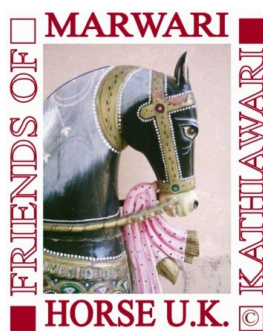


The Origin of the Marwari and Kathiawari Horse Breeds

By Beverley Davis

October 2010



Historical Report Commissioned by
'Friends of Marwari / Kathiawari Horse UK'

Affiliated to the Indigenous Horse Society of India

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"There are three things you must never ask of a Rajput;
his horse, his mistress and his sword"

TIMELINE

Before Common Era

6000 - 4000 BCE – Time period in which the horse was domesticated by the Indo-Iranians and Celtic peoples. Centum-Satem languages.

3700 – 3100 BCE – A burial mound in Northern Kazakhstan shows evidence of being among the earliest known keepers of domestic horses. The remains in the grave show a connection to the Indo-Aryans.

3000 BCE – petroglyphs in Armenia show oldest artwork depicting men with horses and chariots.

2200 – 2000 BC – A settlement near Samara on the Sok River. A powerful man is buried with horse and sheep heads. A second man is killed and decapitated. A horse head is buried in place of his own. *This echoes the Rig-veda story of Dadhyanc Atharvan who learned how to make mead from honey. The Ashvins desired to know the secret, but when the man would not tell him, they replaced his head with a horse's head.*

2000 BCE – Elamites first mention a chariot/horse people named the Kassites, believed to be an Indo-Iranian people.

1900–1800 — Indo-European horsemen arrive in Asia Minor. King Anittas of the Hittites follows and sacks the cities of the indigenous people, including Hattusas, an important Hatti city. Prior to this time there were no domestic horses in Asia Minor, the Middle East, or Africa.

1620–1590 — Hittites and Kassites are allies during the reign of Hittite king Murcilis, a man bent on conquering as much land as possible. Babylon falls to him, but he leaves it in the hands of the **Kassites, who introduce the first horses into Babylon.**

- Kassite king Mursilis I is created with sacking Babylon.

1500 BCE – Indo-Aryans arrive in Pakistan and **Northern India**. *(Related to the Mittani of the Middle East who were famous horse breeders and charioteers. Mittani name for chariot warriors was maryanna or marijannina, a form of the Indolranian term mary meaning young man. Used in the Rig-veda when referring to the Celestial warriors assembled around the Vedic deity Indra)* Mittani arrive in the Middle East and ally with Egypt; Wassukkani is their capital. The famous black horses of Nefertiti were probably Mittani.

— **Horses are introduced into northern India at this time**, the beginning of the Vedic Era. **Mittani and Indian chariot horses belong to the same family.**

— Sometime between 1500 and 1450, King Shaushshatar of the Mittani loots the Assyrian city of Ashur, teaching its citizens the importance of the horse

1360 — After the death of Tushratta, last king of the Mittani, a war of succession leads to the Mittani becoming a part of the Hittite Empire. **Mittani and Hittite horses are crossed to produce a superior horse suitable for war**, chariot pulling, and racing.

1350 BCE – Kikkuli a Mittani horse trainer writes a text on chariot horse training. **Practices would have been similar in Northern India.**

1200 — Hattusas, the Hittite capital, is sacked and burned by “sea peoples,” probably Greeks. The era of the Hittite chariot horse is coming to an end.

- Horsemen arrive in China. Legendary Emperor Mu has a shaggy black horse that looks like a dog and runs away whenever people come near. The Chinese word for horse, *ma*, appears to be related to the English “mare,” the Irish *mark* (horseman), and Persian *maal* (workhorse). Archeological evidence seems to show that these first horsemen were the Tocharians, related to the Celts.

1170 — The Kassites disappear as a world power. In Persian times they raise great horses for the Shah of Persia and have dealings with Alexander III. The Elamites drive them into the Zagros Mountains.

1100 – 500 BC Vedic Periods. The Vedas tell of the warrior caste being associated with chariots. (It is interesting that the Vedic period begins with the end of the chariot peoples in the Middle East)

1074 — Tiglath Pilser I becomes the first great king of the Assyrian Empire. The need for horses drives him into the lands of the Indo-Iranian horse peoples and Armenia.

885 – Assurnasipal goes to the land of the Kirurri looking for horses.

860 — The Assyrians wage a merciless war of conquest against the **Arabs, who do not have horses at this time**. Tens of thousands of camels are slaughtered.

853 – Battle of Qarqar. The Assyrian army consisted of 1,200 chariots and a like number of cavalry, Ahab of Israel supplied 2,000 chariots but no cavalry, 10 chariots came with the troops from Irqanatu, 30 chariots from Sianu, and 1000 dromedaries of Gindibu of Arabia.

- **no horses in Arabia.**

710 — Cimmerians move out of the Ukraine into Central Asia and ally themselves with the Medes. Their art shows an Arabian-like mount. This alliance puts them at odds with Assyria's Scythian/Saka allies.

634 — Defeated by the Scythians, the Cimmerians ravage Phrygia and Lydia, taking horses with them.

625 — Cyaxares the Mede has a banquet and invites all the chieftains of Scythia to it. While they are drunk, he kills them and begins a war against Assyria.

614 — Cyaxares lays siege to Assur, an important Assyrian city, and captures it.

612 — The Medes, with the help of their Babylonian allies, capture Nineveh and put an end to the Assyrian Empire.

590 — Urartu falls to the Medes; Armenia is the Roman name for the region.

— The Scythians drive the Cimmerians out of Central Asia. There is a belief that some of the Cimmerians join up with the Huns and become the *Wu-sun* (*Wusun*), who are also known for the quality of their horses.

580 — Cyrus the Great comes to power in Persia and makes the Nisean the imperial horse of Persia. *Appaloosa, a color not found in Indian horses, is common in this breed. Of further interest Darius' father's name in Persian was Vishtaspa. Aspa is horse in Persian. The ancient connection between the Persian and Aryans has long been known by scholars.*

- Persian Empire extends as far as Gandhara.

508 – Gandhara, a part of the Bactrian administration becomes a separate Persian satrapy. *Horses from this region are paid as tribute to Persian rule.*

- Darius the Great starts looking eastward to India. He sends spies on a 30 month reconnoiter.

513 – Western India is conquered and becomes the satrapy of Hindukush. The name comes from the great Indus River (Sindhu in Sanskrit).

- **Northern Indian horsemen** and charioteers become a vital part of the Persian army. Hindukush is listed on the great wall of Darius as one of the satrapies ruled by Persia.

500 - **Kambojas the breeders of fine horses** are mentioned as independent rulers of a great Mahajanapada per Buddhist texts of 500 BCE

486 – Darius the Great passes away.

- Ariamenes, Xerxes' older brother, leaves the satrapy of Bactria and Ghandhara with the intent of seizing the throne. Xerxes placates his brother and keeps him loyal. *It is logical that some horsemen from Hindukush went with him.*

480 – 479 – Xerxes invades Greece. *Indians are listed among the cavalry units that accompany him. The majority of the Indian horse units ride horses, but the nobles still used chariots as a sign of their heritage. Herodotus states that there was an Arab camel unit, but that the Arabs had no horses.*

- June. Battle of Plataea. Persian cavalry commander General Mardonius uses hit and run tactics against Greek forces but is unable to topple Spartan led Greeks. He and the cavalry take on the Spartans.

-The Spartans who get the bulk of the horses in lieu of money and riches become famous racehorse breeders.

-while wintering in Thessaly, Xerxes white Nisean mares are stolen. The lay over of the Persian cavalry the winter before Plataea in Thessaly introduced

- Herodotus writes that in numbers the Indians were far greater than all the other people known to the Greeks. They paid the heaviest tribute – 360 talents of gold. Indian dogs (Mastiffs) were used in the army with four Babylonian villages set aside for their support. *Cavalry and infantry make up the bulk of the Indian army.*

400 – *Kambojas are regarded as a very salient Kshatriya tribe in Pāṇini's Ashtadhyayi of 400 BCE;*

334 – Alexander III invades Persia.

331, 30 September – Battle of Gaugamela. Persian and Indian cavalry were in the center with Darius III.

329 – 330 – Bessus, satrap of Bactria, rules as Artaxerxes V. Fought very hard against Alexander III but in the end suffered a very ignoble fate at his hands. He is replaced by Spitamenes who keeps the fight for freedom from Macedonia going. His daughter Apame is married to Seleucus and is considered the mother of the Seleucid Empire.

As satrap of Bactria Bessus had Indian horsemen with him. Historical accounts were he had many mounted archers with him: Saka, Indian, Bactrian and Sogdian. Spitamenes operated out of Sogdiana with Dahae as allies.

327 – Alexander III defeats the last of the Persian forces and turns his eyes to India.



Bucephalus coin.

Could Alexander's battle stallion have been a Persian horse or a descendent of Indian chariot horses?

327 – Alexander III turns his attention to India. Invites the leaders of the various groups to submit to him and acknowledge him as Emperor.

- Ambhi of Gandhara submits. Some of the hill tribes, the Aspasioi (Ashvayanas) Assakenoi (Ashvakayanas) and sections of the Kambojas, refuse.

Ashva is Sanskrit for horse showing the equestrian nature of these first two tribes. These people were famous breeders of horses.

Buddhist texts speak of the Land of the Kambojas as the Land of Horses.

Several Texts refer to these people as breeders of fine horses.

- The Aspasioi of the Kunhar Valley put up a fierce fight and even wound Alexander. 40,000 are enslaved and their horses become a part of the Macedonian army.

- The Assakenoi face Alexander with 30,000 cavalry, 38,000 infantry and 30 war elephants. Alexander had to literally attack them in their strongholds in savage bloody fighting. When the chieftain of Massaga fell, his elderly mother took over the resistance which inspired the women to fight. Alexander had to raze the walls and slaughter everyone to put an end to the resistance.

- A similar slaughter followed at the Assakenoi city of Ora.

327 – 326 – Siege of Aornos, last Assakenoi stronghold taken.

326 - Battle of Hydaspes – between Alexander and Porus (Pururava in Sanskrit). 7,000 horsemen ride with Alexander including several Indian units. Porus has roughly 4,000 horsemen and 1,000 chariots. When Alexander returns to Syria, he *takes hundreds of Indian horses with him as prizes of war* and to replace the animals that he has lost.

324 – Chandragupta of the Mauryan Empire pushes the Macedonian garrisons out of Punjab and Sindh. Next he attacks the Kingdom Magadha which controlled the Ganges and conquers it. His army was composed of infantry, cavalry, chariots and war elephants. His cavalry is 30,000 strong. Overthrows the Nanda kingdom that had been created by Alexander III.

Departing Greeks would have taken Indian horses with them.

– the prime minister of Chandragupta Maurya also glorifies the war horses of the Kamboja Kshatriya to be the foremost among the best breeds of the known horses.

323 – Alexander dies in Babylon.



Chandragupta gold coin. The horse appears gaited.

305 – Seleukos Nikator invades the Punjab. Chandragupta kept the Punjab and annexed three rich Macedonian controlled provinces.

269 – Ashoka becomes emperor of Northern India. Is almost successful in conquering all of India. Regarded as a great and moral ruler. Had contacts with the Greeks. His army contains 10,000 chariots

221 – Qin Shi Huangdi becomes emperor of unified China. *Among the terra cotta chariot horses is one with ears almost touching.*

185 – Last Mauryan king assassinated by Pushyamitra Shunga

181 - Greco-Bactrian king Demetrius I invades Sunga lands in retaliation for the overthrow of the Mauryans. Demetrius seizes Arachosia, Gedrosia, Sindh, and the Punjab

180 – Demetrius goes through the Khyber Pass and conquers the North East region of India.

174 – An Indo-European people called the Tocharians (Yeuzhi by the Chinese) are defeated by Xiongnu and flee west.

145 – Saka driven west by the Tocharians destroy Alexandria-on-the-Oxus.

145–125 — Tocharians and Scythians (the Yüeh-chih [Yuezhi]) flee China ahead of marauding Huns. Their conquest of Bactria, still very Greek from the days of Alexander leads to the founding of the Kushan Empire. *Evidence is that Tocharian horses were gaited. One of the ancient breeds in the Marwari pedigree.*

130 – Sakas (Yeuzhi) destroyed the last of the Greco-Bactrian kingdoms

130 – 103 - *Kanishka is regarded as the greatest of the Kushana kings. Suffocated in his sleep for being Buddhist.*

73 – Indo-Parthian forces seize Gandhara from Indo-Greeks

70 – Scythians take on the Greco-Bactians and defeat them

65 – 64 – Phillip II Philoromaeus – Last Seleucid king.

58 – Azes I becomes king of the Sakas in India.

The original Saka horse was a tough long maned pony that most closely resembles the Mongolian pony. These horses would have been uninteresting to the horsemen of India.

30 – Chinese Text, the Shiji, chp.123 states the Yeuzhi have between 100,000 and 200,000 mounted horse archers.

7 – **Roman general reports no horses among the Arabs.**

~ * ~ * ~ * ~

After Common Era

68 – Beginning Kushan Empire from the Yeuzhi. Vima Takto conquers Gandhara (Kandahar) *Horses on Kushan coins may show ear curl.*



Vima Takto coin.



Herios coin



Adsho Carnelian

30 – 80 – Kahula Kadpha a Kushan prince unites the Yuezhi and becomes first emperor of the Kushan Empire. The Yuezhi are great horsemen.

99 — The Kushanas (Saka and Tocharians) send a delegation to Rome; Kushana horses become known in Rome.

105 – 250 – Kushan empire at its peak.

191 – 225 – Vasudeva rules the Kushans. Last great king of the Kushana empire.

224 – Ardasir revolts against Parthian rulers in Persia. Founds the Sassanid Empire of Persia.

241 – 272 – Rule of Shapur I. Attacks the Kushanans and captures their capital of Peshawar. Disposes of their nobles but does not destroy them.

309 – 379 – Shapur II wages war against the Kushanas, Arabs and White Huns.

320 – 335 – Chandragupta I rules Gupta Empire. Named King of Kings.
- It during the time of the Gupta Empire that the Puranas are written. *Within the text they name the Kamboja Kshatriya as being the finest horsemen with finest horses.*

335 – 375 - Samudragupta the Great rules the Gupta Empire in Northern India. Brings an end to the Kushan empire. *Kushana warriors and their horses are incorporated into the warrior caste of Northern India.*

337 – 361- Constantius II Emperor of Rome at Constantinople sends a gift of 200 Cappadocian racehorses to the Prince of Arabia Felix (Yemen) as an enticement to Arian Christianity. *Roman racehorses were a mixture of Spanish and Asian breeding. Syrian racehorses would be descended from the horses Alexander brought back from India.*

400 – Chandragupta II defeats the western Saka dynasties whose capital is at Gujarat. This ends Saka occupation in the Indian subcontinent.

420 - Hephthalites subjugate Transoxiana and invade Persia. *Believed to be the Wu-san from Chinese reports.* The Wu-san were famous in China for their fine horses.

427 - Sassanids win major victory over Hephthalites and drive them out of Persia.

454 - Hephthalites defeat the Sassanids and revenge their earlier loss.

470 - Hephthalites conquer the Kidarite Kingdom of Gandhara. Tegin (Toramana) becomes the Viceroy of this new realm, known in India as the Hunas

475 - Sassanids are again defeated by the Hephthalites and forced to pay tribute.

479 - Hephthalites conquer Sogdiana to the north, and Kashgar and Khotan to the east.

480 - Hunas under Tegin (Toramana) invade the Gupta Empire.

484 - Akshshunwar leads his White Huns against the Sassanids and kills Shah Peroz in battle. This gives them control of Merv and Herot.

490 — The White Huns invade India and destroy the Gupta Empire by 535.

500 - Hephthalite armies restore the Sassanid Emperor Kubad to the Persian throne. Meanwhile in India, the Gupta Empire has collapsed and Huna armies have overrun much of Northern India

508 - Hephthalites conquer Turfan and Karashar, giving them control over most of the Tarim Basin.

518 — Justinian comes to throne in Constantinople; he sets up imperial stud in Bythnia for Nisean horses and **begins a policy of giving horses to the Arabs** to kill Persians. The Persians retaliate in kind. (One pro-Persian Arab named al-Mundhir bragged about sacrificing 1,000 Christian virgins to his gods.) Horse racing is very important in Constantinople. *The giving of horses to slaughter each other is clearly being done by both sides and is how the Arabs acquired horses in numbers.*

522 - Hephthalites are at the height of their power. The majority of central Asia either is under direct Hephthalite control, or pays tribute.

528 - The Hunas are defeated in Malwa by Yasodvarman.

532 - A coalition of Indian kingdoms drives the Hunas from the plains of North India. *The cavalry units of Indian horses would by now be a thorough mixture of ancient Indian chariot horse, Nisean and Tocharian riding horse.*

561 -565 - The Sassanids under Chosroes II ally with the Gokturks of the Altai to destroy the Hephthalite Empire. Sogdiana, the land of the Heavenly Horse goes to the Turks.



Sogdian horses show clear relationship to Nisean horse of Persia.

632 - 651 — Sassanid shah Yazdgerd III is captured and killed by Arab Muslims at Marv. Surviving Persians flee to China (Tang dynasty). *Persian war horses were great prizes of war.*

- *As the great king Yazdgerd would have called upon all his people to help in defense of the empire.*

- *Immediately after the Arab conquest, the country came under the rulership of the Umayyad caliphs of Damascus and became part of the Islamic Caliphate.*

664 – First attack on India by Muslim conquerors of Persian Empire. Led by Al Muhallab ibn Abi Suffrah. Attacked Southern Punjab and came away with great wealth, horses and slaves.

711 – Muhammad Bin Qasim invades Northern India with the Sind and founds Pakistan.

738 – Battle of Rajasthan where the Rajputs drive the Arabs out of India. All captured Arabs land was divided among the various Rajputs clans. The Arabs had a cavalry of 20,000 to 25,000 horses and 2,000 camels. The Rajputs only had a cavalry of 2,000 to 5,000 horses.

751 – Battle of Talas between the Arabs and Chinese in Krygzstan for the fate of the Sogdians, allies and trade partners of Northern India. *The Turkish allies of China in the middle of the battle betray them. The Sogdians were famous breeders of the Nisean (Heavenly Horse of Ferghana) horse. These and other riding horse breeds, including Chinese horses, were taken as war prizes by the Arabs.*

800s – Arabs under Governor Bashar in Sind attempted another invasion of India. Crushed by Nagabhatta II. A naval expedition on Kathiawar by defeated by the Saindhava Rajputs.

836 – 910 – Gurjara-Pratihara Empire.

-Kambojas horsemen make up a part of the military unit.

- The Arabs praise the horses of the Gunjars and consider them their greatest foe.

1211 – 1225 – Genghis Khan conquers much of the old Persian Empire.

- One of his breeding horses introduces the pacing gait in the Mongolian breed. Only the horses of Northern India naturally paced.



Most of the horses in the painting on both sides were appaloosas, a color not allowed in the Marwari breed. The Persian horses are held as ancestors of the Arabian.

1236 – 1264 - King Narasimhadeva-I orders the building of the Sun Temple dedicated to the sun god Surya . Commemorates his victory over Muslim invaders



Kornak horse

1292 – Marco Polo arrives by ship in on the Coromandel Coast in Southern India. States that the ruler imports 2,000 horses from Aden, Yemen each year but all but **100 die due to hard usage and inexperienced handling. There are no native horses in the region.** He accuses the merchants who sell the horses of withholding veterinarian care so they can continue with their lucrative horse trade.

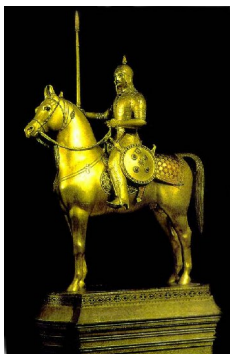
1325 — Ibn Battuta, a Berber from Fez, Morocco, begins his travels, and writes that the **Turks have sent 6,000 horses at a time to the Sind in India** (now Pakistan). Because food is scarce, the horses must be fed forage, but many still **die** or are stolen. The horses are used for warfare. When the Sind want racehorses, they import them from Yemen, Oman, and Fars in Persia; these horses are quite valuable

1526, 21 April – First Battle of Panipat in Northern India. Marks beginning of Mughal Empire. Moghul ruler Babur defeats Ibrahim Lodi, Sultan of Delhi. Babur takes possession of Delhi and Agra. He is from Ferghana and claims descent from Genghis Khan. Ferghana was once famous for the line of Persian warhorses bred there. *The appaloosa color is still found among Central Asian Turkic and Mongolian breeds.*

1527 – Rana Sanga (Maharana Sangram Singh) ruler of **Mewar** fights a valiant but losing battle against Babur. This is the last great battle of the Rajputs against outside invaders. 4,000-5,000 horsemen answer his call for battle.

- The Rajputs are considered to be most revered and persistent Kshatriyas. Some legendary Rajputs are Rana Kumbha, Rana Sanga, Raja Bhoja, Rana Mokal, Prithviraj Chauhan, Rana Hamir, Hadi ke rani.

1546 — The Indian hero Pratap Singh I of Mewar battles the Mogul ruler Akbar at Haldi Ghati near Udaipur, India. Chetak, the hero's prized stallion, repeatedly leaps up so that his owner can shoot arrows into the carriage of a sword-swinging elephant. Although he has lost part of his leg, the valiant stallion carries his owner to safety, even making a great leap over a gorge, before dying in Singh's arms.



Chetak

1576 -Kunwar Man Singh leads the Mughal army in the well-known battle of Haldighati fought in 1576 between the Mughal Empire and Maharana Pratap. Moghul army has 10,000 horsemen, among them 4,000 Kachwaha Rajput warriors. *The Mughuls pitted Indian prince against Indian prince.*



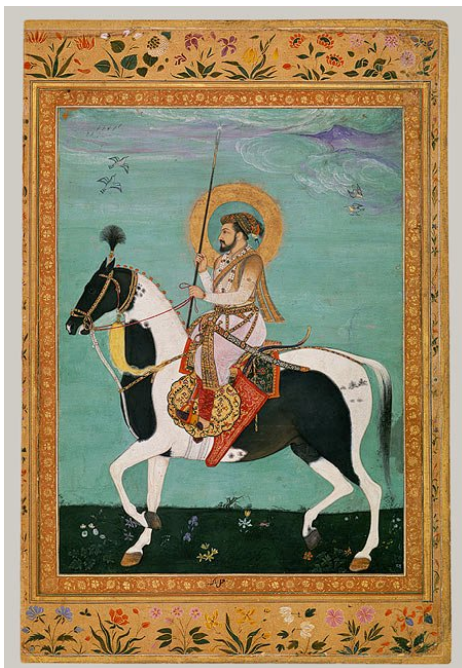
Raja Man Singh with a Marwari stallion. The Levade and other Airs Above the Ground were learned from the Persians. This ability ensured that no outside weaker bloodlines contaminated the Marwari breed. *This is a history of the horses and not the people*

1597-1620 - Maharana Amar Singh I, fifty-fifth ruler of the Mewar Dynasty eldest of the seventeen sons of the hero Maharana PRATAP SINGH succeeds his father, January 19, 1597 at CHAVAND, aged 38, and ruled for twenty-three years from Udaipur.

1628 – 1658 – Shah Jahan Mughul Emperor of India. Imports Arabian horses from Yemen and Oman.

- Amar Singh Rathore is exiled from Mewar for making a snide remark about his father's Mughul wife. He eventually joins Shah Jahan and earns many honors, but court jealousies and intrigues. A Mughul named Salavat Khan insults him, at which Amar Singh kills him. **Escaping on his Marwari horse Bahadur**, he leaps off the wall of Agra Fort and makes his escape. The stallion dies from the fall.

The story of Amar Singh's death and the recovery of his body by Ballu Champavat on one of the finest horses in Mewar has been made into songs, books and movies.



Shah Jahan on a tobiano horse. **Is it a Marwari or a pinto Arab?**



The Sons of Shah Jahan. The youngest son is riding his father's horse. It is the youngest son who also keeps Shah Jahan as a prisoner and kills his brothers for the Mughul throne

1589 - Initially known as *Kunwar* (prince), Man Singh received the title of *Mirza Raja* and the *mansab* (rank) of 5000 after the death of his father on December 10, 1589 from Akbar. On August 26, 1605, Man Singh became a mansabdar of 7,000, i.e., a commander of 7,000 cavalry in the Mughal forces, which was the maximum command for anyone other than a son of the Mughal emperor and the guardian of Khusrau, the eldest son of Jahangir. Akbar called him "Farzand" (son). He fought many important campaigns for Akbar.

1675 - A jeweler named Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, Baron of Aubonne, visits Shah Aurangzeb, the second son of Shah Jahan, and reports that his horses, imported from Arabia and Persia, each cost between 3,000 to 10,000 ecus. Each horse has its own groom and is forced to eat a mixture of wheat flour and butter. *Akhal-Tekes are also kept on this diet*

1792 - British invade India.

1814 – Wellesley Grey Arabian is shipped from India to Great Britain. His granddaughter Lilius wins Oaks in 1826. He is the last Arab to breed Thoroughbreds.



When enlarged his ears look very interesting. Plus his head is straight and not dished, a trait Europeans were beginning to obsess upon at this time. **The General Studbook now considers him Persian but If he's from India, how can he be Persian?**

1832 - *"The Rathor cavalry was the best in India. There were several horse-fairs...but the events of the last twenty years appear to have dried up every source of supply. The breeding studs...are almost extinct."* Lt Col James Tod.

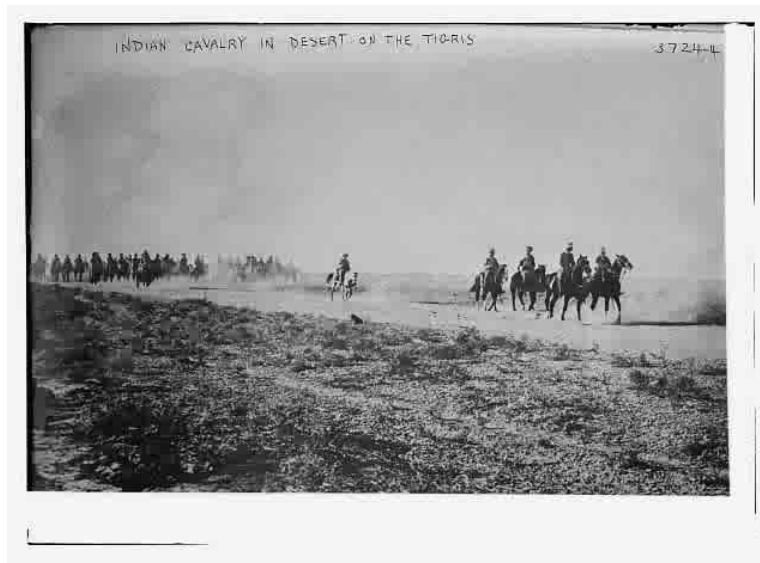
1836 – **Shagya, a cream colored Arabian is imported to Babolna, Hungary. He is reputed to have been born in Syria. Cream is not a color ever found in Arabs, but it is found in the Kathiawari and Marwari. The horse was also taller than the average Arab.**

Just as the Arabian that founded the Russian Orloff breed was probably an Akhal-Teke because of its unusually long back, the Shagya breed was founded on an Indian stallion or at least a half bred one based on his color.

1880 – The Superintendent of Gaewar contingent **suggests the Kathiawari may be descended from the wild horse of the region, a type of Quagga. This is the beginning of many outlandish claims aimed at the indigenous horses of India.**

1889 - The Boer War in South Africa begins. The British import 494,000 horses from America and India, of which 326,000 are killed.

1918 – Sir Pratap Singh and an **Indian cavalry on Marwari horses lead Gen. Allenby to the conquest of Haifa.**



Indian cavalry on the Tigris with Allenby. *Not all Indian horses were Marwaris or Kathiawaris.*



Sir Pratap Singh in 1914

1921, 1 December – Lord Mountbatten plays his first game of polo in Jodhpur. States some of the best polo players are found here. *Accounts are Marwari horses were, and are still are, used.*

1922 February - Jodhpur beat Patiala in Delhi to become champions of all India. It was a match often described as the finest ever. A crowd of over a hundred and fifty thousand people, which included the future King-Emperor, the Viceroy, Sir Pratap , and fifty Maharajas...watched spellbound as the Jodhpur Team; Thakur Prithi Singh of Bera (Sir Pratap's daughter's son), Thakur Dalpat Singh of Rohet,

Ram Singh and Rao Raja Hanut Singh (Sir Pratap's third son); scored in the last minute of the last chukker to win. Jodhpur thus avenged in style their defeat years earlier at the hands of Patiala. The magnificent Bhupinder Singh, Maharaja of Patiala, *let his horses loose in the crowded by-lanes of the capital* and ordered his team to burn their sticks. They never entered the field again...

1956 – Thousands of horses are shot, castrated or given to farmers by the Socialist government of India.

1985 – 1988 – Russian archeologists uncover four kurgans around Samara, Russia. Within one of them is the skeleton of a man with a horse's skull. Similarities to a tale in the Rig-veda are not unnoticed. *Could this culture be the ancestor of the Aryans that brought the horse to India?*

1995 - Francesca Kelly becomes involved in saving the Marwari horse and Indigenous Horse Society of India was founded.

2000 – Six Marwari horses are exported to the US.

2001 – Only a few thousand purebred Kathiawari horses are believed to exist in India.

2003 – Thirteen Marwari horses are exported to Sri Lanka.

2005 - Genetic diversity and bottleneck studies in the Marwari horse breed -This basic study indicated the existence of substantial genetic diversity in the Marwari horse population. No significant genotypic linkage disequilibrium was detected across the population, suggesting no evidence of linkage between loci. A normal 'L' shaped distribution of mode-shift test, non-significant heterozygote excess on the basis of different models, as revealed from Sign, Standardized differences and Wilcoxon sign rank tests as well as non-significant M ratio value suggested that there was no recent bottleneck in the existing Marwari breed population, which is important information for equine breeders. *This study also revealed that the Marwari breed can be differentiated from some other exotic breeds of horses on the basis of three microsatellite primers.*

2007 - The genetic relationships of five Indian horse breeds, namely Marwari, Spiti, Bhutia, Manipuri and Zanskari were studied using microsatellite markers. The Spiti and the Zanskari were the most closely related. The Marwari and the Manipuri were the farthest apart. The four pony breeds clustered together while *the Marwari remained separate*. Thoroughbreds were included as an out-group to which none of the Indian breeds clustered near. *As the Thoroughbred is highest in Arabian blood, this should negate some of the nonsense that the Marwari and Kathiawari are also descended from the Arabian.*

2008 – Genetic Characterization and Bottleneck Studies on the Kathiawari Horse Breed of India. There is sufficient genetic diversity within the breed with no recent bottlenecks.

2009 - The All Gujarat Horse Breeders Association (AGHBA), apex body of all the horse breeders in Gujarat, has initiated the process of registering all the purebred Marwari horses of its members with the Marwari Horse Stud Book. The registration team is headed by Col. Umaidsinghji Rathore and supported by Gajendrapalsinghji Poshana; both are renowned breeders and horsemen.

2010 – Dancing Marwari horses enthral Prince Charles and Duchess Camilla Parker Bowles. She expressed a desire to ride one and to import a few into England.

In Conclusion

How can the Marwari horse be descended from something that did not exist when the first bit was placed in its mouth, the first yoke placed across its shoulders, or the first saddle placed upon its back?

The answer is it can't.

The horses of India are descended from the three most important breeds of the ancient world;

- the Aryan chariot horse
- the Nisean war horse and
- the Kushana gaited horse

The Aryan chariot horse pointed to in Egyptian art, as proof that the Arabian is that old, entered a horseless realm pulling the chariots of the Indo-Aryans and the Mittani. The other breed the Hittite chariot horse is a kinsmen of the Kushana horse. It was also taken to Egypt by Hittite allies who conquered this ancient kingdom for a short while.

Just as their horses are descended from these first domestic horses, so too are the warriors of Northern India descended from the first people who domesticated the horse. No one had to give them a horse to kill someone else, nor did they steal the animals belonging to someone else. The blood of their horses might well flow in their own veins.

The second great breed to enter the horses of Northern India was **the Nisean**, the ancient world's greatest horse and whose blood flows in the veins of all horses. When the Indian warriors, now a part of the Persian Empire, switched from chariots to riding horses they introduced the blood of the Nisean into their animals. But the Nisean was not a breed given to hard living. Like the Thoroughbred this ancient breed required care and special food. One might even say alfalfa was domesticated in order to feed them. The warriors of Northern India did not have the time or inclination to pamper a horse. Nisean blood was used sparingly but it still shows in the conformation of the Marwari. The equestrian art of "Airs Above the Ground" learned from the Persians ensured that the battle stallions of Northern India retained their strength.

The final add to the mix were the horses of **the Kushana**, the gaited pintos who may have been the source of the curled ears. When the Gupta dynasty destroyed the Kushanas, the warriors of that race were absorbed into the warrior class of Northern India. The Kathiawari, in my opinion, most closely resembles this breed.

So where is the Arabian blood?

It doesn't exist.

The Warriors of Northern India hated the Arab invaders and for hundreds of years kept them out of India. In fact the Arabs took Kushana horses out of Pakistan in the early centuries of their conquests, just as they took the horses of Persia, China and Sogdiana with them.

And the tales of Yemen and Oman shipping thousands of horses a year from their ports to Pakistan and Southern India is not something to brag about. 90% of those animals died within the first year and the rest sickened and died soon after.

This was confirmed by two separate sources, one a Berber traveller and the other Marco Polo, an even more famous traveller. Plus from their own art we know the Marwari was already an established breed, and one can not help but wonder if the Shah Jahan and his sons were riding imported Arabs or Marwaris.

I have no doubt that the Marwari and Kathiawari are survivors from another time.

With most horses of the world being little more than Thoroughbred crosses, and the Marwari having absolutely no relationship to these animals, the gene pools of the Kathiawari and Marwari may well be their greatest treasure.

Let us hope this increases their value to humanity.

Beverley Davis.

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