THE HORSEMAN AS A WORK OF ART: THE CONSTRUCTION OF ELITE IDENTITIES IN EARLY MODERN EUROPE, 1550-1700

by

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in History in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

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Abstract

THE HORSEMAN AS A WORK OF ART: CONSTRUCTION OF ELITE IDENTITIES IN EARLY MODERN EUROPE, 1550-1700

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Horsemanship played a vital role in the political culture of early modern Europe. The horse represented power—pragmatically, through its role as an instrument of war and hence of statecraft, and metaphorically, in the elemental dominion of rider over mount. This dissertation explores the ways in which mastery of the animal could be used in the strategic assertion, and redefinition, of rank in a period of profound social and political change. It focuses on the stylized courtly horsemanship of the period, as explicated and promoted through the medium of the treatise, and on the pivotal figure of the riding master/author.

The study argues that symbolic exploitation of the horse should be seen in dynamic rather than static terms, as a semiotically complex, opportunistic and at times unpredictable phenomenon. While stereotypically associated with power, the horse as symbol actually references three distinct discourses within Western tradition: that of dominance, that of discipline and disorder, and that of service. Taken in combination, these thematic strands could reinforce, nuance, or even subvert hegemonic status claims. Such associations, moreover, were readily available for appropriation and manipulation. Finally, the use of horsemanship as a symbolic vehicle raises an essential question: what happens when signification is centered in a living creature? How do the symbolic and the actual interact?

These questions are explored in broad historical terms in chapters 1 and 2. Chapter 1, organized chronologically, examines diverse aspects of the horse in the Middle Ages, with particular attention to the dynamic interaction of the practical and the symbolic. Chapter 2 focuses on the horse within the princely culture of the Italian Renaissance, where it variously appears as a bearer of identity, a vehicle of rhetorical expression, and an instrument of self-representation. The symbolic and practical elements thus introduced are encountered in context in chapters 3 through 5, which feature a comparative analysis of selected early modern Italian, French and English equestrian treatises. Of particular concern are the author's strategies of self-authorization, his envisioned audience and use of the medium of print; and the interplay of symbolic construct and empiricism in his prescriptions as horse master.

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Introduction: THE HORSE AND ELITE IDENTITY

Rulers and nobles have long relied on the power and presence of the horse to enhance their own. This was particularly true of early modern Europe, a period rich in equestrian spectacle and display. This dissertation explores the ways in which elite identity was conceived and constructed through the symbolic medium of the horse in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe.

Racked by profound instability, the age witnessed a range of adaptive strategies on the part of those who variously sought power, advancement, or competitive survival as their end. Rather than approach the phenomenon structurally, by focusing on a particular group or nationality, I focus here on a single, virtually archetypal symbol of rank, that of the horse; and on what was arguably *the* signal accomplishment through which elite status could be claimed in this period, that of expert horsemanship. My interest lies in seeing how this particular skill, so rich in symbolic associations, could be used in the strategic assertion, and redefinition, of rank.

The figure at the center of the study is not that of the rider, but rather that of the riding master. As instructor and horse trainer, the riding master of this period held specialized knowledge crucial to anyone who wanted or needed to look impressive on a horse, a population heavily weighted toward Europe's ruling elite. His skills were all the more necessary because of the kind of horsemanship then in vogue, a rigorous and highly stylized discipline known to the period as *manège*, anglicized by the same name, and familiar today as dressage. Originating in Renaissance Italy in the first half

of the sixteenth century, manège required horse and rider to execute a repertoire of precise, physically demanding movements. The desired effect was of one seamless harmony, with the horse, always a stallion, at once brilliant and smoothly responsive to his rider's will.

As codified and rigorous as dance, manège represented horsemanship as rhetorical performance, and in this guise could evoke the full range of traditional equestrian associations, from chivalric prowess to moral superiority to wise governance. As such it would furnish the iconography of equestrian portraits and statues, provide the basis for absolutist carrousels and horse ballets, and serve as the curricular centerpiece of noble academies. More immediately, however, it offered its rider a dramatic and strategically useful means of self-fashioning and self–representation.

As a consequence, the new horsemanship out of Italy rapidly gained adherents. The earliest riding schools, located in Naples and Ferrara, attracted students from across the continent, and the great riding masters associated with them––Federigo Grisone, Cesare Fiaschi, and Gian Battista Pignatelli—acquired an enduring international reputation. This courtly art spread swiftly throughout Europe, carried home by students returning from Italy, by riding masters themselves, or, most markedly, by the treatises which those masters authored. Grisone and Fiaschi both published treatises on horsemanship, with Grisone's *Gli ordini di cavalcare* (The Precepts of Horsemanship) enjoying particular success; within twenty years of its 1550 debut Grisone's treatise had been translated into French (1559), English (1560), Spanish (1568), and German (1570). Numerous editions of the work appeared

thereafter, particularly in French and Italian. Other *cavallarizzi,* or masters of horsemanship, followed suit, as did still others claiming expertise in the discipline or in a related field, with the result that such treatises soon constituted a veritable genre.

These treatises, however, especially at first, were far less concerned with the instruction of the rider than with the training of the horse. For all but the most expert horsemen, a well-trained manège mount was essential, while a balky or unruly horse could mean humiliation and disaster. As a result, a keen interest attached to the training of the animal, which in the treatises became a fully developed system, theoretically grounded, codified and elaborated.

Given the horse's close symbolic association with dominance and rule—an association which manège consciously cultivated—the riding treatise, like the manège hall, resonated with implied meanings. In both, the riding master held sway. As author, particularly, he presented, and represented, his art and his authoritative self to the public of his envisioning.

One establishes this picture, however, only to disarrange it. Whatever fame and prestige a riding master might enjoy, he still occupied an equivocal niche when viewed in more traditional terms. Master he might be with regard to his art, but in another setting and in the next breath, mere servant or hireling. This is one reason that the riding master/author's strategies of self-authorization hold such interest.

Another lies in the elective nature of authorial identity. Not everyone who wrote a treatise on horsemanship was a noble or a riding master. By mere virtue of the enterprise, the writer of such a work was claiming membership in an ineffable community of horsemen, a community inherently associated with elite status. As a

result the boundaries of that community might begin to blur, or to undergo redefinition. A third issue lies in the paradoxes inherent in the project itself, from the difficulties inherent in transmitting a complex physical skill through print, to the tense juxtaposition of exclusive art and popularizing medium.

Finally, there is the richness of the symbolic field involved. The horse as symbol readily invokes associations of power: historically, by virtue of its enduring role as an instrument of war and hence of statecraft, and more essentially, by its role as metaphor, in the elemental dominion of rider over mount. To reduce the horse to these terms, however, is to overlook its complexity as a symbol, for it embodies at least three distinct discourses within the Western tradition. Each is familiar, and each has ancient roots.

The first, that of dominance, encompasses a range of concepts including governance, superiority, pride, and coercion. Perhaps dating back to the first time a human being mounted a horse, or hitched it to a chariot, the dominance motif finds its expression in mythological formulations associated with the sun and, in the case of the Greeks, the sea. The horse appears here as power-giver, and is implicitly associated with the crossing of boundaries, of transcendence or transgression.[1]

The second, embodied in the imagery of bridling, is that of discipline, which embraces the principles of order, restraint and reason as well as their opposites, disorder and passion. It finds its clearest Western articulation in Plato's *Phaedrus*, which depicts the soul as a composite being of charioteer and mismatched horses, one

[1] See, for example, Fernand Benoît, *L'Heroisation équestre* (Gap: Édition Ophrys, 1954) and Peter Hammond Schwartz, "Equestrian Imagery in European and American Political Thought: Toward an Understanding of Symbols as Political Texts," *The Western Political Quarterly* 41 (1988): 653–73.

good and one bad. The bad horse, ugly, common and headstrong—note the implicit social ranking—signifies passion and appetite, and forever keeps the charioteer from his divine home. A more explicit rendering of this theme is made available by the horse's association with sexuality, found in classical and Germanic traditions, learned and folk alike.[2]

The third discourse, and arguably the most provocative, is that of service, whereby the horse as servant of man stands as an analogue for a variety of modes of human servitude and subordination. As formulated in the West, it may be traced to two sources, the scriptural and the classical. Between them these articulate a narrative which justifies servitude and even consecrates it, though they proceed from radically different premises.

The scriptural version resides in the biblical moment of creation, recounted in Genesis 1: 26-30, when God, creating man in his own image, confers upon him dominion over all the earth, including birds and fishes and beasts. From this comes the claim that the horse, like other beasts, was created by God to serve mankind. In consequence it embodies man's dominion over the world and the righteousness of an objectified, involuntary servitude. It should be noted, however, that the horse's subordination is premised here on a clear ontological distinction between beast and human.

A very different premise informs the views of Pliny, who, writing of the horse as a fit companion to man, speaks of it as a wondrous creature, so nearly human in its emotions and intelligence. So it is, he claims, that horses have been known to weep at

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[2] Beryl Rowland, *Animals with Human Faces: A Guide to Animal Symbolism* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1974), 103–106.

the death of their master, or to kill themselves from their horror of incest.[3] In this tradition the horse is anthropomorphized, elevated above other animals in explanation of its close relationship to man.

Having so elevated horses, however, and made so much of their near-humanity, Pliny remands them to their proper place. Indeed it is through their very intelligence, the mark of their superiority to other creatures, that they recognize the natural justice of their subordination to man. This is most clearly expressed in Pliny's tale of the racing team which, having lost their charioteer at the starting line, nonetheless runs the race with artful strategy, crowding and jostling their opponents as if they had "a most skillful charioteer in control." With victory in sight, however, they stop dead at the finish line, "as they were ashamed for human science to be beaten by horses."[4] Thus elevated, the horse stands as that best of all servants, the servant who understands the justice of his servitude and so willingly embraces his subordinate condition.

As is readily apparent, the use of the horse as symbol references the human condition. Moreover, these three discursive strands are not mutually exclusive. It is through their mingling that subtleties of nuance and paradox may be expressed. An important part of this story lies in the ways in which they were variously combined, through the medium of the horse, to shape the dominant discourse. Of even greater interest are the ways in which these might be turned to serve contending voices.

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[3] Pliny the Elder, *Natural History,* trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963), 8.64.156–7.

[4] Pliny, *Natural History*, trans. H. Rackham, 8.65.160.

Here one encounters a final question: what happens when signification is vested in a living creature? How do the symbolic and the actual interact? The stakes can prove quite high when a ridden horse may, by its misbehavior, subvert an image of human dominance into one of impotence and humiliation. From another perspective, the act of training itself may take on the coloring of a metaphor. As Jennifer Mason writes, "the technologies and the very actions of controlling horses have always been and continue to be *integrated*—metaphorically, temporally, and physically—with those that control humans."[5]

The first two chapters of the dissertation approach these questions from an external vantage point, examining them as manifested respectively in the Middle Ages and the Italian Renaissance. The last three approach them from within, through a comparative analysis of Italian, French and English treatises.

Chapter 1, organized chronologically, explores the practical and symbolic role of the horse at three points in the Middle Ages. The first part, focusing on developments in the seventh through tenth centuries, examines the horse as a marker of aristocracy in a subsistence economy. Part 2, spanning the eleventh through thirteenth centuries, charts the horse as implement and symbol in a period of pronounced social, military and economic change. Part 3, focusing on the Edwardian wars of the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries—the heyday of the Great Horse of chivalric legend—–examines the intense pressures created by a protracted military need for horses, leading to a warping of the relationship between social rank and war.

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[5] Jennifer Mason, "Animal Bodies, Corporeality and Class Formation in *The Wide, Wide World*," in *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 54 4 (March, 1985), 509. The emphasis is hers.

Chapter 2 focuses on the horse within the princely culture of the Italian Renaissance. Part 1 addresses the horse in its role as bearer of princely identity, both dynastic and individual, through public display and competition, and through the development of family *razze* or breeds. Part 2 examines the emergence of manège and discusses its distinctive characteristics, while Part 3 explores a basic dissonance between the pretensions of the art and coercive elements of its actual practice. Part 3 identifies subordinate groups, such as courtiers, horse keepers and horse trainers, who, through their association with this prized animal, were in a position to parlay self-representation or specialized knowledge into alternative status claims.

The symbolic and practical elements discussed in chapters one and two are encountered in context in chapters three through five, through analyses of the riding treatises. Each treatise will be addressed in terms of distinctive national characteristics; the author's strategies of self-authorization; his envisioned audience; his use of and attitude toward the medium of print; and his conceptualization of the horse, particularly as reflected in his method of training and in issues of punishment and correction.

Chapter 3 introduces and analyzes a group of Italian treatises on horsemanship, all penned by the first generation of internationally-renowned riding masters. The first of these works, Federigo Grisone's 1550 *Gli ordini di cavalcare,* represents a groundbreaking fusion of Xenophon's classical prescriptions and current practice, translated into print. Cesare Fiaschi's *Trattato dell'imbrigliare, maneggiare, & ferrare cavalli* (Treatise on Bridling, Schooling, and Shoeing Horses; 1556) emphasizes two seemingly discordant aspects of manège, the technical and the

balletic. The first is found in his discussion of bits and farriery, and the second—Fiaschi's most noted and influential contribution—in his emphasis on the rhythmic and spatial elements of manège, reflected in the addition of music and vocal cues to the training regimen.

The third work, Claudio Corte's *Il cavallarizzo* (The Horse Master) of 1562, offers a sharp contrast to the respective approaches of the Neapolitan Grisone and the Ferrarese Fiaschi. Floridly literary in its tone and encyclopedic in its aspirations, it provides insights into the competitive tensions of the author's Roman milieu, as colored by his own temperament.

Chapter 4, shifting to France and the next generation of great riding masters, is centered on the works of Salomon de la Broue and Antoine de Pluvinel. La Broue's *Le Cavalerice françois* (The French Horse Master), first published in 1593–4 under another title, represented the first work on horsemanship authored by a Frenchman, and a conscious effort to establish a native school of equitation. Pluvinel's *L'Instruction du Roy en l'exercice de monter à cheval* (Instruction of the King in the Exercise of Riding on Horseback), was published in 1625 as an authorized and expanded version of a pirated work, *Le Maneige Royal* (The Royal Riding School). The latter treatise is a recognized masterpiece of the genre, notable for its lavish engravings, Pluvinel's own innovative methods, and the ingenious device by which these methods are presented as an extended riding lesson for the young king Louis XIII. *L'Instruction du Roy,* while retaining these features, also includes a detailed proposal relating to the education of the nobility. The last work examined here is René de Menou's 1650 treatise *La Pratique du cavalier* (The

Horseman's Method) of 1650, by Pluvinel's discipline René de Menou. Menou's treatise reflects the art at a crossroads: heavily indebted to the past, in eclipse as a fashionable recreation, and yet braced by a more secure technical grounding, heralding its future line of development.

The fifth and final chapter of the dissertation examines a selection of English treatises of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Roughly contemporaneous with the Italian and French works, the English treatises represent a marked departure from these in character and tone, while showing a comparable internal diversity. Drawing upon a broader selection for purposes of comparison, the chapter examines them in three groups, reflecting three successive phases in the English reception and development of manège, as well as three distinct approaches to it. The first of these represents works originating in the Elizabethan court, and comprises Thomas Blundeville's *The Art of Riding and Breaking Greate Horses* (1560), a translation and reworking of Grisone's *Ordini di cavalcare*, and his *Four Chiefest Offices of Horsekeeping* (1565-6), John Astley's *The Art of Riding* (1584), and Thomas Bedingfield's 1584 work, also titled *The Art of Riding*, a translation and abridgement of Claudio Corte's *Il cavallarizzo*. The second, featuring Christopher Clifford's *The Schoole of Horsmanship* (1585) and Gervase Markham's *A Discourse of Horsemanship* (1593), consists of works written outside the sphere of the court and so provides a different vantage point. The third examines the work of England's greatest equestrian authority, William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle, here represented in his *General System of Horsemanship* of 1743. Newcastle, repatriated and unreconstructed royalist, patron of Thomas Hobbes and sometime host to such figures

as Marin Mersenne and René Descartes, offers another and even more compelling union of conservatism and intellectual change, manifested here in his relationship with his horses. Through his collaboration with the great French riding master Jacques de Solleysel, Newcastle directs us back to France and, in a sense, brings the study full-circle, as the baroque era of classical horsemanship cedes place to the groundbreaking work of the eighteenth-century French master François de la Guérinière, featuring techniques informed by a new philosophy and sensibility.

Taken collectively, the Italian, French and English treatises are offered as a coherent group in terms of influence and development. Two other important collections, however, are not represented and require acknowledgement. The first of these comprises Spanish and Portuguese treatises, the second, those of the Empire. Both represent fertile lines of investigation. The Iberian corpus is especially noteworthy, as it encompasses fifteenth century works on a range of hippological and hippiatric subjects, embraces a native style of riding as well as that of manège, and includes works written in New Spain, and thus in a colonial and frontier context. The Empire, meanwhile, was an important center of horsemanship in its own right, in the area of military adaptation as well as that of courtly display, and similarly offers a context of charged frontiers.

Beyond the treatises themselves resides a significant body of older hippological and hippiatric writings. The Renaissance stood heir to a significant body of authoritative literature on the nature and care of the horse, most of it amassed during the Middle Ages and derived from ancient authorities. The relevant classical works may be broadly divided into two types, the literary and anecdotal on one hand,

and the scientific, particularly as represented by works on agriculture and medicine, on the other. While Aristotle's very influential *History of Animals* would furnish material for both, Pliny's *Natural History* would prove the most influential source of literary and anecdotal material, as received both directly and through the *Etymologies* of Isidore of Seville, with the *De mirabilibus mundi* (On the Wonders of the World) of Solinus as another popular source and conduit. The agricultural treatises include Virgil's *Georgics* as well as Cato the Elder's *De Agricultura,* Marcus Varro's *Rerum rusticarum*, Columella's *De re rustica* and Palladius's *De re rustica*, all sharing the English title *On Agriculture*. The medical literature specifically devoted to the horse reflects two trends, a close affiliation with human care, indicating the important role of comparative medicine, and the prominence of the Greeks, with Arabic influences also important. The *Mulomedicina* of Renatus Flavius Vegetius figures among the influential works of this type.[6]

While the bestiary tradition largely overlooked the horse, the medieval encyclopedists did not, and their compendia would play a key role in perpetuating and legitimating the stock of ancient prescriptions, lore and myth which constituted the core of Western textual authority in this area. Isidore of Seville's *Etymologies* represents the original of the genre, followed in the thirteenth century by a host of works, among them Thomas de Cantimpré's *Liber de natura rerum* (Book of Nature),

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[6] Aristotle, *Historia animalium. With an English translation by A.L. Peck* (London: Heinemann / Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965), for a more recent English translation, see *History of Animals,* ed. and trans. D.M. Balme (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991); Isidore of Seville, *Isidori Hispalensis episcopi Etymologiarum sive Originum: libri* xx, ed. W.M. Lindsay (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1957); and G. Julius Solinus, *Collectanea rerum memorabilium,* ed. Theodore Mommsen (Berolini: Weidman, 1958). The works of the Roman agricultural writers, along with Vegetius's *Mulomedicina,* may be found in *Scriptores res rusticae veteres Latini*, 2 vols, ed. Johan Matthias Gesner (Leipzig: Caspar Fritsch, 1735).

Bartholomew of England's *De proprietatibus rerum* (On the Properties of Things), Jean Corbechon's *De proprietatibus rerum* and Brunetto Latini's *Livre dou Tresor* (Book of Treasures). Albert the Great's *On Animals* represents another important source of natural historical writing on horses, notable for an element of empiricism. To these may be added the medieval English manuals on husbandry, *Fleta* and Walter of Henley's *Boke of Husbandry.* [7]

This tendency is even more pronounced in the noted thirteenth-century treatise of Giordano Ruffo, a Calabrian noble who served as master of the horse to Emperor Frederick II. Ruffo's treatise, known in Latin as *De medicina equorum* (On Horse Medicine) and subsequently translated into Sicilian, Italian, French, Provençale and Catalan),[8] shows something of the same precocious empiricism found in Frederick's famous *De arte venandi cum avibus* (The Art of Falconry). Pietro de Crescenzi's early fourteenth-century agricultural treatise, *Opus ruralium commodorum* (The Fruits of Forests and Fields), would also serve as an important source of information on horse breeding and husbandry, though Crescenzi's work, like that of Giordano Ruffo, still draws extensively on classical sources. The period similarly witnessed a burst of works on hippiatry, with Lorenzo Rusio's fourteenth-century *Mascalcia* or *Liber marescalcie*—approximately translatable as *The Book of Horse-Medicine* or

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[7] For relevant excerpts from the encyclopedists in French translation, see Brigitte Prévot, *Le Cheval en France au Moyen Age: sa place dans le monde médiéval; sa medécine, l'exemple d'un traité vétérinaire du XIVe siècle, la Cirurgie des Chevaux* (Caen: Paradigme, 1994), appendix 2 (Jean Corbechon and Bartholomew of England) and appendix 3 (Albertus Magnus). Additionally, see Thomas de Cantimpré, *Liber de natura rerum von Thomas Cantimprensis* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1973) and Albertus Magnus, *Man and the Beasts: De animalibus (books 22-26),* trans. James J. Scanlon (Binghampton, NY: Medieval & Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1987). Walter Henley's *Boke of Husbandry* and *Fleta* may be found in *The Manor Farm*, ed. Francis Henry Cripps-Day (London: Quaritch, 1931).

[8] Yvonne Poulle-Drieux, "L'Hippiatrie dans l'occident Latin du XIIIe au Xve siècle," in *Médécine humaine et vétérinaire à la fin du Moyen Âge* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1966), 17.

Book of Horse Care—providing an important example. Also available in print is *La cirurgie des chevaux* (The Surgery of Horses), an anonymous treatise from the same period.[9]

Though innovative in many respects, the sixteenth century treatises on horsemanship were not entirely without precedent. Four equestrian works of the fifteenth century speak to different traditions which would converge in the new treatises on manège. The first of these is an early fifteenth-century treatise by the king of Portugal, the *Livro da ensinança de bem cavalgar toda sela* (The Book of Instruction in Riding Well in All Saddles), which addresses horsemanship in a didactic and moralizing framework. The second, *De equo animante* (The Living Horse) is a little-known treatise on horses written by Leon Battista Alberti, drawing on textual sources and more of a literary performance than a practical manual. Of particular interest is Alberti's use of Xenophon's *On Horsemanship*, since the classical treatise*,* newly-recovered in the fifteenth century, would subsequently provide the theoretical foundations of manège. Last come two very different works, late-fifteenth century Italian treatises on *marescalcia,* a flexible term which most reliably indicates horse medicine, but may also encompass other technical aspects of horse care, including bitting and farriery.[10]

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[9] For Rufus in French translation, see *La Marechaucie des chevaux,* in *La Science du cheval au Moyen Age: Le Traité d'hippiatrie de Jordanus Rufus*, ed. Brigitte Prévot (Paris: Éditions Klincksieck, 1991), 31–113. For Pietro de' Crescenzi in Latin, excerpted, with French translation, see Prévot, *Cheval en France*, appendix 1. Also see Pietro Crescenzi, *Trattato della agricoltura di Piero de' Crescenzi, traslatato nella favella Fiorentino rivisto dallo'Nferigno...*, 3 vols, trans. B. de Rossi (Milan: Società tipografica de' Classici italiani, 1805), and Lorenzo Rusio, *La mascalcia di Lorenzo Rusio: nel volgarizzamento del codice angelicano*, ed. Luisa Aurigemma (Alexandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 1998).

[10] Duarte, King of Portugal, *Livro da ensinança de bem cavalgar toda sela que fez el rey dom Eduarte de Portugal e do Algarve e senhor de Cueta* (Lisbon: Livraria Bertrand), 1944; Leon Battista Alberti, *Il*

In quoting from the treatises and other primary sources, I have respected the orthography, but modernized the punctuation. Where titles are inconsistent in their orthography or capitalization, I have standardized them for greater legibility.

The secondary literature on this period may be divided into broader social, military and economic studies on one hand, and those specifically dealing with the horse on the other. The first group is weighted heavily toward debate over the relationship between military and social change, and includes the classical interpretations of Lynn White, Jr. and Georges Duby, as well as more recent studies such as Reginald Allen Brown's "The Status of the Norman Knight," Donald Fleming's "Landholding by Milites in Domesday Book: A Revision," David Crouch's *The Image of Aristocracy in Britain 1000–1300*, Joachim Bumke's *The Concept of Knighthood in the Middle Ages*, and Susan Reynolds' revisionist work *Fiefs and Vassals.*[11] Studies by Linda A. Patterson and Matthew Bennett focus specifically on the shifting status of the squire,[12] while those of Brigitte Bedos-Rezak, Linda Seidel, and Lester K. Little chart social change through analysis of

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cavallo vivo, trans. and ed. Antonio Videtta (Naples: Ce. S.M.E.T., 1991); and *Hippiatria: Due Trattati Emiliani di Mascalcia del Sec. XV*, ed. Domizia Trolli (Parma: Studium Parmense, 1983).

[11] Lynn White, Jr. *Medieval Technology and Social Change* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962); Georges Duby, *The Chivalrous Society,* trans. Cynthia Postan (London: Arnold, 1977); R. Allen Brown, "The Status of the Norman Knight," in *War and Government in the Middle Ages: Essays in Honour of J.O. Prestwich*, ed. John Gillingham and J.C. Holt (Cambridge, U.K.: Boydell Press, 1984), 18–32; Donald Fleming, "Landholding by Milites in Domesday Book: A Revision," in *Anglo-Norman Studies XIII: Proceedings of the Battle Conference 1990* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1991), 83–98; David Crouch, *The Image of Aristocracy in Britain 1000–1300* (London and New York: Routledge), 1992; Joachim Bumke, *The Concept of Knighthood in the Middle Ages*, trans. W.T.H. and Erika Jackson (New York: AMS Press, 1982); and Susan Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

[12] Linda A. Patterson, "The Occitan Squire in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries," in *War and Government in the Middle Ages: Essays in Honour of J.O. Prestwich*, ed. John Gillingham and J. C. Holt (Cambridge, UK: Boudell Press / Totowa, NJ: Barnes & Noble, 1984), 133–149; Matthew Bennett, "The Status of the Squire: the Northern Evidence," in *Ideals and Practices of Medieval Knighthood*, eds. Christopher Harper Bill and Ruth Harvey (Dover, NH: Boydell Press, 1986), 1–11.

iconographical evidence. Rezak's study is particularly interesting, as she tracks changes in the practice of sealing through the crucial decades of the eleventh century.[13] Economic studies by Duby, Kathleen Biddick and Constance Bouchard provide valuable insights from another perspective.[14]

The literature focusing on the horse in the Middle Ages has moved well beyond the realm of antiquarians and romantics. It includes some remarkable studies, older ones as well as new. The newer work, at its best, demonstrates impressive rigor, creativity and interpretive depth. Between the two, neither new nor groundbreaking, but especially valuable, is R.H.C. Davis's *The Medieval Warhorse*; Davis's slender book wears its scholarship lightly, but is the work of a scholar nonetheless—densely footnoted, richly researched, and cogently argued.[15]

Also invaluable are two extended articles, the first by Anne-Marie Bautier alone, and the second produced in collaboration with Robert-Henri Bautier. Simply titled "Contribution à l'histoire du cheval au Moyen Age,"[16] these represent the fruit of an exhaustive combing of archival records throughout Europe—principally but not

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[13] Brigitte Bedos-Rezak, "Medieval Seals and the Structure of Medieval Society," in *The Study of Chivalry* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1988), 313–372; Linda Seidel, "Early Medieval Images of the Horseman Re-Viewed," in *The Study of* Chivalry (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1988), 373–400; and Lester K. Little, "Pride Goes before Avarice: Social Change and the Vices in Latin Christendom," *American Historical Review* 76 (1971), 31–37.

[14] Georges Duby, *Rural Economy and Country Life in the Medieval West*, trans. Cynthia Postan (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1976); Kathleen Biddick, *The Other Economy: Pastoral Husbandry on a Medieval Estate* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1989); and Constance Brittain Bouchard, *Holy Entrepreneurs: Cistercians, Knights, and Economic Exchange in Twelfth-Century Burgundy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991).

[15] R.H.C. Davis, The Medieval Warhorse: Origin, Development, and Redevelopment (London: Thames and Hudson, 1989).

[16] Anne-Marie Bautier, "Contribution à l'histoire du cheval au Moyen Age," in Bulletin philologique et historique (jusqu'au 1610) du Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques (Paris: Impr. nationale, 1978), 209–249; and Robert-Henri Bautier and Ann-Marie Bautier, "Contribution à l'histoire du cheval au Moyen Age," in Bulletin philologique et historique (jusqu'au 1610) du Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1980), 9–75.

exclusively monastic cartularies—for information on the horse in the Middle Ages. In the earlier article of the two, Anne-Marie Bautier covers basic ground, discussing horse colors, types and terminology, and adopting a dynamic rather than static perspective which offered insights key to this study. The second article, by contrast, proceeds geographically and chronologically. The Bautiers do not attempt any statistical analysis, and thus their conclusions are necessarily broad. From their painstaking research, however, they are able to reconstruct something of a topography of the medieval horse, as they persuasively track economic and political patterns region by region.

Another very valuable work is found in *Le cheval en France au Moyen Age*, a joint study of encyclopedic scope by Brigitte Prévot and Bernard Ribémont. The book is divided between its two authors, with Ribémont addressing practical and cultural issues, and Prévot covering the area of veterinary literature. Particularly impressive, given the work's breadth, is the depth and subtlety of its analysis. Another essential resource is Yvonne Poulle-Drieux's "L'Hippiatrie dans l'occident Latin du XIIIe au XVe siècle," a survey of medieval hippiatric treatises with appended excerpts, written by the acknowledged authority in the field. Rounding out these French works is a collection of studies on the horse in medieval culture, chiefly but not exclusively literary in its focus, *Le Cheval dans le monde médiéval*.[17]

Other works consulted include Ann Hyland's historical studies of the horse, notable for the author's forensic approach to historical issues; Hyland, a horsewoman,

[17] Poulle-Drieux, "L'Hippiatrie dans l'occident Latin," 9–167; and *Le Cheval dans le monde médiéval. Centre universitaire d'études et de recherches médiévales d'Aix.* Aix-en-Provence: Publications de C.U.E.R.M.A, 1992.

brings her own experience with horses to bear in material and imaginative reconstructions, an approach which yields interesting results but warrants caution. More secure in this regard are Bernard S. Bachrach's analyses of the logistics involved in mounted warfare, which persuasively outline the difficulties presented by dependence on horses in war. Bachrach also contributes two very useful monographs, one on the Alans and another on the Merovingians, both of which address the role of horses. Nellie Neilsen, in an older but very interesting study drawn from archival sources, details practices at fourteenth-century royal stud farms in "The Forests," an extended article in *The English Government at Work, 1327–1336.*[18]

John Langdon's *Horses, Oxen and Technological Innovation: The Use of Draught Animals in English Farming from 1066 to 1500* represents another useful study. In it Langdon argues that the increased use of the horse for transport in England in the twelfth and especially the thirteenth centuries resulted in the faster movement of goods to market and so contributed substantially to economic growth. A more ambitious undertaking is found in Charles Gladitz's *Horse Breeding in the Middle Ages,* a densely-packed study encompassing Asian and European developments, though decidedly favoring the former. While reflecting extensive

[18] Ann Hyland's works include *The Horse in the Middle Ages* (Far Thrupp, Stroud, Gloucestershire, UK: Alan Sutton 1999); *The Medieval Warhorse from Byzantium to the Crusades* (Far Thrupp, Stroud, Gloucestershire, UK: Alan Sutton, 1994); and *The Warhorse, 1250–1600* (Far Thrupp, Stroud, Gloucestershire, UK: Alan Sutton, 1998). Works by Bernard S. Bachrach include "Caballus et Caballarius in Medieval Warfare," in *The Study of Chivalry* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1988), 173–212, and two monographs, *A History of the Alans in the West; From Their First Appearance in the Sources of Antiquity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1973) and *Merovingian Military Organization, 481–751* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1972). Also see Nellie Neilson, "The Forests," in *The English Government at Work, 1327–1336*, eds. James F.Willard and William A. Morris (Cambridge, MA: The Medieval Academy of America, 1940), 394–467.

research and welcome for its use of Asian sources, the book tends to present facts without context, and so is more congenial as a reference work.[19]

A more recent work on medieval warfare, Andrew Ayton's *Knights and Warhorses: Military Service and the English Aristocracy under Edward III*, combines military and social history in a remarkable example of creative methodology and diligent research. Studying the Edwardian wars of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, Ayton analyzed horse inventories and restaur rolls—government documents recording the assessed value of privately-owned war horses for purposes of pay and compensation—to construct a detailed prosopographical picture of the otherwise-obscure men-at-arms who comprised the Edwardian cavalry. Having done so, he could then track faults and fissures in the traditional hierarchies of service, in a sense watching the processes of social and military change from within.[20]

The secondary literature consulted for the horse in Renaissance Italy falls into four broad categories: court life and culture; horses and horse keeping within that culture; horsemanship itself, and the role of music and dance in the court. The first group includes Thomas Tuohy's *Herculean Ferrara: Ercole d'Este, 1471–1505, and the Invention of a Ducal Capital*; Gregory Lubkin's *A Renaissance Court: Milan Under Galeazzo Maria Sforza*, and Mary Hollingsworth's *The Cardinal's Hat*, all of which reconstruct court life from archival records such as account books and related

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[19] John Langdon, "Horse Hauling: A Revolution in Vehicle Transport in Twelfth- and Thirteenth-Century England," *Past and Present* 103 (1984): 37-66, and *Horses, Oxen and Technological Innovation: The Use of Draught Animals in English Farming from 1066 to 1500* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1986); and Charles Gladitz, *Horse Breeding in the Medieval World* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997).

[20] Andrew Ayton, *Knights and Warhorses: Military Service and the English Aristocracy under Edward III* (Woodbridge, Suffolk / Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 1994).

sources.[21] The undercurrents of court culture are explored in works such as Harry Berger's *The Absence of Grace: Sprezzatura and Suspicion in Two Renaissance Courtesy Books,* Stephen Kolsky's *Courts and Courtiers in Renaissance Northern Italy,* a collection of studies by the author examining aspects of court life from the point of view of the courtier, and Isabella Lazzarini's analysis of service under the Gonzaga, *Fra un principe e altri stati.*[22]

The famous Gonazaga horses are the subject of an incipient literature of their own. The first, Giancarlo Malacarne's *Il mito dei cavalli gonzagheschi,* effectively tells its story through correspondence, thus providing a detailed firsthand picture about the Gonzaga stud farms and the family's other equestrian activities, albeit with little interpretive context. Malacarne considers the Gonzaga horses as works of art intended to enhance the family's standing and prestige, and so builds his book around the twelve mares sent to Henry VIII in 1514. Galeazzo Nosari, on the other hand, is primarily concerned with the *palio,* the horse race run in cities throughout Italy in this period, which he documents more than analyzes. Two other works on the *palio*, however, take a more provocative tack, as Deanna Shemek's "Circular Definitions: Configuring Gender in Italian Renaissance Festival" and Richard Trexler's *Correre la*

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[21] Gregory Lubkin, *A Renaissance Court: Milan Under Galeazzo Maria Sforza* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Mary Hollingsworth, *The Cardinal's Hat: Money, Ambition and Housekeeping in a Renaissance Court.* (London: Profile, 2004); Thomas Tuohy, *Herculean Ferrara: Ercole d'Este, 1471–1505, and the Invention of a Ducal Capital* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

[22] Pertinent studies by Kolsky include "Learning Virtue, Teaching Politics. Some Notes on Book Four of the *Cortegiano*," and "'The Good Servant': Mario Equicola: Court and Courtier in Early Sixteenth-Century Italy," reprinted in *Courts and Courtiers in Renaissance Northern Italy* (Aldershot, Hampshire, UK and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003), various pagings. Also see Harry Berger, *The Absence of Grace: Sprezzatura and Suspicion in Two Renaissance Courtesy Books* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000); and Isabella Lazzarini, *Fra un principe e altri stati: relazioni di potere e forme di servizio a Mantova nell'età di Ludovico Gonzaga* (Rome: Istituto storico italiano per il Medio Evo, 1996).

Terra: Collective Insults in the Late Middle Ages," point to the race's origins as part of an insult ritual carried out against enemy cities; Shemek, working from Trexler's analysis, then identifies the survival of coded insults in the reinvented civic festival. In "Nelle stalle di Lorenzo," Mario Martelli offers a selection of letters which reveal the personal, social and diplomatic dimensions of Medici transactions involving horses. John R. Hale, meanwhile, provides a detailed examination of a lesser-known phenomenon, that of the noble academy, an early modern experiment found in Italy as elsewhere in Europe.[23]

The works on horsemanship, almost without exception, trace successive developments in equitation and thus follow a fairly predictable chronological and intepretive sequence. The emergence of manège during the Italian Renaissance, a major turning point in the history of riding, is celebrated as a liberation from medieval practices, but also measured against the more advanced (and less brutal) French school of the early seventeenth century. Within this formulaic framework, individual writers vary in terms of strengths and emphases: Charles Chenevix Trench, while writing in the tone of the British sportsman, offers a nuanced and technically informative discussion. Luigi Gianoli's work, on the other hand, though encyclopedic in scope and authoritative in tone, suffers from its segmented format and lack of

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[23] Giancarlo Malacarne, *Il mito dei cavalli gonzagheschi: alle origini del purosangue* (Verona: Promoprint, 1995); Galeazzo Nosari: *Il palio nel Rinascimento: i cavalli di razza dei Gonzaga nell'età di Francesco II Gonzaga 1484–1519* (Reggiolo: E. Lui, 2003); Deanna Shemek, "Circular Definitions: Configuring Gender in Italian Renaissance Festival," *Renaissance Quarterly* 48.1 (Spring, 1995): 1–40; Richard C. Trexler, in *Dependence in Context in Renaissance Florence* (Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1994), 113–70; Mario Martelli, "Nelle stalle di Lorenzo," *Archivo Storico Italiano* 150.2 (1992): 267–302; and John R. Hale, "Military Academies on the Venetian Terraferma in the Early Seventeenth Century," in *Renaissance War Studie*s (London: Hambledon Press, 1983), 285–307.

footnotes or index. Sylvia Loch, a professional horsewoman, is at her best when tracing the distinctions between different schools of riding, and broadly informative in areas sometimes overlooked by others, but less reliable on matters of historical detail. In the end, these writers tend not to venture beyond the narrative and technical aspects of their subject. A significant exception is that of André Monteilhet, whose book, *Les Maîtres de l'oeuvre équestre,* provides biographical sketches of the great masters of the discipline, supplemented by the author's own research. Unfortunately, Monteilhet focuses primarily on later centuries, and includes only the most famous of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century figures.[24]

Dance and music would play a crucial role in elevating manège to the level of art. They were also coded activities, in which the elements of harmony, measure and restraint carried social, cultural and political meanings. The philosophical and moral dimensions of dance are explored by Françoise Syson Carter and Stephen Kolsky. Kolsky examines these as manifested at court, where they served as a stylized expression of behavior, relationship and rule. Carter, on the other hand, discusses the relationship between dance and morality as conceived in various traditions of the period: humanist neoplatonism, of scripture, chivalry and Northern humanism. C.A. Patrides examines another metaphysical aspect of dance, similarly carried into manège, that of number.[25]

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[24] Charles Chenevix Trench, *A History of Horsemanship* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1970); Luis Gianoli, *Horses and Horsemanship Through the Ages* (New York: Crown Publishing, 1969); and Sylvia Loch, *Dressage: The Art of Classical Horsemanship* (1990; reprint, North Pomfret, VT: Trafalgar Square Publishing, 2001), and André Monteilhet, *Les Maîtres de l'oeuvre équestre* (Paris: Odège, 1979).

[25] Françoise Syson Carter, "Dance as a Moral Exercise," in Maurizio Padovan, ed., *Giuglielmo Ebreo da Pesaro e la danza nelle corti italiane del XV secolo* (Pisa: Pacini, 1990): 169-177; Stephen Kolsky, "Graceful Performances: The Social and Polticial Context of Music and Dance in the *Cortegiano*," in

The question of how these element translated into practice—and into overtly ideological expression—is addressed by Thomas M. Greene and Kate van Orden in two studies closely related in subject and complementary in interpretation. Greene's study, "Labyrinth Dances in the French and English Renaissance," identifies and deconstructs a popular court dance of the mid-sixteenth century, designed for performance and of classical derivation, which, through its intricate patterns, at once acknowledges chaos and triumphs over it. While the labyrinth dance could be performed by dancers, it was also performed on horseback, a scene having conscious military overtones. In a related study, Kate van Orden offers a remarkable analysis exploring the mutual influence of military change and the courtly arts of music, dance, and manège. A historian of music, van Orden writes from an informed knowledge of the technical demands of all three disciplines, and thus is able to reconstruct and establish their connections on the level of tone and pitch, rhythm and gesture.[26]

Other works on France include Mark Motley's *Becoming a French Aristocrat: The Education of the Court Nobility, 1580–1715*, which examines education as a crucial means by which the French aristocracy adapted to political and social change. In it Motley discusses various venues of education for French nobles in this period. James Supple's "François de la Noue and the Education of the French 'Noblesse

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Courts and Courtiers in Renaissance Northern Italy (Aldershot, Hampshire, UK and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003), IV, 1-19; and C.A. Patrides, "Those Mysterious Things They Observe in Numbers: Approaches to Numerology," in *Promises and Motifs in Renaissance Thought and Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982).

[26] Thomas M. Greene, "Labyrinth Dances in the French and English Renaissance," *Renaissance Quarterly* 54.4 (2001): 1403–1466; Kate van Orden, *Music, Discipline, and Arms in Early Modern France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

d'Épée'" examines La Noue as an advocate of educational reform in sixteenth-century France. Supple argues that La Noue was driven by concerns for the noble estate more than by any particular concern for humanist education per se. Georges Vigarello's *Le corps redressé: histoire d'un pouvoir pédagogique* examines the training of the body in the seventeenth century through gesture, posture, comportment and movement. Yuval Noah Hariri's *Renaissance Military Memoirs* analyzes writings by warrior nobles, primarily French, of the sixteenth century, and among other observations notes the central role which the horse and horsemanship played in their sense of personal identity, as well as the strong emotional attachment they formed to their own horses.[27]

Two works by Arlette Joanna offer insights into aspects of French social orders and of nobility in particular. In "Recherches sur la notion d'honneur au XVIe siècle" she offers a typology of honor in early modern France, reoriented toward a social rather than a religious definition. In *Ordre social, mythes et hiérarchies dans la France du XVI siècle,* she traces the origins and evolution of the period's theories of social hierarchy, conceived as predetermined through innate qualities perpetuated through heredity. Ellery Schalk contributes a study examining sixteenth-century perceptions of social and cultural dislocation among the French nobility, the terms of the associated debate on the nature and purposes of the nobility, and the adaptive strategies pursued in the seventeenth century. In *The French Nobility in Crisis 1560–*

[27] Mark Motley's *Becoming a French Aristocrat: The Education of the Court Nobility, 1580–1715* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990)*;* James Supple's "François de la Noue and the Education of the French 'Noblesse d'Épée,'" *French Studies* 38 (1982): 270–81; Norbert Conrads, *Ritterakademien der frühen Neuzeit: Bildung als Standesprivileg im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vendenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982); Georges Vigarello, *Le Corps redressé: histoire d'un pouvoir pédogogique* (Paris: J.P. Delarge, 1978); and Yuval Noah Hariri, *Renaissance Military Memoirs: War, History and Identity 1450–1600* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2004).

1640, Davis Bitton examines the principal motifs, issues and positions involved in the debate over the character and role of the nobility.[28]

Secondary literature on England includes two studies of William Cavendish which address his horsemanship and riding treatises within a broader intellectual context. Karen L. Raber's "'Reasonable Creatures': William Cavendish and the Art of Dressage," analyzes Newcastle's treatises on horsemanship in the context of his political philosophy, and asserts that he invests his horses with a Lockean intelligence, a self-defeating irony for a staunch royalist like the duke. Lisa Sarasohn offers a neatly complementary study of Cavendish's intellectual circle and patronage, in particular his relations, both personal and intellectual, with Thomas Hobbes.[29]

The theme of education and usefulness figures prominently in the court treatises, which appear as part of a larger endeavor of improvement. A humanist educational program was laid out by Ascham and Elyot in the *Schoolmaster* and *The Book Named the Governor* respectively. Educational programs and proposals circulating within the sphere of the Tudor court are discussed by Patricia-Ann Lee in "Some English Academies: An Experiment in the Education of Renaissance Gentlemen." Principal examples of these are detailed by John R. Hale in "The Military Education of the Officer Class in Early Modern Europe." In *Wit's*

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[28] Joanna Arlette's works include "Recherches sur la notion d'honneur au XVIe siècle," *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 15 (1968): 597–623, and *Ordre social: mythes et hiérarchies dans la France du XVI siècle* (Paris: Hachette, 1977). Also see Davis Bitton, *The French Nobility in Crisis* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1969).

[29] See Karen L. Raber, "'Reasonable Creatures': William Cavendish and the Art of Dressage," in *Renaissance Culture and the Everyday*, ed. Patricia Fumerton (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 42–66 and Lisa T. Sarasohn, "Thomas Hobbes and the Duke of Newcastle: A Study in the Mutuality of Patronage before the Establishment of the Royal Society," in *Isis* 90 (1999): 715-737.

Pilgrimage, Darryl Grantley speaks to the potentially unsettling consequences of education in sixteenth-century England, as facilitating upward mobility.

Aspects of social and cultural change in Tudor England are examined in *Print, Manuscript & Performance: The Changing Relations of the Media in Early Modern England*, edited by Arthur F. Marotti and Michael D. Bristol; Keith Wrightson's "Estates, Degrees, and Sorts: Changing Perceptions of Society in Tudor and Stuart England," and Mark Thornton Burnett's *Masters and Servants in English Renaissance Drama and Culture: Authority and Obedience*.[30]

The literature on horses in England reflects the enthusiasm for the animal in that country. This is especially evident in *The Foals of Epona,* by Anthony Dent and Daphne Machin Goodall. Their history of horses in the British isles is thick with linguistic, archeological, regional and local particulars and insights. Not unusual for the genre, however, the work lacks an index, frustrating in such a richly-detailed book. Charles Matthew Prior's *The Royal Studs of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* is a relatively brief work which is nonetheless very valuable, containing sixteenth-century documents unpublished elsewhere. These include a commissioned survey of the royal studs by the sixteenth-century Italian horse master Prospero

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[30] Roger Ascham, *The Schoolmaster* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1967); Sir Thomas Elyot, *Sir Thomas Elyot's The Book Named the Governor* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1969); Patricia-Ann Lee, "Some English Academies: An Experiment in the Education of Renaissance Gentlemen," *History of Education Quarterly* 10.3 (1970), 273–86; J.R. Hale,"The Military Education of the Officer Class in Early Modern Europe," in *Renaissance War Studies* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1983), 225–46; Darryl Grantley, *Wit's Pilgrimage: Drama and the Social Impact of Education in Early Modern England* (Aldershot, Hants., UK: Ashgate, 2000); Arthur F. Marotti and Michael D. Bristol, ed., *Print, Manuscript & Performance: The Changing Relations of the Media in Early Modern England* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2000); Keith Wrightson, "Estates, Degrees, and Sorts: Changing Perceptions of Society in Tudor and Stuart England," in *Language, History and Class,* ed. Penelope J. Corfield. (Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1991), 30–52; and Mark Thornton Burnett, *Masters and Servants in English Renaissance Drama and Culture: Authority and Obedience* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: MacMillan / New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997).

d'Osma. Two Ph.D. dissertations, Gabrielle Ann MacDonald's "Horsemanship as a Courtly Art in Elizabethan England: Origins, Theory, and Practice" and Alan D. Rogers' "Tudor Horsemanship," represent two aspects of the Tudor horse culture, with MacDonald offering an analysis of Tudor riding treatises in their cultural context, and Rogers focusing primarily on horse medicine in the period, though with some overlap between the two. Peter Edwards offers an examination of the various aspects of horse dealing in this period in *The Horse Trade of Tudor and Stuart England,* while Joan Thirsk's *Horses in Early Modern England: For Service, for Pleasure, for Power* is a brief but well-researched and authoritative account of horses in three areas of English life in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[31]

Manège similarly invoked, and in turn influenced, the plastic arts. The equestrian statue, predating manège, offered a visual referent for the self-conscious rider on his "managed" horse, and thus offers insights into the symbolic associations which manège may have invoked. Dario Covi, in his study of fifteenth-century equestrian sculpture in Italy, traces the path leading to the triumphalism of the Renaissance equestrian statue, with earlier fifteenth-century equestrian statues referencing the funerary, the familial, the chivalric, and the religious. Walter Liedtke seconds this diversity of available meanings in his 1989 essay *The Royal Horse and Rider: Painting, Sculpture, and Horsemanship 1500–1800.* Like Covi, he cites the

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[31] Anthony Dent and Daphne Machin Goodall, *The Foals of Epona: A History of British Ponies from the Bronze Age to Yesterday* (London: Galley Press, 1962); also see Dent, *Horses in Shakespeare's England* (J.A. Allen: London, 1987); Charles Matthew Prior, *The Royal Studs of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: Reproduction of the Earl of Godolphin's Stud Book* (London: Horse and Hound, 1935); Gabrielle Ann MacDonald, "Horsemanship as a Courtly Art in Elizabethan England: Origins, Theory, and Practice," Ph.D. dissertation (University of Toronto, 1982); Peter R. Edwards, *The Horse Trade of Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988); and Joan Thirsk, *Horses in Early Modern England: For Service, for Pleasure, for Power* (Reading: University of Reading, 1978).

mounted figure as evocative of the imperial and chivalric ideals—those of the ruler and the righteous warrior—but adds a third, that of riding as an inherent expression of personal virtue.[32]

Central to the study is the fact of the living creature made symbol, which in turn raises the question of how the animal, in its own being, was regarded. That the answer was likely not a simple one is suggested by Esther Cohen in her study, "Animals in Medieval Perceptions: The Image of the Ubiquitous Other." Keith Thomas offers a similar conclusion in his *Man and the Natural World.* Both remind us that animals were present in the pre-industrial world with an immediacy that has now largely been banished; Thomas reminds us too that animals were agents of disorder.

John Passmore, in his article, "The Treatment of Animals," surveys the Western traditions, both classical and scriptural, which variously embraced a kinship with animals or denied it, in the latter case denying them also any inherent right to protection or kindness. The practice of vivisection threw all such attitudes and concerns, on either side, into sharp relief, as is shown by Andreas-Holger Maehle and Ulrich Tröhler in their study, "Animal Experimentation from Antiquity to the End of the Eighteenth Century." Roger K. French addresses these questions as they were manifested through the medical investigations of the sixteenth century in *Dissection and Vivisection in the European* Renaissance. Hester Hastings, in her monograph

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[32] Dario A. Covi, "The Italian Renaissance and the Equestrian Monument," in *Leonardo Da Vinci's Sforza Monument Horse: The Art and the Engineering* (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press / London: Associated University Press, 1995), 40–56; Walter A. Liedtke, *The Royal Horse and Rider: Painting, Sculpture, and Horsemanship 1500–1800* (Pleasantville, NY: Abaris Books in association with the Metropolitan Museum of New York, 1989). Another study of the equestrian image in this period is found in Laura Camins' essay for the exhibit catalogue *Glorious Horsemen: Equestrian Art in Europe, 1500–1800* (Springfield, MA: The Museum, 1981).

Man and Beast in French Thought of the Eighteenth Century, draws upon George Boas's classic study, *The Happy Beast in Seventeenth Century Thought,* and focuses on the debate over the nature and standing of animals as it carried into the eighteenth century. William J. Scheick examines Renaissance representations of animals perceiving spiritual phenomena in "Animal Testimony in Renaissance Art," seeing in them evidence that, despite the ecclesiastical position, animals were regarded by some as having the capacity to recognize and respond to a higher spiritual existence.[33]

Works specifically examining the symbolic associations of the horse, or including a discussion of these, cover an extensive range. Two examples of political interpretation are found in Richard N. Watson, "Horsemanship in Shakespeare's Second Tetralogy," and Peter Hammond Schwartz, "Equestrian Imagery in European and American Political Thought." Watson discusses the prominence of the theme of loss of self-control in Shakespeare's history plays, associated with an unruly or runaway horse on one side, and with the loss of rule on the other. Watson also offers a compendium of examples of the Platonic metaphor of the soul as chariot and mismatched team. Peter Hammond Schwartz, on the other hand, speaks to the

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[33] Esther Cohen, "Animals in Medieval Perceptions: The Image of the Ubiquitous Other," in *Animals and Human Society: Changing Perspectives*, ed. Audrey Manning and James Serpell (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 59–80; Thomas, Keith. *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England 1500–1800* (London: Allen Lane, 1983); John Passmore,"The Treatment of Animals," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 36 (1975): 195–218; Roger K. French, *Dissection and Vivisection in the European Renaissance* (Aldershot, UK; Brookfield, VT: Ashgate, 1999); Andreas-Holger Maehle and Ulrich Tröhler, "Animal Experimentation from Antiquity to the End of the Eighteenth Century," in *Vivisection in Historical Perspective*, ed. Nicolaas Rupke (London and New York: Croom Helm, 1987), 14-47; Hester Hastings, *Man and Beast in French Thought of the Eighteenth Century* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press / London: Oxford University Press, 1936); George Boas, *The Happy Beast in the Seventeenth Century* (New York: Octagon Books, 1966); and William J. Scheick, "Animal Testimony in Renaissance Art: Angelic and Other Supernatural Visitations," in *Figuring Animals: Essays on Animal Images in Art, Literature, Philosophy, and Popular Culture,* eds. Mary Sanders Pollock and Catherine Rainwater (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 65-77.
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transcendent aspect of horses, and their association with liberating power. Fernand Benoît's venerable study *L'Heroïsation équestre* addresses this same trope in its mythological guise. Working from Georges Dumézil's identification of a crucial Indo-European tripartite archetype relating function and status, Shan M. M. Winn's *Heaven, Heroes, and Happiness,* and Priscilla Kershaw's *The One-Eyed God* cite numerous examples of Indo-European myths relating to horses. Winn's book is especially well-furnished in this regard. Robert Harrist, meanwhile, in his study of the horse in Chinese art, offers a useful corrective to the assumption that the association of the horse with social hierarchy is a universal archetype; historically, the horse held no such meaning in Chinese culture, although it did function as a symbol of imperial power. Finally, Beryl Rowland in her compendium of animal symbolism, *Animals with Human Faces,* identifies sources of the horse's popular association with sexuality.[34]

Works on the court and on chivalry include Norbert Elias's *The Civilizing Process: The History of Manners,* which addresses the sociological dynamics and implications attending the evolution of "civilized" codes of conduct in Western Europe. These are seen as both reflecting and inculcating cultural structures and hierarchical social relationships. *Princes, Patronage and the Nobility* is a comprehensive work detailing the origins, composition, organization and

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[34] Peter Hammond Schwartz, "Equestrian Imagery in European and American Political Thought: Toward an Understanding of Symbols as Political Texts," *The Western Political Quarterly* 41 (1988): 653–73; Richard N. Watson, "Horsemanship in Shakespeare's Second Tetralogy," *English Literary Renaissance* 13.3 (1983): 274–300; Fernand Benoît, *L'heroïsation équestre* (Gap: Éditions Ophrys, 1954); Georges Dumézil, *L'Idéologie tripartie des Indo-Européens* (Brussels: Latomus, 1958); Shan M.M. Winn, *Heaven, Heroes, and Happiness: The Indo-European Roots of Western Ideology* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1995); Priscilla Kershaw's *The One-Eyed God: Odin and the (Indo-) Germanic Männerbünde* (Washington, DC: Journal of Indo-European Studies, 2000); and Rowland, *Animals with Human Faces*.

distinguishing features of various European courts from the late fifteenth century through the seventeenth centuries. *Chivalry in the Renaissance,* edited by Sidney Anglo*,* a collection of studies on German, Italian and French chivalry, focusing on problems of influence and meaning. Franco Cardini's *Guerre di Primavera* examines aspects of medieval chivalry from a theoretical perspective, featuring unusual juxtapositions and investigations, including that of Indo-European influences. Maurice Keen's classic study *Chivalry* offers a comprehensive examination of the culture of chivalry in Europe through 1500, including its origins, developing ethos, ceremonies, studies, practices and institutions. Aldo Scaglione's *Knights at Court*, meanwhile, offers a collection of studies exploring French, German and Italian manifestations of courtly chivalry.[35]

[35] Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: The History of Manners,* trans. Edmund Jephcott, 2 vols. (New York: Urizen Books, 1978); Ronald G. Asch and Adolph M. Birk, eds., *Princes, Patronage and the Nobility: the Court at the Beginning of the Modern Age c. 1450–1650* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); Sidney Anglo, ed. *Chivalry in the Renaissance* (Woodbridge, Suffolk and Rochester, NY: 1990); Franco Cardini, *Guerre di primavera: studi sulla cavalleria e la tradizione cavallaresca* (Florence: Florence: Le Lettere, 1992). Aldo D. Scaglione, *Knights at Court: Courtliness, Chivalry and Courtesy from Ottonian Germany to the Italian Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

Chapter 1. THE HORSE IN MEDIEVAL SOCIETY: ISSUES OF STATUS AND UTILITY

Any seeker after the medieval horse must come prepared for contrast. At one end of the array stands the barded charger of romance; at the other lie the bones of an aged work horse, slaughtered, skinned and rendered when it could no longer haul.[1] The two are bound by more than chronology. Both were *equus*, as defined in the *Etymologies* of Isidore of Seville. Both, according to the Church, were created to serve. And each in its own way existed in an economy of great demands and little means. That the charger was allowed to outlive his usefulness, while the work horse was not, speaks to the force of the meanings assigned them both.

The fabric of practices, uses and beliefs which framed these animals constitutes the substance of this chapter. In its function of providing background, it will discuss such issues as horse types and breeding methods, economic considerations, learned traditions, and uses in peace and war. Key here, however, is the argument that the practical and symbolic aspects of the horse impacted each other in dynamic and at times even paradoxical ways. For this reason the chapter will proceed chronologically, to better show such connections, and particularly to trace the three thematic strands of hierarchy, discipline and service.

Part 1, dealing with the early Middle Ages, will address the horse as a marker of aristocracy in a subsistence economy. Part 2 will track the cluster of changes, material and semiotic, occurring around the horse in the eleventh through the

[1] See Dale Sergeantson, Tony Waldron and Mark Bracegirdle, "Medieval Horses from Kingston-Upon-Thames," *London Archaeologist* 7.1 (Winter 1992): 9–13.

thirteenth centuries, as a reflection of broader social, economic and political developments. Part 3, focusing primarily on the latter thirteenth and fourteenth centuries—the age of the Great Horse—examines what has been called the *politique de cheval* of the era*,* the complex financial, political and social strains created by a strategic dependence on war horses.

Part 1. Horses and Status in the Early Middle Ages

In a letter written in 592 to the overseer of the papal estates in Sicily, one finds Pope Gregory I touching on a number of matters, prominent among them the culling of unproductive livestock. These include aged, sterile cows and valueless oxen, and, above all, the herds of "useless horses" which inhabit the estates. Gregory's orders with regard to the latter are quite specific. Save only four hundred of the younger mares for breeding, he instructs, adding that the mares should be distributed among four hundred tenants "because it's a bad bargain to spend sixty solidi on caretakers when we don't make even sixty denarii from the herds."[2] Moving on to other business, he returns to the subject of horses at the letter's end. This time, however, the problem lies with riding animals, as he acknowledges receipt of "one miserable horse and five good asses." "I can't ride the horse because it's a wretch,"

[2] "Greges uero equarum quos ualde inutiliter habemus omnes uolo distrahi et tantummodo quadringentas iuueniores seruari ad foetum, ex quibus quadringentis singulae conductoribus singulae condomae dari debent, quatenus ex ipsis aliquid singulis annis reddant, quia durum ualde est ut sexaginta solidos pastoribus expendamus, et sexaginta denarios ex eisdem gregibus non habemus." Reg. II, 50. Jul–Aug, 592. *S. Gregorii Magni Registrvm Epistvlarvm*, ed. Dag Norberg (Turnholt: Brepols, 1982), 1: 141.

he laments, "nor the good ones because they're asses." Thus discomfited, he asks his overseer to bring him *aliquid dignum*, something worthy, as the opportunity arises.[3]

The pope's dilemma—an abundance of horses but no way to turn a profit on them, nor sufficient means, with all those animals, to produce a riding horse worthy of the papal dignity—speaks to a striking paradox of the medieval world. The horse existed as a mark of status in large part because it represented, not just expense, but a conspicuous and arbitrary diversion of crucial resources. In a subsistence economy where grain was often scarce,[4] the keeping of riding horses implicitly signified superior power, whether claimed by virtue of transcendent right or demonstrated in a display of excess.

Such perceptions had considerable strategic value, insofar as one might care to exploit them. Secular lords surely did, in ways often only tangentially related to the actual conduct of war. Churchmen also were keenly aware of the stock of meanings to be gleaned from the figure of the horseman. These appeared in terms sometimes oppositional, sometimes collusive, as the Church itself remained intimately associated with what Fernand Braudel has termed the "sort of virile and violent aristocracy" that horses represented.[5] Power as configured through this animal followed diverse tracks. The benefits it provided in return—mobility, strength, and speed—were valuable aids in the exercise of that power, a coercive advantage in peace as in war.

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[3] "Praeterea unum nobis caballum miserum et quinque bonos asinos transmisisti. Caballum illum sedere non possum, quia miser est, illos autem bonos sedere non possum, quia asini sunt. Sed petimus ut, si nos continere disponitis, aliquid uobiscum dignum deferatis." Ibid., I, 145.

[4] Duby, *Rural Economy*, 149.

[5] Fernand Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism 15th–18th Century: The Structures of Everyday Life:*, Vol. 1 (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), 342.

The first issue, however, the one which rendered all others contingent, was that of husbandry. In regions where transhumance could not be practiced, the keeping of horses compelled a series of hard choices which, in strictly economic terms, would have consistently gone against them. They were of limited usefulness to the early medieval peasant, ill-suited for ploughing heavy, resistant soils, and generally hampered as draft animals by the restrictive and inefficient harness then in use. Prejudice against the horse as a draft animal persisted well beyond the period. "The plough of oxen is better than the plough of hors," states the thirteenth-century *Boke of Husbandry,* advising that "the plough of hors is more costly than the plough of oxen & yet shal your plough of oxen doo as moche werke in a yere as youre plough of hors."[6] Compounding their inefficiency, horses could be destructive of pasture, given to overgrazing in a way that cattle were not.[7] Unlike oxen, moreover, which at the end of their working life could be fattened for slaughter, horses offered little after death but "very cheap horsehide."[8]

While alive, however, they claimed more than their share of sustenance. Each stockowner, great or small, faced the decision of either grazing his livestock in available meadows or mowing some portion for winter fodder. To the extent that he chose the former, he needed to make other provision for his animals. Pigs could be

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[6] Henley, *Boke of Husbandry,* in *The Manor Farm*, chap. iv.

[7] Like cattle, horses will avoid grazing near their own droppings; unlike cattle, they crop grass close to the roots. As a result, unless a pasture is rested and allowed to recover, some parts will be grazed bare, while others, left untouched, will give way to patches of tough, weedy grass. See Davis, *Medieval Warhorse*, 92.

[8] Duby, *Rural Economy* (1962)*,* 148–9; Biddick, *Other Economy,* 116. Robert Delort, surveying the medieval exploitation of animals and animal products, finds that even in this regard the horse was passed over in favor of other animals. See Delort, "Les Animaux et l'habillement," in *L'uomo di fronte al mondo animale nell'alto medioevo: 8–13 aprile, 1983* (Spoleto: Presso la sede del Centro, 1983), 1: 684.

butchered in the fall and their meat salted, and cattle sold off or left to subsist on hay, straw and browse. Horses, on the other hand, especially those expending energy as riding, pack or draft animals, would do poorly on such a meager diet; they required a supplement of grain year-round, and in the absence of winter pasture would consume through the snowbound winter months a daily ration of fodder which had to be stored in advance or otherwise secured.[9] The closely-calculated comparison provided by the anonymous author of *Fleta* reveals that such considerations still obtained in the late thirteenth century:

> It is to be noted that a horse costs more to keep than an ox, and that every ox or cow for the plough is kept by common custom in a stall from the feast of St. Luke [October 18] to the feast of the Holy Cross [May 3], a period of twenty-eight weeks. If the horse is to be kept in working condition, he ought to have a ration every night of one-sixth of bushel of oats, at the cost of a halfpenny, and should have grass in summer worth 12*d.*at least, and the cost of properly shoeing him each month is a penny, making a total cost of 11*s.* 6*d.* besides the forage and waste corn he gets. Also, when the horse is worn out through old age or work, he will only be worth his hide, but with the ox it is different for with an extra tenpence worth of grass the lord can recoup himself, or nearly so, by selling the hide, &c. and the meat to the butchers.[10]

Their need for grain put horses in direct competition with humans for the produce of arable land. Bernard Bachrach, assuming a pre-1300 AD yield ratio of 1:2, estimates that a single horse could consume enough grain to feed four active adult men.[11] Even given the agricultural improvements and higher yields of the later Middle Ages, the proportion remains sobering; at the beginning of the fourteenth

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[9] Charles Gladitz, *Horse Breeding in the Medieval World* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997), 154.

[10] *Fleta,* §3, in *The Manor Farm*, 58–9.

[11] Bernard Bachrach, "Animals and Warfare in Early Medieval Europe," in *L'uomo di fronte al mondo animale nell'alto medioevo: 7–13 aprile, 1983* (Spoleto: Presso la sede del Centro, 1983), 1: 750. Bachrach's yield ratio is taken from Duby, *Rural Economy*, 25–27, 102; Biddick, *Other Economy*, 76.

century Peterborough Abbey was sowing fully one-quarter of its 5,000 acres of arable land in oats, primarily as feed for its riding and work horses.[12] Given the lower crop yields of the early Middle Ages, the diversion of resources would have been acute.

Citing these harsh realities, Anne-Marie and Robert-Henri Bautier point to the relative absence of horses in pre-Carolingian documents and Einhard's famous royal Merovingian ox-cart as further proof that horses were of little importance in this period.[13] In purely practical terms that would surely be so. However, as suggested in Gregory's letter, there is another side to the picture. While horses may have been marginal and even detrimental to the early medieval economy of subsistence, they continued to play an important role in the economy of power.

That this phenomenon has attracted relatively little attention may be attributed in large part to the impact of Heinrich Brunner's seminal late nineteenth-century thesis, which asserted a determinative link between the shift to cavalry warfare and the emergence of feudal institutions. According to Brunner, the Franks, responding to the Muslim threat in the wake of the battle of Poitiers in 732 CE, made a fateful tactical shift to mounted warfare; this created an array of new logistical necessities, the need for horses prominent among them, which led in turn to the concentration of land and resources in the hands of a military elite. Thus the emergence of feudal institutions and relationships can be traced directly back to the decision to fight on horseback rather than on foot. Providing the framework for subsequent and equally influential work by such scholars as Lynn White, Jr., Marc Bloch and Georges Duby, the Brunner thesis has given rise to far-ranging debates, with disagreements

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[12] Biddick, *Other Economy*, 76.

[13] Bautier and Bautier, "Contribution à l'histoire," 12.

continuing to the present over issues of chronology, causality, and fundamental interpretation. Nonetheless, the validity of the underlying premise—that military dependence on the horse carried with it profound political and social consequences—remains unchallenged. Ever since, historians of medieval Europe have placed the horse squarely at the nexus of war, economic dominance and social privilege.

Brunner's thesis, however, by fixing the eighth and ninth centuries as a historical watershed, effectively schematized the early medieval period into unhorsed/horsed phases, and so overshadowed equestrian activities in the earlier era. The picture alters if one looks beyond a narrow military perspective, for the sources of the period, if somewhat scanty in this regard, nonetheless clearly attest to the existence of a European equestrian culture, aristocratic in character and predating the Frankish adoption of cavalry warfare in the eighth and ninth centuries. This culture, broadly defined, rested on diverse traditions, in some cases little more than a ghostly echo, in others, thriving survivals.

Isidore of Seville, writing in the early seventh century of the relative longevity of different breeds of horses, identified seven by region—the Persian, the Hunnish, the Greek, the Sicilian, the Spanish, the North African and the Gallic[14] —thus referencing a Roman equine geography which nonetheless retained a certain currency in his own day. Sicily, for example, had been a principal center of horsebreeding under the Roman Empire, and Gregory's Sicilian horse herds may well have been a scattered vestige of the imperial world from which his own had devolved. Similarly

[14] "Aetas longaeva equis Persicis, Hunnicis, Epirotis ac Siculis in annis ultra quinquaginta, brevior autem Hispanis ac Numidis et Gallicis frequens opinio est." Isidore of Seville, *Isidori Hispalensis episcopi Etymologiarum sive Originum: libri* xx, ed. W.M. Lindsay (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957) 2: 12.i.44.

the practice of mulebreeding, introduced by the Romans into Gaul in the first century CE, resurfaces in the tenth-century request of a *mulam mirabilem* from Count Guillaume IVof Poitou.[15] Elsewhere one finds survivals of older equestrian cultures, as in the native Iberian style of riding known as "*a la jineta*," whose distinctive characteristics may be traced through artifacts and Roman descriptions to the peninsula's Celtiberian past.[16]

Also still current in Gregory's time would have been the impact of the various peoples who, as enemies or allies of Rome, had infiltrated the Empire, bringing with them distinctive bloodstock and equestrian practices. One of these in particular, the Alans, contributed to the emerging regional aristocratic culture of northwestern Europe. Originally a steppe people, the Alans were famed for their warlike nature, superb horsemanship, and use of armor for both horse and rider.[17] They were highly valued as *foederati* in the late Empire, and as such settled under the *hospites* system in northwestern Gaul, whereby they received cessions of land among the local population. There they appear to have assimilated into the landowning aristocracy; their influence would long survive them in an array of vestiges—in place names, in

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[15] Janine Carette, "Éthologie animale et domestication: le cas du Baudet du Poitou," in *L'Histoire de la connaissance du comportement animale: actes du colloque international, Université de Liège, 11–14 mars, 1992*, ed. Liliane Bodson (Liège: L'université, 1993), 285–308.

[16] See Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz, "La caballería visigoda," in *Wirtschaft und Kultur. Festschrift zum 10. Geburtstag von Alfons Dopsch* (Leipzig: R.M. Rohrer, 1938), 96–97.

[17] "*Sine equis inertes extant Alani,"* Isidore writes of them in the *Etymologies*, 19.23.7. The quality of Alan horses is suggested in a Roman elegy for the horse Borystheses, traditionally, though probably spuriously, ascribed to Hadrian: "Borystheses the Alan was Caesar's horse, over level land, through the swamps and over the Tuscan hills he used to fly. And never on a Pannonian boar hunt could any charging boar with whitish tusks come close to injuring him. It used to happen that saliva sprinkled from his mouth to the end of his tail in the chase. But while he was still in full youth and his legs were not yet weakened by age, he died on his birthday and was buried here in the earth." *Borystheses Alanus*, ed. Büchner, cited in Bachrach, *Alans*, 10.

the use of "Alan" as an aristocratic given name, carried to England by the Norman Conquest, in a large and highly-valued medieval hunting dog called the Alan, and, very likely, in the vibrant Breton tradition of horsemanship.[18]

The Alans were not the only horsed people to settle in the West in the fifth and sixth centuries. The cavalry traditions of the Lombards were still current in Gregory's era; before migrating into Italy in 568 CE, they had passed twenty years in the lush grasslands of the Pannonian Älfold, prime horse country received from Justinian following their service against the Ostrogoth Totila. A particularly striking example of continuity is found in Spain, where Visigothic cavalry, described at the battle of Adrianople in 378 CE as "descending from the mountains like thunderbolts,"[19] were still on hand in 711 CE to meet Iberia's Muslim invaders.[20]

As eloquent, in their fashion, were the little votive statues of the Celtic goddess variously known as Macha, Rhiannon, or Epona, "The great Mare," statues which—thanks to her cultic popularity among Roman cavalrymen—could be found throughout Europe.[21] Less tangible, but nonetheless profound in their influence, were the Indo-European mythological and cultural patterns of which the Celtic horse

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[18] Bachrach, *Alans,* 19–24; 88–9. This last included a preference for fighting on horseback, in armor, described by Ermoldus Nigellus in the ninth century CE in terms very similar to those used to describe the Alani centuries earlier. Anthony Dent and Daphne Machin Goodall pick up the strand at a later point, describing the knightly families of twelfth-century Richmondshire, then a newly-vitalized center of horsebreeding activity, as "mostly of Breton origin, their ancestors having followed Count Alan of Brittany in the train of the Conqueror." The connection is further underscored by the Earls of Richmond, "who were called either Conan or Alan in rather bewildering succession." Dent and Goodall, *Foals of Epona,* 103.

[19] Ammianus Marcellinus, *The Roman History of Ammianus Marcellinus During the Reigns of the Emperors Constantius, Julian, Jovianus, Valentinian and Valens,* trans. C.D. Yonge (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1911), 609–18, Internet Ancient History Sourcebook, http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/378adrianople.html (accessed April 1, 2006).

[20] Sánchez-Albornoz, "La *caballería* visigoda," 103.

[21] Dent and Goodall, *Foals of Epona,* 9.

goddess was but one manifestation. Crucial to the life and power of these pastoralists, the horse was transformed through Indo-European myth into a bearer of cultural and cosmological meaning. As such it passed into the broad currents of European culture, most notably through its association with the Divine Twin configuration, as manifested in, among many others, the *Dioskouroi*, their Roman counterparts Castor and Pollux, and the Anglo-Saxon twins Hengst and Horsa. Recurrent elements of myths involving the horse-loving Divine Twins included a female consort, the solar chariot dividing night from day, and separate and unequal paternity. The last assured that the twins would carry coded messages of social hierarchy, privileging the warrior twin over the agriculturalist.[22] This conformed in turn to a hierarchically-ranked tripartite construct fundamental to Indo-European cultures, whereby the priestly and governing functions, the military, and the productive occupied successive rungs. Thus, of the Anglo-Saxon twins Hengist ("Stallion") and Horsa ("Horse"), Hengist was associated with warriors, and Horsa with men of the land, with Hengist the more esteemed of the two.[23]

While the Merovingian Franks fought on foot, as evidenced by their famous signature weapon, the double-headed throwing axe known as the *francisca*, they were far from being unhorsed. The Merovingian aristocracy, like the Carolingians after them, were ardent horsemen, a fact amply attested to by Gregory of Tours in his *History of the Franks.* His chronicle portrays a ruling class already associated with

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[22] Shan M.M. Winn notes a fifteenth-century account which invests El Cid with a half-brother, begotten by a peasant as the Cid was begotten by a knight. See Winn, *Heaven, Heroes, and Happiness*, 149.

[23] Winn, *Heaven,* 149. For a discussion of these and other Old English and Old Norse horse terms as reflected in place names and surnames, see Dent and Goodall, *Foals of Epona*, 63–69.

the horse, in ideology as well as practice, long before the appearance of feudal institutions and chivalric conceits.

Though anecdotal, Gregory's references to horses and riding are at once frequent and unexceptional, suggesting that both were a familiar part of Frankish aristocratic culture. Hunting, ever a simulacrum of war, looms large in this regard,[24] as illustrated by the treacherous Guntram Boso, who lures his hapless companion from sanctuary and into the hands of assassins by proposing some recreational hawking on horseback. Similarly, Gregory's despised King Chilperic, "the Nero and Herod of our time," seems always to be either hunting, setting off for the hunt, or coming back from one. Elsewhere one encounters other characters, of high estate and low, involved with horses: a slave boy set to watch the horse herd at night, a rapacious Count of the Stable, and a bishop making a hasty escape on horseback, leaving his pursuers afoot and panting in the dust.[25] This anecdotal picture is borne out by other evidence. In addition to their stables, the Merovingians maintained stud farms in the region of Maine[26]; both operations would have required resources, personnel, and a degree of administrative oversight. At the same time, it is important not to overstate the scale of the effort. These, at least under the Merovingians, were probably limited in scope, governed as they were by the social and political needs of a ruling elite rather than by any larger strategic concern.

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[24] Of Charlemagne, Einhard would later write,"[h]e spent much of his time on horseback and out hunting, which came naturally to him, for it would be difficult to find another race on earth who could equal the Franks in this activity." Einhard, *Life of Charlemagne*, in *Two Lives of Charlemagne*, 77.

[25] Gregory of Tours, *History*. For Attalus the slave, see 5.14; for Bishop Egidius, see 6.31.

[26] Bautier and Bautier, "Contributions à l'histoire," 25.

The breeding practice of the times in any case involved a minimal commitment of resources. Called *selvagium,* this mode of horsebreeding—prevalent in Europe throughout this period, and indeed through much of the Middle Ages—represented little more than oversight of a free-ranging herd. As the term suggests, the practice was associated with forest land, with a band of mares left to range at will within a given tract of woodland, fen or moorland.[27] Here, running with a stallion, they would mate, foal, and raise their young, all with a minimum of human intervention. The size of the herd could vary; Salian law specified herds of seven or twelve mares per stallion, with a small herd considered to be one having six mares or fewer.[28] In a reflection of the land's legal designation, these were typically termed woodland mares, *silvestres* or *equae selvaticae*.[29]

As suggested by Pope Gregory's letter, the distinction between *selvagium* and a true feral state must have been slender at times; the term *chevaux sauvages*, for example, encompassed both, while *indomitae*, literally meaning untrained, could likewise be used to mean either a young horse unbroken to the saddle or a truly wild one.[30] Nonetheless these woodland mares should not be confused with wild horses.[31]

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[27] The term "forest" is used here in its technical, inclusive sense. See Dent and Goodall, *Foals of Epona,* 102; Gladitz, *Horse Breeding,* 144.

[28] Bautier and Bautier, "Contributions à l'histoire," 16.

[29] As a result, such herds, as breeding populations, were affected by the progressive elaboration of forest law. See Dent and Goodall, *Foals of Epona,* 93; Gladitz, *Horse Breeding,* 144.

[30] A.-M. Bautier makes a clear distinction between woodland mares (*equae silvestres or selvaticae)* and feral mares *(equae indomitae),* following Domesday Book in this regard. Gladitz, however, parsing the context of the Domesday references, suggests that both may have been demesne woodland populations in different stages of reversion to the wild. Bautier, "Contribution à l'histoire," 216; Gladitz, *Horse Breeding,* 143–4.

[31] Dent and Goodall offer "shy and untamed" as a more accurate translation of *selvaticus*. *Foals of Epona,* 93.

Such herds were managed, albeit in an unobtrusive way, by a keeper or *custos*—the "shepherd" whose wages the pope was so loathe to pay—and subjected each year to a simple but systematic regime in which the young stock of a designated age would be separated out, the colts to be gelded or not and either sold or gentled, and the fillies, typically, released as a new band.

This practice, so simple in outline and modest in its material demands, was elastic enough to accommodate a range of constituencies and needs over time. References to such herds abound, both as the property of monasteries and of private individuals, typically conveyed through gifts and bequests. In 651, for example, we find the Bishop of Orléans Leodebode bequeathing part of his horse herd to the abbey of Saint-Victeur du Mans.[32] Similar bequests dot Anglo-Saxon wills of the late tenth century: "to Cynlefu her share of the untamed horses (*wildera horsa)* which are with Eadmaer's," "to the monastery at Burton a hundred wild horses (*wildera horsa)* and sixteen tame geldings (*hencgsta*)," "[to his] stag huntsman the stud (*pæs stodes*) which is on Colungahrycg;"[33] "half his stud (*stodes)* to his wife and half to his companions-in-arms (*geferan).*"[34] If in secular hands, such herds were subject to the tithe, with every tenth live foal to be given to the church.[35]

Forest mares appear also as part of the royal fisc, as evidenced in the Carolingian capitulary *De Villis*, issued at a time when the military use of horses was coming into play. Concerned with the overall management of the royal estates, *De*

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[32] Bautier and Bautier, "Contribution à l'histoire," 25.

[33] Dorothy Whitelock, *Anglo-Saxon Wills* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1930), 11–15, 47, 61.

[34] Davis, *Medieval Warhorse*, 74.

[35] Gladitz, *Horse Breeding,* 170.

Villis outlines provisions for the management of the horse herds, including specific instructions for stallions and mares, fillies and colts. The objective is straightforward enough: to produce numbers of healthy horses in an economical manner. Stallions, for example, are to be moved periodically to avoid the destruction of pasture, and old, sick or moribund studs to be replaced before breeding season.[36]

These procedures and instructions reflect one aspect of a larger administrative structure, conceived within the framework of the royal household, which had been created to oversee the palace stables and estate studs. This administrative apparatus, in turn, gave rise to a functional hierarchy around the care of the king's horses. That such a structure already existed under the Merovingians is confirmed in Gregory's *Historia*, as, for example, in his reference to the *jumentorum fiscalium custos,* the "keeper of the mares of the fisc."[37] As will be seen, Gregory also introduces us to a few of the individuals who held these offices.

These were clearly ranked. The *custos,* charged with the actual care and safeguarding of a herd, stood at the bottom of the hierarchy. At its head, with overall responsibility for the king's horses, was the *comes stabuli*, or Count of the Stable, a high household official enjoying considerable power. Below him served another officer or group of officers bearing the title of marshal: the *mariscalcus* or *marescallus*, a term taken from the German words *marchaz* and *skalkaz* and literally

[36] Ernst W. Wies, ed. and trans., *Capitulare de Villis et Curtis Imperibus* (Aachen: Einhard, 1992), 50-52, 72.

[37] Gregory of Tours, *History*, 8.40.

meaning "horse-servant."[38] Below the marshal came the *polidorius,* charged with care of the *polledros* or young stock, and finally the *custos,* as mentioned above.

These positions encompassed social extremes. In what would prove to be an enduring pattern, they embraced the contradictory aspects of the stable, of rank and power on one hand and menial labor on the other. The *custos,* for example, might be a slave, as in Gregory's tale of the enslaved hostage Attalus.[39] The *marescallus,* or marshal, meanwhile, though certainly higher in rank, was subject to a distinct ambiguity, as suggested in the title's hybrid etymology; while enjoying the prestige accorded a member of the royal household, he occupied a distinctly inferior position within it. Of the eight Merovingian palace officials, his appears to have been the bottom rung, a dubious distinction shared with the butler.[40] That this was not unique to the Franks is shown by comparable dispositions in royal Anglo-Saxon households.[41]

At the same time, however, the *marescallus* was affiliated with the powerful *comes stabuli,* a pairing which, in the positions of Marshal and Constable, would remain fixed through subsequent centuries and incarnations. Something of the

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[38] Davis, *Medieval Warhorse*, 84.

[39] Gregory of Tours, *History*, 3.15.

[40] Bachrach, "Animals and Warfare," 710; Davis, *Medieval Warhorse,* 84.

[41] The tenth-century Anglo-Saxon court roughly resembled that of the Carolingians in terms of its officers and hierarchy. Household positions included seneschal, chamberlain, butler and royal chaplain. While the title of marshal existed, it still indicated a fairly low-ranking servant; only in the twelfth century would it come to supersede the important, if controversial, Anglo-Saxon office of the staller. In Teutonic lands, on the other hand, from the tenth century on, the marshal was one of the "four great officers" of the royal household, the chamberlain, steward and butler being the other three. Laurence Marcellus Larson, *The King's Household in England Before the Norman Conquest* (Madison, WI: repr. from *Bulletin of the University of Wisconsin*, No. 100, vol. no. 2. Hist. Series, 1904), 124, 186 and 194. Also see J.F.A. Mason, "Barons and Their Officials in the Later Eleventh Century," *Anglo-Norman Studies* XIII (1991): 243–62.

position and character of the latter office can be discerned, once again, from Gregory's *History,* which includes mention of two Counts of the Stable and a third man described as having that responsibility. Though a tiny sampling, it is sufficient to add some anecdotal flesh to dry bones.

The two identified by title, Sunnegesil and Chuppa, are clearly men of influence and enjoy a position of trust within the royal household. They are also active participants in factional intrigue and violence. Sunnegesil suffers confiscation of property and banishment for his part in a plot against the royal family; subsequently repatriated, he is last seen breaking under torture following an attempt on the king's life. Chuppa, Master of the Stables under King Chilperic, at first appears only as a trusted and competent royal servant; we find him conscientiously executing two separate commissions for Queen Fredegund, both outside the scope of ordinary responsibilities. When next encountered, however, he has become a brigand—not such a leap, perhaps, given the general bad behavior of the powerful in Gregory's pages. In his new guise Chuppa is found leading raids on the countryside around Tours, bribing his way to a pardon, and finally attempting the forcible abduction of the daughter of the bishop of Le Mans, only to be driven off by the girl's mother and a contingent of hastily-armed household servants in what Gregory charitably describes as "a pretty discreditable affair."

The third account, while not so colorful, is in a sense the most revealing, less through specific incident than by the assumptions which Gregory brings to it. His subject this time is Pelagius, a citizen of Tours whom the bishop describes as "a man well versed in all manner of evil-doing, and who revered no judge*, insofar as the*

guardians of the royal horses were under his control. As a result," Gregory continues, "he was responsible for endless robberies, attacks, assaults, woundings and crimes of all kinds."[42]

If the officials responsible for the king's horses were reputed to prey occasionally on his subjects, their equine charges were well-protected under Salian law. The gradation of fines for theft reveals the Frankish hierarchy of equine value as well as the bases of differentiation: gender, related primarily to breeding value; use; and owner's rank Not surprisingly, theft of the king's stallion incurred the heaviest fine, 3600 denarii or its equivalent, ninety solidi (38.4). Next was that of a stallion having a herd of mares, at 2500 denarii or 62½ solidi (38.6). After this, ranked equally, was theft of a Frank's stallion (38.2), a pregnant mare (38.7), or, interestingly, a cart horse (38.1), all valued at 1800 denarii or forty-five solidi each. The lowest fine, 1400 denarii or thirty-five solidi, was reserved for the gelding (38.3) and the work horse (38.11). Some sense of the relative weight of these crimes may be gleaned from the fact that the theft of a stallion having a herd of mares was held, in terms of *wergeld,* to be the equivalent of kidnapping a Roman (39.5).[43]

The shift to cavalry warfare, taking place among the Franks in the eighth and ninth centuries, and among the Saxons roughly one hundred years later, sharply increased the need for horses and introduced a host of new considerations and difficulties. The timing of military operations, for example, was adjusted to meet the

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[42] Gregory of Tours, *History*. For Sunnegesil, see 9.38 and 10.19; for Chuppa, see 5.39 and 10.5; for Pelagius, see 8.40. The emphasis in the last passage is mine.

[43] *Laws of the Salian and Ripuarian Franks,* trans. Theodore John Rivers (New York: AMS Press, 1986), 80-83.

need for fodder, as in 820 when a campaign was delayed to assure that the grass would be sufficiently lush to support a large number of horses.[44] The problem of equine supply was met through a number of expedients, among them the levying of tribute and the taking of horses as spoils of war, as in 758, when Pepin III is recorded as demanding a tribute of up to three hundred horses annually from the Saxons.[45] Royal restrictions were placed on the sale or export of horses. In 781, for example, in the Capitulary of Mantua, Charlemagne prohibited the export of stallions (*ammisarios)*, along with that of arms and female slaves.[46] A more pointed prohibition was enacted by Charles the Bald in the Edict of Pitres of 864, specifically forbidding the sale of arms or horses to Northmen,[47] while in the early tenth century, the Saxon king Aethelstan prohibited export of any horse whatsoever overseas.[48]

Initially at least, however, the need to mount a force occasioned no major reallocation of resources. The terms of military obligation were simply redefined to assure a sufficient muster of mounted men, with provision made for the expense of the undertaking; for example, three householders of insufficient means individually were to pool their resources to outfit a fourth. However, the particular implements of war—sword, shield, warhorse and armor—begin to figure prominently in heriots, pointing to their growing importance and anticipating a time when these would prove

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[44] *Royal Frankish Annals*, AD 820, in *Carolingian Chronicles: Royal Frankish Annals and Nithard's Histories*, ed. and trans. Bernhard Walter Scholz, with Barbara Rogers (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1972).

[45] *Royal Frankish Annals*, 42.

[46] Davis, *Medieval Warhorse*, 53.

[47] Davis, *Medieval Warhorse*, 53.

[48] Davis, *Medieval Warhorse*, 73.

militarily, and socially, determinative. Those of late tenth-century Anglo-Saxon wills are indicative: one heriot includes two swords with sheaths; two gold armlets, three stallions and three shields; another, a sum of gold, two silver-hilted swords, four horses, two saddled and two unsaddled, "and weapons due with them." A third heriot entails two horses, two swords, four shields, four spears and, additionally, ten mares with ten colts, suggesting the new strategic value of the *equae selvaticae*. The church was not exempt; a bishop's heriot includes 200 marks of red gold, his four best horses, four shields and four spears, in addition to three estates.[49] The emergence of the horse at the heart of social, political and military power was at hand.

Part 2. Elaborating and Redefining Hierarchies

The political and economic changes of the eleventh and twelfth centuries saw a comparable expansion of the role of horses in European life. Materially, they offered power and mobility, contributing to increased food production and commercial growth. Henri Ribémont perceptively identifies the horse's semiotic role as an "identifying sign, the privileged bearer (in every sense of the word) of the identity of the *chevalier,* the knight. It would come to indicate personal virtue as well as social estate, the implication being that a good knight would, all things being equal, have a good horse."[50] While Ribémont makes this assertion in the literary

[49] Whitelock, *Anglo-Saxon Wills,* 3; Davis, *Medieval Warhorse*, 74–5.

[50] "[L]e cheval se révèle être le signe identificateur, le porteur privilégié (dans tous les sens du terme) de l'identité du chevalier, du miles. Il en est aussi un marqueur de personnalité et de caractère: un bon chevalier aura en général, en situation normale, un bon cheval." Ribémont, with Prévot, *Le Cheval en France*, 207.

context of the *chanson,* one may extend it into the broader society, as horses offered a ground on which discordant values could be reconciled or suppressed and shifting boundaries accommodated. This process played out in three unstable areas: first, in the relationship between the church and the warrior nobility; second, within that nobility, reordered at its lower boundaries and undergoing redefinition; and finally, within the larger society, as the formal tripartite hierarchy, born of an agrarian world, encountered the irreducible energies of the town and the marketplace.

In a reflection of this process the horse too underwent change, both materially, in an elaboration of type and function, and conceptually, as a medium for the elucidation of status and the articulation of values. Differences appeared, and were accentuated and sharpened, as the animal became a site of textual as well as practical interest.

Among the most significant changes of the eleventh century was the reconfiguration of the role and purpose of the warrior. While this transformation would redefine the nobility itself, it took shape at the lower reaches of the caste, along the permeable boundary governed by functional service more than status. The function itself entailed fighting on horseback; thus the horse became the visible sign through which the assimilation into the community of warriors was accomplished and its assigned significance articulated.

Of key interest among those changes marking the latter tenth and eleventh centuries has been the socio-economic identity of the individual designated by the term *miles*. In the course of this period the term came to signify the fighter on horseback, a concept also subsumed in the Germanic terms *ridere* and *cniht.* A

problem arises, however, in matching terminology to evolving meaning and practice, complicated by the variable and often opaque language of the records. Scholars have established that the actual meaning, and hence the associations, of such terms as *miles*, *ritter*, and even "knight" itself, were contingent rather than fixed, varying according to regional usage, context, and the writer's attention. In some instances, even this much may only be inferred, as in the case of the word *miles* as used in Domesday Book.[51] Also obscuring the picture is the vivid and tenacious grip of chivalric images fostered at a later date, especially that of the fully-realized knight. In fact, none of these terms initially implied high estate, social or otherwise. In Germanic usage, for example, the designation of knight was socially indeterminate, and in literary accounts originally indicated the anonymous fighting man, not the solitary hero. "The people who do not matter," writes Bumke, "in whose fate no one is interested, who are counted in hundreds and thousands, are called knights. When a hero strikes home, a dozen of them die at once."[52]

This lowly connotation, standing in sharp contrast to the ingrained aristocratic associations of the man on horseback, appears far more indicative of the actual position of the early eleventh-century *miles*, taken as the mounted man in the ranks. As characterized by Georges Duby in his study of the Mâconnais, the local eminence of the *miles*, such as it was, reflected his military role, the personal if decidedly subordinate association with the *castellan* which came with it, and, above all, the economic resources which enabled him to outfit himself with horse, arms and armor.

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[51] Fleming, "Landholding by Milites," 94–5. Also see Brown, "Status of the Norman Knight," 18–32, and Bumke, *Concept of Knighthood*, 154–6.

[52] Bumke, *Concept of Knighthood*, 26.

His position was both indeterminate and tenuous, vulnerable to any reversal which might plunge him back into the ranks of the peasantry. Such men, David Crouch asserts, may have exercised a certain appeal or even glamour, but it was one that ran against the social and religious grain. As evidence he cites Richer of Reims, who, commenting on the marriage of Charles of Lorraine, found it shameful that a noble should marry a woman "from the people of the rank of knight (*de militis ordine*)."[53]

The very acknowledgement of the *miles* as belonging to a recognized rank or *ordo*, however, is worth noting, since his ascent to the elevated status of knight would be accomplished in large measure through the creation, both from within and without, of a distinctive caste. From one perspective, it may be seen as a natural consequence of shared activities and concerns which bound him to the castellan in a community of interest. These would include an emergent code of arms and the more personal ties of service, whether as a feudatory, a member of the household retinue, or both.[54]

One can chart the progress of this phenomenon by tracking the changes that take place in markers of identity. Beginning in the 970s, for example, small landholders began to assume the "title" of *miles*; by the 1030's it had been taken up by nobles as well, and used in charters in lieu of the term *nobiles*.[55] This pattern, first identified by Georges Duby in Mâconnais, has since been also confirmed for Picardy, Flanders, Berry, Normandy, Languedoc, Catalonia and Lombardy, all by the mid-

[53] Crouch, *Image of Aristocracy*, 124–5.

[54] Crouch, *Image of Aristocracy,* 126.

[55] Duby, *Chivalrous Society,* 75–9.

eleventh century.[56] The practice of sealing also appears around this time. It is interesting to note, however, that when the feudal nobility began to use seals, ca. 1050, they reverted to their comital titles, adopting the more conservative convention for the more personal and permanent insignia. Only later does the title *miles* appear on noble seals, suggesting that it was still somewhat ambiguous in the mid-eleventh century.[57]

The small landowner, however, quicker than the noble to adopt *miles* as a title, was just as quick to adopt the use of the seal, likewise ca. 1050. By 1080 the common knight, the original *miles,* had begun to seal as well. If, as Brigitte Bedos-Rezak asserts, the seal is taken as a fixed and tangible assertion of identity, the adoption of sealing suggests that all were coalescing into a single caste, even if the nobility showed some residual hesitation concerning the term *miles* itself.[58] All, moreover, sealed with the same image—that of an armed horseman.

If the horse was becoming central to the identity of an emergent warrior caste, however, its importance appears to have been solely functional. In the *Chanson de Roland*, for example, contemporary with these developments, the protagonists' horses are acknowledged and often named: Roland's Veillantif, Gerin's Sorel, Gerier's Passecerf, Charlemagne's Tencendor. Beyond this, however, they receive little if any

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[56] Crouch, *Image of Aristocracy,* 121. The German lands were the exception, lagging by roughly a century.

[57] Bedos-Rezak, "Medieval Seals," 330. The above discussion of sealing and its implications is drawn from this article.

individuation.[59] They are what they are, simply "swift war-horses,"[60] and their handling in the work is matter-of-fact and unsentimental.

This is particularly evident when contrasted with the reverence accorded swords. Swords, like horses, are given names, as for example with Roland's *Durandel.* Of the two, however, it is the sword that is invested with significance and character, and addressed with emotion. The difference is crystallized in the epic's tragic sequence of Roland's unhorsing, wounding, and death. His war horse Veillantif dies first, felled by thirty wounds. The charger's passing, however, merits no lament or tribute, and his body is left without a backward glance. Concern centers instead on Roland's practical dilemma, as he finds himself afoot and unable to pursue the enemy:

> However, they wounded Veillantif in thirty places
> Under the Count, and they left him dead.
> The pagans flee, thus letting him be.
> Count Roland now remains on foot.
>
> The pagans flee, angry and vexed,
> They strive with all their might to reach Spain.
> Count Roland does not have any way to pursue them,

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[59] Archbishop Turpin's charger is the only one described in detail, conforming in its particulars to the ideal horse of the learned tradition:

> The archbishop opens the battle.
> He sits astride the horse he took from Grossaille,
> A king he killed in Denmark.
> The war-horse is swift and spirited,
> It has hollowed-out hooves and flat legs,
> Short haunch and very broad croup,
> Long flanks and yellow mane,
> Small ears, a completely tawny head,
> There is no animal that can outrun it.

Turpin's stallion is also anonymous, however, notable primarily for its provenance. A spoil of battle taken from the king of Denmark, the magnificent animal merely serves as testament to Archbishop Turpin's prowess in battle. The singular reference to color underscores its alien, pagan origins. *The Chanson de Roland,* trans. Frances F. Beer (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969). On the color of Turpin's horse, see Alice Planche, "De quelques couleurs de robe," in *Le Cheval dans le monde médieval* (Aix-en-Provence: C.U.E.R.M.A., 1992), 406.

[60] *Chanson de Roland* 1142.

He has lost his war-horse Veillantif,
Willy-nilly, he now remains on foot.[61]

Durendal, on the other hand, receives a vaulting encomium, in which Roland details the lands and peoples he has conquered with the sword and the sacred relics contained in its hilt.

"Oh, Durendal, how beautiful you are and how very holy!
There are many relics in the golden hilt:
Saint Peter's tooth, some of Saint Basil's blood,
Some of my lord Saint Denis's hair,
Some of Saint Mary's clothing.
It is not right for pagans to own you.
You must be served by Christians.
May no coward ever possess you!
With you I conquered many vast lands
Over which white-bearded Charles rules,
And the Emperor is powerful and mighty as a consequence."[62]

With his last strength Roland shatters the sword, to prevent its use by infidels. This veneration, so clearly identifying the weapon with Christian piety, anticipates the time when the gonfanon on nobles'seals, the banner signifying their role as leader of the host, would be replaced by a sword, a change coinciding with the introduction of ceremonial dubbing and, in the blessing of the sword, an overt sacralization of the military.

If the horse's significance to the fighting men of the period remained essentially functional, it provided the church a useful metaphor for the vices associated with them. The imagery of restraint and disorder made for a forceful moral. Thus even as the armed horseman a common presence in the land, his image

[61] *Chanson de Roland* 2152–68.

[62] *Chanson de Roland* 2344–54.

began to show up elsewhere as well, though in a different context and bearing a different association. Appearing on church and cathedral façades, in monumental relief, the horse was shown stumbling with the rider flying from his back, vividly illustrating the words "Pride goeth before the fall."[63]

In a neat convergence of literary convention and theological tradition, the armed horseman had long since come to personify Pride, the chief of the seven cardinal vices. The principal source for medieval disquisitions on this particular vice, and on the seven cardinal vices as a whole, was the fourth-century work *Psychomachia* of Prudentius. The late antique poem, markedly martial in character, depicts an allegorical battle between virtue and vice, good and evil, with the soul as prize. In this context the vices are introduced one by one, as allegories, all feminine, with each disposed and garbed according to her nature. Of the seven only Pride, vividly described, rides into battle on horseback:

> It chanced that Pride was galloping about, all puffed up, through the widespread squadrons, on a mettled steed which she had covered with a lion's skin, laying the weight of shaggy hair over its strong shoulders, so that being seated on a wild beast's mane she might make a more imposing figure as she looked down on the columns with swelling disdain.[64]

Her mount, likewise proud, is willful and headstrong, fighting the bit:

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[63] Little, "Pride Goes before Avarice," 31–37. Little cites examples in Conques, at the church of St. Foy (35), and on the south porch of Chartres (33).

[64] Prudentius, *Psychomachia,* trans. H. J. Thomson, in *Prudentius* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1969). Line numbers are given in parentheses.

> . . . . . .
> forte per effusas inflata Superbia turmas
> effreni volitabat equo, quem pelle leonis
> texerat et validos villis oneraverat armos,
> quo se fulta iubis iactiantius illa ferinis
> inferret tumido despectans agmina fastu. (78-182)

> Her charger also, too spirited to stand still, carries itself proudly, ill brooking to have its mouth curbed with the bit it is champing. This way and that it backs in its rage, since it is denied freedom to run off and is angered at the pressure of the reins."[65]

She is opposed by Lowliness, "a princess she, indeed, but standing in need of others' help and wanting trust in her own provision."[66]

This portrayal of Pride would resonate throughout the early Middle Ages. Convention required one vice to be held as supreme, and of the seven, only two are so identified in scripture. The first is avarice, with Paul proclaiming in 1 Timothy 6:10 that "Cupidity is the root of all evil things." More influential, however, at least until the twelfth century, was the dictum of Ecclesiasticus 10:13: "Pride is the beginning of all sin."

That Pride should be allegorized as a martial figure on horseback, following the precedent of the immensely influential *Psychomachia*, would seem to follow almost as a matter of course. Over time this figure, no longer female, would become instead the image of a "mighty person seated on a horse...usually armed with at least a sword."[67] The medieval church's appropriation of the armed horseman on these terms clearly articulated a stance opposing, or at least challenging, the assumptions and values by which a self-willed nobility secured its own privilege.

The horse fulfilled its symbolic purpose admirably, in keeping with a well-established tradition associating it with pride, vice, and willful desire. As seen earlier,

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[65] nec minus instabili sonipes feritate superbit,
inpatiens madidis frenarier ora lupatis.
huc illuc frendens obvertit terga, negata
libertatate fugae pressisque tumescit habenis. (190–194)

[66] Mens Humilis, regina quidem, sed egens alieni
auxilii proprio nec sat confisa paratu. (199–200)

[67] Little, "Pride Goes before Avarice," 31.

for example, Gregory of Tours, making no secret of his disapproval of the unrestrained license of his age, overtly associated the horse with a culture of highborn violence. In its turn, this everyday experience of aristocratic criminality, embodied by the man on horseback, could serve the church as a homily of sorts, a living manifestation of the vice of Pride. The Venerable Bede offers an instructive comparison. While Gregory serves up an earthy, bloody actuality to which he himself brings the necessary dimension of moral judgment, Bede's history unfolds within a divinized landscape. Here the horse serves repeatedly as a foil, providing the exemplum of human pride and weakness so that the countervailing force of saintly virtue may be more effectively portrayed.

Even from Bede, however, we can catch the excitement of the horse's presence, the visceral flash of movement and thunder of hoofbeats—perhaps the more so, given the seductive role it plays. Such is the case of the clerk Herebald, who in recounting an incident from his "lusty youth" offers the unexpected glimpse of an impromptu horse race. Recalling that day, he describes how, "overcome with wantonness of spirit" and "trusting full well the excellency of the horse" his bishop had given him, he joined the race in defiance of his superior—unable to resist as "many times they fetched their horses to and fro at full speed before the eyes of the bishop and me."[68] Young Herebald, of course, by way of divine chastisement, jumps a ditch, falls from his mount and cracks his skull on a providentially concealed stone. Repentant, he is healed through the prayers and patient ministrations of the saintly bishop John.

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[68] Bede, *Opera Historica,* trans. J.E. King (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), 2: 5.6.

Elsewhere the moral is more straightforward. Aidan, bishop of Lindisfarne, having received a superb horse [*equum optimum*] from King Oswin, immediately hands it off to a poor man begging for alms, much to the king's chagrin. Chastised for giving a royal horse to a beggar, Aidan reminds the monarch of the proper ranking of earthly pomp and spiritual humility. "Why talketh your Grace thus? Is that son of a mare dearer in your sight than that son of God?" [69]

In a subsequent and interesting inversion of this motif of the riding horse, Chad, the bishop of York and Mercia, accepts a mount from his superior Theodore, but reluctantly, only after the archbishop lifts him bodily into the saddle.[70] Aidan had disdained the prideful horse given him by a king; Chad, on the other hand, by denying the dictates of his own humility to accept one from his superior, demonstrates the virtue of obedience.

In each of these the horse offers the means by which Bede may illustrate a failing and draw an appropriate moral, his oppositional strategy satisfying the needs of a gentle didacticism. Twice, however, the direct exercise or invocation of spiritual power occurs *through* the horse, in a kind of fierce cooptation. One, the first miracle associated with the site of King Oswald's death in battle, involves the healing of a riding horse, the animal having been stricken with agonized seizures.[71] Even more striking is Bede's account of the pagan priest Coifi, who, having experienced conversion, takes up weapons and mounts a war horse in order to desecrate his own altar:

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[69] Bede, *Opera*, 1: 3.14.

[70] Bede, *Opera*, 2: 4.3.

[71] Bede, *Opera*, 1: 3.9.

> And incontinently casting away vain superstition he besought the king to grant him harness and a stallion war horse [*equum emissarium*] whereon he might mount and come to destroy the idols. For it was not before lawful for a priest of the sacrifices either to wear harness or to ride on other than a mare. Girded therefore with a sword about his loins he took a spear in his hand, and mounting the king's war horse set forth against the idols.[72]

A comparable example, including the inversion motif of riding-as-obedience, is found in the ninth-century life of St. Corbinian (d. 730), bishop of Freising. Ordered by the Pope, against his own wishes, to return to Bavaria, Corbinian travels there on horseback, riding through northern Italy on a stallion—in one version identified as *iberus,* or Spanish—so magnificent that it catches the covetous eye of the Lombard king Huisingus. Unable to buy the horse, Huisingus has it stolen and puts it to stud; subsequently, in divine retribution for the crime, the hired thief is stricken down, as are all the mares thus serviced. Terrified, the penitent king gives the saint two more stallions of even higher quality.[73]

Thus the horse is appropriated by priests and saints who, through an act of symbolic inversion, turn its power against the Church's enemies. This anticipates the motif of the *miles Christi,* projected into the chivalric figure of the knight, and that final conflation of church and sword, the great military orders of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. An earlier, and in a sense, transitional example is found in a sermon of Anselm of Canterbury, as he uses the metaphor of the war horse to preach to the warrior. His theme is that of self-control, discipline and obedience. While

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[72] Bede, *Opera*, 1: 2.13.

[73] "Cum autem ad Tredentanum castrum vir Dei pervenit, ubi tunc a Langobardorum rege comes nuper erat positus nomine Husingus. Hic quoque cum viri Dei amissarium valde decorum forma vidisset, emere concupivit. Quem cum emere non potuit, furto silenter tollere iussit: cuius vindictam a Deo ordinatam ad tempus narrationis et ordinem reservamus." From vita retractus B, *Vita Corbiniani. Bischof Arbeo von Freising und die Lebengeschichte des hl. Korbinian,* trans. and ed. Hubert Glaser, Franz Bruhölzl and Sigmund Benker (Munich and Zurich: Verlag Schnell & Steiner, 1983), 112.

drawing on the Platonic convention of the horse as a dualist adjunct of the soul, either subdued and good or unruly and troublesome, he recasts it in the terms of the body as a war horse, with the latter offering an obvious and readily comprehensible object lesson to a warrior audience.

The knight's horse is his friend and ally, Anselm says, as long as it obeys the commands of bit and spur. But it may also be willful and disobedient, resisting these and fighting to go its own way. "When a knight goes against the enemy, an obedient horse is his surest ally, but a disobedient horse will bring disaster. The same is true in the battle against the Devil in which the body is the horse of the soldier of Christ; the bit, is that which is called abstinence...."[74]

In a sense, church and nobility would subsequently meet within the horse, which offered a singularly apt symbolic vehicle for the moral reorientation of the latter. The new ideal, like the old, was premised on exceptionalism. This conformed to the political trends of the period, as authorities, both secular and ecclesiastical, sought to elevate knighthood by restricting access to it. Here restraint and status went hand in hand, with order and hierarchy juxtaposed against disorder and low estate. In 1140, Robert II prohibited the knighting of men "who might disturb the peace," aimed against disaffected peasants and merchants. In 1152 and 1179, German

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[74] "Miles imperare, equi obtemperare. Nequamquam namque miles contra adversarium decenter pugnare poterit, nisi equus suus sibi subiectus fuerit et nisi sibi per omnia oboederit. Sed quia est animal mutum et non habet intellectum, miles capiti eius frenum imponit, quo eum huc et illuc etiam cum noluerit, secundum propriam voluntatem flectere posit. Neque enim expedite advsersus suum pugnare poterit adversarium, nisi in equo suo habuerit frenum. Nam quomodo ipsi hosti fortiter resisteret, cum sibi proprius equus multotiens repugnaret?... Similiter et miles Christi, si vult legitime certare contra diabolum, debet in equo suo habere frenum. Frenus, autem, quo huiusmodi equus regitur, abstinentia dicitur." Anselm of Canterbury, *De humanibus moribus per similitudines,* in *Memorials of St. Anselm,* ed. R.W. Southern and F.S. Schmitt (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), 99.

peasants were prohibited from bearing arms.[75] In 1186, Frederick I issued an edict restricting knighthood to the sons of knights. He specifically cited illegitimacy and servile status as grounds for exclusion, these being directed respectively against the sons of priests and those of peasants. In the same vein, in 1231 Frederick II ordered that "[n]o one shall acquire the standing of a knight who is not of knightly family unless by grace of our special licence and mandate." In 1235, the Cortes of Catalonia similarly mandated, "We decree that no one shall be knighted unless he is a knight's son."[76] Within this caste the lower tier, while elevated above the common run, was still subordinate. Their subordination, however, was consecrated by an ideology of service.

Rooted in a kind of paradoxical exceptionalism, this ideology is vividly captured in the Vulgate Lancelot, where one finds an elaboration of the theme of the knight-as-servant: servant of the highest calling, servant by virtue of his own excellence, servant who is himself served. It is provided by Lancelot's mother, the Lady of the Lake, who, in answer to his plea to "set forth to me how great a charge is chivalry so that none may be so hardy as to become a knight," replies:

> [T]he knight was created to protect Holy Church, for she may not further her by means of arms, or render evil for evil. And therefore was the knight created that he might protect her that turneth the left cheek, when she hath been smitten on the right. And wit ye well that at the beginning, even as it is written, none was so hardy that he mounted

[75] Susan Reynolds notes that the 1252 prohibition was conditional in nature, with peasants allowed and even expected to bear arms under certain circumstances. Thus she cautions against too broad a reading of the intent and effect of such acts. While a general disarmament of peasants may have been underway, she asserts, the 1252 act was "but an early signal of what would be a slow and halting trend." *Fiefs and Vassals,* 470.

[76] Richard Barber, *The Knight & Chivalry* (New York: Charles Scribner's & Sons, 1970), 16.

> on a horse, if he were not already a knight. And for this reason were knights called horsemen, or *cheval-iers*.[77]

The knight, she explains, is to be as protective as the hauberk; as visible in his righteous vigilance as the helmet, as fearsome from afar as the lance. The sword, "of all arms the honoured and the most worthy," has a threefold significance, since with it "may one do threefold harm." One edge smites the enemies of the Church, and the other the enemies of the people, "them that rob and kill one another"(99). It is the point, however, by which one may kill by stabbing, which has a special importance. It

> signifieth obedience, for all folk should obey the knight. The point signifieth obedience right well, for it pricketh, and naught, neither loss of lands nor of goods, pricketh the heart so sore as to obey from force and against its will. Such is the significance of the sword (99).

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Of the horse, however, she says:

> But the horse, whereon the knight sitteth and that beareth him wherever he must go, signifieth the people. For even so should they bear the knight in all his needs, and upon them should he be mounted. The people should bear the knight in this wise, for they should seek and purvey for him all whereof he hath need for honourable living, that he may guard and protect them both night and day. And upon the people should he be mounted, for even as he who sitteth upon the horse spurreth it and driveth it where he would be, so should the knight drive the people according to his will and in subjection, for that he is and should be above them. Thus ye may see that the knight should be lord of his people and servant to the Lord God (99–100).

The tip of the sword thus signifies the knight's access to coercive force, while the two edges restrain it. Of the knight's attributes, however, only the horse represents the symbolic "other," with mutual responsibility couched in terms that establish the knight's superior status and authority.

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[77] *Sir Lancelot of the Lake: A French Prose Romance of the Thirteenth Century*, trans. Lucy Allen Paton (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1929), 97. Further references from this text will be cited parenthetically.

This change is likewise reflected in the *chansons* of the period. In the older *gestes*, horses had been defined in terms of the their value, understood in purely functional terms—thus Roland's Veillantif, dying unlamented from his thirty arrow wounds. Of all the horses appearing in the epic, only Archbishop Turpin's Danish horse was described in terms of color. Now, however, the horse emerges as a sentient being endowed with emotions, intellect and virtues. As befits the horse of a knight, the steed of the one man chosen from a thousand, he is characterized in exceptionalist terms.

The template for this anthropomorphized creature was already present in the period, originating in the writings of Pliny and other ancient authors and made available by a host of encyclopedists, all working in the tradition of Isidore of Seville. Particularly prominent among these are Vincent of Beauvais' *Speculum naturale* and *Speculum maius,* Thomas de Cantimpré's *Liber de natura rerum,* Bartholomew of England's *De proprietatibus rerum* and Brunetto Latini's *Livre dou Tresor.* In their comprehensiveness and exegetical character, these writings reflect their authors' desire to encompass and order the knowledge of the world, and their theological frame of reference. Nonetheless, they make ample use of such classical sources as they have, while likewise relying heavily upon Isidore.

Thus, in their treatment of the horse, they follow a common, if not identical, pattern. Isidore's fourfold criteria for judging a horse, for example—"*forma, pulchritudo, meritum atque color*"[78]—passes into their works, as does his prescription for the well-conformed horse; as an illustration of its diffusion into the culture, one

[78] Isidore, *Etymologiae*, 12.1.

may find the particulars in the description of Archbishop Turpin's horse (17n58). As these writers all drew more or less on the same repertoire of ancient sources, either directly or through Isidore, their works share a common stock of tales and assertions. Through selection and reiteration, certain attributed characteristics and qualities would emerge and take on an authority of their own, substantiated by anecdotal evidence similarly recited. In the process, these acquired an added legitimacy. These "invariants," as Henri Ribémont calls them,[79] then passed into common usage, most often taken up as literary tropes but in some instances also passing into hippiatric and hippological writings.

The following is a representative selection, with most of the items taken from Thomas of Cantimpré's *Liber de natura rerum.* Thomas indicates as his sources Solinus, Aristotle and Isidore of Seville; to these may be added Pliny the Elder, the original source of much taken from Isidore.

> Horses are found in nearly every part of the world, but the best horses are found in Scythia and Cappadocia…They plunge their nostrils into the water…They rejoice in the sound of the trumpet and glory in battle.[80]

> There were some horses who, having lost their master, chose to die of hunger. Many horses, when their masters die or are killed, shed tears. Indeed Isidore says that alone save for man, horses weep and feel sorrow.[81]

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[79] Ribémont, with B. Prévot, *Cheval en France,* 270.

[80] "Equi, ut dicit Solinus, in universus fere orbis partibus procreantur. Sed illi precipue bonitatus sunt, qui in Sythia et in Capadocia generantur….[P]rofundius nares mergitat in bibendo….Gaudent ad sonitum bucine et congressionibus gloriantur." Thomas of Cantimpré, *Liber de natura rerum* (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1973), 4.34.5. The following citations are all from this work.

[81] "Fuerent etiam equi, qui rectoribus perditis quos diligebant accersierunt mortem fame. Interfectis vel mortuis dominis multi equorum lacrimas fundunt. Solum enim equum preter hominem lacrimari et doloris affectum sentire Ysidorus dicit." 4.34.75–77.

> Some horses delight in the sound of the flute, and may be drawn by it.[82]
>
> Scythian mares conceive by the wind, but their foals never live past three years.[83]
>
> Clipping a mare's mane will quench her lust. Indeed, mares are incited to lust by the glory of their manes.[84]
>
> According to Pliny, if you want a mare to abort her foal, extinguish a candle in front of her nostrils. The same holds true for pregnant women.[85]

As may be seen here, invariants frequently carry moralizing overtones, a legacy of the encyclopedists' exegetical and didactic approach. Those dealing with aspects of breeding differ in essential tone from those dealing with equine sexuality, with the latter either implicitly or explicitly referencing the sexuality of women. In some instances they transform myth into a statement of general fact, as with the legendary Sybarite war horses, said by Pliny to have danced to flutes, who here become "some horses" that "delight in the sound of the flute."

Invariants also tend to emphasize the autonomy of the horse, portraying it as self-willed and voluntary in its involvement with human beings. In the same way, they typically depict the horse in exceptionalist terms, through either generalizations, illustrative anecdotes, or legendary individual animals. The last are usually notable

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[82] "Nonnulli etiam equorum tibiarum cantibus gaudent, et quidam accensis facibus provocantur ad cursum.." 4.34.5–7.

[83] "Eque pullos in Sythia pariunt ex ventis conceptos; sed hii nunquam ultra triennium vivunt." 4.34.23–5.

[84] "Equarum libido iubis tonsis extinguitur. Iubarum enim gloria ad coitum agitantur. Et hoc quidem in mulieribus reperitur." 4.34.7–10.

[85] "Eque, ut dicit Plinius, impregnate aliquando abortivum faciunt, siante nares eius extinguitur candela cerea. Hoc idem mulieribus delicatis posset accidere." 4.34.25–29.

both for their own virtues and for their association with a famous figure of history or legend. Bucephalus, war horse of Alexander the Great, stands out among these; another example is Incitatus, Julius Caesar's horse. Ribémont points out that this trope of the great man/great horse may in turn be traced back to the figure of the centaur, which he rightly notes signifies the kinship of horse and man, but also stands as a mixed being.[86] This latter is of particular interest here, as the centaur tradition—excepting Chiron, the teacher of Achilles—invokes the lower register, the bestial and appetitive nature. As a result, the figure of the heroic man/heroic horse references its own inversion.

In its dominant mode, however, it conforms to the pattern general to these equine invariants. They project human qualities, aspirations and values onto the horse, and in the process narrow the ontological distinction between human and animal. This elevation of the horse in turn serves the glorification of the man: first, and most obviously, through the premise that only a superior horse would be worthy of such a superior man; second, through analogy; to the extent that the horse exceeds his own kind in virtue, courage and understanding, so too does the man exceed his—a superiority made manifest through the animal's beauty and power—and finally, and most significantly, through the horse's resultant *consciousness* of the moral and existential superiority of its human rider. Thus the horse's love and self-sacrifice, while proof of its own virtue, testify even more eloquently to that of its master.

In this way, through its being, it unites and harmonizes the principles of dominance and service. The theme of discipline, on the other hand, remains untapped in this context. Indeed, it is unnecessary precisely because it is already realized in the

[86] Ribémont, with B. Prévot, *Cheval en France*, 272.

perfect harmony of horse and man. The theme of discipline is invoked by the condition of its absence; here, one would look to the tropes dealing with the sexuality and sexual appetite of horses, an echo of the centaur but more immediately, of course, referencing women. The associative force of the invariants accompanied them into the broader culture. Though they would circulate most visibly through literary works, they also made their way into another genre, that dealing with the care and healing of horses, as will be seen in chapter 2.

Against the curiosity and pleasure of the encyclopedists stood another tradition, that of the Church itself.[87] Its position regarding the status of animals was ultimately defined by Genesis I: 26-30, which established three crucial points: that man was made in God's image, while animals were not; that man justly exercised dominion over them, as over the rest of creation; and that animals existed to sustain and serve humankind. On the question of human responsibility to animals, including the moral dimension of kindness and cruelty, the scriptures offered contradictory testimony. The Old Testament offered passages such as that of Ecclesiastes 3:19, which stressed a common bond between man and beast, for "that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them; as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they all have one breadth; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast," or that of Proverbs 12:10, which states that "a righteous man regardeth the life of his beast: but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel." The tenor of the New Testament, on the other hand, is exemplified in the position of Paul, who, following

[87] On the subject of classical and ecclesiastical positions regarding animals, see Passmore, "Treatment of Animals," 195; Cohen, "Ubiquitous Other," 60–61; Hastings, *Man and Beast,* 19; and Maehle and Tröhler, "Animal Experimentation," 17–18.

Augustine's lead, argues for an allegorical or pragmatic interpretation of such passages. The Church, at pains to maintain a fundamental existential separation between human being and animal, cultivated the Pauline/Augustinian position.

Also influential in this regard was the influence of Aristotle; his tripartite division of the human soul into the appetitive, sensitive and intellective faculties denied animals the last, and in so doing offered another basis of distinction and separation. The Stoics made use of this argument, as would Augustine and Aquinas.[88]

As a result, according to the teachings of the Church no moral or religious consequences followed from cruelty to an animal. It only condemned those who enjoyed inflicting pain, and that because it spoke badly for the souls of the individuals involved, and might signal a corresponding cruelty toward people.[89] Of course, the Church's influence, important as it was, was not conclusive; as the invariants suggest, medieval perceptions and conceptions of animals sprang from many sources, and fed others in their turn.[90] Still, one does well to remember that no overarching moral structure encompassed the wellbeing of animals or considered their suffering. Such attentions and protections as they enjoyed remained dependent on the disposition of individuals, and on their value, real or perceived.

With the economic and demographic revival of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the symbolic disposition of the horse would encounter jarring dissonances in the marketplace and on the road, as fresh prosperity fed a degree of social mobility. The horse had its place in this new economy as well, as in the humbler guise of the

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[88] Passmore, "Treatment of Animals," 198.

[89] Passmore, "Treatment of Animals," 195; Maehle and Tröhler, "Animal Experimentation," 17.

[90] Cohen, "The Ubiquitous Other," 60.

pack, plow, and draft animal it sped the pace of production and commerce. Meanwhile more people were riding horseback, middling types now as well as noble. The symbolic construct required adjustment.

Thus one finds a striking elaboration of equine terminology in this period. In the early Middle Ages, terms for the horse had been sparse and approximate, offering only a crude range of differentiation between one animal and another. Early medieval writings, for example, largely made do with the generic terms *equus* and *caballus*, both of classical origin and roughly interchangeable, though *caballus* originally had something of the disparaging connotation of a nag or hack. Their medieval usage varied geographically in terms of preference and shades of meaning, with *equus* preferred in northern Europe and in Italy with its strong classical traditions. *Caballus*, meanwhile—significantly for the evolution of the chivalric vocabulary—came to be preferred in Spain and the Midi. (Mares, in an odd reversal, were typically called *jumenta* in Italy, from another old generic term, and *equae* in Spain.)[91]

To these can be added the *sagmarius, affer* and *paraveredus*, all terms descriptive of function. The *sagmarius*, an old Roman military term, was the word for pack horse, and the *affer*, also spelled *apfer* or *afer*, that used for the lowly plow horse. *Paraveredus*, meanwhile, like *sagmarium* of late classical origin, was a half-Greek/half-Latin term originally used for an imperial post horse or courier's horse. Its association with official business survived into Carolingian times, but in an altered context, as the word appears in documents in connection with horses loaned to

[91] Bautier, "Contribution à l'histoire," 211.

discharge *servitium* obligations or those used by *missi* and other court officials.[92] Finally, one encounters the terms identifying the horse's gait: *currens, trottans* and *amblans.* [93] Another term, *runcinus*, turns up in the Domesday inventories, of modestly higher value than the *afer*, it appears to have been a horse of all work, and was probably a small, sturdy animal of native stock. These were relatively rare, however; even Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk, the shires richest in work horses, averaged only one or at most two per village.[94]

The elaboration of these terms attests to the burgeoning role of the horse in this period. In a society marked by growing population, proliferating markets and increased importance of money, the horse's speed gave it a singular advantage over the ox as a draft and traction animal; while the innovation of the horse collar and whippletree made the horse's expanded use possible, it was the brisk economy itself which made its use profitable.[95] In the same vein, we find a comparable expansion of terms for farm and work horses: in addition to the *afer* appear the *hectarius,* used for harrowing, and the *carectarius*, or cart horse. The most valuable of these was the sumpter, or pack horse, descendent of the old *sagmarius,* whose strong back would

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[92] Bautier, "Contributions à l'histoire," 218–19.

[93] The term ambling as used here indicates a particular gait, comparable to pacing, in which the hind- and forelegs are coordinated laterally rather than diagonally. This action afforded a smooth and comfortable ride, and would be specifically associated with the palfrey, the saddle horse of the aristocracy and upper clergy.

[94] Bautier and Bauter, "Contribution à l'histoire," 54–5.

[95] John Langdon, "Horse Hauling," 65–66. The testimony of *Fleta,* however, suggests that old habits died hard among farmers, serving as a brake on increased productivity. "[I]t is to be noted that an ox plough will accomplish as much as if drawn by two horses," writes the anonymous author, "partly because the horse sweats and uses itself up more, partly because the ploughmen and drivers think it hard on them to go beyond the customary pace after the manner of oxen." Thus the writer still finds the horse preferable only for plowing in "sandy or stony soil, which is difficult and hindering on the feet of oxen." *Fleta,* S.2, in *The Manor Farm,* 58.

now carry the goods of trader and traveler, and the wherewithal of itinerant courts and armies on campaign.

It was the riding horse, however, which served to mirror and accommodate increasing social complexities. By the eleventh century, the *paraveredus* had become the *palefridus* or palfrey, a riding horse distinguished by its handsome appearance, manners and comfortable gait, known as the amble.[96] It was the finest of riding horses and as such, the mount of nobles, ladies and high clergy—in short, of those who, in the old days, would have been the only ones to ride. To these was added another grade of riding horse, the *runcinus* or rouncy. Albert the Great reflects this reordered equine hierarchy in his *De animalibus*; while retaining the four-fold criteria for judging a horse—appearance, beauty, qualities and color—inherited from the ancients by way of Isidore, he substitutes his own typology. Whereas Isidore had cited three, the horse of quality, the work horse, and horse of mixed nature, e.g. the mule, Albert lists four. He confines himself, however, to "those trained horses which we possess," these being destriers, palfreys, coursers, and rouncies.[97] Notably, the draft horse and pack horse are omitted altogether.

In a sense it is the rouncy, the least of Albert's four, which holds the greatest interest. Though a riding horse, it was emphatically one of secondary quality, and as such represented a suitable mount for the socially inferior—the burgher, the

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[96] The amble was a walking gait in which the horse advanced its fore and hind legs laterally rather than diagonally. The gait is comparable to a person swinging the right arm while stepping out with the right leg. Though occasionally occuring naturally, it was most often induced through training, via the use of a special rigid harness.

[97] "Parmi les chevaux dressés que nous possédons, on en distingue quatre sortes, qui sont les chevaux de guerre, nommé destriers, les palefrois, les chevaux de course et ceux que l'on appelle roncins." Albert the Great, *De animalibus,* trans. Prévot, in *Le Cheval en France,* Appendix 3, 454. The courser was a sturdy, fast riding horse used by the aristocracy for hunting and racing.

merchant, the common cleric or servant. Thus riding on horseback, compromised as a marker of rank by the accession of commoner horsemen, was restored as such by the introduction of a commoner horse.[98] That worse were available still offered a means of mockery, as in *The Waggon-Train*:

> We must now tell of the men with the carts who were to lead the waggon-train along. They wore straps and bags and baldrics, and large wallets for changing money, and rode mules and broken-down pack-horses. If you had seen them wending their way up towards you, you would have been put in mind of a wretched mob. Wherever they went in that country, if it was daylight and they could be seen, they would pass for merchants.[99]

The hierarchy of riding horses also served to crystalize the superior position of the knight against that of his *escuyer* or squire, the former riding to battle or tournament on a palfrey, the latter following on his rouncy and leading his master's destrier. In this the squire occupied an ambivalent position. On one hand he achieved the visible rank of one who rode horseback; on the other hand the horse he rode served as a marker of his subordinate, and even servile, status.

Nonetheless, the very care of horses appears to have helped breach the barrier separating commoner from noble. According to the twelfth-century *Regle du Temple*, the *escudier* or squire was simply the servant charged with the care of the horses.[100] Defined solely by function, the position brought with it no presumption of rank or

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[98] Linda Seidel finds inconographic evidence of this shift in artistic representations, with the introduction of the horse into novel social and situational juxtapositions. See Seidel, "Early Medieval Images," 385.

[99] From "The Waggon-Train," in *William, Count of Orange: Four Old French Epics*, ed. Glanville Price (London: J.S. Dent & Sons / Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1975), 81.

[100] Bennett, "Status of the Squire," 2.

social status.[101] At the same time, however, noble rank was no bar, even if the nobly-born found doing this work were a marked minority. By its indeterminate nature, the position of squire was a socially fluid space, occupied by commoner and noble alike without detriment to the latter. The position of squire, in turn, by virtue of its availability to men of rank, came to acquire status over the course of the thirteenth century, even as it remained chiefly associated with the care of horses. By the fourteenth century the title had achieved full social rank, and by the end of the century was armigerous.[102] The equalizing element appears to have been the horse, itself now of sufficient status to exempt its caretaker from the taint of manual labor.

In a related fashion the privileged status accorded the horse, and its aristocratic associations, enhanced its suitability as a gift, even as such considerations remained linked to its practical value. This would prove especially true in the context of monastic horsebreeding, a practice which itself forged strong local ties of mutual dependence and accommodation between monastic foundations and noble families.

Blessed with ample pasturage, a number of medieval monasteries engaged extensively in horse breeding. They received their horses through a range of conveyances, most typically as tithes, gifts or bequests, or as part of a new

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[101] Bennett, "Status of the Squire," 7.

[102] See Bennett, "Status of the Squire," 2, and Patterson, "Occitan Squire," 133–149. Patterson sees a roughly similar progression in the south, where the position of *escudier* again represented a *mestier,* a job. Initially it was regarded as a lowly one, albeit above that of the *jongleur*. Here, more directly than in the north (or at least among the Templars), it combines the work of valet and groom. However, it is still heavily weighted toward the care of the horse, as the *escudier* was to "look after the lord's horse and armor, fetch and carry, rub down and saddle the horse." By the late twelfth century, however, she sees evidence of a change in expectation, if not actual status. In this connection she cites a *chanson* of 1225, whose hero Jauffre rides a rouncy and is both *escudier* and *donzel*, both squire and bachelor knight.

foundation.[103] In this way quite significant herds could be built up; in some regions, particularly in northern Spain and western France, horse breeding came to be a mainstay of the monastic economy, much as sheep raising was in parts of Britain. As such, improvement of the herds was pursued with systematic care, as documented by monastic records. The gift of a good stallion, for example, would be highly prized. Alternatively, the monks might pasture their horses with those of a lay proprietor, either on an informal basis or through a more structured and widely-used contractual arrangement**,** variously known as *gasaille* or *soccida,* under which a breeder would maintain and breed another party's animals for a fixed period, and keep a specified share of the resulting get.[104]

The intricacies of custom and negotiation similarly obtained in the crucial area of land and pasturage, as when a religious house would accept horses in exchange for a limited grant of pasture rights. Far more common, however, was the use of the horse as a counter-gift, given by the monks to acknowledge receipt of some gift from a lay patron. Typically the original gift was of greater value, and most often was a piece of land.[105]

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[103] Bautier and Bautier, "Contribution à l'histoire," 18. Examples include the 651 bequest of Leodebode, bishop of Orléans, of part of his horse herd to Saint-Victeur du Mans, cited in Bautier, 25, and the eleventh-century will of the Anglo-Saxon Wulfric, in which he leaves "to the monastery at Burton a hundred wild horses (*wildera horsa*) and sixteen tame geldings (*hencgsta*)." In Whitelock, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Wills*, 47.

[104] Duby, *Rural Economy*, 149–50. The Bautiers cite such an arrangement of 1188, whereby four mares were to be loaned to the monastery of Santa Creus for a term of five years, the monks to care for and breed them during this period as if they were their own. At the end of this term the mares would be returned to their owner, along with one-third of the young stock thus produced, with the monastery keeping the remaining two-thirds. Bautier and Bautier, "Contribution à l'histoire," 22.

[105] Bautier and Bautier, "Contribution à l'histoire," 18–19, 31–32.

The practice of exchanging gift and counter-gift was common in medieval Europe, and the use of horses as counter-gifts does not appear to have carried any special significance *per se.* Sheep, cows and other farm animals also served the purpose, as did pieces of cloth, fine objects and gifts of grain or other food.[106] Thus, while not dismissing its symbolic aspects, the Bautiers stress the economic dimension of the practice, seeing it primarily as a mechanism of exchange in a specie-strapped economy, and Davis similarly shorthands it as a commercial transaction.[107] The counter-gift, however, was not a simple *quid pro quo,* and would have functioned on a number of levels. Constance Bouchard, in her study of Cistercian commercial practices, cites the range of ways it served the brothers. In addition to providing a tangible record of the transaction, it also served as an expression of good will and if, as sometimes happened, it was given to another member of the donor's family, it further widened the monastery's network of relationships. In the early fourteenth century, for example, Peterborough Abbey was still breeding riding horses, not for sale, but as gifts for officials and friends of the abbey.[108]

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[106] Bouchard, *Holy Entrepreneurs,* 93. For a more theoretical discussion of the implications of the gift and counter-gift, see Barbara H. Rosenwein, *Negotiating Space: Power, Restraint, and Privileges of Immunity in Early Medieval Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), esp. 7–23 and 137–155.

[107] Davis, *Medieval Warhorse,* 57. Also see Constance Hoffman Berman, "Land Acquisition and the Use of the Mortgage Contract by the Cistercians of Berdoues," in *Speculum* 57.2 (Apr. 1982), 250–66. Berman, examining records of land transactions made by the monastery of Berdoues in the Pyrenees, found numerous instances of local lords alienating portions of land through mortgages to the monastery. The specifics suggest that the practice offered a useful flexibility. In one instance, the lord's debt increased on his deathbed, becoming a penitential bequest; in many others, the loan represented by the mortgage was used by the lord to purchase items, often horses. In one instance, the transaction itself included receipt of a horse, though whether as a counter-gift is unclear**.** The Bautiers, noting the abbey's numerous gifts of foals and its sale of horses, cite the likelihood of a breeding operation of some kind (37). The abbey's geographic situation might well have encouraged this; Berman, finding Berdoues exceptional among Cistercian abbeys in its traffic in mortgages, speculates that the explanation may lie, in part, in its proximity to the Spanish border, and the military activity, and opportunities, offered by the Reconquista.

[108] Bouchard, *Holy Entrepreneurs,* 87; Biddick, 119.

Through its association with donations of land or of rights over land, the counter-gift intersected in a very real way with the monastery's power and economic viability. In some instances, the horse itself could serve to cant an abbey's social contacts upward; remote as the Cistercian houses may have been for someone on foot, for example, they would have been easily accessible to a person on horseback, making social and economic intercourse with the local elite not only possible, but even an everyday affair.[109]

Similarly, the breeding of exceptional horses could extend a house's reach well beyond its own locality. In keeping with the longstanding tradition of giving horses as gifts of state, quality animals eased dealings with powerful neighbors, and even with rulers. In Spain, for example, fine monastery-bred horses were frequently chosen as counter-gifts for the king, as being both beautiful and useful; in return, the monastery could remain assured of his good will, and his protection of their pastureland and grazing rights.[110]

The Bautiers' intensive examination of medieval monastery records, revealing the broader patterns of medieval horsebreeding, likewise reveal its intersection with political power. Geographically, the most concentrated breeding took place within a broad band carrying from Portugal and Spain up into western France, where it encompassed the regions of Poitou, Saintonge, Anjou, Maine, Brittany and Normandy.[111] Monastic horse breeding was particularly intense in Normandy, Anjou

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[109] Bouchard, *Holy Entrepreneurs,* 19–23.

[110] Bautier and Bautier, "Contribution à l'histoire," 19.

[111] Bautier and Bautier, "Contribution à l'histoire," 29

and Maine. As noted earlier, this region had a longstanding tradition of horse breeding, particular Maine, which once sheltered the studs of the Merovingians. By the eleventh century these regions represented seats of power, held as they were by the dukes of Normandy and the dukes and counts of Anjou. Thus the numerous references to horsebreeding in monastic records of the period take on an added significance, with horses exchanged as tithes and counter-gifts, broodmares given and herds consolidated, and horses rendered back for military or other service through the obligations of *servitio equorum*. Norman abbeys in particular, with Jumièges notable among them, received horse herds, foals or pasturage rights as tithes from local nobles, while grown horses, often described as being "of great price," passed back to those same lords as counter-gifts. Readily explicable when considered against the backdrop of campaigns in England, Ireland, Sicily and the Holy Lands, these practices continued well into the twelfth century, even increasing in pace while they were dying out elsewhere.[112]

Signs point to a general intensification in horse breeding throughout Europe around this time. Forest pasturage of horses, for example, expanded significantly in France.[113] Meanwhile scattered indicators suggest that horse breeding was becoming more systematized. In this connection the Bautiers single out as especially significant a document from 1159 in the southern Marne, granting permission to an *equicarius* to construct an enclosure and shelter for horses—*parcum equorum et logiam*—an early

[112] Bautier and Bautier, "Contribution à l'histoire," 19, 29–32.

[113] Jean-Marc Moriceau, *L'Élevage sous l'Ancien Régime: les fondements agraires de la France moderne, XVIe–XVIII siècles* (Paris: SEDES, 1999), 106.

example of imparkment, assuring greater control over the herd.[114] The same period witnessed an elaboration in terminology, with the traditional *custos equarum*, the caretaker of the mares, superseded in places by the more formal title *equitarius*, implying greater standing and responsibility. This development is all the more notable in that it appears in connection with monastic studs.[115] The term *haracium*, ancestor of the modern French *haras,* for stud farm, likewise makes its appearance around this time. Apparently of Norman origin, its first known use is in a royal English charter dating from around 1140, its second, some thirty to thirty-five years later, in a charter from Henry II to the Norman abbey of Saint-Evroul, in which "*araciis equorum et equarum*,*"* breeding herds of mares and stallions, are associated with tithing.[116]

A thriving horse trade was also coming into its own. The fact that the counter-gift was dying out or had already passed from use in most places speaks to the revival of a money economy, with horse dealers and enterprising merchants not far behind. One already finds scattered references to horse dealers—*equorum mercator* and *venditor equorum*—in the late eleventh century. By the twelfth century one finds references to regular horse fairs. Horses were routinely sold at the Champagne fairs, for example, as indicated by the existence in Troye in 1163 of a special area for the purpose, the *percursus nundinarum equorum*.[117]

A bustling horse-market also existed in Smithfield, near London, as evidenced by William Fitzstephen's description in his 1171 *Descriptio nobilissimae civitatis*

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[114] Bautier and Bautier, "Contribution à l'histoire," 43.

[115] Bautier and Bautier, "Contribution à l'histoire," 16.

[116] Bautier and Bautier, "Contribution à l'histoire," 30.

[117] Bautier and Bautier, "Contribution à l'histoire," 43.

Londiniae. Notable for its freshness and immediacy, his account offers a striking sense of the hubbub of a busy horse fair, along with an informative picture of the twelfth-century equine social array:

> There is a fair where the sight of well-bred horses for sale is well known.
> Either to look on or to buy everyone who is in town comes—earls, barons, knights and many burgesses.
> It is a joy to see the palfreys with a flashing action smoothly ambling., raising and setting down their feet as it were, both on one side alternately.
> Here horses more suitable for squires with rougher but fast gait
> Which as it were raise and put down opposite legs at the same time.
> Here well-bred younger colts not yet well accustomed to the bridle rear up but go softly.
> Here are pack horses with stout and nimble legs.
> Here are expensive chargers of handsome conformation and impressive height switching their ears and arching their necks: they have massive quarters.
> When these are run up the prospective buyers first watch the slower paces and then the faster ones in which the forefeet are alternately raised and set down and then the hind-feet likewise.
> ….a shout goes up to take the common horses aside.
> Here are mares for ploughing or draught in sled or double harness cart.
> Some of them are heavy in foal. Yet others have brought forth foals which frisk about, their progeny not yet weanable.[118]

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[118] Dent and Goodall, *Foals of Epona,* 97–98, from their own translation, with the Latin original as provided below:

> Feria est ibi celebre spectaculum nobilium equorum venalium.
> Spectaturi vel empturi veniunt qui in urbe adsunt comites barones,
> milites civites plurimi.
> Juvat videre gradarios succassatura nitente suaviter ambulantes pedibus.
> Lateraliter simul erectis quasi a subalternis et demissis:
> Hinc equos qui armigeris magis conveniuntur, durius incidentes sed expedite tamen,
> qui quasi a contradictoribus pedes simul elevant et deponunt.
> Hinc nobiles juniores pullos qui nondum freno bene assueti altius incidunt
> et mollia crura reponunt.
> Hinc summarios membris solidis et vegetis.
> Hinc dextrarios pretiosos elegantis formae staturae honestae micantes auribus
> cervicis arduis clunibus obesis.
> In horum incessu spectant emptores primis passum suaviorem
> postea motum citatiorem qui est quasi a contrariis pedibus anterioribus
> simul solo admotis et posterioribus similiter
> ….clamor attolitur, vulgares equos in partem ire praecipitur.
> Stant ibi aptae aratris, trahis et bigis equae. Quarumdam ventres foetibus
> tument. Alias editi foetibus obeunt pulli lasciviores, sequela inseparabilis.

This evolving equine hierarchy mirrored that of human society in other ways as well. Though Peterborough Abbey, for example, relied on more than 300 plow, draft and harrow horses for the cultivation of its fields, a disproportionate amount of the oats grown for feed went to the twenty-four riding horses kept in its stables.[119] This privileged treatment is all the more striking as it diverted grain from those animals which, subjected to arduous daily labor, needed it most. An explanation may be found in the fact that the riding horses were not sold, but rather given as gifts. Part of a higher economy of influence and reward, they possessed as such an intangible value. As their actual value escalated through military need, the resulting pressures would strain and distort the bonds linking status and military service. With respect to its use in war, the horse stood precisely at the interface between the state and the individual.

Part 3. The Paradox of Rank and Value

For the thirteenth-century ruler as for the common knight, both balancing finite resources against ambition and military necessity, the war horse represented daunting expense, difficulties, and a narrowing of choices. As a consequence of the Scottish, Welsh and French wars, the latter thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries witnessed a voracious military demand for horses of all types, from war horses to palfreys and rouncies to sumpters for the baggage trains. Most prominent among these was the Great Horse, the destrier of the period, bred up to meet the demands of

[119] Biddick, *Other Economy,* 15.

heavy cavalry. Such horses were highly specialized, difficult to come by, and exorbitantly expensive. They were also necessary, in terms of both strategy and status. The resultant *politique de cheval* drove royal policy and undermined traditional hierarchies of service, as the costs of going to war, particularly those associated with horses, contributed to tactical innovations and eroded traditional patterns linking social rank and military service. In the end they contributed to the marginalization of the Great Horse on the battlefield, as new tactical configurations marked a shift in the social composition of the military community. As its military utility waned, however, its status increased, as it became the bearer of a new chivalric culture of the court.

The prestige of the war horse was already in the ascendent by the mid-twelfth century, a consequence of tactical innovations which accorded it a new importance and demanded a larger, more specialized animal. It was the adoption of the charge with couched lance, however, which tipped the balance dramatically toward equine size and power. The need for better protection resulted in a more heavily-armored knight and, for the first time, armor for the war horse as well. These developments in turn spurred a demand for larger, more powerful animals who could bear the increased weight, deliver a degree of speed and momentum at the charge, and keep their feet under the concussive force of impact.

The actual character and chronology of the Great Horse have been the subject of contention, with some historians dating it back to the Norman Conquest and most, though not all, identifying it with the massive, slow-moving coldblooded northern breeds, ancestors of the modern draft horse. Bernard Bachrach, by gauging

proportional relationships in the figures of the Bayeux tapestry, arrives at an eleventh-century Norman mount of sixteen hands or more. Anthony Dent and Daphne Machin Goodall likewise turn to the tapestry for evidence. However, having begun by proclaiming the Great Horse as "ancestor of the Shire and the Clydesdale," they find what they are determined to; amid an otherwise impressive analysis, they pin their identification on visual evidence that seems slender at best.[120]

R.H.C. Davis, on the other hand, offers a far more considered assessment, persuasively arguing for a gradual increase in size and weight, with the Edwardian wars of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries tipping the balance toward a truly large animal. Rather than speculate on the size and build of a prototypical Great Horse, he focuses instead on the more precisely-known weight of armor and equipment which the animal was required to carry; at its maximum, in the fourteenth century, the lance alone would have weighed up to forty pounds.[121] His conclusion thus seems inescapable, that the "horse required was emphatically a Great Horse, agility being less important than unstoppable power."[122] Andrew Ayton, having exhaustively researched the military and social intricacies of the Edwardian wars, readily accepts Davis's chronology, and likewise finds the quintessential charger credibly described as a "battering ram" and a "moving castle."[123] Nonetheless, both

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[120] Bachrach, "Caballus et Caballarius," 176; Dent and Goodall, *Foals of Epona,* 1–5, 101; Davis, *Medieval Warhorse,* 86–92; Liedtke, *Royal Horse and Rider*, 21.

[121] Davis, *Medieval Warhorse,* 23.

[122] Davis, *Medieval Warhorse,* 24.

[123] Ayton, *Knights and Warhorses*, 30.

historians offer a more nuanced picture of the actual horses on the battlefield at this time.

Davis in particular stresses the extent to which Spanish destrier stallions—lighter, faster and more spirited than their northern cousins—were tapped by northern monarchs for use in breeding and war. Spanish horses were highly prized, as they had been since Charlemagne's day and indeed since the time of the Romans, and throughout the Middle Ages are frequently mentioned in connection with ceremonial occasions.[124] As early as the late eleventh century we hear of Spanish stallions being imported for breeding purposes, in this instance by the Norman noble Robert de Belesme. Their offspring, the get of Welsh mountain mares, became known as Powys horses, a type Geraldus Cambrensis, our source concerning these animals, describes as being "remarkable for their majestic proportion and astonishing fleetness."[125] Dent and Goodall temper these comments by observing that such qualities are relative, and that Geraldus was comparing his horses to the "lumbering Norman destrier...and the Welsh pony."[126]

Such references to horses from Spain, previously sporadic, begin to proliferate in the thirteenth century. In 1242, for example, on the eve of war in Aquitaine, Louis IX and Henry III both purchased Castilian destriers, with those for the French king shipped from Cantabrian ports to la Rochelle, and the six for Henry III—"as many

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[124] William the Conquerer, for example, received the gift of a horse from the king of Spain, an event commemorated by the court poet and chronicler Robert Wace. Geoffrey Plantagenet, at the time of his dubbing at Reims in 1128, was given a Spanish horse by his future father-in-law Henry I "so swift that it surpassed the birds." Bautier, 1976, 23; Bautier and Bautier, "Contribution à l'histoire," 24.

[125] Cited in Dent and Goodall, *Foals of Epona,* 99.

[126] Dent and Goodall, *Foals of Epona,* 100.

destriers as possible"[127]—shipped through Navarre by the provost-marshall of Roncevalles. Edward I of England, also duke of Aquitaine, had his officials in the duchy purchase groups of Castilian and Navarrese destriers, with some held back for use in Gascony and Poitou, and others shipped to England from the port of Bordeaux.[128] The pressure for war horses continued to grow, and by the time of the French and Scottish wars they were being exported in groups of ten to one hundred, variously embarked in ships for England or brought through the Pyrenees to France. Even in the late eleventh century Spanish horses crossing the Pyrenees were being taxed at six times the rate for asses, mares or mules. Thus it is hardly surprising to learn that horse smuggling was a thriving business in that region in the thirteenth century.[129]

As always the export of these animals was closely restricted, in this instance requiring a license from the crown. Such permission was by no means assured; the Castillian and Aragonese cortes might as readily obstruct the traffic in destriers as encourage it, depending on whether military or economic considerations were uppermost at the time. Moreover these horses were in hot demand, assuring English and French royal agents of competition from secular and ecclesiastical magnates, not to mention the papacy itself. Merchants likewise joined the hunt, eager to ply a

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[127] Gladitz, *Horse Breeding,* 164.

[128] Ayton, *Knights and Warhorses,* 574.

[129] Yves Renouard, "Un sujet de recherches: l'exportation de chevaux de la péninsule ibérique en France et en Angleterre au Moyen Âge," in *Homenaje a Jaime Vicens Vives* (Barcelona: University of Barcelona Press, 1965), 573–74. This last figure in particular raises the question of how their handlers controlled such a large number of stallions in transit.

lucrative trade.[130] By the fourteenth century Lombard stallions, a novelty in England earlier in the previous century, were also moving briskly; according to one account, these too had some Mediterranean blood, the product of smaller, more agile Apulian stallions brought north to service the large mares of Lombardy.[131]

The French crown was similarly desperate for war horses in this period. The *politique de cheval* is most in evidence at those times when rulers are driven to expedients, successful or otherwise, to obtain horses. Such was the case of Philip III of France (1270-85), who, losing ruinous numbers of horses to war, instituted several ill-conceived measures in an effort to increase domestic horsebreeding. His principal measure, an ordinance passed in 1279, compelled every noble having land worth at least two hundred livres and every bourgeois with assets of at least fifteen hundred livres to maintain a broodmare. Every abbot, count, baron, and duke with sufficient pasturage was similarly required to have a herd of four to six broodmares. This ordinance was notable as one of the first measures applicable to the entire realm, and it was not the last. Thinking to compel his nobles to raise their own horses, the king additionally imposed price limits on the purchase of mounts at market and prohibited foreign merchants from bringing more than thirty war horses to a given fair. The illogic of these measures proved out, and they were allowed to lapse when Philip IV

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[130] Licenses issued by the Aragonese chancellery during the reign of James I (1291–1327) show a steady flow of horses from Spain to southern French ports and market towns such as Narbonne, Perpignan, Foix and Rodez, as well as further afield to Portugal, Genoa and the Papal States. At least thirty-five horses sent to Narbonne during this time went to magnates, their designation as *chevaux* indicating in context that they were destriers and/or palfreys. Most of the thirty-five, moreover, went to only two figures in Narbonne itself, the archbishop and the vicomte. Narbonnais merchants, meanwhile, bought more than thirty Spanish rouncies in this period, along with at least three more *chevaux*. Jean Régné, "Chevaux d'Espagne à Narbonne," in *Bulletin historique et philologique du Comité des Travaux Historiques* (Paris, 1938–39), 189–203, cited in Renouard, "Un sujet de recherches," 573.

[131] Davis, *Medieval Warhorse,* 63.

acceded to the throne in 1285. The new king adopted more rational expedients, prohibiting the export of all French war horses, encouraging the importation of foreign destriers, and organizing a system of royal studs.[132]

The English crown was well ahead in this respect, having already established a state breeding operation unprecedented in its scale and administrative complexity. Such studs were typically located in emparked royal forests.[133] As reflected in a royal survey of 1293, they comprised a network divided into two administrative groups, lying north and south of the River Trent, with each supervised by an official called the Keeper.[134] Accounts reveal graded levels of responsibility, with the keeper of an individual stud charged with recordkeeping as well as matters of breeding and husbandry. One such would be John de Neusom, described in the accounts as "clerk, keeper of certain horses of the king in northern parts, answering for receipts, *mise,* and expenses."[135] The largest expense shown in this entry is for wages, with Neusom himself drawing 6d. a day as keeper; along with 2d. each for the *ferratores* or horseshoers, the provisor, and each of thirty-one boys for a total of £117.14s.6d.[136]

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[132] Bautier and Bautier, "Contribution à l'histoire," 61–2. The Bautiers note that similar measures requiring the keeping of broodmares had been instituted by Charles the Bald in the ninth century. The pattern persists, as subsequently one will see Henry VIII imposing similar measures in England.

[133] Neilson, "The Forests," 437.

[134] Davis, 91–2. The most important northern studs were those of Bilton in West Yorkshire, Macclesfield Park in Cheshire, and Ightenhill Park in Lancashire, while the southern operation was led by Woodstock, in Oxfordshire, Windsor in Berkshire, and Guildford in Surrey. These were only the most prominent, however, with at least fourteen more studs located in the south alone. The other southern studs were Risborough (Buckinghamshire), Odiham (Hampshire), Henly Park (Surrey), Tonbridge and Knowle (Kent), Rayleigh and Writtle (Essex), Hadenham (Cambridgeshire), Cornbury and North Oseney (Oxfordshire), Hampstead Marshal and Stratfield Mortimer (Berkshire), Cippenham (Burnham, Buckinghamshire) and Yardley Hastings (Northamptonshire).

[135] Neilson, "The Forests," 437.

[136] Neilson, "The Forests," 437.

Carefully-maintained records tracked the stud's breeding operations, success rate, and losses. Stallions are listed by name, with Great Horses identified by their color and the place where they were bred or the name of the person from whom they were received.[137] While Woodstock, the principal stud and administrative center of the southern group, primarily bred destriers, this was not true of all the royal studs. Like rulers before and after, thirteenth-century kings required a variety of horses to fill a range of needs. Thus Ightenhill was housing rouncy stallions in 1295 and 1296, while those at another stud, Bolton Priory, were either rouncies as well or possibly *equi*—a term which had come to signify second-rank war horses, solid, serviceable animals which were ridden by men-at-arms and bred as remounts. Chester, meanwhile, which in 1283 housed fifty-one *equi* and twenty-two destriers and coursers, was also home at the time to twelve palfreys, ten cart horses, two hobbies, a sumpter of the wardrobe and four horses of the treasury.[138]

Royal stud operations intruded opportunistically beyond the bounds of the formal system. In addition to the official studs, Davis identifies others on lands which were held through escheat or wardship, and thus only temporarily in possession of the crown. Still others appear on the rolls for a time and then drop off again, suggesting a similar arrangement. "[O]ne gets the impression," he observes acerbically, "that whenever there was a secular wardship or ecclesiastical vacancy, the king's agents

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[137] Neilson, "The Forests," 440.

[138] Gladitz, *Horse Breeding,* 261.

moved in quickly to see if it included a park which could be 'depastured' by the king's horses before the new heir was installed."[139]

Here as elsewhere one finds evidence of the burden such operations could represent, to the land and to local communities as to the crown itself. Most were imparked studs, located in royal forests whose profitability was thus reduced.[140] Additionally, the horses required a constant supply of fodder, consuming not only hay, but considerable quantities of oats, beans and peas as well. As these were purchased by purveyor's order, they fetched the fixed price and no more, even as the locality found itself drained of its stores.[141] Neilson, examining the accounts for the king's stud in Oxfordshire and Berkshire, finds neighboring villages yielding up quantities of hay, grass, oats, and bread and bran, the last typically purchased from bakers.[142]

The predations did not stop there. The ruler needing horses to wage war was faced with a number of other logistical difficulties, the first of which was securing remounts to replace those lost through wounds, mishap or disease. The second problem was that of fodder; should the horses go hungry, the entire expedition could be placed at risk. An army on the move, moreover, could not take the time to graze its horses.[143] Thus hay as well as grain needed to be packed, including hay for the pack

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[139] Davis, *Medieval Warhorse,* 92.

[140] Neilson, "The Forests," 437.

[141] Davis, *Medieval Warhorse,* 92.

[142] Neilson, "The Forests," 443.

[143] Because fresh grass contains a large amount of water, grass-fed horses must spend much of their time grazing in order to acquire sufficient nutrition. For a discussion of this and other logistical aspects

animals, serving in turn to increase the number of pack animals needed. Transport of water might also be necessary. For this reason pack horses, like war horses, were at a premium; humble they might be, but no less essential to the war effort.

Where necessary, such animals were secured through forced levies and impressment. These frequently came up short. Records from 1306, for example, reveal the less-than-stellar results of such a requisition: of the 108 horses secured, 87 were listed as less than sound, variously characterized as being "of small value," "weak and of little value," "infected and worthless," and "totally dried up in mind and body." Quality oxen were likewise in short supply, with 54 of 66 similarly indicted.[144] Such confiscations, needless to say, also visited hardship on farming communities, and on a broader scale served to disrupt agricultural production.

In their own way, the upper ranks of what Ayton calls the "military community" were just as ridden. Destriers could be a sobering burden to those who, by virtue of their estate, were expected to ride one. The war horse *par excellence,* the Great Horse was an essential marker of rank. "A great man's warhorse," writes Andrew Ayton, "had to be in harmony with, and reflect, his *dignitas.*" In fact, Ayton found he could reconstruct the social composition of the Edwardian cavalry from the assessments provided by the royal horse inventories, so close was the correspondence between a man's social rank and the value of the horse he rode.[145] Given the expenses involved, the superior man/superior horse conceit could weigh heavily.

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of mounted warfare, including those mentioned above, see Bachrach, "Caballus et Caballarius," esp. 180–182.

[144] Hyland, *Warhorse,* 35.

[145] Two types of government documents were used from the latter thirteenth century into the fourteenth in connection with cavalry warfare: horse inventories and *restauro equorum* accounts. Ayton describes

The cost to buy such a horse could be staggering. Davis, surveying market prices for horses in the period 1250-1350, found that a rouncy typically sold for £5-10, and a hobby, the sturdy little Irish horse used for light cavalry work, for £2. The hunter type known as the courser, popular with nobles for sport, fetched considerably more, £10-15, and the palfrey more still, £10-50. The destrier, however, overshadowed them all, with a single mount commanding £50-100 or more. The disparity becomes even more striking when common workhorses are included: the most valuable of these animals, the sumpter, sold for 7-8 s., while a carthorse or a peasant's workhorse *(stottus* or *affer*) could be had for 2s.6d. "Thus," Davis observes, "a cheapish riding horse would cost 24 times as much as a peasant workhorse, a good palfrey 400 times as much, and a good warhorse 800 times as much."[146]

Such a horse in any event was destined for use by the upper reaches of the nobility. The ordinary man-at-arms rode a sturdy, serviceable animal, a working-class war horse simply called *equus* in the inventories and *restaur* rolls. Remarks Ayton, "Assuming that *all* late medieval warhorses were destriers is rather like assuming every saloon car to be a Rolls Royce."[147] But even the baronial class, the true

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these as follows: "The former were working records, drawn up as an army's warhorses were appraised at the start of paid military service and designed to be consulted and annotated during and after the cammpaign. The latter, consisting of lists of horses lost on active service, were based on information contained in the full horse inventories, but were usually compiled long after the dust of the campaign had settled, as part of a formal set of accounts." Ayton, *Knights and Warhorses,* 49.

[146] Davis, *Medieval Warhorse,* 67, though see Ayton, *Knights and Warhorses,* 40–41, for a discussion of some of the difficulties entailed in ascertaining a reliable value for warhorses in this period. Aside from market fluctuations, the source and context of the figure must also be considered. If the animal in question was being valued by his owner, the figure is likely to be inflated, while if valued by a royal official, toward the end of compensation in the event of the animal's maiming or death, the figure is just as likely to be low.

[147] Ayton, *Knights and Warhorses*, 23n77.

preserve of the destrier, included many men unable to afford such a horse on an income of £500 per year or in some cases even less than £200.[148]

The situation led to a series of striking ironies. If it was difficult from the king's perspective, it was no less so from that of the feudal landholder. Knighthood had become prohibitively expensive, in its ceremonial, in the administrative and judicial duties now attending the honor, and, at a minimum, in the cost of outfitting oneself for battle, figuring in the cost of arms, armor, and at least four horses: the destrier, the palfrey, the squire's rouncy and the sumpter. The high cost of knighthood, and the burden of its accompanying obligations, led to the spectacle of titled nobility evading knightly status, and with it the summons to battle.

Kings, meanwhile, under pressure themselves, exerted pressure in turn. Edward I and especially Edward II, caught between the need to adapt to changing tactical developments, the expenses involved in waging war, and the diminishing numbers available through feudal and shire levies, sought to get around these difficulties by placing new demands on individuals and communities, albeit draped in traditional guise. Resorting to distraint of knighthood, they forced nobles to either become knights and fulfill their military obligations or pay a heavy fine, even as towns were pressed for service and cost-cutting steps taken.[149] Thus royal authority was brought pointedly to bear on subjects made recalcitrant by the spiraling demands of war. At the same time such measures affected the social composition of the army, resulting in more heavily armed and armored infantry, and the supplementing of

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[148] Gladitz, *Horse Breeding,* 158.

[149] Michael Powicke, "The General Obligation to Cavalry Service Under Edward I," *Speculum* 28.4 (1953), 815–16.

heavy horse with larger numbers of less expensive men-at-arms, each of whom received half the pay of a single knight.[150]

The final irony lay in the fact that the destrier itself, bred specifically for the purpose of war, was becoming too costly to risk in battle. Other factors also worked against its usefulness in war. As had always been the case, the tactical success of heavy cavalry was dependent on favorable ground. A disciplined force of foot, moreover, could throw a charge into disarray, and opposing armies were now securing the services of disciplined, well-drilled companies of pikemen and halberdiers. Sieges, far more common in the fourteenth century than pitched battles, could also prove devastating to war horses. With no effective military role beyond reconnaissance and protection of foragers, they often sickened and died in large numbers, a particular blow given their cost.[151]

All these factors combined to skew the actual waging of war away from the knightly class. Ayton, analyzing the horse inventories and *restaur* rolls from Falkirk, finds that fully 90% of the mounted English force were riding horses valued at less than £20.[152] The actual fighting body of the heavy cavalry consisted primarily of untitled men-at-arms on solid, unglamorous, second-rank war horses classified on the rolls as *equi.* A comparable pattern obtained for the French. Subsequent changes, meanwhile, flew directly in the face of traditional distinctions of rank as manifested on the battlefield. The lessons of the Scottish and Welsh campaigns lent impetus on

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[150] See Powicke, "General Obligation," 827-30, and a related study by the same author, "Edward II and Military Obligations," *Speculum* 31.1 (1956): 92–119.

[151] Ayton, *Knights and Warhorses*, 22.

[152] Ayton, *Knights and Warhorses*, 47.

the English side to tactical innovations, particularly the horsing of archers and a return to dismounted fighting. The first especially, through the so-called "mixed retinue," would become a feature of the Hundred Years' War, in the process further weakening traditional lines of demarcation between the foot soldier and the mounted knight. Thus social distinctions below the highest rank tended to blur over time, much as they had in the tenth and early eleventh centuries during the formative period of knighthood.[153]

From the late thirteenth century on, even as the Great Horse was entering the zenith of its prominence and visibility, its military marginalization was already underway. Nonetheless it persisted as part of a chivalric survival, emblematic of a social exclusivity no longer found on the battlefield.[154] The Great Horse remained the mount of choice of tilts and jousts, and accompanied chivalry's ideological shift to the royal courts of the sixteenth century; members of Henry VIII's personal retinue, later known as the Gentlemen Pensioners, were each required to keep "three great-horses."[155]

That these horses received particular care, given their cost, is hardly surprising. A more revealing indicator of special status lies in the continued care given them after they had outlived their usefulness. In the society at large, horses, like other animals, were necessarily regarded in economic terms, without sentiment. A

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[153] Ayton, *Knights and Warhorses*, 15–16.

[154] Ayton, *Knights and Warhorses*, 34, 36–39.

[155] Samuel Pegge, *Curialia, or An Historical Account or Some Branches of the Royal Household. &c. &c. Part II. Containing A Memoir, addressed to the President of the Society of Antiquaries, London; Regarding the King's Honourable Band of Gentlemen Pensioners, from its Establishment to the Present Time* (London: J. Nichols, 1784), 25.

fourteenth-century bone dump excavated in 1976 tells a typical story. Based on reconstruction and analysis of the skeletons, three of the horses were ten to eleven years old when they died, one between fifteen and sixteen, and six of them nineteen or older. Only one had bit marks, meaning that it was the only riding horse; the others almost certainly wore the halter of the work horse, and so served either as pack or draft animals.[156] Barring the unlikely anomaly of a tranquil retirement, it seems safe to conclude that they were worked to the end of their strength. At the same time, they were kept alive into that old age, which is just as surely worth noting. One was the *affer* met at the beginning of this chapter.

At the other end of the spectrum was the care accorded the finely-bred horses of the great. Preferential treatment began with birth; Pietro de Crescenzi, writing in the early fourteenth century, recommends that pureblood mares suckling male foals should not conceive for at least two years, to permit abundant milk for their little one. "Others," he adds parenthetically, "can be impregnated without waiting so long."[157] As reflected in the accounts of the royal English studs, such care continued throughout the animal's life. Nellie Neilsen, examining the records for one such stud in the early 1330s, finds a wide array of medicines listed, along with cloths of coarse wool to keep the horses warm in winter. One entry notes the pulling of a horse's tooth, while from another Neilsen relates, "A pleasant toddy of spiced wine was given to Lyard Nicole on a cold day."[158]

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[156] Serjeantson, Waldron and Bracegirdle, "Medieval Horses," 9–10.

[157] Crescenzi, *Opus ruralium commodorum,* 439.

[158] Nellie Neilson, "The Forests," 440.

Such animals might well know a peaceful old age. In 1291 the royal stud at Knowle could boast three destrier stallions, described as beautiful animals "of great size," and a fourth, Baucan de Gloucester, who was "old and very feeble."[159] Claudio Corte, remarking in 1562 on the longevity of horses, cites a horse which belonged to Charles VIII of France, "a very old horse, missing an eye, a black villano of Spain."[160] This is a far cry from the Carolingian *De Villis,* with its terse requirement that aged and unfit stallions be removed from service. The preservation of such horses against all practical interests speaks to another kind of value, whether personal, symbolic, or both.

[159] Gladitz, *Horse Breeding,* 170.

[160] "…Paolo Giovio che fu bellissimo Historico in questi tempi, dice, che Carlo Ottavo Re di Francia hebbe un caval vecchissimo, & senza un'occhio di pel morello villan di spagna…." Claudio Corte, *Il cavallarizzo* (Venice: Giordano Ziletti, 1562), http://www.vet-lyon.fr/bib/fondsancien/ouvonline/corte.htm#29 (accessed April 5, 2006). Unless other indicated, all citations are from this edition, as digitalized.

Chapter 2. THE RENAISSANCE: HORSES AND THE RHETORIC OF POWER

The princes of the Renaissance understood the symbolic uses of the horse. Churchmen and *signori* alike sought out the finest horses, bred them, raised them, and exchanged them as gifts. We may not know the men who rode them, but we know the names of Serpentino and Larmelino, El Renegato and El Peregrino. Furthermore we know what they looked like, and the races they won, and the dates on which they won them, all carefully preserved in the Gonzaga *Codici dei palii*. The courts of Renaissance Italy, no less than those of Burgundy, England and France, celebrated the chivalric ethos in literature, jousts and tournaments. Such events were expressive of more than competition and display. Even as the monumental equestrian statue gave form to a revived, muscular classicism, it was the living horse that excited envy and delight, the means by which a ruling family could project its power, its vitality and its *virtù*.

With the emergence of manège in the first half of the sixteenth century, horsemanship itself became a vehicle of ideological or personal representation. Highly stylized and conceived as art, manège restated riding as self-conscious performance. As the essential element of this new symbolic medium, the horse itself became an object of even more intense scrutiny and desire.

Part 1 of this chapter examines the significance of the horse in the political culture of the Italian Renaissance, addressing both symbolic and practical aspects. Part 2 focuses on the emergence and character of the new horsemanship. Part 3 then examines a paradox of the discipline as practiced at the Italian courts: the effect of a harmonious unity between horse and rider, and the coercive means used to achieve it. In part 4, the chapter concludes with a discussion of those who, in one way or another, were associated with the court horses in a subordinate position, whether as courtier, trainer, or doctor.

Part 1. The Play of Magnificence

In his study of the famed Gonzaga horses, Giancarlo Malacarne notes that Ludovico II, the first to conceive of developing a family breed, initiated the project in 1463. Ludovico's breeding project thus falls within a period of brilliant artistic and architectural achievement, carried out, under Ludovico's direction, by such figures as Pisanello, Mantegna, and Alberti, and devised in no small part for political ends. The timing, in Malacarne's view, was no coincidence; after all, he writes, "others too entertained ingenious artists, had cardinal sons and sumptuous palaces." Horses, on the other hand, were "an element of absolute prestige."[1] Given subsequent developments, the claim is credible enough, and speaks aptly to the characterization

[1] Malacarne, *Il mito dei cavalli*, 1–2.

offered by Lisa Jardine and Jerry Brottan, that horses in this period, in this milieu, were inalterably bearers of political and dynastic meaning.[2]

Their most straightforward use lay in sheer spectacle. Magnificence proclaimed power in the Renaissance, and large processions—of people, of horses, of leopards and hawks and hounds, all richly arrayed and arrayed by rank—produced magnificence. Emblematic of such display, in its underlying logistics as in its calculated effect, is Galeazzo Maria Sforza's 1471 visit to Florence. A Sienese visitor to Florence recounted his entry into the city:

> There was a livery for his greater camerieri, all dressed in crimson, and each one well mounted on horseback, with a greyhound on a leash. There were about sixty pages, all dressed in green velvet, on huge coursers, all with fittings of gold and silver, and saddles covered with brocade of various colors and crimson. In similar fashion they led from 65 to 70 mules with coffers and carriages, all with covers of embroidered silk. Of the order and decoration of the Duchess's damsels, I will say nothing; and the same for the great preparations here, which are things almost incomprehensible, and Your Lordships can imagine better than I can describe.[3]

As this passage makes clear, the abundance, richness and variety of the individual elements of the procession were crucial to its effect, with horses figuring most visibly. Behind this triumphant moment, however, lay an expedition conceived on impulse and executed with only six weeks' planning. The journey required upkeep and lodging for 1000 people and 1000 horses for one month (as opposed to the 3600 Galeazzo had originally thought to bring to France); the horses alone cost £1000 a day to maintain, for a total of £30,000 or 7,500 ducats, at a time when the annual

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[2] Lisa Jardine and Jerry Brotton, *Global Interests: Renaissance Art between East and West* (London: Reaktion Books, 2000), 139.

[3] Cited in Lubkin, *A Renaissance Court*, 100.

expenditure for the stables as a whole was budgeted at 8,000 ducats. Added to this were 150 new coverings, or *fornimenti*, for the horses, and new clothes for the retinue from the *camerieri* down to the *ragazzi.* In the end, the entourage numbered 1400.[4]

The reception of prominent visitors to one's own city was just as important, and called for as lavish a display. Here the strain fell most heavily on the resources of the community. Anticipating a visit from Cardinal Pietro Riario, the Gonzaga secretary Francesco Simonetta jotted down the logistics involved: 69 *boche,* or mouths to feed; 169 servants; 225 horses; 129 beds.[5] As suggested by the disparity in the numbers, not all would be accommodated at the court. The horses, if boarded elsewhere, could represent a particular problem, as we find a Sforza steward complaining that few households in Milan could manage an additional thirty or forty animals.[6]

The stable itself was an enormously expensive proposition. In the case of the Sforza stables, for example, salaries for the *servitori di sala* alone came to over £2,500 a year. The logistics involved were likewise formidable, particularly in the provisioning of urban stables. The Ferrarese stables of Cardinal Ippolito II d'Este relied on hay grown on his country estates, transported on the Po via barges, unloaded at the docks and carried to the stables by cart. Averaging a staff of twenty, these were

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[4] Lubkin, *A Renaissance Court*, 99–100. Thomas Tuohy, writing of the Este court of Ferrara, notes that the *fornimenti* were handled much like clothing, with each tailored to fit its particular horse, and the d'Este tailor frequently sewing these as he sewed clothes for the court's human members. To the labors of the tailor were added those of goldsmiths and saddlers, fashioning harness and adding "buckles, bosses, bells and gilded nails." The Estense court also travelled in style; Borso d'Este, visiting Rome, was accompanied by over 700 animals in addition to horses, including 320 hounds, and falcons, and leopards. The latter were trained to ride across the cruppers of the horses (as the horses were apparently trained to tolerate them). Tuohy, *Herculean Ferrara*, 161–2.

[5] Lubkin, *A Renaissance Court*, 337n55.

[6] Lubkin, *A Renaissance Court*, 172.

far smaller than the Sforza establishment; nonetheless accounts show one convoy of 160 cartloads of hay and, at another time, 246 cartloads of straw.[7]

Cost and difficulties were secondary, however, for the stables were crucial to the functioning and the prestige of the house. In one respect, they simply served an array of practical needs. Renaissance princes and members of their families travelled often and extensively, and though travel was conducted by water whenever possible, riding horses and pack horses were required for overland journeys, as the season or circumstances demanded.[8] To these could be added mules and asses, again used for riding. Additionally, horses were needed for communication, so essential to a secure and effective rule; Galeazzo Maria Sforza, for example, maintained a well-organized courier system, with relays of fresh horses held at strategic locations.[9] Riding horses were likewise kept for those members of the household who needed them, including court intimates such as the *cameriere di camera* and the *gentilhuomini*, functionaries within the chancery and other household departments, and the *galuppi,* couriers on horseback. Finally, and most important, were the personal horses of the duke, duchess, and other family members. These typically included a range of types variously intended for riding, hunting, war, tournaments, racing, or breeding. This description, moreover, omits one of the most salient features of the great court stables of the period, that is, their sheer size. Galeazzo Maria Sforza was decried as stingy

[7] Hollingsworth, *Cardinal's Hat*, 36–37.

[8] Tuohy, *Herculean Ferrara*, 161.

[9] Lubkin, *A Renaissance Court*, 22.

when he allowed his wife only 100 horses for her household; he himself routinely traveled with 40 to 80 for his personal use.[10]

Typically housed in their own building, the court stables represented a self-contained establishment, the domain of the *famiglie di stalle*. This 'household" included grooms and *galuppi,* carters, muleteers, and *ragazzi di stalla,* "stable boys by the dozens" who lived on the premises.[11] Overseeing the whole was the *maestro di stalli,* or Master of the Stables. In this setting as elsewhere, his was a position of considerable prestige, and brought with it the significant advantage of proximity to the prince. Galeazzo Maria Sforza's Master of the Stables was Count Giovanni Antonio Secco, familiarly known as Borella; beyond supervision of the stables his duties for the duke included travels to purchase or accompany horses, trips which at this level often took on a diplomatic character.[12] Ippolito d'Este's Master of the Stable, by contrast, held the post merely as a sinecure; the duties of the office fell instead to his head trainer, Pierantonio, who enjoyed a similarly close relationship with his employer and likewise traveled extensively in connection with the post.[13] Ever in search of quality horses, Ippolito sent agents not only to Spain and Sicily, usual haunts for good breeding stock, but also to England and Ireland. A single horse in Borso d'Este's racing stable could command £400.[14]

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[10] Lubkin, *A Renaissance Court*, 62, 90.

[11] The *ragazzi di stalli,* like the *galuppi,* are either not named in the household lists, or are recorded by their first name only, both indicators of low status. Lubkin, *A Renaissance Court*, 268n13.

[12] Lubkin, *A Renaissance Court*, 36 and 288n41.

[13] Hollingsworth, *Cardinal's Hat*, 38.

[14] Tuohy, *Herculean Ferrara,* 241.

As Jardine and Brotton have amply demonstrated, such excursions were characteristic of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and international transactions involving horses, whether exported, purchased or given as gifts, frequently had a political dimension. In one respect, of course, this was nothing new; one has only to think of the heavy trafficking of Spanish destrier stallions to England and France in the latter thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and the earlier, widespread practice of the counter-gift. There, however, purchasing expeditions and exchanges had at their base a military purpose, as royal breeding operations, still a novelty with regard to scale and complexity, were geared primarily toward the destrier. Recreational riding was simply that, a royal and aristocratic pastime. Such animals as were bred simply for riding—palfreys, coursers, amblers, even fine mules—would make pleasing gifts, and so were often extended as diplomatic or symbolic offerings. At the same time, however, ecclesiastical injunctions against the sin of pride assured that a certain ambivalence attached to the creature who was its preeminent symbol.

The temper of the Renaissance was different. Their letters and instructions reveal these princes to be connoisseurs of fine horses, as of paintings, architecture, music and poetry. Moreover they were aggressive, competitive collectors, even as they generously gave their horses as gifts, knowing full well the advantages resulting. Thus writes Ippolito d'Este, having given a much-admired horse to a friend well-placed at the French court, "though I am not able to enjoy [the horse] myself, I could not have made a better investment at this court."[15] Galeazzo Maria Sforza, on the other hand, having promised Giuliano de Medici the pick of his stables for the

[15] Cited in Hollingsworth, *Cardinal's Hat,* 121.

younger man's celebratory joust of 1475, found himself faced with an awkward situation when the Medici agent, Andrea del Fede, selected only one horse, "the one dearer to us than our right eye."[16] Offered all the rest in its stead, the Florentine demurred, and left empty-handed.[17]

The most sought-after horses were those breeds produced in the ancient Mediterranean horsebreeding regions; Spain, Sicily, North Africa and the Near East each produced a distinctive type of horse, and each had its supporters and detractors. All, however, were prized. Collectively lighter, faster, smaller and more elegant than the horses of northern Europe, particularly the heavy, powerful animals of Frisia and Scandinavia, they were well-suited to the needs and aesthetic tastes of the court culture of the period. The widespread enthusiasm for such horses, seasoned by competitive zeal and a connoisseur's discernment, provided the basis for a community of *amateurs* in the literal sense of the word, and gave rise to a lively social and political economy of gifting and negotiation. Something of that excitement comes through in a letter of 1468 to Lorenzo de Medici. The correspondent, Andrea de Medici, called "Il Butto," writes from Rome of three "*ottimi e perfetti"* horses owned by the Bishop of Fermo. One of these is particularly exceptional, "a five-year-old dappled liard[18] courser, taller and heavier than your bay was, of such beauty, so

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[16] "De tutti li nostri cavalli non trovò salvo uno, el quale ad noi è caro quanto l'ochio dextro…." Galeazzo Maria Sforza to Filippo Sacramoro, December 1, 1474, in Martelli, "Nelle stalle," 272–3.

[17] "In somma, perché da questo in fora non vi era alcuno altro che havesse possuto piacere ad Iuliano, né essere apto al suo bisogno, se è partito sensa cavallo per non menare cosa disutile." Martelli, "Nelle stalle," 273.

[18] Liard, or *leardo* as it appears in the letter, is a term of color dating to the Middle Ages. Nellie Neilson describes it as "grey, or pear-grey." See Neilson, "The Forests," 440.

clean and correct, that everyone says his like is not to be found in all of Italy, nor even beyond Italy…."[19]

Il Butto himself confirms this judgement: "[N]ever have I seen a more noble nor a more beautiful nor a more graceful horse than this one. This is what moves me to write to you, as I know you don't have a courser, and this one is of superlative quality and worthy of you."[20] Besides, he continues, the horse is a great bargain, as the bishop is asking so high a price, 200 *fiorini larghi*, that no one can afford it, and Il Butto feels sure that Lorenzo can get it for less. A second letter, written in March, confirms the purchase of the horse on Lorenzo's behalf, though the actual cost is not stated.[21]

Purchasing superb horses was one thing, however; breeding them was a different matter altogether. Unlike the *selvagium* practiced in the Middle Ages, a formal stud farm, aimed at the development and maintenance of a particular breed, entailed an extensive physical infrastructure of barns and fenced paddocks, an experienced, reliable staff, and close supervision. Illness and mishap were common, stillborn foals and mares lost to difficult deliveries likewise so. Breeding stock obtained in exotic locales, moreover, did not always naturalize well. As a consequence the successful development of a prized breed, like those produced most

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[19] "...un corsiere leardo pomellato di cinqu'anni, più alto e più grosso non era il vostro baio, di tanta bellezza e tanto netto e sì destro che per ciaschuno si dicie non essere il pareglio in tutta Italia né ancor fuor d'Italia." Andrea de Medici to Lorenzo de Medici, January 22, 1468, cited in Martelli, "Nelle stalli," 268.

[20] "…non aver mai visto il più nobile né il più bello né'l più legiadro chavallo di questo; e ciò mi muove a dovervene scrivere, perché so non avete corsiere e che questo è una cosa in superlativo grado e degnio per voi." Martelli, "Nelle stalli," 268.

[21] Martelli, "Nelle stalli," 269.

famously by the Gonzaga, represented a genuine triumph, and one which brought great credit to the family. To have one's horses sought by kings and popes burnished the reputation of horses and family alike. Thus might the Gonzaga justifiably regard their horses as an extension of themselves. "One condition alone we demand," writes Francesco Gonzaga, referring to the race known as the *palio*, "that elsewhere there be no injuries or insults to our horses, but rather those courtesies and loyalty which for our part, in our house, we extend to others."[22]

The initial efforts undertaken by Ludovico bore fruit under Francesco II (1484-1519), passionately committed to the project and to his horses. The Gonzaga maintained seven different *razze,* or breeds: *la razza Bàrbera*, or Barbs, used only for racing; *la razza Corsiera,* being *corsieros* or coursers, "powerful, agile, and slender,"[23] used specifically for tournaments; *la razza Turca,* or Turks, fast and hardy; *la razza Ginnetta*, popularly known as *Zannetta,* described by Malacarne as "very noble horses coming from Spain," used as light cavalry mounts and very probably related to the modern Andalusian; *la razza Ulbini*, which Malacarne describes as race horses much-admired in England, predating the advent of the English thoroughbred, and finally, two types of service horses, *la razza Villa,* strong, sturdy animals used for common labor, and *la razza Virgiliana,* pack horses used to transport household furnishings and other freight during the court's frequent travels.[24]

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[22] "Una sol condictione dimandamo, che altrove non siano usate a nostri cavalli iniurie et insidie, ma quelle cortesie e lealtà che per noi, in casa nostra, saranno usate alli altri." Francesco Gonzaga to Giuliano de Medici, n.d., in Malacarne, *Il mito dei cavalli*, 78.

[23] Malacarne, *Il mito dei cavalli*, 17.

[24] Malacarne, *Il mito dei cavalli*, 17–18. Malacarne's description of *la razza Ginnetta* as "very noble horses coming from Spain" identifies them as Andalusians, the type later seen in baroque equestrian portraits. His assertion that the Spanish *ginnetta*—also known as the *jineta* or jennet—had "much

An array of proprietary devices proclaimed these animals as emblems and bearers of the family's prestige. The most explicit among these was the Gonzaga brand, not at all unusual as a practice, but notable for the distinctive variant reserved for each *razza*. The elaborately illustrated *Codice* served to document the proud succession of Gonzaga racing victories and memorialize the winners, reminiscent in a sense of a family chronicle. An even more imposing presence was granted the mares and stallions depicted in the famous frescoes of the *Sala dei cavalli* in the Palazzo Te.[25]

An impassioned undertaking for the Gonzaga as for other Italian princely families, the buying and breeding of race horses was bent toward the single end of winning *palios,* the communal races run in Italian cities throughout the peninsula. The palio, named for the brilliant length of cloth which went to its winner, represented a highlight of the year, its running associated with a feast day of signal importance to the community. In Mantua, for example, it was held on August 16, the Feast of San Leonardo,[26] in commemoration of the Gonzagas' accession to power. In Ferrara it was associated with the feast day of the city's patron saint, Saint George, on April 23, as in Florence, with the feast day of St. John. As run in Ferrara, the palio was the

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Arab blood" puts in him in one camp of an ongoing dispute over the genetic makeup of that much-prized Spanish horse.

[25] There are precedents for this practice, among them the portraits of six imperial war horses commissioned during the Tang dynasty, and Roman mosaics found in Hadrumentum, in Tunisia, depicting race horses, apparently much prized. The names of the war horses—Night-Shining White; Autumn Dew; Wind-rushing Violet; Saffron Yellow Battlecharger and Jade Flower—were based on their color, as in the West. In their commemoration was preserved an implicit narrative of the emperor Taizong's rise to power and the battles won along the way. The feats of the racehorses are lost to history, though it might be argued that their names—Adored One (*Adorandus*); Delightful (*Frumentas*); Beloved *(Amandus*); and Curly *(Crinitas*)—tell the story. See Harrist, *Power and Virtue*, 18–19, and Davis, *Medieval Warhorse*, 34–35

[26] Malacarne, *Il mito dei cavalli,* 9.

fourth and most important of a traditional four-race slate: the first being for boys on asses, the second a footrace for men, and the third a race for young girls. Each winner received a cash prize along with a length of cloth in the successive colors of the Este, red, white and green.[27] Though the order of the races and the prizes awarded might vary from city to city, the basic elements remained the same, with the horse race always occupying the place of honor and the length of cloth always awarded as its prize. These were treasured objects, each one representing a hardwon victory and standing as implicit proof of the family's superiority. Thus in 1513 we find Francesco II Gonazaga, writing of the approaching Florentine palio, goodnaturedly taunting, "We hope to replenish our wardrobe, which at present contains only eleven *palii* of St. John."[28] Elsewhere in the letter, written to Giuliano de' Medici, son of Lorenzo, Francesco gives some hint of the spirit in which the race was run, as he recalls "the good memory of the Magnificent Lorenzo your father, with whom in all other things we always wished to be at peace, save for the space of the running of that palio, in which, as it concerns honor, we wish the freedom to use every tactic and means of opposition."[29]

Of passionate concern to the great families and those others whose horses ran the course, the palio likewise involved the entire community. The communal nature of the race festivities, celebrated by all and incorporating participation by an

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[27] Tuohy, *Herculean Ferrara,* 238–41.

[28] "…speramo reimpire le nostre guardarobba, qual non ha più a quest'hora che undeci palii di Santo Zoanne." Francesco Gonzaga to Giuliano de Medici, n.d., in Malacarne, *Mito dei cavalli*, 78.

[29] "…la bona memoria del Magnifico Lorenzo vostro padre, con cui in tutte l'altre cose volevamo essere concordi sempre, salvo che per il spacio che si tractava dil corso di quel palio, che per vertirsegli lo interesse di l'honore [riguardando una questione d'onore], volevamo libertà de usar seco ogni contesa e garra." Francesco Gonzaga to Giuliano de Medici, n.d., in Malacarne, *Mito dei cavalli*, 78. The translation of the idiomatic phrase is Malacarne's.

emblematic cross-section of the community, including young girls, has led some scholars to see the palio as a ritual of civic unity, serving to knit and reinforce a bond between the city's rulers and its people. Thomas Tuohy takes this view,[30] while Galeazzo Nosari, adopting a somewhat different perspective, characterizes it as a moment when the ordinary people of the city could project themselves into and for a time share the power of those who ruled them.[31]

Deanna Shemek, on the other hand, proceeding from the visual registers established in the frescoes of Francesco del Cossa, argues that the day's races, far from dissolving the structures of hierarchy and exclusion, actually served to reiterate them.[32] The key, in Shemek's view, lies in the sequence of the races— horse race; man's footrace; ass race; girl's footrace—which set up the analogical sequence of "horse is to man as ass is to girl." The valuation, or devaluation, thus implied is plain enough. Its precise nature, however, lies buried in the palio's origins as a ritual of insult and inversion. Just as the horse anchors this hierarchical formula, moreover, its prominence speaks to another buried aspect of the race, its original military context.

The roots of the palio, with its prize of cloth, lay in the Middle Ages, in taunting rituals conducted by one city outside its rival's walls in the course of a siege or an incursion. These included cutting down the tallest tree within view of the city—a symbolic felling—and ostentatiously minting victory coins. The enemy's humiliation was then ritually effected through the running of a succession of races,

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[30] Tuohy, *Herculean Ferrara*, 238.

[31] Nosari, *Il palio nel Rinascimento*, 79.

[32] Shemek, "Circular Definitions:, esp. 2–9.

each featuring a different field of competitors: men on horseback, camp followers, and, finally, the *ribaldi,* the looters and dregs of the soldiery. The winner, receiving as prize a piece of cloth—symbolic of the enemy's banner—would flaunt it before the besieged. Even the horse race, Richard Trexler points out, would have represented an inversion, as the riders were very likely the younger men of the company, taunting their elders behind the city walls. Thus all three represented forces of social disruption and disorder. After the victory, this ritual shaming of the enemy's banner was enacted in fact, with the victors handing the enemy's banner—the *palio*—to a prostitute, who would then brandish it upside down.[33]

In the course of the latter thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the races were moved inside the city walls and recontextualized against the feast day as a civic celebration. In the case of Florence, the civic connection was clear, as the races were run during the Feast of St. John, the city's patron saint. In Ferrara, they were established by statute in 1279, twenty years after the Este came to power in the city, thus associating them with Estense rule. Meanwhile, the preservation of the distinctive races turned a ritual of inversion into one sanctioning communal hierarchies.

Interestingly, the horse appears as the symbolic constant through which this transformation was effected, at each stage offering a different association. First, as a presence in the ranks of the warring city, it may be seen as an implicit symbol of communal power and martial virtue. Next, in the insult ritual, it takes on a very different coloring, the galloping horse signifying the *inversion* of right order and

[33] Trexler, "*Correre la Terra*," 134.

discipline, with unbridled youth taunting age. Finally, through its featured role in the palio as new-minted civic ritual, the horse represents the *reassertion* of right order, of social hierarchy and, by clear inference, signorial rule.

A virtual surrogate for its owner, the race horse was accorded painstaking care; "in a certain sense and in many respects," states Malacarne, "it was considered the *signore.*"[34] Since the palio was run on different dates in different cities, it offered something akin to a racing circuit, with horses, accompanied by their trainers, travelling from city to city to compete. The competitive passions aroused by the race itself emerge vividly in a 1521 letter from Baldassare Castiglione to his patron, Federigo Gonzaga. Written immediately after the Roman *palio* for mares, the letter offers a detailed account of the race, and, far more to the point, its disastrous conclusion. An archer, careless or otherwise, had cost the Gonzaga horse the victory, leading to an immediate appeal brought quickly before the Pope. Thus Castiglione writes of the affair's conclusion:

> After much discussion, the archer who was at fault has been put in prison, and the Senator and the Governor have promised me that he shall not be set free until we have a *palio* exactly like the one which he prevented us from winning. I further asked that he should be hanged or sent to the galleys, or at least given four or five turns of the rope. Anyhow, I promised V.E. that he shall not leave without some punishment. However, you have no cause for displeasure, because, if you have not carried off the *palio,* you have won all the honours, and your horses were a long way ahead. Zuccone [the trainer] has been most diligent in seeing that everything was in good order, and succeeded in making the chestnut horse, who generally refuses to run, do very well. Now I cannot comfort him at all; he is in despair, and it is as much as I can do to prevent him from starting for Mantua on the

[34] Malacarne, *Il mito dei cavalli*, 76.

> spot. Your Excellency will no doubt deign to give him your commands.[35]

Just as the semiotic flexibility of the horse accommodated shifts in political culture and civic ritual, it offered symbolic continuity amid military change. The *palii* of the early sixteenth century were run against a backdrop of foreign invasion, war, and dissolution. The fate of Leonardo's Sforza horse seems almost emblematic, with its bronze diverted for cannon and the great clay model destroyed by French soldiers taking target practice. The chivalric code itself seemed under siege, as changes in tactics, military technology and the physical practices of war served to dislocate custom and expectations.

Nonetheless the cult of chivalry, though not without its detractors, was still vital in the early sixteenth century, in Italy as elsewhere in Europe. Ferrara in particular was renowned for its tournaments and jousts, vividly evoked by the Ferrarese riding master Cesare Fiaschi. Even Venice, with little cultural or practical affinity for the countryside prior to the sixteenth century, participated in the chivalric ethos. Petrarch had encountered it firsthand in the course of a 1364 visit to the city, in the midst of celebrating a victory over Crete. Among the festivities were two equestrian events, both of which impressed the Florentine poet:

> The first was a race; the second a contest, or joust. In the first the contestants dash down a straight course; in the second they dash

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[35] "Doppo molte parole quel balestrero fu messo in pregione, et èvvi ancor, et el Senator e el Governatore mi hanno promesso ch'l non si partirà di là prima che'l farà un palio a ponto, come quello che l'ha impedito, lo desideravo più che'l fosse impicato, o almeno quattro o cinque tratti di corda, e subito poi fosse messo in galea. Credo ch'l non se ne anderà senza castigo, ch'io prometto a Vostra Ex. che non gli mancherò." Baldassare Castiglione to Federico Gonzaga, Rome, Feb. 13, 1521, in Baldassar Castiglione*, Le lettere*, ed. Guido la Rocca, 1: 716. English translation found in Julia Cartwright, *Baldassare Castiglione: The Perfect Courtier His Life and Letters 1478-1529* (London: John Murray, 1908), 2: 103.

> against each other. In both the participants are mounted: in the first the riders do not clash but give a warlike note by brandishing a spear and shield and carrying fluttering silk banners. The second is a sort of duel in armor. In the first reigns the utmost of elegance, with a minimum of peril. The second is a mock conflict; the French call it, not very properly, "jeu de lance"; this would better fit the first game, for in that they play, and in the second they fight. In both I realized something I should hardly have accepted on others' testimony, but I must credit my own eyes: this people possess a rare eminence, not only, as everyone is aware, in nautical and seafaring skills, but in military exercises. They display the arts of horsemanship and of weapon-handling, élan and endurance, enough to rank them with the fiercest participants on earth.[36]

Though this martial bravura remained an ideal of the period, another, based on restraint and discipline, was also emerging. By the end of the century one finds evidence of a marked shift in the martial culture of the nobility, with military academies—featuring horsemanship as the centerpiece of the curriculum—springing up throughout Europe. Italy was no exception, as the cities of the Venetian *terraferma* supported several such academies in the latter decades of the sixteenth century and the first years of the seventeenth. These schools were not established by the state, however, as would be the case in France and elsewhere, but were rather founded on the initiative of the young noblemen in question, who, after the fashion of the medieval university, organized themselves, drew up rules and devised an institutional structure, and then asked for a degree of financial support from the Venetian state. In one instance after another they received it, as the academies were felt to be a public as well as a private good.

The idea itself was not a new one; as early as 1411, Christine de Pisan had proposed the establishment of court-sponsored noble academies in her *Livre des fais*

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[36] Petrarch to Pietro da Muglio, August 10, 1364, in *Letters from Petrarch Selected and Translated by Morris Bishop* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1966), 236–7.

d'armes et de chevalerie. Her objectives were straightforward: to assure aristocratic proficiency in the modern arts of war, and, perhaps more to the point, to inculcate the martial Roman virtues of discipline, obedience, and self-sacrifice for the greater good. Conceived against the gathering threat of civil war, the academies were offered as a means of curbing and channeling the riotous energies of a feckless, self-willed nobility.

This would reemerge as their *raison d'être* in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as, at first tentatively, and then with the confidence of a movement, such academies were established throughout Europe. As formulated by the French noble writer François de la Noue—writing, as Christine had, against a backdrop of aristocratic civil strife—they were designed to provide a modern military education, but one couched in the traditional terms of the warrior noble identity.

The Venetian academies, an early manifestation of the trend, constituted a response to the malaise and disruptive behavior of young noblemen finding themselves at odds with a changing military world. By the latter sixteenth century, the heavy cavalry—traditionally the signature branch of noble service—had been relegated to policing its home grounds. Even these companies were kept up to strength only with difficulty, as the keeping of horses declined among the nobles of the Terraferma, along with proficiency in horsemanship.[37] Thus we find twenty *cavalieri della compagna* of Verona formally resolving in 1607 to secure the services of the riding master Baldassare Mazidore, "to revive insofar as is possible the

[37] Hale, "Military Academies," 286.

honorable practice of horsemanship in this city."[38] Meanwhile the violence inherent in the martial subculture was showing itself in other, less salutary ways such as duels and intrigues, inciting disorder and mayhem. As noble academies began to appear in the cities of the Terraferma, they found ready support from the Venetian state.

Between the years 1608 to 1610, four such academies were established, in Padua, Udine, Treviso and Verona. These were modeled on an earlier effort, the *Accademia Filotima*, established in Verona in 1565, the name signifying the school's purpose, "to inspire a yearning for glory and the love of honor."[39] The structure and organization of the Filotima set the pattern for subsequent efforts, requiring of its students a commitment of four months' military service at their own expense, and providing for their education facilities, instructors and horses, in order that

> the youth of the city should be trained in the use of weapons and in horsemanship to the effect that this virtuous exercise would deliver them from idleness and other, less honourable forms of activity as well as to make them ready to render some service to the state where it was needed.[40]

The academy would be governed by a five-man committee, including president, chancellor, and secretary, and additionally bring on three *padri,* two of whom would be distinguished by their "*nobiltà e valor militare*," and the third, "*per lettere famoso*."[41]

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[38] "…per ravivar per quanto sia possibile l'honorato essercitio dello cavaleria in questa città." Cited in Hale, "Military Academies," 288.

[39] "…ebbe il nome di Filotima perché si doveva ispirare al desiderio della gloria ed all'amor dell'onore." Hale, "Military Academies," 287n6.

[40] Astorre Baglione, military governor of Venice, cited in Hale, "Military Academies," 288.

[41] Hale, "Military Academies," 290.

A subtle but crucial shift may be seen, however, in the Paduan *Accademia Delia,* founded in 1608 by sixty-three nobles, "*una nova accademia di cavallieri et di cavaleresca disciplina,*" established by its members in order to inculcate good military discipline, that they might be "*in ogni tempo più fruttuosa al Serenissimo Nostro Principe, et più utile et honore alla patria nostra.*"[42] The themes of service and self-discipline, both integral to the original chivalric ethos, are here revived, but with the state, not the church, as the object of devotion.

The change is reflected in the style of horsemanship as well. The horse was central to these noble academies, with riding the core of the curriculum, in addition to instruction in fencing, mathematics and, in one instance, dancing. The inclusion of mathematics—essential for use in fortification and siege warfare—points to their serious, pragmatic bent, more evident still in the later absolutist foundations of France and elsewhere. Nonetheless, horsemanship was the *sine qua non* of these institutions, as it always would be; such a school without a riding master, state the minutes of the *Filotima,* would be "*come un corpo senz' anima*," like a body without a soul.[43]

Hardly surprising, it was also the most expensive component, with the school required to furnish horses as well as a riding instructor. These instructors were difficult to come by, and commanded salaries accordingly; by the turn of the sixteenth century, expert riding masters had become a prized and highly sought-after commodity. "Local instructors were available," Hale writes, "but the academies wanted the best, and such men were not easy to find."[44]

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[42] Hale, "Military Academies, " 290.

[43] Cited in Hale, "Military Academies," 290.

Naples, by this time, had become the place to look. We find both Udine and Verona sending there for their riding masters. In the case of Verona, negotiations with the Neapolitan master Fulvio Cardone continued for two years, to no effect. Similarly the *Accademia Delia* offered another Neapolitan, Horatio Pentrasci, an annual salary of 700 ducats—nearly five times the going rate for a mathematics instructor—only to be turned down. At last they secured the services of "*il Picardini*," described as "*huomo celebre nella professione*," for a salary of 800 ducats per annum—and lost him two years later to the Grand Duke of Tuscany. *Il Picardini*'s successor, Lelio d'Agno, commanded an annual salary of 1000 ducats, at a time when a mathematics instructor could be had for 150.

The contrast, of course, is striking. The governing committee of the *Accademia Delia*, needing someone to teach mathematics, would have their pick of candidates, with three vying for the position and one, a fellow noble and friend, offering to teach for nothing. Upon taking a vote, the committee resolved to hire one of the three at a salary of 150 ducats per annum, and to accept the services of the volunteer on a part-time basis. The third candidate, a Ser. Galileo Galilei, left empty-handed.[45]

This extreme inequity of salary lessens on closer examination, however, for Lelio d'Agni was required to furnish and maintain six trained horses for the use of the students, a standard contractual stipulation. Since local masters would have been sufficient for what Hale terms "utilitarian military horsemanship," he concludes—no

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[44] Hale, "Military Academies," 297.

[45] Hale, "Military Academies," 299–300.

doubt rightly, given the Neapolitan association—that the academies were seeking instructors in the new mode. The horses trained in this discipline, like the men who trained them, were specialized, much sought-after, and often hard to come by.

Part 2. The New Horsemanship: Character and Origins

The style of equitation so enthusiastically promoted through the Venetian academies in the early 1600s was known as manège, reflecting French dominance in the art at that time. As discussed earlier, however, the term derived from the Italian *maneggio*, just as the art itself was Italian in origin. As first advanced by the Neapolitan horse master Federigo Grisone[46]—through his riding academy, founded in 1532, and his 1550 treatise *Gli ordini di cavalcare*—manège encompassed a number of claims, all premised on a rationalized system of training. In purely functional terms, its aim was the creation of a well-balanced, responsive and docile mount. Beyond this primary goal, its professed objective was that of preparing the horse for use in battle, particularly in the *mélée* or in hand-to-hand combat. To these ends the horse was schooled in a series of graduated patterns, or figures, designed to cultivate obedience as well as coordination, strength and flexibility. Additionally it learned an array of balletic movements, called airs, the most spectacular of which involved precise, explosive leaps. In reality such displays of horsemanship constituted an end

[46] Carlo Bascetta describes Grisone as a student of the great riding master Gian Battista Pignatelli, but this is chronologically impossible, since Pignatelli, born ca. 1525, was still a child when Grisone was opening his riding academy. This is characteristic of the confusion surrounding the earliest Italian riding masters. Carlo Baschetta, ed., *Sport e giuochi: trattati e scritti dal XV al SVIII secolo* (Milan: Edizioni il Polifilo, 1978), 1: 206. On Pignatelli's dates, see Monteilhet, *Les Maîtres*, 222.

in themselves, as they showed the rider to advantage. It was against this setting that the discipline's proponents made their loftiest assertions, as they claimed for horsemanship the status of an art, and so carried it explicitly into the realms of the aesthetic, the moral, and the ideological.

Thus, through classical horsemanship, the act of riding was endowed with self-consciousness in a way which transformed it from a physical skill to a rhetorical performance. Always inherently a symbolic act, it now acquired a coherent conceptual vocabulary and offered itself as a tangible ideological statement. As such, however, it participated in and drew upon a range of discourses. Some, such as the military and the humanist, comprised threads within the dominant ideological discourse of the court. As will be seen in part three of this chapter, others lurked abroad in the larger culture, familiar and readily available but not always subject to control.

The emerging discipline found its principal theoretical foundation in Xenophon's *Peri hippike* (On Horsemanship), a small, crisply written treatise of the late fourth century CE dealing with the selection, care, and handling of riding horses. It is at this point, in its embrace of Xenophon's principles, that manège clearly breaks with the medieval past and takes its place among the arts of the Renaissance. Recovered in the first part of the fifteenth century and translated into Latin under the title *De re equestri*, Xenophone's small work was printed in the original Greek in 1516, with a Latin edition following in 1534. Grisone was already an established master by that time, and it is not known at what point he encountered the classical

treatise. By 1550, however, when he published his own, he had clearly become a disciple.

Xenophon's work is at once prescriptive, conversational, and quietly aristocratic in tone, a congenial fit for a Renaissance court.[47] It is divided into twelve chapters. The first six provide concise and reasoned advice on the selection of a horse, its breaking-in when young, and its stabling and grooming. Chapters seven through eleven deal with working and handling the horse, and the last, with arms and armor. Chapters nine and ten include advice on bits, while chapter eleven sets out, in a few succinct paragraphs, the principal tenets which would be taken up by the horse masters of the Renaissance.

These are simple and to the point, and begin with the purpose at hand: horsemanship intended for brilliance of effect, for the specific setting of the public procession. The horse is to be spirited and yet contained. This balance of effect is founded on a simple physical principle, today known as "collection," whereby the horse's weight is shifted to the hindquarters, or backhand. This produces great impulsive power, like that of a coiled spring. When combined with the resultant lightness of the forehand, it permits the mount to wheel sharply, rear easily, and move with a high and brilliant action at the walk, trot and canter.

According to Xenophon, the first prerequisite of such a style is an appropriate mount. This means that one must have a "horse for parade, a high-stepper and of showy action." Not every horse is suited for the part; to carry it off he must have "the

[47] Xenophon, *The Art of Horsemanship,* trans. M.H. Morgan (1894; repr. J.A. Allen & Co., 1979), 13. All other references from this work will be cited parenthetically.

natural gift of high spirit and strong body" (61). This is not enough, however, for a certain conformation is also necessary:

> Some people fancy that if a horse has supple legs, it follows that he will be able to rear his body on them; but this is not the fact. It is the horse with supple loins, and short and strong ones too, that can do this. I do not mean the loins at the tail, but at the belly, between the ribs and the haunches. Such a horse will be able to gather the hind legs well in under the fore (61–2).

Xenophon then goes on to describe what, in manège, would be termed a *pesade* or *levade*, depending on degree. He then describes how to effect the illusion of voluntary action on the part of the horse:

> Now when he has gathered them well in, if you take him up with the bit, he falls back on his hocks and raises his forehand so that his belly and sheath can be seen from the front. You must give him the bit when he does this, and it will look to the spectators as if he were doing all of his own accord the prettiest feat that a horse can do (62).

Elsewhere, however, he offers advice which, while similar on its face, differs in its essence:

> [I]f you teach your horse to go with a light hand on the bit, and yet to hold his head well up and to arch his neck, you will be making him do just what the animal himself glories and delights in. A proof that he really delights in it is that when a horse is turned loose and runs off to join other horses, and especially towards mares, then he holds his head up as high as he can, arches his neck in the most spirited style, lifts his legs with free action, and raises his tail. So when he is induced by a man to assume all the airs and graces which he puts on of himself when he is showing off voluntarily, the result is a horse that likes to be ridden, that presents a magnificent sight, that looks alert, that is the observed of all observers (56).

This is not deception, but rather an effect created from the channeling of the horse's natural desires. The animal as presented here is a willing collaborator, indeed a joyous one. Implicit in this statement is the assertion that beauty—and implicitly,

moral standing—can be realized only if the horseman's skill and discernment, rooted in his understanding of the animal, prove sufficient to achieve his ends.

That principle, received through one text and subsequently passed on through others, established manège as something more than a physical accomplishment. Conforming to the Renaissance ideal of perfecting nature through human intervention, it conferred upon the new discipline the dignity of an art. How this principle translated into practice, however, is less easy to determine, particularly in the early period. Similarly, while the new horsemanship took its conceptual framework from Xenophon's prescriptions, and likewise the basis of the figures that would become its hallmark, its vocabulary of movements—the airs on the ground and those above the ground—originated elsewhere. While Xenophon describes actions that resemble these, as in the apparent *levade* of the parade horse, he offers nothing more specific.

By 1550, as confirmed by contemporary accounts, manège had already passed into France, and it seems clear that a basic repertoire of movements was in place. Grisone, in his treatise, certainly appears to proceed on that understanding. While referring freely to the *posata, terra à terra, redopolone* and other movements, he rarely describes them, clearly assuming a certain familiarity on the part of his reader. Some terms are happily descriptive, as for example the *capriole,* or "goat-leap," in which the horse, standing, gathers itself and leaps vertically, kicking its hind legs in full extension as it does so. The *corbetta* or *corvetta* is another example, an apt name for an air in which the horse, rearing to its full height, advances in crowlike hops. Others, like those given above, are not so evident. Such terms could bedevil

contemporary translators, as they found themselves wrestling with the double difficulty of prolix or idiomatic language and an unfamiliar technical vocabulary.[48] It remained for subsequent horsemen-authors to clarify what Grisone had left in doubt, even as familiarity with the airs themselves spread.

The precise period of their origination similarly remains elusive. Grisone's riding academy, dating from 1532, was the most famous of the early schools teaching the new horsemanship, and is believed to have been the first. That he was so regarded in his own time is evidenced by an inscription in the church of San Paolo at Ferrara, which, commemorating his student, Sigismondo Locatelli, speaks of *Federicique Grisonii artis eius inventoris*.[49] Seeking to narrow the chronological frame, Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly observes that at Henry II's ceremonial entry into Lyons in 1548, some sixteen years after his academy opened, a display of school airs was still novel enough to arouse awe at the sight of "the captain, lieutenant, ensign and a good part of the others so dextrous on horseback and so well able to handle them, to make them bound, leap and perform double jumps in the air…"[50] It should be noted, however, that the riders in this instance were neither royal officers nor nobles, but rather

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[48] In his 1564 French translation of Cesare Fiaschi's *Trattato dell'imbrigliare, atteggiare, & ferrare cavalli,* François de Provane provides a letter to the reader in which he remarks on the difficulties of translating from the author's Ferrarese dialect. See Gen. Mennessier de la Lance, *Essai de bibliographie hippique* (Nieuwkoop: B. De Graaf, 1971), 1:480n2.

[49] "Sigismundus Locatelleus Ferrariensis, equis omni nationum artificio instituendis artifex totius Italiae suo aevo primarius, Federicique Grisonii artis eius inventoris primi discipulus…." Inscription in the church of San Paolo, Ferrara, in L. Schrader, *Monumentorum Italiae, Quae hoc nostro saeculo et a Christianis posita sunt, Libri Quattuor*, edita a Laurentio Schradero Halberstadien (Saxone, Helmaestadii: Typis Jacobi Lucii Transsylvani, 1592), 1: 51a. Cited in Conrads, *Ritterakademien*, 41n6.

[50] *La magnificence de la superbe et triumphante entrée de la noble & antique Cité de Lyon faicte au Threschrestien Roy de France Henry deuxieme de ce* Nom (Lyon, 1549), cited in Watanabe-O'Kelly, *Triumphall Shews*, 74.

members of Lyon's *Cavallerie des enfans de la ville*. The account indicates that the wonderment had as much if not more to do with the fact that these dazzling equestrian feats were being performed by bourgeois.[51] That Grisone's influence had made its way to the Tudor court by 1526 seems at least possible, as Joan Thirsk notes the presence there in 1526 of two Italian "officers of the stable," Alexander de Bologna and Jacques de Granado, who were still at court eighteen years later.[52] As she notes, the former seems likely to be the "olde Alexander" whom Thomas Blundeville, writing in 1560, described as "sometime Grysones scholler."[53] But Blundeville himself is not sure of this, for he qualifies the statement, "as I understand."[54] As will be seen in chapter 3, however, Grisone himself cites contemporaries and predecessors, conveying through such references the sense of someone working within a community of fellow practitioners. It seems likely that he merely refined and codified existing practices.

Another reference, reported by Miklós Jankovich and dating from the latter fifteenth century, points to a possible seminal influence. In it we find the Hungarian king Matthias Corvinus contemptuously dismissing the horsemanship of the Spanish,

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[51] van Orden, *Music, Discipline, and Arms*, 243–47.

[52] Thirsk, *Horses in Early Modern England*, 17. In this connection Watanabe-O'Kelly refers to Italian grooms at the court "familiar with the new system" (74), but Thirsk, whom she cites and who found the archival reference, makes no mention of this.

[53] Thirsk, *Horses in Early Modern England,* 19n83.

[54] Blundeville, referring to his translation of Grisone, expresses his hope that the Earl of Leicester will encourage "the esquires and rydors of the Queenes Ma. horses, sometimes to folow thinstructions therof (and the rather for that olde Alexander their first master, was him self as I understand, sometime Grysones scheller)…." Thomas Blundeville, *A new booke containing the arte of ryding, and breakinge greate horses* (1560; facsimile repr. Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum / New York: Da Capo Press, 1961), dedication.

with their horses "hopping around with their bent hocks."[55] This last points to the Spanish presence in Naples and the claims of the native Iberian style of horsemanship known as *a la jineta*. The story is one of cultural cross-fertilization. This style of riding, claiming ancient roots predating the Muslim conquest and even that of the Romans,[56] was characterized by the use of shortened stirrups, and light, agile horses, a combination which emphasized responsiveness and speed. In the course of the Middle Ages it was supplanted in court circles by the European chivalric style, known by the Spanish as *a la brida*. In this form of riding, associated with the destrier, the rider, sitting straight-legged in a high, rigidly-constructed saddle, relied on the curb bit and long spurs to guide and control his mount. Diametrically opposed to *a la jineta, a la brida* was popular as the style of the joust and tournament, in Spain as elsewhere. In actual battle, however, the native style still proved more effective, and retained its martial vitality through the course of the *Reconquista*.

Thus when Spanish forces occupied southern Italy, they brought their light, swift horses and native style of riding with them, along with their own equestrian sports, particularly that of bullfighting on horseback, called *el rejoneo.* The latter in fact was already well-known in Italy; Cesare Borgia, himself a Spaniard, was an enthusiastic practitioner.[57] Caesáreo Sanz Egaña, charting the rise and decline of the native Iberian style, asserts that the Neapolitans, adapting elements of the Spanish style to their own, emerged with a new style which, while maintaining the straight-

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[55] Cited in Miklós Jankovich, *They Rode into Europe: The Fruitful Exchange in the Arts of Horsemanship between East and West*, trans. Anthony Dent (London: George G. Harrap, 1971), 126–27.

[56] See Sánchez-Albornoz, "La caballería visigoda," 96–100.

[57] Loch, *Dressage*, 40.

legged seat of *a la brida,* and still known by that name, in fact represented a hybrid of the two types. As this new, more elegant style of riding, still called *a la brida* and associated particularly with the Neapolitans, spread in popularity, the old style *a la jineta* fell out of favor at court and entered a decline. It was still popular for practical riding, however, and became the subject of a significant number of Spanish treatises in the latter sixteenth and early seventeenth century, a nationalistic counterpart to the burgeoning literature on manège.[58]

A reference in the *Book of the Courtier*, though inconclusive, could arguably be taken to support Sanz Egaña's assertion, as Castiglione characterizes the respective equestrian skills of each nation:

> Thus it is the peculiar excellence of the Italians to ride well with the rein [*a la brida*], to handle spirited horses very skillfully, and to tilt and joust; so in all this the courtier should compare with the best of them. In tourneys, in holding his ground, in forcing his way forward, he should compare with the best of the French; in volleying, in running bulls, in casting spears and darts, he should be outstanding among the Spaniards.[59]

Unfortunately it is difficult to know whether, in speaking of the Italians, Castiglione is describing a single equestrian activity, two, or three. The phrase "spirited horses" could as easily refer to the light, fast "*barberos*" used for the Palio. However, as discussed earlier, in the latter fifteenth century the Gonzagas were already breeding "powerful, agile, and slender" coursers specifically for tourneying.

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[58] Caesáreo Sanz Egaña, introduction, *Tres libros de jineta de los siglos XVI y XVII* (Madrid: Sociedad de bibliófilos españoles, 1951), xxix–xxxvii.

[59] Baldassare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, trans. George Bull (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, UK: Penguin Books, 1967), 62–3.

Here one may also acknowledge the possibility of some connection between the joust and the tilt and the emergence of the new horsemanship. The term *carriera*, *carrière* or career, used to denote the straightaway portion of the figure in manège, originated in the lists, and the element of headlong charge may be seen as a carryover. Additionally, tilt yards were often taken over for the schooling of manège mounts. In any event Étienne Saurel's point seems a just one, that in tracing the development of horsemanship from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance, one should think in terms of continuity rather than rupture, true in this regard as in so much else.[60] It is in the application of Xenophon's principles that we find a decisive break with the medieval past.

The type of horse used for manège in sixteenth century Italy—still a matter of contention—bears directly on more fundamental interpretive issues relating to the method itself. Practitioners and advocates of manège tended to emphasize its military aspect, a posture consistent with Castiglione's assertion that the bearing of arms was "the first and true profession of the courtier."[61] Indisputably, manège preserved a symbolic connection to the military, permitting the rider to participate actively in and identify with a military culture, even within the preserve of the riding ring. As has been seen, it was held to be the defining discipline of the noble academies of the latter sixteenth century, overshadowing more progressive subjects.

Manège also helped to bridge the enduring divide between arms and letters. As an accomplishment long associated with the nobility, horsemanship was easily

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[60] Etienne Saurel, *Histoire de l'équitation: des origines à nos jours* (France: Christian de Bartillat, 1990), 199-200.

[61] Castiglione, *Courtier,* 57.

accommodated within the humanist educational program, seen as a worthy form of the physical exercise necessary for a well-balanced individual. Castiglione classes it as such; it is like swimming and tennis, and "certainly very exhausting and difficult." At the same time, however, he accords it a particular distinction, for "more than anything else it serves to make a man wonderfully agile and dextrous; and apart from its usefulness, if agility on horseback is accompanied by gracefulness, in my opinion it makes a finer spectacle than any other sport."[62]

Thus, while speaking of riding as a sport, as a form of useful physical exercise, Castiglione identifies another aspect, one which would be crucial to manège—that of riding as performance.

Part 3. Beauty and the Curb Bit

In one respect, manège was an eminently practical art, a means of producing a riding horse that was balanced, agile and obedient. In another respect, it dealt in illusions. Castiglione, speaking of the grace of riding and its aesthetic value as spectacle, identifies the functional basis of the discipline's loftier claims. As seen above, the model received from the Greeks already embraced an element of calculated effect. as in Xenophon's advice to give the parade horse the bit when he rears, so that "it will look to the spectators as if he were doing all of his own accord

[62] Castiglione, *Courtier,* 63.

the prettiest feat that a horse can do."[63] The very type of the parade horse speaks to conscious effect.

Although the airs were held to be a heightening and perfecting of the horse's action in nature, the balletic quality of manège and the choreographic precision of its figures, typically performed indoors in a defined space, testified to its essential artifice. Nonetheless, the harmony of horse and rider was to appear effortless, in keeping with the dictates of *sprezzatura.* Once again Castiglione is prescriptive:

> [P]ractise in all things a certain nonchalance which conceals all artistry and makes whatever one says or does seem uncontrived and effortless. I am sure that grace springs especially from this, since everyone knows how difficult it is to accomplish some unusual feat perfectly, and so facility in such things excites the greatest wonder… So we can truthfully say that true art is what does not seem to be art; and the most important thing is to conceal it, because if it is revealed this discredits a man completely and ruins his reputation.[64]

The consequent play of illusion and reality resonated amid the stratagems of the court. In this respect manège mirrored dance, to which it was closely allied. Like dance too, it codified and celebrated the disciplining of the body—at first, only that of the horse, but eventually, that of the rider as well.

As manège evolved, its kinship with music and dance was cultivated, and the ordering elements of measure, rhythm and harmony accentuated. The addition of music, introduced by the noted sixteenth-century Ferrarese riding master Cesare Fiaschi, further strengthened the connection with dance, itself a powerfully coded activity. This parallel held important ideological implications. In keeping with Neoplatonic thought, the harmonizing of parts was held to mirror good governance.

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[63] Xenophon, *Art of Horsemanship,* 62.

[64] Castiglione, *Courtier,* 67.

Thus the harmonies of music reflected a political ideal, while dance—the body in motion—encompassed its opposite as well. The harmonious ordering of the body served as a metaphor both for personal virtue—an echo of Anselm of Canterbury—and the well-ordered body politic. Against this stood the threat implicit in the disordered body and the immoderate gesture.[65]

School riding, with its emphasis on the training and disciplining of the horse, offered a template for the training and disciplining of the human being. This had recognized military importance in a period of radical tactical change, as the individualistic mode of combat associated with the armored knight and heavy cavalry gave way to an increased reliance on variants of the formation. As Norbert Conrads observes, "repeated comparisons between the education of young humans and the training of the horse are not coincidental in contemporary writings. Both were understood as new, important and coherent tasks."[66] Music and dance likewise offered a physical discipline and mental concentration valuable in fencing and battle alike; their integration with horsemanship not only provided a potent element of absolutist spectacle, but, as Kate van Orden has impressively shown, also served to cultivate necessary new military skills and persuade men to them.[67]

As expressed in manège, the efficacy of the construct relied on the creation of an image of seamless harmony between horse and rider, one expressing a unity of

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[65] Kolsky, "Graceful Performances," 14–15.

[66] "Nicht zufällig finden sich in den zeitgenössischen Schriften öfters Vergleiche zwischen der Erziehung des jungen Menschen und der Schulung des Pferdes. Beides wurde als eine neue wichtige und zusammenhängende Aufgabe begriffen." Conrads, *Ritterakademien*, 42.

[67] See van Orden, *Music, Discipline, and Arms*, particularly chapter 6, "'Dresser l'homme': The *Ballet à Cheval*."

will as well as one of effect. As elsewhere in their close association, this insistent parallelism between horse and human demanded that the horse transcend its own animal being. Once again we find it credited with near-human intellect and sensibilities. Adduced as proof of its superior being was the horse's supposed ability to hear rhythms and to comprehend and respond to music: in other words, to dance.[68] Thus manège may be seen as literally *embodying* the exceptionalist trope of the great rider/great horse.

Needless to say, such assumptions complicated the task of the horse trainer. At the same time, however, these men were themselves deeply vested in the premises of the new art. As a result we find riding masters actively promoting the conceit in their treatises, turning to ancient sources for substantiation and finding it, more immediately, in the host of invariants inherited from the Middle Ages. As will be seen, the tale of the dancing Sybarite horses suited the purpose especially well. In the end, of course, this conceit of the horse's superior intelligence and preternatural sensibility was an illusion, created through the systematic disciplining of the body and, at least initially, through the complete subjugation of the horse's actual will. The means by which this was achieved, resting necessarily on some process of correction, reward and punishment, marked the point of essential dissonance between the pretense of the animal's near-human capacities and the reality of its instincts and psychology.

At issue were two aspects of training: first, the method by which one achieves the desired effect, and second, that of correction, in other words the use of

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[68] van Orden, *Music, Discipline, and Arms*, 242.

punishment and the means employed. Having laid out his approach, Xenophon is clear with regard to the first:

> If you desire to handle a good war-horse so as to make his action the more magnificent and striking, you must refrain from pulling at his mouth with the bit as well as from spurring and whipping him. Most people think this is the way to make him look fine; but they only produce an effect exactly contrary to what they desire—they positively blind their horses by jerking the mouth up instead of letting them look forward, and by spurring and striking scare them into disorder and danger (55).

As to the other issue, he does not preclude punishment of the horse, though he advises simply to "reward him with kindness after he has done as you wish, and punish him when he disobeys" (49). Likewise he is not wholly averse to striking the animal, for example, to test its character: "It is not a bad thing to try whether he is just as ready to mind when roused by a blow as he was before. A disobedient servant is of course a useless thing, and so is a disobedient army; a disobedient horse is not only useless, but he often plays the part of a very traitor"(24). At another point he advises having a helper strike a balky mount hard to get it to jump a ditch, though this is framed as a lesson learned: "He will never need a blow after that, but will jump the minute he sees anybody coming up behind him" (46). Elsewhere, however, the Greek master has little recourse to force; his understanding of the animal is deep, and his tolerance broad. Above all, he urges, no horse is to be beaten from anger, and no horse is to be blindly coerced into obedience. To do so is to violate something essential in the undertaking. "[W]hat the horse does under compulsion," Xenophon warns, "is done without understanding, and there is no beauty in it, any more than if one should whip and spur a dancer" (62).

These words acquire a certain irony when considered in the Italian context. Xenophon's advice was received by the Italian masters, incorporated into their works and reasserted through frequent repetition. However, one crucial difference separated the equitation of the Greeks from that of the Renaissance. The Greeks rode without saddles or stirrups, having at most a saddlecloth and frequently riding bareback. The school riding of Grisone's time, on the other hand, was done in an evolving version of the war saddle called the *selle à piquer*, which featured a deep seat with high cantle and pommel and long stirrups. This saddle, requiring that the rider sit "on the fork" and straight-legged, offered security at the expense of contact with and feel for the horse's back. As a consequence, far more emphasis was placed on the aids, those varied means by which the rider communicates with and directs the horse. These included the natural aids such as the voice and leg, and others, such as the bit, the spurs, the *bachetta* or baton, and the *bastone* or staff, which were instrumental or mechanical in nature and carried the potential of coercive or punitive action.

Of these aids, that which attracted the most interest by far was the bit, *la frena,* a word used also for bridle and restraint. As employed in the Renaissance, the bit stands at the junction of metaphor and actuality. That bridling or bitting was a pervasive trope for restraining the passionate and the disordered, whether in oneself or in others, is well-established. It was also central to the equitation of the period, as evidenced by the sets of woodcut illustrations of bits—typically featuring up to 50 full-page pictures to a set—which were a standard feature of period treatises on horsemanship.

These were curb bits, a type still in use along with the milder snaffle bit. Though the snaffle, sometimes also called the bridoon, was available to the Renaissance, the curb was, for all intents and purposes, the only bit used in manège and military riding. The term itself referred to a good deal more than the bar placed in the horse's mouth; the curb bit was (and is) in fact a complex mechanism, comprising several different parts, each of which could be varied to alter the final fit and effect. These included the curb chain, running under the horse's chin, and the branches, or shanks, the sidepieces to which the reins were attached through holes called "eyes." Through the branches, pressure was communicated to the mouthpiece or bar, or to the chain; the longer the branch, the more pressure it exerted. In a sense, the branch and the chain were the hallmarks of the curb bit, the elements which gave it its particular severity.

The bar, also known as the cannon, represented another highly variable feature. It could be solid or jointed, and single, doubled or tripled, with each bar typically different from the others. Often it would have a u-shaped rise at its center, called a port. This in turn would often feature small dangling chains and metal keys, which the horse tongued and played with, thus keeping its mouth moist and its attention diverted. The port might offer some additional freedom for the tongue; however, particularly if high, it could also press painfully against the horse's palate.

Charles Chenevix Trench explains the action of the curb thus:

> The 'arm' or cheekpieces were as much as fifteen inches long, producing terrific leverage to bend the thickest and most inflexible neck; but the power of the bit would depend on two variable factors—the tightness of the curb chain and the rider's hands. The cannons of the mouthpiece were generally smooth and of large diameter, so comparatively innocuous in their pressure on the bars of the

> mouth....Reinforced by sundry spikes, the sixteenth-century bit could be an instrument of torture; without the spikes it was an instrument of power, but not necessarily painful to the horse unless the rider had rough hands.[69]

Thus, for all its potential severity, the curb bit was not merely or even primarily punitive. In fact, simply because it did offer the potential of more restraint, it also permitted a lighter hand than the less forceful bridoon. On the other hand, the curb bit, while subtler, was also potentially savage in its effects. In the sixteenth century it was used to control the horse, to counter undesirable habits, and if necessary to achieve an artificial flexion of the neck and head, creating the high degree of collection described by Xenophon, and so desired in school riding.

As may be inferred from Xenophon's description of horses compelled to parade with head bent back and held high, a somewhat different ideal appears to have obtained among the Greeks. Renaissance equitation dictated a different dynamic. The desired end, at least in visual terms, was similar to that which Xenophon describes elsewhere in his work, of a horse prancing with proundly arched neck. Christopher Clifford, writing in 1585, offers a succint formula, stating that the horse "should carrie his head in such sorte that when you should make him stand against a wall, he may touch the same with his forehead and nose both just togither."[70] How this effect was achieved, by what means and according to what premises, speaks to the essential spirit in which manège was practiced in this period, the degree to which understanding of the horse's actual nature, or lack of it, influenced methods, and the

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[69] Trench, *History of Horsemanship*, 106–7.

[70] Christopher Clifford, *Schoole for Horsemanship* (London: Thomas Cadman, 1585), 22.

extent to which the effect of harmony between horse and rider was genuine or brutally illusory.

The coercive potential of the bit is not the only issue. As will seen in the next chapter, the horsemen of the Renaissance, masters included, were not averse to tormenting their mounts in order to achieve a desired end. Their methods included some which to modern sensibilities are brutal and even grotesque. As a result, modern assessments of the equitation of the period usually come accompanied by some degree of condemnation. Federigo Grisone in particular serves as a target, precisely because of his stature as groundbreaking figure. He too used certain of these punishments, and so his contribution remains tinged with controversy. While praising him as a pioneer, many writers also dismiss him as a primitive, a transitional figure justly overshadowed by more enlightened successors such as Pluvinel, Newcastle and La Guérinière. Sylvia Loch's assessment is characteristic:

> While Grisone, known by his contemporaries as the 'Father of the art of equitation,' repeated almost word for word the teachings of Xenophon, we know from exercepts and illustrations that he interpreted punishments all too literally and had little understanding of the mind of the horse. Due to ignorance, so-called art in this case became a travesty.[71]

Another school of thought, citing the military claims of the art and such visual referents as the horses of Ucello, argues that the early practitioners of manège reserved it for mounts of the Great Horse type, heavy coldbloods wholly unsuitable for intricate maneuvers and figures. Thus coercion was required to achieve what nature could not. Luigi Gianoli, an adherent of this position, describes these horses as "always lacking in vigor and…coldly unresponsive." Such a horse would be poorly

[71] Loch, *Dressage,* 24.

suited for the collection and precision required in manège. This in turn would explain the importance of bit and spurs, used together to achieve collection: the spurs, by activating the animal's hindquarters, would drive him into the restraint of the bit, producing the proudly curved neck desired in the period. This, Gianoli asserts, would also explain Grisone's warning against cultivating any kind of flexibility in the neck or allowing the horse to extend its neck, since "excessive flexibility in that part of the body would give rise not only to uncertainty in the horse, but defensiveness as well."[72]

Chenevix Trench, another adherent, offers an even more unforgiving characterization:

> The only horse which the manège expert rode, known as the 'great' (or, more incongruously, the 'pleasure') horse was the huge ponderous creature bred to carry thirty stone of knight and armour. To make this vast creature handle as lightly as a polo pony, it was necessary, above all things, to get him back on his haunches and to carry his head 'like a fighting ram' in what we should call a grossly overbent posture. To this object all early schooling was directed, and for this, too, the bit was designed.[73]

In fact, there is little consensus regarding the type of horse used in sixteenth-century school riding, as on the actual characteristics of the war horse of the Middle Ages. Since manège overlapped to some extent with military use, and much more so with military pretensions, the question of the war horse remains pertinent. As was indicated in chapter 1, the Great Horse, so closely associated with chivalric traditions and ceremonial, retained a privileged status well into the sixteenth century. While it was still admired, used and bred, however, changing tastes and military tactics alike

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[72] Gianoli, *Horses and Horsemanship,* 104.

[73] Chenevix Trench, *History of Horsemanship,* 106.

called for speed and agility rather than sheer power. In response a more versatile animal began to appear, produced by crossing coldblood stock with warmblood. These were known as "horses of two saddles," that is, horses suitable for travel and recreational riding as well as for war.

The new look of cavalry is suggested in a report made in 1494 by Matteo Maria Boiardo, then captain of Reggio Emilia, in which he describes a French company passing through Este territory, including "five hundred crossbowmen of good appearance and very well armed as far as I could tell, on good, handsome rouncies and thirty very fine men-at-arms on horseback." To this he adds, significantly, "these had two coursers per man, either Spanish or Frisian, but agile and handsome."[74] The native Frisian was a coldblood, and the fact that Boiardo even uses the words "Frisian" and "agile" together suggests that mixed-type mounts were already in use by the beginning of the sixteenth century.

Grisone, for his part, speaks to a range of contingencies, offering advice which considers an array of equine types and dispositions. Such an approach, while sensible when directed at an undifferentiated readership, would also be consistent with the needs of the Italian princely families, which, as discussed earlier, kept and used a range of horse types. Among these the Spanish jennet was well-suited for school figures and evocative of Xenophon's prescription that the parade horse be "a high-stepper and of showy action" and have the "natural gifts of high spirit and strong

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[74] "La Compagnia sua ha come ho detto V.^{cento} balestreri di bona aparencia e tanto bene armati quanto dire se possa, sopra a roncini per la più parte boni e belli XXX.^{ta} homini d'arme benissimo a cavalo: tuti per homo hanno dui corseri o Spagnardi o Frizoni, ma legeri e belli," in Giovan Battista Venturi, 'Relazioni dei governatori di Reggio al duca Ercole I in Ferrara (1482–99)," in *Atti e memorie delle RR. Deputazioni di storia patria per le provincie modenesi e parmensi*, s. III, vol. II, p. II (1884), 326–7, cited in www.deremilitari.org/resources/sources/boiardo.htm (accessed March 28, 2006).

body" (61). Thus, while some may have wished to school their Great Horses for use on the battlefield or for martial spectacles, it seems unlikely that these animals would have been the mounts of choice for courtly display.

Indeed, separate training programs evolved for the war horse and the school mount. Chenevix Trench's mordant characterization appears to spring from a confusion of the two, as he conflates the "Great Horse" with the "horse of pleasure." In Tudor England the "horse of pleasure" or school horse, was also known as a "Styrrer," a corruption of the term "destrier." The war horse, on the other hand, was known as the "horse of service." Only the term for war horse, not the war horse itself, as Chenevix Trench would have it, decisively crossed the boundary to the balletic art of manège.

Nonetheless the coercive practices remained; the worst of these, as will be seen, represented prevailing practices which the riding masters in their treatises both acknowledge and condemn. One also gets a sense of the prevalence of abusive, cruel and even crippling methods still applied in the practice of manège, from the round condemnations issued by authors from Corte to La Broue to Astley. Clearly the ideal of manège was all too readily sacrificed to effect. One also wonders if the art was always approached in the spirit which its masters had intended.

At issue, in the end, are two contending views of the horse, and thus two contending portrayals of the rider. Manège, positing a moral and aesthetic ideal of harmony between horse and rider, encouraged the fantasy of the horse's near-human capacities of intellect and emotion—creating, as it were, a living image of the "superior man/superior horse." In reality, the effect would be achieved through the

trainer's discernment, restraint and understanding, and the rider's discreet use of the aids.

Thomas Elyot, on the other hand, writing in 1531, captures the appeal of the second view of the horse:

> ...the most honorable exercise, in mine opinion, and that beseemeth the estate of every noble person, is to ride surely and clean on a great horse and a rough, which undoubtedly not only importeth a majesty and dread to inferior persons, beholding him above the common course of other men, daunting a fierce and cruel beast, but also is no little succor, as well in pursuit of enemies and confounding them as in escaping imminent danger when wisdom thereto exhorteth.[75]

This second view, finding its virtue in the effective use of curb bit and spur, references the horse as *animal,* emphasizing the distance between reasoning human and instinctual brute. The horse is presented as savage beast, not demi-angel, and the rider's *virtù* displayed through subjugation. *Virtù* itself is represented as an act of sheer will, the *sang-froid* by which will itself is imposed.

Representing two different concepts of riding, these represent also two different concepts of virtue, and of rule. One may speculate how many riders envisioned themselves in the guise of the second. They too required training, in the interests of civility and in the terms of the state. Thus manège may be seen as having ever broader implications.

[75] Elyot, *Book Named the Governor*, 140.

Part 4. Discourses of Service

As has been argued, the horse may be seen as embodying three distinct discourses. That of dominance is amply exhibited in the art, spectacle and equitation of the Renaissance. The second discourse, that of discipline, is essential to the art of manège, though as has been seen it may carry conflicting meanings. The third, that of service, is most closely identified with the animal itself. Interesting possibilities appear, however, when the horse is privileged in its standing or nature, as, for example, when the identity and prestige of the great are invested in, and closely associated with, the superiority of their horses. In such instances the horse itself becomes a source of status, suggesting in turn possibilities of cooptation and inversion.

One subject of interest in this connection would be those who, occupying a privileged yet ultimately subordinate position, might be identified, or might themselves identify, with the horse. The courtier in particular comes to mind, as does the noble in certain settings. Also of interest in this connection are those who, by their labor, craft or skill, engaged in the care of horses. Finally one arrives at those whose knowledge placed them in a position of mastery of some sort with regard to the horse; chief among these, of course, would be the trainer or riding master himself.

Each of these groups is marked by a distinct ambivalence or ambiguity. This is most true of the second, those who worked with their hands and who, by virtue of the manual nature of their labor and skills, were firmly remanded to a subordinate and even menial place in society. Ultimately, however, no one who served a prince was

other than a subordinate, and all these may be so defined. In this connection the realities of service and subordination run through the social hierarchy, bearing on noble and commoner alike.

Identification with the horse offers a basis of identity, though not necessarily a happy one. Service and subordination were not confined to those of common or inferior status, but ran through all ranks. In this connection Stephen Kolsky reminds us that Castiglione's picture of court life was a highly idealized one, that actual service in a princely court brought with it a number of strains, among them unpredictability, insecurity, and an at-times humiliating subordination of one's own desires and interests to those of the prince. Self-interested calculations and maneuvers offered one arena for independent action, in which a courtier might preserve some sense of autonomy and self-respect. These, according to Kolsky, created the need for self-representation for strategic purposes, and self-justification.

> [A]lthough the theoretical models of court behavior that were proposed by courtiers like Castiglione and Equicola might not have had much to do with the workings of real relationships, they are nevertheless important, because they demonstrate the courtier's need to assert a certain degree of dignity and autonomy for himself.[76]

The horse, a vehicle of display and self-representation, offered itself for this purpose, both figuratively and literally. Castiglione's treatment of the accomplishments and conduct of the ideal courtier, if read across disciplines, is prescriptive in this respect, and establishes themes of judgment, discernment and self-restraint which would subsequently be echoed by the riding masters.

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[76] Kolsky, "'The Good Servant,'" 39–40.

Thus sounds his key admonition, that **"**everything should be tempered by discretion; for it is just not possible to imagine all the circumstances possible, and if the courtier is a good judge of himself he will adapt himself to the occasion."[77] Or again, "…the correct rule of behavior is to understand a certain prudence and wise discretion, and to understand the exact emphasis to give to various actions so that they may always be done seasonably."[78] The same principles of calculated effect apply to horsemanship, as the courtier should

> make sure that he is as elegant and attractive in the exercise of arms as he is competent, and that he feeds the eyes of those who are looking on with everything that can give him added grace. He will ensure that the horse he has is beautifully caparisoned, that he himself is suitably attired, with appropriate mottoes and ingenious devices to attract the eyes of the onlookers in his direction as surely as the loadstone [sic] attracts iron. He will never be one of the last to show himself, knowing that the crowd, and especially the women, scrutinize the first far more than the last…[79]

Thus one perceives the importance attached to the elements of performance and effect in the new horsemanship, the qualities which it celebrated, and the appeal it held for young men. Van Orden captures the somewhat incongruous mixture of conceptual ideal and personal motive, as she writes that "restraint, equilibrium, and artistry—the triumph of artifice over nature—came together in a delicate symbiosis of horse and rider, and students cut striking figures when they returned home."[80]

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[77] Castiglione, *Courtier*, 121.

[78] Castiglione, *Courtier,* 113.

[79] Castiglione, *Courtier,* 116.

[80] van Orden, *Music, Discipline, and Arms*, 239.

Courtiers were but one group tactically positioned to benefit by their association with the horse. The training and care of the animal engaged the services of an array of people. Traditionally, moreover, as shown in chapter 1, these encompassed an array of roles and ranks, from high to low. This still held true in the Renaissance; Mary Hollingsworth points out that, in a princely household, the court stables more than any other part spanned social extremes.[81] Thus one finds yet another hierarchy, from the highest, the Master of the Horse, to the lowest, the stableboys and *galuppi* or messengers—those too humble to be named in the accounts. The Master of the Horse was typically of noble birth himself, had a degree of independent status, and, more important, would often enjoy ready access to and even a certain emotional bond with the prince. The *scozzone* or horse trainer also occupied a position of some importance, though of greater variability. In one instance he might enjoy considerable responsibility, including the selection and purchase of new horses or their delivery elsewhere, a role which frequently entailed travel, independent action, and even diplomatic skills. Ippolito d'Este's Pierantonio, for example, in 1535 received a salary of thirty-four *scudi* a year, plus expenses for himself, his wife, a servant and a horse, and further enjoyed a room above the stables with glass in the windows, further testament to his status.[82] At the other extreme, however, the *scozzone* might be little more than a stableyard horsebreaker.

The groom, of course stood lower still, though his position too brought with it a certain variability, such status as he enjoyed a reflection of the status of his equine

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[81] Hollingsworth, *Cardinal's Hat,* 36.

[82] Hollingsworth, *Cardinal's Hat*, 38.

charges. Independent of the horse, the relative ignominy of his status is suggested by the famous appearance of the groom at the end of *Richard II* (5.5), as the extent of Richard's fall is captured in his ironic greeting to his "noble peer." Lowest of all were the stableboys. In the household of Ippolito d'Este, these received a paltry wage of five *scudi* a year and alone of the stable personnel were excluded from dining in the palazzo; by the same token they were more transient as a group, with a markedly higher turnover than other divisions of palace staff. Hollingsworth notes various precautions taken against theft, such as locks placed on the feed-boxes, which she observes as being doubtless necessary under the circumstances.[83] Xenophon, writing more than a thousand years earlier and with a good deal more brevity, implies a similar expectation: "[I]t is a good thing to have his [the horse's] stall in such a part of the establishment that his master shall very often have an eye on the animal; it is well too, that the stable should be arranged so that the horse's food can no more be stolen out of the manger than his master's out of the storeroom."[84]

Nonetheless, it is with regard to these figures collectively, the lowest of the stables and the most rambunctious of those associated with the horse, that one encounters an intriguing inversion. It surfaces in a popular work of the period, *La piazza universale di tutti le professioni del mondo* of Tomaso Garzoni, an encyclopedic compendium of contemporary occupations and professions. Garzoni's chapter on those who work with horses, asses and mules is of particular interest. "It may seem strange," he writes, "or even ridiculous, that I should wish to celebrate

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[83] Hollingsworth, *Cardinal's Hat*, 36.

[84] Xenophon, *Art of Horsemanship,* 27.

certain occupations, which almost all the world holds to be degraded, and hardly worthy of being named."[85] Nonethess, he does so:

> I praise the cavalrymen *(cavallari)* and the servants of the stable, reputed by others to be unworthy of praise, because they are the caretakers of the noblest of animals, and do that which lords themselves do, who, when they have seven or eight horses in the stable, of value or importance, very often visit it, and with their own hands deign to touch the rump, and open the mouth, and arrange that they be attended with great care, and suitable solicitude…[86]

Thus, according to Garzoni, these servants of the stable, whether grooms or stable boys, achieve status through their association with the animal they serve. Their elevation is legitimated by the lord, who, in this single instance, deigns to perform manual labor himself, touching the horse's rump and opening its mouth.

The act of physical touch, associated here with manual labor, makes manifest the transformation. So noble is the horse that the lord is not abased by serving it; thus those who serve the animal every day practice an occupation that is intrinsically worthy. Even though, Garzoni concedes, "in effect the service of one might be a little more refined than that of the other,"[87] the service itself acquires a kind of grace; through its innate nobility, the horse has the power to remove the stigma of manual labor, from laborer and lord alike. In this Garzoni's praise of grooms and stable boys recalls the reverence extended to the knight's horses in the Middle Ages, so noble

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[85] "Parerà cosa strana, e fuor di modo ridicola, ch'io voglia celebrar certi mestíerí, che tutto il mondo quasi reputa vili affatto, et a pena degni di esser nominati." Tomaso Garzoni, *La piazza universale di tutte le professioni del mondo,* 2 vols., ed. Giovanni Battista Bronzini, with Pina De Meo, Luciano Carcereri (Florence: L.S. Olschki, 1996), 600.

[86] "[I]o lodo i cavallari, et anco i servitori da stalla dagli altri reputati indegni di lode, perché son custodi di animali nobilissimi; et fanno quello che i signori istesso fanno, che quando hanno in stalla sette, o otto cavalli di pecia, or di portata, spessissime fiate visitano la stalla, et con le proprie mani si degnano toccargli la groppa, aprirgli la bocca, et ordinar che siano attesi con cura grande, et sollecitudine convenevole…." Garzoni, *La piazza universale*, 600.

[87] "…benché in effeto sia un poco più gentile l'ufficio di uno, che dell'altro." Garzoni, *La piazza universale*, 600

themselves that a squire of gentle birth could perform the hard, dirty, menial work of caring for them without sacrificing his status or dignity.

This intimation of a social leveling through the agency of the horse, however, is a very tenuous proposition. While the virtues of these servants of the stable derive from their association with the noble animal, their defects are their own, and these, Garzoni makes clear, are many and shameful. Thus he upends his rosy picture of the *servitori di stalla*, quite emphatically tumbling them back to their lowly status:

> [T]hese sometimes leave their horses, and the mares fall prey to wolves through the poor care they got; or sometimes they let them graze in the wheat fields of another…and sometimes ruin stallions by providing too little restraint,…and then they are scoundrels in a house with a farm, cunning for play; rascals for theft; sluggards from not wanting to overtire themselves; drunks from too much intemperance; dissolutes from stealing the patron's luxuries from under his nose; given to pillaging the goods of the house, which they carry off to slatterns, they stand about with loud-mouthed women*;* they go out all night flirting, leaving the stable abandoned, and hardly remember to give a little combing to the horse, who is entrusted to them above all others. They are filthy all over…stink of the stable all over, and hardly come close to someone when they make them vomit from that horsy dive that is so nauseating; infidelity, laziness, rascality, ignorance, the air of the disgraced that is theirs alone, which is not the shifty eye of the Hebrews, or the very perfidy of the Marranos. And I believe that their craft has elected in mystery the pitchfork, the shovel and the wheelbarrow, because many of these would do well on a pitchfork, for being depraved, and scoundrels; and they are well suited to the wheelbarrow of the wicked, and the shovel to bury them alive in the dungheap as dissolutes.[88]

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[88] "…perché quelli lascian talhora i cavalli, et le cavalle in preda ai lupi per la debile custodia che n'hanno; talhora le mandano a pascere ne' frumenti di altri con danno espresso del compagno; e talvolta ruinano i stalloni per intendersi poco del governo di essi…et questi son furfanti in casa con le massare, furbi per ciocare, mariuoli per il rubbare, poltroni per non volersi troppo affaticar, ubbriachi per troppo crapulare, dissoluti per voler senza saputa de' patron lussuriare; ove dan di piglio alla robba di casa, e la portano alle sgualdrine, stanno su le galozze con le femine di chiasso, vanno tutta notte furor di casa civettando, lasciano la stalla in abbandono, e a pena si ricordano di dare una stregghiata al cavallo, ch'è lor raccommandato sopra gli altri. Sono sporchi da ogni parte;…puzzan da stalla da per tutto, e a pena s'accostano a alcuno, che li fanno vomito con quel tuffo da cavallino tanto stomacoso; l'infidelità, la pigritia, la poltroneria, l'ignoranza, l'habitoda disgratio è più proprio loro, che non è il tuffo da occa agli Hebrei, et la perfidia istessa ai Marani. E credo che nel loro mestiero habbiano eletto con misterio la forca, il badile, et la carriuola, perché molti di loro starebbono bene su una forca, per

If Garzoni's enumeration of the failings of the stable help seems excessive, it should be remembered that he is an encyclopedist, and inclined to exuberant aggregations whatever the context. Moreover, though he characteristically balances his praise with a listing of failings, he is less of a moralist in his leanings than a satirist, leaving latitude for a certain exaggeration.

Moreover, while these accusations appear grounded in the author's experience, it should be noted that the vices of the stableboys and grooms are not theirs alone, but are also those attributed to horses, who in their other incarnation are characterized as oversexed, intemperate and chaotic. Thus while the horse elevates his groom on one side, he plunges him down again on the other—the difference here being that it is the groom who stands as a surrogate for the horse. While deceit and dishonesty would seem to be a departure from this pattern, we will find in the next chapter that these too may be projected onto horses.

A final group occupies an intermediate position: not so low as the groom and stableboy, nor so consistently elevated as the Master of the Horse. This group includes those who, by virtue of their specialized knowledge, may claim a certain dignity, or who, at the least, are acknowledged as plying a crucial trade or possessing a crucial skill. Among these are the *marescalcus*, the farrier, and, once again, the *scozzone*, or horse trainer, now in his new capacity as riding master.

The most salient fact to be noted concerning this group is the absence of clear occupational distinctions between them. This was particularly true of the

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esser vitiosi, e furfanti; e gli si conviene la carriuola da sciargurati, e il badile da sotterrargli vivi nel letame come dissoluti." Garzoni, *La piazza universale*, 602.

marescalcus, or marshal, who, while reliably a specialist in horse care, could be either a horse master, a horse doctor, or a farrier with a secondary knowledge of horse medicine, and whose status varied according to definition and circumstance. Pietro Aretino plays on this ambivalence in his comedy *The Marescalco*, whose eponymous hero, though expert in the care of his lord's horses, becomes the butt of a sustained practical joke by the Duke of Mantua.[89]

The area of horse medicine also labored under an ambivalent status. This was particularly true of hippiatry, long the particular beneficiary of the tradition of comparative medicine. From ancient times physicians such as Galen and Hippocrates had pursued the study of animal physiology and illness, drawn by ready subjects and the hope of medical insights transferable to human medicine; meanwhile animal medicine itself stood justified by the crucial economic importance of livestock. Thus the discipline historically featured parallel lines of development and a marked degree of crossover between the human and the animal. Particularly privileged, in this regard, was the horse, perennially the subject of more literature and more directed study than any other animal.[90]

This pattern continued in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Of the known works produced in this period, a few are the work of translators, while others are of anonymous authorship; of those remaining, two were written by practicing veterinarians: Laurenzio Rusio's *Liber Marescacie* (The Book of Marshalcy), written

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[89] Also notable is the Marescalco's homosexuality, which provides the basis of the practical joke, involving an arranged marriage. In this situation the Marescalco's true inclinations play against type, e.g. the rampant sexuality associated with horses. Pietro Aretino, *The Marescalco*, trans. Leonard G. Sbrocchi and J. Douglas Campbell (Ottawa: Dovehouse Editions Canada, 1986).

[90] Lise Wilkinson, *Animals and Disease: An Introduction to Comparative Medicine* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 8.

before 1342*,* and Dino Dini's *Mascalcia* (Marshalcy), ca. 1352–1359; and two more by practicing physicians: Teodorico Borgognoni's *Mulomedicina* (Horse Medicine), written after 1266, and the first such work known in Portuguese, Mestre Giraldo's *Livro d'Alveitaria* (The Book of Farriery) of 1318. Of the others, Moses of Palermo was a physician as well as translator to the court of Charles I of Anjou, the hippiatric treatise which he translated into Latin, *De curationibus infinitatum equorum* (lit., On Cures of Infinities of Horses), came to him as part of a group of Arabic medical manuscripts. Of this group Borgognoni, a Dominican, was a third-generation physician; Dini, more remarkably, represented the seventh in his family line to practice veterinary medicine.[91] At the same time, however, if medicine itself was somewhat tainted by its association with the physical, this was all the more so of medicine practiced on animals, whether horses or otherwise. This ambivalence extended likewise to writers addressing horse care from the perspective of agronomy, itself a subject of lesser dignity. The textual and the theoretical, in this context, offered an important counterbalance, as did invocation of the superiority of the horse itself. Thus we find Pietro Crescenzi, in his early fourteenth-century agricultural treatise *Opus ruralium commodorum* , writing:

> It is true that, among other animals, one considers the horse the most noble and the most necessary, as much for kings and other princes—in war as in peace—, as for men of the church. As a result, I will speak more completely concerning the riding horses of the first, and more briefly of the others; many things articulated with regard to the horse may be adapted to the others, following the principle of the affinity of their nature.[92]

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[91] For a discussion of these authors and their works, see Poulle-Drieux, "L'Hippiatrie dans l'occident Latin," 23–49.

[92] "Il est vrai que, parmi d'autres animaux, on considère le cheval comme le plus noble et le plus nécessaire, tant aux rois et aux autres princes—en temps de guerre et en temps de paix—, qu'aux

As will be seen, the recourse to textual self-authorization would be of critical service to the riding master, who found himself crossing several crucial boundaries. At each point he found himself challenged by some inherent handicap of prejudice or rank. As teacher, for example, he stood in the disadvantaged company of tutors and schoolmasters; whatever his standing with regard to his discipline, his relationship to his students was too easily reduced to that of either servant or paid employee. As riding master, he taught a physical skill. As writer he invoked the clerkly realm of the study, out of keeping with the martial company of horsemen. In each instance, as will be seen, the horse offered him the means to turn the formula to his advantage.

Needless to say, not every horse was held to be either noble or ennobling; the common riding horse or plow animal merited no such consideration. Only horses of breeding possessed such stature, the noble horse of the noble man. In this respect the conceit of the horse's nobility, by simply mirroring existing distinctions of social rank, served to reinforce and even reify them.

Ironically, however, the character and claims of the new horsemanship may be seen as undermining these age-old associations. This was certainly not through any overt assault; school riding itself, after all, was a noble undertaking *par excellence.* Previously, however, for all its prestige, horsemanship had been a purely functional skill, one which the noble youth learned by hands-on instruction, practice and hard knocks. The status of one's teacher was largely beside the point; he could be a prince

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hommes d'église. Par conséquent, je parlerai d'abord plus complètement des montures des premiers, plus brèvement des autres; les nombreuses choses énoncées à propos de ces chevaux-là pourront être adaptées aux autres, selon le principle de l'affinité de leur nature." Crescenzi, *Opus ruralium commodorum*, 429.

of the blood or an expert old man-at-arms. What mattered was his knowledge and experience, and his ability to impart both to his pupil. The training of the horse, meanwhile, could be left to the *scozzone,* the horse-breaker.

Now, however, it was the *scozzone* himself who had become the instructor, the master of horses. The discipline he taught involved far more than the mere mastery of a physical skill. It entailed the training of another creature, an undertaking requiring judgment, self-restraint, patience, and discernment. Moreover, by codifying the practice, by transposing it from the realm of the physical to that of the theoretical, *manège* demanded the engagement of the intellect in the undertaking, and with it, engagement in the world of ideas, texts and literacy.

Chapter 3. THE ITALIAN RIDING MASTERS, 1550-1600

The Italian riding masters of the first generation, in turning author, courted formidable challenges as well as considerable fame. The first challenge, and the most notable, lay in the project of translation, of communicating a precise and complex physical project through the medium of print. Related to this was the challenge of systematizing and authorizing a body of knowledge largely derived from observation, oral transmission, physical skill and empirical experience.

Balanced against these uncertainties was the advantage of novelty. The riding master who undertook to write a treatise was laying claim to a particular status for his discipline as for himself. The field of expertise which he claimed was similarly open to definition. Initially narrow in scope, concerned specifically with the training of horses for a rarefied purpose and an elite clientele, it soon broadened to encompass ancillary fields such as farriery and veterinary medicine—driven to a large extent by practical dictates, but also, over time, by the pressures of competition in a fashionable field, by the need to offer more, to be more proficient if one could not be more innovative. This development, however, tended to work against the discipline's claims of social exclusivity, and of traditional social and occupational distinctions. The forging of a professional identity—whether as a self-conscious act or through gradual evolution—was necessarily an exercise in self-definition. Its broadening horizons brought both opportunity and contradiction.

This chapter will examine three works, each in its own way a pioneering effort: Federigo Grisone's *Gli ordini di cavalcare* (1550); Cesare Fiaschi's *Trattato dell'imbrigliare, maneggiare e ferrare cavalli* (1556); and Claudio Corte's *Il cavallarizzo* (1562).[1] Each represents a distinctive response to the challenges of the emergent genre, and so will be assessed in terms of its unique character and contribution. At the same time, however, these works will be analyzed in terms of certain fundamental questions. The first of these concerns the strategies by which the riding master authorizes himself, his discipline, and the undertaking at hand. The second involves the issues of coercion and correction broached in chapter two. The third, and related issue, concerns his view of the horse he trains, and the extent to which it appears as animal subject, as signifier of abstractions, or, in some measure, as surrogate self.

Somewhat paradoxically given the fame they came to enjoy, there is little hard information on the riding masters of this first generation.[2] This fact underscores the transitional nature of the moment, as the figure of the riding master passed from one culture to another: from an essentially oral culture to one grounded in literacy, and—in large measure through the agency of print—from the relatively insular milieu of the court to international celebrity.

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[1] The first editions for these works are as follows: Grisone, *Gli ordini di cavalcare* (Naples: Giovan Paolo Suganappo, 1550); Cesare Fiaschi, *Trattato dell'imbrigliare, maneggiare et ferrare cavalli* (Bologna: Anselmo Giaccarelli, 1556); and Claudio Corte, *Il cavallarizzo* (Giordano Ziletti, 1562).

[2] Conrads notes the meager biographical information on Grisone. He himself identifies Fiaschi as Grisone's pupil, citing M. Jähns, *Geschichte der Kriegswissenschaften vornehmlich in Deutschland* (Munich, 1889) 1: 647; Chenevix Trench, *History of Horsemanship*, 103ff; and Alois Podhajsky, *Die klassiche Reitkunst: eine Reitlehre von den Anfängen bis zur Vollendung* (Munich: Nymphenburger Verlagshandlung, 1965), 12. Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly follows him in this assertion. Fiaschi himself makes no mention of the Neapolitan, however, and Sylvia Loch identifies him as a probable colleague of Grisone's, a more likely scenario. See Conrads, *Ritterakademien*, 41n4; Watanabe-O'Kelly, *Triumphal Shews*, 75; and Sylvia Loch, *Dressage,* 42.

Part 1. Federigo Grisone

Federigo Grisone, the first and most famous of the Italian riding masters, achieved a remarkable degree of international fame in his lifetime. Acknowledged as the pivotal figure in the establishment and promotion of the new art, he derived his celebrity from two enterprises, his riding academy in Naples, established in 1532, and his celebrated treatise *Gli ordini di cavalcare*, first published in 1550. His riding academy spawned a legion of similar schools, while his treatise enjoyed a swift and widespread success during the latter half of the sixteenth century; the first edition, published by Giovan Paulo Suganappo of Naples, was followed by no fewer than eighteen Italian editions or impressions. The first French translation, *L'Ecurie du S.F. Grison,* appeared in 1559; the first English translation, Thomas Blundeville's *Four Chiefest Offices Belonging to Horsemanship*, in 1565. Benvenidas' *Reglas de la cavalleria de la brida,* published in 1568, marked the treatise's debut in Spanish; its German debut followed in 1570 with Johann Fayser's *Künstlicher Bericht und allerzierlichste Beschreybung*.[3] Ultimately translated into almost every European language, *Gli ordini di cavalcare* came to exert an even wider influence through unacknowledged adaptations and outright plagiarism.

One encounters Grisone's name in a variety of circumstances. He figures prominently, for example, in the epitaph of the Ferrarese horsemaster Sigismondo Locatelli, appearing there as a master of masters. He turns up in the autograph

[3] See Watanabe-O'Kelly, *Triumphall Shews,* 69, for an expanded chronology of translations.

marginalia of Gabriel Harvey's copy of *The Courtier,* in a passage loosely copied from Thomas Blundeville's translation of *Ordini di cavalcare*:

> M. Blundeuil, in his Praeface to My Lord of Leyster before his Art of Ryding. I sawe my deare friend, M. John Ashley, M. of the Queens Maiestys Jewel howse, by the daily practising of the Rules of Grisons Books, without ye help of any other Teacher, bring two of his Horses unto such A perfection, as I beleeve few Gentlemen in this Realme have the lyke…[4]

And, marking a transition of sorts, one finds him in John Florio's Italian-English dictionary of 1611, *Queen Anna's World of Words,* cited as a source and sharing the company of writers such as Tacitus, Dante, Boccaccio, Guiccardini, Guazzo and Garzoni.[5]

Despite Grisone's fame, we know little of him beyond his father's name, Iacopo,[6] and his status as a *gentil'huomo napolitano*, the identification provided in his treatise. The term *gentil'huomo* encompassed a range of meanings in the sixteenth century; it could signify a courtier or a man of noble birth, or a man variously possessing landed wealth, a court office or the personal qualities of "noble spirit and courtly manner," or, at the basest level, one simply adopting such a manner.[7] Of these, the courtly association seems most likely. Monteilhet states that Grisone learned his craft under Colas Pagano, son of the chief *écuyer* of Don Ferrante, the

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[4] Cited in Caroline Ruutz-Rees, "Some Notes of Gabriel Harvey's in Hoby's Translation of Castiglione's *Courtier* (1561)," *PMLA* 25.4 (1910): 614.

[5] John Florio, *Queen Anna's New World of Words* (London: Melch. Bradwood, 1611), n.p.

[6] Carlo Bascetta, *Sport e giuochi*, 1: 306.

[7] Reale Accademia della Crusca, *Vocabolario degli accademici della Crusca* (Florence: Tip. Galileiana di M. Cellini e c., 1893), 7: 141.

Bastard of Aragon and king of Naples.[8] A connection to the Neapolitan court is supported by Grisone's own reference to a conversation with a Messer Vincenzo Respino of the king's *cavallerizza.*[9] The internal evidence of the treatise indicates an individual who was at least conversant with literary and learned conventions, and attuned to the stratagems of self-presentation.

The work itself is simple in organization and presentation, consisting of four books prefaced by a dedicatory letter. It concludes with fifty full-page woodcuts of curb bits, which are omitted in some later editions. Otherwise, illustrations are limited to two schematic diagrams representing manège figures fundamental to Grisone's method. These are labeled to indicate direction and sequence of movement, though at least one edition reverses the written instructions, with the turn to the right labeled *da mano sinistra* and the turn to the left, *da mano destra*, suggesting some confusion on the part of the printer. Ornamental initials decorate the dedication page and each of the four books, as well as a note on bits which introduces the woodcuts. The treatise features somewhat irregular pagination, and while it offers a running head indicating the chapter, it lacks a table of contents or any other finding aids. Taken as a whole, it provides a roughly sequential, though not clearly structured or differentiated, program for schooling horses in manège.

Successive editions of the book offer some clues concerning its changing audience, or at least the audience to which it was directed at any given time. The 1550

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[8] Monteilhet, *Les Maitres*, 136.

[9] Federigo Grisone, *Ordini di cavalcare* (Bartolomeo Cesano, 1558), fiiijr. http://www.vet-lyon.fr/bib/fondsancien/ouvonline/grisone.htm#30 (accessed March 24, 2006). Unless otherwise indicated, all citations for Grisone's *Ordini di cavalcare* are from this edition.

first edition, printed in Naples by Gian Paulo Suganappo, has the air of an initial venture. It is a fairly modest quarto volume, its austere title page reading simply *Gli ordini di cavalcare di Federigo Grisone, Gentil'huomo napoletano,* with the privilege below. The historiated initials which open each book feature generic humanist subjects, not surprising given the cost of these ornate block stamps. That two include horses, in each case drawing a chariot, suggests that the printer made the best of what he had on hand. A shift in the pagination from Roman to Arabic numerals, occurring specifically around the two diagrams, likewise lends the work a somewhat improvised air. The table of errors is quite extensive, with corrections concentrated in the first book and the concluding section on bits; while the errors in the first book are primarily typographical, those in the addendum are substantive, again suggesting that the printer was unfamiliar with his subject matter.

The popularity of Grisone's first edition is indicated by the speed with which it passed into a second. Suganappo's ten-year privilege notwithstanding, the treatise appeared in a new edition the next year, a tidy octavo volume printed by Vincenzo Valgrisi of Venice and reissued in 1552 and 1553. This small Venetian edition of the early 1550s retains the two manège diagrams but, significantly, omits the woodcuts of bits. That a comparable set of woodcuts appears in a late-fifteenth century Emilian work on *marescalcia*,[10] or horse care, suggests their practical value as a reference tool. Their absence from the little Valgrisi edition would thus seem to indicate economy as an overriding concern, either that of the printer, the projected buyer, or both.

[10] Trolla, ed., *Hippiatria*.

In mid-decade publication of the work passed to the Pesaro printer Bartolomeo Cesano, who issued a new quarto edition in 1555 with successive printings in 1556, 1557 and 1558. The treatment is clearly ramped up; coincidentally or not, Cesare Fiaschi's treatise went to print the following year, in 1556. The Cesano edition is both more explicit and more aggressive in its address to the reader. It emphasizes the treatise's military associations from the outset, as reflected in the work's expanded title: *Rules of Riding, and Ways of Discerning the (Diverse) Nature of Horses, of Correcting Their Faults, & of Training Them for Use in War, and for the Benefit of Men.* Similarly, the 1558 title page alerts the potential buyer to the inclusion of "figures of various types of bits, according to the mouths, and handling, of Horses;"[11] the woodcuts of bits, now restored, are thus advanced as a selling point. Finally, the treatise tellingly advertises itself as a "New work, and one very useful for every sort of person of account."[12]

In its use of the phrase *commodità umana,* the title invokes an enduring theme, that of the horse as created by God to serve human beings. This theme, like that of the military, clearly invokes distinctions of status and rank. The single overt sales pitch on the page, advertising the work as "most useful to every sort of person of account," appeals to these same distinctions, but in terms which are markedly open-ended. The buyer is thus made the arbiter of his own social worth and standing. His possession of Grisone's book serves to second the judgment, as it confirms his membership in the exclusive brotherhood of horsemen.

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[11] "Morsi, secondo le bocche, & i maneggiamenti de' Cavalli." Grisone, *Ordini di cavalcare,* title page.

[12] "Opera nuova, & utilissima ad ogni sorte di persona di conto." Grisone, *Ordini di cavalcare,* title page.

The work's peregrinations continued as it returned to Naples in 1559, reissued there by Mattio Cancer in a quarto edition commissioned by the bookseller Marc'Antonio Fenario. In the same year a different edition appeared in Padua, this one by Gratiano Perchacino, the first of four issued successively in 1559, 1561, 1565 and 1569. These mark a return to the octavo format. Of the last two the 1565 edition is also by Perchacino but printed in Venice, and contains a newly-added section of medical remedies.[13] Though the second lacks any reference to either printer or place of publication, its other similarities strongly suggest it belongs to this group. In addition to their octavo format, the Perchacino editions also share the mislabeled first diagram, in which the words *da mano sinistra* and *da mano destra* are reversed.

Thereafter the treatise remained in the hands of Venetian printers, with a quarto edition issued by Gio. Andrea Valvassori, detto Guadagnino, in 1571; another octavo edition by Altobello Salicato in 1582; a return to the quarto format, and the Valvasori family, in 1584, now printed by Luigi Valvasori Gio Domenico Micheli; and finally, in 1590, 1610 and 1620, three quarto editions, all printed by Andrea Muschino. By the time it entered its final editions Grisone's work, though still august, had been surpassed by others in organization, coherence and aesthetic quality. Manège itself had advanced in method and understanding, as other masters built on the foundation which Grisone had laid.

At the outset, however, Grisone enjoyed an open field. As the first of the early modern treatises, his work is particularly interesting for the strategies it employs and the contradictions it reveals. The latter are especially evident in the jarring dissonance

[13] See Jean-Baptiste Huzard, *Catalogue des livres, dessins et estampes de la bibliothèque de feu m. J.-B. Huzard* (Paris: Mme ve Bouchard-Huzard, 1842), 425; Watanabe-O'Kelly, *Triumphall Shews,* 69.

between the dedication and introductory text on one hand, and the substance of the treatise on the other. In the former, we see Grisone authorize himself and his discipline both through an artful use of language and references, and neoplatonic invocations. The latter, as will be seen, is anything but literary, and thus represents a markedly different tone.

Grisone's choice of a dedicatee is of interest. Cardinal Ippolito II d'Este (1509-1572), younger son of Alfonso I d'Este and Lucrezia Borgia, spent virtually his entire life in the church—becoming a bishop at age 2, an archibishop at age 10, a cardinal at 29, and very nearly pope at 41. As this swift and precocious progress suggests, his advancement had little to do with piety, and everything to do with family rank and connections. Subsequently French ties also came into play, as the young Ippolito, at once lusty and discerning, found a like-minded companion in Francis I, some seventeen years his senior. He received the French king's political backing, and subsequently enjoyed support from Henry II in his bid for the papacy. Foiled in that ambition by his rival Giovan Maria Giocci, elected Julius III, Ippolito received the governorship of the town of Tivoli in September of 1550, an appointment which brought with it both consolation and exile. He would remain based in Tivoli for the rest of his life, engaged in the design and construction of the Villa d'Este.

The papal election and its immediate aftermath are of particular interest here, as they coincided with the publication of Grisone's *Ordini di cavalcare*. Paul III died on September 10, 1549; five months later, on February 7, 1550, Ippolito's papal hopes were dashed with the election of Julius III. In the absence of a precise

publication date for Grisone's work, the circumstances attending its dedication also remain murky. Ippolito's chances had appeared good going in—*entrò papa, uscià cardinale* [14]—and we do not know whether Grisone dedicated his treatise to the prospective pope or to the defeated candidate. The dedication itself contains no reference to Ippolito's ecclesiastical status apart from his title.

Instead Grisone repeatedly invokes the military, hardly Ippolito's forte but the appropriate idiom for a work on horsemanship. As might be expected, the dedication is also rich in references to aristocracy and family. The military note is struck immediately, as Grisone refers to those "great souls which eagerly embrace every work pertaining to war."[15] In a graceful bit of flattery, he appeals to the Cardinal's exceptional character and ancient family. The latter reference is particularly apt, affording him an opportunity to invoke the renowned stables and equestrian pursuits of the Este:

> Therefore, knowing your lordship to be singular, and gifted not only with a great spirit, and with all those gifts which Nature may bestow, but also deeply devoted to *cavalleria* (following always the natural customs of your illustrious and most ancient family) I resolved, from among the many Princes which are today in the world, to choose you, and to dedicate to you this little work of mine.[16]

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[14] Biographical information may be found in www.romeartlover.it/Tivoli3.html (accessed August 9, 2005). For a lively account of Ippolito's earlier life, contextualized within its material culture, see Hollingsworth, *Cardinal's Hat*.

[15] "Sogliono, Illustrissimo et Reverendissimo Signor mio, gli animi grandi allegramente abbracciare ogni opera conveniente a Guerra…" Grisone, *Ordini di cavalcare,* dedication.

[16] "Per tanto conoscendo V.S. Illustriss. & Reverendiss. sia rara, et non solo dotata di animo grande, & di quanti doni si possono dalla Natura porgere, ma didicatissima alla cavalleria (seguendo sempre i naturali costumi della sua Illustre & antichissime fameglia) mi risolvo fra tanti Principi, che oggidi sono al mondo, sceglier lei, & dedicarle questa operetta mia…" Grisone, *Ordini di cavalcare,* dedication. The prince's name is also apt, meaning as it does, "horse-lover."

In the process Grisone artfully shifts the balance of power to himself,[17] something made possible through the multiple meanings of the word *cavalleria*, which may be taken to mean either chivalry or horsemanship, and *cavaliero,* which is similarly ambiguous. Given the context, it seems undeniable that Grisone is speaking of horsemanship; nonetheless, by not stating so explicitly, he retains the lofty associations of knighthood. Once he has established his meaning in the first use, he is able to ring changes off it in every use thereafter.

A comparable strategy is evidenced in the last sentence quoted, which serves to subtly elevate the riding master over his patron. In selecting Ippolito as the dedicatee of "this little work of mine," Grisone appears as the person of discernment and the giver of honor. Indeed, he speaks of the "many Princes which are in the world today" as if they were an all-too-familiar superfluity. This does not extend to the Cardinal, of course, who is "singular." As will be seen, however, it is Ippolito's love for horses and horsemanship, not his birth or rank, that is seen as the proof of his quality.

The martial motif is again invoked, as Grisone describes his reluctance to let his treatise "come into the light, thus disarmed, to receive the blows of this one and that one."[18] Nonetheless, he goes on, "although for the most part my doctrine may end up in the hands of the common people, I don't scorn reasoning with them; and

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[17] Or the actual writer of the dedication, if composed on his behalf. Elsewhere in the treatise, Grisone's writing is neither polished nor artful. On the other hand, this may simply reflect the difficulties inherent in the undertaking.

[18] "…niun modo consentirei ch'ella uscisse a luce, cosi disarmata, a ricevere i colpi di questo e di quello." Grisone, *Ordini di cavalcare,* dedication.

indeed I have wanted to demonstrate it, if not in person, then through written rules."[19] And so he seeks the aid of "some principal Cavalier" who will shelter and protect the art, and "strive with all his power to succor it, seeing that it is an admirable virtue, and so vilely oppressed: of which the King and celebrated men alike have been called master."[20]

Thus Grisone casts his undertaking as a heroic struggle, one in which, being overmatched, he enlists the figurative prowess of that "principal Cavalier," the Cardinal. He frames the struggle, moreover, in social terms, reinforcing differences of rank and condition through a series of conventional antitheses: the exceptional vs. the common, reason vs. ignorance; the aristocratic man of taste vs. the undiscerning generality.

At the same time, however, speaking as the learned man who claims the singular authority of wisdom, he subtly subordinates the claims of mere aristocratic status to those of the *principal Cavaliero*. By characterizing the Cardinal thus, Grisone again exploits the ambiguity of a word which could be variously taken to mean knight, gentleman, or horseman. In the context of the passage it would seem to signify the last, that of horseman. In conventional terms, this is the least valued of the three. Grisone, however, makes clear that the word is by no means diminished as a result, as he cites the *virtù mirabile* of horsemanship "of which the King and

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[19] "Et benche nel generale questa dottrina sia in man di gente bassa, non perciò mi sono sdegnato di ragionarne; & ho voluto dimostrarla, se non con la persona, con gli ordini scritti…." Grisone, *Ordini di cavalcare*.

[20] "…& aiutarla sotto le ali, et l'ombra di quella, conoscendo che bene appartiene a qualunque principal Cavaliero, tentare con ogni forza di sollevarla, essendo virtu mirabile, & si vilmente oppressa: della quale & Re, & huomini celebrati furono chiamati maestri…" Grisone, *Ordini di cavalcare*.

celebrated men alike have called themselves master."[21] In this way he deftly intimates a fellowship that transcends ordinary distinctions of rank, and which, by their own admission, elevates even the greatest of the earth. The ennobling power of the horse to which Garzoni alluded may be glimpsed here as well.

The result points, albeit subtly, to a dissolution and potential reordering of traditional power relations. A comparable social ambiguity is introduced through Grisone's "crusade," in which the *gente bassa* appear as a foe to be enlightened rather than crushed, if only parenthetically. By committing his rules to print—his express wish—Grisone is assuring himself of a large but undifferentiated audience. Exclusivity becomes, if not exactly a shibboleth, at least something to be reconfigured, as horsemanship, freighted with so much ideological meaning, is to be broadcast rather than hoarded, and the fellowship of horsemen, by implication, hazarded at large.

The complexities of this junction of print and horsemanship are further explored in the opening paragraphs of book 1, in which Grisone, addressing the reader, asserts the validity of his undertaking, his method, and his own authority. Again he begins with conventional allusions to the horse, successively striking the themes of war, beauty, utility and virtue as he pronounces, "Among the military arts, there is no discipline of greater beauty than that of Horses, nor is it only graced with handsome effects, but it is also necessary, and clothed in every virtue."[22]

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[21] Grisone, *Ordini di cavalcare,* dedication.

[22] "Nell'arte della militia non è disciplina di maggior bellezza di questa de' Cavalli; et non che ornata di belli effetti, ma necessaria, & vestita di ogni valore." Grisone, *Ordini di cavalcare,* Aiir.

The balance of the introductory paragraphs reveals a strategy of legitimation that tacks between the invocation of conventional values and the assertion of new ones. While ostensibly directing his work to the warrior noble, for example, Grisone gives pride of place to "handsome effects," suggesting an audience more of the court than the battlefield. While in introducing his method he evokes the heroic sensibility of the *geste*, the qualities he praises stand sharply at odds with the impulsive passions of the chivalric hero:

> And the more difficult it is and worthy of praise, the more one must bring to bear time and measure, and though the one or the other be more or less lacking, they will grow through true and good discourse, just as the senses of hearing and sight (when not regulated by the intellect) show themselves capable of little.[23]

Thus in a burst of neoplatonic references, the author deftly privileges the virtues necessary to the new discipline and asserts its essential character. With the single phrase "time and measure," he evokes diligence and self-restraint on one hand, and the grace of dance on the other. Similarly, by invoking the image of the intellect governing the senses—an appropriately equestrian one—he sets up an analogy for the new horsemanship, one governed by intellect, over the old as mere physical skill.

Nonetheless, one is recalled immediately to the novelty of the endeavor and the difficulties attending it. Grisone cuts to the heart of the matter:

> I have no doubt that someone, seeing that I wish to teach these rules of horsemanship through writing, will not fail to condemn my judgment, holding this to be a vain undertaking, dealing as it does with

[23] "Et tanto é piu difficile et degna di lode, quanto in essa bisogna usar' il tempo, & la misura, & piu & meno l'uno & l'altro mancare, & accrescere col vero, et buon discorso, tal che ancora il senso dell'udire, & del vedere (non havendo la pratica regolata dall'intelletto) ne fara poco di quella capaci." Grisone, *Ordini di cavalcare*, Aiir.

> something that by universal custom is learned more through the work of the body than through words.[24]

To counter the objection, he once again invokes neoplatonic thought—this time in a particularly striking way which elevates the practice to a wholly new plane, and in the process transforms it. Previously riding had been regarded and taught as a physical skill. By involving the intellect, he argues, one introduces the conception, and therefore the possibility, of perfection, for "through the understanding with which one listens, or reads may be born the perfection of the thing (even though one cannot see it)…."[25]

It is at this point, the crucial moment when the treatise is to be cast abroad, that Grisone addresses his true audience,

> not caring for the many, who perhaps not considering closely what I have written, will seek to take it up and tear it to pieces, but confident that judicious *Cavalieri* will not fail to encounter it, who will understand it well, and will labor at the work over time, until at last they will make clear that which I have cast in shadow with pen and paper.[26]

And so a new exclusivity takes shape against the backdrop of the uncomprehending masses, again through the ambiguity of that term *cavaliero.* Just as Grisone sought a *principal Cavaliero* to shelter and protect his work, so he places his

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[24] "La onde non dubito, che qualunque vedrà, ch'io habbia voluto scrivendo insegnare questi ordini di cavalcare, non lascerà di condannare espressamente il giudicio mio, stimando la fatica vana, essendo presa in cosa, che, secondo l'universal costume, par che s'impari piu col travaglio del corpo, che con le parole." Grisone, *Ordini di cavalcare*, Aiir.

[25] "Nondimeno conoscendo che anche da l'ingegno per quel che si ode, o legge, può nascere la perfettione della cosa (ben che non si vegga) desideroso dell'utile commune, tali quali si sieno, mi è paruto mandargli fuora…." Grisone, *Ordini di cavalcare,* Aiir.

[26] "…non curando di molti, che forse non considerando minutamente quel ch'io scrivo, cercheranno riprendergli, & avidamente mordergli, confidato che non mancheranno all'incontro giuditiosi Cavalieri, che gl'intenderanno bene, & in opra travagliarsi a tempo in egli, al fin farano chiaro quel ch'io con penna ho adombrato in carta…" Grisone, *Ordini di cavalcare,* Aiir.

trust now in the discernment of such men, who, seeing his work, will recognize and understand what he has tried to do. In the process—in yet another striking neoplatonic turn—they will take the penned shadows of his art and make it real. Once again we have the intimation of a fellowship, based not on blood, class or connections, but rather on some shared, unspoken, inimitable common bond of sensibility and experience. Either men have such qualities because they are horsemen of this stamp, or they will become such horsemen because they have these qualities. They stand as an elite, an equestrian equivalent of Plato's philosopher caste.

In this way Grisone's project appears in a new light, as one of divination and translation. The possibilities of his method lie latent within the written word; it is for these unknown *Cavalieri*, through their labors and their understanding, to make them manifest—in Grisone's neoplatonic imagery, to bring them into the light. To the possibility of perfection is added the possibility of marvels, as the singular nature and capacities of the horse are realized. Here Grisone substantiates his claim in traditional fashion by citing the legendary dancing horses of Sybaris[27] —located in the kingdom of Naples, he takes pains to remind his readers. Though it is not really so marvelous, he adds, for the Horse is such a docile animal and a friend to man—as, through his rules, it will show itself, in valor and obedience.[28]

At this point he invokes yet another theme, that of reform. As will be seen, it is one that passes like a thread through the riding treatises, taking on a variety of

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[27] So great was their docility, Pliny says, that the entire cavalry of the army of Sybaris used to perform a sort of ballet to music: "docilitas tanta est ut universus Sybaritani exercitus equitatus ad symphoniae cantum saltatione quadam moveri sol." Pliny, *Natural History*, 8: 64.157.

[28] "Et gia fu tempo, che in una città del Regno di Napoli, chiamata Sibari, non solo gli huomini, ma anco i Cavalli, al suon della sinfonia a imparavano di ballare." Grisone, *Ordini di cavalcare,* Aiir.

colorings. Here Grisone, sounding a lofty note, frames it as something close to a crusade, once again enlisting the collaboration of his unseen reader, who

> by reading often, with a sincere spirit and without detraction, this that I have written, and correcting errors such as you may have, may expect to advance the gift which in this age, by means of your efforts, not from me, but from the mighty hand of God, so graciously is given you.[29]

Having defined his project and his audience, the riding master negotiates his status as author. He does so in almost perfunctory fashion—by dropping a nod to Tuscan and so establishing his literary currency, but now in the brusque, no-nonsense manner of the man of action:

> And if this work seems to you to suggest a certain lack of suitable diligence, consider that I have attempted to do it well, rather than by the ornaments of the Tuscan tongue, putting more care into the substance than the words, so that everyone who reads it may better train a horse than speak of doing it…[30]

Thus are neoplatonic abstractions abruptly turned on their head and left in the dust. The book is just a means to an end, and its language—its words, its signifiers—are incidental. The reader is recalled to the world beyond the book, and Grisone suddenly seems poised to begin the important work at hand, that of training horses.

Instead, and equally abruptly, he delivers a ringing and lengthy encomium to the horse, that "unconquerable rock and most faithful companion of kings." In this

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[29] "Dunque non sara maraviglia, essendo il Cavallo animal si docile, & amico dell'huomo, se ora con questi ordini convien ch'egli se gli dimostri con valore, & obedienza. Però senza detrattione leggendogli spesso con animo sincero, cosi come gli ho scritti, et correngendo gli errori, se pur vi sono, attendiate ad avanzar'il dono, che a questa età, col mezo delle vostre fatiche, non da me, ma dalla potente mano di Dio cortesemente vi si porge." Grisone, *Ordini di cavalcare,* Aiir.

[30] "Et se vi paresse che nel modo del dire io fossi stato non cosi diligente, come conviene, pensate c'ho atteso piu a farlo bene, che a gli ornamenti della lingua Toscana, ponendo piu cura alle cose, che alle parole, accioche ogn'uno che legge s'ammaestri piu di cavalcare, che di parlare..." Grisone, *Ordini di cavalcare,* Aiir.

connection he invokes—as so many have before him, and so many will after—Alexander's horse Bucephalus, and the city founded in his memory; the horse of Caesar; Neptune; Bellerophon and Pegasus, and their battle against the Chimera; the mythological origins of military horsemanship in the fight between the Peletronian Lapiths and the Thessalians; and finally, his conclusion that to the horse, "truly judged to be no less divine, than useful," must be attributed all the good things of civilized life, for where there is no hay

> there is neither abundant living, nor accomplished festivals, nor valorous games, nor great battles, and by what grade, and human profession, of letters, of arms, and of religions were not, and will be necessary: and valor over every dominion, sign above every sign of honor: what thing can ever be more wondrous?"[31]

Grisone's answer, however, is unexpected: "Surely, not that nobles, but that baseborn men became illustrious through their strength. Who will not say that every Prince considers it a glorious thing to be called Horseman?"[32]

The leveling implications of this statement have no corollary, and if anything one is left with the impression that Grisone would simply focus all agency in the horse. As abruptly as he undertook his recitation, he abandons it—only to move to yet another form of authorization, as this renowned riding master—writing eighteen years after the establishment of his famous academy—takes care to ground his authority in learned theory.

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[31] "…perche non si può dire, ne viver'abondante, ne festa compita, ne giuoco valoroso, ne battaglia grande, ov'essi non fieno: & a qual grado, & profession'humana, di lettere, di armi, et di religioni non furono, et saranno necessarii: & valor sopra ogni possanza, et segno sopr'ogni segno d'onore: qual mai sara piu cosa mirabile?" Grisone, *Ordini di cavalcare,* Aiiv.

[32] "[C]erto non che i nobili, ma gli huomini bassi con le lor forze si fanno illustri. Chi no dirà ch'ogni Principe si tien glorioso a chiamarsi Cavaliero?" Grisone, *Ordini di cavalcare,* Aiiv.

At last approaching his subject, Grisone follows Xenophon, and longstanding convention, by first discussing what to look for, or avoid, when selecting a horse. Xenophon, emphasizing the importance of sound legs and feet, starts from the ground and works his way up.[33] Another model is offered by the encyclopedists, whose four-part formula of form, character, beauty, and color, drawn in turn from classical sources, actually represented a fairly commonsense approach to the question.[34] Grisone follows neither. Instead he provides an elaborate display of applied humoral theory, whereby the color and markings of the horse, seen as reflecting the mix and proportion of the elements and humors in its nature, are offered as a guide to its character, strengths and weaknesses.

The choice is an interesting one, for nowhere else in the treatise do we find anything comparable. Grisone's method is fundamentally empirical, and elsewhere he proudly touts it as such. "But leaving aside opinions," he says in a characteristic example, dismissing an ancient Roman belief in the unluckiness of a six-year-old horse, "I judge only by long experience."[35] The true repository of wisdom is Grisone himself; who, as shown above, seeks to trump the written word even as he makes use of it. His pronounced recourse to *scientia* at the outset suggests a desire or felt need to establish his intellectual credentials, as someone learned as well as lettered. An empiricist Grisone may be, but he still offers pride of place to theory. It is no longer enough for the riding master to be experienced and knowledgeable; his knowledge

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[33] Xenophon, *Art of Horsemanship*, 14–15.

[34] Ribémont, with B. Prévot, *Le Cheval en France*, 269.

[35] "I Romani conobbero la infelicità, & male augurio del Cavallo Seiano, benche fosse di rara bellezza. Ma lasciando le opinioni giudico solo per la lunga esperienza..." Grisone, *Ordini di cavalcare*, Aiiijr.

must be scientifically grounded. Thus, it is arguably his own empirical authority which he is seeking to authorize here.

Nonetheless, the theory is effectively jiggered so that it squares with experience. Grisone begins with an unequivocal statement: "I say, first of all, that the quality of the horse depends on the four elements, and that it conforms to that element in which he participates." He then offers its practical application, in terms very nearly as blunt:

> If he is more of earth than of the other elements, he will be melancholic, earthbound, heavy and faint-hearted, and he will typically have a dark coat, or be fawn-colored, or dappled, or mouse-colored, or other such colors. And if he is more of water, this will make him phlegmatic, slow, and soft, and he will be white. And if he is more of air, then he will sanguine, lively, agile, and of a changeable temperament, and he will be bay. And if he is more of fire, it will make him irascible, nimble, passionate, and a jumper, and often he will be very excitable, and he will be a chestnut, like the color of fire.[36]

Aside from the two qualifiers "typically" and "often," Grisone is making categorical claims here, claims which would quickly prove untenable in the face of actual experience. Immediately thereafter, however, he begins to introduce the modifying factors of variety and nuance:

> But when all participate in the proper proportion, then he will be perfect. And among all the colors, the red bay, the reddish grey, which many call an apple (pomato) grey, the Segenato over black, called the Moor's head, and also the silver chestnut, which in the Spanish tongue is called *Alazan tostado*, are more seasoned, more highly valued, more robust, and of a gentle nature. And close to these are those which most

[36] "Dirò adunque primieramente, che la qualità del Cavallo depende da i quattro elementi, et con quell'elemento, del qual piu partecipa, si conforma. Se prende piu della terra, che de gli altri, sara malinconico, terraguolo, gravoso, & vile, & suol'essere I pelo morello, over cervato, ammelato, & soricigno, & di simili variati colori. Et se piu dell'acqua, sara flemmatico, tardo, & molle; & suol esser bianco. Et se piu dell'aere, sara sanguigno, allegro, agile, & di temperato moto, et suol'esser baio. Et se prende piu del fuoco, sara colerico, leggiero, ardente, et saltatore, & rade volte di molto nervo; & suol'esser sauro somigliante alla fiamma, o al carbone acceso*."* Grisone, *Ordini di cavalcare*, dedication.

> closely resemble them, among which would be the bay which is golden or red in color, or nearly red, or truly dark, though not be those Zainos[37] which have reddish bands around the eyes, and on the muzzle and washed flanks; the chestnut more like burning coals than flame; the white mottled with black, the silver grey with black extremities, that is, the tips of the ears, the mane, the tail, the hind legs and forelegs, and if the black runs from his mane all the way to his tail, all the better. ..[38]

The qualifiers multiply, drawing on the exuberant diversity of equine colors and markings. Grisone's theoretical sleight-of-hand is perhaps most deftly accomplished in the matter of the black—which, being of the element of earth and reflecting a melancholic humor, would seem to be highly undesirable for school riding or war. Not necessarily so, however, for the black coat may be born of a dry choleric humor, and when this is the case, the horse will be "furious, courageous, and intelligent," though if it is excessive it may cause him to be "fraudulent and deceitful, which is popularly called *zaino*."[39] Even this may not be sufficient to tell, for

> when it comes from a natural melancholic humor, then this will make him timid, hard, and lazy. And when he has something of the one, or of the other, then one may not be able to tell by the muzzle, or by the

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[37] Zaino refers to a horse without any markings whatsoever. Grisone's French translator defines it in a marginal annotation as follows: "*Zain appelle l'Italien le cheval qui n'a nesigne ne marque, ne tavellure.*" Evidently the term, like a number of others similarly explained, was not familiar to a French audience and had no French equivalent. See *L'ecurie du Sr. Federic Grison* (Claude Michel: Tournon, 1599), 3. http://www.vet-lyon.fr/bib/fondsancien/ouvonline/grisone.htm#26 (accessed April 5, 2006).

[38] *"*Ma quando con la debita proportione partecipa di tutti, allora sara perfetto. Et fra tutti I peli, I baio castagno, il liardo rotato, che da molti si chiama Liardo pomato, il Segenato sopra negro cavezza di moro, & anco il Sauro Metallino, ch'in lingua Spagnuola si dice Alazan tostado, son piu temprati, et piu vagliono, et di piu robusta, et gentil natura. Et appresso a questi son poi quelli che piu s'accostano alla similitudine loro, fra quali sarannno il baio idorato o rosso in color quasi di rosa, overamente oscuro, che non sia di quei zaini coi giri di gli occhi, & i mostacci, et I fianchi lavati, il sauro a guisa di carbone infocato, & non di fiamma; il bianco moscato negro, il liardo argento con le estremità negre, cioè le punte dell'orecchie, i crini, la coda, le gambe, & le braccia; et se da I crini infin'alla coda tiene la lista, taknto piu vale..." Grisone, *Ordini di cavalcare*, 3r.

[39] "Et è da sapersi, che quando il pelo negro si genera da colera adusta, il Cavallo sara furibondo, animoso, & di molto senso; & assai siate suol' esser fraudolente, & ingannevole, & si dice volgarmente zaino.*"* Grisone, *Ordini di cavalcare*, 3r–3v.

> flanks being reddish or black, or to distinguish in any other way, save by his habits, and by the worth of his actions…[40]

Yet another means of saving the phenomenon is provided by *remolini,* or whorls, and *balzane,* markings. Such beliefs traced back to antiquity, and were found also in Arabic equine lore. Based principally on their location, these were deemed lucky or unlucky. Grisone makes full use of their serviceability as qualifying or mitigating factors. A white stocking on the right foreleg, for example, is deemed to be "not too desirable." A white stocking on the left foreleg, on the other hand, "called *Arzeglio,*" is considered very good indeed, at least by others. Grisone cautions against it, however, because "any horseman who finds himself on such an animal in battle will see that it makes the horse headstrong, vicious and unlucky." In the same way, white stockings on both forelegs will prove "disastrous and ill-fortuned," and even more so when one of the hind legs is marked as well. This need not be fatal, however, as "reason dictates that horses always have more white on the hindquarters than on the forequarters." White stockings on the hind legs alone are a very good sign, and when combined with a white star on the forehead, indicate a horse "of admirable worth."[41]

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[40] "Ma quando vien da humor malinconico naturale, sara egli allora timido, duro, & pigro. Et quando ha dell'uno, o dell'altro, non sempre si può al mostaccio, & a i fianchi rossi, o negri conoscere, overo distinguere, fuor che per li costumi, & per lo valore de gli effetti suoi..." The perfect black, however, is one which has some white on him, leading Grisone to a discussion of another well-established body of belief, that concerning the disposition and significance of markings. Grisone, *Ordini di cavalcare*, 3v.

[41] "Il balzano della man della briglia non é da troppo stimarsi. Il balzano dal piè distro, si dice Arzeglio. Et benche nell'opre suol'apparere eccellente, guardisi ogni Cavaliero in battaglia di trovarsi sopra di esso, perche sara caval superbo, vitioso, & infortunato. Il balzano del piè della staffa, è di stima grande, & dimostra sempre esser di buon core, & assai corritore. Il balzano delle due mani sara disastroso, & mal fortunato, & sia pur con l'uno o l'altro piede bianco, che non perciò se li toglie totalmente la sua pessima qualità, perche la ragion vuole, che'l Caballo habbia sempre piu bianco di dietro, che davanti. Il balzano solo di due piedi é ben segnalato. Et se di piu tiene la stella nella fronte, maggiormente è da far mirabil conto…." Grisone, *Ordini di cavalcare*, 3v.

Only then does Grisone come to what, in modern terms, is the meat of the matter, a discussion of the actual points of conformation. In doing so, his style shifts abruptly from the serpentine discursiveness of the earlier sections to blunt, prescriptive phrases, terse and to the point. Like Xenophon, he starts from the ground and works his way up.

It is at this point that the work begins in earnest. As subsequent translators would remark, there is little point in offering a structural description of the work, beyond saying that it consists of four books and concludes with woodcuts of bits. Otherwise, it has no discernible structure, beyond following a roughly progressive plan from simpler airs to more complicated ones. Indeed, though Grisone raises the possibility of perfection in his prefatory remarks, his treatise offers little evidence of an abstract or conceptual sensibility. Its organization is less schematic than organic; proceeding by association, digression and parenthetical aside, it has the feel of direct experience translated into writing, with the printed page still something of a foreign territory. Indeed, at times one glimpses his frustration at the limitations imposed by the printed page, which requires that the material be presented entirely and at once though there is always something more to be said.

His method, while it follows Xenophon in important respects, is similarly not theory-based; for example, he does not follow a single hypothetical animal through a series of graduated exercises. Instead he offers a contingent and adaptive model, one which, within a framework of progressively difficult maneuvers, considers horses of varying character and aptitude and advises accordingly. Thus, despite its conceptual point of departure, his system preserves a clearly empirical frame of reference.

Nonetheless it does advance a central principle, that of balance; indeed, he indicates as much when, early in the first book, he invokes Isidore's etymological gloss on the word *equus*: "[T]hey are certainly within reason who assert that the Horse takes his name in the Latin tongue from the word for equality, or correctness." For in addition to their meaning, the horse must be just in all things, "correct at the walk, correct at the trot, correct at the gallop, correct at the career, correct at the halt, correct at the manège, correct in his leaps, and finally, correct in the carriage of his head, correct when he stands motionless, and correct and true when united with the will of the horseman who rides him.[42] From this essential quality spring his primary objectives: to make the horse "flexible and well-balanced, the rider correctly aligned with the horse's body, the horse collected and responsive." And, while Grisone concerns himself first and throughout with the horse rather than the rider, he nonetheless offers this as prescriptive ideal, for from this central principle derive the qualities necessary to the true horseman: judgment, moderation, and restraint.

As for *giustezza,* variously signifying both justice and correctness, Grisone addresses the quality in terms both moral and mechanical. To both ends, he places great emphasis on the precise repetition of movements within a prescribed pattern, the latter called a manège or figure—the basis of school riding, and similarly derived from Xenophon. In its simplest form, this pattern combines the *volta*, or volte—a term variously used to designate a figure-8, entailing sequential circles to the right and to

[42] "Et non in tutto fuor di ragione si muovono coloro, che tengono che il Cavallo in lingua latina prendesse il nome dalla equalità, or giustezza. Percioche oltre alla ragione la loro assegnata, gli bisogna troppo misura, giusto al passo, giusto al trotto, giusto al galoppo, giusto alla carriera, giusto al parare, giusto al maneggio, giusto a i salti, e finalmente giusto di testa, & giusto quando sta fermo, & giusto, & reale si unisce con la volontà del Cavaliero, che gli sta sopra." Grisone, *Ordini di cavalcare*, 6r.

the left, or the circles themselves—with a straightaway, the *carriera* or career. Xenophon describes them thus:

> I recommend the exercise known as the Volte, because it accustoms the horse to turn on either jaw. Changing the direction is also a good thing, that the jaws on either side may be equally suppled. But I recommend the Career with sharp turns at each end rather than the complete Volte; for the horse would like turning better after he has had enough for the straight course, and thus would be practising straight-away running and turning at the same time.[43]

The volte is particularly demanding for the horse, and serves to cultivate flexibility, balance and strength. Grisone also places great stress on the halt, which, by driving the horse into the bit, inculcates collection, attentiveness, and obedience, the means by which the rider sustains control and restraint, and, theoretically at least, assures the animal's responsiveness. This is the basis of all future work. However, it is here that the trainer confronts the essential truth of Xenophon's observation: "The gods have bestowed upon man the gift of teaching his brother man what he ought to do by word of mouth; but it is evident that by word of mouth you can teach a horse nothing."[44]

Again, Xenophon is authoritative in this regard, with his simple recommendation to reward the horse when he does well, punish him when he does not, and do both with a cool head. Grisone follows a similar tack; though not inclined to abstractions, he repeats two terms constantly in connection with the use of the aids and the recourse to punishment: *tempo* and *misura.* Similarly, he approaches the work of training the horse as an artist with his medium:

> [D]o not think that the horse, though well-disposed by nature, can function well on his own without human assistance and true theory, for he has need of art to awaken his limbs and the virtues hidden within

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[43] Xenophon, *Art of Horsemanship,* 42–43.

[44] Xenophon, *Art of Horsemanship,* 49.

> him, and in this way his quality may be more or less brought to light, through correct order and good discipline; in fact art, when it is false, ruins him, and buries every one of his virtues, whereas when art is good, it compensates for many advantages which nature has failed to provide him.[45]

Thus we see Grisone clearly advocating Xenophon's enlightened principles and approach to training. Nonetheless, in a characteristic contradiction, he resorts at times to violent methods, albeit typical of the practices of his age, and even moderate by its standards.

Key to the endeavor was the understanding and proper use of the aids, briefly discussed in chapter two—a concept which, though greatly refined by successive generations, remains fundamental to horsemanship. Simply put, the aids represent the means by which the rider communicates with the horse. They are used to transmit instructions, e.g. to control direction, gait, speed, and even weight distribution; they are used to reassure, balance, incite, or praise; and they are used to correct and to punish. Grisone names seven: the voice, language, the *bachett*a or baton,[46] the bit, the calf of the leg, the *bastone* or staff, and the spurs. They are all wonderful, he says,

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[45] "E non pensiate, che il cavallo, benche sia bene organizato dalla natura, senza il soccorso humano, & la vera dottrina, possa da se stesso ben'oprarsi [sic], perche bisogna con l'arte svegliare i membri, & le virtu occulte che in lui sono, & secondo il vero ordine, & buona disciplina, piu o meno sara chiara la sua bontà; anzi l'arte, quando ella è falsa, lo ruina, & gli cuopre ogni virtu, cosi come quando ella è buona, supplisce a molte parti, ove gli manca la natura." Grisone, *Ordini di cavalcare,* 5r-5v.

[46] The *bacchetta* is defined by John Florio as "any wand or stick or rod." Its relative size may be inferred by the use of the word to signify variously a magistrate's staff of office, a lintstock (used to fire a cannon), a scouring stick, and a drumstick. The *bastone,* on the other hand, was of a more formidable and menacing character, being described by Florio as "a cudgel, a batton, a truncheon, a waster, a staffe." Florio, 51, 56.

when they are used at the right time, though the staff is to be used only rarely.[47] However,

> If you do not use measure or timing in the application of certain of these aids, then they will be of no help to you whatsoever; but at least you should have an awareness of the appropriate moment to chastize him when he errs, which will be very easy, since the horse through fear of that will respond much more readily, than if you give the aid at the wrong time, where, being shocked without understanding what you wish of him, he will be confused.[48]

In this we find a clear echo of Xenophon's advice, counseling restraint of the trainer or rider. As used by Grisone, however, the concept of *misura,* the response that is reasoned and appropriate, encompasses the use of fear, coercion, and violence. For example, we find a matter-of-fact use of fear to make a young horse go in the desired direction, by having an assistant circle and threaten it in a loud voice.[49] In this way Grisone makes use of the play of instinct in the horse, the visceral responses of fear or aversion by which its behavior may be modified, although, as will be seen, his actual understanding of the animal's psychology and instincts is somewhat wanting.

In this connection, he refers to those practices notorious among modern commentators, ones which, for the most part, he himself disavows. It is worth noting that these are not punitive in nature, but merely designed to get the horse to do something against its will. Significantly, however, the most brutal methods appear to

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[47] "Al Cavallo se gli può donar'in sette modi parimente aiuto, di voice, di lingua, di bacchetta, di briglia, di polpe di gamba, di staffa, & di sproni. Et tutti questi aiuti sono maradigliosi, quando si saranno a tempo…." Grisone, *Ordini di cavalcare*, 53r.

[48] "Se non havete la misura in donargli alcun di questi aiuti a tempo, non vi bisognerà in niun modo aiutarlo; ma almeno allora habbiate solo cognitione di saper' a tempo servirvene in castigarlo quando egli erra, che sara piu facile, perche il Cavallo per timor di quello vi responderà poi molto piu, che aiutandolo fuora di tempo, dove stordito senza intendere quel che volete si confonderebbe*."* Grisone, *Ordini di cavalcare*, 53r.

[49] Grisone, *Ordini di cavalcare,* 7v.

be reserved for the horse that is *restif,* that is, balky. On its face, this particular strategy demonstrates two features: disregard for the horse's pain and terror, an attitude consonant with the position of the church regarding brute beasts, and a certain mechanistic approach:

> Messer. Vicenzo Respino of Naples told me that he had in the king's stables a horse which had been balky for many years, so that one day he had a small animal, called a spiny hedgehog, tied under the horse's tail by one leg, and when it began to squeal, the horse took such a terror that he made with great speed and determination straight ahead to the *correre*…." [50]

Of this practice Grisone comments, "While this remedy was done in a timely manner appropriate to his [the horse's] malignity, still I would say that to use it too often would invite chaos, as it would most often cause the horse to be stunned or despairing, and would not always intend what you wish…," and though he recommends some variations, ultimately concludes that it "does not befit a horseman to have notice of these and other such punishments, although they may be minimal, and however much they may serve to correct any defect…"[51]

Revealing here, however, is Grisone's use of the word "malignity," one he also uses in connection with punishment. Thus the suffering visited on the balky horse is revealed to be punitive after all, or at least, in Grisone's eyes, merited. Thus

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[50] "Messer Vicenzo Respino di Napoli, mi disse, che egli hebbe nella cavallerizza del Re un Cavallo di molti anni restio, & che un giorno gli fece legare dietro la coda per un piede un'animaletto, che si chiama Riccio Spinoso, il quale incominciando a stridere, il Cavallo prese si gran terrore, che determinatamente con molta velocità si fece avanti al correre…." Grisone, *Ordini di cavalcare*, 44r.

[51] "Et benche allora tal rimedio fosse a tempo, che conveniva a quella malignità, nondimeno dico, che sarebbe disordine continuamente servirsene, perche il piu delle volte sarebbe il Cavallo stordire, o disperare, & non sempre intenderebbe quel che volete….Ma non vi niego, che non convenga a Cavaliero haver notitia di questi, & di altri castighi, quantunque minimi sieno, & di quanto si può fare in correggere ogni difetto…." Grisone, *Ordini di cavalcare*, 44r

elsewhere we find him advising the reader, when confronted by a resistant mount, to take the *bachetta* to the animal, striking him

> between the ears, and on the head, anywhere except the eyes, and on whatever part of his body that is easiest for you to reach (being incorrigible, & of great malignity)…and without regard punish him, in the same instant threatening him with a terrible voice. [52]

In this way, according to Grisone, the horse will be brought to an understanding of the futility of resistance, and so to a desire to please his rider; moreover, as his resistance incurred blows, his obedience should be rewarded with caresses:

> [A]nd so in that manner, seeing that you are determined, he will wish to be docile, and without any further resistance, will conduct himself like a lamb; but you need to take care to caress him often, so that he renders himself thus, and responds well to you. [53]

Taken as a whole, however, such examples as these, frequently cited, yield a distorted picture of the riding master's method. Elsewhere, and far more often, Grisone urges his reader to use patience and discretion when schooling a horse, to gauge lessons to the animal's capacities, to work slowly and gradually. His conceptual vocabulary, meanwhile, is ambiguous, and even contradictory: on one hand, he repeatedly uses the language of dominion, repeating words such as submission, domination and conquest. On the other hand, he uses the language of understanding, speaking of reason, understanding, measure, and judgment.

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[52] "E se il Cavallo, o per timore della fatica, o per anima, che ha preso, o per infinita superbia naturale, non si volesse avicinare al poggio per farsi cavalcare, & voi allora con un bastone fra le orecchie, & nella testa, & fuor, che a gli occhi, in qualunque parte della perrsona [sic] vi sara piu facile (essendo però incorrigibile, & di molta malignità) mirabilmente, & senza rispetto lo castigherete…" Grisone, *Ordini di cavalcare,* 6v.

[53] "…che in tal maniera, vendendovi determinato, verrà mansueto, & senza far piu difesa, come agnello si accosterà; ma si vuole avvertire di accarezzarlo sempre, che egli si rende, & vi risponde bene." Grisone, *Ordini di cavalcare,* 6v.

Of these the first two, reason and understanding, are especially notable, as they are used not only of the horseman, but also of the horse. Here appears to lie the irony at the heart of his occasionally brutal methods. Grisone regards the horse, not as a brute beast, but rather as a reasoning creature with a measure of rational consciousness, free will and intention. He offers a teleological explanation by way of proof, seeing in the horse's perceived intellectual precociousness evidence of its God-given role as man's helpmate:

> Some may say to me, that it seems impossible that the horse should be capable of such discourse; to this I respond, that having been created by God to serve and conform to the will of man, it is no wonder that he may conform in part to our intellect."[54]

Thus we find an example of a horse trainer who accepts the conceit of his charges' preternatural intelligence. This tendency toward anthropomorphization has a darker side, however, as balking, shying, and other forms of disobedience are framed in theological terms. Thus one finds punishment recommended in some instances as a means of inducing understanding, and in others as a way of chastising behaviors ascribed to the horse's defective moral nature—to its "malignity," for example, or to its "perfidy," or to its "infinite natural pride." One encounters this dissonance in Grisone again and again. It is in these terms that the resty horse becomes the sinful horse and, one may speculate, the treasonous horse, who with his maddening obstinacy betrays the compact of loving servitude.

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[54] "Et perche mi si potrebbe dire, che pare impossibile che il Cavallo habbia tal discorso; a questo rispondo, che essendo creato da Dio per servire, & conformarsi con la volontà dell'huomo, non è maraviglia che egli in parte sia quasi conforme all'intelletuo nostro…" Grisone, *Ordini di cavalcare*, 45r.

A final aspect of Grisone's work requires notice before moving on. Amid the sustained debate concerning manège as a military art, it should be noted that Grisone orients his work quite clearly to the courtier, with only an occasional nod to military use. This is most clearly demonstrated by an extended section at the end of the second book in which he offers detailed and pragmatic advice on how to ride before a prince. The point of the exercise is, quite simply, self-promotion before the great, something which Grisone treats in a candid, straightforward manner.

To this end he advises his reader—repeatedly and with great precision—on the position from which one can be seen to best advantage. This objective is emphasized from the outset:

> [W]hen one wishes, among other horseman, to display the horse to a great Prince, to a King, or to an Emperor, the place where this can be done to best effect will be one in which these princes may see the career clearly from the side, and toward its end, which should be the distance of a just turn beyond them, so that the beginning will be easily seen, and the middle, and the end, and nearly every particular of the manège. However one should be aware that the right side is the better, so that the horseman, in every volte that he makes in the turn, will always present his face to them, and not his back [literally, shoulder]…[55]

He adds that some claim that princes prefer to be seated at the end of the career, where the individual horse is halted and pauses. Grisone pragmatically warns against this, as affording too perilous a solitary prominence:

> [I]t seems to me that this would not serve the purpose, not only because it would leave only a few voltes which all those Lords and Nobles could see clearly, but because, should the curb chain break, or

[55] "Dapoi quando il Cavallo si vuol mostrare fra Cavalieri ad un Principe grande, ad un Re, ad uno Imperatore, il vero luogo che conviene a questo effetto, vuol esser di sorte, che questi Principi mirino bene la carriera da una delle bande, & vicino al parare, il quale sara a spatio di un giusto repolone piu avanti di loro, dove facilmente si vedra il principio, il mezo, & il fine: & appresso ogni particolarità del maneggio verrà ivi a farsi: però si vuole avvertire, che la banda destra sarebbe migliore, perche il Cavaliero in ogni volta che fara a I repoloni, si volter à sempre di faccia, & non di spalle verso di quelli…" Grisone, *Ordini di cavalcare*, 16v.

> the reins, or the port of the bit, or if he [the horse] should have a hard mouth, a disaster could easily take place: this would never be noticed from the side, as I have already said….[56]

Such a performance involves complex and physically taxing movements, and Grisone cautions his reader that it should only be attempted on a horse of proven strength, spirit, and training—one which "responds easily to every command, and proceeds in good order and according to the true usage of war."[57] The association between school riding and warfare is made explicit here, in terms which, at least at first, seem to suggest a direct functional relationship between the figures of the manège and battlefield tactics:

> [For] it is very certain that in all that one does in performance on horseback one seeks as much as possible to approach the true semblance of war: in which the first necessity is to advance at the charge with the lance to the encounter with one's enemies; & then, once one has entered among them, sword in hand, to dash back and forth in their midst….[58]

Unfortunately, Grisone laments, "the observance customary these days is contrary to this,"[59] a development which he attributes, at least ostensibly, to the prevailing weakness of the horses. As it happens, however, this need not stymie the

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[56] "benche alcuni dicano che questi Signori vogliono stare all'incontro dove il Cavallo va a posarsi, a me pare che non sarebbe a proposito, non solo per cagione che rade volte la strada sarebbe atta, che tutti quei Signori & Cavalieri vi possano ben mirare, ma perche rompendosi il barbazzale overamente le redine, o i porta morsi, o se pur fosse di mala bocca, potrebbe facilmente occorrere disastro: il che non sara mai trovandosi dalla banda come ho gia detto..." Grisone, *Ordini di cavalcare,* 16v.

[57] "…accade solo a cavallo di estrema forza, & che in ogni cosa risponde facile, & va con l'ordine, & col vero uso di guerra... *"* Grisone, *Ordini di cavalcare,* 17v.

[58] "[P]erche bene è chiaro, che quando si mostra il Cavallo, quanto si può vuol approssimare alla similitudine di quella [la guerra], che il primo è andar di corso all'incontro de' nimici con la lancia, & dapoi cavando fuor la spada si entra, & esce di repoloni da mezo quelli." Grisone, *Ordini di cavalcare,* 17v.

[59] "...la osservanza che ora si costuma, è contra di questo, per la fiacchezza che generalmente si ritruova quasi in ogni Cavallo…*"* Grisone, *Ordini di cavalcare,* 17v.

courtier bent on impressing his prince. He handily offers his reader a way to make a favorable impression by having the horse appear better than he actually is, "by which although he is not very robust, he will appear to possess the greatest strength and spirit." In this way will be preserved "the form of a small and truly singular battle."[60]

Grisone's sleight-of-hand involves simplifying the program while preserving its bravura; dramatic dashes up and down the career are substituted for the more intricate and physically demanding voltes, only a few of which are preserved as a flourish at the end. His instructions—as elsewhere, wordy, repetitive, and at times confusing—underscore the limitations of the written word as a means of communicating physical movement, certainly another parallel with dance. This passage also provides a reminder of the stakes involved in such a display, and the degree to which the rider's fortunes, here dependent on creating an *impression* of martial fire and intrepidity, depended on the capacities and performance of his mount. A flagging animal, or one showing resistance or disobedience, would certainly dispel the illusion, and could easily make a laughingstock of its rider.

> Before he gallops you will take your place on the track, where the Prince will be watching to your right side: & advancing the horse you will handle him in such a way that, in coming and going you will make six, eight, ten or twelve returns, more or less furious according to what suits his spirit, which you will begin and end always on the right hand: & then on one of these you will return to halt at the same place you initially departed from, & halting him there you will aid him as I instructed above, and if you want to handle him more furiously than is suitable, do only up to six or eight returns and no more, for otherwise he will not be able to endure it, and his speed will be seen to falter,

[60] "...dirò un'altro modo da farsene stima, dove quantunque non fosse egli troppo gagliardo, si dimostrerà con maggior forza & animo, & segue solo la forma di un picciola & vera battaglia singolare." Grisone, *Ordini di cavalcare,* 17v.

> which would be a great failing, for the horse must perform each of these passes with ever greater fury and speed, not less: & at the end, once he is in place, you will have him do two double voltes to the right, & two to the left, & two more at the last to the middle point of the right, and then you will stop: or if you don't want to do so many, you will do only one to each side which will make three voltes total, with the first and the last done to the right: & before you double them, you may have your horse do the capriole, if he knows how to do it, and depending on how well he does it one can have him do it after, but it will be easier for him to do it before…[61]

This, then, is Grisone's nod to manège as performance. It would be left to his contemporary Cesare Fiaschi to develop its courtly and balletic potential.

Part 2. Cesare Fiaschi

Cesare Fiaschi**,** the second of the great Italian riding masters, may certainly be considered as the father of manège as an art form. His points of divergence from Grisone's approach and sensibility are readily apparent. Unlike the great Neapolitan master, Fiaschi demonstrates an inherent feeling for proportion, measure and design, evidenced in his treatise no less than in his approach to manège. In the words of Monteilhet, he had "deux mérites, et une singularité": first, he was the teacher of Pignatelli, who in turn was the teacher of the great Pluvinel; second, he made

[61] "Prima che si corra, vi ponerete nella strada, ove il Principe sara mirandovi dalla vostra man destra, & rimettendo il Cavallo inanzi il maneggerete, & tra l'andare, & ritornare indietro farete sei, over otto, o dieci, o dodici repoloni, piu & meno furiosi secondo che conviene al suo senso, cominciando dalla man destra, & in essa finendo, vi troverete ad un di questi numeri a parare in quel luogo donde prima partiste; & fermandovi lo aiuterete come ho detto; & volendo maneggiarlo piu furioso di quel che si richiede, sieno i repoloni al numero di sei over otto, & non piu; altrimenti non gli potrebbe soffrire, & verrebbe a mancare la sua velocità, il che sarebbe vitio, perche vuol sempre in ciascun di essi avanzare piu presto, che mancar di furia; & al fine come egli sara posato, gli darete due volte raddoppiate da man destra, & due da man sinistra, & due altre all'ultimo dalla medesima banda destra, & vi fermerete; overamente non volendo farne tante, ne farete una sola per mano, che saranno tre volte, & la prima & l'ultima sara da man destra, & prima che si raddoppi, sapendola bene, gli farete fare la capriola, quantunque si potrebbe pur far appresso, ma avanti gli sara piu facile..." Grisone, *Ordini di cavalcare*, 17v.

significant and enduring advances in the field of farriery, and finally, he was the first to establish a formal connection between riding and music[62] —in other words, to hear and cultivate the musical cadences in the various paces and airs of the school, thus laying the basis for the great horse ballets of the seventeenth century. It is perhaps no coincidence that, of the two, the pragmatic empiricist Grisone had the greater direct influence in England, while Fiaschi, with his emphasis on proportion, measure, design, and order, ultimately had the greater influence in France.

As with Grisone, relatively little is known of Fiaschi's personal background and circumstances. He comes down to us as a *gentiluomo* of Ferrara, and a contemporary of the great Neapolitan. The relationship between them, if any, is unclear. Conrads, a widely used source, cites Fiaschi as Grisone's student.[63] Fiaschi himself makes no mention of this, however, and the two are so close chronologically that any master-disciple relationship would likely have been brief indeed. Fiaschi's riding academy opened in Ferrara in 1534, just two years after Grisone opened his in Naples.[64] Similarly, Fiaschi's treatise, *Trattato dell'imbrigliare, maneggiare, et ferrare cavalli*, appeared in 1556, only six years after *Ordini di cavalcare.*

Though somewhat overshadowed by the celebrity of Grisone's work, Fiaschi's treatise enjoyed considerable success in its own right, with at least nine

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[62] Monteilhet, *Les Maîtres*, 118.

[63] Conrads, *Ritterakademien*, 40.

[64] Gabrielle Ann MacDonald puts the date at 1539, but is the only one to date found to do so. MacDonald, *Horsemanship as a Courtly Art*, 90.

Italian editions or impressions published between the years of 1556 and 1628.[65] The Venetian edition of 1603 is notable for the addition of Filippo Scaccho da Tagliacozzo's *Opera di mescalzia*, a work of prescriptive horse medicine. Scaccho's work was omitted from the next edition, that of 1613, but would be restored to the final Italian edition, printed in Padua in 1628.[66] According to biographical information provided by the École Nationale Vétérinaire d'Alfort,[67] it also appeared in a separate edition that year, likewise in Padua, under the title *Trattato di mescalzia.*

Characteristically, Fiaschi's work represents a decided advance over that of Grisone in terms of clarity and organization. It is divided into three books, dealing respectively with bitting, training in the manège, and farriery. The differences between them continue; while Grisone is concerned primarily with issues of physical conditioning, behavior and control, through and toward the end of the execution of the figures, Fiaschi tends to place a greater emphasis on technical issues. Thus, in presenting his treatise, he describes the first book as discussing the bridling of horses, "as I know that one preserves or loses a horse by bitting it well or badly." Also included in the first book, and mentioned almost parenthetically, is "some advice on the varying nature of horses." The second "deals with the schooling of horses, truly a

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[65] Italian editions or impressions of Fiaschi's treatise were published in Bologna in 1556; Vineggia in 1561 and 1563; Venice in 1565, 1598, 1603, and 1614; and Padua in 1626 and 1628. Its French translation, first published in Paris in 1564, was subsequently reissued in 1567, 1578, and 1579. Ellen Wells provides the most comprehensive survey of these works. Mennessier de la Lance offers a detailed discussion of the Italian first edition and of the French edition and its reprints, along with a brief but informative overview of the other Italian issues. The *Ecole Nationale Vétérinaire de Lyon* claims another Venetian reissue for 1564. See Wells, *Horsemanship*, 78–79; Mennessier de la Lance, *Essai de bibliographie*, 1: 481–82; and http://www.vet-lyon.fr/bib/fondsancien/ouvonline/fiaschi.htm (accessed March 25, 2006).

[66] Mennessier de la Lance, *Essai de bibliographie,* 1: 481.

[67] See http://www.vet-lyon.fr/bib/fondsancien/ouvonline/fiaschi.htm (accessed April 6, 2006).

thing not to be attempted blindly, as so many today seem to do. The third will deal with shoeing horses in accordance with the nature of their hooves, as it is well known that in shoeing well or badly lies their salvation or perdition."[68]

Fiaschi's treatise gives evidence of a greater degree of comfort with the medium of print than that of Grisone, and greater confidence in its exploitation, both suggesting a more congenial fit with the riding master's approach and emphases. While Grisone dwells in the provisional, conditional realm of empirical experience, Fiaschi divides his material into neat, often succinct chapters, each furnished with an amply descriptive chapter heading. Design is a pervasive concern, evidenced not only in the numerous woodcuts of manège figures, but also in the composition of the printed page. A concern for clarity and order is similarly suggested in the ancillary features of the book, including chapter divisions and titles, and a table of contents, all of which are absent from Grisone's book.

Their differences aside, the two masters have this in common: both couch their works in terms of mission and reform. Grisone, it will be remembered, expressed his desire to "succor that admirable virtue of horsemanship, so vilely oppressed." For his part, Fiaschi seeks to impart knowledge and institute sound practices, a remedy to superstition, carelessness and ignorance in the areas he cares most about, those pertaining to horses.

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[68] "Il primo de'quali sarà dell'imbrigliare cavalli, conoscendo io, che'l guardagnare, & perdere un cavallo consiste nel bene, et male, imbrigliarlo, con alcuni avertimenti sopra la natura d'essi; le quali sono tanto differenti, che alcuna ricerca essere battuta, a certi tempi però, altra minaccie, & altra lusinghe, & carezze. Il secondo del modo, che s'ha a tenere in maneggiarli, & giustarli nel maneggio; cosa veramente da non essere fatta alla cieca, come da molti hoggidì si vede fara. Il terzo sarà del modo, che si dee tenere in ferrare essi cavalli secondo la natura dell'unghie, conoscendosi da chi sà, che nel ferrare bene, & male consiste la salvatione, & perditione loro." Fiaschi, *Trattato dell'imbrigliare*, Letter to the reader.

Each writer also slants his work to a particular audience, or, perhaps more accurately, to a particular identity or self-image. Both, of course, are addressing a courtly elite. Here again, however, they part company. Grisone sites his work within an ostensibly military and utilitarian context, even though his work, in actuality, is concerned more with the riding ring than the battlefield. Fiaschi, on the other hand, establishes his firmly within the milieu of courtly chivalry. He does so, moreover, with some specificity, recalling his own youth in Ferrara and depicting that city, his *patria,* as a place of "festivals, tournaments and all sorts of cavalcades."[69] He lends the scene a visual immediacy, speaking of "horsemen so richly armed and gracefully clothed, handling their horses with such ease, and so masterfully, that surely one could not see better anywhere else, such a sight as filled everyone who saw it with amazement."[70]

Having established the motif of chivalric performance and awestruck observer, Fiaschi turns his preface into a chivalric quest of sorts, framing his own education in the chivalric arts as both search and initiation. He first shows himself as the novice who, riding in that noble company, becomes keenly aware of his lack of skill, and so his unworthiness. His own words—"recognizing that I could ill remain in that paragon of honorable and noble horsemanship"[71]—cast this lack as an implicit moral failing. At issue here is chivalric prowess, whose possession confers honor, and

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[69] "…feste, tornei, & varie sorti di cavalerie…" Fiaschi, *Trattato dell'imbrigliare*, Letter to the reader.

[70] "…cavalieri tanto riccamente armati, & cosi leggiadramente vestiti maneggiando con tanta agevolezza, & cosi maestrenolmente li cavalli loro, che certamente, meglio in altro luogo non si saria potente vedere, la quale cosa si come di stupor tutti li risguardanti riempiva." Fiaschi, *Trattato dell'imbrigliare*, Letter to the reader.

[71] "…conoscendo di poter malamente stare in al paragone dell'honorata, & nobil cavaleria…." Fiaschi, *Trattato dell'imbrigliare*, Letter to the reader.

whose want brings shame and exclusion. Only by banishing himself from that elite group can the young man preserve his honor:

> Thus I was compelled by zeal for my honor to withdraw from them, that I not remain horsed among such valorous knights, determining never again to take up arms among such *cavalieri* if I did not first know myself to be worthy of their company.[72]

And so the young Fiaschi sets off to acquire the grail that will win him a rightful place among the *honorata, & nobil cavaleria.* The desired knowledge becomes an object unto itself, independent of any mentor or personal relationship. Interestingly, he characterizes his search for knowledge as one of ever widening circles, first

> submitting myself to any knight whatsoever, and to anyone else who was practiced and expert in arms as in horsemanship, and finally to anyone who could be useful to me in those things pertaining to a good *cavaliere;* so that I might, by these means, and with continual practice, instruct myself perfectly in that virtue.[73]

Rank appears to mean little here as Fiaschi's nameless instructors become a means to an end, significant only for whatever knowledge and experience they may have to impart. Notably too, his quest follows a downward social trajectory, passing from the realm of the knight to that of the ordinary fighting man, and finally, to that

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[72] "…fui spento dal zelo dell'honor mio fuor d'essi ritirarmi, per non rimanere fra si valorosi cavalieri arrossito, con fermamente di non mai piu vestir arme per pormi tra simili cavalieri, se prima'io non mi conoscossi degno di tal consortio." Fiaschi, *Trattato dell'imbrigliare*, Letter to the reader.

[73] "Et cosi per essequire la determinatione del mio pensiero incominciai a non stimar fatica, sommettendomi a qualunque cavaliere, & ad ogn'altro che fusse si in armi, come nel cavalcare prattico, & esperto, & finalmente ad ogniuno, ch'io conoscessi potermi giovare nelle cose appartenenti al buon cavaliere; accio, ch'io potessi per questi mezi, & co'l continuo essercitio in tal vertu perfettamente ammaestrarmi." It is interesting to note that Fiaschi, in speaking of his chivalric education, employs terms such as *sottomettersi* and *ammaestrare* which are also used to describe the training of a horse. Fiaschi, *Trattato dell'imbrigliare*, Letter to the reader.

of *ogniuno,* anybody at all, so long as they have "knowledge of the things pertaining to a good *cavaliero*."

Like Grisone, Fiaschi makes artful use of the term associating horsemanship, nobility and chivalry. The word *cavaliero*, appearing at the end of Fiaschi's story as at its beginning, has been transformed along the way, passing seamlessly in meaning from knight to horseman. It is as a horseman of long years' experience that Fiaschi now recommends himself to his reader, whom he both serves and exceeds:

> And because over the many years that I have practiced this art I have learned much that is worth knowing, and for the profit of those who take pleasure in it, I have determined to set these things down in writing, in three books.[74]

The unknown reader, meanwhile, is defined explicitly as a fellow enthusiast, *essa si diletta,* and by implication, as a person of taste and means. Thus, like his Neapolitan colleague, Fiaschi asserts a personal mastery born of experience. He does not take pains, however, as Grisone does, to site his knowledge within established literary and learned traditions. Instead he embarks upon a very different tack, again revealing his concern with the technical and practical dimension of horsemanship. Here he attacks the parlous veterinary practices of his times, rife with ignorance, misconceptions and superstitions, and opens the attack, interestingly, with an admission of his own former ignorance in this regard:

> It vexes me greatly, and indeed strikes me to the heart, to not be able to speak of the means of restoring horses to health when they are ill, for this is something not only of concern to a particular profession, but itself of great importance. I have often wished to write of it properly, as it is, to my mind, so corrupted and confused by smiths, wrights,

[74] "Et perche in questa arte, nella quale molti anni essercitato mi sono, conosco haver imparato molte cose degno de'esser sapute, per utilità di chi d'essa si diletta, ho deliberato scriverne, & farne tre trattati." Fiaschi, *Trattato dell'imbrigliare*, Letter to the reader.

> farriers and conjurers that it could not be more so. However, I did not have the knowledge to write about it, nor would I have it yet, had I not first uncovered the truth of it through long study, tedious efforts, and experience.[75]

It is this more recent experience, however, that leads him to a striking conclusion:

> By which I am persuaded, that, just as I will have used this as an excuse for the time being, the abovementioned [farriers, smiths, marescalchi, conjurers] ought be able to do so too, that everyone does well to put his talent and strength into learning; but these because of their poverty are unable to come to the recognition of any good thing; therefore it may be necessary, that such merit be placed before the noble and the powerful, and not before such as these.[76]

In consequence he directs his anger against those princes, "worthy of great reproof, who have thus permitted these poor ones to be ruined by ignorance and necessity."[77] Meanwhile, because of its association with these same lowly artisans, "knights, wealthy gentlemen and burghers all scorn such knowledge, wishing by no means to learn it, and having no regard for its nobility. Whereas to my mind," concludes Fiaschi,

> one ought to make every possible effort to know and to learn the signs which indicate illness, in order to recognize those, seeming to be of a choleric humor, sanguine, phlegmatic, or melancholic; or of

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[75] "Oltra modo m'incresce, & fin'al vivo cuore mi preme di non poter dire del modo, che si dee tenere in sanare li cavalli quando sono infermi, cosa pur appartenente a tal professione, ma essendo esso al'importantia grande, & che molto tempo porterebbe seco a volerne scrivere perfettamente, si come l'animo mio sarebbe per essere si corrotto, & confuso da magnani, fabri, manescalchi, & incantatori, che non potrebbe essere più; però non me ha dato l'animo scriverne, ne darebbe ancora, se non trovassi di lei prima il vero con lunghi studi, notomie, & isperientie."Fiaschi, *Trattato dell'imbrigliare*, Letter to the reader.

[76] "La onde mi persuado, che per hora sarò havuto per iscusato, si come parimente deono essere li sopranominati, che bene ogni suo ingegno, & forza per imparava mettono; ma per la povertà loro non possono a cognitione d'alcuna buona cosa venire; però sarebbe necessario, che tal virtù per più condegni rispetti fuse posta ne'nobii & potenti, & non in pari loro." Fiaschi, *Trattato dell'imbrigliare*, Letter to the reader.

[77] "E con sopportatione di gran riprensione son stati degni quei Principi, che l'hanno cosi dall'ignorantia, & necessità d'essi poveri lasciata affassinare..." Fiaschi, *Trattato dell'imbrigliare*, Letter to the reader.

> indigestion, or colic, or if similar accidents have befallen them…in order to serve them with true reason and the proper medicines, being that they are animals, who cannot speak, nor show us their needs. And all the more ought we to have great care for them, and consideration, seeing how much more necessary they are to human beings, than any other animal.[78]

Once again he inverts the established hierarchy of relations, at the end presenting the human being as being not only the caretaker, but in a sense the servant of the ailing horse. His ultimate rationale, however, restores that order, as he returns to the traditional theme of the horse's usefulness to man—here argued to be the most useful of creatures, so that the horse remains privileged in its subordinate state.

Fiaschi's emphasis on shoeing, and his inclusion of the subject in his book—in fact, his decision to devote the entire third book to it—is especially notable given the pretensions which his genre was cultivating at the time. The treatise is particularly noteworthy in this regard, combining as it does the chivalric and the mechanical, and directing the *cavaliero* toward knowledge of a distinctly technical, manual type. In explaining his inclusion of the subject of farriery, Fiaschi returns to the language of chivalry, asserting that it is "necessary for the horseman who wishes to enjoy chivalric virtue as he ought, to be familiar with the kinds, and qualities, of the horse's hooves, so that he might know how to select a shoe suitable for the horse, and also

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[78] "…che oltre che non se le trova più forma, ne modello, per essere tanto vilmente, da i predetti poveri artefici posta, i cavalieri, ricchi gentilhuomini, & cittadini la sdegnano, & sprezzano, ne per alcun modo imparar la vogliono, non havendo consideratione alcuna alla nobiltà d'essa; la dove (per mio giudicio) doverebbe essere da quelli fatto ogni possibile, per sapere, & imparare li segni, che mostrano i mali, per conoscere quelle, vedendo se da humor colerico, sanguineo, flemmatico, ò melancolico; overo da indigestione, ventosità, ò da simili accidenti lor vengono…per potere con veraci ragioni, & proprii medicamenti giovarli, essend'essi animali, che non fanno ne dire, ne mostrare il suo bisogno. Et tanto più se ne devria havere gran cura, & consideratione, quanto più sono d'ogn'altro animale, che si sia, all'huomo più necessarii." Fiaschi, *Trattato dell'imbrigliare*, Letter to the reader.

how to shoe him, as his nature requires…"[79] Once again he anticipates criticism, expecting that some will find the subject "too base, and doing little honor to the cavalier."[80] Fiaschi's answer, a departure from his earlier stance, restores the distance between horseman and artisan. He offers a derogatory picture of marescalchi, almost all of whom are deemed either inept or dishonest:

> And in answer I say this, that there are few good *marescalchi* out there, and those few may be of such a character that at times they'll do what works best for them, rather than what is needed by the horse. Thus the horseman is compelled to stand wholly in judgment of the marescalcus, an easy thing if his horses should be lamed or otherwise injured, something that happens all too often these days.[81]

In order to act on his horse's behalf, serving as advocate and protector, the cavalier must be well-informed. Fiaschi therefore promises to discuss the subject extensively and "minutely, chapter by chapter, for the use of the horse, as for the benefit of the horseman."[82] There follow thirty-two more chapters, dealing with such topics as "On some opinions on the color of the hoof, and a discourse on its good qualities and defects…" (chapter 2); "On crampons, nails for ice; ridged ones, barbed,

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[79] "Conoscendo io, ch'egli è necessario al cavaliere che si vuole dilettare della virtù cavaleresca come dee, havere cognitione de le nature, & qualità dell'unghie del cavallo si per saper il modo, che si convien tener nel torgli del'unghie, come del porgli il ferro, che ricerca la natura sua..." Fiaschi, *Trattato dell'imbrigliare*, 114.

[80] "…se ben forse ad alcuni parer à esser suggetto basso, & poco honorevol al cavaliero...." Fiaschi, *Trattato dell'imbrigliare*, 114.

[81] "E in risposta à questi tali dico, che ve ne sono pochi maneschalchi buoni, & quei pochi forsi di tal natura, che faran alle volte quello gli torna più acconcio; che non quello, che il cavallo ha de bisogno. E essendo'l cavaliere sforzato à star totalmente nel giudicio del maniscalco farà facil cosa che i suoi cavalli siano da essi stroppiati, ò in gran parte dannificati; la qual cos si vede hoggidi occurrer spesso...." Fiaschi, *Trattato dell'imbrigliare*, 114.

[82] "Adunque essendo i piedi quelli, che portano il corpo, & la fatica, tanto più violontieri si dee haver buona cura d'essi, si nel ferrarli come nel'resto, di chi farò con i miei scritti capace ogniuno, intendend'io però di far tutto quello, che si può; & conosco essere necessario, con dire il tutto minutamente, à capitolo per capitolo, si per l'utile de cavalli, come ancho per beneficio de cavalieri." Fiaschi, *Trattato dell'imbrigliare*, 114.

and some ringlets, which at times are placed on the hind feet " (chapter 4); "On the way in which one ought to fashion ordinary shoes for the forefeet (8); "On a strong hoof, that dries out in hot weather" (chapter 15); "How to know when the hoof may be weak or weakened from having been ridden without shoes, and the way in which this is observed" (chapter 24); "On the horse which does not want to let itself be shod" (chapter 28); and "Discourse over certain shoes which some use, when their horse throws a shoe on the road, and the way in which this should be done" (chapter 32). He concludes with drawings of various types of horseshoes.

If Fiaschi's third book represents a striking departure from the conventional concerns of the cavalier, the topic of his first book, while also technical in nature, lies well within the mainstream of aristocratic interest. He devotes the first book to a discussion of the types and uses of curb bits. Of types there are many, differing primarily in the number of bars, the addition to these of balls of various sizes, the height or absence of a port, the inclusion and varied shapes of keys. As depicted, moreover, each bit possesses a visually striking quality, making it something of a work of art in its own right. Thus one finds even in Grisone's otherwise spare volume the inclusion of fifty full-page woodcuts of curb bits of various types, each identified by its distinguishing feature, such as the "bell," the "melons," the "cat's paws," and the "double-stranded *pater nostri*."[83] Fiaschi's treatise contains twenty-nine, similar though not wholly identical to those in Grisone's work. All are clearly intended as technical drawings, with great attention given to the rendering of individual parts and their relationship to each other. They are also done to scale, as indicated by the bit

[83] See Fiaschi, *Trattato dell'imbrigliare*, for the "campanello" (36), "meloni da tre prese con montada" (58), "chiappone pie di gatto" (62), and "doppie filze di pater nostri" (50).

called *Fiasco*, which is depicted against a human hand, thus presumably showing it to be the measure of a *palma* from branch to branch.[84] One suspects, however, that these were also enjoyed as works of visual interest and pleasure in their own right.

While Fiaschi's first and third books deal with technical subjects, his second book is devoted to a discussion of manège figures and their correct execution. As mentioned earlier, and as indicated in the chapter title, the text in each case is accompanied by illustrative diagrams. Before proceeding to the second, however, which with its diagrams and musical and vocal accompaniment is the most-studied aspect of Fiaschi's work, it seems worthwhile to look at his treatment of bits and bitting, the subject he accorded pride of place.

It should be noted at the outset that Fiaschi's content is not original, nor are his organization and approach. A similar treatment appears in a late-fifteenth century Emilian treatise.[85] It may be argued, however, that Fiaschi's inclusion of this material, and the emphasis he gives it, speak to the nature of his fundamental approach to manège.

His discussion of bits proceeds according to the particular condition, physical type or behavioral quirk for which each is designed. These he addresses the size and shape of the tongue, for example a thick tongue or one which the horse rests over the bit; the nature of the gums, whether sharp, fleshy or torn; the location of the tushes, or canine teeth, whether hanging down, protruding, or unevenly set; the jawbone, whether wide, narrow, or likewise uneven; and the chin dry or fleshy. All are

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[84] Fiaschi, *Trattato dell'imbrigliare,* 40.

[85] See Trolli, ed., *Hippiatria*.

significant as they may affect the placement of the bar in the mouth, or that of the curb chain under the chin, and so interfere with the bit's effective mechanical action.

For this very reason Fiaschi is acutely conscious of the effect these mechanisms have on the horse, though he appears primarily concerned with the result, in terms of both action and visual effect. Nonetheless he exhibits an awareness of and concern for the horse's sensations. For example he advises, when on a horse with a serpentine neck, to "ride with a light rein, so that the bit will be pleasing to him, since one can easily bring his head to its proper place."[86]

This approach underscores the physical, mechanistic aspects of the art, in which the various parts of the tack must fit well and be correctly adjusted in order to have the proper effect and appearance. The diversity of bits proceeds from the diversity of nature; iron and leather must be adjusted to the inevitable imperfection. As a result Fiaschi, instead of approaching the horse as a totality, resolves the animal into its component parts, and thinks in terms of mechanical cause and effect. Degree, measure and understanding all play their part, as they determine the application of one's own force, as relayed through the bit. It is this, in fact, which may represent one element of the broad attraction of the curb bit—as an equalizer, the one point of contact at which human strength can hope to overpower that of the horse.

As a result, certain points of conformation likewise become very important, in particular the shape of the neck, whether arched, for example, or serpentine or ewe-necked. Of particular interest in this connection is Fiaschi's prescribed approach for a

[86] "…pur per l'ordinario facciasi, che sia piacevole l'imboccatura non vi ponendo troppo guardia, ne che sia troppo ardita, perche facilmente si ridurrà con la testa al suo luogo." Fiaschi, *Trattato dell'imbrigliare*, 16.

horse that has a short, thick neck, suggestive of the coldblood Great Horse type. This is the animal which supposedly could only be used in manège through the torment of harsh bits and raking spurs.

Fiaschi, on the other hand, presents the problem thus:

> Finding oneself on a horse with a short neck, and a thick one, which most often will be accompanied by large jaws, in which there is great power to stand against these remedies, say that a man wants to take it back or bring it up according to need; therefore I say to him, that intending for him to govern the horse, and collect it to the necessary point, and to somewhat fashion it, one must use a lengthened rein, and slack, and a pleasing bit, without which there will be little satisfaction; because in collecting him by means of force..it will be most fatiguing for him, by virtue of his conformation, and may easily rip his gums, and chin; and even worse when he has a narrow jaw.[87]

He thus advises, "to put things in good order, and firmly take him in hand," that the reader use a cavesson, a bitless bridle which conveys effective force through the noseband, in this period often made of iron. This will work well, Fiaschi adds,

> because with it one may keep the mouth and chin sound, instead applying the torment only to the nose. And once removed, to assure that these means will not require recourse to the cavesson again, I advise you to not bear on it too much when it is adopted at first, because by bearing on it a little, he will be collected with little distress, and once collected, once you render him just ["true" him], if it can be done then take it off leaving him with a bit that suits his mouth.[88]

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[87] "Trovandosi nel cavallo un collo corto, & grosso, il più delle volte sarà accompagnato da gran ganasse, nelle quali è gran forza per stare al contrasto di quei rimedi, di che l'homo si valeria volendolo tirar sotto, & reggerlo secondo bisogna; però dico, che intendendo egli di governarlo, & ridurlo al segno necessario, & alquanto forgerlo, bisogna adoperare la guardia lungheta, & fiacca, con l'imboccatura piacevole, sin tanto, che sarà un poco accomodato; perche tirandolo sotto ad un tratto per forza…saria à lui ciò di grandissima fatica, per rispetto delle sue fattezze, & facilmente potriasseli rompere la gengiva, & il barboccio; & peggio saria, quando havess'egli le ganasse strette insieme." Fiaschi, *Trattato dell'imbrigliare*, 18.

[88] "Nel qual caso volendolo accommodare bene, & tirarlo sotto, bisogna per alcun giorno adoperare la cavecina, che va nel mezo delle braccia perche con essa si conserva sana la boccia, & il barboccio, dandoseli la passione solo sopra'l naso. Et levato, che saranno questi rispetti non occurrerà servirsi della cavecina, avertendo di non la tirar troppo quando l'adoperi nel principio, perche tirandola à poco, à poco si ridurrà sotto con destrezza, & ridotto, che l'haverai se li potrà poi quella levare facendoli imboccatura, che alla sua bocca convenga." Fiaschi, *Trattato dell'imbrigliare*, 18.

In this way, Fiaschi concludes, the mount "will show to good effect, because you have him collected, and are helping him to fashion himself."[89] It should be noted that he twice uses the word "fashion"—*forgere*—in the sense of forging or artificing, and as something which the *horse* does through human assistance. In this way Fiaschi's use of bitting may be seen as part of his approach to manège as an art.

Only after his discussion of bits does Fiaschi offer his prescriptive advice concerning the good horseman, something which will become a convention of the genre. Once again, temperance and discernment are the rule. The good horseman, Fiaschi states,

> must know the nature and quality of horses, and how to school them well, and graciously, with a gentle and pleasing hand, in good measure, and with justice, and sit firmly in the saddle, tempering himself according to occasion and the times, whether to strike them or caress them, or to hold them simply in fear, fatiguing them more, or less, according to the lesson one would have them do, having a continuous eye on their spirit, and their strength, and according to these operations, to never fear the vice which may be in the horse.[90]

Here self-discipline and dominion combine, in an echo of the mirror-for-princes tradition. The analogy to the governance of humans is obvious, though it is one that Fiaschi does not pursue.

Another interesting reversal comes about when Fiaschi discusses horses by breed, which in this period was associated with place of origin. His tone changes, as

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[89] "La montada in ciò fa buono effetto, perche lo tira sotto, & aiuta à forgere, avertendo però che non trabbocchi mai la briglia, havend'ella tanto più montada…." Fiaschi, *Trattato dell'imbrigliare*, 18.

[90] "[A]l buon cavaliere fa bisogno sapere ancho conoscere le nature, & qualità de cavalli, & maneggiarli bene, & aggratiatamente con la mano suave, & piacevole, à tempo, & con giustezza, & stare in sella forte, temperandosi secondo l'occasione, & tempi, si de batterli, come di farli carezze ò di tenerli solamente in timore affaticandoli più, & meno, secondo por quello maneggio, che se li fa fare, havendo l'occhio di continuo all'animo, & forze loro, & secondo quelle operare, ne mai temer di vitio, che nel cavallo fusse." Fiaschi, *Trattato dell' imbrigliare,* 36.

he passes from a pragmatic and aesthetic concern for the creature under his care to another basis of judgment. Following convention, he offers a generalized assessment for each type, here confining himself to the Frisian, the Turkish, Barb and Moorish, considered together, the Sardinian, the Neapolitan, and the Spanish. He speaks, not of their physical characteristics, but of their nature, and his assessment bears largely on one simple distinction, which breeds require the use of the stick,[91] and which do not. Of these the Frisians are the worst, he says, for they are "lazy, deceitful and vicious, and all the more so when their laziness governs them."[92] Thus personification creeps into Fiaschi's treatise as well; once again, vindictively harsh treatment appears to be reserved for the horse that is read in human terms.

All such passion is absent from his method, which makes clear certain fundamentals of the discipline as practiced at the time: the precise and demanding nature of the physical movements involved; the associated need of the rider to maintain close control of the horse's actions; the importance of the elements of rhythm, measure and degree, and the concern with aesthetic effect; the emphasis placed on the horse's absolute submission to the rider's will; and the discreet or pointed use of the aids. From Fiaschi's injunctions one gleans something of the less-than-ideal habits to be seen among its amateur practitioners, a reminder that these masters, in seeking perfection, were establishing a standard that was probably seldom realized in practice.

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[91] Although Fiaschi uses the word *battere* here, I have avoided translating it as "beating," since that implies a force and cruelty which would by no means be the rule, though not necessarily excluded either.

[92] "…dico, che è poltrona, doppia, & vitioso, & tanto più quando si comportarla sua poltroneria…." Note that the first adjectives are gendered feminine, and the last, masculine. Fiaschi, *Trattato dell'imbrigliare,* 25.

Fiaschi's groundbreaking "singularity", that of relating riding to music and dance, similarly speaks to the imposition of a perfect, abstract order on nature. While Grisone alludes to this, he evinces little affinity for it in practice, at least in any translation to the page. The Fiaschi text, on the other hand, far more elaborate in its visual aids, amplifies and develops these latent rhythmic and geometric elements.

The geometric patterns of the *manège*, somewhat crudely represented in woodcut, are given context by the addition of little figures on horseback. These ostensibly illustrate the performance of the air in question, though the figures, stiff and somewhat doll-like, are more indicative than actually illustrative. Nonetheless they are naturalistically represented, with shadow lines drawn in on the otherwise two-dimensional schematic, to enhance the illusion of weight and solidity. In all but one instance the horse and rider are richly dressed in courtly fashion; that sole exception, showing a knight in full armor mounted on a horse in mail, is the only reference to a military function. Elsewhere on the course, as the chapter title indicates, a set of horseshoes serves to indicate direction, another effort to clarify the physical movement and, possibly, to develop a system of equivalent notation.

Fiaschi explains these innovations as a memory aid for his reader (who will translate them into practice):

> It occurred to me in this second part of the treatise not only to provide the rules of the manège in words, but also to diagram all the actions of the rider on horseback, along with the horse's hoofprints and the musical tempo for each figure, so that if someone cannot continue the figure, every time he rides he will be able to recall it through these.[93]

[93] "Mi pare in questa seconda parte del trattato non solo dar norma col dir mio del maneggio di cavalli; ma porre anco in disegno alcuni atti di cavalieri à cavallo, & ferri d'esso, & il tempo in Musica d'alcuni maneggi, acciò che non possa essere ripreso alcuno, ogni volta che secondo tali raccordi li maneggierà poi." Fiaschi, *Trattato dell'imbrigliare*, 75.

He also envisions them, however, as an aid toward correcting problems he has encountered in the riding ring, where riders cannot always see—*mirano*—how to make the horse move as he should.[94] Moreover, he finds that many riders sacrifice quality for quantity, so that

> the more voltes that they have the horse do, the more he does without finishing the half-volte, or the complete one, or that, at the walk, they either hurry by ahead of time, or lag behind, or circle in the same fashion when they shouldn't.[95]

These evolving formal elements of the discipline—time and measure, rhythm and geometry—all serve as ways of fixing horse and rider in time and space. It is here that we find a significant parallel between school riding and the courtly disciplines of music and dance. All rest on fundamental principles of harmony, order and discipline. That this interrelationship was even more explicit has been established by Kate van Orden, who explains Fiaschi's use of musical notes and vocal cues:

> In Fiaschi's airs, pitch rhythm and vowel sounds interlock in musical commands keyed to the pace and exertion of the horse's movements. For example, *un passo e un salto* [a step and a hop]…utilizes three short "ah's" at a lower pitch for the preparation, a higher, longer "ahi!" for the leap, and a rest for the recovery. By contrast, the less demanding *galloppo raccolto* requires "la voce somessa," rendered musically with a lower pitch (B-flat), longer note length (semi-minim), and the soothing syllable, "ah."[96]

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[94] "L'haver io veduto molti si pe'l passato, come per adesso, che non mirano di far fare al cavallo intieramente, quel che dovrebbero, mi ha fatto prender questa fatica; & anco perche so, che aldì d'hoggi, alcuni per non essere avertiti, incorrono in molti errori." Fiaschi, *Trattato dell'imbrigliare*, 75.

[95] "Et però dico, che personne assai, il più delle volte, secondo, che voltano il cavallo, fan si, che non finisse la meza volta, ne ancho l'intiera, overo che la passa, ò che comportavano di la schiarlo trascorrer avanti con la vita, overo di dare adietro, ò di voltarsi con l'anche [? – unclear line break] quando non deve." Fiaschi, *Trattato dell'imbrigliare*, 75.

[96] van Orden, *Music, Discipline, and Arms*, 241.

From this would derive an emphasis on musicality on the part of the rider, and an insistence on the horse's susceptibility to, and appreciation for, music and rhythm.[97]

This alliance of music, dance and horsemanship fostered by Fiaschi would take root and flourish in the congenial soil of post-civil war France, as will be seen in Chapter 4. The medium of its transmission was the riding master Giambattista Pignatelli, Fiaschi's student and teacher of masters. Somewhat more is known of Pignatelli's background, though it remains little enough. According to Monteilhet, he was born around 1525 and died before 1600, a member of the second generation of Italian horse masters.[98] Like Grisone a Neapolitan *gentiluomo*, he came from an ancient noble family of Apulian origins. Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly identifies him as a student of Fiaschi's, who after studying in Ferrara returned to Naples to establish his own academy. No one appears to have questioned why, though a Neapolitan, he chose to study with Fiaschi in Ferrara rather than stay in Naples and study with his famed fellow countryman Grisone. In any event, he subsequently returned to Naples and opened his own school there, where, as mentioned earlier, he taught the great riding masters Salomon de la Broue and Antoine de Pluvinel, who, as *écuyers* associated with the French court, would carry school riding to a new level and establish France's dominance in the art.

As their teacher, highly acclaimed in his own right, Pignatelli has long been a figure of particular interest in the history of equitation.[99] His own contribution

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[97] van Orden, *Music, Discipline, and Arms*, 241–2.

[98] Monteilhet, *Les Maîtres,* 222.

[99] In addition to Pluvinel and la Broue, Pignatelli can also claim Allessandro Masari Malatesta, himself the author of a treatise, *Compendio dell'heroica arte di cavalleria* (1600),

remains the source of considerable speculation, as he left no published treatise which might provide insights into his methods and approach. E.M. Kellock, working in Naples, claims evidence of Pignatelli's direct contact with Byzantine circus performers, whose handling of horses relied on the gentler and largely invisible aids of voice and shifts of weight.[100] The perception of Pignatelli as a seminal innovator has been challenged, however, as two copies of a long-rumored manuscript work by him have surfaced in recent decades. The first, according to Monteilhet, was unearthed in 1976 at the French military academy of Saumur, though never published.[101] More recently, Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly located a second in Wolfenbüttel, Germany, in the library of Duke August of Brauschweig-Lüneborg, a copy commissioned by the duke in Italy sometime before 1627. Having examined it, she finds much that is characteristic of the equine literature of the period, and little if anything that is novel. Pignatelli, she concludes, "may have been an outstanding riding master, but it is to his three most famous pupils that one must look for innovation and originality."[102] Nonetheless, he is widely credited with having further developed the musical and balletic elements of classical equitation.

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and believed by Watanabe-O'Kelly to be responsible for introducing the horse ballet to Italy. *Triumphall Shews,* 76.

[100] E.M. Kellock, *The Story of Riding* (Newton Abbott, UK: David & Charles, 1974),43–44. Kellock's assertion supports claims for the formative influence of Greek equitation on the Neapolitan school, as trainers made their way to Naples following the fall of Constantinople. The author's references are somewhat vague, however.

[101] Monteilhet, *Les Maîtres,* 222.

[102] Watanabe-O'Kelly, *Triumphall Shews,* 76-77. This would seem to call into question the impact of Byzantine circus practices, at least on Fiaschi's method as committed to writing. However, since neither the Byzantine contact nor the treatise has been dated, the issue remains open.

Part 3. Claudio Corte

Claudio Corte's *Il cavallarizzo* represents another facet of the rapidly developing genre of treatises on horsemanship and its related subjects. Based on the number its editions, his treatise enjoyed considerably less success than Grisone's work or Fiaschi's; the first edition, published by Giordano Ziletti in 1562, was followed by two others, a 1573 edition printed in Lyon and dedicated to Charles IX[103]—whom he congratulates on the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre.[104] The latter work crowned a six-year sojourn in France, something which Corte appears to have regarded as crucial to his career.[105] Meanwhile his staunch anti-Protestantism had not precluded a trip to England, and we find him there in 1565, in response to an invitation by Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, Elizabeth's then-Master of the

[103] Neither J.-B. Huzard nor Carl Gräfe note the second edition, a copy of which is held by the National Sporting Library in Middleborough, VA. Mennessier de la Lance does not include Corte because the treatise was never translated into French. Huzard, 2: 427; Carl Gräfe, *Die Haltung und der Sitz der Reiters: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Reitkunst…* (Wiemar: B.F. Voigt, 1855), 344.

[104] "Et anco che tutto questo vi sia di somma lode, pur nulla dimeno sarebbe poco, over non tanto, quando alla grande, e di tutte le altre crudelissima conspiratione ultima che vi si fece in Parigi l'anno prossimo passato, la Maesta vostra Christianissima non havesse proveduto, & reimediato subito con somma Providenza, & arte con la subita gran Giustitia dimostrata nella morte dell'Almiraglio Gasparo Coligni capo d'essa, e con la morte de' suoi complici, & seguaci insieme. O Giustitia di Dio come se ben tardi arivi [sic] presto: & ricompensi piu aspramente i misfatti de i delinquenti, & empij." Claudio Corte, *Il cavallerizzo di Messer Claudo Corte di Pavia…*(Lyon: Alessandro Marsilii, 1573), Dedication.

[105] Corte, writing in the *proemio* of *Il cavallarizzo*, laments a lost opportunity to travel to France, claiming that fate "ruined [him] in an instant" by not allowing him the time to travel there in the service of his patron, Cardinal Alexander Farnese: "....la mia sorte…mi ruinò in un subito, col non darmi pur spatio d'andare, & ritornare di Francia in suo servitio." Corte, *Il cavallarizzo*, *2 2v. Bascetta, while confirming the Parisian stay of 1567-73, claims that Corte had been a frequent visitor to France for some thirty years, citing a remark in the 1573 edition. Bascetta, *Sport e giuochi,* 1: 242.

Horse.[106] That Corte enjoyed considerable renown in his own day seems indisputable, as we find him acclaimed by the great French master Salomon de la Broue and his treatise, along with that of Grisone, singled out for translation into English.[107] Such knowledge as we have of his background is provided by Corte himself, who describes himself as a Lombard, and as forty-eight years old at the time he wrote the treatise, placing his birth date at ca. 1514.[108] At another point in the treatise, he reveals that in his early years he served as a page to Isabella of Aragon, duchess of Milan.[109] Through his *proemio*, we also learn of his service to Cardinal Alexander Farnese (1520–1589), grandson of Paul III, as well as of certain other features of his career, discussed below.

The work itself is straightforward in its presentation. The full title, *Il cavallarizzo di M. Claudio Corte di Pavia nel qual si tratta della natura de' Cavalli, del modo di domarli, & frenarli, et di tutto quello, che a' cavalli & à buon Cavallarizzo s'appartiene*, gives a sense of the work's encyclopedic ambitions. The balance of the page reflects the printer rather than the author, decorated as it is with an engraving of the printer's mark of a star, *all'insegna della Stella.* The treatise itself consists of three books, the first two containing forty-nine and sixty-five chapters

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[106] See van Orden, *Music, Discipline, and Arms*, 243, for the dates of Corte's stay in France. Thomas Blundeville refers to Corte's stay in his *Foure Chiefest Offices of Horsemanship* (London: Humfrey Lownes, 1609), dedication. Mention of the visit to England is also found in Prior, *Royal Studs*, 4, and Thirsk, *Horses in Early Modern England*, 20.

[107] "Ce que les Seigneurs IoanBaptiste Ferrare, Frederic Grison, Claudio Court, & quelques autres ont expliqué en leurs livres parun [sic] grand nombre de belles & apparentes raisons, & si doctement, que le mieux entendu en ceste profession, qui les pensera surpasser, se mettra en danger de demeurer en chemin comme donnant du nez en terre." Salomon de la Broue, *Le Cavalarice françois*, 7. http://www.vet-lyon.fr/bib/fondsancien/ouvonline/de_la_broue.htm#11 (accessed March 24, 2006).

[108] Corte, *Il cavallarizzo*, *2 1v.

[109] Corte, *Il cavallarizzo,* 19r.

respectively and the last book, much briefer, three dialogues. The first book addresses a miscellany of subjects, with the emphasis on breeding and stable management. Additionally it addresses the qualities associated with horses of various colors (with a chapter devoted to each major color); the care and breaking of colts, and the shoeing and bleeding of horses. The second book provides instruction on manège figures and airs, with diagrams, in addition to discussing the aids, bits and other types of tack, and the means of correcting various equine faults.

This is only a partial list, suggesting something of the book's value as a resource. What most distinguishes the treatise, however, is its marked literary and humanist slant. The ancient authors accorded little more than a respectful bob of the head from Grisone, and noticeably missing from Fiaschi, are present in full force here, cited throughout as authorities and represented in numerous historical and mythological allusions. Corte's literary approach seems almost anachronistic when considered beside the self-confident empiricism of Grisone and the artistic innovations of Fiaschi. His opening chapters, dealing with subjects such as "On the origins of the horses," "On the intellect, or the intelligence of the horse," and "On some famous and beloved horses, purchased at great price," are populated with such familiar figures such as Bellerophon, Pegasus, centaurs and Lapiths, Julius Caesar's horse, the weeping steeds of Pliny, and of course, Alexander's Bucephalus. He explains himself thus to his reader: "I have tapped various histories, poems and philosophies to speak at greater length of this than perhaps is required by the craft, so

that each may better know by this means the truth of the thing, and more fully."[110] He did not want to play the orator, he goes on, "contenting myself to clothe the book without as many colors as it might have had, but only ornamenting it so that it may be seen without vexation."[111]

Corte's equestrian content is no less reflective of his own experience as a riding master, and as will be seen, he has a keen consciousness of his status as a professional. One senses, however, that his social and cultural orientation is markedly different from that of Grisone or Fiaschi, very likely a reflection of the insular and intensely political environment in which he lived, that of papal Rome. It is this, more than his literary flourishes, that lends Corte's treatise its special interest. He offers an intimation of the temper of the circles in which he moved, including tensions and jealousies. It is quite unlike anything found in Grisone or Fiaschi.

When Corte brought out *Il cavallarizzo,* only twelve years had passed since the publication of Grisone's *Ordini di cavalcare.* The conception of the undertaking had already shifted, however, with the treatise established as a legitimate means of transmitting a formal system of horsemanship. In one sense, Corte seeks to shift it away from the sphere of the physical—so clearly Grisone's domain—and back to that of the learned and the textual. In another sense, however, his approach is in advance of Grisone's. Even as he hauls the ancients back to center stage, Corte is identifying

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[110] *"*Ho tocco ancora alcune historie, poesie, & filosofie con piu lungo parlare di quello forse, che saria stato di mestiere, accioche ciascuno sappi ancor meglio per questo la verità della cosa, & più integramente....*"* Corte, *Il cavallarizzo*, I, 49, 120 f.

[111] "Essendo certo che se così secco, & nudo com'altri haurebbeno voluto, lo davo fuori & non ingrassatolo con le sudette cose, & ampliato con digressioni, & discorsi, niente da molt'altri moderni sarebbe differito, & per aventura sarebbe ancora dispiaciuto, ne io havrei fatto quello, che l'invento mio é di fare, che è oltra il far profitto alli Lettori e dilettarli, inalzar il suggetto & l'arte d'un vero cavallarizzo, & il cavallarizzo insieme piu che si puote. Corte, *Il cavallarizzo*, 49, 120 f.

shortcomings in their work which he seeks to rectify. The same is true with regard to his contemporaries. In neither instance, however, is he critical of the substance of the writer's work. Rather, he finds his ancient antecedents lacking in completeness, and his modern ones lacking in clarity and order. One suspects this latter criticism is directed primarily at Grisone, the most successful of the Italian writers but also the one most deserving of that particular criticism.

Of the classical authors, Corte laments that "[a]lthough they wrote well about these matters, they wrote so little that there was not very much which posterity could use and enjoy, having written only one work, and only about one or two things, and even that but briefly." He then singles out the four he considers most influential:

> We see this with Aristotle in his book on nature and animals, with Pliny in his natural history, and with other ancients as well. Among these I would say that Xenophon treated those subjects better and more fully in his *Hippico* and *Hipparco.* But even he, with his rules for what is desired in all the matters I mentioned above, could have offered much more that would be useful to people, and in particular, to horsemen. Vegetius and all the ancients, while writing copiously about certain illnesses of horses and their cure, have little if anything to say about the cure of others. And others have done the same in more recent times, who, being fixed on imparting information about one thing, overlook another.[112]

Corte is discreet in critiquing his contemporaries, whom he identifies only as "*celebratissimi homini, & honorati cavallieri*," celebrated men and honored

[112] "Perche se ben ne scrissero, fu si poco, che non molto a' posteri ha possuto recare & utile & diletto, havendo un solo, sol d'una, ò di due cose scritto: & l'istessa brevemente. Come si vede haver fatto Aristotile nel suo libro della natura degli animali, Plinio nell'historia naturale, & altri antichi. Tra li quali giudico che Xenofonte ne habbi trattato più diffusamente, & meglio di tutti gl'altri nel suo Hippico, & Hipparco. Ma ne anc'esso con quell'ordine, che si desidera in tutte le sopradette cose; & che à ciascuno, & massime à cavalliero, molto assai possi giovare. Vegetio, & molt'altri antichi ragionando copiosamente delle infirmità, e delle cure de' cavalli, poco, ò nulla, di dire altro si curono. Il medesimo hanno fatto alcuni a' tempi men remoti; li quali mentre furono intenti à servire d'una cosa, lasciorno l'altra." The last would seem to refer to Giordano Ruffo. Corte, *Il cavallarizzo*, *2 1r.

horsemen.[113] Once again he abstains from any criticism of the substance of their work; rather, he says, "it seems to me that, while they deal with the whole, they do so without the order and clarity that one would like."[114]

Just as his critique is essentially literary, so too are the credentials which he offers. He describes himself as having been virtually called to the task of the treatise, as someone who had "expended much effort not only in the art of riding, but also in that of letters"[115] And, as with Grisone and Fiaschi, he articulates a sense of mission. In Corte's case, however, this bears directly on the issue of the vernacular, which he presents here as a vehicle of communication:

> …it occurred to me to set down in this book the result of some of my studies and efforts, in our common Italian tongue, so that anyone moderately educated may, by reading it, easily understand many beautiful things and useful writings, scattered elsewhere among various Latin, Greek, and Italian authorities on the same subject.[116]

Just as Fiaschi writes in his native Ferrarese dialect, to the subsequent frustration of his French translator, Corte writes as a Lombard, refusing to *Toscanizzare* "lest I

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[113] Corte, *Il cavallarizzo*, *2 1r

[114] "Oltre che quelli, c'hanno scritto a' tempi nostri à me non pare, che habbino scritto il tutto, né con quell'ordine, & chiarezza, che si desidera." Corte, *Il cavallarizzo*, *2 1v.

[115] "…perche essendomi affaticato molto non solo nell'arte del cavalcare, ma delle lettere ancora..." Corte, *Il cavallarizzo*, *2 1r.

[116] "...me p'arso di notare il ritratto d'alcuni miei studij, & fatiche in questo libro nella lingua nostra commune Italiani, accioche ciascuno mediocramente instrutto possi intendere agevolmente con questa lettione molte cose belle, & utili scritte, & sparse in diversi auttori Latini, Greci, & Italiani di simil suggetto." Corte, *Il cavallarizzo*, *2 1v.

become like Theophrastus, who by trying to speak too much like an Athenian, was found out by a simple old woman to not be one."[117]

The measured and even graceful tone of the proemio changes abruptly, however, as Corte suddenly raises the specter of anticipated criticism. More than either Grisone or Fiaschi, he evinces a clear sense of participating in and belonging to a community, one with its own cliques and stars. Though his own particular circle remains unspecified, it seems likely that Corte had experience of two distinct but overlapping fields of aspiration and ambition, the literary and the equestrian. The picture which he paints of them is far from pretty.

"[B]ecause I know how it has always been," he writes, "that there is no shortage of people who, wishing to show themselves to advantage by attacking someone else's work, or actions, will complain about this effort of mine." By way of bitter illustration he offers a laundry list of typical, and undeserved, criticisms:

> …these ones [are attacked] as being too spare and dry; the oration of that one for having more skin than flesh to it: those others for being too obscure and affected in their speech; and that other one too humble and base, while with respect to that other full of vials and bladders of exquisite words, inflated, bloated and overreaching, but then in this one the style is too languid and nerveless.[118]

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[117] "Noncurandomi di Toscannizarlo, per esser'io Lombardo, & per sapere che à Theophrasto avenne, che per voler parlar troppo Atheniese, fu scoperto da una semplice vecchiarella per non Atheniese." Corte, *Il cavallarizzo*, *2 1v.

[118] "Riprendendo questi per troppo digiuno, & secco, l'oratione di quell'altro per haver piu pelle che carne: quelli per essere nel dire troppo oscuro, & affettato, & quell'altro troppo humile, & basso, & rispetto di quell'alto pieno d ampolle [sic], e di vesiche di vocaboli esquisiti, troppo gonfio, tumido, & elevato: cosi come anco in questi los stile troppo languido, & senza nervo*."* Corte, *Il cavallarizzo*, *2 2r.

Not that it matters, he adds, for "the blind have nothing to do with judging colors."[119] Not only does Corte write in expectation of attack; he actually rehearses the anticipated criticisms and then frames a reply to them. The result is a curious, extended dialogue of criticism and rebuttal, with Corte providing both positions. Not surprisingly, his characterization suggests that the world of the riding master was highly competitive and acutely status-conscious.

> [S]peaking of myself, some too-nosy person may throw in against me, saying that I want to lay down precepts on riding and many related matters without ever having produced a horse of great fame, as have so many of the finest horseman both past and present. And that as a result I have never been sufficiently esteemed to merit service with a king or an emperor. And other things similarly showing these people to be more tenacious of my honor and usefulness than of their own, and more jealous of the wellbeing of others. They might say that I would do better to seek my fortune by some other route than that of horsemanship. [120]

It is worth recalling at this point that Corte is carrying on so in a formal address to his patron. In fact, despite his fulsome protestations to the Cardinal, he implicitly insults him, as he claims it was due to his "fatal destiny" that he entered a service less prestigious than that achieved by others. Corte attributes his position in life to fortune as much as merit, a way, it would seem, of justifying his disappointments. Another explanation is found in the inherent injustice of the world, with the "honors of rank" apportioned according to considerations other than merit.

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[119] "...i ciechi non hanno à giudicare de i colori..." Corte, *Il cavallarizzo*, *2 1v.

[120] "Ma per venire al particulare, & parlando di mi proprio, s'alcuno troppo nasuto mi si opponesse, dicendo ch'io voglio dar precetti del cavalcare, e di tant'altre cose insieme, non havendo però mai fatto cavallo alcuno di fama grande, come hanno fatto, per il tempo andato, & fanno al presente tanti cavalcatori, & cavallieri eccellentissimi. Et ch'io per ciò non sono mai stato in quella stima che habbi meritato servire à Re, & Imperatore. Et s'altri parimente dimostrandosi più teneri dell'honore, e dell'utile mio, & più gelosi della salute altrui, che della loro; dicessino ch'io farei meglio cercar per altra via dell'oro, e dell'argento, che col cavalcare..." Corte, *Il cavallarizzo*, *2 2r.

Here again, as with Grisone, we sense a current of resentment over the claims of birth.

Corte also reveals the achievement by which the riding master makes his reputation, that of training—"bringing to perfection"—a renowned horse. His own failure to have done so clearly rankles, spurring him to a defensive posture of repudiation, explanation and self-justification. He begins with a thinly-veiled attack:

> I would answer that many horses have the reputation of being good ones, which in truth are worth but little. In fact I could cite a number of examples without having to leave Rome, if it were not my habit to recoil from smearing the reputation of certain great agemts and horse masters.[121]

This is followed by an excuse, one which carries a tantalizing echo of the craftsman complaining about the inferior materials at his disposal, a variation on the theme sounded by Fiaschi.

> If I have not produced any celebrated horses, I will say first that there is little profit to be had from dwelling on it; and that if this were the case it might have been because I had no suitable subject for the purpose. As they say, the form will never take if the material isn't right for it.[122]

This, however, carrying as it does an implicit criticism of his patron's establishment, prompts an immediate qualification. The passage which follows appears to be an unusually personal one, as Corte speaks directly to his patron:

> …to have been your *cavallarizzo*; that you have always had fine blood stock and the most excellent horses, I would reply that my fate in this briefest of times, which showed me desirous of pleasing the world in

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[121] "Rispondo ancora, che molti cavalli han' fama d'esser boni, che poi per vero poco vagliono. Come di molti per essempio [sic] io potrei dire, senza partirmi di Roma, se non fusse mio costume di non voler macchiare la fama d'alcuni gran comperatori, & maestri di cavali*."* Corte, *Il cavallarizzo*, *2 2v.

[122] "S'io non ho fatto dunque così famosi cavalli, dirò prima che poco importa d'intorno al caso; e che se così fusse sarebbe stato per non hauer hauto soggetto atto à questo. Che come si dice la forma non s'introduce già mai se non in materia ben disposta*."* Corte, *Il cavallarizzo*, *2 2v.

> order to prove myself worthy that such a great and complete Prince should avail himself of my service, by the same token ruined me in an instant, by not even permitting me the time to go [to] and return from France in your service. This would be a very significant thing to anyone who knows me, without my dwelling on it even a little.[123]

"Something could also be said," Corte continues, "concerning the bearing of the horses, after what manner and in how short a time they were schooled."[124] He then offers an extended argument on behalf of the theoretician over the practitioner, and the intellectual over the manual. While apparently prompted by his acute sensitivity concerning a professional failure, this line of reasoning leads Corte to delineate the authority of the riding master in terms very different from those put forward by Grisone.

> [I]s it the architect who constructs the building, or the mason?...Or if someone had written most impressively on the art of warfare, strategy, or duelling, as have Mutio, Alciato and others, would it be necessary for him to have soldiered, duelled, and captained? And for those who believe that to be so, then would it be better to know how to do the thing, than to know how to command well? Certainly not, I would say, knowing very well that Vitruvius did not dirty his hands with mason's lime."

This brings him to his central argument:

> Therefore, without having built these great palaces, without having mixed medicines with my own hand, in sum without having produced any that they call celebrated horses, I have constructed this my

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[123] "Ne mi si opponga l'esser'io stato cavallarizzo vostro; che havete sempre hauto razza bona, & cavalli eccellentissimi, ch'io risponderei che la mia sorte in quel brevissimo tempo, che dimostrò volermi felicitare al mondo, col farmi degno che un si grande, e compito Prencipe si degnasse del mio servitio, nell'istesso mi ruinò in un subito, col non darmi pur spatio d'andare, & ritornare di Francia in suo servitio. Cosa notissima à ciascuno, che mi conosce, senza ch'io dimori pur tantillo à ragionarne." Corte, *Il cavallarizzo*, *2 2v.

[124] "Oltra che e si fa pure di che maniera habbi hauto i cavalli, in che guisa, & in che breve tempo i gl'habbi fatti." Corte, *Il cavallarizzo*, *2 2v.

> building, under whose roof, if I do not deceive myself, those also may by chance graciously lodge.[125]

Not surprisingly, Corte frames the horse in lyrical and celebratory terms. However, he provides a devotional note uniquely his own. Thus, in speaking of the spiritual and physical benefits of the horse, he sees in the animal, as willing servant, an analogue for the human relationship to God, and in the well-disposed horse—obedient, generous, and self-sacrificing—the reflection of a human spiritual ideal:

> And so I say that usefulness is that which serves either the soul, or the body, or both together. The horse fulfills all three of these. And while it may seem strange to many that the horse could serve the soul, since it cannot offer precepts, or documents, or teach any science around which the strength of our spirit and intellect turns, it is not, however, that the horse does not lead man to the contemplation of Almighty God; could we wish to turn our soul to its noble parts, and to his [illegible] services, and uses, which he brings us in this life, which further instruct and reproach us, if it were not that the horse serves us so well, and in so many ways, and with such pleasure, honor, and usefulness: as we ought to serve the highest Lord our God, who has created us, and him, as such noble beings, and to render him gratitude infinite and immortal for such a gift.[126]

Thus the horse becomes both guide and intermediary, in a fashion which invokes the divine. Throughout the chapter Corte speaks of the horse as the giver, and man as the beneficiary. This of course continues the motif of the good servant, which

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[125] "Posso dunque ben io senza haver fabricato questi gran palazzi, senza haver composto di man propria queste lor medicine, senza esser soldato havere scritto precetti da cavallieri, & in somma senza haver fatto questi, che lor dicano famosissimi cavalli, haver composto questa mia fabrica, sotto il cui tetto potranno per aventura agratiatamente albergare ancor loro, s'io non m'inganno." Corte, *Il cavallarizzo*, *2 3r.

[126] "Dico adunque, che l'utile è quello, che giova ò all'animo, ò al corpo, ò all'uno, & l'altro insieme. Le quai tutte tre parti adempie il cavallo. Percioche se bene potrà parer strano à molti, che il cavallo possi giovare all'animo, non potendo darne precetti, ne documenti, ne insegnar scientie alcune, d'intorno alle quali la forza dell'animo, & dell'intelletto nostro versa, non è però che il cavallo non induca l'homo nella contemplatione del sommo Iddio; se vorremo rivoltar l'animo alle sue nobili parti, & à i **nti servigi, & utili, che ci reca in questa vita, li quali altro non ci mostrano & sgridano, se non che si come il cavallo noi serve si bene, & in tante guise, & con tanto piacere, honor, & utile: doveriamo ancor noi servire al sommo Signo nostro Iddio, che ci ha creati, & egli, & noi così nobili, & rendergli gratie infinite, & immortali di tanto dono." Corte, *Il cavallarizzo*, 11–11v.

through its analogy to man serves to reinforce the principle of hierarchy and submission. By the same token, he argues, the horse makes of us better rulers ourselves, for

> more than any other creature [he] also leads us to a knowledge of the nature of other animals, domesticated, untamed, and wild, participating as he does in the domesticated nature, the docile, and the wild. In the same way he causes us to philosophize, penetrating nature and her complexion through many causes, such as are spoken in secret, making man very patient, and aware in governing him, and schooling him, needing, in order to govern and school him well, awareness, and temperance, and almost infinite patience."[127]

Thus Corte frames the horse as a devotional object, contemplation of which leads one to thoughts of "the goodness of God, and of his nature, and of all the animals, through which it clear that all men receive no little benefit, so much to the spirit as to the intellect."[128]

Elsewhere Corte offers another poetic fancy concerning the horse, in which he compares the coat of a multi-colored horse to music, which is "like a harmony, which is born from the bass, the alto, and the tenor, which are the different parts, and all three together make a gentle concert, and a sweet and perfect sound…"[129] For all its literary flourishes, however, the work remains a treatise on horsemanship, and Corte's approach necessarily remains grounded in empirical experience. Here too his style

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[127] "C'induce ancora il cavallo nella cognitione della natura de gl'altri animali, domestichi, & fieri, & selvaggi, più che altro animale; participand'esso della natura domestica, & mansueta, & della fiera ancora; come di sotto si dirà diffusamente. Ci fa similmente filosofare, penetrando nella natura, & complessione sua con tante ragioni, quante si diranno di sotto à i luoghi soi, fa etiando l'homo molto patiente, & accorto nel reggerlo, & manneggiarlo, bisognando à ben reggerlo, & maneggiarlo, accortezza, & temperanza, & patientia quasi infiniti." Corte, *Il cavallarizzo*, 11v.

[128] "Dandoci dunque il cavallo da speculare per mezzo suo nella bontà di Dio, & nella natura sua, & de gl'altri animali: parmi che chiaramente à tutti gli homini rechi utile non poco, quanto all'animo, & intelletto." Corte, *Il cavallarizzo*, 11v.

[129] "E così come l'armonia, che nasce dal basso, alto, & tenore, che sono parti diverse, & tutte tre insieme fanno un soave concento [sic], & dolce suono & perfetto…." Corte, *Il cavallarizzo*, 27r.

remains somewhat discursive. ("When caprioles are requested I think of a goat's leap. And really they're not very useful, but nonetheless they're quite fine to look at, and the *signori* like them."[130]) Beneath the froth, however, his approach is focused and authoritative, reflecting his ease with language as well as his skill in the manège ring.

With regard to correction, it is useful to compare Corte's approach with the resty horse. In the end, there is very little difference between his approach to correction and Grisone's. "If a horse is wayward, of little spirit, and therefore goes every which way," he states, "and willfully, in a fashion which shows that he doesn't want to move,

> not having an honest spirit, as he should, then he has the great and principal vice of being *restif*; and to the one [waywardness] and to the other [balkiness], one must use a powerful voice to chastize him, and much more with the resty horse: which is such that it requires all one's will to make him go forward, and very often he backs up; therefore, accompany these terrible cries with all other means of punishment that are suitable to this: that is to say, great blows with the stick on the body of the horse, and on his shoulders.[131]

Also like Grisone, Corte dislikes beating about the head, and especially on the ears, where one could deal too hard a blow, "and suddenly kill the horse."[132]

Thus Corte, like Grisone and Fiaschi, offers a study in contrasts; each, in the end, meets the horse's stubbornness with blows. In actual experience, of course, a

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[130] 'Si Dimandano capriole mi pens'io dal saltar del caprio. Et anco che non siano molt'utili, sono non dimeno di assai bella vista, & hanno del signori le." Corte, *Il cavallarizzo,* 73v.

[131] "Se'l Cavallo fosse ramingo, di poco animo, e perciò andasse con dui cori, & volontà, di sorte che dimostrasse di non volere andare, non havendo l'animo schietto, & sincero, con il conviene. ilche [sic] è principio, & inditio grande di restio; all'uno, & all'altro si deve usare castigo gagliardo di voce; & molto più al restio: il quale è quello, che ricusa dell tutto il voler andare innanzi: & ben spesso si ritira indietro; accompagnerete però le voci terribili, con tutti gl'altri castighi à questo convenienti: cioé le gran bachettate nel corpo, & spalle del cavallo." Corte, *Il cavallarizzo*, 100v.

[132] "Ma nella testa à me non piace che se li dia, & massime nel procomio, che è trall'un orecchia, e l'altra; perciò che ivi è una commissura, laqual percossa facilmente si potrebbe allargare, & far di subito morire il cavallo." Corte, *Il cavallarizzo*, 100v.

balky horse can be maddening, inflicting a terrible humiliation on its rider. And blows, at least, may be seen as an advance over the hedgehog. It is only with the next generation, however, that represented by the great riding masters of France, that one encounters a genuine and realistic understanding of the horse's psychology and behavior.

The dominance of the Italian or Neapolitan school of horsemanship, so pronounced throughout the sixteenth century, faded quickly during the early decades of the seventeenth. As swiftly, the French established an international preeminence in the art. It has been suggested that the Italian courts, their vitality ebbing, simply represented too small a setting for the potentialities of the nascent art. In order to thrive, school riding required a more grandiose and expansive stage on which to play.[133] As will be seen in the next chapter, that stage was provided by the resurgent royal courts of seventeenth-century Europe, most notably the nascent absolutist court of the reborn French monarchy

[133] W. Sidney Felton, *Masters of Equitation* (London : J.A. Allen, 1962), 27.

Chapter 4. THE FRENCH RIDING MASTERS, 1590-1650

By 1620, Italian dominance in the field of classical horsemanship had indisputably passed to the French. This particular art, viewed in the wake of the civil and religious wars, held considerable resonance for France's political nation. In performance it offered a powerful expression of governance, order and harmony, while its mastery spoke to the disciplines of rule and self-rule alike. Such relevance was not lost on its masters; the moral and educational analogies implicit in manège, little explored in the Italian works, are engaged directly and actively in the French. Through their treatises the great French riding masters of the period openly assert a connection between the schooling of horses and the larger project of restoring order, peace and security to the nation.

It is in this context that, after a brief overview in part 1, delineating major themes and developments, parts 2 and 3 will address the most important treatises of the period: *Le Cavalerice françois* of Salomon de la Broue, first published under that title in 1602, and Antoine de Pluvinel's *L'Instruction du Roy en l'exercice de monter à cheval*, first published in 1625.[1] A third work, *La pratique du cavalier* by Pluvinel's

[1] Salomon de la Broue, *Le Cavalerice françois* (Paris: Abel l'Angelier, 1602); Antoine de Pluvinel, *L'Instruction du Roy en l'exercice de monter à cheval* (Michel Nivel, 1625); and René de Menou, *La pratique du cavalier* (Paris: G. Loyson, 1650). The first two are both somewhat problematical. La Broue's treatise was originally published in 1593–4 by Hierosme Haultin of La Rochelle, under the title *Preceptes principaux que les bons cavalerisses doivent exactement observer en leurs Escoles, tant pour bien dresser les chevaux aux exercices de la guerre & de la carriere que pour les bien emboucher*, an obscure edition which remains extremely rare today. Pluvinel's *L'Instruction du Roy,* meanwhile, is often overshadowed by his *Maneige Royal*, published two years earlier. *Le Maneige Royal* remains the more famous work of the two. This, however, is due primarily to the originality of its format and its sumptuous engravings, both of which are duplicated in *L'Instruction du Roy*. The latter work, essentially an expanded version of its predecessor, is inferior in its visual elements but contains important textual addenda, and so is the version used for this study. Mennessier de la Lance provides a detailed print history for both authors; see his *Essai de bibliographie*, 2: 3–6 for La Broue, and 2: 325–34 for Pluvinel.

disciple René de Menou, provides a coda of sorts, dating as it does from the mid-seventeenth century when manège as a fashionable discipline was already passing its heyday.

Of particular interest here are the ideological and strategic possibilities offered in this setting, both by the discipline of manège itself and by the medium of the riding treatise, and what each author makes of them. Similarly, the questions asked of the Italian treatises, concerning strategies of self-authorization, issues of correction and punishment, and conceptualization of the animal, take on an added dimension here. A final issue of interest, particularly given the clear monarchist orientation of these court professionals, is that of discursive motifs and manipulation; to what extent and to what end does each invoke the discourses of discipline and service?

Part 1. Background and Overview

Salomon de la Broue (1552–1602) and Antoine de Pluvinel (1555–1620), famed in their own time, are recognized today as the founders of a progressive French school of classical horsemanship, known as the Versailles school from its close association to the court. The two men had much in common. As noted in chapter 3, both studied under the Italian master Gianbattista Pignatelli, and thus were closely associated with the Neapolitan school. Both spent their professional careers in service to the great, La Broue as *écuyer* to the Duke of Epernon and *écuyer ordinaire* of the royal *Grande Écurie* or Great Stables,[2] and Pluvinel as *grand écuyer* to Henry IV,

[2] Mennessier de la Lance, *Essai de bibliographie*, 2: 3.

gentleman of the chamber, and under-governor to the dauphin.[3] Both men thus lived and worked in the rarefied culture of royal court and great aristocracy, where, it seems, they were also rivals.

Nonetheless, though the Versailles school is closely associated with the great absolutist court spectacles of the seventeenth century, it would be misleading to consider the masters themselves within too narrow a chronological frame. La Broue's work first saw light in an obscure edition of 1593–4, while Pluvinel's treatise, first printed posthumously in 1623 under irregular circumstances, was published from manuscript writings of unknown date. He is believed to have been drafting educational projects as early as 1580, when still a young man.[4] Both works effectively reflect the closing decade of France's religious and civil wars. Pluvinel's work evinces a deep concern for educational reform, moral renovation, and political order, all urgent issues of the day. So too, in its own fashion, does that of La Broue. Thus each articulates, in its own fashion, a response to the questions raised by the specter of civil disorder.

In this respect, of course, they were hardly alone; the period witnessed an extensive debate concerning the problems plaguing France, along with proposals for reform. Historical investigations range around the central concept of a "crisis of the nobility," a complex dislocation attributed to a number of factors, among them the increasingly technical nature of warfare, that traditional arena of noble action and identity, the advance of commercial activity and influence, and the growth of civil

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[3] Mennessier de la Lance, *Essai de bibliographie*, 2: 327.

[4] Conrads, *Ritterakademien*, 50.

government, all of which threw competitive advantage to the literate and the professionally trained. Noble privilege, rank and influence, derived from a warrior role which had largely ceased to have currency, were threatened by the blurring of distinctions between noble and *roturier*, as educated non-nobles attained positions of wealth and influence, and adopted the trappings of noble rank. The civil and religious wars, attributed in large measure to the violent and rebellious impulses of a turbulent nobility, threw the problem into sharp relief, prompting widespread criticism and a reexamination of the character and definition of the estate. While distinctions of privilege and rank remained essentially unchallenged, questions of claim and access arose. Central to the debate was the question of how one justified noble privilege, whether by birth, character, or some combination of the two.

Viewed in this context, the concept of *vertu* acquired central importance. As a martial ideal, connoting qualities of courage, selfless loyalty and generosity of spirit, it had traditionally served as the defining attribute of the nobility. Once equated with merit, however, it offered a justification for access to the noble estate. The problem for the *noblesse d'épée* thus crystallized around the restoration of virtue, at a time when warfare, traditionally considered the nursery of *vertu*, was rapidly receding as a stage for its display.

The theme of the loss of *vertu* is repeatedly sounded in noble writings of the period. The central problem is characterized as one of moral decline, to which all others, political, economic and social, can be traced. A solution, following the classic humanist prescription, is identified in education**.** It was in the issue of education,

particularly noble education, that the political and moral strands of the prevailing discourse converged.

A particularly influential voice in this regard was that of François de la Noue, whose *Discours politiques et militaires,* first published in 1587, offered a searching analysis of the condition of the nobility, and a detailed response. Reflecting the humanist view of education as a source of moral development and social wellbeing, La Noue argued for the creation of special noble academies, public institutions which would offer a coherent program to replace existing makeshift arrangements. Such academies would mold students both morally and practically to fulfill a productive role in society.

The idea was not original to La Noue. As has been seen in chapter 2, Verona had ventured a comparable project in its *Accademia della Filotima*, established in 1565. Five years later Jean-Antoine de Baïf opened a school in Paris which, though it did not focus on military preparation, had a military component,[5] and in that same year Humphrey Gilbert proposed a school for nobles to Queen Elizabeth. Such ideas were in the air; as noted above, Pluvinel is believed to have been drafting educational proposals in 1580. Nonetheless, La Noue's ideas, forcefully presented in a popular work by an author who was himself a much-admired warrior noble in the old tradition, would prove particularly influential. That these influenced Pluvinel seems highly likely; in any event, the two men were clearly thinking along the same lines. La Noue's characterization of the dilemma, written in the 1580s, is thus useful in its perceptions.

[5] Hale, "Military Education of the Officer Class," 236.

Sounding a theme which will echo in the riding treatises, La Noue notes the decay of values and discipline among nobles, and the resultant emergence of violent and destructive tendencies; he urges education as a corrective, since "the young, if not polished by good customs, become rude and vicious."[6] Citing Plutarch as his authority, he sounds a number of Erasmian themes, including the necessity of early education and the negligence of the father who disregards his child's education, whether from neglect, miserliness, or "bastardized custom."[7] At stake is the welfare not only of the individual, but also that of the nation, since, as Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and others write, "failure to educate children well leads to the corruption of republics."[8]

In arguing his case, La Noue offers a striking picture of the educational options then available to the child of the nobility: service as a page in the household of a prince or noble, service in an infantry regiment, travel abroad usually to either Germany or Italy, or attendance at a university. While he acknowledges certain benefits in each, all carry hidden dangers: "If one isn't careful, one sometimes finds that, thinking to bring back honey, one brings venom instead."[9] The child page at court, poorly supervised, learns dissolute language, intemperate behavior, lying and

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[6] "…les jeunes gens, s'ils ne sont polis par bonne coustumes, devienent rudes & vicieux." François de la Noue, *Discours politiques et militaires du Seigneur de la Nouë* (Basel: François Forest, 1587), 131.

[7] La Noue, *Discours politiques*, 139.

[8] "…la negligeance à bien faire instituer les enfans rend les Republiques corrompues." La Noue, *Discours politiques*, 131.

[9] "Si on n'y prend garde, on trouve quelquefois qu'en pensant raporter du miel on raporte du fiel." La Noue, 140.

"a thousand small deceits."[10] A military apprenticeship, formerly served among other nobles in a company of archers or heavy cavalry, is now served in the company of debauched soldiers. Though many young nobles, fifteen, sixteeen and seventeen years old, still follow this course, they learn nothing of value in the infantry. "And what good is it to learn to shoot an arquebus?" La Noue challenges. "So he knows how to stand guard or do sentinel duty, swagger about and play the brave soldier?"[11] Beyond that the young nobles learn only vice, and develop "an unbridled license to beat, pillage and devour the people without compassion."[12]

Travel abroad also poses dangers; young Frenchmen going to Germany return coarsened by exposure to German manners and customs; their fathers are then compelled to send them somewhere else so they may be "*resubtilisés*," and so incur twice the expense and trouble. Italy, for all its beauty, offers the perils of sensual corruption, and all travel abroad poses physical danger; of the three hundred to four hundred young nobles who leave France each year, La Noue asserts, many never return, having died of illness or mishap. Of the others, he remarks that when they go, they take French money with them, but when they return they bring back nothing but bad habits.[13]

For the author, himself an educated man, attendance at a university offers the advantage of a well-regulated life. He agrees, moreover, with those who hold that

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[10] La Noue, *Discours politiques*, 141.

[11] "Et que sert-il d'aprendre à tirer un harquebouzade? Savoir que c'est de gardes, sentinelles, & escarmouches, & monstrer une brave contenance de soldat?" La Noue, *Discours politiques*, 142.

[12] "…une effrenée licence à batre, piller et manger le peuple sans compassion." La Noue, *Discours politiques*, 142.

[13] La Noue, *Discours politiques*, 143–44.

knowledge is "a great ornament to nobles," enabling them to better administer public affairs. Unfortunately, however, such benefits are often lost as fathers remove their sons from their studies too early.[14] Moreover, he believes these parents naïve in their hopes, since the great ecclesiastical positions go not to the most learned but to those in favor with cardinals or bishops, or to the favorites of the king, and the offices of justice are awarded on the basis of money, not merit.[15] A last alternative, study at home under the guidance of a tutor, is barred to all but the wealthy. For the nobles who must provide for four or five children on an income of seven to eight hundred livres, there is little choice but to send the child to serve as a page in a great house already overrun with them.[16]

La Noue's solution is institutional in nature, and lies in the establishment of royal schools specifically for the education of young nobles aged fifteen through nineteen. The program, incorporating elements of a classical education, represents a marked departure from older humanist models. As in the Venetian academies—most of which were opened in the first decade of the seventeenth century, and thus possibly indebted to La Noue's model—the emphasis shifts pointedly from intellectual endeavor to a pragmatic program of physical training and instruction in subjects applicable to a career in service to the state.

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[14] This observation is supported by the findings of Laurence Brockliss concerning noble attendance at the University of Paris in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Brockliss finds a noble representation of 10–12% among students in the Faculty of Arts, with sons of the *noblesse de robe* predictably predominant. The proportion of nobles drops sharply among graduates of the higher faculties, with virtually none found in the Faculty of Medicine. Brockliss cautions against assuming similar patterns in the provincial universities, however. Laurence Brockliss, "Patterns of Attendance at the University of Paris, 1400-1800," *Les Universités européenes du XVIe siècle*, eds. Dominque Julia, Jacques Revel and Roger Chartier, (Paris : Editions de l'Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales, 1986–89), 2: 504.

[15] La Noue, *Discours politiques*, 145.

[16] La Noue, *Discours politiques*, 141.

In a program that may be taken as a virtual blueprint, students were to read the best of the ancient authors, focusing on the moral virtues associated with warfare; history, both ancient and modern, would be particularly emphasized. In addition, instruction would be provided in mathematics, geography, vernacular languages and fortification, horsemanship and tilting at rings, the use of arms and vaulting. Dancing would be included to teach the young noble how to compose and conduct himself in public, and music and painting as beneficial activities for leisure hours which might otherwise be given over to vice. Thus the model of the military figure, the courageous man of action, remained the determinative ideal, but one now tempered by the moderating influence of courtly attainments.

This influence worked at more than one level. As has been seen, dancing and music in the Renaissance court were coded activities, whose philosophical premises translated into an array of personal and political meanings. Fiaschi's cultivation of the balletic qualities of manège integrated horsemanship into this system of signification. Recent work on the royal *ballets de cour* and the related phenomenon of horse ballets in sixteenth-century France has shown the extent to which such rigorously patterned exercises served as, and were intended to be, templates of civility and restraint. More complex meanings resided in the dynamic, shifting patterns of the dances themselves, most particularly the labyrinth dances, which, devised from classical antecedents, sported with the terrors of the irrational.

Performed on horseback as well as on foot, labyrinth dances were popular in the late Valois court and carried within them a deeply embedded psychological dynamic. According to Thomas M. Greene, who has closely studied them, this

dynamic is captured in the characteristic Meander effect, a pattern of repeated reversals which frustrate expectations of a rational linearity, "thus rendering explicitly a half-conscious fear that human experience is indeed an entanglement of lines, of progressions, of sequences, we had been led to expect to remain distinct."[17] That fear finds its visual expression in the labyrinth, a pervasive Indo-European motif which offers two variants: unicursal designs, which contain "no blind alleys or choices and always lead through manifold windings from an entrance inside and then out again,"[18] and the frightening multicursal design, with its blind alleys and abrupt dead ends. "The labyrinth dance," writes Greene, "creates the illusion of a multicursal design but is actually unicursal. It is a joyful, celebratory dance, representing an exuberant triumph over confusion."[19]

The so-called *Troia,* or Trojan Ride, drawn from the Aeneid, was an example of a labyrinth dance performed on horseback, and the kind of horsemanship for which a royal *écuyer* was in large measure responsible. Jean Dorat, the chronicler of once such spectacle, cites the passage from Virgil (5.749-69) which inspired it:

> The column split apart
> As files in the three squadrons all in line
> Turned away, cantering left and right; recalled,
> They wheeled and dipped their lances for a charge.
> They entered then on parades and counter-parades,
> The two detachments, matched in the arena,
> Winding in and out of one another,
> And whipped into sham cavalry skirmishes

[17] Greene, "Labyrinth Dances," 1420.

[18] Greene, "Labyrinth Dances," 1415. According to Greene, before the sixteenth century virtually all maze designs, whether found on Etruscan pitchers, in Roman mosaics or in the design on cathedral floors, were unicursal. Apart from French garden mazes called *dédales*, only literary accounts featured the multicursal design.

[19] Greene, "Labyrinth Dances," 1419.

> By baring backs in flight, then whirling round
> With leveled points, then patching up a truce
> And riding side by side.

The complex maneuver then collapses on itself in purposeful seeming-disorder:

> So intricate
> In ancient times on mountainous Crete they say
> The Labyrinth between walls in the dark,
> Ran criss-cross a bewildering thousand ways
> Devised by guile, a maze insoluble,
> Breaking down every clue to the way out.
> So intricate the drill of Trojan boys
> Who wove the patterns of their pacing horses,
> Figured, in sport, retreats, and skirmishes—
> Like dolphins in the drenching sea, Carpathian
> Or Libyan, that shear through waves in play.[20]

The military element is also significant. As Kate van Orden has strikingly demonstrated, such performances were not merely for show.[21] They also played a crucial role in cultivating expertise in—and acceptance of—the new tactics and techniques available to cavalry. These entailed fighting in well-trained, fast-moving units called squadrons, which, as demonstrated by the successes of the innovative Henry of Navarre, held a marked advantage over the traditional "hedge of lances" of heavy horse.[22] The latter, a last bastion of chivalric warfare, celebrated individual heroism; the former, if sufficiently cohesive and skilled, could prove devastatingly mobile in battle, performing variations on the complex maneuvers of the *Troia*.

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[20] Greene, "Labyrinth Dances," 1408. The particular circumstances surrounding this performance are also of interest. The guests of honor were a Polish delegation, in Paris to offer their kingdom's crown to Henry, Duke of Anjou. Antoine de Pluvinel, still a very young man, would be with the duke when he left for Poland.

[21] van Orden, *Music, Discipline, and Arms*, 249–67.

[22] See Ronald S. Love, "All the King's Horsemen: The Equestrian Army of Henry IV," *Sixteenth-Century Journal* 22.3 (1991): 510–33.

Thus the external uses of a highly-disciplined horsemanship would seek the cultivation of a comparable inner discipline and balance, even as the intricate faux-chaos of the labyrinth dance would surrender to a cooler absolutist geometry, in horse ballets which Pluvinel himself would design.[23] As will be seen, manège figures themselves would achieve a singular geometric rigor in the hands of the French, arguably different from Fiaschi's musical *giustezza* in quality as well as degree. In a clear Foucauldian moment, one finds this geometric precision used to discipline and fix both the human body and the equine in space. Here again the discourse invokes morality as well as power, as moral qualities (or the lack thereof) are read in the disposition and comportment of the body.[24] This idea, related to dance and already articulated in Castiglione, is given ample development in the courtesy literature of the period. However, in the French riding treatises it comes to encompass the whole of the *manège*, meaning here the school itself; the equestrian activity within is closely ordered, extending to behavior, dress, speech and gesture.

As so often in the past, we find a semiotic correspondence between horses and humans, which in the French context is often overt and even presumed. This development marks a decisive shift in the discourse. For the first time the rider becomes an object of concern, to be studied, assessed, and schooled in terms not unlike those formerly reserved for his mount. On one level, this represents a moral education, whereby the successful governance of the horse, again evoking the Mirror

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[23] van Orden, *Music, Discipline, and Arms*, 271–73.

[24] See Georges Vigarello, "The Upward Training of the Body from the Age of Chivalry to Courtly Civility," in *Zone 4: Fragments for a History of the Human Body. Part Two*, eds. Michel Feher, Ramona Nadaff and Nadia Tazi (New York: Urzone, Inc., 1989), 148–199; van Orden, *Music, Discipline, and Arms*, 265.

for Princes tradition, requires the cultivation of prudence, wisdom and moderation. This in turn, however, is made manifest through the achievement of a perfect physical balance and harmony. Following the sense of the French verb *dresser,* the rider's body, no less than that of the horse, is to be disciplined and ordered.

Both treatises cultivate this ideal, as both sound a note of reform and seek to cultivate virtue through education. Yet, for all their underlying similarities, they present striking differences, with each reflecting a distinctive authorial voice, approach and strategy. Pluvinel's treatise, the enormously successful *L'Instruction du Roy en l'exercice de monter à cheval,* has the opaque and deceptive simplicity of a performance. In reality, very little about this work is straightforward, from its title—it was initially published as *Le Maneige Royal*—to the events surrounding its publication, to questions of authorship. Such circumstantial tangles are fitting, for the work itself, in its structure and presentation, has something of a ludic character, like a rhetorical game.

La Broue's work, on the other hand, best known as *Le Cavalerice françois*, proceeds from the Italian model. Comprising three books replete with finding aids, marginal annotations, diagrams and illustrations, it is magisterial in its scope and presentation. La Broue's standards, values, and outlook are, in broad terms, wholly consonant with absolutism. Through language and imagery he places the courtly practice of horsemanship firmly within a hierarchical cosmos, rendering religious, political and social analogies natural. At the same time, however, with striking candor, he sheds light on the tensions inherent in the office of court *écuyer,* a figure at once master and servant—tensions complicated by his own investment in the

equestrian symbolism of noble service. While not sufficiently distanced to reconcile the inherent contradictions and tensions of his position, he does reveal their existence. By his own admission a man little given to literary flourishes, La Broue emerges in the treatise as a candid, engaging, and even poignant presence.

Part 2. Salomon de la Broue

Salomon de la Broue, though overshadowed by the more innovative and influential Pluvinel, is credited with effecting the transplantation of school riding to French soil. His was a conscious effort, undertaken in response to the lagging state of native horsemanship. This, according to La Broue, was not due to any want of courage, aptitude or desire, but rather to a scarcity of quality horses, and thus of schools, and to a certain "presumption and nonchalance" among France's young nobles, who, while flocking to Italy to study horsemanship, lacked the patience and application necessary to master it.[25] His was the first treatise written by a Frenchman, a fact which its new title, *Le Cavalerice françois*, impressed on the reading public.[26]

Though the particulars of Salomon de la Broue's family background remain unknown, his early life and education suggest that he was of gentle birth. A native of

[25] "Car les haras & nobles races des chevaux ne sont pas communes en France comme on les trouve aux autres nations, ny par consequent les bonnes escoles. C'est pourquoy tant de jeunesse Françoise s'achemine avec beaucoup de fraiz en Italie pour apprendre à monter à cheval. Mais la plupart, & quasi tous ceux qui font ce voyage à ceste intention, sont de si bonnes maisons, qu'ils n'en désirent sçavoir que pour leur usage, & pour passer leur temps: ou, parlant plus librement, c'est qu'il n'y en a pas eu beaucoup, qui exempts de présomption ou de nonchalance, ay pu longuement perseverer en la penible & necessaire patience, qui les eut peu rendre bons maistres." La Broue, *Le Cavalerice françois* (Paris: Abel l'Angelier, 1610), 1.2. http://www.vet-lyon.fr/bib/fondsancien/ouvonline/de_la_broue.htm#11 (accessed on March 25, 2006). Unless otherwise indicated, all references cited are from this digitalized edition.

[26] Mennessier de la Lance, *Essai de bibliographie,* 2.4.

Gascony, born in 1552, he entered service as a page in the house of the Counts of Aubijoux, where, he says, he served "on campaign, at the court and in the hunting field." While he spent some time on horseback, however, by his own account he more often gave himself over to "an infinity of debauches and tomfoolery, of the sort typically enjoyed by the crack-brained and licentious youths who wear the page's livery."[27] Thereafter he took up arms, wishing to play his part in the civil wars, and then, during a period of peace, decided to travel abroad. At the age of thirty he found himself in Italy, where he undertook to perfect his skills in "those violent and altogether honest exercises which I had always loved greatly, preferring them to *belles lettres,* and I daresay to anything else in the world."[28] Journeying to Naples, he became a student and friend of the famed Giambattista Pignatelli, who would likewise teach his countryman Antoine de Pluvinel. Thereafter La Broue served as *Grand Écuyer* to the duc d'Epernon and as a royal *écuyer ordinaire*, under the supervision of his friend Saint-Antoine. He died in 1602.

At some point in the early 1590s, having fallen on hard times and suffering a long illness, he wrote his treatise, reconstructing a previous effort lost in manuscript. The first of its three books was published in 1593 by Hierosme Haultin of La Rochelle, under the title *Preceptes principaux que les bons cavalerisses doivent exactement observer en leurs Escoles, tant pour bien dresser les chevaux aux*

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[27] "…ou cette premiere saison de ma vie a esté occupee à le suivre aux armees, à la cour, à la chasse, & quelquefois à l'exercice de monter à cheval, mais plus souvent à une infinité de desbauches & singeries, ausquelles la jeunesse follastre & licentieuse portant l'habit de page se plaisit d'ordinaire." La Broue, *Le Cavalerice françois*, 1.2.

[28] "...poursuivant la perfection de plusieurs exercices violents, & toutesfois honestes, lesquels j'ay si extremement aymez, que je les ay preferez non seulement aux bonnes lettres, mais j'oseray dire à toutes les choses du monde." La Broue, *Le Cavalerice françois*, 1.2.

exercises de la guerre & de la carriere que pour les bien emboucher. The circumstances surrounding the book's publication serve as a reminder of the unsettled nature of the times, for while it was in print La Broue was arrested and imprisoned for a time, along with his close friend and fellow riding master, Saint-Antoine, "without either knowing the crime or the accuser."[29] The second and third books were published in 1593 and 1594 respectively, by the same printer.[30] As noted above, the second edition was published in Paris in 1602, the year of La Broue's death, under its new title *Le Cavalerice françois*, with a third edition appearing in 1610 and subsequent impressions in 1612, 1613, 1620 and 1628, all from the Parisian printer Abel L'Angelier. A fourth edition, very similar to the others, was printed in 1616 by Charles du Mesnil. Conrads cites a 1646 edition not included in Mennessier de la Lance or Huzard.[31]

All of the editions were printed in folio. The typographical features of the edition examined for this paper, that of the 1610 third edition, are representative of all issues after 1593–4.[32] At once handsome and comprehensive, the work seems directed primarily to an aristocratic audience, and secondarily to a merely prosperous one. The three books were evidently printed for alternative sale as independent

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[29] "…ce qui m'a le plus troublé et du tout empesché est la calomnie et l'emprisonnement que j'ay souffert à la Rochelle, durant l'impression du premier livre de cest oeuvre, avec le sieur de Sainct-Anthoine, mon bon amy, sans que luy n'y moy en ayons peu sçavoir le crime, n'y l'accusateur." From La Broue's *Avertissement au lecteur,* appended to the 1593–4 edition but omitted from subsequent ones. Mennessier de la Lance, *Essai de bibliographie*, 2: 3 and 3n1.

[30] Only two copies are known to have survived. The first, described by Mennessier de la Lance as "superb," is in the Bibliothèque nationale*;* the second is in the Bibliothèque de Troyes. Mennessier de la Lance, *Essai de bibliographie*, 2: 4 and 4n1.

[31] Conrads, *Ritterakademian,* 46.

[32] Mennessier de la Lance, *Essai de bibliographie*, 2: 5.

volumes, with each accorded its own title page, dedications and pagination. The principal title page, that of the first book, depicts horses grouped around a cartouche bearing the title itself, the author's name and titles, and a brief summary of each book's contents. The cartouche is framed by handsomely-modeled, bridled horses on classical pedestals, with a grouping of arms and armor before each. Above the cartouche stretches a fully-realized landscape, in which another horse is shown galloping free, following the artistic conventions of the period. The second and third books feature less elaborate title pages which highlight the printer.

The presentation aspects of the work are restrained in character. The first book is dedicated to the Duc d'Epernon, the second to the Duc de Montmorency, and the third to the Baron de Bellegarde, the last being *Grand Écuyer* of France. The dedications are brief, no more than a page in length, and each followed by a selection of laudatory sonnets and verses. The number of these poems suggests to Conrads that La Broue had a thriving riding academy; a likely candidate is one known to have existed in Brouage, near La Rochelle where the treatise was printed.[33] Each of the three books is dedicated to a great noble or influential figure at court: the first, to the Duc d'Epernon; the second to the Duke de Montmorency, father of one of La Broue's most eminent pupils, recently deceased; and the third, to the Baron de Bellegarde, *Grand Écuyer* of France. While the second dedication praises the memory of the dead youth, the first and third speak openly of the viscissitudes of the riding master's life, as La Broue makes reference to his ill health and reduced means, describing himself

[33] Conrads, *Ritterakademien,* 46.

in the first as "deprived of health, old, and virtually useless in your service."[34] Conrads notes that the appeal to Bellegarde apparently worked, as thereafter we find La Broue employed as *Écuyer* of the Great Stable.[35]

La Broue's treatise was the first written by a Frenchman, a provenance proudly asserted in its new title, *Le Cavalerice françois.* The choice of the word *cavalerice* was governed also by other considerations, as we learn from La Broue's glossary, itself an innovation:

> First there is the word *Cavalerice,* which properly speaking signifies a Gentleman who is expert in the art of training horses for war and for the career: that being the art which the Italians also call the art of *Cavalerice*. If the word *écuyer* did not signify something in French other than a good horseman, I would have used it: but as it may be used in several other senses, I found it more sensible to use the foreign word, having also been advised to do so by friends well versed in the art.[36]

As noted above, the books, while sold together under a single title, were clearly designed for separate sale as well. Many editions also include a self-contained twenty-two-page work, also by La Broue, entitled *Sur le debvoir de l'escuyer de Grande Escurie,* or, "On the Duties of the *Écuyer* of the Great Stable."

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[34] "Pour moy, je ne tairay jamais les biens & faveurs qu'il vous a pleu me departir mesmes depuis que vous m'avez veu privé de santé, vieux & presque inutile à vostre service…" appears in the dedication to book 1. In a similar vein, we find the following in the dedication to book 3: "…j'ay beaucoup travaillé à plusieurs exercices qui me sembloient propres à l'homme bien né, & principalement à celuy de la carriere: A quoy je n'ay pas eu moins d'inclination, qu'aux autres occupations, que j'ay plus affectionnees que les biens de fortune, & que ma santé: comme il paroist par le peu de moyens que j'ay acquis, & en l'indisposition de ma personne, qui ne me permet plus de monstrer par effect le profit que me curiosité, & mes peines extremes m'avoient apporté." La Broue, *Le Cavalerice françois*, dedications to books 1 and 3.

[35] Conrads, *Ritterakademien,* 46.

[36] "Premierement donc Cavalerice, est à dire proprement Chevalier bien entendu, & expert en l'art de bien dresser les chevaux de combat, & de carriere: lequel art les Italiens nomment aussi l'art du Cavalerice. Si le mot d'escuyer ne signifioit autre chose en France, que de bon homme de cheval, je m'en fusse servy: mais d'autant qu'il se peut adapter à plusieurs autres significations j'ay trouvé plus expedient d'user le mot estranger, ayant aussi eu l'advis de quelques uns de mes amis fort suffisans en cest art." La Broue, *Le Cavalerice françois*, 1.10.

The first book is by far the longest, with seventy-five chapters dealing with a range of topics, among them specifics of equipage, bitting, and behavior. Here La Broue also provides advice on such subjects as dealing with a young horse, achieving a correct seat, and training a horse for war. The latter chapters provide rules for instruction in a wide range of airs, both on and above the ground.

The second book continues in this vein, providing detailed instructions for the schooling in and performance of a range of manège figures. As with Fiaschi, a separate chapter is devoted to each, complete with one or more diagrams. As will be seen, however, La Broue's approach represents a significant departure from that of the Italian in terms of both approach and conceptualization. The third book returns to the subject of bits and bitting, here handled in a more systematic fashion.

The work as a whole is informed by La Broue's particular principles and preoccupations, which are articulated in each preface and reiterated throughout. The ideological bases of his thinking are suggested in the opening sentences of the interposed tract, "On the Duties of the *Écuyer* of the Great Stable." In terms reminiscent of the Mirror for Princes tradition, La Broue states that princes and great nobles are to be guided by "honor and prudence, even in the economy of their houses, and the love and fear of God," thus ensuring that "justice, respect, peace and fidelity" will govern relations among their dependents.[37] This moral husbandry is crucial:

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[37] "D'autant que les actions communes des plus grands Princes ou Seigneurs sont les plus ésclairées, elles doibvent estre tousjours sainctement & genereusement conceuës, & puis guidees par l'honneur & la preud'hommie: & mesmes en l'economie de leurs maisons, à l'amour & la crainte de Dieu, & par consequent la justice, le respect, la paix, & la fidelité y doibvent regner avec tant de recommendation & d'authorité entre leurs domestiques, que l'exemple en foit comme une escole de vertu." La Broue, *Le Cavalerice françois*, "Avis du Sieur de la Broue sur le debvoir de l'escuyer de grande escuyrie," †1r.

> [A]lways must the prudence of the master cultivate and maintain the measure of this divine harmony: for without the care and foresight of such conduct, without doubt presumption assisted by an infinite number of immoderate desires would lose not a whit of time: Thus all of a sudden they attack, and violating the most hallowed places they throw the door open to tyranny, and soon after enters a host of other most detestable vices, which give birth to disorders.[38]

Here, in a scene reminiscent of *Psychomachia,* one finds articulated the terms of the dominant discourse which informs La Broue's work, that of the "school of virtue," by which the master, through his temperate virtues, fosters harmony and order among those in his charge, and so cultivates virtues among them. Otherwise, human weaknesses—and here La Broue gives pride of place to his favorite, that of presumption—will lead to tyranny, to yet more vices, and ultimately, to anarchy. Thus, because the stakes are so high, it is crucial that the master be temperate and wise, and the servant obedient and appreciative. This theme sounds throughout the treatise.

It is found first in the tract "On the Duties of the *Écuyer*…," in which La Broue discusses in extended detail the particulars of conduct, instruction and duties of pages in the service of the king's Great Stable—a responsibility of the *écuyer* and one which La Broue holds to be among his highest and most stringent obligations. This one, he explains, is born of conscience as well as duty:

> For as a rule these youths are of noble birth, and without doubt their parents give them to princes and seigneurs, hoping that under the name and rank of Page they will learn honor and civility so well that, upon

[38] "Mais toujours la prudence du maistre doit accorder & tenir la mesure de ceste divine harmonie: Car manquant le soing & la prevoyance de telle conduite, sans doubte la presomption assistee d'un nombre infiny de desirs desmesurez n'en pert point le temps: Ains soudain se mesle, & donnant esfrontément jusqu'aux lieux plus reservé fait telle entrée à la tyrannie, que bien tost apres elle establist plusieurs autres vices detestables, qui engendrent des desordres… ." La Broue, *Le Cavalerice françois*, "Avis du Sieur de la Broue sur le debvoir de l'escuyer de grande escuyrie," †1r.

> becoming men, they will demonstrate a great difference between their actions and those of an infinity of others who were less virtuously raised…[39]

He reserves criticism for those great houses whose masters show little concern for, or even awareness of, the quality of instruction given their pages. As a result, he writes, "these children will have lost or badly spent those years most suited to shaping them and setting them on the path of virtue."[40] In this regard La Broue stresses an attentive adherence to rules, with words such as care, diligence, and attention stressed again and again. Order appears as a governing principle, at once reflection and guarantor of moral rectitude.

This emphasis on the crucial necessity of adhering to rules, of the virtues of diligence and patience, similarly informs La Broue's advice to the horseman. His seeming rigidity, however, is tempered by a striking attention to the individual. The instructor should know and heed the character, natural talents, strengths and weaknesses of the individual student; should adapt his pace and approach accordingly, and should use reason, patience and diligence to achieve his desired goals. La Broue applies this humanistic approach with great care and devotion to the training of horses.

One finds comparable injunctions in Grisone, and if the Italian's methods are often at odds with his precepts, and his estimates of equine intelligence too generous,

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[39] "Car d'ordinaire ceste jeunesse est issuë de noble extraction, & sans doubte leurs parens les donnent aux Princes & Seigneurs, esperans que sous le nom & rang de Page ils apprenent si bien l'honneur & la civilité, qu'estans devenus hommes ils monstrent aussi une grande difference de leurs actions à celle d'une infinité d'autres, qui auront esté moins vertueusement nourris…" La Broue, *Le Cavalerice françois*, "Discours sur le debvoir," 18.

[40] "…où ces enfans auront perdus, ou mal employé l'aage & le temps plus propre à les disposer & acheminer à la vertu." La Broue, *Le Cavalerice françois*, "Discours sur le debvoir," 18.

he nonetheless represents a major advance in his concern that the horse come to an action through understanding rather than sheer coercion. La Broue's approach, while having similar aims, is founded on a much more realistic appreciation of the horse's nature and capacities than that encountered in Grisone or among the more literary of the equestrian writers. Gone are the weeping, suicidal horses, the conceit of leonine courage or claims of a preternatural intelligence. La Broue's first dictum is this: that "the horse is by nature generally less clever than nervous, more timid than courageous, more choleric than malicious; that he has a good deal of apprehension and little memory, even as he is perceptive and vigorous…"[41] This clear-eyed understanding affects both method and expectations. Thus, La Broue counsels, should the horse be seen to perform something he has learned, and to do it well and in its correct order,

> it is more from the fear of the good punishments which he has learned to expect, or from the long habit of good rules well practiced, and reiterated an infinite number of times, at the right time and occasion, than from his remembering the order of the lessons which one has given him….[42]

This more rational assessment of equine capacities and temperament also leads to an approach to problem horses that can be aptly described as remedial. One may take, for example, La Broue's chapter "*Des jeunes chevaux retifs,*" "On Young

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[41] "I]l est necessaire que le Cavalerice sçache premierement que le cheval est de la nature generalement moins adroit que nerveux, plus timide que courageux, plus colere que mal faisant, qu'il a beaucoup d'apprehension & peu de memoire, mesmes tant plus il est sensible & vigoureux…." La Broue, *Le Cavalerice françois*, 2.8.

[42] "…que si aucunesfois on luy voit faire des choses apprinses, ausquelles il observe plusieurs actions & mouvemens d'obeissance, de justesse & d'esgalité, c'est plus par la crainte des bons chastimens, qu'il a accoustumé de recevoir, ou par la longue habitude des bonnes reigles bien pratiquées, & refaites une infinite de fois, en leur vray temps & occasions que pour se bien souvenir de l'ordre des leçons qu'on luy a donné….." La Broue, *Le Cavalerice françois*, 2.8.

Horses that are Nappy"[43] —the same fault which, in a considerably older horse, had a royal Neapolitan *scozzone* tying a hedgehog under the animal's tail to make it go forward. La Broue, by contrast, approaches the problem in this way:

> One sees few young and newly broken horses which do not sometimes stop or back up, or commit some other foolishness, rather than moving forward in accordance with the action and will of their rider. The first cause of this disobedience proceeds from the habit which they have acquired since birth of following their mothers, and of being at liberty in the pasture, typically in the company of several mares and foals…And as proof that young, innocent horses often cause difficulties in going where the *Cavalcadour* wants them to, because of the loss of this first and accustomed liberty, and from their astonishment in feeling themselves persecuted, constrained, and separated from their first and natural company; it is that the most timid are those which most often commit such faults…[44]

Having identified the innocent nature of the problem, La Broue proposes a simple solution, likewise born of his knowledge of equine behavior: "[S]hould they persist in not wanting to leave the place, or in turning back to it, whatever one threatens them with, if one has another horse either walk ahead of them or beside them, most will leave and voluntarily follow the horse that has taken the lead."[45] Should this fail, he offers another stratagem, one involving the use of an assistant on foot, loud menacing voices and a single rap on the rump with the crop—the whole

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[43] La Broue, *Le Cavalerice françois*, 1.53–54.

[44] "On void [sic] peu de chevaux fort jeunes & nouveaux apprentis que quelquefois au lieu d'aller en avant, selon l'action & le vouloir du Chevalier, ne s'arrestent ou reculent, ou ne facent quelque autre sottise. La premiere cause de ceste desobéissance procede de l'habitude qu'ils ont prins dés leur naissance à suyvre leurs meres, & d'estre un liberté dans le haras, & ordinairement en compagnie de plusiers juments & poulains….Et pour voir une preuve assez pertinente que les chevaux jeunes & innocens font souvent ces difficultez de passer là ou le Cavalcadour les veut pousser, à cause de ceste premiere & accoustumee liberté perdue, & pour estre estonnez se sentans persecutez, contraints, & separez de leur premiere & naturelle compagnie; c'est que les plus timides sont ceux qui font le plus souvent telles fautes…" La Broue, *Le Cavalerice françois*, 1.53.

[45] "…& que lors qu'ils perseverent, quelque mal qu'on leur face, à ne vouloir partir d'un lieu, ou à reculer, si on leur fait passer un autre cheval devant ou à costé, la pluspart partiront de ce lieu, & suyvront volontairement ce cheval qui passera le premier." La Broue, *Le Cavalerice françois*, 1.53.

designed to distract the horse rather than hurt it, permitting the rider to use the stick without being identified as the source of the blow and thus encouraging forward movement rather than more resistance.[46] Throughout, La Broue underscores the importance of patience and gentleness in such circumstances, to preserve, "insofar as possible, the natural courage and joyousness of the young horse."[47] Still, he concedes, one occasionally encounters an animal, young or old, which simply has this fault by nature; being of a temperament that is dry and hot, its natural propensity toward malice and cowardice may bind it to this fault. One should not be surprised to have trouble which such horses, which, given their temperament, will be defective all their lives, whatever one may do.[48]

It is in keeping with this expectation that La Broue returns to the subject in a later chapter, in which he acknowledges and permits the use of more violent means, as long as they represent a last resort, are used rationally and judiciously, and are only used against an animal which is nappy through natural malignity, and not because it is young and timid, or has been too much spurred or beaten about the head. "With regard to such ill-born horses," he says, "that always present such base and disloyal behavior to the good horseman, I don't discard them, but I do try to make them see reason through great cries, and blows of the spurs and stick…perservering until they

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[46] La Broue, *Le Cavalerice françois*, 1.53.

[47] "…le Cavalcadour doit user d'un grande douceur & patiences, principalement au nouveaux remedes, lequel doivent estre accortement faicts, afin de conserver, tant qu'il sera possible, le courage naturel & l'allegresse du jeune cheval." La Broue, *Le Cavalerice françois*, 1.54.

[48] "Toutesfois il faut considerer que si le cheval, soit jeuve [sic] ou vieux, est de sa naturelle humeur aduste & colere, la malice & la poltronnerie se pourron* [illegible letter] facilement joindre à cette premier mauvaise & susdite habitude….Car communément les chevaux de ceste temperature sont vitieux toute leur vie de defaict, ou de volonté, quoy que l'on puisse faire." La Broue, *Le Cavalerice françois*, 1.54.

are of a mind to obey."[49] And here La Broue admits to having had recourse to a number of extreme remedies

> which I used in earlier times to get nappy horses to move forward, be it by fire or water, applied in diverse ways to the most sensitive parts of the horse's body or members, and even by means of various animals or other things which one may attach to the tail or beneath it, together with certain spurs devised by a superfluity of enthusiasm, which never once work. But because I am an enemy of these little secrets invented for want of art, I hand the discussion of them and their practice back to those who heed them more than I do.[50]

In a sense, this is characteristic of La Broue, who frequently acknowledges his Italian predecessors even as he critiques certain of their assumptions and practices. He has high praise for Pignatelli, of course, as also for the Italian master's nephew, Horace de la Mare; both were close friends as well as colleagues. Others he appears to know primarily from their writings, as he speaks of "that which the Seigneurs J-B Ferraro, Federigo Grisone, Claudio Corte & certain others have explained in their books by a great number of fine and lucid reasons, and in such a learned way, that the most proficient of our profession who think to surpass them put themselves in danger of being left in the dust with their nose to the road."[51] Nonetheless, La Broue counsels against too passive an acceptance of their assertions:

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[49] "Or pour le regard de ces chevaux si mal nais, toutes le fois qu'il feront ces traicts villains & desloyaux au bon Cavalerice, je ne le dispense pas seulement, mais je le prie d'en avoir la raison, à grands cris, & coups d'esperon & de nerf…perserverant jusques à ce qu'ils se seront mis en devoir d'obeyr." La Broue, *Le Cavalerice françois,* 1.63.

[50] "…une grande quantité de remedes, que j'ay pratiquez autrefois pour chasser en avant les chevaux retifs, soit par le feu ou l'eau, appliquez en diverses façons, & aux parties plus sensibles, qui soyent au corsage & aux membres du cheval, & mesmes par le moyen de quelques animaux, & autre choses qu'on luy peut attacher à la queuë, ou mettre dessous icelle: ensemble de certains esperons faits par curiosité superfluitieuse, qui reusissent aucunefois. Mais parce que je suis ennemy des ces petits secrets inventez à faute d'art, j'en remets le discours & la pratique à ceux qui s'arrestent plus que moy." La Broue, *Le Cavalerice françois*, 1.63.

[51] "Ce que les Seigneurs IoaBaptiste Ferrare, Frederic Grison, Claudio Court, & quelques autres ont expliqué en leurs livres parun grand nombre de belles & apparentes raisons, & si doctement, que le

> [H]e who would stop short at their fine precepts, without considering that there may be many natural and accidental exceptions which often produce extraordinary and different effects, which ought to be judged by indications other than the evidence of the color of the horse's coat, and various natural and apparent signs, will without doubt often find himself deceived in his presumed knowledge.[52]

Thus, while La Broue himself will describe a horse as being of a "choleric phlegmatic" or "sanguine choleric" temperament,[53] the terms as used tend to be more descriptive rather than determinative in nature. Similarly, echoing Grisone, he reserves his first chapter for a discussion of the nature of the horse as it relates to color, humor, and place of origin, a revisiting of the humoral approach so prominently advanced by great Italian. La Broue's purpose, however, is to dispute the utility of the very theoretical content which Grisone chose to emphasize:

> Thus it happens that the true chestnut, showing by his reddish color that he is choleric and of good nerve, will be found instead to be of a sluggish humor, base and with little strength. And the white, which based on his color should be humid, feeble, and lacking in courage, will be found sometimes to be courageous and of good strength, but commonly accompanied by some vice. The true bay, which according to his coat should be sanguine, sensitive and of a good disposition, nonetheless will be found to be of a bad will, heavy and without courage: and the true black, who is held likewise to be earthy, dry and malicious, may be found to be light-hearted and of a gentle nature.[54]

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mieux entendu en ceste profession, qui les pensera surpasser, se mettra en danger de demeurer en chemin comme donnant du nez en terre." La Broue, *Le Cavalerice françois,* 1.7.

[52] "Toutesfois celuy qui voudra s'arrester du tout à leurs beaux preceptes, sans considerer qu'il y a peut avoir beaucoup d'exceptions naturelles & accidentales, qui produisent souvents des effects extraordinaires & differens, lesquels se doivent quelquefois juger par d'autre indices, que les tesmoignages de la robe du cheval & plusieurs signes naturels & apparens, sans doute il se trouvera souvent deceu en son sçavoir presumé." La Broue, *Le Cavalerice françois*, 1.7.

[53] La Broue, *Le Cavalerice françois*, 2.8.

[54] "De là vient que le cheval vray allezan monstrant par sa couleur rougeastre estre de son naturel fougoux, colere & de bon nerf, se trouve au contraire d'une humeur lente, vile & de peu de force. Et le blanc, qui correspondant à son poil doit estre humide, foible & de peu de courage, se trouve aucunesfois courageux & de bonne force, mais communément accompangé de quelque vice. Le vray bay, qui selon le rapport de sa robbe doit estre sanguin, sensible & de bonne inclination, neantmoins se trouve souvent de mauvaise volonté, lourd & sans courage: & le vray noir, qui semble aussi estre

Significantly, he refers to these as exceptions; this is no attack on established beliefs. However, such beliefs are clearly trumped here by personal observation, a case of theory lagging behind practice with no particular inconvenience resulting. While not discarding humoral theory, La Broue bluntly sides with empirical experience, leading to much the same result.

The difference is readily apparent in the diagrams in book 2; unlike Fiaschi's woodcut figures, at once decorative and somewhat crude, those of La Broue are pure geometric forms—perfect circles and arcs, perpendicular, parallel and oblique lines, intersecting lines and their resulting angles. One innovation of Fiaschi's remains, the hoofprints laid down to indicate direction. Otherwise, however, the diagrams, when taken on their own, appear better suited to a geometry text than a treatise on horsemanship.

This signals another difference from the Italians; Fiaschi's diagrams, like those of Grisone, provide visual aids—the little horse and rider, for example, or the descriptive labeling—to direct the reader in their use. La Broue's diagrams, on the other hand, are labeled only with letters, making them incomprehensible without benefit of the accompanying instructions. Another difference is revealed by the chapter titles, which range from those generic in nature, such as "Rules for voltes at the gallop"[55] to the many which are tailored to horses with specific qualities or needs, as in Chapter XXV, "Other rules for voltes appropriate to horses which are nervous

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terrestre, aduste & malitieux, se peut rencontrer allegre & de gentille nature." La Broue*, Le Cavalerice françois*, 1.8.

[55] "*Reigles pour les voltes de galop*." La Broue, *Le Cavalerice françois*, 2.22.

and strong, and have a firm contact with the bit."[56] A brief example is included here, an excerpt from the chapter, "Concerning the obedience of the horse moving laterally through the express movements of the horseman."

> Recognizing that [the horse] is sensitive, warm, and light to the hand, [the rider] will lead him to some plain and fairly spacious place, at which, moving by small steps, he will seek to push him gently from the side, by ordinary aids and chastisements, as much by the bit and the cavesson as by the leg, the spur and the stick, causing him always to advance in this way, without breaking step, to the front and to the side as if on the bias, as is represented by these two lines.[57] [Refers to a diagram of two parallel oblique lines intersecting a vertical.]

La Broue also parts company with the Italians in his jaundiced view of display for its own sake. The noble French horsemen whom he describes appear to have much the same objective as their Italian counterparts: to achieve an impressive and even spectacular effect. La Broue, on the other hand, makes an essential distinction between the mere doing of the thing and the subtle knowledge and skills needed to achieve it in a true, *juste* way. He has little patience with the former, finding it a lure for the ambitious, the vain, and the presumptuous. That this hunt for the easy effect was endemic among the *chevaliers* of his own country is suggested by the tone of his diatribe against it, which is biting, sarcastic and at times even bitter. Not surprisingly, his criticism of the horsemanship of his times is strongly reminiscent of the attack of the vices described earlier.

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[56] "Autres reigles des voltes propres aux chevaux nerveux et gaillards, qui ont l'appuy de la bouche à plein main." La Broue, *Le Cavalerice françois*, 2.87.

[57] "Recognoissant qu'il est sensible, colere & leger à la main, il le menera en quelque lieu plain & assez spacieux, auquel allant le petit pas, par le droit, il taschera à le pousser doucement du costé, par les advertissemens & chastimens ordinaires, tant de la bride & du cavesson que de la jambe, de l'esperon & du nerf, le faisant toujours avancer, de façon, que sans rompre le pas, il chemine en avant & de costé comme de biais, selon qu'il est icy representé par ces deux lignes." La Broue, *Le Cavalerice françois*, 2.30.

La Broue's observations suggest that the "new horsemanship," by this time some sixty years old, has gained a broad and enthusiastic following in France. Its popularity, however, has proven a mixed blessing, as the integrity of the art is sacrificed to what he considers cheap and easy effects:

> [T]hey assume that this serves as a great proof of their self-importance, that they can make horses perform courbettes, croupades or leaps, something which, for better or worse, the most insignificant schools in Italy have been doing for the last fifty years. In fact, I can truthfully say that in my first tries at it, being almost ignorant of the art, I was able to school an ass to perform such airs and manèges, to the wonderment of the common people. But since then such exercises have become so familiar, that by now it's reached the point where the lackeys know how to teach them to monkeys and dogs. I'm just waiting to see shepherds do the same with their sheep and their billy goats.[58]

The problem, in La Broue's view, is not merely one of aesthetics or exclusivity. Morality is also at issue—a far cry from Grisone's pragmatic advice on how to make a mediocre horse look like a superb one when performing for a prince. La Broue catalogues some of the ways in which the human vices of ambition, vanity and impatience have taken a toll on the art. There is the man, for example, who, having had a success with a single, fine-tempered horse, proclaims himself a master––overlooking the countless other horses he has ruined along the way. As in La Broue's metaphorical school of virtue, the vice of presumption breeds further disasters. Here it is the horses who suffer:

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[58] "Nonobstant tout cela ils presumeront que ce leur fera une grande preuve de suffisance, de faire manier des chevaux à courbettes, groupades ou sauts, chose qu'on a pratiqué bien ou mal, il y a environ cinquante ans, aux moindres escoles d'Italie: Mesmes je puis dire avec verité, qu'en mes premiers coups dessay, estant encore presque ignorant en cest art, j'ay aide à dresser a tels airs & manesges, un asne, qui faisoit esmerveiller le peuple badin. Mais depuis ce temps, tels exercices se sont rendus si familiers, qu'a present il n'est pas jusques aux laquais qui ne les sçachent apprendre aux singes & aux chiens." La Broue, *Le Cavalerice françois*, 2.6.

> [T]here have never been so many obstinate, wayward, base horses, falsified in neck, mouth, and tail, crippled and rejected, as we see at present. These are also the typical consequences of very precise and excellent rules being badly executed, for by himself the presumptuous, impatient, and badly prepared horseman can ruin an infinity of good horses, by flattering himself, and presuming to do it as well, or better, than the best masters." [59]

Another is the surreptitious poacher of the craft. Throughout the treatise La Broue emphasizes the dignity and the most necessary role of the riding master, whose skill and wisdom are the hard-won fruit of long years of work and experience. Thus it is galling on many levels to find horsemen seeking subtle ways to steal a master's techniques so they can call them their own. He cites the example of Horace de la Mare, Pignatelli's nephew, who had taken to training his best horses in seclusion because he could longer stand to see his airs "practiced without order or judgment, by certain bad and presumptuous imitators."[60]

> How many horsemen have I seen, and there are even more of this glorious humor, who, not wishing to cede to the most excellent masters, covertly seek ways to watch them work, for the *justesse* of their school figures, thinking at the outset to achieve correctly, and in good time, that which they have presumably hidden, and all while being exempt from obligation, as from regret at having confessed imitation. …[61]

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[59] "Et ce qui est plus fascheux, il n'y eut jamais tant de chevaux retifs, ramingues, avillis, falsifiez de col, de bouche & de queue, rebutez & estropiez, que nous voyons à present. Ce sont aussi les communs effects des reigles plus justes, & plus excellentes, estant mal effectuees: car par icelles le Cavalerice presumptueux, impatient, & mal fondé, peut gaster une infinité de bon chevaux, en les flattant, & presumant de faire aussi bien, ou mieux, que les meilleurs maistre: car par icelles le Cavalerice presumptueux, impatient, & mal fondé, peut gaster une infinité de bon chevaux, en se flattant, & presumant de faire aussi bien, ou mieux, que les meilleurs maistres." La Broue, *Le Cavalerice françois*, 2.6.

[60] "…mais seulement pour ne pouvoir patiemment supporter, le desplaisir de les voir pratiquer sans ordre, ny jugement, à certains mauvais & presomptueux imitateurs, qui ne s'estimoient." La Broue, *Le Cavalerice françois*, 2.6.

[61] "Combien de Cavalerice ay-je veuz, & y a il encores de ceste humeur glorieuse, qui ne voulans ceder aux plus excellents maistres, cherchent couvertement les moyens de les voir travailler, aux iustesses de leurs escoles, pensans au partir de la effectuer iustement, & bien à temps, ce qu'ils se presument avoir

In the end, however, such deceivers only deceive themselves, for despite "this useless cunning, they can neither discover nor distinguish anything beyond what is general and apparent, nor conceive of anything which exceeds their capacity."[62] We catch the faint sounding of an Augustinian chord here, as La Broue's calculating horseman evokes the fallen man who vainly seeks happiness, fulfillment, and salvation through his own efforts, not recognizing that these can only be achieved through the grace of the Master whose aid and wisdom he has spurned. La Broue continues in a like vein: without an understanding of the fundamentals, he asserts, "their fortuitous acquisition will not only be vain, but the subject of an infinity of errors."[63]

Conversely, not all prospective students are acceptable. La Broue's assessment is marked by a reassertion of hierarchy, with social inequities implicitly mirroring a natural inequality of talent and character. Natural aptitude—sensitivity, perceptiveness, subtlety of understanding, combined with a temperate, judicious nature and a capacity of hard work—are for him presumptive of gentle birth (though not necessarily vice versa). The earthy practicality glimpsed on occasion in the Italian treatises is hardly in evidence here, at least not in matters of rank and deference. At

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desrobé, & estre exempts d'obligation, comme du regret d'en confesser l'imitation…." La Broue, *Le Cavalerice françois*, 2.6.

[62] "…sans considerer que par ceste finesse inutile, ils ne peuvent descouvrir ny recognoistre, que ce qui est le plus general & apparent, ny rien concevoir de ce qui excede leur capacité….." La Broue, *Le Cavalerice françois*, 2.6.

[63] "…Et quand bien ils auront comprins beaucoup des plus belles & justes proportions, c'est asavoir si pour cela, ils en cognoistront les fondemens.....Et si est'ce que sans cette cognoissance, leur acquisition fortuite, ne sera pas seulement vaine, mais le sujet d'une infinité d'erreurs." La Broue, *Le Cavalerice françois*, 2.6.

the same time, however, the distinctions are not absolute and exclusionary; La Broue recognizes grades and degrees of achievement, and as with his horses, his students are to be instructed according to their natural inclinations and abilities.

> For in order to master well an animal so vigorous and proud, the Horseman must be naturally ingenious, patient, courageous and strong. Beyond that the long experience of the best schools [figures] of this exercise must give him such knowledge, that he can well judge the humor and inclination of the horse, and profit from his good natural effects. And in order to school and delicately adjust the horse in all these airs and figures, which are practiced by the best schools of the age, it is also necessary for the Horseman to have much natural judgment, even of proportions, since all the airs and the most beautiful figures are composed of numbers, measures, and balances which one must carefully observe."

Indeed, La Broue adds, based on his own experience "it is highly unlikely that anyone who can neither feel nor comprehend the harmony, air, and measure of music, and thus of instruments and of dance, could ever learn the airs and proportions of our schools."[64] He does, however, state certain general criteria. The student should be mature, at least twenty years old; he should have the qualities described above, and ideally, some training and proficiency in music and dance. To master such a vigorous and proud animal, the horseman must be naturally ingenious and patient.

In the end, the community of true masters must necessarily remain small. Elsewhere La Broue laments, "For each one who is able to comprehend the perfection

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[64] "Car pour bien maitriser un animal si vigoureux & si fier, le Cavalerice doit estre naturellement ingenieux, patient courageux & fort. Outre cela il faut que la longue experience des meilleures escoles de cest exercice luy aye donné telle cognoissance, qu'il puisse bien juger, l'humeur & l'inclination du cheval, & faire industrieusement son profit des bons effects du naturel d'iceluy…Et pour dresser & adjuster delicatement le cheval à tous les airs & maneges, qui se pratiquent aux meilleures escoles de ce temps, il est aussi necessaire que le Cavalerice aye beaucoup de jugement naturel, mesmes aux proportions: d'autant que tous les airs & plus beaux maneges sont composez de nombres, de mesures & de plusieurs egalitez qu'il faut soigneusement observer. Et pour parler en comparaison seulement de ce don't je me suis autrefois meslé, selon la petite portee de mon entendement, & particulierement de ce que j'ay voulu experimenter à l'endroit de la jeunesse, qui s'est eslevee sous ma charge au service des grands: je puis asseurer qu'il est fort mal-aysé qui celuy qui ne peut gouster ny comprendre l'harmonie, l'air & la mesure de la musique & consequemment des instrumens & de la dance, puis jamais bien entendre les air & proportions de nos escoles." La Broue, *Le Cavalerice françois*, 1.3.

of these rules, there is an infinity of those who think they know them, and yet who will never be able to understand them."[65] The riding master is authorized, not so much by his mastery of the rules of his art, or by its rigorous aesthetic, as by the assertion of an intangible, subjective wisdom that lies at its heart.

That wisdom, paradoxically, in its essence runs counter to the claims of absolutism. It is neither more nor less than a deep-rooted and finely-tuned empiricism, suggesting a profound sense of the infinite contingency of life. La Broue's horses are individuals all; he admits some play to the claims of theoretical abstractions, but ultimately is guided by his experience of the many variations possible in the individual and the specific, and by the knowledge which that experience has brought him. La Broue's powerful sense of the great multiplicity of life may in part explain the fervor with which he embraces rules and order.

To an extent, this sets him at odds with the writings of his predecessors. In this connection La Broue speaks to the expectations of his readers, conditioned to a large extent by the earlier works. On the subject of bits, for example, he feels compelled to address his handling of their illustration; he has discarded the traditional array of complete bits—elaborate and visually striking—in favor of various elements presented in isolation. Clearly he is anticipating a negative reaction at the change, whether one of disappointment, bewilderment or annoyance. He counters it artfully:

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[65] "Toutesfois je ne sçay si pour cela, je dois dire qu'il aye apporté beaucoup d'utilité, d'autant que pour un qui pourra avoir bien comprins la perfection de ce reigles, je m'asseure qu'il y en aura une infinité qui les penseront sçavoir, & qui néantmoins ne les entendront peut estre jamais…." La Broue, *Le Cavalerice françois*, 2.5.

> The less knowledgeable in this art will be those who find it strange that I have not represented in this Book complete bits fully arrayed, in imitation of several horse masters who have written and so brought their rules to light: but the better informed will grasp that I have done what my predecessors ought to have done.[66]

The new approach, La Broue explains, in another example of his subtle and insistent particularism, simply reflects the importance of tailoring a bit to the individual horse:

> Since in order to bit a horse correctly, it is necessary that the form and character of all the parts of the mouth, of the chin, of the jaw, of the neck, of the shoulders, and even the strengths of all the other principal members of this particular animal, be well and separately considered, prior to judging and reworking the entire composition of the bit.[67]

Certainly, such a stock of personal knowledge, gained through years of observation and experience, could be transmitted only partially and imperfectly through writing. La Broue indicates as much, along with a clear-eyed and rather bemused assessment of the capacities of his reading public. Speaking of his diagrams in Book II, he writes:

> I am sure that most horsemen capable of understanding and effectively executing that which they will find here, grossly enough explained, will confess in good conscience that their thoughts had been very much inclined to wander; others will understand little enough of what they read, as if the discourse had nothing in common with their profession, and others, all confused, will be thrown into doubt about the correct practice of rules and lessons represented by explanations and figures which they cannot understand very well.[68]

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[66] "Les moins sçavants en cest art, seront ceux qui trouveront plus estrange, que je n'aye figuré en ce Livre les mords entiers & garnis, à l'imitation de plusiers Cavalerices, qui ont escrit & mis leurs reigles en lumiere: mais les mieux entendus cognoistront, que j'ay fait ce que me devanciers devoient faire." La Broue, *Le Cavalerice françois*, 3.103.

[67] "Car pour bien embrider le cheval, il faut necessairement que les formes & temperaments de toutes les parties de la bouche, de la barbe, de la maschoire, du col, des espaules, & mesmes des forces de tous les autres principaux membres d'iceluy, soyent bien & separément considerees, premier que juger & refoudre l'entiere composition de la bride…" La Broue*, Le Cavalerice françois*, 3.103.

[68] "Je m'asseure que la plupart des hommes de cheval, qui seront capables de comprendre, & de bien effectuer ce qu'ils trouveront icy apres assez grossierement expliqué, confesseront en leurs consciences, qu'ils auront auparavant esté for esloignez de leurs pensees, d'autres entendront aussi peu ce qu'ils liront, comme si le discours n'avoit rien de commun avec leur profession, & autres qui tous

His advice in this respect (incidentally reinforcing the parallel between horse and rider) suggests an awareness, or a suspicion, that his audience comprises two groups, those who use the book as an aid to a broader program of training and instruction, and those who hope to derive from the book what they would get from a riding master. La Broue's response, not surprisingly, privileges the physical act over the written word, and the personal instruction of the master over his literary surrogate:

> With regard to which I advise them once again that, just as the good Cavalerice must never seek and constrain the horse to do that which his strength, disposition and memory cannot support, he must no more boldly undertake to do that which he does not understand himself, but set himself to learn from the best masters, and I wish to say again, that it is an error to believe that one can become a good Cavalerice by reading alone, since the effects of such an exercise consist of action, and the just movements of the body and members…[69]

All in all, La Broue's riding master is invested with a certain magisterial grandeur; indeed, with his finely honed knowledge of the particular and the idiosyncratic, his sensitive reading of nature, he has something of the magus about him. Thus it comes as a rude shock to encounter that same figure from an opposing perspective, to see him pass from master to servant, from governor of horses to harried minion. Nonetheless, this is the picture he presents as he offers advice to those young men assuming the position of *écuyer.* As he pictures it, the reality of his office and obligations has little in common with the idyllic harmony of the "school of

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confus entreront en doute de la vraye pratique des reigles, & leçons representees par les raisons, & figures qu'ils ne pourront bien entendre." La Broue, *Le Cavalerice françois*, 2.7.

[69] "Surquoy je les advise de nouveau, que tout ainsi que le bon Cavalerice ne doit jamais rechercher, & contraindre le cheval, à ce que ses forces, disposition & memoire ne peuvent fournir, il ne doit non plus temerairement entreprendre de fair plus qu'il n'entend soy mesmes, que pour se mettre en devoir de l'aprendre des meilleurs maistres, & veux encore redire, que c'est erreur de croire qu'on se puisse rendre bon Cavalerice, seulement par la lecture, puisque les effects d'un tel exercise, consistent en l'action & aux justes mouvemens du corps & des membres…" La Broue, *Le Cavalerice françois*, 2.7.

virtue." Nonetheless, he still nurses the belief that harmony is attainable, as long as restraint is exercised and proper relations are maintained. The discipline of the body so carefully cultivated in the riding ring is fully in evidence here; nonetheless, discordant notes sound throughout, suggesting a barely-suppressed tension that verges at times on bitterness.

Écuyer, love your art, La Broue says, for sacrifices will certainly be required of you:

> [T]he *Écuyer* of the Great Stable must resolve, on taking the title, to love his art with the end of understanding its excellence: and above all to love his master, more than all the things of the world: otherwise he will be too unsettled to bear his diverse passions, and to deprive himself for a long time of pleasures and sensuality, which he must also banish from himself: these principally being idleness, passionate affection for games and love, and the free conversation of his personal friends.[70]

This is particularly so when the *écuyer* accompanies his master. He will have much to do, and yet must always be at hand,

> [f]or if at such a time he happens not to be nearby (however narrow and long the subjection which he has hitherto rendered) his excuse had better be prompt, or else it may be forestalled by a scowling face, or a reproach, such as 'It seems that you disdain your responsibilities, since one can never find you when I have need of you.'"[71]

Nonetheless, one must harden oneself against the sting of such words:

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[70] "Or donc l'Escuyer de grande Escuyrie se doibt resouldre prenant ce tiltre, d'affectioner son art, afin d'entendre l'excellence: & sure tout d'aymer son maistre, plus que toutes les choses du monde: autrement il luy sera trop-mal-aisé d'en supporter les diverses passions, & de se priver long temps des plaisirs & voluptez, qu'il doit aussi tost bannir de soy: principalement la paresse, l'affection passionnee du jeu & de l'amour, & la libre conversation de ses amis plus privez…" La Broue, *Le Cavalerice françois,* 1.2.

[71] "Toutefois si en tel temps il ne se trouve à propos (quelque estroicte & longue subiection qu'il ait auparavant renduë) son excuse doibt estre soudaine, ou peut estre qu'elle sera prevenuë d'une mine renfrongee, ou de tel reproche: Il paroist bien que vous desdaignez vostre charge, puis qu'on ne vous trouve jamais quand j'ay affaire de vous." De Broue, *Le Cavalerice françois,* 1.2.

> I am sure that it seems to some that such words could affect a very sensitive soul: nonetheless they should carry nothing more than displeasure at having been unable to avoid them. For he who either in appearance or in secret grows angry with his master, because of something which he said when rebuking him (without outraging him), puts in doubt the true friendship and free affection which produce and nourish the respect and honest fear from which the good servant must never depart.[72]

The position itself carries temptations to transgress the bounds of rank. The *écuyer*, after all, rides on horseback, and so it behooves him to adapt his own style to that of his lord, and not put on airs. "For if one wishes always to seem bravely turned out, while serving a seigneur accustomed to dressing modestly, it may happen that one will mistake the magnificent *Écuyer*, with all his glitter and his feathers, for his lord."[73] By the same token, if a particular lord is a gallant who takes pleasure in "magnificence and cleanliness in his clothing and equipage," it is wholly unsuitable for his *écuyer* to dress and act like a commoner, like "some peasant tricked out in his Sunday best."[74]

Specifically, La Broue directs his warning to youth, for whom too often "vanity precedes wisdom." Thus it is that a man

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[72] "Je m'asseure qu'il semblera à plusieurs que telles paroles peuvent alterer une ame fort sensible: neantmoins elles ne doivent apporter que le seul desplaisir de n'avoir peu les eviter. Car celuy qui en apparence, ou couvertement s'irrite contre son maistre, pour quelque chose qu'il luy die en le reprenant (sans outrager) met en doubte la vraye amitié & la libre affection qui produit & nourrist le respect & honneste crainte, dont le bon serviteur ne se doit jamais departir." La Broue, *Le Cavalerice françois*, "Le debvoir," 2.

[73] "Car s'il veut estre toujours bravement paré, servant un Seigneur acoustumé à s'habiller modestement, il aviendra qu'on prendra l'Escuyer magnifique avec son clinquant et ses plumes, pour son seigneur." La Broue, *Le Cavalerice françois*, "Discours sur le debvoir," 3.

[74] "Au contraire si le Prince ou seigneur se plaist à l'excellence de tous les plus beaux & genereux exercices, & aussi à la magnificence & propreté de ses habits & de tout son equipage, & que son Escuyer soit fort grossier en ses gestes & communes façons, & vestus d'ordinaire comme un Paysan endimanché, ceste contrarieté effacera quelque chose de la grace du maistre." La Broue, *Le Cavalerice françois*, "Le debvoir,"3.

> as yet more young than wise may play the Peacock, being more than ordinarily richly dressed, and well-turned-out in an old suit of his master's: and be found also, at his pleasure, not only mounted on horseback like a St. George, but more than that being honored, served and typically followed by several pages in motley, who tremble fearfully at his every command, giving a grand flourish to his vain airs. And what is seen to be more pleasing yet is the imitation of every gesture, word and accent, by which one judges that he imagines that nothing can be more alike than the grace of his Seigneur and his own.[75]

La Broue reserves a particular scolding for that young *écuyer* who, playing the peacock, is in danger of losing sight of the boundaries and responsibilities of his position. For "if he ceases to love and serve his master well because of all these follies, the duties of his estate will tax him with so many difficult occasions, that he will have trouble providing for himself." La Broue continues: "I don't mean just difficult, but so painful and of so little profit that I sometimes think God predestined to this vocation (as to a hidden punishment) certain bizarre and badly ordered spirits."[76]

This is not merely a case of a disapproving elder lecturing wayward youth. The discordant bitterness that breaks forth within the passage is almost painful to

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[75] "Parce qu'au moyen d'iceluy l'homme encor plus jeune que sage peut faire le Paon estant d'ordinaire richement vestu, & bien souvent d'un vieux habit de son maistre: & se trouvant aussi quand il luy plait, non seulement à cheval monté come un sainct George, mais encore honoré, servy & communément suivy de plusieurs Pages bigarrés, qui branlent craintivement soubs ses commandemens, donnant un grand esclat à ses vains deportemens. Et ce qui s'en remarque de plus plaisant est l'imitation d'aucuns gestes, mots & accents, par lesquels on juge qu'il s'imagine aucunesfois, que rien ne se voit de plus semblable, que la grace de son Seigneur & la sienne." La Broue, *Le Cavalerice françois*, "Le debvoir," 3.

[76] "Mais s'il s'arreste plus à bien aymer & servir son maistre, qu'à toutes ces folies, le debvoir de son estate luy apprestera tant d'occasions difficiles, qu'il se trouvera bien empesché d'y fournir suffisamment: je ne dy pas seulement difficiles, mais tant penibles & peu profitables, que j'ay maintfois pensé que Dieu destinoit à tel vocation (comme à un supplice couvert) certains esprits bizarres & mal arrestez." La Broue*, Le Cavalerice françois*, "Le debvoir," 2.

encounter. The bluntness and ironic understatement of his next words offer another view altogether of the life of the riding master:

> Thus too does one see the majority of these fellows dying in poverty, or wholly crippled, and most often seized by the two furiously importuning together, from which I myself have not been exempt and which would have caught me by the greatest surprise, had I not gained some expectation of it by long example.[77]

As a result this passage appears deeply conflicted in its meanings, with La Broue chastizing the heedless young and urging them to be mindful of their place and duty, speaking from experience of the difficulties of the office, and at the last revealing that he himself is crippled and impoverished, who by all indications sought only to be the best and most loyal *écuyer* and servant. Justice—*justesse*—is surely elusive here, but who can he blame for the injustice? His master? God? If La Broue's sense of justice is to be preserved, it seems that the fault must lie with him.

In fact, *Le Cavalerice françois* appears to have been born of La Broue's desperation, as indicated by the pathetic appeals couched within the first and third dedications. Nonetheless it seems that Mennessier de la Lance may be wrong when he states that La Broue died in poverty,[78] for the appeal to the Baron de Bellegarde appears to have born fruit. La Broue subsequently entered the king's service, receiving the title of *écuyer* of the Great Stable.[79]

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[77] "Aussi voit-on mourir la plus part de telles gens pauvres, ou du tout estropiez, & le plus souvent saisiz de ces deux furieusement importunisez ensemble, dont je ne suis pas exempt & lesquelles me tiendroient de plus court." La Broue, *Le Cavalerice françois*, "Le debvoir," 2.

[78] Mennessier de la Lance, *Essai de bibliographie*, 2: 3.

[79] Conrads, *Ritterakademien*, 46.

The hardships and humiliations suggested by La Broue's portrait contrast sharply with the picture provided by Pluvinel's treatise. In its artful theatricality, *L'Instruction du Roy en l'exercice de monter à cheval,* has the quality of a hall of mirrors. On one hand, it gives full expression to key elements of absolutist ideology and actively assists the absolutist agenda, even while preserving a certain continuity of noble symbolism and association. On the other, it is striking for the way in which it advances the riding master's position, arguably at the expense of the king, even as the analogy is ultimately turned back to the service of the monarch.

Part 3. Antoine de Pluvinel

Antoine de Pluvinel appears to have been a prodigy. Born around 1552 to a wealthy, non-noble family of the Dauphiné, [80] he was sent to Italy while still a boy to pursue his education. While there he spent six years in Naples, "the mecca of equestrian education,"[81] studying under the celebrated Pignatelli. He emerged an expert horseman, so accomplished that he attracted the attention of Charles IX's principal *écuyer*, M. de Sourdis, in Italy at the time to purchase horses.[82] Thus in 1572 we find Pluvinel, still a very young man, in service to the king's brother, Henry,

[80] Biographical information on Pluvinel may be found in Conrads, *Ritterakademien,* 48–49; Maria Platte, *Die »Maneige Royal« des Antoine de Pluvinel* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2000), 15–21; Monteilhet, *Les Maîtres de l'oeuvre équestre* (Paris: Odège, 1979), 226–27; Mennessier de la Lance, *Essai de bibliographie*, 2: 325–27. While these agree on virtually all the particulars of Pluvinel's life and career, Conrads and Platte give his birthdate as 1552, while Monteilhet and Mennessier de la Lance give it as 1555.

[81] Conrads, *Ritterakademien,* 48.

[82] Mennessier de la Lance, *Essai de bibliographie*, 2: 326.

Duke of Anjou. Soon after he accompanied Anjou to Poland, where the latter had been elected king. The death of Charles IX in 1574, however, brought the new monarch fleeing back to France to claim his native crown, with Pluvinel one of his three companions on the breakneck journey. Once there, the young *écuyer* received honors as well as commissions from a grateful Henry III.[83]

Upon the king's assassination in 1589, Pluvinel threw his active support to the new monarch, the Huguenot leader Henry of Navarre, now Henry IV of France. Henry received that support in kind, granting Pluvinel lands, honors and titles in recognition of his loyal service. An expert rider known for his innovative and daring use of cavalry,[84] Henry would certainly have appreciated the services of a rare horseman like Pluvinel. The latter's responsibilities, however, carried him well beyond the riding ring, as we find him named chamberlain, under-governor to the Dauphin and tutor to the Duke de Vendôme. Perhaps the most important commission of his career came in 1609, as he was sent to conduct delicate negotiations with Maurice of Nassau in pursuit of Henry IV's "great project" against Spain, a project which would collapse the next year with Henry's assassination.

Pluvinel, however, had long since found another focus for his energies and dedication. In 1594, thanks in large part to the patronage of his good friend the Chevalier de Saint-Antoine, chief *écuyer* (*premier écuyer ordinaire*) to both Henry III and Henry IV, he received permission to establish an academy of his own in the Faubourg St. Honoré, near the *Grande Écurie du Roy.* The new academy, intended

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[83] Monteilhet, *Maîtres,* 226; Mennessier de la Lance, *Essai de bibliographie*, 2: 225–26.

[84] See Ronald S. Love, "All the King's Horsemen: The Equestrian Army of Henry IV," *Sixteenth-Century Journal* 22.3 (1991): 510–33.

for the sons of French nobles, was not confined to horsemanship, but included instruction in a range of subjects, including mathematics, literature, painting and music.[85] It was no recent inspiration, but rather the realization of what appears to have been a lifelong preoccupation; Pluvinel is believed to have been drafting plans for such an institution as early as 1580, when he himself was still only in his twenties,[86] the year before the wedding festivities for the Duke of Joyeux. At the same time, however, the academy did not represent the fruition of his plans. As will be seen, it was merely a prototype, the first of several such academies which he hoped to see founded throughout France.

He also embarked on another, related project, one which he would not live to see finished. Like Grisone, Fiaschi, La Broue and so many others, Pluvinel undertook to write a treatise on horsemanship in which he could explain and promote his innovative method of schooling horses.[87] To this end he commissioned a series of engravings from the Flemish artist Crispin de Pas the younger, whom he had brought to Paris to teach at his academy.[88] Maria Platte places the execution of the engravings between 1617 and 1623, with most of them likely completed by 1620, the year Pluvinel died.[89] Upon the master's death stewardship of the project passed to Pluvinel's disciple René de Menou.

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[85] Mennessier de la Lance, *Essai de bibliographie*, 2: 326.

[86] Conrads, *Ritterakademien,* 50.

[87] According to Mennessier de la Lance, the project was undertaken at the express order of Louis XIII. Mennessier de la Lance, E*ssai de bibliographie*, 2: 326

[88] Mennessier de la Lance, *Essai de bibliographie*, 2: 326.

[89] Platte, *Die »Maneige Royal«*, 104.

Three years later, in 1623, a version of the treatise appeared under the title *Le Maneige Royal,* containing the original engravings and a pirated text. The culprit in the affair appears to have been Crispin de Pas, who, in possession of the plates but also in financial difficulties, wished to hurry production of the book. According to Menou, he therefore bribed Pluvinel's former valet-de-chambre, J.-D. Peyrol, to steal an earlier, incomplete draft, allowing him hasten the whole into print. Thus it appeared in 1623, printed by Guillaume le Noir "at the expense of Crispian de Pas" and with Peyrol credited as the publisher.

The appearance of this version of Pluvinel's work, visually beautiful but edited from an incomplete manuscript and without comprehension of the master's aims or method, prompted René de Menou to issue an authorized edition, based on the manuscript entrusted to him by Pluvinel. The enlarged and emended work was published in 1525, under the title *L'Instruction du Roy en l'exercice de monter à cheval*. De Pas's engravings, though omitted from the first edition, were reintroduced in subsequent editions.[90]

Both works ran to multiple printings. *Le Maneige Royal*, or, in its full title, *Le Maneige Royal ou l'on peut remarquer le défaut et la Perfection du Chevalier en tous les exercices de cet art, digne des Princes, fait & pratiqué en l'instruction du Roy par Antoine Pluvinel son Escuyer principal, Conseiller en son Conseil d'Estat, son Chambellan ordinaire, & sous Gouverneur de sa Majesté,* was issued again in 1624, this time by the printer Claude Cramoisy of the *maison* l'Angelier instead of Guillaume le Noir. Another, bilingual edition appeared in Germany three years later,

[90] Though Mennessier de la Lance states that the engravings were only restored in the 1529 edition, they also appear in the digitalized 1527 edition examined for this project.

with the text presented in French and German in side-by-side columns; this edition, overlooking the fact of Pluvinel's death, advertised the work as having been "reviewed and corrected by the author himself." Subsequent impressions of the first edition appeared in 1658 and 1673, each time with only the date changed. Another edition, printed in 1660 and 1671 by Étienne Loyson and in 1706 by Saugrin, comprised the actual *L'Instruction du Roy,* but under the title *Le Maneige du Roy* and attributed to *les Sieurs de Pluvinel et Charnizay.*[91]

In its turn, *L'Instruction du Roy* went through eight editions and a total of at least eleven impressions: 1625; 1627; 1628, reprinted in 1640 and 1670; 1629; 1640; 1668; 1669; and the mistitled edition of 1660 described above and reprinted in 1671 and 1706. The work's printed title leaves no doubt of its royal provenance, with Pluvinel again identified through his full array of titles:

> *L'Instruction du Roy en l'exercice de monter à cheval. Par Messire Antoine de Pluvinel, son soubs-Gouverneur, Conseiller en son Conseil d'Estat, Chambellan ordinaire & son Escuyer principal. Lequel, respondant à sa Majesté luy faict remarquer l'excellence de sa Methode pour reduire les chevaux en peu de temps à l'obéyssance des Airs & Maneiges Le tout enrichy de grandes Figures en Taille douce, representant les vrayes & naïfves actions des Hommes & des Chevaux, en tous les Airs, & Maneiges, Courses de Bague, Rompre en lice au Quintan, & combattre à l'Espee. Ensemble les figures des Brides les plus necessaires à cet usage.*

Not surprisingly, this version promotes the book's actual content a good deal more energetically than did its predecessor.

Despite—or because of—the irregular nature of their relationship, the two works are nonetheless similar in substance and unique presentation, and each has its

[91] Mennessier de la Lance, *Essai de bibliographie,* 2: 329.

particular strengths and weaknesses. *Le Maneige du Roy*, as mentioned above, offers the superlative de Pas engravings in pristine fashion. *L'Instruction du Roy*, on the other hand, while providing a fuller and more nuanced treatment of its subject and, after 1629, still featuring the de Pas engravings, nonetheless offers them in somewhat inferior form. As Mennessier de la Lance observes, "Lovers of beautiful engravings ought thus to seek out the first work, and true horsemen the second."[92] The relative value of the two is worth noting, with the bastardized but more beautiful *Maneige Royal* fetching, on average, five times the price of *L'Instruction du Roy*.[93]

The latter work, meanwhile, presents problems of its own. In the absence of any external verification, the extent of Menou's contribution remains open to question, particularly since he authored three treatises of his own and included many of the same ideas. Of particular interest in this respect is the extended and significant discussion of the French nobility which concludes *L'Instruction du Roy*, and is wholly missing from its rival. A similar discussion, however, appears in Menou's *La Pratique du cavalier.* Given the close relationship between the two men, Pluvinel's longstanding interest in noble conduct and education, and Menou's subordinate position as discipline and protegé, it seems more likely that Menou was simply influenced by Pluvinel in this regard, as he was in matters of horsemanship and training.

It is clear at the outset that Pluvinel's treatise represents a marked departure from the conventions of the genre. The format itself is both unusual and arresting. Printed in folio size, *L'Instruction du Roy* is structured as an extended lesson in

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[92] Mennessier da la Lance, *Essai de bibliographie*, 2: 327.

[93] Mennessier de la Lance, *Essai de bibliographie,* 2: 327 and 327n2.

horsemanship, delivered by Pluvinel himself to the king and spanning two days, in three parts. The lesson is set in the royal manège or riding school, and takes the form of a dialogue. A third participant, identified in the caption as Cesar Auguste de Bellegarde, Comte de Montbar, Marquis de Termes and Grand Equerry of France acts as interlocutor and demonstrator. As noted above, the 1527 text is accompanied by fifty-five full-page illustrations, in itself not unusual for a such a work. Typically, however, these would represent diagrams of manège figures or bits. Here, by contrast, most are lavishly detailed scenes which illustrate points made in the course of the lesson and to which the reader is referred by marginal notations.

The sheer quality of the illustrations is also striking. These are not the often crude woodcuts found in sixteenth-century treatises; they are copper-plate engravings, a relatively new technique at the time and one which permitted a subtlety of line and shading previously impossible in the print medium. Maria Platte, in her monographic study, underscores the heightened realism of effect available to printmakers as a result.[94] Here, that effect is unmistakable, as is its design. The manège is depicted as a real space in three dimensions, rendered in single-point perspective and framed by an architectural setting closely resembling a proscenium. The resulting effect is that of a performance, an illusion intentionally cultivated throughout the work; the text sustains the conceit of a courtly conversation conducted in real time and space, in which the reader participates as unseen listener and observer, in other words, as audience.

[94] Platte, *Die "Maneige Royal"*, 71–73.

The lesson is crafted as a play. Near the beginning, for example, M. de Ternes cites a superb stallion named Bonnite, deemed hopeless by other noted masters for certain problems which have been triumphantly overcome by Pluvinel's scientific and innovative method. Part one concludes for a fictive rest—an intermission, as it were––after which the stallion himself is announced, making his entrance to serve as the king's mount:

> SIRE, it is eminently suitable that, as the greatest Monarch in Christianity, your Majesty should take your first lesson on the most perfect horse in Europe: *Voila,* SIRE, le Bonnite, of whom I have spoken to your Majesty, and who, in my opinion, will serve him most worthily."[95]

Pluvinel's instruction is couched throughout in courtly discourse, broadly framed as his extended responses to questions posed by the king. When demonstration is required, as in the crucial matter of correct posture, one has the benefit of Pluvinel's verbal description, appearing in print but purporting to be spoken, fictively illustrated by a demonstration cued in the dialogue, and actually illustrated in an engraving to which the reader is directed at the appropriate moment by the marginal notation. In this way the immediacy of the riding school is invoked through the medium of print and engraved image, and the deadening necessity of convoluted, prosaic description is avoided.

In fact, the practical, experiential character of the discipline is readily acknowledged, and even heightened through the device of the riding lesson. In a sense the book itself has become transparent, projecting the reader into the privileged

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[95] Antoine de Pluvinel, *L'Instruction du Roy, en L'Exercice de monter à Cheval* (Paris: Pierre Rocolet, 1627), 72. Unless otherwise indicated, all citations are from this edition.

immediacy of the courtly session. Theory is now materially grounded in practice and observation.

The extended lesson itself serves to showcase Pluvinel's innovative method, founded on the use of the pillar, alone or paired, in the schooling of the horse. This technique, providing a stable, neutral constraint, eliminated to a significant degree the inconsistent and often defensive or coercive aids delivered by a rider schooling from the horse's back. Instead the trainer, having restricted the horse as needed, is able to accustom him gently and gradually to the aids and coax him to the performance of desired movements. The result is a more systematic approach to horse training,[96] achieved through assiduously non-violent means—through the voice, for example, or by tapping the horse's legs or croup with the stick.

Nonetheless, Pluvinel's technique is not so utterly benign as it first appears, for the animal's fear plays a crucial role in its training. The difference lies in the nature of the fear exploited. This is not the terror created by violent blows, flaming thatch, or menacing shouts; rather it is the instinctive timidity of the horse as a prey animal, exploited here by Pluvinel's own creation, the *chambrière*, a rod with long strips of leather attached to one end which is shaken within the horse's peripheral vision. The sudden appearance of the *chambrière* can be used to get the horse to halt or to turn; the repeated performance of a desired movement, meanwhile, may be rewarded with praise or caresses, or, quite simply, a cessation of fear. In either case modification of movement or behavior remains the objective, and kindness, like fear,

[96] Conrads, *Ritterakademien,* 47.

a means to an end. The French, like the Italians before them, seek to instill obedience and responsiveness, but in a way that preserves the horse's natural spirit and "joy."

This goal becomes attainable through a more realistic appreciation of the horse's actual nature, yet again privileging empirical knowledge over received wisdom. Indeed, Pluvinel shows little patience for the latter. When asked by the king, for example, why it is that horses turn more readily to the left than to the right, Pluvinel first acknowleges prevailing wisdom on the question, observing that there are those "who seek the cause prior to the horse's birth, and assert that the foal when lying in the mother's belly is always curled on its left side; others have said that horses most often sleep on their right side, which requires them to bend their neck and head to the left."[97] He quickly dismisses such explanations, however, in favor of his own commensense judgment: "but I, who have no use at all for that invisible Philosophy, who stops at what presents itself to the eye, I believe neither one nor the other, and furthermore assure your majesty that only custom produces this bad habit, which they acquire while at their mother's side, and when tied in the stable." It is not that horses tend to be left-handed, Pluvinel continues, but that people tend to be right-handed; thus grooms and others walk to the left of their charges, and lead them from the left-hand side.[98]

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[97] "SIRE, il y a quelques uns qui en ont voulu chercher la cause avant la naissance du cheval, & asseurent que le poullain estant dans le ventre de sa mere est tout plié du costé gauche: d'autres ont dit que ordinairement les chevaux se couchent le plus souvent sur le costé droit, qui les oblige de plier le col & la teste à main gauche." Pluvinel, *L'Instruction du Roy,* 27–28.

[98] "Mais moy qui ne recherche point toute cette Philosofie invisible, & qui m'arreste à ce que je voy apparément, je ne croy ny aux uns ny aux autres: & puis asseurer à vostre Majesté, que la seule coustume leur produite cette mauvaise habitude, laquelle ils prennent dés qu'ils sont hors d'aupres de leur mere, & attachez dans l'Escurie. Premierement le licol, le filet, la bride, la selle, & les sangles se mettent du costé gauche. Jamais, ou rarement le Palfrenier ne commence à penser, ny ne luy donne à manger que de mesme costé. Et toutes sortes de valets soit Palfreniers ou autres (s'ils ne sont gauchers)

For the horse master, this empiricism finds its most important application in his assessment of individual horses and riders. The point is approached indirectly, in a way which, while seeming at first to undermine Pluvinel's authority, in the end only serves to reinforce it. The section begins with Pluvinel explaining the importance of not putting an inexperienced rider on a green horse, a virtual prescription for harm to the one or the other. The green horse requires an experienced rider; the green rider, an experienced horse.[99]

The king has just acknowledged the wisdom of Pluvinel's reasoning when Monsieur le Grand volunteers the following:

> SIRE, I know full well that what Monsieur de Pluvinel tells you is true, that an ignorant horse is much better schooled by a learned man, than by one who knows nothing at all or very little. Nonetheless, even though I know this, I have often seen him do the contrary, by taking the wildest horses of all sorts, and mounting them with Your Majesty's youngest pages, thirteen or fourteen years old, or with students of the same age whom one must set to practice without fearing some accident will befall them: for after all these are gentlemen of the best houses of Your Majesty's realm, whose lives are too precious to be hazarded unwisely.

"That is why (SIRE)," he concludes with seeming illogic, "I perceive in this the excellence of the method. For it is patently true that if someone put an inexperienced infant on an ignorant, ill-tempered, skittish horse, and then sought to work him in the fashion that everyone does, the child would be lucky to get down

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conduisent toujours un cheval de la main droicte, & par ce moyen luy tirent la teste à main gauche." Pluvinel, *L'Instruction du Roy*, 28.

[99] Pluvinel, *L'Instruction du Roy*, 15.

alive. Which makes me think it only fitting that M. de Pluvinel explains how he manages to do it."[100]

Pluvinel's answer is courtly but to the point: such a thing "cannot be undertaken without a perfect knowledge of the disposition of the one and the other, and without knowing what the man can handle without inconvenience, and anticipating what the horse must do lest he prove to be beyond his rider's skill; it is through such knowledge as this that one avoids those accidents that might occur." "These anticipations and knowings are very difficult things," the king remarks. "I would very much like you to explain to me what they are."

It is not Pluvinel, however, but Monseiur le Grand—Pluvinel's student and disciple—who provides the answer:

> SIRE, I will tell you that I have learned on this subject from M. de Pluvinel, that in order to discern the disposition and natural bent of a young student, one must observe him closely in order to learn something from his physiognomy, to hear him speak to judge the quality of his spirit, and to put him on a horse of whose strength and natural steadiness one is sure. In the same way it is necessary to gaze fixedly into the horse's eyes, in order to judge its nature, and its disposition… [101]

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[100] "SIRE, je cognoy bien que Monsieur de Pluvinel vous a dit vray, que le cheval ignorant est bien plustot dressé soubs un homme sçavant, que soubs un qui ne sçait rien du tout ou fort peu. Neantmoins depuis que je le cognois, je luy ay veu souvent pratiquer le contraire, en ce que les plus facheux chevaux de toutes sortes de natures, se font des plus jeunes Pages de vostre Majesté, de treize ou quatorze ans, ou de ses escoliers de pareil aage ausquels il les fait travailler sans apprehender qu'il en arrive d'accident: encores que ce soient des Gentilhommes des meilleures maisons de vostre Royaume, desquels la vie luy est trop chere pour hazarder imprudemment. C'est pourquoy (SIRE) je remarque en l'excellence de sa methode. Car il est tout vray que qui mettra un enfant sans aucun usage sur un cheval ignorant, fascheux, & plein de fantasie, pour le travailler par les voyes que tout le monde praticque, il seroit en peril de n'en descendre pas en vie. Ce qui me fait dire estre tres à propos que Monsieur de Pluvinel luy declare comme quoy cela se peut." Pluvinel, *L'Instruction du Roy*, 17.

[101] "SIRE, Je vous diray que j'ay appris de Monsieur de Pluvinel sur ce sujet, que pour bien cognoistre la portée & le naturel du jeune escolier, il faut le regarder pour juger quelque chose par sa phisionomie, l'ouyr parler pour voir quel est son esprit, & le mettre sur un cheval duquel on soit asseuré pour cognoistre sa force, & sa fermesse naturelle. De mesme il faut regarder le cheval fixement dans les yeux, pour juger de son naturel, & de son inclination…" Pluvinel, *L'Instruction du Roy*, 18–19.

The veneer lapses here, and the true lesson comes clear: this is about governance, the governing, not only of unruly horses, but also that of unruly men. One must repeatedly remind oneself that this is an artificial construct, not the transcript of an actual lesson. The effect is seamless, however, and the construct achieves a subtle reversal of authority, far removed from the gracefully manipulated abasement of client to patron found in Grisone.

In the performance represented in *L'Instruction du Roy,* the king, the ostensible center of attention, becomes a mere device through which the skill and understanding of the riding master are promoted. The substance of the text is authorized through the king's fictive presence; the lesson is initiated at his request, advanced and directed through his questions. His subsequent comments on the master's explanations confirm their validity, while also offering implicit testimony to the ease and effectiveness with which they have been communicated. "Your reasons fall easily upon my senses," Pluvinel has the king say, "and I see how, little by little, you make yourself understood by the horse; that is why I should like you to continue your discourse, so that you might make me understand how you bring the horse to the point you have just described."[102]

The inversion extends to criticism and correction. In fact, the rude realities of the riding ring are now offered as a virtue, necessarily precluding the flattery so rife elsewhere. Having made this assertion, however, Pluvinel proceeds to subtly mingle

[102] "Vos raisons tombent facilement soubs mon sens, & voy comme peu à peu ou vous faictes distinctement entendre au cheval: c'est pourquoy je prendray plaisir que vou poursuiviez vostre discours, & que vous me faciez entendre ce que vous faites au cheval reduit au point que vous venez de dire*."* Pluvinel, *L'Instruction du Roy*, 61–62.

flattery and correction. "I dare to assure your Majesty that I have never seen anyone accomplish in so little time one third of what he has just done: he does well to remember to keep his weight back. And if the right shoulder is not quite where I would like it to be, and the leg not sufficiently extended…as I said before, it's impossible that your Majesty should manage everything all in one day."

The inversion is completed when, upon the entrance of the marvelous Bonnite, the king mounts, thus effectively succeeding M. de Termes as a demonstration model. His "spoken" words simultaneously provide a caption to the accompanying engraving, to which the reader is duly directed by the corresponding number in the margin. "Here I am," the king is made to say, "my stirrups well-adjusted, the reins in my hand. What would you like me to do?"[103]

Thus, while the formal language of the courtier extols the sovereign majesty of the king, the king in turn, through his fictive role and speech, is effectively and quite dramatically subordinated to the expert authority of the riding master. In one respect, this artful manipulation of the medium of print may be seen as making quite blatant use of the figure of the king to promote Pluvinel's own reputation and the prestige of his method. The effectiveness of the device extends well beyond that narrow aim, however. Through the ideological subtext of governance, inherent in the horse as symbol and specifically invoked with reference to its training for the art of maneige, Pluvinel's enhanced authority is reflexively folded back as advice to the king in matters lying well beyond the riding master's area of expertise. In this sense, *L'Instruction du Roy* can be seen as participating in the tradition of the Mirror for

[103] "Me voilà donc à cheval, mes estrieux bien adjustez, & la bride en la main, que voulez-vous que je fasse?" Pluvinel, *L'Instruction du Roy,* 74.

Princes, in which a wise counselor instructs the ruler in his profession. In contrast to the moral exhortations of the medieval tradition, however, the covert advice conveyed through *L'Instruction du Roy* is grounded in the earthy example of the riding ring, and the nuanced process by which horse and man are trained to achieve a harmonious and aesthetically fulfilling partnership.

The ideological subtext is established at the outset, as the king expresses his desire to be foremost among his subjects in the exercise of horsemanship, whether at the head of his armies in the battlefield or merely riding for pleasure. M. de Termes, serving as interlocutor and thereby permitting the dignified introduction of Pluvinel, sanctions the king's wisdom in terms which establish the fundamental claims of the discipline as "the most beautiful, and most necessary, of all the exercises practiced in the world, not only for the body, but also for the spirit."[104] The king seeks elaboration of this point, setting the stage for Pluvinel's formal articulation of the claims of his discipline, in a long passage which is striking in its manipulation of the contested hierarchy of arms and scholarship:

> All the sciences and arts are learned in repose, without any torment, agitation, or apprehension of any kind. It is possible for the scholar, whether in the presence or absence of his instructor, to study the particulars of that which his master has taught him without the least disquiet. But the exercise of horsemanship is nothing like the same thing, since a man cannot learn it withou mounting a horse, by which he resolves to suffer all the extravagances which may accompany an irrational animal, the perils which are encountered through the fury, despair and cowardice of such animals, combined with the apprehension of feeling their effects. None of these things can be either conquered or avoided, save by knowledge of the science, strength of spirit, and soundness of judgment, which he must exercise in the midst of the worst of these torments, with the dispatch and

[104] "…le plus beau, & le plus necessaire de tous les exersices [sic] qui se pratiquent au monde, non seulement pour le corps, mais aussi pour l'esprit…" Pluvinel, *L'Instruction du Roy*, 1–2.

> coolness of a man sitting in his study and seeking to learn something from a book. Thus your Majesty can see quite clearly how this exercise is useful to the spirit, since it instructs it and accustoms it to execute cleanly and in good order all necessary functions, amid uproar, noise, agitation and continuous fear of danger, so that it is a form of preparation, enabling him to perform these same operations on the battlefield, in the midst of all the hazards which one encounters there.[105]

The horse is now portrayed as exemplifying brute nature as well as innate nobility; through careful, systematic training it is to be gentled and brought to a high level of responsiveness and brilliance of execution. The master, meanwhile, is to achieve his end through reason and patience rather than force, and by the adaptation of methods and goals to the animal's particular nature and abilities.

Here we find a significant variant of, and departure from, Elyot's "fierce and cruel beast." The value of Elyot's fire-breathing Great Horse lay in his ability to inspire awe among onlookers—not just at his power and ferocity, but at the skill of the rider capable of mastering him with a cool hand and impassive mien. In Pluvinel's hands, the value of the fiery brute lies in the bracing fear he strikes in the heart of his novice rider, thus toughening his spirit and nerve. Intellectual pursuits by contrast are cast in a deprecating light, implied as fostering a psychological softness that is poor

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[105] "…toutes les sciences, & les arts, ils les apprennent en repos, sans aucun tourment, agitation, ny apprehension quelconque: Leur estant permis, soit en la presence, ou en l'absence de celuy qui les enseigne, d'estudier en leur particulier ce que leur maistre leur aura enseigné, sans estre inquieter de quoy que ce soit. Mais en l'exersice de la Cavalerie, il n'en est pas de mesmes: car l'homme ne le peut apprendre, qu'en montant sur un cheval, duquel il faut qu'il se revolve de souffrir toutes les extravagances qui se peuvent attendre d'un animal irraisonable, les perils qui se rencontrent parmy la cholere, le desespoir, & la lachete de telx animaux, joincte aux apprehensions d'en ressentir les effets. Toutes lesquelles choses ne se peuvent vaincre, ny eviter, qu'avec la coignoissance de la science, la Bonté de l'esprit, & la solidité du jugement: lequel faut qu'il agisse dans le plus fort de tous ces tourmens; avece la mesme prompitude, & froideur, que fait celuy qui assis dans son cabinet, tasche d'apprendre quelquechose dans un livre. Tellement que par là, vostre Majesté peut cognoistre tres-clairement, comme quoy ce bel exersice est utile à l'esprit, puis qu'elle l'instruict, & l'accoustume d'executer nettement, & avec ordre, toutes les fonctions, parmy le tracas, le bruict, l'agitation, & la peur continuelle du peril, qui est comme un acheminement, pour le rendre capable de faire ces mesme operations, parmy les armes, & au milieu des hazards qui s'y rencontrent…." Pluvinel, *L'Instruction du Roy*, 2–3.

preparation for the realities of battle—or, by implication, of rule. Thus even as the discipline is reformulated as a science, advancing a consciously progressive method based on reason, it is distanced from scholarly pursuits in a way which preserves the traditional attributes of the warrior nobility. Even this is not straightforward, however, as instruction in manège is offered as a simulacrum of battle, a setting in which, in reality, it found a declining application. Nonetheless, it serves a *moral* purpose by fostering those qualities necessary to leadership in the field—qualities expendable in others, but essential to the *noblesse d'epée*.

Even as he preserves the distinct and privileged identity of the estate, however, Pluvinel implies here that the martial virtues of courage and *sang-froid* are cultivated rather than inbred. Sounding a note of realistic psychological perspicacity, he subtly undermines the nobility's traditional claim of superiority by birth, even as he works to support the privileged status and functional effectiveness of those making the claim. Implicit is the analogy between riding master and ruler. As has been seen, manège was concerned far more with visual effect than martial effectiveness, and the true measure of skill and ability lay in the patient, discerning regime which lay behind the creation of that effect. The ruler, in this scenario, is no longer the man who sits the horse and holds the reins, but rather the man capable of training and actively managing horse and rider both.

The dichotomy between the appearance of power and its reality is soon made explicit. Again, it is the king who introduces the question, here by asking Pluvinel what he first desires of a rider. That he be a graceful horseman, answer Pluvinel, replying from the vantage point of the viewer's pleasure in the effect. "There is far

more pleasure in seeing a graceful horseman ignorant of the science, than a knowledgeable one who is awkward."[106] The latter, however, is an impossibility, as the knowledgeable horseman, possessing correct posture, will of necessity also be graceful. Anyone who can sit a horse correctly can be a graceful horseman, but one cannot be held to be a truly accomplished horseman unless he knows how to train the animal, a process which entails understanding, knowledge, method and judgement. Thus is La Broue's incalculable, subjective empiricism—that of the horse master as magus—transposed to the ruler:

> In order to be a complete and judicious horseman, one must know, through practice and through reason, how to train all sorts of horses to all sorts of airs and then to manage them; one must know their strengths, their inclinations, their habits, their perfections and imperfections, and their entire nature. In all of this one must exercise judgment, in order to know what the horse is capable of doing and therefore to attempt with him only that which he is able to do with sufficient grace; and once having this knowledge, to start, continue and finish the horse with the patience, resolution, gentleness and force required to bring him to the point which the graceful horseman requires. Once these qualities are found in a man, one may truly deem him a judicious horseman.[107]

The king then asks what one must do to acquire these qualities, marking the beginning of the instructional body of the treatise.

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[106] "Il y a bien plus de plaisir de voir un bel homme de cheval ignorant de la science, qu'un tres-sçavant de mauvaise grace." Pluvinel, *L'Instruction du Roy*, 9.

[107] "[P]our estre parfaictement bon homme à cheval, il faut sçavoir par pratique & par raison, la maniere de dresser toutes sortes de chevaux à toutes sortes d'airs & de maneges: cognoistre leurs forces, leurs inclinations, leurs habitudes, leurs perfections & imperfections, & leur nature entierement. Sur tout cela faire agir le iugement pour sçavoir à quoy le cheval peut estre propre, afin de n'entreprendre sur luy que ce qu'il pourra executer de bonne graçe: & ayant cette cognoissance, commencer, continuer, & achever, le cheval avec la patience, & la resolution, la dousseur, & la forçe requise, pour arriver à la fin où le bon homme de cheval doit aspirer, lesquelles qualitez se rencontrans en un homme, on le pourra veritablement estimer bon homme de cheval." Pluvinel, *L'Instruction du Roy,* 9–10.

Pluvinel's prescription bears more than a passing resemblance to the pedagogical principles which characterized humanist educational reform. Of particular interest in this connection are his views on punishment and the use of force. These remain necessary and so are not dispensed with, but as in all else, are to be applied temperately and as necessary. This marks a notable contrast with Grisone, who while attentive to method and echoing humanist educational precepts, had yet to fully assimilate these pedagogical precepts into practice. Thus, while asserting the need for graduated instruction and patience and judgment in the use of punishment, he continued to depend upon an array of coercive measures, fundamentally mechanistic in their effect.[108] His reading of the horse's intellectual and spiritual capacities also led him to punish perceived moral transgressions as well as unwanted behavior.

Pluvinel's injunctions, on the other hand, reflect the influence of that more realistic assessment of animal nature also seen in La Broue. Gentler methods notwithstanding, however, pragmatic rather than humane considerations still remain uppermost. Punishment and leniency are merely two sides of the same coin, each to be administered when appropriate and to the proper degree, with undue caresses held to be as harmful as wanton cruelty. A successful outcome will produce docile obedience while preserving the animal's native spirit—an outcome which, while it echoes Xenophon's ancient dictum on training a horse, is also appropriate to the creation of a service nobility. "[T]he Horse must take pleasure in being handled," Pluvinel asserts, "or otherwise the horseman and he will be able to do nothing with

[108] See Gianoli, *Horses and Horsemanship*, 103, for a defense of this approach, though it rests on a supposed addiction to heavy, inherently unsuitable coldblooded war horses for school work.

glad grace."[109] Elsewhere he provides a more qualified statement of his expectations, in terms strikingly evocative of La Broue's advice to the harried *écuyer*; the well-trained horse should "suffer aids and punishments, not without disquiet, nor without evidence of resentment, but without anger and disorder."[110]

The ideological subtext which plays throughout the treatise is made overt at the formal conclusion of the lesson. Duly thanked and praised by the king, and asked to name a reward for his splendid advice on horsemanship, Pluvinel responds with a concerned assessment of the current state of the nobility, detailing the vices that have arisen among them and making special note in this connection of the prevalence of dueling. "First," he answers, "the lack of love and respect for God and for their prince; disobedience to his commands, from which often follow revolts, plots and a thousand other crimes which arise in consequence; the quarrels and duels which are so common in these times, and a host of other disorders which I shrink from naming."[111] As a remedy to this situation, so grievous to the wellbeing of the kingdom as a whole, he proposes the establishment, under royal aegis, of four noble academies, "in order to nourish the nobility on virtue."[112]

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[109] "Car c'est une maxime que le cheval doit prendre plaisir à manier, ou autrement le Chevalier & lui ne sçauroient rien faire de bonne grace." Pluvinel, *L'Instruction du Roy*, 5.

[110] "…faisant toutes les actions à tous les temps qu'il plaict au Chevalier, endurant & souffrant les aydes, & les chatimens non sans inquietude, ny sans temoigner du ressentiment, mais bien sans cholere, & sans desordre." Pluvinel, *L'Instruction du Roy*, 15.

[111] "Premierement le peu d'Amour & de respect à Dieu et son prince; la desobeyssance à ses commandemens, d'ou il s'en est ensuivy autresfois des revoltes, des conjurations, & milles autres crimes qui dependent de là: les querelles et les duels si frequents en ce temps & quantité d'autres desordres que j'aurois horreur de nommer." Pluvinel, *L'Instruction du Roy*, 201–02.

[112] "…pour faire nourrir la Noblesse à la vertu." Pluvinel, *L'Instruction du Roy*, 205.

Thus the ideological and pedagogical subtext of the manège is made manifest. The note of social and moral reform quietly sounded by La Broue is overt in Pluvinel, whose work provides a pointed critique of contemporary noble mores and conduct, and, in the framework of the riding lesson, offers the king a detailed proposal by way of partial remedy. Exceptional in several respects, his treatise moves beyond the accepted bounds of the genre to assume an overtly political and activist stance. As such it belongs to a broader current of reform inspired in part by the troubling questions raised by the spectacle of civil and religious strife, and concerned chiefly with the rehabilitation of the *noblesse d'épée.* As noted earlier, it has a particular affinity with François de la Noue's *Discours politiques et militaires* of 1587. Both identify the French nobility as a source of social and political discord, and both identify education as the root of the problem and the key to reform.

La Noue's academies were projected for Paris, Bordeaux, Lyon and Angers, to be followed eventually by similar foundations in every major city in France; as an alternative, he suggests siting them in royal palaces such as Fontainebleau. The dearth of suitable masters, seen by La Noue as the most pressing difficulty, would be provisionally remedied by bringing one from Italy, preferably skilled in horsemanship, "because everyone knows that a man who can demonstrate the handling of a horse is worth more than a painter."[113] To ensure the provision of horses for all students, wealthy boys would each bring one of his own, either already trained or to be trained at the school.

[113] "…car chacun scait qu'un qui mostreroit à manier chevaux meriteroient plus qu'un peintre." La Noue, *Discours politiques*, 153.

Pluvinel's academies, founded under royal sanction, offered a specialized curriculum designed to train a governing elite in the service of the king. The educational program, while echoing the broad goals and elements of its classical model, was limited and sharply defined: it represented both continuity and innovation, and reveals the subtle transmutation not only of the noble's role in society, but also of the attitudes and conventions attendant upon that role, contributing to the emergence of a new, "modern" ideal of French nobility.

The proposed academies, to be located in Paris, Bordeaux, Tours or Poitiers or Lyons, are to be placed under the supervision of a "gentlemen of quality and means," responsible for both the education and the conduct of his charges. The cost of board and lodging for students and their servants is estimated (from 500 *écus* to as much as 1000 if deemed necessary), financial assistance is requested of the crown (16,000 *écus* for Paris, 8,000 for each of the other schools), and provision to be made for the sons of indigent noblemen, drawn, the author suggests, from the confiscated estates of rebellious subjects. A schedule of studies is also included, lending some insight into the relative importance assigned by the author to various subjects. Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons would be given over to practice in arms, vaulting and other physical skills, as well as dancing and the cultivation of social graces, and Tuesday and Thursday afternoons to the study of philosophy, particularly political philosophy, ancient and modern history, letters and mathematics. Mornings would be devoted entirely to horsemanship and tilting at the ring.

Pluvinel's proposed academies, as outlined in *L'Instruction du Roy,* had certain elements in common with the Venetian noble academies discussed in chapter

3 and founded during the same period. Both focused specifically on the education of the nobility, and both conceived of this education in military terms, in accordance with the traditional defining attributes of noble identity. Both represented efforts to accommodate change within a traditional framework, and both viewed the educational project having an important moral dimension. Both shared the perception that the noble youth of their time were falling into wild, licentious ways because the old, supposedly virtuous way of life was no longer available to them. The academy was intended to prepare these youths for a productive role in the new order, while maintaining the values and attributes of their class and heritage.

There were several key differences between the French and Venetian schools, however. Chief among these was the nature of the school's origins and charter. The Venetian academies represented voluntary associations which, following the medieval corporatist tradition, organized themselves, established their own by-laws and procedures, and then sought official sanction. Governance of the school was conducted by committee, and decisions taken by vote. The schools, significantly self-governing, represented the survival of a noble esprit de corps and political independence that was itself growing outdated.

The French academies were established under the aegis of the crown, and were conceived toward the end of molding noble youth morally, intellectually and ideologically, while educating them in subjects useful for the profession of war. Riding, the centerpiece of the curriculum in both cases, invoked the traditional warrior noble identity, but toward divergent ends: in the Venetian academies, as a means of reinforcing noble identity, and in the French, as a means of preserving the

traditional attributes of noble identity while reorienting the nobility toward service to the state. Through this curriculum and environment, argues Pluvinel, the school will prepare the young nobleman, and "show him the form necessary to govern provinces, cities and positions which your majesty might place in his hands, just as he must maintain armies, to command them or to obey: in this way he may serve his Master, whether in an Embassy or in any other particular business."[114]

Thus Pluvinel brings the riding lesson to its close. The publication of *L'Instruction du Roy* did not precipitate the founding of a series of academies. It did not need to; Pluvinel's project was already underway at the time of his death, beginning with his academy established in Paris in 1594, and followed by a second during his lifetime, founded at Aix in 1611. The project continued long after his death, with academies appearing in Riom (1644), Angers (1670), Besançon (1674), Rouen (1677), Bordeaux and Montauban (1680, Strasbourg and Sumur (1681), and Lille (1687).[115] The phenomenon was not confined to France, and similar institutions are found in Germany, Italy and the Low Countries during this period, with comparable proposals floated in England.[116] In this respect at least, Pluvinel was less an innovator than a representative voice, articulating these ideas in a unique idiom.

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[114] "…leur monstrer la forme qu'il faut tenir pour gouverner les Provinces, les villes & les places que vostre Majesté leur peut remettre entre les mains: comme il faut se mainenir aux armees, soit pour commander, soit pour obeyr: comme quoy servir son Maistre, soit en Ambassade, soit en quelqu'autre affaire particuliere: bref, tacher par ce moyen de les rendre capables de bien servir leur Prince, soit en paix, soit en guerre." Pluvinel, *L'Instruction du Roy,* 200.

[115] Schalk, *From Valor to Pedigree,* 182n.

[116] Conrads' *Ritterakademien* offers a comprehensive study of the phenomenon thoughout Europe, and cites La Noue as its seminal influence. Conrads also provides profiles of individual academies by country, with most located in the Empire. Also see J.R. Hale, "Military Education," 237–42, for a précis of early efforts and proposed projects.

Part 4. René de Menou

René de Menou de Charnizay (1578-1651) belongs to the next generation of French riding masters. Born in Touraine in 1578, he was a protegé and close friend of Antoine de Pluvinel. Though best known for his role in preparing the first edition of Pluvinel's *L'Instruction du Roy*, he also authored a treatise of his own. The original work, *La Pratique du cavalier, par où il est enseigné la vraye méthode qu'il doit tenir pour mettre son cheval à la raison*…,[117] was first published in Paris in 1612. Based on its numerous reissues, the treatise enjoyed considerable popularity; it was reprinted in 1614, 1619, 1620, 1622, 1629, 1636 and 1651. A second version, *La Pratique du cavalier où l'Exercice de monter à cheval,* was published in Paris in 1650 and reissued in 1651, the year of Menou's death.[118] Another work sometimes attributed to him, *L'Escuyer français contenant L'Exercice de monter à cheval ensemble le Manège royal de MM. de Pluvinel et de Charnizay,* is, as noted above, actually Pluvinel's *L'Instruction du Roy* with garbled title and authorship. The work examined for this study is the 1650 *La Pratique du cavalier, ou, L'Exercise de monter à cheval,* published in Paris by G. Loyson.

Approaching Menou's treatise, one is immediately struck by its relatively modest character, particularly in comparison with the imposing *Le Maneige Royal* and *L'Instruction du Roy.* Both of the latter were printed in folio, with many of the

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[117] The full title of the work, to distinguish it from Menou's later *Pratique du cavalier,* is *La Pratique du cavalier, par où il est enseigné la vraye méthode qu'il doit tenir pour mettre son cheval à la raison & le rendre capable de paroistre sur le carrière, obeyssant à l'ordre des plus iustes proportions de tous les beaux airs & maneges: augmentee des maladies qui arriuent ordinairement aux cheuaux, & les remedes d'iceux*.

[118] Monteilhet, *Les Maîtres*, 198–99.

engravings given an unusual horizontal orientation. Menou's work, by contrast, is printed in the serviceable quarto format. At the same time, though 245 pages long, it adopts the large typeface used in Pluvinel's works, easier to read but prodigal of space and paper. In formal terms, the work marks a retreat from Pluvinel's dramatic idiosyncracy, hardly surprising given that Pluvinel's work is essentially a virtuoso turn. Menou's approach, far more conservative, reverts to the conventional organization of books and chapters, with each book of the treatise devoted to a different equestrian topic. Somewhat paradoxically, however, Menou's treatise serves to point up some of the inherent limitations imposed by Pluvinel's originality. Pluvinel's work, fashioned as a dialogue, necessarily proceeds in a discursive manner; the reader is offered only the most rudimentary table of contents, a few sentences summarizing the content of each of the three parts. Even these are discursive and rather intimate in tone. The first part deals with "the qualities which a man should have to be accomplished in the exercise. What the horse should be like. How one should begin and continue to the point of the greatest *justesse.* The second part deals with "the means one should adopt to refine the horse (*adjuster*), and render it obedient to the just proportions of the most beautiful airs and manèges. The third deals with "the true method of schooling horses in the capriole and the step-and-jump; the way to perform good and handsome *courses de Bague,* armed or unarmed. How to break the lance against the quintain and in the list. How to fight with a sword. What sorts of bits are most appropriate, and how to use them."[119] As this table of

[119] "Division de tout l'oeuvre. La premiere repartie traite Des qualitez que doit avoir l'Homme pour se rendre parfait en l'Exercice. Quel doit estre le Cheval. Comme quoy il le faut commencer & continuer jusques au poinct des plus grandes Justesses. La seconde Des moyens qu'il faut tenir pour adjuster le Cheval, & le rendre obeyssant aux justes proportions des plus beaux Airs & Maneiges. Et la

contents indicates, Pluvinel's work addressed subjects of practical interest to the horseman, albeit weighted to courtly exercises and contests. The structure and organization of the work, however, virtually conspire against any such practical use. By contrast, La Broue's treatise—dense, informative and tightly organized—stands as a culmination of the dominant trend within the genre since Grisone, the effort to develop the riding treatise as an effective, useful, and, one presumes, therefore marketable resource. The more daunting challenge, that using the medium of print to effectively communicate the infinitely subtle and contingent, yet ultimately mechanical, dynamics of a complex physical skill, had led to an ever greater refinement of terms and compartmentalization. Pluvinel's treatise effectively tossed this all aside, retaining only as much as could be effectively communicated by the marriage of print to the startlingly naturalistic illustrations. It is hardly that the content was to be devalued; rather the nature of the exchange between author and reader, master and student, was to be substantially transformed, lifted from an impersonal commerce of information and coin to a courtly conversation among gentlemen who, if not equals in any social sense, are nonetheless peers in the community of horsemen.

Menou's work is of interest in part because its author stands fixed between the two impulses. Moreoever, though Menou remains largely lost in Pluvinel's shadow, his treatise also offers a glimpse into the author's own particular concern with the breeding of horses, a topic of timely concern and little visited, at least in the terms used by Menou, in the previous literature.

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troisiesme De la vraye Methode de dresser les Chevaux a Capreoles, & a un pas un sault. La maniere de faire de belles & bonnes course de Bague, soit en pourpoint, soit arme. De rompre des Lances contre le Quintan. De Rompre en lisse. De combatre a l'Espee. Quelles sortes de Brides sont les plus propres: & comme quoy illes faut employer." Pluvinel, *L'Instruction du Roy.*

First, one should note Menou's numerous affinities with, and declarations of loyalty to, Pluvinel. His book actively advocates the older master's techniques and philosophy of training, and if Menou's scope is more limited than that of La Broue, for example, he shows a concern for depth and precision of treatment not found in Pluvinel, whose priorities clearly lie elsewhere. Menou, on the other hand, devotes eight full chapters to the training of the horse in the capriole. It is, up to a point, reminiscent of La Broue; interestingly, however, La Broue's rigor, precision and specificity are the last things which Menou desires to emulate. La Broue and Pluvinel may both have studied under Pignatelli, and we know that they shared a good mutual friend in Saint-Antoine. Nonetheless, there is evidence of a rivalry between them that carried the additional bite of controversy and partisanship.[120]

That rivalry surfaces briefly in *L'Instruction du Roy,* in the exchange about the magnificent stallion Bonnite. It is Pluvinel who works him into the conversation, in the context of the grace, agility and versatility of Barbs. "Witness (SIRE) the bay Barb which Monsieur le Grand has given your majesty, surely the paragon of all the manège horses in the world, as much for his beauty as for his excellence, and who performs the terre à terre and courbettes so beautifully and with such good grace, and with so much justice and agility that it is with good reason that he is called Bonnite."[121]

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[120] See Conrads, *Ritterakademien,* 57–58.

[121] "…temoing (SIRE) le Barbe bay que voila, lequel Monsieur le Grand a donné à vostre Maiesté, le paragon certes de toutes les chevaux de Maneige du monde, tante pour sa beauté, que pour son excellence, à manier parfaictement, & de bonne grace, terre à terre, & à courbettes, avec tant de justesse, & d'agilité, que ce n'est pas sans cause qu'il s'appelle le Bonite." Pluvinel, *L'Instruction du Roy*, 22.

One's interest in this paragon of horses rises with the disclosure that he had actually had severe problems—an oversensitive mouth, as it happens, appropropriate for such an aristocratic animal—which prevented him from executing the courbettes he was otherwise so beautifully fitted for. The most expert of the king's equerries were stymied; no bitting combination seemed to work. It is Monsieur le Grand who deftly deals the blow.

> SIRE, Monsieur de Pluvinel is right to show you this horse as a masterpiece, for it is true that M. de la Broue, very excellent in the practice of horsemanship, worked with him for a long time, and had him seen by Monsieur le Constable; they both judged him incapable of ever being able to perform courbettes well, because of his impatience, and the uncertain carriage of his head, having those gums and a chin so tender…; nevertheless, despite whatever judgment had been passed by these excellent men, M. le Pluvinel assured me that he would bring him to the point of perfection that a horse could attain.[122]

After a little trial and error, Pluvinel then fits the horse with a grommet which, to Monsieur le Grand's eye, appears perfectly ordinary, "just the same as all the other horses use." And, only a few days later, he is called to Fontainebleau to see Bonnite's progress, and there witnesses such a marvelous display of courbettes and voltes," he says, "that I immediately named it the Saraband of Bonnite …"[123]

This overt bit of literary backstabbing among royal equerries, with its further suggestion of cliques or factions, serves as a reminder of the personal and

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[122] "SIRE, Monsieur le Pluvinel a raison de vous monstrer ce cheval pour un chef-d'oeuvre: car il est vray que seu Monsieur de la Brouë, tres-excellent en l'exercice de la Cavallerie, apres l'avoir fait long temps travailler, & fait voir à feu Monsieur le Connestable, ils le jugerent tous deux incapable de pouvoir jamais bien manier à courbettes, à cause de son impatience, de sa teste mal-asseurée, ayant les gensives, & la barbe où repose la groumette si tendre….: neantmoins quelque jugement qu'en fissent ces excellens hommes, Monsieur de Pluvinel m'asseurant de le rendre à la perfection où un cheval pouvoit atteindre." Pluvinel, *L'Instruction du Roy*, 22.

[123] "Je nommay tout à l'heure ce Maneige la Sarabande du Bonnite…" Pluvinel, *L'Instruction du Roy*, 23.

professional stakes that could rest on a horse's performance, and how the animals themselves became freighted with human anxieties and ambitions.

One final point is of note here: Monsieur le Grand's description of Bonnite's remedial training as taking "only a few days." This emphasis on speed and ease is a hallmark of Pluvenal's method, or at least of the values attaching to that method. Again and again in *L'Instruction du Roy,* Pluvinel's method is praised for the phenomenal speed with which he can train both horses and men. Speed, of course, is not everything; one must have quality too, and M. de Pluvinel's work is touted as brilliant. This sounds a discordant new note, however, distinctly at odds with the riding master's traditional emphasis on patience, work and painstaking diligence, all of which in turn were associated with strength of character and personal virtue. The same new disposition appears in Menou, who in his dedication takes the opportunity to savage the methods and approach of Salomon de la Broue. These are sarcastically attacked as tedious and stodgy.

The animosity was not only personal. School riding in this period became a focus of chauvinistic, anti-Italian feeling. La Broue, though the first Frenchman to have penned an original treatise on the art, was regarded as too close to the Italians in method and sympathies for acceptability. The French affinity for ease and speedy results, meanwhile, set against an absolutist backdrop, invites further investigation.

Finally, one finds in Menou yet another note of what may be termed national pride and concern. As La Noue and Pluvinel directed their concern toward the education of France's noble youth, Menou directed his to France's horses. In this regard also, to an extent, he echoes Pluvinel who, when called upon to answer the

traditional question about dfferent horse types based on country of origin, offers an unconventional answer. Spain produces excellent horses, he says, as does Turkey, though those are difficult to come by: Italy is reputed to produce fine horses, but they are mostly all bastardized now. Barbary, however, produces exceptional horses. Having said this, the French master goes on to extol the horses of his own country as second to none, citing in particular the regions of Gascony, the Auvergne, Limousin, Poitou, Normandy, Brittany and Burgundy. His concluding judgment: "I don't care what country they come from as long as they have a good height, handsome feet and legs, with strength, lightness, and a good and sweet nature."[124]

Menou's chapters on horse types by country—placed, in accordance with convention, near the beginning of the treatise, likewise offers evidence of a new perspective. He too cites the Barb and the Turk, and notes the declining quality of Italy's horses. He too plays the good Frenchman, citing for quality, bar none, the same French provinces as Pluvinel. Menou, however, provides the detailed assessment which Pluvinel's airy conversational style forestalled. His evaluation, moreover, is suprisingly even-handed, pragmatic and informative. The horses of Brittany, for example, are described as "similar in size to those of Germany, though they are smaller, less fleshy, with legs that are finer and leaner, and not so hairy; their feet are better, handsomer and higher, the head dryer and not so heavy at the neck. And the reason for this is, that most of their mares come from England and Scotland, and their stallions for Denmark or Germany."[125]

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[124] Pluvinel, *L'Instruction du Roy,* 18–19.

[125] "La taille des Chevaux de Bretagne est approchante de celle des Chevaux d'Allemagne, sinon qu'ils sont plus petits & moins chargez de chair; les jambes plus nerveuses, plus seiches & moins peluës; les

Those of Burgundy, on the other hand, are given little quarter. They are not so good as the others, Menou remarks, insofar as there's really no one to look after them, "nor proper broodmares for the stud farms, nor fine stallions, nor any of a good height. There's none there but peasants who let their mares be covered by the first stallion that comes along,; nor desire anything save animals to do their labor. So it's so no wonder if most of the horses that come from there are bastardized…"[126]

Analogies of blood and breeding are always charged, but Menou's assessment in these instances appears cool enough. His concern for the quality of France's horses was not misplaced. The civil and religious wars of the latter sixteenth century had exacted a terrible toll among cavalry mounts, while disrupting stud operations. One finds evidence of a pronounced shortage of war horses in France by the early seventeenth century, due in part to the ravages of the civil wars, and in part to competition with a reviving civil economy, leading to a brisk demand for cart horses. Letter patents issued by Louis XIII in 1613 testify to the dilemma, while also suggesting that Northern coldbloods were indeed the mount of choice of heavy cavalry, at least in this place and at this time. The king's edicts prohibit merchants and marshals from "going before the horse dealers who display each day horses from the provinces of Denmark, Friesland, Flanders, Brittany and elsewhere, which is the reason why the Seigneurs and others who assist us daily in our wars and armies,

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pieds meilleurs, plus beaux & plus relevez du talon, la teste plus seiche & moins chargez d'ancollure; Et la raison est, que la pluspar de leurs Cavalles sont Angloises ou Escossoises, & leurs Estelons [sic] sont Chevaux de Dannemarch ou d'Allemagne." Menou, *La Pratique,* 10.

[126] "Les Chevaux du Compté ne sont pas si bons que ceux cy-dessus, d'autant qu'il n'y a personne qui soit soigneux d'avoir, ny Cavalles propres pour le haras, ny Estelons beaux, ny de belle taille. Il n'y a que les Paysans qui font couvrir leurs juments aux premiers Chevaux qu'ils rencontrent; ne desirant autre chose qu d'en avoir pour leur labourage; Si bien que la pluspart de ceux qui en viennent sont Chevaux tous abastardis…." Menou, *La Pratique,* 11.

cannot be mounted and furnished with horses of such quality as is required for our service."[127] This scarcity of suitable horses is attributed directly to "the frantic number of carts which one sees today in all the cities of my realm."[128]

Menou's interest in horse breeding as a fact of French recovery may have gone farther than the few observations penned in this treatise. Jacques Mulliez cites the opinion of a nineteenth-century off icial in the national stud administration, Geffrie de Neuvy, who, based on similarities of style and tone, credited Menou with the authorship of an anonymous work of 1639 presenting a plan for a national stud system.[129]

Like the noble academies proposed by La Noue and Pluvinel, this would be an issue of far-ranging concern. Legislative efforts ventured in the 1620s came to nought.[130] One proposal, bearing echoes of the Middle Ages, proposed using monasteries for horse breeding.[131] The establishment of a network of royal studs would also be guided by mercantilist concerns, with Colbert, at a later date, citing the

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[127] "…marchands courtiers en chevaux et mareschaux des provinces de Danemark, Frise, Flandre, Bretagne et autres, ce qui est cause que nous, si les Seigneurs Gentilshommes et autres qui nous assistant journellement en nos guerres et armées, ne peuvent être montés et fournis de chevaux tels et si bons qu'il es requis pour notre service." Cited in Jacques Mulliez, *Les Chevaux du Royaume* (Belin: Paris, 2004, repr. 1983), 74.

[128] "…à raison du nombre effréné de carrosses que l'on voit aujourd'hui dans toutes les villes de mon royaume." Mulliez, *Les Chevaux*, 74.

[129] Mulliez, *Les Chevaux*, 76.

[130] Mulliez, *Les Chevaux*, 75.

[131] Mulliez, *Les Chevaux*, 75–6.

loss of French gold and silver "to the Germans and other foreigners who are importing their horses [into France] in great numbers."[132]

In Menou's work we can catch something of a sea change in the equestrian orders. The *Grand Ecuyer* by tradition occupied a position within the royal household of considerable prestige and importance. Not only was he responsible for the the king's equestrian establishment – royal stables and horses, spectacle and chivalric protocol – but also for the considerable personnel these entailed, along with post riders and couriers.[133] La Broue offers an insider's look at the *écuyer'*s position, with its multiplicity of demands and details. In the course of the seventeenth century, however, we see the French *écuyer* as having a higher profile, and exerting a broader authority, based solely on his knowledge and experience. Mulliez sees in Menou but the first of many such experts who would serve as technical advisors in the administration of state studs.[134]

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[132] "…le transport qu'on a faict pour les Allemands et autres étrangers qui amenoient des chevaux en grand nombre." Mulliez, *Les Chevaux,* 75.

[133] André Stegmann, "La Naissance de l'art équestre en France à la fin du XVIe siècle," in *Les Jeux à la Renaissance* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1982), 119. Stegmann points out that their responsibilities excluded matters pertaining to hunting or to war, each of which was organized and administered separately.

[134] Mulliez, *Les Chevaux,* 76.

Chapter 5. ENGLAND'S EQUESTRIAN LANDSCAPE, 1550-1670

An Italianate transplant, English manège flourished in thorny ground. The English writers, like the French, ended by translating the art of horsemanship, conceptually as well as linguistically, into a distinctive native idiom. In this respect, their treatises reveal the emergence, not of one voice, but many, a diverse and somewhat contentious landscape suggestive of deeper social and political differences.

Consequently, the assimilation and naturalization of school riding in early modern England are examined here in three parts, each representing a different social sphere and orientation. These are preceded by an overview in part 1 which establishes the context of the treatises, focusing particularly on those features which broadly distinguish the English works from their continental counterparts. Part 2 focuses on the Elizabethan court, and the treatises of Thomas Blundeville (1560 and 1564-5), John Astley (1584), and Thomas Bedingfield (1584). Part 3 explores alternative social and cultural vantage points, as represented by the treatises of Christopher Clifford (1585) and Gervase Markham (1593 and 1607). Part 3 moves to an examination of the influential works of William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle (1657 and 1743), England's greatest equestrian authority. In Cavendish we encounter a figure at once outdated and progressive, and whose work reflects the play of contemporary intellectual and political currents—though not necessarily either consistent or harmonious in combination.[1]

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[1] Blundeville, *A new booke containing the arte of ryding, and breakinge greate horses*, cited hereafter as *The Arte of Ryding;* for full citation see 92n54; Thomas Blundeville, *The Four Chiefest Offices Belonging to Horsemanship* (London: William Seres, 1565–66); John Astley, *The Art of Riding* (London: Henrie Denham, 1584; facsimile reprt. Amsterdam and New York: Da Capo Press, 1968);

Part 1. Manège with an English Accent

The English writers on manège resembled the French in a number of ways. Both drew upon Italian sources, and both worked, at least initially, within a courtly and aristocratic milieu. Both negotiated the ground between the military claims of the art and its rigorous aesthetic. Both used the art as expressive of a broader program of moral, educational and political reform, and even offered it as one means to that end. Nonetheless, the differences between the two are striking.

In examining these treatises as a group, one is immediately struck by a characteristic that sharply distinguishes the English works from their French and Italian counterparts. While it is true that the English produced a great master in William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle, they produced no great *professional* riding masters. Professionals were certainly at hand; Thomas Bedingfield speaks of the "praise due to those that be teachers of this art in the citie of London; for by their

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and Thomas Bedingfield*, The Art of Riding* (London: H. Denham, 1584) [Early English Books Online]. The second group consists of Christopher Clifford, *The School of Horsemanship* (London: T. East for Thomas Cadman, 1585) [Early English Books Online], and Gervase Markham*, Cavalerice, or, the English Horseman, Containing all the Arts of Horsemanship* (London: Edward Allde and W. Jaggard, 1607) [Early English Books Online]. The third is represented by two treatises by William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle, *La Methode nouvelle & invention extraordinaire de dresser les chevaux, les travailler selon la nature, et parfaire par la subtilité de l'art* (Antwerp: Jacques Van Meurs, 1657) and *A General System of Horsemanship in all its Branches* (London: J. Brindley, 1743); as discussed in the text, however, these are not so much distinct works as the first and last representatives of an extensive process of translation, reworking, and retranslation. Ellen Wells, *Horsemanship,* provides a bibliographical survey for these authors, while Mennessier de la Lance offers a more detailed discussion of those with works in French translation, i.e. Markham and Cavendish. For Markham, see F.N.L. Poynter's bio-bibliographical study, *A Bibliography of Gervase Markham* (Oxford: Oxford Bibliographical Society, 1962). For a detailed and comprehensive discussion of these treatises within their cultural and historical context, see MacDonald, *Horsemanship as a Courtly Art*.

industrie and vertue, the number of serviceable horsses & horssemen is daily increased; & should be more, if other skilful men would applie themselves to teaching in that maner…."[2] Nonetheless, the literary incarnation of the art originated elsewhere. Without exception, the notable English treatises of the early modern era were penned by amateurs. This phenomenon is most marked among the authors of the Tudor court, men who, while offering their efforts to a larger audience, affected first and foremost to write for their own circle of friends and acquaintances.

This amateur posture contrasts sharply with the French court, which, as has been seen, nurtured the creation of finished, highly-trained specialists whose excellence in their chosen field provided the basis of career and identity both. La Broue, Pluvinel, St. Antoine and Menou all conform to this pattern, as would the great eighteenth-century master La Guérinière. This is not to suggest that English horsemanship differed radically in its social assumptions. It too emerged and flourished in a courtly milieu, and so reflected comparable values and preoccupations. The exercise still carried a coded assertion of power and superiority, and the patronage of the great continued to play its part. However, one finds as a whole that the idiom is fundamentally different, as are the associated postures and terms of value.

For example, the English model skirts the hierarchical *pas de deux* of patron prince and client master, that fixture of the Italian and French treatises so ingeniously inverted by Pluvinel. As indicated above, school riding as translated to England established itself as the domain of the gentleman-amateur. In the case of the English, mastery was defined in the terms of gentlemanly accomplishment, with prideful

[2] Bedingfield, *Art of Riding*, Dedication.

display tempered by the demands of taste and decorum, and sublimated as usefulness to one's friends and society. The resulting lower profile and more modest claims in turn allowed for a freer play of individual assertion.

It may be argued, moreover, that English manège proceeded from premises fundamentally different from those which shaped the French school, and that the art itself was conceived as serving different ends. Simply put, the English chose to follow Grisone, while the French gravitated to Pignatelli, and so to Fiaschi. This divergence occurred despite the fact that the evolving French and English schools were actually aligned for a time, as English horsemanship passed under French influence during the early Stuarts. It was in this period that the English court played host to the French riding master Pierre Antoine Bourdin, Seigneur de St. Antoine.[3] Though less familiar to posterity than Pluvinel or La Broue—he wrote no treatise—St. Antoine enjoyed a considerable reputation in his own time, both at home and abroad. Sent to England in 1603 by Henry IV, he served as riding master to Prince Henry, James's elder son, and, upon the prince's death in 1612, entered the service of Prince Charles. Twenty-one years later, in 1633, St. Antoine would be accorded the honor of inclusion in the king's equestrian portrait by Van Dyck.[4]

The French transplant withered, however, with the prince's premature death.[5] In fact, by that time a native English school of sorts had already taken root, a far more vigorous growth springing from the thorny empiricism of Grisone. It is at this point

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[3] Daniel Reytier, ed., *Les Écuries royales du XVIe au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Association de l'Académie d'Art Équestre de Versailles, 1998), 152–3.

[4] Reytier, *Écuries royales*, 142. St. Antoine is depicted walking to the left of the king's horse, a traditional position of subordination. He gazes up at Charles while carrying the king's helmet.

[5] St. Antoine led the mourning horse at his funeral. Strong, *Henry, Prince of Wales,* 65.

that one finds a fundamental divergence between the developing English school and that of the French. As has been seen, the great French masters issued from the Fiaschi-Pignatelli school. The English, on the other hand, drew far more heavily on the teachings of Federigo Grisone and on those of the Lombard-born Roman master Claudio Corte, whose visit to the kingdom in 1565 exerted an important secondary influence. The distinction is significant. The musicality and precision cultivated by the Fiaschi/Pignatelli school positioned riding as an art closely akin to dance. This approach, with its concern for exactitude of line and rhythm, placed a marked emphasis on the disciplining and ordering of the body, human and equine both. The fusion of music and dance with horsemanship, a definitive aspect of the Pignatelli legacy, held a particular affinity with absolutist spectacle. Grisone's somewhat formless treatise, on the other hand, with its classical rules and labored descriptions—waiting for "judicious *Cavalieri*" who would "make clear that which I have cast in shadow with pen and paper"[6]—seems almost to have invited the defining imprint of its translators and interpreters. Corte's encyclopedic treatise, trimmed of its literary effusions, similarly offered a cornucopia of equestrian knowledge. Thus the first generation of English authors set their stamp on the art in the modest guise of translators and abridgers.

By the time of Corte's visit the first English work on horsemanship was already in hand; Thomas Blundeville's *The Arte of Ryding and Breakinge Greate Horses* (1560), a selective translation of Grisone's *Gli ordini di cavalcare*, represented the first of a modest but sturdy Tudor literature on the subject. A small cluster of works followed in the 1580s. The year 1584 saw the publication of two

[6] Grisone, *Ordini di cavalcare,* Aii r.

works on horsemanship, one by John Astley and a second by Thomas Bedingfield, both bearing the title *The Art of Riding.*

A marked difference of posture can be seen in a third treatise, Christopher Clifford's *The School of Horsemanship,* which appeared the following year. Clifford wrote as a seasoned soldier, and one who had little use for the spectacular airs of the manège ring. Eight years later, in 1593—the same year that an impoverished Salomon de la Broue saw the first volume of his great treatise into print—Gervase Markham produced *A Discourse of Horsemanship.* It was only the first of many works which Markham would write on horse-related subjects, a principal facet of his prolific and wide-ranging literary career. In that last fact, as in the diversity of his subject matter and the broad inclusiveness of his envisioned audience, Markham offers another twist on the lofty stance of the continental riding master-turned-author. Professional riding master he was not, but professional author, he most certainly was. Taken together, the treatises of Clifford and Markham may be seen as reordering the premises of exclusivity which manège itself had established, those governing the exclusive community of horsemen. This reordering may be traced at least in part to an anti-manège backlash and the rise of alternative forms of equestrian recreation such as horse-racing, both of which held deeper social implications.

One would expect such social heresies to be overthrown in the seventeenth-century works of England's greatest horse master, William Cavendish, first Duke of Newcastle—landed aristocrat, unreconstructed royalist and ardent apologist of manège. Cavendish was also, however, patron to some of the most progressive

thinkers of his time. Thus he stands as something of a paradox, simultaneously looking to the past and defying it.

Part 2. The Gentlemen Pensioners: Blundeville, Astley and Bedingfield

The first cluster of English treatises, dating from 1560 to 1584, sprang from a circle of friends and officials within the court of Elizabeth I. These men—Thomas Blundeville, John Astley, and Thomas Bedingfield—were part of a Norfolk contingent at court, a striking circumstance identified by Gabrielle Ann MacDonald.[7] More significantly, all held the title of Gentleman Pensioner,[8] an office which, by its history and its duties, joined the equestrian concerns of horse breeding and horsemanship to a larger national mission. This perspective is reflected in their treatises, which all, to a greater or lesser extent, appear framed by broader concerns. As will be seen, their efforts meshed on one side with the military and equestrian concerns of Robert Dudley, Earl of Essex, and Robert Devereux, Earl of Leicester, both energetic and capable Masters of the Horse, and on the other with the educational and rehabilitative projects of men like William Cecil and Roger Ascham. Thus English manège was embraced at its birth by educational and military concerns.

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[7] Fellow Norfolk men at Elizabeth's court included Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester and Master of Her Majesty's Horse; William Fitzwilliams, first cousin to Sir Philip Sidney; and Henry Mackwilliam. Fitzwilliams and Mackwilliam were Gentlemen Pensioners as well as friends of the writers. MacDonald, *Horsemanship as a Courtly Art*, 161.

[8] Nicholas Russell, *Like Engend'ring Like: Heredity and Animal Breeding in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 64.

Established early in the reign of Henry VIII, the Gentlemen Pensioners were a cadre of fifty courtiers—"Cadets of noble Families, and of the higher Order of Gentry"[9]—constituted as a royal retinue of men-at-arms. As such they were required to maintain proficiency in "the Feate of Armes, in handling and renying the Spere and other faits of Werre on horsbacke like as in other Reames and Cuntreys be dayley practised and used."[10] Their role was both military and ceremonial, and entailed a natural concern for good horses and proficiency in horsemanship. More significantly, they represented one facet of a broader royal undertaking to restore England's horse population, both in quality and in numbers.

The need was especially pressing during Henry's reign, as it had been from the time of his accession in 1509. As has been seen, horses were of crucial strategic importance in the waging of war. Organized horse breeding in England, however, had fallen into disarray with the Wars of the Roses. Martial horsemanship had lapsed over a longer trajectory, as, from the fourteenth century on, the English demonstrated a marked tactical preference for fighting on foot.[11] Thus, though English nobles kept their skills honed through tourneying, the chivalric ethos was backed by considerably less authentic battlefield experience than could be found on the continent.

Henry VIII, an avid connoisseur of horses, initially showed little interest in the rehabilitation of any horse population beyond that of his own stables.[12] His

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[9] Pegge, *Curialia*, 2.2.

[10] Cited in Pegge, 2.4.

[11] Andrew Ayton, *Knights and* Warhorses, 26.

[12] From the first he was enthusiastically engaged in the acquisition and breeding of fine horses, as witness the twelve Gonzaga mares sent him from Mantua in 1512. Malacarne offers a detailed discussion of this gift from the Italian perspective in *Il mito dei cavalli*, 106–34.

complacence changed, however, as military campaigns began to take their toll, using up horses at a prodigious rate.[13] While this would continue to be the case, beginning in the 1530s he undertook a series of concerted steps to restore the kingdom's horses in numbers and reinvigorate them in quality.[14] These measures were virtually identical to those implemented by the monarchs of France and England three hundred years earlier, as statutes, intrusive in their effect and intention, prohibited the private export of horses, sought to regulate private breeding for size and quality, and mandated the maintenance of breeding stock, a levy based jointly on rank and property.[15] The effort was framed, as it would later be under Elizabeth, as a question of state, "[f]orasmuch as the breed of good and strong horses is a great help and defence to the realm and a great comoditie to the inhabitants thereof."[16]

The Gentlemen Pensioners provided a crucial service in this connection by breeding horses for service to the crown. This was an expectation rather than an explicit charge, but Joan Thirsk has noted the frequency with which former monastic lands, especially those endowed with parkland, were leased to Pensioners on favorable terms. Such transfers, she observes,

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[13] See Thirsk, *Horses in Early Modern England*, 8–11, for a concise and compelling discussion of Henry's military profligacy with regard to horses, and its results in terms of crown actions and policy, another striking instance of *politique de cheval*.

[14] Thirsk, *Horses in Early Modern England,* 12–13.

[15] The size of English horses was of particular concern to the king, and the royal statutes of this period represent a concerted effort to reduce the population of "pony weeds," scrawny, undersized horses of nondescript breeding, and encourage that of horses at least fourteen hands high. Insofar as they were enforceable, such statutes worked against the ancient practice of *selvagium*, and went so far as to require the periodic extermination of weak or small animals. By leaving the cull to the owner's discretion, however, that particular law, 32, Henry VIII (1541), largely rendered itself ineffectual. See Dent and Goodall, *Foals of Epona,* 138–47 for a discussion of these statutes and their actual impact.

[16] Cited in Dent and Goodall, *Foals of Epona*, 141.

> were not random and capricious grants to court favourites, as at first sight appears, but purposeful measures to improve the number and quality of English horses for service. To contemporaries, indeed, they probably seemed deliberately designed to maintain the tradition that had hitherto been upheld by the monasteries of keeping the best horses.[17]

Beyond such specific activities, the Pensioners represented a cohesive and purposeful circle devoted to the cultivation of good horses and good riding. Though the original Pensioners left no writings, it seems highly likely that they would have embraced the new courtly horsemanship out of Italy—and that they had the opportunity to do so, since, as mentioned in chapter 2, the Italians Alexander de Bologna and Jacques de Granado were serving as officers of the royal stables during this period, from 1526 until at least 1544.[18] Thomas Blundeville's reference to "olde Alexander their first master," who "was him self as I understand, sometime Grysones scheller,"[19] takes on a particular resonance under the circumstances, revealing at least the tradition of such an association.

Thus the equestrian activities of the Gentlemen Pensioners, far from appearing as self-indulgent "dauncing and prauncing," can be seen as having genuine strategic significance, and as representing an important contribution to the security of the

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[17] Thirsk, *Horses in Early Modern England*, 14. Such traditions resided in living memory. As they had done in the Middle Ages, monasteries played a role in the Tudor revival of horse breeding—albeit through their dissolution, as prime breeding grounds were made available to the crown. Malmesbury, site of the great royal stud at Cole Park, was one such. Sir Arthur d'Arcy, writing to Thomas Cromwell, alerted him to the possibilities offered by the Cistercian abbey of Jervaulx Abbey in Yorkshire, long known for its horses, "for surely the breed of Jervaulx for horses was the tried breed in the North, the stallions and mares well sorted. I think in no realm should be found the likes to them. For there is large and high grounds for the summer, and in winter woods and low grounds to serve them." Memorials of Fountains Abbey, 1: 190, Surtees Society, cited in C.M. Prior, *The Royal Studs of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: Reproduction of the Earl of Godolphin's Stud Book* (London: Horse and Hound, 1935), 3.

[18] Thirsk, *Horses in Early Modern England,* 17.

[19] Blundeville, *The Arte of Ryding*, dedication.

realm. If military preparedness was the most obvious benefit of proficiency in horsemanship, however, the moral and temperamental "dressing" of the young could be claimed as another. As has been seen, the training of horses invited analogies with the education of young men, and in particular, young nobles. This focus would be no less true of England than of France, due in large part to the singular character of this Tudor court circle and the close personal connection of its members with statesmen, scholars, adventurers and poets.

Particularly representative in his breadth of interests and contacts is Thomas Blundeville, whose 1560 treatise *The Arte of Ryding and Breakinge Greate Horses* represented the first English translation of Federigo Grisone's *Ordini di cavalcare*.[20] One of only two books he produced on equestrian subjects, *The Arte of Ryding* would take its place beside a far more sizable array of works on navigation, geography, mathematics and moral philosophy.

Born around 1522 in Newton Flotman, Norfolk, Blundeville was the oldest son of Edward Blundeville and Elizabeth Godsalve.[21] Though the specifics of his education remain uncertain, he may have attended Cambridge University and then entered Gray's Inn in 1541.[22] He passed much of his adult life in London, only

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[20] Watanabe-O'Kelly incorrectly identifies *The Four Chiefest Offices of Horsemanship* of 1565 as the first English translation of Grisone. In this, his second work on horsemanship, Blundeville merely incorporated material from Grisone as the second book of the four. Watanabe-O'Kelly, *Triumphall Shews,* 69.

[21] For biographical details and family background see Arthur Campling, "Thomas Blundeville, of Newton Flotman, co. Norfolk (1522-1606). Author and Poet, *tempo.* Elizabeth," in *Norfolk Archaeology: or Miscellaneous Tracts Relating to the Antiquities of the County of Norfolk*, vol. 21, (Norwich: Goose & Son, 1923), 337–60.

[22] Campling, "Thomas Blundeville," 340.

returning to Norfolk upon the death of his father in 1568. He married twice, to Rose Puttenham in 1554 and to Margaret Johnson of Woodnorton in 1581.

Blundeville approached the subject of horsemanship primarily as a translator and compiler; his own interests ran to more intellectual subjects such as mathematics, navigation and astronomy. A member of the putative Wingfield House circle,[23] he counted among his friends John Dee and Henry Briggs; Edward Wright, author of *Certaine Errors in Navigation* (1599) and tutor in mathematics to Prince Henry; Dr. William Gilbert, author of *De Magnete*; and the noted geographer Richard Hakluyt. The group was close-knit and collegiate in nature, freely sharing ideas and discoveries,[24] and Blundeville was an active and engaged member. In the company of such luminaries as Gilbert, Briggs and Hakluyt, however, he typically appears as something of a lesser light, more noteworthy as a member of the group than for any personal achievement. "We might also mention Thomas Blundeville," writes one modern scholar in characteristically parenthetical fashion, "a free-lance writer on horsemanship, moral education, logic, cartography, astronomy, etc."[25]

Nonetheless Blundeville left a sizeable body of scientific and instructional works, striking for their educational orientation: *The True Order and Methode of Wryting and Reading Hystories* (1574); *A Briefe Description of Universal Mappes and Cardes and of Their Use* (1589); *M. Blundevile his Exercises, Containing Sixe Treatises* (1594), a work on astronomy, geography and navigation written specifically

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[23] The existence of this circle is discounted as apocryphal by Richard Westfall. See http://galileo.rice.edu/Catalog/NewFiles/gilbert.html, item 10 (accessed March 26, 2006).

[24] E.J.S. Parsons and W.F. Morris, "Edward Wright and His Work," *Imago Mundi* 3 (1939): 69.

[25] Rufus Suter, "A Biographical Sketch of Dr. Willliam Gilbert of Colchester," *Osiris* 10 (1952), 380.

for the benefit of "young Gentlemen"; and *The Theoriques of the Seven Planets* (1602). To these may be added an early work, *Three Morall Treatises* (1561), including two in verse; *The Arte of Logike* (1599); and several works of translation, most notably *A Very Brief and Profitable Treatise* (1570), a translation of a Spanish work, Federigo Furio Ceriol's *El consejo i consejeros del principe,* via an Italian translation by Alfonso de Ulloa,[26] and *A Ritch Storehouse, or, Treasurie for Nobilitye and Gentlemen* (1570), translated from a work in Latin by the German humanist educator Johannes Sturm. Sturm was a longstanding correspondent of Roger Ascham's, another thread in the web of relationships which linked these gentlemen.

The Arte of Ryding and Breakinge Greate Horses proved a success, with the first edition appearing around 1565 and a second in 1570, respectively titled *The Arte of Riding* and *A Newe Booke Containing the Arte of Riding*, all printed in London by William Seres.[27] Another edition appeared in 1580 (London: Henrie Denham); and a fifth in 1597 (London: P. Short), the last for this work until the production in 1969 of a facsimile issue of the original 1560 edition.[28] The initial translation of Grisone, completed when Blundeville was around 38 and some six years after his first marriage, was followed roughly five years later by *The Four Chiefest Offices Belonging to Horsemanship.* This second treatise represents a compilation "painfully

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[26] Mary Augusta Scott, "Elizabethan Translations from the Italian: The Titles of Such Works Now First Collected and Arranged, with Annotations: IV, Miscellaneous," *PMLA* 14.4 (1899), 487–488. Blundeville's published translation includes a dedication to the Earl of Leicester, dated from Newton Flotman, April 1, 1570. According to J. De Oliveira E. Silva, the work was a commission from the earl. ("Sir Philip Sidney and the Castilian Tongue," *Comparative Literature* 34.2, Spring, 1982, 133n8.) Though Scott reports finding nothing by Alfonso de Ulloa, a Spaniard noted for his translation of Spanish and Portuguese works into Italian, she did find one by his friend Ludovico Dolce.

[27] Wells, *Horsemanship*, 98.

[28] Campling also mentions a 1609 edition, not referenced in Wells. "Thomas Blundeville," 343.

collected out of a number of authors," with his reworking of Grisone appropriated for the second book. Written in 1565–6, approximately three years before Blundeville's return to Norfolk, *Four Chiefest Offices* was even more successful than *The Arte of Ryding;* editions or reissues appeared in 1570 (London: William Seres); 1580 (London: Henrie Denham); 1593 (London: Richard Yardley and Peter Short), and 1609 (London: Humfrey Lownes). A reprint of the first edition similarly came out in 1969.[29]

As this chronology suggests, *The Arte of Ryding* was an early literary effort, undertaken, Blundeville tells us, at the urging of William Cecil.[30] In a sense, it is the more notable for the company it keeps, as Blundeville's enthusiasm for free scientific inquiry offers an interesting juxtaposition with the social exclusivity implicit in manège**.** Cecil's involvement, along with Blundeville's own background as a translator, educator and mathematician, suggests the possibility of a broader, shared concern with education in general, and with the education of the sons of the nobility in particular. This would be consistent with the pattern seen elsewhere, in the close functional and symbolic association of manège with such plans.

The particular timing of the project also suggests such a connection. In 1559—just a year before Blundeville's *Arte of Ryding* came to print, and coinciding with the project itself (for Blundeville refers to having begun it in 1558), Cecil was entertaining a proposal which would require young nobles to attend university from the age of twelve to that of eighteen. He went on to establish such a school in his own

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[29] Wells, *Horsemanship,* 29.

[30] Blundeville, *Arte of Ryding,* dedication.

household, with the aim of giving young nobles the intellectual, social and ethical grounding appropriate for service to the crown.[31]

Cecil's school was only one of several such efforts, and though it lacked any military component, other such projects did. Sir Nicholas Bacon (father of Francis), in whose household Blundeville had served as a mathematics tutor, also drew up such a plan, as did Sir Humphrey Gilbert.[32] Bacon's 1561 proposal, which specifically concerned the education of the Queen's Wards, included provision for instruction in horsemanship,[33] as did Humphrey's project. The latter was the first to actually attempt it, devising a fully developed proposal for a school which he called "Queen Elizabeth's Academy."[34] Humphrey's project in particular, with its call for education in "matters of accion meet for present practize both of peace and warre," resembled the continental model. Though it placed a greater emphasis on academic subjects, mandating, for example, the study of classical languages, it also included instruction in horsemanship and riding to the ring.[35]

In fact, the translation's practical value as a riding manual may have carried more weight. Though the theme of military preparedness would sound with particular

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[31] Lee, "Some English Academies," 277. This was not a new idea; something comparable was ventured during the reign of Edward VI, with a proposed school for the education of royal wards.

[32] Lee, "Some English Academies," 277.

[33] MacDonald, *Horsemanship,* 45.

[34] Lee, "Some English Academies," 275.

[35] The ambitious program mingled the modern and retrograde; in addition to instruction in chemistry, practical medicine, civil law and divinity, it called for employment of a herald, whose duties would include maintaining each student's genealogical records. Unfortunately the estimated budget for the project came to nearly £3000, not including the cost of buildings or riding school. Given the queen's frugality, nothing came of the plan. Lee, "Some English Academies," 275, 277.

urgency in the 1580s,[36] it was already a matter of frank concern as early as 1560. Cavalry was particularly at issue, as the crown had discontinued its use of the noble retinue in the 1540s, and turned instead to the county muster.[37] If Blundeville's description of such a muster is at all representative, as seems likely, the prospect must have been troubling indeed, "when the Quenes Maiesty hath nede of hors and horsemen," and one sees instead "some that sit on their horse like wind shaken redes handling their hands & legs like weavors." And should the horseman prove capable,

> then the horse for hys parte shal be so evel broken, as when he is spurred to go forward, he wil go backward. And when his ryder wold have him to turn on the right hande he will turne cleane contrary. And when he shoulde stoppe, he will arme him selfe and runne away, or else stoppe sooner then his rider woulde have him, or use such like toyes.[38]

Set against this image, the project of rendering Grisone into clear and easy-to-understand English acquires a fresh significance, and even a certain urgency.

In his dedication—appropriately enough, to the Earl of Leicester[39]—Blundeville stresses the twin themes of practical value and moral reform, likewise received from the pen of Grisone but here given specific application. With regard to the first, he expresses his hope that the earl will "[encourage] the esquires and rydors of the stable, in breaking the Queenes Ma. horses, sometimes to folow thinstructions

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[36] See MacDonald, *Horsemanship,* 182.

[37] Ayton, *Knights and Warhorses,* 10.

[38] Blundeville, *Arte of Ryding,* letter to the reader, A.iiii.1v–2r.

[39] Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, was Elizabeth's Master of the Horse at the time. He was also related to the Blundeville family through his marriage to Amy Robsart, a Blundeville cousin. Campling, "Thomas Blundeville," 343.

therof…"[40] The theme of national interest emerges in the paradoxical figure of the Great Horse, as Blundeville praises Leicester for his support of the "breding & keping of great horses," something which the earl "hathe so gracisully [sic] provided for." This, though impractical on its face, is held to be an important service, for the Great Horse remains identified with the cultivation of chivalry and chivalric virtues. As such, Blundeville presents its preservation as important to the welfare of the nation. It "should be to the greate profitinge of this oure common weale," Blundeville writes, "[i]n the moste partes whereof partelye for lacke of arte, & partly for lacke of exercise, Chivalry is sore decayed."[41]

Blundeville's treatise reflects a freer attitude toward his material than the word "translation" might imply. Like Corte before him, he undertakes to correct Grisone's deficiencies, chiefly those of organization and coherence**.** While certainly respectful of his source, he is also candid, and leaves no doubt of the difficulties the work caused him. In the dedication, he explains the genesis of the project, dating back to the time, two years earlier, when he decided "to have translated into our vulgare tounge, the foure bookes of Gryson…and to have geven the same unto your L. [Robert Dudley, earl of Leicester] as M. Secretarye Cycell can well testifie."[42] Blundeville writes that he abandoned the project after completing the first two books—the bulk of the treatise—seeing

> to what inconvenience I was bound: having to folow so doubtful phrases, and maners of speaking, and so confuse an order of writing,

[40] Blundeville, *Arte of Ryding,* dedication.

[41] Blundeville, *Arte of Ryding*, dedication.

[42] Blundeville, *Arte of Ryding.* dedication.

> as in my iudgement he useth, (being in dede a farre better doer, then a writer) by meanes wherof he is consstrayned too make many repiticions of one thing. And to use more woordes then nede: I could not satisfis [sic] my self therwith. And therfore leavinge of the enterprice, I soughte how to bringe so good a matter as that is, into a better forme, and ordre if it might be. And thereby too make it the playner and also the briefer.[43]

Corte, it will be remembered, critiqued Grisone on similar grounds, and so asserted that his aim in writing his own treatise was to provide greater completeness as well as greater clarity. Blundeville's impulse carries him in the opposite direction; he condenses and reorders, working always to make the sense of his subject as clear as possible for his English audience. It is to this end that he includes a second, longer prefatory letter, addressed to the general reader, in which he sets out the rationale for his book and describes its contents and organization.

The treatise, divided into three books, now opens with a table of contents. The first book, which "entreateth of the riders office,"[44] begins, as in the original, with a few condensed and neatly ordered classical references, leading with that of the Sybarite horses; moves to a discussion of the significance of various colors and markings followed by points of conformation; provides instructions for taming a young colt, and then moves to the subject of the aids, discussed first generally and then each individually. The second book "entreateth of the horses lessons,"[45] and the third "of the corrections and vices of the diversitie of bittes."[46] The treatise concludes with the fifty woodcuts of bits, now clearly organized into three groups, those of

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[43] Blundeville, *Arte of Ryding*, dedication.

[44] Blundeville, *Arte of Ryding,* A.iiii.2r.

[45] Blundeville, *Arte of Ryding,* A.iiii.2v.

[46] Blundeville, *Arte of Ryding,* A.iiii.4r.

closed bits, broken ports and upset mouths, and whole ports. The bits are numbered within each group, and the numbers placed as appropriate in the margins of the third book, so that the images can be easily referenced from the text and vice versa. Blundeville himself adds a fifty-first, a woodcut of a "halter or headstrayne." Despite the lack of pagination, one is struck throughout by the care taken to present the material in a clear, intelligible and well-organized fashion.

Blundeville carefully delineates his own contribution and subordinates it, without challenge, to Grisone's authority as author and horse master. In his letter to the reader, he distances himself from Grisone's literary faults even as he excuses them, and ends by praising the accomplishment on its own terms:

> And though Gryson seemeth to use the like order, that I do in the very beginning: yet he doth not continew the same but immediatly maketh so many digressions, & interlaceth so many and divers maters together, as were ynough to confound the memory of a very discrete reader. And yet Gryson not to be blamed, for not observing that order or Metheode in writing, which perhaps he never had learned: But rather much to be praised & commended of al men for uttering in the best maner he could this his assured knowledge which he had gotten with great labour, & contynual exercising him self in ryding the space of xl. years & above.[47]

Blundeville is not inclined to surrender all credit to Grisone, however, and claims his proper share. "I doubt not but by your readye profiting therein," he writes to the reader, "you shall have just occasion to be thankefull, bothe to Grison for the first invention of the matter, and also to me for disposing and reducinge the same into a playne forme and order of teachinge."[48]

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[47] Blundeville, *Arte of Ryding*, letter to the reader, A.iiii.1v.

[48] Blundeville, *Arte of Ryding,* letter to the reader, A.iiii.2r.

Having taken his bow, Blundeville segues easily into something very like a testimonial:

> And you shall have very good cause also to be thankful unto my deare frende M. John Astely M. of the Queenes Maiesties Jewell house. By whose daily practising of the rules of Grison his booke, I sawe him without the help of any other teacher, bring two of his horses, and specially that whiche he calleth his Balle, unto such perfection as I beleve few gentilmen in this realme have the lyke.[49]

Thus he assures the reader of the efficacy of Grisone's method as learned and applied through the text. It is a sensible precaution; one suspects that the idea of using a book to train a horse would strike most people as odd and even foolish. In the next moment, however, just as seamlessly, he transforms the passage into a graceful tribute to Astley himself, a subtle illustration of that English divergence from the continental model of princely patronage. Though the work is formally dedicated to the Earl of Leicester, Blundeville's praise of Astley appears as the more genuine dedication; it is fuller and more feeling, and in its disclosure of personal details—the name of Astley's favorite horse, and mention of his active encouragement of the project—proudly claims the friendship even as it tips a knowing smile to the friend. In this spirit Blundeville offers Astley, the model horseman, as being likewise a model of virtue.

> Which evident proofe together with his encouraging me unto it, made me the more willing to take the matter in hand. In hope that other men woulde with like diligence use the like exercise, wishing all gentelmen lacking his qualities, to be his like in dede. And that not only in this exercice, but also in many other his vertuous exercises, as well of minde as of body. To thintent they may deserve as he doth, the love, favour, and commendacion of all men.[50]

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[49] Blundeville, *Arte of Ryding,* chapter to the reader, A.iiii.2r.

[50] Blundeville, *Arte of Ryding,* chapter to the reader, A.iiii.2v.

In contrast to the pattern of the formal dedication, Blundeville's words suggest disinterested affection more than interested expectation.

His own approach combines fidelity to his source with matter-of-fact economy. Grisone's lengthy oration in praise of the horse is reduced to a neat summary of themes, as Blundeville tells his reader that Grisone commends, not only "the aptnes of a horse to learne, his stout courage, and long continuance in his goodnes, but also the worthines of the art it selfe, whereunto is also adjoyned who firste founde out riding…."[51] Each quality then appears as a heading, with a brief explanatory entry. "The aptnes of a horse to learne," for example, is demonstrated through a concise reference to the Sybarite horses: "There is a city within the kingdom of Naples called Sybarye, in which sometime horses did learne to daunce at the sound of a Simpban [sic]."[52]

Blundeville also passes along Grisone's punitive corrections, however. The nappy horse whose restiness proceeds "of stubbornness and stout courage" is to be ridden

> into some plane fielde newly plowed. And there if he whilest you give him his leasson chaunce to stoppe in dede, or mind to stoppe, and so to become restiffe: then immediately all to rate him with a terrible voice, beating him upon the heade betwixte the eares, and uppon the forelegges, with a good sticke…And to molest hym the more, geve hym the ringe tournes on the one side, or on the other…By meanes whereof you shal so tame him as he seing his resistance not to prevayle, shalbe content from thence forth to go quietlye and orderly.[53]

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[51] Blundeville, *Arte of Ryding,* B.ii.1r.

[52] Blundeville, *Arte of Ryding,* B.ii.1r.

[53] Blundeville, *Arte of Ryding,* S.v.3r–3v.

Blundeville adopts a markedly different approach in this respect in his second treatise on the subject, *The Four Chiefest Offices of Horsemanship*, written approximately five years after *The Arte of Ryding*. The later work is more ambitious in scope, dealing with breeding, riding, husbandry and farriery. It too is based on other authors, although Blundeville admits to drawing on "mine owne small knowledge gotten by travayling in forreine countries."[54] Though such self-effacement is formulaic in this group, one still wonders which most informed his work, the domain of the riding ring or that of "manuals, handbooks, and private schoolmasters."[55] In *The Arte of Ryding* he writes of his hope "tattempte hereafter some other thing of more waight," a reminder of the broader perspective and more varied interests which he brought to these projects, an approach quite different from that of the professional riding master.

In fact, one finds evidence of a distinctly scientific perspective in this popularizing work, directed, notably, to farriers and horsekeepers as well as horse owners. This in itself contrasts with Fiaschi's treatise, which, as discussed in chapter 3, lamented the lack of education among smiths, farriers and *marescalchi,* but sought to remedy the situation by fostering technical knowledge among the horse-owning nobility, who would then provide informed oversight. Blundeville's treatise is directed to the practitioners. Moreover, it suggests that sound practice and technical proficiency are not enough; one must also understand the underlying causes at work.

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[54] Blundeville, *Four Chiefest Offices,* dedication. Unless otherwise indicated, all references cited are from the 1609 edition, published in London by Humfrey Lownes.

[55] Kenneth Charlton, "Holbein's Ambassadors and Sixteenth-Century Education," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 21.1 (Jan–Mar, 1960), 109.

This results in a significant departure from the practices (if not the principles) set down by Grisone and passed on through Blundeville's own *Arte of Ryding.* In book 3, chapter 24, Blundeville, having just explained the four elements, speaks "[o]f the affections for a horse, and how the keeper ought to behave himselfe, that there may be a mutuall love betwixt the horse and him." By way of answer, he offers an Aristotelian discourse on the horse's nature which grounds the animal's emotions in physiological and instinctive responses:

> That there be affections, as well in a horse as in everie other beast enbued with the soule sensitive, I am sure no wise man doubteth. For as God gave to all such beastes the use of the senses, and the vertue sensitive, to comprehend thinges offered unto the senses: so did he also give them a naturall instinct or desire, called of the Latines Appetitus sensitivus, wherby they are moved to love or to hate, to follow or flie such things as they do conceive, & to rejoyce, or to be sorie for the presence or absence of the same. Wherfore al such affects as do belong unto the power sensitive, they have common with man: as these, love, hatred, anger, toy,[56] sorrow, feare, and such like: which affectes, for that they cause many times strange motions in the body, are to be considered as wel of the keeper, as of the Ferrer.[57]

In this way Blundeville reasserts the *animal* nature of the horse, offering a basis on which to judge its behavior other than that of human morality. In some respects, this is hardly new. Xenophon proceeded from a comparable understanding of the horse's nature, from which he asserted reward and punishment as the fundamental elements of training. As has been seen, however, Grisone's application of that principle was marked by inconsistency; insofar as the horse was anthropomorphized, its "bad behaviors" might be interpreted in moral terms, and so invite retributive punishment.

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[56] The word "toy" had a number of meanings in the sixteenth century, and in its abstract sense was associated with frivolity, fancies and fantasies, e.g. irrational and groundless notions or actions. In some settings it carried the added sense of "a foolish or unreasoning dislike or aversion," a usage specifically associated with horses. See "toy," *OED,* I.4b. OED Online (accessed March 27, 2006).

[57] Blundeville, *Four Chiefest Offices,* 3.24.

Blundeville urges a different approach, asserting that, "to the intent that the horse be not oppressed with the force of any affection, specially of feare, hatred, or wrath...the keepers office is to procure the love of his horse, and to delight him all maner of waies, as well with his voice as doings. For through the currish handling of unskilfull keepers, many horses are driven into such feare and desperation, as they become restife, and have many skittish toies."[58]

Blundeville's treatises would represent the totality of English writing on horsemanship until 1584–5, when we encounter a burst of work on the subject. First among these is John Astley's own work, a slender treatise entitled *The Art of Riding*, published in 1584. Although Astley too draws heavily on Grisone, we encounter in his work a decisive repudiation of coercive aids and stratagems in favor of subtle signals. In Astley's approach, the appearance of harmony between horse and rider has its basis in something like reality, through the sensitive application of a precise physical technique.

Astley was well-born, the son of Sir Thomas Astley of Hilmorton and Melton Constable, Norfolk.[59] He was also a cousin of Ann Boleyn, and therefore related to Elizabeth herself.[60] Casting his fortune with Elizabeth, he subsequently married her governess, Katherine Champernowne. They were joined in 1548 by Astley's friend Roger Ascham, who entered the Chelsea household as Elizabeth's tutor. The peace of the household was short-lived, however, as Thomas Seymour's ambitious plot to

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[58] Blundeville, *Four Chiefest Offices,* 3.24.

[59] Both Thomas Astley and Henry Markham appear on the roll of Gentlemen Pensioners for the year 1526. Pegge, *Curialia,* 27.

[60] MacDonald, *Horsemanship,* 161.

marry the princess—a scheme in which Katherine Astley was implicated—resulted in Elizabeth's disgrace and Seymour's execution. Ascham himself hastily withdrew to Cambridge,[61] and in 1554 John Astley fled to Padua, remaining there until Elizabeth's accession in 1558. He then became Master of the Queen's Jewels, an office he would hold for the next thirty-seven years, until his death in 1595. The friendship between Ascham and Astley likewise endured; Astley appears as one of the dinner guests in Ascham's *The Schoolmaster*.[62]

Contemporary testimony confirms that Astley was an esteemed figure at Elizabeth's court, admired for his character, manner and accomplishments. As is evident from Blundeville's tribute, he was known as a horseman as early as 1560. Years later the passage would find its way into Gabriel Harvey's copy of Thomas Hoby's translation of the *Courtier,* transcribed in Harvey's own hand:

> M. Blundeuil, in his Praeface to My Lord of Leyster before his Art of Ryding. I sawe my deare friend, M. John Ashley, M. of the Queens Maiestys Jewel howse, by the daily practising of the Rules of Grisons Books, without ye help of any other Teacher, bring two of his Horses unto such A perfection, as I beleeve few Gentlemen in this Realme have the lyke, where he also commendith him, not only for this exercise, but for many other courtly and vertuous qualitys, as well of mynd, as of body; thereby deserving the looue, favour and commendation of all men.[63]

Blundeville's tribute is but one of three testimonials to Astley cited by Harvey, sharing space with mentions from Roger Ascham and the Italian courtier,

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[61] "Roger Ascham," *ODNB,* Vol. 2, 590–91.

[62] Ascham, *Schoolmaster*, 3–7. The other guests are Sir William Petre, Sir John Mason, Doctor Wotton, Sir Richard Sackville, Sir Walter Mildmay,"Master Haddon, Master of Requests," Master Bernard Hampton, and Master Nicasius Yetswaert, "an agent for Queen Elizabeth in the Netherlands." See 3n1.

[63] Caroline Ruutz-Rees, "Some Notes of Gabriel Harvey's in Hoby's Translation of Castiglione's *Courtier* (1561)," PMLA 25 4 (1910), 614.

historian and "intelligencer" Pietro Bizzari. "*M. Ascham wrote his Discourse of Germane Affayeres to this M. Astely,"* Harvey writes, "whereby it appearith that they had read togither Aristotles Rhetorique, Tully, and Livy."[64] This notation is preceded by another in Latin, citing a poem written by Bizzari in Astley's honor: "*Petrus Bizarus in suis Poematis facit Joannem Ashlium Anglum perfectum Castilionis Aulicum.*"[65] Given its appearance on a dedication page in Hoby's translation of *The Courtier,* the citation suggests that, to Gabriel Harvey at least, John Astley was emblematic in his courtly virtues, a model worthy of emulation.

The notes may have been made any time after 1572, the year Harvey acquired the book.[66] A full twenty years later, however, the contentious Cambridge don would add his own admiring commentary, referring to Astley in *Pierce's Superogation or A New Prayse of the Olde Asse* (1593), and again invoking Bizzari:

> I cannot forget the gallant discourse of Horsemanship penned by a rare gentleman, M. Iohn Asteley of the Court, whom I dare intitle our English Xenophon, and maruell not that Pietro Bizzaro, a learned Italian, proposeth him for a perfect Patterne of Castilio's Courtier.[67]

Astley's treatise, like that of Blundeville, was undertaken at the behest of others, in this case the Gentlemen Pensioners Henry Mackwilliam and William Fitzwilliams. Once again the work was conceived toward a clear end, with an eye

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[64] Ruutz-Rees, "Some Notes," 614. The work referred to is *A report & discourse, written by Roger Ascham of the affaires and state of Germany and the emperour Charles his court, durying certaine years while the sayd Roger was there.* London, [1553]. B.M. Cat. 33. b. 27, cited in Ruutz-Rees, "Some Notes," 614n3.

[65] *Petri Bizzari varia opuscula* (Venice: Aldus, 1565). Bib. Nat. ms. Rés. Z 2732, identified in Rutz-Rees, 614n2.

[66] Ruutz-Rees, "Some Notes,"608. Harvey wrote his name on the title page, along with the date 1572.

[67] Ruutz-Rees, "Some Notes," 615.

toward clarifying and improving aspects of English horsemanship. As requested by Mackwilliam and Fitzwilliams, Astley's book deals with two topics only, the correct use of the cavesson in riding and the correct use of the hand. Only sixty-eight pages long, it is divided into nine chapters, and ends with a 10-page addendum on the use of the cavesson, trench and martingale*,* which, Astley purports, "is not the Authors worke, but the experience of another Gentleman verie skilful and long practised in the same Art, which he hath brieflie written at the request of his inward freend" (69).

The first chapter, forming an introduction to the work, offers a definition of the art of riding and some insights on abusive practices. Astley's definition is just that, as he parses the enterprise in language echoing that of the schools. Thus he writes of the horse as the material cause, the art as the efficient cause, the manner of teaching as the formal cause and obedience as the final cause. Citing Xenophon, he then speaks of the two kinds of horses (service and pleasure); the two kinds of service on the battlefield (troops and companies), and the two kinds of fighting, in skirmish or pitched battle (5). Astley's central lesson is this: that Art must imitate Nature, and that Nature must be obeyed. The moral philosophical content of the riding lesson is here made clear:

> Contrarie to those things herein shortlie passed over, namlie Nature, Art, and Reason: is violence, which nature abhorreth; error, which Art rejecteth; unrulie passion of mind, which reason alwaies withstandeth: and as they be contrairie in nature, so be they also in working, and therefore must needs bring foorth contrairie effects (5–6).

The effects of these moral failings are inscribed on the flesh of horses,

> that both without courage and comlines are ridden, with rawe noses, bloudie mouthes and sides, with their curbed places galled, turning their bodies one waie, & their heads another waie, which things are brought to passe by the violent and unskillful use of the hand upon the

> chaine, *Cavezzan,* musroll, and such like, which were first devised to save their mouths; and not to marre their noses and muzzels (6).

As is clear from these passages, Astley is more concerned with training the rider than training the horse. The horse itself, traditionally emblematic of such vices as violence and "unrulie passion of mind," is assigned no such symbolic duty here; instead, its body is the field on which men's vices are written. These vices, marked by the absence of "courage and comlines," represent violations of just measure as well as of morality. In pointing to their graphic effect, Astley recalls his reader to consequences and thus to personal responsibility.

In addressing this subject, however, Astley hews close to his sources, Grisone chiefly, but also Claudio Corte, Xenophon, Blundeville and others. In terms of its deference to textual authority, if not precisely in its method, Astley's approach has something of the scholastic about it. Much as schoolmen used the works of Aristotle, Astley accords Grisone and Corte pride of place, subordinating his presence to theirs and relaying their instructions with painstaking fidelity. His role, at least as he defines it, is that of commentator, the intermediary who explicates and clarifies as necessary.

Nonetheless, Astley is taking his reader far from Grisone, whose lessons, it will be remembered, were directed primarily to the training of the horse. In requesting that he write on these subjects, Mackwilliam[68] and Fitzwilliams were asking for guidance on two related subjects which, as indicated above, were the source of rampant abuse by riders and great suffering and disorder among horses. Also known as a headstrayne (and pictured in Blundeville's *Arte of Ryding*), the cavesson was a type of halter or bitless bridle which, in the absence of a bit—hence the thought of

[68] It was Mackwilliam who asked specifically for a work on the correct use of the cavesson (20).

saving a young horse's mouth—provided control through the effect of the noseband, variously made of rope, leather, chain, or even iron. That the device was often misused is made vividly clear by Astley.

In response he urges patience and restraint on the part of the rider, and, through instruction, understanding and practice, cultivation of the correct use of the rein hand—denoting exactness of position, and precision and subtlety of movement, with as little as a twist of the wrist or a movement of the little finger. This is a far cry from the vigorous application of the *bachetta* or the *bastone.* Nonetheless it is here that Astley turns to Grisone and Corte. On one hand he appears closely wedded to his authorities: rather than simply restating or alluding to Grisone's idea, he refers the reader to specific passages, citing these by page number and, on occasion, by the words themselves.

> In this point, therefore, first there is to be considered, how in the left hand the reines be placed, and how they are then to be used: for therein most cheefelie standeth the whole governement which *Gryson* likeneth to the handle of the stearne that governeth the ship: and these reines (as he sheweth in the 109. page, which he willeth to note, beginning at these words *Notate che*) must alwaies be placed in this maner, which Maister Blundevile hath remembered in the tenth chapter of his first booke thus: As touching the reines, you must hold them in your left hand, so as the little finger, and ring finger too (if you will) may alwaies be placed betweene the twoo reines, and the thombe close upon the reines, with the brawne thereof turned toward the pommell of the saddle, and being thus closed togither [sic] in your fist, Gryson in the 39. page, beginning at *Quando vol terete,* &c, sheweth, how the fist must then be used, when you will turne your horsse in whatsoever kind of manage it be, after this maner: Doo not (saith he) remoove your arme or hand, but keepe it firme and staied right over the crest or mane of the horse, and with a little signe or token given after a certeine manner, by turning your fist onelie, make him to know on what side you would have him turne, but yet so as your fist in anie wise keepe the appointed place right over the mane, neither remooving it of the one side, nor the other, to the end he may go firme and just. Thus farre Gryson.

> Maister *Claudio Corte*, in the second booke of his *Cavallarizzo*, as he intituleth it, for the placing of the hand and the reines, agreeth fullie with *Gryson*, but is somewhat more liberall in declaring the maner of the motion of the fist, when one shuld turne him of anie side. For (saith he) if you will turn him on the right hand…(56–8).

One realizes, however, that the instruction is really Astley's. The curb bit and cavesson, so punishing if used brutally, here become refined aids. Here again, visual demonstration is replaced by written instructions, of a particularly detailed sort. Communicating such precision of movement may tax the skills of the writer and the understanding of the reader— a frustration acknowledged by Astley, on behalf of both sides of the exchange. "And heere doubting (as it seemeth) whether his meaning should be understood in this point, [Corte] addeth; and peradventure there be few that understand me (saith he) though I have set it downe verie plaine" (59). Lest the reader miss it, this point is underscored by a marginal annotation: "M. *Claudio Corte* doubteth that his meaning will be understood but of a few" (59). To this Astley adds his own assent. "And so surelie no doubt he had great reason. For truelie I feare that to the most part this which hath hitherto beene said of either of them, will seeme but a riddle, and therefore had need of further explanation" (59).

What is missing, Astley concludes, is "some grounded reason of this precept," (59) the underlying rationale evidently grasped by Grisone and Corte, but not articulated by them. This is the gap he seeks to fill, for the reason "being known, the rule will easilie be understood" (59–60). In this way the mastery of a complex and formidable physical skill is reduced to the subtle action of a single part of the body, and progresses, via writing, from indication, to description, to causal explanation.

Given Astley's prominence in the writings of others, it is surely worth noting that he contrived to be absent from his own work. It is in this instance that we see most clearly an attitude toward authorship and mastery markedly different from that found either among the Italian masters or the French. In fact, the issue becomes the basis of an odd *pas de trois* between Astley and his fellow Gentlemen Pensioners Henry Mackwilliam and William Fitzwilliams. Bedingfield's treatise, interestingly, reveals a somewhat similar scenario, again involving Mackwilliam. In both cases the train of events is revealed through correspondence printed as part of the work's front matter.

As mentioned earlier, Astley's treatise was undertaken at the express request of Mackwilliam and Fitzwilliams. Astley, however, desiring anonymity, apparently sought to shift the honor of authorship to a fictive "G.B.," using the device of a decoy letter. This letter, dated September, 1583, and purportedly written by "G.B." to Mackwilliam and Fitzwilliams, is included with the treatise, and as intended throws the authorship of the work into question. In it we find "G.B." presenting himself as the work's reluctant author, "as it pleased the right worshipfull M. Astley M. of the Jewell house, earnestlie to desire me to satisfie you right worthie Gentlemen his verie good freends"

> as touching the right use of the Cavezzan first mooved unto him by you Maister Mackwilliam, as afterward for the like use also of the Bit, by you M. Fitzwilliams, and that in writing; the which things both doo speciallie rest in the true use of the hand, wherein the chiefe substance of the whole Art of Riding standeth…[69]

[69] Astley, *The Art of Riding,* prefatory letter by "G.B."

This deception almost immediately comes to nought, however, as "G.B."'s letter is followed by a second one, dated March, 1584, and addressed to the reader from Mackwilliam and Fitzwilliams. In it the pair cheerfully reveal Astley as the true writer of the treatise "though perchance not without some offense unto him." They do so, they explain, "being loath that so worthie a Gentleman...should be defrauded of his due commendation."[70]

. The sequence of self-effacing deception and public unmasking lends these letters an odd, ludic quality. Astley's desire for anonymity may have sprung from a genuine modesty or from some other personal motive, or it may simply reflect the inclinations of the gentleman, in keeping with Castiglione's advice to "avoid playing in the presence of a large number, especially of the common people."[71] It also serves the dictates of *sprezzatura,* as neatly summarized by Gabriel Harvey, "A courtier must do, & speak euerie thing as well, as possibly he can: yet with such dexteritie & such a negligent diligence, that all may think, he might do much better, if he woold."[72]

Astley's arch deception invokes the distinction between the public and private face of the courtier; ease and candor may be found in the company of friends, but the public self is necessarily crafted as performance. Here, however, the distinctions blur, as Mackwilliam and Fitzwilliams publish Astley's treatise under Astley's own name, and private diffidence is made public. They do so, they say, to assure him "his due

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[70] Astley, prefatory letter by Mackwilliam and Fitzwilliams.

[71] Castiglione, *Courtier,* 2.121.

[72] Autograph annotation from Harvey's copy of Hoby's translation of Castiglione, cited in Ruutz-Rees, "Some Notes," 611.

commendation." In fact, they are privileging public recognition over the veiled autonomy of the courtier, effectively claiming an unwonted public existence for their friend. In the process, by including "G.B."'s letter, they have exposed Astley's ruse to the world, and so taken control from him. As will be seen, Thomas Bedingfield's treatise, also published in 1584, would follow a similar if considerably more circumspect course from manuscript to print.

In 1584, at the request of that same Henry Mackwilliam, Thomas Bedingfield translated a portion of book 2 of Corte's *Il cavallarizzo* and printed it under the title *The Art of Riding.*[73] Thomas Bedingfield, like Mackwilliam, was one of Elizabeth's Gentleman Pensioners, from a knightly family of Norfolk. His father, Sir Henry Bedingfield, had served as constable of the Tower under Queen Mary, during the time of Elizabeth's imprisonment there.[74]

Bedingfield's treatise closely resembles Astley's in several respects. Not least of these is the somewhat indirect path taken from manuscript to print; Bedingfield's followed closely after Astley's, and, as noted above, also featured the prominent involvement of the Gentleman Pensioner Henry Mackwilliam. Also published in 1584 under the title *The Art of Riding*, Bedingfield's treatise includes a similar sequence of letters in its front matter. There are three letters in all, the earliest of which is dated May 18, 1584, roughly two months after the Mackwilliams/Fitzwilliam letter which identified Astley. This first letter is from Thomas Bedingfield to an unidentified "Sir," who had initially requested the

[73] MacDonald, *Horsemanship,*182.

[74] MacDonald, *Horsemanship,* 182.

translation, and who, we subsequently learn, is none other than Henry Mackwilliam. Here Bedingfield discusses the general scope of his efforts, basically entailing a "reduction" of Corte's teachings and method, tailored to the practical uses of travel and war. "I have not Englished the author at large," he writes, "nor medled with his manifold digressions; neither have I spoken of all things conteined in the said second booke, but onlie those that concern the making of horsses for service."[75] The material on bitting is likewise omitted, "bicause the same hath beene long since verie substantiallie handled by Maister Blundevile."[76] Here again we see the distinctive collegiality of the court writers, as Bedingfield shows neither need nor inclination to burnish his own reputation at the expense of his colleagues. He closes with a standard caution, as, citing his ignorance of Corte's original intentions and his own "simple knowledge of riding,"[77] he urges, "I praie you represse this booke when you have perused it, or else preserve it at your owne perill."[78]

We then find Mackwilliam writing a second letter, dated June 1, 1584, to his fellow Gentleman Pensioners. In it he introduces Bedingfield's translation of Corte, provides some background on the work, and announces his intention to see it into print, since,

> finding the worke verie well worthie the printing, I could not in anie wise content it should be suppressed, but have presumed (as you see) by my friends leave, to cause it to be published, & to make a brief dedication therof unto you above others, as Gentlemen best able to

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[75] Bedingfield, *Art of Riding,* first epistle.

[76] Bedingfield, *Art of Riding,* first epistle.

[77] Bedingfield, *Art of Riding,* first epistle.

[78] Bedingfield, *Art of Riding,* first epistle.

> iudge of it: as also for the benefit of those which have anie gentlemanlie disposition to attaine to perfection in horssemanship.[79]

There follows a third letter, this one undated, in which Bedingfield addresses the reader, since, he writes, "contrarie to my desire and expectation this treatise of horsemanship is happened into the Printers hand…."[80]

Here one encounters something of a paradox. On one hand, these courtly treatises demonstrate a decided sense of mission, ranging from the improvement of English horsemanship, to the fostering of knowledgeable and proficient horsekeepers, farriers and marshalls, to the elimination of particular equestrian abuses. On the other hand, two of the three found their way into print only with difficulty, or, more to the point, give that impression. The printing of the sequence of letters in each case assures that the little dance of modesty and self-deprecation will itself receive a very public airing—perhaps, in the terms of the gentleman courtier, a way of "saving the phenomenon." This willful anonymity of the amateur stands as a polar opposite of the aggressive self-assertion of professional riding masters such as Grisone, Corte and Pluvinel. This is not to say that no self-interest or artful calculation attached to the former, but rather, that the accepted model of conduct and self-presentation differed.

The distinction between the two is brought home to devastating effect in Sir Philip Sidney's *Defence of Poesie,* as he opens with a mischievous yet biting portrait of an imperial riding master. The latter is presented as a petulant blowhard, pompous and vain—nor is his dependence on payment overlooked:

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[79] Bedingfield, *Art of Riding,* second epistle.

[80] Bedingfield, *Art of Riding,* letter to the reader.

> When the right vertuous E.W. [Edward Wotton] and I were at the Emperours Court togither, wee gave our selves to learne horsemanship of Jon Pietro Pugliano, one that with great commendation had the place of an Esquire in his stable, and hee according to the fertilnes of Italian wit, did not onely affoord us the demonstration of his practise, but sought to enrich our mindes with the contemplations therein, which he thought most precious. But with none I remember mine eares were at any time more loaden, then when (either angred with slow paiment, or mooved with our learnerlike admiration), he exercised his speech in the praise of his facultie.[81]

Sidney's depiction is particularly striking in its general applicability. His characterization of Jon Pietro Pugliano would hold as well for almost any of the continental writers studied here; their lofty claims, resonant in one context, are produced by Sidney as fodder for ridicule.

> He said souldiers were the noblest estate of mankind, and horsemen the noblest of souldiers. He said they were the maisters of warre, and ornaments of peace, speedie goers, and strong abiders, triumphers both in Camps and Courts: nay to so unbleeved a point he proceeded, as that no earthly thing bred such wonder to a Prince as to be a good horseman. Skill of government was but a Pedenteria in comparison…[82]

Here again we encounter the horse-as-superior-being, only to have the image merrily deflated:

> …then would he adde certaine praises by telling us what a peerless beast the horse was, the one serviceable Courtier without flattery, the beast of most bewtie, faithfulnesse, courage, and such more, that if I had not been a peece of a Logician before I came to him, I thinke he would have perswaded me to have wished myselfe a horse.[83]

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[81] Philip Sidney, *The Defence of Poesie* (London: William Ponsonby, 1595) www.worldebooklibrary.com/eBooks/Renascence_Editions/defence.html (accessed March 27, 2006).

[82] Sidney, *Defence of Poesie*. Satirical edge notwithstanding, J.R. Hale sees in Sidney's characterization an essentially apt portrayal of the prestige attached to horsemanship at this time. See Hale, "Military Education," 234.

[83] Sidney, *Defence of Poesie*.

Sidney's motives, as it happens, are more generous than they first appear, for he turns the satire against himself as poet, having made the point that "selflove is better than any guilding, to make that seem gorgious wherein we ourselves be parties."[84] The self-deprecating posture serves to disarm his reader, even as it betrays a certain ambivalence.[85] His satirical reading of the riding master, nonetheless, is devastating precisely because it is so accurate. The claims themselves—of the horse as the "beast of most bewtie, faithfulnesse, courage, and such more"—were in fact already conventions of the genre by 1595. Such assertions would pale before the living, breathing animal, which by the end of the sixteenth century was taking center stage in training theory and literature, as in medicine; Ruini's *Anatomia del cavallo*, a precise and vividly illustrated work detailing the anatomy of the horse, would be published only three years later. Thus it may be that Pugliano violated decorum by voicing conventional claims with an unwonted (and visibly self-interested) conviction.

Part 3. Other Voices: Clifford and Markham

Manège itself did not go unchallenged, as changes in the use of the land and in the character of the landscape affected England's equestrian culture. As pressure grew to extend the acreage of land under cultivation, and to secure timber for England's

[84] Sidney, *Defence of Poesie*.

[85] For a discussion of the tensions and interplay between martial action and poetry in Sidney's work, and the role accorded horsemanship, see Edward Berry, "The Poet as Warrior in Sidney's Defence of Poetry," *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 29 1, The English Renaissance (Winter 1989): 21-34.

ships, forests and parklands were cut down and fens drained. Horses lost much of their traditional breeding grounds.[86] At the same time, however, the more open landscape encouraged the popularity of equestrian sports involving ground-covering speed and jumps over obstacles.

Thus already in the Tudor period one witnesses a surge in the popularity of such full-throttle sports as horse racing and 'chasing, a contest deriving from the hunt that would evolve into the steeplechase. Physically, economically, aesthetically and socially, these stood in sharp contrast to the defining characteristics of school riding. As country sports *par excellence,* they were shaped to distance, speed, and breakneck competition. They called for a different kind of horse, and made different demands on it; instead of dense and compact muscle, they required a lithe, lean conformation; instead of collection, all-out extension; instead of power, speed and endurance.[87] Even more important, perhaps, such sports were not so much governed by rules as manège; for the latter, with its elaborate precision, rules were a veritable *raison d'être*. Less regulated, the new sports were rowdier, less expensive to pursue, and more accessible. At the same time they permitted the play of technique, expertise and improvement, all in the interest of reputation, competitive edge, and victory.

Thus England's equestrian culture comprised diverse constituencies which were, in a sense, emblematic of deeper divisions. The tensions they invoked cannot be reduced to simple dichotomies, nor were the divisions a straightforward matter of class. Even the military dimension of horsemanship played out differently in England,

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[86] Thirsk, *Horses in Early Modern England,* 22–3.

[87] Loch, *Dressage,* 87.

where, having been largely neglected, it acquired a marked urgency as international political and religious tensions escalated. Nonetheless, the contentious voices can be seen as echoing a fragmenting political and social discourse. Accordingly, the community of horsemen reveals itself as cohesive in one context and in another as riven by tensions and animosities, collective as well as personal. It was no longer sufficient to ride a horse, or even to ride a good horse and ride it well; *how* one rode, what style one adopted, was likewise becoming a contested marker of identity.

Thus manège itself proved something of a lightning rod, with criticism directed in particular against those who had the resources to pursue this very expensive pastime, and in the process invited accusations of wasting time and resources on "dancing horses." The well-schooled horse read very differently in an English setting than in the more hermetic court culture of France.

The School of Horsemanship by Christopher Clifford appeared in 1585, the year after Bedingfield's treatise. Both emerge as critics of the *haute école*, that is, of the more complex figures of manège and the airs above the ground. Bedingfield stands as a critic of the art cultivated for its own sake, which he dismisses as "sundrie sortes of superfluous dansing and pransing…"[88] Clifford, fresh from military service in the Netherlands, levels a stinging rebuke against such apparent frivolities, but from a soldier's perspective:

> Perhappes some curious riders may finde fault with my homelie kind of teaching, for [illegible] I set not down how they shuld teach their horsses to corvet, nor how to torment them vainly with a chain or cavison…, but my intent is not to teach anie of them which make their horses more fit to daunce on a carpet, then for anie other kinde of service, but onelie to those, whose noble mindes delights [sic] in

[88] Bedingfield, *Art of Riding,* 18. See Corte, 2: 64 v.

> armes, and to have their horses made for service and travaile, which is the thing whereunto God ordained that beaste.[89]

This repudiation of the more esoteric aspects of school riding accorded with a general emphasis on military preparedness. Clifford is especially scathing on the subject of those dazzling achievements of the art, the airs above the ground. As has been seen, some modern scholars point to these as originating in, or intended as, specific battle moves, and they were often justified as such at the time. Clifford, the hardened ex-soldier, offers a different perspective. In his estimation the *curvet*, or courbette, is not merely useless in battle; it is a positive hazard, "for ye he. [horse] never standeth surelie and therefore is in perill to be throwen downe or else to give the riders back to the enimie, which is no lesse daunger than his life is worth."[90] Likewise he scorns the capriole as unworthy, "a womanlie or taffata goats leape."[91]

Clifford's "homelie kind of teaching," moreover, suggests an authoritative stance markedly different from that found elsewhere. As has been seen, the Italian authors, professional riding masters, cited their own experience above all but took care to establish it within a broader context of textual authority, variously theoretical or literary, while redefining horsemanship itself as a seal of true nobility. The two great French writers, occupying highly visible positions at court, established their authority through their mastery of the discipline itself, which each clothed in a singular mystique: La Broue in natural and experiential terms, and Pluvinel in rhetorical terms. The Tudor writers, on the other hand, retreat from direct self-

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[89] Clifford, *School of Horsemanship*, dedication, 2 r.

[90] Clifford, *School of Horsemanship,* fol. 2v.

[91] Clifford, *School of Horsemanship,* 10.

authorization; concealing their own expertise behind the guise of translator and amateur, they turn their hand to useful projects, and look to each other for authorization.

Clifford's stance in this regard is of particular interest; an outsider, socially speaking, he uses rhetorical strategies and figures familiar from the courtly setting, but does so while inverting traditional hierarchies of learning and value. Particularly intriguing is his use of the interlocutor as an authorizing device—anticipating Pluvinel's comparable use of King Louis XIII in his treatise some thirty years later.

Clifford dedicates his treatise to Sir Philip Sidney, offering his work as "a conference and discourse about the training of horses, and curing of their diseases,"

> wherin albeit I dare professe to teach a readier and better waie in training horse for service & travaile, than hath bene either yet set downe of anie, or put in practice by the delicate professors of this Art, yet my intention was not further then to serve the private use of my private friends.[92]

Clifford's expertise, moreover, comes "not by reading, but on mine owne experience," a fact he states bluntly at the outset, and clearly as a claim rather than an apology. Thus he immediately establishes himself in opposition to "the delicate professors of this Art"—which, at this date, would have to signify the Tudor circle. As has been seen, the latter, though horsemen, took care to site their treatises as works of translation and compilation; Astley, the sole exception, still framed his assertions in the authority of Grisone and Xenophon, and sought to veil his own involvement. Clifford defines himself against this circle, whose treatises represented *the* authoritative body of English equestrian writing of the day. Nonetheless he adopts

[92] Clifford, *School of Horsemanship*, dedication, 2 r.

a comparable posture with regard to his own work, which, he says, he decided to publish only on the urging

> of a certain honorable Gentleman, whose singular good judgement & great experience in this matter I have ever esteemed above all others, who liked so wel of this my labour, that he not onlie thought good it should be printed for the common use and profit of our Country but also vouchsaft by setting of his hand to testifie the same.[93]

Citing the "homelie stile and tenor of this conference," Clifford apologizes for his lack of literary polish, one which he quickly recasts as a virtue, in that "true experience do need no ornament of words...."[94] Thus his protestations that he is "unlettered & have not Rethoricke accommaundement" acquire something of the character of a boast. In the same way, in his letter to the reader, Clifford immediately calls attention to the disorganized character of his treatise, his own want of time and literary skills, and his lack of "anie servant whom I might commaund to write when I would."[95] In this way he sets up an implicit juxaposition between the vanities and pretensions of the court, and the solid, homely *truth* of the ordinary man.

This oppositional stance colors his opinions on training and riding as well. The use of the curb bit and cavesson, for example, represents one key point of divergence, a particularly telling one since, as has been seen, both of these were widely used to achieve a desired result through physical coercion and torment. Once again, Clifford implicates a particular class, those "curious riders" who "may finde fault with my homelie kinde of teaching, for that I set not down how they shuld teach

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[93] Clifford, *School of Horsemanship*, dedication, 2 r.

[94] Clifford, *School of Horsemanship*, letter to the reader, 3 r.

[95] Clifford, *School of Horsemanship*, letter to the reader, 3 r.

their horses to corvet, nor how to torment them vainlie with a chain or cavison, which is one of the principal causes that they make their horses restie runawaies, and hard mouthed…." Against these he sets those "whose noble minds delights in armes." Again, the actual lines are not so clearly drawn; Clifford echoes Bedingfield here in his concern to train horses solely "for service and travaile, which is the thing whereunto God hath ordained that beast."[96]

Having adopted this oppositional position, Clifford invigorates and legitimizes it by introducing dialogic voices, much as Pluvinel would do in *Le Maneige Royal.* Here his "curious riders" speak up: "Clifford take heede what you doe," he has them say. "[W]ill you speake against the chaine and corvetting of horses? Mee thinke that shewes in you small skill in riding, since they are both used throughout all Christendome."[97] Subsequently, he introduces an even more pointed variant of this device, an interlocutor named Kingdon, who—much like Louis XIII in Pluvinel's treatise—asks questions, provides confirmation, offers praise and also challenges, which may then be met and dispelled. Kingdon also, by restating lessons ostensibly learned earlier from Clifford, provides actual substantive content. This device, by recasting the lessons in a conversational mode, neatly lightens the burden of the treatise, in terms of both literary style and instructional verbiage.

> Sithence you have taught me howe to make my horse gentle, it shal not be amisse to teach me what order I shall observe in learning him to tread the great ring, for that I have often times heard you say, that by treading the great ring upon his pase, trot and gallop, and by observing good order, time, and measure therein, that it is not onelie sufficient to make him raine well, trot well, carrie his head steadie, and to beare

[96] Clifford, *School of Horsemanship*, letter to the reader, 3 r.

[97] Clifford, *School of Horsemanship,* letter to the reader, 3 r.

> light, but that the whole making of your horse depends upon the orderly using of him, in this foresaide lesson.[98]

Elsewhere Kingdon sets up Clifford's contravention of established authorities, in this case, Grisone. In the process, he also offers a list of references of sorts, as he names gentry, knights and princes alike whom Clifford has assisted.

> I have herd you saie, that the furrow turnes, by Gryson taught, doth greatly weaken the back and loines of anie horse, and also, that divers horses thereby are utterly marred and made restie. And also I have often heard you say, that you have had good experience thereof, in a bay horse of Sir Thomas Scots in Kent, and also in a roane horse of M. Gregorie Pries of Herefor., East.: and likewise in a grey gelding of Sir John Tracies in Gloucestershire, and a dapple grey horse of Nassaws, base sonne to the prince of Orange. All which foure horses were disordered by turning them too short, and that you reformed these two last named, by causing them to make their mannage in a couple of large rings.[99]

Thus Clifford exploits the legitimating stamp of noble patronage, even as he purports to challenge it. Nonetheless, his remains the specialized knowledge, and by extension the authority, which counts in this context, since he is able to school horses correctly and redeem "disordered" animals.

Gervase Markham offers a somewhat comparable perspective. His career was varied and wide-ranging, encompassing the roles of soldier, courtier, tenant farmer, sporting man and plyer of the literary marketplace. Born in 1568 to a landed Nottinghamshire family of decayed fortune, he was a third son whose father and eldest brother were both notorious spendthrifts.[100] Though the particulars of his education are not known, it is believed likely that he followed his elder brother

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[98] Clifford, *School of Horsemanship*, dedication, 10 v–r.

[99] Clifford, *School of Horsemanship*, dedication, 15 r.

[100] Robert Gittings, *Shakespeare's Rival: A Study in Three Parts* (London: Heinemann, 1960), 31.

Francis to Cambridge. Thereafter he took up the profession of arms, and subsequently turned to writing, by inclination as well as necessity. He was a markedly prolific writer, producing both poetry and prose. Though his poetry, then as now, was regarded as mediocre at best; his prose works were striking for their breadth and diversity, and ranged from fiction to manuals on agriculture, domestic management, military practice, hunting, archery, and rural sports.

Markham's works on horsemanship and related topics figure prominently in his *oeuvre*. Typically he reworked and recombined his material to create one book after another, even as printers were printing reissues to take advantage of his popularity. At one point he had so many titles on veterinary medicine on the market that the Stationers' Guild took the unusual step of making him sign an agreement never to publish another work on the subject.[101] While his exuberant output was dictated in large part by the pressure of financial need, his works on horsemanship are nonetheless grounded in solid personal experience. In this respect he served his readers well: of this prolific writer, often dismissed as a hack, Gabrielle MacDonald writes that his "gift is to make clear what is already known but perhaps imperfectly understood."[102] Thus, if copies of certain of Markham's works are hard to come by, it is not because he was an obscure author in his own time. "His books were so popular," writes Robert Gittings, "that an extraordinary number of editions and reissues were called for. They were literally read to pieces."[103]

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[101] "Gervase Markham," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eds. H.C.G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[102] MacDonald, *Horsemanship,* 195.

[103] Gittings, *Shakespeare's Rival*, 30.

Markham's first book on the subject, *A Discourse of Horsemanship*, was published in London in 1593 by I. Charlewood and ran to six editions.[104] Its full title is revealing on several counts:

> *A Discource of Horsemanshippe. Wherein the breeding, and ryding of Horses for service, in a breefe manner is more methodically sette downe then hath been heeretofore. With a more easie and direct course for the ignorant, to attain to the same arte or knowledge. Also the manner to chuse, ryde and dyet, both hunting-horses and running horses: with all the secretes thereto belonging discouered. An arte neuer heeretofore written by any authour.*

The reference to "Horses for service" makes clear that the author is concerned with practical uses and practical ends. Notably missing, meanwhile, is the other half of the usual formula, "horses for pleasure," that is, horses trained for manège. The book is clearly seeking its audience on the other side of the social divide, among those who, like Clifford, have no use for the "taffata goats leape" of "dancing horses."

Equally telling is the fact that all editions after the first bore the title in reverse order, with Hunting-horses and Running horses the clear selling point.[105] This reversal speaks to the growing popularity of the new equestrian sports of fox hunting and horse racing, particularly among the gentry.[106] These would enter directly into competition with manège, the two representing very different aesthetics, governed by different principles and markedly different in setting and temperament. Needless to say, they vied for the favor and resources of the elite, with impassioned adherents on both sides.

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[104] MacDonald, *Horsemanship*, 201.

[105] MacDonald, *Horsemanship*, 201; Poynter, *A Bibliography,* 86.

[106] Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, 100–109.

That Markham was defying the exclusivity implicit in the genre is made explicit by the title page of his 1607 treatise, which grandly promises the reader "all the arte of horsemanship,"[107] then adds pragmatically, and irrepressibly, "as much as is necessary for any man to know, whether he be horse-breeder, horse-ryder, horse-hunter, horse-runner, horse-ambler, horse-farrier, horse-keeper, coachman, smith, or sadler." Markham's work is pitched to the horse race and cross-country hunt, as he offers "discovery of the subtill trade or mistery of the horsecoursers," along with the revelation that "horses may be made to draw drie-foot like a hound." At the same time, however, he promises "an explanation of the excellency of the horse's understanding," and for a moment one glimpses Grisone's conceit of the horse as precocious companion to man, created to "conform in part to our intellect." But Markham's interpretation follows a different track, for he means to employ this understanding "to teach them how to do tricks like Bankes his curtall."[108]

The engraved title page similarly casts familiar motifs in a new mode. The soldier and martial still-life share space with winged horses, but the page belongs to the handsome "Neapolitan Horse for Service" and his three fellows, each horse in its own medallion. The first references manège, if only in its more stalwart military incarnation. The others do not: instead we have the "English hunting horse", the "Barbarye running horse," and the "Englishe amblinge geldinge." The "Barbarye running horse" invokes the *Barbaresco* of the Italian *palio* and horse racing. The

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[107] Markham, *Cavalerice*, title page.

[108] A "curtall," as in "cut-tail," was a horse whose tail had been bobbed, or of a breed or type commonly bobbed. The ears were sometimes cropped as well. *Oxford English Dictionary* Online (accessed March 28, 2006).

remaining two are both assertively English; also noteworthy is the prominent inclusion of a gelding, a marked contrast to the traditional privileging of stallions.

Markham makes extensive use of authorities, but in a way which declares his own authority in the field. He frequently cites Salomon de la Broue, for example, whom he describes as a "man of exquisite practise and knowledge,"[109] and likewise Grisone, but does not hesitate to voice his own disagreement on particular points of theory or, more often, practice. Indeed, Markham's attitude toward these renowned masters is essentially collegial in tone; he often cites their opinion on a given subject and then provides his own, in some instances agreeing, in others not. Indeed, he all but advises his readers to do the same with him, regarding "what you shall finde to differ either from your owne rules, or from the square of auncient practice, after you have argued it with reason and the nature of the beast."[110] His tone, accordingly, is conversational and plain-spoken, carrying an air of good common sense. Thus, in the matter of language as an aid, he remarks:

> Now whereas some horsemen would have a horse be helpt in his going backe, by crying *Back I say*, or *back Boy*, and in his advauncing by saying *Hup Boy, Hup*, or such like, I am utterly against it, for neither is it comely in the Rider in every motion to use his tongue so liberally, nor would I have a horses memory clogd with so much severall language: but for this helpe of crying *Darrier, Darrier* [French for "Behind, Behind"], when a horse should yerke behinde, tis as absurde as fantasticall, and never in use since spurre or rod was invented.[111]

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[109] Markham, *Cavalerice,* 1.84.

[110] Markham, *Cavalerice*, 1.85.

[111] Markham, *Cavalerice,* 2.46.

Similarly he decries the "drawing of teeth, cutting of mouthes, and dismembring of tongues,"[112] condemning "this tyrannical martyring of poore horses."[113] As for the resty horse, Markham begins by offering a typology of "restifenes," which, he states, "proceeds from two causes, Nature or Custome, Nature if the horse be of base and wilde spirit, or of too stout and couragious fierceness; Custome as from the tolleration and sufferance of the unskilfull rider…."[114] This in turn affords him a variety of approaches, based on the source of the problem. Nonetheless, when all else fails, Markham still resorts, like so many other masters, to the tried and true solution: "[M]ake a stander by take a drie wispe, writhe it hard about a Poile, then set it on a flame of fire, and bring it before the face of the horse, thrust it against his buttocks, and against his cods, and there is no question to be made, but hee will go forward…."[115]

Part 4. William Cavendish, First Duke of Newcastle

Like Gervase Markham, William Cavendish was an accomplished horseman who, encountering hard times, turned to publication as a remedy. Beyond this, however, the two had markedly little in common, and so their figurative kinship in the literary marketplace is worth noting.

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[112] All were common practices of the time to secure a better fit for the bit or also, in the case of the last, to deal with a horse whose tongue dangled from its mouth in an unsightly way.

[113] Markham, *Cavalerice*, 1.84.

[114] Markham, *Cavalerice*, 2.89.

[115] Markham, *Cavalerice*, 2.90–91.

William Cavendish was born at Handsworth Manor, Yorkshire in 1593,[116] the same year that Salomon de la Broue's treatise was first brought to print. He was the oldest surviving son of Sir Charles Cavendish (1553–1617), M.P., and Catherine (1570–1629), daughter of Cuthbert, Baron Ogle. The baron, William's grandfather, held a castle and property in Northumberland.[117] Sir Charles, meanwhile, was the youngest son of Bess of Hardwicke and her second husband William Cavendish of Chatsworth, Derbyshire.

In 1597 Sir Charles received the title to Welbeck Abbey from his stepbrother and brother-in-law Gilbert Talbot. Young William spent much of his boyhood at Welbeck, but was also tutored at Shrewsbury. His formal education began in 1608 when he entered St. John's College, Cambridge. He had little patience for books or teachers, preferring sports and especially riding. Emblematic of his temperament and upbringing is the famous instance when, though short of money, he spent £50 for a horse and a boy singer; drawing his father's proud approval.[118] Thus it is hardly surprising that, instead of proceeding to the Inns of Court, he chose instead to study horsemanship at the Royal Mews with Prince Henry, under the riding instructor St. Antoine. This also marked the beginning of Cavendish's long and close association with the Stuarts themselves. He attended Henry at his investiture as prince of Wales, one of twenty-five young men so honored, was created a knight of the Bath in conjunction with the ceremony, on the eve of it, and rode in a tilt to celebrate.[119]

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[116] Mennessier de la Lance gives 1592 as his year of birth. *Essai de bibliographie,* 2: 246.

[117] *ODNB,* 654.

[118] *ODNB,* 654.

[119] *ODNB,* 655.

In 1612 William traveled to Italy as part of a diplomatic mission, and two years later was elected to Parliament for East Retham, Nottinghamshire. It was around this time that he became a close supporter of Ben Jonson. His father died on April 4, 1617, and William inherited Bolsover Castle in Derbyshire and other Cavendish lands.

He married Elizabeth Howard (1599–1643), widow of Henry Howard, third son of the earl of Suffolk, and only daughter of William Bassett of Blore, Staffordshire, and Judith Austin. The young Cavendish was taken with the romantic décor of Bolsover, whose renovations, undertaken on his return from Europe, reflect among others the influence of the Palazzo del Te in Mantua. Cavendish continued to enjoy a close relationship to the Stuarts; James I visited the couple at Welbeck in 1619, and Prince Charles stood as godfather to their second son.[120]

Cavendish became Viscount Mansfield in 1620, though his activities were circumscribed by concern for his wife's ill health. She gave birth to a daughter, Jane, in 1622, around the same time that the riding school at Welbeck was being constructed.[121] Cavendish's circle during this period included Thomas Hobbes and Robert Payne, his chaplain from 1632 to 1638, who also wrote a piece on horses, "Considerations touching the facility or difficulty of the motions of a horse."

A staunch royalist named by Charles I as governor to the prince of Wales, Cavendish gave freely of his talents, energies and treasure during the Civil War.

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[120] *ODNB,* 655.

[121] John Smythson (d. 1634), son of the famed architect and master mason Robert Smythson, handled the rebuilding of Bolsover Castle in the years after 1612. He, or possibly his son Huntingdon Smythson (d. 1648), was responsible for the design and construction of the riding hall at Welbeck. (*ODNB,* vol. 51, 475–6.)

Charged by Charles I with the defense of the strategically crucial city of Newcastle, he personally raised and outfitted an army of 8,000 horse. The defeat at Marston Moor, however, represented a sharp reversal for the royalist cause and a crushing blow to Cavendish personally. His fortune and military reputation in shreds, he left for Paris in February, 1645, intending to join the court of Henrietta Maria, part of a growing royalist expatriate community. Three years a widower, he met there Margaret Lucas (1623?-1673), whom he married in November or December of the same year. While in Paris, he gathered around him a circle of prominent scientists and intellectuals, among them Marin Mersenne, Thomas Hobbes, René Descartes and Pierre Gassendi.[122] Toward the end of 1648, Cavendish and his second wife Margaret moved to Antwerp, where he set up a riding school in what had been the studio of Peter Paul Rubens.

While Cavendish retained an active interest in a variety of subjects, and until 1650 remained active in royalist political circles, it was as a horseman that he reestablished his reputation. Karen Raber argues that Cavendish's mastery of the art became the key to a resurrected identity and self-respect, as "banished, financially ruined and reduced to living on credit," he was "banished as well from all the social structures and physical landmarks that had shaped his sense of self."[123] Lisa T. Sarasohn, on the other hand, offers a considerably more sanguine picture of his activities at this time. With creditors knocking at the door, he spent lordly sums for

[122] See Sarasohn, "Thomas Hobbes and the Duke of Newcastle" for an extended discussion of the scope, character and particulars of the duke's intellectual patronage and relationships.

[123] Karen L. Raber, "Reasonable Creatures," 44.

Spanish and Barbary horses, ever his favorites.[124] In turn his superb horsemanship attracted the notice of princes and nobles, and he began to achieve a certain prominence and reputation. It was at this time that he composed his great work on horsemanship, *La Méthode et invention nouvelle de dresser les chevaux,* published at Antwerp in 1657.

Upon the restoration of the Stuart monarchy three years later, Cavendish was able to return to England. There his sacrificial devotion to the royalist cause and to the Stuarts themselves was justly rewarded by his former charge, now the crowned and regnant king Charles II. Cavendish was out of step with the temper of the times, however, and soon found that he carried little weight at court. He turned instead to the rehabilitation of his estates, which had been devastated during the war. There he remained until his death in 1676, turning his full energies and attention to his family, his lands, and his beloved horses.

It is against this backdrop that Cavendish's oeuvre must be considered. Of all the great riding masters, he was most openly invested in his identity as a horseman. His life is amply documented, not least due to his own efforts and those of his fiercely devoted wife Margaret, herself a prolific writer and amateur scientist. As a result, his emotional landscape appears especially exposed, and thus subject to judgment. Mennessier de la Lance, for example, while praising his loyalty, generosity, courage and natural gifts, criticizes his "immense" pride and vanity, and asserts that Cavendish's widespread fame as a horseman was due as much to his social status, his

[124] Cavendish, *General System,* 1: 4.21.

wartime exploits, his widely-admired traits of loyalty and personal honor, and finally, "to the hyperbolic praises which he accorded himself in his own work."[125]

It is true that Cavendish's *La Methode nouvelle & invention extraordinaire de dresser les chevaux*, written at a time of personal difficulty and financial hardship, was intended to promote his celebrity. The first edition was published at his own expense, its print run, according to La Guérinière, limited to a mere fifty copies. Mennessier de la Lance disputes this number, asserting that Cavendish was "too amorous of glory" to limit himself to so few copies. Nonetheless he concedes that the first edition of the treatise, intended for Cavendish's friends and for "various princes and lords," was undoubtedly small.[126]

Its full title, when translated, suggests something of the outsized self-image which Mennessier da la Lance attributes to the royalist-in-exile. It also, however, gives some sense of the magnitude of Cavendish's fall, and the bravura of his gambit:

> The New Method and Extraordinary Invention of Schooling Horses, Working Them According to their Nature, and Perfecting Their Nature through the Subtlety of Art; Which has Never Been Discovered Except by the Very Noble, Great and Very Puissant Prince William, Marquis and Count of Newcastle, Viscount of Mansfield, Baron of Bolsover and Ogle, Lord of Newcastle, Bothel and Hepwel; Peer of England, who had the charge and honor of being Governor of the most Serene Prince of Wales in his youth and now king of England; and furthermore is Lieutenant to the King for the County of Nottingham and Sherwood Forest; Captain-General of all the provinces beyond the river Trent and other places of the Realm of England, Gentleman of the King's Bedchamber, Counselor of State and Privy Counselor; and Knight of the very noble Order of the Garter, etc. Translated from the English of the Author by his Command.[127]

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[125] Mennessier de la Lance, *Essai de bibliographie,* 2: 246.

[126] Mennessier de la Lance, *Essai de bibliographie*, 2: 247–8. Another story holds that a fire destroyed part of the first print run, another explanation for the great rarity of the first edition today.

[127] "*La Methode nouvelle & invention extraordinaire de dresser les chevaux, les travailler selon la nature, et parfaire la nature par la subtilité de l'Art; la quelle n'a jamais été treuvée que Par le tres*

As has been seen, other riding masters—or their printers—took comparable pains to establish their social *bona fides* on the title page, from the simple *Gentil'huomo Napoletano* of Grisone or *Gentiluomo Ferrarese* of Fiaschi to the posthumous recitation of Pluvinel's offices and responsibilities as *Escuyer principal* to the king*, Conseiller en son Conseil d'Estat, son Chambellan ordinaire, et son Escuyer principal.* For all these men, however, their status as horse master represented the basis of their standing in the world, raising them from a background of relative obscurity. Had it been otherwise, their greater claims would surely have graced the title page of their works, particularly in the case of the Italians, at pains to legitimize their novel undertaking.

For a great noble, on the other hand, particularly one lacking the sheltering association of a royal court, the riding-master identification might prove more problematical. As has been seen, Elizabeth's courtier-writers took considerable pains to distance themselves from any hint of unseemly self-promotion or interested professionalism. The riding master *per se* belonged to a different social sphere, to that laudable class of fellows who ran their riding schools in the city. Those courtiers like Gervase Markham who wrote openly for the marketplace had crossed an intangible but significant line.

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noble, haut et tres puissant Guillaume, Marquis et Comte de Newcastle, Vicomte de Mansfield, Baron de Bolsover et Ogle, Seigneur de Cavendish, Bothel et Hepwel; Pair d'Angleterre, qui eut la charge et l'honneur d'estre Gouverneur du Serenessime Prince de Galles en sa jeunesse et maintenant Roy de la Grande Bretagne; et d'avantage qui est Lieutenant pour le Roy du Comté de Nottingham et la Forest de Scherwood; Capitaine géneral en toutes provinces outre la Rivière de Trent et autres endroits du Roÿaume d'Angleterre, Gentil-homme de la Chambre du Lit du Roy, Conseiller d'Etat et Prie; et Chevalier de l'Ordre tres noble de la Iartiere, etc. Traduit de l'Anglois de l'Auteur en Francois par son Commandement." (Mennessier de la Lance, II, 246–7.)

In printing his treatise, William Cavendish, Marquis of Newcastle and exile in straitened circumstances, was also crossing that line, though he could not afford to be seen to do so. As he would not jettison or conceal his titles, he had little choice but to trumpet them as loudly as possible.

A second edition of the 1657 treatise would not appear until 1737, more than sixty years after Cavendish's death. However, several variant editions of the work appeared in the decades after its debut. The first of these was an English translation prepared by Cavendish himself following his return to England, and published in London in 1667. This version, which included some new material, some deletions and some amendments, was then translated back into French and printed in London in 1671. It featured very nearly the same title as the original, *Methode nouvelle et invention extraordinaire*, as well as what Mennessier de la Lance calls the "interminable nomenclature," if anything still a bit more elaborate.[128]

While all the preceding editions had been in folio, an octavo edition of the 1671 French translation was printed in 1674, suggesting a broader popularity for the work. The same edition was reissued in 1694, but in Brussels this time rather than London, with yet another printed in Vienna in 1727. Meanwhile, a third French translation of the treatise was printed in Paris in 1677, courtesy of the great French riding master Jacques de Solleysel. An author in his own right, Solleysel had received a copy of the treatise from Cavendish in 1672; unhappy with the quality of the French, he wrote back with an offer to retranslate the work, one which Cavendish readily accepted. Another edition of the Solleysel translation was printed in 1700.

[128] Mennessier de la Lance, *Essai de bibliographie*, 2: 248.

Finally, a two-volume edition was published in 1743 by the editor J. Brindley, who had come into possession of the original 1657 plates and used them for the 1737 edition. As this version was in the original French, he had yet another English translation made. This new translation comprised the first volume of the 1743 edition, which also featured the original forty-eight copper plate engravings. The second volume is an English translation of Gaspard de Saunier's *Parfaite connaissance des Chevaux*.[129] A reflection of the changing tastes of the time, Saunier's work includes a section on the care and training of race horses and hunters, along with a section on veterinary medicine reflecting firsthand experience in private practice and on campaign with the army.

This 1743 edition, examined for this study, is in folio format in two volumes, the first, as described above, consisting of Cavendish's *A General System of Horsemanship.* The text of the engravings is in the original French. In many respects, Cavendish's treatise follows traditional lines; for example, he duly revisits what by now have become commonplaces: desirable and undesirable horse colors and markings, with their humoral association; desirable points of conformation; types of horses based on place of origin; breeding practices; vices in horses and the means of correcting them. He also provides instruction in the schooling of the horse, from its introduction to the saddle to the execution of manège figures and the airs above the ground.

His treatment of these subjects, however, reveals the operation of a scientific sensibility, scarcely surprising in one who kept company with Mersenne and Hobbes.

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[129] Mennessier de la Lance, *Essai de bibliographie*, 2: 250.

"Some philosophers deny the existence of fire in this sublunary globe," he writes, "in which case there will only be three elements remaining":

> others say, that the whole world is only matter put into motion, therefore motion performs all. Antient philosophers maintain, that we are preserved alive by means of the four elements compounded together, but as to my own part, I believe we subsist by eating and drinking. Chymists say, that all matter is composed of salt, sulphur and mercury; but my business is to treat only of Horses, and not of Natural Philosophy; for I find by experience, that their rules are as false as the predictions of the weather in an almanack, which in one year's revolution is discovered to be as false as true. But suppose I should take the opposite side of the question, one will prove as true as the other. Therefore these are only trifling and chimerical conjectures. From whence I conclude, that a horseman ought to mount a horse often, by which means he will be able to form a better judgment, than any of those who philosophize upon his colour; or by the elements, since that is only a piece of empiricism or quackery.[130]

He has little more patience with his colleagues and predecessors on the question:

> Several horsemen have blotted more paper to demonstrate their Natural Philosophy, than their art in Horsemanship, endeavouring to discover the constitution and particular disposition of horses by their marks and colour, and which of the four elements enters chiefly into their composition, whether it be earth, water, air, or fire.[131]

The engravings are one of the most notable features of Cavendish's work; commissioned by him, they may be taken to represent his conception and intention. Each takes up a full sheet, though the images are striking for their originality as well as their size. Like the engravings in Pluvinel's *Maneige Royal* or *L'Instruction du Roy*, they depict a richly conceived and naturalistically portrayed world, one which serves, in a sense, as a stage set for the author's "performance."

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[130] Cavendish, *General System,* 1: 3.20.

[131] Cavendish, *General System,* 1: 3.19.

While Pluvinel's stage is the French court, however, Cavendish's world—almost literally—is found in his estate of Welbeck. At first glance this country seat appears to be Cavendish's personal kingdom, and the select population of horses which inhabit it, his loyal subjects. The most baroque expression of this idea is found in the series of frontispiece plates. In the second, Cavendish is shown on horseback, being crowned by Renown and triumphing in battle; in the third he is shown on horseback on a pedestal, on which is a celebratory poem; in the fourth we find Cavendish dressed in classical garb and riding in a chariot drawn by centaurs. His horses have arrayed themselves in a circle around him and kneel in obeisance. The fifth again represents the marquis on horseback, this time executing a flawless capriole while the gods, gathered in the clouds overhead, look down, impressed, and his horses, again arrayed around him, perform a synchronized levade. The sixth and last shows Charles II on horseback, surrounded by putti who crown him.[132] each offers an image which would seem to support Mennessier's contentions of rampant egotism. The second is similar in conception, except that here the horses kneel in obeisance.

Amid the grandiosity of the images, it is worth noting that these horses are not simply generalized duplicates of a type, nor are they represented as automata. They are distinct individuals, each visibly inhabiting its own being. Their responsive obedience does not result in a slavish conformity; they crane their necks and look around, and in some instances appear to converse with each other or simply exchange glances. Their eyes are dark and expressive, alive with intelligence.

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[132] Mennessier de la Lance, *Essai de bibliographie*, 2: 247.

This last characteristic is shared with the horses represented in the royal equestrian portraits of Van Dyck. Karen Raber, citing the 1635 portrait of Charles I, perceives in it the statement of a metaphoric identification between royal horse and royal rider.[133] This dark, intelligent eye is, in fact, one of the features of the Andalusian breed which by the seventeenth century had become the preferred mount of royalty.[134] Breeding and training had brought these animals to a high degree of refinement. Nonetheless, that refinement is amplified in the equestrian portraits, translated into a kind of quivering, intelligent sensibility.

Karen Raber finds a subtle paradox in this depiction of the horse as reasoning, sentient being. In the instance of the royal portrait, she argues, the identification between king and mount runs counter to the typology of the mount as obedient servant, producing an "interesting tension between the artist's need to show the king *in control* as a horseman on a worthy mount, and the tendency of the mount to *mirror* its rider's identity."[135] This disjunction, in her view, is inherent in the ideals of manège, and made manifest through its exaggerated representation in the painted image:

> A horse that might share tea and conversation in polite company is hardly the best vehicle for demonstrating the rider's metaphoric triumph over "bestial" nature. The validity of the horse-rider image as a metaphor for the imposition of rule, so prevalent in the sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century literary works, is thus troubled by the introduction of the ideals of dressage to equestrian art. These beautiful, cultivated animals, which respond so completely to their riders as to mimic human qualities or even embody human attributes, shift the

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[133] Raber, "Reasonable Creatures," 51–2.

[134] See Loch, *Dressage,* caption, plate 5; also see photograph, 147.

[135] Raber, "Reasonable Creatures," 53. The emphases are hers.

> metaphor's emphasis from externally imposed control to mutuality and cooperation.[136]

One might also, however, point to the complex and fluid nature of the horse as symbol, one capable of sustaining multiple meanings. To be sure, the horse as a symbol of governance was traditionally associated with the powers of brute instinct, that is, in civic terms, of the unreasoning populace. However, the shifting power relations of the seventeenth century elicited more subtle variations on the theme. The dressed horses of M. de Pluvinel, for example, may be seen as a living metaphor for France's rehabilitated warrior nobility—rendered elegant, obedient and responsive, but with fiery spirit intact. Viewed in this light, mutuality and cooperation are wholly consonant with the monarch's ends; after all, as willing as the horse may be to bear his king, the king is still the rider, and still holds the reins. Moreover, this does not exclude the identification of horse and rider. The "bridled" horse had also long served as a symbol of inner restraint and self-control. It would seem only fitting that the king's "inner self" should wear such an aspect, at once spirited and serene.

These arguments bear directly on Cavendish's work, albeit with a somewhat different bearing and emphasis. Karen Raber, offering a "new" new historicist reading of his famous treatise, bases her analysis on the horse's symbolic valence. Central to this is the act of constructing one's identity. In this connection, she juxtaposes Cavendish's fame as a "dresser of horses" with his Restoration identity as an aging, marginalized royalist, in a sense still exiled. Drawing on analyses of his treatises and other sources, she argues that the duke took refuge in his art, finding there the means to redefine, and so preserve, his claims to personal and social

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[136] Raber, "Reasonable Creatures," 53–4.

superiority. At the same time, however, she finds a self-defeating contradiction in his characterization of his horses as "reasonable creatures," a definition which, she argues, anticipates the ideas of John Locke.[137]

The work's engravings would appear to support this interpretation. The plates described above, in particular, appear unquestionably as statements of dominance and subordination, the classical referents of the chariot and centaurs invoking the triumph of civilization and reason over brute instinct. These images would seem to represent Cavendish's formal summation of his achievement and stature. To a modern eye they appear overweening, to say the least.

The other plates, at first glance, appear as variations on a theme. Some depict individual horses, others provide views of Cavendish's estate. By far the largest number illustrate aspects of Cavendish's method; like those of Pluvinel's *Maneige Royal,* these last are naturalistically rendered, showing Cavendish himself or his assistant demonstrating the movements, positions, or actions in the duke's own riding ring or outside in his stable yard. Specificity of place is of crucial importance, as evidenced by the care with which each location is labeled and, in some instances, described. The duke himself is likewise labeled, even though he is readily recognizable. He is often to be found gazing dispassionately out at the viewer, as when his horse is executing a spectacular capriole.

In the end the images are relentlessly proprietary: one is never permitted to forget that these are *Cavendish's* horses, *his* estates, *his* fields and forests. In keeping with Raber's interpretation, they suggest a self-contained world of order, harmony and abundance. Almost aggressively, they are thus placed before the reader.

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[137] Raber, "Reasonable Creatures," 43.

Of particular interest in this connection are the five portraits of individual horses, appearing one after another. Each represents a particular type; thus, taken together, they serve to illustrate Cavendish's discussion of the characteristics and relative merits of different breeds, by now a commonplace of the genre. The five, however, are also named, and each is presented in a richly detailed and, for the most part, highly specific setting.

The first horse, PARAGON UN BARBE, is shown posed before Welbeck, Cavendish's manor house. As the horse is labeled, so is the house: with the words LA MAISON DE *WELBECK* A MONSEIGNEUR LE MARQUIS DE *NEWCASTLE,* LE QUEL EST DANS LA PROVINCE DE *NOTTINGHAM.* appearing in a prominently placed cartouche. The identification between horse and manor house is reinforced by the composition, with the two aligned on a centered, vertical axis. A low wall separates them, anchoring an orderly visual recession into a genteelly-constrained pastoral landscape. Of particular interest, however, is the groom who holds the horse. Not surprisingly, we are not told his name. However, his identity is even further subsumed within that of his charge, as his African features, tawny skin and light, wavy hair echo the subtly pied coat of the stallion and evoke its place of origin.

The next horse, LE SUPERBE CHEVAL DE SPANIE, is again posed before Welbeck. The picture is lent a dramatic, turbulent quality by the sharp wind which blows the horse's mane, the groom's long locks and the tails of smoke from the manor's several chimneys. This groom, again echoing the horse's place of origin, is European in dress and appearance, elegantly decked out in a falling collar and a coat with slashed sleeves. The third portrait, that of MACKOMILIA UN TURKE, again

distinctive, confirms the pattern by its differences. This time the stallion is black or morel in color, and the groom likewise a dark-complected African. His livery, like that of the barb's groom, is eastern in appearance, again invoking the animal's origins as indeterminately African/Arabic. Welbeck is again announced. This time, however, it is the estate's riding complex that is shown, in a fashion that is informative as well as proprietary. To the left is a wing labeled "LA BOUTIQUE DU MARECKALL." To the right, "Le MANEGE couvert de bois large de 40 pieds, longe de 120 pieds."[138]

The fourth of the stallions is announced as NOBILLISIMO COURSIER NAPPOLITAIN. Unlike the other horses he faces right, permitting the viewer to appreciate his long, full mane, and also to see the duke's brand, seared on the horse's right haunch. Once again the groom is a European, fashionably dressed like the first with long hair, slashed sleeves, short jacket, and blouson leggings featuring a ruff below the knee. This time, however, he leads his charge with the *left* hand rather than the right, a marked departure from convention. While in life this might have simply signaled a left-handed groom, the grooms are not determinative in these images. More likely, it was dictated by the horse's pose. At the same time, however, this detail may have been intended as an allusion to an ongoing debate concerning horses' supposed left-handedness. The groom standing to the horse's right would then signal the author's adherence to a pragmatic or "scientific" position on the question, as opposed to an explanation rooted in custom or "philosophy."

[138] "The marshall's workshop"; "The riding ring, covered in wood, 40' wide by 120' long."

The setting, in this instance, is also of interest, as Nobillisimo is posed before the duke's stable. This great building is not only identified, but described in some detail:

> The stable is vaulted in stone, with stone pillars in the Italian style, and a fountain which flows beside the manger, disappearing into a vault beneath where a little brook runs. Opposite the head of each horse there is a little flue for ventilation, which may be opened or closed according to whether it is cold or hot. It [the stable] is paved with cut stone. [139]

As stables were always susceptible to fire, the extensive use of stone is noteworthy; so too is the provision of fresh running water and fresh air for the stabled horse, in an age when indoor plumbing was a fantasy for most of the population. The level of comfort provided in the stable is intimated by the fifteen smoking chimneys shown atop its roof. The middle section is also identified, as "*Le Grenier de l'Ecurie,*" or the stable hayloft. An arch connects this complex to another building on the right, over which is the proud caption, "There are two other Stables for forty-five horses."[140]

The last horse represents an interesting departure from the pattern. Identified as RUBECAN UN ROUSIN—Rubican, a Rouncy—he is another black or morel, with three white feet—left forefoot and both hind feet—and a white star. The markings themselves are worth noting. Cavendish, as will be seen, dismisses as superstition the traditional belief that white markings signify a horse's quality for good or ill.

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[139] "*L'Ecurie voutée de pierre, les piliers de pierre, à l'Italienne, et une fontaine qui coule le long de la mangeoire, et le rend dans une voute au desous ou coule un petit ruisseau.Contre la teste de Chaque Cheval il ÿ a une petite cheminée l'haleine du Cheval, laquelle s'ouvre ou se ferme, selon la chaleur, ou froideur; Elle est pavée de pierre de taille*." Cavendish, *General System*, plate 9.

[140] "*Il y a d'autres Ecuries pour quatre-vint Chevaux.*" Cavendish, *General System*, plate 9.

Nonetheless these particular markings are all quite fortuitous, suggesting to those who still believe in such things that this is a very good horse indeed.

Other details, however, seem to qualify that assertion. Though Rubican, like the other horses, is attended by a groom, he has for his backdrop an anonymous rural landscape rather than some named prospect of Welbeck. A collection of roofs and spires is visible in the distance, suggesting a village or town, but it is not identified. His groom is likewise more modestly dressed than the others; his long hair is not curled, and he lacks the frilled hose and slashed sleeves of his comrades. The visual code thus subtly confirms what the word "Rousin" clearly implies: this is a country horse, a horse of lesser status.

At the same time, however, he has been deemed worthy of a portrait. He is as proudly named as the rest. He is one of Cavendish's horses and acknowledged as such, which by definition means he is an animal of superior quality. Thus, while social distinctions are retained, quality itself is presented as adhering to the individual. Implicitly, it cuts across class lines.

This apparent paradox, with its suggestion of a conflicted ideological alignment, speaks to the dilemma identified by Raber, in which she finds a contradiction between Cavendish's construction of his horses as rational creatures possessing a sensitive interior life, and his Hobbesian political views. The observation is apt. If Cavendish's method reflects the enlightened empiricism of Pluvinel, his reading of the character of his horses is more akin to that of Grisone, who interpreted equine behavior in terms of conscious will and calculated intention.

Raber invests this paradox with a certain fateful irony. "Cavendish's horses," she writes,

> embody elements of a subtle yet sweeping historical change in the world of human relationships…Concepts of individualism, individual rights, and rational participation in self-government have begun, despite the return of the monarchy, to transform English political and social life; these concepts, reflected in Cavendish's descriptions of his beloved horses, are precisely those that will ultimately marginalize the kind of aristocratic identity their author himself exemplified before the civil war.[141]

Cavendish's initial statement on the subject of horse training echoes Xenophon, Grisone, and virtually every other horse master. "There are but two things that can make an accomplish'd horse," he writes, "*viz.* The hope of reward, or the fear of punishment." As has been seen in previous chapters, this appeal to instinct and manipulation of animal fear had served to justify the use of cudgel, spurs and flaming straw**.** Even Pluvinel's *chambrière,* a device intentionally benign in its physical effect, was designed to inspire fear.

Cavendish, however, immediately goes on to extend the generalization in a way which gives it a very different import. This is the case, he explains, for it is fear and hope "which all the world are influenced by; and, as far as we know, God has no other means of exciting his people to virtue, but by the largeness of his infinite rewards, and the terror of the pains that are prepar'd for their crimes."[142] Thus, through a blithe elision, he blurs and even erases the distinction between horses and human beings.

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[141] Raber, "Reasonable Creatures," 43.

[142] Cavendish, *General System*, 1: 12.

This ingenuity of reasoning is characteristic of Cavendish's method of attack. He is neither a logician nor a philosopher, and his arguments are hardly systematic. His stance is far more that of an advocate. Arguing strenuously for the dignity and capacity of his horses, he parries thrusts as they come and rebuts as he can, using whatever argument he can devise to make his case.

Cavendish's method and his argument are, in a sense, inseparable, for he is concerned primarily with questions of cognition: how the horse comes to know things, how it learns. Thus he continues in somewhat greater detail, explaining how fear and hope work upon the animal:

> A horse must be wrought upon more by proper and frequent lessons, than by the heels, that he may know, and even think upon what he ought to do. If he does not think (as the famous philosopher DESCARTES affirms of all beasts) it would be impossible to teach him what he should do. But by the hope of reward, and fear of punishment; when he has been rewarded or punished, he thinks of it, and retains it in his memory, for memory is thought) and forms a judgment by what is past of what is to come (which again is thought); insomuch as he obeys his rider not only for fear of correction, but also in hopes of being cherish'd.[143]

Here one sees the disparate elements of Cavendish's argument, not cleanly knit together in a logical progression, but rather triangulated in order to bring him to the necessary point. His prescription is sound in terms of practice, as he advises "proper and frequent lessons" instead of physical goading. However, he then uses the efficacy of such lessons as *a posteriori* proof that horses "can think." That process of thought, moreover, includes the faculty of memory and the capacity to form judgments.

In this Cavendish is at pains to refute Descartes's assertion that animals are merely automata, mechanisms that have the appearance of ensouled life without its

[143] Cavendish, *General System,* 1: 12.

animating spark. In his *Discourse on Method,* published in 1637, the French philosopher had bluntly denied that animals have minds. "[I]t is nature which acts in them acording to the disposition of their organs, as one sees that a clock, which is made up of only wheels and springs, can count the hourse and measure time more exactly than we can with all our art."[144] As proof of his assertion, he cites the absence of intelligent language among animals, traceable to a mental rather than a physical lack, as witness the verbal performance of parrots, "for one sees that magpies and parrots can utter words as we do, and yet cannot speak as we do, that is to say, by showing that what they are saying is the expression of thought; whereas men, born deaf and dumb,…habitually invent for themselves certain signs, by means of which they make themselves understood…" Nor, he warns, should we

> confuse words with the natural movements which bear witness to the passions and can be imitated by machines as well as by animals; neither should one think, as did certain of the Ancients, that animals speak although we do not understand their language. For if it were so, as they have many organs similar to our own, they could make themselves understood by us as well as by their fellows. [145]

And so Descartes delivers his verdict: "this shows not only that animals have less reason than men, but that they have none at all."[146]

Much of Cavendish's subsequent argument is formulated to counter that of the French philosopher. Thus he articulates his own position concerning the relationship

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[144] René Descartes, *Discourse on Method,* in *Discourse on Method and the Meditations,* trans. F.E. Sutcliffe (London and New York: Penguin Books, 1968), 75–6.

[145] Descartes, *Discourse*, 75.

[146] Descartes, *Discourse,* 75.

between language (or, as he would have it, "the mark and representation of things") and the operations of reason:

> Altho' horses do not form their reasonings from the ABC, which, as that admirable and most excellent philosopher HOBBS says, is no language, but the mark and representation of things, he must notwithstanding give me leave to think, that they draw their reasonings from things themselves. For instance; that I observe the clouds to darken, I see it lighten, or hear it thunder, and that I have been once wetted after having made these observations, and that a horse at pasture has been likewise wetted: tho' he knows not these words, *dark, cloud, lightening, thunder*, both he and I will notwithstanding take to our heels to shelter ourselves from the rain under the trees. So far the one is as wise as the other. I am reasoning by marks express'd in language, and he is reasoning from the presence or absence of things without the marks. The same judgment is to be made in a thousand other things.[147]

Characteristically, while Cavendish seeks to establish a certain parity between human beings and horses, he does not do so by claiming for the horse a rational intellegence *per se*. He is far too experienced a horseman to attempt such a claim. Instead he bases his argument on observed behavior, which he then construes as proof of thought.

In the process, he doggedly searches out points of kinship between horse and human, and devises ingenious arguments to counter obvious objections. In this regard he is not above citing the court of public opinion, using the phrase "some say…" to set up an argument which he plans to counter, and "many say…" to set up his own. The horse's absence of language, for example, is explained thus:

> Many are of opinion, that the reason why men speak, and not the beasts, is owing to nothing else, but that the beasts have not so much vain-glory as men, which produces language in them; and we see that the rarity of things among *Indians* occasions their using speech very little; therefore the beasts do not amuse themselves with bracelets, enamel'd rings, and innumerable baubles of that kind, but follow nature simply without having, like men, their heads crowded with a

[147] Cavendish, *General System*, 1: 12.

> multitude of thoughts and business, of which horses are not solicitous.[148]

Thus Cavendish offers the horse's perceived simplicity and purity of being as a standard against which the failings of his own human tribe may be more clearly seen. In the same way, he wryly turns the horse's lack of speech into a virtue, for if "[i]t is true, the horse cannot express his reasoning by a proposition, not knowing the marks ABC; then he has at least this advantage, that he never errs as men do."[149]

It is here that one finds Cavendish passing into somewhat unexpected political territory, as he describes power achieved through the use of force. In one sense his example remains valid even for a royalist, as what he is describing is a reversal of the legitimate order of things, with the savages overcoming the wise man. However, the tenuous logic of his argument seems to suggest that horses may be subdued by men who are similarly their inferiors, thus inverting what would seem to be a fundamental ontological hierarchy.

> Some too are pleased to say, that horses are void of understanding, because men get the better of them: but when the horse gets the better of the man, which frequently happens, is the man then void of understanding? Force subdues men, as well as beasts. If the wisest man in the world were taken by a savage people, and put to draw in a cart proportion'd to his strength, and if he were beaten when he refused to do his duty, would not he draw just as a horse does when he is threaten'd? And in like manner when he felt hunger, would he not be very uneasy till he got victuals?[150]

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[148] Cavendish, *General System,* 1: 12.

[149] Cavendish, *General System,* 1: 12.

[150] Cavendish, *General System,* 1: 12.

What heretofore has been seen as a heinous vice in horses—that of being "nappy" or "resty"—is here presented by Cavendish as something like a heroic virtue. Following the parallel logic of his argument, moreover, he similarly presents the act of resistance—a form of rebellion—as a virtue in men:

> Somebody will perhaps say, that he is so proud he would sooner die than draw a cart, and so full of resolution, that he would rather thrown himself down than stir. A horse will do as much as all that, and will (I believe) bear beating somewhat longer than the mighty man that talks at this rate. We call the horses of that temper restive and the men obstinate, t'is all one.[151]

It is only toward the end of this lengthy introduction that we find that Cavendish's target has shifted. He is no longer fending off the predations of Descartes alone; it is now the scholars who appear as the enemies of his horses. "The learned will hardly be brought to allow any degree of understanding to horses," he writes. "[T]hey only allow them a certain *instinct,* which no one can understand; so jealous are the schoolmen of their rational empire."[152]

Proceeding in a somewhat more generous temper, he allows them the benefit of their own ignorance. "What makes scholasticks degrade horses so much, proceeds (I believe) from nothing else, but the small knowledge they have of them." He soon veers back to a darker track, however. "As for men of letters, tho' they study, they don't study horsemanship, but their studies turn to better account, by [illegible] themselves to rule over the rest of mankind, till such time as they are subdued by the sword…"[153] At last, however, the Duke of Newcastle bids them all farewell, having

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[151] Cavendish, *General System,* 1: 12.

[152] Cavendish, *General System,* 1: 13. The emphases are Cavendish's.

[153] Cavendish, *General System,* 1: 13.

been reminded of "what the great and excellent doctor EARLE says in his characters, that a scholar and a horse are very troublesome to one another, and so I leave them, without giving them or myself any farther trouble."[154]

Still, this is not the end of his battles, for next he takes on the critics of his art, the "wagg, [that] perhaps will ask, what is a horse good for that can do nothing but dance and play tricks?," and "those great wits (the *sneering* gentlemen)" that would laugh and call his horses "dancer and prauncer."[155] His answer has the iron of the seasoned soldier in it:

> [I]f those gentlemen were to fight a duel, or go to the wars, they would find their error; for these horses perform a journey, as well as they do the high airs; and the long marches occasionally make them soon forget those airs, which are calculated merely for pleasure; moreover, they are much fitter for galloping, trotting, wheeling, or anything else which is necessary.[156]

Nonetheless, the future lay with the waggs and sneering gentlemen. By 1657 manège was already passing as a fashion, certainly in England and even in France, while its prohibitive cost exacerbated the appearance of vain frivolity. This may explain the curious discordance in the duke's response. Karen Raber characterizes it as sounding "like an anxious self-defense." [157] In any case, it has a distinct air of accommodation:

> When a commonwealth is to be form'd, that men may live together in society, those who make feathers to put into their masters hats, are as

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[154] Cavendish, *General System,* 1: 13.

[155] Cavendish, *General System,* 1: 13. The emphases are Cavendish's.

[156] Cavendish, *General System,* 1: 13.

[157] Raber, 59. Oddly, however, Raber interprets "those who make feathers to put in their masters' hats" as referring to Cavendish's horses. It seems more likely that Cavendish himself would be the feather-maker, and his horses the feathers.

> useful in the republick, for the maintenance of themselves and families, and for the good of the community, as those who sell beef and mutton; for the tendency of the whole is to live by aiding one another, without wrongdoing or offending any body.[158]

Thus, Cavendish argues, manège still has its place, "being an exercise that is very noble, and that which makes [Kings, Princes, and persons of quality] appear most graceful when they shew themselves to their subjects, or at the head of an army, to animate it; so that the pleasure in this case is as useful as anything else besides the glory and satisfaction that attends it."[159]

Thus arrayed, these arguments may give the impression of a crabbed and contentious work, and an author of somewhat querulous character. In fact the spirit animating Cavendish's treatise is quite otherwise: it is spacious, witty and reasoned, suggestive of a warm and generous temperament. In a sense, those quarrels may be seen as marking the boundaries of the duke's world. Within these boundaries he is master, and can fashion the world as he wishes.

In a very real sense, that world was already a creation of the imagination. After all, the original treatise was written and published while Cavendish was still in exile. The engravings of Welbeck and Bolsover depict estates which had been lost, and which at the time were in ruins. It is this fact that gives two of the engravings a particular poignancy. The first, titled *Les Haras,* or *The Stud*, shows mares and foals at grass, with a few stallions among them. The second, called *Les Poulins,* or *The Colts*, shows young horses, one or two years of age, similarly at liberty in a pasture. In each case, the engraving complements Cavendish's advice on the subject. In the

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[158] Cavendish, *General System,* 1: 14.

[159] Cavendish, *General System,* 1743, 14.

section on breeding, for example, he emphasizes the importance of keeping the stallion well-nourished—"Without meat and drink love grows cold."[160]—and of permitting the horses to breed naturally rather than "with the hand," for otherwise "it is then rather a compulsion than a natural inclination; for every natural action of this kind ought to be performed with freedom and love, and not by violence or constraint."[161] Colts are likewise to be given their freedom in the summer, preferably kept warm and stabled in the winter, and not even saddled until they are three.[162]

The images are more than instructive. They are idyllic. "The Stud" offers the vision of an irenic society of horses, a pastorale whose inhabitants gambol and graze, nurse and socialize. "The Colts" offers a similarly joyous image, as the young horses playfully nibble each other and cavort, or graze tranquilly in the company of their friends. Most striking in the latter picture are the young horses spontaneously performing perfect caprioles and courbettes, for the sheer joy of it. Raber compares them to "schoolboys conning their lessons," who are "practicing their *haute école* on their time off, perhaps the better to encourage their masters to cherish them well."[163] In fact the horses are too young to have begun their training under saddle, much less to be learning the airs above the ground. This is not, as Raber would have it, an image of animals whose will has been "colonized."[164] That may be a fair assessment of the broader methods and goals of manège, particularly in its symbolic dimension, but it is

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[160] Cavendish, *General System,* 1: 23.

[161] Cavendish, *General System,* 1: 23.

[162] Cavendish, *General System,* 1: 26.

[163] Raber, "Reasonable Creatures," 56.

[164] Raber, "Reasonable Creatures," 59.

not apt here. This is rather a representation of one of the fundamental premises, or conceits, of the art, that the artificial airs are simply perfected versions of the horse's actions in nature. That these young horses' leaps are already perfect underscores the utopian character of the image.

Had Cavendish simply wished to flaunt his skill as a horse trainer, he might have done better to emphasize difficulties overcome instead of the native excellence of his students. This, it will be remembered, was the case with Pluvinel's Bonnite, the magnificent horse with the fatal flaw which only the master could correct, a living testimonial to the latter's genius. To be sure, Cavendish offers himself in this light, providing demonstrations of his mastery in many of the engravings, and presented in apotheosis in others. Here, however, the horse is shown as having a beauty and vitality of its own, independent of him in all but the care it receives.

A key may be found in the opening sentences of the treatise, in which Cavendish immediately takes his stand with regard to those who would "teach" a horse by beating it.

> The understanding of a Horse is infinitely degraded below that of a man by several, who notwithstanding, by their actions, shew, that they believe the Horse to be the more intelligent of the two. And indeed, a boy is a long time before he knows his alphabet, longer before he has learned to spell, and perhaps several years before he can read distinctly: and yet there are some people, who, as soon as they have got upon a young horse, entirely undressed or untaught, fancy, that by beating and spurring they will make him a dress'd horse in one morning only. I would fain ask such stupid people, whether, by beating a boy, they could teach him to read, without first shewing him his alphabet? Sure, they would beat the boy to death, before they would make him read. The horse is taught first to know, and then by frequent repetition to convert that knowledge into habit. It is in like manner in what men learn: for example, a boy is a long time before he can play perfectly on the lute; but when once he is become perfect, his fingers move without his thinking on every note, or every point. There is just

> as much to be said for a managed horse. It is true, that the hand and the heels are all that is to be required to make a perfect horse; but there are other things required to make him perfectly obedient to the hand and heels.[165]

As has been seen, the analogy between the school boy and the young horse was something of a commonplace in England. However, Cavendish returns to it repeatedly in the course of the treatise. Always he emphasizes time, patience, reason and understanding, even as he offers scathing rebukes to those "stupid people" who would resort to force. The balance between human being and animal has shifted. Previously, human beings had represented the standard of comparison for the horse; with Cavendish, it is the horse that establises the standard of comparison for the human being.

In her analysis of the Cavendish treatises, Raber references the Foucauldian theme of internalized discipline, whereby behavior comes to be influenced through appeals to the mind and emotions rather than by means of "external devices and punishments."[166] This is certainly applicable to manège in its broader terms. In the instance of William Cavendish, however, the impersonal Foucauldian reading must be qualified. His pronounced empathy with his horses undermines the dynamic of power and subordination, and suggests the play of another dynamic, that of identification.

Cavendish is not alone in this. La Broue speaks of gazing into a horse's eyes, to know its temper and quality, as does Pluvinel: "One must stare fixedly into a

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[165] Cavendish, *General System,* 1: 11.

[166] Raber, "Reasonable Creatures," 57.

horse's eyes, in order to judge its nature and its inclination."[167] So too does Jacques de Solleysel, Cavendish's great French contemporary and collaborator, who writes in 1664 that

> …the eye must be resolute, insolent, and proud; a Horse, in order to be beautiful, must gaze firmly, and superbly, on whomever is presented to him, without averting the eye; such effrontery suits the Horse admirably; in his eye one discovers his inclination, his anger, his malice, his health, and his sickness, *the eye is the mirror of the soul.*[168]

Solleysel's horse has the address of a king. This horse transgresses social boundaries that a human being may not, indeed *must* if he is to be of any worth. Thus one marks a decisive shift from an assessment of the animal's temperament and quality based on the humoral indications of color and markings, to the knowledge gained—or inferred, and thus projected—from the psychological penetration of its gaze. The act of confrontation with the animal Other, and that of co-optation, now take place within an inner animal self.

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[167] Pluvinel, *L'Instruction du Roy*, 19.

[168] "De plus l'oeil doit estre resolu, effronté, & fier; un Cheval pour estre beau, doit regarder fixement, & superbement, ce qui se presente à luy, sans en détourner la veuë, l'effronterie sied admirablement bien au Cheval; dans l'oeil se découvre son inclination, sa colere, sa malice, sa santé, & sa maladie, *profecto in oculis habitant animus.* Jacques de Solleysel, *Le Parfait Mareschal* (Paris: Jean Mariette, 1713), 2.2.9.

CONCLUSION

The riding treatises examined here exhibit a number of traits held in common, as might be expected in a fashionable and quickly evolving genre. Reflecting the paradoxical nature of the discipline, for example, they readily transgress traditional hierarchies of knowledge, as instruction in farriery and horse medicine sits comfortably in the company of humanist digressions. Certain themes and preoccupations reverberate through their pages with greater or lesser sincerity: that of the nobility and utility of the horse; of reform, whether of horsemanship, education, morals, or society; of wise rule and governance; of martial valor and the chivalric virtues.

Also held in common are certain underlying tensions. As revealed in the first two chapters of this dissertation, the symbolic resonance of a living horse is of a different order from that of a statue or painting; symbolic meaning, when vested in the animal itself, exists in a dynamic tension with practical needs, concerns and consequences. One may readily influence the other, often in unpredictable ways.

However lofty their claims for the innate nobility of horses and for manège itself, these treatises on horsemanship necessarily remain grounded in the physical and the everyday. Other tensions derive from the inherent dissonance between the physical skill of riding and the capabilities of print, as between the assumptions of exclusivity surrounding manège and the popularizing forces of the medium and the marketplace. Due in part to the play of these inherent tensions, the differences between the treatises can be as revealing as the patterns which emerge among them.

As seen here, some distinctions play out along lines of nationality. The Italians, first on the scene, demonstrate a marked diversity and innovative energy, establishing models for those who would come after. Grisone, the groundbreaker, actively invited reinterpretation, just as the highly valued but inchoate substance of his work galvanized translators and adaptors. Fiaschi's emphasis on the precise, balletic ordering of horse and rider found avid disciples among the French. While Corte's effusive approach offered the pleasures of contemplation to the sedentary, his methods, stripped of their literary veneer, found a home among the English.

Subsequent variations take on a different cast. The French works, for example, while also diverse in tone, share an underlying emphasis on form and precision, consistent with the seminal influence of the Fiaschi/Pignatelli school. The English works, on the other hand, are defined by their posture of disinterested amateurism, their division into what may be seen as court-oriented versus market-oriented works, and their tendency to privilege the "horse of service" over the "horse of pleasure," at least on paper. The Gentlemen Pensioners, following a strategy of gentlemanly indirection, avoid unseemly self-promotion by authorizing each other. More pointed strategies of self-authorization, on the other hand, cut across national lines.

In the last analysis it was his association with the horse, more than his association with kings, that conferred distinction on the professional riding master. As we learn from Pluvinel and Corte, this was literally so: the greatest fame for such a professional came through "making" an exceptional horse. It was also true in a figurative sense, a fact which some of these writers, though not all, consciously exploit in their treatises. Even where no overt manipulation occurs, however, the

authoritative self is asserted in terms made definitive through its connection to the horse.

Some of these authors, attuned to the play of artifice and irony, aggressively define and assert themselves by manipulating the status claims associated with the horse. Grisone, Fiaschi and Pluvinel are most pronounced in this respect, as they take advantage of literary transactions—Grisone and Fiaschi in their dedications, and Pluvinel through the device of the riding lesson—to define themselves *against* the established hierarchy as represented by their patron. All use their position as masters of horses and horsemanship to invert the inherent imbalance of the relationship and tip it to their advantage. Grisone and Fiaschi do so through their manipulation of the word *cavaliero* or *cavaliere,* exploiting its varied meanings of knight, gentleman and horseman to privilege the last, and with it an arena in which they enjoy a supremacy unassailable by their social betters. Viewed in these terms, the dedication itself takes on the character of a performance, since it clearly, if subtly, establishes the *mastery* of the riding master/author for the benefit of his reader—here with his patron as subject.

Pluvinel achieves the same end through what is in effect a performance *manifested* through print, one which, for a riding master, represents a tour-de-force; just as he has "made" the most perfect horse in Christendom, the incomparable Bonnite, so too does he "manage" Bonnite's human counterpart, the king himself. In play here is the enduring "superior man/superior horse" construct, taken by Pluvinel and turned on its head. As the riding master without peer—a status both demonstrated and earned through his "making"of Bonnite—he is in a position to command horse and king both. Regarded thus, the rhetorical performance represented by the treatise

may be seen as having its climax in the moment when the king, now on horseback, is *made to say*, "Here I am, my stirrups well-adjusted, the reins in my hand. What would you like me to do?"[1]

Christopher Clifford provides an interesting counterpoint to Pluvinel, anticipating the French master's use of the dialogic form and to similar effect, but in the service of the social outsider. Clifford's oppositional stance is further reflected by the arguments he builds into his text—reminiscent of Corte in this regard—and by his insistent inversion of social values. He wears his ostensible poverty and want of a servant like a badge of honor, not—or not only—to secure assistance from his dedicatee, as La Broue so assiduously does, but to better distinguish himself from the rider given to the "womanlie or taffata goats leape."[2] Even Clifford, however, adopts the more conventional strategy of including a poem of commendation from someone of rank, in this case the knight, Sir John Tracie, and in the end is considerably less radical in his claims than Pluvinel. Even Pluvinel's adept performance is aimed, however, not at true inversion, but simply at advantage, as he borrows the king's high estate for a time to burnish his own.

Somewhat unexpectedly, the one riding master who demonstrates a genuine oppositional stance is the royal *écuyer* Salomon de la Broue. In many respects he appears the most subdued and conservative of the group, his spiritual austerity contrasting sharply with the courtly artifice of Pluvinel. While the latter asserts himself by manipulating the rhetoric of dominance, La Broue abides by that of

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[1] "Me voilà donc à cheval, mes estrieux bien adjustez, & la bride en la main, que voulez-vous que je fasse?" Pluvinel, *L'Instruction du Roy,* 74.

[2] Clifford, *School of Horsemanship,* 10.

discipline and service. At first glance he resembles Pliny's chariot horses—the perfect servant, magnificent in his role while understanding and accepting its necessary limitations. Acutely conscious of his subordinate place in the hierarchies of existence, La Broue embraces hierarchy as the guarantor of order and virtue, qualities which for him are synonymous. His method of horsemanship, accordingly, is mathematical in its precision, requiring rigorous adherence to precepts and rules. For La Broue riding itself, if done correctly, is an inherently moral exercise.

All the more startling, then, are his flashes of bitterness and resentment, whether directed at instances of offhanded and humiliating treatment by his lord, or at the underlying insecurity and hardship of his profession. Against these, however, La Broue sets his personal authority as a trainer of horses—ultimately derived, not from his skill, nor even from his rules, but from what he portrays as a rich, *subjective* knowledge of horses in all their infinite variety and possibilities. Painfully gained over long years of experience, observation and practice, La Broue's knowledge is priceless and irreducible; rules apply to all, but his is the wisdom that shapes those rules. Thus, at the ideological heart of this geometricized court, we find a horse master's resistant retreat into the sovereign space created by the subjective and the empirical.

This raises the issue of the horse itself, the living being at the center of this densely coded and highly charged complex of symbolic meanings. On the conceptual level, we find horses often anthropomorphized, depicted as having near-human intellect and sensibility—a conceit which manège itself encouraged. The reality, of course, is quite otherwise, a disparity which the riding master, in his capacity as

trainer, was left to negotiate. From the first, the art of training necessarily privileged empirical experience, the stubbornly-asserted basis of mastery from Grisone to Cavendish. Experience, however, is still necessarily interpreted within a conceptual framework; thus it is that we find Grisone interpreting the horse's balkiness as malignity, and so responding with beatings and cries of "traitor!" to shame or chasten it into submission. Ironically, the cruelty of the punishments visited on horses appears directly related to the degree to which they were anthropomorphized. Fiaschi's mechanistic and materialist approach to the use of the curb bit, an approach which, based on the particulars of a given horse's conformation, effectively reduces it to its composite parts, nonetheless has the end result of seeking the best effect with the least discomfort to the animal.

The issue may well trace back, at least in part, to what Esther Cohen calls "that borderland between the settled and the wild, reality and fantasy" where the human and the animal meet.[3] The fancy of the "superior horse" inherited from Pliny and cultivated by poets, the fit companion of princes, violated the Church's teachings of an unbreachable ontological difference between human and animal. To the extent that the horse participated in humanity, it participated also in the consequences of the Fall. Since, in the eyes of the Church, the horse *qua* animal was in any event removed from moral considerations of suffering or mercy, it enjoyed no protections in any case—explaining, perhaps, the heedless use of cats on poles to scratch its belly and hedgehogs tied under its tail. Grisone's advice, however, apparently still current in the latter decades of the sixteenth century, rings with a punitive intensity reserved for

[3] Cohen, "Animals in Medieval Perceptions," 64.

the intentionally malicious. Indeed, his cry of "Traitor!" suggests the depth of the balky horse's transgression.

By the latter seventeenth century, however, we encounter William Cavendish similarly anthropomorphizing his horses, after a fashion—at pains, not so much to persuade his reader of the ways in which horses are like people, as of the ways in which people are like horses. In this connection, one may look back to 1598, and the publication of Carlo Ruini's *Dell'anatomia et dell'infirmità del cavallo*, with its splayed anatomized horse, in precise emulation of the anatomized human beings in Vesalius's 1543 *De humani corporis fabrica.* An essential equivalence between the two was established, with the human being, this time, reconceived in the animal terms of the horse.

Descartes could still represent animals as unfeeling automata, on grounds not unlike those on which the Church had excluded them from the considerations given the ensouled. Nonetheless, by the seventeenth century the frame of reference had changed. In Cavendish we find a proprietary identification with the horse, based in one sense on the old pride of dominion, and in another on an emotional, empathetic bond, the stirrings of what in the eighteenth century would be known as sensibility. The principles of training laid down by Xenophon and taken up by Grisone still held true, but the underlying premises informing their interpretation had changed. Similarly the art of manège would be recontextualized over time, its courtly and aristocratic associations preserved but increasingly marginalized. The horse would

still bear its ancient associations of dominance, discipline and service, but it would carry them into new social and material contexts.[4]

[4] For studies of nineteenth-century cultural and social values as projected through horses, see Jennifer Mason, "Animal Bodies, Corporeality, and Class Formation," and Susannah Elisabeth Ryan's "Coming to the Whip," Ph.D.dissertation, University of Michigan, 2002.

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