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# Caspian Horses

A Lecture Created by Tracey Adams

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# Louise Firouz

(nee Laylin)

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- Graduate of Cornell University
- Married Iranian, Narcy Firouz in 1957
- Moved to Iran and had three children
- Established Nourozabad Equestrian Centre near Teheran, Iran
- Discovered Caspian horses in 1965

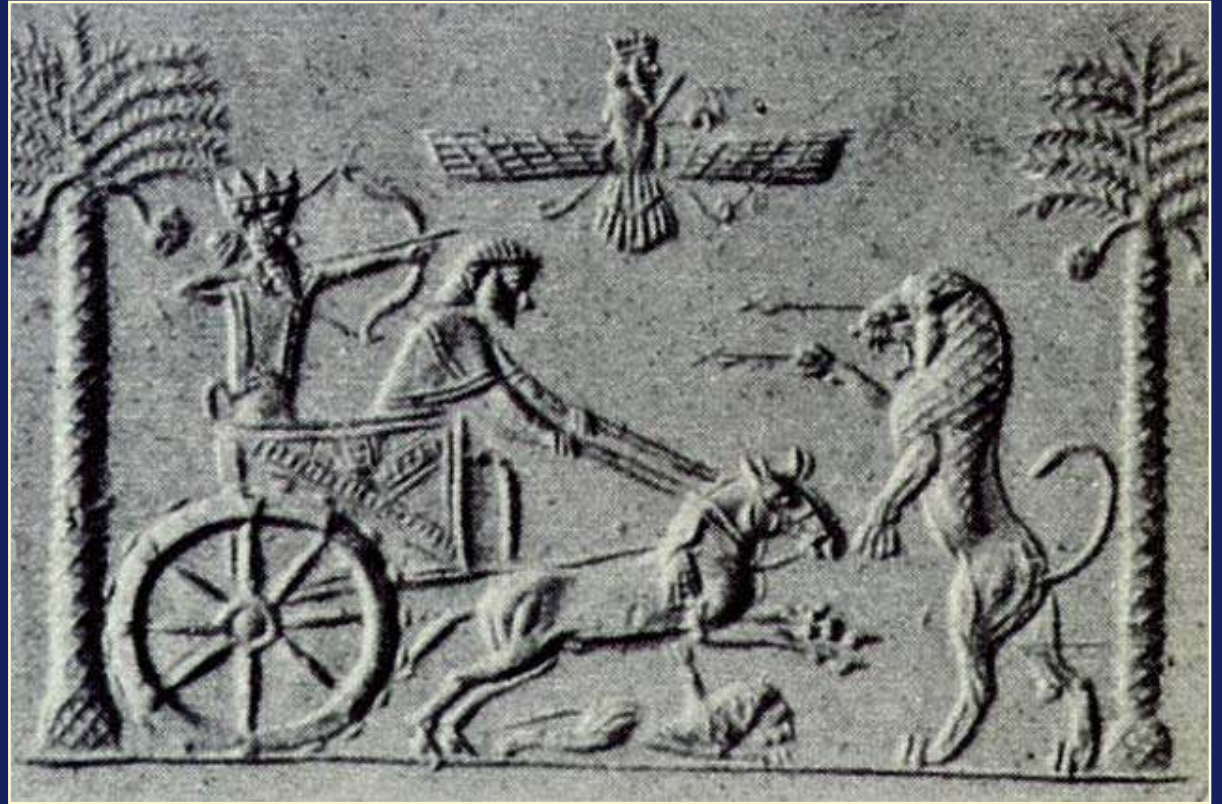




# History

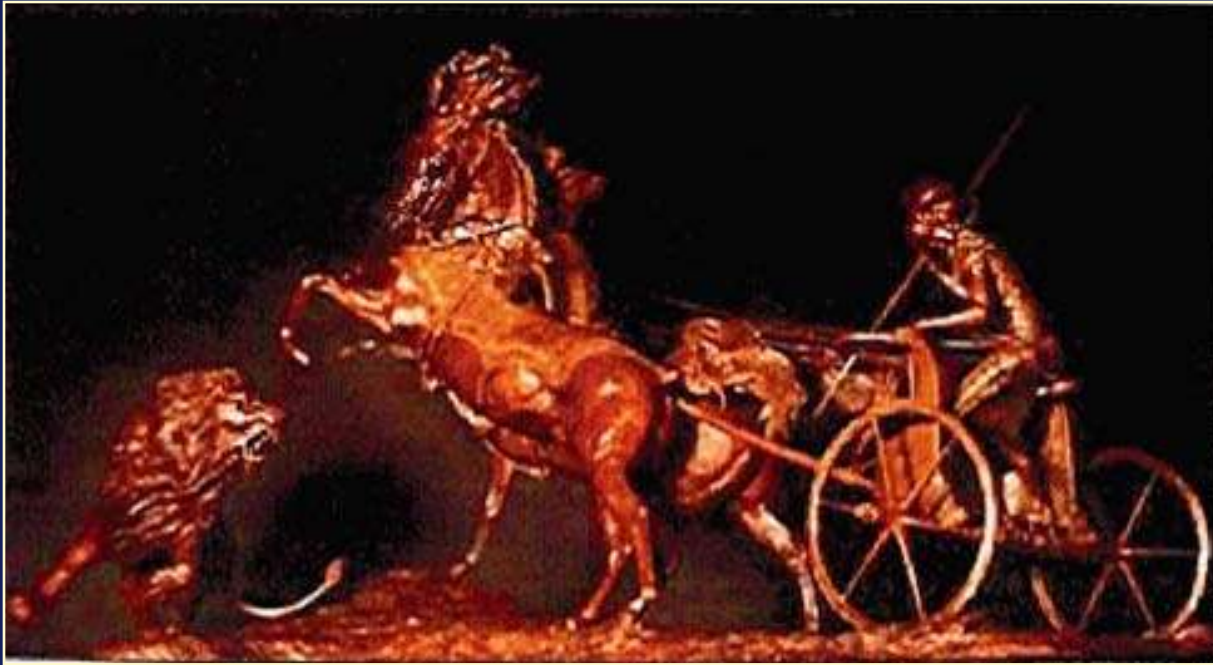
King Darius the Great  
of Persia - 500 BCE

Caspian type horses  
depicted on his  
royal seal



Entertaining recreation  
of the lion hunt





Ancient writings and artifacts and skeletal remains from 3,000 BCE

Caspians appear to be mostly unchanged over 5,000 years

Highly prized by ancient royalty

Three breeds in ancient Persia







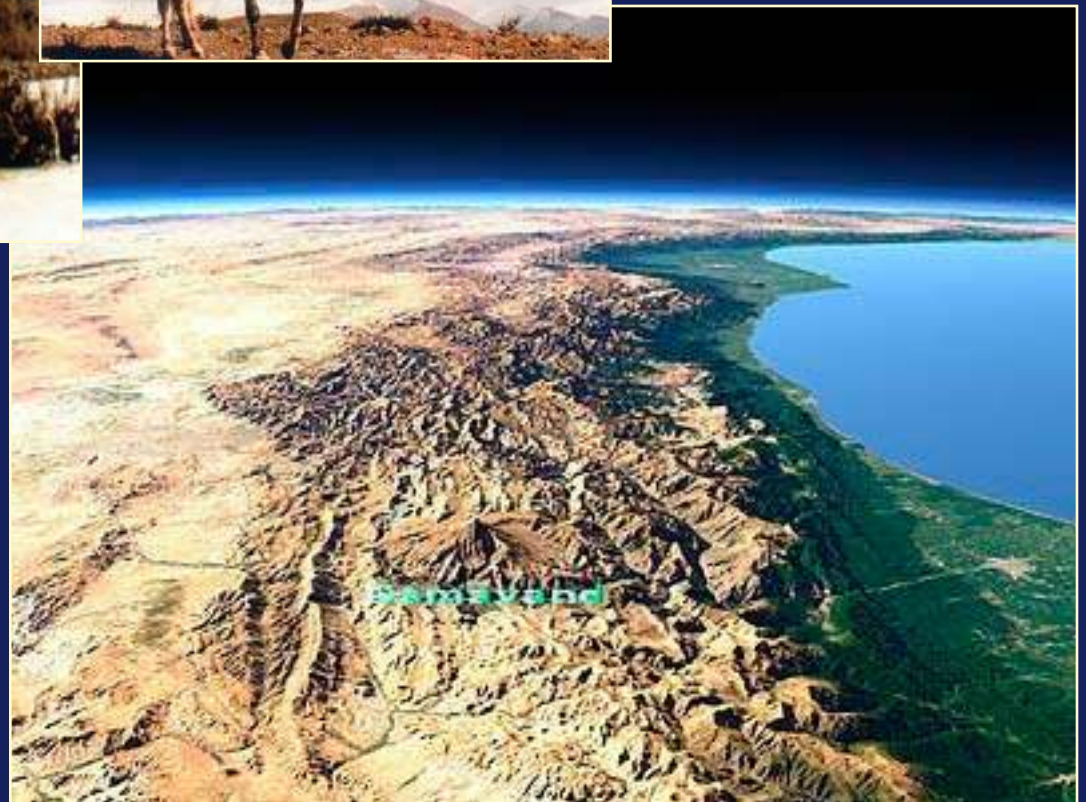
## Location

Foundation  
stallion  
Zeeland\*



South of the Caspian Sea,  
North of the Alborz  
Mountains of northern Iran

Very isolated wilderness,  
farms and a few small  
villages



# Prehistoric Horse

- Modern Horse, *Equus Caballus*, has 64 chromosomes
- *Equus Ferus Przewalskii* has 66 chromosomes
- Hybrid crosses have 65 chromosomes, and are fertile
- About 1/3 of all Caspians have 65 chromosomes
- It is probable that Caspians are an evolutionary hybrid
- This is likely what makes Caspians different from all other breeds
- Other theories include chromosomal fusion and fission



Registered Caspian  
Mare



*Equus Ferus*  
*Przewalskii*



Prehistoric "Curly" and  
colour genetics





# Horse Types



All modern horse breeds evolved from these four ancient types



Pony Type 1  
Resembled  
Exmoor Pony



Pony Type 2  
Resembled  
Highland Pony



Horse Type 3  
Resembled  
Akhal Teke



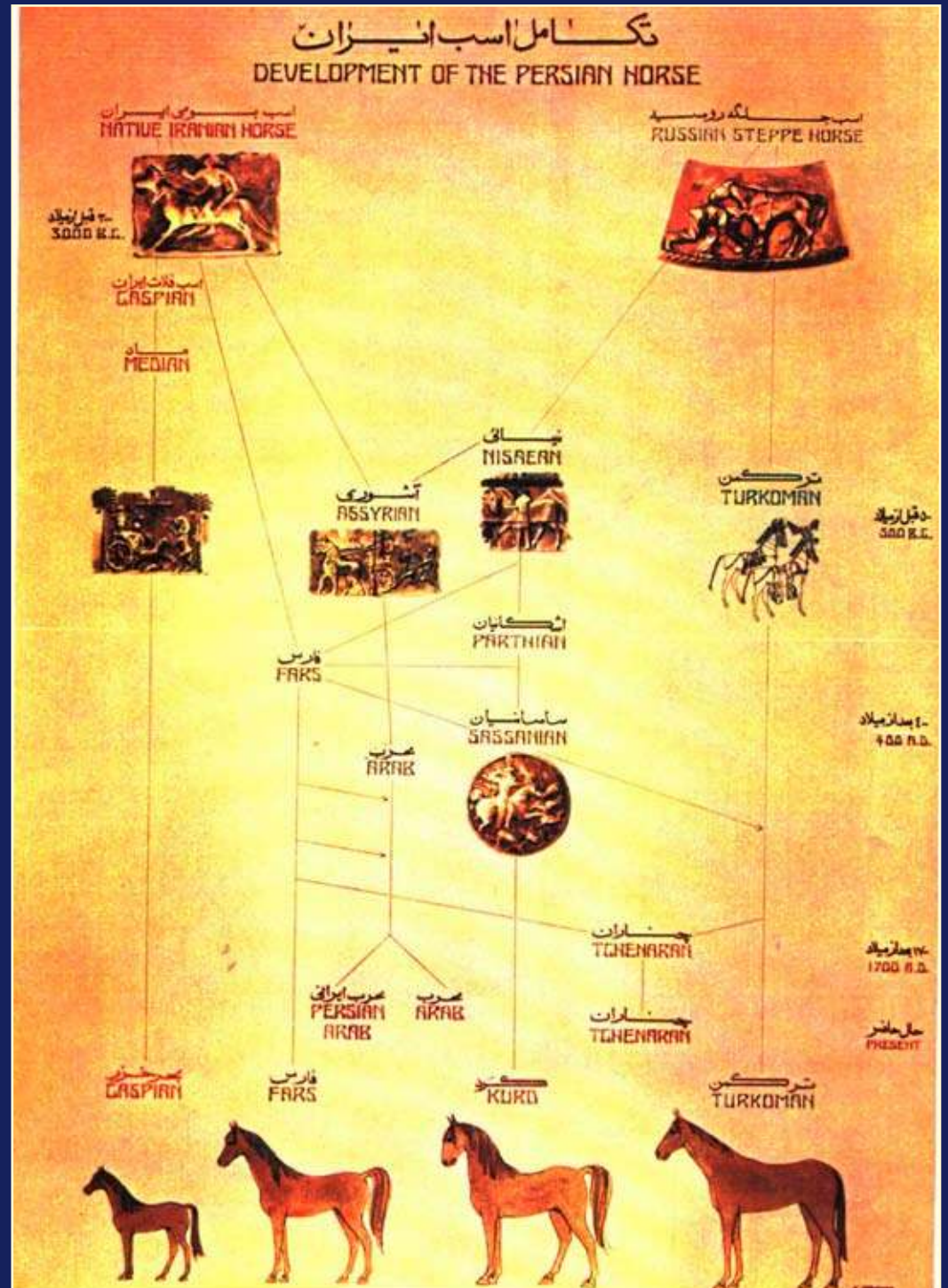
Horse Type 4  
Caspian



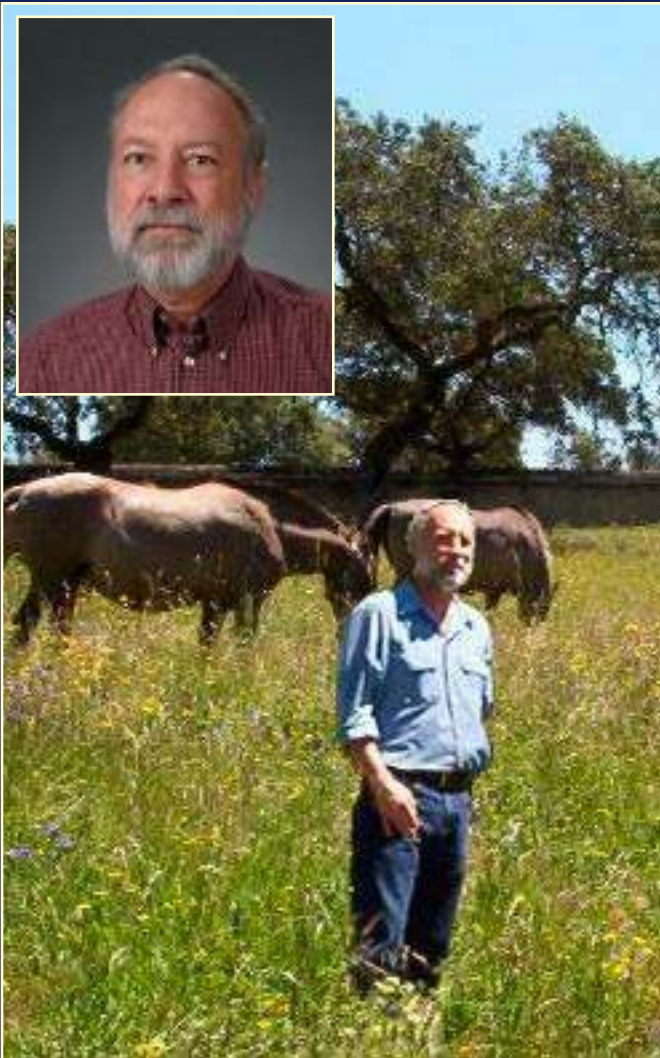
# Evolution

It is proposed that the Caspian is the ancestor to the modern Oriental breeds:

- Turkoman
- Yabou
- Akhal-Teke
  - Fars
  - Arabian
- Shagya Arabian
  - Kurd
  - Barb
  - Bedouin







Dr. Gus Cothran -  
Equine Geneticist  
University of Kentucky  
Caspian DNA evaluator

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**Research**  
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Elwyn Hartley  
Edwards  
Renowned equine  
author and editor



Dr. Shahram Dordari  
Equine Researcher  
Ministry of Ag. - Iran  
Caspian herd vet and  
Iranian registrar



# Foundation Horses



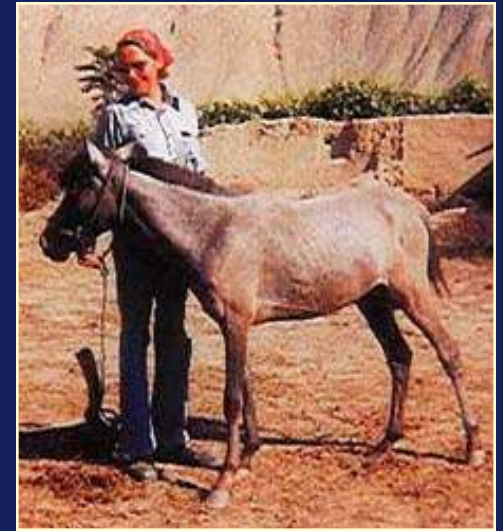
Ostad\*



Palang\*



Ostad\* & Aseman\*



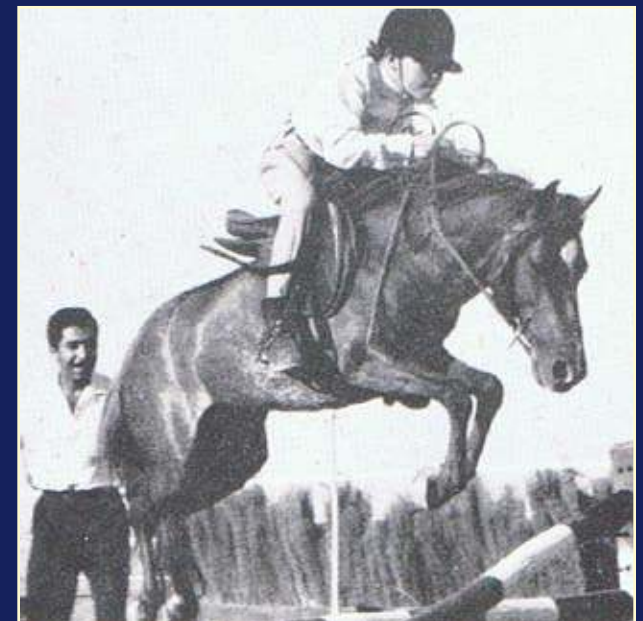
1965 - 1974: 27  
1986 - 2008: 30



Amu Daria\*



Daria Nour\*



Ruba\*





# Exports



*All Caspians exported from Iran*

## To USA

1966: 1 stallion

1974: 1 stallion

## To Bermuda

1970: 1 stallion and 2 mares

These horses and 4 offspring  
then went to Great Britain.

## To Great Britain

1971: 1 mare and 1 stallion  
given to HRH Prince Philip

1974: 3 stallions and 5 mares

1975: 4 stallions and 3 mares

1976: 1 stallion and 6 mares

## To Australia

1975: 1 stallion and 3 mares

*1977-86: Iranian revolution  
and Iran/Iraq war*

## To Great Britain

1993: 4 stallions and 3 mares  
exported to Great Britain

## To Germany

2008: 20 horses (pending reg.)

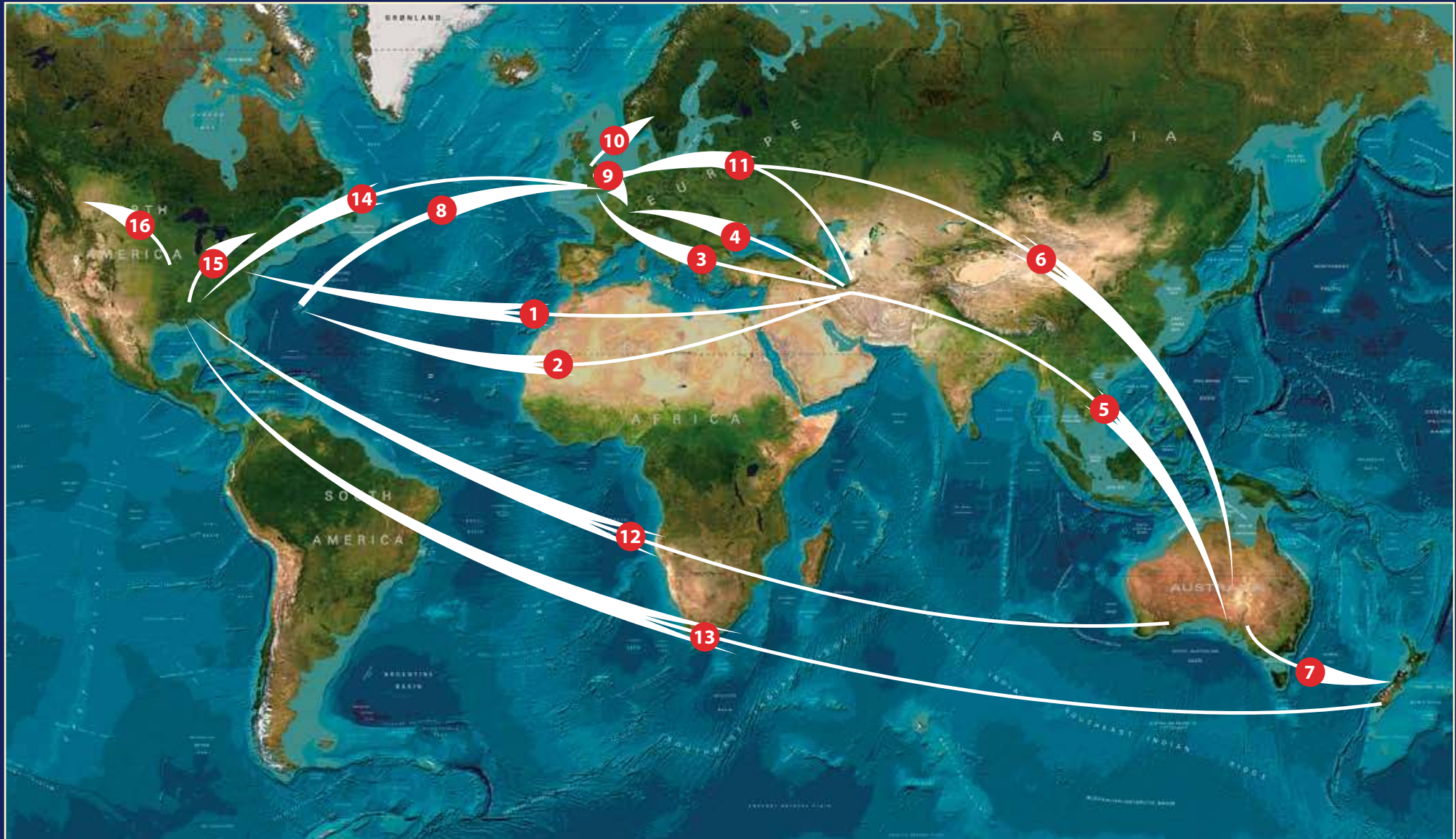
**Total exported from Iran**

40 plus 20 pending



# Population

Numbered in chronological order







# Physical Characteristics



- Appearance of a well-bred, elegant horse, with no pony features
- 10 - 13 hands
- Prominent forehead, tiny muzzle, and deep, wide cheek bones
- Large prominent eyes and tiny ears
- Supple neck with refined throatlatch
- Refined, slim, close-coupled body
- Long, sloping hindquarters
- Long shoulders and forearms
- Strong, oval hooves
- Flat, silky coat, in all solid colours



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# Comparison

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These have not been  
PhotoShopped!





# Temperament

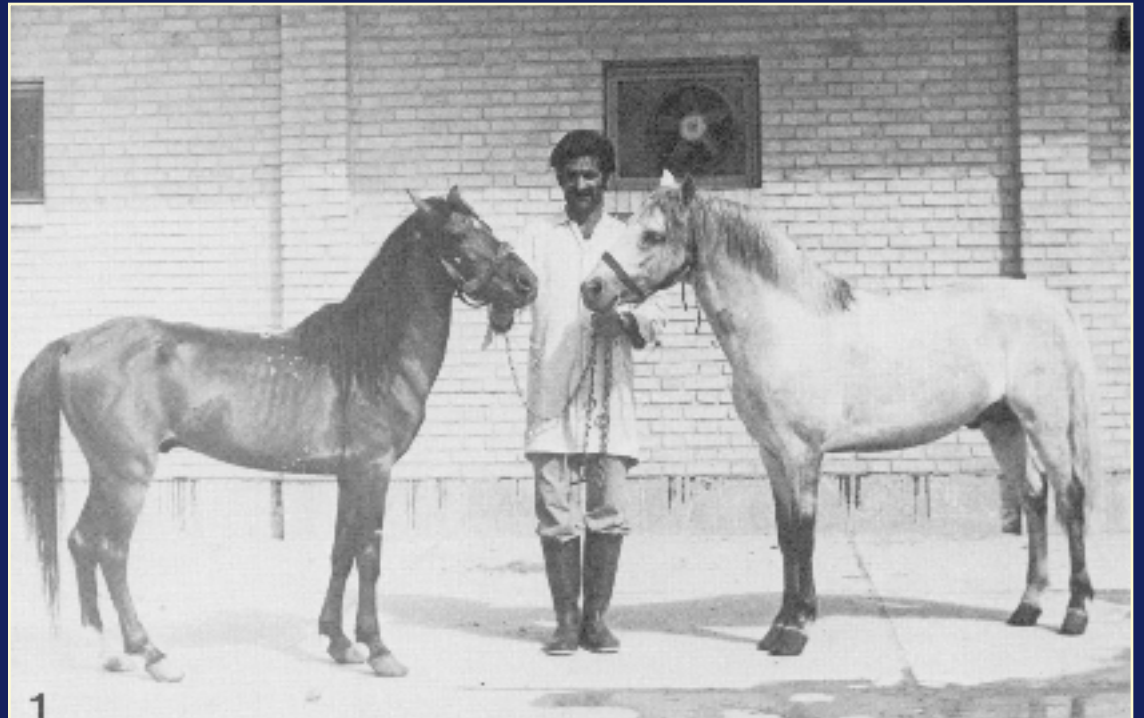
- Extremely intelligent
- Willing to please
- Easy to train
- Spirited
- Very brave
- Adaptable
- “Primitive”





# Differences

- Unique parietal crest creates a domed forehead
- The first six vertebrae are longer
- Many Caspians have a molar instead of a wolf tooth
- Specific markers in their DNA
- Often a metallic sheen to the summer coat
- Elongated scapula
- Canon bones are longer



# Usage

- Jumping ability
- Driving sensibility
- Great with children

- Speed
- Endurance
- Agility



















Half Miniature Horse

Part-Bred



Half Welsh Pony



Half Arabian



Half Hackney



Half Quarterhorse



Half Arabian



# Endangered

Caspian Horse is listed as Critical: Less than 300 active breeding mares world-wide

There are about 1400 registered Caspian horses; 450 of them are in USA 35 are in Canada

\* Still a few Caspians at large in Iran

SMALL PONIES		
	Country of Origin	Global Status
Dartmoor	England	Vulnerable
Exmoor	England	Critical
Gotland-Russ	Sweden	At Risk
LARGE PONIES		
	Country of Origin	Global Status
Dales	England	Critical
Fell	England	Vulnerable
Highland	Scotland	Vulnerable
Newfoundland	Canada	Critical/Study
SMALL HORSE		
	Country of Origin	Global Status
Caspian	Iran/Persia	Critical
HORSE		
	Country of Origin	Global Status
Akhal-Teke	Turkmenistan	Vulnerable
Asiatic Barb Horse	Central Asia	Critical/Study
Canadian Horse	Canada	Threatened
Cleveland Bay	England	Critical
Colonial Spanish**	USA	Critical
Abaco Barbs	Bahamas	Critical/Nearly Extinct
Banker Wild Horses	USA	Critical
Carolina Marsh Tacky	USA	Critical/Nearly Extinct
Florida Cracker	USA	Critical
Spanish Barb	USA	Critical
Spanish Mustang	USA	Critical
Hackney Horse	England	Threatened
Irish Draught	Ireland	At Risk
Lipizzan	Austria	Threatened
Mountain Pleasure	USA	Critical
Rocky Mountain	USA	Recovering
DRAFT HORSE		
	Country of Origin	Global Status
American Cream Draft	USA	Critical
Clydesdale	Scotland	At Risk
English Shire	England	Vulnerable
Suffolk	England	Critical



## Stewardship

- New owners and breeders quickly fall in love with Caspians
- Breeders often end up making drastic personal sacrifices to preserve, promote and propagate the breed
- Cooperative efforts among breeders worldwide, to share and distribute bloodlines
- Never had to introduce other breeds for genetic variation



# Caspians in Canada

- 1981: 1 Caspian mare imported to Toronto, from UK
- 2005: 1 Caspian yearling gelding imported to Vancouver Island
- 2006: Tracey Adams imported the first breeding herd;  
1 stallion and 3 mares to Eastern Ontario in June
- 2007: Brent Seufert imported 21 Caspians to Calgary
- 2007: Donna O'Neill imported 1 stallion and 2 mares to Edmonton



Brent and Kristull Best Yet



Donna's Kristull Talib



Tracey and Stella

# Conclusion

What luck, for one person to have stumbled upon such a perfectly preserved specimen of the equine species. After 1,000 years of obscurity, the Caspian horse has walked out of our imaginations and into our hearts.

Words and pictures are insufficient to truly portray their exquisite beauty and unusual personalities. When you finally meet a Caspian, if you open your mind, you will feel the same wonder you might, if you were to touch a unicorn.

