

# Orientalism

## and the Arabian Horse

### Part III

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#### **François Hippolyte Lalaisse** 1810 Nancy – 1884 Paris

*We owe some of the most beautiful illustrations of Arabian horses to the French artist François Hippolyte Lalaisse. He left an extensive opus in his very own, rather realistic style. Lalaisse loved to depict refined horses with big eyes and exotic type. His often beautifully coloured lithographs are today sought-after collector's items.*

*Born in 1810 in Nancy, Hippolyte Lalaisse was a pupil of the gifted painter and engraver Charlet. Lalaisse later on became his adjoining professor at Polytechnique where he lectured from 1839 to 1877. The publisher Charpentier commissioned him to illustrate his book on the costumes from Bretagne. From 1835 on, Lalaisse also exposed at the salons.*

*Hippolyte Lalaisse published a considerable amount of lithographs on regional costumes and uniforms. His illustrations of oriental costumes are especially remarkable – they show Lalaisse's great love to detail.*

*Despite his beautiful oil paintings and watercolours, Hippolyte Lalaisse's strongest point was certainly graphic. He portrayed many stallions and mares who were imported from the Orient to France in order to improve local horse breeding. He illustrated for example the work "La Connaissance Générale du Cheval" (1861), "Atlas Statistique de la Production des Chevaux en France" (1850) and "Chevaux de Race de tous Pays".*

*Hippolyte Lalaisse died in 1884 at the age of 74 years in Paris.*



Lalaisse's pictures often show his great love for details: "Arabian Warriors" Original lithograph owned by Judith Wich-Wenning



From the series "Les Races Chevalines" by Hippolyte Lalaisse: "Cheval Arabe de Pur Sang". Handcoloured lithograph owned by Judith Wich-Wenning



## **Alfred de Dreux**

**Paris 1810 – Paris 1860**

*Alfred de Dreux is for sure one of the most famous equestrian artists of the 19th century. He was born in Paris in 1810 as the son of a very successful architect. De Dreux first studied under the landscape painter Léon Cogniet and later on entered the atelier of Isabey. The greatest influence however came certainly from Géricault, who was a close friend of de Dreux' parents and of his uncle. His uncle, the painter Dedreux-Dorcy shared an atelier with Théodore Géricault (for further information on this orientalist, please refer to "Orientalism and the Arabian Horse Part II" in the last issue of "Desert Heritage"). Géricault painted the young Alfred de Dreux several times. The most famous of these works is today a portrait in the collection of New York's Metropolitan Museum. This early encounter with Géricault destined de Dreux for a career as an equestrian artist. Similar to his master, de Dreux turned into a passionate horse-lover and acclaimed painter of the higher equestrian society. He led an interesting life and was an independent character.*

*In 1831 Alfred de Dreux exhibited for the first time at the Paris salon and won immediate fame. Alfred de Dreux had the chance to travel with King Louis-Philippe on an official visit to England. This trip was the first of several journeys to Great Britain. After the Revolution in 1848, the French royal family emigrated to England. De Dreux frequently visited them and painted many equestrian portraits of the exiled ruler and his sons. In England de Dreux was exposed to the works of British animal painters which influenced him. De Dreux' paintings reflected English society's deep love for horses, hunting and dogs. Also Queen Victoria admired his works and commissioned him. So de Dreux had clients of the aristocracy on both sides of the Channel.*

*Alfred de Dreux' very elegant life as a Parisian dandy obliged him to work fast and a lot. In 1840 he started his famous series of portraits from the stables of the Duc d'Orleans. Furthermore, he studied and painted the impressive Arabian horses of Abd El Kadr who was imprisoned in France. Especially the famous Arabian stallion "Tamerlan", owned by Abd El Kadr, fascinated de Dreux.*

*Alfred de Dreux' style is easily recognizable: he painted very expressive and powerful horses, rounded with curved necks and beautiful, small heads. Although de Dreux never personally had the chance to visit the Near*

*East, he studied souvenirs and photos which others had brought to Paris. They were easy to find in high numbers as orientalism was so in fashion at that time.*

*Especially impressive is Alfred de Dreux' series of oil paintings showing Nubian grooms holding or riding Arabian horses. In these works de Dreux played with colours and contrasts. His paintings are very strong works with bold use of colour. The horses possess tremendous energy and are often depicted in full gallop. Even when they are painted at a momentary halt, they seem to be ready to leap away in the next moment.*

*Alfred de Dreux was also an excellent engraver and several of his works were reproduced in impressive, sometimes large-sized lithographs.*

*Pictures by Alfred de Dreux are nowadays exhibited in numerous French and international museums, as for example the Musée du Louvre and the Musée Hermès in Paris, Queen Elizabeth's collection in London, the Uffizi in Florence and the Museum of Ermitage in Saint-Petersbourg.*

*Today we can even find Alfred de Dreux' work in the logo of one of the most stylish companies. A stylized reproduction of one of de Dreux' drawings is since 1945 the trademark for the world famous French brand "Hermès".*

*Alfred de Dreux died in Paris in 1860 at the age of only 50 years. His passing remains somewhat mysterious. While many sources state that he died of a liver disease, rumours suggested that he had been shot to death in a duel by Comte Fleury, Napoleon's aide-de-camp. This theory claims that a dispute over an equestrian portrait of Napoleon III was behind de Dreux' tragic end. The real background of this remains uncertain.*

## **Eugène Delacroix**

**Charenton/Saint-Maurice 1798 – Paris 1863**

*Eugène Delacroix is today widely known as the leader of the French Romantic school. He left us fabulous orientalist works, painted with expressive brushstrokes, striking colours and verve.*

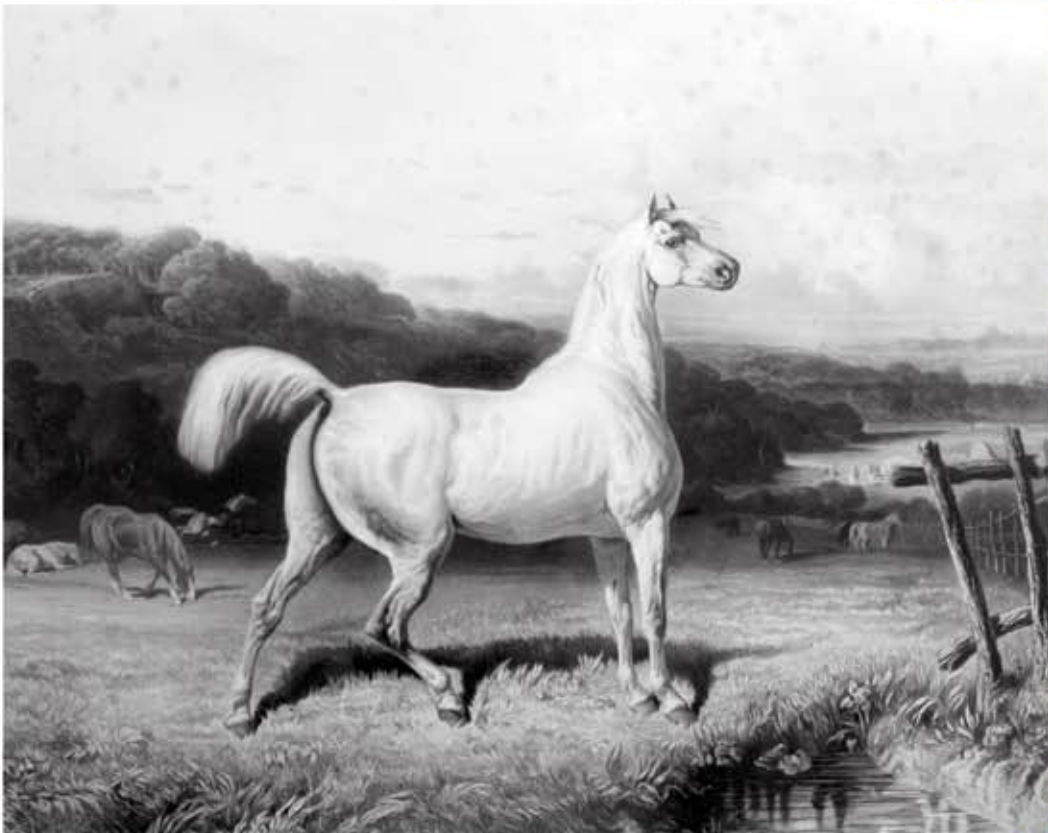
*Delacroix' mother descended from a family of famous cabinetmakers. There is reason to believe that her husband Charles Delacroix was not Eugène's natural father. In fact, it is today generally accepted that*





Fig. 56. Chevaux arabes.

"Chevaux Arabes" by Hippolyte Lalaisse, original lithograph from the collection of Judith Wich-Wenning



One of the most classic pictures by Alfred de Dreux: "La Paix" ("Peace"), 19th century lithograph owned by Judith Wich-Wenning



*Eugène Delacroix was the son of the supreme diplomat and "grey eminence" Talleyrand. He was a friend of the family and succeeded Charles Delacroix as Minister of Foreign Affairs. Talleyrand protected Eugène Delacroix throughout his career.*

*Like Théodore Géricault, Eugène Delacroix was trained in the atelier of Guérin. Delacroix was a friend and later on the spiritual heir of Théodore Géricault. When Delacroix started to read books and literature about the Near East, he became interested in exotic subjects. He developed a passion for Lord Byron's writings which inspired him to some of his works.*

*In 1832, Delacroix travelled to Spain, Morocco and Algiers as part of a diplomatic mission. This journey had enormous influence on his further artistic career. Delacroix was entranced by the sizzling colours, the bright light, the people and costumes. Throughout his stay in the East he produced pencil and watercolour sketches in 7 small notebooks. They provided him with an inexhaustible source of material for the following decades. The exotic, imaginary and sumptuous Orient haunted him for the rest of his life. Delacroix' oeuvre comprises impressive horse paintings as for example "Mameluke on Horseback", "Combat of the Giaour and the Pasha" and "Turk with Harness". Only later in his life, Delacroix' orientalist pictures were less and less realistic as his memories and impressions faded.*

*Delacroix' probably best known painting is however not orientalist: the unforgettable "Liberty Leading the People". It represents the values of the French revolution: Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. Today this huge painting is visible in the Louvre Museum.*

*Eugène Delacroix was also a fine lithographer and created powerful works of art in this field. In his paintings, he put the emphasis on colours and movements instead of clarity of outline.*

*Despite his often fragile health, Delacroix possessed immense vitality and creative power. Delacroix lived in seclusion and devoted himself entirely to his only passion: art.*

*The extent of Delacroix' oeuvre is enormous: he left 853 oil paintings, 1525 pastels and watercolours and beyond that, literary works as for example art essays, correspondence over almost four decades and his famous diary.*

*Eugène Delacroix died in 1863 after suffering from chronic laryngitis since many years. He was buried in Père Lachaise cemetery in Paris. His former atelier in Saint-Germain-des-Près in Paris has been turned into*

*an important museum and attracts today numerous tourists from all over the world.*

## **Albrecht Adam**

**Noerdlingen 1786 – Munich 1862**

*Albrecht Adam was born in Noerdlingen in Southern Germany. Bearing the same family name as the French artist Victor Adam was just a coincidence – the two were not related. Albrecht Adam began an apprenticeship as a confectioner. In 1803 he moved to Nuremberg to begin his training. Here he also attended the Academy of Fine Arts. Albrecht Adam was very much influenced by the director of the Academy Johann Rugendas who specialized in painting battle scenes.*

*Albrecht Adam moved to Munich in 1807 where he studied and copied paintings by the old masters. After participating in the Austrian campaign of 1809, he stayed for a time in Vienna. Here he painted numerous works of horses and riders and drew the attention of an important supporter: Napoleon's stepson Eugène de Beauharnais, the viceroy of Italy. He appointed Albrecht Adam as his court painter. Albrecht Adam spent several years in Milano where he also married in 1811. Adam was to become the progenitor of a very influential Bavarian family of artists. Four generations of his descendants worked as painters of horses and battles. In addition to his position as court painter, Albrecht Adam was given an officer's rank. During that time, most of Adam's works deal with Napoleon's Russian campaign. Adam accompanied the viceroy and was eye-witness of every battle. Among other works, he painted a diary of this campaign in 83 scenes in oil on paper.*

*In 1815, Albrecht Adam and his family moved to Munich where he worked for the emperors and kings of Austria as well as Bavaria. In Munich Adam bought a piece of land on which he built the "Adamei", an idyllic house with a studio. His studio was remarkable indeed: It was located on the ground floor with an entrance spacious enough so that horses – Adam's favourite models – could easily enter the house. The "Adamei" was also a refugium for the Polish Arabian horse painter Juliusz Kossak. He was a good friend of Albrecht Adam's son Franz Adam and painted at the "Adamei" for 10 months. Another close friend of Franz Adam is a household name as well: the painter Emil Volkers. He immortalized many of the fantastic purebred Arabians owned by King Wilhelm I. of Wurttemberg. Emil Volkers had his studio in the attic of the "Adamei" for a while.*





"Combat of the Giaour and the Pasha" by Eugene Delacroix, engraving on handmade paper from the collection of Judith Wich-Wenning



"Horse Family", steel engraving by an anonymous artist; owned Judith Wich-Wenning



A lovely handcoloured lithograph by an unknown artist "Dark Grey Arabian Stallion", owned by Judith Wich-Wenning

*In 1829 and 1830 Albrecht Adam spent some time in Stuttgart where he was commissioned by King Wilhelm I. of Wurttemberg. Of course every Arabian horse lover is familiar with this important historic person: King Wilhelm I. of Wurttemberg was the first to found a purebred Arabian breeding program outside of the Orient. Horses descending from his famous stud farm can still be found at the state stud of Marbach which took over the royal herd of Weil in 1932, as well as in numerous private and state breeding programs worldwide. King Wilhelm I. of Wurttemberg founded a stud farm near Stuttgart in 1817 using only the noblest and purest blood lines from Arabia – a very uncommon practice at that time. Albrecht Adam created several oil paintings of the king riding on his noble steeds as well as fantastic portraits of King Wilhelm's exclusive Arabian horses.*

*In 1844 Albrecht Adam painted the Arabian stallion Siglavi – one of the foundation sires of the Lipizzan race. Another of Albrecht Adam's beautiful paintings depicting Arabian horses shows five Arabian stallions with their grooms in front of the royal stable in Munich. Adam created this charming work of art in 1834. Albrecht Adam was a versatile painter, always true to nature with great love for the details.*

*At the age of 76 years, Albrecht Adam's strength faded and he passed away after a very active and fulfilled life.*

*This series of articles covers the most important aspects of the work and life of orientalist artists depicting Arabian horses. However there were many others – some more, some less well-known. Moreover, one should not forget the numerous works of art which were not signed by their creators. Some of them are real treasures – even if we will never know who was the mastermind behind them. When we marvel at old Arabian horse pictures today, we should briefly think of the brilliant artists who left us this source of inspiration. They were thrilled by the same passion as we are today: The beauty and spirit of the Arabian horse!*

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Emil Volkers: "Kereja", coloured lithograph from 1856.  
Collection of Judith Wich-Wenning

"Das Arabische Pferd" ("The Arabian Horse"),  
a beautiful 19th century engraving by  
an anonymous artist, from the collection of  
Judith Wich-Wenning



Emil Volkers: "Koheil", coloured lithograph from 1856.  
Collection of Judith Wich-Wenning