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# Racinet Explains Baucher



## Synopsis

Excellent introduction to the philosophy, method, and procedures of Baucherism, or the French tradition of "riding in lightness" that Baucher developed in the 19th century. Includes a translation of Baucher's "second manner." Jean-Claude Racinet wrote a few articles in the magazine Dressage and CT in 1992-3 on Baucher and his equitation. This series, with some necessary editing for cohesion, has been brought together to create this book. Two appendices were added; the first one deals with the validity of Baucherism, in light of the last discoveries of "equine osteopathy," as exposed by Dr. Dominique Giniaux of France; the second is a translation of the very last part of the 12th edition of Baucher's *Methode d'Equitation*, dealing with his second "manner." This text has probably never been translated into English, and is of utmost importance. The riders who will endeavor to apply by the letter the progression described by Baucher in this text will, to their surprise, probably accede to a new and higher level of equestrian knowledge. Born in Paris in 1929, Jean-Claude Racinet is a graduate of St. Cyr, the French West Point, Class of 1950. He was a member of the French contingent in Korea (1950-53), where he was wounded twice. As an officer of the French army, he spent seven years in Tunisia and Algeria (1954-61) and four more years in Europe. While he spent most of his army career during the time when the military was getting rid of their horses, he managed, between and during his sojourns overseas, to successfully attend the Superior Equitation Course in the Cavalry School of Saumur (1953-54), winning the title of Champion of Tunisia in open jumping (1956), and to become a member of the Jumping Team of the Military School in Paris (1953). Riding teacher and trainer as a civilian after 1965, he was more particularly known by his retraining of difficult horses and later as an equestrian journalist by his always witty and sometimes scathing articles in the French equestrian monthly *L'Information Hippique*. In the United States since 1983, Jean-Claude Racinet became a successful teacher, trainer, lecturer, clinician, and author. Xenophon Press published in 1994 his highly popular book *Another Horsemanship*, now in its second printing. Jean-Claude Racinet has devoted his life to the vindication of "*L'Équitation de Légereté*" (riding in lightness), which fosters balance by relaxing the horse - more so his mouth - excluding force in the wielding of the aids. In fact, the very essence of riding in the French Classical tradition. softcover, 207 pages, illustrated. Excerpt from the book: So, who was Francois Baucher? Francois Baucher was born in Versailles near Paris on June 16, 1796. Twenty-nine-year-old General Napoleon Bonaparte's "Coup d'Etat" was to take place on December 2, 1798, so the childhood and youth of Baucher was to unfold during the Napoleonic era, which the French call the "First Empire." At age 14, Francois Baucher was brought to Italy by an uncle who was managing in Milan the stable of Camille Borghese, Prince of Sulmone, and husband

of Pauline Bonaparte, a sister of Napoleon. Four years later, at the fall of Napoleon, Baucher came back to France. He worked for a short time in the stables of the Duke of Berry in Versailles, then decided to work for himself and by 1820 settled in Normandy where he managed first one, then two riding establishments, in Le Havre and Rouen. Baucher evinced outstanding qualities as a rider, trainer, and riding teacher. Yet he deplored that the way horsemanship was taught at the time was unclear, vague, and futile, and he set out to create his own system which, he hoped, would be based on rationality and "scientific" observations.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is the second copy of this book that I have purchased, in order to have one to loan out to friends. This book, as well as Another Horsemanship and Total Horsemanship, was a turning point for me in my riding career and has changed my way of riding forever. When I found these books, I was searching for a way to establish a true and light way of riding that allowed me to connect with my horses in a way that was enjoyable to each of us. I had not found it previously and was frustrated with what I was being taught by top trainers and shown at shows. Force, heavy contact, tight nosebands, overworked horses, and extreme strength were not my goals. I desired a partnership with my horse as a willing and happy participant in a connected relationship. This book confirmed my belief that this was possible and immediately resonated with me giving me hope to try something new and different. Through Mr. Racinet's teachings I found so much more. I found the connected and harmonious, truly light, way of riding that I was seeking, and when I found that it

opened doors for more advanced movements that I had understood my horses could do...especially so willingly and without force. Riding became fun again, for the horses and for me. What is so different about Mr. Racinet's teachings is that not only can he speak to what true lightness feels like, he can teach it in a systematic, structured way that will work for anyone willing to put in the time and effort to practice and understand. Racinet Explains Baucher logically explains the history and background of many of Baucher's teachings in a way that even a layperson can understand. This book is essential reading for anyone with an open mind who seeks a better relationship with his or her horse. I feel extremely fortunate that Mr. Racinet has left behind these books as part of his legacy so that his knowledge can be continued even though he is no longer with us. If you are searching for a way to achieve true lightness, whether or not advanced dressage is your aim, Mr. Racinet's books provide a systematic way to achieve it that actually works!

The first review says it all, however I would like to add that in modern dressage circles "Baucher" is a bad word. It should not be! Trying to find an instructor who teaches this way is incredibly difficult (I live in the West) and public opinion is often against it. However, I think it's so important to learn about Baucher and his method. It proves for once and for all that contact is NOT needed for collection! I was told over and over that collection couldn't be achieved without heavy contact. To find that there has been another way and that it still exists is wonderful! This book will be better understood by those who have had some dressage experience since you may not understand the significance of what the author is saying or the terms. Read it anyway! I read this early in my dressage career and when every instructor taught me to pull, pull, pull...I knew that there was another way because of this book. If you do read this you will soon become aware that the "German" method is the main way people and horses are taught dressage. If you have a keen eye, you will watch the horses at the olympics and see that they are not moving very freely. As for the book itself, it is well-written and surprisingly easy to read. It gives concrete instructions to help you work on your own. I have used this book often over the years since an instructor has yet to be found.

My mare was severely injured and into her second year of recovery I found this book. Since starting these stretches and positions described, I am now riding her again and she is back to enjoying life. I think this would enhance any horse's abilities. Most especially, it has freed her neck and poll to move as it should.

I am so regretful that I only discovered Racinet through his books just after his untimely death while giving a clinic in Germany ... he had lived just one state away from me in the US for many years prior. I came to explore Baucherism more deeply while researching the methods of Nuno Oliveira. Pursuing then other current proponents of Baucher's techniques, I came across Racinet and am very glad I did. I think it is fair to say his is among the most accessible explanation of Baucherist techniques. As I think anyone who has spent many years in the discipline understands, there are many wonderful equestrians and yet very few wonderful teachers. At a certain level, it becomes quite difficult to articulate the sensations and communications going on between horse and rider. And as soon as we begin to put down the "rules" of a given methodology, we begin to find exceptions; and then the rules become fairly complex algorithms ... and then we need someone to explain them in a manner relevant to our particular context. For most, it is not enough to simply read Baucher (which of course I highly recommend) - particularly if you are reading a translation from the original French. How much is lost in context via the ocean of time, culture, and then language? But then here is Racinet. He is French, though moved to the US and resided here until the end of his life. So he has a certain appreciation for the subtle insinuations here and there within Baucher's work, and a better point of departure for understanding the culture of the day when Baucher was creating his work. He also understands American culture and communication well enough to move the right meaning from there to here. Moreover, he is never condescending in this process, taking instead the tone of just another fellow student and admirer of our ancient friend, the horse. From his very readable pros, I was able to head myself off from many mistakes which would now seem obvious in retrospect, but which I know I would have committed had I not invested the time with Racinet's work. If you are passionate about understanding a higher order of "classical" dressage techniques, I would encourage you to begin with Racinet ... but be forewarned: it will change your view of "right", and your style of riding - perhaps at the expense of a few points at your next FEI-sanctioned dressage social. Let them go, and go on to enjoy an aptitude for horsemanship you'll be surprised you didn't know existed until now.

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