



Arabian Stud Books Part Two:  
The Middle East -  
The Beginning of it All

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## INTRODUCTION



*Scouts on the Lookout by Adolf Schreyer*

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## INTRODUCTION

After my first article titled, "The How and Why of Foundation Stud Books", I wanted to continue by tracing the development of recorded Arabian Stud Books, which were predicated by the fascinating Bedouin tradition of oral pedigrees. This has been a journey that encompasses learning, not just about Arabian horses, but the cultures and history of each country and the people involved with this magnificent creature. In my opinion the Arabian horse is the "Ultimate Ambassador" uniting people all over the world because of their love of the horse.

The Middle East is where the Arabian horse breed began, so it is fitting that I begin here as well. My hope is that you will enjoy reading this piece as much as I enjoyed researching and writing it.

Christie Metz

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## ORIGINS OF THE ARABIAN HORSE - SCIENCE, THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

Different theories abound as to where the Arabian horse originated. There is scientific archeological evidence supporting a theory that the breed originated along the northern edge of an area known as the Fertile Crescent. According to the Encyclopedia Britannica (updated 2014), the Fertile Crescent is located between the Arabian Desert to the south and the mountains of Armenia to the north.

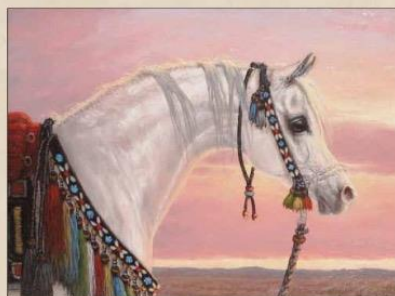
In ancient times, the area extended from Babylonia and Susiana (the southwestern province of Persia) up the Tigris and Euphrates rivers to Assyria. From the Zagros Mountains, east of Assyria, it continued westward to the Mediterranean Sea and extended to southern Palestine. The Nile Valley of Egypt is often included as a further extension. I will address Egypt in a separate story because of the scope and influence of this country.

However, additional recent scientific discoveries challenge the first theory. It suggests the Arabian horse may have originated in the southwestern corner of the Arabian Peninsula in what is modern day Yemen. There are three dry riverbeds in this area and studies there indicate good pasture lands existed there at one time, possibly as far back as the Ice Age.

In 2010, a discovery at Al-Magar, near the city of Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in the southwestern region of the country, found artifacts portraying horses dating back to 6590 – 7250 BCE. The discovery inspired a renewed interest in the area as the original source of the Arabian horse. The Layan Cultural Foundation is conducting an organized



According to the Encyclopedia Britannica (updated 2014), the Fertile Crescent is located between the Arabian Desert to the south and the mountains of Armenia to the north. The area extended from Babylonia and Susiana (the southwestern province of Persia) up the Tigris and Euphrates rivers to Assyria. From the Zagros Mountains, east of Assyria, it continued westward to the Mediterranean Sea and extended to southern Palestine.



*Painting by Anne Hatchet-Sprague, Private Collection*

and scientific study of the Arabian Rock Art Heritage. Their goal is to interpret these ancient petroglyphs. Although none of the theories concerning origins have been substantiated at this time, it is a priceless opportunity to learn more about the history of the Arabian horse and the people of the region.

Another hypothesis is that approximately four to five thousand years ago, the nomadic people of the Arabian Peninsula, known as Bedouins, after domesticating camels, very likely domesticated horses as well. Prior to the rise of Islam as a religion, scholars noted that horses were common in the Fertile Crescent and rare in the Arabian Peninsula.



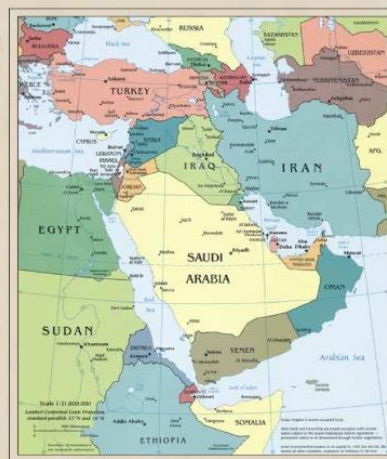
*Painting by Anne Hatchet-Sprague, Private Collection*

There is a theory that the Arabian horse as it is recognized today, developed in large numbers only upon the conversion of the Persians to Islam in the 7th century. According to this theory, the Bedouins brought Islam to Persia and the Persians brought their knowledge of horse breeding and horsemanship to the Bedouins. The oldest depictions of horses in the Arabian Peninsula that are clearly domesticated date no earlier than 1800-2000 BCE. References in the Bible and the Koran, as well as archaeological data, indicate that the Arabian is one of, if not the oldest breed of horses in the world.

### THE MIDDLE EAST TODAY

According to the current World Atlas, the Middle East is defined as those countries that meet with Europe, Africa and Asia. However, that may vary according to differing opinions. The World Atlas describes the Middle East as ranging as far north as all the countries with "Stan" in their names (Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and etcetera), to the east as far as Pakistan, and to the west are the North African nations of Libya, Egypt and the Sudan. The countries of the modern Middle East are all part of Asia, but for clarity reasons, geographically they are shown here as a separate landmass.

For this article the following countries are highlighted in the Middle East: Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Syria, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, which includes Sharjah, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Ajman, Fujairah, Ras al-Khaimah and Umm al-Qaiwain; and Yemen. Modern Israel is also included in this article.



# **BEDOUIN ORAL TRADITIONS – A LINK TO THE ORIGINS OF THE ARABIAN BREED**

Bedouin tribes, clans or families ranged all over the lands following seasonal grasses for their livestock and the established trade routes. Historically, the Bedouin people engaged in herding camels and goats, agriculture and fishing where possible, as well as transporting goods and people. Camels and horses were their primary modes of transportation.

The Bedouin tribes provided the link to their horse's history through their oral tradition of reciting a mare's lineage and history. The tribes told each succeeding generation their mares' histories in detail, including their character and physical traits. It has been said the Bedouin were so proud of their horses that even if a mare was taken in a raid, the tribe gave her history to the victors as a matter of honor so they would realize her worth and she would not be defiled. In the Bedouin breed-



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*This page and facing page, examples of Bedouin life. Photos, Library of Congress.*

ing tradition, it was paramount not to breed pure mares to any horse of questionable pedigree. Interestingly, the stallions' histories were not a part of this oral tradition until much later in time.

Although the advances of science will increase our knowledge in many ways, it seems a great loss that the personal remarks recited by the Bedouins are not present in today's documented records. The tales about a mare's character and personality traits such as braveness in battle, loyalty and devotion are no longer noted. This can only come from the breeders and owners themselves. Most of these original, colorful and often inspiring stories are lost forever. A few precious histo-

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ries remain in the writings and journals of the adventurous explorers who traveled to the desert in search of the authentic Arabian horse.

Most Arabian horse registries today document many of the same facts that the Bedouins recited orally including parentage (histories of five generations and more are now available with just a click on your computer mouse), birth date, sex, color, white markings, breeder and owners.

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*This page and facing page, examples of Bedouin with their horses.  
Photos, Library of Congress.*

Science is also now a part of the documentation. It first took a role in establishing parentage through blood tests and has now evolved to DNA testing for parentage verification. With the advent of the mitochondrial DNA test (tracing the bottom female line in a pedigree), we may even be able to determine the exact geographical origin of our horses. This information could direct us to the specific Bedouin tribes or breeders within that region that first bred the Arabian horse.

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### THE TRANSITION FROM ORAL HISTORIES TO WRITTEN RECORDS

As the Bedouin way of life began to diminish, the tribes became less nomadic. They settled within specific geographical areas according to alliances with tribal Sheikhs and other rulers associated with cities, regions and countries that were along the Bedouin's established trade and travel routes. The boundaries of these regions or countries were constantly changing because of native factions warring over territories, new associations with western countries, the discovery of oil and the politics in the area.

As the countries of the Middle East developed, many of the Emirs, Sheikhs, Pashas and other rulers established private studs with horses purchased, traded or taken from the Bedouins. Although the desert horses were extremely important to the improvement of cavalries and military bloodstock, there was still no documentation or written records of established breeding programs or herd books. These did not appear until the early to middle 1800's.



Emir Abdullah's feast for Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia.  
Lining the road the Emirs are to pass. Photo, Library of Congress.

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Almost exclusively, the written information available to us today comes from the personal diaries, drawings and paintings, journals and reports of western travelers who ventured into the regions of the Middle East in search of the Bedouin and their authentic desert-bred horses. These travelers transcribed by hand the lineages, physical traits and personality characteristics of horses they purchased as told to them by the Bedouin. Many of these adventurers also drew or sketched the horses in their journals.

Sometimes this information came from city leaders or horse traders acting as intermediaries between the Bedouin and buyers, and of course, from the Bedouin tribesmen themselves. These precious pages give us a glimpse into the history and development of the horses we love so much. The importance of this early documentation should not be underestimated. Later, it was included in the herd books of private studs and eventually used in establishing some of the first breed registries for Thoroughbred and Arabian horses.

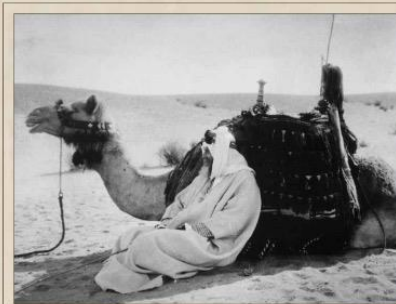


*Adwan-Lowzy tribes. Majid's guests consulting him on the death of his father  
Sheik Sultan Adwan. Tents at Es Shama. Photo, Library of Congress.*

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Among the most notable travelers who ventured into the desert in search of the Bedouins and their precious horses were Lady Anne Blunt, maternal granddaughter of the poet, Lord Byron and Lady Annabella Byron, the 15th Baroness of Wentworth (1837-1917), and Lady Anne Blunt's husband, Sir Wilfred Scawen Blunt (1840-1922). Lady Anne and Sir Wilfred Blunt wrote and published numerous important books and articles describing their travels among the desert tribes. They also kept meticulous private stud books for their Crabbet Arabian Stud.

*Facing page, top: A historical image of Lady Anne Blunt, attired in traditional dress.*

*Facing page, bottom: Lady Judith Wentworth at Crabbet Stud, England presenting Arabian horses to royalty and dignitaries visiting from Saudi Arabia.*

*This page: Wilfred Scawen Blunt in traditional Arab dress. Blunt travelled extensively throughout the Middle East in search of Arabian horses for his Crabbet Stud. The Blunts kept detailed journals full of the histories and descriptions of horses they saw and purchased, which were shared by the Bedouin tribes they met in their travels.*

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Arabian horse pedigrees  
from over the years...

- 1) One of Lady Wintworth's hand-written classical pedigrees in Galloway, Courtesy of Ey Media Productions
- 2) An Arabic pedigree showing the lines of the mare Meshara
- 3) A pedigree showing thumb prints of witnesses.
- 4) A pedigree issued by Arabian Horse Association of America.
- 5) A domestic pedigree from Silver Maple Farm for the straight Egyptian stallion Majestic Noble SMF includes the street and last female line.

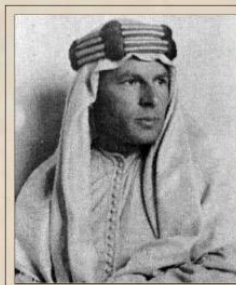
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*Harold Richard Patrick Dickson, British author of numerous books about Arabian horses and life in the Middle East. Photo, Library Congress.*

The writings of two additional men were also widely published. Harold Richard Patrick Dickson, H.R.P. Dickson, (1891-1959), was a British political agent. He was born in Lebanon and later immigrated to the U.K. Dickson authored a number of books about life in the Middle East; some are still available and well worth the effort to secure them.

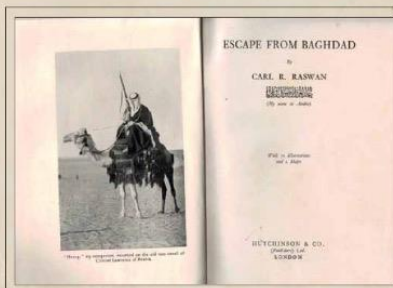
Carl Raswan (1893-1966) was born in Germany and immigrated to the United States in 1925. Raswan was a prolific writer. He is perhaps most famous for his books called the Raswan Index, Volumes 1-7. The Raswan Index is an extensive compilation of Arabian horse pedigrees and strains, which are horse families associated with the tribes of their origins. Other books, such as "The Black Tents of Arabia", are based upon Raswan's perceptions from living with the Bedouin tribes.



*Carl Raswan, was as much or more at home in the tents of Arab Bedouins, as he was in his homeland of Germany and later the United States.*

*Raswan authored numerous books about Arabian horses and the Bedouin tribes of the Middle East.*

*His books provide a very personal and fascinating look at a harsh life and the deep friendships he forged among the Bedouins.*







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*Sir Herbert Samuel reading his proclamation of Amir Abdullah, in Trans-Jordan, Amman, 1921. Photo, Library of Congress.*

The people I mentioned traveled extensively throughout the Middle East during the mid to late eighteen hundreds and early nineteen hundreds. They often lived among the Bedouins for extended periods. They have contributed to the historical record from their firsthand experiences and their own unique perspectives. It is interesting to note that much, if not all, of our understanding about the horse breeding principles of the Bedouins came about through the oral reciting they gave to western travelers, who were so diligent in transcribing the stories into the written word. In this way, the Arabian horse and its priceless history were preserved.



*Photo, Library of Congress*

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*Bedouin gathering, Photo, Library of Congress.*

As the desert horses moved out from the Bedouin tribes into royal and aristocratic stables, the sport of racing became quite important. Consequently, records such as race winners and their parentage were documented. This style of record keeping became the basis for Thoroughbred breeders of Great Britain's future stud books. In 1791, British breeder James Weatherby was the first to publish, "Introduction to a General Stud Book". In my first article, I explained that eventually all the private Thoroughbred stud books came under some form of governmental monitoring within Great Britain and Ireland. This was

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also the case of Weatherby's General Stud Books. Originally, Weatherby's General Stud Book included Arabians. As the Thoroughbred evolved into a recognized breed and government regulations were required, these records became The General Stud Book of Great Britain and Ireland. At that time, the Arabians were removed and The Arab Horse Society of Great Britain established the purebred Arabian's separate set of stud books, which are among the oldest official stud books in the breed.



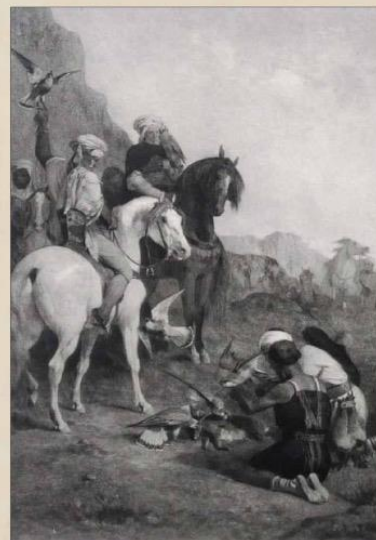
*Photo, Library of Congress.*

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# **STUD BOOKS AND REGISTRIES TODAY – THE WORLD ARABIAN HORSE ORGANIZATION**

As Great Britain and other countries established Arabian Horse Registries, each country established their own sets of criteria for required documentation and verification. This often caused disagreements among individuals and nations about the information included in their stud books. It became apparent to members of the global Arabian horse community that they needed to form an international organization to standardize information, establish acceptable methods to validate the information and to arbitrate disagreements or misunderstanding. This organization would create and uphold universally accepted definitions, criteria, actions and goals, which would apply to all purebred Arabian registries wishing to be members of this worldwide organization.

In 1967, The Arab Horse Society of Great Britain hosted the first ever conference of International Arabian Horse Societies. Representative from nine nations attended this first meeting. The result of the meeting was those present agreed that a world organization should be formed to aid in the protection and orderly development of the Arabian horse breed throughout the world. In August 1970, the Arab Horse Society of Great Britain, under the chairmanship of Major T.W. Ian Hedley, hosted a second conference, attended by representatives from Australia, Denmark, the German Federal Republic, Hungary, Israel, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Egypt, United Kingdom and the United States of America (AHRA & IAHA).



*Image, Private Collection*



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The result of that meeting was the establishment of the World Arabian Horse Organization, commonly recognized as WAHO. The first goal for WAHO was, as stated on their website, "To preserve, improve and maintain the purity of the blood horses of the Arabian breed and to promote public interest in the science of the breeding of Arabian horses by continuing the introduction of Arabian blood into the breeding of light horses."

Since it was established, WAHO has received a continuous flow of questions and requests concerning the registration of purebred Arabian horses. Over the years, WAHO has assisted new member countries in establishing their registries. WAHO has also provided countries with existing registries, not yet meeting the organization's criteria, with structured and standardized guidelines. These guidelines show registries how to make their country's stud books compliant with WAHO criteria, which then allows them to become recognized members of the international Arabian horse community.

Acceptance as an official registering member of WAHO happens only through a standardized and regulated inspection process conducted by official WAHO Investigation Committee Teams. These teams help member nations to comply with the WAHO criteria required for a horse to be declared a "Purebred Arabian Horse", and therefore eligible to be registered



*Image, Private Collection*

as such. The WAHO Inspection and Investigative Committees have worked with many countries, resulting in more approved stud books, as well as a growing number of WAHO recognized members. At this time, there are sixty-two member nations and four Applying Member Nations. Nineteen additional countries utilize other member nations for their registries.





*Image, Private Collection*

### THE PUREBRED ARABIAN HORSE – A CULTURAL TREASURE OF THE MIDDLE EAST

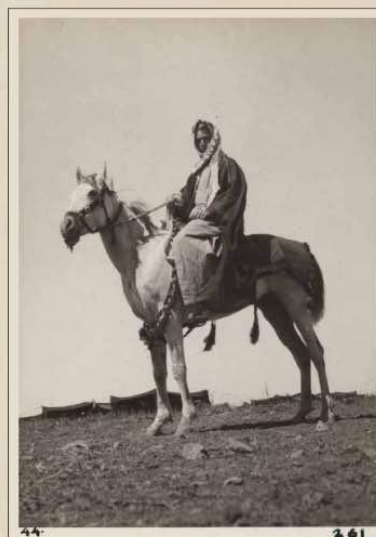
In the 19th century, the focus of Middle Eastern breeding programs shifted away from horses for war or daily survival. Today, the focus of Arabian horse breeding in this area includes the sports of flat racing, endurance racing, show ring competition, hunting and more. Many leaders in the region have established state studs or Arabian breeding centers, and racing, hunting and equestrian clubs as a way to make the Arabian horse available to all their fellow citizens. Most important to breeders of the Middle East is the preservation of the Arabian horse as a priceless piece of their cultural heritage. They are deeply committed to reestablishing the Arabian horse, with its unique beauty and character, in its original homeland where it can flourish and remain for future generations to appreciate and enjoy. I believe "National Treasure" accurately describes how the people and countries of the Middle East regard the Arabian horse. To ensure the purity of their Arabian horses for generations to come, rulers, leaders and private breeders of the Middle East have become very active WAHO members and supporters. They generously host and attend WAHO meetings to report on their accomplishments and to learn from other registries and breeders.



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Each country has its own unique history with the Arabian horse, which is not necessarily documented as part of their acceptance into WAHO. This does not diminish the value of that country's history. Today, the oral – and written – reports given by the delegate members are an important part of the WAHO conferences. In some ways, these reports recall the ancient Bedouins' tradition of oral histories. These oral recitations are the kind heard only during the WAHO convention. As I studied these reports, I found such charm and personal connection, something that is sadly missing in today's busy world. It made me think of the past when this oral tradition of reporting would have taken place in a far more entertaining and gracious manner, perhaps around a campfire or in a Bedouin's tent.

The following are excerpts from past WAHO reports or a synopsis of stud books from countries I focused on for this article.



*A member of the Adwan-Lawzi tribe. Photo, Library of Congress.*

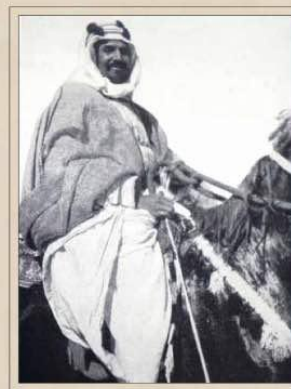


# KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA STUD BOOKS

Historically, in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, it was common to find private herd books rather than one central organization for the registration of purebred Arabians. In 1960, The King Abdul Aziz Arabian Horse Centre was established with the goal of promoting the Arabian horse within the Kingdom. It is under the direction of Mr. Sami Al-Nohait. The breeding program of the Centre has two specific Arabian horse herds, each of which represents significant lineage to Saudi Arabia.

The first herd is very unique because it is all Saudi bred and its history traces back to the founder of KAS, King Abdul Aziz Al Saud. The second herd at the Centre includes the best of the best purebred Arabian horses from around the world.

The Kingdom Of Saudi Arabia officially joined WAHO in 1986. However, Saudi Arabia has many private breeders who predate that year and the publication of the first "official" WAHO approved KAS Stud Books. It is important to note that the informa-



*H.M. King Abdul Aziz Al Saud, Ruler of Saudi Arabia, at Uqair Camp, 1923.*

tion documented by these private breeders was vital to validating their foundation bloodlines for the approval of the KAS Stud Books. In my opinion, it is also an important part of this country's historical relationship and deep connection to the Arabian horse.



### JORDAN STUD BOOKS

In 1921, Abdullah I, son of Sherif Hussein ibn Ali, was crowned the first King of Transjordan, a post he held from April 1921 until Transjordan was granted independence on May 25, 1946 and became known as the Hashemite Kingdom of Transjordan. The country's name was shortened to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan on April 3, 1949. During his reign, King Abdullah I brought Arabians into Jordan that had belonged to his family since the 19th century. Over the years, and for a variety of reasons, the Arabian horses in Jordan were almost decimated. Of course, this necessitated rebuilding the bloodstock. In 1952, the same year King Hussein I came to the throne as King of Jordan, eight purebred Arabians were brought to Amman, forming the foundation stock of the Jordanian State Stud. Officially, Jordan established its State Stud in 1961. At that time, the herd consisted of just five mares and four stallions. King Hussein I appointed an experienced European husband-and-wife team, Mr. and Mrs. Santiago Lopez, to manage the stud. Since that time, members of this royal family have procured and preserved the Arabian horse as a cherished and beloved cultural treasure.



*Image, Private Collection*

Jordan became a member of WAHO in 1980. They support local and regional breeders by hosting the Middle Eastern Championships. Today, the royal family continues the efforts of King Hussein I to preserve and increase the presence of the Arabian horse in Jordan. HRH Princess Alia bint Al Hussein, daughter of King Hussein I, is the director of the Royal Stables of Jordan for the Preservation of the Arabian Horses. Princess Alia is an internationally respected judge and a strong advocate for the humane treatment of all animals. HRH Princess Zein and her husband, Mr. Majdi Al Saleh, maintain a private breeding farm for purebred Arabian horses called Royal Jaafar Stud, located in Amman, Jordan. Many private breeders abound in Jordan and participate in showing on an international basis.

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### BAHRAIN STUD BOOKS

Bahrain joined the WAHO organization in 1980. The Royal Studs and the Bahrain Royal Equestrian and Endurance Federation enthusiastically support the growth and development of Arabian horses in their country. Equestrian activities and horsemanship are some of the great historic and cultural traditions in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The Royal Stud of Bahrain is over two hundred years old and they take great pride in exhibiting their unique Arabian horses during national festivals. The horses from the Royal Stud of Bahrain have a very specific look, one that is immediately recognizable and much admired because it truly demonstrates the nobility of this classic breed. The horses from the Royal Stud of Bahrain receive frequent invitations to international events. In 2011, they were presented at the Moroccan Horse Exhibition where they received much praise. Private breeders abound in Bahrain and they participate in many international show venues.

In 2013 the King of Bahrain gifted two Arabian stallions to Queen Elizabeth II, and just recently gifted a bay 7-year-old stallion of the Kuheilan Afas strain to Poland, some 90 years after the original Kuheilan Afas came from Bahrain to Gunniska Stud in Poland. The presentation ceremony for the stallion, whose name is Kuheilaan Afas Maidaan, was made at the recent Arabian Horse Days Festival in Poland.

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Famous Bahraini stallion, Jellaby Almarhoosh Alkhaani. It is interesting to note that in Bahrain they use the strain names as a prefix of each horse's given name. This stallion was born in the early/mid 1930's and died in 1960, the same year his last recorded foal was born. Photo by Judith Forbes

### Editor's Note:

Interestingly, the last three countries, Bahrain, Jordan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia all have Stud Books for their own national herds, which are selectively bred Pure Arabian horses. Other countries have followed their leads and even published stud books noting, "Breeds within the Breed" of Arabian horses. As the Arabian horse moved out of the desert and gained global popularity this practice became more and more common.

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### KUWAIT STUD BOOKS

In the late 1980's the Kuwait Public Authority for Agricultural and Fisheries, which was at the time responsible for the State of Kuwait's Arabian Horse Center, decided to give greater support to Kuwaiti breeders of purebred Arabians. Although the horses owned by these breeders already had existing, well-established pedigrees, the Public Authority decided to become a member of WAHO in order to provide their breeders with the support of this global organization and thereby joining the larger world community of purebred Arabian breeders.

In 1996, Kuwait revisited this goal through the governing body of the Hunting and Equestrian Club, its Arabian Committee and the steadily growing number of private breeders. They began the process of appealing for a WAHO membership and a stud book to record not only the Arabian Center's horses, but the horses owned by private breeders as well. Mr. Abdullah Nayer Albrahhi, a representative from Kuwait, a devoted Arabian horse enthusiast and later the General Secretary,

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THE PALACE OF THE SHEIKH OF KUWAIT—KNOWN AS DASMĀN  
(the House of Poetry)

was instrumental in achieving this goal. He is still active today as the Registrar for Kuwait. The country of Kuwait became an official member of WAHO in 1996.

Personally, I would like to note that the breeding of Arabian horses is alive and well in Kuwait! In 2014, my husband, Henry and I attended a show there and afterwards visited many of the private breeders' farms and Bait Al Arab, the State Stud and Al Arab owned by H.H. Sheikha Sara Al Sabbah. We have been traveling to Kuwait since the late 1990's. It has been very rewarding to get to know the breeders of Kuwait and to watch their breeding programs grow and flourish. Kuwaiti breeders are very dedicated to the purebred Arabian horse with an enthusiasm that remains high.

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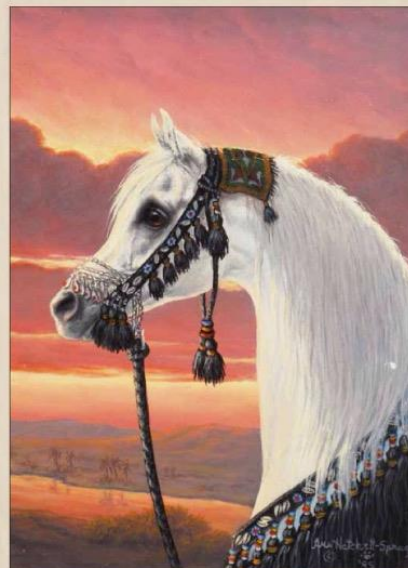


### QATAR STUD BOOKS

Henry and I have also traveled to Qatar many times over the past 20 years. The accomplishments of the breeders there is nothing short of remarkable! They have also taken a leadership role in the realm of Arabian horses, providing support and education for all breeders of purebred Arabian horses in venues around the world. Al Shaqab, a member of the Qatar Foundation has the Arabian Horse Center, the flagship breeding facility in Qatar. The Qatar Foundation has provided a myriad of ways for native Qataris to become involved with Arabian horses through their Racing and Equestrian Club, which supports flat races, endurance races, polo, jumping, and a riding school. Qatar is home also to a flourishing community of private breeders.

Qatar became a member of WAHO in 1990. The country graciously hosted the 2011 WAHO conference and they are hosting the upcoming conference again in 2014. Al Shaqab has assumed a major leadership role for the Arabian horse on a worldwide basis through their stallions, Ghazal Al Shaqab, Marwan Al Shaqab and Al Adeed Al Shaqab. Through these three Arabian stallions' influence on their progeny, they have forever stamped the Arabian breed. In addition, Al Shaqab has generously sponsored education and other worthy national and international events as well.

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*Painting by Anne Hatchet-Sprague, Private Collection*

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### OMAN STUD BOOKS

In 1970, His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said ascended to the Omani throne. He initiated new directives pertaining to the care and breeding of Arabian horses. They were placed under the care of The Royal Cavalry, which is currently directed by General Commander, Abdulrazak Alshahwarzi. This is the exclusive authority in Oman for registering horses of any breed. The Royal Cavalry organizes all promotional events such as local, national and international races. Oman became a WAHO member in 1979. In 2011, the country had six published stud books and work had begun on the seventh.

His Majesty Sultan Qaboos, the Ruler of Oman has always shown a great interest in purebred Arabian horses as a part of Oman's cultural heritage. In the mid 1970's, His Majesty Sultan Qaboos ordered the construction of The Royal Stud Farm, in Salalah. This Royal Stud was a department within the Royal Stables designed to breed the best quality horses with the emphasis placed on Arabians and Thoroughbreds.

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*Omani horse by Phil Crabill*

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# **UNITED ARAB EMIRATES STUD BOOKS -**

Abu Dhabi, Ajman, Dubai, Fujairah,  
Ras al-Khaimah, Sharjah and Umm al-Qaiwain

The Arab Horse Society of the UAE was founded in 1986. Its offices are headquartered in the capital city of Abu Dhabi and Mr. Essam Abdulla is the Director General. Also in 1986, the stables of H.H. Sheikh Zayed applied to become an individual associate member of WAHO. The Arab Horse Society of the UAE became official members of WAHO in 1988. From the beginning, they set out to establish the origins of all their purebred Arabian horses. At that time, there were almost 11,000 horses and over 2,000 breeders. The Arabian Horse Society of the UAE has published 26 volumes of stud books.

The Arab Horse Society of the UAE supports and organizes activities for breeders and owners including eight shows; four international and four national, 52 endurance rides and almost 111 races. Some of the best Arabian show horses in the world live in the UAE, bred and owned by prominent breeders such as Dubai Stud, Ajman Stud, Al Zohair and Albidayar Stud. They all compete successfully on a global basis. The UAE is home to over 2000 active endurance horses and

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*Image, Private Collection*

80 racing stables as well. These countries have a rich archeological history demonstrating very early civilizations with large and small cities, excavated forts, public monuments and evidence of agrarian endeavors. The UAE is recognized for its rich cultural traditions and stunning visual arts, as well as their progressive attitudes toward the development of their countries.

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### YEMEN STUD BOOKS

As stated earlier in this text, the geographical area of modern day Yemen is thought to have had three former areas of ancient grasslands that are now dry riverbeds. This archeological discovery is the basis of the theory that Yemen could very possibly be the place of origin for the Arabian horse.

Very little is known or understood about ancient Yemen, how it transitioned from a Bronze Age civilization to a more trade focused caravan kingdom. According to Yemeni history, it was once called the Sabeen Kingdom, which has been associated with the Queen of Sheba or "Malikat Saba" (Arabic). In fact, the Queen of Sheba appears in other writings such as the Bible, the Quran and Ethiopian history. This traces back to at least the eleventh century B.C. There were four major kingdoms, or tribal confederations, in southern Arabia: Saba, Hadramout, Qataban and the Ma'in. The Saba is associated with Queen of Sheba.

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Likewise, there is very little history recorded about the Arabian horses of Yemen. However, there is a growing Arabian horse population there now. Deputy Minister of Youth and Sports, Hashid al-Hmar made an official appeal to the executive committee of WAHO, requesting to become the approved registering body for Arabian horses bred in Yemen. The General Federation for Equestrian & Camel Racing, Registration Centre of Pure Arabian Horses of Yemen became an official WAHO Member on February 3, 2009. Perhaps through Yemen's association with WAHO, we will learn more about their people, their history and their Arabian horses.

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### IRAN STUD BOOKS

Parts of Iran are included in the area known as the Fertile Crescent, the area many believe to be the birthplace of the Arabian horse. Until the middle of the last century, this area was known throughout the civilized world as Persia. This nation has a colorful history and an incredibly rich culture revealed through art and artifacts, revealing the deep influence of the Arabian horse on this ancient civilization. Current society may not recognize or even be aware of the link between Persia and Iran. In 1935, the Iranian government requested those countries which it had diplomatic relations with, to call Persia "Iran," which is the name of the country in the Persian language, Farsi. Much has changed in Persia and Iran over the centuries. However, the love of the Arabian horse has remained steadfast.

Iran joined WAHO and became an official member of the international Arabian horse community in 1975. The 2011 WAHO Conference included this excerpt from the report of the Iranian delegation.

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"We are pleased to say that The Equestrian Federation has achieved Volume 3 of our national Stud Book, covering the period of 2000 to 2003... We are currently working on Volume 4, which will cover 2004 to 2009... Since 2001, The Equestrian Federation has adopted the use of microchips for additional identification. All horses have been parentage tested before registration, using DNA testing. Artificial Insemination is not used in Iran, mares are live covered and embryo transfer is not permitted."

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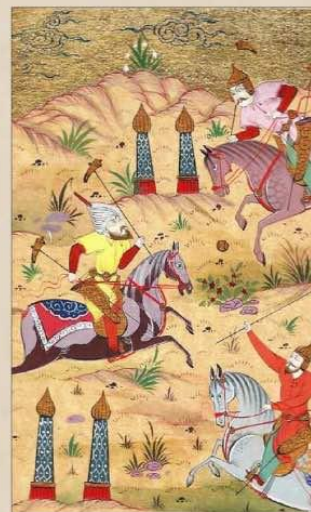
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### IRAQ STUD BOOKS

Iraq is believed to have the one of the earliest civilizations known to man; the Sumerians. They ruled for three thousand years in the fourth millennium. Iraq's history is vast and rich. It is believed that Iraq is where writing and the wheel were invented. The entire world recognizes Iraq for the historical significance of its music, poetry, literature, textiles, art and craftsmanship.

WAHO approved and accepted Iraq as an official member in 1984. The current political situation in the country has affected its people and its Arabian horses. However, where there are Arabian horses, there is hope. The following is according to a report given during the last WAHO conference in 2011. "In Iraq the number of Arabian foals registered in 2010 was 27, in 2009 there were 28, in 2008 there were 26, and in 2007 there were 37 foals. Currently we have 600 purebred Arabian horses, of which 21 stallions and 70 mares are used for breeding purposes. There is a Stud Book published every 4 years. We do parentage verification by DNA typing for all foals, before registration. All registered horses have been micro-chipped and we issue passports."



*Image, Private Collection*

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### LEBANON STUD BOOKS

Nabil Nasrallah is the General Manager of the SPARCA, the Society for the Protection and Improvement of the Arabian Horse in Lebanon. This is the non-profit organization that has run the horse racing activity in Lebanon for over 100 years and which represents the WAHO authority as well. Lebanon applied for membership to WAHO in 1974 and became an official member in 1992.

An excerpt from Edouard Aldahdah's, Daughters of the Wind Blog sheds light on the horse of Lebanon. "In 1974, Lebanon had submitted a first stud book to the nascent WAHO, with 120 or so Asil mares and stallions free of "Iraqi" blood. But, the civil war that erupted the following year thwarted that effort and the draft stud book remained a draft (the single copy left is in my Lebanon). Things were left to deteriorate for the next 15 years of the devastating Lebanese civil.

When the war ended in 1990, my father was put in charge of a task force that was responsible for identifying the remaining Lebanese Asil horses, those free of "Iraqi" blood, and registering them in a studbook to be submitted to WAHO. He did this with the help of Mr. Basil Jadaan and the Syrian Stud Book registration authorities. The Leba-



*Basil of a Bedouin. Photo, Library of Congress.*

nese task force, headed by my father, found 22 elderly mares and one stallion that was later gelded. Most (horses) were in their late twenties and past breeding age. A lot of pressure was put on that task force to register the prettier-looking Lebanese-Iraqi crosses (we owned several of these ourselves), but the task force stood firm, even though it knew the Lebanese Asil breeding was not viable. Today, all 22 mares are deceased, and their remaining offspring are all by non-Asil Polish, French and Spanish Arabians."



## SYRIA STUD BOOKS

It was a more peaceful time in 1990, when Syria became members of WAHO. The Syrian Stud Book authority, The Arabian Horse Bureau, is a Directorate of the Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform. This is the Syrian government office responsible for the registration of its Arabian horses. In 2007, Syria hosted the WAHO convention in Damascus, with an additional trip offered to the surrounding countryside after the meetings. Local owners rode their horses from afar to line the roadside in order to show them off, greeting attendees and enjoying the camaraderie. In 2011, the Syrian delegates at the WAHO Conference reported that as of 2008, there were 10 volumes issued of their Stud Book. The next volume was in progress; it would include another 300 horses and would cover the period until 2008.

The WAHO Investigation and Inspection Committee was well aware that the Syrian Stud Books are unique in the world. The introduction to Volume One gives a complete and detailed explanation of the methods used to register the foundation horses in that stud book, a method that has been followed with all subsequent registrations, and has been adapted and strengthened for the investigations into the previously unregistered horses. Each entry for each horse presents a complete record, giving not only the registered name but also the full strain of each horse in the pedigree, together with all the owners of all the horses in the pedigree at the time of registration.

To quote from the introduction to the Syrian Stud Book, Volume One, "Lineal descent, traceable to the origin, was sacred to the Arabs, arising from their belief that mental and physical qualities are genetically inherited. The continuation and safety of the race depends upon the retention and strengthening of these traits." The Syrians adopted this



*Syrian Bedouin Kabli Sarkers with family 1893.  
Photo, Library of Congress.*

principle to ensure their future and it is applied rigorously to the Arabian horse to safeguard its heritage.

The Syrian's traditional method of retaining strain-names and sub-strain names, which are each specifically linked to particular families within the Bedouin horse-breeding tribes in Syria, is a priceless historical record and is of great value to pedigree researchers all over the world. To delete all this information for the additional horses by just using the term 'desert bred' for unregistered antecedents, when known and certified pedigrees are in existence, was considered to be unnecessary and detrimental. It was therefore agreed by WAHO that Syria could maintain the same format for the additional horses, when accepted, and for their future stud books.

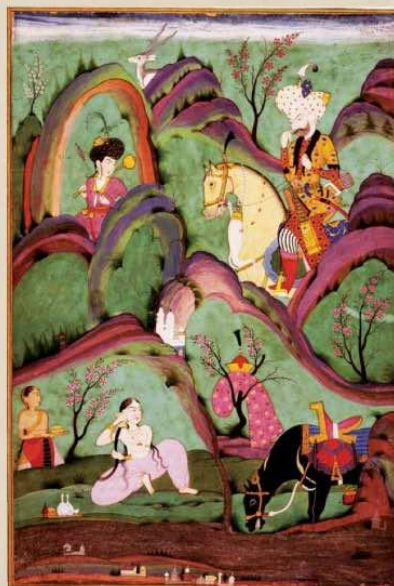


# TURKEY STUD BOOKS

The country of Turkey joined WAHO in 1998. The WAHO investigative team's reports reveal a long history in Turkey with many private breeders. Mr. Erdal Celal Sumaytaoglu, is the Under Secretary of State at the Ministry of Agriculture and Vice President of the Board of High Stewards. This is the Horse Racing Authority, which is responsible for the Turkish Stud Book. Since it was accepted into WAHO, Turkey has published five volumes of their stud book, the fourth volume was published in 2006 and it covers the years between 2002 and 2005. The fifth stud book was published in 2011. In addition, there is an online stud book that is updated on a daily basis. The website for this is [www.wyik.gov.tr](http://www.wyik.gov.tr).

According to the report published on the WAHO website, the Turkish Ministry of Agriculture and the Jockey Club of Turkey hosted the 2002 WAHO Conference, which was held in the historic and beautiful city of Istanbul. People from 47 countries around the world attended the conference. These fortunate people also enjoyed a trip to Karacabey Stud for the Turkish Arabian Horse Parade.

Originally, there were five state studs established in Turkey. Three state studs are still active today. The people of Turkey took the recording of pedigrees before written ones or a registering agency so seriously, that if someone was found to be lying about a pedigree, they could go to jail for six months! The link to this very interesting official report is: [www.waho.org/Turkey](http://www.waho.org/Turkey)



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*Ali Samuhk, owned by Silver Maple Farm. Image, Jennifer Ogden.*

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## CONCLUSION

In researching this article, it is apparent that official registries of Middle Eastern countries show a continued enthusiasm for Arabian horses, their leaders and members. People in the East have been breeding Arabian horses longer than anywhere on earth, yet their official registries are relatively new. The Bedouin tradition of oral histories will never be forgotten; it is such an essential, irreplaceable link from the past to the present. However, breeders in the Middle East today recognize the critical importance of consistent, accurate record keeping as a means to preserve and protect the Arabian horse, which only they may truly claim as their cultural heritage and treasure.

~ FNI ~

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### TEXT RESOURCES

I want to say a special thank you to the many people who have been involved over the decades for their wonderful work on the WAHO investigative teams. It is your hard work and the written reports that have made this article much more interesting.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Edouard Aïdahdah: *Daughters of the Wind* blog, *The Horse of Lebanon*
- *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2014 Digital Edition
- Lady Anne Blunt: *Journals and Correspondence - 1878 - 1917, Pilgrimage to the Nejd*, Volumes 1 & 11 - 1881
- Lady Judith Wentworth: *The Authentic Arabian Horse and His Descendants - 1979*
- H. R. P. Dickson: *The Arab of the Desert - 1947*
- Tziviah Idan; Co-owner Atiq Arabians, Israel
- Carl Raswan: *Black Tents of Arabia - 1935, Out of Baghdad* or titled as *Escape from Baghdad - 1938*
- Major-General William Tweedie, CSI: *The Arabian Horse, His Country and His People - 1894*
- *Wikipedia*: This author and breeder loves Wikipedia. However, I strongly encourage verifying facts, resources, usage practices and restrictions.
- World Arabian Horse Association (WAHO) & WAHO web site: [www.waho.org](http://www.waho.org)
- World Atlas, [www.worldatlas.com](http://www.worldatlas.com)

### ART & PHOTOGRAPHIC RESOURCES



Image, Private Collection

- Phil Crabill
- Judith Forbis
- Library Of Congress, Print and Photographs Archive
- Darryl Larson, Equine Videographer and Photographer
- Samantha Mattocks, Ivy Media Productions
- The private library and art collection of Christie and Henry Metz
- Jennifer Ogden, Equine Videographer and Photographer
- Shutterstock, [shutterstock.com](http://shutterstock.com)
- The World Wide Web
- Wikipedia



