

ART. LI.—On the Native Dog of New Zealand.

By TAYLOR WHITE.

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DURING the last twelve months I have collected further information regarding the kuri, or Maori dog, through the "Notes and Queries" column of the *Otago Witness*, and by private correspondence, and now bring to your notice the answers received. It is noteworthy that the name "kuri," which some persons say is equivalent to "animal," and does not refer to the dog alone, should seem to be closely connected with European or Aryan names for dog; and, as Mr. Edward Tregear informs me by letter, a somewhat similar name is used among the Pacific islands, as follows: "Tongan, *kuli*; Fijian, *koli*; Baki, *kuli*; Api, *kuli*; &c. Skeat, our great authority on etymology, says that 'colley' is related to the Celtic *cu*, a dog, and gives from an old glossary 'Coley, a cur-dog.' I do not think you are right about your derivation of 'cur,' as a dog which has been curtailed or cut in any way. Skeat says, 'Cur, a small dog: Middle English, *kur* and *kurre*; Swedish, *kurre*, a dog; Old Dutch, *korre*, a watch-dog, giving as probable origin a sound as of growling or barking.' I do not hold with this. I think that the root is *kur*, to run, as found in French *courir* and Latin *curro*. *Cur* is 'a dog which runs away,' and *ku*—as seen in the Greek *κύων*, a dog; the Celtic *cu*, a dog; &c.—is evidently the same root, the original *kur*, *kuri*, *kuli*, or *colley* meaning 'the swift animal.' Years ago I said in 'The Aryan Maori' that I believed the Maori dog was the degraded descendant of the dogs which once guarded the herds of the Maori people in Central Asia. Remembering this, do not the constant comparisons to a shepherd's dog made by those who saw the old kuri seem remarkable? And note the European and the native names."* *Cu* is also Irish for dog; *ci*, Welsh: *cá*, a dog, Gaelic: Russ, *suka*, a slut: Sanskrit, *çvan*, a dog; *çara*, variegated in colour, also used of hair mixed with grey and white: *canis*, Latin, a dog; *canus*, grey, hoary: *chien*, French, a dog (Old French, *chen*, a dog); *chenu*, grey hairs: *grey*, Icelandic, a dog; as also *greyhunde*,

* The foregoing is quoted from Mr. Tregear's letter, but I take exception to Mr. Tregear speaking of the kuri as "the degraded descendant," holding that, although the kuri might be greatly altered in habits, there is no proof of degradation as far as size is concerned. We have ample proof that the word "cur," used by Captain Cook, was then the correct term for dog; and, in place of "runs away," read "the chaser," or, more correctly, "courser."

a greyhound; *grey-baka*, a slut (Skeat says not allied to "gray," which is *grar* in Icelandic). In this I think he is wrong, for we have both "grey" and "gray" in English. From the apparent connection of these words we may safely infer that the old-time dog was of a grey colour, and that English stag-hounds and the greyhound are the least modified from the original old-time dog—as also is proved by Assyrian bas-reliefs or sculptures. Take the word "grin," to snarl, grimace: Middle English, *grennen*; Anglo-Saxon, *grennian*, to grin; Dutch, *grinjen*, to weep, fret; Icelandic, *grenja*, to howl; Danish, *grine*, to grin, simper; Swedish, *grina*; German, *greinen*; and English, *grimace*, *grind*, *gripe* (to seize), *grip*, *grizzly*, *grizzled*, *grab*, *grasp*, *grope*. These words all refer to the characteristics of a grey animal, presumably the dog. The English word "*grim*, fierce—Anglo-Saxon *grim*, allied to *gram*, fierce, angry, furious: Icelandic, *grimmr*, *grim*; *gramr*, angry: Danish, *grim*, *grim*; *gram*, angry: German, *grimm*, fury; *gram*, hostile:" &c. (Skeat)—shows parallel changes = *grey* and *gray*, and is another dog word.

The Maori also uses *moi* and *pēropēro* in connection with the dog. It is remarkable that *perro* is Spanish for dog. Mr. W. H. Skinner says "*Peropero*" is used by the Maoris to their dogs, as we call "Puss, puss," or "Chuck, chuck," to cats and poultry. *Moi* is, I believe, connected with a Maori story of a person of that name who was changed by witchcraft into the form of a dog, which was proved by the strange dog answering to the name when called by the lost one's sister.

The Maoris name a plant "*poroporo*" (*Solanum aviculare*), which is allied to the potato and tomato, and bears large oval berries or drupes, the size of a pigeon's egg, of a bright-orange colour. The colour of these fruits gives a fair definition of what I described as gamboge-yellow in a former paper—a white dog with patches of gamboge-yellow, meaning thereby a light-orange colour. This will give a better idea of the colour meant, and might be one reason for the coupling-together of "*peropero*" and "*poroporo*;" still, I have no evidence of the white-orange-coloured dog occurring in the North, where "*Peropero*" is used as a call for dogs. This plant, also, I have not seen in the South Island, and the name discussed is strictly confined to the North.

In Mr. Tregear's paper I was much taken by the sketch or figure showing an old form of tattoo formerly used by the Maoris, called *mokokuri*. This was a marking of the face by sections of three short parallel lines, and at once reminded me of the black markings on dogs which were described as freckled with black—that is, a few black hairs close together here and there on a pure-white ground, but not

in sufficient numbers to constitute spots. I consulted Mr. Colenso on this matter, and he replied, "It means an inferior, or common, or less-esteemed kind of face-tattoo. '*Kuri*' is added adjectively to several words in Maori, generally meaning as above (having nothing to do with their *kuri*=dog)—much, indeed, like our English use of the term 'horse' as in 'horse-chestnut,' 'horse-mint,' 'horse-mackerel,' 'horse-laugh,' &c." Mr. Colenso is not with me; but there is yet no certain proof that the tattoo was not copied from the dog's markings. A horse-trough and horse-cloth are certainly connected with the horse. And it is rather remarkable, in taking the skin from a wild pig, I noticed that the arrangement of the hair-follicles, as seen on the under-side, were almost invariably in threes, and closely resembled the *mokokuri* tattoo, and showing as parallel lines. Most of the Pacific islands were supplied with pigs when the first European ships arrived, so that, if "kuri" included pigs, the skin of the pig might originate the markings of *mokokuri*. But this is hardly probable, for the natives seldom remove the skin: still, the incident is worth recording. To return to the word "curtail," mentioned above, I had not then seen a copy of Skeat, but I will now quote his definition, and leave you to judge between us as to whether it is a dog-word or no: "'Curtail,' a French word derived from Latin. It has nothing to do with 'tail,' but is a corruption of the older form *curtal*, verb, to dock, from the adjective *curtal*, having a docked tail ('All's Well,' ii., 3, 65); old French, *courtault*; later, *courtaut*, 'curtail, being curtailed' (Cot.). The same as Italian *cortaldo*, 'a curtail, a horse sans taile' (Florio). Formed with suffix *ault* (=Italian, *aldo*; Low Latin, *aldus*; from German *wald*, power), from old French *court*, short, from Latin *curtus*, short."* I would have you notice that the word "tail" occurs four times in this paragraph. In fact, it seems all about the tail and the shortening thereof. Possibly the word is "curt-tail" = short tail; but why not "cur-tail," or dog-tailed? Most of us know that a breed of dogs are born with little or no tail, as also are Manx cats; therefore "curtail" came to mean docked or shortened tail. We do not say "curt-ail" or "curt-al," but "cur-tail" and "cur-tal." If not allowed either the cur or the tail, the whole word seems lost.

I hope it may not seem irrelevant to the subject of this paper if further remarks are made on the European dog. It

* Again, Skeat says, "'Dock,' to curtail (Celtic?). Perhaps from Welsh *tocio*, to clip, dock; chief form, *tocyn*, a short piece." Here we find *ci* and *cy*, Welsh for dog. "'Dock,' a basin for ships; Danish, *dokke*; Swedish, *docka*; Low Latin, *doga*, a ditch, also a cup." Compare M.E. *dogge*, A.S. *docka*, a dog.

is evident that chains were first made for the special purpose of controlling the dog. Most people are acquainted with the result of tying a dog to his kennel by a rope or piece of hide—how he will with the greatest ease cut them with his teeth as if with a knife. Now, *chien*, French, a dog; *chenil*, a kennel; *chenu*, hoary, grey-headed; *chaine*, a chain: and in Latin, *canis*, a dog; *canities*, a grey or greyish-white colour; *canicula*, a small dog or slut. *Cuniculus*, a rabbit; and *kaninchen*, German, a rabbit—the ending of these two words means “little” or “small;” so the whole is “the little grey fellow,” and seems to show that the rabbit was not indigenous to Germany.* Latin, *catella*, a little chain; *catellus*, a little dog, puppy, or whelp, also a small chain; *catena*, a chain; *catillo*, to lick a plate; *catulus*, a young dog—point to the dog being of a grey colour, and to his being fastened by a chain when not in use.

“The Gauls used dogs in war. Appian relates that a Celtic ambassador’s body-guard was composed of these trusty animals. The Allobroges also kept numbers of them for this service. The Cimbrians having left their baggage in the charge of their dogs, they successfully defended it after the defeat of the army. (Pliny, viii., 40.)

“Those of Britain were particularly esteemed, and great numbers were sent to Gaul to be used in war, being much superior to the continental breed. The Caledonians kept them for the purpose of giving notice of the approach of an enemy. (Smith’s Gall. Ant.) The Romans imported great numbers from Britain for use in hunting.

“The *Lupus cervarius*, a hart- or hind-wolf, called by the Gauls *raphium*, was found in their extensive forests, and several were exhibited in Rome by Pompey as natural curiosities. They were not the only remarkable animals of the kind; there were a sort of very large and fierce creatures, called wolf-dogs, being a cross from the two animals. Great herds of these roamed in the woods, and, what was most singular, a particular dog acted as leader, all the others following and submitting to his direction, the whole pack observing an appearance of order.” (Pliny, vii., c. 40.) “They seem to have resembled the Irish wolf-dog.”

“The present name of a wolf in the Highlands is *mada*, a dog, and *alluidh*, ferocious: and foxes are *madadh ruadh* (red dogs) or *sionach*.” It would seem probable that the idea that these wild dogs were hybrids is fallacious: their evident numbers and the fact of their congregating together are against

* It might be said that Lat. *cuniculus* means “little cave-maker;” but I prefer to take advantage of the change of the vowel “u” to “a,” as shown in the German *kaninchen*.

it. They must have been the original of the domestic dog, or the descendants of stray dogs gone wild.

It is not very clear if the crossing of *Lupus cervarius* and the wolf, or of the dog and wolf, is meant. I am much inclined to think *Lupus cervarius* was the badger. It is said that the wolf and the dog are fertile together. The jackal must have been extinct in Europe long before the time of the Romans, although remains of an extinct species have been found in Britain, together with those of the cave-bear, sabretoothed lion, and other curious animals.

Mr. W. H. Skinner, surveyor, New Plymouth, Taranaki, has kindly furnished me with the following account of a dogskin mat which is in his possession at the present time:—

“New Plymouth, 14th February, 1891.

“Mr. Taylor White: Dear Sir,—I am sending under separate cover a rough sketch of dogskin mat. I find it a most difficult matter to hit off the colouring, and nothing short of seeing the mat itself would be satisfactory. The mat was bought by myself from Whakatau, a chief of the Taranaki Tribe. This man's age, I should think, would be from seventy-five to eighty years. The mat was made by his father, Rawahotane. The skins were obtained and cured by this man's father, or the grandfather of Whakatau; so that these dogs must have been killed at least eighty years ago. This would accord with Te Whiti's statement that the mat was at least eighty years old. Such being the case, these skins cannot possibly be other than those from the native dog, as explained in my first letter.

“I am surprised that Mr. Colenso takes up the line that the native dog was a small miserable cur. From conversations held with intelligent natives I gather that the old Maori dog was by no means a small animal, but a very fine animal indeed, and good-looking withal; but in one respect they differed greatly from our European dogs, and that was, they had no bark such as our dogs, and they never offered to bite any one, or, as the Maori explained, never got into a rage.

“Some twenty years ago Captain Good, then living at Urenui, in this district, found the skeleton of a Maori dog which had evidently been buried with some show of respect. The bones were found in a small cave, and the remains of a mat—a few fragments only—in which the dog had evidently been wrapped, were lying around. This skeleton is either in the Wellington Museum or was sent to Copenhagen. Mr. Good's address is Oeo, near Opunake. He, no doubt, could tell you if the dog was a small or a large one. Some nine years ago, whilst surveying well up on the slopes of Mount