

OM EL ARAB

Forgotten Foundations

A Photographic Record of Om El Arab's Original Foundation Mares

by Betty Finke

Inevitably, any assessment of the significance of Om El Arab focuses on *Estopa. This one mare's impact on the breed as a whole has been so overwhelming that we tend to forget she was not the only foundation mare of Om El Arab. Yes, she was certainly the most important, but the others also made their own, if more modest, contribution to the Arabian breed. And "modest" is relatively speaking, because compared to *Estopa's influence, almost anything is modest, but in a few cases, it is actually quite significant.

The original Om El Arab importation from Spain in 1970 consisted of no less than 18 mares; to this day the largest single importation from Spain to any country in Europe, if not worldwide. At this point in time, there was just one Spanish Arabian mare in Germany. As a matter of fact, there were very few Arabians in Germany outside of Marbach State Stud and only a few private breeders, which is what made Sigi, her husband, and her father look abroad in the first place. The publication of Erika Schiele's seminal book *The Arabian in Europe* in 1966 no doubt played a huge part, because it was through this that readers in Germany first learned about Arabian horses in other European countries. Spain was an untapped source, and building one's breeding program on Spanish mares quite a daring undertaking.

Spain was not the only source, however. The original Om El Arab foundation also included four mares from Albadeia Stud in Egypt, and one each from Janow Podlaski and Michalow Stud in Poland. And, not to forget, the very first mare came from Marbach, where Heinz and Sigi Merz had first encountered Arabians: Dindara, who was owned by Sigi's father Franz Siller.



Sigi Siller and Om El Shadiva (*Sanadik El Shaklan x Om El Shaina)

Franz Siller, it should be pointed out, also imported and owned the Polish stallion Laos, the first *Naborr son in Germany.

By lucky coincidence, I embarked on my first tour of Arabian breeding farms in the fall of 1973, taking in Om El Arab. *El Shaklan and the famous "Golden Cross" were still in the future then — *Estopa's first foal had only been born that year — but the farm had attracted a lot of attention through its eye-catching advertising. At this time, the horses imported and

owned by Heinz and Sigi Merz and by Sigi's father were all at the same farm. This included the Egyptian stallions Shaker El Masri and Mehyar (an Alaa El Din son who died before being registered); and the Polish stallion Laos, as well as all the Egyptian and Polish mares and most of the Spanish mares. In the course of that day, I managed to get photos of all of them. The photos were taken with a very primitive camera and are not of professional quality (like Om El Arab, I was just starting out), but I believe they are worth sharing, because to this day, with one exception, I have never seen photos of these mares anywhere else. So, in an attempt to fill the gaps in the Om El Arab record, here are the photos along with a brief summary of each mare's achievement as a broodmare.

The record is not entirely complete, because some of the original imports had been sold on by 1972; but they were never really part of the Om El Arab breeding program in the first place. Sevillista (Mosafi x Frajana II), Helena (Argel II x Solera II), and Balada II (Alcazar x Ballesta) were sold after producing just one foal each. The three mares bred by Luis de Ybarra, Laga (Zafiro x Bocina II), Laida (Zafiro x Bizancio II), and Lira (Corinto x Betelgeuse), were never even registered in Germany,

but went straight to Swiss breeder Hans Stucki, who based his own very successful breeding program on them, using Om El Arab stallions.

I have also included some later photos of the second wave of Spanish mares, imported in the late '70s/early '80s. Their influence is of course inextricably linked with *Estopa, as they were imported with the express purpose of breeding them to *El Shaklan. But they, as well as the 1970 imports, are all a part of the rich tapestry that forms the background of Arabian breeding today.

THE MARBACH MARE



DINDARA

*b. 1965 (Karmin x Winarsad by Wind)
Bred by Marbach State Stud.
Owned by Franz Siller.
Photo at Om El Arab in 1973.*

Dindara has the distinction of being the first mare at the farm. She was of three-quarter Polish breeding, and one-quarter Weil, tracing to the breeding program begun by King Wilhelm I of Württemberg in 1817. Her sire Karmin (Witraz x Canaria) was a full brother to the Polish chief sire Celebes and her dam Winarsad, by the Ofir son Wind, was regarded as one of the finest mares in Germany. Dindara's family is well represented today in Germany and in France. Her daughter Dschesira (by Shaker El Masri) and

The true art of breeding is in the creation of a superior foal out of a great mare. In our travels, we're always looking for new and exciting stallions for our program and for American breeders. We want to find individuals that will guarantee the continued preservation of the type we have developed. — Sigi

granddaughter Dschida Ibn Estopa (Ibn Estopa x Dschesira) were exported to France and have descendants there. Her granddaughter Dscherana Ibn Estopa (Ibn Estopa x Dschesira) was one of the foundation mares of the endurance breeding program of Dr. Ulrike Weckenmann in Germany, where she and her daughter Dschamilja Ibn Scha Ze Man established a dynasty of endurance horses that is still going strong today.

THE SPANISH MARES



ETICA

*gr. 1965 (Tabal x Ariana by Malvito)
Bred by Miguel Osuna Escalera.
Owned by Heinz Merz.
Photo at Om El Arab in 1973.*

Etica was from the same breeder, by the same sire, and foaled the same year as her more famous half-sister *Estopa. Her first, Spanish-bred daughter Elsisa (by Figuero) became a foundation mare for Melissa Arabians in Holland and was a well-known international show champion

in the 1980s. At Om El Arab, Etica, like *Estopa, was first bred to the Egyptian stallion Ghazal. The result was the lovely broodmare El Gazella, who produced the stallion Mashhour (by Shaker El Masri) as well as another three stallions and one daughter who bred on. Etica herself was exported to France in 1976 along with her son Kandjar by Shaker El Masri. She had several daughters in France that bred on, and her descendants are found today in France, Switzerland, and Hungary.



MECA II

*gr. 1966 (Carbonero x Rauda II
by Trueno IV). Bred by Juan del Cid.
Owned by Sigi Merz.
Photo at El Hauhwa Stud in 1985.*

Meca II, one of three Spanish mares registered in Sigi's name, had only two foals at Om El Arab before she was sold on. By Hadban Enzahi, she produced the impressive stallion Hegab El Arab in 1972, but her more lasting contribution was her daughter Mishitta by Maquillo,

imported in utero from Spain. Mishitta established her own dynasty in France, where she and her daughter Ranya (by Shaker El Masri) were exported to become foundation mares for Gerard Wissler. Mishitta was a prolific broodmare, whose offspring included the stallion Rubis (by Koran) and the mare Reine de Saba (by *El Shaklan), both big international winners during the 1980s. Another Mishitta daughter, Bint Mishitta (by Mehyar) was exported to Switzerland, where her descendants include her grandson Maniok (Salamon x Mona Lisa al d'Ama), a European Sport Horse Champion in harness.



MORISCA V

gr. 1966 (*Tunante x Fabiola by Jalifa II*)
 Bred by Juan del Cid.
 Owned by Heinz Merz.
 Photo at Om El Arab in 1973.

Morisca V was arguably the most significant of the 1970 Spanish imports after *Estopa. She produced four daughters at Om El Arab, of which the first, Mirwana (by Maquillo, i.i.u.), was exported to Switzerland. Her greatest achievement was her 1972 daughter by Hadban Enzahi, Mohena. Mohena's first daughter was Mohara (by Shaker El Masri), who produced the Australian champion Mahabi El Shaklan; Mohara was also, as a somewhat curious side note, the grandam of the only registered Curly

In advertising, we have consistently utilized *Arabian Horse World* because we know that our friends around the world eagerly await their copies of *World*. We believe it is essential to advertise our program and our stallions each month in this publication because it reaches the most serious breeders everywhere. — Sigi

Arabian stallion in Germany! Mohena is best known, however, for the full siblings she produced by *El Shaklan: the mare Bint Mohena, exported to Australia and a successful broodmare there, the stallion El Mokari, a popular sire in Denmark and later leased to Britain, and of course the great *Sanadik El Shaklan. Through Mohena's last daughters, Malina Bint Masran and Moasha Bint Mohena, Morisca's family still continues in Germany.



PROMETIDA

b. 1966 (*Zanjar x Batista by Sherif*)
 Bred by Rafael M. Rojas.
 Owned by Heinz Merz.
 Photo at Om El Arab in 1973.

Prometida is another original import who has a large international family today. She came over with her first foal Zagala, by Alcazar, who grew into a very beautiful mare, but only ever produced one stallion. Prometida's 1973 filly by Shaker El Masri, Shafira (seen grazing next to her dam in the photo) was exported to France, where she has

numerous descendants. *Inshallah El Shaklan (*El Shaklan x Prometida) came to the U.S. where she produced, among others, the stallion Fame Maker R, exported to Australia. Other Prometida daughters were exported to France, Sweden, and Switzerland, and her second to last daughter Padisha Ibn Estopa is the dam of the stallion Patros HB (by Psytadel), many times champion under saddle in Britain. Prometida's last daughter Primadonna II (by Estopa Son), born in 1990, is an Elite mare of the German registry, having produced several successful endurance horses.



TUNANTA

ch. 1965 (*Tunante x Julianita II by Habiente*) Bred by Juan del Cid.
 Owned by Franz Siller.
 Photo at Om El Arab in 1973.

Tunanta is the odd one out among the Spanish mares, as she has no living purebred descendants. This does not mean her blood has died out, however. Her one purebred daughter Trixi, by the Polish stallion Laos (*Naborr x Laguna),

was also the dam of one purebred daughter, Triesienne (by Samum). Triesienne was trained as a western horse and was often shown under saddle. Bred to the Paint stallion Repainted King, she produced the 1993 Half-Arabian stallion Tishyno, the most successful Quarab stallion in Europe who competed in reining and sired numerous pinto Half-Arabian get.



COCA-COLA

gr. 1967 (*Mosafi x Sirena by Habiente*)
 Bred by Juan del Cid.
 Owned by Franz Siller.
 Photo at Om El Arab in 1973.

Coca-Cola was easily one of the most striking of the original imports, a very typey fleabitten mare marked with a distinctive “bloody shoulder.” She produced one foal at Om El Arab before being sold to Dr. Friedrich Immisch, who bought all his foundation mares from Om El Arab and regularly bred them to Om El Arab-bred stallions. Coca-Cola’s first daughter Casablanca, by Shaker El Masri, was sold to Switzerland. She was the dam of Canila (by Nil I, also by Shaker El Masri), a European and World Champion mare and dam of Europe’s Padron, the first *Padron son in Europe and still found in the pedigree of modern champions. Canila’s three quarter sister Chloe (Nil I x Coca-Cola) was the dam of Candy Bint Chloe (by Ibn Estopa), who produced four successful endurance horses in Germany and Austria.



FESTINA

gr. 1967 (*Mosafi x Rapidez by Eufrates*)
 Bred by the Yeguada Militar.
 Owned by Sigi Merz.
 Photo at Om El Arab in 1973.

Festina produced two daughters by Shaker El Masri, Fesihra Bint Shaker (1974) and Feziza (1976). Since both were exported, none of them left any descendants in the stud or indeed in Germany, but Fesihra’s descendants are still found in Belgium and Feziza’s in France.

This photo has previously been published as Morisca V (and appears as such on Allbreed). The error was only recently discovered, when another photo of Festina turned up which showed that she and Morisca V had their identities switched when I originally identified the photos back in 1973.



PAOLA

gr. 1967 (*Mosafi x Dorita II by Habiente*)

Bred by Juan del Cid.
 Owned by Franz Siller.
 Photo at Om El Arab in 1973.

Paola’s legacy has fared less well than the others, which seems a shame. She was a very beautiful mare with especially lovely, large eyes. Her two sons Padisha (by Saher) and Palisander (by Shaker El Masri) were both licensed for breeding, but little used. Other than that, she had two daughters by the *Naborr son Laos, of which at least one appears to have no living descendants. Paola is most likely to appear in pedigrees today through her oldest son Padisha, who sired several daughters that bred on.



DOLORA

ch. 1968
 (*Testigo x Rosaleda II by Carbonero*)
 Bred by Juan del Cid.
 Owned by Franz Siller.
 Photo at Om El Arab in 1973.

Dolora is another mare who may have living descendants today, but they are not much in evidence at this time. Her 1973 Shaker El Masri daughter Dame produced a licensed stallion and two mares, of which one was exported, while Dolora’s other daughters (two by Paola’s son Palisander, two by Ibn Estopa, and one by Spanish stallion Tabuk) don’t appear to have left much in the way of produce.



CICATRIZ

*gr. 1970 (Xamir x Pepona by Jalifa II)
Bred by Juan del Cid.
Owned by Heinz & Sigi Merz.
Photo at Al Hauhwa Stud in 1985.*

Cicatriz, one of the second wave of Spanish imports, produced three foals for Om El Arab before being sold on, all of them by *El Shaklan. The first, the stallion Caliph, was sold to the U.S., and the second, the filly Kawi El Shaklan, to Brazil. In Brazil, Kawi produced the broodmare Butterfly PAR. Only last year, this family returned to Germany with Kawi's great-granddaughter Johara Morab from Brazil, who has been successfully shown.



NIHARRA

*gr. 1975 (Jaguay x Jabalina II by Zancudo)
Bred by Miguel Osuna Escalera.
Owned by Heinz & Sigi Merz.
Photo at Aachen in 1979.*

Of the second wave Spanish imports, none has been more significant than Niharra. Imported in foal to the top

Spanish sire Jacio, Niharra foaled the chestnut filly *Bint Jacio in 1979. *Bint Jacio was a star in the showing, winning numerous prizes, and became a pillar of Om El Arab International after relocating to the U.S. Her daughter Om El Jazira by Estopasan has produced four daughters for Om El Arab, first and foremost among them Om El Jimala (by *Sanadik El Shaklan).

But *Bint Jacio isn't Niharra's only claim to posterity. Her 1980 daughter *Naharra by *El Shaklan was exported to Brazil, where she created a dynasty of her own. Prominent members include the stallion Nyhl El Jamaal (Ali Jamaal x Naharra), sire of Halsdon Arabians' Lothar El Nyhl, and his full sister Nyagara El Jamaal, whose granddaughter El Lucina OS is a prized broodmare at Osterhof Stud and dam of 2016 German National Champion Mare Lola OS. Naharra's full brother Nihar was also exported to Brazil, and a son and daughter of Niharra, Niyashin El Shaklan and Ninara Ibn Estopa, were exported to South Africa. Niyashin El Shaklan is a great-grandsire of the 2016 ANC Gold Champion mare Tehama Ballalina.



LYDIA

*gr. 1978 (Marpeso x Hezina by Jacio)
Bred by Diego Mendez Moreno.
Owned by Heinz & Sigi Merz.
Photo at Aachen in 1980.*

Lydia, as well as the majority of her offspring, was eventually exported to

Switzerland, where she has numerous descendants. Her most significant daughter was her first, Lydira El Shaklan (by *El Shaklan), who was sold to Brazil. She has created her own successful family there for Lenita Perroy, which includes her grandson Lethyf El Jamaal and her son Ludjin El Jamaal, who have successful offspring in many countries. Ludjin El Jamaal is the maternal grandsire of *Jullyen El Jamaal and international gold champion stallions *Abha Qatar and *Lawrence El Gazal, among others.



QUABILAH

*gr. 1979 (Kadi x Quatar by Kiew)
Bred by Luis de Ybarra.
Owned by Heinz & Sigi Merz.
Photo at Om El Arab in 1982.*

Quabilah was imported in utero with her dam, Quatar, in 1979, and is notable for her athletic descendants. Her daughter Quasara Ibn Estopa (by Ibn Estopa) became a foundation mare for Dr. Weckenmann's endurance breeding program. An active endurance horse herself and an Elite mare of the German registry, Quasara Ibn Estopa produced six successful endurance horses including two stallions, Quadir Ibn Masri (by Masri) and Soufi (by Estopa Son), who have sired endurance horses themselves. All of these are "straight Om El Arab," demonstrating that these horses can perform as well as look pretty.

Horses are not priced according to the name of the prospective buyer. Our sale horses have the same prices no matter who comes shopping. We don't negotiate, we get our prices, and the buyers are always happy. We have good relationships with buyers after the sales, and that is also part of putting fair prices on them. We want to be sure that buyers have an opportunity to be successful with them, and economics is always part of that success. — Sigi



YEMANAH

*gr. 1979 (Kadi x Rasalhague by Kiew)
Bred by Luis de Ybarra.
Owned by Heinz & Sigi Merz.
Photo at Om El Arab in 1982.*

Yemanah, a half-sister to Spanish National Champion Calahonda and last of the Spanish imports, more or less only passed through. Both she and her 1984 daughter Yanah Ibn Estopa were exported to Australia. They have numerous descendants in Australia and New Zealand, some of whom have won championships.

I feel our program produces not only great females, but also great stallions, which is a rarity. — Sigi

THE EGYPTIAN MARES



BINT RAWYA

*gr. 1963 (Bandong x Rawya by Sid Abouhom)
Bred by Albadeia Stables.
Owned by Sigi Merz.
Photo at Om El Arab in 1973.*

The only one of the Egyptian mares registered in Sigi's name, Bint Rawya has the distinction of remaining at Om El Arab and of producing the only significant straight Egyptian son of Shaker El Masri, Ibn Shaker I. Before this, however, she had already produced two daughters by Kayed at Albadeia Stud. The oldest, Adam Kheir, was imported to Germany by Erich Hagenlocher and established her own family at his stud. The second, Bassima, also came to Om El Arab. She had several foals at Om El Arab by Malik, of which most were exported to the U.S.; the last two became broodmares

for the late Dr. Helmut Freimüller in Germany.

At Om El Arab, Bint Rawya had two sons by Shaker El Masri, of which Ibn Shaker I became the only Shaker El Masri son to find his way into straight Egyptian breeding. His full sister Rawyana still has an existing branch in German straight Egyptian breeding as well.



GAMILA

*b. 1969 (*Ramses Fayek x *Shook)
Bred by Albadeia Stables.
Owned by Heinz Merz.
Sold to Ursula Poth in 1977.
Photo at Om El Arab in 1973.*

Gamila, pictured here running with Prometida's daughter Zagala, was the only *Ramses Fayek daughter imported to Germany. She produced three Shaker El Masri fillies for Om El Arab, of which two, Gazeela and Gameerah, were exported to the U.S. and have straight Egyptian descendants

For Sigi the golden rule for the Golden Cross has been to never sacrifice type. “I’ve always been committed to breeding a horse that looks ethereal as seen in old paintings,” she said. “Beginning with the original mating of Shaker El Masri with *Estopa, the horses have a universal appeal. The horses of this family complete the picture for a lot of breeders in that they have ultra-type, a smooth balanced structure, and are taller rather than smaller. They are very showy, but friendly. And they pass it on. They are not an end product. Typically, our clients are producing champions for their clients.” — Sigi

there. In 1978 Gamila was sold to Ursula Poth, and her remaining foals were by Ibn Galal. These included the licensed stallion Ibn Magdi and the mare Galila, who was a successful broodmare for Serenity Farms for several years. Galila was also the dam of AR Ninive and AR Yashmak, two excellent producers for Birkhof Stud in Germany. AR Ninive is the dam of one of their chief sires today, the beautiful black stallion DF Siraj.



NAGLAA

ch. 1966 (*Mamdoub x Fadila*
by *Sheikh El Arab*)
Bred by *Albadeia Stables*.
Owned by *Heinz Merz*.
Photo at *Om El Arab* in 1973.

Naglaa founded quite an extensive international dynasty, though not exclusively straight Egyptian. She came over with her daughter Azeema by Ibn

Ghalabawi, a stallion whose somewhat obscure background initially led to Azeema and her offspring being denied purebred registration, but the matter was eventually cleared up and the family reinstated. In fact, Azeema’s daughter Azeela (by Shaker El Masri) was the dam of Al Ambra (by Ibn Galal), yet another foundation mare of the Weckenmann endurance breeding program that carries the title Elite. Al Ambra has produced a tribe of successful performers, including Dr. Weckenmann’s current chief sire Ahad Ibn Scha Ze Man.

Naglaa herself produced two daughters by Shaker El Masri, Nashakla and Shaklana. Nashakla was first exported to Sweden and then imported to the U.S. by Bentwood Farms, renamed AK Nashakla, along with her daughter Shakina (by Shakhs). Shaklana produced two daughters by Malik, Schahara who also came to the U.S., and Bint Shaklana, who was exported first to Belgium and then to France. Her Belgian-bred daughter NA Copala (by Warandes Plakat) was also sold to France and became a highly successful broodmare who appears in pedigrees of champions today through her son Ekla de Gargassan and her granddaughter Harmattan Maharaba.



OM EL ARAB

gr. 1967 (*Alaa El Din x Tifla* by *Nazeer*)
Bred by *Albadeia Stables*.
Owned by *Heinz Merz*.
Photo at *Om El Arab* in 1973.

The mare who gave the stud her name, “Mother of Arabians,” proved to be the most successful of the Egyptian imports. A large part of this is due to her daughter who was imported in utero, Omera, sired by the *Morafic son Shawki. Omera’s daughter Ora, by Bint Rawya’s son Ibn Shaker I, founded the hugely successful “O” family that produced several distinguished sires: *Orashan, first imported to the U.S. by Imperial Arabian Stud and later sold to

Australia; Orashaan, a show champion and distinguished sire both in Germany and Britain; Orayan, a sire of winners in Britain; and Al Najma Ovid, a premium stallion, endurance performer and sports horse sire in Germany. Om El Arab's daughter Onasha (by Shaker El Masri) was a broodmare for Count Zichy-Thyssen in Argentina, and her full brother Omar El Shaker went to South Africa as a breeding stallion. Om El Arab was then sold to Friedhelm Dutzi, for whom she produced three licensed stallions in a row by Kaisoon (of which *Bakil was sold to the U.S.), and finally joined the Kübe family's Brigittenhof Stud, producing four daughters who have bred on into modern straight Egyptian lines in Germany.

THE POLISH MARES



CAMPINA

*gr. 1967 (Ego x Camera by Aquinor)
Bred by Janow Podlaski Stud.
Photo at Om El Arab in 1973.*

Campina was an extremely well-bred mare, by the Comet son Ego out of Camera, who herself was a foundation mare for Patricia Lindsay in England. In fact Campina was one of the very few

daughters of Camera, who notoriously produced one colt after another! With this background, it is both strange and sad that of all the mares imported by Om El Arab, she is the one whose blood did not survive. She produced three daughters in succession, all by Shaker El Masri, but none of them was ever used for breeding.



ZBROJA

*ch. 1967 (Kord x Zlota Iwa by Arax)
Bred by Michalow Stud.
Owned by Heinz Merz.
Photo at Om El Arab in 1973.*

Having dedicated a "Moments in Time" to Zbroja not so long ago (November 2016 issue, page 132), I will not go into great detail here. A hugely successful broodmare, Zbroja produced three sons and nine daughters that all bred on. Of her sons by Shaker El Masri, Zareef was a sire in Sweden, Zaraf in Denmark, and Scha Ze Man in Germany. Their full sister Zareefa was a foundation mare for Calbar Arabians in Denmark; and Zaleen (by Ibn Shaker I) has descendants both in Germany and Australia through her daughter Zadira (by *El Shaklan). Later in life, Zbroja herself joined Calbar in Denmark and had another four daughters, of which two have been top producers for Calbar.

“One of the proudest *Sanadik achievements occurred this year and has a little history that goes with it. In 1978, Isabella Zawadzka, overseer of the breeding studs in Poland, came to Hamburg with a Polish contingent to watch the German National Championship show during the WAHO meeting in Hamburg. *Estopa was shown and named National Champion Mare. Later, Isabella told us that she made a mental commitment that day to bring the blood of *Estopa to Poland. Then, after watching the *Sanadiks showing and taking championships, the Polish stud directors approached us at Scottsdale five years ago to tell us that they'd like to incorporate *Sanadik El Shaklan in their breeding program. — Sigi”