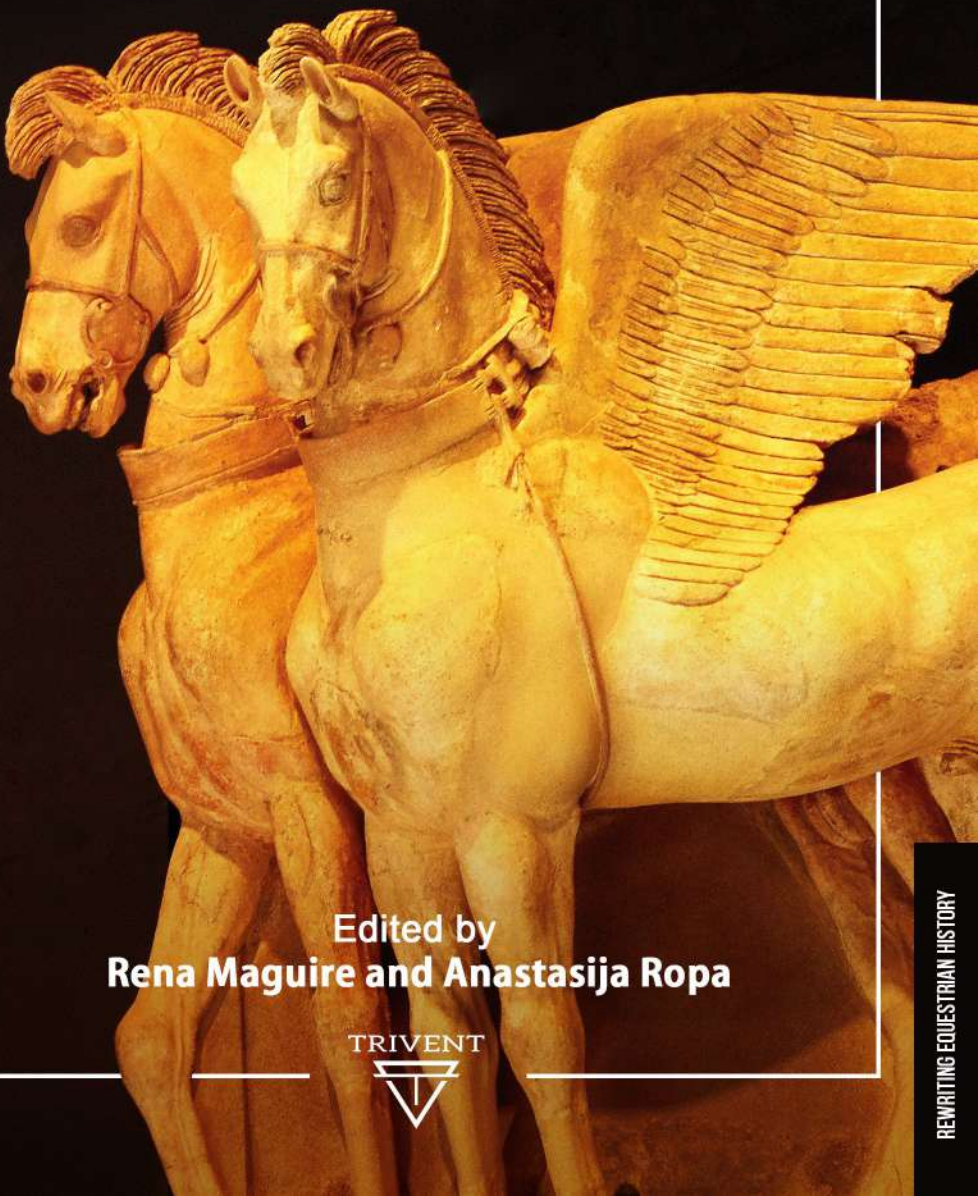
THE LIMINAL HORSE

EQUITATION AND BOUNDARIES



Edited by
Rena Maguire and Anastasija Ropa

TRIVENT

REWRITING EQUESTRIAN HISTORY


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The Liminal Horse: Equitation and Boundaries

Edited by

Rena Maguire and Anastasija Ropa

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Foreword

It gives me particular pleasure to introduce this multi-disciplinary collection of papers devoted to matters equine, not least because of my long-standing interest, on a personal level, in horses of the sport and racing variety, but also my interest, on a professional archaeological level, in the association of horses with human burial in Ireland and Britain in the Early Medieval period.

The editors have gathered together, under the title *The Liminal Horse: Equestrianism and Horses on Social Boundaries*, papers from internationally renowned experts (archaeologists, historians, linguists, and a harness maker) on the treatment, training, care, and equipment of horses, throughout Europe, from the Bronze Age, up to the present-day.

The papers cover a diverse range of topics. The domestication of the horse in Southern Scandinavia in the Bronze Age, and its subsequent development from draught to war horse is discussed in detail by Xenia Pauli Jensen and Jacob Kveiborg. Horsemanship, both military and civilian, within and on the frontiers of the Roman Empire, is assessed by M. C. Bishop and Alexia Foteini Stamouli. Continuing with the theme of Roman frontiers, Rena Maguire examines Roman ideological influences on Late Iron Age Irish snaffles. The myth of the importation of Arab racehorses into Britain during the Roman period, is closely and expertly examined by Miriam A Bibby.

The text written in the mid-thirteenth century by Jordanus Rufus on the treatment and training of horses is assessed by two authors: Jennifer Jobst provides an English translation and a discussion of Rufus's Book Four 'On the care and the bridling and the training of the young horse'; Anastasija Ropa details Rufus's training methods, and discusses whether these are still applicable in the twenty-first century.

The methods of stabling and housing of horses in English manorial centres in the medieval period are outlined and examined by Duncan L. Berryman. Cristina Oliveros Calvo provides a list of historical terms for the horse in English, French, and Spanish. Harness maker Terry Davis

discusses the topic of harness-use in the medieval period, and the use of correct harness especially in developing countries at the present time.

Congratulations to the editors and the authors for this excellent contribution to the expanding corpus of literature charting horse-human interaction throughout the ages.

Elizabeth O'Brien, MIAI, FSA, FSAScot.

Dr. Elizabeth O'Brien is a notable Irish archaeologist and scholar. She is a graduate of UCD and the University Oxford, and a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London. She has lectured and published widely on the subject of burial in late Iron Age and early medieval Ireland.

Introduction:
The Horse as a Liminal Being

Rena Maguire, Anastasija Ropa

In the early 2000s, horse history was limited to a number of once authoritative, but somewhat dated studies written by a few outstanding scholars. Some of them were academics with little practical knowledge of horseflesh, while others, like the famous Ann Hyland, were primarily "horse people" – trainers, riders, and breeders. In the recent decades, a growing interest in animal studies on the one hand, and in material culture on the other, motivated a new generation of historians to plunge into the study of equines and of equestrian practices, often combining a passion for horses and expertise in history. This interest has led to the publication of articles, edited volumes, and monographs, not to mention dedicated conference sections and even entire conferences focusing on the horse and its history.[1] To navigate through the accumulated body of academic writing on horse history and to provide a platform for emerging and established scholars to publish on what, for many, is still a liminal field, a dedicated series with an academic publisher was imperative. The series Rewriting Equestrian History was established by Trivent in 2018: its aim is to bring together scholars who recognize the practical and symbolic importance of the horse in history and to provide a forum for raising and debating the new and topical issues in the history of horses and equestrianism.

[1] Conferences on equine history have been organized by the Equine History Collective in 2018, 2019, and, in virtual format, 2021. In 2020, Anastasija Ropa and Timothy Dawson organized a conference Historical Practices in Horsemanship and Equestrian Sports, hosted by the Latvian Academy of Sport Education, in August 2020. To this can be added Equine Cultures in Transition, a conference that combines panels on horse history and panels on art, literature, modern lifestyle, ethics, pedagogics, and equine assisted social work, on 22-24 June 2021, by the Swedish University of Agricultural Studies.

The idea for this series emerged as a result of the editors' activity at the International Medieval Congress in Leeds, where, since 2016, Anastasija Ropa and Timothy Dawson have been organizing sessions dedicated to equestrian history.[2] It is fitting that medieval history, where research on horses has been somewhat lagging as compared to other historical periods, is the primary focus of the first two books published in the Rewriting Equestrian History series, a monograph by Anastasija Ropa, *Practical Horsemanship in Medieval Arthurian Romance* (2019), and a volume edited by Miriam A. Bibby and Brian G. Scott, *The Materiality of the Horse* (2020). It is no surprise therefore that the first part of this volume, too, concentrates on the medieval period, albeit making reference to modern equestrian practices. However, the series welcomes contributions from all chronological periods, and the second part of the volume brings out the connection between prehistoric, ancient and modern equestrian practices convincingly, showing how the knowledge of horse history is essential not only for historians, but also for equestrians and, indeed, for all people with interest in the history of culture and civilization.

But why the emphasis on borders and liminality? As the previous volume in the series was dedicated to the material aspects of equestrianism and the materiality of its central agent, the horse, it seemed fitting to consider the symbolical implications of horsemanship in the following volume. Indeed, the historical horse is at once material and abstract, as is the notion of the border: borders and frontiers are not only markers delineating geographical spaces (just as a horse is more than just a quadruped historically used by humans mostly, but not only, for transportation), but are also mental constructs. In her discussion of the notion of border from a philosophical perspective, Latvian scholar Mara Grinfelde points out that borders can be not only spatial, dividing one space from another (geographic) space, but also cultural, that is, borders between differing cultures. There are also borders between order and disorder, the ones providing a moral assessment of activities: the borders between what is permitted and what is prohibited. Building on the writings of Waldentfels, Grinfelde affirms that, on the whole, the border concerns not only the material sphere, the "world of things," but also

[2] It is following the first series of sessions in 2016 that the Equine History Collective, a US-based professional organization for equine historians, was established: see https://equinehistory.wpcomstaging.com/.

economic, political, moral, legal and religious spheres.[3] In this volume, the authors consider the presence of horses in all of these spheres in various ways.

The horse moves through our history, straddling the domestic and the legendary, on the boundaries of the human psyche. They may be war-horses, farm-horses or even food, but the horse has captured and inspired the human imagination for millennia. Sometimes the horses have wings and belong to the realms of air, like Tianma (天馬), the dragon horse of China, and Tulpar, its equivalent in Turkey.[4] They also can have fish tails, or horns, and occasionally a mingling of all these. The horse cannot be placed in one single context of human experience, instead existing in the liminal spaces of life, death and everywhere in between.

The Iron Age Scythian burials of Pazyrk,[5] in Siberia, included horses, which were sacrificed so that they could make the journey to the Fields of Heaven. Accordingly, their trappings were spectacular. A chamfrain with horns, turning the horse into a deer or elk, itself a deeply meaningful creature on the steppes.[6] It was not just in the equestrian heartland of the Steppes that the horse could transform – the copper alloy chamfrain found in Torr, Scotland, turned its equine wearer into the stuff of myths, with sweeping horns, extravagantly decorated in the La Tène-derivative style of the European Iron Age, topped by staring-eyed metal waterfowl. Despite their distance from each other, Pazyrk and Torr demonstrate how the domestic horse could shift into the realms of the supernatural, through the enchantment of human technology. The horse may occupy the boundaries of wildness and domesticity, but we choose to accompany

[3] Mara Grinfelde, "Pārdomas par robežas jēdzienu: filozofiskais aspekts" [Thoughts about the notion of border: philosophical aspect], in *Baltu un slavu kulturkontakti* [Cultural contacts of the Balts and the Slavs], ed. Janīna Kursīte (Riga: Madris, 2009), 279.

[4] Ji Yong, "Analysis of the heavenly horse Tianma in the Han Dynasty stone reliefs," *Journal of Nanyang Institute of Technology* (2010) and Khurshid Sayfullayev, and Dildora Komilova, "The national and spiritual essence of Uzbek fairytales in upbringing young generation," *Mental Enlightenment Scientific-Methodological Journal* 1 (2020): 170-180.

[5] Sebastien Lepetz, "Horse sacrifice in a Pazyryk culture kurgan: the princely tomb of Berel' (Kazakhstan). Selection criteria and slaughter procedures," *Anthropozoologica* 48:2 (2013): 309-321.

[6] Boris Piotrovsky, "Early Cultures of the Lands of the Scythians," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 32:5 (1973): 12-25.

it, a theme explored in detail by Anastasija Ropa in her study on Jordanus Rufus's hippiatric treatise in chapter two of this volume.

Myth and legend are full of shapeshifting, liminal horses, which veer from adorable to deadly in a hoofbeat. The Irish *púca*, Welsh *pwca* and Cornish *bucca*, taking the form of a shaggy, mischievous young horse, lived in wells or ancient cairns, and could choose to bring good luck or bad, depending on its mood.[7] Its hatred of iron marks it as a wild creature, beyond the domains of domestication. That essential spirit of wildness echoes in horse folklore – that you can very much find yourself lost to human society once you choose to mount one of these supernatural horses. A multitude of world cultures interred horses in burials, the ultimate psychopomp escorting the deceased human on the ultimate journey from which there was no coming back.[8]

The magic of the horse was not diminished with the passing of the ancient world. Instead, a whole culture of horse training, housing and associated technologies were created: two chapters in this volume, by Jennifer Jobst and by Duncan L. Berryman, relate to medieval practices of horse training and stabling, respectively. And yet, the horse still had a hoof in both worlds – the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse are seldom depicted on shabby or humble mounts, traditional mummers dressed as the Mari Lwyd, the skeletal prankster performer of medieval Britain, and the *chansons des gestes* have such creatures as Bayard and Gringolet,[9] with distinctive personalities and wisdom which their humans rely on. Real-life equids may have been tethered by leather and metal, but the essence of wild and ancient magic is always there, even in the gentlest creature.

The contributing authors to this volume explore the theme of the liminality of the horse. How does one reconcile the very different roles played by the horse in human life? The horse has acted as marker of identity and social status in cultures as different as those of the Late Iron

[7] Deasún Breatnach, "The Púca: a multi-functional Irish supernatural entity," *Folklore* 104:1-2 (1993): 105-110.

[8] Horse burials often involved sacrifice of the animal, another Indo-European tradition, which is the subject of the recent far-ranging monograph by Anders Kaliff and Terje Oestigaard, *The Great Indo-European Horse Sacrifice. 4000 Years of Cosmological Continuity from Sintashta and the Steppe to Scandinavian Skeid* (Uppsala: Uppsala university, 2020).

[9] The liminal nature of horses in Arthurian romance, such as that of Gawain's Gringolet, is disccused by Philippe Walter, "Le cheval dans la mythologi arthurienne," in *"Sonò alto un nitrito". Il cavallo nel mito e nella letteratura*, ed. Francesco Zambon (Pisa: Pacini, 2012), 121-134.

Age Ireland (the subject of Rena Maguire's contribution, chapter 8), the Roman Empire (see M. C. Bishop's study, chapter 9), and Byzantium (discussed by Alexia-Foteini Stamouli in chapter 4). It has been a creature with a hotline to the supernatural, a status symbol of aristocrats, a helpmate to the labourer (which is the subject of chapter 6 by Terry Davis), a warrior (an issue considered by Xenia Pauli Jensen and Jacob Kveiborg in chapter 7), and a creature made for sport, often performing all these functions at the same time. Such is the case of many iconic equine breeds, most notably the English Thoroughbred, which has become the object of nineteenth-century mythmaking, some of which is uncovered by Miriam A. Bibby in her chapter concluding the volume.

It is therefore, as editors, our honour to present to the reader a collection of papers exploring the human boundaries, both actual and ideological, on which horses have existed through the past two thousand years. The volume is divided into three sections, with the first dealing with the equestrian apogee of the medieval period. A practical paper on harnessing methods acts as a bridge between the medieval period and the third section, which examines equestrian boundaries of antiquity.

It is our hope that these papers inspire, entertain and inform, and perhaps leave the reader thinking further of the relationship between human and horse.

Section One

1. Jennifer Jobst, "Horse training in the thirteenth century: Insights from Jordanus Rufus"

2. Anastasija Ropa, "Crossing Borders in Equestrian Training: Applying Jordanus Rufus's Advice on Training Young Horses Today"

The first two chapters of the section are dedicated to the same source text: arguably the central horse text of the Middle Ages, the hippiatric treatise of Jordanus Rufus. The authors approach the advice provided in the initial sections of the text, those on horse breeding and training from different perspectives. Jennifer Jobst concentrates on relating the text to contemporary realia, while Anastasija Ropa narrates a practical experiment in applying Rufus's advice on horse training to her own practice. Both studies focus on crossing the border between an untrained, unridden and virtually unhandled, "wild" horse to an

"educated" horse that can serve the purpose for each it is bred in a particular socio-cultural context. Jennifer Jobst is an independent scholar with a background in dressage, who has published on historical riding performances and has translated several medieval and early modern hippiatric and equestrian histories from Middle French and early modern Italian, including parts of Jordanus Rufus's treatise; in this study, she discusses the training of a medieval warhorse (*destrier*) or elite riding horse (palfrey).

In turn, Anastasija Ropa combines her academic background in literary criticism and translation studies with her practical experience as a horse owner and trainer of young and "problem" horses to show how Rufus's advice on preparing the horse to cross the border from an unridden colt or filly to a serviceable amateur sport or hobby horse is still topical today. In all, both chapters demonstrate that Rufus's text has made the transition of time successfully – much of it is as useful to a twenty-first century horse person as it was for a thirteenth-century one. The reason is that Rufus's text is, essentially, a treatise of human-animal becoming, where the horse crosses the border from "nature" to "culture" only after its human handler/rider/trainer has crossed the border in the reverse direction to take the horse with him/her.

3. Duncan L. Berryman, "Housing Horses on the Edge in Later Medieval England"

The horse was of vital importance to every aspect of the medieval world, with the finest animals an indulgence of the great and the good. Duncan Berryman examines the construction of English manorial stables, which may reflect symbols of lordship; effectively, if an aristocrat could house their horses in luxury, the unspoken statement was that their own habitations were even grander. The stables may have been on the boundaries of the great houses, but existed as prestige symbols, just like horse studs, in their own rights.

4. Alexia-Foteini Stamouli, "Roman and Enemy Horses and Riders: the Testimony of *Historia Romana* by Nikephoros Gregoras"

In her study of the horse in a Greek historiographic text, Alexia-Foteini Stamouli taps into the realms of the political border-crossing, but also into ideology and religion. Alexia-Foteini Stamouli is a specialist in

Byzantine literature and has presented and published on equines in Byzantine hagiographic, theological and historiographic texts. A window into Byzantine cultures of equestrianism, her source text provides ample evidence of how enemies could be separated from "allies" and "one's own" people based on their riding skills, ways of treating horses, and the animals they ride. The decision to ride or not to ride and what kind of horse to choose for riding would firmly mark adherence or transgression of ethnic and social borders: there were specific kinds of horses ridden by the military elite, whereas the religious could forego riding at all or choose a humbler equine than a horse – a mule or a donkey.

5. Cristina Oliveros Carlos, "Straight from the Horse's Mouth: A Study of Horse Type Terms in English, French and Spanish"

In this chapter, Cristina Oliveros Carlos, a linguist and translator with a particular interest in horse-related texts, considers linguistic boundaries where various words designating "horses" could cross – or not – from the Middle Ages up until the present day. Starting from the Latin words "equus" and "caballus," which co-existed but belonged to different stylistic registers, the terminology designating horses by type and use in the medieval period was developed, varied, and specific. Due to cross-cultural and cross-border contacts, English, French, and Spanish have retained many etymologically related terms designating horses: but many of them are "false friends" – words that sound similar but that have changed their meaning when crossing the border. On the other hand, there are many autochthonous terms that are not attested in other languages, as well as new, autochthonous meanings and stylistic overtones they develop in their new linguistic and cultural context. The author shows that words denoting horses, like the animals they signified, could cross borders – but they could also change on the new soil. And some of these words never made the transition.

Section Two

6. Terry Davis, "Harnessing Horsepower: Then and Now"

Working horses are increasingly rare in Europe and North America, unless as recreational animals, used for tourism or leisure. This is not the case in many developing countries, where workers rely on equids for

haulage and agricultural traction, in exactly the same way people of the past depended on working equids. Terry Davis is a master harness-maker for draft horses, based in Shropshire, England. He has an interest in both zooarchaeology and improving the lives and health of working equids. This paper examines best practice for draft animal harness, even if it is improvised equipment. He also poses a question of whether we can use this knowledge to identify the worst kinds of harness-related pathology on equid skeletons of the past, by comparing with injuries caused by poor fitting harness in developing countries.

Section Three

7. Xenia Pauli Jensen and Jacob Kveiborg, "Bridles and Bones – early cavalry in Southern Scandinavia"

Central and western Europe can chart a reasonably precise timeline for the increasing use of the riding horse, rather than chariotry, through the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age. The boundaries of Europe, in this case, Scandinavia and the Baltic regions, have very different Iron Age chronologies compared to western and central Europe. Xenia Pauli-Jensen and Jacob Kveiborg, both equine and military specialists from Moesgaard Museum, Denmark, examine the introduction of the riding horse to Scandinavia, during the Late Bronze Age, using the forensics of bridle-wear, to define when the horse changed its status to mounted warhorse, and by doing so, changed its status to be a co-warrior with humans.

8. Rena Maguire, "Livin' on the Edge: Roman influences on the equestrian equipment of Late Iron Age Ireland"

Like the Baltic regions, Ireland was on the boundary of the Roman Empire. Equitation equipment is among some of the more commonly found artefacts of the Late Iron Age/Roman period. The double-jointed ported snaffles are unlike any others in Europe, with a unique shape and remarkable manufacturing sophistication. Yet these snaffles tell a story of hidden identities and clashing cultures, finally showing previously hidden aspects of the lives of the aristocratic riders and their horses, and their relationship with the beliefs of the Roman Empire itself. Rena Maguire is a specialist in the manufacture and use of lorinery of late

antiquity and late prehistoric Europe, with a specific interest in the Irish Iron Age.

9. M. C. Bishop, "*Dimisso equo*: horse-riding elites on the frontiers of Rome"

The Roman Empire utilised many kinds of equestrians, from the provincial riders, or *peregrines,* to cavalry conscripts, or *ales*. Less evidence survives of civilian equestrians connected to the Empire. There is a hint of ideology in separating the spheres of military and civilian life (the "dismisso equo" of the title), but it has proved more problematic to assess differences in the kinds of equipment used. M. C. Bishop, the editor of the *Journal of Roman Military Equipment*, asks if it is possible to identify a boundary between civilian and military equitation (and associated equipment), or if everything came down purely to status and warfare for the Roman elite rider.

10. Miriam A. Bibby, "Mist on the Border: Emperor Severus and the Netherby Arabians that never were"

The abiding myth of Arabian racehorses imported to Britain during the Roman period is examined by Miriam Bibby, currently a PhD researcher studying Scotland's Galloway pony. Moving firmly in the realms of myth and wishful thinking, popular legend has related the arrival of fineboned Arabian horses to Britain at the bequest of the Emperor Septimus Severus, who wanted to enjoy the spectacle of horse-racing. Using a combination of horse-sense and good old-fashioned primary source texts, Bibby produces evidence that much of this legend is manufactured by nineteenth-century imaginations.

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Horse Training in the Thirteenth Century: Insights from Jordanus Rufus

Jennifer Jobst[1]

About Rufus and *De medicina equorum*

In the mid-thirteenth century, Jordanus Rufus was a *mareschal* (marshal) in the royal stables of Frederick II, King of Sicily and the Holy Roman Emperor. Around 1250, Rufus wrote *De medicina equorum*, which is not only is it the first Western European equine veterinary text since that of Vegetius almost 800 years earlier, but is also widely considered to be the basis for European veterinary medicine throughout the Middle Ages and Renaissance.[2] Unlike many ancient and medieval authors who flaunted their knowledge of ancient texts and even paraphrased or copied wholesale, Rufus claimed to have written his book based on his own knowledge and experience.[3]

De medicina equorum is divided into six books; the first three focus on the breeding and care of young horses, and were translated and analyzed in "Practical advice on equine care from Jordanus Rufus, c. 1250."[4] In this paper, we focus on book four, which is on the care, bridling, and

---

[1] Independent researcher, USA.

[2] For a thorough discussion of Rufus' influence, see Harrison, "Jordanus Ruffus," 35-8.

[3] The Old French text (which may not be Rufus' original words) says, "Je ay assemblé en ce livre aucunes choses de cheval selonc ma quidance et soustillité de mon angin et ce qu'en ay apris en la marechaucie de l'empereour Fedric, qui je l'ay tout mis en escrip" [I have assembled in this book some things about horses according to my guidance and the subtlety of my knowledge/intelligence/practical wisdom and what I have learned in the mareschal service of the Emperor Frederick, which I have put everything in this script] (line 5). Prévot, *Le science*, 31.

[4] Jennifer Jobst, "Practical advice on equine care from Jordanus Rufus, c. 1250," in *Materiality of the Horse*, ed. Miriam Bibby and Brian Scott, 37-69 (Budapest: Trivent Publishing, 2020).

training of young horses. The fifth and sixth books, which are on equine diseases and their treatments, are beyond the scope of this paper.

Translation notes

Despite the importance of Rufus' work, it has never been translated to English.[5] The overwhelming number of extant manuscripts makes a proper scholarly translation from the original Latin quite daunting.[6] However, there are a more manageable number of Old French manuscripts, which were the focus of Brigitte Prévot's *La Science du Cheval au Moyen Age*. Dr. Prévot synthesized five fourteenth-century Old French manuscripts,[7] and it is Dr. Prévot's unified Old French text that has been translated to English for this paper.

The basis for Prévot's work was Paris BNF, MS Fr. 25341 – a circa 1300 Old French manuscript thought to be a copy of the first French translation of Rufus' original Latin.[8] However, she noted that the copyist (or perhaps the original translator) was probably not very familiar with horses or the vocabulary associated with them.[9] In addition, she noted that the Reims, Bibliothèque municipal 991 manuscript (1390) had to be used for the section on bits and advanced training (lines 89-124), as these lines were not found in three of the five Old French manuscripts, but appear in Latin manuscripts.[10]

In several places, the meaning of the Old French text was unclear, so we consulted Molin's 1818 Latin edition.[11] Some cases appeared to be

[5] It has, however, been translated into a number of other languages. Sunny Harrison, "Jordanus Ruffus and the late-medieval hippiatric tradition: Animal-care practitioners and the horse" (PhD diss, The University of Leeds Institute for Medieval Studies, September 2018), 28.

[6] Ibidem, 48.

[7] Paris BNF, MS Fr. 25341 (c. 1300), Rome, Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, Reg. Lat. 1177 (fourteenth century), Reims, Bibliotheque municipal 991 (1390, which is itself a translation of Vatican lat. 5331, c. fourteenth century), Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale n.a.l. 1553 (first half of the fourteenth century), and London, Wellcome historical medical library 546 (mid fourteenth century).

[8] Brigitte Prévot, *La science du cheval au moyen âge. Le Traité d'hippiatrie de Jordanus Rufus* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1991), 23.

[9] Ibidem, 16.

[10] Ibidem, 38.

[11] Despite Molin's version being 'barely accessible, unequally reliable, and executed based on a single thirteenth century manuscript" (Harrison, "Jordanus Ruffus," 11), it is the only relatively modern printing.

simple copyist mistakes or translator errors, but in other cases, the differences were significant enough that the interpretation could vary depending on the text being used. In these situations, we discuss the differences in the text and present various options.

As the author is by no means a fluent French speaker, the first step of the translation process involved making a rough translation of the text. Unfamiliar words were then identified using Prévot's dictionary and a variety of online sources, including the Dictionnaire du Moyen Français.[12] Finally, Grégoire de Beaumont (medieval enthusiast, equine expert, and native French speaker) and Adeline Dumont (researcher at "Les Rênes de l'Histoire") reviewed and corrected the translation, and Dr. Anastasija Ropa provided additional edits. John Clark provided the Latin translations from Molin, and both Mr. Clark and Dr. Frederik Kirch assisted with interpreting bit descriptions. We would like to thank them all for their help in ensuring the accuracy of this translation.

When identifying the bits described in the Old French text, we looked at both extant bits and bit illustrations from a few later Rufus manuscripts (namely, Beinecke MS 679)[13] and other fourteenth-century *hippiatric* texts.[14] Thus, although these illustrations may depict examples of bits that Rufus described, said illustrations are neither exclusive to Rufus' works nor do they necessarily accurately reflect bits contemporary with Rufus' text.

Finally, regarding gaits of the horse – the Old French text uses "galoper" (Lat. "gallopare") to indicate a speed faster than a "trotter" [trot] but different from "courre" (Lat. "currere"). "Courre" means "to run" in both Old French and Latin, and is often used on the context of hunting (which is typically done at very fast speeds);[15] thus it seems likely

[12] http://www2.atilf.fr/dmf/ (accessed June 12, 2020).

[13] Yale, Beinecke Digital Collections, Beinecke MS 679, ff. 39v and 40r, https://brbl-zoom.library.yale.edu/viewer/1464996. We chose Beinecke MS 679 because it is the oldest complete set of illustrations in a Rufus manuscript that we had access to at the time of writing. The manuscript is c. 1350; however, according to Dr. Gloria Allaire, the illustrations have been dated to the early fifteenth century, most likely the second quarter of the fifteenth century, and were executed in Florence,. Gloria Allaire pers. comm. July 2020. There may be earlier sets of illustrations that we are unaware of.

[14] For example, Urb.lat.252 folio 10v, https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Urb.lat.252; and Plut.77.25, folio 10r, http://mss.bmlonline.it/s.aspx?Id=AWOMMi2WI1A4r7GxMRIm&c=Magistri%20Laurentii%20De%20veterinaria%20disciplina#/oro/31 (accessed June 12, 2020).

[15] This has been the author's experience when participating in modern foxhunts.

that "courre" refers to the horse's fastest speed, a four-beat gait exhibited by racehorses (in modern French, "courre" also refers to this fast four-beat gait). In the Old French text, "galoper" and "petiz galoz" are used in the context of doing slower work earlier in the horse's training; therefore, we suggest that the "galop" refers to the slower, three-beat gait with one foreleg or the other leading, modernly called a "galop" in French, and a "canter" or "lope" in American English. To avoid confusion, we translate "galoper" and its variations to "gallop/canter," meaning the three-beat gait with one foreleg or the other leading, and "courre" to "run," indicating the four-beat gait where the horse is going top speed.

Overview of Book IV

In Book III, we learned that Rufus' noble horses spent the first two years of their lives in mountain pastures with their mothers, then were brought to the stables in the spring of their second year[16] and trained to be haltered, hobbled, groomed, and led about.[17] Book IV continues with training the two-year-old[18] to be ridden, starting with introducing him to the bit and bridle and working in-hand. Once he was comfortable following a handler, he could be mounted and ridden without a saddle,

[16] The time when horses began their training has varied through the ages. Aristotle (fourth century BCE) recommended starting the horse after he had shed all his baby teeth, at the age of four years and six months (Aristotle, *The Complete Works* (Dulles, VA: MVP Press, 2019)). Varro (first century BCE) stated that a horse could be started at eighteen months, but it was better to wait until the horse was three years old (Varro, *In Res Rusticae*, trans. F.H. Belvoir, https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Res_Rusticae_ (Country_Matters) (accessed May 11, 2020)). Clifford (1585) said not to start a horse before it was "4 yeeres of age & eight moneths at the least" (Christoper Clifford, *The schoole of horsmanship* (London: Thomas Cadman, 1585) Intro, np). Stallions at the Spanish Riding School are started at age four (Alois Podhajsky, *Complete Training of Horse and Rider* (Wilshire Book Company, 1967), 74).

[17] Markham (1593) described training horses for a similar skill set in the late sixteenth century, saying "When your Colt is thus in the stable made gentile, that hee will be curried, rubd, pickt, cold, clothed, scopt, shodde,and leade vp and downe, eyther to the water or from the water..." See: Gervase Markham, *A Discourse of Horsemanship* (London: Richard Smith, 1593), Chapter 2, np.

[18] Grisone (1550) erroneously states that Emperor Frederick did not want his horses ridden until they were four years of age. In Elizabeth Tobey, *Federico Grisone's "The Rules of Riding": An Edited Translation of the First Renaissance Treatise on Classical Horsemanship* (Tempe: ACMRS Press, 2014), 409.

and taught basic turning. After a month, he could be ridden with a saddle, but his workload remained light until his third year when he was taught to trot, gallop/canter, and run under saddle. Rufus described several types of bits, and how certain teeth should be removed at the end of the horse's fifth year so that the horse could be properly bitted. He also addressed proper conditioning and advised that young horses should be ridden through cities, in places where he would hear loud noises, and around other horses. The horse was expected to be "perfectly accustomed and learned" by his sixth year.

Introducing the bit and bridle

Once the young horse could be haltered, groomed, and led about, the next step of his training was to teach him to carry a bit. When introducing a two-year-old to the bit, Rufus recommended that the bit be as light and weak (that is, not strong or harsh) as possible:

> Il est convenable chose et naturele, et reson le requiert, que l'an ait .I. fraig foible et le plus leger que l'an puet avoir. Apres soit oins le morts dou fraig d'un poi de miel, ou d'aucune austre chose douce.
> [It is an appropriate thing and natural, and reason requires it that one's bit be the weakest and lightest that we can have. Afterwards you should anoint the mouth of the bit with a little honey or any other sweet thing.] (line 71)

Using a light, soft bit was important so that the experience would be pleasant for the horse, and therefore he would be more willing to be bridled on subsequent occasions. Rufus also suggested covering the bit in honey or some other sweet substance, a practice that continues in modern times.[19]

> Et, si comme j'ai dit, le fraig doit estre dous et legiers et faibles, pour ce que, quant le fraig fet mains moleste au cheval et la bouche dou cheval, tant le prendra il plus voulantiers des en avant, et plus legeremant, et pour la doucour, qu'il aura santue, siques il le retendra plus voulantiers une autre foiz.

[19] The author gives her horses a small treat each time she bridles them, so they associate bridling with a tasty treat.

> [And, as I have said, the bit must be pleasant and light [having a light action] and soft/weak, because, when the bit is less unpleasant for the horse and his mouth, so that he will take it more willingly going forwards, and more easily, and for the sweetness, which he will have tasted, he will hold it more willingly another time [the next time].] (lines 72-73)

It was important that the horse take the bit willingly before progressing with further training: "Apres ces choses, puis que le poulain receit voulentiers le fraig et sanz nule force" [After these things, when the young horse takes the bit willingly and without force] (line 74). The type of bit one should first use on a young horse is not mentioned, but it may have been the *a barre* bit, which is described later in Book IV as being "lighter" and "weaker" than other bits.

In-hand work and beginning riding

Once the horse had accepted the bit, Rufus recommended a rudimentary form of working the horse in-hand; that is, leading or guiding the horse from the ground using the bit and bridle instead of a halter:

> L'an e doit conduire a la main, le matin et le soir, de ca et de la, par aucuns jours, juques tant que li poulains aille tres bien apres celui qui le maine.
> [one should lead it by hand, in the morning and in the evening, here and there, for all days, until the young horse goes very well after the one who leads him] (line 74).

It is unclear if the handler did anything more than simply lead the horse about, but modern equestrians often teach their horses to halt, turn, and back up (reverse) in-hand, so it is not unreasonable to think that Rufus may have trained his horses to do the same during these twice-daily sessions. In-hand work is an important part of many later riding traditions,[20] and Rufus' text indicates that at least basic in-hand work was done in the thirteenth century. Importantly, Rufus put no specific time frame on how long it might take the young horse to become comfortable

[20] For example, Salomon de la Broue, *Le Cavalerice François* (Paris, 1610), 35. Horsemen can be seen working the horse from the ground and lungeing a horse in Von Zeumen (Zäumen), *Gründtlicher Bericht des Zeumens* (1588), 33-34.

in this work, instead stating that the handler practice until the horse "aille tres biens" [goes very well], at which point he could be ridden:

> Apres ce, soit chevauchez sanz nule noise et sanz selle et sanz esperons le plus legerement et le plus soef que l'an puet. Et soit mene poi a poi et le petit pas.
> [After this, he should be ridden in a quiet place,[21] without saddle and spurs as lightly and agreeably as you can. And you can lead him little by little and slowly.] (line 75)

For modern equestrians, it may be surprising to suggest first riding a young horse without a saddle, since the horse may object to being ridden, and a saddle can help the rider stay on should the horse move quickly or attempt to dislodge the rider. However, Rufus seemed unconcerned with the lack of saddle, so perhaps his method of leading the horse with a rider made for an uneventful first ride.[22] By the sixteenth century, special training saddles were used,[23] and many modern trainers use a saddle from the outset.

There is also the question of who might have been the young horse's first rider. In ancient Rome, Varro recommended using a young boy to sit on the horse the first few times, so as not to put too much weight on the horse.[24] Rufus wanted the horse to be ridden "le plus legerement" (literally "the most lightly"), which may indicate that the riders he initially used were also young boys.

Leading the horse "little by little and slowly," combined with the lack of spur and admonition that the horse should be ridden "the most lightly

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[21] "Noise" refers to both noise and loud quarrels, so this could also mean that the horse should be ridden without argument.

[22] Dr. Ropa discusses her experiences riding a horse for the first time without a saddle in her chapter in this publication, "Crossing Borders in Equestrian Training: Applying Jordanus Rufus's Advice on Training Young Horses Today," and concluded that it is a reasonable method for starting young horses.

[23] For example, Grisone (1550) used a special training saddle for young horses. See Eizabeth Tobey, *Federico Grisone's "The Rules of Riding": An Edited Translation of the First Renaissance Treatise on Classical Horsemanship* (ACMRS Press: 2014), 111.

[24] Varro mentioned using a young boy to sit on the horse the first few times, when the horse was three years old (https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Res_Rusticae_(Country_Matters) (accessed June 12, 2020)). The practice of using young boys the first few times the horse is ridden is still used in Turkoman training: "While still less than one year of age, a child is put on their back for the first time and led behind an adult mounted on a trained horse." See: Carolyn Willekes, *The Horse in the Ancient World: From Bucephalus to the Hippodrome* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2016), 85.

and agreeably that you can" leads the reader to envision a young horse taking his first tentative steps under a rider, while being gently encouraged by his handler on the ground. Several modern-day riding masters use similar methods,[25] and Rufus' kind, humane method is certainly a far cry from the "breaking" or "throwing" methods described in some manuals.[26]

During the young horse's first rides, he practiced turning left and right, and Rufus recommended using a "small rod" to encourage him to turn. He may have meant using the rod to gently tap the horse on the shoulder, as many horses will move their shoulder away from this touch, thereby turning themselves:[27]

> Et soit tournez souventes foiz a destre et a senestre, et soit feruz d'une vergete d'une part et d'autre. Et se il est mestiers, si soit mene par .I. home a pie, si comme j'ai dit dessus.
> [And let him be turned frequently to the right and the left, and hit him with a small rod on one side and the other. And if he needs it, let him be led by a man by foot, as I have said before.] (lines 76-77).

Rufus reiterated that the horse could be led by someone on the ground if needed, indicating that these first ridden sessions were to be taken slowly. The young horse was to be ridden on flat ground without stones, presumably so he would not have to worry about his footing whilst becoming accustomed to carrying a rider:

> Et soit chevauchez par lieu plain ou il n'est nules pierres juques tant que le chevaucher le puisse conduire sanz compagnie.
> [And let him be ridden on flat ground where there are no stones until the rider can drive him without company] (line 78).

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[25] See Bengt Ljungouist, *Practical Dressage Manual* (Boonsboro, Maryland: Half Halt Press, Inc, 1995), 49, and Wilhelm Müseler, *Riding Logic* (New York: Arco Publishing, 1983), 68.
[26] For example, Denis Magner, *The art of taming and educating the horse: with details of management in the subjection of over forty representative vicious horses, and the story of the author's personal experience: together with chapters on feeding, stabling, shoeing, and the practical treatment for sickness, lameness, etc.: with a large number of recipes* (Battle Creek, Mich.: Review and Herald Pub. House, 1886), 32-8, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mmet.ark:/13960/t74t6wg0j&view=thumb&seq=1 (accessed June 12, 2020).
[27] Grisone used a similar technique to teach horses to turn. See Tobey, "*Rules of Riding,*" 155. The author has also used this method.

After a month of riding without a saddle (presumably at the walk, although gait is not specified), the young horse could be saddled:

> Puis que li poulains sera chevauchez en tele maniere par l'espace d'un mois, l'an li doit metre la selle sanz noise, et soit chevauchez atout la selle juques a tant que le tans d'iver soit entrez.
> [After the young horse has been ridden in this manner for one month, you can put a saddle [on] without argument, and ride him in a saddle until the time of winter has arrived.]
> (line 79)

It is curious how little attention Rufus gave to the saddling process, since young horses can be discomfited by the sensation of girth tightening and the stirrups dangling and bumping their flanks. Perhaps Rufus' method of riding the young horse without a saddle for a month adequately prepared the horse to the point where saddling was not really a concern. However, most modern trainers spend significant time accustoming the horse to a saddle *before* the horse is ridden,[28] so Rufus' nonchalance about saddling the horse for the first time may be surprising to the modern equestrian.

After the young horse had been ridden, Rufus reminded the rider that he must care for the horse properly himself, instead of having someone else do it:

> Apres ce que le chevaucher aura chevauche sus le poulain, il ne le doit removoir juques a tant que il ait atourne ses dras sus li, si comme il convient, car par ce li poulains s'acoustumera a la maniere de celui qui le chevauchera.
> [After the rider has ridden on the young horse, he [the rider] should not leave [the horse] until he has put his drape [rug/sheet] on him, as it should be done [as proper], because this way the young horses will get used to the manner of the one who will ride him.] (line 80)

The phrase "this way the young horses will get used to the manner of the one who will ride him" implies that, at this stage of training, the

[28] For example, at the Spanish Riding School. See Alois Podhajsky, *Complete Training of Horse and Rider* (Wilshire Book Company: 1967), 75.

horse's owner was doing the riding and also at least some of the care-taking. If so, it means that noblemen (perhaps even Emperor Frederick himself!) were involved with their horses' training from the earliest stages, and they invested significant time in it. It also means that noblemen had the knowledge and skills to train a horse from the ground up.[29]

After being introduced to the bit and being trained to lead, as well as being ridden with a saddle at the walk and taught basic turning, the young horse's training began in earnest in the spring[30] of his third year: "Apres ce, quant li tans d'iver vendra, la mesure et la maniere d'enseigner le poulain soit muee en tele manière" [After this, when the time of the winter has passed, the way and the manner to teach the young horse will change in this manner] (line 81). First, Rufus instructed that the young horse learn to trot in fallow fields whilst carrying a rider:

> C'es assavoir que le chevaucheur face troter le poulain atrempremant par les jascheres bien matin, et puis le face torner a destre et a senestre, quar la resne destre doit estre plus courte que l'autre d'un poce de gros, et pour ce que le poulain est plus maniers de soi torner a senestre que a destre. Et face troter le poulain atrempeement par les jacheres plus que par austres lieus. Et par ceste reson li poulains s'acoustumera miex a lever les jambes et les piez plus legerement en s'aeure pour les motes de roies qui sont par les jacheres.
>
> [You should know that the rider must trot the young horse moderately in the fallow fields in the early morning, and then make it turn to the right and to the left, and the right rein must be shorter than the other by a large inch, because the

[29] Evidence of noblemen caring for and training their own horses can be found in chivalric handbooks and medieval chronicles. For example, in *The Book of Knighthood and Chivalry* (1274-1276), Lull said "it behooves the knight's son to understand how to care for the horse," indicating that horse care was not necessarily left to a groom or *mareschal*. See Ramon Lull, *The Book of Knighthood and Chivalry*, trans. Noel Fallows (Oxford: Boydell & Brewer, 2013), 42. Similarly, the fifteenth-century chronicle of Don Pero Niño states that Niño trained his horses himself for war, jousting, and parades; he also cared for them himself. See Gutierre Diaz de Gamez, *The Unconquered Knight: A Chronicle of the Deeds of Don Pero Niño, Count of Buelna*, trans. Joan Evans (Oxford: Boydell Press, 2004), 41.

[30] According to Rufus's schedule, horses should not be ridden hard "from January until the end of February" (line 67) because of the cold, so presumably the young horse's training would have been light until March of his third year.