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Organization (at the time of the grant): Faculty of History, University of Cambridge, UK

Title of Research: Horse and Man in the History of Modern Europe, 1815-1914

Purpose of Research:

My purpose during the time of the Award was to conduct fieldwork through making visits to libraries and archives in Austria, Germany, England and France. During a 12 month period between November 2004 and November 2005, I managed to successfully complete, thanks to the Award, research trips to the following European destinations:

1) Hanover [November-December 2004] – Niedersächsische Landesbibliothek, Bibliothek der tierärztlichen Hochschule Hannover

The trip to Hanover was useful because it made possible a thorough acquaintance with the literature on the history of horses and animals in German before I embarked on serious research into primary material. Hanover was also productive because the veterinary school there houses a wealth of historical material related to the horse in its library where I managed to unearth much in the way of material related to the scientific aspects of the horse.

2) Berlin [January-February 2005] – Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Landesarchiv Berlin, Humboldt Universität: Zweigbibliothek Agrarwissenschaft und Bodenkunde, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preussischer Kulturbesitz

The trip to Berlin allowed research to both deepen and widen as I consulted a vast array of material, including official publications and correspondences as well as specialist books and journals. My trips to the city archives yielded much insight into how the horse was dealt with in the urban environment. My trips to the state archives on the other hand gave rise to an appreciation of the role the state played in the direction horse breeding took while my visits to the agricultural library opened my eyes to the ambivalent stance agriculture assumed towards the horse.

3) Vienna [March-April 2005] – Österreichisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek

The trip to Vienna represented a continuation of what I had already started in Berlin but which took place within a different national context. This helped rectify many of the positions that I had initially assumed in relation to Germany

4) London [May-June 2005] – Public Record Office, British Library, Imperial College Library

The trip to London was dominated by research into how the British capital dealt with its increasing number of horses. Much unprinted material was unearthed relating to the use of the horse for the riot police which were called upon to suppress lower class disturbances as well as the efforts that the animal welfare movement, in collaboration with the police, undertook to supervise public behaviour towards horses used in transport and construction.

5) Paris [July-November 2005] – Archives nationales, Bibliothèque nationale de France

The trip to Paris led in particular to the appreciation of the conflict between the military, industrial and state interests that grew increasingly acrimonious as the nineteenth century went on. It also made me aware of the importance of what previous centuries, in particular the early modern period, had bequeathed to the nineteenth. Consequently, I made productive forays into the history of horsemanship (which had been important until the mid eighteenth century) as well as into the erection of equestrian statues and monuments that were inextricably linked with the politics of absolute monarchy.

Content/Methodology of Research:

Before I embarked on the series of research trips I had every intention of keeping the focus primarily on the nineteenth century. But it quickly transpired that it was important to recognise the role the 'ridden horse', which had lost its prominence by the nineteenth century, had played previously, especially in the period before the French Revolution, so as to comprehend better the rise of the 'driven horse' in later periods. For without this context it would be impossible to understand the venom that was unleashed towards the driven horse in the nineteenth century. It thus became necessary to look back at the early modern period, which eventually led to the late sixteenth century at which time wheeled passenger transport had made its breakthrough. From observing the furore that surrounded its introduction, I realised this was a revolutionary development in equine terms because those who had previously ridden on horses now increasingly opted to travel 'inside' coaches and carriages, thus contributing further to the slow demise of the rider that had been occurring since the high middle ages. But the introduction of such coaches did more since it sparked off massive protest from the riding interest, which was eventually to find expression in the development of the art of horsemanship, the foundation of equestrian academies and the erection of equestrian statues, especially by supporters of absolute monarchy. Such an appreciation of the importance of the rider I found to be critical when it came to understanding the divisions that arose, especially in debates about the direction of state horse breeding, later on in the nineteenth century.

Looking back at the early modern period also enabled the research to be set properly in its

equine context. For it became clear that hippology, the study of the health and beauty of the horse, was a particular discipline that grew out of the equestrian academies dominated by those seeking to maintain the supremacy of the riding horse. But as the number of driven horses increased these hippologists felt threatened that their knowledge of the horse, which had related mainly to ridden horses, would be dispensed with as an ever growing number of uneducated farriers or horse doctors, drawn from the lowest rung of society, invaded the equine world and threatened to make the horse their own. This observation led to another revelation: veterinary science first took root in France as an initiative of hippologists and horsemen in equestrian academies, such as the founder Claude Bourgelat, who saw it to be their task to educate but also to suppress the farriery from taking over their knowledge of the horse.

By now what had become clear in the investigation was the extent to which the equine world could be divided into the ridden and driven interest whereby the numerical rise of the latter severely impinged upon the former. What further abetted this process, I managed to find out, was the improvement in the construction of roads as well as a developing highway network which established the basis for the proliferation of driven horses used in industry, commerce and transport during the latter part of the eighteenth century. Crucial to this 'take-off' was the parallel development within agriculture which, after centuries of reliance on oxen for draught, was now turning to horses for draught purposes. But what I discovered was that in doing so it set the course for collision between the ridden and driven horse insofar as the latter had a broader reproductive power base among a wide body of farmers. The farmer-breeder preference for the heavy driven horse made total sense because it, after its use had been expended on the farm, could be sold to a wider market in towns and cities whose appetites for horsepower, through industrialisation and urbanisation, were growing insatiable. All of which spelt disaster for the fortunes of the light ridden horse which, because its use was limited commercially, had to rely on the state to prop it up on the justification that it was still required for use in the military. Thus it was that I managed to reveal the background to the development of the state studs whose powers to decide centrally on the kind of horses that should be bred and supplied made it a focal point of contention between the various military, agricultural, commercial and industrial interests throughout the course of the nineteenth century.

Moving on to research the urban environment during the nineteenth century, I became aware that, bearing in mind the tradition of the ridden and driven horse conflict, European towns and cities were now places where the driven horse had triumphed. But what I also managed to

uncover was that the shift from the ridden to driven involved not only a material process but constituted a significant challenge to perspective and change in ideology. When the ridden horse ruled its pre-eminence was inextricably linked with the horseman who mounted atop and whose position gave rise to a particular way of looking at the world. What was significant was the extent to which within the rider ideology the horse took a distinctly subordinate position to the horseman – it was only relevant insofar as its features lent authority to those who bestrode it.

Within the urban sphere remnants of such thinking came to be undermined on the one hand through pedestrians on the pavements and passengers in coaches and carriages on the other whose influences over the horsemen gained considerable ground during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Part of this process saw its culmination in the development of the circus, which successfully ridiculed the pretensions of the rider and sought to make horses into central actors, with the result that horsemen came to be quite literally dethroned from their perches. A similar upshot, I found, could also be witnessed in the development of horseracing. For what the English thoroughbred system did was to place the horse at the centre through the expulsion of the whims of the rider and the employment of jockeys as faceless individuals who could be relied upon to make sure horses performed to the best of their abilities at each race. Such shifts in how the horse was positioned, I have come to contend, formed a crucial context to how it came to be seen within an urban environment full of driven horses where, helped by the separation of animals and humans through sanitary regulation, a particular and compassionate gaze fixated on the horse, giving rise to animal protection movements.

Conclusion/Observation

The Award has contributed greatly to throwing light on how the 'equine world' (which I refer to as the 'equine economy' to include a particular way of thinking and living) moved and functioned. Previous scholarship that have dealt with the horse, which have been few and far between, had very little interest in treating the horse either separately or seriously as an object of study, choosing to incorporate it as a side story within larger studies that dealt with agriculture, sport or transport. What this gave rise to was that while the horse came to be 'used' as a vehicle to illuminate other aspects of society, politics and economy, the horse itself remained paradoxically hidden away. By contrast, this research has placed the horse at the centre of its analysis. From this an appreciation has grown that the world it created had to be understood on its own terms and that it deserved to be given attention on the basis that European society was utterly dependent on the horse until at least the First World

War.

Such a stance signals a significant departure from an over-reliance on the usual methodologies and theories of modernisation, civilisation and discourses which would have only contributed to the horse's continued invisibility. But, in temporarily dispensing with these theories, the research was able to listen more closely and attentively. This care has resulted in an understanding of the equine economy's down and fall, ebb and flow, paradigms of conflict and changes in perspectives and ideologies involving the ridden and driven horse. What this does, in turn, is to break significant new ground in the study of modern European history. For it rediscovers a parallel universe, centred on the horse, which, while it did not develop un-related to wider social, economic, political and cultural forces, laboured under a significant equine dynamic of its own on which this research has for the first time shed light. In aiding in the evolution of this insight, the Foundation has, I believe, contributed in significant ways to what will be written in the PhD dissertation this year in Cambridge.