



**Official Breed Standard
of the
Kennel Union of South Africa**



AFRICANIS

***NOTE :** The dog breed of which this is a written description is an emerging breed with its origins in South Africa. At KUSA licensed events in Conformation (Beauty/Breed) it is only eligible to enter Development Classes at Non-Championship Shows . It is able to enter any Obedience Classes, Working Trials (Classic), Dog Jumping, Agility, Dog Carting events for which it is qualified, with awards.*

INTRODUCTION

Not many primitive dogs - as they occurred in ancient human cultures - are left. The 'Africanis' has its origin, and is linked to the sight and pariah hounds, which in pre-dynastic times were introduced into the Nile valley from the Levant. With the consecutive migrations of Early and Later Iron Using people, they spread into Southern Africa where they became endemic. Since their arrival as from the 6th century AD, they have played a social and cultural role in the different societies to which they belonged. They mean a cultural and biological heritage. Conserving the Africanis would also be conserving bio-diversity.

The description which follows broadly applies to any primitive dog breed which originated in the Levant. Where variables occur, they are respectively due to the predominance of graioid features above pariah particularities, or vice versa. These were the ingredients which seven thousand years ago formed the corner stone of proto-Africanis.

REGIONS OF OCCURRENCE

Southern Africa (similar dogs occur further north in the lacu-strine region and beyond). (In Swahili they are called Umbwa wa ki-shenzi or traditional dogs).

SPECIFIC SUITABILITIES

Watchful companion in and around the homestead, able to work with livestock. Also a hunting hound combining sight and scent with great efficiency.

CLASSIFICATION

Primitive Hound.

GENERAL APPEARANCE

Medium sized, slender built, dry and well muscled. Gives the impression of a swift, enduring and efficient dog. When in good condition the ribs are just visible.

IMPORTANT PROPORTIONS

The length of the body, measured from the point of the shoulder angulation to the buttock, slightly exceeds the height at the highest point of the withers.

DEMEANOUR AND CHARACTER

Because the Africanis has, for centuries, roamed freely in and around rural settlements, it combines attachment to humans with a necessity for space and freedom of movement. The people to whom these dogs traditionally belong do not tend to make body contact with them. However, their settlements are seldom deserted from humans, other dogs and livestock, ensuring adequate socialisation and environmental adaptation. This also entails that the Africanis displays watchful territorial behaviour. They are well disposed without being obtrusive. When pushed around the Africanis can demonstrate reactive aggression. The Africanis displays unspoiled social canine behaviour with a high level of facial expressions and body language towards congeners and humans. Therefore, when approached correctly, it is easily trainable. Although it is a Hound with a swift chase response, it is able to live in and around the homesteads in the company of livestock without ever harming it. This is a result of correct environmental adaptation and imprinting. The rather demanding conditions imposed by its environment have, over the years, induced the Africanis into an energy conserving life style. It has a steady nerve constitution but is always cautious in its approach to new situations. In other words, it displays a high survival instinct. During the hunt it is active and alert, shows great eagerness and toughness. It is a great opportunist that easily adapts to modern western life style without, however, losing its natural need for

space and a certain degree of freedom. It has to be noted that the Africanis has never been used to the western concept of dog obedience training. However, because of its innate subservience and a high sense of attachment to pack leader, it follows its handler in a natural way.

HEAD

Indicating the Africanis' ancient origins, its head simultaneously features particularities found in primitive sight and pariah hounds.

Although the head is streamlined, elongated and wedge shaped, it gives the impression of strength.

Top Skull : Flat, moderately wide between the ears. Frontal furrow gradually becomes less pronounced across the upper head until it disappears when it reaches the not pronounced occiput. The top skull runs parallel to the ridge of the nose. Its skin may wrinkle when the dog is attentive.

Stop : Slight.

Foreface

Muzzle : Prolonged wedge without exaggeration, about as long as the skull. Ridge is straight.

Nose : Rather large, full, pointed, usually black. (Note : partly unpigmented noses are sensitive to African sun).

Lips : Usually black, clean with often a little bell in the corners. It seems to play a role in facial expression.

Jaws : Strong.

Teeth : Normally a full set of strong, healthy, white teeth meeting in a scissors or pincers bite. (Dogs born in rural areas can show deteriorated teeth. This is usually due to an onslaught of distemper at a very young age).

Eyes : Medium to large, oval, slightly slanting, colours range from yellow to black. Often accentuated by a black rim and/or expressive eyebrows. Alert, mild and intelligent expression. No entropion, nor ectropion.

Ears: Set on laterally, V-shaped, of medium size, carried erect or drooping in any position. The most important fact is that they are mobile and linked to the dog's awareness of its environment.

NECK

Clean, dry, well muscled and of medium length. Flexible. In stand and alert, carried at approximately 45E to a horizontal line, on the move, the neck tends to follow the body's top line.

BODY

Slender, slightly longer than high

Withers : Tips of shoulder blades wide apart and just perceptible above the thoracic vertebrae.

Back : (Thoracic part of the spine). Slightly sloping towards the anticlinal vertebra.

Loin : (Lumbar part of the spine). Strong, fairly broad, raises slightly to the first sacral vertebra.

Pelvic Slope : Steep ($\pm 30-40E$). Huckle bones are generally somewhat prominent, always equal to, or slightly higher than the withers.

Croup : Short, sloping to set on of tail.

Tail : Set on half way between huckle bone and ischial protuberance, harmoniously continuing the slope of the croup, reaching approximately to hock. The tail is closely coated, medium thick, narrowing to the gently upward curved tip. (The top of an entirely straight tail is prone to injury). Functionally mobile - carriage varies in function of mood and/or environmental stimuli. A darker triangle at the upper outer part of the tail, approximately one quarter from its onset, is often present. It indicates the place where the caudal gland used to be.

Chest : Shallow, moderately broad, oval in shape, roomy. Ribs well arched, slanting rearwards. Sternum not reaching to elbows. (Depth of chest - sternum to ground : ratio 1 - 1.3).

FOREQUARTERS

The forelegs are straight, long, dry, with strong big oval bones. Muscles and tendons area clearly visible. Seen from the front the upper part forms an inverted 'V'.

Shoulder Blades : Wide apart, long and oblique, dryly muscled. Angle between shoulder blade and upper arm is obtuse ($\pm 120-130E$).

Upper Arm : Equal in length to shoulder blade.

Fore Arm : Longer than upper arm.

Pasterns : Strong, slightly sloping.

Feet : Large, oval, strong, supple. Toes are well arched, neither splayed out nor cat-footed. Pads are thick, hard and pigmented. Unpigmented pads and nails are undesirable. The front paws larger in area than rear paws.

HINDQUARTERS

Hind legs are long and dry.

Upper Thigh : Broad with well developed and dry muscles.

Stifle : Moderately bent i.e. when standing normally with rear pastern vertical to the ground, the front edge of the paw is directly under the rear of the buttock.

Under Thigh : Long, with well developed and dry muscles.

Rear Pastern : Longer than the front pastern.

Hind Feet : As forefeet but slightly smaller. Extra fifth toes or rear dew claws sporadically occur.

GAIT

Walk, trot, canter and gallop are common ways of moving. The Africanis normally uses the pace-like walk or the pace in the slower rate of travel. He should be able to trot and/or canter for long periods on rough terrain and in a hillside environment, going into gallop when real speed is required. The trot is light and effortless, with moderate stride. Viewed from the front or rear, the trotting movement reveals, as the speed increases, a natural tendency for the limbs to converge towards a central line of travel (nearly single tracking).

COAT

Texture : Compact, short coated, harsh and thick, very short on head and limbs. The length and density of the undercoat varies with the seasons. Wire-haired dogs are possible. A ridge on back : (symmetric or non-symmetric of indefinite length can occur).

Colour : Any colour or combinations permissible.

SKIN

Dark and loose to body. (In the event of a superficial injury, a loose skin ensures that the damage remains skin-deep and that subcutaneous tissue and muscles stay intact).

SIZE

For dogs and bitches usually between 50 and 60cm at the withers, but even 2-3cm smaller or bigger individuals can occur.

NOTE

Male Africanis have two testicles normally descended into a tight carried and well protected scrotum.

FAULTS

Any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault and the seriousness with which the fault should be regarded should be in exact proportion to its degree.

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