

Clergy stables

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Among the growing number of private Arabian horse breeders in Poland there is a distinct group of Catholic clergymen. Priests: Andrzej Majchrzak, Stanisław Sławiński and Jan Matwijiszyn bring together the duties of both parish rector with the running of a breeding stable.

From where do we know them?

The class and Silver Medal winner of Junior Colts at the Arabian Impressions show in Sickendorf (2010) and the Top Five Junior Colts title winner at Polish Nationals 2010 – the yearling colt **Zimarc** (QR Marc – Zeksterna/Ekstern), comes from the breeding of priest Stanisław Sławiński – Czeple Arabians in Ciepeliów near Tarnobrzeg. This stable was also the birthplace of **Faronn** (Ekstern – Firosetta/Eldon) and **Pasadia** (Ekstern – Pasadena/Eukaliptus), whose successes at the Junior Spring Show in Białka in 2007 drew attention to the breeder's name. Faronn gained the title of Best Private Bred 2 Year Old Colt, Pasadia placed third in the yearling fillies class.

Pallottine priest Andrzej Majchrzak is known in the racing community as an experienced race horse breeder. Oaks winner **Emanuela** (Pamir – Emetyka/Europejczyk), awarded with a trophy for Best Race Filly in 2002, is one of the first successful matings of Rogale Stud, located near Łuków in the Lubelskie region. Emanuela's older daughter, **Emelia** (by Derby winner Espadero), is a winner of a race for 3 year olds over 2000 m at the Służewiec Racetrack in 2007. Also successful on the turf is the Rogale bred **Predator** (Etogram – Penetracja/Pepton), owned by Mr. and Mrs. Wiśniewski.

From the 2007 Spring Show in Białka we also remember the spirited grey two year old, who enjoyed moments of freedom after breaking loose from the handler. It was the colt **Tidal**



Zimarc (QR Marc - Zeksterna / Ekstern)

photo: Sylwia Ilenda

(Grafik – Turbina/Balaton), who placed 5th in class. With that he brought the first show ring success for his breeder – priest Jan Matwijiszyn from the Walichnowy parish near Wieluń, where next to the presbytery exists a small Arabian stud.

How did it begin?

The breeding beginnings in the case of each priest were bound to the taking up of office at the presbytery in the countryside. But it was a long road that led them to their own Arabian horses.

IN THE VICAR'S YARD – priest Stanisław Sławiński

Priest Stanisław Sławiński's first contact with horses was at the fair in Skaryszew, his home town. He looked at them with the eyes of a child raised in an urban family. When he came to Ciepeliów, the parish like all the old ones had land: 7,5 hectares of 6th class soil. After three winter months of walking in constantly dirty shoes, among Cimmerian darkness from the early hours of the afternoon as the streets had no lamps, with a



severe lack of stores and the usual urban comforts, priest Stanisław thought to himself, looking at the village and his neglected farm: God, do I fit here?. Still a year passed, two, three. Priest Sławiński fixed up the presbytery and garden, made friends with the people. But he discovered the beauty of the countryside to full extent only after engaging himself in breeding Arabian horses. He began with Shetland ponies and a large steed for recreational riding, but when he saw the Arabians in Michałów – he was speechless. From that moment

symbolical price. And as it was the line of Etna... The second bargain purchase was also a Janów mare **Penetracja** (Pepton – Pestka/Probat) with a broken hip. From these two began the breeding. With time a third broodmare joined the herd, the only one bought at Michałów, the grey **Ludmila** (Pesal – Larissa/Eukaliptus). The rest are horses bred solely at the priest's stud, beside the Janów stallion **Eutin** (Etoqram – Euzebia/Palasz), who is the first own sire of Rogale Stud.



Priest Stanisław Sławiński with Pasadena (Eukaliptus – Plisa / Probat)

he knew how he would use the farm buildings, the meadow behind the brick presbytery and the vast lawns with the orchard, which stretched upon the hill.

The first pure bred Arabian mare, which appeared in the stud named Czeple Arabians, was **Zorza Polarna** (Wojśław – Zemsta/Arbil), in foal to Ekstern. From that mating in 2003 **Zeksterna** was born.

BREEDING IS AN ADVENTURE – priest Andrzej Majchrzak

Priest Majchrzak, a priest performing ministerial priesthood, originating from Poznań, had a passion for horsemanship and riding horse breeding since childhood. These animals have been present in his family for a couple generations – both the priest's father and grandfather dealt with them professionally. Ever since he can remember his house was full of discussions about Arabians and Thoroughbreds. Before the war his grandfather bred restorations for the army. Some tens of years later priest Andrzej began coming to the Janów shows and auctions, only as a spectator for the time being.

„And because the passion was still there, then at the beginning it was sheer joy just to be able to see the horses and purchase a catalogue with the Arabians”, recalls priest Majchrzak.

When the political situation gave private breeders a green light, he purchased in Janów the first Arabian mare, the yearling **Emetyka** (Europejczyk – Etanika/Aloes), crippled, with a broken fore cannon bone and because of that qualified for slaughter, and so possible for him to be acquired for a

„My goal from the beginning was to breed a horse that director Krzyształowicz spoke about: bold and beautiful”, claims priest Majchrzak. “That's what we put an emphasis on at Rogale until this day and that's why we try to present our horses at the shows, but they should also have racing results. We don't treat it as a business – to get a trophy and quickly sell the awarded horse most profitably. This is to be an adventure and the animal is to be a friend. ”

A modern complex of stable buildings, surrounded by greenery and spacious paddocks for the horses, arises the admiration of visiting experts from France and the United Arab Emirates. Priest Andrzej brought the construction works to an end at the expense of his own time and funds, but the functionality of the facility pays off for that endeavor. Summer riding camps for children from the poorest, often dysfunctional families have become a tradition.

„Working around horses fixes the character”, he explains. For teaching to ride he uses calmer ponies and Hucul horses, but the campers participate in the life of the entire



Eutin (Etoqram – Euzebia / Palasz)

stable. Many would like to return next year. “Why did I choose this place exactly?”, the priest smiles, pointing to a thick cluster of grass with various wild herbs. “There are two rules of horse breeding. No foot, no horse is one. Pasture – the second. And here we have soil of the first and second class”.



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BORN IN CAUCASUS – priest Jan Matwijiszyn

The breeding of priest Matwijiszyn is associated with the foundress, the chestnut **Turbina** (Balaton – Tribuna/Nazeeh), born in Caucasus from Polish horses, who he sought out in the classifieds.

Priest Jan Matwijiszyn with the stallion Aligar



„I come from the country, there were working horses at home”, he explains. “The mare Baška allowed only my father to handle her, she bit and kicked others. But what a horse it was! Once she got going with a load, it was hard to stop her. I had a great sentiment for her and when I saw Turbina’s photograph, then in a way she reminded me of that mare from home. And when I read that she descends from horses taken by the Russians during the war... My parents came from Drohobych in the Ukraine (the name itself suggests an Ukrainian background, as Matwij translates to Matthew). A sentiment set in... I said to myself: In that case I have to buy her, as for a couple of years I have managed the rural parish Walichnowy and tried keeping horses, but not to breed them. We brought her with a breeder we’re friends with on a winter evening before New Year’s Eve and already in January of 2004 she foaled **Toscania** by Gafal. A year later – the colt Tidal.”

There are a lot of emotions involved with the first presentation of priest Jan’s graduate at the show:

„I went to Białka with the organist who also breeds horses, but draught ones. We set off late. I went to see Tidal. So I’m looking at a group of horses and say to the organist: Paint me gold and call me Oscar, but I don’t know which one is my horse... I stretch out to see, but people are blotting out my view. Where is the horse?! He broke loose, ran the other way.”

“When he began presenting himself again”, continues priest Jan, “the downpour started, so that the people who were meant to arouse the horses hid themselves. The jury panel was already gathering their paperwork, because everything was wet. So I went to the car, there was nothing to wait for. It rained cats and dogs, nothing could be seen through the pouring water.”

„We’re off. On our way home I had a phone call: Get ready to be decorated. What decoration, I ask. Tidal fifth place. And we’re 200 km behind Lublin already... I was so mad, because I could have had the opportunity to congratulate the state stud directors and be congratulated myself and I let it slip. But then I was not dressed for the occasion – in a sweater and them – in suits, ties. I could not have gone out like that, when I was not at all prepared that I would win something...”

Where do the funds come from?

A priest breeder is a subject arousing interest. First of all, it’s rather unusual, second – there is a stereotype that if a priest buys horses, it’s from... church donations.

Priest Majchrzak laughs hearing such speculations.

„Celiny is a rural parish, not numerous, this year I had just a couple of children for the First Communion...”, this is suffice an answer for the inquisitive. The priest doesn’t make a secret out of the fact that he comes from a hard-working, rather wealthy family, where everyone helps one another. With such a background he has achieved everything with his own hard work, starting off with two eliminated from breeding mares. How does he manage this with the duties of priesthood, running a camp, preacher travels and responsibilities of a clergyman?

„Five hours of sleep. This amount has to do”, he answers briefly.

„Each priest has his hobby, passion, just like any other person”, admits priest Sławiński, who was able to persuade his brother in law to purchase an Arabian horse. You just have to start to have the horses earn their own keep after a while. Their beauty is worth all the effort, both work and money. “This is how I treat Arabian horses. I’m not fond of cars, entertainment, I don’t travel much. I mostly like to go to the horses, sit with them, pat them, make friends. It doesn’t come by itself, you have to put some effort into it”.

A lot of joy, but also trouble connected with Arabians at the presbytery has priest Matwijiszyn with his parishioners. He



Tidal at the Junior Spring Show in Białka (2007)

photo: Mateusz Jaworski





The barn at Rogale with the priest Andrzej Majchrzak

spent a part of his saved over the years salary on his breeding. The photos of horses draw attention at the humbly furnished presbytery.

„People showed a great kindness from the beginning, sometimes they even went too far”, he recalls. “One day I was returning from mass and I see that my chestnuts are galloping up and down the fence. I went to see what made them run so. And inside, with a frail stick, a small girl is standing. Why are you prodding them, I asked, getting her out of there. Because they look so pretty when they run..., she said. Well, I like it too, but to have a child walk into the horses alone? It’s a miracle that nothing happened. From that moment I keep watch that nobody comes inside.”

What for the future?

All three emphasize that despite all their love towards horses and breeding this activity is secondary to priesthood, which is

the most important in their life. That’s why it is difficult for them to be present at the shows, races or Polish Arabian Horse Breeders Society meetings, which usually take place on the weekends, when there are the most duties in the parishes: marriages, mass, First Communions. Priest Slawiński would love to go the World Championship in Paris, but... the Christmas is coming.

„I seldom leave this place”, priest Slawiński says, stroking the grey Zeksterna. “When I meet other breeders I can never get enough of talking about horses and I always regret that as they are usually people of large businesses, they have so little time for their horses”.

He would not like to enlarge the herd too much, however he dreams of enriching his breeding with the descendants of the Szamrajówka dam line, which he values much.

Priest Matwijiszyn also takes care of his herd by himself every day. Raised in the country he likes this duty and could not imagine that the farm buildings should stand useless. He would like to finish the renovation of the stable, though not to enlarge it. So that there would be no temptation.

The most numerous herd of priest Majchrzak requires a hired person for the stablework. Even more so, as the Pallottine travels a lot across the country with his preachings and in the summer holds several camps. During the year the local teenagers come to help with the horses in exchange for the longed-for opportunity to ride.

„I ride myself all the time, I have a racing trainer license. I have a passion for speed, wind. That’s why I strive for such horses, bold and beautiful. Breeding and races teach humility. Because a horse can raise you to success or bring you down.”



Czeple

