

Mediterranean horse cultures: Greek, Roman and Arabic equine texts in late medieval and early modern Andalusia

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Abstract

In histories of medieval and early modern Iberia, distinctions between ‘Christian’ and ‘Muslim’ cavalries have become shorthand for differing forms of social organization and cultural meaning embedded in the relationship between horse and rider. In other words, practices with horses—as amalgamations of style, technique, and function—also imply region, religion, and ethnicity, in effect, transforming the signified (the equestrian tradition) into the signifier (a marker of boundaries and identities). However, the religious boundaries implied by the use of Iberian Muslim horse culture are rapidly undermined by examination of the recurrent circulation of equines, equestrian experts, and equine-related texts in a circum-Mediterranean context. Reframing Iberian horse cultures within broader Mediterranean connectivities illuminates a common body of equine knowledge uneasily contained by regional, imperial, or ethnic-religious denominations, and emphasizes the dynamic multi-functionality of horses, riders, and texts about horses. By focusing on the particular practices constituting cavalry traditions, rather than the cultural identities their labels imply, the notion of Mediterranean horse cultures can better aid historians in deciphering outcomes of diplomacy and military strategy across Christian-Muslim borders.

Keywords: Iberia, Mediterranean, cavalry, veterinary medicine, horses.

Resum

En les històries de la península ibèrica de l'edat mitjana i moderna les diferències entre la cavalleria islàmica i cristiana s'han convertit en una manera d'il·lustrar diferents formes d'organització social i significats culturals vinculats amb la relació entre cavall i genet. És a dir, les pràctiques de la cavalleria —com a conjunt d'estils, tècniques i funcions— també impliquen connotacions regionals, religioses i ètniques, i en efecte han acabat transformant el significat (la tradició eqüestre) en el significant (un element de distinció de territoris i identitats). Tanmateix, la frontera religiosa de la pràctica de la cavalleria musulmana ibèrica es mostra molt subtilment analitzada a la llum de la circulació recurrent d'equins, experts eqüestres i textos relacionats amb equins en un context circummediterrani. Replantejar les cultures del cavall ibèriques dins del marc de connectivitats mediterrànies més extenses posa en evidència un corpus comú de coneixements sobre el cavall, sovint constret de manera excessiva per denominacions regionals, imperials o etnicoreligioses i destaca els aspectes multifuncionals de cavalls, genets i textos sobre aquests animals. En centrar-se en les pràctiques particulars que constitueixen les tradicions de la cavalleria, en lloc que en les identitats culturals que impliquen les seves etiquetes, el coneixement de les cultures mediterrànies del cavall pot ajudar els historiadors a entendre més a fons la diplomàcia i l'estratègia militar en el context de les fronteres cristianomusulmanes.

Paraules clau: Ibèria, Mediterrani, cavalleria, medicina veterinària, cavalls.

Resumen

En las historias de la península ibérica medieval y moderna, las distinciones entre la caballería islámica y cristiana se han convertido en una cifra de diferentes formas de organización social y de significados culturales vinculados con la relación entre caballo y jinete. En otras palabras, las prácticas de la caballería —como conjunto de estilos, técnicas y funciones— también implican connotaciones regionales, religiosas y étnicas, y en efecto han acabado transformando el significado (la tradición ecuestre) en el signifiante (un elemento distintivo de territorios e identidades). Sin embargo, la frontera religiosa de la práctica de la caballería islámica ibérica aparece muy sutil si se considera la circulación recurrente de equinos, expertos ecuestres y textos relacionados con equinos en un contexto circunmediterráneo. Replantear las culturas de los caballos ibéricos dentro de conectividades mediterráneas más amplias permite

apreciar un corpus de conocimientos comunes sobre el caballo, a menudo constreñido de manera excesiva por denominaciones regionales, imperiales o étnico-religiosas, y enfatiza los aspectos multifuncionales de caballos, jinetes y textos sobre caballos. Al centrarse en las prácticas particulares que constituyen las tradiciones de la caballería, en lugar de en las identidades culturales que implican sus etiquetas, la noción de las culturas mediterráneas del caballo puede ayudar mejor a los historiadores a entender más a fondo la diplomacia y la estrategia militar a través de las fronteras cristiano-musulmanas.

Palabras clave: Iberia, Mediterráneo, caballería, medicina veterinaria, caballos.

1. *Introduction*

Numerous historical equestrian traditions from around the Mediterranean maintain their popularity today, such as the *palio* horse races in Italy, the *cirit* games in Turkey, and the *tburida* spectacles in the North African Maghreb.¹ These horsemanship styles present a visual contrast to alternative northern European traditions of jousting, tournament warfare, and pageantry, for their emphasis on speed and notable lack of armor, belonging to light rather than heavy cavalry techniques. National interest in the promotion of these unique equestrian traditions, however, also obscures the shared transmission of equine knowledge and horse breeds based on centuries of contact in the Mediterranean across diverse cultures.

The identity boundaries implied by distinctive horsemanship traditions is clearly illustrated within Iberian history. There, traditions of horseback riding are commonly divided between the style of heavy

1. See Elizabeth TOBEY, *The Palio Banner and the Visual Culture of Horse Racing in Renaissance Italy*, Routledge, London, 2011; Hasan Bülent PAKSOY, «Two Altaic Games: ‘Chelik-Chomak’ and ‘Jirid Oyunu’», in D. Sinor, ed., *Aspects of Altaic Civilization III*, Indiana University Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies, Bloomington, 1990; Gwyneth TALLEY, «Gunpowder Women: Gender, Kinship & Horses in Moroccan Equestrian Performance», PhD Thesis, UCLA, 2019.

cavalry, known as *a la brida*, and the style of light cavalry, known as *a la jineta*. In historical scholarship, functional and stylistic characteristics of riding *a la jineta* denote its Muslim origins, and its appearance in Iberia is traced to Muslim knights fighting by turns against or on behalf of Christian kings. This horsemanship is contrasted with the contemporaneous style of riding in the manner of the heavy cavalry, or Christian knight, riding *a la brida*. Nevertheless, despite the clear cultural and religious implications of each respective horsemanship style, there is plentiful evidence for intersection between styles and riders: knights on the deep borders between Christian and Muslim polities adopted the opposing style, despite religious designations.² These examples have led to reconsideration of Iberian Muslim horsemanship as both a local and autochthonous tradition.³

If Iberian horsemanship *a la jineta* is neither strictly Christian nor Muslim in its practice, despite its contributing elements, the complexity of the landscape does not end there. As this article shows, a nexus of equine texts that accumulated in Iberia from the twelfth to sixteenth centuries can be traced to curated Greek references transmitted in both Latin and Arabic languages as the texts passed through Roman, Byzantine, and Islamic territories. In many ways, the knowledge base for Muslim horsemanship itself represented an amalgamation of shared elements that deeply shaped Christian horsemanship. In addition to the movement of equine texts, the mobility of mercenary units and cavalry horses complemented this interrelated body of equine knowledge in Iberia. The sum of these moving parts confounds the designation of equestrian techniques and practices with regional, imperial, or

2. Francisco A. RIVAS RIVAS, *Omnia equi: caballos y jinetes en la España medieval y moderna*, Colección Ecuestre Almuzara, Córdoba, 2005.

3. C. Sanz Egaña, ed., *Tres libros de jineta de los siglos XVI y XVII*, Sociedad de bibliófilos españoles, Madrid, 1951, editor's preface; Kathryn RENTON, «Muy grandes hombres de acaballo: New World Horsemanship and Spanish Nobility», in G. Liang and J. Rodríguez, eds., *Authority and Spectacle in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia: In Honor of Teofilo F. Ruiz*, Routledge, London and New York, 2017, pp. 217-226.

ethnic-religious denominations as simple as Christian heavy cavalry and Muslim light cavalry.

Rather than considering horse cultures as unique national traditions or markers of broad religious divisions, these categories can be more productively reframed in terms of a shared Mediterranean development of light cavalry horsemanship, facilitated by repeated movements of people, texts and animals. Similarities between Near Eastern, North African, and Iberian traditions of horsemanship suggest historical commonalities among several Mediterranean horse cultures. Likewise, these same were not hermetically sealed off from Christian traditions, as horses, experts and texts moved across multiple imperial, national, and religious boundaries. Examining the recurrent circulation of equine texts, equestrian experts, and their equine mounts in a circum-Mediterranean context revitalizes our understanding of the practices engaged in by knights, nobles and mercenaries in training and riding their equine mounts. Reframing Iberian horse cultures within broader Mediterranean connectivities emphasizes the dynamic multi-functionality of horses, riders, and texts about horses. By focusing on the practices constituting cavalry traditions rather than the cultural identities their labels imply, the notion of Mediterranean horse cultures offers novel insights into outcomes of diplomacy and military strategy across Christian-Muslim borders in the Mediterranean world.

2. Late medieval and early modern equestrian traditions

Discussions of horsemanship in Iberia, and particularly Andalusia, usually center on distinguishing Christian and Muslim traditions, respectively characterized by the plated armor and chivalric traditions of the Christian knight in contrast to the tactics and skill of the Muslim mounted warrior. Despite numerous revisions of Lynn White's singular view of the development of feudalism, his coupling of the stirrup, armor and «shock cavalry» (referring to the heavy, armored cavalry able to disrupt enemy formations with explosively timed charges) has retained its force in European historiography. The inter-reliance of heavy caval-

ry, feudalism, and Christian kingdoms in Western Europe has generated a preoccupation with the status of the heavy cavalry as the so-called «decisive arm» of battlefield tactics and in chivalric models in medieval European historiography.⁴ The horsemanship of the heavy cavalry of Western Europe is most often illuminated in high relief to the alternative Near Eastern and North African traditions of light cavalry. Represented by the footprint of Dar al-Islam, this image of Muslim horsemanship drew on nomadic, tribal tactics, and the demands of desert warfare—namely lightly armored and highly mobile men at arms. Visual clues for this opposing style included ethnic dress, such as turbans, as well as small weapons for rapid engagements, like javelins or bows and arrows, and finally the techniques of governing the horse in characteristic maneuvers. In essence, the horsemanship style of the Christian knight reflects the function of heavy cavalry and the financial outlays underlying obligations between lord and vassal; conversely the horsemanship style of the Muslim warrior signifies the lightning speed and flexible configuration of aggressive, light cavalry raids. In other words, the equestrian tradition signified by the label of Christian or Muslim itself has become a marker of boundaries and identities defined by social organization.

Early modern publications that documented the style of horsemanship *a la jineta* have been read as examples of a Spanish desire to erase its Muslim past by minimizing the relationship between Andalusian and North African equestrian traditions. Functionally, riding *a la jineta* used shorter stirrups, poisoning the rider on the horse's back for high-

4. Lynn WHITE, *Medieval Technology and Social Change*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1962; critics include Bernard S. BACHRACH, *Merovingian Military Organization: 481-751*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, MN, 1972; and Philippe CONTAMINE, *War in the Middle Ages*, Basil Blackwell, New York, 1984. Nevertheless, the coupling appears in standard accounts of the development of chivalric culture, as in Maurice Hugh KEEN, *Chivalry*, Yale Nota Bene, New Haven, 2005, and the association of the heavy cavalry with European knighthood also comes to the fore in discussions of the Italian Wars, as in J. R. Hale, ed., *Renaissance War Studies*, Hambledon Press, London, 1983.

speed maneuvers associated with raids and skirmishes characteristic of the frontier conflicts between Muslim and Christian polities. Stylistically, the rider used a short lance and leather *adarga* shield, and rather than plated armor, boots (*borceguies*), a cape (*marlota*), and turban representative of Muslim habit. These details of dress emerge in the Christian ceremonial use of horsemanship games, most notably the mock skirmishes of the *juegos de cañas*, as early as the fourteenth century, remaining popular through the seventeenth century in Spain, by which time they had become deeply integrated with military and courtly training of the nobility.⁵

When considering the integration of these Muslim equestrian traditions among Christian subjects, the question arises: was the wearing of silk turbans to ride *a la jineta* by the elite of Andalusia an appropriation of former Muslim culture? Or was it rather a radical erasure of a deeply divided past? One vein of scholarship frames riding *a la jineta* in terms of early modern Spain reckoning with and re-imagining its complex past—showing the simultaneous appropriation and exclusion of Muslim influence and tradition in the Iberian Peninsula.⁶ Such printed works describing horsemanship *a la jineta* first emerged in Spain in the sixteenth century, and the majority of exemplars appear between 1550 and 1670.⁷ Given this short window of time, these horse-related works are most often treated in isolation as a Spanish oddity. Nevertheless, the role of Muslim horsemanship in Iberia should be considered alongside the transmission, preservation and collation of classical knowledge about horsemanship and veterinary traditions associated with the

5. RENTON, «Muy grandes hombres de acaballo», pp. 217-226.

6. Barbara FUCHS, Chapter 4 in *Exotic Nation: Maurophilia and the Construction of Early Modern Spain*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, PA, 2009, pp. 88-114.

7. The first printed text dedicated entirely to this topic appeared in 1550 by Hernan Chacón, a *comendador* of the order of Calatrava, who associated the reconquest of the Catholic monarchs with horsemanship *a la jineta*. The most often cited of these «libros de jineta» by Pedro de AGUILAR, *Tratado de la caballeria de la Jineta*, Hernando Diaz, Malaga, 1572, was dedicated to restoring the glory of riding *a la jineta*.

Christian knight and courtly forms of classical and baroque horsemanship developing in European courts at the same time. Similarly, these texts present a tradition related to and yet distinct from an Arabic manuscript tradition of horsemanship manuals from the early Abbasid translation projects to the Nasrid texts in late medieval Granada.⁸ In this light, evidence for the practice of riding in the Muslim style in medieval and early modern Iberia forms part of the debate over *convivencia*, questioning the co-existence and integration of diverse forms of religious and cultural knowledge, not only within Iberia but in a wider Mediterranean context.

Attempts to derive an etymological source for the category of riding *a la jineta* itself have proven deeply inadequate for deducing specific regional, ethnic or religious characteristics of this form of equitation. While the first reference to horsemanship in this style appears in fifteenth-century texts, the term itself has a longer history. Usually traced to North African/Maghrebi roots, the term possibly originated with Berber/Amazigh soldiers from the Zanata region bordering present-day Morocco and Algeria.⁹ Between the tenth and thirteenth centuries, these ethnic soldiers were marshaled first by the Umayyad Caliphate of

8. Publications on the history of horsemanship in cultural studies of European history and in animal studies frequently refer to European horsemanship without including Spanish horsemanship *a la jineta*, in titles including: P. Edwards *et al.*, eds., *The Horse as Cultural Icon: The Real and Symbolic Horse in the Early Modern World*, Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2012; Donna LANDRY, *Noble Brutes: How Eastern Horses Transformed English Culture*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, MD, 2008; Monica MATTFIELD, *Becoming Centaur: Eighteenth-Century Masculinity and English Horsemanship*, Penn State Press, University Park, PA, 2017; Walter A. LIEDTKE, *The Royal Horse and Rider: Painting, Sculpture, and Horsemanship, 1500-1800*, Abaris Books for the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1989; Ann HYLAND, *The Warhorse, 1250-1600*, Stroud, Sutton, 1998; K. Raber and T. Tucker, eds., *The Culture of the Horse: Status, Discipline, and Identity in the Early Modern World*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2005.

9. Hussein FANCY, «Etymologies and Etiologies», in *The Mercenary Mediterranean: Sovereignty, Religion, and Violence in the Medieval Crown of Aragon*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2018, pp. 16-38.

Cordoba, and later formed part of the Almoravid resurgence and incursions into the territory of the Crown of Aragon.¹⁰ Hussein Fancy has noted that mercenary troops brought in from North Africa were known in the Crown of Aragon as the *jineti* and considered distinctive from native Iberian-Muslim soldiers as a cavalry unit due to their use of short stirrups, in contrast to evidence for the use of long-stirrups by Muslim cavalymen in Andalusia.¹¹ Thus, it is possible that these riders lent their name to an aesthetic of riding and horse training in the Crown of Aragon and also in the kingdoms of Castile and Leon, as the term expanded from its original signifier. Yet, as Fancy also acknowledges, the association of function and style with the general designation of Muslim horsemanship blurs distinctions between local influences from Ibero-Muslim (Andalusi) and Maghrebi-Moorish equestrian traditions.

If it is unclear whether these displays of Iberian horsemanship represented distinctive North African-Moorish origins or rather a uniquely Iberian-Morisco development, the extension of this query to the Muslim horsemanship tradition more broadly raises additional questions and requires further elaboration. Encyclopedic compilations from at least the tenth century Abbasid court focusing on equestrian branches of knowledge demonstrated knowledge from Greek, Persian, Syrian, and Indic traditions under the umbrella of Arabic equine knowledge. Moreover, the transmission of these valuable compilations incorporated not only Arabic but also Turkic and Berber tribal and ethnic knowledge bases. Numerous manuscripts from fourteenth-century Mamluk

10. Joan COROMINAS and José A. PASCUAL, *Diccionario crítico etimológico castellano e hispánico*, Vol. III: *G-MA*, Gredos, Madrid, 1980, «jineta». Corominas's entry states that its use was well documented since the twelfth century but emphasizes the association of riding *a la jineta* with the figure of the «jinete» quoting Jaime II to his ambassador in 1323: «homens a cavall a la genetia». The term is traced to the arrival of Zanata-Berber soldiers in 1263, referred to as «caballeros ginetes» in the fourteenth century chronicle of Alfonso X (*Estoria de España*), and as «genets» in Jaume I's *Liber dels Feys*.

11. FANCY, *Mercenary Mediterranean*, pp. 17-18. Fancy notes that Lisan al-Din Ibn al-Khatib described both Berber and Andalusi Muslims in Nasrid Granada's fourteenth-century military, noting that the latter previously had used «long stirrups».

Egypt document the horsemanship skills and comportment of *furusīyya*, providing a description of exercises in parallel to a light cavalry function, without negating possible ethnic and regional differentiations introduced by diverse slave warrior origins.¹² Notably, the distinctive feature of the short stirrup emphasized in Iberian descriptions of riding *a la jineta* is moderated by the equally elevated saddle, including a high pommel (front) and cantle (back) similar in fashion to the anchoring devices found on the European jousting saddle. Perhaps most tellingly, the equestrian games described rose to prominence in the thirteenth century and then fell from use in the fifteenth century, with a trajectory following the decline and attempted revival of riding *a la jineta* in Spanish manuals in the sixteenth century.¹³ The Andalusi tradition, then, could claim ties to the Umayyad traditions of horse breeding from the earliest textual corpus, and while not in close contact with the Mamluk manuscript tradition, still generated some new works in the Nasrid period in Arabic. Following these trajectories in greater detail, it becomes apparent that the knowledge base of «Muslim» horsemanship in Spain itself represented an amalgamation of elements that had deeply shaped «Christian» horsemanship, in addition to presumed acts of translation and familiarity with both traditions in the possession of equine experts themselves.

3. *Arabic and Latin sources of equine knowledge*

Outside of the practice of horsemanship, the texts on riding and maintaining horses often combined genres of natural history and medicine with horse training theories and experience. Given the history of the

12. Shihab AL-SARRAF, «Mamluk *Furusīyya* Literature and Its Antecedents», *Mamlūk Studies Review*, 8-1 (2004), pp. 141-200.

13. David AYALON, «Notes on the *Furusīyya* Exercises and Games in the Mamluk Sultanate», *Scripta Heirosolymitana*, 9 (1961), pp. 31-62. Ayalon notes the decline of *furusīyya* in the Circassian period of Mamluk Egypt (1382-1517), and the effort to revive *furusīyya* exercises in the early 1500s for visiting dignitaries. The introduction of firearms in Mamluk-Ottoman conflicts can explain some but not all of these transitions.

Iberian Peninsula, a common historiographic consideration for equine or horse-related knowledge is whether «Christian» or «Muslim» authors provided a better, more informed, or more intact tradition. In Spanish veterinary history, for example, Carlos Sanz Egaña sided with the superior knowledge of the Latin kingdoms, while Camilo Alvarez de Morales y Ruiz-Matas considered Spanish veterinary practices a derivation of Muslim al-Andalus.¹⁴ In fact, the common development of this body of knowledge in relationship to both veterinary and equestrian training can be traced to overlapping and curated Greek references transmitted in both Latin and Arabic languages through Roman, Byzantine and Islamic territories. Reliance on a well-defined set of classical Greek sources shaped the structure of most of the equine texts that influenced Iberian equine knowledge.

The twelfth-century *Libro de agricultura (Kitab al-falahah)* by Ibn Awwam provides a sample overview of equine knowledge from an Arabic language Andalusí source. Also known as Abuzacaria Jahya Abenmohamed Benehmed «el Andalusí», this author's work was one of the Escorial Arabic manuscripts translated into Spanish in the nineteenth century and considered representative of the flourishing agricultural sciences under Islamic rule in Iberia.¹⁵ Set within the larger scope of the text, a substantial section on the treatment of horses (Book II, Chapter xxxii, Articles I-xxii and Chapter xxxiii, Articles I-xii) discussed the nature of the horse and its external characteristics of conformation and initial training for behavior, the cures and treatments of illnesses, and finally methods for riding the horse well, armed with shield and lance.

14. Cesáreo SANZ EGAÑA, *Historia de la veterinaria española: albeitería, mariscalería veterinaria*, Espasa-Calpe, 1941, p. 21, «Cierta que los musulmanes nos legaron la voz 'albeitería', pero los españoles de los reinos cristianos llenaron de contenido esta palabra»; Camilo ALVAREZ DE MORALES Y RUIZ-MATAS and Fatima RÓLDAN CASTRO, «Sobre el caballo en la cultura», *Ciencias de la naturaleza en al-Andalus*, 4 (1996), pp. 265-297.

15. The translation made in 1808 by the Franciscan José Antonio Banquero of the twelfth-century *Kitāb al-Filāḥah (Book of Agriculture)*.

Arabic-language hippological knowledge in general was divided into horse management in agriculture («khalq al-khayl»), illnesses, cures and surgery («baytara»), and horsemanship («siyasa al-khayl»). In this sense, Ibn Awwam followed a standard structure. His sources included the ancient Syrian *Agricultura Nabataea* and the horse-specific work of Ibn Hizam Al-Huttuli. Compiled in the ninth century, the *Book of Horses and Hippiatry* (*Kitab al Khayl wa 'l-baytara*) is considered the first veterinary work in Arabic. This text determined Ibn Awwam's access to the equine knowledge of Aristotle's *On Generation*, and also a collection of Hellenistic medical sources from the second century BC to fourth century AD known as the *Hippiatrica*.¹⁶ Along with many other translations at the ninth century Abbasid court in Baghdad, the amassing and compiling of equine-related sources drew not only from Greek but also Indic, Syriac, Turkic and Bedouin origins. Despite the diversity of influences evident in these sources, the Hippocratic view of humoral body composition and bleeding and Aristotle's summation of the sexual maturity and breeding of horses predominated. Ibn Awwam's work, like that of his contemporary Ibn Ishbili, or other agronomists of the Umayyad or Andalusian realms, illustrated depth of learning and continuous interchange between Umayyad and Abbasid centers despite dynastic divisions, from the eastern Mediterranean, North Africa and Iberia.¹⁷

The consistency of this chain of transmission impacted both eastern and western Mediterranean horsemanship cultures. While Aristotle's *On Generation of Animals* and *History of Animals* (*Liber animalum*) did not reach the Latin west until the conquest of Toledo in 1085, and was filtered through the translation from Arabic with the commentary

16. Ibn Hizam Al-Huttuli's text follows a translation of the Greek veterinary text of Theomnestus, a part of the *Hippiatrica*. For a detailed study of the textual tradition of the *Hippiatrica*, see Anne Elena McCABE, *A Byzantine Encyclopaedia of Horse Medicine: The Sources, Compilation, And Transmission of the Hippiatrica*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2007.

17. From the tenth to fifteenth centuries, including Arif ben Said, Ibn Wafid, Ibn Hayyay, Abu l-Jayr, Ibn Bassal, al-Tignari, Ibn al-Awwam and Ibn Luyun, Abu Bakr al-Ishbili.

of Averroes (*Kitāb al-Hayawān*) by Michael Scot in the thirteenth-century court of Frederick II, the approximately seven authorities making up the *Hippiatrica* had multiple routes throughout the Mediterranean. For example, the work of Pelagonius (*Mulomedicine chrionis*, fourth century AD), included in the Greek corpus then translated into Arabic, had been originally written in Latin and also circulated in the work of Vegetius. Likewise, the well-known agricultural instructions of Columella (*De agricultura*), from first-century Cadiz, included authorities from the *Hippiatrica*. Notably, one of these was the agricultural work of Mago, a Carthaginian authority on local North African veterinary methods from the second century BC, which had been collected in the library of the Numidians and then transferred to Rome. The translation of veterinary and equine knowledge from Arabic to Latin, which surged in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in the centers of Sicily, Naples, Toledo and Cordoba, thus re-integrated a broader selection of *Hippiatrica* sources that supplemented the Hippocratic approach with a revival of Galenic anatomical and surgical methods. The circulation of an anonymous Latin «Libro de caballo» in Iberia proposed by George Sachs dated to the thirteenth century, traced to later fourteenth- and fifteenth-century manuscripts attributed variously to Manuel Diez and Juan Alvarez de Salmiella, most likely derived from translations of equine sources circulating between the courts of Sicily and Aragon. In particular the work of Giordano Ruffo, veterinarian of Frederick II in Sicily, whose 1250 *Medicine equorum* can be considered a «best seller» for the volume of its circulation, and numerous texts derived from it in Romance vernaculars, as well as the closely contemporary work, the *De medicina equorum* of Teodorico Borgognoni, Bishop of Cervia.¹⁸ The work of Manuel Diez (*Libre de la menescalia*), majordomo of Alfonso V of Aragon, provided a vernacular translation of the works of Teodorico Borgognoni, which in turn developed from the work of Ruffo, the Greek *Hippiatrica* and its Latin extracts found in Vegetius,

18. G. Sachs, ed., *El libro de los caballos: tratado de albeitería del siglo XIII*, Junta para ampliación de estudios, Madrid, and «Un tratado de Albeitería de la época de Alfonso X», *Hispanic Review*, 6-4 (Oct. 1938), p. 298.

and survives in at least eleven manuscripts and at least twelve printed editions between 1495-1545.¹⁹

Early Arabic ninth-century compilations of equine husbandry also cited the training of the horse and rider in specific tactics and armor. The work of al-Hazim, used by Ibn Awwam, fits within the tradition of *furūsiyya* (horsemanship manuals) developed for riders in military maneuvers. For example, Ibn Awwam writes about riding with the lance, although noting that the stirrups should be rather longer than short. Regardless of the transmission of equine texts that did occur, such portions on riding were not included in the Italian-Spanish translations of horse care and early training. However, in both Arabic and Latin language traditions, books dedicated solely to horses only appear later in the fourteenth centuries. In Granada, Ibn Hudhayl (d. 1391) produced a brief manuscript on horsemanship specifically, entitled *Hilyat al-fursan* and commissioned by the Nasrid Sultan Muhammad V (1350-1362).²⁰ He describes the lore of Arabic horse lineages from Biblical descendants (Ishmael, son of Abraham as the first to domesticate horses, and the descent of Turkish and Egyptian horses from King Solomon's stables), as well as emphasizing the correspondence between Arabic names for the parts of the horse and the parts of a bird—describing near eastern lore rather than a specific local tradition. A 1438 manuscript written by the king of Portugal, Dom Duarte, represents the first European work focused on horseback riding specifically, and moreover considers riding *a la jineta* as one of several possible forms of a general mastery of riding.²¹

19. Lluís CIFUENTES and Carmel FERRAGUD, *El «Libre de menescalía» de Manuel Dies: de espejo de caballeros a manual de albéitares*, Centro de Estudios Históricos, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Madrid, 1999, pp. 101-102.

20. *Gala de caballeros, balson de paladines*, Editora Nacional, Madrid, 1977; and L. Mercier, ed., *La parure des cavaliers et l'insigne des preux*, P. Geuthner, Paris, 1924.

21. Antonio Franco PRETO DUARTE and Steven MUHLBERGER, *The Royal Book of Jousting, Horsemanship, and Knightly Combat: A Translation into English of King Dom Duarte's 1438 Treatise Livro da ensinança de bem cavalgar toda sela*, Chivalry Bookshelf, Highland Village, TX, 2005.

Considering the manuscript and printed traditions, it is clear that medieval texts about horses crossed over imperial and ethnic boundaries. Such a broad survey could rightfully be criticized for overlooking more particular differences in the reception and incorporation of local, regional expertise that could change the corpus dramatically. Awwam's collection includes recommendations to let the horses eat bread, while noting that horses in Libya drank camel's milk, and acknowledging that some of the cited cures required the skin of an Egyptian lizard or Armenian plant, ingredients not easily acquired by his readers. Likewise, a focus on the combination of coat colors, humoral signs, and astronomical influences dominated equine recommendations, even though Latin texts began to fixate on the science of bits for behavior and temperament, which diverged from earlier priorities for diet and bleeding. Nevertheless, the commonalities appear more striking than these differences, and not merely for a systemic application of medicine, but similarly with regards to methods of riding. The consistency of this transmission intimated a shared basis of knowledge about horses, most likely facilitated or supported by the shared use of horses by bordering polities. Based on textual traditions alone, as a result, it is difficult to discern which elements of horsemanship represented specific versions of Muslim equestrian influences in the Iberian Peninsula.

4. *Mobile mercenary cavalry and ethnic-stylistic distinctions*

A long-term trajectory of transmission and translation aided in the dissemination of horsemanship *a la jineta*. In the shared body of equine knowledge propagated in Latin and Arabic texts, the features most carefully compiled focused on medicinal remedies and general breeding, rather than on specialized training of riders in particular styles. Nevertheless, the expertise of a veterinary treatise was minimal without an equine expert to apply it, and likewise mounted military training required a cavalry to deploy it. Horsemanship in the «Muslim» style primarily is used to refer to the techniques and strategies of light cavalry, and it was this characteristic that the *jineti*, regardless of style or

ethnicity, came to stand for. Such units often came with ethnic designations, yet in considering not only the role of the *jineti* but also other mercenary cavalries in the Mediterranean basin, it is also critical to not collapse ethnic designation, functional use and style: identifying Muslim horsemanship styles with light cavalry tactics dramatically over-simplifies the role of mobile mercenary cavalry units.

As has been carefully documented by scholars of the Mediterranean, a lattice of renegades, diplomats, merchants, captives, converts, translators, and other minority subjects crisscrossed imperial boundaries like a nervous system, and a similar view applies to the situation of mercenary units. Contrary to what one might expect, paid soldiers were often hired with the expectation of greater loyalty, stemming from their dependence on the ruler. If the early expansion of Islam signified a military unity, later rulers in Iberia, like Abd al-Rahman, relied extensively on foreign mercenaries, both Turks and Berbers, to establish the Second Caliphate of Cordoba. A similar strategy was likewise pursued by the Almohad expansion into Iberia from North Africa. On the other side of the equation, both the Crown of Aragon and the Castilian monarchs utilized North African troops as part of their personal guard for the same reason.²² The use of mercenary units did not represent a movement from east to west, alone; Byzantine armies in the middle ages likewise were largely composed of foreign mercenary units, and in many cases sources for these units overlapped with those sought by Fatimid, Mamluk, and later Ottoman military services.²³

The recourse to mercenary troops could provide cavalry from North Africa to both sides of a conflict, as happened in Iberia. In fact, the presence of North African «light cavalry» has a long history in the Iberian Peninsula, particularly the use of Numidian or Libyan cavalry that

22. See for example Ana ECHEVARRÍA, *Knights on the Frontier: The Moorish Guard of the Kings of Castile (1410-1467)*, Brill, Leiden and Boston, MA, 2009.

23. Mark BARTUSIS, *The Late Byzantine Army: Arms and Society, 1204-1453*, p. 141; Jere L. BACHARACH, «African Military Slaves in the Medieval Middle East: The Cases of Iraq (869-955) and Egypt (868-1171)», *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 13 (1981), pp. 471-495.

attained renown for equitation without saddles or bridles as mercenary troops for both Carthage and Rome in the second-century BC Punic wars there. Their signature tactic was the drawn retreat, in which they would charge in loose formation and retreat under cover of their own javelins.²⁴ Among their contemporaries, it is certain that the northern Celtiberians not only utilized cavalry forms that could be considered «heavy» cavalry²⁵—riding to the scene of battle and dismounting to fight, or using teams of three men to support a mounted rider (*trimarcasia*)—but also a rapid wheeling action like a cavalcade tactic typical of light cavalry units.²⁵ While these variations on the ancient «Parthian shot» can be found in use by light cavalry on both sides of the conflict, it becomes associated primarily with the Muslim tactics in the Middle Ages as the *al-karr wa-l-farr* («tornafuye»). Nevertheless, in the invasions from North Africa by Almoravid and Almohad armies, the same tactic finds use among both Andalusi natives and Berber or Turkish mercenary units.²⁶

Moreover, while an armored *cataphracti* from the eastern Mediterranean would have been considered «heavy cavalry» in a late classical context for the presence of any armor, in a medieval context the same would be very closely related to the kind of armored lance cavalry considered «light cavalry».²⁷ Thus, while a light cavalry function can distinguish a particular unit, and even influence the selection of harness, armor and tactics, it remains a highly relative term within military history, and its transmission throughout innumerable conflicts in the medieval and early modern Mediterranean a relevant factor. The same

24. Philip SIDNELL, *Warhorse: Cavalry in Ancient Warfare*, Continuum, London, 2006, pp. 180-200.

25. Miranda GREEN, *Animals in Celtic Life and Myth*, Routledge, London, 1992, p. 77, as noted by Cesar in his account of the Gallic Wars.

26. F. García Fitz, J. Gouveia Monteiro, eds., *War in the Iberian Peninsula, 700–1600*. Routledge, London, 2018, pp. 15, 68, 309-310.

27. Ann HYLAND, *The Medieval Warhorse from Byzantium to the Crusades*, Combined Books, Conshohocken, PA, 1996, p. 3. The *cataphracti*, known for not only having armor for the rider, but also the horse, originated in Persia and Asia Minor, notably used by Parthian, Armenian, Persian, and Byzantine armies.

flexibility applies with respect to Mamluk cavalry, depicted as heavy cavalry in opposition to Mongol opponents, a characteristic also remarked upon by Europeans in the first crusade, despite the fact that the Mamluk dynasties are also the most well-known for their development of horsemanship texts in the Arabic language tradition during the fourteenth century most commonly used to explicate Muslim light cavalry tactics.²⁸

While North Africa was a favorite resource for mercenary cavalry units in Iberia, additional polities influenced by eastern Mediterranean horsemanship traditions likewise circulated in the military labor market. These included, for example, the units—primarily comprised of eastern Mediterranean soldiers but employed by Aragonese, Italian, and other western European powers—generally referred to as the *stradioti*, and from which a third label for horsemanship in Spain *a la estradiota* could be said to derive. Drawn into service by Venetian conflicts in the fifteenth century, these eastern Mediterranean mercenaries are sometimes given credit for having initiated a revival of light cavalry tactics among European powers after their popular adoption by French, Habsburg and English rulers.²⁹ At the same time, contemporaries described these units described as having many similarities with already circulating Spanish and Turkish light cavalry styles. Drawing from the Balkans, and even the Caucasus, these units at times incorporated Slavic, Georgian and Armenian soldiers—not unlike those supplied to the sultan of Egypt for generating the Mamluk class of slave-warriors—or later conscripted the slave-based cavalry units known as *kapikulu* in the

28. Rashid AL-DIN, *Jāmi' al-tawārikh*, 1306 manuscript illustrations as described in John Masson SMITH, «Mongol Society and Military in the Middle East», and John FRANCE, «Technology and Success of the First Crusade», in Y. Lév, ed., *War and Society in the Eastern Mediterranean: 7th-15th Centuries*, Brill, Leiden and Boston, MA, 1996, pp. 259-261, and pp. 166-170; David AYALON, *Studies on the Mamluks of Egypt*, Variorum Reprints, London, 1977.

29. See for example Donald Joseph KAGAY and L. J. Andrew VILLALON, *Crusaders, Condottieri, and Cannon: Medieval Warfare in Societies Around the Mediterranean*, Leiden, Brill, 2003.

Ottoman empire.³⁰ Skanderberg, famous for generating Albanian *stradioti* in the anti-Ottoman league in the fifteenth century, had himself been trained in the court cavalry of Istanbul. The extent to which the chosen cavalry tactics can be considered Turkish or Eastern in origin must also taken into account the contrasting appeals of drawing on wide-spread imperial resources and on the deep roots of horse supply and training originating in the region of Kappadocia even before Roman times.³¹ Similarly in North Africa, the diverse ethnicities that gained a Berber identity in relation to the Arab conquest does not imply a wholesale adoption of imported horsemanship techniques.³² Indeed, many of these Muslim practices would be adopted and used by Portuguese soldiers in Morocco in the sixteenth century based on light cavalry guerrilla warfare.³³

The more these examples are brought to light, the more it appears that exposure to multiple styles of riding within an army and its recruited cavalry was not uncommon. A new problem then becomes determining how many different light cavalry styles might have been in use, and to what extent ethnic designations meant to determine

30. Patricia CRONE, *Slaves on Horses: The Evolution of the Islamic Polity*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003.

31. Klara HEGYI, «Freed Slaves as Soldiers», in G. Dávid and P. Fodor, eds., *Ransom Slavery Along the Ottoman Borders*, Brill, Leiden and Boston, MA, pp. 90-91. Ottoman rulers Selim I and Suleyman I grew Ottoman imperial bureaucracy, including administration of military units of the *kapikulu* or slave units like the Cavalry of the Porte, as well as the provincial *siphai* cavalry. Ottoman soldiers and cavalry drew on and trained Balkan, Hungarian, and other converts of diverse nationalities. In one register of the court cavalry from 1579, out of the men listed with a specific nationality, approximately ¼ were Balkan, ¼ Hungarian, and ¼ Caucasians.

32. Ramzi ROUGHY, *Inventing the Berbers: History and Ideology in the Maghrib*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, PA, 2019.

33. Vitor Luís GASPARD RODRIGUES, «The Portuguese Art of War in Northern Morocco during the 15th Century», *Athens Journal of History*, 3-4 (2017), pp. 321-336. Edward W. BOVILL. *The Golden Trade of the Moors*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1958, p. 168. For El Mansur's 1591 invasion of the Sudan, Bovill notes that, of the 4000 light cavalry, only 1500 were Moroccan. Others were composed of Andalusians and renegades with an official campaign language of Spanish.

mobile units, specialized tactics, or horsemanship styles. Considering light cavalry styles within the larger circulation of equine knowledge and equine experts along the Mediterranean coastlines could offer insight into horse cultures that recognized local distinctions but remained mutually intelligible because of common sources, past integrations and connectivities.

5. *Horsemanship «a la jineta» in «De la Naturaleza del Caballo» (1580)*

Among the Spanish horsemanship texts, Pedro Fernandez de Andrada wrote one of the most comprehensive works on horsemanship *a la jineta*, although no works on Iberian horsemanship to date have given it extensive treatment.³⁴ Fernandez de Andrada wrote his magnum opus in three editions, the first in 1580 (*De la Naturaleza del Caballo*), the second in 1599, and the third in 1619. In the 1580 edition, the first book dealt with the natural history of horses, their characteristics, and recommendations for breeding, and the second book addressed the role of the rider in training and «perfecting» the horse, including bits, corrections, and suggestions specific to riding *a la jineta*. His biography for the most part is unremarkable—having the modest distinction of serving in the municipal body of the city of Seville—except for his enormous interest in documenting a body of knowledge on horses and horsemanship, and particularly riding *a la jineta*. Tomes of more than 600 pages document his extraordinary synthesis of classical allusions,

34. Unlike other Spanish horsemanship texts, Fernandez de Andrada's work has not received a modern edition and is not studied in major reference works, such as Sanz Egaña, ed., *Tres libros de jineta de los siglos XVI y XVII*; Noel FALLOWS, *Jousting in Medieval and Renaissance Iberia*, Boydell Press, Woodbridge, Suffolk and Rochester, New York, 2010; F. Quesada Sanz and M. Zamora Merchán, eds., *El caballo en la antigua Iberia*, Real Academia de la Historia, Madrid, 2003; Manuel JIMÉNEZ BENÍTEZ, *El caballo en Andalucía: orígenes e historia, cría y doma*, Ediciones Agrotécnicas, Madrid, 1994; Eduardo AGÜERA CARMONA, *Córdoba, caballos y dehesas*, Colección Ecuestre Almuzara, Almuzara, 2008; Miguel ABAD GAVIN, *El caballo en la historia de España*, Universidad de León, Salamanca, 2006.

practical veterinary knowledge, as well as forty years of experience riding and handling horses.

Does tying horsemanship *a la jineta* to a classical Greek past represent a form of whitewashing in order to re-interpret and instrumentalize its ceremonial uses?³⁵ Despite being dedicated to horse knowledge *a la jineta*, a large portion of Fernandez de Andrada's compendium is not specific to riding in this style. Rather, it follows a tripartite division among the natural characteristics of the horse, the specialized training of the horse and rider, and the veterinary care of the horse. Indeed, Fernandez de Andrada carefully culled his references from many classic volumes. Drawing from Greek texts on agriculture and horses, he cites substantially from Aristotle, Marco Varron, Xenophon, Crecentino, Columella, Palladius, Vegetius, and Absirto. In addition, he refers to horse lore from Strabo, Pliny, Ovid, Virgil, and Plutarch, as well as medical sources from Hippocrates and Galen, among other physicians. He cites more modern texts on agriculture and husbandry produced after the Renaissance, including those by Fernando of Naples, Laurenzio Russio, Pasquale Caracciolo, Federico Grisone, as well as medieval sources like the *Siete Partidas*, Isidore of Seville, Paulo Jovio, and Esteban de Garibay.

However, considering Fernandez de Andrada's exposition of the origins and characteristics of horsemanship *a la jineta* in greater detail, it is also possible to conclude that such classical ties rather demonstrated an important confluence in the accumulation and transmission of equine knowledge. The history of horsemanship articulated by Fernandez de Andrada reaches back to eighth-century Syria and Turkey. Rather than characterizing his history as a problematic classicizing re-invention of horsemanship *a la jineta* to eradicate Muslim influences, in light of the complexity and circulation of equine texts and equestrian experts around the Mediterranean, I suggest that this Iberian body of equine knowledge was not easily contained by regional, imperial, nor ethnic-religious denominations.

35. FUCHS, *Exotic Nation*, pp. 99-114.

First, Fernandez de Andrada's emphasis on Greek classical sources does not obscure acknowledgement of Muslim influences on horsemanship in Spain. In addition to stories of Alexander the Great and Spanish kings, Fernandez de Andrada also recounted the story of the horse of Sultan Selim (who was brave enough to deserve his own memorial sepulcher, as told by Paulo Jovio).³⁶ His consideration of the medical treatment of horses included not only Galen but also Avicenna. Stories from the Greek foundation moreover emphasize specific place names that concentrate horsemanship firmly in the territory of Macedonia, Thessaly and Turkey (including the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia, and the stables of King Solomon). It is clear that the classical view of horses included a widespread swath of the Mediterranean basin.

Second, when considering the origins of horsemanship *a la jineta*, Fernandez de Andrada fixed on its Arabic origins. Despite different possible etymological derivations from Greek or Italian, Fernandez de Andrada concluded the word had an Arabic root: «gineta es arabigo que signifie cosa ligera». Moreover, he emphasized that not only the terminology but also the usage came from the Moors of North Africa: «it is true that the name of *jineta* is Arabic and that the Moors used it before and after coming to Spain, which is to say that the first mention of it should be theirs (*es verdad que el nombre de gineta es Arabigo y que el general uso della exercitaron los Moros antes y despues de venidos a España de creer es que la primera mencion seria suya*)». Yet, this certification is not a general reference to foreign horsemanship, as he distinguishes horsemanship *a la jineta* from earlier incidents in which other horses and riders were brought from North Africa to Iberia. For example, historian Esteban de Garibay had noted that at least 700 «ginetes» had passed through Cartagena in 200 BC, representing the Numidian aid sought for the Punic Wars between Carthage and Rome by both powers, and Fernandez de Andrada protests that this could not have been the origin of riding *a la jineta*. Rather, he traces the use of stirrups in the *jineta* fashion to the grave of a rider, whose harness and stirrups

36. FERNANDEZ DE ANDRADA, *De la naturaleza del caballo*, fol. 12v.

were found in the vicinity of Saint Jerome of the Hieronymites in Thrace and Syria in the eighth century, to conclude that the Moors had brought them into Africa and Spain some time thereafter.

Fernandez de Andrada further argues that the prevalence of riding *a la jineta* in Spain and North Africa was not a mere coincidence; rather, this fashion of riding had many other influences but remained in Africa and Spain on behalf of the kind of horses found there: «the ingenuity and longevity of this horsemanship in Africa and parts of Spain is owed to [the horses] (*se les debe la gloria de tan ingeniosa caballeria y asi solo a permanescido en Africa y en algunas partes de España*)» and «those [horses] possessed by the Moors since Spanish and African horses are the best and fastest in the world for *la jineta*, and nothing more of its origin can be said (*de las que poseyeron los Moros por ser los caballos Espanoles y Africanos los mejores y mas ligeros del mundo para la gineta y pues de su origen no se puede decir mas*)». ³⁷ Since the use of short stirrups could not be attributed to the ancient Greeks, who rode without stirrups, this feature of riding *a la jineta* represented a contribution developed and passed on by Muslim horsemen in the Mediterranean bordering regions. This origin of horsemanship *a la jineta* however was not identical with all horsemanship in general, but developed and passed on through several regions, and finally associated with the specific type of horse found in North Africa and in Iberia. This distinction of types of horses he draws from Isidore of Seville, who wrote that the horses of Persia, Hungary and Turkey lived longer, while those of Spain, France and Africa lived less long and therefore required more care, feed and stabling than the former.

With an historical eye, Fernandez de Andrada acknowledges the Muslim influences on horsemanship in Spain, including the Maghreb, while at the same time locating these traditions in the eastern Mediterranean more generally. The style was not entirely dependent on the horse type itself, as formerly horses were used without saddles in Numidia (North Africa), in Thessaly among the Turks, and even ridden without bits by women in Mauretania. Yet he culls his references to the

37. FERNANDEZ DE ANDRADA, *De la naturaleza del caballo*, f. 45.

juego de cañas (which is played *a la jineta*) from the story of Aeneas in Sicilia (Virgil's *Aeneid*), who celebrated with equestrian skirmishes that used the quadrilles very similar to the game of canes they played in Spain. If the source and origin of horseback riding is centered on ancient Greece, the specific form of «jineta» horsemanship itself dates from the eighth century and its spread west across Africa to Iberia.

Fernandez de Andrada does not maintain a totally neutral position on the Moorish customs of horsemanship, noting that Iberians contributed “naturally” to the development of horsemanship *a la jineta* and the fine quality of horses in Spain, while Moors liked to feast on a roasted horse's head (referring to the poem of *El Cid*). But his criticism of Muslim forms of equine knowledge also demonstrated the common foundation of humoral composition in considering equine temperament—that the customs of selecting horses based on white markings and hair growth (whorls) is not very certain because white markings might just as well be hair scars from mistreatment or «abusos de Moros». Nevertheless, he praises the tradition of «jineta» as distinct from others that require greater forcefulness of their hand and bit and use of punishments. He prefers the blander corrections that were part of the repertoire of horsemanship *a la jineta*.

Fernandez de Andrada's conclusion on the origins of «jineta» is to say that it is «an immense sea of which one will never sound the depths». Such a comment might be considered an attempt to bypass certain contributions of horsemanship *a la jineta* in order to apply a classical patina of greater respectability. On the other hand, the depth of this «sea» may also be a serious proposition for understanding how the style of horsemanship related to commonalities and the transmission of textual sources of equine knowledge, the circulation of equine experts, and mercenary cavalry units within the Mediterranean itself.

6. *Towards Mediterranean horse cultures*

Practices of equine husbandry in Spain represented a confluence of influences—certainly those from North Africa, but also indigenous

Iberian, classical Greek-Byzantine, and eastern Mediterranean sources. More importantly, horsemanship traditions represent elements of a deeply lived practice, one found in transit across imperial, ethnic and religious boundaries, but also persisting along specific regional and temporal axes. Horse cultures emerge from the combination of knowledge about the horse's body and the rider interacting with the horse. To fully understand the larger social and cultural significance of the horse within the economic and political landscape, the multifunctionality and diversity of these practices and their implications demand a new look.

All too often, battles are granted to a particular cavalry charge or adoption of cavalry troops and tactics—at times heavy, at other times light—and lack the dynamic, diverse and even cyclical complexity of Mediterranean military engagements and the cultures that influence them. The divisions between a Western and Eastern way of war, similar to the designation of Muslim and Christian horsemanship in Iberian history, imposes an implicit binary without making visible the assumptions that lie behind.³⁸ Literature on encounters and shifts in cavalry formation, supplemented by studies of the knowledge culture and experts facilitating this training and horsemanship, offer insights not only for specific military campaigns but also resulting cultural and ethnic epitaphs.

The framework of the Mediterranean, as formulated in discussions of historical region and periodization, provides an intriguing heuristic for unpacking conceptions of horsemanship that are often problematically driven towards either a universalizing similarity or an exaggerat-

38. Abbès ZOUACHE, «Western vs. Eastern Way of War in the Late Medieval Near East: An Unsuitable Paradigm: A Review Essay of David Nicolle's Late Mamluk Military Equipment», *Mamluk Studies Review*, 18 (2014-15), pp. 301-325. Zouche notes that despite widespread acceptance of Victor Hansen's theory of the «Western Way of War», new military historiography includes more flexible discussion of cultural influences on warfare and combat, such as John LYNN, *Battle: A History of Combat and Culture*, Westview Press, New York, 2003; John FRANCE, «Close Order and Close Quarter: The Culture of Combat in the West», *The International History Review*, 27-3 (2005), pp. 498-517, and Jeremy BLACK, *War and the Cultural Turn*, Malden, MA, Wiley & Sons, 2013.

ed uniqueness. Interest in new formulations of Mediterranean history have focused on centers of exchange generated by the geographic features (mountains, plains, seas) foregrounded by Braudel; in an inherently complementary fashion, animal husbandry represents one of the avenues through which such movement and adaptation was not only essential for maintaining distinct micro-ecologies, but also forging innumerable connectivities across the seas. Horse types representing individual micro-regions were transported across these boundaries for trade and war, and mutual admiration for horses also led to the exchange of equine-specific personnel and of common textual authorities amassed as a support for military success.

Considering such connectivities in this case of Iberian horsemanship is not to make claims of a universal understanding of the horse, but rather to emphasize the potential for a specifically Mediterranean development of horsemanship in its historical light cavalry form through movements of people, texts, and animals. In this sense, exploring horsemanship in Spain requires a foundation against which to measure its own unique characteristics. Taking into account the notable mobility of equestrian practices alongside their deep residual knowledge base establishes a basis against which to evaluate claims to difference represented by styles and categories of horsemanship.