

Calling the Dog: The Sources of AKC Breed Names

Angela G. Ray

Oshkosh, Wisconsin

The official names of the 136 dog breeds currently recognized by the American Kennel Club reflect the role of the canine in human civilization. Some names are exotic, but most are practical. Most names derive from sources pertaining to geography, appearance, and behavior.

In the early chapters of George Eliot's *Middlemarch* (1872), Dorothea Brooke wanders through the woods accompanied by Monk, an aptly named Saint Bernard. As she walks, she envisions a "possible future" with the old ascetic scholar Edward Casaubon (28). Sir James Chettam, another prospective suitor, arrives on horseback, attended by two setters and carrying a Maltese puppy. He attempts to present Dorothea with the puppy, but "annoyed at the interruption" (31), she rejects the dog, denouncing it as "parasitic." "I like to think that the animals about us...either carry on their own little affairs or can be companions to us, like Monk here." Parrying, Sir James responds, "I should never keep them for myself, but ladies usually are fond of these Maltese dogs" (32).¹

In this passage, Eliot employs the cultural shorthand of the canine to flesh out her characters and to set the stage for various conflicts of the novel. Dorothea is, significantly, accompanied by a Saint Bernard. Her dog could be no other, considering her worldview: a Bedlington terrier would not do, nor a collie, a Pomeranian, or a saluki. She passionately wants to "learn everything," to "learn to see the truth by the same light as great men have seen it by" (30). Virtuous action is her ultimate goal: the contemplative life, she believes, must necessarily result in active and useful works. What better companion could there be for such a person than a Saint

4 Names 43.1 (March 1995)

Bernard, a dog named for a hospice founded by a saint, a dog bred as a savior of lost travelers, as a large, strong comforter and companion par excellence? Her favoring of this animal over other breeds also heralds her choice of Casaubon, whom she perceives as saintly. It may also foreshadow trouble: she will have need of aid in her personal travels.²

Likewise, Sir James's two setters identify him immediately as a sportsman, a hunter, a traditional English country gentleman. His "beautiful" setters perfectly complement his "well-groomed chestnut horse." These approaching animals, Eliot's narrative voice asserts, "could leave no doubt that the rider was Sir James Chettam" (31). Like his animal companions, Sir James is wellborn, well-bred, and well groomed, and in a familiar motif of English literature, he is also a huntsman, seeking to be a groom of a different kind. His spurned gift marks him as a traditionalist: the Maltese had been considered for centuries as a "naïve toy" for ladies (Eliot 1872, 31). Writing of the Maltese in his book *Of Englishe Dogges* (1576), John Caius identifies Dorothea's greatest horror: "These dogges are...instrumentes of folly...to tryfle away the treasure of time, to withdraw their [women's] mindes from more commendable exercises" (20). Through her rejection of the puppy — although her opinion of the dog was formed at "that very moment...under the heat of irritation" — Dorothea rejects not only James Chettam but also the life of indolent leisure that his gift represents. She does, however, suggest that her sister, Celia, might be more receptive (Eliot 1872, 32).

Domestication and Breeding of the Dog

Dorothea's Saint Bernard, Sir James's setters, and the spurned Maltese — all three of these and, in fact, all other breeds of the domestic dog are members of the same species: *Canis familiaris*. Scientists assert that domestication occurred about twelve to fourteen thousand years ago and that the dog was the first animal to develop this relationship with humankind. Although the passage of time has obscured the specifics of domestication, writers on the subject usually stress common social organizations of the two species (the pack, the family group) and mutual benefits of the bispecies interaction: the dog served humans as hunter, guard, and sanitation

worker — and often as dinner — and in return received reliable shelter and a steady supply of food (see Fox 1993, 444-45; Olsen 1985; Coren 1994, 17-41; Mestel 1994, 93-94). Over time, as human civilization changed, so did the domestic dog: dogs applied themselves to herding and hauling, and their companionship function grew in importance.

Despite the antiquity of the domestic dog, most of the breeds we know today trace their ancestry only to the nineteenth century, and, of course, many ancient breeds no longer exist. In the late fifteenth century, English prioress Juliana Berners (1486) identified fourteen types of dogs, including the greyhound, mongrel, mastiff, spaniel, scent hound, terrier, butcher's hound, dunghill dog, and, perhaps most evocative, "smale ladies popis" that "beere a way the flees" (fol. fiiiib). Ninety years later Caius (1576) categorized "Englishe Dogges" in three groups: "A gentle kinde, serving the game," "A homely kind," and "A currishe kinde, meete for many toyes" (2). He then proceeded to examine them in subcategories, including "Dogges serving ye pastime of hunting beastes" (13), "Dogges serving the disport of fowling" (19), "the Spaniell gentle or the comforter" (22), "Dogges of a course kind...the shepherds dogge" (23), and "Curres of the mungrell and rascall sort" (34). Within these groups, Caius identified about twenty individual varieties. By the time Samuel Johnson compiled his *Dictionary of the English Language* (1755), the word *dog* could be defined as "a domestick animal remarkably various in his species; comprising the mastiff, the spaniel, the bulldog, the greyhound, the hound, the terrier, the cur, with many others."

Today, kennel clubs around the world recognize more than four hundred dog breeds, and some estimate that closer to eight hundred breeds exist worldwide (Coren 1994, 22). The principal registry agency for pure-bred dogs in the United States, the American Kennel Club (AKC), recognizes 136 breeds as of the beginning of 1995.³ According to the AKC, founded in 1884, a breed is "a relatively homogeneous group of animals within a species, developed and maintained by man." The breeds were "created...using selective breeding to get desired qualities.... Through the ages, man designed dogs that could hunt, guard, or herd according to his needs" (AKC 1991, 5). Recognized breeds are eligible to participate in AKC-

6 Names 43.1 (March 1995)

sanctioned events, including dog shows, at which individual dogs are judged on their conformation to an official breed standard.⁴ Significant for our purposes here, each recognized breed has an official breed name; in virtually every case, the AKC adopted as official the name in use among contemporary breeders and fanciers.

Methodology

In the long relation of *Homo sapiens* and *Canis familiaris*, the former has embraced the latter in mythology and folklore, both elevating the dog to the status of a god and debasing the dog as a pariah (see Leach 1961; Coren 1994, 43-58; "Gods and Gladiators" 1993). In an attempt to improve our understanding of the human relation to the dog, I propose to examine the evidence provided by breed names. I have chosen as my study group the official names of the 136 breeds recognized by the American Kennel Club.

I first gathered data on the origins of the 136 names from AKC publications such as *The Complete Dog Book (CDB)* (1992) and the periodical *Pure-Bred Dogs/American Kennel Gazette*, supplemented as necessary by other publications about dogs. These sources gave me a good picture of the perceptions of many of the breed names held by those intimately involved in dog breeding and promotion. Then I turned to authoritative English dictionaries for etymological information and dates at which the terms first appeared in printed or written sources. The dictionaries on which I chiefly relied were the second edition of *The Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*, *Webster's Third New International Dictionary (W3)*, and the tenth edition of *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (W10)*. The *OED's* quotations, as always, proved helpful. *Webster's Collegiate* is based on *Webster's Third*, but many newer terms appear in the *Tenth Collegiate* that do not appear in the *Third*; also, Merriam-Webster began presenting dates in the ninth edition of the *Collegiate*, whereas the *Third* does not offer that information (see Mish 1988, 6). As necessary, I supplemented these sources with foreign language dictionaries and other reference texts.

After compiling information on dog breeds from these and other sources, I created a computerized database in order to examine my findings quickly and accurately. An individual record in the database

contains the official breed name as used by the AKC, the AKC group to which the breed belongs, the date the breed was first registered by the AKC, information about the breed name's presence or absence in the *OED*, *Webster's Third*, and *Webster's Tenth Collegiate*, dates from the *OED* and *Webster's Tenth*, information about non-English terms in the name, and my classification of the name according to type.⁵ The AKC groups are Sporting Dogs, Hounds, Working Dogs, Terriers, Toys, Nonsporting Dogs, and Herding Dogs. Every recognized dog breed is a member of one of these groups, and two breeds — the Manchester terrier and the poodle — appear in two groups each (the standard Manchester terrier in Terriers and the toy in Toys, and the miniature poodle in Toys and the standard in Nonsporting Dogs).

Classifications

I have classified each name according to type, placing it in one or more of the following categories: Appearance, Behavior, Geography, Ancestry, Human, Unique, and Uncertain. A breed name classified under the Appearance category contains at least one element that describes the dog's size, color, hair, shape, skin, or resemblance to another animal species. The papillon, whose name means 'butterfly' in French, is an exemplar of this category, as are the miniature bull terrier, the flat-coated retriever, the German wirehaired pointer, the Kerry blue terrier, and the shih tzu ('lion dog' in Chinese [*CDB* 466; *W10*; *OED*]).

Breed names classified under Behavior contain elements describing the dog's speed or agility (e.g., whippet); the dog's manner of hunting, guarding, fighting, barking, or showing obedience (boxer, beagle [see Onions 1966, 82; Shipley 1984, 109]); the medium in which it is active (Bernese mountain dog, Irish water spaniel, cairn terrier); the prey it was bred to hunt or bait (otterhound, Norwegian elkhound); or the domestic animals it was bred to herd or guard (Australian cattle dog).

Geographic elements in the names of AKC dog breeds refer to the place of origin, the place of assumed or legendary origin, the place of breeding or the development of the breed, the place where the breed was first found by Europeans or Americans, or a place

8 Names 43.1 (March 1995)

unrelated to the breed's origin or development. The latter category, the most peculiar one, embraces the next-to-last recognized breed, the Australian shepherd. This breed, developed solely in the United States, is related to Australia in only the most peripheral way:

It probably originated in the Basque region of the Pyrenees mountains between Spain and France, but was dubbed the Australian Shepherd because of its association with Basque shepherds who came into the United States from Australia in the 1800s. (Ball 1993, 46)

Other exemplars of the Geography category are more straightforward: the Sealyham terrier, for example, evokes Sealyham, the Welsh estate of John Edwardes, who developed the breed in the nineteenth century (*CDB* 399; *OED*). Likewise, the Chesapeake Bay retriever was developed in the Chesapeake Bay area to retrieve game (*CDB* 54-55; *W3*), and the Siberian husky was bred in northeastern Asia (*CDB* 313; *W3*).

The category Ancestry comprises those breeds whose names derive from the names of the breeds from which these later breeds were developed. An example is the bull terrier, which was believed to have been developed by mating a bulldog and a terrier (*CDB* 343; *OED*; *W3*).

The Human category contains those breeds whose names refer specifically to individual people or to groups involved in the development of the breed. Three men are commemorated in the names of AKC dog breeds: Louis Dobermann; Alexander, fourth duke of Gordon; and Cornelis de Gyselaer.⁶ Dobermann, a nineteenth-century night watchman and dog catcher in Apolda, Germany, gave his name to the Doberman pinscher (Nichols 1986, 11; *CDB* 253).⁷ The fourth duke of Gordon, a Scottish peer and sportsman, was prominent in the development of the Gordon setter (*CDB* 79; *OED*; *W3*; see Chichester 1908, 8:167). Cornelis de Gyselaer, a leader of the Dutch Patriots Party in eighteenth-century Holland, gave his name to the keeshond (*CDB* 514; Weil 1988, 11; Peterson 1980, 38). Kees is a Dutch pet name for Cornelis (Hanks and Hodges 1990, 190). Appropriately, Kees de Gyselaer gave the name Kees to his own pet dog, who became a symbol of its master's party.⁸ Breed names in the Human category that refer to groups of people include Samoyed (a Russian name for a Siberian ethnic group, the Nenets

[Shipley 1984, 356; *CDB* 308; *W3*] and Alaskan malamute, named for an Inuit group (*CDB* 236; *W3*; *OED*).

The Unique category comprises those breeds named in an unusual way. Only three of the AKC breed names fall into this category: basenji, Dandie Dinmont terrier, and Pharaoh hound. The basenji, native to central Africa (*CDB* 143), has a name akin to a Lingala and Tshiluba term that means 'native, inhabitant of the hinterland' (*W3*). The Dandie Dinmont terrier is the only dog breed named for a character in literature. It recalls the Scottish farmer Dandie Dinmont in Sir Walter Scott's novel *Guy Mannering* (1815). Dinmont had six terriers: "There's auld Pepper and auld Mustard, and young Pepper and young Mustard, and little Pepper and little Mustard." Asked about this limited variety of names, Dinmont responds, "O, that's a fancy of my ain to mark the breed" (145). Finally, the Pharaoh hound is believed by some to trace its ancestry to the dogs of ancient Egypt (*CDB* 211).⁹

The Uncertain category embraces the breed names for which information was unavailable (2 of 136) or disputed. Most of the breed names in this category are either very old (greyhound, bloodhound) or very new in English (shiba inu). The term *bloodhound*, for instance, may refer to the dog's reputedly pure bloodlines (the "blooded hound") or to the animal's fabled ability to catch the scent of its quarry's "blood" in tracking (*CDB* 161; Caius 1576, 5). The shiba inu, the most recently recognized AKC breed, is an old breed of Japan. *Inu* means 'dog.' *Shiba* may refer to the brushwood bushes in which the dogs hunted; it may refer to the red color of the dog, which matches the brushwood leaves; or it may simply denote the dog's small size (Holden 1992, 54).

Generic Elements

In order to avoid obscuring the references of the names of specific breeds, I chose to omit from the bulk of my analysis ten generic terms, each of which appears in at least three breed names. These generic terms are *griffon*, *hound*, *pinscher*, *pointer*, *retriever*, *schnauzer*, *setter*, *shepherd/sheepdog*, *spaniel*, and *terrier* (see table 1).¹⁰ Eighty of the 136 breed names include one of these generic terms. The inclusion of these terms in the classification scheme would tend

10 Names 43.1 (March 1995)

Table 1. Generic Terms in AKC Breed Names

Term	OED Citation	Classification	# of Breeds
Griffon	1882	Appearance	3
Hound	ca. 1200	Behavior	16
Pinscher	1926	Behavior	3
Pointer	1717	Behavior	3
Retriever	1486	Behavior	5
Schnauzer	1923	Appearance	3
Setter	1576	Behavior	3
Shepherd/Sheepdog	ca. 1440/1774	Behavior	5
Spaniel	ca. 1386	Geography	11
Terrier	ca. 1440	Behavior	28

Sources: *OED*; *W3*; *W10*; *Schöffler-Weis* (1963); Onions (1966, 850).

to skew the results toward the behavioral category, for obvious reasons. Including the generics would also require classifying all eleven of the spaniels under the Geography category, since the term derives from words referring to "Spaniard" (*W3*; Onions 1966, 850); spaniels were thought to have come from Spain (Caius 1576, 15). It seems likely that the various spaniel breeds were named because they were bred from or somehow resembled other spaniels and not as a commemorative gesture toward Spain. The presence of other geographic elements in spaniel names attests to this: American water spaniel, Clumber spaniel (for an estate in Nottinghamshire [*CDB* 91-92; *OED*; *W3*]), English cocker spaniel, English springer spaniel, English toy spaniel, Irish water spaniel, Sussex spaniel, Tibetan spaniel, and Welsh springer spaniel.¹¹

The greatest impact of the omission of the generic terms is seen in the Terrier group, where all twenty-six breed names employ a generic (twenty-five use *terrier*; one uses *schnauzer*). The Sporting group follows, with twenty-one of twenty-four breed names affected (one griffon, three pointers, five retrievers, three setters, and nine spaniels). The Hound group contains fifteen breeds with generic

usages: one griffon and fourteen hounds. The remaining groups each contain fewer than ten breeds whose names employ generics.

When we consider the dates of AKC registration, we observe a shift away from the use of generics over time. Of the breeds registered in the period 1878-90, two-thirds have names using one of the identified generic terms.¹² This proportion remains consistent during 1891-1918. From 1919 to 1993, however, a drop in the use of generics is apparent: from 1919 to 1941, slightly less than half of the breeds newly registered with the AKC use a generic name; the proportion is the same from 1942 to 1993.

Turning to dictionary dates — that is, the earliest known dates when the breed names appeared in written or printed form — we find that the apex of the use of generic terms occurred in the nineteenth century. Using the dates from *Webster's Tenth*, we find that before 1800 only 29% of breed names used these generics. Seventy-five percent of the names that first appeared from 1800 to 1860 used generic terms; the percentage dropped only slightly during the period 1861-1900, to 70%. The proportion continued to fall, to 63% from 1900 to 1940, and then to 56% from 1941 to the present. Although the incidence has declined, more than half of new breed names still employ the identified generics.¹³

Analysis of Specific Elements

In analyzing the classifications of breed names by group, with the generic terms omitted, we find that the Geography category leads the list, with 61% of the 136 breed names containing some geographic element (see table 2; for specific classifications, see the appendix). Appearance follows, only slightly ahead of Behavior.¹⁴ The impact of the other categories is minimal.

At least 45% of the breed names in every group contain a geographic element: Herding Dogs have the most place-specific names, followed by Terriers and Sporting Dogs. Hounds have the least incidence of geographic terms. The Toy group has the greatest proportion of names reflecting appearance. This is unsurprising, since among the toy dogs, which were bred as companions, style and physical characteristics have proved important to owners and breeders. Still, even in the Toy group, geographic elements occur

12 Names 43.1 (March 1995)

Group:	Appearance		Behavior		Geography		Ancestry		Human		Unique		Uncertain	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Sporting Dogs (24)	6	25.0	9	37.5	16	66.7	0	0	1	4.2	0	0	0	0
Hounds (22)	4	18.2	12	54.5	10	45.5	0	0	0	0	2	9.1	2	9.1
Working Dogs (20)	4	20.0	5	25.0	11	55.0	1	5.0	4	20.0	0	0	1	5.0
Terriers (26)	7	26.9	3	11.5	18	69.2	3	11.5	0	0	1	3.8	0	0
Toys (18)	7	38.9	1	5.6	11	61.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	11.1
Nonsporting Dogs (14)	3	21.4	2	14.3	7	50.0	1	7.1	2	14.3	0	0	3	21.4
Herding Dogs (14)	4	28.6	2	14.3	11	78.6	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	7.1
TOTAL (136)	35	25.7	33	24.3	83	61.0	5	3.7	7	5.1	3	2.2	9	6.6

Note: Many breeds are classified in more than one category. Each percentage shows the proportion of the group that exhibits the characteristic, e.g., 25.0% = 6/24. The totals of the groups sum to 138 rather than 136 because two breeds appear in more than one group.

Registration Date:	Appearance		Behavior		Geography		Ancestry		Human		Unique		Uncertain	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1878-1890 (46)	7	15.2	15	32.6	26	56.5	1	2.2	1	2.2	1	2.2	4	8.7
1891-1918 (28)	4	14.3	10	35.7	16	57.1	1	3.6	3	10.7	0	0	1	3.6
1919-1941 (31)	11	35.5	4	12.9	20	64.5	1	3.2	3	9.7	0	0	3	9.7
1942-1993 (31)	13	41.9	4	12.9	21	67.7	2	6.5	0	0	2	6.5	1	3.2
TOTAL (136)	35	25.7	33	24.3	83	61.0	5	3.7	7	5.1	3	2.2	9	6.6

Note: Many breeds are classified in more than one category. Each percentage shows the proportion of the total from the particular period that exhibits the relevant characteristic, e.g., 15.2% = 7/46.

more often than others. In the behavioral category, the Hound group comes out on top, followed by Sporting Dogs and Working Dogs. This too reflects expectations: dogs bred as workers have names that emphasize their functional qualities. For all groups except the Hound group, though, geographic terms are the naming source of choice.¹⁵

Fourteen breed names employ both a behavioral and a geographic element: five dogs of the Sporting group, five of the Hound group, two Working Dogs, and two Herding Dogs. Similarly, twelve animals are named by both appearance and geography: these are evenly spread over six groups, with two breed names from all groups but Herding Dogs. Four breed names contain elements in the Appearance and Behavior categories: two Terriers and one each from Sporting Dogs and Hounds.

Next we will consider the classifications according to the dates of AKC registration (see table 3). Here we see some interesting trends: names referring to appearance have become increasingly popular over time, while behavioral names have declined in importance. These shifts may reflect the increasing importance of the canine as a companion, a pet, and even a fashion accessory in the post-industrial Western world and the decreasing reliance on the dog as a laborer. Geographic names have remained significant throughout the period under consideration, with a slight increase over time. No breeds first registered since 1942 have directly commemorated an individual or a group of human beings.

Turning to the dictionaries, we discover 126 of the 136 breed names present in *Webster's Tenth* (122 with dates), 110 in *Webster's Third*, and 106 in the *OED* (103 with dates). The nonappearance of breed names seems related to date of registration and to the presence of non-English elements in the name. Only five breed names do not appear in any of the three dictionaries: Japanese chin (registered in 1888, as Japanese spaniel), miniature bull terrier (1991), petit basset griffon Vendéen (1990), Portuguese water dog (1983), and shiba inu (recognized in 1993).¹⁶ Of the ten breed names not appearing in *Webster's Tenth*, seven of them identify breeds first registered by the AKC since 1983; three of the ten names are terms borrowed directly from other languages. Of the 26 breed names that do not have entries in *Webster's Third*, 15 mark dogs first registered by the AKC since 1961, the original publication date of the *Third*.

14 Names 43.1 (March 1995)

Nine of the 26 breed names contain non-English elements. The *OED*, for obvious reasons, reflects American usage — and AKC activity — less than do the American dictionaries: of thirty AKC breed names absent from the *OED*, eight identify dogs whose first AKC registration occurred after 1970, and eleven contain non-English elements. These data indicate the significance of the American Kennel Club's activity on English usage in the United States.

Exploring this area further, I examined the discrepancies between the dictionary date for an individual breed name and the date of the first AKC registration. Of the 122 breed names given a date of first known use in *Webster's Tenth*, eight are dated in the same year as the registration: boxer, Cardigan Welsh corgi, Kerry blue terrier, Lhasa apso, puli, Siberian husky, silky terrier, and Weimaraner. Five of the 103 dated observations in the *OED* are similarly given a date of first use that corresponds to the AKC registration date. This group comprises the list from *Webster* minus boxer, Cardigan Welsh corgi, and silky terrier.¹⁷

The dictionary dates for the breed names tend to cluster around the registration date. Of the 122 dated names in *Webster*, 51 are given dates that fall within ten years on either side of the registration; the comparable figure for the *OED* is 30 of 103. Generally, I would expect the known use of a breed name in English to predate the AKC registration date, and an analysis of the dating bears this out. Only 36 of the 122 breeds in *Webster* are dated after the AKC registration date (30 of these are dated within ten years of registration). More dramatically, of the 103 names in the *OED*, only 9 are dated after AKC registration (6 within ten years).

Conducting an analysis of the classifications of breed names by dictionary date, I found trends comparable to those presented in table 3. For this analysis, I examined five periods: before 1800, 1800-1860, 1861-1900, 1901-40, and 1941 to the present. Names that entered the language before 1800 have marked behavioral components (43% using *Webster's* dates; 47%, *OED*). *Webster* shows that the use of terms relating to appearance has increased over time, with a sharp upsurge after 1900; the *OED* reflects a less steady, but still generally upward, trend, with the peak of naming for appearance occurring from 1901 to 1940. The Behavior category declined, as we saw earlier, and its impact on the names from the period 1941 to the

present is negligible (6%, *Webster*; 0, *OED*). Geographic terms lead in every period except that before 1800. Since 1800 at least 59% of the breed names from each period have exhibited a place-specific element. The lowest proportion occurred in the period 1861-1900, and the two highest in 1800-1860 and 1941 to the present.

The analysis by dictionary date provides the opportunity for some meaningful commentary on the categories with comparatively few observations. Names relating to ancestry all occurred from 1800 to 1940. Before 1800 this type of naming would have been unlikely, since intentional crossbreeding flourished only in the nineteenth century. Likewise, naming referring to humans took place from 1861 to 1940, and according to *Webster*, names in the Unique category also appeared only during this time. It may be that the more usual sources of naming were perceived as becoming exhausted, opening the way for these new sources. Or perhaps the increasing activity among dog breeders made the introduction of new naming sources inevitable. Names in the Uncertain category have the greatest presence before 1800, reflecting the effect of time on lexicography. Both dictionaries date three names I have classified as uncertain to this period: bloodhound, greyhound, and pug.

Non-English Elements

Finally, 39 of the 136 AKC breed names contain some non-English element. For this brief analysis I have included the generic terms listed above. Among this assemblage I have grouped terms such as *basset* (from French *bas* 'low'). Paul Robert (1967) dates the French term *basset* — "chien courant très bas sur pattes" — to the sixteenth century; according to the *OED*, it made its first appearance in English in the early seventeenth century. Breed names also include expressions relatively new in English from languages like Chinese and Japanese. *Shar-pei*, a Chinese term meaning 'sand skin,' for instance, is dated 1975 by *Webster*; the Chinese *shar-pei* was admitted to AKC registration in 1991. Among the 39 breeds examined here, ten have names from German, eight from French, and four from Hungarian. Other languages with a notable presence are Chinese, Dutch, Flemish, Japanese, Russian, and Welsh. Somewhat surprisingly, six of the ten breeds whose names contain a German component were first registered by the AKC between 1925 and 1943,

16 Names 43.1 (March 1995)

a period when the German language fell into some disfavor in the United States (see Tatalovich forthcoming, chap. 2). Two breeds, not counted among the thirty-nine considered here, have names translated directly from non-English languages: *deutscher Schäferhund* 'German shepherd dog' (*OED*, s.v. "Alsatian"; *CDB* 582), and the French *grand Danois* 'Great Dane' (*CDB* 262).¹⁸

Conclusion

Despite the mythology and folklore that have grown up around the canine, breed names in common use in the United States have a generally pragmatic cast. People involved in the development of the myriad breeds considered here most often chose names that described the way an animal looked, the things it was bred to do, and the place with which it had a direct or indirect connection. Some of the names pertaining to appearance are fanciful, but the majority simply describe physical characteristics: the soft-coated wheaten terrier, for example, is a terrier (an earthing dog) with a soft, honey-colored coat. Behavioral names, in both generic and specific terms, are also common, although the use of such nomenclature has declined. The decline of the use of generics, moreover, parallels the tendency toward shortening of names demonstrated by quotations in the *OED*. The Dalmatian, for instance, was formerly called the Dalmatian dog; the pug was known as the pug-dog. Common usage often shortens the name of the bearded collie to beardie, and fanciers of the petit basset griffon Vendéen frequently call it petit or even PeeBeeGeeVee. On occasion official AKC breed names have changed in ways that reflect this trend: in September 1982 the Brittany spaniel became the Brittany (*CDB* 30, 35). The toponymic references in breed names dramatically illustrate the importance of Western Europe in American dog breeding. Many breed names derive from rural places in the British Isles and recall a sporting and agricultural past.

References in dog literature to the aristocracy are common: *The Complete Dog Book* (1992), for example, relates that Lafayette is thought to have presented George Washington with basset hounds after the American Revolution (148). The nobility is sometimes recalled in the breed names, especially those that refer to particular estates (Clumber spaniel, Sealyham terrier) or to nobles (Gordon

setter). Many aristocrats did engage in dog breeding, and the well-bred dog was one of the accoutrements of a nineteenth-century gentleman.

Although the names of dog breeds place preponderant emphasis on the usefulness of the canine to human civilization — as hunter, herder, guard, draft animal, and so on — one function of the dog is absent from the breed names examined in this study: that of companion. The fidelity, loyalty, and companionship of the dog were celebrated in origin myths (see Leach 1961) and reached an apotheosis among the bourgeois of the nineteenth century (Kete 1994, 22-38). Only one AKC breed name, however, reflects directly the human-canine interaction, and this name is an old one (ca. 1330, *OED*; 14th century, *W10*). The mastiff's name, which described a large dog long before it identified the modern breed, derives from the Latin *manus*, 'hand,' and *suescere*, 'to accustom' (*W3*), with the ending influenced by the French term *mestif*, 'mongrel' (Shipley 1984, 228; *OED*). *Mastiff*, then, refers to one "accustomed to the hand," that is, domesticated. The term connotes obedience but does not directly imply an emotional bond.

The absence of direct associations of canine fidelity and companionship in the breed names may reflect the view prevalent especially in previous centuries — as we saw in the examples from Caius and Eliot above, concerning the Maltese — that dogs whose essential function was to be a pet were less worthwhile than dogs who labored for humankind. These breeds have also often been associated with indolent women, a conjunction beyond the scope of the present study that is yet worth mentioning. Anglo-American naming practices have recognized canine loyalty, however: traditional names of individual dogs include Fido and Pal (see Leach 1961, 362). Psychologists and physiologists in the twentieth century have improved the popular view of the companionship function of the dog by describing the beneficial effects of pets on human beings (see Coren 1994, 157-58; Gavrielle-Gold 1993; "Matters" 1993).

Exploring the origins of breed names can offer us a view of the sources of names that dog breeders and fanciers considered important when the breeds were first developed or recognized. Subsequent perceptions of the dogs and their owners, however, must be considered in formulating general theories about the place of the dog in

18 Names 43.1 (March 1995)

Western culture. The poodle, for example, was originally named for its behavior: the word comes from the German verb *pud(d)eln*, 'to splash' (*W3*; *OED*), and the dog was first bred as a water retriever (*CDB* 521). The subsequent development of the breed, its popularity in France (*CDB* 521; Kete 1994, 87), and its suitability for fantastic haircuts led to the frequent association of poodles with elite society and social climbing. The *OED* contains entries for two nouns and one verb that are pertinent here: a *poodle* is "a lackey," a *poodle-faker* is "a man who cultivates female society, esp. for the purpose of professional advancement," and *to poodle* is "to overdress, to dress up." Interestingly, this cultural idea of the poodle may well provide a skewed idea of the animal itself. In Stanley Coren's 1994 survey, the poodle ranks second only to the Border collie in obedience and working intelligence (182). Coren also reports that experts in dog training assert that the standard poodle can be quite effective in guarding: "The major problem appears to be the public perception that a poodle is a 'fancy dog' with no substance, kept for its looks" (141).

This study has demonstrated the significance of appearance, behavior, and geography in the naming of dog breeds. Other avenues could be usefully explored to gain a more complete understanding of the perception of our best friend: detailed studies of the three major naming sources, an investigation of social mores and choices of breeds, an exploration by region of breed popularity, a study of individual dog names, and an examination of terms referring to dogs that have gained other meanings and applications by association with the cultural view of the animal. As Dandie Dinmont said, "Beast or body, education should aye be minded" (Scott 1815, 145).

Appendix
 AKC Breeds, Dates of First Registration,
 Groups, and Name Classifications

Breed	Date	Group	Categories
Affenpinscher	1936	Toys	AP
Afghan Hound	1926	Hounds	G
Airedale Terrier	1888	Terriers	G
Akita	1972	Working Dogs	G
Alaskan Malamute	1935	Working Dogs	G, H
American Foxhound	1886	Hounds	B, G
American Staffordshire Terrier	1936	Terriers	G
American Water Spaniel	1940	Sporting Dogs	B, G
Australian Cattle Dog	1980	Herding Dogs	B, G
Australian Shepherd	1993	Working Dogs	G
Australian Terrier	1960	Terriers	G
Basenji	1944	Hounds	UQ
Basset Hound	1885	Hounds	AP
Beagle	1885	Hounds	B
Bearded Collie	1976	Herding Dogs	AP
Bedlington Terrier	1886	Terriers	G
Belgian Malinois	1959	Herding Dogs	G
Belgian Sheepdog	1912	Herding Dogs	G
Belgian Tervuren	1959	Herding Dogs	G
Bernese Mountain Dog	1937	Working Dogs	B, G
Bichon Frise	1972	Nonsporting Dogs	AP
Black and Tan Coonhound	1945	Hounds	AP, B
Bloodhound	1885	Hounds	UC
Border Terrier	1930	Terriers	G
Borzoi	1891	Hounds	B
Boston Terrier	1893	Nonsporting Dogs	G

20 Names 43.1 (March 1995)

Bouvier des Flandres	1931	Herding Dogs	B, G
Boxer	1904	Working Dogs	B
Briard	1928	Herding Dogs	G
Brittany	1934	Sporting Dogs	G
Brussels Griffon	1910	Toys	G
Bulldog	1886	Nonsporting Dogs	B
Bullmastiff	1934	Working Dogs	AC
Bull Terrier	1885	Terriers	AC
Cairn Terrier	1913	Terriers	B
Cardigan Welsh Corgi	1935	Herding Dogs	AP, G
Chesapeake Bay Retriever	1878	Sporting Dogs	G
Chihuahua	1904	Toys	G
Chinese Crested	1991	Toys	AP, G
Chinese Shar-Pei	1991	Nonsporting Dogs	AP, G
Chow Chow	1903	Nonsporting Dogs	UC
Clumber Spaniel	1878	Sporting Dogs	G
Cocker Spaniel	1878	Sporting Dogs	B
Collie	1885	Herding Dogs	AP
Curly-Coated Retriever	1924	Sporting Dogs	AP
Dachshund	1885	Hounds	B
Dalmatian	1888	Nonsporting Dogs	G
Dandie Dinmont Terrier	1886	Terriers	UQ
Doberman Pinscher	1908	Working Dogs	H
English Cocker Spaniel	1946	Sporting Dogs	B, G
English Foxhound	1909	Hounds	B, G
English Setter	1878	Sporting Dogs	G
English Springer Spaniel	1910	Sporting Dogs	B, G
English Toy Spaniel	1886	Toys	AP, G
Field Spaniel	1894	Sporting Dogs	B
Finnish Spitz	1991	Nonsporting Dogs	AP, G

Calling the Dog 21

Flat-Coated Retriever	1915	Sporting Dogs	AP
French Bulldog	1898	Nonsporting Dogs	G, AC
German Shepherd Dog	1908	Herding Dogs	G
German Shorthaired Pointer	1930	Sporting Dogs	AP, G
German Wirehaired Pointer	1959	Sporting Dogs	AP, G
Giant Schnauzer	1930	Working Dogs	AP
Golden Retriever	1925	Sporting Dogs	AP
Gordon Setter	1878	Sporting Dogs	H
Great Dane	1887	Working Dogs	AP, G
Great Pyrenees	1933	Working Dogs	AP, G
Greyhound	1885	Hounds	UC
Harrier	1885	Hounds	B
Ibizan Hound	1978	Hounds	G
Irish Setter	1878	Sporting Dogs	G
Irish Terrier	1885	Terriers	G
Irish Water Spaniel	1878	Sporting Dogs	B, G
Irish Wolfhound	1897	Hounds	B, G
Italian Greyhound	1886	Toys	G
Japanese Chin	1888	Toys	G, UC
Keeshond	1930	Nonsporting Dogs	H
Kerry Blue Terrier	1922	Terriers	AP, G
Komondor	1937	Working Dogs	UC
Kuvasz	1931	Working Dogs	B
Labrador Retriever	1917	Sporting Dogs	G
Lakeland Terrier	1934	Terriers	G
Lhasa Apso	1935	Nonsporting Dogs	G, UC
Maltese	1888	Toys	G
Manchester Terrier	1886	Terriers	G
		Toys	
Mastiff	1885	Working Dogs	B

22 Names 43.1 (March 1995)

Miniature Bull Terrier	1991	Terriers	AP, AC
Miniature Pinscher	1925	Toys	AP
Miniature Schnauzer	1926	Terriers	AP
Newfoundland	1886	Working Dogs	G
Norfolk Terrier	1979	Terriers	G
Norwegian Elkhound	1913	Hounds	B, G
Norwich Terrier	1936	Terriers	G
Old English Sheepdog	1888	Herding Dogs	G
Otterhound	1910	Hounds	B
Papillon	1915	Toys	AP
Pekingese	1906	Toys	G
Pembroke Welsh Corgi	1934	Herding Dogs	AP, G
Petit Basset Griffon Vendéen	1990	Hounds	AP, G
Pharaoh Hound	1983	Hounds	UQ
Pointer	1878	Sporting Dogs	B
Pomeranian	1888	Toys	G
Poodle	1887	Toys	B
		Nonsporting Dogs	
Portuguese Water Dog	1983	Working Dogs	B, G
Pug	1885	Toys	UC
Puli	1936	Herding Dogs	UC
Rhodesian Ridgeback	1955	Hounds	AP, G
Rottweiler	1931	Working Dogs	G
Saint Bernard	1885	Working Dogs	G
Saluki	1929	Hounds	G
Samoyed	1906	Working Dogs	H
Schipperke	1904	Nonsporting Dogs	H
Scottish Deerhound	1886	Hounds	B, G
Scottish Terrier	1885	Terriers	G
Sealyham Terrier	1911	Terriers	G

Calling the Dog 23

Shetland Sheepdog	1911	Herding Dogs	G
Shiba Inu	1993	Nonsporting Dogs	UC
Shih Tzu	1969	Toys	AP
Siberian Husky	1930	Working Dogs	G, H
Silky Terrier	1959	Toys	AP
Skye Terrier	1887	Terriers	G
Smooth Fox Terrier	1885	Terriers	AP, B
Soft-Coated Wheaten Terrier	1973	Terriers	AP
Staffordshire Bull Terrier	1974	Terriers	G, AC
Standard Schnauzer	1904	Working Dogs	AP
Sussex Spaniel	1878	Sporting Dogs	G
Tibetan Spaniel	1983	Nonsporting Dogs	G
Tibetan Terrier	1973	Nonsporting Dogs	G
Vizsla	1960	Sporting Dogs	G
Weimaraner	1943	Sporting Dogs	G
Welsh Springer Spaniel	1914	Sporting Dogs	B, G
Welsh Terrier	1888	Terriers	G
West Highland White Terrier	1908	Terriers	AP, G
Whippet	1888	Hounds	B
Wire Fox Terrier	1885	Terriers	AP, B
Wirehaired Pointing Griffon	1887	Sporting Dogs	AP, B
Yorkshire Terrier	1885	Toys	G

Abbreviations for categories: AP, Appearance; B, Behavior; G, Geography; AC, Ancestry; H, Human; UQ, Unique; and UC, Uncertain.

Sources: *CDB*; *OED*; *W3*; *W10*; Robert (1967); *Schöffler-Weis* (1963); Shipley (1984, 109, 228, 339, 344, 356, 430); Onions (1966, 82, 191, 850); Ball (1993, 46); *Cassell's Dutch-English* (1967); Weil (1988, 11); Peterson (1980, 38); Beregi and Benis (1993, 6-7); Alvi (1993, 55); Holden (1992, 54).

Notes: The dates for Australian shepherd and shiba inu are the dates of AKC recognition of the breeds. The categorizations do not address the generic terms; these classifications appear in table 1.

24 Names 43.1 (March 1995)

Notes

I gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Harold E. Gulley, Lyn W. Bingham of the Komondor Club of America, and the Wisconsin taxpayers who provided the libraries that made this study possible.

1. For a very different assessment of the Maltese, but still a socially constrained one, see AKC (1992, 447).

2. Although Coren's book (1994) came more than a century too late for Eliot, his survey of dog trainers provides a result that is instructive here: the Saint Bernard was named as one of the twelve breeds least likely to succeed as watchdogs (135). Dorothea too is quite trusting and not particularly alert to impending difficulty; even in the passage under discussion, she believes that Sir James intends the dog as a gift for her sister, and her rejection of the puppy is more intellectual than personal. On the long-standing legend of the Saint Bernard, "a cliché already" in the mid-nineteenth century, see Kete (1994, 71-73).

3. Readers will note the catachrestic term *pure-bred* to refer to breeds clearly developed by human beings from other breeds or varieties of dogs. The AKC definition of *breed* appears in the text below. Purity is, in this case, relative.

4. For a recent AKC mission statement, see "AKC Updates" (1994, 10). On AKC policies and regulations, see AKC (1992, 7, 13-29; 1991; 1984; 1994; 1993).

5. Dates of first registration come from AKC (1992, 30-33). For the two breeds recognized by the AKC since *The Complete Dog Book* was published — the Australian shepherd and the shiba inu — I have used the alternate date of AKC recognition, 1993 in both cases (see Ball 1993 and Thornton 1993).

6. I classified *Saint Bernard* as a geographic name, since the available evidence suggests that the name arose by association with the hospice Grand Saint Bernard, an institution itself named for its founder (AKC 1992, 303-5; *W3*; Shipley 1984, 339).

7. Note that the name Dobermann lost its final *n* in its transition into American usage. The *OED* describes the dog under the entry "Dobermann," but *Webster* uses "Doberman," as does the AKC.

8. Some sources, including *The Complete Dog Book* (AKC 1992, 514), assert that the breed was named for the *dog* Kees, not its master. Also, Weil indicates that "a less popular account" claims that the keeshond was named for Cornelis de Witt, a seventeenth-century political leader (1988, 11).

9. Thurston, however, states that "no archaeological evidence linking modern dogs to ancient ones has been uncovered to date, so all we know for sure is that today's sighthounds are descendants of progenitors imported from the Middle East in the last century" (1993, 73).

10. I have also omitted the quintessential generic, *dog*.

11. Of course, these geographic elements place nine of the eleven spaniels in the Geography category even though the generic is not considered.

12. The AKC accepted the registry volumes of the National American Kennel Club as the basis of its own registry (*CDB* 26). Thus some of the registry dates predate the AKC's 1884 founding.

13. The *OED* dates reflect the same trend, in a less pronounced fashion: before 1800, 40%; 1800-1860, 65%; 1861-1900, 69%; 1900-1940, 48%; and 1940 to the present, 50%.

14. With the inclusion of the generic terms, the Geography category still has the largest proportion (63%), followed by Behavior (62%) and Appearance (26%).

15. I constructed another table, similar to table 2, which included the classifications of the generic terms. As expected, the Behavior category was the one most affected. That column in the alternate table read as follows: Sporting Dogs, 19 (79.2%); Hounds, 18 (81.8%); Working Dogs, 7 (35%); Terriers, 25 (96.2%); Toys, 7 (38.9%); Nonsporting Dogs, 4 (28.6%); Herding Dogs, 6 (42.9%); Total Group, 84 (61.8%). Two changes occurred in the Appearance column: Toys, 8 (44.4%); Total Group, 36 (26.5%). Two changes also occurred under Geography: Sporting Dogs, 18 (75%); Total Group, 85 (62.5%).

16. The official AKC name Japanese spaniel was changed to Japanese chin in 1977 (*CDB* 31). The older term does appear in *Webster's Third* and the *OED* (dated to 1880 in the latter).

17. In the *OED* the term *boxer* is dated 1934, thirty years after AKC registration; *silky terrier* and *Cardigan Welsh corgi* do not appear.

18. The Kennel Club of Great Britain registers this breed as the Alsatian. The *OED* explains: "The name *Alsation* was adopted in order to avoid the associations of *German*. The dog does not belong to Alsace." In 1922, Robert Leighton, in *The Complete Book of the Dog*, wrote of "the dogs lately introduced into Great Britain as the Alsatian Wolfdog and into the United States as the German sheepdog" (quoted in *OED* s.v.).

References

- "AKC Updates: From the Board, Highlights from the April 12, 1994, Board Meeting." 1994. *Pure-Bred Dogs/American Kennel Gazette* 111, No. 5: 10.
- Alvi, Dana. 1993. "Guardian of the Horses." *Pure-Bred Dogs/American Kennel Gazette* 110, No. 11: 55.

26 Names 43.1 (March 1995)

- American Kennel Club. 1984. *The Formation of Dog Clubs*. Rev. ed. New York: American Kennel Club.
- _____. 1991. *Dogs: General Information*. New York: American Kennel Club.
- _____. 1992. *The Complete Dog Book*. 18th ed. New York: Howell Book House-Macmillan.
- _____. 1993. *Rules Applying to Registration and Discipline*. New York: American Kennel Club.
- _____. 1994. *Rules Applying to Dog Shows*. New York: American Kennel Club.
- Ball, Sherry. 1993. "Judging the Australian Shepherd." *Pure-Bred Dogs/American Kennel Gazette* 110, No. 1: 46-50.
- Beregi, Oscar, and Leslie Benis. 1993. *Komondors*. Neptune City, N.J.: T.F.H.
- Berners, Dame Juliana. 1486. *The Boke of Saint Albans*. Facsimile rpt., Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1969.
- Caius, Iohannes. 1576. *Of Englishe Dogges*. Trans. Abraham Fleming. Facsimile rpt., Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1969.
- Cassell's Dutch-English, English-Dutch Dictionary*. 1967. New York: Funk and Wagnalls.
- Chichester, H. Manners. 1908. "Gordon, Alexander, fourth Duke of Gordon." *Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee. New York: Macmillan.
- Coren, Stanley. 1994. *The Intelligence of Dogs: Canine Consciousness and Capabilities*. New York: Free Press.
- Eliot, George. 1872. *Middlemarch: A Study of Provincial Life*. New York: New American Library, 1964.
- Fox, Michael W., ed. 1993. "Dogs." *Encyclopaedia Britannica: Macropaedia*.
- Gavrielle-Gold, Joel. 1993. "Dogs in a Psychologist's Office." *Pure-Bred Dogs/American Kennel Gazette* 110, No. 7: 76-81.
- "Gods and Gladiators." 1993. *The Incredible Story of Dogs*. Dir. Pratap Rughani and Michael Waldman. Videocassette. A&E/BBC. AAE-11202.

- Hanks, Patrick, and Flavia Hodges. 1990. *A Dictionary of First Names*. Oxford: Oxford UP.
- Holden, Jacey. 1992. "Konnichiwa Shiba Inu!" *Pure-Bred Dogs/American Kennel Gazette* 109, No. 6: 54-57.
- Johnson, Samuel. 1755. *A Dictionary of the English Language*. New York: AMS Press, 1967.
- Kete, Kathleen. 1994. *The Beast in the Boudoir: Petkeeping in Nineteenth-Century Paris*. Berkeley: U of California P.
- Leach, Maria. 1961. *God Had a Dog: Folklore of the Dog*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers UP.
- "Matters of Life and Death." 1993. *The Incredible Story of Dogs*. Dir. Bradley Adams, Geoff Deehan, and Franc Roddam. Video-cassette. A&E/BBC. AAE-11202.
- Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*. 1993. 10th ed. Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster.
- Mestel, Rosie. 1994. "Ascent of the Dog." *Discover: The World of Science* 15, No. 10: 90-98.
- Mish, Frederick C. 1988. Preface to *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*. Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster.
- Nichols, Anna Katherine. 1986. *The World of Doberman Pinschers*. Neptune City, N.J.: T.F.H.
- Olsen, Stanley J. 1985. *Origins of the Domestic Dog: The Fossil Record*. Tucson: U of Arizona P.
- Onions, C. T., ed. 1966. *The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- The Oxford English Dictionary*. 1989. 2d ed. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Peterson, Clementine. 1980. *The Complete Keeshond*. New York: Howell Book House.
- Robert, Paul. 1967. *Dictionnaire alphabétique et analogique de la langue française*. Paris: Société du Nouveau Littré.
- The Schöffler-Weis Comprehensive German and English Dictionary*. 1963. New York: David McKay.
- Scott, Sir Walter. 1815. *Guy Mannering; or, The Astrologer*. New York: Century, 1902.

28 Names 43.1 (March 1995)

Shipley, Joseph T. 1984. *The Origins of English Words: A Discursive Dictionary of Indo-European Roots*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP.

Tatalovich, Raymond. Forthcoming. *Nativism Reborn?: The Official English Language Movement and the American States*. Lexington: UP of Kentucky.

Thornton, Frances. 1993. "Judging the Shiba Inu." *Pure-Bred Dogs/American Kennel Gazette* 110, No. 6: 40-43.

Thurston, Mary E. 1993. "The Dogs of Ancient Egypt." *Pure-Bred Dogs/American Kennel Gazette* 110, No. 8: 70-75.

Webster's New International Dictionary. 1961. 3d ed. Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, 1993.

Weil, Martin. 1988. *Keeshond*. Neptune City, N.J.: T.F.H.