



THE HISTORY OF THE ORIGIN OF KARAKUL SHEEP

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Summary. The article provides information on the time and condition of the origin of karakul sheep, an analysis of the facts given in scientific and literary sources on the creation of karakul breed of sheep.

Key words: karakul sheep, breed, history, selection, desert

Karakul sheep are a unique breed of sheep adapted to the extreme climatic conditions of the desert region. They are a valuable breed of sheep that is adapted to grazing on sandy, gypsum and saline pastures, in areas unsuitable for other agricultural purposes in our country, in drought conditions, and are hardy, and they produce karakul skins of all colors that exist in the rainbow under the same climatic conditions.

At the same time, karakul skins, with their rainbow-like attractiveness of color and variegation, the elegance of their flowers, and their beautiful pattern, have attracted the attention of buyers with high aesthetic taste since ancient times and are a strategically important commodity that determines the socio-economic status of the Uzbek people.

The origin of the Karakul sheep has caused many disputes and discussions, as well as scientific research, and stands out among agricultural animals.

Let's analyze the data on the origin of the Karakul sheep, which has caused much controversy. When it comes to the origin of sheep, it is important to remember that the wild ancestors of sheep were domesticated 8,000 years ago.

The antiquity of the Karakul breed and its creation in the territory of present-day Uzbekistan is evidenced by the writings of the Arab traveler Ibn Hawkal (939-978), who visited Khorezm in the 10th century, in his book "Geography of the East". He was delighted with the beauty and charm of the skins of Karakul lambs, which were then obtained in Central Asia, and in 978 he wrote the following: ... in no other country in the world are there such rams, their ewes give birth to six or seven lambs, like dogs. The local population of Turkestan and Khorezm slaughter more than two lambs left in the bosom of a rich ewes and use their skins, because these skins are red and dark red. Depending on the color, one skin is sold for prices from ¼ dinar to 2 dolaks and even more. Some of the black skins found among them are sold for two dinars or more for their purity and beauty of color. Ten skins of colors other than red or black are valued at one dirham or so. When I asked the reason for this, they told me that the sheep were driven to pasture day and night, that the local climate was favorable for the animals, and that it strengthened the health of the sheep and increased the purity of the color. Since all the details are clearly visible, they do not need evidence, they "confirm the truthfulness" of the picture. (Taken from the book *Magfial po istorii Turkmen v Turkmenskiy*, 1t M.L. 1939). Thus, it is certain that Ibn Khavkal did not see such sheep and lambs not only in his homeland, but also in any other continent or country of the world.

This information by Ibn Khavial is one of the valuable literary sources that clarify the disputes about the time and place of the formation of the characteristics of the Karakul breed.

The portrait of Shota Rustaveli wearing a Karakul hat (XII century), attributed to the poet Mehesh Khojandi (Ganjavi), can be another reliable source confirming the antiquity of the Karakul breed.

During archaeological excavations conducted in the territory of the ancient Persian capital of Personnel in 500 BC, artifacts were found depicting rams with tails and horns similar to those of modern Karakul rams. This similarity indicates the genealogical connection between ancient and modern sheep. The presence of curls on the body of these sheep indicates that their skin showed Karakul signs (P.V. Evit, 1943).

Another proof of the antiquity of this breed is that Durst (quoted by E.A. Bogdanov in 1913) compared the skulls and bones of sheep found in archaeological excavations with the skulls and bones of Karakul sheep, and the origin of this breed dates back to 6000-7000 BC (Turkestan).

An important evidence that Karakul sheep were created in Central Asia is the fact that the skins of lambs of sheep breeds bred in any region or country in ancient times did not have the characteristic Karakul flowers.

Karakul sheep were bred in ancient times in Asia Minor and brought to Central Asia by Arab conquerors (Sinitsin 1900, Adamets 1930).

Karakul sheep were bred in ancient times in the territory of present-day Uzbekistan (V.I. Stoyanovskaya, 1966; M.F. Ivanov, 1935; Duret 1936)

I.N. Dyachkov (1980) puts forward the idea that the Karakul characteristics of lambs arose as a result of a mutation process and their firm establishment in the animal heredity occurred as a result of targeted selection and mating carried out by humans, and believes that the formation of the Karakul breed took place in the Karakul principality of the Bukhara Emirate in the 18th-19th centuries.



Picture 1. Karakul sheep

Researchers have always been interested in obtaining information about the origin and evolution of the Karakul sheep breed, as well as information about the history of animal breeds created through local selection over many years.

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