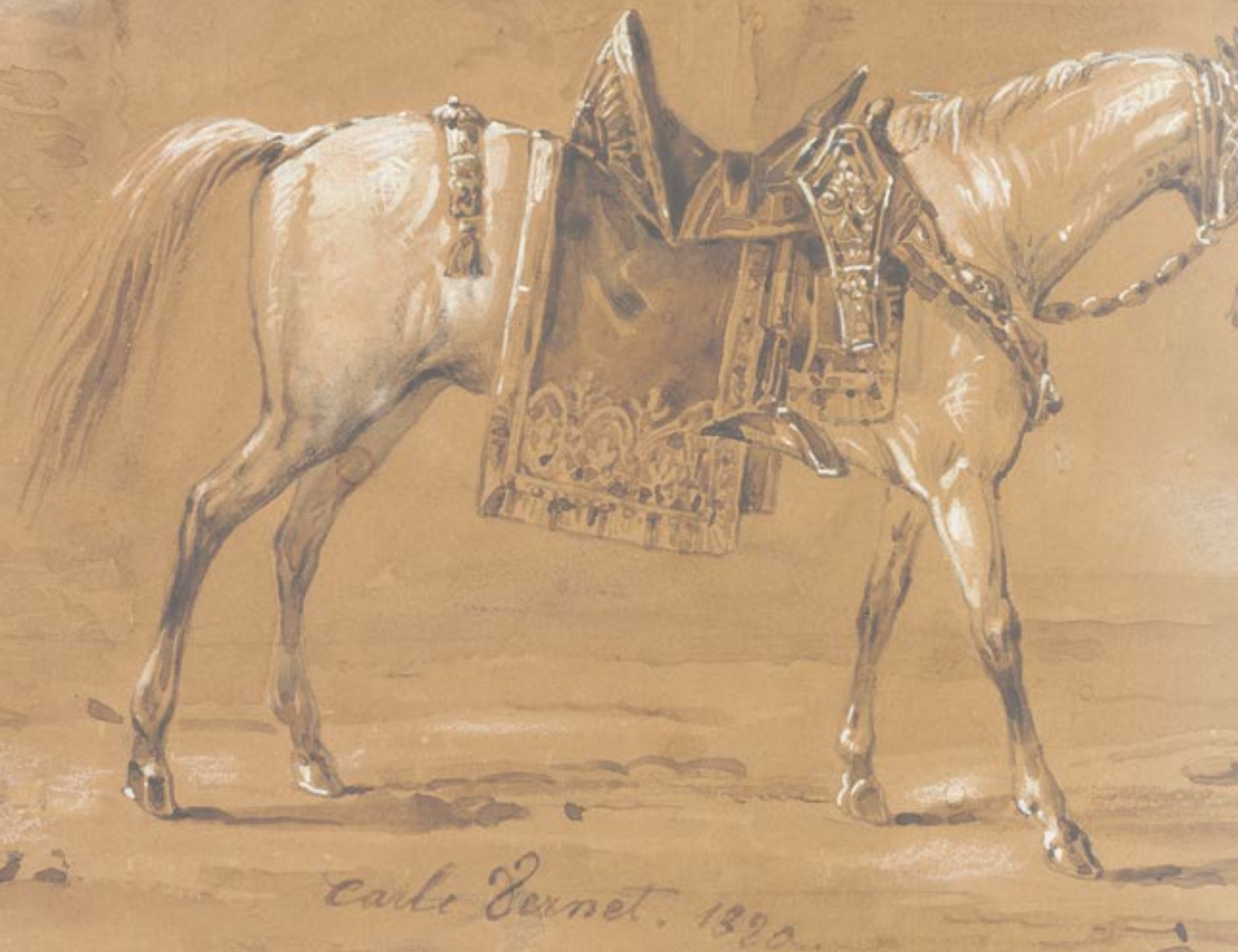


Hiding in Plain Sight – New Discoveries of Original Documents on the Horses of Abbas Pasha

by Edouard Al-Dahdah



The Arabian horse collection of Abbas Pasha I, Viceroy of Egypt and the Sudan (r. 1848–1854), heralded by its European and Oriental contemporaries alike as the choicest and largest of its time, continues to fascinate to this day. It has been the subject of countless books and articles over the past century and a half. In general, these tend to recycle bits and pieces of information from first or second-hand accounts by European visitors of the studs of Abbas Pasha, like the German stud master von Hugel or the French veterinary Hamont. Even Lady Anne Blunt, to whom we owe the survival of a majority of the Abbas Pasha bloodlines available today, only managed to obtain scattered and partial information about the horses she and her husband acquired from Ali Pasha Sherif (themselves from Abbas Pasha lines), despite a twenty-year long quest for original documentation.



Painting of Abbas Pasha I, Viceroy of Egypt

Indeed, only a minority of the books and articles ever written about the horses of Abbas Pasha are based on original sources – i.e., Arabic language sources produced by the main people concerned about these horses: their breeders, buyers, owners, and sellers. For the longest time, *The Abbas Pasha Manuscript* was the main exception. Translated into English by Gülsün Sherif and Judith Forbis and published in 1993 by Ansata Publications, it is based on an Arabic language manuscript copy owned by Gülsün's father, Ahmed Bey Sherif, a great-grandson of Ali Pasha Sherif. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia later acquired this manuscript and published limited numbers of fac-similes.

The Abbas Pasha Manuscript is essentially a compilation of the histories of horses acquired (or about to be acquired) by the envoys of Abbas Pasha to the Bedouin tribes of Arabia. The original was produced in 1852–53, and remains to this day the most comprehensive record of the histories of dozens of strains of Arabian horses acquired by Abbas Pasha. Amazingly, another original document is now available:

The Abbas Pasha Sale List

When Abbas Pasha was assassinated in 1854, his son Ibrahim Ilhami Pasha inherited his father's stud. Ilhami Pasha died in September 1860 at the young age

of twenty four, when his boat capsized over the Bosphorus. At the time of his death, he was heavily indebted to the Bank of Egypt and private bankers, who organized the sale of his estate in an attempt to collect debt. Part of Ilhami Pasha's estate was constituted of the remainder of his father's stud of Arabian horses. Advertisements about the sale of some two hundred and eighty stallions, mares and foals appeared in German, French and British newspapers, and attracted wide attention across Europe and within Egypt's elite. A sale list was drawn, and a public auction was held in over eleven days between December 10 and December 30, 1860.

This sale list is the centerpiece of my new book, with Kate McLachlan and Moira Walker, *The Arabian Horses of Abbas Pasha — New Discoveries: The 1860 Abbas Pasha Sale List and other Original Documents*, with a Foreword by Judith Forbis, a design by Joe Ferriss, and the generous sponsorship of Sheikha Sarah Al Fahad Al Sabah of Kuwait.

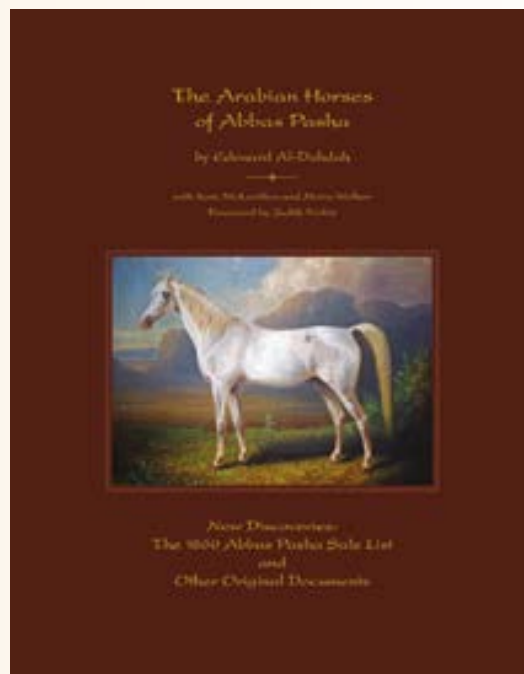
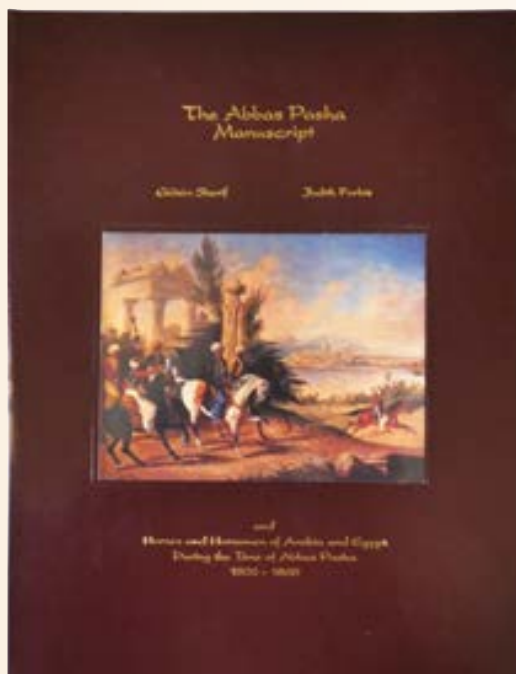
To be fair, the Abbas Pasha Sale List is not exactly a new discovery. When I stumbled upon it in the summer of 2016, it had been hiding in plain sight for some sixty years in the form of thirteen photocopies of an Arabic document tucked in every edition of Carl Raswan's *The Raswan Index and Handbook for Arabian Breeders*. This precious document was just lying in the middle of one of the breed's most widely known publications, with hardly anyone paying attention to what it contained. Its original title is "Account of the horses sold from the bequest of the late Ilhami". The dense Arabic text consists of two hundred



Ibrahim Ilhami Pasha, son of Abbas Pasha, and heir to the horses of Abbas Pasha, died unexpectedly in 1860 resulting in the famous dispersal Sale of priceless Abbas Pasha stock.

and seventy eight entries for every horse sold at the sale, including its price, gender, coat color, markings, strain, the name of its original Bedouin owner if the horse was imported from Arabia, its dam's and sire's name, color, and the name of their original owners, and the name, title, and occupation of the buyer of the horse at the auction.

In many ways, my book *The Arabian Horses of Abbas Pasha – New Discoveries: The 1860 Abbas Pasha Sale List and other Original Documents*, and Gülsün Sherif's and Judith Forbis's *The Abbas Pasha Manuscript and Horses and Horsemen of Arabia and Egypt During the Time of Abbas Pasha, 1800–1860* are like two bookends! Just like *The Abbas Pasha Manuscript* documented the horses Abbas Pasha bought from Arabia at the



Bookends: left is *The Abbas Pasha Manuscript* (1993), right is *The Arabian Horses of Abbas Pasha* (2022)

onset of his reign, the Abbas Pasha Sale List sheds an unprecedented light on this collection a decade later.

Classifying the Abbas Pasha Horses

The book's first chapter classifies the horses in the Abbas Pasha Sale List in three different ways: by mare line, by stallion line, and by buyer. The mare section confirms Abbas Pasha's predilection for the Dahman and Saqlawi strains of Arabian horses, while recording the dozens of other strains he owned, most of which have vanished. The stallion section of this chapter highlights the preeminence of his senior stallion Ghadir, a Saqlawi which at the time of his acquisition by von Hugel, had seventy nine descendants in the Sale List, far more than any of the other twenty reference stallions. The buyer section shows the outsized role Egypt's Viceroy Ismail Pasha, and one of its

noblemen, 'Ali Bek Fahmy (the future Ali Pasha Sherif) played at the Sale, amidst many smaller Egyptian and European buyers.

The second chapter goes through the European purchases as they appear in the studbooks of France, Germany, and the Austro Hungarian empire among others.

The book's third chapter showcases six other smaller original Arabic documents, including a scrapbook of the future Ali Pasha Sherif from a period that preceded the 1860 Sale, two surviving entries from Ali Pasha Sherif's studbook now lost, and three documents from Lady Anne Blunt's archives.

The fourth chapter analyzes breeding patterns at the stud of Abbas Pasha drawing on the information in the Sale List, including his use of desert-bred versus home-bred stallions and mares, and the choice of



*“That indescribable air of distinction.”
Lady Anne Blunt on the horses of Abbas Pasha lines*

certain strains over others for breeding. It shows that Ilhami Pasha had been actively breeding up until his untimely death, with at least one in four horses in the Sale List being attributed to him.

All these original sources come together in the fifth chapter, which features revised pedigrees for a number of foundation horses of modern Arabian horse breeding from Abbas Pasha bloodlines. The original documents yield a number of surprising revisions to long-accepted genealogies. In a nutshell, this fifth chapter fills a critical forty year gap that has long eluded researchers and students of the Arabian breed at large, by directly connecting the horses Lady Anne Blunt acquired from Ali Pasha Sherif in the 1890s with the original desert-bred Abbas Pasha horses imported from Arabia in the early 1850s.

Finally, the last chapter features a verbatim translation of the Sale List, the

way it was originally drawn, by day of sale, allowing future researchers to draw their own conclusions.

The Other Abbas Pasha Manuscript — Still Missing!

Rarely since Rosemary Archer and James Fleming published excerpts of Lady Anne Blunt’s *Journals and Correspondence* in 1985, and Judith Forbis and Gülsün Sherif published *The Abbas Pasha Manuscript* in 1993, has a book brought to light so much new information on the horses of Abbas Pasha. Hopefully the discovery of other missing pieces of the puzzle, like the elusive studbook of Ali Pasha Sherif and another different original copy of *The Abbas Pasha Manuscript*, (once known to be in the possession of a Saudi Arabian diplomat) will bring forth more knowledge about this legendary collection. So the never-ending search for the other original Manuscript continues!

NEW BOOK!

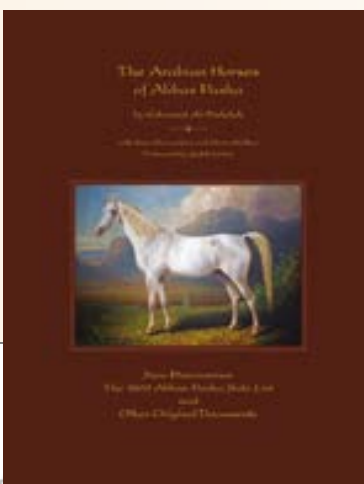
The Arabian Horses of Abbas Pasha

New Discoveries: The 1860 Abbas Pasha Sale List and Other Original Documents

Authored by Edouard Al-Dahdah • Published by Ansata Publications

The most significant publication on the Arabian horse since *The Abbas Pasha Manuscript*

Hardbound with gold foil lettering, the cover is graced with a painting of the renowned Abbas Pasha stallion Ghadir. The book is 336 pages in color and illustrated with nineteenth century art throughout as well as historic photos of descendants of Abbas Pasha horses. It is an ABSOLUTE MUST for any complete book collection on Arabian horses.



This book reveals new discoveries from the translation of the Sale List of the famous 1860 dispersal sale of Abbas Pasha's legendary collection of Arabian horses, as well as an examination of several other original documents, resulting in a great deal of new information about the ancestors of most of today's Arabians tracing to the stock of Abbas Pasha I.



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