

THE MAREMMANO ABRUZZESE SHEEPDOG

THE ORIGINS OF THE BREED

Much research has been carried out into the origins of the large group of guardian dogs, to which the Maremmano Abruzzese Sheepdog belongs, and Paolo Breber takes up the theme in his famous book “Il Cane da Pecora d’Abruzzo” (The sheep-guarding dog of Abruzzo).

He rejects the hypothesis that the anti-wolf dogs used in those far-away lands where the first sheep were domesticated in 6000 BC and pasture grazing was developed originated from Italy or indeed any Western country.

In the field of animal husbandry and of agriculture in general, the West is indebted to the East. The most likely hypothesis is that this canine breed originated in the steppes and grasslands of Asia and was brought to Europe along migratory and trade routes.

It therefore seems probable that our sheepdog, today's Maremmano Abruzzese Sheepdog, came to central and southern Italy with the Phoenician merchants, who arrived here from Greece and who we know had very close historical and cultural ties with these regions of Italy.

The similarity between these breeds so geographically distant, some even separated by centuries, could be explained by the fact that they have a specific function and habitat, and probably share the same phylogenetic origin.

Moreover, what our Maremmano Abruzzese Sheepdog has in common with the other breeds is the fact that it was selected in regions where transhumance was practised. Transhumance was a feature of traditional sheep farming that involved the seasonal migration of livestock between summer grazing pastures in the mountains and the lowlands in the winter.

If we observe the distribution of nomadic and transhumant pastoralism (from the mountains of Morocco to Central Asia), we can see how this coincides with the presence of these dogs.

Therefore, if the Maremmano Abruzzese Sheepdog belongs to that group of dogs forged in Eurasian pastoralism, equally incontrovertible, and confirmed by its diffusion, is the fact that it found its cradle in the central-southern Apennines, the ancient Abruzzi region, and that goes beyond the double name that was introduced by twentieth-century dog breeders.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Dogs*, by Lorna and Raymond Coppinger, HAQIHANA, 2012, pp. 380
Il Cane da pecora abruzzese, by Paolo Breber, WEBSTERPRESS, 2015, pp. 278
I cani da pastore, by Vittorino Meneghetti, A.C.A.M.P., 2015, pp. 254
Il nome del cane, by Sandro Allemand, CANES PASTORALES (blog), 2018