

## INTRODUCTION

### THE HORSE AS CULTURAL ICON: THE REAL AND THE SYMBOLIC HORSE IN THE EARLY MODERN WORLD

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In the modern developed world, the appearance of horses in a peaceful public space (police horses in a town centre, say, or horses with their riders on a hack, stopping for refreshment at a food and drink outlet) typically draws a small crowd. Children approach diffidently to touch and stroke the horses, adults stand back, looking. Horses are unexpected visitors in contemporary everyday life: not quite exotic, but not familiar either. This estrangement between humans and horses has occurred abruptly and relatively recently. From antiquity until the 1930s, horses were fully present in the day-to-day world, a situation that only a small and rapidly dwindling cohort of elderly people can now recall. More than this, horses were not just a part of human life in the past, they were crucial to the development of modern societies and nations. But, despite the importance of horses, cultural studies scholars, literary critics and historians of all kinds have paid very little attention to their lives, roles and meanings. A continuing process of urbanisation since the industrial revolution, a general acceleration of technological change and, in particular, the rapid post-Second World War expansion of motor transport, may account for the virtual obliteration of knowledge of an older horse-powered society among the populace as a whole. It does not explain, however, the scant scholarly attention paid to the significance of horses. Paradoxically, it is, in part, the taken-for-granted centrality of horses to human lives in the past that has rendered them almost invisible to history. Victorian compilers of the calendars of State Papers, for instance, habitually failed to list references to horses in the indexes and not uncommonly omitted them from the edited texts altogether. Similarly, western culture and its languages are so saturated with terms deriving from the routine business of riding, breeding, selling, driving and handling horses that

we fail to notice them.<sup>1</sup> That horses are largely associated with leisure activity in the contemporary developed world has also perhaps diverted modern cultural analysis from attention to the roles and meanings of horses in the past. An unconscious transfer of value from present to past has meant that horse-related history may seem unserious, the product of no more than a hobby-based or idiosyncratic interest. The effects of a wider alienation of the world's human inhabitants from a natural environment and other species is part of the familiar story of how knowledge of ecological damage is not matched by a substantiating experiential awareness. This broad separation of the human from a natural environment also forms part of the general context to history's inattention to the formative role horses have played in shaping the world.

Recently, in reaction to growing recognition of what has been called modernity's species narcissism, a well-received sprinkling of books and articles on the importance of horses to history has appeared. Nevertheless, the range of meanings and functions of horses to early-modern societies and cultures remains under-explored. This book reflects the work of an already-established, international network of scholars that has sprung up to share and further develop knowledge and understanding of early-modern horse cultures. It brings together leading academics and younger scholars of distinction from a number of disciplines, most of whom met at a conference at Roehampton University in June 2009 to celebrate the career of Professor Peter Edwards, to discuss the multi-faceted role of the horse in early-modern society.

The cross-disciplinary essays here display their authors' diverse approaches to the subject, which, in turn, reflect the potency of the horse as a functional animal and as a cultural icon. Taken together, the essays assert and underline the horse's immense influence on early modern societies, offering a view of the animal from a number of perspectives, as highlighted by the tripartite division of the volume: Horsemanship and Status; Horse Breeding; Horse-Human Identities. Although the individual essays cover a range of separate (if inter-related) issues, they all share a central concern with the work of recovery and interpretation. Each essay aims to retrieve aspects of the

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<sup>1</sup> Similarly, authoritative past and present editions of, for instance, Shakespeare's *King Henry V*, a play full of horse talk, or of *The Taming of the Shrew*, with its sustained series of allusions to horse management manuals, rarely pick up on equine references in interpretative introductions or textual notes.

knowledge and awareness of horses that formed part of the texture of life and thought in the early modern period. The empirical focus and directly historical argument of some essays (concerned with agricultural and veterinary practices, farriery or breeding, for example) bring attention to the actuality of the lives and roles of horses in the period. At other times, the essays are more concerned with the meanings generated by horses' presence in the world and the significance of horse-related discourses. How the actualities of horses' existence and horse discourses relate to each other, to more consciously symbolic or metaphoric representation of horses in literary or visual texts and to the early modern socio-cultural exploitation of equine symbolism to signify power, rank, individual temperament and political allegiances, is a concern of individual essays and, through its juxtaposition of analyses of different equine and equestrian discourses, of the book as a whole. As the essays here suggest, actual early modern practices differed between social groups and between places. Ideas about horses were similarly varied – there was no consensual set of horse-related beliefs or understandings. And the aesthetic forms and socio-political meanings associated with the representation of horses were, again, heterogeneous. The collection's recognition of ways in which ideas circulated between different discursive domains and of the disparities between, say, practice and artistic representations, or theories such as geohumoralism and literary symbolisation, reminds us of the variety and density of early modern thought about horses and its pervasiveness in the culture. If historical, cultural and literary studies are to achieve a corresponding complexity of understanding of the place of horses in past lives, it is the diverse, contradictory, shifting nature of horse-related thought in the period that begs to be further explored. John Bunyan, writing a collection of educational rhymes for seventeenth century children, could assume their everyday familiarity with distinctions between different horses' ways of going and how these relate to their riders' personalities and even spiritual states:

There's one rides very sagely on the Road,  
Shewing that he affects the gravest Mode.  
Another rides Tantivy, or full Trot,  
To shew, much Gravity he matters not.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Bunyan J., *A Book for Boys and Girls: or, Country Rhymes for Children* (London: 1686) 49.

In retrieving aspects of early modern horse culture, the essays here aim to restore factual knowledge, but also to open up a sense of the complexity and interrelationship of those different levels of meaning that horse-related practices carry.

The essays, then, recreate a sense of how early modern western Europe depended upon horses, even if in certain regions, oxen, mules and asses shared some of the work. Horses acted as draught animals: they pulled ploughs, wagons and coaches; they worked a variety of machines, which carried out such vital jobs as draining mines, raising water and minerals and grinding corn; and they transported goods around the country on their backs. As saddle animals, they enabled riders to carry out a wide range of tasks, some purely functional and others leisure-based or performative. By the end of the period their dominance was even more pronounced both in absolute and relative terms. Even in areas where other animals were operating, they were making inroads. Social and cultural considerations further enhanced their value. These essays depend, too, on the recognition that humans and horses enjoyed a special relationship, one that operated on physical, psychological and cultural levels as well as on the material one. Alone among working animals (with the possible exception of hounds), horses were not solely judged by practical considerations. Possession conferred status and, as a result, horses were imbued with an iconic significance. If early modern society could not have functioned effectively without horses, nor could its human population have understood or engaged with the world in many of the ways we have come to associate with the period without their association with horses.

The relationship between horse discourses and more traditionally recognised early modern discourses is, as this suggests, both subtle and far-reaching. Ideas about horses in the period both reflect and inflect apparently distinct ideas about a whole range of issues: gender, social organisation, aesthetics, nation and power, for example. And allusion to horses can work at literal and metaphoric levels simultaneously, referring to clusters of issues and events through a form of horse-indexed cultural shorthand. For instance, Henry VIII's infamous reference to Anne of Cleves as 'a great Flanders mare' carries an allusion to her suitability for breeding as well as her physical build (and perhaps, also, placidity of nature.) So, this use of equine reference immediately indicates something of Henry's need for an heir and his attitude to women. But the meaning of his comment broadens when we also know he was fascinated by horses, horse breeds and breeding

and that he played an important role in importing horses to diversify English horse-stock and facilitate the development of different breeds of horses for different functions. Courtiers and members of the royal household were commissioned to buy mares for breeding purposes in northern and southern Europe and the Ottoman Empire throughout Henry's reign, and 200 Flanders mares were specially imported for his personal studs in 1544 to improve the stamina and strength of English draught horses.<sup>3</sup> In the context of this knowledge, his 'Flanders mare' remark points not only to the idea that wives can be likened to horses but to the fact that the acquisition of wives was also an opportunity for the acquisition of fine horses: Ferdinand of Aragon had sent him, by Henry's specific request, a Spanish ginete, a Neapolitan and a Sicilian horse on his marriage in 1509 to his daughter, Katherine.<sup>4</sup> The reference to Anne of Cleves becomes not just a disparaging, clichéd metaphor but more a highly determined reference to a whole cluster of significances, events and enterprises. The possibility of dynastic endurance, expansionist and protective foreign policy and a saturation in horse-knowledge lie behind apparently casual words. Flemish mares are not just analogous to potentially fertile women; the discourses of nation, marriage, gender and horse management are far more deeply intertwined.

As the essays here show, among the population at large the division between owners and non-horse owners marked a real division in society, though the boundary was fluid and fluctuated according to prevailing social and economic conditions. Horses were expensive to keep and, if under-used economically, were among the first 'luxury' items to go in a depression. Owners themselves were graded. Contemporaries could immediately assess a person's social status by his or her horse: its appearance; how it was used or ridden; and the way it was 'dressed' (trained and presented). Possession of a horse improved a person's economic opportunities too. Whereas Autolycus, the pedlar in *The Winter's Tale*, carried his goods in a pack on his back, some of his

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<sup>3</sup> Letters and Papers of Henry VIII, XIX, I nos. 831, 832 (London: 1862–1910), referred to by Thirsk J., "Horse in Early Modern England: for Service, for Pleasure, for Power", in Thirsk J., *The Rural Economy of England: Collected Essays*, (London: 1984) 383, and Edwards P., *The Horse Trade of Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge: 1988) 41.

<sup>4</sup> Letters and Papers of Henry VIII, I no. 127, (London: 1862–1910), referred to in Thirsk, "Horses in Early Modern England" 382.

real life counterparts invested in a horse, enabling them to travel further, sell a greater range of items and increase their income.<sup>5</sup> Naturally, a distinction was made between saddle and work-horses. Thus, a person, who kept a horse purely for riding, gained added status over some one, who used the animal primarily to earn a living. *A fortiori*, riding a cart-horse to church on Sundays did not create the same impression as going there on the back of a finely shaped Oriental stallion. Conversely, to be seen to be riding too good a horse could lead to condemnation for social over-reaching, as when the Quaker, George Fox, was, among several slurs, described as riding a 'great black horse'.<sup>6</sup> He is here being accused of financial corruption (making money from his preaching), possessing a horse above his station and witchcraft.

Horses were versatile creatures and could perform a range of tasks and, where owners only kept a single animal, they had to do so. Naturally, given differences in size, strength, pace, conformation and even colour, some horses were better suited to certain jobs than others. Contemporaries were aware of these distinctions and, if possible, sought out specimens which possessed the requisite traits. Hill ponies made ideal pack-animals, for instance, while larger horses, bred in vales or on fen margins, pulled equipment, machinery and vehicles. At the top end of the market the elite imported horses from abroad. As a guide, they could use the information contained in the manuals on horsemanship, which became increasingly numerous from the late sixteenth century onwards. Authors adopted a geohumoralist approach, that is, they classified breeds and their qualities according to their country of origin, its climate and topography. Thus, cold-bloods from northern Europe tended to be large, tractable and heavy, while the hot-bloods of the deserts were smaller, fierier and more finely proportioned, and possessed speed and endurance. Of Arabians, Morgan stated, 'If you determine your race for the breeding of swi[f]t horses [...] the most excellent [...] is the Ariabian [...] which participating with the great influence and power of the Sunne is a Beast of wonderfull courage,

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<sup>5</sup> Spufford M., *The Great Reclotting of Rural England* (London: 1984) 54–58.

<sup>6</sup> Fox G., *The Journal of George Fox*, ed. N. Penney (London: 1924; New York: 2007) 58.

swiftnesse and strength'.<sup>7</sup> Warm-bloods occupied the middle ground between the two.

The title of the volume suggests that the emphasis of this collection lies with the horses belonging to the elite. As they possessed the means, as well as the inclination, to judge horses according to their symbolic value as well as their functional capabilities, they viewed them not as luxuries but as essential signifiers of status. The themes of the three sections reinforce this perception since good horsemanship and participation in equine-based pursuits such as hunting and hawking, the *manège* and jousting virtually defined a gentleman and thus membership of the governing caste. Moreover, the elite maintained the best-stocked and most varied stables, the ownership of a string of horses, each with its designated role, allowing them publicly to display their wealth and standing. They also took the lead in bringing about the improvement in the quality of horse populations through their role as breeders of fine animals. Even when their motives were frivolous or fashion-conscious, they might achieve advances in functional performance. Concern about the size and conformation of their coach team led to more powerful cart and plough horses, for example. Genteel landowners might allow a stallion to service their tenants' mares or, more commonly, sell on coach horses past their prime in the open market.

Apart from the elitist nature of the equine-based pursuits noted above, the upper classes argued that they provided them with training for war. In the sixteenth century jousting even replicated actual weapon-handling skills, though offering diminishing returns in the face of the firearms revolution. Such a view is a little disingenuous, even if these activities did offer some transferable skills. Traditionally, enrolment in the army in wartime, especially in heavy cavalry units, had enabled the aristocracy to justify their right to exercise authority over the population as a whole. Their ethos was a martial one and they could best exercise their notion of *vertu*, a concept akin to manliness, on the battlefield. However, developments in weapon technology promoted the infantry at the expense of the cavalry and threatened their *raison d'être*. Moreover, the extra penetrative ability

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<sup>7</sup> Morgan Nicholas, *The horse-mans honour, or the beautie of horsemanship* (London, John Marriott: 1620) 4–5.

of firearms brought about the demise of the aristocratic heavy cavalry detachments, which were replaced by bands of light horseman, armed with pistols and carbines. In this regime, more cost effective in terms of horses and equipment and training time, cavalrymen could now be drawn from a wider social pool. Bruce Boehrer has dubbed this development: the 'bourgeoisification' of the horse.<sup>8</sup>

As a result, the elite had to find other means of protecting their exclusivity and of demonstrating their wealth and status. According to Boehrer, they chose conspicuous consumption and in the process reinvented the horse as a fashionable accessory for 'sport, luxury and social display'.<sup>9</sup> Treva Tucker's study of the French nobility supports Boehrer's view. In France, the old *noblesse d'épée* faced the challenge of the emerging *noblesse de robe*, men who had risen in royal service and whose virtues were of a different kind to those enshrined in the notion of military *vertu*. At the same time handbooks outlining the ideal qualities of a courtier started to appear, including the best known, Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier* (1528), translated into French in 1537, into Latin in 1538 and into English in 1576. The book listed a number of characteristics but gave prominence to the qualities of *grazia* (grace) and *sprezzatura* (nonchalance). According to Tucker, the French nobility responded to the changing concept of *vertu* by learning the equestrian exercises then being taught in Italian academies like Frederico Grisone's establishment in Naples.<sup>10</sup> The *manège* enabled its practitioners to display the new qualities of grace and nonchalance in a non-military environment but one which still demanded the exercise of the old martial traits of courage, good judgement, quick-wittedness, determination and stoicism.<sup>11</sup> In England Sir Thomas Elyot's book, *The Boke named the Governour* (1531) served a similar purpose to Castiglione's manual. He, too, recommended various exercises to the prospective leaders of society, placing the *manège* at the top of a list, which included the handling of weapons.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Boehrer B., "Shakespeare and the social devaluation of the horse", in Raber K. – Tucker T.J. (eds.), *The Culture of the Horse: Status, Discipline, and Identity in the Early Modern World* (New York: 2005) 91–94.

<sup>9</sup> Boehrer, "Shakespeare" 97.

<sup>10</sup> Tucker T.J., "Early Modern French Noble Identity and the Equestrian 'Airs above the Ground'", in Raber – Tucker, *Culture of the Horse* 280–281.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 282–284.

<sup>12</sup> Elyot Thomas, *The Boke called the Governour* (London, T. Berthelet: 1531) fols. 68r–68v.

Attention to the *manège* in a number of the essays here reflects its importance in early modern elite culture. Looking trans-historically at the evolution and generalisation of elite practices in the early modern period can also allow us to see how, in an evolved mode, these are the origin of practices that are all-pervasive in the modern world of large-scale corporations. Today, as we all recognise, we are supposed to manage everything: our hair, our diet, our weight, our time, our daily schedule, our data – and that is before we get on to our institutions or organisations and their management systems, processes and styles. It was in the mid sixteenth century that this apparently indispensable verb was circulated throughout Europe and first came into English from the Italian *maneggiare*, meaning to handle a horse or train it in its paces.<sup>13</sup> This usage is retained in the globally-used word *manège*, for the enclosed school used for dressage. If we follow the history of the word in English from the sixteenth century onwards, we see that by the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the meanings of ‘management’ had multiplied: it can, in the early seventeenth century, refer to the handling of weapons or, less frequently, to personal conduct (as a synonym to ‘comportment’).<sup>14</sup> In the later seventeenth century and the eighteenth century it comes to be used in relation to land management (think of Capability Brown) and, from the first half of the eighteenth century, it is also connected with administration and governance. In the nineteenth century it becomes commonly associated with household and domestic management or science (as with Mrs Beeton in the UK, or Catherine Beecher and Ellen Swallow Richards in the US); and by the early twentieth century it is fully adopted by organisations and businesses, largely through the influence of F.W. Taylor’s *Principles of Scientific Management* (1909).<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Cf. Gerald Hammond, *The Language of Horse Racing*, Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers (Chicago – London: 1992) 133. See Elizabeth Tobey’s essay in this collection for the origins of the term in Grisone’s writing on the *manège*.

<sup>14</sup> These uses of the concept of management relate to humanist and courtly insistence on the importance of training the body as well as the mind. On training in martial arts, training manuals, and the cultural significance of these, see Sydney Anglo, *The Martial Arts of Renaissance Europe* (New Haven – London: 2000).

<sup>15</sup> The link between horse and organisational management was rather wonderfully recognised a few years ago by Manchester Business School which ran a series of expensive management training courses involving an experience of horse handling based on Monty Roberts’ techniques of ‘join up’ as a means of instilling leadership skills. Roberts M., *The Man Who Listens to Horses* (London: 1997); Roberts M., *Shy Boy: The Horse That Came In from the Wild* (London: 1999). Manchester Business School’s deployment of ideas derived from Monty Roberts’ work: <http://www.mbs.ac.uk/programmes/edc/leadership/html/explained.cfm>, accessed 05.08.2003.

What this brief etymology generally suggests is that all of these applications of the word imply scientific systems, and the bringing of productivity, order and harmony out of relationships between disparate elements, some of which are deemed to be, by their nature, unruly or uncontained. The history of the word is bound up with a history of what is perceived to need controlling in order to be exploited or turned to account: from horses, weapons and conduct (the tools and signs of Renaissance nobility) to sources of economic productivity and organisational activity. Implicit in the word and its history, though, are not just changing objects of use and control but a constant refinement of power dynamics. Several essays in this collection investigate ways in which matters of horse management are linked to matters of political value and organisation. What these essays also imply is how ideas about the structuring of power, traced back across several centuries, derive from early modern ideas about, and practices of, the *manège* and the relationships they create between humans and horses.

Concern with the equestrian practices of elites also returns us from a history of ideas to a more material realm of history. In every country, the elite acted as the focal point for thousands of people who earned an income from them as suppliers of equine-based labour, goods or services. They included the staff at estate studs and stables; the trainers, who broke-in young horses, the farriers, who dealt with illnesses and injuries, and the blacksmiths, who shod the hooves; the dealers and merchants; the manufacturers of tack and riding-gear; the coach builders and ancillary tradesmen; the coachmen and postillions; the providers of fodder; and the designers and builders of stable blocks. Of course, the elite did not monopolise their services; even coach builders earned money from the construction of hackney- and stage-coaches required for the burgeoning transport network, which, catering *inter alia* for the middling orders, expanded during the course of the seventeenth century. The favoured few suppliers, who worked on or near a gentleman's estate or who fashioned a luxury version of a particular commodity, did well out of elite patronage, but most people made their money from doing business with the wider public. In spite of its aristocratic focus, this book does not ignore the horse-related activities of the non-elite classes. Indeed, several of the essays concentrate wholly or partially on them, whether farriers in England and Germany, 'bourgeois' suppliers of horses to the parliamentary army or the farmers of England and the Philippines.

*Horsemanship and Status*

Horsemanship was deemed one of the essential attributes of a gentleman. James I of England and VI of Scotland told his son, Prince Henry, that 'It becometh a Prince better than any other man to be a fair and good horseman'.<sup>16</sup> To be seen riding a mettlesome horse was to project an image of power and authority, the mastery of such a creature affirming the rider's fitness to rule. According to Boehrer's argument, this could be viewed as an example of displacement, the *manège*, as metonym, compensating the aristocracy for the loss of their military status along with the decline of the heavy cavalry. Pia Cuneo's essay emphasizes the link between horsemanship and status in a close examination of the illustrations from two German books on the training process. To ride well, she points out, was a difficult skill to master. It was a noble art, one that called for the possession of a range of qualities: physical, emotional and moral. Apart from requiring good balance, steadiness and courage, riding instilled leadership skills. It also taught humility. Unlike courtiers or underlings, who might flatter the young nobleman, a horse was honest, punishing an error by depositing the rider on the ground, as one of Cuneo's engravings depicts.

Greg Bankoff's essay broadens out the discussion, revealing the problem that Europeans faced when trying to take such social signifiers as fine horses and refined horsemanship with them when they settled in the colonies. In the Philippines, as in the mother country, the authorities sought to deploy them as symbols of status and power. Their attempts, however, were frustrated, partly because of the difficulty in obtaining sufficient numbers of horses of the requisite stature and conformation but also on account of the local environment. As the animal went 'native' and decreased in size, it no longer provided a suitable mount, on which to posture. Sandra Swart's study of the role of horses in the late medieval and early modern kingdoms of sub-Saharan Africa indicates that native rulers also valued as status symbols the fine horses that they obtained to the north of the desert. In places, however, their horsemanship skills did not always match the quality of the horses. In the kingdoms of Dahomey and Benin, for

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<sup>16</sup> Reese M.M., *The Royal Office of Master of the Horse* (London: 1976) 166.

example, attendants often had to prop up the chiefs in the saddle in order to prevent them falling off.

Cuneo's essay, which discusses the semiotics of the paintings and engravings she presents, shows that the upper classes were as concerned with their representation on canvas as they were with the image they projected in person. If no artist could capture the sheer physical presence and elemental strength of a powerful horse, viewed in the flesh, he could improve on reality in his portrayal of the sitter. In the sixteenth century the stallion of choice was a Neapolitan courser; a large, strong well-proportioned mount, its career as a parade animal outlived its value as a warhorse which decayed along with the demise of the heavily armoured man-of-war. By the early seventeenth century Spanish ginetes had replaced Neapolitan coursers in equestrian portraits, as in Diego Velázquez's painting of the Spanish chief minister, Count-Duke Olivares (c. 1636), reproduced in this volume. To enhance the image, sitters tended to be dressed in full armour, an indication that the iconic appeal of a mounted knight still resonated in the minds of the aristocracy, even if they had lost their monopoly of places in the cavalry. Anthony Van Dyck's equestrian portrait of Charles I (1633) depicts him in cuirassier armour and holding a field-marshal's baton. The setting for the picture in St. James's Palace, at the end of a corridor flanked by portraits of Roman emperors, enhanced the iconic appeal of the image.<sup>17</sup> The inclusion of Charles's riding master, St. Antoine, who looks on in admiration, suggests that the king was a skilled horseman and hence fit to occupy the throne at a time when elements of the political nation were doubting it.

A number of contributors examine the relationship between service in the cavalry and status. Gavin Robinson makes a major contribution to the Boehrer debate in his essay, which looks at the impact of technology on the nature and importance of mounted warfare, mainly in early modern England and with a particular emphasis on the Civil War period. He also assesses its effect on the social composition of the troops, his analysis revealing a marked decline in status between the men-at-arms, who fought at Agincourt in 1415, and those, who served in parliamentary troops in the English Civil Wars. Jennifer Flaherty and Ian MacInnes also look at the Battle of Agincourt, but as Shakespeare depicted it. In *Henry V* the French horses and riders are

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<sup>17</sup> Edwards P., *Horse and Man in Early Modern England* (London: 2007) 29–30.

far superior to their English counterparts but that did not guarantee a victory. Indeed, Shakespeare equates the French aristocracy's uncritical obsession for their horses as a sign of decadence and an indication of the degeneration of the landed elite as a military caste. In his portrayal of Hotspur, moreover, Shakespeare derides the attitudes of martial-fixated noblemen, the implication being that things were different in his day. On the other hand, Elizabeth Socolow's study of Sir Philip Sidney's *The Defence of Poesie*, reveals that Shakespeare's view was not necessary the only one expressed at the time. The aristocracy may have lost one military indicator of status but to Sidney soldiering still enabled its members to exercise *vertu*. As he declared, 'Soldiers were the noblest estate of mankind, and horsemen the noblest of souldiers'. Elsewhere in the world, Swart's essay discusses the deployment of cavalry in sub-Saharan Africa from the middle ages onwards. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the traditional use of local ponies declined as Muslim rulers, returning from pilgrimage to the north of the Sahara, adopted the cavalry tactics they had observed there, along with their bits, saddles and stirrups, and armour for the riders.

The quintessential test of a good horseman was skill in the *manège*, which arguably replaced military-based horsemanship as the means whereby aristocrats could display then current notions of *vertu*. As Elizabeth Tobey indicates in her essay, pupils came from far and wide to study horsemanship at these academies, especially at Grisone's establishment in Naples. One of his English pupils was Robert Alexander, who became Henry VIII's riding master at Hampton Court.<sup>18</sup> Italian riding masters also received invitations from abroad. Alexander de Bologna and Jacques de Granado were officers in Henry VIII's stables, while in Elizabeth I's reign, the Earl of Leicester, her Master of the Horse, and his step-son, Sir Philip Sidney, were responsible for the presence in the country of Claudio Corte, Prospero d'Osma and a Signor Romano. In addition, Sir Philip wrote about Giovanni Pietro Pugliano in *The Defence of Poesie*. When Sidney stayed at Vienna in 1574 Pugliano had instilled in him the 'true' virtues and values of horsemanship and, as Socolow shows in her essay, drew on his mentor's equine-based philosophy for his own argument.<sup>19</sup> 'Great' horses, as those suitable to perform the exercises were known, had to be strong

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>19</sup> Stewart A., *Philip Sidney: A Double Life* (London: 2000) 131–132.

and spirited, well-balanced and with a fine conformation, and were therefore very expensive. The outlay, in terms of the cost of mounts, buildings, servants and equipment, as well as in the time spent acquiring the skills and training the horses, was substantial and therefore represented a clear expression of conspicuous consumption.

Pupils, in turn, became masters and might attract a following. In 1609 Morgan praised Robert Alexander for his work: 'Not onely he in England was esteemd,/But eeke in forraine Countries for his Art/ [...] Had many men of worth and great renowne/That were his schollers [...]'.<sup>20</sup> In France, graduates returning from Italy established their own academies, Antoine de Pluvinel opening the first one in 1594. They proved popular among (and more convenient for) young men of high birth anxious to acquire the skills that would enable them to display the revised version of *vertu*.<sup>21</sup> As a result, France quickly replaced Italy as the centre of horsemanship. English gentlemen, for instance, finished their education in Paris. In a letter of 9 January 1615/6, addressed to his son in the French capital, Sir John Holles wrote of the value of the schooling he was receiving in terms which suggest the value placed on *grazia* and *sprezzatura* in the educational experience. He observed,

For what makes a good horseman, but the practise of many horses, which according To their severall mouthes, natures, and abilities, exercise eache, and all parts of horsemanship, wherein I hope you will prove a proficient, and in your dauncing and Weapon also, seeing you are in the mart, wher both best, and best cheap [...] may be had.<sup>22</sup>

Conversely, one could learn from an imported riding master. Thus, James I's sons, Charles and Henry, along with a group of young aristocrats, including William Cavendish, the future Earl, Marquis and, finally, Duke of Newcastle, learned about horsemanship from St. Antoine, the protégé of Antoine de Pluvinel, esteemed as the leading riding master of his day.<sup>23</sup>

From Grisone onwards, these riding masters extended their influence through the manuals they wrote. As Tobey shows, Grisone's book, *Gli Ordini di Cavalcare* (1550), translated as *The Rules of Riding*, was

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<sup>20</sup> Morgan Nicolas, *The Perfection of Horse-manship, drawne from Nature; Arte and Practise* (London, E. White: 1609) f. B3.

<sup>21</sup> Tucker, "French Noble Identity" 281.

<sup>22</sup> Seddon P.R., "Letters of John Holles, 1587-1637", *Thoroton Society*, Record Series 31 (1975) 10.

<sup>23</sup> Strong R., *Henry, Prince of Wales and England's lost Renaissance*, (London: 2000) 41-42.

particularly significant, especially in the loose, adapted translation that appeared in Thomas Blundeville's *The Arte of Rydyngge* (c. 1560), the first book on horsemanship written by an Englishman. De Pluvinel's *Le Maneige royal* (1623) was equally influential on the mainland of Europe in publicising the French style of horsemanship.<sup>24</sup> Newcastle was not that impressed, arguing that continental writers were too rigid in their training methods. Even so, because, as Elaine Walker points out, his avowed aim was to write the definitive handbook on horsemanship, his comments have to be read with this in mind. Most of the published manuals did not concentrate solely on the *manège*. In England, Blundeville's second book, *The fower chiefyst offices belongyng to horsemanshippe* (1565) was a more comprehensive text, consisting of a slightly amended version of his previous book, augmented by a number of additional chapters. It provided gentlemen with practical advice on breeding, diet and medical treatment, as well as giving tips on training horses in order that might display the right image in public. As John Astley wrote in his book, *The Art of Riding* (1584), 'Now then, when a horse is thus taught and brought to perfection [...] he will accompanie you, and you shall accompanie him in time and measure, so as to the beholders it shall appeare, that he and you be one bodie, of one mind, and of one will'.<sup>25</sup> As Socolow and Tobey emphasise in their essays, the concept of 'measure', that is, 'timing' and 'rhythm' – hence, harmony – was a key *desideratum* of contemporary manuals on horsemanship.

In a largely formalist essay, Elspeth Graham discusses the horsemanship texts of William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle, in order to explore a variety of political and psychological meanings behind their aesthetics. She links these to Newcastle's career and the centrality of horsemanship in general and the *manège* in particular, to it. By situating Newcastle's life and his horsemanship in the broader context of the period from the Civil War to the Restoration, and his texts more widely within the context of baroque style, she suggests ways in which the history of the seventeenth century is written into Newcastle's life and his relationship to horses and horsemanship. In doing so, she indicates how ideas deriving from horsemanship were central to the habits of thought and cultural practices of the century. Newcastle,

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<sup>24</sup> Raber K., "A Horse of a Different Color: Nation and Race in early Horsemanship Treatises", in Raber – Tucker, *Culture of the Horse* 231.

<sup>25</sup> Astley John, *The Art of Riding* (London, Henrie Denham: 1584). 56.

along with Prince Henry and one or two of the others, who had learned horsemanship from St. Antoine, established riding schools on their properties. Newcastle's creation, built at Welbeck in 1623–24, still stands, though converted into a chapel and library. The later riding school he built at Bolsover Castle in Nottinghamshire, however, survives as one of the finest examples of a riding house in Britain.<sup>26</sup>

Contemplating the loss of power, while in exile in the 1650s, Newcastle wrote about horsemanship and authority and practised the art of the *manège*. He argued that the *manège* was not merely an exercise in showing-off one's ability to perform tricks but had a practical value too, giving the rider greater control when out riding, whether hunting or on the battlefield.<sup>27</sup> Many English gentlemen must have questioned this assertion because the *manège* never attained the same level of popularity as it did on the continent in spite of the exhortations of *aficionados* like Newcastle and writers of manuals such as Gervase Markham and Thomas de Grey. As de Grey wrote, 'It much troubleth me to see how little esteeme gentlemen now a dayes thereof. Some horses they have, though not for the *ménage* yet for hunting'.<sup>28</sup> A select group of English noblemen embraced it as such but lower down the genteel ladder many squires seem to have focused their attention on other priorities. Hunting remained their passion. For aristocrats, who wanted to spend a lot of money in an ostentatious fashion, horse racing served as the most popular option. In France, for the reasons that Tucker puts forward, riding schools were numerous. According to Evelyn, writing in 1644, hardly any town of note lacked one, a benefit which he thought accounted for French superiority in horsemanship.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> For further information on Newcastle's riding schools, read the following works by Lucy Worsley: Worsley L., *Bolsover Castle* (London: 2000); Worsley L. – Addyman T., "Riding Houses and Horses: William Cavendish's Architecture for the Art of Horsemanship", *Architectural History* 45 (2002) 194–229; Worsley L., "Building a Family: William Cavendish, First Duke of Newcastle, and the Construction of Bolsover and Nottingham Castles", *The Seventeenth Century* 19 (2004); Worsley L., "His Magnificent Buildings: William Cavendish's Patronage of Architecture", in Benden B. van – and Poorter N. de (eds.), *Royalist Refugees: William and Mary Cavendish in the Rubens House 1648–1660* (Antwerp: 2006).

<sup>27</sup> Cavendish William, *A New Method, and Extraordinary Invention, to Dress Horses* (London, Thomas Milbourn: 1667) 5–6.

<sup>28</sup> De Grey, Thomas, *The Compleat Horseman and Expert Ferrier* (London, Nicholas Vavasour: 1639) I, f. C2.

<sup>29</sup> De Beer E.S. (ed.), *The Diary of John Evelyn* I (Oxford: 1955) 88.

*Horsebreeding*

Breeding and rearing horses was a complicated and expensive business: the horses cost a lot to maintain, required careful handling and were prone to illness and injury. Once past their useful life, however construed, horses were virtually worthless, being valued at two or three shillings at most for their hide and as dog meat. Most horse keepers learned the requisite skills informally through emulation, by word of mouth or even trial and error. Gentry and substantial farmers, on the other hand, could seek advice in the manuals on horsemanship that proliferated during the course of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These manuals can be divided into two general categories: those that dealt with a specific subject, usually farriery, and those which provided general advice of horsemanship and allied themes. Thomas Blundeville's book, *The fower chiefyst offices belongyng to horsemanshippe*, illustrates the typical content of the second type. In four distinct sections the author deals with the 'offices' of the breeder, rider, keeper and farrier, that is, with production, breaking-in and training, maintenance and medical care. Most of these writers were (or claimed to be) gentlemen and assumed a genteel readership.<sup>30</sup>

When it came to acting on the advice of the manuals to improve breeds by importing foreign horses only the elite could afford the exorbitant costs involved. In England, as elsewhere, the crown took the lead, exhorting courtiers and wealthy landowners to improve their breeding programmes, using the finest specimens wherever they could be found. Peter Edwards's essay reviews the improvements that were being made to English horses throughout the period. If, as he postulates, the country's saddle and draught horses were among the worst in Europe in 1500, a century later signs of improvement were clearly discernible. The positive trend accelerated over the course of the following hundred years, in spite of the destructive effects of the Civil Wars. Newcastle in 1657/8 and Blome in 1686 both commented on the quality of the country's horses, highlighting the benefits wrought by the admixture of foreign blood.<sup>31</sup> By the turn of the seventeenth century, moreover, the thoroughbred was beginning to emerge, though it took

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<sup>30</sup> MacKay M.H., *Equine Medicine in a Horse Drawn World: Farriery, Horse-Doctoring and Equine Surgery in England c.1680–c.1800* (University of York Ph.D.: 2009) 30–31.

<sup>31</sup> Blome Richard, *The Gentleman's Recreation* (London: 1686) part II, 2.

a further fifty years before it could be termed an established breed. Apart from the impact of these horses on racing, the widespread practice of using them for cross-breeding purposes enhanced the quality of saddle horses in general. Significantly, if Blome highlighted the equine pursuits of the elite, his survey also encompassed improvements in the horses used by the population at large. Indeed, coat colours of horses sold at English fairs indicate that the blood of Low Countries draught horses had become widely disseminated among the nation's stock.

MacInnes's essay examines Shakespeare's deployment of the geohumoralist argument to provide a dramatic contrast between the physical and mental make-up of the English and French soldiers and their horses on the eve of the Battle of Agincourt. Even if English horses were improving by the time he was writing the play, MacInnes correctly argues that Shakespeare's views did reflect contemporary concern over the quality of such a strategic item. Moreover, allowing for poetic licence, the pathetic image of English horses that the bard conjured up, accorded well with early sixteenth century accounts, if not necessarily with evidence from 1415. The low base made the improvements that occurred over the course of the following 200 years all the more dramatic. Of course, as Morgan pointed out in 1609, some of the foreign horses were inferior to native ones. Much depended upon the source of supply. While dealers might defraud the unwary with the mere mention of an exotic breed, diplomatic gifts or deals between rulers comprised top quality horses. As Edwards relates, Henry VIII initiated the process of improvement by deploying the horses he acquired from other west European rulers as breeding stock.

From a geohumoralist point of view, this was not necessarily the answer to the problem, a point which MacInnes deals with in his response to Morgan's question about how imported horses would fare in the alien conditions they faced. Edwards and Nash, in their different ways, prove that Oriental hot-bloods could thrive in the damp, cool environment of seventeenth and early eighteenth century England. Bankoff's essay, on the other hand, emphasizes the power of environmental conditions to modify the physique of equine populations in spite of the wishes of their human owners. Swart makes the same point, noting that in sub-Saharan Africa Arabian and Barb horses, similar to the ones that flourished in western Europe, suffered badly. While they might survive in areas of savannah, tsetse fly infestation of the interior- and coastal-marshes decimated them. Even so, dwarf horses, perhaps the size of Shetland ponies, lived in the forests of West

and Central Africa, their stature, as in the Philippines, representing a response to the sparseness of the fodder available. They also seem to have acquired a partial immunity to the trypanosomes carried by the tsetse fly.

Andrea Tonni's essay provides an illustration of the process of equine migration, whereby fine horses became objects of diplomacy as well as trade. His study of the Gonzagan studs in Mantua looks at the sources of supply, the breeding regime in the studs and the subsequent distribution of the progeny around Europe. Reputedly the finest in Europe, the fame of the studs rested on the regular infusion of the blood of horses from the Ottoman Empire. Italian princes, like the Gonzagas, with their established trading links, thereby provided an essential service for the monarchs of western Europe, who, as potential, if not actual, enemies often found the Sultan unwilling to sell them such a vital military-related commodity. Henry VIII was merely one monarch, who obtained horses from Mantua. Francis I of France, whose rivalry with Henry was conducted on a personal as well as a national level, was another. As Edwards argues, when the two monarchs met on the Field of the Cloth of Gold in 1520 the discourse concerning the quality of their horses and their prowess in horsemanship ran parallel to the diplomatic negotiations. The French king won on points; both monarchs had sent their agents to Italy and Spain but crucially Francis had secured the best specimens from the Mantuan studs. Eye-witness accounts emphasize the beauty of the horses, which included Neapolitan coursers, Spanish ginetes and a bay horse of the Duke of Termini's stud, as well as fine horses from Mantua.

Richard Nash adds a twist to the debate over blood and environment with his case study of the pedigree of the Byerley Turk, one of the three thoroughbred foundation stallions. From the mid 1690s the horse was covering mares, probably at the Goldsborough Hall stud in the West Riding of Yorkshire. If, as Nash argues in his essay, the stallion was home-bred, the country was already capable of producing sires of racehorses of the highest quality. Even if imported, his career indicates that these exotic creatures had acclimatised. As Edwards points out, desert Arabians grew in stature in England, partly as a result of cross-breeding but also on account of the better fodder they received. Nash's essay is a detective story, built on a framework of hard facts with an infilling of plausible conjecture intelligently handled. Even this is only possible because the Byerley Turk was a sire of racehorses and therefore better documented than horses carrying out other functions. The

racecourse test, the sole criterion of performance, meant that owners and punters needed to know the identity of individual horses as a guide to betting and breeding. The existence of a relatively small group of racehorse owners and breeders, many of whom operated in a particular part of the country, also aided Nash's quest. Emphasis on blood and selective breeding, allied to the keeping of careful records, had a beneficial effect on breeding standards in general. Naturally, the upper classes, with their higher standards and specialised horses, were the ones who most readily maintained detailed records but over time farmers and other horse keepers – men like Robert Bakewell – must have recognised the advantages of a more systematic approach.

Edwards, Nash and Tonni deal with the breeding practices of the time. Tonni's account is the most detailed, revealing the way in which the Gonzagas organised their studs and the policies they adopted there. The family maintained a number of centres, each of which specialised in the production of a different type of horse. The family used coursers for war and for state occasions; Turks, Barbs and hobbies for racing; and Spanish ginetes for the saddle. They also bred draught horses: the Villana breed for farm-work and the Virgiliana breed for pulling the vehicles which transported courtiers and their impedimenta from one place to another. Barbs were the most favoured on account of their success as *palio* horses. An interesting aspect of the Gonzagan breeding regime involved these Barbs, some of which remained pure in order to retain the original gene pool, while others were crossed with Turcomans or perhaps hobbies to produce even faster *palio* horses. Edwards, in passing, looks at the landscape of horse-breeding. Typically, the horses were kept in a series of paddocks with brood mares segregated from the rest of the animals in order to avoid injury or miscarriage. Nash's argument depends upon an understanding of the fundamentals of horse-breeding, notably the length of the gestation period, the time of foaling and the maturation process of a late seventeenth century colt, as well as breeding conventions, a knowledge of equine and human genealogies, an awareness of linkages between the persons involved and a prediction of their likely actions.

Sick horses were a matter of constant concern to their owners, reflected in the numerous references to illness and injury in early modern records. Periodically, epidemics swept the country.<sup>32</sup> As the upper classes had servants to look after their horses and farriers to call

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<sup>32</sup> Edwards, *Horse and Man* 66.

upon if the animals felt off-colour, how much more of a problem was it for the bulk of the horse-keeping population? If they could afford it, they might hire the services of a horse leech but most of them had to make do with whatever knowledge they had gained themselves, perhaps augmented by the information contained the cheaper books on farriery. The writers of some of these manuals avowedly aimed at the public at large; they included the author of *The English farrier or countrymans treasure* (1636), who claimed that his remedies would cure all 'Diseases, hurts, maymes, maladies and griefes in Horses' and would benefit 'Gentlemen, Farmers, Inholders, Husbandmen, and generally for all'. Even so, MacKay's research indicates that most of the specialist books were directed at gentlemen. The purchase price alone, between 2s. and 3s. 6d., would have sufficed to exclude the bulk of the population.<sup>33</sup>

Because of the iconic and functional value of horses not surprisingly owners wanted to keep them in good health. For a carrier, whose livelihood depended upon the fitness of his horse, it was more important than it was for a gentleman with his string of valuable horses in the stables, even if individually the latter were far more expensive animals. Unfortunately, small-scale carriers, farmers and the like did not leave documentation behind them. Inevitably, we know far more about the treatment of horses on large estates because of the survival of estate archives with their accounts, commonplace books and correspondence. For minor ailments and scrapes the stud or stable master would supervise the treatment but for serious illness or injury a farrier attended the horse. On large estates owners might employ a full-time farrier but generally they sought their skills as and when required. Edwards's essay confirms Louise Curth's contention that these horse doctors, whether farriers or horse leeches, performed better than their lowly reputation warranted. She suggests that the exclusive Farriers Company of London was partly to blame for their reputation, fearing a threat to their monopoly, but no doubt some of them were poor and damaged their charges. Horse dealing, as a profession, suffered in the same way. According to Curth, some farriers were literate and could potentially draw on the advice presented in the manuals but, if not, they possessed practical knowledge and a rudimentary understanding of business practices. Many of the ones whom large landowners hired must have impressed them as they were given regular employment or,

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<sup>33</sup> MacKay, "Horse Medicine" 30–31.

if another gentleman inquired about a farrier, provided a good reference. Amanda Eisemann's essay, which focuses on the work of farriers in the north German duchy of Brunswick-Lüneburg, offers a continental comparison. There, the farriers were much better organised. Instead of a single, highly exclusive metropolitan company, which left the vast majority of farriers and assorted horse doctors out on their own, as in England, they were members of thriving urban and village guilds and were able to exercise considerable authority.

Curth points out in her essay that the treatment for horses, as for humans, was based on the Galenic theory of the four humours, an indication of the abiding influence of Classical authors on European thought and practice. Colour, the Ancients had stated, was a good indicator of health and humoral condition and, as a result, the advice that early modern writers gave was couched in the same terms. As Morgan wrote in 1609, 'The ancient writers tel vs that euerie horse is coloured as he is complexioned, & according to complexion he is good or euil conditioned, and as he doth participate of the Elements, so hee is complexioned [...]'.<sup>34</sup> As diagnosis was based upon humoral imbalance, horse doctors became expert at bleeding, purging and administering poultices and, in doing so, acquired a working knowledge of the composition and dosages of specific remedies. In a letter that Sir John Gell of Hopton Hall wrote to his son, John, on 10 February 1662/3 he praised the work of the farrier, whose skill had saved a number of horses sick with the 'plague'. He quoted the farrier's advice.<sup>35</sup>

[...] no one medison will doe good to all if the[y] tremble & quake in theyre hinder partes letting of them blood in the Dock help the quaking/ but not saue the life/if any horse fale ill, stoperill him as you doe a horse in the forehead for the stagars/ but this must bee beloe in the forboothes or neare vnto them/ it will roone & stinke very much.

Many gentlemen took an interest in horse medicine, reading the manuals, swapping remedies among one another and assisting at the treatment.<sup>36</sup> John Gell junior, noted above, was one who kept remedies for horse complaints, including a recipe written in about 1680 for curing scouring and the staggers.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Morgan, *Perfection of Horse-manship* 23.

<sup>35</sup> Derbyshire Record Office, Chandos-Pole-Gell MSS, D 258/Box 29/44b.

<sup>36</sup> Edwards, *Horse and Man* 63–65.

<sup>37</sup> Derbyshire Record Office, Chandos-Pole-Gell MSS, D 258/Box 48/15.

*Horse-Human Identities*

In many respects the themes discussed here overlap with those dealt with in the section on the relationship between horsemanship and status. What distinguishes them is their angle of approach. The first section focuses on the acquisition of riding skills and the public performance of them, as well as the outward demonstration of aristocratic wealth and status. In a sense the spectacle did help to establish the rider's identity but identity is not the same thing as status: on the one hand it is a more personal construct but on the other it expresses the fundamental nature of existence, whether of a horse, a human being or even a nation. Flaherty's essay, for instance, provides a good example of the distinction. Basing her account on the quote, 'know us by our horses', a line in Shakespeare's, *Henry IV, Part 1*, she not only discusses the link between horses and status but offers insights into the human condition as well. This section also looks at the horse's identity from the animal's point of view, notably in relation to the question of agency.

Horses enjoyed a close relationship with people but it was one based on human superiority. If early modern society believed that its dominion over the natural world was God-given, Classical philosophers had thought the same. Aristotle argued in his theory of the three souls that in comparison with plants and creatures only man possessed a rational soul. Medieval scholastics developed this premise in the concept of the Great Chain of Being, a continuum of living organisms from the simplest to the most complex. As Edwards argues, contemporaries placed horses at the upper end of the scale, probably immediately below humans. Writing in c. 1683, Thomas Tryon declared that, 'An Horse is a very excellent Creature for Shape and Beauty, for Strength, for Swiftnes and for its great and general Use'.<sup>38</sup> To these aesthetic and utilitarian values, some added the ability to reason. As the capacity for rational thought, together with language and the possession of a soul, distinguished humans from animals, many people at the time were reluctant to accept the blurring of the boundary between them. Descartes expressed the traditional view most forcibly in his notion of the beast-machine, which he put forward in his influential

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<sup>38</sup> Physiologus Philotheos, *The country-mans companion* (London, Andrew Sowle: 1684) 1.

*Discourse on Method* (1637). The arrival of Oriental horses in western Europe materially affected attitudes towards equine capabilities, strengthening the argument of the pro-animal lobby. Apart from their beauty, contemporaries remarked on their nobility and intelligence. They appeared as rational creatures, the embodiment of Swift's houyhnhnms, and therefore had to be treated with respect rather than being beaten into submission.<sup>39</sup>

Those writers, who accepted equine intelligence, still distinguished between it and human intelligence. Nonetheless, the thought that one was dealing with a rational creature must have affected the way that people treated horses. The manuals on horsemanship, in fact, reflect the movement away from the harsh approach to training of the sort that prevailed in the early sixteenth century to a greater emphasis on coaxing and cherishing. Traditionally, scholars have attributed this shift to a reaction to the brutal regime of the celebrated riding master, Grisone. Tobey's study of Grisone offers a corrective to this view. She argues that he only used harsh methods as a last resort and that most of the passages, in which he discussed cruel treatment of horses, were descriptions of the measures deployed by riding masters who were ignorant of his rules. In this respect, Blundeville, writing in the 1560s and heavily influenced by Grisone, was following his mentor's precepts. Thus, Blundeville stressed the importance of gentleness from the outset, pointing out the need to accustom young horses to quiet handling before attempting to ride them and then to encourage them to come to the mounting block. However, should this fail, he advocated Grisone's method of last resort, namely, that the rider should 'beat him your self with good stick upon the head between the ears'. When the horse obeyed, though, the rider should 'make much of him'.<sup>40</sup>

Walker's essay, which examines the training regime advocated by Newcastle in the middle of the following century, moves the debate forward. She argues that his systematic and equine-centred approach marked a qualitative advance in training methods, one which, though located on a 'through-line in the development of ideas', was nonetheless innovative. Newcastle pointed out that, as the horse was more powerful than the rider-trainer, the latter had to gain obedience in a way that

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<sup>39</sup> Edwards, *Horse and Man* 31; Landry D., "The Bloody Shouldered Arabian and early modern English culture", *Criticism* 46 (2004) 59.

<sup>40</sup> Blundeville Thomas, *The fower chiefyst offices belongyng to Horsemanship* (London, William Seres: 1565) 4.

worked in harmony with the animal's mind and instinct rather than through violence. The rider had to gain the trust and respect of the horse, a sentient and thinking creature, through firm but careful and dispassionate application of 'force', that is strength of will. The animal would instinctively respond more readily to confident leadership than bullying. However, despite the literature clearly advocating the value of a more thoughtful approach, Edwards asks, was there a gap between theory and practice? Working horses kept by the general public suffered the most, not because ploughmen, carters and carriers did not recognize their charges' mental capacity but rather because of the pressure to get jobs done and to extract the maximum amount of work from a major capital asset. The elite, who had read the manuals, seem to have accepted their advice and if, like Newcastle, they trained their own horses, they tended to act accordingly. Leading trainers also had digested the advice. In certain circumstances, however, even noblemen abused their horses and several writers showed concern that violent methods simply revealed a man's own beast-like nature.

Contemporary writers, when listing the attributes of horses, often discussed their qualities in relation to those possessed by other animals and even by humans. As Edwards has written elsewhere, the evidence they present suggests that horses possessed a number of traits particularly associated with mankind: 'nobility of mind, loyalty, faithfulness, pride, courage, a desire to please and even intelligence'.<sup>41</sup> Indeed, members of the elite not uncommonly wrote about a favourite saddle horse in anthropomorphic terms. Edward Lord Herbert, for instance, recalled with affection a dead horse, who had pined away in his absence, and in terms that one would use when losing a human friend.<sup>42</sup> Literary works similarly imbued horses with human qualities. As Flaherty points out in her essay, Richard II's horse, Roan Barbary, was perceptive enough to discern the transfer of power from his master to Bolingbroke. Later, Jonathan Swift in his satire, *Gulliver's Travels*, chose horses to represent a race of intelligent creatures when he wanted to point out the beastly side of human nature. A mere literary device, perhaps, but it is significant that horses were the selected model.

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<sup>41</sup> Edwards, *Horse and Man* 24.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

The reverse was also true: horses helped humans construct an identity either by engaging in equine pursuits or by association with the perceived characteristics of the animal. Socolow quotes Sir Philip Sidney as admitting that his riding master, Pugliano, might have persuaded him to wish that he had been a horse.<sup>43</sup> Sidney admired horses for their noble qualities and, as Socolow emphasizes, for the role they played in self-fashioning, that is, to act in a manly and virtuous way. For Sidney, only poetry surpassed horsemanship as a means of acquiring *vertu*. Moreover, while Sidney accepted the symbolic importance of the *manège* as a means of acquiring and displaying *vertu*, he did not reject the traditional military-based version, even if, as a cavalry officer, he had discarded heavy plated armour and the lance. Edwards also argues that horses helped the elite project the sought-after image inwardly onto themselves as well as outwardly onto others in public. The iconography of the equestrian portrait, one could argue, was as much aimed at the sitter as at the public.

The middling orders also utilised the iconic and status-enhancing qualities of horses to improve their individual or group identity, as well as their economic standing. Eisemann, in her essay, illustrates the point. Beginning in the late sixteenth century, large-smiths' guilds in the duchy of Brunswick-Lüneburg started to adopt the symbol of the horse as the primary signifier of their trade. By identifying themselves with such a potent iconic creature they were able to improve their status and feeling of self-worth. In some centres during the course of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, smiths, identified with horse-related work, especially farriery, broke away from the more general smith guilds. Where they chose to stay, they tended to form a medical sub-group and strove to dominate the guilds' activities.

When Flaherty discusses the association between horses and war in the *Henriad*, she reminds us of the early modern identification of horsemanship with masculinity. Women rode and hunted – some sat astride their horse – but mainly they progressed sedately by side-saddle or perched behind a man on a 'double' horse. Warfare dominates the *Henriad* but, as Flaherty indicates, Shakespeare juxtaposed the two spheres, the battlefield and the bedchamber, in order to emphasize contrasting gender roles. Hotspur, the archetypal warrior, rejected home-life in favour of his warhorse, declaring that his horse should be

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<sup>43</sup> Stewart, *Sidney* 132.

his throne. When his wife asks him if he loves her, he replies, 'Come, wilt thou see me ride?/And when I am a-horseback, I will swear/ I love thee infinitely'. Henry V is equally ill-at-ease when attempting to woo the French princess, Katharine, and has to resort to the same cavalry metaphor. Was Shakespeare illustrating the brutalising effect of war on human relations and, as Boehrer argues, satirising the antiquated code of conduct followed by the old nobility? Conversely, was he defining the nature of gender relations at the time, the riding trope epitomising the link between sex and power, with men 'on top'? Hotspur's preference for horses and the masculine pursuits that involved them was not unusual. Stone cites an old French proverb, 'Rich is the man whose wife is dead, and the horse alive'.<sup>44</sup> The middling orders, as depicted by Eisemann's equine-based tradesmen in the duchy of Brunswick-Lüneburg, also equated horses with masculinity. Newcastle went further, using riding as an analogy for human relationships in general. Walker points out that he thought that the way a riding master trained and managed a horse was akin to man's relationship with God and, by extension, a monarch's relationship with his subjects and a teacher's relationship with a pupil.

The geohumoral theory, current at the time, linked horse and human identities together through the impact that shared environmental influences had on both species. However, the importation of foreign horses during the course of the period complicated the picture, raising questions about the transmission or adoption of environmentally related traits. On the other hand, it allowed humans a wider choice when they sought to associate themselves with perceived equine attributes. By the middle of the eighteenth century the thoroughbred, a breed that owed its existence to the most exotic of imports, had become Anglicized. Indeed, as a cross between native and Oriental stock, it defined Englishness, an idealized view of the nation's inhabitants, perhaps a subconscious reflection of their joint hybrid origins.<sup>45</sup> Thoroughbreds improved the speed of racing and, as noted above, when crossed with other breeds, the quality of hunters and cavalry horses. To cope, Donna Landry has argued, riders adopted the Ottoman custom of riding short on a lightweight saddle with loose reins

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<sup>44</sup> Stone L., *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500–1800* (London: 1977) 103. I am grateful to Joan Thirsk for this reference.

<sup>45</sup> Landry D., "The Bloody Shouldered Arabian and Early Modern English Culture", *Criticism* 46, 1 (2004) 59–63; Edwards, *Horse and Man* 117.

and a snaffle bit. The synergic relationship which this practice encouraged benefited both horse and rider.<sup>46</sup>

Although the volume in general adopts an anthropocentric stance, it does not ignore the issue of equine agency. Some horses did not succumb quietly to the dictates of their masters. They refused the saddle and proved difficult to train; they threw their riders or dislodged them by rolling over or shunting them into an obstacle; they bit, kicked or knocked aside anyone who came within their reach; they refused to move or turn in a particular direction; they made their own decision about what constituted a danger and certainly did not throw themselves onto a row of pikes in battle; they engaged in unregulated sex on commons and wastes and, even if penned in, barged through hedges or jumped fences to impregnate a mare in season. Horses also acquired a greater degree of agency than other domesticated (non-pet) animals because, along with hounds, they were the only ones identified as individuals and given names.<sup>47</sup> For the upper classes, the image projected by their horses was as important as function – indeed, image was a function – and, therefore, as Edwards shows, they were treated very well. Owners modified the landscape to accommodate them and servants catered for their daily requirements. When they fell sick or suffered an injury, farriers tended them. However, as Edwards concludes, it was a conditional agency, valid only so long as the horses displayed those qualities that gave them the agency in the first place.

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<sup>46</sup> Landry D., “Learning to Ride in Early Modern Britain, or, The Making of the English Hunting Seat”, in Raber – Tucker (eds.), *Culture of the Horse* 329–349.

<sup>47</sup> Some cows were given names.

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