

Marek Trela

The director of
Janów Podlaski
State Stud



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photo: Wiesław Pawłowski



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Tutto Arabi: Last autumn you celebrated the 30th anniversary of your work at Janów Podlaski State Stud, which in turn had its 191st anniversary on December 18th. Your work here began with the position of veterinary surgeon under the watchful eye of director Andrzej Krzyształowicz, whose life was connected with the stud since 1938 and who didn't leave the horses during the World War II, leading them during the evacuation from and later back to Janów, as well as organizing the stud again after the war. Was the beginning of your work here, at the oldest Polish stud farm and with the legendary authority on horse breeding for horsemen of then and now hard?

Marek Trela: At first, I resisted working in Janów with all might and main! I did not have the slightest intention to work with Arabians as my interest was in sport horses. There was no place for pure bred in my plans, and in fact the reason I finally came to the Janów stud were the half-breds, which director Krzyształowicz promised that I will have a chance to ride and compete on them. Of course he "forgot" to mention that there was also a 2000 cattle herd and 500 horses that I had to take care of as the only vet at the stud. So I could ride Janów's half-breds, but there was no occasion to do so. Seriously speaking – I had a few job offers at that time and although my heart cal-

led me to different, more sport-related studs, Janów was the one closest to Warsaw – where I come from. So I immediately went to the Warsaw racecourse to see how pure bred horses looked like! I took a look at Gokart (by Partner) and Pepi (by Celebes) – one grey and one bay, I liked them very much, so finally during the meeting with director Krzyształowicz the decision was made that I would go to Janów and this is how the story began.

TA: What was the most difficult in your job at that time, besides the early wake ups that I heard you didn't like at the beginning?

MT: Those were completely different times, the more difficult for the vet than nowadays that the animal stock was too large compared to the number of barns that Janów stud had at that moment. This resulted in many disease cases, especially amongst the meat cattle and the bulls which Janów had about 2000 at that moment and it all consumed a lot of time and effort. Fortunately, I had a great paramedic – Mr. Józef Laszuk as the assistant – he didn't have veterinary education but was much better than many vet technicians due to his practical skills especially with horses. Anyway, the times were different, Poland was different but I was younger and so I managed with all of that somehow.

photo: Wiesław Pawłowski



TA: What, in your opinion, were the most important lessons director Krzyształowicz gave you during the years of your work together; I mean the extra skills and practical knowledge you have gained for the future?

MT: First of all it was what director Krzyształowicz himself represented – a sense of duty and a great responsibility for what you do – for the horses, the people and the stud. It may sound pompous, but you can feel the burden of history leaning on your back here and he who has never been responsible for this kind of project would never understand it – no one would ever like to be the last director of this kind of company. Returning to the traits of director Krzyształowicz – his great equine knowledge, an in-depth one, not out of the books or the lecture of pedigrees, but a practical one. He was able to grasp a horse's good characteristics without seeing the faults only and losing the whole vision of the horse. He was also lucky to have an excellent team of horsemen, who were well acquainted with horse breeding, as it was a time when grooms derived from the cavalry and horses and horsemanship were on everyday's agenda so the practical equine knowledge was much better than nowadays. All together it resulted in director Krzyształowicz being a living encyclopedia and in a sense I look at horses through his eyes, though surely in a modified way.

TA: ...a veterinary way?

MT: Indeed, I value that besides noticing a horse's faults I also know what the consequences can be, if the fault is more or less serious inside.

TA: How much is book knowledge useful in your everyday's work? Should a good breeder, in your opinion, have a veterinary or animal husbandry education, or are the practical skills, this undescribed „something”, an intuition, more important?

MT: Director Krzyształowicz always said that what was needed was luck and a nose for breeding – this special feeling leading us to the right solutions. Of course all of that needs

to be supported by good practical knowledge and experience and I don't want to say that book knowledge is an interference, but it's hard to learn the practical breeding knowledge from books. Of course the process of learning involves searching for answers in literature but most of all – the more horses you see, the wider and more inquisitive will be your look at the breeding.

TA: You took up the post of Janów Stud director in 1994 after 16 years of your service at the stud. Managing the oldest, large state stud which duty is to preserve the genetic reservoir for Poland is a great responsibility. Did you have any concerns when taking this position and have they confirmed themselves or were they overcome?

MT: Taking up this position I had great luck to work with the previous director – Michał Maciejewski – for the first years. He was a very experienced manager of the state stud – an agricultural farm. These were difficult times and certainly I wouldn't have managed with the massive task of restructuring the company just working by myself. This was the time when farms in Poland went bankrupt, when there was a monstrous excess of employment, outdated work organization and equipment as well. The modernization of the Janów stud farm was launched by director Maciejewski, later I accompanied him in this process, so I may say that together we shaped the stud into the form that it has currently, regarding the organization and territory. Thanks to him my beginnings at stud and its managing were much easier; for what I am very thankful Mr. Maciejewski for. These were not easy times for various reasons, among other things also because of the lack of horse stock, so first for many years we worked on increasing the quantity before we started making quality a priority and only when all the sire and dam lines were quantitatively secured we could start a more strict selection and to be honest I have just started it now, after 15 years of my work here, as breeding requires a lot of time.

TA: Does managing a state stud differ from managing breeding at a small, private one? What are the main differences?

indoor arena during
the Pride of Poland auction



photo: Lidia Pawlowska



Pianissima

by Gazal Al Shaqab out Pianosa
by Eukaliptus



photo: Lidia Pawlowska

photo: Wiesław Pawłowski



photo: Lidia Pawlowska

photo: Lidia Fowlowska



Pilar and Pilarosa

Pilar by Fawor out Pipi by Banat with a 2008
filly Pilarosa by Al Adeed Al Shaqab

photo: Gigi Grasso



Gazal Al Shaqab owned by Al Shaqab



photo: Gigi Grasso

Al Adeed Al Shaqab owned by Al Shaqab

MT: The difference is big indeed. First of all the tasks are different – the state stud has to fulfill its mission and regardless of the view of private breeders who see the subject from the other side, the state studs take their mission very seriously to preserve all the most important sire and dam lines, to preserve the genetic pool and improve it by using stallions brought from the outside. All this is not easy, as it goes hand in hand with other activities of the state stud, which is to represent the entire Polish breeding outside the country. It's our duty to promote the Polish breeding program by means of competing at shows and keeping the sale results at the best possible level – these results go out into the world proving that Polish breeding is doing well and that it's worth to come for good Arabian horses to Poland. If our annual sale should collapse, just as most of the Arabian horse sales worldwide, then the entire Polish market would look much different.

TA: We live in an era when Arabian horse breeding is ruled by huge money, a lot has been said about „politics” at shows and in breeding, the buyers are getting more choosy looking for dishy heads, inbreeding, embryotransfers, French or part-French bloodlines compete strongly against Polish horses on the racetrack... The Polish state studs are obliged

to preserve the valuable bloodlines but on the other hand – they need to find buyers to preserve the studs' existence. How does the traditional breeding program of the 191 year old stud fit itself into today's market?

MT: *The power of our breeding lies in the fact that for many years and many horse generations we have had the same philosophy, the same breeding program, and for that reason we have to maintain a high level no matter what happens on the market or in the trends. Of course it doesn't mean that we have to keep breeding forever the same type of horse as in the years past, as the world goes on. It is just like with a backyard we remember from our childhood – once it seemed great and beautiful, but if you enter it now, it turns out that it's not so impressive. The same happens in breeding – take a look at the picture of the great Ofir hanging on the wall here – he was the model of Arabian horse beauty in the past, nowadays we would look at him in a different way, which of course doesn't depreciate him, but shows how breeding changes and develops horses that differ from their desert ancestors more and more and this is absolutely natural and normal. But what distinguishes Polish breeding from the others is the breeding program and the preservation of what always characterized the Polish Arabian horse – performance abilities, type, excellent movement and beauty in one. The threat of disruption or even inhibition of horse races in Poland forced us to preserve the race program for Arabian horses within our stud and for that reason we established our own race stable and the track to have the possibility of holding the races in Janów. Fortunately it has not proved necessary. And whether the Polish Arabian horse is still brave and beautiful, or just beautiful, or none of these is just a matter of opinion, but I think that the interest of endurance riders lately in the Polish horse proves that we haven't spoken our last word yet and Polish horses, if trained properly, can compete successfully against others. We have proof of this also on the race course, when a filly who has won*

a championship as a two year old fights against a Dormane daughter on the entire final stretch in a stake race, moreover she is a daughter of Ekstern who is not considered a sire of good racers. This is a great pleasure and shows that Arabian horses are worth training. Another thing is that this breed has excellent predispositions to be ridden. The best proof for this are performance classes which take place during Janów Podlaski Autumn C show, which are mostly filled by state stud sires. It's a great pleasure to watch 14 or 15 stallions ridden by children. It is a proof of great character and riding predispositions of the Arabian horse that is a consequence of selection, mostly racing – a human on the back of an Arabian horse is nothing unnatural, on the contrary – it's been a most obvious thing for generations for the Arabian horse.

TA: *After thirty years of your work in Janów the stud achieved a historical success breeding a mare that has beaten all the score records at the shows she competed at. Also she has become the only horse to have gained the Triple Crown (All Nations Cup, European and World Championships) twice – as a junior and senior mare. In addition to that she has twice been Polish National Champion, US National Champion and Al Khalediah Festival Champion Mare. Is Pianissima your biggest breeding achievement?*

MT: *Pianissima is a horse that is born once in an entire generation or maybe not even that often, proof of which are her results at the shows. She is also a very pleasant horse. Her individual success is of course a reason to be proud of for our entire Polish breeding not only for Janów stud, especially as she has beaten her rivals in an unparalleled way, being chosen champion unanimously at every show she appeared at as far as I remember. She is a very special horse and there is no doubt that we will not have Pianissimas born every year at Janów's barns. We are blessed that a horse like that was born in our time. Answering the question – it's hard to say what my biggest breeding achievement is.*

the clock Barn, one of the oldest buildings at the stud, built around 1848



photo: Nicoletta Abelli



Alayyl Ramadam

owned by Princess Alia Al Hussein of Jordan

photo: Lidia Pawlowska



Amra

by Eukaliptus out of Albigowa by Fawor
sold for 340.000,00 € at 2008 Pride of Poland Sale

I'm very satisfied that I'm close to having a decent group of mares where you can go to the barns, take one of them out and compete successfully at shows, even abroad. This kind of a surprise was recently Altamira, who was taken out from the barns quite unexpectedly and won her class at the European Championships last year; she also did very well in Paris despite her high pregnancy at that time. This is that pleasure, that there are more and more such horses every year; that we can compete among any company.

TA: *Is it true that during the Pianissima's first appearance at the World Championships in Paris you got a blank cheque and just had to put an amount on it?*

MT: *Of course the sale offers for Pianissima started with her first contact with the spectators. I would prefer not to talk about her value, as this is a very special horse also in this matter.*

TA: *It is quite common that champions usually do not always produce champions and it would surely be very hard to have Pianissima foal something better than herself. Isn't her second Triple Crown the best moment for selling such a mare?*

MT: *In my opinion our activities don't need to rely on selling and earning money. This mare can probably do much more than just being a sold horse. She promoted our breeding very effectively when shown on all the continents, now it's time for her to get a rest – she leaves for the US where she will deliver a foal by Ganges. We have some promotion planned and she will surely be an important part of it, but we are not planning on selling Pianissima. She is a kind of icon of our breeding at the moment.*

TA: *Pianissima's embryos offered for sale during her last stay in the US were the hot sellers and surely there would be a lot of clients wishing to have some more. In the meantime Janów stud is establishing a horse reproduction center – is it a kind of preparation for the future ET offer of Janów Podlaski and should, in your opinion, embryotransfers be allowed in Poland?*

MT: *I'm not a fan of embryotransfers and in my opinion it depends on the mare owner's decision. There are no restrictions set by WAHO so far about ET and I think the most effective restriction is the horse's reproductive physiology, but talking about Pianissima we are not planning to make her a donor mare and she will have a foal each year...*

TA: *...one?*

MT: *I would put it this way – she will for sure deliver one foal each year.*

TA: *Do you think that embryotransfers are a good solution for the Polish breeding program in the future?*

MT: *Regarding the Polish breeding program I think that there should be quantitative restrictions but insisting that they should not be legalized is basically pointless and detrimental to the breeding, as it unables some mares to be included into breeding. Restrictions would increase the value of possible embryos as the value of rare goods is always higher than of goods widely available. Of course horse embryos will never be as widely produced as bovine ones because of the differences between these two species, but anyway I think that breeders' associations and stud books should restrict ET. It's a matter to be discussed between breeders if there should be only one additional embryo or two allo-*



young riders on Arabian stallions

wed but I think limits are needed. Take the frozen semen as an example – common use is not always profitable. If there would be some restrictions in the use of stallion semen, breeding fees would be higher and as Thoroughbred breeding history shows – nothing bad happens if there is no wide availability of each breeding stallion via frozen semen. Of course the embryo acquisition doesn't bring any pain or discomfort to the donor mare, but I think that unlimited acquisition is not beneficial, for example in terms of marketing.

TA: At the beginning of 2008 Janów stud unfortunately lost Pianissima's dam, who delivered her last foal – a colt by Al Adeed Al Shaqab, one of the only two foals by this sire in Poland. Also in the 2008 season there were few other such „single” births in the Janów barns by sires new to Polish breeding so far – for example by Hlayyil Ramadan or El Nabila B. What was the reason for the use of these stallions, and why on such a small scale?

MT: Because each of these stallions represent features that don't suit every mare. It seems to me that above all we must constantly look for new blood and our predecessors did nothing different. I'm old enough to remember the opinions of various breeders on the use of Palas in Poland – Palas is at this time identified with Polish breeding as a great and meritorious sire, but I remember the voices of criticism that the Pure Polish horse is threatened being mixed with Egyptian blood and it will not be Pure Polish anymore. While what Polish breeding has shown is that Pure Polish is not a pedigree, but a philosophy, since the Pure Polish horse also originates from the desert. Each case of the stallion you mentioned has its own story. Why Hlayyil Ramadan? – I know his progeny very well and judged the stallion himself several times and I always couldn't get my eyes off him. I could stand in front of him for hours looking at his eye – he has an incredibly beautiful, huge one that no other horse has. Of course he has some faults as well so he must be used selectively, however, he has one other great advantage which is

his dam that derives from the best Jordanian old desert lines and is completely foreign to our breeding. In this case we can reach deeply into the roots of the desert horses. It's no secret that Janów stud got Hlayyil's breedings as a gift from HRH Princess Alia al Hussein, and therefore such a gift should be treated very seriously and used sparingly. We used it for Pohulanka (dam of Poganin by Laheeb, 2007 Polish National Champion Stallion and twice World Top Ten) hoping that she will give birth to a colt. She delivered a filly but an outstanding one, so I'm very happy...

TA: ...did he pass the eye?

MT: Actually this eye is amazing, as when the filly was born it was not impressive at all, but it seems to get better each day. But the best is what this filly carries in her veins – the old, desert blood of her grand dam and I think this is extremely valuable for our breeding.

TA: Is Janów stud also expecting any such „single” foals in the 2009 foaling season?

MT: There will be one foal by Hlayyil again, two by Gazal Al Shaqab out of excellent broodmares and we are impatiently waiting for the foals by Eden C – son of Enzo, whose progeny we already have successfully proven in the show ring. Here you can see another difference between state and private breeding – when building the Janów stock we have to think a couple of generations into the future. Enzo has one feature extremely important for us, namely his long legs, short back and long neck. We don't need to worry about the loss of beauty, as this is the easiest to add, what can be seen in some horses related to Enzo that absolutely reigned the show rings, but Enzo himself is a very correct horse and so is his progeny – strong, long legged, representing the modern type. A horse like that, which would additionally have good movement and a pretty head will be unbeaten at the shows. From the entire progeny of Padrons Psyche only Magnum



photo: Joanna Jontenz



photo: Joanna Jontenz



photo: Joanna Jontenz

Psyche and Enzo impressed me enough that I would like to use them and although chestnuts bearing white markings do not belong to my favorite horses, there is something in Enzo which attracts me. Our goal was somehow achieved so far as the Janów-bred Palabra (Enzo – Palmeta) was 2008 Polish National Junior Champion. For now, we are patiently waiting to see how the Enzo offspring continues to grow. Of course there are no stallions siring 100% of good progeny but we showed a relatively large group of those by Enzo and besides the fact that they have no sophisticated, Egyptian heads they are big, correct horses, and it seems that they may add some modern type to our breeding.

TA: Which sire has given you the most satisfaction in terms of progeny bred in Janów?

MT: I would certainly lie if I didn't say that the one of the greatest merit was Gazal Al Shaqab. We scored a bull's eye with him, but I am also very happy with Ekstern's and Ganges' offspring. Today the first pure bred foal of 2009 was born in Janów – a beautiful filly by Ganges. A fairly numerous group of Ekstern progeny will be shown and incorporated into the broodmare herd and I think they will also do well.

TA: Since the time of establishing the Arabian department in Janów the stud has been a well known supplier of stallions for the rest of state and private studs, but nowadays one may have an impression that the stud is better known for its mares – Pianissima, Palabra, Passionaria, Altamira, Sefora to name a few most known from the show rings. In the meantime both Polish state and private studs seek stallions abroad more often. Why is it so hard to breed and raise an outstanding Polish sire lately – successful both in the show arena and in the breeding barn?

MT: I don't know why it's so hard, but it was always hard and it's not true that it's an especially hard task now. There was always a lack of good sires and I remember director Krzyształowicz and director Jaworowski from Michałów stud always complaining about the lack of stallions and their distribution between the state studs was almost a life-and-death struggle. There are always very strict requirements poised in front of breeding stallions and one would like to have them all fulfilled, which is impossible. I judge a lot and

I get to see many of the world's best stallions each year; but to be honest I also think that there is lack of good sires indeed and even if a stallion has won several championships it doesn't mean that I'd like to use him on Janów's herd.

TA: Does state stud breeding have any restrictions in choosing which stallions they can use?

MT: I think there used to be certain restrictions in the past, when Poland was behind the iron curtain. Nowadays we can use any available stallion in the world. Also the economical situation of the state studs has changed – I can't imagine the state studs directors buying semen for thousands of dollars in the past. Nowadays we create restrictions ourselves by the requirements we have for the potential sires. As a judge who looks closely at these stallions I know that all that glitters is not gold, but on the other hand there sometimes is a particular stallion that one cannot get out of his mind. In my case it was Al Adeed, representing the opposite type of a horse that we would like to use in Janów, but having judged him many times I felt that despite some of his flaws there is something about this horse that I would like to try... and I did. The results of this decision will be seen when his get in Janów grows up.

TA: From time to time a discussion about the privatization of state studs arises in Poland, with an intention of keeping only those oldest, most valuable. Janów Podlaski will surely remain in this group. How would you see the Polish state studs in the next several years? What should be their role and how should they be organized?

MT: Once the duties of the state studs were to spread breeding knowledge and to provide breeding material to the stallion depots and thus improving the local breeding. None of this obligation was taken off the studs so far; we still have similar tasks, but with an increased social significance of the stud – it has to be a place for the breeders to meet, to conduct shows and sport events. Besides all that – the stud acts as a breeding center where breeders can come to see how the barn looks like, how to groom and show horses, where they can hone their riding or other equestrian skills. The number of state studs in Poland will probably be reduced over time but certainly they will remain very important centers for the local breeding.



mares with foals on their way to the stables

A lot of Polish private breeders consider the state studs as rivals, as they compete against us on the arena in sport or halter events and it's hard to be surprised at them, but when they would calmly think about it they would see that if there was no Białka State Stud for example, there wouldn't be such a certainty of having a place for running the Junior Spring Show or the half-breds championship that gathers breeders from all across the Region.

The stud state must in a sense also be a museum - it must keep valuable old exhibits, provide historical knowledge, not to mention that the entire Janów stud is itself under the ward of the conservator of historic buildings, being a monument with each individual stable and as the entire facility. For that reason it was so hard to find a place for the building of the indoor arena which, as a new one, couldn't interrupt the original old, historical facility. Fortunately, we managed to hide it at the back. An additional hurdle for us is that we must work in this museum and in addition to the costs associated with breeding, we have the costs of maintaining the historical substance.

TA: *What are the plans of Janów Podlaski Stud in the coming season regarding the Arabian horse section?*

MT: *We will host various events including the indoor Polish National Cup in show jumping and regarding Arabian horse events we plan the Polish National Championships in sport competitions in June. It is planned for June because it's the best moment to qualify the members of the Polish representation for the European Championships in Stadl Paura, moreover in June the young riders finish school year so they can come to Janów for a team meeting to improve their skills before the Stadl Paura event. Of course the Polish National Show and sale in August, in September the Autumn C show that has already become a part of the show season and attracts a lot of interest. Recently at*

the ECAHO Conference a decision was made that Janów Podlaski stud will be the place of conducting annual clinics and courses for ECAHO judges. In 2009 the classes are planned for April.

TA: *The 2008 show and breeding season was for you, as Janów stud director, a very successful one - the successive spectacular titles for Pianissima, the Polish National Junior Champion title for Palabra, good results of Equifor and Olita in the US, the titles of best breeder and best stud at the World Championships in Paris, a very good financial result during the sale with two highest selling horses (besides Kwestura) - Amra sold for 340 000 euro and Andromeda for 270 000 euro, a satisfying foaling season... What should we wish you for the coming 2009 breeding and show season?*

MT: *That it will not be worse! And that the global economic crisis will not affect us. And that in addition to what we will achieve or will try to achieve in the show ring, we would also be able to maintain the same level of sales as in the past - it's very important because that gives the greatest certainty of existence. □*



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