

photos: Krzysztof Dużyński

JARCZOWCE

Tracking down Mlecha, Gazella and Sahara

Text: Krzysztof Czarnota

Photos: Krzysztof Czarnota, Krzysztof Dużyński

Translation: Joanna Krawczyk

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IT IS FROM THERE THAT THE MOST EXQUISITE, WORLD FAMOUS DAM AND SIRE LINES ORIGINATE. IT IS THERE THAT THE MOST REFINED HORSES WERE IMPORTED TO FROM THE DESERT.

The second homeland of pure bred horses

The former Eastern Borderlands¹ have a special place in the soul of a Pole. For those generations that have been raised on such writers as Sienkiewicz, Mickiewicz and Słowacki², they seem as some kind of magical land of plenty, the bulwark of Christianity, the place of our military dominances, the cradle of Polishness. For the lovers and breeders of Arabian horses they are also something more. The former Borderlands with their climate, vast expanses, way of life and fascination with the Orient are without all doubt a second homeland of pure bred horses. It is there that Poland's long and rich history of Arabian breeding takes its beginnings. It is from there that the most exquisite, world famous dam and sire lines originate, it is there that the most refined horses were imported to from the desert. There is a place, located in the former Borderlands, that is especially close to my heart. I try to visit there from time to time, though the place has been past its prime for more than 150 years. The only thing left of the magnificent palace and stables are rubbles and ruins and the only distant memory of Arabian horses lives with a hundred year old woman, whose father used to tell stories about JULIUSZ DZIEDUSZYCKI³.

Bagdad, by Juliusz Kossak, 1890. The painting is a private property



Jarczowce, Ukraine

A trip to the Ukraine is like a journey to a different world for an inhabitant of the European Union, starting with the border itself. In the EU, when entering another country, we sometimes slow down to 40 km/h and that's it. Here, especially on our way back, the wait may take up to 40 hours. It's not so bad if the inhabitant of the "rotten West" was born and raised during the communist period, because then it is easier for him to get accustomed to Ukraine's reality, where not much can be done officially, but everything can be "arranged". Another rather unpleasant surprise are the local roads – if someone thinks that those in Poland are bad, he should visit the Ukraine.

Breeding bad horses on this soil is impossible

At the beginning of October of this year I again visited Jarczowce. On both sides of the road, as far as the eye could see, unrolled thousands of hectares of humus. It is here that the words of one of the great enthusiasts of oriental horses came to my mind, who a hundred years ago wrote that on such expanses and such soil it is impossible to breed bad horses. We arrive at a gloomy village, similar to many around

it. If someone remembers Polish villages from the 70s of the past century, then these Ukrainian ones look the same, but in the present day. I quickly regain my sense of direction and after several minutes we stop in front of an Orthodox church and cemetery. The grave of the entire Dzieduszycki family looked strangely familiar in the October sun, with autumn flowers growing around it. The tombstone, like years ago, is partially patched up with cement, but most of the letters are still readable. We light a candle.

The love for horses and their breeding in the aristocratic family of the Dzieduszycki counts was almost hereditary. Over the centuries the representatives of this family managed many studs scattered on the lands of the then Galicia. Their love, especially for oriental horses, was so huge, that it was often joked that they descend from the Arabian horse.



The ruins of the palatial cellars

photo: Krzysztof Czarna



Jarczowce. The grave of the Dzieduszycki family

The obtaining of Gazella, Mlecha and Sahara. Wealth and bankruptcy

The most outstanding breeder in this family turned out to be Juliusz Dzieduszycki, owner of the legendary Jarczowce. In 1845 count Juliusz set off on an extremely difficult and risky but most of all historic excursion to the desert, from which he returned with three mares. They were named **Gazella**, **Mlecha** and **Sahara**. These three mares, purchased from the Bedouins, became the foundations of Polish Arabian horse breeding, contributing invaluable to world breeding. The lines which they established, despite the passing centuries, are active to this day and the

representatives of *Gazella*, *Mlecha* and *Sahara* can be found at every latitude – everywhere where pure blood horses and bred. Mares from these lines have produced horses which without exaggeration can be called the icons of the Arabian breed and names such as **Bandola**, **Bask**, **Kwestura**, **Wiking**, **Mammona** and **Monogramm** are known to Arabian fans all over the world.

Juliusz Dzieduszycki inherited Jarczowce after the death of his father in 1842 and together with them – 24 Arabian mares. After his return from the desert the Jarczowce herd became extremely famous and the owner became an authority and a breeding guru. The master of Jarczowce was an expert on horses



photo: Krzysztof Czarna

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Jarczowce. The Orthodox church and cemetery

and knew how to breed them like no one else. In breeding matters he recognized only the authority of count Roman Sanguszko⁴, owner of the famous herd in Sławuta. He knew how to live and did so eagerly, not caring about his wealth, which at a later period almost led him to bankruptcy. His persona is very well characterized by the words of Stanisław Witkiewicz⁵: “Juliusz Dzieduszycki was one of those unusual people who were born with an excessively courageous and broad soul for times in which society had to live in. The country was full of originals and eccentrics, whose quirks seemed to be a form of distortion of their strong personalities, forced to use the excess of their strength in the cramped conditions which life imposed on them. These people are made to have lived for instance in the 17th century, made to chase over the then numerous battlegrounds, made for participating in adventurous excursions, made for living without norms and boundaries, who have to feel an open country around them, a boundless and free steppe, in which vibrates a reckless willfulness of a soldier, a «young blade» and lord, who doesn't care about his wealth, either because he has too much of it or doesn't have it at all...”

The prime and greatness of the Jarczowce stud lasted a good half a century and in that time, as well as a good deal later, quoting Stefan Bojanowski⁶ „There wasn't a stable rearing oriental horses in Galicia and even further, which didn't have at least one chief sire or broodmare from the Jarczowce herd”.



Five weeks? Five years!

In that time many great personas were received in Jarczowce with pompous style. The stud was visited among others by Emperor Franz Joseph, who was enamored and enchanted by it upon departure. The greatest Polish equine painter, Juliusz Kossak⁷, began his career here. Rumor has it he came to Jarczowce for several weeks and stayed for five years, painting and creating portraits of the most valuable horses. The story about the gentlemen's first meeting is extremely interesting. After returning from the desert Dzieduszycki wanted someone to paint the imported horses, but artists declined saying that they will not make portraits of beasts. One day, when he was sitting resigned in a bath house in Lvov, beside him a couple of students were behaving loudly and having fun. One of them incidentally said: it's a pity that Julek (Juliusz Kossak) is not here with us, he'd paint us beautifully. Another answered that Julek only paints horses... Kossak was then 21 years old and so his great career began. Count Juliusz was an extremely sociable person, who incessantly organized hunts in which the desert steeds had to prove their speed and stamina. The guests chased over the vast steppes after wolves, hares and various game. Juliusz was also known as a tireless rider, who could cover a distance of 140 km on horseback in one day, with just one stop. The local nobility took pleasure



The tombstone of the Dzieduszycki family

*in copying both the count's breeding methods, as well as the way of using Arabian horses, thanks to which the borderland Arabians were famous for their unbelievable stamina and hardiness. The superb breeder also did not forget about the type and beauty of his horses. Attesting to the enormous genetic strength of his Arabians is the fact that a century and a half later **Kwestura**, descending from Gazella, won the halter World Championships and the gelding **Nobby**, representing the same line, won the endurance World Championships twice, the European Championships and Reserve Championships and remains the most outstanding horse in the history of endurance races.*

A tomb and a pile of rubble

Juliusz Dzieduszycki, one of the best breeders of Arabian horses in Poland, died in 1885 childless and the stud passed on to his nephew, count Wojciech Dzieduszycki. After returning from the famous expedition to Arabia, count Juliusz built a new palace and luxurious stables, which one could enter on horseback directly from the steppe. Since that time two World Wars rolled through Jarczowce and together with them communists, nationalists, Nazis



and God knows who else. Attesting to the former greatness of this place today is only the tomb in the cemetery and a pile of rubble where the once marvelous palace stood. When I last sat there, on top of the ruins of the palatial cellars, I wondered how in Austria or France, a sabre hung on the wall of a castle two hundred years ago hangs there until this day, while here no stone has been left unturned... Fortunately the horses remained. The representatives of Sahara, Mlecha and Gazella stand today in our stable near Zamość, at a place where the legendary Borderlands began. From there it is about 230 km to Jarczowce. I have this dream to go there on horseback



photo: Krzysztof Dużyński

Mlecha, by Juliusz Kossak, 1845

The painting is property of Janów Podlaski State Stud

and just stand above the grave of Mr. Juliusz with Arabian horses, whose great-great etc. grandams he once brought from the desert.

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1 The Eastern Borderlands – former Eastern lands of Poland, under occupation from 1939 first by the USSR, later the Third Reich. After World War II the Eastern Borderlands were separated from Poland and annexed to the Ukrainian SSR, Byelorussian SSR and Lithuanian SSR. The annexation of Poland's territory was accepted during the Tehran and Yalta Conference. Forced by the superpower countries Poland had to give the USSR 48% of its territory, losing about 180 thousand square km in the East.

2 Henryk Sienkiewicz (1846-1916), writer, author of „Quo Vadis”, Noble Prize winner of 1905; Adam Mickiewicz (1798-1855), romantic poet, author of the national epic „Pan Tadeusz”; Juliusz Słowacki (1809-1849), romantic poet, author (among others) of ballads referring to the Orient.

3 Count Juliusz Dzieduszycki (1817-1885), land owner, horseman. In 1840 he set off on a famous, full of adventures expedition to Lvov to acquire the stallion **Bagdad** and in 1845 to Arabia, from where he brought the mares **Gazella**, **Mlecha** and **Sahara**. Their significance for Polish Arabian horse breeding does not need to be emphasized. This stud, similar to the others, did not survive. The only ones to survive the extermination of the World War I and the Bolshevik invasion in the years 1917-1918 were the mare **Pomponia** 1902 and three fillies, which sent to Janów formed the foundations of the stud (**Gazella II** 1914, **Mlecha** 1914 and **Zulejma** 1914). Descending from Pomponia and Zulejma was the epochal **Ofir**.
Read more on polskiearaby.com:

„Who was Gliocco, the seller of Bagdad”, by Monika Luft

„This breeding cannot perish, since it gave Melpomena and Skowronek...”, by Monika Luft

4 Prince Roman Sanguszko (1800-1881), owner of Sławuta in the Volhynia region, one of the oldest (probably existing since 1506) and most important nobility studs in the Republic of Poland. They began keeping their own stud book already in 1820. It was here that in the 19th century valuable damlines were founded, including Szweykowska ca.1803, Wołoszka ca. 1810, Ukrainka ca.1815 and Milordka ca.1810. The day of extermination came on the 1st of November, 1917. The nearly 85 year old prince Roman Sanguszko (born 1832), defending the savagely murdered horses, was killed by the Bolsheviks.

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„Breeding work with Arabian horse bloodlines in Poland – historical aspect”, by Krystyna Chmiel

„Camels' milk for the stallion, armored vests for the Bedouins”, by Monika Luft

„This breeding cannot perish, since it gave Melpomena and Skowronek...”, by Monika Luft

5 Stanisław Witkiewicz (1851-1915), Polish painter, architect, writer and art theorist.

6 Stefan Bojanowski (1850-1910), author of many studies on horses, especially of the Galicia and borderland estates. Both quotations from: “Sylwetki koni orientalnych i ich hodowców” (“Profiles of Oriental Horses and Their Breeders”), 1906.

7 Juliusz Kossak (1824-1899), a Polish painter specializing in battle and historical paintings. He most liked painting horses. His most important works include “Sobieski at Vienna”, “Stud of Mohort”, “Arrival of Emperor Franz Joseph to Cracow”, “A stud in the Podolia region”, “A portrait of Count Rzewuski”.