

## THE ANGORA OR ANKARA CAT

By MRS. A. M. DICKIE

In the 1959 Year Book Joan Van Zele had an article entitled "Cats of Yesteryear". In this article she included the Angora. This cat was and is a native of the province of Angora (now Ankara) in Turkey. It is one of the oldest and purest of breeds. Early Angoras in this country were imported from England, though earlier specimens may have been brought in by traders.

Quoting from Helen Winslow's "Concerning Cats" published in 1900, the standard called for "a small head, with not too long a nose, large eyes that should harmonize in color with the fur, small, pointed ears with a tuft of hair at the apex, and a very full, fluffy mane around the neck — known as the lord mayor's chain. The body is longer than that of the ordinary cat in proportion to its size, and is extremely graceful, and covered with long, silky hair, which is crinkly like that of the angora goat. This hair should be as fine as possible and not woolly. The legs are of moderate length but look short on account of the length of hair on the body. Little tufts growing between the toes indicate high breeding — The tail is long and like an ostrich plume. It is usually carried, when the cat is in good spirits, straight up, with the end waiving over toward one side. — The suppleness of the Angora's tail is also a sign of high breeding. A high-bred Angora will allow its tail to be twisted without apparent notice of the performance." Apparently, at that time, blue was the favorite color, especially when mixed with white.

Two other, older books add little to our knowledge of the Angora. The standards are similar. Robert Kent James in his book "The Angora Cat" published in 1898 refers to the bib as "the Queen Elizabeth ruffle". He states that the original Angora came in only three colors — white, black and buff. Scientific breeding cre-

ated the many colors popular at the turn of the century. Judges preferred solid colors but "the fancy of the people" was for the mixed colors.

The following point system for judging Angoras is given in the James book and attributed to Huidekoper (and I wish someone could tell me who he was):



Angora (Ankara) Cats

Length of fur	20	Color	10
Quality of fur	15	Head	5
Frill	12	Eyes	10
Tail	12	Size	6
	Condition	10	

Coat seems to have been paramount at this time.

Harrison Weir in his "Our Cats and All About Them" published in 1889 speaks of the favorite color of the Turks as being the blue-eyed white with orange-eyed blacks, slates and blues being also esteemed. Light fawns (creams?), deep reds and mottled greys were also desirable. In England at that time there were also a few smokes.



Napoleon the Great. Reprints from  
1959 Year Book

Mr. Weir reports that Angoras were mentioned by writers of 100 years before but I have not been able to lay my hands on the works of any of these writers. He also mentions seeing whites at least forty years previous to his writing.

I think that most Persian breeders of today believed as I did that the Angora was extinct. So often spectators would exclaim at my beautiful "Angoras" and I would explain that my cats were Persian, a breed developed long ago from the crossing of Angoras and the long-haired cats of Persia.

Imagine my surprise to read in "CATS Magazine" of February 1966 and then again this spring that a Colonel Grant and his wife had brought back from Turkey two pairs of unrelated Angoras, or Ankaras (one pair in 1962 and the second in 1966). I made up my mind then that a trip to Alexandria, Virginia would be a "must" when next I went East. Colonel Grant forestalled me and moved to California and from him I got the story of these cats.

Threatened with hybridism and/or extinction they were rescued by the Ankara Zoo and a carefully stocked number of them have lived there and been carefully bred for at least eight years to the Grants' knowledge. The Zoo only preserved the three eye-colors of whites—blue, amber and odd-eyed. At first the cats were numbered but later were given names. Not being familiar with the rules of the cat fancy or, probably never thinking that the cats would be anything but pets, a pedigree consists only of the names of the sire and dam, and all papers are written in Turkish!



A White Angora

From their four cats the Grant's now have the fifth generation in one instance and the third in the other. As with the Burmese and the Korats (who were worse off since they had, in the case of the Burmese only Wong Mau and in the case of the Korats only two—brother and sister from a brother and sister mating) a certain amount of line breeding and in-breeding will be necessary before the Ankara population can provide sufficient cats for other breeders and for the market that is certain to occur when these cats are known to the general public. It is hoped that there will soon be enough unrelated, pedigreed Angora cats for all interested breeders and that our associations will accept them as what they are—a most beautiful, purebred cat.

Editor's Note:

1. Joan Van Zele's article, The Angora (from Cats of Yesteryear) CFA Year Book 1959. Napoleon was an Imported French Angora owned by Mrs. Charles Weed, Woodhaven, N. Y. It was valued at \$5000.
2. Ibid.