

Great Books on Horsemanship: Bibliotheca Hippologica Johan Dejager.

Koert van der Horst, ed.

Leiden: Hes & De Graaf, 2014. 784 pp. \$227.

Great Books on Horsemanship, a catalogue of the book and manuscript collection of Belgian businessman and equestrian Johan Dejager, could easily serve as a textbook for a university course on the horse in Western Europe. The book documents 364 titles in Dejager's collection from the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries. Appearing on the slipcover is an image of William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle (1593–1676), instructing his mount in performing the croupade, a movement of manège riding. Historians consider Cavendish's illustrated treatise, *Méthode et invention nouveaux de dresser les chevaux* (New method of training horses, 1658; cat. 144), one of the masterworks of the genre. Originating in sixteenth-century Italy, manège riding required physical strength, coordination, and mental attunement of both rider and horse. Young noblemen learned manège horsemanship as part of their education, and many flocked to riding academies in Italy and France for instruction. Riding masters such as Federico Grisone (cat. 55–70) and Cavendish (cat. 144–50) published treatises outlining their training methods; the teachings of others such as Giovan Battista Pignatelli (b. ca. 1525; cat. 93) and Valerio Piccardini (cat. 208–09) circulated in manuscript form.

An interdisciplinary group of a dozen contributors wrote the essays and catalogue entries. Koert van der Horst, former manuscripts curator of Utrecht University Library, edited and indexed the volume. Johan Dejager wrote the introduction, including a breakdown of his collection by country and century and an account of how the book was planned and produced. The authors of four essays address the themes of horsemanship, hippiatrics (equine medicine), cavalry, and the horse in art. Historian Elisabetta Deriu explains how early modern treatises disseminated equestrian knowledge throughout Europe. Veterinarian Bernard Clerc outlines the three main genres of hippiatric manuals authored by veterinary physicians, riding masters, and expert farriers. Independent art historian Tim Clayton traces the history of the equestrian print series. Thierry d'Erceville, horsewoman and artist, surveys the cavalry treatises of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century equerries. An essay on the history of the collecting of equestrian books would have been an insightful addition, as the book has an index of former owners of works in the Dejager Collection.

The catalogue entries are grouped by century and by country. A biography of the author precedes the entries. Each entry includes a physical and bibliographic description of the book or manuscript in the Dejager Collection, including notes on the collation and binding. A commentary section describes the book's contents and illustrations followed by a list of references and any titles bound together with the book.

The oldest printed work in the collection, a hippiatric work by Roman veterinary physician Lorenzo Rusio (1288–1347), was printed in Germany in 1490 (cat. 2), and

Dejager also owns two manuscripts of Rusio's treatise (cat. 7–8). The Italian books dominate the sixteenth century, including fifteen editions of Grisone's *Gli ordini di cavalcare* (The rules of riding [first edition, 1550]) in four languages (cat. 55–70). However, German authors represent fifty-two titles from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, including three richly illustrated folio-sized books by the German riding master Georg Engelhart von Löhneysen (1552–1622) on bits and manège riding (cat. 30–32). Löhneysen was not only a horseman, but also a printer, establishing his own press at his Remlingen estate in 1596. In the seventeenth century, France had surpassed Italy as a center for the teaching of manège riding, with Pignatelli's pupil, Antoine de Pluvinel (1552–1620; cat. 164–76), establishing a school at the French court in 1594 (354). This shift is also reflected in the Dejager Collection, with forty-five French titles from the seventeenth century and 104 titles overall (18).

Great Books on Horsemanship will serve as a tremendous aid to scholars of the history of riding, veterinary medicine, and the visual culture of the horse. Dejager's catalogue gives scholars an overview of equestrian books and descriptions of individual works, which researchers can then discover in the library collections. Major collections of equestrian literature are held by the British Library, the Biblioteca del Quirinale, the Bibliothèque nationale de France, National Veterinary School in Lyons, the Herzog August Bibliothek, the National Sporting Library and Museum, the Fairman Rogers Collection at the University of Pennsylvania Libraries, and the John A. Seaverns Collection at Tufts University Libraries. Through the digitization of rare books such as those in the Rogers and Seaverns Collections, scholars can read many of these titles online via the Internet Archive (archive.org).

The 1,029 full-color and high-quality plates will also assist scholars in interpreting these texts in the wider visual culture of the era. Past bibliographies of equestrian works have been poorly illustrated or lacked illustrations altogether. As the late art historian Walter Liedtke (1945–2015) demonstrated in his book *The Royal Horse and Rider*, artists such as Leonardo da Vinci, Peter Paul Rubens, and Anthony Van Dyck frequently portrayed horses and riders as symbols of ruling power. Illustrated equestrian treatises likely served as an aid for artists composing designs for paintings, tapestries, and equestrian monuments. In turn, the works of mainstream artists informed equestrian book illustrations, as the dissection diagrams in *Dell'anatomia et dell'infirmità del cavallo* (1598; cat. 094) by anatomist Carlo Ruini (1530–98) may have been based upon lost anatomical studies by Leonardo.

Great Books on Horsemanship does have its shortcomings: there are typographical errors throughout the volume; its high price (€175) places it beyond reach of some scholars who might wish to acquire it. Despite these drawbacks, it is an important contribution and reference work for early modern equestrian studies.

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