

Horses and Courts: An International Symposium

The Wallace Collection, London, 21-23 March 2018, with a visit to the Royal Mews

For centuries horses have played a spectacular part in court ceremonies and displays of power around the globe. Carriage processions, tournaments, carrousel, hunting and racing are just some of the activities in which horses have taken centre stage. For hundreds of years, horses were crucial performers in diplomatic exchanges and military confrontations. The culture of equestrianism at court was reflected in architecture, equipment and treatises, in bloodlines, riding and driving practices. Horsemen and horsewomen today maintain traditions that originated at medieval and early modern courts. However, despite their ubiquity in historical documents, horses have been neglected in studies of court culture. 'Horses and Courts' seeks to fill this gap.



Anthony van Dyck, *Charles I on horseback with his riding master, M. de St Antoine* (1633)



Studio of Diego Velázquez, *Prince Baltasar Carlos in the riding school* (c.1640-c.1645)

The Society for Court Studies and the Centre for Studies in the Long Eighteenth Century at the University of Kent will be hosting a major symposium on courts and horses from the sixteenth century to the present, taking in equestrian, sporting, military and ceremonial history. The event will be international in scope and open up questions of hybridity and cross-cultural exchanges between the monarchies of Britain, France, Italy, Prussia, Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands and Russia, the Habsburg (Austro-Hungarian) and Ottoman empires, and other states.

What was the connection between horsemanship and power at different courts?
What were the relationships between equestrian practices and military training? In a period when having 'an eye for a horse' was part of a gentlemanly as well as royal education, what codes of breeding and connoisseurship were operating? These are just some of the questions that this symposium will seek to pose.

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