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### *Reflections regarding white markings on the Italian Greyhound*

The origins of the gene pool of a breed are directly related to its territory of development and its consolidation. It is also very well documented that as far as the I.G. is concerned, it was the mediterranean area which not only gave rise to its predecessors but also increasingly developed its original breeding stock and consolidated the morphological, structural and aptitudinal characteristics from which it descends. It is thus simple to reconstruct the course of development through various forms of artistic documentation of various nature...paintings, sculptures and literary remains. This can be considered more precisely the prehistorical epoch of the breed and that of the IG traces back to the "Canis Leporarius" of the ancient Romans or even as far back as the Bronze Age as proven by archaeological findings discovered near the Varese lake as well as in and around Pavia. Even if we have proof dating back to the Egyptian era and ancient Greece we mustn't however forget that it was the Romans, at the time of their unlimited, maximum power who spread abroad the earliest known specimens throughout the most varied zones of their many conquests. Historical Romans such as Varrone, Columella, Oppiano and Virgilio left precious descriptions and it would be even too simple to demonstrate that this is just a minute fraction of the indisputable documented proof regarding the paternity of the breed's origins. Italian Greyhounds were described chasing each other around the table of Trimalchionis in the Satyricon of Petronius and this, if it were to be necessary says quite a great deal about the Romans' familiarity with those dogs. This to demonstrate that it was precisely that population of extremely powerful conquerors who were to propagate the breed even as far as great distances from Rome, is of elementary deduction. The places in which the Romans often left their mark were small villages and it was those inhabitants who took responsibility and care throughout the years for the development of the IG. The territory which perhaps stands out amongst the others is what is now France which has left innumerable historical evidence about the love for these dogs. Then after time, the prosperity of trade, the increased ease of travel and not to mention matrimony amongst noble lineage throughout Europe from the Renaissance and thereafter led to the flourishing in general splendour both the destiny and diffusion of the Italian Greyhound. So rich is then the early history of this millenary breed and no one more than those that have cultivated, studied and preserved it could have taken interest in securing the cardinal elements by means of the Standard. And it's from there that commenced the origin of the history of the breed, from the laying out of the breed's standard which goes back to 1933 and for which documentable reasons recognize Italy as its parenthood. Therefore, adapting themselves to the indications of that Standard, all the countries affiliated with the FCI have bred and are still breeding accordingly. They have done so in times of which the number of IG's in Europe have been extremely low and continue to do so for better reasons today, since the number of bloodlines are incomparably more numerous and hence more diverse. The outstanding and arduous work of European breeders, a valuable struggle that in almost 80 years of selection has brought them to have morphological type ever so homogeneous. Just seeing the outcome of their work in any ring throughout Europe fills one's heart with pride for the enormous commitment and teamwork strived for in conserving the type. It is definitely not just by chance but by the fruit of discipline and severity in breeding that today all European dogs have chiseled heads, fine amounts of bone, properly contained stature and solidly coloured coats. They have all conserved that grace and refinement of the general traits that counter distinguish the true Italian Greyhound. So it's necessary to keep in mind that considering the standard a fixed and ratified convention which is a point of reference that cannot be disregarded for those who breed or judge a breed, it constructs the one and only guide. Each and every animal

species finds there within the description of the colour of its coat a unique identifying characteristic. If this applies to wild animals it also holds true for domesticated species. This refers to horses, cows, cats, rabbits, etc....and naturally as well to dogs. Thus, "EVEN" colour is specific to each breed. Approximately 80 (!) years ago the SOLID UNICOLOR was established for the Italian Greyhound: black, gray (over the years different shades have been described), and fawn (now considered isabella) in various tonalities. Since that point in time small, white markings have only been tolerated on the chest and paws. Many updated scriptures throughout the years have brought upon minor modifications or redefined details but NEVER has anyone felt the need to amplify the allowed zones where white markings may appear in determining the breed. Breeders of ALL FCI affiliated countries have dedicated decades, even a lifetime in selecting the I.G.'s colours in their purest form with the firmest conviction that the accepted colours and markings were to be considered an integral part of a breed specific. They have preserved and delivered to modern times entire bloodlines selectively based on solid colours. They have accepted and diffused and with great pride have defended a tiresome yet precious common line that which gives to the I.G. an unmistakable identity to which is even concerned the colour and distribution of its markings. The decisions about colour were decided at the origin of the breed based upon technical significance according to experts throughout Europe and the latest appointment in chronological order to collectively discuss the breed took place only 5 years ago in occasion of the 50th anniversary of the founding of the CPLI (Circolo del Piccolo Levriero Italiano/Italian Club for the Italian Greyhound) at the Castle of Calcione. On that occasion were present the leading experts from EVERY European country as well as the United States of America and Great Britain. Those who took part in that convention were either personally present or participated by way of written correspondence. No discussion pertaining to white markings was ever even mentioned, nobody ever suggested the hypothesis of a change in regard, demonstrating without a doubt that no one felt the least need to. More so, let it be remembered that during this convention some considerations and changes were proposed regarding specifics in movement, bone structure and general notes with regard to the section on General Description. After much debate all the described changes and proposals in that occasion were taken into consideration and have been applied in the latest revision of the Standard dating March, 2010. Everything considered really important regarding the breed by the major I.G. authorities of the moment were serenely discussed in a constructive way. There are no motives today as were there none in July of 2006 to justify any changes regarding colour and/or markings. The CPLI intends to defend the product of 80 years of selection upheld by all the breeders of all FCI countries up until now. Seeing as how ENCI (Ente Nazionale Cinofilia Italiana/Italian Kennel Club) has authorized the CPLI to be in charge of the welfare of our breed, recognizing exclusively the FCI (Federation Cynologique Internationale/ International Cynological Federation) as its sovereign organ to which make reference. The paternity of the I.G.'s Standard is Italian and the CPLI, even if willing to clarify anything whatsoever pertaining to the Italian Greyhound, has no intention of renouncing its job of supervising and protecting the breed.



The President of CPLI

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