and mastery, and deployed those images as part of their royal rhetoric of political control. Collins argues that, just as the Hittite kings used imagery of the Storm God to refer to their success in the larger political world, they used images of the Stag God (and hunting scenes more generally) to refer to their successful control of the land, creatures, and people within their own realm.

Four chapters focused on the Aegean follow, three of which are concerned with Bronze Age Minoan and Mycenaean cultures. Janice Crowley’s chapter is a typological presentation of animal mastery motifs on Bronze Age seals and seal impressions. After a comprehensive discussion of this evidence, Crowley concludes that the Master of Animals was adopted from the Near East with much of his iconography, but then adapted (in ways such as the substitution of distinctly Aegean animals) to become a specifically Aegean persona. Anna Simandiraki-Grimshaw’s approach to animal mastery motifs in the Bronze Age Aegean is more theoretical, as she tackles the issue of Minoan depictions of somatic human-animal hybridity. She argues that human-animal hybridity is a complex phenomenon of negotiated power expressed through shape-shifting potentialities—power that may relate to human struggles with mastering the animal world, or perhaps might be expressions of cross-cultural interactions in liminal zones such as harbor towns and administrative centers. Louise Hitchcock’s chapter on the throne room at Knossos also takes an innovative approach. She argues that the griffin-guarded throne was intended to remain permanently empty—not as a staging area for the performance of a divine epiphany by a priestess, but rather as an aniconic shrine to Daidalos, who had animal mastery as one of his attributes. Hitchcock traces Aegean connections with the Near East through the use of such vacant thrones and thus proposes cross-cultural transmissions of animal mastery meanings that were materially expressed through the somewhat different concept of sacred emptiness.

Susan Langdon’s chapter, the last of the four dedicated to the Aegean, is focused on the Iron Age and includes discussion of both mainland Greece and Crete. Langdon links the popularity of male animal mastery motifs in the earlier periods of the Iron Age, and their subsequent decline, with changes in human–ecological interaction and the rise of polis society. The “Mistress of Animals” was successful, and eventually identified with the goddess Artemis, because she represented the Greek identification of the wilderness as feminine. Langdon argues that the “Master of Animals” challenged that divine association in ways such as the Greeks of the Archaic and later periods found unproductive; masculinity instead became more strongly linked to polis life and agricultural husbandry. Derek Counts also focuses on the Iron Age in his chapter on Cyprus and its imagery of three seemingly separate “Masters,” each of whom controlled a different animal (lion, ram, goat). Counts argues that these were not separate motifs but rather manifestations of a range of animal mastery powers that expressed Cypriot kingship ideologies. Imagery of specific animals was deliberately deployed in order to increase the motif’s local potency and thus enable it to negotiate boundaries within the landscape of rural sanctuaries.

Mark Garrison’s contribution addresses images of heroic encounters with animals in Mesopotamia and Iran, primarily focusing on Neo-Assyrian and Achaemenid Persian contexts. Garrison’s analysis of Neo-Assyrian imagery links the iconography of the heroic encounter on the royal seal with depictions of lion hunts on palace reliefs, arguing that both should be regarded as displays of ritualized violence. Garrison argues that, rather than documentation of real events, these images of lion killing were depictions of an ideology expressing the naturalness of Assyrian royal power. The heroic encounter is visually diversified in the Achaemenid Persian period, with a larger range of poses, human costuming, and animal combatants. Garrison contends that, although some of the motif’s meaning in this later period is derived from Neo-Assyrian (and earlier) associations, its variety of expression also suggests that it could convey multiple, situationally contingent meanings as well.

Five additional articles complete the volume; I have not reviewed these, as they fall outside the chronological and geographical scope of interest for the average BASOR reader. These chapters focus on early Eurasian Steppe; pre-Roman Iron Age Europe; Etruscan Italy; early Celts; and early Medieval Europe.

Conspicuously absent from this volume is a contribution focused on Egypt, where animal-human hybrids abound and issues of human (often royal) control over the natural world, addressed in many of this volume’s chapters, were paramount. This is one example of how a shift in the title and conception of this volume—from one giving the impression of aiming primarily to trace a single motif’s specific identities and meanings, to one intended more explicitly to examine the interconnected uses of animal mastery imagery across Europe, the Mediterranean, and Western Asia—might have been more illuminating. Overall, however, this volume succeeds in presenting original and informative studies of animal mastery motifs in a way not accomplished in previous publications.

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The volume under review is a revised version of the author’s 2008 Vanderbilt University dissertation. It is divided
into eight chapters: (1) “Introduction”; (2) “The Nature of the War-Horse”; (3) “Horses in Iron Age Israel and Judah”; (4) “Chariotry in Iron Age Israel”; (5) “Stables of Israel: The Case of Megiddo” (an adaptation of the author’s contributions to Megiddo IV; Cantrell 2006; Cantrell and Finkelstein 2006); (6) “Warfare in Iron Age Israel”; (7) “From Chariotry to Mounted Combat”; and (8) “Conclusion.” The bibliography is current to 2007.

The author begins (chapter 1) by noting that, while horses are common in biblical literature, they seldom feature in discussions concerning ancient Israelite society, despite the ramifications that the procuring, breeding, training, and maintaining of horses and chariots would entail for any society that used them. Indeed, the implications of the Israelite military, beyond its mere existence, is, for the most part, ignored in works on Israelite society (e.g., the issue of the existence of barracks for the regular year-round army). Cantrell argues that the existence and presumed scope of a military horse industry in Israel justifies its study. She further notes that horses were involved in combat roles on a large scale right up to World War I. It is only recently that the horse has retreated from the common experience of the everyday person. The author positions herself squarely in the camp of those who believe the Israelites were able to, and did, maintain significant numbers of horses, as suggested by biblical and extra-biblical sources.

The author next details certain aspects of her approach to the subject. She generally follows the low chronology of Finkelstein, which affects her presentation of the historical development of horse usage in Israel (hence the chronological emphasis in the volume’s title, though the material drawn in comes from before and after this restricted period). Often enough, she suggests what the implications would be if one were to follow the more conventional chronology. She acknowledges that reconstructing historical events in Israel from biblical texts can be problematic, due to the theological agendas of the writers/editors, but argues that these texts do reflect real knowledge of how horses were used, since horse training and technology remained much the same over the era. She also notes that biblical details regarding horses are often realistic. Similarly, descriptions of how horses were used are probably fairly accurate because they are background details known and understood by the biblical audience, not part of the religious pedagogic agenda of the editors.

The strongest parts of the work center on the author’s intimate knowledge of the horse, its potential, its needs, and how these may be integrated into understanding its role in Israel (chapters 2 and 3). For example, she notes that horses do not need to be stabled on a regular basis, though some form of rudimentary protection (“sheds”) from the elements is desirable. The main point of stabling horses is that it enhances their periodic training (pp. 9–10). Thus, efforts to discredit a significant chariot force for ancient Israel on the basis of an assumed relative lack of stabling compounds is unjustified. Later she artfully discusses the conflicting ten-

encies of the horse to explode into battle, rather than to flee, despite the fact that it is a prey animal and is prone to flight (pp. 11–12). Other important aspects of horse physiology that are discussed include size and breed(s), restricting vision to reduce potential for panic, the need to desensitize horses to the sounds of battle, the role of the horse itself as a weapon (though some amount of trampling, perhaps the majority, took place in the pursuit, once the enemy was broken), the actual difficulty in killing or incapacitating a horse in battle with arrows and spears (pp. 14–34), and the need to bring in fresh horses periodically during battle (pp. 74–75). Much has been written about chariots, harnessing systems, and so on, and a brief summary of these discussions would helpfully flesh out the author’s presentation.

As noted above, the author takes an optimistic view on the abundance of horses in ancient Israel. So, for example, the 2,000 chariots assigned to Ahab in Shalmaneser III’s inscription are accepted in straightforward fashion (p. 36, n. 7), as often are references to large numbers of horses, chariots, and stalls in the Bible. Here it would have been helpful to differentiate these sorts of propagandistic sources, which may have their own reasons for inflating/deflating figures, from the kinds of horse lists known from the Assyrian army, which represent real-life tallies. These sorts of rosters are lacking for ancient Israel, so the actual number of horses available there will remain a matter of conjecture. It might be worthwhile to compare Israel with other areas famous in antiquity for their horses. For example, Thessaly, an area about the size of Israel (excluding the Negev and deserts), was famous in antiquity for the size and caliber of its cavalry. Other questions one might ask are how many personnel would be required to maintain thousands of horses, and could the populations of Israel and Judah have afforded to divert that many individuals to such a task?

The author presents the various ways horses could be procured (e.g., trade, war, breeding; pp. 41–51) and the agricultural potential Israel had for supporting a significant horse population. Similarly, she argues that typical, non-royal war chariots were not expensive to produce or maintain, and they would have thus been relatively plentiful. This is a more debatable point, since only Late Bronze Age reliefs from Egypt give a sense that these light chariots could have been mass produced. Were the huge late Assyrian-style chariots, capable of carrying four armored crewmen, produced so easily? Chariot manufacture and repair are not mentioned in the Bible, and such a workshop has, so far, not been identified archaeologically there.

The author suggests that the common four- and six-chamber gates of the Iron Age were used, at least in part, as hitching, unhitching, and staging areas for chariots and their horses, a novel idea (pp. 76–86). She presents data showing that the chambers were large enough to accommodate horses, chariots, and grooms, and argues that the visual seclusion from other teams created by the chambers would facilitate readying the horses. Her map showing the locations of such gates is a bit incomplete. For example, Jerusalem
(Ophel gate), Tell en-Nasbeh, and Tell el-Kheleifeh are not shown. Could four-chamber gates at Carchemish and Halaf have been used in a similar fashion?

In chapter 5, she reviews the pro and con arguments in assessing the tripartite building complexes at Megiddo as stables. Here she stands firmly on the side of Holladay (1986) and contra Pritchard (1970). She notes additional problems with the latter’s analysis of these buildings and adds details in support of the former. One can also mention that in the century and a half of excavation in the ancient Near East, the number of indisputable excavated military stables is tiny: Qantir (Egypt, Late Bronze Age), along with Bastam and Hasanlu (Iran, Iron Age). If the supposed lack of excavated stables in Israel is evidence for a significant lack of chariotry there, then, by the same standards, the 2,238+ horses and 924 chariots ascribed to the Canaanites by Tuthmosis III must also be a work of literary fiction; to date, no Bronze Age stables have been found in Canaan.

Chapter 6 does not go into detail on how chariots were actually used in battle but instead lists and discusses battles fought in and around Israel in which chariotry and cavalry were involved. Certainly the latter is useful, but some discussion of actual tactics seems warranted. It is generally accepted that Bronze Age chariots served as well-armored mobile missile platforms, though how they actually fought is a matter of debate. Over the course of the first half of the first millennium, chariots increased greatly in the size of the vehicle itself and in the number of crew and horses. At the same time, true cavalry was evolving and gradually replacing the chariot as the primary mobile missile platform. As the author notes, chariots are more prominent in biblical passages set in the earlier part of the Iron Age, whereas cavalry is more noticeable in seventh- and sixth-century passages. What role(s) did the large late Iron Age chariots have? Were they primarily status/ceremonial vehicles, or did they continue to have an important, though different, role in warfare? The author mentions a change in tactics (p. 137) but does not describe what this change was. This is an area where the insights of a professional equestrian would be most welcome.

Especially effective is the author’s frequent citation of biblical passages related to horses (the property, primarily, of the state) to show how widespread the knowledge of these creatures was. They appear in historical, wisdom, poetic, and prophetic materials. Clearly the biblical authors and editors had experience of horses and expected their audience(s) to have the same sort of knowledge.

Downsides to the volume include a relative dearth of illustrations (4 of the 16 photographs are of the Megiddo troughs), and the lack of a final bibliography (frustratingly, all the references are in the footnotes), though scripture and author indexes are included. There is no map of the ancient Near Eastern world (helpful when mentioning Hasanlu, Bastam, Kush, etc.) and only a single map of Israel. There are a few misstatements. For example, the battle of Gaugamela in 331 B.C.E. was not the last noted use of scythe chariots (p. 34). Such chariots were still being used by the Pontic kingdom in the last half of the first century B.C.E.

In sum, the author does a fine job of documenting the importance of horses, chariotry, and cavalry in ancient Israel and argues well for a substantial chariot and cavalry force there (though not always in the numbers given in more extravagant biblical passages). At times, she may be a bit too effusive on the size and ability of Israelite chariotry (p. 116), though the fact that Samarian chariot forces, at the nadir of the northern kingdom, were incorporated into the Assyrian army, does suggest these were a capable military force that had earned the respect of their adversary (p. 143). The volume is a worthy addition to the bookshelves of those interested in warfare in the ancient Near East and is offered at a reasonable price. The comments above are intended to suggest avenues that the author, or others, might someday explore.

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REFERENCES


