

Review of Kaisoon - Biography of a Legend

A tribute to an extraordinary Arabian horse



Photo: Stadt Duisburg

■ *by Judith Wenning*

With “Kaisoon – Biography of a Legend”, Dr. Karl-Heinz Kirsch presents a work that not only fills a gap in the literature on Arabian horse breeding, but is also a deeply personal tribute to an extraordinary stallion. Published in a small print run by the author himself, the book is entirely devoted to the famous crowd favourite, riding and breeding stallion Kaisoon

– a horse that aroused admiration and fascination for decades without ever receiving adequate recognition in book form. “While his half-brothers Hadban Enzahi and Ghazal received appropriate recognition in Germany, Kaisoon came away almost empty-handed,” explains Dr. Karl-Heinz Kirsch. This “vacuum,” as Kirsch himself says, was the decisive impetus for him

Photo: Karl-Heinz Kirsch



to embark on the two-year project. Dr. Karl-Heinz Kirsch recounts: “After a visit to Duisburg in 2023, the topic was once again ‘on top’ and was tackled in November 2023.”

Structured chronologically, the book written in German language, answers all the questions that have long been on the minds of Arabian horse lovers and breeders: Where did Kaisoon come from? Who were his parents? How did he live? And above all, what was he like as a horse in everyday life? Dr. Karl-Heinz Kirsch succeeds not only in collecting and presenting the facts, but also in painting



Photo: Karl-Heinz Kirsch



Photo: Peter Schultz



Photo: Peter Schultz

a vivid portrait that appeals to both connoisseurs and newcomers to the world of Arabian breeding. Despite the difficult source situation – Kaisoon lived from 1958 to 1987 – the book presents an astonishingly complete and coherent picture. This is not least thanks to the persistent research of the author and his wife, who tracked down the last pieces of evidence on the eve of going to press. Dr. Karl-Heinz Kirsch recalls: “Digging up documents, finding contemporary witnesses, and motivating people to engage with this long-past topic. Unfortunately, the way things are, we don’t live

forever—we’re talking about the years 1930-1950 here. There are virtually no documents left about the horse. But persistent searching and digging, especially by my wife, kept bringing little bits and pieces to light.”

The work captivates the reader and also evokes a certain nostalgia for times long past. Dr. Karl-Heinz Kirsch writes with a mixture of professional expertise and emotional closeness. His fascination with Arabian horses – their beauty, charisma, rideability, and gentleness – permeates the book and makes it clear that Kaisoon is



Photo: Karl-Heinz Kirsch

much more than just a memoir. The author, Dr. Karl-Heinz Kirsch, lives with his wife Ilona in Essingen in Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany and is a very successful Lipizzaner breeder. He is himself a veterinarian, a long-standing member and board member of the Asil Club e.V., and a proven expert on Egyptian Arabians. "As a native of Duisburg, I first saw Kaisoon in early summer 1964 as a seven-year-old boy at the zoo, where I later took lessons at the children's riding school. My goal at the time was clearly defined: "to ride Kaisoon." But I had to wait years for that," says Dr. Karl-Heinz Kirsch.

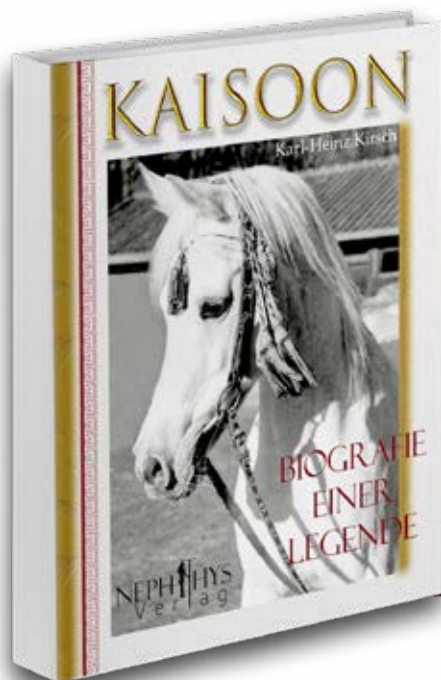
When asked how long Dr. Karl-Heinz Kirsch has been involved with Arabian horses, he recalls: "It was a gradual process that developed and manifested itself over the years through my interaction with these horses at the zoo. After graduating from high school, I studied veterinary medicine in Hanover and, towards the end of my studies, I was a member of the breeding commission for Arabian horse foal inspections, first alongside Dr. Saenger in the Hanover area, and later, after changing jobs, together with Dr. Piduch in the Westerwald area. I wrote my dissertation on the Arabian horse ("Blut-

Adel-Leistung” [Blood, Nobility, Performance], Olms Verlag, Hildesheim). What fascinates me about Arabian horses is their exotic beauty, nobility, charisma, rideability, willingness to perform, friendliness towards humans, and gentleness.”

Even though Dr. Karl-Heinz Kirsch himself, as he humorously notes, has never ridden or bred Arabian horses since graduating due to his height of 186 cm, he has remained closely connected to them since childhood – a connection that originated in that first encounter with Kaisoon at Duisburg Zoo in 1964. “In addition, my family owned a wonderful straight Egyptian riding and breeding stallion for almost 30 years,” adds Dr. Karl-Heinz Kirsch. Kaisoon is therefore much more than a

purely historical non-fiction book about breeding. It is a lovingly crafted portrait of the life of a horse that was present in Germany but never received the recognition that his half-brothers Hadban Enzahi and Ghazal enjoyed. With this book, Kaisoon finally gets the stage he deserves.

For anyone interested in the history of Arabian horses, breeding lines, or simply extraordinary animal personalities, this work comes highly recommended—precisely researched, written with passion, and an important piece of Arabian horse culture. Dr. Karl-Heinz Kirsch himself states that this will be his last book on Arabian horses. It seems like a fitting conclusion: a labor of love that not only fills a gap, but also creates a legacy. □



Book Kaisoon - Biography of a Legend

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