

PIAFFE IN ENGLISH

magazine translation for the international reader

2008/2

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Légereté - The original Ecole Nationale D'Equitation

Le Cadre Noir De Saumur

By Juergen Kemmler

Elegantly and fleet-footedly resiliently, in spirited easiness, yes even playfully some riders of the Cadre Noir present their horses in the giant arena, which comes across the viewer as a dome.

They are doing their every day training work the school of Légereté. The PIAFFE-team, publisher Isabella Sonntag and me, we traveled to the "Capitale du cheval" to Saumur, the French capital of horses on the left bank of the Loire. Saumur's reputation as a rider's city goes back to the time of Henry IV (1553-1610), when a "Protestant Academy" was founded here, where the art of collecting a horse in the Pilars according to the rules by Monsieur Pluvinel (1555-1620) was taught.

The reason for our journey to Saumur was awarding écuyer Jean-Claude Racinet with the first PIAFFE-sign for classical horsemanship. In the first issue of PIAFFE, we introduced écuyer Jean-Claude Racinet, who today, almost 80 years old, lives in the USA, but wished the awarding to take place in Saumur as he was travelling to Europe.

But we also wanted to take advantage of this opportunity to watch the riders of the Cadre

Noir working in the arena, but above all to get to know the French way of riding better with its great tradition.

For the support by its director, Monsieur Antonie Sinninger, as well as for the guided tour around the huge area of the "Ecole Nationale D'Equitation" by the PR-manager, Mademoiselle Frederique Said, PIAFFE sends a cordial "merci" to Saumur.

What shows the spirit of the "Ecole Nationale" best, is the brilliant combination between training, caring for the cultural heritage, research and sports. Already in 1814, Saumur was appointed "Royal Cavalry School", thus central training place, by King Ludwig XVIII. Since then, the "Cadre Noir"'s training has been a elite institution for horse training on the highest level according to the principles of French tradition.

The state riding school, heir to a valuable cultural heritage, has founded in 1872, its core is the "Cadre Noir", a team of elite riders, which delivered Olympic winners and world champions, as well as such moulded, internationally known trainers and authors like Philippe Karl (see article page 32).

Since 1922, Saumur has been the talent hotbed for the Equipe nationale in all equestrian disciplines. Under the protection of the ministry for health, youth and sports, it cooperates closely with the French Rider's Association. The financial support by the French national stud farms as well as by the ministry of agriculture and defense has to be especially stressed, too. Some écuyers of the CADRE NOIR also work as trainers of the national youth team (Juniors and Young Riders) and in the French state training of riding instructors.

The area of the riding school offers training possibilities at a scale, which are unique in the world.

Some examples:

- the area includes 300ha including a race track
- single boxes for 400 horses in 4 big barns and a smithy
- 7 riding arenas and 16 outdoor arenas in Olympic dimensions
- about 50km riding ways and several hundred field obstacles
- a veterinary hospital according to modern standards
- a technical library (with about 17000 books and movies) including a centre of documentation

The school is open throughout the whole year (annually, more than 50000 visitors come). In the centre of research and documentation,

there also is a "horse simulator", which can simulate all gaits of the horse and visualise the rider's signals (signals of reins, legs and weight, also when jumping a course).

The riders of the CADRE NOIR, known all over the world because of the black uniforms with the golden epaulettes and their spectacular shows, are the official "keepers of French equestrian culture". They carry the idea of the traditional classic "high school" into the whole world. Only a small part of their work are shows on almost all continents.

As ambassadors of "fine riding the French way" they primarily advertise for the literal Légèreté (Lightness) in national and international competition arenas. The principle of Légèreté from the CADRE NOIR's point of view is based on the smooth movability of all "elastic powers of the horse" by developing it with the right gymnastics. No matter, whether the lections are easy or hard, like i.e. with the schools

above the ground, the characteristic of French riding art are not mainly spectacular movements of the horses, but rather perfect lightness in an impulsive flow of movement. No less than Udo Buerger described this kind of riding like no other in his classic "Vollendete Reitkunst" (see quotation below). His description, written several decades ago, is timelessly valid.

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Quotation by Udo Buerger from his classic "Vollendete Reitkunst"

(Mueller-Rueschlikon publishing house)

"It is obvious, that riding high school is emotionally seen as the actual art. In Europe, there are the two historical keepers, the Spanish Riding School in Vienna and the Cadre Noir in Saumur. If you watched a show by the Lippizaner, then the engravings by Riding on our walls are filled with life. The deeply set, effortlessly dancing stallions, the riders in a stretched seat, ideals of classical horsemanship. We are captured and in such a show we see, what the old masters teach, what has been kept in their works and pictures. The impulsion out of collection seems to us the highest expression of the art, as art itself.

If we then watch the Reprise de Manège of the Cadre Noir, then the superficial might say that he did not like this as much. But the thoughtful is deeply moved by the assemblage, not the collection. There is no releasing of power, no nobility of great movements, but light footed, dancing pacing according to elated music. The exact, which is supposedly there, is covered by the elegance of the movement. If we like the show this much, that we are tempted to try this gliding pacing on our own horses, only then we comprehend how hard a school work under a 100 steps a minute is, that you cannot do it by reins or

legs, but you have to totally agree with your horse. And we also comprehend, that this is only another expression of the art, another expression for rider and horse being an elated unity."

Picture No.1: The trainers at the former cavalry school still wore blue uniforms. The cavalry school of Saumur was founded in 1763. The school jump, which they already practiced at this time, was called "Croupade".

Picture No.2: Trot traversals and ziczac-traversals at the canter belong to a Quadrille.

Picture No. 3: With "living Pillars" the schools above the ground are trained according to the baroque ideal.

Picture No.4: In Saumur, brilliant shows take place throughout the whole year.

Picture No.5: Already the young horse learns free jumping at the double line – without the rider's weight, but still under control.

Picture No.6: Test for smoothness, courage and obedience and the variety of training at the jump over the table.

Picture No.7: Show of the ceremonial school quadrille in the big riding arena. The "Ecuyer en chef" (chief instructor) on the white horse commands.

Laudation by Isabella Sonntag on the occasion of awarding Jean-Claude Racinet the PIAFFE sign for "classical horsemanship" at the Ecole Nationale D'Equitation in Saumur:

Dear Mr. Racinet,

The magazine PIAFFE obliged itself to give the horses a better life in this time and therefore

it is necessary, to teach the readers knowledge, which has an immediate effect on the wellbeing of our horses.

To show the readers people at the same time, who also work for the horses' wellbeing, we stress the few real horsemen of this time – we award them. By this, we say to everyone who take the magazine into their hands: If you go to Jean-Claude Racinet, attend a clinic, read a book by him, discuss with him, then your equine knowledge will expand in the right direction, then horses will become less item of use and more a partner – who is treated in a way, that he can feel good, as far as this is possible without the natural environment of this most important companion of the human.

Your knowledge we want to esteem and outline – you did good for equitation. Therefore, we award you with the PIAFFE sign for your barn, a jacket for you and a saddle pad for

your horse, as well as a fitting saddle for you and your horse.

PIAFFE is achieving a big deal of attention and is being taken very seriously – in one, two years, people will attach a certain weight to this PIAFFE sign, which will not be little.

I thank you in the horses' name and in the name of the people who profited from your knowledge and will go on gaining profit from it.

We thank our sponsors of classical horsemanship: www.sonnenreiter.de, www.roeckl.de, www.st-eb.de, www.thw-horses.com

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Judging the horse's condition

By Prof. Dr.-Ing. Ulrich Schnitzer

In most textbooks of equitation, the horses' behaviour is only a side issue. But Beyond the ethical aspect every rider and trainer include the knowledge of behavioural science in his or her handling of horses. Prof. Dr.-Ing. Ulrich Schnitzer wrote a hippologically remarkable book about this topic, where the following article was extracted from.

Animals do not miss the small differences in behaviour, which result from changes in their human partner's emotional state of mind. Should not be the same possible in the reverse direction? The trainer is interested in what mood the horse is in. Its state of mind tells him what the horse is able to do, and it helps him to predict the horse's behaviour in every moment of work. As an extern, you have to judge what your counterpart's looks and behaviour tell you in context with the situation at hand. Judging therefore stays a estimation, which also includes the possibility of being wrong.

With the perception of the horse's state of mind and the connected spontaneous acting of the trainer, several elements cooperate:

- knowledge by experience about what "normal" behaviour of horses is, with its breed, gender and age specific characteristics
- intimately knowing the individual horse; as the diversity with which horses show nuances of their state of mind, is hardly less than with the human (some, who seem in a bad mood to an extern, are actually in their best mood)
- wholistic sensory perception in the acute situation
- Unconsciously processing this complex perception with the experience and the knowledge of the individual animal to a judgment

- Consequence of this for the handling of the horse.

This way of comprising, judging and acting therefore is mainly based on intuition, rather than on analysis. But in fact, the horse gives obvious signs which show whether it is experiencing something it wants or it does not want and whether it feels secure or insecure. Scientists found out that these superordinate categories of the state of mind are judged most reliably, especially if the relation to the respective situation is regarded as well (Tschanz et. Al., 1997, Tschanz 2007).

To the one who works with horses and trains them, those categories are not enough; he works with a bigger differentiation of states of the mind (see also table 4). One of the horse's signs is i.e. "chewing and licking" (see pictures page 11). I myself hadn't regarded this detail of their behaviour for many years, until the vet Marion Wickert (2004) made it the subject of her dissertation. Some of the chewing movements in connection with licking the lips horses show i.e. after slowing down to walk or stopping, but also after rolling and standing up. Wickert connects this behaviour with the transition of tension to relaxation and judges it as a sign of being "unencumbered for the next goal". A further detection is interesting in connection with the classical way of training: with empty chewing saliva develops, which physically suggests a relaxing effect. When riding, you want an active horse's mouth, that it "gets concerned with the bit". When working according to the described rewarding principle, the rider always tells the horse his "ok" i.e. by giving in slightly, the horse gives his "ok" by chewing; foamy lips, which are connected to this activity, is said to be a wanted sign that the horse copes with the requirements relaxedly. This is how the trainer's request for the student at the end of the lesson should be classified: "Let the horse chew the reins out of your hands." But the bridle has to be put in a way that the horse is still able to chew. For this reason, the rules about bridles say that between nasal bone and nasal strap two fingers should be able to be put easily next to another.

Chewing and licking is done with modest activity of the chewing muscles. In contrast, if the horse gnashes its teeth, the jaw muscles are tense - which suggests that the horse does not "let go". Continuous gnashing indicates by experience that the horse does not feel good. Some horses however, they gnash lightly in moments of highest concentration, even if they seem to be fully motivated for the completion of the tasks at hand. "Kitty" was such a horse; I judged the state of excitement which her gnashing indicated as a hint to do some relaxation exercises or breaks.

Excitement while working intensively can also express itself in other "quirks". A former teaching horse of mine for working on the long reins, the Trakehner gelding "Ibikus", trained by Egon von Neindorff, used to clatter with his lips when it became laborious.

If a horse does not accept the offered goody, "it clenches its teeth" and indicates herewith, that it cannot cope with the tasks relaxedly, it is not "supple". If it already came to that point, you should immediately stop working and try to restore suppleness after a walking pause in which you give the reins to the horse. If you continued working, it could happen that the horse completely blocks - with consequences I already talked about in the section about handling contumacies. Podhajsky (1960) reports about his "Nero", that refusing sugar occurred and writes about this: "For me, this was an alarm signal which caused me self-reproaches and reminded me of moderation...I sought to win clarity by clearly structuring my requests and my behaviour. This way, my horses trained me to keep self-control...". An ideal, this horseman! A snorkeling sound, which the horse sometimes does when experiencing something new, can indicate an unease connected with fear.

The rider can interpret it as a signal of resentment if the horse snorts several times accentuatedly. When doing this, it feels secure, but something just is not right. It occurs at a external impulse that the horse - i.e. when longeing - stops, raises its head up and gives a heavy snort. Subsequent, ground-covering Passage steps indicate boasting behaviour. At this moment, the horse said good bye to its

trainer. For his part, he can only try to calm the horse down and bring it back to work by being totally calm.

After slowing down to a halt - or if the horse stops after some Piaffe steps at hand - the horse mostly does a deep breath with accentuatedly breathing out - the "letting go snort". This signal of relaxing indicates a connection between breathing and suppleness which has not yet been explored satisfactorily; but I have always watched horses breathing rhythmically during a harmonic movement in trot or canter. Changes in the breathing frequency while working do not only indicate the level of stress, but are also indicators for the horse's condition.

Similar to an rising breathing frequency and depth, sweating not only shows the level of physical stress, but can also be the consequence of stress because of not meeting the requirements or physical roughnesses. An old experience says, that most "sweats" of horses are not to be classified as exhaustion, but as excitement. When training a horse for dressage, sweating does not have to exceed the location of the saddle and the chest, unless it is very hot.

Spectators of hard dressage competitions notice that most horses knock their tails while Piaffeing. If you look more closely, you will be able to see excessive use of the spurs, which the rider does to animate the horse to mark time. Instead of spurs, a maybe necessary coaching would be more purposeful and gentle if done with a fairly long crop (1,30 m), but, absurdly, crops are forbidden in such shows. Knocking the tail indicates that something is not right for the horse. If the tail is moving continuously in forward motion, this indicates back problems. The same, if the horse does not carry its tail, clamps it or does not carry it straightly.

Knocking the head also expresses resentment and eventually is also a sign for back prob-

lems. You must not repress this by fixing the horses head by force!

The horse's facial expression connected with the movement of its ears is very revealing. From the saddle, you can only see the ears - here, the work in hand has an advantage. It is worth the trainer's while to read publications on this topic, i.e. Schaefer, Trumler, Zeeb/Blank u.a. Next to the ears, you should pay special attention to lips, nostrils and chin; pressed down upper lips and a hard chin while working indicate tension, chewing and licking are missing. Also the eyes' expression changes with the horse's state of mind. Judging the facial expression, it is especially important knowing the individual animal very well. Sounds made by the male genitals while trotting are connected with a higher tension, in my experience.

Sometimes horses even make sounds while working. A stallion, which I tried to start Piaffeing at the hand, always made a comforting grunting sound when rewarded. My gelding Donatello often does a squeaking sound when starting to Piaffe collectedly, which I cannot interpret right. But after this sound he seems especially industrious.

The most important conclusions about the horse's condition are drawn from the way the horse moves; whether the moving is fluent, how it reacts to the signals, how tensions can be reduced, what the rider feels in his hands and through the saddle. All perceivable expressions of the horse add up to a complex impression of the horse's condition (picture page 66, table 5 see below). The changes in the horse's behaviour are crucial in the course of the work units, as also in comparison to previous days and in the long term development. But the human always has to be conscious of the fact that his judgement of the horse's state of mind cannot be more than an estimation which also includes errors.

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What faces tell us

Expressional behaviour of horses...

...in the herd

The horses' gregariousness corresponds with their natural needs. Apparently, the herd is very important to the individual horse to weaken undesired weather and to avoid dangers from enemies. Also it is of significance for less dominant and weaker horses to avoid fights with more dominant horses. All this is done by their expressional behaviour, which helps them to communicate among each other. The ethologist calls this "social communication".

The diversity of social activities among horses is best understood by the table on page 16 and the respective pictures. Although the horses' facial muscles is not very distinct, a connoisseur can notice many different "faces". These faces are also assistance for the human to judge the condition (psychologically) of the individual animal.

...towards humans

The pictures on page 17 show the expressional behaviour and their meaning concerning disharmony (+) and harmony (-) with the rider. Harmony: The horse likes the situation and it

feels safe. Disharmony: The horse does not like the situation and it feels insecure.

Position of the tail as a way of expressing oneself

It is useful for a harmonic cooperation between human and horse, if horse people get to know the characteristics of the horses' expressional behaviour among each other. Then, the horses' expressional behaviour while interacting with a human is easier to understand. But it has to be stressed that what is happening there is by far more differentiated than it could be described here.

Unfortunately, I also have to point out that in the riders' education, they are hardly taught anything about this topic. This behavioural complex is of special significance in connection with animal protection in equestrian sports.

By Prof. Dr. Klaus Zeeb

Drawings by Renate Blank

Page 16: The horses' expressional behaviour in the herd
When handling a horse, we are rarely aware of the fact, that we are facing a living being whose behaviour is not aimed for surviving in an environment designed by humans and living together with this foreign species, even after millenia of domestication. An overview of the diversity of social activities among horses is explained best by the following table:

Attracting
Meeting

Greeting
Nose contact
Licking
Sniffing
Let's play!
Keeping together
Being together
Following
Coat care
Playing

Rounding u
 Repulsive
 Threatening
 Biting
 Attacking
 Rearing
 Threat of kick
 Kicking

Pictures left to right:

dozing, meeting face, exploring face, threatening face,
 coat care face, fear, being inferior

Page 17: The horses' expressional behaviour towards the human

First box: Attention to the front

a-b supple, attentive horse (+) / a-c-d-e horse approaches a jump (+)

Second box: Attention to the side
 a-b-c supple riding with forward motion

Third box: Attention backwards
 a-b-c resisting the rein (-)

Fourth box: Expression in damage-avoiding behaviour
 a-b-c hard hands, too much pressure on the reins (-)

Fifth box: Aggressiveness
 a-b-c-d Defensive behaviour towards the rider (-)

Page 18: Position of the tail as a way of expressing oneself

left to right

relaxed tail position (+), relaxed tail position (+), relaxed tail position (+), defensive against the rider (-), rider is too rough (-), fear (-)

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Renate Blank shows horses - like they really are

HIGH SCHOOL OF HORSE PAINTING

Already thousands of years ago, human and horse agreed to a biocenosis, which has lasted until today. In cave paintings in France and Spain, which are 15000 - 20000 years old, you can already see horses with a bridles.

"I'm not a horse painter, but above all a graphic artist."

No other living being influenced man's history as much as the horse. The long joint way of the human together with the horse - from domestication of the wild horse to today's sport horse - is mirrored with many different views and artistic facets in the great horse painters' works, who occupied themselves with the artistic depiction of the horse and therefore created a figurative record of human culture, but also of horsemanship.

From the huge amount of artists who have worked intensely on the topic horse but have not been satisfied by only copying from photos, the horse painter Renate Blank sticks out.

The former director of the "Spanish Riding School" in Vienna, Brigadier Kurt Albrecht, where Renate Blank had painted the pictures for her diploma thesis, says about the artist's work: "I think, if I may, that you captured an expression of horse and rider of our institute in every sketch as well as especially in your chalk drawings, which you can hardly imagine more vivid and more exact."

Her artistic work's foundation is her study at the university of visual arts and at the school of design in Hamburg. On seven study trips, which led the horse loving artist around the world, she studied the different breeds, gaits and ways of riding and thus educated her ar-

tistic eye. Similar to Georg Stubbs, the greatest horse painter of the 18th century, who is named the most important representative of English sports painting, Renate Blank studied the horse's anatomy intensely. Especially the artistic depiction of moving horses requires a subtle understanding of muscular relations in different work movements. It is not only about depicting the right body proportions and the right step sequence in the individual gaits and lections, but it is also about capturing the flow of the movement in action, the expression of the horse, the dynamic but also details like the play of the ears and expressional behaviour (tension and hardenings) in the encounter with the human. Examples for the art using illustration of depicting the horse's condition, you can see in the article on page 14 "What faces tell us" (also online). The world's best photographer couldn't depict it in a better way.

Although the diversity of her artistic field is impressive, as well as her hippological knowledge, Renate Blank says about herself: "I am not a horse painter, but above all a graphic artist. Proof for this, but above all also for her professional capacity, are for example the illustrations of books like "Mentales Reiten" by Petra and Wolfgang Hölzel and "Reiterwis-

sen" by Kurt Albrecht, which unfortunately is not exhausted. This collection of basic principles of classical horsemanship of a profound connoisseur of hippological literature contains 54 reed pen drawings and 8 tables in colour by Renate Blank.

Especially fascinating for the hippologically educated viewer are her studies of movement with Indian Ink Pen or reed pen. But Renate Blank can also demonstrate her artistic competence in the technique of etching and in oil.

Classical motives like reprises from the Spanish Riding School, for which the institute Egon von Neindorff, the Spanish Riding School and the stud farm Lipica inspired her, document her distinct artistic sensitiveness, which rarely is obtained by birth but rather by an intense study. Renate Blank took the classical principles and those of the old masters in as an horse expert and understood them, which she confirms with this phrase: "You can see the culture of a time in riding."

This phrase from her mouth maybe gets one or the other horse lover to think (hopefully) - and I don't have anything to add - except for my truly deep admiration for the artistic work of Renate Blank to this date.

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Legendary horses and riders

CORLANDUS

Series by Arnim Basche

Although France owns a riding school with a world reputation with the Ecole Nationale d'Equitation, the French dressage riders could only triumph in the big sports in 1987 after a slack period of 39 years. They owe this to Margit Otto-Crepin and Corlandus. The Holstein gelding was one of the best Dressage horses of all time.

The art of riding was raised to a high degree already early by a row of great masters. Among them the Frenchman Antoine de Pluvinel, who is the first master known to think about animal psychology, regarded the equus caballus as a friend and partner and met it with sensitive understanding. At this time, this was something completely new - in his time, horses were not treated very gently.

"But I want to say further/ that you shouldn't hit them/ neither at the beginning/ middle nor

end/ when it is possible to avoid/ regarding that it is much better/ winning them with kindness/ than with fierceness/ as a horse which runs joyfully on its own/ is much lovelier to look at/ than a horse doing it out of force and need. Additionally,/ if you force and exhaust them/ bad things can happen to the rider as well as the horse", he calls to us over the centuries from his great equestrian scientific work "Neuauffgerichtete Reitkunst", published in 1623 - three years after Pluvinel's death.

Others went his way, which introduced a change in riding art and culture, further and refined it. But despite figureheads like Francois Robichon de la Guerinere or Alexis-Francois L'Hotte - whose ideas are still valid today - the Grande Nation does not win so many medals at the Olympics or championships. With Francois Lesage, who won the gold medal on TAINÉ in Los Angeles in 1932 and the team victories at the same place as well as in London in 1948, they have won three Olympic medals until now. Also the medal table does not suggest anything better: France is behind Germany, Sweden, the former UdSSR and Switzerland on 5th place. Now, the one thing may not have anything to do with the other - but it is still remarkable.

Although the French have a riding institute of international reputation with the Ecole Nationale de Cavalerie, founded in Saumur in 1768, they could only triumph on a higher level in 1987 after 39 years slack period. They owed this to Margit Otto-Crepin and CORLANDUS. The Holstein gelding, who always moved as if walking on feathers and resembled Johnny Walker - thus, full of energy and convinced of himself - was without a doubt an equine personality and one of the best dressage horses of all time. With his rider, he won at the Olympic Games, international championships and World Cup events five medals and a row of placings for France, which mostly were not far away from those places which enabled you to get on the little platform where athletes like to stand. The highlights of their career together were in the second half of the 80s of the last century. In 1987, there was the triumph at the European Championship in

Goodwood - and in 1988, they won the olympic silver medal.

In Seoul, Margit Otto-Crepin and CORLANDUS had to go into the arena second last for the Grand Prix Special and risk everything to win the gold medal in the individual results. Because of a careful and focussed on safety ride they had not exhausted their possibilities in the Grand Prix. Despite a failed Piourette to the right and mistakes in the one step flying lead changes in the end, they were only 3 points behind the only 21 year old Nicole Uphoff, who sat in REMBRANDT's saddle and got the high score with 1458 points. Therefore, there was an exciting duel between the two favoured pairs in the Grand Prix Special.

CORLANDUS showed more freshness and expression this time. Shining highlights of his show were Passages and Piaffes, safe canter travers, clean lead changes as well as smooth transitions especially in the final tour, which ended with a flawless greeting position. But there were also little mistakes. Among others, the gelding was irregular in the flying lead changes at every stride after the eleventh stride and when Piaffeing, he tried to reverse. Possibly, the reason for this was a beam of light which hadn't yet been shadowed by the stands' roof. CORLANDUS probably was irritated by it like other horses, too, which had to complete their lections in the dark and suddenly in brightness from one moment to the other. They earned 1462 points for this excellent, but not optimum ride. As in the course of its career, the pair had already won 1500 points and more several times. But it is not for nothing "hic rhodus, hic salta" about former performances. In other words: in the Equestrian Park of Seoul, the French would have had to repeat former results or outrun them. Whether it would have been enough for an Olympic victory is another question. Nicole Uphoff and REMBRANDT got 1521 points from the judges and won the gold medal - which started one of the greatest careers on the Olympic and international dressage championship grounds which this sport knows.

In 1989, Margit Otto-Crepin and CORLANDUS were outstanding with a superior victory in the World Cup Finals in Goeteborg. After this

success, a Swedish paper called the Holstein the "Nureyev of the dressage arena". His performance in the Scandinavium was a demonstration of dancing elegance, sweeping impulsion and complete harmony. Of which quality it was is outlined by the fact that Wolfgang Niggli - at this time president of the dressage committee of the FEI - showed it on video to everyone how something like this should look in his opinion.

"Thanks to his enormous potential of athletic power, he piaffed, passaged and piouretted in a way, which caused the audience goose bumps."

"I object riding tons of lead changes at every stride, Piaffes or never-ending canter piourettes in freestyle Dressage. An excess of spectacular lections on short, staccato lines does not fit my ideas. The choreography for dressage according to music should primarily be fluent and comfortable for the horse - and must never cause it more physical and psychological strain than a Grand Prix or Grand Prix Special", said Margit Otto-Crepin about her philosophy of a task which debuted in Atlanta in 1996 and has played an important role when it comes to the individual medals ever since. This opinion is astounding. As Corlandus shone above all in lections of high collection. Thanks to his enormous potential of athletic power, he piaffed, passaged and piouretted in a way, which caused the audience goose bumps. Furthermore, they always had the impression that he could be doing it forever. But because he has always belonged to the horses which sold themselves well and could move incredibly as well as he has had excellent basic gaits - of which the canter really was the finest - he did not have to do any special tricks in freestyle and could still make a lot out of little.

In 1989, they won the silver medal at the European Championship in Mondorf - where Margit Otto-Crepin once again lost to Nicole Uphoff and Rembrandt. A year later, the pair, now spoiled by success, scarcely missed the podium with their 4th place at the World Equestrian Games in Stockholm. After obvious weaknesses at the trot and mistakes at the canter they were only 2 points behind third

placed Monica Theodorescu and GANIMEDES with 1463 points. In 1991, they made it to the podium once more. At the European Championship in Donaueschingen they were third after the winner Isabell Werth and GIGOLO and second placed Nicole Uphoff and REMBRANDT. CORLANDUS was already 15 at that time and his career trended to the end.

What he was able to do in the arena has been summed up here. But you have not been informed about his breeding background and his first years.

He was born on April 18th, 1976 in Holstein Heede as the result of a German-French liaison. His mother GUSTIA, a LANDGRAF-daughter, belonged to the best mares in the country - his Anglo-Norman father COR DE LA BRYERE has been working at the small, compared to Hannover or Westphalia, but posh breeding of Schleswig-Holstein since 1971 and he was an international star as a sire of sport horses. Whereas I have to say that he and his sons fit especially well to the mares of the LANDGRAF-line. Another stallion in CORLANDUS's pedigree should be mentioned. Namely CONSUL, one of the two grandfathers on the mother's side - who is sire to the exceptional dressage horse GRANAT!

As a foal, CORLANDUS is said to have had such long legs that he could not stand up at first without human help. Already early his distinct individuality was noticeable because he always wanted to be independent. As much as possible, he wandered away from GUSTA and kept his distance. So, CORLANDUS never was a mother's boy. As a weanling, his breeder Hermann Kruse sold him to Maas Hell - who has been and still is a legendary figure among horse people far beyond Schleswig Holstein's borders. From there, he came to Fridrich Dehn, who raised him. On Dehn's farm close to Husum, Peter Mohr of the Holstein Association saw him as a 2,5 year old who taught there but was also looking for a horse. "It was as if I had been hit by electricity - this was how much charisma CORLANDUS already had at this point", he remembers. "Although his exterior was not perfect with the strongly bent hind quarters and the not ideal kidney area, I wanted to buy him at all costs."

What Peter Mohr had expected from this rough diamond, did happen. CORLANDUS was a jewel and had all what it takes to become a crack. Sometimes he was rather cheeky, but this did not hinder the progress in his training. At 4 years, he could already do flying lead changes - and in 1981 he impressed the judges at the Federal Championship in Munich with his brilliant movements so that they gave him 10 points for the canter! By the way, he also would have been great in show jumping. He is said to have had talent and technique for this job, too.

In November 1983, CORLANDUS moved to the barn of Margit Otto-Crepin. The French rode the 1.8m tall brown until 1992. Already some years before, an ugly swelling was visible on the right ankle joint of the gelding. Apparently, a splinter of wood, which encapsulated to a leishmaniasis, on which additionally a fistula formed, was the reason for this deformation.

But CORLANDUS' real Achilles heel were his loose ligaments at the knee joint, whose missing tightness was already an issue at the pre-purchase check up by the vet. Because of this, he had to cope with a "loose" kneecap, which sometimes was the reason for some irregular steps.

CORLANDUS' last show was in summer 1992 in Aachen. Although he was lame then which excited the audience's disapproval, he was - maybe because of pressure by the French Federation - transported to Barcelona, but there he did not pass the vet check. One had wished this horse a better good bye from the athletic stage. After this, CORLANDUS had some happy years as a pensioner. He did not like to stand around; as his performance blood still was in him. But on a day in December 2001 he did not want to stand up anymore and had to be put down. The French Dressage sport's star was 25 years old.

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Sonntag's Thoughts

My trip to Healdsburg/California

Visiting DOMINIQUE and DEBRA BARBIER

It is 98° Fahrenheit, the sky is blue - no wind and in the morning I read in the local paper, the Daily San Francisco Chronicle, that the bush fires in Northern California already started at five spots around Santa Cruz. It is hard to believe that in this climate, in the middle of a huge vineyard, there is a barn with 30 boxes - home to 29 Brazilian Lusitano stallions and a Frisian mare. I am already spending my 8th day and certainly the 35th hour on this white plastic chair to watch Debra and Dominique Barbier and their coworkers working with the horses. I am happy that I have found another place in this world, where Piaffe is not taught as a trot on the spot, the horses complete their training supply and happily, the bridle is loose enough, spurs are unnecessary (quote: "because the horses don't like it"), a

wonderfully fitting saddle is used for each horse, which had been developed according to Nuno Oliveira's saddle. Every day, freshly washed blankets lie on shinningly clean horse backs. The boxes are twice as big than in Germany - unfortunately there are no paddocks.

Actually, I did not plan on writing about a foreign horse trainer in my Sonntag's Thoughts, but the work I am experiencing here is inspiring me and so I use this space to convey to you, my dear reader, Californian Légèreté. Before they start riding a horse, they longe it and work it in the hand for 10 minutes at least: shoulder in and crossing the legs on both leads, the horses' legs must cross exactly, the neck has to be in the correct position, at the walk and at the trot. This way, every horse

is prepared for the rider sitting on its back - there never is a cold start - even not with 38°C in the shadows. They use a little podest to get on the horses in order to treat the horse's back with care. First command consists of three words here: Calm, discipline and energy. Every horse has its own level of energy which it is worked in; it is decisive to feel how much of your own energy you have to use to work the individual horse gymnastically, so that working on suppleness and extension makes sense and the horse is totally with the human all the time : "Look ahead and give...", were Debra's words for the rider of the Frisian mare in the lesson and then: "Think about what you can do less?!" They aim at riding almost with-

out reins and visible aids. Guérinière's Descente de main et de jambe is lived reality here, respectively the goal of the work in every case. Additionally, you find something else which is rare: Brevity is the soul of wit - they hardly ever ride horseback longer than 20min.

Result: I have experienced a week of exceptionally good, very sensitive work with horses and therefore, we can definitely recommend this Californian adress.

Yours,

Isabella Sonntag

Dominique Barbier, 58 years old, says about himself:

"Since my earliest childhood, being with horses has been my passion. I am familiar with every equestrian discipline: Dressage, show jumping, Eventing, Racing. I experienced my greatest riding inspiration in my time at Nuno Oliveira's, which is exactly why I do not want to teach any physical concepts - as the rider's mind is his greatest aid. At least 90% of riding take place on a mental level - sort of from brain to brain. And every human rides like he or she is: mentally, emotionally and spiritually. Therefore, horses work differently under different riders. Horses teach us to ask without aggression, love unconditionally and avoid the destructive part of perfection. If you feel touched by my words, you will, whether on my horses which I happily offer, or on your own horse, get lessons which are a little different."

If you are interested in clinics in Germany, please send an email to candida@vonbraun.net.
More info: www.dominiquebarbier.net

Picture p. 30: left to right: Dominique Barbier, Debra Barbier, Candida von Braun, Isabella Sonntag

Pictures page 31: Impressions of the Californian morning work: The lessons' main focus is to learn to feel.

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The key to the concept of Légèreté

Chewing and bending exercises

How do you get your horse "on the aids"? Everywhere in the dressage scene, there is the same opinion about this, which can be reduced to the following instructions:

Push your horse with active back and leg signals to the hand, which is carried deep, hard and pulls against the horse, until it yields

If the forehead-nose-line still stays in front of the vertical, longe your horse first with short side reins to make it yield in its back of the neck

Picture p.32 left: Philippe Karl on Verdi, a Lusitano stallion bred by Jean Peigné

Drawing p. 32 right: The rider who forces the horse to yield in the back of the neck with side reins and closes the horse's mouth with special bridles, does not act any different from a teacher who gags the child and ties it to a chair to force it to calm down

In this context, where the horse's mouth is neglected thoroughly, it even seems to be improper to seriously care about yielding in the lower jaw (frz.: cession de mâchoire). We still have to do it - we owe it to the horses and our riding culture.

An experiment

Let's start with a practical experiment, which every rider can easily check: take a horse which resisted all common efforts - side reins, draw reins, curb bits, Pelham and so on - (and survived) and stays stubbornly, with totally tense back of the neck, above the reins. It won't be hard to find! Get on the horse and try to make it yield with hands fixed at the withers by pulling against the pressure while standing. You won't get anywhere. Before you give up, ask a helper to loosen the bridle a

little and to give the horse some sugar. In order to take the sugar into its mouth, the horse has to open the jaw; in order to eat it, it has to mobilise lower jaw and tongue, salivate and swallow. During all this time, the horse will play with the bit and finally round in the back of the neck all on its own. You will get the wonderful feeling of a vivid mouth which is at total harmony with your hand.

Drawing page 33: A horse above the reins, which resisted the rider's hands fixed to the withers stubbornly, will round the back of the neck on its own if it is chewing a piece of sugar and mobilising lower jaw and tongue.

In this experiment, it becomes clear what it means to reduce the putting-the-horse-on-the-reins (french: mise en main) to the unconditional bending of the back of the neck without caring about the horse's mouth. Who works like this, mixes the goal with the way and fights the results without caring about the reasons.

The experiment conveys a first expression of putting the horse on the reins by yielding in the lower jaw by Francois Baucher. General L'Hotte describes it perfectly: "The longitudinal flexion (french: ramener) does not concentrate on the position of the head. It is first of all the yielding in the lower jaw, the first "elastic spring" which the hand affects." Therefore, two contrary opinions oppose each other: Either the rider understands the putting the horse on the reins as a fight of power between his arms and the horse's neck, which, if necessary, he can win by force and which furthermore brings the horse behind the vertical inevitably - or he sees it as a dialogue between his hand and the horse's mouth. He just has to decide.

Explanations

If the rider carries his hand low, the bit inevitably affects the horse's tongue - an organ highly supplied with blood and nerved, highly sensitive. Because of the pain, the hyoid bone is blocked, jaw, back of neck, neck and shoulders clench. The more the rider pulls, the worse is the pain, the more the horse clenches, the more the rider has to pull....a vicious circle. Even worse because the constant pressure strangulates the tongue: Blood cannot circulate well, the tongue becomes dry, sometimes even blue and more and more insensitive.

Drawing p. 34 left: Hyoid bone and tongue form an important crosspoint of the forehead. The muscles which mobilise the tongue are connected to breastbone, head and shoulders.

By contrast, the piece of sugar causes a mobilisation of lower jaw and tongue. The hyoid bone is eased, as a result back of neck, neck and shoulders of the horse relax. If the forehead is relaxed, it becomes elastic and flexible and the horse neither has reasons nor the means to fight the rider's hand. Like General L'Hotte writes: "Relaxation of the mouth shows primarily in a movement by the tongue similar to the one which it does when swallowing, where the lower jaw separates only as much from the upper jaw that the tongue's movement becomes possible. This slow, smooth movement moves the parotid glands, causes a little salivating and transports the bit or bits to the back of the mouth, to let it fall back down as soon as the tongue replaces itself in its long stretched position. During this down fall the bits bump into each other and create the characteristic clatter."

Therefore, what the rider needs is a sensible hand influence, with which he can initiate this mobilisation of the lower jaw and the tongue whenever he likes - without having to use a piece of sugar.

Drawing p. 34 middle: The lower you carry the hands, the more it affects the horse's sensitive tongue. The tightly closed bridles which suppress the horse's protest do not change anything, either.

How do you teach a horse to yield in its lower jaw?

The task is clear: First, the rider has to create the best conditions for a yielding in the lower jaw and then initiate the yielding with a hand signal which does not affect the tongue.

If the horse erects its neck almost vertically, it shifts its weight in the haunches' direction, it cannot lean on the hand. The open scruff frees the jaw joints and prevents squeezing the parotid glands. In this vertical, extended position, the breastbone-hyoid bone-muscle relaxes and can work freely.

If the rider puts his hands up evenly, he can erect the horse's neck and stabilise its head without affecting the tongue. The bit moves upwards in the mouth and works on the corners of the horse's mouth, which inevitably initiates the jaws opening and the tongue mobilising more and more. As soon as the horse opens its mouth, the rider lowers his hands again and keeps only light contact to the horse's mouth. The fingers on the only lightly tense reins slightly open, he allows the horse to freely play with the bit. This is the famous *descente de main*, the lowering of the hands and interruption of the reins' aids, which was important to Francois Robichon de la Guerniere as well as to Baucher.

In his book "Methodische Dressur des Reitpferdes nach den letzten Anweisungen von Baucher" (1891) Francois Faverot de Kerbrech describes the course of action as following:

"The rider holds one snaffle bit rein in each hand and starts to lift head and neck, if necessary using *demi-arrets*, as high as possible; then he requires yielding in the lower jaw by tightening the reins evenly on each side and constant semi tension of the reins from low to up and front to back in a way that the bit works on the corner of the mouth." "If a horse tends very much to lower the neck, you have to carry the hands very high, higher than the ears, if necessary, until the lower jaw has yielded smoothly in this position." "The position of the head follows later as a result of the jaw yielding. But the jaw always has to yield first, with the neck held high and without the head moving."

(Demi-arret is a pure hand signal upwards. In order to differentiate this from other hand signals, the term demi-arret is used here)

Drawing page 35 right: By lifting his hands, the rider works on the corners of the mouth and makes the horse open its mouth. Afterwards, he lowers his hands again and allows the horse to chew on the bit freely.

Pictures page 36: With Sampajo, a Oldenburg stallion bred by Heike Blank, Philippe Karl demonstrates the yielding in the lower jaw in the lateral bending in the work in hand (pic 1) as well as extending the horse's neck in the longitudinal bending (pic 2). Pic 3 shows the yielding in the lower jaw with bent scruff in bending to the left under the saddle. Because the young horse experienced basic schooling concerning the rider's hand, it is put to the hand easily when moving, here at the canter (pic 4).

Of course, the horse learns by frequent repetition to react to slighter and slighter signals from the rider earlier and longer. This way, the rider teaches the horse all the positions he wants one by one - lateral bending, extending position and finally bending in the back of the neck - where he carefully prepares and completes every change with a yielding in the lower jaw and following descente de main. These bending and chewing exercises (french: flexions) form the basis for the training of each horse together with the leg lesson, as well as for correcting horses which were treated in a perverse way, so, which were worked with tightly closed bridles, side reins or behind the vertical.

Features and effects of yielding in the lower jaw

It informs the rider about the psychological condition of the horse: As ethology has shown, the mouth plays an important role in the horse's ways of expression and communication, especially concerning the being inferior attitude. An example is the "Join Up" described by Monty Roberts: If the horse has had enough of being sent away, it stops and turns towards the dominant human. In doing so, it turns its attention on him and expresses its inferiority by mobilising jaw and tongue ("Lick-

ing"). Initiated by a sensible hand signal, the yielding in the lower jaw therefore causes a behaviour of submissiveness. It makes the horse pay attention respectively restores its attention towards the rider - the dialogue is kept.

It informs the rider about the horse's balance: Because of the numberless synergies between tongue, jaws, neck and the rest of the horse's body, every loss of balance causes undesirable muscle tensions which also affect the mouth - the horse holds on to the mouth. Like F. Kerbrech writes: "As long as it remains unchanged, true Legerete (French: Lightness) an unmistakable proof that the horse is in perfect balance." General L'Hotte adds: "Therefore, Legerete proves - nota bene perfect Legerete - that the rider really only moves those powers respectively the horse only uses those powers which are necessary for the completion of the required movement. Every power beyond that produces resistance and thus a decline in Legerete."

It improves the horse's flexibility and smoothness: The knowledge of osteopathy shows how important it is, that the horse's neck can move freely and is flexible. The flexibility of the forehead, brought about by yielding in the lower jaw, allows the rider to bend the horse's neck as he likes. This way, he can practise all sensible lateral bendings and improve whole horse's smoothness by that - until he finally gets the ramener, the attitude of a horse completely on the hand, which is erect in the neck, yields in the lower jaw and bends its scruff, whereas the nose is slightly in front of the vertical and the scruff is the highest point. (Note: Ramener includes more than the yielding of the horse in the scruff, therefore we use this French word).

Picture page 37: After having required yielding in the lower jaw by using the snaffle bit reins, the rider requires the horse to bend laterally over the inner snaffle bit rein and finally bends the horse's scruff by slightly holding contact on the outer reins of both bits. Then, he makes the horse yield in the lower jaw again, in order to confirm the new position (picture of the Lusitano stallion Quiela).

Pictures page 38: The French way of holding the reins allows the rider to separate the influence of the two bits clearly. Thus, he can erect the horse's base of the neck

and require yielding in the lower jaw by using the snaffle bit rein only (picture 1). By lifting the inner hand with the snaffle bit rein he bends the horse in the neck (it mustn't lower the head in this exercise). He decides the level of the scruff bending with the outer snaffle and curb bit reins. Another yielding in the lower jaw confirms the new position (Picture 2). With influence on the curb bit only, the rider can softly require the horse to extend the neck forward-downward – again yielding in the lower jaw confirms the position. This influence is the antidote against curling (Picture 3). Over the curb bit reins, the rider can decide the level of extension, which the horse needs to develop its gaits fully; here in rising trot (picture 4).

Like Baucher once said to his students, who he showed his extended arm with clenched fist: "The strongest of you tries to bend my arm...The weakest tickles me and gets me to open my fist. He will be able to bend my arm easily." It improves the forward movement and obedience to the leg of the horse (French: impulsion): Like Etienne Beudant writes: "Correctly understood Legerete improves impulsion (...). The animal will move forward energetically even more willingly, as it lost its fear of the hand only by chewing on the bit. Therefore, nothing stands against its good will and it gains more impulsion, the more its Legerete completes and confirms. This allows us to say, that the well understood Legerete does not only not destroy impulsion, but by contrast improves it and that horses which are soft in the mouth and remain it constantly, are confirmed in their will to move."

It guarantees the rider's respect for his horse: Like General Decarpentry writes: "The loss of Legerete does not only indicate a change in the physical or psychological balance. The yielding in the lower jaw required at the right moment and cleverly, restores this balance because of its influence on the whole organism of the horse more quickly and infinitely more precise than every other aid of the rider could."

General L'Hotte makes this even clearer: "Often, the rider tries to keep the Ramener by putting side reins on the horse, attaching them to the girth. He thinks he accomplished his task if the horse carries his head vertically or almost vertically. As a matter of fact, this position guarantees a certain submissiveness

of the horse's head. It gives the rider the possibility to let the horse feel the bit in a righter way, respectively control the horse's powers better in case it gets in front of the reins and runs off – but nothing else. The horse is still able to reject the hand sometimes very strongly. The Ramener, like the high school understands it, does not concentrate on the position of the head. It primarily lies in the yielding in the lower jaw, the first "spring", which the hand influences. If this spring reacts softly to the influence, which initiated its resilience, this causes the flexibility of the neck because of the natural connection of all muscles and invites the other "springs" to resonate. If, by contrast, a horse resists this and does not want to mobilize the mouth, there can't be any Légèreté, as this resistance in the mouth – because of the natural joint fortification of all resistances – causes various echoes in the horse's body. In the high art of riding, the Ramener therefore is less a certain unchangeable position of the body, but rather a state of general obedience of all "springs". Circus riding, where only the lection itself counts, does not care about Légèreté and defies it. Thus, for circus riding, a term like "eccentric riding" would be more apt than high school."

Transported to today's time, the honorable General – seeing the side reins upraised to a system, bridles closed tightly and the omnipresent curling of the horses – would probably correct this last sentence and replace the expression of "circus riding" by "modern dressage competitions".

Picture page 39: Through Demi-arrets on the snaffle bit reins, the rider can decide the level of erection in the neck, which the horse needs to shift its weight to the hind quarters here in Piaffe. The relative bending of the scruff is developed later and only to a degree to which it does neither affect the horse's balance nor its relaxation.

Philippe Karl has been a member of the Cadre Noir for 13 years, the French elite riding school in Saumur. As an enthusiastic riding instructor, he conveys his philosophy of Légèreté in clinics throughout Europe. Since 2004, he has been especially dedicated to the training of riding instructors in his "School of Légèreté".

Results

Yielding in the lower jaw is inseparably connected with the concept of – correctly understood – *Légèreté*. As such, it is far more than only a simple technical tool of the rider:

- its outstanding meaning is proven by objective facts of anatomy, physiology, balance, ethology and osteopathy, which today can only be ignored with a great deal of malevolence.
- It proves, that the training of the horse has to be done on the basis of a careful schooling regarding the rider's aids, especially the rider's hand – finally this is about communication.
- It forces the rider to put balance and relaxation of the horse above everything else in his whole work with the horse; this hinders him to sacrifice the wellbeing and health of the animal to a certain lection, position or other requirements.
- It gives the rider the possibility to train almost every horse up to high school.

In the whole, yielding in the lower jaw leads to a true riding philosophy.

With the foundation of international dressage sports in 1929, the international association of riders FEI aimed at "(...) preserving the art of riding against changes, which it can be exposed to, and preserve it in the pureness of its

basic principles in order to pass it untouched on to future generations of competitors."

Furthermore, the following paragraph could be found in the rules: "At all gaits, a slight mobility of the lower jaw without nervousness is proof for the horse's obedience and a harmonic distribution of its powers."

Since the issue of 1958 this essential paragraph has been lost – replaced by a sentence about a horse "being on the reins" and the request of constantly tight reins. What came after this is unknown... This change was one of the hardest hits against riding culture and the respect for the horse.

Luckily, for some years the amount of riders who – terrified by the errands of modern dressage – are searching for alternatives, has been growing. Herewith, the term *Légèreté* is "in" again and is used strongly for advertising purposes. But in this context, it has to be clear that this term has a definite meaning and that a mere lip service is not enough. As who invokes *Légèreté*, without knowing anything about bending and chewing exercises, primarily the yielding in the lower jaw, claims to be a musician although he really only is a music lover.

More information about Philippe Karl and his "School of *Légèreté*" on www.philippekarl.com

Picture Page 40: An intelligent hand works wonders.

magazine page 52

The Principles Of Classical Horsemanship

A Speech by Alois Podhajski (1898-1973), director of the Spanish Riding School in Vienna from 1939-1964

In September 1979, the "German Judges Association for Horse Performance Tests" published a brochure of 230 pages with speeches about "Equitation, Horse Driving, Judging and Breeding Horses".

A trend-setting reading, not only then but still today. As we announced in PIAFFE issue 1/2008 (page 25), the following speech, in some passages shortened by the editorial office, by Alois Podhajsky, director of the Spanish Riding School from 1939 to 1964, is about the question we still ask today "What is Classical Horsemanship?". He gives the answer in the following contribution - a summary of his speech given at the member's assembly of the German Judges Association in Warendorf on Dec 8th, 1952.

Beyond my personal attitude, I am happy as the director of the Spanish Riding School, the last institute consequently maintaining Classical Horsemanship according to the great Masters from the bloom of the equitatorial department, to have received such an opportunity of talking about the principles of Classical Horsemanship in front of this convention.

At the same time, my aspiration is fulfilled to contribute to the mutual understanding of judges and riders, an understanding, which is unconditionally necessary, if this way of riding should be kept in the future and win enough practitioners and friends. Therefore, I feel called to report my opinion also about those questions, as I myself have dedicated my whole life to the service on the horse. A big part of my life's work I assigned to comprising this living being with all its strengths and weaknesses, and forming the horse to be what is understood today by the less fitting term "dressage horse". As the term "dressage" reminds me too much of circus, automatically, you think about poodle dressage, so, exactly the contrary of what is expected from a school horse according to Classical Principles. But, as the term "dressage" has become the international term for this way of riding, we have to live with it and finally, not the term but the way how the sport is practised, is crucial. Please allow me now, to answer and explain the question "What is Classical Horsemanship?". It would lead way to far to talk about this question as profoundly as the subject requires it, and to dissect this way of riding in all particulars. Therefore, I will limit myself to describing the basics of this art of riding and pointing out what we want to know about it in relation to today's dressage competitions.

Classical Horsemanship, which builds on a thorough study of the horse's disposition and communication with it and uses literature going back to antique times, requires nothing else of the horse than the cultivation of such

movements, which it shows in free nature, partly when playing and in high spirits, respectively such which result from being ridden like for example the Levade. Under all circumstances, Classical Horsemanship rejects all movements contrary to nature, like the circus like marching step, canter on three legs, backwards canter, etc.

With this, the question what Classical Horsemanship is, seems to be already answered in most parts. But I want to go a little further and explain the term of this riding art by quoting the great ecuyer Gueriniere, who lived 200 years ago and influenced the art of riding in a good way with his book "Ecole de Cavalerie". In the just mentioned work is written, 2nd part, 1st chapter: "The purpose of training a horse is to make it calm, agile and obedient in systematic work, so that it becomes pleasant in its movements and comfortable for the rider. This is valid to the same extent for the hunting, war and school horse."

With these few, exact words, we involuntarily think how absurd it is to talk about this - like you unfortunately hear it very often -, that Classical Horsemanship is obsolete and has to make room for a modern perception. Finally, it remains the aspiration of the rider always, who has only little understanding for this sport, to have a pleasant and comfortable horse under him. In order to fulfill these requirements, the horse has to be agile and flexible and submit obediently, but joyfully to the rider's will, so, be according to the principles of Classical Horsemanship.

"Finally, it remains the aspiration of every rider, who only understands little of this sport, to have a pleasant and comfortable horse under him."

I'd like to add to these explanations, that I report the rules from the Spanish Riding School, the last place where Classical Horse-

manship is practised. Exzellenz von Hohlstein stated those before the turn of the century in the directives, the few records this Riding School has. According to these directives, a horse's training at the Spanish Riding School is divided into the following three parts:

1. Riding in natural position at not collected gaits on straight lines, the so called riding straight. This way of riding can be thought on its and done on its own.

2. Riding the collected horse at all gaits, turns and tours in complete balance: The Campagne-school. This way of riding is only possible after having completed the first part and is a consequence of it.

3. Riding in erect position with more bending of the haunches' joints and regularity, agility and skilfulness at all usual and natural unusal gaits and jumps. Bringing all this to completion in a methodic way means: High School. This third way of riding is just not imagineable without the first two and especially without the Campagne-school. High School rather forms a whole, in which all three ways of riding unite, so that the rightly trained school horse always has to be able to be a completely usable Campagne-horse.

If you exactly follow the sense of these instructions exactly, you will realise immediately how absurd the talk about a modern perception of dressage and similar things is. The requirements of the FEI for a good dressage horse - even if there are only few phrases about it - are to a huge extent the same as in the Spanish Riding School. The little differences in the perceptions of both sides does not change this fact; the joint big line is kept at the Spanish Riding School as well as in the rules by the FEI. But as the Spanish Riding School practises Classical Horsemanship, the immediate meaning of the principles of Classical Horsemanship for judging dressage competitions is clear.

Herewith, I want to counter the often discussed and expatiated opinion of a Germanic and a Romanic way of riding and reject this structure. This rejection is on behalf of international equitation. Already the historical

development of horsemanship confirms the correctness of my claim that there is no Germanic and no Romanic art of riding, but only one art of riding. At the time of this art's bloom in Europe in the 16th century, the riding institutes installed in the different states of this part of the earth tried to improve and perfect their performances by studying at Europe's most famous riding academies and masters. Then, nobody thought about speaking of a Germanic and a Romanic school. First, Italy was the center of attraction with the masters Grisone and Pignatelli for riders seeking further education, later France with its Pluvinel and Gueriniere. Gueriniere's teachings have lived and live on at the Spanish Riding School in Vienna. And at this royal Riding School Louis von Seeger and Baron Oeynhaus were students. Seeger even was a faithful student of the famous Chief Ecuyer von Weyrother. These two carried the teachings of the Spanish Riding School, or better the teachings of the French Gueriniere, which they learned at the school, to Germany and build a blooming riding art in their home country, which found its excellent representatives in the names Seeger, Steinbrecht, Heydebeck and Stensbeck, just to name some of them. Which close connection there is between the Spanish Riding School and Riding art in Germany, I experienced when studying the old German Riding Rules closely.

Therefore, it seems to me that it is not right to speak of a Germanic and a Romanic way of riding, only from the historical point of view. In my opinion, some nations have tried in the course of the last century to excuse their weakness by claiming it to be the riding concept in their country. As we must not miss the fact that in France, the country of Guérinière, a Baucher could gain an unfortunate influence on training horses, an influence, which had not developed as an advantage for his home-country. With this, I point out Seeger's arraignment titled "Mister Baucher and his arts".

But also in Germany a Plinzner with the unnatural hyperflexion of horses created much mischief, a confusion, which maybe was increased by Fillis' influence. I want to stress explicitly that I do not deny Fillis as a great artist my esteem. But whether his instructions

and his methods, but especially his love for exercises which definitely belonged to the circus riding department, can be used for normal riding, I doubt.

Maybe it is the humans' fallibility that a riding system, however good it is, suffers from poor or substandard representatives. But it must not lead to giving this riding system, changed by human weaknesses, a new name and claiming it to be the only right method. I also reject the so called modern perception of dressage as a term, as it is a absurdity if we humans of today suddenly find better methods and other instructions than the great masters and representatives of classical horsemanship, who dedicated their whole life to studying the horse thoroughly and to the best way of training it. It seems like an impudence to me to try to replace Guérinière's instructions by new methods, characterised by being "modern". This as well could lead to the success that we maybe make work a easier, but to a double and triple degree we loose what Guérinière always dreamed of: a horse, which unfolds in all its beauty, serves the human joyfully and willingly and as a result of its smoothness and agility gives the rider a comfortable feeling, which makes him say that all luck on earth is horseback. But it certainly is not luck, if the rider constantly has to fight in some way with his horse, like you see it so often at today's competitions. But also the horse's lethargic, often even cheerless facial expression of the dressage horses, which partly move with spiritless and tired, partly with tense and irregular steps to fulfill their task, lack this luck.

Now, let's take a closer look at the character of classical horsemanship and then you can judge how far the principles of classical horsemanship can be used in judging dressage competitions.

The main focus of classical horsemanship is to preserve and cultivate the beauty of the horse's natural movements under the rider. Also with a dressage horse, the main focus should be gaits' purity and the steps' regularity. A dressage horse has to, despite the fact that it can do Piaffe and Passage, keep its gaits, given by nature, even show them by

training - the result of right training - more expressively and beautifully. Then the training was right, then riding is art. An old riding master said rightly that nature can exist without art, but that art cannot exist without nature. Therefore, the well trained dressage horse has to be proficient in the natural gaits and any occurring deficiencies cannot be compensated for by spectacular exercises. If we are blinded by spectacular exercises, we leave the path of classical horsemanship and approach circus riding. Therefore, every dressage horse, from easy L-Dressage to Olympic dressage competitions, should be required to perform a pure and ground covering walk and an impulsive, even and elastic trot. But also the canter should be characterised by vivid and even strides at every speed and must not become a hobbling on four tracks. In my opinion, these are the requirements for a dressage horse, and they give the judge the best opportunity for judging the right way of training. Occurring cardinal errors cannot and must not be ignored. As it is always stressed, that dressage is not an end in itself, but only a way of reaching a goal. If it is like that, a dressage horse should have its free, natural gaits and they should not be sacrificed to wrong exercises of high school. What does classical horsemanship require among others from a school horse? That it is pleasant and comfortable in its movements. But a horse with irregular and tense steps cannot be comfortable for its rider. Such a horse will be exhausted early, because it is not agile and smooth enough, therefore also does not fulfill classical horsemanship's other requirements. But a horse can only be agile and smooth if it is supple enough, the exact contrary of tension.

With this opportunity, I will give you an example how far the confusion in training dressage horses has come. A not unimportant rider has said literally, for what he should first bring his horse to suppleness if he needed the tension in Passage. See, here the meander starts, and this meander must be fought in its beginning. Impulsive steps with suppleness at the same time, erect seat and soft and smooth, these and many more apparent contraries are, what elevate riding from pure handcraft to an art.

Therefore the first requirement for all levels of dressage remains: purity and regularity at each gait. The second requirement for a school and for a dressage horse is, that it becomes agile, smooth and obedient. Agility and smoothness are the result of a systematically structured training, the result of so called gymnastication of the horse. Many horse will be sufficiently smooth by nature, but will lose it temporarily if they feel hindered by the rider's weight. Some horses will have less of this, and it will be the right training's task to acquire adequate smoothness. Let's not forget how many physical weaknesses of the human can be eliminated through systematic gymnastics. Smoothness, agility and art cooperate in horses and will be mirrored in the softness of the movements best for the viewer. Mostly, you get the best impression of the horse's smoothness from the rider's behaviour. As a horse, which throws the rider a lot at the trot, is not supple enough and this appearance clearly points to a stiffness of the horse in the joints or back, but also shows the steps' tension. The best way to judge a horse's suppleness is in speed changes, which should not only be clearly perceptible but also soft. If we are honest, we have to admit that how much we miss those speed changes in modern dressage competitions even at the hardest levels. Mostly, the riders use a standard speed which they only increase in extended trot by some tense steps and then they think they rode a spirited programme.

What requires classical horsemanship concerning this? The horse should always keep the same rhythm in the movement and only extend or shorten the length of the strides according to the speed. How beautiful are transitions like that! But at the same time, they show that the horse is absolutely smooth and supple and in balance. Don't you have to require this from a dressage horse as well?

A further requirement of a school and dressage horse is obedience. Obedience shows best in the dressage horses I have seen in the last years. But maybe this obedience led to the judges overseeing the lack of the other characteristics mentioned above. Of course, this overseeing often leads to misjudgements. As it is not only about obedience alone, but

also the way, the horse follows the rider's instructions. If it was about obedience alone, then we would do nothing else than poodle dressage. But then all those riders would triumph who force their horses by using various coercives to do what they want.

Therefore I claim, that the principles of classical horsemanship must find their full use in dressage competitions; yes, that the consequent following of it will only lead to a support of this branch of equitation. As it would be very unclever to reject classical horsemanship and its golden instructions because some disciples used its methods badly.

I'd like to shortly sum up the basic principles of classical horsemanship which should be regarded unconditionally when judging a dressage horse and which characterise the whole structure of training at the same time:

1. *A straight horse, moving forward spiritedly.*
2. *Absolute purity of gaits and uniformity of steps. This uniformity only gives the dressage horse the right beauty and is not experienced as the music of movement without reason.*
3. *Calm and trusting being on the reins by the horse, which entrusts itself voluntarily and willingly to its rider's leadership. The horse must seek the rider's leadership, not the other way around, that the rider uses the reins to press the horse into a certain head position. By the way, this wrong collection of the horse will always express itself through a lack of freedom at the gaits.*
4. *Speed, which is acquired by the right gymnastics and is mirrored in the movements' softness, the flowing transitions and last but not least in the horse's absolute balance in all movements. This balance is only acquired if the hind quarters have developed enough carrying capacity and have at least the same share of carrying the rider's weight. A horse moving in such a way will, transferred to mechanics, evoke the impression as if the motor of forward movement, the force of moving forward, is in the hind quarters and that the rider's reins only guides and channels the forward movement. But this force first has to be*

existent, so that it can be guided by the reins accordingly.

5. The horse's agility, which is a result of suppleness to a huge part and requires absolute physical self control as well as total balance, will show in the correctness of figures, when it comes to the lines as well as in the order of steps. This agility should always be perceptible always not only in the hardest lections, Passage, Piourette and Changement - to name only a few-, but also at the shortened gaits.

6. The horse's obedience. I consciously put the main requirement for a dressage horse at the end, because obedience is a natural result of the requirements mentioned above and this obedience must not be the obedience of a drilled poodle but the proud result of a gym-

nastic training of the horse built on preserving the horse's eagerness and willingness to work.

These principles of classical horsemanship should and must be the main requirements for a successful dressage horse. Every rider, but also every judge should get this straight. As especially the clarity of terms is unconditionally necessary for the growing of each work, art and sport. Free of mysticism must the forming and training of a riding horse be, so free that the methods can be comprehended even by a layman - also if he cannot perform them. Free of mysticism must also be the perception and decision of a dressage judge - a claim, which unfortunately was often not fulfilled in dressage decisions of the last years.

magazine page 64

The perfect Piourette

As a canter lection in highest collection, the Piourette is one of the hardest lections in dressage training. It requires impulsion, balance, smoothness and suppleness. Only through dosed gymnastics, the increasing invigoration of the hind quarters can be supported. Training too intensely in too short a time period can quickly lead to overstraining the joints and ligaments.

Regarding the ideal we let Richard L. Wätjen, the "classic" of equine literature, get a word again, like already for the Piaffe and Passage.

"The Piourette is a turn on the hind quarters at the canter in five to six jumps. The horse, bent strongly in the haunches, does a small circle as possible with the hind quarters (almost on the spot). The forehand does a bigger circle around the hind quarters, where the order of steps of the canter must never stop. In narrowing the turn, the inner hind leg carries the most weight without losing the rhythm of the movement, so that the correct canter is kept by the stepping outer hind leg. "Throwing" the

horse must be avoided from the beginning. The Piourette is one of the most difficult lections of high school. Performing it correctly requires a totally gymnasticated dressage horse flawlessly on the aids. The Piourette requires distinct bending in the haunches and highest collection.

There are three possibilities to practise the Piourette: on a straight line (one track) by riding a double half Piourette, or from the Renvers canter in the corner of the arena with 3/4 Piourettes or by downsizing a circle at the Travers canter.

Teaching the horse the Piourette by practising a double half Piourette is disproportionately harder and not recommendable. Here, the horses learn the "throwing" too easily, come behind the reins, stop the canter with the hind quarters and loose correct canter. Only when the horse has already had some exercise at the 3/4 Piouretts, one can start with those exercises."

Magazine page 70

The Correct and Easy Way to Learn Riding

The well ridden horse – A series

"Stepping safely and lightly, it moves in pure step order, seeking forward motion eagerly of its own accord but still without stress and haste, on its instructed track willingly and free. The neck arches upwards in front of the rider in an even arch, the head's position is slightly in front of the vertical with a yielding scruff. The ears form the highest point, are neither pointed forward nor flattened, but rather they make the horses' willingness and its attention to the rider obvious in their natural position." This is the beginning of Hans von Heydenbreck's article about the picture of a well ridden horse on page 6 in Piaffe I.

This ideal is also valid for the following and all future articles by the author Karin Luehrs.

11 always repeating correcting exercises for rider and horse

Introduction

In this first article, I want to discuss frequently occurring and repeating "problems" of rider and horse.

It is not about the small details, the typical rider's or horse's mistakes like "horse does not canter straight" or "rider's hand to high"; those are explained thoroughly in the work "111 Loesungswege fuer das Reiten".

This article is mainly about the wholeness of work movements - the horse's as well as the rider's. They require the ability to notice movements of the whole body, to analyse them and to change or improve them according to the situation.

The following 11 points therefore are something new - they vary from the usual wordings, which you, honoured reader, are used to. But only like this it is possible to educate the eye and perception in another way.

- Form of the saddle and length of stirrups
- Function rather than form
- Back mover and leg mover
- Profile - uphill tendency
- Dosing of aids - muscle strength, use of muscles, strength!
- Naturalness in the rider's body - wholeness
- "Natural", supple movement of the horse
- Balance/motor balance - rhythm
- Flow of movements
- Rider's feeling
- Harmony

In later articles, I will present detailed exercises and instructions for you to choose. This will be about exercises for the young horse as well as exercises for up to Grand Prix. But first these "11 always repeating correcting exercises for rider and horse", in order to lay the foundation for the following.

1. Form of the saddle and length of the stirrups

I start this paragraph with the topic "equipment". I do this consciously, because I want to make these mechanic and technic points first and will then assume they are known.

What?

The term form of the saddle means the saddle which fits the horse as well as the rider! This sounds simple, but is very complicated in practice. Knowing about the "right" position of the saddle is rather different.

The same applies to the length of the stirrups of the dressage rider. It should be in a way that the rider can both assume the extended as well as the elastic dressage seat.

Why and how?

The essential criteria of the saddle related to the horse are:

The saddle has to lie on the deepest point of the horse. Centre of gravity of horse and saddle must be the same. Looking from the side, the saddle must lie on one level, meaning it should not be higher on any side. The deepest point of the seat must be in the middle of the saddle.

The gullet must never under any circumstances press the horse's withers. Rider and trainer must check this on a regular basis. The essential criteria of the saddle related to the rider are: Today's modern dressage saddles usually have a big panel in front of the femoral and the knee, a high pommel and gullet, which results in a relatively small seat.

The panel itself is not the problem, but rather its position. The panel only makes sense if it supports the rider but does not block his mobility. This is the case if the panel is placed too far back. Then the rider's femoral is forced in an almost vertical position, which fixes the hip and makes the rider sit stiffly. Being elastic in the middle position is impossible.

This is also especially the case if the panel reaches so far down that it fixes the rider's knee. Then really every sort of movement is blocked. Many riders who have such an over-long panel on their saddle have gotten used to placing the leg even further back in order to evade the pressure and the pain in the knee. What a misdevelopment!

With such saddles, you can watch the rider moving a lot in the upper body instead of being elastic in the middle position. The horse's movements cannot be captured by the elastic hip, but are transported to the upper body, which then has to do the movement.

It also occurs, that the seat of the saddle is this narrow, that the rider cannot move and sit at all. He is so shut in the gap that the movement again is not transported to the middle, but to the upper body or even to the rider's head.

But: Riding is movement. Everything which blocks movement is wrong!

Concerning the length of the stirrups, there is a similar problem. If the stirrups are so long that the rider either cannot find the stirrup or always has to overextend his legs to reach it, something basic is wrong.

The length of the stirrups has to be so, that the rider assumes an extended, but not over-extended position, but is still able to bend the joints. If the stirrups are too long, the elasticity of hip, knee and tarsal joint are blocked. Stiff, fixed sitting is the result.

The length of the stirrups is correct, if the rider can sit on his back and is not forced to sit on his femorals.

2. Function instead of form

What?

What do "function" and "form" mean?

Form means if the rider is "formed", forced stereotypically into a sitting position, which makes him clench and look stiff. This form is

kept in no matter which movement. In order to classify this term, it helps to imagine pressing someone into a (baking) form. The rider is forced to adapt to this form, he has to fit into the form without regard for the actual movement beneath him.

So many riding students' efforts to adopt the form their instructor requires leads to tension and clenching and later to automated malpositions. Watching in the warm up arenas shows these problems clearly.

This way of learning is wrong!

By contrast, function means that the ideal seat is aimed for, but always under the aspect that every seat characteristic has to fulfill a certain function. Every criteria of the seat has to be functional; they fulfill a certain sense!

Why?

When learning the basic seat, you have to meet certain criteria, i.e. sitting upright, with heels low and resilient, upright hands, carried head etc...

Those criteria were created like this because they make sense and are functional. Some examples for this:

The rider has to sit in an upright position, not because it is written in the handbook, but because only in this position, the body is free to move and participate in the horse's movements. The rider has to carry his hands upright, not because it is written in the rules, but because only if you carry your hands upright, your seat will be independent.

The rider's heels have to be resilient, not because it is written in the rules, but because the resilient heel is a prerequisite for an elastic, resilient seat. If you press your heels down by force or by contrast, pull your knee up high so that the tip of your foot is the lowest point, every resilience is impossible.

The rider's head should be carried freely, not because it is written in the rules, but because only a freely carried head allows you to move with your horse. If you hold your head up by force convulsively or if you look down all the

time, the cervical spine is fixed in the one or the other direction, and once again moving with your horse won't be possible.

In all situations, the rider should be able to adapt to the horse's movements. This aspect is an essential topic and is also discussed in point 6.

With all these examples, it surely became clear to you, that the rider's seat is functional. Every detail of the seat has a certain sense and always has to be rechecked for functionality.

How?

How will I learn functional riding, respectively how do I train it?

There are a few things to be attended, too, and they are not very difficult either.

- The rider has to learn which sense the respective exercise has. He has to learn by theory why the exercise has to look like this and not different. This knowledge concerns the rider's seat as well as the horse's movement. Conveying this theoretical knowledge is the trainer's task.

An example for this:

The rider has to learn to ride with a closed fist around the reins. Why? Because only with a closed fist you can be sure that the rider feels and gets a constant, even connection to the horse's mouth. If the rider has understood the logical part of the exercise – the fingers have to be closed so that he can feel the mouth -, he develops more understanding for it and the exercise can be completed well sooner.

A second example:

The rider has to learn that and above all why every horse has to be relaxed and supple. He has to be taught how the relaxation phase should be and when it is successful. Only then he will be able to warm his horse up on his own.

- In conveying this knowledge, you have to be careful to give the rider time to feel. "Who does not feel it will not be able to hunt it

down” – this old phrase will never lose its value. Without feeling, riding is impossible! The exercises and tasks for the rider have to be created in a way that the student has to feel. “Close your fingers so that you feel the mouth” or “Tell me when you feel the mouth resp. the diastema of the horse in your fingers” instead of “Close your fingers”.

In short: Learning to ride and to teach it will progress more quickly if the rider first understands the sense, the function of each exercise and second, if the rider learns the exercise by feeling, by “having to feel”.

3. Back mover rather than leg mover

The subject “back mover” is placed here because it is essential for the training and health of the horse.

What?

What is a back mover and what is a leg mover?

A back mover is a horse, which uses the vibrations to the front and down in all movements; the stronger and easier they are, the more active and wider, the smoother and more elastic, fresher and more decided are the movements. The horse is also kept healthy with this.

By contrast, a leg mover is a horse, which is mostly formed by the rider’s hand (or maybe rather misformed). You know this if the horse does not show real impulsion, its back is tense and therefore it is mostly only showing short strides. The rider’s too hard hand which presses the horse in a frame which is too small and at the same time too strongly pushing back and leg signals are cause this problem. The horse tries to process this cumulative power by lifting its front legs spectacularly high up, but it cannot move the hind legs under its center of gravity because of the rider’s blocking hand. The results are tense steps with enormous effort in the front legs and the hind legs not stepping up, the so called show trot. Unfortunately, it is rather popular, as it looks very

spectacular – but it is wrong and if done for a longer period of time, it affects the horse’s tendons and joints.

But you cannot only notice a leg mover by the show trot, but also by them stepping without impulsion, tact and activity. They just stroll. Those horses have never learned to use their backs spiritedly.

Why?

Why does a horse have to be a back mover?

A horse has to learn to carry the rider on a positively tense and accordingly supply working back muscle (see Heuschmann). Then the horse is in a state of suppleness and shows purity in tact at all three basic gaits. This way, it is prepared for its career as a riding horse and by this correct building of muscles, it can be used as a riding horse for a long time and become old.

How?

The “Skala der Ausbildung” (“Training Scale”: tact, suppleness, dependence, impulsion, straightness, collection), proven over centuries, serves as a guideline for the development of the back mover. I will talk about the scale in a later article.

How do I train the horse to be a back mover?

You cannot answer this question in a few sentences. In the next article, which is about the gymnastics for young horses, it will be intently discussed. But it is essential that the horse learns, to step up to the bit. It has to learn to allow dependence through the rider’s hand and being required to look for further dependence by the encouraging signals. Best way to check is the correct “having the horse chew the reins out of your hands”.

I talk about these terms here so that the rider and the trainer are conscious of the difference between the two ways of moving. Many riders are not able to sit properly, because their horses are leg movers; then new saddles and sometimes seat prostheses are bought, instead of making the horse’s back resilient.

Principally, a back mover is able to make its back swing while a leg mover never learnt that and is tense.

A horse becomes a back mover, if it learns to use its muscles in positive, supple tension. The rider has to give his signals in appropriate doses (see part 5) and ride the horse from back to front. That means that the pushing aids have to be stronger than the restraining ones, this means in praxi that the aids from the reins should always be less than back and leg aids. There must be no reverse tendency to the aids. The direction of the aids should always be the front. (see part 9) The horse has to be given the chance to move forward, to let itself relax to the front, to extend itself. If the horse looks for dependence, it is on the right path.

4. Profile – uphill tendency

Following the part about back mover and leg mover, this chapter is about a smaller correcting exercise: the profile of horse and rider.

I mean the perspective of the viewer from the outside, thus the trainer's, the judge's or the audience's perspective. This point is in this chapter, as it is elementary in judging a horse for one, and second it has to be noticed by the rider in his daily work and third it is relatively easy to notice.

What?

What do "profile" and "uphill tendency" mean?

Profile means the view of horse and rider from the outside and from below. This perspective is also conveyed by the medium "arena mirror", to be able to look at and judge oneself in the side view.

How does the picture of horse and rider affect us if we look at it from the side?

The term uphill tendency includes the goal of a well ridden horse at the same time. The horse should move uphill, that means no walk-

ing "on the front legs" and should not lean on the rider's hand, therefore not get a fifth leg.

And it does not include the picture which is already typical for us, of a "thoroughly positioned" horse which bites its own chest and whose front line is behind the vertical. Unfortunately, we have already gotten used to this view!

Why?

Why is the horse's uphill tendency so important?

If a horse moves uphill, it is already sure that it will neither lean on the forehead nor on the rider's hands. Ideally, the horse moves with relative elevation, meaning it carries itself and is elevated according to its level of training. The front legs are unburdened, the hind legs have to work more – this also serves for keeping the horse healthy.

For horses which have a complexion rather downhill, the same is valid. It should always be tried that the horse does not lean on the rider's hand. If a horse's complexion is downhill, even the best rider cannot train it to be a real uphill mover. But it can be prevented from leaning on the rider's hand and on the forehead and therefore, many damages can be prevented.

How?

How do I train my horse to move with uphill tendency?

Again, the training scale is decisive. If the horse is worked according to the scale (above all when it comes to tact, suppleness and dependence), it will be able to carry itself. Two images help you to achieve that goal:

The first image is that of a horse moving (galloping or trotting) in its paddock. The horse likes to carry its head-neck axis by nature. It would never start to move "downhill" and lean on the forehead of its own account.

The second image is the one of a horse which is required to carry its head and neck on its own. Dependence is only there, like the rules

tell you, to give the horse the direction and the frame, to get it on the aids and improve its position and form and not to pull its head down or carry it with your hand...

If you have those images in your head, you will try not to confuse your horse and let it lean on the forehead right from the start. The trainer has the first and best view here, as he is able to see the profile from the outside and can interfere accordingly.

For correcting a leaning horse, the images of movement given above are important as well as the right mix of pushing and restraining aids and the strength/dosing of giving aids, which is described in the next chapter.

5. Dosing the aids - muscle power, using muscles, strength!

What?

What does "dosing aids" mean?

- The term "signals" (or "aids") means the ways possible for us to influence the horse. This is using our legs, our weight and reins. Combining these aids in different ways and manners, the rider controls gaits, speed and the horse's composure; he trains his horse and makes it supple.

- "Dosing" means that the rider has to learn to use the respective aids appropriately. Appropriately means first that they have to fit the horse (character and level of training = state of the art), second that the goal always has to be to use the signals/aids as lightly as possible. Here, it is important that the rider has to want to perceive the use of strength in his aids from the start, to control it and use it pointedly.

Why?

- The rider who trains a horse is solely responsible for the being ridden of the horse! He has to be aware of him being the one who makes the horse be "user-friendly" or "user-unfriendly".

- The learning rider has to be trained from the start of his riding career that he only learns fine, light riding. This is only possible if he is taught lighter aiding from the beginning.

How?

- In order to learn the right dose of giving aids, there is a relatively simple way: You have to let the rider feel. He has to experience the force, strength of his aids and learn to differentiate it.

- This is done the easiest with tactile exercises, those are exercises in which the rider is instructed to feeling and perceiving. For example his task would be to lay his leg on the horse, to let it breathe. Here, he should use the leg with different levels of strength. The trainer puts his hand between the rider's leg and the horse. Together with the trainer, the difference between seizing, stronger aids and normal working aids is worked out.

- Further example: Feeling the right dosing in the reins aid. Rider and trainer take an extra rein and simulate the taking, the giving and the holding reins aid. This exercise is very, very effective and should be used regularly in lessons. Many riders use the reins with too much force and are overwhelmed by their progress in learning after this exercise.

6. Naturalness in the rider's body

What?

What does naturalness mean?

The term naturalness is defined as a behavior in movement which is characterized by being elementary, wholly, organic, rhythmic, expressing and such (see Roethig 1992).

Rational and intellectual forces are seen as dangers for naturalness. These are changes or anomalies in behavior, which are led by the head. A typical phenomenon for adults. They try to control their motor function only by their intellect. Often, clenching and arrhythmic movements occur. This is followed by

disharmonies and misunderstandings. In order to be able to handle the term better, our own eye and feeling is always helpful. When do we feel that the rider sits “naturally”?

The answer is: When he sits relaxed. Principally, this is related to the muscles, but also to the rider’s breathing and mimics.

Why?

Why is naturalness this elementary?

As the definition puts it, naturalness requires wholeness and rhythm.

Wholly means the body in its whole, in a system. In this whole the body parts are structured so they are one together. This unity has to be created when horseback, because a harmonic whole can only be created this way. In order to achieve wholeness, the body has to act rhythmically. The body parts have to adapt to the rhythm or the rhythms in a way that they add up to a whole and naturalness.

How?

How do I train it? How do I create it?

In order to achieve naturalness and preserve it, controlling your body is necessary. The rider has to learn to perceive his movements using his senses. He has to learn when tensions are necessary and where the borders to too much tension are.

In order to achieve this goal, I will point out three different paths:

1. The trained instructor has to offer many exercises which force the student to feel. This is done by asking questions about the rider’s feeling, i.e. “What do you feel when exaggerating moving with your horse and what do you feel if you do it more passively?” or “Tell me by feeling it (not by eyesight) when the front legs touch the ground at the walk.” At an advanced level, this exercise is done concerning the whole movement and all four legs.

2. If the rider is too tense, this is often related to his breathing. In such a situation, the rider has to learn to use his breathing on pur-

pose. Only like this tensions can be resolved. The student should be asked to breathe in over a couple of trot or canter steps and then to breathe out over a certain number (which should be way higher than the first) of steps. This exercise trains the perception of your breathing.

3. A further point for learning naturalness is learning to differentiate between tension and relaxation. If the rider learns to put these forms in the right relation, a wonderful prerequisite for naturalness will be created. A tool for this is experiencing the contrast, this means working out the right dosing by consciously practicing tension and relaxation.

Example: Changing from tension to relaxation in the rider’s thighs (femoral..?). The moment the rider relaxes his thighs, he sinks deeper into the saddle. The instructor has to teach the student to consciously perceive this, so that he can achieve it on his own in the future.

7. “Natural”, supple work movement of the horse

What?

What do the terms “natural” resp. “supple” work movement mean?

“Natural” means to preserve the work movement the horse is born with. The horse is born with a certain quality of movement. In the very successful German horse breeding this quality has increased enormously. Many horses have movements with a large frame, impulsion and have good basic gaits in the whole. Those have to be preserved in the course of training and, if possible, be improved.

Unfortunately, it happens that horses lose their movement by being ridden. Especially, this is the case at the trot. Instead of developing more impulsion, the horses are worked backwards by false riding and therefore lose tact as well as their level of impulsion. The result is a trot, which looks hasty and running.

“Supple” means that the process shows inner and outer suppleness, in this context. Here, the definition of suppleness of the rules is valid.

A horse is supple, if it shows a resilient back and muscles, which work and relax without cramping or force.

Suppleness shows in

- a content face
- an evenly resilient back
- a closed, active mouth
- a carried tail, swinging in the movement
- breathing out as a sign that the horse also relaxes on the inside. (see Richtlinien Bd. 1)

On the whole, a supple, naturally moving horse looks content!

Why?

Why is natural, supple work movement so important?

The foundation of a horse to be ridden and trained is and remains its back. As only a supple back is able to carry the rider. This is why it is so elementary to train the back in the right way from the start. With an image in the head of the horse, as far as possible, being trained without cramping and force (but please with consequence), the best prerequisite for keeping a content riding horse is given.

If this is the case, this content state of the horse serves the well being and health of the horse.

How?

How do I keep the horse’s movement under the saddle supple and natural?

About this, there are many answers. This question is described more thoroughly in the next article “Gymnastics of the young horse”.

Here, only the essential principles are discussed:

1. The rider must never ride the horse backwards. This means, he must never act with a pulling rein. The horse does not have a chance to yield to this aid and cannot understand it.
2. The horse has to be worked from the back to the front. This means, when using the reins, you always have to support this positively by using encouraging aids. Already described in point 5 which is about the right dosing of aids.
3. With the right image in the rider’s head, that the horse should be content and relaxed, the rider will give aids more carefully.
4. The horse’s tact should always be watched. If you care about the points that the timely and spatial symmetry is kept at all three basic gaits, we get a horse moving in tact. We call this the “purity of gaits”. If this is the case, we can equate it with “suppleness” and “contentment”.
5. The horse has to be made supple in each lesson, so that all prerequisites for a successful lesson are given, pulse, breathing and temperature have to be increased gradually; the horse has to come to tact, suppleness and dependence. More details about this in the next article.

8. Balance/motor balance – rhythm

What?

What does balance and motor balance mean and why is rhythm this important?

In sports, we talk about motor balance, therefore the balance which is related to movement. The “motor” balance is defined as the ability of the human to leave his own or another body in a state of balance by balancing movements (see Roethig).

In relation to riding, this means the ability to adapt to the horse’s movements in each situation. For this, the rider has to learn the so-called “ability of balance”. This sounds simple, but in reality, it’s the hardest of all.

The term “rhythm” has many definitions. In sports, “movement rhythm” is the dynamic structure of a movement, this means the periodic change from tension and relaxation, which forms a movement. It is also defined as a characteristic of spatiotemporal order. From the training scale, we know the term “tact”: “Tact is the temporal and spatial symmetry of movements (see Richtlinien, Bd. 1).

Why?

Why do we need this ability?

A rider horseback means that two beings move with one another and have to coordinate. The rider has to learn to balance. Every movement of the horse, be it forward, backward, to the side or at different tempi, means for the rider he has to adapt to the new situation of balance. You could say the horse has us in a constant state of “disquiet”, which has to be balanced by the rider. He needs the ability of balance for this.

If the beginner has littler body experience – if he played, climbed, skated little outside as child, moved little but sat down more – he lacks a great amount of so called movement experiences. These are experiences which the human should have, in order to train himself in balance, in body control and body feeling. All collected movement experiences, especially those from childhood, are helpful when learning to ride.

As riders, we need the ability of rhythm or getting into rhythm, in order to be able to adapt to the horse’s movement. This means that the rider has to accept the horse’s rhythm of movement and has to adapt his movements to the horse’s. This ability is an important foundation, to respond to the horse’s movement at all.

How?

How do I train the ability of balance and rhythm?

Balance training starts in the first riding lesson. As the horse moves the rider, resp. the rider is moved by the horse, he is forced to rebalance himself constantly. Every smallest

step requires a movement adaption on the rider’s side, so that he does not loose his balance or even falls. Therefore it is very, very important that the first phases of the beginner are not mainly seat training, but mainly balance training. It would be wrong to confront the student with seat training at this level. If so, he would be pressed into a form which forces him into certain positions. As discussed in point 2 (Function instead of form), this would be the counterproductive way.

Exercises which train the rider’s balance are decisive in this phase. Starting with easy exercises at the lunge, in order to provide security and trust, movements at the walk and at the trot are required. At the trot, they are of course connected to raising trot, as it is the easiest for the student. Only when the rider trusts, the canter is required. Many students rather choose the light seat at the canter because it is easier for them. Here, the trainer has to differentiate between his students.

If the first security is there, trail riding is added, uphill and downhill, in order to have the students collect more movement experiences. Everything which gives the student a bigger repertoire of movement experiences, is helpful. In order to learn to feel the horse’s rhythm, it is important to get into the horse’s movement. This means, that the student has to get tasks which encourage him to feel.

An example: The feeling of the step order is ideal, starting at the walk (because the walk is a gait without impulsion and the rider can concentrate on feeling). With the trainer’s help and maybe acoustic support, feeling the step order at the walk is worked out. First, the step order is explained in a theoretic unit, then you start by feeling the front legs. When the student can do this, feeling the hind legs is worked out and practiced together with the trainer.

Those are the first steps to achieve feeling for movement and rhythm. In the further course of learning, these exercises are transported to the impulsive gaits and refined.

A further, ideal training for the ability of rhythm is experiencing and feeling move-

ments on different horses. The horse gives the rhythm, the rider has to adapt! The value of such an experience is often underestimated. Here, special requirements for the ability of balance, the ability to adapt (adapting to the new, unknown movements of the horse) and the ability of rhythm. The more often this is possible, the quicker learning will progress.

If the rider is fit in rhythm, he will be able to adjust to the horse and learns to use his aids at the right point in the horse's work movement.

9. Movement flow

What?

What does "movement flow" mean?

The term "flow" contains the goal already: The movement should flow like a wave, which moves evenly through the water. "Movement flow" is defined as a feature which characterises the continuancy of the work movement (see Roethig, p. 80).

The term is from the subject "kinematics", which is the essential foundation of all sports studies. Kinematics is the whole of sport scientific statements about the problem complex movement in sports. Here, the whole knowledge about athletic movements and moving athletically is accumulated. Therefore, it is to be used in equitation: As riding is moving and movement!

Back to the understanding of the term "movement flow" - it is an essential criteria for the perfection of a technical execution (1.), for the degree of being proficient in a certain technique (2.) and for the achieved level of a learning process (3.).

Explanations about this:

1. Riding a certain lection seems perfect, if the rider's aids are invisible.
2. A rider is proficient in a technique (a lection or a special combination of aids), if it happens automatically. This means that he can recall

the technique and use it anytime. A beginner has to think about how and where to put the leg aid, the weight aid and the rein aid when he wants to canter. The advanced rider does it automatically and does not have to think about it. He just does it!

3. The less elaborate giving aids is, the more flowing are the movements, the higher is the movement's quality. With this, a rider has achieved a certain (in this case higher) level in the learning process.

Why?

The movement flow is very important for several reasons:

1. If the candidate shows movement flow, that means a continuancy in the work movement, this is an expression of his coordination of movements. Therefore of his ability to connect several movements and to control them temporally, spatially and regarding power.

As a rider and a trainer, you feel resp. notice it from the completion of the movements, whether they are coordinated or not. Square changes of direction (i.e. sudden turn manoeuvres of children with their ponies which are unbalanced by this), interruptions or setbacks (i.e. approaching a jump, the horse is excited and interrupts the rhythm) or a too harsh, jerky use of power (i.e. sudden pulling on the reins) have their cause in lacking coordination of the rider, and this especially regarding muscle impulses. Those ways of execution disturb our aesthetic perception.

We all know the statements by show jumpers if they criticise after the ride that the horse didn't jump round and flowingly. Also the dressage rider talks about flowing and halting movements. Even laymen can estimate a ride to be harmonic or disharmonic. They don't like or like a movement if isn't or is round.

All this is evidence about the topic movement flow.

2. Flowing movements are also experienced and perceived very subjectively. If the work movement is flowing, it seems to be joyful and inspiring, while a disturbed, interrupted

movement flow evokes reluctance. Also the viewer has similar feelings.

3. Movement flow has something to do with economy of the movement. Constant speed lead to maximum economy. Every movement requires additionally to the actual moving muscle work also holding work, so called "static work". When delaying or interrupting a movement this static work can become very high temporally.

Two examples for this:

If a horse loses flow in the canter pirouette, it has to carry its whole body longer during the jump than necessary. It has to perform much more static work, which exhausts more, so that the performance becomes uneconomic. If semi or strong speed is required, it is the most economic, if the rider manages to keep an even speed. - Movement flow is therefore also a criteria for the achieved symmetry.

How?

How do I train movement flow?

The right ideal is very important. That means that the rider has to imagine the movement of the required lection or task. He either has to have a so called inner image of the movement or somebody who shows him the lection. If he has this image in front of his eyes, it will be easier for him to achieve a continuous flow in the movement.

A further tool for training the movement flow is the pointed perception. If the attention is consciously put on the movement flow, the movement perception of the student will be refined and his coordination improved. This is especially important in dressage, as in this discipline, the aesthetic aspects are part of the judgment.

10. The rider's feeling

What?

Rider's feeling means the ability to feel and perceive movements and changes even of the

smallest dimension with your own sensors (whole of the sensuous information intake and processing). The better the perception of the student is, the better is his feeling. Sports science uses the term "differentiation ability" for this.

If the rider has this ability, he is able to achieve a high fine tuning of individual movement phases and movements of body parts, which express themselves in great preciseness in the movements and movement economy. Things are perceived precisely because they can be differentiated. This is based on consciously perceiving time, power and spatial parameters of the current movement completion.

The ability to differentiate implies feeling for movements, skill and the ability to relax muscles, regarding the conscious fine controlling of the rider's muscle activity.

Why?

Training the rider's feeling is an elementary part of learning to ride. Only by feeling you can react and act right. If the rider has not learned to judge what is right and what is wrong, he can never act right. Then, he will always depend on his instructor's help and cannot decide anything on his own. He is unable to act!

It must be the goal to make the rider "come of age". This means to train him so that he always learns to correct himself on the resp. level. So, it is not important which knowledge and performance level the rider is on. He has to be met where he is riding wise and has to be trained on this, his level.

I.e.: Raising trot on the right foot can be learned by feeling. In order to be able to correct yourself, it has to be taught through feeling it and not through the trainer's instructions (more about this in "111 Loesungswege fuer das Reiten", exercise 54). Only like this it is possible that the rider gradually obtains independence from the instructor. This should not mean that the instructor is not necessary anymore; but it has to be made sure that the

rider has learned to judge and differentiate the learnt.

How?

How does the rider obtain feeling? How does he obtain decision making and responsibility?

The answer is not that hard. The trainer has to design the tasks in a way that the rider has to feel and not only execute. The student must not become the instructor's marionette; typical set phrases like "hands upright, heel low, position him more, tighten your back, keep him up" etc. do not help the student to develop his own body feeling, perceiving and feeling movements consciously and using situation appropriate aids.

The student has to be more confronted with tasks than with instructions. The exercises have to be designed in a way that the student has to think and/or is forced to ask his feeling. Phrases like: "Try to feel the mouth with your ring fingers" or "try to feel putting your horse straight first before checking with your eye and getting my feedback". With this, it is possible that the student learns decision making and responsibility and becomes able to develop his own feeling and decide appropriately from it.

Only by feeling and perceiving consciously, it is possible to perceive the finest changes and differentiate them. The more pronounced the perception is, the finer are riding and influence. The student reaches the finest possible coordination with his horse through his experiences over the years. It can even be that pronounced that mistakes or disturbances can be noticed and stopped right from the beginning. A sign of perfect movement feeling!

11. Harmony

Consciously, the term "harmony" is placed last. It is a kind of summary. You could also call it the goal of learning to ride and of the correctly ridden horse.

What?

In literature, by "harmony" you understand a pleasant inner and outer congruence, a unison. In sports, you use "harmony" when something is balanced. Especially in kinematics, you mean a movement characteristic by it which describes the balance of parts and phases in a work movement. The term aesthetics is closely connected, as the expression of something beautiful.

Why?

Why is harmony so important and so hard?

It is important, because it is the confirmation that you did something right. If horse and rider move in harmony, they are in unison. Inner and outer suppleness are obvious, both are content, the goal of harmonic cooperation is achieved.

It is hard, because it became clear in the points above that an infinite amount of categories play a central role and have to be attended. By the combination of two living beings the possibilities of doing something wrong are so much higher than if you "only" learn a technical sport (with or without a "tool").

How?

The first 10 points of this essay are the foundation to achieve the desired harmony first gradually in slow steps.

In every case, schooling the movement feeling is your first priority. Only this way a better understanding, a better communication between rider and horse is possible.

By Karin Luehrs

Magazine page 84

Riding in balance

In order to change the rider's composure, some requirements have to be fulfilled. First, the rider has to acknowledge that many of his problems when riding have nothing to do with the horse, but rather with his composure and the settings he gives the horse with this composure. This is especially hard for riders who have been riding for years, as they have to question their old system and their way of riding and reorientate themselves in many categories - which means a considerable "energy-effort" and diverse self-doubts. In order to make the necessary changes, you need an instructor educated in body work, who takes action to establish new movement patterns and anchoring them.

As a reminder: The following essay is the sequel to the article from Piaffe 1/2008, page 48 titled "Caught in the system?"

This series of articles is about how different composure and hand mistakes affect the horse's "elbow room" negatively and therefore also have an effect on riding lessons.

Selective perception

Fixed behaviour patterns (=habits) lead to blurred resp. strongly selective perception. You only perceive what you know and can classify. An unbiased view of something you have already seen 100 times in a similar way is not possible for most people. They see what they want to see or believe to see. That is why shows are rarely judged objectively.

As an example the following linguistic game: If you swap the letters of all words in a phrase, dicing them wildly without adding or losing a letter, almost every reader can read the sentence "right". The brain arranges the "non-sense" automatically into something sensible, known and finds out how the words have to be.

Bad habits and mistakes stick to you

Changing habits is very hard, because the automatic took over control of the system. Wanting to influence automatised actions

consciously, to change them, costs a lot of energy at the beginning - in form of concentration and attention to the course of the action.

That is also why correcting riders' (and horses') fixed mistakes costs much more energy than learning the movement right from the beginning. But energy is not the same as power. Using more power when correcting a movement will bring out the contrary of the desired result. If a movement is changed with power, the feeling for the subtleties is lost. The rider does not become more sensitive, but rougher in his influence on the horse. His ability to listen to the horse is lost instead of improving.

Changing a movement through feeling

Changing a movement through feeling is therefore necessary. A movement should not only fulfill its purpose but also feel pleasant. Not only pure power is decisive, but the quali-

ty of the movement. Movements improved regarding this usually require less power than before. An explicit power training for the rider is not necessary, as he will never be able to ride the horse with force alone "beautifully". Rather, it is about coordinating work movements well and giving the right signal at the right moment - and with the least possible effort; in doing so: as little and as short as possible - as much as necessary.

Eliminating misunderstandings - underlying behaviour patterns with feelings

Sometimes linguistic misunderstandings have to be eliminated for this. Many instructions about seat and influence are misunderstood by riders, who have not yet developed the right feeling for the form of the required use of muscles, and underlayed with the wrong movement feeling. It is the instructor's task to notice this and to find a way of conveying the right movement feeling to the student. Many things can be practised without the horse. But often, even instructors do not know what their body is actually doing if they give this or that aid or when they call themselves supple. Good riders often do not find the right words for what they are actually doing with their body, they react on instinct. They have a good feeling for movements, but can rarely convey its origin and basics.

Body tension

The principle "as little as possible" is not fully valid for body tension itself and for sometimes necessary "tension peaks" for correcting resp. resisting a certain undesired action of the horse. A sufficient basic body tension of the rider keeps the whole system rider+horse together and is desirable; condition is that it is limited to the absolutely necessary muscles in the upper body and partly the femoral muscles and that it neither fixes the pelvis nor affects the arms' and legs' "ability to act". The right body tension of the rider must neither be too high nor too low. Both restrict the spinal column's mobility and blocks the horse's back.

Body tension brings the rider's upper body in an upright position. An upright upper body makes the rider sit in balance, stable and the legs free, to move independently. Knee, legs and hands resp. arms must not be used for holding on, but should be used pointedly for finely controlled aids.

Elevation of the upper body is mainly done by the so called "back extensors", which run between the pelvis and the shoulder alongside the spinal column in the human back. If they are shortened (contract themselves), the spinal column is elevated; if they are extended, the upper body collapses in the thorax. Extending the back extensors is mainly obtained by a shortening of the abdominal muscles.

Muscles express invisible, inner processes in the body

The "unconscious" and the "invisible" are expressed by the muscles. Often invisible processes in the human body can only be detected from the outside because of changes in muscle tension, sometimes they can only be felt by the hands. Mimics, gestures, composure and voice represent visibly to the outside what makes the person's personality – his weaknesses and strengths, his emotional state (fear, optimism, unsureness, sovereignty), his physical state (fatigue, power, energy) and his intentions (orientation towards a goal, strength of will).

By the way, the same is valid for the horse – all inner processes are expressed by the horse's attitude and its movements, too. Therefore, a horse which, is not calm on the inside will never be able to move lightly, elegantly and freely.

Inner and outer attitude always are related directly. Often, you first have to change your inner attitude to improve the outer. But sometimes, the outer attitude has to be improved first to prepare and introduce an inner change.

In order to improve a movement considering its effectiveness and beauty, every unnecessary tension has to be eliminated. The human's as well as the horse's movements – and

especially for the movement of the rider-horse-pair. In rider's language, this is called suppleness. The human has to show the horse the way to suppleness (under the rider). The rider has to work on it himself, but also needs instruction for this.

Ways to suppleness with enough body tension – body work

At this point – of (relative) suppleness – the so called “body work” comes in with different methods. Moshe Feldenkrais and F.M. Alexander are the nationally most known representatives of this body work. By pointed exercises, the human becomes conscious of too high (wrong) tensions in parts of his body. Over this – newly resp. regained – consciousness the way leads to improvement of effectiveness and lightness of movements, to a better elevation and positioning of the upper body, that means a more stable and more supple attitude. And to acknowledging the inner state, which is connected inseparably to a certain outer attitude.

If the human has noticed his too high tension, he can relax his inner self by relaxing consciously on the physical level.

If tension (energy) is missing, he can “elevate” himself on the inside (mentally) if necessary, to elevate the outside. By a different way of breathing he can stabilize his attitude and increase his isometric body tension by training too weak muscles.

The possibility of changing the inner attitude up to a person's self-perception by changing ways of expression (of movement) which are visible to the outside is one of the great findings of Feldenkrais. This interaction is the reason they humans can develop the inside through reorganizing his muscles. Already the ancient Romans knew about the relationship between body and soul and expressed it in the sentence “Mens sana in corpore sano – a healthy soul in a healthy body”.

Attitude is movement

Attitude can never be static. This is already valid for human attitude in sitting or standing,

perceived as calm. Try it. Stand upright, close your eyes and try to just stand still. Concentrate on the tension in your body; you will notice that you are constantly moving for balance, in order to stay vertical. You slightly move forward and backward, or sideways. This balancing is mainly done by the huge muscle chains in your legs. The stable position is always achieved and left again, similar to a pendulum, which always swings through the Lot back and forth. While the unliving pendulum will swing to the stable position of symmetry at some point, this is not possible for the human. His upright position will always be mobile, because his center of gravity is relatively high and he constantly has to balance his asymmetries.

But this rather unstable upright position also has its advantages. It creates a good foundation for a faster movement in each direction.

Only when lying down most muscles can be relaxed. Most of them – not all, as the muscles which are not subject to your will are also working when you are lying down: breathing, heart muscle and partly also the deep torso muscles, whose basic tone (its basic tension) is also dependent on the emotional state and reacts automatically up to a certain level.

If attitude in the position of symmetry is already movement, how much more movement does attitude require in movement – when running, jumping, climbing and finally when dancing or riding, where the human body has to adjust to another in movement?

When dancing the human body is moving in unison with another. Both partners have their own axis in most cases, which they use to balance themselves. In rare cases with some dancing figures they also have a joint axis – and therefore temporally also a joint balance. Then, there is danger that one partner makes the other lose his balance.

When riding, the human body is co-moved by the horse's body. Both constantly have a joint balance. When both centers of gravity are vertically above each other, the horse-rider-pair is balanced.

Balance and stability

The rider has to keep position on a moving "underground" and in doing so, has to change his position constantly and adjust to often very fast changing rhythms and situations. Only then he can keep his balance. Therefore, the seat on a horse is not really a seat, but rather a kind of "standing-sitting-with-bent-knees" (you could even call it kneeling) with constant rebalancing: in sitting over the position of seatbones and pelvis as well as springing in the joints in the leg, in raising trot or light seat over the three balance points ankle, knee and femoral as well as the decline of the straight upper body from the hip joint as far beyond the vertical, as the rider can balance comfortably without using muscles in arms or legs for help. The basic idea in the light seat is (and raising trot is a special form of the light seat), that the rider feels as if he was standing on the ground with bent knees. Absorbing the weight in the saddle has to be done vertically down over the knees and ankles, the upper body has to be taken as far forward as the lower leg neither "flees" to the back nor to the front. Especially in raising trot, you often see the rider trotting too stiffly with his upper body too far back. Here, he needs a lot of energy in the front muscles of the femorals to keep balance and often hits the horse hard when sitting down.

The quick and appropriate adjusting of the position horseback to all - predictable and unpredictable - movements of the horse make a good rider. A good balance keeps the limbs free for conscious actions (controlling). In jumping gymnastics, you can train this quick adjusting well. Especially, you get a feeling for how far forward the upper body sometimes has to be taken to remain seated in the movement/in balance.

Stability and mobility condition each other

The right attitude and the good balance need the right tension as well as the right relaxation. Stability and mobility do not exclude

each other, but condition each other. Stability on the one hand is achieved through a good balance and on the other hand through an appropriate isometric basic tension in the rider's body (tonicity), which prevents the rider from collapsing in the upper body. The vertical upper body and the pelvis in the neutral middle position (seatbones point down; heel, hip and shoulders of the rider form a vertical line) are the basic position for all actions by the rider. After every aid the rider has to come back to this basic position and even it is only for the shortest time.

Sitting well means perceiving sensitively and reacting quickly

Only if the rider sits on the horse with minimum alternating tension and keeps the upper body in the vertical, he keeps all his receptors open for the horse's signals and can react resp. correct quickly enough. Too high or constant tension makes the rider insensitive for the horse's finer signals; he does not feel its intentions early enough and loses control quickly.

As paradox as it sounds: The horse is controlled better the less the rider is scared of losing control and the less he tries manipulating the horse all the time. "Letting the horse do", giving him time for a reaction and listening with supple attention for its answers, this is motto.

The "perception seat" mentioned above needs suppleness and balance of the rider mandatorily. Only if the rider wants something from the horse he gives up the (almost passive) perception seat for the action seat, in which an aid is given with the reins, the back or the legs. And he immediately gives up the action seat as soon as he reaches his goal. The upright position for the perception as well as for the action seat needs a basic body tension (tonicity), otherwise the human collapses. Balance in movement additionally needs rhythmically changing tension, where the right, conscious relaxing (letting go) is much more important than tension.

Group 1:**Torso, spinal column, pelvis and thorax of the rider**

The mobility of pelvis and spinal column is basic precondition for "sitting in the movement" and for pointed, effective influence.

Without a mobile pelvis and a mobile spinal column, the rider will never be able to sit clearly in the horse's movement. And he also cannot give precise weight aids. The movement of the pelvis and the loading of the seatbones control speed, direction gait at the "switch point horse's back-rider's seat". At this switch point, kinematic energy can be passed or limited. But it cannot be created there. If the rider sits in the movement, his seatbones never leave the saddle. The pelvis accepts the complicated forward and upward movement of the horse's back with a combined turning-tilting-movement and therefore works as a movement transformator.

Mobility of the pelvis: The turning-tilting movement in the pelvis

Most of the movements the rider has to execute horseback in order to sit in the horse's movement as well as influencing the horse depend on the pelvis's movement. With the pelvis's mobility, the rider's suppleness wins or loses and in consequence, as we are going to see, also the horse's. Normally, the rider must never (if the horse does what it is supposed to do) ever lock his pelvis (lock his iliac crest in a position, contract the cross constantly).

The right movement of the rider's pelvis to not handicap the horse in its back's movement, is an alternating turning-tilting movement for walk and trot and a "steed's jump" movement for the canter. Some riders only tilt the iliac crest forward and back and then are not in perfect unison with the horse's movement - without the necessary element of torsion; they disturb the horse more or less stark in the back, without wanting to or knowing it. The torsion which is necessary to sit in the

movement is not identical to the so called turning seat, which is only used in turns. It is rather an alternating slight turning, as you can understand best if you walk on your seat bones (seat walking).

Turning seat or turning the head?

Some trainers propagate the "turning seat" from the hips for turning. Personally, I prefer a pure turning of the head in order to get the weight on the inner seat bone (at the most combined with an advancing of the inner hip), because you can quickly "overturn" the turning seat and then your weight is on the wrong seat bone.

Keeping the S-form and herewith the resiliency of the spinal column

The spinal column's mobility is lost if it is locked in one of its final positions: in layback, various seat types, if pelvis, cross or another joint is locked.

Locked cross and joints always also lead to a loss of balance on the rider's side and therefore to instability of the whole system.

It counts the relationship: stable = balanced = soft and precise influence.

Elevation of the rider's upper body and evasion maneuvers of the rider in the seat

Only if the rider's upper body is rightly upright and tense, the pelvis can work as movement transformator as well as the spinal column as shock absorber.

Rightly means: neither hyperextended in a hollow back nor comfortably "hanging" on the horse's cross - seat like on chair with a round back. In both positions, the pelvis's mobility is restricted, if not completely lost. The pelvis cannot serve as a balancing element; if the rider does not want to shock his vertebrae

(especially on a horse with lots of impulsion), he only has a few "evasion maneuvers" to oppose the horse's back movements. The most usual are: Layback, sitting on the femoral, hollow back, as well as pushing out back because of too much pressure on the stirrups.

The pelvis as "girl Friday" and as "punching bag"

The problem with the pelvis is that it "gets it all", what goes wrong in other parts of the rider's body and the horse's movements. The natural asymmetry of horse and rider affects the way of load of the two seat bones. The leaning rider often does not notice that the weight is not distributed evenly between his seat bones and wonders why the horse is not moving straight; the inexperienced rider often does not know how to help himself if the young, untrained horse makes him lean. In both cases the rider who can control his pelvis position as well as load and position of the seat bones consciously remains able to act and correct, while the whole system of rider+horse comes off balance with a rider who cannot do this.

Stability through isometric body tension and the right way of breathing

In order to control the pelvis's position and herewith the seat bones and achieving a stable position of the upper body without getting wrong tensions, an isometric muscle tension in the abdominal region, in the lateral muscles of the torso (Latissimus Dorsi and Serratus Anterior) as well as in the inner femoral muscles (Adductores) is necessary. The last must not seize, but they participate in the seat in isometric tension. The upper body cannot become stable and remain in balance if these muscles do not work right or unevenly (leaning of the rider). Lacking stability and muscle power with pronounced asymmetry of rider and/or horse tempts the rider to evade the horse's movement rather than accept it (evasion maneuver). For evasion maneuvers by the rider in the seat there are also other reasons which result from wrong concepts of pushing and holding the reins. They are only touched

here, as they will be discussed more detailed in the following parts, as the possibilities of combining arms and legs are rather manifold and have different effects according to the combination.

Examples for restricted mobility of the pelvis, which results from wrong concepts of pushing:

Seizing: If the rider constantly seizes with his legs or even pulls the knees up, he blocks his pelvis. It is locked in the straight position and thus restricts the horse's back movement. It is like counter sitting resp. "contracting the cross".

Counter sitting: This is always wrong if it is done constantly. Normally, temporally counter sitting and holding the rein should make the horse round again if it lost position. If the rider counter sits for too long, he also has to pull on the rein longer; if he does not pay attention, he then misses the moment where the inner rein should be released because the horse has yielded.

Counter sitting means (understood in the wrong way) for many horse-rider-pairs: working constantly against each other with tension.

If it is really necessary to use pressure then for once, everything is already in use for the "normal run" and there is no energy left for increasing aids.

Examples for restricted mobility of the pelvis, resulting from wrong basic concepts of holding the reins

Pulling the reins towards the stomach: (reins are too long) The rider's stomach evades the hand backwards. The iliac crest is tilted backwards, the cross is hung in. The rider falls into sitting like on a chair or makes a round back and collapses in the abdominal region. The hand does not have anymore space (if the rein is not shortened). Giving aids precisely has become impossible.

Pushing the hand down: arm and shoulder become straight and hard/locked. Often, the wrist is constantly tilted to the outside. Here, in the rider's body something similar is happening, as if he'd pull his hands towards his

stomach. The iliac crest is tilted backwards, additionally the rider's arm and shoulder are as hard as stone. For a hard restricting aid, for a short counter sitting this might be possible in exceptions, but for sitting in the movement this is totally counterproductive. Additionally, a controlled giving the reins is not possible because of the high tension in the arm.

The rider throws his upper body back, because he wants to use it as counterweight to carry the horse's head. This means the horse leans on the hand and the rider pulls on the rein (mostly with arm extended). Also here, the reins are mostly too long. Often the rider pushes in front against the stirrups, thus the leg is too far in front and he lifts himself from the deep seat.

Light seat

Of course you could also see the light seat as a kind of evasion maneuver by the rider. But we rather see it as a tool to make life easier for horse and rider, as in the right (balanced) raising trot and light seat you can definitely ride a horse (i.e. with a sensitive back) correctly and work it gymnastically and spare your own spinal column.

Body tension and elevation

The right elevation of the rider's upper body is a difficult subject. The rider has to have exactly as much body tension that his spinal column and the pelvis are in middle position on the standing horse, which allows maximum elbow room to all sides. Quickly, tension has shifted to the one or the other direction. One elevates himself convulsively, presses the shoulders back, puts his head in the neck - and gets into hollow back: he sits overextended: the iliac crest tilts to the front, the spinal column is locked in the front final position. The other sits as if in granny's rocking chair, pulls the stomach in and his shoulders fall to the front - he sits like on chair or is in layback. The iliac crest tilts back, the spinal column is almost straight - in the back final position. In this context, the terms extending and bending pattern are relevant.

Extending and bending pattern

The extending pattern: In its right form, it conditions the inner and outer elevation of the rider. The spinal column and the connected pelvis are brought into a middle position and remain mobile to all sides. The shoulders fall down vertically, the thorax is wide, the head "grows" from the freely mobile neck upwards.

If it is exaggerated (according to the old, rather stupid resp. often misunderstood instruction: chest forward, shoulders back) the rider sits overextended (see above).

The bending pattern: It leads to a collapse in the upper body. The shoulders are put forward, the stomach is pulled in; the rider crouches. The bending pattern originally is a adverse-effects reflex, caused by fear of falling. The inner vital organs should be kept safe by crouching when falling. On a horse, the bending pattern prevents the resilience of the spinal column to the front and tilts the iliac crest back.

The bending pattern makes you stiff and wry. The hanging head, the braced elbows or the pulled up knees are the beginning of the bending pattern.

The bending pattern can actively be provoked with too much and passively with too little body tension. In the first case it mostly is a reaction out of fear, in the second it occurs with riders who have little body tension and weak muscles by nature. (Often this is also connected to lacking authority and inner energy)

In the following paragraphs it is explained in short how mistakes in position of any part of the body affect the rider's whole body and what signals the horse gets (and you will be astounded by how many of these incoming signals you as a rider had not intended...).

All movements of the rider-horse-system (energy circle) come together in the rider's pelvis

Over connected muscle groups in the rider's legs and arms all actions in the pelvis always affect a bigger part of the body. And in the

end all muscle chains of the rider's limbs are connected to the pelvis. Pelvis and spinal column of the rider form the central gathering point for all movements and actions of the rider. A stiff pelvis or an immobile hip have an effect up to the rider's toes and - over the shoulder - up to the hand holding the rein. Many mistakes by the rider in hand position/holding the reins or also in the legs' influence resp. its position result from a wrong position of the pelvis resp. lacking mobility of the pelvis. Additionally, the pelvis is the catching point for the horse's movements.

Thus, the pelvis has the central meaning in the whole energy circle and must never be blocked for a longer period of time, if not the whole energy circle be affected.

Before and behind the movement

If the back extenders shorten too much, the upper body forms a hollow back. Now if the rider also forces his shoulders back, the muscles in the shoulder shorten themselves and the hollow back is even increased. If he additionally puts his head back, this leads to a further overextension backwards and increase of the hollow back. The whole upper body is overextended to the back and becomes immobile because spinal column and pelvis cannot move freely between the two poles "slight hollow back" (reinforcement of the S-shape) and "straight position" (weakening of the S-shape). The iliac crest is tilted completely to the front, the lower back is extended backwards (the seat bones point back). The rider cannot sit in the horse's movement anymore - he evades it by sitting on the femorals and is mostly in front of the movement.

A similar immobility is created if the upper body collapses to the front. Causes are slight contraction of the abdominal muscles, a falling to the front of the thorax and shoulders and hanging the head. The lumbal spinal column is locked into the straight position in this crooked attitude and again cannot move freely. The iliac crest is tilted back, the seat muscle is contracted, the seat shifted to the front (the seat bones point forwards). Also pulling the shoulders up, enclosing the head between the

shoulders favours this straight position. Riding with forward extended arms, putting the hands on the withers and the popular "pulling the hands into the stomach" if the rein is not shortened early enough, also lead to this blockade of the spinal column in the straight and of the pelvis in the tilted back position.

In this collapsed position the rider evades the horse's movements to the back; he gets behind the movement (layback, sitting too far back in raising trot). His legs are too far in front.

Accepting the horse's movement settings over the pelvis - sitting in the movement

In order to only be able to sit in the horse's movement (this means being able to accept the horse's movement settings in the different gaits and not evading the horse's back movement) spinal column and pelvis have to be mobile. The pelvis has to be able to tilt alternately in walk and trot, as the stepping hind legs of the horse set it. This leads to the seat bones being lifted alternately left and right and are moved forward-below in a circular movement when the rider moves with the horse's movement rightly with his pelvis.

The exercise windmill backwards simulates the right turning-tilting movement of the pelvis in walk and trot.

At the canter the movement of the inner hip of the rider is done in a semi-circle from back-low to front-high. I.e. Left hand canter: Left iliac crest and seat bone are practically rolled up, the position of the spinal column changes from a slight hollow back to straight; the right side of the pelvis follows with a little delay, like the diagonal seat sets it with the outer leg back.

For this it is necessary that the rider can perceive the abdominal and back tension consciously and can control it. He has to be able to know when which muscle is contracted and if necessary release the tension a little. With this, he prevents the locking of the pelvis in one of the final positions (and thus blocking the horse's back).

Especially in cross overs like shoulder in, traversers or traversal, releasing the hip and pelvis is very hard. Most of the riders try to push the horse into the side movements, push the leg firmly to the horse and block their pelvis. It is more sensible, to look into the direction which you are going, pushing the hip forward onesidedly in the direction which you are going and "luring" the horse from under the rider's weight (the unspoilt horse runs under the rider's weight...).

Only if spinal column and pelvis of the rider are free, they can accept the horse's movement impulses and process them. At the switch point rider's seat-horse's back a sort of energy-exchange takes place.

Maybe you can imagine that the horse's legs move the rider's pelvis.

This letting yourself be moved must be allowed by the rider and he must not want to push it away or compensate it through wrong muscle tensions. Just as well he has to accept what his own spinal column gives him as acting space. Lateral crouchings, natural hollow backs or a straight back cannot just be ignored, but have to be integrated in the action. That is why the ideal position for a rider with a hollow back looks different from the position for someone with a normal or too straight back. The respective final positions of the spinal column are just different. Criteria for the right position for a special rider and a special horse thus cannot be found in a formally right position but rather in a functionally right position. The formally right position (of horse and rider) will always be cut and dried and stiff (immobile) because it does not regard the specialities of rider and horse. The functionally right position needs stability through an isometric basic tension in the body and "movement in the right spots". And these spots are mainly the pelvis, furthermore the spinal column and finally all joints which must move from the middle position back and forth and finally convey the image of a smoothly sitting rider without stiffness.

You can also sum it up like this: the joints are mobile and the muscles keeps the tension for stability.

Functionally right instead of formally right

Like every horse which was forced into a position formally defined as right makes the well trained viewer miss "expression", smoothness and suppleness, the only formally right rider's seat often leaves an impression of stiffness and missing elegance with the viewer. The rider then sits on the horse like a clothes-pin: straight but immobile.

Many viewers notice the harmony and the unity, the supple whole movement of a really good, supple horse-rider-pair. In the gray zone of the semi good the ability to judge lessens extremely. A horse locked in the back, which lets the rider sit badly, is judged as impulsive if it only carries its nose low. A stiff attitude of the rider with overextended shoulders is judged as right no matter whether he is able to sit with it or is thrown from the horse's back. Astonishingly, most riders haven't learned to judge movement regarding its functional qualities, but use formal tools. Always think about: Attitude is movement in its smallest, finest, balanced form.

Functional good quality of every movement and attitude implies a respectively lightest, softest, roundest (minimum) work of the muscles. And this has to look different for every horse and rider, as the individual differences in exterieur and basic tension are huge: where one rider has to partly reduce his body tension the other lacks it.

The locked cross of a rider on a horse with little impulsion/back movement will only be noticed by a very practised eye. But an impulsive horse with much back movement throws such a rider "half a meter" from the saddle.

On the other hand the turning-tilting movement of the rider's pelvis is obvious with an impulsive horse and can serve as optical training.

Let's sum this up quickly: Functionally good position implies good mobility at the important switch points. It is never static and allows quick adjustments to changed requirements which are set by changes of gait or speed. A

static holding on, no matter which muscles - a seizing of the knees, an extended arm - conditions a handicap of mobility and must be avoided. "Good position and good mobility work with minimum alternating tension".

In the area of the spinal column and the pelvis, locking is especially fatal. A constant too much of tension in the abdominal muscles conditions a constant too little in the back muscles and the other way around. In contrast, an alternating tension of abdominals and back muscles is right. If one is shortened,

the other is extended - the whole alternatingly in the movement's rhythm which is set by the horse's back.

With the movement of the spinal column there is a mostly relaxed normal position between the two amplitudes stronger S and straight position (which lasts only short). In this moment, when the spinal column reaches the normal position, the rider's upper body is supple. In this moment, the rider feels his seat bones especially pronounced.

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