

■ by *Annalisa Monticelli and Monika Savier*

Hamama and the lost strain

*According to the legend
- maybe inspired by a true story,
who knows? - all Arabian horses
derive from the five mares owned
by the Prophet Mohammed
("Khamisa ar-Rasul").*

*Abbayah, Saqlawiah, Kuhaylah,
Hamdaniah and Hadbah created
a family, a genealogical tree,
a strain that has survived until
today as a common denominator
among horses from various
countries in the world.*





Yamama

The Bedouin tribes tried to breed horses that were pure in the strain, at least as far as the maternal line was concerned.

Over the centuries sub-strains were added to the five main ones until there were 2-300 different maternal lines, which can all be traced back to the main strains. How can this be explained?

European researchers in the Arab desert give a variety of explanations. It is a fact, however, that for centuries the inclusion of a horse in a strain (defined according to its belonging to a maternal line) was also an attempt to give a characteristic to the phenotype rather than just the genotype. According to Raswan (1930) and other researches, the Kuhaylans represented the masculine phenotype, characterized by powerful musculature, back, broad croup and chest and a small head. The Saklawis, on the other hand, represented the "feminine" horse, elegant, with a light bone structure, long lines, a light head with a small nose but less hardy than Kuhaylans. According to ancient texts the Munigis, the third main strain, represented the riding horse.

Judith Forbis (1976) also distinguishes three main strains but talks about more than 100 Kuhaylan sub-strains, 32 Saklawi sub-strains and so on. The Bedouin tribes, who did not know how to record the pedigree of a horse, found it easier to breed a strain and classify the horses according to that strains.

It is worth also to analyze the belonging to a strain, which is always defined according to the maternal line.

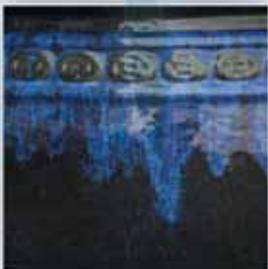
Dr. Nagel (2005) wrote in *Desert Heritage*:

"The Bedouins gave highest attention to the female line. Each Arabian mare had to belong to one of the known strains, if not, this mare was not considered to be a pure bred Arabian horse. Any foal born by such a mare received as well the strain name of its mother, and this system went on to apply to all the following generations. The strain of the father, however, was neglected. To make it clear, the sire was known, but his strain name had no place in this system of genealogy. Curiously, in this respect the Arabs followed an old Roman principle which says: "Mater semper certa est." - "The dam is always sure".

If we look at a pedigree from a scientific angle, the genetic influence of the paternal line (and his strain) changes, from the point of view of its biology and phenotype, exactly as the genetic maternal line. And to breed "pure in the strain" horses, i.e. always using stallions of the same family, undoubtedly increases the risk of extreme inbreeding and reduces the range of breeding choices aimed at improving the phenotype of the mare. But the Bedouins knew this already, they simply did not have many chances to find new compatible stallions when their mares were on heat. Today, with the globalization of semen available anywhere in the world within 24 hours, the selection of the stallion is dictated by other criteria (i.e. economic ones).

Apart from following the religious dogma and breeding purebred Arabians (asil), the Bedouins understood that certain lines were more desirable in the marketplace. Their way of defining a more or less noble strain was certainly rooted in an attempt to escape the economic uniformity of the market and to obtain more money for some genetic lines, regardless of the horse's phenotype.

These strain-based value definitions have



survived until today in the breeding world. And what if the definition of a horse strain was wrong in the first place? Today's horses certainly do not decrease in value, but if the strain is missing, their real genealogical identity is incomplete and the breeder is left wondering, so to speak.

One of these mares is Yamama. Among her descendants there is Prince fa Moniet, Mohafez, El Aziza, Elf Layla Walayla, Imperial Bareez... and many others. After coming through ancient texts for a long time, Desert Heritage can now tell you her story.

HOW MANY YAMAMAS?

A horse has always been associated to a bloodline and vice versa.

This is often done to follow a tradition, a habit or to

make researches more easy.

What do you do if you discover that there has been a gap ever since the beginning or that the interpretation of the sources is forced?

A minor revolution full of new stimuli.

That is what is happening among pedigree history lovers.

When you mention Bint Yamama, people instinctively refer to the white Kuhaylah-Jellabiyah mare bred by Prince Mohamed Ali. And what about the other two mares, Yemama-Bay and Yemamah / Yamama?

Yemama-Bay is also traditionally associated to the Kuhaylah-Jellabiyah strain, but she was owned by Lady Anne Blunt and was bred in the desert.

Yemamah / Yamama, on the contrary, is the only one to be associated to the Saqlawi Gidran breed of Ibn Sudan,



▲ **Bint Yemama**
(Saqlawi I° x Yamama/
Yemamah)
grey mare born in 1893
bred by Prince
Mohamed Ali
(Egypt)



▲ **Yemama -Bey**
(a stallion desert bred x a
Kuhaylah Jellabiyah of Ibn
Khalifa Strain)
bay mare , born in 1885.
bred by a desert tribe,
owned by Lady Anne
Blunt -Sheikh Obeyd Stud.



▲ **Mesaoud/Ibn Yemameh
As Saghir**
(Aziz / Aziz II x Yemameh)
chestnut stallion, born in 1887
bred by Ali Pasha Sherif
(Egypt) , owned by
Lady Anne Blunt ,
sold in Russia in 1900.

How many mares called YAMAMA were there in Egypt towards the end of the 19th century?

Based on the very little information - no written documents are available - there were at least two.

In that period, individual identities were irrelevant, and the same applied to people and to horses. What was relevant was the family of origin: that explains the appearance of Yamama-Yemamah-Yemameh, with all the variations of Abu-Ibn-Bint-Bint. In addition to that, it was not rare for the same horse to have several names, if described as a foal or as an adult.

Who would have thought, for example, that IBN YEMAMEH AS-SAGHIR, registered on the list of horses for sale at the auction of Ali Pasha Sherif in 1889 was actually

the great stallion MESAOUUD purchased by Lady Anne Blunt?

Finally, the same Arab name can be transcribed or translated in many different ways when using the Western alphabet.

In 1892, Khedive Abbas Hilmi II ascended to the throne succeeding to his father, Khedive Tewfik and continued the family tradition of breeding Arabian horses.

One of the first mares that became part of his stud was the white YEMAMEH, bought by his friend and ally Ali Pasha Sherif. He was the son of the Governor of Syria, President of the Chamber of Commerce and President of the Law Counsel. This mare was the dam of the famous Mesaoud (Aziz/Aziz II x Yemameh) born in 1887.

Mr. and Mrs. Blunt, keen admirers of Ali Pasha Sherif's horses, went to visit his stud and were impressed by the outstanding beauty and quality of YEMAMEH.

Lady Anne Blunt had a few examples of the KUHAYLAH JEL-LABIYAH strain in her stud in Sheikh Obeyd: the chestnut KASIDA, born in 1891 a daughter of Nasr: a bay Dahman Shahwan

stallion, bred by Ali Pasha Sherif, with a "perfect head", as Lady Anne Blunt herself said. Kasida's dam was MAK-BULA II/MAKBULA AL AZIZA, a white mare sired by the renowned Saqlawi Wazir and bred by Ali Pasha Sherif.

Kasida was the dam of Kasima, a bay mare, born in 1905, bred at Crabbet Park. Dam of KAZMEYN, bay stallion born in 1916 at Crabbet Park. The stallion Kazmeyn /Kazmeen was sold to R.A.S- Egypt in 1920. Kazmeyn was the sire of Bint Samiha - the dam of Nazeer, Bint Sabah - the dam of Bint Bint Sabbah and Bukra, Zareefa, the dam of Maisa and El Sareei.



▲ **Makbula / Makbula II**
(Wazir x Bint Bint Jellabiet Feysul)
white mare, born in 1886
bred by Ali Pasha Sherif, owned by Lady Anne Blunt, sold to Russia in 1900.



▲ **Kasida**
(Nasr APS x Makbula / Makbula II 1886)
chestnut mare
born in 1891
bred by Ali Pasha Sherif, owned by Lady Anne Blunt.



▲ **Kazmeen**
(Sotamm x Kasima)
bay stallion born in 1916
bred by Lady Anne Blunt - Crabbet Park, owned by R.A.S.-Egypt in 1920

The origin of the bay Yamama is rather vague. The historic tradition says that, like Makbula II and her dam Makbula I, she descends from the legendary and famous JELLABIET FEYSUL WAZIRIA, imported from the Royal Studs of Ibn Khalifa (Bahrain), for the collection of the Viceroy of Egypt Abbas Pasha I and paid a large amount in gold.

Right now this is unclear, because the General Stud Book initially described her as Abeyah! In Lady Anne Blunt's Journal, the entry for 4 December 1907 talks about a conversation between Moharrem Pasha and Mutlak (Lady Anne's manager and factotum) on Yemama, the bay mare and her gray daughter Yashmak. The Pasha asked who the gray mare was and Mutlak replied "that

Yamama

she was the daughter of that bay mare Moharrem Pasha [...] sold to us - to which the Pasha replied "Oh THAT mare, the Jellabiyah I had from Ali Sherif! I thought she reminded me of that Jellabiyah. So after all Yemama was from Ali Pasha Sherif! and her stock are Mazbutin....Moharrem Pasha had a fancy for the Jellabiyah, and traced Feusul's stock in each case..... Ghania's long tale about Yamama having passed through several hands on her way from desert is all a fabrication!!"

Was Ghania one of Moharrem Pasha's agents for the sale of Yamama in 1892? What role did Ali Bey Shahin play? Why is Moharrem Pasha never mentioned in the Stud-Books? Are they maybe the same person? This would further corroborate the theories on the value of names that I have already written about. Why is she described as Abeyah in the General Stud Book? All these questions will obviously remain unanswered...

Yamama-Bey's career as a mare started exactly a year after her purchase. Her first foal was a gray filly born in 1893 in Sheikh Obeyd, sired by Shahwan: a grey stallion of Dahman Shahwan strain, bred by Ali Pasha Sherif.

Yashmak was the dam of the chestnut stallion IBN YASHMAK. This stallion was born at Crabbet Park and sired the chestnut Bint Rissala/Razieh. Together with other horses, both were imported to Egypt in 1920 by R.A.S.



▲ **Yashmak**
(Shahwan -APS - x Yemama-Bay)
grey mare born in 1893
bred and owned by Lady Anne Blunt.



▲ *Ibn Yashmak is the sire of Bint Rissala/ Razieh, chestnut mare, born in 1920, out of Rissala / Risala, chestnut mare born and bred at Crabbet Park.*



▲ *Bint Rissala / Razieh (Ibn Yashmak x Rissala / Risala) and Bint Riyala / Risama (Nadir x Riyala) were sold to R.A.S. in Egypt. Both are _ sister. These two chestnut mares are today the only source of KUHAYLAN RODAN -blood in the Straight Egyptians - bloodline.*

After Yashmak, Yamama had two more foals, both sired by Feysul - the bay stallion Ibn Yamama born in 1902 and the bay mare Bint Yamama born in 1904. The latter was sold in Greece in 1906, when she was 2 years old. Therefore, she is in no way related to the white Bint Yamama we are talking about. That is how the tradition was created that Bint Yamama was a daughter of the bay Yamama owned by Lady Anne Blunt. Some sources even suggest that Bint Yamama was bred by Lady Anne Blunt at Sheikh Obeyd. Perhaps Bint Yamama was said to be part of the strain or even half-sister of Lady Anne Blunt's horses and over the years this became a reference point for the KUHAYLAT JELLABIET bred by Ali Pasha Sherif

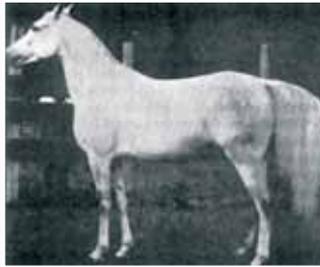
and subsequently purchased by Lady Anne Blunt (such as MAKBULA, KASIDA, MERZUK, son of WAZIR, one of the most highly-appreciated SAQLAWI owned by Ali Pasha Sherif and a certain KUHAYLAH JELLABIYAH, a chestnut mare bred by the Royal Family of Ibn Khalifah in Bahrain, or like FEYSUL, son of IBN NURA, one of the DAHMAN SHAHWAN stallions that Lady Anne Blunt admired the most: she tried to buy him for years and she only managed to do it when the stallion was old and almost sterile!).



Yamama



▲ **Negma**
(Dahman El Azraq x Bint Yamama)
grey mare born in 1908 bred and
owned by Prince Mohamed Ali.



▲ **Mahroussa**
(Mabrouq -Manial- x Negma)
grey mare born in 1919
bred and owned by Prince
Mohamed Ali
"The true wind's drinker"
(Carl Raswan)



▲ **Maaroufa**
(Ibn Rabdan x Mahroussa)
grey mare born in 1931
bred by Prince Mohamed Ali
, owned by H. Babson (U.S.A.)
Dam of more National winner
producers than any other
Egyptian mare.

In 1914, Khedive Abbas Pasha Hilmi II was deposed and exiled. His brother, Prince Mohamed Ali, took control of the stud and split it in 4 studs, with the most luxurious one located on the island of Roda, at the centre of the Nile.

Out of this incredible collection came many of the stallions and mares that founded RAS/EAO, the Inshass-Stud and most of the studs in Poland, Germany and America. The matriarch, the archetypical Arabian, was Bint Yamama, the white, gorgeous mare that Mr. and Mrs. Blunt talked about. In "Breeding of Purebred Arabian Horses" Prince Mohamed Ali writes: "The true quality in the shape of the head comes from Bint Yamama and seems to be dominant..."

In another chapter, the Prince presents theories on his breeding principles, taking as example special horses such as Ibn Rabdan or Negma, his beloved white mare but he does not write a single word on their strains.



▲ **Fadl**
(Ibn Rabdan x Mahroussa)
grey stallion born in 1930
bred by Prince Mohamed Ali,
owned by H. Babson (U.S.A.)

Except in one case: when he proudly describes the courage and affection towards his horse of the Saqlawiyah Gidraniyah strain.

10 horses, direct descendants of Bint Yamama were exported and became the founders of new strains. Today, after more than a century, writing about Nasr, Fadl, Kafifian, Negma, Jasir, Maaroufa, Zarife, Roda, Hamida and Hamama causes a surge of emotion to Arabian horse lovers.



▲ **Kafifan**
(Mabrouq-Manial- x Negma)
grey stallion born in 1916
bred by Prince Mohamed Ali,
owned by Count Potocki
-Poland- in 1924.



▲ **Jasir**
(Mabrouq-Manial- x Negma)
grey stallion born in 1925
bred by Prince Mohamed Ali,
owned by Princess Of Weil
-Germany- Marbach Stud.

It was during the purchase of 4 horses belonging to this strain on behalf of W.R. Brown that General Dickinson noticed a gap in the name of the female lines: the gray stallion KAFIFAN (Mabruq-Manial x Negma) born in 1916 and imported into Poland in 1924 by Count Potocki, was recorded in the first edition of the Polish-Arabian-Stud-Book as belonging to the SAQLAWIYAH-GIDRANIYAH strain, a descendent of GHAZIEH, a white mare also called Yamama, bred in the desert and bought by the Viceroy of Egypt Abbas Pasha I. The full brothers JASIR born in 1925, sold to the Princess of Weil (Germany) in order to improve the phenotype of the horses bred at the Marbach-Stud and Mahroussa, defined as the most beautiful living mare, the actual “drinker of the wind” - together with all the others related to Bint Yamama were recorded as belonging to the KUHAYLAH-JELLABIYAH strain, descending from Wazira -Jellabiet Feysul, another mare bred in the desert and owned by the Viceroy Abbas Pasha I.

To sort out this discrepancy, in the subsequent editions of the Polish-Arabian-Stud-Book the strain to which they belonged was changed from KAFIFIAN to KUHAILAN.

But even today, the prototype of the saqlawi model for the old Polish breeders remains a small, rounded, powerful, muscular body, with a short and wide head and low eyes on the cranium: precisely corresponding to the description of



◀ **Johara**
(Aziz / Aziz II x Helwa)
chestnut mare born in 1880.
Bred and owned by Lady Anne Blunt.



◀ **Bint Helwa**
(Aziz / Aziz II x Helwa)
grey mare born in 1887
bred by Ali Pasha Sherif,
owned by Lady Anne Blunt,
imported to England in 1907.

the ideal Kuhailan.

A connection or a relation between YEMAMEH of Ali Pasha Sherif, the dam of Mesaoud, and BINT YAMAMA of Prince Mohamed Ali, the dam of Negma and Nasr, was never even considered... Despite the fact that Lady Anne Blunt never described a mare called Yamama, bay and belonging to the K.J. strain when she was visiting Prince Mohamed Ali, but only and always a white mare called Yemama, and her daughter Bint Yamama, also white, belonging to the S.G.I.S. strain, who was also sister of her chestnut stallion Mesaoud, universally known as SAQLAWI GIDRAN.

In his writings, Prince Mohamed Ali proudly noted that his Bint Yamama, though aged 25, was still a perfect dam. This



◀ **Mesaoud / Ibn Yemameh As Saghir**
(Aziz / Aziz II x Yemameh)
chestnut stallion,
born in 1887
bred by Ali Pasha Sherif
(Egypt), owned by Lady Anne Blunt, sold in Russia in 1900.



◀ **Hamasa**
(Mesaoud x Bint Helwa)
chestnut mare 1902
bred and owned by
Lady Anne Blunt Crabbet Park.



◀ **Harb**
full brother of Hamasa

remark, together with the doubts raised by Lady Anne

Blunt's accurate descriptions, generated the initial perplexities.

What if Bint Yamama of Prince Mohamed Ali was the same Bint Yamama described several times by Mr. and Mrs. Blunt as the magnificent "Seglawiya", with her enchanting head?

SOME EVIDENCE

The latest recorded son of Bint Yamama was Nasr, the gray stallion born in 1918, when she was 25 years old. From this we can conclude that Bint Yamama was born in 1893, which corresponds with the information given by the Blunts.

But the mare Yashmak was also born in 1893, which means that they cannot be sisters from maternal side, also because if they had been somehow related, Lady Anne Blunt would have certainly mentioned it.

These statements contradict more than half a century of traditions connected with the pedigrees. But there is no doubt that Lady Anne Blunt's writings are the best and most reliable and documented evidence: when it came to considering a horse or a pedigree, she would set aside any feeling or respect for the horse or the owner and she would only be interested in his/her actual ancestors.

What cannot be explained is how and why the descendents of Bint Yamama of Prince Mohamed Ali, were given the KUHAYLAT JELLABIYAT suffix after they were imported to Germany and America, whereas Kafifan was initially registered as SAQLAWI in Poland.

A POSSIBLE EXPLANATION

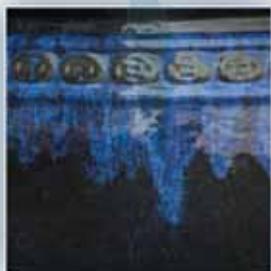
Perhaps the horses imported to Germany by the Weil/Marbach stud and to America by W.R. Brown and H. Babson received that name as guarantee of their absolute purity of strain?

It is a fact that the ASAYEL are first and foremost KUHAYLAT, which are then split into various sub-strains depending on the Bedouin tribe that bred them and, by breeding them in strict genetic isolation, gave origin to the various bloodlines still in existence today, even though often undistinguishable unless one reads the pedigree.

The Prince was asked an explanation for this and he replied with an ambiguous answer, which however clarified and underlined how Bint Yamama was a descendent of the horses bred by Ali Pasha Sherif, who inherited them from his great-grandfather, Prince Ilhami, son of Abbas Pasha I, and therefore that the origin of Bint Yamama was and still is pure.

SCIENCE EXPLAINS

At the end of the 1990s it became possible to scientifically ascertain the presence of just one SAQLAWIYAH GIDRANIYAH IBN SUDAN breed by analyzing the DNA of its Mitochondrion. The Mitochondrion lives in the cytoplasm of cells, not in their nucleus, and so the DNA of the Mitochondrion is always transmitted, regardless of the hereditability of chromosomes. In mammals, the DNA of the Mitochondrion (called also MT-DNA) is passed on by the mother. The MT-DNA of the BINT HELWA, BINT YAMAMA and MAKBULA maternal lines was compared and it was discovered that the MT-DNA of Bint Helwa is the same as Bint Yamama, both very different from that of Makbula. In a nutshell, Bint Yamama of Prince Mohamed Aly, the famous white mare with an enchanting head is sister by maternal side of the chestnut stallion Mesaoud (and if we observe well, the transmission of the stockings and the high number of rabicano chestnut horses are other typical traits of this strain).



It is important to highlight that the nature and identity of this mare and her descendents have not changed. The mare and all her descendants are the same, what has changed and evolved is the knowledge we have about her.

The evidence provided by the identity of Bint Helwa's and Bint Yamama's MT-DNA has also another implication: at the time of the great monarchies, Arabian horses' pedigrees

were not recorded and documented as Stud Books are today, they were just a list of names and traditions that were passed on orally from one generation to another.



▲ **Dalal I° 1903**
(Radban El Azraq x Om Dalal)
grey mare, bred and owned by
Prince Mohamed Ali.



▲ **Ghazala / Ghazala El Beida**
(Ibn Sherara x Bint Helwa)
grey mare 1896
bred by Ali Pasha Sherif, owned by
Lady Anne Blunt, sold to Colonel
Spencer Borden (U.S.A.) in 1909



▲ **Bint Helwa**
(Aziz / Aziz II x Helwa)
grey mare born in 1887
bred by Ali Pasha Sherif,
owned by Lady Anne Blunt,
imported to England
in 1907.

The fact that there is a link between the two daughters of the mare GHAZIEH / YAMAMA (the founding mare of the entire Saqlawiyah-Gidraniyah strain, bred in the desert and brought to Egypt for Abbas Pasha I's stud), i.e. Horra - granddam of Bint Helwa - and Bint Ghazieh / Yamama II - granddam of Bint Yamama - is further proof that GHAZIEH really existed.

A modern difference of phenotype among the various strains is undeniable; however, if we compare the pictures of Negma (considered by Prince Mohamed Aly as his prototype of Arabian horse), Bint Helwa or Ghazala El Beida e Dalal, you cannot but notice a striking resemblance.

EXAMPLES OF GAZELLE-HEAD

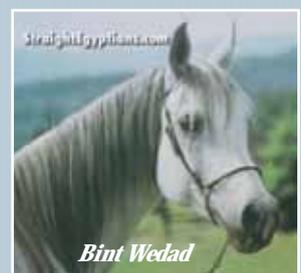
Following the inclusion and the intensification of blood from heavier stallions (e.g. doubled or quadrupled Ibn Rabdan), the phenotype of Negma's descendents gradually became heavier and stockier, but in most cases the special and wonderful shape of the head remained unchanged. It is the so-called GAZELLE-HEAD, loved and researched by Abbas Pasha and Mohamed Aly. See also the heads of Maar Ree, Fay Roufa, Bint Aaroufa, RDM Maar Hala, Elf Layla Walayla, El Aziza, Sakani, Bint El Bataa, Fay El Dine, Fa Deene, Ansata Bint Mabrouka and Ansata Bint Zaafarana.



▲ **Nafteta**



▲ **Koutel Kaloob**



Bint Wedad



Maarree



▲ **23 Ghalion**



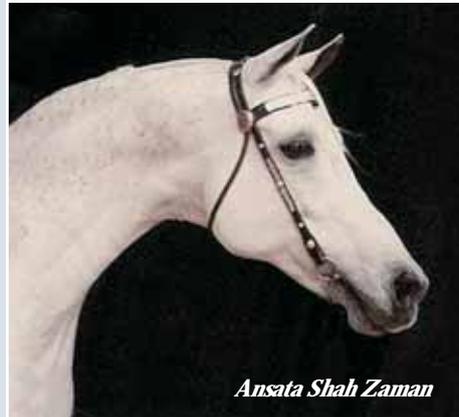
▲ **Ansata Aziza**



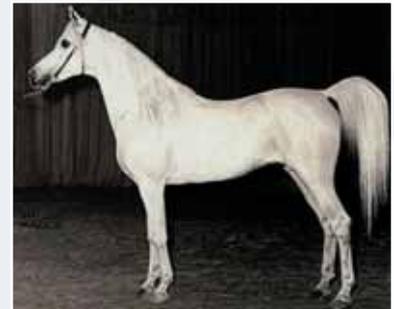
▲ **Sameer**

EXAMPLES OF CAMEL-HEAD

If we think about it, we will notice that only a small section of this great strain carries the special "Moniet El Nefous head", or CAMEL-HEAD. The same strain section, due to marketing or personal preference of the breeders (rightly or wrongly), created the concept of the ideal Saqlawi, and being able to endlessly reproduce it has become an obsession for breeders.



Ansata Shah Zaman



▲ ***Morafic***



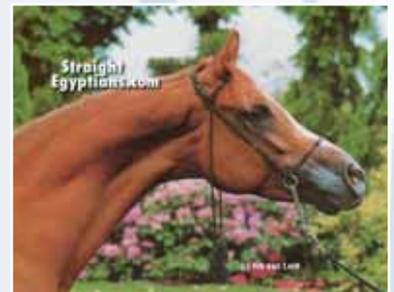
▲ ***Wanisa***
Maysouna



▲ ***Moniet El Nefous***



▲ ***Mabrouka***



▲ ***Maysouna***

Probably, the Saqlawi model par excellence is the one that so far we have considered as "exquisitely Kuhailan" in this strain.

Trawling through the history of Arabian horses, the studies and analyses on Kuhailan as well as Saqlawi within the context of the

mare Yamama, leads us to consider the complexity of breeding. The research of the origins helps us develop future breeding strategies. Those who do not see just the phenotype and take also into account the genotype of their Arabian horse have significantly better chance to breed successfully. □

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▲ ***Moncera***