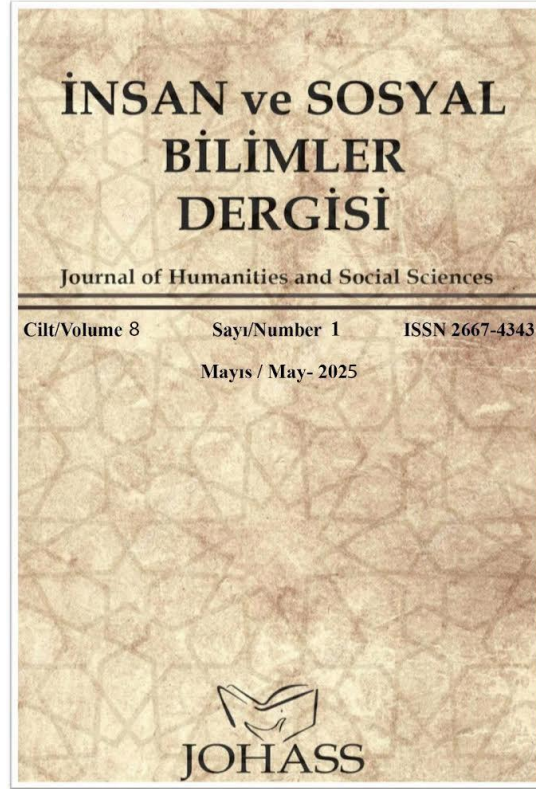


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The Horse in Turkish Mythology, Ahal-teke and Hyotherapy Methods

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The Horse in Turkish Mythology, Ahal-teke and Hyotherapy Methods

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Abstract	Research Article
<p>The horse, which has been a source of inspiration in many fields from architecture to art in Turkish civilizations rising on horses from Turkestan to Anatolia, has been an indispensable element and cult at every stage of Turkish cultural history with the words “<i>The horse is the wing of the Turk</i>” in Divan-ı Lügat’it Türk written by Kashgarlı Mahmut and “A man on foot has no hope” in Dede Korkut. The horse, which is associated with the symbol of “time” in Kutadgu Bilig and with the “<i>Big Dipper Constellation</i>” in Turkish cosmology, has become famous as a close friend and valuable asset of bards such as Dadaloğlu, Köroğlu, Karacaoğlu. The horse, which has made significant contributions to the development of cultures and civilizations in the historical process, has been described as a social and emotional being in many myths, legends, epics and stories about the Turks and has been used to treat people thanks to its strong intuition. In this context, in this article, the history, care, nutrition and hypnotherapy methods of Ahal-Teke horses, which have an important place with their elegance, posture, anatomy and universal value, indispensable helpers of human life, mythologically called “<i>Gök horses-Nesey horses-Turkmen horses</i>” in the literature, will be discussed.</p>	<p>Received: 26.11.2025 Accepted: 31.05.1993 Published online: 31.05.1993</p>
<p>Keywords: Ahal-Teke, Hippotherapy Methods, Turkish Mythology.</p>	

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Introduction

The horse, which is called “*the most honoured being created after man*” (Şen, 1988), is two beings that cannot be mentioned separately from man. When heroism, courage, harmony and loyalty are added to these two beings who are companions in the hereafter and friends in the world, it can be better understood that the horse has become a “*trademark*” for Turks (Türker, 1971).

While Kâşgarlı Mahmud's words “*the horse is the wing of the Turk*” in his work *Dîvânu Lugâti't-Türk* show the highest degree of the horse figure that is characteristic for Turks (Sümer, 1995), the words of the Chinese “*Turks sleep, get up, fight, die and are buried with horses*” express the friendship between Turks and horses in the best way. The unity of the concept of “*Horse*” and “*State*” has an important functions in understanding the history of culture, therefore, the sons of a nation “born on a horse, buried with a horse, sacrificing the horse to the Creator” cannot be explained without “horse” in socio-cultural terms (Aksoy, 1998).

Omar Hayyam said; “*in previous times, no one was as good as the Turks in recognising the horse and knowing its skill and defects. The sultan of the world is one of them. Today, there is no people who know the world of horses better than the Turks, because their world is the horse precious*” with this words, he expressed that Turks are successful in horse breeding as well as being a part of their lives (Hayyam, 1312). In this success, the characteristics of Turkistan geography and the fact that it region where the world's most horses have been raised from the known ages to the present day are important (Sümer, 1998).

“*Anav Culture*”, which was the pre-culture of the Turkestan steppes between 5000-1000 BC; ‘*Afanasyevo Culture*’, which prevailed in the northwest of the Altai-Sayan mountains between 3000-1700 BC; “*Andronovo Culture*”, which developed in the region extending to the east of the Altai-God Mountains, southern Siberia and the Caspian Sea between 1700-1200 BC (Gök, 2018); ‘*Karasuk Culture*’, the period when iron was first processed by Turks; ‘*Tagar Culture*’, which dominated the Abakan region between 700-100 BC, are the regions belonging to the Pre-Turks where different horses were bred. In Kâşgarlı Mahmud's work *Dîvânu Lugâti't-Türk*, in *Kutadgu Bilig* and Uyghur dictionary, horses are described up to their age, breed, name, etc (Sümer, 1998).

In the “*Anav Culture*”, horse bones dating back to 6000-8000 BC were found in the “*Anav*” excavation centre (Batu, 1951) and horse images were engraved on 15,000-year-old petroglyphs in the Gobi desert (Figure 1). Archaeological excavations in the “*Sredni Stog*”

region in 6500-5500 BC showed that the companionship of the horse and humanity began in the middle Dnieper region. During the excavations, bones of domesticated horses with tall, beautiful bone structure, whose bones were found together with their owner, dating back to 2400 BC (Figure 2), (Gök, 2018).



Figure 1. Gobi Desert, 15,000 years old Petroglyph.¹



Figure 2. Berel Cemetery, Horse Burial, Kazakhstan (Samashev, 2013).

In the 8th and 7th centuries, the Oghuzes formed their military structure from horse-drawn troops and made comrades in arms from their loyal friends (Deer, 1954). Due to the fact that they slept on horses and fought on horses, Europeans have been using “*mythological heroes*” who were half horse and half man, namely the “*Centaur*s” mentioned in Greek myths. They likened them to Turks and it was stated in history books that the “*Centaur*s” were Turks (Figure 3).

The horse, which is thought to be created from air, water and earth, can be grouped under three headings as “*horses of celestial origin*”, “*horses of earth origin*” and “*horses of water origin*” in terms of their mythological characteristics. Sky origin horses depicted as winged, earth origin horses as horned and water origin horses as life drinking and immortal (Çoruhlu, 1998). “*Tulpar*” as a winged horse, ‘*Burak*’, the horse of the Prophet Muhammad and the horse of Hızır are depicted in this group (Figure 4), (Bıyıklı, 2019).

While the horses in the epics of Dede Korkut, Battal Gazi, Bozoğlan and Köroğlu are considered immortal because they drink the water of life (Koncagül, 2020), Köroğlu's horse is thought to be Ahal-Teke.² The Turks, who attach great importance to celestial culture, also

¹ In “Ancient Origins”, a research center for archaeology and history, scientists have determined that the 15,000-year-old petroglyphs found in the Gobi Desert were made by the Pre-Turks and that the Turks are the first of the oldest ethnic groups of people in existence. <https://whc.unesco.org/es/list/1382> (Date of Access: 17.10.2024).

² Türkmen Ahal-Teke Horse, <https://h4bib.blogspot.com/2012/02/turkmen-ahal-teke-atlar.html>

considered the constellations revolving around the Pole Star as horses and astrologically associated the horse with Mete Han.

The yellow horse was identified with the sun and the centre; the brown horse with Jupiter; the gray horse with woman and Venus; the black horse with Saturn and greatness and the pied horse with Mercury (Esin, 1995).



Figure 3. *Sentor-Sagittarius.*¹



Resim 4. *12th Century Seljuk Tile, Tulpar.*²

In the first army formation based on the quadruple system established by Mete Han, cavalry horses were deployed in four directions according to their colors. There are grey horsemen in the east, country horsemen in the west, fat horsemen in the north, bay horsemen in the south and Mete Han in the centre with his golden yellow horse and it is highly probable that Mete Han's horse is the golden Ahal-Teke (Figure 5-6)



Figure 5. *Directional Colors in Turks.*³



Figure 6. *13th century Turkish Four Directions Symbolism Related to Cosmology.*⁴

(Date of Access: 19.10.2024).

¹ Centaur (Centaur), <https://okuryazarim.com/centaur/> (Date of Access: 30.10.2024).

² Winged Horse, <https://tr.pinterest.com/pin/148900331424945006/> (Date of Access: 30.10.2024).

³ The Language of Colors in the First Turkish States, <https://www.tarihbilimi.net/ilk-turk-devletlerinde-renklerin-dili/> (Date of Access: 30.10.2024).

⁴ Portrayal Arts, <https://x.com/tasvirsanatları/status/1329406294919421954> (Date of Access: 30.10.2024).

History of Akhal-Teke

Central Asia, with its continental climate and vast pastures with high quality grasses, has bred a significantly different breed of thoroughbred horse (Gebert, 1). This thoroughbred horse, whose secrets are passed down from father to son, is the oldest and most noblest horse breed in the world. Ahal-Teke was named after the Turkmen tribe called “*Teke*” living in the “*Ahal*” oasis at the foot of the Kopet Mountains in present-day Turkmenistan (Koçkar, 2019). The lineage of the Ahal-Teke, which has preserved its unique characteristics and pedigree for centuries, is believed by historians to date back to the “*Nisean*” horses described in the Persian Empire sources dating back 3,000 years (Alexander and Nazarova 2017).

The quality of the Ahal-Teke breed was preserved until the conquest of Turkmenistan in the 19th century. The Tsarist colonial administration did not develop any extra methods to protect the Ahal-Teke horses, which were loved and bred with devotion by the Turkmen people. For this reason, some tribes, instead of surrendering their horses, fled with their horses to Iran and Afghanistan where, since there were no favourable conditions for them or their horses, the horses were left in the wild and perhaps in this way the Ahal-Teke race did not disappear.¹

When Iran, Afghanistan, Germany and especially England showed great interest in these horses and England imported 214 of the best mares from Turkmenistan in 1904/1905 alone (Gebert, 4), the Russians realised the value of these horses from 1917 onwards and started to keep their genealogies, calling them “*Argamak*”, meaning divine or sacred horse. In 1991, Turkmenistan which gained its independence in 1991-declared Ahal-Teke as a national treasure and used its picture on the state coat of arms (Gebert, 5).

Ahal-Teke, which has been a friend and indispensable companion of Turks for thousands of years and contributed to the independent existence of Turkic tribes, is estimated to have 7000 individuals in the world. As a state policy, Turkmenistan has banned the export of horses out of the country. The Russians recognised the value of these horses and created an identity for each horse, calling them “*Argamak*”, meaning sacred horses. British and German horses are also said to be descended from Ahal-Teke.² Horses such as “*Massaget, Parthian, Nisean, Persian*” are also declared to be descended from-Akhal-Teke.

¹ Ahal-Teke and Horse Feast, <https://www.zdergisi.istanbul/makale/ahal-teke-ve-at-bayrami-211> (Date of Access: 19.10.2024).

² Horse Love, Horse Love: AHAL-TEKE (Date of Access: 19.10.2024).

Physical Characteristics of the Akhal-Teke

The Ahal-Teke is a horse breed, whose origins lie in the dark, perfectly adapted to the desert. The harsh climatic conditions of extreme heat, dry cold and drought with the influence of the Karakum desert, have developed the endurance of this breed. Due to its isolation in desert oases and arid desert climate, it is orientated towards extreme endurance and is considered particularly suitable for difficult distance routes.

Living in steppe conditions, the Ahal-Teke, with its nobility hardiness, endurance, boldness, speed, easy gait, intelligence, docility, trainability, extraordinary physical strength and sensitivity, well as its nobility has gained the importance it deserves today outside its homeland of Turkmenistan (Gebert, 3) and has become the best friend of people thanks to its miraculous abilities and loyalty.

In the sun, the Ahal-Teke's fur has a metallic lustre and because the fur is so thin, there is a transparent hollow layer between the two layers for protection. The fur refracts reflected sunlight through the transparent substance (medulla) in a way that most animal hairs cannot, giving the skin a shimmering metallic lustre.¹

The color tones of the Ahal-Teke reflected in its coat due to its genetic characteristics. The fine and silky coat is shiny in all color variations and exhibits a wide range of shades of black, brown and chestnut (the three basic colors of the breed). Palomino (bronze), golden deerskin (golden-brown shaded), perlino (off-white, dark mane), cremello (cream), chestnut, bay, black, grey, white shades, as well as striped, spotted, smoky, brunette fur.² The cream color of the Ahal-Teke exhibits a silky, pearl-like sheen, like an oyster bed (Figure 7).



Figure 7. *White-colored Ahal-Teke.*³

¹ Kuballa, Katja. <https://www.fundis-reitsport.de/blog/author/katja-kuballa/> (Date of Access: 19.10.2024).

² Horse Breed Named Holy, <https://sacredwindows.com/the-breed-of-horse-called-sacred/> (Date of Access Date: 02.11.2024).

³ Pleasant Grove Ahal-Tekes, <https://www.pleasantgroveakhaltekes.com/our-stallions.html> (Date of Access: 02.11.2024).

The Ahal-Teke has earned the nickname “*Golden Horses*” thanks to its shiny metallic-gold coat, which provides warmth at night and regulates the heat balance (Bıyıklı, 2019). The Ahal-Teke's thin skin and generally short forelock, mane and tail hair make grooming easier (Figure 8). The Ahal-Teke's pinkish nose and marbled-effect blue, brown and black eyes create a mesmerizing appearance. This variety of colors, patterns and unique features makes the Ahal-Teke the most exciting and unique horse in existence. If perfection were possible in this world, the Ahal-Teke would definitely take the prize.¹

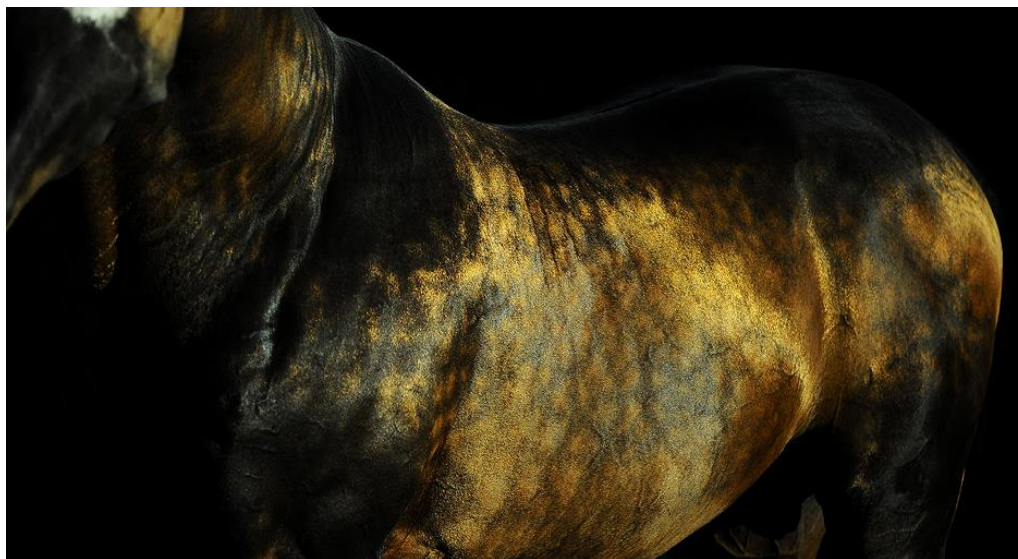


Figure 8. *Ahal-Teke With Metallic Fine Hair, (Baboev, 2013).*

The head structure of the Ahal-Teke is proud, narrow, flat, thin and weak. The head is narrow, the forehead broad, the nasal line straight, the ears long and thin, graceful, mobile and high (Figure 9). The mouth is flat or slightly convex and the cheeks are broad. The thin and long ears are high. The large almond eyes, usually large and expressive, are expressive and beautiful. Some horses have light blue eyes and are extremely sharp in the dark. The erect neck is long, slender and elegant, with prominent shoulders over a narrow chest.

The body of the Ahal-Teke, which arouses great sympathy and admiration because it is unlike other horses and is beautiful as a breed. Its musculature is straight and dense. Its limbs are long and lean. Tendons are strong and joints are strong. Hooves are small and hard. Ahal-Teke moves like a cat with strong, elastic and graceful movements and shows its own characteristics in its movements (Figure 10). It is a dexterous horse with extremely comfortable

¹ Ahal-Teke: The Shining Golden Horses of Turkmenistan, <https://binicilikokulu.com/ahal-teke-ati/> (Date of Access: 19.10.2024).

and flexible movements. It can easily perform the most of the movements that other horses have difficulty with.¹

The Ahal-Teke is characterized by its upright posture and long slender neck. Its long legs, narrow body and small, firm haunches make him very dynamic and mobile. Its body is long and sloping, with a muscular and well-defined shoulder, and the mane, although small, is extremely soft and moves harmoniously when running. The hooves are medium-sized and hard (Das Russische Forschungszentrum, 2018).



Figure 9. Ahal-Teke Head Structure.²



Figure 10. Ahal-Teke Horses.³

The Ahal-Teke warm-blooded horse, although it differs significantly in body structure, from common warm-blooded horse breeds⁴ (Figure 11-12). The Ahal-Teke is 157.6-159.2 cm tall.⁵ It is mentioned in Sumerian, Scythian and Persian mythologies that the Ahal-Teke, which can run 180-200 kilometers a day, is strong enough to stay without water for three days and has high maneuverability, is the oldest known racehorse in the world.⁶

¹ Thoroughbred Turkish Horse: Ahal Teke, 2018, <https://www.karamandan.com/foto/6391001/safkan-turk-ati-ahal-teke> (Date of Access: 19.10.2024).

² The Ahal Teke, <https://akhalteke.tumblr.com/> (Date of Access: 02.11.2024).

³ Ahal-Teke, <https://threadreaderapp.com/thread/1294993065816580098.html> (Date of Access: 24.10.2024).

⁴ Atınızın Vücut Ağırlığını Nasıl Tahmin Edersiniz – [Irka Göre Ortalama Ağırlık], <https://madbarn.com/estimate-horse-body-weight/> (Date of Access: 31.10.2024).

⁵ Heavenly Horses, <https://artdaily.com/news/125153/Heavenly-Horses> (Date of Access: 19.10.2024).

⁶ Ahal-Teke Atlarının Özellikleri, <https://ipekyolu.org/blog/ahal-teke/> (Date of Access: 24.10.2024).

To prove the endurance of Ahal-Teke horses, in 1935 a group of tribesmen traveled 2500 miles on horseback for 84 days, from the interior of their country to the capital Ashgabat, during which time the horses were not given water and three of them crossed the desert to reach the capital. Underlying this achievement was breeding in the harsh conditions of the Eurasian steppe.¹ In 1960, an Ahal Teke won the Olympic Gold Medal. Today, many Ahal-Teke owners achieve success in competitions and jumping arenas.²



Figure 11. *Ahal-Teke in Metallic Gold Color.*³



Figure 12. *Ahal-Teke in Black Color.*⁴

Characteristics of the Ahal-Teke;

The Ahal-Teke is emotionally united and attached to its rider, it wants only one owner, it is a source of great personal honor for its owner and a constant part of its family, it is extremely compatible with its owners. As a result of their relationship with their owners, they know their owners well and can deduce the slightest movement what their owners mean. They are very sensitive to how they are treated and avoid doing things they don't like.⁵

They are intelligent, learning and brave, which makes them able to act in the most difficult circumstances and their emotional nature allows them to build a special relationship with his owner. However, he is very stubborn in some situations and his stubbornness comes out when he is asked to do something he does not like to do.

¹ Ahal-Teke, <https://www.woopets.fr/cheval/race/akhal-teke/> (Erişim Tarihi: 02.11.2024).

² Thoroughbred Turkish Horse: Ahal Teke, 2018, <https://www.karamandan.com/foto/6391001/safkan-turk-ati-ahal-teke> (Date of Access: 19.10.2024).

³ Ahal Teke, the most beautiful horse in the kingdom, https://www.reddit.com/r/FairytaleasFuck/comments/f77kr0/akhal_teke_the_most_beautiful_horse_in_the_kingdom/?rdt=44639 (Date of Access: 30.10.2024).

⁴ Ahal-Teke and Horse Feast, <https://www.zdergisi.istanbul/makale/ahal-teke-ve-at-bayrami-211> (Date of Access: 19.10.2024).

⁵ Characteristics of the World's Most Beautiful Horse Ahal-Teke, <https://banafikirver.com/kultur-ve-sanat/ahal-teke-ozellikleri> (Date of Access: 19.10.2024).

Feeding the Ahal-Teke Horse

Turkmen horses were sometimes feed dates, eggs and sheep fat to survive in the desert. However, these foodstuffs do not provide the best nutrition for horses. Instead, Ahal Teke's should be fed a high-protein, forage-based diet with sufficient vitamins and minerals.

For a horse in grooming or light work, hay alone should be sufficient to meet it's energy and protein needs as determined by it's nutritional requirements. Hay supports gut health and helps reduce the risk of behavioral problems. Horses perform best on a forage-based diet, which requiring about 2% of their daily body weight in feed. For an average 1,000-pound Ahal-Teke horse, this is equivalent to 20 kilograms of hay per day. The Ahal-Teke has evolved to survive on drought-tolerant forages such as alfalfa. Even today, these horses thrive on high-quality forages and a diet based on tasty grass hay is an ideal basis for their nutrition. High-quality forages usually provide enough energy for Ahal-Teke horses for light work. Horses that need more calories benefit from fat supplements, which are a safer source of concentrated calories than high-starch cereals (Nadeau, et al. 2000).

"*Alfalfa*" is an excellent source of feed-based protein for Ahal-Teke. This legume is rich in calcium, which helps buffer stomach acid in horses with ulcers. However, too much "*Aalfalfa*" can also upset the balance of mineral ratios (Nadeau, et al. 2000).

Ahal-Teke can also use soaked "Aalfalfa" pellets or other feed-based carriers instead of grain (Metayer, et al. 2010). If Ahal-Teke needs fat for dietary energy, "Omega-3" has anti-inflammatory properties that provide many benefits as a rich source of fat. "*DHA*" supports joint health, cardiovascular function, hair health and weight maintenance.¹

Barley is low in protein and high in energy; it is more efficient to mix it with some straw (Tektaş, 1946). Raisins, parsley, carrots, etc. Can also be added to barley as additives.

Although maize is low in protein and fiber, it is a high energy feed like barley. Corn should be given crumbled or after heating. Because it is easier for the horse to chew and digest. Meadow grass, alfalfa and rough clover are dry grass types. The quality and nutritional value of dry grass varies depending on the mixture of different grasses, the condition of the ground where it grows, the fertilization status of the area, harvest time and storage conditions (Özgel, 2009). Hay and straw contain a minimum amount of water and a high level of structural richness.

¹ Ahal Teke Horse Breed Guide: Characteristics, Health & Nutrition, <https://madbarn.com/akhal-teke-horse-breed-profile/> (Date of Access: 30.10.2024).

Care of the Ahal-Teke Horse

The Ahal-Teke needs a clean stable, ventilated and dry environment. In addition to regular basic care such as vaccination and parasite checks, hoof cleaning, grooming, dental health, bathing, as well as keeping away from crowds and noise. Regular farrier care is important to maintain optimal hoof balance and minimize excessive stress on distal limb structures during exercise. Horses with “*DSLD*” need regular corrective shoeing.¹

Ahal-Teke Horse Health

The Ahal Teke is a breed that generally has similar physical characteristics and lacks genetic diversity. This makes them genetically susceptible to a number of health problems.

“*Cervical Vertebral Malformation-CVM*”, also known as ‘*Wobbler Syndrome*’. “*Wobbler's Syndrome*” is a chronic condition in Ahal-Teke. This “*Neurodegenerative*” condition involves spinal cord compression caused by “*Vertebral Malformation*” or injuries.

The affected horse shows signs of uncoordinated gait (Falco, 1976).

“*Cryptorchidism Scrotum*”, the absence of one or both testicles, making sterilization difficult and causing other health and behavioral problems.

“*Foal Syndrome*” causes foals to be born without teeth, tooth and jaw abnormalities, hairless, and a tendency to develop digestion, pain and many other problems.

“*NFS*” is a fatal disorder found only in the Ahal-Teke breed. Affected foals are born hairless and often struggle with abnormal tooth development, digestive problems and laminitis-like symptoms (Figure 13,14). Most foals with “*NFS*” die within a few weeks. Genetic studies have linked a variant in the “*ST14*” gene to Ahal-Teke. Horses that are “*homozygous*” for this variant inherit the disease from those with two copies of the variant. “*Heterozygous*” carriers, those with only one copy of the variant, show no clinical signs (Bauer, et al, 2017).

¹ Bkz. 10.



Figure 13. Sick Ahal-Teke foal.¹



Figure 14. Healthy Ahal-Teke foal.²

Ahal-Teke horses with a limited gene pool have a high degree of inbreeding (Alev, 2011). This can be detected through genetic testing, reducing the risks of genetic disorders. This disorder manifests itself in the form of thin and very infrequent mane, sparse tail. For centuries, Turkmen have tried to treat this genetic feature of horses.³

Most “NFS” teas die within a few weeks after birth, but some horses live up to two years. While early deaths are mostly caused by digestive issues, older animals have been euthanized due to severe pain (Bauer, 2017).

Ahal-Teke may also inherit cryptorchidism. Horses with one or two testicles in the abdomen are considered cryptorchid. This increases the risk of neutering and is associated with low fertility and unwanted stallion behavior (Coryn, et al, 2010).

“*Degenerative Suspension Bond Desmitis-DSLD*” is a chronic condition in horses that affects connective tissue, including suspension ligaments and other ligaments and tendons. This painful discomfort often leads to debilitating lameness. The sling ligament becomes progressively weaker, which leads to hyperextension of the ankle, knee and knee joint. “*DSLD*” is a debilitating condition characterized by a progressive weakening of falling ankles and sling ligament (Halper, et al, 2011).

Although there is no cure for the disease, supportive nallation and pain medication can help manage symptoms. Other causes of lameness in the ahal-Teke are often associated with joint diseases and soft tissue injuries (Wei, et al, 2016). Sensitive Ahal-Tekes exposed to stress

¹ Hairless Horse Photo Page, <https://web.archive.org/web/20120607024603/http://ultimatehorsesite.com/info/hairless/hairlesshorsephotos.html> (Date of Access: 19.10.2024).

² The Ahal Teke, <https://akhalteke.tumblr.com/> (Date of Access: 02.11.2024).

³ Bkz. 1.

are also prone to stomach ulcers and other digestive health problems. Intestinal discomfort associated with ulcers can exacerbate unwanted reactive behavior.¹

Other symptoms include persistent and recurrent diarrhea, indigestion and laminitis-like, treatment-resistant rotation of the coffin bone, dry and inflamed skin that flakes off, severe sunburns in summer and frequent lung infections in winter are secondary symptoms.

Equipment and decorative art of Akhal-Teke horses

The Turkmen people's fondness, love and respect for Ahal-Teke horses and their relationship with their horses are reflected in the art of decoration in the ornaments they put on them. Horses are decorated like a bridal girl and a young groom. Precious stones, gold and silver were used in the decorations, and this art of ornamentation was accepted as "*National Heritage*" by Turkmen (Figure 15-16).

In front of the Ahal-Teke's saddle, is a round and bunny handle made of leather. Knobbed handle made of leather. The saddle circumference decorated with precious stones and silver ornaments and large-headed silver buckles are continued with an iron-clasp strap made a strap made of gold or silver and decorated with motifs.²

A silver belt with an iron buckle, called bird's eyes made of gold or silver, is attached, decorated expensive stones attached to the saddle from its tail. With embroidered bird-eye motifs on leather or fabric, chest brigades decorated with expensive stones embroidered on gold or silver are attached. Used in silver, bright and reddish stones used in decorations.

The chest plate has a dome that collects all the straps when they come together. This dome is richly decorated with agates and washed in gold. The saddle made of raw leather has an elegant horn, like a swan head. The saddle is made of rawhide and has a horn in the shape of a swan's head. Ahal-Teke is usually decorated with decorative carpets and blankets, the back of the horse back is protected by a specially made saddle pad. Although the reins are simple in different styles, there are crown tassels and a single buckle is used to fasten them.³

The elegant thin necks are decorated with a central yellow gold-plated belt arch or a silver-colored arch detailed with geometric motifs and the entangled, colorful and geometric patterned fabrics, beads of which are Ahal-Teke, carry the body, that is, the main base, four thin and long-legged four elegant pillars. In the context of visual culture, it gives the impression that

¹ Not So Cute, <https://uglyoverload.blogspot.com/2006/12/not-so-cute.html> (Date of Access: 30.10.2024).

² It is known as Bezben, which is used in the decorations of the horse's chest.

³ Türkmen Gururu, <https://akhal-teke.org/the-breed/traditional-tack/> (Date of Access: 30.10.2024).

architectural structures in the steppes of Central Asia and Anatolia are decorated with decorations on the neck, arms and waist.



Resim 15. *Decoration of Ahal-Teke¹*



Resim 16. *Decoration of Ahal-Teke²*

Hypotherapy Methods in Human Life

The word "*hippotherapy*" is a combination of the Greek word "hippo" meaning "horse" and the word "*therapy*".³ Clay tablets from the Sumerian period mention prestigious horses called "kunga" with inscribed nails. Research on the interaction between horses and humans describes the connection between humans living with horses. This shows that the bond is good for each other. This emotional bond significantly reduces levels of physiological anxiety.⁴

The most important thing for horses is emotion.

In other words, horses do not perceive positive emotions as good to reflect, and their negative emotions, like humans do, are more consistent with the person.

The movements of the horse increase the movement functions of the muscles and organs by working the entire. The temperature of the horse helps to relieve excessive tension in the muscles by providing relaxation in the muscles of the rider.

It provides balance by directly addressing the internal muscles, improves joint mobility and activates all central muscle groups. Touching the horse activates the sense of touch. The

¹ 4000 Yıldır var olan Ahal Teke atları neden yok edilmek isteniyor, <https://liderform.com.tr/articles/14208-4000-yildir-var-olan-ahal-teke-atlari-neden-yok-edilmek-isteniyor.html> (Date of Access: 30.10.2024).

² Ahal-Teke, <https://akhalteke.tumblr.com/archive> (Date of Access: 02.11.2024).

³ Using Equine Therapy as Mental Health Treatment, <https://www.verywellmind.com/equine-therapy-mental-health-treatment-4177932> (Date of Access: 19.10.2024).

⁴ Atlardan Önce, Eşek Melezleri Savaş için Yetiştiriliyordu, <https://arkeofili.com/atlardan-once-esek-melezleri-savas-icin-yetistiriliyordu/> (Date of Access: 30.10.2024).

vestibular system is also stimulated by the movement of the horse, changing its direction and speed.

It provides balance by directly addressing the internal muscles, improves joint mobility and activates all central muscle groups. Touching the horse activates the sense of touch. The vestibular system is also stimulated by the movement of the horse, changing its direction and speed.

The fates of horses and humans have evolved together almost since creation, because horses and humans have fought together, been stranded, sharing many abilities. Both are social beings who need connection with others in order to survive and thrive.¹

The rhythmic movements of the horse are very close to the sides, back and forth, up and down, human movements and regulate the patient's nervous system. When we are on the horse, our abdominal and back muscles are stretched for control of our body, and sitting on it causes the muscles of the hip adductor to become severely tense. This positioning, which extends from a narrow horse to a larger horse, is practiced under the name Hippotherapy as a treatment for children with movement disorders and neurological diseases such as Spasticity and adductor spasticity (Grandin, 1998).

Hippotherapy can be listed as Equine Assisted Activities (EAA), Equine Assisted Therapy (EAT), Equine Facilitated Learning (EFL), Equine Facilitated Psychotherapy (EFP), Hippotherapy (HT), Interactive Voluntary Exercise (IV), Therapeutic Riding (TD), Therapeutic Horseback Riding (TR) for therapeutic purposes with the horse as the basic dynamic to improve bodily mobility and strengthen joints. The activation of the nervous system automatically improves the patient's ability to plan and move. This development allows the nervous system to work more efficiently and regularly. The patient responds to this controlled and natural education away from the clinical setting (Scott, 2005).

Emotional bonds between humans and horses have been linked to improvements in people's emotional health (Beetz et al., 2012).² The aims of activities such as grooming, feeding and directing horses under the supervision of a specialist in psychotherapy helping people develop skills such as emotional regulation, self-esteem, and responsibility (Ciesla, 2007).

Hippotherapy has become an enjoyable method that makes life worth living for all those disabilities who do not accept that their disability limit their lives. Areas where hippotherapy is

¹ Bkz. 2.

² Kunga: Mezopotamyalı At Yetiştiricileri Dünyanın İlk Melez Hayvanını Nasıl Ortaya Çıkardı? <https://www.matematiksel.org/kunga-mezopotamyalı-at-yetistiricileri-dunyanin-ilk-melez-hayvanini-nasil-yaratti/> (Date of Access: 31.10.2024).

used; autism (Otism), movement disorders and spasticity (Cerebral Palsy), arthritis (Arthritis), multiple sclerosis (Multiple Sclerosis), head injury (Head Injury), stroke (Stroke), spinal cord injury (Spinal Cord Injury), behavioral disorders (Behavioral Disorders) and psychological disorders (Psychiatric Disorders) (Scott, 2005).

Disruption of neural skills such as amputee (amputation), attention disorder, cerebral palsy, cerebrovascular accident/stroke, down syndrome, multiple sclerosis (ms), hearing loss, developmental/cognitive delay, impairment of posture, inability to control posture, asymmetry in posture, developmental anomalies, learning disabilities, muscular dystrophy, spina bifida, spinal cord injuries, visual impairment, lack of coordination. The physiological benefits of hippotherapy, improves joint mobility, by increasing pelvic and lumbar mobility, increase muscle tone and muscle strength, improve proper gait pattern, regulate the trunk balance by stimulating balance reflexes. Helps to stand properly by increasing head and trunk control, reduces or eliminates pathological reflexes, improves hand-eye coordination, respiratory system, accelerates metabolism (Ciesla, 2007).

Hippotherapy helps them to develop the muscles, flexibility, strength, balance, coordination, self-confidence, discipline, control, adaptation, social interaction, stronger movement ability and mental relaxation, to become aware of problems in their lives and overcome personal obstacles, to find themselves with their life goals and passions, to live by.

It helps them to set boundaries and protect them in everyday life, to get rid of addictions, to overcome social inadequacies, to develop leadership skills, to learn to live by enjoying life, to become aware of their own emotions to understand their language and to increasing their awareness.

Promotes socialization by increasing self-confidence and courage. Helps with learning difficulties and speech disorders. Stimulates metabolism and increases bladder control. Improves the cardiovascular system and respiratory system and reduces scoliosis.¹

Emerging scientific evidence suggests that interacting with horses improves health and well-being and can help people with a wide range of physical and mental health issues, from children with motor disabilities to adults struggling with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).² Various limbs of horse, horse feces and horse-derived food have been used in various

¹ Horses and Humans: A Unique Partnership in Therapy by Kathleen Choe, <https://www.horsesandhumans.org/new-blog-1/2023/11/22/horses-and-humans-a-unique-partnership-in-therapy-by-kathleen-choe> (Date of Access: 17.10.2024).

² Biniciler, <https://www.binicilik.org.tr/Detay2/116/faydalari> (Date of Access: 17.10.2024).

health problems, expressed and the positive effects of horse riding on overall health have been expressed.

Results and Discussion

"He who rides a horse is armed with a sword"¹

The horse is used as a symbol of life and death in the image of the horse, death is like a bareback horse and death means getting descending from the horse of life. The horse is also important in religious contexts. It was emphasized that learning to ride horses, feed a horse, to look at the horses and to compete in horse races, was considered, clean and it was stated that male horses would not be subject to intelligence (Özen, 2014).

The Turks always used the horse in the best way and treated it as a companion. They formed law enforcement officers on horseback and they always kept the horse in their lives. The horse has had a great place in the idioms, proverbs, language, epics, mythology and art of the Turks. In legends and epics, the emotional bond between the horse and its owner has an important place. The horse has gained personality; it has attracted attention with its intelligence, understanding and friendship; it has been the owner's closest friend, most valuable asset and instrument of victory.

The extraordinary horse species and names mentioned in Turkish epics and mythology such as Manas and Dede Korkut: winged horse; Tulpar, flying horse; Crescent, horned horse; Kayakers Ceren and Whips Ceren talking horse; Ak Nose and Rote Kök twin horses (Bıyıklı, 2019).

The Shubar, named in Turkish epics, is the horse of Alpamis Khan; Akkula is the horse of Manas Khan; Burul, is the horse of Koblandı Khan; Chalkuyruk is the horse of Töştük Khan; Akbut is the horse of Ural Khan (Bıyıklı, 2019).

Ahal-Teke, who hans and kagans raised with prideful manners and brilliance for its extraordinary durability, attracted kings and empressors.

It is known that the Persian King Cyrus offered "a kingdom for one of these horses". 2. yy. Chinese emperors are rumored to have waged war on Turkmenistan to capture these horses, which they describe as "*horses of heaven*". Alexander the Great was one of his most valuable and reliable buildings.

¹ Emotional Transfer in Human–Horse Interaction: New Perspectives on Equine Assisted Interventions, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6941042/> (Date of Access: 17.10.2024).

Ahal-Teke, called "argamaks" in Russia, is part of the heritage and history of thousands of years of development of the territory of Turkistan. Turkish horse Ahal-Teke has become a world cultural heritage.¹

Coming from the desert, where the nights are cold and the days were so hot, the Ahal-Teke found a way to counter this indecision, becoming a legendary creature with golden and silver colors, speed, with and shiny gold coat, giving him the title of the "*Golden Horse*".

These "Golden Horses" are often described as stubborn and fierce their incredible endurance and unconditional loyalty to their riders characterize these horses, which are among the noblest in the world (Baboev and Klimuk, 2014).

Ahal-Teke is an extremely intelligent, active and lively horse. Has a smooth, elastic gait and almost seems to swim while running. Horses communicate with each other through visual, auditory, olfactory and tactile signals. The ability of horses to respond to manifestations of human emotional states and to determine the focus of human attention has also been experimentally studied. People who look at and care for horses are more likely to approach horses than careless people whose eyes are closed and whose bodies are moving away from the food source (Proops, 2010).

It has been stated that horseback riding has positive effects on general health in Turkish civilizations and that horseback riding should be avoided for a long time because it will cause sciatic disease only.

The consumption of horse meat and milk is also considered appropriate according to an event attributed to the Prophet of Islam in the Medicine of Nebevi (Özen, 2014).

In this context, therapy, movement of the horse, body temperature, physiology, therapy in this context, movement of the horse, body temperature, physiology, physical strength and psychological interaction has been realized in this context by taking advantage of the positive effects.

Horse therapy is now called hypotherapy. Treatment with horse therapy allows-patients to gain physical mobility and improve their social lives in a positive way. Hypotherapy is a special form of therapy that uses the horse's characteristic movements to provide motor and sensory inputs. This method can be applied in groups of patients with diseases such as cerebral palsy, autism, brain traumas, stroke and psychological problems.²

¹ Golden Horse: The Legendary Ahal-Teke, <https://photoawards.com/winner/zoom.php?eid=8-90226-15> (Date of Access: 02.11.2014).

² Atların mucizesi; Hipoterapi, https://www.kocaelilife.com/atlarin-mucizesi-hippoterapi/#google_vignette (Date of Access: 17.10.2024).

The role of Ahal-Teke horses in the process of Hippotherapy contributes to the physical and psychological development of individuals. It provides physical, emotional and emotional and behavioral support. These positively affect the therapy process. riding, which has many physiological benefits such as balance development, reflex and motor nervous system development, has endless psychological benefits.

According to recent research, riding is said to help children greatly improve their cognitive abilities. In one study, scientists discovered that equestrian activity contributes to memory, learning, and problem solving (Bilgin, 2021).

Today, Ahal-Teke is considered a rare species with less than 7000 worldwide. Raised for the desert at least 3,000 years in the Ahal-Teke is the national emblem of the country of Turkmenistan.¹ The "national treasure" of the people of Turkmenistan, Ahal-Teke is one of the most magnificent creations of the Creator in every respect.

¹ Ahal-Teke, <https://horseisle1.fandom.com/wiki/Akhal-Teke> (Erişim Tarihi: 02.11.2024).

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