

## What Happened to the Przewalskis in Europe?



When I started this paper, I had one goal in mind, to show how the Przewalski Horses in Western Europe had disappeared because of interbreeding with modern horses, which resulted in the creation of the Tarpan. But this task proved to be a little overwhelming; I found so much information that it threatened to sidetrack me; it was all I could do to stay focused. And to do that, I had to make some assumptions that are as of right now improvable. But I'm not trying to prove

something unequivocally, only to show how something might have occurred, and I'll use facts where I can to back up my theory. But in the end, you'll be free to decide whether you agree or disagree. That's the fun of using your own brain—and no one has to have a degree in history to do that.

The story starts 2.6 million years ago in the late Pliocene Age. Equus entered Asia, and by one million BC horses and their relatives are everywhere except Australia and Antarctica. For the sake of this article, I am claiming that this horse is Equus Przewalski, the horse with 66 chromosomes in his makeup as to 64 in modern horse. This chromosome makeup is very important to the article. My reason for claiming the Przewalski horse as the only horse in at that time comes from the cave paintings of Neolithic Europe and Siberia.

Scientists state that the Cro-Magnon, the first true human, appeared around 40,000 BC, the end of the Pleistocene Epoch. It is also the time when he started painting the walls of caves. Humans were artistic from the start and they loved to paint the creatures of their world. Wisents, woolly rhinos, mammoths, European lions and horses adorned every blank space they could find. At Chauvet-Pont-d' Arc Cave are some excellent horse heads that show a number of characteristics that are found in Przewalski only, the foremost being the absence of forelock. Archeologists who study the caves state they are Przewalski, although I have heard several breed registries try to claim them for themselves. I will debate this now, it is up to you as to whom you want to believe, but as I say, I will go with Przewalski for the sake of this article.

Between 80,000 and 10,000 years ago, Asia and North America were cut off by what is called the Wisconsinan Glacial Period. Horses were no longer passing between the two continents. South America rejoined the North at this time and horse like creatures entered the south and evolved into unusual creatures the size of Clydesdales. With them came huge lions and cameloids, while on the northern plains forest bison evolved into open grasslands creatures that would one day number millions. During this isolation the North American horse evolved into a slightly different animal than Przewalski.

18,000 years ago the ice sheets were at their maximum growth over North America. This was called the Laurentide Ice Sheet. According to traditionalist, there were no people in the Americas at this time, although archeologists in South America and Washington State are making new discoveries that question that theory. Still, the ice sheet made it impossible for new animals to make the crossing. But sometime around the year 15,000 BC, a passage between the Americas and Asia started opening up and

new migration between animals and humans began for a little while. Fresh equine blood entered Asia.

According to the archeologists at La Brea, the American horses found in the tar pits were the size of Quarterhorses. But modern horses come in all sizes from Shires to Shetlands, and genetically they were exactly alike. The horses that came out of North America did not have to be Quarterhorse size.

Horses in art merge between the Paleolithic period and the beginning of the Bronze Age, but the moment horses do return they are clearly modern animals. The stiff mane and missing forelock are gone, although primitive animals are clearly primitive in appearance. The Scythians, ranked among the first horsemen, had beautiful broaches, pins and goblets crafted by the Greeks depicting their lifestyle and exploits. The horses are often described as Mongolian ponies, although well-bred animals have been found in the tombs of their kings. But Herodotus in his Histories mentions that the Assyrians and Scythians routinely stole valuable animals from the Medes, Central Asia's first great horse breeding tribe.

When Jericho was founded in 8000 BC, there were no horses in Central Asia, although wild asses were relatively common. Horses did exist in Asia Minor and the city of Catal Hayuk supposedly has art depicting some horses, but these were prey animals and not used for riding. (I am currently trying to locate them pictures)

Sometime after the last Ice Age ended and the last modern horses crossed over a change occurred in equestrian art. Although there is a lapse of several thousand years (please if anyone knows of horse art in the interval between 10000 BC and 3000 BC, please let me know) When art reemerges, the horses are clearly modern and almost Arabian like in some areas (please note the Horses of Ramses the Great), Tarpan like in others. The Scythians, recognized as the first horse people, kept great herds of horses, and Greek art showed that many of them were primitive animals that could be related to the Mongolian pony breed or were perhaps true Tarpans-many of the ponies have large heads. Historians generally accept that the Scythians tamed the first horse 5000 years ago, but there's a problem with the notion that only primitive types existed at that time that I will go into later.

So where did the notion come from that the **Tarpan might be a Przewalski-Tarpan cross?** From the German zoologists, Heinz and Lutz Heck. In the 1930s, these two zoologists at the Tierpark Hellabrunn, Munich Zoo, decided they were going to recreate the Tarpan, which had become extinct in the 1800s. Using Icelandic, Swedish Gotland and Polish primitive mares with Przewalski stallions, they announced the birth of the first Tarpan on 22 May, 1933. What proved interesting about this crossing was that the Przewalski has 26 chromosomes while the modern horse has 24. The first crossing between the two horses had 25 chromosomes, but the crossing was fertile. They in turn were crossed with each other. The Heck brothers believed the Przewalski horse brought out the primitive characteristics of the Tarpan. What if this is how the Tarpan was created in the first place? Modern horses coming into contact with Przewalskis-cross breeding occurs and in 8,000 years, the Przewalski is almost gone. Where the Przewalski was most prominent the more primitive was the modern horse. Where there were no Przewalskis-or very few the modern horse is more developed and colorful.

I base this latter statement on the apparent fact (when dealing with the far past you can only make observations and draw your conclusions from that) that the three most highly developed types, the protoArab-the Nisean (ancestor of the Spanish breeds) and the Tekkes-evolved in a region free of Przewalskis almost 1500 years after the taming of their so called Tarpan ancestor. Actually this date is speculative- 1500 years after the Tarpan was tamed by the Scythians-at least two of these breeds-the Nisean and the protoArab were already in existence. The Hykos (1759-1539) were driving well bred Arabian like horses (some were pintos) when they entered Egypt and introduced the horse to Africa. The Uratians in Armenia had Appaloosa colored/Andalusian sized horses in their herds as early as 1200 BC.

So what if the horses that came out of America were not primitive Tarpans but more like the horses we are familiar with now? The scientists at La Brea state the bones of horses that they have been pulling out of the tar are the size of Quarter horses. What if this was the case all along? The average height of the Tarpan is 13 to 13.2 hands, the Przewalski is 12 to 13 hands tall, both have large heads and primitive color. In the thousands of years of contact with humans, neither animal has changed much (I am speaking here of the true Tarpan that became extinct in the 19th century)

## SPANISH PRIMITIVES

The Sorraia and the Asturian may both be called the true primitives of Spain. One, the Sorraia is very primitive, the other only moderately so. The Asturian, a gaited pony, is 11.2 to 12.2 hands a dark reddish bay or black in color with a long mane and tail and no white. The Sorraia is dun and normally 14 hands tall, which is taller than the Przewalski or the Tarpan. Some have claimed the Sorraia is a subspecies of the Tarpan, which I think is nonsense. This is like saying the Boxer is a subspecies of Mastiff. Boxers and Mastiffs are both dogs. Tarpans and Sorraias are both modern (genetically) horses. The true Sorraia is a long maned horse with no white on him. He is dun in color with sniping. The Tarpan is mouse colored, no **striping and a heavier built horse.**

Spanish Mustangs, which incorporated all that Spain had to offer in their lineage, show all types of coloring and size. My Spanish Mustang is a dun, 14 hands with a white nose, Some would say he is a Sorraia type, except his forelock is very small and not his best feature. Looking at him, I would say he got that from an ancestor that did not have much of a mane. But if you look at **the Spanish horses**, these are animals with glorious manes. Where did Zydeco get his sad forelock? You know what I'm thinking, don't you? Zydeco's forelock came from some ancient Przewalski ancestor (both sire and dam are full maned lovelies).

So where did the Sorraia come from and the Asturian? Well, the Asturian has a lineage that's been traced back to Central Asia where the Celtic people, like all Indo-Europeans originally came from. But the Sorraia seems to have always been there. One theory is that he is the original horse that crossed the land bridge at the end of the last ice age. Some Scythian art shows men on primitive horses that could very well be Sorraia types. Other Scythian art is clearly Tarpan, while other is Tekke. One could speculate the Tarpan is a subspecies of Sorraia that occurred when the Sorraia came into contact with the Przewalski. Maybe the Tekke breeds we also his descendents-conformation fits, although personality

does not. Perhaps the other two breeds, the Nisean and protoArab, are original types as well. I can't say, all I can do is look at the evidence and make up my own mind. You can too.

By the way, don't let an EXPERT lead you astray. He or she puts their pants on the same as you-which makes you an expert also if that is what you want to be. And you don't have to agree with me. I just think in a nutshell, the Tarpan came about when modern horses came into contact with the Przewalski. I'd like to think the Sorraia is one of the original breeds that crossed out of America in Asia all those centuries ago. I can't prove my of this, but I can show you the evidence.

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The Tarpan

The Przewalski

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