

Amatangzig's Story

Mr. Arthur Byron
as it appeared in *Basenjis: The Barkless Dog* by Veronica Tudor-Williams

During 1937-38 my wife and I were motoring in the west corner of the South Sudan, and hearing we were in the 'country of the barkless dogs,' we were on the look-out for them. One day we saw a native on the side of the road with two little puppies, so we stopped, and by a lengthy process explained that we wanted one. We agreed upon the price, but I gathered that I could have bought two or three wives for far less, and that he would much rather I had a wife than one of his dogs. He seemed an ordinary Azande, and certainly was no local chief.

One puppy was black and white, and one red and white. We chose the red and white, which we called Amatangzig, so we just called her by the last syllable. What it meant I never discovered, for when I asked another native, he burst into a slightly bawdy laugh, so I did not pursue the question further.

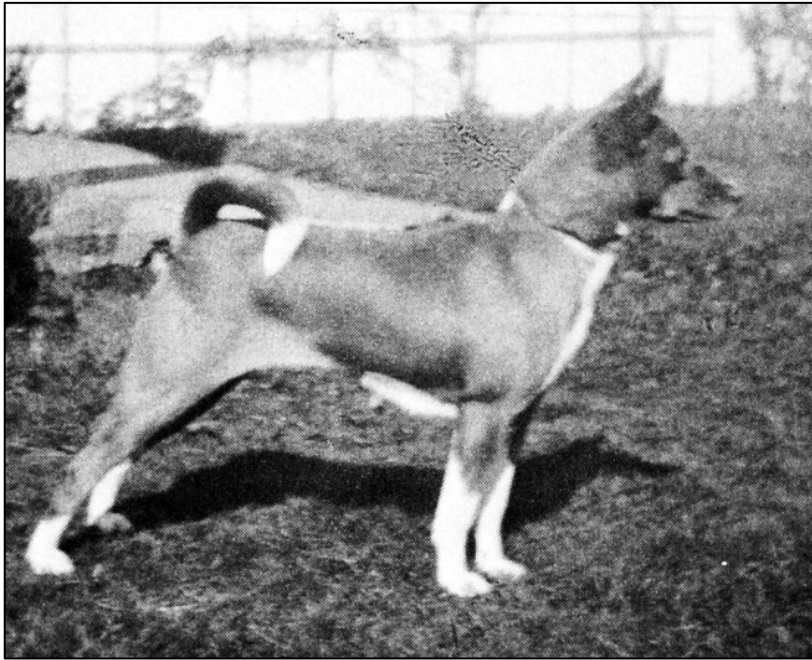
Zig was bound up in an open wicker basket, in which she could move, but not turn round. This was rather important as she did not seem to like white people, though any native could handle her. We hoped to ingratiate ourselves by offering her food, but she kept on making fierce noises. After a couple of days, she would eat the food we gave her and within a week she appeared to be fond of us. She then became colour conscious; in fact the situation was reversed; white people were acceptable while natives received angry rebuffs. She became an outrageous snob,

a habit she kept up in England, servants being tolerated but never really accepted. From the start Zig showed signs of being a very clean dog. She was fussy and would only use grass, and later when starting to cross the Sahara I had visions of Zig bursting her-self, but to our amazement she resigned herself to sand. When we stopped at the end of a day's trek across the desert, Zig would jump out of the Ford and rush away to the horizon. This frightening gesture would be repeated two or three times until exhausted she would jump on to a bed and curl up for the night.



Mrs. Byron and Zig

Upon our return to civilization Zig quickly became housetrained and her delightful and unusual ways, especially her frequent yodel, soon made her a dearly loved pet.



Concerning Basenjis in general, they are found in the South West corner of the Sudan, below the Dinka country, better known as the Bahr-el-Ghazel, a swampy district of Nile tributaries. They seem to live in a narrow belt west of Meridi, in the area occupied by the Zande tribe, who use them to hunt game. They take them in packs through the thick undergrowth, the men of the village going out with spears and nets, not unlike the gladiators of Rome, while the dogs chivvy the animals out into prepared paths and traps, where the men net and spear them. The Basenjis, being silent, have bells attached to them so that the hunters know where they are. These simple bells, like a small cowbell, are fixed to the leaders of a pack, not round the neck, as one would suppose, because it was found that the thick undergrowth

tore them off. They are fixed between the hind-legs, which gives the old dogs a bow-legged appearance rather like a retired jockey.

Valuable and priceless to the natives, the dogs, as I said before, are worth more than a wife. The small short-backed specimens are greatly prized and, incredible as it sounds, the natives will often run a dog up and down for its movement to be admired.

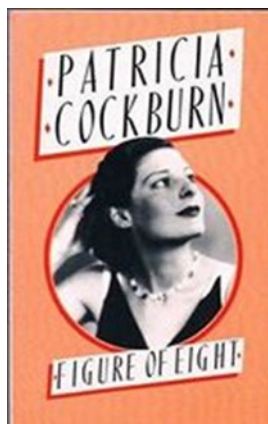
Again from *Basenjis: The Barkless Dog's* Veronica Tudor-Williams writes of Zig:

From the first time I saw Zig I admired her, feeling she possessed just the qualities we required in Basenjis – small size, perfect conformation, and extreme daintiness, and in 1941, when Mr. Byron went on active service, she became my property. She was very small, about 14 ½ inches at the shoulder, weighting about 15 pounds, exceptionally red in colour, with the finest legs, feet, and movement I have ever seen in a Basenji. Perfectly sound, with a very short back and beautiful front and shoulder. Her faults were that her eye was rather round and light, and her tail, though very well placed, was insufficiently curled. Her best-known descendants are Juba, Zandia, Zephyr, Zeppo (USA), Am. Ch. Zinnia (USA), Eng. Ch. Fern, Eng. Ch. Brown Trout, all “of the Congo” (photo right.)



More Background by Glen Dymock

Mrs. Byron was a published author and even mentioned Zig in her autobiography, "Figure of Eight" (1985), writing under the name of Patricia Cockburn. This is on the Goodreads website: "Born into a landed and banking family of Anglo-Irish Ascendancy people, Patricia Cockburn's main love was reckless riding to hounds across the Galway fields. She was presented at Court in 1931 and did the debutante's London Season. She married a wealthy young man, and they went off on wide and then very unusual travels, in which they visited places



which would now either be totally spoiled by development or tourism (Tahiti) or ruined by decolonialization, war and banditry (West, East and Central Africa). Not long after returning from this long trip, her son (left in Ireland) died and eventually she remarried, to Claud Cockburn, often then and since termed a Soviet agent, whose anti-fascism she shared, though her political views are not explored deeply in this book. After

WW2, the family lived in Ireland and endured several upsets, including Cockburn being named 84th worst Communist in the world by Senator McCarthy; two sons contracted polio, while Cockburn senior suffered from tuberculosis

Patricia Byron pictured in 1938 with the South Sudanese import, Amatangazig, shortly after returning to the UK from an extensive tour of Central Africa. This was just a year after Olivia Burn's "Blean" imports from the Belgian Congo had made their debut at Crufts. Mrs. Byron's husband Arthur had the presence of mind to gift Amatangazig to



Veronica Tudor-Williams ("of the Congo") in 1941, thus providing a hugely valuable outcross bloodline which doubtless secured the breed's survival in the UK during the war years and for posterity.

Please note Amatangazig's small size, tiny ears, fine bone and lightly-built frame – breed hallmarks highly prized by all four pre-war breed pioneers named above.



Photo., J. E. Wilday, Liphook.

ZEPP0 and ZEPHYR OF THE CONGO
(out of Amatangazig of the Congo)

Two of Zig's offspring, Zeppo and Zephyr of the Congo (born 1943). Please note that their muzzles are not overly long.

End of Dymock notes.

Zig's Influence continued

Bred to Kinga of the Congo (who was down from the Blean imports) in 1943, Zig produced Am. Ch. Zinnia of the Congo, CD. Zinnia was exported to the U.S. where she won all those titles with the Phemisters in Massachusetts. Zinnia is the dam of the first Basenji champion in the world: Ch. Phemister's Melengo who finished her title before her dam.

Zig's behind those tris: In a 1942 litter between Kinga and Zig there was a female pup named Juba. Juba had a litter by Kinga in 1945 and they produced English Champions Brown Trout of the Congo and Fern of the Congo. Continuing the story from *Basenjjs: The Barkless Dog* by Veronica Tudor-Williams:

The year 1947 seems to have been an exceptionally important one for Basenjjs: the first English champions (Fern and Brown Trout) were made in February 1947, than in March came the sale of four puppies to HM King Farouk, and April 1947 saw the first birth of the first black, tan and white Basenjjs in the western world.

Ch. Fern (Zig's granddaughter) came in season at an unusual time of the year, February, just when I had the undignified complaint of measles. I was asked whether Fern should be removed from her littler brother, Brown Trout, but feeling as though I would die at any moment I replied, "Oh! Don't bother, it's probably a false heat and nothing will happen; anyhow Leo Wilson (who gave trout and Fern their first certificates) suggested breeding them together to help establish type." They stayed together, but only mated once when Fern's season had appeared to be over.

We forgot about this...Then Fern drew attention to herself by looking like a birch in whelp. On 17 April, a

black, tan and white puppy was born, then a red one, then another black, tan and white, all dogs. I called my family and we gazed at the puppies with surprise and delight. There was no mistaking that they were genuinely black with tan eyebrows and edges and white markings. Their advent was more or less an accident. It was known that Amatangazig had a tricolour brother, who was not for sale, as in Africa the blacks are looked upon as bringers of good luck and seldom parted with.

Editor's Note: VTW is trying to distinguish these tricolors from the saddle marked tris that were already being produced. See Mary McWain's advertisement below to see the two types of markings.



One puppy became Ch. Black Magic of the Congo (left above). Another Black Idol of the Congo (right above), exported to Miss Mary McWain, New York, was the first tricolour Basenji in the United States; although here tragedy intervened and Idol died of leptospirosis when within two points of her American championship.

WINNING "CONGO" BASENJS

Owned by **Miss Veronica Tudor-Williams**, Little Orchard, Hillbrow, Liss, Hants. Phone : Liss 253

Through the "Congo" Basenjis are world famous as winners, good health and perfect character is the first consideration of their owner, and no dog goes in the ring or is used for breeding which does not fulfil these high ideals.

The kennel is small, but has had a wonderful year, starting at Edinburgh in February 1948 when Brown Trout and Fern of the Congo became the first English Basenji champions in the world. By special request these two were temporarily retired, so at the Basenji Club show in July 1948, a new star appeared in Black Magic of the Congo, the only black and tan and white Basenji dog in Europe. He won the dog C.C. and best of breed, and followed this success with the Irish Green Star and best of breed at Monkstown. At Bournemouth in August 1948 he took another C.C. and



Photo by [Wilmot]
Ch. BLACK MAGIC and BLACK MYTH OF THE CONGO,
the only black, tan and white Basenjis in England.

again best of breed. In September he won his third C.C. at Wembley and the title of champion.

The bitch puppy, Frolic of the Congo, has swept through her classes, with one exception, winning best puppy every time shown, and in open bitch has gained two reserve C.C.s when only seven months old. Every judge under whom she has been exhibited has referred to her as a certain champion. Her puppy kennel-mate, Lotus Bud of the Congo, has followed close on her heels, taking seconds to Frolic's firsts.

As usual "Congo" sales have given every satisfaction, both at home and abroad, during 1948. Some exceptionally lovely puppies bred from champions and C.C. winners will be for sale in the New Year, including a unique litter from Ch. Black Magic and Black Myth of the Congo.

PHYLLIS ROBSGN.

1952
HAKU KENNELS, reg.

BATAVIA, N. Y. Miss Mary M. McWain, owner Phone, BATAVIA 1663

At Stud
CH. HAKU BLACK ICICLE
Best of Breed, Westminster, 1952
son of Eng. and Am. Ch. Black Ace of the Congo

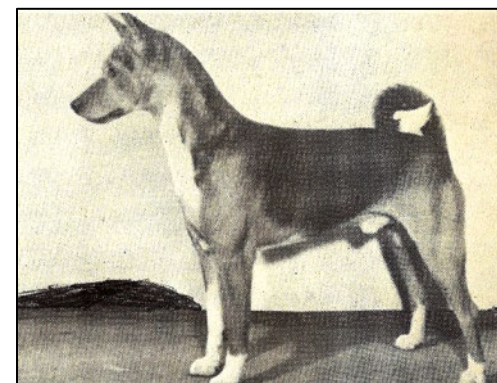
At Stud
**ENGLISH and AMERICAN CHAMPION
BLACK ACE OF THE CONGO**

We specialize in black, tan, and white Basenjis
Orders being accepted for December and January puppies

13" BEAGLES **IRISH WOLFHOUNDS**

Black was born in 1948 sired by Eng. Ch. Black Magic of the Congo and out of Black Myth of the Congo.

Here is another photo of Am. Ch. Haku Black Icicle to show the markings a bit more clearly.



Veronica Tudor-Williams

wrote about question of describing tri-colors and other colors in the Basenji

Black, Tan and White Basenjjs

"The Basenji" October 1970

About seven years ago, two rather unusually marked Basenji puppies were born. At first they were thought to be black and white, but at about 12 weeks of age they developed tan behind the ears, on the seat and on the back of the legs, so they were registered as black, tan and white. Their parents were big winners, so there was no doubt as to their purity. Then in various litters a few others cropped up, and they were accepted as a variation of black, tan and white, until that time black, tan and white Basenjjs had tan cheeks and melon pips as well.

Then little rumours started that these were not pure Basenjjs, that they are mismarks, that they should be banned, or that the standard should be altered to include a fourth colour. In fact, the whole thing was blown up quite out of proportion to the problem and yet no one seemed to know how or why it started.

After hearing such statements, I thought that, for my interest and amusement, I would list all the reasons why black, tan and whites, without melon pips, should be accepted or banned, I think the list might interest and amuse others. Colours were "Chestnut with white points and tail tip, also black and white, and black, tan and white, all with white feet, chest and tail tip. White legs, white collar and white blaze optional."

At no time has the word "tri-colour" ever been mentioned in the English Standard, so as a legally-minded member of the Basenji Club said, "The suggestion of

introducing a fourth color, black, tan and white, does not make sense, and is pure nonsense as it is already there."

Until 1947 no one had ever seen a black, tan and white in England or the United States, and then through in-breeding to the native import, Amatangazig of the Congo, two black, tan and whites were born. These had tan cheeks and the melon pips, and everyone was very excited about them, one becoming Ch. Black Magic of the Congo. In 1959 another import came from the Sudan, Fula of the Congo, and a few years later, through line-breeding on her, black, tan and whites without melon pips, were produced. Now if this situation had been reversed, and Amatangazig had produced black, tan and white stock without melon pips, they would have been accepted without question as the black, tan and white mentioned in the standard. So why should the situation be so different twenty years later?

There are suggestions that black, tan and whites without melon pips can become very sabled on the neck and sides; taken care of in the standard, "creams, sable and off colours to be heavily penalized." In my opinion judges should adhere to this more strictly when judging the three colours.

Regarding creams and other dilute genes, these are semi-albinos, with pink noses and eye rims, and met great disapproval as creams dilute coat colour and pigmentation.

Black, tan and white intensifies colour and pigmentation and does not dilute it.

In my opinion, years of thought and discussion should be undertaken before any point or colour is banned in known purebred stock. Take the case of Ch. Binza of Laughing Brook, better known as Tiger – the tiger-striped import from the Southern Sudan. Tiger-striped Basenjis have been seen by experts in the Southern Sudan and the Belgian Congo and are possibly the purest colour there is in Basenjis. Yet because one Basenji club disapproved, and stated they would never accept the colour, Tiger joined his owner in South Rhodesia, and the colour, a dominant, was lost to England and the United States.

Black, tan and white without melon pips is mentioned as having been owned in the Sudan 53 years ago by a member of the Sudan Defense Force. If this colour had been banned when it first appeared in English stock, this would have meant the loss of a great stud dog. Ch. Fulafuture of the Congo sired the first of this colour in his first year at stud. Actually, he only sired three black, tan and whites without melon pips in his hundreds of pups. He is the sire of twenty-six champions, the grandsire of well over a hundred, and winner of the Stud Dog Cup four years in succession. But if black, tan and whites without melon pips had been banned six years ago, he would have been retired from stud, and the greatest influence for good would have been lost to us. Cases like this can lead to whispering campaigns, which are about the most unpleasant and damaging situations which can occur in a breed.

This brings in a most important point. Dogs of this colouring should NEVER be incorrectly registered as black and white, but as their true colouring: black, tan and white.

Finally, is it right to ban a colour which is known in the Southern Sudan, the home of the purest Basenjis, and as the Basenji Clubs of the world have been formed with the idea of retaining true native type. It would be rather ludicrous to ban a colour found in Africa.

SIN
Basenjis
•
FORD COTTAGE
TIMBERSCOMBE
SOMERSET



Photo (Coke)
VIXEN OF SIN
at 6 Weeks.

At Stud—
FAIRY
PUCK
of **SIN**
FEE 8 GUINEAS.
Best of Breed and
two 1sts at Paignton
Ch. Show,
1956, 3rd in Puppy
Stakes, 45 in class,
at 6 months.



CH. SUNSPOT and FROTH OF SIN.

**PUPPIES SOME-
TIMES FOR SALE**
Blacks, Reds and
Creams.



For those unsure about dilutes: The advertisement above shows a red and white adult and a cream adult together. This was an English kennel. The photo on the right shows a cream and a red and white puppy born at the Cambria Kennels in the late 1960s. Cambria was not the only kennel who experienced dilute colors in the early years.

Most breeders tried to breed away from any dilute colors. There were also dilute tri-color Basenjis at that time.