

The Future is Now!

The Project: Pyramid Society 2.0

by **MONIKA SAVIER**

It was high time for the members of Pyramid Society Europe to take the initiative, and so they did. On the occasion of the General Assembly on April 25, 2015 and by common accord, they took up the manifold challenges of contemporary breeding of Straight Egyptian lines. After all, the future is now! It was generally agreed: as fascinating as the look back, to the glorious past of our horses and their splendid pedigrees, may be – it is high time to look ahead and give a fresh profile to the European Pyramid Society. With good reason, the society's members expect support in finding answers to the various problems and challenges that breeders of Straight Egyptian Arabians are faced with in today's globalized world. This is about new concepts, orientation and guidelines, exchange of experiences, but also about joint projects, start-ups for marketing strategies, and Arabian breeding in other countries that can be investigated in travel groups. It is also necessary to suggest solutions to critical issues for future breeding, particularly with an eye out for the rapid developments in reproductive technologies which one might want to use or ban in one's own stables.

In recent years, the identity presented by Pyramid Society Europe has no longer been as clear-cut as it was in the beginning. For example, the Egyptian Event Europe, the traditional yearly show for Straight Egyptians, has for the last nine years been taking place in Lanaken in Belgium, having been realized by an external team there. From the point of view of organization, this approach was successful. But some more items supporting the aims of Egyptian breeding and highlighting PSE activities might be organized. In this context, the project PSE2.0 calls for all members to take part in arranging and shaping the show as a special platform designed for their own ideas and requirements.

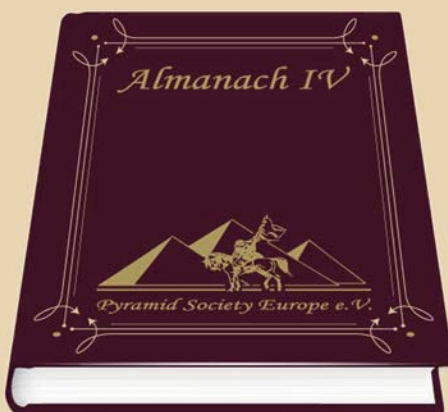


Photo: Pferdemedien.de

The new members of the PSE board, from left Heike Hain, Bettina von Kameke, Monika Savier, Uwe J. Wagner.

So, the first thing the newly elected Executive Committee, consisting of *Bettina von Kameke* (President), *Heike Hain* (Vice President), *Lutz Wende*, (Vice President), *Monika Savier* (Secretary), *Uwe J. Wagner* (Treasurer), intends to do is re-design Pyramid Society Europe's profile and framework for action, and the second is to integrate and involve the present members to a greater extent, also addressing a European circle of breeders.

Part of that will be to improve information policies, and to have a motivating approach for ongoing education and training. As breeders today, we are subjected to an overwhelming flood of images. The result: describing what happens has replaced explaining why it happens. What the breeders needs today is more content, information, discussions, books, a lively atmosphere of constructive debate, meaning of an exchange of experiences, in the best sense. The dominance of pictures, however, changes our expectant attitude, particularly as far as shows are concerned – shows, after all, have created a new standard even for Straight



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Photo: Marine Bomer

The Egyptian Event Europe at the showground in Lanaken, Belgium: www.egyptian-event-europe

Egyptian breeding, putting more emphasis on type. This standard hardly takes into account functionality, a horse's character, and the quality of life for horses, as selection criteria.

In the world-spanning neoliberal market of today's "horse industry" so far, rules and regulations are not desired. Pyramid Society Europe will try and hold against this

attitude by offering a more widely spread set of actions and educational programs, just as the founders of the Pyramid Society in the USA, have intended and implemented already. Just as a reminder: North American breeders joined as soon as in 1969, and "The Pyramid Society" was set up. Douglas B. Marshall became their first president. Further members of the first executive board were James Kline (Vice President), Judith Forbis (Secretary) and Willis H. Flick (Treasurer). Publications, conferences and seminars have always been the Big Points which the Pyramid Society in the US had to offer. The new executive committee of Pyramid Society Europe is going to continue supporting this approach, wishing to present a wide range of ideas – possibly even of contradictory ones – that exceed the scope of purely personal interests by far and make breeding Straight Egyptian Arabians a fascinating challenge now and in the time to come.

New members are most welcome.

Looking Back to the Future



Why is it that the Straight Egyptian Arabians are a „breed“ of their own within the scope of the Arabian Horse breed? This is what Prof. Dr. S. Paufler, one of the founders of Pyramid Society Europe, wrote on the topic:

"The prophet Mohammed recognized the great importance of the hardy, strong, noble and medium-sized high-performance horses of the Nejd desert on the Arabian peninsula. The horses who formed the factual basis for the contemporary "Straight Egyptians" were those who were brought to Egypt after 1811, by the sovereigns Mohammed Ali (1769 - 1848), Ibrahim Pasha (1789 - 1848) and Abbas Pasha (1813 - 1854), or those who were bred by these three men. Viceroy Mohamed Ali captured a great number of horses during the Wahhabite war, and later the royal family spent enormous sums of money to obtain the very best horses from out of the desert. Mohammed Ali, who started breeding with his horses in his stud of Shoubra near Cairo, was a lover and connoisseur of the noble horses from the desert, just as was his successor Ibrahim Pasha. During his era, the stud started to investigate the origins, lineage, and importance of all the horses kept there, and to write their pedigrees down. It was, however, Mohammed Ali's grandson, Abbas Pasha, who placed the actual foundations for the future. He was definitely a pure-blood fanatic. His stud in Heliopolis near Cairo housed horses belonging to his grandfather and his uncle, and in addition, he had bought a major part of the horses himself, directly from Bedouins. He was also the manager of all other studs of the family of the Viceroy, as he did not only have a great love of horses, but also great knowledge about horse breeding and management. Because of his interest in the genealogical origin of horses, he instructed persons of his confidence in the task of collecting all available information about his Arabian horses, going out directly to the Bedouins and the origins of the horses. The results of these inquiries were written down and thus preserved for the future in the "Abbas Pasha Manuscript" by Ali Gamal al Din el Shamashirgi Bey (called "Al Lallah"). The extensive work gives the breeders of "Straight Egyptians" a background knowledge about the Bedouins, their horses in general, and in particular about the ones of Abbas Pasha. That this unique genetic legacy, this valuable gene pool, could be maintained and preserved up to our times is something we owe to the continuous ongoing breeding of the desert horses on their pure Bedouin basis.

In the following time, it was particularly the royal family who were breeders of Egyptian horses. Among others, they were Ali Pasha Sherif, Khedive Abbas Hilmi, Prince Ahmed Kemal, Prince Mohammed Ali, and Prince Kemal el Din. For the most part, the horses were gathered in the Royal Inshass Stud. In 1908, the "Royal Agricultural Society" (RAS) was founded, which controlled horse registration. RAS was later renamed "Egyptian Agricultural Organization" (EAO) and maintains the state stud of "El Zahraa" with approx. 400 horses, which is still existing and flourishing today in Heliopolis / Cairo."

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