



ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Training the Bronze Age War Horse: Techniques and Logistics for Battlefield-Ready Chariot Teams in the Ancient Near East

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Abstract

The emergence of lightweight, two-wheeled chariots in the Ancient Near East during the second millennium BCE brought about a significant transformation in battlefield strategy and chariot technology during the Bronze Age. Initially, oxen served as the draft animals for these chariots. However, during the third millennium BCE, there was a transition to using donkeys, onagers, and hybrids, eventually culminating in the adoption of horses in the early second millennium BCE. This transition significantly enhanced the speed, maneuverability, and responsiveness of the chariots. The earliest records of horse-drawn chariots appear in the Anitta Text from the 18th century BCE, potentially marking the inception of organized horse training. Additionally, Hittite horse texts from the 15th century BCE and the 13th century BCE Kikkuli Text provide evidence for a structured, large-scale, and comprehensive horse training program. This predates similar contributions by over a thousand years compared to works by the Greek philosopher Simon and the military leader, philosopher, and historian Xenophon. Iconographic and written sources further substantiate evidence of horse training for chariot warfare during the Eighteenth to Twentieth Dynasties of Egypt. This paper seeks to examine the archaeological and epigraphic evidence for Bronze Age horse training techniques developed to prepare chariot horses for performance on the Late Bronze Age battlefield.

Keywords

Ancient Near East, Bronze Age, Horse, Chariots, Horse training

Session

4. The materiality of inscribed and figurative objects

Type of paper

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