

## **PRESERVING THE MAGHREB SLOUGHI**

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At a time when people and dogs travel much faster and much farther than before, when breeds meet each other when 100 years ago it was much less the case, it is important for the Sloughi, as well as for other indigenous breeds threatened to be bastardized by the importations of foreign breeds, to understand the basic notions of the evolution of canine breeds.

### ***What is a breed?***

In Biology and Science, a breed of animal is a group of animals who reproduces its physical characteristics in a stable fashion from generation to generation. For the canine breeds, the puppies look like the parents who look closely like the grandparents who look closely like the great grandparents and so on. Added to this are the results of genetic studies of the canine breeds' DNA

For registries and dog shows, a breed is a population of dogs who reproduces its physical characteristics from generation to generation, and whose appearance is described in a text or standard. The judges rely on this standard to judge the dogs presented to them. The standard can be more or less representative of the breed in question.

In contrast to a group of dogs belonging to a breed, recent crosses between breeds, or mongrels, do not reproduce their looks in a stable fashion. The puppies do not necessarily resemble their parents or their grandparents.

However, many canine breeds were selected from such crossbreeds for a specific purpose, in most cases long before the creation of canine societies, the dog having been mostly a working animal.

So how does one go from a group of mongrels with an unstable genome to a group of breed dogs with a stable genome? By selection. From these crosses, breeders have selected generation after generation specific physical characteristics and a specific role (guard dog, shepherd dog, companion dog, hunting dog etc). It is thus that through a rigorous selection across many generations that a breeder can establish after starting with crosses a type of dog which reproduces its looks in a stable manner and transforms itself bit-by-bit into a breed. The development of a breed created by Man is progressive. It is therefore in this way that from the domestication of the Wolf thousands of years ago, Man has succeeded in breeding hundreds of different breeds of dogs.

### ***What is a native breed?***

A native breed is a breed of animal, here of dogs, which has developed and been rooted in a specific geographical region and human culture, in some cases for hundreds of years.

### ***What does the expression "purebred" mean?***

A purebred animal or dog is an animal bred from parents of the same breed for several generations. It is the opposite of a mongrel, who is a recent cross between breeds. The notion of "purebred" is always relative. In canine registries, this genealogy is documented in the pedigree, which can be more or less correct. For indigenous breeds, the breeders often keep their own genealogies for their dogs.

### ***The Sloughi, the Galgo español, the Saluki***

The Sloughi is the Sighthound breed native to the Maghreb (Africa), the Galgo is the Sighthound breed native to Spain (Europe), the Saluki is a Middle Eastern Sighthound breed (Asia). In each of these breeds, the dogs reproduce today their specific physical characteristics from generation to generation. The Maghreb Sloughi is always short haired, the Galgo can be short or wire haired, the Saluki can be short or long haired. Whatever the history of these breeds might have been across centuries, the fact of the matter is that they have evolved in different ways and have become with time populations with different and stable genomes. Scientific research confirm so far that the most stable and ancient part of the DNA is different for the Sloughi and the Saluki. Studies about the Spanish Galgo are ongoing.

To justify current crossbreeding, one often invokes the fact that these breeds met each other during their history, through the occupation by the Moors of the Iberian Peninsula, and the different invasions of North Africa by peoples coming from the East as well as the North, which is difficult to prove. If these breeds had a common origin, or if they had much crossed with each other, the results of scientific studies would show the same DNA for the Sloughi and the Saluki, which is not the case. A Sloughi would also frequently have the wire hair of the Galgo or the long hair of the Saluki, which is also not the case.

Any cross between these three breeds is therefore a mongrel, at the biological and scientific level as well as the level of breed registries, for which these breeds are different, each having its own standard. In fact, to cross these breeds today amounts to destroying the result of hundreds of years of selection, which made them different from one another.

Preserving the Maghreb Sloughi implies therefore to protect this breed from the foreign influence of the Spanish Galgo and the Saluki and of any other breed – or crossbreeds - with which it could interbreed. One knows that there are still enough authentic Maghreb Sloughis in Africa to avoid the harmful effects of inbreeding.

***The Maghreb Sloughi***



Algeria © Mangelsdorf



Tunisia © de Caprona



Morocco © de Caprona

***The Spanish Galgo***



Short haired variety, Spain © Gaede



Wire haired variety, Spain © Gaede



Short haired variety, Spain © Gaede

***The Middle Eastern Saluki***



Short haired variety , Qatar line © Fisher



Long-haired "feathered" variety © McGuffin



Long-haired "feathered" variety, Saudi Arabia line © Fisher