

ON OUR COVER

The Puli

A history of the Hungarian Puli.

In 440 A.D., the Huns invaded the Pannonian Plains of Hungary. Under the leadership of Attila, they became known as the *Puli Hou* or Destroyer Huns. The Chinese referred to the Huns as the people of the "dog kingdom."

Other migrating tribes from Central Asia began to populate eastern Europe, notably the Avars and the Magyars. Dogs were known to have accompanied these migrating tribes of people. The Magyars arrived in the area which is now Hungary at about 895 to 896 A.D. It is believed that the Puli was brought to Hungary by the Magyars during this period.

The ancient word *puli* has been translated to mean destroyer or drover. The plural for the breed is Pulik.

Some researchers supposedly have traced the Puli back to Tibet and a relationship with the Tibetan Terrier. Dr. Sandor Palfalvy has written about his investigations into the Puli's origins in ancient Sumeria.

Invaders decimated Hungary during the sixteenth century. People from western Europe, along with their merino sheep and sheepdogs, began to repopulate Hungary in the seventeenth century. The Puli intermingled with the sheepdogs of France and Germany and the Pumi was the result. The names Puli and Pumi were used interchangeably for many years, and the Puli breed was nearly lost.

In 1912, Emil Raitsits began a program to reconstitute the Puli. Two types of coats were noted: shaggy and curly. The first standard for the Puli was written in 1915 and, in 1924, the standard was approved by FCI (Federation Cynologique Internationale).

At the Budapest dog show in August of 1923, the newly reconstituted Puli was shown. The Puli was divided into three classes: ancestral or working Pulik with shaggy coats, luxury or show Pulik and dwarf Pulik.

The 1934 standard for the breed



Photograph by Sally Anne Thompson

divided the Puli according to height: large (19.7 inches or larger), medium (15.7 to 17.7 inches) and dwarf (13.8 inches or smaller).

In the Hungarian Studbook, dated January 9, 1935, the Puli is recorded in four size classifications: large police Puli, medium or

working Puli, small Puli and dwarf Puli. The medium size appeared to be the most popular.

When herding, the Puli has been known to leap on the backs of stray sheep in order to drive them back into the flock. The long, matted coat served as protection from the weather, terrain and wild animal attacks. The Puli coat is a solid color of black, gray or white. The black coat color often has a graying or rusting effect.

In 1935, the United States Department of Agriculture imported four Pulik for sheepdog experiments, with a fifth Puli from the U.S. loaned for breeding purposes. Thirty-three pure-bred Pulik were produced during the program, and Pulik also were used in experimental cross-breedings with German Shepherd Dogs, Border Collies and Chow Chows. World War II brought the program to a close without any conclusions, and the remaining Pulik were sold.

In 1936, the first Pulik were registered with the American Kennel Club. The Puli Club of America was formed in 1951. The AKC standard for the Puli was based on the 1936 Hungarian standard for the breed.

—J. Dorl

For The Record 1989 Award Statistics

Champions	65	Companion Dog Excellent (CDX)	4
Group 1	44	Utility Dog (UD)	2
Best in Show	3	Obedience Trial Champion (OTCh)	1
Companion Dog (CD)	14	Highest Scoring Dog	5

1989 Registration Statistics

Dogs	228	Litters	73
	(ranked 103 out of 130)		(ranked 106 out of 130)

Related Reading

Benis, Leslie. *This Is The Puli*. T.F.H. Publications (211 West Sylvania Avenue, Neptune City, NJ 07753), 1976, 320 pp., (out of print).

Owen, Sylvia C. *The Complete Puli*. Howell Book House (230 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10169), 1976, 256 pp., (out of print).