



PREFACE

« I wish everyone to see how beautiful a well-cared-for cat is, and how docile, gentle [...] Why should not the cat that sits purring in front of us before the fire be an object of interest, and be selected for its colour, markings, and form ? »

Harrison Weir, 1889

We owe the first cat breeds to the British, more precisely to Harrison Weir, famous animal artist, inquiring intellectual and cat lover. In order to pay homage to the English cats, beautiful but often ill-treated, and to arouse his contemporaries' curiosity about the beauty of all cats, he organized the first feline show on July 16th, 1871 in the Crystal Palace, London. He had to invent everything: show categories, breeds description, judgment scale, awards... He even borrowed cages from a club of pigeon breeders! The success of that exhibition, which was renewed every year so as to become a must, exceeded his expectations. Harrison Weir received dozens of letters asking how one could recognize a tortie cat, how to describe a blue tabby cat or even advice on proper cat food or how to avoid sofa scratching!

Harrison Weir then had the idea to publish the notes he had collected through the years in a book entitled: "Our cats and all about them: their Varieties, Habits, and Management; and for show, the Standard of Excellence and Beauty" (1). A moving sum on cats, their beauty and intelligence, but also a selection book where, for the first time, the description of what the ideal cat should be was listed. It also was a true plea for the recognition that all cats – purebred or not – deserve. That was 120 years ago.

(1) H. Weir, Our Cats and all about them, London, 1889



Since then, purebred cats have conquered all continents, first across the Atlantic Ocean to reach the United States and coming back to Europe to gain it totally.

Then they went to Asia, Japan first, then to Australia, New Zealand, South Africa...

From ten at the beginning of the XXth Century, there are now more than 60 cat breeds, and still today, new varieties, new colours are discovered and selected thanks to the breeders' work.

The standards guide that you are holding is the contemporary heritage of the work initiated by Harrison Weir. A collaboration between the actors of cat breeds selection (breed clubs, breeders and judges), it is a reference tool meant for morphological selection of the better subjects. However, we should keep in mind that beauty cannot exist without the two other elements that condition respectful breeding: health and behaviour.

We wish you a pleasant reading.

LOOF standards commission.