

Breed History by Miroslaw REDLICKI

based on the article by Prof. Dyakowska, founder member and long-time Chairman of the Polish Club

The first information on the breed in writing is dated on XVIth century. Paradoxally, it was first published in England. The late Mrs Willison, who has developed Bearded collie into a modern show dog, informed in her book.



A pre-war PON (looks like Ali!)

"About 1514 the Pole were being to trade of other countries and there is a record of the trading of a ship which owner K.Grabski sailed from Gdansk to Scotland with grain in exchange for Scottish sheep. With him he told six lowland sheepdog."

Finally three of them were traded for a ram and ewe to a Scottish shepherd, who admired the dogs for their excellent work.

Next information comes of XVIIth century. The long coat, medium size sheepdog is mentioned in written instruction by Princess Jablonowska, who ordered that such dogs should be kept by shepherd in her estates in Podlasie (North-east Poland), for their superb working qualities. In 1779 Christopher Kluk, a reputable author on zoology and botany, described a dog, which can easily regarded to niziny ancestor. Because of its shaggy coat, he used the word "poodle":

"...Poodles usually medium (sized), shaggy, are the most clever dogs, having almost human intelligence. No other dog can be compared to them in herding flocks."

The record showed, that medium-size, shaggy coated herding dog existed for centuries in Poland, mostly in its eastern and northern part. No doubts that this dog originated from an Asian sheepdog (Tibet terrier type) who also the ancestor of pull, Catalan, schapendoes and others. As the breed was kept mostly for working qualities, no special attention was paid to the type. In fact, we know the picture, dated in XIXth century ("A shepherd boy" by F.Maslowski). There is a small, shaggy coated, bob-tailed dog at the picture, but seems that its ears are almost pricked. Nothing more can be seen, as the dog is pictured from behind.

In the beginning of present century, when the interest of pure-breed livestock, also dogs started in Poland, some people turned their attention to these intelligent country dogs. The foundations for breeding were given by three ladies, namely Maria Czetwerynska-Grocholska and Wanda and Rosa Zoltowska. Princess Grocholska had bought a few dogs of similar type and started their breeding at her estate in Planta (east of Poland). For the first time she exhibited two of them in 1924. The dogs were of unknown origin, but from 1930 she regularly exhibited dogs bred herself. Her top brood bitches were FAJKA and FRYGA, top studs - SEP and WYKOP.

Mesdames Zoltowskie started breeding in thirties and their foundation stock originated of Planta. (namely FAJKUS z Planty and TUSKA z Planty). They bred five litters from this pair. All those dogs showed general uniformity of type. They were of medium size, pure white or biscuit with darker marks on the heads. Most of them were natural bobtails.

The pioneer work of the above ladies resulted in arising interest in the breed. In 1937 "My Dog" - an official paper of "The Working Dogs Society", published a research program for establishment and development of the breed. Ms Zoltowska wrote there :

" In our region (i.e eastern part of the country) we recognized particular type of herding dogs. The breed type remains strong and uniform, even being neglected by countrymen. In our breeding we have never seen puppies of different type, coat and color. These dogs are very keen for herding sheep and cows, and guarding. They also make very intelligent, friendly pets."

All the beginnings were totally destroyed in Second War. Ms Zoltowska had survived the war and Warsaw Uprising (1944) with two of her dogs. Later she settled in Cracow - and we know nothing more about.

It was not before 1948 when Polish Kennel Club was founded and new attempts to rescue and establish the breed started in Bydgoszcz (northern part of Poland). Pioneer breeders found strong support from officials there, and tribute must be paid here to the late Mrs. Dubrowinowa, who organized the whole plan.

The pioneer breeders were the late Mrs. Kusionowicz in Bydgoszcz ("Babia Wies" - existed to 1956) and the pillar of breed - Dr Hryniewicz with her "Kordegarda", who continues her breeding up to date. Dr Hryniewicz settled in a small village at the seacoast in 1945 (later she moved to a small city - Leba, where she lives until now). Being a vet and breeder of some other breeds, she was attracted with the native shepherd dogs. She purchased two of them from the countryman (namely KURTA and LASKA) and soon she contacted Mrs Kusionowicz and bought two of her puppies. Finally she was given a bitch from Cracow, which showed very close resemblance to pre-war dogs. It's most possible, that she had originated from Zoltowska's surviving pair.

In 1957 four polish lowlands were exhibited in Bydgoszcz. There was no breed standard, but the predominant and preferred type was medium sized, lively, alert and shaggy (never silky or woolly) coated, showing no resemblance to poodle or Maltese. The breed standard was accepted in 1959 (written by Ms Dubrowinowa).

Meanwhile, Dr Hryniewicz bred famous dog SMOK z Kordegardy (by Kurta and Laska), who became a true "father of the breed". Soon all the "Kordegarda" stock was heavily inbred on him. Fortunately, this inbreeding resulted with unification of the breed's type with no hereditary defects. The next famous dog of this kennel was DOMAN z Kordegardy (born 1967).

But it was not before 1970 when the breed gained wider popularity. Many newcomers went into the breed then. They mostly started with dogs bred by Dr Hryniewicz, some of them used also bitches of unknown pedigree.

At present, interest remains quite strong and stable, and fortunately the breed has never been as popular as to be spoiled by fashion.

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