

TARSUS CATALBURUN BREED OF TURKISH HUNTING DOG (TURKISH POINTER)

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Summary: This dog breed known as the Catalburun in its homeland, meaning "fork-nose", the Turkish Pointer is a rare hunting breed, closely associated with the south Anatolian city of Mersin in the Tarsus province, but rarely found elsewhere. Today, it is estimated that their number is about 200. Tarsus Catalburun is neither standardized nor recognized, but this dog breed is uniform in type and a valued local partridge hunter. This dog is easily identified by its "split-nose". Their owners prefer Tarsus Catalburun dogs because they are good hunter, intelligent, very loyal, have a good relations with the people and have small and lithe body.

Aim of this study is draw an attention to Tarsus Catalburun dogs their critically low numbers in their homeland and to encourage the scientific researches regarding to these dogs that have never been addressed in any scientific publication.

Key words: Tarsus Catalburun, Turkish Pointer, hunting dog

Introduction

The World Canine Organization (FCI) has organized breeds into ten different groups based on function, and, to some extent, supposed origin. However, the genetic analysis defined only four fundamental genetic subdivisions in dogs [9].

Many different breeds of hunting dogs appeared throughout the human history due to the changing of hunting techniques. Thus hunting dogs diverge in groups such as hounds, gundogs, retrievers, sight hounds and spaniels [7]. Dogs from the gundog group (sporting) are the most recognizable of all breeds. The purpose of every breed in the group is to assist in hunting and retrieving game, either furred or feathered. Common points include their very easy-going temperaments (although there are slight variations) and fact that they do not make much noise [10]. The name originated pursuant to the way the dog stands stock still when it spots its target, when the dog is pointing to the game with its nose. The earliest mention of the pointer was in England near 1650. Due to their excellent ability to catch a scent and point in the direction of the game, they have become very popular hunting dogs [11].

Some very old resources reported that two months of age a pointer puppy could obtain training for hunting. Dogs are able to find the game in two different ways- by wind scent and by ground scent. The air or wind scent points are all made at a long distance by dogs that hunt with a high head, and they go like the wind without a stop. The ground scent points are made at shorter distance and the dog runs with his nose close to the ground [8].

According to large extent on the agreed vision, native breed is described as the pure breed animal that have been living in the same region for at least 40 years or six generations [13]. Catalburun is neither standardized nor recognized, but this dog breed is uniform in type and a valued local partridge hunter [1].

The purpose of this study is to support the scientific researches on this topic, to contribute to describe Catalburun dogs as a breed and, to providing a perspective for the breeding these dogs in the future.

Origin

Although there is no scientific evidence, it is known that Turkish Pointer, Tarsus Catalburun dog as a hunting dog, have been breeding for many years in Tarsus province and villages it around. According to narratives, photos of curious and hunter families, these dogs have been living near Tarsus since the 1930s. Today, it is estimated that their number is about 200. It can be said that Spanish Pacon Navarro is the most resemble dog to the Catalburun in the world due to their nose structure and general appearance. A relationship between these two dog breeds is that both Spain and Tarsus were dominated and affected by the Abbasid-Umayyad since 8th century and then ottoman period. Arabs probably took Catalburun dogs from Turkey to Iberian Peninsula in this process [2].

General Characteristics

Remaining quiet for a long time, Catalburuns are excellent friends for hunting. At the same time, these dogs are candidate ideally for search-rescue, search for narcotic and police dog when the capabilities of intelligent reading from their eyes and talents of scent tracking from air and ground are combined. Realizing the situation, the Turkish General Directorate of Security sends a team to Tarsus immediately to take from these dogs for Centre of Dog Training in Ankara [3].

The Catalburun dogs can be kept indoors or small gardens without disturbing anybody. They do not bark very much. They play with children as if they are children themselves do not bite and are not dangers at all. They do not make any noise or bark when you pet them. They have never bitten any child and they are very sensitive towards babies

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and children. They do not bite even if the children hurt them. They are very obedient. These dogs have a unique build. It is not very tall, rather squat. The shape of the nose is different from other dogs. The nose is as if it is divided in two, from the middle goes toward the forehead. Therefore, this dog seems to have two separate noses. It is very loyal and its sense of smell is keen. Maybe the area of mucous membrane inside is larger due to the split nature of nose forming a larger moist region that could increase its sense of smell. The noses of these dogs are moister than other dogs' noses [12].

It is reported that height of body varies between 45-63 cm, and the body weight varies between 14-25 kg. Range of their life span is 10-13 years [6]. The coat is short, smooth and flat, seen in a variety of colours, but most common in white-based colourings with darker patches, ranging from yellow, orange and wheaten to red, brown and black shades, as well as tricoloured [1].

Similarly, the Pachon Navarro has the standard features of a split or double nose. They are a very brave hunter and have superior tracking abilities. They stand at about 48-57 cm tall and weight anywhere between 27 and 33 kg. The Pachon Navarro has a large and substantial head. They have broad foreheads with rather expressive eyebrows. These dogs are not very furry. They can have longer coats as well but this is very rare. The longer coats are rather silky in texture and give the dog a furry appearance. The more common variety is the short haired dog. Their coats are usually seen in either a white and silver or a white and orange color combination. Their coats are not ticked often. Ticked implies that the coat is freckled with a certain color. They are very friendly and loyal, and, can be used as house pets as well because of the sunny disposition [4].

Hunting Characteristics

Catalburun hunting dogs are very intelligent animals compared to the other hunting dogs. It adapts to hunting at very early age. These dogs, either male or female, learn and start to hunt when they are 6 or 7 months old. Hunters use these dogs for hunting animals that hide on the ground, rocks and in the bushes without flying. For example, it is impossible to distinguish a quail with the naked eye; this dog can smell it easily with his nose. These games are generally birds that have wings and can fly but there are also rabbits that live together partridges and francolins. Francolin is the most difficult game to hunt since it is very clever and cunning. Catalburun finds the bird by its scent and makes it fly, wherever it hides. Therefore, Catalburun dog hunts is the best and easiest. Birds and rabbits stay motionless in one place; because they are adapted to their natural environments and they know instinctively that this will hide them. Catalburun tracks the game from its scent and find it where it is motionless. It informs its owner that there is game by the pointing position. At that time, it stops wagging its tail and waits above the bird or rabbit as if it does not breathe. You would think the dog had become petrified, and this situation is called "pointing". With command "go pounce on it", it jumps on the animal to catch it. It is very rare that the dog catches it. The dog makes the game fly or run away, and the hunter naturally shoots the game. If it has already caught the game, then it brings the game to its master. Well-trained Catalburun dogs bring and deliver the game to their master alive without even harming its feathers [12].

Tarsus Catalburun breed of hunting dog can track the scent by air and ground. The rate of their using the airborne and ground scent are 79% and 95% respectively; using rate of both style is 70 % [6].

The Pachon Navarro, most closely resemble of Tarsus Catalburun dog in the world, is a kind of Braque hunting dog. This means that they point out their game. These dogs are characterized by their ability to point the direction in which the game is. This ability makes them great hunting companions [4].

In a study on three breeds of hunting dog, it is reported that the estimated heritability for the scored hunting performances of seven traits (hunting eagerness, speed, style, independence, seeking width, ability to work in the field and cooperation) varied from $h^2 = 0.006-0.28$ [5].

Conclusion

In this study, it can be said that scientific studies are clearly required on genetic relation with the other pointers, for which the sequence analysis of mitochondrial DNA and Y chromosomal markers can be used. There is a need for works in detail to determine the breed standards of Tarsus Catalburun dog with hunting abilities and nasal structure. In addition, It can be proposed to do the anatomic and histological comparison between the other pointers especially the most similar to the Spanish Pacion Navaro. Although it is not reported any medical problem about abnormality in nasal structure of these dogs, and clearly, research is needed on this issue.

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