



Text by: Monika Luft
Translation by: Joanna Krawczyk
Photos by: Ewa Imielska-Hebda
Closing photo by Zofia Raczkowska

2017

200 years of Janów Podlaski

2019

100 years of Arabian breeding in Janów Podlaski



In some second-hand bookshop in Warsaw I happened to come across a work unavailable to today's readers: "The history of Janów Podlaski Stud 1817–1939" by Professor Witold Pruski¹, published in 1948 by the Poznań Society of Friends of Science. It is a rather interesting read, because the Professor mentions not only plenty of details regarding the history of the stud, but also great amounts of anecdotes.

The era of Potocki

The first persona of Janów Podlaski was the Crown Grand Equerry Aleksander Potocki from Wilanów (1776–1845), son of Stanisław Kostka Potocki and Aleksandra of the Lubomirski clan. It was him who by the decree of the tsar was appointed as the herd's supervisor. He entrusted Rzewuski's equerry, a German named Ritz, with a mission to select and bring home 150 stallions and mares offered by tsar Alexander I. The national treasury provided 121 thousand Polish zlotys to cover the costs of preparing and setting up the stud, the location of which was chosen in Janów Podlaski. Meanwhile Ritz, a Thoroughbred enthusiast, selected 25 stallions and 90 mares and purchased the rest. He arrived at Janów with 54 stallions (including 9 Arabian), 100 mares (including 2 pure bred) and 33 three year olds on December 18th, 1817. In 1822 three Arabian stallions were purchased for the herd, including Alabadżak from the breeding of Emir Waclaw Rzewuski.

Potocki's rule is remembered by the chroniclers of Janów with wide recognition. He remained at his post until 1832, being not only a skilled administrator, but also a good breeder. He passed on his love for horses to his descendants – his sons August and Stanisław were the directors of Janów Podlaski; another son,

Maurycy (and also his son August) were many year presidents of the Horse Racing Society; daughter Natalia married Roman Sanguszko of Sławuta.

The year 1831 (the November Uprising²) forced Janów to evacuate the herd and wander with the horses across the country. After the uprising was suppressed, the breeding was reorganized; Józef Dulewski (a student of Aleksander Potocki) was chosen as inspector and the up to then "animal doctor" Filip Eberhard was chosen as subinspector. "The 30s and 40s were a golden period for Janów. Later it all began to decline and the herd started to quickly deteriorate, until finally several unfortunate experiments that intended to change the breeding direction literally killed it in the fifth and sixth decade almost completely", writes Pruski. The Janów herd enjoyed great respect for many years and private breeders often used the chief sires. But already at the beginning of the 40s the Janów horses began to exhibit "symptoms of being too delicate – from a too strong dosage of Thoroughbred blood". By the end of the decade the decline was very much visible and the used sires gave unpromising get ("slim, thin-boned"); the selection of dams was also insufficient. In order to fix the situation large and heavy half-bred horses were brought to Janów, which did not give the expected results.

Easy to brake, harder to fix

In 1848 Aleksander Potocki's son August was appointed as the director of the herd. This nomination, Pruski recalls with somewhat sadness, brought less successful years for Janów. "He was not an expert such as his father Aleksander (...). He took up the post in a very difficult period, the herd was degenerating, it had to be rescued, but it is easy to break and harder to fix". It was by the decision of August that "Clevelands, Yorkshires, Mecklenburgs, Orlov Trotters etc." started to be imported to Janów. In 1857 it was decided that Arabian blood should be added and so the herd was joined by the stallion Dżelabi (Dżelaby d.b. – Beko III/ Amurath) and the mares Zulejka (Amurath – Sady), Alma (Chaban – Alga) and Arabka (Amurath – Saya) from the herd of the Württemberg king in Weil. The sire of Dżelabi, purchased in Cairo in 1844 to Rejterowice of Władysław Rozwadowski for 2,500 guilders, was sold to Weil for 20 thousand guilders. His son cost 3,500 guilders. When describing this stallion Karol Fryderyk Seeling (born in Saxony in 1798, died 1873), an "animal doctor" since 1835, a main groom from 1845 in Janów Podlaski and at the end a herd inspector (he worked until 1867), he wrote about Arabians in an article titled "Materiały dla oznakomenija s Janowskim Konskim Zawodowom" ("Żurnal Konnozawodztwa" 1868): "These horses are too small and weak for carriages, too short and insufficiently strong for riding. A question comes to mind – what use can they be; perhaps only for stallion depots, as in this country Arabian horses are especially liked; regardless whether they are good or not, whether they are suitable for breeding or not – it doesn't matter (...), also mares by Dżelabi cannot bring anything but harm to the herd: what can be produced by a dam of a short height, thin-boned, with long pasterns turned outside, with flanks not spacious enough for a foetus...". As you can see, Arabian horses did not enjoy a great opinion everywhere.

Run for the hills... Escapes from Janów

August Potocki resigned from his post in 1861. And although it was said that he brought the herd down from its one-time high, later it got even worse. History also contributed to this – in 1863 the January Uprising³ broke out. Over several years (1861–66) there was a change of four directors in the headquarters in Warsaw and three inspectors in Janów. Janusz Konrad Rostworowski, who took over after August Poniatowski,



took a leave after three months, left for Dresden and never returned. When it became clear that the director would not come back, August's half-brother, Stanisław Potocki, took over the reins. However he

soon also took a leave and went to Berlin. When all the deadlines had passed and once again it was clear that the post was vacant, this function was given to Zygmunt Wielkopolski. After several months he also took a leave, left the country and... was never heard of again. At least in Janów, because his family probably knew what he was doing. It is not known what haunted Janów so badly that subsequent managers fled after several months of taking up the job.

In 1864 a committee was sent to Janów which eliminated 98 horses from the herd. There was also a concept of liquidating the herd and if not for the intervention of Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolaevich, brother of emperor Alexander II, a reformer of the Russian cavalry, horse expert and enthusiast, perhaps that



would've been the end of the Janów stud. Upon his request the decision was postponed and the administration of Janów was handed to colonel (later general) Alexander Meszczerski. Janów became fully subordinated to the government in St. Petersburg; the official language was Russian and staff began to be sent from Russia.

Dżelabi becomes Tough

A new chapter in Janów's history begins in 1868. Prof. Pruski writes about then director Meszczerski that "he was a man without any special equine preparation and lacking skills in that area". An intensive russification was exhibited among others in changing the horses' names. For example the Arabian Abubekir became "Wiesioły" (Happy), Dżelabi "Twirdy" (Tough), Kair "Ziemlak" (Mate) and Basza "Głupoi" (Stupid). Soon the stud welcomed stallions Bagdad Koheilan d.b. 1854 and Iskander Pasza 1851, a gold medalist from the world exhibition in Paris in 1967 (purchased from Roman Sanguszko of Sławuta) and later other Arabian

stallions and mares. In 1874 Meszczerski was replaced by General Boris Sievers. "This nomination did not improve the situation. On the contrary – it made it worse." Sievers was a civil officer, who first of all wanted to be rich, and at that he was a zealous russificator. During the reigns of Meszczerski and Sievers, according to Pruski Janów "lost its spiritual leadership in breeding, ceased being a forge and propagator of progressive equine concepts".

In 1881 Sievers' place was taken by Count Alexander Nieroth (1849–1913), owner of a racing stable and a keen sportsman, initiating a new phase in the stud's history and leaving (according to Pruski) "the best memory". He raised Janów from practically ruins – that's how neglected the stud was. He also set up a breeding program and because he was a racing fan, there came an era of Thoroughbreds. "The herd took on a distinct character and type, the horses became correct, of a strong build, resistant conformation and enjoyed great popularity and recognition", writes Pruski about the herd from Nieroth's reign. However after several years the herd was too saturated with Thoroughbred blood. There were too many investments and too little income – because Janów was not a place where superb stallions were born. And again the liquidation of the stud appeared to loom on the horizon as it was too expensive – however Nieroth was luckily able to obviate this danger. He remained at his post until his death in 1913.

In 1914, after the outbreak of World War I, the herd was evacuated to the Kharkov Governorate and in 1915 it was evacuated again – and did not return to Janów. "Practically the entire pre-war herd died in Russia and during the revolution of 1918", writes Pruski. "When after regaining independence the Polish government rebuilt the stud, the foundations for it were made of completely different horses, imported from Austria and Hungary and acquired from various private Polish herds (...). The old Janów blood ceased to exist".

1919: Janów becomes an Arabian herd

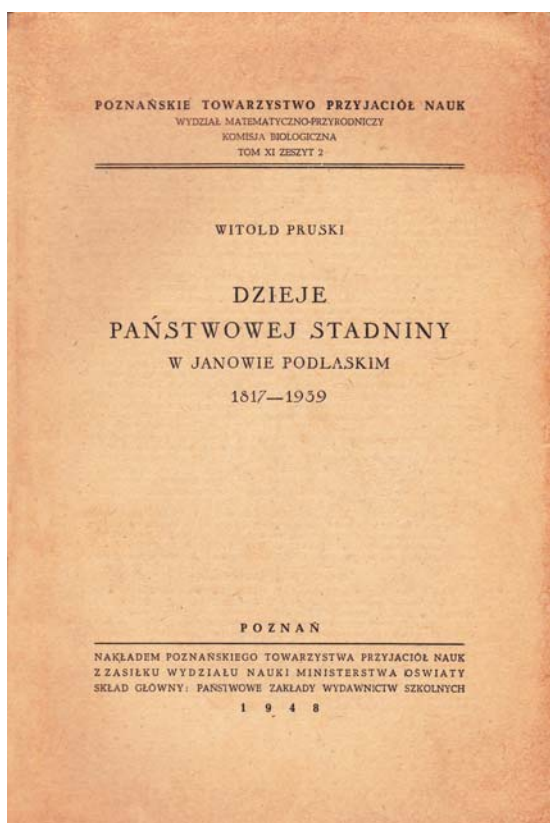
After regaining independence in 1918, among the many tasks laying ahead of the young Polish state was the restoration of the breeding of all horse breeds. Already in February 1919 a Horse Breeding Office was established in the then Ministry of Agriculture. Its panel included Stanisław Wotowski, Jan Grabowski and Major Jan Köppl. At the time Jan Grabowski was only 27, but this choice turned out to be extremely fortunate. In May the State Stud Board took over Janów, whose condition turned out to be tragic.



There were no horses and the infrastructure was destroyed. One of the four soon-to-be-established divisions was the Arabian one. The first mares (from the breeding of Radutz) were brought from Austria in April: Siglavi Bagdady 1908 (Siglavi Bagdady d.b. – Malta/Hadžar), later dam of Fetysz and Haszysz, and Anielka 1909 (Amurath Weil – Belgia/Mazepa). Subsequent mares from the same breeding were purchased from the National Science Institute of Agriculture: Hebda 1913 (Hermit d.b. – 221 Amurath/Amurath), who produced Kaszmir, Hermitka 1913 (Hermit d.b. – Belgia/Mazepa), dam of Damaszek, and Koalicja 1918 (Koheilan IV – 238 Amurath-25/Amurath), who wrote herself down in history as the dam of Enwer Bey by Abu Mlech and Miecznik by Fetysz. All the mentioned mares descended from Sławuta damlines. Soon they were joined by the Antoniny-originated Elstera 1913 (Ibrahim d.b. – Lezginka/Obejan Szarak d.b.), who produced Morocz, and her full sister Kalina 1909. Next, coming from Jezupol of Władysław Dzieduszycki, the epoch-making Gazella II 1914 (Koheilan d.b. – Abra/Anvil), Mlecha 1914 (Koheilan – Pisanka/Nabob), Pomponia 1902 (Zagłoba – Kadisza/Kalif) and her daughter Zulejma 1914 by Koheilan d.b., direct

descendants of mares imported from the desert by Juliusz Dzieduszycki. "All that was best in Janów, as well as in Poland, descended from Gazella II, Pomponia and her daughter Zulejma", states Pruski. This noble group also included Sławuta's Fontanna 1906 (Lenkorań – Sława/Jussuf), bred in pureness of blood. Stallions which showed up at Janów were: Amurath III 1910 (Amurath – 392 O'Bajan-3/O'Bajan d.b.) from Radutz, Sławuta's Bakszysz 1901 (Ilderim d.b. – Parada/Rymnik) and Abu Mlech 1902 (Mlech I – Łania/Al Nabi) from Jezupol. Soon the Thoroughbred division was transferred to Kozienice and Janów became a herd of Arabians, half-breds and Anglo-Arabians. Great services in compiling the foundations of Polish Arabian horse breeding in the interwar period were rendered by Jan Grabowski as the General Inspector of the State Studs (a function which he served since 1920).

Pruski noticed that there were two distinct group of broodmares in the stud: one descending from the Jarczowce damlines and the other from the Sławuta damlines. "The stud's aim was to systematically cross these two lines in the future, even with a strong inbreeding to outstanding specimens". Among the chief



„The history of Janów Podlaski Stud 1817–1939”
by Professor Witold Pruski – the cover of the book

sires were also: Farys II 1905 (Mlech I – Sahara IV/El-Kebir), bred by Florentyna Czartoryska-Cieńska, the before mentioned Enwer-Bey, Fetysz 1924 (Bakszysz – Siglavi Bagdady/Siglavi Bagdady d.b.), Koheilan I 1922 (Koheilan IV – 10 Gazal/Gazal) and the famous Ofir 1933 (Kuhailan Haifi d.b. – Dziwa/Abu Mlech), who bred for just 3 seasons, but still managed to leave such excellent sons as Witraż (out of Makata/Fetysz) and Wielki Szlem (out of Elegantka/Bakszysz). “He had a very expressive head”, Pruski describes him, “but his legs left a lot to be desired (...) he was small, pony-like, with some defects in his conformation. But with beautiful Janów mares he gave remarkable get”.

“The Arabian horse division set a goal for itself”, sums up Pruski. “To create Arabians with a distinct type, much beauty, sound conformation, excellent bone and tissue, full of stamina, not too fast on the track, but dealing well with larger distances and weight. The Janów Arabian was to be a combination of the Saklavi and Kuhailan types, as some describe them”. After which he adds: “I personally do not agree with the opinions about the existence of a specific external appearance associated with particular lines”. According to the professor, the Janów



stud, managed at the time by the talented and thorough Stanisław Pohoski (1895–1944), did not adhere to the opinions popularised by Raswan and his followers. “The greatest concern of the stud was to consolidate the deserts traits of the horse beside striving to obtain horses that were full of stamina, health and correctness”.

In 1939, after the outbreak of World War II, the herd was evacuated to Volhynia. It was led by Pohoski and Tadeusz Machowiecki. Here Prof. Pruski ends his account. Having published the book in 1948 he could not have written about the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact or where Janów’s valuable horses – including the

epochal Ofir – were robbed and taken to. The history of the Janów herd in that period was not spoken about for many years. Perhaps on the account of a one hundred year anniversary of breeding Arabian horses in Janów, which will take place in 2019, we will see a new history of the Janów Stud told in full.

Post scriptum

Cited on the next page is a fragment of an article about the lots of Polish Arabian horses during World War II, associated with the war times of the Janów Stud in 1939 (“From Caucasus to America – the war wanderings”, by Monika Luft):



Several days after the Germans crossed our borders the stud at Janów Podlaski evacuated itself East. In all a total of 260 horses and 19 horse-drawn wagons with forage and equipment, under the care of tens of people, set off on the road. At night, on the

road to Brest, a column of tanks ran into the group of yearling colts. The horses scattered and the then director of the stud, the remarkable breeder Stanisław Pohoski, who had brought the stud during the years of peace to its peak development, nearly committed suicide out of despair. Meanwhile however, at the news of the Russians attacking from the East, both people and horses turned back to Janów, reaching the stud in pitiful condition after a 12 day long journey. Several hours later the Soviet troops came. All horses were robbed; they were loaded onto wagons and transported to Caucasus – to Tersk. At a given signal also the Belarussian people from across the Bug River, a territory which at that time lay within the Polish borders, set off to plunder the Janów Stud. “Even the metal roofing was torn off and root crops dug out”, Roman Pankiewicz⁴ reported. “Only the coming of the Germans brought an end to this”. He further added: “Probably it never crossed Pohoski’s mind that he would suddenly lose the entire stud: chief sires, broodmares, all the youngsters and foals”... Out of 27 mares only Najada 1932 remained, who did not allow to be led out of her stall. Fortunately later on the yearlings, lost during the evacuation, were found. Among the mares robbed by the Russians seven were lost and 20 made it to Tersk, from where they were again evacuated in fear of the approaching German troops – by foot! – to Kazakhstan. Only nine of them lived longer than 3 years, among them mares who would become famous dams in later years: the Ofir daughter Mammona 1939, great-granddam of Monogramm, foundress of a dynasty from which the majority of Russian horses today descend, and Taraszczka 1937, who produced Negatiw, the sire of Nabor and Bandos. The entire female progeny of Koalicja was lost. Taken away was the wonderful Gazella II 1914 and the valuable Kewa 1923 (in 1953 her granddaughter Piewica was purchased, who began in Poland today’s world-famous “P” line), the remarkable stallion Piolun 1934, the later sire of Priboj 1944 who left 203 foals at Tersk and the famous race horse Hardy 1926. And most of all the epochal Ofir 1933, son of Kuhailan Haifi. “And so ceased to exist the most wonderful Arabian stud in Europe, and perhaps even in the world”, wrote Pankiewicz about Janów. 📖

¹ Professor Witold Pruski (died 1983) – hippologist, research worker of the Polish Academy of Science, expert and organizer of horse breeding in Poland, the author of the pivotal work “Two centuries of Polish Arabian horse breeding 1778–1978 and its successes abroad”. Original Polish title of the book described in this article is “Dzieje państwowej stadniny w Janowie Podlaskim 1817–1939” (publisher: Poznańskie Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Nauk, 1948).

² November Uprising – Polish–Russian War 1830–1831, also known as the Cadet Revolution. An armed rebellion of the partitioned Poland against the Russian Empire.

³ January Uprising – began in 1863 as a spontaneous protest by young Poles against conscription into the Imperial Russian Army.

⁴ Roman Pankiewicz – breeder at Albigowa Stud in the 50s, where the epochal stallion Bask (Witraż – Bałajka/Amurath Sahib) was born. In the 60s he was employed at Michałów Stud. Author of numerous articles on the history and breeding of Arabian horses, published in Poland and abroad. His works also include books dedicated to Arabians, “Polish Arabian horse breeding 1918–1939” and “Register of Polish Arabian purebred stallions” (two volumes: 1944–1983 and 1983–1993) among others.