

## ORIENTALISM AND THE ARABIAN HORSE : PART 7

# ALBRECHT ADAM

Noerdlingen 1786 – München 1862

By Judith Wich-Wenning

**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. THERE HE ALSO ATTENDED THE ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS.**

He 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 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 **an 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 some time.

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 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 most 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 Arabian horse!**

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"Bay Arabian in front of Castle Blütenburg in Munich. Painted by Albrecht Adam in 1832, oil on wood."