

THE HORSE IN EUROPEAN HISTORY, 1550-1900

by

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Je hais tout autre voiture que le cheval
Montaigne

Acknowledgements

At the dinner table, when polite conversation turns to the inevitable etiquette of exchanging hobbies and interests, people are often surprised – and some disappointed – to hear, that I have had very little to do with horses. What’s more, I probably never will. My years spent in Japan, England and Germany – which are countries invariably passionate about their horses – seem to lead some people to suspect that I would be too. Not that there have been a lack of opportunities to become interested, of course. During childhood, my parents were keen to take me pony-riding in the countryside, at the ‘*Mother’s Farm*’ in Chiba, near Tokyo. But my recollection of this experience is far from fresh, and pictures that my parents have thrust in front of me to jog my memory depict a mounted child exuding a sense of utter indifference. When, some years later, I visited Sandown racecourse, in Surrey, albeit to play Par-Three golf in the areas inside the racetrack, it did not dawn on me that horses galloped around the same space on meeting days. Much later, when friends at university wanted to take me to racecourses in and around Tokyo, to experience the roars of thousands of punters urging their thoroughbreds on, I had better things to do. Perhaps the only time when I came even close to setting foot on a racecourse was when the Japan Racing Association began to put on night-time races, which appealed because they promised romantic evenings out on the turf. But before I could offer this experience, my girlfriend at that time left me. Even when, following my decision to take on horseracing as a topic of research, attempts to become more personally involved were undertaken –these have all ended up firing blanks. Having a flutter at least on Derby Day, watching Glorious Goodwood on television, appreciating equestrian eventing at the Olympics in Athens when I worked as interpreter, taking time to visit Newmarket, and popping into the National Gallery to look at paintings of George Stubbs have been promises I made to myself – but which I have never kept. Every time I look back at the numerous occasions when I could have become interested, in fact, I see, as a historian, the unlikelihood of why I ever

became interested in horses. Whatever the motivation, therefore, the result was certainly not inevitable.

My chance encounter with horses, as a subject of academic study, came while I was researching in Helsinki on a totally different topic of ‘ethnic crime’ in late imperial Russia, when I happened upon a court case of a supposedly Russian horse, called *Rassvet*, that had won races under suspicious circumstances during the early twentieth century. What was intriguing about the furore that enveloped the racehorse was how Russians themselves came to doubt the likelihood of a Russian-bred racehorse being able to compete and win against ‘western’ ones. My initial reaction to reading the *Rassvet* incident was thus to hastily see it as an illuminating example of the Russian inferiority complex *vis-à-vis* the ‘West’. But as I thought and read about the general subject of horseracing, it quickly became clear that what I saw were humans who conferred emotion upon the horses rather than the horses themselves. Why this topic has kept me involved over the years of the PhD is the undoubted intellectual challenge it presents for scholars to incorporate horses without completely diminishing their presence or hijacking them for different ends, for this was what I had initially done when I pigeon-holed *Rassvet* within discourses of Russian nationalism and identity. My challenge since then has been to look closer at the peculiarly ‘equine’ strand that has run through European history.

By the same token, since I am no lover of horses, or in fact of any animal, I cannot lay claim to moral arguments about the abysmal conditions in which horses historically had to work, the relentless cruelty inflicted upon them in towns and cities, or their courage, or ‘sagacity’, as cavalry horses on countless battlefields – these compassionate reasons are not why I feel their stories need to be told. As far as I am concerned, I will have no qualms about continuing to live in an equine-free bubble and feel no excessive outrage at the number of horses that have to be put down following falls at Becher’s Brook each year during the Grand National. But, as a historian, I fully realise that we are still living in an age where it was only relatively recently that horses were considered indispensable to the functioning of the world. Even though it would be disingenuous of me to say that we owe it to the horses that

we take them seriously, it would, I think, be reasonable to say that any understanding of the past would end up poorer and incomplete without them in it.

Many institutions and people have helped me as a person over the years I have pursued studies in Cambridge, and it is with great pleasure that I can finally record my gratitude to them. My time as a PhD candidate at Cambridge, first of all, was made possible by a variety of funding bodies. Most importantly, I wish to record the unremitting support of the Cambridge Overseas Trust and its colourful director Dr Anil Seal, not only for the award of a Scholarship, but also for periodic financial top-ups at times of particular need. As an overseas student, I also benefited from an Overseas Research Studentship (ORS) without which I would not have been able to afford doctoral studies in the United Kingdom. My appreciation also extends to my college, Fitzwilliam, which elected me to a Senior Scholarship for the duration of the PhD and to the Cambridge Political Economy Society whose financial help provided the basis on which I could concentrate on the task of writing-up. Over the years, research has been funded by The Prince Consort and Thirlwall Fund, The Matsushita (Panasonic) International Scholarship Foundation, The Sir John Plumb Fund, The Cambridge European Trust, and The Royal Historical Society.

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Universität Hannover; Österreichische Nationalbibliothek; Universitätsbibliothek Wien, especially the closet that is the Sonderleserraum; Österreichisches Staatsarchiv and its affiliate library for military history; Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv; Fachbibliothek, Historisches Seminar, Universität Wien; and the cathedral of knowledge that is the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

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Tats Mitsuda
Cambridge, 20.iv.2007

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Introduction

Towards a re-interpretation of European history in equine terms

A few years before his death in February 2006, the eminent German historian, Reinhart Koselleck, published a newspaper article – based on his acceptance speech at the *Historikerpreis* of the City of Münster – in which he radically advocated the re-interpretation of history in equine terms. More than impressed by the crucial role the horse has played in the evolution of all civilisation, Koselleck imaginatively re-organised history into the pre-equine, equine and post-equine periods (*Vorpfeder-, Pferde-, und Nachpferdezeitalter*), conceptualising the past on a grand scale as a horse-reliant, as opposed to a human-independent, world. By doing so, he placed reins upon man's mischievous proclivities for claiming undue credit for the achievements of civilisation:

From school we are used to history being served up in three parts. But if I were to re-classify the history of the world into the pre-equine, equine and post-equine periods, there are good reasons for doing so. Certainly, any attempt at periodization is a matter of perspective; but I want to look for a single thread that flows unnoticed through all divisions of ancient, medieval and modern history. By doing so, one discovers that no religious, political or social unit in the world during these three periods could have done without the horse. No cult, no army, no commerce and certainly no agriculture could have functioned without one. Only with the emergence of the so-called modern era did the horse lose its previously indispensable presence within all areas of human activity, retreating as it did into areas of art, sport and leisure.¹

¹ Reinhart Koselleck, 'Das Ende des Pferdezeitalters', *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (25 September, 2003), 18.

What Koselleck realised, as he looked back both at his childhood in particular and at the human past in general, was the extent to which man had been dependent on the horse for the bulk of his existence, employed as it was, literally or otherwise, in practically all areas of human activity and thought. ‘Whoever belongs to the time when I was born’, he reminisced, ‘that’s to say, whoever grew up as a child in the 1920s, will recollect the stench, which prevailed not only in the countryside, but also in the towns: streets reeked of horse-sweat, horse-excrement, bridle, harness and leather – whereas now exhaust fumes, coming from automobiles, infect the nose. As such, the equine period, as a lived experience, is now over.’²

Such an observation is not an original one, of course, but one that probably came easier to those who had, like Koselleck, experienced directly the twilight years of the equine period, as it cantered to a halt during the inter-war era, at least within Western Europe.³ Down the years, similar remarks have been recorded by a number of equally formidable students of modern European history, from the English economic and social historian F.M.L. Thompson, who first cultivated interest in the horse during the 1970s, to the French cultural historian Daniel Roche, who more recently called upon scholars to take a serious attempt at unearthing the equine dimensions of the French past⁴ – itself a revealing admission that research into the history of the horse still has much to do in a

² Ibid.

³ Of course, before scholarly interest took off, there were plenty of writers who wrote about the history of the horse, and they still do. For some of their more useful contributions, see: Harold B. Barclay, *The role of the horse in man's culture* (London, 1980); Juliet Clutton-Brock, *Horse power: a history of the horse and the donkey in human societies* (London, 1992); Bruno J.G. Dechamps, *Über Pferde. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Pferdes* (Berlin, 1957); Jean-Pierre Dirgard, *Une histoire du cheval: art, techniques, société* (Paris, 2004); Ann Hyland, *The horse in the middle ages* (London, 1999); Helmut Lenz, *Mit dem Pferd durch die Zeiten. Aus der Geschichte des Pferdes in der Natur und über einige sozialökonomische Probleme von Pferdezucht und Pferdesport* (2nd edition, East Berlin, 1978); Erika Schiele, *The Arab horse in Europe: history and present breeding* (London, 1970).

⁴ F.M.L. Thompson, *Victorian England: the horse-drawn society* (London, 1970); idem., ‘Nineteenth century horse sense’, *Economic history review* 29 (1976), 60-81; idem. (ed), *Horses in European economic history: a preliminary canter* (Reading, 1983); Daniel Roche, ‘Le cheval et ses élevages: perspectives de recherche’, *Cahiers d'histoire* 42/3-4 (1997), 511-20; idem. (ed), *Les écuries royales du XVIe au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris, 1998); idem. (ed), *Voitures, chevaux et attelages du XVIe au XIXe siècle* (Paris, 2000).

country which, despite the tradition of the *Annales*, has only belatedly seen the potential benefits of uncovering the animal past in general and the equine past in particular.⁵ Even so, partly owing to their initiatives, historians of different epochs, countries and approaches have, over the last thirty years, come closer to a more accurate, if still fragmented, appreciation of why, how and to what extent the animal had a role to play in the development of European history between approximately 1550 and 1900.⁶ Military historians, for example, have shown that battles would not have been possible without the support of horses, which pulled armoury, transported equipment and provided soldiers with mounts⁷: historians of the cavalry, in particular, have shown how the pride of cavalymen, whose identities were forged fighting on horseback, proved to be obstacles that delayed the introduction of new technologies and progressive military tactics beyond the First World War.⁸ Similarly, historians of the rural economy have

⁵ Éric Baratay and Jean-Luc Mayaud, 'Un champ pour l'histoire: l'animal', *Cahiers d'histoire* 42/3-4 (1997), 409-42. For an early example of this interest, within the French context, see: Éric Baratay and Élisabeth Hardouin-Fugier, *Zoos: histoire des jardins zoologiques en Occident, XVIe-XXe siècle* (Paris, 1998). Such a situation contrasts with that of England where realisation came much earlier with the publication of Brian Harrison's seminal article in 1973 which prefigured Keith Thomas' heavily influential work a decade later: Brian Harrison, 'Animals and the state in nineteenth-century England', *The English historical review* 88/349 (October 1973), 786-820; Keith Thomas, *Man and the natural world: a history of the modern sensibility* (London, 1983).

⁶ No fewer than five bibliographical compilations are available to historians of the horse in Europe. Needless to say, richness in source material should be no substitute for conceptual poverty: Gérard Comte de Contandes, *Bibliographie sportive. Les courses de chevaux en France (1651-1890)* (Paris, 1892); Anne Grimshaw, *The Horse: A bibliography of British books 1851-1976* (London, 1982); Frederick H. Huth, *Works on horses and equitation. A bibliographical record of hippology* (London, 1887); Eileen P. Loder, *Bibliography of the history of horse racing* (London, 1978); Gabriel-René Mennessier de La Lance, *Essai de bibliographie hippique, donnant la description détaillée des ouvrages publiés ou traduits en latin et français* (2 vols., Paris, 1915-1917).

⁷ R.L. DiNardo and Austin Bay, 'Horse-drawn transport in the German Army', *Journal of contemporary history* 23 (1988), 129-42; John Singleton, 'Britain's military use of horses 1914-1918', *Past and Present* 139 (1993), 178-203; Rudolf Rautschka, 'Studien zum Pferd im Militärdienst', (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Vienna, 1999).

⁸ Stephen Badsey, 'Cavalry and the development of breakthrough doctrine', in Paddy Griffiths (ed), *British fighting methods in the Great War* (Ilford, 1996); idem., 'Fire and sword: the British army and the *arme blanche* controversy' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 1982); Antulio J. Echevarria II, 'A crisis in warfighting: German tactical discussions in the late nineteenth century', *Militärgeschichtliche Mitteilungen* 55/1 (1996), 51-68; Nikolas Gardner, 'Command and control in the 'Great Retreat' of 1914: The disintegration of the British cavalry division', *The Journal of military history* 63/1 (January 1999), 29-54; Gervase Philips, 'The obsolescence of the *arme blanche* and technological

discovered that horses were important to agriculture: even though oxen were the preferred source of traction, used for ploughing and hauling during the bulk of the early modern period, they found that draught horses came to be increasingly relied upon once the high costs of breeding them could be met by demand from commerce and industry later on.⁹ Equally, historians of transport have noticed the indispensability of horsepower: with the rising desirability of road networks, reliance on either saddle horses (for passenger transport) or packhorses (for haulage), with specific reference to England, eventually gave way to horses that could pull more quickly and economically heavily-laden vehicles during the early nineteenth century.¹⁰ Economic and urban historians have also confirmed the importance of horses: following urbanisation, horses proved to be in great demand, pulling coaches, carriages, cabriolets, carts and omnibuses, especially within urban centres where, as a result of the construction of the railway, further demand had to be met to ferry passengers from one station hub to another.¹¹ What urban historians additionally discovered was that the increase in the number of horses presented municipal authorities with issues of hygiene and sanitation: the presence of dead carcasses and horse dung, which were left uncollected for extended periods of time on the streets, presented an affront to bourgeois sensibilities.¹² By

determinism in British military history', *War in history* 9/1 (2002), 39-59; Michael Howard, *War in European history* (Oxford, 1976), 104ff; Dennis Erwin Showalter, 'Prussian cavalry 1806-1871: the Search for Roles', *Militärgeschichtliche Mitteilungen* 19/1 (1976), 7-22; William L. Taylor, 'The debate over changing cavalry tactics and weapons, 1900-1914', *Military Affairs* 28/4 (Winter 1964-5), 171-83.

⁹ Keith Chivers, *The Shire horse: a history of the breed, the society and the men* (London, 1976); Peter Edwards, *The horse trade of Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge, 1988); John Langdon, *Horse, oxen and technological innovation: the use of draught animals in English farming from 1066 to 1500* (Cambridge, 1986); René Musset, *L'Élevage du cheval en France. Précédé d'une bibliographie de l'élevage du cheval en France du XVIIe siècle à nos jours* (Paris, 1917); Joan Thirsk, *Horses in early modern England: for service, for pleasure, for power* (Reading, 1978).

¹⁰ Philip S. Bagwell, *The transport revolution from 1770* (London, 1974); Theo Barker and Dorian Gerhold, *The rise and rise of road transport, 1700-1990* (London, 1993); Dorian Gerhold, *Road transport before the railways: Russell's London flying waggons* (Cambridge, 1993); idem. (ed), *Road transport in the horse-drawn era* (Aldershot, 1996).

¹¹ Ghislaine Bouchet, *Le cheval à Paris de 1850 à 1914* (Geneva, 1993); F.M.L. Thompson, *Victorian England*.

¹² Alain Corbin, *The foul and the fragrant: odor and the French social imagination* (Leamington Spa, 1986); William John Gordon, *The horse-world of London* (London, 1893); Anne Hardy, 'Pioneers in the

contrast, social historians found how the horse often formed the focal point of leisure and sport: in particular, horseracing, as it emerged in England, France and Germany during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, ignited passions among the aristocracy, while among the lower class the Turf appealed as a popular object of gambling.¹³ Equally, historians of science have shown how the horse was involved in the development of veterinary medicine: as the most valuable animal, not only within towns and cities but also among the military, scholars have remarked how veterinarians preoccupied themselves with the care and welfare of horses on which so much of their livelihoods depended.¹⁴ Similarly, historians of art and high culture have recognised the importance of the horse within depictions of monarchic and aristocratic power: equestrian portraits and monuments, which rose to prominence during the seventeenth century, these scholars have established, borrowed heavily from artistic styles developed within the equestrian academies – institutions that had sprung up first in Italy and then in

Victorian provinces: veterinarians, public health and the urban animal economy', *Urban History* 29/3 (2002), 372-87; Henry Mayhew, *London labour and the London poor* (2 vols., London, 1861-2), II; James Winter, 'The "Agitator of the Metropolis": Charles Cochrane and early-Victorian street reform', *London Journal* 14/1 (1989), 29-42; Anthony Wohl, *Endangered lives. Public health in Victorian Britain* (London, 1993).

¹³ Jean-Pierre Blay, 'Chantilly, le développement urbain et le monde des courses (1834-1914)', (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Paris I Pantheon Sorbonne, 1991); Nicole de Blomac, *La gloire et le jeu: des hommes et des chevaux (1766-1866)* (Paris, 1991); Carl Chinn, *Better betting with a decent feller: bookmaking, betting and the British working class, 1750-1990* (London, 1991); E.C. Eadie, 'The structure and organization of English horse-racing 1830-60: the development of a national sport,' (Unpublished DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 1992); Christiane Eisenberg, *"Englische Sports" und deutsche Bürger: Eine Gesellschaftsgeschichte, 1800-1939* (Paderborn, 1999); Christopher R Hill, *Horse power: the politics of the turf* (Manchester, 1988); Mike Huggins, *Flat racing and British society, 1790-1914: a social and economic history* (London, 2000); R. Munting, *An economic and social history of gambling in Britain and the USA* (New York and Manchester, 1996); Wray Vamplew, *The turf: a social and economic history of horse racing* (London, 1976).

¹⁴ Garry Alder, *Beyond Bokhara: the life of William Moorcroft. Asian explorer and pioneer veterinary surgeon, 1767-1825* (London, 1985); J.R. Fisher, 'Not quite a profession: the aspirations of veterinary surgeons in England in the mid nineteenth century', *Historical research* 66/161 (1993), 284-302; Ronald Hubscher, *Les Maîtres des bêtes: les vétérinaires dans la société française (XVIIIe - XXe siècle)* (Paris, 1999); Roy Porter, 'Man, animals and medicine at the time of the founding of the Royal Veterinary College', in A.R. Michell (ed.), *History of the healing professions: parallels between veterinary and medical history* (Wallingford, 1993); Joanna Swabe, *Animals, disease and human society* (London, 1998); Lise Wilkinson, *Animals and disease. An introduction to the history of comparative medicine* (Cambridge, 1992).

France, where the art of horsemanship was carefully handed down to a succession of future kings and nobles.¹⁵ More recently, cultural as well as literary historians, who have taken a broad interest in the representation of animals, have noted the frequency with which the horse made an appearance: their works have fruitfully shown how sensibilities and attitudes towards the horse were transformed, especially during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as a humanitarian (and sometimes gendered) narrative of compassion infiltrated public discourse, influencing the ways in which hard-working but battered horses, which were most prominent within towns and cities, were seen on the streets.¹⁶

What is striking to all these investigations, however, is the extent to which the horse figured on the peripheries. Enmeshed either as a helpless feature of much broader historical processes or caught up within the crossfire of other scholarly preoccupations, the horse, as a historical topic, has invariably had to stand on the sidelines, while historians battled issues that were, in the final analysis, coincidental to it. Military historians, for example, took an interest in horses – but only insofar as they were relevant to discussions about technological backwardness and tactical conservatism among the officer classes; agricultural historians felt attracted to horses – but only because they reflected the workings of the rural economy as it interacted with an

¹⁵ Norbert Conrads, *Ritterakademien der frühen Neuzeit: Bildung als Standesprivileg im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen, 1982); Walter Liedtke, *The royal horse and rider: painting, sculpture, and horsemanship 1500-1800* (New York, 1989); Michel Martin, *Les Monuments équestres de Louis XIV: une grande entreprise de propagande monarchique* (Paris, 1986); Marie-Christine Mégret-Lacan, 'Naissance de l'art équestre', *Dix-septième siècle* 204/3 (July-September 1999), 523-48; Jeffrey Merrick, 'Politics on pedestals: royal monuments in eighteenth-century France', *French history* 5/2 (1991), 234-64; Alan D. Rogers, 'Tudor horsemanship', (Unpublished PhD thesis, Emory University, 1992).

¹⁶ Jutta Buchner-Fuhs, *Kultur mit Tieren: zur Formierung des bürgerlichen Tierversständnisses im 19. Jahrhundert* (Münster, 1996); Moira Ferguson, *Animal advocacy and Englishwomen, 1780-1900: patriots, nation, and empire* (Ann Arbor, 1998); Kathleen Kete, *The beast in the boudoir: petkeeping in nineteenth-century Paris* (Berkeley, 1995); Paul Münch (ed), *Tiere und Menschen: Geschichte und Aktualität eines prekären Verhältnisses* (2nd edition, Paderborn, 1999); Harriet Ritvo, *The animal estate: the English and other creatures in the Victorian age* (Cambridge, Mass., 1987); Keith Thomas, *Man and the natural world*; James Turner, *Reckoning with the beast: animals, pain, and humanity in the Victorian mind* (Baltimore and London, 1980).

expanding market; economic historians have looked to horses also – but only because, in contrast to confident proclamations and depictions of a modernising world, they showed up the extent to which Europe, especially during the nineteenth century, was far from ‘advanced’; historians of science also looked at horses – but their importance ultimately took a backseat to wider concerns about how veterinarians woke up to the thinking of the Enlightenment, how they conducted battles with quacks, and the extent to which the veterinary regime formed part of a rigid education system; historians of art and high culture were equally selective about their horses, engaging with them only because the equestrian portraits and monuments reflected the characteristics of absolute monarchy; and cultural historians too have looked at horses – but only as a part of studies into either animals or nature whose manifestations within popular discourse have been used to illustrate wider points about the shifting relationship between man and the ‘other’. Clearly, despite claims made by some historians that the horse interested them, they often inadvertently ended up placing the animal within narratives that paradoxically precluded an understanding of the horse on its own terms.

Such a problem might be better appreciated if one were to discuss the potential ways in which histories of horseracing could be researched and written. Let us take, as a generic example, horseracing in late imperial Russia. During 1904, a six-year old thoroughbred, called *Rassvet*, burst onto the Russian turf scene, which had developed into a mass spectator sport following the introduction of gambling during the late nineteenth century. Taking everyone by storm, the racehorse won virtually all the prizes on offer in and around St Petersburg and had also won one of the main prizes in Moscow. A feat ‘unheard of’ for a horse with ‘Russian blood’, the stallion had slashed the one-mile national record by a full two seconds.¹⁷ But public rumours soon circulated that, despite the Russian name, the horse in question was in fact an American horse, called Willy, which had been unfairly entered into races reserved exclusively for

¹⁷ Tatsuya Mitsuda, ‘Ethnic and national dimensions of crime in late imperial Russia’, (Unpublished MPhil dissertation, University of Cambridge, 2002), 85.

Russian-bred horses. Such an explanation, which quickly gained weight among the press covering the ensuing trial that tried to establish the ‘nationality’ of the horse, proved attractive among wider society. What was unthinkable was how a Russian horse could compete, let alone trounce, ‘western’ opposition. But how can one view this event? By placing the spotlight on the reaction of the public, one could, of course, use horseracing as a ‘window’ through which one can intelligently observe the nature of Russian identity and nationalism, seeking answers to why Russian spectators chose to view themselves in a negative as opposed to a positive light.¹⁸ More specifically, a study of horseracing could also be seen within the well-trodden context of the development of leisure and entertainment and how it competed with other sports for the attention of the masses.¹⁹ From a class perspective, too, the Jockey Club might form the centre of discussions to how its exclusivity and popularity within the social scene helped maintain the power of the aristocracy at a time of challenges to its authority.²⁰ Equally, the fact that horseracing was a foreign, specifically English, import can lead to the increasingly fashionable issues of comparison and transfer: how horseracing spread across Europe and why it proved more popular in certain countries than others might constitute fruitful avenues of investigation. Such approaches to horseracing are certainly legitimate avenues of enquiry; but the recurring problem with these is how, once again, the horse is, as a result, submerged within narratives of nationalism, leisure, sport, comparison, class and power that render the horse not only helplessly invisible but also eminently replaceable. Cats and dogs, or association football and rugby, for example, could serve as equally valid ‘mirrors’ on nation and society, a point marked within the growing number of studies on human-animal relationships which use animals as metaphor.²¹ As such, there

¹⁸ Ibid., 85-8.

¹⁹ Louise McReynolds, *Russia at play: leisure activities at the end of the tsarist era* (Ithaca, 2002), 77-82.

²⁰ For examples of this in Ireland and France, see Fergus A. D'Arcy, *Horses, lords and racing men: the Turf Club 1790-1990* (Curragh, 1991); Blomac, *La gloire et le jeu*.

²¹ Discussions about the inadequacies of the approach adopted by scholars interested in human-animal relationships will not be entered into here, for reasons of space. But the contention of this author is that these scholars, who generally base their ideas on the work of Claude Lévi-Strauss who believed animals

seems little reason why one should insist on the horse, if the objective is to illuminate something else. By doing so, the distinctiveness of the animal is lost. But it should be possible to ask, with reference to horseracing as a historical phenomenon, an alternative set of questions, which allow the ‘visibility’ of the horse to remain. Rather than compare horseracing to other forms of leisure, sport and entertainment, why not compare it to other pursuits where the horse loomed large? Rather than fixate on the thoroughbred as a symbol of aristocratic pride and wealth, which no one disputes, why not consider its relationship to and influence upon other breeds of horses? By extension, one can surely also ask whether the racehorse was limited to the sphere of sport or whether it could be placed within the horse-breeding industry in general. What, also, was the significance of racing, which employed jockeys and kept records of results, not within the context of gambling but of riding, which had existed before the sport took off? Finally, how did this modern form differ from its predecessors and how was its introduction received across Europe?

By posing these alternative questions, it should be made clear, at this point, that this investigation does not seek to reject the findings of historians who have shed light on the European equine past over the last thirty years. But it should be equally evident, from the range of scholars who have shared, in varying degrees, an enthusiasm for the horse, as well as the problems that their approaches to it have produced, that the quadruped, as Koselleck acutely recognised, was a feature in the broadest possible areas of human activity, so that continuing to deal with horses, as if they played second fiddle

usefully ‘reflected’ human society, do not offer any insight into how a specifically equine past might be historically recovered. For a summary of their work and relationship to history, see: Molly H. Mullins, ‘Mirrors and windows: sociocultural studies of human-animal relationships’, *Annual review of anthropology* 28 (1999), 201-24; Harriet Ritvo, ‘History and animal studies’, *Society and animals* 10/4 (2002), 403-6. For a sample of some of their work by the main practitioners in the field, see: Jonathan Burt, *Animals in film* (London, 2002); Peter Dinzelsbacher (ed), *Mensch und Tier in der Geschichte Europas* (Stuttgart, 2000); Erica Fudge (ed), *Renaissance beasts: of animals, humans, and other wonderful creatures* (Urbana 2004) Paul Münch (ed), *Tiere und Menschen: Geschichte und Aktualität eines prekären Verhältnisses* (2nd edition, Paderborn, 1999); Nigel Rothfels, *Savages and beasts: the birth of the modern zoo* (Baltimore, 2002); James Serpell, *In the company of animals: a study of human-animal relationships* (Oxford, 1986).

to issues that have essentially little to do with them, can hardly do justice to their ubiquity in the European past. What becomes an additional problem, however, even if the indispensability of the horse is acknowledged, is how the horse could be understood on its own terms, without falling into the trap of anthropomorphism.²² By contrast to human actors, such as the working class, who, it could be argued, were ‘active’ rather than ‘passive’ participants in the making of their own histories, it makes little sense to talk equally as though horses were ‘active’ in their fate, if the objective is to recover the equine past. But the distinctiveness of the equine past should not hang on whether the horse can be conferred agency. Even though some anthropologists and geographers have recently suggested doing precisely this, it should still be possible to construct an interpretive framework that can place the horse at the centre of the analysis, capture its diverse use, and provide linkages between the various areas in which it was employed, without incurring criticism of conveying a narrative of anthropomorphism.²³ What Koselleck was able to do, in this regard, was to avoid this trap not by imagining how horses must have experienced their surroundings, but by placing them within their proper equine context. By doing so, he managed to place the horse at the centre of history, making historical research into it an independent undertaking that need not languish as a specialism hidden within other historical periods, themes and processes.

Building on the foundations of Koselleck, this investigation posits the concept of the ‘equine economy’. This refers to the thinking and the conflict that emerged between

²² On the nature, problems and solutions to anthropomorphism, see: John Berger, *About looking* (London, 1980), 9-17; Loraine Daston, ‘How nature became the other: anthropomorphism and anthropocentrism in early modern natural philosophy’, in Sabine Maassen et al (eds), *Biology as society, society as biology* (Dordrecht and London 1995); John Andrew Fischer, ‘The myth of anthropomorphism’, in Marc Bekoff and Dale Jamieson (eds), *Readings in animal cognition* (Cambridge, MA, 1996); Chris Philo and Chris Wilbert, ‘Animal spaces, beastly places: an introduction’, in idem (eds), *Animal spaces, beastly places: new geographies of human-animal relations* (London, 2000), 14-20.

²³ Tim Ingold, ‘Introduction’, in idem. (ed), *What is an animal?* (London, 1994); Chris Philo, ‘Animals, geography, and the city: notes on inclusions and exclusions’, *Environment and planning D: society and space* 13 (1995), 655-8; Chris Wilbert, ‘Anti-this- Against-that. Resistances along a human-non-human axis’, in Joanne P. Sharp et al (eds), *Entanglements of power: geographies of domination/resistance* (London, 2000).

historical actors who fought access to the horse as a provider of ‘horsepower’ in both senses – the power of authority and the power of movement. Similar to how E.P. Thompson coined the term the ‘moral economy’ as a tool to better understand the behaviour and rationale of the crowd in industrialising England, this investigation assumes an empathetic approach, which believes particular dynamics were at work in a world that centred on horses.²⁴ This study finds within these dynamics three types of movement – ‘riding’, ‘driving’ and ‘walking’ – which jostled and tussled for position. Many of the various actors that had, to a lesser or great extent, dealings with the horse and who will appear in the course of this study – such as horsemen, drivers, pedestrians, stud officials, veterinarians, shopkeepers, jockeys, circus artistes, breeders, cavalrymen and the like – will be classified into these three camps, although it should be noted that boundaries between them were relatively porous. What this, in turn, allows the investigation to do is to connect the various equine themes – horse-drawn and horseback transport, equestrian academies, veterinary science, horse-breeding, cavalry, horseracing, circus and so on – within a new mould that makes it possible to appreciate the essence of how the equine economy operated. Consequently, this study argues, within its five chapters, that a shift from ‘riding’ to ‘driving’ took place during a 350-year span in which the kinds of people who held power and access to the horse, the forms of movement they favoured, the types of horses they preferred, and the ways in which they viewed the horse all underwent first gradual and then later fundamental changes. Charting how ‘riding’, which had held a position of dominance in the middle of the sixteenth century, eventually lost out to ‘driving’ by the start of the twentieth century, this investigation tells the story of the various circumstances that conspired to bring about the fall of ‘riding’ and the rise of ‘driving’, in the tentative aim of providing an alternative picture of European history between 1550 and 1900.

²⁴ E.P. Thompson, ‘The moral economy of the English crowd’, *Past and Present* 50 (February 1971), 76-136. This concept is also partly indebted to Susan Jones who coined the term the ‘animal economy’ to refer to the fields in which veterinarians in the United States operated: Susan D. Jones, *Valuing animals: veterinarians and their patients in modern America* (Baltimore and London, 2003).

From all this transpires a history on a grand scale. Naturally, many aspects have had to be omitted from the investigation, and the examples chosen have been those that illustrate particularly well the arguments that will be advanced in the thesis. Importantly, the sources that have been consulted constitute an extremely small part of the voluminous historical record the horse has left behind. Even so, if the broader framework in which the horse is presently situated is indeed flawed, it surely makes sense to sketch out, most of all, a paradigm in which the horse can be fruitfully thought about, before any attempt should be made to conduct more localised, specific and source-intensive studies. By now it should be more than apparent that narrowly-based analyses will inevitably struggle to move beyond the wider political, social, economic and cultural forces that crowd out a serious analysis of the horse. Such a need has necessarily transformed the original project – a more down-to-earth comparative analysis of horseracing in Europe during the late nineteenth century – into an ambitious one that moves freely (some might say arbitrarily) in search of equine dimensions over time and space. By doing so, it is clear, in what follows, that this study frequently rides roughshod over vast tracts of the historical landscape without stopping to dismount and take in the minutiae of the local environment, the disruptive peculiarities of national context and the power of specific historical factors over simply equine ones. But even though in many cases attempts are made to do so, which might still be insufficient to assuage some sceptics, the emphasis of this study is to convey an unfamiliar sense of European history which does proper justice to the fact that horses were ubiquitous. Much of the attraction about looking at the horse is that it straddles most areas of historical research, allowing connections to be made between those historical forces that result in a fuller interconnected picture of the past. But the contention of this study is that the whole is greater than the sum of these parts. If, at the end, the reader, living within the post-equine period, takes away a similar sense of the distinctiveness of the

equine past, which defies simple classification, then the main aim of this thesis will have been achieved.

Chapter One

The emergence of ‘driving’, the demise of ‘riding’ and the re-invention of horsemanship, c.1550-1700

In 1623, John Taylor – English water-poet, wit, traveller and eccentric – published a searing invective against the coach and carriage. ‘[N]ever since Phaeton broke his neck’, he fulminated colourfully, ‘no land has endured more trouble and molestation than this has, by the continual rumbling of these upstart four wheeled tortoises.’¹ Convinced that ‘these coaches are one of the greatest mischiefs that of late years have happened to the Kingdoms’, Taylor likened wheeled passenger transport to ‘grasshoppers and caterpillars of Egypt’ which gathered so much popularity that they threatened to ‘over-run the land that we can get no living upon the water.’ Replicating this sentiment in a petition to parliament a few decades later, Jon Cresset, who clearly appropriated much of the language employed by Taylor, urged authority to curb the proliferation of hackney carriages in the capital.² Taken together the publications represent two of the first, most extensive and lucid diatribes decrying the advent of wheeled passenger transport to have appeared in the English language. To Taylor, in particular, the coach and carriage posed a threat to his trade. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, London watermen conducted a lucrative business in ferrying passengers, letters and bundles across the Thames, especially for those travelling to the Globe Theatre on the Bank side, but also to more distant places down the river such as Windsor and Maidenhead.³ Wheeled passenger

¹ John Taylor, *The world runnes on wheeles: or oddes, betwixt carts and coaches* (London 1623), 7. For a useful biography on Taylor, see Wallace Notestein, *Four worthies* (London, 1956), 169-210.

² [Jon Cresset], *Reasons humbly offered to the consideration of Parliament, for the suppressing such of the stage-coaches and caravans now upon the roads of England, as are unnecessary, and regulating such as shall be thought fit to be continued* (London, 1672).

³ Taylor, *The world runnes on wheeles; Reasons humbly offered*, 3.

transport was impacting hard on this monopoly. In Taylor's own estimation 'every day in any term (especially if the Court be at Whitehall) they do rob us of our livings, and carry 560 fares daily from us, which numbers of passengers were wont to supply our necessities, and enable us sufficiently with means to do our Prince and Country service'.⁴ In order to put a halt to this trend, Taylor had to take a stand or face financial ruin.

By the time Taylor came to write his polemic, it would be right to say that the coach and carriage, as a new form of passenger transportation, had firmly established a foothold. Disagreement reigns over the precise year in which coaches and carriages arrived on the scene, not least because of confusion as to what went into constituting one. For the purposes of this investigation, the carriage will be understood as 'wheeled-private-passenger-transport' while the coach will be regarded as 'wheeled-public-passenger-transport'. But the difference between the two is slight: in practice contemporaries referred to them interchangeably as two components of one same force, and so it will be the case here. Most importantly, the novelty common to both coach and carriage lay in the fact that men, as well as women, were now being driven in wheeled vehicles on a day-to-day basis for the purposes of their enjoyment, protection and convenience.⁵ Based on this definition, transport historians are in general agreement that the years between 1550 and 1650 approximated to the hundred years in which wheeled passenger transportation first made its major breakthrough. In the case of France, Alfred Martin observed it was between 1575 and 1580 that the suspended coach or 'coche' first made its appearance when used for the purposes of promenading around town. This was quickly followed, in 1584, by the carriage or 'caroche' which, while used in the main by the wife of Henry III, was also made use of by the king himself when he travelled to Vincennes.⁶ Equally, in the case of England, the eminent transport historian W.T. Jackman estimated that while their debuts could be traced back to the early sixteenth century, it was the period

⁴ Taylor, *The world runnes on wheeles*, 15-16

⁵ Herbert Haupt, 'Der Wagen im Mittelalter', in Wilhelm Treue (ed), *Achse, Rad und Wagen: Fünftausend Jahre Kultur- und Technikgeschichte* (Göttingen, 1986), 196.

⁶ Alfred Martin, *Étude historique et statistique sur les moyens de transport dans Paris* (Paris, 1894), 9.

between 1536 and 1580 in which, to him, the coach and carriage made their indelible mark on English soil.⁷ More specific has been the German art historian Rudolf Wackernagel, who, writing much later, traced the vehicles' appearance to 1553, when the Dutch coach-maker Willem Boonen sent Elizabeth I a coach.⁸ By the end of the century, helped by Dutch protestant émigrés who had fled the religious wars, England managed, it seems, to have nurtured what approximated to a fledgling coach-manufacturing industry. So much so, in fact, that it was now capable of delivering products for export, as attested to when Sir Thomas Smith sent an English-crafted coach, replete with strong Dutch styles, to the Russian court of Boris Godunov in 1604.⁹

By all accounts, the take-up of four-wheeled passenger transport was quick; but it does seem that its popularity reached substantial levels only in the first half of the seventeenth century. As one English contemporary put it, shortly after their introduction, the lords 'hastened to buy coaches, and quickly lost the habit of walking on foot in the streets' but that it was only by '1636 [that] coaches blocked the streets.'¹⁰ Similar to the situation in London, which had already deliberated in parliament to restrain the excessive patronage of public passenger vehicles as early as 1601, the problem associated with vehicle travel in Paris had reached such heights that a petition was put forward, in 1637, in an effort to resolve the issue of passenger transportation.¹¹ Such calls for regulation arose, because by the early to mid seventeenth century, urban public coach hire services – called 'fiacres' in Paris and 'hackney carriages' in London – had taken off as a business for those who chose –

⁷ W.T. Jackman, *The development of transportation in modern England* (2 vols., Cambridge, 1916), I, 111-2.

⁸ Rudolf H. Wackernagel, 'Zur Geschichte der Kutsche bis zum Ende des 17. Jahrhunderts', in Wilhelm Treue (ed), *Achse, Rad und Wagen: Fünftausend Jahre Kultur- und Technikgeschichte* (Göttingen, 1986), 219.

⁹ Wackernagel, 'Zur Geschichte der Kutsche', 219.

¹⁰ Cited in Joan Thirsk, *The rural economy of England* (London, 1984), 376-7.

¹¹ Jackman, *Transportation in modern England*, I, 115; *A proclamation to restrain the abuses of hackney coaches in the cities of London, and Westminster, and the suburbs thereof* (London 1660); *Les Plaintes générales faites au roi contre la confusion et incommodité des carrosses* (Paris 1637).

and could afford – to move around in the towns.¹² Equally, stagecoach services, which operated inter-urban connections, had sprung up at this time. In the case of England, there were now long-distance services that linked far-flung parts of the kingdom such as York, Chester and Exeter to London. Shorter services, catering for travel to and from environs such as Middlesex, Kent and Surrey, were also burgeoning in popularity.¹³ Looking beyond 1650, moves widened to institute services designed to cater for a much broader travelling clientele. For example, the famous *cinq sols*, which fixed five routes ‘for the comfort of the citizens of Paris’ in 1662, represented the genesis of what was to later morph into the omnibus.¹⁴ Differing from its vehicular predecessors in that it lumped together total strangers of various classes in one cramped vehicle, this French invention was to mark a critical watershed in the development of wheeled passenger transport. Such preference for moving about in vehicles seemed on an inexorable rise: it was hardly surprising why conservatives fretted over whether ‘walking’ and ‘riding’ would ever regain their places as preferred modes of movement.¹⁵

What was historically significant about the emergence of the coach and carriage between 1550 and 1650 becomes apparent when one understands that the landscape into which ‘driving’ entered was a two-dimensional one. Prior to the appearance of wheeled passenger transport, only two forms of ‘going’ had ever mattered.¹⁶ Either ‘riding’ in which horsemen were engaged or ‘walking’ in which pedestrians were engaged had been the only (in the case of walking) and the preferred (in the case of riding) means by which man could move about. Of course,

¹² Bernard Causse, *Les Fiacres de Paris aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Paris, 1972), 14-5; Jackman, *Transportation in modern England*, I, 115-6.

¹³ *Reasons humbly offered* (1672), 2.

¹⁴ Octave Uzanne, *La Locomotion à travers l'histoire et les mœurs* (Paris, 1900), 108; Nicholas Papayanis, *Horse-drawn cabs and omnibuses in Paris: the idea of circulation and the business of public transit* (Baton Rouge and London, 1996), 17-8.

¹⁵ For an eloquent illustration of this fear, see ‘The damaging economic effects of stage coaches, 1673’ in Joan Thirsk and J.P. Cooper (eds), *Seventeenth-century economic documents* (Oxford, 1972), 380.

¹⁶ The concept of ‘going’ has been adapted and developed from the otherwise disappointing anthropological work of Wolfgang Wehapp, *Gehkultur. Mobilität und Fortschritt seit der Industrialisierung aus fußläufiger Sicht* (Frankfurt/Main 1997).

one might also choose to include ‘carting’ – as represented by carmen or draymen – as part of this landscape. But strictly-speaking, the cart, which exclusively aided in the transport of goods, did not enter into the paradigm, since it did not in general cater for passengers. Exceptionally, the travelling poor and weak would make use of the cart because, rather like hitchhikers today, they could neither afford the coach nor bear the exertions of long journeys on foot, especially when lumbered with heavy luggage and accompanied by crying infants, and who often had to make do huddled among vegetables and other produce. Yet as a force capable of upsetting the duopoly of ‘riding’ and ‘walking’, ‘carting’ had little clout. By contrast, what had emerged to break this duopoly was a third force – ‘driving’ – which, with the advent of the coach and carriage as viable alternatives to ‘riding’ and ‘walking’, threatened to re-configure the two-dimensional paradigm in which movement had previously been conducted.

By imagining the period under review in such terms, the chapter will lay down the basic structure to the conflict between ‘driving’ and ‘riding’, a central spat that continually informed the development of the equine economy throughout the time with which this investigation deals. During the first half of the chapter, it shall be demonstrated how riding’s dominance as the main form of movement was threatened for the first time, sparking fears of horsemen being converting into passengers. What this facilitated, in turn, was concern that a decline in the skills of horsemanship would have disastrous consequences not only on the morality of the rider, but also on the strength of countries to defend themselves in the event of war. Such a context, the second part of the chapter then argues, provided the crucial background against which horsemen moved to resurrect, re-invent and institutionalise the art of horsemanship within a new mould, which not only helped the horsemen maintain their hold over the horse, but also contributed to the continued importance of them during an age when riding as an everyday form of movement was in decline.

Figure 2: Eugene Courboin, *Carrosse à cinq sols – 1662* (1911). Passenger vehicles contributed, in the minds of conservatives, to the effemination of man, the decline in the skills of horsemen and the deterioration of ‘horseflesh’. This is an early twentieth century depiction of carriages when they first appeared in a major way on the streets of Paris in the seventeenth century.

a. ‘Driving’ as a threat to ‘riding’

What undoubtedly concerned those who looked on at the rise of vehicles with horror was – quite unsurprisingly – the extent to which incidents and accidents on streets and thoroughfares were in alarming ascendancy. Placing the blame squarely at the door of coaches and carriages, John Taylor noted disapprovingly: ‘Coaches [are] cumbersome by their rumbling and rutting, as they are by their standing still, and damning up the streets and lanes, as the Blackfriars, and other diverse places one witnesses ... the streets are so pestered and clogged with them, that neither man, horse, or cart can pass for them.’¹⁷ Their increase blocked narrow streets of towns

¹⁷ Taylor, *The world runnes on wheeles*, 17.

and cities, placed burdens on urban infrastructure which, up until this time, had not planned for spaces for wheeled passenger transport, and contributed to frequent road accidents as pedestrians and vehicles jostled and tussled for position within a changing urban environment. ‘The mischiefs that has been done by them are not to be numbered’, he exclaimed, ‘as break of legs and arms, overthrowing down hills, over bridges, running over children, lame and old people’ had come to present real dangers to what one might term today ‘public safety’.¹⁸ Not only did he stop at wheeled passenger transport in terms of the nuisances and dangers they caused the general public, but he also warned that even passengers – presumed safe because they were the ones instigating all the chaos and accidents – were placed under considerable danger. Citing the example of the French king, Henry IV, who had, together with his wife, nearly drowned after their coach was overthrown from a bridge, Taylor cautioned against the excessive patronage of four-wheeled passenger vehicles.¹⁹

But Taylor’s arguments did not confine themselves to the immediate harm vehicles undoubtedly visited upon both pedestrians and passengers. They also captured a perspective that transport and urban historians interested narrowly on issues of technology and traffic would surely miss. For believing that the fashion in wheeled passenger transport, if allowed to spread, portended a decline in horsemanship, Taylor looked on with grave concern at the multitude of men who were now dispensing with riding *on* horses and converting to riding *in* vehicles. Lamenting what the stagecoach had wrought, Cresset, for example, pointed to how driving had almost comprehensively won round riders in and around London who would have previously relied upon saddle horses for conducting their day-to-day affairs. As he put it:

There are stage-coaches that go almost every town within 20 or 25 miles of London, wherein passengers are carried, so

¹⁸ Ibid., 27.

¹⁹ Ibid. In a further twist, Henry IV was assassinated in a carriage.

that ... gentlemen, merchants, and other traders that have occasion to ride, make use of them, some to keep fairs and markets; others to visit friends, and to, and from their country-houses, or about other business, who before these coaches did set up, kept a horse or two of their own, but now have given over keeping the same.²⁰

What upset Cresset even more was the apparent ease with which horsemen were dismounting from their saddles. Of course, the sick, the aged as well as children, he accepted, ‘may ride in the long waggon-coaches, which were those that first were set up, and are not now opposed, because they do little or no hurt.’ But for gentlemen ‘that are able to ride on horseback’, he continued, to own or to hire coaches amounted to a ‘sordid’ affront which had to be prevented at all costs.²¹ The fact that grown-up men, who should know better, were deciding to do so, surprised and angered Cresset, who accused them of acting like wimps, so concerned they were about keeping their clothes clean and who would ‘endure all inconveniences of that manner of travelling rather than ride on horseback’.²²

Such a move from ‘ridden’ to ‘driven’, however, was not only about a change in technology or men dispensing with their masculinity. Since ‘driving’ deprived them of a major source of exercise, the shift from ‘riding’ to ‘driving’ gave rise to accusations of laziness, which, in its extreme manifestations, led to fears of a decline in moral standards of behaviour. Importantly, values and virtues which went into constructing the equine economy had been garnered on horseback. To be forced to dismount from the horse meant men had to relinquish the very moral standards on which society had been based. Losing the taste for how horses should be ridden had a knock-on effect, since children could no longer be taught the basics of horsemanship in a world where very few rode – thus making them incapable of serving their country on horseback in the future.²³ Pushing this scenario to its logical conclusion,

²⁰ *Reasons humbly offered* (1672), 2-3.

²¹ [Jon Cresset], ‘The grand concern of England’ (1673) reprinted in *The Harleian Miscellany* (London 1809), VIII, 546.

²² *Reasons humbly offered* (1672), 1.

²³ Thirsk and Cooper, 379.

Cresset warned that such a state of affairs would inevitably discourage incentives to breed quality saddle horses: ‘By destroying the breed of good horses, the strength of the nation, and making men careless of attaining good horsemanship, a thing so useful and commendable in a gentleman.’²⁴ This would, in turn, severely compromise the strength of the cavalry to defend the nation in the event of war. If coaches were allowed to expand at its present pace, Cresset predicted apocalyptically, the type of horses that would be bred specifically for the purpose of the horseman would simply cease to exist, wiping out a quarter of the most valuable part of the equine population.²⁵ Exactly this argument had been brought forward in 1601 when a bill called for the coaches to be suppressed: ‘because of the greater use of horses among the common people, the Government would find it difficult to get enough horses for the army’.²⁶ To halt this slippery slope, it was thus necessary for incentives to be given to gentlemen for holding on to ‘good’ horses. Linked as it was to both military and national interests, this argument about the need to breed, whatever the circumstance, saddle horses of calibre held an abiding attraction. In fact, as an ‘ideology’, it survived the onslaught first of wheeled passenger transport and then later of wheeled goods transport, so long as the cavalry remained an important and prestigious arm of the military.

What had to be done, to put a halt to this malaise, was to stop princes, nobles and gentlemen from dismounting their horses. During 1634, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Francis Cottington, called for legislation, put before the Committee of the Council deliberating the issue of hackney carriages, stipulating that ‘[n]o sons of noblemen, nor gentlemen unmarried, shall go in the streets in coaches, except in company of their parents, after the age of ten, eleven or thirteen’.²⁷ Equally important was to prevent the taste for vehicles spreading to infect those lower down the social order, whose associations with the saddle horse were not as important to their

²⁴ *Reasons humbly offered*, 1.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

²⁶ Jackman, *Transportation in modern England*, I, 113.

²⁷ Quoted in Jackman, *Transportation in modern England*, I, 116.

identities. If this tactic were to fail Taylor was in no doubt about the kind of social consequences that would follow:

[W]hen every Gill Turntripe, Mrs. Fumkins, Madame Polecat, and my Lady Trash, Froth the Tapster, Bill the Taylor, Lauender the broker, Whiff the tobacco seller, with their companion Trugs, must be coached to S. Albones, Burntwood, Hockley in the Hole, Croydon, Windsor, Uxbridge, and many other places, like wild haggards prancing up and down, that what they get by cheating, swearing, and lying at home, they spend in riot, whoring, and drunkenness abroad.²⁸

So it should come as no surprise that when Taylor went in search for coaches' analogical cousins, he would alight on the comparison with whores to illustrate how morally indefensible and socially corruptible they were:

[A] coach is common, so is a whore: a coach is costly, so is a whore; a coach is drawn with beasts, a whore is drawn away with beastly knaves. A coach has loose curtains, a whore has a loose gown, a coach is laced and fringed, so is a whore: a coach may be turned any way, so may a whore: a coach has bosses, studs, and gilded nails to adorn it: a whore has Owches, brooches, bracelets, chains and jewels to set her forth: a coach is always out of reparations, so is a whore: a coach has need of mending still, so has a whore: a coach is unprofitable, so is a whore: a coach is superfluous, so is a whore.²⁹

Utter contempt Taylor had for wheeled passenger transport did not necessarily translate into a blanket critique of all forms of wheeled transport. In fact it was quite the reverse – if the coach was a 'whore' then the cart was a 'saint'. As an indispensable means of carrying stones and timber from the woods to the towns as well as corn, wine and beer from the fields to the markets – necessary because they

²⁸ Taylor, *The world runnes on wheeles*, 18.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 33.

are ‘dead things and cannot go on foot’ – the cart served an invaluable purpose.³⁰ Equally, Taylor held in high regard the role the cart played in carrying the luggage of kings and queens without which their entourage could not have moved from place to place as was so common for sovereigns to do at the time.³¹ The services the cart provided in ferrying the infirm, elderly and sick were also laudable, while its presence at executions and funerals provided convicted criminals and the recently deceased with an honourable means of taking them to their places of rest.³² From cradle to grave man simply could not do without carts. Their paramount importance was beyond reproach. By contrast, Taylor found nothing to commend in coaches and carriages. Bedecked as they were with ostentatious and needless display, passenger vehicles were, in his eyes, all talk and no action, whose destiny should have been to play second fiddle to the cart; but instead, to his horror, he found them punching above their station, with the coach driver, riding atop the vehicle and shouting down at the minions below him, embodying all that was pretentious and grotesque about the coach. As he put it:

A cart (by the judgement of an honourable and grave Lawyer) is elder brother to a coach for antiquity; and for utility and profit, all the world knows which is which, yet so unnatural and unmannerly a brother the coach is, that it will give no way to the cart, but with pride, contempt bitter curses and execrations, the coachman wishes all the carts on fire, or at the duel, and that carmen were all hanged, when they cannot pass at their pleasures, quite forgetting themselves to be ... unprofitable intruders, upstarts, and innovators.³³

Such juxtapositions, which involved associating vehicles with those who operated them, had the effect of casting doubt over the moral credibility of coach drivers which reflected, in turn, on how they treated those in their charge. Contrasting once again the attitude of the cabman who, finding his ‘horse be

³⁰ Ibid., 9.

³¹ Ibid., 24.

³² Ibid., 25.

³³ Ibid.

melancholy or dull with hard and heavy labour’ would then ‘like a kind piper whistle him a fit of mirth, to any tune from above Eela to below Gammoth’, Taylor came down heavily on the coachman’s cruelty ‘for he never whistles, but all his music is to rap out an oath, or blurt out a curse against his team.’³⁴ Significantly, this mode of thinking, with its references to animal cruelty, was to have powerful consequences on how the relationship between horse, man and vehicle was to unfold in later centuries, as chapter five will eventually show.

Why did coach and carriage attain popularity and who was responsible for this upsurge in interest in vehicular transport? To uncover definitive answers would require further study, including painstaking research into various diaries that contemporaries kept, which this present investigation has neither time nor space to undertake. Nonetheless, it would be both easy and wrong, as Jean-Baptiste Bullet quickly did, to believe that the chief factor in the take-up of the coach and carriage lay in technological change which, in turn, made it possible for passengers to travel in relative comfort.³⁵ Given the poor state of the roads at the time, comfort would not have been an overriding factor in why men chose to be driven in vehicles. Certainly, technology seems to have improved not least because suspension had been added. Yet, as Germain Brice acidly noted in the case of Paris, ‘these vehicles could be made more comfortable and less expensive if one only paid more heed to public demand’.³⁶ This was a sentiment shared by Montaigne whose experiences of negotiating one left him thoroughly unimpressed, leading him to quip memorably: ‘I hate all vehicles apart from the horse’.³⁷ As with Montaigne, who refused to dismount ‘whether I am ill or well’, the overall experience of being knocked about without being able to predict or have control over when bumps and jolts threw passengers off their seats, particularly over long distances, could not have aided in

³⁴ Ibid., 9-10.

³⁵ Jean-Baptiste Bullet, *Dissertation sur la mythologie française et sur plusieurs points curieux de l’histoire de France* (Paris, 1771), 497.

³⁶ Germain Brice, *Description de la ville de Paris: et de tout ce qu’elle contient de plus remarquable* (3 vols., 9th edition (1752), Paris, 1971), III, 161.

³⁷ Quoted in Majorie Nice Boyer, ‘Mediaeval suspended carriages,’ *Speculum* 34/3 (July 1959), 359-66, 366.

keeping down the food for very long.³⁸ In fact, one might share in the sentiment expressed by Taylor who was genuinely puzzled as to why men chose ‘driving’ over ‘riding’ given all its side-effects:

It is a most uneasy kind of passage in coaches on the paved streets in London wherein men and women are so tossed, tumbled, jumbled, rumbled, and crossing of kennels, dunghills, and uneven-ways, which is enough to put all the guts in their bellies out of joint, to make them have the palsey or megrum, or to cast their gorges with continual rocking and wallowing.³⁹

Even advocates and defendants of the coach and carriage, who were rare voices of accent among a chorus of dissent in the early seventeenth century, were far from quick to refer to the comfort of the coach so as to justify its public utility. Compared to walking or riding, the *Apologie des carrosses*, for example, shied away from citing comfort as one of the reasons why driving should attract support and patronage – a curious omission. Nor did the pamphlet choose to appeal to convenience when it was widely known that the coach was as slow as it was to walk. In fact, the only time in which it came close to referring to either its comfort or convenience was when it mentioned that the merit of coaches and carriages lay in the way in which dignitaries, such as ambassadors and civil servants, who were transported in them, could respectfully shield themselves from the weather.⁴⁰

Commandeering foreign dignitaries and civil servants to its cause, the same pamphlet is also striking in its glaring omission to mention monarchs as a legitimating factor. This was no mere oversight: as a force responsible for the increased interest in coaches and carriages, monarchs were peripheral, an absence that continued, in the opinion of Wackernagel, until the middle of the seventeenth century.⁴¹ If anything, when the coach and carriage first appeared on the scene,

³⁸ Quoted in Thirsk, *Rural economy*, 375.

³⁹ Taylor, *The world runnes on wheeles*, 30-1.

⁴⁰ *Apologie des carrosses: contenant la réponse à leurs calomnieurs* (Paris, 1625).

⁴¹ Rudolf H. Wackernagel, *Der französische Krönungswagen von 1696-1825: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des repräsentativen Zeremonienwagens* (Berlin, 1966), 21-2.

European courts were far from passionate in embracing them. Francis I, who was king between 1515 and 1547, had only two in his possession. In the decade beyond, the French court as a whole boasted of a mere three coaches whose functions were, in any case, strictly limited to those of ceremony.⁴² Even when popularity began to mount in the latter half of the sixteenth century, the temptation to board the carriage was by and large resisted – if not banned outright. So much so that several regents in the court of Charles IX condemned the new habit, while the king himself spoke out in opposition in 1560, remarking acidly how he would not consent to being seen in something that represented nothing less than an ‘effémination asiatique’, a sentiment replicated across the channel.⁴³ Unsurprisingly, a few years later, when a petition was put forward to the same king, asking his permission for the inhabitants of Paris to travel in carriages, the request was stoutly refused.⁴⁴ Yet, as the example of the petition illustrates, pressures were mounting both from within and without. An important development in breaking down monarchical hostility towards passenger vehicles came soon afterwards. A decree entitled *Voitures pour la Suite de la Cour, Enfants de France et Conseils* was issued in 1570, which bowed to demands to make following the king easier and which did so through permitting the court to travel out in carriages.⁴⁵ Crucially, this decree did not go as far as to grant everybody permission, limiting as it did usage of the carriage to women of the court; but it did set a precedent. This was built upon thirty years later when the Spanish ambassador, Pedro de Toledo, resident in the court of Henry IV, successfully requested the use of a carriage on the occasion of the *royal entrée* in Paris in 1608, so that he could participate in the ceremony not on horseback but seated in a carriage.⁴⁶ Yet in truth, by the time the king granted this request, the breakthrough in four-wheeled passenger transport had taken on a momentum that sovereigns could do little to overturn – still

⁴² Uzanne, *La Locomotion*, 84; Wackernagel, ‘Zur Geschichte der Kutsche’, 211-12.

⁴³ Wackernagel, ‘Zur Geschichte der Kutsche’, 211; Peter Edwards, ‘Une forme d’étalage ostentatoire : la mode des carrosses et l’aristocratie anglaise du XVIIe siècle’, in Daniel Roche (ed), *Voitures, chevaux et attelages du XVIe au XIXe siècle* (Paris, 2000), 42.

⁴⁴ Uzanne, *La Locomotion*, 84.

⁴⁵ Causse, *Les Fiacres de Paris*, 18-9.

⁴⁶ Wackernagel, ‘Zur Geschichte der Kutsche’, 212.

less to extinguish. When, for example, the Counts of Braunschweig-Lüneburg and Pommern-Stettin brought out decrees, first in 1588 and then later in 1608, banning the use of coaches, they were simply ignored.⁴⁷ Equally, when a bill, which was designed to curb the excessive use of horses for coach travel, was brought for the first time before the English parliament in 1601, it did not stand a chance.⁴⁸ Once the sluice gates had been opened, there was little to stop the flow – and it was with reluctance that demands were acquiesced to.⁴⁹ By the beginning of the seventeenth century in France, those outside the court were now clambering for permission to board their carriages at official events previously reserved for the court. When approval was grudgingly given in 1610 to extend the permission to preferred guests and high-ranking civil servants, which meant that they could now arrive at the Louvre in their carriages instead of on foot, this development set the ball rolling for all to outdo each other in the ostentation stakes. Consequently, edicts were issued, which had the intention of reining in the excess use of gold on the panel of carriages, first in 1613 and then immediately a year later, but which ultimately fell on deaf ears and proved wholly ineffective as pieces of legislation.⁵⁰

By this time, of course, wheeled passenger transport had acquired something of a following among those who aspired to ride at a height previously reserved for those in highest authority. What should not be overlooked, however, is the fact that, despite the general reticence displayed towards the coach and carriage within monarchic circles, aristocratic women had, by stark contrast, few qualms about boarding them, which accounts for why contemporaries commonly associated travelling in vehicles with women. In fact, to many observers, these women could not get enough of them. In a letter addressed to Madame de Sully, the wife of the finance minister, Henry IV apologized for his long neglect to pay her a visit, a

⁴⁷ Ibid., 211.

⁴⁸ Jackman, *Transportation in modern England*, I, 113.

⁴⁹ *A proclamation prohibiting the importation of divers foreign wares and merchandizes into this realm of England and the dominion of Wales, and sale thereof* (London, 1661), 2-3.

⁵⁰ Wackernagel, 'Zur Geschichte der Kutsche', 212.

situation that had come to pass because his wife was constantly out using his coach.⁵¹ So dependent had women become on the coach that, according to Taylor, they had almost forgotten how to walk, sending for coaches at a moment's opportunity and 'forgetting in a manner to go on her feet so much as to church'.⁵² Following on this observation, Taylor amusingly declared that if a nobleman had to send for the wife to travel over long distances, bringing her over through conventional means was bound to lame her forever, 'so that she can by no means go without leading under the arm, or else she must be carried in a coach all her life time after'.⁵³ More broadly, common knowledge had it that behind every marriage there lay a contract. This stipulated that the first thing the husband was obliged to do, following the wedding, was to buy his wife a carriage for her own amusement.⁵⁴ So desirable had the coach and carriage become in the eyes of potential wives that observers even speculated that this was the major reason why women chose to marry who they did. Even after the husband delivered on his promise, there was still no guarantee that the coach would help stabilise marital relationships. The wife could become so obsessed with her new-found toy that she could lose herself completely in it, leading, in some cases, to separation. As Quicksilver disapprovingly put it in *Eastward Hoe*: 'So a woman marry to ride in a coach, she cares not if she rides to her ruin. 'Tis the great end of many of their marriages.'⁵⁵

Clearly, such comments, emanating as they did from the pens of men who had, in any case, axes to grind with the coach and carriage, must be treated with a great deal of scepticism. Yet, while their depictions of women were most probably exaggerations and caricatures, they do still usefully point to how much upper class women had been involved in the proliferation of four-wheeled passenger transport. This is unsurprising. Before the debate between 'riding' and 'driving' ever erupted, aristocratic women had been associated with wheeled passenger transport for

⁵¹ Causse, *Les Fiacres de Paris*, 13.

⁵² Taylor, *The world runnes on wheeles*, 23-24.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Les Justes plaintes faites au roi, par les cabaretiers de la ville de Paris. Sur le confusion des carrosses qui y font, et l'incommodité qu'en reçoit le public* (Paris, 1625), 12.

⁵⁵ Quoted in R. Straus, *Carriages and coaches* (London, 1912), 75.

centuries. Referred to as ‘chariots or whirlicotes’, these antecedents of coaches and carriages were permitted to ferry women as well as the infirm and the elderly – the purpose being to transport the weak.⁵⁶ In his *Survey of London*, published in 1598, John Stow noted:

Of old time coaches were not known in this island, but chariots or whirlicotes, then so-called, and they only sed of princes or great estates, such as had their footmen about them; and for example to note, I read that Richard II, being threatened by the rebels of Kent, rode from the Tower of London to the Myles end, and with him his mother, because she was sick and weak, in a whirlicote[...]⁵⁷

Similar evidence exists, stretching as far back as the fourteenth century, which point to occasions in which healthy upper-class women would be conveyed in passenger vehicles. The English Luttrell Psalter, drawn in 1340, clearly shows how it was only aristocratic women who were allowed to ride – a practice adhered to for centuries. In this particular instance, the women were transported on a long chariot, while men rode alongside them mounted on horseback. Even the footmen had either to lead the horses or mules on foot or ride on their backs – not on the vehicle – as if mindful of upsetting the division between ‘riding’ and ‘walking’.

What one must also note about the Luttrell Psalter is that the chariot in question was depicted within the context of a wedding, indicating how the use of such vehicles was tied in with ceremony. A similar relationship between chariot and ceremony can be detected a century later. In 1447, the Duchess Katharina came to marry Markgrafen Karl von Niederbaden. For this occasion, the Viennese court specifically ordered the construction of a chariot which would not only serve a ritual purpose. But the court also envisaged a vehicle which would be practical and sturdy enough to transport her to the marital residence in Pforzheim, along with some fifty

⁵⁶ Haupt, ‘Der Wagen im Mittelalter’, 191.

⁵⁷ John Stow, *A survey of London, written in the year 1598* (London, 1876), 32.

other vehicles, pointing to the beginnings of chariot-use for the purposes of travel.⁵⁸ By the early sixteenth century, this trend continued, bringing forth doubt as to whether the chariot could still be referred to as one as opposed to a carriage. When Catherine de Medici travelled from her native Florence to France in order to marry the future king Henry II, in 1533, she brought with her from Italy a ‘carrucha’. By the time she acceded to the throne, it was recognised that she was the first to have introduced the carriage to the French court, a practice which Henry’s illegitimate daughter, Diane de France, continued.⁵⁹ By this time wheeled passenger transport was no longer limited to infrequent and ceremonial use. Now it was being brought out more frequently for the purposes of travel, excursions and leisure. True, in the first part of the sixteenth century, its use was preserved for daughters and wives of monarchs and sovereigns. But the shift from the chariot to the carriage was now unmistakable. Eventually, it was in 1570 when permission was granted to members of the court to travel in wheeled passenger transport. Significantly, in the absence of any enthusiasm from male members of the court to exploit the permission, it was left up to women to take up the baton. So it was Catherine-Henriette of Beauvais, the first lady of the chamber of Anne of Austria, who moved to apply for and receive a patent (*brevet*) in May 1661 for ‘vehicles for hire for the following of the court in the vicinities of Paris’. Receiving confirmation in two decrees, issued in 1667 and 1669, this allowed services of coaches and carriages to operate between Paris and Versailles as well as between Versailles and Saint-Germain.⁶⁰ From this time on, the coach and carriage hardly looked back, attaining their status as the preferred mode of everyday transport for women who could afford it. Even for those who could not afford to own one there was the possibility to hire one once in a while.

Much of the popularity of the coach and carriage by this time can, therefore, be attributed to these aristocratic women. But one has to wonder whether the take-up of wheeled passenger transport could have been as substantial as it turned out to be

⁵⁸ Wackernagel, ‘Zur Geschichte der Kutsche’, 201.

⁵⁹ Causse, *Les Fiacres de Paris*, 13.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 18-9.

without the involvement of upper class men. Equally, one has to ask whether the vilification meted out to the coach and carriage could have been as polemical had there only been women. After all, upper class women had a long history of being transported in waggons and chariots without ever having raised an eyebrow. Women could have popularised the coach and carriage among their own sex as much as they would have liked, but they still might not have invited the kind of vitriol the likes of Taylor and Cresset dealt out. In fact, opponents of the coach and carriage did not deny the existence of wheeled passenger transport *per se*. On the contrary, they accepted the need for them among certain sectors of the population. As Taylor put it: ‘For in all my whole discourse, I do not inveigh against any coaches that belong to persons of worth or quality, but only against the Caterpillar swarm of hirelings.’⁶¹ Rather, the tipping point between acceptance and rejection arguably lay in the presence and involvement of men. What sent critics fulminating was the fact that men were being converted to the cause. For their role in soliciting men to join them in their carriages, women were taken to task. Criticism that the turn to coaches and carriages would ‘effeminate’ men was a reflection of precisely this concern.

Yet if men were involved one needs to ask who they were and why they were choosing to board vehicles. To understand why they were doing so, in spite of the sniggers and stares, one must turn to how the nature of the relationship between the nobility and government was changing. Before the time when coaches made their impact, the nobility had assumed predominately a military role as warriors who, as knights, protected the sovereign while it had been the duty of the clergy to take care of the administrative side of government. In the high middle ages, however, a series of noisy conflicts between the ruler and the church made churchmen less attractive to employ as government administrators. But the complexity of ruling was not made any easier by their absence. Seeking to train a body of loyal servants who would be specialists at seeing to the civil side of ruling, the state looked upon education in universities, particularly in relevant subjects such as law, as a way of creating laymen

⁶¹ Taylor, *The world runnes on wheeles*, Preface.

necessary for filling posts in government. As a result, the number of civil servants mushroomed. In the case of France, there had been only one royal official to every 4,700 inhabitants in 1515. By 1665 there was one to every 380 inhabitants.⁶² Eventually, with all the privileges they acquired, these civil servants came to form a new ‘nobility of the robe’ – as opposed to the traditional ‘nobility of the sword’ – whose appearance coincided with the breakthrough of wheeled passenger transport.

In marked contrast to the warrior horsemen, who had chequered the Middle Ages, the new nobility did not see much purpose in mounting horses. Fighting battles was not their primary mode of existence – sitting at their desks was.⁶³ As such, they not only performed tasks, which required mental as opposed to physical strength, they clothed differently too. The flowing robe which often touched the surface would have been far from conducive to riding on horseback. Neither perhaps would have been the alternative of ‘walking’. This is especially so when one considers the reserve of the new class of civil servants to have to expose themselves to the vagaries of the weather or to mingle with the lower orders. As one French pamphlet explained:

Gentlemen of Law and of Council as well as Gentlemen of the Church and other bodies [find] this town to be so unclean and full of rubbish that they would hardly want to walk about in the streets getting completely dirty. Gentlemen of Law and Gentlemen of Council would not be seen with mud on their robes and even Ladies would not walk about in the streets.⁶⁴

Of course, the limits to how much vehicles afforded protection must not be overstated. As Martin Lister made clear in his account of Paris in 1698, such instruments of avoidance often failed to live up to their billing when beggars walked their way. ‘Such is the vast multitude of poor wretches in all parts of this city,’ he observed, ‘that whether a person is in a carriage, or on foot, in the street or even in a shop, he is

⁶² Jonathan Dewald, *The European nobility, 1400-1800* (Cambridge, 1996), 37.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 36-7.

⁶⁴ *Apologie des carrosses* (1625), 11-12.

alike unable to transact business on account of the importunities of mendicants'.⁶⁵ But these small nuisances apart, the coach and carriage did offer a modicum of security and was, above all, ideal in ferrying the new nobility from their homes to their places of work in increasingly populous urban centres.

What had made wheeled passenger transport not only desirable but also necessary to the upper classes was that, partly as a result of the changes in the demands of government, a substantial part of the elites now needed to live in cities – or at least reside there for extended periods. To cater for this change, aristocratic neighbourhoods had sprung up in Paris and in London between 1550 and 1650 which again overlapped with the breakthrough in wheeled passenger transport.⁶⁶ Of course, the degree to which this gravitational pull had on the aristocracy as a whole would have varied – not least in different countries. In France, this pull seems to have been greater, less resistible and more permanent, so that the nobility would move wholesale to Paris, leaving the countryside devoid of their presence. By contrast in England, the same force would have pulled them into London only on a semi-permanent basis, so that a house could be maintained in the country to which they would return after the end of the 'season'. But the upshot, in both French and English instances, was similar: they both needed carriages and coaches to carry them. In the case of England, Taylor observed how London reclaimed peace when all the aristocrats had left with their coaches and carriages:

[T]he last proclamations concerning the retiring of the gentry out of the city into their countries, although my self, with many thousands more were much impoverished and hindered of our livings by their departure; yet on the other side how it cleared the streets of these way-stopping whirligigs, for a man now might walk without being stand up on, by a fellow that scarcely can either go or stand himself.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Martin Lister, *An account of Paris at the close of the seventeenth century* (1698), (Revised edition, London, 1823), 46.

⁶⁶ Dewald, *The European nobility*, 48. Based on domestic and estate receipts, Peter Edwards locates the major take-up of coaches and carriages among the English aristocracy to the years between 1650 and 1750: Edwards, 'La mode des carrosses', 43.

⁶⁷ Taylor, *The world runnes on wheelles*, 18.

To take them from their country houses to their urban dwellings when business had to be conducted in the capital, the aristocracy were now reliant on the coach. When in the city, they availed themselves of wheeled passenger transport, so that they could be taken to and from their places of work, official engagements and social events. Even their wives, who might have otherwise found themselves estranged several hundred miles away from their husbands within a purely ridden equine economy, were able to accompany them to the city, and once there they might choose to promenade around town in coaches and carriages for the purpose of socialising and amusement.

Problematic in any investigation that considers the historical significance of passenger transportation is that it is easy to overestimate the kind of impact coaches and carriages had. The novelty of ‘driving’ was of course real not least because it introduced a third element in how people chose to move, alongside ‘riding’ and ‘walking’. But it would be misleading to suppose, together with contemporaries who had an interest in whipping up fear, that the conflict between ‘driving’ and ‘riding’ had already been settled in favour of the coach and carriage in the period between 1550 and 1650. When viewed from the *longue durée*, the proliferation of wheeled passenger transportation, during these hundred years, was far from all-encompassing. In the case of Paris, following the first breakthrough, the number of wheeled passenger vehicles stood at a modest 310-320 in 1685.⁶⁸ By contrast, some forty years later, that figure exploded to 15,000 and by 1765 to 20,000.⁶⁹ In the case of London, too, the trend was similar: from a similarly modest number, conservatively-estimated figures reached 1,900 by 1694 and by 1754 there were in excess of 8,000 vehicles.⁷⁰ More importantly, the number making use of public wheeled passenger transportation, such as stagecoaches, remained insignificant. So low had been the number of these coaches, which linked up the various parts of the kingdom to

⁶⁸ Bulet, *La mythologie française*, 507.

⁶⁹ Annik Pardailhé-Galabrun, ‘Les déplacements des parisiens dans la ville aux XVIIème et XVIIIème siècles’, *Histoire, économie et société* 2/2 (1983), 205-53, 224

⁷⁰ Jackman, *Transportation in modern England*, I, 130.

London, that Jackman was compelled to conclude that, even as late as the mid-eighteenth century, ‘most travelling was done on horseback rather than wheeled carriages.’⁷¹ Such modest increases in coach and carriage may have led to increased demand for breeding horses whose purpose would have been to pull vehicles rather than to carry men on their backs. But the fear that, with the introduction of coach and carriage, breeders would suddenly stop providing light horses in favour of heavy horses – which doomsayers predicted would happen – was severely misplaced.

Given what one can surely describe as an explosion, which took place after the breakthrough period, and the sluggish take-up of coach services in the period under review, one should bear in mind that ‘driving’ – at least during the course of the seventeenth century – remained by far from a position of outright preference as a mode of movement; still less did the uptake of coaches denote a significant move towards the breeding of heavier as opposed to lighter horses. The impact of ‘driving’ one might say, was more symbolic than real, one limited to certain sections of the population rather than one devouring all. Of course, as a story the tussle between ‘riding’ and ‘driving’ did not cease but continued to escalate, as later chapters of this study will show, and it would be correct to attribute the genesis of this clash to the period between 1550 and 1650. But the outcome of this conflict, for the moment, still hung in the balance. What the furore surrounding the coach and carriage did manage to ignite, however, at least in the short term, was a renewed effort, on the part of the riding interest, to halt the demise of horse-riding and to resurrect the art of horsemanship within the context of a new age.

⁷¹ Ibid., 125.

Figure 3: Anon., *The state carriage of Louis XIV and his queen Marie-Therese (1667)* Eventually even the king succumbed to the use of vehicles. Previous monarchs had appeared in ceremonies on horseback. Note, also, the number of women seated happily inside the carriage.

b. The re-invention of horsemanship

When Antoine de Pluvinel, principle equerry to the future Louis XIII, came to open his equestrian academy in the faubourg Saint-Honoré in Paris around 1599, it was from a position of weakness rather than from a position of strength that he moved to do so.⁷² Coinciding with the time when ‘riding’ was being threatened by the rise of ‘driving’, it is unsurprising why the ridden interest, with its back against the wall, chose to act before it was too late by founding schools where the skills of horsemanship would be carefully imparted.

By the sixteenth century, it was common knowledge how horsemen – the former knights – had become degenerate, morally loose and lazy – ‘guzzling and hawking themselves’, in the words of J.R. Hale, ‘to the very margins of social

⁷² Opinions diverge over when Pluvinel’s equestrian academy came to open its doors. The date taken here is from Carabin, ‘Deux institutions de gentilshommes’, 27. But Kate van Orden, for example, has recently placed its foundation to 1594: Kate van Orden, ‘From *Gens d’armes* to *Gentilshommes*: Dressage, Civility, and the *Ballet à Cheval*’, in Karen Raber and Treva J. Tucker (eds), *The culture of the horse: status, discipline, and identity in the early modern world* (New York, 2005); 197.

usefulness'.⁷³ The depths to which horsemen could plummet when they had dismounted from their saddles were made scathingly and ignominiously apparent by Erasmus, who disseminated the opinion of them as fraudsters who would drink, debauch and gamble away their lives. In a dialogue between a wise old advisor and a youth who hoped to become a nobleman, the advisor notes sarcastically: 'Unless you are an expert gamester at cards and dice, a rank whoremaster, a stout drinker, a daring extravagant, and understand the art of borrowing or bubbling, and have got French pox [syphilis] to boot, scarce anyone will believe you to be a knight.'⁷⁴

Much of the reason why horsemen found themselves in this unhealthy state was because they were struggling to adapt to two new circumstances – the first military and the second civil – which the early modern period had thrown up. By the beginning of the sixteenth century, firepower had entered the battlefield, affecting profoundly the position of the horseman within the military set-up. Previously, it had been common for the knights or *gen d'armes* to assume a central and independent position in the field of battle. Their heavy charge, on armoured horses, was designed to strike the decisive blow that would send foot soldiers scattering. What changed their significance was the arrival of firepower which, in the hands of the artillery and infantry, could now repel the advances of a heavy mounted attack, rendering the men-at-arms mere mascots on the field of combat. Looking at the example of Henry II, who is considered the most medieval of French kings, one can appreciate how this turnaround was finally achieved. As a ruler, Henry II still set up tournaments and jousting for the heavily-armoured knights, who, with their principle weapon the lance, composed the heart of his royal army. But his heavy cavalry soon met its match when in October 1552 it encountered a force of *reiters* or riders led by the Duke Albrecht of Brandenburg. By relinquishing their short lances and replacing them with pistols, the Duke's force had recently transformed itself into light cavalry. Despite inaccuracies over long distance, their impact over closer ranges was

⁷³ J.R. Hale, 'The military education of the officer class in early modern Europe', in Cecil H. Clough (ed), *Cultural aspects of the Italian Renaissance. Essays in honour of Paul Oskar Kristeller* (Manchester and New York, 1976), 442.

⁷⁴ Colloquy, 'The false knight' in W.T.H. Jackson (ed), *Essential works of Erasmus* (New York, 1965).

devastating, so that it resulted in the decimation of the French *gen d'armes* at Saint-Vincent.⁷⁵ From such experiences, Henry II took the immediate decision of creating a large force of *reiters* and *pistoliers* in his cavalry arm. By August 1588 there were, according to one estimate, some 8,200 *reiters* as opposed to a mere 1,750 *gen d'armes*.⁷⁶ Such moves were part of a wider transformation: in the mid 1540s, German *reiters* successfully came to adapt firearms to the saddle, a feat that led to the complete abandonment of the lance in favour of the pistol and, in emergency, swords.⁷⁷

What the demise of knights and the rise of cavalry, which had finally been achieved in the mid sixteenth century, gave rise to was a battlefield in which the horseman no longer ruled supreme. Battles had now turned into complex and messy affairs where no arm was dominant: medieval pitch battles in open spaces had given way to sieges and skirmishes, where it was no longer individuals, able to demonstrate and act upon notions of bravery garnered on horseback, who could take the initiative. Rather, their importance diminished, knights had to turn themselves into cavalymen, which meant that free movement would be curtailed and that their efforts would be regimented to work along side other arms in tactical formations.⁷⁸ Closer integration into the forces required a more sophisticated understanding of the art of war which moved beyond the one-sided emphasis on physical and moral attributes, such as strength and courage, to an emphasis on intelligence to exploit better situational opportunities that arose. But to develop a better appreciation of tactics required the horseman to dismount from his saddle, sit down with books and study military tactics. This was a move still damned as out of line with the spirit of being a proper warrior. As the irreverent Pietro Aretino, in a letter to a young nobleman, commented in 1549: 'I consider it of little importance or none that Your Excellency has set yourself to

⁷⁵ James B. Wood, *The King's army: warfare, soldiers, and society during the Wars of Religion in France* (Cambridge, 1996), 123.

⁷⁶ Frederic J. Baumgartner, 'The demise of the medieval knight in France', in Jerome Friedman (ed), *Regnum, religio et ratio. Essays presented to Robert M. Kingdom* (Missouri, 1984), 14.

⁷⁷ John Ellis, *Cavalry: the history of mounted warfare* (Newton Abbot, 1978), 80-1.

⁷⁸ Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte* (7 vols., Berlin, 1920), IV, 137.

studying treatises and compendiums upon the art of war. A man of your talent and your valour should rather have some great captain for his instructor [...] You should study and consider things military in actual warfare and not in the classroom.’⁷⁹ Despite such feelings, it had by now become patently obvious that it was no longer sufficient to be brave, to know how to ride, to use a lance and a sword: the cavalryman also had to have intelligence, so that he could adapt himself to the ever-changing circumstances of war in which he found himself. Noting the bewildering pace with which military strategies underwent change, Sir Roger Williams observed, in 1590, that ‘every day new inventions, strategies of wars, change of weapons, munitions’ had proliferated which demanded the attentive mind of the elite soldier. What the horseman had to grapple with, towards the end of the sixteenth century, was the possibility that they could no longer indulge in the exclusive pursuit of horsemanship, which had been hitherto possible in tournaments, jousts and tutoring received from their masters within households. Now, they also needed to broaden their education to encompass a more intellectual training conducted not outside but inside; designed not so much to raise their physical prowess as deepen their military knowledge; and delivered to foster group cohesion rather than encourage individual initiative.

The second new circumstance that horsemen had to deal with was in the civil realm; but similar to the military, intellect also played a role insofar as it had become increasingly important for horsemen to acquire an education in order to retain influences in government. Of course, from the horsemen’s particular viewpoint, it had little to do with education and all to do with the king allowing positions at court to be easily purchased. As Davis Bitton has explained: ‘The demand that only nobles be chosen as baillis and senechaux ... had been readily granted by the king; yet it had to be repeated in 1560, 1576, 1588, and 1614. In 1615, over two hundred noblemen appeared before the chancellor to complain that the positions at court were still being

⁷⁹ Quoted in Hale, ‘Military education’, 441.

sold and that the nobles were not being favoured.’⁸⁰ Embittered at this state of affairs in which commoners would buy up offices from the crown, take over noble estates and titles, and thus install themselves in the body politic, Pierre d’Origny charged that ‘it is the sure sign of the fall and collapse of a Monarchy or Republic when charges, offices, and church dignities are distributed to people who do not deserve them or sold for money in public sale or auction.’⁸¹

But these calls of foul play often masked the issue of whether it was not the nobility, which had misunderstood the shifting nature of government in which complexity of ruling demanded an expanded bureaucratic apparatus. Even in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, when they came under severe challenges from those who invested their time and effort in acquiring an education at colleges and universities for the purposes of professional and social advancement, the horsemen commonly displayed hostility to acquiring such basic skills as literacy and numeracy. Referring to the *roturier* or commoner, who was now making advances at the expense of the nobility, Florentin Thierriat de Lochepierre despaired at the blindness of horsemen to respond to the times when intellect was becoming all important. ‘The calamity of the time and the ignorance that we affect’, he cried, ‘have brought us to the point of not being preferred to *roturiers* unless equal to them in merit. It is judged unreasonable that a gentleman destitute of knowledge and experience be preferred to an experienced and learned *roturier*’.⁸² Finding themselves stuck within the rising importance of merit, the nobles were particularly ill-equipped to meet the challenge. Especially for such positions as the magistracy, which had assumed an important role at a time when laws were becoming greater in number and more complicated in content, they possessed few qualifications. Nor did they have much stomach for acquiring a legal education either. As a long and arduous process where preliminary studies of French, Latin and Greek were followed by further studies in a university setting, the nobility would have had very little

⁸⁰ Davis Bitton, *The French nobility in crisis 1560-1640* (Stanford, 1969), 61

⁸¹ Quoted in Ellery Schalk, *From valor to pedigree: ideas of nobility in France in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries* (New Jersey, 1986), 72.

⁸² Quoted in Bitton, *The French nobility*, 450.

appetite. This is hardly unsurprising: horsemen, as men of action and honour, still retained the notion, expressed by Castiglione, that found the study of letters to be abhorrent and that, in consequence, men of letters were very base too.⁸³ In the words of Rivault, writing in 1596, the nobility ‘so despises the enrichment of the mind [that] nothing seems to it more vile and less estimable’.⁸⁴

When Antoine de Pluvinel and Salomon de la Broue – the two pioneers of equestrian academies in France and then across Europe – came to write their respective treatises on horsemanship in the early seventeenth century, their concerns were that, as things stood, the nobility would not be able to survive if it were to continue to repulse the importance of education.⁸⁵ What Pluvinel thus proposed was the establishment of five academies, funded by the state, in the large towns of Paris, Tours, Poitiers, Bordeaux and Lyons.⁸⁶ Each of the schools would be directed by a superintendent or governor who would be chosen for three to four years among the most virtuous gentlemen and who would be paid some 12,000 *livres* annually for the task of educating young nobles from the age of 15 for a four-to-five year period.⁸⁷ Pressures to found institutions of learning for the nobility had been mounting for some time. Following the passing of the edict of Nantes in 1560, the essentials of an educational structure had come to be laid down for those who could afford and pursue it. In hasty response, writers such as François de l’Alouëte (1577), Pierre d’Origny (1578) and Florentin Thierriat de Lochepierre (1606) all came to express the urgent need for the nobility to follow suit in acquiring an education.⁸⁸ Only by doing so, they reasoned, could one solve the problem of aristocratic degeneration,

⁸³ Cf. Dewald, *The European nobility*, 35.

⁸⁴ Quoted in Bitton, *The French nobility*, 49.

⁸⁵ Antoine de Pluvinel, *L’Instruction du roy en l’exercice de monter à cheval* (Paris 1627); Salomon de la Broue, *Le Cavalierie français, contenant les préceptes principaux qu’il faut observer exactement pour bien dresser les Chevaux aux exercices de la carrière et de la campagne* (3 vols., Paris, 1602). The first work of Pluvinel was published posthumously.

⁸⁶ Conrads, *Ritterakademien*, 50-2.

⁸⁷ Roger Chartier, *L’Education en France du XVI au XVIII siècle* (Paris, 1976), 170.

⁸⁸ François de l’Alouëte, *Traité des nobles et des vertus dont ils sont formés, leur charge, vocation, rang et degré, des marques, généalogies et diverses espèces d’iceux, de l’origine des fiefs et des armoiries...* (Paris, 1577); Pierre d’Origny, *Le Hérault de la noblesse de France* (Paris, 1578); Florentin Thierriat de Lochepierre, *Trois traictez, savoir: 1 De la noblesse de race. 2 De la noblesse civile. 3 Des immunités des ignobles* (Paris, 1606).

dampen the mindset of anti-intellectualism and equip the nobility with the skills necessary for the challenge that the new nobility of the robe had thrown down. Some had already seen the writing on the wall and had decided to act on their own accord. Looking to re-new themselves through ‘*un accès à la culture livresque*’ these forward-looking nobles entered their children into universities and colleges in a hurried attempt to cover lost ground.⁸⁹ But the problem with these institutions of learning, which had traditionally been home to the clergy and then the robe, was that they did not strictly belong to the nobility. Naturally, it felt it had different requirements.

What the proposal put forward by Pluvinel and Broue represented, insofar as it envisaged an equestrian academy, was that it managed to satisfy that need to be distinct and separate. Chief among those demands was the horsemen’s wish to distance themselves from the robe. Most easily this could be achieved through riding on horseback, as opposed to the robe who would usually travel around in coaches and carriages to their places of learning. A few years before the opening of Pluvinel’s equestrian academy in Paris there had been a proposal, which did seek to found a special academy for young nobles as distinct, say, from Jesuit colleges and universities. But the idea advanced by Pierre d’Origny in 1578 never gained the kind of support Pluvinel’s was to attain. Focusing unashamedly on two career trajectories to either the civil service or the military, the curriculum he envisaged arguably smacked too much of the kind of course offered elsewhere, to which the ‘driving’ classes commonly flocked.⁹⁰ The unconcealed zeal for career advancement through the attainment of merit would have been unpalatable. In other words, it did not have the horse at the centre to set it apart from the rest.

The failure of Origny’s plan does not mean, however, that the one pursued by Pluvinel was solely focused on the *manège* or riding exercises, as if stressing difference was all that mattered. Far from it: the equestrian academies furnished not

⁸⁹ Chartier, *L’Education en France* 169.

⁹⁰ Cf. Bitton, *The French nobility*, 49. For another failed example, this time an earlier attempt by Francis I to establish a noble school for letters, see Motley, *Becoming a French aristocrat*, 124-5.

only competence in riding, but they also took a keen interest, for example, in fencing, dancing, gymnastics and musical performances. They also taught academic subjects, notably mathematics and languages, which involved just as much time off the saddle as on it.⁹¹ ‘Pluvinel not only instruct[s] the gentleman in the profession of riding,’ as Alexandre de Pontaymery put it, ‘but in the practice of good morals – without which all sciences are only vanity’.⁹² Many of the equestrian academies also came to be strategically placed near to universities, so that the nobility who attended them could benefit from learning offered outside the confines of the *manège*.⁹³ So much had the need to ‘intellectualise’ the outlook of the nobility permeated, in fact, that even in the hallowed area of horsemanship, concerted efforts were made to publish books and manuals that attempted to place horsemanship on a theoretical and scientific footing, which had to be learnt away from the horse. This was an unprecedented undertaking for an activity, which had prided itself on individualised learning and direct on-the-saddle experience. Mistakes in how one rode and how one performed jumps and airs, horsemen had now come to realise, could not be corrected by mere self-observation on horseback. ‘Grisone demands that the rider complements his education through the study of teaching that has been written’, Maria Platte has written with reference to Federico Grisone, the Italian master who had taught Pluvinel. ‘Only by doing so’, she added, ‘can he acquire the necessary knowledge about weight and proportion.’⁹⁴

But even as equestrian academies sought to comply with the demand of the times, they refused to concede that consultation of books, which required the nurturing of the mind, guaranteed the development of good horsemen. As the writings of Broue and others make abundantly clear, horsemanship was an art that one had to pursue over a considerable length of time, if not over the course of a lifetime. Not for nothing did Pluvinel and Broue envisage a four-to-five year period

⁹¹ Corinne Doucet, ‘Les Académies équestres et l’éducation de la noblesse (XVI^e – XVIII^e siècle)’, *Revue historique* 308/4 (October 2003), 817-36, 829-30; Orden, ‘From *Gens d’armes* to *Gentilshommes*’, 198.

⁹² Cited in Orden, ‘From *Gens d’armes* to *Gentilshommes*’, 198.

⁹³ Nobert Conrads, *Ritterakademien der frühen Neuzeit: Bildung als Standesprivileg im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen, 1982), 70-1.

⁹⁴ Maria Platte, *Die «Maneige royal» des Antoine de Pluvinel* (Wiesbaden, 2000), 31-2.

of instruction in which the art was to be perfected, not through the perusal of manuals, but through instruction from a competent master. As such, the kind of education the nobility underwent was designed in such a complicated and profound way, involving the acquisition of so many different moves and postures, that attendance at one of the academies could not be avoided. As Denise Carabin has summarised, teaching consisted of a bewildering array of moves, which involved “airs”, the “courbette”, the jump, the “terre à terre”.⁹⁵ Another specialist in the study of the *haute-école*, Elizabeth LeGuin, has described what some of this involved:

The ‘airs above ground’ include *caprioles*, *terre à terres*, *courbettes*, and *un pas et un saut* (‘a step and a jump’). The capriole is a motion in which the horse springs off the ground from a standstill, flinging out all four feet. Rhythmically speaking, it is a single beat, adaptable to any meter, although obviously it is a massive movement best suited to marking musical arrival points. The most beloved of the airs are also most rhythmically complex ... the *terre à terre* and the *courbette*, movement similar in all but degree of elevation. Menestrier describes the *courbette* as ‘a [hopping] movement like a crow, which has given the name Little Crow to this air’.⁹⁶

Only when these moves were acquired, and unity with the horse achieved, could the education be considered in any way complete. Of course, the nature of the education envisaged, which prided itself on how it could not be copied or self-taught, did have the added benefit of limiting it to those who attended the equestrian academies, thereby helping to control those who could profess excellence in and knowledge of horsemanship. But what was important was less the kind of people who came to receive instruction than the confirmation of the superiority of “action” over “learning” and “feeling” over “reading” within an otherwise increasingly bookish and intellectual age. Horsemanship, to those who had experienced it, could

⁹⁵ Denise Carabin, ‘Deux institutions de gentilshommes sous Louis XIII: Le Gentilhomme de Pasquier et L’Instructions du Roy de Pluvinel’, *Dix-septième siècle* 218/1 (January-March 2003), 27-38, 31.

⁹⁶ Elizabeth LeGuin, ‘Man and horse in harmony’, in Karen Raber and Treva J. Tucker (eds), *The culture of the horse: status, discipline, and identity in the early modern world* (New York, 2005), 191.

not simply be expressed in words. As one teacher put it in the late seventeenth century: ‘there are some actions so full of grace that they are impossible to describe[...] a teacher whose knowledge is based only on writings and language [...] will exert himself in vain trying to teach something that is more a question of practice than abstract knowledge.’⁹⁷ Pushed further what this amounted to were the inestimable insights that could only be gained on horseback. ‘The virtue in action is of greater worth than the virtue in contemplation’, Broue emphasised, ‘and beautiful deeds are to be prized more than profound words.’⁹⁸ In his *Maneige royale*, which took the form of a dialogue with a future king, Pluvinel elaborated on the difference between what one could learn sitting down and what one could learn mounted. Certainly, he did not negate the importance of pursuing intellectual activities. Even so, he could not help but underline how, if it could not be deemed superior, horse-riding differed from those activities. Questioned why exercise on the horse was important, Pluvinel replied:

Everything about the sciences as well as the arts conducted on a rational basis are learnt in a rested position without any kind of torture, disturbance or concern. Pupils are allowed to study, either with or without teachers; and when their master assigns them something, they do so without being troubled as to what those teachings should be. But the task of horse-riding should not be confused with this: a man cannot learn the art without mounting a horse. He is forced to cope with all the eccentricities that an irrational animal can throw at him; he must experience the perils of when the horse is in a rage; and he must put up with the desperation and the cowardice of these animals, contending with the effects of their actions.⁹⁹

Clearly, the attraction of the Pluvinel model of educating the nobility was that it managed, even while it absorbed the need for study, to hold on to its own sense of

⁹⁷Quoted in Mark Motley, *Becoming a French aristocrat: the education of the court nobility 1580-1715* (New Jersey, 1990), 141.

⁹⁸Cited in Platte, *Die «Maneige royale»*, 31.

⁹⁹Antoine de Pluvinel, *Maneige royal, où l'on peut remarquer le défaut et la perfection du chevalier en tous les exercices de cet art digne des princes, fait et pratiqué en l'instruction du Roy* (Paris, 1623), 11.

being different by subordinating the act of learning to the act of riding. What the equestrian academies managed to do was to re-invent themselves in an image that would not only be acceptable to society at large but also satisfactory to the nobility who could, through the horse, maintain their distinct sense of identity.¹⁰⁰

Figure 4: Charles Parrocel, *Allures de dressage en manège, Airs relevés* (early 18c)

Of course, not everybody welcomed what one might term a ‘re-branding exercise’. To the extent that criticism came from their own, the success or failure of the new art of horsemanship hinged on whether enough horsemen could be converted to the Pluvinelian cause. Those who maintained the traditional view of horsemanship as a predominately military exercise – with its connections to knights, battles, jousting and tournaments – had difficulty coming to terms with this new format. In England, for example, William Cavendish was the main force behind the introduction of the new art of horsemanship in his country. But the Duke of Newcastle, who had picked up the new art while in exile in Holland and France

¹⁰⁰ A similar conclusion is reached by Tucker who argued that the *haute-école* created ‘an identity that was better suited and more responsive to [the nobility’s] actual circumstances’: Treva J. Tucker, ‘Early modern French noble identity and the equestrian “airs above ground”’, in Karen Raber and Treva J. Tucker (eds), *The culture of the horse: status, discipline, and identity in the early modern world* (New York, 2005), 273-310, 275.

following the Civil War, found himself having to defend the legitimacy of the exercises, which included elaborate jumps, airs and kicks that seemed to have little relevance to actual horse-riding and warfare. '[A]ll things in the manège', as one critic remarked to him, 'is nothing but tricks and dancing, and gamballs, and of no use.'¹⁰¹ Similarly, Thomas Bedingfield, writing in the late sixteenth-century, expressed the sentiment that: 'The principal use of horses is to travel by the way, and serve in the war: whatsoever your horse learneth more is rather for pomp or pleasure, than honour or use.'¹⁰² Equally, Cardinal Richelieu had deep reservations about conferring state-support to the new art of horsemanship, because of his ingrained belief that the noble's place was first and foremost the military sphere. Consequently, he could see little reason in funding what must have seemed to him over-elaborate exercises that had little applicability on the field of combat.¹⁰³

All of these objections, however, missed the deeper point about the *haute-école*. For the aim of instituting the equestrian academies was to rid the nobility of its negative associations with the past. Repeated images of violent warriors only served to inhibit the nobility's chances of survival in an age where it struggled to adapt to changing military tactics and social challenges from below. As part of the effort to escape from the shackles of the medieval past, appearing 'elegant' on horseback went some way to correcting this stereotype. As George Vigarello pointed out, 'an erect posture ... served as a brake on violent and unmeasured movement' the attainment of which had a significance far beyond the four walls of the *manège*.¹⁰⁴ Easy on the eye and certainly entertaining to an audience that came to watch them, the jumps and airs were designed to impart not only an aesthetic appeal but also to advertise the view that the nobility had successfully changed from violent rabbles to civilised elites. As Ellery Schalk put it: 'By helping to educate and polish the nobles they would help their 'image', and, like birth and the duel, would serve better and

¹⁰¹ William Cavendish, *A new method and extraordinary invention to dress horses, and work them according to nature* (London, 1667), 6.

¹⁰² Quoted in Hale, 'Military education', 450.

¹⁰³ Cf. Bitton, *The French nobility*, 61.

¹⁰⁴ Quoted in Motley, *Becoming a French aristocrat*, 140-1.

more effectively a nobility that, as it lost its primary military function, was becoming more in need of a new and more up-to-date *raison d'être*'.¹⁰⁵ To the extent that the new art of horsemanship provided one, it was a resounding success.

Despite all the assertions made on their behalf, it would be an exaggeration to suggest that the equestrian academies were runaway successes from the start. The model advocated by Pluvinel and Broue put forward the creation of four to five academies, which the king was to found. But this template struggled to garner support from the state. Such were the delays to implementation that Estienne Pasquier, writing between 1610 and 1612, was moved to comment that the forefathers' calling had not been sufficiently heeded. In a letter to the governor of Metz, Pasquier threw in his penny's worth, proposing the establishment of an academy in the province.¹⁰⁶ Cardinal de la Rouchfoucauld went one step further by taking matters into his own hands. In 1618, he took to channelling funds destined for crippled soldiers in an aim to institute a publicly-funded establishment for horsemanship. Unsurprisingly, his plan never left the drawing board as it eventually incurred the wrath of the counsel, parliament and, not least of all, the soldiers' syndicate.¹⁰⁷ Perhaps in belated response to these – at times desperate – pressures the state did eventually come to sanction support for the cause of horsemanship. Nonetheless, state investment in academies came later rather than sooner. For it was only in 1636, over thirty years after Pluvinel's private academy had first opened its doors, that Cardinal Richelieu agreed to state backing and royal patronage in founding the *Académie royale* in Paris; but only some time after he had set up the *Académie française* in 1625. Even then, closer inspection reveals how the system of scholarship, which had been drawn up to support poorer aristocrats at the Royal Academy, had been significantly watered down. In the original plan some 600 nobles had been set to benefit from the scheme; but eventually a mere 20 scholarships were

¹⁰⁵ Schalk, *From valor to pedigree*, 177.

¹⁰⁶ Conrads, *Ritterakademien*, 69-70.

¹⁰⁷ Motley, *Becoming a French aristocrat*, 131-2.

underwritten.¹⁰⁸ Given this ambivalence of the state to fund attempts to resurrect horsemanship, the academies were forced to lead a patchy existence, unable to attain financial stability throughout much of the seventeenth century. Often they had little choice but to operate as self-financing institutions. Yet the high maintenance costs – which included the purchase of land and buildings, the provision of teachers and stabling, and the acquirement of clothing and horses – made them prohibitive to impoverished aristocrats which helped diminish the impact of what had been initially intended.

To judge the performance of academies based on whether they were able to implement an original creed, however, would surely be wrong. Despite the evident hardship, the *haute-école* did successfully spread across France and then beyond it to the rest of Europe, without much state support. Since the academies did not come under the central authority of the *grand écuyer* until 1680, official figures are hard to come by. Nonetheless, Mark Motley has managed to calculate that equestrian academies increased their number substantially between 1600 and 1680. In Paris alone there were 7 to 8 schools while in the provinces there were between 18 and 20 in this period.¹⁰⁹ To an extent the schools owed their existence to initiatives made in the middle to late sixteenth century. This was when Italian masters came over to France to found private schools of horsemanship. Nevers was founded in 1565; Lyons was established in 1581 and Toulouse over a decade later in 1598.¹¹⁰ But, in the majority of cases, schools came to be established in the seventeenth century. Of the sixteen examples of provincial academies in France, Charles-Alphonse Duplessis noted that twelve had been established in either the seventeenth or eighteenth century.¹¹¹ So desirable had the *haute-école* become as an institution by this time that it had began to entice the robe nobility. For them enthusiasm came from a wish to enter a career in either the military or the court which had been areas previously off-

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 131.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 127.

¹¹⁰ Doucet, 'Les Académies équestres', 819-20.

¹¹¹ Charles-Alphonse Duplessis, *L'Équitation en France, ses écoles et ses maîtres depuis le XVI^e siècle jusqu'à nos jours* (Paris and Nancy, 1892), Chapter 3.

limits. But their fear was that, being totally unversed in riding generally and in horsemanship particularly, incompetence on horseback threatened to be a serious embarrassment at best and an impediment to social advancement at worst. In the case of one Norman legal family, the youngest son, Nicolas Goulas, was sent off to be enrolled in an academy on the advice of an uncle who believed his nephew would be ‘mocked at court and in the army if he did not ride well’.¹¹²

As another measure of their popularity one might note the number of foreigners who flocked to France to attend the academies. Functioning like present-day MBA institutions, the schools attracted young gentlemen from across Europe. At Angers, for example, Roger Chartier calculated there had attended some 640 foreign pupils between 1601 and 1635. Most numerous among them were Germans with 323 pupils, followed by the Dutch with 179 and the English and Scots with 86 young nobles being represented.¹¹³ More significant perhaps were the sorts of people who came to France to receive training in the skills of horsemanship. Once again at Angers there are records of attendance for young gentlemen who would later on attain prominence and power. George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, came in 1615; Frederick von Pappenheim in 1629; William Pitt visited in 1724, Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington, attended in 1786; while Count Buffon as well as the Duke of Newcastle also came.¹¹⁴ By the seventeenth century, one can reasonably say, the practice of sending young nobles to equestrian academies, albeit for shorter stays than initially envisaged, had become common.¹¹⁵

¹¹² Motley, *Becoming a French aristocrat*, 134.

¹¹³ Chartier, *L'Education en France*, 182.

¹¹⁴ Doucet, ‘Les Académies équestres’, 830-1.

¹¹⁵ Due to limitations of space, only the French model, the most significant, has been considered here. For how the equestrian academies and the art of horsemanship spread to and developed in other European countries and contexts, see, for Germany, Conrads, *Ritterakademien*, 88-135. For England, see Sir Humphrey Gilbert, *Queene Elizabethes Achademy, a book of precedence, &c.. with essays on Italian and German books of courtesy* (London, 1869), 12ff.; Hale, ‘Military education’, 442-3; William Harrison Woodward, *Studies in education during the age of the Renaissance 1400-1600* (Cambridge, 1906), 302-6; Giles Worsley, ‘A courtly art: the history of ‘haute école’ in England’, *Court historian* 6/1 (2001), 29-47. But it seems that, in the case of England, the art of horsemanship never really took off, despite the efforts of the Duke of Newcastle to do so, a point that needs further investigation. For a tentative undertaking to do this, see Donna Landry, ‘Learning to ride in early modern Britain, or, the making of the English hunting seat’, in Karen Raber and Treva J. Tucker (eds),

By the middle of the seventeenth century, one could safely state, the art of horsemanship had been rejuvenated.¹¹⁶ What this revived format allowed the horseman to do was for him to rise, once more, above the walking and driving classes who were, in Broue's words, nothing more than 'a motley crew of badly-formed, thoughtless and presumptuous men.' This was done by elevating himself 'through [his] beautiful and genteel actions the difference in [his] virtuous livelihood and high quality.'¹¹⁷ Perched high on the saddle, the horseman assumed a central position, subjecting the brute creation to his will in a way that indicated authority to those below. But in order to 'reduce the horse to reason', in Pluvinel's phrase, a highly competent horseman had to 'work with the mind and memory of the horse in such a way so that it can be accustomed to executing with beauty and discipline the moves intended... [T]he rider senses the movements of the horse and will be able to at which point he would need to use his hand or his heel to cause it to move forward.'¹¹⁸ Consequently, nothing looked as 'glorious', in the estimation of William Cavendish, than 'to see so excellent a creature, with so much spirit, and strength, to be so obedient to his rider, as if having no will but his, they had but one body and one mind.'¹¹⁹

But in doing so the horseman had to be subtle. He could not, for instance, order the horse through an iron fist. Particularly when the eyes of the public were on him, analysing his every move, this way of proceeding would have invited howls of derision. Rather, it was important that 'the good horseman always maintains a good posture, a *gaieté au visage*', so that an impression of gracefulness would surface. Not only was this important because the rider needed to please, but also because the

The culture of the horse: status, discipline, and identity in the early modern world (New York, 2005), 329-50.

¹¹⁶ For an important parallel development in which the medieval tournament was re-invented as equestrian ballets, see Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly, *Triumphall shews: tournaments at German-speaking courts in their European context 1560-1730* (Berlin, 1992); idem., 'The Equestrian ballet in seventeenth-century Europe – Origin, description, development', *German life & letters* 37 (1983-1984), 198-212; André Stegmann, 'Art équestre en France en 1600', in Philippe Ariès and Jean-Claude Margolin (eds), *Les Jeux à la Renaissance* (Paris, 1982).

¹¹⁷ Broue, *Le Cavalerie français*, I, 4.

¹¹⁸ Carabin, 'Deux institutions de gentilshommes', 32, 31.

¹¹⁹ Cavendish (1667), 13.

doctrine of the new art of horsemanship believed movement directly reflected the rider's inner soul. It 'render[ed] visible his abilities and his interior virtues' which, in turn, served as measurements for ascertaining his potential to rule and lead.¹²⁰ Crucially, in the case of a future king, the first demonstration of his equestrian abilities before a select audience was something that was closely watched. So there was genuine jubilation at the occasion of Louis XIV's first lesson, which he passed with flying colours. For his riding competence was taken as a sign that he had been 'born with the necessary dispositions to learn effortlessly everything that can serve as an ornament to a great monarch', thus auguring well for his future position as ruler.¹²¹ Indeed, the way in which he rode was considered the same as the way in which he ruled, the horse representing the common rabble which he needed to subject to his will. As Pasquier put it, the one who 'knows how to place the horse under his reason is both destined and capable of being ruler.'¹²² In such a way, the new art of horsemanship managed to link the act of riding with the act of ruling.

Without this renewed ideology, which justified the elevation of the horseman above all others, the emergence of equestrian portraits and equestrian statues would not have been imaginable. As early as the end of the sixteenth century, it was clear that the new art of horsemanship had come to influence the rising popularity of equestrian portraits in particular. According to Walter Liedtke, who has been the first art historian to see the link between the advent of the new doctrine of horsemanship and the popularity of equestrian portraits, it was the Italian Giovanni Stradanus who was the first to have been influenced by this trend.¹²³ Trained in Antwerp, Stradanus had joined the gild in 1545 but made his way, a few years later, to Florence where he remained a successful artist, making occasional trips to Naples and Flanders.¹²⁴

¹²⁰ Carabin, 'Deux institutions de gentilshommes', 37.

¹²¹ Quoted in Motley, *Becoming a French aristocrat*, 143.

¹²² Quoted in Carabin, 'Deux institutions de gentilshommes', 32.

¹²³ Walter Liedtke, *The royal horse and rider: painting, sculpture, and horsemanship 1500-1800* (New York, 1989). However, a more thorough treatment of the linkage between horsemanship and equestrian art still needs to be undertaken. For a mild attempt to develop what Liedtke has started, see Platte, *Die «Maneige royal»*.

¹²⁴ Liedtke, *The royal horse and rider*, 29.

While it is unclear how he spent his time there, it would not be unreasonable to suppose he was influenced by the rise of equestrian schools that had sprung up across Italy at that time. By 1581, when Philips Galle published a set of engravings of the stables of the Don Juan of Austria, titled *Equile Joannis Austriaci*, the drawings of Galle, Goltzius and others had sought inspiration in the engravings of Stradanus.¹²⁵ Significantly, the engravings in question, such as the *Equus Hispanus*, did not contain the rider at all, depicting as they did lone horses against landscaped surroundings. Insofar as the focus was on the horse, this indicates how, at this stage, the doctrine of the centrality of the horseman had still to permeate the canvas. Nonetheless, the traces of the new art of horsemanship, revealed in the dynamism of the horses performing airs for instance, were unmistakable.

Figure 5: Stradanus, *Equus hispanus* (1581)

By the end of the century, however, depictions appeared which now showed horses with their riders, such as monarchs and nobles, sat upon them. Tempesta's *Horses of Different Lands* (1590), Stradanus' *Twelve Caesars* (c 1590) and Tempesta's *Twelve Caesars* (1596) all exploited this theme. Yet the depictions were

¹²⁵ Ibid.

still far from overt projections of identifiable individuals who personified power and exuded authority. As some of the titles of the examples serve to illustrate, artists were still experimenting with classical figures, such as Roman Caesars, rather than eminent individuals much closer to the present, thereby pointing to a period of transition. By the early seventeenth century, however, the shift towards placing the horseman at the centre of depictions grew stronger. In 1604, for example, when Thomas Cockson came to draw Charles Blunt, the Earl of Devonshire was depicted on horseback. From a technical point of view, Cockson took his cue from the works of Stradanus; but the difference was clear: a definite shift had taken place towards painting contemporary figures, albeit aristocrat ones.¹²⁶ By the time when Renold Elstrack came to engrave Charles I in 1613-14, the shift was almost complete. In the case of Elstrack's attempt there was still an air of uncertainty about Charles, the horseman, since his posture was far from inspirational.¹²⁷ But these ambiguous renditions eventually gave way to confident depictions, with the horseman indisputably central, a few decades later. By the time Rubens, Velasquez and Van Dyck came to produce the *Equestrian Portrait of George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham* (1625), the *Equestrian Portrait of Philip IV* (1634-5), and *Charles I on Horseback* (1638) respectively, the evolution of this particular form of art was complete. Following a fifty-year development, started by Stradanus, these enduring images of equestrian art serve to remind us of how the ideology of the horseman came to influence and then infiltrate an art form.

Referring to the portraits of Van Dyck's *Charles I on Horseback*, Velasquez's *Equestrian Portrait of Philip IV of Spain* and Holbein's *Henry VIII*, the popular art historian Roy Strong has contended that they collectively represent 'the most famous

¹²⁶ Cf. Liedtke, *The royal horse and rider*, 25, 28-9.

¹²⁷ Roy Strong, *Van Dyck: Charles I on horseback* (London, 1972), 49-53. For an extended discussion, with other examples, of the relationship between Charles I, equestrian portraits and horsemanship, see John F. Moffitt, "'Le Roi à la crosse'? Kings, Christian knights, and Van Dyck's singular 'Dismounted equestrian-portrait of Charles I'", *Artibus et historiae* 7 (1983), 79-99.

ruler-painter relationship in the history of art.’¹²⁸ From an equine point of view, however, one might venture an alternative statement: with the exception of Holbein’s standing rendition of Henry VIII, whose production took place before the advent of equestrian academies, these portraits indicate depictions of power that owed heavily not only on the techniques of the *haute-école* but also on the ideology that the new art of horsemanship had established and institutionalised. So it should hardly come as a surprise why monarchs chose to tap in to the new art of horsemanship for inspiration in their pursuit to render themselves powerful. As Vargo put it: ‘As one spurs on a horse and leads it where he wants, so shall the rider lead the people

Figure 6: Diego Velázquez, *Equestrian portrait of Philip IV* (1635-6)

¹²⁸ Strong, *Van Dyck*, 14.

according to his will.’¹²⁹ Perhaps the purest manifestation and application of this doctrine can be found in the equestrian monuments, which emerged parallel to the equestrian portraits. By contrast with equestrian paintings, which witnessed their zenith in the early to mid seventeenth century, equestrian statues achieved prominence much later on in the same century. Notable traces of the impact of the new art of horsemanship are, of course, detectable in the early seventeenth century: one might cite the examples of the equestrian statue of Henry IV (1635) on the newly-constructed Pont Neuf or that of Louis XIII (1639) on the Place Royale. Even so, it was following the erection of the large bronze equestrian statue of the Sun King, Louis XIV, by François Girardon, started in 1685 and finished in 1699, that equestrian statues came to be constructed in a systematic fashion across the breadth of France.¹³⁰ Grenoble was the first to follow the example of Paris by erecting a statue in the same style in 1685. Bretagne followed suit in August, Toulouse and Montpellier in October, Aix-en-Provence in November, and Marseille in December.¹³¹ Significantly, these were all provinces and towns which had come under suspicion for being disloyal towards Paris. Areas considered loyal, such as Normandy and the Vallée de la Loire, consequently did not witness the establishment of equestrian monuments.¹³² So it was with this political purpose in mind that authorities took the step of erecting figures of the King who would, perched from his saddle, look down and keep a watchful eye over his subjects in areas that were viewed as politically unstable. Consequently, when, for example, Lyons came to establish an equestrian statue of its own in a demonstration of homage to the King in 1638, the location of the monument was of paramount importance. Earmarking the Place Royale as the square in which monarchical authority would be expressed, the authorities insisted on this choice of location, even if it were to involve the wholesale remodelling of the immediate urban landscape. ‘We have seen that, in order for the

¹²⁹ Liedtke, *The royal horse and rider*, 37.

¹³⁰ For an accessible account of the construction of Girardon’s monument, see Peter Burke, *The fabrication of Louis XIV* (New Haven and London, 1992).

¹³¹ Michel Martin, *Les Monuments équestres de Louis XIV: une grande entreprise de propagande monarchique* (Paris, 1986), 64.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 69.

statue to retain its complete worth,' a report noted, 'the entire equestrian statue, from its pedestal to its inscription, must be erected in the middle of a spacious environment, which, as a place of convergence and meetings, could also be a place for great shows and popular festivals.'¹³³ To the extent that equestrian monuments came to be positioned in the centre of towns, they were designed to be seen by all members of society – a feature that stood in marked contrast to equestrian portraits, which necessarily had a limited audience.

Of course, equestrian monuments, like equestrian portraits, had had precedents; but their historical roots stretched back farther. Tracing their origins to antiquity, Dario Covi has established two strands to the utilization of equestrian monuments: the first strand extended back to ancient Greece where victors of horseracing were lauded and remembered; the second strand, which went back to ancient Rome, came to symbolise the majesty and authority of the rider.¹³⁴ Most representative of this latter strand is the equestrian statue of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius (AD 161-80) which represented 'the most monumental and awe-inspiring visible expression of ... authority.'¹³⁵ Certainly, then, the equestrian monuments of the seventeenth century can be regarded as a continuation of the second strand. Even so, one must not forget the fact that this strand had been underused throughout much of the intervening medieval and early Renaissance periods, before it came to be revived in the seventeenth century. During this time, equestrian monuments had descended to serve a commemorative rather than authoritative function, which was reflected in where they were placed and what they were made from. As Covi has explained: 'first, none of them was executed in bronze; they were made of stone or wood, the latter sometimes combined with perishable materials, or were painted. Second, all but the Bamberg rider and Otto I were made for tombs, or for catafalques and erected over tombs. Third, all the tombs with equestrian statues, save the 14th

¹³³ Quoted in Martin, *Les Monuments équestres*, 72.

¹³⁴ Dario A. Covi, 'The Italian Renaissance and the equestrian monument', in Diane Cole Ahl (ed), *Leonardo da Vinci's Sforza monument horse: the art and the engineering* (Bethlehem and London, 1995), 40.

¹³⁵ H.W. Janson, 'The equestrian monument from Cangrande della Scala to Peter the Great', in Archibald R. Lewis (ed), *Aspects of the Renaissance: a symposium* (Austin and London, 1967), 75.

century ones of the Scaligeri, were erected indoors.’¹³⁶ Certainly, there were exceptions, such as Donatello’s *Gattamelata* (1444-53), which self-consciously tried to revive the authoritative strand of Marcus Aurelius. As an equestrian monument of a *condottiere* or captain of the land force of the Venetian republic, it stood unashamedly on a tall, column-like pedestal, which invited criticisms of ‘imperial arrogance’ from its critics.¹³⁷ Yet even this example could not escape the ceremonial context: it was placed in a tomb, designed to honour military heroes, and made predominantly from wood. Given this, the kind of equestrian monuments that rose to

Figure 7: Jean Le Pautre, *Gravure de l’inauguration de la statue de Louis XIV sur la place Louis-le-Grand* (c.1699)

¹³⁶ Covi, ‘The Italian Renaissance and the Equestrian Monument’, 46.

¹³⁷ Janson, ‘Cangrande della Scala to Peter the Great’, 77-9.

prominence in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries should not be considered on a par with those of previous centuries. Rather, they should be viewed not simply as the exploitation and renewal of the model of Marcus Aurelius, but also as a significant departure from it. Insofar as the intentions were to project a profound and far-sighted political image of individual monarchs, which witnessed its culmination in the widespread construction of equestrian monuments of Louis XIV, the seventeenth century equestrian monuments were *sui generis*. ‘Unlike the royal effigies that temporarily incarnated the principle of dynastic continuity during the fifteenth- and sixteenth century funeral rites’, Jeffrey Merrick has correctly remarked, ‘seventeenth- and eighteenth century statues endowed monarchs with a visible presence and ongoing afterlife that underscored their posthumous role in the political culture of the *ancien régime*.’¹³⁸

What this shift from ceremony to authority underlines is the extent to which the application of the new art of horsemanship assumed political forms that made it impossible to separate the act of riding from the act of ruling. Previously, equestrian statues merely commemorated the memory of a happy reign. But equestrian monuments in the seventeenth century came to serve a more ominous purpose where personal qualities, the grandness of character, the benevolence of government, religious defence and victories in war all came to be embodied in one exalted figure. The challenge of the sculptors and the authorities that commissioned them was to interweave all these messages into one coherent whole, so that even the masses should be able to understand. So it was that when a province came to consider the erection of an equestrian monument in homage to Louis XIV, in November 1685, it expressed the similar view that everyone who would come to look up at the mounted figure would see in it the personification of all virtues of ruling:

Each one of us will take pleasure in seeing in this image the victor of the nation, the restorer of laws, the destroyer of

¹³⁸ Jeffrey Merrick, ‘Politics on pedestals: royal monuments in eighteenth-century France’, *French history* 5/2 (1991), 234-64, here 235.

heresy, the propagandist for the Catholic faith, the lover of the peoples, and the model of monarchy. All the more we will be able to experience this joy several centuries later as it will endure the ravages of time for Louis the Great to emerge as the most loved ruler that has ever lived.¹³⁹

The extent to which the horseman was able to project his image, control the political message intended, and facilitate the interpretation of the rider as the embodiment of all virtue was perhaps a feature distinctive to equestrian monuments. As such, it is unsurprising why they became the preferred means of political representation in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, particularly favoured among absolutist monarchs. Seen within the context of the development of the equine economy, however, the equestrian monuments can be placed within a quite different narrative. Faced with the crisis of ‘riding’, it was important that the horseman met this challenge. The new art of horsemanship, which had been established by Pluvinel and Broue, went some way resurrecting the rider in a new mould, providing a renewed ideology of the supremacy of the mount that saw its manifestation in equestrian paintings first and then in equestrian statues later on. Set within this context, the equestrian monuments can be considered as a culmination of the desire to resurrect ‘riding’ and the horseman within a new age, extending their influence beyond the time when riding as an everyday form of movement was in decline.

By the end of the seventeenth century, the equine economy drew to the close of one particularly noisy and turbulent phase of its development. Some 150 years previously, it was shaken by the unprecedented challenge of a new form of movement – ‘driving’ – which threatened to overturn the erstwhile monopoly of ‘riding’. But horsemen, as we have seen, stood up to the threat: in the specific case of horsemanship, they not only absorbed the need to dismount and open books, but they

¹³⁹ Quoted in Martin, *Les Monuments équestres*, 66.

also went further by elevating riding into an art form, conducted within academies, which skilfully satisfied both the “civilizing” demands of the times and the “distinctive” needs of the horsemen. By doing so, ‘riding’ experienced a renaissance in its fortunes which saw manifestations in various artistic forms, including equestrian monuments, which enabled the rider to stand, once more, perched above the height of both vehicles and pedestrians in publicly significant centres. But all was not quite as they seemed. An unmarked but important feature of the equestrian academies was that instruction took place in an interior as opposed to an exterior setting under controlled circumstances. Only outside their walls did coaches and carriages clutter pass, indicating the extent to which ‘riding’ had been banished from the streets, forced to exist within a restricted environment. To have ridden out of the comfort of the *manège*, to the full glare of the public and the commotion of traffic, would arguably have exposed the rider to unpredictable dangers for which he would have been ill-prepared.

By the same token, the fact that horsemanship, in its new guise, was performed to a select audience reveals the desire to better control the kind of impression airs and jumps were supposed to make. At a time when ‘riding’ was falling increasingly out of favour as an everyday form of movement, the re-invention of horsemanship illustrated the limits to which this new art could contribute to a full reversal in riding’s fortunes. From an equine perspective, then, the foundations on which the horseman sought to renew and re-establish himself was by far from secure, belying the confident representations of power the painters, sculptors and authorities wanted them to be. Even so, the fact that ‘riding’ managed to survive, albeit in modified form, meant that the influence of horsemen – trained within these equestrian academies – extended far beyond the time when ‘driving’ first challenged its dominance. As the next chapter will show, this equestrian tradition cast a long shadow over the development of the equine economy: for the birth and evolution of veterinary medicine, it will be argued, owed more to the initiatives of horsemen than to the ideals of the Enlightenment.

Chapter Two

The equestrian tradition, the tortured development of veterinary medicine and the focus on the horse, c.1700-1850

In 1805, Christian Seyfert von Tennecker published a book entitled *Handbuch der niedern und höhern Reitkunst* in which the German set out the importance of a discipline – veterinary medicine – which had only emerged a few decades earlier with the opening of the French school at Lyons in 1762.¹ Educated at the *Roßarztschule* or Equine Medicine School in Dresden, which was founded twelve years after the first *école vétérinaire* had been established, Tennecker was among the first veterinarians in Germany who pronounced upon animal health and welfare as a qualified professional. Prolific throughout his career as a writer, he wrote the *Handbuch*, which was one of the first he ever penned, with the riding classes uppermost in his mind. The fact that he did so was no coincidence. Employed as Major of the Cavalry, Equerry and Senior Horse Doctor for the Kingdom of Saxony, Tennecker was tasked with finding remounts for the cavalry arm in the saddle horse-breeding areas of Mecklenburg, Holstein and Hanover. Clear from his experiences as an army officer was the unforgivable extent to which horsemen had neither understanding nor respect for the ‘art’ he engaged in. Undoubtedly it was to convince them of the importance of what he practised that led to the writing of the *Handbuch*.

Where the fundamental problem lay, Tennecker pointed out, was in the division of labour that pertained between ‘higher’ and ‘lower’ arts of horsemanship. By this he meant there was a split between those who cared for the horse and those who rode it. What was unacceptable, to his mind, was the state-of-affairs in which, despite all their fancy books on horsemanship, riders actually knew almost nothing

¹ Christian Ehrenfried Seyfert von Tennecker, *Handbuch der niedern und höhern Reitkunst* (Leipzig, 1805).

about the horse itself, perched as they were on top of the animal. ‘What can possibly be more ridiculous,’ Tennecker asked sarcastically, ‘than when one sees men who can pace, trot and gallop the horse and know how to direct it, but who, despite being familiar with names, are unfamiliar with what the purpose of exercise is when they listen to lessons on how to train the horse!’² Taking issue with the widespread assumption that anything and everything about the horse could be learnt on horseback through ‘feel’ – ‘riding with their own hands’³ – the dismounted and objective veterinarian came to contest the dubious knowledge of the horse which the horsemen had previously monopolised. By comparison to what riding entailed, which might employ ‘only a few months or at most by daily exercise a year or so’, veterinary medicine, Tennecker proudly proclaimed, required ‘a good few years, uninterrupted exercise, constant change of horses, intensive thinking about their treatment and concentrated application of all powers.’⁴ Clearly agitated by all the pronouncements the riding classes had been making about the horse, he wanted to make it clear that they were nothing more than ‘horse lovers’ (*Pferdeliebhaber*) and that proper knowledge of the horse belonged to the veterinarians who were, by contrast, ‘horse specialists’ (*Pferdekenner*):

The lovers of horses should ... refrain from passing definitive judgements on the horse, making claims about how it can be healed, and how it can be understood and how it can be trained. They should not intrude into an area which lies outside of their business, their profession, and their expertise. They should not confuse being ‘horse lovers’, which they by all means deserve to be known as, with having the right to the knowledge of the horse and the true art of horsemanship. And they should definitely not think that they possess knowledge when in fact they are merely horse lovers who ‘feel’ that they know.⁵

² Ibid., 15.

³ Ibid., 18.

⁴ Ibid., 15.

⁵ Ibid., 22.

Despite the polemical tone of Tennecker's introduction to his *Handbuch*, it is obvious that he still craved for recognition from horsemen. By calling what he practised the 'higher art of horsemanship', he was tactically trying to confer on veterinary science a prestige in the same way that horsemen benefited from an association with the equestrian academies, revealing how much the veterinarian cared about the position he was assigned to in the world. Yet at the same time he was hostile not only to the way in which 'riding' quite literally looked down at people, but also to the manner in which it pretended to know the essence of the horse when its grasp of the creature was anything but. In this respect, Tennecker was claiming a large stake in the knowledge of the horse based on the view that a superior understanding of the animal was gained not by being *on* it but *off* it. From a broader perspective, however, the tactic of earmarking a class of people who merely rode horses does strike as odd. For one might argue that, as a veterinarian, he could have sought access to a wider range of domesticated animals on which he could have built not only a useful career, but also a new power base on which livelihoods could be made. But of course this was precisely the point: the reality of the veterinary profession as it emerged during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was that it had to contend with the riding classes who, through the art of horsemanship, dominated how the horse was seen and known. Not only did horsemen have power over knowledge, but they also wielded influence over early veterinarians, such as Tennecker, since veterinarians were generally dependent for their livelihoods on either stables of the wealthy or the military – both of which were establishments the horsemen ultimately controlled. Even though Tennecker could criticise 'riding' as much as he liked, he did not go as far as denying the centrality of the horse in what he practised, arguably because he could not as yet see how a respectable living could be earned without the creature, at a time when it was still uncertain whether profit or prestige could be generated from engaging with domesticated animals in general.

What the present chapter deals with is how this obsession with the horse, which arose out of having to engage with the riding interest, cast an ominous shadow over the development of veterinary medicine, which struggled to break free, in the

years between 1750 and 1850, from the equine yoke. By doing so, the chapter argues that the emergence and evolution of veterinary medicine owed less to the ideas of the Enlightenment or the needs of the urban economy than to the equestrian tradition, which continually exerted an influence in the selection of the animals that could and could not be cared for.⁶

a. Claude Bourgelat, equestrian academies and veterinary medicine

During the first half of the eighteenth century, epizootics, or cattle plague, had periodically conspired to decimate livestock across the breadth of Europe to an extent never witnessed before. For centuries the characteristics of this particularly virulent form of animal disease were unknown. Since accounts of symptoms were often too vague, it was invariably difficult to maintain that they were in fact incidences of contagious diseases until more reliable descriptions appeared in the eighteenth century.⁷ By 1709, which was one of the first panzootics to have been extensively recorded, the main features of cattle plague were mapped out, providing hope for its prevention and cure. In his *Jahreshistorie von des Seuchen des Viehes*, written in 1721, the German J. Kanold copiously reported on a particularly bad case

⁶ For previous work on the history of veterinary medicine, most recently rejuvenated by an interest in human-animal relationships, see J.R. Fisher, 'Not quite a profession: the aspirations of veterinary surgeons in England in the mid nineteenth century', *Historical Research* 66/161 (1993), 284-302; Anne Hardy, 'Pioneers in the Victorian provinces: veterinarians, public health and the urban animal economy', *Urban history* 29/3 (2002), 372-87; Ronald Hubscher, *Les Maîtres des bêtes: les vétérinaires dans la société française (XVIIIe - XXe siècle)* (Paris, 1999); Susan D. Jones, *Valuing animals: veterinarians and their patients in modern America* (Baltimore and London, 2003); J. Lane, 'Farriers in Georgian England', in A.R. Michell (ed.), *History of the healing professions: parallels between veterinary and medical history* (Wallingford, 1993); Roy Porter, 'Man, animals and medicine at the time of the founding of the Royal Veterinary College', in A.R. Michell (ed.), *History of the healing professions: parallels between veterinary and medical History* (Wallingford, 1993); Joanna Swabe, *Animals, disease and human society* (London, 1998); Philip M. Teigen, 'Nineteenth-century Veterinary medicine as an urban profession', *Veterinary heritage* 23 (May 2000), 1-5; Lise Wilkinson, *Animals and disease. An introduction to the history of comparative medicine* (Cambridge, 1992); Sarah Wilmot, 'Fever cows and measly pigs: veterinarians, farm animals and public health scares in Victorian Britain', in Johann Schäffer and Peter Koolmees (eds), *History of veterinary medicine and agriculture* (Giessen, 2003).

⁷ François Vallat, 'Les épizooties en France de 1700 à 1850. Inventaire clinique chez les bovins et les ovins,' *Historie et Sociétés Rurales* 15 (2001), 67-104, 68-9.

of epizootics between 1701 and 1717. Comparing it in scope and intensity to the Bubonic plague, he sought the origins of the disease in Tartary and in Russia, ending on a premature note that ‘epizooty’, because it was now studied, was under control.⁸ Subsequent developments made Kanold’s optimism look foolish. Between 1711 and 1769 losses to cattle amounted to approximately 100 million for the whole of Europe. At least 10 million of these occurred in France and Belgium, while in Germany 14 million and in Holland upwards of 600,000 perished. Mortality was high: in Holland it averaged 73 percent between 1769 and 1770 and in France the figure was much higher at 90 percent in 1745.⁹

Containment of cattle plague was thus a growing concern in Europe at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Even so, despite the efforts of governments to curtail the worst excesses of epizootics, there was still little hope of finding effective cures when society still relied on the assistance of itinerant ‘cow doctors’ or ‘cow leeches’ ‘whose advice and “treatment” were at best useless, at worst actually harmful if not lethal’.¹⁰ Such were the problems of epizootics at that time that it would be easy to refer to them as the main motivation behind the establishment of veterinary schools – first in France then across Europe – in the decades following the outbreaks. But it would be equally wrong to do so. Curiously, as Lise Wilkinson has correctly pointed out but never elaborated upon, it was not chiefly to stop animal disease that veterinary establishments initially arose – in spite of the ‘verbal acknowledgements of the ubiquitous threat of cattle epizootics’.¹¹ True, calls were made for veterinary institutions to be set up. Protection of livestock was, after all, a major concern for all states. Already in 1714 and 1715, for example, the French absolutist state had intervened in a particularly bad case of cattle plague. Dispatching a large number of physicians, surgeons and apothecaries to the infected regions, the state imposed sanitary measures, in which diseased cattle were separated from the

⁸ George Fleming, *Animal plagues: their history, nature, and prevention. Chronological history of animal plagues from B.C. 1490 to A.D. 1800* (2 vols., London, 1871), II, 180-1.

⁹ C.A. Spinage, *Cattle plague: a history* (New York, 2003), 133.

¹⁰ Wilkinson, *Comparative medicine*, 38.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

infected herd.¹² Some forty years later, and after another bout of cattle plague that had swept the countryside, the Saxony *Landtag* expressed its frustration at not being able to prepare for the devastation. ‘You see it is not unknown to His Majesty’, a representative remonstrated, ‘how much the cattle plague in these lands have, despite all measures taken against it, wrought havoc for thirty years or more and that it is impossible to put forward reliable measures of prevention and cure without knowing for sure either the cause or, more importantly, the effects on the body of cattle.’¹³

Such was the desperation with which calls were couched for an institution that dealt with animal health. Even so, the task of founding the first veterinary school in Europe, which would usefully conduct researches into and counteract the effects of epizootics, did not fall to either doctors or scientists who one might suspect to have been the natural instigators. In fact, they wanted as little to do with animal medicine as possible. Stretching as it did as far back as the medieval period, this split between human and animal medicine was an entrenched one, which significantly delayed the involvement of the former in the latter. Since those who tended and cared for domesticated animals were looked down upon, medical brothers found that it helped maintain their social profile if they kept a safe distance from animals and those who mingled with them.¹⁴ ‘One must leave animal medicine not to doctors and not to quacks,’ doctors would typically object, ‘one must leave it to the shepherd. These people have been bred with cattle, they have grown up with them and are their true friends and know most about them.’¹⁵ Despite concerted, if isolated, efforts of physicians such as Bernardo Ramazzini, who represented a group at the University of Padua scornful of their medical colleagues’ allergic reaction to investigating cattle disease and dealing with cow leaches, research into animal disease remained few and

¹² Caroline C. Hannaway, ‘The Société Royale de Médecine and epidemics in the ancien régime’, *Bulletin of the history of medicine* 46 (1972), 257-73, 261.

¹³ Quoted in Günter Michel, ‘Vieharzneischule or Roßarztschule – the Veterinary School of Dresden in the first four decennia after its foundation in the year 1780’, in Johann Schäffer and Peter Koolmees (eds), *History of veterinary medicine and agriculture* (Giessen, 2003), 140.

¹⁴ Wilkinson, *Comparative medicine*, 3.

¹⁵ Martin Claudius Scherer, *Akademische Rede über die Vortheile der Thierarzneikunde in den Händen der Aerzte* (1781), 29.

far between, remaining so well into the middle of the seventeenth century.¹⁶ Even during the eighteenth, prejudice was alive as ever, a point gloomily accepted by one of the early advocates of veterinary medicine in Germany, Christian Cothenius, who went on to found the Berlin veterinary school. ‘One must concede’, he observed, ‘the prejudice which states that the treatment of animal disease belongs exclusively to the shepherd, blacksmith and hangman; that animal medicine is separate from human medicine; and that it should be left to country squires and the peasantry.’¹⁷ Echoing similar sentiments a hundred years later, Karl Wilhelm Vix, a first generation veterinarian, expressed his discontentment at being treated like second class citizens. Borrowing the words of a dejected colleague, Vix explained that his new discipline of veterinary medicine, because of its negative associations, had much to overcome if it were to aspire to a ‘true’ science:

There has never been a time and there never will be a time when animal healing could be seen as a science and that animal doctors could be treated as scientific men. For since only sons of blacksmiths, hangmen and other low-ranking people have hitherto devoted themselves to the study of animal healing, so it is that it cannot be considered a science. Providing a scientific education to the animal doctor is not only superfluous, it is positively detrimental since, in carrying out his tasks, he constantly totters about in filthy stables and engages with the most uncultured of people within society.¹⁸

Constantly associated with the lowest rung of society, such as hangmen and blacksmiths, both doctors and scientists wanted very little to do with what veterinary medicine had to offer. So much so in fact that when the Prussian Academy of

¹⁶ Wilkinson, *Comparative medicine*, 42, 30. For fleeting interest in applying inoculation to the treatment of cattle plague, but mainly conducted by gentlemen farmers, see C. Huygelen, ‘The immunization of cattle against rinderpest in eighteenth century Europe’, *Medical history* 41 (1997), 182-196, 184-5.

¹⁷ C.A. Cothenius, ‘Gedanken über die Nothwendigkeit einer Vieharzneyschule, nebst Vorschlägen, wie sie zu errichten (1768)’, in Johann Knobloch (ed), *Sammlung der vorzüglichsten Schriften aus der Thierarzney* (2 vols., Prague, 1785), I, 10.

¹⁸ Quoted in Karl Wilhelm Vix, ‘Beiträge zur Entwicklungsgeschichte der Thierarzneiwissenschaft im Allgemeinen und im Großherzogthume Hessen insbesondere’, *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Thierheilkunde und Viehzucht* 8 (1841), 35-87, here 38.

Sciences was consulted about establishing a veterinary school in Berlin, it replied tartly: ‘one cannot expect professors to dig around in the carcasses of animals.’¹⁹

Placed within this context of reticence, which was a sentiment the European medical and scientific elite were supine about confronting, it should come as no surprise why the task of establishing a veterinary school should ultimately fall into the hands of someone who had less to lose from being tarred with prejudices under which medical men laboured. Picking up the baton at a time when nobody wanted to hold it, it was Claude Bourgelat, an *écuyer*, or riding master, at the Lyons Academy, who became founder when his *école vétérinaire* opened its doors to the public in 1762. Much could, of course, be read into the fact that it was an *écuyer* who became the first head of veterinary medicine in its institutionalised form. Certainly, one could suggest that this reflected how much influence an establishment set up by the riding classes could still command. To a certain extent, it did. No doubt, Bourgelat would never have been able to realise his ambition without the networks, which the tradition of equestrian academies had bequeathed and which he was able to exploit. Even so, one should not totally discount both the personal and fortuitous circumstances that led Bourgelat to found the veterinary school at Lyons, either. In contrast to many other riding masters at the time, Bourgelat did not hail from a family steeped in the equestrian tradition. For example, he had not followed in the footsteps of his father which his counterpart at Caen, Pierre Herbert Pleignière had done. Nor had Bourgelat assisted in the riding stables of his master which Etienne Lafosse, a Parisen stable master turned veterinarian, had done.²⁰ Educated at a Jesuit college, Bourgelat showed little signs of what he would later become when he had gone on to study law in Toulouse from where he obtained a doctorate. During his time as a lawyer in Grenoble, Bourgelat seems to have grown increasingly discontented with his work, subsequently leaving it to join the army; but equally at this time there was very little indication of his subsequent interest in horsemanship –

¹⁹ Reinhold Schmaltz, *Entwicklungsgeschichte des tierärztlichen Berufes und Standes in Deutschland* (Berlin, 1936), 3-4.

²⁰ Hubscher, *Les Maîtres des bêtes*, 37.

still less in veterinary medicine. Only following his service in the military, during which time he presumably discovered an interest in riding, did he arrive in Lyons for the specific aim of taking up lessons in the *manège*. Events then took a turn. The Academy at which Bourgelat learnt the art of horsemanship was run by Pierre Budin, who had temporarily taken over the running of the school after the premature death of his niece Claude, who had previously headed the establishment.²¹ Clearly excelling in the art of horsemanship, but also fortunate in that no heir apparent within

Figure 8: Pigeot, Engraving of Claude Bourgelat, 1712-79 (1835)

²¹ Charles-Alphonse Duplessis, *L'Équitation en France, ses écoles et ses maîtres depuis le XV^e siècle jusqu'à nos jours* (Paris and Nancy, 1892), 358.

the family was available to succeed the ageing Pierre, it was by and large favourable coincidence, which eventually elevated Bourgelat to the position of ‘*l’écuyer tenant l’Académie d’équitation de Lyons*’ in 1740, a position he assumed at the young age of 28.²²

The directorship of the Lyons Academy conferred upon Bourgelat an institutional and financial platform from which the ex-lawyer would later springboard his ideas of creating a veterinary school. Founded during the reign of Louis XIII by Pluvinel, the Lyons Academy represented one of the oldest and finest schools of horsemanship in operation.²³ Benefiting substantially from this reputation, Bourgelat quickly managed to establish himself as one of the foremost proponents of the *haute-école*. In 1744 he followed on in the footsteps of the equestrian greats, such as Pluvinel and Solleysel, in publishing his pronouncements upon the art of horsemanship in a book entitled *Le Nouveau Newcastle ou Nouveau Traité de Cavalerie*.²⁴ At the same time, Bourgelat benefited financially from his directorship. The town of Lyons offered him a salary of 1,700 livres, with free usage of a fiacre, while he was never short of pupils to teach from both the provinces and abroad who would by and large flock to his school as lodgers or *pensionnaires* despite the prohibitive costs of doing so.²⁵ Only a few years into his tenure, however, Bourgelat began to move beyond the traditionally equestrian. Perhaps this was a decision that could have only come from someone whose ties to the riding interest came relatively late in his life. Clearly restless with the narrow remit of the *manège*, he expressed an interest in pathology and anatomy, which he believed were aspects heavily neglected in the traditional teachings of hippology. This realisation took him to attend courses at the *College de chirurgie* at Lyons.²⁶ His studies there eventually led to the publication, in 1750, of *Eléments d’hippiatrique*, which is said to have been read with

²² Hubscher, *Les Maîtres des bêtes*, 29.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Claude Bourgelat, *Le Nouveau Newcastle ou nouveau traité de cavalerie géométrique et pratique* (Lausanne and Geneva, 1744).

²⁵ Duplessis, *L’Equitation en France*, 359.

²⁶ Hubscher, *Les Maîtres des bêtes*, 29-30.

interest by Malesherbes before he became secretary of the *Maison du Roi*.²⁷ Critically acclaimed by other *philosophes* in Paris, such as Diderot and Alembert, this anatomical work eventually led to Bourgelat being invited to contribute to the *Encyclopédie*.²⁸ So that by the time Bourgelat came to moot his ideas about founding a veterinary establishment, he had already contacts on which he could rely. One of these was Henri Bertin who had become Secretary of State for Agriculture in 1763. An important figure in that he was heavily influential in supporting Bourgelat's ideas, Bertin had previously plied his trade as a physician in Lyons between 1754 and 1757 and knew the riding master from his time there.²⁹ Support firmly behind him, Bourgelat benefited from the social caché that his position as *écuyer* of the Lyons Academy lent him. Thanks to an institution the riding classes had built, he was able to exploit the vacuum scientists and doctors had avoided filling.

This is not to say of course that the epizootic strand, by contrast to the equestrian one, did not influence the early development of veterinary medicine. Even as Bourgelat was founding a veterinary school in his home town of Lyons, Anne-Robert Turgot, a physician in the Limousin, had taken to setting up something similar, but in Limoges, in 1766. Profoundly concerned with the devastating effects of cattle plague on local livestock, Turgot specifically earmarked his establishment to incorporate farm animals, as opposed to narrowly looking after the interest of horses.³⁰ Nonetheless his school never succeeded in attracting the kind of attention that Bourgelat, with his institutional and financial stability and links to eminent and powerful personalities, so effortlessly managed to garner. After three years in operation it folded. Yet neither the concerns over the effects of epizootics nor the resolve of Turgot abated. A decade later, Turgot re-surfaced as Comptroller-General of Finances in Paris, an influential position he kept between 1774 and 1776. During his tenure, he set about implementing what he considered to be the proper function of

²⁷ Ibid., 30.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Caroline C. Hannaway 'Veterinary medicine and rural health care in pre-revolutionary France', *Bulletin of the history of medicine* 51 (1977), 431-47, 435.

³⁰ Cf. Hannaway, 'Société Royale de Médecine', 436.

veterinary medicine: the battle against epizootics. Following a bout of cattle plague, which had wreaked havoc among French cattle in 1770 and 1771, Turgot established a Royal Commission for Epidemics to tackle the disease's effects on livestock. But on this occasion, rather than turn to the obvious choice of the Bourgelat schools, Turgot deliberately sought advice from the *Académie des Sciences*, appointing to the position of commissioner, Felix Vicq d'Azyr, a revered anatomist, whose appointment marked a significant turning point for veterinary medicine. Only a few decades later did his research-orientated and dispassionate approach to the discipline open up a new and irreversible road down which budding veterinarians with interests other than to become farriers could proceed. Bringing about a move away from a fixation on horses – possible because he had no links to the equestrian tradition – this belated strand had as its hallmarks a wider interest in animal disease and proper research into its causes and effects. Presenting itself as an alternative approach, it inadvertently challenged the riding interest that had hitherto sustained the equine obsession within the veterinary regime. Receptive rather than ignorant to what was happening to livestock affected by outbreaks of cattle plague, Vicq d'Azyr founded the *Société Royale de Médecine* two years after his appointment as commissioner. At the same time, Vicq d'Azyr helped to inaugurate a journal, *Histoire de la Société Royale de Médecine*, in which the authors dealt extensively with a wide range of diseases, such as sheep disease, dysentery and fevers that affected a variety of animals – and not just horses.³¹

Perhaps one should be taken aback by the boldness with which Vicq d'Azyr ventured onto a terrain which, until a few decades ago, his medical and scientific colleagues would have feared even treading. After all, there had existed a fixed and abiding separation between the treatment of humans and the treatment of animals. Engagement in the latter by practitioners of the former would have brought disrepute and ill-feeling upon a medical profession still struggling to establish its profile and respectability within wider society. Yet what Vicq d'Azyr proceeded in espousing, to

³¹ Cf. Wilkinson, *Comparative medicine*, 75.

the horror of both physicians and veterinarians, was that there was little difference between humans and animals. Establishing the branch of comparative medicine, he invited both human and veterinary medicine to come closer, exhorting in his *Mémoire instructif sur l'établissement*, published in 1776, that 'the disease which attack men are applicable without any exception to those which attack animals. Medicine is one; and its general principles, once set out, are very easy to apply to different circumstances and species.'³² Even so, it would be helpful to bear in mind that what motivated Vicq d'Azyr was not only his desire to do away with disciplinary divisions, which he regarded as counterproductive. He also believed that comparative analysis would ultimately bring untold benefits to the health and welfare of humans. Only by reference to this logic could he break down the taboo that human doctors and scientists should refrain from dirtying their hands treating and researching animals. By the same token, one could safely assert that the French anatomist's interest in veterinary medicine grew neither out of an intrinsic concern for the welfare of animals nor out of consideration for the farmers who were the ones suffering from frequent and substantial financial losses of livestock. Rather, frustrated with the difficulties of not being able to operate and experiment on live human beings, Vicq d'Azyr saw in veterinary medicine an exciting and convenient opening in which animal experimentation would trail blaze a path to uncovering cures for ailments in humans. '[V]aluable and bold experiments which would be criminal if attempted on the treatment of human diseases', he unflinchingly declared, 'could be made possible with the development of veterinary medicine.'³³ Since there was little moral problem opening up for inspection and experimentation diseased and dying animals, Vicq d'Azyr saw veterinary medicine as a handy discipline. Coincidentally, he thus introduced a preliminary justification for vivisection, a practice that was to embroil the veterinary profession later on in the early to mid nineteenth century.

³² Quoted in Hannaway, 'Rural health care', 438.

³³ Quoted in Wilkinson, *Comparative medicine*, 76.

By contrast to Vicq d'Azyr's immediate motivation, which resulted from limitations he felt in using only humans to ascertain the cause of diseases common to all animals, Bourgelat's interest in looking inside the horse was a culmination of the belief that the horse should be seen off the saddle rather than experienced on it. Placed within this equine context the originality of Bourgelat did not lie in the fact that he advocated an anatomical approach to the horse, for this was a method which had gained partial acceptance within equestrian circles long before the ex-lawyer set foot in Lyons. At a time when riders had struggled to re-invent horsemanship for modern tastes, the riding interest had to acquiesce to demands to dismount from the saddle in order to take an 'objective' view of the horse in its anatomical glory. But in doing so, the new art of horsemanship, which took shape in the seventeenth century, had unwittingly laid down a platform on which subsequent riding masters, Bourgelat among them, could build. More immediately, at his academy in the rue de Vaugirard, La Guérinière transformed his school, in 1729, into a place in which peering inside the horse acquired significance. Courses were taught not only with regard to war and fighting but also into the anatomy of the horse with a surgeon employed to conduct dissections. Such a way of teaching had, La Guérinière boasted, 'never been taught in any other academy and which is very useful not only for gentlemen who engage in war exercises but also for cavalry officers who are obliged to have horses'.³⁴ Only less than twenty years later did Bourgelat himself, following on La Guérinière's example, instigate courses in anatomy – but this time without recourse to military justifications. Not only did the pupils in attendance at his Academy learn about the *manège* as well as music and languages, they were also introduced to the kind of diseases horses suffered from, how they occurred and what could be done to treat them. A prospectus for the Lyons Academy, published in 1747, illustrates this point:

The teaching of the *manège* takes place every day: one teaches here the parts that go into making up the body of the horse; the proportions, beauties and defects; the causes and

³⁴ Quoted in Duplessis, *L'Equitation en France*, 291-2.

symptoms of diseases; the cures that have to be administered. Then there is also a school of cavalry in which one teaches everything related to this arm. In the rooms of instruction and demonstration, there are walls on which are pictured frescos of fourteen actual-sized horses with pointers to various external diseases. As for interior diseases, depictions of the behaviour of horses are shown which indicate the symptoms. Lastly, there is also a depiction of a dissected foal which has all the vessels, muscles, internal organs, and other parts as they would appear in real life. In showing things this way, the physical and mechanical functions of a horse are rendered easy to understand.³⁵

What is important to point out about both La Guérinière and Bourgelat's early attempts to include anatomy as part of their curricula is that they took place within the comfortable, noble, and idealistic settings of the equestrian academies. As such, courses were designed to inform and enlighten a particular clientele – 'les officiers de cavalerie' and 'les gentilhommes' – who never seriously entertained any pretension to become experts in the disease of horses other than for their own intellectual nourishment. Still less did any resolve to pursue careers as horse doctors when their upper class credentials prevented them from stooping socially so low.

Where Bourgelat parted company, both with La Guérinière and with equestrian academies in general, was not over what was taught but where it was taught and to whom. Despite his obvious debt to the riding tradition, Bourgelat founded his veterinary school separate from the *haute-école* which might account for why posterity has by and large forgotten the equestrian influence in the development of veterinary medicine. But it was also forgotten because other riding schools refused to follow his example. When the question was posed, in 1762, whether the remaining equestrian academies wanted to join and change, they chose to stay out and remain as they were. Two years after the opening of the Lyons school, Countess de Brionne approached Pleignière, putting it to the *écuyer* if he would also be interested in heading up a veterinary institution in Caen but separate from the *manège* itself.

³⁵ Ibid., 360.

Despite his evident sympathies, Pleignière could not ultimately bring himself to establish a veterinary school that would operate separately from the academy he directed. Thus he wrote back in July 1764:

The establishment which has been set up in Lyons – under the title of *école vétérinaire* – carries out but only one detached part of the function being a chief *écuyer* who serves in accordance with the spirit of the Academies under the direction of the *grand écuyer* of France. The writers, which I cite below [ie Solleysel, Broue, Francini and other writers on the art of horsemanship], have distinguished themselves not only through their lives but through their insightful instructions so that, even after their death, I cannot hope to deviate from them. So I hope, Madame, you would not disapprove of me if I ask that you exclude me from the honour of conferring the same privileges that you have accorded to M. Bourgelat.³⁶

To the *écuyer* of Caen, it was far more important to keep veterinary medicine under the institutional auspices of the equestrian academies. If it could not, then Pleignière could not since to do so would be to depart from the teachings of the greats, such as Pluvinel and de la Broue. After all, the job of being a farrier was, in his mind, synonymous with being an *écuyer*:

Both foreign and French works on the horse indicate that the veterinary element has always been an inherent part of being a rider – it is included in his title. As a *grand écuyer* one cannot, without consent, condone doing away with the duties of the rider by just delegating tasks to farriers and saddlers. Without being a farrier or saddler himself, the rider cannot be considered fit to bear the title he carries and cannot be considered superior.³⁷

Perhaps in part because the equestrian academies still continued to impart knowledge of farriery, Bourgelat never intended to produce gentlemen horse doctors in his

³⁶ Quoted in Duplessis, *L'Equitation en France*, 367.

³⁷ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 368.

school. Aristocrats in fact were expressly forbidden from entering should they have even considered it proximate to their intellectual and social station.³⁸ Instead, the veterinary school took to train ‘ordinary farriers’, recruited from the lower orders, who would be tasked with treating ailments and shoeing horses.³⁹ Ideally the kind of pupil Bourgelat envisaged had only a smattering of education – enough to be able to read and write basic French – with greater weight placed on his physical attributes. This was the reason why a candidate would not be accepted who exceeded the age of 30, since he would be in essence un-malleable to the teachings conducted and one step too slow for mastering the menial practicalities of the job. Hailing from a rural milieu, the pupil would be sent back from where he came after completing his studies so as to benefit the local community of which he was a part. In particular, priority was accorded to the sons of farriers and blacksmiths:

In choosing the pupils from the different provinces, the commission should attach all priority to the children of farriers who are resident there. Most of these being accustomed from an early age to hammer and anvil will take less time in learning the job in the forges of the schools as compared to sons of farmers or other pupils who have never had the experience of striking iron and the like. Secondly, when they come to return home, they will have no need for help, since they will find there their fathers’ place of work.⁴⁰

More significantly, teaching would take place in a highly-regimented setting. Pupils – not students – who came out from the provinces would be housed together in dormitories, with curfews placed on their daily routines and limitations imposed on what they could read and when. Books would be confiscated, if pupils were found reading literature unbecoming of an obedient farrier. During the course of instruction, teachers, who acted more like moral guardians and disciplinarians, would also co-

³⁸ *Règlements pour les écoles royales vétérinaires de France* (Paris, 1777), 9-10.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Règlements*, 10.

habit, following pupils' every move. Thus incarcerated, nothing untoward could escape the attention of the Bourgelat schools.⁴¹

Why did Bourgelat choose to recruit from the lower echelons in order to train up farriers, whose job it was to look chiefly after horses, expressly limiting in the recruitment process the capabilities of his future pupils? Two conventional explanations – one social, the other cultural – could be put forward. First, one might argue that Bourgelat feared the rise of farriers as a class. Since these horse doctors threatened to take over the riding interest as the chief arbiters of equine knowledge, this mode of thinking would insist, he felt compelled to act. Yet this explanation falls down when one considers that, in the mid-to-late eighteenth century, there was little evidence in France or elsewhere in Europe, including in advanced England, to suggest the influence of the farriery on the horse was on the rise. At least not to such an extent that it would provoke Bourgelat into action. After all, wheeled transport – both passenger and goods – had yet to take off as the preferred form of movement, which would have swollen the number of driven horses that needed the attention of farriers. Nor had agriculture turned *en masse* to the use of the horse for traction, depending as it still did on oxen. Both were developments which, having taken place well inside the nineteenth century, could not have influenced the nature of the Bourgelat schools during their early years.⁴² Second, one might account for Bourgelat's motivation by reference to the ideals of the Enlightenment of which he was a contemporary. As Ronald Hubscher, the only serious historian of veterinary medicine in France, has confidently pointed out: 'Bourgelat was a disciple of the Enlightenment. The idea of a veterinary education fitted in well with one of the philosophical doctrines of the eighteenth century: to know how to reject tradition on which authority was based as well as prejudices and superstitions in the name of progress in the scientific realm.'⁴³ Influenced by this pedagogical zeal, one might

⁴¹ Ibid., 9. For a further elaboration on the militaristic nature of the veterinary school in France which is interpreted within a Foucauldian framework, see Ronald Hubscher, 'La condition des élèves vétérinaires français au 19^e siècle', *Historia medicinae veterinae* 24/1 (2004), 16-31.

⁴² For a discussion of when these factors did become relevant, see Chapter 4, 191ff.

⁴³ Hubscher, *Les Maîtres des bêtes*, 31.

suggest that Bourgelat purposefully sought to tackle the empiricism, the ignorance and the irrationality with which farriers carried out their tasks. Yet, there is little indication that Bourgelat did feel he was on a mission to deliver farriers from their uneducated stupor. Unlike so many veterinarians later, who frequently picked bones with farriers whom they considered little more than charlatans and a sham, he did not indulge in criticising their social, intellectual or moral failings.

In fact, it was quite the opposite. Bourgelat wanted his pupils to come from the lower orders. He welcomed with open arms those who only boasted a minimum level of education. Even better were those whose fathers themselves were farriers and who could return to their communities. Not only was this sensible because it meant jobs would be guaranteed upon completion of training, but it was also shrewd because the chances of them staying farriers were, in such cases, high. Circumscribing the conditions of entry by placing emphasis on low academic attainment and stressing the importance of experience in handling animals properly was a means by which the equine focus could be maintained. For Bourgelat feared not that farriers would usurp their riding masters in contesting the knowledge of the horse but that they would, if he did not lay down a strict curriculum and force them to lead disciplined lives, have too much time and freedom in developing their intellectual curiosities, which would eventually lead to an engagement with complicated and scientific aspects of veterinary medicine that went perilously beyond farriery. '[S]peculative discussion of such matters as the cause of disease' was, Bourgelat thus decreed, to be ruled out and that 'in order to protect the students from harmful exposure to the theories of other authors on veterinary matters he would confiscate any such books he found in the students' possession.'⁴⁴ So acute was the fear that farriers, having broadened their horizons, would seek to interest themselves in something other than the curing and shoeing of horses, that regulation was laid down which stipulated that those who chose not to return to their local

⁴⁴ Hannaway, 'Rural health care', 441.

communities as farriers would be liable to pay back the costs of their education to the authorities which had sponsored them.

It is certainly possible that pupils will commit ... grave mistakes which oblige them to leave the schools. There will also be pupils who, having received a complete education, forget what they owe to the provinces, which had sent them, by moving away from them after finishing school. They are motivated either by self-confidence or by foreign temptations in the hope of striking it big than what they could expect from the kind of education which are provided for them.⁴⁵

The fact that the medical establishment, kicked off by the surprise appointment of Vicq d'Azyr to the head of the Royal commission on epidemics, had entered the fray must have particularly concerned Bourgelat. Coming only a year after the anatomist proclaimed there to be no difference between humans and animals, and hence, between human and veterinary medicine as disciplines, the worry that pupils, who studied at Lyons and Alfort, would turn their backs on him seemed a genuine possibility when he drew up his *Règlements*. Sharing the same spirit, Philippe Chabert, who succeeded the founder at Alfort, expected the worst from Vicq d'Azyr's unwelcome meddling. He fiercely objected to the training of medical surgeons at his veterinary school not least because such 'mixing' might push his pupils towards taking up human rather than equine medicine.⁴⁶

Such sentiments managed to survive implantation into other national contexts, of which the English one provides useful illustration and counterbalance to the French case. No doubt the success of 'transfer' had much to do with the fact that the initiator, who first made the trip across the channel in 1788 to found the veterinary college in London, was a Frenchman schooled in the Bourgelat mould. At the

⁴⁵ *Règlements*, 11.

⁴⁶ Cf. Wilkinson, *Comparative medicine*, 74-5.

beginning of plans to set up a veterinary college in London, Charles Vial de Sainbel, who had received his training at both Lyons and Alfort, expressed familiar concerns about the interference of the medical profession. Even before the college had opened its doors, he worried that medical students would swamp his lectures on comparative anatomy and pathology. This led to recommendations that the buildings of the future college should be located away from the centre of London, so that pupils learning veterinary medicine could not be led astray through fleeting yet promiscuous contact with their medical brothers.⁴⁷ As Sainbel worryingly put it:

It would be dangerous for the progress of veterinary science to give them [medical students] too free an admission into the college, because it might give a disgust [sic!] to the resident pupils from their application to the veterinary medicine and many of them would change their mind and apply themselves to anatomy of the human body, thinking it would be more honorable for them to cure the human species than animals.⁴⁸

Much of these concerns came to be addressed when the College opened its doors in 1792. Not only did the school come to be located in still rural Camden, it also continued to stay true to its Bourgelatian roots, shunning the involvement of medical men and sticking to the focus on farriers. Even following the unexpected early loss of Sainbel to glanders, when there was a glimmer of hope that things might change, the door was firmly shut on the face of doctors, who continued to be denied entry, even as Edward Coleman, a medical doctor by training, took over the reins in 1793.⁴⁹ Some thirty years later, and with Coleman still at the helm of the now chartered Royal Veterinary College, the frustration within the pages of the farriery-hostile journal, *The Veterinarian*, was palpable. Reflecting on over thirty years of what he considered stagnation, one writer despaired it had not dawned on Coleman,

⁴⁷ L.P. Pugh, *From farriery to veterinary medicine 1785-1795* (Cambridge, 1962), 45.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ The suggestion is that Moorcroft, who had leanings towards a more research-oriented view of veterinary medicine would have sped up the inevitable process of a move away from a fixation on horses. See, Garry Alder, *Beyond Bokhara: the life of William Moorcroft. Asian explorer and pioneer veterinary surgeon, 1767-1825* (London, 1985), 32-3.

as it had on him, that medical men were more able at becoming competent veterinarians than farriers, which the College continued to churn out. If doctors were allowed entry to the school, the critic insisted, farriers would be no match for men of science. Since farriers would find it difficult to pick up on the basics of anatomy, physiology and pathology, it made sense for doctors, who could learn them with ease, to be employed – all the more so, because the time required to acquire practical knowledge would be much shorter.⁵⁰ But this was a point that non-riding observers, who fixated on the lack of academic prowess among farriers, frequently missed:

The summit of the farrier's son's education, which is reading and writing, will never allow him to reach beyond a certain point; he has the liberty of attending certain lectures in town, it is true, but he has not the time to do so[...]; and if he had, he has not the ability to understand them. He goes then to the college for a few months; has his head filled with a few theories of the foot, and a parcel of hard words he is incapable of understanding; and is then sent home as a monstrous clever fellow.⁵¹

All this, I would argue, was not neglect but deliberate. Even as critics lamented that the London College could not 'prevent any chimney sweep from becoming a pupil', the point was surely that the school would welcome anyone who had such admirable low class credentials.⁵² If an equine focus could be maintained then there was no reason why a cohort of subservient men – chimney sweep or otherwise – should not become farriers. Preserving the association of lower class and veterinarian helped limit the scope of pupils' intellectual curiosities. Only by doing so could one guarantee the focus on the horse and keep the animal, with its glorious riding past, 'special'.

Following the foundation of the Bourgelat schools – first in Lyons in 1762 and then at Alfort near Paris in 1765 – veterinary institutions quickly emerged across

⁵⁰ *The Veterinarian* (1828), 135.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*, 458.

Europe which took their cue from the French model. Crucially, it was the riding class which took the initiative, quickly creating an infrastructure that catered for the welfare and the health of the horse rather than for the wider interests of all animals and those who were interested in them. In Hanover, for example, preliminary interest in establishing a veterinary institution came from Johann Adam Kersting. As *Marschallpferdearzt*, or Stable Horse Doctor, he had been serving the Crown Prince when he came to found the *Roßarznei-schule*, or School of Equine Medicine, which was one of the first of its kind in Germany, in 1778. Far removed from any concern with epizootics, Kersting's immediate concern was similar to Bourgelat's in that he felt a need for well-trained farriers, who could be relied upon to cure and shoe horses that could withstand the exertions of war, an interest that was reflected in his book, *Sicherer und wohl erfahrener Huf- und Reitschmied*.⁵³ Much of the Hanover school's abiding focus on the horse was sustained by Kersting's right-hand man, August Conrad Havemann, who had received his training at Alfort. Totally consumed by his passion for horse-breeding, Havemann was appointed stud director at Neuhaus in Solling in 1782. Following the death of Kersting, he inherited the post of director in Hanover, a situation which meant the school's focus was to remain equine until he too passed away in 1819.⁵⁴ A similar state of affairs pertained in Vienna, which became the first veterinary establishment to be founded in Europe outside French soil, by Maria Theresia, in 1767. Envisaging an institution that would better train blacksmiths and horse doctors, the Empress sent Ludwig Scotti to Lyons, the first director of what was to become the *Pferdekur-Operationsschule*, on the specific instruction that 'a complete understanding of the horse and cures to treat its disease should be acquired and that after his return he should teach the country's young what he has learnt about the art.'⁵⁵ Such an equine emphasis remained in place when Johann Gottlieb Wolstein took over the school, almost exclusively catering to the requirements of the horse. Both directors of the first two periods between 1767-1777

⁵³ Schmaltz, *Entwicklung*, 11.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 11-2.

⁵⁵ M.F. Röhl, *K.K. Militär-Thierarznei-Institut in Wien während des 1. Jahrhunderts seines Bestehens. Eine historische Skizze* (Vienna, 1878), 2.

and 1777-1795 respectively were from their training horse doctors, and it was only later with the appointment of the Bohemian medical doctor Ignaz Josef Pessina, who had been heavily involved with controlling cattle plagues, that an expansion into extra-equine areas gradually came into being.⁵⁶

Even in more ambiguous cases, such as Dresden, where both the equine and animal strands locked horns, it was still invariably the riding tradition which ultimately held sway. On one corner, both the University of Wittenberg and the state stressed the need to study cattle medicine; while on the other, Heinrich von Lindenau, an *écuyer*, wanted to send someone to Alfort, so that when the sponsored candidate returned, he could take up appointment as *Oberrossarzt*, or Senior Horse Doctor, at the Princely Stables.⁵⁷ Consequently, the candidate selected to make the trip to France ended up being a compromise. Echoing, in his acceptance letter, the precarious tightrope he was forced to walk, Ernst Planern promised: ‘I take it that by an *école vétérinaire* is meant a joint school for both horse and cattle doctors. I will therefore learn with the intention of giving lessons on horses and cattle.’⁵⁸ Even so, despite the heated debate over what the school should focus on, the Dresden school did not immediately materialise. Pushed as it was down the pecking order by plans to erect a school for midwives, in the end the compromise candidate never made it to France. Instead, it was Christian Weber, the riding master’s initial choice, who with Lindenau’s backing, was able to come up with the resources to travel to and study in Paris. Following his return it was Weber who founded the first, albeit private, veterinary school in Dresden in 1774, with, once again, an inevitable bias being placed on the horse.⁵⁹ Unsurprisingly, the equine focus was not an emphasis that could easily be dislodged. Despite protestations from the local *Sanitäts-Collegium*, which professed a vested interest in cattle, the Dresden school continued to be

⁵⁶ Cf. Vera Noel, ‘Der wissenschaftliche Beitrag zum Fach Anatomie an der Tierarzneyschule Wien während der Zeit von 1767-1808 unter Scott, Schmid, Tögel und Pessina’, (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Vienna, 1998), 57. For how the epizootic strand made its breakthrough with Pessina see 41-55.

⁵⁷ Michel, ‘Dresden’, 140-2.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 142.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 142-4.

occupied by a succession of ‘veterinarians’ from the Royal Stables, and, as such, the school kept on referring to itself as a *Roßbarztschule*, refusing to serve the animal as opposed to the equine economy.⁶⁰

Figure 9: Anon., *Perspective view of the Veterinary College, London (1792)* Note the rural setting of the College as well as the presence of only horses in the foreground.

By now it should be clear that the veterinary schools Bourgelat helped institute and inspire across Europe were not, in the present-day use of the term, strictly ‘veterinarian’. By deliberately recruiting from the lower classes, the focus on farriery and, in turn, the horse, could be successfully maintained. But in doing so, he neglected a whole swathe of healers as well as scientists who were interested in dealing with other domesticated animals, such as cats, dogs, cattle, oxen, sheep, and pigs and who might have wanted to sign up to his ‘veterinary school’, if only it had had a broader remit. Despite the fact that he took the decision to move out of the

⁶⁰ Ibid., 145-6.

equestrian fold as an institution, Bourgelat could not quite bring himself to kick the horse off its exalted position by treating it like any other animal. Even though he looked at the creature with anatomical eyes, he could not, in effect, ‘normalise’ the horse. When he came to write textbooks, for example, for use in his schools, Bourgelat insisted on the primacy of the horse until the end of his life, writing little on anything else. In his misleadingly-titled *Eléments de l’art Vétérinaire*, he devoted ample space to an explanation of the anatomical features of the horse which, in turn, served as a means of handing out instructions on how diseases and faults could be detected; but he did not range beyond discussing how they could be applied to other animals.⁶¹ Perhaps the point that he remained wedded to the horse, however, is overly-retrospective and misses the proper context in which he operated. After all, the kind of literature devoted to the study of animals, prior to the late eighteenth century, was often synonymous with the study of horses. ‘More than ever’, Hubscher has commented, ‘this animal was made the object of an abundant literature’ whose output was fervently maintained by the upper class which made use of the horse as a symbol of their own respectability.⁶² By the time Bourgelat came to found his Lyons school, works on horses published in the major European languages had swelled to exceed 100 books, most of which occupied themselves implicitly with the investigation and treatment of saddle horses, easily outstripping works carried out on either draught horses or other animals.⁶³

Of course, this is not to say that the Lyons school in particular and the veterinary schools in general completely excluded the imparting of knowledge of other animals. When the French government passed a decree of the Royal Council in August 1761, which gave permission for setting up a school in Lyons, it noted that ‘it permits Monsieur Bourgelat to establish in Lyons a school which has the objective of

⁶¹ Claude Bourgelat, *Eléments de l’art vétérinaire. Traité de la conformation extérieure du cheval, des considérations auxquelles il importe de s’arrêter dans le choix qu’on doit en faire des soins que cet animal exige* (2nd edition, Paris, 1825).

⁶² Hubscher, *Les Maîtres des bêtes*, 22.

⁶³ Frederick H. Huth, *Works on horses and equitation. A bibliographical record of hippology* (London, 1887).

imparting knowledge and the treatment of the diseases of cattle, horses, mules etc.⁶⁴ Equally, it is clear in the national regulations of 1777 that veterinary pupils were called upon to help out with the various departmental commissariats when epidemics struck.⁶⁵ But both, it seems, were peripheral top-down considerations, which seem to have had little bearing on what took place within the schools in practice: the training up of farriers to serve the equine interest. In this respect, Bourgelat's *école vétérinaire* was not 'veterinary' at all. 'What does one teach at the *écoles vétérinaires*?', a French interior minister asked rhetorically, 'A poor grounding in *materia medica*, horse-shoeing according to geometric principles, and a rough understanding of animal anatomy. But one neglects the teaching of *Buiatrik* (cattle disease) or, what's more, one knows nothing about the diseases of cows and sheep and how to treat them. One simply does not engage with the epidemics of such animals.'⁶⁶ Looking back at his time at Lyons during 1763, a Danish student, Peter Christian Abilgaard, reported similarly how, contrary to his expectations, little knowledge was imparted about a wide range of livestock. Instead, he wrote that staff were interested mainly in 'the theoretical side of veterinary medicine seeking to explore the discipline suitable for the instruction of the so-called horse doctors, or farriers. The leaders of this school were interested first and foremost in horses, as the most valuable of the domestic animals.'⁶⁷ By training a medical doctor, who went on to found veterinary medicine in Copenhagen after spending three years in France, Abilgaard came in for a shock when he first arrived at Lyons because the kind of dynamic in which the French veterinary school operated was equine. By contrast, the expectation of the Danish government, which sent Abilgaard and two others in September 1763, had been that they would quickly learn to understand why epizootics happened and how they could be prevented, a need that was more acute

⁶⁴ Quoted in Hubscher *Les Maîtres des bêtes*, 33.

⁶⁵ *Règlements*, 243-49.

⁶⁶ Quoted in Reinhard Froehner, *Kulturgeschichte der Tierheilkunde: ein Handbuch für Tierärzte und Studierende: Geschichte des Veterinärwesens im Ausland* (3 vols., Konstanz 1968), III, 76.

⁶⁷ Quoted in Wilkinson, *Comparative medicine*, 69.

than ever following a devastating outbreak of cattle plague only a few years earlier.⁶⁸ Such a split in expectations arose simply because Abilgaard and Bourgelat represented two different traditions – the one medical; the other equestrian – which understood veterinary medicine differently. Such a difference in opinion, which boiled down to the issue of whether the horse was central or a mere part of the veterinarians’ endeavours, is crucial in understanding how the discipline developed in the early part of the nineteenth century and why it struggled to establish itself during the rest of it.

b. Veterinarians, farriers and the equine problem

From early on scientific veterinarians, who cared little for the equestrian tradition, did mount concerted attacks on the establishment’s almost exclusive and atavistic focus on the horse. Taking to task farriers, who allowed the equine focus to persist, ambitious veterinarians, who considered themselves doctors within the medical tradition, believed farriers hampered the advance of science and damaged the reputations of those who no longer wanted to be stuck in stables and mews. Similar to the tension between Bourgelat and Vicq d’Azyr in France, the life-long spat between Coleman and William Youatt, in the case of England, centred on the lack of ambition and willingness to see beyond the horse. ‘Is it not absurd that on this one million and a half horses [in Britain] the whole attention of the veterinarian should be lavished,’ Youatt, exploded rhetorically, ‘and not one solitary thought, during the whole period of education, be bestowed on the other one and forty millions of valuable and useful animals?’⁶⁹ What was more, despite this undivided attention on the one animal, farriers were, in his eyes, still coming up short, for as amateurs they were guided by ‘ignorance, carelessness or callousness’ whose operations performed on horses involved ‘considerable torture’ without demonstrable

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ *The Veterinarian* (1828), 449.

traces of an improvement in health.⁷⁰ Cloaking himself in ‘civilising’ rhetoric, Youatt, who launched his tirades against the College from his chair at London University, asserted that the farrier’s ‘skill consisted in the performance of a few cruel and butcher-like operations, and in the possession of prescriptions, ridiculous, unchemical, injurious, and which were employed empirically and blindly in every ailment and in every stage of disease.’⁷¹ Echoing Youatt’s sentiments about the farrier’s barbarity and lack of reason, another critic even went as far as to advise purging the uneducated from the veterinary ranks:

If there were laws existing to prevent ignorant men from becoming pupils, obtaining the diploma of veterinary surgeon [...] then the profession would have just cause to inveigh against the admittance of such a motley tribe as usually form the college circle of pupils - men who can scarcely pen their own name; and how can it be otherwise, when mutton-pie men, rat-catchers, razor-strap makers, and blacksmiths are suffered to usurp the place of men of science?

Of course, such drastic, if hypothetical, measures were impossible to implement, since these recommendations did not come from those running the veterinary establishment. Even so, several ways of challenging the stranglehold of the London Veterinary College were devised by those who wanted a broadening of the discipline, both in subject matter and people admitted. One way of doing so was to publish a journal. Needless to say the College saw little need for publications since it saw no reason for encouraging scientific debate and discussion, when what it was chiefly concerned with was the training up of professional farriers. Much in the same vein that Vicq d’Azry had done in France when he started bringing out his *Histoire de la Société Royale de Médecine* in 1776, Youatt edited *The Veterinarian*, which began circulation in 1828, deliberately publishing research findings which looked at the whole animal economy. Another way of breaking down the influence of the

⁷⁰ *The Veterinarian* (1837), 309.

⁷¹ *The Veterinarian* (1828), 444.

College on the veterinary profession was to join forces with the animal protection movement, whose meetings veterinarians now joined.⁷² Calling out to other like-minded veterinarians to come out in favour of an alliance with so-called humanitarians, Youatt demanded that compassion, extended to all animals and not just horses, form an integral part of veterinary medicine's future mission.⁷³ 'Why should I not be ashamed of it? [looking at other animals]', he asked rhetorically. 'Are they not susceptible to pleasure, and conscious of pain? Is it any degradation to add to the sum of happiness, or lessen that of misery? Is it false pride which would associate the loss of dignity with contributing to the enjoyment of the meanest creature?'⁷⁴ Worrying over the interests of the patient, weighing up the risks involved in conducting operations, and brooding over the kind of operation that would cause the minimum harm and achieve the maximum benefit – these were considerations which Youatt believed would win them public support.⁷⁵ Yet another alliance he sought to cultivate, this time following the death of Coleman, was with agriculture. Much of the problem with the College was that it did not interest itself in affairs agricultural, seeing little need for them when a humble but respectable living could be earned from treating horses – itself the influence of the notion that the saddle horse was qualitatively different from the rest of the animal kingdom. Despite the fact that the College owed its birth to initiatives of the Odiham Agricultural Society, it was only in 1842 that the Royal Agricultural Society, set up in 1838, came to sponsor a chair in cattle pathology.⁷⁶ Yet, at the outbreak of epizootics in 1840, it was still glaringly obvious that the Coleman school still had a precarious relationship with agriculture, only reluctantly accepting the request of the English Agricultural Society to draw up a statement on the nature, cause, symptoms, and treatment of epizootics.⁷⁷ What was highly significant, at least from Youatt's point of view, had been the fact that William Sewell, Coleman's successor in London, had sent the reply

⁷² *The Veterinarian* (1838), 311.

⁷³ See Willaim Youatt, *The obligation and extent of Humanity to Brutes* (London, 1839).

⁷⁴ *The Veterinarian* (1828), 449.

⁷⁵ *The Veterinarian* (1837), 307-11.

⁷⁶ Iain Pattison, *The British veterinary profession 1781-1948* (London, 1984), 35.

⁷⁷ *The Veterinarian* (1841), 426.

to the Society but not to veterinarians in the field who could have been empowered to lead the fight against the disease, if only Sewell had allowed them to do so. Taking ferocious issue with him, Youatt lamented: ‘the folly of placing so many dangerous recipes in the hands of farmers and the bailiffs of landed proprietors [...] let them [circulars] be sent to the veterinary surgeon, who would not abuse them, and not to the uneducated – medically uneducated – men, by whom they would be misunderstood.’⁷⁸ Only by taking an interest in what agriculture interested itself in, Youatt believed, could veterinary medicine advance beyond the sorry state it found itself in. ‘From the union of the veterinary surgeon with the agriculturalist, and the confidence which will grow out of their mutual esteem,’ Youatt predicted, ‘will result the successful progress and triumph of our art, and that to an extent which no exclusive system could possibly produce.’⁷⁹

By advocating these institutional alliances, Youatt provided much hope to the rank-and-file veterinarian tired of both the narrow focus on the horse and the obduracy of the farriery. Particularly excited about the creation of the Royal Agricultural Society a few years before Youatt’s pronouncement, J.P. St Clair, a veterinarian stationed in Morpeth, waxed lyrical about the potential benefits collaboration could bring:

A new light has beamed upon the profession. It is now becoming [...] devoted to the cure and treatment of all domesticated animals. The great struggle is essentially over - prejudice has given way, and common sense had triumphed. The interests of the agriculturalist will now be identified with the improved education of the veterinary surgeon.⁸⁰

What St Clair could now hope to do was to hitch a ride with the agricultural establishment. By doing so, he would not necessarily have to share the same fate as farriers in looking exclusively at the horse nor did he have to worry about having to

⁷⁸ *The Veterinarian* (1841), 427.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 428.

⁸⁰ *The Veterinarian* (1839), 264.

combat charlatanism, for the Royal Agricultural Society would take care of ridding quackery. Yet, in quickly running to enlist the help of agriculture, St Clair was conveniently forgetting that these difficulties themselves arose in large measure out of veterinarians' own strategies to combat the power of the Royal Veterinary College. In particular, it was the tactic of publishing research findings in *The Veterinarian* which gave rise to concerns that as practitioners, notably in rural areas, they were shooting themselves in the foot. Writing anxiously into the journal, one country practitioner fretted that his services might be rendered surplus to requirements, since many of his potential clients would resort to the pages of journals and books for the treatment of diseases.⁸¹ Recounting in detail how veterinary knowledge could be misappropriated, another practitioner in Rochdale, J. Hayes, pointed to amateurs unfairly benefiting from advice freely dished out in print:

[T]hese publications falling into his hands, even the scientific man's hands, if his horse or his cow should become unwell, he immediately flies to his library, takes out the veterinary work or circular, (the best in the world!) looks over the symptoms of diseases, and when he finds some resembling their appearances which he fancies he sees in his sick animal, he then applies the remedial means that are then set forth.⁸²

If such a state of affairs did indeed correspond to reality, what publication amounted to was 'little less than professional suicide'.⁸³ For, within a competitive animal health market, when there were several farriers and grooms operating in the same area, letting them know how veterinarians treated different diseases meant being placed at a distinct disadvantage.⁸⁴ At a time when health consumers still bought into mysticism which lent believability to the effectiveness of exotic remedies and potions, there were concrete social grounds for keeping methods and ingredients a

⁸¹ *The Veterinarian* (1841), 456.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 457.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 457.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 456.

secret.⁸⁵ Completely underestimating the realities on the ground, veterinarians like Youatt, who was caught up in a fight with the equine-centred establishment, missed how strategies could prove to be debilitating for practitioners themselves. Worse, when in severe cases professional veterinarians were ultimately resorted to, the timing of the call-up could potentially be too late. Drafted into help at the last minute but unable to deliver on their much-touted expertise in ‘scientific’ healing, the reputation of veterinarians stood little chance of rising.⁸⁶

What then should veterinarians do? The way they responded to the issue of publication spanned the spectrum from totally abandoning it to keeping it as it is. Most, however, advocated continued publication. At one end of the divide stood Hayes who effectively advocated scrapping the journal altogether. ‘I think the present modes of disseminating veterinary science’, he opined ‘are calculated to almost, if not quite, ruin the practice of the country veterinarian.’⁸⁷ In the event this proposal was unrealistic. Even so, he proposed that articles be written in more nebulous, specialized language which should be cultivated deliberately so as to make things more obscure. By doing so, he proclaimed, only educated men and scientists would be able to understand the contents.⁸⁸ But most veterinarians, who wrote to throw in their penny’s worth, disagreed with Hayes. As far as they were concerned, shrouding things in secrecy once more was tantamount to throwing the discipline back into the Dark Age in which ‘mystery retard[ed] progress’.⁸⁹ In any case, there was little fear in divulging veterinary knowledge, published in the pages of *The Veterinarian* and elsewhere. Since knowledge possessed both a complexity and impenetrability, S. Brown maintained confidently, there was little the uneducated charlatans could do to steal the fruits of their labours. Especially because veterinarians monopolised knowledge in areas such as anatomy and physiology, he added, this set them apart from other healers, such as farriers, who, lacking such

⁸⁵ See, for example, *The Veterinarian* (1835), 635-6.

⁸⁶ *The Veterinarian* (1841), 458.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 458-9.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 459.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 468-70.

knowledge, could not access the ‘real’ horse.⁹⁰ And even if a farrier were to take on board veterinary teaching, John Kent of Bristol asserted, he would inevitably run up against inconsistencies and contradictions in his traditionally-held beliefs, which would, in turn, lead him into confusion as to what he should do, and thereby lose the trust of the public and the customer.⁹¹

So it was that the lot of the farriery-loathing veterinarian had to be advanced by cultivating links to institutional interests unrelated to the horse and persevering with journal publications despite the evident risks of doing so. But it had also to be furthered by the veterinarian himself looking the part, developing the social skills, and acquiring the right kind of education. ‘Simple, clean, and unadorned – avoiding the extremes of fashion on the one hand,’ *The Veterinarian* advised, ‘and the horse-dealing groomish appearance so disreputable to a medical man, on the other – your appearance should always be.’⁹² What he also needed to do was to range beyond the conventional kind of teaching – such as forging and horse-shoeing – and take an avid interest not only in related subjects, such as comparative anatomy and chemistry, but in the broader sciences and in literature.⁹³ By doing so, he could learn the language of the superior classes from whom he craved respectability and, in the process, distance himself from the uncivilised farriery. As William Walton Mayer, a local veterinarian in Newcastle put it in 1840:

By these means [of studies in literature and science] you will imbibe a love of truth [...] the laws of good breeding and the customs of society will be attended to – vice, in whatever form, will be discouraged – the tricks and devices of those men with whom your practice often brings you in contact will be scorned and avoided – the various duties of private and social life will be performed with pleasure and delight – in short, all those virtuous principles which are an ornament to

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 475.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 559.

⁹² *The Veterinarian* (1840), 53.

⁹³ Cf. *The Farrier and Naturalist* (1828), 131-2.

man will be fostered by you, and their effects discovered in your every action.⁹⁴

What advancement as a veterinarian boiled down to was to ‘exhibit those marks which characterise a true gentleman’. Failing this, the consequences of staying rigidly equine were clear. What it meant, according to one keen advocate of social advancement, was a life spent in the ‘company and fellows of coachmen, grooms, and stablemen, with whom I regret to fear too many compromise their self-respect, and become lowered to this most degraded level.’ In order to extricate themselves from this sorry state, a nurturing of wider interests was called for. ‘If every veterinary surgeon were entitled by education, intellect, and professional ability, to rank as a member of a liberal profession,’ he continued, ‘he would soon be admitted into the confidence and society of his employers.’⁹⁵ Rather than having to spend time in the inhospitable climate of stables, in other words, veterinarians would be allowed inside the house. Once inside the level of education he had acquired would shine through and, in consequence, reputations would rise through conversation with the master of the household.

But the problem that veterinarians faced, at least in rural areas, was not one that could be easily solved by nurturing the social skills and acquiring the proper kind of education so as to ‘get along’ with superiors. Not least because who they faced in the countryside was lower down the social scale, the veterinarian encountered a different set of problems. This issue of community penetration was one keenly felt by Bourgelat himself. He appreciated that recruits had to be culled from local areas and, even better, from sons of farriers, who could seamlessly return after ending their training at his schools. Only by doing so, he reasoned, could one avoid the common pitfalls of a new face – with new knowledge – upsetting the delicately balanced social fabric of communities. Even the Bourgelatian veterinarians faced conflict upon their return: in one particular case from the 1770s, described by

⁹⁴ *The Veterinarian* (1840), 53.

⁹⁵ *The Veterinarian* (1842), 522.

Caroline Hannaway, the existing system of guilds of farriers believed that the newly-returned veterinarians should not be allowed to forge or care for sick horses unless they themselves became members.⁹⁶ So it should come as no surprise to find that those who departed from the Bourgelatian track could expect to face even greater difficulties. The case of J.M. Schmager, a veterinarian who set himself up in the Black Forest, provides a close and rare insight into this problem. A son of a surgeon, Schmager first attended the veterinary school at Karlsruhe in 1828. Similar to the majority of schools at the time which referred to itself as veterinary, the Karlsruhe school had an overtly equine focus. Headed no less by an army officer, *Oberhofmarschall* Gailing, the stated aim of the school was to produce farriers and blacksmiths for the army, in which ‘young people, in particular from the butchery and blacksmith trades, might find lessons to their benefit’.⁹⁷ Unsatisfied with the level of education he received there, Schmager opted to move on to university at Freiburg, seeking greater intellectual challenges. In this respect, he mirrored the experiences of other veterinarians, such as Karl Wilhlem Vix, who came to attend the veterinary schools, but who, far from satisfied, went on to university. Eventually, Schmager chose to set up his practise in Lahr, a rural area in the Black Forest. But it quickly it became apparent how difficult it would be to freely ply his trade. From the notebook of the activities he threw himself in, Schmager frequently mentioned Ferdinand Frank, the local knacker, with whom he crossed swords. Since the family had been living in the area for over three generations, Frank had a distinct head start over his newly-arrived competitor who had to struggle to win over the well-established base of clients Frank enjoyed. Even worse from Schmager’s perspective was that his rival received backing from the local authorities in monopolising the collection of animal carcasses. In fact, not only was Frank allowed free accommodation and had no taxes to pay, ‘he had free access to goods in relation to

⁹⁶ Hannaway, ‘Rural health care’ (1977), 442.

⁹⁷ Anke Koller, ‘Untersuchungen zum Notizbuch des J.M. Schmager (1811-1859), Tierarzt in Lahr/Schwarzwald,’ (Unpublished Doc. Med. Vet. Dissertation, Tierärztliche Hochschule Hannover, 1998), 167.

fruit and wood which was a part of being a knacker.⁹⁸ Standing little chance of contesting the private market head-on, Schmager was forced to look for new openings which, it seems, only came his way with the development of state sanitary activities. While he did deal in the treatment of large animals, such as cattle and horses, income from them was not enough for Schmager to make ends meet. So it was that he jumped at the opportunity of becoming a government inspector, who would oversee the vending of meat, turn in stray dogs and police the local animal market, for which he received 33-44 Gulden.⁹⁹ Unsurprisingly, Schmager was not slow in writing to the local authorities when butchers were not reporting to him about where they were disposing their carcasses. He also fiercely defended his state-appointed jobs when Frank attempted to join in.¹⁰⁰

What the case of Schmager reveals is not only the difficulties of penetrating a traditional market, which was monopolised by the likes of farriers and knackers, but also the extent to which veterinarians, in view of such difficulties, were prepared to become dependent on the state for providing them with jobs. At a meeting of veterinarians at Baden in 1847, for example, one delegate, *Obertierarzt* Lautemann, went as far as to propose that they should be willing to become *Staatstierarzt* since by becoming one it would greatly alleviate the pressures on the country practitioner.¹⁰¹ Such a desire, evidently borne out frustration, was not wholly unrealistic. Even though the slaughterhouse, whose widespread creation enabled veterinarians to secure a steady living much later, had not come into full existence, it was during the 1850s that science established the transferability of diseased meat to the human body, which indicated the extent to which professionally-trained veterinary inspectors would be needed in the future.¹⁰² In the particular case of France, it was in 1878 when a congress was opened to debate whether veterinarians should become involved as meat inspectors. Following approval, a special course

⁹⁸ Ibid., 267-8..

⁹⁹ Ibid., 244ff.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 268.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 271.

¹⁰² Cf. Carl Damman, *Festrede gehalten vom Geheimen Regierungsrath Prof. Dr. Dammann bei der Einweihung der neuen Thierärztlichen Hochschule in Hannover* (Hannover, 1899), 8.

was set up at Alfort the same year which was designed to impart the techniques of meat inspection. So that, by 1885, the meat inspection service, which was run by the police, counted some 57 personnel on its payroll.¹⁰³ What is important to note about veterinarians who increasingly took on the role of enforcers, however, is that they were laying themselves open to further public distrust. From the 1830s onwards, the state made arrangements for employing veterinarians when epizootics broke out in France.¹⁰⁴ To this end, teams of veterinary assistants and inspectors were dispatched to the infected regions as part of a sanitary police force. Asked to do the state's bidding, veterinarians often came up against a wall of silence upon inspecting rural communities. Since villagers would be unwilling to divulge information for fear that livestock could be subjected to decimation, veterinarians would find it difficult to penetrate local communities. Such was the challenge that faced one particular veterinarian, in 1858, when he reported on the suspected outbreak of epizootics in Largentière. Yet when he arrived on the scene, all he was able to obtain was the uniform reply that disease had been caused by sorcerers. Systematically hiding the affected livestock, the villagers only provided him with one decomposing carcass on which it was impossible for the veterinary inspector to conduct an autopsy.¹⁰⁵ Such was the potential danger in allying with the state that veterinarians risked being seen in an unfavourable light. The paradox was that, increasingly in the nineteenth century, veterinarians were reliant on state help to sustain their livelihoods. By the eve of the First World War, there were in Germany, in addition to the traditional career in the military, civil service positions in meat inspection, slaughter houses, animal breeding, colonial service, and the police.¹⁰⁶

More than owing to these concerted efforts, which were a feature in evidence across Europe, veterinary medicine gradually managed to shed its overly equine focus. During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, there was little indication

¹⁰³ Hubscher, *Les Maîtres des bêtes*, 194-5.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 193.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 190.

¹⁰⁶ Rudolf Wille, *Der tierärztliche Beruf. Ein Wegweiser bei der Berufswahl. Studium und Hochschulen. Die Aussichten im tierärztlichen Beruf* (Hannover, 1914), v.

that the fixation on the horse and the insistence on the training of farriery would lower their respective hold on the profession. Yet, from the 1820s onwards, one can detect a steady but sure stream of farriers, trained in traditional equine-centred schools, deviate from the path for which they had been prepared. Fears that pupils would, once they caught the intellectual bug, look beyond farriery proved prophetically accurate. In Germany, for example, the career path of the founder of the veterinary school in Giessen, Karl Wilhelm Vix, is instructive. Similar to so many aspiring veterinarians at this time, Vix had been employed from an early age within the equine economy as both farrier and groom, working in the riding stables of Landgraf Christian in Darmstadt. Presumably sent by his master to improve his skills as a farrier, Vix studied at Hanover but became quickly dissatisfied with the lack of medical teaching at the school. ‘Here one does not hear one word spoken about medicine,’ he noted, ‘one sees no medicine, learns nothing about it ... [but] which is more or less important to learn as a veterinarian.’¹⁰⁷ After some eighteen months, he packed his bags and quickly moved to Vienna, only returning to his home town of Darmstadt in the autumn of 1822. But while Vix did resume service at the riding stables, his curiosity could no longer be suppressed. Two years later, he joined the *Darmstadt Medizinalkollegium* as a specialist in veterinary art, which he left, once again with the financial help of the Landgraf, to pursue further medical studies at Tübingen where he obtained his doctorate in 1825.¹⁰⁸ Similar moves were also afoot in England where, following the death of the particularly obstinate Coleman, in 1839, who had helped much in keeping the focus on the horse. Even then, reform was induced rather than willed, for it was the Veterinary Committee of Royal English Agricultural Society, which took the initiative of donating £100 per annum to Sewell to teach cattle and £80 per annum to Spooner to teach anatomy and

¹⁰⁷ Giese, ‘Giessen’, 92.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 92-108.

physiology of cattle and sheep.¹⁰⁹ Nonetheless it did set an important precedent for when James Beart Simonds was appointed to the chair in cattle pathology in 1842.¹¹⁰

For some, this was clearly not enough. Perhaps one of the most revealing yet vituperative examples of how much veterinary medicine had progressed but still had to go in the mid-nineteenth century is illustrated by the emergence of experimentalists, such as John Gamgee in Edinburgh, who should be seen as the extension of the Vicq d'Azyr strand within the discipline. Educated at the Edinburgh school of William Dick, which had expanded into the teaching of domesticated animals other than horses early on in its operation, Gamgee had lost patience with what he saw as the spineless leadership taken by the RVC.¹¹¹ To this extent, he was a much greater critic than Youatt ever was. As a veterinarian who had received his training in the 1840s, Gamgee had little direct knowledge of the kind of limitations the veterinary regime had operated under in the late eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries. By contrast, William Spooner, who had inherited the equine focus from Coleman, still possessed a natural hostility towards allying his disciple too close to the sciences, taking the continental experimentalists in particular to task for taking things too far. Gamgee was furious. 'When a man who had done nothing for science vilifies the greatest scientific discoveries,' he criticised, 'he cannot have much hope of successfully repudiating the taunt, "The grapes are sour"'.¹¹² In fact, Spooner would even side with the RSPCA with whom he shared an anti-vivisectional interest. '[W]hat is all this big talking of the Principal Professor, Member of Council of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals?', he asked sarcastically. 'Is it anything but a misguided humanitarianism, breathing ignorance of the veterinary spirit of experimental science?'¹¹³ Convinced that the experimental direction was the path down which the discipline as a whole should develop, Gamgee set about pitching his Edinburgh school in opposition to the London school. Publishing the

¹⁰⁹ *The Veterinarian* (1841), 50.

¹¹⁰ Pattison, *The British veterinary profession*, 35.

¹¹¹ Cf. Orlando Charnock Bradley, *History of the Edinburgh Veterinary College* (Edinburgh, 1923), 27.

¹¹² *Edinburgh Veterinary Review* (January 1859), 326.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 325.

journal *Edinburgh Veterinary Review and Annals of Comparative Pathology*, which he believed, in contrast to the London School which had none, was a reflection not only of his determination to be different but also of his belief that scientific investigations worth their name needed to be published. To this extent, Gamgee firmly believed in the advantages that transformation of veterinary medicine into a science would bring. ‘If’, he opined enthusiastically, ‘such a school really existed in London, if such experimental investigations ... really were conducted ... it is impossible to over-rate the magnitude of the results.’¹¹⁴

For obvious reasons Gamgee’s vision was premature for an establishment, such as the London school, which was only gradually learning to take leave of its equine roots. By contrast in France, which had traditionally been equine-centric, change appeared to occur drastically following the French Revolution. In April 1795, both Alfort and Lyons were turned over almost overnight into *écoles d’économie rurale vétérinaire* in which six chairs were established which devoted themselves to the study of a wide range of domestic animals. Lectures on sheep were taught by Charles-August Yvart who also had a chair in rural economy.¹¹⁵ At the same time a broader scientific veterinary education seems to have been introduced. But such changes, it seems, were more cosmetic than real. In a *Mémoire* written shortly after the Revolution, calls were rife to reverse the changes made. Focusing in particular on Alfort, it observed that as a result of teaching ‘useless’ subjects, such as anatomy, there was now a distinct lack of farriers. ‘The veterinary art is profoundly linked to farriery that one cannot separate the two’, it warned, ‘that is why one has moved to create the school at Alfort.’¹¹⁶ Fearing a desertion, if matters were not immediately dealt with, the pamphlet gave expression to the familiar fear that farriers ‘after having spent some time in the establishment [Alfort] would abandon the idea of following their primary profession.’¹¹⁷ Such strength of feeling indicates the extent to

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 324.

¹¹⁵ Hubscher, *Les Maîtres des bêtes*, 46.

¹¹⁶ *Réflexion sur les avantages qui résulteront de la réunion de la Société Royale d’Agriculture, de l’Ecole Vétérinaire, et de trois Chaires du Collège Royal au Jardin du Roi* (Paris, 1804), 5.

¹¹⁷ *Réflexion* (1804), 5.

which France was still not ready to take leave of the horse in favour of newer pastures – at least not just yet. In fact, Alfort had to wait until the arrival of Eugène Renault as its director for any substantive change to occur. Holding the chair in operative medicine, Renault differed from his predecessors in that he injected a greater scientific component into teaching, inheriting the spirit of Vicq d’Azyr that the veterinary could not be separated from the human.¹¹⁸ The aim of Renault, whose proposals for reform were eventually made in 1842, was to demand greater levels of education and thus intelligence for gaining entry to the school. An education equivalent to the *primaire supérieur* was required: examinations now required not only the ability to merely read but also the skills to analyse French texts as well as engage in complicated arithmetic, geometry and geography too. Consequently, the level of recruits at Alfort went up. Some 47 percent of those admitted between 1843 and 1849 achieved levels equal or superior to the *quatrième* and some even had a *baccalaureate*.¹¹⁹ By doing so, Alfort was able to cut its ties to the farriery, who would not have attained the levels the school now required. The road towards creating ‘true’ veterinarians without lower class associations was now clear.

Efforts to achieve greater social standing and attract pupils with higher levels of education gathered pace in the second half of the nineteenth century. In Germany, for example, Johann Feser called on fellow veterinarians at a congress in Frankfurt in 1872 to strengthen their appeal to the state for recognition. He demanded that veterinary medicine as a qualification should be ranked alongside that of human medicine and natural science.¹²⁰ This was to be achieved by requiring candidates to possess not the *Sekundärreife* but the *Universitätsreife*. By the same token, he also asked that veterinary lectures take place in an independent yet integrated setting in universities so that knowledge might not only be available to all but also to the most academically talented.¹²¹ At the same time, Feser expressed the opinion that

¹¹⁸ Hubscher, *Les Maîtres des bêtes*, 72.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 73-4.

¹²⁰ Johann Feser, *Die Nothwendigkeit der Reform des thierärztlichen Unterrichts in Deutschland* (Berlin, 1873), 21.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

veterinary medicine should no longer discriminate what they treated. Insofar as the scientific problems they were confronted with were the same, he argued, veterinarians should treat each case equally. ‘The scientific worth with regard to the only cow of a farmer,’ he noted, ‘is no less than the horse of a royal stable. The knowledge of the causes, the carrying out of diagnosis, prognosis and the required cure are all equal in cases of disease and must not differ from place to place and from person to person.’¹²² In doing so, Feser wanted to nullify the division of veterinary medicine into ‘high’ and ‘low’ – a state-of-affairs that had stalked the discipline since the days of Tennecker. ‘One cannot divide the disease of animals into higher or lower,’ he urged, ‘but only see and treat it in one way.’ Even though it took time, the wish of the Germany veterinary community eventually did receive recognition. In 1902, the Prussian *Staatsministerium* agreed, following hefty lobbying, to upgrade the discipline so that students now entering the school required the highest qualification – the *Universitätsreife* – to do so.¹²³ On hearing this decision, Valentin Goebel, a Munich veterinarian, confidently predicted that: ‘the term horse doctor (*Roßarzt*) will disappear and will be replaced across Germany by the term veterinarian (*Veterinär*).’¹²⁴ A similar path was trodden by veterinarians in France. Following the reforms of 1881, the ambition to rid themselves of lower class associations reached new heights. Entry examination now consisted of reading comprehension of the classics followed by essay-type questions on history or geography. Not only were candidates required to be versed in the arts, they also needed to be able to understand geometry and arithmetic which were tested orally. Such developments for equal parity with their medical brothers was achieved – at least on paper – in 1887 when a decree was passed making it obligatory for candidates to possess a *baccalaureate*.¹²⁵ As Hubscher notes, the 1887 decree was a watershed moment, for it spelt the final distancing of veterinarians away from the horse:

¹²² *Ibid.*, 32.

¹²³ Schmaltz, *Entwicklung*, 276.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 277.

¹²⁵ Hubscher, *Les Maîtres des bêtes*, 73-4.

The qualification needed for entry to the *écoles vétérinaires* was now the *baccalaureate* which transformed the traditional image of them as 'small schools'. It conferred upon the veterinarian recognition by attributing to him the status of an honourable profession. The veterinary artist, as a profession closely associated with farriery, disappeared. The suppression of lessons into the shoeing of horses was a reflection of this change: it marked a cultural rupture between the manual and intellectual spheres.¹²⁶

The decree of 1887 had the effect, at last, of bidding farewell to the associations that had, in the view of its medically-orientated practitioners, dragged down the profession. No longer did veterinarians have to be equated with empirics and quacks. No longer did they have to be hidden away in stables and forges attending solely to the equine economy. Now refined and cultured, veterinarians believed they were finally out of the ghetto in which they had spent far too long.

But the damage, one could say, had already been done. Up until the early nineteenth century, the equestrian tradition cast a strong shadow over the development of veterinary medicine. From the writings of Christian Tennecker it is clear the extent to which he found himself stuck in the paradigm the riding classes had constructed which prevented him from even addressing wider veterinary concerns. That he furiously contested the influence of the art of horsemanship on veterinary knowledge is certainly true; but this should not be taken as a sign that he was prepared to accept an interest in other animals. Even though he referred to himself as a veterinarian, he was, in fact, fixated on the horse, or more precisely, saddle horses, which he no doubt had in mind when he wrote his numerous books. Completely oblivious to how he favoured the horse above all other domesticated animals, Tennecker unwittingly shared with the founder of the French veterinary

¹²⁶ Ibid., 75.

schools, Claude Bourgelat, the bottom line that the centrality of the horse could not be compromised. Since both viewed the horse as ‘special’, one could argue that the development into other areas of veterinary medicine as well as into studies on other domesticated animals was severely set back. By ignoring the medical as well as agricultural interest, early veterinarians, such as Charles Vial de Sainbel and Edward Coleman, were ill-prepared for the epizootics which swept furiously across Europe. One contention of this chapter has been to assert that the equine obsession was a significant factor in how badly equipped they were.¹²⁷

Of course, lessons of this equine bias were taken onboard. This can be witnessed, for example, in the Dresden school’s reaction to the cattle plague following the Napoleonic wars. Shaken by the experience, Gottlieb Reutter, the director of the school, went as far as to admit the error of his ways. Full of contrition, he wrote to the *Sanitäts-Collegium* in May 1814, remarking: ‘I found out that I had been taught on a few areas of equine medicine but not on remaining subjects in animal medicine. Also, I failed to perceive the importance of more immediate considerations.’¹²⁸ This admission led to some soul-searching: it resulted in the state setting up a commission that looked into reforming the school. The school was moved from the auspices of the *Oberstallamt*, or the Royal Stables, to the *Chirurgisch-medicinische Akademie*, or the Medical Surgery Academy, and then re-founded in 1815. But even though veterinary medicine did move slowly beyond the horse, owing to the help of doctors, such as Felix Vicq d’Azyr and William Youatt, a significant breakthrough could only really be achieved by confronting the issue of class. For horsemen managed to preserve the equine focus by deliberately limiting entry to lower social orders. That gentlemen and medical students were forbidden from studying at the school was part of a strategy of circumvention. Doing so prevented pupils, who lacked the education, from broadening their intellectual horizons. Otherwise, they would quickly range beyond the treating and curing of

¹²⁷ That the equine focus contributed to how ill-prepared the English veterinary establishment following the outbreak of the 1850 cattle plague can also be made. See, for example, Wilmot, ‘Fever Cows’, 101.

¹²⁸ Michel, ‘Dresden’, 146.

horses. Certainly there were early deviations from the prescribed path: Karl Wilhlem Vix represented one of a number of pupils who started out as farriers but then developed extra-equine interests. But the real breakthrough only came about towards the end of the nineteenth century when veterinary schools received recognition as university-like institutions. For this allowed recruitment from both the highly-educated and the higher class. Only by doing so could the ghosts of the equestrian tradition be finally banished.

What this tussle points up is the extent to which 'riding', which had both made the foundations of veterinary schools possible and hampered the development of them, continued to have a powerful say in how, within certain sections of society, people should operate – even when riding, as a means of movement, had long lost its dominance. Strikingly, 'riding' managed to persist well into the nineteenth century: veterinarians found it difficult to stamp out horsemen's influence and legacy. Even though the rider may have been removed from his high horse by the middle of the nineteenth century, it was still clear that the romantic way in which the animal was held managed to hold irresistible sway. The rider may have been toppled, one might say, but the horse still stood proud on the pedestal on which it had originally been placed. How the ideology of the horse fundamentally changed, however, must consider the arrival and the infiltration of the principles of the English system of horseracing and the popularisation of the circus, to which investigation now turns.

Chapter Three

The English system, the circus and the shift from rider to horse, c. 1770-1840

By the end of the eighteenth century, it had become painfully apparent across Europe that a new system of studs was required to keep up a population of horses commensurate with the demands of the state.¹ During the Seven Years' War most European countries had to rely for horses on traditionally rich horse-producing regions of Europe, such as Russia, Hungary, and Holstein. Naturally, this meant that in the event of hostilities, supply was threatened if home-bred horses had not been reared in sufficient numbers.² By 1761, Prussia, for example, witnessed the doubling of horse prices and experienced a severe lack of remounts – some 3,400 short – to supply the

¹ Much of our understanding of how the stud system in Europe arose and developed remains patchy. This has rendered research, on which this chapter is based, difficult. Despite the evident importance of studs in military history, for instance, as well as an abundance of material in central archives, historians have lacked the energy to chronicle even the most basic contours of how initially monarchs and then later sovereign states sought to breed horses. Preliminary literature, from which a fuller investigation can be launched, are: Nicole de Blomac, *Voyer d'Argenson et le cheval des Lumières* (Paris, 2004); Eugène Gayot, *La France chevaline, 1^{ère} partie – Institutions hippiques* (Paris, 1848); Ostpreußisches Tageblatt (ed), *Zweihundert Jahre Preußische Staats-Gestütsverwaltung, 1731-1932* (Insterburg, 1932); Jacques Mulliez, *Les Chevaux du royaume. Histoire de l'élevage du cheval et de la création des haras* (Paris, 1983); Christian Ehrenfried Seyfert von Tennecker, *Denkwürdigkeiten meiner Zeit in Beziehung auf Pferdezucht, Pferdekenntniß, Pferdehandel, Pferdearznei und Reitkunst* (Munich, 1828); Joseph Vernois, 'Histoire de l'administration des haras en France', (Thèse vétérinaire, Lyons, 1947).

² Johann Christoph Justinus, *Hinterlassene Schriften über die wahren Grundsätze der Pferdezucht, über Wettrennen und Pferdehandel in England, nebst Aphorismen über das Exterieur in besonderer Beziehung auf Zuchtthiere* (Vienna, 1830), 163; Vernois (1947), 13; J.C. Zehentner, *Kurzer und gründlicher Unterricht von der Pferdezucht, in welchem die Ursachen des heutigen Verfalls derselben, nebst dem daraus entstehenden grossen Schaden eröffnet werden, wie auch die Art und Weise, wie die Gestüte in besseren Verfassung zu bringen, daß der Landesherr sowol, als die Einwohner grossen Nutzen davon haben können* (Berlin, 1770), Introduction.

army; while Austria-Hungary, too, had to rely on imports from Hanover and Holstein to stave off temporary shortage but which could not ultimately prevent seven regiments of cuirassiers from being disbanded between 1769 and 1775.³ Only by setting up a domestic system of state studs could European continental nations control such price fluctuations within the equine market as well as make themselves less dependent on other countries when procuring horses. During the Napoleonic wars this lesson became even more keenly felt. Exceptionally, in a country such as Russia, which was a net exporter of horses, this rule did not hold true, resulting in the advantage that its armies had over Napoleonic forces when they invaded in 1812.⁴ But in general, the mobilisation of horses in record numbers over a sustained period, which the revolutionary years created, severely tested the limits of the European equine economy to cope with unprecedented demands. Consequently, traditional arrangements in breeding, purchasing, and distributing horses were exposed as insufficient, while the daunting costs associated with building up reserves from scratch only heightened the resolve of states to depart from past practice. An Austro-Hungarian stud inspector, Johann Christoph Justinus, succinctly summarised this realisation:

If countless wars had not reminded governments of the indispensability of horses, then governments would have left things down to the slow and coincidental development of agriculture to take care of things. But as states took shape, enlarged, and sought to become independent – believing that they had to own everything and anything – they realised, through painful experience, that the strength and wealth of states lay in satisfying demand themselves and in rendering themselves free from everything foreign.⁵

³ Hew Strachan, *European Armies and the Conduct of War* (London, 1983), 16.

⁴ Dominic Lieven, 'Alexander I', (Lecture, 'Writing Russian Lives', Department of Slavonic Studies, University of Cambridge, November 2, 2006).

⁵ Justinus, *Hinterlassene Schriften*, 164-5.

Previously, horse-breeding had been left up to individuals, chance, and the vagaries of the environment. Conducted in either private or court studs, the breeding of horses had essentially been entrusted to either farmers or monarchs, who catered for their own small but separate circle of clients.⁶ Such a division often meant there was little coordination between the two sets of breeders; conversely it also meant there was little conflict of interest between the two either. On the one hand, farmers required heavier horses, which were bred to ‘drive’, while on the other monarchs demanded lighter horses, which were bred to ‘ride’. Both breeders, however, exhibited the characteristic that they did not hold the ‘purity’ of horses in high regard. Studs consisted of a mixture of wild and domesticated sorts which meant the birth of good quality horses was more a matter of haphazard coincidence than a result of deliberate policy.⁷ Much of this thinking behind how quality horses were born reflected wider assumption that climate and soil were the main determinants. By contrast the skills of the breeder, who allowed nature to take its course rather than intervene to change it, were relatively unimportant. By implication, this meant stud horses could not be bred anywhere. So that states, which were unfortunate in not possessing rich horse-producing areas in their territory, thus had to accept imported horses. But this kind of defeatist thinking, in the assessment of Justinus, had to be jettisoned during the early nineteenth century, because such an approach to horse-breeding had proved to be coincidental, unstable, and transient:

⁶ J.J. Wörz, *Die Staats- oder Landespferdezucht-Anstalten Württembergs mit einer Einleitung über ihre geschichtliche Entwicklung aus den vormaligen fürstlichen Hofgestüten* (Ulm, 1876), 2; J.G. Prizelius, *Beschreibung des so bekanten Senner Gestüts in der Grafschaft Lippe* (Lemgo, 1771).

⁷ Justinus, *Hinterlassene Schriften*, 163; Vernois, ‘Histoire des haras’, 15-6; Zehentner, *Kurzer und gründlicher Unterricht von der Pferdezucht*, introduction; Johann Gottlieb Wollstein, *Bruchstücke über wilde-, halb wilde-, militär- und Landgestüte* (Vienna, 1788). For how wild horses were hunted down in forests and then sold at market during the early modern period, see Annette Krus-Bonazza, “*Auf Cranger Kirmes*”: *Vom Pferdemarkt zum Oktoberfest des Westens* (Münster, 1992), 20-30.

[Not to have a system of state studs] would leave breeding to coincidence, since all animal species, which have not been reared independently but are maintained through foreign and distant breeding – for example those which have been taken from English or Spanish stock – can lose that source either by accident or fortune. It would also be unstable because all foreign and dependently-reared animals are dangerous to breed. The breeder can only know for certain with horses that they have themselves bred what they can demand, wish and ask of them. It is also transient because only independent breeding, which perpetuates and maintains itself, can remain long-lasting and constant.⁸

What the state-instituted stud system – *Landespferdezucht* or *haras* – was designed to do was to respond to this clamour for a more rigorous and directed *equine politic*, which looked not only at satisfying increased demand but which also sought to make states independent of foreign imports within a brave and new post-Napoleonic world. Such autarkic policies involved the setting up of central studs – *Hauptgestüt* or *pépinière haras* – in which selected stallions were housed effectively as ‘seeds’, or blueprints, for the entire domestic equine population. Based on research into the health of the equine economy, state studs would respond by dispatching government-approved stallions to depots within regions of particular need. By doing so, stallions could come to ‘cover’ mares, which would hopefully bear plentiful offspring to serve the future equine economy. Exceptionally in France, a system of state studs, which wielded sufficient power over the equine economy, had come into existence early on, its establishment stretching back to 1665; but in most cases initiatives came much later. In Prussia, Count Lindenau extended the previous paltry influence of the court studs beyond their immediate remit in 1786, erecting what would later become *Landgestüte*. Only ten years later, these boasted some 310 stallions, which were ready to be dispatched across the

⁸ Justinus, *Hinterlassene Schriften*, 2.

province.⁹ Similarly in Austria-Hungary, Count Heinrich Hardegg was responsible, following the Napoleonic wars, for setting up a modern state-inspired stud system, ‘which not only collected and created stud material for reproductive purposes but through which an overbearing influence on the farmer was exerted’.¹⁰ By complete contrast in England, a state stud system never arose, the significance of which was keenly felt on the European continent.

Such a flowering of the stud system points to how much European states were successful at making themselves less dependent on foreign imports. Yet it did have its downsides, on which point the present chapter specifically seeks to shed light. Since power was centralised, the state studs inevitably handed power to a group of individuals, who wielded much influence in what could and could not be bred. Encouraging an abundance of lighter saddle horses, for example, might solve the problem of demand which arose from the cavalry. But this could not answer the needs of wider society, which might, by contrast, demand heavier draught horses for use in transport and haulage. What this chapter deals with, then, is how the European state-stud system, which was headed by the riding classes – military officers in general and cavalymen in particular – proved to have an in-built bias towards the breeding of the saddle horse. Such a bias had its roots, it will be argued, in the unquestioned connection between horsemanship and horse-breeding. Considered natural – even divine –, this romantic union proved detrimental to the newly-emerging equine economy, which favoured not only a different type of horse but enjoyed little support within the state studs. Similar to the way horsemen were seen as the acknowledged experts in the art of horse-riding, those who rode on horseback with grace and authority were regarded as the principal arbiters in how horses were to be bred too. Common were instances in which horsemen

⁹ Bujack-Medunißten, ‘Die Pferdezeitung in der Provinz Preußen’, *Annalen der Landwirtschaft in den Königlich Preussischen Staaten* 24 (1863), 228-59, 235.

¹⁰ Victor Silberer, ‘Domink Graf Hardegg’, in Dominik Graf Hardegg, *Einiges über das Pferd* (Vienna, 1917), 10.

were employed both in studs and riding academies. What remained without doubt in the mind of J.C. Zehentner – a Prussian stud director and riding master of the *Ritterakademie* in Berlin and Frankfurt-Oder – was that he was duty-bound not only to perfect the art of horsemanship, but also to pronounce upon horse-breeding matters. Both represented the mission of a horseman. So much had he been convinced of this binary obligation that when he reflected on his childhood, he believed he always had ‘a particular affinity to both the arts of horsemanship and horse-breeding’.¹¹

The historical study of the horse has proved difficult because too many students, who enthuse about the special place of the horse within history, have taken the likes of Zehentner at their word, believing in the inseparability of horseman and horse. By doing so, they have failed to understand how much this ‘rider view’ was a self-serving ideology, which was engineered to make the horse the exclusive preserve of horsemen. Naturally, such an assumption is not made in this investigation, which approaches this ‘special’ relationship with healthy scepticism. Rather, what is exposed is the repeated and sorrowful extent to which, in the face of adversity and challenge, the riding classes stubbornly held on to the naïve belief that because they rode the animal – while others did not – they knew best. Casting light on how this connection between riding and breeding was less a natural than a historical product, this chapter illustrates how the link arose out of definite moves on the part of the riding interest to protect itself. Later, it moves on to consider how a new English doctrine emerged which, as an alternative approach, not only cast doubt over this union but introduced a different actor – the wider public – as the new arbiters of the equine economy. But the chapter also argues that this new ideology, which shifted attention away from the rider to the horse, had wider resonance within society. Taking up the example of the circus, which achieved popularity with performances of hippodrama, the chapter assesses the damage inflicted

¹¹ Zehentner, *Kurzer und gründlicher Unterricht von der Pferdezzucht*, a3.

on the riding classes within a broader setting, concluding that their hold over the equine economy was severely compromised by the end of the period under investigation.

a. The challenge of English horseracing

During the early seventeenth century, the riding classes moved to resurrect the art of horsemanship because ‘riding’ was under threat. By the same token, initiatives for introducing a state stud system in continental Europe, which extended back to the same period, fed off similar fears that ‘horseflesh’ was in terminal decline. By this doomsayers almost always implied a particular kind of horse – the lighter saddle horse rather than the heavier driving one – which had to be defended from ‘deterioration’. Coinciding as this fear did with the first breakthrough of wheeled passenger transport, which challenged the dominance of ‘riding’ between 1550 and 1650, the emergence of ‘driving’ no doubt set the immediate context in which concerns of a decline in ‘horseflesh’ were first expressed.¹² During the reign of Henry IV, who ironically met his death on the newly-invented coach, a commission was set up in which Sully, the King’s finance minister, called for the establishment of a state stud to assuage this perceived decline. Declaring boldly a return to the glory days of Charlemagne, he envisaged an equine utopia in which there were more horses ‘than oxen and cattle, and when it was France which, rather than rely on purchases from abroad, furnished the needs of Europe’.¹³ Such a return to old ways did not immediately materialise. During Richelieu’s time in office, private studs that had belonged to the nobility were dismantled – partly as a result of the French aristocracy abandoning the countryside for

¹² See Chapter one, 20ff.

¹³ Quoted in Vernois, ‘Histoire des haras’, 15.

the town – putting paid to hopes of a revival of the saddle horse further back in time.¹⁴ Coming as this set-back did from someone who assumed a generally hostile attitude to equestrian academies, it is hardly surprising why Richelieu looked unsympathetically on horsemen's concerns. He refused to see that the art of riding and, by implication, horses bred for this purpose should receive the support of the state.¹⁵ By contrast, Colbert, who succeeded the Cardinal, took a more positive stance. Encouraging the establishment of numerous equestrian academies in Paris in 1689, he was eminently more receptive to the need to regenerate the quality of horses.¹⁶ Even so, a return to more 'feudal' arrangements, in which the nobility would conduct their own breeding within private studs, had become unrealistic due to the legacy Richelieu had left behind. What the King had to do instead was to intervene on the nobility's behalf not by supporting their efforts as private breeders but by erecting state-sponsored studs, which would be designed to cater for the preferences and demands of the horseman, who lacked the direct means by which control could be exerted over the breeding of horses. Such an intention can be gleaned from the decree of 29 December 1668, which officially inaugurated the establishment of state-appointed studs within the French kingdom:

The King has resolved, for the wellbeing of his subjects, to re-establish studs in his Kingdom, particularly in the Moulins area, which had previously possessed an abundance of good quality horses, to which several stallions that His Majesty has purchased abroad will be sent and then distributed among those of the nobility and others who find themselves in proper standing.¹⁷

¹⁴ Gayot, *La France chevaline*, I, 19. For an alternative view which argues that private studs were destroyed more by the civil war and then later the Thirty Years War, see: Mulliez, *Les Chevaux du royaume*, 72.

¹⁵ See Chapter one, 48.

¹⁶ Charles-Alphonse Duplessis, *L'Equitation en France, ses écoles et ses maîtres depuis le XVe siècle jusqu'à nos jours* (Paris and Nancy, 1892), 278.

¹⁷ Quoted in Gayot, *La France chevaline*, I, 12.

Most striking about the state stud system was the kind of civil servants who came to be appointed. Peopled as it was by the riding classes, the state stud system functioned as an institution with an agenda. Naturally, the decisions stud officials made had an ominous impact on the equine economy, for their preferences influenced the kind of equine landscape that would take shape. Even by the middle to late seventeenth century, this characteristic was already detectable in France. Chosen by Colbert to head the operation, in 1665, was Garsault, who ranked alongside Salmon de la Broue and Pluvinel as a revered equestrian, whose books formed the classics to the art of horsemanship.¹⁸ Both as riding master and stud official, he was responsible both for how horses should be ridden and how they should be bred when he assumed office.¹⁹ Following an investigation, which was designed to map an accurate picture of the country's equine population, Garsault would establish where 'deterioration' had been occurring.²⁰ Such an understanding of the contours allowed him to know what stallions he needed to purchase from places such as Holland, Holstein and Barbary, which were renowned saddle horse-producing areas, with a good idea as to which areas 'royal stallions' could be sent to 'cover' government-approved mares within the appropriate regions.²¹ By housing what amounted to high-quality 'seeds' within state studs, national horse-breeding could be placed on an autarkic footing. Since these stallions could conveniently be resorted to in the event the country witnessed depletion in horse reserves, it obviated the need to fall back on stud horses, which might otherwise be located in hostile territory, a state-of-affairs to be avoided, especially during times of war.

Such a justification based on military autonomy should not mask the involvement of the riding classes. After all, horsemen had an interest in putting a stop to

¹⁸ Cf. Duplessis, *L'Equitation en France*, 388.

¹⁹ Gayot, *La France chevaline*, I, 9.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 11.

²¹ Cf. Vernois, 'Histoire des haras', 16-7.

the breeding of increasingly popular ‘driving’ horses, which, while useful for transport, lacked the respect to be classed along side ‘riding’ ones. By having them control the reproductive process, it was possible to encourage a particular taste in horses that were bred. Following in the footsteps of his father, Marquis de Seignelay continued to strengthen the hold Garsault had instigated over the French equine economy. Passing a decree in January 1684, he laid down stringent guidelines, for example, on the kind of horses which required castration and at what age horses could be mounted. Compiling a list of all horses and mares ‘which have produced foals – broken in by the parish commission – all the unfit small horses,’ the decree noted, ‘must undergo castration during the last days of March except for horses used for carting and for normal postal services. No horse, even an approved one, can be mounted before the age of four. The non-castrated foals cannot be sent to pasture in fields in which mares reside before the age of 20 months’.²² So influential did the efforts of the riding interest prove to be that by 1690 there were some 1,639 stallions which had been purchased. These were made available to 50,000 mares which, in turn, brought about some 40,000 recorded births.²³ Crucially, the domination of horsemen within the state stud apparatus did not diminish during the eighteenth century. A distinguished early student of the development of the studs, René Musset, succinctly summarised the situation. He demonstrated that it still held true that the *haras* exerted significant power over the direction of horse-breeding, even though he emphasised that its influence should not be exaggerated:

The study of the administration of the state stud and that of the breeding of the horse in eighteenth century France cannot be considered in isolation from each other. The stud administration controlled the breeding of horses – it held a monopoly over how stallions were supplied and inspected and it conducted reproduction of them through complicated rules. Its influence was very large and

²² Quoted in Vernois, ‘Histoire des haras’, 17.

²³ Vernois, ‘Histoire des haras’, 17.

one not would be able to conduct breeding without it. But this influence was not necessarily all-encompassing: the stud administration could neither completely exercise its monopoly nor totally impose its rules, for it was in constant conflict with the population at large.²⁴

Following the outbreak of the French Revolution, studs were shut down in 1790. Since they were viewed as political emblems of the *ancien régime* studs were done away with along with other reminders of the dominance of the riding classes, such as equestrian monuments.²⁵ But a lack of equine resources to fight military campaigns, especially those which took place abroad, led Napoleon to revive studs – although not equestrian monuments – only fifteen years after they had been abolished.²⁶ Subsequently six were re-founded in Pin, Pompadour, Langonnet, Pau, La Manderie and La Venerie. Four of these had the capacity to receive 100 government-approved mares. The remaining two were designated for the housing of stallions and colts; while another 30 depots, spread across the country, were set up which could collectively accommodate visits of 1,400 stallions at one time.²⁷ Similar to how Colbert reasoned, the Emperor, who created a central committee for equine matters in 1809, considered the problem of studs to be linked inextricably to the decline in the skills of horsemanship.²⁸ Not only did he therefore decide to re-establish eleven equestrian academies but he also took the step to populate his state studs with horsemen who, as so often before, were appointed to positions based on their supposed affinity with the horse. Of course, Napoleon did allow non-riding elements to join the set-up. Veterinarians, for instance, were fully integrated into the state stud system, assigning them to work in both studs and depots. Moved by a

²⁴ René Musset, 'L'administration des haras et l'élevage du cheval en France au XVIIIe siècle', *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 13 (1909), 36-57, here 36.

²⁵ For how equestrian monuments came to be destroyed, see Ernst Steinmann, 'Die Zerstörung der Königsdenkmäler in Paris', *Monatshefte für Kunstwissenschaft* 10 (1917) 337-80.

²⁶ Camille Mellinet, *Des Remontes de la cavalerie et des haras militaires* (Paris, 1836), 3.

²⁷ Vernois, 'Histoire des haras', 35.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 38.

desire to find better ways of breeding horses, he also sent ten stallions to the veterinary schools at Alfort and Lyons so that experiments could be conducted upon them.²⁹ Even so, reform only went so far in diminishing the riding element. For in the choice of positions that mattered, such as stud director, inspector, and head of depot, all went invariably to retiring cavalry officers who were still selected for their jobs based on the simplistic reason that, because their lives had been spent on horses, they would be best placed to ‘know’ the animal too.³⁰

Much of what had happened in France was replicated in other national contexts. Even though research still needs to be carried out, which looks at length into how European states responded to the French example, it would be fair to say that the riding classes still invariably ended up calling the shots. Much in the same way veterinary schools were to do in the late eighteenth century, efforts to create state-appointed studs from the early eighteenth century onwards exhibited an alarming tendency to favour horses which served the riding interest. Particularly in countries where the nobility had difficulty directly accessing sites of reproduction – due to a mixture of financial circumstance, disinterest in agriculture and absence in rural areas – studs represented a convenient means by which control could be exerted over the kind of horses that could be bred. Exceptionally, in a case such as England, where the nobility’s wealth, continued presence in the countryside and enthusiasm for private horse-breeding were prominent features, there was little need for the state to intervene on behalf of the upper classes.³¹ After all, rich aristocrats could themselves decide the kind of horses which should be bred on their land. Such an explanation would account for why the state stud system was a characteristic confined to the European mainland. But the contrast between the English and continental approaches to horse-breeding was stark enough. Before the early

²⁹ Ibid., 37.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Karl Wilhlem Ammon, *Bemerkungen über die Nutzen der landlichen Hof- und Stammgestüte, und der Wettrennen nach englischer Art* (Nuremburg, 1831), 43.

nineteenth century, England was the last place that breeders looked to procure decent horses. Since her inhospitable climate made the place far from conducive for breeding purposes, continental Europeans, who still believed in the importance of the environment in determining the outcome of horses, had looked instead to places such as Italy, Spain, and Barbary where temperate surroundings made the task far more favourable.³²

Only the English were becoming increasingly confident about their horse during the course of the eighteenth century. In 1727, the first attempt to publish the *Racing Calendar* was made; in 1752 the *Jockey club* was founded in Newmarket; and moves to record the lineage of ‘racers’ – which culminated in *The General Stud Book* of 1791 – were quickly instigated.³³ Such institutional developments led William Osmer, some four years after the establishment of the *Jockey club*, to confidently declare that ‘racers’, or thoroughbreds, could claim to be a cut above the Arab horse, which had hitherto been considered the most desirable stud horse in Europe.³⁴ Yet continentals laughed off any suggestion that a supreme horse could ever emerge out of an activity that was mere ‘play’. Much of the travel literature, which reported on horseracing, found the practice to be positively quirky. Even as late as 1820, one Prussian stud official, dispatched to report on English horse-breeding, mused jokingly that his sections on horseracing could be read as a commentary on ‘the moral history of a strange kingdom’, which exposed the author’s inability to take the activity seriously.³⁵ Typically, observers chose to view English horseracing as an institution, which shared much in common with classic racing

³² R[obert] H[owlett], *The School of Recreation: or, the Gentlemens Tutor to those ingenious exercises of hunting, racing, hawking. ... tennis, ringing, billiards* (London, 1684), 22; Erika Schiele, *The Arab horse in Europe: history and present breeding* (London, 1970), 16-20.

³³ Richard Nash, “‘Honest English breed’: the thoroughbred as cultural metaphor”, in Karen Raber and Treva J. Tucker (eds), *The culture of the horse: status, discipline, and identity in the early modern world* (New York, 2005), 250-1.

³⁴ William Osmer, *A dissertation on horses: wherein it is demonstrated, by matter of Fact, as well as from Principles of Philosophy, that innate qualities do not exist and that the excellence of this Animal is altogether mechanical and not in the Blood* (London, 1756), 8.

³⁵ Carl von Knobelsdorf, *Ueber die Pferdezucht in England* (Berlin, 1820), Introduction.

events such as those at Munich and Siena, where the chief aim was to win, bet, and take part in frivolities; but it was not much more.³⁶ Dismissing racing as ‘merely a gamble in which luck only played the part’, Christian August, for example, criticised the way in which English breeders went about breeding as if it were part of their leisure activities.³⁷ Not least because it failed to attract the support of the riding classes did horseracing prove to be a far from popular activity on the European continent throughout much of the eighteenth century. Perhaps all this accounts for why horseracing is still considered a part of both the sporting and entertainment worlds to this day. Such an entrenched way of classifying horseracing has blinded scholars from seeing the particular equine context in which the sport should also be set.³⁸

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, however, there appeared on the European continent those who were prepared to countenance the validity of horseracing. Such a bold stance was first assumed by Johann Christoph Justinus who, as a low-ranking stud inspector in the Austro-Hungarian court, carefully sketched out – initially within the pages of the *Allgemeine Grundsätze zur Vervollkommnung der Pferdezucht* and then posthumously in the *Hinterlassene Schriften* – the significance of horseracing as it related to horse-breeding when he published his two books in 1815 and 1830 respectively.³⁹ What immediately led to Justinus championing the cause was the time he

³⁶ Justinus, *Hinterlassene Schriften*, 75; Staatsrath von Hazzi, *Ueber die Pferderennen als wesentliches Beförderungsmittel der bessern, vielmehr edlen Pferdezucht in Deutschland und besonders in Bayern* (Munich, 1826), 23-4.

³⁷ Christian August, *Versuch eines Beweises, dass die Wettrennen das wesentlichste Beförderungsmittel der Pferdezucht und Veredlung derselben unumgänglich nothwendig sind* (Schleswig, 1829), 64-5.

³⁸ For recent work, which operates within such frameworks, see: Nicole de Blomac, *La gloire et le jeu: des hommes et des chevaux (1766-1866)* (Paris, 1991); Rebecca Cassidy, *The sport of kings: kinship, class and thoroughbred breeding in Newmarket* (Cambridge, 2002); Christiane Eisenberg, *"Englische Sports" und deutsche Bürger: Eine Gesellschaftsgeschichte, 1800-1939* (Paderborn, 1999), 162-78; Mike Huggins, *Flat racing and British society, 1790-1914: a social and economic history* (London, 2000).

³⁹ Johann Christoph Justinus, *Allgemeine Grundsätze zur Vervollkommnung der Pferdezucht, Anwendbar auf die übrigen Hausthierzuchten* (Vienna and Triest, 1815) and *Hinterlassene Schriften über die wahren Grundsätze der Pferdezucht, über Wettrennen und Pferdehandel in England, nebst Aphorismen über das Exterieur in besonderer Beziehung auf Zuchtthiere* (Vienna, 1830). For biographical information, albeit patchy, on Justinus, see: *Der Pferdezüchter* 11 (November 1909), 85.

had spent hectically travelling around Europe during the Napoleonic wars, which served as an unprecedented showcase for the kind of horses that were bred and reared across different nations at the time. Such foreign assignments enabled him to accumulate at first hand a rich database of horses, from which he was able to extrapolate patterns, compare features, and establish generalisations as to which country was the most successful in breeding horses. Based on a mental map of the horses he came across, Justinus was struck by the consistently high level of horses the English were providing for the war effort. Despite the perception that climate and nature played a significant part in the successful breeding of horses, England had managed to produce its own quality horse – the thoroughbred – whose evolution, so the reasoning went, must have arisen out of the kind of system the English had managed to construct rather than anything geography could have ever bequeathed. Since England lacked a state-appointed stud system, it could only be the Turf which could be plausibly cited for her success in the breeding of horses.⁴⁰ Calling on others to follow suit, Justinus enthused that introducing a system of horseracing based on the English model would benefit horse-breeding immeasurably:

[The thoroughbred is] the most noble breed, the epitome of equine excellence. It is around [the thoroughbred] that the Turf has been scientifically instituted and it is the racecourse which has managed to maintain and popularise the breed and through which the most complete system of horse-breeding has been realised. The thoroughbred, which was introduced from the lands of the Orient, has been enlarged, improved upon and acclimatised through knowledge and dedication. Now the question remains: would other countries want to introduce it and should they also make use of horseracing so as to maintain and popularise the breed?⁴¹

⁴⁰ Cf. Knobelsdorf, *Pferdezucht in England*, 35.

⁴¹ Justinus, *Hinterlassene Schriften*, 87-8.

What is important to point out – before exposing the characteristics of the English system itself – is that Justinus was drawn to the ‘sport’ on the back of resentment, which was an emotion supporters of horseracing fully shared. Such was the ill-feeling towards the stud system, of which he was a small part, that Justinus came to question the domineering influence the riding classes exerted over the equine economy. Be it through hippological knowledge in densely-packed publications, military pride in the cavalry arm, institutional presence in veterinary schools and equestrian academies, the equine landscape that supporters of the English system were confronted with, during the early nineteenth century, was still a monolith of horsemen – and the studs were no exception to this unequal reality. By pointing out how the horseman was far from qualified to pronounce upon breeding matters, Justinus ranked among the first critics who courageously took it upon himself to dispel the myth that because the horseman rode he knew best. Promptly turning the tables on riders, who dismissed the link between racing and breeding, the disgruntled Austrian cast doubt, for example, over the relevance the practice of hunting had on the breeding of horses. Since the rider was far too preoccupied in showing off, Justinus intimated, the horsemen would lose sight of thinking about the horse itself. ‘Even if hunting does have its benefits in testing the courage and skill of the rider as well as the quality of horses,’ he argued, ‘it nonetheless cannot be defended from the appearance that it is merely a playful recreation of young people whose purpose is to both show themselves and the horses off rather than actually contribute to breeding’.⁴² Similar criticism, which took up how ‘rider’s vision’ impaired the ability of the horseman to see beyond himself, was made within the realm of agriculture.⁴³ Crucially, such a narrow perspective, Justinus argued, led to the detrimental belief that because horse-breeding was a ‘noble’ pursuit, it shared little in common with other branches of the rural economy. Consequently, livestock breeding,

⁴² Ibid., 106.

⁴³ The concept of rider’s vision, or ‘*Kavaliersperspektive*’ is taken from: Reinhart Koselleck, ‘Das Ende des Pferdezeitalters’, *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (25 September, 2003).

for example, did not deserve to be uttered in the same breath, since the horse was something too special to be considered alongside other animals of dubious social associations. Pointing to the example of how pigs or chicken did not have state-appointed studs, Justinus explained the riding interest was so infatuated with its creature that it considered horse-breeding to be *sui generis* and the horse, by extension, almost an *Übertier*.⁴⁴ ‘Those who make horse-breeding their profession’, he observed sharply, ‘believe out of half-baked pride that their art is something better and higher than cattle, sheep and pig breeding.’⁴⁵

Such was the pomposity of horsemen, who shunned connections to and cooperation with other areas of animal breeding, that their attitudes had the detrimental effect of distancing the horse from wider developments in agriculture. In fact, whether the horse was part of agriculture at all during the early nineteenth century is a question that one could legitimately pose.⁴⁶ For even though one might innocently suppose farmers had equal claim to the horse, they found horse-breeding to be almost *terra incognita* during this period. Much of what private breeders were up against could be illustrated no better than through the words of Karl Wilhelm Ammon, stud director in Munich, who hardly minced his words when he discredited them as amateur part-timers, who lacked the necessary passion to the vocation:

The private horse breeder treats horse-breeding usually as a secondary concern – or part-time job (*Nebenerwerb*) – which is relegated to other agricultural practices. From this it is clear that he cannot seriously pursue not only a theoretical but also a practical study of horse-breeding. By contrast the stud director lives for his discipline and is taught comprehensively about breeding from the time he is young.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Cf. Heinrich von Nathusius, *Ueber die Lage der Landespferdezucht in Preußen* (Berlin, 1872), 2.

⁴⁵ Justinus, *Hinterlassene Schriften*, 177.

⁴⁶ See Chapter four, 191ff.

⁴⁷ K.W. Ammon, *Wettrennen nach englischer Art*, 12-13.

Perhaps fearing the wrath of horsemen, such as Ammon, farmer-breeders were conspicuous by their absence, staying warily clear from entering horse-breeding territory, despite the evident contributions that a constructive exchange of ideas could potentially bring to improving breeding techniques across a whole spectrum of the rural economy. Faced with the fact that agriculture had developed beyond recognition in the past thirty years, Justinus believed horse-breeding had missed a gaping opportunity. ‘Agriculturalists [...] investigate, collect, write and range over all manner of agricultural subjects,’ he lamented, ‘but not the horse’.⁴⁸ Such a diagnosis was also shared by Carl von Knobelsdorf who, despite being Prussian stud director, expressed sympathies towards the English system without actually wanting to import it wholesale to Germany.⁴⁹ Recognising the shadow the riding interest had hitherto cast on agriculture, Knobelsdorf observed that those who wrote books on studs hardly ever envisaged that their works would be read by the farmer – a situation which he wanted to resolve through his own publication.⁵⁰ Similar to how agriculture had kept away, science too, in the opinion of Justinus, hesitated from entering the hallowed realm of horse-breeding. Casting his eyes over the plethora of books on horse-breeding available at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Justinus remarked that because scientists had shied away from hippological publications, which despite their proliferation, amounted merely to copies and repetitions of older work that could not lay claim to be ‘scientific’ at all. Not only this, but treatises in horse-breeding also lacked the willingness to communicate failed and successful experiments in print, from both home and abroad, which served as a means by which horse-breeding could make progress.

⁴⁸ Justinus, *Hinterlassene Schriften*, 76.

⁴⁹ See, for example, Knobelsdorf’s initiative to set up a state-funded society, which was ultimately designed not to encourage horseracing but to support military riding and breeding: Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz (GSta PK): Pferdezucht- und Pferdedressurverein in Berlin, 1828 – 1860: Letter from Knobelsdorf dated 17 June 1828.

⁵⁰ Knobelsdorf, *Pferdezucht in England*, 7.

Placed within this context of antipathy towards horsemen, at whose door Justinus firmly placed the blame for shielding horse-breeding from agriculture, it should come as no surprise to find that advocates of the English system were attracted to horseracing because it left the judgement of what constituted good horses not in the hands of the riding classes located within state studs, but in the hands of the non-riding public who went to the races. Expressing this sentiment, F.J.C. Pogge, a farmer in Mecklenburg who took to racing horses himself, believed that it should ‘not be the stud directors who should decide the worth (of horses) but the public’.⁵¹ By contrast to the set-up in which state studs formed the focal point, the English model offered an alternative fulcrum around which the equine economy could be re-organised, which opened up ‘ownership’ of and ‘access’ to the horse to the widest possible audience. Such was the challenge of this public-centred equine infrastructure that it naturally worried those horsemen who controlled the state studs. For the problem that many horsemen had with the English system was that it irresponsibly opened up horse-breeding to the masses whose knowledge of the horse could not be trusted. Even if horseracing was necessary, Ammon defensively chimed in, ‘the regulation and participation in it must by all means [...] be left up to the most exclusive and the richest classes’.⁵² Even so, it was clear to Friedrich von Biel, who, together with Pogge, was one of the foremost proponents of the English system in Germany, that the riding classes could not have it both ways. Referring to the contradiction of horsemen wanting to advance the cause of horse-breeding but who desired to do so without public involvement, Biel was only too well aware that acceptance of horseracing based on the English model spelt disaster for the riding classes, even to the point that their services would be rendered surplus to requirements: ‘What smacks as curious for someone who wants to help out horse-breeding is that he

⁵¹ F.J.C. Pogge, *Ansichten über die Entstehung und Ausbildung des edlen Pferdes und die zur Verbesserung der Pferdezucht anzuwendenden Mittel sowie über die Nothwendigkeit einer veränderten Einrichtung der Landesherrlichen Gestüte in Deutschland*, Second Edition (Güstrow, 1836), 237.

⁵² K.W. Ammon, *Wettrennen nach englischer Art*, 59-60.

considers it necessary to shut out the public so that horse-breeding does not descend into commercial speculation. By doing so, though, all central, court, and provincial studs will become redundant.’⁵³

Faced with a challenge to their very existence, the riding classes responded by dismounting, both in force and in number, from their mounts and publishing ripostes, which were designed to stave off the threat of equine *Anglomanie*. Presenting his own views on the English Turf, Carl Friedrich Wilhelm von Burgsdorf – the proud stud director of the central Prussian stud, Trakehnen – represented one particularly dismissive critic of the English system. Embittered in particular that his rival Knobelsdorf – a noted semi-sympathiser of the English system – had managed to beat him to the post of *Oberstallmeister*, who was charged with overseeing the entire Prussian stud system, Burgsdorf had notable professional reasons to feel disgruntled.⁵⁴ When he set off for England in 1826, he was determined to find out for himself what all the fuss was about and to return with ammunition to trounce those, like Biel and Justinus, who advocated the introduction of horseracing as the principle cornerstone to a new *equine politic*. Upon his return to East Prussia, it was clear Burgsdorf was far from impressed. Cheaply pointing out that ‘English horseracing is the biggest betting game in the world’, he expressed disappointment with the ‘first class of people’ who had all but retreated from the ‘honour’ of breeding quality horses.⁵⁵ What horseracing in England had done, he fumed, was to take the horse out of the hands of those who knew and placed it in the hands of those who had money. Echoing similar sentiments, Freiherr von den Brincken, a Prussian *Rittmeister* or riding master, who also made a trip to England, observed acidly: ‘The reputation, which has been gained either through having won prizes at some

⁵³ Friedrich von Biel, *Einziges über edle Pferde* (Dresden, 1830), 129.

⁵⁴ Theobald Renner, *Etwas über die preußische Pferdezucht und ihre Geschichte seit dem Tode Friedrich's des Großen* (Weimar, 1846), 135-7.

⁵⁵ Carl Friedrich Wilhelm von Burgsdorf, *Versuch eines Beweises, dass die Pferderennen in England so wie sie jetzt bestehen, kein wesentliches Beförderungsmittel der bessern edlen Pferdezucht in Deutschland werden können* (Königsberg, 1827), 5.

famous racing event or for having successfully gambled large sums of money, is almost the sole criterion which decides the capability of stud horses in England.’⁵⁶ What further angered Burgsdorf was how the central tenets of ‘looking’ at the horse had been jettisoned.⁵⁷ For the English system merely sought speed as the only criterion by which the quality of horses could be measured. Yet, to a horseman like Burgsdorf, it mattered how horses appeared to the eye: ‘Well-proportioned, consistency in build and pace, purity of bones, smartness and beauty’.⁵⁸ But all these attributes now played a subordinate role: the need to run quicker had become regrettably the only thing that counted. During the 25 days he spent in England, Burgsdorf, using his usual criteria, could consequently find a mere four out of six hundred horses that he considered to be ‘good’. Unreservedly he placed the blame on the obsession with racing, which, far from having a positive impact on breeding, produced the reverse:

[The horses] were at times not the right colour; at other times they were not for sale, since they were busy or were too precious for breeding since they were winners of the Derby stakes. But true racing characteristics (or crumpled front feet) were to be found all over the place: full of faults ... and totally exhausted when young so that they would retire early to lead lives in sickness.⁵⁹

Certainly, the likes of Burgsdorf and Brincken attacked the English system because their livelihoods depended on the defence of a state stud system which employed them. But they also objected because when they looked at English society

⁵⁶ Freiherr von den Brincken, *Bemerkungen über das Englische Pferd: dessen verschiedene Racen, und die Pferdezucht im Allgemeinen* (Weimar, 1827), 49.

⁵⁷ Such a way of relying on how horses appeared was a chief legacy of the teachings of horsemanship. See for example: Gervase Markham, *Cauelarice, or the English horseman: contayning all the arte of horsemanship. [...] Together, with the discouery of the subtill trade or mistery of horsecourers, & an explanation of the excellency of a horses understanding, or how to teach them to doe trickes like Bankes his Curtall, etc.* (London, 1617), 1-3.

⁵⁸ Burgsdorf, *Versuch eines Beweises*, 5.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.

they could see that it was a country in which the skills of riding and the art of horsemanship had all but disappeared. Such a deplorable state-of-affairs had been brought about through the Turf. Before setting out to England, Brincken had held high hopes, not least because he believed he was visiting a country, which boasted a rich equine tradition. But his hopes were quickly dashed:

In a country where to move anywhere requires horses, where riding has become a national custom, where only the most impoverished go on foot over long distances, where fox-hunting has turned into a popular pursuit of the rich and where horseracing has become a national pastime – it is all the more galling indeed to discover in such a country that horsemanship has been neglected.⁶⁰

What particularly aroused his ire was when he came across the fashionable Rotten Row, in London's Hyde Park. At first glance, the members of high society, who rode out in immaculately turned-out horses, did look as though they were engaged in horsemanship. But a cursory look at the way in which 'a London dandy would hang out of his saddle with modern indifference' was more than enough to convince Brincken that even the basics of horsemanship, which was to show elegance on horseback, had been dispensed with in England.⁶¹ Unlike a Rotten Row rider, whose visits to the racecourse would have encouraged mindless galloping, a proper horseman, he reminded his readers, would exude authority on the saddle. Letting the horse know who was in charge, gracefully guiding it in desired-for directions, and effortlessly allowing the creature to release the correct amount of power constituted the basics to the art.⁶² Coming across the passing of the animal protection act, which he witnessed during his travels, only helped confirm in his mind how much horsemanship had deteriorated. Rather than express indignation in

⁶⁰ Brincken, *Bemerkungen über das Englische Pferd*, 149.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 7.

humanitarian terms, he concluded in equestrian terms that the need to have a law meant English gentlemen were forgetting how to ride their horses, with the consequence of more defects and injuries.⁶³ Even the positives that Brincken chose to mention received qualification. For example, hunters used for fox-hunting were singled out for praise. Yet he observed that such horses were usually worn out too quickly because riders, oblivious to some basic teachings of horsemanship, did not know how to ride in such a way so that horses could last the distance.⁶⁴

Figure 10: George Cruikshank, *Riders and carriages in Rotten Row* (c.1820). The kind of reckless riding and driving on show in this depiction would not have pleased continental horsemen.

⁶³ Ibid., 8-9.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 94. Part of the reason why the English had ‘forgotten’ how to ride horses might be sought in the phenomenon of fox-hunting. For this was an activity, which arose out of the nobility’s inability to make the traditional pilgrimage to the European equestrian academies because of the Napoleonic wars during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. See David C. Itzkowitz, *Peculiar Privilege: A Social History of English Foxhunting* (Hassocks, 1977), 12.

But if the English system was not to their liking, even detrimental to the art of horsemanship, where could the riding classes look for their horses? More often than not, the fear of the English Turf led to a search for the ultimate horse in the deserts of Arabia – in particular Mesopotamia, the banks of the Euphrates, and the plains of Syria.⁶⁵ Much of this made perfect sense for horsemen who believed the Arab was the most beautiful horse in the world.⁶⁶ After all, the English thoroughbred, to which many in Europe were now in awe, had its roots in a mixture of Arabs. For the Godolphin Barb, Darley Arabian and Byerly Turk all formed the foundation to the birth of the modern thoroughbred at the beginning of the eighteenth century. The only problem the riding classes had arose when the English started publicly transforming the thoroughbred into the racehorse. So that in stressing how much the English had come up with a new kind of horse, advocates of the English system, as one opponent was quick to point out, tended to wash over the fact that their horse owed its existence to the original Arab.⁶⁷ What one simply needed to do, in other words, was to set back the clock by importing not from England but directly from Arabia where – it was both romantically and conveniently thought – because time stood still a fresh start could be made.⁶⁸ Consequently, numerous expeditions were set up with the aim of procuring stallions. When Heinrich Graf von Hardegg came to head the state studs in Austria-Hungary, he began by importing predominately oriental strains – from 1816 onwards – sending subsequent missions to the Near East.⁶⁹ Similarly in France, Napoleonic conquest in Egypt had initially established contact with oriental horses. Such was the background to why, informed by objection to the English system later on in the early nineteenth century, the Arab horse continued to find favour during

⁶⁵ Cf. K.W. Ammon, *Wettrennen nach englischer Art*, 61-2.

⁶⁶ Erika Schiele, *Araber in Europa Geschichte und Zucht des edlen arabischen Pferdes* (Munich, 1967), 8.

⁶⁷ *Ansichten über die auf dem Continente gemachten Versuche die Pferderacen zu veredeln* (Comorn, 1854), 14.

⁶⁸ Karl Wilhelm Ammon, *Nachrichten von der Pferdezucht der Araber und den arabischen Pferdes* (Nuremberg, 1834), xiii.

⁶⁹ Rudolf Rautschka, 'Studien zum Pferd im Militärdienst', (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Vienna, 1999), 478.

the Restoration period. During this time Portes and Damoiseau – stud director and veterinarian respectively – were tasked with purchasing Arab stallions in Syria for use in state studs which they successfully did by bringing back some 27 horses that had belonged to the Bedouins.⁷⁰ Equally in Germany the preference for the Arab over the English horse was pronounced. Reacting to the English system, Röttger von Veltheim, for example, recommended, in 1833, that his country should not import the English thoroughbred but that it should maintain oriental horses within the stud system.⁷¹ Common to so many advocates of the Arab horse at the time, Veltheim could no longer rest content with any horse that originated vaguely from the region. Previously, he felt it would be sufficient to import indirectly from either Russia or England to which pre-selected horses would have been sent from India.⁷² What changed his mind was John Lewis Burchkhardt, whose influential travel accounts of inner Arabia convincingly revealed the extent to which quality horses were found in rural as opposed to urban areas, in particular among the nomadic tribes of the Bedouins and Wahabys.⁷³ Convinced by this that genuine Arabs could no longer be purchased at the usual commercial trading centres, Veltheim came out for the setting up of expeditions. But much of the difficulty of procuring such horses presented a challenge in itself, as did the cost of dispatching teams to the distant Near East, when returns on investment could hardly be guaranteed. Not only were Europeans, travelling to the inner most parts of Arabia, exposed to plunder and murder, they also had to suffer the extremities of high temperatures in the desert which all severely retarded progress.⁷⁴ Even when at last tribes could be tracked

⁷⁰ Vernois, 'Histoire des haras', 48.

⁷¹ Röttger von Veltheim, *Abhandlungen über die Pferdezucht Englands, noch einiger Europäischen Länder, des Orients u.s.w. in Beziehung auf Deutschland nebst einer Revision der seit der Mitte des 18 Jahrhunderts aufgestellten Systeme über die Pferdezucht* (Braunschweig, 1833), 17.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 25-28, 35-6.

⁷³ John Lewis Burchkhardt, *Travels in Arabia, comprehending an account of those territories in Hedjaz which the Mohammedans regard as sacred* (London, 1829); *idem.*, *Notes on the Bedouins and Wahabys collected during his travels in the East* (London, 1830).

⁷⁴ K.W. Ammon, *Pferdezucht der Araber*, ix-xiii.

down, difficulty still lay in persuading them to part with their prized assets. Consequently, it was not uncommon, as the example of one Russian expedition shows, for a three-year mission to end up with a paltry collection of 5 stallions and 3 mares – all at a total cost of 24,000 ducats.⁷⁵

What underpinned such moves to seek the Arab horse as opposed to the English one – and look for it in obscurer parts – was the fundamental ideal that the Arab horse, unlike the English one, was still emphatically a ‘riding’ horse. Much of the reason why the Arab was sought among tribes in the desert was because it reflected the occidental horsemen’s fears that in their towns and cities the heavier ‘driving’ horse was now taking over and that ‘riding’ horses were banished to the countryside. By searching out rural enclaves within Arabia, opponents of the English system hoped to find space in which commerce, entertainment, and industry stood blissfully at arm’s length. What horsemen, like Brincken, saw in the Arabian desert was an ideal environment in which the nomadic way of life exerted a beneficial influence on the development of horses.⁷⁶ Bred and reared neither for transport nor for racing but for riding, the Prussian riding master enthused at how the Arab horse came into being. Far removed from the artificial surroundings of the racecourse the horse was placed in war-like conditions where its riding qualities would be put to the sternest test:

Designed to test the dexterity and skill of both man and horse, the war-games, which several Persian natives practice on horseback, sometimes exceeds our powers of comprehension. But in view of reliable eyewitnesses, the games certainly amount to evidence that the Bedouins of the Arabian Desert know how to work their horses. So that it would not be unreasonable to say that while such practice contrasts with our own systematic art achieved within the *manège*, it achieves similar honourable ends.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Biel, *Einziges über edle Pferde*, 187-8.

⁷⁶ Brincken, *Bemerkungen über das Englische Pferd*, 154.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 155.

By looking towards Arabia, Brincken thus witnessed ‘the art of horsemanship conducted in untainted perfection’.⁷⁸ Clearly, the gaze directed at the Orient was far from innocent: it was not simply about wanting to import – for the purpose of studs – a horse because of its intrinsic quality. More important was the fact that as a saddle horse the Arab had been bred and reared in an environment – a rural one – that was conducive to ‘riding’. By contrast in Europe the stark reality, which horsemen had to face, was that ‘driving’ horses were in ascendancy, particularly in urban areas. Such longings for the perfect riding horse, which emerged parallel to the threat of the English system, never really abated and continued to be expressed throughout the nineteenth century.⁷⁹ Even so, when one comes across references to the Arab horse in contemporary accounts, one would do well to remember how much horsemen – eager to defend riding – lurked behind them.

Figure 11: Anon., *Bedouin Arab and Arab horse* (early 19c). The harmonious relationship between man and horse, depicted here, often masked occidental horsemen’s passion for the saddle horse.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ See, for example, the backlash against the thoroughbred in England in which the re-introduction of the Arab – the supreme saddle horse – was powerfully advanced during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: Wilfred Scawen Blunt, ‘The thoroughbred horse - English and Arabian’, *Nineteenth century* 8 (1880), 411-23; Lady Anne Blunt, *Bedouin tribes of the Euphrates* (2 vols., London, 1879); James Penn Boucault, *The Arab horse, the thoroughbred, and the Turf* (London, 1912); William Tweedie, *The Arabian horse, his country and people* (London, 1894); Roger D. Upton, *Newmarket and Arabia: an examination of the descent of racers and coursers* (London, 1873).

A consideration of how horsemen as well as state studs reacted to the challenge of the English system reveals more powerfully the significance of what supporters of the English system were trying to achieve. For they advocated a radical shift from the existing equine system, in which the riding classes monopolised the sites of reproduction, to a new one, in which wider society could exert its influence over the breeding of horses. Rather than focus solely on horsemen, a proper equine system, if it were to maintain both higher quality and attract broader interest, Justinus maintained, had not only to be more inclusive but it also had to seek a different authority on which to build its legitimacy. If ‘the cavalier, aristocrat, cleric, bureaucrat, farmer and labourer are to be involved,’ Justinus enthused, then one could no longer seek guidance from ‘the riding school but to look to an institution which has the greatest possible transparency’.⁸⁰ By replacing riding with racing as the centrepiece of the equine set-up, he suggested, everyone could join in:

The development of racing, which astutely understands how human nature works, stimulates and challenges the passion of the aristocracy and the rich, excites the competitive spirit in the folk and the poor, brings together and unifies all classes, invites the lower elements to see themselves united under a common goal with the higher elements, allows the lower orders to triumph over the sovereign, entertains the landowner, the competitor and the spectator – it is a public spectacle where splendour, wealth and laziness all have their places.⁸¹

But the Turf did not stop merely at encouraging competition and providing entertainment. Since discussion would arise as to why a particular horse won while another lost, racing allowed the masses to become educated about matters of

⁸⁰ Justinus, *Hinterlassene Schriften*, 108.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

‘horseflesh’.⁸² ‘[R]easons would be looked for, searched, known and finally spread,’ Justinus explained, ‘so that equine knowledge becomes general knowledge’.⁸³ By allowing taste for the racecourse to spread, patronage of the Turf ultimately helped raise the level of the country’s breeding standards. By stark contrast to horse-breeding in France and Germany, where knowledge was contained ‘in a tangled mass of unused and hardly-used books’, Justinus continued, in England it was a ‘popular science’ (*Volkswissenschaft*), which relied upon the whole population talking about it in pubs and clubs.⁸⁴

Making the public the chief arbiters of equine knowledge had far-reaching consequences. Not least because it potentially allowed entire society to enter the equine market, the English system made the equine economy serve the demands of all who depended on horsepower – and not just the few who merely rode. Compared to the riding classes, who desired in the main the reproduction of lighter horses, the public generally wanted horses which were heavier. Such horses could not only ferry the public in coaches and carriages, they would also be able to carry freight for a variety of different commercial and industrial purposes. Yet existing arrangements on the European continent did not allow ‘driving’ horses to be considered in any way as important as ‘riding’ ones. Commonly, horse-breeding was tied in closely with the interests of the state studs, which demanded horses that answered purely to the requirements of horsemen because of the military uses saddle horses served. Such an arrangement made it seem as though only ‘riding’ horses ever mattered – still less existed – within an equine economy, which had the state studs as its centre. To this extent, ‘riding’ horses were the only historically significant horses for the bulk of the equine period. Much of this accounts for why the first three chapters have been devoted

⁸² Cf. Eugène Gayot, *Guide du Sportsman, ou Traité de l’entraînement et des courses de chevaux* (Paris, 1839), 5.

⁸³ Justinus, *Hinterlassene Schriften*, 9.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 25.

to them. But all this was to change. For at a time when the thirst for ‘driving’ horses, which were suited for transportation, commerce and industry, was gathering momentum, the English system provided an infrastructure in which such demands could be accommodated. What Jean-Baptiste Huzard, a French veterinarian, writing in 1827, pointed out was how the principles that underlay the Turf were applicable to the breeding of horses in general because it made no distinction between whether it was ridden or driven. Criticising traditional opinion that ‘racehorses are a species apart’, Huzard expressed the common belief among English system advocates that the Turf embodied principles which could be applied usefully to all horses:⁸⁵

One does not reflect on the fact that in order for the horse to function properly, one needs to ascertain whether the machinery of the creature is excellent; whether the chest and the legs in particular are well formed; and whether, in placing riders on top of a certain number of horses, they should not necessarily all be of top quality but that nearly all of them should be able to serve as saddle, hunting, carriage and Tilbury horses and even, once such uses have been exhausted, be re-cycled as coach, post and fiacre horses.⁸⁶

Such an expansive view of horse-breeding, which did not discriminate between different types of horses, was a new idea. Since it recognised not only ‘riding’ but also ‘driving’ horses, which were to increase their importance during the nineteenth century, the English system offered a better market-driven environment in which wider requirements of society could be answered. Even Knobelsdorf, who ultimately defended the state studs, admitted that the strength of the English system lay in ‘the absence of studs’ since ‘horses of both high and low quality could be bred in infinite varieties so that they are able to satisfy any demand and indulge any interested buyer’.⁸⁷ Similarly, Friedrich Authenrieth, stud director in Stuttgart, noted how the English had managed to

⁸⁵ Jean-Baptiste Huzard, fils, *Notice sur les courses de chevaux et sur quelques autres moyens employés pour encourager l'élève des chevaux en France* (Paris, 1827), 20.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Knobelsdorf, *Pferdezucht in England*, 35.

breed an array of horses – ranging from the saddle horse, through the hunting horse, to the carriage horse – by adhering strictly to the various uses to which they were put.⁸⁸ Supremely confident about how an equine system, which deferred to the public, would eventually win out over one that catered to riding, Biel challenged horsemen to expose themselves to open scrutiny: ‘We will leave it up to the public to decide’, he declared, ‘which breeding horses fit in best with use and demand’.⁸⁹ By doing so, the English system not only made horse-breeding dependent on social demand, but it also provided private farmers and breeders the courage to do what they wanted to do with their horses, safe in the knowledge that they were not intruding on territory of the riding classes. As Huzard put it:

In my opinion, this national institution [the Turf] is the source and the principal reason why horses of luxury are able to multiply. For it is the racecourse which excites farmers and breeders to choose to breed horses of quality. Equally, it is the racecourse which reduces the risks involved in spending money on the breeding of horses.⁹⁰

By placing the public at the centre, this English system allowed little room for horsemen to express an opinion. Even when they did their views would often be discredited, since their assessments would be based not on results but on aesthetics. Summarising how a perfect horse – ‘a pretty head with a pleasing stripe [and] a pleasant shape to a fleshy body’⁹¹ – would look like in the eyes of the rider, Justinus pointed out how this emphasis on external attributes represented a flawed way of assessing the inner worth of horses. By comparison with the English system, which provided the observer with ‘objective facts’, based on results from the racecourse, the stud system turned to

⁸⁸ Friedrich Authenrieth, *Die Pferdezucht und das Landgestütswesen mit besonderer Rücksicht auf Württemberg* (Tübingen, 1838), ix.

⁸⁹ Biel, *Einziges über edle Pferde*, 216.

⁹⁰ Huzard, *Notice sur les courses de chevaux*, 17.

⁹¹ Justinus, *Hinterlassene Schriften*, 9-10.

horsemen, who passed ‘subjective judgments’ on the appearance of them. But by allowing, as it were, the horse to race within the controlled surroundings of the racecourse in which incontrovertible results would become the all-important criteria of quality, the English system could claim to have come up with a better way of ascertaining the real value of horses which, as a consequence, did not require horsemen to sit in as judges of quality. From this same basis, Huzard objected to a system of premiums, which awarded prizes as an incentive to the breeder, since it necessitated the appointment of judges who, composed on the whole of the riding classes, would rely on esoteric criteria of beauty. But this approach blinded them from looking inside at hidden flaws and strengths of the horse that could only be discerned on the racecourse.⁹² Predicting how judges would no doubt remark that ‘racehorses are badly shaped, have no body, and suffer from lanky points’, Huzard pointed out that ‘in order for horses to run quickly’ there was in fact no need to boast a perfect torso.⁹³ So much so that it hardly mattered how horses ever looked. Even if racers exhibited deformities as long as they performed well on the Turf, their quality could not in theory be questioned. ‘A deformed horse, which wins on the racecourse’, one maxim ran, ‘is better than a non-deformed horse, which loses’.⁹⁴ Convinced that judges would only hold back a more objective assessment of horses, Huzard came firmly down on the side of the English system, which, in guaranteeing minimum intervention, inspired maximum trust. As he expressed it:

During a fight – and equally during a race – one cannot accuse the judges of favouritism and one cannot accuse them of ignorance either. In this regard, there is no need for judges to pronounce upon the characteristics of the animals – one need only to adjust the rules of the race. People involved in races should therefore not despair that an

⁹² Huzard, *Notice sur les courses de chevaux*, 30.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁹⁴ K.W. Ammon, *Wettrennen nach englischer Art*, 44-5.

injustice is wrought because there aren't any. On the contrary, defeat acts as a stimulus to performing better.⁹⁵

By the same token, a reliance on undocumented horses was undesirable. Not only was this arrangement far from ideal because horses' origins remained obscure but also because it increased, at the same time, the power of horsemen to pronounce upon their worth. The lack of sufficient 'facts' about their ancestral lineage made this possible. By publishing bloodlines in the General Stud Book, which appeared for the first time in 1791, as well as the results of races in the *Racing Calendar* and the *Sporting Magazine*, the English system precluded the need to turn to horsemen's expertise, since it would be clear to anybody which horses were good upon consulting and comparing the relevant results.⁹⁶

Perhaps the epitome of the English system, which severely diminished the powers of the riding classes, lay in how professional jockeys came to replace amateur horsemen on top of racehorses. Similar to the English system, whose importance first came to be fully recognised on the European continent, the emergence and significance of jockeys, within a strictly English national context, have been difficult to ascertain, so that substantial research still needs to be undertaken in this area. Even so, the kind of reaction the arrival of jockeys elicited in France, for example, provides ample material in considering their historical importance from across the channel. During the early years in which horseracing was being introduced to France, which was the first main European country to experiment with the English system of horseracing, the practice of placing jockeys – instead of riders – in saddles provoked incomprehension. Behind the reason why Linguet, who published an article in the *Journal de politique et de littérature*, in 1774, ultimately objected to the popularisation of the English system could of course be

⁹⁵ Huzard, *Notice sur les courses de chevaux*, 33-4.

⁹⁶ Cf. C.M. Prior, *Early records of the thoroughbred horse* (London, 1924), 3; Biel, *Einziges über edle Pferde*, 214.

easily put down to a patriotic dislike of foreign imports. But such an analysis does not reveal the extent to which he felt uncomfortable with the way in which jockeys – which he termed ‘postillon’ in reference to the messenger boys who rode on horseback – as well as weights should figure so prominently in the functioning of the English Turf:

One does everything possible so as to preserve an exotic – foreign – appearance on the racecourse. On top of French horses one only places English *postillons*. Equally, one subjects oneself to the formality of having outfits weighed, being obliged to impose weights on those who are lighter. By doing so, one imitates all the fussiness that is attached to this Anglican practice.⁹⁷

Much of the reason why Linguet could not get his head round the English system was because his thinking still operated within parameters set by horsemen. What was unbelievable to his mind was the extent to which the ‘postillon’ – the supposed riders – could be degraded to paying ‘servile homage’ to ‘their masters’ – the horse.⁹⁸ More natural would have been for the rider to sit confidently on the saddle – in sovereign control both of the horse and the situation. Similarly, Linguet was taken aback by how violent horseracing appeared to be – he saw little justification in allowing horses to be ridden at such excessive extremes and speeds. Remarking how competing racehorses were provided with spirits over a three month period prior to the event, Linguet expressed horror at this arrangement. But he did so not because this practice was in any way cruel but because it deprived the rider any say in both the direction to which and the speed at which the horse he was mounted on took. More to his taste would have been to have the horse obey the rider’s wishes rather than gallop on as if it had a mind of its own. By the same token, Linguet protested against the use of weights, which horses carried, so as to minimise unfair advantages that would arise between racers, in particular when there were disparities between the weights of jockeys. Describing this practice as

⁹⁷ [Linguet], ‘Spectacles’, *Journal de politique et de littérature* 12 (1774), 543-9, 544.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

‘repugnant’, Linguet believed that it was only natural that there were in-built disparities.⁹⁹ By weighing down horses, so he argued, meant these natural differences would be prevented from appearing:

When I take up the reins, I expect there to be advantages which the horse is naturally born with. Equally, my way of riding can influence the horse, but this does no harm to my competitors, who do not see it as unfair. If I wanted to manufacture a saddle made up of only one simple fabric, why should I be prevented from doing so? Why is it that my outfit should take on weight?¹⁰⁰

What all these objections shared, of course, was the fear that the role of the rider would be rendered superfluous. Even the rider, who propelled the horse forward, would be stripped of his individuality, as he would be transformed into a jockey whose main purpose was to assist in the performance of the animal he bestrode. In fact, Linguet opaquely understood how the horse assumed a much more prominent position within the English system: ‘[T]he difference the rider can give the horse must be held back for the sake of allowing the muscles and the lungs of the horse to perform their function.’¹⁰¹

Two years later, Brancas-Lauraguais published a booklet in which he mounted a robust defence and explanation of the English system. Pointing out how Linguet had totally misunderstood the principles of horseracing, he turned around to ridicule the kind of thinking that underpinned the horseman’s preference. Most clearly this would have been manifest in the type of flamboyant clothes Linguet wanted his riders to wear:

No doubt, M. Linguet wants to have riders wear a beautiful jacket braided at the seams – instead of a small and shabby waistcoat tight to the riders’ figure. He would also want them to have sturdy boots, which would weigh no less than fifteen to twenty pounds,

⁹⁹ Ibid., 545.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

contributing but little – because of the weight – to the assistance of the horse. He would finally want to have his riders perform with catogan [ponytail hair] or at least with long tails on top of which a Spanish chapeau, with feathers, would be worn – instead of just a small cap.¹⁰²

By contrast to jockeys, who would wear unassuming uniform, Linguet preferred to have riders kitted out properly by ‘boot makers, feather makers and wigmakers’.¹⁰³ Why such behaviour appeared ridiculous to someone like Brancas-Lauraguais was because it misunderstood the role the jockey played within horseracing. Rather than draw attention to themselves jockeys had to be almost invisible. Minimising the extent to which individuals, with a penchant for taking matters into their own hands, was the chief aim behind the institution of jockeys whose presence, by default, had to be subordinated to that of the horse. This was why uniforms were worn – which standardised performance – and why weights were added – so that the existence of the jockeys could be nullified. Everything, in fact, including how jockeys rode, was tied in with bringing out the full potential of the horse:

Instead of being sat on the saddle of the horse, one must take care that in taking up the stirrup the horse does not feel the movements of the rider. If the rider can support the exertions of the horse – without allowing the impression to arise that the rider is constantly at the stirrup – then a stable and easy position would be achieved [which allows the horse to perform].¹⁰⁴

What is clear from a consideration of the jockey is that it reveals once more the fundamental characteristic to the English system in which human intervention – and above all the riding classes – was banished. This left little doubt as to what formed the

¹⁰² [Brancas-Lauraguais], *Mémoire inutile sur un sujet important* (Paris, 1778).

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 9.

focal point: the horse. Nothing could be more of a hindrance to the smooth running of the English system than horsemen. Either in the capacity of judges or in the position of riders, horsemen would detract attention away from knowing the true quality of the horse. Only the horse could, as it were, know its inner capabilities. Freed from the whims of the rider, the horse thrived on the racecourse because it was an environment in which its potential could be fully realised. Such an insight was put forward succinctly by Alexander von Bally, in 1836, when he described the on-set of a third riding technique – alongside the more traditional forms of cross-country and *manège* riding – which he detected on the racecourse:

More recent times have seen a third form added to the art of horsemanship ... which has subjugated the reputation of the riders to the feats of the horses. Nowadays it is no longer customary to say: I jumped over a five meter high wall or a fifteen meter wide brook. Rather, etiquette now demands that talk centres on the horse to the exclusion of the first person 'I'. My horse jumped, my horse ran in an hour so many miles is what is called for now. The English even resort to naming their horses even though the rider is also there.¹⁰⁵

What can be said in conclusion about the advent of the English system is that it presented a major challenge to how the equine economy had traditionally functioned. Classified narrowly as mere spectacle, sport, and play, a conventional understanding of horseracing clearly misses both the whole point of the Turf and the division it generated. Ultimately, the difference between horseracing in ancient Rome and in modern England boiled down, according to Antoine-Prosper Lottin, to who or what attracted attention. For in Rome 'it was how riders presented themselves – the skills of the riders and chariot racers – which entranced the eyes of the spectators. During these difficult and brilliant competitions, it was the riders who mounted the horses or drove the chariots

¹⁰⁵ Alexander von Bally, *Über Pferdezzucht, Reitkunst, Wettrennen und Rennpferde* (Stuttgart, 1836), 196.

who were the winners and who left with the crown'.¹⁰⁶ What Rome never did was to test which horses were superior or inferior since riders were the chief attraction. But England did the opposite by placing the horse at the centre – 'Eclipse, Sterling, Childress (sic) and Godolfin were the winners'¹⁰⁷ – which 'left no doubt as to which horse is the best and which has triumphed over the rest'.¹⁰⁸ Such a change points up the extent to which – at the expense of the rider – the horse came to the fore: it became, as Justinus succinctly put it, 'its own judge' without having to defer to horsemen's supposed expertise.¹⁰⁹ Neither did it have to submit itself to scrutiny to a panel of judges, who looked to its looks, nor did it have horsemen instructing it to move in various directions. Rather, aided by subordinate jockeys, who helped fulfill its inner potential, the worth of the horse was measured in terms of its own performances that were publicly recorded – not under the name of its owner but frequently under its own name.

¹⁰⁶ [Antoine-Prosper Lottin], *Coup d'œil sur les courses de chevaux en Angleterre: sur les haras, la valeur, le prix, la vitesse des chevaux anglais; sur les moyens d'améliorer et d'étendre cette branche d'économie rurale en France* (Paris, 1796). 76.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Brancas-Lauraguais, *Mémoire inutile*, 7.

¹⁰⁹ Justinus, *Hinterlassene Schriften*, 17.

des Gehorsams nicht gedacht. Er sprang jedoch zu kurz und landete auf den Knien im Wasser, so dass ich allerdings wieder herauspringen musste und durch nochmaliges Landen auf den Knien am jenseitigen Ufer — wobei der Hengst niederbrach — ungezählte Längen verlor.

Dass ich mit einem Thiere zur Armee oder überhaupt auf die Rennbahn ziehen könnte, das mir einen Sprung verweigert, halte ich nicht für möglich, und dass dies auch andere Leute glauben sollen, bedrückt mich einigermaßen, und dieses bedrückende Gefühl ist es, welches diese Zeilen mir diktiert.

Ich verharre, Herr Redakteur, u. s. w., u. s. w.

Fuchs-Nordhoff,

Lieutenant und Adjutant im 10. Hus.-Regt.

Anmerk. der Red.: Dem geehrten Herrn Einsender stellen wir unsern Dank ab für die freundliche Berichtigung, dass Sycamore den Sprung nicht verweigert, sondern zu kurz gesprungen und dass der Hengst nicht vor, sondern unmittelbar hinter dem Antinous-Graben niedergebrochen. Derartige Ungenauigkeiten sind bei der vielseitigen Inanspruchnahme eines Berichterstatters nicht immer zu vermeiden. Viele der Herren Rennstall-Besitzer geben durch ihre Zurückhaltung auch die erste Veranlassung, dass Unrichtiges über sie und ihre Pferde in die Spalten des „Sporn“ gelangt. Dass Pferde auf die Bahn gebracht werden, welche vielfach Sprünge refusiren, ist nichts Seltenes; wir erinnern nur an die berühmte Lady of the Lake, die im ersten Jahre ihres Hierseins häufig genug zu springen sich weigerte.

H. M.

Statistik der Rennen in Deutschland 1886.

(Bis zum 10. Juni einschl.)

A. Gewinne der einzelnen Rennpferde-Besitzer (bis 2000 M. einschl.)

Gr. H. Henckel sen.	44972½	Hr. O. Germann	4654
K. Hptl.-Gest. Graditz	39105	Hr. Jul. Jäger	4604
Hr. O. Oehlschläger	22540	Gr. M. Schmettow	4285
Gr. T. Festetics	21200	Lt. a. d. Winckel	4086½
Mr. G. Johnson	16430	Lt. V. v. Oertzen	3478½
Capt. Joë	13852	Rittm. v. Boddien	3388
Hr. Ulrich	9925	Hr. K. v. Eichel	3192½
Hr. v. Zansen-Osten	9866	Hr. Roberts	3080
Hr. v. Tepper-Laski	9550	Lt. Pr. G. Radziwill	2880
Rittm. Gr. Bismarck	9298	Rittm. v. Kramsta	2704
Lt. Frhr. v. Fuchs-Nordhoff	8058	Gr. A. Apponyi	2650
Gr. R. C. Schönburg	7350	Lt. Frhr. v. Reitzenstein I.	2605
Gr. Bernstorff-Gyldensteen	6500	Lt. v. Sydow	2536
Rittm. v. Schmidt-Pauli	6345	Gr. H. Stolberg	2362
Hr. O. Spiekermann	5848	Mr. Solloway	2168
Gr. Sierstorff-Franzdorf	5716	Lt. Pr. Fr. C. Hohenlohe	2160
Hr. Worm	5630	Mr. Alexander	2077½
Hr. W. v. Treskow	5555	Rittm. v. d. Osten	2037½

B. Gewinne der einzelnen Rennpferde (bis einschl. 2000 M.)

3. Fenek v. Buccaneer a. d. Hélène Triomphante	21200
3. Matutina v. Y. Buccaneer a. d. Joyeuse	20462½
5. Chalili v. Kettledrum a. d. Flora	11040
3. Abenadar v. Y. Buccaneer a. d. Flora	10020
a. Pull Cry v. Hanstead a. d. Maggie	9800
5. Antoinette v. Savernake a. d. Angela	8975
3. Poltrinos v. Chamant a. d. Pulcherrima	8812½
3. Carmoisin v. Flibustier a. d. Cigarette	8620
3. Freiherr v. Emilus a. d. Preifraulein	8075
3. Bokenmünd v. The Palmer a. d. Lady Betty	7812½
4. Glückskind v. Chancellor a. d. Constancy (Hbl.)	7350
2. Rätuberhauptmann v. Savernake a. d. Rapina	6625
a. The Mahdi v. Prince a. e. Lightning-St. (Hbl.)	6429
2. Warnung v. Chamant a. d. Willkommen	5960
4. Ladevig v. Hymenaens a. d. Lulu	5920
4. Marktorrunner v. Dalham a. d. Marmotte	5410
4. Little Bella v. Fitz James a. d. Miss Maggie	4860
4. Triffig v. Chamant a. d. Thrifty	4560
4. Mezzanin v. Waisenknahe a. d. Chloë	4518
3. Archivar v. Savernake a. d. Relic	4455
a. Consul v. Doge a. d. Constellation	4440
4. Fruck v. Rustic a. d. Titania	4070
4. Curatel v. Sir Garnet a. d. Lady Lillean	4048
6. Iburg v. Chamant a. d. Germania	3830

3. Holla v. Wild Oats a. d. Lady Constance	3820
3. Aladin v. Baromètre a. d. Balblair	3630
4. Nanon v. Hilarious a. d. Miss Fanny	3457
3. Dictator v. Giles I. a. d. Little Digby	3450
4. Pechvogel v. Hans Styx a. d. Schuncke	3410
3. Little Lovelock v. Chamant a. d. Lovelock	3192½
3. Auburn v. Touchet a. d. Blonde	3080
5. Kyrill v. Rustic a. d. Listless	2980
3. Hartenfels v. Chamant a. d. Hamadryade	2875
3. Isenstein v. Chamant a. d. Prinzessin Ilse	2840
3. Marktenderin v. Monseigneur a. d. Regimentstochter	2775
4. Tapioca v. Lurgan a. d. The Baby (Hbl.)	2765
a. Fliegender Holländer v. Dutch Skater a. d. Sweet Galingale	2704
3. Raitenfänger v. Maelstrom a. d. Miss Lettie	2691
2. Florenz v. Y. Buccaneer a. d. Flora	2650
3. Highlander v. Picklock a. d. Gravelotte	2645
a. Conqueror v. Paganini a. d. Sooloo	2514
4. Irnela v. Flibustier a. d. Yorkshire Bride	2501
4. Alpheda v. Savernake a. d. Relic	2362
5. Appellant v. Good Hope a. d. Adeline	2324
5. Faust II. v. Rotherhill od. The Rover a. d. Tinkling Cymbal	2240
6. Blanche v. Chevron a. d. Miss Hawthorn	2160
a. Anderton v. Outcast a. d. Andorra	2075
a. Tourist v. The Traveller a. The Snipper's Mut.	2037½

C. Liste der siegreich gewesen Väter (bis einschl. 2000 M.)

Chamant v. Mortemer a. d. Araucaria	34855
Savernake v. Stockwell a. d. Bribery	33579
Y. Buccaneer v. Buccaneer a. d. Lava	33132½
Buccaneer v. Wild Dayrell a. e. Little Red Rover-St.	21200
Flibustier v. Buccaneer a. d. Sweet Katie	17093
The Palmer v. Beadsman a. d. Madame Eglantine	11234
Kettledrum v. Rataplan a. d. Hybla	11040
Hanstead v. Trumpeter a. d. Prairie Hen	10320
Dalham v. Cathedral a. d. Gertrude	9516
Emilus v. Scottish Chief a. d. Katie	8075
Chancellor v. Exchequer a. d. Savante	7350
Rustic v. Stockwell a. d. Village Lass	7096½
Baromètre v. Tournament a. d. Baroness	7003
Wild Oats v. Wild Dayrell a. d. The Golden Horn	6513½
Prince v. Paymaster a. d. Once More	6429
Hymenaens v. Lord Clifden a. d. Cantata	5980
Good Hope v. Buccaneer a. d. Gorse	5433½
Monseigneur v. Orphein a. d. Maid of Hart	4985
Maelstrom v. Blair Athol a. d. Terrie	4874
Fitz James v. Scottish Chief a. d. Hawthorn Bloom	4860
Waisenknahe v. Buccaneer a. d. Sweet Katie	4518
Doge v. The Duke a. d. Tzaritza	4440
Dutch Skater v. The Flying Dutchman a. d. Fulvie	4359
Sir Garnet v. Gladstone a. d. Goodlass	4046
Outcast v. Voltigeur a. d. The Gem	3765
Uncas v. Stockwell a. d. Nightingale	3616
Hilarious v. Brown Bread a. d. Hygeia	3451
Giles I. v. St. Giles a. d. Lady Shrewsbury	3450
Hans Styx v. Orpheus a. d. Retirement	3410
Touchet v. Lord Lyon a. d. Lady Audley	3090
Lurgan v. Macaroni a. d. Nightingale	2765
Picklock v. Buccaneer n. d. Sexagesima	2645
Paganini v. King of Kent a. d. Melody	2514
Rotherhill v. Lord Clifden a. d. Laura od. The Rover v. Blair Athol a. d. Crinon	2240
Chevron v. Rosicrucian a. d. Cognisance	2205
Traveller v. Lambton a. e. Sroggins-St.	2037½

D. Siegreiche Herren-Reiter (bis 2 Siege einschl.)

	Ger.	Gen.	Ger.	Gen.
Lt. Gr. H. Dohna	25	11	Lt. Gr. Nesselrode	10
Lt. v. Heyden-Linden	16	7	Lt. Frhr. v. Nagell	7
Lt. a. d. Winckel	10	7	Lt. Wittich	7
Mr. Moore	15	6	Lt. Bloch v. Blotnitz	5
Lt. Schlüter	15	6	Lt. v. Cossel	5
Rittm. v. Kramsta	13	6	Lt. Kusenberg	5
Lt. Frhr. v. Reitzenstein	8	5	Lt. Pleyer	5
Lt. Gr. Rothkirch	6	5	Lt. Gr. Stolberg (2.Gd.-Ul.)	5
Lt. Frhr. v. Fuchs-Nordhoff	12	4	Lt. v. Versen	5
Lt. v. Kaufmann	13	3	Lt. v. Arnim (10. Hus.)	4
Hr. Jul. Jäger jun.	12	3	Lt. v. Bastineller	4
Lt. v. Sydow	12	3	Rittm. Gr. A. Dohna	4
Lt. v. Blumenthal	9	3	Lt. v. Eschebeck (3.Gd.-Ul.)	4
Lt. v. Ravenstein	14	2	Hr. H. Dehns	3
Lt. Preuss	12	2	Hr. C. Köster	2
Lt. v. Monteton	9	2	Lt. Gr. Schimmelmann	2

Figure 12: German horseracing statistic for 1886 (Der Sporn 36, June 1886). From a statistical compilation of results in Germany, in 1886, one sees horseracing divided into flat (A-C) and steeplechase racing (D) where it is only in D that names of gentlemen riders appear. No record is kept of the jockeys (B-C) — only the horses or the owners (A).

b. The circus and the shift from rider to horse

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, equestrian academies still retained their popularity as places in which young gentlemen became horsemen. Compared to its peak of eight schools at the end of the seventeenth century, Paris for example, boasted four academies in still healthy operation between the years 1704 and 1715. Such schools were located in the Rue des Cannelles, Rue et Carrefour Saint-Benoît, Rue de l'Université and the Rue de Tournon, all of which functioned as relatively small-scale, privately-funded institutions whose civilian, as opposed to military, character upheld the spirit of the founders.¹¹⁰ By the time reform was passed in 1697, the previously disjointed nature of these schools acquired not only a uniform curriculum but also a Chief Riding Master or *grand écuyer*, who became the central authority to which the revamped academies now deferred. What was a particularly significant extension to these developments was the establishment of the Royal Equestrian Academy, which opened in 1730, at the former Palaces of the Tuileries. Previously, the Tuileries had formed part of the large complex, which housed the royal stables as well as the *manège* of a succession of French kings. Following the permanent departure of the royal court to Versailles during the reign of Louis XIV, the buildings, which had the capacity to house some 120 horses, were left empty. By the 1720s, La Guérinière found himself in financial difficulties, the cost of rent being uppermost in his concerns. Taking pity on him, Prince Charles made available to him, with the authorisation of the king, exclusive use of the derelict *salle du manège*, conferring upon the school royal support.¹¹¹ By all accounts, the Tuileries Academy, which became the main Parisian school of horsemanship until its dissolution during the Revolution, proved commercially successful, not least because of its associations with the monarchy. But its popularity

¹¹⁰ Duplessis, *L'Équitation en France*, 283.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.* 291.

had an effect on the three remaining private academies. Unable to compete with the capacity, facilities, and the prestige of the Royal Academy, they all struggled to last beyond more than a few decades. When Jaques-Philippe Dugard, the *écuyer* of the school on the Rue de l'Université, assumed the position of *écuyer directeur* of the Tuileries Academy, he took the decision to shut down his own in 1758. During his tenure as director he successfully saw through a period in which the Academy became dominant. Not only did he achieve reform of the curriculum, he also managed to attract the majority of those attendees, who travelled to Paris from either the provinces or abroad to study at the Academy, by setting up hostels in which they could comfortably reside for the period of instruction. But in doing so, Dugard contributed to the demise of the last remaining equestrian school on the Rue des Cannelles when it too, bowing to competition, was forced to close down in 1767, leaving the Tuileries Academy the only player on the Parisian equestrian market.¹¹²

When Charles-Alexander Thiroux bravely moved to set up in the French capital an equestrian school in 1778, he was thus intruding onto terrain the Tuileries Academy had grown to consider its own for over a decade. Much can of course be made of the kind of resentment the Thiroux school predictably generated. The sheer amount of vitriolic correspondence between the *grand écuyer*, the Tuileries school and Thiroux can easily lead to the distorted impression that the new school, located on the Pont-aux-Choux, represented genuine competition to the Tuileries.¹¹³ But this was far from the case: in fact the school was set up specifically to cater not to the aristocracy but to a bourgeois clientele who, for their part, were interested in mimicking the upper class penchant for elegant riding. Referring to itself clearly as the '*Manège bourgeois*', the Thiroux school was allowed only to take on 'the youth of the bourgeoisie who, either through birth or through means are not in the position to attend the royal academy in this

¹¹² Ibid., 293-4.

¹¹³ Cf. Duplessis, *L'Équitation en France*, 296.

town'. To this end, curbs and fines were threatened if one were to ever find 'men of privilege, military men, young men from the financial world or foreigners' in attendance.¹¹⁴ But the perception was that the new school did pose a threat – not only to the operation of the Tuileries but also to the reputation of the art of horsemanship itself. Earlier attempts to open up equestrian academies to wider society had already caused alarm. In Paris, for example, Gautier Devaux received permission from the *grand écuyer* to establish a school on the suburbs in 1717. Eventually founded nine years later, it proved to be short-lived, being suppressed in the end by Louis XVI, who bowed to predictable pressures that the privilege should not be extended to those lower down the social echelons.¹¹⁵ Even though this example indicates the extent to which higher society was far from prepared to allow the middle class to imbibe the art of horsemanship, it does nonetheless hint at the demand there was among upwardly-mobile social groups, who were restless to acquire the skills of horsemanship that would speedily elevate them to social levels enjoyed by the aristocracy. Equally, the fact that the *grand écuyer* was sympathetic, first to the proposals of Devaux and then later to Thiroux in granting permission, points to the extent to which there was a perceived need to widen the base of those who could ride of whom there was only a small number. Even so, the circumstances which surrounded the foundation of the Thiroux school fully illustrate that reservations were still alive about allowing such schools to operate.

Eventually, the school managed to open because of Thiroux's tenacity. But troubles arose almost as soon as the '*Manège bourgeois*' opened its doors to the middle class public. Some four months into its operation, Thiroux wrote in September 1778 to the *grand écuyer* complaining that the *almanac royal*, which was to be published the following year, contained the inaccurate reference that there was only one *manège* in

¹¹⁴ Duplessis, *L'Équitation en France*, 296.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 284.

Paris.¹¹⁶ Even though this might be viewed as a careless oversight, it formed part of a pattern in which recognition of Thiroux's school as a proper place for the acquirement of the *haute-école* was constantly denied. From the point of view of Thiroux the subdued interest in his establishment did not lie in any fundamental lack of demand but in how he was forced to refer to his school as a '*Manège bourgeois*'. Noting that only four out of seven pupils he taught wanted to renew their subscriptions, he made clear that potential pupils were literally turning away at the school gates because the inscription powerfully implied that his school was a fake. 'I cannot deny that the cause of why people are not turning up lies with the inscription of the *manège*', he pleaded. 'For as soon as the pupils see the inscription – '*Manège bourgeois*' – on top of the doorway, they are turned away.'¹¹⁷ Paradoxically, the Thiroux school faced the reality that it could not attract clients to attend without advertising its 'aristocratic' appeal. For it was only by offering the same 'experience' as that offered at the Academy that the school could stay afloat. So much in fact hinged on the impression that it was offering genuine instruction in the arts of horsemanship that the issue of how the school could be called became a burning and central one. Pleading with the *grand écuyer* to allow him to drop references to the '*Manège bourgeois*', Thiroux eventually secured the rights to re-name his school: '*Ecole d'équitation subordonnée au manège des Tuileries*'. But sensing the danger, Grimoult, an employee of the Tuileries Academy, went to inspect the new school, sneakily reporting to the *grand écuyer* that Thiroux had in fact taken advantage of the gesture by manipulating the size of the sign to his school. He accused Thiroux of knowingly writing '*Ecole d'équitation*' in 'très grosses lettres' while diminishing the rest of the title 'en lettres imperceptibles'. Clearly, Grimoult argued, this was a deliberate ploy: it was intended, he charged, for the impression to emerge that the Thiroux school stood in

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 297.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 298.

equal terms to the one at the Tuileries.¹¹⁸ Thiroux admitted as much to the accusation that he had doctored his sign. Remaining unrepentant, however, he asserted that to revert back to the old name would be tantamount to financial suicide:

What was the actual reason of my complaint with regard to the subject of the *Manège bourgeois* or subordinated school? That was to prevent the total desertion of my pupils, a desertion which is sure to happen if the name ‘*Manège bourgeois*’ is kept and ... which will pursue and drive me into total ruin[...]¹¹⁹

Of course, one could argue that Thiroux was an incompetent business operator. But his complaint that potential clients would be put off when they turned up at the school gates was probably genuine. So much had the equestrian academies been selective in choosing those who attended in the past that it was only natural for aspirants to want to have access to all the aristocratic trappings that the schools had to offer. To the prospective pupil, there was something suspect about the ‘*Manège bourgeois*’ when it offered technically-speaking nothing different from the teachings at the Tuileries. But the expectation was, no doubt, that at the latter, they would not only learn how to ride but experience the transformation of being turned into horsemen as well. Much of the problem with the stance adopted by Thiroux was that he was seen to overstep the line. Even though his intention to associate himself and the school with the prestigious Academy had been borne out of commercial desperation, the perception was that he was mounting a challenge, which involved taking away the client base of the Tuileries when in fact he only hoped to entice a new cohort of non-riding men to the riding cause. In this respect, riding lost the opportunity to attract new supporters. Ultimately, the authorities could not accept Thiroux demands. Despite his numerous protestations, he received an unchanged set of rules which insisted that the name ‘*Ecole d’équitation subordonnée à l’académie du roi*’ be spelt out in clear letters above the entrance and to

¹¹⁸ Quoted in Duplessis, *L’Equitation en France*, 299-30.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 300.

submit each month a list of pupils, so as to prevent the attendance of '*classes prohibées*'.¹²⁰ This was the last straw. Disgruntled, Thiroux closed down his establishment in 1784.

What can be viewed as a common case of class conflict should not mask the real challenge equestrian academies had now come to face. Following the closure of the Thiroux school, the Tuileries Academy did not experience any improvement in its business fortunes. No sooner had the battle against Thiroux been won, that it immediately became apparent it was the military, which had founded its own academy in 1751, that posed the greatest threat to the business. Much of the effort that had been taken up with the fight against Thiroux had diverted attention from this real danger from within, which the increasing popularity of the *école militaire* presented within the equestrian market. In a letter addressed to the *grand écuyer*, Villemotte outlined the acute problems his Tuileries Academy faced following the opening of a hostel at the military institution:

Since the establishment of a hostel at the *école militaire*, there have not been more than 20 day-pupils and 3 boarders at our *manège*. Presently, during the first few months of 1786, there has not been one person at all. This proves clearly that the hostel at the *école militaire* has impacted hard on the royal *manège* and that M. de Villemotte is in an impossible situation to fulfil his obligations and to sustain the considerable but necessary expenses of his *manège*.¹²¹

What this reminds us of is that the decline of equestrian academies was not necessarily linked to the demise of horsemanship as such. Rather, it was the military which, in collaboration with the state, had been eating away at the client base of schools of horsemanship for some time. Importantly, equestrian academies had developed as

¹²⁰ Duplessis, *L'Équitation en France*, 307.

¹²¹ Quoted in Duplessis, *L'Équitation en France*, 311.

civilian institutions when they first appeared in Italy and then France in the early seventeenth century. Bearing the characteristics of a time when the riding classes moved to dispel the debilitating association between horsemen and war, the *haute-école* represented a conscious attempt to reinvent the art of horsemanship as a ‘civilised’ pursuit, as it competed with other educational establishments for the attention of the nobility.¹²² Much of this motivation managed to survive as schools of horsemanship expanded in number. Far from unimportant was also the way in which these schools provided for the education of cavalymen. When equestrian academies were located near local garrisons of the military, in places such as Toulouse, Lyons, Besançon and Lille, officers would take time out to follow courses of horsemanship there.¹²³ Even as this precarious arrangement reveals the ingrained notion that riding should be tied in closely with the army was never far from the surface. Diverging from founders such as Antoine de Pluvinel, Richelieu had steadfastly maintained the medieval association between riding and fighting, believing that the nobility was a military rather than a civilian class.¹²⁴ By his definition, those who engaged in the art of horsemanship were nothing if not warriors. Objecting to the idea that academies should emphasise the development of the moral education of individual nobles, Richelieu believed that they should function as thoroughly military establishments, designed solely to nurture obedience to king and country. What the schools of horsemanship represented was, to him, freely-standing institutions which might succeed in their objectives of re-inventing horsemen but which imparted little knowledge of how they were to conduct themselves in battle. Much of this accounts for why the Cardinal remained hostile to providing financial support to the equestrian academies in the form that they initially appeared.

¹²² See Chapter one, 42ff.

¹²³ Duplessis, *L'Équitation en France*, 273.

¹²⁴ Nobert Conrads, *Ritterakademien der frühen Neuzeit: Bildung als Standesprivileg im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen, 1982), 77.

At the time Richelieu's ideas failed to bear fruit; but his spirit lived on. By 1682 clear moves towards the institution of *écoles militaires* can be detected. At the behest of Mazarin, Louis XIV created *companies de cadets* in which young gentlemen would enter a military school where they would receive teaching in mathematics, German, drawing, dancing and fencing. Much of the character of such establishments complemented the often exorbitantly expensive, privately-run riding schools, which were off limits to poorer members of the aristocracy. Even so, this initial attempt never really took off. By 1694, there were only seven *compagnies* left; the number dwindled to a mere two in 1696 and these eventually closed soon thereafter.¹²⁵ Some twenty years after this failed attempt, it was the turn of Louis XV to resurrect the *companies de cadets* in 1726, establishing them on a wider geographical basis in Metz, Cambrai, Strasbourg, Perpignan, Bayonne and Caen, with each unit accommodating 100 young men. More resilient than the first, the second attempt to institute a military academy met a similar fate. By 1729 the six companies had been reduced to 200 to 300 men concentrated in Cambrai and Metz. Further amalgamation continued so that in 1733 the decision was taken to reduce the number to 600 men all receiving their training in the single town of Metz.¹²⁶ Ultimately, what reignited interest in the idea of the *école militaire* were the initiatives of Peter the Great, who started off initiatives that resulted in the establishment of an *académie militaire* in 1732 for the training of nobility in Russia. Taking up this example, Paris du Verney argued that a similar institution should be set up in Paris. This was an idea seconded by Madame Pompadour, who believed that either the Tuileries Academy or the provincial academies should be converted to reflect a greater level of emphasis on military teaching.¹²⁷ Finally convinced of the need for a military school, Louis XV gave orders to create one in January 1751: 'We have founded and established, through our present edict, a military school in perpetuity, the purpose of which is to

¹²⁵ Duplessis, *L'Équitation en France*, 428-9.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 429.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

accommodate, feed, look after and educate 500 young gentlemen in the military arts for the benefit of our Kingdom.’¹²⁸

By passing this *ordonnance*, the King managed to take – at one sweep – some 500-600 gentlemen who could be educated at the expense of the state. The military academy did not, of course, immediately threaten the existence of the equestrian academies. After all, in abiding by the spirit of Mazarin, the *école militaire* was initially earmarked for the poorer nobility, who could not otherwise afford the prohibitive sums private academies charged. To this extent, the *école militaire* was designed to complement the existing arrangements for the education of the upper classes. For this purpose the state set down precise guidelines for who could be accepted. Most of the eight categories comprised of orphans whose fathers had either died fighting for the country or children whose fathers had retired from the army due to age or infirmity. Even so, criteria also allowed for the poor who did not need to show any family connections to the military in order to attend the school.¹²⁹ When the *école militaire* opened in 1756 – in the Saint-Lambert de Vaugirard – it quickly proved to be popular. Student numbers rose steadily over the first period between 1753 and 1776. So much popular did it prove to be in fact that, following the end of this period in which places were reserved for the impoverished nobility, the school came to accept fee-paying gentlemen in the second period between 1777 and 1787. Outside Paris, the *école militaire* spread across France which responded to the calls of the Duke of Choiseul for regiments to create similar military academies in imitation of the Paris model. Some 10 *écoles militaires secondaires* were consequently established by 1776.¹³⁰ But in allowing the military schools to proliferate and cater to wider groups, the *école militaire* came to provide an alternative to private institutions, such as the Tuileries, which now had to compete with establishments which were cheaper to attend. As their influence spread, so

¹²⁸ Quoted in Duplessis, *L'Équitation en France*, 430.

¹²⁹ Duplessis, *L'Équitation en France*, 431.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 434.

it seems did their desirability. Feeling the squeeze, the Director of the Caen academy, Pierre Herbert Pleignière, requested from the *grand écuyer* permission to have uniforms at his school, the intention being to mimic what he believed to be the chief factor in the popularity of military schools: '[T]hese scarlet uniforms, with facings made of gold, buckskin breeches and matching waistcoats, turned out boots [are provided for] the pupils of the military academies in Marseille, Rennes, Besançon and Caen.'¹³¹ By the time the Tuileries Academy frantically wrote to the *grand écuyer*, in 1786, the military academies had successfully managed to put a dent in the operation of the civilian schools of horsemanship. Such a takeover was to become more marked as horsemanship retreated further into the military realm during the nineteenth century.

What this tension between the civilian and military schools reveals is not that there was any difference in their respective approaches to how the horse was to be ridden. Emphases might have differed but both institutions would have perceived the relationship between horse and rider to be sacrosanct. For it was horsemen who assumed control, attracted attention, and knew the horse. Even so, the increased presence of the military – which was a trend not only in France but across Europe – provides an important backdrop in fathoming why, in contrast to past practice, horsemanship came to be represented increasingly by those within the army – most obviously the cavalrymen. Such a shift from civil to military was to quicken even more following the French revolution. During the revolutionary years, civilian schools of horsemanship had to close because they were seen as symbols of the *ancien régime*. But this did not mean that, as a result, the number of horsemen necessarily declined; it was only that those who pronounced upon horsemanship now did so from the military side, which progressively took over the mantle of chief arbiters of the art of horsemanship during the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries. By the same token, the shift from civil to military explains why the initiative to inject horsemanship into the circus was taken not

¹³¹ Ibid., 276.

by those taught within traditional equestrian academies but by those who were trained within military ones. More to the point, these ‘horsemen’ were somewhat different from those of the past. By the eighteenth century, the size of European armies – as standing forces – had increased to such an extent that it became numerically difficult to recruit for the cavalry solely from the nobility, who had previously monopolised the arm. Despite the fact that the aristocracy continued to compose the bulk of cavalrymen, in particular the officer classes, lower social groups successfully infiltrated the ranks, benefiting from training in horsemanship provided by the state.¹³²

Figure 13: Anon., *Trick horse riding by Mr. Wilkinson* (c.1790)

Such a change helps us to understand why it was these cavalrymen, whose social origins were much humbler than those who historically practiced the art of horsemanship, who were responsible for the emergence of the circus in the middle of the eighteenth century. Resorting to trick-riding, ex-cavalrymen wanted to make ends meet

¹³² John Ellis, *Cavalry: the history of mounted warfare* (Newton Abbot, 1978), 104-5.

by providing entertainment based on the skills they had acquired during their service in the military. So it was that Thomas Johnson, a former army horseman, established nationwide fame when he toured the country as ‘The Irish Tartar’, initially in fields around Islington in 1758.¹³³ Similarly, English trick-riders, who had learnt the skill while in the army, achieved fame on the European continent with their performances; while closer to home the likes of Sampson, Coningham and Price all rode after the success of Johnson, performing ever more daring feats in which invariably the number of horses they rode – standing – forever increased.¹³⁴ Following on such trends was Philip Astley, who was responsible for founding what later developed into the modern circus, when he set up in fields in Lambeth, near Westminster Bridge, in the spring of 1768. Similar to other riders, he had been a cavalry officer, who wanted to use his experiences during the Seven Years’ War by ‘working as a groom, riding instructor, and, with a greater fortune in mind, a trick-rider’.¹³⁵ Even though he had not formally acquired the art of horsemanship, as it had been taught at equestrian academies, he had picked up the basics while he was serving in the newly-established regiment of the Light Dragoons where, by all accounts, he was highly successful, reaching the position of sergeant major.¹³⁶ Similar to other trick-riders of his generation, Astley styled himself as an authoritative horseman whose skills as a rider would be revered. Strutting out as an ‘English hussar’ he performed feats such as ‘picking up handkerchiefs from the ground at a canter, performing headstands on a pint pot on the saddle, and playing the pipe while riding two horses simultaneously’.¹³⁷

Even by this time a tentative shift can already be discerned. Be it the *haute-école* or the military, riding had moved out of its traditional institutional contexts while still

¹³³ George Speaight, *A history of the circus* (London, 1980), 21.

¹³⁴ Marius Kwint, ‘The legitimization of the circus in late Georgian England’, *Past and present* (2002), 72-115, 77; Speaight, *Circus*, 21.

¹³⁵ Kwint, ‘Circus in late Georgian England’, 76.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

retaining the appearance of horsemanship. Most interestingly, contemporary depictions of English trick-riders on the continent display feats of horsemanship – but with jockeys’ caps which one might take as a subtle change in how riders, who performed outside the riding schools, came to be seen.¹³⁸ Previously, skills of the horseman could only be appreciated by select audiences who saw riders perform within the controlled surroundings of the *manège*. Now, it had been taken out by cavalry-inspired men, such as Astley, to a less controllable setting in which the art was transformed into a form of entertainment that catered to fee-paying audiences.¹³⁹ Even though the early circus referred to itself as ‘riding schools’, it was evident that, strictly-speaking, it was not. A French observer, writing in 1817, summed up this new situation best, when he noted: ‘A routine is set whereby the applause of the public and profit [from performances] become their reward. The fear of not being able to please – and thus a worry with the loss of job – is the kind of punishment that beset their minds.’¹⁴⁰ Gradually, the trick-show, which had, in the case of London, been performed in wealthy areas, such as Islington, developed into something more sophisticated which was performed to the widest possible audience. As rivals to Astley’s the Royal Circus transformed the primitive equestrian trick-show into a theatrical display. By incorporating stories and dramas in which horses were meant to play roles, the so-called ‘hippodrama’ was to become a staple of the European circus during the first half of the nineteenth century, scoring spectacular commercial successes in doing so.

Even so, in the early years the hippodrama borrowed heavily on the equestrian tradition, which held on to the centrality of the rider in performances. During the first phase of the circus’ development, Astley steadfastly maintained the seriousness of what he engaged in. Unwilling to sell either himself or the art cheaply and completely to the

¹³⁸ Speaight, *Circus*, 23.

¹³⁹ Cf. George Pallister Tuttle, ‘The history of the Royal Circus and Equestrian Academy, 1782-1812, St. George’s Field, Surrey, England’ (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Tufts University, 1972), 7-8.

¹⁴⁰ B** néé de V**, *Le Cirque olympique, ou les exercices des chevaux de MM. Franconi, du cerf Coco, du Cerf Azor, de l’Eléphant Baba, suivi du cheval aéronaute, de M. Testu Brissy* (Paris, 1817), 17-18.

demands of the masses, he portrayed himself as a figure of authority who, dressed in military garb, felt duty-bound to tell them what he stood for rather than having the audience decide what he represented.¹⁴¹ By educating the population in the basics of horsemanship, Astley believed, he was doing nation and society a service. The founder of the Royal Circus, Charles Dibdin, concurred. Insisting that his establishment was designed to preserve the spirit of the horseman, he confidently wrote, in 1803, that: ‘Horsemanship was at that time [in the 1780s] much admired; and I conceived that if I could divest it of its blackguardism, it might be made an object of public consequence. I proposed, therefore, that it should embrace all the dexterity and reputation of ancient cavalry [...] and that a classical and elegant turn should be given to exercises of this description.’¹⁴² Similarly in France, where Astley was instrumental in setting up the circus in Paris, the initial intention was to render public a faithful rendition of both the ancient and modern arts of horsemanship. As Victor Franconi, who was the main rider in Parisian performances during the early nineteenth century, argued, there was little difference in what took place between the circus and the equestrian academies. What his circus was tasked to do was to bring the art – undiluted – to new audiences:

The airs of the *manège* are the same [as in the circus]. In fact, we have invented nothing. If there are things that are not in the circus it is because I believe them to be far too eccentric for the art of horsemanship. The Spanish step and trot, the horse proceedings on its front legs, movement involving front crossed legs ... and others have never been a proper part of the *haute-école*. And traditional horsemen have been opposed to such things as raised airs, which have been abandoned for a long time, as well as croupades, ballottades, lancades, courbettes, etc.¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ See, for example, his *The modern riding master* (London, 1775).

¹⁴² Charles Dibdin, *The professional life of Mr. Dibdin* (London, 1803), volume 2, 106.

¹⁴³ Quoted in Charles-Maurice de Vaux, *Écuyers et écuyères des cirques d'Europe (1680-1891) avec une étude sur l'équitation savante* (Paris, 1893), 1-2.

Consequently, performances put on by Franconi were characterised by the centrality of the rider, leaving little doubt in the minds of the audience who was in control of the show. By doing so, the awe of the observer came from looking not at the acrobatics of the horse but at the skills of the horseman. Penned by the *Cirque Olympique*, one reads a fictional account of a young boy, who is transfixed by the antics of Franconi as he rode standing on the saddle. The child's enthusiasm arose out of watching one of the master's performances. So much did the sight make an indelible impression on the child that, after coming home, he proceeded to imitate the act on a wooden horse in the family play room. Enjoining his reluctant sisters to watch him, the boy exclaims: 'Have you not seen Mr Franconi perform? Okay then! I will show you what it's like. Look at me doing high balance on a horse! This, I hope, is just like the famous tricks of Mr Franconi.'¹⁴⁴ Of course, this story was fictional: it was a deliberate ploy to entice audiences. Notably, the use of a child for this purpose not only points to how important children – and the parents who took them – were considered as fee-paying audiences but also to the extent to which they were cast in the role of messenger. Even so, there is reason to believe that this message, which asserted the centrality of the rider, was something that, at least in the early years of the history of the circus, was accepted by the audience at large. Following one particular performance in 1807, the *Morning Post*, for example, praised the social importance of what Astley was displaying on the stage:

When mounted on his beautiful grey the veteran Astley, apparently in the flower of his age, still conserves the extraordinary management of the horse [...] What a noble example to the heads of families, civil and military, and to the riding generation in general, is to be witnessed every evening!¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴ B**, *Le Cirque olympique*, 11-2.

¹⁴⁵ Quoted in Kwint, 'Circus in late Georgian England', 90.

Figure 14: Engraving of Astley's Amphitheatre after a drawing by A.C. Pugin and Thomas Rowlandson (1808).

Such a rider-centric view, which was a marked feature in the early years of the circus, was an emphasis that gradually faded away. When Astley put on *The Brave Cossack*, a hippodramatic melodrama, in 1807, the military element proved an instant commercial hit. Involving speedy cavalry charges in which battle scenes from the Napoleonic wars were recreated, the performance took particular pains over making the fighting scene as exciting as possible, installing a massive system of stage elevations and bridges to strike awe into the hearts of the audience. At this time the horse, while important to the performance, was considered as nothing more than today's equivalent of 'special effects'. No doubt, the inclusion of the horse with its physical presence lent the stage excitement, noise, smell, and tension: the rider plunged into a supposed valley

below, real horses lay down and died, and horses galloped across the vision of the audience. All this made for a scintillating watch. Buoyed by the success of *The Brave Cossack*, Astley proceeded to put on *The Arab* during the 1809 season. Leaving little doubt as to what formed the centrepiece, this particular hippodrama followed the movements of a caravan as it made its 60 mile journey which functioned as a mere prelude to the ‘grand attack of both horse and foot’ that was the climax to the show. By the time *Blood Red Night* came to be performed, in 1810, the successful formula had been set. Successful hippodramas now had to reach their climax in a pitched battle scene which, in extreme instances, may have taken up almost half the playing time. By now, the ever popular battle scene offered up an excuse to deploy as many horses as possible, turning the stage into a sea of white smoke and threatening to render the story – if it ever mattered – incomprehensible. Crucial in the contribution to the atmospherics were of course horses. But their contributions, controlled as they were by horsemen, cast in the role of cavalry officers, were still far from individual or autonomous.

Yet it was not long before horses moved out of the shadow as ‘special effects’ to become actors in their own right. Such a move can be followed through the example of the fantastically popular burlesque, *The Taylor Riding to Brentford*, which had been staged for the first time at Astley’s towards the end of the eighteenth century. During the seventy-five long years in which it brought in the crowds, this hippodrama told the story of the often hilarious and ultimately fruitless attempt by a tailor to mount his horse in an effort to ride to his client. Despite taking on a variety of different guises – one subtitle it was given read: ‘The unaccountable sagacity of the Taylor’s horse’ while in New York it was called ‘The Taylor humorously riding to New York’¹⁴⁶ – all versions unmistakably shared in the common and central objective of ridiculing the rider,

¹⁴⁶ A.H. Saxon, *Enter foot and horse: a history of hippodrama in England and France* (New Haven and London, 1968), 30-1.

achieved by means of handing the horse independence, agency and control.¹⁴⁷ Entitled *M. Rognolet ou le tailleur gascon*, the popular French rendition was no exception. From the very start, Rognolet, who receives news that he needed to set off to seek a client, has trouble mounting the horse.¹⁴⁸ Frustrated that the horse had to make another journey when it had only recently returned from one, the animal – sometimes cast as a pony – would refuse to obey the command of its demanding master, throwing him off its back every time he attempted to mount. ‘The master’s pony, tired out after already a long journey, has no wish to embark on a new one, which will put off rest. It collapses but comes down to rest on top of poor M. Rognolet.’¹⁴⁹ Consequently, the valet is sent for who, upon arrival, discusses comically how the horse might have injured its foot through a fall. While the valet tends to the horse, conversation develops into how Rognolet has been treating the horse.

R[ognolet]: What are you doing to my horse? It will not stand up.
The poor animal is dead. We haven’t been able to find any oats en route.

V[alet]: You didn’t eat any oats during the journey?

R: Lord, no! It’s the horse that hasn’t eaten.

V: But it’s all your fault.

R: So you want to argue with me, is that right? I really cannot tolerate argumentative people!

V: I argue but only because I’m right.¹⁵⁰

Much aghast that the horse might be dying, Rognolet sends the valet to look for the postmaster who had to be informed. By doing so a message could be relayed to the client informing him that Rognolet would not be able to come because of an ‘accident’. Yet when the postmaster appears and bends down to inspect the horse, he remarks that the horse has not died. Thereupon the horse springs up back to life, thus making a complete

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 32-3.

¹⁴⁸ B**, *Le Cirque olympique*, 44-5.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 46.

mockery of initial attempts by the master and the valet to revive it.¹⁵¹ Supposedly cast in the role of an expert, the postmaster then suggests that Rognolet himself talk to the beast, pointing out that it too had feelings and sentiments, a personality even. Heeding his advice, Rognolet carefully stoops down to caress the horse. Momentarily, he is successful as his horse allows him to mount with little resistance. But, having got on, the horse springs into autonomous and uncontrolled action, taking the tailor literally for a ride around the amphitheatre of the circus several times, provoking much hilarity. By this time dizzy, Rognolet is finally dumped unceremoniously on the sand.¹⁵² All the while the postmaster, sensing that the tailor was sick and tired of being fooled around by his usual horse, offers him the use of a different one. Flustered, Rognolet replies: ‘I cannot trust this one as much as the other!’¹⁵³ Immediately, the horse in question, reacting angrily as though it had heard and understood the remark, took matters into its own hooves:

Furious as though it has understood, the horse throws itself at M. Rognolet and pursues him all over the circus. The tailor has to take refuge under his work bench. But the horse places its front hooves on it and turns the table upside down, despite its weight. M. Rognolet has to retreat into his own house. But the horse follows him, entering the house by jumping through a window.¹⁵⁴

What is clear from any performance of *The Taylor Riding to Brentford* is how, characteristic to other hippodramas of this period, the horse is handed a central role. No longer a ‘special effect’, the horse exhibits will, individuality and character which all come to the fore on the stage, challenging the position of the rider. Notably, the fact that it is a tailor and not a cavalier who is ridiculed is perhaps significant. To laugh at horsemen, who would be cast and clothed authoritatively as cavalry officers, might have

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 47-8.

¹⁵² Ibid., 50.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 51.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 51.

been considered still off limits. That it was merely a tailor who is laughed at made it still acceptable. Even so, at this stage the basic plot in which the rider is thrown off his saddle is clearly discernible. Such a storyline remained intact, spawning many other similar plots in which the horse was prevalent, as the hippodrama took off as a popular form of theatrical and circus entertainment.¹⁵⁵

Such were the spectacular successes hippodrama scored – Astley’s had taken some 18,000 pounds from performances of *The Blood Red Night*, for example, in 1810 – that the conventional theatre at Covent Garden, which had hitherto resisted the introduction of horses to the stage, could no longer shy away from the profits exploitation of this new dramatic form could bring. So that, in 1811, it adapted George Coleman’s *Younger Blue Beard* to the stage in which horses played a major part in the unfolding of a Greek myth. Despite the increased revenues inclusion of an equine element had achieved, conservative reviewers were hostile, considering the horse’s presence to be invasive. As one high-brow commentator put it:

To have heard the divine strains of the Orphean lute silenced by the professional neighing of a Stallion, in battle! - To have seen the Hounhymns dispute the meed of renown, with the best Tragedians on their own chosen ground! To have seen Quadrupeds trampling upon that sweet flowers of Poesy, and scattering ordure upon that Parterre, where the Muses and the Graces have assembled to charm away the sorrows of humanity! - To have seen buskins attached to the hoofs of an Arabian charger, and a Gelding measure the force of a cantabile with Mrs Dickens!¹⁵⁶

Similarly, seasoned theatre-goers, sceptical of what to them was mere gimmick, greeted the arrival of the horse on stage with hissing. But these conservative voices were quickly drowned out by cheering. Consequently, handbills, which had been printed to object to

¹⁵⁵ For another example, see Moussard, *L'Equitomanie, folie équestre, en trois parties et à spectacle, représentée, pour la première fois, au Cirque Olympique, le 24 Juin 1808* (Paris, 1808).

¹⁵⁶ Saxon, *Enter foot and horse*, 90.

the horses, were trampled upon by the equine supporters. Coming to watch *Timour the Tartar* at Covent Garden in 1811, a reviewer of the *European Magazine* started out unsure; but by the end he was completely won over. Mesmerised by the supreme acting talents of the horses, he was full of praise for them.

The exertions of the horses have a wonderful effect. The white horse which carried the heroine (Mrs H Johnston) plays admirably. He kneels, leaps, tumbles, dances, fights, dashes into water and up precipices, in a very superior style of acting, and completely astonished the audience. His fellow labourers in the scene also displayed much ability, and lived, died, climbed up walls perpendicularly, or scampered longitudinally, with the greatest ingenuity.¹⁵⁷

By now, circus operators had woken up to how audiences were reacting to the horses themselves. In 1815, Astley put on *The Life, Death and Restoration of the High-Mettled Racer*, which placed the horse not within the context of battle scenes in which cavalrymen controlled its moves but within the context of its own life. The climax to this particular hippodrama arrived when the main acting horse played dead for almost 10 minutes without moving a single muscle. Admiring the horse's acting prowess, one reviewer was moved to exclaim: 'It was even with difficulty that he could be observed to breath, such efforts did the animal make to suppress it.'¹⁵⁸ Much praise which consequently followed other performances increasingly centred on the horse. Reviewing *The Uranda the Enchanter of the Steel Castle*, which was first put on in 1817, *The Times* enthused: 'We never saw any set of performers exert themselves with more spirit, skill, and address than the horses, who seemed to enjoy their rich trappings, to exult in the success of their efforts, and to be sensible of the admiration they excited.'¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 91.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 76.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 56.

By the mid-nineteenth century, the horse had undeniably assumed a central role in performances. In February 1846, for example, the *Cirque Olympique* in Paris presented a hippodrama titled *Le cheval du diable*, which deserves mention for the unusually large part the horse, called Zisco, played in the unfolding of the drama.¹⁶⁰ The story involves Ulrich, a son of a humble miller, who has burning ambitions of becoming a knight and to triumph over a detested rival but who, in the drama, is transported to the stables of Satan where he meets Zisco. The ancient gypsy, Djina, who brought him there then proceeds to tell Ulrich that the horse could fulfill whatever he desired by merely uttering the words '*je le veux*'. But the caveat was that one wish would cost him 5 years of life which, Ulrich thinks, was worth it, since he calculated that he had 60 more years to live. Each time he makes a wish, however, he becomes more dissatisfied. Finally, while Sultan of Damascus, when the forces of Christianity appear to defeat his army, he makes his last wish, which is to drink water while escaping from the desert. Faithfully, Zisco responds: daintily he runs up to a rock and cracks it open with his hoofs, upon which water gushes out. Then as the rock in turn spouts forth flames, Zisco carries his master into the fire where he is condemned to eternal torment by Satan. But the point about Zisco is the extent to which he is allowed to upstage Ulrich. Even prior to the penultimate scene, he is allowed to exhibit his various skills before the audience. Responding to Ulrich's wish to become a knight in one scene, he gallops up to a great oak, stands on his hind legs, pulls on a small branch, and discovers a complete suit of armour. Later, he comes to the rescue of his master's fiancée by trampling to death the abductor. In Damascus, Zisco is the centre of attention: a procession pays homage to him by surrounding him with golden pans of flaming perfume and Indian dancing-girls waving plumed fans to refresh him. Subsequently, he looks on as a ballet is performed in his honour, responding by dancing one of his own. Following the performance, reaction also centred around Zisco. Introduced as the principle actor, one reviewer reported that

¹⁶⁰ Following account is based on Saxon, *Enter foot and horse*, 79-80.

his feats drew warm applause. As the circus historian, Saxon, has observed: ‘At the *Cirque Olympique* and Astley's horses were regarded both as integral parts of the *mise-en-scène* and as actors in their own right. It was for them that massive practicable settings of mountain heights and pathways, bridges, cataracts, and triumphal arches were constructed; for them, too, that plays were specially commissioned to display their ‘sagacity’ and intrepid feats of daring.’¹⁶¹

So much had horses become the chief attraction that, by the 1850s, audiences went to the hippodramas not to see the human actors but to enjoy the acting of their equine counterparts. As Saxon has explained: ‘It was not Richard's but White Surrey's death that spectators flocked to see at Astley's in the 1850s, and when Black Bess, after carrying Dick Turpin over the turnpike gate, staggered onstage, fell down, and lifted her head to give her master on last kiss before dying, a new peak of dramatic poignancy had been reached.’¹⁶² Following the death of the lead role Rossinante in *Don Quichotte et Sancho Panca*, even an obituary appeared in the pages of the *Charivari* which lamented the passing away of the equine actor. ‘We regret to announce the loss of an actor, taken prematurely away from us, who was born to be famous. What is more sorrowful is that this actor died a victim of his own high standards and dedication to the art.’¹⁶³ So much to the fore was the horse now appearing that its presence completely overshadowed the acting of its human colleagues who, roles now reversed, had to play second fiddle. By comparison to their four-footed actors, commentators would unfairly remark, abilities of human actors left a lot to be desired. As Edward Fitzball, an employee at Astley's put it:

I do consider where an author succeeds at Astley's, he displays greater dramatic skill, than when writing at the national houses; for a very palpable reason, he has neither the assistance of high music, nor high poetry, and has, moreover, to shape his histrionic abilities

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 54.

¹⁶² Ibid., 7.

¹⁶³ Quoted in Saxon, *Enter foot and horse*, 65.

to the footsteps of horses, in many instances, the more comprehending actors. To be sure the ‘animals’ have four legs to sustain the weight of the drama, upon, while biped-actors have only two. The animals, also, have another recommendation: they never grumble at their parts, nor throw them up, although very frequently throw a bad actor and cast him to a level, which, many, who call themselves actors richly merit.¹⁶⁴

By this stage, it had reached such a point that nothing was expected of the human performers than to support the equine actors. Similar to the jockeys within the English system, who were rendered faceless, performers were merely required to have ‘steam-engine lungs, limbs of adamant, and toes proof against the hoofs of horses; while at the *Cirque Olympique*, wrote another, one could say that the actors came from the Conservatory – if only there were such a thing as a Conservatory for horses’.¹⁶⁵ Perhaps the most surreal moment, which made clear that the horse now stood head and shoulders above all, came during a rehearsal at Astley’s in 1855. Standing innocently before a horse, thus shielding it from view, the human actor was severely reprimanded.¹⁶⁶ Why? Because the horse had to be given every opportunity to show off!

What ironically led to the demise of the hippodrama during the second half of the nineteenth century – and with it the focus on the horse – was the re-appearance of the rider. But the gaze of the audience did not fixate on what it had discredited before, but focused anew on the rider, because the performer in question was female. When Adah Isaacs Menken appeared in *Mazeppa or the Wild Horse* – first shown in the United States and then in Europe during the 1860s – the centre of attention was incontrovertibly on her: a woman. By contrast, the original hippodrama – first performed in 1823 in London and a year later in Paris – placed the wild horse to the fore. Performing with a male rider desperately clinging on, Mazeppa, in the final scene, would storm the castle

¹⁶⁴ E[dward] F[it]zball], *Thirty years of a dramatic author's life* (2 vols., London, 1859), II, 140.

¹⁶⁵ Quoted in Saxon, *Enter foot and horse*, 53.

¹⁶⁶ Saxon, *Enter foot and horse*, 54

and then set the forest ablaze, amazing the audience with displays of courage which put the human actor, who was only there for the ride, to shame.¹⁶⁷ Some of the initial reactions to Menken's sudden appearance on stage and saddle provoked confusion as they struggled to come to grips with her femininity appearing within a hippodrama. Revealingly, reviews of the performance still operated within the assumption that the horse was the central character in the unfolding of the story; but it was clear that the appearance of a woman had shaken this presumption. Suspicion was that by including Menken the 'personality' of the horse had to be compromised. '[T]he steed itself, always disposed to take it quietly, by no means corroborates his fearful reputation', a reviewer lamented. 'He is a very mild steed, to say the least, and looks surprised and somewhat remonstratively at the supers who wave the torches in his face.'¹⁶⁸ Even while the reviewer felt custom-bound to judge the female Mazeppa in conventional hippodramatic terms, there was tacit recognition that the involvement of Menken had an impact on the way in which this hippodrama was seen. When Menken performed at Astley's in 1864, where she scored a spectacular success, the predominately male audience, which turned up and cheered, did so not because they were impressed by the antics of the horse, but because they were turned on by Menken's sexuality.¹⁶⁹ Such was her femininity the selling point that promoters hardly held back when enticing potential circus-goers to come. When Menken made an appearance on Broadway, in New York, the manager put up the following advertisement, which left little doubt what and who was the chief attraction:

Miss Adah dresses the part very prettily, and displays a leg - or rather, two legs - in silk fleshings of such delicate proportions that they would have made St Anthony lift his eyes from his prayer-book. To

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 173-8.

¹⁶⁸ Quoted in Saxon, *Enter foot and horse*, 195.

¹⁶⁹ Saxon, *Enter foot and horse*, 193-5.

see Miss Adah in the matured beauty of her womanhood, costumed as she is costumed, is alone worth the price of admission.¹⁷⁰

Eventually, press reaction, which might have hitherto dwelt on the horse, came to concentrate on Menken, whose acting talents were held up to scrutiny. Praising her ‘wonderful vigour and spirit’, it commented how ‘her poses are abundant and ready to illustrate every sentence, or rather every phrase; the words, however, she has to utter are not spoken but shouted’.¹⁷¹ References to the horse’s prowess and talents – even its presence – evaporated from print. So that, by the end of the nineteenth century, the hippodrama had all but lost its popularity. Looking back disconsolately to the glory days of the hippodrama, Dutton Cook wrote in 1876, how this previously popular form of entertainment had faded away:

Of late years a change has come over the equestrian drama. The circus flourishes, and quadrupeds figure now and then upon the stage, but the ‘horse spectacle’ has almost vanished. The noble animal is to be seen occasionally on the boards, but he is cast for small parts only, is little better than a four-footed superumerary[...] Plays are not now written for him. He is no longer required to evince the fidelity and devotion of his nature by knocking at street-doors, rescuing a prisoned master, defending oppressed innocence, or dying in the centre of the stage to slow music.¹⁷²

Largely responsible for the demise of hippodrama was Menken whose femininity rendered the horse-rider dichotomy irrelevant. What is important to note is that she did not represent a reversion to an older hippodramatic form, when riders composed the focal centre. Reviewers commented enthusiastically on her acting talents, while her riding prowess hardly merited a mention. More to the point, it now mattered little to

¹⁷⁰ Quoted in Saxon, *Enter foot and horse*, 197.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 195.

¹⁷² Dutton Cook, *A book of play* (2 vols., London, 1876), II, 189-90.

audiences whether she was mounted on a horse – she could have appeared on an elephant and it would have made little difference. What counted was that her sexuality shone through. As Saxon expressed it, the hippodrama became ‘merely a vehicle for the gorgeous display of tights, silk fleshings, and beautiful limbs’.¹⁷³ Unsurprisingly, without either rider or horse, the hippodrama quickly lost its justification. During the second half of the nineteenth century little was written for it and in 1893 Astley’s amphitheatre at Westminster – the site of so many memorable hippodramas – finally closed.

Of course, the shift in perspective from rider to horse was not welcomed universally. Rather than endorse the public view, the riding classes dismissed displays of horsemanship within the circus as pure gimmick. During the 1840s in France, for example, François Baucher, who performed as a professional rider with the Franconis, advocated a new method of riding, which presented a challenge to the authority of the equestrian status quo. Most ironically, Baucher himself originally hailed from a family steeped in the equestrian tradition. Born in 1796, he completed his equestrian training in Italy – the birth place of the art of horsemanship – seeking tuition from his uncle who was *écuyer* to Prince Borghèse. Following ten years in Havre and Rouen where he taught horsemanship, Baucher joined Jules Pellier, who was an owner of a riding school in Paris, with whom he co-wrote a well-received book, *Dialogue sur l'Equitation*, in 1834. But the ousting of the Bourbon monarchy had a severe effect on the operation and popularity of the Pellier school, which was forced to find other means of making ends meet. Reaching out to an alliance with the circus, Pellier saw the unique potential of entering the realm of entertainment, offering his star horseman, Baucher, to the *Cirque des Champs-Élysées* where he duly achieved fame between 1838 and 1848.¹⁷⁴ Buoyed by success in the circus, with which he toured Europe, Baucher published a new book on

¹⁷³ Saxon, *Enter foot and horse*, 203.

¹⁷⁴ Gabriel-René Mennessier de La Lance, *Essai de bibliographie hippique, donnant la description détaillée des ouvrages publiés ou traduits en latin et français* (2 vols., Paris, 1915-1917), I, 85-7.

horsemanship in 1842 which pulled no punches at criticising the equestrian establishment.¹⁷⁵ Exposing the prejudices and erroneous routines of traditional horsemanship, he vowed to replace it with his own, which, developed within the circus, he touted as revolutionary.¹⁷⁶ When one looked closer, however, there was little substantive difference in approach. Reviewing Baucher's much-vaunted method, Maximilien Caccia concluded soberly that it was only 'an old form of horsemanship which has been coupled with the glamour of the theatre. This horseman (*écuyer*) has invented nothing; he has added nothing wondrous to this discipline'.¹⁷⁷ Even so, the fact that a new form of horsemanship was being preached from the amphitheatres of the circus was enough to rouse traditional horsemen, such as Lecornué and Viscount Aure, into entering the public domain.¹⁷⁸ Commenting on his 'new' riding style, these military horsemen, who were the most vociferous in their opposition, poured scorn on Baucher, warning coolly that his style deceived only because it had been successfully performed – with dazzling and ultimately misleading effects – in the circus.¹⁷⁹ But the problem lay precisely, according to Lecornué, in the kind of trust that advocates invested in the popularity of the 'public'. Casting doubt over the supposed expertise of the crowd, he asked rhetorically: 'How many individuals who come to the circus each night have the authority to talk about horsemanship? How many who applaud know anything about it?'¹⁸⁰ What was unacceptable was the way in which opinion had to defer to a public which, by all accounts, knew very little about the true art of horsemanship. By implication, the charge levelled at Baucher was that ultimately it was not about himself but about satisfying the audience which horsemen found so abhorrent. Pointing to the

¹⁷⁵ François Baucher, *Méthode d'équitation basée sur de nouveaux principes* (Paris, 1842).

¹⁷⁶ Decarpentry, *Baucher et son école* (Paris, 1987) 26-7.

¹⁷⁷ Maximilien Caccia, *De l'Équitation militaire* (Paris, 1842), 42.

¹⁷⁸ See, for example, Antoine-Henri-Philippe-Léon d'Aure, *Observations sur la nouvelle méthode d'équitation* (Paris, 1842).

¹⁷⁹ Lecornué, *Examen du système Baucher, de son application à notre cavalerie, avec quelques observations sur l'ouvrage de M. le Comte Savary de Lancosme-Brèves* (Paris, 1843), 45.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

ridiculous costumes he was often forced to wear for the ‘shows’, Lecornué accepted these were necessarily for an actor; but he parted company because he believed the costumes were there not to shed light on Baucher’s equestrian talents but because he was responding to public desires to wear them.¹⁸¹ What was important to the horseman was the ability to control the kind of reaction his riding actions evoked. Enslaved to the demands of commercial entertainment, the equestrianism on show in the circus was anything but. Viewed in such a way, the idea that various classes, which frequented the circus, were at peace with each other, fails to locate tensions that were there. Diverse social groups were able to co-mingle not because class boundaries were permeable but because the essence of hippodrama allowed both ‘lower’ and ‘higher’ views of looking at the relationship between horse and rider to co-exist. Patently, the riding classes were deeply uncomfortable with the way in which the circus had hijacked horsemanship, helping to alter public perception of what it was all about. Commenting in 1871, the German, Oeynhausen, for example, lamented the widespread misunderstanding that riding within the circus was essentially the same thing as riding within the schools. Such was the power of the circus that, in presenting itself before the public as *haute-école*, it ‘has contributed to total confusion regarding views of horsemanship.’¹⁸² Such stern objections towards the circus illustrate how much it was contested. Far from reflecting consensus, the shift from rider to horse, which amounted to a rejection of rider ideology, represented a contentious and ultimately triumphant new way of looking at the horse which did not require horsemen to pronounce upon horses.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 7.

¹⁸² *Der Pferdezüchter* 6 (1873), 3.

Despite the fact that the shift from rider to horse was a widespread phenomenon, the English doctrine did not necessarily mean that its impact on the equine economy in general and the stud system in particular was immediate. Even as late as 1872, the military veterinarian, K. Ableitner, lamented the extent to which, within the intractable Prussian set-up, horsemen still held the reins to the reproductive process:

Cavalrymen who conduct the breaking-in of horses, who train them for riding duties, who are versed in the tending and caring of them, who know the stalls and other areas, and who are in a position to decide on how one should get along with them ... are regarded as the most appropriate people for this branch of livestock production [horse-breeding].¹⁸³

Even so, the situation for the riding classes – their ideology exposed and openly ridiculed – was far from rosy either. Compared to their unquestionable dominance at the end of the eighteenth century, the riding classes faced distinct pressures from an increasingly visible, confident, and vociferous ‘public’ by end of the period under review. Expressing doubt about the romantic sentiments that had sustained for so long the horseman’s control over the horse, the non-riding public brought down the horse from its exalted pedestal. Farmers, veterinarians, industrialists, and agronomists, who are to appear more prolifically in the next chapter, followed the trail blazed by advocates of the English system, considering the horse not as something special but as an animal like any other. Consequently, the horse constituted just a mere part of the mechanics of the developing world. For example, within agriculture or science, the horse was only one of many animals which required attention. No animal had a natural right to be favoured, and the horse was no exception: it was ranked alongside pigs and cattle on the farm and it was no more deserving of medical attention than, say, cats and dogs. Such a process of

¹⁸³ K. Ableitner, ‘Der Zuchtbetrieb in Privat-, Staats-, und Landgestütsanstalten,’ *Neue Landwirtschaftliche Zeitung* 21 (1872), 422-8, 423.

‘normalisation’, which subsequent chapters will develop, could not have happened without the English practice of looking at the horse. During the time the rider was firmly mounted – and he called the shots on how the horse should be viewed – the horse could not be seen in isolation from the horseman. By helping to relinquish control over the horse away from horsemen, then, the English system prepared the ground for wider society to become involved with the horse.

Chapter Four

The breakthrough of ‘driving’, the turn to economic demand and the resilience of horsemen, c.1750-1900

When Christian Seyfert von Tennecker brought out his two books – *Denkwürdigkeiten meiner Zeit in Beziehung auf Pferdezucht, Pferdekennntniß, Pferdehandel, Pferdearznei und Reitkunst* and *Der Pferdehandel mit allen seinen Geheimnissen, Handelsvortheilen und Pferde-Verschönerungs-Künsten* – in the late 1820s, his chief motivation for publishing them differed from around twenty five years earlier.¹ During 1805, when Tennecker wrote *Handbuch der niedern und höhern Reitkunst*, which constituted one of his first tracts as a veterinarian, he believed the main stumbling block to his professional advancement were horsemen who he felt wielded too much power over the horse.² Since the riding classes claimed to ‘know’ the horse merely because they rode it, Tennecker was keen to expose, in his first book, this stance as a myth, referring as he did so to the scientific knowledge veterinarians now acquired from a dismounted position.³ By the time he wrote his latter two works, familiar calls to take veterinarians more seriously were advanced with the same vigour, but there was a notable shift from his earlier works. For Tennecker directed criticism not at the riding classes but at horse dealers, whose influence had grown to such an extent that their presence, within the equine economy, could no longer be ignored in the way he had been

¹ Christian Seyfert von Tennecker, *Denkwürdigkeiten meiner Zeit in Beziehung auf Pferdezucht, Pferdekennntniß, Pferdehandel, Pferdearznei und Reitkunst* (Munich, 1828); idem., *Der Pferdehandel mit allen seinen Geheimnissen, Handelsvortheilen und Pferde-Verschönerungs-Künsten* (Hannover, 1829).

² Christian Seyfert von Tennecker, *Handbuch der niedern und höhern Reitkunst* (Leipzig, 1805).

³ See Chapter two, 64-5.

able to do in the past. Common to horsemen, who judged the quality of horses by their looks, Tennecker believed horse dealers were equally infatuated with appearance:

The majority of [these practical horse experts] one finds among horse dealers who have made themselves wise, clever and attentive about horses through the trial and error of making money. But they have done so without possessing scientific knowledge. By thinking they know how best to discern good horses by their looks, they have failed to engage with the theoretical and scientific art of horse medicine which means dealers will almost always remain amateurs, since their claims about the horse will never have solid foundation.⁴

Such a swift shift in strategies – from taking horsemen to task to criticising horse dealers within a quarter of a century – points to how much Tennecker had a nose for knowing where the wind was blowing within the equine economy. During the intervening period, he had detected a change in how horse dealers were operating – a change that had been brought about by an increase in the demand for ‘driving’ horses. Back in the mid-eighteenth century, horse dealers in Württemberg for example – who were butchers, lower class or Jews – were much in evidence, frequently travelling great distances to places as far apart as Anterior Austria, Sigmaringen and Ansbach to procure their horses.⁵ But these middlemen, who looked for their horses in both open and private markets, did so essentially in order to satisfy local demand – not least because of the costs and risks associated with moving operations to foreign territories.⁶ Consequently, when at the Leipzig Fair, horses came to be sold, they were put up for auction not by ‘non-locally resident foreigners, but by Dessau and Berlin Jews who had brought their

⁴ Tennecker, *Denkwürdigkeiten meiner Zeit*, 41.

⁵ Rolf Walter, ‘Der Pferdemarkt des Herzogtums Württemberg im ausgehenden 18. Jahrhundert’, Uwe Bestmann et al (eds.), *Hochfinanz, Wirtschaftsräume, Innovation: Festschrift für Wolfgang von Stromer*, Volume 2 (Trier, 1987), 837, 839. See also Karl Heinz Burmeister, *Der jüdische Pferdehandel in Hohenems und Sulz im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden, 1989).

⁶ *Ibid.*, 839.

purchases from Mecklenburg'.⁷ But as demand for horses escalated, so did the conduct of the dealers change. During the last fifty years or so, Tennecker noticed, with reference to northern Germany, that horse trading had developed from essentially a private enterprise, run by minority groups, who conducted their businesses locally, to one where, because of the kind of profits that could be made from selling horses, bigger wholesale merchants, catering to the regional and, at times, international market, came to the fore.⁸ By this time these merchants were offering farmer-breeders 10-15 Thaler, even before foals were born, which reflected the confidence that margins could easily be recouped.⁹ As one of these large-scale businesses, Johann Ahsbach, a Holstein dealer who operated from Jutland, made huge profits, particularly in the period following the Napoleonic wars. Between 1815 and 1822 alone 12,354 horses were sold to Prussia which totalled over a million Thaler.¹⁰ Even when appetite from the military, which feverishly sought to replenish what it had lost, subsequently dissipated, 'Pferdemanie' or horse-mania refused to die down: horses continued to be delivered to countries such as France, Belgium, Holland and Spain, as the need for horses that could pull coaches, wagons, carts and cabs increased.¹¹ Between 1822 and 1826, it was this demand for 'driving' that made possible the sale of 1,846 horses to Prussia alone which brought in 144,704 Thaler of revenue.¹²

From Tennecker's perspective, however, something had to be done about a situation in which the thirst for 'driving' horses turned horse dealers into uncomfortably powerful actors, who threatened even to displace horsemen from their perches as the chief arbiters of the equine economy. Not only could these dealers make fortunes, but

⁷ Tennecker, *Denkwürdigkeiten meiner Zeit*, 51.

⁸ Ibid. See also Andrea Prahl, *Pferdezucht und Pferdehandel in Schleswig-Holstein von 1830-1960* (Gelting, 2005).

⁹ Tennecker, *Denkwürdigkeiten meiner Zeit*, 50-1.

¹⁰ Klaus-Joachim Lorenzen-Schmidt, 'Jütische Pferde für Europa. Ein holsteinischer Zwischenhändler 1830-40', *Zeitschrift für Agrargeschichte und Agrarsoziologie* 40/2 (1992), 186-205, 192.

¹¹ Ibid., 190-3.

¹² Ibid., 192.

they could also, because of the nature of the market, seek to unload any horse, regardless of its quality, to unassuming buyers in a Hobson's choice-like manner. By contrast to horsemen, who did at least have a 'relationship' with the kind of 'riding' horses they purchased, the problem with consumers of 'driving' horses towards the middle of the nineteenth century was, in the mind of Tennecker, that they knew little or nothing about horses, making them easy prey to dealers. Such a sellers' market provided fertile ground for the reputation of horse dealers to surface as tricksters who lost little sleep over defrauding their clients. 'In no other trade is the reputable man so much under threat', Tennecker explained, 'in no other business is it as hard [...] to be an honest and truthful person as in the profession of horse dealing.'¹³ So much did their operations become a byword for deception that phrases, which referred to horses that had been more than spruced up, became especially entrenched in common use during this time. 'Geschenktem Gaul sieh nicht ins Maul', 'un cheval donne, on ne regarde point à la bouche', and 'Look not a gift horse in the mouth' – all these variations on the same theme of the gift horse reflected the deep suspicion in which horse dealers, who commonly replaced teeth so as to hide the age of their wares, were held.¹⁴ Such suspicions provide the background to why Tennecker believed veterinarians could play a key role as intermediaries between dealer and consumer, pronouncing upon horses as 'scientific, educated and experienced horse doctors' who could inspire and garner trust from both sides.¹⁵ Rather than take it upon themselves to treat and dress up horses,

¹³ Tennecker, *Denkwürdigkeiten meiner Zeit*, 2.

¹⁴ *Deutsche Landwirtschaftliche Tierzucht* (DLT) 67 (August 1883), 424. For a useful study, confined to Germany, which investigates the presence of the horse in everyday language, see: Max Jähns, *Ross und Reiter in Leben und Sprache, Glauben und Geschichte der Deutschen. Eine kulturhistorische Monographie* (2 vols., Leipzig, 1872).

¹⁵ Tennecker, *Der Pferdehandel mit allen seinen Geheimnissen*, 130. Such was the enthusiasm for casting themselves in the role of intermediaries that veterinarians published books that were designed to instruct potential buyers on the common tricks dealers engaged in, particularly with regard to age-deception. See, for example, Henry Thomas Alken, *The beauties and defects of the horse comparatively delineated* (London, 1816); N. Girard, *Hippelikiologie, ou Connaissance de l'âge du cheval* (Paris, 1828); Abraham Mortier-Mortgen, *Taschenbuch für Pferdekennner und Pferdeliebhaber. Ergebnisse einer mehr als*

dealers should seek the assistance of veterinarians who, as objective and rational specialists, were more reliable than quacks. As Tennecker put it: ‘Each horse dealer should contact a rational and educated horse doctor [a veterinarian] and obtain advice about their horses’ illness and disease rather than try and do it themselves. What is not enough is to rely on empirical quacks – a common arrangement one finds among horse dealers.’¹⁶

What this chapter investigates, then, is the kind of fast-changing world Tennecker found himself reacting to, as he shifted his position as a veterinarian, from being a critic of horsemen to a critic of horse dealers. Concerned with how and when ‘driving’ achieved its breakthrough, the first half of the chapter considers the peculiar position of the horse within agriculture, the obstacles horse-breeding faced when converting from rearing light to heavy horses, and the circumstances that enabled this shift to take place – a process that only saw its completion towards the end of the nineteenth century. By all means, of course, the fact that Tennecker no longer seems to have wanted to take horsemen to task is no indication that they were no longer important. Even so, as the second part of the chapter argues, horsemen were decidedly on the back foot, forced as they were to devise ways in which they could survive within a horse-focused as opposed to a rider-centred world. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the chapter concludes, even riders themselves had come to accept the centrality of the horse.

a. The breakthrough of ‘driving’ and the obstacles to horse-breeding

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, substantial pressures had been brought to bear upon the riding classes, the kind of movement they favoured, and the

siebzigjährigen Ausübung des Pferdehandels. Nebst einem Anhang, selbst erlebte Anekdoten im Pferdehandel enthaltend (Dessau, 1857).

¹⁶ Tennecker, *Der Pferdehandel mit allen seinen Geheimnissen*, 130.

type of horses they required. Be it from advocates of the English system of horseracing, veterinarians who called for a move away from exclusively treating horses, or passengers who preferred to travel in carriages and coaches rather than on horseback, 'riding' was clearly being challenged from all sides and at unprecedented levels. But to conclude from such developments that 'driving' had triumphed completely over 'riding' would be inaccurate – this sweeping conclusion would be tantamount to placing the cart before the horse. Despite all the heat that was undoubtedly generated when 'driving' made its mark between 1550 and 1650, the reality was that its impact was limited predominantly to urban areas during the century that followed.¹⁷ By contrast, within rural and inter-urban regions, 'driving' remained far from prominent as a means of moving around. Even at the beginning of the eighteenth century 'most passenger travel', as Theo Barker and Dorian Gerhold have concluded with reference to England, 'appear to have been on horseback, and there were still people who regarded it as effeminate for a man to ride in a vehicle'.¹⁸ Similarly, goods transport eschewed 'driving', electing to carry produce on the back of horses as 'pack', rather than in wagons and carts, thereby relying in a familiar manner to horsemen on horses' hooves for ease of movement, rather than on the wheel.¹⁹ Consequently, a sight common in the English countryside, as late as 1750, was one where packhorses periodically punctured the tranquillity: 'The road (from Buxton to Matlock Bath) is a continuance of the same scene, naked hills and desert dales: nothing worth notice occurred, except the vast number of pack-horses travelling over the hills, of which we counted sixty in a drove; their chief lading is wool and malt, which they carry across the country from Nottingham and Derby to Manchester.'²⁰

¹⁷ See Chapter one, 35-6.

¹⁸ Theo Barker and Dorian Gerhold, *The rise and rise of road transport, 1700-1990* (London, 1993), 35.

¹⁹ J. Crofts, *Packhorse, waggon and post: land carriage and communications under the Tudors and Stuarts* (London, 1967), 1-5.

²⁰ W.T. Jackman, *The development of transportation in modern England* (2 vols., Cambridge, 1916), I, 304.

The major reason why horseback – both for haulage and passenger transport – still predominated in rural areas and inter-urban routes was because the state of the roads, which the wheel had to negotiate, was poor. ‘[E]xcept for the principal roads communicating the important seaports, the seat of great fairs, and the fortress,’ the eminent transport historian W.T. Jackman observed, ‘the highways should be, in most cases, but little better than bridle-paths.’²¹ What added to disincentive was that roads were dangerous to pass at night, because of the presence of highway robbers, and cumbersome to navigate, especially during the winter months, when the elements conspired to retard movement.²² All this meant that, with reference to passenger transport, ‘riding’ had a far greater advantage than ‘driving’: saddle horses could easily tackle steep gradients, jump over potholes and uneven surfaces, and take flexible detours depending on the conditions of the lie and the land. Similarly, wagons and carts, which had the potential to carry greater amounts of haulage at one time, had little chance of being favoured, when mud, slush and ruts nullified any natural advantages ‘driving’ may have enjoyed. This was the reason why Josiah Wedgwood and his partner Bentley, from the pottery-making regions of the Midlands, decided on a system of inland canals. By contrast to packhorses and asses which were ‘heavily laden with coal, tubs full of ground flint from mills, crates of ware or panniers of clay ... floundering knee-deep along the roads in Staffordshire and Warwickshire’, canals afforded far superior levels of efficiency and economy than a combination of wheel, pack and road.²³ So it was hardly a surprise why businesses relied, at least for long distances, on waterways and canals, with roads being resorted to only for short distances. Such uneasiness towards the wheel during the first half of the eighteenth century was reflected in legislation passed to curb its usage. Concern over the kind of damage the wheel inflicted on the roads led

²¹ Jackman, *Transportation*, I, 43.

²² Dorian Gerhold, *Road transport before the railways: Russell's London flying waggons* (Cambridge, 1993), 86.

²³ Quoted in Jackman, *Transportation in modern England*, I, 304.

authorities to place limits on the amount which haulage carts could carry. In England, the 1754 Act decreed that wheels had to be more than 9 inches wide so that weight could be spread out over a larger surface area.²⁴ Even following the introduction of the turnpikes, which improved conditions for the wheel, attitudes towards vehicles remained uncertain. In the 1773 General Turnpike Act, for instance, some 28 clauses governed weights, carriage construction and wheel size.²⁵ Similarly in France, unease about the wheel led to a decree passed for the first time in 1724 – and subsequently revised on numerous occasions – which punished offenders 300 francs if they were caught loading their vehicles excessively.²⁶ More than 80 years later, in 1806, official attitudes towards the wheel still meant intricate restrictions were imposed not only on weights, but also on wheel-rim widths.²⁷ As the Webbs truthfully put it with reference to England: ‘the wheeled carriage was an intruder on the highway, a disturber of the existing order, a cause of damage – in short an active nuisance to the roadway – to be suppressed in its most noxious forms and where inevitable to be regulated and restricted as much as possible’.²⁸

By the beginning of the nineteenth century – in the case of England – and a few decades later in the rest of Europe, however, ‘driving’ finally did make progress in infiltrating both rural and inter-urban areas. Engineers, such as John Metcalfe, Thomas Telford and John Macadam, contributed to the improvement in the quality of road surfaces which allowed the potential of the wheel – for so long a liability than an asset over long distances – to be fully harnessed, encouraging the use of larger carts and wagons being pulled by fewer horses.²⁹ All of which increased, in turn, the speed,

²⁴ Phillip S. Bagwell, *The transport revolution from 1770* (London, 1974), 37.

²⁵ Simon P. Ville, *Transport and the development of the European economy, 1750-1918* (Basingstoke, 1990), 15.

²⁶ *Rapport à M. le conseiller d'état directeur général des ponts et chaussées et des mines sur la police du roulage* (Paris, 1828); Pierre Braff, *De la Police du roulage* (Paris, 1849), 19-23.

²⁷ Ville, *Transport and development*, 15.

²⁸ Sidney Webb and Beatrice Potter Webb, *The story of the king's highway* (London, 1913), 74.

²⁹ Ville, *Transport and development*, 27.

economy and desirability of ‘driving’. During the time when so-called ‘soft roads’ predominated, even the touch of heavily-laden wagons, which struggled to carry one tonne, contributed to turning them into a quagmire, while on the improved roads wagons could carry double and still cause minimal damage to the road surface.³⁰ By contrast to the European continent, which by and large developed its road networks through state intervention, in England private initiative caught on quickly. What developed feverishly were the turnpikes, which, by the 1830s, boasted some 1,116 trusts operating 22,000 miles of paved and maintained roads in England and Wales alone.³¹ Most influential in this development was Macadam. Employed by a large turnpike trust in Bristol in 1816, during which time he implemented his own method of road construction, Macadam succeeded in having his technique adopted by 11 other trusts only two years later. Carried on by his sons, the Macadam family came to supervise, by 1823, no less than 107 trusts nationally, which totalled 2,000 miles.³² Similarly across the channel, in France, road construction proceeded apace. Following the appointment of Pierre Trésaguet who, similar to Macadam, put forward improved techniques and a systematic plan of road construction, France had, by 1776, witnessed the building of approximately 26,000 kilometres of new roads.³³ Even though these roads were, according to Arthur Young, relatively underused, they nevertheless laid the foundation for further expansion by Napoleon, who wished to build *routes imperiales* – or trunk roads – along which his troops could be dispatched easily and efficiently as political circumstances dictated.³⁴ By 1830 there was in France, according to Roger Price, a total of 52,700 kilometres of new roads, a figure that increased further, following greater governmental commitment, to

³⁰ Bagwell, *Transport revolution*, 13.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 39.

³² *Ibid.*, 40.

³³ Jean-Marcel Goger, ‘Routes et chemins de la France moderne (1661-1850)’, *Sources: Travaux historiques* 19 (1989), 13-28, 20 ; Guy Arbellot, ‘La Grande mutation des routes de France au milieu du XVIIIe siècle’, *Annales: économies, société, civilisations* 28/3 (1973), 765-91, 772-3.

³⁴ Guy Arbellot, ‘Arthur Young et la circulation en France’, *Revue d’histoire moderne et contemporaine* 28 (April-June 1981), 328-34, 329 ; Ville, *Transport and development*, 16.

77,400 kilometres between 1847 and 1854.³⁵ Equally in Germany, construction proceeded swiftly. Following a stuttering start under Frederick the Great, who had opposed the building of roads on the grounds that invaders could easily take advantage of such networks, initiatives were taken to link the chief towns of Prussia to Berlin.³⁶ Previously, according to Uwe Müller, Prussia had the worst road network in central Europe. East of the Elbe, there were only some 800 kilometres of maintained highway in Lower Silesia and the Kurmark, while none at all existed in Pomerania and Posen during the early nineteenth century.³⁷ By complete contrast to Eastern Prussia, the western provinces fared much better, not least because the French had invested in a proper road infrastructure that stood the region in good stead when the revolutionary armies ended their occupation of the Rhineland, Westphalia and Saxony in 1815.³⁸ What was a peculiar characteristic to road construction, following the end of the Napoleonic wars, was the need to protect the western provinces from future French invasion. Partly as a result of this, road construction continued to be disproportionate: between 1816 and 1834 roads were built further in Saxony and Westphalia, while eastern backwaters like Gumbinnen witnessed very little construction at all.³⁹

Following the successful construction of roads, which could withstand the weight of the wheel, the attractiveness of ‘driving’ naturally increased.⁴⁰ In France, for example, average speeds between 1800 and 1848 rose from a mere 3.4 km/h to 9.5 km/h, while in England, which witnessed an earlier take-up of ‘driving’, journey times were slashed

³⁵ Roger Price, *The modernization of rural France: communications networks and agricultural market structures in nineteenth-century France* (London, 1983), Table 5, 41; Table 25, 260.

³⁶ Ville, *Transport and development*, 16-17.

³⁷ Uwe Müller, ‘Chausseebaupolitik und Herrschaft in Preußen vom Ende der Napoleonischen Kriege bis zum Beginn des Eisenbahnbaus’, in Ralf Pröve and Norbert Winnige (eds), *Wissen ist Macht: Herrschaft und Kommunikation in Brandenburg-Preußen 1600-1850* (Berlin, 2001), 194.

³⁸ Müller. ‘Chausseebaupolitik’, 195.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 198-9.

⁴⁰ By the early nineteenth century, 4-6 tonnes could be carried, as opposed to only 1.5-3 tonnes in 1750 in England and in central Europe. See Uwe Müller, *Infrastrukturpolitik in der Industrialisierung: der Chausseebau in der preußischen Provinz Sachsen und dem Herzogtum Braunschweig vom Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts bis in die siebziger Jahre des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin, 2000), 103.

between 1750 and 1830.⁴¹ Most spectacular decreases were recorded, according to Simon Ville, at the time Telford and Macadam were at the helm. The time taken to travel between London and Edinburgh was cut from 14 to 10 days between 1754 and 1776, while the stretch from London to Holyhead, which had taken 41 hours in 1815, could now be completed in a mere 28 hours some 15 years later.⁴² Such significant drops in journey times led to an increase in the number of passengers that chose ‘driving’ as the chief means of movement. Demand for stagecoaches, which operated inter-urban services, grew eightfold between 1790 and 1836 within the leading cities and towns of England.⁴³ So popular did coach services prove to be that companies hurriedly brought out vehicles that could carry more passengers not only inside, but also outside where cheap-fare paying customers would sit alongside the driver.⁴⁴ By 1835, Bagwell has estimated there were some 700 mail coaches and 3,300 stagecoaches in regular service, which carried upwards of 10 million passengers a year.⁴⁵ Similarly, the number of haulage services, which also employed the wheel, greatly increased by the beginning of the nineteenth century. Between 1796 and 1799, Barker and Gerhold have calculated, there were 565 services in London alone; by 1838-1840 the figure had risen to 1,093.⁴⁶ More specifically, a London carrying company, Thomas Russell and Company, whose long-haul operations are well-documented, had approximately 200 horses and up to 30 wagons in its possession between 1816 and 1821, while Deacons and Company, which operated between Yorkshire and Norwich, reportedly had 700 horses on its books in 1838.⁴⁷

⁴¹ Ville, *Transport and development*, 27.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Bagwell, *Transport revolution*, 43.

⁴⁴ Bagwell, *Transport revolution*, 43.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Barker and Gerhold, *Rise and rise of road transport*, Table 2, 11.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 11-12.

Figure 15: E.F. Lambert, *Brighton stagecoach* (1829). The coach is just leaving Piccadilly. Note the number of passengers who are squeezed in together at the top and at the sides of the driver.

Perhaps most symbolic in how ‘driving’ managed to extend its influence from an urban to a rural context, overturning the disadvantages it had had over ‘riding’, took place when the post office in England decided to dispense with the services of the post boy. Until 1784, it had been the custom for post to be carried and delivered on horseback. But the reliability and speed of the service had always been under scrutiny, partly because of post boys’ notorious lack of sobriety in giving in to temptations of public houses *en route*. Frustrated by this perceived state-of-affairs, John Palmer proved that, by hiring coaches for short stages on the Bath to London route, he could bring mail to the capital in just 17 hours – much shorter than on horseback. Subsequently, Palmer instituted a regular carriage mail service in 1784 whose operations so impressed William Pitt the Younger that he recommended ‘driving’ over ‘riding’ in all major postal roads.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Bagwell, *Transport revolution*, 45.

By the 1820s indeed, helped by the spread of better roads, it was no longer faster to travel on horseback than by coach. Of course, not every rural enclave succumbed to ‘driving’. As George Eliot’s *Silas Mariner* reveals, small villages still existed which were ‘nestled in the snug, well-wooded hollow, quite an hour’s journey on horseback from any turnpike, where it was never reached by the vibrations of the coach horn, or of public opinion’.⁴⁹ Even so, the inroads ‘driving’ had made not only within urban, but also rural areas by the early-to-mid-nineteenth century was such that it could not be ignored and which, if anything, continued to gather pace, despite the evident competition railways posed during the remainder of the nineteenth century.⁵⁰

The take-off in ‘driving’ naturally necessitated an increase in the number of heavy horses that could pull those coaches and wagons which invaded the roads – and, in turn, provide farmers with incentives to breed for profit. More specifically, farmers were now able to breed horses not only for use on their own land – for agricultural tasks of ploughing and produce transportation, for instance – but also to sell them on, after their uses had been expended on the farm, for re-deployment in other areas of the equine economy. Such an arrangement made investment in horses, which could take a maximum of three years to breed and rear, genuinely worthwhile. What is important to remember, however, is the extent to which this cyclical arrangement was a rarity until the breakthrough of ‘driving’. Looking back from a post-equine age, it is easy to forget that the connection between horse and agriculture was far from natural. Since farmers had historically preferred oxen over horses to provide traction, agriculture did not feature as a factor in the development of the equine economy for a long time. Even as far back as Ancient Rome, horses stood aloof from agriculture, employed as they were ornamentally ‘for pulling light chariots, the aim apart from their military uses, to have a fine show of horses rearing and struggling, and drawing a ridiculously light load as fast

⁴⁹ Quoted in Bagwell, *Transport revolution*, 37.

⁵⁰ This is the conclusion Barker and Gerhold reached in their reappraisal of the development of the roads, argued in *The rise and rise of road transport*.

as possible'.⁵¹ When equid traction was used at all, for more practical purposes, power was provided by mules and donkeys; otherwise oxen took on the primary burden of ploughing and hauling.⁵² Such an arrangement, John Langdon has observed, held essentially true after the fall of the Roman Empire, although he concedes there was greater use for horses which took to pulling coaches and wagons. Only during the twelfth century can one detect, with reference to England, any significant shift in the power relationship between horse and ox. During the Domesday period, Langdon has calculated there was one horse to every seven oxen in the country. By the second half of the twelfth century, however, the ratio had come down, albeit marginally, to one horse to every seven oxen, constituting 12.5 percent of power supplied by draught animals.⁵³ Even though this nationwide ratio indicates how much medieval agriculture was still predominantly oxen-dependent, it does nevertheless mask regional advances that were made, particularly in East Anglia, where by the end of the twelfth century the ratio had risen to 30 percent.⁵⁴ Such advances continued. During the period 1350 to 1420, the national take-up of workhorses had risen to 29.4 percent, while in East Anglia, horses became the majority, with 57.9 percent of draught animals being equine.⁵⁵ By the early modern period, horses had gained a foothold as a major source of traction, with their breakthrough most complete in East Anglia, the Chilterns and the Home Counties where, according to Peter Edwards, all-horse teams had made an appearance.⁵⁶

What was an important condition, it seems, to the take-up of the horse was the virtuous circle that emerged between the field and the market. Citing an example from Leicestershire in the 1530s, which took the step of substituting oxen with horses, Edwards found that this change had been down to the growth in the amount of oats

⁵¹ John Langdon, *Horse, oxen and technological innovation: the use of draught animals in English farming from 1066 to 1500* (Cambridge, 1986), 8.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, Table 12, 90.

⁵⁶ Peter Edwards, *The horse trade of Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge, 1988), 4.

being produced on the land.⁵⁷ Much of the reason why oxen were preferred to horses was because the diet, which horses had to be fed on, conflicted with the similar human appetite for cereals: both demands could not be fulfilled within a subsistence economy. By contrast, oxen had the natural advantage of being left out simply to graze on the grass – often on land inappropriate for growing crops – that prevented a conflict of interest. By having a market for cereal, which in turn encouraged the abundant production of grain on the farm, could one then feed horses on ‘home-grown corn, pulses and vetches’.⁵⁸ Consequently, horses could be employed both on the land for ploughing and for transporting foodstuff to market which, at last, helped offset the naturally high costs of breeding them. Such a development was, however, rather patchy during the early modern period. More commonly, it was still the case that oxen were used on their own, not only on the farm for the plough, but also for haulage.⁵⁹ Occasionally the horse was used in conjunction ‘with oxen in mixed teams, a device which speeded up the task of ploughing[...] Horses, stronger, quicker and more agile animals, were particularly suited to light or stony soils, whilst oxen did comparatively better on stiff, heavy clays.’⁶⁰ Even then, the costs of doing so still favoured oxen, which could be fattened up and sold off once their ploughing days were over, as opposed to aged horses, which could not. As Anthony Dent correctly observed, when writing about horses in Shakespearean England, the early modern period was not ‘horse-borne but ox-drawn’, where the horse had still much to do to replace oxen as the main source of traction within agriculture.⁶¹

Such preferences seem to have continued into the eighteenth century and beyond. Even when the issue of the amount of cereal produced was solved, farmers within central and southern France still continued to bypass horses, because they took up too much space, feed and time. In the Midi region, for example, farmers remained wedded

⁵⁷ Ibid., 5.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 4.

⁵⁹ Langdon, *Draught animals*, 61.

⁶⁰ Edwards, *Horse trade*, 4

⁶¹ Anthony Dent, *Horses in Shakespeare's England* (London, 1987), 9.

to oxen or cattle, while in the South-East, preference persisted for both cattle and mules.⁶² When horses were used at all they were pulled in as auxiliaries. So that in the West, for example, 4, 6 or 8 oxen were used for ploughing with 1 or 2 horses driving on before them to help with the pulling.⁶³ Despite the efforts of the government, following the epizootic of 1774, to convert to the use of the horse for draught purposes, little was achieved, and the numerical supremacy of oxen, or '*boeufs de travail*', continued to be marked, with one official noting that while there were some 2,700,000 oxen (to which one must also add a part of the 4,000,000 cattle employed on a part time basis), there were merely 600,000 'horses occupied in agriculture, in regions where one breeds cattle'.⁶⁴ Even in traditional horse-producing regions, such as Limoges, the profitability of breeding other livestock, such as beef and mutton – which could be sold to urban markets with an appetite for meat – made sure horses continued to assume a subordinate position within agriculture. As René Musset made clear in his magisterial work on horse-breeding in France: 'The small farmer did not produce horses; they preferred to breed cows, which were less costly, more remunerative and less risky. The cows were the only animals that captured their attention as the beef from them found a secure market in Paris.'⁶⁵

When the small number of farmers did turn to the breeding of horses, however, it was not only purely economic considerations they had to think about during the first half of the nineteenth century – at least within France and Germany.⁶⁶ By taking the bold step to become actors within the equine economy, farmers came up against the traditions

⁶² René Musset, *L'Élevage du cheval en France. Précédé d'une bibliographie de l'élevage du cheval en France du XVIIe siècle à nos jours* (Paris, 1917), 137.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 138.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 139.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 88.

⁶⁶ More research is required that takes forward the valuable findings of Langdon and Edwards into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, especially with reference to England. For a tentative attempt, albeit with analysis focused on the supply side, see R.J. Moore-Colyer, 'Aspects of horse-breeding and the supply of horses in Victorian Britain', *Agricultural history review* 41 /1 (1995), 47-60.

of horsemen whose historic penchant for breeding saddle horses, which were designed to be ridden, conflicted fundamentally with the farmers' preference for breeding draught horses, which were meant to be driven. More ominously, horsemen, who populated the studs, had an intractable romantic attachment to the horse which elevated the breeding of horses not only into an activity of passion and patriotism, but also an undertaking that stood proudly but unhelpfully aloof from the rest of livestock breeding – divorced at times even from the laws of economics.⁶⁷ By controlling the stud, it was possible to influence the kind of horses that would be produced, since stallions, housed within the studs, had to be crossed with farmers' mares. Such attitudes towards the horse stood at odds, of course, with the stance of the farmer who was not only interested in 'driving' horses generally, but also viewed the horse like any other animal on which profits could be made – a viewpoint that horsemen considered to be heresy. Much of what farmers were up against can be illustrated no better than through the words of Karl Wilhelm Ammon, stud director in Munich, who hardly minced his words when he discredited farmers as amateur part-timers:

Since the private horse breeder treats horse-breeding usually as a secondary concern – or part-time job (*Nebenerwerb*) – which is relegated to other agricultural practices, then it is clear that he cannot take up seriously the pursuit of a theoretical as well as practical study of horse-breeding than the stud director, who lives for his discipline and is taught comprehensively about it from the time he is young.⁶⁸

Prospects of a showdown could have hardly appealed or worth the energy during the early nineteenth century. Even agronomists, who had otherwise taken a voracious interest in applying scientific principles to improving crop, soil and livestock productivity, refrained from doing the same to horse-breeding – for fear, arguably, that

⁶⁷ See Chapter three, 125.

⁶⁸ Karl Wilhelm Ammon, *Bemerkungen über die Nutzen der landlichen Hof- und Stammgestüte, und der Wettrennen nach englischer Art* (Nuremberg, 1831), 12-13.

their fingers might be burnt. From the pages of the first serious agricultural journal in Germany, the *Möglinsche Annalen der Landwirthschaft*, edited by the pioneering Albrecht Thaer, the horse is conspicuous by its absence. Whenever the journal took up the theme of horse-breeding, which was seldom, it was invariably dealt with amid a general discussion of livestock breeding, especially sheep and wool, which loomed far larger by comparison.⁶⁹ Revealingly, the first mention of horse-breeding had to await the sixth year of publication – 1820 – when the journal reviewed a book by Tennecker, merely recommending it as a read, but not entering into any prolonged discussion about what it contained.⁷⁰ Even in cases where interest was shown, as when the Prussian stud director Carl von Knobelsdorf wrote an article – later published as a pamphlet – exhorting farmers to take up horse-breeding in a major way, calls were made by the enlightened riding class – of which Tennecker and Knobelsdorf were a part – rather than by other members of society.⁷¹ What is striking nevertheless about Knobelsdorf’s piece was not only his acknowledgement that horse-breeding had hitherto lain outside the realm of agriculture, but that he broke new ground as a horseman in addressing farmer-breeders. As he put it: ‘more than any other area of agriculture there is a lack of teaching, in print, about the fundamentals [of horse-breeding]. For those works, which are written about the studs, care little about teaching the farmer, and nobody has yet imparted their own experiences of horse-breeding in a way beneficial to agriculture.’⁷² Deliberately shying away from speaking to the traditional arbiters of equine knowledge, Knobelsdorf effectively called on agriculture to claim the horse as its own.⁷³ Most impressive about Knobelsdorf’s treatise was how much he was at pains to place horse-breeding not within a sphere aloof from the rural economy, but firmly within the context of agriculture. By complete contrast to the writings of horsemen – or hippologists – who fixated on the

⁶⁹ *Möglinsche Annalen der Landwirthschaft* 6 (1820).

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 314-5.

⁷¹ Carl von Knobelsdorf, *Ueber die Pferdezucht in England* (Berlin, 1820).

⁷² *Ibid.*, 7.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

horse in isolation, he found it relevant to study at length the practices of English farmers. Not only did he take an interest in farmers like John Bulmer, who specialised in horse-breeding, but also a certain Mr Lee, who was a breeder of sheep and cattle, pointing out that all forms of livestock breeding shared a common pursuit: profit-making.⁷⁴ Even though Knobelsdorf ultimately drew the line at English horseracing, whose introduction he could not stomach, he still found the principles – those of making horses accessible to the many and not the few – that underpinned the sport worthy of emulation, so that he envisaged an equine landscape in which every farmer produce a horse once a year, transforming the whole country into a stud. ‘There will come a time’, he dreamed, ‘when there will no longer be state studs, but a time when every farmer breeds a foal each year and when the whole country is turned into a large stud like Yorkshire.’⁷⁵

Figure 16: Anon., *French trade card* (early 19c). Many areas of France remained wedded to oxen during the nineteenth century

Many of Knobelsdorf’s assertions were taken on board by the French agronomist Christoph Mathieu de Dombasle. As a leading savant in agricultural affairs in France, Mathieu de Dombasle came to the realisation first in 1833 that the majority of horses in

⁷⁴ Ibid., 39-45.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 96.

existence in his country were now employed within the agricultural sector.⁷⁶ Such a fact had been less than obvious – he believed with Knobelsdorf – because of the ominous influence the riding classes cast over the equine economy. By coming out for horses, which were bred and reared to ‘drive’ rather than to ‘ride’, Mathieu de Dombasle was keen to relegate the saddle horse to the dustbin of history, contending that its time was finally up. Except for a few weak defences of riding as a source of exercise, he pointed out, riding had little use: it had declined to such an extent that it had only an ornamental function to serve.⁷⁷ ‘It’s an object of fantasy rather than an object of luxury’, he quipped.⁷⁸ Taking issue with the moaners, who complained that horses were deteriorating, Mathieu de Dombasle exposed them to be horsemen who felt threatened that their light horses were under attack from heavier breeds.⁷⁹ Chief among those he criticised was Felix Person, whose brochure – *Les Chevaux français en 1840* – amounted to a robust defence of the saddle horse, but whose assertions typified the stance of horsemen.⁸⁰ Elevating themselves above all opinion, exclusively focusing on the horse itself without reference to wider factors and noisily claiming supreme knowledge of the horse, horsemen, according to Mathieu de Dombasle, had narrow minds: ‘One must not mistake the passion – this is the keyword – the passion, I tell you, for the horse serves to sweep away almost everything in its path, leaving hardly any space for the idea of others. The horseman only thinks and speaks about his favoured subject. He would go to any lengths if he could acquire a profound knowledge of it.’⁸¹ Much of the problem, as Mathieu de Dombasle saw it, was how the rest of society had

⁷⁶ Christoph-Joseph-Alexander Mathieu de Dombasle, *De la Production des chevaux en France; de l'amélioration des races et de l'inefficacité des moyens employés par le gouvernement pour atteindre ce but*, (Paris, 1833).

⁷⁷ He was arguably referring to such work such as that of A. Fitzpatrick, *Traité des avantages de l'équitation considérée dans ses rapports avec la médecine* (Paris, 1838).

⁷⁸ Christoph-Joseph-Alexander Mathieu de Dombasle, *Œuvres diverses. Economie politique, instruction publique, haras et remontes* (Paris, 1843), 301.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 313.

⁸⁰ Felix Person, *Les Chevaux français en 1840* (Caen, 1840).

⁸¹ Mathieu de Dombasle, *Œuvres diverses*, 372.

blindly gone along with the pretence of the riding classes – veterinarians did not escape his ire – whose narrow perspectives and opinions had not been exposed for the sham they really were. As he put it:

Horsemen, whose perspectives are blinkered, are in a position to impose their opinions on a considerable part of society, among them those who read in the salons, those who write and who rule or those who conduct businesses. They are more than happy, without seeing any contradiction, to go along with the opinion that the saddle horse is superior to all other races. Consequently, calls never cease to be made that our indigenous breeds should be crossed with thoroughbreds.⁸²

Challenging the view that riders long held, Mathieu de Dombasle was determined not to allow ‘rider’s vision’ to dictate the terms in which horses were talked about, but under conditions in which ‘the needs of society’ held central sway. Such an environment, he explained, did not require people to be engaged in life-long studies of the horse to be qualified to talk about the animal – rather that ‘the demands of commerce’ should be what dictated the shape of the equine economy.⁸³ What farmers simply had to do – horsemen now ejected – was to respond enthusiastically – and without fear – to demand which had become easier to do following the development of roads. Coaches, postal services, omnibuses – transportation for the masses rather than individuals – offered the farmer incentives to breed.⁸⁴

Such initiatives for claiming control of the horse – taking it away from the hands of horsemen – provided a basis on which the demands of agriculture, industry and commerce could be answered during the second half of the nineteenth century, when appetite for ‘driving’ horses increased even further; but it was a struggle. When

⁸² Ibid., 375-6.

⁸³ Ibid., 377.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 298-9.

Desvaux-Lousier, a breeder of the Percheron, wrote, in 1847, a book advocating the heavy horse, his concern still lay with the state studs, or *haras*, which stood in the way of the development of ‘driving’ horses. Noting pessimistically that the *haras* merely represented ‘an instrument for a society of amateurs interested in useless horses’, he pointed out how agriculture and the state did not speak the same language when it came to the kind of horses that were required for the country.⁸⁵ Similar to Mathieu de Dombasle, he believed it was time that ‘activities of princes should stick to their own areas ... and that it is time state funding is devoted to the improvement of useful horses’.⁸⁶ Before the French Revolution, Charles Morain de Sourdeval, a supporter of the Percheron, explained that ‘equine production was considered exclusively from the perspective of the art of horsemanship’ which meant that riding masters popularised the discourse that favoured Spanish and Arab horses.⁸⁷ But now the situation had changed with demand for horses that could pull vehicles. Drawing comfort from the decision of the *Congrès central d’agriculture*, in 1846, which advised that the state should not intervene to ‘transform all regions into a stud for Arab and thoroughbred horses’, Desvaux-Lousier sensed that at last the situation was ripe for heavy breeders, like him, to do as he pleased.⁸⁸ Confidently proclaiming that in France ‘one no longer walks, one rides less often and everyone wants to travel on vehicles’, he stressed how everybody was now after ‘driving’ horses:⁸⁹

The facts bear witness to the extraordinary increase in all forms of vehicular transportation in Paris and in other cities. Small cars are proliferating all over the place as roads become more attractive. Now, farmers, common travellers and tradesmen have cabs,

⁸⁵ Desvaux-Lousier, *De l’Avenir du cheval de trait, par un cultivateur du Perche* (Paris, 1847), 34.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 21-2.

⁸⁷ Charles Mourain de Sourdeval, *L’Agriculture, le cheval de guerre et le cheval de course* (Paris, 1860), 23.

⁸⁸ Desvaux-Lousier, *De l’Avenir du cheval de trait*, 24.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 5.

coaches or carts, which reflect the needs of commerce to move quicker and at low cost. Even agriculture is gradually replacing work done by oxen with work carried out by horses.⁹⁰

Such had been the crucial background to the emergence of the Percheron – along with the Boulonnais, Picard and Breton breeds – in northern France which grew in stature, importance and profitability as demand increased. During the eighteenth century, the Percheron had hardly existed. Since farmers produced only sufficient quantities of cereals to cover local consumption, oxen had still been preferred over horses as draught animals which meant little capital was invested in a horse that, before money flowed in, was more a ‘poulain’ than a ‘cheval’.⁹¹ But demand for ‘driving’ horses could be answered when enough oats could be produced to feed both man and horse, resulting in a situation in which the Percheron spread quickly across France as ‘the most lucrative in equine production’.⁹² Consequently, the Percheron came to be used extensively on the roads, especially as mail horses which operated from the north to the west and from the Midi up to Nantes, Tours, Limoges, Lyons, Dijon and Toulouse in 1825.⁹³ Later, when the railways temporarily halted its advances, it came to be used as horses that pulled omnibuses within towns and cities.⁹⁴ Even within agriculture, the horse gradually overtook the ox as the main source of traction in the northern regions of France, in particular the Maine and Normandy.

A similar process of conflict can be followed through the example of Prussia, which initially resisted calls for the breeding of heavy horses, but which eventually gave way to demand, firstly in the western provinces and then, later, in the traditional saddle-

⁹⁰ Ibid., 6.

⁹¹ Musset, *L'Élevage du cheval en France*, 154, 161.

⁹² Sourdeval, *Le cheval de guerre*, 23.

⁹³ Musset, *L'Élevage du cheval en France*, 166.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 172-3.

horse producing areas of East Prussia.⁹⁵ Following the Napoleonic wars, the Rhineland witnessed the establishment of agricultural societies. By contrast to the past when agriculture assumed an ambivalent stance towards horses, the worth of breeding for extra-military uses came to be recognised relatively early. Such societies had, from the outset, the aim to encourage domestic horse-breeding, or ‘Hauspferdezucht’, which would be sensitive to the demands and requirements of the regional economy.⁹⁶ During the early nineteenth century, the Rhineland possessed a state-instituted and horsemen-dominated stud, which deferred not only to Berlin, but which was tasked with spreading the taste for saddle horses. Consequently, stallions that were housed there were crossed with mares from across the western provinces which resulted in a disproportionate number of horses that were suited for the military, but less useful for agriculture, industry and commerce. Such an imbalance came to be questioned, however. Writing to Berlin in 1835, the Rhineland agricultural societies pleaded with the state for a stud that better catered to their own needs. Such pleas were eventually met, at least in principle, four years later, when the *Landgestüt* at Wickrath was founded. Even then, the traditional emphasis on riding horses proved cumbersome to dislodge, with the stud continuing to house horses that hardly conformed to local circumstance. As early as 1839, the Rhineland society sent a frustrated note to the *Oberstallmeister*, the head of state studs in Prussia, pleading with him to take into consideration the particular needs of the Rhine region by filling Wickrath with stallions ‘which corresponded to the requirements of the small farmers and which were big, strong and weighty’.⁹⁷ Despite these calls, pleas for sending stud horses that could form the foundation to a race of

⁹⁵ Here the focus is on the Rhineland. For a similar process, which occurred in neighbouring Westphalia, see Martin D. Sagebiel, ‘Westfalens Pferdezeit im 19. Jahrhundert. Förderungsmaßnahmen und Fehlentwicklungen’, *Westfälische Zeitschrift* 138 (1988), 149-72. For conflict, in this regard, with the kind of horses aristocracy desired see Heinz Reif, *Westfälischer Adel 1770-1860: vom Herrschaftsstand zur regionalen Elite* (Göttingen, 1979), 412-8.

⁹⁶ Karl Simons, *Die Entwicklung der rheinischen Pferdezeit (Rheinisch-belgisches Kaltblut)* (Berlin, 1912), 10-11.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 11.

heavy horses fell ultimately on deaf ears: the primary emphasis on military, or *Campagnepferde*, held firm sway well into the 1850s.⁹⁸ Eventually, however, a significant shift did occur in 1853 when another plea, submitted in Bonn, elicited a positive response from the stud director of Wickrath, Freiherr von den Brincken, who promised he would comply with demands to replace ‘stallions of Norman breed’ with ‘the highly-regarded and urgently requested (Flemish) Brabanter stallions’.⁹⁹ Even so, compliance was grudging, which was reflected in the stud director’s insistence he would not necessarily give up on the importance of crossing horses with stud horses that were designed to beget saddle horses, a process dubbed ‘Veredelung’.¹⁰⁰ By the 1860s, however, the insatiable thirst for heavy horses had not only contributed to industry importing substantially from abroad, but it had also encouraged inflationary prices. According to Waldschmidt, approximately 5-6,000 working horses, or *Arbeitspferde*, had been purchased abroad, a loss to the local economy of 1 million Thaler.¹⁰¹ What this trade revealed was how profitable the breeding and rearing of horses now irresistibly proved to be: previously it had cost only 80-100 Thaler to purchase a heavy horse; now prices had rocketed so that a driving horse could fetch between 200-300 Thaler, making it extremely lucrative to breed.¹⁰² Helped by a climate in which protectionist measures in general were called for to encourage domestic agricultural production, pressures were to eventually usher in change: the period between 1875 and 1883 witnessed the arrival of 67 Belgian heavy stud horses at Wickrath.¹⁰³ By 1890, the ratio between ‘riding’ and ‘driving’ stud horses came down increasingly in favour of the latter. While it had stood

⁹⁸ Ibid., 12.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 12-3.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 13.

¹⁰¹ Waldschmidt, *Vorschläge zur Förderung der Pferdezucht mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Rheinprovinz* (Bonn, 1865), 1.

¹⁰² Ibid., 6.

¹⁰³ Rita Aldenhoff, ‘Agriculture’ in Roger Chickering (ed.), *Imperial Germany: a historiographical companion* (London, 1996), 33; Simons (1912), 18.

at 48:1 in 1876, it was 89:75 in 1890 and by 1910 it eventually reached parity with 200:202.¹⁰⁴

By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries there was widespread recognition and fear in Berlin that success in heavy horse-breeding within the Rhineland would have a crippling effect on the breeding of lighter, saddle types within Germany as a whole, especially East of the Elbe, which the state had traditionally earmarked for the breeding of saddle horses. Such arrangements had been made between the state, which provided the stallions, and the farmer-breeders, who accepted them to cover their mares on the condition that the state would buy out the horses they bred as military remounts, while farmers would employ these light horses for agricultural work while being reared. This partnership proved mutually beneficial, as long as both parties were in agreement about the kind of horses they required. For much of the nineteenth century, the backward state of agriculture in Eastern Prussia meant light but weak horses were more than adequate to carry out the farm work demanded of them. But as the nature of agriculture altered and became more intensive, albeit belatedly, towards the end of the nineteenth century, a chasm opened up in what farmers on the one hand and the state on the other wanted from their horses. Such a state-of-affairs led many horsemen, such as Richard Schoenbeck, a breeder of remounts, to fear for the security of his country, if the breeding of cold-blooded horses was to escalate even further. ‘Though we are at present able to satisfy demands of the cavalry domestically’, he warned, ‘if the breeding of cold-blooded horses were to continue apace then demand would be difficult to satisfy in the event of war.’¹⁰⁵ Confronted with a proposal to divide Prussia between remount and cold-blooded horse-breeding areas, which was an arrangement designed, if anything, to protect saddle horse-breeding from the elements of the full-blown market, Schoenbeck still felt threatened, convinced as he was that private breeders would, without flinching

¹⁰⁴ Simons, *Die Entwicklung der rheinischen Pferdezucht*, 32.

¹⁰⁵ *Deutsche Landwirtschaftliche Presse* (DLP) 23 (November 1894), 225.

and out of scant consideration to their country, choose to line their coffers by responding to industrial and agricultural demand for heavy horses.¹⁰⁶ Such was the extent of the hostility of Schoenbeck towards ‘driving’ horses that he refused to even entertain the worth of cold-blooded horse-breeding for a second which, in his mind, ‘drops out of the realm of national horse-breeding (*Landespferdezucht*) and enters the realm of private breeders and communities. By contrast noble horse-breeding, which is designed for the purposes of war, is a matter for the state’.¹⁰⁷ By this time, of course, such romantic sentiments of the horsemen were cutting little ice. Countering his argument, Heinrich von Nathusius, a supporter of cold-blooded horses, turned to the issue of whether the breeding of ‘driving’ horses did not, in fact, belong to *Landespferdezucht*, to which he emphatically said it did. Not least because horse-breeding was now placed under the auspices of the agricultural ministry rather than the war ministry, which had been the case until the mid-nineteenth century, it had ‘just as much interest to serve the needs of agriculture’.¹⁰⁸ Twisting the knife even further, Nathusius went on to expose the pretence of his opponent, aggressively asking him to beg for money from the war ministry instead.¹⁰⁹

By the end of 1898, East Prussian breeders achieved partial victory when the Ministry of Agriculture agreed that, while the state would not actively encourage breeders to engage in the reproduction of heavy horses, it would not intervene to prevent them from doing so either.¹¹⁰ Emboldened by the setting up both of *Landwirtschaftskammer*, or agricultural chambers in 1894, and the Prussian *Zentralgenossenschaften*, or cooperatives in 1895, which made directly available money that had been controlled by the estate owners, farmer-breeders went a step further to

¹⁰⁶ *DLP* 8 (January 1894), 60.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ *DLP* 14 (February 1894), 124.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ *Pferdefreund* 35 (December 1898), 281.

seek concessions in 1902.¹¹¹ Requesting that the state ease regulations, Otto Gagzow pleaded that it accord regions – previously designated exclusively for remount purposes – to be allowed independence to breed heavy horses that would better serve the local agricultural interest.¹¹² Eventually, pressures from the Rhine province proved irresistible. Even within the traditional remount-rearing areas of East Prussia, which had dutifully obeyed the state, audible grievances could now be heard discussing the kind of horses breeders were allowed to produce. No doubt furtive glances towards their counterparts in the western provinces led to small farmer-breeders in East Prussia feeling constricted in what they were told to carry out, which, because it had little market value outside of the military, was exposed as unprofitable and risky.¹¹³ More fundamentally, East Prussian breeders felt they needed to look to heavier horses because those were the kind of horses increasingly in demand on their own farms in which horses would be employed before being sold on. Previously, the kind of horses that farmers bred and reared could, after several years' use, be offered to the military as remount horses: such horses were able to satisfy both the demands of agriculture and the army. Yet as the nature of agriculture became more intensive this cycle was broken. Since lighter horses could no longer be relied upon to pull increasingly heavy equipment, the farm needed heavier breeds, which stood in opposition to the demands of the state. As Gagzow explained: 'The light remount horses were neither able to pull on their own – in teams of four – the turnip-plough and other heavy farming equipment nor could they carry the turnip-plough on badly-maintained highways.'¹¹⁴ Such a situation was exacerbated through the drainage of skilled land-owning agricultural workers, which sought better livelihoods in the industrial regions of western Germany, leaving behind only landless day labourers and

¹¹¹ Aldenhoff, 'Agriculture', 39, 44-5. By 1899, out of the 150 cooperatives that had been established following the passing of the cooperatives act, 75 dealt with horse-breeding. See *Pferdefreund* 6 (February 1899), 45.

¹¹² Otto Gagzow, *Der Kampf um Kalt- und Warmblut in der Pferdezucht der preussischen Remonteprovinzen* (Posen, 1902), 62ff.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 56ff.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 61.

seasonal workers.¹¹⁵ Since the breeding of light horses, which were more delicate to rear, required greater skill than the breeding of heavier ones, an environment in which saddle horses could continue to be produced as before was no longer guaranteed.¹¹⁶ In the words of one landowner, the difference between skilled and unskilled labour had a direct effect on the quality of saddle horses. By contrast, he pointed out, workhorses were easier to breed. ‘Every experienced farmer will know that strong, round, apt horses are as easily cared for by a labourer,’ Dietrich Born pointed out, ‘while lighter, temperamental noble horses must be fed and cared for with greater attention and that such animals are quickly corrupted in the hands of inexperienced workers and consequently perform badly.’¹¹⁷ Such difficulties were reflected in an actual study carried out in the journal *Deutsche Landwirtschaftliche Tierzucht* which showed that in East Prussia 11.49 equine related accidents occurred out of a population of 10,000 horses, whereas the same ratio dropped to 4.37 accidents in the Rhineland, pointing to how much more care was needed for remounts, if losses were to be avoided.¹¹⁸ More significantly, however, draught horses had at least a broad market to cater to, even for low quality ones which had been rendered partially lame while being reared.¹¹⁹ By contrast, saddle horses not only lacked a market, but their quality could not be compromised. Ultimately, the problem lay with the dominance of the state, which in controlling what could and could not be bred, effectively chortled incentives and dictated prices.¹²⁰ Even when it attempted to widen the field of those providing it with saddle horses, in an effort to have a broader base from which it could look to procure quality horses, this policy had the effect of sowing resentment among traditional

¹¹⁵ Aldenhoff, ‘Agriculture’, 45-6.

¹¹⁶ Gagzow, *Der Kampf um Kalt- und Warmblut*, 61 ; Rittergutsbesitzer Dietrich Born, ‘Kaltblutzucht in Ostpreußen’, *DLT* 39 (Sept 1908), 460.

¹¹⁷ Rittergutsbesitzer Dietrich Born, ‘Kaltblutzucht in Ostpreußen’, *DLT* 39 (September 1908), 460.

¹¹⁸ *DLT* 2 (January 1908), 22.

¹¹⁹ Cf. Gagzow, *Der Kampf um Kalt- und Warmblut*, 56ff.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 59-60.

suppliers within East Prussia who perceived the move to be nothing less than an attempt to undercut prices even further.¹²¹

By the beginning of the twentieth century, then, it would be fair to say that ‘driving’ was firmly in control. When L. Hoffmann, a veterinarian in Stuttgart, surveyed the German horse-breeding scene in 1902, he found how much a romanticised view of the horse – which owed heavily to the ‘riding’ tradition – had given way to a rationalised perspective, which favoured heavy over light horses, economic need over military dictates, and calculation over patriotism. ‘What could one possibly want’, Hoffmann asked rhetorically, ‘in any area of business, from agriculture to haulage, from riding?’¹²² If breeders were to choose ‘to breed the most noble Spanish carousel horse, which had been paid enormous sums in its time’, they would, he added, ‘do as bad financially as those who, over fifty years ago filled their stables with Arab horses.’¹²³ Indeed, time was up on riding or lighter horses ‘since they can neither be of use for agriculture that uses deep plows nor for industry which requires suitably serviceable horses’. Only could saddle horses find employment as ‘military horses’, a preference which had made ‘German horse-breeding backward with regard to present circumstances’.¹²⁴ Pointing the finger at the favouritism the state had traditionally lavished on riding, Hoffmann accused it of not ‘having the right to demand that expenses in their entirety are used only for the so-called warm-blooded horses’.¹²⁵ By contrast, breeders had to escape from the clutches of the state by helping themselves – through breeding societies – so that they might not be tempted away from their core interests of breeding for ‘heavy transport’.¹²⁶ What breeders now had to face up to was reality: they could no longer operate within a world dominated by ‘ideals, aesthetics and passions’ – which had been possible when

¹²¹ Ibid., 60.

¹²² L. Hoffmann, *Spezielle Pferdezzucht. Zugleich eine Lanze für die Zucht des schweren Pferdes* (Leipzig, 1902), 2.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid., v.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 10.

horsemen still ruled – ‘but in place of all these sentiments the reckoning farmer and breeder should have a calculating mind and brain’.¹²⁷ Pushing the distinction further, he said that these days the issue was ‘not about “theories” of horse-breeding, like during the days of the gentleman, but about material need, namely about the “weight” of horses. The “shape” in itself – the width, length, or height of the horse – has become a side issue’.¹²⁸ When Hoffmann concluded that ‘horse-breeding, among all livestock breeding, represents always the most beautiful, the most important and the most venerable which can and should be of economic worth to the breeders’, he was very much decorating his statement with language developed by horsemen; but at the same time, he believed that horse-breeding could only function if breeders were aware that it was primarily an economic venture.¹²⁹ Echoing similar sentiments, Felix Hoesch put it in even more succinct terms: ‘Heavy horses cannot flourish in the long term if breeding is not conducted within existing economic relationships, situated within the wider context of business, and considered not outside of it, like some special sector.’¹³⁰ Horse-breeding was, in other words, a ‘noble’ pursuit, yes, but not one that allowed passion to make redundant the rules of the wider world. In short, the horse was no longer above the law.

b. Survival tactics of the riding classes

During the course of the nineteenth century, horsemen faced an uphill struggle: they had to survive in a world increasingly reliant on ‘driving’, which required not only different kinds of horses to those traditionally favoured by the riding classes, but also an equally variant ideology that placed the horse – and not the rider – at the centre. By

¹²⁷ Ibid., 14.

¹²⁸ Ibid., iv.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 14.

¹³⁰ Felix Hoesch, *Wie ist die Züchtung und Aufzucht kaltblütiger Pferde unter den deutschen Wirtschaftsverhältnissen am zweckmässigsten vorzunehmen?* (Leipzig, 1903), 3.

contrast to their predecessors in earlier centuries, horsemen living within the nineteenth century – which witnessed the takeover of the carriage, coach and later, more substantially, the omnibus – fully recognised they were on the back foot that led them to devise ingenious ways in which, if they could not claw back lost ground, they would at least fight their corner.

During the early-to-mid nineteenth century, horsemen still believed ‘riding’ could be rejuvenated. More than ten years following the end of the Revolutionary wars, which contributed to the temporary decimation of equine populations across Europe, the leading French equine publication *Journal des haras* took stock, in 1829, of how the equine economy had changed, but ultimately maintained the situation could still be improved. Pointing out despairingly but unoriginally that ‘driving’ had almost completely triumphed over ‘riding’ within the French context, it painted a gloomy picture of what was to come, if things were left as they are:

These days the proper taste for the art of horsemanship has declined. Not least because of the immense increase in the number of public vehicles, the situation has changed so much that on all the roads one encounters a hundred travellers on wheels for just one on horseback. Within the large cities, the young men have their Tilbury’s and in smaller towns one sees all too frequently young cavalry officers move about in these light vehicles instead of mounting their saddle horses.¹³¹

Such a description of the French equine landscape Viscount Aure would have surely recognised. Employed as a former riding master, or *écuyer*, of the Royal School of Horsemanship at Versailles before the fall of the Bourbon monarchy and then at the popular equestrian school at the Rue de Duphot, Aure stoutly believed in his calling to continue to uphold the art of horsemanship as he classically understood it.¹³² Even

¹³¹ *Journal des haras* (July 1829), 246-7.

¹³² Decarpentry, *Baucher et son école* (Paris, 1987), 18.

though he had been prepared to hold out judgment over the state of ‘horseflesh’, explaining away the cause of ‘deterioration’ by referring to the revolutionary wars, it eventually dawned on Aure that ‘for twelve years we have had time to repair our losses and make improvements. However the quality of breeding is constantly in decline’.¹³³ Shrilly warning government that ‘if the lighter horse is no longer in fashion it is because our country no longer has the proper taste of horse and has no horsemen!’, Aure believed a dismal situation would arise where the proper ‘taste’ for horses could no longer be acquired.¹³⁴ Similarly diagnosing the situation as one where French equitation was in decay, Eugène Chaplet looked nostalgically back to the past when, because ‘the art of riding had been scientifically constituted and ruled by schools of savants ... our equine industry prospered in France’.¹³⁵ During the era of the *ancien régime*, he continued, equestrian academies had been in existence which imparted a proper education to the young who would, upon return to their respective areas of residence and employment, use their acquired knowledge to encourage the production and consumption of horses that were consistent with what they had been taught to value. As Aure himself expressed it: ‘Exercise on horseback was considered then such an absolute necessity that youth, who practiced it from an early age, fought with elegance, skill and energy. During hunting, riding, the *manège*, or combat, these young men brought out the quality of their horses to the full. The proper taste for horses was propagated to such an extent during those times that our light horse breeds easily found statesmen who would use them.’¹³⁶ Clearly it was obvious what needed to be done, at least from the perspective of the horseman: re-establish equestrian academies as they had been prior to

¹³³ Antoine-Henri-Philippe-Léon Aure, *Aperçu sur la situation des chevaux en France* (Versailles, 1826), 3.

¹³⁴ Antoine-Henri-Philippe-Léon Aure, *Utilité d'une école normale d'équitation. De son influence sur l'éducation du cheval léger, sur les besoins de l'agriculture et sur les ressources qu'elle peut offrir à la classe pauvre* (Paris, 1845), 1.

¹³⁵ Eugène Chaplet, *Etablissement d'une école nationale modèle d'équitation. Régénération de la race chevaline. Inauguration de fêtes équestres, populaires et historiques* (Paris, 1851), 6.

¹³⁶ Aure, *Ecole normale d'équitation*, 7.

the Revolution. The *Journal des haras* summarised this rationale for returning to the past as follows:

It is thus necessary to re-awaken the taste for the art of horsemanship. It is necessary to re-establish the equestrian schools that have fallen into ruin. It is necessary to re-train teachers who, with grace and perseverance, are allowed to pursue careers that are considered honourable to engage in. To ensure the quality of what is taught, it would be necessary to recognise the need for founding a school.¹³⁷

Of course, there already existed the military academy at Saumur. Together with the *manèges* at Fontainebleau (1808) and at Saint-Germain (1810) the three schools represented places where the correct ‘taste’ for horses was properly handed down. But to horsemen, reliance on these essentially military establishments was insufficient. Since a self-confined institution like Saumur was ‘completely military in nature’, it was not placed institutionally in a position to ‘leave behind a legacy’ that would have an impact on decisions made within either agriculture or the state.¹³⁸ Pointing to the distinct lack of clout military academies would have in spreading the proper taste for horses far beyond its own sphere, the *Journal des haras* agreed horsemen had to found a more influential institution of learning:

The Royal Military Academy at Saumur, which is presently well-organised, does provide the army with skilled instructors. But a College of Education is needed to produce skilled instructors for civilian schools of horsemanship within the various regions which are necessary to revive the proper taste in horsemanship. By doing so, the wealthier classes can take up the art which will, in turn, increase the demand for and use of saddle horses.¹³⁹

¹³⁷ *Journal des haras* (July 1829), 247.

¹³⁸ Aure, *Ecole normale d'équitation*, 2.

¹³⁹ *Journal des haras* (July 1829), 248.

If the riding classes were to mount a realistic comeback – respected once again as major actors within the equine economy – ‘*une speciale de cavalerie*’ was needed which would be designed not only for the army ‘but for all classes of society’.¹⁴⁰ More specifically, Aure wanted to ‘found on a much larger basis’ places that trained men to become horsemen. Subsequently taking up positions as heads of studs and equestrian academies, their appointment would, it was thought, have ‘the most wonderful results’.¹⁴¹ By doing so, what Aure and his supporters envisaged was for horsemen to re-take control of the equine economy, occupying ‘diverse branches of equitation’.¹⁴²

Two points might be raised about what Aure and other horsemen advanced during the mid nineteenth century. By expressing deterioration in horseflesh in terms of a decline in riding and institutions that encouraged it, he was hardly being original. Such complaints stretched back to the time ‘driving’ first emerged as a threat during the sixteenth century. By the same token, moves to re-establish civilian schools of horsemanship had similar antecedents such as when Pluvinel and Broue moved to institute equestrian academies during the early seventeenth century.¹⁴³ Only in Aure’s case he was concerned that, because the military was now the only bastion that upheld the spirit of the rider, the art of horsemanship had to embrace a much wider circle of people. By contrast to less than one hundred years before, when the likes of the Tuileries Academy had moved to crush any bourgeois initiatives to spread the desirability of the *manège*, Aure now advocated the recruitment of new converts from a wider base of people, convinced as he was that it was the number of horsemen who rode saddle horses that was key to turning things around. What is striking about Aure’s decision to do so, then, lay less in his audacious belief that he could overturn the juggernaut of ‘driving’

¹⁴⁰ Aure, *Ecole normale d’équitation*, 2.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁴³ See Chapter one, 37ff.

than in his tacit recognition that control over the horse had to take place within a competitive market – an idea that the breakthrough of ‘driving’ had brought about. Previously, the riding classes had remained romantically aloof from considering their animal as an economic product. Perched as they were high on the mount, horsemen had been oblivious to the idea that their ‘noble’ creature – whose breeding was conducted out of passion, pride and patriotic duty – should in fact obey the same laws as any other traded product. When Aure sought one of the chief causes of a decline in quality horses in the power of the horse dealers, however, he implied that riding horses had lost their appeal as a commodity.¹⁴⁴ Coming to realise that price mattered, Aure understood that the army was not being competitive enough about offering breeders incentives:

One cannot hope that landowners will breed horses exclusively for remounts. Prices are too modest for this to happen. What one must recognise is that breeders consider the remount to be the last place in which to sell their horses – the remount is not the only market they cater to. Therefore it is essential to establish an outlet, which can increase the price of saddle horses to such an extent that it far surpasses the costs of breeding them.¹⁴⁵

By recognising the fact that horses also obeyed the rule of demand and supply, calls for the re-establishment of civilian schools of horsemanship had as their objective the creation of a new generation of horsemen who would exert an influence over the equine economy by increasing the demand for riding horses – and not by keeping them exclusive.

Ultimately the efforts of Aure came up short. Failing to find a sympathetic audience who agreed with him and took pity on the horsemen’s plight, he could not open doors when possession of an equestrian education might have done in the past. Such was the desperation horsemen felt and the difficulties involved in realising a grand scheme

¹⁴⁴ Aure, *Aperçu sur la situation des chevaux*, 4-5.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

that Chaplet resorted to pitching a more realistic alternative. He asked, in 1851, for space in which to hold twelve equestrian festivals on the Champs-Élysées for 50 years, all at a total cost of 192,750 francs, in which the carrousel, equestrian ballets and circuses would be put on for the benefit of the public.¹⁴⁶ Even though significant concessions were made to commercial expediency, which would have made the proposal attractive as a self-sustaining business model, Chaplet clearly had an ulterior motive: he wanted to transmit and teach, by means of festivals, in which ‘pre-eminent historical figures from ancient, medieval and modern times will be the sole heroes’ what he considered to be the important roles horsemen had played in history.¹⁴⁷ No doubt Chaplet drew inspiration from the circus, which had developed popularity with the staging of hippodrama during the first half of the nineteenth century; but in his case the aim was probably more to confer on the audience the importance of the rider rather than the horse, a transformation in perspective touched upon in an earlier chapter.¹⁴⁸ Even if he had been successful in realising his plan, however, Chaplet would not have been able to overturn this shift towards the horse which was now even entering the military realm. Lamenting the disastrous situation that Maximilien Caccia believed had developed, following the closure of the Royal School of Equitation at Versailles, he described the significant impasse in evidence among the cavalry:

When one follows riders performing their movements, one will only witness one out of ten riders who are in control of their horses and only one out of a hundred who are comfortable using their weapons. During the alignment of horses, one will bear witness to shocking irregularities in formation. During the ensemble exercises, one will see the head of the regiment try to sort out the chaos because the horses don't want to move forward or because the horses have carried riders away...It is not only among the rank-and-file one

¹⁴⁶ Chaplet, *Régénération de la race chevaline*, 13.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Chapter three, 160ff.

notices the effects of being ignorant of the art of horsemanship: one sees even senior officers having to temporarily forgo their commands because their horses demand all their attention... Can it not happen, then, that even General Staff officers would have to renounce a command since their horses don't want to move in the direction that they would want them to go? ¹⁴⁹

Clear from the musings of Caccia is the extent to which the degeneration of the horse was linked, not only to the general decline in the skills of the horseman and the art associated with it, but also, and more powerfully, with the emergence of independent and autonomous horses which, in almost taking on lives of their own, no longer seemed content to obey their masters, pouring scorn over what horsemen had traditionally held dear.

By the 1870s, however, this ideology, which placed the horse at the centre, managed to infiltrate even further into realms traditionally occupied by the riding classes. Such an example was steeplechase racing, which emerged parallel to the development of flat-racing when horseracing had been introduced to the European continent in a major way from England during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, spawning organizations that imitated the English Jockey Club. ¹⁵⁰ Those influences led, in the particular case of Germany, to the foundation of the *Norddeutsche Jockey Club*, in 1840, which accepted the principles underlying the English system in which the horse was placed at the centre. ¹⁵¹ Two years later it duly brought out a *General Stud Book* in which 242 people, mainly from the upper classes, were registered alongside information on the 779 thoroughbreds they collectively owned. ¹⁵² From the very start, the horseracing scene

¹⁴⁹ Maximilien Caccia, *De l'Equitation militaire* (Paris, 1842), 39.

¹⁵⁰ See, for example, Nicole de Blomac, *La gloire et le jeu: des hommes et des chevaux (1766-1866)* (Paris, 1991).

¹⁵¹ Cf. *Gedanken über Errichtung eines Jockey-Klubs* (Berlin, 1840), 6.

¹⁵² Beate Ödendorfer, 'Die Geschichte des modernen Pferderennsports (Trabrennsprt/Galopprennsport) in Österreich unter Berücksichtigung der internationalen Entwicklung', (Unpublished Masters Dissertation, University of Vienna, 1987), 16. More than 15 years later, the Jockey Klub took stock of the situation,

in Germany was characterised by a preponderance not only of flat-racing, but also of steeplechase riding, which drew its legitimacy from the supposed military usefulness racing had for so-called *Herrenreiter*, or ‘gentlemen riders’, who were invariably employed within the Prussian army. Even though it took after flat-racing, which had first been held in Doberan, Mecklenburg, in 1822, steeplechase racing took off after its first race in Breslau in 1847.¹⁵³ Of course, research still needs to be undertaken to uncover the extent to which steeplechase events took place, who promoted them, and whether they consciously tried to set themselves up in opposition to flat-racing.¹⁵⁴ What does seem clear, however, at least in the case of Germany, is that both racing forms developed independently of each other during the mid nineteenth century, with different authorities responsible for holding meetings. Crucial to the fortunes of steeplechase racing, which was put on by various riding clubs or *Reitervereine*, was the establishment of a central jockey club. When the co-founder of the aristocratic journal, *Der Sporn*, Fedor André, called upon the various regional jockey clubs to join forces in 1866, he led an initiative that resulted in the foundation of the Union Club (later Union Klub) a year later, with its headquarters in Berlin. Set up three years before German unification under Bismarck, the nominal reason put forward was the need to catch up with the likes of England and France which already boasted a central organisation.¹⁵⁵

What was significant about this move became evident only seven years later, in 1874, when the Union Klub reached into non flat-racing areas, declaring its intention to become involved in all equine matters by setting up a National Horse-breeding

with reference to horses’ bloodline, when it published *Pedigree der Vollblut-Hengste welche in Deutschland bis einschliesslich 1857 zur Zucht benutzt worden sind* (Berlin, 1857).

¹⁵³ ‘Die Kinderjahre unseres Herren-Reiters’, *Der Sporn* 22 (May 1886), 147.

¹⁵⁴ Writing in the early twentieth century, Gallus was of the strongest opinion that steeplechase racing had emerged in opposition to flat-racing. See Clemens Gallus, *Woran krankt unser Herrensport? Hat das Rennreiten praktischen Wert? und andere lose Betrachtungen* (Stuttgart, 1902), 29-30.

¹⁵⁵ Franz Charles de Beaulieu, *Der klassische Sport. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Rennsports und der Vollblutzucht* (Berlin, 1942), 62-73.

Commission (*Landespferedezuchtkommission*).¹⁵⁶ What the Union Klub proposed, influenced as it was by the principles of the English system, was to make the horse, as opposed to the rider, the focal point by introducing professional jockeys, complete with handicapped weights, into all forms of racing. Much of the problem that flat-racing advocates saw in steeplechase events, as they appeared to them, was that they offered ‘nothing useful either to the horse or to the rider’.¹⁵⁷ Even if horses used for the flat were transferred to steeplechase racing, the Commission observed, they ‘would be too expensive to expose them to the contingencies of steeplechase racing, so that the employment of only second or third class horses could be considered for steeplechase events’.¹⁵⁸ Such an arrangement had come to pass because horsemen, whose talents were as diverse as their penchants were for showing off, could not be relied upon to deliver results that contributed to the improvement of horse-breeding, based as their type of racing was not on the exactness of the horse’s performance but on the whims of the rider. As the Commission of 1881 succinctly put it: ‘Naturally, jockeys ride on average better and more evenly than gentlemen. Such a situation in which a number of gentlemen ride so much better than others would, if jockeys are comprehensively excluded, give rise to the perception that these races are not tests for the performance of horses, but just tests of the rider.’¹⁵⁹ What thus had to be done was for ‘these races to be turned into jockey races, so that all inconsistencies, which steeplechase racing brings along with it, can at least be rectified through the adoption of a competent rider’.¹⁶⁰ By doing so, every chance could be given for the horse to perform, with professional jockeys there merely for the ride (‘Mitreiten’), which enabled human ‘mistakes’ to be kept down to a

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 94, 98.

¹⁵⁷ *Der Sporn* 6 (February 1875), 43.

¹⁵⁸ F. Alpert (ed.), *Verhandlungen der Commission zur Förderung der Pferdezucht in Preußen im Monat Juni 1876* (Berlin, 1876), 25.

¹⁵⁹ *Verhandlungen der Commission zur Förderung der Pferdezucht in Preußen im Auftrage des Königlich Preussischen Ministers für die landwirtschaftlichen Angelegenheiten* (Berlin, 1881), 110.

¹⁶⁰ *Commission 1876*, 27

minimum.¹⁶¹ Such an arrangement inspired confidence, the Commission implied, when it came to ascertain the true worth of ‘horseflesh’.¹⁶² Confidently proclaiming the superiority of the horse over the rider, a correspondent of the *Sporn* cited the testimony of Graf Fritz Metternich – one of the best steeplechase riders in Germany at the time – as favourable evidence of how little horsemen stood a chance against quality horses:

Given that domestic steeplechase racing is declining, only two or three half-lame horses of marginally superior quality, accompanied by half-decent gentlemen riders, would be enough to take away all the main prizes and dominate the sport of steeplechase racing... This is a detrimental situation for the value of steeplechase riding.¹⁶³

Such moves to place steeplechase racing on a completely different footing were naturally resisted by horsemen, who continued to maintain that races were environments in which their military prowess as riders should, above all, be tested and developed. What they took particular objection to was the kind of prize money being offered by the Union Klub which, while meant to be an incentive to breed better horses, was not interpreted as such by proud horsemen. By contrast to the professional jockey, who would be spurred on by the lure of money, Frenzel, an East Prussian landowner explained, the horseman would be emotionally indifferent to competition: ‘When a young man mounts a horse in a steeplechase event, he is fully aware of the danger to which he exposes himself. If he were victorious, he would celebrate it as a beautiful triumph; but if he were to lose, it would equally be a beautiful defeat’.¹⁶⁴ Emphasising the virtues of ‘Care, calm, skill, courage, and boldness’, Buggenhagen, an avid rider, added: ‘Steeplechase racing – or gentlemen riding – have for us the one purpose of

¹⁶¹ *Der Sporn* 6 (February 1875), 43.

¹⁶² Cf. *Commission 1876*, 20-1

¹⁶³ Cited in ‘Zur Reformfrage im Hinderniß-Sport’, *Der Sporn* 15 (April 1876), 131-4, 3.

¹⁶⁴ *Commission 1876*, 26

training up horse and rider. It is not about making money, and it should be kept as such.¹⁶⁵

Much of the reason why horsemen objected to the Union Klub's audacious proposals was because the jockeys, who were uniformly trained to merely bring out the best in horses and otherwise shun the limelight, came from lower down the social echelons. Such was the discomfort in sharing the steeplechase experience with jockeys that one writer in the *Sporn* openly aired the widespread antipathy that 'the majority of gentlemen cannot come to terms with the fact that they will be riding alongside stable boys of friends or errand boys of colleagues.' 'Riding in races', the writer stressed, demanded 'physical as well as mental character' which those who 'perhaps grew up in a stable and only happened to be good at riding' could not possibly possess.¹⁶⁶ What gentlemen riders really feared, a reformist conversely taunted, was that their poor riding skills would be exposed to public scrutiny when pitted against the superior skills of professional jockeys, whose low social origins would only rub salt into their wounds, rubbishing the natural link between riding and the upper classes.¹⁶⁷ Such a take on why riders objected to competition with jockeys should not be taken too far, however. By contrast to the agitation that criticism was made to cause the riding classes, horsemen would arguably not have shied away from confrontation, believing that they were the superior riders. But the point was that gentlemen riding and jockey riding were not the same thing: they were in fact two opposing styles that had contradictory objectives in mind. By taking the bait and allowing professional jockeys to participate, albeit initially in races doted with more than 2,000 Marks of prize money, the principle of the centrality of the rider would fundamentally be altered.¹⁶⁸ This was akin to accepting the Trojan horse – except riders saw through this. Such was the reason why, after more than six

¹⁶⁵ *Commission 1876*, 28.

¹⁶⁶ *Der Sporn* 7 (February 1875), 52.

¹⁶⁷ *Der Sporn* 6 (February 1875), 43.

¹⁶⁸ *Der Sporn* 13 (March 1876), 98.

years of debate, German riding clubs took the decision to have nothing to do with the Union Klub. During 1881, the *Verband deutscher Reiter und Pferdezuchtvereine* made the crucial step of excluding any gentleman rider who competed against jockeys from races conducted by member societies.¹⁶⁹ By doing so, horsemen were not only simply shutting themselves away from the wider world, they were upholding a central tenet of what steeplechase racing meant to them. For it represented ‘the only dangerous, knightly preoccupation left today’ which had to be preserved at all costs.¹⁷⁰

Such instances portray a picture of horsemen wriggling and writhing. But they could do little to halt the advance of a horse-centred rather than a rider-venerated view holding sway over the equine economy. By the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, gradual acceptance of this new reality, while difficult to swallow, led to new arrangements in which, by contrast to the conflict over steeplechase racing, horsemen tried to meet the challenge head on. Successfully marrying both the whims of the rider and the need to test horses, long-distance races, or *Distanzritte*, can be seen as a positive attempt by horsemen to acclimatise themselves to new circumstances rather than bury their heads in the sand. Perhaps the most popular of these was held during the first three days of October, 1892, when Austrian and German army officers came together to compete in a *Distanzritt*, which took place between Berlin and Vienna, the object of the exercise being to reach the opponent’s capital first. Generously doted with prize money that went from 20,000 Marks, which was awarded to the winner, down to 1,500 Marks, handed to the competitor who came in seventh, the event was designed to encourage as many horsemen to compete. Subsequently, some 106 German riders started the race in Berlin, while some 93 Austro-Hungarian riders set off from Vienna, with 76 and 69 riders respectively managing to finish the gruelling endurance

¹⁶⁹ *Commission 1881*, 108.

¹⁷⁰ *Der Sporn* 7 (February 1875), 53.

race.¹⁷¹ By all accounts, the event proved to be a success, not only because it managed to attract a wide field of participants, but also because it generated publicity among broader society. Euphoric scenes were reported when the German competitors set off from Tempelhof, while the Austro-Hungarian participants were greeted jubilantly upon their arrival in Berlin three days later.¹⁷² Reflecting on what he had witnessed a year after the event, Erwin Pott, a professor in Munich, described the enthusiasm for the *Distanzritt*:

Rarely has a sports event generated so much general interest among the masses than the Berlin-Vienna *Distanzritt* which took place last autumn. People, who had not even taken the slightest notice of horseracing etc, suddenly acted like engaged sports-lovers, proclaiming an intensive interest in the organised race, and were so wrapped up in the event, as though the fate of their fatherland hang on its results.¹⁷³

Before such long-distance races culminated in the large scale public event that was the Berlin-Vienna race, it seems similar events had been organised by individual riding societies, which set out tests over long distances, unpredictable weather conditions and prohibitive countryside during the mid 1870s. Coinciding as this initiative did with the time when the Union Klub shook the legitimacy of the steeplechase as a rider-centred event, it would not be unreasonable to assume that *Distanzritt*, such as the inaugural one organised by the Riding Society of Westphalia (*Westfälischer Reiter-Verein*) between Münster and Hannover in 1875, was a response to come up with a format that could satisfy both the pride of the rider and the demands of the time.¹⁷⁴ Clear from the proposal that Otto von Monteton put forward is the lengths he went to align himself with

¹⁷¹ *Distanzritt Wien-Berlin im October 1892* (Vienna, 1893), 3-7.

¹⁷² *DLP* 81 (October 1892), 840-1.

¹⁷³ Emil Pott, *Der Distanzritt und die Pferdezucht. Ein offenes Wort an deutsche und oesterreichisch-ungarische Pferdezüchter sowie an andere Pferdeinteressenten* (Munich, 1893), 1.

¹⁷⁴ Otto von Monteton, 'Ueber den projektirten Wett-Ritt von Münster nach Hannover', *Der Sporn* 19 (May 1875), 163-4.

the need to test the performance of horses, proclaiming in fact that his version of racing – as opposed to the flat – was better at assessing the true worth of horses. ‘This is precisely the reason why riding and the testing of horses have so much significance,’ he argued, because *Distanzritt* ‘in contrast to the fashion of the times is designed to test performance, and to seek out abnormality, that is overlooked when there is too much adherence to blood’.¹⁷⁵ Such moves to accept horse-centred ideology reflected hardened times among horsemen. Lacking equestrian academies, which had historically represented their interests and provided them with roofs under which they could comfortably practice the art of horsemanship, there was little else they could do other than seek solace in the countryside, away from the urban areas in which ‘driving’ had completely taken over.¹⁷⁶ In Germany, the last riding academies had closed down in Dresden, in 1840, and in Hannover, in 1866, both of which were only half-heartedly superseded by the *Militär-Reit Institute* or Military Riding Institutes.¹⁷⁷ But above all, *manège* riding had ceased to have little applicability on the field of combat: the nature of modern warfare necessitated horses – and riding styles – that were quick, enduring, run great distances behind enemy lines and provided reconnaissance, demands answered, in many ways, by the rigours of *Distanzritt*.¹⁷⁸ Consequently, as the *Sporn* pointed out in 1872, even horses at the famed Spanish Riding School in Vienna – an institution of traditional riding or *Schulreiten* – were considered unproven on the battlefield. Even if these Lipizzaner horses had proved enduring and lived on to when they were 20 or 30 years old, they could not be trusted, since ‘these animals are constantly trained on soft ground, which is not always the case with cavalry horses.’¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 164.

¹⁷⁶ Cf. *Der Pferdezüchter* 6 (1873), 3.

¹⁷⁷ *Der Sporn* 12 (1872), 91-3.

¹⁷⁸ Dennis Erwin Showalter, ‘Prussian Cavalry 1806-1871: the Search for Roles’, *Militärgeschichtliche Mitteilungen* 19/1 (1976), 7-22, 15; Charles Townshend (ed), *The Oxford Illustrated History of Modern War* (Oxford, 1997), 188.

¹⁷⁹ *Der Sporn* 27 (1872), 217.

How was the centrality of the horse received among competing horsemen? Despite concessions to the notion that horses needed to be tested, riders who participated in the *Distanzritt*, and particularly the Berlin-Vienna race of 1892, did so because it seemed to put the horseman back in control.¹⁸⁰ When the *Allgemeine Sportzeitung* later considered why so many Austro-Hungarian officers took part, it pointed not only to the financial incentives for doing so, but also to the lack of rules that governed the selection of horses as being a major pull: ‘above all the financial incentives made participation easier, while the small number of conditions placed on the choice of horses and the doing away of all limitations regarding weight’ contributed also.¹⁸¹ Such freedom to choose contrasted sharply with steeplechase racing, which was, by now, weighed down with a whole gamut of regulations regarding age, breed, pedigree and past performances for horsemen to have any remaining say in the matter. Of course, there were some, like Freiherr von Reitzenstein, who finished second in the race, with whom the idea of racing over long distances, in which speed was more important than how one reached the destination, stood suspiciously at odds with some basic principles of the art of horsemanship. ‘A good rider does not ask of the horse more’, he pronounced, ‘than is necessary for victory. He knows what his horses are capable of. He knows the horses’ strengths, he can see and assess his opponents during races, he can underrate or overrate horses and change his riding tactic in an instant during a critical moment.’¹⁸² Similarly, General von Rosenberg cast doubt over the utility of *Distanzritt*, suggesting that hunting or *Jagdreiten* was a better test of the rider’s skill, because he would have to negotiate all sorts of terrain as nature threw at him – not simply paved roads along which the long distance rider mindlessly galloped.¹⁸³ Even so, these were small objections. Eventually Reitzenstein himself decided to enter the competition (albeit at the last minute), because

¹⁸⁰ Cf. *Der Sporn* 10 (March 1876), 76.

¹⁸¹ *Allgemeine Sportzeitung* (15 March 1896), 215.

¹⁸² Freiherr von Reitzenstein, ‘Mein Distanzritt Berlin-Wien’, *Beiheft zum Militär-Wochenblatt* (Vol. 1, 1893), 1-24, 2.

¹⁸³ Cited in *DLP* 83 (October 1892), 861.

the benefits, militarily, from doing so outweighed any compromise one had to make on the purity of horsemanship. By testing the ‘harmonious collaboration of rider and horse’, he convinced himself, the *Distanzritt* had ‘invaluable worth: it was sufficient to establish that horses could remain strong three days and three nights without having to rest and eat... The fruits of the *Distanzritt* will show themselves first in war’.¹⁸⁴ Even though Reitzenstein accepted the role the horse played in the event – ‘The testing of the horses during the long-distance race was a military requirement’ – which loomed far larger than in any activity horsemen had participated in before, he still romanticised that *Distanzritt* represented something that was qualitatively different from mere horseracing. ‘But this kind of racing is not about showing that one horse is better than another,’ he insisted, ‘rather what is shown – as demanded by representatives of both armies – is the ability of rider and horse being able to exert power.’¹⁸⁵ Such a defense reveals equally how the riding classes, despite their unrepentant protection of their ideals, did nonetheless come to accommodate themselves within new equine arrangements.

More striking still is how the *Distanzritt* came to be praised not only by the riding classes, but also by agronomists, who commended the idea not as some atavistic expression of the medieval knight, but as something that showed the way forward for the breeding of lighter horses. Such breeding, they reasoned, could only benefit from having events that published extensively the results of races, so that the true quality of the participating horses could be contrasted and compared – much in the same way flat-racing had been doing for over 50 years.¹⁸⁶ Particularly excited by the *Distanzritt* was Emil Pott, a Professor of Agriculture, who even saw potential in expanding the arrangement, enthusing how in a modified form it could act as an incentive for ‘breeders of warm-blooded horses’ who would benefit from ‘appropriately-organised *Distanzritte*, which would receive generous support from the state, so that they can be elevated into a

¹⁸⁴ Reitzenstein, ‘Mein Distanzritt’, 23.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁸⁶ Cf *DLP* 90 (Nov 1892), 924-5.

permanent institution'.¹⁸⁷ Carried away by his passions, however, Pott wanted to erode the freedom of the rider in competition which had, after all, been the main attraction. Most telling is how he proposed to take away the individuality of the horseman – thus increasing the reliability of comparing horses' performance – by circumscribing the route he would be allowed to take. Only by doing so, he argued, 'would differences for both sides – either for the outward or the inward journey – be neutralised in a completely fair fashion'.¹⁸⁸ Even though Pott did not go as far as to advocate the introduction of a system of weights – and thus the introduction of jockeys that such thinking implied – he nevertheless set down constraints on who could ride in an attempt, once more, to heighten the accuracy of measurement.¹⁸⁹ Revealingly, Pott at the end re-brands what he proposed, from *Distanzritt* (long-distance riding) to *Distanzrennen* (long-distance racing), making it explicit that his version had an emphasis on the horse rather than the rider.¹⁹⁰

By the beginning of the twentieth century, this shift in perspective reached new levels with breeders taking advantage of this situation. Responding to Pott's insights, Otto von Funcke represented a group of saddle-horse breeders who felt the effects of focusing on the horse by means of testing its quality in long-distance races. Previously, breeders of warm-blooded horses, or *Halbblut*, had to play second fiddle to the cold-blooded workhorse, which had managed, as the example of the Rhineland has amply shown, to become prominent by responding to the demands of industry, commerce and agriculture. By contrast, light horse breeders had been reliant on the state rather than the market for demand, and it was invariably the case that horsemen held the reins. Such horsemen had not, according to Funcke, ever contemplated the pedigree of the horses they rode. 'Often officers do not even know the origins of their chargers', he lamented,

¹⁸⁷ Pott, *Distanzritt*, 4.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 34.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 34-5.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 32.

‘I know cases where, despite all effort, it was impossible to establish [the pedigree of the horse], even though birth certificates are always delivered when purchasing remounts. Even in the stalls one cannot find, on the slates, reference to origin and race.’¹⁹¹ By contrast, the *Distanzrennen* had the potential to place the limelight on the horse itself which, in turn, would encourage breeders all the more. ‘Would not every breeder express delight, would it not be a lasting fillip for him’, he pleaded, ‘if in all the newspapers, on the occasion of publishing the results of the Kaiser Prize, he could read his name as the breeder of one of the victorious horses of the coveted prize?’¹⁹² By doing so, it would encourage, as the English system had been doing for decades, to breed and rear better horses based on the comparative results gained from races. As Funcke put it:

Within the sport of racing, one has come to the conclusion years ago that it is important to honour the name of the breeder at every opportunity... Behind the report of every big race stand the breeders as the winners... And on this the warm-blooded races have to place more emphasis than in the past. By recognizing this need our level of breeding will be further improved.¹⁹³

Such developments point to the extent to which, even within the realm of the riding classes, who had managed to maintain their hold on lighter saddle horses, the horse became centrally important. More than ninety years after the English system caused a storm, the main premises of the system infiltrated even the thinking of the riding classes: the horse-centred had triumphed over the rider-venerated view of the horse by the early twentieth century.

¹⁹¹ Otto von Funcke, ‘Unsere Halbblutzucht’, *DLP* 17 (February 1904), 140.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 140.

¹⁹³ Otto von Funcke, *Das deutsche Halbblutpferd. Betrachtungen und Zusammenstellungen über Zucht, Aufzucht und Leistungen deutscher Halbblutpferde nebst einer Sammlung von Distanzritt-Berichten* (Berlin, 1903), 38.

What, one might ask, happened to the humanitarian element in the staging of the *Distanzritt*? After all, in view of the amount of publicity it generated, it would be natural to presume that animal protection enthusiasts would have ventured an opinion as to the treatment of horses, which were forced to work day and night for three whole days. Despite the relatively muted response to the *Distanzritt*, held in 1892, substantial complaints were expressed following the 1909 event, which managed to kill, it was claimed, approximately 50 horses as a result of the extraordinary pressures the animals had been placed under.¹⁹⁴ Casting doubt over the legitimacy of such activities, the humanitarian journal *Anwalt* pointed to the technological advances modern society was now making that surely made racing horses replaceable and thus obsolete. ‘One must have the courage to repeat, again and again, that such extreme long-distance races have absolutely no justification’, it noted, ‘in view of the technical advances of the modern age (telephone, automobiles and airplanes) which under cut any worth racing could possibly have.’¹⁹⁵ Taking the upper class participants – such as Graf Starhemberg and Freiherr von Reitzenstein – to task, the *Anwalt* cast further doubt over their understanding of a ‘noble’ pursuit, dismissing the historic connection between riding and the horse:

Our opinion is that a really ‘noble’ person would seek out equally noble pursuits and, when handed time and commitment, would find enough opportunities in which he would look to palliate the misery and hurt as well as banish evil from the world. Putting on a racing event, with these noble principles in mind, would be a marvellous demonstration for the great, the highly-standing and the rich of the world. But how many of them do we really find these days?¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁴ *Anwalt* (October 1908), 147.

¹⁹⁵ ‘Die große Wettfahrt von Wien nach Berlin in zweierlei Beleuchtung’, *Anwalt* (November 1909), 163.

¹⁹⁶ *Anwalt* (October 1908), 150.

From an equine perspective, however, it is striking how little humanitarians understood about the equine economy. They were oblivious to the conflict ‘driving’ and ‘riding’ had engendered. They did not recognise that two opposing views of the horse had emerged from this clash. And they could not see, as a result, that the *Distanzritt* was an attempt to revive ‘riding’ alongside tests of participating horses. As Major-General of the Prussian army and representative of the Horse Protection Society (*Pferdeschutzvereinigung*), E. Zobel was placed in a unique position to provide clarity on this issue. Pointing to how the *Herrenfahrer Klub* of Berlin, who organized the event, had been in constant contact with his organisation, Zobel explained that proposals to ban riders who pushed horses too hard had been implemented.¹⁹⁷ Even so, Zobel could not ultimately rally round his fellow officers in the army who had competed. ‘Of course one can raise the question of whether, in the era of the railway, the automobile, the bicycle and the airplane the performance-testing of horses ... has its justification’, he accepted and then came down on horsemen who overstepped the line of cruelty, arguing, in alliance with the humanitarians: ‘[races] must however be conducted in such a way that the horses are not ridden beyond a certain limit.’¹⁹⁸ By doing so, Zobel’s reaction contrasted sharply with that of a leading proponent of the *Distanzritt* in 1892 who laughed off any suggestion that members of animal protection societies could talk authoritatively about a creature that they had never ridden:

The officers know only too well that they can achieve a higher purpose by applying themselves fully to the task. More than easy would it be for people to write an article for an animal protection society from the comfort of their own homes, but there are times

¹⁹⁷ Zobel, ‘Die Fernfahrt Wien-Berlin 1909’, *Anwalt* (November 1909), 164

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 165.

when love towards the horse must be cast aside and, in certain cases, love of the horse has to be compromised for a higher purpose.¹⁹⁹

Much can of course be made of such tensions, which can be couched in terms of the middle class view of cruelty imposing itself and restricting the behaviour even of the upper class who engaged in the *Distanzritt*. Such an insight can, as a result, act as a corrective to works which stress the extent to which humanitarians were concerned with the cruelty of the lower classes.²⁰⁰ But the incomprehension of the animal protection movement, which had developed its basis of support since the early nineteenth century in towns and cities, reveals, more interestingly, how it historically had little to do with the clash between ‘driving’ and ‘riding’, on which previous chapters have concentrated. Evolving within a particular urban context, humanitarians’ view of the horse had been forged at a time when ‘driving’ had already established itself on the street as the main form of movement, which made it difficult for them to understand the reasons behind why *Distanzritt* came into being. When humanitarians came to apply their ideas of cruelty to the horse, they did so overwhelmingly with reference not to saddle horses but to heavy horses, which were operated not by riders but by drivers whose morals were at issue. Why the animal protection movement showed an interest in the *Distanzritt* at all was because it started and ended in urban conglomeration, whose inhabitants bore witness to the cruel scenes of worn-out and knackered horses, stumbling over the finishing lines in Berlin and Vienna. But what took place between the two capitals – and why *Distanzritt* was conceived – humanitarians were oblivious about. To explain the different dynamics at work within towns and cities, it is thus necessary to devote the final chapter to a consideration of the urban environment and the place of the horse within it.

¹⁹⁹ *DLP* 90 (November 1892), 923.

²⁰⁰ Jutta Buchner-Fuhs, *Kultur mit Tieren: zur Formierung des bürgerlichen Tierversständnisses im 19. Jahrhundert* (Münster, 1996).

Chapter Five

The dynamics of ‘driving’, ‘walking’ and ‘riding’ within urban Europe, c.1750-1900

By the middle of the eighteenth century the equestrian statues, which had reached their apotheosis during the era of absolute monarchy, had lost their charm, assertion and hold over the population that had looked up to them within urban centres. During their heyday, equestrian monuments, such as those of the ‘Sun King’ Louis XIV on the Place Vendôme in Paris, exuded an authoritarian, triumphal and militaristic air which demanded respect from those who walked below them, reminding subjects of their lowly positions within society.¹ When an equestrian statue of Louis XV came to be designed in the late 1750s, however, the sculptor Edmé Bouchardon expressed concerns about presenting it as overtly individualistic and authoritarian. Such reservations led him to reject the dramatic rearing pose – so central in equestrian representation – since it would have lent the monument an uneasy triumphal and arrogant feel. What was offered instead was a king, still nevertheless perched high on horseback, but assuming a more sedate posture, ‘which stressed the pacifist rather than the conqueror’.² Emphasising this point further, the pedestal on which the horse was mounted was decorated with the royal virtues of Force, Peace, Prudence and Justice in place of defeated slaves at the four corners.³ Even though Bouchardon’s work was inaugurated in what is now the Place de la Concorde in 1763, by this time sufficient doubt had crept in about the real need to

¹ See Peter Burke, *The fabrication of Louis XIV* (New Haven and London, 1992), Chapters 7-8; Michel Martin, *Les Monuments équestres de Louis XIV: une grande entreprise de propagande monarchique* (Paris, 1986).

² Jeffrey Merrick, ‘Politics on pedestals: royal monuments in eighteenth-century France’, *French history* 5/2 (1991), 234-64, 244.

³ *Ibid.*

present monarchs on horseback. ‘Why always equestrian statues?’, one observer queried, ‘Why not a statue of the King standing calmly or seated in the middle of his palace and capital city ... securing about him peace, abundance, the sciences, the fine arts?’⁴ In fact, when it was unveiled, the statue inspired the public quip: ‘The virtues are on foot, vice is on horseback’. Responding to these sentiments, a standing rendition of Louis XV was unveiled at the *école militaire* only three years after the Bouchardon statue had been erected, but which escaped similar snide comments. Revealingly, the sculptor Gabriel had originally proposed a more grandiose and costly equestrian statue, but eventually he had to plump for a standing version, not least because of the paternalistic message it was designed to convey. Positioning the king on horseback, by contrast, was thought to be counterproductive when offering the monarch as a father figure to the nation.⁵ In the words of Jeffrey Merrick, such statues ‘emphasized the blessings of peace, sharing their glory with the nation, acknowledging their paternalistic obligations, or memorializing reforms intended to promote the welfare of the people’.⁶ By doing so, monarchs were now effectively climbing down from their saddle. When they refused to do so, the French Revolution saw to it that they did when equestrian monuments were destroyed. Despite efforts to impart a benevolent look to them, the arrogant and submission-inducing message inherent in such works of political art must have seemed highly offensive to the Parisian crowd, as they set about putting them down as symbols of the *ancien régime*.⁷ Such acts spelt the final end to the mystique in which equestrian monuments had previously been shrouded: it was no longer possible to capture the ‘aura of *magnificentia*’ that radiated ‘from the Cangrande as well as from Falconet’s Peter the

⁴ Quoted in Merrick, ‘Politics on pedestals’, 244.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 247-8.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 256.

⁷ Ernst Steinmann, ‘Die Zerstörung der Königsdenkmäler in Paris’, *Monatshefte für Kunstwissenschaft* 10 (1917) 337-80, 337.

Great'.⁸ More accurately, perhaps, as a tool of political propaganda, monuments of monarchs on horseback were no longer tolerated by wider society, which wanted men – both literally and figuratively – to get off their high horses.

Beyond France, where the force of revolution was not as violent and antipathy towards horsemen not as bitter, equestrian statues escaped being torn down.⁹ Nonetheless, depictions of men on horseback had by now similarly failed to exert their power over the minions who passed below them. By the end of the eighteenth century, the equestrian statue of Charles I near Charing Cross in London, which had been completed in 1638 by Hubert le Sueur, for example, had turned into a harmless and forgettable relic of the heyday of the art of horsemanship.¹⁰ Leaving aside the periodic acts of vandalism and wear and tear wrought upon it from years of neglect, Rodney Mace pointed out that 'it has acted not only as a coach stop, a sedan chair stand, and an obstacle to traffic, but also as a place where the unemployed gathered and until 1837, when it was abolished, the site of a public pillory.'¹¹ Similar fortunes befell the equestrian statue of George I, situated further to the west in Leicester Square, which had been commissioned by its aristocratic inhabitants and erected centrally around 1754.¹² By the time of the Great Exhibition, however, the importance of the statue and who it depicted had diminished. So much so, in fact, that nobody seemed to question the right of removing and replacing it with a huge model of the earth, the Great Globe. Reported consequently missing, the equestrian statue was eventually found, in 1854, along 'with

⁸ H.W. Janson, 'The equestrian monument from Cangrande della Scala to Peter the Great', in Archibald R. Lewis (ed), *Aspects of the Renaissance: a symposium* (Austin and London, 1967), 84.

⁹ For how equestrian monuments fared within Germany during this period, see: Nikolai Bernd, *Andreas Schlüter. Das Reiterdenkmal des Grossen Kurfürsten im Ehrenhof von Schloss Charlottenburg* (Berlin, 2002); Ulrich Keller, *Reitermonumente absolutistischer Fürsten: staats-theoretische Voraussetzungen und politische Funktionen* (Munich and Zurich, 1971); Wolfgang Vomm, *Reiterstandbilder des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts in Deutschland: Zum Verständnis und zur Pflege eines traditionellen herrschaftlichen Denkmaltyps im Historismus*, Two volumes (Bergisch Gladbach, 1979).

¹⁰ Rodney Mace, *Trafalgar square: emblem of empire* (London, 1976), 26.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Nicola Smith, *The royal image and the English people* (Aldershot, 2001), 178.

other rubbish'.¹³ Following the demolition of the Great Globe, in 1862, the statue did manage to stage a temporary comeback; but its condition had degenerated to the point that one journal pitifully remarked: 'the mutilated statue, with one leg, astride a goblin horse on three legs, propped by stakes, serves as a mockery of royalty'.¹⁴ Later, in a further act of ridicule, the horse was given spots and ass's ears, while the king received a dunce's cap and broomsticks. By 1872, when it was finally sold off for scrap, it was a small miracle why it had managed to survive for so long – the figure of the king had, by this time, disappeared; the horseman had been unseated.¹⁵

What the demise of equestrian monuments in Paris and in London illustrates, of course, is the overriding extent to which, within the urban context, ostentatious representations of monarchic power were falling rapidly out of favour, a point David Cannadine, for instance, has made with reference to England.¹⁶ Even so, placed within an equine context, the demise of the rider shows how much earlier horsemen had met their match than has been indicated within earlier chapters. Beyond the immediate environment of town and city, the riding classes stubbornly maintained a hold over the horse. By means of controlling the state studs, for example, horsemen continued to have a say in the reproductive process and, in turn, in the development of the equine economy. By the end of the eighteenth century, however, such clout was no longer detectable within the urban context. Common to the crowds, which tore down the equestrian monuments in Paris during the revolutionary upheavals, and the pranksters, who comically dressed and unseated the statue of George I in Leicester Square, is the extent

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Quoted in Smith, *The royal image*, 183.

¹⁵ Smith, *The royal image*, 183.

¹⁶ David Cannadine, 'Splendor out of court: royal spectacle and pageantry in modern Britain, c. 1820-1977', in Sean Wilentz (ed), *Rites of power: symbolism, ritual, and politics since the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, 1985), 208-10. Moves to replicate equestrian representation with national heroes equally failed to impress. Most comical of them all was the planning and erection of a gigantic equestrian monument on the triumphal arch near Hyde Park in dedication to the Duke of Wellington in the early nineteenth century: F. Darrell Munsell, *The Victorian controversy surrounding the Wellington War Memorial: the archduke of Hyde Park Corner* (New York, 1991).

to which urban dwellers could no longer tolerate – as they might have done in the past – the presence of horsemen who looked down upon them within publicly-significant centres. What quickly took the place of ‘riding’ was ‘driving’. Ever since high society opted to travel inside carriages, coaches and cabriolets, rather than on horseback, within towns and cities during the sixteenth century, vehicular movement had been on an inexorable rise. By the early nineteenth century, the total number of vehicles registered in Paris amounted to a staggering 20,000, while in London, too, the number of passenger vehicles, in 1754, stood at 8,000, both numbers representing massive increases over previous centuries.¹⁷ By the time doubts were cast over equestrian monuments, the dominance of ‘driving’ as the main form of urban movement had been secured whose significance is paramount in how the dynamics of the equine economy operated in the major European cities of London, Paris, Berlin and Vienna.

What this chapter stresses is how this urban environment bore witness to a slightly different story than that told so far. Such was the clout ‘driving’ wielded over the urban space during the late eighteenth century that it led pedestrians, who had previously languished as an invisible presence, to stand up and mount a challenge to curb vehicular excesses. Placing the development of the trottoirs, or pedestrian pavements, as an example of the way in which pedestrians, supported by commercial interest, extended their previously paltry influence within towns and cities during the early nineteenth century, the chapter argues how ‘walking’ sparked off concerns about how much power pedestrians could have. Resulting in the revival of ‘riding’, the chapter shows how horsemen came to be used as a means of controlling pedestrian unrest during the middle of the nineteenth century, concluding that ‘riding’ persisted long after its demise as a means of transportation and policing.

¹⁷ Alfred Martin, *Étude historique et statistique sur les moyens de transport dans Paris* (Paris, 1894), 209; W.T. Jackman, *The development of transportation in modern England* (2 vols., Cambridge, 1916), I, 130.

**Figure 17: *W. Gee, 'The statue' in Leicester Square, on Wednesday morning
October 17 1866***

a. Pedestrians and the limits on ‘driving’

By the late eighteenth century, at least in Paris, pedestrians were becoming increasingly frustrated with the excesses of vehicular traffic. Much of the reason why these walkers, who were representatives of a third form of movement, alongside ‘driving’ and ‘riding’, have so far remained unexplored in this investigation – as well as in historical research in general – is because they lacked clout both on and off the street.¹⁸ Not only could pedestrians barely afford to travel either on horseback or on wheels (until at least the advent of mass public transportation during the late nineteenth century), they also faced undue hardship at street-level as well.¹⁹ For much of their existence, if walkers failed to be trampled upon by horses on which horsemen rode, they would be run over all the same by coaches and carriages, which cared as little for the welfare of pedestrians as horsemen ever did. What Alexandre Laborde, the Chief of the Highway Department of the Seine, witnessed in Paris during the early nineteenth century was this *mêlée* in which ‘riding’, ‘driving’ and ‘walking’ struggled and jostled for position on the street:

Those who travel on vehicles do so by taking the pavement, which is only wide enough for two vehicles. When they [vehicles] are obliged to turn around quickly, they crash near to the edge, which is usually half a foot lower than the side of the street. Men on horseback can pass through neither by the side of the streets, which are full of mud, nor can they go on the pavement, where

¹⁸ By contrast to the interest in ‘recreational’ walking, only a few scholars, it seems, have seriously tackled the issue of ‘everyday’ pedestrian walking. For initial attempts, see: Joseph Anthony Amato, *On foot: a history of walking* (New York 2004); Mayer Hillman and Anne Whalley, *Walking is transport* (London, 1979); Rebecca Solnit, *Wanderlust: a history of walking* (London, 2001).

¹⁹ For example in London, Barker and Robbins estimated public vehicle transportation only became affordable in the 1870s to most with the advent of horse-drawn tramways: T.C. Barker and Michael Robbins, *A history of London transport: passenger travel and the development of the metropolis* (2 vols., London, 1963), I, 196.

they would be in constant danger of being run over by vehicles. Finally, pedestrians would almost certainly need to walk in the fields ... and look for a third way through, which does not exist, so as to avoid the mud on the one hand and vehicles on the other.²⁰

By the early nineteenth century, pedestrians in reality were experiencing hardship caused less by ‘riding’ than by ‘driving’. Such an observation was, for example, made by an English visitor to Paris, John Moore, who noted the extent to which walkers were exposed to the whims of the drivers of coaches as the wheel asserted control over urban spaces:

Whereas Paris is poor and partially lighted; and except on the Pont Neuf and Pont Royal, and the quays between them, is not provided with footways for the accommodation and safety of those who cannot afford carriages. They must therefore go their way as they best can, and hide behind the pillars, or run into shops, to avoid being crushed by the coaches, which are driven as near the walls as the coachman pleases; dispersing the people on foot at their approach, like chaff before the wind.²¹

Most worryingly was how ‘driving’ was almost allowed to get away with murder when it came to accidents – which sometimes ended fatally – on the streets. Coaches and carriages stood at a distinct advantage because they could quickly drive away from the scene of the incident, leaving pedestrians helplessly floored. Reporting on a traffic incident, in which ‘driving’ and ‘walking’ was involved, one pamphlet pointed out that the driver ‘did not even stop to rescue his victim [an old man who had been trampled upon].’ Rather, he would ‘turn his eyes away from the painful and cruel spectacle, fleeing with lightning speed from the scene, and threatening anyone who even dared

²⁰ Alexandre Laborde, *De l'Esprit d'association dans tous les intérêts de la communauté* (3rd edition, Paris, 1834), 363.

²¹ John Moore, *A view of society and manners in France, Switzerland and Germany* (London, 1781), 34-5.

approach to caution him'.²² Clearly, pedestrians had to tread with utmost care, if they did not want to be on the receiving end of an irate driver.

Figure 18: Nicolas Guerard, *L'embaras de Paris*, (early 18c). Even though contrived, the depiction of Pont Neuf points to the organized chaos of the Parisian street as all forms of movement jostled and tussled for space

Such a street environment, which essentially allowed everything and everyone to intermingle freely, forced pedestrians to be street-savvy. When Nikolai Karamzin, a Russian writer, visited Paris in 1789, he noted with a mixed degree of alarm and admiration how, in contrast to 'us foreigners', 'the French know how to walk in the middle of the filth-ridden street without getting dirty. They jump artistically from pavement to pavement and shelter themselves in boutiques from the vehicles which

²² *Les Assassins, ou dénonciation au peuple de l'abus tyrannique des voitures* (Paris, 1789), 4.

quickly pass by'.²³ Such manoeuvres had to be performed, moreover, within constraints of the weather which could lead, in the words of Katharina Oxenius, to defenceless walkers being 'drenched from head-to-toe with street sludge and dung' when there had been heavy rainfall, while during the summer months, pedestrians 'had to breathe in the dirt whipped up off the streets'.²⁴ Such was the condition of the streets at the time, as well as the skill needed to negotiate them, that it should come as no surprise why those who had the means to avoid them consciously did so. Before the advent of the English garden and the public parks, which made 'recreational' walking respectable, continental aristocrats, living within towns and cities, hardly bothered to walk.²⁵ Observing that aristocrats 'do not understand at all the pleasure of walking', Louis-Antoine Carraciolo explained, in 1777, this was because 'they could not bring themselves down to the level of the pedestrians'.²⁶ Similarly, the bourgeois shared the same sentiment of keeping themselves away from contact with undesirables.²⁷ Of course, now and again, sheepish attempts were undertaken by the driving classes to use their feet. But invariably, having descended from their coaches and carriages, they tiptoed along, with the vehicles in careful tow, safe in the knowledge that they would be able to re-board them at a moment's opportunity should trouble – perceived or real – arise.²⁸ Why they did so was undoubtedly because they would instantly be surrounded by 'an infinite number of paupers, the blind, the crippled, and women with children on their arms'.²⁹ Even those who might have been seasoned to the street could quickly lose the knack of taking it on.

²³ Quoted in Arlette Farge, *Vivre dans la Rue à Paris au XVIIIe siècle* (2nd edition, Paris, 1992), 18.

²⁴ Katharina Oxenius, *Vom Promenieren zum Spazieren: Zur Kulturgeschichte des Pariser Parks* (Tübingen, 1992), 12.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Louis-Antoine Carracioli, *Paris: le modèle des nations étrangères, ou l'Europe française* (Paris, 1777), 229.

²⁷ Martin, *Étude historique sur les moyens de transport*, 14.

²⁸ Oxenius, *Vom Promenieren zum Spazieren*, 13.

²⁹ *Les Grandes moustaches de Paris, ou réflexion d'un patriote, dit l'avocat des pauvres, et sapeur d'un district; au sujet de gens à équipage, qui doivent contribuer au soulagement de ces infortunes* (Paris, 1790), 2.

When the illustrious Tournefort returned to Paris, for example, after time touring abroad, he was run over by a fiacre not least because ‘during his journey he had forgotten the art of hopping around ... in the streets which is an indispensable talent for all those who live here.’³⁰ Such was the reason why the rift between those who walked and those who drove grew wider. Cooped up as they were in their hotels and apartments, and cosseted away within carriages when they moved about, passengers were in effect blinding themselves from the social reality of the street. Such was precisely the indictment of the polemical pamphlet, *Les Grandes moustaches de Paris*, published in 1790, which brought out the contrasting worlds in which lived the ‘walking’ and ‘driving’ classes:

It seems that people, who board carriages, do not, for the most part, leave their hotels other than to pour scorn over the misery of the poor and to do harm to them. After their return, they confine themselves to living within their apartments, surrounded by lackeys and other servants, where they enjoy all pleasures, comfort and amusement as well as give themselves up to more refined activities. All the while the poor, who are their brothers, go without bread, clothes, refuge and life’s essentials.³¹

Trampled upon for the bulk of their existence, pedestrians finally stood up to express their discontentment at ‘driving’. ‘When will the tyranny perpetrated by men on his brothers end?’, a pamphlet, referring to the excesses of vehicle traffic, wailed, ‘Hasn’t time come to put a halt to all barbaric oppression?[...] There is so much talk of freedom but, step outside and you cannot help but be exposed to the risk of losing your life. It is beautiful, no doubt, to sacrifice yourself for the honour of your nation and for the defence of the *patrie*. But to die at the feet of a vile sybarite. No! That is too much, fellow citizens.’³² Much dirt and abuse had been flung at passenger vehicles in the past,

³⁰ Quoted in Farge, *Vivre dans la Rue à Paris*, 18.

³¹ *Les Grandes moustaches de Paris*, 3.

³² *Les Assassins*, 5-6.

of course, albeit in non-textual form. Such was the experience of a Frenchman who travelled to London in 1700, where he and his companions were met with hurls of rotten vegetables and dirt when the coach they had been travelling on took a wrong turn.³³ During the sixteenth century, too, when ‘driving’ had threatened to displace ‘riding’ as the premier form of movement, criticism of ‘driving’ was expressed, except in support of ‘riding’.³⁴ But sentiments that broke out towards the end of the eighteenth century, helped no doubt by the spirit of the French Revolution, were different in that condemnations were vented towards coaches and carriages with the welfare of pedestrians uppermost in authors’ minds. What struck fear in the minds of the pedestrian were the calls, shouted out by the driver, ‘*Gare, gare*’ (Look out, look out!), which were so terrible they ‘sounded like a kiss of death to the humble citizen who hardly knows how to get himself nimbly out of the way’.³⁵ Driven by ‘those drivers bearing moustaches, who exude a sense of pride and determination, which come from being authorised by their masters’, the respectable and defenseless pedestrian stood little chance.³⁶ In fact, the nuisances caused by vehicles were so great that it would be preferable to seek shelter indoors, even though they would still get on inhabitants’ nerves by the amount of noise that they created in rumbling past the windows of pedestrian refugees.³⁷ If walking had any say in the matter, it would seek to force passengers, who snugly travelled inside coaches, carriages and cabriolets, to disembark, bringing them into line with the rest of society.³⁸ Clearly late eighteenth century Paris was a city in which the street belonged just as much, if not more, to the footed interest as the vehicle. Within an ideal, pedestrian-centred world, the *Voëu d’un piéton* dreamed, ‘they [pedestrians] could come and go among the vast streets of this capital without

³³ Jackman, *Transportation in modern England*, I, 132: footnote 4.

³⁴ See Chapter one, 19ff.

³⁵ *Pétition d’un citoyen, ou motion contre les carrosses et les cabriolets* (Paris, 1790), 5.

³⁶ *Les Grandes moustaches de Paris*, 2.

³⁷ *Voëu d’un piéton, présenté à l’Assemblée nationale* (Paris, 1789), 5.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 12-13.

running the risk of being floored every minute of the day. For close to a million people are exposed to imminent danger because of the rich travelling around in vehicles'.³⁹ Consequently, poetic calls were made to the authorities to protect the health and safety of the pedestrian from the excesses of 'driving':

Within the rules of the police
We ask your help
Extend to us your assistance
And save by your care
Legs, arms and lives
Belonging to the poor footed men of France
Who are the victims and toys
Of troublesome cabriolets.⁴⁰

Numerous proposals were put forward which were essentially designed to promote 'walking' as the preferred form of movement within an urban environment. Such a move did not mean, of course, that every form of 'driving' was dismissed out of hand. As before, justification based on transporting the weak, women and the elderly was upheld, while the need for vehicles to carry essential foodstuff from the countryside was equally held up as an important public utility.⁴¹ Nonetheless, the *Voeu d'un piéton* insisted that, even in such cases, drivers should still be told to disembark from their seats and 'lead their horses by the reins'.⁴² Pressing this idea further, albeit unrealistically, were calls to do away with horses altogether by introducing '*chaises à porteurs*', or sedan chairs, which, as '*voitures pacifiques*', would encourage drivers to operate on the ground, resulting in a situation where there would be 'fewer horses and more people'.⁴³ Objecting to the predictable retort that such arrangements would make travelling time-

³⁹ Ibid., 12.

⁴⁰ [Jean-Henri Marchand], *Requête des fiacres de Paris contre les cabriolets* (Paris, 1768), 1-2.

⁴¹ *Voeu d'un piéton*, 10; *Pétition d'un citoyen*, 7.

⁴² *Voeu d'un piéton* (1789), 10.

⁴³ *Pétition d'un citoyen*, 8-10; Jean-Baptiste-Claude Delisle de Sales, *Lettre de Brutus sur les chars anciens et modernes* (London, 1771), 165.

consuming, the *Voeu d'un piéton* snapped sarcastically: 'Well then, one should then leave an hour earlier, or still, at least one should exercise one's legs, which have after all been given to us for the purposes of walking.'⁴⁴ What was particularly attractive about sedan chairs, which were never going to take off, was that they caused minimum damage to pedestrians and, more importantly, 'could not intrude onto the trottoirs, which must be reserved for the free and easy movement of citizens on foot.'⁴⁵ Such an existence of trottoirs, which were only sparsely used at this time, represented a realistic part of proposals that aimed at separating the spheres in which 'driving' and 'walking' operated. Putting forward the idea of constructing two separate promenades, Jean-Baptiste Delisle de Sales was one of the first to express interest in this demarcation: 'It would be sufficient to rebuild the street ... so that the vehicles could move around without the danger of killing horses or mutilating people. A wall ... would separate the carriage for vehicles and that of pedestrians, and the sight of two promenades would be pleasing to the eye.'⁴⁶ Pushing this idea further the *Pétition d'un citoyen* envisaged the building of trottoirs so as to 'protect and defend the man on foot from vehicles'.⁴⁷ Pointing out how London already boasted one, it advocated a trottoir 5 feet wide on each side of the carriageway: 'This trottoir will be six inches higher than the street and extends parallel to it without having to stop at the doors being opened on coaches'.⁴⁸ When trottoirs were built, it went on, nothing should be allowed to trespass on them 'either by beer casks, inventories and other merchandise, or by harnessed horses parked before doors of houses. All such offences will be punished by police regulation.'⁴⁹

Such calls for the establishment of trottoirs, or pedestrian pavements, did not mean none had existed before, of course. When they first emerged, during the time

⁴⁴ *Voeu d'un piéton*, 11.

⁴⁵ *Pétition d'un citoyen*, 13.

⁴⁶ Delisle de Sales, *Les chars anciens et modernes*, 222.

⁴⁷ *Pétition d'un citoyen*, 7.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 13-4.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 15.

when waterways had served as an important means of urban transportation, trottoirs had been, at least in France, ‘a sunken path on the side of quays for horse-drawn traffic’.⁵⁰ Such usage indicates that trottoirs had initially been meant for horses to trot on rather than for humans to walk on. Gradually, however, their uses – as well as meaning – spread from the riverbank to the bridges, especially narrow ones, which had been experiencing severe bottlenecks. By introducing the trottoir, which was designed to separate the elements of ‘walking’ from ‘driving’ and ‘riding’, it was possible to prevent pile-ups from occurring.⁵¹ Even so, the vast majority of streets did not have anything similar that helped separate the flow of pedestrians on the one hand and horses, carriages, coaches and carts on the other before the end of the eighteenth century. Most commonly ‘the roadway was shared by the vehicle and the pedestrian’ which meant that the latter almost inevitably lost out to the might of the former.⁵² ‘It is superfluous to add’, the engineer Léon Malo discerned, ‘that the vehicle always had one up on the pedestrian’.⁵³ Even when streets did discriminate the arrangement was still primitive. Bollards, such as those introduced in London in 1710, merely drew a line between the carriageway and the pavement.⁵⁴ But these trottoirs still lacked the difference in height and material used, as well as designated areas for crossing. As Malo put it: ‘The first trottoirs were coarse and were made from similar material to those used for the carriageway. It was distinguished by raising the height by only a few centimeters so as to protect against the intrusion of the wheel’.⁵⁵ All of which leaves doubt over the kind

⁵⁰ André Guillerme, ‘Le Pavé de Paris’, in François Caron et al (eds), *Paris et ses réseaux: naissance d’un mode de vie urbain XIXe - XXe siècle* (Paris, 1990), 67.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 68.

⁵² Léon Malo, *L’Asphalte, son origine, sa préparation, ses applications* (3rd edition, Paris, 1898), 178.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*; Maxwell G. Lay, *Ways of the world: a history of the world’s roads and of the vehicles that used them* (New Brunswick, 1992), 69.

⁵⁵ Malo, *L’Asphalte*, 178.

of influence early trottoirs had in prescribing how ‘riding’, ‘driving’ and ‘walking’ went about their business.⁵⁶

Calls by pedestrians alone, demanding the erection of trottoirs, could not, of course, bring about change. What had been responsible for the emergence of the trottoir as a serious proposition, it seems, was shopping. Many of the boutiques up until the first half of the eighteenth century were not located at street level. Parisian dressmakers and tailors, for example, placed their businesses either in the courtyard, away from the hustle and bustle of street traffic, or above the ground floor.⁵⁷ Catering to customers who would arrive in carriages, which could be conveniently parked in the courtyard, little thought had gone into enticing pedestrians into entering their boutiques.⁵⁸ Consequently, the wares that were sold in them were extravagant and invariably off limits to the majority, who considered that, in the words of Claire Walsh, shopping was ‘a glance at a treasure or a cabinet of curiosities – a world to which the onlooker did not belong’.⁵⁹ But by the second half of the eighteenth century, traveller accounts of Paris were finding products increasingly affordable as well as eye-catching. Products now ‘offered themselves to your sight’, one late eighteenth century English gentleman neatly observed, so that he could not help but be sucked into the shop that displayed them.⁶⁰ Similarly, H. Peckham enthused in 1772: ‘The passages, or rather halls, which lead to these different courts, are the object of curiosity by the infinite variety of toys and knickknacks, which are offered to your notice by the mistresses of these little shops.’⁶¹

⁵⁶ James Winter, *London's teeming streets: 1830-1914* (London, 1993), 36.

⁵⁷ Françoise Tétart-Vittu, ‘«Le magasin des grâces». Architecture, décor et montre de la boutique de modes et nouveautés dans la première moitié du XIXe siècle’, in Natasha Coquery (ed), *La boutique et la ville: commerces, commerçants, espaces et clientèles XVe - XXe siècle* (Tours, 2000), 298.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 297.

⁵⁹ Claire Walsh, ‘Shopping et tourisme: l’attrait des boutiques parisiennes au XVIIIe siècle’, in Natasha Coquery (ed), *La boutique et la ville: commerces, commerçants, espaces et clientèles XVe - XXe siècle* (Tours, 2000), 228.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ Quoted in Walsh, ‘Shopping et tourisme’, 228.

To cater to this new clientele it made sense for shops to move down to street level.⁶² Such a concept of the *'boutique rez-de-chaussée'* saw its manifestation in 1780, when a standardised style emerged. At the Palais-Royal, Rue Bailleul and Rue d'Angevillers, one witnessed the construction of 'a central door which leads into two fronts either side... This façade then becomes the exterior part of the boutique and a new space on which the imagination of the decorators is allowed free rein'⁶³ A year later, private funds were collected from shop owners on the Rue de l'Odéon for the aim of establishing trottoirs, so that the shopping experience could be made more pleasant, a trend that spread out to the Rues de Louvois, Lepelletier and Tournon in later years.⁶⁴ What the creation of trottoirs allowed the shopper to do was to take comfortable leave of the vehicles and walk from boutique to boutique without fear of being run over or drenched in effluent. As Thaneur put it, the trottoirs 'facilitate access to the ground floor and powerfully contribute to the development of the relationship between the seller, keen to show off his wares, and the public, who look around, before purchases are made'.⁶⁵ Designed very much to 'pull in rich ladies' boutiques also developed their shop fronts as a means of enhancing their advertisement profile. The first models of shop fronts was offered by a London firm Taylor, in 1792, followed by Young in 1828 and Faulkner in 1831.⁶⁶ Between 1820 and 1840, technology behind the shop front became even more sophisticated with the manufacture of glass. Expanding the shop's transparency and visibility to the passer-by, the front would typically be only supported by three narrow pieces of wooden panels. Such techniques eventually found their way

⁶² Tetart-Vittu '«Le magasin des grâces»', 298.

⁶³ Ibid., 298-9.

⁶⁴ Guillerme, 'Le Pavé de Paris', 67; Bernard Causse, *Les Fiacres de Paris aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Paris, 1972), 63.

⁶⁵ Thaneur, 'Sur l'établissement des pavages, empièvements et trottoirs dans les rues de villes au point de vue administratif et contentieux', *Annales des ponts et chaussées* 4 série 2 semestre (1870), 335-60, 353.

⁶⁶ Tetart-Vittu '«Le magasin des grâces»', 299.

into all boutiques of the major boulevards by the middle of the nineteenth century, made the more effective by the trottoirs built along side them.⁶⁷

Both separate contexts – pedestrian disgruntlement and the commercial development of trottoirs – served as pressures, which eventually led the Ministry of the Interior in France to express an official interest, first in 1803 and then again in 1805, to pledge investment in the construction of pedestrian pavements, basing their justification on the insight that ‘the trottoirs function as social communication channels for the inhabitants of the city and for the needs of commerce’⁶⁸ What had been the problem with France, Alexandre Laborde explained, was how absolutist monarchs had spent lavishly constructing wide and elaborate highway networks, which connected the major towns and cities to Paris, rather than look to improving the state of narrow streets within those urban areas which had, as a result, remained largely neglected.⁶⁹ No doubt, political intentions to flush out criminals and the mob from hiding away figured as a motivation behind plans for street reconstruction, as research into the Hausmann and Ringstraße projects have often shown.⁷⁰ Even so, trottoirs, which predated these projects of urban renewal, were constructed – at least nominally – because they would provide pedestrians the freedom, time and space to ‘think’, as opposed to being overly and solely concerned with the negotiation of vehicle traffic: ‘People will no longer have to fixate their gaze on the streets – on the stones – on which they must walk; they will now be able to think about their own interests, their own concerns, helping to raise, moreover, their self-consciousness.’⁷¹ By 1807, official moves went further towards the encouragement of trottoirs when the prefect of Paris, Nicolas Frochot, invited house proprietors to consider the merits of having them in front of their houses. A year later,

⁶⁷ Ibid., 301.

⁶⁸ Cited in Guillerme, ‘Le Pavé de Paris’, 67.

⁶⁹ Laborde, *De l’Esprit d’association*, 362.

⁷⁰ See for example, T. J. Clark, *The painting of modern life; Paris in the art of Manet and his followers* (London, 1990); Michaela Masanz and Martina Nagl, *Ringstraßenallee: Von der Freiheit zur Ordnung vor den Toren Wiens* (Vienna, 1996).

⁷¹ Cited in Guillerme, ‘Le Pavé de Paris’, 68.

the municipal authority laid down a ‘test’ trottoir, uniformly recommending in doing so that it be raised 18cm above the level of the street.⁷² Such a move to advocate the construction of trottoirs was left essentially down to private interest and individual communes, who, by all accounts, saw them as effective means of adding value to their properties; but this also meant that construction was limited to the wealthier areas.⁷³ Only later, in 1845, did the municipal authority take over central control of establishing them on a comprehensive basis. Even so, the distinct demarcation between the trottoir and the street – between ‘walking’ and ‘driving’ – was a significant development. Departing from past practice where the distinction between them was less clear, official guidelines, in the words of one Parisian priest, now ‘placed limits on the movement of haulage and elevated that of pedestrians above the mud of the streets’.⁷⁴ By 1825, such cambered streets were, despite their paucity, visible and naturally led to the construction of trottoirs that allowed water to run off, making the experience of walking far less unpleasant, eventually attracting those who had avoided them back on to the street.⁷⁵

When the *Trottoir loi* was passed on 7 June 1845, it made the construction of trottoirs mandatory. If the municipal council felt it was in the public interest to do so, costs had to be met jointly by the commune and the owner of the properties that lay adjacent to the street in question.⁷⁶ By making rules laid down uniform, which included the techniques involved and the types of material that went into constructing them, the law contributed to the emergence of a systematic network of trottoirs that prevented walkers from negotiating a disjointed system of pavements – thus helping to contribute to pedestrian welfare even more.⁷⁷ After all, the primary objective of the law was to

⁷² Ibid., 67.

⁷³ Thanneur, ‘Sur l’établissement des trottoirs’, 352.

⁷⁴ Cited in Guillerme, ‘Le Pavé de Paris’, 67.

⁷⁵ Thanneur, ‘Sur l’établissement des trottoirs’, 352.

⁷⁶ Guillerme ‘Le Pavé de Paris’, 68; Thanneur, ‘Sur l’établissement des trottoirs’, 353.

⁷⁷ Thanneur, ‘Sur l’établissement des trottoirs’, 356-7. In England, this process seems to have been completed by the 1840s. See Michael Reed, ‘The transformation of urban space 1700-1840’, in Peter Clark (ed), *The Cambridge urban history of Britain, volume II: 1540-1840* (Cambridge, 2000), 639.

protect pedestrians from accident, while at the same time contribute to the smooth running of traffic and the improvement of street hygiene. Not unimportant in all this remained the commercial advantages that an encouragement of trottoirs would help effect; for ‘they will render access to the ground floor more pleasant and establish a direct connection between the boutique, which shows its wares, and the public, who come to think about purchasing them’.⁷⁸ What pedestrians could now ideally do was to ‘walk along the sides of the street instead of in the middle, undisturbed by vehicles and animals, and sometimes shaded by trees’.⁷⁹ Even amenities were increasingly provided for the pedestrian in the form of kiosks, drinking foundations and urinals.⁸⁰ Such moves towards the construction of trottoirs conversely meant that ‘driving’, which had hitherto dominated the street, became more circumscribed, as initiatives to protect pedestrians were further enhanced across Europe. In London, for example, the Metropolitan Police Act of 1839 stipulated the need to regulate the traffic flow ‘from time to time and as occasions shall require ... make regulations for the route to be observed by all Carts, Carriages, Horses and Persons, and for preventing the obstruction of the Streets and Thoroughfares.’⁸¹ From an account of the traffic laws in Vienna, in 1852, orders were handed out to the driver to proceed ‘always on the left side on the carriageway without touching the trottoir’.⁸² When it came to allowing passengers off the same regulations spelt out that ‘no fiaker or one-horse carriage (Einspänner) must stop to let passengers disembark under city gates, on bridges, or in the middle of the street. Rather they are to do so only next to a trottoir; but only if pedestrians are not inconvenienced’.⁸³ The

⁷⁸ Quoted in Guillerme, ‘Le Pavé de Paris’, 68.

⁷⁹ François Bédarida and Anthony R. Sutcliffe, ‘The street in the structure and life of the city: reflections on nineteenth-century London and Paris’, in Bruce M. Stave (ed), *Modern industrial cities: history, policy, and survival* (Beverly Hills and London, 1981), 27-8.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁸¹ Quoted in Winter, *Teeming streets*, 43.

⁸² Cited in Robert Messner, *Topographie von Alt-Wien. Teil III: Die Josefstadt im Vormärz. Historische-topographische Darstellung der westlichen Vorstädte (nördliche Hälfte) und westlichen Vororte Wiens auf Grund der Katastralvermessung* (Vienna, 1973), 318.

⁸³ Cited in Messner, *Topographie von Alt-Wien. Teil III*, 318.

extent to which pedestrians had gained a say is conveyed in a case in 1865 when in London a young widow successfully sued for damages after she had lost her husband when he was involved in a traffic collision with an omnibus. Siding unequivocally with the pedestrian, even when there was doubt over his liability, the judge revealingly noted that a pedestrian ‘had, of course, a right to pass where he pleased... Besides men are not to be recklessly and carelessly run over merely because they themselves are careless.’⁸⁴ A few years later after this trial, London witnessed the institution of pedestrian crossing signals, which replaced the manual efforts of the hand-waving policemen, located at Bridge Street and New Palace Yard, outside the Houses of Parliament. Operating with red and green gas lights, which indicated stop or caution, the signals dealt out instructions to ‘all persons in charge of vehicles and horses’ in an attempt to safeguard the welfare of the pedestrian.⁸⁵ And despite objection towards traffic regulation of any sort in London, the Metropolitan Police eventually succumbed to introducing traffic constables whose number swelled to 172 full-time men in 1872, assisted by a further 230 men at rush hour.⁸⁶

What can one make of such developments in which pedestrians increasingly expanded their influence and spheres of movement? Even as the various petitions put forward at around the time of the French Revolution illustrate, one can plausibly argue that pedestrians became politicised, more conscious of themselves and aggressive about their rights as walking classes, albeit not to the point that they banded together to form political associations. Even though it took the interests of shopkeepers, who had seen the trottoir as an important tool to entice customers into their shops, to make the spread of pedestrian pavements both justifiable and remunerative, the advances that ‘walking’ made during the first half of the nineteenth century cannot surely be denied. What all this meant, conversely, was that ‘driving’, which seemed to be on an inexorable rise

⁸⁴ Winter, *Teeming streets*, 44.

⁸⁵ Lay, *A history of the world's roads*, 184.

⁸⁶ Winter, *Teeming streets*, 48.

during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, was held in check, if not numerically then structurally: reins were placed on the movement of carriages, coaches, cabs and omnibuses. Of course, the effectiveness of moves to curb the wayward behaviour of ‘driving’ can easily be exaggerated. As a city councillor in Vienna, for example, reported in 1869: ‘There exists police notices against the driving of cars, carts and other vehicles on the trottoir, as well as against the cracking of the whip on public streets. Despite the existing regulations these nuisances are still in full bloom.’⁸⁷ When road works were being conducted, too, drivers took matters into their own hands by driving upon pedestrian pavements.⁸⁸ But the resistance of ‘driving’ never really amounted to much. Faced with a tirade of criticism, which took ‘driving’ to task for its arrogance towards pedestrians, hardly any defence was recorded in its favour. When *Les Cabriolets justifié* was published in 1760, which was brought out as a rare counterattack on those who discredited vehicle transportation, it could only feebly point out how cabs boasted a historical tradition, which stretched back to Ancient Rome, and that it also had military applications in preparing men to be skilful drivers.⁸⁹ More significantly, there is scant evidence of ‘driving’ being defended to any extent in the past. When it first emerged as a viable form of movement, it posed a threat to ‘riding’, since it was thought to contribute to a decrease in the number of horsemen.⁹⁰ By using similar language, but in the service of ‘walking’, the attack on ‘driving’, during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, could borrow on this tradition of vehicle-bashing. Much of the reason why this could happen – without much retort – was because criticism could be directed not at the passengers or owners of vehicles, but at the drivers who were socially easier targets. By contrast to ‘riding’, where criticism would necessarily have been

⁸⁷ *Protokolle Gemeinderath Wien* (4 May 1869), 762.

⁸⁸ Landesarchiv Berlin (LAB), Polizei-Präsidium (A Pr.Br.Rep.), 030 18714: ‘Die Regelung des Fuhrwerks und Reitverkehrs und Maßnahmen gegen dabei vorkommende Tierquälerei, 1899-1924: Letter dated Berlin, 3 June 1899’.

⁸⁹ *Les Cabriolets justifiés* (Paris, 1760), 1-2.

⁹⁰ See Chapter one, .21.

directed at horsemen, and ‘walking’ where pedestrians could be taken to task, ‘driving’ was a delegated act, so that responsibility for its excesses could be placed on the most visible embodiment of such movement – the cabman or driver – without having to consider the failings of the passengers who owned the carriages and coaches or the companies that operated cabs and omnibuses. Such an understanding can help explain why the animal protection movement, whose arrival coincided both with moves to check the dominance of ‘driving’ and the emergence of concern for the welfare of pedestrians, tended to criticise cruelty perpetrated by driven transport, not only because of its numerical ubiquity, but also because those who drove the vehicles could hardly fight back, to which issue discussion now turns.

b. Cruelty, street demonstrations and the disappearance of riding spaces

During the middle of the nineteenth century, animal protection societies were founded within towns and cities across Europe which commonly made conscious attempts to record and report instances of cruelty, perpetrated by man on animals. Following the successful foundation of the *Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals* (RSPCA) in London in 1824, one witnessed the flowering of similar societies in places such as Stuttgart and Munich, established in 1837 and 1841 respectively, and later in Paris where *La Société Protectrice des Animaux* (SPA) began its operations in 1845 – but which all saw themselves on a common mission to expose cruelty on animals, campaign for legislation, and bring those responsible to account before the law.⁹¹ Most significantly, the majority of the offences reported had been committed on urban horses

⁹¹ Georges Fleury, *La Belle histoire de la S.P.A. Des 1845 à nos jours* (Paris, 1995); Martin H. Jung, ‘Die Anfänge der deutschen Tierschutzbewegung im 19. Jahrhundert. Mössingen-Tübingen-Stuttgart-Dresden-München’, *Zeitschrift für Württembergische Landesgeschichte* 56 (1997), 205-40; Arthur W. Moss, *Valiant crusade. The history of the RSPCA* (London, 1961); Miriam Zerbel, *Tierschutz im Kaiserreich. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Vereinswesens* (Frankfurt/Main, 1993).

of the ‘driving’ variety. From the 1869 Annual Report of the RSPCA, for example, of the 1,392 convictions secured nationally under the Cruelty to Animals Act of 1835, 1,093 were perpetrations against horses.⁹² Some of them placed the blame on the owners (255), but the vast majority pointed the accusing finger at ‘carters’ or drivers whose catalogue of ill-treatment included working diseased horses, kicking them, overloading and overdriving, as well as burning, beating and maiming them. One conviction even involved the horse’s eye being knocked out.⁹³ Such a preponderance of cases involving horses makes it far from surprising why the activities of the so-called ‘humanitarian’ movement was inextricably tied with the maltreatment of horses, especially by drivers – and less so by owners – of them.⁹⁴ What had led Dumont de Monteux to found the SPA was an incidence on the Boulevard de l’Enfer, where he had witnessed the fall of an exhausted and worn-out cart horse. Such a sight of a horse, being hit ‘with the handle of the whip’ by its master, was common enough, a problem facilitated and rendered prolific through the increase of ‘driving’ horses within urban conglomeration. But this incident set off emotions within Dumont de Monteux because the sight and sound of the whip crashing down on the poor creature inherently disgusted him.⁹⁵ Eventually the horse managed to recover, street traffic was eased and the police instructed passers-by to move on; but Dumont de Monteux did not let this incident pass, so that he acted to successfully implement a ban, which imposed on drivers and carters fines when caught excessively using the whip to hit at horses in their care.⁹⁶ Similar emotions were experienced by C.E. Nugent, who recounted in the RSPCA’s *Animal World*, in 1869,

⁹² ‘Annual Report of the RSPCA’, *Animal World (AW)* (July 1870), 178.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ Similar proportions can be seen in Germany. Of the 45 people who received sentences for animal cruelty in Kassel in 1870, 36 of them were for maltreatment of the horse: Jutta Buchner-Fuhs, ‘Das Tier als Freund. Überlegungen zur Gefühlsgeschichte im 19. Jahrhundert,’ in Paul Münch (ed), *Tiere und Menschen: Geschichte und Aktualität eines prekären Verhältnisses* (2nd edition, Paderborn, 1999), 287.

⁹⁵ Fleury, *La Belle histoire*, 19-20.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 20. The Berlin society was established following similar concerns with coachmen’s whips: Buchner-Fuhs, ‘Das Tier als Freund’, 286-7.

how the sight and noise of the cabman's lash on the horse sent shivers down his spine, the whip in use 'cutting him [the horse] in two'. Brought before Hampstead magistrate, the hansom cab driver defended himself by abrogating responsibility to the horse, which was a 'green one' and still needed breaking in. Despite his protestations, the driver was eventually charged and fined.⁹⁷

Why did humanitarians feel compelled to act? Firstly, animal protection activists were worried about the moral welfare of drivers who resorted to lashing out at horses in their care. What particularly disturbed animal protection advocates were suspicions that drivers frequented public houses, which provided an explanation to why they were less squeamish about abusing horses, a point explained in the *Animal World* in 1870:

As occurs hundreds of times during the day, a man will stop to have a beer at a public house, the horses, tired and jaded, are perhaps half asleep when he returns. To make a start, he will touch the leading horse smartly with his whip [...] and then comes a sudden tug of the chain enough to pull the poor things head off; this is a common thing, and no one steps in to speak a word on its behalf.⁹⁸

Such a link between alcohol and cabmen led the authorities in Vienna, for example, to set up, as early as 1852, designated waiting areas not only to bring order to the chaotic nature of urban street traffic, but also, in maintaining those areas away from the bars and public houses, to keep the drivers sober.⁹⁹ Similarly, the *Animal World* realised that, in order to prevent cruelty from occurring, it was necessary to provide alternative venues of rest, to which drivers could go without succumbing to the temptations of drink. Such a situation was exacerbated during the winter months when the cold, rain and snow made waiting for clients outside far from bearable, with many drivers consequently

⁹⁷ *AW* (December 1869), 59.

⁹⁸ 'Cruelty to horses', *AW* (June 1870), 159.

⁹⁹ Messner, *Topographie von Alt-Wien. Teil III*, 317.

taking refuge in public houses.¹⁰⁰ Proposing to build alternative shelters, which were designed to shield the cabman from both the elements and the bottle, the journal believed this initiative would significantly reduce incidences of street cruelty. By doing so, shelters would ‘keep away exciting causes of anger, and especially the tendency to enter the gin-palace, and cabby will not only be a more humane driver, but a better man, cared-for himself, he will turn out of his box, and approach his horse with commiseration, saying, we hope “Cheer up, mate, and we’ll try to obtain shelter for you next”’.¹⁰¹

Figure 19: Cabman's hut, Birmingham (Animal World, May 1870)

But the moral health of the driver and his use of the whip made up only half the issue – the welfare of the pedestrian was the other. When Dumont de Monteux chose to act upon the cruelty he saw inflicted on the horse, half his eye was preyed on the sizeable crowd that had accumulated which, disturbingly, looked on as if it were

¹⁰⁰ *Anwalt der Tiere* (January-February 1913), 14.

¹⁰¹ ‘Sheltered Cabman’, *AW* (May 1870), 141.

watching a show unfold.¹⁰² Similarly, in Berlin in 1867, complaints were lodged that ‘animals, especially horses, which have sustained broken bones and other injuries and have become unable to move forward, lie around for long periods of time becoming a public eyesore’.¹⁰³ Some ten years later, the local hangman, who was traditionally tasked with dealing with dead animals, wrote to the police, reminding them of their obligation to ‘remove [horses] as quickly as possible, above all for the benefit of the injured animals in question, but also so as to ease the unpleasant sight for the public’.¹⁰⁴ More explicit still was the Viennese police, which in 1890 noted how fallen horses – sprayed across the street and trottoir – presented an obstruction, not only for transport and commerce, but also an unwelcome diversion to the weak-willed pedestrian. Supported by the local animal protection society, concern was voiced that such a sight attracted pedestrians who, rather than carry on walking, would choose to stand around and stare at the scene.¹⁰⁵ Echoing similar sentiments, the Police Commissioner of London, Edward Bradford, also expressed, in 1893, the opinion that incidents of fallen horses posed less of a disruption to the traffic flow than an affront to people who happened to be walking close by: ‘When delay occurs it has the effect of prolonging the torture of the suffering animal, of exposing its suffering for an unnecessary period to the passers by, and to some extent of obstructing the thoroughfare’.¹⁰⁶

What had elicited Bradford’s comments was an eyewitness account, published in the *Daily News* in May 1893, of fallen horses in Piccadilly. Reporting on the collision of two horses – one pulling a carriage, the other a hansom – late at night, the correspondent vented his frustrations at how much time it took the police to put the fatally-injured horses out of their misery and relieve the pain of the onlooker:

¹⁰² Fleury, *La Belle histoire*, 20.

¹⁰³ LAB, A Pr.Br.Rep. 030 18711: ‘Verordnung und Bekanntmachung über die Entfernung von auf öffentlichen Straßen verunglückten Thiere, 1867-1927: *Neue Berliner Nachrichten*, 15 August 1867.’

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.: ‘Letter dated Berlin, 6 January 1879. From Berliner Abdeckerei-Wesen’.

¹⁰⁵ *Protokolle Gemeinderath Wien* (4 February 1890), 305.

¹⁰⁶ Public Record Office (PRO), Home Office (HO) 45/1006/A50090: ‘Duties of Police under Injured Animals Act 1894, 1889-1906: Letter from the Police Commissioner, 13 June 1893.’

When I passed the spot at 1.50 am, I saw the cab horse lying with shoulder blade and knee bone each protruding some four inches; the horse was in terrible agony, but I was informed by the police that they had no power to have the poor brute destroyed until a licensed slaughterer could be got[...] During the whole three hours that I know it was there (and how much more I don't know) it kept struggling on to three legs and falling again. When I left, at 3.40, the wretched creature was, happily for itself, nearly dead, having knocked the greater portion of its brains out in the roadway.¹⁰⁷

There was a delay because the horse slaughterers, Harrison and Barber, who had an exclusive arrangement with the police for carting fallen horses away, were late to arrive on the scene.¹⁰⁸ To solve this problem of speed, it was proposed that a list of local slaughterers, with their addresses, be compiled for the benefit of officers, so that they might be able to send for the nearest one available.¹⁰⁹ In the event horse slaughterers could not be quickly made available, it was also suggested that cattle slaughterers be employed too.¹¹⁰ But the police themselves, at least for the moment, were manifestly opposed to taking on the role of slaughterers themselves in a bid to expedite the process.¹¹¹ Similarly, the *Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons* (RCVS) refused to take on the role of slaughterers when they were approached by the police. Pointing out that while ‘veterinary surgeons would most strongly object to have imposed upon them the duty of acting as horse slaughterers,’ the President nevertheless offered that they would ‘only be too willing to mitigate suffering by administering anaesthetics’.¹¹² Even though veterinarians stoutly refused to be cast in the role of the killer, which only had the effect of prolonging the amount of time the fallen horse would be exposed to the pedestrian

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.: ‘*Daily News* 29 May 1893’.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.: ‘Letter from Commissioner, 13 June 1893’.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.: ‘Letter from President of Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons 29 June 1893’.

gaze, the Commissioner accepted their role effectively as humanitarians, noting approvingly that by their actions they would render ‘the suffering of the injured animals ... less of a painful spectacle to passers-by.’¹¹³ Such an arrangement came to be reflected in the Amended Police Order of 19 October 1893 which acknowledged the rights of the veterinarian:

When an accident occurs [...] the Police Officer present is to send for one of the veterinary surgeons, who is to be requested to come provided with anaesthetics. If it is the opinion of the veterinary surgeon that the injury must prove fatal, the horse may be killed by him, or, if he is unwilling to kill the horse, a slaughterer is to be at once sent for. In other cases the veterinary surgeon should be requested, if practicable, to administer anaesthetics.¹¹⁴

But to the RSPCA the amended process still took far too long, and they urged the police to take matters into their own hands, offering them free use of a silent pistol, called Greener’s Humane Killer, ‘so that a constable, instead of waiting for a knacker, could get a qualified officer to kill a suffering animal say at least in the course of ten minutes or a quarter of an hour. The animal being dead could be covered over until the knacker could fetch the carcass away’.¹¹⁵ Evidently, the Home Office was swayed by the suggestions of the RSPCA for officers to kill fallen horses, consequently experimenting with the idea of using a revolver to put them out of their misery; but reservations were still rife that, if they failed, the surrounding pedestrian crowd, in front of whom such acts had unavoidably to be performed, would not look upon them kindly. What would happen, a memo asked, if ‘the Police allowed anyone but a slaughterer to attempt to kill the animal and he bungled in doing so [...] so as to increase the sufferings of the wounded horse, and aroused the indignation of the crowd by his want of skill

¹¹³ Ibid.: ‘Letter from Commissioner, 22 July 1893’.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.: ‘Amended Police Order, 19 Oct 1893’.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.: ‘Letter from RSPCA, 12 June 1902’.

would not the Police be blamed by the public?’¹¹⁶ Much of the attraction of the Greener’s Humane Killer lay arguably in its consideration of the pedestrian gaze. Making a distinction between knackers, whose business was conducted indoors as opposed to the open street, the Home Office noted that: ‘[s]omething of the nature of a Greener’s killer is more appropriate in the latter case [open street] than the pole-axe which the regular slaughterman is accustomed to’.¹¹⁷ Subsequently, the pistol – touted as ‘a noiseless, smokeless, shooting apparatus for killing animals instantly and without pain – was tested ‘with results which leave no doubt of its efficacy in killing an ox, or anything else!’, and for which neither qualification nor extra training was necessary.¹¹⁸ During the second half of 1902, when the pistol came into operation, it was reported that Green Killers had been successfully used 59 times as opposed to the pole-axe’s 29 times.¹¹⁹

Such moves by the police, pressured by the RSPCA, to deal with the spectacle of the fallen horse as quickly as it was ‘humanely’ possible was, in fact, another example of how the powers of ‘driving’ had become even more circumscribed because of concerns over pedestrians’ moral welfare. Behind the reason why it took so long for horses to be taken away also lay the difficulty in contacting the owners of the horses in question. When deliberating the issue of speedily removing horses off the street, police were concerned, more than anything else, that a decision to kill the horse without the consent of the owner would be overstepping their powers, exposing themselves to legal consequences.¹²⁰ Similarly, veterinarians, who were tasked with providing certificates that passed medical judgement on the curability of fallen horses they came across, were equally anxious of litigation. When the President of the RCVS wrote, in 1893, to the

¹¹⁶ Ibid.: ‘Memo dated 31 July 1902 in File named Killing of injured animals, 18 July 1902’.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., ‘Memo dated 14 October 1902 in File named Killing of injured animals, 13 Oct 1902’.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.: ‘Analysis showing by what means horses fatally injured in the streets were slaughtered under the Injured Animals Act 1894, during the half-year ended 30 June 1902 File named Killing of injured animals, 13 Oct 1902’.

¹²⁰ Ibid.: ‘Letter from Commissioner, 13 June 1893’.

Commissioner, he made it clear that ‘in the present state of law, and after the very cursory examination that could be made in the public street [a veterinarian could not] take the responsibility of ordering the destruction of an animal, as he might render himself liable to the owner of the animal in case of an error of judgment.’¹²¹ Yet the passing of the Injured Animals Act of the following year tilted the situation in favour of speedy action, further contributing to the loss of power for ‘driving’. Revising the police orders in August 1894, new rules made explicit it was now within the powers of the police to make a decision without obtaining the approval of the owner. So long as the veterinarian certified that the horse was beyond recovery, the officer in charge of the situation could immediately send for the slaughterer.¹²² When the London Road Car Company filed a legal complaint, in May 1899, protesting that the police had mistakenly put down one of their horses – which was merely suffering from an ailment than an incurable injury – this represented an inevitable result of haste with which fallen horses were dealt and the pressures in which all involved were faced – under the gaze of pedestrian passers-by – to reach a rushed decision.¹²³ Complaining bitterly ‘whether the Police have power to act in this extraordinary manner’, the company demanded compensation for the way in which the police had conducted themselves when putting down the company horse on Curtain Road.¹²⁴ Following an internal inquiry with G. Division, it transpired that the dispute had centred on how quickly a veterinarian could be dispatched. Even though the company sent one of their own to the scene, he took too much time to reach the site, so that the police officer ordered one himself who, upon speedily examining the horse, issued a certificate authorising Harrison and Barber to put it down.¹²⁵ Finding in favour of the plaintiff and despite appeals that the decision to do

¹²¹ Ibid.: ‘Letter from President of Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons 29 June 1893’.

¹²² Ibid.: ‘Revised Police Orders in File named Injured Animals Act 1894, dated 24 Aug 1894’.

¹²³ PRO, Metropolitan Police (MEPO) 2/737, ‘Horses injured in Street: Slaughter of, 1899-1906: Letter from The London Road Car Company, Limited, 18 May 1899’.

¹²⁴ Ibid.: ‘Letter from The London Road Car Company, Limited, 18 May 1899’.

¹²⁵ Ibid.: ‘Special Report No. 283495, G. Division, 22 May 1899’.

so was in keeping with the Injured Animals Act, no appeal was made, resulting in compensation of 122 pounds, 9s and 2d.¹²⁶

What the cruelty cases reveal is not only a concern to regulate ‘driving’ – forming part of a trend towards imposing limits on the excesses of vehicles – but also anxiety about the kind of message passers-by, who could now observe more clearly the cruelty inflicted because of the development of trottoirs, took away from the scenes. Such moves on the part of the animal protection movement were, of course, attempts to impose upon the lower classes proper manners within a civilising age.¹²⁷ Conversely, these actions belied the wider fear that pedestrians, who were extending their clout over ‘driving’, could become a force that threatened the urban order, if allowed to grow unfettered, in the way the Parisian mob had done so memorably during the Revolution. One way of combating them, especially in cases of emergency, was to revive ‘riding’. Defeated as the preferred form of passenger transportation and ridiculed as a symbol of authority and rule – incarnate in equestrian statues – ‘riding’ had long lost its awe, justification and place within towns and cities. Even so, as a way of effectively quelling unrest, the employment either of cavalry charges or mounted police proved invaluable, especially during the second half of the nineteenth century, when demonstrations put on by rowdy and discontented pedestrians threatened the status quo. Following the fear whipped up by the French Revolution, England quickly established the yeomanry, containing a sizeable cavalry presence, which was usefully deployed for the first time during the Nottingham bread riots of 1795.¹²⁸ By 1833 the Berlin *gendarme* found that the use of the ‘cavalry charge’ proved to be a versatile instrument with which riotous behaviour could be circumvented. By contrast to firearms, which had the potential counterproductive effect of inadvertently inflicting a great number of casualties, riding

¹²⁶ Ibid.: ‘Letter from Wontner & Sons, Solicitors, 4 May, 1900’.

¹²⁷ Harriet Ritvo, *The Animal estate: the English and other creatures in the Victorian age* (Cambridge, Mass., 1987), 130-5.

¹²⁸ Leon Radzinowicz, *A history of English criminal law and its administration from 1750* (4 vols., London, 1948-86), IV (1968), 113.

into crowds ‘hacking with the flat and often the sharp edge of the blade’ presented a less bloody alternative in restoring order without antagonising the walking mob.¹²⁹ Such moves to revive ‘riding’, which took place following the French Revolution, was also reflected in England, which cast aside traditional reservations about keeping a standing army by erecting a number of barracks built to house both infantry and cavalry after 1792. By comparison to the 17 permanent infantry installations in England of that year, the Commissioners of Military Enquiry reported, in 1805, that there were now some 168 established, temporary and rented barracks with the capacity to collectively accommodate 133,000 men.¹³⁰ What is particularly relevant, for the purposes of this investigation, is how fear of popular insurrection led William Pitt to urge local magistrates to take action against English Jacobins which consequently led to the erection of cavalry barracks concentrated around either industrial areas or the outskirts of London.¹³¹ By 1793 such barracks had been constructed in Birmingham, Coventry, Manchester, Norwich, Nottingham and Sheffield – all of which had the capacity to house 170 to 320 cavalymen each.¹³² Construction proceeded apace a year later: Doncaster and Exeter built one that could accommodate 400; York had one for 250 men, while the barracks at Hyde Park could take care of 360 mounted men.¹³³ Most interestingly, the decision to place the Knightsbridge cavalry barracks next to Hyde Park was a strategic one. Not only could horsemen thus have easy access to vast greenery on which they could exercise their horses, they could also keep watch over Hyde Park, which functioned as a major collecting point for demonstrations.¹³⁴

¹²⁹ Alf Lüdtke, *Police and state in Prussia, 1815-1850*, trans. Pete Burgess (Cambridge and Paris, 1989), 162.

¹³⁰ Clive Emsley, ‘The military and popular disorder in England 1790-1801’, *Journal of the society for army historical research* 61 (1983), 10-21, 17.

¹³¹ Clive Emsley, *The English police: a political and social history* (Hemel Hempstead, 1991), 16.

¹³² Emsley. ‘Military and popular disorder,’ 17-8.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹³⁴ Cf. Map in PRO, Ministry of Works (WORK) 32/431, ‘Plan of Cavalry Barracks: Knightsbridge, 1879’.

Much of the problem that lay with the deployment of cavalry forces on pedestrians was that the sight of military horsemen could be considered too audacious, heavy-handed and, hence, antagonising.¹³⁵ This was a lesson learnt from experience during the Luddite riots, which flared up in the Midlands and the North between 1811 and 1818, culminating in the cavalry charge at Peterloo, in 1819, an event that claimed 11 demonstrators and over 500 injuries.¹³⁶ Such was the reason why, in the case of London, the Metropolitan Police took over the task of preventing and controlling urban unrest, only relying on cavalry power when a state of emergency arose. What should be noted, however, about the Police Horse Patrol Establishment, which had been instigated by the Bow Street Runners, was that it had initially been concerned with crime occurring on the city's environs, the main aim being, in 1805, not to quell internal disturbances, but to tackle the 'many highway robberies committed on the roads around London.'¹³⁷ Only with the passing of an Act in 1836 did the nature of the Horse Patrol change as the newly-established Metropolitan Police force looked to command the whole of London under the auspices of the Home Office.¹³⁸ Of course, the main backbone of the police remained the dismounted patrol, which boasted 89 men and 12 officers, as opposed to the 54 men and 6 officers of the Horse Patrol in 1828.¹³⁹ Such concerns reflected the reality that an 'immense number of lanes, alleys, Courts and Bye-places' provided cover for the criminal and that 'had they been intended for the very purposes of concealment, they could scarce have been better contrived[...] For by wandering from one part to another, and often shifting his quarters, he may almost avoid

¹³⁵ Radzinowicz, *English criminal law*, IV, 153-7.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 114.

¹³⁷ *Parliamentary Papers* (PP), 1828 VI: 'Report from the Select Committee on the Police of the Metropolis, Appendix G, 326'.

¹³⁸ PRO, MEPO 2/25: 'An Act to authorise the placing of Horse Patrol now acting under the Authority of the Chief Magistrate of the Public Office in Bow Street under the Authority of the Justices appointed for the Metropolitan Police District [13 August 1836]'.

¹³⁹ Emsley, *The English police*, 19.

the possibility of being discovered'.¹⁴⁰ Consequently, it made sense to have men placed on the ground so that they could better infiltrate built-up areas, which was something that the Horse Patrol, with their conspicuous presence, could hardly emulate.¹⁴¹ But the mounted police did serve a useful purpose nonetheless in patrolling Hyde Park, especially between Kensington Gate and Victoria Gate where, at night, 'the mounted man' was able 'to visit it more frequently than the man on foot'.¹⁴² More importantly, however, the mounted division proved to be invaluable when footed constables required back-up in maintaining the peace.¹⁴³ From time to time, the utility of the mounted division and the money it ate up, especially in maintaining stables and feeding horses during extended times of peace, were questioned. But their use at a time of increasing social unrest could hardly be denied.

Such a case in which the mounted division proved indispensable can be witnessed in the Bloody Sunday episode on 13 November 1887 when 'riding' and 'walking' clashed violently on Trafalgar Square. Providing an ironic backdrop to the proceedings was the equestrian statue of Charles I, which stood indifferently to the south next to Charing Cross, looking down upon a Square that had by now metamorphosed into a major focal point of labour unrest and popular demonstrations. What appeared instead of the immovable statue were active horses which, while still serving the interests of the state, were sent in – as police and military horses – to contain the street disturbances of the pedestrian masses. Originally, the protest had been organised to object to the imprisonment of William O'Brien, an Irish nationalist who had been found collaborating with Parnell and the Irish Parliamentary Party to achieve independence. But it developed into a much larger event, as it was adopted by the Metropolitan Radical Association and the Law and Liberty League, both of which came out in opposition to

¹⁴⁰ Quoted in Emsley, *The English police*, 17.

¹⁴¹ Cf. Radzinowicz, *English criminal law*, IV, 284.

¹⁴² PRO, HO 45/4316: 'Police: Stables in Princes Mews and Mounted Police, 1848-1852: Report A Division, 9 January 1852.'

¹⁴³ PRO, HO 45/4316: 'Report A Division, 9 Jan 1852'.

the questionable legality of a police notice that had tried to forbid ‘meetings’ in the Square.¹⁴⁴ Only a decade ago demonstrations had been banned outright – and the loosening of the ban had already led, in 1886, to a riot, a repetition of which the authorities were keen to avoid. The fact that the police tried to curb demonstrations on Trafalgar was logical enough: in view of the steady rise in the frequency with which demonstrations were now taking place on the Square, which was disconcertingly located close to the corridors of power, the reasoning was that it was too small to accommodate the increasing number of participants. Much better, from the police’s point of view, was to have them take place in Hyde Park – but both parties failed to reach an agreement.¹⁴⁵

By Sunday morning, a force of 1,500 policeman had descended on Trafalgar Square in anticipation of the crowd: 100 stood in a single file outside the parapets on each side of the Square; 120 stood in double file inside, at the head of the steps at each corner of the north side stood 100 in fours, with an additional 50 men close by; across the south side there were 750 men four deep, and 60 mounted police patrolled all sides of the Square.¹⁴⁶ Following the end of a series of speeches, William Morris among them, to artisans at Clerkenwell Green, who were told to resist ‘by every means in their power’, the demonstrators walked towards Trafalgar Square. Turning onto St Martin’s Lane, however, the 5,000 strong crowd was met by a detachment of mounted police, who plunged wielding staves into the lines of protestors which was quickly followed up by a large formation of footed police. Similar ‘shock’ tactics were employed against contingents coming from Peckham, Bermondsey, Deptford and Battersea: as the crowd passed Big Ben, they were charged down by staff-holding mounted constables, all of which only resulted in halting the sea of pedestrians temporarily.¹⁴⁷ Eventually, by sheer weight of number, the walking mass managed to converge on Trafalgar Square, which bulged at

¹⁴⁴ Mace, *Trafalgar*, 179.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. Mace, *Trafalgar*, 179.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 187.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 188-7.

the edges on account of police protecting the central space. But as the crowd threatened to infiltrate further, the police called on reinforcements from the cavalry to maintain the core of the Square as a protestor-free zone. The arrival of the 200-strong regiment of the 1st Life Guards had an immediate effect. As *The Times* reported: ‘the prancing horses, the scarlet uniforms, the burnished breast plates and the polished helmets, a long moving streak of brilliant colour among the dense mass of police and of people. It was a striking sight.’¹⁴⁸ Supported by a further regiment of the 2nd Life Guards, which numbered 150 mounted troopers, military horsemen cut an imposing presence in the middle of Whitehall. Even so, they did not enter the Square, keeping to their remit as emergency back-up in the event police initiatives failed and the situation spiralled out of the authorities’ control.¹⁴⁹ After the conclusion of the meetings, which had to take place within limits imposed by police, a bulk of the crowd refused to promptly disperse, testing the patience of the police and the power of the prohibition order. But as they did so, the police reacted by charging into the crowd in an attempt to forcibly disband it. During one of the ‘wild charges’, which one witness described as though the police ‘were trying to imitate the heroes of Balaclava’, a young radical law student, Alfred Linnell, fell and was trampled to death under the weight of a charging police horse.¹⁵⁰ Clear from the pamphlet that accompanied Linnell’s funeral was the unmistakable critique that it was ‘riding’ that had caused the death of the helpless pedestrian protestor:

[H]e, with those among whom he found himself, indignant at the recklessness with which the police were riding their restive, bean-full horses into the crowd at the same time that the foot police drove the people away. There was a rush as for life, and in the rush Linnell fell. In a moment the police cavalry were upon him, and the charger of one of the constables trampled him as he lay, smashing his thigh bone beneath the horse’s hoof. Then they rode

¹⁴⁸ Quoted in Mace, *Trafalgar*, 188.

¹⁴⁹ Mace, *Trafalgar*, 188.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 192.

on, leaving Linnell writhing on the ground. There was a police ambulance in the Square, but no attempt was made to succour the poor wretch whom they had done to death at the base of Charles Stuart's statue.¹⁵¹

Such a phenomenon in which 'riding' was revived as an instrument that was used against the masses was a development, which one can observe as a general trend across Europe. Most notoriously riding's renaissance culminated in Russia's Bloody Sunday massacre of 1905 in which Cossack charges, which numbered some 3,000 men, heavily prefigured in attempts to halt the advance of protestors, led by Father Gapon, before the Imperial Guards opened fire on those who threatened to infiltrate the grounds of the Winter Palace in St Petersburg.¹⁵² Where the chief difference with England arguably lay was, as the Russian example indicates, that continental states were less squeamish about employing the cavalry as a means of dispersing the crowds.¹⁵³ By contrast with the past, when horses were the main instruments employed on the battlefield against opposing armies of cavalry and infantry, now mounted horses were used for suppressing social unrest.¹⁵⁴ Similar to England, however, concern with the possible revolt of the walking masses led not only to the revival of 'riding' as an instrument of control, but also to the maintenance of 'riding' spaces within urban areas.

¹⁵¹ PRO, HO 144/206/A47976P: 'Alfred Linnell's Funeral, 1887-1888: Pamphlet distributed at Alfred Linnell's funeral, 1887.'

¹⁵² Walter Sablinsky, *The road to Bloody Sunday: Father Gapon and the St Petersburg massacre of 1905* (New Jersey, 1976), 229-30; 234; 237; 241. The estimate is taken from S.N. Semanov, *Krovavoe voskresen'e* (Leningrad, 1965), 73.

¹⁵³ For some vivid examples of cavalry deployment on civilian protestors in Vienna, see: Michael John, "'Straßenkrawalle und Exzesse'. Formen des sozialen Protests der Unterschichten in Wien 1880 bis 1918', in Gerhard Melinz and Susan Zimmermann (eds), *Wien – Prag – Budapest: Blütezeit der Habsburgermetropolen. Urbanisierung, Kommunalpolitik, gesellschaftliche Konflikte (1867-1918)* (Vienna, 1996); *Wien wirklich: Ein Stadtführer durch den Alltag und seine Geschichte* (Vienna, 1983), 36.

¹⁵⁴ Jutta Buchner-Fuhs, *Kultur mit Tieren: zur Formierung des bürgerlichen Tierversständnisses im 19. Jahrhundert* (Münster, 1996), 57-8.

Figure 20: Pamphlet distributed at Alfred Linnell's funeral (1887).

What is clear is how this fear was reflected in plans for urban reconstruction, which had to consider the worst-case scenario of having to dispatch mounted horsemen to troubled areas. Such an instance can be gleaned, for example, from plans for the Ringstraße, in Vienna, which took shape during the middle of the nineteenth century. During the deliberations, the City Extension Fund, which drew up a master plan in 1859, took pains to point out the importance of correctly incorporating the military around the proposed ring road, making references to several barracks, an artillery depot, a general command centre and a military training field that needed to be thoughtfully relocated.¹⁵⁵ Concerned less with the enemy from without than from within, it was recommended that ‘the large part of the resident troops should be freely available for use outside’ the proposed Ringstraße’.¹⁵⁶ By the same token, careful note was taken of the potential advances that protesting pedestrians could make in penetrating the Inner City, for which the creation not only of watchtowers, but also of erecting steel girders were put forward as preventative measures.¹⁵⁷ More important, in such situations, was the speed at which cavalry troops could reach the Hofburg Imperial Palace around which rebellious pedestrians might congregate and cause disturbance. To prevent disturbances from getting out of hand, the construction of two riding paths was envisaged so as to make possible the ‘prompt deployment of cavalry’ either side of the boulevard and the carriageway.¹⁵⁸ When the final plans for the Ringstraße was approved, it extended to some 4,400 meters and 56.65 meters wide: the road itself was divided up into the middle carriage way (14.9 meters), the side roads (6.25 meters each) and the inner road (9 meters). But the outer road, which stretched 8.95 meters wide, also doubled as a riding path, designed for the use of cavalry in the event of disturbances.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁵ Rudolf Wurzer, *Planung und Verwirklichung der Wiener Ringstraßenzone* (Wiesbaden, 1980), 156-164.

¹⁵⁶ Quoted in Wurzer *Planung und Verwirklichung*, 164.

¹⁵⁷ Wurzer *Planung und Verwirklichung*, 164.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 195.

From similar motives, riding paths, or *Reitwege*, had been constructed in the Prussian capital, Berlin, which were designed less for the recreational purposes of the riding classes than for political reasons alluded to above. [Appendix A: Riding paths in Berlin, 1913] Constructed for the military in 1866, the *Reitwege* along the Gneisenstraße had become a nuisance by the late nineteenth century. Some 24 years later, the Board of Public Works and Construction proposed to convert them into promenades for the benefit of the walking citizens of Berlin.¹⁶⁰ What had turned the *Reitwege* from practical to wasteful spaces was that they seemed to be hardly in use at all. ‘[The riding path] is seldom used by civilians,’ the Board complained, while ‘for military purposes ... it has less use since the path is only 5.7 meters wide ... Only the two Dragoon regiments have use for it and only particular exercises may be performed on it.’¹⁶¹ More than any other thoroughfare, the riding paths stuck out, since as dirt tracks they contrasted with the paved streets and boulevards. By comparison, the demands of the urban environment had grown to such an extent that seemingly underused and redundant spaces now appeared too precious to ignore. What comes strongly to the fore in the argument of the Board was its desire to allow inhabitants, many of whom were socially frustrated and politically volatile, space in which they could let off steam by walking and engaging in healthy exercise.¹⁶² But the problem the Board had not bargained with was the tenacity of the riding interest to defend the *Reitwege*. Not only did the Board have to repeal a cabinet order of 4 June 1866 which upheld the importance of these riding paths, but it also had to contend with the Imperial Royal Household, which fiercely objected to the idea for a promenade, arguing on the contrary that they were in daily use by the two Dragoon Guard regiments for their manoeuvres. As the Governor advocated: ‘in the interest of the military, the need to maintain the *Reitwege* must be absolutely

¹⁶⁰ LAB, A Pr.Br.Rep. 030 18617: ‘Öffentliche Reitwege, 1890-1917: Letter from Städtische Bau-Deputation Abtheilung II, Berlin, 30 November 1890.’

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid.

defended'.¹⁶³ The real problem was, however, that pedestrians had already begun taking over the riding paths in the absence of any go-ahead to turn them into promenades. Referring to the *Reitwege* along the Tiergartenstraße, the riding master Reihten was moved to write to the police in 1897, claiming that accidents between riders out on exercise on the one hand and pedestrians making a short cut to reach the zoo, or Tiergarten, from the Hildebrandstraße on the other had reached such proportions that intervention could no longer be put off.¹⁶⁴ Following this complaint, an inspector was dispatched to investigate the mixing of riders and walkers. Reporting back to the Board, Pinkenburg confirmed that the *Reitweg* in question had *de facto* been overtaken by pedestrians. During the mornings children could be found playing there, while in the afternoons adults could be observed playing games. By contrast, it was reported, riders – either civil or military – were rarely seen taking out their horses for exercise and that, as such, it was unrealistic to conclude that riders themselves posed a serious threat to the pedestrians.¹⁶⁵ Consequently, Pinkenburg felt there was no need for a barrier – as drawn up by the police in response to the complaint – to be implemented so as to separate riders and pedestrians from each others' spheres of movement.¹⁶⁶ Ironically, the appeal not to change arrangements was backed by the Imperial Household, which pointed out that, far from accidents occurring, pedestrians would usually stand back 'looking on' to spectate the riders' movements. More importantly, it argued, riders were mainly military officers who were so skilled that they could possibly be no danger to the walking public.¹⁶⁷

What finally did contribute to the demise of the riding paths, despite initial protestations, were the efforts firstly of residents and then later of shopkeepers who came out in strong opposition to the public merit of holding on to the *Reitwege*. In May

¹⁶³ Ibid.: 'Letter from Gouverneur, Gouvernement der Residenz Berlin, Berlin, 19 February 1891.'

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.: 'Letter from Rittmeister Reihten, Berlin, 26 April 1897.'

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.: 'Abschrift Stadtbauinspektion, 17 May 1898.'

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.: 'Abschrift Stadtbauinspektion, 17 May 1898.'

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.: 'Letter from Gouvernement der Residenz Berlin, 21 November 1898.'

1900 Hans von Adelson, a resident on the Kurfürstendamm, wrote in to the police to complain about the nuisance the riding path could cause, since it was annoyingly located between his house and the main road. So much did it present an obstacle that it was ‘almost impossible for women to enter my house since they are not in the position to traverse the *Reitweg* on account of the dirt.’¹⁶⁸ Calling for the small stretch of riding path, which inhibited his guests, to be paved over, Adelson put it to the police in no uncertain terms that what was at stake was a choice between the collective interest of the inhabitants – and their visitors – and the riding classes whose presence was by now almost obsolete:

My opinion is that the paving over [of the riding path] outside houses number 4 and 5 will prove less disagreeable than leaving it as it is, for I should think that the owners of property on the Kurfürstendamm should receive more consideration than the few number of riders who occasionally use the riding path.¹⁶⁹

Much of the initial response of the police did not favour Adelson. Following an inspection of the area in question, a police report reached different conclusions. By contrast to the inhabitants’ claim his house was a mere 27 steps away from the paved area in front of the complainant’s house – numbers 4 and 5 – while even in foul weather, the report established, the state of the riding path was fine.¹⁷⁰ More to the point, the police could not grant Adelson his wishes because it had received a note from the Imperial Royal Household, which pointed out that ‘the Kaiser uses the path often for his riding exercises (*Spazierreiten*)’.¹⁷¹ In fact, the Kurfürstendamm riding path, which had been used by the Royal Court as well as by politicians, such as Bismarck, had served as a link between the Stadtschloß and the Jagdschloß Grunewald – between the Imperial

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.: ‘Letter from Hans von Adelson, Berlin, 5 May 1900.’

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.: ‘Note, Berlin, 25 June 1900.’

¹⁷¹ Ibid.: ‘Note, Berlin, 25 June 1900.’

residence and the hunting retreat – before construction of the Kurfürstendamm made it appear out of place.¹⁷² Since by paving over the riding path, it would endanger not only the health of the Kaiser, because he would not be able to conduct his usual riding exercises but also, even if he did, the paved area would be dangerous to the galloping horse.¹⁷³ Despite such objections, Adelson took matters into his own hands, erecting a hand-made ramp in front of his house which – being a few inches higher than the actual riding path – presented a dangerous obstacle for advancing riders and their horses.¹⁷⁴ More sympathetic to Adelson's cause was the Minister of Public Works who waded into the disagreement between residents and the police, electing to side with the former by pointing out that the riding paths could no longer justify their continued presence. 'The *Reitweg* on the Kurfürstendamm between Auguste Victoria Square and the Kornelius bridge', the Minister commented 'does not extend beyond those two streets, so that it has less meaning for riders and, as a consequence, is only used by them on rare occasions.'¹⁷⁵ In any case, he went on, the Kaiser was only now using 'the *Reitwege*, which proceeded along the hippodrome and Joachimsthaler street, so as to get to and from Kurfürstendamm'.¹⁷⁶ To his mind, then, there was little reason why the wish should not be granted. What the Minister ultimately upheld was not only the inhabitants but also the pedestrians whose interests deserved more attention and protection, particularly if conditions meant they would have to wade through mud to get to where they were going. 'In view of such an untenable situation', he declared, 'consideration for the convenience of the rider must take a back seat.'¹⁷⁷ Preempting an alternative proposal, which would merely drain as opposed to pave over the riding path, he continued that such a half-hearted attempt would not be 'an effective remedy for

¹⁷² LAB, *Lexikon Aller Berliner Straßen und Plätze*.

¹⁷³ Ibid.: 'Note, Berlin, 31 June 1900.'

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.: 'Note, Berlin, 31 June 1900.'

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.: 'Letter from Der Minister der öffentlichen Arbeiten Berlin, 15 September 1900.'

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

pedestrian traffic'.¹⁷⁸ Consequent to the directives he sent out the following week, by 20 September 1900 it seems Adelson was finally granted his wish when *Ausbesserungsarbeiten* – or 'repairs' – were reportedly fully carried out.¹⁷⁹

Moves towards paving over *Reitwege* intensified. Now shopkeepers were writing in to the police to ask for what Adelson had requested. But in the shopkeepers' case it was clear that having ramps or permanent pavements had the benefit of enabling more customers to enter their shops, especially during bad weather when trade would be sluggish.¹⁸⁰ Strikingly, the police were becoming increasingly sympathetic to such requests: following the appointment of a new Chief of Police, Dr George von Borries, in December 1902, leanings shifted markedly towards the inhabitants and proprietors of the Kurfürstendamm rather than the riding classes. So much so, in fact, that Borries wrote to the *Obermarstallamt*, asking whether the Kaiser would consent to the area in front of house number 8 to be paved over. Such a plea was based on the reason that the house in question was inconveniently located some 75 meters from the nearest crossing point which made business far from brisk when clients had to make their way through a combination of slush mud and sand.¹⁸¹ Predictably, the *Obermarstallamt* wrote back to complain about the 1.5 meter plank that was proposed which would act as a ramp. Despite its conciliatory stance in allowing ramps to be erected, it nevertheless warned the 'owners had the responsibility not to furnish the ramp with sharp edges, but to build it with rough plaster'.¹⁸² What had by now come to pass, however, was a general situation in which the building over of the riding paths had reached such heights that riders were now the ones writing in to the police to complain. They pointed out how the development of asphalt in particular was having a detrimental effect on horses, and, in turn, the riding experience. Referring specifically to the *Reitweg* along the

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.: 'Letter from Polizei-Direktor, Charlottenburg, 20 September 1900.'

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.: 'Letter Alexander Kittel, Besitzer der Barbarossa-Apotheke, Berlin, 30 January 1902.'

¹⁸¹ Ibid.: 'Letter Polizei Präsident to Obermarstallamt, Graf von Wedel, Berlin, 28 November 1904.'

¹⁸² Ibid.: 'Letter from Graf von Wedel, Königliches Oberstallamt, Berlin, 6 December 1904.'

Charlottenburger Chaussee, which was located between the Brandenburg gate and the Siegesallee, Carl N. Engelhaus believed, in September 1909, that conditions were now too dangerous for horsemen: ‘For us riders the use of asphalt streets is highly dangerous and can account for injury caused to mounted officers. Due to the amount of automobile traffic, the street is also not without dangers, even when it is covered with sand [to aid the horse]’.¹⁸³

But by this time horsemen were in a losing battle. In April 1910, for example, Wilhelm Wolff, a pensioner living along the Lennéstraße, wrote in with a proposal to convert the riding path nearby into a proper carriageway. Pointing out how much traffic of coaches, busses and cabs could build up in the mornings, Wolff suggested congestion could be alleviated if the riding path were simply to become part of the main road. ‘The *Reitweg* lies totally unused’, he declared, continuing:

Being a pensioner, I have had enough time to observe that not a single rider uses the path during the entire winter. Nor has a single rider used it during the summer. Of course a recreational rider has tried to use it on Sundays, but on account of the dust that is kicked up it is sure he would not repeat the same exercise. Apart from this, he is equally sure to regret riding out on the path on account of the nearly life-threatening passage that leads onto the Kempler Square.¹⁸⁴

Despite a half-hearted response from the police, in which customary reference was made to the need to keep the *Reitwege* free for military use, Wolff’s letter was also passed on to the traffic department, which warmed to his idea.¹⁸⁵ ‘Despite the reasonable width of the carriageway, one can hardly move forward’, it diagnosed and suggested that

¹⁸³ Ibid.: ‘Letter Carl N. Engelhaus, Berlin, 25 September 1909.’

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.: ‘Letter dated Berlin 2 March 1910. From Wilhelm Wolff.’

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.: ‘Der Polizei-Präsident to Wilhelm Wolff, Berlin, 4 April 1910.’

‘solution can only be found by incorporating the *Reitwege* into the carriageway.’¹⁸⁶ Much of the remaining clout the riding classes enjoyed only a decade ago was by now fast evaporating, and the evidence that they existed and stalked the urban environment – the riding path – also eventually went with it. Prior to the outbreak of the First World War, privileged equestrian spaces within Berlin were by now few and far between. In fact, the city was turning into a decidedly rider-unfriendly environment in which it was no longer safe or worthwhile to conduct journeys on horseback. A distraught horseman expressed his lot succinctly:

Modern means of transportation, such as automobiles of all types, as well as the asphaltisation of the streets have heavily impeded the progress of the rider, so that they now pose severe dangers for man and animal alike. Particularly when street-crossings are wet – following downpours or street cleaning – the horses are not able to keep standing up... The slippery nature of the streets is further increased through the oil and rubber, which auto tires deposit, left on the streets.¹⁸⁷

Much of the horsemen’s activities were consequently confined to areas in and around the zoological garden or Tiergarten, which contained within it an outdoor riding area – referred to as the hippodrome – as well as riding paths. When proposals were put forward by horsemen to erect riding ramps between Baumschulealle and Kemperplatz, since the paths had been paved over, their pleas were rejected out of hand not least because ‘to undergo such work, which will incur high costs, cannot have much in its favour, when one considers that, by comparison to the objectives envisaged, only a very small section of the population stand to benefit’.¹⁸⁸ Certainly, city support was forthcoming when requests were made to provide the Tiergarten with riding ramps, most

¹⁸⁶Ibid.: ‘Letter to Magistrat der Haupt- und Residenzstadt Berlin (Verkehrsdeputation), dated 4 February 1914.’

¹⁸⁷Ibid.: ‘Letter dated Charlottenburg, 25 January 1910.’

¹⁸⁸Ibid.: ‘Letter from Städtische Tiefbau-Deputation, 13 June 1910.’

of which were erected at a cost of 7,000 Marks; but a further increase in that number, on the back of a further spread in asphalt, was declined in view of the fact that they were being used less and less.¹⁸⁹ More crucially, the authorities could no longer understand why riders would want to request an extension of the environs to the zoo into a riding path. What was clear, at least from the perspective of the Board of Civil Engineering, was that the Tiergarten already offered ‘in all its areas an abundance of *Reitwege*, which, apart from the large area occupied by the hippodrome, extends to around 19.5 kilometres, so that any need of riding traffic can be answered’.¹⁹⁰ By allowing such a proposal to come to fruition, the Board revealingly went on, it would deprive Berlin’s pedestrians future space in which they could roam around. So that if riders could therefore use existing riding paths then ‘the pretty promenade along the edges of the zoo can remain reserved for pedestrian traffic and for walking. That this kind of traffic is still minimal is no reason why this path should be removed since it does not seem out of the question that, with an increase of motorised traffic, it will be come to be used more often than before’.¹⁹¹ Not only had ‘riding’ lost out to ‘driving’, it had, at least within the urban context, failed to hold its own against ‘walking’.

What is curious about the urban environment in which control over the horse was fought is the extent to which pedestrians were at the forefront, both in relation to driven and ridden horses. Differing from the conventional conflict between ‘riding’ and ‘driving’, which informed discussions of the equine economy in previous chapters, the scenario within the urban context was characterised by tensions created by pedestrians – actors peculiar to the urban environment – whose grievances arose out of vehicular

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.: ‘Letter from Städtische Tiefbaudeputation, 4 May 1914.’

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

excesses. By the end of the eighteenth century, pedestrians had, as a result, become more visible, audible and conscious of themselves, demanding space in which they could manoeuvre without fear of being run over by oncoming traffic. But as 'walking' extended its clout, at the expense of 'driving', concerns arose about how much power pedestrians, who still composed the bulk of the population living within towns and cities, could be allowed to wield at a time when social and political unrest was rife. Despite the fact that 'riding' had, by this time, lost its importance and presence, both as a form of transportation and as a symbol of power, it managed to rediscover its use as an instrument by which increasingly restless pedestrians could be held in check. What underpinned this qualified renaissance of 'riding' of course was less the justification that it was still being enjoyed as a recreation by a substantial number of civilian horsemen than the expediency that, in a state of emergency, military horsemen could be dispatched quickly to trouble spots. Such a revival of 'riding' meant that its symbolic association with authority, which extended back to at least the time when the art of horsemanship was rejuvenated during the early sixteenth century, continued to enjoy currency – a message that was not lost on the pedestrian demonstrators who bore the brunt of the cavalry-like charges. But the return of 'riding' was not the kind of full-blown comeback horsemen, even during the late nineteenth century, dreamed about. By the end of the nineteenth century, even riding spaces had come under persistent pressures from residents, pedestrians and shopkeepers, who regarded them as a nuisance for their guests, obstacles for their recreational activities and bad for business. Negotiation of the dirt, mud (dust in the summer) and sludge that paths threw up had, of course, become undesirable because of concerns over public hygiene and middle class sensibilities. Even so, the equine element to why the riding paths had been able to persist for so long – long after riding as a means of movement had demised – should not be easily overlooked. Where horsemen rode off to next, given the increasingly rider-hostile environment he found himself in, must await a different historian. No doubt his task would involve

taking up the story of the horse beyond the equine period, seeking to understand not only where the rider retreated to, but to evaluate whether the legacies of the conflict between 'riding', 'driving' and 'walking', which powerfully shaped the equine economy, still inform the post-equine world we inhabit today.

Conclusion

Up until the middle of the sixteenth century, horsemen, as well as the mode of transportation they represented, rode tall in Europe. Despite the series of challenges ‘riding’ had been subjected to – involving the shifting importance of the cavalry within the military set-up and the emergence of nobility who eschewed movement on horseback – it was still regarded as a symbol of authority, a demonstration of masculinity and the chief source of progressive-movement. But this situation, in which ‘riding’ dominated within the equine economy, was fundamentally shaken during the course of the seventeenth century. Precipitated by the arrival of passenger vehicles, or ‘driving’, which posed a serious threat to the monopoly ‘riding’ had held over movement, the proliferation of coaches and carriages was thought to have a broader detrimental effect on horsemen, who would choose to ride no more, and hence on the breeding of quality saddle horses.

Defenders of ‘riding’ stood up to this challenge in two interconnected ways. Firstly, horsemen transformed themselves from medieval warriors to civilised elites, successfully responding to the challenge of ‘driving’ by re-inventing the art of horsemanship. Set up as equestrian academies within France, which had taken their cue from the Italian schools, the *haute-école* became an important rite of passage for future kings, rulers and elites who all flocked, from across Europe, to attend them, before the French Revolution saw to their eventual demise. More than significant was the way in which these schools of horsemanship developed a doctrine that re-elevated the rider into a position of power and authority, which inspired, in turn, the artistic development of equestrian portraits and monuments. What fundamentally underpinned the thinking behind the art of horsemanship was the supreme position the rider assumed – both in relation to the animal and to the populace – which came to be reflected in how

equestrian monuments, in particular, assumed an elevated position within urban centres that demanded submission from those who walked and drove below them. Secondly, 'riding' defended itself from the onslaught of 'driving' by moving to establish, in the case of the European continent, a state-instituted stud system. Such an institution, peopled as it was by horsemen, should be seen as a concomitant development of equestrian academies, since it grew out of fears that fewer horses suited for 'riding' would be produced owing to the fashion for 'driving'. Providing horsemen with the means to control the sites of reproduction, these studs, which rose to prominence first in France and then imitated across Europe, influenced the kind of horses that could be bred and reared. By implementing these two measures, horsemen managed to maintain not only their standing but also their control over the equine economy well beyond the time when, as an everyday form of movement, 'riding' represented the chief means of movement.

What the foundation of the veterinary colleges, first in France then across Europe in the middle of the eighteenth century, reveals is the extent to which this clout that 'riding' had cast over the equine economy continued to inform ways in which institutions, which had an equine component, developed during later centuries. Emerging out of this equestrian tradition, in which the founder Claude Bourgelat had been schooled, veterinary medicine serves as an example of a discipline that struggled to break free from 'riding'. Stubbornly insisting on the elevated position of the horse, the veterinary establishment, during its early years, refused to see the relevance of treating other animals on a par with horses. By the same token, it rejected wider cooperation with other areas of agriculture, medicine and science which, it feared, would have a detrimental effect on both its pupils and its emphasis on the horse: farriers would not only be enticed away from their chief occupation of shoeing and curing horses but, by doing so, the prominent position of the horse would also be compromised. Such a sentiment, which deemed the horse special, was shared by the state studs, which refused

to see the horse as part either of livestock breeding or the rural economy. Believing horse-breeding to be *sui generis*, horsemen insisted it was a noble pursuit that required passion and patriotism. When farmers did turn to the breeding of horses – which was still rather rare at a time when oxen were preferred to carry out the bulk of agricultural tasks until at least the early nineteenth century – they invariably had to contend with these horsemen, within state studs, who objected to their involvement based on the reason that farmers considered horse-breeding to be a secondary concern that took a backseat, for example, to the rearing of cattle and sheep.

What contributed fundamentally to undercut this ‘rider’s vision’, however, which had for so long dominated the ideological basis of the equine economy, was the emergence of the English system of horseracing and the hippodrama during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Placing the emphasis on the performance of the horse rather than the skills of the rider, these two forms of sport and entertainment, which developed independently of each other, transformed ‘riding’ from a demonstration of the horseman’s authority to a test of the horse’s talent. Such a shift in perspective was reflected in the prominent positions thoroughbreds and equine actors – rather than jockeys or human actors – assumed within publications, such as the *General Stud Book* and the *Racing Calendar*, or on stage, where audiences admired the courage of horses to act out their roles with a passion that frequently put the human actors to shame. Such a shift, from looking at the rider to looking at the horse, proved significant, because it allowed wider society, whose opinions about horses had previously been shunned, to pronounce upon the quality of horseflesh without having to defer to the judgement of horsemen. By doing so, veterinarians and farmers, for example, could contest not only the knowledge of the horse that ‘riding’ had monopolised, but they could also have a say in what kinds of horses should now be bred. By contrast to horsemen, who placed the saddle horse on a pedestal, shunning connections to the wider world, agronomists and farmers placed the heavy horse firmly within the workings of

agriculture in general and livestock breeding in particular. Common to the stance of these advocates of ‘driving’, who called for the take-up of heavy horses during the first half of the nineteenth century, was that horse-breeding could no longer be considered a noble and patriotic pursuit that could operate freely outside of economic rules, turning out merely saddle horses for the use of cavalry. Responding to the demands of industry and commerce, which required heavy horses to pull carts, wagons, carriages, coaches and cabriolets within both rural and urban areas, horse-breeding had to demonstrate its profitability, casting aside the legacies of ‘riding’ by embracing ‘driving’ in an intensive but dispassionate way.

Such momentous changes naturally sparked off protests from ‘riding’. Most defiant were horsemen, employed within state studs, who vehemently objected not only to the introduction of horseracing – and the principles that underpinned the sport – but also to thoroughbreds as stud horses, pointing out how the popularisation of the Turf and the racehorse had contributed to the demise of the art of horsemanship in England. During the first half of the nineteenth century, it seems, the efforts of these stud officials, at least within Germany, proved successful. Opposition to the English system and the thoroughbred led to expeditions that sought out stud horses in the East not least because the Arab horse, which had been bred and reared in a nomadic environment, was considered a saddle horse that had been left untainted by the effects of ‘driving’. Less successful, however, were the efforts of the French riding classes to resurrect equestrian academies – an idea that failed to gain acceptance not least because they wanted to compete with the inexorable rise of heavy horses by producing a new generation of horsemen who would, in turn, create demand for saddle horses. But the general picture, during the second half of the nineteenth century, is one that saw the further infiltration of the horse-centred perspective, even within conservative areas of ‘riding’. When ‘sports’, such as steeplechase and long-distance racing, came to be conducted during the late nineteenth century, these were designed to satisfy not only the whims of the rider, but

also the need to test the performance of horses that were ridden. Such moves formed part of the final triumph of ‘driving’ over ‘riding’ in which farmers increasingly chose to breed heavy over lighter horses. What the example of the Rhineland shows is how farmers spearheaded campaigns for state studs to house stallions that were more suited to the requirements of the local economy, eventually resulting in the introduction of Belgian breeds during the late nineteenth century. Even East Prussian farmers, who had traditionally bred and reared remounts, were consequently attracted to the profits that could be made from breeding heavy horses, leading to significant concessions that allowed them to cater to a wider equine market by the beginning of the twentieth century.

But the expanding power of ‘driving’ was not necessarily a force that could be allowed to grow unfettered. Limited to the urban environment, which had already witnessed the demise of ‘riding’ as a mode of movement and as a representation of monarchic authority, ‘driving’ had become a rampant problem as early as the late eighteenth century. Pedestrians, it seems, felt particularly aggrieved at the hardship they had to endure from having to evade the wayward behaviour of coaches, carriages and cabriolets. Helped by the development of shopping, which made the construction of trottoirs, or pedestrian pavements, justifiable and remunerative, ‘walking’ extended its clout, contributing to curtailment of vehicular excesses witnessed on the streets. But the development of both ‘driving’ and ‘walking’ gave rise to another problem, which included increased cases of cruelty inflicted on horses – a phenomenon brought about in part by the growth in the number of horses required to pull the various vehicles operating within towns and cities. What concerned the animal protection movement was not only the cruelty that drivers invariably committed against horses, but also the kind of impact the sight of fallen and injured horses had on pedestrian passers-by. Such concerns about the moral welfare of pedestrians formed part of wider fears about how much ‘walking’ could extend its influence. Since it was thought pedestrians could cause severe disruption to urban life by taking to the streets, European cities, such as London,

Berlin and Vienna responded by reviving 'riding' as a major force in instances of emergency, dispatching either cavalry or police mounts to trouble spots so as to contain pedestrian unrest. Reflected in plans for urban reconstruction, 'riding' made a qualified comeback, functioning as enforcers of the rule of law; but it was not a revival that portended a full-scale return of the horseman.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, then, the horseman, who had stood tall at the start of this investigation, had been removed from his high horse, at times ridiculed and at other times ignored as equestrian monuments so often were. Even though the decline of 'riding' as a means of movement had been set in motion during the course of the seventeenth century, the power of the horseman, it seems reasonable to conclude, extended well into the second half of the nineteenth century and, with the exception of the immediate urban environment, continued to form a feature, if a marginal one, of the equine economy at the start of the twentieth century. When in fact the burning embers of the conflict between 'riding' and 'driving' were finally extinguished, as the equine period drew to a close, is a matter of conjecture that goes beyond the scope of this present study. But one can be certain, even before research is undertaken, that any study of the age of the automobile must seriously consider the preceding period and the role of the horse within it, asking whether in fact motorisation constituted a clean break from the equine past. Referring to the age of the automobile as the post-equine period, Reinhart Koselleck implied he was of a different opinion that did not see the significance of the horse evaporate over night. Even today our continued attachment to the otherwise unscientific term 'horsepower' suggests that we still live in the shadows of a time when man was dependent on the horse.

What this investigation has tentatively sought to do is to sketch out the basic contours of how the equine economy operated. But it is clear that severe weaknesses and questions remain. Perhaps inevitably, an investigation of this scope has ridden roughshod over significant components of the equine economy. How, for example, did

the French school of horsemanship differ from the Italian one on which it was modelled? To what extent were the Italian schools really successful in creating horsemen imbued with ‘rider’s vision’? How different was the horseman of the seventeenth century to that of the medieval knight, whose identities must have also been forged on horseback? Could one argue, by extension, that horsemen who managed to survive into the nineteenth century represented a continuation of the spirit of the knight? How much did the military, which only appeared on the periphery of the investigation, and the changing tactics of warfare, figure as factors that influenced the development of the equine economy? Could one plausibly argue, for instance, that the continued prestige, if not tactical importance, of the cavalry arm, contributed to the extended survival of the horseman? How did hippologists, who emerged out of the equestrian academies and who pronounced upon horses as horse specialists in print, think about the animal? What were the main characteristics of the doctrine that they laid down, how did it evolve following initial attempts of Pluvinel and other classic riding masters, and how did it differ from thinking found among the founders of veterinary medicine, such as Bourgelat, who had grown up with this tradition? What, more generally, was the involvement of the aristocracy in the process of breeding, especially in England, which lacked the state-appointed studs commonly found on the continent? Why was it that England did not choose to found a similar stud system? What, moreover, was the role of English gentlemen in the setting up of flat-racing as an institution? Did the Turf, within the English context, also signify a move away from the spirit of the horseman, as research into its reception on the continent concluded? Connected to this, how was the art of horsemanship, as it had evolved in Italy and France, received and developed (if at all) in England, which seems to have taken a different attitude towards riding? What, moreover, were the precise circumstances in which farmers and agriculture in general became interested in horses, particularly during the eighteenth century, about which we know little? What was the nature of the relationship between horse and farmer and how much

did ambivalence inform the way in which horse-breeding was conducted during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries? And how did this, in turn, affect the position of the horse within wider society? Such questions, needless to say, will have to be left to a different date and perhaps to other scholars who can devote more space to discussing them in more focused and localised studies.

What this study has selectively chosen to tell can, of course, be narrated in different ways and, perhaps, if a different historian were to respond to the challenge, with greater emphasis on other historical actors, factors and processes. When coaches and carriages arrived on the scene across Europe, for example, this development could be accounted for by the rise in the importance of the state bureaucracy. Such a development, one could argue, made it necessary for the nobility to reside, for long periods, within towns and cities where it became more convenient to move around on wheels rather than on horseback. Equally, when equestrian academies were established in France during the seventeenth century, this decision can be viewed as part of a process in which the nobility had to re-invent itself in an increasingly bookish and civilising age. Equestrian portraits and monuments might also be seen within the context of the rise in the system of absolute monarchy, which required instruments of political propaganda to convey the authority of rulers. The emergence of the state studs could also be plausibly told as a story of the state, which felt it had to set up an infrastructure that could place the military on an autarkic footing with regard to the procurement of remounts. Similarly, the birth and evolution of veterinary medicine could be sought in the forces of the Enlightenment, which re-established animal medicine on a scientific and experimental footing. Why horseracing required jockeys, weights and the publication of results of races could alternatively be linked to the need to provide a transparent and trustworthy basis on which money could be gambled. Similarly the fact that horses within the circus rose to prominence as the main actors during performances could also be considered within the context of the development of entertainment in

which popular culture periodically ridiculed the pompous and powerful. Why farmers chose to breed horses could be answered simply as a response to the development of roads, towns and industry, which thirsted after horses in order to construct the modern world. Pedestrian grievances about the excesses of vehicular traffic could also be told in terms of concern for public safety; while the development of trottoirs could be viewed as the manifestation of the commercial development of shops and shopping; and the employment of cavalry and police on horseback could be situated within the wider moves towards circumscribing the popular disturbances of the working class.

What all these various narratives hide, however, is the presence of the horse in all of them. Submerged within histories that do little to understand the immediate world various horses operated in, attempts to account for the change in how they were viewed become a corollary of processes that have little to do with the animal itself. To be sure, there is little sense in arguing, at the risk of falling into the trap of anthropomorphism, that these narratives present the horse as ‘passive recipients’ of wider forces at work. Such a problem was arguably the reason why social historians, who diversified their interests and made respectable previously obscure subjects, could not quite bring themselves to embrace animals during the 1970s because of the obvious limits involved in propping them up as ‘active participants’ in their fate. Even cultural historians, on the whole, have neatly side-stepped this problem by focusing on representations, manifestations and linguistic discourse of animals. But the visibility of the horse does not necessarily hang on conferring upon it agency. By imagining a world that revolved around horses, this study has argued, it should be possible to shed light on the diverse actors – horsemen, stud officials, breeders – within the equine economy who all, to varying degrees and at different points during the equine period, saw and fought over the horse as a creature that provided them with power in both senses – the power of authority and the power of movement. As this study has shown, the move from ‘riding’ to ‘driving’, as a means of transportation, did not necessarily involve only issues of

convenience and comfort – the take-up of vehicle transport also created concerns about the demise of the spirit of the horsemen and the decline of the art of horsemanship. Only by placing the subsequent developments of equestrian academies, portraits and monuments within this context can one fully understand why the *haute-école* and artistic representations on horseback were insisted upon to the extent that they were. Similarly, the emergence of the state studs should not be seen as a natural outgrowth of a modernising state apparatus but as a reaction, which was rooted to the threat that horses bred for vehicle transportation posed to the breeding of horses suited for the cavalry. By the same token, the development of veterinary medicine was a response not only to prevent epizootics from spreading, but also to satisfy the horsemen's need to create a cohort of subservient farriers that could continue to serve the need to cure and shoe horses. What the evolution of both horseracing and the circus has to consider is how they can be placed not only within narratives of leisure and entertainment, but also within the context of the shift from 'riding' to 'driving'. By doing so, one sees how both institutions contributed to the undermining of 'rider's vision'. Even so, both institutions, approached conventionally, would lead to the misinterpretation that the nature of the Turf and hippodrama, which employed jockeys and circus artistes as performers, were an extension of 'riding', when in fact they were anything but. Much of the discussion about farmers indicate the extent to which they came up against the issue of economic profitability in the breeding of horses, but also that they had to contend with horsemen, within state studs, who made it difficult for them to do so. Finally, the significance of pedestrians can be appreciated as a form of movement which replaced 'riding' as the major opponent of 'driving', leading to concern not only about street safety but also to fears that their influence, as evidence in the development of trottoirs and riots, could signal a challenge to authority. Why this was significant, in equine terms, was because this perceived threat led to the revival of 'riding' within the urban environment. By asserting the primacy of equine factors, however, it should not imply that this

investigation denies the importance of the state, absolute monarchy, aristocracy, the military, the Enlightenment, leisure, commerce, industry and so on as historical forces that undoubtedly shaped and influenced the evolution of the equine economy between 1550 and 1900. Nevertheless, it believes that, in order to uphold the ‘visibility’ of the horse, a different analytical framework, context and narrative is needed. By providing it, this investigation has demonstrated that the division that developed between the ‘riding’ and ‘driving’ camps was a feature that reverberated for almost 250 years through Europe’s tumultuous history.

What are the wider implications of writing a history of the horse in the way that this investigation has sought to do? A major characteristic of this study has been its admittedly tentative attempt – in response to Kosselleck’s imaginative conceptualisation – to reinterpret history in equine terms. Such an approach, which harks back to the time when grand narratives held sway, has become less fashionable among historians, because they have rightly come to suspect the explanatory power of over-arching narratives. But it is also because they have diversified their field over the years to the extent that the discipline of history has, as a consequence, become highly specialised, rendering any attempt at large scale depictions of the past difficult, despite the emergence of ‘Big’ or Global history in recent times. What is attractive about a topic, such as the horse, is that it enables a large story to be told not only as a collection of these specialised fragments, but within a new mould which, while not totally rejecting conventional historical narratives – such as the Renaissance, the Scientific Revolution, the Enlightenment, and the French and Industrial Revolutions – does not perpetuate a linear story of modernity and progress either. Much of the attraction to researching the horse as a historian, in fact, is how it eludes simple classification: the horse was a force of reaction (‘riding’) and progress (‘driving’), an object of patriotism (remounts) and profit (heavy horses), a symbol of masculinity (horseback riding) and femininity (coach travel), an embodiment of aggression (cavalry charge) and defencelessness (cruelty).

Clearly, an appreciation of how the equine economy functioned leads to the fruitlessness of considering whether, for example, horses could be considered ‘modern’ or ‘backward’. By resisting the urge to classify, with reference to these conventional dichotomies, the investigation has sought to retain the rich, complex and contradictory nature of the equine past that makes research into it such a challenge.

Evidently, this study can also be pursued in greater empirical detail and temporal scope, looking at how the equine economy looked like before, during and after the equine period in the European past. Equally, the framework developed within this investigation should also work within other geographical regions of the world. Particularly interesting would be to look for the equine dimension in the history of the Middle East, which boasted a culture of the horse from its early days. More than significant would be to discover how the equine economies of Europe and the Middle East differed but also how they overlapped: Arab horses perhaps would, in such cases, figure prominently as idealised saddle horses that fired the passions of occidental horsemen since the Crusades. Conversely, a history of the horse would also be revealing when taken to North and South America, which only really came to breed and then employ them following imperial intervention, a process initiated by Columbus when he brought horses to the New World for the first time in 1493.¹ But doubts must remain as to whether a similar approach can be applied to the study of all animals, such as dogs, cats, sheep or cattle. Since this investigation has been premised on the understanding that the horse was uniquely present in a diverse and complex range of human activity – a feat no other domesticated animal could match – the framework adopted here cannot be readily exported. But it is arguably right and proper that this is the case. Of course, the history of the horse could have been written differently as part of a wider history of animals – an issue into which this study has not had time to delve deeper. But in much

¹ Alfred W. Crosby, *Ecological imperialism: the biological expansion of Europe, 900-1900* (Cambridge, 1986), 182.

the same way that students of human-animal relationships are wont to do the history of the horse could have been couched in terms of human domination and exploitation; in terms of the shifting boundaries of what it meant to be human or animal; in terms of middle class squeamishness about animal cruelty; and in terms of animal agency and volition. But this is not what is offered here, for the simple reason that, by doing so, the distinctiveness of the equine past would be lost. Of course, this far from implies that other animals are no less important and significant in their own ways. More than ironic would be if this study, which has exposed the narrow-mindedness of horsemen when perched on horseback, shunned any connection to other animals. Rather this study suggests that narratives and frameworks should be created that would similarly increase the visibility of these animals, so that their peculiarities as individual animals are brought carefully to the fore.

Figure 22: Remains of the statue of George I, Leicester Square (c.1872)

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