



*Original Contribution*

## GENEALOGICAL STRUCTURE OF TROTTER HORSE BREED IN BULGARIA. DEVELOPMENT OF STAR'S PRIDE AND SPEEDY SCOT BLOOD LINES

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to determine the dynamics in the development of the genealogical structure of the trotter horse population in Bulgaria. The information was collected from the Annual Reports of European Trotting Union (U.E.T) as well as the annual catalogues of the Standardbred, Orlov, French and Russian trotter breeds of the above-mentioned organization. Routine zoo-technical methods were used for the data analysis. The comprehensive study of the genealogical structure of trotter horse breeds in Bulgaria shows that trotter horses bred in our country belong to some of the prominent sire lines worldwide. The sire lines maintained until 1990 are no longer popular due to the increased importation of stallions from Italy, France, Germany and other countries. The trotter horse population in Bulgaria shows high level of genetic diversity.

**Key words:** trotters, genealogical structure

### INTRODUCTION

Trotter horse breeds are well known worldwide for their two beat diagonal gait (trot) that they are named after. Usually these specific breeds of horses compete in harness racing or under saddle, entirely in a trot gait. The competitions with trotters are one of the most popular and attractive in the world. During 2014 in Europe and the Scandinavians, where the harness racing has a great popularity 50 000 competitions were held on 400 racetracks. The genesis of the trotter horses begin in the end of 18<sup>th</sup> century when the first harness races were conducted. At that period of time the only known trotter breed was the Standardbred, from which originated two of the four officially recognized trotter breeds, French trotter and Russian trotter (1). French trotter is a cross between Norman horses, Hackney, Thoroughbred and Standardbred (2) and Russian trotter is a cross between Standardbred and Orlov trotter (3). The Orlov trotter was also created in the end of 18<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> century but this breed is genealogically more distant than the other three breeds (4).

In Bulgaria initially in 1954 were imported horses from the Orlov trotter breed, but latter they drop out of the breeding process and new importation of stallions and mares of Russian trotter breed was made. Nowadays mainly Standardbred, French, Spanish and Italian trotters represent the trotter horse population in Bulgaria. The Spanish and Italian trotters are not yet officially recognized as separate breeds but in the last years, those terms are widely used to define the place where the horses were selected and foaled (5).

So far in Bulgaria there is no in-and-out study of the historical development of the trotter horse population, so the aim of this research was to determine the dynamics in the development of its genealogical structure.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The information for the current study was collected from the Annual Reports of European Trotting Union (U.E.T) as well as the annual catalogues of the Standardbred, Orlov, French and Russian trotter breeds of the above-mentioned authority. Routine zoo-technical methods were used for the data analysis.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

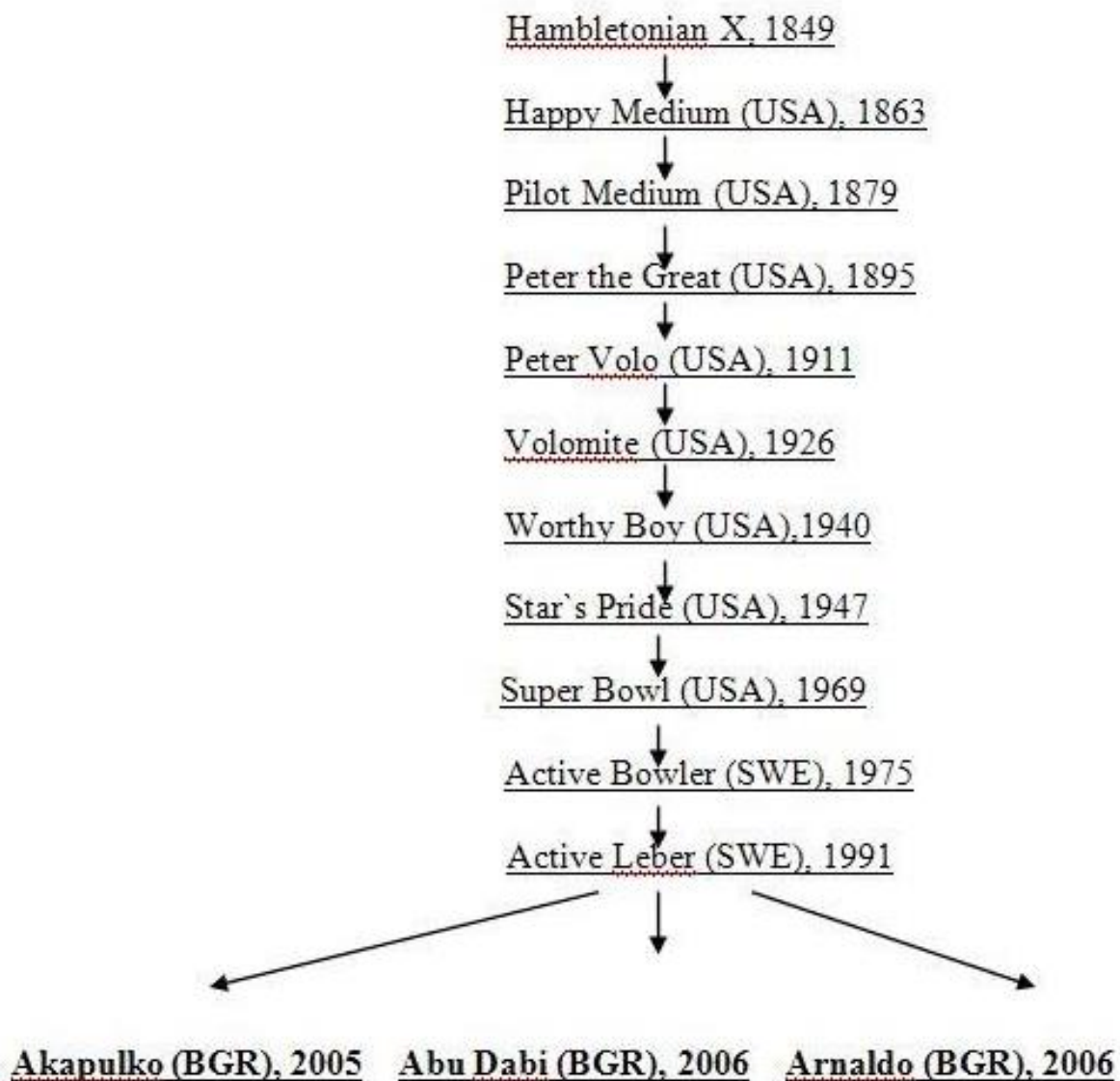
At the beginning of 1990's breeding of trotter horses in Bulgaria entered a new historical

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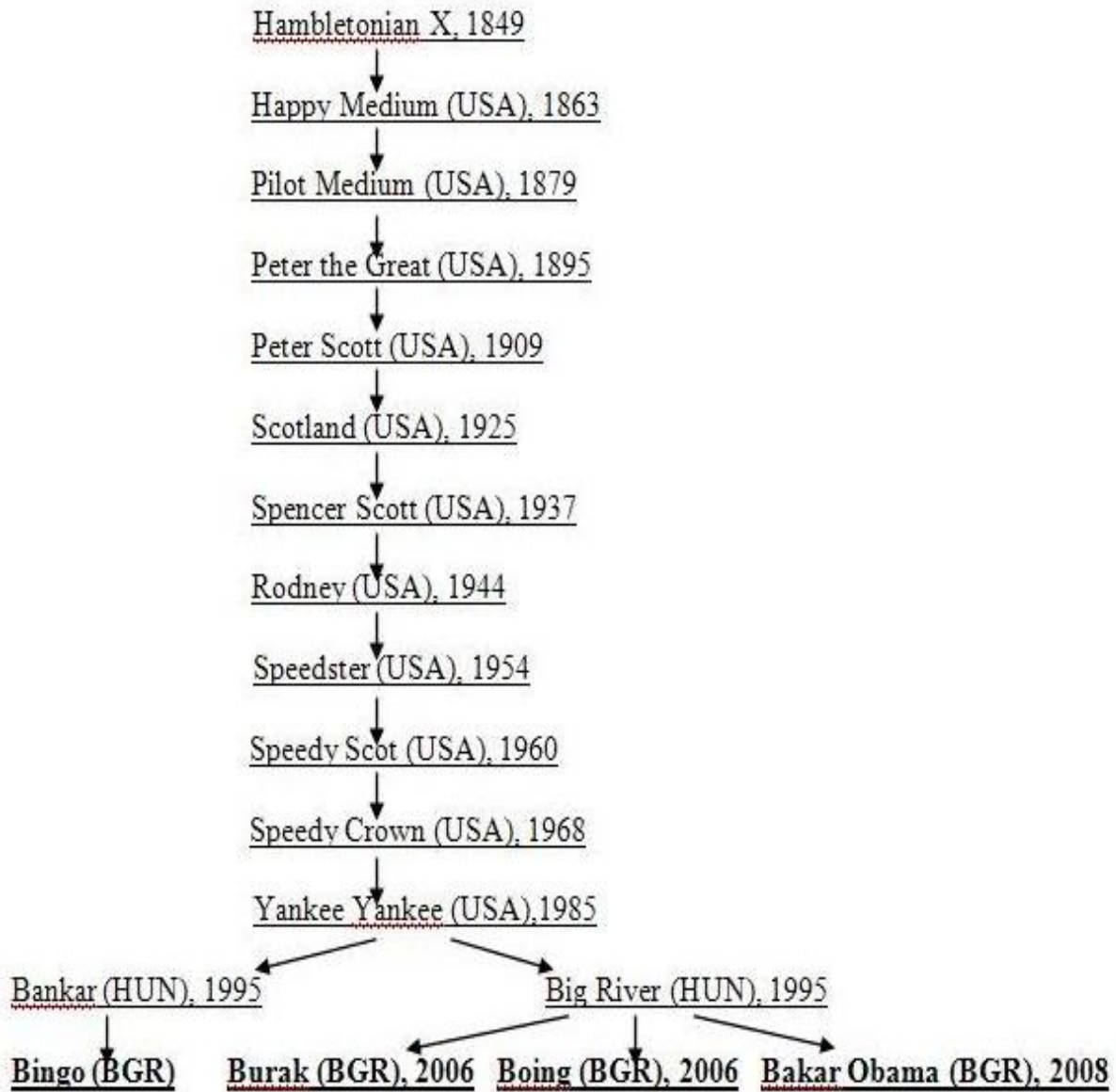
period which continues nowadays. It was a time when many changes took place in the economical status of the country, which affected the majority of the state studs and many of them were disbanded. From that point forward the trotter horse breeding in Bulgaria undergo vigorous development, private owners began to import Standardbred, and French trotter stallions from allover Europe, as main requirements in the selection of the horses were origin and racing time. With time, the newly imported stallions become more popular as breeding stallions than the well-known "older" sire lines, which undoubtedly lead to greater genetic diversity in trotter breeds in Bulgaria.

Between 2005 and 2006, three stallions were imported from Serbia, *Active Leber*, *Bankar* and *Big River*. *Active Leber* was born in Sweden in 1991 and he was widely used as a breeding stallion in Bulgaria. His progeny showed very good results in harness racing.

*Active Leber* belongs to the sire line of *Star's Pride* which is one of the progressive lines in Bulgaria, and recently the line is represented by the stallions *Akapulko*, *Arnaldo* and *Abu Dabi* (**Figure 1**). The other two stallions imported from Serbia, *Big River* and *Bankar* represent the sire line of *Speedy Crown* through the branch of *Yankee Yankee*. *Bankar* was used as a breeding stallion in the national stud "Han Asparuch" near Razgrad and recently there is only one active stallion descending from this sire line – the stallion *Bingo*. *Big River* was more widely used as a breeding stallion. Recently two of his sons, *Burak* and *Barak Obama* are used in the breeding process in Bulgaria. Another of *Big River's* sons, a stallion named *Boing* was exported to Greece in 2010 but he left a descendant as an eventual representative of the line (**Figure 2**). The horses with affiliation to this sire line are of great interest in Greece and they implement very well on the local market.



**Figure 1.** Line of Star's Pride Branch of Super Bowler



**Figure 2.** Line of Speedy Crown. Branch of Yankee Yankee

After year 2000, the number of stallions imported from countries with well-known traditions in breeding of trotter horses rises considerably. With affiliation to the *Star's Pride* sire line, through the branch of *Super Bowl* from Germany were imported three stallions, *Don Vito*, *Jet Set* and *Molino As*. *Peter Scott's* sire line is presented mainly by *Speedy Crown* and *Sam Williams* branches. *Speedy Crown's* branch is presented by stallions *Fighting As* imported from Sweden, *Eusebio Car* imported from Italy and *Juevert D'arc* and *Ludivin De Font* imported from Spain. The French trotter *Jet De Landemer* originates from *Sam Williams* branch. All of the above-mentioned stallions descent from the main sire line of *Hambletonian X* (**Figure 3**). Those stallions are used for breeding for a relatively short time and still there is not big enough number of progeny, so we cannot

predict how this sire line is going to develop in future. Considerable number of the imported broodmares and stallions are mated without clearly set aim for the future generation.

The recent trotter horse population in Bulgaria consists of over 550 horses. The greatest number of these over 550 horses is Standardbreds; small number is from the French trotter bred and a minor part of the old "Russian" lines. Regarding the number of the horses, the trotter horse population in Bulgaria comes second after the Thoroughbred horses. The harness racing is of great interest and become more and more popular among the horse owners in Bulgaria. The development of the trotter horse population in our country is closely related with the possible membership of Bulgaria of European Trotting Union (U.E.T).

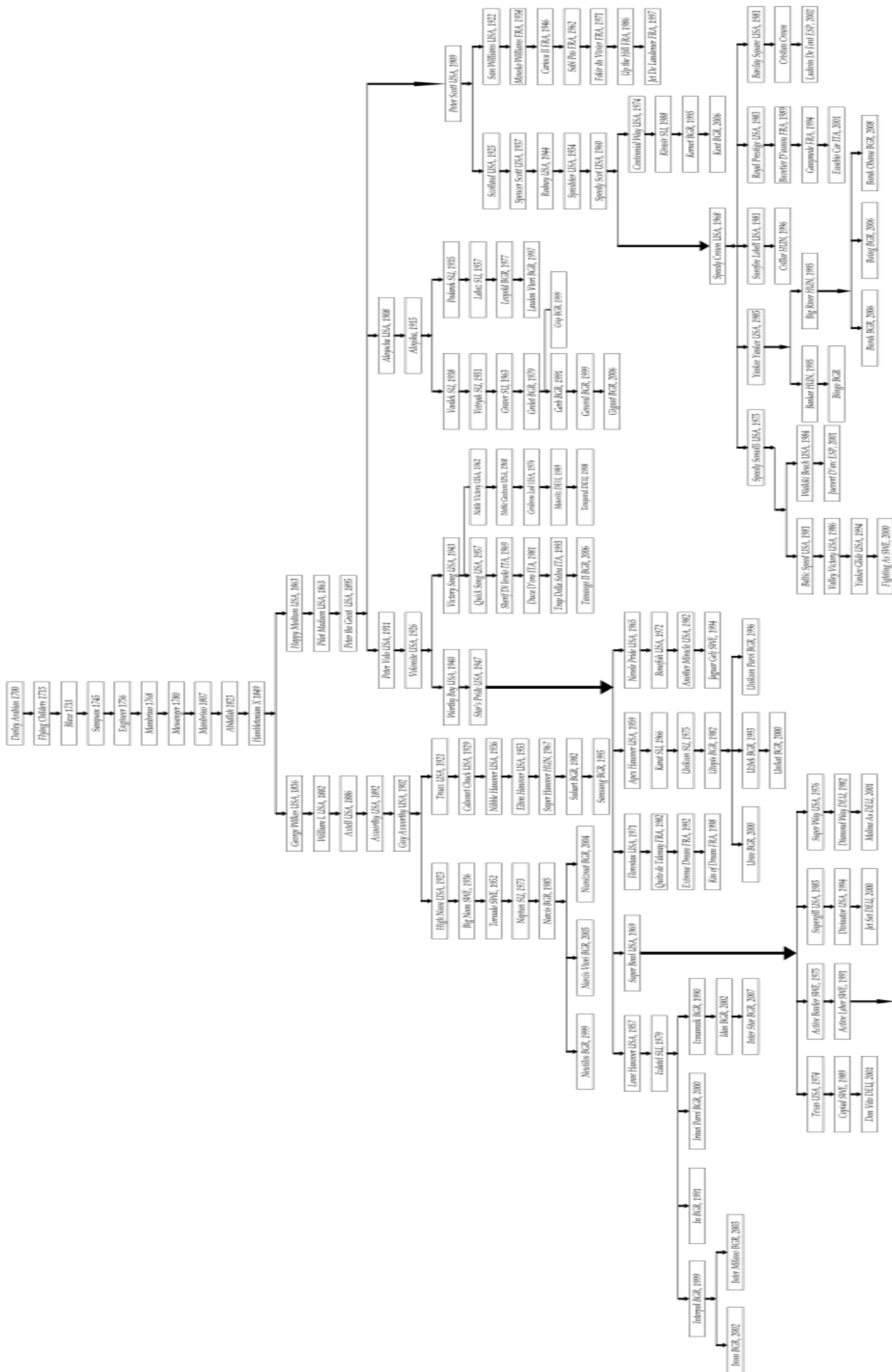


Figure 3. Line of Hambletonian X

**CONCLUSION**

The comprehensive study of the genealogical structure of trotter horse breeds in Bulgaria shows that trotters bred in our country belong to some of the prominent sire lines worldwide. The sire lines maintained until 1990 are no longer popular due to the increased importation of stallions from Italy, France, Germany and other countries. The trotter horse population in Bulgaria shows high level of genetic diversity.

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