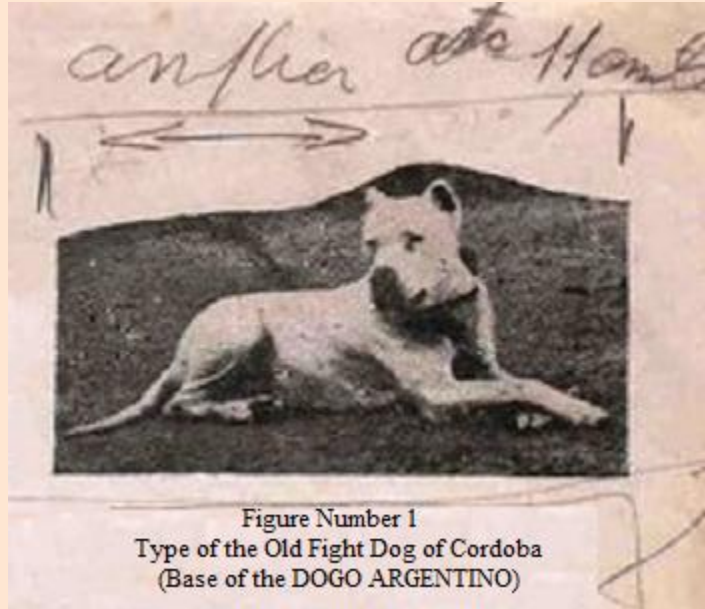


The Dogo Argentino



By
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(Creator and Promoter of this Breed)
(Translated By Daniel D'Hulst)

(Written for "DIANA")

BRIEF HISTORICAL REVIEW

Dog fights along with cock fights, have constituted a tradition in Cordoba, whose origin, without a doubt began in Colonial times. This strong spectacle, to not use the word savage, has its roots in the purest Iberian origin. However, it was in England, from the 13th Century on, where this spectacle gained importance as a sport; Rowland Johon writes in his book "Our Friend the Bulldog", of combat to the death, not only between dogs, but also with bulls, the famous "Bull-baiting", and even at times brave men would get into the arena and fight with one or two dogs. The famous painting by Goya titled "Echan Perros a Los Toros" (Throw Dogs to the Bulls), that is in the Prado Museum in Madrid, proves that Spain has practiced this rough and manly sport for centuries.

In our city of Cordoba, even though no semi-official entities were formed, like the famous "pits" of England (where in spite of the restrictive laws, even

presidents, governors, ministers and high magistrates attended) there was, nevertheless, a select group of dog fighters in Cordoba, whose names come to mind, amongst others Oscar Martínez, Don Pepe Peña, el Baron Funes, Dr. José Ignacio Bas, Dr. Enrique Martínez, Dr. Enrique Otero Caballero, Dr. Narciso Nores, Don Rogelio Martínez, etc. For this combat they used a dog that they obtained by crossing English Bull Dog with Bull-terrier, choosing those which were pure white and did not have prognathism, that is to say those in which the Bull-terrier was predominant. These animals, that combined the fierceness and courage of the Bull Dog with the agility and musculature of the Bull-terrier, as well as a bigger muzzle than the Bull Dog, with the advantage of not asphyxiating while seizing and holding due to the longer jaw and the well-fitting dental arches, giving to the crosses, specimens of larger size and weight than the original breeds, specimens which when adults weighed more than 30 kilograms.

At times some would breed again with Bull-terrier and others would cross with the Boxer or with the Dogue de Bordeaux, according to the criteria of each aficionado. They achieved quite a standardized dog, that was white in color, with black eyes and nose, a heavy skull with a muzzle that was as long as the head, deep set and had shielded eyes, tight lips, that is to say a lion type head, ample and deep thorax, a short body, a sculpted musculature due to careful attention in feeding and training, a long thick tail that somewhat deformed the overall harmony of the body, but that was brought about because of the dogs origin and selection for its exceptional qualities for fighting.

Amongst the specimens that earned a great reputation because of their valor and agility in combat, I remember amongst others, Chino, Johnson, Ton of Oscar Martínez, true canine gladiators, who ended their career without having ever lost one single fight; El Roy de Los Deheza, El Caradura de Don Rogelio Martínez, El Italiano de Don Pepe Peña, El Taitú de los Villafane, El Centauro del Mayor Baldasarre, they were of legendary courage that gave irrefutable proof in numerous fights that we witnessed as kids, remembrance and admiration that the passing of time has not been able to erase from our memory. The violent and at the same time methodical exercise that these specimens were subjected to gave them an exceptional athletic state and a physical state that was almost perfect for combat.

Starting with this base 25 years ago, I set out to make a breed, conserving these traits of courage, tenacity, and acclimation, that would be a general utility gripping dog (perro de presa), a guardian, and a dog for the eradication of wild

animals, that is to say a faithful companion in our home in the city or in the field, as well as for our passion for big game hunting.

To obtain more size, without losing the courage and at the same time to give it an instinct for the field, I had to make a series of crosses using studs and mothers chosen from amongst purebred Bulldog, Great Dane, Pyrenean Mastiff, Bull-terrier and Boxer, always conserving as the base and my guide the Old Combat Dogs of Cordoba, those which I saw so many times perform great exploits of courage in battle, fights in which they were excellent because of the accumulation of atavism from so many generations of fighters.

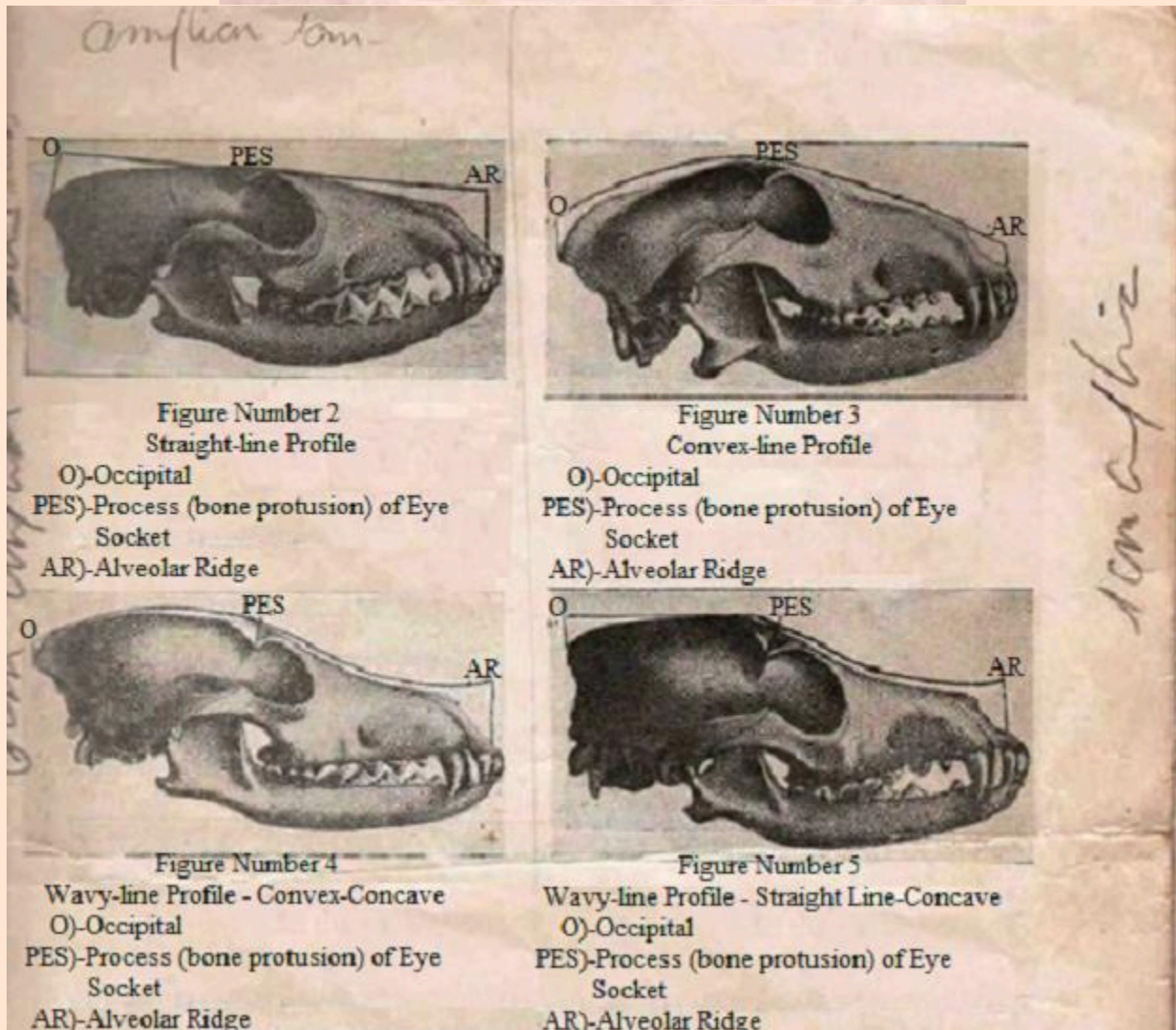
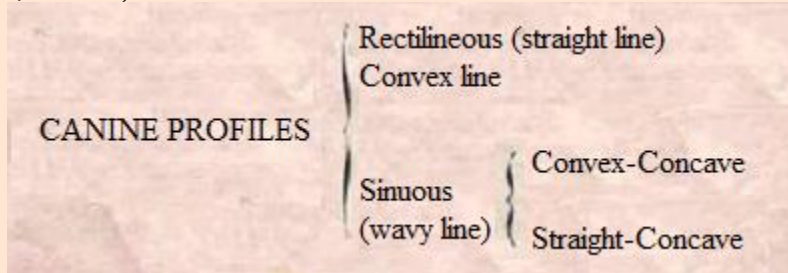
Selecting from generation to generation and creating several families which in my judgment joined the somatic and psychological traits that I was looking to set and eliminating all units that did not respond satisfactorily in a “fight to the depths”, we have achieved the definitive establishment, in virtue of biogenetic laws, a new breed that we call the DOGO ARGENTINO, in homage to our country and that I define as: “The most dog of all gripping dogs (presa dogs) and of the most grip (presa) amongst all dogs of all breeds”.

This claim, that may seem exaggerated and the own enthusiasm of the creator, is backed up by hundreds of acts, which is not my intention to talk about, but as the aficionados of my country come to know this new breed they will say that I am right.

NOTIONS OF CANINE BIO-GENETICS TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT FOR THE FORMATION OF THE DOGO ARGENTINO:

With the dog, like all other beings of creation, behavior or the physical makeup responds to the adaptation of the organism to the environment; and this makeup is set by inheritance through generations, and the type or morphological makeup can be used to ascertain the qualities of the breed. For example: If seeing a greyhound, the length of his body and his limbs, we can ascertain his strength, it is because we accept a direct correlation between the morphology and a certain attitude, a correlation which is no more than the result of the general biological law that it is function that makes the body. So then, what morphology should a gripping dog (presa dog) have? Let's start with the head: the solidness of the bone is a necessity that goes without saying. What proportions should the cranium and the face have? Here we will elaborate a bit.

Before all we must remember that according to the profiles the canine skull is divided into: rectilinear (straight line), convex line, and sinuous (wavy line). The last one is further divide into convex-concave and straight-concave. (Figures 2, 3, 4, and 5)

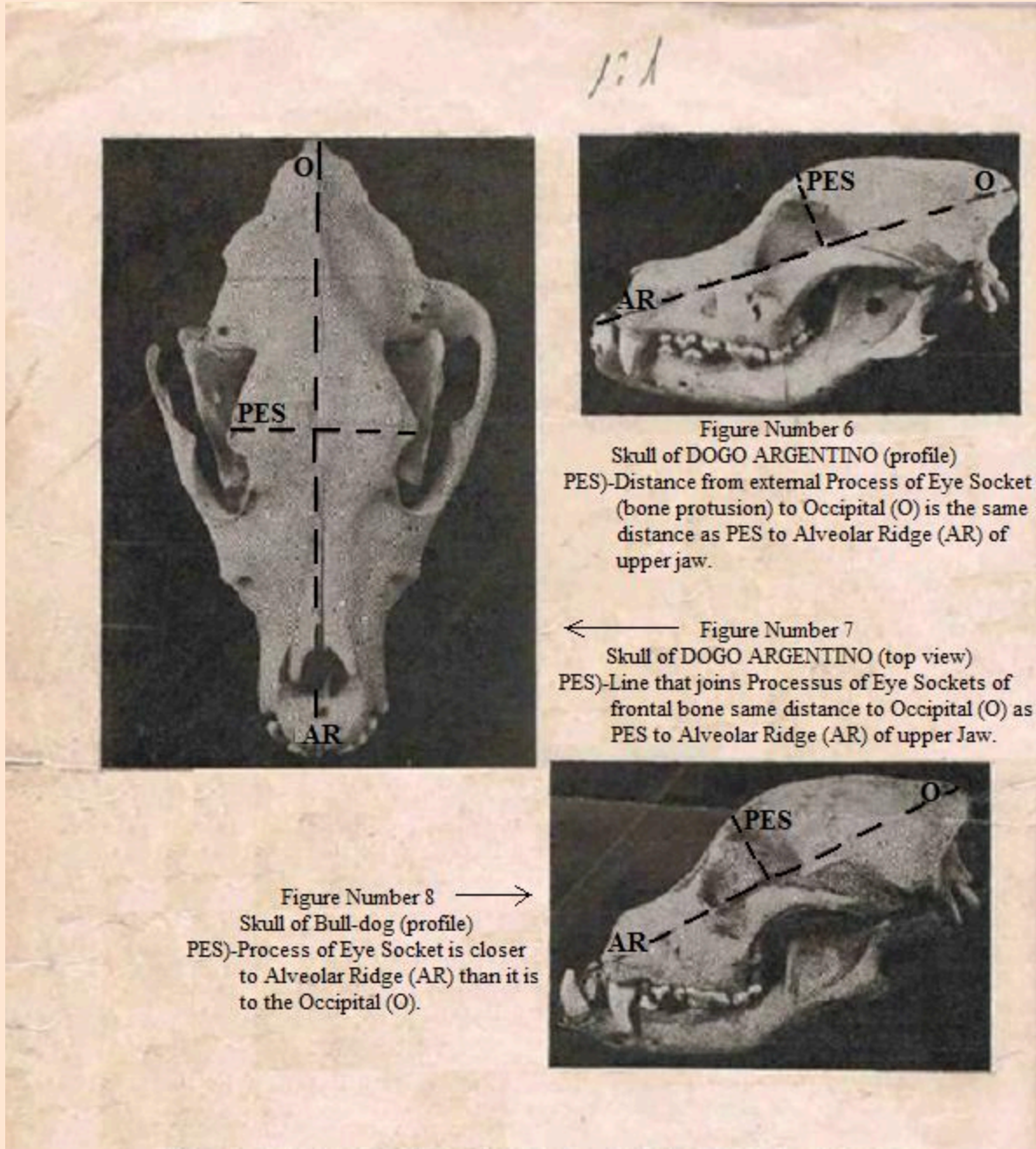


In the DOGO ARGENTINO, the profile is convex, while the muzzle is concave upwards, like in the wolf, puma and other carnivores. Concerning the relation between the length of the skull and the face, I believe the ideal relation

for a gripping dog (presa dog), is the one that has an equal distance between these two halves that make up the mass of the face and the skull. That is to say, that an imaginary line that passes through the two protrusions of the external part of the eye socket on the frontal bone, should be equidistance from the occipital and the alveolar ridge of the upper jaw. (Figures 6, 7, and 8).

Keeping these proportions the jaws do not have prognathism and they can hold with ease, that is to say, "the mouth is not full of prey" as happens in the Bulldog and all snub-nosed dogs that have to eventually let go because of asphyxiation. It is necessary to remember here that the gripping dog (presa dog), even though he has a sufficiently long nose, when he is fatigued, he should breath through the corner of his mouth to provide the necessary oxygen that the exertion demands, and having a short jaw, all of the mouth is full because of the prey, the dog then having to let go due to asphyxiation. (Figures 8 and 9).

In addition, as dogs cannot sweat, during muscular work the dog needs to combat hyperthermia, produced by the exaggerated consumption of muscular glycogen during exertion, and regulate their body temperature within ranges compatible with life, regulation that is accomplished by eliminating a great quantity of water vapor through breathing. It is because of this reason that during fatigue dogs are seen eliminating great amounts of water through their mouth and people that do not know or understand confuse this with saliva, but it is no more than the expelled condensation of water vapor from the lungs.

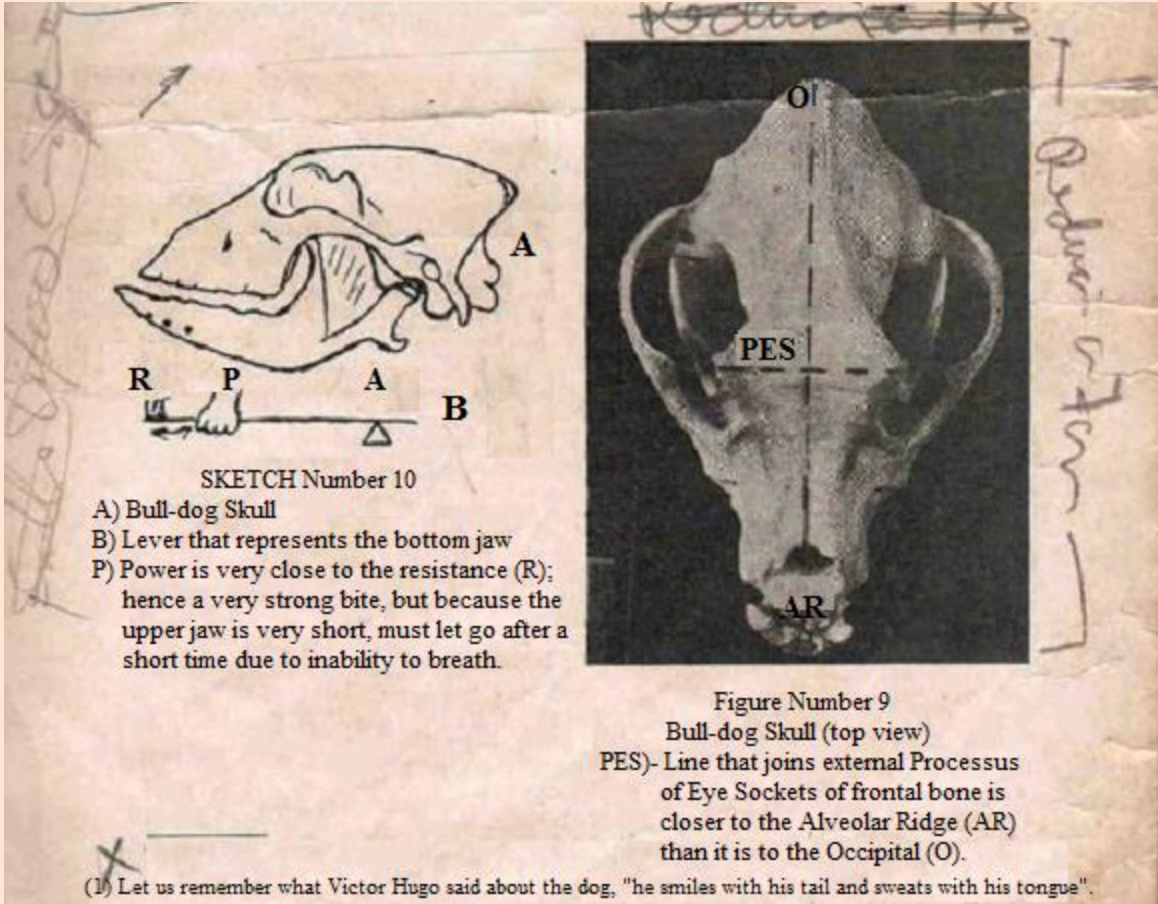


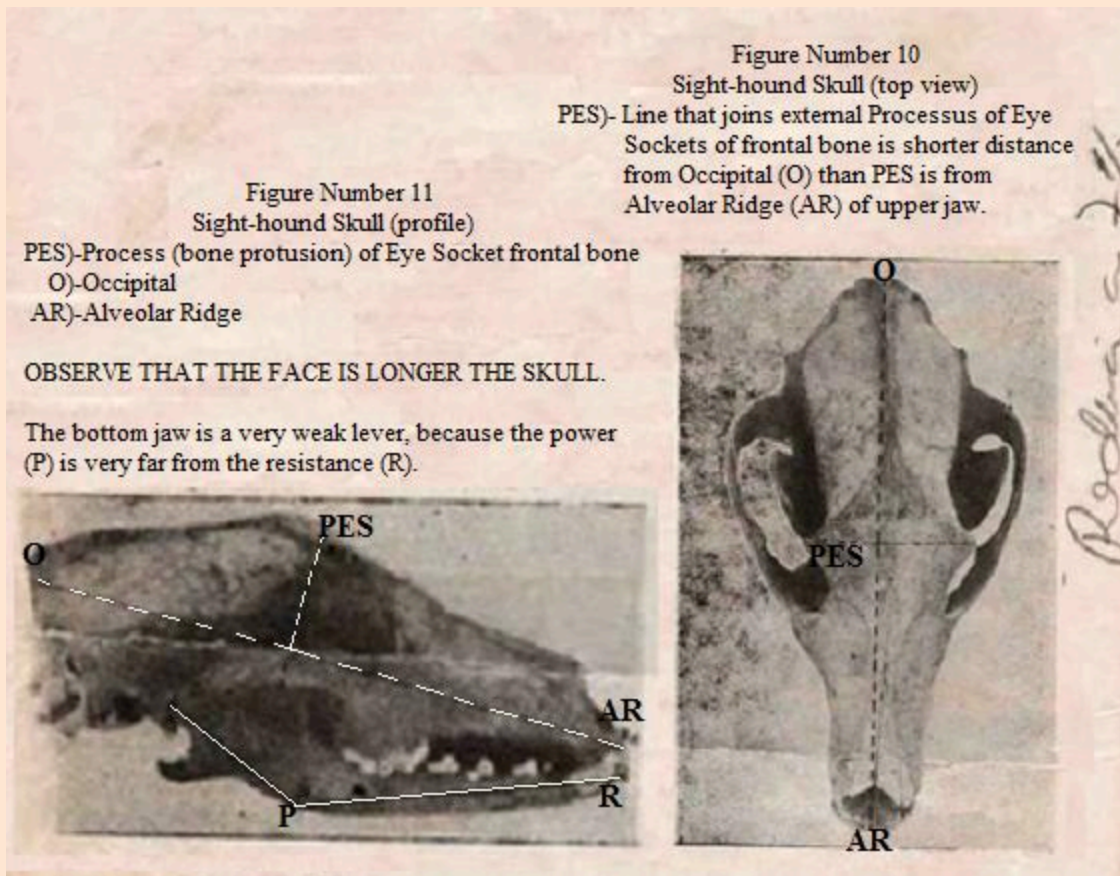
If the dog cannot perform this supplementary breathing through the corner of the mouth during the act of holding (*durante el acto de la presa*), be it because the jaw is very short or because the pendulous lips create a valve cover during breathing, the moment will come when the animal has to let go or die. To explain these facts I am going to describe the following classic physiological experiments.

If we put a dog on a treadmill and we start off with a moderate pace, the animal will begin to trot with a pace that corresponds to the speed of the treadmill, he will open his mouth and he will start to breath with greater frequency, making a rhythmic movement with his tongue, that is to say performing a compensating act, to increase the supply of oxygen that the exertion of the muscular combustions require and at the same time to eliminate the great quantity of water vapor: serving as a natural cooling system. As the combustions are exothermic, they will greatly increase the animal's temperature to limits incompatible with life, because they will increase the coagulation of albumins (heat-coagulable water-soluble proteins in blood plasma) and the death of cellular plasma. In eliminating the water vapor through breathing the dog performs an act of temperature regulation, that is to say the dog sweats out of his mouth (1). Now, if we put another dog on the same treadmill, with his mouth tied shut, without being able to perform the supplementary breathing, the dog will start trotting like the other, but in a short time will begin to grow weak in his effort and will fall and die if we do not quickly attend to him.

If we examine the second dog we will see that he has noticeable hyperthermia (he has a fever), a great increase in tension at first and then a sharp fall in pressure (peripheral collapse), ruptured blood vessels in the eyes, the mouth with the mucous membranes cut off, the breathing rate cut short, a complete lack of muscular strength, and sometimes there may be multiplying muscle contractions that take over in the final phase before muscle failure. The weak and imperceptible pulse, the typical scene of shock is caused by "blood-thermodynamics"; that is to say that the dog falls, lets go, or dies because of anoxia (total decrease in the level of oxygen, an extreme form of hypoxia or "low oxygen"), a general asphyxiation of the muscle tissues caused by the inability to meet the demands for oxygen that the muscle combustions require during exertion; the elimination of water vapor necessary to maintain his body temperature in ranges compatible with life; as a consequence there is a flood of incomplete oxidations (toxic factor) in the blood, histamines and other similar products, that act upon the production centers of the bone marrow, which in turn cause the failure of the peripheral capillaries with the animal succumbing to shock.

This is the one and only reason why the dog needs to breathe through the mouth during fatigue and why I insist for the need of a sufficient mouth in the DOGO ARGENTINO.





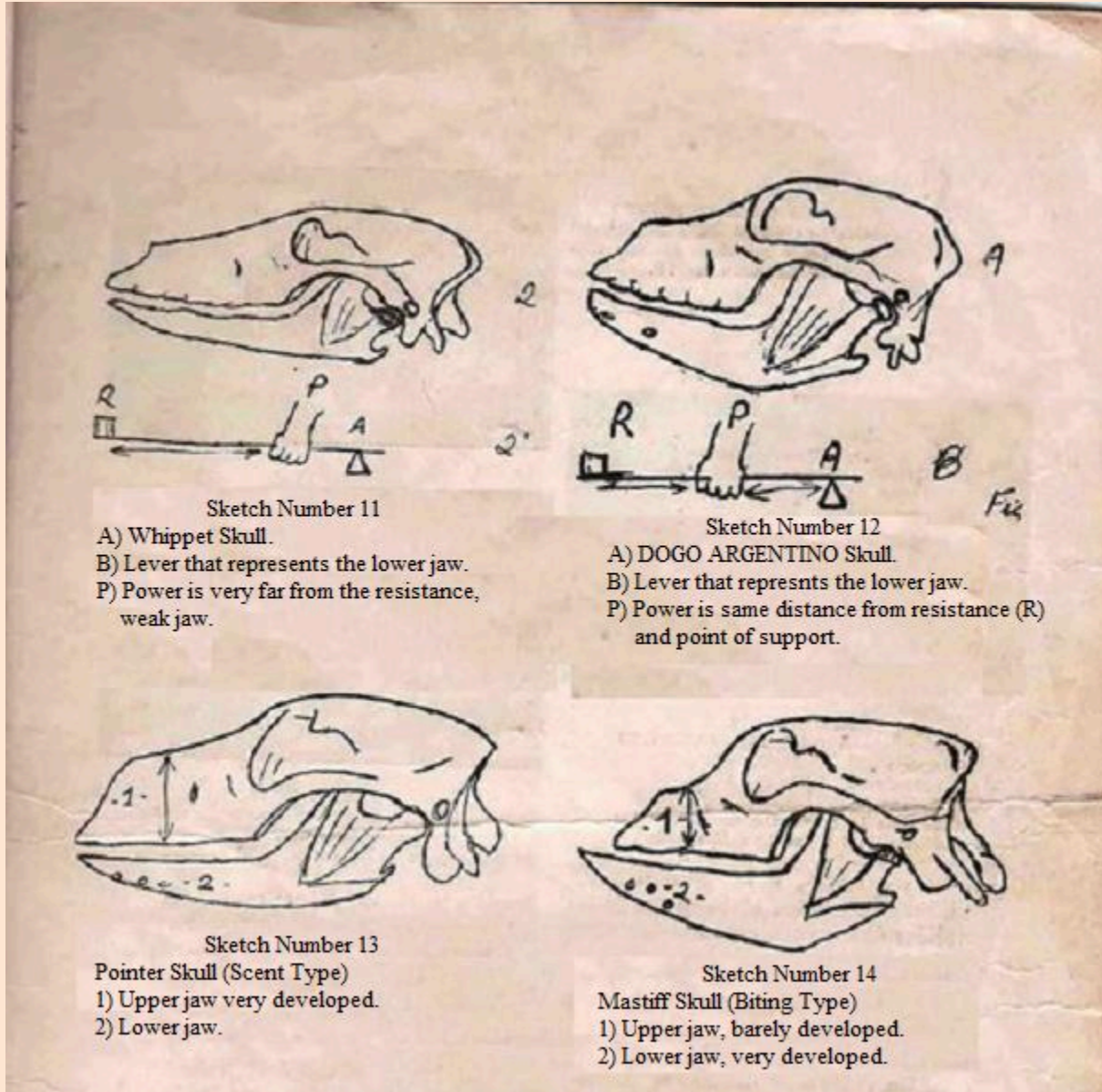
Neither should the upper jaw be longer than the skull, because of the loss of power, as the bottom jaw acts like a lever when closing, whose point of support is the temporomandibular joint, the power being generated by the angle of the jaw, where the muscles of mastication (temporal, masseter (the round muscles on the jaw that look like cheeks), etc.) are inserted. The border of the teeth is the place of resistance; so that the closer the source of power is to the resistance, the stronger the lever is, and if this distance is longer the weaker it is, as happens, for example, in the different varieties of sight hounds. (Sketches 10 and 11) and (Figures 10 and 11).

For this reason, I have set the skull of the DOGO ARGENTINO in this proportion of equal lengths, between the cranial bone and the face. (Sketch 12)

Amongst canine skulls, scenting hounds show a stronger development of the upper jaw, not at the cost of the compact bone tissue, but because of the greater capacity of the nostrils and the sinus cavities, that is to say they have a "scenting type" skull (Sketch 13); on the other hand in gripping dogs (presa dogs) the bottom jaw predominates, like the Mastiff, Boxer, Bull-dog, etc., in

which there is an atrophy of the sense of smell and the upper jaw, that is to say, they have a “biting type” skull (Sketch 14).

This phenomenon is within the known principal of general biology, stated over a century ago by Jofroi de Saint Hilaire, as the “Law of Compensations”, and before that by Viola, as the “Law of Animal Structure Antagonism”, that says: “When a certain organ develops to a greater degree, another related organ suffers an involution.”

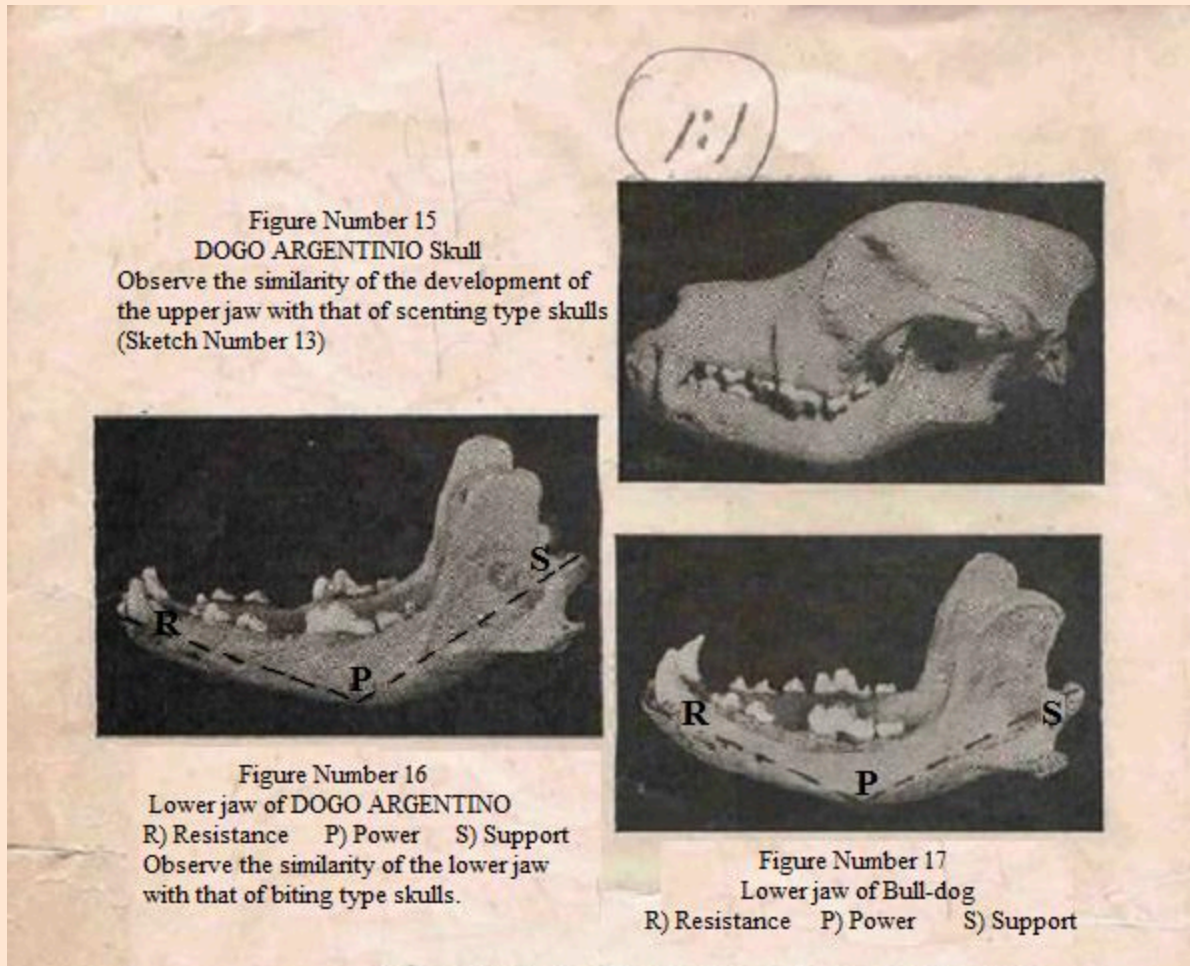


Taking into account this detail of the morphology of the facial and cranial bones of the different breeds, I have sought to harmonize these two extremes of

“olfactory” and “masticator” in the DOGO ARGENTINO, to obtain a general utility breed, as can be observed in Figures 15, 16, and 17.

One can frequently read in the standards of dog breeds about references to dolichocephalic (long headed) and brachycephalic (broad headed) skulls; these terms can only be used because of their accepted common usage, but technically they are anatomically incorrect, because all canine skulls are dolichocephalic, meaning that they are always longer than wide. What happens is that when the skull is covered with its soft tissues, according to the development of the mastication muscles the skull appears wider or longer, and skull length is confused with muzzle and face length.

For comparison we have taken as our base the morphology of the facial region of the bulldog's skull, considering it the mother breed of all gripping breeds (las de presa). As far as the breed the Bull-terrier, the light weight combat dog, it has in the make-up of its facial region of the skull, the misfortune of having the mass of the facial bone (face and muzzle) longer than the length of the skull, and as a consequence has less power in the bottom jaw even though they may have greatly developed mastication muscles. These observations of the different parts of canine skulls, are only valid when they are accompanied by a very powerful muscular system, that is to say, amongst dogs that have equally strong muscles, there is more efficiency in the dog that has a bottom jaw that is the same length as the total length of the two halves that make up the mass of the facial bone and the skull.



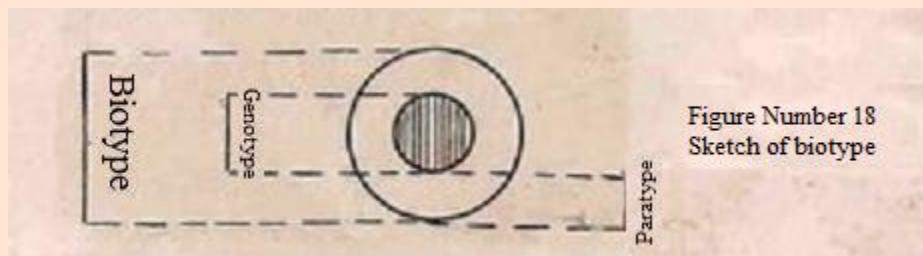
THE CANINE BODY:

In general dogs are classified according to length, those that are longer are called “longilineal” or dolichomorphs, shorter dogs are called “brevilineal” or brachymorphs, and finally those that maintain harmony in their proportions are called mesomorphs or normal types.

According to size, they can be microtalic or small size, mesotalic or medium size, and macrotalic or large size.

I am convinced that the gripping dog (perro de presa) as an athlete, should adhere to this tenet: from a morphological point of view, it should be harmonious in proportion; from a functional point of view it should be eurythmical (the word eurythmy stems from Greek roots meaning beautiful or harmonious rhythm), in other words because of the normal organic correlation of the macrotalic’s greater capacity for strength, I have tried to make the DOGO ARGENTINO a mesomorph or normal-type and macrotalic (large size), giving preference to those of greater size, in this way the DOGO ARGENTINO,

because of its weight, defeats lighter combat dogs. As far as larger dogs, the DOGO ARGENTINO defeats them because of quality. The biotype of an individual can be represented with two concentric circles (Figure Number 18), the inside circle or genotype which is hereditary and the outside circle or paratype which is the result of training and the environment. The genotype of the DOGO ARGENTINO is that of a gripping dog (perro de presa); all you need to do is remember the breeds that are in its roots: Bull-Dog, Bull-terrier, Great Dane, Boxer, Mastiff, etc. and the paratype is also the synthesis of many generations which were trained for fighting and combat, thus fulfilling the formula set forth by Dr. Agustín Nores Martínez in his article: “Ancestral Hereditary and Functional Fitness of the Dog”, Diana Magazine, November 1944, which as a base for the improvement of canine breeds, is expressed with the following formula: (F. + M.) X E. That is to say, father plus mother times education or functional fitness. This formula is valid for all species, because it is a genetic law, whose result is: Heredity plus Education.



STANDARD OF THE DOGO ARGENTINO:

SKULL: Massive, convex both lengthwise and widthwise due to the relief (bulge) of the mastication muscles and muscles of the neck.

FACE: Of the same length as the skull, that is to say that the line that joins the processus (protrusions) of the eye sockets of the frontal bone should be the same distance from the occipital as the alveolar ridge of the upper jaw is from the processus of the eye sockets of the frontal bone.

EYES: Dark, protected with eyelids rimmed with black or light colored skin. The separation between the eyes should be great, with an alert and intelligent gaze, but at the same with a pronounced hardness.

JAWS: Well adapted, without prognathism, strong with large, well implanted teeth.

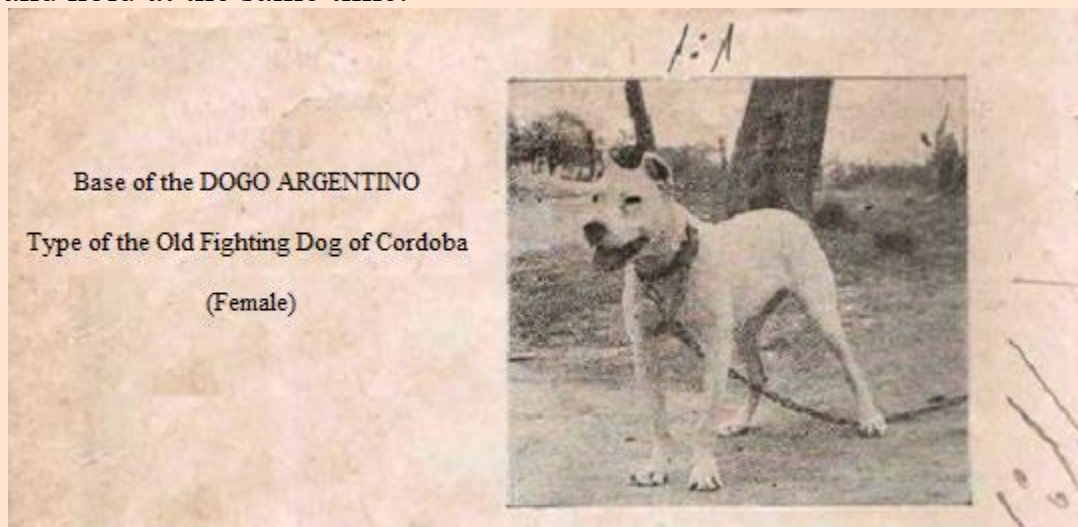
NOSE Strongly pigmented in black, with a slight stop at the end. Ample nostrils.

EARS: On top of the head; erect or semi-erect of triangular shape. They should always be presented cropped.

LIPS: Very short (the word “arremangado” literally means “rolled up sleeves“), tight, with free edges pigmented in black. Very short lips are demanded, so that when the dog is holding, he can breathe through the corner of his lip. If the lip is pendulous, even though the jaw is long enough, the lip turns into a valve cover when inhaling and closes the corner of the lips. This impedes the animal’s supplementary breathing through the mouth during gripping, having to let go due to asphyxiation like happens with the Mastiff.

OCCIPITAL: There should be no relief at the base of the skull because the powerful neck muscles cover it completely, the head and neck join in the form of an arch.

NECK: Thick, arched, yet elegant, with very thick skin around the throat, making wrinkles like the Mastiff and not tight like the bull terrier. The elasticity of the neck skin owes to the cellular tissue being very lax, this allows the skin to slide along the fascia near the surface in such a way that the tusk, fang, or claw of the adversary only wounds the skin and if it is another dog that tries to grab the neck, because the skin is elastic and stretches a lot it allows the dogo to also grab and hold at the same time.



CHEST: Ample and deep, giving the impression of big lungs. Seen from the front, the sternum should extend below the elbows.

SHOULDERS/WITHERS (“espalda” which can translate to “back” or “shoulders”): High, very strong, of great muscular relief.

THORAX: Ample, seen from the side it extends past the elbows.

BACK (top line): Higher at the withers and smoothly sloping to the croup. Adult animals that have well developed muscles along the back and kidneys when seen in profile look like an armchair and have a channel along the length of the spine, owing to the relief of the spinal muscles.

FRONT LEGS: Straight and very (bien) plumb, (vertical and perpendicular with the ground); with short, very tightly closed together toes.

KIDNEYS: Covered by the dorsal muscles

REAR LEGS: Very muscular thighs, short hocks, with short very tightly closed together toes, without dewclaws.

TAIL: Long, raised in an arch, of ample curvature upwards. During combat the tail is raised in constant lateral movement, like when the dog greets his owner. The length should try to be shortened to improve the harmony of the overall build of the dog, for which reason preference should be given to those specimens whose tails do not reach the hock.

COAT: Completely white. The only tolerable spot is a dark or black one around the eye or on the head in front of the ears. All other spots on any part of the body must be disqualified as an atavistic trait. Dogos with white coats, but with skin that is very pigmented with black, should be considered as specimens not suitable for breeding because of the recessive trait that can become predominate in offspring if coupled with another specimen that has a dominant pigmentation defect.

DISQUALIFICATIONS: Light blue eyes; deafness; spots on the body; long hair; white nose; prognathism; pendulous lips, all bodily disproportions.

CONCLUSION

With this brief outline of our work, which we carried out with determined intentions over the last twenty-five years, the reader will have formed an

approximate idea of what we have sought to achieve and have obtained with the “Dogo Argentino”; in its formation we have guided ourselves both with the scientific medical teachings to which we have dedicated our lives, as well as our enthusiasm towards our great friend, the dog, whom since our childhood we have learned to admire because of their unsurpassable qualities of loyalty, selflessness, and courage.

Thus we can say unequivocally, that we have satisfactorily achieved our proposed outcome. There is no doubt that a new breed, completely different from the known breeds up until this time, has been definitively established.

Studying the origins of some of the European and North American breeds, we find that some of them have been created in fifteen or twenty years by crossing already established breeds, but it has almost always been commercial reasons that inspired these breeders. They worried more about the physical or somatic aspects than the moral qualities, hence those specimens without courage, those that are very excitable or victims of true neurosis that commonly appear amongst breeds that generally are of great use, but extremely dangerous because of the failures that we often say is the result of a “bad upbringing“, but that in reality is the result of the atavistic laws that relentlessly fulfill themselves, because nature will not be mocked.

Through the careful selection of “genotype” and “paratype” (see Figure 18) we have been able to achieve a “biotype” that is characterized by its outstanding moral qualities. My dogs are now in the north tropics (Formosa and Chaco) as well as in the deep south in the territories of Chubut, Neuquen, Rio Negro and the Pampas. Everywhere that they were subjected to hard trials, they responded satisfactorily to our efforts and the honesty with which we have created this new breed, whose qualities, origin, and standard we present today to the aficionados of this country, by the gracious request of the Hunters Club of Buenos Aires, through the prestigious magazine “DIANA”, whom we thank for this opportunity.

The DOGO
ARGENTINO "Aña" in
combat with a five year
old Eurasian Boar, a
hard test which took
place last December in
Cordoba. He came out
victorious, as he
defeated the boar in
forty minutes, finishing
the fight in perfect
physical condition.

