

Title: A Journey through time with the Cane Corso

Subtitle: Corso Information

Second Subtitle: #0 By R. Whitmore

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Summary: The Canis Pugnax, acknowledged as the ancestor of the Cane Corso as well as the Neapolitan Mastiff, was used by the Romans as a dog of war at the time of their conquest of Briton.

On the battlefield it was defeated by the broad mouthed war dogs of the Britons, the Romans were suitably impressed and introduced large amounts of the British dogs into Rome. It is thought that these British dogs were bred with the Canis Pugnax to produce the bloodlines of the Cane Corso.

Over the years the Cane Corso has become to be known by many names. It is believed by some that it derives from the Latin for dog 'Cane' and 'Corso' which means to course or chase therefore being known as 'the dog of chase'. Others argue that the name comes from the Greek 'Kortos' which translates to mean a property surrounded by a fence, another claims it is from the Latin 'Cohors' which means bodyguard. To confuse matters further local Italian dialects add the names Can'Curs, Cane-E-Presa and Can' Guzzo in to the pot and not forgetting the Italian Mastiff.

Throughout history, texts about the Cane Corso can be found. In an ancient manuscript by an unknown author, who's work is on display at the Alibrandi archive of Montopoli in Val d'Arno not far from Pisa. Is an account of the history of Montopoli from the origins up to the XVI century, it reads that the inhabitants of Montopoli (mons operis) where by tradition strong men, warriors, who were provided with Cane Corsos for their own defence and the defence of the lands and therefore became known as the corsari (corsairs). Their use is mentioned in 1137/8 AD at a siege in Monopoli di Sabina, near Rome, where they were starved and then let loose on the unfortunate inhabitants. We are informed by Giuseppe Chiecchi and Giorgio Gualtieri that the name Corso first appears in documentary evidence during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century. Italian baroque poet Giovanni Battista Marino (1569-1625) mentions the Cane Corso in his book "La Sampogna". Bartolomeo Pinelli, Italian artist, of Dante's Inferno fame sketched himself with his Cane Corso.

Down the ages the Cane Corso or CC has had many occupations. They have been employed as gladiators in the coliseum, drovers, butchers dogs; they were used to corner the animal for the slaughtering process and as insurance should the animal get free, you can imaging the ferocity of a bull in this situation, but a CC would prove more than a match for it and be able to quell it easily, protection of animals and humans alike in the setting of farms and pasture land, trained to run alongside carts and coaches to protect valuable cargoes, hunting wild animals such as Badger, Porcupine, Stag, Wild Boar and Bear and as an excellent protector of land, livestock and home which he continues to perform today in his homeland and all over the world. The distinctive bobbed ears and tail of a lot of the breed also comes from the CC's history, these were cut off to prevent injury if they were caught in a fight with a Wolf or stray dogs. In the old days they would be cut off with shears and ash mixed with olive oil would be applied to help them to heal. With the disappearance of big game to hunt and the invention of firearms the Cane Corso was in danger of extinction especially after the Second World War. The Cane Corso could only be found in Puglia, Luciana and Sannio in Southern Italy.

References:

Encyclopaedia Britannica

Cane Corso – Emily Bates

Renzo Carosio – Saxellum (Cane Corso Kennel)

Godiva Cane Corso Website