

## The Hungarian Count, the Polish Major and the Slovenian War Horses in South Africa

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### Abstract:

The noble Hungarian Jankovics-Bésán family have long being renowned as influential breeders of Lipizzan horses. During the Second World War in 1944 with the advancing Soviet Red Army bearing down on the family stud farm then located at Oreglak in Hungary, Count Elemér Janković-Bésán de Pribér-Vuchin, decided to flee the farm. He, however, refused to leave behind his beloved horses and fled with eight of the animals, two stallions and six mares. After stops in Germany and England, the Count decided to relocate with his horses to the Natal midlands of South Africa, where he re-established his family stud farm.

In 1951, during the Royal Agricultural Show in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, the Hungarian horse breeder by chance met a Polish horse trainer. Major Jerzy (George) Iwanowski (13 March 1907 – 28 May 2008) was a graduate of the College of Agriculture in Warsaw. After the Second World War, Iwanowski also decided to leave Europe and relocate to South Africa, where he established the Centaur Stables in Johannesburg.

It is from this meeting of two European horse lovers on the rolling hills of KwaZulu-Natal that South Africa's world-famous Lipizzaner horses are derived. Based exclusively on the high standards as established by the Spanish Riding School based in Vienna, Austria, South African Lipizzaner's have been performing since 1957. The original riders were almost exclusively women, unlike their European counterparts. This was because in South Africa the Lipizzan horses that formed part of the original performing team were all privately owned by women who were able to donate their time and efforts to a non-profit organisation that did not really pay its riders to perform.

### Keywords:

Hungary; Poland; South Africa; Lipizzaner horses; Austrian riding school in Vienna.

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## Introduction

In today's modern world with every region of the globe connected to each other via numerous trade, financial, educational, and even cultural links, it is easy to forget that this was not always the case. On the surface, it would be easy to dismiss any links between South Africa, located on the southern tip of the African continent and the group of four eastern European states that form the Visegrád Group. However, even during the height of the Cold War, when the two areas found themselves on opposing sides of the political divide, separated by thousands of kilometres, such links existed. This paper aims to highlight just such a link, from a most unusual source, namely the famous performing white horses – the Lipizzaners.

The history concerning the origins and establishment of the Lipizzaner horse breed is one steeped in the blood of battle. The Punic Wars, fought between the legionnaires of Rome and the soldiers of Carthage brought the original horse ancestors from the deserts and mountains of North Africa to Europe. (Spainthenandnow.com, n.d.) War would also ensure that these original Andalusian horses would spread out over the length and breadth of the Roman Empire as Rome's cavalry units fought to keep the Empire's borders intact. It was also war that would ensure that new genetic stock arrived to reinforce and refresh those first horse ancestors in Hispania, with the Muslim invasion of *al-Andalus*. (Grutz, 2007) Finally, it would be war (and the emergence of classical riding schools during the renaissance period), with both the military and the nobility and their riding schools in need for strong yet trainable horses that would prompt the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian II (31 July 1527 – 12 October 1576) to establish a Royal Stud at Kladrub, modern Kladruby nad Labem in the Czech Republic in 1562. After the Emperor's death his brother, Archduke Charles II (3 June 1540 – 10 July 1590) would establish a similar stud at Lipizza, modern Lipica in the Littoral region of Slovenia, close to the border with Italy, in 1580, from which this new breed of horse would eventually obtain its name, the Lippizan or Lipizzaner. (Jankovich, 1971, p. 77)

In a remarkably similar sequence of events, war would also be responsible for bringing the Lipizzaner's to South Africa. During World War Two, with the Soviet army bearing down on his family horse stud in Oreglak in western Hungary, Count Elemér Janković-Bésán de Pribér-Vuchin, decided to flee from the farm taking his beloved Lipizzan horses along with him. Travelling firstly to Germany and then to England, the Count finally decided to re-establish the family horse breeding operation in South Africa, arriving with two Stallions and six mares. (Lipik vas Čeka, n.d.)

These were by no means the first war horses to arrive in South Africa. In 1652, the Dutch *Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie* (VOC) (United East India Company) decided to establish at the southern point of the African continent a refreshment station that could service their ships travelling between Europe and their colonial possessions in the Far East. The following year the first four horses arrived at the Cape of Good Hope. (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007, pp. 46-47) This first stock came from the VOC colonies in modern Indonesia and were crossbreeds between Arabians and Barbs. Over the years, several Arabian horses were used to improve

the quality of the breed at the Cape. This original breed would become known as the Cape Horse and the softly curled thick mane of the barb is still often a feature of the breed. (SouthAfrica.com, n.d.) The use of horses to wage war in South Africa with its vast distances and absent infrastructure was quickly realised by military commanders. This process culminated at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, when the descendants of the original Dutch settlers, now known as Boers (Dutch for farmers), clashed with the British Empire. During two vast conflicts, the 1<sup>st</sup> Anglo-Boer War (1880-1881) and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902), both sides would employ horses in combat, with the Boer forces deploying over 40 000 mounted riflemen during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo – Boer War. (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007, pp. 85-89, 150-152)

Finally, war would also bring the man responsible for the training of the Lipizzan's to South Africa. With the Soviet occupation of Poland, Major Jerzy (George) Iwanowski, decided to abandon his work at the ex-SS horse stud at Gestüt Lauenburg in the Rhineland and emigrate to South Africa. It would be a chance encounter in 1951 between the Hungarian horse breeder and the Polish horse trainer that would cement the foundations of South Africa's modern Lipizzaner horse program. (Odendaal, 2007, pp. 91-92)

Under the training of Major Iwanowski, a team of Lipizzan stallions would eventually begin to perform in South Africa. The performance would be based on the world-famous Spanish Riding School in Vienna's weekly shows. With assistance from Vienna, the South African performances would improve and ultimately reached the international standard as practiced by the Austrians. (Uys, 2018, p. 37) The Lipizzaners thus form an integral part of the natural, cultural and sporting history of modern South Africa, but their South African story is relatively unknown within academia. This paper aims to rectify this deficiency.

### ***The Origins and History of the Lipizzaner Horse Breed***

The Lipizzan or Lipizzaner horse breed trace their origins back to the Muslim Umayyad conquest of Hispania (711 to 718). The invading Muslims arrived in Spain on foot and mainly fought as infantry accompanied by small contingents of camel cavalry, for their Arabian horses were far too valuable to be used as cavalry mounts. Instead, Muslim cavalry forces turned to the Barb, the native horse of North Africa, which would soon become an important component of the Arab–Berber armies that entered Spain. Later, the Christian kingdoms of Spain would also rely heavily on the Barbs for their own cavalry regiments. The Barb was a breed especially well suited to the so-called Spanish Jineta (Berber Zenata) style of riding, in which the rider relied on his/her horse to place him/her in position to throw, thrust, parry or dodge as required. Named after the Algerian Zanatah tribe, this style required a steed trained to anticipate the rider's actions and obey without hesitation. (Grutz, 2007)

As a military term, jinete (also spelled jineta, ginete or genitour) means a Spanish light horseman that wore leather armour and was armed with javelins, a spear, a sword, and a shield. They were a type of mounted troop developed in the early Middle Ages in response to



the massed light cavalry of the invading Muslim forces. Often fielded in significant numbers by the Spanish, and at times the most numerous of the Spanish mounted troops, they played an important role in Spanish mounted warfare throughout the *Reconquista* until the sixteenth century. (Contamine, 1984, p. 58)

Barbs were not big horses, seldom being taller than 14 hands (1.42 metres), but they were nimble and responsive to the slightest touch of the reins. They were accustomed to harsh environments, strong, surefooted, fleet yet smooth. Their strong loins and quick intelligence enabled them to master and perform the quick turns and elevated positions required in close combat. Most of all, the Barb had extreme courage, and was unfazed by blows and wounds. To the contrary, Barbs often seemed to relish a fight. (Grutz, 2007)

These Barb horses were however not the first Berber horses present in Spain. After losing the First Punic War (264-241 BC) fought against their arch enemies, the legionnaires of Rome, the Phoenicians of Carthage invaded the Iberian Peninsula to establish a financial base from which they planned to finance a second war against Rome. The Carthaginian general Hamilcar Barca, accompanied by his son-in-law, Hasdrubal, and his son Hannibal, landed at the port of Gadir (Cádiz) in south-western Spain in 237 BC, bringing along with them large numbers of Barbs into Iberia as part of the cavalry forces of their invading army. (Spainthenandnow.com, n.d.)

With the outbreak of the Second Punic War (218 to 201 BC), fought in Spain, Italy and eventually North Africa, the Romans were to encounter Numidian<sup>2</sup> cavalry mounted on these Barb horses for the first time. (Polybius, 1927) The Romans soon noticed their qualities with the second-century Roman writer Claudius Aelianus described the Barb, then known as the Numidian Horse, as follows, “They are small and not very beautiful,” but to their credit, he added, they were “extraordinarily fast and strong and withal so tame that they can be ridden without a bit or reins and can be guided simply by a cane.” (Grutz, 2007) Aelianus continues by criticizing the lack of care Muslim Barb owners showed towards their horses:

These Horses are exceedingly swift and know little or nothing of fatigue; they are slim and not well-fleshed but are fitted to endure the scanty attention paid to them by their masters. At any rate the masters devote no care to them: they neither rub them down nor roll them nor clean their hooves or comb their manes nor plait their forelocks nor wash them when tired, but as soon as they have completed the journey they intended they dismount and turn the Horses loose to graze. (Grout, n.d.)

With the eventual defeat and destruction of Carthage by Rome during the Third Punic War (149–146 BC), Rome inherited all the horses of the Carthaginian armies, including those in North Africa and Spain. (Grutz, 2007)

The Romans were to exploit the natural characteristics of these horses to the full by employing them in both chariot racing and other sports, as well as using them as war horses

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<sup>2</sup> The Numidians were a Berber tribe occupying an area now in Algeria.

in their own cavalry units. Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus (c. 155 – c. 220), a prolific early Christian author from Carthage in the Roman province of Africa, (Barnes, 1985, p. 58) where there was a circus, was not so enthusiastic about the Roman horse races. In his *De Spectaculis* also known as “On the Spectacles” or “The Shows”, written somewhere between 197 and 202, Tertullian looks at the moral legitimacy and consequences of Christians attending the circus, theatre, or amphitheatre. (Tertullian, 1977) Concerning the horse races he writes, “Equestrian skill was a simple thing in the past, mere horseback riding; in any case there was no guilt in the ordinary use of the horse. But when the horse was brought into the games, it passed from being God's gift into the service of demons.” (Grout, n.d.) Nevertheless, it was the descendants of these Carthaginian-Roman horses that the invading Muslim armies encountered during their own invasion of the Iberian Peninsula in 711.

Under Muslim rule in *al-Andalus*, the name given to Iberia by the invaders, an important new fusion of Barb and Spanish blood took place. The result was the Andalusian horse breed, which nearly 300 years of Umayyad patronage and breeding upon the grasslands around Córdoba had refined into one of the most beautiful horses of all time. As the years went by, the Andalusian was periodically refreshed with new Barb blood, especially after 930 when Ceuta and other North African cities entered the Umayyad orbit. Horses of the highest quality were transported to Cordoba. (Fierro, 2005, p. 106) By the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> Century, Muḥammad ibn Abū ‘Āmir al-Manṣūr, regent and de facto ruler of *al-Andalus*, had become famous throughout the Muslim world for his stud and his special strain of Barb warhorses. The later Almoravid and Almohad Dynasties (1090-1145 and 1145-1212 respectively) were both Berber in origin, and it must be assumed that the northbound traffic in Barb horses continued during the years of their rule. As a result, there can be little doubt that the Muslim rulers of *al-Andalus* rode the finest horses of their time. (Grutz, 2007)

Following the reconquest of Iberia by Christian military forces (718-1492), Iberia passed into the hands of Charles I, the son of Philip of Habsburg and Joanna of Trastámara of the Austrian House of Habsburg in 1516. (Parker, 2009) The advent of the Habsburg dynasty (1438 to 1806) which ruled both Spain and Austria, resulted in a need for a powerful but agile war horse. Additionally, a horse was also required for the rapidly growing and increasingly fashionable classical riding schools of the Central European nobility, which had been revived during the renaissance. Consequently in 1562, Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian II (31 July 1527 – 12 October 1576), brought Spanish Andalusian horses to Austria where he founded a court stud at Kladrub, modern Kladruby nad Labem in the Czech Republic. After the Emperor's death, his brother, Archduke Charles II (3 June 1540 – 10 July 1590) imported nine Spanish stallions and 23 mares (Davie, 2003) in 1580 and established a similar stud at Lipizza, modern Lipica in the Littoral region of Slovenia, close to the border with Italy, from which a new breed of horse would eventually obtain its name. (Jankovich, 1971, p. 77)

Initially Spanish, Barb, and Arabian stock were all crossed at Lipizza, and succeeding generations were crossed with the now-extinct Neapolitan breed from Italy and other



Baroque horses of Spanish descent obtained from Germany and Denmark. While breeding stock was exchanged between the two studs, Kladrub specialized in producing heavy carriage horses, while riding and light carriage horses came from the Lipizza stud. (LANAa, n.d.) Eventually the modern Lipizzan horse breed, small but powerful usually standing between 14.2 and 15.2 hands high (1.44 to 1.54 metres), was to emerge from this process. (Hyde, n.d.)

### *Lipizzan Foundation Horses*

Among the foundation horses of this breed, six stallions were especially prominent, and today most Lipizzaners can be traced back to these stallions: Pluto, Conversano, Maestoso, Favory, Neapolitano, and Siglavy. (LANA, n.d.) Two additional stallion lines, Tulipan and Incitato were later also established in Croatia, Hungary, and other eastern European countries, as well as in North America and are also recognised today by the International Lipizzan Federation. (Ibid.)

A review of these original eight stallion lines gives an insight into the origins of modern Lipizzaner horses:

- Pluto: The first founded stallion line was the Pluto line. The lines founding sire was the original grey stallion Pluto, born in 1765 at the Frederiksborg stud in Denmark. From this stallion two Pluto lines were to emerge, one based on the stud farm in Lipica and the other from the Foragas Stud in Transylvania, Romania. The Monarchy used these horses for pulling heavy court coaches as they were strong and handsome animals.
- Conversano: The founding stallion of the Conversano line was originally from Italy, a Neapolitan dark brown stallion named Conversano, born in 1767 in the stud of Count Kaunitz in Italy.
- Neapolitano: Neapolitano was born in 1790 in Italy and was an original Neapolitan brown stallion and the founder for the Neapolitano line. Horses from both the Conversano and Neapolitano lines were used as swift horses on long trips as they were horses with good staying power.
- Favory: The Favory line began in 1779 from the stallion Favory, a blue-brown Kladruby stallion. In Croatia the Favory line had a great influence on the country's breeding at that time.
- Maestoso: The founder of the Maestoso line was the grey Kladruby stallion Maestoso Senior, born in 1773. This line died out at Lipica, but it was renewed with the stallion Maestoso X, who was born in 1819 in the Austrian military stud at Mezöhegyes in Hungary.
- Siglavy: The founder of the Siglavy line was an original Arabian stallion named Siglavy that was born in 1810 in Arabia. All his offspring were superb, with horses of this line being used for breeding purposes.
- Tulipan: The Tulipan line has its roots in Croatia. The Terezovac Stud Farm had been established at Terezovac close to the Hungarian border during the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. The first stallions and mares came to Terezovac from Lipica in about 1860, with the founding stallion, Tulipan being foaled here later that same year. Strong and fast carriage-horses were bred and by 1881 the stud had more than 55 mares and 7 stallions. The early Tulipans were big, muscular, and dark in colour.

- Incitato: The Incitato line comes originally from the Transylvanian stud Bethlen owned by Count Pal Bethlen (1783 – 1866). The first Incitato ever, the founding sire for the Incitato line, was born in 1802. His sire was the Romanian Siebenburger stallion Curioso, and his dam was the Spanish-born mare 532 Capelano. The Hungarian stud farm Mezőhegyes bought Incitato in 1815. He was used as a breeding stallion for the time when horses from Lipica were safeguarded in Mezőhegyes during the Napoleonic War from 1809-1815. In the following years, 23 of Incitato's offspring were used as breeding stallions in Mezőhegyes. (Lipizzan.com, n.d.)

The Habsburg Kladrub stud thus only produced two of the six established classical sire lines, Maestoso and Favory. Surprisingly, though most modern Lipizzaners today are grey, only four out of the six foundation stallions were grey. (LANAa; Hyde) There were also twenty classic mare lines, fourteen of which still exist today. (Dolenc, 1981) These first horses are remembered in the names of purebred Lipizzaners, which have two names, one for the sire's line and one for the dam's line, like Favory Modena or Siglavy Arva. (LANAb)

### *The Spanish Riding School*

The origins of the Spanish Riding School in Vienna, Austria lies with the establishment by the Habsburg Monarch of a court stud at Kladrub in 1562. The school where the horses bred at Kladrub were to be trained is first mentioned ten years later when the 'Spanish Manège' is named by the Habsburg's after its Spanish horses in 1572, making it the oldest of its kind in the world. (Podhajsky, 1977, p. 249) The school was to be located between Michaelerplatz and Josefsplatz inside the Hofburg – the principal imperial winter palace of the Habsburg dynasty - in central Vienna. (Ibid, p. 248)

Habsburg records show that a wooden riding arena was first commissioned in 1565, (Ibid, p. 275) with the school operating from a wooden arena at the Josefsplatz - a public square located at the Hofburg Palace in Vienna, Austria. (Schulte-Peevers & Coupe, 2007, p. 359) It was **not** until 1729 that Holy Roman Emperor Charles VI (1 October 1685 – 20 October 1740) commissioned the architect Joseph Emanuel Fischer von Erlach (13 September 1693 – 29 June 1742) to build a new riding hall inside the Hofburg. The hall of the Winter Riding School was built between 1729-1735 (Cityseeker, n.d.) and when it opened in 1735, it offered horse riding classes to young aristocrats. (Civitas Vienna, n.d.) Although the hall's measurements of 55 metres by 18 metres with a height of 17 metres was considered unusual, its beautiful construction gave the building an impression of proportionality that dazzled all who frequented the hall. Initially utilised as a general riding hall, by the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the hall was reserved for the exclusive use of the Spanish Riding School and its Lipizzaner stallions. (Podhajsky, 1977, p. 250)

Lipizzaner's and riders at the school would receive instruction in the art of classical dressage as designed by François Robichon de La Guérinière (8 May 1688 – 2 July 1751), a French riding



master who had a profound effect on accepted methods for horse training and became one of the most influential writers on the art of dressage. (Horse Magazine, n.d.)

The Lipizzaner stallions would be (and still are) taught in three stages:

*Remontenschule*: ("forward riding") This stage begins when the horse is first brought to the Spanish Riding School as a 4-year-old. The stallion is taught to be saddled and bridled and is started on the longe<sup>3</sup> to teach him the aids, to improve his obedience, and to strengthen his muscles in preparation for a rider. Work on the longe includes transitions between the walk, trot, and canter, and changes of tempo within the gait, and lasts 2–3 months before a rider is ever placed on the animal's back. After longeing, the horse is ridden in an arena on straight lines, to teach him to respond correctly to the rider's aids while mounted. The main goals during this time are to develop free forward movement in the ordinary (not collected or extended) gaits, with correct contact and on a long rein, and to begin to cultivate straightness. Additionally, the training should have improved the animal's strength and stamina to prepare him for the next stage.

*Campagneschule*: ("campaign school") The horse is usually ready for the second stage after a year of riding in the first stage, although this timeframe is always adjusted to the individual horse. Young stallions are always placed with experienced riders during this second stage, to help prevent the development of bad habits due to incorrect work. During this time, he is taught collection, and is ridden in turns and circles at all gaits. The main purpose of this phase is to develop impulsion, improve the natural paces, promote self-carriage, make the horse supple and flexible, and gradually develop the muscles of the horse. The horse will learn to bend correctly in the neck, body, and at the poll as appropriate for his conformation. It is during this time that most of the training takes place, and the horse learns to shorten and lengthen his gait and perform lateral movements, with most of the work taking place at the trot. This phase requires the most time of the three, generally two-thirds of the total time it takes to produce the "finished" horse. Before the end of this phase, the stallions are introduced to the double bridle, to refine the rider's aids.

*Hohe Schule*: ("high school" or *Haute Ecole*) In this stage, the rider will gradually push the horse to perfection in straightness, contact, suppleness, collection, and impulsion, to produce improved gaits. Through this work, the horse will learn to perform some of the most difficult movements such as pirouette, passage, piaffe and One-Tempi-Changes. Many of the exercises first taught in the Campaign school are utilized in this phase, focusing on the quality of the work and using them to help teach the more difficult exercises. The stallions are then assessed to determine if they are suitable for the demanding "airs above the ground", the final step in their training. Once they are chosen, the horses are taught their most-suitable school jump, first on the ground and then under saddle. (Podhajsky, 1977, pp. 263-277)

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<sup>3</sup> The horse is asked to work at the end of a long line of approximately 7.6 metres. Longeing is performed on a large circle with the horse traveling around the outside edge of a real or imaginary ring with the handler on the ground in the center, holding the line.



The riders at the school would also be carefully trained. They firstly worked on the longe without stirrups and reins on well-trained horses for up to 3 years, to teach them balance and an independent seat. They were then allowed to control the animals themselves, under the eye of an experienced rider, until they could perform the Haute Ecole movements. With intensive training, this took between 2 and 4 years. Finally, senior riders were allowed to train the young stallions from unbroken up to Haute Ecole stage, a process that usually took between 4–6 additional years. (Ibid, pp. 29-68)

### **War Horses in South Africa**

The arrival of the Dutch *Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie* (VOC) (United East India Company) in Table Bay on 6 April 1652 along the southern point of the African continent was to alter the history of South Africa irrevocably. The Dutch planned to establish a permanent refreshment station at the Cape from which its ships travelling the long sea voyages between Europe and the companies' territorial possessions in the Dutch Far East could stop to obtain fresh water, vegetables, and meat. (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007, pp. 46-47) A year after its establishment (1653), the Dutch brought the first horses to the settlement, which would eventually grow into the modern city of Cape Town. The first stock came from the Dutch Far East (modern Indonesia) and were crossbreeds between Arabians and Barbs. Over the years this original breed would evolve into what is today known as the Cape Horse. The Cape Horse was hardy, could survive on meagre rations and grazing and was a very comfortable ride. It had endurance, spirit, kindness, and heart. It was also incredibly beautiful. (SouthAfrica.com, n.d.)

During the French Revolution (1789-1799) and consequent Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815), the Cape was seized by the British to prevent it falling into French hands and thus threatening their vital sea-lanes to their eastern colonies, especially India. The original settlers of the Cape, whose descendants now included Dutch, French, German and Scandinavian peoples had no wish to live under British rule. Starting in the 1840s, large sections of the population left the Cape and travelled into the interior of South Africa. In order to protect the slow-moving ox-wagons from predators and possible enemy combatants, many of the Trekkers (Dutch for pioneers) rode horses, with large Trekker groups forming mounted commandos. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, these people, now collectively calling themselves Boers (Dutch for farmers), had established two independent republics on the Highveld on South Africa. (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007, pp. 85-89, 150-152) The ancestors of the original Cape Horse had also by now developed into an independent breed, known as the Boerperd (Boer Horse). (SouthAfrica.com, n.d.)

The discovery of diamonds in Kimberley on the border of the Orange Free State Republic in 1867 followed by the discovery of vast gold deposits in the South African (Transvaal) Republic in 1886 resulted in British interests once again intersecting with those of the Boers. The result of all these events was a series of two wars fought between the Boer Republics and the British



Empire. The 1<sup>st</sup> Anglo-Boer War (1880-1881) was followed by the far larger 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) in which the two Boer Republics deployed almost 40 000 mounted infantrymen riding their Boerperds, with which they confronted the British Empire. Boer infantrymen trained from infancy to ride, shoot and camouflage themselves within the African battlespace combined with their hardy Boerperds that provided them with outstanding mobility, allowed the two elements to merge into a perfectly synchronised mobile killing machine – the Boer Commando.<sup>4</sup> For three long years, the Boers fought an enemy numbering over half a million strong, only surrendering when British forces had killed approximately 26 000 Boer women and children within their concentration camps. (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007, pp. 159-160, 199-218) A strong military horse culture has thus existed within South Africa since the first arrival of Europeans in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, who had brought the first horses into the country in 1652, with horses playing prominent roles in all the ensuing conflicts waged across the country. (Marlow, n.d.)

### *The Janković-Bésán family*

To fully comprehend the link of how the Lipizzaners ended up in South Africa, it will be necessary to briefly discuss the early family history of the man responsible for bringing the horses into the country. At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Julia Janković de Priber (maiden surname Fekete de Galántha) (1734-1814), the widowed wife of Antal Jankovich de Pribér (1730-1765) purchased the Vučín Lordship from Prince Kazimir Esterházy de Galántha (1749-1802). The purchase included the entire administrative and commercial compound of buildings within the small settlement of Terezovac, situated on the northern slopes of the Bilogora mountains in the Virovitica-Podravina of Croatia. The purchase included the main single-story house, which would eventually after extensive alterations become the manor house *Dvorac Jankovic* (Castle Jankovic).

The original purchase also included the stables located on the property. Stables and the owning of horses was a requirement at all the old manor houses, both as an economically important business, but also as a sign of social prestige. The stables at Terezovac were destined to become the world famous Terezovac Stud Farm. By the end of 1800, Terezovac was already considered one of the best studs in Europe, with many famous studs, including the royal stud at Lipica, buying horses from Terezovac. In 1860, the first Lipizzaner stallions and mares began arriving at Terezovac from Lipica and by 1881, the Terezovac Stud Farm had approximately 7 Lipizzaner stallions and 55 mares, used in the breeding of strong and fast carriage-horses. The Croatian Lipizzan Line Tulipan would eventually be created from these horses. (Lipizzan.com, n.d.)

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<sup>4</sup> The skill and bravery of the Boer mounted Commando's during the war is the origin of the modern military term Commando, which designates a combatant, or operative of an elite light infantry or special operations force using dedicated operation techniques.

The family's long association with Lipizzaner breeding was, however, in danger of crumbling by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. In approximately 1890, the Jankovics-Bésán family stud farm located at Terezovac, was split due to an inheritance struggle within the family. Consequently, a second stud farm was established eight kilometres south-east of Terezovac within the small village of Cabuna. The ruins of the *Dvorac Janković* in Cabuna mark the location of this property today. (Lipik vas Čeka, n.d.) After a further family dispute concerning its horse breeding operations in the 1920s, the Terezovac and Cabuna operations were closed, and the entire horse breeding operation was relocated to a stud farm in the small village of Oreglak in western Hungary. (Stem, 2008)

Despite the challenges facing the Janović's breeding programs, Lipizzaner breeding was to survive in Croatia due to the establishment in 1919 of a stud farm in Stančić near Božjakovina, east of Zagreb as part of the Croatian-Slavonian Provincial Breeding Program. In 1924, the stud was reorganized into the Stančić State Stud Farm (sometimes referred to as the Petrovo Stud Farm). The stud had a great influence on the improvement of Croatian horse breeding through the Kutjevo State Stallion Habitat. Quality stallions bred in Stančić were given to private breeders for breeding through the Stud's habitat in Kutjevo. The Kutjevo State Stallion Habitat operated as an organizational unit. In addition, the stud also worked to improve Croatian horse breeding through the Zemaljska Pastuharna in Đakovo, where quality young stallions bred in Stančić were delivered and then loaned to private breeders. (Cacic, 2011)

The Stančić State Stud Farm, in addition to its own breeding, initially Lipizzaner, and later Nonius, was also responsible for organizing not only horse breeding in Croatia but also in Slovenia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Simply put, all organized state farms and stallion habitats operated under the supervision of the Stančić State Stud Farm. The breeding results of the Stančić State Stud Farm were confirmed by a large number of domestic and foreign experts, such as Gustav Rau. The largest presentation of the Lipizzaners of the Stančić State Stud Farm was made during the 14<sup>th</sup> International Horse Riding, Jumping and Driving Tournament in Aachen, Germany in 1938, where horses from Kutjevo won several first prizes. During the Aachen tournament, Stančić Lipizzaner mares competing in the 255 kilometres long-distance ride achieved a 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> position. (Ibid) In 1937-38 disaster struck the stud, with the outbreak of an infectious equine infectious anemia (IAC) within the herd. To save the program, the Administration of the Sava County bought the Lipik Stud Farm to accommodate approximately 60 horses from Stančić. At that time, the Lipik Stud Farm was the only stud farm in the world to breed black and bay Lipizzaner horses. (SSFL, n.d.)

The Second World War would again threaten the continued existence of the Jankovics-Bésán families' Lipizzan operations. In 1944, with the Soviet Army advancing across Hungary towards the stud farm in Oreglak, the current head of the family, Count Elemér Janković-Bésán de Pribér-Vuchin, decided to flee from the farm taking his beloved horses with him. As the railroads were a strategic target for Allied forces' heavy bombing and a 480-kilometre journey



took six agonising weeks, the Count decided to complete the approximately 600 kilometres to his parents' stud farm in Sünching, Bavaria, Germany, by road. (Odendaal, 2007, p. 89)

Travelling by road was, however, no safer as there was the ever-present danger that starving soldiers would requisition the horses for rations. To prevent such a calamity from occurring, the horses were firstly hitched to carts and wagons as if they were normal draft animals. Additionally, the Count had all the white horses painted with paraffin and oil so that they would appear sick and unhealthy and thus unfit for human consumption. After weeks of travelling through the snow of a late European winter the horses arrived safely in Bavaria. Conditions in post-war Germany were unfortunately no better and when it became too difficult to survive, Count Jankovich decided to relocate most of his horses to England. Arriving at Christmas 1946, the horses were sent to the estate of the 11<sup>th</sup> Baron Digby, in Dorset, England. Three years later, the Count made the bold decision to abandon Europe and resettle with only eight Lipizzaner's, two stallions and six mares, in the southern part of the African continent. Arriving during Christmas of 1949, the Count established a new stud in the town of Mooi River in the province of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa. (Odendaal, 2007, pp. 89-90) In this manner, the first of the founding fathers of South Africa's Lipizzaner horses made the long journey into the country from his home in Europe.

### ***The Polish Horse Trainer***

The story of origin around the second founding father of South Africa's Lipizzaner horse program takes place in the largely agricultural and extensively multi-ethnic region that constituted the northern part of the Polish *Kresy Wschodnie* (Eastern Borderlands). (Eberhardt & Owsinski, 2003, pp. 199-201; INR, 2019) In 1510, Zygmunt I the Old (1 January 1467 - 1 April 1548), the King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania gave a parcel of land in the *Kresy Wschodnie* to Ivashka Bykovsky for his faithful service to the crown. Bykovsky was to establish a vast estate on the land, which later became known as the Lebedka Estate, named after the local Lebedka River. By the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the estate had passed into the hands of the Iwanowski (Ivanovsky) family. The Iwanowski family patriarch, Leonardas Ivanauskas (Iwanowski) (2 November 1845 – 15 October 1919) was a Polish nobleman from the Polish Rogala noble clan, who also held Lithuanian nationality. Leonardas was educated in Vilna (modern Vilnius – the capital of Lithuania) and then in St. Petersburg in Russia. (Grodno, n.d.) Leonardas, a qualified engineer was eventually appointed chairman of the Technical Committee at the Ministry of the Treasury in St. Petersburg. Leonardas was also friends with Dmitri Ivanovich Mendeleev (8 February 1834 – 2 February 1907), the famous Russian chemist and inventor, who is best known for formulating the Periodic Law and creating a farsighted version of the periodic table of elements. (Gordin, 2004) Leonardas would accompany Mendeleev on his world travels since Mendeleev did not know a single foreign language. (Ibid)

Leonardas and his wife Jadwiga Baroness von Reichel had five children. Unusually their four sons, growing up on an estate located in an area floating between Polish, Lithuanian and

Belorussian control, considered themselves representatives of each of these nationalities, with each of the brothers destined to play an important role within his chosen national branch. The eldest, Jerzy Ivanovski (10 February 1878 – 28 March 1965) became a renowned Polish social activist, politician and engineer who served as Minister of Foreign Affairs of Central Lithuania (1920-1922),<sup>5</sup> Senator of the Third Term (1930-1935), and founder of the National State Union in 1922. Conversely, brothers Vaclovas Ivanauskas (25 May 1880 – 07 December 1943) and Stanislovas Ivanauskas (4 December 1887 – 01 October 1970) both opted to become Belorussian when Lebiodka was ceded to Belorussia after the Second World War with Vaclovas becoming a Belorussian politician and Stanislovas a Belorussian lawyer. The last brother Tadas Ivanauskas (16 December 1882 – 01 June 1970), however, chose to become Lithuanian and eventually became a prominent zoologist and biologist, and one of the founders of Vytautas Magnus University, a public university in Kaunas, Lithuania. (Roszkowski & Kofman, 2016, p. 380)

South African Lipizzaner founding father Zerzy (George) Iwanowski (13 March 1907 – 28 May 2008) was born on Lebiodka two years before his ancestor Leonardus Ivanovsky decided to build a beautiful manor house in the Art Nouveau style on the estate in 1909. (Grodno) Young George growing up on Lediodka prior to the area being ceded to Belorussia always considered himself to be Polish. It was here on the estate with its stables that George was to begin his lifelong association with horses. After completing his schooling, George attended the College of Agriculture in Warsaw, where he earned a Master of Science degree with a dissertation that examined horse breeding. He then began working as an assistant director at the Polish National Stud in Bogusławice, (Odendaal, 2007, p. 91) in the administrative district of Gmina Mycielin, in west-central Poland. (GUS, n.d.)

With war clouds building over Europe, Iwanowski completed his military training at the Polish cavalry school before being sent to join the Polish 1<sup>st</sup> Lancers Regiment. As a 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant in command of a squadron of Polish cavalry, Iwanowski formed part of a 3000-horse cavalry charge against a German bivouac in Eastern Poland in September 1939. (RDM, 1973) Many years later, during a newspaper interview Iwanowski recalls that, “I took part in what must have been one of the last cavalry charges in military history. Our target was a German motorised infantry outfit and we carried sabres and lances. We didn’t do much damage, but the sight of us charging must have frightened the daylight out of the enemy.” (Carruthers, 1968) After being wounded and taken prisoner, Iwanowski escaped and later saw service with Polish units in France and Britain. (Ibid)

After the Second World War, George was given the task of scouring Europe to recover Polish horses lost, stolen, or strayed. (Ibid) He was then promoted to the rank of Major and tasked to take over command of the ex-German SS *Gestüt* (horse stud) at Lauvenburg in the

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<sup>5</sup> A formally independent state, with its capital in Vilnius (modern Lithuania) but which was dependent on Poland. It was created by the announcement by General Lucjan Żeligowski on 12 October 1920 after the so-called Żeligowski Rebellion. On 18 April 1922, it was annexed by Poland. See W. Jędrzejewicz, *Central Lithuania and its inner life: 1920-1922*, Vol. 16 (London & New York: Independence, 1983), p. 26.



Rhineland. With the establishment of the communist Polish People's Republic in 1947, Major Iwanowski decided to leave Europe and relocate to South Africa. On his arrival in Johannesburg, George set out to meet 'horsey' people who would be able to assist him in finding employment in his new home. The plan worked, for he soon found himself working on a stud farm in the desert-like region of the Karoo. Iwanowski was to ultimately return to Johannesburg, where he went into a partnership with a South African, Josy Hicks, and together they established the Centaur Stables in Johannesburg. (Odendaal, 2007, pp. 91-92)

On 6 May 1949, a notice appeared in the Rand Daily Mail in which Jerzy Iwanowski, a farmer and instructor in equitation, residing at Centaur Stables in North Road, Strathaven, Johannesburg, gave notice for his intention to apply to the South African Minister of the Interior, in terms of Section 19 (1) (a) of the British Nationality of the Union and Naturalization and Status of Aliens Act 1925, for a Certificate of Naturalization under that Act. (RDM, 1949) Iwanowski had decided to make South Africa his permanent country of residence.

### ***The origins and establishment of the South African Lipizzaner program***

In 1951, the Hungarian horse breeder and the Polish horse trainer met by chance at the Royal Agricultural Show in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Conversing in the only language that the two men shared, broken Yiddish, Janković-Bésán immediately invited Iwanowski up to his stud farm in Mooi River to come review his Lipizzaners. After the visit, Janković-Bésán asked Iwanowski if he would be prepared to train a Lipizzaner. He offered him his stallion Maestoso Erdem for this training. (Odendaal, 2007, p. 92) In his 1977 book *The White Stallions of Kyalami*, Iwanowski writes about this exceptional horse, "Maestoso Erdem was three years old, dirty-grey and moved with the charm of a young bear trying to be graceful. But there was something irresistible about his personality, his behaviour, and his large intelligent eyes. Our relationship was the foundation of the Lipizzaner team." (Iwanowski, 1977) Due to the natural trainability of the Lipizzaner, combined with the vast skill of Iwanowski, Erdem was soon performing some of the more difficult *Haute Ecole* dressage movements and impressing audiences across the country in both competitions and displays. (Odendaal, 2007, p. 92)

Following the success of the various shows put on by Erdem, Iwanowski decided to establish a performing Lipizzaner team, based on the world-famous Lipizzaner performing teams of the Spanish Riding School in Vienna. The original teams' stallions all belonged to other riders, pupils of the Major, who agreed to train as a team. (Ibid) The first public performance of the South African Lipizzaners taking place in 1957. Unlike in Europe, because all the horses in the team were privately owned, the South African Lipizzaner Team were exclusively ridden by their owners, who all happened to be women. Additionally, the Iwanowski school's first graduating class also consisted solely out of thirteen women riders, which resulted in Iwanowski becoming the only male Lipizzaner rider at that time within the display team. (Ibid)

The reason for this was that men were generally their family's providers and thus could not afford to work without any remuneration for a non-profit company. (Uys, 2018, p. 37)

During a visit to Rhodesia (modern Zimbabwe) during that time, Iwanowski met Colonel Hans Handler, at that time the second-in-command of the Spanish Riding School in Vienna. The Colonel gave Iwanowski his first lessons in the Spanish School's *Haute Ecole* and accepted an invitation to visit Iwanowski's school in Johannesburg. Handler's subsequent input concerning the organizing as well as the choreography of the Lipizzaner shows proved to be invaluable in raising the South African performance to an international standard. This experience led Iwanowski to consider forming a permanent Lipizzaner team which could perform displays in the same manner as their Austrian counterparts. (Odendaal, 2007, p. 92)

In 1962, tragedy, however, struck the school when Erdem broke his leg. While Erdem was saved, his performing days were over. He was thus retired to stud, but unfortunately died from a mysterious illness after siring only two foals. A devastated and heartbroken Iwanowski did not appear on a Lipizzaner in public for the next two years. (Ibid, pp. 92-93) A further calamity was narrowly avoided not long thereafter. Count Janković-Bésán's stud at Mooi River was in financial distress and the Count needed to sell his herd, which by then consisted of 6 stallions, 9 mares and 3 fillies, (Snaffle Travel, 2019) or all the horses would be sent to the butcher's block. Fortunately, Angela Irvin and her husband Jack, the managing director of National Chemical Products (NCP), bought some of the Lipizzaners and relocated them from Mooi River to the NCP farm at Waterkloof, also in KwaZulu-Natal. (Odendaal, 2007, p. 93)

Iwanowski was asked to assist in finding suitable homes for the remaining horses. (Ibid) In 1963, Iwanowski had decided to purchase a property [Portion 114 Witpoort 406-JR] in the Kyalami area, 40 kilometres north of Johannesburg. (Kyalami Park Club, n.d.) Seizing this opportunity, he now proposed to the Irvin's that all their young colts be transferred to his newly established Kyalami Equestrian Centre for training, where they would be formed into a display team known as the NCP Lipizzaner Team. Here they would act as NCP ambassadors while simultaneously publicizing the company's products which included horse feed. The Irvin's agreed with the arrangement setting the foundation for South Africa's Lipizzaner display team of dancing white stallions – a feat not even then present within England. (Odendaal, 2007, p. 93)

The Irvin's continued to invest in their Lipizzaner herd. In 1972, they went to Vienna and imported the stallion Maestoso Palmira to add new genetic stock into the herd to prevent inbreeding. Later they imported the stallion Siglavy Savons for utilization as an outcross, but South Africa's Lipizzan stallions and mares are still considered direct descendants of Count Janković-Bésán's original two stallions and six mares. The stud, which now has approximately 20 broodmares, has become a genetic outcross pool for the Lipizzan studs of Europe, because the South African Lipizzaners have been isolated from the rest of the world for several generations already. (Iwanowski, 1977)



Meanwhile back in Johannesburg, since his first visit, Colonel Handler had begun travelling to South Africa once a year to assist with the planning, choreography and training of the young stallions and their riders. Colonel Handler, by now the director of the Spanish Riding School, even invited Iwanowski to come visit his school in Vienna. (Odendaal, 2007, p. 93) In June and July of 1968, Iwanowski accompanied by fifteen South African horse enthusiasts embarked on a grand tour of the horse shows of Europe. The party, which was organized by the Transvaal Horse Show Association, visited three of the major equestrian events of the world, namely Royal Ascot in England along with the Aachen and Hamburg shows in Germany. The tour would also include visits to the Wahrendorfskool in Germany, the Neuilly Riding School in Paris, the Torre de Quinto in Rome, the Royal Stables at Buckingham Palace and naturally to the Spanish Riding School in Vienna. A particular highlight for the ex-Cavalry Officer would be the group visit to the Torre de Quinto Cavalry School in Rome. As an army institution, the cavalry school was not generally open to the public, but an exception had been granted for the visitors from South Africa. The school, arguably the most famous cavalry school in the world was the birthplace of the modern style of show jumping, (Carruthers, 1968) and Iwanowski as an accomplished jumper was keen to visit the school.

By 1969, under Iwanowski and Handler's guidance, a team of eight stallions had been sufficiently trained that they were able to form the central showpiece at the inauguration ceremony and performance of the newly constructed indoor arena located at Kyalami. (GTA, n.d.)

Colonel Handler was also instrumental in raising the standard of the school and he was responsible for authorizing the deployment of additional staff from the Spanish Riding School, who became regular visitors to Kyalami, including Chief Rider Ignaz Lauscha, who arrived in South Africa for the first time in January 1976. He was followed over the years by other staff including Rider Ernest Bachinger, Chief Rider Hubert Eichinger and Chief Rider Andreas Hausberger, who all assisted in the training of both the stallions and their riders. (Snaffle Travel, 2019) Due to the strict maintenance of the Spanish Riding School's standards and because South Africa continues to uphold the traditional principles and training methods, the Lipizzaners in South Africa are currently the only performing Lipizzaners outside of Vienna, that are endorsed and recognized by the Spanish Riding School. (Joburg.co.za, n.d.; GeorgeNews, 2017)

Successful performances across the country allowed the stud in KwaZulu-Natal and the school at Kyalami to continue to expand and grow. In 1972, the original Kyalami property of Iwanowski was purchased by the South African National Equestrian Centre (SANEC), which then registered the 23 hectares of land as a separate proprietary limited company, renamed as the Kyalami Equestrian Park (KEP). (Kyalami Park Club, n.d.) Unfortunately, ten years later, new financial challenges threatened the future of the Lipizzaners, still training and performing at the KEP. In June 1982, Mr David Marlow, the director of Sentrachem Limited, a Johannesburg-based company that specialized in the manufacture of basic and diversified chemicals, who had purchased the horses from the Irvin's, announced that the company was



considering selling the one hundred plus Lipizzaners that they had now owned for fifteen years. Marlow estimated the horses' value in the millions of South African Rands but lamented that Sentrachem could no longer afford the costs involved in owning the horses. (Capel, 1982) Fortunately, despite such financial challenges, the Lipizzaners remained at Kyalami and continued to perform once a week to the delight of the thousands of visitors who came for the show.

The advent of democracy in 1994 within South Africa was to bring many changes to the country, and the equestrian community was not spared these upheavals. The Transvaal Horse Society (THS) had maintained its head office on the SANEC property in Kyalami and boasted a membership base of around 4000 members. During 1995, in line with the establishment of South Africa's new provincial structure, the THS re-registered as the Gauteng Horse Society (GHS). In around 2013/2014, a directive was issued by the South African National Equestrian Federation (SANEF) wherein it was stated that Equestrian Sport needed to affiliate to its National Structure through a Club System and not a Provincial System. This meant that overnight the GHS was converted into a club and lost some 3500 of its members, retaining only a loyal core of approximately 400 members. This created a huge challenge for the organisation as the Club had to survive with the existing cost structures including maintenance of all its facilities, but with hugely depleted revenue stream. The Club ran at a loss annually, and in late 2016 the Club's liabilities exceeded its assets by some 3 to 4 million South African Rand (excluding the value of the land). At around this time, a share scheme was agreed to by the membership base, whereby shares (underwritten in value by the property) would be issued for cash to the club members. The Club remained a 30% shareholder and around 70% of the remaining shares were taken up. This capital injection has allowed the Club to recapitalise itself, pay off all debts and improve its facilities. The KEP remains the centre of South Africa's equine activities including being home to the South African Derby, FEI World Cup Qualifiers, the Nissan Easter Festival and the South African Championships. (Kyalami Park Club, n.d.)

In 2007, in celebration of Major Iwanowski's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, the South African Lipizzaners proudly put on a special display in his honour, with many of his original student riders involved. As the Major had returned to Poland during his later life, he was not present for the show, but a recording was sent to Poland for his private viewing as a special tribute for the man who had nurtured and trained South Africa's Lipizzaners for many years. (Odendaal, 2007, p. 93) Sadly, the Major passed away the following year on 28 May 2008, but his legacy has outlived him and he will always be remembered in his adopted country as the father of South Africa's dancing stallions.

Despite various challenges, the South African Lipizzaner Centre, continued to function at Kyalami as a non-profit company. While the performance stallions remained at Kyalami, the centres stud farm relocated to Hartebeespoort, 50 kilometres to the north-west of Kyalami. In 2018, the stud housed 11 mares, 9 fillies and 6 colts. However, as a non-profit institution,



the South African Lipizzaner Centre, which not only had to feed 62 horses but also pay 14 staff and riders, found its resources stretched to breaking point. Various forms of funding were then implemented to reinforce the funds obtained from the weekly shows, including individual horse sponsorship and membership to the Friends of the Lipizzaner Organisation. (Uys, 2018, pp. 37-38)

Unfortunately, in 2020, as a direct result of the Corona Pandemic which cancelled or allowed only a limited number of visitors to all the shows, it was decided to relocate 35 stallions and 28 mares from the KEP, which had been the Lipizzaners home for more than 70 years, to the winelands of the Western Cape which enjoyed a far larger tourist base, both locally and internationally. The move to the Mistico Equestrian Centre in Paarl, completed by 20 January 2021, has proved to be a success. With the lifting of South Africa's restrictions concerning large gatherings, visitors can once again enjoy the ballet on horseback as performed by the dancing Lipizzaners. (Newspaper, 2021)

## Conclusion

War proved to be instrumental in shaping what is today considered the oldest man-made horse breed in the world. From the original invasion of Hispania by Carthage, via the Muslim invasion of *al-Andalus*, to the establishment of the royal stud by the Habsburgs, the Lipizzaner horses have survived numerous challenges to their existence.

War was also instrumental in bringing the Lipizzaners to South Africa, with Count Janković-Bésán fleeing Hungary with his horses during the Second World War. War also brought the man who was to play a pivotal role in the establishment of South Africa's performing white stallions, Major Jerzy Iwanowski. Deciding to leave Europe after the establishment of a communist Polish state in 1947, Iwanowski settled in South Africa. After a chance encounter, Iwanowski began training a single Lipizzaner Stallion to perform various manoeuvres as perfected by the Spanish Riding School in Vienna. From shows with a single stallion a Lipizzaner performing team would eventually develop, with Iwanowski's lady riding school students providing both the horses and the riders.

A second chance encounter brought Colonel Hans Handler onto the scene, and it was under his guidance and advice that Iwanowski was able to raise the performance of the Lipizzaner team to that of the Spanish Riding School's level. Despite numerous challenges, South Africa's Lipizzaner program has survived and continued to flourish. Even a global pandemic has not been able to destroy the show and while it was forced to relocate from Kyalami to Cape Town, the Lipizzaners continue to perform once a week for both South African and international audiences at the Mistico Equestrian Centre. The Lipizzaners are today considered a cultural and historical icon of modern South Africa, and will continue to entertain both locals and visitors alike for many years still to come.

## Conflict of Interest

The author hereby declares that no competing financial interest exists for this manuscript.

## Notes on Contributor

Lieutenant Colonel Jean-Pierre Scherman joined the South African Defence Force as a National Serviceman in 1993. After completing his year service he joined the Permanent Force and was commissioned as an officer in the South African Armoured Corps. He has completed numerous internal (within South Africa) and external (African Union and United Nation) missions including missions to southern and central Africa. He holds a Master Degree in African History and is busy completing his PhD in Military Science at Stellenbosch University. He currently works as a military researcher at the Centre for Military Studies, Faculty of Military Science, Stellenbosch University, South Africa.

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