WHAT'S IN A NAME? THE NOMENCLATURE OF THE THYLACINE

Written by Chris Lee[1].

[1] Priestley College, Loushers Ln, Warrington WA4 6RD, United Kingdom; BA and MA from the University of Leeds

All translations are my own. All sources not marked "retrieved" are quoted from this website's "The Early European Thylacine Literature: 1642-1850".

"What's in a name?" Juliet famously opined in Romeo and Juliet. In the case of the Thylacine this is a vexed question indeed. Robert Mudie brilliantly summed this up in 1829 when he stated "They have vulgarly been called bears, wolves, hyænas, tigers, and even devils, according to the fancy of those by whom they have been seen. There is much the same confusion in the printed accounts of this genus as in other genera of New Holland; and it is impossible to say whether different writers may or may not allude to the same animal when they use different names, or to different animals when they use the same one[1]." This same confusion extended to the taxonomy of the animal which took a considerable time to be settled.

When we review the early literature, it is immediately clear that there was intense confusion over the animal, it's physical characteristics and behaviour; at least in the early days of European exposure to the Thylacine. It is clear that scholars in Europe were unsure of the exact characteristics of the animal and indeed which animal it was they were actually describing. For example, in 1831 J E Grant wrote in relation to a skin he had received: "I have the pleasure to send for the inspection of the Asiatic Society, the stuffed skin of an animal from Van Diemen's Land. It is called by the settlers the Van Diemen's Land *Tiger*, and proves very destructive to sheep. Whether it be synonimous [sic] with the creature called the Van Diemen's Land Hyena or not, I will not take it upon me to say"[2]. Evidently those present in Tasmania began to resent these confused reports and statements about the Thylacine. One such was Ronald Gunn, a man who arrived in Tasmania in 1830 and had first hand personal experience of the animal; and who's own credentials as a naturalist, whilst not of a formal nature, were strongly reinforced by his own later fellowship in the Linnean Society of London (1850) and his position as Secretary of the Horticultural Society in

[1] Mudie, R. (1829). The picture of Australia: exhibiting New Holland, Van Diemen's Land and all the settlements from the first at Sydney to the last at Swan River. London: Whittaker, Treacher. 370 pp.
[2] Grant, J. E. (1831). Notice of the Van Diemen's Land tiger. Gleanings in Science 3(30): 175-177. Located at: https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/page/51532039#page/219/mode/1up retrieved 18/10/21

Hobart[3], became so exasperated by claims in various publications that Thylacines fished and ate seafood that he felt compelled to challenge and refute the more outlandish statements then current in Europe. Responding to one spurious claim he wrote "As to their feeding on fish, I hardly know how it could have been ascertained… Deductions are frequently too hastily drawn by naturalists (or persons professing to be such) from isolated facts. That *Thylacinus* may often be seen on the sea-coast, as also every other species of our quadrupeds, is quite probable, and may once or twice have been seen eating a dead fish thrown up by the sea; but as to its *fishing*, it is out of the question[4]."

It is clear that bar a small number of Europeans who had actually spent time in Tasmania, among whom were very few, if any, actual naturalists, those European scientists grappling with the nomenclature of the newly reported animal were working very much with unreliable and second-hand information. This inevitably led to confusion in how the Thylacine was handled taxonomically.

What accounts for this confusion

The multiple names and general confusion which surround the nomenclature of the Thylacine can be attributed to a number of factors. Perhaps most profound amongst these was the fact that Europeans were now trying to describe and categorise animals which were alien to them, in a far-flung location, well away from European centres of learning and without many vital tools such as effective photography or fast communications. British explorers and naval expeditions first visited Tasmania in the late eighteenth century and no permanent settlement was made until 1803, which was a penal colony. The majority of the early settlers were convicts deported to the island by the British authorities. The Van Diemen's Land Company was not chartered until 1825 and did not begin commercial operations until the following year. Hence in the period during which the taxonomy was being developed and debated during the 1820s there was no significant scientific establishment on Tasmania and much of the debate was based upon reports emanating from the island and then discussed in European and sometimes British Indian (for example John Henderson in Calcutta[5]) scholarly circles. We have already touched upon the early confusion as to the characteristics of the animal. As we shall see European settlers did not even settle on

[3] https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/gunn-ronald-campbell-2134 retrieved 21st September 2021

[4] Gunn, Ronald Campbell. (1838). Notices accompanying a collection of quadrupeds and fish from Van Diemen's Land. By Ronald Gunn, Esq., addressed to Sir W. J. Hooker, and by him transmitted to the British Museum. With Notes and Descriptions of the new species. By J. E. Gray, F. R. S., &c. Annals and Magazine of Natural History: Zoology, Botany and Geology 1: 101-111.

[5] Henderson, John. (1832). Observations on the Colonies of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land. Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press. [pp. 141f-143f]

a single agreed name. Therefore, confusion among those trying to scientifically classify the Thylacine in Europe is hardly surprising.

A second significant obstacle to reaching a clear and agreed taxonomy was the lexicon available for scholars to describe the animal. Europeans settling in Tasmania relied on Old World terminology when describing and naming native fauna. Hence the Thylacine was viewed through a European or Old World prism and attached names which were in accepted use for Old World animals which could be in some way show a physical similarity to the animal. So, Europeans tended to deploy terminology such as dog or hyaena to describe the Thylacine. This was doubly problematic for the taxonomists, since whilst the lay population could coin new terms or perhaps adopt terms from indigenous peoples the methods used in taxonomy have always been to use Latin, or in early days, Greek words or Latinise certain terms such as the names of 'discoverers' of new animals, or in honour of someone important to the author. For example, *Thylacinus macknessi*, an extinct species known from the fossil record, is named after well-known Australian author Brian Mackness. Such words were, by now ancient, and reflected the terminology available to people in the Classical World.

Thus those scholars attempting to author taxonomies for Australasian fauna had only a narrow and limited basis on which to build an agreed binomial which tended to restrict those naming the animal to certain basic aspects, predominantly: physical characteristics rendered in ancient terminology, comparisons to ancient animal names for Old World animals or the name of a scholar Latinised to ascribe possession as a means of setting out their importance in the 'discovery', early description or other key role in the development of understanding of the animal. Thus, the Thylacine, for example, had to make do with a scientific name which was derived not from the animal itself but the tools and information available to the scholars of the day, using ancient Greek and Latin terminology to describe an animal they had little if any direct experience of.

Scientists and taxonomic nomenclature

Scientists today have a strong, agreed system through which to describe and categorise animals. Binomial (or binominal) nomenclature, the use of two names is the building block of this system, as evinced by the name. The first name is the genus and the second the species. This system is now extremely well-established, having adopted fully-accepted international rules for determining and authoring binomials in 1905. Sadly, this was long after the European colonisation of Tasmania in 1803 and also a long time after the first suggestions of a taxonomic system by Carl Linnaeus in 1735. There was thus a long interval in which scholars suggested taxonomies for the Thylacine but lacked a centralised and agreed system to reach a

definitive binomial. This leads to a profusion of suggested names and a lengthy period in which the now accepted classification of *Thylacinus cynocephalus* was not universally agreed upon. Throughout this period scholars following Linnaeus used Latinate terminology and binomials to attempt to produce a scientific name for the animal but without coordination, agreement or any common approach, leading to a profusion of suggested names. The currently accepted *Thylacinus cynocephalus* was still not in universal usage until decades after it was first set out.

Early taxonomies and problems with these

The first attempts at authoring a taxonomy for the Thylacine were attempted shortly after Europeans settled Tasmania and began to gain first-hand experience of the animal. In 1808 George Prideaux Harris, a surveyor who had been working in Tasmania since 1803, published his classification in the Transactions of the Linnean Society in London[6]. He suggested the taxonomy *Didelphis cynocephala*. *Didelphis* was an existing genus which contained the American marsupial opossums, *cynocephala* means 'dog-headed/head of a dog' in its original Greek form. This attempt suffered from the issue of placing the Thylacine in the genus *Didelphis*, which it was clearly not a member of, that genus being reserved for American marsupial opossums which are entirely distinct from the Thylacine. This taxonomy led to the erroneous and faintly ridiculous tendency of some early writers to talk about the animal as a "dog-headed opossum". For example, George Long in 1839 referred to the "The *Thylacinus cynocephalus*, or large Dog-faced Opossum"[7] or in the Visitor: Or Monthly Instructor which in 1839 published an entire chapter entitled "The Dog Headed Opossum"[8]. This name was used in several early works, despite the fact that the animal clearly was not an opossum and shared minimal physical similarities apart from being a marsupial and subsisting on a diet of at least some meat. This may have been a result of scholars in Europe uncritically accepting Harris' work without any serious investigation or it may have been a factor of the distances and communication difficulties which dogged early efforts to accurately name the animal. European scientists had no chance to examine a live or dead specimen and none of them had yet visited the island to perform a first-hand investigation. They were forced to rely on those 'in the field' and accept their judgements.

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[6] Harris, George Prideaux. (1808). Description of two new species of *Didelphis* from Van Diemen's Land. Transactions of the Linnean Society of London 9(1): 174-178.

[7] Long, George (ed). The Penny Cyclopedia of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge (London, 1839) p.454.

[8] The Visitor: Or Monthly Instructor, 1839 edition (London, 1839). Author uncredited. Located at: https://books.google.com.au/books?id=xAY2AAAAMAAJ&pg=PA418&dq=thylacinus&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiwpPiczeHjAhUJXisKHVZzBHw4HhDoAQhAMAQ#v=onepage&q=thylacinus&f=false retrieved 14/08/21

In 1810 Étienne Saint-Hilaire (often referred to as Geoffroy) disputed Harris' taxonomy and suggested a variant of his own[9]. While conceding that Harris knew how to classify and "we can… rely on the accuracy of the details which he entered" ("on peut donc compter sure l'exactitude des détails dans lesquels il est entré"[10]), he argued that the Thylacine was not suitable for classification as *didelphis* and instead met the generic characteristics of *dasyurids* "the generic characteristics of the dasyures which I have provided" ("des caracteres generiques des dasyures que j'ai donné"[11]). He, therefore, coined the new classification *dasyurus cynocephalus*, loosely "the hairy-tailed one with the dog head". In doing so he brought the species designation *cynocephalus* into line with the neo-Latinate grammar which was used by taxonomists and later became the accepted global standard approach. His *cynocephalus* Latinised the Greek.

This new classification placed the Thylacine, much more reasonably and logically, in the main family of Australian marsupial carnivores, the *Dasyuridae*, which includes the bulk of indigenous carnivore species in Australia. This makes a good deal more sense than the *didelphis* classification of Harris and shows a growing understanding of the Thylacine's place in Australian marsupial evolution. However, those following on from Saint-Hilaire soon realised that there were significant physiological differences between the Thylacine and other 'true' *Dasyuridae* which rendered this classification too simplistic. Despite this, it was the first attempt by what we might regard as a true scientist rather than an enthusiastic amateur such as Harris. Saint-Hilaire was "a considerable personage. Involved in the founding of comparative anatomy, of experimental embryology, of teratology, and of evolutionary palaeontology, he makes his appearance as one of the great French naturalists of all time"[12]. He was a Professor of Zoology at the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris, one of the leading institutions in biology at the time. Yet even he seems to have not had the depth of knowledge required to differentiate the Thylacine from other *Dasyuridae*, possibly due to the study of Australian marsupials being in its infancy, possibly due to not having had extensive first-hand experience of the Thylacine.

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[9] Saint-Hilaire, Étienne Geoffroy. (1810). Description de deux espèces de Dasyures (*Dasyrus cynocephalus* et *Dasyurus ursinus*). Annales du Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle (Paris) 15: 301-306. Located at https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/page/3546569#page/351/mode/1up retrieved 21/09/21.

[10] Ibid, p.302

[11] Ibid, p.304

[12] Hervé le Guyader, Étienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire 1772-1844: A Visionary Naturalist . Trans Marjorie Grene (University of Chicago Press, 2004), p.2. Located at https://www.google.co.uk/books/edition/Geoffroy_Saint_Hilaire/cfk5PqBU78EC?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=etienne+saint-hilaire&printsec=frontcover retrieved 30/9/21.

It is widely believed that the binomial *Thylacinus cynocephalus* was authored by Coenraad Temminck in his seminal 1827 work, 'Monographies de mammalogie, ou Description de quelques genres de mammifères dont les espèces ont été observées dans les différens musées de l'Europe'[13]. However, this is not the case. He absolutely did author the genus *Thylacinus*. In fact, he calls it "my Thylacine genus/type" ("mon genre Thylacine"). He gave detailed reasoning for why he did this, based upon features of the Thylacine that were inconsistent with a placement in the *Dasyuridae*. For example, he demonstrated a clear difference in dentition, which was accepted by other scholars. Overall he says he had to split the Thylacine into a new genus: "I find myself forced to move to one which has not yet been examined [*Thylacinus*]… one of which forms my Thylacine type/genus… which reduces the number of true dasyures known today by their teeth to four" ("je me vois force d'en éloigner une qui n'a point encore été examinée… dont l'une forme mon genre thylacine… ce qui Reduit le nombre des vrais *dasyures* aujourd'hui bien connu par les dents… à quatre"[14]) His actual taxonomy for the Thylacine was *Thylacinus harissii*, "this animal carries the name Harris' Thylacine" ("cet animal portera le nomme de *Thylacinus harrisii*"[15]). He refers to *thylacinus* as "mon genre thylacine" ("my thylacine kind/type"[16]) and he was undoubtedly the first scholar to use this nomenclature. However, he did not, as is often claimed, use the term *cynocephalus*. This was Harris's coinage, as *cynocephala* originally (modified to *cynocephalus* by Saint-Hilaire), and Temminck discusses this openly. He discusses the name *cynocephalus* thus: "Harris, who had the first sight and described this animal, seems to have had the name Cynocephala" ("Harris, qui a le premier vu et décrit cet animal, paraît avoir été le nom de Cynocéphale")[17]. He concedes that Harris' nomenclature is an ideal one, stating that "on first comparing the skulls of [Thylacines] with those of dogs, one must agree that on first sight the resemblance is striking" ("en comparant le crâne de cet animal avec ceux de chiens,

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[13] Temminck, Coenraad J. Monographies de Mammalogie. Located at: https://zmmu.msu.ru/files/%D0%91%D0%B8%D0%B1%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%BE%D1%82%D0%B5%D0%BA%D0%B0%20%D0%9F%D0%B0%D0%B2%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B0/temminck-1827_mammalogie.pdf#page=303 retrieved 01/09/21.

[14] Temminck, ibid, p.94

[15] Temmick, ibid p. 23. Found at https://zmmu.msu.ru/files/%D0%91%D0%B8%D0%B1%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%BE%D1%82%D0%B5%D0%BA%D0%B0%20%D0%9F%D0%B0%D0%B2%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B0/temminck-1827_mammalogie.pdf#page=60 retrieved 10/10/21

[16] Ibid, p.55. Found at https://zmmu.msu.ru/files/%D0%91%D0%B8%D0%B1%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%BE%D1%82%D0%B5%D0%BA%D0%B0%20%D0%9F%D0%B0%D0%B2%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B0/temminck-1827_mammalogie.pdf#page=60

[17] Ibid p.61. Found at https://zmmu.msu.ru/files/%D0%91%D0%B8%D0%B1%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%BE%D1%82%D0%B5%D0%BA%D0%B0%20%D0%9F%D0%B0%D0%B2%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B0/temminck-1827_mammalogie.pdf#page=60

on doit convenir qu'on premier coup d'oeil le ressemblance pareîl frappante") [18]. However, although he agrees with Harris' choice, he himself opted to adopt the taxonomic *Thylacinus harrisii* – Harris' Thylacine, a nod to Harris as the first scholar to describe and name the animal, even though Harris placed the Thylacine in the genus *didelphis* which was manifestly inappropriate, he did coin the name *cynocephalus*, albeit in Greek not neo-Latin, as *cynocephala*. Temminck minutely argued for the new genus Thylacinus and his argument was accepted quickly and definitively by other naturalists but he did not coin the taxonomy *Thylacinus cynocephalus*.

T. cynocephalus

Thylacinus cynocephalus, the modern, accepted binomial appears in scholarly and lay works soon after Temminck wrote. Both Harris' *didelphis* and Saint-Hilaire's *dasyurus* were rejected quickly and definitively by scholars, as both were demonstrably inaccurate. Thylacinus as a new genus was accepted generally as soon as Temminck proposed it. It seems that a number of scholars accepted *Thylacinus* after Temminck's clear arguments for this but also appended *cynocephalus*, which Temminck did not do, thus replacing the Dutchman's *Harrisii* having accepted Harris' own "dog-headed" description and argued for it, they seem to have inadvertently created the confection of *t. cynocephalus*, a combination of Harris' *cynocephala* with Saint-Hilaire's neo-Latinised *cynocephalus* together with Temminck's own *Thylacinus* to form the very effective and appropriate *Thylacinus cynocephalus*. For example, in 1829 J B Fischer referred to the *Thylacinus cynocephalus* ("TH, Cynocephalus)[19], noting of the animal "parts are similar to dogs and cats" ("sectoriis *Canum Feliumque* similes") thus perhaps explaining his decision to append *cynocephalus* to *thylacinus*. Although this is the first work that specifically mentions the *t.cynocephalus* binomial, Fischer does not state any reasons for this name and simply states it in a table. The Hobart Town Courier in 1832 referred to "his present of a pre-served opossum, (*thylacinus cynocephalus*) which is deposited in the Museum"[20]. William Swainson, in 1834, writes of "the Dog-Faced Opossum (*Thylacinus cynocephalus Tem.*)"[21], even though this translation is not accurate. News

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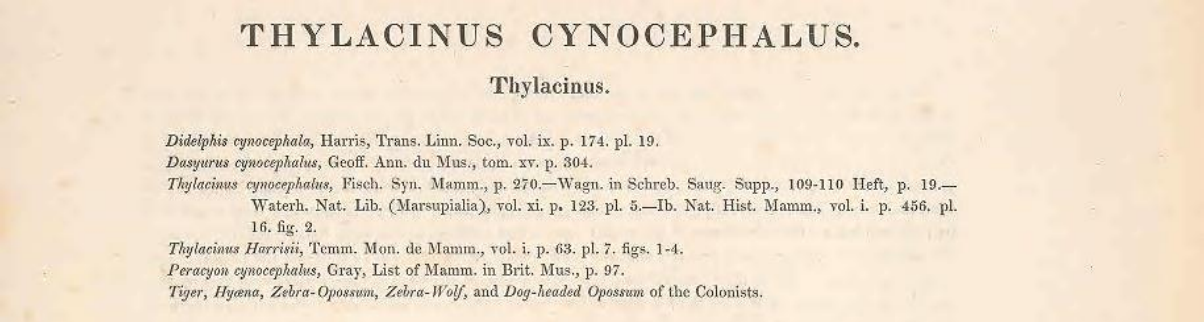
[18] Temminck, ibid, p.62

[19] Fischer, J B. Synopsis Mammalium (Stuttgart, 1829), p.270. Located at; https://books.google.co.uk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=Ls5t_LvZB5gC&oi=fnd&pg=PR1&dq=j+b+fischer+1829&ots=CgSfT8ILoX&sig=KhRQk_ajVh3KbGB0ze2FrjVkWfk#v=onepage&q=j%20b%20fischer%201829&f=false retrieved 23/08/21

[20] Hobart Town Courier, Friday 14th December 1832, p.2. Located at: https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/4195181?searchTerm=thylacinus&searchLimits=sortby%3DdateAsc&fbclid=IwAR3mQMueuA3d2ud03E5JTM2V_REe2wTrQjN5IM1FTa8wWsSsOjyGk3eYuDc retrieved 14/08/21

[21] Swainson, William. (1834). The Dog-faced Opossum, p. 1485. In: Murray, Hugh, Wallace, W., Jameson, R., Hooker, W. J. and Swainson, W. An Encyclopædia of Geography... London: Longman,

of the new taxonomy had reached British India and J T Pearson produced an article for the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1835 entitled: "Note on Thylacinus Cynocephalus…"[22] Meanwhile, back in Tasmania, Ronald Gunn was referring to "The *Thylacinus cynocephalus*" in 1837[23]**.** Perhaps most significant of all John Gould, in his seminal The Mammals of Australia gives *Thylacinus Cynocephalus* as the main binomial, although he does also list others[24]. Gould's work is widely regarded as a watershed in the study and popularisation of the study of Australian fauna, the Royal Collection Trust refers to 'The Birds of Australia' as "a landmark in the history of Australia"[25]. So impressive and valuable was his work that the British government placed a ban on the export of his ornithological drawings of Australian avians in 2021 to prevent them being removed from the UK[26]. The Australian Museum refers to him as "a significant figure in Australian mammalogy"[27]. However, it is clear that he regards the confected classification as the leading one, as clearly shown by the prominence he gives it while relegating the other possible taxonomies to the status of notes, as can be seen below:



THYLACINUS CYNOCEPHALUS.

Thylacinus.

Didelphis cynocephala, Harris, Trans. Linn. Soc., vol. ix. p. 174. pl. 19.
Dasyurus cynocephalus, Geoff. Ann. du Mus., tom. xv. p. 304.
Thylacinus cynocephalus, Fisch. Syn. Mamm., p. 270.—Wagn. in Schreb. Saug. Supp., 109-110 Heft, p. 19.—Waterh. Nat. Lib. (Marsupialia), vol. xi. p. 123. pl. 5.—Ib. Nat. Hist. Mamm., vol. i. p. 456. pl. 16. fig. 2.
Thylacinus Harrisii, Temm. Mon. de Mamm., vol. i. p. 63. pl. 7. figs. 1-4.
Peracyon cynocephalus, Gray, List of Mamm. in Brit. Mus., p. 97.
Tiger, *Hyæna*, *Zebra-Opossum*, *Zebra-Wolf*, and *Dog-headed Opossum* of the Colonists.

Gould's taxonomic notes on the Thylacine.

Rees, Orme, Brown, Green & Longman. [fig. 1070] Located at: https://books.google.com.au/books?id=-vlCAAAAcAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q=oposs&f=false retrieved 20/08/21

[22] Pearson, J. T. Note on Thylacinus Cynocephalus. Extracted from the Osteological Section of the Catalogue of the Asiatic Society. The Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal 4(46): 572-574. 1835.

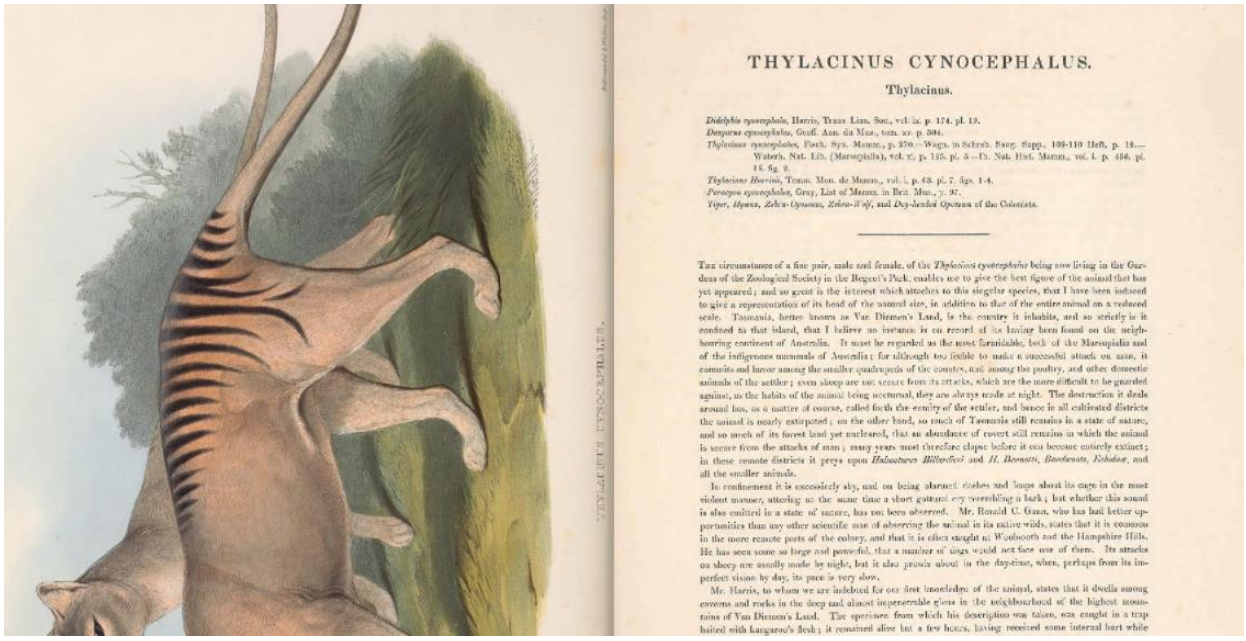
[23] Gunn, Ronald Campbell. (1837). Letter to Sir William Hooker, 31/3/1837. In: Burns, T. E. and Skemp, J. R. (eds.). (1961). Van Diemen's Land Correspondents. Launceston: Queen Victoria Museum.

[24] Gould, John. The Mammals of Australia, Volume 1, p.54. (London, 1863)) Found at: https://archive.org/details/mammalsAustrali1Goul/page/54/mode/2up retrieved 29/9/21

[25] Quotation taken from: https://www.rct.uk/collection/1122359/the-mammals-of-australia-v-1-by-john-gould retrieved 11/09/21

[26] https://www.theguardian.com/books/2021/jul/06/ban-imposed-overseas-sale-john-gould-landmark-ornithological-studies retrieved 15/10/21

[27] https://australian.museum/learn/collections/museum-archives-library/john-gould/gould-and-his-contribution-to-science/ retrieved 22/10/21



THYLACINUS CYNOCEPHALUS.

Thylacinus.

Didelphis cynocephala, Harris, Trans Linn. Soc., vol. ix. p. 174. pl. 19.
Dasyurus cynocephalus, Geoff. Ann. du Mus., tom. xv. p. 204.
Thylacinus cynocephalus, Fisch. Syn. Mamm., p. 370.—Wagn. in Schreb. Saug. Suppl., 109-110 Heft, p. 18.—Waterh. Nat. Lib. (Marsupialia), vol. x. p. 135. pl. 5.—D. Nat. Hist. Mamm., vol. i. p. 456. pl. 16. fig. 2.
Thylacinus Harrisii, Temm. Mon. de Mamm., vol. i. p. 68. pl. 7. figs. 1-4.
Peracyon cynocephalus, Gray, List of Mamm. in Brit. Mus., p. 97.
Tiger, Hyæna, Zebra-Opossum, Zebra-Wolf, and *Dog-headed Opossum* of the Colonists.

The circumstance of a fine pair, male and female, of the *Thylacinus cynocephalus* being now living in the Gardens of the Zoological Society in the Regent's Park, enables me to give the best figure of the animal that has yet appeared; and so great is the interest which attaches to this singular species, that I have been induced to give a representation of its head of the natural size, in addition to that of the entire animal on a reduced scale. Tasmania, better known as Van Diemen's Land, is the country it inhabits, and so strictly is it confined to that island, that I believe no instance is on record of its having been found on the neighbouring continent of Australia. It must be regarded as the most formidable, both of the Marsupialia and of the indigenous mammals of Australia; for although too feeble to make a successful attack on man, it commits sad havoc among the smaller quadrupeds of the country, and among the poultry, and other domestic animals of the settler; even sheep are not secure from its attacks, which are the more difficult to be guarded against, as the habits of the animal being nocturnal, they are always made at night. The destruction it deals around has, as a matter of course, called forth the enmity of the settler, and hence in all cultivated districts the animal is nearly extirpated; on the other hand, so much of Tasmania still remains in a state of nature, and so much of its forest land yet uncleared, that an abundance of covert still remains in which the animal is secure from the attacks of man; many years must therefore elapse before it can become entirely extinct; in these remote districts it preys upon *Halmaturus Billardieri* and *H. Bennetti*, *Bandicoots*, *Echidnæ*, and all the smaller animals.

In confinement it is excessively shy, and on being alarmed flashes and leaps about its cage in the most violent manner, uttering at the same time a short guttural cry resembling a bark; but whether this sound is also emitted in a state of nature, has not been observed. Mr. Ronald C. Gunn, who has had better opportunities than any other scientific man of observing the animal in its native wilds, states that it is common in the more remote parts of the colony, and that it is often caught in Woolcomb and the Hampshire Hills. He has seen some so large and powerful, that a number of dogs would not face one of them. Its attacks on sheep are usually made by night, but it also prowls about in the day-time, when, perhaps from its imperfect vision by day, its pace is very slow.

Mr. Harris, to whom we are indebted for our first knowledge of the animal, states that it dwells among caverns and rocks in the deep and almost impenetrable glens in the neighbourhood of the highest mountains of Van Diemen's Land. The specimen from which his description was taken, was caught in a trap baited with kangaroo's flesh; it remained alive but a few hours, having received some internal hurt while

John Gould's section on the Thylacine, clearly showing the prominence given to *T. Cynocephalus* as opposed to the other taxonomies he notes.

Gould's immensely influential work with the Thylacine reference was released in 1863. It is clear that by this point *T. cynocephalus* had become the dominant taxonomy and other suggestions had been relegated to footnotes. However, this was not the end of the story. 1827 did not mark a sudden universal acceptance of *Thylacinus* as the correct taxonomy for the Thylacine. For some time afterwards, older binomials persisted in use and more new ones were suggested. In 1827 Griffith, Hamilton and Pigeon[28] referred to the animal as "the Dog-faced *Dasyurus*". This was inaccurate as not only had Temminck convincingly demonstrated that the Thylacine needed to be placed in a separate family from the main *Dasyuridae* lineage but they also mis-translated *cynocephalus* as "dog-faced" when it clearly means "dog-headed". Given that they then assert that it was the size of a wolf there is a strong suggestion that they did not know the animal well and may have been unaware of Temminck's arguments. However, these errors persisted. In 1829, Robert Mudie, a well-respected author of works on topics such as birds, publishing 'The Feathered Tribes of Britain' in 1834, continued to use the Saint-Hilaire terminology, referring to the Thylacine as "The dog-faced *dasyuris* (cynocephalus)"[29]**.** Renowned British naturalist Richard Owen, a key figure in early palaeontology, who ironically

[28] Griffith, Edward, Smith, Charles Hamilton and Pidgeon, Edward. (1827b). The Animal Kingdom...Volume V. The Class Mammalia. London: Geo B. Whittaker. [p. 192] Located at: https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/108114#page/202/mode/1up retrieved 10/08/21

[29] Mudie, R. (1829). The picture of Australia: exhibiting New Holland, Van Diemen's Land and all the settlements from the first at Sydney to the last at Swan River. London: Whittaker, Treacher. 370 pp. Located at: https://archive.org/details/pictureofaustral00mudi/page/174/mode/2up retrieved 15/08/21

went on to win the Linnean Medal in 1888; seem to have become confused as to who had actually coined the taxonomies: "the Thylacine (*Thylacinus Harrisii*, *Didelphys Cynocephalus*, Harris)"[30]. While Harris had coined cynocephalus (as cynocephala) he did not create the genus *Thylacinus* which was Temminck's. As late as 1838 Lorenz Oken was still erroneously referring to the Thylacine as "*D. Cynocephalus*"[31], despite clear arguments over a decade previously that convincingly moved the animal into the new *thylacinus* genus.

Temminck's own *Thylacinus Harrisii* also persisted for a considerable time in scientific writings. We see its usage continue at least into the early 1840's. Renowned French polymath René Lesson[32] stuck to this binomial for a considerable period. In 1830 he produced a striking picture of the Thylacine labelled as *T. Harrisii*[33]:

[30] Owen, Richard. (1839). On the Classification and Affinities of the Marsupial Animals. Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London 7: 5-19. [alternative title, from the contents page: Outlines of a Classification of the Marsupialia] Located at: https://books.google.com.au/books?id=eedJAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA7&dq=thylacinus&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwj91fi73tzjAhVhILcAHeGGB-A4FBDoAQhHMAY#v=onepage&q=thylacinus&f=false retrieved 18/08/21

[31] Oken, Lorenz. (1838). Allgemeine Naturgeschichte für alle Stände, Volume 7, Parts 2-3. Stuttgart. Located at: https://books.google.com.au/books?id=LH1BAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA918&dq=Zebra+Opossum&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjC2pmPnebjAhVx6nMBHcb-DlY4ChDoAQhMMAc#v=onepage&q=Zebra%20Opossum&f=false retrieved 20/08/21

[32] Exemplar biography: https://www.portrait.gov.au/people/ren-primevre-lesson-1794

[33] Lesson, René P. (1830). Centurie Zoologique, ou Choix d'Animaux Rares... Paris: F. G. Levrault. [pp. 14-17] Located at: https://books.google.com.au/books?id=iwM0AQAAMAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false picture taken from https://recentlyextinctspecies.com/thylacine-archive/early-thylacine-literature-1642-1850#Retrospective%20texts retrieved 01/10/21

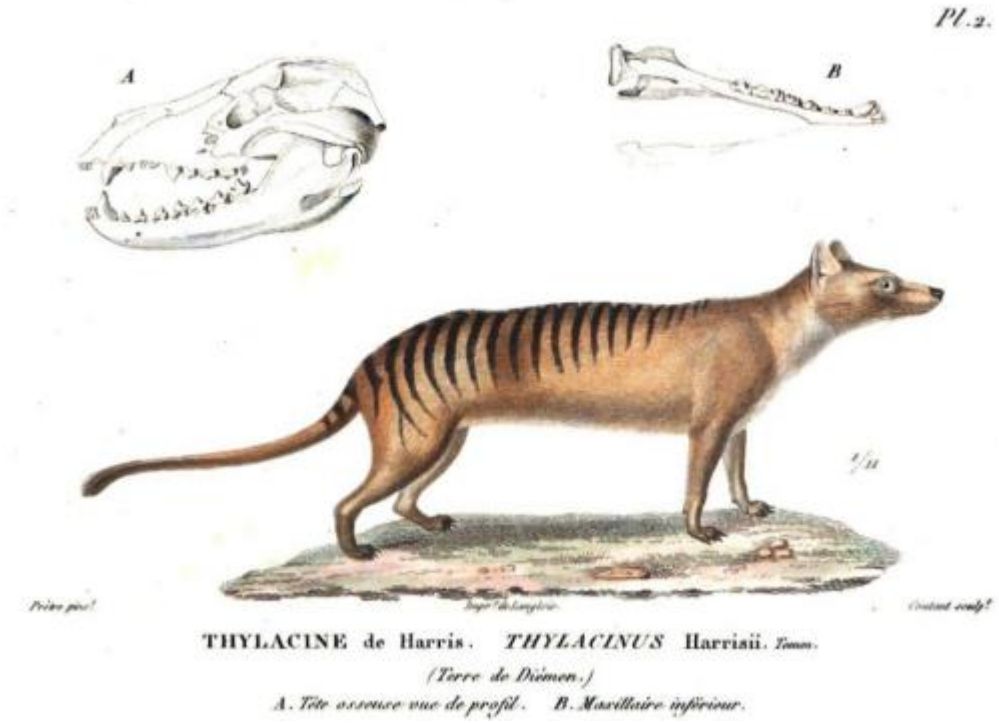


Illustration from Lesson's 'Centurie Zoologique'

Lesson repeated the same binomial in later works, for example in 1838[34]. He was not by any means the only scholar to cling to this older taxonomy. George Waterhouse did so in 1838 in his Catalogue of Mammalia Preserved in the Museum of the Zoological Society of London[35], where he states "Thylacinus Harrisii. *Temminck*". In 1840 an anonymous article in the Edinburgh New Philosophical Journal[36] talked of "Thylacinus Harrisii, Hyaena of the colonist". Others examples include W Ogilby[37]

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[34] Lesson, R. P. (1838). Compléments de Buffon (2nd edition). Paris: P. Pourrat Frères. [p 367?] Illustration found at: https://recentlyextinctspecies.com/thylacine-archive/early-thylacine-literature-1642-1850#Retrospective%20texts retrieved 28/09/21

[35] Waterhouse, George Robert. (1838). Catalogue of the Mammalia Preserved in the Museum of the Zoological Society of London, 2nd edition. London. [p. 64] located at: https://books.google.com.au/books?id=4Kk-AAAAcAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q=dog-headed&f=false retrieved 23/09/21

[36] Anonymous. (1840). Instructions In Zoology and Animal Physiology, for the British Antarctic Expedition. The Edinburgh New Philosophical Journal... XXVIII: 72-76. Located at: https://books.google.com.au/books?id=egdSAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA76&lpg=PA76&dq=Exhibit+of+a+large+specimen+of+Thylacinus+Harrisii&source=bl&ots=FWX_WONRtT&sig=ACfU3U0zu9rgiD12WGzLsi7GHY1oknS2mg&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiZy_Co_tHkAhXr8HMBHRjcCbc4FBDoATACegQICRAB#v=onepage&q=Exhibit%20of%20a%20large%20specimen%20of%20Thylacinus%20Harrisii&f=false retrieved 13/08/21

[37] Ogilby, W. (1841). Notice of certain Australian quadrupeds, belonging to the order Rodentia. Transactions of the Linnean Society of London 18: 121-132. Located at: https://books.google.com.au/books?id=qxwhAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA121&lpg=PA121&dq=Notice+of+certain+Australian+quadrupeds,+belonging+to+the+order+Rodentia&source=bl&ots=slxH8NNnQn&

and Richard Owen in the year 1841[38]. At this point Owen was Hunterian Professor of Anatomy at the Royal College of Surgeons, suggesting that even the highest echelons of mid nineteenth century scholar were not yet convinced by *T. cynocephalus*.

As well as the retention of the older taxonomy in certain quarters, other scholars continued to offer new suggestions, despite the appearance of the *T. cynocephalus* binomial by the late 1820s. Three main alternatives were suggested, none of which went on to become the accepted terminology. The first of these was *Thyalcinus striatus* – the Striped Pouched One. This has been suggested to have been coined in 1831 by Dr W Warlow in an article in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal[39]. Here he refers to "*Thylacinus Striatus*. Zebra Thylacine". However, Branden Holmes[40] has shown that, in fact, the Striatus taxonomy was originally proposed by Gilbert Burnett in 1830[41] as shown:

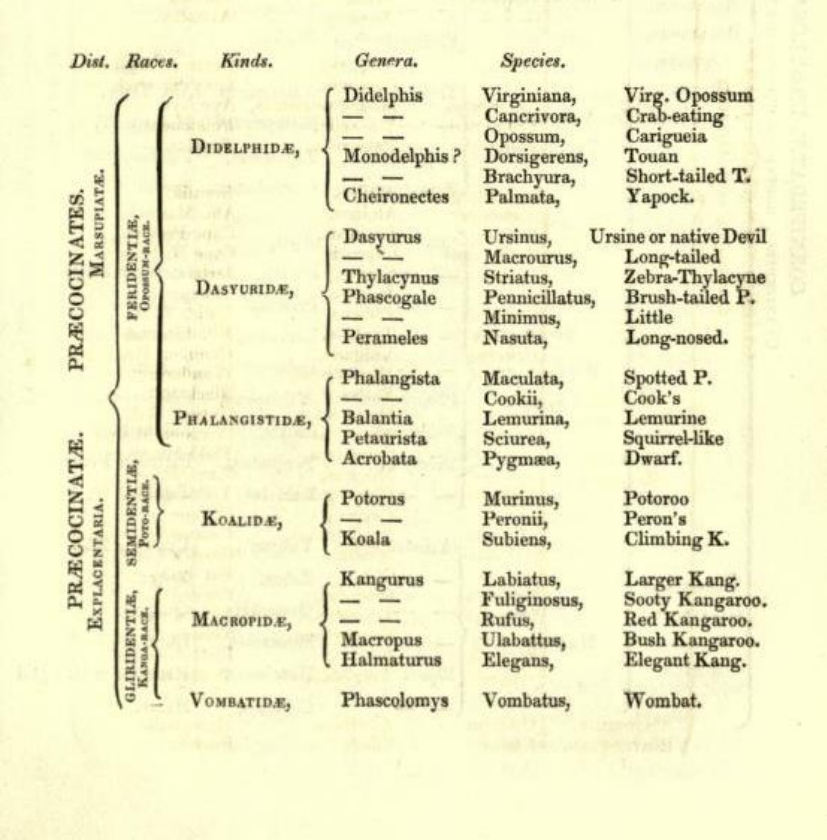
sig=ACfU3U0iu7wdigQEmxAhwkqMjjx02LK3kg&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwi7qtOJ39bjAhXXeisKHTcKDpsQ6AEwB3oECAYQAQ#v=onepage&q=Notice%20of%20certain%20Australian%20quadrupeds%2C%20belonging%20to%20the%20order%20Rodentia&f=false retrieved 24/09/21

[38] Owen, Richard. (1841c). Outlines of a Classification of the Marsupialia. Transactions of the Zoological Society of London 2(4): 315-333. [p. 316-317] located at: https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/46223#page/441/mode/1up retrieved on 23/09/21

[39] Warlow, Dr W.). Systematically arranged Catalogue of the Mammalia and Birds belonging to the Museum of the Asiatic Society, Calcutta. The Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal 2(14): 97. 1833. Located at: https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/page/37178581#page/139/mode/1up retrieved 11/08/21

[40]Holmes, Branden. The True Author of *Thylacinus striatus* "Warlow, 1833" (2019) online article located at: https://recentlyextinctspecies.com/thylacine-archive/the-true-author-of-thylacinus-striatus-warlow-1833 retrieved 15/08/21

[41] Burnett, Gilbert Thomas. 'Illustrations of the Quadrupeda, or Quadrupeds, being the arrangement of the true four-footed beasts indicated in outline'. The Quarterly Journal of Science, Literature and Art (London 1829), p.351. Located at: https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/24336#page/369/mode/1up retrieved 15/08/21



Dist.	Races.	Kinds.	Genera.	Species.	
PRÆCOCINATES. Marsupiatæ.	Feridentiæ, Opossum-race.	Didelphidæ,	Didelphis	Virginiana,	Virg. Opossum
			— —	Cancrivora,	Crab-eating
			— —	Opossum,	Carigueia
			Monodelphis ?	Dorsigerens,	Touan
			— —	Brachyura,	Short-tailed T.
			Cheironectes	Palmata,	Yapock.
		Dasyuridæ,	Dasyurus	Ursinus,	Ursine or native Devil
			— —	Macrourus,	Long-tailed
			Thylacynus	Striatus,	Zebra-Thylacyne
			Phascogale	Pennicillatus,	Brush-tailed P.
			— —	Minimus,	Little
			Perameles	Nasuta,	Long-nosed.
		Phalangistidæ,	Phalangista	Maculata,	Spotted P.
			— —	Cookii,	Cook's
			Balantia	Lemurina,	Lemurine
			Petaurista	Sciurea,	Squirrel-like
			Acrobata	Pygmæa,	Dwarf.
PRÆCOCINATÆ. Explacentaria.	Semidentiæ, Peto-race.	Koalidæ,	Potorus	Murinus,	Potoroo
			— —	Peronii,	Peron's
			Koala	Subiens,	Climbing K.
	Gliridentiæ, Kanga-race.	Macropidæ,	Kangurus	Labiatus,	Larger Kang.
			— —	Fuliginosus,	Sooty Kangaroo.
			— —	Rufus,	Red Kangaroo.
			Macropus	Ulabattus,	Bush Kangaroo.
			Halmaturus	Elegans,	Elegant Kang.
		Vombatidæ,	Phascolomys	Vombatus,	Wombat.

Burnett's reference to *Thylacinus striatus*.

Striatus was sensible based on the stripes which were present on the rear quarters and upper tail of the Thylacine. However, the zebra appellation which Burnett attaches is not an especially convincing or sensible one. The Thylacine is clearly not an herbivore and its colouration is not even close to that of a zebra, with some stripes being the only uniting factor. This may even hark back to the very earliest descriptions of the animal, when Labillardière in 1799 described it as "white in colour, speckled with black"[42] . It is, of course possible, that Burnett was making use of the available earlier source material. Burnett was a Professor at King's College, London, but a Professor of Botany not zoology. He died very young, at only 35 years old[43], and there is no evidence to show that he ever personally visited Tasmania during that tragically short lifetime.

J Grant contributed our second post-Temminck alternative in 1831, in his article 'Notice of the Van Diemen's Land Tiger'[44]. He suggests that "by way of convenience,

[42] CF note 47 for full citation.

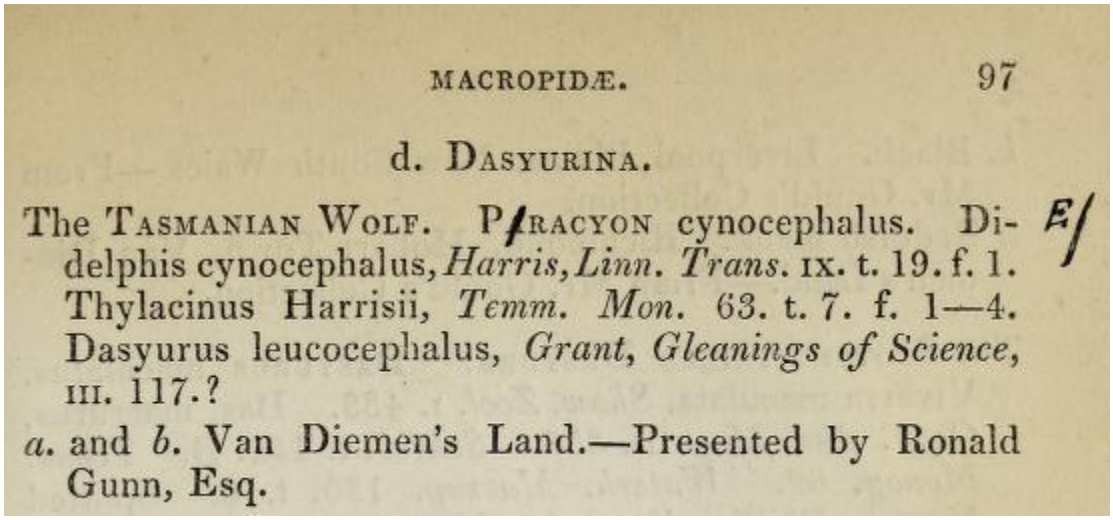
[43] Bettany, George Thomas. Dictionary of National Biography, 1885-1900, Vol. 7. Located at : https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Dictionary_of_National_Biography,_1885-1900/Burnett,_Gilbert_Thomas retrieved 18/10/21

[44] Grant, J. 'Notice of the Van Diemen's Land Tiger'. Gleanings in Science, Vol 3. (Calcutta, 1831). P.175 Located at: https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/page/51532039#page/219/mode/1up retrieved 01/10/21

and looking at its wolf-like expression, we might distinguish it as the *Dasyurus Lucocephalus*." His proposal then was to return the Thylacine to the *Dasyuridae*, despite widespread acceptance of Temminck's genus *Thylacinus*. This is a retrograde suggestion that did not accord with the knowledge already developed at the time. However, *lucocephalus* is a potentially interesting suggestion, if an enigmatic one. *Lucocephalus* is not entirely clear in its meaning, since luco is not a standard transliteration of Greek, and in Latin it means a grove of trees, categorising the animal as having a head like a grove of trees seems unlikely to say the least. It is not fully certain quite what Grant means, possibly because he transliterated from Greek in an unusual way. A direct translation, albeit a confection of Latin and Greek that might offend the Classical purist, would be "light headed", as in light from the sun, luco being a standard Latin prefix referring to light. This would be constructed from the Latin prefix luco added to the Greek kephale to make a phrase meaning one who's head was light, as in shining, reflecting light or something similar. This would make basic linguistic sense, but given that Grant himself claims "the colour of the animal is between a greyish and a tawny"[45] this would seem a strange turn of phrase indeed. One common Greek phrase that is used in taxonomy is 'leucocephalus', meaning "white head(ed)", this is used in the species name of the Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*). However, it seems odd that Grant would drop the standard 'e' if this is what he intended. It may also be variant on the prefix lyko/lyco, "wolf". It would usually be rendered as lycocephalus or lykocephalus in English if this were the case. Reading Grant's piece on the animal it appears that this is, in fact, what he intends. He says "looking at its wolf-like expression, we might distinguish it as the *Dasyurus Lucocephalus*"[46], suggesting that, although he does not specifically state it, he does intend to label it "wolf-headed". He does not fully elaborate. If this is what he means, then "wolf-headed" is a sound suggestion for the Thylacine, given the manifest similarity of the skulls of Thylacines and wolves, as noted by Temminck for example. However, the already venerable "dog-headed", *cynocephalus*, had already effectively set out this comparison, given the intimate links between dogs and wolves. *Lucocephalus* in this sense may have been more prosaic, more attractive to the ear and more romantic but *cynocephalus* had already comprehensively covered this ground and had enjoyed a long period in which it had built up broad acceptance. In short, a new wolf headed *lucocephalus* was an unnecessary and redundant innovation that effectively added nothing and did not catch on.

[45] Grant, ibid, p.176
[46] Op Cit, p.176

Our final new effort was another canine-related contribution by Captain George Grey, *Paracyon cynocephalus*[47] (excerpt reproduced below). This accepts the long-established *cynocephalus* and interestingly reinforces this with the *paracyon* nominal. This means something like "close to the dog" or "beside the dog". This leaves us with "dog-headed one beside the dog". Seemingly Grey's intention was to reinforce and focus the emphasis of the taxonomy on the close physiological comparisons between the Thylacine and canines. It is seemingly an attempt to show how the animal not only had a dog's head but was generally close to the dog in form, lifestyle and many other features. This is a reasonable approach given the convergent evolution which saw the Thylacine develop in a way which showed striking physical similarities to canines. However, it lacked the distinction provided by *Thylacinus* which allowed for the marsupial nature of the animal and acted to balance the canine reference of *cynocephalus* with a distinctly marsupial nominal. Potentially Grey overemphasised the canine similarities and oversimplified the binomial, removing the element of sophistication afforded by clear marsupial attribution. What can be said with confidence is that *paracyon* did not catch on and that eventually rival scholars ceased to provide alternatives, leaving *Thylacinus cynocephalus* as the undoubted and only taxonomy, used in all scientific publications, encyclopaedias and now in all online settings.



MACROPIDÆ. 97

d. DASYURINA.

The TASMANIAN WOLF. PARACYON cynocephalus. Didelphis cynocephalus, *Harris, Linn. Trans.* IX. t. 19. f. 1. Thylacinus Harrisii, *Temm. Mon.* 63. t. 7. f. 1—4. Dasyurus leucocephalus, *Grant, Gleanings of Science,* III. 117.?

a. and *b.* Van Diemen's Land.—Presented by Ronald Gunn, Esq.

Grey's *paracyon*, interestingly in this copy a handwritten correction has been made to change this to *peracyon*. This would change the meaning to "beyond the/a dog".

[47] Grey, Captain George. List of the Specimens of Mammalia in the Collection of the British Museum (London, 1843) p97. Located at: https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/228669#page/257/mode/1up retrieved 01/10/21

Suitability of T. cynocephalus

Thylacinus cynocephalus did not, then, stride unchallenged into the taxonomies of the world. Indeed, it was only one of several challengers, some older and others coined later. However, it did eventually 'win' the battle of the taxonomies. *Striatus*, *Harrisii*, *Lucocephalus* and all the others fell by the wayside so why was *Thylacinus cynocephalus* the eventual winner? What made this become the agreed-upon binomial which is accepted today? In order to fully consider this, we need to bear in mind the problems of early taxonomies, to whit that the scholars engaged in this process had usually not had any first-hand experience of the Thylacine beyond a few samples with no access to high quality photography; and the fact that they had limited vocabulary with which to describe the animal, mostly derived from ancient Greek and Latin. Given these restrictions how appropriate is *T. cynocephalus* as a binomial for our subject?

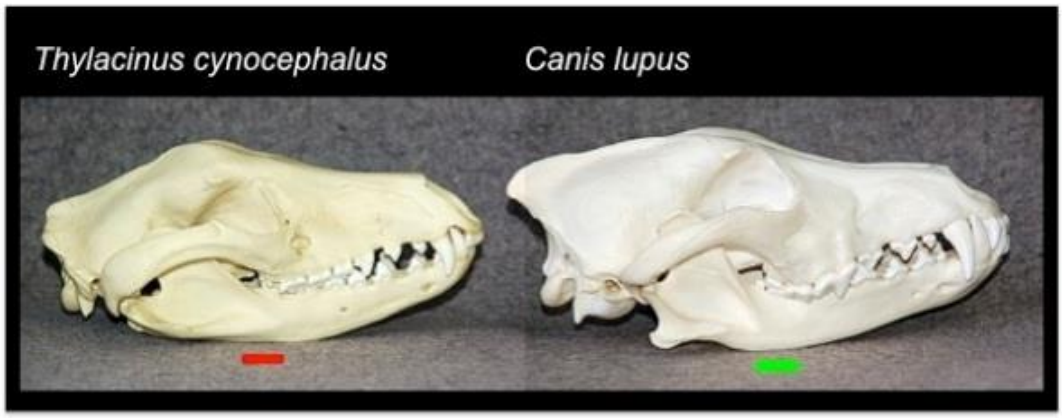
First let's examine the meaning of the binomial. *Thylacinus cynocephalus* is made up of three Greek words, Latinised into neo-Latin. *Thylacinus* is a Latinised derivative of the Greek word θύλακος (Thylakos). Thylakos means a bag or pouch (and could even be used to refer to trousers, although presumably not in the case of the Thylacine!). It is a specific reference to the marsupial nature of the Thylacine, the direct counterpart of the Latin word marsupium (pouch) and carries the same meaning and inferences in biological terms. *Thylacinus* means "pouched one" or "the pouched" and is a clear, direct reference to the Thylacine as a marsupial, distinct from placental mammals. It is perhaps an antidote to remind the observer that in the words of John Henderson the animal "appears to have no very peculiar character, to occasion its being separated in classification from the tribe Canis; with the exception of the organs of generation"[48]. In other words, it is superficially so similar to a dog that only the genitals and pouch suggest that it is not, in fact, a canine itself. *Thyalcinus* reminds us clearly and unambiguously of this.

Cynocephalus is a Latinised version of the well-known term KynoKephaloi "dog headed". It combines the word κύων (kyon), Greek for dog, with κεφαλή (kephale), Greek for head. Latinised into neo-Latin it becomes *cynocephalus* "dog-headed", in other words a statement that something has the head of a dog. This is a reference to the common Medieval and earlier concept of the dog-headed race of Kynokephaloi. It was common to claim that in any poorly known area the inhabitants had dog heads. In the case of the Thylacine this is a clear reference to the fact that dog and Thylacine skulls are incredibly similar and almost indistinguishable to the lay observer. The Thylacine then is, very much, dog-headed to an audience who's frame

[48] Henderson, John. Observations on the Colonies of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land (Calcutta, 1832).

of reference is the dog and other Old World canines such as wolves, jackals and foxes.

In purely physical terms, in other words looking at the physiology of the animal there are absolutely clear similarities between the Thylacine and the Old World canines. Below is a side-by-side picture of the skull of *T. cynocephalus* and the Grey Wolf *Canis lupus*. The similarities are striking, down to the sagittal crest on both species. As Temminck himself said "on first comparing the skulls of [thylacines] with those of dogs, one must agree that on first sight the resemblance is striking"[49].



Side by side view of Thylacine and wolf skull[50]

This resemblance is so striking and profound that modern scientists have made much of this in their discussions of the Thylacine. Newton, Weisbecker, Pask and Hipsley writing in Nature state: "The thylacine and gray wolf (*Canis lupus*) are considered one of the most striking cases of convergent evolution in mammals, independently evolving nearly identical skull shapes"[51]. This physical similarity is now being appended with extraordinary new discoveries in genetics that show the Thylacine had converged with placental wolves to a remarkable extent. For example, Dr Charles Feigin, writing on the University of Melbourne's open access science website, Pursuit, informs us that: **"**Unexpectedly, in the course of this work, our team also found that the thylacine and wolf showed evidence of convergence in regulatory elements of

[49] Temminck, C, *op. cit.* p.62.
[50] Tollis, Marc. Case Studies of Convergent Evolution: of Wolves and Thylacines (2014). Found at **https://anolistollis.wordpress.com/2014/03/05/case-studies-of-convergent-evolution-of-wolves-and-thylacines/** retrieved 14/08/21

[51] Newton, Axel, Vera Weisbecker, Andrew J Pask and Christy Hipsley. Ontogenetic origins of cranial convergence between the extinct marsupial thylacine and placental grey wolf. Communications Biology 4, (Article Number 51, 2021). Located at: https://www.nature.com/articles/s42003-020-01569-x retrieved 21/08/21

brain genes."[52] It is clear from modern science that Thylacines and placental canines shared an exceptionally close similarity in their physiognomy and even genetics.

This similarity between *T. cynocephalus* and canines was immediately apparent to even the first observers who only caught fleeting glimpses of the animal when Europeans first explored Tasmania. Reporting on French discoveries Ambroise de Clermeur wrote in 1772 that "our people ...noticed the traces of quadrupeds in different places, some of which resembled deer and others dogs"[53]. Jacques-Julien Labillardière similarly stated in 1799 that during his voyage "after we were stuck in the woods, a quadruped of the size of a large dog came out of a bush close to one of our travelling companions. This animal, white in colour, speckled with black, had the appearance of a ferocious beast" ("après nous etre enfoncé dans les bois, un quadrupède de la taille d'un gros chien sorti d'un Buisson tout près d'un de nos compagnons de voyage. Cet animal, du couleur blanche, tacheté de noir, avoit l'apparence d'une bête féroce"[54]). Labillardière's animal, whilst described with colouring and marking that is not entirely in accordance with the Thylacine can hardly have been any other animal in Tasmania at this time. It is striking that both Frenchmen chose to refer to the Thylacine as very like a dog.

Once settlement commenced and Europeans began to observe the Thylacine more closely and over a protracted period, rather than a few snatched glimpses, this comparison did not fall away. If anything, it was redoubled. In 1804 Harris, even before his seminal observations which authored the term *cynocephalus*, described his later-to-be-called "dog-headed one" as "I suspect however that it may be only a variety of the wild Dog, or rather wolf of this Country"[55]. However, he did base this observation on a retelling of Labillardière's tale of the white dog speckled with black. Harris' report is not based on his own personal observations. Any suggestion that Harris was out-of-step with his compatriots, however, is swiftly refuted once one looks at other early writings of European colonists and those reporting their descriptions of the Thylacine. William Paterson, in 1805, providing what was probably the first detailed

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[52] Feigin, Dr Charles. The Shared Evolution of the Tasmanian Tiger and Wolf. Pursuit open access science sharing platform, University of Melbourne. Located at: https://pursuit.unimelb.edu.au/articles/the-shared-evolution-of-the-tasmanian-tiger-and-the-wolf retrieved 10/08/21

[53] Le Jar du Clesmeur, A. B. M. (1772). Account of a Voyage in the South Seas and the Pacific beginning in 1771 (Maryse Duyker, Trans.). In E. Duyker (Ed.), The Discovery of Tasmania: journal extracts from the expeditions of Abel Janszoon Tasman and Marc-Joseph Marion Dufresne 1642 and 1772 (1992 ed., pp. 20-22). Hobart: St David's Park Publishing.

[54] Labillardière, Jacques-Julien Houtou de. (1799 [1800?]). Relation du Voyage à la Recherche de la Pérouse. (Paris: H. J. Jansen), p.163. Located at: https://bibdigital.rjb.csic.es/viewer/13335/?offset=#page=179&viewer=picture&o=bookmark&n=0&q = retrieved 14/08/21

[55] Hamilton-Arnold, Barbara (ed.). (1994). Letters and Papers of G.P. Harris 1803-1812: Deputy Surveyor General of New South Wales at Sullivan Bay, Port Phillip, and Hobart Town, Van Diemen's Land. Sorrento, Victoria: Arden Press. 174 pp.

descriptions of the animal to emerge from Tasmania, states that its appearance "strongly reminding the observer of the appearance of a low Wolf (dog)"[56]. Georges Cuvier in 1817 refers to it as "the size of a dog" ("Grand comme un chien")[57]. It is clear that early observers were struck by the physical similarities between the Thylacine and a dog or small wolf. Fischer stated it "the size of a young wolf" ("magnitudo lupi junioris")[58]. The preponderance of canine-related nominals coined by learned scholars to construct the taxonomy tells its own story: *cynocephala*, *cynocephalus*, *lucocephalus* the animal's resemblance to a dog, especially cranially is abundantly clear.

Therefore, it seems to me that *Thylacinus cynocephalus* likely 'stuck' and was adopted because it was the first binomial to fully and adequately define the Thylacine in several crucial ways. First although Temminck coined the term *Thylacinus* in order to construct a new genus in order to formalise the clear differences between the Thylacine and the 'true' Dasyurids; he also proposed a phrase which was ideal for the animal, ergo "pouched one". This was something which spoke to its marsupial nature and at the same time provided some clear distance between the animal and the canines with whom it was naturally linked due to its appearance. This provided a counterpoint to *cynocephalus*. It had a 'dog's' head insofar as it resembled a dog extremely closely but it was simultaneously a marsupial and not a dog. This juxtaposition provided an ideal taxonomy, something which allowed for physiognomy in both similarity with and difference from, dogs and wolves. It resolved the errors of trying to place the Thyalcine in *Didelphis* or with *Dasyuridae* and was logical, sensible and prosaic enough that no further taxonomy was really required. *T. cynocephalus* fitted the bill neatly so all the subsequent proposed binomials quickly fell out of use.

'Common' or vernacular nomenclature

We have considered what the animal was called by scholars, how its accepted binomial came into existence and rose to become the universally agreed scientific name. Much of this was taking place in rarefied academic debate and discourse in Europe, among scholars who had never set foot in Tasmania and had never seen more than a few preserved remains of the animal. This was clearly a process and discussion which was largely divorced from the everyday lives of the colonists in Tasmania. What names did they use to refer to the Thylacine? Did they use the same broad terminology, was this the dog-head or something similar?

Carol Freeman tells us that "Tasmanian or Marsupial Wolf is the dominant name given to images of the thylacine in zoological works until well into the twentieth

[56] Paterson, William. (1805a). Letter to Sir Joseph Banks, dated 30 March 1805. State Library of Western Australia (Series 27.33).
[57] Cuvier, Georges [Jean Léopold Nicolas Frédéric, Baron Cuvier]. (1817). Le règne animal distribué d'aprés son organisation, pour servir de base a l'histoire naturelle des animaux et d'introduction à l'anatomie compareé. Tome 1: i-xxxvii, 1-540.— Paris.
[58] Fischer, J B. *op cit*. p.270.

century"[59]. This is certainly true when one looks at the scientific literature of the early period: Fischer with his description of the animal as the size of a young wolf, Mudie describing it as having the mouth of a wolf, the taxonomies chosen referring to lupine characteristics and a host of other similar statements. However, whilst we can readily see the widespread use of this name in the scholarly works was it the term used in vernacular discourse? We can possibly best attempt to answer this by looking at original material of the time, such as letters, diaries and most importantly newspapers. Undoubtedly the term wolf was used by colonists to describe the Thylacine, examples of which are found, both in Tasmania itself and in the wider Australian press. In 1829 very early in the colonisation of the island and only a few years after the Van Diemen's Land Company began operations and the colony was developing the Hobart Town Courier states that "its mouth resembles that of a wolf[60]", although it did not actually refer to the Thylacine as a wolf per se. In 1858 the South Australian Register (from Adelaide) spoke of the "marsupial wolf from Van Diemen's Land"[61] and in 1859 the Armidale Express from New South Wales also referred to "the Tasmanian marsupial wolf"[62]. It is clear that this term was in use both popularly and also in scientific circles where dog and wolf comparisons formed the basis of the nomenclature that was accepted.

However, early references to a 'wolf' in relation to the Thylacine are uncommon in popular colonial language. Despite the early French explorers such as Labillardière talking about dogs and the scientific establishment being impressed by the similarities between canine and Thylacine skulls, wolf is not the usual name given to the animal in the popular press of the time. There are undoubtedly references to wolf as the name of choice but these are not the major popular name. G P Harris does state that the animal is popularly called a wolf "it is vulgarly called… zebra wolf" in 1808[63]. However, popular references to the animal as "wolf" are not seen in the early popular literature. For example, the Hobart Town Courier does

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[59] **Freeman, Carol J. (2005).** Figuring extinction: Visualizing the thylacine in zoological and natural history works 1808-1936. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. University of Tasmania: (Hobart, Australia) p138. Located at: https://eprints.utas.edu.au/19821/ retrieved 2/09/21

[60] Hobart Town Courier, Sat 28th February 1829, P2. Located at https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/4217812?searchTerm=native%20hyenas retrieved 10/09/21

[61] South Australian Register, Adelaide, Tuesday 28th December 1858, p2. Located at *https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/49782519?searchTerm=tasmanian%20wolf* retrieved 10/08/21

[62] The Armidale Express and New England General Advertiser (NSW). Sat 5th march 1859. P3. Located at: *https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/189983710?searchTerm=tasmanian%20wolf retrieved* retrieved 10/08/21

[63] Harris, George Prideaux. (1808). Description of two new species of *Didelphis* from Van Diemen's Land. Transactions of the Linnean Society of London 9(1): 174-178. P175. Located at: https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/page/757948#page/200/mode/1up retrieved 12/09/21

use the term in 1829 but only as comparative context, the article states: "Considerable numbers of the native hyena prowl… Its mouth resembles that of a wolf"[64], and thus the wolf element is a comparison to Old World animals for the cognitive convenience of the Europeans. Later in the 1850s the name wolf is more widely used, for example, The South Australian Register in 1858 tells us: "He has added to the collection a marsupial wolf from Van Diemen's Land[65]", while in 1859 we learn from The Armidale Express and New England general Advertiser: "The Australian collections have received a very interesting addition… the Tasmanian marsupial wolf (Thylacinus cynocephalus)[66]". However, neither of these latter two publications were Tasmanian and a search for the term wolf used to directly describe the Thylacine in Tasmanian sources of the period is likely to be largely fruitless.

In the early days of the colony there were a plethora of popular names used for the Thylacine. The earliest notes on the animal suggest a variety of names which did not all survive long. The very earliest accounts by Harris and Paterson give a variety of names. In 1804, evidently before seeing the animal, Harris wrote "Traces of a Carnivorous Beast have been found in many parts, like a leopard or Panther"[67], in 1808 he tells us "It is vulgarly called the Zebra Opossum, Zebra Wolf, &c"[68]. The idea of the Thylacine as some kind of feline is repeated later by the likes of W C Wentworth in 1819 ("there is an animal of the panther tribe"[69]) and Thomas Godwin, later in 1823 ("An animal of the panther tribe"[70]). This, presumably came from the stripes, which suggested a tiger to Old World eyes and therefore the leap of logic was made to place the (clearly non-feline) Thylacine into the cat family, although to be fair this was a suggestion made by non-scholars who were trying to frame the

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[64] Hobart Town Courier, Sat 28th February 1829, P2. Located at https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/4217812?searchTerm=native%20hyenas retrieved 10/09/21

[65] South Australian Advertiser (Adelaide). Tue 28th December 1858, p2. Located at: https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/49782519?searchTerm=tasmanian%20wolf retrieved 14/09/21

[66] The Armidale Express and New England General Advertiser. Sat 5th March 1859, P3. Located at: https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/49782519?searchTerm=tasmanian%20wolf retrieved 14/09/21

[67] **Letter by G P Harris, reproduced in** Hamilton-Arnold, Barbara (ed.). (1994). Letters and Papers of G.P. Harris 1803-1812: Deputy Surveyor General of New South Wales at Sullivan Bay, Port Phillip, and Hobart Town, Van Diemen's Land. Sorrento, Victoria: Arden Press. 174 pp.

[68] Harris, George Prideaux. (1808). Description of two new species of *Didelphis* from Van Diemen's Land. Transactions of the Linnean Society of London 9(1): 174-178.

[69] Wentworth, W. C. (1819). Statistical, Historical, and Political Description of the Colony of New South Wales, and its Dependent Settlements in Van Diemen's Land: with a particular enumeration of the advantages which these colonies offer for emigration, and their superiority in many respects over those possessed by the United States of America. London: G. and W. B. Whittaker.

[70] Godwin, Thomas. (1823). Godwin's Emigrant's Guide to Van Diemen's Land, more properly called Tasmania, containing a Description of its Climate, Soil and Productions; a Form of Application for Free Grants of Land… a list of the most necessary Articles to take out, and other information Useful to Emigrants… London: Sherwood, Jones.

animal in their writings using their frame of reference which was derived from their European roots. Also, in the earlier sources we see the Thylacine referred to frequently as an opossum of some sort. For example, William Bullock in 1812 ("Zebra Opossum"[71]) and the Hobart Town Gazette in 1820 ("Hyena Opossum"[72]). However, the inappropriateness of this name was quickly realised and pointed out, for example by William Breton in 1833: "hyena opossum, as it is absurdly called"[73]. These opossum names disappeared fairly early, presumably as knowledge of Tasmanian fauna improved and scholars such as Temminck pointed out the falsity of this terminology. The confusion and sheer variety of early names applied to the Thylacine are perhaps best attested by looking at local newspapers. The Hobart Town Gazette, for example, uses a bewildering set of alternative names for the same animal. As we have seen in 1820 it was "Hyena Opossum", but in 1819 it referred to "an animal known in the Colony by the name of the cat tyger"[74] and previously, in 1817 to the same animal but then it was "known in this Colony by the name of the dog-tiger".[75] The 'cat tyger' or tiger cat appellation survived for some time and is referred to again by George Robinson in 1834: "he discovered a tiger cat… it was female hyaena"[76], this suggests that the tiger cat name might have been applied to any marsupial predator, it was certainly applied equally to quolls over the years, to be refined at need as Robinson does here when he reports that the dead animal is a hyaena as opposed to any other type of 'tiger cat'.

There are, however, two terms which clearly predominated in the early colony period. Ronald Gunn that major figure in the limited scholarly stratum in early colonial Tasmania informs us "The Thylacinus cynocephalus is called in Van Diemen's Land indiscriminately by the names of Tiger and Hyaena[77]", notably not wolf. Indeed, it is

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[71] Bullock, William. (1812). A Companion to Mr. Bullock's London Museum and Pantherion ; containg a brief description of upward of fifteen thousand nayural and foreign curiosities, antiquities, and productions of the fine arts, Collected during Seventeen Years of arduous Research, and at an Expense of thirty thousand pounds ; And now open for Public Inspection in the Egyptian Temple, just erected for its reception, in Piccadilly, London, opposite the end of Bond-Street. London: Printed for the proprietor. xii + 136 pp. [p. 30-31]

[72] Anonymous. (1820). ["A young female Hyena Opossum"]. The Hobart Town Gazette and Southern Reporter, Saturday, 24 June. p. 2.

[73] Breton, William Henry. (1833). Excursions in New South Wales, Western Australia, and Van Dieman's Land ... London: Richard Bentley. [p. 407-408]

[74] Anonymous. (1819). [Untitled]. The Hobart Town Gazette and Southern Reporter, Saturday, 24 July, p. 1. [thylacine killed by dogs after returning to its kill at Kangaroo Point]

[75] Anonymous. (1817c). [No title]. The Hobart Town Gazette and Southern Reporter, Saturday, 6 December, p. 2.

[76] Plomley, N. J. B. (1966). Friendly Mission: The Journals of George Augustus Robinson 1829-1834. Hobart: Tasmanian Historical Research Association.

[77] Gunn, Ronald Campbell. (1837). Letter to Sir William Hooker, 31/3/1837. In: Burns, T. E. and Skemp, J. R. (eds.). (1961). Van Diemen's Land Correspondents. Launceston: Queen Victoria Museum.

by the two terms: hyena and tiger that the Thylacine was predominantly referred in the early colonial sources we have available.

Let us first turn to the well-known and much used name "tiger" for the Thylacine. This was a name applied very early on in the colonisation of Tasmania. It is well attested from the earliest sources. For example, in 1805, just two years after the British began to colonise Tasmania, Robert Knopwood tells us "when they were in the wood they see a large Tyger"[78]. A report in the Hobart Town Gazette in 1817 informs us that "a male animal of the tyger species was killed"[79]. By the 1820s the local newspapers were regularly referring to the Thylacine as a tiger. For example, in 1821 The Hobart Town Gazette spoke about the "Native tyger"[80], in 1831 the Tasmanian advertised "Two Native Tigers"[81] for sale, likewise the Colonial Times in 1832 had a George Marsden also offering "Native tiger[82]" for sale (he was also doing so again in 1833[83]) and in 1833 the Colonial Times mentions "tigers[84]" foraging in the Tasmanian bush. Adam Amos in 1826 was able to state: "tigers are plentifull [sic] amongst the rocky mountains"[85] and Henry Melville writing an informative guide to Tasmania in 1833 talks about the "tiger[86]" as a danger to flocks. Melville had been in Tasmania for seven years at this point and was the owner of the Colonial Times, a man who clearly knew the island well, so would be expected to know the current and popular terminology.

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[78] Lord, Clive Errol. (1927). Notes on the Diary of the Reverend Robert Knopwood, 1805-1808. Papers and Proceedings of the Royal Society of Tasmania 61: 78-154.

[79] Anonymous. (1817a). Non-descript animal. Hobart Town Gazette and Southern Reporter, Saturday, 5 April, p. 2 |2|. Located at: https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/652559/40507 retrieved on 12/09/21

[80] Anonymous. (1821). Native Tyger, or Hyena. Hobart Town Gazette and Van Diemen's Land Advertiser, Saturday, 3 November, p. 2. Located at: https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/1089570 retrieved 18/09/21

[81] Anonymous. (1831). 'Sale by Auction'. The Tasmanian, 19 November, p. 2 |1|. Located at: https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/233097963/25174457 retrieved on 17/09/21

[82] Marsden, George. (1832). To Connoisseurs in Natural Curiosities. Colonial Times, Tuesday, 20 November, p. 1. Located at: https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/8646772?searchTerm=%22native%20tiger%22&searchLimits=exactPhrase=%22native+tiger%22%7C%7C%7CanyWords%7C%7C%7CnotWords%7C%7C%7CrequestHandler%7C%7C%7CdateFrom%7C%7C%7CdateTo=1850-12-31%7C%7C%7Csortby retrieved 18/09/21

[83] Anonymous. (1833). To Naturalists. The Tasmanian, Friday, 8 November, p. 1. [George Marsden]

[84] Anonymous. (1833a). ['We have noticed']. Colonial Times, Tuesday, 25 June, p. 2 |2|. [plans to kill thylacines etc. that scavenge arsenic-poisoned carcasses] Located at: https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/8647066 retrieved on 12/09/21

[85] Letter from Adam Amos (Oyster Bay), dated 20 April 1826. Barrett, Charles. (1944). Isle of Mountains: Roaming Through Tasmania. Melbourne: Cassell & Company. [p. 132]

[86] Melville, Henry [Wintle, Henry Saxelby Melville]. (1833). Van Diemen's Land ; Comprehending A Variety of Statistical And Other Information Likely To Be Interesting To The Emigrant, As Well As To The General Reader. Hobart Town: Henry Melville & London: Smith, Elder, and Co.

If we advance to the final decade of the Thylacine's known existence, the 1930s, it is referred to systematically in the popular press as the tiger. In the year of the death of 'Benjamin', 1936, we find The Examiner in Launceston telling us it is "known as the Tasmanian Tiger"[87] and the Advocate from Burnie Tasmania informing us of "a recent report of a native tiger" also in 1936[88]. Mainland Australian newspapers concurred, the Queenslander in 1934 stating that "the "Tasmanian Tiger" as it is known in its home state"[89] and in the same year the Leader in Orange, New South Wales, spoke about "the Tasmanian tiger"[90]

The name had clearly caught on and has persisted to the modern day, so that today it is the most common name used for the Thylacine. Evidence to support this can easily be found by looking at the names of books on the subject. David Owen published 'Thylacine: The Tragic Tale of the Tasmanian Tiger' in 2003 in 2000 Robert Paddle published 'The Last Tasmanian Tiger: The History and Extinction of the Thylacine', Eric Guiler's 'The Tasmanian Tiger in Pictures' dates from 1991 and Col Bailey's 'Tiger Tales: Stories of the Tasmanian Tiger' was released in 2001. These are just a few of a multitude of books to use this popular name. This is the name by which the animal is now largely known when not referred to as the Thylacine.

Despite the evident popularity and ubiquity of the term "tiger" it may surprise a modern audience to note that perhaps the usual name in the early colonial period was "hyena". This is not a name that is much used in current discourse on the Thylacine. A cursory glance at the main popular encyclopaedia websites shows that hyena is not a name which is more referenced in modern basic discussion of the animal. Britannica states "Alternate titles: Tasmanian tiger, Tasmanian wolf, Thylacinus cynocephalus, marsupial wolf"[91]. Wikipedia only concedes one additional name: ""Tasmanian tiger" redirects here"[92]. However, in the early days of the colony the term hyena was used widely and popularly. The first significant report of the

[87] Examiner (Launceston) Tues 28 April 1936. Located at: https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/52008397?searchTerm=hyena%20tiger%20tasmanian%20tiger retrieved 11/10/21
[88] Advocate (Burnie, Tasmania) tues 28 Apr 2936 p9. https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/91814222?searchTerm=hyena%20tiger%20tasmanian%20tiger retrieved on 11/10/21
[89] The Queenslander, Brisbane thurs 15th Nov 1934 p40. https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/23341259?searchTerm=hyena%20tiger%20tasmanian%20tiger retrieved on 11/10/21
[90] Leader (Orange, NSW) mon 16 Jul 1934 p2. https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/255374129?searchTerm=hyena%20tiger%20tasmanian%20tiger retrieved on 11/10/21
[91] Britannica Online, located at: https://www.britannica.com/animal/thylacine retrieved 03/09/21
[92] Wikipedia, located at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thylacine retrieved 03/09/21

animal by Paterson in 1805 stated "The form of the animal is the of the hyaena"[93]. In 1808 Harris claims "Head very large bearing a near resemblance to the wolf or hyaena"[94], George Barrington in 1810 states "A species of the Hyena has lately been seen at Port Dalrymple"[95]. Newspaper reports from the 1820s regularly refer to hyenas, for example the Hobart Town Gazette in January 1821 "A very large hyena"[96] and again in November, "Hyena"[97]. Into the 1830s the name persists commonly, for example The Quarterly Journal of Agriculture talks about "an animal known by the name of hyena"[98], Hector McRa claimed in 1832 that "Hyenas"[99] were a danger to wildlife. George Robinson in his diaries almost always uses the term hyena, repeating it over and over, throughout the 1830s. In 1832 for example: 14th July "a bitch hyena", 15th July "seeing the hyaena" and 29th August "skinned the hyaena" to name just a few occasions. He was a man who spent over a decade living among the Tasmanian Aborigines and evidently had many dealings with Thylacines in that time. He rarely uses any other term[100]. This name was extremely common and widely used in the early years of the settlement. Indeed, it was also found in a variety of sub-variants such as the hyena opossum which is also widespread: used by the Hobart Town Gazette in 1820[101], Charles Goodridge in 1832[102] and Henry Melville in 1833[103].

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[93] Paterson, William [Anonymous]. (1805b). ["An animal of a truly singular and nouvel description..."]. The Sydney Gazette and NSW Advertiser vol. 3, no. 112, Sunday, 21 April 1805, p. 3. Located at: https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/626732/6103 retrieved 15/09/21

[94] Harris, George Prideaux. (1808). Description of two new species of *Didelphis* from Van Diemen's Land. Transactions of the Linnean Society of London 9(1): 174-178.

[95] Barrington, George. (1810). The History of New South Wales, including Botany Bay, Port Jackson, Parramatta, Sydney, and all its Dependancies, from the Original Discovery of the Island; with the Customs and Manners of the Natives; and an account of The English Colony from its Foundation to the Present Time. 2nd edition. London: Sherwood, Neely and Jones. Located at: https://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks12/1203391h.html retrieved 18/09/21

[96] Anonymous. (1821). ["A very large Hyena"]. Supplement to the Hobart Town Gazette. Hobart Town Gazette and Van Diemen's Land Advertiser, Saturday, 27 January, p. 2. Located at: https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/1089384/123623 retrieved 12/09/21

[97] Anonymous. (1821). Native Tyger, or Hyena. Hobart Town Gazette and Van Diemen's Land Advertiser, Saturday, 3 November, p. 2. Located at: https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/1089570 retrieved 11/09/21

[98] Author? (1831-1832). Van Diemen's Land. The Quarterly Journal of Agriculture 3: 335-356. Located at: https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.hx3grx&view=1up&seq=347 retrieved on 12/09/21

[99] McRa, Hector. (1932). Tasmania—One Hundred Years Ago. The Australasian, Saturday, 10 December, p. 4.

[100] All found in: Plomley, N. J. B. (1966). Friendly Mission: The Journals of George Augustus Robinson 1829-1834. Hobart: Tasmanian Historical Research Association.

[101] Anonymous. (1820). ["A young female Hyena Opossum"]. The Hobart Town Gazette and Southern Reporter, Saturday, 24 June. p. 2.

[102] Goodrige, Charles Medyett. (1832). Narrative of a Voyage to the South Seas,... London: Hamilton and Adams. [p. 291]

[103] Melville, Henry [Wintle, Henry Saxelby Melville]. (1833). Van Diemen's Land ; Comprehending A Variety of Statistical And Other Information Likely To Be Interesting To The Emigrant, As Well As To The General Reader. Hobart Town: Henry Melville & London: Smith, Elder, and Co.

Although not used widely, if at all, today, it did persist into the later days of the Thylacine's known existence, for example by The Advocate in 1930[104] reported "Hyena Killed at Mawbanna", in reference to Wilf Batty's famous killing of the third last attested wild Thylacine. It is a name that has lost currency today and has been almost entirely superseded by tiger but which was for a time the dominant and most usual name for the animal.

It may strike the casual observer that both tiger and hyena are possibly strange words for Europeans to use, given that those animals are Asian. It might be expected that a European population giving Old World names to newly discovered animals would use names familiar to their own original environment, of which there were clearly some highly appropriate to the Thylacine, notably the grey wolf, well-known in Europe. Why then did the British colonists in Tasmania use the names tiger and hyena? It has to be remembered that the British had been heavily involved in India for decades and had acquired significant territory in the subcontinent. Indeed, by the time Tasmania was settled in 1803, the British East India Company had substantial control over large areas of Eastern and Southern India, such as Bengal and Karnataka. Many tens of thousands of British officials and soldiers had served in the Company's possessions and had gained experience of Indian animals. Among those animals were the Bengal tiger and the striped hyena. This undoubtedly informed their naming of the new species as the British were now operating with Asian as well as European knowledge of fauna. John Henderson in 1832 suggested that this was the case when he tells us: "It is about the size of the hyena common in Hindoostan"[105]. Hindoostan was an older rendering of the term Hindustan, another name widely used for India in earlier times. He was clearly referring to the striped hyena, an animal common to India at that time and undoubtedly seen by Europeans many times over decades. The Thylacine was not an animal which immediately brought to mind the hyena, which is an animal with longer legs, bulkier forequarters and a quite different head. However, given the constraints of the naming approach, to whit applying Old World names, it was perhaps quite a logical choice as it is a dog-sized predator with extensive striping on its body, similar in colour to the Thylacine and occupying a similar ecological niche.

A comparison of the striped hyena and Thylacine for visual purposes[106]:

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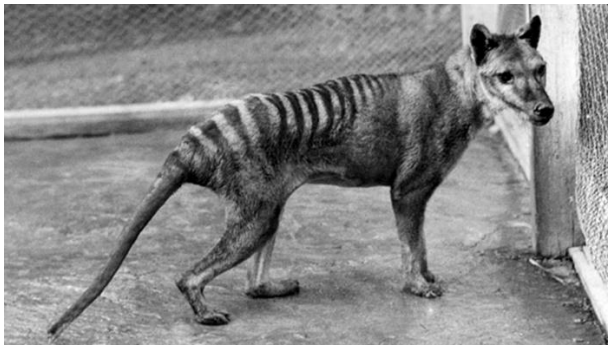
[104] The Advocate, Burnie, Tasmania. Wednesday 14th May 1930 https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/84936684/7330341

[105] Henderson, John. (1832). Observations on the Colonies of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land. Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press.

[106] Hyena picture found at https://www.worldatlas.com/r/w1200/upload/8c/3e/b6/the-hyena-is-a-near-threatened-species-and-india-is-home-to-20-of-the-hyena-population-in-the-world.jpg retrieved 20/10/21 Thylacine picture found at: https://encrypted-

Thylacine (right and striped hyena) showing the pelage for comparison.

Likewise, 'tiger' may strike the reader as an unusual comparison but it again was an animal well-known from India and also striped. Obviously, a tiger is a very different animal, far larger with the largest Bengal Tigers weighing in at over 250 kilograms and reaching over 300cm in length, making them far bigger than the Thylacine which weighed in the 16 kilogram range and was not more than about 200cm in total length. Adding to this the feline nature of the tiger which has no close relation to the Thylacine even when we consider that it was physically very similar to canines. The comparison is simply one based on stripes. However, given the confusion in the early days of colonisation and the Thylacine being considered as of the "panther tribe" as Wentworth and Godwin stated, perhaps the tiger appellation is not as weird as it first appears. Still, given the frame of reference of the British in the early nineteenth century, this was a fairly logical name, even if it was physically unrealistic. It certainly stuck and is now widely accepted as the vernacular name found in most modern sources, so it clearly has some validity and popular appeal.

The lay reader will immediately note that there is no suggestion among all these vernacular names that the colonists adopted indigenous names for the animal. We know that the Tasmanians had a plethora of names for the Thylacine, but unlike the name kangaroo which was adopted more-or-less exactly from an indigenous language by Joseph Banks on the Cook expedition, there is no connection between the indigenous words we have attested, for which information is very limited, and the terminology used by the colonists. George Robinson was a man who attempted to preserve the indigenous peoples of Tasmania and spent over a decade trying to protect and look after the surviving population, in the process of which he had extensive daily dealings with Tasmanians and is referred to as "protector of Aboriginals" in the Australian Dictionary of Biography[107]. In his immensely useful diaries he informs us: "The hyaena is called mannalargenna (east coast), cabberrone-

tbn0.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcT3AoAhVyTWOoGQYOLjj_0h179xgrTkTeusQSCK2Ym6EfOhvjZanFrdO-y6k42XU52lAxU&usqp=CAU both retrieved 20/10/21

[107] Originally: Australian Dictionary of Biography, Vol. 2. (Melbourne, 1967). Located at: https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/robinson-george-augustus-2596 retrieved 12/09/21

nener, by the Cape Grim, lowenin, by Jenny (north coast), clinner, by the Cape Portland warternoonner, by the Brune cannenner, and by the Oyster Bay larnter..."[108]. It is unlikely that Robinson was able to ascertain all the indigenous names for the Thylacine but even these limited examples suggest that the colonists did not adopt any of the existing Tasmanian terms. Another indigenous name is given by Walker in 1833 "mytōppyněh... trŷnōōněh... the big opossum... the tiger-cat..."[109] It is unsurprising that the European scientific community, wedded to Classical terminology, did not utilise these names, even if they had somehow heard of them. However, it is perhaps more remarkable that the colonists did not adopt any of them. Given the hostile nature of relations between the newcomers and the original population, which led to the destruction of almost the entire indigenous population, it is unsurprising that the incomers, contemptuous in the main, as they evidently were, of the existing inhabitants, did not learn and use their names for the Thylacine, whose popular names seem very much founded in British terminology of the time.

Conclusion

The story of the nomenclature of the Thylacine is one in which there is a clearly an answer in the academic sense but not in the vernacular. In other words, after some debate and various suggestions, scholars reached a consensus on what to call the animal; whereas, the vernacular name was never settled and is still open to debate and variance, even 86years after the death of the last attested specimen. The scholarly name, *Thylacinus cynocephalus*, as we have seen, has been widely accepted since the 1830s and is now the only scientific name for the species given in any publication. It is an eminently sensible name which combines the marsupial and superficially canine nature of the animal and provides it with a separate sub-genus to take account of its unique nature that is different from any other Australian marsupial carnivore observed in historical times. In short, it is a highly appropriate taxonomy, one that satisfies all categories and has been in universal use and acceptance for decades. Unsurprisingly, the vernacular name for the animal was never settled. It was given a variety of names across the island of Tasmania, by the European colonists and also, seemingly, the indigenous peoples who preceded them. However, even this melange of names has varied over time, with an early plethora of

[108] Plomley, N. J. B. (2008). Friendly Mission: The Journals of George Augustus Robinson 1829-1834 (second edition). Hobart: Quintus Publishing / Launceston: Tasmanian Historical Research Association. xviii + 1162 pp.

[109] The journal entry (for 15 October 1832?) of either James Backhouse Walker or George Washington Walker. Walker, James Backhouse. (1902). Early Tasmania: Papers read before the Royal Society of Tasmania during the years 1888 to 1899. Hobart, Tasmania: John Vail, Government Printer. This cannot be the diary of James Backhouse Walker as he was born in 1841 so is, presumably, that of George Washington Walker.

terms giving way to the two main stalwarts of tiger and hyena, although always supplemented by a healthy smattering of other appellations. Over time, tiger has assumed the central position as the most commonly used popular name for the Thylacine and is now the dominant phrase used in books, websites and all other media. Hyena, formerly arguably the main name attached to the animal by colonists, has now receded so far from the public conscience that modern websites do not even list it as an alternative for consideration. Even by the 1930s, hyena was not a name that was commonly found in newspapers and publications, although it did still occasionally appear; today it has entirely died away. So, in modern parlance we are able to confidently speak of the Tasmanian Tiger, *Thylacinus cynocephalus* and expect to be understood both in lay circles and by the scientific community as speaking of the Thylacine.