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Preservation of Primitive
Aboriginal Dogs***

From the Curator...

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

We are wishing you a beautiful Holiday season and a New Year of peace and happiness!

In this 33rd issue we publish two articles.

Dr. Anna Laukner, in the second part of her article, continues discussion of coat color variation in the German Spitz. Sir Terence Clark writes about aboriginal sighthounds of Turkmenistan and place of these remarkable dogs in history and today's life in Turkmenistan.

Sincerely yours,

Vladimir Beregovoy

Curator of PADS, International

In This Issue...

COAT COLOUR IN THE SPITZ..... 4
TAZY IN TURKMENISTAN..... 17
LIST OF MEMBERS..... 40

Coat Colour in the Spitz

Dr. Anna Laukner

Translation: Gabriele Schröter

Part II

The colour spectrum in the Spitz is extraordinarily broad. As explained in the first part of this article, the genes for these colours have always been in the gene pool of the breed.

In the more than one hundred years of history of planned Spitz breeding there have been a number of changes in the standard concerning colour:

1899, when the Club for the German Spitz was founded, white, black and shaded grey were the only recognized colours.

1906: all colours are allowed again. At a general meeting there is an application to allow piebald-s only in The Small Spitz, but not in the Giant Spitz.

1958: Small Spitz permitted only in white, black, brown, orange and grey. The Giant Spitz permitted only in shaded grey (Wolf Spitz) and in white, black and brown when called Giant Spitz. From this date on breeding is also separated according to colour (the only exception is breeding brown to black).

1969: The size variety of the German Standard Spitz is included in the standard (this type is mainly formed by oversized Small Spitz that would otherwise be lost for breeding).

1974 : The Deutscher Zwerg Spitz/Pomeranian was included in the breed standard, it is recognized in the colours of the Small and Standard Spitz, adding ‘other colours’ (heterochromous).

1990: The colour palette is enlarged by ‘other colours’ (heterochromous) for the Small and Standard Spitz as well.

So you can see that up to the year 1958 there had not been any colour rules for 52 years, neither separate breeding for colour. Customarily the white Spitz was only bred among each other and every couple of generations a black Spitz was bred in to improve the pigmentation. Black and grey were regularly interbred with the result that among others orange and other colours appeared as well (in the Giant Spitz, too, of course. Pied Spitz kept appearing as well, the gene for piebald dogs is ‘hidden’ especially in white lines (for in a white dog you will hardly be able to recognize whether a dog is white piebald or not).

Even in 1954 you could read in a leaflet of the Club for the German Spitz: “It was good that the Club decided years ago to recognize not only the Wolf Spitz, the black and the white Spitz but also the other colours giving up its original negative position, as

there are many highly typical specimens among them. In any case the big red ones with a slight black shading are very beautiful. But why shouldn’t one also recognize brown or cream coloured ones if they are real Spitz? For it is a fact that you can only judge their merit if there is a competition among all the different varieties of coat. Therefore the breeders of Spitzes of other colours who feel that their favourites are more tolerated than recognized should be encouraged by prizes at shows. Maybe then colour varieties will appear at shows that have not been seen there yet, and will also appeal.”

It is almost tragic for the friends of the Giant Spitz in other colours and for the variety in colour in general that only four years later such a restrictive amendment of the standard and breeding regulations were accepted. At least partly this was eased 16 or 32 years later, respectively when the Pomeranian, the Small and German Standard Spitz in other colours were introduced. But separate breeding for colours remains in the breed’s home country to this very day.



A group of Standard Spitz dogs (Mittelspitz) – at the center a black dog with tan markings on the legs, on its right and left Spitz dogs of a gray shaded colour of different intensities. Photo: Carola Mahler



**Black Middle German Herding Dogs.
Photo: Susanne Zander.**

To preserve through education..... 7



Black Giant Spitz photo: Ave/Haaß Prominent distinguishing feature between the Old German Herding Dog and the Giant Spitz is the curled tail as well as the square body structure of the Spitz. Nevertheless both breeds share characteristics which suggest common ancestry.

Deutscher Zwergspitz alias Pomeranian

In the 1970ies the Pomeranian that was popular in the USA and the United Kingdom returned to Germany. Optically it was already detached from its German ancestors. As the rising popularity could no longer be denied and the Association of Toy Dog Breeders (Verband der Kleinhundezüchter) was interested in supporting and mentoring the breed, there was hardly any other possibility for the German Spitz Club than to accept the Pomeranian as a new size variety (namely as ‘Deutscher Zwergspitz’) in its standard. As a wide range of colours had always been

8

To preserve through education.....

accepted in England and the USA and breeding was not so strictly separated as in Germany it was inevitable to adopt this wide spectrum of colours. This is also one of the reasons why the reclassification of too large Zwergspitzes as Small German Spitz is not allowed: the introduction of heterozygous Spitzes into the purebred separate colours of the Small German Spitz is the threat. Besides, the modern Pomeranian is clearly different in type from the Small German Spitz (and of course from the larger Spitz varieties), a gradual infiltration of this American Type into the Giant, Standard and Small German is not wanted. The other size varieties, however, may be reclassified: that means that a Small German Spitz that has grown a bit to large may be bred from as a Standard Spitz or a larger Standard Spitz as a Giant. These measures are extremely sensible as they preserve valuable genes for breeding. But back to coat colours...

In 1992 the managing director of the Club for the German Spitz of the time, Mr. Peter Machetanz, wrote in the official club magazine 'The German Spitz: "Almost three years have passed since the standard of the German Spitz was revised and the colour palette of the Small and Standard Spitz was extended. (...) A well aimed use of size borderliners can positively influence the breeding of the other size varieties as there have occurred small breeding lines within the separate colour and size varieties over the years accompanied by the corresponding deficiencies.

The 'heteronomous colours' classification for the Small and Standard Spitz was necessary in order to incorporate these size-borderliners, originating mainly from the Zwergspitz, into the breeding pool without losing the homozygous German lines. This is nothing the Club for the German Spitz invented, but the revival of an old tradition. Before the beginning of the separate breeding (some 40 years ago) there had been breeding of multi-coloured Spitzes in the Club. Experienced breeders and judges today are clearly convinced that these borderliners between different colours and sizes are necessary to keep the separate sizes and colours stable over time thus giving them a safe future. We must keep in mind that at the moment the most popular and most successful Spitz in Middle Europe is the Wolf Spitz and that it is not wholecoloured. If we then look at the humble existence of his wholecoloured relative, the Giant Spitz it becomes very clear how beneficial it is for a breed if colour is not the only decisive part of the breeding aim. (...) How small have the possibilities of the breeders of Giant, Standard and Small Spitz been up to three years ago (...) Colours are always a very vivid and constantly changing part of all pure bred dogs. Something that is right today may be outdated in a couple of years because of the development of breeding. The standard is not the Bible, it has to be improved and expanded again and again. With the new colours the Club for the German Spitz has given

the breeders great freedom. The breeders and breed judges are responsible for what will come from this freedom. I personally can only wish that we who were involved in this change in the standard can say in a couple of years: "It was a good decision to give the German Spitz more colour in the year 1990." More than 20 years later these sentences are as topical as ever. Meanwhile we know that too much restriction within a population (the strict separation of sizes and colours) can have negative consequences for a breed through the loss of genes. Reduced fertility and diminished vitality can be the result of too close breeding.

But now let's find out why all the old Spitz colours are still frowned upon in the Giant Spitz of all varieties.

Poor Cousin Giant German Spitz?

The Giant German Spitz is to this very day the only size variety of the German Spitz that is bred neither in orange nor in other colours. If we read Peter Machetanz's remarks of 1992 this is hardly believable. According to the puppy statistics of the VDH (The German Kennel Club) the Giant German Spitz no longer belongs among the really popular breeds with an average of 42 puppies a year (over the last ten years). The times of only single-digit annual puppy numbers seem to have been overcome, thankfully. Still it is a great pity that the Giant German Spitz is

still not very popular as the big Spitz is one of the German dog breeds with the greatest tradition. That medium sized dogs of Spitz type are still popular family dogs and pets can be seen by looking at the population of the Eurasier. Over the last ten years the annual number of puppies averaged between 400 and 500. The Giant Spitz and even the Wolf Spitz (an average of 187 puppies per year in Germany over the last 10 years according to the VDH puppy statistics) were thus significantly overtaken by the Eurasier. One of the reasons for the great popularity of the Eurasier is certainly the wide variety of colours – there are hardly any bad feelings about any coat colour (apart from pure white, brown and pie-bald that are not recognized) or about breeding certain coat colours to one another. In comparison the requirements for the breeding of the Giant German Spitz appear rather antiquated and can not really be understood by a modern dog lover. Several dog friends that had thought of buying a Giant Spitz decided against it in the end in favour of a Eurasier or a Standard Spitz because here they could choose from a rich palette of colours. Once again I would like to quote Peter Machetanz's remarks of 1992: "Regarding (...) the humble fate (...) of [the Giant Spitz] it becomes perfectly clear how advantageous it is for a breed if colour is not the only decisive part of the breeding aim. (...) How small have the possibilities (...) of the breeders of Giant Spitz become (...). Colours are

always a very vivid and constantly changing part of all pure bred dogs. Something that is right today may be outdated in a couple of years because of the development of breeding. The standard is not the Bible, it has to be improved and expanded again and again.



Wolfspitz of the old German type. Photo: Ave/Haas.

Separate breeding according to colours

In the present breeding regulations (status January 2011) of the Club for the German Spitz we read: Interbreeding of colours in the size varieties Small Spitz and Standard Spitz are permissible between black and Brown; orange, shaded grey and heterochromous.

Wholecoloured black, brown or white specimens that have been bred from orange, shaded grey or heterochromous parents; orange, shaded grey or heterochromous specimens from black or brown parentage and black, brown, orange, shaded grey or heterochromous specimens from white parentage may only be bred to heterochromous specimens.

Colour interbreeding within the size variety of the Giant Spitz are allowed only between black and brown.

In the Zwerg Spitz all colours may be interbred that are recognized by the standard.

The reason for this rather strict separation of colour breeding in the breed's mother country is the wish to keep the individual colours pure – and, of course, also to avoid colours that are undesirable.

The individual colours were bred separately early. Interbreeding of black and white was done only sporadically (see quotation from Strebel in part 1). Interbreeding of different colours was forbidden for the first time in 1958. So in Germany white Spitz and black and black Spitz have been bred only separately for 53 years now. The Wolf Spitz is bred purely shaded grey. Only the orange, shaded grey and heterochromous Spitz in the Standard and Small size variety may be interbred arbitrarily (only within their own size variety, of course). A further exception is formed by the pure brown Spitz: it may be bred to

brown as well as to black (brown is genetically analogous to black).

The Wolf Spitz is judged separately, is not considered as a colour variety of the Giant German Spitz, but rather as a separate variety, even though its standard differs only (at least theoretically) in colour and a few centimetres in height at the withers from the Giant German Spitz. Opening up the colour separation would make winning titles more difficult – competition would simply larger.

Outside the mother country of the breed things are not handled quite so strictly. In the Czech Republic Wolf Spitz are regularly interbred with black Giant Spitz. In Scandinavia and in England, too, Standard Spitz are bred ‘across the colours’, there is a much greater variety in colour there, litters are much more colourful. Of course this is not without consequences in a global world: the international exchange of studs and brood bitches is common practice. So many a breeder of a white Spitz is not amused when a stud from his breeding produces colourful litters in Scandinavia. And on the other hand dogs are imported into Germany for breeding that may turn out as genetic bag of surprises concerning colour. Therefore foreign dogs from colour-mixing breeding are submitted to special conditions in Germany and within the Club for the German Spitz they can be used for breeding only with a special permission.

In Switzerland breeding regulations concerning colour are not as strict as in Germany. Here Giant Spitz may be bred ‘trans colour’ after approved application. All the other size varieties can be interbred regardless of colour within their own size variety. Madelaine Hermann the breeding supervisor of the Swiss Club for Spitz emphasizes that it is more important to breed Spitz that are healthy in body and temperament than to watch every ‘faulty hair’.

Please read more about colour genetics in the third and last part as well as about the abundance of colour in the Spitz and a look into the future.



Orange has always been an existing coat colour in the breed – today it is only recognized in the Standard, Small and Toy variety of the breed (the picture shows a Standard Spitz).

Photo: Ave/Haas

Tazy in Turkmenistan

Sir Terence Clark
England

The idea of visiting Turkmenistan has been with me since my days as a student of Russian, when I became acquainted with the exciting history of Russian expansionism into Central Asia in the 19th century. With the generous help of some contacts in the National Falconers Association of Turkmenistan the idea became a reality in April 2012.

Although I had read how the capital, Ashgabat had been completely destroyed by an earthquake in 1948, had been rebuilt during the Soviet era and rebuilt again since independence in 1991, nothing had prepared me for the amazing sight of the sweeping wide boulevards, bounded by lush gardens and backed by monumental buildings faced uniformly with white marble. At times I was reminded of parts of Arabia: Turkmenistan is a similar mainly desert country with a relatively small population and huge hydrocarbon resources that have been employed to develop the centres of population to a very high standard.



View of Ashgabat

The Turkmen History Museum and the Carpet Museum were close by my hotel and they provided a graphic introduction to the colourful nomadic origins of the Turkmen people. The area of modern Turkmenistan has been settled since early Neolithic times and has seen wave after wave of peoples attracted by the abundant waters of its two great rivers – the Amu Darya (Oxus) and Morgab – and its access to the Caspian Sea. The Turkmen of today descend from the Oghuz Turks, who moved westwards from the Altai Mountains of Mongolia in the 7th century AD, came across the Siberian steppes and settled in what used to be called Transoxiana (the land beyond the Oxus River). Here they are believed to have intermixed with such ancient tribes as the Scythians, Sogdians, Parthians and others. They were

supplemented by the Seljuq Turks in the 11th century, whose two major centres of population were at Marv and Konye-Urgench, which were however razed to the ground during the Mongol period of devastation (1219-1221 under Genghis Khan) and never recovered, though some idea of their former magnificence can still be gained from their extensive ruins. Marv was known as Marv-i Shahjehan – Marv – Queen of the World and in its heyday stood alongside Damascus and Baghdad as one of the great cities along the Silk Road. The Seljuks went on to conquer Persia, where they adopted the language and culture of the Persians, as well as a large swathe of the Middle East and Anatolia. That the Turkmen managed to survive so many upheavals is largely due to their nomadic lifestyle and their ability to move quickly from place to place across the great Kara Kum Desert. But they could not withstand the might of the Russia Empire under Czar Peter the Great and they were forced into submission at the battle of Geok-Tepe in 1881. They remained within the Russian Empire and later the Soviet Union until they achieved independence in 1991.



Turkmen yurt



Desert hunting scene from the History Museum

The Soviet era was a period when the Turkmen were obliged to abandon much of their customary way of life but since independence there has been a great drive to reaffirm their traditions and culture. Not least in this renaissance is the reestablishment of hunting with falcon and Tazy with the encouragement of the National Falconers Association, which was founded in 1998, with a special section for the Tazy. According to its President, Ata Eyeberdiyev the origins of the Tazy go back far into the history of the Turkmen. Evidence of this is to be found in the Turkmen language, in popular proverbs and sayings, and in Turkmen rugs, in which its hooked tail appears among the designs that have been employed by rug makers for centuries. A modern hand-made rug in the Carpet Museum actually depicts a Tazy inside a typical Turkmen border.



Tazy rug

The National Falconers Association promotes the revival of interest in hunting with the falcon and Tazy through presentations and demonstrations at national festivals and exhibitions. At the present time the Association has information about only 86 Tazys but they know that in many settlements in the Central Kara Kum region there are many fine working Tazys, which are not registered. From time to time the Tazy Section of the Association receives some of the best examples of these hounds for breeding purposes and in return distributes among the hunters from this region some of the best hounds that it has bred. By ‘best’ is meant those hounds showing the best hunting characteristics during the hunting season, but account is also taken of its conformation, character and colour. The season for hunting with falcons and Tazys is regulated by a law of 1998 and runs from 1 October to 1 February, though it is possible to obtain special permission to hunt with hounds in certain designated areas at other times.



The waterlogged desert

So, it was clear my visit was too late for the hunting season but my Turkmen friends were keen nevertheless to show me their hounds in their natural habitat – the desert. It had rained heavily during the night, which made the trip much easier than usual as it laid the dust and made the loose sand firmer. The desert was blooming after a wet winter and tamarisk bushes and wild flowers dotted the sand dunes as we left the tarmac and headed out to a shepherds' camp some 25 miles away. As we approached our destination, two Tazys ran out to greet us. There was Garash, a well-proportioned two-year-old male in good hunting condition and Uchar, an eight-month-old

To preserve through education..... 23

cream female. But first we had to follow custom and after introductions to the shepherds we drank from a foaming bowl of fresh camel's milk and we were honoured with the slaughter of a goat for lunch.



Slaughtering the goat

24

To preserve through education.....



Milking the camel

Only then could I have a proper look at the Tazys. In addition to the two that greeted us, there was also Melegush, a rather shy bronze-coloured three-year-old female, who needed to be coaxed out of her

kennel. The shepherds explained that there would usually be more at this time of year but because the desert pasture was so abundant after the rains many shepherds had gone off with their flocks to take advantage of it. The falcons were already in their summer quarters in the villages, but they would show me some pictures of them in their most distinctive embroidered hoods.



Embroidered hoods – A. Eyeberdiyev



Hunter with falcon and Tazy – A. Eyeberdiyev

According to Ata Eyeberdiyev, the Turkmen Tazy is formed by its desert environment and differs from the Kazakh Tazy by being finer, lighter and less stocky. It is also used mainly for hunting the Tolai hare in tandem with a falcon rather than for hunting fox. In the Turkmen language it is known as the assistant, because from the age of about six months it learns to assist the falcon in the hunt through the scrub over the undulating dunes. First, it learns to spring into action when it sees or even only hears the falconer launch the bird and then it follows the falcon's flight to pick up the route taken by the hare until it has it in sight. Once it has adapted to this style of hunting, a Tazy is capable of continuing until it is

eight or nine years old. During the hunting season the hounds are fed on a soup made out of hare offal and bread made with a special kind of flour. At other times they eat boiled meat and drink camel's milk, which the Turkmen believe improves the hounds' speed. Bitches with puppies are given milk, eggs and bread soaked in sheep fat.



Garash

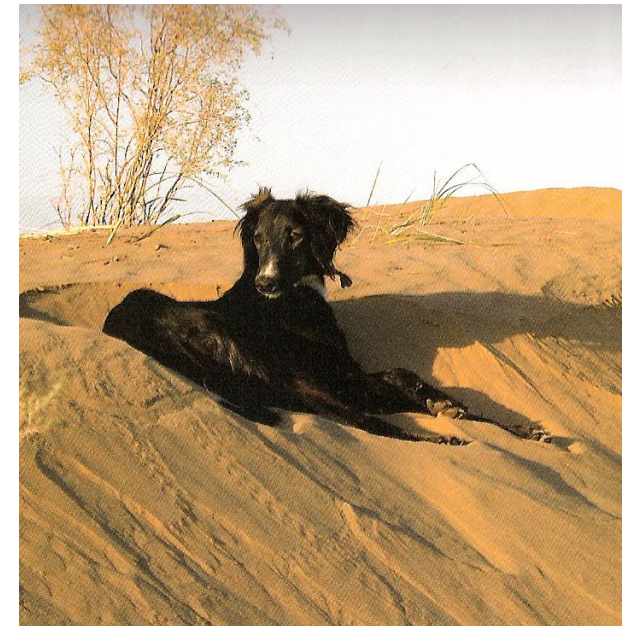


Melegush



Uchar

The three Tazys looked in good condition on such a diet. They were all quite small: the tallest was Garash, who was only 25 inches at the shoulder. Like Tazys elsewhere in Central Asia they had quite well feathered ears but only very sparse feathering on the tail, which was a little short and carried with pronounced ring at the end. The puppy had a woollier coat than the mature hounds. The chocolate and bronze colours are quite common and derive from black. I did not see any black hounds but Ata Eyeberdiyev provided a picture of one.



Black dog by A Eyeberdiyev.

Later I saw another Tazy in Ashgabat who was in the same range of colours. This young bitch, called Achar, had just been fed and was so sleepy she would not move!



Achar

Ata Eyeberdiyev kindly gave me permission to reproduce some of his other very artistic pictures showing a wider range of colours from cream to dark grizzle and grey.



Cream



Dark grizzle



Grey puppy

To preserve through education..... 33

The shepherds also keep Turkmenistan's other national breed – the Alabai – for protecting their flocks against predators and for guarding the house. Some also breed them for fighting, but I was assured that such fights were never to the death. As soon as one dog or the other showed any sign of submission, it was withdrawn. I heard this from a Kurd out exercising his dog whom I met by chance when visiting the ancient Parthian capital at Nissa. He was from the nearby Kurdish village of Bagir, where he said they bred fighting Alabais. I also visited the home of the President of the Alabai Association, where I saw a number of these magnificent mastiffs, including some delightful puppies. Interestingly these dogs all had a rear dew claw, which is common to some other mastiff breeds across Europe.

34

To preserve through education.....



Alabai



Cowboy with Alabai



Wistful puppy

Of course no visit to Turkmenistan would be complete without seeing the national horse breed – the Akhal Teke. At one of the stud farms I saw some of these amazingly slender-looking horses, which are however noted for their endurance as well as their golden colour. The Turkmen believe that the Akhal Teke is the progenitor of all other race horses. Turkmenistan has a national holiday to celebrate the

breed which coincided with my visit and among other manifestations there was an all-day endurance race over a huge circular course with stations along the way where people in their colourful national costumes danced and sang and generally had a good time.



Akhal Teke racing



Akhal teke and groom



Turkmen elders celebrating

With the renewed interest in these different aspects of Turkmenistan's natural heritage, which has

the full backing and encouragement of the State, it seems to me that the Tazy has a bright future in a country where it is still possible to hunt with it in the traditional way.

Primitive Aboriginal Dogs Society

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All questions, suggestions and comments will be accepted with gratitude. Send them to:

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Categories:

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- Review: 8-12 thousands of characters plus 2-3 black and white photographs, JPG or TIFF, resolution 300 dpi.
- Note: 3-8 thousands of characters without picture.

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