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Aschir

Purebred Akhal Teke (Mazan elite x Ataka elite)



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Sire of highest placed European bred stallion at European International breed show 2009.

Has produced well coloured, metallic palomino and buckskin foals

For more information on Aschir or our other Akhal Tekes

please contact

Ajdarha Akhal Teke

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HORSE MUSEUM GALLOPS INTO FOCUS

Caroline Baldock *brings us up to date with events*

WHO

Caroline Baldock has been collecting equine related articles for over 25 years. Her objective is to establish a Museum of the Horse in Great Britain. She set out to campaign by putting together a website, www.museumofthehorse.org, that shows her extensive collection of artifacts along with interesting articles and a cartoon horse called Fergus. There is also a poetry section and a journal and travel section. The website is still under development and is a work in progress.

Caroline's career has taken her from racing, as one of England's first professional female flat jockeys, to literary assistant to Monty Roberts. She spent many years with J. A. Allen at the Horseman's Bookshop in London, during which time she met many of the horse world's characters.



Caroline's quest recently took her to Downing Street in the guise of Lady Godiva

WHY

Caroline firmly believes that we owe it to the horse and to horsemen to record the journeys they have taken, physically, intellectually and spiritually. Horse and man have travelled through time together from travel and war to toil, sport, pleasure and companionship. The story of those journeys deserves a place to rest, an institute where exhibits, records and information can be held in safekeeping for future generations. We are living in a time when much horse knowledge will be lost to future generations if we don't act fast. The last veterans of the First World War have passed away, and Second World War veterans are now in their eighties. We have a responsibility to record material, conserve archives and work with the traditional trades associated with the horse. There is a story to tell here, a story that needs to be kept alive from generation to generation. A story of service, companionship, prowess in sport, service and war. The horse has been there for us for over two thousand years. It's time to record for posterity his role in our society.

HOW



Caroline Baldock has a committee which is working together to address the challenge of finding a site, and/or finding a patron. Caroline has proved she can set up exhibitions and is looking for site that can incorporate stables and possibly an indoor school and exhibition space with offices and outbuildings with land. It sounds like a tall order but strangely this is not a difficult specification to fill. There is no shortage of such sites. Caroline is still running a petition on her website www.museumofthehorse.org.

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MOAB ADVENTURE

Jas Shearer-McMahon and Patrickhan *report on 160 miles at the Moab Canyons Endurance Ride, Utah*



I left home on Tuesday morning to try and beat the storms over the passes and that worked well. I did encounter some rain and snow showers along I-70, but nothing too severe and we arrived at camp just before 5 PM with a brisk wind out of the northwest. I got Patrick all settled in in his pen with lots of hay and water for the night. Sometime around 10 or so, it started snowing and the winds increased and when I stepped out of the trailer at 5:30 AM Wednesday morning, there was about 5" of snow on the ground and the water buckets were frozen. It never got very warm, and when I was asked if I wanted to go to Moab for breakfast with some friends, I jumped at the chance! After a warm

and leisurely breakfast, we drove through Arches National Park and hiked into Devil's Garden which was pretty impressive with all of the stone arches and weird stacked rock outcroppings. We got back to camp about 2:00 and I took Patrick out for a couple mile walk to get him stretched and warmed up.

Thursday's ride was a 55 miler and it was COLD, but very scenic and ride management provided food for humans and horses at the Vet Check which was a one hour hold. We vetted right through, Patrick ate all he could during the hold and we finished at a little after 3 PM in about the middle of the pack which was my goal.

Friday morning was still overcast and with wind most of the day, we both managed to keep warm, Patrick with his rump rug all day and me with all of my layers.... I did get to take off my jacket for about 15 minutes in the afternoon before the wind kicked up again. Views were awesome and we rode through some cool canyons that had been used in a lot of John Wayne movies - you could just imagine the Cowboys and Indians hiding out in this country! Once again we finished in the middle of the pack and had a pretty good day except for when Patrick was sure we were going too slow and thought he should argue with me about our pace, right as we were crossing one of the longer areas of slickrock! As the days went on, I gained more confidence trotting across the rock. We had been told that as long as you did not cross sideways, the footing was secure and it really was.

Saturday morning was a little warmer and sunnier. I ended up riding all day with a woman from Berkley, CA who has ridden the Tevis 6 times and it was great hearing about all of her adventures and highs and lows on that trail! Since we were both riding horses that had already done 105 miles and the sand was getting pretty deep in the places where you retraced parts of the previous day's trail we rode very conservatively and still managed to finish about middle of the pack once again. I am so proud of my horse.... he is really built for this sport and I think after this three day ride he understands what he needs to do to get through that many miles. He had a hard time adjusting to there being nothing edible along the trail, he tried several plants, but none were grasses. Every other ride we have attended this season had ample grass at least somewhere along the way and he was getting good at grabbing a mouthful without having to stop. I did carry some complete pellets in my cantele bag and he thought those were OK in a pinch.

I think this ride was a perfect end for our ride season and I am pleased with what we accomplished in his first real season of Endurance.

I will definitely do the Moab Ride again and the only thing I would change would be hoping for the weather to be about 10 degrees warmer and no snow! It also would be nice to have a crew for this ride, so anyone who wants to volunteer for next year would be most welcomed!

Permission for photographs requested from [www. easycare.typepad.com](http://www.easycare.typepad.com)



ORIGINS OF THE RACEHORSE

Julia Kungu traces the history of the English Thoroughbred

The evidence for the 'original racehorse' is by no means conclusive, but the Akhal-Teke must have one of the strongest claims. Bred by the Turkman people of Central Asia, centred on the Akhal oasis on the edge of the Karakum desert, the breed may well go back three thousand years. The ancient origin of the Akhal-Teke was researched over a century ago in Russia showing the breed was well established long before any evidence of Arabian horses (long claimed as the ancestor of the thoroughbred) by Prof. V. Fisov ('Turkestan and the Turkestan Horse Breeds' published in the 'Journal of Horse Breeding' in 1895).

In Chinese legend Turkman horses were known as 'Heavenly Horses'. Writings from the first millennium BC recorded their fame as '....divine and supernatural steeds'.



This Han dynasty (c200 BC) bronze horse shows the distinctive head carriage of the Akhal-Teke.



This Pazyryk felt artefact illustrates a strong likeness to the modern Akhal-Teke.

Closely related horses have been excavated from burial mounds at Pazyryk in eastern Siberia near the Mongolian border, which date back 2,500 years (V. Burdon, 'Horse & Driving' magazine, 1985).

While there are many ancient reports about the Central Asian horses there is no mention of horse breeding in Arabia. For example, Herodotus tells us that the Arabs following the army of the Persian king Xerxes in 490 BC were mounted on camels, not horses. The Assyrian king Tiglath Pileser, who fought the Arabs in 733 AD, captured only camels and horned cattle, but no horses. Horses are mentioned in poems and historical reports by Arab writers, but written about as rarities. Those present in Arabian countries were usually brought from other countries: e.g. in the year 350 AD the emperor Constantine I sent 200 Cappadocian horses as a gift to the Yemen.

Horse breeding was not established until the times of Islam (around 630 AD) when the army of the prophet Mohammed recognised the superiority of the horse as a war animal. Horses captured during the wars allowed the Arabs to establish their own breeding programme. Many of these horses were from Central Asia. Indeed in the opinion of experts on the Arabian breed (K. Raswan, E. Schile and others) the Mu'niqi strain with its taller size, more angular lines and higher speed owes much to the Turkman breed. Similarly the Russian expert O.A. Balahshin has recognised Akhal-Teke characteristics in the Syrian Arabs. The evidence clearly indicates that Arabian horses have been strongly influenced by the Akhal-Teke rather than the other way around as suggested by some modern writers. Indeed it would be unlikely that the Turkmans would have used horses inferior in height and speed to breed into their long established lines. The Danish traveller Karston Nibur, who was in Arabia and Turkey at the end of the 18th Century, wrote: 'The Turks do not highly respect the Arabian horses, they prefer to have tall, impressive horses under the saddle, which look utmost impressive with their splendid adornment'. According to reports by European travellers until the beginning of the 20th Century the best horses in the stables of the Sultan of Istanbul were Akhal-Tekes bought from Turkmenistan.

The 18th Century saw the beginning of the English Thoroughbred, with two of the three progenitors of the breed, the Darley Arabian (1704) and the Byerley Turk (1689) showing a strong physical resemblance to



This life size painting of the Darley Arabian shows a 15hh horse more akin to the Akhal-Teke than the Arab.



Similarly the Byerley Turk resembles the Akhal-Teke

the Akhal-Teke. Descendants of these two sires, Lord Oxford's Dun Arabian and Darcy's Yellow Turk, were buckskin and palomino respectively, which are both common colours in Akhal-Teke breeding but absent from the Arabian.



Another colour shunned by Arab breeders, dun, can be observed in a 1714 painting by John Wootton entitled 'Lord Oxford's Dun Arabian, illustrating a racehorse with clear Turkman traits.

Clearly much misunderstanding on the origin of the Thoroughbred has arisen from the practice of calling every horse of eastern extraction 'Arabian'. Further evidence for a strong Turkman influence comes from great similarities between old English and Turkman training and competing systems: working under blankets, early breaking of horses etc. The Arabs have nothing similar, and this approach may have come to England with the Turkman trainers who accompanied their horses.

Clearly there are strong arguments for the Turkman Akhal-Teke to have been an influence in the formation of two other pure breeds, the Arab and the English Thoroughbred. Both breeds should be proud of this heritage.

*Meanwhile, the breeding of the Turcoman horse itself is the subject of ongoing debate. **Maria Marquise Baverstock** examines the concept of "purity" in her website article "Purity- Fact or Fiction", to which she gives this introduction...*

ASYL OR ALASHA?



The concept of purity stems from the Turkmen tradition itself where two terms exist to distinguish between a purebred ("asyl") and a partbred ("alasha").

The Turkmen tribes were nomadic and did not have writing. The first Akhal-Teke studbook was compiled by the Russian Cavalry officers, stationed on the frontiers of the Russian Empire after the annexation of Central Asia: they came across the few remaining original Turkmen horses and, with the aid of the Central Government grant, succeeded in setting up in 1897 the Transcaspian Stud. By quizzing the Turkmen elders about pedigrees, they were able to record these into the first hand-written studbook.

The first printed volume of the studbook was published in 1941, based on the now-lost two hand-written volumes. The introduction to this volume states: "Akhal-Teke horses with less than 25% of English TB blood are accepted into the current studbook. Subsequently, only those horses whose parents are in volume 3 can be inscribed".

During the 1930s a lot of cross-breeding had taken place in Turkmenistan where collective farms were encouraged to experiment, to produce a bigger and better horse for the Soviet Cavalry. The famed 1935 ride from Ashkhabad to Moscow was organised as a comparative test of stamina of pure- versus partbreds, a contest which purebreds won. It took many years after the Second World War, and the efforts of devout breed fanatics such as V.P. Shamborant, to weed out the horses with "English" blood from the Akhal-Teke Studbook.

The main driver for adding TB blood back into the breed in the more recent past has been racing speed. In his Open Letter, published on Odnoklassniki.ru (a kind-of a Russian Facebook!) Geldy Kiarizov, who himself is strongly opposed to cross-breeding, writes:

"As soon as we relax, the influx of cross-breeding returns with a vengeance... This situation is an affront to those who have dedicated several decades of their lives to this breed... a whole new category of private breeders has emerged in Turkmenistan and the whole breed is now saddled with their lack of taste and sense of responsibility... De facto, the breed is split: I do not mean geographical divide, nor the quality of horses, nor the division by bloodlines. I am talking about the division between purebred horses - asyl, and the partbreds - alasha."

Do we, Akhal-Teke owners in the West, care who the Turkmen punters choose to spend their money on? Yet for the key breeders of Akhal-Tekes in Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan this is a painful subject, inspiring heated public exchanges.

You can read about the ins-and-outs of this debate in an article entitled "Purity – Fact or Fiction?" on the Akhal-Teke UK website <http://www.akhaltekeuk.com/Purity.html>