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To preserve through education.....1

From the Curator....

Dear members of PADS and readers of our Journal,

In this issue we offer the third part of Valdimir Beregovoy's article about evolutionary changes in dogs during their domestication and adaptation to life under conditions of urban environment. P. D. Boaz described little known to the world, but quite remarkable hounds from Southern India. Isik Guvener described in details how aboriginal livestock guarding dogs have been fed in Turkey. Indeed, what dogs ate before the invention of commercially manufactured dry dog food? This is not an idle question, because obtaining food and its quality (and sometimes not feeding dogs) was an important part of dog's way of life and it had a biological impact on dog's behavior, character and physiology. We also publish the first part of a large article by Robert Vartanyan with a detailed description of the environment, way of life and appearance of aboriginal Caucasian Ovcharkas. In the end, we include an updated and corrected list of members of PADS.

Sincerely yours,
Curator of PADS,
Vladimir Beregovoy

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Evolutionary Changes In Domesticated Dogs: The Broken Covenant Of The Wild, Part 3

by Vladimir Beregovoy, USA

Cultured breeds

The appearance of cultured breeds marks the next step in the evolution of the domesticated dog. Every cultured breed was derived and improved by deliberate breeding, at one time or another, from a population of aboriginal dogs. There is no precise data where and when the first cultured breeds originated because it began as a gradual process which started at the dawn of the first civilizations. One major difference between a cultured breed and a primitive one is in the cultured breed's better adaptation to life under conditions of restricted freedom and under the care and control of people in overcrowded environments. Civilized society needs different dogs, those



Chow Chow, a show quality dog. Photo taken by the author at the dog show in Tulsa, Oklahoma, USA

which are easy to own. This kind of dog is more obedient and submissive even if it is mistreated physically, and it would work anywhere and in any new overcrowded environment. This type of dog lives under the control and care of its master and is his cohort in hunting, sport, guarding or companionship during leisure time. Because cultured breed dogs are kept confined, their breeding in isolation is easy and selection for peculiar appearances and specific working qualities allows the development of numerous breeds, keeping them simultaneously on the same small

territory. Importation of dogs with peculiar traits into Europe from different parts of the world added even more peculiar breeds, ones which became absorbed in the process of improving old breeds and developing new ones. As a result of this frequent reshuffling, cultured breeds became more or less genetically cosmopolitan.

Appearance.

The earliest signs of impact on dogs caused by esthetic preferences of people are observed in specialized aboriginal breeds, such as different sight hounds and livestock protecting dogs. Short, medium, or long hair coat and pendulous ears of livestock guarding dogs and unusual distribution of long hairs over the body of Afghan Hounds, Taigans and Saluki are examples of considerable differences from Dingo-like dogs. Perhaps lop eared dogs better fit life with nomads who keep livestock on the open plains. Such dogs are less frightening to sheep and they are easier to distinguish from wolves preying on sheep. When it became possible to breed dogs in isolation, dogs' appearance became further diversified. These, and many other differences involving changes in body structure are found in archeological artifacts with images of dogs and fossil remains from ancient Egypt. There were several groups of dogs with conspicuous anatomical differences which can be related to the dachshund, sight hound, greyhound, scent hound and sheep guarding types of dog. Prick eared dogs with almost square body proportions were also there. During the Greco-Roman period of history, six major groups of breeds known today were quite popular: guard dogs, shepherd dogs, bird dogs, scent hounds, sight hounds and toy breeds. Since that time, more breeds within each group and several new type breeds were developed. Differences between the breeds became enhanced, but variation within each breed reduced.

Variation of coat colors far exceeds known coat colors among aboriginal breeds and includes also harlequin, mouse blue, chocolate brown, blotched patterns and brindle; none are typical among most known primitive aboriginal breeds. Characteristics in appearance, conducive to the physical function of aboriginal breeds, is not always the case in cultured breeds because esthetic requirements of a purebred looking dog are also important and some features became over exaggerated. For example, long ears and baggy lips of some scent hound breeds.

Reproductive biology.

Females of the majority of cultured breeds are good mothers and, under good care, can raise puppies on their own. However, if abandoned, they have estrus periods regardless of the season, usually two times per year, and give birth to large litters, from 9 to 20 or more puppies per litter, which they cannot feed on their own. In feral life, this is very costly energetically and results in high pup mortality. Females of some breeds have false estrus periods, difficulties during parturition and other reproductive problems requiring veterinary assistance.

Behavior.

The sixth century and through the eighteenth century was a golden era of diversification of hunting breeds in medieval Europe. Hunting with dogs was a popular pastime. Orderly behavior of dogs during the hunt and around the house was very important and it was a must for dogs of other than hunting purpose as well. Life in a crowded place required obedient and easy to handle dogs. Moreover, during hunting, dogs of each breed were required to act in a certain manner and pursue only a particular kind of game. Thus, scent hounds should use their nose on tracks on the ground when searching and tracking animals, and be persistent and barking continually during the chase. Sight hounds should not use their noses, but search and chase their quarry by eye only. Hounds should be able to live in overcrowded kennels, work well in packs and not fight each other or snarl at unfamiliar people. Guard dogs should be aggressive and mistrustful with unfamiliar people, but also be controllable and obedient to commands. This is now called an "on-and-off dog". Dogs of cultured breeds are easy to teach all kinds of tricks and they are eager to learn, which is now sometimes called a "willing-to-please dog". These and other similar qualities together with peculiar traits of appearance were considered signs of a noble dog and these traits were most coveted and deliberately enhanced by selective breeding. Freedom loving, independent, cautious in unfamiliar surroundings, ceremonious with each other, genetically preprogrammed dogs of primitive breeds were out of place on private estates and in highly ritualized hunts of high status people. They were equally inappropriate in any crowded place, where decisions were made only by people, not by dogs. Cultured breeds displayed discipline and intelligence; they lived and worked in overcrowded environments and, under control of their masters and breeders, achieved amazing perfection such as the cold nose (the ability and desire to track game by using very old, i.e. cold, tracks, sometimes glazed footprints on ice, two or even three days old tracks left by animals on dirt, etc.), the persistence and endurance of scent hounds, the style and beauty of work of bird pointing dogs, the extraordinary intelligence of working with sheep of border collies or police work with Belgian Malinois, German Shepherd



**Chow Chow of the aboriginal type from China before it had been modified by breeding for winning shows.
Picture sent by Marylin Harris, USA**

Dogs and their mixes. There is no doubt that dogs of functional cultured breeds share fully with their masters the high excitement of their communal pursuit and influence their owners by actively competing with each other. For example, the hunter is watching his dog at work and the dog is stimulated by active participation and encouragement of the hunter by voice, gestures and body language in general, which dogs are so capable to read correctly. The dog may be tired, wet and cold, very hungry and yet he will work, hard driven by that strange excitement. This is how hunter and his dog become one, feel the same and enjoy the same activity. Listening to conversations among hunters with dogs, one can quickly learn that they are much more excited with the style and efficiency of the work of their dogs during the hunt, than with the game the dogs helped them get.



Plott, the American scent hound breed. This Plott male belongs to Charles Montgomery, Virginia. Photo by the author.

Way of life and selection.

In medieval Europe hunting with dogs was considered a necessary attribute of a nobleman. Sight hounds and scent hounds followed crusaders on their military expeditions, scent hound packs were sprinkled with holy water in churches, and bishops and father superiors also participated in hunts with scent hounds. In the time of Gaston Phoebus (the fourteenth century) in France alone the number of hunters with scent hounds was twenty thousand (Sabaneev, 1899). Gaston Phoebus had up to 1,200 dogs, and other high status people had large numbers of hounds as well. Besides scent

hounds, there were sight hounds, molossers and other breeds. Some breeders kept records of their dogs' pedigrees while others did not keep any records at all. Each breed was named by its function, regardless of admixtures of other breeds used for their improvement.



In XV century, artist Gaston Phoebus' time, dogs were well cared for. From *Gaston Phoebus' Book of the Hunt*, reprinted with the kind permission of ADEVA, Austria

Usually noblemen did not sell puppies, but gave them as gifts to relatives and friends. Spay/castration policies were not on the mind of breeders and bad dogs were culled, often by hanging. Trade, diplomatic relationships and wars helped the genetic exchange of dog breeds between different countries. Scientific knowledge of genetics was not available then, but breeders were well aware of inbreeding depression and they took care to add "fresh blood" to their breeds while selecting for the best functional qualities and details of appearance. Two opposite trends in the breeding of dogs were debated since very old time and they remain important to this day. Crossbreeding helped to

enhance general vigor, physical endurance and it added desirable new qualities. However, the increased diversity in subsequent generations was undesirable and returning to the original noble look required selective breeding of similar to similar. More or less regular genetic exchange between different strains and breeds helped to maintain them as sound populations. Because hunting and other activities are based on mutually shared enthusiasm of both dogs and people, the old covenant of the wild held true. However, this changed radically, beginning in the late nineteenth century, when dogs were bred for winning at shows, rather than for any physical performance.

Show-pet dogs.

Show-pet dogs are derived from formerly physically performing cultured or aboriginal breeds. The emergence and expansion of a show-pet culture in the dog loving public signified the most recent step in the evolution of dogs under conditions of life in overcrowded urban society. In Europe and other economically advanced parts of the world, when human population increased, there was little space left for hunters with their dogs. Hunting dogs declined in numbers, but small toy breeds became increasingly popular. Toy breeds, well known from ancient artifacts of old civilizations, had been changed for esthetic purposes first. After a period of decline, hunting dogs made a come back, but in a different capacity. They became show dogs. In effect they joined ranks with toy breeds, becoming big toy breeds for an idle way of life.

In Great Britain, the dog show business was started in 1891 by a young entrepreneur named Charles Cruft. In the United States, the first dog show was held in 1877 by the Westminster Kennel Club. The Westminster Kennel Club was established with a positive view to increase an interest in dogs, and "improving" the breeds. In the beginning good hunting dogs were shown, but when interest in showing dogs became widespread, interest in "purebred" appearance overcame interest in the physical performance of dogs. Breed standards were put together and the standard of each breed became a tool designed to facilitate the work of dog show judges and help breeders to select potential show champions in order to breed even more show champions. Breeders of dogs for show soon discovered that they could do well without using their dogs for hunting, or any other activities, and an assumption that the pedigreed dog was better than dogs without documents became widely accepted. A dog's documents became more important than its functional qualities, the pedigree serving as a stamp of approval, helping breeders of show winning dogs to sell puppies. In fact, for many people, show sport became the sole reason for keeping dogs. Non-hunters assumed the role of experts in hunting breeds and became major producers of puppies. In actuality, their expertise is limited to interpreting a written breed standard, reading literature and talking with other dog owners who never validated their dogs at hunting or other work. Moreover, breed standards were periodically changed. The changes in popular dog breeds are aimed at helping to keep the show sport going. In this context, "improvement" means only the appearance.

Appearance. Show-pet strains retain the same differences between breeds, from which they had been derived, but their appearance has become further changed by reducing variation within one breed and enhancing differences between the breeds in favor of peculiar traits. Some such traits became so-called trademarks of a breed even at the expense of health and functionality, for example the ridge of the Rhodesian Ridgeback, blue eyes of the Siberian Husky, evenly distributed black spots over body of the Dalmatian, stilted joints of the Chow-Chow, wrinkles of the Shar Pei, domed shape of skull of spaniels, long furnishing hair of setters, etc.

Reproductive biology. Physiologically, show-pet strain dogs do not differ much from the breeds from which they originated, but the same and several new problems associated with reproduction increased in frequency. Mating often requires assistance. Some females cannot give birth without veterinary intervention and in extreme cases all females of certain breeds, such as the English Bulldog, can survive the whelping process only if a veterinarian helps by delivering pups via Cesarean section. False estruses in females are recorded in several breeds.

Behavior.

Dogs of any particular show-pet strain of any breed are much more variable in behavior than they are in appearance. In general, they are perfectly adapted to idle life in kennels and inside houses or in fenced yards; they are calm and this is very convenient for being controlled by dog show handlers or by veterinarians. Some show strain dogs of different show-pet breeds can be trained to do all kinds of tricks just like those which came from cultured functional breeds, such as spaniels, pointers, retrievers, poodles, etc. There are several activities invented mainly for urbanites, such as lure coursing, weight pulling, agility and retrieving from water. Thus, behavior of some hunting and herding breeds had been modified genetically for lure coursing competitions and herding trials. There are lure coursing dogs and herding trial dogs. A good lure coursing dog has particularly acute reaction to moving objects, live or man-made, stay on the track, not making shortcuts and not detracted by presence of other coursing dogs. For generations, the ability of these dogs to perform their original jobs remained untested. Today, if they are put to work, most of them could not work satisfactorily.

Some show dogs do not have a desire or interest to work, are lacking of stamina, have pads that are too soft and their overdeveloped esthetic features are a hindrance to functional performance. Some deviant forms of behavior are not uncommon problems. These include compulsive behavior such as tail chasing, excessive barking if left alone (separation anxiety), mounting objects, self mutilation such as tail biting, leg or flank sucking, and unpredictable snapping at owners, etc.

Way of life and selection.

The majority of show-pet dogs receive good care, regular feeding, clean living quarters, washing, grooming, vaccinations, veterinary check ups, hugging and petting for a proper socialization, all of which is necessary for handling at shows and a happy life in a new home, if the dog is transferred. One important ingredient is missing and this is exercising free and assessment for endurance under strenuous conditions. A breeder with dozens of dogs rarely has enough time to test his or her dogs at actual work. A majority of these dogs are condemned to an entire life behind fences, inside a kennel or walking on the leash around the block one or two times a day. The breeding is strictly selective for traits described in breed standard. Intentionally or not, breeders use propagation strategies contradictory to natural laws of population genetics. In effect, this is a selection against adaptive evolution in a population. Concurrently with selection for the most desirable appearance, unconscious selection for a good kennel dog is in action. A good kennel dog is content under conditions of life without being exercised, does not attempt to escape, does not vocalize much and it is not aggressive to other dogs or unfamiliar people. Absence of tests for physical endurance excludes the chance of preferential "survival" (breeding) of heterozygous individuals. Breeding of dogs of similar appearance with emphasis on trademarks results in continuous inbreeding, because most of the trademarks are recessive traits. Invisible deleterious alleles accumulate and at one generation or another they become doubled and cause death and heritable defects for some of the puppies. There will be puppies which do not fit the breed standard close enough, or puppies with visible, but tolerable genetic defects. They will be spayed and castrated and transferred to good homes. Many of those rejects will be loved and well cared of in their new homes and live a happier life than their parents left in a breeder's kennel. However, breeding dogs are carriers of deleterious allele. On some occasions up to 90% and even 100% of breeding populations are carriers of at least one or even several recessive deleterious alleles ready to pop up in the next generation. Often the very feature valued at the show is a phenotypic manifestation of bad genetics.

Besides "reputable" show breeders, there are many unscrupulous commercial breeders, known as puppy mills, a kind of dog farming establishment. Such enterprises have dozens and even hundreds of breeding dogs, which live in deplorable conditions. Prior to selling, weaned puppies live in groups sorted by age in wire mesh floor to facilitate the cleaning. The dogs are fed low-grade kibbled dog food to make business cost effective. Commercial breeders do not want visitors, because they know that their operation would not inspire a buyer. They prefer selling by

shipping puppies nationwide. Once I had a chance to visit an Airedale Terrier breeder in Tennessee, who advertised in Dog World one year after another. Adult breeding stock dogs lived in about two acre fenced pen that was like a mud pit when it rained. These parents were like a herd of cattle running in one large pen, and their puppies were in cages in one large cattle barn, all sorted in mixed origin groups, by age only, not by litters and the breeder did not have a record of which puppy came from which parents.

Castrating, spaying and other veterinary care and humane methods of euthanasia replace brutal factors of mortality of the past such hanging, shooting, starvation, diseases, predators, etc., but the dogs did not become better because of this. Meaningful evolutionary fate and survival of any breed is determined not by how and why the dogs die, but rather by the quality of the dogs, which survive and procreate. Show-pet breeders are not active dog users, but they are suppliers of puppies and they determine quality of dogs. There is a certain disconnect between the interests of dog breeders and that of dog users, but dog users have little say in the evolution of show-pet dog, unless they breed dogs for themselves and other dog users. If breeders are active dog users and breed their dogs for other dog users, the breed will be functionally sound. There will be always some dogs better than other dogs, but general trend will be towards the functional improvement. If breeders keep dogs idling in pens, the dogs' appearance is the only part which they can know.

There is much money spent on programs involving methods to diagnose debilitating genetic health problems, such as hip dysplasia, with the hope that show-pet breeders could do judicious selection and breed dogs free of genetic problems for their dogs who spend their life in pens and without real working activities. This is not going to help much, because many other genetic deficiencies are lurking and remain unnoticed until the dog is put to work. Besides, every hunter or other working dog user knows that even if a dog would be free of genetic problems, it does not automatically make it a good hunting or working dog.

The accumulation and frequency of genetic health problems in show-pet breeds deserves special attention and research. The dog show fancy is looking for new, "unspoiled" breeds and they adopt "new rescued" breeds for show sport. The older the show strain of aboriginal origin a dog is, the more genetic health problems it has; for example, the Siberian Husky, the Shiba Inu, the Saluki, the Azawakh, the Basenji, the Caucasian Mountain Dog, etc.

While we are overlooking or accepting the disappearance of indigenous aboriginal breeds - those real monuments of nature and ancient culture of functionally sound old type cultured breeds, pop culture show breeds registered and standardized by major kennel clubs are spreading globally like brand name manufactured products, the same in every country of the world, similar to Coca-Cola, Rolls-Royce or Nike sneakers.

There are very interesting examples of breaking the established traditions of closed registries by using any breed, if it helps to enhance the function. This is how high performance breeds are being created, such as the coyote hunting sight hound of the American prairie states and the Alaskan Husky racing sled dog. Even some dogs of cultured breeds, if left to themselves, in the absence of wolves, can survive and reclaim genetic composition as in natural populations of wild species. There are interesting recent studies on feral dogs of Galapagos Islands (Harris Fienberg, private collection, 2003), which showed that secondarily emerging feral populations evolve by adaptive changing specific to the environment.

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Dravidian Hounds of South India

P. D. Boaz
South India

1. Rajapalayam

History

While its own origins remain unknown, it is speculated by some that the Rajapalayam may have been one of the dogs used in the breeding of the modern Dalmatian. It is also known that the Rajapalayam dog was used during the Carnatic Wars to attack the British cavalry in their stables.



Rajapalayam male

kgs in weight. The bitches are about 60cms in height and about 20 kgs in weight. It has a domed head that is carried high. There may be little wrinkling on the skin of the head and throat but no pronounced dewlap. The skin is loose all over the body and the eyes are dark and usually deep brown. The ears are pendant and feel like soft leather. The jaws are long, fine and powerful. It has a scissor bite. The tail is whip-like with a noticeable thinning after about 1/3 its length giving it a bony look. The legs are long and straight. The dog needs plenty of freedom and space. Properly trained they make excellent guard dogs. The Indian Postal Department has brought out postage stamps on the Rajapalayam

Appearance

This breed looks like a miniature Great Dane, with its powerful, muscular, and heavy build. It is a typical boar hound which was used for hunting wild boar and hare. It is usually white in colour, the nose being pink. It has a deep chest. The hair is soft on the head but coarse on the body. It may be about 65cms tall and about 25



Rajapalayam female

An extremely handsome and graceful dog, the Rajapalayam has a gait similar to the trotting of a thoroughbred horse. As with many fully white dogs, there is a high incidence of deafness in this breed. Puppies born with whitish or blue eyes are deaf. Many Rajapalayam dogs suffer from mange, though this is usually not a serious problem. Though the breed dates back a few centuries, the creators of the breed unwittingly ended up fashioning an albino dog, characterized by the pink nose and the lack of pigmentation.

Temperament

It tends to be heavier boned than most Sight hounds, but shares the depth of chest and basic body structure. Its facial structure is considerably different from that of, say a caravan, as it is meant primarily for hunting wild boar.

The Rajapalayam was used predominantly for hunting wild boar and as a formidable guard dog. It needs wide open spaces and is very affectionate and devoted towards its owner, although not always demonstrative. They do not usually like to be touched or handled by strangers and are known to be one man dogs. Most specimens are aggressive and hostile towards strangers, and will attack intruders. Socialization in puppy-hood is important.

Rajapalayam usually do not get along well with other pets like cats, owing to their strong hunting instincts.

Registration Details

Rajapalayam dogs are being registered by the KCI (Kennel Club of India) and are yet to be recognized and registered by international kennel clubs.

Distribution:

Virudhunagar District (Rajapalayam), Tanjore District, southern regions of Tamil Nadu.

2. Combai

History

The Combai is a very ancient breed of dog, used in hunting as early as the 9th century B.C., when the Marava Kings held sway over Southern India. The Combai is now restricted to certain parts of Tamil Nadu and to some special kennels. This breed of dog is slightly shorter than the



Rajapalayam, but appears heavier because of its powerful build.

Appearance

The Combai is usually red or brown, with a black mask, and with a dark line along the back. The chief differences between the Rajapalayam and the Combai breeds are that the Combai has more powerful jaws, often with a black mouth, much more pendent ears, rich red colour and a savage temper. It has, like Rhodesian, a ridge of fur along its back. It may be about 60cms tall and about

Combai male

20kgs in weight. The bitches are about 55cms in height and about 18kgs in weight.

Their coats are easily maintainable, and less prone to skin disorders, fungal and yeast infections, and parasite infestation. The breed, having evolved naturally many centuries ago, is more immune to most diseases compared to the man-designed breeds.

Temperament

As a guard dog, the Combai is superior to the Rajapalayam. It has a savage temper: it is very much like the bull terrier in its temperament. The Combai were used for hunting and keeping watch. Nowadays, these are mostly used as guard dogs in farm houses. Years ago they were used to guard people's cattle from lions and leopards. A Combai is an intelligent and sensible family

dog, as a German shepherd, and as ferocious as a Rottweiler to intruders. It is athletic and intelligent breed.



Combai female

Against the popular belief of its savage temper, the Combai is a very alert, good family dog, loves to play with children and enjoys human companionship. He clearly senses who is welcome and not. As an intelligent dog, the Combai strives to please its master and generally responds to the mood and command of its master from its infancy. It is difficult to find.

When the circumstances demand it, they can fight intruders (whether humans or animals) until death.

Registration details:

The Combai dog is registered by the KCI (Kennel Club Of India) and is yet to be recognized and registered by international kennel clubs.

Distribution:

Southern regions of Tamil Nadu

3. Chippiparai

History:

The Chippiparai is a sighthound breed of dog from the south of India. Thought to be a descendant of the Saluki, today it is found in the area around Periyar Lake, Ammaiyyar Patti of South India. It is used primarily for hunting wild boar, deer and hare. It is said to be an excellent hunter, and is also used for guarding the home.



Chippiparai male

The Chippiparai is a hound native to Southern India particularly the district of Thanjavur. It has a compact streamlined body built for chasing game. This is a one man dog which does not like to be petted fed or handled by anyone other than its master or handler. It has an independent mind.

The Chippiparai is a hound native to Southern India particularly the district of Thanjavur. It has a compact streamlined body built for chasing game. This is a one man dog which does not like to be petted fed or handled by anyone other than its master or handler. It has an independent mind.

Appearance

The typical color is a silver-grey, with very limited or no white markings. Other colors, particularly variations of grey and fawn, also occur. This dog is about 50 cms tall and weighs 15-20 kg. The head is domed, fine and long. The ears are small and maybe semi-erect or rose shaped. The eyes are dark, the tail is bony the legs are long and straight. The chest is deep with a slightly

roached back and a tucked-up belly. The length from the brisket to the rump is slightly shorter than the height at the shoulder it maybe white and fawn though all colours are accepted. It needs very little grooming and enjoys the outdoors. Its food requirements are very minimal.

It has a short coat that is very close; on the whole the coat if kept groomed has a shine on it. A



Chippiparai female

shining, pearl-like appearance is greatly desired. This kind of coat makes it ideal for hot climates. This hound is also less prone to ticks and fleas, with their short coat providing easy detection. The overall appearance is very similar to that of the Saluki, or the Rampur Hound.

Temperament

The Chippiparai is a robust animal needing little or no veterinary care. It does need lots of exercise, as it was and is a breed meant to hunt.

Chippiparai is an intelligent breed and a wonderful watch dog. Chippiparai loves human companionship and it hates to be in isolation. It is capable of great speed and can overtake a hare with ease. The Chippiparai is a treat to watch and, when seen running, it is a breathtaking spectacle, almost floating through air. It is not a fussy eater, and eats to live and not vice versa. It is easy to groom and does not shed much due to its short coat length.

Registration details

The Chippiparai dog is being registered by the KCI (Kennel Club of India) and is yet to be recognized and registered by international kennel clubs.

Distribution

Southern regions of Tamil Nadu

4. Kanni



Kanni male

History

Kanni is a sighthound of South India. The origin of this breed is unknown. It believed that the history goes centuries back.

Appearance

This dog is about 50 cms tall and weighs 15-20 kg. Color of this wonderful species is just like the Doberman, which is black and tan with dots over both eyes.

General information

It is said that this dog is given as a gift for the bride by her family at her marriage. Probably by providing a sense of security to

the bride, this dog got its name Kanni (in the Tamil language a spinster is called Kanni) because of this practice.

Registration details

Today this dog is not yet recognized / registered by the KCI (Kennel Club of India). However steps are being taken to study the quality of the dog and to standardize this breed so that it may be officially registered.

Distribution

Southern regions of Tamil Nadu

Profile of the breeder

Mr. P. D. Boaz, clinical psychologist who has established the Dr. G. D. Boaz Memorial Hospital School (300 bedded psychiatric rehabilitation centre and hospital). He has been interested in native South Indian dogs from his childhood. As he grew up, he realized western dogs have taken over the bungalows and our dogs are pushed to the streets and labeled "street dogs". Later he realized that there are dogs in Tamil Nadu which are equal or superior to any other breeds. Fortunately for him he had the space and time to attend to this project and to develop a kennel called Dravidian Hounds India. The idea behind breeding these South Indian Hounds is to spread these dying breeds of dogs in our own land and to preserve them for the future rather than to show our generation just picture of these excellent dogs.

Yal The Traditional Dog Food in Anatolia

Isik Guvener
Turkey

Yal is the basic dog food for the shepherd dogs in Anatolia. The basic ingredient is either flaked or broken barley; oats, wheat or it could be the combination of these grains. In some regions, broken corn is also used. Barley is the most common grain used since it is cheaper and works better than the other grains. Alternatively, only bran can be used. Either one of the above-mentioned grains or bran is mixed with hot water and some salt. If the above grains are only available in flour form, then cold water is added to the flour and heated until it comes to a boil. The flour or grain must be boiled in order to be digested by the dogs. The salt adds taste to the mush and protects the teeth. It is served to the dogs when the mixture cools off enough to be eaten. Whey, milk, yogurt, various left overs, oil, tomato and/or pepper sauce can also be added to the yal. Whey works great when it is added after Yal gets cooler. Whey proteins fortify grain-based products. Whey by itself is also given to the dogs and reason is its protein structure, which is the best feed. Whey proteins include beta lactoglobulin, alpha lactalbumin, bovine serum albumin, immunoglobulins, lactoferrin, lactoperoxidase, proteose peptones. Whey may work better than other forms of protein for the Anatolian.

In some regions, bread biscuits are made for the dogs as it is done in Central Asia. The dough is baked and dried for future use. I recently learned from a shepherd in Denizli, who is in his sixties, that his family used to prepare dried dog bread before they move to the highlands. Dough could also be given, but it is not well digested. Yal is the basic dog food in Central Anatolia more so than it is in the Taurus Mountain range. In the Taurus Mountains, dogs receive milk products in addition to Yal, yet Yal is still the main diet in traditional shepherding.

The texture of Yal should be that of a thick soup. Yal should not be watery. It should have the consistency of melted ice cream when poured. City dwellers that want to prepare Yal must not use white bleached flour, as all the protein and the fat of the wheat are removed from the flour. In

addition to the loss of nutrients in bleached flour, the shells of the whole grains contain B vitamins that are essential for protein synthesis. Whole flour must be used. If whole flour is not available, white flour should be mixed with wheat bran. This mixture should be half flour and half wheat bran.

When I prepare the above-described Yal, I occasionally use raw eggs and any type of left overs. I also add any vegetable that I did not eat into the yal. Dogs can eat old or spoiled food. Dogs know what is or is not edible. Adding animal protein in terms of milk and milk's by products is the best of proteins. Adult dogs can live a long life with just eating basic Yal. I have seen 10-year-old dogs in the villages whose food rations consist of 95% Yal.

Anatolians have been built by several factors. The Anatolian is a semi-natural dog, bred and



managed with minimal human intervention. Feeding is one of the few human interventions reflecting the mindset of the owner and his overall raw material production for a living. Yal feeding is one of many factors of Anatolian conservation. As grass-fed cows build a different meat structure than corn fed ones, an Anatolian will grow differently when fed with various nutrients from different sources. Anatolians that have been raised with Yal for hundreds of years may continue eating Yal.

Accordance with its past will help maintaining Anatolian's original raising methods. In a fast pace society, it may not be easy to create all the traditional Anatolian raising conditions, but whatever is accomplished is a gain for the Anatolian. Every drop of ancient practice will help fill the level of quality in the Anatolian bucket. The price is so low and the benefits for the dog are great.

Only good quality bread and water will do for shepherd dogs. These dogs are not Nordic dogs; Anatolians have been raised on cooked grains for several centuries. These dogs are not meant to go after a hare but to defend a flock; they do not have to have animal-based protein although scientists and dog food companies may advocate so. There is a living outcome in Turkey and it works. My own dogs' ration is 90% yal; the rest is raw meaty bones and then dog food only when I am lazy. I like to feed raw meaty bones whether it is chicken, beef, or lamb as they clean the dogs' teeth better than anything else does. Goat or sheep heads could also be substituted for bones.

Dogs on livestock farms or in the Turkish villages eat fresh goat and sheep feces. The feces contain minerals and some undigested protein. This may be the main reason why these dogs can live a healthy life by mostly consuming Yal. I have observed my dog Gandolf gorging on deer manure in New Mexico even when he was not hungry. Yoruk nomads who do not produce grains but only livestock and by-products of livestock cannot always feed their dogs Yal. This is especially true when they are on the move. Dogs scavenge on camel, horse, sheep, goat, and even human feces.

Puppies fed with Yal will grow very slowly and might not get very big, but they will have better skeletons and temperament. A slower growing dog is generally stronger and physically more resistant than a faster growing, larger dog. A shepherd dog needs strength and stamina not only size. I know modern LGD owners who advocate a high protein diet for the working shepherd

dogs, but no Turkish shepherd would advocate such a diet. Anatolians must be tested for whether they are fuel-efficient or not, because they must be able to live with meager food rations. Overfeeding an Anatolian is abusing what the Anatolian inherited from its ancestors. Anatolians have been selected and evolved over time to thrive on low calorie, low protein diets. High protein food causes an Anatolian to grow too fast and then it ends up with hip problems. Feeding Yal helps slow growth and development without negatively impacting the overall development.

One of my own dogs, Gandolf, 31” at the shoulder, has been fed with Yal and his father, who is nine years old, is healthy and looks like he has at least five years to go. Another dog of mine, who lived for eight years, his main diet consisted of Yal. He did not die due to old age, but because of



a dogfight. He was badly injured by two younger dogs. He was about 29” on the shoulder and he was a superb jumper. A 7’ fence was not a problem for him to fly over while the other larger dogs could only watch him. I have seen village dogs as tall as 34” on the shoulder.

Several breeders in Turkey expressed that dogs they collected from the villages were initially not as large as the ones they have currently. The bitches they collected used to be an average weight of 35 kg (77 lbs) and the dogs were 50 kg (111

lbs). At the present, these breeders’ bitches now weight over 50 kg (111 lbs) and the dogs weight over 70 kg (150 lbs). The change in weight indicates the effect of the recently introduced diet on the size of the dogs. Lack of internal parasites and an easier life are additional positives, because I know that some city breeders who have the same size dogs are fed a basic Yal diet and these dogs are free from parasites too. Additionally, the prenatal development can have an impact on the later development of the dogs. No matter how well they are fed after birth, the dogs will carry the scars of malnourishment from the embryonic stage. The parents, especially the mother, should be in perfect shape before breeding takes place for maximum growth and development of the embryos. However, maximum growth is not necessarily healthy growth.



The real shepherd dogs do not eat more than once a day and it is not abnormal if they skip Yal for a day. My grandmother, who kept shepherd dogs, told me recently that they used to feed the dogs once every two days but feed the bitches every day. The reason behind this practice has nothing to do with health. It is about guarding. This practice ensures the

dogs stay awake by giving them less time to relax. This practice may contradict with the need for strength, but it works. We do not have to rationalize every practice, but if we have to we can try: dogs should be able to imitate the behavior of sheep grazing. If the dogs' behavior blends in with the sheep's behavior, then the dog does not have to spend more energy than it needs to guard the flocks. Low energy food helps the dog scale its energy level down to the sheep's energy level. The dog should mirror the pace of the sheep and, if necessary, be able to sprint from one end of the flock to the other end for a quick patrol. This pattern of behavior is economizing energy. When the flock is in an area where wolf attacks are abundant, the shepherd knows that there will be a constant chase all night and then he feeds the dogs accordingly, because they will need the extra food. Feeding rich food when it is not justified will cause roaming or hyperactivity among the dogs.

The point here is not letting the dog go hungry and suffer. Dogs must be fed well and properly. My grandmothers' dogs were fed well once they returned from herding. Her dogs always had energy reserves. An empty stomach is not equal to lack of reserves. Dogs without protein and fat reserves may end up with a weak immune system. A dog can eat un-boiled Yal all day long and it will not benefit from it. This dog will have diarrhea and it will not guard well. A well-fed dog is not a fat dog; it is lean and athletic. An Anatolian in its traditional land, working with a flock is 20-30% lighter than an average American or European Anatolian. Puppies with excess weight are prone to degenerative hip disease. Pushing puppies with rich feed in order to produce larger dogs is greedy. An Anatolian will grow well with the same quality and 30-40% less food than what a Labrador of the same weight receives daily.

The word Yal is similar to the word "yalamak," which means licking in Turkish. Yal eating dogs are not attack dogs. Interestingly, they are not biters. Yal may be making them peaceful and confident guardians. After all, shepherd dogs are not there to eat the lamb but to protect it. If a sheep dies for any reason, including for an illness the carcass is given to the dogs, Anatolians should not eat it right away if they are in the village. This shows the dogs' reliability. I have seen this occur on various occasions in Denizli and Konya villages. The carcass is punctured after it is offered to the dog. After the blood runs out of the carcass, the dog eats the entire sheep, including the skin. Then he is full for about a week. The dog will still not refuse Yal a week later. Skin eating may be part of their guarding instincts. Anatolians do not want to attract predators to the rotting carcass. Therefore, their behavior in the pasture is different towards dead lambs.

Caucasian Mountain Dogs (Caucasian Ovcharkas) of The Northern And Central Caucasus Part 1

Robert Vartanyan
Russia

The Caucasus encompasses many peoples and cultures on its territory. If you look back into the remote past of the peoples of Caucasus, you can see that the life of many of them has been associated with keeping livestock animals. Thus, a favorable climate and vast alpine meadows allowed the development of transhumance methods of keeping animals and, inseparable from this, livestock guarding dogs. There were periods, when transhumance declined or increased and at the same time livestock guarding dogs declined or increased. Over 20 years, starting from the mid-1960s, I observed the life of Ovcharkas and, in my opinion, this period did not belong to the best time of the existence of the Caucasian Ovcharka as a breed. Fortunately, there are many people, who strive to preserve these dogs in their natural environment, without mixing them with other breeds and may God help them in this beautiful endeavor!

Together with my friends, I investigated vast territories from Vladikavkaz (Northern Ossetia), along the Daryal Gorge (Military Georgian Road) to the York plateau (Georgia), which is located in the very heart of the Caucasian Mountains.

When I was still a school boy of 8-10 years old, during the summer break, I traveled to the home country of my parents in Nagorny Karabakh. The early spring break time (early June) coincided with the migration of herds of sheep from the winter pastures in Dagestan, near Kochubey, into the Caucasian Mountains, in Ossetia and further into Georgia. When I was on my way back to school, in late August, this time coincided with the fall migration of sheep herds back into Dagestan. Sometimes, our bus got stuck in one of the streams of sheep and I, as if mesmerized, looked at chobans and, of course, the powerful dogs, escorting them.

Now, I understand what exactly attracted me in this picture. Looking at all these, you have a feeling of eternity, because during hundreds of past years nothing has changed in the appearance of the migrating sheep herds: the suntanned faces of the chobans, wearing their papahas and burkas, with their khurdvins (sticks with hooks at the end for catching sheep), horses harnessed to carriages (kibitka), and, of course, beautiful dogs, protecting both sheep and chobans.

Transhumance sheep management and breeding

The chobans explained to me why they migrate with their sheep herds. In winter, it is impossible to keep them on pastures in the mountains, because of avalanches and fog. Therefore, in the fall the chobans migrate from the mountain pastures of their home country to the steppe regions of Dagestan and Stavropol Province and the Naur steppes of Chechnya. In the spring, they come back into the mountains. This is a long trip covering in one direction only over 400 km. It is long and difficult and takes almost a month. By the end of the trip, the sheep become skinny, because of insufficient food; the herds move on a strictly defined route so they do not damage agricultural crops. The herds moving first still have enough grass, but the other herds following them must starve. When the sheep reach the mountains or the steppes of Dagestan, they regain their normal weight in two weeks.

During the travel of the herds all the attention of the chobans is focused on the safety of the sheep. On the way of the sheep herds, often special traps are set up. They are over 1.5 meters deep and covered with branches and earth. Such a pit can be discovered only if you stumble on it. Such traps occur mainly in Ingushetia and Chechnya. When the sheep move, the space between animals is not enough for maneuvering and they fall into the traps. The choban may easily miss such a case, because the herd is large. However, if the choban sees that one of the dogs stands behind at one place, it means that a sheep has fallen into a trap. However, the dogs may not always notice the trap pits, because they became tired during the long trip and they went to rest in the shade or lie down in some pothole with water.

During winter the climate on the pastures is harsh. Cold winds are blowing, but they calm down, and the sheep are moved on the pasture. When the weather is nasty, the sheep remain in kosharas, which are old barns built in the 1950s or even older. Such kosharas were built out of compacted sheep manure, which was made in the form of plates, making walls a little over 1 meter high. The roof was made out of bull rushes. When the sheep are in such a low barn, it is always warm, even if the temperature outside is below freezing point. The koshara is 20-50 meters long. Because there is no firewood in the steppe, the buildings where the chobans live are heated by burning dry sheep manure. It burns slowly, like turf, and helps to keep heat well. The huts where the chobans live are small and void of any conveniences. In the old times, the chobans lived in dirt huts, some of which still remain until now. There was no electricity, so kerosene lamps were in use. There were several beds with mattresses in one hut, and burkas served them as blankets. Sometimes, the men slept without removing clothes. In addition there was a small stove. There were no baths and the chobans had only rare opportunities to wash themselves. Each "plot" had one well for water, which usually was of low quality. A "plot" is a several square kilometers of land, where the chobans with their 2-5 thousands of sheep were allowed to stay. The chobans were not allowed to graze sheep beyond the borders of their plot. Such were the

conditions, where the chobans overwintered. However, they were happy people, always friendly and hospitable. They found some beauty in their job, which was known only to them. When the chobans had an opportunity to travel home to tidy themselves up and rest, they were longing to go back to the winter pastures. Without work, the chobans “perish”.



Bandit

Listening to the stories of old chobans, we discovered that in the old times, in the mountains, there were small camps for sheep owners. They were called “bera”. The choban lived in a bera with his family. All the structures were made out of rocks; the roof was made out of wood poles placed closely to each other and covered on top with dirt compacted by using a round rock with a hole in the middle. Such a round rock was rolled

over the dirt with rope tied to a stick put through the hole. Such a roof kept the water out and protected the people from bad weather. Corrals were constructed around the bear with walls made of rocks to keep the sheep and goats in. Some children of the sheep owners were actually born in the mountains. Eleven-fifteen- year- old children worked with the men in the mountains. There were cases, when they alone remand with the herd. Thus, Tamaz Samkanashvilli was herding the sheep along with his father and brothers, when he was 13 years old. Their food was all natural, mainly dairy products; meat was a rarity on the table. At the end of the working day, when the sheep were gathered for the night, the dogs were fed first and then the people sat down for the supper. When collective farms were introduced, sheep breeding declined and the need for the bera disappeared.

In the summer, the chobans with their herds occupy a mountain slope, where there is a vertical cliff and water. If possible, they build a small corral out of wood poles under the cliff, where they keep the herd overnight. Location near the cliff has several advantages. First, a bear can approach from only one direction and second, the sheep cannot walk uphill during the night. Near the corral, at a distance of 20-30 meters from it, there is a tent, in which the chobans rest covered with their burkas, because nights in the mountains are cold. The temperature during the day and night usually ranges about 20 degrees.

In the summer, the herds graze on alpine pastures and remain on the mountain slopes. During clear weather or rain, the chobans and their Ovcharkas remain near the sheep. Sometimes, the chobans leave the herds to go to a village to change their clothes and buy food. During the summer, the Ovcharkas do not see people and become aggressive. During this time, approaching the herd is dangerous. When we were climbing in the mountains and approaching herds, the dogs would start barking when we were about 200 meters from them. The closer we walked towards the herd, the more vicious the barking became. On such occasion, the chobans did not wait until unfamiliar people showed up but came down themselves to meet them. If the Ovcharkas came with the chobans, they remained several meters away, watching us talking with the choban.

In January-February comes the most difficult time for the chobans. This is the time of lambing and the chobans stay day and night without sleep with the sheep. A new born lamb cannot stand on its feet. The choban should wipe it and help it to stand so it can start suckling; otherwise, it may die. The lambing period lasts about one month. All the sheep with young need

to be fed and watered. This is a hard work, but the chobans enjoy it. When the lambs grow strong enough, the sheep are moved onto the pasture, if the weather allows. In the evening, the herd with ewes returns to the koshara. There are not enough words to describe this properly, you have to see it. The ewes and lambs are noisy, the lambs run towards their mothers and the mothers run towards their lambs and both streams conjoin in one and everything becomes quiet in a few minutes. Not one of the ewes would mistake her lamb for another one, which is most amazing. The chobans say that they find their own lamb by smell and, when the lamb grows up a little, they recognize it by its voice. It is amazing that the mother can recognize her lamb by its voice in such a noisy environment.

In the early 1990s, when the Soviet Union broke down and Georgia became an independent state, economic ties with Russia in the area of livestock industry were broken. Numerous sheep herds, which had their own winter pastures in the Russian Federation, were suddenly lost. In 1993, the migration of sheep to winter pastures in the Naur steppes of Chechnya, in Kizlyar and Kochubei districts of Dagestan and in the “black lands” of Stavropol Territory was terminated. As a result of this, the number of sheep was cut down and numerous herds were sold. The majority of sheep breeding collective farms were dissolved, because there was not enough land for grazing sheep on the foothills of the Caucasus. To move great numbers of sheep deeper into Georgia onto the York Plateau was impossible and small amount of land in Kazbek District was not enough to support so many animals.

Thus, in a short time, the transhumance livestock management of Georgia sustained terrible losses and the chobans lost their jobs. As a result, the number of purebred Ovcharkas also went down. The whole culture of sheep breeding changed for the worst.

In Transcaucasia, sheep herds remain in one place all year round.

Ovcharkas of Kazbek Mountain

During the study of dogs of Kazbek Mountain I was concerned with one question: which of the Caucasian peoples had the best livestock protection dogs? I started with the population of Northern Ossetia. We surveyed all the mountain regions of Ossetia, all the sheep breeding centers, but we discovered that on all the mountain pastures sheep were herded by Mokhevets¹ Georgians of Kazbek District. In Georgia, in the Trusov Gorge, there is only one village named Kobi, where Ossetians live, who run transhumance sheep management. At the same time in Ossetia, this occupation belongs to the Kazbek chobans, in other words, Mekhovets. Naturally, the livestock protecting dogs in Ossetia were of Kazbek origin.

In the mountain villages of Ossetia old dogs were rare, although the people's attitude to dogs was good. All the interesting Shepherd Dogs were of Kazbek origin. Only in the late 1980s, in association with the spread of dog fighting, dogfight fanciers began breeding livestock protection dogs for that purpose. They obtained their first dogs from the chobans of Kazbek Mountain, because at that time, in Ossetia, there were no native livestock guarding dogs. Although historical documents indicate that the Alan peoples had such dogs and the Ossetians are direct descendants of the Alans. Unfortunately, these dogs did not survive until present. The same happened in Chechnya and in Ingushetia.

In the process of transhumance, migrations of sheep herds of Kazbek and other mountain districts of Georgia pass through the lands of these republics and Georgian dogs remained in the hands of the local people and were mixed with local dogs. I should mention that Chechen, Ingush and Karachai people during WWII were persecuted and relocated from their historical homeland into the Central Asian republics of the former Soviet Union. Of course, they were relocated there without their dogs. Kabardino-Balkaria lost its own population of Ovcharkas after WWII. The population of livestock guarding dogs survived until the present time only in Dagestan. However, in the time, when I conducted my study, the dogs of this region were considerably inferior to the old stock of Ovcharkas of the Kazbekian type.

¹ One of many ethnic groups of Georgian people. Comment by the editor L. Bogoslovskaya

In the early 1980s, when I surveyed livestock guarding dogs in Dagestan (Kochubei and Kizlyar Districts), Dagestan chobans, talking with me, always ended the conversation with the suggestion to see the best dogs in Georgian ‘plots’ with sheep. They admitted that the Georgian dogs were the best.

This is my story about the dogs bred by the chobans of the Caucasus in Georgia (Kazbek, Dushet, Leningorsk and Tionety Districts), in Northern Ossetia, Ingushetia and Chechnya. From here, the best dogs were dispersed in the Stavropol Territory to overwinter in the lands of Dagestan, near the cities of Kizlyar and Kochubei; Georgian chobans migrated with their sheep there. I am sure that if they had not preserved this breed for hundreds of years, we could only guess and never find out what the chobans’ or herd protecting dogs are.

This is what happened with the dogs of many peoples, who vanished in history without a trace. I am grateful to those people, who studied the Kazbek dog (Tugo) with me and also to all those people, who save pure lines from it today for its original purpose. I am particularly thankful to those people, who provided me with valuable photo materials, including old photographs of chobans with their Ovcharkas.

In 1978, I began to study Ovcharkas in their natural habitat in the nearest regions to Kazbek Mountain. Chobans suggested waiting until the spring migration of sheep into the high mountains, when in a short period of time it would be possible to see most of the chobans’ dogs of Kazbek Mountain. Before the start of migration, Tamaz Samkanashvili and I examined several Ovcharkas in Vladikavkaz (former Orjonikidze, Northern Ossetia). This city is located at the entrance of the Daryal Gorge, which crosses the Great Caucasian Mountain Ridge; many chobans of Kazbek District have their houses there.

The Ovcharkas, which I saw, were employed for guarding homes and most of them were of the short haired type. The chobans talked highly about them and explained that these dogs were stronger physically and with a higher working potential than the longhaired type of dogs. Males were no higher than 75-76 cm at the shoulder and females were no higher than 72 cm. The average height of males was 68-72 and females 63-67 cm at the shoulder. All the dogs had a sturdy to coarse body, well developed muscles and correct front and hind quarters. The average weight of males was from 45 to 60 kg. The dogs barked at me viciously, looked alert and demonstrated an extraordinary ability to jump. There were some longhaired dogs, but they did not differ otherwise from shorthaired and medium length haired dogs. The diversity of coat color was most surprising. A spotty coat pattern was predominant, ranging from light cream to dark brown and rarely black. Uniformly colored individuals also occurred, from pure white to bright red; rare were gray, brown and brindle.

In late May every day I visited Balta (Northern Ossetia), which is 12 km from Vladikavkaz. I found a wonderful place for my observations, a bridge over which all the herds passed from the right bank of the Terek River to its left bank. After a few days, the sheep herds showed up and with the sheep there were the long awaited dogs. Again, they were the same dogs, but they were no longer full of energy, but were tired, lean, and walking slowly with the sheep, saving every move. Some of the Ovcharkas were tethered to donkeys or to carriages and they also looked tired. If the dogs had an opportunity to lie down, they never missed it. However, when the herd stopped for overnight rest, the dogs changed and carried out their guarding duty honestly.

The majority of the examined dogs were moderately aggressive to unfamiliar people. No doubt, under conditions of running free, the dogs cannot be too aggressive towards strangers, because during the migration they are on alien land and instinctively do not pay much attention to unfamiliar people. Free living herd guarding dogs are often in contact with the surrounding world and they have to adapt and to be tolerant to everything not belonging to their own world. However, as soon as the herd stops to rest, their instinct to protect “their territory” wakes up in an instant. Extremely aggressive individuals do not survive at the herd, because they get killed by people, whom they carelessly attack. I discovered much more listening to the chobans than I had ever suspected.

Among the four sheep breeding regions of Georgia, from which herds passed over this route, the Kazbek District deserved most attention. A small high mountain town, Kazbek had been always a sheep breeding center. In the late 1970s, when we studied the population of herd guarding dogs, the number of sheep in the Kazbek District was only about 200,000.

Sheep breeding was at its peak. Numerous sheep herds were grazing the alpine meadows of the Great Caucasian Mountain Ridge. The chobans of this region are owners of sheep herds, had well fed sheep, many horses and carriages and they were more tidily dressed, friendly and talkative. They spoke better Russian than the others. Finally, their dogs...the best dogs belonged to the Kazbek chobans. The majority of Ovcharkas belonged to the chobans, whereas in other regions most of the dogs belonged to collective farms. Therefore, the dogs of the Kazbek chobans were the strongest and most purebred.

After an examination of the dogs, it became clear that the best dogs of the Kazbek, Dushet, Leninogorsk and Tianti districts were of a single type, purebred and carrying the blood of the Kazbek dogs. The chobans of these regions subdivide into two subtypes: Gergeti type and Garbani type, according to the names of the villages. Most purebred choban Ovcharkas are concentrated in the Kazbek District. They can also be subdivided by length of hair into shorthaired, longhaired and intermediate types and each of them deserves attention.

Requirements of the chobans as to the appearance and character of Ovcharkas

We would certainly never be able to see perfect Ovcharkas without the people who have dedicated their lives to their favorite business, which is breeding sheep and Ovcharkas. The chobans raise only those dogs which are beneficial to them and are eager to work, subconsciously understanding the nature of these animals. They are skillful at selecting breeding pairs, taking into account pluses and minuses in the character of each dog and not tolerating traits uncharacteristic of this breed. There is no choban, who would feed a lazy dog with a weak character.

Chobans do not consider the beauty of Ovcharkas as a major goal in developing the breed. They value primarily strong character and working qualities, mental and physical endurance and agility.

The optimal size of dogs of this breed is an important aspect of breeding. The largest, but rare individuals I saw were no taller than 75-76 cm at shoulder. In the mountains, the dog should be able to remain in a good physical shape, have a fast and active reaction, and endure the harsh environment and poor food. Very large dogs, because of their size, cannot possess this set of qualities. Dealing with bear requires specific skills and big and heavy dogs cannot protect sheep from this predator.

A dog, which I had in my imagination before I studied real Ovcharkas, could not walk from the "black lands" of Dagestan to the mountains of their home country. Even dogs of a size common for this breed become so drained, so what can be said about big and massive individuals? The peculiarities of the work of these dogs determined their optimal size range. Myths about huge choban dogs have disappeared without a trace.

During my studies on Ovcharkas of Kazbek Mountain I asked the question: What has guided chobans in developing certain traits of character and appearance of their Ovcharkas? Most likely they see and feel these dogs. In the beginning, we found Ovcharkas of different types of body structure, proportions and length of hair. When we started talking with chobans about certain traits of their conformation, for example, a certain correct bite, color of eyes and nose, chobans looked at us puzzled, trying to understand what was the point? They tolerate dogs with a so-called "red" nose, or bobtailed at birth, if they work well.

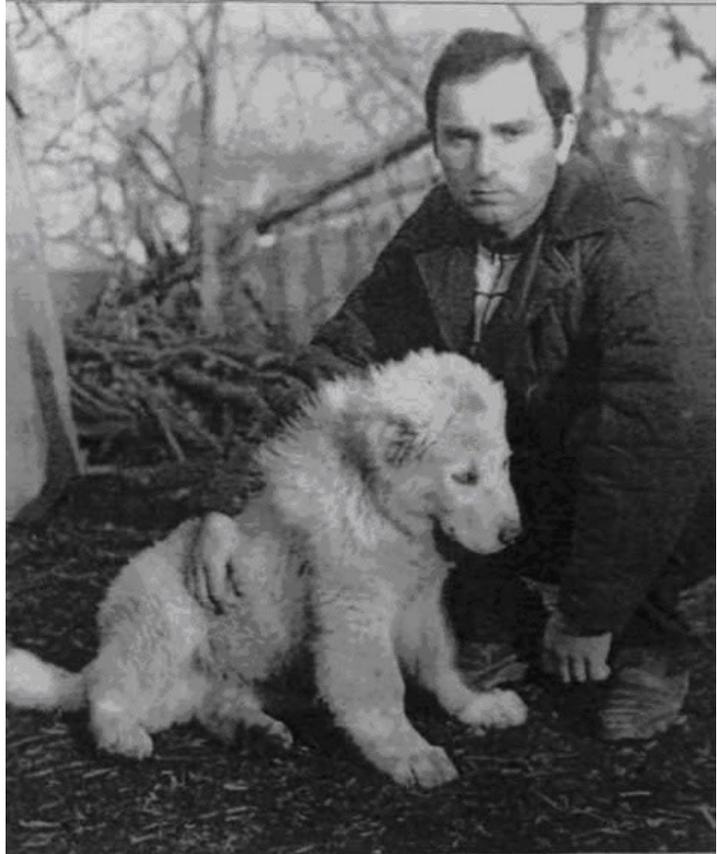
This is exactly how Loma from Akhaltsikhi looked. He was a 9 years old shorthaired male, bobtailed at birth, big - about 72 cm at the shoulder, pale red, well boned and sturdy, despite his age. His hair was thick and standing out from his body. The Head looked purebred, with broad frontal part, strong jaws, and a short muzzle, not tapering to the nose. The lips were thick and

brown. The nose was of average size and also brown. The eyes were of average size, amber color and set straight. The ears were not large and set at the level of the eyes.

The withers were well developed. The neck was of moderate length, powerful and with a distinct dewlap. The chest was broad and with good muscle mass. The back was broad and strong. The quarters were strong. The circumference of the pasterns was 14-14.5 cm. The hind legs stood wide apart. His movement was sure and strong.

Loma was tireless during fights with competitors and during mating fights he sometimes strangulated some of them. During five years he mated with all the bitches in the village, passing to his offspring a purebred looking head, amber colored eyes and brown nose, as well as aggressiveness and persistence in fights. Some of his puppies were born naturally bobtailed. His best offspring originated out of Garbani females. Because of Loma, in Akhaltsikhi emerged its own strain of sheep guarding dogs, which was highly valued by chobans. Perhaps, this is one of the best strains in Kazbek District.

Coat colors, like in Loma, are considered as typical of the Garbani subtype of dogs. Many legendary Ovcharkas of Kazbek Mountain had a similar coat color and they passed it to their offspring. A famous dog named Khoda from Pkhelsha was pale red with a black nose; over 30% of his offspring had “red” noses, which seems explainable, because Khoda is a descendant of Garbani bloodstock.



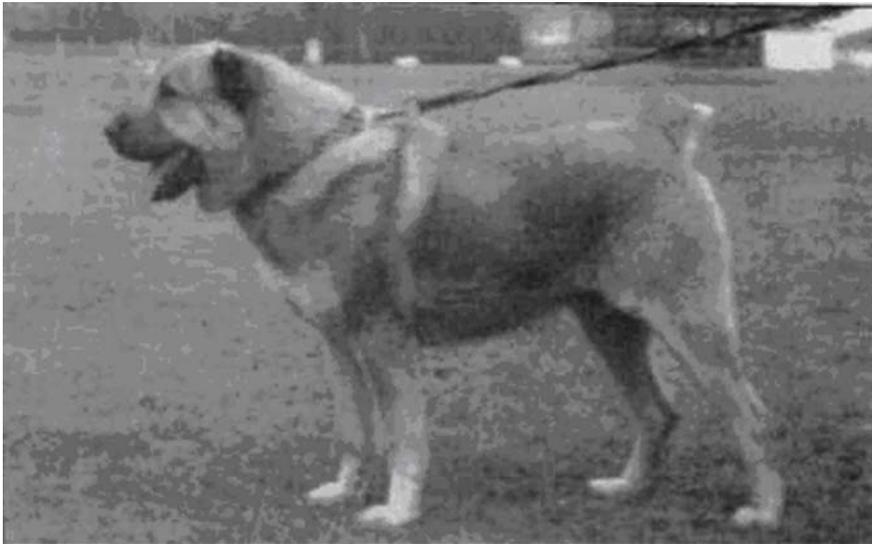
Puppy out of Loma

Taking into account the above, one can summarize the requirements of the chobans as to body structure, character and working qualities of sheep guarding dogs.

Most desirable are stocky dogs, well balanced, with a sturdy, but not coarse skeleton, because for complex and dynamic physical work in the mountains, dogs with a coarse skeleton would not be suitable. Dogs with a short and full muzzle are preferred, but the head should not be huge. Big headed dogs have a slower reaction and are not capable of taking a quick hold. Ovcharkas with guard hair standing out from the body and a thick undercoat are valued; both guard hair and undercoat have the same length. Dirt comes off such a coat quickly, not reaching the skin, and it retains well an optimal temperature inside. If you take a closer look, it is easy to notice that the hair grows in rows; this is particularly visible on the dog’s sides. This type of coat prevents too much matting, which is important in the life of dogs in corrals with sheep. On certain parts of the body, such as the mane, tail and legs, the guard hair is considerably longer than the undercoat. On the head and front parts of the legs the hair is the shortest. In dogs with intermediate length of hair, long hair grows between the toes. In shorthaired dogs this does not occur.

The chobans pay much attention to the hind quarters of the dog. The rear part must be as strong as front part of the dog. We never heard from the chobans the word “powerful”, they always said “sturdy”. Ovcharkas with tails curling tightly over the back were particularly valued. Such individuals have the most active nervous system and sturdy body structure (without any trend towards obesity), are more disease resistant, undemanding for food and alert and have a

greater endurance during the long migrations; they also look better. If a choban does not expect his puppy to have a curling tail, he breaks his tail in several places. The chobans consider this a valuable “art”. If you do not know how to do it, you can ruin the tail. If everything is done right, the tail takes the shape of a “donut”.



Tugo. Garbani subtype.

In the character of the dog, the attitude towards its master and to unfamiliar people is an important criterion. The Ovcharka must greet its master enthusiastically, without reservation and it must equally express aggression to a stranger. After an act of aggression, the dog must return to the master with affection and gentleness. A dog with such a character is considered the best, because it can dynamically change its

attitude, depending on the situation.

A person, who demonstrated his dog for us, changed completely through the behavior of



Ryzhy, Garbani subtype

his dog. Active, bold and proud the dog changed his master in a moment: his eyes turned brighter, his cheeks turned pink and he looked uplifted. At this time, there was no need to ask questions, because it was clear how good the test was. There were other cases, when the dog’s owner was speaking highly of his Ovcharka, he changed his mood right away after he had showed it to us. The dog did not show itself well and the mood of its owner changed accordingly.

As a result of investigating the best dogs of the Kazbek type of Ovcharka during a period of over 25 years, I learned what kind of appearance the chobans are striving to achieve and I developed a breed standard of the Kazbek Tugo – “ Dog of Kazbek Mountain”, see the Appendix.

Attitude of chobans to their dogs

Hereditary chobans have their own idea how the dog should look like and they pay attention and time to make their dogs attractive. For example, the hair on the tail of the dog must be cut. The hair on the tail is cut evenly along

its entire length, leaving a small tassel at the end, like a lion’s. When the hair on the tail is cut, the

dog resembles a lion, if it has long hair, or a lioness, if the dog is shorthaired. Statistically, the dog name Loma (lion) occurs most often next to Tugo (dog). If the hair on the tail is left intact, it is considered in bad taste. The chobans explain that a tail with uncut hair gives the impression that the dog is smaller. In the beginning we could not get used to this “barbarism”, the tail seemed mangy. With time, we found it acceptable and exotic and learned that indeed the tail hides the dog’s body size. In longhaired dogs the hair is cut into “pants” to prevent matting.

My friend and colleague Vladimir Romanovets discovered an interesting fact, when he surveyed dogs in the area of the York Plateau. Among local chobans, there is a belief that if you brand with a copper rod the top of the muzzle between the eyes of a puppy, when it is one and a half months old, it will never fall sick with distemper. More than 50% of dogs Vladimir saw had scars on the top of the muzzle, but he could not find any proof that this belief had a practical reason.

Kazbek dogs did not have this kind of scar. The chobans of this region had never heard of this preventive measure against distemper. This is evidence, among other things, to indicate that despite the relatively short distance of 600-800 km, there were no close cultural or business ties between the chobans of Transcaucasia and the North Caucasus. Another peculiarity of Transcaucasian sheep breeders, such as the Azerbaijanis, is the habit to tie a short rope or leather lead to the neck of puppies so that they are easier to catch.

No other people in the Caucasus have such a diversity of names for sheep guarding dogs as the mountain Georgians. This tells us that they take their dogs very seriously and in their culture relationships between dogs and humans go back for centuries. This is particularly conspicuous among choban Mekhovets of Kazbek District. Archeological findings from Kazbek with images of dogs on belts and weaponry are 2,500 years old. Mekhovets lovingly reflect the character and peculiarities of their dogs in their names. Below, I offer the most common names of dogs with translations into English [Russian in the original article].

Avaza – cheetah	Jado – sorcery, course	Navsa - nasty
Aptar – hyena	Jibir – support	Nemsa - needle
Baya – little one	Kaji - devil	Okro - gold
Boko – relaxed	Kalia - girl	Parekh - corral
Bombora – plump	Katsats - clinging	Patara - little
Brola – flint	Kedan – wild pigeon dove	Patskhver - lynx
Burta – ball	Kere - hammer	Petfer – powerful, strong
Vephia - tiger	Komsha – quinsy	Pkhorია - hair up
Gnyas – barking at night	Korana-crow	Tati - paw
Godora – hay basket	Kokhta - beauty	Tatuchi – bear cub
Guguli – cuckoo	Kuda - bobtail	Tetri - white
Gulbetsva – hairy heart	Kunta – cushion for a chair	Tolia – spot on the eye
Dato – bear	Lasha – gape, big muzzle	Totia – rampant
Denela – invincible, inconvenient	Loma - lion	Tugo – respectful name for a dog
Dzukna –bitch	Marukh – name of mountain	Khoda – male dog
Javrya – angry	Mgela – wolf	Khora - pig
Jaga – bold	Mura – dark (black) muzzle, or head	Tsuntsula – kitten

Some of the hereditary chobans teach their dogs certain signs, when they want them to attack people who came to the herd with bad intentions. For example, when the conversation turned bad and the threat of confrontation was obvious, the choban loudly pronounced a word unfamiliar to others and clapped his hands, like being frustrated. To strangers the dog's attack at this moment might seem accidental. This kind of clandestine tactic sometimes saves the chobans from bandits.

Primitive Aboriginal Dogs Society

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