

On Horsemanship - Xenophon

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On Horsemanship written c. 350 BC by Xenophon is one of the earliest extant treatises on horsemanship in the Western world (the oldest is the one written by Kikkuli of the Mitanni Kingdom). In it, Xenophon details the selection, care, and training of horses both for military and general use. One of the most important qualities in a horse, Xenophon writes, is that it have a fleshy (or "double") back. This presumably is because Xenophon wrote this treatise before the invention of the saddle. Xenophon's On Horsemanship is one of the oldest surviving Western works detailing the principles of classical dressage, including training the horse in a manner that is non-abusive. In On Horsemanship, Xenophon himself pays tribute to better established works by apparently more celebrated contemporary horsemen—in particular, a trainer and writer referred to only as "Simon"—but no known copies of these other texts have survived into the modern era.

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