

TRAVELING IN EUROPE

THE TRUE COLOR OF THE PULI

by: Dr. Arthur Sorkin

The "true" or original color of the Puli has been a matter of dispute for years. Written records and experts do not agree, even in Hungary. In this country, the allowable colors are black (including reddish or grayish black), gray, and white. In Hungary and the rest of the FCI countries, all of those are allowed and, in addition, the color "fakó" is recognized. Fakó includes Pulis with dark marks, called maszkos fakó. Here all colors compete together and may be interbred. In Hungary, white, gray, fakó, and black all compete in separate classes with a CAC for each color. Whites may not interbreed with blacks. In Western Europe, white competes in a separate class, and all the other colors compete together.

On a recent trip to Hungary, we decided to try to get some information about the true color of the Puli by talking to a number of old-timers. We spoke to Prof. Imre Ócsag, author of **Dogs of Hungary, The Puli**, and numerous articles about the Hungarian dog breeds. We also spoke to Dr. Imre Bordács, who was a prominent Puli breeder and judge. His Nagykursági kennel will be familiar to most American Puli People from their dog's pedigree's. We also went to Pécs to speak to József Schmidt of Pécsdiósi Puli kennel. Mr. Schmidt is a long-time breeder of white and black Pulis and used to breed komondors as well. He is active as a judge of the Hungarian shepherd dog breeds.

I have listed all their comments below. You will see that they don't entirely agree. But it does seem that they all think that Pulis long ago had many colors, though Dr. Bordács feels that colors other than black were not considered correct. Other breeders we spoke to during the trip also reiterated the idea that the original Puli color was any solid color.

József Schmidt

The original color of the Puli was any solid color. The blacks were a weather beaten black, not absolute black. White was always there, but due to the fact that the Pulis lived in the open with the shepherd and weren't bathed very often (if at all), the whites tended not to look white. Black became a fad in the 1920's and took over. In the post WWII era, when some white Pulis were born, the breeders thought that a komondor had gotten the puli bitch. But József Schmidt knew that there were white Pulis and collected many of these puppies. As a result, there were many white Pulis in the vicinity of Pécs.

Prof. Imre Ócsag

The original color of the Fuli was any solid color. A black Fuli with white hair is heterozygous black. The maszkos fakó is new; it was not bred before, but it must have always been present genetically.

Dr. Imre Bordács

The original color of the Fuli was "old black" with red or gray. Shepherds thought that pigment was very important and got rid of the ones with bad pigment. The absolutely black color is new. The term "fakó" was coined by Dr. Bordacs. He named it after the color of a horse that has both light hairs and dark hairs intermixed. Fakó is **not** apricot. Once in a while over the years, fakó's were born, so they must have been always present genetically, but they weren't bred. For example, Hodtoi Lompos was black, but produced fakó's. Apricot, as opposed to fakó, came from inbreeding in the United States. It is a bad fault and is not the same as fakó. Before WWII, the standard mentioned a "green Fuli" which had black feet, ears and mask, but had a white or fakó body.

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