Contents

List of Illustrations *page* ix
Acknowledgments xi

Introduction: Horse and Human in the Early Modern World 1
Iberian Horse Culture, from "Reconquest" to "New World Conquest" 7
A Political Ecology of the Horse in the Americas 9
Breeding the Horse: Limits of Domestication and Race 10
Feral Empire: Horse and Human in the Early Modern Iberian World 12

1 The Equine Imprint in Iberian History, Tenth to Fifteenth Centuries 14
1.1 Deconstructing the Equine Ideal: Knights on the Medieval Iberian Frontier 21
1.1.1 Knights and Horses: Negotiating Status in Frontier Municipalities 23
1.1.2 Nobles Riding Mules 29
1.1.3 Changing Fortunes of Horses in War 32
1.2 Horses for the Kingdom: Scarcity and Breeding Regulations 38
1.3 Framing an Iberian Horse Culture 42

2 A Politics of Horses: Scarcity and Colonization in the New World 45
2.1 Horses in Conquest Narratives 46
2.2 Horses as a Measure of Colonization 56
2.3 An Equine Imprint in the "New World" 72

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 15 Nov 2026 at 21:20:11, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009091015

3 The Paradox of Abundance and Illusion of Control: An Equine Political Ecology 74
3.1 The Paradox of Abundance 76
3.1.1 Environmental Concerns for Supplying Horses in the Americas 80
3.1.2 "Domesticating" Colonial Landscapes 83
3.1.3 Protecting the Commons 91
3.2 The Illusion of Control 95
3.2.1 New Spain, from High Plains to Borderlands 96
3.2.2 Peru, from Coastal to Mountain Valleys 100
3.3 An Equine Political Ecology 105
4 Indigenous Equestrianism: A "New World" Frontier Model 107
4.1 A "New World" Frontier Model 111
4.1.1 License to Ride in New Spain 115
4.1.2 Indios Conquistadores 119
4.2 Expanding Uses of the Horse 125
4.2.1 Growing Tensions 127
4.2.2 Sharpening Divisions 131
4.2.3 Status and Lineage Mediated by Horses 134
4.3 Becoming Equestrian 141
5 Ferality and Breed in "New World" Horses 143
5.1 Naming the *Cimarrón* 147
5.2 Breeding *Criollo* Horses 153
5.3 Brands and Branding Practices 159
5.4 Regional Types: *Castas* and *Razas* 163
5.5 Issues of Decline 172
5.6 Domestication and Ferality in Spanish Colonization 175
6 Defining *Casta* and *Raza*: Horse Breeding and the Language of Race 177
6.1 Regulating Horses and Horse Breeding: Law and Language 183
6.2 *Relaciones de la Cría Caballar* (Reports on Horse Breeding) 187
6.3 Creating and Debating the King's Race 196
6.4 Constructing Race 203
Conclusion: Feral Empire 208

Works Cited 211
Index 233

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 15 Nov 2026 at 21:20:11, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009091015