



# ROYAL HORSES

■ by Gudrun Waiditschka

*In 1817, King Wilhelm of Württemberg, back then a kingdom in the southwest of Germany, founded his Royal Stud of Weil. The dam- and sirelines of his foundation horses, Murana I db 1808 and Bairactar db 1814, are the oldest lines in Arabian horse breeding and still active today. During his whole life, he did not spare effort or expense to acquire the best horses from Arabia, imported by prominent Arabian horse experts such as Count von Fechtig, 'Emir' Waclaw Rzewuski, Nicolas Glioch and many others. He was constantly searching for new original blood, but it became more and more difficult to find suitable horses in the Arab countries that would indeed be of equal or higher quality than his own ones. All in all, between 1812 to 1861, he imported 53 stallions and 56 mares of desert bred or "Arabian" bloodlines, mainly from Syria (see table 1). His very last imports were from Egypt, this is their story:*

## **Mehmed Ali**

*As a rule, Oriental monarchs did not (and do not) sell their horses. At most, they gave them away as gifts, for example to travellers who had been commended to them, or to princes and sheikhs who sought their protection. Such gifts were, and still are, a token of esteem in Oriental countries.*

*This Oriental custom was also practiced at the court of Viceroy Mehmed Ali, as described by Pierre-Nicolas Hamont, who managed Mehmed Ali's stud farm at Shoubra for 14 years (from 1828-1842): "Many visitors had been given horses, and each consul general on his appointment received a horse with splendid trappings. Such gifts are accepted with*

*gratitude, and each of the privileged recipients believes himself to have received a special honour: His horse, he will say, is of the finest breed, so the Pasha has assured him. But while the consul general who has been blessed with such a gift hastens to tell everyone at home that the Viceroy gave him one of his best horses, the Viceroy himself gleefully rejoices, for the much-praised horse was, as always, worth no more than five cents, discarded from the stables of Abbas Pasha or from a pashalik officer."*

*Hamont continues: "During the fourteen years I was in charge of the Egyptian stud farms and in constant contact with high-ranking pashas, I was able to observe their maneuvers, learn their tricks, and penetrate their secrets. I declare that the Viceroy of Egypt never, under any circumstances, officially gave away a horse of superior breed, neither to a consul general or a traveler, nor to European countries."*

*When the Viceroy made such gifts, he hardly ever chose a horse from his own stables; as a rule, those horses came from the stables of the princes, Ibrahim and Abbas Pasha. Their stud farms were divided into several sections: one for the stallions; the second for the princes' riding horses; the third for the horses of the mamelukes; and finally, the fourth for the common horses; these were the ones given to the Europeans.*

*One exception was the horse Mehmed Ali gave to Fürst Pückler-Muskau from Germany. The Pasha knew that Pückler was a famous travel writer and gave him a foal, hoping this would lead him to write positively about Egypt. Hamont received exact instructions as to what kind of foal he was to select. Was it an intrigue, or did Hamont make a mistake? In any case, Mehmed Ali was extremely upset when Hamont gave Pückler a foal worth 10,000 francs, which very nearly caused him to fall into disgrace.*



*King Wilhelm I von Württemberg riding his desertbred stallion Bairactar.  
Painting by Albrecht Adam*

### **Abbas Pasha**

In 1848, Mehmed Ali's mental condition forced him to hand over his affairs to his son Ibrahim Pasha, who was not in good health himself. Ibrahim died while Mehmed Ali still lived, but was too senile to notice. As a result, the power passed to Abbas Pasha I, Mehmed's grandson and Ibrahim's nephew. Abbas Pasha's father, Tousson Pasha, had died when Abbas was only four years old, and Abbas had been raised by his grandfather. But he was neither ambitious nor a warrior, and Mehmed Ali was not much pleased with his grandson. Abbas, however, loved horses above all else and collected, bought, and stole Nedjdis wherever he could find them. At its peak, his stud farm was said to contain some 1,000 horses. He owned seven palaces, each with its own stables. Among all these stables, the "desert stables" at Dar El Beyda housed the greatest treasures, and it is said that this stable cost the Pasha over a million Egyptian gold pounds.

The fame of this fabulous collection of finest desert Arabians traveled even to Württemberg, and in the early 1850s, Baron von Taubenheim by order of King Wilhelm contacted the Danish consul A.F. Dumreicher. This man's predecessor, Daniel Dumreicher, was known from previous horse purchases and the liberation of Jacob Noa Epp. King Wilhelm desired to purchase a stallion from the stud of Abbas Pasha I. Taubenheim explained in a letter to Dumreicher, that he would be very grateful "if His Highness [Abbas Pasha] should be inclined to fulfil the King's long cherished wish, he especially desires a bay Arabian stallion, of the finest Nedjed breed." He pointed out that the King had been breeding Arabian horses for 30 years and "owns the finest Arabian horses to be found in Europe". Also, "the requested stallion would be used exclusively for breeding", so that he should be "a most noble horse suitable for breeding." Since Abbas Pasha was known to never sell any horses, he was offered in return "some objects of our industry

## The imported Stallions 1812-1864

imp.	Name at Weil	born	colour	acquired for the stud	breed / strain	active at stud
1814	EMIR db	1808/09	bay	imp. by Baron v. Fechtig from the Anazé-Bedouins	Desertbred	1818-1824
1817	BAIRACTAR db	1812-14	grey	imp. by Baron v. Fechtig	Desertbred, Saklawi Djedran	1818-1819, 1825-1838
1817	TAJAR db	1809-10	bay	imp. by Baron v. Fechtig	Desertbred, Saklawi Djedran of 'good arabian breed'	1817-1826
1818	No Name (ox)	1809	dark bay	imp. by General Achwerdow	Desertbred, Saklawi Djedran	Royal Stables
1819	(Goumousch) BOURNU I db	1814	Silver grey	imp. by Count Rzewuski	Desertbred, Saklawi Djedran	1820-1824
1819	PADISCHAH db	1810	Silver grey	imp. by Count Rzewuski	Desertbred, Kohellan Sheik	1820-1826
1819	CHERAKY db	1811-14	light / golden brown	imp. by Count Rzewuski	Desertbred Obeian el Cheraky	1820
1819	SEGLAVI I db	1814	liver chestnut	imp. by Count Rzewuski	Desertbred Tuisan	--
1819	BAGDADY db	1811	dark bay	imp. by Count Rzewuski	Desertbred	1821
1819	(Maktabat) WECHABY db	1811	dark bay	imp. by Count Rzewuski	Desertbred Maktabat El Wehabi	1823
1819	DAHMAN db	~1814	bay	imp. by Count Rzewuski	Desertbred, Obeyan el Hadra	1824-1827
1819	HURSCHID db	1814	grey	imp. by Count Rzewuski	Desertbred, Abou Arcoub	1823
1819	BENI SAKR db		bay	imp. by Count Rzewuski	Desertbred	--
1819	SABAH db		bay	imp. by Count Rzewuski	Desertbred	--
1819	No Name		liver chestnut	imp. by Count Rzewuski died 1819 in quarantine	Desertbred Abu-Moeref Wesir	--
1819	No Name			imp. by Count Rzewuski died during transportation	Desertbred Kohellan El Bedavi	--
1819	No Name			imp. by Count Rzewuski died during transportation	Desertbred Iski-Nejdi-Djezar	--
1820	BARAK db	1919	Braun	imp. by Graf Rzewuski, out of BARRAK db	Desertbred	1825
1821	ALI BEY ox	~1812	dappeled grey	imp. by Consul Daniel Dumreicher from Egypt	Arabian (egypt.)	--
1822	MAMELUCK db	1814-15	black	imp. by Count v. Fechtig	Desertbred Kohellan Adjouz	1823-1828
1824	ALEPPO db	1821	bay	imp. by Henry Masseik bought by the King in Marseille	Desertbred	Royal Stables
1826	SOLIMAN ox	1818	dappeled grey	imp. by Lebolo from Nubia/Egypt	Arabian (egypt.)	--
1826	ACHMET ox	1819	grey	imp. by Lebolo from Nubia/Egypt	Arabian (egypt.)	--
1826	MAHOMET ox	1819	grey	imp. by Lebolo from Nubia/Egypt	Arabian (egypt.)	--
1826	SEGLAVI II db	1821	golden chestnut	imp. by John Barker	Desertbred	1827-1835
1826	colt foal	1826		imp. by John Barker	Desertbred	--
1828	SULTAN MAHMUD db	1817	grey	imp. by Nicolas Glichocho bought between Aleppo and Bagdad	Desertbred (?)	1829-1835
1835	No Name	1834		von Appel in Ürmeny	Hengstfohlen der Hasphora	--
1836	ABOU ARCOUB db	1830-31	grey	imp. by veterinarian Dambly	Desertbred Abou Arcoub	1836-1837
1836	DAHMAN db	~1831	chestnut	imp. by veterinarian Dambly	Desertbred Kohellan El Fedaan	1836
1836	OBEYAN db	1827-31	bay	imp. by veterinarian Dambly	Desertbred Obayan	1836
1836	TAJAR db	~1831	bay or chestnut ?	imp. by veterinarian Dambly	Desertbred Kohellan Adjouz	1836-1837
1838	CHARP db		liver chestnut	from Mailand	Desertbred (?)	1838
1837	SULTAN db	ca. 1823	black	bought in England; originally from the Sultan of Muscat	Desertbred	1838-1841
1838	PADISCHAH db	1826	grey	bought in England; bred by the Mountefik Bedouins	Desertbred	1838-1842
1841	CHAM db	1835	chestnut	imp. by von Taubenheim	Desertbred	1841-1851
1841	colt foal	1841		imp. by von Taubenheim	Desertbred	--
1844	El Bedavi ox	1839	bay	bred by Count von Fechtig (El Bedavi / Bedue)	purebred Arabian	Royal Stables (?)
1847	DZELLABY db	ca. 1836	grey	bought from Rozwadowski, Poland; originally from the Pascha of Medina	Desertbred	1847-1854
1847	JEMSCHIED db	1840	fleabitten grey	from England, through mediation of painter Sperling	Desertbred	1848
1849	DACHAMAN db	1843	golden bay	gift from Count von Müller of Mehmed Alis stud	Desertbred	1855
1852	ZARIF db	1830-35	grey	imp. by Prince Pückler, bred by the Shammar Bedouins	Desertbred	1853-1858
1852	HEDBAN db	1848	bay	imp. by von Hügel from Abbas Pascha's stud	Desertbred	1853
1852	BANGOR db	1848	black	bought from Equerry Oberst von Hamel	Desertbred	1852-1854
1856	EL HAMI db	1845	grey	from Egypt, gift of El Hami Pascha	Desertbred	--
1956	SAID db	1846	bay	purchased by von Hügel in England; originally from the Imam of Muscat	Desertbred	1857-1859
1858	ASSAD db	1850	fleabitten grey	imp. by painter Sperling, came from India	Desertbred	1859
1860	SOLIMAN db	1852	grey	from Egypt, gift of El Hami Pascha	Desertbred	--
1861	GADIR db	1847-48	grey	imp. by von Hügel from Abbas Paschas stud	Desertbred	1861-1865
1861	SADHAN db	1858	bay	imp. by von Hügel from Abbas Pascha stud	Desertbred	--

or agriculture”, for example „a pair of rare black carriage horses“ complete with carriage, which Dumreicher had seen and admired during a previous visit to the King's Royal Stables.

Abbas Pasha insisted on giving the stallion to King Wilhelm as a gift, and so, in a later letter the chief equerry wrote “for which reason we [in Württemberg] shall leave the choice of a noble stallion – without insisting on any particular colour or other conditions – entirely to His Highness [Abbas Pasha], who will best know what, other than pure blood, is required of a suitable breeding stallion.” The King would then send a man to Egypt to collect the horse, who “might find the opportunity to buy some additional horses, mares of course. On account of the constant contact between Syria and Arabia, it should be possible to find good horses in a large city such as Cairo, and your [Dumreicher's] many contacts and long familiarity with local conditions would surely prove very useful.”

In 1852, chief equerry von Hügel was sent to Egypt. Accompanied by Jakob Noa Epp and a servant, he traveled via Vienna to Trieste and there took a boat across to Alexandria and Cairo. Epp was in charge of the carriage and the two black horses. On the way back, he looked after three horses: the stallion HEDBAN Or.Ar., the gift to the King, and two grey mares, KOHEIL AGUSE Or.Ar. and SEGLAVIA I Or.Ar., who were purchased for 25,000 and 20,000 piasters, respectively.

Professor Rueff describes HEDBAN Or.Ar. as follows: “Light bay with white markings, from the tribe of the Aeneze-Saaba, a well-balanced horse with noble shape and good movements, unfortunately died young.” The stallion obviously met with approval, as he covered 17 mares during his first season at stud, including some of the carriage horses. Unfortunately he died in July 1853, so he was only used for one year.

Among the two mares, the fleabitten grey KOHEIL AGUSE Or.Ar. proved the best catch. She came to the stud aged 12, in foal to an unnamed desertbred stallion, and consequently gave birth to the chestnut filly Saida II, through which she founded her own family. KOHEIL AGUSE Or.Ar. was “purchased in Shubra near Cairo from Sami



*Honzes Ali, a stallion from Shubra, the stud of the Viceroy of Egypt, Mehmed Ali  
Lithograph by Heinrich Mayr*

Pasha". This Sami Pasha was Mehmed Ali's first adjutant. Shubra was Mehmed Ali's stud – it is quite likely that the 12-year-old mare was bred by Mehmed Ali, who had died in 1849. Professor Rueff describes her as "a very refined, well-built animal...; sold in 1861 because of strong melanomas; her descendants are among the best broodmares." And in „Horse Breeding in Württemberg“ we can read that she currently (1857) had five foals at the stud, and „is especially characterized by great refinement and speed.“

The other mare, SEGLAVIA I Or.Ar., white grey, 9 years old, 15 fists 3 inches tall. She was a Saklavi Djedran and was „purchased at Mattaria near Cairo from Ahmed Pasha, the last Egyptian governor of Meka [Mecca]“. She was sold in 1865 to Colonel Leube for 360 fl. None of her descendants appear to have remained at the stud.

### **El Hami Pasha**

Abbas Pasha I, Viceroy of Egypt, died on 13 July 1854. His stud was inherited by his son, Prince Ibrahim Ilhami Pasha (also known as El Hami Pasha), who had much less interest in breeding. Instead, he gave away many horses to friends and protégés without making sure of adequate replacements.

As a result, the grey stallion EL HAMI Or.Ar. arrived at Trieste in April 1856, a gift from El Hami Pasha to the King of Württemberg. The royal veterinarian Ammann and the groom Reichle were dispatched to Trieste to collect the horse. But at first, the two men travelled to Dresden on 8 April, where Ammann inspected a "grey Arabian stallion" owned by Baron von Schönberg at Danneberg. As nothing more is known about this, we may assume they did not purchase that horse. The journey



*Egyptian horses on pasture  
Lithograph by Heinrich May*

*The Viceroy of Egypt, Mehmed Ali*

continued by fast train to Vienna and via Laibach to Trieste, where they arrived on 14 April. The horse had in the meantime also arrived by boat from Egypt, and two days later they were off by carriage via Sessana [Sezana], Praewald [Razdrto], Planina to Laibach [Ljubljana], from there again by train via Graz, Vienna, Prague, Dresden, Leipzig, Eisenach, Frankfurt [Main], Bruchsal to Stuttgart. The detour was probably due to the incomplete rail network, or rather to the fact that horses could not be transported on all connections at all times. Thus the return journey took two weeks, and on 29 April the men arrived at the Royal Stables at Stuttgart, where they delivered the stallion.

The royal veterinarian Wörz described him as "grey with a small snip and fleabites, stallion, 11 years old, 15 fists 4 inches tall. Original Arabian". He only covered a few mares, none of them purebred.

*The Viceroy of Egypt, Mehmed Ali, in conversation with British officials.*

*Lithograph after David Roberts*





*Mehmed Ali's Palace in Shubra. Lithograph by the Didot brothers*

In 1860 the stud acquired the grey Arabian mare NEDSCHJDI Or.Ar. [registered in the Weil stud book as NEDSCHYD IV] from the bequest of Ahmet Pasha, who had drowned in the Nile; she was taken to Europe by a French engineer officer. The stud book has this description: „an original Arabian mare purchased from an Egyptian colonel. Grey, 6 years old, 15 ½ fists tall; sold on 22 April 1868. She was of the Koheil family.“ That same summer, two other horses arrived from Egypt as gifts from El Hami Pasha to King Wilhelm, as Taubenheim writes in a testimonial for the coachman Franz Paier from Graz “that this man in summer 1860 delivered two Arabian horses in the best and most desirable condition to the Royal Stables at Stuttgart, a stallion and a mare which His Highness El Hami Pasha, Viceroy of Egypt, sent as a gift to the stud of His Majesty the King of Württemberg.“ These horses were SOLIMAN und ZARIFFA.

The stallion SOLIMAN Or.Ar., grey, \*1852, was bred at the Viceroy's stud [at Shoubra], out of a mare from the Bedouin tribe of the Anaze Roucel. His sire was the chief sire at Shoubra, Gadir, who would later come to Weil himself. “This stallion is notable for his presence and his exceptionally strong and short legs. His back dips slightly towards the withers, which

makes him appear higher behind and negatively affects his movement. He is used for breeding here for the first time and, if used with discretion, should produce well. I have seen his dam at the Abbassie Stud, and several good, especially strong foals by him that were sold.“

The mare ZARIFFA Or.Ar. came together with Soliman; she came from the Bedouin tribe of the Aneze Saba, her strain was not known.

Such a generous gift usually required a gift in exchange, which is why some sources say that the horses came „in exchange from El Hami Pasha“. But on 9 September 1860, only a short time after the royal gifts arrived, El Hami Pasha was killed in a boat accident in the Bosphorus. The documents of the Royal Stables note a year later, in August 1861, that „two horses brought to the Royal Stables on 27 August 1860, originally intended as a gift for El Hami Pasha, have not yet been definitely accepted for the Royal Stables.“ In other words, these horses were never sent to Egypt, as the two black coach horses were in 1852.

### **Auction at Abbassie**

It soon became known in Europe that the Egyptian Bank at Cairo was going to sell all of El Hami Pasha's 200 horses at



*The stallion Omar resembles the type of horses bred by Abbas Pasha  
Lithograph by Alfred Dedreux*

*auction. The chief equerry, Baron von Hügel, was dispatched to Egypt to purchase any suitable horses in the auction. This was no easy task (see Hügel's „Impressions of Abassie“), but he succeeded in buying the stud's chief sire, GADIR Or.Ar., as well as a two-and-half-year-old bay colt and three grey mares. These horses were:*

*„GADIR Or.Ar., grey, 14 years old, 15 fists 1 inch, original Arabian of the Saklavi Djedran strain, a true Nedjid Hedjas.*

*He was the most valued sire at the Abbassié Stud of the late Viceroy of Egypt, Abbas Pasha, and is noted for his fertility and foals that are consistently good, in particular refined, tall, and strong. It is a rare good fortune to be able to buy the most noble Arabian stallion under such favourable conditions. The decision was made not only on account of the stallion's own merits, but his excellent qualities as a sire are proven by the large number of his descendants of all ages and out of all kinds of mares. Gadir*

*Gadir was the best horse for sale at the auction in Abbassie and could be secured for His Majesty, King Wilhelm I. of Württemberg. For many years, he was used as chief sire at Weil and left many excellent broodmares.*

*Painting by Otto Stotz*





*Kobeil Aguse was one of the most noble Arabian mares at the Royal Stud of Weil; she was imported from Egypt, bought from Sami Pasha, Mehmed Ali's first adjutant. Lithograph by Emil Volkers*

*will be used here [at Weil] for the first time this spring and should, when bred to our noble Bairaktar mares, surely produce good results. His best characteristics are his great refinement of the head, the outlines, coat and mane, as well as a rarely seen balance in conformation; the connection between head and neck, which in Arabian stallions often leaves something to be desired, the length of his neck, the long, laid-back shoulders, the long croup, the cleanness of the legs, strength of the sinews, and*

*especially the entirely normal alignment of his hocks and hind legs, should be instantly obvious to any expert. The health and energy of this stallion have been amply proved by the way in which he came through the journey from Egypt to Stuttgart. He left Cairo on 1 January 1861, arrived on 9 January at Trieste and on the 22th at Stuttgart, without once having refused to eat. If you consider that the heat in Cairo rose to 18 to 20 R [Réaumur, equals 22 bis 25 °C] each day, and*



*Dachma was purchased at the auction at Abbassie in 1861 for the Royal Stud of Weil. Painting by Otto Stotz*

that after arriving at Trieste the mountains had to be crossed in a cold temperature of 14 [i.e. -14° R, equals -17.5 °C] and this temperature hardly rose at all until Stuttgart, you must admit that you could hardly demand a more rigid test for the constitution of a horse raised in the Arabian desert.”

The bay colt **SADHAN** Or.Ar. joined the other colts at Klein-Hohenheim and was sent on October 1862, aged four and half years, to the Royal Stables, where he was named **SAAD** Or.Ar. [or **SAD**]. He was „bay with a small star and a snip, both front pasterns white, 15 fists tall“. He was not used for breeding and died in 1863.

The three grey mares were:

**DACHMA** Or.Ar. – she was, according to the stud book „an original Arabian fleabitten grey mare, 15 years old, 15 fists 2 ½ inches tall... Died of colic on 15 August 1863.” She had two daughters, of which one died as a foal. The other, **DACHMA II** \*1862, was added to the broodmare band (No. 761).

**DUEBA** Or.Ar. – she was, according to the stud book: „an original Arabian grey mare, 8 years old, 15 fists 1 ½ inches tall... On 27 April 1858 sold to Prussia” (together with a filly foal by **Amurath II** 1855). She had a total of five foals, of which three were sold; the other two died.

**MOREGHIA** Or.Ar. – she was „an original Arabian mare, white grey with a blaze and snip, 8 years, 15 fists 1 ½ inches tall... Died of encephalitis on 29 May 1868.” She had seven foals, her 1867 daughter **Moreghia** (by **Asslan II**) joined the broodmare band.

The two foals out of **DUEBA** and **MOREGHIA** that were imported in utero, were sold in 1865 for 475 resp. 825 fl.

Of these 13 horses from Egypt, **HEDBAN** O.Ar., imp. 1852, the mare **KOHEIL AGUSE** Or.Ar., imp. 1852, and the stallion **GADIR** Or.Ar., imp. 1861, who became chief sire at Weil and sired many beautiful daughters, were the only ones with any significant impact on the breeding programme at Weil.

# The Stud Farms of the Pashas

■ Pierre-Nicolas Hamont

*Pierre-Nicolas Hamont lived in Egypt for 14 years, from 1828 to 1842. He had graduated from the veterinarian school at Alfort and was sent from France to Egypt in 1828 by request of the viceroy Mehmed Ali, in order to establish a veterinarian school there. This school existed from 1828–1840 at Abouzabel. He also advanced to director of Mehmed Ali's stud. As a result, Hamont had first-hand knowledge of the studs of Mehmed Ali's sons and some other stud farms. He described the conditions he found there in numerous magazine articles and in his book "L'Égypte sous Mehmed Ali" (1843).*

## **Mehmed Ali's stud at Shoubra**

During the early 1820s, the Pasha of Egypt already kept several mares and stallions for breeding at Nayè, a village in lower Egypt. The land for cultivating barley, the main food in this country, was granted, and a Turk named Osman Aga named as director.

Many years were wasted in the attempt to breed and keep horses, without yielding any satisfying results. Deadly diseases struck each year, killing two thirds of all foals in one year, since veterinarian medicine was unknown in Egypt.

To improve the conditions, the stud was relocated to the

vicinity of Mehmed Ali's summer residence at Shoubra, Osman Aga was retired and replaced by his adopted son. New stables were constructed for all animals. But here, too, diseases took a heavy toll. Hamont was thus ordered to search for the origin of these diseases. Nothing was done in these stables to ensure the health, breeding, and strength of the horses. The mares stood close to each other, tied on all four legs, unable to move, in a low stable, without separating walls and in a bad climate. The foals were poorly and often suffered from colds; mangy and covered with flies, they stood on damp manure beside their dams. The stallions were old, decrepit, faulty, and tied up like the mares. This was the stock with which Mehmed Ali hoped



*Mehmed Ali, Viceroy of Egypt  
(1769 – 1849)*

*to breed good horses.*

*The horses were not ridden during the vegetation period, standing in the clover instead. Hamont was outraged: "These beautiful Nejdīs, the best of their kind, that were to be bred here, are hardly recognizable after one year in Egypt; they are coming apart, their movements slow down, they lose their original strength and their character. Back in the Nedjd – instead of five months in the clover with no movement at all – they go out to pasture for 40 days, but either free or only tied by a long rope to their necks. During the rest of the year, they are fed milk, dates, and meat. The horses that are kept that way hardly ever get ill, they are untiring and the most beautiful in the world."*

*As for breeding, it was done quite without consideration. Any stallion at hand was used to cover any mare, with no concern for any faults that might be passed on. As a result, many foals were born with deformities. When a mare was bred, she was only bred again six weeks later and was often not in season when she was taken to a new stallion. When a foal was born, it was often not known who the sire was. Many mares regularly lost their foals, for various reasons. Inappropriate feeding that did not take into account sex, use, or age, was another cause for various health issues. Mares with foals at foot were given only barley and straw in the summer, so that they did not produce enough milk. The year Hamont joined the stud, most of the foals had died; those that still lived were small and stunted and would never make good horses.*

*During the first year of its life, the course is set for a horse's further development, but this was completely neglected at Shoubra. The usual dry feed was not sufficient, and after a year of suffering and misery at this stud, the horses were sent*

*to another stable at Cairo. Their life continued there as before: no exercise, dry food, no variety. The poor foals that had barely managed to survive Shoubra were now on the next path that would inevitably end in misery and death.*

*It was not an easy task to fight diseases under these circumstances. The establishment did not deserve the name „stud farm“; it had to be radically reformed.*

*Hamont presented a plan to Mehmed Ali for building new stables in the plains of Shoubra. These would form a parallelogram 280 metres long and 183 metres wide. In the centre, several yards were enclosed by iron fences. The mares would be able to move freely inside the stables, and the paddocks would be bordered with hedges.*

*Mehmed Ali had brought back blue lucerne from Mecca, which grows for three years with proper watering and yields three cuts per month. This would provide fresh feed for the mares and foals throughout the year, alternating with barley and chopped straw.*

*Under Hamont's direction, no horse was tied up anymore. Each mare, each stallion had a number on its left hoof corresponding to the number in the register, where the dates of coverings and births were set down. From the age of two months, the foals were given shredded barley, and they were weaned at the age of four months – but slowly, not as abruptly as before. Feed was successively increased, always with lucerne, barley, and straw. The horses were outside in the paddocks all day and only returned in the evening. Two thirds of the foals were born in spring; at age three, the young horses left the stud. For greater variety in feeding, oat, esparcet, and carrot seeds were imported from France to be cultivated. If those plants acclimatized, it would be of great benefit for Egypt. Richer and more varied food made for fewer diseases and better offspring. The personnel were organized in a military fashion, the grooms were given uniforms and, in addition to their pay, received clothes and bread rations.*

*Lack of size used to be a problem. With better, more varied feed and more exercise the horse grew taller: soon the two-year-olds were as tall as the four-year-olds used to be. Glanders, scabies, worms, and colds were much reduced. More foals were born, and they were more beautiful, which soon became apparent to Mehmed Ali as well.*

*After the reform, the stud in 1838 contained around 400 Egyptian mares, 30 Arabian stallions from the Nedjd and from Syria, as well as an English and a Russian horse; 120 two-and-a-half-year-old youngsters, 80 yearlings, 180 foals between half a year and a year of age. The mares were inspected every year, and the ones that were discarded were put to breeding mules. The colts left the stud when they were three*

years old to be ridden; the Viceroy chose the finest of them for use at his own stables. The mares in the surrounding area were bred to the Nedjd stallions, whose offspring were very popular.

### **The Stud of Ibrahim Pasha**

The management and procedures were the same as at the old stud at Shoubra and everywhere in Egypt. The Prince's stables were located near Kasserling, next to his palace, on the banks of the Nile and not far from Cairo.

The mares and stallions were from the Nedjd, where Ibrahim Pasha had taken them himself when he conquered the country. There were a few Egyptian mares, Egyptian stallions, several donkeys; 400 animals altogether. The location was not suitable, being very damp during the winter, but there were fewer diseases than at Shoubra, because the Prince's horses were of a better breed. There were no glanders or strangles, only increased cases of diarrhea during the cold season.

The birth rate was low, around 50% of the mares. At the age of 6 months or one year, the foals were tied on all four legs. Their feed was little varied during those years, consisting only of barley and straw. The foals received very little nourishment until they were two years old. The foals remained stunted and were not highly valued, although they had very good dams and sires.

The reforms at Mehmed Ali's stud had caught Ibrahim Pasha's interest. Hamont had reported to him what reforms would be necessary. With the help of the Frenchman Bonfort, who had been in Ibrahim Pasha's service for many years, he was able to enforce the reforms. Changes were made to the feeding, the stabling was improved and paddocks built. Feeding lucerne, rich nourishment for the foals, and a breeding regime were introduced after the example of Shoubra. But Hamont was unable to carry all his reforms through, as he met with resistance from the Turkish staff.

### **The stud of Abbas Pasha**

The stud of Abbas Pasha lay on a sandy plain near Heliopolis. The facilities were a copy of Shoubra. For a long time Abbas Pasha had kept his horses outside, in the sun, in the rain, without any problems.

The mares and stallions were from the Nedjd and of the finest breed. The stud was supervised by a man from the Hedjaz. There was no starvation, nor any diseases such as glanders or strangles. The birth rate was high, but lower than at Shoubra. The foals were fed on dates and camel's milk. Abbas Pasha supervised the raising of the foals himself.

Some of the reforms were adopted, such as shredded barley, lucerne, and hacked straw. The stables were like those at Shoubra, the foals could move around freely without barriers.



It was the most prosperous stud farm in Egypt and the stallions, mares, and youngstock were of very high quality. There were 150–200 horses. Abbas Pasha loved his horses dearly, and among all the children of Mehmed Ali, he was the most knowledgeable.

It was virtually impossible for foreigners to visit his stud. The horses bred there were used as mounts for Abbas Pasha and his mamelukes. His grandfather wanted to transfer the management of the stud at Shoubra to him. In Hamont's opinion, Mehmed Ali could have done nothing better, for this appointment would have been a blessing for the entire land.

### **The stud of Kurshid Pasha**

The stud was situated at Embabé, opposite of Boulac. The mares and stallions were from the Nejd, where Kurshid Pasha had been governor for several years.

They were very beautiful horses; some magnificent stallions; excellent youngstock, around 150. Kurshid Pasha's stud had been well thought out. The feed was varied and plenty; the stud manager was a European. According to Hamont, if Kurshid Pasha had concentrated all his energy on his stud farm, he would have been able to breed the best horses in Egypt, and if he would give up his mares and stallions, it would be a great loss for Egypt.

Mehmed Ali had forbidden his former mameluke to sell his mares and stallions, but he was permitted to sell the foals. Besides these studs, several other high government officials in Egypt bred Arabian horses: Ahmet Pasha, minister of war and the Viceroy's nephew, owned several Nedjd stallions of great beauty, and twenty or thirty Arabian mares of the finest breed. His stud was managed in the manner that was typical for Egypt.

# Impressions of Abbassie

*Observations by Chief Equerry Julius von Hügel on the Egyptian Abbassie Stud and the Auction held there in 1861. If a description of the royal stud farms is of interest primarily because of the purebred Arabians that are bred there, the reader should welcome the addition of a few words on the author's journey to Egypt and his experiences there regarding Arabian horses. At the end of October 1860, news of the sudden death of El-Hami Pasha, son of the late Viceroy of Egypt Abbas Pasha, reached the King, and soon after, both English and French equestrian papers advised the public of the impending sale of the deceased's stud by public auction. At the same time, the Egyptian bank gave out lists and advertisements, which, along with more detailed descriptions of the horses at this stud, issued an invitation to the auction on 10 December. Abbas Pasha, son of Toussoun Pasha, nephew of Mehemed Ali, raised in Arabia, where his father lived as governor of Mecca, was a Bedouin by inclination and customs, and like the Bedouins valued nothing higher than his horses. After returning to Egypt and rising to power and immeasurable wealth, he gave in fully to his passion for Arabian horses and built a stud farm on a large scale near Cairo in the desert. Loving the vast expanse of sand, his cradle and home, the Viceroy erected a colossal castle near to his stud farm, built a road lined with acacias leading there,*

*installed water pipes and gardens, and, by adding magnificent buildings for all kinds of purposes, created a new town which he named Abbassie. He even tried to force the officials and the wealthy pashas to follow his example and add their own houses to his favourite place, and the derelict foundations of the houses that were to be erected for that purpose are still visible today. His kingdom was of short duration. With his death, the entire plan fell apart, leaving only the saddest picture of past glories. Abbas Pasha was a great connoisseur and surely the greatest breeder of Arabian horses that ever lived, perhaps even including Solomon himself, for in 1852, the year of my first journey to the miraculous land of Egypt, his stud is said to have contained 1,000 horses. Along with Bedouin tastes, he had also adopted Bedouin superstitions, and he permitted no one, least of all non-Muslims, to come near his horses. Despite the best recommendations and the most powerful protection, and even after I had presented to him a pair of superb Württemberg carriage horses and been given one of his Arabian stallions as a return gift for the King, I was unable to see even one of his stables. When on one morning I rode out before dawn into the desert on the road to Suez, hoping to see the horses, which were ridden out after midnight, at least from the distance as they returned, I almost got into serious trouble. The Turk fears the Christian's „evil eye“, believing that a possession which incites envy in another man will bring him bad fortune.*

*Vast amounts of money were sunk into Abbassie, possibly more than have been spent on any other stud farm. Individual agents, if necessary even entire expeditions, were constantly on the lookout to buy famous horses for the Viceroy, even from the most distant Bedouin tribes. Insiders claimed that Abbas Pasha's passion for Arabian horses had a political foundation, in so far as he sought the good will of the sheikhs of the most powerful Bedouin tribes and maintain contact with them, feeling insecure in his position as Viceroy and in need of a powerful support if the need should arise. He even bought his horses from them after the Bedouin fashion, purchasing mares under the condition that the former owner retained the right to the first or the second foal. Not a single case is known where a bedouin who sold such a mare did not arrive at Abbassie a day before the foal's birth, making it perfectly clear that time and distance mean nothing to those*



*Abbas Pasha I. (1812 – 1854)*

desert dwellers. At Abbassie, they were invariably received with great hospitality and sent home bearing rich gifts. The following example may show the insignificance of money in this context. Abbas Pasha had given the Queen of England the grey Arabian stallion Saklavi Dourbie, whom he valued highly and who was exceptional for his size. The stallion was not appreciated in England, was sold and taken by his buyer to India. Abbas Pasha heard about this and, whether out of hurt vanity or because he really valued the stallion that highly, immediately sent to the desert for the Bedouin who had bred the stallion and sold it to him. „Are you able to recognize your stallion Dourbie among a hundred other horses?“ – was his only question to the Bedouin, and when that man swore in the name of Allah that he would know him even among 1,000 others, he sent him to India in the company of a shrewd agent, with orders to find the stallion and on no account to return without him. A year later the stallion was back at Abbassie, none the worse for the wear, and was now sold at auction in my presence. The costs of this royal whim can well be imaged; here, the price asked was 5,000 guineas. He was hardly worth it.

After Abbas Pasha's death in 1856, many horses at his stud are said to have died of neglect, and others stolen. It is a fact that, when news of his death reached the desert, a house he had built there, halfway to Suez, where he used to spend some time each year with his best horses, was literally razed to the ground by the Bedouins, and everything stolen that could be carried away. I have seen the now desolate site myself. His only heir was his son El Hami Pasha, later son-in-law to the Sultan. This young man, 18 years old at the time, continued the stud out of vanity rather than genuine passion, and with excessive generosity gave any young man who knew how to make the right compliments two or even three horses at once. As a consequence, whenever you see a beautiful horse in Cairo these days, it is certain to be one of the Pasha's gifts. Many horses were sent to Constantinople; no new purchases were made from the desert, and as a result, the stud had shrunk to 350 horses at the time of his death. It was the sale of these remains of Abbas Pasha's world famous stud that was publicized in Europe by the Bank of Egypt; to which the stud along with other possessions had been mortgaged. To these circumstances alone do the Europeans buyers owe this opportunity. Without the European competition, the natives would have distributed the remaining noble animals among themselves for a song. His Majesty, convinced that even among the remains of this stud which was built with so much love and expertise, with vast amounts of money and Oriental extravagance, there must be something extraordinary for our Arabian breeding programme, and always striving to



not only bring his most beloved creation to the highest level, but to ensure its continuation in the future, gave the author the honourable commission to travel at once to Cairo and, if possible, purchase the best horses for the royal stud.

I departed from Stuttgart on 21 November 1860, left Trieste by boat on the 27th, arrived at Alexandria on 3 December and at Cairo on the 4th. Having come from deep winter to beautiful spring, I had just 7 days before the auction to take a good look at the stud and plan my purchases. The usual Oriental indifference prevailed; there were no lists, no information available of any kind to help me along; it was barely possible to get anyone to give me any information for love or money. Each horse, each foal, had to be inspected individually, and it was barely possible within those 7 days to get a proper impression of these animals, arranged entirely without system. Even here, the lazy slaves hardly left the visitor any time, for they constantly held out their hands and called for the inescapable „baksheesh“ (tip), the almighty password throughout the Orient. „Baksheesh“ at the top, „baksheesh“ at the bottom: without „baksheesh“ you will achieve nothing, and anyone who has visited the Orient will be familiar with that word's magic power. I found 30 stallions here of various ages, some 14 of which have been used for breeding, 110 Arabian broodmares, and around 180 foals. Of these stallions, 7 had been bought from the tribes of the desert; all the others had already been bred at the stud. Of the broodmares, perhaps a fifth were original Arabians. For the connoisseur and especially the breeder of Arabian blood,

nothing could be more instructive and more interesting than the close study of the remains of this stud farm, which is still highly significant and remarkable. The more I came to know through my industrious studies, the more cause I had to regret that, due to the Pasha's Bedouin superstitions and Turkish fanaticism, I had been prevented from seeing this stud when it flourished during my visit in 1852. The best representatives of nearly all the excellent breeds of Arabia were to be found here, including mares, for example, of the „Kobeil Norwack" strain of such exceptional size and beauty that they would have been an asset for any English hunting stable. Until then, I had no idea that Arabian horses of that size even existed. Abbas Pasha knew how to obtain horses from areas of Arabia which no European has ever seen, and which even the Turks and Egyptians only entered by military force. I was told that at the beginning of his reign, the Viceroy discovered a sheikh in the dungeons of the Citadel whom Mehemed Ali had captured during his war against the Wahhabis and kept imprisoned for over 20 years. He promised to set him free under the condition that he should acquire for him horses of the true „Nedjid Hedjaz" breed. The sheikh having assented, he was secretly allowed to escape. The Bedouin, grateful for the precious gift of freedom and true to his word, sent him horses of rare beauty and the noblest breed, including the stallion Gadir, whom I was fortunate enough to buy at the auction for the Royal Stud. Unfortunately, since Abbas Pasha had died in 1856 and his successor only gave horses away without acquiring any new ones, the majority and the finest of the remaining specimens were so old that it did not make any sense to buy them. Among the Arabian strains found here, the best and the most numerous are: the strains Saklavi Djedran, and Dachman el Chahouan. Other well-represented strains were Saklavi Moreghi, Dachman el Amir, Kobeil Norwack, Kobeilan, Obeyan, Hedban, and Rabdan. Most of the horses sold here were grey. Other than that, there were several very excellent chestnuts, and a few bays; among the latter a strain I had not heard of until now, Tehama, from the south-western slopes of the Hedjaz and Jemen, towards the Red Sea. The two mares of this strain were notable for their great refinement, deep bodies, especially short legs and good bone. They were a little long in the back and short in the croup, with an exceptionally beautiful tail set. For one of them I offered 500 guineas in vain, and I regretted being unable to purchase her for His Majesty. But because of the excessively high price, as well as the fact that she was at most 14 days from foaling and the transport would have been very risky, it seemed advisable not to make the purchase. It could also be observed here that size was most in demand and increased the prices.

The stud farm consisted of eight large yards surrounded by walls and connected to each other. The stables built in these yards were extremely simple and consisted of a low foundation of stone with angular brick pillars carrying a flat

roof. Everything was surrounded by high iron picket fences, so that the horses, while being protected from the sun directly above, were out in the open. This building style, highly suitable for any climate, made it possible to look straight through the parallel stables, which were arranged that way so that the Viceroy, from the balcony of his palace, was able to look into all stables. Some horses were tied at the head, others at the feet, and only few wore rugs. They lay on the bare ground, were led to the water at 11 a.m. and fed barley and straw twice daily. Care and ministration are unknown here; and grooming, if one may call it that, is done with something like a brush made from camel's hair in the shape of a glove.

The auction began on 10 December at 10 a.m. A large tent had been set up in the first yard and filled with a large number of benches and fauteuils, for the Orientals value their comfort. The event was presided over by a fat elderly gentleman, Ethem Pascha, who had served as Minister de l'instruction publique under Abbas Pasha, which he set great store in. Here, too, the splendid Oriental indolence prevailed; here, too, the almighty baksheesh ruled. There was not even a sales list telling you in which order the horses were to be sold, forcing the buyer to constantly remain present. Each day, a certain number of stallions, mares, and foals were auctioned. All horses and foals had a brass chain around their neck with a brass plaque in which their name, breeding, and number had been engraved; this was all by way of information. Since most of the foreigners were unable to read Arabic and the dragoman was usually equally incapable, this was no help at all, no one knew what was going on, and we soon realized that this was intentional. It was a shrewd method designed to make things as difficult as possible for the European buyers, who were disliked and regarded askance, while the clever Egyptians could have any horse they wished to buy brought to the auction whenever they wanted. To the right of the Pasha, the Europeans had been seated, representatives from France, Austria, Piemont, and my humble self. We were joined by the many foreigners of all nations who are travelling through Egypt either to or from India, or had come to Cairo for the healing powers of this wonderful climate. To the Pasha's left, the native buyers had gathered. The whole gathering presented an interesting picture of all nations, made especially colourful by the addition of half-naked fellahs, negroes, and even Bedouin Arabs, who had come and squatted on the sand with their curious customs and expressive, beautiful faces. The auction itself was conducted in Arabic and Italian, and I shall never forget this highly amusing scene. Three criers were constantly running up and down the long rows of buyers, who sat with Oriental stoicism, apparently impassive, smoking their tshibuk and sipping their ever-present mocca, shouting the latest bids in a voice that can only be produced by Arab lungs. Any misunderstanding was hardly possible. The bids were made in English guineas, and when the highest bid had been

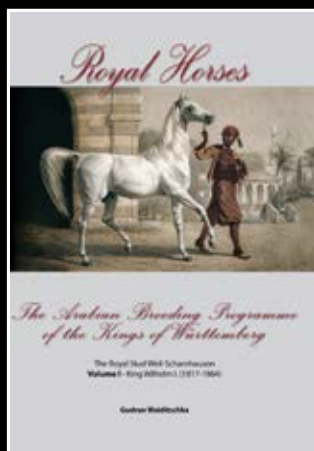
reached, the fat pasha arose and, with a stentorian voice, roared a la una, a le due, a le tre.

Between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m., no more than 25 to 28 horses were sold; the auction continued day after day and lasted for nearly three weeks. The enormous prices may be illustrated by the fact that on one day, 26 horses sold for a total a sum of 5,000 guineas! I saw yearlings sold for 100 guineas, two-year-olds for 250, and 20-year-old mares for 120 and 250 guineas; some younger mares and stallions reached prices of 300 to 700 guineas. Most horses were bought by the natives and remain at the smaller stud farms in and around Cairo that are kept by the very wealthy pashas. One young man, Ali Bei [Ali Pasha Sherif], President of the Commercial Court, whose beautiful horses are well known in Cairo, bought 40 horses. Thus the noble blood of this stud is not wasted, and it will still be possible to find some noble horses within easy reach at Cairo. Regarding sales to foreigners, I can state that a commission for the French government purchased 18 stallions and mares, Prince Ahrensberg bought 2 stallions for the Austrian government, and 20 horses were purchased for Piedmont, but these were only in part bought at this auction. I was able to acquire 2 stallions and 3 mares for the Royal Stud, the grey stallion GADIR, a 2 ½-year-old bay colt SADHAN and 3 grey mares DACHMA, DUEBA, and MOREGHIA, of which the latter two were heavily in foal. Saklavi Djedran GADIR and DACHMA el Chahouan, [DAHMA EL SHAHWAN] which I purchased on the first day of the auction, were so well-known and highly valued, that the certainty of seeing them go abroad, namely to Europe, caused great dissatisfaction among the Turkish and Egyptian buyers (who, if the stallion had remained in Cairo, would have liked to have used him). They were so incensed that I was given the well-meaning advice to take means to protect the horses from the possibility of malign influence; I was advised to take them away immediately

and have them guarded day and night by my own men.

On 1 January 1861 I left Cairo, took the horses by train to Alexandria, shipped them to Trieste on the 4th, where I arrived after a good crossing on the 9th, and on 22 January I had the extraordinary good fortune to see them arrive safely at Stuttgart in the middle of the harshest winter. The two pregnant mares delivered healthy colt foals three weeks later, and the stallion GADIR has been covering mares at the Royal Stud since 15 March.

To finish, I would like to remark that it is no small risk to transport such noble and valuable horses from the Egyptian climate to Germany in the middle of winter. Such a venture can only be attempted with authentic Arabian horses. These have been out in the open from the moment of their birth, have not been coddled with rugs, have not known musty stables, and have been exposed to rapid changes in temperature, for in Arabia, the cold and damp of the night is followed by the scorching heat of the day. The Arabian Horse, a clever and understanding animal, has strong nerves, is easily calmed by friendly and gentle words, and is barely startled by unusual situations, such as railways and steamboats; whereas a German horses in the same situation will be driven to a frenzy. The most difficult part of such a transport is how to properly increase the rugs, with the temperature dropping from a warm 22 degrees to an icy -14 degrees. The journey itself was made much easier by excellent means of transport, trains and steamboats, so that I was able to take along a sufficient quantity of Egyptian barley to avoid a change of feed during the journey. But anyone who has been in a similar situation, knowing the difficulties of such a transport and understanding the huge responsibility, will agree with me that, as beautiful and instructive my journey may have been, I counted myself happy when I finally saw my horses arrive hale and hearty at their new home. □



This article is an extract from the book

**"Royal Horses - The Arabian breeding program of the Kings of Württemberg", Volume 1 (2017).**

The book will soon be available in English language and can be (pre-)ordered from the author at her website [www.in-the-focus.shop](http://www.in-the-focus.shop) at the price of 69,00 € (plus postage).