



Il Cirneco dell'Etna



Interpretation and comment of the new morphological standard of the Cirneco dell'Etna

References expressed as percentage are related to the height at the withers.

Draws of Alberto Marengoni



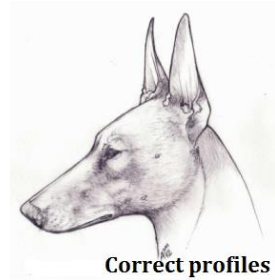
Fig.1



Fig.2



Correct expression
Fig-3



Correct profiles
Fig.4

The Cirneco is a primitive dog, his selection was mainly made by nature, environment and use that has been done over a period of about three thousand years until, around the thousand before Christ, already strongly defined in form and temper, he arrived in Sicily probably thanks to the Phoenicians. The theater in which this race has been originated was the Mediterranean basin and in particular Egypt. It is one of the most ancient races and the first evidences that we have received, through figurative and writings, make us assume that the origins must be sought in the Asian greyhound.

In Sicily it has been always used by all hunters for its excellent hunting qualities and also for the ability to move in rough terrain, especially on the slope of Etna, where the sharp lava, makes those places difficult to access other types of dogs. At the beginning of the 20th century, a Sicilian noblewoman, Agata Paternò Castello dei Duchi Caracci, fascinated by this noble and elegant animal, studied its origins and matured the need to safeguard its primitive characteristics.

For years she devoted herself to this work, breeding under the "Aetnensis" affix; in 1939 the standard was officially presented and it was in this way that the Cirneco solemnly entered to belong to the races recognized by the ENCI.

General Appearance:

The Cirneco dell'Etna has been a working dog breed since 1994. The trial is based on hunting wild rabbits which the dog has not to cull necessarily and it is valid for awarding the title of Italian championship for working dogs and for the title of Italian beauty championship. The elegant and slender shape of the Cirneco has not to be intended in contrast with its robust, vigorous and strong conformation typical of the working dog breeds.

- Head: dry and well chiseled (Fig. 3-4)
- Ears: perfectly straight, parallel or almost. (emblem of the Cirneco)
- Square construction. (Fig. 1-2-5)
- Feet: compact and rounded shape.
- Tail: big at the attachment and uniform for almost the entire length.
- Hair: semi-long in some areas and well dense in others and however of consistent and without deviations texture.

These, in order of importance, are the most appreciable characteristics on which we must pause and evaluate with particular attention. The Cirneco must be tall on the limbs: this peculiarity is due essentially to the brevity of the arm compared to the shoulder and the forearm. The 8 to 10 ratio between the muzzle and the skull is the most common in the race, but it is right to appreciate the subjects who tend to the 1 : 1 ratio but which is difficult to achieve; the greater length of the nasal canal

in fact gives the head more elegance and distinction. The square construction does not need comments, the cirneco must be a squared dog. (Fig.5).

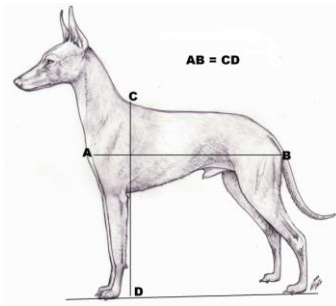


Fig.5

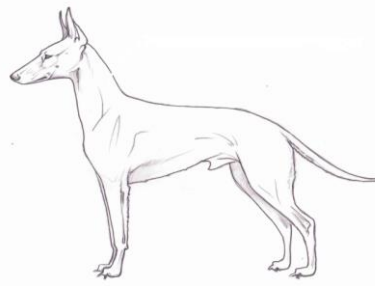


Fig.6

excessively long body

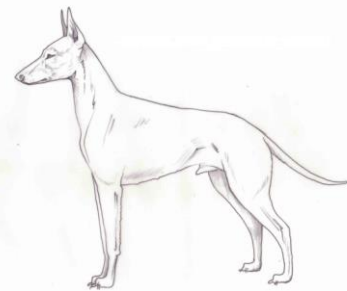
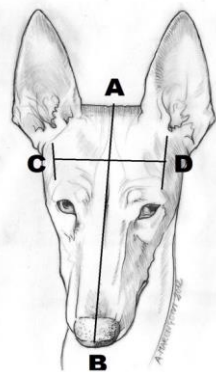


Fig.7

excessively robust body

Behavior and temperament: the Cirneco is particularly suitable for the hunt of wild rabbits which it smells and discovers in every environment. It is as an expert on rocky, rugged and formed by volcanic lava terrains. It is essentially a search dog even appropriate for hunting hares, rock partridges, wild boars, quails etc. Its behavior is gentle and affectionate towards his master. If the Cirneco grows up in isolated environment, it may show diffidence towards strangers. Such behavior has not to be confused with unjustified fear towards people or things, which conversely, has to be imputable to hereditary faults, lack of social support and an improper socialization.

Head: the oval skull shape on a sagittal plane is emphasized by observing the head from above. The upper profile of the skull appears almost flat both from the slightly developed temporal muscle, which must not highlight the frontal furrow, and from the almost non-existent occipital crest. (Fig. 8) The half of the total length of the head must be on the horizontal line that connects the inner angles of the eyes. (Fig. 9- 10)



CD < 1/2 AB Correct

Fig. 8

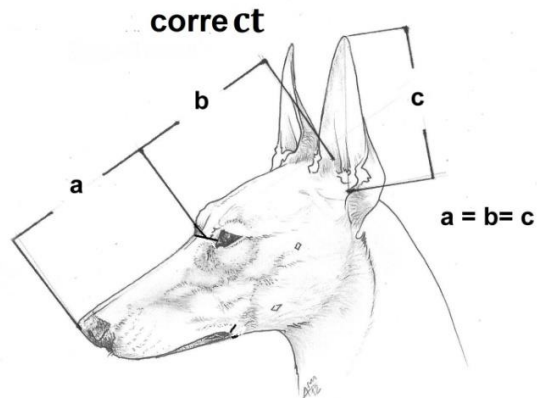


Fig. 9



Fig. 10

Wide skull



Fig.11

Convex nasal cane, incorrect

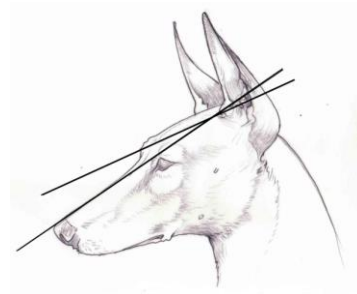


Fig. 12

Divergent skull-facial axes. Incorrect

The straight nasal bone, the parallelism between the axes of the skull and muzzle as well as the alignment between nose and nasal bone are fundamental to mark the Cirneco typical expression. Such peculiarities must be taken into account under judgment. For this purpose, the superior axes of the skull appearing hardly divergent, a slightly convex upper profile as well as a nose which is not aligned with the nasal bone must be severely penalized. The slightly prominent stop is due to the frontal nasal chests which are lightly developed but it is also due to the superciliary arches not very protruding. The maximum value of accentuation is 150°.

(Fig. 13-14)

Muzzle: The length of the muzzle must nearly correspond to the one of the skull. This trait attributes more value to the Cirneco. The top-line of the fore face from the suborbital region along its convergent, pointed sides ought to be clearly visible. The top-line of this region is not in contrast with the roughness of the skin but it rather derives from its quality. The quality itself, must be fine in order to emphasize the gaunt bone structure of the below regions. A slightly solid muzzle does not represent a physical fault, even if a gaunt nasal bone well chiseled is preferable and more expressive. However, the nose must be solid and voluminous. The short and convex nasal bone is considered a fault, if conversely is concave, the fault causes disqualification.

If the superior facial axes of the skull are correct or almost parallels, the extension of the nasal bone must pass into the occipital squama, between its center and its intersection with the skull.

Nose: It is rather large and must be on the same line of the nasal bone. It ought not to be dark since this color is sign of crossbreeds. Moreover, a raised nose is considered a fault and each light sign of depigmentation must be penalized.



Fig.13

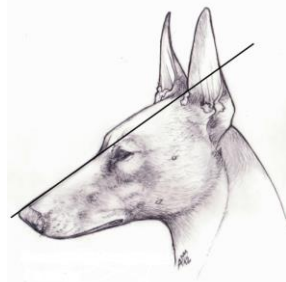


Fig. 14



Fig. 15

.Short snout, incorrect Straight nasal cane, correct Rightly protruding labial commissure

If the superior facial axes of the skull are precisely or almost parallels, the extension of the nasal bone must pass into the occipital squama, between its center and its intersection with the skull.

Lips: As a result, the shape and texture described by the standard have a particular labial commissure which must be high, fine and thin. Observing frontally the dog, the commissure ought to be protruding compare to the muzzle. This is a consequence of the fine lip of the skin. (Fig. 15)

The below jaws must be free and clearly visible. As a further consequence, the superior lips traces a much open arch starting from the nose. A serious fault to consider is also the parallelism of the lateral sides of the muzzle which determine a square muzzle.

Jaws: The jaws must not be too pronounced and the chin is certainly prominent. Teeth are required to be accurately implanted on maxillary bones. Lower canines are perfectly wedged in-between lateral incisors and upper canines. Incisors must snap shut in a scissor bite: upper incisors ought to overlap lower incisors. In case they shut in a pincer bite, the fault is not considered serious. Teeth must be complete.

Eyes: The eyes of the Cirneco dell'Etnea require particular attention since they confer expressiveness to the dog breed. Three aspects need to be evaluated: shape, position and color. The eyelid rim must be rosy and of an oval shape. The iris is ochre or amber and it is set in semi lateral position: its color

intensity depends on the coat shade. Hazel color is admitted. A big eyeball is not a proper quality of the standard dog breed. Round-shaped, protruding eyes, as much as excessively light or dark must be penalized (e.g. o “yellow raptor” or brown eyes). The iris of the Cirneco get darker once the dog get older. However, the iris ought not to show microphthalmia. The eye must be set at midpoint level, in line with the ear. The edge formed by the eyelid and the horizontal axis must be 25° . The dog breed gaze must not express neither aggressiveness nor fear or submission. Its expression ought to be rather gentle as well as sharp, attentive and curious. Eyelids must not show depigmentation and the edge of the eyes ought not to be dark.

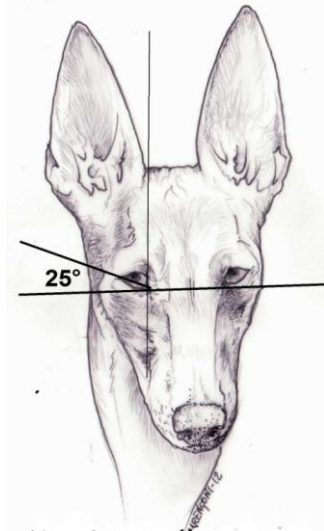


Fig. 16

Eye of shape and correct position

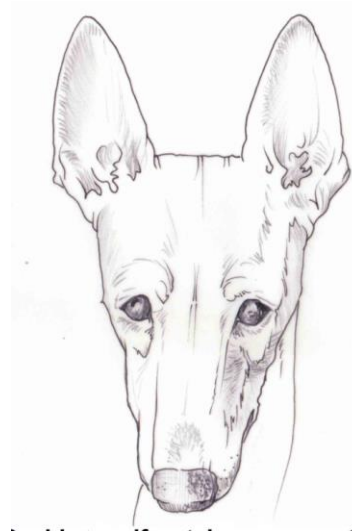


Fig. 17

Round eye

Ears: Even the ears of the Cirneco confer expressiveness to the dog breed. Their evaluation may occur only when the dog is vigilant. The four aspects as part of the judging process are: position, shape, consistency and direction. Ears must be set high, over the zygomatic arch and with the intersection of inner margin close to each other. The ideal shape is a isosceles triangles: they are required to be wide, the opening towards the front, narrow tip and without inner fur.

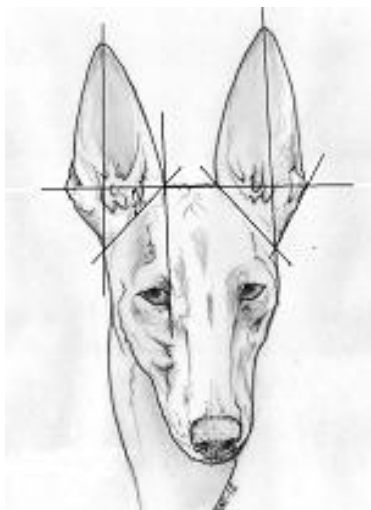


Fig. 18

Ears of right shape and correctly positioned



Fig. 19

Ears of incorrect shape

More precisely, the ears are required to have a rhomboidal-extended shape. Sides under the minor diagonal must have an inclination of 45° . The external vertex on the minor diagonal is required to be

narrow tip and protruding from parietals. The inner vertex is set on the skull. The ears are parallel if they are perfectly positioned.

(Fig. 18- 19).

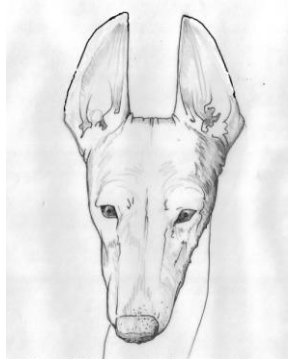


Fig. 20

Ears of non-ideal shape



Fig. 21

Ears with rounded apex, incorrect



Fig. 22

Ears too wide, incorrect

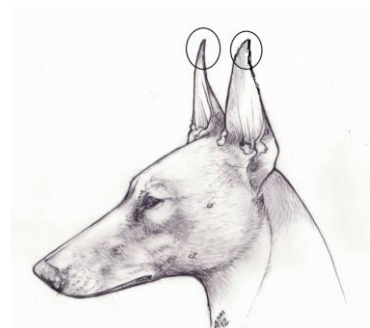


Fig. 23

Slightly inverted apex, correct

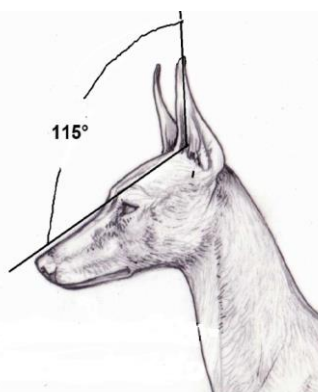


Fig. 24

Correct

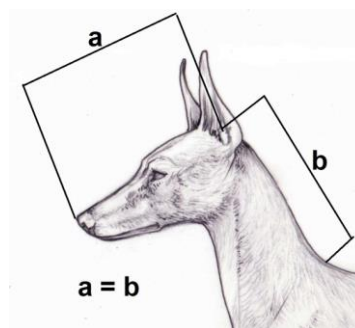


Fig. 25

Correct

The head seen frontally and in horizontal position shows a straight line which connects the vertices of the minor diagonal with the upper line of the skull. Some Cirneco have the external edge of the ear more or less round-shaped compared to the inner one. The inner edge itself is set sometimes almost perpendicular to the skull. Such shape, even if less refined is not considered a fault. The cartilage must be thick at the bottom and thinner towards the tip. This characteristic gives consistency to the dog ear and it is the aspect which allows the ear to form on the tip a slight overturning backward (the lack of such peculiarity does not represent a fault). The ear direction is fundamental and it is as much optimal as it tends towards the parallelism of its vertical axes. For those who may concern the length of the ear, it is preferable to be not more than half of the length of the head. A ear length beyond this measure is not considered proper of the standard breed. Many Cirneco show a horizontal fold on the ear around half of its length. Such peculiarity is of genetic inheritance and it also depends on the consistency of the cartilage. However, it does not represent a fault if the ears of the attentive dog are erect, lack of relaxation and deviation alongside the fold. In any case, a rigid ear lack of fold is mainly appreciated. From their profile perspective, they must form an obtuse angle of 115° in line with skull profile.

(Fig. 24).

Neck: The upper profile well arched, the correct shape and length of the neck are very important peculiarities of the breed since they confer elegance and class to the dog. Even the nape demarcation, as a break point and a boundary line, confers impulse to the head and it emphasizes its lines.

The other aspect that deserves attention is the point of connection between the neck and the shoulder. The line that joins the upper profile of the neck with the profile of the withers must be lack of demarcation. Such peculiarity results from the conical trunk shape of the neck and its direction. Moreover, it derives from the inclination both of the shoulder and the spinous apophysis of the dorsal vertebra. A dewlap, short neck with muscular deficiency that is not well arched must be penalized.

(Fig. 26-27)

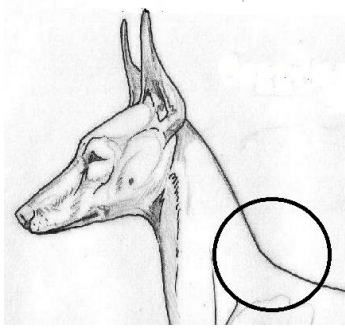


Fig. 26
Correct

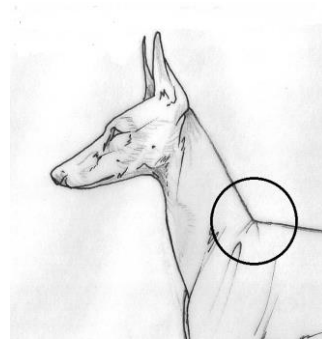


Fig. 27
Incorrect

Trunk: The upper line ought to be straight, sloping gracefully from the withers towards the rump. The height difference must not go beyond 7%. The height of the withers is due to the spinous apophysis of the fifth vertebra which is required to be the highest and less sloped. The spinous apophysis of the following vertebrae slope towards the tail. In correspondence of the eleventh vertebra, they join with the following thoracic vertebrae which conversely show apophysis towards the muzzle.

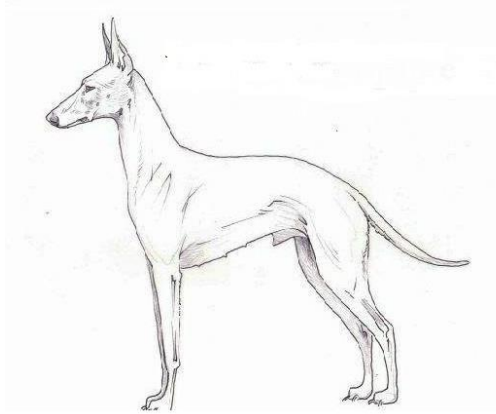


Fig. 28
Kyphosis, incorrect

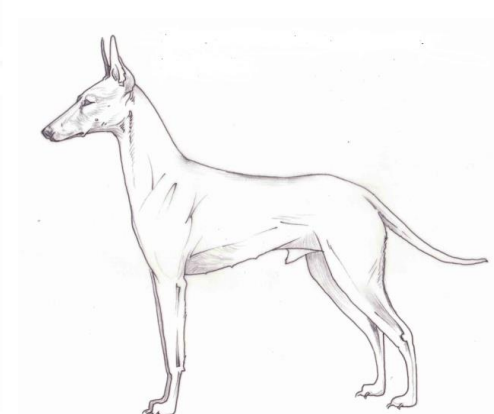


Fig. 29
Lordosis, incorrect

Spinal deformities such as kyphosis and lordosis must be penalized. Their seriousness ought to be examined in movement.

The Cirneco in stable position, if put under pressure assumes a particular position with the backside under itself. Therefore, the dorsal line develops kyphosis. If the fault is only due to the dog position, it disappears as soon as the dog is in movement.

The chest of the Cirneco extends almost to the height of the elbow. It is rather narrow (27% of the height at the withers), therefore the disjunction between chest and elbow is normal. In movement, elbows ought to move parallels to the median plane of the body. The dog sternum must be at the same level of the humeral scapular joint. The xiphoid apophysis ought to follow the abdominal line.

(Figg. 30-31-32)

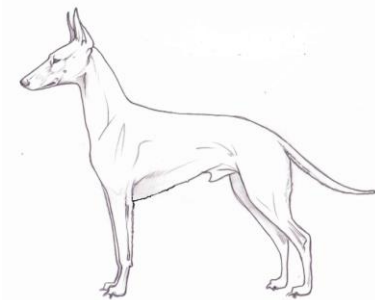


Fig. 30

low on the limbs, incorrect

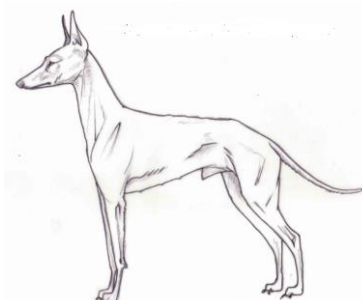


Fig. 31

Too light construction



Fig. 32

Belly too retracted

Kidneys are required to be slightly arched, short and strong. They join to the back without demarcations. If the kidney is clearly long, it must be penalized. Especially in the female of the Cirneco, kidneys are longer than the standard. This is not a serious fault if the length is not excessive and it does not damage the harmony of the trunk. Such aspect could derive from the slightly opened and oblique ribs structure. In this case, the fault is considered more serious. The croup is flat and steep, hence the tail junction is rather low. Croups which are slightly steeped as much as high tails junctions must be penalized. The line of the lower profile must show a flat belly which is not excessively retracted (Fig. 33 – 34).

Tail: The tail of the Cirneco is a part of the body that ought to be examined carefully. Its posture and height must match with shape and consistency which derive from a solid tail junction and from the presence of semi-long furs. The dog fur in this part of the body must be thick and lack of fringe. Moreover, it is required to confer a uniform shape compared to the thickness. The furs of the tail are longer than the other part of the body.

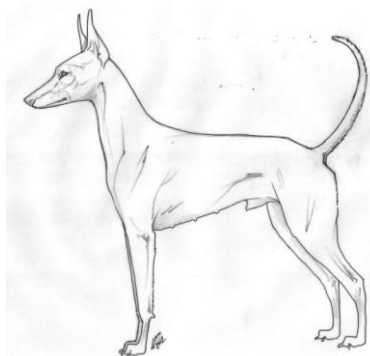


Fig. 33

Tail in attention, correct

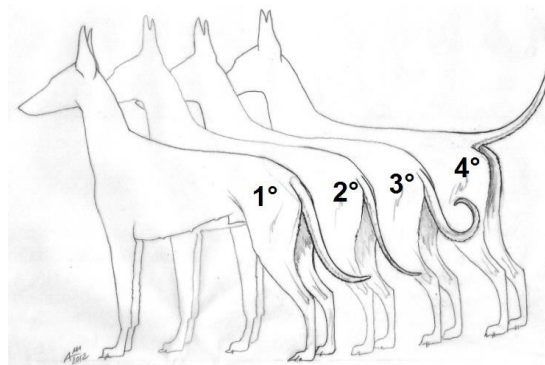
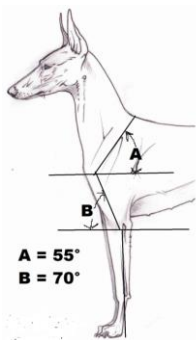


Fig. 34

1° correct; 2°,3°,4° incorrect

Forelimbs: The dog shoulder blades are rather straight (inclination 55° - 60°). The tips are close around 1,5 cm to each other. Their proximity is due to the rather narrow chest structure and also to the limbs which are few hooped. The arm is shorter than the shoulder blade. Such peculiarity confers the dog the appearance of being high on limbs. The scapula-humeral angle is open and the humerus is more straight than the shoulder blade (fig. 35). Even if parallel to the median plane of the body, the elbow is slightly disjointed from the thorax because of the chest structure and the height of the limb below the elbow. The olecranon ought to be visible (fig. 37). The forearm must have a strong, light, long bone structure as the shoulder blade. The light bone structure is proved by the cubital-carpal groove which is clearly visible. Carpus and metacarpus must be thin and if seen frontally, they ought to be in line with the forearm. The metacarpus is long (almost 9%) and seen in profile, it is slight sloped. Hypertrophy and spongy bones must be penalized. Compared to the description, the foot ought not to show laxity nor excessive size. Moreover, it must not be like the one of hares but rather it is required to have a round shape. Toes ought to be well arched and the nails curved (fig. 36). The color of nails and pads must never be black since it is sign of dog crossbreeds.



A = 55°
B = 70°

Fig.35

Correct

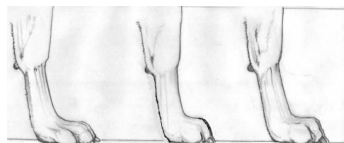


Fig. 36

incorrect correct incorrect

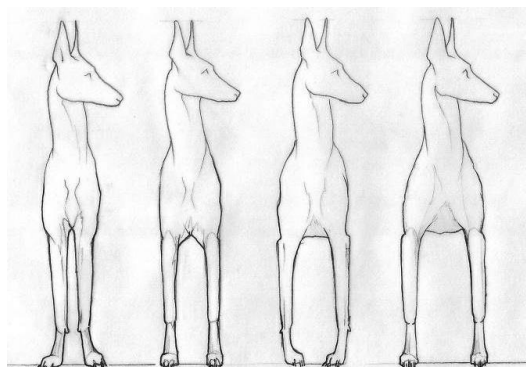


Fig. 37

left-handed Correct CagnoloCagnolo Too

open

Backlimbs: The backside of the Cirneco is not excessively flexed (fig. 40). Dogs with almost straight backside and open angles are penalized. The thigh must be wide and oblique, otherwise if it is opened from the stifle joint, it causes a serious fault.

(Fig. 38-39).

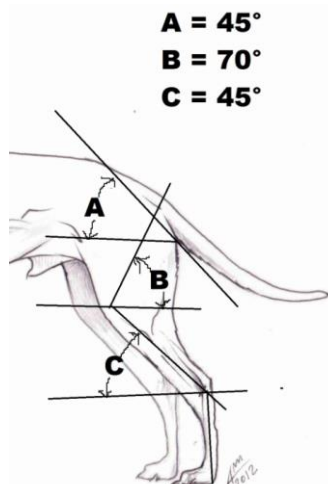


Fig. 38



Fig. 39

Correct

incorrect

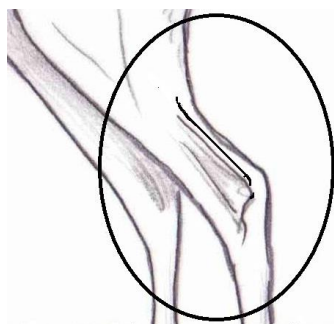


Fig. 40

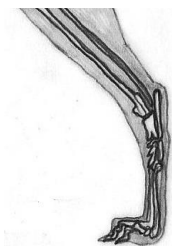


Fig. 41

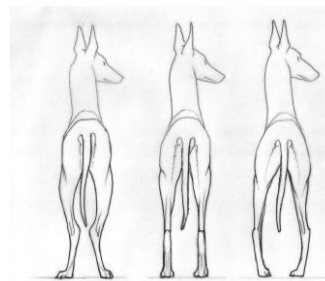


Fig. 42

Prominent groove, correct Metatarsal dry and without spurs Vaccine Correct Cagnolo

The leg ought not to be short and it has to highlight the leg groove. The limb must give impression of strength that results from well detached, strong and thin muscles. The hock has a close angle and seen from the back, it is set on the vertical line from the tip of the buttock to the ground. Metatarsus must lack of spurs and it has not to be excessively long (Fig. 41). The perpendicular line from the tip of the buttock to the ground ought to coincide with the tip of the foot. The back foot has the same peculiarities of the fore one. Seen from the back, once in movement the Cirneco closes its backside. A slight convergence is not considered a fault since it is partially due to its structure.

(Fig. 42).

Skin: Fine on the head and slightly thick on the trunk but always well fitting to the underlying tissues on all parts of the body. A rough, overabundant skin is a serious fault.

Coat: The body of the Cirneco must always be totally covered in fur. The coat ought to be of vitreous weaving neither too short nor velvety. Quality and consistency of coat are important aspects of the judging process since they confer the dog the right level of exterior roughness. This is a characteristic of the dog breed, therefore it must be examined carefully. Against its growth, the coat ought to be thick. It is short on the head and limbs and slightly longer in the trunk (until 2 cm). The tail is the part of the body where the coat is longer (until 2,5 - 3 cm) but it must be lack of fringe.

Colour: All shades of solid tan ranging from dark to light colored such dove-grey (isabella) or sable are typical of the dog breed. It is also allowed the white color on the parts of the body under judgment. (white blaze on the head, white mark on the chest, white belly, white feet and white tip on tail). The most precious colors of the dog coat are wheat and golden honey since they essentially derive from a natural selection and adaptation to the environment over the centuries. Intense fawn color turning to

mahogany is tolerated. Except for white, the Cirneco must be a monochromatic dog. Coat, skin, mucous membranes, soles, nails and iris with the same shade confer the dog more value. A slightly lighter color in some parts of the body is not a fault. Spots with undefined outlines on the shoulders, on the neck or on the buttocks are allowed if due to the molt.

Height: The height of the withers needs to be examined carefully because it causes disqualification if it is out the range of tolerance. If the Cirneco is not exposed to a serious selection, its natural position compared to the height tends to a limit or maximum range of tolerance. Belonging to a range of tolerance must not be cause of discrimination compared to the morphological judgment. In presence of two dogs with the same qualities, which is a rarely probable circumstance, it is correct to award the one that is out of such a range.

Gait: Movement and trot play an important role in the dog breed. The trot of the Cirneco must be ordinary with the prints of the back foot covering those of the forefoot. The strength decomposes in two vectors because of the angles of the bones segments of this body region and the inclination of the back. The strength itself is originated from the back and turns upwards. As a result, the dog movement is short, skipping and extremely elegant. This is a characteristic of the breed. Amble as well as intermittent and extended trot must be penalized.

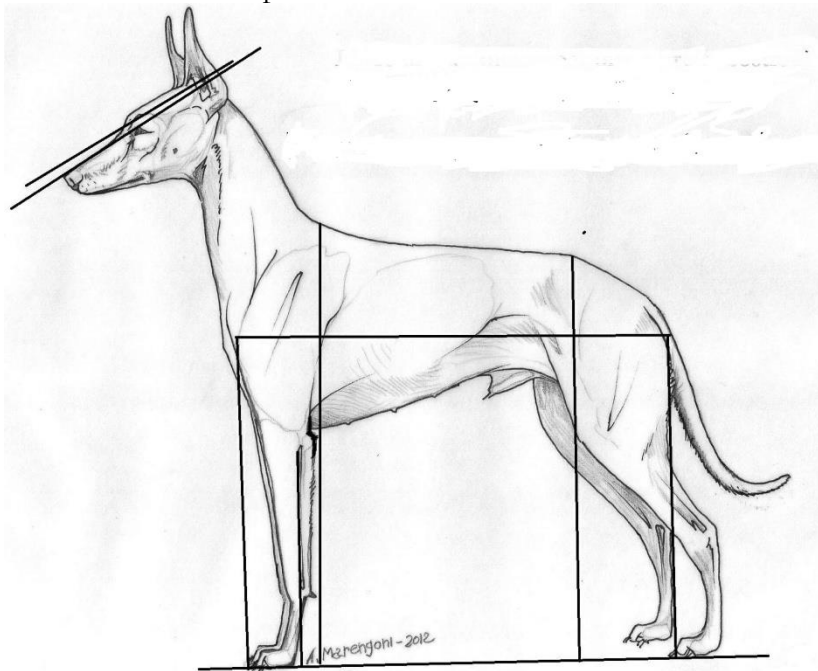


Fig. 44

Reference lines to identify a correct construction

Serious Faults: In case of only one of such faults, the judge is compelled to retreat the maximum qualification.

Disqualification Faults: In presence of only one of such faults, the judge must exclude the dog from the competition. Furthermore, he is obliged to ask the intervention of the delegate whose task is to collect and deliver the dog title certificates to ENCI. The authority will communicate to the owner of the Cirneco the lack of the dog eligibility. In the morphological judging process, the most relevant faults are: the exemplar, the structure and the distinction. Dogs show judges must evaluate the dogs according to the work.