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Preservation of Primitive
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From the Publisher...

***Dear members of PADS and readers
of our Journal,***

In this issue we have once again two different views on preserving and maintaining the qualities of breeds of aboriginal dogs.

In the first article, Isik Guverner describes with first-hand experience the way of life of the shepherds of Eastern Anatolia and their Caucasian sheepdogs. He makes a strong plea for these dogs to be left alone, since their qualities are subject to the natural laws of survival in their special niche. As he says, any attempt "to insert these free spirits into molds" should be opposed, since to do so would weaken the uniqueness of this landrace.

In the second article, Konstantin Plakhov and Anna Plakhova describe the efforts that have been made in Kazakhstan to revive the Tazy. This aboriginal hunting hound, once common among the nomadic peoples of Central Asia, went into serious decline, as a result of a variety of factors. The authors believe that the way to restore the breed and to achieve its international recognition is by instituting a national programme for breeders to produce Tazys conforming to a revised breed standard.

We also publish article by Alberto Bertelli about ancient transhumance tradition and dogs associated with this tradition in Italy.

Sincerely yours, *Vladimír Beregovoy*

Secretary of PADS, International

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MORKARAMAN DOGS of AĞRI

Guvener Isik

Turkey

I chose this region because it is at the far end of Turkey and has a distinct and radical climate, geography, history, and culture. However and most importantly, sheep flocks are abundant here. This province has been on my mind for several years. Therefore, I visited it. The longitude of Ağrı is similar to Eskişehir and Sivas, which is just a bit south of Kars and north of Denizli and Konya. My observations during this trip were limited to six days in July 2013. This short period is normally not adequate to collect satisfactory information, but my previous experience with shepherds, sheep, goats, and dogs allowed me to focus on the critical details and to raise pertinent questions. During this trip, I did not focus on taking photos, which I find distracting and too touristy. Instead, I centered my attention on the activities surrounding the sheep, focusing my attention on six sheep flocks as I conversed with the shepherds.

Since I follow the flocks not the dogs, the best place to find flocks in Ağrı, based on my conversation with a Kurdish acquaintance, Zeki Pamir in Izmir, was the Diyadin (1925m/6315ft) region. The ethnic composition of this region is overall Kurdish. The people I dealt with described themselves as Kurmanchis and they speak a dialect of Kurdish. Everyone was friendly and helpful. In particular the assistance I received from Celal Gürses in Tapesor village was invaluable.

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Black and white dog leading the flock.

Geography, Climate, and Sheep

Ağrı, being geographically in the Southern Caucasus region, is located in eastern Anatolia at an elevation of 1650m/5413ft. The famous Mount Ararat (5137m/16,854ft) is located here facing Iran. Many peaks in this province are over 3000m. The high altitudes and the lack of real summer months allow neither Mediterranean nor Central Anatolian style agriculture. Additionally, 80% of the land is not suitable for agriculture, with pastures making up the remaining twenty percent (20%) of the land. The steppes make the region an enormous highland that can be comparable to Kars province in a way. You feel that you are in a free land when you gaze forever over rolling green pastures with various wild flowers and nice scents. When I look at American history, I tend to see it in two parts: pre-fencing and post-fencing. In Ağrı, one can walk almost unhindered for hundreds of miles. The absence of fencing is the best thing about this unspoiled land because

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fencing actually confines the land, destroys freedom, and brings self-imprisonment.

The average annual temperature here is 9C/48F, and temperatures drop to -44C/-46F in winter, rising to 37C/98F in summer. Snow remains on the ground for 120 days in Ağrı. As they say in Kars, Ağrı has also two climates: winter and spring. The village I stayed in on the first day of my trip, Diyadin, is considered semi-dry and semi-humid at the same time depending on the location and the elevation. However, northeast of Ağrı, Iğdır has a dry climate where the precipitation drops down to 300mm/yr., whereas in Diyadin, it can reach up to 550mm/yr. Every element in this region is affected by the southern Caucasian climate. Even the local bees are Caucasian bees. These bees work well in cold or cold and wet weather and have longer tongues than the other bees, which allow them access to plants other bees cannot get. The above information is necessary because it helps the reader understand the conditions where the local sheep dogs live.

Tapesor (Red Rock /Hill, 2700m/8858ft) is one of the 558 villages in Ağrı and it is under snow for more than 200 days. In Tapesor, there are no motor vehicles; people transport themselves and their goods on horseback. So keeping horses is as important as keeping sheep. In July, snow remains on the ground at 2900m, it never melts and sheep flocks must go higher than this elevation on the southern slopes of the hills in order to find the freshest grass. Dogs are kept for sheep protection here, but in many other places, they are also kept for cattle. The flocks are rarely attacked by steppe bears, but are attacked mainly by wolves. Here, the packs are composed of 4-8 wolves. The local sheep are normally Morkaraman, which is

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a darker variety of Akkaraman of Central Anatolia. It has a fat tail, which ensures survival in times of drought and provides fat for local dishes. The wool hair color is generally reddish and even purple-like. Their wool is carpet grade and is ideal for felt and rug making. Black, grey, and white sheep are also part of the flocks. Nevertheless, in Tapesor, Gürses' Morkaraman flock reminded me of the extinct Karabas sheep of Denizli, because not only were they mainly white, but also their body, skull and wool types were similar! Their main difference was their tail type. This is an imperative note for the future researcher.



Morkaraman sheep

General Morphology

I saw dogs of all kinds of colors with yarikaba (semi short) and kaba (long) coat types. A great majority of the dogs were kaba. There was one dark brindle in Ulukend village (out of sixty dogs; almost all the dogs were in a remote highland),

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and two black and tan dogs in Mollakara (out of twenty dogs), but in Tapesor there was none of those colors.



Ulukend dog

There were over thirty dogs in Tapesor and they were black, white, fawn, and pinto. This village, by itself, is a good example to show that the morphological variation is immense in this area. There was a general shape for all the dogs, but body ratios, colors, neck, and muzzle types, along with paw structures, vary. You do not see the relative uniformity that you can find in sheep flocks. Thick bones, paws, torsos, and dense coats were the most notable general traits. This density is clearly a protection against extreme cold.

Tail types along with forehead types also varied. There were dogs with curled tails and dogs with wolfish hanging tails. Most dogs did not have full curled tails. There were two dogs with almost no forehead stops. There was no dog with a horse type head. The distance between the ears makes their heads

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appear more equilateral (60° - 60° - 60°) than isosceles (70° - 70° - 40°), which makes the dogs look more bearish than wolfish. There was only one black dog with wolfish skull. The above angles are not rules or an attempt to make rules, but they put my visual observations into geometric relationships, which provide a new perspective. Most dogs had square body proportions. No dog walked with a heavy gait as frequently seen in kennel-raised dogs.



Kaba and yarikaba dogs

Heavily coated kaba dogs of Ağrı face no wintering problems, but it is not unheard of dogs with shorter coats freezing in winter. The latter are mostly dogs brought from the southern and Central Anatolian plains or from the lowlands of Iran. In Sivas, I also heard stories about how and why dogs freeze in Uzunyayla highland. However, it is not only the coat type that makes a dog resistant to cold, but also the structure. Such dogs have no hanging lips; they have shorter snouts, thicker torsos, rounder heads, smaller ears and eyes, bushy

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tails, thick necks with loose skin, and very dense and long wool around their neck and shoulder area. If you managed to touch one of these dogs, you would notice that the shorter coated local dogs have very dense wool that makes it impossible to see their skin. As long as they can survive the winter like other dogs, no one is prejudiced against them. Compared to Central Anatolian dogs, kaba coat is more frequent and it is almost the norm. Another difference between kirik (short coat) and kaba dogs is that the hair of a kirik dog cannot grow longer than its limits.



Clearly, wedge shaped heads

The hair number per sq/inch can increase to the extent of the quantity of follicles. However, kaba dogs shed all their hair in the early spring and they remain less hairy than kirik dogs. In Ağrı, shedding takes place between July and August. At the end of September, they have the full kaba coat again that

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they need until the following June. Not all the dogs start shedding at the same time. Some of them just start shedding when the others are nearly finished.



Shedding black kaba dog

One may ask why the dogs have to freeze and what kind of barbaric people keep these poor dogs? It is this exact mindset, which raises these questions and in turn, ruins these dogs. Any human help constitutes a weakening factor for this landrace. Although human-centric humans enjoy assisting dogs in order to feel good about themselves, they do so without ever realizing that they are infantilizing their dogs. The more dependent the dogs are, the more pleasure human-centric individuals draw out of assistance. The fact is these dogs are supposed to have their own natural insulation and they usually do. If a dog is missing the necessary insulation, then it is not a Caucasian.

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Dog with a very thick neck in Tapesor

One of the explanations of heavy coats is that these dogs are tied up in winter. An untied dog can manage to find a shelter. A dog tied in one place without shelter should have better insulation against cold than a wolf. This allows the shepherd to move the dog to a new location without erecting a shelter. Once the dog has a shelter it will confine itself, which negates the purpose of being alert. This is why sometimes dog tails are shaved or cropped. That way the dog cannot wrap itself around with its tail. A well-insulated dog does not need its tail to keep itself warm. That is one of the main reasons for the abundance of stub-tailed dogs in the region. When one dog is tied up, another dog is let free to patrol. This way, dogs work alternately. To contradict my discussion above, it is possible that a coat type, which appears visually unfit, may have features that are not easily detected and can have several

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unknown advantages especially for dogs that come from a nomadic background, in addition to allowing the dog to survive in the Caucasian winters. Coat types mentioned here are necessary to understand how coat types in relation to body types can tell us more about these dogs than understanding and classifying canine melanocytes (pigment cells).

I must interpose here that sometime between 2004 and 2006 when I visited the southern regions of Derbent in Konya; I came across barns made of clay that looked like caves at higher elevations. The altitude was about 1600m and the dominant tree was black pine (*Pinus nigra*) which indicates the end of Mediterranean and the beginning of sub Alpine climate. The dogs were dark grey and dark red with full kaba coats. The dogs were tied to the small entry and exit holes of the barns, which ensured there was always a dog in front of the barn's entrance. The holes were about three feet in diameter; additionally they served as aeration openings. I was told the wolves can only enter the barns through those holes and the dogs wait on the spot without any cover. A scared dog may become submissive to wolves and run away. To avoid this, sometimes two dogs were tied at the entrance at same time. This was done in order not to allow one of them to abandon the other. Two dogs covering each other's back form a good defensive position. I called those dogs Yörük, because of the inhabitants. They were not wrestling dogs and they alone had the fierceness to stand against the wolves and the cold at the same time.

Dogs in Ağrı were not as large as Denizli and Konya wrestling dogs, which are usually above 80cm. The average size ranges of Ağrı dogs were 70-75cm for males and 65-70cm

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for the females. Although wolves are similar to dogs in size, large wolves (above 85cm) are spotted and sometimes shot. These size ranges are also valid for Denizli and Konya dogs where they were kept by traditional sheep and goat shepherds.

There were several typical Caucasian type dogs among these dogs, but what is a typical Caucasian? Since most of the dogs here were local and only a very few were possibly imported from Central Anatolia, they must be a sub Caucasian type. Some of them easily looked like old kaba native dogs of the Aegean region and some of them could be described as typical Sivas dogs, but overall they were not the same dogs. I do not believe that the differences can be quantified or safely described when the subject is a landrace population. We cannot claim any measurement with precision, but we can claim that things take place between point A and point B. Anything beyond that range may be considered invalid, and the values within this interval are excitingly complex. Classifying these dogs via DNA tests is irrelevant, intrusive, and plainly a distraction that does not deal with sheep guarding in any way. Not only the current picture of variation but also the historical variation and migrations-related genetic influx are part of the dynamics of chaotic landrace populations.



Primitive looking dog

Morkaraman dogs

Classifying Caucasians based on their color stems from the inability of grasping the whole landrace picture and believing that dogs as a breed were already ready waiting to be discovered by the entrepreneurs and their scientist allies. Grey wolf packs are made of various colors, such as black, white, red, and grey. So far, no scientists who have no ideological and political motives have attempted to study grey wolves based on their colors, especially if wolves occupy a certain geographical location. Arabian horses and Salukis/Tazis come in various colors, but no one thought of fabricating new breeds out of them. Karakul and Morkaraman sheep are also composed of red, purple, grey, black, and white colors. The brush goat of Anatolia is generally a dark colored goat but all wild types of colors are present in the flocks. Grey Anatolian donkeys are not

a different breed from black ones. If a scientist decides to study Caucasians of Anatolia under a few arbitrary color codes, then he must do the same with Sivas (supposedly all fawn and black masked), and Eskisehir (supposedly all white) dogs. Anatolian Caucasians are different from Central Anatolian dogs but this difference does not come from the color, but structural and behavioral differences, in addition to adaptation skills in Caucasian lands. Once the scientist realizes this, he may direct a question for a meaningful forward step such as “Is a black and white Caucasian a cross between a black and a white Caucasian?” If he “cleverly” says “Yes” then I would assume that he believes that a Panda is a cross between a white and a black Panda! When a scientist is free from a freethinking mindset and curiosity, he can only be a bureaucrat who simply feeds on his university salary and becomes an assistant of statistics and computer generated papers instead of being the master of his own mind.

If a sheep dog can live and work under traditional conditions without receiving assistance from its owner in a Caucasian climate and geography, it is a Caucasian dog. It belongs to the land; it deserves the title. Any dog who fails under the given conditions is not a Caucasian no matter what its family tree, body, and coat type is. The same is valid for being a Caucasian, Yörük, and Central Anatolian sheep dog. Just because it has feathers, to what extent is a bird really a bird if it cannot fly? Devoting time and attention to the failing members of a population is nothing but backpedaling. Hoping that I am not contributing to historical confusion, I will generalize for the confused: Anatolian dogs, essentially and roughly, can be divided into Akkaraman and Morkaraman dogs, because dogs

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follow sheep. The rest of the major variations come from the interaction of these two main huge clusters. Anatolian Caucasians are Morkaraman dogs. Sheep dogs of Anatolia cannot be correctly understood by isolating sheep and goats from the matter.

Temperament and Health

None of the dogs were friendly and they are not supposed to be. Although a visiting, simply threatened, law enforcement officer may shoot them, friendliness is a negative trait for sheep dogs since they are not there to welcome restaurant customers. The sheep dogs of this region were certainly more aggressive than the sheep dogs of Sivas. This is a clear behavioral difference. Ağrı dogs were more like customs officers, not friendly but not vicious. They were all reserved, careful, and ready to move. I saw no sick dogs. They are all in good shape even in the absence of intensive and intrusive health checks required of the authoritarian clubs of the west.

The simple reason for their good health is that they live in the right environment, eat traditionally, work, and are not tortured by humane interventions. Any raw dog as a product thrown into this system is processed accordingly. There is no prescreening for health. The results are released by the system without any written rules and formulae at the end of every year based on their performances. Any dog above nine months old that is still alive is likely to remain alive until it dies for any reason. The breeding age here is not decided by the “experts” but by the dogs themselves. I saw one dog without cropped ears. The reason for that was the owner missed the cropping

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age (preferably during the first month, but not after five months old) and he let the dog go intact. The explanation for ear cropping was to facilitate improvement in the dogs' hearing ability. People do not pay much attention to dew claws here as they do in Central Anatolia. Slightly more than half of the dogs had dewclaws and no one thought they were detrimental to the dog's health. Although ears are partially removed, dewclaws remain intact.

Dogs have to stay outside and cannot get relaxed on a sofa in front of the fire because sheep in winter are not totally kept in barns but they are taken on long walks for exercise and for fresh air. Some flocks have free access to open parts of the barns where dogs have to watch. A dog that stays outside is better protection than a relaxed dog becoming a sheep among sheep. These dogs are happier spending the entire year out in the open. They have no allergies or flu; the soil they sleep on and the air they breathe vaccinate them.

Guarding

Dogs lose sheep to wolves especially during the grazing months. Shepherds are not bothered much with this because their losses are not heavy. I saw no hatred against the wolves here. Any heavy losses are due to the ineffectiveness of the dogs, which is when the shepherds' expertise comes in. Three dogs generally escort flocks composed of 200 sheep. Dogs choose which ends of the flock to cover and there is no training for this. It is not unusual for the dogs go without eating for two to three days. They always endure this with patience. This happens especially when the shepherd loses the food for some reason or the flock gets lost because of heavy rain and fog.

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Kaba dogs can last longer when it is wet, cold, and no food is available. The night and day temperature difference in this region is normally about 20C/32F, but it can be more. Dogs get wet in the evening and the water on their coats freeze when it gets dark. One needs to be exposed to cold July rains at 2700m and observe wet dogs performing 24/7 in order to appreciate this perspective.



A fawn dog in summer coat

Dogs can be eaten by the wolves. However, if dogs kill the wolves, they eat them. People do not go to the government like helpless children who go and complain to their teacher when the wolves eat their dogs. Shepherds of Ağrı make no noise, produce no tears but improve their dogs and their own shepherding skills. However, what is rewarded in the "developed" countries is helplessness. Weakness is welcome and praised. As mercy is offered, strength and pride are

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penalized. Dogs then become folkloric ornaments for farms. Moreover, the owners of ornamental dogs cannot talk about the real issues since real issues are nothing more than fictions to them, so they create some instead.



Brush goats with Kashmir grade wool

Dogs always stay with the flock even in the absence of the shepherd which is expected anywhere throughout Anatolia. A dog that requires human encouragement, which shows a feeble personality, is not ideal for this post. Only loving these dogs is for the frail hearted, who is a potential destroyer of this cultural and genetic beauty. The stoicism, loyalty, courage, affection, fierceness, stamina, and reliability of these dogs give excitement to the original developers. How can I not admire and respect both parties? I keep going back to them wherever they are kept for their original purpose. My respect for them allows me to dare to oppose the dog clerks, who insert these

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free spirits into molds. These pastoral beauties are puzzles to me at times and I resist solving the whole puzzle. Once solved, they are compromised; they will no longer be the same. Yes, I want to understand them, but finding out about them, even in the form of asking questions, is a prying business. Dogs should have personal space and private history too. Caucasians of Ağrı were in their best forms in their ancestral land in the absence of people who pretend to look after them. It was not difficult for Kurmanchi shepherds to accept their dogs as dogs, not to interfere, and to let the dogs shine.

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Wolf color pinto

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Preservation and restoration of the Kazakh Tazy breed and formation of its contemporary appearance

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Kazakhstan

Tazy sighthounds belong to one of the oldest breeds of dogs, to the group of Eastern Sighthounds most adapted to the nomadic way of life of the people of Asia. Many images of them in petroglyphs found in Southern Kazakhstan belong to different historical epochs as far back as the X-XIIIth centuries B.C. (Plakhov and Plakhova, 2005). In Kazakhstan, in the written record, the word Tazy appears in Kazakhstan in 1245 (Kuryshzhanov, 1970). Travelers and explorers of the XVIIIth century, P. S. Pallas, I. P. Falk and Gregory mentioned Kazakhs hunting with Tazy.

The first descriptions of the Tazy from Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Khiva were put together by P. M. Machevarianov (1876), M. Bogdanov (1878), L. P. Sabaneev (1892) and Polferov (1898). During that time, the breed was most often called Krymka or Kyrgyz Sighthound. The first breed standard of the Kazakh Tazy was accepted in 1925, at the First Cynological Convention of the USSR. It was published in 1932 in "The Standard of Industrial Hunting Dogs". In 1939, A. A. Sludsky added numerical data by taking measurements. It was modified and in 1959 the breed was called the "Central Asian Sighthound" until the time, when the last version was approved by Glavokhota of Russia in 1955. Finally, the appearance of the breed was changed to such a degree that it prompted suggestions that work on the breed should be

¹ Union of Hunters and Fishermen of Kazakhstan Republic

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abandoned and either switched to the Saluki or returned to the original breed standard (Gusev, 1991).

Thus, when we began our work in 1991, we dealt with the Tazy breed. It was necessary to analyze its condition in Kazakhstan, determine how it should look like after purging admixtures of other breeds, and plan and implement a program for its preservation, restoration and international recognition.

During that time, the following factors had adverse effect on the breed:

1. The collapse of the USSR and an economic and political crisis in all parts of the former Soviet Union, including Kazakhstan;

2. The absence of serious studies of the breed after A. A. Sludsky (1939, 1965);

3. The lack of government support and the absence of government kennels for breeding the Tazy in Kazakhstan. The Kazakh Research Institute of Animal Science had a kennel with a small number of Tazys, which was insufficient for the future of the breed.

4. Starting from the 80th program for the preservation of the Tazy, the "Kazakhrybolovsoyuz" (Union of Hunters and Fishermen of Kazakhstan), which conducted a survey of the Tazy population, could not stop the decline of the Tazy. In 1990, the kennel for breeding the Tazy belonging to the Provincial Association of Hunters of Southern Kazakhstan did not work with this breed.

5. Government organizations and agencies, foreign international funds and private sponsors did not provide money for the restoration of the Tazy.

6. In Kazakhstan, there were no specific standard for the Tazy. The "Central Asian Sighthound Tazy" standard accepted in the former USSR was put together without the participation of specialists from Kazakhstan.

7. In different regions different breeders maintained their own views on the breed and sometimes they were controversial. The Tazy was represented by many types and they were considerably mixed.

8. Most detrimental was the absence of an organization in Kazakhstan, which would be genuinely interested in the preservation of the Tazy and work with it.

Positive factors in our work were our youth, belief in ourselves, our experience and the opportunity to use our knowledge and, working independently, we hoped to preserve, if not a wild species, then at least one of the ancient breeds of dog.

We designed our work program, taking into account the basic principles of preserving biodiversity applied to a concrete breed.

1. We started with a survey of the population to determine of existing standard and to develop a standard which would fit exactly the Kazakh Tazy. For this purpose we conducted an investigation into the variation within the population (Yablokov, 1966). The total number of Tazy and Tazy-like dogs surveyed was over 1000. The dogs were measured, photographed and described. In 1993-1994, working as show assistants, we participated in describing over 100 pedigreed Tazy dogs. In 1995-2012, working independently, we evaluated the conformation of over 300 Tazys. Besides, we analyzed accounts of shows of the hunting dogs of Kazakhstan during the period 1995-2012, which we found in the archives of Kazakhohotrybolovsoyuz and in private materials. We also studied photo and video materials sent to us by Tazy fanciers from different regions of Kazakhstan and from other countries. We received great help from experts of the breed in Kazakhstan and dog breeders from other countries.

Our goal was to create such a breed standard, which first clearly defined its traits, secondly defined its differences

from other related breeds, thirdly provided cynologists and dog breeders with actual knowledge of this breed, and fourthly helped to exclude crossbreeds. To obtain a quality standard, it was necessary to use techniques, which, regardless of the personal preferences of the researcher, would help to find answers to some major questions: how and why the breed should appear (conformation) and how its characteristics should be described in the standard. To work out such techniques, we used studies by D. D. Gott (1935), A. A. Sludsky (1939) and E. I. Shereshevsky (1962), methods of comparative morphology (Dombrovsky, 1982), the evaluation of horses by data from their measurements (Balakshin and Khotov, 1992) and standards of different breeds of dogs and other domesticated animals. When developing the standard, unlike D. D. Glott and A. A. Sludsky, we analyzed results by the recalculation of all the parameters into growth indexes, not by average values or mode. Because the Tazy is a hunting dog, the measure of the quality of its appearance should be its suitability for use in hunting. Henceforth, there would be a direct correlation: the closer the conformation of the dog to the breed standard, the greater its expected hunting potential. For this purpose, indexes of each aspect of the appearance were divided by degree of development (minor, medium and great) and their distribution among similarly divided groups of dogs (for example, slow, medium and fast; aggressive attitude to game animals: aggressive, medium aggressive and not aggressive; by endurance: not fatigued, medium and fatigued, etc.). Analysis of this kind is more correct for putting together a standard of aboriginal and utility breeds than plain descriptions of a range of variation of characteristics or an average of numerical indexes as is done in the work of D. D. Gott, 1935; A. A. Sludsky, 1939, etc. It would be difficult to select the best dogs based on the opinions of Tazy users and experts (Gott, 1935), because of the absence of at least two

similar ratings of the same dogs. Survey of mixes of different generations allowed us to distinguish traits indicating the admixture of other breeds, which was important for developing the breed standard.

In 1996, the first version of the Kazakh Tazy standard was approved by the Presidium of the Kazakh Association “Syrius”. We continued to work on the standard. In 2000, a new edition of the Kazakh Tazy standard was considered in the Cynological Department of Kzakhohotrybolovsoyuz and approved. In 2007, subsequent editions were approved by the the Union of Cynologists of Kazakhstan; in 2009-2011 it was further improved; and, in 2011, it was finally approved by National Club of the Kazakh Tazy Breed.

2. Concurrently, in 1993, we worked on the formation of a pedigreed nucleus population of the Tazys of Almaty. Under conditions of the complete absence of government or other support and insufficient personal funds, we relied mainly on club work. Private kennels, including our own, could not make a serious influence on the breed. We realized our dependence on people, who initially were far from the idea of preservation and restoration of the breed. Therefore, unlike work with kennels, major work in clubs is work with people. Working on a pedigreed population, we had only a few truly purebred dogs. Therefore we started not with purebred breeding, but rather with a reproductive breeding. This was the only way to preserve at least a small population of dogs completely conforming to our new breed standard and using it for the organization and support of new centers working on the breed.

3. The investigation of closely related breeds became an important aspect for developing the breed standard. For comparisons we used photographs, measurements and video recordings of sighthounds of different breeds kindly shared with us by members of the Tazy Internet Group.

4. The official recognition of the Tazy as a breed includes three steps:

a) Recognition in the cynological organizations of Kazakhstan. For this purpose, in 2006, the National Club of the Kazakh Tazy (“NKP”) and in 2007, the Union of Cynologists of Kazakhstan, a leading cynological organization of Kazakhstan, formally approved the standard of the Kazakh Tazy breed;

b) Recognition of the Tazy in Kazakhstan. In 2009, the Ministry of Agriculture approved “the methods for evaluating breeds for distinctiveness, uniformity and stability and for evaluating the achievements of selection in breeding animals and their suitability for being patented.” At the present time, we are preparing an application for the recognition of the breed by the government.

c) International recognition. At first, we tried to unite our efforts with the Russian Federation of Breeding Hunting Dogs. In 2000, Kazokhotrybolovsoyuz sent suggestions for the breed standard and for its joint acceptance with Rosokhotrybolovsoyuz. As we did not receive an answer, we tried to find other ways. Attempts to get approval of the breed standard by the Kennel Club and the American Kennel Club were not successful, because both clubs have Salukis as the primary breed. Recognition by the ICU and the UCI turned out to be far from international. The only choice left was cooperation with the FCI. We started this program in 2006 with the creation of the NKP, the acceptance of the Kazakh Tazy standard and the continuation of work with the breed.

6. To secure success in the restoration and preservation of the breed it was important to attract the support of the local population. Therefore, starting from 1994, we used the media for popularizing the breed in Kazakhstan. A major slogan was: “The Tazy is a national treasure and cultural heritage of the Kazakh people.” Tens of televised programs, tens of articles

and interviews in newspapers, magazines and Internet publications were produced. We also tried to raise the prestige of the breed among senior officials and businessmen. Gradually, the Tazy has become accepted as a valuable item, like a purebred racehorse and a Kazakh saddle adorned with artistic silverwork. For three seasons, with the assistance of the Jockey Club, we offered a Tazy puppy as a special gift to the winners of races. Naturally, if a senior official or a businessman became the owner of a Tazy, many of their subordinates or friends would try to obtain a dog of this breed.

Today, the Kazakh Tazy increasingly improves its position in Kazakhstan. Now, the success of the breed will depend on pedigree work. If we are able to save it from degeneration and can include it in the cynological process of the world as fully recognized participants, it will be an important contribution to its preservation in its home country.

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THREE ANCIENT ITALIAN DOG BREEDS

Alberto Bertelli

Italy

Italy boasts a very ancient pastoral tradition, especially in the central-southern area; sheep-rearing is inseparable from the use of sheepdogs, so the Italian territory was characterized by the presence of specialized sheepdog breeds since ancient times.

In this article, three sheepdog breeds typical of Central Italy will be introduced; they are not recognized by the FCI but they are of ancient heritage: the Abruzzese Mastiff (Mastino Abruzzese), the Italian Paratore Dog (Cane Paratore Italiano) and the Italian Shepherd (Pastore Italiano), also paying attention to some zootechnical and ethological aspects.

Italy was the object of three migratory waves of Indo-European warrior-shepherds during the Copper Age and the Bronze Age, between the III millennium BC and 900 BC. It is not excluded however that sheep-rearing was already known by the Italic peoples before: for example, the Liguri (singular = "Ligure") population of farmers/breeders migrated from the Iberian peninsula, according to the current thesis, and settled in northern Italy before the advent of the Indo-Europeans; also, according to fragment 55 of Hesiod (*Hesiodus* VIII BC - VII B: C.) quoted by Strabo (*Strabo* ante 60 BC – 23 A. D.; *Geografia*, IV, V VII), they would be the most ancient civilization of Western Europe. This thesis is confirmed by modern studies.

In particular, central Italy, the territory in which the breeds presented in this article developed and evolved, was inhabited since the Xth century BC by the Piceni (singular = "Piceno") of Indo-European origin; and the discovery by archaeologists of instruments for wool processing (e. g. loom

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weights) shows the importance of sheep-farming in this population.

Because the dog is the indispensable assistant in pastoral activity, it follows that the territory of the Italian peninsula was characterized by the presence of herding dogs ever since remote antiquity. It is likely that some Italian sheepdog breeds retain much of their original genetic heritage; and thus the attitudes that characterized the original ancient Asian sheepdogs arrived in the peninsula.

The group of the sheepdogs can be subdivided into three types, according to their task: the Guardian Dog, the Herding Dog, and the Watch Dog. In this article three Italian ancient sheepdog breeds are presented: one Guardian Dog, the Abruzzese Mastiff, and two Herding Dogs, the Italian Paratore Dog and the Italian Shepherd.

The sheepdog that gives the alarm is typical of Italian sheep-rearing: although it does not represent a homogeneous breed, it is, as we'll see, of considerable importance in the formation of the Italian Paratore Dog.

Abruzzese Mastiff (Mastino Abruzzese)

The Sheepdog that is in charge of guarding has the exclusive role of protector of the flock, preventing the attack of predators and rustling and intervening in any case one or more sheep are in a vulnerable situation. A significant role is played by the dog that protects the sheep which have just given birth (this is innate and habitual behaviour in the Abruzzese Mastiff). The Guardian Dog is historically the first sheepdog: it was born with sheep-farming and in particular with nomadic sheep-farming in an area between Turkey, Syria, today's Iraq and Central Asia during the VIth millennium BC. The first livestock guardian dogs were undoubtedly the direct descendants of the famous war-mastiffs portrayed in the Assyro-Babylonian bas-reliefs, thus sharing the same

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phylogenetic origin. These were large dogs (more than 50 kg = 110 lb in weight) and belonged predominantly - according to Megnin's morphological classification - to the Molossoid (Mastiff-like) group. Recent genetic studies (Lynch D. & Madeoy J., 2004) have confirmed the III - IV millennium BC as the most likely epoch of the appearance of Molossoids. In the course of the millennia, they have undergone a rigorous selection process that resulted in the today's type, which keeps only some of the features of their ancestors and retains a general morpho-functional uniformity. From the ethological point of view, the livestock guardian dog must not have any predatory attitude, so that it isn't inclined to attack sheep or it isn't distracted by eventual prey to move away and abandon the flock. At the same time, it must have a good attitude towards working together with their own fellow-dogs, so that its aggressiveness and combativeness, even if well present, should be directed exclusively towards outsiders but under the control of the owner. This is an absolutely distinctive and innate behaviour (Coppinger & Coppinger, 1982), which can at best be refined through training; and it's evidently part of the genetic-behavioural heritage of livestock guardian dogs.

In addition to their large size, livestock guardian dogs are characterized by a dense coat, typically made up of a thick, woolly undercoat and long hair to protect them in the harshest weather conditions of, in particular, frost, snow and humidity. In summary they are perfectly adapted to nomadic life. In Italy, as has happened in other areas of the world, in different ways from time to time, nomadic sheep-rearing has evolved in transhumance. The term is derived from the composition of two Latin words: "*trans*" (= beyond) and "*humus*" (= ground, soil) and it means the seasonal movement of livestock from high pastures towards the plains during the winter and vice versa during the summer, involving travelling hundreds of miles .

This type of grazing has been characteristic of the Apennine mountains of central-southern Italy ever since the Copper Age (4500 BC) and it acquired during this time a fundamental economic importance to the point where it was governed by law during the Roman period (e. g. *lex agraria*, 111 BC)

The transhumance of central-southern Italy is also called "horizontal transhumance" to differentiate it from the "vertical transhumance" typical of the Alps. In the first case, it is the movement of livestock, mainly sheep, over long distances, regardless of the altitude and over a long period of time, weeks or months. In the second case, the movement of livestock, both ovine and bovine, is over short distance and it consists of an altimetric migration in the span of one or a few days.

Transhumance is typical of the countries of the Mediterranean basin, in the territories of southern Europe from Portugal to the Balkans, an area generally characterized by rainy/snowy winters and hot summers ensuring abundant grazing at high altitude.

These areas correspond exactly to the areas of the breeding and diffusion of those dog breeds that are specialized in guarding livestock, breeds that are surprisingly similar to each other and are without doubt from a monophyletic origin: large dogs with a thick, woolly coat, totally or mainly white.

The transhumance of central and southern Italy winds along pathways called "*tratturi*" (singular = "*tratturo*", from Latin "*trahere*" = to lead, to drive), predominantly grassy slopes, sometimes more than 100 metres (328 ft) wide, connected to towns and villages by numerous side paths ("*traturelli*" = "*little tratturi*" e "*bracci*" = "*arms*") and interspersed with "*riposi*" (= "*reposes*") - temporary grazing areas.

The set of side paths and of secondary tracks forms a complex network, the development of which exceeds 3000 km (1864 ml) in total'.



Schematic map of the "tratturi network" elaborated by the author from the official edition of 1959 updated by the Foggia Commissioner for reinstatement of the Tratturi.

Its importance, over the centuries, was also cultural, as it ensured the spread of knowledge, news, language elements, artisanship, and commercial activities. For example, the longest and most important "tratturo" is that from L'Aquila to Foggia, and it is also called *Tratturo Magno* (= "Great tratturo") or *Tratturo del Re* (= "King's tratturo"), a path over 244 km (151 ml) long and in some places over 100 meters (over 330 ft .) wide.



Tratturo Regio ("King's Tratturo) or Tratturo Magno ("Great Tratturo"): locality Pescasseroli, province of L'Aquila, Abruzzo region

Transhumance, both in Italy and elsewhere, is a sort of organized nomadic sheep-rearing, however the risks faced by men and animals remain high. Long journeys through mainly wild or poorly inhabited territories expose the livestock to attacks by predators or thieves and the presence of one or more guard-dogs is therefore indispensable. For this reason, all over the world the livestock guard-dog is inseparable from the concepts of transhumance or extensive sheep-rearing. Moreover the large number of sheep ensures the maintenance of these same great guard dogs, because the main source of protein for the dogs comes from whey. Transhumant sheep-rearing and active protection of the sheep are closely interdependent. The necessity and the efficiency of guard-dogs protecting the flock have been demonstrated amply (Coppinger *et al.* 1988). The presence of the dogs reduces the slaughter of sheep by predators by 70 % or more.

To describe accurately the Abruzzese Mastiff, it is first necessary to provide some clarification: there is in fact some confusion between "*Abruzzese Mastiff*" and "*Maremmano-Abruzzese Sheepdog*", known also by the incorrect names of "*Maremmano Sheepdog*" or "*Maremma Dog*" in Anglo-Saxon countries. The FCI (*Fédération Cynologique Internationale*) recognizes the breed called "*Cane da Pastore Maremmano-Abruzzese*" ("*Maremmano-Abruzzese Sheepdog*", standard N° 201 – 1981), following on the fusion of the names "*Pastore Maremmano*" and "*Pastore Abruzzese*" in 1958. Generally, in the world, the names "Maremma dog" or "Maremmano dog" refer to the breed recognized by the FCI: however, the terms "Maremmano" or "Maremma" are inaccurate and historically misleading.

The Maremma is a large area between Tuscany and Lazio regions, the borders of which are difficult to define, extending along the coast of the Ligurian and Tyrrhenian Seas and to the west of the range of Apennine Mountains.



Schematic map of the original breeding and diffusion area of the three breeds (elaborated by the author). Within the yellow lines the geographical region named "Maremma".

The word "*Maremma*" is derived either from the Latin term "*maritima*" (= "*marine territory*") or from the Castilian "*marisma*" (= "*swamp*"). In both cases, the nature of a difficult territory because of the high humidity, which has made it the subject of important drainage schemes ever since ancient times, is evident. In this area, as in the rest of Tuscany, there is no historical evidence of breeding these great white guard-dogs. Also the heart of the Italian sheep-rearing economy, based on transhumance and therefore on the use of guard-dogs, was concentrated along the central-eastern flanks of the Apennine Mountain range (in the Abruzzo region and vicinity). In spite of this, the Tuscan cynophiliasts were the first to take into account the watchdogs of Abruzzo from the sporting point of view, making them known also in England during the XIXth century (e. g. the Grand National Dog Show in Nottingham, October 1872). Today it can be stated that the name "Maremma dog" is historically imprecise because the Maremma, therefore Tuscany, was an area of diffusion only but not of origin/breeding of this canine lineage (Breber , 1977). The breed today officially recognized as *Cane da Pastore Maremmano-Abruzzese* was selected from a population of working dogs identifiable with the Abruzzese Mastiff.



Typical adult, male, exemplar of Abruzzese Mastiff, sometimes the ear are cropped: it's a custom to protect the dog from the bites of the wolves; by Weleda Asia courtesy

It is the cause of lively discussions among cynologists whether the Maremmano-Abruzzese Shepherd and the Abruzzese Mastiff are two types - respectively "sporting" and "working" – of the same race or whether they are to be considered separate breeds. There are different geographical types of Abruzzese Mastiff and this makes it difficult to make a clear morphological separation from the Maremmano-Abruzzese Shepherd. However, it is clear that the Mastiff represents a primitive working population and that the average of the morphological differences (e. g. size, general structure of the skull, texture of hair) seems to indicate the difference between the two breeds. In summary, despite the Abruzzese Mastiff not being officially recognized by the FCI, it is historically and genetically the real ancestor of the "Maremmano-Abruzzese Shepherd" and it must be considered a distinct breed.

The ancient original area of the great white guard-dogs is Central Asia and from this region came the ancestors of the typical livestock guard-dog breeds recognized today (e. g. Kuvasz, Slovensky Cuvar, Mastin De Los Pyreneos, Chien de montagne des Pyrénées, etc.) as well as the distant ancestors of the Abruzzese Mastiff.

Each breed belonging to this group evolved later in their breeding territories, acquiring little by little its identity. The Abruzzese Mastiff has a fully innate protective instinct towards sheep and - if necessary - also towards other small pets, not only in the event of predation by wolves or bears, but also at any time of vulnerability or difficulty, for example, if a ewe gives birth or is injured.



A male Abruzzese Mastiff protecting his sheep during a transhumance; by Weleda Asia courtesy

The presence and the employment of this breed in the territory of central-southern Italy is demonstrated by history. The Latin writer Marcus Terentius Varro (116 BC - 27 BC) has handed down in his work "*De Re Rustica*" (*On the Countryside*) an accurate description of the "*Canis pastoralis*" (...): "*Facie debent esse formosi, magnitudine ampla, oculis nigrantibus aut ravis*" (...) "*capitibus et auriculis magnis ac flaccis, crassis cervicibus ac collo*" (...) "*cauda crassa, latrato gravi, hiatu magno, colore potissimum albo, quod in tenebris facilius agnoscuntur, specie leonina*"

"They have to be beautiful in appearance, of large physique, with black or yellow eyes" (...) "a big head and wide, soft ears" (...) "a big tail, deep bark, wide span of mouth, coloured white preferably, such that it can be recognized in the darkness, and leonine."

The characteristics described by the Latin author are the same as those that can be recognized in today's Abruzzese Mastiff and that we can admire in the sculpture of a Molosser (with cropped ears), preserved in the Belvedere Court of the Vatican Museums, which dates back to a period between 100 BC and 1 AD, contemporaneous with Varro.

Another Latin author, Lucius Giunius Moderatus Columella (4 AD – 70 AD), confirms the preference for the white colour of the shepherd dogs:

(...) "Pastor album probat, quoniam est ferae dissimilis, magnoque opus interdum discrimine est in propulsandis lupis sub obscuro mane vel etiam crepusculo, ne pro bestia canem feriat", "The Shepherds prefer the colour white, because it is very different from the wild beasts, and this diversity is needed when chasing down wolves in the gloom of the morning or at dusk, so that you do not hit the dog instead of the attacker."



**Statue representing a Molosser dog (after 100 BC - before 1 BC)
Vatican Museums, Belvedere Court**

The Latin witnesses handed down an important detail: the typical sheepdog of the Italian territory, until the Roman period - or "*Canis pastoralis*" - was exclusively a guard-dog. The Latin sheep-rearing economy was in fact based on transhumance, which was practised in the central-southern mountainous territory already at that time. A dry and more easily practicable way than the swampy plains extended between the Tuscany and Lazio regions. Until the XIXth century, the Abruzzese Mastiff was the typical dog of the "*region of the tratturi*", the area of the Naples Kingdom made up by today's Abruzzo, Molise, Puglia, Campania and Basilicata regions.

The appearance, the role and the skills of *Canis pastoralis* have not changed in the course of the millennia: it is perfect for warding off predators from the flock. I wrote "to

ward off " because the survey of direct physical confrontation between the wolf and the Abruzzese Mastiff is limited. The Italian subspecies wolf (*Canis lupus italicus*, Linnaeus 1758) is adapted to a heavily populated habitat since ancient times. It does not form large packs but small family groups of two or three individuals. It has developed great shrewdness and is able to assess when the number and strength of the mastiffs are too many to risk a sortie on the sheep. Despite the Abruzzese Mastiff showing innate aggressiveness (as the fruit of continuous selection) against predators and in particular against the wolf, this is still a formidable opponent who can come off better against young or isolated dogs. An Abruzzese Mastiff male at the age of five or six years (usually the pack leader) may be able to stand up to the wolf in a "hand-to-hand" fight (Breber , 1977). However it is an ancient custom to protect the dogs with a spiked metal collar, called in the Abruzzese dialect "vreccale" or "roccale ", which is considered as a "defensive weapon".



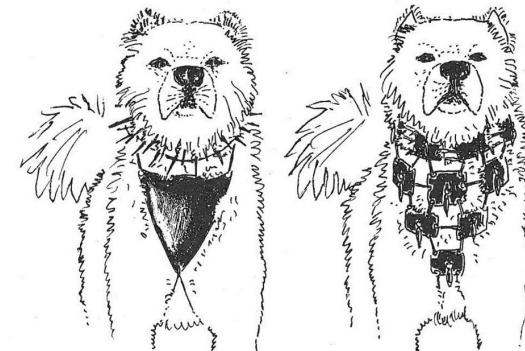
Armour-plate "vreccale".

http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Roccale_2.jpg



"Vreccale" or "Roccale": mesh example; usually the making of these protective metal collars was entrusted to the apprentices smiths http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Roccale_1.jpg

During the past, the spiked pectoral also existed as an "offensive weapon".



The pectoral represents a defensive weapon. The Mastiff charges the enemy with the chest trying to throw it back and to bite its stomach. (Breber, 1977)

It is interesting to observe that the custom of the defensive spiked collar is ancient and widespread in all areas in which dogs are employed to fight the wolves, from Asia to the Iberian peninsula.



Particular from the Nativity fresco in S. Francesco Church, XIV century (by marchigiana school), Amatrice town (Rieti) – Lazio region: a medieval large, white molossoid with spiked "vreccale"

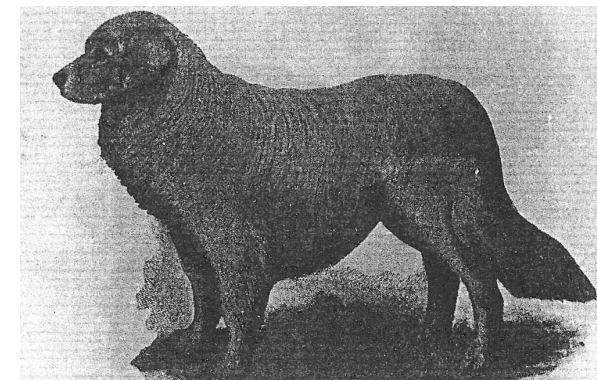


Akbash dog in Turkey (photo from Italian pet-magazine in '90s): the use of spiked collars has spread everywhere the guard-dogs are employed during the transhumance.

Through the centuries we have received numerous iconographic evidence of the employment and constant morphology of the Abruzzese Mastiff.



Particular from "The Nativity" (Vatican picture gallery) by Mariotto di Nardo cent. XIV: constant and homogeneous presence through the centuries of white molosser dogs to protect the sheep.



"The Italian Sheepdog - Abruzzese variety" The first illustration of the Maremma sheepdog appeared in an Italian Cynophily text: "Il Cane" by Angelo Vecchio 1904

One should not forget that the morphological homogeneity of Abruzzese Mastiffs always has been and is still considered of secondary importance to the working skills. The morphology and the beauty are a direct consequence of the necessary working skills of the dog.

The empirical relationship between form and ability helped the farmers to select these working dogs; and today we can speak about an empirical "standard" summarized in these points: large mass (over 80 kg - 176 lb for the males); a powerful and broad head; a large chest; an absolutely white coat.



**Good exemplar of Abruzzese Mastiff;
by Weleda Asia courtesy**



Particular of the head

Despite the risk represented by crosses that may undermine their working skills, the farmers of the Abruzzo region in the past gave "new blood" to the Abruzzese Mastiff by means of crosses with another ancient Italian breed: the *Cane Corso* (Standard FCI n° 343; 24 June 1987). The *Cane Corso*, indigenous to Puglia region and with the same ancestors as the Neapolitan Mastiff, was used in the past to capture wild cattle and wild boar. The contribution of this breed has helped to increase the fighting spirit and the generosity of the Abruzzese Mastiff. However the genetic input of the *Cane Corso* has caused the appearance of black dappled dogs. In the past, the spotted or reddish examples sometimes were eliminated drastically; however this was not a rule. Even today, in some areas, the existence of black dappled Abruzzese Mastiffs is admitted. These examples are employed to guard the

farm exclusively, but they are not considered suitable to livestock guarding. They are called "*Mezzocorso*" ("*Half a Corso*") or, because of the black and white coat, "*Domenicani*" (= "*Dominican variety*"), recalling the black and white habit of the Dominican friars.



Particular from oil on canvas "Landscape in the Roman Country" (private collection) by Philipp Peter Roos (Sankt Goar, 30 August 1657 – Rome, 17 January 1706): Abruzzese Mastiff "Dominican type". This German artist was a careful portraits painter of the animals in the countryside of central Italy.

The typical diet for Abruzzese Mastiffs consists of whey, bread, and sometimes bran.

A surprising aspect of their physical behaviour is the refusal of the Abruzzesi Mastiffs to feed on the flesh of a ewe. It is probably a legacy that comes from both genetic selection and imprinting. These dogs are missing absolutely any

predatory instinct and any tendency of aggression towards the sheep.

The physiological capacity of the Abruzzese Mastiff to metabolize easily their starchy food could be an indication of the ancient genetics of the breed. In the light of recent studies (Axelsson *et al.*, 2013) the acquisition of the capacity to digest starches easily, compared to the wolves and to the other representatives of the genus *Canis*, is a crucial passage in the domestication of the first dogs.

The work in the field is carried out by a variable number of dogs. Usually the considered ratio is ewes: dogs = 100:1, but the number of dogs may vary and be higher if the sheep have to move through areas particularly rich in predators. It can be observed in Italy from region to region that in the Abruzzo region, for example, a higher number of dogs is employed than in the Tuscany or Lazio regions (Maurizio Martial by direct conversation).

The Abruzzese Mastiff is strictly a working breed. As it not officially recognized, it is not protected by national boards (ENCI - FCI) and its purity is maintained by enthusiasts, farmers and shepherds; and the only attempt at protection dates back to a legislative proposal of the Abruzzo region in 2002, proposed by the Italian Abruzzese Mastiff Club (CIMA).

Italian Paratore Dog (Cane Paratore Italiano)

The Italian Paratore Dog is also called "*Cane Toccatore*" ("*Toucher Dog*") because it drives the sheep with fast and light touches of the muzzle, though in fact this breed is distinguished by its care in herding the ewes. In Italian the term "*paratore* " occurs in the zootechnical context to indicate the sheepdog specialized in herding sheep and, when necessary, cattle.

Unlike what happened about the Abruzzese Mastiff, the historical evidence about herding dogs in Italy is almost absent.

The Latin texts quoted above allow us to deduce that in the past, until Roman times, there were no dogs specialized in herding in Italian territory: the ancient *Canis pastoralis* was exclusively a guard-dog.

The first clue is deducible from the etymology of the term "*paratore*". In classical Latin the verb "*parare*" means "*to prepare*", "*fit out*", but in this case it seems there's no logical connection with the work of the dog. However, considering the Vulgar Latin of the late Middle Ages (after the Xth century approximately), the verb takes the meaning of "*to push forward*" or "*to stand in front of*": a meaning which still remains today in some dialects of North- Eastern Italy. The same philological root is in the term "*parade*". "*Paratore*" is therefore the sheepdog who leads the sheep in determined directions and regulates their movement. The historical events seem to confirm the medieval origin of this breed of dog native to central Italy. In Northern-central Italy, from the XIII - XIVth centuries, the development of commercial trade and economic activities in the towns attracted from the countryside a great number of free farmers, lured by the opportunity to embrace the profitable activities of trade and handicrafts. This migration led to a conflict between the rising city economy and the feudal economy based on rural activities. The feudal lords were the first to suffer economic damage and, in order to hold the rural population, had to modify deeply the relationship of dependency through large concessions such as the right of ground exploitation in the long term and the formation of the first associated managements which brought about the birth of the first estates. Consequently, the extension of lands destined for cultivation grew, thanks to drainage works and deforestation, and the number of large predators also declined dramatically as a result of systematic hunting. Because the pastures and farmlands alternated closely, a new assistant in the work of the farmer was needed so that the

livestock were contained within the pastures, without trespassing and therefore without damaging the nearby cultivations. In this period the first specialized herding dogs appear in Italy.

In order for the herding dog to be considered as such, it must show morphological and functional characteristics very clearly: it must be of medium or medium-small size, typically and necessarily - as we shall see - "*lupoid*" (wolf-like) , fast, agile and intelligent, able to develop a real empathy with the owner/leader in order to interpret and execute his orders quickly, but also endowed with autonomy of decision-making and skill in resolving problems. Some works of art of the XIV century testify the presence of the first dogs with the morphological characters of herding dogs:



Particular from "Scenes from the Life of Christ - Nativity" (private collection) by Mariotto di Nardo, XV century ; this dog, portrayed with the shepherds, is clearly not a guard-dog: lupine, medium sized, dappled, it's a typical herding-dog morphologically. The historical period corresponded to the transition from the feudal economy to the city-state one. The wool trade increased and at the same time the pasturelands: the rapid herding-dog was essential to keep the sheep away from the cultivations.



Particular from "The Annunciation to Joachim" (1383) (Vatican picture gallery) by Bartolo di Fredi (Siena, 1330 – Siena, 26 January 1410). Another another slight, dappled, herding-dog from the medieval period.

The herding dog is needed for permanent or semi-permanent sheep farming as the presence of the guard-dog is needed for transhumance. From the ethological perspective, the herding dog can be considered the antithesis of the guard-dog. When the dogs gather and drive the livestock or separate a part of the flock, they use the same tactics - with some difference from breed to breed - used in nature by wolves hunting large herbivores. The activity of the herding dog is a kind of mimed hunting, without cruelty. The flock reacts and moves forward to the tactical and to the "lupine" appearance of the herding dog. Therefore the final result is derived from the encounter of two ethological modules: one (partially) predatory of the dog and the other of escape of the sheep.

The two types of sheepdogs – guarding and herding - have antithetical aptitudes (Breber, 1977): while the watchdog absolutely mustn't have predatory instincts, the herding dog performs its task by mimicking the activity of predation. Cooperation between guard-dogs and herding dogs is primarily determined by habit, training and the adaptable intelligence of the dogs.



A team of three Italian Paratori Dogs, ready for action if some ewes moved away from the flock. The Abruzzesi Mastiffs are ready too: to protect both the sheep and the Paratori Dogs.

It's possible that a guard dog, which has never seen a herding dog, attacks it through identifying it as a predator (Coppinger, 1982). According to oral tradition, to increase the capacity of predatory instincts, the Italian Paratore Dog was crossed with wolves in the past. An image, dating back to the 1950s, might confirm this hypothesis.



In this photo of '50s two Paratori Dogs and a Abruzzese Mastiff are portrayed; the similarity of the two Paratori Dogs with the wolves of the Italian subspecies (*Canis lupus italicus*) is surprising and it seems to confirm ancient crosses between this sheepdog breed and the wolves. By Maurizio Marziali courtesy



Also today some exemplars keep the similarity with the wolves. By Maurizio Marziali courtesy

However only a genetic analysis could confirm - or disprove - the hypothesis. There is evidence that, from a

sheepdog/wolf cross, there is no guarantee to obtain, within a few generations, reliable herding dogs. A long period of careful selection is needed to quell the predatory instincts inherited from the wolf and to establish good trainability

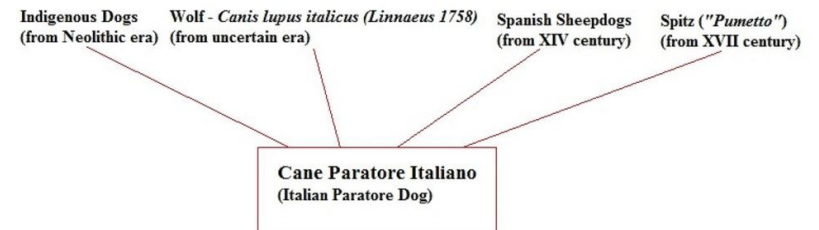
Another contribution to the formation of the breed may have come from breeds of Spanish origin. Central-southern Italy was under Spanish domination since the XIVth century and the commercial and cultural exchanges between the Italian and the Iberian Peninsula were constant until the XVIIIth century. In Italy, Merino breed ewes were introduced and, as happened later in other parts of the world, in the wake of these sheep herding dogs also arrived, probably similar to the Catalan Sheepdog. It is not excluded that the Paratore Dog has also ancestry of the Spitz type. The Mastiffs and the Herding Dogs were often accompanied by small dogs, named "*pumetti*" or "*pomini*" in the dialects of central Italy. The name derives from a distortion of the term "*pomerania*". It seems clear that these little, brisk and noisy dogs descend from the northern European Spitz introduced into Italy between the XVIth and XVIIth centuries.



Typical exemplar of "Pumetto". The "pumetti" don't represent a homogeneous breed, however it's clear the heritage of the North-european spitz that came in Italy during the XVI – XVII centuries. In the Italian sheep-rearing, the Pumetti are considered sheepdog with the fundamental role of "sentinel".

By virtue of their very sharp senses and nervous temperament, while not representing a defined breed, they can be considered the third type of herding dog: the "watch-dog". The "Merle" allele, determining the dilution of coat colour in the heterozygotic form "Mm" or in the depigmentation in the homozygotic form "MM", occurs rarely in the Italian Paratore Dog and with mild effects. Because the presence of the "Merle" allele is typical of the "Collie-like" dogs - spread mostly in the British Isles and in southern Europe through Spain, France, northern Italy, Germany and Hungary - it is probable therefore that the Italian Paratore Dog was not crossed in recent times with herding dogs of this group.

The presence of indigenous wolf-like dogs is confirmed in the Italian peninsula since Neolithic times. In 2009, a tomb was found near Mantua (Northern Italy) of a hunter, buried with his dog that was very similar to a small wolf (see web reference in bibliography). In these ancient native dogs might be recognized the farthest origin of the Paratore Dog.



This scheme reproduces in synthesis the most probable lineage from which the Italian Paratore Dog descends.

The progressive selection of a close working function and the environment have in the end determined the functional homogenization of the breed.

The Paratore Dog is typically lupoid (wolf-like), medium or small-medium sized (15 kg - 25 kg / 33 lb – 55 lb, on average); the coat is short or semi-long, rough and "goat-like"; and the basic colour is grey with various shades, in some cases all black.



The coat of Paratore Dog is typically rough, "caprine", short or semi-long. The colours are basically grey with various shades or totally black. by Weleda Asia courtesy



A young Paratore mother with her puppies. By Maurizio Marziali courtesy

The temperament is lively, attentive, and intelligent. Typically it works in teams, consisting of three or four elements usually, according to the size of the flock to be led. Although it is still employed regularly, the Italian Paratore Dog is at high risk of extinction: the population is threatened by the introduction of not-indigenous breeds, especially the Belgian Shepherd Groenendael, which undermine the phenotypic and behavioural purity. Currently the Italian Paratore Dog is not protected by any society. Only one breeder in Italy, Maurizio Martiali, is trying patiently to retrieve and to breed the last examples.

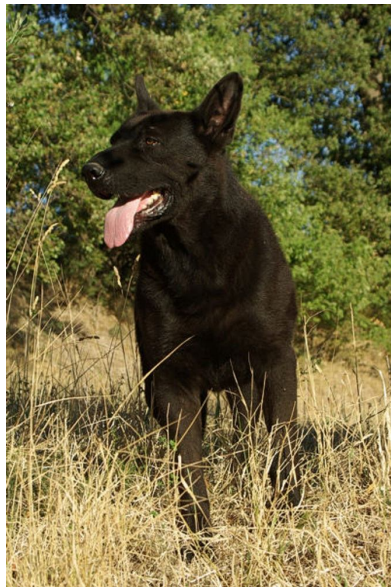
Italian Shepherd (Pastore Italiano)

The characteristics of the Italian territory - relatively narrow, strongly populated, with many mountainous areas - have led the shepherds of central Italy to make use of guard-dogs - Abruzzese Mastiffs - and herding dogs - Italian Paratore Dog (or related lineages) at the same time . Usually the farmers have always tried to keep separate the two lineages, destined for different tasks and characterized by partially antithetical ethological attitudes. It is impossible to know exactly when the cross between watchdogs and herding dogs happened, however it happened and the result of such crosses was maintained.

Around 1975 the breeder Piero Accettella observed, among the regions of Abruzzo, Brands, Lazio, Tuscany and Umbria, the recurrent presence and the working employment of dogs with a completely black coat and morphological characteristics intermediate between molossoid and lupoid, descending from crosses between Abruzzesi Mastiffs and herding dogs.



A young female exemplar of Italian Shepherd (author Marco Leonardi) by Piero Accettella courtesy



A male exemplar of Italian Shepherd; this breed shows a moderate sexual dimorphism: the male is heavier and with mlossoid traits more accentuated. by Piero Accettella courtesy

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He decided to collect the most typical subjects to stabilize and increase the population of these dogs, baptising the breed "*Pastore Italiano*" ("*Italian Shepherd*".) In fact the official denomination dates from the 1990s, with reference to the typically indigenous origins. As happens for most of the herding breeds, there are no historical records that allow us to establish precise dates for the remote past of the breed, however the black colour (already present in the genetic heritage of the Italian Paratore Dog), maintained through time by the work of breeders, is an interesting clue.



The coat of the Italian Shepherd is dense, short or – as this exemplar – semi-long; always black coloured. by Piero Accettella courtesy

In Lucius Giunius Moderatus Columella's work, considered the most important literary work about the agronomy of the whole of antiquity, the ideal watchdog for the farm is described with its morphological and functional

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characteristics: (...) *Villaticus, qui hominum maleficiis opponitur, sive luce clara fur advenit, terribior niger conspicitur, sive noctu, ne conspiciatur quidem propter umbrae similitudinem, quam ob rem tectus tenebris canis tutiorem adcessum habet ad insidiantem.* "The yard dog, which opposes itself to the incursions of men, when the thief comes in broad daylight, appears more terrifying if it's black. If during the night it's invisible because it is similar to the shadows and, therefore, hidden by them, the dog can approach the intruder with less danger".

This does not demonstrate that the Italian Shepherd is a direct descendant of Roman farm dogs, as the origins of the first crosses between molossers and herding dogs in Italy go back to the medieval period supposedly, but the employment and the morphological and functional peculiarities of this breed are the same as those of the ancient farm dogs of the Roman/Latin period, beginning from the strictly black colour. It is a versatile working dog, able to hold several roles in the rural context. It is perfectly capable of leading the flock, even though it is heavier than the Paratore Dog and herding dogs in general. Its large size makes it suitable to manage the larger forms of livestock and its affinity with horses is indeed important (Piero Accettella, from personal correspondence).

The Italian Shepherd has inherited from the Mastiff the attitude to watch over the territory and the property; from the herding dog it has inherited trainability and sharpness; and from both, hardiness, longevity and mental balance. The primitiveness of the breed is evident at the point of birth: the female gives birth in lairs dug into the ground and takes care completely independently of the birth of the puppies.



Italian Shepherd puppies: the mother has repaired them in a haystack. The female is autonomous during the birth which often occurs in lairs dug into the ground.

Since 1999, some examples have been successfully introduced into units of the Carabinieri as sniffer dogs and in 2000 they started to be employed as guide dogs. It is a large dog, with powerful structure but not massive; it shows a moderate sexual dimorphism; it has a short or semi-long coat; it is uniformly colored black; its height and weight are about 45 kg (99 lb) and 70 cm (27.5 in) at the withers for the males and 35 kg (77 lb) and 56 cm (22 in) at the withers for the females.



An Italian Shepherd portrayed in a olive-grove: this breed expresses the typical qualities of the versatile farm-dog, capable of various working roles: herding-dog, guard-dog, cattle-dog. by Piero Accettella courtesy

The breed is relatively rare and little known outside Italy, but it is carefully protected by a specific fan club (*Fan Club del Pastore Italiano*) so that it is perpetuated and made known with full respect to its original features, protecting it against the risks that derive from "fashion".

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Primitive Aboriginal Dogs Society

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