



descend from the same ancient central European dogs. This view is supported by archaeological evidence. The early history of the Iceland Dog (Chien d'Islande) is worthy of consideration. Some historians believe they also may have contributed to Pom ancestry in Britain. There is some historical evidence to support this opinion.

1400s - Before the advent of Natural History books, which became very much in vogue during the 1700's (Linnaeus, Buffon, Cuivier, etc), there had been a few efforts at accounting for dog breeds, Dame Juliana Berners' 15th century list included Teroures, Mengrells, Myddyng Dogges and Pryckeryd Currys. It is known that Myddyng (Dunghill) dogs had traded hands in Anglo-Saxon and Viking age England being valued at 1/30th of the value of a Greyhound (reference Regia Anglorum). The etymology of myddyng sources to Scandinavian countries, meaning muck and dung. There would have been two middens – one for dung and for general waste (modern archaeologists often refer to their interest in the latter type of midden). This may suggest an early Spitz type dog in England as an old German nickname for Spitz dogs was apparently 'mistbeller' or dung-hill barker.

left - Pip posing as a 'Dung-hill barker'

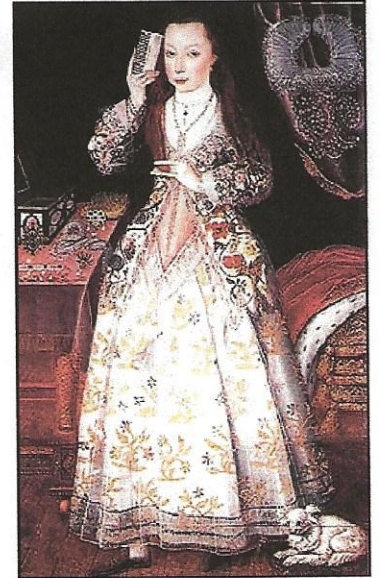
very fashionable in Tudor England. However, it may come as a surprise that Shakespeare's prick-eared cur was in fact a very small dog less than 12 inches in height.

right - Shock dog or 'shough dog' of the Icelandic type from the Tudor era

In 1577 William Harrison contributed 'Of our English dogs and Their Qualities' to the Holinshed Chronicles he describes a toy dog called a whappet 'a prick eared cur' (called a 'wappe' by Dr Caius in 1576) and also wrote 'Besides these also we have sholts, or curs, daily brought out of Iseland, and much made of among us because of their sauciness and quarrelling. Moreover, they bite very sore, and love candles exceedingly, as do the men and women of their country; but may I say no more of them, because they are not bred with us'. It was the quarrelsome, nippy aspect of the Iceland dog's character that Pistol alluded to in Henry V. Comparison to a Spitz was also an insult in Germany.

It was the view of Knight (1867) and many others that Shakespeare's 'cur of Iceland' is 'unquestionably the cur daily brought out of Iseland of Harrison. Tudor lapdogs are often all called 'shock dogs' from the Icelandic word 'shough' showing the influence of Iceland dogs on terminology. The question remains if from one of the several dog breeds known to exist in Iceland downsized specimens were developed to compete with the ever-popular, docile Maltese/Bolognese type comforter dog or whether they were merely attractive runts. Iceland was a poor country and dog breeding would have provided some additional income. They also exported falcons as early as the 1200s.

Note - Norwegians settled in Iceland about 874AD – there were no indigenous dogs so all dogs were imported. Eventually Iceland was controlled by a Danish Norwegian monarchy, in 1416 the Danish king was Erich der Pommer, the son of Duke Vartislav of Pomerania.



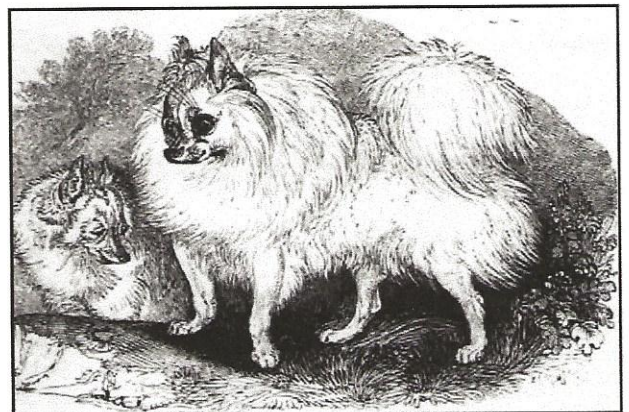
Did trading between Iceland and Pomerania include dogs?

1600s – Sir Thomas Browne wrote an account of Iceland and trading links in January 1663 'Beside shocks and little hairy dogs, they bring another sort over, headed like a fox, which they say are bred betwixt dogs and foxes; these are desired by the shepherds of this country'. This is probably the beginning of the term 'fox-dog' which eventually came to mean a Pomeranian. Undoubtedly this was a smart piece of salesmanship by the Icelanders – the sagaciousness of a fox combined with canine attributes. Shock dogs were losing popularity at this time in favour of small Spaniels so it was a wise move to popularise another one of their dog breeds. (It is apparently genetically impossible to interbreed a fox and a dog but many educated people including Darwin considered the possibility at one time. As late as the 1870s in America some felt that the white Pom or Spitz dog had fox ancestry – referring to the winter coat of the arctic fox).

below right - Chien d'Islande as featured in Prichard's book of 1843



left - Pomeranian Dog - early 1800's book on Quadrupeds - Linn Sift



above

Linnaeus coined the term Canis Pomeranus in his natural history book Systema Naturae. By the third quarter 18th century this type of dog was usually called 'the Pomeranian Dog' in Britain. Edwards noted it was also called 'the Kees' (1800). By about 1840 the name 'Spitz dog' is sometimes used. The name Fox Dog and later on in the 1800s Pomeranian Fox Dog were also alternative names.

Before the Unification of Germany in 1871 the area comprised of a number of independent states. Pommern or Pomerania, as it was called in Britain, was partially controlled by Prussia. Most regions favoured specific dogs and had regional variations of Spitz dogs. Popular breeds of Pommern included the Pommersche Huetehund and the Pommern Spitz or Pommer. Pommern Spitz translates as Pomeranian Spitz. This explains why the names 'Pomeranian' and 'Spitz' are interchangeable and both names could be used.

George III's wife Queen Charlotte was from Mecklenburg -Strelitz situated to the west of Pommern. Mrs Tietjin's book records a letter Charlotte wrote to Lord Harcourt in 1767 to accompany a gift to him of two 'Pommeranians' called Mercury and Phebe Imported directly from Pomerania. Lord Harcourt had gone to Mecklenburg in 1761 as the King's special ambassador to negotiate the marriage between George and the 17 year old Charlotte and then to accompany her to England.

There is no description of Mercury and Phebe other than they were 'beautiful for that Species'. As several types can be seen in artwork for this period, ranging from small to large, it cannot be assumed they resembled the classic Gainsborough type or even that they were white.