

Military Equitation or a Method of Breaking Horses (and Teaching Soldiers to Ride, Designed for the use of the army) by
Henry Earl of Pembroke, 1773

Review and Notes on the text by Daune Bronte-Stewart. Last updated: 26 July 2010

This review is the result of my own interest in trying to understand the history of writing on classical equitation. The 'notes' represent my attempt to review and comment on the texts and I am happy for any interested person to use them for research purposes, subject to usual academic referencing practices. The 'comments' represent questions that the text raises for me. I'd be interested to hear from other interested people, please email me at: daune.west@uws.ac.uk

Author: Henry Earl of Pembroke

Title of work: Military Equitation or a Method of Breaking Horses (and Teaching Soldiers to Ride, Designed for the use of the army)

Date of publication: no date for this copy – but plates missing and typographical error in the title and author name on cover. Seems to be a facsimile version of the 4th edition with plates (missing in this version) London: printed for G and T Wilkie and E and J Easton, Salisbury. MDCCXCIII (1793)

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1. Introduction and summary of text content

Pembroke states in the Dedication to the work that he is writing this text on account of the “wretched” and “disgraceful” system of horsemanship that he sees in the army: he presumes that this state prevails because the troops are missing proper and intelligent instruction. This text is, then, for use of the cavalry. In addition, it would appear that horsemanship was a matter on which the king had engaged him in conversation on a number of occasions and so Pembroke, in the style of the courtier, hopes his work will be not only useful to the cavalry but well-received and supported by the king.

There are nine chapters to the ‘treatise’. The first 6 deal with (i) ‘preparing horses to be mounted’, (ii) instructing the rider on the seat, and notes on bits and biting, (iii) suppling horses by the use of movements such as ‘épaule en dedans’, and by longe, and in-hand work, (iv) the exercises of head- to-the-wall and croup-to-the-wall, (v) the trot, (vi) rein-back and forward movement, piaff and the use of pillars. The last 3 chapters deal with (vii) teaching horses to be good in battle including going over rough ground and jumping, (viii) dealing with vices and bad habits, and, finally (ix) advice on shoeing, feeding, and the general management of the cavalry horse.

Rather than offer a description and commentary on the content of each chapter in turn, the review offered here is structured by using a number of headings that seem to represent Pembroke’s main interests, concerns and beliefs

regarding the art and science of riding. In this way it is hoped to present the component parts of Pembroke's 'system of horsemanship'. Hopefully, in future reviews published on this site, we may be able to see how Pembroke's set of ideas about horsemanship fits into what we will refer to, collectively, as 'classical equitation'.

2. Use of hands and *appui*

The early pages of the text contain quite a lot on the subject of the rider's hands and how they affect the horse.

"great care must be taken to make the men use their snaffles delicately; otherwise as a snaffle has not the power, which a bridle has upon a horse's mouth, they will use themselves to take such liberties with it, as will quite spoil their hands, and teach their horses to pull, be dead in hand, and quite upon their shoulders, entirely deprived of good action" (p11).

Comment: 'bridle' assume the double bridle is meant here.

More on the balance between gentleness and firmness of the hand:

"A hand should be firm, but delicate" (p19) and "That hand, which by giving and taking properly, gains its point with the least force, is the best;... This principle of gentleness should be observed upon all occasions in every branch of horsemanship." (p19).

In fact he advises that riders should not be allowed to use any bit until [their seats] are 'firm' (presumably from plenty of work on the longe), and the horse is able to bend well both left and right, (likewise for the horse as well as the rider, by consistent longe and in-hand work) (p27). Pembroke considers that many disasters stem from men not having firm seats independent of hands and the horse's mouth:

"Were the men rightly instructed how to keep the mouths of their horses fresh and obedient, and thereby maintain a cadenced pace, (be it ever so fast, or ever so slow) ranks would of course be always dressed, and unshaken, and consequently always powerful". (29)

Pembroke links the idea of horses having a heavy head and dull mouths with a stumbling horse: "Most horses, whose heads are heavy, are apt to stumble" (p28)

Pembroke reminds us that all horses need to be treated as individuals; with respect to 'appui' or 'degree of bearing':

“...there is no horse but has his own peculiar *appui* or degree of bearing, and also a sensibility of mouth, as likewise a rate of his own, which it is absolutely necessarily for the rider to discover and make himself acquainted with.” (p56-7).

By 'rate of his own', presumably he means pace? He also tells us that “The horse will inform his rider when he has got his proper bearing in his mouth, by playing pleasantly and steadily with his bit, and by the spray about his chaps.” (p57)

p58 – Pembroke questions people who say they like a horse that will “let them bear a little on his mouth” – says they are “not only ignorant, and unfeeling, but also very unfirm in their seat” - says helping the horse from time to time and properly is another matter;

“When the proper *appui* is found, and made of course as light as possible, it must not be kept dully fixed without any variation, but be played with; otherwise one equally continued tension of reins, though not a violent one, would render both the rider's hand and the horse's mouth very dull. The slightest, and frequent giving, and taking is therefore necessary to keep both perfect.” (p58)

Comment: This is exactly the instruction I am given in Portugal today where I am told to keep a 'conversation' going through gentle 'talking' with the fingers. Also the message I receive is to 'take' a little, for a short period of time and then to 'give', 'give', 'give' – I interpret this 'giving' not as letting go, or throwing away the contact or appui but encouraging the horse to move out, up and forward into the 'appui', where again there can be a 'take', a check, a 'rebalance' and then a 'give'.

I am interpreting 'appui' as meaning 'contact' or 'feel' – I struggle with translating this word time over. Loch suggests it can be translated as a “term to indicate the feeling of contact experienced by the rider through the medium of the rein as the horse accepts the bit of mouthpiece on the bars of his mouth” (1990, p216). She says a light constant appui has always been looked for by horsemen but more recently “certain schools of thought suggested that contact or appui be determined or measured in terms of weight”.

Paul Belasik (2009, p73-76) describes some experiments undertaken by himself and Hilary Clayton in which they measured the tension in the reins of a working horse. The experiment indicated that as he rode his reins were measuring weights of between 1lb and 5lbs depending upon the work and progression of the schooling session. As a result of later experiments in clinics he suggested that most riders have no concept of the feel of 1lb or 5lb! The moral of the story seems to be that the rider should develop feel, and that the weight of appui will be different at different times with different horses. Despite this general advice I have heard him pushed by members of the audience at clinics/lectures on several occasions who seem to want a definitive, measurable answer!

3. Encouraging a horse to move forwards, develop appui – using the trot

Pembroke offers interesting advice and discussion about the trot and its use to supple joints and ‘free’ the action of the shoulders and legs (presumably to encourage lightness?). Pembroke talks about ‘ramingue’ (when a horse ‘retains himself’) – this is a way of a horse resisting. If a horse does this then Pembroke suggests the horse should be kept to the extended trot. But knowing when to push and when to yield in reaction to his giving is very important:

“Every horse, who has a tendency to be ramingue, is naturally disposed to unite himself, and collect all his strength; your only way with such horses is to force them forwards; in he instant that he obeys, and goes freely on, retain him a little, yield your hand immediately after, and you will find soon that the horse of himself will bend his joints, and go united and equally” (p65)

He warns that if you push a tired or weak horse too much the result will be a false and hardened appui (p66) also that it is not right to ‘confine your horse in the hand’ as a way of trying to raise and fix his head – instead:

“If his appui be full in hand, and the action of his trot should be checked, and restrained by the power of the bridle, his bars would soon grow callous... if, on the contrary, he has a fine, and sensible mouth, this very restraint would offend, and make him uneasy”. The way to achieve ‘true and just’ appui is by “stops, and half-stops, by sometimes moderating and restraining him, with a gentle, and light hand, and yielding it to him immediately again, and by sometimes letting him trot without feeling the bridle at all” (p67).

Later we are told “The principal effects then of the trot are to make a horse light, and active, and to give him a just appui” (p69)

4. Use of the rider’s legs

We have an interesting difference in the theory of the relationship between the hands and legs here compared to what is often taught today - for Pembroke it would appear to be hands before legs at all times. Pembroke explains the relationship between the rider’s hand and leg:

“It is requisite in horsemanship, that the hand and legs should act in correspondence with each other in everything; the latter always subservient and assistant to the former” (p22) and “The less the legs are used in general, the better” (22). Another example “In reining back, the rider should be careful not to use his legs, unless the horse backs on his shoulders; in which case, they must be both applied gently at the same time, and correspond with the hand.” (p23).

Comment:

This statement warning against over-use of the rider’s leg seems to be at odds with much of what we now consider to be the correct balance between the use of hands and legs. It may be just a question of interpreting Pembroke’s meaning when he uses the term ‘leg’; it is not clear whether he means the whole leg or just the lower leg. If he means the former including the thigh, then this seems to depart from many other authors so it seems more likely that he is referring to over use of the lower leg and the spur.

In discussion about how the rider should use the legs to direct the haunches and to make the rear legs cross in travers and renvers he underlines the relationship between legs and hands. He explains that the legs should not be used

“till the hand, being employed, (as has before been explained) in a proper manner, has failed, or finds, that a greater force is necessary to bring what is required about, than it can effect alone; for the legs should not only be corresponding with the hand, but also subservient to it; and all unnecessary aids, as well as all force, ought to be avoided as much as possible” (p55).

More on the need to keep legs quiet:

“Nothing is more ungraceful in itself, more detrimental to a man’s seat, or more destructive of the sensibility of a horse’s sides, than a continual wriggling unsettledness in a horseman’s legs, which prevents the horse from ever going a moment together true, steady, or determined. ‘Tis impossible, upon the whole, for a man to be too firm, settled, and gentle.” (p35)

Pembroke discusses asking for sideways movement (‘forcing the horse sideways’) stating he believes it “a most glaring absurdity, and very hurtful to the animal in its consequences” (p38) – he says it is a practice that stiffens the horse as he tries to defend himself and causes him to be a “restive, frightened, and vicious man-hater for ever”. (p39) He links this asking for sideways movement with riders who use their legs “when going to work on two pistes” saying that it causes the horse to place the croup inwards which is bad practice and comes about through riders using the leg against the side of the horse “before the hand has determined the fore parts of the animal, on the line, upon which he is to go” (p39)

Comment

The idea of ‘forcing the horse sideways’ needs a little interpretation here - does this equate to what we refer to as ‘leg yielding’? If so, this is in line with some classical schools that do not believe the leg yield to be of any gymnastic benefit. For example, Podhajsky (1967) warns against placing too much importance on leg yielding, saying that it is only useful to teach the young horse the rider’s leg aids. In the Spanish Riding School, he says, “it is practised in the walk only and disapproved of at the trot” (p133). The argument against leg-yielding is that its requirements and positioning are in direct conflict to the demands for the half-pass which comes later.

5. Gentleness

A very noticeable word used over and over again is “gentleness” (pp. 1; 6; 19; 27; 31; 95), “gentle” (pp. 24), “gently” (pp. 2; 23; 37)

Advice against treating a horse badly and its consequences:

“Quarrelling with horses, plaguing, or beating them, as one often sees done, not only spoils both their tempers, and their paces, but it teaches them to trip, stumble, fall, start, run away, and to be unsteady and vicious, &c. whilst gentleness and coolness would very soon bring them to go through, or over any bad place whatsoever, with ease, good-humour and safety. Beat a horse for a trip, or such a kind of thing, and he will soon do it again through fear and hurry” (p95)

6. Horse's head position

Pembroke discusses the effect of a low head position: “If the top of the head is low, the position is a bad one, notwithstanding the head and nose being nearly perpendicular, because it obstructs the action of the fore parts” (p28)

He advocates that if a rider may keep a horse's head up by carrying his hands “very high and forwards” but admits that this means “a bad and awkward position in the man” (p39)

7. Cadence

There is a small paragraph on cadence in chapter IV (head- and croup-to-the-wall), in which Pembroke advises:

“Whatever pace or degree of quickness you work in, (be it ever so fast, or ever so slow) it must be cadenced; time is as necessary for an horseman, as for a musician” (p59)

8. Suppling and the role of the shoulder-in

I think it worthwhile reproducing what Pembroke says about the *épaule en dedans* (shoulder-in) because he gives such careful instruction about how to ride this method to supple the horse's shoulders. (Note: Gueriniere published "Ecole de Cavalerie" in 1733, 28 years prior to Pembroke's text). Pembroke explains:

“The outward rein, being crossed, not in a forward sense, but rather a little backwards, serves also, when necessary, to prevent the outward shoulder from getting too forwards, which facilitates the inward leg's crossing it; which is the motion which so admirably supples the shoulders. Care must be taken, that the inward leg pass over the outward one, without touching it; this inward leg's crossing over must

be helped by the inward rein, which you must cross towards and over the outward rein, every time the outward leg comes to the ground, in order to lift and help the inward leg over it: at any other time, but just when the outward leg is come to the ground, it would be wrong to cross the inward rein, or to attempt to lift up the inward leg by it: nay it would be demanding an absolute impossibility, and lugging about the reins and horse to no purpose; because a very great part of the horse's weight resting upon the inward leg would render such an attempt, not only fruitless, but also prejudicial to the sensibility of the mouth, and probably oblige him to defend himself, without being productive of any suppling motion whatsoever.

When the horse is thus far familiarly accustomed to what you have required of him, (but by no means before he is entirely so) then proceed to effect by degrees the same crossing in his hinder legs. By bringing in the fore legs more, you will of course engage the hinder ones in the same work: if they resist, the rider must bring both reins more inwards; and, if necessary, put back also, and approach his inward leg to the horse: and if he horse throws out his croup too far, the rider must bring both reins outwards, and if absolutely necessary, (but not otherwise) he must also delicately make use of his outwards leg for a moment, in order to replace the horse properly; observing, that the croup should always be considerably behind the shoulders, which in all actions must go first; and the moment the horse obeys, the rider must put his hand and leg again into their usual position." (pp33-4)

Pembroke refers to the *épaule en dedans* as "a very touchstone in horsemanship, both for man and horse" (p41). He argues that nether horse nor man can be "dressed to any degree without a consummate knowledge of it;" He states that the *épaule en dedans* must not however be practiced in exercises in the field where horses must always be bent in the direction they are going. He comments that much to the shame of the cavalry this is often not the case. The *épaule en dedans* reversed (counter shoulder-in?), he claims, can be used to advantage on a circle with those horses who "are apt to throw themselves forward", (p41) but there is no explanation offered for this point.

Pembroke advocates the *épaule en dedans* to be practised:

"on all figures, circles, straight lines, squares, &c. and when on this last, which is an excellent lesson, (as also in every lesson, and on all figures, where there are corners and angles) care must be taken concerning the shoulders and croup, that, which ever of them is to enter the corner first, may go quite into it; and let that which

goes in last, follow exactly the same ground. This rule can not be too much attended to. The croup, indeed, can never enter the corner first, except in working backwards.” (p41-2)

Comment: Counter shoulder-in is not commonly seen to be practiced in the UK these days; it's not often that you see this movement being undertaken in lessons or dressage warm-up arenas. Similarly, renvers, or haunches out also seems to be less popular than travers (haunches in) and if it is used it seems to be only really practiced along the long side by the fence and hardly at all on the circle or inside of the school.

Similarly, shoulder-in does not seem to be practiced much in the UK on the circle, in fact it is quite rare to see it used away from the sides of the school. In Portugal it seems to be used on the circle a great deal as a suppling exercise and also used around the outside of the school, into and out of the corners so, to all intents and purposes, it is undertaken on a large square. Riding shoulder-in or counter shoulder-in round corners offers interesting learning opportunities for the rider: (i) opening the outside rein a little but catching any 'fall-out' of the outside shoulder with the outside thigh and timely re-positioning of the outside rein and (ii) guarding the position of the croup so that it neither swings out to hit the fence or inwards so that it leads, are both valuable experiences in helping the rider gain a *feel* for the aids and giving an understanding of the way they fit together as a whole.

9. Suppling the haunches (renvers and travers)

Pembroke declares that a well prepared horse should be kept on his haunches:

“with his hinder legs well placed under him; whereby he will be always pleasant to himself, and his rider, will be light in hand, and ready to execute whatever may be demanded of him in reason, with facility, vigour, quickness, and delicacy.” (p38)

Chapter four focuses on the head-to-the-wall (travers) and the croup-to-the-wall (renvers) exercises and Pembroke advises that these should be taught straight after shoulder-in. He says that head-to-the-wall is the easiest of the two exercises in 'riding houses' because you have the wall to help you. He says that the 'motion of the legs' is the same as for shoulder-in (shoulder-in right is same leg motion as travers left) but the '**head is always bent and turned differently**' (p54-5)

– that is on shoulder-in the horse looks away from the direction of travel whereas in all other lateral movements the head faces the direction of movement.

10. Working in hand

Section covering work in hand (pp42-52): emphasis placed upon ‘accuracy’, ‘delicacy’, ‘without noise, hurry, or confusion’; it requires ‘a certain degree of activity, a quick eye, and, like everything else about horses, good temper, and judgment’. The section covers how to use the appropriate tack, (chambriere) and strings. It seems the head-stall has rings to allow the passing through of the strings but Pembroke gives careful instruction about how to use the different arrangements. It appears he used ‘long reins’ – presumably two? The plates would be very useful in this section to indicate how the horse was worked but the narrative description is fairly detailed and is not too difficult to follow.

11. Riding as a science and the link between theory and practice

Chapter 6, although about rein back, piaff and the use of pillars, contains quite a bit about the rider’s attitude to learning, riding as a science, theory and practice, the necessity of reading and study. Some interesting comments illustrates Pembroke’s way of looking at equitation. “I must urge the necessity of forming by reading, and serious study, as well as by much constant practice...” (p76).

He refers to equitation as a science:

“but Equitation is confessedly a science; every science is founded upon principles, and theory must indispensably be necessary, because what is truly just and beautiful can not depend upon chance” (p76-7).

He explains that anyone who has ‘no other guide than a long continued practice’ must, as a consequence be:

“Incapable of accounting rationally for what he does, it must be impossible for him to enlighten me, or communicate to me the knowledge which he fancies himself possessed of” (p77).

Theory, for Pembroke, seems to take a precedent role over practice, although later he explains the way the two work together, since he claims he can learn from someone

“whom theory enables to comprehend and feel the effects of his slightest operations, and who can explain to me such principles, as an age of constant practice could never put me into a way of acquiring. Equitation does, to be sure, require also a constant, and an assiduous exercise. Habit, and continual practice will go a great way in all exercises, which depend on the mechanism of the body, but, unless this mechanism is properly fixed, and supported on the solid basis of theory, errors will be the inevitable consequence” (p77).

Comment:

This type of discussion aligns well with the interests of certain other ‘classical writers, i.e. King Duarte (1438 - see Preto and Preto, 2005) and Pluvinel (1626). A modern link can be made with Paul Belasik who also spends some time in his interview with Joliffe discussing this very topic (The High School Work tapes) and runs as a vein throughout his writing (i.e. 1990; 1999; 2009). This is a topic I plan to return to elsewhere in detail.

He explains that a lot of people think that it is easy to dress a horse but anyone who really understands what it is about will realise that the more he learns, the more he will understand the difficulties involved and so will continue in his search for learning – the more you explore, the more you find to learn:

“The knowledge of a horse is vulgarly thought so familiar, and the means of dressing him so general, and so common, that you can hardly meet with a man, who does not flatter himself, that he has succeeded in both points; and while masters, who sacrifice every hour of their life to attain knowledge, still find themselves immersed in darkness and obscurity, men the most uninformed imagine, that they have attained the summit of perfection, and in consequence thereof suppress the least inclination of learning even the first elements. A blind, and boundless presumption is the characteristic of ignorance; the fruits of long study, and application amount to a discovery of innumerable fresh difficulties, at the sight of which a diligent man, very far from over-rating his own merits, redoubles his efforts in pursuit of further knowledge” (p78-9)

He argues that “The coolest, and best-natured rider, *cæteris paribus*, will always succeed best” (p90)

12. Preparing horses for war

The chapter on the work necessary to prepare a horse to be able to withstand the experience of battle is fascinating – it covers the subject of jumping obstacles, including the need to teach a horse not to be frightened by the sight and scent of dead horses and, indeed, to jump over them. They are required to get used to burning things as well as the sight and sound of a gun being fired from their backs. Advice is given explaining how to teach the horse to accept this kind of treatment. Horses are expected to be able to swim and we are told how best to swim a horse across a river. Horses must also be accustomed to carry a second person on their croup, vital for helping comrades whose horses are killed from under them during battle.

Pembroke does not talk much about other ‘masters’ but he mentions that “[there is a great deal of good sense in Xenophon’s method of forming horses for war; after him, horsemanship was buried for ages, or rather brutalised, which is still too much the case](#)” (p87). Nowadays it is often considered that Grisone, although apparently so influential in terms of Europeans who would have gone to him to study, was quite brutal in his methods. (His pupils/disciples may have been Pignatelli, and de la Broue) Grisone’s famous treatise “Gli Ordini di Cavalcare,” or *The Rules of Horsemanship*, first published in 1550, describes what we would see as being brutal and cruel practices. He is considered to have been influenced by Xenophon but he does not seem to have adopted Xenophon’s ‘gentle’ approach.

Pembroke’s continued emphasis on the ‘gentle’ treatment of the horse throughout his text would appear to illustrate the influence of Xenophon on his approach to horsemanship, who tells us “[For what the horse does under compulsion, as Simon also observes, is done without understanding; and there is no beauty in it either, any more than if one should whip and spur a dancer](#)” (Xenophon, translated by Dover, 1893, p62).

Pembroke does not mention Cavendish or Gueiriniere by name; strange given when (chronologically) he is writing and presumably he was well aware of their work and texts.

Comment: Interesting that Pembroke refers to Xenophon and his ‘good sense’ regarding his teaching about the training of the horse for war. In my copy of Xenophon (Dover, 2006) he does use the word ‘gentle’ when talking about handling a good war-horse (e.g. p52 - twice). My reading of Xenophon is that he advocates consideration, empathy, care, even adoration for the horse but never indulgence and nothing that would lead to undisciplined behaviour.

13. General Comments

Pembroke's book is very readable – it could have been written by one of our top classical trainers today. His style is engaging in that he talks to the reader and engages them in a discussion about the ways of riding and schooling horses in a down-to-earth and yet carefully considered way. He offers simple sentences that contain much wise council and often such complex ideas - a style that appears to reoccur in many texts written by 'masters' of their art, who have developed their understanding to such a level that they are able to describe and explain the complex simply. His style of instructing reminds me of the teachings of Oliveira through his writing (eg 1976) – the simplicity of his words/teaching but their profoundness for anyone prepared to think about what is being said.

Pembroke's use of English is easy to follow once you 'get your eye in' since it uses 'f's instead of 's's according to the old English written style. Sometimes it can be a little confusing if you read "wife" instead of "wise"! For me it's a much more accessible piece of reading than Cavendish's much better known "A General System of Horsemanship" (1743). My copy is published by BiblioLife through Amazon (an open source project) and whilst it seems to be a facsimile of the 4th edition of 1793 it is without plates – a real shame as these are referenced throughout the text and seem to have illustrated, for example, the attachment of reins, straps and even poles to the headpiece and cavesson. The passages about 'working in hand' refer to the missing plates throughout and although it is possible to follow the textual description, the plates would be helpful. The plates are sorely missed in the more technical explanations. For some reason there are also typographical errors on the cover of my publication "Breakin" instead of "Breaking" and "Henry Earl of Pembroke" instead of "Pembroke". However, without BiblioLife it is unlikely that I would have had the opportunity to read this text.

14. List of summary points

Most notable aspects: use of word 'gentleness' throughout text; care to describe schooling movements such as shoulder-in, travers, renvers; spends quite a lot of time discussing the idea of 'appui' and how true and just appui may be attained.; advocates that legs should always be subservient to the hands - tells riders to keep their legs still. Advocates that practice alone is of little value and that a horseman needs to study theory: theory enables one to make sense of what one feels in practice and to pass this understanding on. Equitation is a science. The rider's seat is very important. Practical advice on how to school and accustom a horse for dependable use in war. Text and teaching therein is focused on the necessary lessons for the cavalry, this includes schooling to the levels of 'finesse' we might ascribe to the teaching of lateral movements and such things as appui.

Author's dates	Nationality;	When active	Dates/titles of other texts	Stated influences on author	Target audience	Translator and date of translation	Pupils/students/disciples
3/7/1734 to 26/1/1794 died at Wilton Henry Herbert 10 th Earl of Pembroke	British	1755 built Riding School at Wilton House and commissioned 55 paintings of military riding exercises; Colonel in 1 st Light Dragoons – to Germany in 1760 – returns 1762		Discussion with his friend General George Augustus Elliott – 1 st regiment of Light Dragoons Refers to Xenophon	Dedicated to “the king”; Recruits of the cavalry whose “wretched system of horsemanship” he considered “disgraceful in itself, and productive in its consequences of the most fatal evils”		None cited in text Others claiming his influence: Later authors quoting: Loch (1990)

Comment: Wikipedia says he commissioned these paintings but Loch says the paintings were published in a book in 1747 in England – book by Baron von Eisenberg and Pembroke was a ‘subscriber’ to one of the editions of this book – the one dedicated to George II

Table 1: Author/text summary.

15. What others say about this author/work

(This section to be updated as cross referencing may appear through the reading of different texts)

Loch’s book *Dressage* (1990):

States that the text was written in 1778 – not sure why there is a discrepancy in dates here – I suspect she has her own edition from this time, maybe without date on dedication page? (p92)

Offers interesting comment on the Wilton House paintings (p52):

1727 a German écuyer to the Court of the Hapsburgs, Baron von Eisenberg, traveled to England and produced book called "Description du Manège Royal, published in London in 1747. Loch says that one edition was dedicated to King George II and Henry Herbert was a subscriber. (What is the role of a subscriber? – presumably this counters claim in Wikipedia that Pembroke commissioned the 55 paintings!

The original paintings (in gouache), remain as an entire collection at Wilton House. Loch explains that von Eisenberg was pupil of Master Regenthal of the Spanish Riding School. Eisenberg traveled extensively throughout Europe and horses from all sorts of breeds are illustrated in the paintings, as are colours of their coats which he seems to have been interested in recording. Engravings of the paintings for von Eisenberg's book are by B. Picart.

Comment: Research Wilton House collection – William's text (1978) tells little/nothing of the history of the paintings

Loch's quotes from Pembroke:

(p17):

"Equitation is confessedly a science; every science is founded upon principles and theory must indispensably be necessary, because what is truly just and beautiful cannot depend upon chance" (p76-7)

(p92):

discussion of the rider's seat as foundation of all that follows "No man can be either well or firmly seated...." (p7)

"...seated neither forwards ..." (p14) This taken from – description of seat sounds like something a classical trainer might say today! "A raw man is much easier taught..." (p10) "men use their snaffles delicately..." (p11) epaule en dedans "the very touchstone in horsemanship..." (p41)

Bibliographic information from "Henry, Elizabeth and George: Letters and Diaries of Henry, Tenth Earl of Pembroke and his Circle" edited by Lord Herbert – Vol. 1 – 1734-1780.

Herbert explains some background influences on Pembroke:

"One of his letters to Newcastle written from Florence on September 23rd, 1754, deserves to be mentioned, as it explains the numerous visits to Lyons, and the commencement of one of his chief interests in life, horses.

He wrote: 'I propose leaving this country next week and going immediately to Lyons to a famous écuyer [Bougelat]¹ there, having just left another by name Eisenberg [Baron Eisenberg² whom he had met in Pisa]

whom your Grace may remember to have seen in England, and being I fear as horse mad as my Father was tennisly so, your Grace sees the folly remains. It has only changed its object' (Add. 32,736, f. 571)." (p28-9)

The footnotes below are those of Lord Pembroke's, editor of the letters.

¹ Claude Bourgelat (1712-1779), founder of the veterinary schools in France. Head of the Academy of Equitation at Lyons and author of works on the horse.

² Baron Eisenberg was riding master to the Emperor Francis I. His portrait is at Wilton.

Herbert tells us that Pembroke had been made second in command of the 15th Light Dragoons (or Elliott's Light Horse) which was a newly founded regiment in 1759. At the end of the year, with a rank of Lieutenant-Colonel he went with his regiment to Germany, where soon after in 1760 he was made Adjutant-General and 1761 saw him promoted again to Major-General and given command of the Cavalry Brigade. Herbert tells us:

"This period of foreign service with cavalry gave Henry the opportunity he had been waiting for to expound his knowledge of horses and the methods of riding which he had learnt in the riding schools of the capitals he had visited during the Grand Tour. The standard of riding in the British Army was at this time very poor, and Henry was determined to improve it on Continental lines. He spared no efforts in this direction, and in 1761 published a book entitled *Military Equitation, or a Method of Breaking Horses and teaching Soldiers to ride*. So successful was it that a second edition was issued in 1763, a third in 1778, a fourth in 1793, and for many years it remained the standard work adopted by the Army. In 1768 he published another book, *Instructions for the Education of Cavalry*, which was translated into French and German" (p30)

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