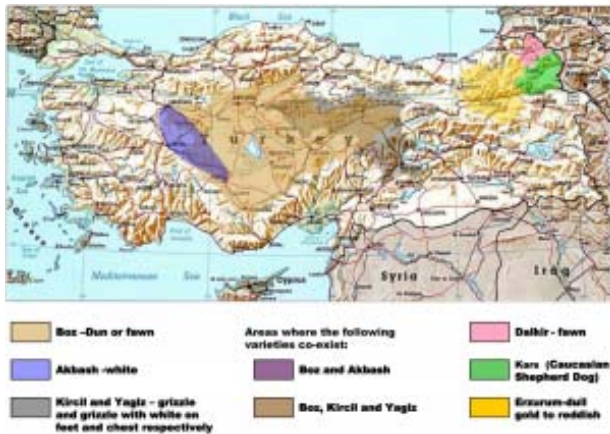


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Kangal Shepherd Dog, Karabash or Anatolian?

Nobody in Turkey has ever called their legendary Livestock Guardian dog the Anatolian Shepherd Dog. But in the last few decades, some have also called it the Kangal "*Çoban köpeği*" which means Kangal Shepherd Dog or "*Koyun köpeği*" which means sheep dog with a black head. This dog indigenous to Turkey was also called the Karabash which came in other colour variations according to the area where they developed in Turkey as the map below indicates.



Turkey Showing Areas where Karabash Varieties Originated

In 1965 the first breeding pair arrived in UK. Despite the original suggestions of Turkish Karabash, Karabash, and Anatolian Karabash Sheepdog the name Anatolian Karabash Dog was the name first accepted by the [Kennel Club \(UK\)](#). A few years later, whilst selecting more dogs to import into UK, another group of people stayed in the Turkish town of Kangal. This second group suggested the name Kangal which the Kennel Club (UK) adopted replacing the original accepted name. The name Kangal was further entrenched in 1996 when an outsourced Turkish postage stamp also incorrectly named Turkey's Livestock Guardian Dog the

"*Kangal köpeği*" or Kangal. Later still it was again changed to Anatolian Shepherd Dog which is now accepted by the Kennel Club (UK) [AKC](#), and [ANKC](#)^[1]. As if that is not confusing enough, the [breed type](#) we see in some of our show rings today often does not reflect a dog with the athleticism required of his ancestors!

The original Livestock Guardian Dogs of Turkey are still seen working with nomads who move them to find sufficient food in a process called [transhumance](#). These working dogs still wear spiked collars to protect their throats if it is necessary to fight predators. For Turkish shepherds who still use the Karabash for its traditional purpose, many believe the Anatolian Shepherd Dog developed outside Turkey has become too big and cumbersome to be sufficiently agile for the zealous work of the Karabash that protects flocks 24/7.

Studies within Turkey

Between 2002 - 2007 a PhD study was carried out by Dr Orhan Yilmaz to determine the morphological characteristics of Karabash dogs raised on private and State farms within Turkey. Data was collected from 41 provinces from a total of individual 735 dogs, 432 males and 303 females. This



Kangal or Karabash



Shepherd with Sheep and Karabash Dogs



Boz or Dun Coloured through
Fawn

interesting study^[2] gave rise to the following information:

Karabash have the structural characteristics of animals living in wide open spaces. Because there are almost no hiding places, both the Karabash and the predators are physically well adapted to the terrain in which they live and know exactly how to take advantage of it. So both the Karabash and the predators must be quick and able to very run fast to avoid physical confrontation. People with bad intentions also have good reason to be afraid of these dogs which can unintentionally cause real physical harm if provoked.

Dr Orhan Yilmaz found that

- The head should resemble that of a female lioness like its ancestor the

Central Asian Shepherd Dog

- The Karabash should have a dense double coat, uniformly short but only slightly longer forming a ruff around the neck
- The Karabash may have single or double hind dewclaws as seen on the Pyrenean Mountain Dog
- The tail may hang low but most of the time it is carried upwards and with a forwards curl
- The Karabash should always have a black mask
- The size was as follows: The male Karabash weighs 42 - 70 Kilos (93 - 154 lbs) and is 64 - 85 cm (25 - 33 inches) tall with the female 34 - 60 kilos (75 - 132 lbs) and is 62 - 82 cms (24 - 32 inches) in height



Dalkir or Brindle

Coat Colour Varieties

The Karabash comes in different coat colours according to the area in Turkey they were developed (see colour coded map above). They are presented here so it is up to future generations of the pure bred fraternity to consider where one variety ends and the next one begins. In the picture on the right we have the Kircil or grizzle above and the Yagiz or ashy below.

1. Boz or dun coloured through to fawn often with a black mask similar to the Akkaraman sheep, so blending into the plateaus in which this dog generally works. These are spread over a large area in Turkey
2. Kircil or grizzle and Yagiz or ashy. These have a similar colour to the Boz with a black mask, but they also have black on the outer guard hairs of the top coat. Those dogs with a greater density of the black hairs especially on their extremities also have white outlined with grey are called Yagiz or Ashy. The white on the feet may also extend up the legs. On the map these two minor variations of grizzle are combined.
3. Dalkir or Brindle with the black hairs forming bands over the Boz or dun colour giving a striped effect. These are found in a small region close to Georgia.
4. Akbash or white. These are always white but the length of coat can vary. They are generally slightly smaller and even more rapid than Karabash, but as a flock guarding dog, they are excellent working dogs and very sharp. Some people consider them as an "ecological" dog because they do not like pursuing and



Arbash or White

killing predators. There are now many Akbash in the USA.

5. Erzurum or dark yellow or gold through to reddish. These come from a small province and are a little more finely or elegantly built, making them more noble in appearance.

Note the Kars is sometimes also designated as a variety of Karabash. But it is generally accepted that the same type of dog has developed on both sides of the border of Armenia and Georgia and throughout the Caucasian Mountains. As this border historically has been changed many times and the the FCI has already recognized this longer haired type of dog as the Caucasian Shepherd Dog, although included in the map they are not included in the categories above.

References and Further Reading

Jane Harvey 'Anatolian? Kangal? What next?' Dog News Australia, published by Australian Canine Press Pty Ltd Australia NSW April 2012
Pages 4 and 8 also refer to Editorial Page 2

[1] Selim Derbent and Dr Orhan Yilmaz, 'Le Karabash, Chiens de Bergers Nomades, son Histoire, son Travail, Son Avenir' Self Published ISBN 978-975-92133-8-9

[2] Dr Orhan Yilmaz 'The Turkish (Karabash) Shepherd Dog, The National Dog of Turkey History, Description, Breeding' Self Published ISBN 975-92133-7-0 Chapter 12 Page 96



Grizzle (top) and Ashy (below)



Erzurum or Dark Yellow to Red