

El Deree and the Fate of his Tail Male Line

by Karin Floyd



Photo: Judith Forbis Archive

The El Deree (INS) tail male or “sire line” at the RAS/EAO has been one of interesting origin and great prepotent contribution to the genetics of Egyptian breeding. This sire line has produced phenomenal racing stock with impressive records; however, its future is hanging on by a thread within the Straight Egyptian Arabians of today. Although El Deree and Sid Abouhom blood is rich within most Straight Egyptian pedigrees, they have been most prevalent in dam lines, and there are only a handful of stallions to carry on the legacy through their tail-male lines in the U.S. Some have sired only mares, and most of the El Deree tail-male stallions left are inactive or currently inaccessible to Al Khamsa.

El Deree came to the Egyptian gene pool as an outcross “through the path of Inshass, the very hotbed of outcrossing” (*The Egyptian Alternative* Vol. 2, Philippe Paraskevas, p382) and as a *shamali*, meaning “a northern horse with no implications concerning purity.” (*Al Khamsa Arabians III*) El Deree is the closest desert-bred stallion of the three sire lines of the RAS/EAO. In the past, this begot certain scrutiny about El Deree’s true origins and purity. There are various discrepancies, although the generally accepted story of his pathway to Egypt comes from Sheik Abdul-Aziz el-Sabek, who states that he “was obtained in the Jezirah region from the Jubur tribe.” (*Authentic Arabian Bloodstock*, Forbis, p134) After his arrival at Inshass, El Deree became “an early favorite stallion of King Fouad, founder of Inshass Stud” as stated by Joe Ferriss. He was a productive stallion at Inshass, and is recorded to have sired about 17 foals. He was then given to the RAS in exchange for the stallion

Hamdan (Ibn Rabdan x Bint Radia), where El Deree sired an additional 26 foals. (Ferriss)

One of these offspring was the legendary and prolific offspring Sid Abouhom. He is known as being a broodmare maker and producing “some of Egypt’s best broodmares.” (Paraskevas, p399) This is where the influence of El Deree is most widely passed on in Straight Egyptian breeding. Joe Ferriss quotes Sid Abouhom as being “appreciated for many good daughters.” (“Reflections on El Deree”, Ferriss) He goes on to state, “Given the influence of [his daughters] via their heavily used sons, daughters and descendants, the impact of Sid Abouhom is considerable on most all Egyptian breeding.” (“Reflections on El Deree”, Ferriss) Furthermore, Philippe Paraskevas touts the impact and excellence of Sid Abouhom: “Even the most inveterate detractors of the desert bred legacy through the EAO had to have second thoughts before attacking Sid Abouhom: Sid Abouhom the racehorse, Sid Abouhom the sire of racehorses, Sid Abouhom, the only son of the desertbred racehorse, the northerner El Deree. Sid Abouhom, born to a desert bred and a ‘shamali’ stallion of ‘parents unknown’ therefore and thereafter became forever central to the whole of the breed. In this instance, intolerance of diversity and prejudice are fighting a losing battle.” (Paraskevas, p384) One has to wonder about the motives of those who would object to such a prolific sire line, given the fact that the El Deree “is the founder of one of the third and last surviving sire line of the RAS/EAO.” (Paraskevas, p381)

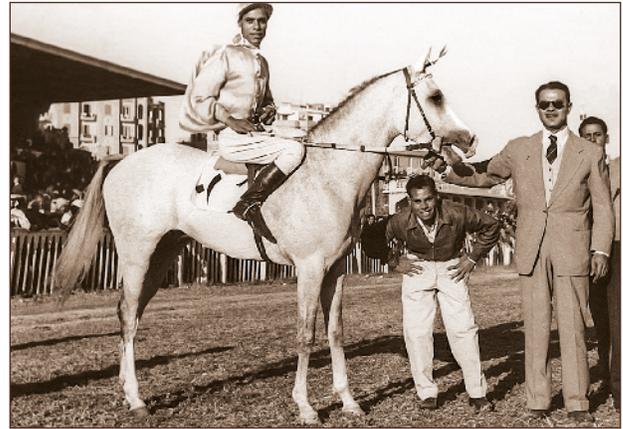
There are infinite reasons to speculate, but when one learns of the esteem and tradition of horse racing in the desert, they all become seemingly absurd. This may be best summed up in this quote: “El Deree himself is best known for two of his best attributes, each fairly hazardous when it comes to how some influential circles view our horses. El Deree was a racehorse — albeit a superb one — and he was desert-bred. When taken together these features can become corrosive.” (Paraskevas, p382) El Deree is recorded as having won fourteen races in his career, and he certainly passed on that success to his get. Sid Abouhom won thirteen races starting as a three year old, and even won a race as a nine year old. He placed second in nine races from ages 4 – 9, and then won third place an additional five times during that time. The athleticism of this sire line is undeniable. Perhaps more focus should be on preserving and diversifying sire lines and their branches for us modern day conservators of the Al Khamsa bloodlines going forward despite trendiness or past prejudice.

Arabian racing tradition, though scrutinized by some individuals, has actually been a well-managed tradition, and was a good outlet for excess colts. (Ferriss) The generally accepted origin of El Deree and his tail male line relies on the esteem of his forebearers and breeders with some documentation, which was satisfactorily accepted for horses of his time. This is the general tradition that racing Arabians have followed. Joe Ferriss states: “Finding exact information about horses appearing in the racing community at the first half of the twentieth century has always been a challenge because the racing community is not a horse breeding community per se.” Even though race participants “bred Arabians from their desert bred stock, they were not breeding based on specific provenance standards required by a registry or formal government studbook. This does not mean the racing community was a shady place that was indiscriminate about bloodlines. The ‘honor’ of participants was very important, and because the British regulated racing activities, there was very little room for shady practices.” (Ferriss)



Sid Abouhom (RAS) 1936 stallion by El Deree (INS) out of Layla (RAS). Photo: Judith Forbis Archives.

Sid Abouhom was popularly used at EAO. His most notable contribution is that of his daughters, which have been well-used within Straight Egyptian breeding. Most Straight Egyptian pedigrees can attribute some of their best dam lines to his daughters. Only two of his sons have been able to carry on the El Deree Tail Male line in the U.S., Amrulla and Ibn Hamama. There is a third branch in Egypt through Ibn Abla, who sired Safar, who sired Rabah, who sired Ragehan in 2013. Although there is hope, this is still a rather bleak picture for this sire line. The other Sid Abouhom sons produced only daughters, or were not bred on. Amrulla went on to sire what we have left of the El Deree tail male line currently available and active in Al Khamsa in the United States, although hopefully that will change.



Amrulla (EAO) 1955 stallion by Sid Abouhom (RAS) out of Zaafarana (RAS). Photo: Judith Forbis Archives.

Amrulla boasts a phenomenal racing career and was an instrumental stallion for preserving this tail male line. He, like his sire, always placed first, second, or third in a myriad of races of various distances, and both also placed first in races over a mile in distance. Joe Ferriss notes that Amrulla had “the fastest time for the one mile race (1:47) eclipsed only by his sire Sid Abouhom (1:46.8).” (Ferriss) This, of course, comes naturally given Amrulla’s breeding: “As far as racing pedigrees go, this one was special. Amrulla was clearly bred for that purpose.” (Paraskevas, p401). Amrulla’s dam, Zaafarana, was by Balance who did very well at the racetrack as well. In *The Classic Arabian Horse*, Judith Forbis records Balance as having “won 14 races, placed second in 2, and was third in 1. He was Egypt’s leadings racehorse of his era” (Forbis, p388). She also notes that his daughter Zaafarana was “a mare of exceptional quality and actions whose brilliant trot and ceremonial presence were a pleasure to behold” (Forbis, p321). Combining Zaafarana with a stallion like Sid Abouhom, it’s no surprise Amrulla did so well on the racetrack.

However, perhaps his greatest victory is what he meant for the propagation of the El Deree tail male line for the future generations (unassumingly at the time, of course). Phillippe Paraskevas passionately preaches: “Superseding in glory all his triumphs on the racetrack, Amrulla won the trophy that really counts: get-of-sire. We all owe Amrulla the continuation of the Sid Abouhom [sire] line for the future of the EAO [and Al Khamsa] by siring that one giant of a stallion. This assessment is not an exaggeration of any sort. Consider this: it is likely that without the advent of Akhtal, the combined virtues of Sid Abouhom and Balance, continuing El Deree, would have in all probability been lost, forever” (Paraskevas, p402). He

continues, “That one foal was the work of a lifetime” (Paraskevas, p402). It is troubling to realize that horses descending from such a successful sire line hang by such a thread for Al Khamsa breeders, and agreeably, thank goodness for Akhtal.

Akhtal certainly brought a good amount of type to this sire line. It is not known for its particular refinement, although, when we evaluate what is considered to be classic Arabian type, the El Deree sire line individuals certainly fit the bill. Akhtal is noted as being “an utterly dominant stallion and quite a prepotent sire” (Paraskevas, p403). The resemblance of individuals of this sire line is notably and unmistakably striking. Akhtal, like his sires before him, only ever placed first, second, or third on the racetrack, according to his racing record in *Authentic Arabian Bloodstock* by Judith Forbis. However short his racing career compared to his forebearers, the genetic prepotency continued on through this sire, as his sons have inherited his build, type and athleticism. This quote from *The Egyptian Alternative* Vol. 2 begs the question as to what is “worth” preserving regarding this sire line: “Akhtal was a giant for our breed, as were El Deree, Sid Abouhom and Amrulla before him. The questions now must be: will this legacy be continued? Do we care enough to make a special place in our hearts and in our breeding programs for this endangered sire line?” (Paraskevas, p404)



Akhtal (EAO) 1968 stallion by Amrulla (EAO) out of Hagir (EAO).
Photo: Judith Forbis.

Luckily for the future Straight Egyptian breeding, a handful of breeders had this same attitude, and became seemingly unlikely visionaries and preservationist warriors. Sandy Cleland is one such breeder who had the foresight to host this sire along with her late friend Karen Hesel. Karen bred El Musaffir (by *Ibn El Balad), and Sandy bred Musafir Almubarak (by El Musaffir) out of Amber Aziza and has been very familiar with the El Deree sire line for many years.



*Ibn Al Balad, 1977 stallion by Akhtal (EAO) out of El Yatima.

*Ibn El Balad was imported by Rick and Ann Heber in 1978. Of *Ibn El Balad, Sandy notes that he was a big stallion who sired size in his get. He “was consistent in siring really good hind ends, spectacular necks, shoulders, heads, and really good feet” even when matched to mares that weren’t as lucky in the hoof department. He crossed well with CMK/Abu Farwa mares as well as Babson mares, “giving them more stretch.” Sandy also comments that he had “the most stunning front end with great muscle definition” combined with a neck that had great break at the poll. *Ibn El Balad never raced on the track, but sired a son, Anwarr El Balad, who won two races, came in second once, and third once. *Ibn El Balad’s other progeny have been successful showing in dressage, hunter, Western classes, saddle seat, and halter which goes to show that *Ibn El Balad was capable of consistently siring good movement, conformation, and type.

One of his only sons that continued on his sire line was El Musaffir. Sadly, his potential at the racetrack was never reached due to a bowed tendon injury he suffered while in training. He did sire two foals before his untimely death at 11 years old: a filly and also a colt to continue on the El Deree sire line, Musafir Almubarak.

When choosing mares to breed into this sire line, Sandy picked Koheilan bred mares with massive shoulders and necks to be balanced by the Akhtal blood in the pedigree. Phillippe Paraskevas also took advantage of this mix of bloodlines in his breeding program, and he advises such a cross in his *The Egyptian Alternative* Vol. 2: “Bring in Koheilan and Rabdan blood to keep pretty curves in the picture, and to avoid narrowness, angularity, straightish lines and lack of substance” (Paraskevas, p399). Although Musafir Almubarak and his sire are more rounded and less angular than some of the El Deree tail male stallions, it is important to keep width in mind when choosing mare matches for this sire line.

Other stallions that were bred for this same look were the excellent and impressive Ibn Akhtal who was shown primarily in hunter classes but also placed well in Most Classic Head classes, *GAF Mosaad and *GAF Hosam (although *GAF Hosam doesn’t have Anter directly in his pedigree, Hamdan, Anter’s sire, is present). Clearly, this type of cross is a “nick” and can produce some impressive individuals. Some currently active stallions, although not of the El Deree tail male line but are good representations of



*El Musaffir, 1997 stallion by *Ibn Al Balad out of CA Serra. Trotting photo by Christine Emmert.*

this cross as a nick, come from the Treff-Haven breeding program (which focused heavily on Inshass breeding) through individuals such as Treff-Haven Labeeb, Treff-Haven Sabeel, Treff-Haven Latif and Baroud DHA. They have *GAF Mosaad in their pedigrees through the late mare Bint Lebleba. *GAF Mosaad excelled in dressage and jumping, boasting a successful show career much like other El Deree tail male individuals. He did sire one son, Nuzul, who is currently inaccessible to Al Khamsa and thus, the Ibn Hamama branch of the El Deree tail male line may soon become lost to Al Khamsa. This leaves Sandy's stallion, Musafir Almubarak, as one from only a handful of current and active stallions to preserve this critically endangered tail-male line.

Looking at Musafir Almubarak, Sandy's attention to curves while maintaining a racy build is quite obvious as well as her proclivity to this nick in Egyptian bloodlines. She also paid attention to temperament, as this sire line has been known to produce some

unruly colts. Sandy jokes that El Musaffir was nicknamed "Killer" as a joke because of his very gentle nature, and thus was a suitable sire to continue on the El Deree tail male line through his son Musafir Almubarak. Some were notably "bold to the point of being aggressive" according to Sandy and probably best gelded if not managed by careful handlers. Perhaps that is another contributing factor to the rarity of this tail male line, along with characteristically producing more fillies than colts throughout its history.

Luckily, Musafir is an excellent candidate to breed this sire line on. He is a handsome and stretchy chestnut stallion with a very similar build to his El Deree tail male ancestors except with a more rounded, refined, and laidback shoulder and hip, much resembling his sire El Musaffir. He has the traditional deep heartgirth of the El Deree sire line and as well as the characteristic racy build. His head is very correct although not particularly refined, but is still an excellent representation of a masculine Egyptian stallion head with



Musafir Almubarak, 2008 stallion by El Musaffir out of Amber Aziza. Photo at right by Sandy Cleland.



expressive and well placed eyes, ample room in his nasal passages to breathe, a large jibbah and large jowls. He is strikingly handsome, and when given his attention, his eye is soft and his affections generous. He also sports a great break in the poll like his forefathers *Ibn El Balad and El Musaffir.

Unfortunately, also like his sire El Musafir, he suffered a tendon injury on a hind leg so he never raced, although he is sound and broke to ride. Musafir inherited a gentle temperament, sometimes uncharacteristic of this sire line. However, that does not discount this tail male line in and how precious it really is to the Straight Egyptian Arabian and Al Khamsa gene pool. Rather, I think it goes to show what careful breeding, management and temperament selection can do to bring out the best in a cross, especially with a sire line that has produced such successful racing competitors. Studiers and breeders of the tail-male lines will agree that a worthy sire line perpetuates its value in a pedigree just as the tail-female line does. In the same sense that inherent characteristics of a tail female line influence a pedigree, so does the tail-male line through DNA that is not recombinant via the Y-chromosome. Perhaps more thought should be given to preserving tail-male lines and attention paid to what they bring to a pedigree.

Considering the need for tail-male line preservation, in 2020, I bred Musafir Almubarak to my Code Red Preservation mare Halimah CW, who foaled a beautiful filly in 2021. She balances the potential spectrums of the outcross given the pedigrees of her sire and dam. This filly sports this same characteristic racy build, with long legs, elegantly slanted shoulder and hip angles as Musafir. Halimah CW brought ample Ibn Rabdan blood into the mix, a great compliment to this El Deree sire line. Her filly, AlHamraaMusafirah DHA (pending) inherited an incredibly laidback personality, through which parent is hard to determine as both are very gentle. Musafir Almubarak is here at Desert Heritage Arabians, and will someday hopefully produce a colt (to continue the El Deree sire line, a line that produced few, although epic, sons to carry on the legacy.



AlHamraa Musafirah DHA (pending), 2021 filly by Musafir Almubarak out of Halimah CW, a Code Red mare of primarily of Egyptian bloodlines, but with a percentage of Europa bloodlines which is extraordinarily rare in the U.S. ■

Treff-Haven
Sabeel
 17.2% Inshass
 Non-Nazeer
 New Egyptian



Producing strong, sporty
 foals of excellent quality

Owned by
 Kate & Carol Rhodes

Van Alma Arabians
 Van Buren, Arkansas