

The Saluki

(source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saluki>)

The Saluki is perhaps the oldest known breed of domesticated dog. A study published in the May 21, 2004, issue of Science, confirms the Saluki's antiquity through DNA analysis identifying it as one of the earliest breeds to diverge from wolves.

Like elsewhere in the Fertile Crescent region, Saluki-like animals appear on the ancient ceramics from Susa and Sialk of 3500 B.C.E. in Iran, as well as on Egyptian tombs of 2100 B.C.E. The breed had been occasionally imported to England before 1840; however there was no serious interest until the Hon. Florence Amherst imported a breeding pair of Salukis from Lower Egypt in 1895 and began working to popularize the breed. The Kennel Club recognized Salukis in 1923.

Widely admired for its beauty, speed and endurance, the Saluki is a sighthound and historically traveled throughout the Middle East with nomadic desert tribes over an area stretching from the Sahara to the Caspian Sea. As a result, different Saluki subtypes, varying mostly in colour and coat, can be found across this widely scattered area. Although the greyhound is the fastest dog breed with a top speed of around 72 km/hour the Saluki's strength lies in its great endurance and stamina. They may not be the fastest sighthounds, but they can run for much longer than the sprinting breeds.

Description

Appearance

They are 58–71 cm and 13–30 kg in weight. The overall appearance of the Saluki is one of grace and symmetry. Salukis are "sight" hounds which means they sight the quarry, run it down, catch and retrieve/dispatch it. There are two coat types evident in the Saluki gene pool: smooth and feathered. In both varieties males may range from 23 to 28 inches at the top of the shoulder with females measuring somewhat smaller.

Temperament

The Saluki is gentle, friendly, even-tempered and extremely devoted. They can be somewhat aloof, even with their family. This loyal dog may become attached to one person. Good with children who do not try and roughhouse with them. Sensitive, this breed does not take kindly to harsh discipline. They must be trained with calm, gentle, but firm, consistency. They are fairly submissive by nature to people and dogs and are easily distracted. Be sure you remain the dog's pack leader so the dog feels secure with his surroundings. Dogs want nothing more than to know what is expected of them and the Saluki is no exception. The Saluki do well with other Salukis. They are a pleasant and calm companion and make a good watchdog. Though not

aggressive with people, the Saluki's natural instinct is to chase and kill non-canine animals. They may need obedience training to keep their deep-rooted hunting instincts under control, but you can never train the instinct out of the dog. Take great caution around



pets such as birds, guinea pigs, hamsters and rabbits. They can get along with family cats if the cat is allowed to assert its dominance over the dog, but may chase strange cats.

History



Dogs of King Antef

The Saluki has historically served as a courser, a speedy hunting dog that operated in packs. They often hunted in tandem with falcons which locate the prey for the dogs to run down.

Salukis appear on Egyptian tombs from 2100 B.C.E. The dogs were so esteemed that they were often mummified like the bodies of the Pharaohs themselves. Numerous Saluki remains have been found in the ancient tombs of the Upper Nile region.

In Muslim cultures, dogs are often seen as unclean. A saluki, however, is given a different status by the Arab culture. The Bedouin value them, breeding them for both beauty and hunting qualities. A saluki, instead of being viewed as unclean, often sleeps in tents with their owners, to be protected from the heat of the day and the cold of the night.

The Breed Established in the West

In England, a few specimens of the breed had been sporadically imported as curiosities since the mid-1700s. The first successful breeding line of Salukis begins in 1895 with the Honourable Florence Amherst (daughter of the 1st Baron Amherst of Hackney). Having seen Salukis on a Nile tour in that year, she imported a breeding pair from the Al Salihah area of Lower Egypt. A champion of breed purity, she struggled alone for nearly three decades and real Saluki popularity did not take hold until the early 1920s when officers returning from the war in the Middle East and the Arab Revolt brought their pet Salukis home with them.

