







WHEN three-time international Group 1 winner Dunaden, best known for his heart-stopping victory in the 2011 Melbourne Cup, died in England from complications following a paddock accident in May of 2019, his once completely dominant tail-male line, tracing back through Herod to the Byerley Turk, lost its best chance at survival.

by Rommy Faversham

# HEROD'S VANISHING SIRE LINE

*The tail-male line of Herod, once so dominant, faces impending extinction. Does it matter? You bet it does.*

**H**EROD, of course, represents one of the original triumvirate of male lines along with Matchem and Eclipse from which virtually all winners of the English classics descend. This trio's series of family links helped shape the primary development of our new sub-species, the thoroughbred. Each male line had been determined by their imported ancestor, the Byerley Turk (imported to England in 1688) was the great, great grandsire of Herod (1758). The Darley Arabian (imp. 1704) was the great, great grandsire of Eclipse (1764) and the Godolphin Arabian (imp. 1730) became the grandsire of Matchem (1748).

What then would be at stake by the effacement of a male line so foundational? In an informal survey not too long ago, the leaders of a number of major U.S. stud farms were asked to comment on the

continuous disappearance of longstanding sire lines, prompting the almost uniform response that it is "of little to no consequence to the breed". No shock then that one would have to go back to the 1995 edition of the Blood-Horse's Stallion Registry to find the last advertised stallion of the Herod line. For comparison, the 1982 edition featured 22 active stallions.

Even more askew, in an October 2020 opinion piece in the breeding section of England's Racing Post, a rather pretentious pundit remarked that if a once-great sire line such as Herod can be on the verge of being snuffed out, then the whole concept of sire lines has no meaning. He concluded his essay by suggesting "if you are trying to work out how to breed a good horse, a study of the stallion's tail is likely to give you just as good a guide as his tail-male ancestry". Wow. ►►

The **Herod** line was originally known for its stamina, a trait retained by many of its subsequent tale-male representatives. These were typically horses of good temperaments, willing and honest.

At this point, we don't really know the extent to which bio-diversity is being forfeited when a sire line dies. It does, however, stand to reason that if one chooses to acknowledge the value in recognizing the spectrum of sire lines, it should, in turn, be difficult to believe the breed suffers no meaningful loss when you eradicate one - especially one as fundamental as the Herod line. Part of the fascination with sire lines is based on the many famous sires whose prepotency influenced the offspring of their sons, grandsons and even further. And then on a more sentimental note, losing Herod in tail-male is a plain and simple irreversible insult to the legacy of the breed, if not the sport.

Maintenance of male line diversity also helps to spread populations of broodmares over a greater number of stallions which ultimately serves to limit excessive inbreeding. The Y chromosome is distributed along the paternal line, the top line of a pedigree chart. It represents less than one percent of the entire equine genome and contains genes mostly associated with fertility. Not surprisingly, fertility issues follow the male line, generation to generation. Other specific sequences within the Y chromosome can now be analyzed to identify the original foundation stallion from which each individual descends. In a sense, the sire line is like a postage stamp. It doesn't tell you what's inside, but it can tell you where it's been.

**Influence**

Some excellent work from an international group of researchers based in Vienna within the last few years has revealed all three founding fathers' male line descendants have common markers on their Y chromosome which indicate they all stem from the Turkoman horse, an ancient population from the steppes of Central Asia. This is counter to the long held belief that thoroughbreds trace back to Arabians (the other Oriental ancestor). As such, all thoroughbreds descend from Turks. Not just the Herod line.

In 1908, retired French military officer Lt. Col. J. J. Vuillier published a book titled *Les Croisements Rationnels* (Rational Crossbreeding) which sought to determine the relative impact of Eclipse versus Herod. By conducting an in-depth study of the pedigrees of major European winners, Vuillier concluded that Herod exerted a significantly greater degree of influence. More importantly, he found the proportion of Herod in the pedigrees of the best horses remained relatively constant over the generations. Continued research led Vuillier to calculate the dosages of other breed shapers (chefs-de-race) all the way through to the late nineteenth century. Vuilliers' dosage estimates have been supported

by a remarkably similar set of values described in a 2018 paper by a group of laboratory researchers from the University of Sydney who analyzed the entire genomes of 128 random contemporary Australian racehorses and found that almost 20% of their genetic makeup as determined by measuring the quantity of markers known as 'identical-by descent' (IBD) alleles unique to Herod. Twenty percent is the genetic equivalent of being inbred 3X4.

	Vuilliers' Value	Univ. of Sydney study; IBD alleles
HEROD	18.3%	19.9%
ECLIPSE	13.2%	11.5%

For good measure, individuals with a greater number of these IBD alleles attributed to Herod had greater cumulative earnings, earnings per start, and career length. Thanks to this bioscience, Herod has now been proven to be the thoroughbred's greatest stallion influence.

**Traits**

The trait of bleeding, which later became identified as Exercise Induced Pulmonary Hemorrhage (EIPH) has become the most widely recognized of all disorders involving racehorses. It is considered a recessive Mendelian trait which appears to have been originally transmitted by Bartlett's (Bleeding) Childers (1716), the paternal great-grandfather of Eclipse. The other key early stallion with the bleeding trait was Herod (1758) whose broodmare sire was a son of Bartlett's Childers' full brother, Flying Childers. It was, in fact, reported that Herod lost the Great Subscription Purse at York due to breaking a blood vessel in his lungs. A heavy price to pay, the highly successful cross of Eclipse and Herod only cemented this affliction into the breed.

The Herod line was originally known for its stamina, a trait retained by many of its subsequent tale-male representatives. These were typically horses of good temperaments, willing and honest. They were also bold types that did not readily shy and were known for their good bone and substance. As time went on, the Herod line became associated with particularly good broodmare sires, a characteristic, however, that never works to the benefit of its own sire line.

It did seem that Herod's intrinsic value was always appreciated by the well-read scholars of racing and breeding. Prominent English journalist and bloodstock agent William Allison lamented that for far too long "Eclipse [had been] accumulated with a view to suppressing the Herod element. I dread to think of the unavoidable consequences of these methods, a constitutionally weaker race

horse...Descent in tail male is largely dependent on the caprice of fashion, and if the same blood is flourishing [elsewhere], then we may be sure that its decadence is due simply to our own neglect of it".

The Herod line began with the Byerley Turk's (c. 1680) importation to England. Described as dark bay or black with a larger, longer body, than the Arabian, the Byerley Turk is believed to have been captured at either the eventful Battle of Vienna in 1683 or the Siege of Buda in 1686. Later on, he served as Captain Robert Byerley's war horse at the Irish Battle of the Boyne in 1689 when his fleetness of foot is said to have saved his master from capture. The Byerley Turk would go on to sire a number of highly influential daughters, most of whose names do not survive. These include the taproot mares for Bruce Lowe's female families, #1, #3, #8, #17 and #41. Conversely, without his great-great grandson Herod, the Byerley Turk's male line would have completely died out during the latter half of the eighteenth century.

Herod (1758) was a good race horse that became the ultimate sire and ancestor. A well-made horse of great strength, speed, and gameness, many of his early descendants were likewise very dark in coat color with few white markings. Figure 1 illustrates all of the major branches of the Herod sire line extending to Tourbillon in the mid-twentieth century.

By the time of the inaugural runnings of the English classics, the Derby (1780), Oaks (1779) and St. Leger (1776), the Herod sire line, particularly its Highflyer branch was in complete control. It is, in fact, somewhat remarkable that so many non-Herod male lines survived this early period. Between 1777 and 1809, Herod, Highflyer and his son Sir Peter Teazle earned sire titles in England and Ireland in 31 of the 33 years. In the decades to follow, Herod male line remained the thoroughbred's dominant sire line only to less of a degree. From 1814 to 1850, nineteen of the British Isles' 36 champion sires descended in tail-male to Herod.

Perhaps, the most notable feature of the mid-nineteenth century downfall of the Herod male line in England and Ireland was its abruptness. From 1851 onward (more than 170 years), only four Herod-line stallions would become leading sires. This rapid loss of potency in the British Isles was already being replenished in France especially following the 1846 importation of the key Highflyer-line sire Gladiator who quickly became one of the most influential French sires of the nineteenth century, in large part through his son Fitz Gladiator. The next French game-changer was the 1859 importation of the famous Derby winner The Flying Dutchman who supplied a lasting life line for Herod's Selim branch. ➤➤

PEDIGREE ANALYSIS *Herod's vanishing sire line*

Likewise, the Castrel branch of Herod started to thrive following the transfer of Thormanby's best son Atlantic to French interests in 1874. A fourth key export was the speedy Buccaneer, by Wild Dayrell, from the Highflyer line who was sent to Austria-Hungary in 1865 where he immediately initiated an influential male line in Central Europe, including Germany. Buccaneer's Hungarian-bred son Kisber returned to England to capture the 1876 Derby. The Buccaneer branch eventually reached the United States where it issued the last superior tail male descendant of Highflyer, 1951 Older Male champion Mioland, a fourth-generation descendant of leading German sire Hannibal (1891).

Atlantic produced the remarkable four-time French leading sire Le Sancy (1884) whose influence at stud in France was likened to that of St. Simon's in England. It was said of him that every single one of his progeny that entered training was returned a winner. Le Sancy featured a particularly auspicious pedigree as his paternal grandsire Thormanby was a full brother to his third dam Lady Hawthorne (2X3). This form of inbreeding between a full brother and sister along the tail-male and tail-female lines is known as the Delta Pattern. He was responsible for establishing the breed's longest uninterrupted

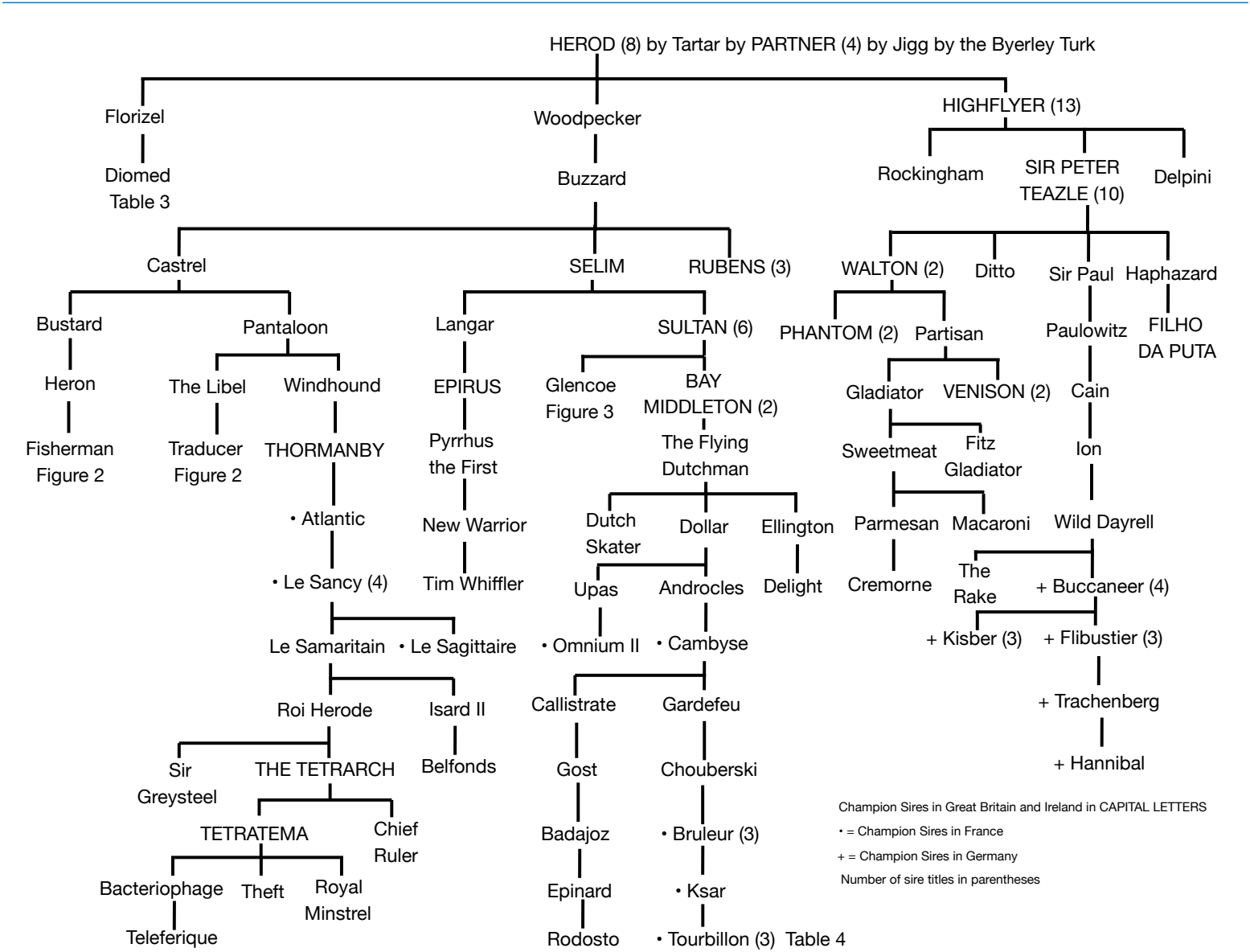
passage of the Mendelian dominant grey (G) gene along his sire line (reaching at least nine generations). Of special note, the majority of Le Sancy-line stallions' best offspring were grey as well. Le Sancy's grandson Roi Herode (1904) was purchased and relocated to Ireland with the specific intent of reviving the Herod sire line within the British Isles. At a time when grey thoroughbreds were not at all in vogue, virtually every contemporary grey / roan thoroughbred receives its G gene through Roi Herode.

From Roi Herode's first crop of Irish-breds came The Tetrarch (1911), rated by Timeform to be the world's best two year old of the twentieth century. Unable to compete in the classics, the undefeated "Spotted Wonder" was a problematic yet highly influential stallion, siring only 130 foals from eleven crops before finally becoming completely sterile. He was not only proficient in getting sprinters and milers but also sired progeny with the potential for classic distances including three St. Leger winners. The best of his offspring was Mumtaz Mahal, known as the "Flying Filly", who became a matriarch to one of the most brilliant families of the twentieth century. Another of Roi Herode's sons, Sir Greysteel was imported to the U.S. where he sired a pair of distaff champions in the 1930s. The Tetrarch and his classic winning

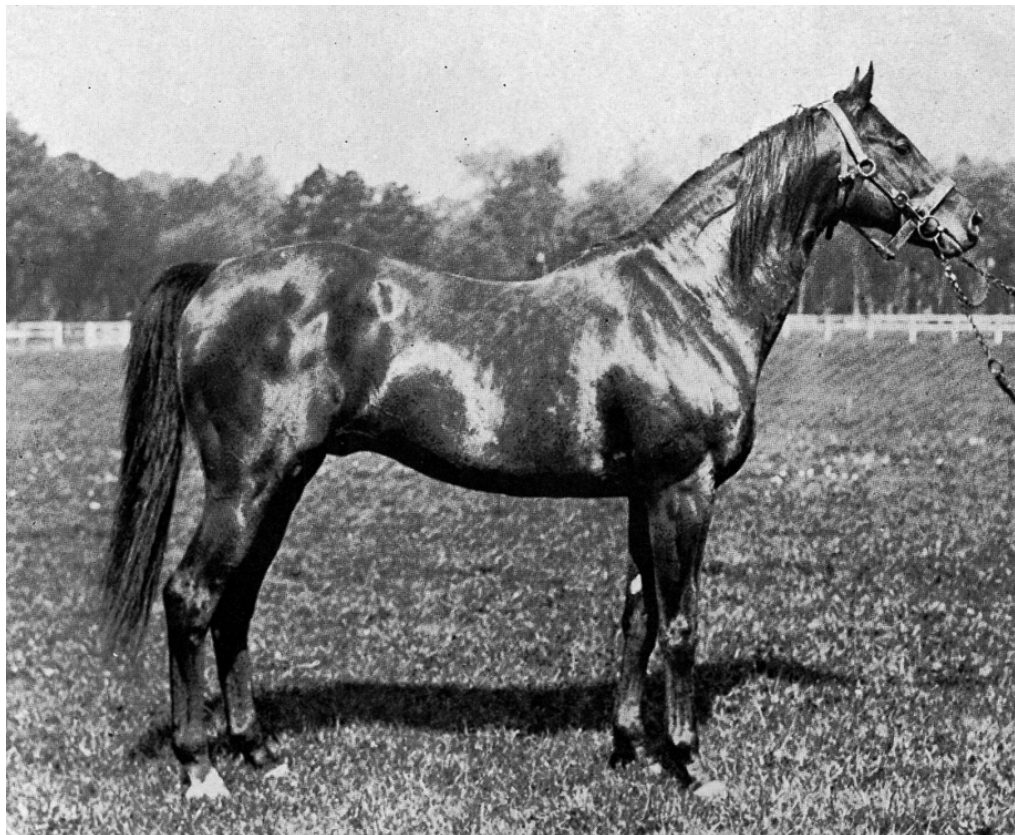
son Tetratema were the last two Herod-line stallions to garner leading sire honors in England and Ireland, in 1919 and 1929 respectively. Finally, Theft, a son of Tetratema was sent to Japan and became a four-time leading sire after the Second World War. Male line descendants of The Tetrarch continued to win a good share of major international races through the 1960s but by the end of the last century the entire Castrel branch of Herod was completely extinguished.

The Flying Dutchman's French-bred son Dollar (1860) inaugurated the only line of Herod that survives to this day, be it a very weakened one. For quite a while, it was a line known for getting runners who were best at the longest of racing distances. Dollar's grandson, leading sire Cambyse produced two important branches. That of Callistrate survived for more than a dozen generations. Its most prominent representative was the pioneer Epinard who in the summer of 1924 made racing history when crossing the Atlantic to take on America's best racehorses in a trio of events known as International Specials #1, 2 and 3. The races were run at different racetracks and distances, all on unfamiliar dirt surfaces while giving weight. Epinard's three impressive second place finishes would earn the French invader U.S. champion older horse honors. ➤➤

Figure 1: THE HEROD SIRE LINE







**Tourbillon**

The branch carried on by Cambyse's French Derby winning son Gardefeu was soon to become France's dominant sire line throughout the 1920s, 30s, and 40s with the succession of Bruleur to Ksar to Tourbillon to Djebel, all four leading French sires. From 1921 to 1949, a Bruleur-line stallion was the leading sire in ten of the 29 years.

### **Tourbillon anchors the 20th century**

Winner of the 1931 French Derby, Tourbillon may have been the most important representative of the entire Herod sire line in the twentieth century. It certainly would not have reached the twenty-first century without him. A potent international sire-of-sires, he added depth to the remaining strains of the Herod tail-male line (Figure 2) at a time when Herod's two other important branches (Castrel and Highflyer) were coming to an end. All the while, the ravenous Phalaris male line was continuing to grow stronger, everywhere. Tourbillon became a principal figure in the rescinding of the Jersey Act in 1949 which had rendered the three-time French sire champion ineligible from inclusion in their General Stud Book on account of his dam's 'questionable American blood'.

Tourbillon's son Timor was exported to Argentina where he sired Pronto who got Practicante (1966), the latter two splitting six domestic sire championships. Pronto also got Chilean sire champion Balconaje (1968) while Practicante produced leading Brazilian sire Vacilante. Neither line lasted very long. Elsewhere in South America, Fort Napoleon (1947) was moved to Brazil and yielded five sire championships but no effective sons at stud. Tourbillon's French juvenile champion Ambiorix was acquired by legendary

Claiborne Farm in Kentucky where he became leading U.S. sire for 1961. Quite likely, the last time a Herod-line stallion will ever achieve that level of success. The Ambiorix branch lasted several more generations issuing a fair number of superior individuals.

Among Tourbillon's many French-based sons at stud, his best was Arc winner Djebel who contributed at least three major branches of his own. They included French juvenile champion Clarion, Irish Guineas winner Hugh Lupus and English Guineas winner My Babu (described below). Clarion's paternal grandson Luthier captured four French sire championships. His son Saint Cyrien appears to have realized the Herod-line's final French sire crown in 1990. The Hugh Lupus branch annexed eight English and Irish classics before it too burned out. After all of this, Herod's entire remaining sire line comes down to a few rather uninspiring strains that run through the sprinter Ahonoora (1975) who sired 1992 English champion three-year old Dr. Devious and Indian Ridge, his best son at stud and another dedicated sprinter.

### **Herod in Australasia**

The first (English) thoroughbred stallion to arrive in Australia was the Highflyer-line horse Rockingham in 1799. His major contribution was as sire of the foundress of Colonial Family 15, Australia's oldest native female line. The five-year old New Warrior from the Selim branch arrived in New South Wales in 1855 and sired three Melbourne Cup winners including Tim Whiffler who sired another two. The most influential Herod-line stallion of the nineteenth century in Australia was probably Fisherman (see Figure 3), one of England's best ever stayers winning 69 races, including two Ascot Gold Cups. Imported

in 1860 as a seven-year old to stand at stud in Maribyrnong, Victoria, the Castrel-line stallion sired only five small crops which included a remarkable three VRC Derbies, four Oaks and three St. Leger winners. Despite his premature death, the Fisherman line branched out to become a prominent, if not dominant domestic sire line during the latter third of the century, thanks in large part to his son Maribyrnong and grandson Robinson Crusoe.

Another important mid-nineteenth century stallion from Herod's Castrel branch was Traducer (see Figure 3) who was imported to New Zealand in 1862. His successes at stud included nine winners of the New Zealand 2,000 Guineas and eight winners of the Canterbury Cup. Several of his sons prolonged his male line into the twentieth century, in particular, Sir Modred who was imported by famed California horseman James Ben Ali Haggin to his Rancho del Paso where he earned a U.S. sire title in 1894.

The best Herod-line import to New Zealand in the twentieth century was The Tetrarch stallion Chief Ruler who captured a couple of local sire titles in 1929-30 and 1932-33. The most important importation of a Herod-line stallion to Australia in the twentieth century was, by far, Better Boy (see Figure 2), a son of the English sire My Babu. Among the leading Australian sires twelve times, Better Boy won the sire title four times, 1965-66, 1970-71, 1971-72 and 1976-77. His brilliant son Century carried on the line, winning his own sire championship in 1978-79. Century's best sons at stud would be the last effective generation of producers and, as such, all that remains are a few aging females and non-fertile males. The relatively high rate of gelding among the Better Boy line's best sons is a major reason it has become functionally extinct. Despite being a successful sire line with very different origins than the rest, there was never an attempt to maintain it. As for Herod's male line, any sort of development of the Better Boy line could have been its salvation. A final import worth mentioning is Twig Moss, by Luthier, an exceptional Australian sire in the 1980s but another lacking a son to carry on his line.

### **Herod in the USA**

Before the American Revolutionary War, there was a preponderance of stallions imported from England who descended from the Godolphin Arabian. After the conflict for independence, most of the imported stallions switched to Byerley Turk and Darley Arabian descent.

The male line of Herod was initiated in the United States by the fortuitous importation of his aging grandson, \*Diomed, winner of the inaugural running of the Epsom Derby in 1780 who was ultimately deemed a failure at stud in England and dispatched to Virginia in 1798 (See Figure 4). In his definitive text, *Racing in America 1665-1865*, turf historian John Hervey wrote, "the success of [Diomed's American] get was so immediate, so sweeping, as to blot out all precedent. He was in no long time regarded as the greatest progenitor yet seen. The Diomedes exceeded in size and power any previous American family". Diomed's best son, Sir Archy

Figure 2: THE TOURBILLON BRANCH OF THE HEROD SIRE LINE

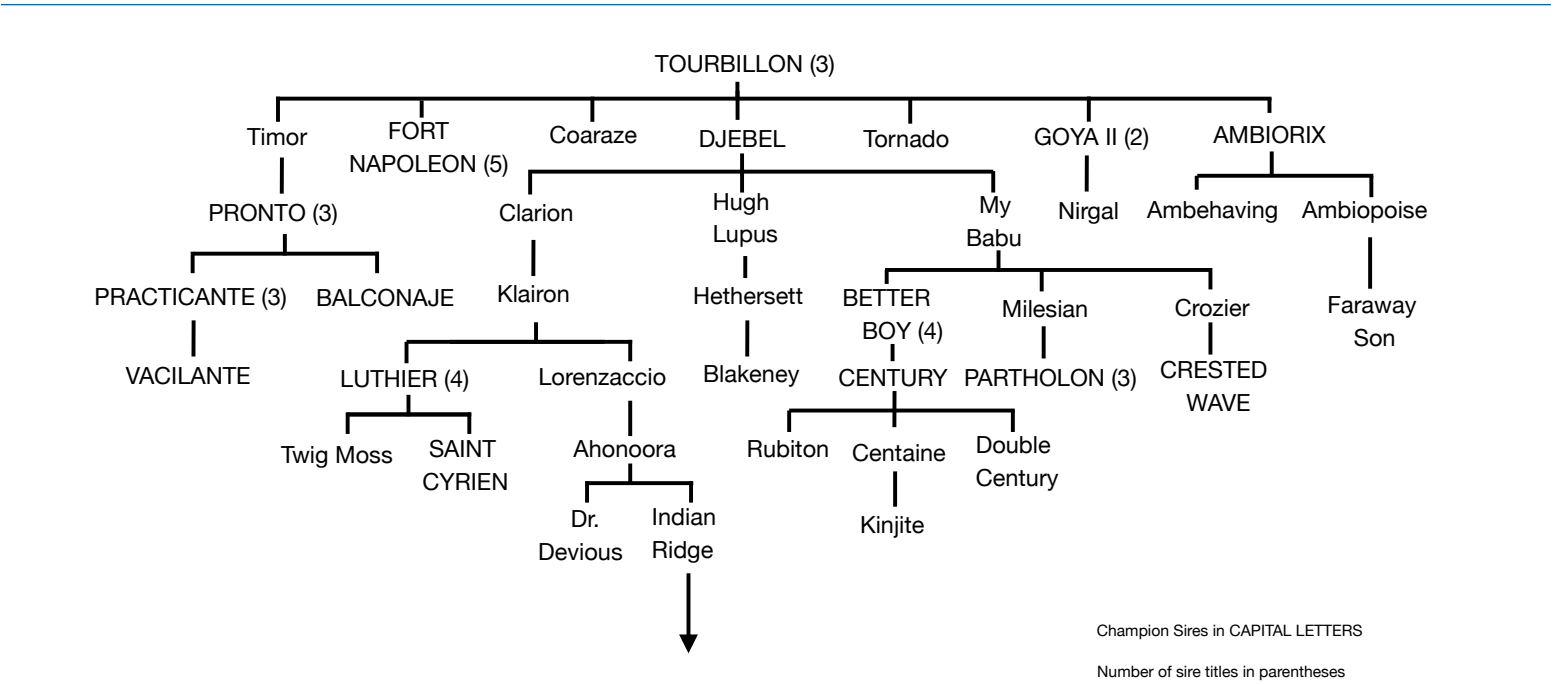
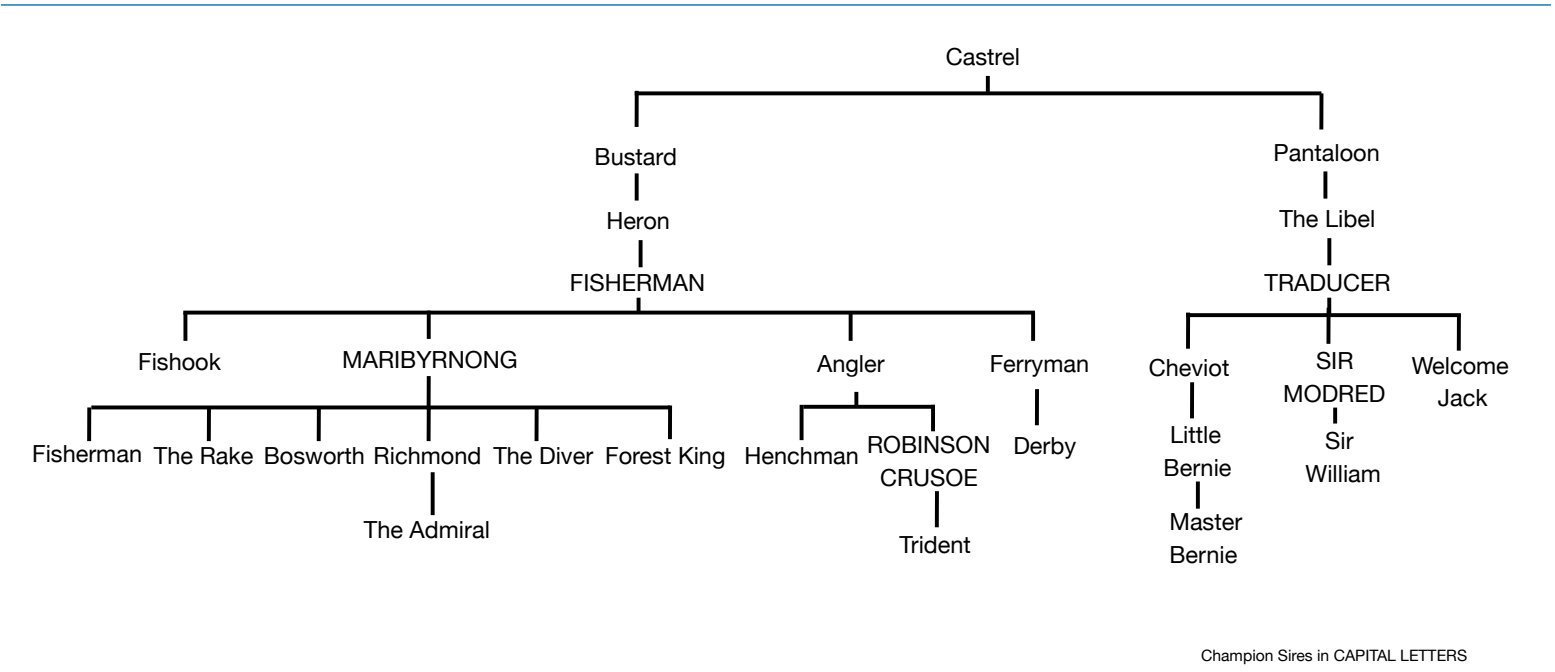


Figure 3: THE HEROD SIRE LINE IN 19TH CENTURY AUSTRALASIA



(1805) has been described as America's first truly great runner and remains the oldest member of American Racing's Hall of Fame. Sir Archy's Virginia-bred son, Timoleon (1813) was another champion of his day, winning 13 in a row at one point. At stud, he produced Racing Hall of Famer Boston (1833), sire of the incomparable Lexington (1850). Lexington was in Hervey's words, "the most illustrious, the most historically significant, and, in his influence as a progenitor, the most potent and far-reaching of American thoroughbreds". He went on to call the horse's pedigree a "triumph of breeding" specifically heralding his unique five crosses of the key American colonial matriarch, Kitty Fisher, Boston's 6th dam. Despite all the obstacles from the intervening American Civil War (1861-65), Lexington annexed an unprecedented sixteen sire titles (1861-1874, 1876 and 1878)

as his offspring captured an unequaled seven Triple Crown events in addition to a record nine Travers Stakes. American breeders had continued to return their mares to the same male strains that seemed to perpetually issue the overwhelming majority of winners. Hervey noted that, even in the North, direct male descendants of Diomed enjoyed overwhelming success having taken 52 of the 60 semi-annual four-mile heats run over the fabled Union Course on Long Island between 1821 and 1849. The dominant male line had only become stronger through the practice of close inbreeding. Boston was inbred 3X3 to Diomed while Lexington, was 4X3 to Sir Archy with a total of three strains to Diomed. Ironically, the decline of this great male line was not so much the inadequacies of Lexington's breeding sons, but the immense powers of his

producing daughters which boosted the fortunes of their competing lines. Later on, inability to trace Timoleon's tail-female line to one of the original foundation mares of England meant Lexington not to mention most of the ensuing American breed were barred from the English Stud Book by the previously noted Jersey Act. For Herod's Diomed branch, the nineteenth century consisted of 75 years of sheer domination followed by another 25 annums of decreasing influence. In the twentieth century, the Diomed/Lexington sire line held on by an agonizing thread for the entire 100 years before it finally flickered out. Next to Lexington, the second greatest stallion of nineteenth century America was from the Herod line as well. Classic winner Glencoe had sired one crop in England that included future megamatriarch Pocahontas before his 1836 import ➡

Figure 4: THE HEROD SIRE LINE IN 19th CENTURY AMERICA

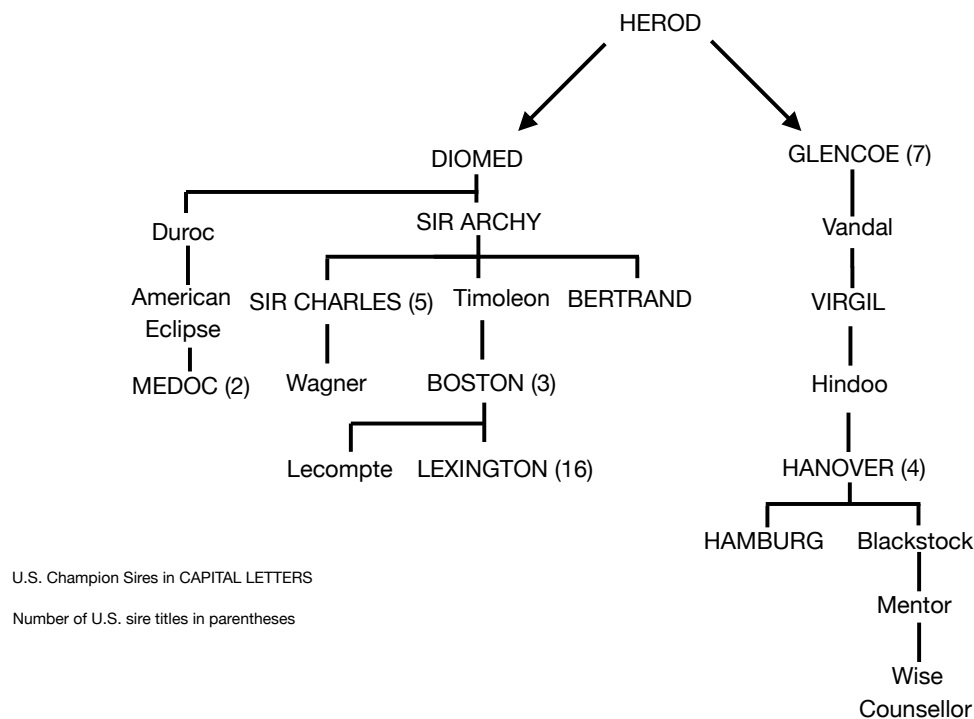


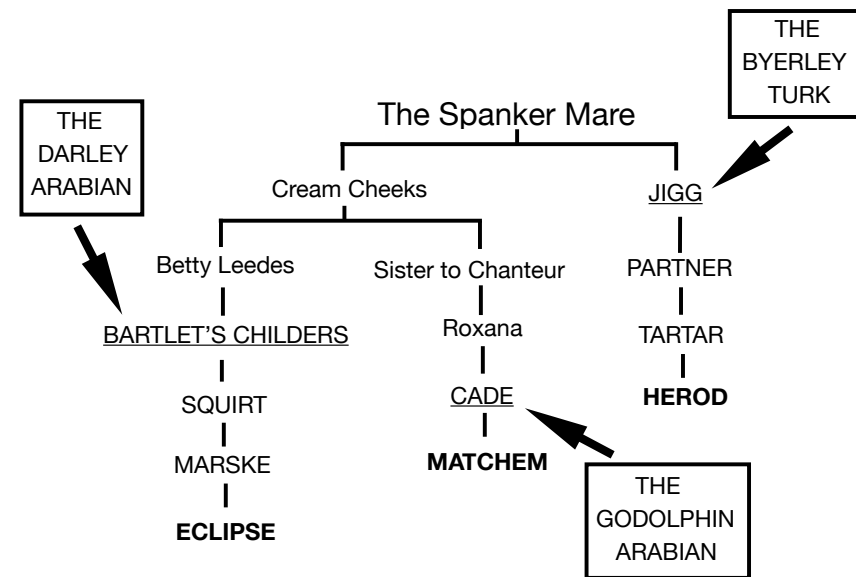
Figure 5: FAMILY TIES BETWEEN HEROD, MATCHEM & ECLIPSE

to the U.S. where he spent twenty-two seasons at stud in Alabama, Tennessee and Kentucky (See Figures 1 and 4), claiming eight sire titles (1847, 1849-50 and 1854-1858). Glencoe was an incredible sire of fillies and if statistics had been kept, he certainly would be recognized as the most celebrated U.S. broodmare sire of all time. Glencoe's tail-male line never really developed prominent branching and yet it survived into the 1950s. Its line of succession was highlighted by American Racing Hall of Famers Hindoo, Hanover and Hamburg. The last important descendant of this sire line was 1923 U.S. juvenile champion Wise Counsellor who as a three-year old defeated the French invader Epinard in the International Special #1 as previously mentioned.

Some pundits have spoken of the "Lexington / Glencoe nick" as if it had yielded far better results than expected. In actuality, the results were commensurate (equally outstanding) with other sires or broodmare sires. Hervey, in fact, noted "the average winnings of Lexington's get out of Glencoe mares were not larger than those by his foals from mares by other sires". By definition then, the Lexington / Glencoe nick was not really a nick at all.

Two of the very few English classic winners made available for export to the U.S., Diomed and Glencoe gave rise to the Herod sire line's domination of nineteenth century America. No less than two-thirds of the leading sires would trace back to Herod. And yet the twentieth century would be an absolute drought with only a pair of sire titles (Hamburg in 1905 and Ambiorix in 1961) over a span of 100 years. America had imported a lot of the world's best blood, but very little of it had come from Herod's male line. The two stallions who had the most influence were the close relatives My Babu from Ireland and Ambiorix from France.

Tourbillon's grandson My Babu served as a death knell to the Jersey Act when he won the



English 2,000 Guineas of 1948. The British Isles had indeed cut itself off from critically important blood for long enough. My Babu's best American son Crozier sired the popular Hall of Famer Precisionist and Crested Wave who when exported to New Zealand became the local 1990-91 champion sire. Another grandson of My Babu, Partholon was imported to Japan where he captured three sire titles.

Key Affinities within the Herod sire line

1) The cross of HEROD with ECLIPSE and MATCHEM

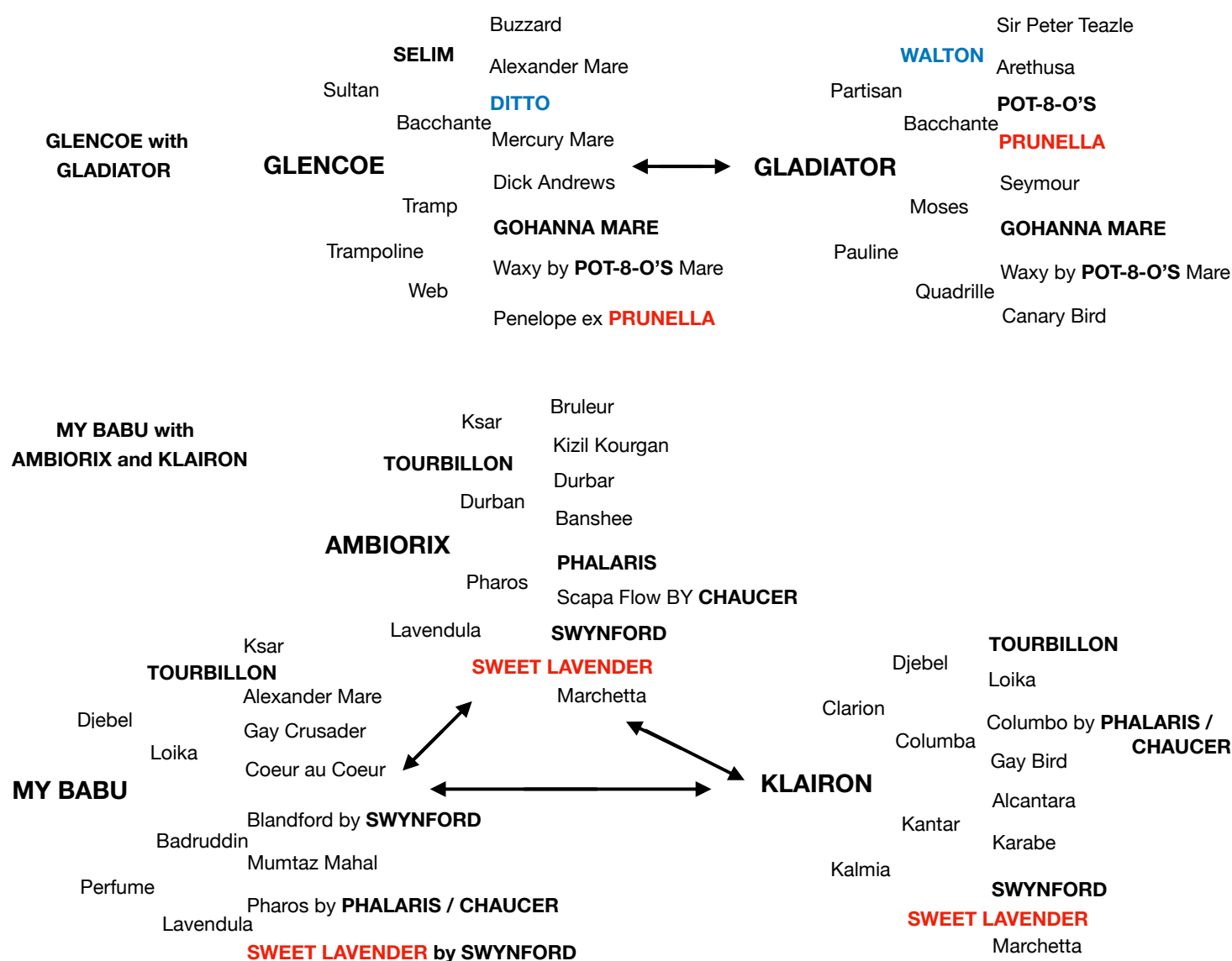
It is quite fitting that, among the dozens of male lines that vied for survival during the formative years of thoroughbred development, it would be the same trio of sires whose blood crossed so well together that ultimately became the only ones to

perpetuate their tail-male line all the way into the twenty-first century. By the early 1800s, Eclipse, Herod and Matchem were appearing within the third and fourth generations of prominent contemporary pedigrees. The accumulation of these crosses would form the backbone of important pedigrees throughout England. What best explains why these three crossed so well is the absolutely remarkable series of family links this triumvirate shared. In the case of all three imported foundation stallions, their direct heir, the first generation of their male-line to be bred in England descended in tail-female line to a common matriarch, an unnamed daughter by the sire, Spanker. As diagrammed in Figure 5, she was the dam of Jigg, the third dam of Bartlet's Childers and the fourth dam of Cade. This enigmatic broodmare, foaled around 1690, is



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Figure 6: **HEROD LINE AFFINITIES**



the fundamental connection between these three great original male lines. All of this should be given further perspective: the Spanker Mare was the only ancestor, male or female, common to the pedigrees of Eclipse, Herod and Matchem. This makes the multiple complementary strains all three received from her all the more remarkable. The formative course, then, for all three sire lines involved the concentration of this central matriarch's strains. In previous writings, I have referred to her as the "Ancestral Mom". She is the most influential Thoroughbred progenitor of all time.

During these early years, the Herod sire line also expressed a strong affinity with broodmares from Bruce Lowe Family Number Three. This specific cross of male and female line produced twelve different winners of the Oaks, Derby or St. Leger in the late 18th century including all three of Herod's Oaks winners.

## 2) The full brothers, Castrel (1801), Selim (1802) and Rubens (1805)

This trio of full brothers (by Buzzard out of an unnamed Alexander mare) all became prominent sires. Rubens may have been the most successful of the three but it was Castrel and Selim who initiated the two longest lasting branches of Herod (Figure 1). Crosses from at least two of these siblings can be observed in the third and fourth generation of pedigrees from a remarkable number of superior individuals in the 1830s and 40s.

## 3) GLENCOE (1831) and GLADIATOR (1833)

This key pair from Herod's Selim and Highflyer branches were both phenomenal broodmare sires led by Glencoe's daughter Pocahontas and Gladiator's Queen Mary. Figure 6 shows how closely they shared the same ancestral elements.

Crosses from these two breed shapers started appearing in the third and fourth generation of pedigrees by the late 1850s and lasted into the 1880s. The overall yield of superior runners and producers with this cross far outweighed its opportunities throughout the racing world.

## 4) My Babu (1945) with Ambiorix (1946) and Klairon (1952)

These three close relatives were all Tourbillon-line sires from the immediate family of Sweet Lavender with other common ancestors within the interior of their pedigree (Figure 6). Crosses from at least two of them can be observed in the third and fourth generation of pedigrees from a remarkable number of superior individuals in the 1970s and 80s. The specifics appeared in an article, "A relative matter", Thoroughbred Times, December 7, 1996 by this author.





**Redkirk Warrior**

## What's left?

Table 1 lists the thirty tail-male descendants of Herod, who captured at least one Group / Grade 1 contest in the twenty-first century. Most of these are females and geldings. Only four of the thirty have won a G1 in the last ten years. Making matters of survival even more bleak, everyone of the sires listed in Table One's second column are now dead.

Ahonoora's best racing son Dr. Devious (Figure 2) died in Sardinia in 2018 after a moderate career in Japan, Ireland and Italy, winning two sire titles in the last. His only current sons at stud are based in Turkey and Cyprus. Ahonoora's best son at stud and the last of Herod's torch carriers, Indian Ridge (41 group winners) has been gone for fifteen years. A few of his grandsons are all that remain. The aforementioned fallen Melbourne Cup winner Dunaden entered stud in England in 2015. We should still see one last small crop from him. Indian Ridge has a few other grandsons still in service including Group 1 winner Total Gallery in India and twelve-year old Group Two sprinter Pearl Secret in England. Captain Chop has had little success in France as did Linngari, siring one nice (gelded) son before his uneventful move to South Africa. And that is it.

## A boost from High tech

Y-chromosomal barcoding of individual sire lines has paved the way for forensic applications in the study of the paternal ancestry of horses. One of the findings in their 2017 paper, the previously noted Vienna-based group of researchers found that all (eleven) of the male thoroughbreds studied whose pedigrees featured a St. Simon male line were actually shown to carry the Tb-

oB1 y chromosome, indicating their descent was entirely through Herod and the Byerley Turk, not Eclipse and the Darley Arabian. In other words, an incorrect paternity assignment must have occurred along this lineage.

The research team then cited the long-held rumor that St. Simon's sire Galopin was not sired by Vedette, as recorded, but by an obscure stallion named Delight from the Herod/Byerley Turk male line who had served at the same farm at roughly the same time. These rumors began to circulate as early as the end of Galopin's stellar two-year-old season and continued on in worldwide print for decades despite his breeder's ardent assurances to the contrary.

At this point, the likelihood that Delight is Galopin's real sire is pretty good, especially since the common stud farm practiced paddock-breeding. But there are question marks. Delight was a moderate runner at best, a poor sire and otherwise of absolutely no consequence. His sire, 1856 English Derby winner Ellington was a poor sire as well. Could a stallion that inferior get a champion and breed shaper like Galopin? There was also the observation at the time that "Galopin and all the Galopins had Vedette-shaped hocks, and there was a peculiarity about them". Another school of thought claims the point of mistaken paternal identity occurred when Hambletonian was credited as the sire of Whitelock (Galopin's fifth generation tail-male ancestor) instead of his true sire, the Highflyer-line sire Delpini. A cannon bone from Vedette's sire Voltigeur has been preserved at the Racing Museum at York Racecourse. If this bone gets tested and is found to carry the same yDNA markers as other descendants of the Darley Arabian, then Delight could be considered the true sire of Galopin. If the markers on Voltigeur's Y chromosome are those of the Byerley Turk, it would mean the errant

switch to a Herod-line sire had to have occurred at an earlier stage, perhaps at Hambletonian, a paternal grandson of Eclipse.

Suddenly at the very least, St. Simon's entire male line including the likes of America's great Round Table, English Triple Crown winner Diamond Jubilee and Tesio's undefeated super sire Ribot have all become members of the tail-male line of Herod, be it retroactive and presumably unofficial. For bloodlines connoisseurs, this finding from cutting edge lab research might be a bit of a mind-blower. Then again, one is reminded that the once-great Galopin/St Simon sire line continues to fail badly as well. And there is the very real possibility that not just Herod and St. Simon but all non-Phalaris sire lines are on the road to extinction.

The French line of Le Sancy has long been known as one of the best thoroughbred jumping lines in steeplechase and show-jumping history. The thoroughbred Gem Twist (1979) was an American-bred seventh generation (all grey) tail-male descendant of Le Sancy who became one of the best show-jumpers of all time. In 2008, two years after the gelding's natural death, it was announced Gem Twist had been successfully cloned. Four years hence, the clone named Gemini sired a chestnut colt. This rather unnatural process, of course, puts an end to the uninterrupted succession of thoroughbreds, but it is perpetuating Herod's Y chromosome, thanks to his line's jumping ability.

## Over and out

In 2008, it was reported that the late brilliant American entrepreneur and horseman Jess Jackson was going to spend Preakness weekend in South America in search of "Byerley sires". Winner of the classic middle jewel in 2007 and 2009 with Hall of Famers Curlin and Rachel Alexandra, Jackson had become adamant that "getting the Byerley Turk line [viable again] would improve the thoroughbred, bringing strength back to the breed". These were quite similar to the words of William Allison a century earlier. But this time, Jackson's quest surely ended once it was realized there was really nothing left to save.

Regretfully, this is the way the once mighty sire line of Herod will end. In the words of revered poet T.S. Eliot, "not with a bang but a whimper".

**BB**

## PEDIGREE ANALYSIS *Herod's vanishing sire line*

**TABLE 1 TAIL-MALE DESCENDANTS OF HEROD WHO BECAME GROUP / GRADE ONE STAKES WINNERS IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

G1 winner, sex	Sire	Group / Grade One Victories
ADAM, c.	Rubiton	2000 AJC George Main Stakes
BORDERLESCOTT, g.	Compton Place	2009 Nunthorpe Stakes (GB)
CAPE OF GOOD HOPE, g.	Inchinor	2005 Golden Jubilee Stakes (GB)
CIRRUS DES AIGLES, g.	Even Top	2011 Champion Stakes (GB)
		2012 Prix Ganay (Fr)
		2012 Dubai Sheema Classic (UAE)
		2014 Prix Ganay (Fr)
		2014 Prix d'Ispahan (Fr)
		2014 Coronation Cup (GB)
		2015 Prix Ganay (Fr)
COLLIER HILL, g.	Dr. Devious	2005 Irish St. Leger
		2006 Canadian International Stakes
		2006 Hong Kong Vase
CRITIC, m.	Centaine	2003 Family Hotel W.f.a.
DAYTONA, g.	Indian Ridge	2007 Hollywood Derby (US)
DOMEDRIVER, c.	Indian Ridge	2002 Breeders' Cup Mile (US)
DUNADEN, c.	Nicobar	2011 VRC Melbourne Cup
		2011 MRC Caulfield Cup
		2011 Hong Kong Vase (HK)
FIELDS OF OMAGH, g.	Rubiton	2003 MVRC W.S. Cox Plate
		2006 MVRC W.S. Cox Plate
		2006 MRC Futurity Stakes
INDIAN HAVEN, c.	Indian Ridge	2003 Irish Two Thousand Guineas
INDIAN INK, m.	Indian Ridge	2006 Cheveley Park Stakes (GB)
		2007 Coronation Stakes (GB)
KINNAIRD, m.	Dr. Devious	2005 Prix De l'Opera (Fr)
LATICE, m.	Inchinor	2004 Prix de Diane (Fr)
LINNGARI, m.	Indian Ridge	2007 Premio Vittorio di Capua (It)
		2008 GP Bayerisches Zuchtrennen (Ger)
NAMID, c.	Indian Ridge	2000 Pr. de l'Abbaye de Longchamp (Fr)
NOTNOWCATO, c.	Inchinor	2006 Juddmonte International S. (GB)
		2006 Eclipse Stakes (GB)
PATEZZA, g.	Rubiton	2005 Doncaster Handicap
PERNOD, m.	Centaine	2002 MRC Dubai Racing Club
REDKIRK WARRIOR, g.	Notnowcato	2017 VRC Newmarket Handicap
		2018 VRC Lightning Handicap
RELAXED GESTURE, m.	Indian Ridge	2005 Canadian International Stakes
RUBISCENT, g.	Rubiton	2007 MRC Underwood Stakes
RUBY CLIPPER, m.	Rubiton	2000 A. Robinson Fillies Championship
RUBITANO, g.	Rubiton	2002 Salinger Stakes
		2002 Newmarket Stakes
SILCAS SISTER, m.	Inchinor	2005 Prix Morny (Fr)
SIXTY SECONDS, m.	Centaine	2002 STC Arrowfield Stud Stakes
SUMMONER, g.	Inchinor	2001 Queen Elizabeth II Stakes (GB)
TOTAL GALLERY, c.	Namid	2009 Pr. de l'Abbaye de Longchamp (Fr)
VINNIE ROE, c.	Definite Article	2001 Irish St. Leger Stakes
		2001 Prix Royal Oak
		2002 Irish St. Leger Stakes
		2003 Irish St. Leger Stakes
		2004 Irish St. Leger Stakes
WILL PAYS, g.	Imperial Stride	2018 Mercury Sprint (SAF)