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Horses back to Count Sanguszko land

Interview with Marek Rzepka by Urszula Łęczycka

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***T**he history of pure bred Arabian horses at Klikowa starts long before Marek Rzepka, the owner of Klikowa Arabians, bought his first mares and its related to the interesting history of the place where the horses of Klikowa Arabians found their home. The city of Tarnów, where Klikowa is a part of, as well as the land where the new stable of Marek is located belonged to Count Sanguszko family who made the mile stone for world's breeding of Arabian horses by one of the first breeders in Europe and last importers of original Arabian horses from the desert. Until today we can find the horses imported by Count Sanguszko to Tarnów in the pedigrees*

of most famous Arabian horses nowadays. The strains of Kuhailan Afas (great grandsire of Bask or Aladdin), Kuhailan Haiji (the foundation stallion for the Monogram or El Paso lines) or Kuhailan Zaid (chief Arabian sire for Babolna stud in Hungary) have began thanks to Count Roman Sanguszko and they come from the land where now the Arabian horses of Klikowa Arabians graze the pastures. Even the family of Marek Rzepka have even the personal connections with the Sanguszko properties in Tarnów so we asked him to tell us a bit of that story.



AJ Penelope
El Nabila B x Pianissima/Gazal al Shaqab



Wieża Nimf
Kahil Al Shaqab x Wieża Marzeń/Ekstern

Art. Karolina Mielnik



Wieża Czarów
Vitorio TO x Wieża Marzeń/Ekstern

Marek Rzepka: *My breeding of Arabian horses relates to Count Sanguszko family breeding in some way. I come from the area of Tarnów that was in direct neighbourhood with Sanguszko Palace at Gumniska (part of Tarnów nowadays). At its best times the Gumniska property was 17 000 hectares of land, many factories and the Arabian horse stud of course. The last Sanguszko family member living in Tarnów area was Count Roman born in 1901. His breeding was famous for the excellent quality. I decided to recall this beautiful breeding traditions and bring Arabian horses back to Tarnów – the land of Sanguszko. The first mares I bought found their place at north part of Tarnów – Klikowa where the big stable complex built by Count Roman Sanguszko is located. My horses were living there for 5 first years. My own Klikowa Arabians stud would never be like the one of Sanguszko's but by running the breeding of Arabian horses at this place we try to bring the memories of counts family of Gumnicka back. The same way as Count Roman was following to breed the best horses even if bringing them from the desert, now we try to follow his footsteps and use the best stallions for our mares to produce some phenomenal horses in the future. Taking care of Sanguszko family history to not fade away we try to keep our breeding on the level that even Count Sanguszko would not be ashamed of.*

Does your family have some horse breeding traditions or you are the first?

MR: *None of my family members has been interested in horse breeding before, I am the first. But I have to admit that my wife Małgorzata is my big support and she got very interested in Arabian horse breeding last years.*

Except of the fact of building new stables near the city of Tarnów you are also involved in Count Sanguszko stables of former Klikowa Stallion Depot restoration where you also established the foundation promoting horses and equestrian activity in Tarnów and its area. Can you tell us briefly about the main goals of the foundation?

MR: *The Foundation we established in 2014 with the group of people who wanted to help a horse breeders by running the educational and breeding centre but also by the protection of national heritage at Klikowa. This place is related to Sanguszko family and Arabian horse breeding since centuries and it was a perfect example of good farmership and Polish patriotism of good times. The Foundation established by large group of passionate breeders and owners gathered in Horse Breeders Associations, Polish universities and agricultural*



Porta KL (QR Marc x Pegala PS/Gazal al Shaqab) and Kamil Biernat

organisations as well as the state studs like Michałów or Janów Podlaski. „Klikowa Polish Horse Refuge” foundation is going to be the active centre training horse riding instructors, grooms, farriers and other equine business related people. At the restored stables we are planning to gather a steady collections of antique carriages and other horse powered vehicles. At the Foundation stables the horses are present again to serve the Polish breeding and equestrian sport and tourism. We also want to promote our city and its area as well as continue the Polish equestrian and breeding traditions.

But privately your heart was stolen by Arabian horses mostly. What is your ideal Arabian horse that you would like to breed at your stud? How do you select your mares and stallions combinations?

MR: *Klikowa Arabians is focused on breeding the Arabian horse of modern show type – with oriental heads with good, expressive eyes, long necks with correct bodies and wide movements so characteristic for Arabian horse. My breeding herd is mostly basing on Polish damlines of proven breeding quality. My mares represent Michałów stud damlines – such as Erigone (Ekstern - Eryka / Eukaliptus), Wieża Nimf (Kahil Al Shaqab - Wieża Marzeń / Ekstern), Wieża Czarów (Vitorio TO - Wieża Marzeń / Ekstern) and of Janów Podlaski like: AJ Penelope (El Nabila B – Pianissima / Gazal Al Shaqab), Pianova (Eden C – Pianissima / Gazal Al Shaqab). We also have some private bred mares representing the lines not continued by Polish state breeding but still very valuable ones – here we have Gamia, Gioia, Graszka PS, Pustynia PS, Gracj GJ. The direction of my breeding is determined by tradition and quality of Polish broodmares for which we don't hesitate to use the foreign stallions of Egyptian or American lines.*



Gazela KL (Gazal Al Shaqab x Gamia/Ganges) and Marek Rzepka

The 2020 breeding and foaling season is almost behind us. This year is very different and economically uncertain due to the global pandemic. Please tell us by which sires you have your 2020 foal crop and also – if you decided to breed all your mares this year and to whom?

MR: We have 3 fillies and 1 colt born this year so far. Pianova foaled the beautiful Ajman Moniscione daughter with exotic face. Other two fillies we have from Gioia (Esparto – Gelena / Werbum) – by Poganin and Gamia (Ganges – Gloria Bis / Wachlarz) - by Morion. The only colt this year so far was born out of Pegala PS (Gazal Al Shaqab – Percepcja / Laheeb) by Excalibur EA. We are still waiting for 3 more foals – two by FA El Rasheem and one by Wadee Al Shaqab. We are going to follow our breeding program in 100%, we want to breed all the mares and use both Polish and foreign stallions. Currently 2 mares are in foal to Morion, one to Pomian and one to Ganges. We will

also use Gazal Al Shaqab, Al Ayal AA, Excalibur EA, Emerald J, Ascot DD or Dominic M.

You have big herd of horses already – who is your favourite there and why?

MR: Of course, my favourites are my home bred fillies. And so the first one I can mention is Gamza KL 2017 filly by Pogrom. She is one of the first fillies born at Klikowa Arabians and very good cross. The other two favourites of mine are 2018 foals - Efora KL (QR Marc - Erigone / Ekstern) and Gazela KL (Gazal Al Shaqab – Gamia / Ganges). Also the yearlings are very promising: the colt Primo KL (QR Marc – Pustynia PS / Marwan Al Shaqab) and the filly Laura KL (Wadee Al Shaqab – Lili PS / Ekstern). Still, all my home bred foals are special for me in some way and I could talk a lot about each of them. I very much look forward to the new borns every year as I can verify if my breeding plan met my expectations.



Gracj GJ
WH Justice x Gasmira El Zaid/Kabur El Shaklan



Wieża Czarów
Vitorio TO x Wieża Marzeń/Ekstern



Laura KL
Wadee al Shaqab x Lili PS/Ekstern



Efora KL
QR Marc x Erigone/Ekstern

And the best foal of 2020 is...

MR: I think this question can be answered after the foaling season is finished. For this moment now the outstanding foal is the Ajman Moniscione filly out of Pianova as well as Morion and Gamia crossed filly happened to be excellent. Our favourites can still change this year – we will see what the foaling season would bring when we meet all our foals.

Except of horse breeding you are also a very active businessman – the owner of Polmark companies in Poland and exporting goods all around the world. You are also famous as racing and show pigeons breeder. As the experienced businessman and economist – can you tell us briefly how, in your opinion, the current pandemic situation can influence the Arabian horse breeding? Is it influencing your own breeding plans somehow or not at all?

MR: I think that pandemic would not influence the Arabian horse breeding. Active breeders who are elastic with their

breeding stock management should survive this difficult time without any loss. Big problem can be when obtaining the semen from abroad but good planning should enable us to breed good foals next season despite this problem. For our stud the big loss is the lack of shows this season. Our plan was to show our horses at the few shows that we had of course to cancel. We are breeding also to show our program results to the spectators and to compare our vision with other studs. It will be much limited this year.

And what are your longer term breeding goals? What shall we wish you for the future?

MR: The breeding goal is unchanged since my stud was established. We are still looking forward to buy the best breedings for our mares and achieve the best crosses. We would like to have only the outstanding mares and stallions in our herd. For the next years you can wish me to breed a world champion of course – I think its the dream of many breeders. We hope it would come true one day. ■