

Travels: Israel, Sinai, Palestine

Part 3

Gail Goodman

Though there were several contacts yet to be made in the northern region of Israel, it was clear that Gideon had done as much “Saluqi touring” as his schedule would permit and he had to begin to prepare for his daughter’s house warming which was fast approaching. Over a hundred guests were expected and a sheep would have to be slaughtered. It was time for me to head south once again.

The bus was the most convenient form of transportation so after good-byes and thank yous to Gideon and his wife, Sadia, who had even packed me a little lunch of her delicious coffeecake for the trip, Sadia and Vered drove me to the bus stop. There was an elderly orthodox couple, several soldiers, and some teenagers waiting for various buses. Though Rosh Pina is in the northern part of the country, August in Israel is just hot, and there was only the bus stop canopy for shade. The orthodox couple had several bags of varied sizes and shapes that they had arranged on all the seats under the canopy, taking up all the shade. Finally they moved a bag or two and made room for me to sit down....maybe it was my gray hair. They eyed me thoroughly and I think the wife asked me where I was from, to which I answered the United States. The husband then leaned towards his wife and said under his breath, assuming, possibly, that I would not hear him, “Don’t talk to her, she’s not Jewish, I can tell from her eyes”. I was so astonished to hear such a comment that I said to the man, “What did you think, I would not hear such a comment? You think you can tell from a person’s eyes whether they are Jewish or not? And you don’t talk to non-Jews?” He was equally astonished that someone would respond to him and said, “No, no....this is the State of Israel and everyone is equal here....Jews, non-Jews, it makes no difference.” So much for idle chatter at the bus stop! One soldier looked furtively in our direction but no one else even lifted an eyelid though the comments were heard by all.

The bus arrived and I took a seat towards the front. There were several tourists from various countries, and the newly wed doctors from Germany who were sitting in back of me got an earful about Sinai, as well as the jeep driver’s phone number. They had been thinking of heading in that direction and I told them it was a must see adventure....Sinai is incomparably awesome.

The bus route from Rosh Pina to Jerusalem follows the shores of the Kinneret (Sea of Galilee) descending into the West Bank, then, at Qumran, where the Dead Sea scrolls were found, ascends again into Jerusalem. The landscape around the Kinneret reminded me somewhat of the drive I made so many times from Window Rock to Tsaile in the Navajo Nation. I always loved that drive because of the wonderful variety of fresh colors and “unmolested” vistas with a huge, open, clear sky. The variation in the rocks, the granite protrusions as we approached the Kinneret had somewhat the same feel but the trees were willows and olives, cyprus and carob rather than pine and cottonwood. The shore of the Sea of Galilee is stony and gray and the Sea, on this day, was greenish blue under a hazy sky. The shoreline was full of people and large apartment buildings overlook the water from the cliffs of the city of Tiberias, which rise directly from the shore. In addition to all the modern construction, Tiberias is full of old buildings and ramparts. This is clearly a tourist area of great importance.

As we descended to the West Bank, along the border with Palestine and Jordan, the agricultural development is astounding. This was one of my favorite areas when I lived in Israel, but it was simply desert then, stark and dry and stunning. It is now an unbroken chain of agricultural enterprises and I was told that there is even a casino in the oasis of Jericho. I remember Jericho as one of the most beautiful places on earth, greenery rising from the barren Judean desert, a miniature version of Ayn Fortaga which I had not seen in the years that I used to visit the Dead Sea weekly to relax while my children splashed and swam in the sweet water pools that spring from the mountains ringing the Sea. We often visited Jericho for the delicious lunches of salads, warm pita bread and kabob in one of the many restaurants found in walled orchards of citrus and banana, with bougainvillea trellised all around. The brilliantly colored flowers, the deep green trees against the barren rising rock mountains seasoned the food in my memory forever. Just writing this, my mouth waters.....

Before beginning the final ascent to Jerusalem, the bus made a rest stop. I bought a bottle of water and sipped it, stretching my legs and my memories in the August heat. The ascent, where there had been nothing but rolling hills, more and more barren as one descended into the region of the Dead Sea, the lowest point on earth, is now development after development of housing and industry. And, as we enter Jerusalem, perpetual Israeli gridlock. Cabs, however, especially at the central bus station, are easy to find and I was quickly on my way to Melanie and Michael's apartment. When I arrived, the children were napping, which gave me time to shower and rest because the final lap of the trip south, to Beersheva, would be the next day. The plan was to meet Andreea Diaconessa and together we would go to Tel Shevah, to see Saluqis. The next day she would take me to Rahat. At Rahat I would meet Dr. Sirik who would take me first to her home in Ramat Gan, then to the village of Qalansua. The tent of Juma is in Rahat and in Qalansua, on the farm of Mohamed Matani is the Saluki bitch, Habob, which was awarded Best of Breed and Best in Group at Israel's International Show in 1998 by Swedish judge, Goren Bodegaard.



Ruthie's Shaffa, blended Bedouin-western breeding. Photo: A. Diaconessa.

After a good night's sleep and touching base with Andreea, Michael Coffman once again navigated the Jerusalem every hour horrible traffic to drop me at the bus terminal. There are usually nice young Israelis to ask for specific directions and information, and sometimes to chat with while sitting on the benches at the gates to the buses. I was beginning to feel like a commuter! The trip to Beersheva was also becoming

familiar as the landscape melted from one vegetation zone into another. Arriving at the terminal I called Andreea to let her know that the bus was on time and that I would go to the spot where she'd parked when she put me on the bus the first time a week or so ago. Rami, her husband, picked me up and took me to their beautiful flat in an old Beersheva building. The flat had all the architectural detail and character missing in most modern Israeli apartments. There was even an attic bedroom for guests and a backyard for dogs.

Andreea had prepared a delicious lunch and while it was cooking she looked at some of the hundreds of historical photos that I had been dragging around Israel. After lunch we would be going to Tel



Bedouin sheep camp in the Negev Desert. All of the livestock blend into the parched summer landscape.



Ahmed's beautiful 5-week-old puppies. These pups were friendly, responsive, and had fantastic coordination for their age, typical of Bedouin Salukis.

Shevah to meet Ahmed Abu Rkaiek, the Saluqi breeder Rashid Darawshe had put us in touch with. None of the Israeli sighthound people had met him, so this was a new contact for everyone. For me, it would be the first Saluqi trip into the Negev desert region, the Bedouin "heartland" of Israel. Tel Shevah is a settlement town, meaning formerly nomadic Bedouin families have taken up residence there. Andreea had spoken to Ahmed on the phone and he was expecting us.

Ruthie with her Saluki, *Shaffa*, and Effi with his camera arrived and we climbed into Andreea's van along with her whippet. After a short drive we entered the town and began to follow the directions that Ahmed had given Andreea. Without much trouble we found Ahmed's house, in part because Ahmed, a handsome, wiry man with chiseled features was standing in front of the main gate waiting for us. We were ushered into his courtyard and then into his sitting room. Andreea and Ruthie intended to take their dogs into the house, but since this is not customary, I suggested that they tie them outside while we had tea, which was served by Ahmed's beautiful wife, almost immediately.

Ahmed had no adult Saluqis at this time but he had two promising five-week-old puppies. Yet again, I unfortunately did

not bring my tape recorder, though I did bring my picture survey cards, my camera, and my tape measure. Ahmed, like Mustafa Abu Juma, is clearly a wealth of history and information about the region, breeding and hunting with Saluqis. As he looked at my picture albums he told us that in 1973 or '74 he had a feathered bitch from Saudi Arabia and a smooth dog from Sinai. He hunted hare and gazelle with them. He would catch maybe six hares out of seven to twelve coursed. The Sinai dog had both strength and desire. "Sinai made the dog strong", he said. They also had speed. The "mixed" Saluqis, the desert-western blends, they won't hunt in the heat, but the Sinai dog would hunt at any hour...he had enormous desire.

When I told Ahmed that it was so fascinating for me that all the Arab people I showed my photos to recognized Dar and Div Tarabin as Sinai Saluqis, but in the United States people had never seen anything like them. Ahmed commented that his Sinai Saluqi looked much like "a regular dog; only his behavior told us he was a Saluqi". I asked him



Dib with Ahmed Abu Rkaiek in the Bedouin town of Tel Shevah, Israel.



Dib with Andreea Diaconesi.

to elaborate on this comment and he described the Sinai Saluqi as having a short neck and a short muzzle, his chest was not particularly deep, his tail not particularly long, and he was generally heavy in build, but his coat was smooth and close to the body.

For hunting, Ahmed generally prefers males, they are, in his opinion, stronger and faster. When I asked what he looks for in choosing a puppy, he replied that it is the parents you choose. If the parents are good, any pup will be good. By good, Ahmed replied, “Good means catch hares”. When I asked what *asil*, pronounced *asle* in this region, meant, he said it means 100% Saluqi. He commented that Saluqis have great eyesight, they see well by day or night and they have plenty of brains. He remembered one of his dogs, saying “All he lacked was the ability to talk”, very much the sentiment of the nephew of Salim Ibn Jahzi in Sinai. Ahmed added that Saluqis are good guard dogs, “My dogs would bite if they were told to.”



Salukis in the trash, Tel Shevah.

We looked at several of the picture survey cards; the results will be reported in a later section of this series. We then left to see the Saluqis of Ahmed’s friends and to look for a contact Ruthie had made. Ahmed got in the van to direct us and it was only a short ride to his friend’s place. As we got out of the van in front of “a building in progress” site, we were greeted by a young man carrying his year old son and one of the most exotic Saluqis I have ever seen. The two and a half year old dog, *Dib*, took my breath away he was so stunning, and as mellow as he was beautiful. Another young man emerged from the compound of what I remember as a trailer, a poured foundation, concrete pillars, and miscellaneous pens for livestock, and tent-like structure, obviously for “sitting”, followed by another stunning Saluqi, not as exotic as the first but of equal quality.



Agab, Tel Shevah, Israel.

The second dog, *Agab*, was younger, a year and a half, and not as tall as *Dib*. These two smooth dogs were thrilling to see. Their photos are all I have of them because I only had time to measure them, photograph them, and simply drink in their quality and beauty. Because the hour was getting late, I couldn’t ask about their breeding.



Agab strutting stiff-legged to meet another Saluki outside the gate.

We next went in search of the house of Ruthie’s contact. We passed an open space full of trash and in the middle of the trash were two lovely feathered Saluqis. We stopped the van to ask a young boy about the dogs, but within minutes the van was surrounded by young boys and one of them started throwing rocks at the Saluqis. The dogs fled. Despite Ahmed’s presence, the boys began reaching into the van to touch the cooler and dogs and, honestly, maybe I’d seen too many US news programs on the *intifada*, but I got frightened. This was the only time that I had been even uncomfortable in Israel, but Arabs and Israelis both speak at a normal speech volume that sounds like shouting to an American, and there just seemed a potentially volatile energy mounting. I strongly suggested we close the van door and get out of there. No one else seemed the least concerned.



Beautiful old Pontiac, Tel Shevah.

We drove around and around the area and finally found the house and the young man who knew where there were good Saluqis but, it just so happened, they were “out hunting” at this time. Ruthie began to lecture the young man that he knew we were coming and the dogs should be there! I was shocked to hear anyone talk to a relative stranger, who owed none of us anything at all, least of all his cooperation to see Saluqis, in such a manner and tried to intervene. I was assured this had nothing to do with Arab-Israeli relations, it was merely the way Ruthie talked to everyone. Of course, not a gate in the village would open again to any of us if that is the way we would talk to our hosts! Ahmed said nothing and we continued on to another house where Ahmed knew there were Saluqis.

The light was fading as we arrived at the house of Sultan Abu Rkaiek. He came out followed by a tall grizzle smooth dog and a smaller,



Sultan Abu Rkaiek's Saluki bitch with pups and sire, Agab, Tel-Shevah.

handsome cream smooth dog. Within moments, the same horde of noisy boys formed a semi-circle around us as I tried to photograph the older cream dog whose type and proportions were everything I recognize as “Bedouin” breeding. Both dogs had wonderful temperaments and were easy to measure. They were totally unruffled by the crowd of boys. As I chatted with Sultan, who at thirty years old is the father of ten children (Bedouin Arabs have the highest birthrate of any group in Israel), to which I commented that my son was also thirty and expecting his first child, it became clear that one of the noisiest boys was his son. He told his son to calm down, and then continued to talk about his Saluqis. *Agab*, the two and a half year old grizzle and tallest dog that I measured, standing 27 ½ inches, was the best dog in the region, according to his owner. The cream male, Pontiac, was ten years old and despite a tremor in his rear leg from an injury, still ran well. Sultan asked me what I thought caused the tremor and I said I didn't know but maybe it was nerve damage. He agreed and asked whether I knew a veterinarian who could look at Pontiac. He assured me that money was no object. I said I thought I would be visiting the camel farm where I knew there was a vet and I would ask him whether he could look at Pontiac.

As we continued to talk about his Saluqis, Sultan informed me that he also had a bitch. And where was she? In the courtyard. And, she had puppies. Could we see them? Yes...and Sultan, followed by his naughty son who I told if he didn't behave I would not bring him a gift from America if I return, which surprisingly shut him up, or, his father said something which I did not hear. Anyway, we all filed into the courtyard where a ferocious shepherd was chained to the wall guarding a new, red vehicle parked



The square in old town Beershevah on Friday 5

within jaws reach. Beyond the reach of the shepherd's jaws, in a small pen with no blankets or anything for warmth was tied an emaciated grizzle bitch with numerous grizzle puppies, only a week or so old, lying around her feet and under a cabinet. The bitch folded back her ears, tilted her head and wagged her tail in delight to see us. She was simply lovely, just so heart wrenching thin. As I looked at her and her puppies, I thought to myself, no wonder Saluqis are such healthy dogs...only the fittest would survive under such conditions. Only the fittest bitches would whelp and only the strongest, most disease resistant pups would survive. The only change for these hounds seems to be that instead of a tent, they are whelped and raised in courtyards. But, then, wealthy Bedouin have always had houses with courtyards in oases. So, maybe nothing has changed. Israeli Bedouin Saluqis must be as tough constitutionally as ever.



Peruvian Indian musicians.

As darkness fell, we returned to Andreea's flat. Effie and Ruthie said good night and after an always delicious light Israeli meal of bread, salads, and yogurt or cheeses, I too, said good night since tomorrow was another big day. We were going to Rahat to meet Juma and see his hounds. And, Juma lives in a tent, so, I would be seeing an authentic Negev Bedouin camp. We would also be meeting Dr. Zafra Sirik of the Israel Sighthound Club and Judy Rubenstein, the producer for the Animal Planet shoot. Judy wanted to see the setting and area to ascertain its suitability as a video site.

Up early, Andreea had to take her whippets and Afghan out, then we got ready for our drive. First, however, Andreea wanted me to see the Friday bazaar in downtown Beersheva. In the heart of the old town of Beersheva is a square closed to vehicle traffic and on Friday it fills with crafts vendors, booths lining the walkway and down the center, outdoor cafes, and even a three piece combo of Peruvian Indians playing to an appreciative audience of Israelis and tourists who generously dropped coins into the open violin case. During the break I couldn't resist asking the band members how they arrived in Beersheva and it turns out that six months of the year they tour the world, and six months they are home in Peru. I was astonished to see Indians so far from home, but I was far from home, too, so why not Indians? People have to make a living. What better way than playing traditional music for an appreciative audience in the Middle East?

After several cellular connections, we headed towards Rahat. How people ever learn the proper turn-off and tracks to take is beyond me, but I never knew where I was going on the Navajo Indian Reservation, either. Rock piles, trees, shapes of hills in the distance indicated turn-offs. Obviously, Andreea shared the talent for recognizing the route with the Navajos on the Reservation because she confidently turned her diesel van off the highway onto a dirt track leading to what appeared to be absolutely nowhere! We bounced around ascending towards an encampment; once there, Andreea asked directions and it turned out, in this seemingly featureless landscape, that we were driving in the wrong direction. The person knew Juma and gave Andreea directions. We descended the same track and headed down into a *wadi* and around a hill, through an area of loose gravel which obviously runs with water and debris when it rains, and which by some miracle the van did not get stuck in, continuing onwards until a low tent became visible on the horizon, on one of many identical, treeless hills. As we approached I could see several cars but it was so hot that nothing was moving around the tent.



Already enjoying themselves with Juna in his large tent, right to left: Kuti Aaharon, Dr. Zafra Sirik, Juma Abn Khawesh, Judy Herbstein.

We pulled up and as I got out of the van and began walking towards the tent, I could see Saluqis everyw here:

pups loose, adults tied to the tent posts, some lying in cool mud, many covered with ticks, some so bad they had raw skin on their ears and necks. I had braced myself for situations like this because I understood, intellectually, I was there to gather information. I had



Juma with Judy and Zafra, the coffee and tea pots glistening for the guests.



Several generations of Juma's Salukis chained to the tent posts in the shade.



Juma's well-fed salukis.

learned from my experience in South Africa where the actual condition of the dogs I had come to see was so tragic, so shocking to me that I was unable to consider collecting data from their owner. Reflecting on that experience, I knew that I would have to overcome my western biases. My personal point of view is that any man who **really** uses his dogs for work and therefore knows about working dogs, also takes good care of his dogs. My shock at the starved and mangy state of the dogs in that particular South African Zulu kraal was so overwhelming that I missed the unique opportunity to collect whatever information that particular elderly Zulu informant could have shared with me. He “knew things” about dogs, regardless of the state of his particular dogs. My western bias had prevented me from learning and I was consciously aware, as a researcher, that I would have to overcome this if I were to learn about Saluqis in traditional settings. There are many western settings equally as far from “good for dogs”.

As wretched as some of the Saluqis appeared, they were neither starved nor mangy and all had wonderful temperaments. They also had beautiful teeth and all appeared to be in good health, overall. Juma and his sons were already entertaining Dr. Sirik, Kuti Aharon, a friend of Dr. Sirik’s, and Judy Rubinstein. Coffee was prepared and refreshments were arrayed on the long table between the rows of cushions forming a horseshoe around the table ample to seat many guests. Sheets of plastic covered the ground and rugs were laid over the plastic.

One should always take one’s shoes off before walking on the rugs, but I had worn shoes with laces, so, I just did my best both not to slip on the slick mud and not to get mud on the rugs. Juma clearly enjoyed having guests and was loquacious. I handed him my photo albums which he glanced through then handed to his sons,

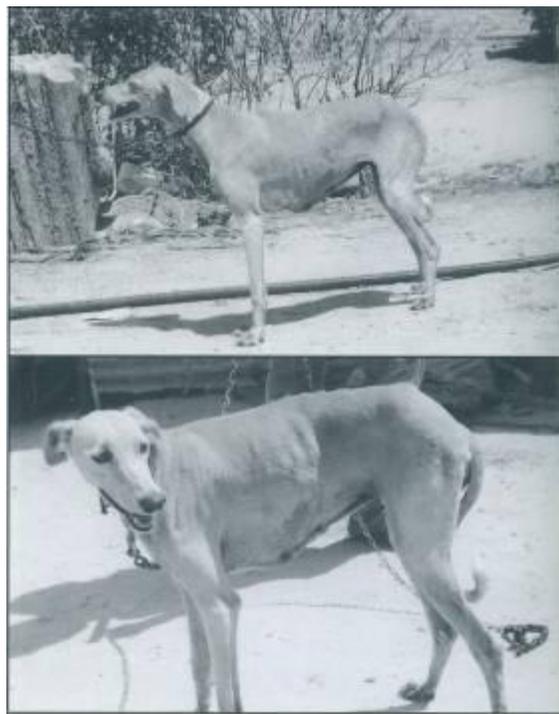
who really studied the pictures and wanted to know , “Where did you get these dogs?” When I told them “from here, from Sinai”, they were fascinated.

Each young man looked intently and silently at my photo albums while Juma looked through the *Sighthound Review* which never failed to interest my Arab hosts. I asked permission to measure his Saluqis and one at a time I measured three dogs and a bitch. I didn't want to measure Saluqis under a year old, so none of the youngest hounds was included. Since the environment lent itself more to social chatter than deep one on one Saluqi talk, I couldn't explore the breeding of all the dogs around the tent, so focused on a few mature hounds.

As I measured I tried to explore with Juma what he preferred in a few areas of conformation. First he wanted a deep chest, as deep as possible, even below the elbow. He wanted to see a broad front, this for strength. He wanted withers buried in muscle, and he wanted a short hock. Toeing-

in in front was

viewed as good and slight cow-hocks, or rear toes pointing slightly outwards was also good because that way the rear legs would not interfere with the front. He also wanted to see a long pelvis. As for body proportions, he indicated that he liked a longer bodied dog, giving the numbers of 6 to 7 as a ratio, but I am not at all clear as to what he meant or how this should be measured. None of his adult dogs were longer than tall and his elderly, still beautiful brood bitch, *Warda*, measured square. All the puppies he had were short bodied. But, in spite of hearing his son tell him the measurements of height to length as I did them, Juma insisted the proportion should be six to seven. He also had some convoluted ideas about the croup angle which I could not understand. After I had measured several dogs, Juma looked at my picture survey cards. The results will be reported in the final section of this series.



Juma's beautiful brood bitch, Warda, who died shortly after these photos were taken from complications whelping. She was 6 years old.



One of Juma's son's Saluqis. The dogs lie in the cool mud around the tent, or anywhere they can find it, so the mud cakes to their coats.



Shuffling back to the shade.

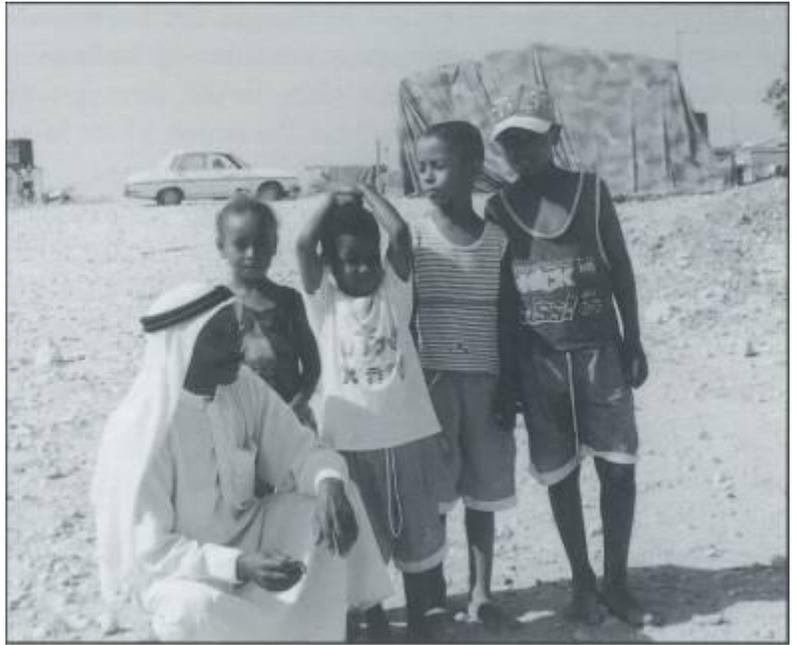
Juma's son wanted to show us his Saluqis, too, so we all got in the car and drove to the summit of the next hill, and there were more Saluqis. Unfortunately it was so hot and I was getting so tired, all I could do was attempt to photograph the dogs as they shuttled from Juma's son, when he called them, back to the shade as quickly as possible. I also photographed Juma with several of his grandchildren. Then we headed back to his tent, Juma between Judy and me. With humor Juma

joked that it had been a long time since he sat between two “young ladies” and in the same spirit, I informed him that it was certainly equally as long since anyone had referred to me as a “young lady”.

We took leave of Juma and Judy, who had driven her own car, and Kutti, Zafra, and I headed back to Ramat Gan. We arrived at Dr. Sirik’s flat and were greeted by three lovely greyhounds, Spot (International and Israeli Champion), Puzzle (2 CCs and Israeli Champion), and twelve year old Tiggy (Israeli Champion). The dogs had to have their outing and went straight out the door and into the elevator, down to the entrance door, out and around the back to the small park where they relieved themselves, all unleashed. They were perfectly obedient and perfectly behaved. No one, not even the children in the park, was the least bit frightened of the dogs, which are impressive in size.

Returning to the flat, I showered and Dr. Sirik caught up on some of her sizeable correspondence and work. Then we went to Old Jaffa, a fishing port, to an outdoor-indoor restaurant on the pier called *Taboon*, which means an Arab stove. This is a well known fish restaurant and I have never had a more delicious seafood meal. Fresh caught local fish is cooked in delicate sauces preceded by their unique appetizer, fried goat cheese. We had grouper and just writing about this meal my mouth is watering. *Taboon* is really a special restaurant.

Back to Zafra’s spacious flat with her lovely bronzes, Persian rugs and art work, I went straight to bed because tomorrow we would go to the village of Qalanswa to see *Habob* and her pups. Zafra took her greyhounds out once more, but I was already drifting into sleep.



Juma Abu Khawesh with some of his grandchildren.



Habob, Best of Breed, Best in Group in the International Show in Israel under Swedish judge Goren Bodegard some years ago.

Qalanswa is part of a triangle of villages that have existed since before the recognition of the State of Israel. We traveled north-east from Ramat Gan, in the direction of Nablous, that famous city for Salukis, the region where Miss Mitchel’s influential imports into England originated in the early 1900s. Dr. Sirik wove her way through several connecting villages and towns and eventually onto a dirt track in an agricultural area, moving steadily towards the livestock compound and fields of Mohammed Matani, owner of *Habob*.

We pulled into the large compound with numerous stalls for horses and other livestock. Mohammed Matani and Omar Zamiru, and several

teenagers and children greeted us. In the shade, in the corner as one enters the compound, was the table and chairs, already spread with coffee and fruit. There was a thoroughbred horse and an Arabian horse, a Weimaraner, a greyhound, and several Saluqis of all ages; all of the animals were in beautiful condition. *Habob* had already had one litter and two yearling pups were there with her as well as two pups from her



Mohammed Matani and Omar Zamiru in the shade at Matani's farm, Qalansua.

Riyah, who would not allow a stranger to handle his tail. The two year old *Reisha*, daughter of Scud, was the only Saluki in my sample that measured longer than tall (22.5 inches tall, 24 inches long). Group winning *Habob* measured 24.5 inches tall and 24 inches long, presenting an elegant picture of a desert hound.

Mohammed Matani and his friend Omar Zamiru were very patient with the photo survey cards and made interesting choices and comments. I'll share a few comments here and the rest will appear in the final section of the series. The context completely escapes me but somehow the belt around the loin came up.

Matani said that for more than forty years he has seen "bound" Saluqis. "The belt, they say, and I have experienced that, the belt gives more strength to the loin and helps the Saluqi lose weight". He commented that in the winter, where they hunt, they put oil on the dog's pads, olive oil or other oil, and this prevents the dog from collecting mud and helps the dog run easier. He prefers smooths because they don't collect stickers and dirt in their fur. He believes that feathered Salukis come from Saudi Arabia and Persian Salukis "are something totally different". Sinai Saluqis are the strongest in the heat and generally the best suited for the conditions in Israel. Sinai Saluqis are smooth. All colors, including brindle and parti-color (he sees them as the same) are acceptable. You can tell if a Saluqi is *asle* or not by looking at the head. *Asle* will have a long, pointy muzzle, round eyes, and a triangular shape looking head on, wide across the head including the ears but narrow between the ears (high set ears). The body should have average breadth, a narrow waist, and a pure bred Saluqi listens to its owner.

Matani is a horseman, and a few of the comments that will be repeated in the final section will be included here. Lung capacity, indicated by a deep, full rib cage, was mentioned by Rashid Darawshe and Mohammed Matani,

recent litter, but they were very young. Matani acquired all of his adult Saluqis from Rahat and Tel Shevah, Bedouin regions. One of Matani's sons shows their Saluqis in Israeli shows, and he was very helpful holding them for me to measure. A teenage girl, I'm not sure whose daughter or niece she is, spoke quite a bit of English and helped record the measurements. All of the Saluqis were cooperative except the handsome



Habob's yearling pup.

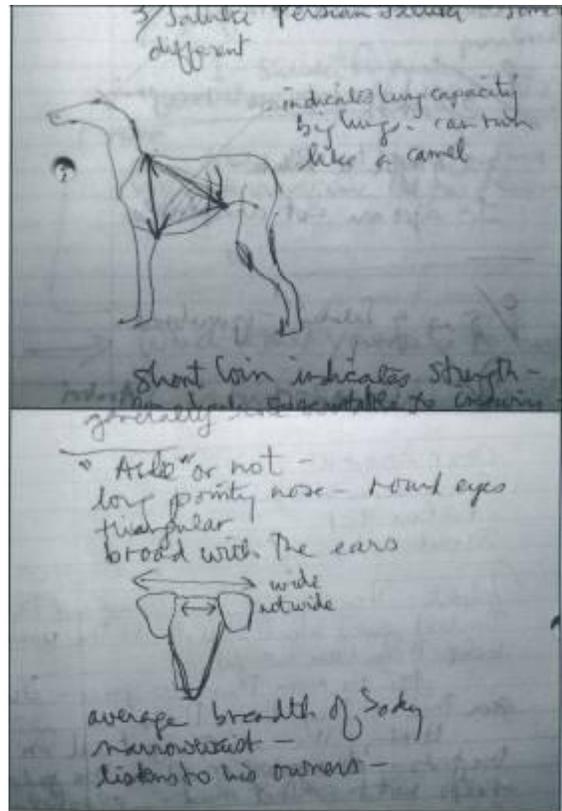


Reisha, daughter of Scud.



1960s, Bedouin Saluki, Sinai. Photo: M. Van Grevenbroek. Note the belt on the loin.

both horsemen and Saluqi owners. Matani stated that “big lungs mean the Saluqi can run like a camel”. A short loin indicates strength. A long back in a coursing hound makes it susceptible to injury. Long backed hounds are viewed as too delicate for work. Viewed from the rear, the Saluqi must be wide. The tail is used as a rudder for balance in turning. The hocks should be straight and strong, this for endurance. A long hock is weak. A short, straight pastern is also desirable for strength and endurance. Matani wanted to see an almost straight rear. The Sinai Saluqi, according to Matani, does not have a good nose for game; it will walk right over the game but it has phenomenal eyesight.



From my notes, drawings to try to visualize what Matani was trying to explain to me.



Matani's male, Riyah, without his belt.



Riyah wearing his belt to strengthen his loin.

He also stressed that you cannot shout at a Saluqi in the field.

At one point, while Matani was looking at the photo survey cards, or maybe later, the kids got a young domestic rabbit that is used as a lure for the Saluqis and greyhound, and took all the dogs into one of the fields. The dogs, including the black greyhound, tore around in the heat for awhile, then headed back to the shade of the compound at full speed. The black greyhound was extremely heat stressed and his panting was shallow. I suggested that the kids wet him down totally, which they did, and his breathing returned to normal. The rabbit was returned to its cage alive.

As with all of the visits everywhere, time flew. There was so much to see and listen to that

the time to leave seemed only moments after we'd arrived. However, we had to get back to Ramat Gan, so thank yous and good-byes were said, addresses written down, and we were on the road again. After a light supper it was time to take Zafra's greyhounds for a “real” walk. It was after 10 p.m. and the heat had subsided. The dogs knew exactly where they were going and with delight in their eyes, jumped into the car and we drove to the Park Leumi.

We pulled into a parking lot with traffic like an airport! Ten o'clock at night and the parking lot is full and the park is teeming with people! It appeared that one group, the picnickers, were leaving and the next group, the walkers and joggers were arriving. It was the pick up and drop off at curbside that made the place feel like an airport...incredible. We eventually found a parking place and took the greyhounds through the park entrance path on leashes. As we entered the enormous park with barbecue pits, walk-ways, a pavilion for folk dancing and concerts, and an almost mile long grass fairway lined with trees, Zafra turned her greyhounds loose and each ran in a different direction. Puzzle ran straight for the nearest overflowing trash basket, Spot ran after the first feral cat that he sighted, and Tiggy trotted along with us as we walked down the middle of the fairway. I asked Zafra whether she made the same walk alone and she said that she did, regularly, and felt absolutely safe in doing so. I told her I did not think there was a park in any large American city where I'd walk my dogs alone at 11 p.m. Zafra replied that safety is often a personal state of mind; she felt safe in this park in Ramat Gan. We walked for an hour or so, leashed the greyhounds, which had not shown any aggression towards other loose dogs also walking with their owners, and, again, no one objected to three large dogs running loose. I found this so interesting. Zafra offered the dogs water at the public fountain and then we headed home.



Salukis playing before they noticed the rabbit "lure."



The Salukis running back to the compound from Matani's fields. The boys still had the live rabbit.

Again, I was exhausted and went straight to bed. Tomorrow it would be back on the bus to Beersheva bright and early. The end of my magical visit was drawing near. There had been several conversations with Judy about which day they could video for the Animal Planet segment. It was decided that my last day in Israel would be the day and that I'd go from the *Arava*, in the south, back to Ramat Gan where Judy would meet me. We'd go to Juma's and Tel Sheva to film, then back to Ramat Gan. Zafra would then take me to the airport to catch my flight to South Africa. And so, plans were set.