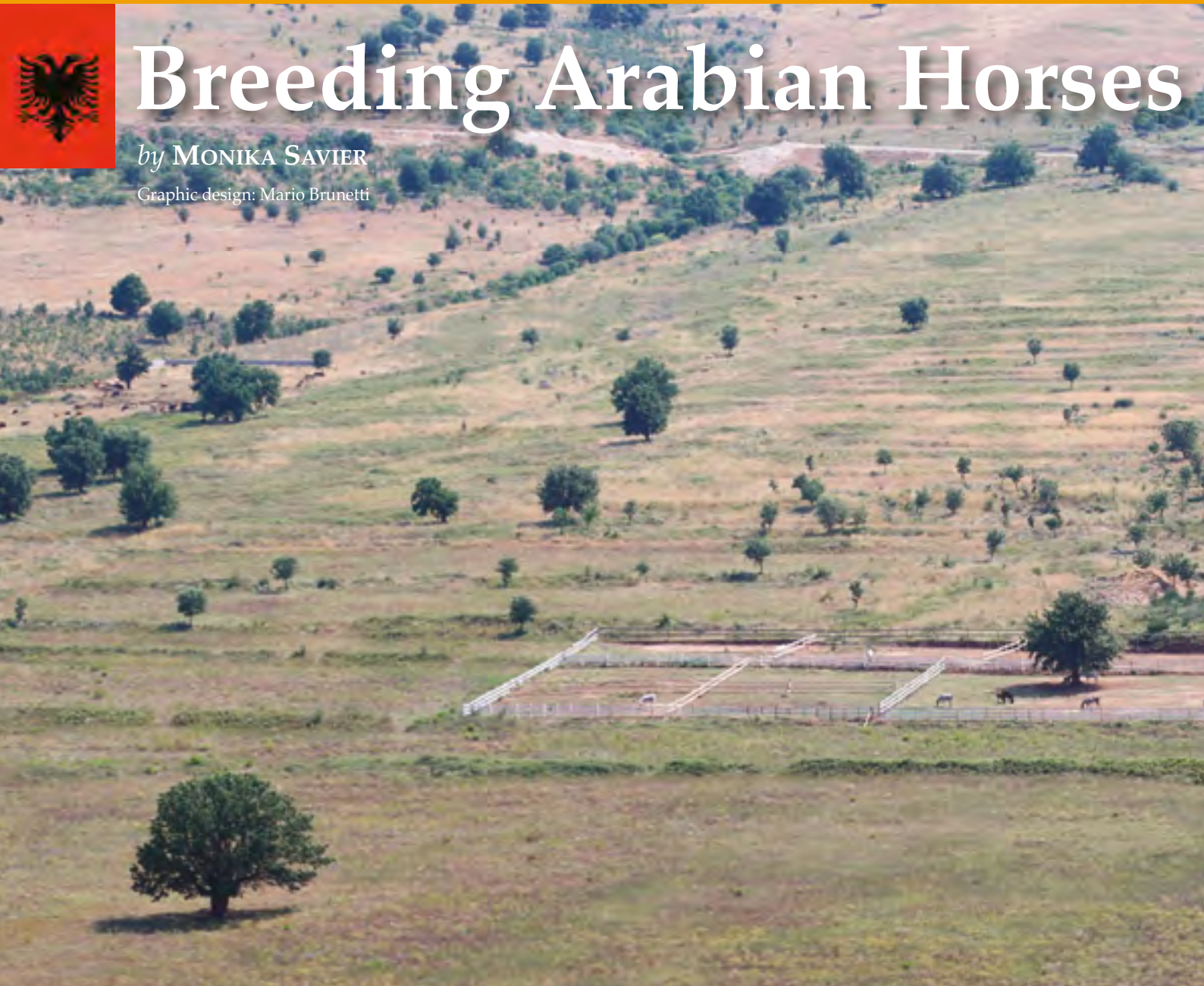




# Breeding Arabian Horses

by **MONIKA SAVIER**

Graphic design: Mario Brunetti



# in Albania



# LUGU I GEGËVE LG Arabian Farm

## A new Farm is Raising in the World of Straight Egyptian Breeding

by MONIKA SAVIER

„In addition to our passion we must reactivate and take care of the tradition that our country has had in the past for Arab horses“.

(Roland Shyti)

Wild high mountain peaks, deep valleys and plains blooming towards the sea, this is the hinterland of touristic Albania, which has the most beautiful sandy beaches along the sea. They are occasionally interrupted by rocky cliffs, which form almost uninhabited and hardly accessible white bays on the blue sea of the southern Adriatic.

And those who think that Albania is still a “workers’ and farmers’ state” do not know Valona (Vlore). This tourist jewel is nowadays populated by Italian visitors and investors, who find a home by the sea there, which reminds them of the Italian region Puglia of the 50’s in terms of its natural beauty and water quality, which stretches barely 150 km away on the other side of the Adriatic coast.



We drive south along the beach. Then the jeep turns left into the mountains. On the narrow road two tortoises quickly save themselves from the car. After another three kilometres of serpentine bends, we reach a natural plateau and see the Arabian stud farm owned by Ilir Shyti and Blendi Bani come into view. Above us, an eagle circles, on the ground, wild orchids and in front of me, the horses in the paddocks. I wonder why there are so few Arabian horses in Albania, because the natural environment would be ideal for their breeding.

### Looking back to understand the future

As in all Balkan countries, oriental stallions influenced horse breeding in Albania during the 500 years of Turkish occupation. The Ottoman Empire, which had also conquered Egypt, had excellent cavalry. Muhammad Ali Pasha, also called Mehemmed ‘Alī Pāšā, (1769-1849) was born in Kavalar, Northern Greece, but his family came from Albania. History calls him the Albanian Ottoman governor and de facto ruler and King of Egypt from 1805 to 1848.



Abbas Pasha I, the Viceroy of Egypt, was famous for his collection of Arabian Horses. He had definitely a preference for the Arabian horses with the fine head and elegant type, which he found only in the southern part of the Arabia, called Nejd. These horses were for the most part the original gene pool for the Straight Egyptians of today.

At the height of his rule, he controlled Lower Egypt, Upper Egypt, Sudan and parts of Arabia and the entire Levant. He is regarded as the founder of Modern Egypt. His dynasty ruled until the King, Farouk I was overthrown in the Egyptian Revolution of 1952. Farouk I was the tenth ruler of Egypt from the Muhammad Ali Pasha Dynasty and proud of his Albanian heritage. As king, 30 Albanian bodyguards protected him as he regarded Albanians as the only people he could trust with his life.

During the whole period of the dynasty until 1952, breeding of Arabian horses played an important role, not only for the cavalry but also especially as status symbol for the ruling class.

Six generations later Abbas Hilmi II, (1874 – 1944) reached the throne, following the dynasty founded by Muhammad Ali Pasha. He was called Abbas Pasha II and was obsessed with Arabian horses breeding from their country of origin, the region called Nejd on the Arabian Peninsula. He did everything to import these horses into Egypt. He even hand-wrote a book about his straight Egyptian horses, pedigrees and history, called „The Abbas Pasha Manuscript“. His horses and their offspring have been the root horses of the breed of straight Egyptians in the following years. They mainly entered into the RAS (Royal Agricultural Society) founded in the early 20th Century in Cairo. Later it was called EAO (Egyptian Agricultural Organization).

When King Farouk I in 1952 had to resign after the revolution, his breeding stables Inshass stud with the finest Arabian horses from the Nejd were also transferred to the Egyptian State Stud RAS / EAO and the basics for today's purely Egyptian Arabian horse breeding was laid.

The influence of Abbas Pasha's Straight Egyptian horses was important throughout the Ottoman Empire, including the land of Albania, as it was a matter of improving cavalry by means of powerful, tough horses with charisma and elegant phenotype. Furthermore, the character of the pure Arabian horses were especially people-oriented and able to create a link of understanding to their riders, which could save their lives. Their influence on horse breeding in the whole Ottoman Empire is widely documented. Still today, many of the Albanian mountain ponies have pretty little heads with a fine mouth and dish. Even before the Second World War, Arabian horses are said to have been used in private studs to improve the breeds. Three-quarters of Albania (the "Land of Eagles", as it is also called), are high mountains and deep gorges, where without the use of donkeys and horses, even today, transport work and agriculture can only be carried out to a limited extent.

Because of political alliances, in 1958 Albania received five purebred Arabian stallions and ten mares from Tersk, the state stud in the former Soviet Union. Also in the 1960's, according to WAHO (World Arabian Horse Organization) information, a number of Russ-



ian Arabians were imported from Tersk to the Albanian State Stud Shkroda. In 1996, there were still about 30 purebred Arabians from these lines living in Albania.

Later the state stud was closed and the horses were sold. We can presume that Russian Arabians from these old bloodstocks still live in Albania today, but they are no longer recognized by the WAHO as purebred Arabians.

Today, the few breeders in the country who want to revive the old tradition of purebred Arabians are trying to re-register their horses with the WAHO, because in the last five years about 50 purebred Arabians have been imported to Albania from other countries, especially from Italy. A strategy is now being worked out to have the Albanian purebred Arabians recognised by the WAHO, probably by having the Italian Arabian Association ANICA as caretaker of the formalities. Later on Albania will take over the organisational business of registration and compliance with the WAHO rules. Now, however, some requirements are still missing in the various small studs, with the exception of LA Arabia's in Valona, where the entire horse stock already consists of Arabians imported from countries with recognised WAHO breeding associations. For Roland Shyti of LA Arabians, the idea of this stud was a matter of the heart. Today he has passed the ownership of horses and the farm to his son Ilir Shyti and to his friend and collaborator Blendi Bani, who takes care of all matters today.

### INTERVIEW WITH ROLAND SHYTI

**Mr. Shyti, how did you get the idea to breed Arabian horses of Straight Egyptian bloodlines in Albania?**

„The love for horses was born very early in my childhood. In the town where I was born and raised, there was a racetrack, where my father took me to see the races of the time. We would go to every horse event that took place. I used to spend my summer holidays in Divjaka and Orikum; in Divjaka there was a protected natural area where there were herds of horses in the wild often went to visit them, but in Orikum there was a well-structured and well-maintained state stud with Arabian horses



imported from very prestigious international stables. Luckily, for me, a cousin of mine worked there at that time, and he made sure that I could go whenever I wanted to see the horses. During these long visits to the stud farm, I heard for the first time that these were Arab horses, but I did not understand the difference between them and the other races. There I had my first acquaintance with this magnificent and proud animal. So while growing up, I had the dream of having an Arab horse myself. In the 1990s, I visited an old friend of mine, who had collected some of the Arab horses that were left without care and without a stable after the fall of the Dictatorship. However, it should be remembered that during the years of communism 1945 - 1990, Albania had an excellent equestrian tradition and culture. Purebred Arabs were bred and selected, making Albania a large player of this breed. We remember in Shkodra



there was the Institute of Equine Studies and Breeding, as well as in Orikum and many other farms spread in our country“.

**Straight Egyptians are a rarer and more particular line because their value refers not only to their phenotype but also to their history, recorded in their pedigree. You are the only breeders of the Straight Egyptians in Albania. Why did you make this choice?**

„When I was later able to buy an Arab horse myself, I read many books and came to the conclusion that the Straight Egyptian (SE) Arab is the most distinctive of the original Arab lines. Another impact on me in choosing this particular horse was the fact that King Farouk of Egypt was a lover and breeder of this breed. King Farouk had distant Albanian origins and I saw this possibility to keep the tradition in my own way. Among the different stables where I had contacts, was also one in the Czech Republic. From there I took my first three horses. Then my research, not to say odyssey, began to start the breeding of the Straight Egyptians Arabs in Albania.

In this initiative, my dear friend, the architect Blendi Bani, sustained me. He is also a great lover of these horses and supported me to realize the project and to import the horses into Albania.

From those days, the horses became a very important part of our lives. After some time we got to know other breeders in Italy, Germany and Belgium and continued to import excellent horses to our farm, which are now the corner stones of an important breeding project. Now there are around 20 Straight Egyptian Arabians in our stables and some foals are still being born. We are the only breeding stud in Albania with the aim of preserving the purity of the Arabian breed in the best way, engaging only horses in breeding that represent the historical Egyptian bloodlines, but also with excellent type and athletic skills.

So in addition to our passion we must bring back and take care of the tradition that our country has had in the past by breeding and selecting Arabian horses. This tradition was forgotten after the fall of the communist dictatorship in 1990“.

**What are your plans for the future?**

„Another of our goals is to make our breeding farm become an organizer of equestrian events, shows, and cultural activities around the Arabian horses. We hope that after Albania’s entry into the European Union, our horses can also be traded in other countries“.

## EVERY HORSE AT LA ARABIANS HAS A PERSONAL STORY TO TELL.

As Roland Shyti told us in his interview, the first three horses at the stud came overland from the Czech Republic to Valona in Southern Albania. The successful breeder and endurance rider Marina Novotna sold him the colt Kamaal AQ and the two young mares Sharifah AQ and Dorri AQ. However, that was not enough for Roland Shyti, Ilir Shyti and Blendi Bani to start breeding. Roland Shyti read everything he could find about breeding Straight Egyptians. Now new mares and fillies were sought, according to certain criteria. Ansata lines and the gene pool of Dr. Nagel's Katharinenhof should lay the foundation for a good offspring. Many studs in Kuwait and Qatar were already successful with this concept. Why should they not be successful in Albania as well? Therefore, it is not surprising that especially mares from the Dahman Shahwan strain were sought. At the same time, large stables were built and suitable grooms were sought, which was much more difficult than finding good horses. Finally, it was decided to import the following brood mares:

### THE MARES AT LG ARABIANS

**Sharifah AQ** (\*2015) is a young athletic mare by Serene Farid, a son of Salaa El Dine, bred by Dr. Nagel, out of Sharifa Al Kadir by Halim Al Kadir, a famous son of Ansata Ibn Halima. Sharifah AQ is tracing to the Hadban Enzahi strain. She had her first foal in 2019 by **Malik El Nile**, called **LG Kadir** (\*2019).

**Dorri AQ** (\*2014) is a daughter of Sheikh El Sherif, who was bred by Jarrell McCracken in Texas. He is the half-brother of the legendary stallions Ruminaja Ali and Alidaar, but after he was sold to Florida, he was mainly forgotten. This excellent stallion was in 2010 exported to Marina Novotna in the Czech Republic. He produced for her a number of outstanding foals. One was **Dorri AQ**, out of Farida AQ, a mare of the Kuhailan Rodan strain. In 2018, **Dorri AQ** gave to LA Arabians the nice filly **LG Aisha** (\*2018) by **Kamaal AQ** and in 2020 again a wonderful filly with the name **LG Shaha** (\*2020).



DORRI AQ

With four years of age, **Persja Al Qusar** (\*2013) arrived in LG Stables from Al Qusar stud in Germany. She is as well belonging to the Dahman Shahwan strain, tracing to the Farida strain. Her grand dam is the famous Ansata Princessa by Prince Fa Moniet. She is by show champion SI Sidi Rayyan by Turki Al Rayyan - Ashhal Al Rayyan.

The bay mare **Shariha Pasha** (\*2013) came from Italy to the stables in Albania. Her sire is Ibn Emir Sinan by Ansata Emir Sinan. She is out of the bay mare Princess Pasha, bred by Dr. Girolamo Dibenedetto in Sicily. She gave to her new owners three wonderful fillies in the last four years: **LG Afra** (\*2017) by Radhjai Ouhara, **LG Habiba** (\*2018) by **Kamaal AQ** and **LG Azra** (\*2019), sired as well by **Kamaal AQ**. **Shariha Pasha** belongs to the Dahman Shahwan strain and is tracing to famous Kamar – Sabah family.

**TB Jaleelah** (\*2014) by Nil Del Guado, out of Jasline, was as well imported from Italy. She was bred by Tre Balzane Stud in Umbria and belongs to the Dahman Shawan strain. She is tracing to the famous Ansata Bint Bukra, the foundation mare of Ansata Stud in the USA. Her first foal at LG Arabians was **LG Amira** (\*2020) by **Kamaal AQ**.



SHARIFAH AQ

**TB Shirin** (\*2017) was as well imported from Tre Balzane stud in Italy. Her sire is NK Mahir by Safir Al Rayyan. Her dam is Diva Shalima, an Adnan granddaughter. She belongs to the Dahman Shahwan strain, tracing to Kamar – Sabah family. This year she might be covered for the first time.

**TB Hekaya** (\*2018) was sired by Rayyan Al Naif by Ashhal Al Rayyan out of Ansata Aya Nadira, Bint Bukra Family. Her dam is the Obayan mare TB Heba, an important root mare at Tre Balzane stud, tracing to Marah, one of the foundation mares of Dr. Nagel’s Katharinenhof.

**TB Maha** (\*2018) is one of the most typiest daughters of international Show Champion and Junior SE World Champion, Naseem Al Rashediah. She arrived from Tre Balzane stud in 2019. Her dam is TB Muneera by TB Hafid El Nil and out of Mia Mouna by Salaa El Dine.

**LaDiva Noaa** (\*2015) came from LaDiva Stud in Belgium to Albania. She is the daughter of Sahib, one of the best sons of Salaa El Dine. Her dam CD Anasta by Safeen is the corner stone at La Diva stud.



LG AISHA





PERSJA AL QUSAR



LADIVA OMAR



SHARIHA PASHA



LG AFRA



LG HABIBA



TB JALEELAH



TB FAROUK



LG KADIR



TB SHIRIN



LG AZRA



LADIVA NOAA



KAMAAL AQ

### COLTS AND STALLIONS AT LG ARABIANS

**Kamaal AQ** (\*2014) was the last son of the 1991 in the USA born mare Orient Queen. She was a daughter of Alidaar and an important brood mare of the Dahman Shahwan family, tracing to Kamar and El Dahma (1880), the famous root mare of Ali Pasha Sharif. His sire was Ansata Nile Echo by Ansata Hejazi, out of Ansata White Nile. He was one of the most important Ansata stallions in Europe and the Middle East. His offspring is much requested because he is a successful Show Champion producer. Kamaal AQ produced some very nice foals in the stables of LA Arabians.

**LaDiva Omar** (\*2017) is a typey son of Ansata Nile Echo, out of CD Anasta by Safeen. He will support in the future his half-brother Kamaal AQ as stallion in the stables of LG Arabians.

**TB Farouk** (\*2018) is the son of Jamil Al Rayyan by Ansata Hejazy. He is an outstanding type producer with many champion foals in the world. His dam is the Tre Balzane root mare TB Helwa by Ibn El Nil. She is belonging to the Obayan strain, tracing to Marah, one of the foundation mares at Nagel's stud in Germany. TB Farouk is the full brother to the Gold Champion filly TB Fayza.

**Malik El Nile** (\*2005), son of Ansata Najdi and out of AM Alia El Nile by Al Kidir, was a very successful Endurance horse, winning many races. He was never disqualified for lameness and with his 15 years now, he is still a perfect riding horse in the farm. Roland liked as well his Ansata Pedigree and tried him as stallion, with success. His first foals are of very good quality.



TB MAHA



MALIK EL NILE



Blendi Bani, Ilir Shyto and Jaho Shyti, the team of LG Arabian Farm

For next year, the LG Arabians team is planning an Open House event and would like to invite interested breeders from all over the world. It is definitely worth it. However,

visitors should also take a few days to get to know the country and its people and especially its breath-taking nature, along the coasts and in the mountains. ■

LUGU I GEGËVE LG Arabian Farm - lgarabianfarm@gmail.com - Mobile: +44 7490 293479