

FOREWORD

“CHEVAL OBLIGE II” is the final version of “Cheval Oblige”.

“Cheval Oblige” was written in 1993. At that time, it was a document of seventy-one pages. It only contained the three chapters defining the curvets called “longitudinal”, “intermediate” and “incomplete” curvets. It was the core of my work. This book was recorded to the society of the authors and dramatic composers, rue Ballu, in Paris, in February 1994.

As riders discovered this book, it appeared necessary to specify some very important points for the good understanding of this new approach of the horse. From 1994 to September 1998, I undertook an educational research in order to optimize the understanding of the text. For that, it was necessary to define the essential notions that were more or less explained in the initial version.

This research ended in September 1998. In fact, some minor but very important corrections were added to the initial text; the other indispensable notes are the synthesis of my constructive conversations with the riders themselves, on the basis of the observation of the behaviour of the horse. About sixty photographs illustrate the text and the explanations. They prove to be very useful.

Once the new text was paged and the old text was revised (sometimes), it only remained for me to find the title. “CHEVAL OBLIGE II” seemed obvious since it literally took the “body” of the text “Cheval Oblige” and I just gave it more “soul”, with a deeper approach of the mental and the physical state of the animal. However, I recognize

its limits, as “I am not a historian of horsemanship, nor a specialized veterinarian”.

“CHEVAL OBLIGE II” is a book that consists of a hundred and forty-nine pages and it has been recorded to the society of authors and dramatic art composers since September 1998 and to the Library of Congress since October 2000 for COPYRIGHT.

“The thought of the horse” is superior to the equestrian thought as it can only obey “its mere natural inclinations”.

Michel FÉVRIER

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**TENACE DU BOULAY (french “trotter”)
MOUNTED BY ANDRE BERTRAND**



“THE HORSE, THIS FAMOUS STRANGER” (1)

If, to answer such a question, an assessment is made in terms of comfort, safety and even velocity of a means of transportation, the service offered is so weak that nothing will be explained. Therefore, let us talk about passion, culture or art and let us examine a possible etiology of this madness.

According to Donald WINNICOTT¹, the cavalcade would refer to the first child experiments of air travelling, when the mother was carrying and holding her baby. If it is sufficiently good, this “holding” makes the baby believe in its omnipotence, in the magic of the event, and it creates a great unconscious and ineffaceable pleasure. The unconfessed search or quest to reproduce these precious moments lead man towards a substitute of maternal care: the horse, for example, or even air travelling reveries, but that is another story. Then, on the back of the noble animal, the “*homo demens*” (sometimes “*homo sapiens*”) unconsciously remembers and recreates his primitive playground where he develops the skill to become “*homo equus*”, depending on his capacity to create, without preliminary rules.

We can all imagine things and, in living memory, it has been the case for at least 2 500 years. (The first treaty on equestrian art was written by XENOPHON about 500 years B.C.). To describe several of its aspects, I will refer to the Bachelardian² approach of wisdom:

— First of all, there are the realistic naïves who acquire an “equidae” only to possess it, to look at it and to fantasize about it... let us leave it there!

¹ Donald WINNICOTT, British child psychiatrist: “Playing and Reality”

² Gaston BACHELARD, philosopher, “La philosophie du Non”

— We mount on the horse and we suffer to get to know it, like the empirists, who represent the majority of us. We sort it out and muddle up, we pull to the left and to the right and we look for the bit and the engine... The falls can be very bad sometimes!

— Then we take lessons, we want to know a little bit more about the animal, like the rationalists; we learn basic notions of “**Newtonian mechanics**” on some ratios of mass and effort, and here they are in the forest or jumping over some “piece of wood”; it is like cow-boys on their motor-horse;

— Then we improve and we “theorize”. The mythology and the wording become hermetic; these are the complete rationalists who develop complicated notions of relativistic mechanics: the “**Einsteinian mechanics**” of horsemanship; but always by applying the sacred laws of command and action-reaction. The animal is always deprived of its “self” and it is considered as stupid. These horsemen are always in steeple-chase competitions and on the breaking arena (referenced playing ground of 60m by 20) exhibiting their talents; they obtained convincing results until the Olympic games (particularly the British cavalry)... But their brutal movements and the extent of their gesture “in full force” disturb the reverie.

— Finally comes the horsemanship of the masters of Vienna and Saumur referring to a “quantum” mechanics of equestrian art: the training is based on the animal “psychological” features, at last revealed. Let me say one word on this conclusion.

The masters of the past century, deeply rooted in their “mechanist” art courageously questioned the infrastructure, the “Kantian”³ *a priori*, the “Cartesian” evidence⁴ (4) of their knowledge: the horse no longer is a quadruped but a biped standing on four feet.

³ Emmanuel KANT, philosopher: “Fondement de la métaphysique des mœurs”

⁴ René DESCARTES, philosopher: “Discours de la méthode”