

The Friesian horse and the Frisian horse

The (re)invention and the historicity of an iconic breed

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The Friesian horse is iconic. This elegant, showy breed of horse sports a jet-black coat and thick, wavy mane and tail. Not only do these horses find their way from Friesland to breed enthusiasts all over the world, but even Hollywood is quite smitten.¹ Whether as a Roman, Persian, Spanish or Medieval horse, the Friesian seems a keeper in Hollywood – never mind historical accuracy. On the other hand, the problem of historical accuracy persists in histories of the breed. Like many – if not most – breed histories, the history of the Friesian horse is distorted. The obvious question is to ask how it is distorted; the next might be to wonder why. Like the studbooks themselves, this distortion of history may well be a remnant of nineteenth-century notions of purity and heritage. This article will offer further insight into the history of the Friesian horse.

The long nineteenth century (circa 1750-1914) was marked by great changes in Europe and overseas. The French Revolution, Industrial Revolution and Agricultural Revolution transformed the political, socio-economic and cultural landscape. A combination of state-formation and nation-building resulted in countries seeking to establish nationalist “us against them” mentalities. The process of modernisation and nation-state formation sparked a (re)invention and revision of tradition, heritage and history, which was expressed in all levels of society and included folklore, folk costume and national anthems.² Frisian identity did not escape this trend: the popular Frisian *sjees*, a gig which seated a couple in traditional costume, is one such example.³ Nowadays, this two-wheeled carriage is closely associated with the Friesian horse. The horse itself was also affected by the construction of identity and heritage. Most studbooks and breed registries were established around this time. Breed officials attempted to trace their origins in national history as far back as possible. One breed history after another was (re)constructed, and one was more glorious than the other.

Although landraces and local varieties had existed for centuries, the marked distinction of breed characteristics, standards and studbooks was largely a product of the long nineteenth century. The Friesian horse was no exception. As such, its placement in history, or any breed of horse for that matter, is problematic from the very beginning. Contrary to the cow that is featured in the Canon of Frisian History as a symbolic backdrop for a fundamental period in history, the horse cannot be used as a symbol so

easily.⁴ The cow not only represents an important aspect of today's Frisian economy, but is also used in general, regardless of breed.⁵

The history of horses and horse breeds has been the domain of horse lovers and breed officials. As horses disappeared from everyday life, and yielded the plough, street, and battlefield to machinery over the course of the twentieth century, their once vital role in society seemed to be forgotten. Finally, in recent years, scholars have begun to rediscover horses and examine their role in history.⁶ One might wonder: what about the Frisian horse? How, and why is its history flawed – or even distorted? What can this iconic horse tell us about Frisian history and identity? How should the Frisian horse and the studbook be seen in a wider, European context?

Frisian or Frisian?

In many respects, the Frisian horse, as a breed, did not exist until the studbook was established in 1879. Of course, *Frisian* horses had long existed before that time. Different parameters, whether political, cultural or geographical, determined what would have constituted a Frisian horse, compared to a foreign horse, long before studbooks existed. By one such definition, Frisian people bred Frisian horses within Frisia's borders. Over time, Frisia fell apart into a multitude of regions, absorbed by various states and nations that rose to power. As a result, the definition of what constituted Frisian people, much less Frisian horses, became much more convoluted.

A shared history and environment of the northern Netherlands and northwest Germany provided the opportunity for local varieties of domesticated species to emerge, such as the Frisian horse. Although somewhat variable, Frisian horses were quite clearly defined and identified by origin (e.g. from Frisia) and/or name (Frisian horse) for centuries. The Frisian horse adapted to local conditions over a long period of time, and was closely associated with local culture and its people. Hence, the Frisian horse could have been considered a landrace.

Horses belonging to the Frisian landrace were relatively uniform. The *breed*, rather, developed from this landrace. The restrictions that followed as part of studbook regulation meant less variety and greater uniformity. One of the more profound restrictions, determined early on in the studbook's history, only allowed solid black horses.⁷ The landrace, on the other hand, offered a much greater variety of coat colours, even though black was most common. However, the studbook's colour restriction did not prevent an occasional chestnut foal from being born. Because chestnut (*ee*) is a recessive gene, it can remain hidden for generations; a black horse can be either homozygous black (*EE*) or heterozygous black (*Ee*). In the eventuality of both dam (mare) and sire (stallion) being heterozygous blacks (*Ee*), there

is a one-in-four chance for the foal to receive both chestnut (e) genes from its parents, resulting in a chestnut (ee) horse. In Frisian cattle, red-and-white (*roodbont*) calves were sometimes born to black-and-white (*zwarthbont*) cows, even up to the twentieth century when black-and-white had long become the main coat colour. Cattle breeders were generally displeased with such a calf, since red calves were seen as a sign of impurity – which in itself was a relative term, as black-and-white only became the dominant colour during the eighteenth century.⁸ Likewise, by the Royal Frisian studbook's official definition, a chestnut Frisian is not technically a "Friesian."

The *Friesian* horse is defined along the parameters of breed as determined by the studbook since 1879. In the strictest sense, the *Frisian* horse (i.e. the Frisian landrace) no longer exists. Over the course of the long nineteenth century, landrace became breed; therefore, the Frisian horse and the Friesian horse are not the same. A shared history between the breeds that developed from the Frisian landrace, apart from much abhorred turn-of-the-century crossbreeding, was largely ignored by studbook officials.⁹ The history of the breed, including its history preceding a studbook, never seems to have escaped nineteenth-century notions of nationalism, history, purity and identity. In order to really define the Frisian horse and understand the origin of the *Friesian*, its history must be re-examined. The official breed history, as it stands, is a product of when the breed and studbook were first established, and is therefore biased.

The history of the Friesian horse revised: The Roman period

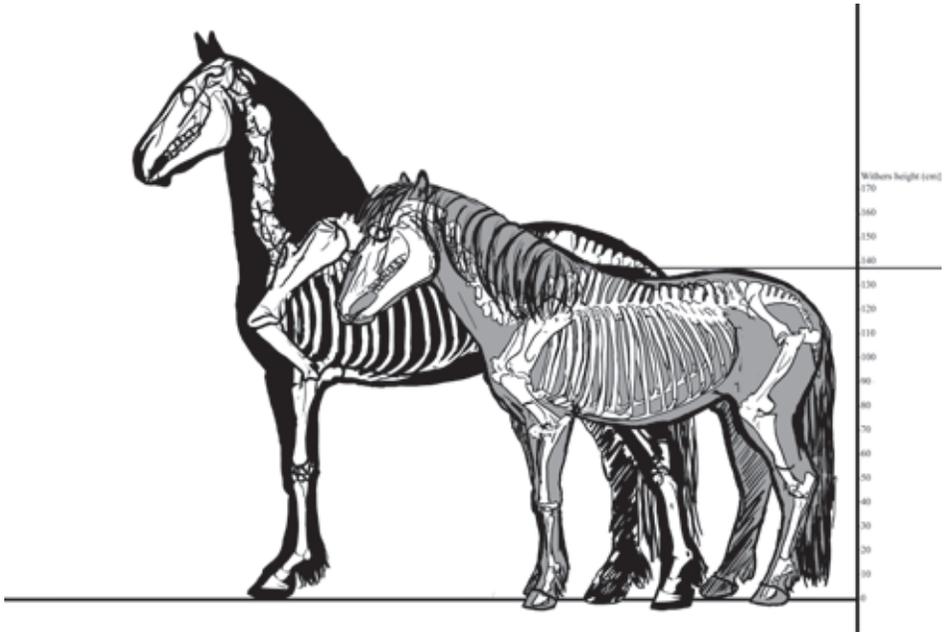
The history of the Friesian horse tends to start with a depiction of the *Frisii*, a Germanic tribe described by Roman historians.¹⁰ At first glance, Frisian ethnogenesis does not follow the pattern of other Germanic peoples defined by extensive European migrations from around the fourth century.¹¹ Evidence suggests, however, that the coastal region of the northern Netherlands was (largely) depopulated in the fourth century not long after the *Frisii* disappeared from written record.¹² The name appears to have been either reinstated by later inhabitants of the area or as a distinction by the Franks for the population of the coastal region originally inhabited by *Frisii*.¹³ This implies that the *Frisii* are, for the most part, not the same as the medieval Frisians. On the other hand, people continued to inhabit some areas, particularly sandy soil.¹⁴ According to numerous Roman historians, however, Frisians did not inhabit those regions.¹⁵

Most, if not all, histories of the Frisian horse provide no distinction between the *Frisii* and later Frisians.¹⁶ Breed experts assumed Frisians and Frisian horses had lived in the area since Roman times. It never occurred to them that the continuity of the Frisians, and their horses, exists only

in name. Of course, this nuance in Frisian history has only come to light relatively recently. And, although the breed's history was extensively documented some decades ago, it has been in desperate need of an update. As things stand, there is no evidence that the horse of the Frisii was a direct ancestor of the Friesian horse.

Iron-Age and Roman-Period inhabitants of the terp region, however, clearly kept horses. Remains of horses dating back to the time of the Frisii were found in mounds, or *terpen*, in Friesland and Groningen.¹⁷ Several Roman sources mention the Frisian horse or cavalry.¹⁸ Roman inscriptions refer to Frisian cavalry (and/or possibly the unrelated Frisiavones – who lived just north of Gaul) stationed in Britannia in the second to fourth century, such as the *Cuneus Frisiorum Aballavensium* at Aballava (Burgh-by-Sands), *Cuneus Frisiorum Vinoviensium* at Vinovia (Binchester) and *Cuneus Frisionum Ver* at Vercovicium (Housesteads) near Hadrian's Wall.¹⁹ Earliest finds in terp sites date back to 500 BC. Most equid finds could be dated between 50 and 150 AD, and the oldest remains were approximately 2,000 years old.²⁰ However, these horses would not have resembled the modern Friesian much. In the northern Netherlands, most skeletons belonged to horses of median height, standing approximately 137 cm at the withers (13.5 hands) – a far cry from the minimum of 160 cm in adult Friesian stallions and 154 cm for mares today.²¹ Overall, horses varied in height from around 125 cm in some Late Iron Age and Early Roman finds, up to an average of 136-37 around the time of the Migration Period.²² Horses were on average approximately 132 cm at the shoulder in Roman times.²³ Horse remains from sites excavated in northern Germany provide similar data. The average withers height of horses found at the Late Roman site of Hildesheim-Bavenstedt was a mere 137 cm and some of the larger specimens were likely of Roman origin.²⁴ With an average height just under 130 cm, horses from a mound at the Feddersen Wierde were significantly smaller. One horse found at the site that measured 135 cm at the shoulder was actually comparatively large.²⁵ Germanic horses from northern Germany were, on average, approximately 130 cm at the withers.²⁶ Frisii military service in the Roman Empire might explain the comparatively bigger average size of horses from mounds in the northern Netherlands. Their stature appears to be a median of the withers height of horses from *Germania libera* and horses from Roman settlements in Germany.²⁷ Overall, Roman horses were larger than Germanic and Celtic horses.²⁸

It may be of note that a horse's mature height is affected by genetics, selection and environment.²⁹ A combination of selective breeding and rich fodder would have affected the size of horses.³⁰ As a result, withers height in horses varied from one location to another. Horses found in terp sites were small, but Roman finds in the Netherlands and Germany, particularly



Reconstructive drawing of a Frisian horse from the Roman period (front) and a modern Frisian (Jorieke Savelkouls)

in romanised areas, often exceeded a withers height of 140 or even up to 150 cm in the Mid Roman Period.³¹ It would have been rare for a horse in Europe to have a height at the withers exceeding 150 cm during the Roman Period and Early Middle Ages. In the area spanning from the Black Sea and further east, a size of 140 cm at the withers was by no means exceptional during the Early Iron Age.³² Finds of the Pazyryk-Chertomlyk phase in Siberia included horses with a height of around 160 cm at the shoulder.³³ Moreover, the Pazyryk horses predated all of the horses found in Frisian and northern Germanic sites by some three to five hundred years.³⁴ Eastern horses were, on average, considerably taller than Germanic and Celtic horses farther west.³⁵

During the Mid and Late Roman Period, many Germanic breeders began raising taller horses and livestock, possibly as a result of importing larger (Roman) stock in rural settlements.³⁶ These horses were still comparatively small. Many books and articles on the Frisian horse describe horses dating back to the Roman and Early Medieval Period as tall and robust based on outdated theories and conjecture.³⁷ A median height of 137 cm would have been considered small by Roman and modern standards.

Although horses were apparently native to the North Sea coastal region

in Roman times up until the third century at least, the area was (mostly) abandoned between the fourth and fifth century. What happened to the Frisii or their horses is unclear. As it is, no direct link has of yet been found between the horses of the Frisii and those of Medieval Frisia except in their burial in Frisian mounds, and in name.

The Medieval Frisian horse

Early Medieval Frisians, like the Frisii, clearly kept horses. Horses are mentioned in Old Frisian texts, although no specifics as to the characteristics of their horses are given.³⁸ Like horses of the Roman period, early medieval Frisian horses were small.³⁹ Although horses were generally eaten, evidence of horse harnessing has been found.⁴⁰

From the Migration Period and fifth and sixth centuries AD, some changes seemed to occur in the overall size and type of horses. Archaeological remains in northern Germany (Frisians and Saxons) indicate that horses not only increased in withers height but were of stockier build than



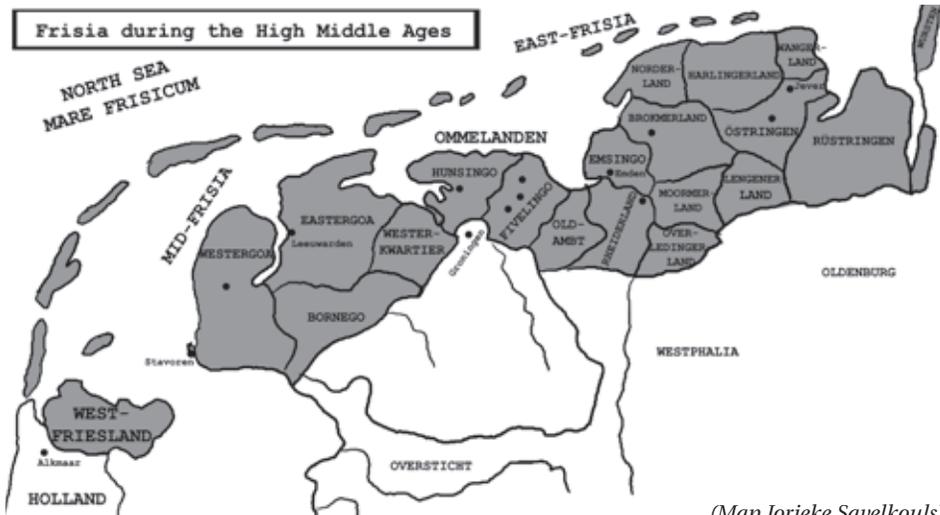
(Map Jorieke Savelkous)

those of the Roman Period.⁴¹ In the northern Netherlands the increase in size was not nearly as significant, and horses remained roughly the same size until the thirteenth century.⁴² A withers height between 125 and 147 cm was considered normal, and taller horses were leaner and lighter boned.⁴³ Early Medieval terp horses did not seem to differ much from terp horses in Roman times. Early Medieval horses in the northern coastal area were of small (128-136 cm) or median (136-144 cm) stature. In much of northwest Europe horses were quite small. In Europe, it was not until the Late Medieval Period that the first heavy horses began to appear and the average size of horses increased.⁴⁴ Although some Late Medieval horses exceeded 165 cm, the majority of horses were roughly 140-150 cm at the shoulder.⁴⁵ Moreover, in some areas horses remained relatively small, such as Scheemda (Groningen), where horses from the late thirteenth to early sixteenth century were excavated with a withers height between 130 and 139 cm.⁴⁶

Horses still varied in size considerably throughout the Middle Ages. On average, Frisian horses were possibly comparatively big; horses from Friesland, Denmark and Scania (Sweden) were, on average, about 10-15 cm taller than horses from the Baltics.⁴⁷ This comparative size might account for the number of references to Frisian horses in centuries that followed. Furthermore, horses were an integral part of the agricultural innovations of the High and late Middle Ages in northwest Europe when the wheeled plough, collar harness and other innovations were introduced.⁴⁸ Horses began to offer some advantage over teams of oxen.⁴⁹ By the thirteenth century, Frisians had already earned a reputation as horse and cattle breeders and traders.⁵⁰ Throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries Frisians sold horses all across Western Europe. Cologne in particular was an important trade centre, but Frisian horses were offered for sale at markets in Holland, Guelders, Flanders and France, as well.⁵¹ Moreover, foreign horse buyers travelled to Frisia and Groningen to acquire Frisian horses.⁵²

Monasteries also kept, bred and sold horses and livestock during the Middle Ages. Some records of several European monasteries exist that point to horse breeding from as early as the twelfth century.⁵³ The sources that mention horses or horse breeding at European monasteries are few and far between, so the evidence is patchy and sporadic. However, Frisian monasteries played an important role in Frisia's economy. Direct evidence of horses and horse trade at or in name of local monasteries mostly dates to the fifteenth and sixteenth century.⁵⁴ For example, Henricus van Rees, abbot of the Cistercian abbey at Aduard (Ommelanden) between 1450 and 1485, mentioned the purchase of horses from Groningen in a letter to John I, Duke of Cleves, Count of Mark in 1466.⁵⁵

The coastal region of the North Sea was, and is, cattle, horse and sheep country. The area dominated horse breeding and horse husbandry in



(Map Jorieke Savelkouls)

north-western Europe from as early as the thirteenth century.⁵⁶ Monasteries, individual horse breeders and tradesmen partook in this international trade.⁵⁷ Unambiguous evidence of horse and cattle trade between the northern Netherlands, northern Germany and southern Jutland becomes especially clear in the fifteenth century, although it is not unlikely that trade relations date back even further.⁵⁸ References to Frisian horse and cattle trade at foreign markets as early as the thirteenth century point to some trade relations at least. East Frisia focused strongly on trade with Westphalia from the thirteenth century onward so any mention of Frisian goods – including horses – is hardly surprising.⁵⁹

Perhaps as a result of this extended trade, Frisian horses were well-known throughout Europe from the fourteenth century and centuries that followed. They are featured in medieval poetry and chivalric romance as early as the twelfth century; the Frisian horse is either, and in general, praised as a *destrier*, a tourney horse, or instead scorned and preferred as a *rouncey*, a work horse.⁶⁰ Although horses were sometimes depicted by origin, breed hardly existed in the Middle Ages. Horses were classified by type first and foremost, and further categorised based on status. A war horse (*chargeur* or charger) could either be classified as a *destrier* (war/tourney horse), *coursier* (courser), *palefroi* (palfrey; a parade horse also suitable for women) or *jennet* (a palfrey of Iberian origin). A palfrey was a refined, often gaited saddle horse of Oriental stock, whereas a hackney (*haquenée*) was a regular saddle horse. Work horses mentioned in Medieval literature include the pack horse or sumpter horse (*summier*) and the versatile rouncey (*roncin* or *roussin*).



Because of the Reconquista and Crusades Iberian and Oriental horses found their way north, especially via France. Frisian nobles, like many nobles in Europe, participated in various crusades. However, Frisians mostly provided ships and fought as foot-soldiers rather than mounted knights.⁶¹ Only the very rich could afford to ride into battle on horseback and most appear to have done so for transport rather than as armoured knights.⁶² Whether or not the Frisian horse was influenced by Eastern or Iberian stock during the Middle Ages is difficult to determine. The influence of Iberian horses from the fifteenth century is much more obvious.

The Baroque Frisian horse

Horse and cattle trade continued to be an integral part of the Frisian and Groningen economy. Frisia had long remained independent, and had retained its own laws and institutions. Frisian independence, however, began to deteriorate due to continued internal power struggles and the rise of powerful states west and east of Frisia.⁶³ For example, the area west of the Vlie, known as West-Friesland, fell to Holland in 1289. The fifteenth century saw the demise of Frisian independence. Holy Roman Emperor Frederick III raised Ulrich of the Cirksena family to the status of Imperial Count of East Frisia in 1464. The coastal region north of the Elder river (Schleswig-Holstein) was subjugated by the king of Denmark. The Count of Oldenburg occupied Butjadingen in 1514, and Jever in 1573. Land Wursten was conquered by the Prince-bishop of Bremen in 1525. Under the influence

of Groningen, the Frisian region that surrounded the city became known as the *Ommelanden* (surrounding lands) and its people started speaking Lower Saxon as early as the fourteenth century.⁶⁴

South of Frisia, the dukes of Burgundy rose to power. By 1433, much of what is now the Netherlands and Belgium was consolidated under Philip the Good. The Burgundian Netherlands passed to the Habsburgs when Mary of Burgundy died in 1482, which brought the area under the influence of the Holy Roman Empire and the Spanish Empire. Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I appointed Duke Albert of Saxony-Meissen hereditary governor-general of Friesland in 1498. Although Groningen tried to resist the reach of the Holy Roman Empire this far north, Frisian independence was effectively ended.⁶⁵

Maximilian's successor, Charles V, sought to further unify the Seventeen Provinces of the Habsburg Netherlands. However, the emperor had difficulty dealing with the Reformation movement that took hold of the northern provinces.⁶⁶ The religious and political differences between the Northern and Southern Netherlands, which grew under Charles' successor Philip II, contributed to the Dutch Revolt led by William of Orange in 1568.⁶⁷ The north rebelled against Spanish, Catholic rule and declared independence. In 1580, Georges of Lalaing, stadholder of the provinces of Friesland, Groningen, Drenthe and Overijssel switched sides from the Union of Utrecht to the Union of Arras and returned to the Spanish fold. Regardless, Friesland signed the Act of Abjuration to depose the Spanish king.

During the reigns of Charles V and Philip II, Spanish horses found their way into the Low Countries via military service. The Spanish Empire relied heavily on cavalry, and Spain's nobility remained, in effect, a military and equestrian elite much longer than other European courts.⁶⁸ At the time, Spanish horses were considered among the finest in the world, and were in high demand. Although not as famous as the Spanish horse, the Frisian horse was relatively renowned as a fine saddle horse.⁶⁹ For example, German merchant and banker Markus Fugger (1529-1597) wrote: 'Die Friesen (welliche gewonlich rauch unnd zottet von schencklen) werden für starcke und nothafftige Pferd gehalten / und haben den preyß under disen Niederländischen Pferden'.⁷⁰ Horse trade in the North Sea coastal region continued to grow as a result of this renown. On 5 October 1512, *Kurfürst* Joachim I and *Markgraf* Albrecht von Brandenburg in Germany contracted a Johann Gryp to purchase fine horses in 'frissland' for a sum of 'acht gulden an muntz' per year for the duration of two years.⁷¹ Horses were exported from Groningen as well, often as Frisian horses and mostly bays and blacks.⁷²

Don Juan of Austria, the illegitimate son of Charles V and Governor-General of the Netherlands from 1576 to 1578, collected horses from all over Europe. During his stay in the Low Countries, he commissioned Jan



*Frisian stallion 'Phryso' from the sixteenth-century *Equile* by Jan Van der Straet. (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam)*

Van der Straet (1523-1607) to make engravings of his horses. The series of plates were published in print by the early 1580s and included a 'Phryso' or Frisian horse.⁷³ The prestigious *Equile* was reprinted well into the seventeenth century and found its way to many libraries across Europe.⁷⁴ Other plates included horses from Guelders, Flanders, Brittany, Germany and Denmark as well as numerous Italian and Turkish horses. This suggests that local types or varieties not only existed at the time but were more or less defined by origin. One must, however, keep in mind that the engravings were a result of their time and artist, and highly idealised artistic interpretations of horses rather than naturalistic representations. The engravings possibly added to the fame of these "breeds". Frisian horses were kept and purchased for courts and lords across Europe, which reflected their elite status.⁷⁵

European warfare was forever changed when the Ottoman Turks came knocking at Vienna's gates. Although the lightning-fast assaults of the Turks

had confounded Medieval-style European troops in Hungary, the Ottoman advance was finally halted at Vienna in 1529. More importantly, the Renaissance marked a cultural revolution. As a result, both warfare and horsemanship were further revolutionised.

This Renaissance in horsemanship was sparked by the Italian Renaissance and, more specifically, the pivotal publication of Xenophon's (431-355 BC) *On Horsemanship* in 1516 which focused greatly on harmony and cooperation with the horse rather than force.⁷⁶ Not just Xenophon but exposure to Ottoman and Arabo-Persian equestrian traditions and *Furusiyya* literature, some of which became available in Spain after the Reconquista, contributed to these changed attitudes.⁷⁷ The first printed work on horsemanship in Europe had been Spanish, published in 1495, and was soon followed by numerous Italian ones.⁷⁸ Influenced by these 'new' ideas on horsemanship, equestrian master Federico Grisone published his *Gli ordini di cavalcare* in 1550.⁷⁹ By the end of the sixteenth century, riding academies had emerged in Naples and Ferrara. These schools formed the basis for military riding academies throughout Europe.⁸⁰ Gradually, the Medieval heavy cavalry charge began to lose significance in favour of somewhat lighter, more adaptable charges. Knighthood lost its military role due to the rise of gunpowder armies and a different take on cavalry and horsemanship. The subsequent modernisation of horsemanship and development of classical dressage at riding academies (*Haute École* or *Hofreitschule*) founded at many European courts, meant the medieval charger developed into a lighter, more agile horse collectively known as the Baroque horse. The Baroque horse gained prominence during the Baroque era, but their powerful hindquarters, muscular, arched neck and thick mane and tail were reminiscent of that era as well. The Frisian horse was one of the breeds associated with this reform. Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries they were praised for their dressage aptitude, though their temperaments were not universally liked.⁸¹ Other Baroque horses included the Spanish horse, the Neapolitan, the Lipizzaner and the Frederiksborg horse.

By the early 1600s, horse trade had become an important part of the Dutch economy; horses from Friesland and Groningen were exported to France and England.⁸² In Holstein, Oldenburg and Friesland in northern Germany horse trade flourished during the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648).⁸³ Horses were exported from Oldenburg, Mecklenburg and Holstein to other European nations via the Netherlands.⁸⁴ Anthony Günther, Count of Oldenburg, had largely preserved his county's neutrality during the war. He made extensive use of the custom to present horses as gifts in political and diplomatic affairs.⁸⁵ As a result of his shrewd politics, Oldenburg became a trade centre for horses and exported 5,000 annually.⁸⁶ Although he was not the first to breed horses at Oldenburg, he was the first to do so on such a



(Map Jorieke Savelkouls)

scale.⁸⁷ Anthony Günther owned well over a thousand horses, 70 or 80 of which were foreign, including Spanish horses, Neapolitan horses and Turks.⁸⁸ The Frisian horse served as foundation stock for the Oldenburg horse.⁸⁹ Georg Simon Winter von Adlersflügel (1629-1701), a German *Reitmeister* (equestrian master) and horse veterinarian, wrote a treatise on horse breeding in which he included how breeds such as the Frisian could improve German stock.⁹⁰ German aristocracy purchased horses of Baroque and Oriental type from all across Europe, including Friesland.⁹¹

The demand for horses was so great that military officers urged the Dutch States General to ban all horse export.⁹² Friesland in particular initially objected to such a ban.⁹³ During the Dutch Golden Age, the popularity of Frisian horses continued to grow. As a result of their popularity, the number of quality horses in Friesland dwindled. In 1668, the States of Friesland permitted a Hendrik Wolters of Leeuwarden to keep a number of the finest Spanish, English and Turkish (i.e. Turkoman) stallions to provide Friesland

with quality saddle horses.⁹⁴ This suggests that the Frisian did not escape the international trend of first infusing Spanish and subsequently Turkoman blood, although not on as large a scale as, for example, the Oldenburg horse.

The 'forgotten' Frisian horse

While the sixteenth and seventeenth century marked a Golden Age for the Frisian horse, the eighteenth century again marked a change. The size of infantry units started to increase whereas the number of cavalry declined due to greater emphasis on firearms and firepower.⁹⁵ Cavalry was also more expensive to maintain.⁹⁶ The deployment of heavy cavalry declined and armies relied increasingly on versatile light-horse units.⁹⁷ Although cavalry mounts became lighter and leaner, heavy horses were in ever greater demand to pull artillery.⁹⁸ European horsemanship was also affected by the losses their armies suffered in consolidating growing empires overseas. The British struggled with the great mobility of their light cavalry opponents.⁹⁹ Between 1720 and 1760, tribal cavalries such as the Arab and Turkmen, who depended on seasonal raiding, threatened neighbouring states – not in the least because settled states depended more on infantry and slower heavy cavalry.¹⁰⁰ Arab, Barb and Turkoman horses were prized in Europe.¹⁰¹ State stud farms began breeding for the military and to refine their stock, Eastern blood horses as well as Thoroughbreds were used: English racehorses bred from Eastern bloodstock and local mares. The Baroque war horse was replaced by faster, lighter horses.

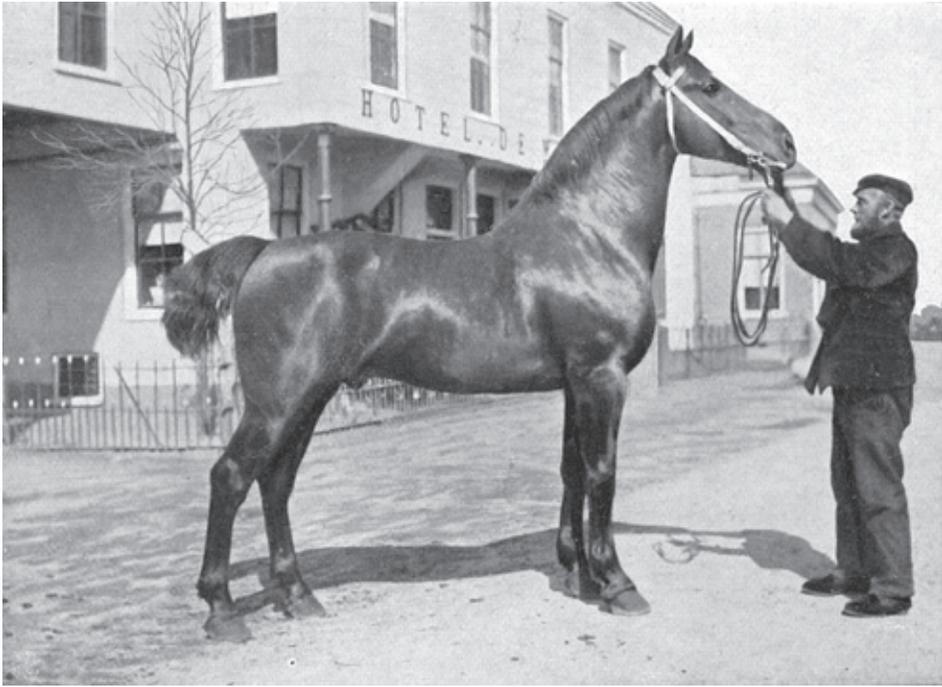
At the same time, scientific and technological progress affected more than just the military. Innovation brought growth in agricultural and industrial production, which resulted in great changes at all levels of society. Economic and social change in turn prompted a growing sense of civic pride and national identity. Elegant, light carriage horses became fashionable and in demand for pleasure riding and driving.¹⁰² Baroque horses were now mostly bred as versatile pleasure horses or a symbol of national pride. The Spanish horse was reduced to the Iberian peninsula, which coincided with Spain's fading power. As a result, Spanish horses largely escaped the revolution of the industrial age and the military reform of cavalry.¹⁰³ The Neapolitan horse was less fortunate and fell into decline. For a time, Neapolitans were in some demand as carriage horses and to improve other breeds.¹⁰⁴ The Neapolitan horse eventually disappeared altogether, and was mostly replaced by horses infused with English blood. In Denmark, the continued export of the Frederiksborg horse had depleted their number. By 1839, the stud farm sold all remaining horses and turned to breeding Thoroughbreds instead.¹⁰⁵ In Austria-Hungary, Arabians rather than Thoroughbreds were fashionable but Lipizzaners were still bred at Lipica.¹⁰⁶

Although the Frisian had some renown as a carriage horse and trotting-horse in the eighteenth and nineteenth century,¹⁰⁷ the Frisian landrace was mostly reduced to the northern Netherlands.¹⁰⁷ Trotting races, whether in harness or mounted, were a popular pastime in the northern Netherlands.¹⁰⁸ In England, America and Russia, fast trotters developed from Dutch and Frisian foundation stock.¹⁰⁹ Frisians were exported as carriage horses to France, but German breeders had mostly moved on to Oriental horses and, eventually almost exclusively, Thoroughbreds and other English breeds.¹¹⁰

Agricultural changes affected the Frisian horse as well. Agriculture, arable farming in particular, had dominated the European economy for centuries. New farming techniques sparked an agricultural revolution that boosted crop yield to feed the increasing population. One of the most important innovations was the curved mouldboard plough, which was introduced in the Netherlands in the seventeenth century and soon spread to the rest of Europe. This plough, particularly useful on heavy and marshy soil, sparked further innovations that meant much less traction was necessary, i.e. less labour and fewer horses.¹¹¹ On the heaviest soils in the northern Netherlands and Germany, three or even four to six horses were often still needed.¹¹² However, in Friesland most farmers owned just one or two horses as opposed to Groningen and northern Germany.¹¹³ Particularly in Friesland, this may have contributed to the need for specialised draught horses.

As the Industrial Revolution gained momentum at the onset of the nineteenth century, the demand for specialised horses increased. European state-formation processes resulted in governments trying to ensure a steady supply of quality horses, which was complicated by large-scale import and export.¹¹⁴ The demands of modern warfare and agricultural innovation also changed attitudes towards horses and horsemanship. Horses needed to be easy keepers first and foremost.¹¹⁵ On the other hand, enhanced fire power continued to diminish the role of cavalry. Continued war and conflict on the European continent, however, meant that horses were in constant demand. At the same time, the need for horses in cities and for agricultural work was on the rise; Europe experienced a dramatic increase of population as a result of the Agricultural Revolution.

Because of the agricultural and social changes, the Frisian horse became a versatile carriage horse suitable for light farm work. East Frisian and Oldenburg horses, once part of the Frisian landrace, had been infused with foreign stock on a much larger scale but weren't much in demand as saddle horses anymore, either. Oldenburg horses were mostly sold as cart and carriage horses.¹¹⁶ East Frisian horses were also deemed too heavy for cavalry, and if sold to the military at all, mostly to pull artillery.¹¹⁷ In spite of this trend, Dutch king William I wanted to implement Frisian horses for cavalry, but the notion met with so much resistance from his military



Oldenburg stallion standing at stud in Groningen at the turn of the twentieth century (Tresoar)

officers that it was eventually abandoned.¹¹⁸ Cavalry officers considered the Frisian horse more a carriage horse than a saddle horse, and unsuitable due to its high-stepping gait and heavy mane.¹¹⁹

At the start of the nineteenth century, the Oldenburg horse was thought to have fallen into decline due to repeated calamities, extensive use of unproven stallions and export of quality mares.¹²⁰ In 1820, German horse traders Stäve and Brandes imported a bay stallion, either a Cleveland Bay or a Yorkshire, from England.¹²¹ The stallion proved such a success that other Cleveland Bay and Yorkshire stallions soon followed.¹²² The growing importance of parentage and breeding a quality carriage horse suited to light farm work resulted in breed registries.¹²³ Notions of breed improvement, purebred breeding and breeding within the restrictions of studbooks arose.¹²⁴ These early registries and studbooks were essentially the beginning of modern *warmblood* horse breeding, its breeding goal reflective of the needs of the market. The term warmblood reflected the use of hot-blooded horses such as Arabians and Thoroughbreds to refine horses and add more stamina and athleticism, as opposed to 'cold-blooded' horses with a calm temper-

ament, which were suited to draught work and had very low or no hotblood infusion. Through high or low *hotblood* infusion, i.e. Arabian, Turkmen and/or Thoroughbred, so-called warmbloods were either bred as cavalry mounts, for light or moderate agricultural work and, eventually, for hobby and sport. In the mid-nineteenth century, the Oldenburg horse was a heavy but elegant carriage horse that developed to a heavier, stronger light draught horse for work on the farm or pulling artillery. Eventually, the Oldenburg horse became a modern sport horse.

In a way, horse breeding followed in the footsteps of improvements in livestock production due to Bakewell, who implemented systematic selective breeding, and the rise of Mendelism, which led to breeding for genetic traits such as meat or milk production in cattle, quality of wool in sheep or herding capacity in dogs.¹²⁵ Notions of purebred breeding and breed improvement took flight.¹²⁶ Imperialism and nationalism put emphasis on racial prejudices and mongrelisation, in people as well as horses.¹²⁷ The rise of Darwinism and eugenics transformed the concept of animal breeding altogether.¹²⁸ Regulation of livestock and specifically horse breeding by European and local governments increased. The Netherlands and Friesland were no exception.¹²⁹ The regulation of breeding culminated in the founding of studbooks for livestock, horses and dogs in many countries.¹³⁰ In horses, regulation and purebred breeding was inspired by the success of the Thoroughbred horse. Thoroughbred records had been kept since the seventeenth century. The Thoroughbred became synonymous for superiority and purity, signified by the *General Stud-Book* first issued between 1791 and 1808.¹³¹

This trend reflected in the popularity of the Oldenburg horse. Many Oldenburg horses were sold to Ostfriesland, and young work horses were sold at horse markets in Jever and Sengwarden to the Netherlands.¹³² The improved Oldenburg horse and East Frisian horses infused with Oldenburg blood were well suited for farm work.¹³³ Unlike the 'unimproved' horses of the North Sea coast, they matured early and even the broodmares were very easy keepers.¹³⁴ Moreover, the demand for Oldenburg horses was not limited to northern Germany and the Netherlands. After the Napoleonic Wars, thousands of horses had perished and many state stud farms in Europe ceased to exist.¹³⁵

More than a decade of war had devastated horse populations. King William I of the Netherlands established a state stud farm at Borculo (Gelderland) in 1822 to improve local stock.¹³⁶ Like the Oldenburg horse, the Frisian horse in the northern Netherlands was thought to have fallen into decline in the early 1800s. Horse breeding was no longer lucrative in Friesland. Some years sale prices were especially low.¹³⁷ However, Friesland, Groningen and Drenthe refused to use state stallions stationed in the

north.¹³⁸ At the same time, Dutch horse breeders began crossbreeding with Oldenburg horses.¹³⁹ In 1829, Friesland issued a decree that determined what constituted a Frisian horse and issued further regulations in hopes of saving the breed and limiting crossbreeding.¹⁴⁰ By 1841, breeding and trade in horses had improved, and the decree was revoked in 1854.¹⁴¹ Within a decade, all other horse breeding decrees of the province Friesland had been revoked.¹⁴² Oldenburg horses were still in great demand in the northern Netherlands. For example, by the 1850s Oldenburgs were sometimes sold for five times as much as a good work horse and three times as much as a carriage horse.¹⁴³ As the demand for cavalry and farm horses grew, prices soared.¹⁴⁴ The Frisian horse of the northern Netherlands was being displaced by profitable Oldenburg horses.

The '(re)invention' of the Frisian horse

Strong regulation in neighbouring countries meant the Frisian horse was in danger of being supplanted by horses from Germany and England.¹⁴⁵ The Province of Friesland, however, felt that it was neither possible nor their task to preserve the Frisian horse.¹⁴⁶ As local authorities and Dutch government abandoned regulations, breed registries took over.¹⁴⁷ On 1 May 1879, local



A Frisian family taking pride in their Frisian livestock (Tresoar)

landowners and farmers convened at a tavern in Reduzum to establish a Frisian cattle registry separate from the Dutch herdbook. A herdbook for Frisian cattle should be viewed not only as part of a general trend of purebred breeding and livestock development but also as a nationalist gesture. The rise of Frisian nationalism meant taking pride in a Frisian identity, which included a differentiation between being Frisian and being Dutch, and being Frisian first, Dutch second. Hence, Frisian cattle had to be differentiated from Dutch cattle and regulated from Friesland, not Amsterdam. The studbook for Frisian horses that followed, marked the beginning of the *Friesian* horse. Breed regulation, however, did not begin when the Frisian studbook was founded.¹⁴⁸ National and local authorities had issued decrees, regulations and inspections for centuries.¹⁴⁹ Horses were, after all, vital for military and agricultural purposes as well as transportation. Government regulation was a worldwide trend.¹⁵⁰

Moreover, farmers in Friesland had to adapt to rapid changes but felt the backlash of the industrial age when grain prices in particular dropped and continued to drop in the late 1800s.¹⁵¹ Innovation in agriculture and industry meant that some crops were no longer in demand while the demand for other resources increased dramatically. Many abandoned crops in favour of cattle.¹⁵² Others left. A number of Frisian academics and upper middle class had already left for Holland. Some Frisian aristocracy, too, had abandoned Friesland but after 1880 left in droves due to a changed social and political climate, and the agricultural crisis.¹⁵³ Many of them had continued to breed fine horses because it was the upper (middle) class that had the means and need to keep horses for pleasure. When the upper classes left, the number of Frisian horses continued to drop in favour of work horses and Oldenburg crossbreeds considered more suitable for farm work.

Two Frisian aristocrats, Cornelis van Eysinga and Arent Johan Vegelin van Claerbergen, responded to the plight of the Friesian horse. They sought to improve local horses and boost local economy.¹⁵⁴ The stud farm “De Oorsprong” was founded in 1885 at Huisterheide. The fate of the Friesian now rested in the hands of local enthusiasts. In 1896, the province of Friesland refused to intervene and instead let the fate of the Frisian ‘inland’ horse run its course. Furthermore, the Dutch government abandoned some of its laissez-faire policy in response to the grain crisis and sought to reform agriculture.¹⁵⁵ Dutch military began purchasing Oldenburg crossbreeds from Groningen to pull artillery instead of importing them from Ireland, which made crossbreeding even more lucrative.¹⁵⁶ These agricultural and economic changes put further pressure on the Frisian horse that had suffered a prolonged decline and was less suited to draught work than the Oldenburg and East Frisian horses imported from northern Germany or their crossbreeds. Many farmers in the northern Netherlands crossbred their local

'inland' (i.e. Frisian) horses, which by the 1870s had led to a 'Groningen' type. These 'improved' horses, the Groningen, Oldenburg and East Frisian horse, were collectively (and somewhat condescendingly) referred to as *bovenlander* or 'upland' horse.

Crossbreeding was widespread, and purebreds of either breed were rare.¹⁵⁷ In addition, Belgian heavy draughts were imported on a small scale to produce an even stronger work horse by crossbreeding.¹⁵⁸ By 1908, the number of registered 'purebred' Frisian stallions had dropped to only ten. The studbook had abandoned the separation of purebred and crossbred registries in 1907, although this decision did not go without protest. By 1910, only four stallions were left. Three years later, only Prins 109 P, Alva 113 P and Friso 117 P remained. The 'purebred' Frisian horse, i.e. the *Friesian*, had lost its position in the northern Netherlands to the *Bovenlander* work horse, which had now become the main horse in Friesland.

Again, Cornelis van Eysinga, amongst others, took the initiative. On 19 December 1913, registry members and breed enthusiasts gathered to prevent the imminent extinction of the 'purebred' Frisian horse. The winds of change were heeded; in the decades that followed, the Friesian became a stockier, all-round work horse. The breed returned from the abyss of extinction and slowly started to flourish again, albeit in a slightly different form than the Baroque horse of the Dutch Golden Age. However, when machinery started to replace the horse in Friesland altogether in the 1960s, sale prices plunged, breeding came to a grinding halt and memberships dropped.¹⁵⁹ This time, the work horse fell out of favour due to mechanisation. The age of the horse seemed to have ended. Another member of the Van Eysinga family took the initiative to turn the tide. Overall, the studbook responded much quicker to this second crisis. As equestrian sport and leisure became affordable to a growing number of people, the studbook sought to cater to this new public. Sport horses, saddle horses and hobby horses replaced work horses. The Baroque history of the Frisian horse was dusted off and the breed took flight as a versatile hobby horse. Within a few decades, the Fri(e)sian became one of the most sought after horse breeds in the world – all over again.

Breed history put in perspective

Although the Friesian horse was developed from the Frisian (landrace) horse, notions of breed purity and superiority were largely the result of cultural, societal and political changes of the long nineteenth century.¹⁶⁰ The beginnings of studbooks, breed registries and even ideas of purity, breed and superiority in blood and pedigree, were signs of the time and a direct result of revolutions that changed the face of Europe.

When the Oldenburg and East Frisian horse, both derived from a Frisian landrace, were subjected to this changed attitude, these 'improved' and 'reinvented' breeds spread west and began to supplant what remained of the local Frisian landrace variety. Local enthusiasts and aristocracy reacted, signified by the Friesian studbook. However, a studbook and breed regulation alone proved insufficient. The Frisian horse continued to decline in number as the need for heavier work horses continued to grow and the demand for versatile pleasure horses dwindled. Although the Friesian studbook was likely a response to the threat of the 'superior' work horse from the northeast (i.e. Groningen, Ostfriesland and Oldenburg), ideas of purity, identity and superiority of breed were projected on both breeds. Breed histories in general still echo these ideas very strongly. As a result of these sensitivities, a long, shared history between the inland (eventually the Friesian) and upland (i.e. East Frisian, Oldenburg and Groningen) horse is largely brushed aside.

Even the famous Friesian stallion Alva 113 was the offspring of horses of unknown ancestry and some Bovenlander infusion. Purebred breeding was, above all, a matter of arbitrary and subjective determination of what constituted the Frisian 'breed' and the Frisian 'type' and what a Bovenlander (or non-Frisian) horse. It marked the start of documenting parentage as a means to maintain a sense of identity, quality and uniformity. Breed regulation itself was by no means unique to the Friesian horse.

From a historical perspective, the Frisian breed and its history were founded on notions of purity, purebred breeding and taking (nationalist) pride in said purity – over most anything else. At the stud farm "De Oorsprong", many crossbreeds were produced from Frisian, Oldenburg and East Frisian stock. These crossbreeds were considered "failed experiments" by experts of the (early) Friesian studbook.¹⁶¹ However, selection for specific 'Frisian' traits in crossbreeds and horses of unknown origin was exactly what the studbook did. Moreover, Frisian horses were the result of centuries of trade between North Sea coastal regions. Horses from the northern Netherlands were sold to northern Germany and vice versa as early as the thirteenth century. In that respect, purebred breeding and purity of breed are relative terms. The history of the Frisian horse, like the history of the Frisian people, is one of trade, mutual influence and of resisting regulation from outside. The Frisian horse's place in history has risen and fallen like the tide. Given the international demand for Friesian horses today, the tide is high indeed.



Noten

1 See also: *Friesch Dagblad*, 11/01/2013; *De Telegraaf*, 18/11/2013. Some examples of Hollywood blockbusters that feature Friesian horses: *The Mask of Zorro* (1998); *Alexander* (2004); *300* (2007); *Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time* (2010); *Clash of the Titans* (2010); *Hercules* (2014); *Exodus: Gods and Kings* (2014). **2** Cf. Hobsbawm & Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*; Lawrence, *Nationalism*. For example, the Dutch Feast of Saint Nicholas (Sinterklaas) was redefined in this period. See also: Koops *et al.* (eds.), *Sinterklaas verklaard*. **3** The sjees was based on the *chaise*, which originated in France in the 1790s. **4** Kanon fan de Fryske skiednis, <http://11en30.nu/> **5** See also: <http://www.lc.nl/friesland/friesland-telt-meeste-koeien-18382453.html>; *Leeuwarder Courant*, 26/02/2015; <http://statline.cbs.nl>: Landbouw; gewassen, dieren en grondgebruik naar regio. Landbouw; dieren naar klassenindeling aantal dieren, regio, 2000-2009. Friesland grootste koeienprovincie, CBS Webmagazine 10/06/2003; <http://fryslan.nl>: Landbouw, Landbou Wagenda 2014-2020, Noorden wil ruimte houden voor grondgebonden groei melkveehouderij. **6** Cf. Derry, *Horses in Society*; Bankoff *et al.* (eds.), *Breeds of Empire*; Landry, *Noble Brutes*; Edwards *et al.* (eds.), *The Horse as a Cultural Icon*. **7** In 1928, the last bay was inscribed in the by-book and the last chestnut had been inscribed in 1916. **8** Theunissen, *De Koe*, 33. **9** One exception was the veterinarian Geurts who considered the upland horses bred in northern Germany, especially the East Frisian, a type closely related to the Friesian horse. Geurts, *Genetische analyse en structuur van de fokkerij*, 1. **10** The area had been inhabited much longer but little is known about horses in the area prior to Roman times. **11** Bazelmans, 'The case of the Frisians', 321. See also: Nieuwhof, 'Discontinuity in the Northern-Netherlands coastal area', 55-66. **12** Frisii were last mentioned in the *Panegyrici Latini* (297). **13** Cf. Gerrets, *Op de grens van land en water*; Bazelmans, 'The case of the Frisians', 321-337. **14** See, for example: Nieuwhof, 'Anglo-Saxon immigration or continuity?', 53-83. **15** See, for example: Peutinger Table; Antonine Itinerary; Velleius, *Historiarum*; Ptolemy, *Geographia*; Strabo, *Geographica*; Tacitus, *Annales*; Tacitus, *Germania*. See also: Schutz, *The Germanic Realms*, 371-73; Turner, 'The Provinces and Worldview of Velleius Paterculus', 260-279. **16** See, for example: Bouma, *Het Friese Paard*, 62-63; Bouma *et al.*, *Het Friese Paard*, 37-38; Van den Heuvel, *Het Friese paard*, 10. **17** See, for example: Knol *et al.*, 'Een oude merrie uit een Friese terp', 49-56. The remains of the examined mare were dated (¹⁴C) roughly between 187BCE and 25AD. Another mare, from a terp in Ezinge (Groningen, the Netherlands), was dated to the Mid Roman period. A third mare, buried in a similar fashion, is of yet undated. **18** See for example: Tacitus, *De situ*; Renatus, *Mulomedicalis* 3; Caesar, *De bello Gallico* IV, 2. **19** Galestin, 'Frisii and Frisiavones', 694, 701. **20** Van Dijk & Groot, 'The Late Iron Age-Roman transformation', 180-81; Grefhorst & Prummel, 'Dieren van de huisterp Birdaard-Roomschotel', 269-70. **21** See, for example: Knol *et al.*, 'Een oude merrie uit een Friese terp', 49-56. Breed regulations of the modern Friesian: KFPS Registration Regulations, Article 11 Registers; Stallion Inspection Regulations, Article 21. **22** Prummel, 'Dieren op de wierde Englum', 139. **23** Lauwerier & Robeerst, 'Horses in Roman times in the Netherlands', 287. **24** Benecke, *Der Mensch und seine Haustiere*, 204. **25** Reichstein, *Feddersen Wierde* 1, 192. The horse was also of a finer build than the others. **26** Benecke, 'Haustierhaltung', 74. **27** Benecke, 'Haustierhaltung', 74-75. **28** Horses found at 12 Roman sites across

Germany varied in size between 136 and 147 cm and were, on average, approximately 10 cm taller than horses from *Germania libera*: Benecke, 'Haustierhaltung', 74. **29** Cf. Metzger *et al.*, 'Body Size in Horses'; Brown-Douglas & Pagan, 'Body weight, wither height and growth rates', 219. **30** Such as selection of taller offspring for breeding and the addition of a grain ration to a grass-based diet. **31** See also: Groot, *Animals in Ritual and Economy*, 91, 149-50; Benecke, 'Haustierhaltung', 74-75. **32** Bökönyi, 'Les chevaux scythiques', 173-83; Bökönyi, 'Les chevaux scythiques II', 93-114; Drower, 'The domestication of the horse', 471-78, 475. **33** See also: Vitt, «Losadi pazyrykskich kurganov», 163-206. **34** Gryaznov, «Razvitiya skifo-sibiriskikh kul'tur», 4-7; Alekseev *et al.*, 'A Chronology of the Scythian antiquities', 1085-1107. **35** See, for example: Bökönyi, *Data on Iron Age horses*, 41. **36** Groot, *Animals in Ritual and Economy*, 190-91. **37** See, for example: Bouma, *Het Friese Paard*, 61-63; Bouma *et al.*, 37-38; Hendricks, *Horse Breeds*, 196; Van den Heuvel, *Het Friese paard*, 10-11. Much hinges on outdated methods for size estimates or outdated theories (i.e. Four Foundations Theory) of primitive subspecies from which modern breeds supposedly descended. A Germanic or Forest Horse type is postulated as ancestor of the Frisian horse. **38** For example, in *Lex Frisionum* (Add. I: 3) horse theft is listed as punishable by death though the penalty can be bought off by monetary compensation. **39** Prummel & Van Gent, 'Dieren van middeleeuwse terp Anjum-Terpsterweg', 261-265; Knol *et al.*, 'The early medieval cemetery of Oosterbeintum (Friesland)', 312-315. **40** Knol *et al.*, 'Een oude merrie uit een Friese terp', 53; Prummel & Van Gent, 'Dieren van middeleeuwse terp Anjum-Terpsterweg', 261-265. Evidence suggests horses were kept for meat in the ninth, twelfth and thirteenth centuries. However, horses were also used for riding and driving. **41** Benecke, *Der Mensch und seine Haustiere*, 204. **42** Prummel & Van Gent, 'Dieren van middeleeuwse terp Anjum-Terpsterweg', 261-265. **43** Knol *et al.*, 'The early medieval cemetery of Oosterbeintum (Friesland)', 312-315; Nieuwhof, *De wierde Wierum*, 37. **44** Benecke, *Der Mensch und seine Haustiere*, 205; Clark, *The Medieval Horse and Its Equipment*, 32. **45** Benecke, *Der Mensch und seine Haustiere*, 204-5; Clark, *The Medieval Horse and Its Equipment*, 23-32. **46** Prummel, 'Draught horses and other animals at late-medieval Scheemda', 304. **47** Benecke, *Der Mensch und seine Haustiere*, 204-5. **48** Aberth, *Environmental History*, 156. **49** Aberth, *Environmental History*, 157. **50** Kuske, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte Westfalens*, 64, 68; Scheurlen, 'Über Handel und Seeraub', 89-91; Hajo van Lengen, 'Stadtbildung und Stadtentwicklung', 33; Hill, *Die Stadt und ihr Markt*, 135. **51** Lübbling, 'Der Handelsverkehr', 145; Nijhoff, *Gedenkwaardigheden I*, XXIV-XXV, no. 214; Charter 432 (May 1252) from Margaret of Constantinople, Countess of Flanders and Hainaut and her son Guy of Dampierre mentions the trade of Frisian and Dacian horses (*Frisonos vel Daci equos*) from Cologne at the harbour of Damme. From: Höhlbaum, *Hansisches Urkundenbuch I*, 143-44. The *Bisschopszoen* (1276) of the (East Frisian) Second Emsinger Codex (VIII: 36) mentions trade of Frisian stallions at Münster (Germany): *Sket ant hangstar, ther Fresa tho merkede farat, mot ma selle it alrakere tid and tha tolene ielde se, ther a stenden heth*. Menko's *Cronica Floridi Horti* refers to horse breeding and horse trade, including a horse market in Groningen. **52** See, for example Nijhoff, *Gedenkwaardigheden I*, XXV. For an overview of Groningen's role in (Frisian) horse breeding and trade: Benders, *Een economische geschiedenis van Groningen*, 247-317. **53** Davis, *The medieval warhorse*, 81. **54** See, for example: Benders, *Een economische geschiedenis van Groningen*, 249, 258, 268. **55** Henricus van Rees, letter to

John I, 12/02/1466. National Archives. See also: Van Leeuwen, *Geschiedenis der paardenfokkerij*, 43. **56** Benders, *Een economische geschiedenis van Groningen*, 316. **57** Benders, *Een economische geschiedenis van Groningen*, 316. **58** Cf. 317. **59** Lübbling, 'Der Handelsverkehr', 139-148. **60** For example: Raimbert de Paris, *La Chevalerie Ogier de Danemarque*; Renaud de Beaujeu, *Le Bel Inconnu*; Jean Bodel, *La chanson des Saisnes*; Anonymous, *Alliterative Morte Arthure*; Anonymous, *Awntyrs off Arthur*. See also: Heim, *Romanen und Germanen in Charlemagnes Reich*, 246-247; Anonymous, *Der geöffnete Reit-Stall*, 90. **61** Mol, 'Frisian fighters and the Crusade', 101. **62** Ibid. 104-106. **63** See also: Vries, *Het Heilige Roomse Rijk*. **64** Daan, 'De woordenschat van het Nedersaksisch', 141-42. **65** See also: Vries, *Het Heilige Roomse Rijk*. **66** Maltby, *The Reign of Charles V*, 122. **67** See also: G. Darby, (ed.), *The Origins and Development of the Dutch Revolt* (London 2001); including, Pettegree, 'Religion and the Revolt', 67-83. **68** Bankoff, 'Big Men, Small Horses', 101. **69** Cf. Bennett, *Conquerors*, 167; Jankovich, *They Rode Into Europe*, 107, Blundeville, *Horsemanship*. **70** Fugger, *Gestüt von gutten edlen Kriegßgrossen*, f.39v. **71** The contract is printed in the *Churmärkischen Lehnscopialbuche XXXII*, 197. Quoted from Riedel, *Codex diplomaticus Brandenburgensis* 3, 214-215. **72** Neitzert, 'Pferdebedarf', 378-80; Benders, *Een economische geschiedenis van Groningen*, 290-91. **73** Stradanus, *Equile*. The book contains 41 plates, no. 24 of which is 'Phryso'. **74** This very popular series of engravings was reprinted numerous times. In the seventeenth century the series was reissued under different titles. See also: Sellink, in Sandra Janssens (ed.), *Stradanus*, 242. **75** For example, John Frederick I (1503-1554), Elector of Saxony rode a Frisian horse: Fafelius, *Lebensgeschichte*, 86. As did King Louis II of Bohemia and Hungary (1506-1526): Dubravius, *Historia regni Bohemiae*, 850; Isthuanffio, *Regni Hungarii Historiae*, Libris XXXIV. **76** Published by In ædibus P. Juntæ, Florence, 1516. It followed Italian publications of other literature from Classical Antiquity in Ancient Greek and Latin, including Plato. The ideology of cooperation and balance in horsemanship was paralleled in other aspects of society. **77** Landry, *Noble Brutes*, 21-23. **78** Thirsk, *Rural Economy*, 389. It is, however, predated by Duarte I of Portugal's (1401-1438) *Leal conselheiro, e livro da ensinança de bem cavalgar toda sella* (Lissabon 1843 edn.). **79** Grisone, *Cavalcare*. **80** The oldest and most famous of which still in existence today is the Spanish Riding School at Vienna, Austria. **81** Blundeville, *Horsemanship*, f.6; Cavendish, *Dresser les chevaux*, 72-73; Cavendish, *A New Method to Dress Horses*, 58-59. Blundeville, however, was not too keen on the Frisian's temperament, nor was Gervase Markham. Gervase Markham, *Caualarice, or The English Horseman I* (London 1617 edn.) 16; Gervase Markham, *Markham's Master-Piece Revived. Containing All Knowledge belonging to the Smith, Farrier, or Horse-Leach, touching the Curing All Diseases in Horses*. I (London 1681 edn.) 142. **82** Blink, *Geschiedenis* 2, 81; Schottmüller, 'Reiseeindrücke', 255-56; Bos, 'Stapelrecht', 309. **83** Gahlen, 'Dreißigjähriger Krieg', 143; Kellenbenz & Walter, 'Das Deutsche Reich', 833. **84** See for example: Resolutions of the States General 13/03/1629, 10; 09/04/1629, 8. **85** Von Halem, *Geschichte des Herzogthums Oldenburg* 2, 500-01; Meiners, *Geschichte A. Günthers*, 77-78; Landesmuseum Oldenburg, *Anton Günther*, 14. **86** Von Halem, *Geschichte des Herzogthums Oldenburg* 2, 500; Meiners, *Geschichte A. Günthers*, 77; Hofmeister, *Mittheilungen*, 5. **87** Wrangel, *Die Rassen des Pferdes* 1, 529-31. For an overview, see also: Hofmeister, *Die Pferdezucht des Herzogthums Oldenburg*. **88** Von Halem, *Geschichte des Herzogthums Oldenburg* 2, 500; Poppe, *Heimatkunde*, 33; Wrangel, *Die*

Rassen des Pferdes 1, 531; Hofmeister, *Mittheilungen*, 5. **89** Wrangel, *Die Rassen des Pferdes* 1, 530. **90** Winters von Adlers-Flügel, *Stuterei oder Fohlenzucht* II, f.54. **91** For example: Wrangel, *Die Rassen des Pferdes* 1, 588-89; in 1569, Johann Albrecht I von Mecklenburg (1525-1576) already owned a number of (bay) Frisian horses. Friedrich I von Württemberg (1557-1608), Albrecht von Wallenstein (1583-1634), and in 1624 Electoral Prince George Wilhelm of Prussia (1595-1640) purchased numerous Frisian horses. Lengerke, *Deutscher Land- und Forstwirth zu Doberan*, 112; Lisch, *Pferdezucht in Mecklenburg*, 14, 15, 18, 19-20; Lisch, 'Pferdezucht in Mecklenburg', 693; Mentzel, *Die Remontirung der Preußischen Armee*, 25, 276. Also, in 1565, Johann Albrecht commissioned a buyer to purchase Frisian broodmares in Ost-Friesland but Edzard of Ost-Friesland answered his request by pointing out that he did not own any of such horses and that he should be able to buy them from West-Friesland in Holland instead. Quoted from: Lisch, *Pferdezucht in Mecklenburg*, 13-14. **92** Resolutions States General 04/06/1629, 1. **93** Resolutions 28/04/1630, 4; 08/05/1630, 11. **94** Van Leeuwen, *Geschiedenis der paardenfokkerij*, 66-67. See also: Jongsma, *De paardenfokkerij in Friesland*. **95** Firepower also diminished the Ottoman Turk threat against Austrian armies. See also: Black, *War in the Eighteenth-Century World*, 32. **96** Ibid. 44. **97** Holmes (ed.), *Oxford Military History*, 188, 416. **98** Derry, *Horses in Society*, 101-102. **99** Black, *War in the Eighteenth-Century World*, 17-18. **100** See also: Black, *War in the Eighteenth-Century World*, 78, 99. **101** Cf. Landry, *Noble Brutes*; Derry, *Horses in Society*, 107-108. **102** Lorenzen-Schmidt, 'Bauern der holsteinischen Elbmarschen als Händler', 51. See, also: Velten, *Beastly London*. **103** Although some Thoroughbred crosses were bred and imported to Spain for military purposes, the Spanish horse was bred mostly pure: Wrangel, *Das Buch vom Pferde* 2, 404; Goldbeck, *Militärpferde*, 298, 343. **104** Cf. Youatt, *The Horse*, 21; Baumeister, *Aeussern des Pferdes*, 45; Huzard, *Notice sur quelques races de chevaux*, 27-30; Huzard, *Instruction sur l'amélioration des chevaux*, 150-52; Garsault, *Le nouveau parfait maréchal*, 68; Westerman, *Dier, bovendien*. **105** Von Baggesen, *Der Dänische Staat* 2, 29-30. **106** M. Huzard fils, *Notice sur quelques races de chevaux*, 27-31. J.B. Müller, who translated Huzard's *Notice* to German, clarified why Thoroughbreds were not well-liked in Austria: Huzard, *Pferde-Racen*, 34-37. **107** Cf. De Buffon, *Histoire naturelle*, 339; Huzard, *Instruction sur l'amélioration des chevaux*, 156-57, 258; Garsault, *Le nouveau parfait maréchal*, 53; Guérinière, *École de cavalerie*, 53; Baumeister, *Aeussern des Pferdes*, 45. **108** Ter Gouw, *De volksvermaken*, 572, 577-78. **109** Derry, *Horses in Society*, 33; Van Leeuwen, *Geschiedenis der paardenfokkerij*, 63-64; Reinders, *Landbouw en de veeteelt* 3, 333. **110** A phenomenon hippologist Wrangel called 'Thoroughbred mania': Wrangel, *Die Rassen des Pferdes* 1, 523. **111** Anonymous, *Schetsen van het landbouwbedrijf in Nederland*, 93; Needham and Bray, *Science and Civilisation* 6/2, 580-81. **112** Anonymous, *Schetsen van het landbouwbedrijf in Nederland*, 299; Lorenzen-Schmidt, 'Bauern der holsteinischen Elbmarschen als Händler', 37. **113** Anonymous, *Schetsen van het landbouwbedrijf in Nederland*, 487; Lorenzen-Schmidt, 'Bauern der holsteinischen Elbmarschen als Händler', 37; Bieleman, *Five Centuries of Farming*, 177. **114** See, for example: Derry, *Horses in Society*, 103, 116-120. **115** An easy keeper is a hardy horse able to maintain its condition with relatively small(er) rations under changing conditions and military campaigns. In general, large and/or hot-tempered horses require more intake. **116** Kohli, *Handbuch* 1, 133. Oldenburg regiments purchased horses in East Prussia instead: Wrangel, *Das Buch vom Pferde* 2, 451. **117**

Wrangel, *Die Rassen des Pferdes* 1, 518. In pursuit of black cuirassier horses in 1787 it was explicitly made clear that 'friesländische' and 'jeversche' horses were not accepted. From: Parey, *Gestütbuch*, 118. **118** Commissie Nederlandsche Huishoudelijke Maatschappij, *Algemeen verslag*, 148. **119** See for example: *Geisweit van der Netten, Handboek*, 29-31. **120** Hofmeister, *Mittheilungen*, 6. **121** Wrangel, *Die Rassen des Pferdes* 1, 534; Hofmeister, *Mittheilungen*, 7; Goldbeck, *Militärpferde*, 113 **122** Hofmeister, *Mittheilungen*, 7-8; Wrangel, *Die Rassen des Pferdes* 1, 534-35. **123** Hofmeister, *Mittheilungen*, 8; Wrangel, *Die Rassen des Pferdes* 1, 518-19. An Oldenburg registry was founded in 1862, an East Frisian registry in 1849 (horses and cattle) and 1869, followed by a studbook in 1897. **124** Derry, *Horses in Society*, 94. **125** See also: Derry, *Bred for Perfection*; Theunissen, *De Koe*. **126** See, for example: *Handelingen Tweede Kamer* (1840), 02 September 1840, 150. Notions of race, superiority and purity in horses are compared to these qualities in humans. **127** Landry, *Noble Brutes*, 126-27. **128** See, for example: Krüger, *A Horse Breeder's Perspective*, 383-86. **129** *Bepalingen betreffende de Staatszorg voor de paardenfokkerij* were issued on a regular basis throughout the nineteenth century. See also: <http://statengeneraaldigitaal.nl>; For an overview of Frisian state regulations and decrees: Jongtsma, *De paardenfokkerij in Friesland*. **130** See, for example: Derry, *Bred for Perfection*. **131** Landry, *Noble Brutes*, 127. **132** Kohli, *Handbuch* 2, 326-327; Wrangel, *Die Rassen des Pferdes* 1, 549. **133** Wrangel, *Die Rassen des Pferdes* 1, 535-36. **134** Hofmeister, *Mittheilungen*, 11; Anonymous, *Overzicht van het landbouwbedrijf in Nederland*, 111; Wrangel, *Die Rassen des Pferdes* 1, 519, 543; Blink, *Geschiedenis* 2, 387. **135** Blink, *Geschiedenis* 2, 382. **136** Blink, *Geschiedenis* 2, 383. **137** The number of Frisian mares covered dropped from 3,774 in 1819 to 1,136 in 1822. Prices in Friesland were especially low compared to the rest of the country with colts going for as little as f14.- to f18.- on average. In: Kops, *Staat van den landbouw*, 91-93. **138** Blink, *Geschiedenis* 2, 386-87. Blink suggests that breeders in the north felt affronted by this government attempt to interfere in the breeding choices of mare owners. **139** Wrangel, *Die Rassen des Pferdes* 1, 551. **140** *Handelingen der Provinciale Staten Friesland*, 17 maart 1829. The decree included the prohibition of having mares covered outside Friesland, which was kept in place until 1849. See also: Hartog, *De paardenfokkerij als tak van staatszorg*, 14. **141** Beijer, *Geschied- en aardrijkskundige beschrijving*, 351. **142** Hartog, *De paardenfokkerij als tak van staatszorg*, 15. **143** Anonymous, *Statistisch Jaarboek voor het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden* 8 (The Hague 1859) 273. In the Oldambt (Groningen) work horses ranged between f170.- and f300.-, carriage horses cost between 4 and 500, whereas a 3 year old Oldenburg cost f1200.- to f1500.- **144** See also: Derry, *Horses in Society*. In cattle, demand from America, England and Germany increased dramatically as well: Theunissen, *De Koe*, 43. **145** Provinciale Staten Friesland, *Verslag*, 187-91. See also: Hartog, *De paardenfokkerij als tak van staatszorg*, 33 onwards; Derry, *Horses in Society*, 172-73. **146** Provinciale Staten Friesland, *Verslag*, 188. **147** Some government regulation still existed via the *Paardenwet* (Equine Law) but from 1918, breed inspections and regulation were the affair of breed registries first, government second. **148** In 1531, Charles V issued a decree that prohibited the purchase of mares outside horse markets and in 1566 his son Phillip II issued a similar decree. Van Leeuwen, *Geschiedenis der paardenfokkerij*, 64-65; Jongtsma, *De paardenfokkerij in Friesland*, 46. **149** Hartog, *De paardenfokkerij als tak van staatszorg*, 5-6. Some of these regulations went as far as prohibiting the use of stallions

outside Friesland. **150** Cf. Derry, *Horses in Society*. Government involvement was especially prevalent in Germany: Krüger, 'A Horse Breeders Perspective', 385. **151** Bielema, *Five Centuries of Farming*, 173-75. **152** Theunissen, *De Koe*, 43. **153** Many, if not most, left for the Randstad area, some to the Veluwe region. For a more detailed insight into Frisian aristocracy and why some stayed and many left: Kuiper, *Adel in Friesland*; Kuiper & Van der Laarse, *Beelden van de buitenplaats*. **154** Tresoar abk-323, no. 1847, Akte van Stichting paardenstoeterij "De Oorsprong". See also: Douma, *Stoeterij De Oorsprong*. Around 1890, some 60 horses Frisian, East Frisian and Oldenburg (i.e. Bovenlander) origin stood at the stud farm. However, when the founder died in 1927, only 5 horses were left and the stud farm ceased to exist in 1930. **155** Theunissen, *De Koe*, 44. **156** Goldbeck, *Militärpferde*, 260. Cavalry horses were bought from Hannover until 1879. By 1881, horses were mostly imported from Ireland. **157** Anonymous, *Schetsen van het landbouwbedrijf*, 605. **158** Anonymous, *Overzicht van het landbouwbedrijf in Nederland*, 97; Anonymous, *Schetsen van het landbouwbedrijf*, 605. **159** The figures are staggering: in 1957, 1211 members together owned 2383 horses, and an estimated 4,000 by 1962, by 1967 only 656 members and 974 horses remained, see <http://kfps.nl> **160** A trend seen in many horse breeds as well as other cultivated breeds of animals. **161** On the abhorrence of crossbreeding, see, for example: Bouma *et al.*, *Het Friese Paard*, 48; Douma, *Stoeterij De Oorsprong*, 58-59.



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