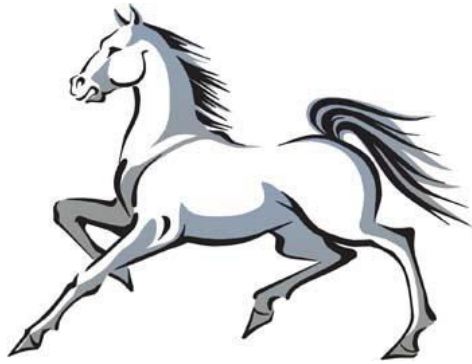


Farid Alakbarli

HORSES OF AZERBAIJAN: A HISTORICAL SURVEY



Baku – AAMH – 2016

Farid Alakbarli. *Horses of Azerbaijan: A Historical Survey*.
Baku: AAMH, 2016. – 41 P.

Since antiquity, the horse played a major role in the life of peoples inhabiting Azerbaijan. Horses were widely used by Scythians, Cimmerians and various Turkic tribes which inhabited steppes of Azerbaijan in ancient and medieval times. Numerous mounds with graves of horses buried with military honors together with saddles and harnesses were found on the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The earliest of them date back to the 4th millennium BC. Figures of horses were depicted on carpets, weapons, jewelry and household utensils. Zoomorphic gravestones in the form of the horse are typical to many regions of Azerbaijan and are known among the people as “Oguz Gebirleri” (“The Oguz graves”). According to statistics from January 1, 2007 in all categories of farms in Azerbaijan there were bred 69,984 horses. The most famous local breeds of horses are Karabakh and Deliboz. This article offers a brief overview of the history of the horse in Azerbaijan from pre-historic times to the 19th century.

Copyright © 2016 by Farid Alakbarli

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

PUBLISHED BY AZERBAIJAN ASSOCIATION OF MEDICAL
HISTORIANS (AAMH). ISTIQLALIYYAT STR.8,
BAKU, AZERBAIJAN.

CONTENTS

	pages
Introduction	4
Place of the horse in the life of ancient and medieval Azerbaijan	5
Historical survey	7
<i>Prehistoric horses: archaeological data</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Domestication of horses</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Cult of the Horse</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Cavalry in antiquity and the Middle Ages</i>	<i>12</i>
Horses in visual arts	15
Horses in folklore	18
Local breeds of horses	21
<i>Ancient breeds</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Karabakh breed</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>Deliboz bred</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>Guba breed</i>	<i>33</i>
<i>Extinct breeds of horses</i>	<i>33</i>
Conclusions	34
References	35

Introduction

Archaeological data testify that the history of the domestic horse in Azerbaijan dates back to the 4th millennium BC. Since antiquity, horses played a major role in the economic life of the region. They were widely used by Scythians, Cimmerians and various Turkic tribes which inhabited steppes of Azerbaijan in ancient and medieval times. Numerous mounds with graves of horses buried with military honors together with saddles and harnesses were found on the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The earliest of them date back to the 4th millennium BC. Figures of horses were depicted on carpets, weapons, jewelry and household utensils. Zoomorphic gravestones in the form of the horse are typical to many regions of Azerbaijan and are known among the people as “Oguz Gebirleri” (“The Oguz graves”).

In 1941, there were a total of 216,900 horses in the country. According to statistics from January 1, 2007 in all categories of farms in Azerbaijan there were bred 69,984 horses. Among them, 368 horses (0.52%) were owned by personal households, the remaining 69,616 animals (99.48%) were the property of private organizations. Among them 20-22% are Karabakh (or Garabagh) horses, 14-16% - Deliboz (or Dilbaz, Dilboz) bred, 8-10% - the pacers of Gu-

ba, Shirvan and horses of the Lesser Caucasus, 1% - thoroughbred British horses, 50% - the metises of the above breeds. In 2014, the number of horses in Azerbaijan increased to 76,600¹.

Today 2 Stud farms in Azerbaijan (Garabagh and Dilbazi) and the Dashuz company in Sheki are involved in breeding of local types of horses. The most famous local breeds of horses are Karabakh and Deliboz. The Karabakh breed was developed in the late Middle Ages in mountains of Karabakh. These horses are of golden color, not very tall, but hardy, strong, tough, and sure-footed. Deliboz (or Dilbaz, Dilboz) is a mountain riding and pack horse bred in the 18th century in the territory of Kazakh, Agstafa and Tovuz regions of Azerbaijan. Other local breeds are of lesser importance, including the pacers of Guba, and the Shirvan horse, which is almost extinct.

Below we offer a brief overview of the history of horse breeding in Azerbaijan from ancient times to the 19th century.

1. Place of the horse in the life of ancient and medieval Azerbaijan.

Even in the pre-historic times, horses played a major role in the life of peoples inhabiting Azerbaijan. The horse was an important element of the everyday life of the indigenous Caucasian tribes. Therefore, emergence of the cult of horse in Transcaucasia, Minor Asia and Northern Iran was not an accident. Horses played significant role also in the

life of nomads, including Scythians, Cimmerians who inhabited steppes of Azerbaijan in ancient times².

In medieval times, the nomads of Azerbaijan were mainly represented by Kipchak and Oghuz tribes. They played essential role in the ethnogenesis of Turks of Azerbaijan (Azerbaijanis or Azeris) who spoke the Azeri language which belongs to the Oghuz branch of Turkic languages. In medieval times, the horse was one of the national treasures of Turks, which was inextricably linked with their traditional way of life. The exceptional role played by horses in the life of nomads gradually led to formation of the cult of horse in the region. The horse was the main means of transportation among the population engaged in cattle breeding and transhumance (the seasonal movement of people with their livestock between fixed summer and winter pastures – F.A.). In summer, Turks grazed their sheep in the mountain meadows (“yaylak”), and in the winter went back with their flocks to the low-lying areas of the country (“kyshlak”). All these movements would be impossible if Turks did not use horses in everyday life. The use of horses as draft animals for plowing the land (“goshgu” – in Azeri) was not characteristic of the local population because it was considered a luxury³.

Turks of Azerbaijan as well as many other Turkic peoples spent most of their life horseback. Figuratively speaking, Turks were born, lived and died on the back of the horse. Horses were indispensable during hunting and on the battlefield, and cavalry was the strike force of the armed forces of Turkic tribes.

2. Historical survey.

2.1. Prehistoric horses: archaeological data.

During archeological excavations in the ancient Acheulian layer of the Azikh cave (700-500 thousand years ago) the remains of the wild horse of Stenon breed lived in Europe and Africa were found. Along with it, a plenty of wild animals' bones have been discovered in the third layer (mustier) of the Azikh cave. Among them the bones of wild horses were recorded⁴.

L.L.Firouz notes that although we know from Coon⁵ that in the Pleistocene there had been true horses in the Zagros mountains of western Iran and in Azerbaijan, it was assumed that it had not survived here into the Holocene⁶.



Fig.1. Skull of the fossil Horse which was found in the Binagadi asphalt lake (or Binagadi tar pits) located 1 km southeast from Binagadi settlement in urban Baku, Azerbaijan. Its age is about 120-96 thousand years. Natural-Historical Museum after Hasan bey Zardabi. Baku.

2.2. Domestication of horses.

Domestication of horses makes other critical matter of the problem. The period of appearance of bone remains of the domesticated horses in archaeological monuments begins from the final stage of development of cattle breeding, since IV millennium B.C.⁷

The remains of horses dating to the end of Eneolith (4th-5th millennium BC) found in the Mugan plain in Azerbaijan during excavations near Alikomektepe village are considered among the oldest in the world. It is possible to assert that Transcaucasia is one of the regions where horses were domesticated.⁸

According to Farkhad Guliyev, as a result of the analysis of osteological materials on the faculty of biology of Azerbaijan Medical University conducted by the researcher - paleontologist Damir Hajiyeu it was found out that in early 4th millennium B.C. inhabitants of Alikomektepe succeeded in domestication of horses: "It was established that among the horse remains found in Alikomektepe, there were bones of two breeds of horses. At the same time, dentition of both remains has oblong 280 shape that separates them from wild horses"⁹.

The horse bits dated to the 7th century BC were found in Azerbaijan: "Horse bits are known from grave 47 in the cemetery of Kalakent (Azerbaijan). They have been created under obvious influence of the Novocherkask-type bits. They have hended blades like the Novocherkask ones"

¹⁰.

According to S. Folting, domestic horse and light chariot began to spread in this region not later than the end of 3rd millennium BC¹¹.

The image of horse drew more than 4 000 years ago is found among the rock paintings of the Gobustan Historic Reserve located near Baku¹².



Fig.2. Horse, Gobustan Rock Art.



Fig.3. Gobustan Rock Art: An ox and a horse

2.3. Cult of the Horse.

Formation of the cult of the Horse in South Caucasus dates back to very ancient times. Starting from early Bronze Age horses were buried with military honors, sometimes next to the host. On the territory of Azerbaijan there were found numerous mounds with graves of horses buried together with saddles and harnesses. In Nakhchevan, during the digging of Shakhtakhta necropolis with the burials in stone boxes of the Late Bronze – Early Iron Age, a skeleton of horse without a human skeleton in the same grave was discovered: “The rite of a horse burial is undoubtedly associated with worshiping of this animal. It demonstrates that

the horse cult had a significant place in the religious system of ancient South Caucasus”¹³.

Farkhad Guliyev concludes that there was formed a cult of horse in ancient Azerbaijan: “Our researches show that from the middle of the 2nd millennium B.C. in Azerbaijan ceremony of burial place of horses with outfit in barrow monuments concerned notable representatives of society related to chariots. Comparative analysis of archaeological 307 materials of funeral monuments shows that use of bull at first, and afterwards horses in funeral ceremonies for transfer of mourning carriage with the owner to the other world indicates the ancient roots of this custom on Southern Caucasus”¹⁴.

In the central western region of Azerbaijan the ceremony of burial of horses with outfit finds develops in the late bronze period: “The custom of burial of horses with outfit in XIV-VIII centuries B.C. exhibits formation of ethnic structure and religious views of ancient Azerbaijanians. In spite of difference of funeral monuments on plain and mountainous zones, nevertheless in essence it witnesses to common ideological views of grave owners”¹⁵.

During the Middle Ages, it was believed that the skull of horse has magical properties, and figurines of horses were used as amulets to protect against disease and evil spirits. According to a legend, the horse is the most vulnerable animal. Therefore, in order to protect the horse from the jinn (evil spirits), people in Azerbaijan covered its back with heavy oil, or fastened to its tail a pin¹⁶.

2.4. Cavalry in antiquity and the Middle Ages.

In the 4th century BC in the territory of the present day Iran and the southern part of the Republic of Azerbaijan (Lankaran and Nakhichevan regions) emerged the Atropatene state (the early form of the word “Azerbaijan”) having strong cavalry. Strabo writes: “Atropatian Media borders upon Armenia and Matiane towards the east, towards the west on the Greater Media, and on both towards the north; towards the south it is contiguous to the people living about the recess of the Hyrcanian Sea, and to Matiane. According to Apollonides its strength is not inconsiderable, since it can furnish 10,000 cavalry and 40,000 infantry”¹⁷.

During the 1st c. BC – 7th c. AD, the ancient kingdom of Caucasian Albania was located in the main part of the present-day Republic of Azerbaijan. Strabo writes in his “Geographia” about the Albanian cavalry: “The Albanians pursue rather a shepherd life, and resemble more the nomadic tribes, except that they are not savages, and hence they are little disposed to war. They inhabit the country between the Iberians and the Caspian Sea, approaching close to the sea on the east, and on the west border upon the Iberians... They fight however on foot and on horseback, both in light and in heavy armour, like the Armenians. They can send into the field a larger army than the Iberians, for they can equip 60,000 infantry and 22,000 horsemen; with such a force they offered resistance to Pompey”¹⁸.



Fig.4. Equestrian statuette of Javanshir, the prince of Caucasian Albania from 637 to 680 AD, hailing from the region of Gardman. The 7th AD. The Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg, Russia.

According to Strabo, the territory of Caucasian Albania was inhabited by the warlike Amazon tribe which consisted from warlike women spending most of life horseback: "The Amazons are said to live among the mountains above Albania. The strongest among them spend much of their time in hunting on horseback, and practise warlike exercises. All of them from infancy have the right breast seared, in order that they may use the arm with ease for all manner of purposes, and particularly for throwing the javelin. They employ the bow also, and sagaris, (a kind of sword,) and wear a buckler. They make helmets, and coverings for the body, and girdles, of the skins of wild animals"¹⁹.

Figures of warriors on horses were found by archeologists in the territory of Azerbaijan. "During archaeological excavations in 1959-1961 and 1968, samples of polychrome ceramics of the 9th-10th centuries were found in the medieval Azerbaijani city of Beylagan (Orengala). A fragment found during excavations in the rooms in the northeast corner of the ancient city wall depicts a warrior (Turkic warrior) wearing a helmet, armor and a spear in his hand on horseback"²⁰.

The Ak Koyunlu state which capital was situated in Tabriz city in the Iranian Azerbaijan had strong cavalry. In 1501 AD, during the Sharur battle in Azerbaijan the Ak Koyunlu ruler Alvand Mirza had 40 000 cavalrymen, including 10 000 from Ganja in the North of Azerbaijan. His rival shah Ismail Sefevi from Ardabil in Iranian Azerbaijan had

only 7 000 horsemen. However, Shah Ismail won this battle²¹.

During the Middle Ages, Turks of Azerbaijan never would join a battle not having a sufficient number of armed horsemen. According to the 15th century Italian diplomat and traveler Caterino Zeno (1440's - 1490s), the ruler of the Akkoyunlu state Uzun Hassan (1423 - 1478) could put in his army at least 300 thousand horsemen and even more, if necessary²². Even if it is an exaggeration, it shows how widely horses were used, and how important cavalry was.

4. Horses in visual arts.

During the Middle Ages, the figures of horses were depicted on carpets, weapons, jewelry and household utensils. "Atli-Itli" ("With Horses and Dogs" in Azeri) carpets decorated with images of horses and dogs were widespread in the Karabakh region. One can see numerous images of horses in medieval miniatures created in Tabriz and other cities in Iran and Azerbaijan. The manuscript "Varga and Gulshah" created in the early Seljuk period (the 13th century) is of particular interest. Here, from a total of 71 miniatures 25 are with battle scenes. The author of miniatures is Abd al-Mumin al-Khoyi, the native of Khoy city, recently the center of Western Azerbaijan province in Iran. Images of horses in this manuscript are of particular interest. The horse of Gulshah is light blue, and the horse of Rabi of dark cherry color. However, nowhere in the manuscript, the color of the horses does not correspond to their natural color²³.



Fig.5. Horses in the miniature from “Varga and Gulshah” (Istanbul, Topkapi Museum, H.841)

Almost all horses in miniatures are depicted in profile. The mane of the horse falls on its neck, and the same lock is on the forehead. Its tail is usually rolled into a knot (pp. 18a - the horse of Varga; 23b, 25b - tail of Gulshah’s horse, etc.). Sometimes it falls freely. If the horse stands, its hooves touch the ground, knees are straight and the head is tilted. Sometimes the horse neighs lifting the front legs or holding up or turning the head. If the horse goes at a slow

pace, the two legs of it fully touch the ground, and the other two legs touch it only with the tips of hooves (21b, Rabi). If the horse sat in the battle, its rear knees are bent in parallel, and the hoofs are completely on the ground, while the two front knees are bent at right angles and drawn in under itself. Color horse of the same character does not remain unchanged. Three colors are the most common: it is a fiery red with white spots (p. 18a – horse of Varga, 37b - Aden warrior's horse), gray or gray dapple (18a - horse of Rabi). Sometimes color is unnatural: Vermillion (l. 122a 21b) or greenish-blue (p. 40a)²⁴.

In medieval times, the stone statues of horses ("Daş at" in Azeri) were often set over the graves, especially the graves of soldiers who died on a battlefield. For the most part, it was burials of Oghuz Turks. Therefore, among the local people these graves are known as «Oghuz gabirleri» («Oguz graves")²⁵.

An ancient custom of exhibiting stuffed horse over the tomb existed among Oghuz Turks. With time, people started to install over these graves the stone sculptures of horses instead of stuffed animals. Usually, these horses were sculpted in saddled form and in full equipment. Often, the armor of the deceased warrior such as bow and arrow, sword, shield and others are portrayed on the sides of these gravestones. You'll find many depictions of horses on the graves in Sofi Hamid cemetery near Baku. They are depicted with saddles or hitched to covered carriages²⁶.

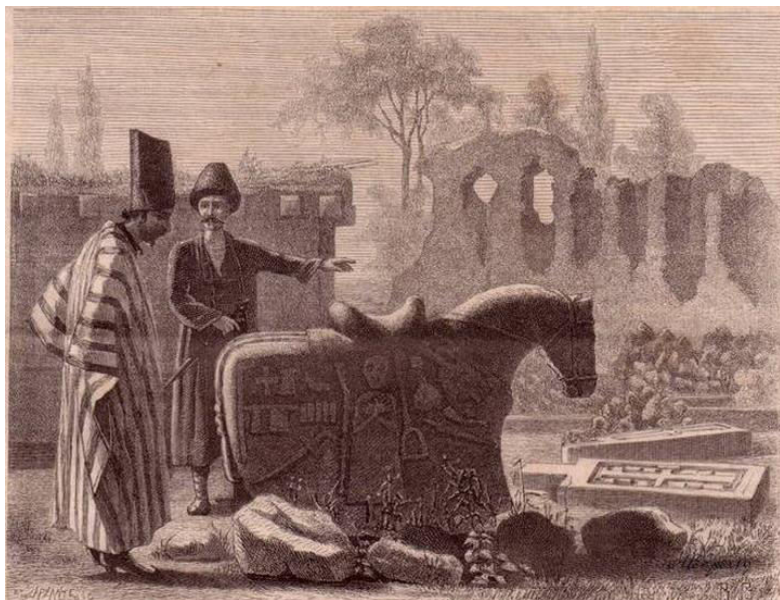


Fig.6. Stone statue of a horse in the picture by Vasily Vereshchagin made in Shusha. 1865

5. Horses in folklore.

The horse is glorified in many pieces of the Azerbaijani folklore. The biggest helper of a hero in the Turkic epics is the horse. The horse has exceptional skills in the same way as the epic hero. The hero cannot succeed in any business without having the horse. Usually, horses are the real heroes of the victory and defeat. The horses in the epics are thoroughbred, genealogy known, intelligent, anticipating and foreboding danger, having morality and heroism. Horses understand the human language, and they speak like hu-

mans, warning the men of their erroneous behavior, and saving them from death and captivity. These horses are extremely fast, crossing the mountains and rivers, and having the ability to fly. Each of horses has its own name²⁷.

The epic "Dede Korkut" is a common cultural heritage of the Oghuz Turks including Turks of Turkey, Azerbaijanis, Turkmen, etc. However, many researchers including Vasily Bartold and Geoffrey Lewis assert that the language of this epos "exhibits a number of features characteristic of Azeri, the Turkish dialect of Azerbaijan"²⁸. In the epic "Dede Korkut" the horse emerges as the most valuable property of the igit (knight). Some quotations from "Dede Korkut": "The feet of the horse and the tongue of the poet are fast"²⁹. "Kazan Bey says, "Is this valor of a horse or of a warrior?". They replied: "Of a warrior, my Khan." Khan said: "No, if the horse did not work, the warrior would not be proud of; it is the valor of his horse"³⁰.

"Kazan saw a warrior wearing steel armor, holding a white standard in his hand, and mounted on a light gray horse come riding at the front of the Oghuz troops... Beyrek with the Gray Horse spurred his horse and came onto the field"³¹.

"When the beys (*lords* – *F.A.*) had mounted their horses, they pulled forward Kazan's chestnut-brown horse, and he also mounted... Uruz Koja spurred his horse, rode onto the field and challenged Kazan, saying: "Ho, you scoundrel! You are my enemy. Come forward"³².

In another medieval epic "Koroglu" we see a wonderful image of the Gyrat (Kirat) horse, which rescues his

master in the most critical situations³³. The ability to fly is an important feature of Gyrat. This horse was able to run not touching the ground. The horse of the Saint Khidr Ilyas is portrayed as a flying creature too. Flying horse is a usual motif in Turkic epics. Like winged horses in Greek mythology many horses in Turkic tales can fly³⁴.



*Fig.7. Monument to Koroghlu and his flying horse
Gyrat in Baku, Azerbaijan.*

The horse is often referred to in Azerbaijani Turkish proverbs and sayings: "The horse is recognized by its gait, and the hero by his posture", "Knight is the one who after

falling from his horse is able to stand up and ride it again"³⁵, "if the horse is stubborn and does not want to go, then, the trouble lies in wait for its master"³⁶.

6. Local breeds of horses.

6.1. Ancient breeds.

Assyrians, Scythians, Mannai, Caucasian Albanians, Medes and other ancient peoples which inhabited Azerbaijan or bordered with it in early times widely used horses in daily life and for military purposes. Starting from the 6th century BC, the main part of the South Caucasus including Azerbaijan became a part of the Achamaenian Empire. Therefore, there are many common features between the ancient Azerbaijani and Iranian horses, which some authors divide into two large groups - Caspian and Turkoman. "After two years study of blood samples from Caspian, Kurd, Persian, Arab (unmixed with western blood), Turkoman...we are able to state without doubt that : 1) a tiny form of *E. caballus* existed in ancient Persia and, 2) that this horse is the same as the modern Caspian and is ancestral to all forms of Oriental horse and, 3) that the Turkoman existed in its present state at least as early as 3000 BC, and that it also is ancestral to the Oriental horse"³⁷.

In the I millennium BC the Iranian Azerbaijan was inhabited with Medes and bordered with Assyria and Urartu with which had close economic and cultural ties: "The As-

syrians in the first half of the 1st millennium BC bred a refined horse with stock they acquired from the Medes and the Urartians in repeated 'razzias'. The Medes, according to Herodotus, bred a smaller horse than their vanquishers and the Achaemenians, in turn, developed the massive Nisaeen breed that so impressed the Greeks. The Urartians reputedly produced a large, useful animal which took full advantage of the lush pastures surrounding Lake Urmia”³⁸

During the Achaemenian rule (6th-4th centuries BC), the Nisaeen breed of horse was widespread in the Northwestern Iran including Iranian Azerbaijan and Kurdistan, and formed the basis of cavalry of Persians, Medes, Caucasian Albanians and other local peoples and tribes³⁹. “The famous Nisaeen horse of the Achaemenians, although of no great height, had distinctly larger bone and its skull exhibited vaulting from the occiput through the nasal bone⁴⁰. The peculiarity of the vaulting in the forehead, known as the Jibbah' in the Arab, is one of the most distinctive features in various breeds or strains of medium height (13 to 15 hands) developed by breeders 2500 years ago in Persia. Other distinctive features of the Caspian as well as the Arab include high tail carriage, dense bone, short back and compact hoof “⁴¹.

Turcoman horses were another type widespread in the region starting from the early times. They penetrated here even in the times of Achaemenians and Parthians, but their number increased after coming of tribal alliances of Akkoyunlu and Karakoyunlu, which moved to South Caucasus from Central Asia in the 13th-15th centuries AD. “They

made good use of the native horse of their original habitat, the modern Turkoman, which would account for the stature and straight heads of the larger horses, slowly mixing with the existing breeds”⁴².

Turkoman horse certainly contrived to contribute to the development of breeds beyond, including South Caucasus and Ottoman Empire: “as importations from Turkmenistan are recorded until the end of the Ottoman Empire in 1920 and, indeed, continue to this day. Many villages of Turcomans with their herds of mares and stallions were transplanted to the Anatolian plateau where they continued to provide mounts for the Sultan's janissaries until the Ottoman Empire was disbanded at the end of the first World War”⁴³.

6.2. Karabakh breed.

Karabakh breed of horses was developed in the Karabakh khanate in the territory of the present-day Republic of Azerbaijan in the Middle Ages⁴⁴. The breed is hardy, strong, tough, and sure-footed. “Karabakh horses had been bred in the mountains of Karabakh for many centuries. That is why these horses besides their beauty are valued for endurance and ability to make their way along narrow mountain paths. Horses of Karabakh breed have lean physique and harmonious built. They have perfect lean legs even after work on the hardest ground. Very strong hoofs, quick recovery after heavy load, ability to run easily distances of several hundreds of kilometers, good fatness with the poor-

est ration – this is not the whole list of the qualities of this unique breed. One needs to add unpretentiousness in keeping and strong health, joyous lively temper and curiosity⁴⁵.

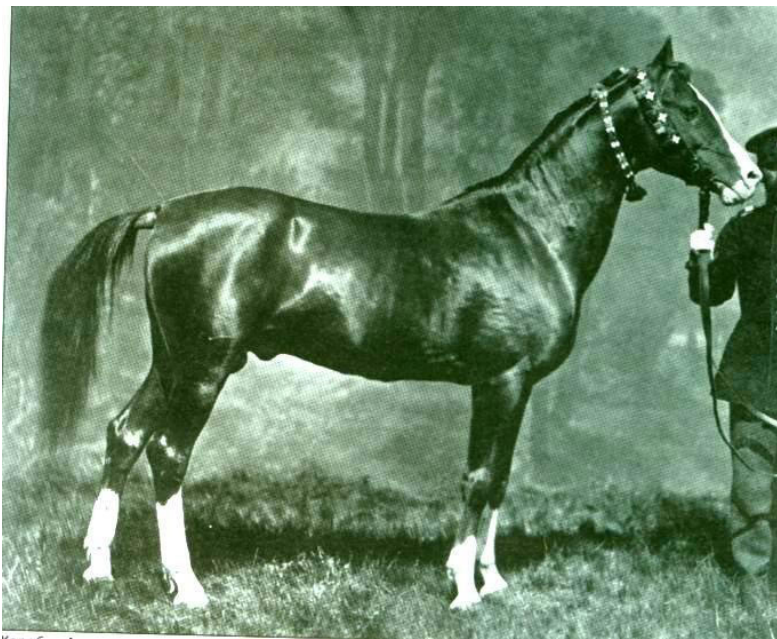


Fig.8. A Karabakh horse named Alyetmez, from the stud of the Karabakh princess Khurshidbanu Natavan, accredited in the Second All-Russian exhibition. Photo from 1867.

Their skin is thin and soft with gleaming hair. The main colors of the breed are chestnut and bay, with characteristic golden tint of the breed. They can also be gray. Rarely they can be Palomino or Buckskin. White markings are allowed. “The main qualities of Karabakh horses are endurance and loyalty to master”. According to the information of Equestrian Federation of Azerbaijan Republic the Karabakh

horse is of medium height: 14–15 hands (56–60 inches, 142–152 cm) and is distinguished by small and clean-cut head which has a straight shape with broad forehead. The nostrils of the Karabakh horse are very capable of dilation: “The neck is set high, average in length, muscular and elegant. They have compact bodies with well defined and developed muscles. The shoulders are often quite upright. The horses have a deep chest, a sloping croup, and long, fine, but very strong legs, although the joints are small. The horses are narrow, not very deep through the girth, due to the Akhal-Teke influence... The Karabakh has close links to the Akhal-Teke, which is bred in Turkmenistan, Central Asia, and the Turkoman horse, which is bred in Iran. Some historians believe that in ancient times these horses were of the same strain and had significant influence on the development of the Arabian breed. Some historical sources mention that during the Arab invasions of Arran in the 8th-9th centuries tens of thousands of horses with golden-chestnut coloring, characteristic for Karabakhs, were taken by the conquerors. The breed attained its current shape and characteristics during the 18th and 19th centuries. In 19th century Khurshidbanu Natavan (daughter of the Karabakh’s ruler Mehdi-Kulu Khan) took care of the breed. In a series of successes her Karabakh stallions received the highest awards in various exhibitions As a result, the Karabakh horse Khan received a silver medal at an international show in Paris in 1867... In the early 20th century the Karabakhs sharply decreased in numbers again, mostly because of civil and ethnic wars in the Caucasus in general and in the Karabakh region

in particular. In 1949 the breed was revived at the Agdam stud in Azerbaijan, which brought together the most characteristic Karabakhs. In 1956 a Karabakh stallion named Zaman, along with an Akhal-Teke named Mele-Kush was presented by the Soviet government to the Queen of Britain, Elizabeth II.”⁴⁶



Fig.9. Karabakh horse, given as a gift to the Great Duchess Xenia Alexandrovna. May 1, 1892



Fig.10. Carpet "Atly-itli". (azerb. Atly – with horses, itli – with dogs). Karabakh. Azerbaijan. The beginning of the twentieth century. The State Museum of Azerbaijani Carpet and Applied Art named after Latif Karimov.

At home, in Karabakh, this breed was called 'Keglan' (az. 'Köglən'). For generations, the best horses had Karabakh khans. Their horse farm was a major hotbed of thoroughbred horses, and they looked at their horses, "as a gift of God bestowed on their dynasty, which can not be traded, and can be given to mortals as a sign of friendship and gratitude." Approximates of Khan received stallions from his horse farm as a gift, but the horses of other plants do not fall into Khan's herds⁴⁷.



Fig.11. The Karabakh horse on the coat of arms of Shusha city, approved by the Russian Emperor in 1843. Shusha was the former capital of the Karabakh khanate (up to 1822), and after the Russian conquest, became the center of the Shusha district (uyezd) of the Russian Empire. From the description of the coat of arms: "The lower part of the shield shows that the excellent breed of horses (karabakhi) is bred in this county".

In the early forties of the 19th century at the stud farms of Karabakh khans were bred three golden breeds of Karabakh horses: Maimon (in Arabic - happy) eletmaz (literally - unreachable) or gazelle. They had the same golden-brown color, known as "narynj" ("Orange" in Azeri). From the cross-breeding of these three types with other local breeds of Azerbaijan have evolved golden-bay (Sary keher), red-gold (Sary kuren), golden-brown (Sary-Gara Kuren) and golden-gray types of horses. Thus, the golden horse ("Sary-lar") has appeared. By this time emerged such breed as "Tokhmak", which was considered the most powerful and enduring. People say: "Tokhmak will never sit, and if will sit, then never get up." Since the second half of the 19th century, there were other types of Karabakh horse "Shakh-mar", "Durnalar", "Agajidaly" and "Balakeher"⁴⁸.

The daughter of the last khan (prince) of Karabakh, the poetess Khurshidbanu Natavan (1832-1897) owned big stud farm nearby the town of Shusha, the former capital of the Karabakh Khanate. According to Inna Kostina: "Famous Karabakh horses, particularly those grown at the stud farm of poetess Khurshidbanu Natavan were exceptionally successful at trade exhibitions. For example, in 1869, a Karabakh stallion from Natavan's stud farm was awarded a gold medal at the Second All-Russian Horse Exhibition in Moscow. The stallion was purchased by the exhibition. A silver medal and a cash prize of 300 rubles in silver went to Natavan's stud farm for the stallion Meynern from the Keglän-Sarilar breed, which was bred at the farm. A bronze medal for hanging from the horse's neck was awarded to the

Karabakh stallion Molotok from the Tokmakh breed. A letter of commendation was given to another stallion - Aletmez from the Keglán-Sarilar breed, which was also from Natavan's stud. Natavan herself was awarded a gold medal and given accolades in a special letter of commendation”⁴⁹.



Fig.12. Karabakh stallion named Khan on a picture of Nikolai Sverchkov, 1865, the Museum of Horse Breeding.

Karabakh horse is described in the poem “Demon” by the famous Russian poet M.J.Lermontov (1814-1841):

*“And silken tassels decked his chargers head,
In Karabakh, a fiery chestnut, bred.
Now as he passed the mountain brow, he stood
And gazed upon Aragwa's foaming flood,
He pricked his ears and shivering pawed the ground,
The path is steep, and darkness closes round,
The mists are rising, from the heights is gone
The glow — the caravan must hurry on”⁵⁰.*

6.3. Deliboz bred.

Deliboz (Dilboz or Dilbaz) is a mountain riding and pack horse bred in the territory of Kazakh, Agstafa and Tovuz regions of Azerbaijan. “Dəliboz” means “Gray crazy” in Azeri Turkish (dəli – crazy, boz – grey). Besides, it is related with the Dilbazi family of horse breeders. These horses are long-lived, have a high endurance and capacity for work. Superior type is bred mainly in the Kazakh region of Azerbaijan where it is known also as Kazakh horse⁵¹.

In the formation of the Deliboz breed huge role played several generations of breeders of the Kazakh district of Azerbaijan from the noble families of Dilbazi and Zulgardar. The Dilbazi family was engaged in breeding of pedigree horses during more than 300 years. In the middle of the 19th century in the Kazakh district, there were about 25,000 horses. This breed had influences from the Karabakh, Turkish and Persian breeds⁵².

Deliboz is taller than all mountain horses of Transcaucasia, and is only a bit lower than Kabardin and Lokay breeds. In addition to this features Deliboz is distinguished by more elegant constitution than other horse breeds of Azerbaijan. Height – 137-152 cm. Lengths of the body - 139 cm. Chest circumference - 172 cm. Average agility-year-olds at a distance of 1600 m - 1 minute 56 seconds. Under a pack of 120-140 kg they pass 60-70 km, and under the rider up to 70 km per day. Maximum load capacity is 3000-3200 kg. For Deliboz it is characteristic the peculiar form of the

language having at the end a deep cut, which creates the impression of duality⁵³.



Fig.13. Galloping Deliboz horse.



Fig.14 Deliboz horse at the stud.

6.4. Guba breed.

In the 19th century the Guba district of Azerbaijan was a famous center for horse breeding. The Guba horses were widespread in Baku, Shemakha and especially Guba district of Azerbaijan. Height – 136 cm. Lengths of the body - 136 cm. Chest circumference - 157.2 cm. Average agility-year-olds at a distance of 1600 m - 3 minutes 25.4 seconds. The main advantage of Guba breeds of horses were their surprisingly strong and durable hooves adapted to the mountainous terrain, as well as the courage and dexterity. Because of these qualities these horses easily transport heavy packs up the steep hills and dangerous mountain trails⁵⁴.

6.5. Extinct breeds of horses.

The historical sources and archive materials mention the Shirvan and the Gala (Kala) breeds of horses which were spread in Azerbaijan until the early 20th century. Shirvan horse was one of the local horse breeds spread in the Shirvan region of Azerbaijan. However, we have extremely limited information about the origin of the horse, its area of distribution, the quality of work and the exterior. Probably, it was influenced by the Karabakh and Guba breeds of horses.

According to K. Freitag: "Shirvan horses do not resemble their ancestors in beauty and elegance. However, as a rule, they are fast, durable and flexible. The Russian cavalrymen, especially high-ranking officers took these horses with great pleasure."⁵⁵ According to the 1891 census, there

were five hundreds of Shirvan horses in Arash and Goychay districts”⁵⁶. Now the thoroughbred Shirvan breed is extinct.

The Gala horse was bred in the Absheron peninsula nearby Baku city especially in the Gala village, but now is completely extinct. Although the population of the Absheron Peninsula did not practiced horse breeding on a large scale, some villagers had horses for the transportation of gardening products, oil and fuel oil. In some villages (Gala, Gobu, Guzdek and Saray) people also bred this local breed of horse. In addition, horse was the only animal, except the donkey, which fulfilled the farm work (plowing, threshing, etc.) and was used for the lifting water from wells, as well as it was almost the only transportation means for the carriage of passengers on chaises⁵⁷.

A.Eritsov wrote in 1880's: “Gala horses are renowned in the whole province. They are distinguished by a dense and beautiful physique, good trot and are suitable for the vehicle-rides”⁵⁸.

7. Conclusions

The following may be concluded from the above mentioned facts:

1. Ancient species of wild horses occurred in Azerbaijan from prehistoric times (Stenon horse, 700-500 thousand years ago).
2. South Caucasus was one of the regions where horses were domesticated (5th-4th millennia BC)

3. There are two main local breeds of horses in Azerbaijan: Karabakh and Deliboz.

4. During ancient and medieval times horses played the major role in the economic life of the semi-nomadic population of Azerbaijan that was engaged in transhumance.

5. According to archeological evidences there was a cult of the Horse in ancient Azerbaijan.

6. The horse is an important character of the Turkic folklore of Azerbaijan including medieval eposes “Dede Korkut” and “Koroglu”, where the winged horse Kirat is described.

7. The horse is usual element of the visual arts of Azerbaijan. During the Middle Ages, figures of horses were depicted on carpets, weapons, jewelry and household utensils.

8. In medieval times, the stone statues of horses ("Daş at" in Azeri) were set over the graves, especially the graves of soldiers who died on battlefield.

REFERENCES

1. The Agriculture of Azerbaijan: Statistical Yearbook. Baku: State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2014. pp. 202-203
2. Petrenko, Vladimir G. Scythian culture in the North Caucasus. In book: Nomads of the Eurasian Steppes in the Early Iron Age. Edited by Jeannine Davis-Kimball et al. Berkeley, CA: Zinat Press, 1995, p.18
3. Иманов Вюгар. Животные в азербайджанском фольклоре. (Vugar Imanov. Animals in Azerbaijani folclore). ”Trend”, 29 July 2009, url: <http://www.trend.az/life/interesting/1526904.html> accessed: 26.03.2015

4. History of Azerbaijan, vol. I, Ed. Igrar Aliyev, Baku: Elm, 1988, p. 66
5. Coon, C.S., 1950, Cave Explorations in Iran, 1949, Museum Monographs, Philadelphia, pp. 43-4
6. Louise Laylin Firouz. Notes on the Oriental Horse in Persia, p.3. url: <http://www.endangeredequines.com/archivesdocuments/19982.pdf> accessed: 26.03.2015
7. Farkhad Guliyev. Barrows with Horse Burials in Azerbaijan. Baku: Elm, 2008, p.279
8. Mahmudov F.R., Narimanov I.G. Digings in Alikemektepesi hill. Compilation. Archaeological and ethnographical researches in Azerbaijan SSR (1973). Baku, 1974, p. 16.
9. Guliyev. Barrows, pp. 279-280
10. Vladimir Elujj. The Archaeological Evidences of the Early Period of Military Contacts Between the Black Sea North Littoral and the Ancient East and the "Cimmerian Problem", CuPAUAM: Cuadernos de Prehistoria y Arqueología, No 20, 1993, p. 141
11. Folting S. The Oldest Representations of Wheeled Vehicles in Central and Southeastern Europe, — AJA, LXIII, 1959
12. Muradova F.M. Qobustan Tunc Dövründə. Bakı,1979, s.26. (Muradova F.M. Kobustan in the Bronze Age. Baku, 1979, p. 26).
13. Borsunlu Kurgan. AAS: Archeology Data Services, the University of York. Url: <http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archiveDS/archiveDownload?t=arch-1057->

1/dissemination/pdf/Phase_3_and_4_Mitigation/272_Borsunlu/272_Bor
sunlu.pdf Accessed: 26.03.2015

14. Guliyev. Barrows, pp. 306-307

15. Guliyev. Barrows, p. 30

16. Иманов Вюгар, Животные.

17. Strabo. Geography. Book XI. The geography of Strabo : Literally tr.,
with notes / The first six books by H. C. Hamilton, esq., the remainder
by W. Falconer. London : H. G. Bohn, 1854-1857. p.262

18. Strabo. Geography. Book XI, p.232-233

19. Strabo. Geography. Book XI, p. 235-236

20. Sabuhi Ahmedov. Knights in Azerbaijan. Article 3 (12-13th century).
Irs Magazine. No 1(6), 2014, p.39

21. Kaveh Farroukh. Iran at War: 1500-1988. Osprey Publishing, 2011,
480 P

22. Grey, Charles and Angiolelli, Giovanni Maria Degli, etc. A narrative
of Italian travels in Persia, in the fifteenth and sixteen centuries, London,
1873

23. Agasalim Efendiyev. Battle Genre in Azerbaijan Miniature Painting
of 13th-16th Centuries. Baku: Khazar University Press, 2009, p.25

24. Agasalim Efendiyev. Battle Genre , p.36

25. Халилов Мубариз. Древние каменные изваяния Южного
Кавказа. // журнал: IRS Наследие. — 2003. — № 8. с.52-57 (Mubariz
Khalilov. Ancient stone statues of the South Caucasus. // Journal: IRS
Heritage. - 2003. - № 8. pp.52-57)

26. Betty Blair and Farid Alakbarli. Sofi Hamid Cemetery: Life Mirrored in Pastel Colors. Azerbaijan International Magazine. Spring 2005 (13.1), p.40-63
27. Mehmet Emin Bars. Horse, Women, Weapon in the Epic of Koroğlu. Turkish Studies. International Periodical For the Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic. Volume 3/2 Spring 2008. pp.168-169
28. Lewis, Geoffrey (Ed.) (1974). *The Book of Dede Korkut*. Translated by G. L. Lewis Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974, p. 22
29. The book of Dede Korkut: a Turkish epic. Translated by Faruk Sümer, Ahmet E.Uysal and Warren S.Walker. University of Texas Press, 1972, p. 162
30. Книга моего деда Коркута. Пер. В.В.Бартольда, М-Л. АН СССР. 1962, с.85 (Book of Dede Korkut. Trans. V.V. Bartold, M-L: USSR Academy of Sciences. 1962, p.85)
31. The book of Dede Korkut, p.164
32. The book of Dede Korkut, p.174
33. Alakbarov Farid. The other "Koroghlu" Tbilisi Manuscript Sheds Light on Medieval Azerbaijani Hero. Azerbaijan International Magazine, Spring 2002 (10.1) Pages 54-57
34. Mehmet Emin Bars. Horse, Women, Weapon, p.171
35. Walker, Barbara K., Siegel, Helen and Halman, Talat Sait. Art of the Turkish Tale. Vol. 2. Texas Tech. Press, 1993, P. 295
36. Иманов Вюгар, Животные.
37. Louise Laylin Firouz . Notes on the Oriental Horse in Persia, p.8
38. Louise Laylin Firouz . Notes, p.4

39. Louise Laylin Firouz . Notes, p.4
40. Hosseinion, M. and Shahrezevi, H, 1972, "A preliminary report on the basic skeletal differences of the Caspian miniature horse as compared to other Iranian and European breeds", Appendix B in L. Firouz, The Caspian Miniature Horse of Iran, Field Research Projects, Miami, Florida, pp. 24-5
41. Louise Laylin Firouz . Notes, p.4
42. Louise Laylin Firouz . Notes, p.5
43. Louise Laylin Firouz . Notes, p.8
44. Karabakh horses perform at jubilee of British Queen`s reign, Azerbaijanews. <http://www.azernews.az/azerbaijan/42408.html>
45. Karabakh Horses. "Günay Equestrian Invest. url: http://www.gunayequestrian.com/endurance_horses/lang,en/] Accessed: 26.03.2015
46. The Karabakh Horse. Equestrian Federation of Azerbaijan Republic. url: http://www.araf.az/en/federation/history/national_breeds.aspx. Accessed: 28.03.2015
47. Елена Волкова. Карабахские лошади. К истории породы // «Конный мир» : журнал. — 2000. — № 2. url: <http://horseworld.ru/modules/AMS/article.php?storyid=23> (Elena Volkova. The Karabakh horse. On the history of the breed // "Horse World": magazine. - 2000. - № 2)
48. Иманов Вюгар, Животные.
49. Inna Kostina. Azerbaijan at agricultural exhibitions in the second half of the 19th century. Irs Magazine, №14, 2013, pp.48-49
50. A Guide to Russian Literature: 1820-1917. Url: <http://www.cristoraul.com/ENGLISH/Universal-Literature/A-guide-to->

Russian-literature-1820-1917/Lermontov-Demon.html Accessed:
26.03.2015

51. Dmitriez, N.G. and Ernst, L.K. Animal Genetic Resources of the USSR. Animal Production and Health Paper Publ. by FAO, Rome, 1989, 517 p.

52. Аббасов А.А. (ред.). Азербайджанцы. Историко-этнографический очерк. Баку, "Элм", 1998, с.65 (Abbasov A.A. (ed.). Azerbaijanis. Historical and ethnographic study. Baku: Elm, 1998, p.65)

53. Книга о лошади. Том I \Составлена под руководством С.М. Буденного - Москва: Государственное издательство сельскохозяйственной литературы, 1952 - с.608 ('The book about horses. Volume I \Compiled under the direction of S.M. Budenny - Moscow: State Publishing House of Agricultural Literature, 1952 - p.608)

54. Иманов Вюгар, Животные.

55. Azərbaycan etnoqrafiyası, III cildə, Red. T.Ə.Bünyadov, I c, Bakı, "Elm", 2007, p. 267. (Ethnography of Azerbaijan. Ed. T.A.Bunyadov, Vol. I, Baku: Sharq-Qarb Press, 2007, p.267)

56. ibid, p.267

57. Аббасов, с.65

58. Ерицов А.Д. Экономический быт государственных крестьян Казахского уезда Елизаветпольской губернии. МИЭБГКЗК, т. II, ч. 2, с. 23. (Eritsov A.D. The economic life of the state peasants of the Kazakh Uyezd of Yelizavetpol province. Vol.2, part 2, p.23).