

SOCIETY FOR THE PERPETUATION OF THE DESERT BRED SALUKI

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Kazakh horseman in Xinjiang Province China- photo by GWHinsch

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ANCIENT AND ABORIGINAL CANINES

Gertrude W. Hinsch, Ph.D.

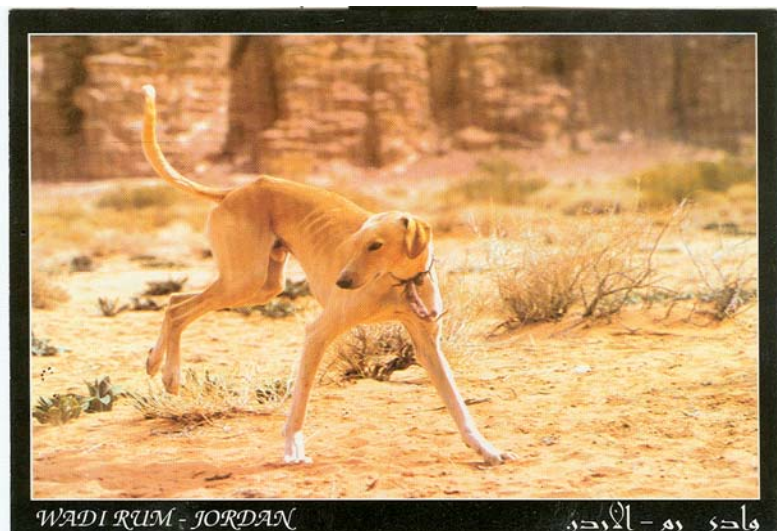
For years, dog fanciers have built up legends/myths about their various breeds. These were based on many things but had little scientific background. Recently, work on the canine genome has allowed for the identification of individual breeds and led to a revised grouping of the breeds studied. The show groupings are based upon morphological and functional qualities while basic DNA is the basis for the new groupings (Porter, et.al. 2004). The four groups are- herding, hunting, sporting and ancient. The first three include most of the recognized breeds which are believed to have been created in the last three hundred years plus. The ancient breeds have been broken down in to regional groups which retain varying numbers of mitochondrial microsatellites of Asian gray wolf origin. These include the Asian breeds- Chow Chow, Shar Pei, Shih Tzu, Pekingese, Tibetan Terrier, Akita, Shiba Inu, Lhasa Apso; the Artic breeds- Samoyed, Siberian Husky, Malamute; the Middle Eastern/Central Asian breeds- afghan and saluki; and the African breed- basenji.

Aboriginal breeds are early natives to the country of their origin. They also have been divided into four basic categories- Nordic/spitz, dingo/pariah, prick-eared hound and gazehounds. When comparing the categories, we can see that there are similarities in classification. Interest in ancient as well as aboriginal canines has been increasing in recent years and efforts have been put forward to maintaining these breeds. It has been found that many of these breeds have gene pool which are distinctly older than more modern breeds. These may be losing their genetic uniqueness by interbreeding with purebred (registry recognized) and mixed-breed/designer breeds.

In recent years, we have been concerned about many of the changes in laws, actions of animal rights people, etc. affecting our canines. Salukis fit into both the ancient and aboriginal canine categories. We will continue to have articles in the newsletter on **country of origin (COO)** as well as articles on various aboriginal hounds. Additionally, given the long standing history of salukis, their geographic distribution, etc. I will include articles on the **Silk Roads-People and Places-** which figure in their history. The Silk Roads were extensive and it is hoped that others will contribute materials from many areas.

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN CANINES

Postcard from Jordan



A Different View of Breeding the Saluki- Israeli

by Kuti Aharon©



The Saluki hound has been found throughout the Middle East since the dawn of history. He has managed to survive due to two major factors: 1) Nature's law of "survival of the fittest" regarding the harsh conditions of the desert; and 2) His long association with the bedouin, who made his own breeding selections, basing them on physical characteristics of the dog which would make him more useful to his own personal survival. Salukis were used as companion dogs throughout the ages and helped in the hunt.

modern dog show world is interest either to the bedouin Saluki. The Saluki hound care if he has papers, or is by the FCI or the AKC, or not there

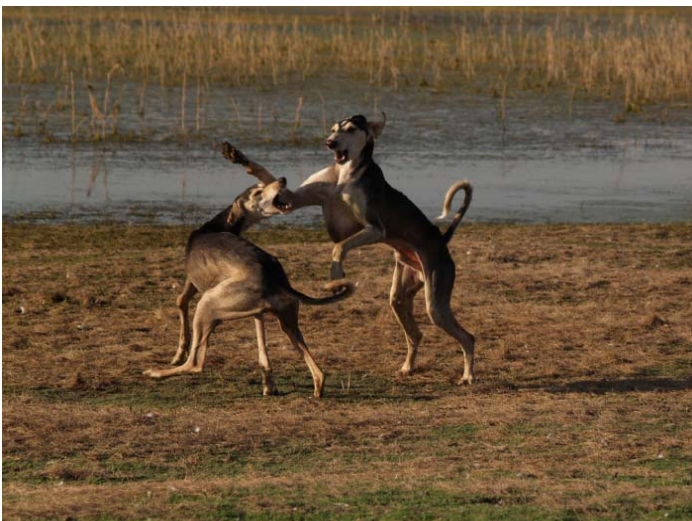
Ofer Grruber



Over thousands of years and until today, the not of or the does not recognized whether or

Photos by Dr.

is a nickel-plated trophy on his owner's living room shelf. The only thing that matters to a Saluki - that has ever mattered - is survival and the hunt.



I have been judging dogs since 1972 and have bred quite a lot of them over the years, allowing me to look back over a long period and to see things from a different angle than many people.

Results of "modern" breeding are expressed in today's show ring and are the results of breeding the Saluki outside of the desert over the past 100 years or so. When Saluki hounds started leaving the desert countries, they found themselves part of the various "exclusive dog clubs" around the world, and particularly in the western-oriented countries such as

England, western Europe, and the USA.

Those who decided how the modern Saluki should look like in the show rings are the western breeders and show judges who decided among themselves how the breed should look in order to please their eye - and not according to the dog's usefulness; for example, long skulls and heads with long muzzles in order that the Saluki will have a nobler look, longer hip bones and back legs that have created an exaggerated angulation, dark round eyes, and high set tails.

Still today, looking at the existing population of hounds in the desert, one sees shorter heads, shorter backs, and a squarer, more balanced build, with back leg angles less pronounced. In all my years involved with desert Salukis I do not know of even one that had missing teeth or whose back was soft and concave.

The walk of the original desert-bred Saluki is usually more stable than that of the angular, exaggerated modern-bred Saluki. The croup of the desert Saluki is steeper, and his topline does not exhibit the flowing line that might better please the eye of modern judges. A steeper croup serves a purpose - allowing the Saluki to go from the walk to a bullet-like sprint in a matter of split seconds to catch his prey.

There are few people who are aware of the desert Salukis ability to conserve water when it is scarce or unavailable. Under these conditions the Saluki recycles his urine to keep himself in hydration, and until water is available he hardly urinates. Once water is regularly available it takes some time before the Saluki switches "conservation" to normal mode and to urinate normally. We have taken home from the desert in this condition. days they would not urinate at all. they finally did urinate the amount was extremely small, the urine was super concentrated and a bright orange in color and it had a very strong smell. The next time they would urinate, the urine appeared



from
begins
Salukis
For 2-3
When

color,
time



perfectly normal.

Maybe I am slaughtering a few sacred cows in what I write, but what I write does not always reflect the agreed opinions of judges and breeders of the larger world. Since early childhood I have spent countless hours among the bedouin and learned their customs and the manner in which they raise their animals. Because the bedouin sees the Saluki as a functional dog whose role is to help him hunt, he does not keep or spoil dogs in the typical Western sense. My intent in this

article is not to choose what is right or which type of Saluki should be preferred, only to point out the facts in the field.

In my lifetime I have seen more than a few Salukis with broken legs who were deserted or abandoned by the bedouin because they were no longer useful in the hunt and were, in their eyes, useless. For example, my partner and I adopted the famous hound Rhazlan after he contracted cataracts - for years he was the fastest hound in the Judean desert (part of Israel's Negev region) with the largest number of hares and gazelles to his credit, but since he could no longer see well enough to hunt he had become a burden. Throughout the years that Rhazlan hunted, he was heavily used by the bedouin as a breeding dog.

Rhazlan had a long and well-deserved retirement with us and was finally humanely put to sleep at age 17, completely blind and so physically weak as to be no longer accepted by our other Salukis.

The bedouin does not base his breeding selections on classic beauty. When his bitch comes into heat, he locks her up or closes her up behind to prevent accidents. When she is ready to be bred he walks or travels a great distance to get to a place where there is a Saluki well-known for his speed and hunting ability - even if its eyes are not dark. It is not beauty that decides, but performance.

This performance-based breeding philosophy combined with natural selection of survival of the fittest, such that from litters of 12-14 pups, only two pups on average survive, should make it clear to all of us to what an incredible level of balance and survival ability the desert Saluki has achieved.

We, the modern "super breeders", have decided that we will change the Saluki to something much "better" - longer, longer skulled, over-angulated behind and with longer bone than what nature selected so that we can take home another show trophy to brag about to our guests. Little by little we are selecting for degenerative characteristics and in another few generations we will lose what nature has preserved so beautifully for thousands of years.

I believe that it is absolutely legitimate to raise any animal according to our tastes and to our needs, even if it opposes natural selection. But we should not be blind regarding the source that we have as a gift, and as a result of thousands of years of natural selection. My partner, Tzviah Idan, and I are raising only desert-bred Salukis, both at the cost and knowledge that we may not win 1st place at the dog show, but in order to preserve a gene pool of the natural desert-bred Saluki for the future. By taking a good look at the photos of Naseem and Shalaf, one can see what can be achieved both in the show ring and on the track while breeding strictly within desert lines.

Most judges judge dogs according to the Western escola, and most of them never have the opportunity to see the desert-bred Saluki in action in his natural habitat. Both in Israel and in the Arab countries there are those who import European-bred Salukis and use them locally in order to raise the chance of winning under western judges; in fact, this works. But if these same judges were exposed to the desert-bred Saluki that survives in nature and with the Bedouin at work, I believe that most of them would change their opinion or at least understand the difference.

Not far from the ancient ruins of the Galilean town of Hatzor in northern Israel, the same Hatzor of Joshua of the Bible, there is a recent archaeological find of what is perhaps the world's oldest and certainly the entire Middle Eastern region's earliest human settlement. Scientific evidence proves that here man both gathered grains and hunted gazelles with the help of dogs. Only a Saluki can reach the gazelle by running so fast, so we must assume that these dogs were of the Saluki type. Think of it....this pushes back man's association with the breed another few thousand years.

My personal view, based on my own experience of so many years, and to paraphrase another, is that 'Nature made no mistake when she made the Saluki'. I don't believe that anyone will prove this to be wrong in at least the coming 500 years, knowing that nature did justice to the breed for so many thousands.

Why can't we, the so-called lovers and certainly the caretakers of the breed, be intelligent enough to really observe what nature has provided? The future of this breed is entirely dependent on us now as every day natural conditions are shrinking as man conquers every part of the planet and interferes with creation.

In Israel, some people think like us, and others continue to introduce European bloodlines into the gene pool. Dr. Zafra Sirik, Tzviah Idan, and myself, are instead taking Western judges and breeders into the desert and straight to the bedouin breeders. This way they can judge for themselves how natural desert-bred Salukis look and behave. We believe that when a judge or breeder trains his eye to see these beautiful natural animals in their own biotope, he can truly appreciate the desert-bred Saluki.

There is no doubt that the authentic desert bred Saluki can survive under the toughest conditions of nature. However, please bear in mind that these beautiful dogs can easily adapt to urban life without being changed. Instead of introducing European bloodlines into the desert-bred population, let us instead introduce the desert-bred Saluki into the European lines. It is still not too late. Good luck.



photo from the collection of T. Idan

ABORIGINAL CANINES

HUNTING LAIKA BREEDS

Vladimir Beregovoy©

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The four hunting Laika breeds officially recognized in Russia originated from aboriginal dogs of peoples living in the forest zone of Eurasia, from the Scandinavian countries and Kola Peninsula in the west to the Amur River region in the east. An old Russian expert in Laikas, Prince A. A. Shirisky-Shikhmatov, wrote that there were as many aboriginal Laika types in Russia as ethnic groups of people who owned them. Generally, all Laikas can be described as small to medium size dogs with a compact body and nearly square proportions, with pointed muzzle, prick ears and more or less obliquely set eyes. Variations in details of head, body size and proportions, and coat color make it possible, however, to distinguish dozens of types or strains associated with certain geographic regions or ethnic groups who owned the dogs. Sometimes dogs of very similar or nearly identical type were found in regions very far from each other. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Russian Prince A. A. Shirinsky-Shikhmatov distinguished the following aboriginal Laikas, which were named after the people who kept them or sometimes simply by the geographic region of their distribution: *Zyryan, Finno-Karelian, Vogul, Cheremis, Ostyak, Tungus, Votyak, Galician, Ostyak, Norwegian, Buryatian, Soyotian, Laplandian* and *Samoyed Laika*». The latter two breeds can hunt well, but their major specialization is herding reindeer. Shirinsky-Shikhmatov thought that «there are as many varieties of Laikas as there are existing tribes of minorities in the north; and these varieties differ from each other and each of them has well established external peculiarities to such an extent that their separation cannot be argued in any way». Another pioneer and early enthusiast of research in aboriginal Laikas, Ms. M. G. Dmitrieva-Sulima (1911), referring to other sources, listed a series of Laika breeds distinguished based on the geographic principle: «the *Kevrolian, Olonets, Kyrghyz, Yakut, Koryak, Orochon, Gilyak, Bashkir, Mongolian, Chukotka, Golds, Yukagir Laikas, Tomsk, Vilyui, Berezovo-Surgut, Kolyma, Pechora Laika*, and the *Polar Dog*.» Some of these dogs are specialized for dog sledding rather than for hunting, but the list indicates a great diversity of aboriginal Laikas in the vast territory of the former Russian Empire. The term “Laika” originated from the Russian word “layat”, which means to bark. A hunting Laika finds game, chases it up a tree or keeps it from running away, and barks until the hunter can approach for a sure shot. As a result of social and economic changes during WWI and the Communist Revolution, many of these diverse Laika types became extinct or very rare, but some survived until WWII. The vulnerability of aboriginal Laika breeds resulted from their free way of life and from mating uncontrolled by people. The country was roadless, and Russian villages or camps of native people were isolated by vast areas of wild taiga forests, rivers and bogs. Before the industrial revolution and the influx of Russian settlers from the west, Laikas were the



only dogs known and available to indigenous peoples of Northeastern Europe, the Ural region and Siberia. The local people were hunters, and heavy dog users, but they were rather sloppy breeders. Puppies were routinely killed for population control, but litters of the best bitches, well proven at hunting, were spared. Thus selection was done only on females. Besides hunting skill, the dogs were evaluated by other traits considered signs of high hunting performance. Some of those ideas were mythical, and some were simply esthetic preferences of the dog owners. The sires of puppies were either unknown, or they just happened to be present at the right time and at the right moment. Large groups of males following a female in heat were a common sight, and intimidating for a stranger. Males were certainly subject to natural selection. Only males with the best stamina and endurance

Fig.6. Aboriginal Laikas from Pechora River Region, photo by Vereshchagin

could mate. Natural selection continued to act during a dog's entire life, however, because living



conditions were harsh for the dogs, as well as for their owners. In the summer, all dogs were on "vacation", free of work, but they were not fed regularly, and wandered loose. They got their food by catching small mammals, checking dumpsites and scavenging. Mosquitoes and ticks transmitting diseases were a constant cause of mortality among the young and the weak. Actually, when veterinary

Fig. 4. West Siberian Laikas from Harty-Mansi Natl. Prov. In natural habitat

assistance was not available, this wiped out imported dogs and thus helped the preservation of authentic dog populations. During WWII, industrial development in the Urals and Siberia accelerated, and whole happy worlds of aboriginal dogs came to an end. Pure types of aboriginal

Laikas still remained only in the most remote and roadless parts of the country, farthest from industrial centers, major navigated rivers and railways. Despite losses in diversity, authentic Laikas remained very important in the postwar fur industry, because they helped in harvesting precious pelts of sable, marten and other furbearing species to sell for hard currency. Besides, high ranking officials and military personnel were hunters, and hunting was considered conducive to being a good soldier. Therefore, the breeding of good hunting dogs was encouraged by the Government. A few hunting Laika enthusiasts paid special attention to the fact that aboriginal Laikas were being lost because of uncontrolled interbreeding with imported dogs. Some good hunting Laikas were bred by Russian hunters who repeatedly imported new dogs from remote taiga regions, but there were no officially recognized breeds. Because there were many breeds named by the ethnic names of the people who owned them, it was hard to decide how many of them still existed pure, and which of them was the best for hunting. The Soviet officials and experts appointed to manage the project for preservation of hunting Laikas chose a geographic approach to the problem and designated four hunting Laika breeds: the Karelo-Finnish Laika, the Russo-European Laika, the West Siberian Laika and the East Siberian Laika.

The Karelo-Finnish Laika was almost identical to the Finnish Spitz. Its development did not take too long, because small Laikas, very similar to the Finnish Spitz, were popular among hunters in the northwestern parts of Russia. Importation of purebred Finnish Spitzes helped very much and during the 1930s, and particularly after WWII, the breed became well established. This is the smallest hunting Laika in Russia.

To establish the Russo-European Laika as a purebred, they lumped together more or less similar looking aboriginal dogs, which occurred over vast territories from Karelia and Ladoga Lake region in the west to Archangelsk, Vyatka, the Komi Autonomous Republic and Udmurtia in the east. Initially, these dogs were quite diverse in their coat color. A majority of them were agouti gray, but there were black, white, black with white patches, pale red, pale red with brown noses and even black-and-tan dogs. These dogs were very popular among hunters in the European part



of Russia in
and 30s of
Figs.
European
Male on left
on right. Of
Ovchirenko.



the 20s
the last
Russo-
Laika.
and female
M.

century. It did not take long to establish a new purebred under the name of the Russo-European Laika. Two or three generations of systematic selective breeding of predominantly black and white dogs, and the breed type was established in later 40s of the 20th century. The West Siberian Laika was also among the ancestors of most successful lines of this breed. Restricting coat color of the breed to black and white dogs only, Soviet cynologists made it most similar to the Karelian Bear Dog, and unfortunately excluded many excellent hunting dogs of other coat colors from the breed gene pool.

Approximately during the same period, the West Siberian Laika was created. This breed was formed by lumping together mainly two types of aboriginal Laikas, the Hanty Laika and the Mansi Laika. The Hanty Laika was stoutly built, with shorter muzzle and ears and a more strongly

developed ruff in males, particularly in winter coat. The Mansi Laika was of racier build, with longer muzzle and ears, and better adapted to live farther to the south in the Urals and West Siberia, where summer is much warmer than in the north. A Uralian Laika is also mentioned among ancestors of the West Siberian Laika, but all writers are somewhat vague about its traits; many believe that the Uralian Laika was already a mixed product of interbreeding of the Mansi Laika and other aboriginal Laika types. Once established, the West Siberian Laika rapidly became very popular among hunters. The breed was further changed by increasing its size.

The East Siberian Laika was established at a later time. Several aboriginal Laikas from various parts of the vast territories of East Siberia were interbred as one breed. These included Laikas from the Lake Baikal region, very interesting big Laikas from the Amur River basin and the lightly built and fast Evenk's Laika. These dogs belonged to quite different types. There were lightly built fast dogs with long legs and long head and muzzle and stockily built somewhat rangy dogs often used for sledding. Among them, the Amur Laika was quite peculiar and certainly deserving to be designated as a different Laika breed. All these differences, including differences in hunting and sledding specialization, were ignored, however. Therefore, the formation of the East Siberian Laika is still not completed and the breed is still a conglomerate, including strikingly different dogs.

Other aboriginal Laikas of the Russian north, including reindeer herding dogs of the Yamal Peninsula and sled-pulling dogs of the tundra and Arctic Ocean shores, remained neglected by the Government until very recently. After Perestroika, three breeds became established: the Reindeer Herding Laika (Olenegonka), the Chukotka Sled Dog and the Kamchatka Sled Dog. Among these dogs, there are many capable hunting dogs, but their major purpose is other than hunting. Some Russian cynologists have suggested using the name "Laika" only for hunting Laika breeds.

Hunting. Since very ancient times, perhaps since the Ice Age, hunting was a vital source of livelihood for people of the taiga zone of northeastern Europe and Siberia. Hunting provided meat for food and pelts for clothing. Besides, pelts of sables, martens and other animals were highly valued by upper class people and were a valuable commodity of trade with neighboring countries to the west and south of Russia. Selling pelts remained an important source of hard foreign currency for the Communist Government of Russia. Now, Laikas are among the most popular hunting dogs in Russia and they are spreading in Scandinavian countries, the United States of America and Canada.

How and what is hunted with Laikas? The Laika is a different concept of hunting dog. Early travelers in the Urals and Siberia were always surprised and often fascinated with the usefulness of these dogs to local people. At the same time, they wrote that the dogs lived like wild animals, never confined, running loose and never receiving any specific training about what and how to hunt. Every dog does it naturally, or it does not. I had an opportunity to observe aboriginal Laikas of the Mansi family in the 1960s, when I worked on my postgraduate research project in the Northern Urals. The Mansi live in log cabins scattered in taiga forests. Usually two or more families live close to each other, with two or three dogs per family. Some never tie out their dogs, but I saw some dogs tethered near the cabin during hunting season. This was done as an exception to ensure the presence of a particular dog, when the master decides to go to hunting with it. Dogs running loose usually stay nearby, but there is a possibility that some of them might be off in the woods scavenging for food or chasing a bitch in heat. This way of life was safe, because the human population was sparse and there were no highways and vehicles. When a bitch gives birth to puppies, they are usually killed for control of the dog population. When the master needed a

replacement for old or injured dogs, however, he would spare a litter of one of his best hunting bitches. He would feed her regularly and provide necessary protection; if the weather turns dangerously bad, she and the pups may be taken inside.



Figs. Male 5 weeks old to left showing prick ears, Right female puppy. West Siberian Laikas.

Puppies grow up in close contact with people and other dogs, and their socialization does not require any special effort. Children and women play with them and treat them. In the spring and summer, young dogs run free and play near the houses or follow women and children on their trips collecting berries, mushrooms or nuts or harvesting hay. Pups investigate the environment where they live, and learn the scent of animals, some of which they will hunt later on. Puppies watch older dogs catching and eating voles and they start doing the same. All these activities are an important part of their preparation for future hunting. By fall, some of the young dogs start chasing squirrels and barking at them under trees. This is a typical game for young Laikas to start hunting. Although it seems nonsensical to some observers, for a young Laika free roaming in woods and brush since early puppy age is a critical period of learning to hunt. What happens, if a Laika puppy is raised in a fenced yard or inside the house? Such a dog would not hunt well when adult. The treeing ability suffers the most, because this is something, which should be learned the natural way during young puppy age. Once it is missing, usually it cannot be learned by an adult dog. Here, I want to emphasize, that a Laika raised in a typical commercial kennel, would never become a good hunting dog. Raising a Laika as a family dog is conducive to raising it as a good hunting dog.

Once started hunting with squirrels, a Laika will enjoy it for the rest of its life. This is, however, not the only kind of game hunted with Laikas. Other popular hunting includes other small game, such as black grouse and capercaillie, which a Laika also finds and points for the hunter by particularly soft barking so the bird does not take off before the hunter can come up for a sure shot. Most Laikas treeing squirrels will also go after valuable fur bearing animals like marten and sable, where available. Only some of them, however, strongly prefer this game and will chase it fast enough, and stay persistently under the tree when the animal is stopped or is hiding in a tree hole.

Another popular and valuable game hunted with Laika is moose. Not every Laika proven good at hunting small game is equally good at moose hunting. A good moose Laika would strongly

prefer moose tracks and follow it despite the presence of scent trails of other kinds of game. Moose is a big powerful animal and no dog could catch or stop it by brute force. The Laika uses a unique method to keep moose from running away. The Laika is silent during the search and chase, and when it has the moose in sight it approaches cautiously and does not run straight at the animal, but rather on a curve and circling. Keeping a distance, the dog seems not much interested, but in fact it is keeping an eye on the moose and starts barking softly. This is a peculiar barking mixed with a kind of squealing and whining. The dog does not show real aggressiveness, makes pauses to sniff nearby stumps and bushes, makes scent markings and resumes barking. It does not disturb the moose, which usually walks slowly or continues browsing on shrubs. The purpose of the dog's behavior is simply to report to the hunter that the moose is found and where it is located. At the same time, the dog should not lose the moose, and stays nearby. Some moose act aggressively and try to kill the dog with hooves and antlers, but the dog skillfully evades attacks and barks louder and more aggressively. An experienced hunter hears this sound and knows exactly what is going on. He has enough time to come up quietly and shoot the moose. There are many other dog breeds which would eagerly pick up fresh tracks of a moose and chase it, but none of them would succeed in stopping this powerful deer. A dog baying on the trail and approaching directly would frighten the animal, which would run fast and very far beyond the reach of a hunter walking slowly on skis. Only Laika does it the correct way. Some Laikas are even able to drive a moose slowly towards the hunter. And all this is done naturally, without special training.

I should mention that the presence of Laikas has another importance for the families of Mansi or other people of Siberia. There, bears are not rare and often inadvertently present a problem in the lives of local people. Very old, injured or just nasty bears develop a habit of raiding houses and damaging supplies. Besides, the presence of an angry mother bear with her cubs in the summer is always a serious concern for berry and mushroom pickers. The Mansi and other people of Ural and Siberia have a special place for bear as a deity in their gentle religion. They did not hunt bear regularly, but only on certain occasions, when a bad bear could not be tolerated and had to be killed. Prior to a bear hunt, they performed special ceremonies with shamans in attendance, and only then organized the hunt. In the country with many bears, a Laika that would deal boldly with a bear was particularly valued. There are no dogs which could fight a bear head on. Bear-aggressive Laikas do it by barking viciously and biting and nipping the bear on the rear and flanks. During berry picking or hay harvesting season, the ever-present Laikas helped to detect bears and prevent dangerous encounters of people with them. The dogs made a lot of noise and kept the bear busy, which gave enough time for people to walk away safely. If a bear actually attacked a human, Laikas would put their life on the line, biting the bear hard. Regular bear hunting with Laikas began in the early 20th Century, when firearms became accessible to native peoples as well as to Russian villagers. A good bear-aggressive Laika immediately became very handy for bear hunters.

Wild boar was a game hunted with Laika only in the Amur River basin, which is a relatively small part of Siberia. Recently, as Laikas became popular far in the south and wild boar spread further to the north, boar hunting with Laikas has become popular. Some Laika breeders began to specialize in breeding their Laika for boar hunting. Many aboriginal Laikas would be reluctant to go after boar, and prefer game typical of their northern taiga forests.

Ironically, in the former Soviet Union, the newly established officially purebred Laikas, particularly the West Siberian Laika, became a factor accelerating the extinction of the still remaining aboriginal Laikas in the country. Government officials introduced and promoted registered West Siberian Laikas everywhere, totally ignoring the still existing wonderful local but not officially recognized breeds. Tragically, the last stock of native Amur Laikas was shot for furs

by order from Moscow. Possibly, some Amur Laika type dogs still survive in remote regions of southeastern Siberia.

At present the four hunting Laika breeds remain very popular among Russian hunters. They have a firm foothold in Scandinavian countries, and some are owned by hunters in Germany, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia and Italy. I imported and bred the first West Siberian Laikas in the USA and they won the hearts and minds of hunters in North America. The West Siberian Laika appears to be better adapted than other Laikas to live and hunt under conditions of hot southern climates. In the American south, squirrel hunters use them successfully in Texas and Louisiana.



Fig. 3 First import to USA, West Siberian male.



In former Soviet Union republics, West Siberian Laikas are established in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, where they are used to hunt wild boar in mountainous regions.

Fig. 5 to left. A very good Western Siberian Laika male in Kazakhstan. They maintain a lighter coat in summer as well.

Ed. note- Vladimir Beregovoy is co-author with Jill Moore Porter of Primitive Breeds- Perfect Dogs.

IMPRESSIONS FROM THE SILK ROAD- PEOPLE AND PLACES- the Kazakhs.

Gertrude W. Hinsch ©

The history of our breed is intimately bound to the Silk Roads of the Middle East and Central Asia. It is the countries along those roads which form the basis of our countries of origin. As an ancient breed, salukis/tazi depending on the language of the COOs, were spread over a wide area. Some feel that the term desertbred refers to the true saluki and want to consider only certain areas as COOs. In all of the countries of origin, there are vast areas of desert. Most of these deserts are unlike our deserts here in the USA. People from those areas would hardly consider much of our desert as truly desert in comparison to theirs.

When considering the COOs, we need to consider that many of today's countries were not such in the history of our breed. Many of the areas today that are desert were not desert during earlier times either. The partitioning of areas into specific countries is relatively recent in the history of the saluki. Many ethnic groups, many of the nomadic tribes roamed over wide areas often now in more than one country. Some groups were split up into areas in different countries. The partitioning of land is very much like the establishment of registries in the past century plus.



The Silk Roads, note the plural, begin in the east in China at Xian. As they spread westward they branch frequently and enter the areas of our COOs. The caravans rarely covered an entire distance of the Silk Roads. Rather, they would travel specific portions from caravanserai to caravanserai and at certain important stops, exchange cargo with others caravans before carrying their new cargo back home. In Jordan, solitary buildings still in the desert which were the caravanserai of the past. These were about 25-40 miles apart. This was the normal distance usually travelled in that area on a single day. There are remains of caravanserai in many places along these routes.

In western China, Xinjiang province, had several routes extending from Xian and on to many other places. Xinjiang is characterized by a harsh landscape of great beauty. It is in this area that it is believed that the first dogs, specifically in the Altai mountains,

arose. It is home today of nine different ethnic groups, some of which historically had salukis. Most of this article will concentrate on the Kazakh people who live in China. To the west in Kazakhstan, they do have some salukis/tazis. But in China, they have been forbidden to hunt with dogs for over 70 years. Thus, though some old timers recall hearing about these dogs, they no longer keep them.

During the summer season, the Kazakhs move their herds of livestock up into the mountain meadows of Heavenly Lake or the Altai Mountains. In small flat or forested areas they erect their yurts. Every so often you see white dots scattered around. These are the yurts in which they live during the summer as their herds of sheep, goats, cattle, camels and horses graze. The shepherds in general ride horseback (see the photo on the cover).



You will often see several different types of sheep. The different types develop fleece of different colors, length, texture. The fleece ultimately is used to produce clothing, rugs, the walls of the yurts. Cattle are mainly used for food. Camels also provide milk, hair, etc. They have traditionally have been kept so transport the yurt and household materials to and from the summer/winter pastures.



While the exterior may be plain, the interior walls on the lattice frame and highly decorated. In the photo to the right, you can see the shangirraq, the red lattice of the framework and the interior sides of the walls. The interior benches are covered with bright pillows, rugs and serve as places for people to sit during the day or on which to sleep at night. Bright rugs cover the ground.

These yurts are rather plain looking from the outside.

They are made up of felt, canvas or leather sheets draped over a latticed wall mounted on the ground. At the top of the yurt is a ringed structure called a shangirraq which serves as a keystone linking the ribs of the lattice and which serves as a vent for smoke and heat.



A cook stove may have a pipe which extends up towards the shangirag. During the summer season, enterprising Kazakhs rent out yurts to tourists wishing to stay in the mountains for one or several days. As fall approaches, they begin to pack up their yurts and prepare to migrate down to their winter quarters. One can then see circles in the ground on which the yurts had been erected during the summer pasturage.



The shepherds will gather their flocks together and begin their long march down to their winter quarters. Some men start off while others stay behind with the women and children to take down and pack up the yurts. One obvious sign of modern change is in this migration. The migrating formerly involved the yurts being carried by the camels or pulled on horse carts. Today they are bundled up and mounted on trailers behind tractors or put in the beds of pickup trucks. The yurt to the right is waiting for such transfer.



The herds move down through the mountains into the valleys where the winter quarters exist.



These photos are of a single herd of several hundred sheep and goats of many different types, cattle, horses and camels. Shepherds ride horses at different points of the herd. Occasionally a dog may be seen mixed in with the herd.



The winter quarters often are small adobe places with enclosed corrals into which all of the animals are squeezed. This so they provide warmth for each other during the frigid winters. Fodder for the herds are collected and piled high

on the roofs of the homes.



Most of the Kazakhs in this part of China have lived there for years. During the time of the USSR, border crossings were difficult. Their relatives on the other side of the mountains still hunt with their tazis. In China they have not been allowed to hunt for over 70 years. In barren areas such as this, a dog which cannot work will not be fed. Many changes are coming to these people.

They are still advertised as the 'gold eagle hunters'. Their children are required to attend school. If there is none close at hand, they are sent off to a boarding school for the school year. Most of the remote areas do not have electricity. However, in many places solar panels were observed outside of the yurts or homes and if present usually were associated with satellite dishes. Life is changing. They still follow the game trails during their migrations. They follow some of the routes of the Silk Road. But they also follow the highways and use the bridges.

BRAGS

FINLAND'S FIRST RACING CHAMPION DB

Pirjo Puttonen © pirjo.puttonen@pp.inet.fi



In May 2001 the 11-week old Bericas Bedar Majan, "Nils", bred by the British couple Sue and Bill Heather, arrived in Finland from Oman. Nils' sire is the FCI registered Iranian Almas von Mahmoudiyeh, his dam Bericas Jadhaba Majan, also bred by the Heathers. Nils' breeders have since moved back to England with their Salukis. The parents Sam and Jadhaba are registered with the English Kennel Club, as are two of their offspring, also owned by the breeders.

In Finland Salukis compete in racing on oval tracks. The racing champion title can be attained by

running 5 qualifying times on a distance of 480 meters during at least two seasons and on at least two different tracks. In addition a verdict of at least "good" is required from the show ring. The tracks where Nils has run his qualifying times have a 34 second time limit for Salukis. His first qualifying time Nils ran in his first competition at 2 years of age, and the last he needed for the title he achieved now at 5 years. We have not been spared disqualifications, so at one point we saw fit to take time out from racing. Nils' best time in competition is 33,28 seconds.

In 2003 Nils was the Finnish Saluki Club's Rookie of the Year (an award given to the Saluki with the fastest time on 480 meters of his or her first season), and this big, strong boy with his long galloping strides was also the Helsinki Sighthound Club's fastest male in 2003.

In addition to racing Nils has taken part in a few Specialty shows. The highpoint of the summer of 2003 was when he placed third in the Working Class on Saturday at the famous internationally renowned Sighthound Specialty of Tammsvik in Sweden! The judge was Nick Bryce Smith from England.

Nils has also tried tracking on a blood trail set in the forest, and his nose works well too! He has also been character tested. Last fall he also passed the Canine Good Citizen test; and in a typical display of his character, he was taught, and learned, the required "sit" and "lie down" commands only the previous day. I'm convinced that Nils has the potential for any sport. He has earned himself many admirers with his open and active demeanour, and not just among Saluki folk.



Nils also has a lure-coursing CC. Lure-coursing and racing are hobbies and I don't think they say much about hunting ability. Personally I prefer racing, as in measuring speed it is not open to interpretation – Nils of course enjoys both. But not as much as chasing real game!

sire:	Parceu von Sarkhez	Tazi von Sarkhez
		Serra von Sardasht
Almas von Mahmoudyieh (imp. Iran)	Minou von Mahmoudyieh	Halo von Naghadeh
		Ziba von Mahmoudyieh
dam:	Tepe Gawra Laaiq	Tepe Gawra Duman ben Arezu
		Saleb (s) (U.A.E.)
Bericas Jadhaba Majan	Maha (s)	Red grizzle
		Nisma (s) (imp. Morocco)

In the future I hope to be able to have a litter by Nils and our 100% Iranian bitch Dar El Hindiyas Amira.

SCOA WESTERN SPECIALTY- Oct. 2006 Several of our gen-3s were in attendance.

The following results were as reported by their owners.

4th place, 12-18 mo. dog was Grassland SJ Shadow
(Grassland TSH Talus Sackett, CC, CM X Dar el Hindiyas Jariya)
Breeder and owner, Lois Kincaid

3rd place 12-18 mo dog was Grassland SJ Saxon
(Grassland TSH Talus Sackett, CC, CM X Dar el Hindiyas Jariya)
Breeder Lois Kincaid. Owner Lois Kincaid and Olivia Loupe

3rd place puppy bitch 12-18 mo was Grassland SJ Abaqero Saja
(Grassland TSH Talus Sackett, CC, CM x Dar el Hindiyas Jariya)
Breeder, Lois Kincaid and Owners Frank and Anne Vigneri.

Yamadan's Red Chile of Arabesque placed third in 9-12 Puppy sweeps under Jeannie Rhodes and first in reg. 9-12 Puppy class.

Yamadan's Duhma Kanz placed second in Bred-By bitches.

Sayyad De Hamadan - third in Stud Dog.

Ch. Yamadan's Tali Da'Rasiini Dafiinah - Award of Merit.

All regular classes under judge Alan Lake.

All got to try their legs in open field coursing, too!

On the evening of the show, a Country of Origin exhibit was given. A total of 17 salukis were listed in the catalog though not all were in attendance. Unfortunately it was a bit difficult to view these salukis as evening had come and the courtyard of the motel was poorly lit.

From the Registrar-

-Elizabeth Al-Hazzam Dawsari

The Search for the Royal Road

By Evelyn Lyle

London : Vision Press, 1966

The Royal Road of the Persian Kings begins at Sardis in Western Turkey and ends at Susa near the Persian Gulf, measuring 1899 miles through Asia Minor, most of Turkey and part of Iraq. Historians have disagreed on the exact position, but the author's researches and extensive travels have enabled her to work out its probable course, taking the great landmarks and towns that lie between Sardis and Susa as a guide.

This is not an account of a single long journey, but of a series of sorties made from Istanbul when work permitted, usually by public transport, often by buses which were either unpredictable in starting or apparently seeking to emulate the jet age, hurtling non-stop through the night, the driver impervious to the pleas of passengers wishing to disembark. Such journeys, however, could hardly be better designed to provide opportunities for meeting a variety of people, learning about the many and varied local customs and being the recipient of much generous hospitality.

These, however, are diversions from the central ploy of tracing the Royal Road from Sardis, ancient capital of King Croesus; visiting Gordium where Alexander cut the Gordian knot; Edessa now known as Urfa, a center of pilgrimage for the early Christians; the remains of Nineveh; and the two sites with rival claims to have been the landfall of Noah's Ark.

CLEOPATRA'S WEDDING PRESENT : TRAVELS THROUGH SYRIA

The book by Robert Tewdwr Moss, introduction by Lucretia Stewart, provides quite a different view of Syria (and the Middle East) than Saluki fanciers / researchers might ordinarily encounter.

From the dust jacket :

Cleopatra's Wedding Present is the rare book that captivates its reader from the first page. Like the best travel books, Robert Tewdwr Moss's memoir of his travels through Syria resonates on many levels: as a profoundly telling vivisection of Middle Eastern society, a chilling history of ethnic crimes, a picaresque adventure story, a purely entertaining travelogue, and a poignant romance.

Tewdwr Moss, a brilliant young writer who was murdered in London the day after he finished this book, left this lyrical gem as his legacy. He aptly captures an essence of the Middle East that is foreign to most of us, but which becomes real with his astute observations of the region's culture and explosive politics. He conveys what so many westerners find both fascinating and frightening in the Middle East, making no attempt to mask circumstances that are appalling and dangerous while also exotic, beautiful, and sometimes very funny.

Mesopotamia, now present-day Syria, was part of Mark Anthony's love gift to Cleopatra. Then and now, it is a land of mystery and love.

Robert Tewdwr Moss (1961-1996) was a journalist of astonishing versatility. He first made his mark as Diary Editor of the books section of the London *Sunday Times*. He also contributed to magazines as varied as *Tatler*, *Women's Journal*, *Harpers*, *Queen*, and *Africa Events*.

Madison : University of Wisconsin Press, 1997.

(Part of the series : Living Out : Gay and Lesbian Autobiographies / Joan Larkin and David Bergman, series editors.)



Litterly speaking-

Whelped- 10/27/2006. 6 girls; 3 boys 4 grizzles, 5 golden to champaign. Gen2.
Sire is SBIS CH. NeonAura Proteus Pulsar CC CM and dam
is Batshevah Mascot Ruah Midbar (Gen.1)