

Peter Edwards, Karl A. E. Enenkel, and Elspeth Graham, eds. *The Horse as Cultural Icon: The Real and the Symbolic Horse in the Early Modern World*. Intersections: Interdisciplinary Studies in Early Modern Culture 18. Leiden: Brill, 2011. xviii + 408 pp. \$149. ISBN: 978-90-04-21206-0.

Peter Edwards speculates in his introduction that it may be horses' very centrality in the past that has made them "invisible to history" (1); it is more likely, however, that our relatively recent but complete estrangement from horse culture has led to the lack of focus on horses and horsemanship in scholarship in the early modern period, since anyone who does not have specialized knowledge of the field would have difficulty recognizing the meanings, techniques, influences, and consequences of that culture's textual remnants. This collection of fifteen essays goes a long way to redressing the situation, covering everything from farriery guilds, to literary and artistic images of horses, to the role of imported animals in the Old and New Worlds.

A number of essays address the tradition of manège riding, or the high schooling of the horse (now called dressage), which evolved in response to changes in the status associated with actual battlefield riding by heavy cavalry. As a performance, an art, and a science, the manège came to signify the noble rider's skills in managing his own emotions, and by extension managing others, whether in his own household or at court. References to horsemanship are thus about the ideological recuperation of aristocratic authority, as noted in essays by Elizabeth Socolow and Elaine Walker. Walker argues that the horse's special status in the hierarchy of creation makes it possible for William Cavendish to portray horses as intelligent and sensitive, and therefore better positioned to stand in for non-elite human subjects in a calculus of power and leadership. Elspeth Graham sees Cavendish's riding as compensatory "self-restoration" (48) for defeat in the Civil War and exile. Two essays with a more global reach, however, suggest that exporting the horse's ideological functions could be difficult: Sandra Swart argues that Africans invested both emotionally and financially in warhorses (often through the slave trade, exchanging humans for horses), but could not overcome the frontier created by the range of the deadly tsetse fly, while Greg Bankoff's work on Philippine horse culture looks at the fate of imported Spanish animals that adapted so well when confronted with a wholly new environment that they shrank in size, and so could no longer provide noble riders with large, powerful mounts that reflected their dominant status.

Many of the essays included are revisionist, indicating that the field, however sparse at present, is maturing. Elizabeth Tobey redresses a critical and contemporary legacy of disgust for the supposedly abusive training methods of Neapolitan horsemaster Federigo Grisone, by looking more carefully at the context for Grisone's descriptions of cruel training techniques. Richard Nash takes on the speculative history of the Byerly Turk, long lauded as one of the three main studs producing the Thoroughbred breed. Instead of a noble foreign animal acquired in foreign wars, Nash finds evidence that the Turk — a term used fairly

indiscriminately in the period for a type, not a breed — may well have emerged out of local politics, suggesting that the story of horse racing's origins are “grounded in rebellion as well as Royalism” (191). Louise Curth disputes assumptions coloring other histories of pre-veterinary animal medicine that practitioners were largely ignorant and ineffective, while Gavin Robinson challenges the absolute nature of the claim that the cavalry were obsolete by the time the manège discipline was invented. For readers who see only warhorses in Shakespeare's *Henriad*, Jennifer Flaherty has a more complete and varied set of horse references to propose, and Pia Cuneo offers a welcome antidote to the “torpidity” of art criticism on horses (71) in her analysis of illustrations included in horsemanship treatises.

That horses were embodied beings, sharing with humans in the humoral schema, alerts Ian MacInnes to their ability to convey ideas in Shakespeare's plays about the determinism of humoralism, versus the possibility of change through discipline. Peter Edwards also finds crossovers between humans and horses in his discussion of their emotional value to elite owners, while Andrea Tonni's essay on the Gonzaga stud situates horses at the heart of important trade patterns between England and Italy. Finally, Amanda Eisemann finds smith and farriery guilds negotiating masculinity through mastery of the horse's needs.

Because of its scope, the volume is uneven in both quality and organization. Three sections on status, breeds, and identity help to locate some general issues, and the introduction by Peter Edwards is useful for situating the different essays in connection or tension with one another, while including material not found elsewhere in the volume, but the collection remains a bit organizationally and thematically amorphous. The volume also attempts to be broadly interdisciplinary and international, with mixed results. This is only to say, however, that the collection is not the last word on this neglected subject, as much as it indicates the need for more such scholarship in future.

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