

Origin of the Malinois

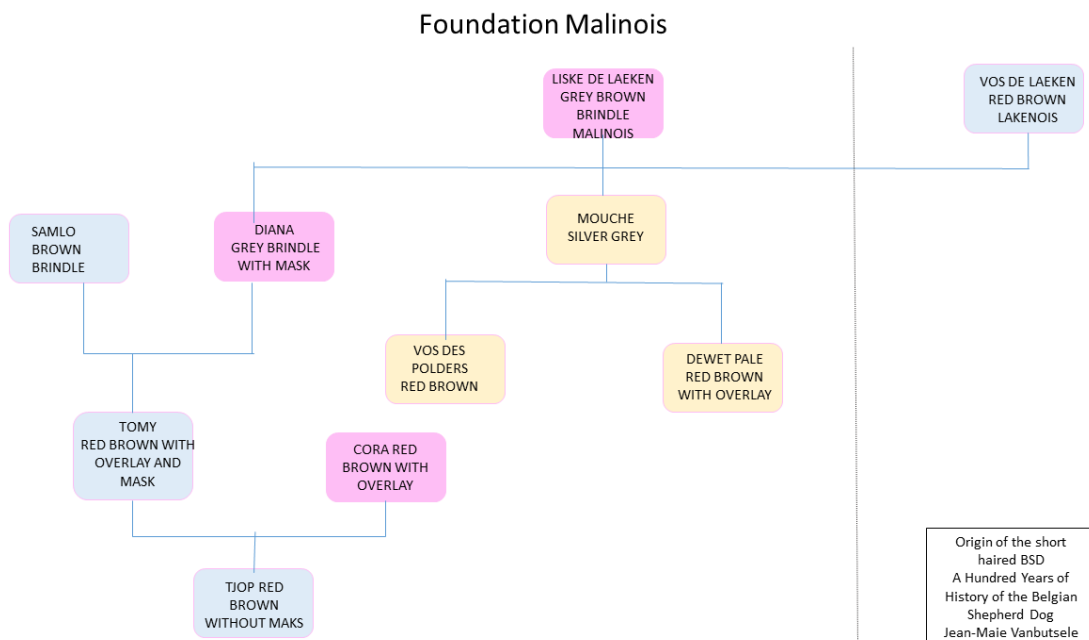
They originate from the area surrounding the town of Malines in Belgium. Late in the 1800 – 1900’s M. Louis Huyghebaert, considered the godfather of the Malinois describes travelling via bicycle in the areas around Malines and the north of the province of Antwerp where he found the type of shepherd dog described by Professor A Reul. Professor Reul was the responsible for the movement to define a shepherd dog native to the area of Belgium. His initial division was on coat type – long, short and rough but not colour.

Huyghebaert is quoted as saying

“It was in the Antwerp Campine, towards the Dutch border and beyond it, in Noord-Brabant (Netherlands), that the short haired type has maintained its uniformity”

On 7th September 1892 he reported seeing a dozen well-built shepherd dogs of Belgian type with short hair, owned by the local farmers all of which had a red-brown coat.

In 8th November 1898 a club was formed in Malines, which was a sub-committee placed under the patronage of the Club du Chien de Berger Belge in Brussels. Their aim was to improve the short haired Belgian Shepherd Dog. At a show on 12th July 1903 (it is unclear if this was their first show) first prize was won by Cora von Optewel (L.O.S.H 6134 red brow). Cora was bred to Tomy (red-brown) to produce Tjop (L.O.S.H. 6132 red brown lacking in mask). Tjop was owned by M. Frantz Huyghebaert. He along with Dewet (red but pale with a good mask), owned by the brothers Mairesse of Frameries plus Cora and Tomy form the foundation dogs of the Malinois breed. Dewet has as his father Vos (L.O.S.H 5847) and his mother was Mouche.



Why not black?

Black dogs were seen in the formation of the breed. They tended to be smaller however.

In a letter dated 15th December 1987 M.L. Huyghebaert wrote:

“I should inform you that for every 20 short-haired shepherd dogs, you will find approximately one example with black hair”

There seemed to be some concern that these small, short haired black dogs may have had their origins more with the Schipperke or else they have resulted from cross breeding of the Groenendael and Malinois. They failed to breed true to type. In the off-spring of those from this cross breed there area as many Groenendaels and Tervuerens produced as short haired blacks. They were banished from the breed standard as were the rough-haired and long-haired red-brown. Possible for no better reason than the fathers of the breed considered them colours they did not prefer to see.

The short-haired blacks were recognised by the Berger Belge Club and were seen in dog shows until 1914. Just before WWI there were 6 varieties of BSD.

- Malinois
- Groenendael
- Short-haired black BSD
- Long-haired red-brown BSD
- Rough-haired grey BSD
- Rough-haired red-brown BSD

There were some very beautiful short black haired dogs. They had the same structure as the Malinois but the hair was genetically shorter. It is assumed, according to the genetic laws of Mendel, to be the result of mating long haired blacks to short haired red browns as the black colour dominates as does the short hair. Short haired blacks were decimated during WWI but reappeared around 1926. They remained due to a handful of breeders that like them and fought for their official recognition. They were officially recognised by the Club du Chein de Berger Belge on 22nd October 1929 but as a separate variety to the Malinois. In 1988 they were still reported as occurring.

Source: “A Hundred Years of History of the Belgian Shepherd Dog” Jean-Marie Vanbutsele. Translated 1988 BSD Association of GB.