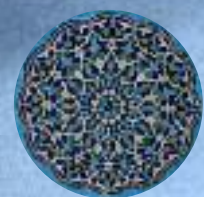


MUBARAK (1990-2012)



THE STRAIGHT EGYPTIAN LEGACY IN IRAN

by SHARZAD AMIR ASLANI

Photos:
MONIKA SAVIER, PRIVATE ARCHIVES



Mubarak with longtime friend AHMAD who stayed at his side until his last moments. Ahmad has been taking care of Mubarak for more than 18 years and loved him dearly. This picture was taken by Emma Maxwell during a visit to Mary's stud



SHARZAD AMIR ASLANI has been breeding horses for more than 24 years and since her first purchase, she has been driven to racing. She has been breeding and training race champions with a little weakness toward Egyptian lines although she has also successfully used French bloodlines.

Few months ago, when I decided to write this article Mubarak was still alive but there were rumors that he was suffering from heart disease. Unfortunately, not much has been said to the unbelievable influence this stallion has had in Iranian breeding and with the following article my goal was for the world to appreciate his bearing in our country. Now, that he has passed away and is grazing in greener pastures, hopefully reunited with the lady he was so attached to, I would like to share his story with all horse lovers of the world.

Strains have always been very important for an Iranian breeder and usually when referring to a particular horse, the first question ever asked is "which strain does it belong to?" So, when Mary Gharagozlou, the Asil horse Lady of Iran decided to import a stallion from abroad, it was without saying that it should have a well-known strain and a very strong mother line.

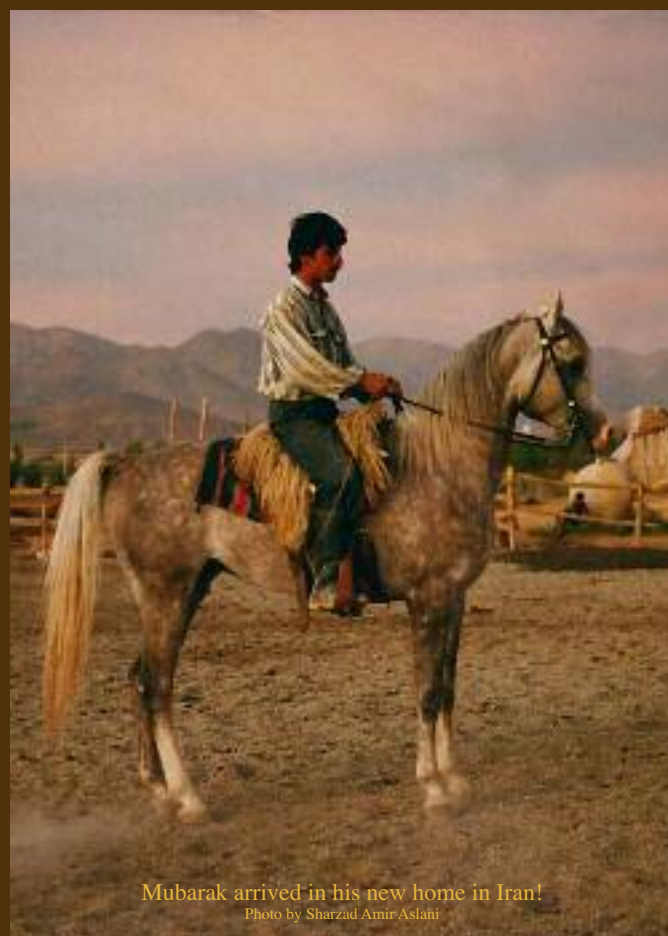
Mary's long time friend, Dr. Hans Nagel proposed to her a promising young colt, sired by Salaa-e-dinn out of Myrna, an Egyptian Prince daughter.

I think, every breeding has a reason and a purpose and we should leave it to Dr. Hans Nagel himself to tell us in his own words about how Mubarak came to the world and how it found its way to Iran.

"Mubarak's dam Myrna was a mare which I was looking for a long time. I could not find a member of the Moniet el Nefous-family in Egypt with the kind of breeding I liked. She should originate from this Moniet el Nefous-family, one of the best foundation stock in El Zahraa, but in a certain combination. This Moniet el Nefous had a daughter called Bint Moniet el Nefous by Nazeer, she was sold to America and it was my intention to try to find an offspring there."



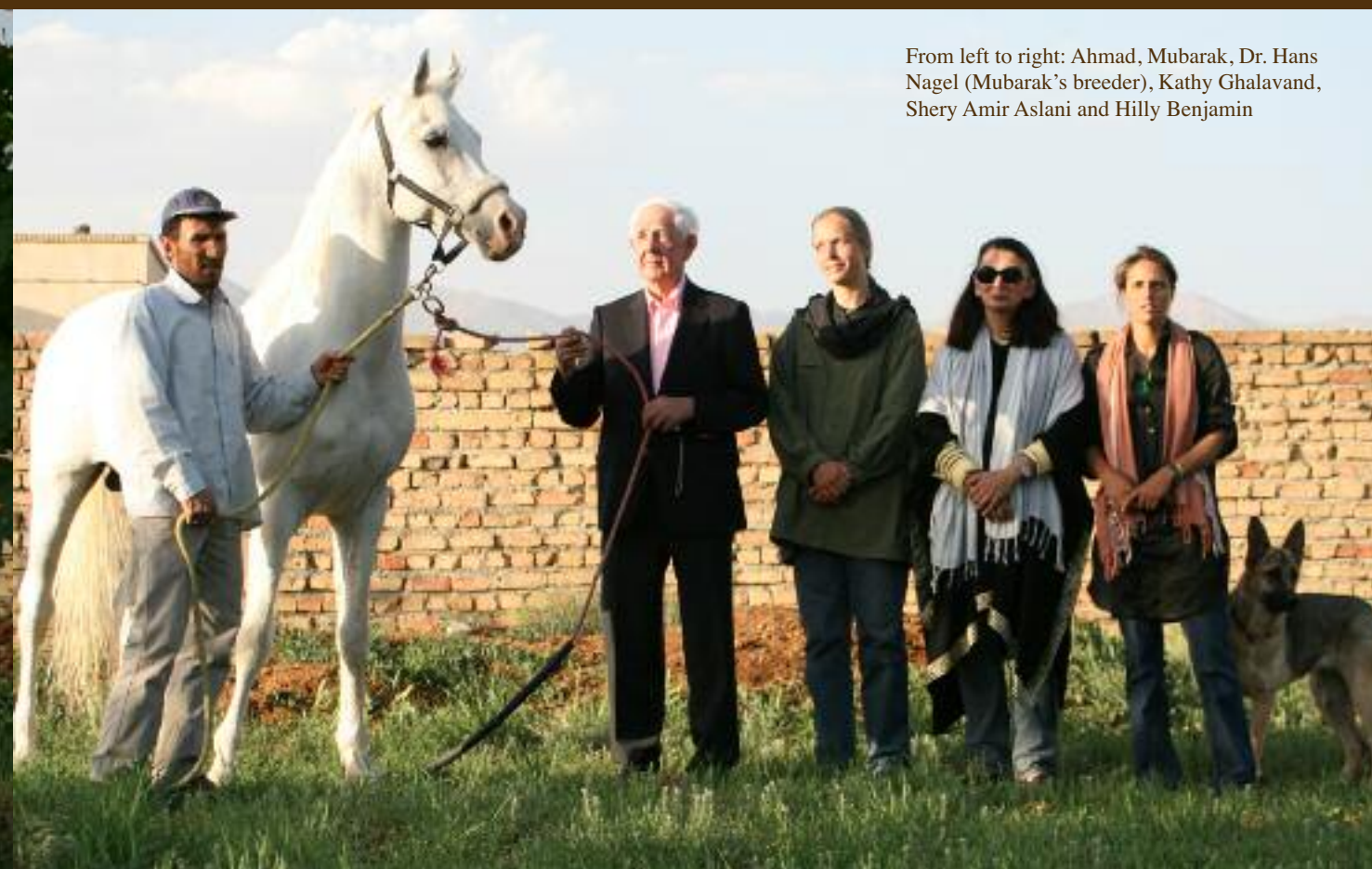
Mary, Mubarak and Chiquita the German Shepard Mary hand raised since birth. The picture was taken 2 month prior Mary passed away in 2002. She did not like to pose for pictures and it was after heavy insistence that she reluctantly agreed to stand with Mubarak.



Mubarak arrived in his new home in Iran!
Photo by Sharzad Amir Aslani



Mubarak being playful in his paddock



From left to right: Ahmad, Mubarak, Dr. Hans Nagel (Mubarak's breeder), Kathy Ghalavand, Shery Amir Aslani and Hilly Benjamin

Bentwood Farms in Texas collected this stock and finally I was able to get Myrna as a 1 ½ year old filly. I had to give another one of my mares away in exchange which Bentwood liked; she was from the Dahman Shawan family. Otherwise they would not have parted with Myrna. Myrna's sire was The Egyptian Prince, a perfect combination, since The Egyptian Prince was by Morafic, a grandson of Moniet el Nefous out of Bint Mona. She was the dam of The Egyptian Prince and as well a granddaughter of Moniet el Nefous. Like this, I had a very strong combination on that beautiful old Egyptian mare. Mubarak was the first foal from a breeding with Salaa el Dine. Myrna had other foals before, but this one made me more than happy. This little colt was quite elegant, had a much wider scope in all his body features: A longer neck, higher on his legs and a very nice head. He grew up in that year with five other foals and I noticed something special with this horse: He was ambitious and fast. In our stud we have a very suitable facility to observe such abilities: When our Arabians are leaving their stables, they have to run first on a sandy runway of 6 m width and about 300 m length until they arrive at their pasture

which is as well 300 m long and 200 m wide. This is every morning a wonderful spectacle. One can see them running into their liberty, following each other for about 500 m, then they make a turn on the pasture, run another cycle, and then they finally relax. This little colt always wanted to be the first – and he was. One day I received a telephone call from Düsseldorf, and on the other side was Mary. She was there to load a few young colts which were sent to Düsseldorf from a friend of hers from Spain. She had not seen these horses in person but only on pictures. She had all reasons to trust this breeder. Apparently Mary had still a different idea about what she wanted as an Egyptian horse. She had visited my farm just a few years ago and she remembered well what type of horses I was breeding. Consequently she asked me : “Have you a little colt for me which I could take to Teheran? I need one of your type, but he must be strong and everything has to go very quickly, since our plane is leaving tomorrow; I wish to take him with me. Please agree that all the rest we settle later.” I told Mary that I would call her back in one hour and I would see. Definitely I was one of the great ad-

mirers of Mary, since I have known her from the meetings in WAHO, and the way how she fought for the registration of her Iranian Arabians and an own sovereign studbook for Iran. She did this with such an energy, with so much convincing power that one definitely had the feeling she would never stop to argue until she had reached her goal. I felt committed to this lady for whatever reason and called her after one hour to tell her that I had selected a little colt by Salaa el Dine out of Myrna and I could load this horse within four hours on our horse trailer to bring him to Düsseldorf. I would need this time for the necessary export documentation.

And so it happened. Mubarak left and once in a while I heard from Mary she would be very pleased with this horse. Apparently he developed well and I received, usually at Christmas time, some letters from Iranian breeders who had a foal by Mubarak. All who were writing to me, were very happy with this offspring. Then Mary passed away and it became very, very quiet – until I met a person called “Shery Aslani”.

From now on, dear Shery, you know the whole story. Myrna gave me later on two more foals and all of them had good abilities, but not so obvious like Mubarak. All of them were gifted with a powerful amazing movement in trot. People kept their breath when they saw these horses in action. One of these offspring was for a certain time leased by Marbach Stud in Germany and apparently left some very nice offspring. I have not seen them yet, but will go there soon. “

As the transaction of Mubarak was going on, breeders, mare owners and Mary's friends were all waiting impatiently and counting the days as to when Mubarak will finally put his hoof in Iranian soil. Importing a foreign horse from Germany in 1992 was not easy. So we were holding our breath until finally, the day came and Mubarak a 2 years old rose water grey was unloaded in Mary's stables. There was no doubt; he looked different from our Iranian bred Arabians. He had the most exquisite type, a chiseled head, with a broad forehead and nicely shaped ears. His muzzle was refined and short compared to what we were

used to see in our own horses and big expanded nostrils. He was a tall horse for his age, long legs and very well laid back shoulder, nice topline, his croup could have been stronger but he was nicely proportioned and he was still young. He was an extraordinary blend of extreme beauty combined with strength. He would remind you of the finest desert bred Saluki dog, conveying the look of speed and grace.

Mubarak's pedigree was a manuscript of well known Egyptian bloodlines and what was very important was his strain: He was a Saglawi. As we all know, ancient Bedouin tribes would favor only few strains as "worthy of breeding" and only such stallions would be used for mating; the Saglawi strain was one of the most seek after.

To Mary, having Mubarak, an Egyptian stallion in her barn was a long time dream coming true and you could see how happy and excited she was, planning and choosing her first mares for breeding.

As, he was still a young colt and AI (artificial insemination) was not used in Iran, Mary chose 5 of her best mares for Mubarak's first season.

Unfortunately, only 2 mares foaled 2 astonishing colts. As some might already know Iranian Studbook chooses 1 alphabet letter every year and 1993 was the Y year. *Yazkhasht* out of Kaboleh (Haddad X Atlassi) one of the most cherished Mary's mare and *Yazdegerd* out of Ghadam Kheir (Haddad X Arezoo) a Hamdani Semri mare with a very strong pedigree, were born.

This was the first crossbred with an Egyptian stallion and the results were beyond expectations.

The change in the type and the length of the head and muzzle were surprising. There was no doubt Mubarak had a stamp and the foals looked different from anything else that had been seen in Iran before.

The next year Mary bred 10 mares and in 1995, she left Mubarak open for public breeding. Few months later, the "B" babies were foaled. As the foals began to arrive in more abundance, we could see Mubarak's trademark qualities consistently appearing and Mary was now reassured about his ability as a sire.

I have to say that we were overwhelmed with the results, their refinement and distinct type made them a different breed within the breed. I myself bred 2 of my best mares and got 2 superb fillies, Banou Belgheis (X Lahabat, a half crabbet mare) and Bibinaz (X Kowssareh, a beautiful bay Nesmani in strain). Both fillies have been the pillar stone of my breeding and since then I have kept breeding to Mubarak, and every time is like opening a Xmas present.



Most of the foals were big, bold, substantial and friendly beyond belief. They had beautiful little typey ears, dark eyes, short faces, strong legs, and "tail over the back" exuberant movement.

Mary got remarkable results as well, Bokhara out of Farokh Lagha, was a beautiful refined bay with huge eyes and astonishing movement, Babylona, (X Houri) was sold for an unprecedented amount, Bibi Bolour (X Cheharshanbeh, a half Crabbet mare) had undeniably an Egyptian look; she has always been one of the best Mubarak daughters.

The male progeny was also beyond expectation, Ashour and Ayaz were not only beautiful but both got amazing results on the racetrack. Barfin, was out of a half Crabbet mare, Geym and right from the beginning, he was already showing the trademark of a great sire.

Barfin was sold to the region of Yazd as a 2 year old and created an important dynasty by becoming a prominent sire in his own right.



Show in Yazd where SAMANGANE (Mubarak X Safa) took the Gold medal and Romina a Mubarak granddaughter went for the silver medal

In 1996, Mary planned a 4 day Festival in the region of Khusistan, near the city of Susa where still remains the archeological site of Choghazanbil, an 3000 years old Ziggurat. And for the first time in Iran we were having foreigners, judging our halter show. At that time, we had 3 generations of Mubarak progeny and their superiority was no matter of discussion. I have to say that I felt it was almost unfair to the others. Despite some arguments as to take the Mubarak progeny out, Mary was firm in letting them compete, stating that the reason she brought Mubarak to Iran was for people to understand what refinement and type meant.

She was right. Mubarak was doing a superb job and although many of the mares he was breeding were rather coarse and of average quality, he would upgrade them all.

As the years went by, Mubarak became more and more popular. The popularity increased when the offspring began to win on the racetrack. This was a turning point in his breeding career and all of those who were still reluc-



tant to use him as a sire, could not deny the superiority of his offspring in the races.

Mubarak sons and daughters were unbeatable and this was especially due to the magnificent length of shoulder they were inheriting from their sire, a very competitive mind and of course a big heart. Many of them find their way in grp.I races. Samson (X Khatoun) was a superbly well built stallion and won in all races he was entered in. Chehelsotoun was the result of a close inbreeding from a Mubarak daughter, Bibinaz to her own sire. I was looking for a show horse but instead, I got a race champion. He has never lost a race during the 4 seasons he raced and then turned into a very prominent stallion himself, breeding show offspring and also race champions.

His female progeny was also successful on the racetrack. Mary had 2 excellent fillies, Bibi Balbak (X Fuladeh) and Hanifeh (X Khabiseh) which were undefeated. Hanifeh was also an excellent mover and was bought by a breeder from Ispahan for an astronomical price. I also



BARFIN (Mubarak X Geym), was bred by Mary Gharagozlou and sold to the region of Yazd as a young colt. He has had a big influence, siring more than 300 foals



FIROOZEH (Mubarak X Sahara), a promising young filly who has been trained for racing



TOGHA (Mubarak X Kataneh) was bred by Mary and sold to Ramon Blecua, Spanish Consul. Ramon rode him in impossible trails, crossing the Zagross mountains and following the Bakhtiari nomads courses, putting Togha through challenging situations. In one of his adventures, Togha felt down a dangerous cliff mounted by Ramon. By some miracle, they both felt in a small ditch, had it been otherwise they would have fallen to a certain death. Ramon commented that if Togha had moved an inch, they would have fallen down. He understood they were in danger and both spent the night waiting for help. After that incident Togha and Ramon bonded for life



PERSIA (Mubarak X Fadak). Bred by Shahrokhi and owned by Bahraini, she is a valuable broodmare



CHEHELSTOUN (Mubarak X Bibi Naz) race champion for successive seasons

had an exceptional sprinter, Chitra which beat all her brothers in a spectacular race. Safa, her dam was bred 5 times to Mubarak. She was a desert bred mare bought in Khusistan from a very famous tribe living near Susa. She was a faultless individual, but was lacking the westernized type. Her first filly, Samangane is a living legend. She has been the supreme mare on shows, never defeated until now. I send a picture of her when she was a young filly to Dr. Nagel and I remember his answer to me stating that it sometimes puzzles him how genetic works

and how it goes far back to their ancestors. Her third filly Rabebeh is not as beautiful as her sibling but she too is exotic and very well balanced. Her last foal was a colt and has inherited her dam's look with a sprinkle of Egyptian refinement. Most of Mubarak's offspring inherited the grey color of their ancestors and though they varied somewhat in type, they would all carry their sire's influence, such as dryness, great nobility, depth of heart girth with long sloping shoulder and good movement.

Mubarak's chestnut offspring were different in type compared to his grey ones. Most of them have immensely strong and compact bodies, broad chest and a very good length of rein with somehow shorter legs.

Diwan out of Zarrafeh has been unbeaten in the race-track. He has raced 14 times (10x1, 3x2, 1x3) so was Honar (X Roxana) another chestnut stallion. Surren, bred by Mary has been a successful endurance horse. Of course, one cannot deny the strong influence of their dam lines. Many of them are from the Wadne Khersani strain

which is as Mary has mentioned it many times "*the horse of wilderness*" Meanwhile, Mubarak was turning into a beautiful snow white stallion. He was not faultless but he was the perfect sire "par excellence", producing the best and although sometimes you would have liked a little more length of neck, or less upright pasterns, he was scarcely passing his faults. Mubarak has been a very spirited stallion, full of self-esteem and loving to show off. This is a trait he has been also passing along to his sons and daughters.

SAFA, a desert bred mare and her filly out of Mubarak, CHITRA a race champion

PEGASUS II (Mubarak X Aashi-reh), one of the best Mubarak daughters

HOURA (Barfin X Yekran) bred in Yazd



SAMANGANE (Mubarak X Safa), a undefeated show mare



PERELLA (Mubarak X Farokh Lagha), bred by Mary and owned by Hilly Benjamin

In Mary's stud, Mubarak was king in residence and greatly treasured like a precious jewel; he was surrounded with a lot of love and the best possible care, turned out every day in a small paddock where he could overlook the whole farm. He seemed to enjoy watching with great interest, the mares wandering around in neighboring pastures, waiting to be bred.

Every other day Mubarak would be taken for a long walk where he enjoyed getting playful; rearing and kicking but

he had an excellent character. His charisma was second to none, making it impossible not to watch when you were standing in his presence.

He was being ridden by his groom Ahmad, an Afghan refugee who has been caring for Mubarak since his arrival. After Mary passed away, Ahmad stayed beside Mubarak concerned by his welfare and taking care of the breeding aspects: this has been going on for more than 18 years.

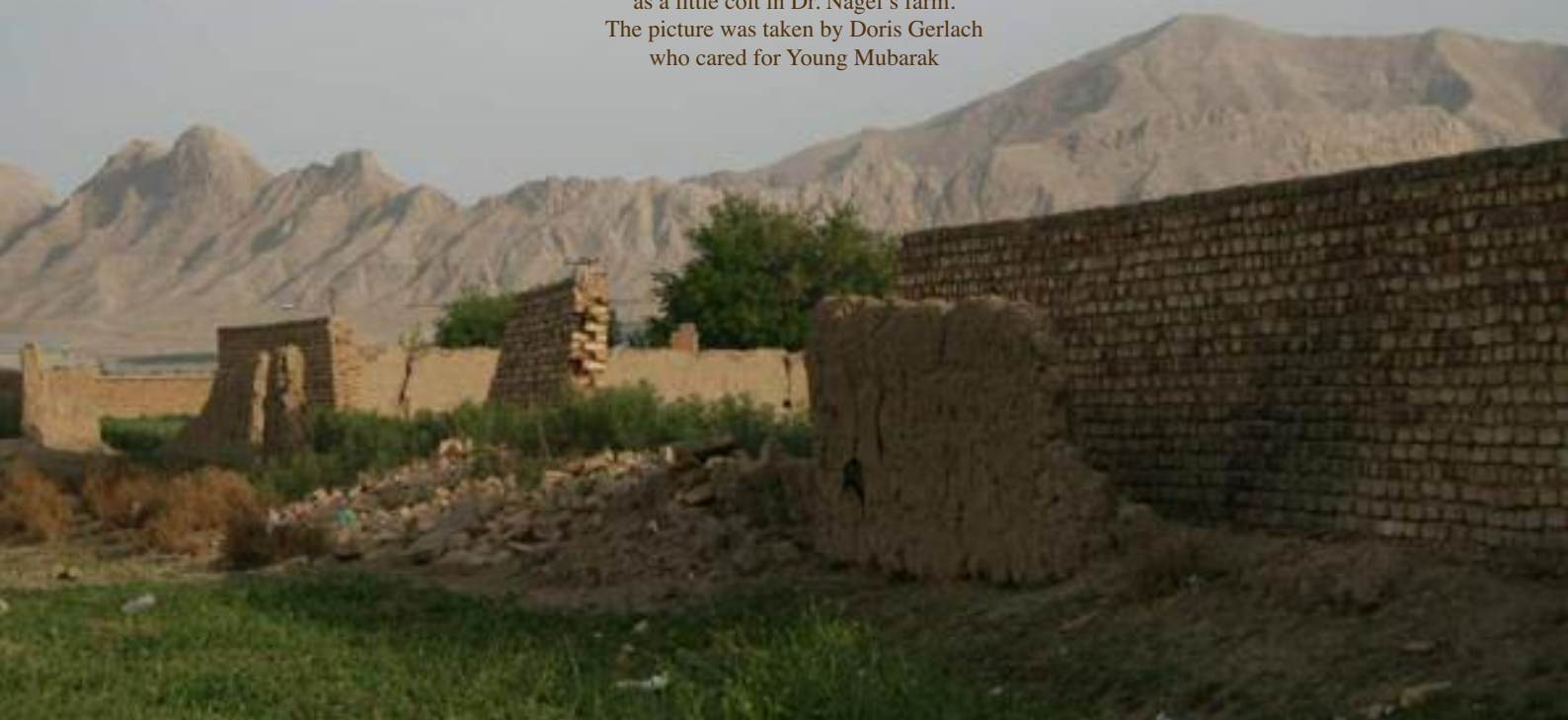
As the years went by, his offspring began to build their own rightful breeding program. The incredible thing about this stallion was that you could see his look in generation after generation. He had stamped his get and grand get, recognizable where ever you were seeing them.

After a very successful racing career, Barfin began his siring duties in the city of Yazd. The first foals were of exceptional quality. His daughters were superior to his male progeny and they began to reach exorbitant prices in the market.

The impact of Barfin in Yazd is comparable to Morafic in the USA. He has been the supreme sire and as no other valuable stallion was present then, many breeders would use him back with his own daughters or would breed to



MUBARAK (Salaa el Dine X Myrna) as a little colt in Dr. Nagel's farm. The picture was taken by Doris Gerlach who cared for Young Mubarak



his male progeny. I have to say the results have been satisfying enough. Khaghan (Akhtan out of Ghorour) has been one of the most awarded race horses, Damavand, Khordadd, Roham, Chalderan just to name a few have all been race champions. In 2003, Mary passed away and she left Mubarak in the good care of one of her friends Kathy Ghalavand, and

especially in the capable hands of Ahmad, Mubarak's long time care taker and friend. Mary did not want to move Mubarak in another farm as she thought he would get depressed. So, her last will was Mubarak should be left in his home until his last breath. Last year, Mubarak was diagnosed with heart problems and was under close watch. This summer, during the



National Championship, he was to be awarded the WAHO trophy but unfortunately, his veterinarian advised against it. On Wednesday 18th of January, after eating his lunch normally, Mubarak lay down and an hour later his spirit left the earth. Mubarak was buried near his paddock, where he has lived happily for more than 20 years. He will be greatly missed.

Mubarak has had a big impact in Iranian breeding and his legacy will live forever in our country. He really showed the versatility of his breed. How many stallions can claim such an achievement, having bred for performance and for show? Few years ago, in that first halter show in Khuzestan, Jean Marc Valerio who was judging our horses and for the first time the newly bred Muba-



rak get, told us in a speech that we should care and cherish the good attributes of our horses such as sound legs and correct conformation, and he pointed out that the easiest thing to change as we were all witnessing were type and head. Today, with the new imported stallions, the danger of losing those attributes is imminent as many of them are faulty and have especially bad legs. What will happen to those horses which are lacking show type and have neither the correct conformation nor the legs to be turned into other disciplines? Choosing a stallion for breeding is no small matter and I wish we could be more aware of the consequences. It took Mary Gharagozlou a long time to find a suitable stallion and I hope many will follow her example. ■