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Nobility

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Introduction

“The” nobility is a slippery fish to catch, especially for the Renaissance and Reformation era. Historians inevitably face the methodological problem of whether to define “nobility” according to juridical, social or cultural criteria. Over the past decades, they have abandoned a legal and essentialist interpretation in favor of a sociological and anthropological approach. Even if legal, fiscal, and social privileges persisted in “the making of” the nobility during the ancien régime, it is now widely acknowledged that the social composition of the group constantly changed, leading to an immense diversity among its members across Europe and the colonies. Likewise, it is accepted today that both the Renaissance and Reformation profoundly changed the cultural and ideological concept of “nobility” itself. These novel insights replace the older 19th-century paradigm claiming that from the late Middle Ages onward the nobility was in long-lasting crisis, losing its power and status to a rising bourgeoisie. Instead of this linear interpretation, a new consensus emerged around a persistent rise and decline among nobilities (not of the group as such), and their remarkable resilience in the face of state-building, religious change, and economic upheaval between 1450 and 1650.

General Overviews

There are several excellent attempts to bring the histories of the nobilities of Europe together in a synthesis. These divide into two categories: the first juxtaposes the nobilities in different countries according to the same interpretative questions, as in Scott 2007 and Clark 1995; the second integrates these separate histories into one explanatory narrative, as in Doyle 2010, Asch 2003, Zmora 2001, Dewald 1996, and Labatut 1978. To this day, this last category has invariably met with the critique that it extends the power balance of France, England, or the Holy Roman Empire across the rest of Europe, whereas local laws and culture often determined the outlook of the nobilities. A general overview including the fate of nobilities in Europe and in its colonial and overseas territories is much needed. See also the section on Comparative History. Labatut 1978 develops the classic interpretation of the encapsulation of nobilities into states by the end of the 18th century, with the comparative study of Clark 1995 arguing for noteworthy regional differences within this macro-historical process. Since then, Dewald 1996 has rewritten this narrative in more neutral terms of an ever-changing social composition of the noble estate, with Asch 2003 and Zmora 2001 pointing to the many moments of noble rebellion and resistance toward their rulers and overlords. Doyle 2010 might serve as the most recent, though probably too brief, introduction for Europe as a whole, and Scott 2007 remains the best starting point for deep study of the regional nobilities in the area covered.

Asch, Ronald G. *Nobilities in Transition, 1550–1700: Courtiers and Rebels in Britain and Europe*. London: Hodder Education, 2003.

Detailed comparative study of English and European nobilities alike, while recognizing regional differences. Argues for a “genuinely European elite” with remarkable resilience in times of crisis and with an ongoing margin for maneuver toward early modern sovereigns. Gives detailed information on the foundations of the nobility, its changing composition, its cultural outlook, and its position at court and within the state apparatus.

Clark, Samuel. *State and Status: The Rise of the State and Aristocratic Power in Western Europe*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1995.

Older but still valid introduction from the perspective of historical sociology, indicating state formation's centers and peripheries, and its impact on local nobilities. Focuses on the differences in status and power in the British Isles and on the Continent.

Dewald, Jonathan. *The European Nobility, 1400–1800*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Classic overview by a leading scholar. Despite criticism of its focus on France and England, it makes excursions to Spain, the Holy Roman Empire, and the Dutch Republic. Among the first to reframe the “crisis” paradigm into a more neutral narrative of class formation, and of change and continuity (see also Stone 1965, cited under Britain).

Doyle, William. *Aristocracy: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.

The most recent, but a too concise, overview, ranging from Britain to Russia. Although “aristocracy” usually denominates the highest group within the titled nobility, it here groups titled and lesser elites alike.

Labatut, Jean-Pierre. *Les noblesses européennes de la fin du XVe siècle à la fin du XVIIIe siècle*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1978.

Clear introduction to the titles and ranks among European nobilities, though mainly centered on France.

Scott, H. M., ed. *The European Nobilities in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*. 2d ed. 2 vols. London: Longman, 2007.

Second improved and updated edition (1st ed. 1995), with excellent bibliographies. Without doubt the best introductory chapters for regional nobilities, from France to Russia.

Zmora, Hillay. *Monarchy, Aristocracy and the State in Europe, 1300–1800*. London: Routledge, 2001.

Wide-ranging survey of the *longue durée*, with particular attention to the growing legal prescriptions concerning noble status. Questions the long-lasting impact of noble rebellion on early modern state formation.

Primary Sources

As a privileged class in the ancien régime, the nobilities themselves produced a profusion of sources in documents relating to the administration of their lands, justification of their dynastic identity, or recording their personal experiences. Moreover, they engaged genealogists or lawyers to draft biographies, family histories, laudatory texts on the Second Order, and treatises on the esteemed noble virtues. To grasp the wide variety of sources, see the anthologies Rosenthal 1976, García Hernán 1992, and Carrasco Martínez 2000. The Sección Nobleza of the Archivo Histórico Nacional (Spanish National Archives) is in the process of digitizing its collections, providing a wealth of information. Many sets of correspondence and memoirs of early modern noblemen and noblewomen have been edited, but these cannot be listed here. See also the section on Cultural History. While there are no anthologies with a European perspective, the best primary source probably remains the highly influential Castiglione 1976, written between 1508 and 1528, and soon translated into six languages.

Archivo Histórico Nacional. Sección Nobleza. Toledo, Spain: Archivo Histórico Nacional.

Documents from the collections of the Spanish National Archives are increasingly digitized and can be accessed online through the portal of Spanish State Archives, and of the Sección Nobleza, specifically.

Carrasco Martínez, Adolfo. *Sangre, honor y privilegio: La nobleza española bajo los Austrias*. Barcelona: Ariel, 2000.

Overview of the cultural and political history of Spanish nobilities, including, in its second part, eighty-six edited documents in Spanish from the 16th and 17th centuries.

Castiglione, Baldassare. *The Book of the Courtier*. Translated by Georges Bull. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1976.

The best source to capture the challenges of the nobilities in the Renaissance. Castiglione describes what the ideal Renaissance courtier should look like: a trained soldier, but versed in literature, dance, and music, displaying these manners with *sprezzatura*—the ability to act as though all these skills had been acquired effortlessly. See also Peter Burke's *The Fortunes of the Courtier: The European Reception of Castiglione's Cortegiano* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

García Hernán, David. *La Nobleza en la España moderna*. Madrid: Istmo, 1992.

A good and wide selection of sources on the stratification, wealth and cultural codes among early modern Spanish nobility, from the 16th century onwards, accompanied by a very short introduction to the early modern Spanish nobility by one of the leading scholars in this field.

Rosenthal, Joel T., ed. and trans. *Nobles and the Noble Life: 1295–1500*. London: Allen and Unwin, 1976.

Both a student introduction and an anthology of sources translated into English, yet mainly for the high and late medieval period.

Reference Resources

Reference resources flourish as a result of the long-standing fascination for aristocracy, genealogy, and heraldry. The online resources mentioned here are extremely helpful for the wider field of elite studies, although at first sight they seem only to be related to court studies. Beyond doubt, the Instituto Universitario La Corte en Europa (IULCE) is the leading research center in this respect, digitizing more and more of the prosopographies and studies on the Spanish Court already published. It is seconded by the (now unfortunately ended) Prosopographia Burgundica project. The website Residenzen-Kommission Arbeitsstelle Kiel provides many useful maps, images, and entries for the aristocratic residences of all kinds in the Holy Roman Empire. The websites of La Cour de France and the Institut Deutsche Adelsforschung are listed here as possible sources of inspiration.

Institut Deutsche Adelsforschung.

Though not scholarly in approach, an interesting portal site for inspiration and bibliographical tips.

Instituto Universitario La Corte en Europa.

One of the main research networks for Court Studies, based at the *Universidad Autónoma de Madrid*, with a special but nonexclusive interest in the courts of the Spanish Habsburg monarchy. It provides open access texts, search instruments, and so on; has taken first steps in digitizing prosopography in its edited volumes on the courts of Charles V, Philip II, and Philip III (under the link “personajes”). See also Court Studies.

La Cour de France du Moyen Âge au XIXe siècle.

Texts, bibliographies, sources, and prosopography related to the French court in its widest sense, including politics, patronage, and religion.

Prosopographia Burgundica. Edited by Werner Paravicini.

Comprehensive bibliography on court studies, tertiary sources, and a prosopography on members of the Burgundian Court between 1407 and 1477, based on extensive archival analysis by the author and his collaborators.

Residenzen-Kommission Arbeitsstelle Kiel. Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen.

Especially useful for its digital entries, images, maps, and lists of *Grafen und Herren* related to the four-volume *Höfe und Residenzen im spätmittelalterlichen Reich. Ein Handbuch*. Edited by Werner Paravicini, Jan Hirschbiegel, and Jörg Wettlaufer.

Journals

Journals proliferate on the level of national institutions concerned with noble entitlement, and of genealogical and/or heraldic associations. Nevertheless, a leading international specialist journal is lacking, while the *Court Historian* fills the gap for court studies, and *Virtus* for the Low Countries (mainly). Most specialized articles appear in journals with a social or economic history perspective, such as *Economic History Review*, the *Journal of Social History* or the *Journal of Family History*, or in those dedicated to the Renaissance and Reformation, such as *Sixteenth Century Journal* and *Renaissance Quarterly*. See also *Special Issue: Les noblesses à l'époque moderne*, in *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*.

***Court Historian: International Journal of Court Studies*. 1996–.**

Journal of the Society for Court Studies, with two issues a year. Topics cover all chronological periods and geographical areas, but with a special focus on Renaissance courts in Europe. Bibliography only available to subscribing members.

***Economic History Review*. 1927–.**

Publishes research on various economic aspects of noble life, such as estate management and land income, strategies for social and economic advancement, and so on. See also section on Economic History.

***Journal of Family History*. 1976–.**

Wide-ranging journal that publishes research on kinship and family patterns among early modern elites.

***Journal of Social History*. 1967–.**

Wide-ranging journal that reviews and publishes research on elites studies.

***Renaissance Quarterly*. 1954–.**

Journal of the Renaissance Society of America, devoting attention to the role of nobilities within the wider patterns of cultural

transfer in the early modern world. Since 2009 (Vol. 62), published by University of Chicago Press.

***Sixteenth Century Journal*. 1969–.**

Publishes on every aspect of noble life in a “long” 16th century, with a preference for religious and cultural history.

***Special Issue: Les noblesses à l'époque moderne. Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 46.1 (1999).**

Opening article by Robert Descimon, making a case for a study of elites based less on law and more on cultural anthropology.

***Virtus: Yearbook of the History of the Nobility—Jaarboek voor adelsgeschiedenis*. 1993–.**

Virtus is a Dutch yearly review specifically aimed at the history of nobilities in the Netherlands, including the early modern Low Countries. Occasionally (though gradually more and more) it includes articles in English or French.

Medieval Background

Renaissance and Reformation scholars usually omit the medieval background of “the” nobility. Perhaps this is because medievalists have recently questioned the conceived wisdom on the origin and socioeconomic status of the Second Order in this age. The hottest debate concerns the impact of the “feudal revolution,” which has been said to have launched the emergence of the nobility around the year 1000. This term was coined in Duby 1978, but since then it has been thoroughly questioned in Barthélemy and White 1996 and other works. A middle ground is explored in Crouch 2005, and earlier in Contamine 1998. Today, “the making of” the medieval nobility is linked more to the impact of the seigniorial right to judge and to command, as discussed in Firnhaber-Baker 2010; to its representation in culture and memory, as shown by the contributions in Oexle and Paravicini 1997; or to its political alliances to the Crown, as developed by Doubleday 2001.

Barthélemy, Dominique, and Stephen White. “Debate: The ‘Feudal Revolution.’” *Past and Present* 152 (1996): 196–223.

This and other articles in the same journal challenged the then classic Duby thesis (see Duby 1978). The so-called *anti-mutationnistes*, also represented by Chris Wickham, Timothy Reuther, and especially Thomas Bisson, acknowledge adaptations between 900 and 1200, but no radical changes around 1000. The conjunction between lordship, the right to bear arms, and judicial power took place gradually.

Contamine, Philippe. “The European Nobility.” In *The New Cambridge Medieval History*. Vol. 7, 1415–1500. Edited by Christopher Allmand, 89–105. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Thematic overview by a leading French scholar, with succinct information on numbers, privileges, equalities, and inequalities among different regions in Latin Christendom.

Crouch, David. *The Birth of the Nobility: Constructing Aristocracy in England and France, 900–1300*. Harlow, UK: Pearson, 2005.

This comparative history charts the middle ground between the two aforementioned theses of the *mutationnistes* and the *anti-mutationnistes*, by looking into the interplay of socioeconomic and the cultural changes between 900 and 1300.

Doubleday, Simon. *The Lara Family: Crown and Nobility in Medieval Spain*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001.

Source-based study of a family that from the late 11th to mid-13th centuries prospered through the patronage of the Crown of Castile, rather than through landed patrimony. Doubleday carefully documents factional noble strife in competition for royal favors, while demonstrating the family's decline after its collision with the Crown.

Duby, Georges. *Les Trois Ordres ou l'imaginaire du féodalisme*. Paris: Gallimard, 1978.

Collection of texts sketching what the author dubbed a "feudal revolution" (*mutation féodale*) in France around 1000, with Carolingian state structures abruptly transformed into feudal-vassal relationships centered around the *seigneurie (banale)*, primogeniture, and codes of honor. Translated by Arthur Goldhammer, with a foreword by Thomas N. Bisson, as *The Three Orders: Feudal Society Imagined* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

Firnhaber-Baker, Justine. "Seigniorial War and Royal Power in Late Medieval Southern France." *Past & Present* 208 (2010): 37–76.

Warns against a teleological view of the declining power of nobles in 13th- and 14th-century history, showing that the French Crown acknowledged limitations on its prerogatives in law and warfare, based on the seigniorial rights of lords with jurisdiction over high crimes.

Oexle, Otto Gerhard, and Werner Paravicini, eds. *Nobilitas: Funktion und Repräsentation des Adels in Alteuropa*. Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997.

Rich collection of texts by specialists on late medieval European nobilities. Less concerned with the definition of nobility than with the representation and cultural legitimation of the dominating elites in society.

State-Building

The historiography of the Renaissance nobility has always been a corollary of studies of late medieval and early modern state-building, and vice versa. The classic account in Elias 1969 claimed that the absolute rulers of the 17th century succeeded in "taming" aristocracies in the "golden cage" of a splendid court. This view echoed the 19th-century paradigm of the decline of the nobility, yet it was framed sociologically and sophisticatedly, and continues to spark new research questions. In current elite studies, however, Elias's view has been turned upside down. It is generally acknowledged that all nobilities (whether high or low, sword or robe, old or new) proactively sought government offices and patronage, instead of being mere puppets on the ruler's string, as shown in Elliott 1963, Paravicini 1975, and above all Beik 1985 and Duindam 2003 (cited under Court Studies), and more recently Liang 2011. Nobles could profit from state-building in all spheres (justice, warfare, bureaucracy, and local governorships), though Harding 1978 shows how they did so with changing success, and Elliott 1963 argued for their continued resistance to centralization. In the 1990s the term "state feudalism" was briefly in vogue to express how the state apparatus recuperated some of the functions of the feudal system by incorporating existing elites or by creating new administrative nobilities (see Genet 1996 and Reinhard 1996). Currently, there is more attention for the setting of the nobilities *outside* the state, both in their classic rural contexts and in the city.

Beik, William. *Absolutism and Society in Seventeenth-Century France: State Power and Provincial Aristocracy in Seventeenth-Century Languedoc*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

Stresses the repeated alliance between absolutist rulers and elites between 1620 and 1690, despite their collision in the Frondes. Shows, contrary to Elias 1969, that absolutism was as much about the protection of elite groups as it was about their so-called domestication.

Elias, Norbert. *Die höfische Gesellschaft: Untersuchungen zur Soziologie des Königstums und der höfischen Aristokratie, mit einer Einleitung; Soziologie und Geschichtswissenschaft*. Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1969.

Provocative, yet classic study of the “golden cage” of court society, in which aristocrats supposedly lost power to the absolutist ruler. Translated by Edmund Jephcott as *The Court Society* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983).

Elliott, John. *The Revolt of the Catalans: A Study in the Decline of Spain, 1598–1640*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1963.

A still authoritative study of the social strata in the Catalan lands under the Crown of Aragón, arguing that the ruling elites (although not all strictly nobles) could mobilize far-reaching rebellion against harmonization attempts by the king, hampering his centralizing policies.

Genet, Jean Philippe, ed. *L'état Moderne et les élites, XIIIe-XVIIIe siècle: Apport et limites de la méthode prosopographique—Actes du colloque international CNRS-Paris I, 16–19 octobre 1991*. Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1996.

Conference proceedings providing a good bibliographical and methodological introduction to the use of prosopography to sketch the “human contours” of state formation. It includes contributions on the Papal States, the Italian States, England, and Poland, but most of the volume concerns the Holy Roman Empire, France, and the Burgundian lands.

Harding, Robert. *Anatomy of a Power Elite: The Provincial Governors of Early Modern France*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1978.

Studies 142 governors of the eleven large provinces between 1515 and 1650, and others of minor regions, towns, and forts, a function typically reserved for noblemen. For Harding, the replacement of governors from the sword nobility with intendants from the robe nobility should be seen as the outcome of a more bureaucratic state toward the 17th century, an evolution in which both the *noblesse de robe* and the *noblesse d'épée* participated willingly.

Liang, Yuen-Gen. *Family and Empire: The Fernández de Córdoba and the Spanish Realm*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011.

Case study of a prominent noble house originating from Cordoba, intertwining family, political, and imperial history. The service of different family relatives turned their family networks into the infrastructure of state-building and empire-building “on the ground.”

Paravicini, Werner. *Guy de Brimeu: Der burgundische Staat und seine adlige Führungsschicht unter Karl dem Kühnen*. Bonn: Ludwig Röhrscheid Verlag, 1975.

First study to argue against Elias 1969 that cooperation between noblemen and rulers created a win-win situation for each, though imperiled by popular revolt.

Reinhard, Wolfgang. *Power Elites and State Building. Origins of the Modern State in Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

This is a comprehensive analysis of the cooperation of power elites in the process of late medieval and early modern state-building. It mitigates most preceding functionalist and institutional approaches by focusing on the agency of elites (including the nobility) in the process.

Patronage Studies

Following the pivotal studies Reinhard 1979 and Kettering 1986, patronage studies have come to supplement the historiography on state-building, questioning its exclusive focus on administration, bureaucracy, and efficiency, and pointing to the networks of governing elites and nobilities that “made” the state. Patronage was as much a phenomenon of an incomplete state as a continuation of traditional ties among elite patrons and clients (and any brokers between them). See Kettering 1986 and Kettering 2002. Though reminiscences to the feudal system persisted (hence the occasional reference to “bastard feudalism”), the Renaissance patron-client relationship was less formalistic and juridical, but mainly materialistic and possibly affective, and it was common across Europe, as confirmed in Maćzak 1988. These studies are indebted to the anthropological theories of Marcel Mauss and Claude Lévi-Strauss, yet there is much debate on the impact and extent of early modern patronage and, especially for France, on its relationship to the venal system, as sketched in Haddad 2006.

Haddad, Élie. “Noble Clientèles in France in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: A Historiographical Approach.” *French History* 20 (2006): 75–109.

Elucidates the terminological problems in the patronage debate, and sketches different methodological approaches in current historiography. Best introduction to older or classic studies by Mousnier, Ranum, Kettering, Greengrass, etc. (see also France).

Kettering, Sharon. *Patrons, Brokers, and Clients in Seventeenth-Century France*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.

The late Sharon Kettering has been heralded as the “queen of patronage studies.” This volume makes a strong case for studying patronage as characteristic of an incomplete (and not even modern) bureaucracy, focusing on the importance of brokers and of personal relations between elites.

Kettering, Sharon. *Patronage in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century France*. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2002.

Groups earlier articles by the author, with an important updated bibliographical essay.

Maćzak, Antoni, ed. *Klientelsysteme im Europa der Frühen Neuzeit*. Munich: Oldenburg, 1988.

Authoritative volume on the resemblances and differences between clientelism in early modern Europe, including the Holy Roman Empire and eastern, central, and southern Europe (but omitting Scandinavia and Hungary).

Reinhard, Wolfgang. *Freunde und Kreaturen, “Verflechtung” als Konzept zur Erforschung historischer Führungsgruppen, Römische Oligarchie um 1600*. Munich: Verlag Ernst Vögel, 1979.

Seminal study of the clienteles of the pope and the magnate families of Rome. More a theoretical argument for using mathematical data and network analysis to study clientelism than an actual description of the Roman oligarchy.

Court Studies

Over the last three decades, the field of court studies has more or less emancipated itself from the broader current of elite and patronage studies, especially since Starkey, et al. 1987 and Asch and Birke 1991. Even if a Renaissance court mainly

consisted of non-noble members, the nobilities essentially influenced its outlook, composition, and impact, producing the bulk of surviving historical sources. This recent field of court studies was influenced by the aforementioned pivotal studies of Norbert Elias (see Elias 1969, cited under State-Building), though here, too, most of his insights are subject to debate. Historiography no longer identifies the court as a “golden cage,” but as a forum for nobles to gain access to the ruler’s policies and patronage through factional competition (see Adamson 2000, Gunn and Janse 2006, and especially Duindam 2003). For nobles, education and residence at court could lead to profitable opportunities, as well as to bitter disillusion (Motley 1990). Again, the ruler does not emerge as the undisputed winner, as he was largely dependent on the noble factions striving at his court. An attempt at global history has recently been provided by Duindam, et al. 2011.

Adamson, John, ed. *The Princely Courts of Europe: Ritual, Politics and Culture Under the Ancien Régime, 1500–1750*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2000.

Well-illustrated volume on courts from England to both northern and southern Europe, revealing the many similarities in structure and culture.

Asch, Ronald G., and Adolf M. Birke, eds. *Princes, Patronage, and the Nobility: The Court at the Beginning of the Modern Age c. 1450–1650*. London: German Historical Institute, 1991.

First comparative volume on nobilities at courts across Europe, with a focus on the Holy Roman Empire and the lands of the Habsburg dynasty.

Duindam, Jeroen. *Vienna and Versailles: The Courts of Europe’s Dynastic Rivals, 1550–1780*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Excellent comparative history, focusing not only on the political role of the courts, but also on their economic base.

Duindam, Jeroen, Tülay Artan, and Metin Kunt, eds. *Royal Courts in Dynastic States and Empires: A Global Perspective*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2011.

Unusual “global” history of the court, comparing royal courts from antiquity to the modern world, from Asia to Europe, and attempting to “de-center” the historiography of the early modern court away from France, England, and the Italian peninsula.

Gunn, Steven J., and Antheun Janse, eds. *The Court as a Stage: England and the Low Countries in the Later Middle Ages*. Woodbridge, UK: Boydell, 2006.

Several articles demonstrate that the court should not only be studied as a princely household, but also as the nerve center of political networks and cultural exchange.

Martínez Millán, José, Carlos Javier de Carlos Morales, and Santiago Fernández Conti, et al. eds. *La Corte de Carlos V*. 5 vols. Madrid: Fundación Mapfre Tavera, 2000.

Extensive prosopographical analysis of the court of Charles V, with introductory chapters. Already followed up for Philip II, Philip III, with the court of Philip IV on its way; see *La Corte de Felipe II*, 2 vols. (Madrid: Fundación Mapfre Tavera, 2005); and *La Monarquía de Felipe III: La casa del rey*, 4 vols. (Madrid, 2008). Research data progressively being made available through the website of the Instituto Universitario La Corte en Europa (cited under Reference Resources).

Motley, Mark. *Becoming a French Aristocrat: The Education of the Court Nobility, 1580–1715*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990.

Fine introduction to the court education that sword nobility pursued for their sons. Argues that this was more due to a cultural desire for distinction and *sprezzatura* than to competition with the robe nobles.

Starkey, David, D. A. L. Morgan, John Murphy, et al., eds. *The English Court from the Wars of the Roses to the Civil War*. London: Longman: 1987.

Pioneering volume on the English Court as the center of political maneuvering, reacting against the older Eltonian thesis of the supremacy of the bureaucratic Privy Council.

Military History

Military history has always come to the foreground when studying Renaissance nobilities. Since the high Middle Ages, the Second Order understood itself as society's *bellatores* or *defensores*. The origins of the nobility were thus to be found in its military and chivalric lifestyle, and additionally in its ability to raise troops. However, in the "military revolution" debate, epitomized by the influential Parker 1996 (first issued in 1988), the professionalization of warfare and the increasing importance of infantry over cavalry was said to have undermined the traditional power base of the aristocracy. This view resonated with the older historiography on the 17th-century crisis of the nobility launched in Elias 1969 (cited under State-Building) and Stone 1965 (cited under Britain). Nevertheless, Potter 1993 and Storrs and Scott 1996 already argued strongly that this decline in military power was not the case: Gunn, et al. 2008 supported them later for the early Renaissance, Parrott 2001 even for French politics under Richelieu. Moreover, Sandberg 2010 (as well as Carroll 2006 and Jouanna 1989, both cited under Cultural History) argues the ongoing endeavors of noblemen to engage in rebellion or local feuding, while Drévilion 2005 also points to the long-lasting noble "warrior culture" that accommodated royal and elite interests even in the reign of Louis XIV. Additionally, there are numerous regional studies of early modern military orders, but very few in comparative perspective (see Mol, et al. 2006).

Drévilion, Hervé. *L'impôt du sang: Le métier des armes sous Louis XIV*. Paris: Tallendier, 2005.

Though concerned with the period after 1650, the author hints at the continued codes of honor and the noble aspirations of military service under the king deep into the 18th century.

Gunn, Steven, David Grummitt, and Hans Cools. *War, State and Society in England and the Netherlands, 1477–1559*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

The third part studies "nobles at war" extensively. Offers comparative insights into the importance of noble agency in the transformation of warfare.

Mol, Johannes A., Klaus Miltzer, and Helen Nicholson, eds. *The Military Orders and the Reformation: Choices, State Building, and the Weight of Tradition*. Hilversum, The Netherlands: Verloren, 2006.

Focuses mainly on the Teutonic Order and the Hospitallers, and demonstrates their multi-confessional arrangements, though military orders survived better in Counter-Reformation regions. Provides a good bibliography.

Parker, Geoffrey. *The Military Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500–1800*. 2d ed. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Provocative study pointing to an early modern "revolution" toward professionalized warfare, henceforth based on bastions, sieges, infantry, firearms, artillery, and linear tactics, which Parker argues undermined the military status of the aristocracies. In this second edition, he also answers the main critiques since the first edition (1988).

Parrott, David. *Richelieu's Army: War, Government and Society in France, 1624–1642*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Questions Parker 1996, in showing how the French government opted to engage noble commanders after the lessons of the religious wars, preventing the rise of military entrepreneurs (as happened in Spain and the Holy Roman Empire).

Potter, David. *War and Government in the French Provinces: Picardy, 1470–1560*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Influential study by one of the leading scholars of French Renaissance warfare, arguing that the Crown remained heavily dependent on noble power in the frontier regions.

Sandberg, Brian. *Warrior Pursuits: Noble Culture and Civil Conflict in Early Modern France*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2010.

Mainly a study of local feuds and conflicts in early-17th-century Languedoc. Argues for the continuing interest of nobilities in military experience and endeavor, even after the Wars of Religion. Relates to the argument of Jouanna 1989 and Carroll 2006 (both cited under Cultural History), while paying more attention to local and cultural conflicts.

Storrs, Christopher, and Hamish M. Scott. "The Military Revolution and the European Nobility, 1600–1800." *War in History* 3 (1996): 1–41.

Against Parker 1996 (first edition 1988), Storrs and Scott argue for an enhanced role of nobility in 17th-century warfare, yet on a more professional basis than before: they held commands in the increasingly larger armies, and acted alongside, and often as, military entrepreneurs.

Wood, James B. *The King's Army: Warfare, Soldiers and Society during the Wars of Religion in France, 1562–1576*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Against Parker 1996 (first edition 1988), sketches an "incomplete" military revolution, demonstrating the continued importance of noble commanders, even in civil war.

Economic History

The role of the nobility in the wider economic history of the early modern period is usually discussed within the so-called Brenner debate on the transition from feudalism to capitalism (see Aston and Philpin 1985). Because of the rule of *dérogance*, a legal and cultural obstacle to the French nobility taking part in economic activities, this land-owning estate was often thought to have had a counterproductive role in the rise of capitalism. With an early mitigation of this view for British noble "entrepreneurs," there is now a more neutral appreciation of the land-owning and industrial activities of the nobles in the ancien régime, singling out their contingent fortunes and setbacks. Early on, Nader 1977 highlighted that in the 16th century the wealth of noble houses only partially stemmed from landed estates, and that land incomes were always supplemented with lucrative business and financial ventures. This revisionism toward a positive appreciation of noble entrepreneurship has been achieved even for "traditional France" by Dewald 1987, or for the capitalist and merchant-driven Low Countries as documented in the historiographical overview of van Steensel 2014. Jago 1973 formulated the classic hypothesis of the crisis of the nobility in the 17th century, in which debt on income from land drove them to embrace court life, but also here a more positive appreciation is provided by Janssens and Yun Casalilla 2005.

Aston, Trevor H., and Charles H. E. Philpin, eds. *The Brenner Debate: Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-Industrial Europe*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

Robert Brenner brilliantly reformulates his thesis, this time stressing the agrarian and feudal roots of capitalism, and answers objections raised by the other contributors.

Dewald, Jonathan. *Pont-St-Pierre 1398–1789: Lordship, Community, and Capitalism in Early Modern France*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987.

Careful and source-based study of one near Rouen, tracing the complex interplay between lord-barons, villagers, and farmers, with seigneurial relations deteriorating by the 18th century and market relations spreading.

Jago, Charles. “The Influence of Debt on the Relations between Crown and Aristocracy in Seventeenth-Century Castile.” *Economic History Review* 26/2 (1973): 218–236.

Shows that by the 17th century, landed income of the Castilian aristocracy came with high debts, which made nobles seek lucrative positions in court and government in order to be able to maintain their estates. See, however, Janssens and Yun Casalilla 2005 and Yun Casalilla 1994 (cited under Spain).

Janssens, Paul, and Bartolomé Yun Casalilla, eds. *European Aristocracies and Colonial Elites: Patrimonial Management Strategies and Economic Development, 15th–18th Centuries*. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2005.

Argues that elites diversified their economic activities between 1550 and 1650, against the stereotype (and occasional prescription) of *dérogeance* (prohibiting economic or labor activity). Contributions stress the different paths in Russia, Prussia, Naples, the Low Countries, and Latin America. Short but excellent historiographical introduction by Yun Casalilla.

Nader, Helen. “Noble Income in Sixteenth-Century Castile: The Case of the Marquises of Mondéjar, 1480–1580.” *Economic History Review* 30.3 (1977): 411–428.

Studies the movable possessions and real estate of the cadet branch of the powerful Mendoza family. Points to the stable real income for this noble household in times of price rises, and their remarkable endeavors to contract financial and business ventures to expand the revenues of their landed estates.

van Steensel, Arie. “Beyond the Crisis of the Nobility: Recent Historiography on the Nobility in the Medieval Low Countries II.” *History Compass* 12.3 (2014): 273–286.

Discusses and challenges the basis of recent historiography in the idea of a late medieval crisis of noble income and land ownership in one of the most capital-driven and urbanized regions of western Europe.

Religious History

The Reformation presented a far-reaching challenge for nobilities in Latin Christendom, for whom virtue and faith were linked. While some converted to the newer Protestant confessions, sincerely or opportunistically, others maintained the old faith. Consequently, religion often provided a cause of noble revolt, not only for Protestant noblemen, but also, as Carroll 1998 and Questier 2006 argue, for their Catholic counterparts. Protestant princes often redistributed the confiscated lands of the Catholic Church, and MacHardy 2003 pinpoints how Catholic rulers acted similarly with confiscated lands of Protestant noblemen. This religious division among the nobilities eventually prevented them from forming a united power bloc in Europe, especially in the Holy Roman Empire, where the 1555 Peace of Augsburg accorded the *jus reformandi* to local rulers, as Press 1997 recalls.

Carroll, Stuart. *Noble Power during the French Wars of Religion, The Guise Affinity and the Catholic Cause in Normandy*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Shows how this Lorraine family raised support for the Catholic cause through maintaining clienteles even in a region not usually associated with their territorial ambitions around Champagne.

MacHardy, Karin. *War, Religion and Court Patronage in Habsburg Austria: The Social and Cultural Dimensions of Political Interaction, 1521–1622*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

Discusses the importance of the confessional strife between noble factions, and the relevance of analyzing patron-client relations in explaining religious events.

Press, Volker. "Adel, Reich und Reformation." In *Das Alte Reich: Ausgewählte Aufsätze*. Edited by Volker Press, 328–378. Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1997.

Shows the different path of the religious revolt in the Holy Roman Empire, where landlords or local princes often opted for a *Landeskirche*, causing division in the institutional structures of the *Reich*. Originally published in 1979.

Questier, Michael. *Catholicism and Community in Early Modern England: Politics, Aristocratic Patronage and Religion, c. 1550–1640*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Insight into the Catholic "framework" of the Viscounts Montague in Sussex, showing how chaplains and clienteles influenced the religious politics of the family as a whole.

Cultural History

Although nobles tended to support the idea that nobility was acquired by birth, blood, virtue, and law, in practice it was as much acquired by upholding a noble lifestyle, including rights to bear arms, to display coats of arms, and to hunt, as well as artistic and literary patronage and so forth—see Paravicini, et al. 2012 and Gersmann and Kaiser 2005. Moreover, cultural history has shown that ideas concerning nobility changed constantly throughout the Renaissance, demonstrated as early as Schalk 1986 and Neuschel 1989. In addition, Jouanna 1989 argued that noblemen considered it their innate duty to take over when the king forfeited his tasks for the commonwealth. Cultural codes were thus as important to noble behavior as law was to noble entitlement. In fact, they even influenced the bodily and emotive attitudes of those concerned; see Bouza 2003 and especially Carroll 2006 for the continued importance of duel and violence.

Bouza, Fernando. *Palabra y imagen en la Corte: Cultura oral y visual de la nobleza en el Siglo de Oro*. Madrid: Abada Editores, 2003.

Exceptionally rich analysis of understudied aspects of court life, incorporating novel insights into the history of the body and emotions.

Carroll, Stuart. *Blood and Violence in Early Modern France*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Bold and provocative study of feuding, dueling, and vindictory violence. Questions the thesis of Elias that noblemen were domesticated from violent knights into disciplined courtiers, showing the endurance of violence among the highest elites.

Gersmann, Gudrun, and Michael Kaiser, eds. *Special Issue: Selbstverständnis-Selbstdarstellung-Selbstbehauptung: Der Adel in der Vormoderne I. Zeitenblicke 4.2 (2005)*.

First of two special issues witnessing the “cultural turn” within elite and nobility studies (Part II appears in *Zeitenblicke* 4.3 [2005]). Along more general introductions, the special issues bring detailed case studies (mainly on the Holy Roman Empire) regarding the importance of memory (*Gedächtnis*), rituals, and written culture within “the making of” the nobility.

Jouanna, Arlette. *Devoir de révolte: La noblesse française et la gestation de l'état moderne (1559–1661)*. Paris: Fayard, 1989.

Crucial monograph in which Jouanna argues that despite state formation, nobles regarded it as their duty to rebel whenever the king did not act for the common good. These cultural codes meant that noble rebellion was often directed against weak kings, rather than strong ones, and thus did not reflect declining, but continuing power.

Neuschel, Kristin B. *Word of Honor: Interpreting Noble Culture in Sixteenth-century France*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989.

Less about the ideas than about the cultural anthropology of nobles in Picardy in the 1550s and 1560s, when norms were changing in the political and religious sphere. Argues against Kettering 1986 (cited under Patronage Studies) for considerable flexibility in patron-client relationships.

Paravicini, Werner, Ulf Christian Ewert, Andreas Ranft, and Stephan Selzer, eds. *Noblesse: Studien zum adeligen Leben im spätmittelalterlichen Europa*. Ostfildern, Germany: Thorbecke, 2012.

Collection of essays written by Paravicini himself, situating nobilities in their “homes,” in their travels, on *Preußenfahrt*, while also demonstrating the importance of heraldry in the lifecycle of a nobleman.

Schalk, Ellery. *From Valor to Pedigree: Ideas of Nobility in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986.

Pivotal volume on the changing conception of nobility itself, among both sword and robe nobles, with (from the 16th century) blood and virtue coming to replace the chivalry that was key in the Middle Ages.

ART COLLECTING

A noble lifestyle usually included artistic patronage, especially for the higher aristocracy; from the 16th century onward, nobles also engaged in collecting all kinds of art. Apart from aesthetic pursuits, this artistic patronage and collecting took place in order to enhance their status both in local residences and at court. Often, kings and nobles competed for the same artists, or collectable items, and spent much time on purchasing and exchanging art, leading to extensive commercial and cultural exchanges across early modern Europe (and with overseas colonies or regions).

Brown, Jonathan. *Kings and Connoisseurs: Collecting Art in 17th Century Europe*. New Haven, CT: Harvard University Press, 1995.

Classic overview on art collecting in Madrid, Paris, London, and Antwerp, showing how the upper strata of nobilities competed with their king in collecting both old and new masters, and in developing aesthetic canons, leading to a remarkable mobility of artworks across Europe.

Schnapper, Antoine. *Curieux du Grand siècle: Collections et collectionneurs dans la France du XVIIe siècle*. Paris: Flammarion, 1994.

By tracing paintings, tapestries, sculptures, and other pieces of art, Schnapper shows both structure and agency within collecting and collections in 17th-century France, paying great attention to the king and his ministers, but also to the *grand seigneurs* at court, mapping their contacts with merchants and the urban patriciate.

WRITING AND READING

Like art, nobles collected manuscripts and books early on (Faems and van Coolput-Storms 2007); yet in the 16th and particularly the 17th century, their own display of writing and reading became increasingly more important, both at court, as shown by Bouza Álvarez 2003, and in their own personal memoirs, as Dewald 1993 argues. Here, too, nobles and rulers competed to patronize authors and poets, as outlined by Jouhaud and Merlin 1993.

Bouza Álvarez, Fernando. "Escribir en la corte: La cultura de la nobleza cortesana y las formas de comunicación en el Siglo de Oro." In *Vivir en el Siglo de Oro: Poder, Cultura e Historia en la época moderna; Estudios en homenaje al profesor Ángel Rodríguez Sánchez*. Edited by Bartolomé Bennassar Perillier, Fernando Bouza Álvarez, and Pedro M. Cátedra García, et al., 77–100. Salamanca, Spain: Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 2003.

Shows how writing at court was a way for noblemen not only to demonstrate their suitability for bureaucratic roles, but also to enhance their personal profile.

Dewald, Jonathan. *Aristocratic Experience and the Origins of Modern Culture: France, 1570–1715*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.

Provocative study based on the literary sources left by French aristocrats, which sought to profile their individualism ("selfhood") above their class ambitions. Has not gone undebated.

Faems, An, and Collette van Coolput-Storms, ed. *Special Issue: Les librairies aristocratiques dans les Anciens Pays-Bas au Moyen Âge. Le Moyen Âge 113.3–4 (2007): 473–668.*

Though confined to the Low Countries, interesting overview of what was at stake in holding and setting up a private library within noble houses.

Jouhaud, Christian, and Hélène Merlin. "Mécènes, patrons et clients: Les médiations textuelles comme pratiques clientélares au XVIIe siècle." *Terrain 21 (1993): 47–62.*

Two of the leading specialists discuss how literary patronage functioned both within noble households and at court in 17th-century France, and that this double circuit meant that literary authors could mediate between noblemen and king, or, on the contrary, damage their relationship.

Family History

Family history is a product of a noble life itself. For a long time, and especially from the 16th century onward, noble families produced extensive genealogies and histories to demonstrate their noble pedigree (real or forged). Often these genealogies had an *Ersatzfunktion* for the failing juridical mechanisms of qualification (see the section Cultural History). In the 19th and early 20th centuries, noble family histories witnessed a revival, mainly out of veneration for one's own family or for the aristocratic lifestyle. Nowadays, family history profits from the boom in social history, and it focuses on the hereditary structures, primogeniture, and cognate and agnatic lines within elite families; see Pita Beceiro and Córdoba de la Llave

1990 for the late Middle Ages. This has led to the recognition that the early modern nobility was never unified or a class, but was rather a constant interaction between families and houses, and that the family may have provided a more distinctive corporate identity than the Second Order itself. Atienza Hernández 1987 shows the economic base of a noble household, Nader 1979 the cultural transfers it could induce, Hurtubise 1985 the importance of its religious choices, and Béguin 1999 and Boltanski 2006 the consequences of political and patronage choices. Hurwich 2006 examines ideas on marriage and sexuality among noble non-princely elites in the Holy Roman Empire. Finally, Carroll 2009 studies the European dimensions of a household, placing the family within different states.

Atienza Hernández, Ignacio. *Aristocracia, Poder y Riqueza en la España Moderna: La Casa de Osuña, siglos XV–XIX*. Madrid: Siglo Veintiuno de España, 1987.

A now classic study, mainly based on the household accounts of a grandee family, explaining in detail the management of an estate, and its offices, rather than the political power of the family.

Béguin, Katia. *Les princes de Condé: Rebelles, courtisans et mécènes dans la France du Grand Siècle*. Seyssel, France: Champ Vallon, 1999.

Traditional narrative of how members of a formerly Protestant family became servants, courtiers, and cultural brokers at the French court in the 17th century. Highlights the overlapping interests between nobilities and upper magistrates in the service of the Crown.

Boltanski, Ariane. *Les ducs de Nevers et l'État royal: Genèse d'un compromis (ca 1550–ca 1600)*. Geneva, Switzerland: Droz, 2006.

Makes a case for seeing how this noble house profited from a compromise with the Crown during the French Wars of Religion. Recapitulates much of the new orthodoxy of a mutually beneficial compact between Crown and nobilities established by the literature cited under State-Building.

Carroll, Stuart. *Martyrs and Murderers: The Guise Family and the Making of Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Important family history, tracing the Guise clan not only in one state, but through its ambitions in Lorraine, France, Scotland, Italy, and beyond. See the entries under Comparative History.

Hurtubise, Pierre. *Une famille-témoin: Les Salviati*. Vatican City: Biblioteca apostolica Vaticana, 1985.

Shows the *annoblissement* of a Florentine patrician family, partially relocated to Rome, living on important church revenues.

Hurwich, Judith. *Noble Strategies: Marriage and Sexuality in the Zimmern Chronicle*. Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2006.

The Zimmern Chronicle is both a genealogy and a literary source, but this study argues that it can be used as a way to detect the views of noble non-princely elites in the German lands regarding marriage, sexuality, and morality.

Nader, Helen. *The Mendoza Family in the Spanish Renaissance, 1350 to 1550*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1979.

Authoritative monograph that shows how the cultural affinities of a noble family could introduce the Renaissance into the mainland of Spain, quite independently from Italy and with distinctive features.

Pita Beceiro, Isabel, and Ricardo Córdoba de la Llave. *Parentesco, poder y mentalidad. La nobleza castellana: siglos XII-XV*. Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1990.

Traces the birth of “lineages” and agnatic structures in late medieval Castile, demonstrating the functions of ramified family networks.

Gender History

Although gender history has long been on the research agenda of historians, there are surprisingly few overviews on early modern noblewomen in Europe and beyond, other than Bastl 2000 (mainly focused on the Holy Roman Empire). Most studies are biographies and family histories, much like Neu 2006, or focus only on the position of women at the early modern court, like Sánchez 1998 and Hirschbiegel and Paravicini 2000. Still, social history already provided excellent empirical research for different countries, like Harris 2002 for England, and Nader 2004 and Coolidge 2011 for Spain. Kalas 1993 examines the agency of noble widows in an overwhelmingly patriarchal noble society.

Bastl, Béatrix. *Tugend, Liebe, Ehre: Die adelige Frau in der Frühen Neuzeit*. Vienna: Böhlau, 2000.

Traces the important moments in the life cycle of early modern women (marriage, giving birth, and death, including funeral monuments).

Coolidge, Grace E. *Guardianship, Gender, and the Nobility in Early Modern Spain*. Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2011.

Though nobility passed in the male line, noblewomen could become “legally male” through the guardianship of their children. Relying on extensive archival research, this study argues for the crucial role of noblewomen in estate and family management at the top ranks of the nobility.

Harris, Barbara Jean. *English Aristocratic Women 1450–1550: Marriage and Family, Property and Careers*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Interesting analysis of about 1,200 aristocratic couples and their children, based on archival evidence. The author insists on the different powerful roles an aristocratic woman could play in an essentially patriarchal society.

Hirschbiegel, Jan, and Werner Paravicini, eds. *Das Frauenzimmer: Die Frau bei Höfe in Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*. Stuttgart: Thorbecke Verlag, 2000.

Collection of texts on various themes concerning female presence at court, ranging from abduction of brides to the material decoration of a *Frauenzimmer*.

Kalas, Robert J. “The Noble Widow’s Place in the Patriarchal Household: The Life and Career of Jeanne de Gontault.” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 24.3 (1993): 519–539.

One of the paradoxes of the patriarchal structure of early modern society is that of noble widowhood, in which the widow assumes prerogatives of from her late husband and takes control of her dower, and often even of all estates in the minority of her children. Kalas shows the agency in politics and economics of this widow of the Noailles clan, even after her sons came of age.

Nader, Helen, ed. *Power and Gender in Renaissance Spain: Eight Women of the Mendoza Family, 1450–1650*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004.

Argues convincingly for the mixed system of patriarchy and matriarchy within early modern noble houses, with the contributing authors carefully tracing the agency of eight women in politics, economics and culture alike, even long before they became widows.

Neu, Peter, ed. *Arenberger Frauen. Fürstinnen, Herzoginnen, Ratgeberinnen, Mütter. Frauenschicksale im Hause Arenberg in sieben Jahrhunderten*. Koblenz: Verlag der Landesarchivverwaltung Rheinland-Pfalz, 2006.

Though this book has the appearance of an encomium, it is certainly not. It provides biographies of several early modern noblewomen of the Arenberg family, focusing on their different roles within a family context. See also Family history.

Sánchez, Magdalena. *The Empress, the Queen and the Nun: Women and Power at the Court of Philip III of Spain*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1998.

Although dealing with dynastic rulers, Sánchez shows how feminine agency and courts were important in policymaking.

Comparative History

Although nobility had since the High Middle Ages been thought of as a universal and perennial category, important differences persisted in the legal, fiscal, and social privileges accorded regional nobilities in early modern Europe. It is clear that local nobilities in the Renaissance and Reformation were also largely shaped by the particular outcome of the religious, civil, and dynastic strife in their area. For a long time, this hindered comparative history, resulting in a largely regional, national, or state-based historiography (see relevant geographical sections). Since the 1980s, however, some noteworthy European comparative histories have been attempted, although they have been met with inevitable critiques, such as Jones 1986, Zmora 2001, and Asch 2003 (last two cited under General Overviews). Increasingly, these comparisons also extend to the colonies and the Asian and African world (see Janssens and Yun Casalilla 2005, cited under Economic History, and Yun Casalilla 2009). Today, the flourishing field of “transnational history” brings promising research in the “transregional” dynamics launch by early modern nobles, as in Johnson, et al. 2011 and Yun Casalilla 2009, with the recent edited volume by Lipp and Romaniello 2011 also paving the way for further comparison.

Carrasco Martínez, Adolfo. “Perspectivas políticas comparadas de las noblezas europeas en la transición del siglo XVI al siglo XVII.” *Cuadernos de Historia Moderna* 228 (2003): 167–183.

Useful historiographical article studying European nobilities’ attitudes toward state formation at the end of the 16th century and the beginning of the 17th century.

Johnson, Christopher H., David Warren Sabeen, Simon Teuscher, and Francesca Trivellato, eds. *Transregional and Transnational Families in Europe and Beyond: Experiences since the Middle Ages*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2011.

Published by experts on early modern kinship, this book examines methods and cases for the study of the emergence of transregional families. For the Renaissance, it deals with aristocracies active in Italy and France and on the Franco-German frontier.

Jones, Michael, ed. *Gentry and Lesser Nobility in Late Medieval Europe*. Gloucester, UK: Alan Sutton, 1986.

Explores the possibility of comparing gentry in England and Scotland, and lesser nobility on the Continent (France, the Low Countries, Germany, and Castile). Conclusions tend toward the “English exception.”

Lipp, Charles, and Matthew Romaniello, eds. *Contested Spaces of the Nobility in Early Modern Europe*. Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2011.

Although strictly speaking not really a comparative history, thirteen chapters ranging from Italy to the Ottoman Empire set out recent research on nobility and its “contested space,” leading the way for further comparisons.

Yun Casalilla, Bartolomé, ed. *Las Redes del Imperio: Élités sociales en la articulación de la monarquía hispánica, 1492–1714*. Madrid: Marcial Pons Historia, 2009.

Almost all contributions study nobilities and state-building, especially in Castile, Milan, Portugal, the Low Countries, and even the colonies. Includes novel perspectives on the methodologies of transnational history for the study of elites and of state-building in the Spanish monarchy.

British Isles

Traditionally, historiography focused on the aristocracy in Britain and the English court. Recently, a vibrant debate emerged on the role and fate of Welsh, Scottish, and Irish nobilities within “the making of the British state” through Ellis 1995.

Ellis, Steven. *Tudor Frontiers and Noble Power: The Making of the British State*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1995.

Provocative study that challenges the Anglocentric historiography of a Tudor “service nobility” at court. Analyzes the rise and fall of two warrior magnate families in the Irish and Scottish borderlands.

BRITAIN

The history of the nobilities in Britain has long been studied in splendid isolation, but there are some good reasons for this. In comparison to the Continent, Britain had an exceptionally small peerage sitting in the House of Lords (with around forty peers under Henry VII and only 150 by 1688). Moreover, the hereditary system and entitlement functioned quite distinctively here: only the eldest son of a nobleman could inherit patrimony and titles, and other sons remained commoners unless their family conceded courtesy titles to them. Some historians have therefore made a case for studying the English gentry (baronets, knights, esquires, and gentlemen) as the lesser nobility of these lands, even though they were untitled in the British sense and disposed over no formal privileges; Mingay 1976 and Gunn, et al. 2008 (cited under Military History) argue for this position, while voices critical of this approach appear in Jones 1986 (cited under Comparative History). Britain’s aristocracy, nobles and gentry alike, disposed over more than half of the land, in some counties even up to 80 percent. Since the pivotal studies Stone 1965 and Stone and Stone 1984 on these landed elites, much debate arose on the “crisis” and “openness” of their group and their fate under Tudor (Bernard 1992, Asch 1993) and Stuart rule (Stater 1994).

Asch, Ronald G. *Der Hof Karls I. von England: Politik, Provinz und Patronage, 1625–1640*. Cologne: Böhlau, 1993.

Rich in appendices, this book by an acknowledged scholar examines the question of whether the court could serve as an integrating factor for the three Stuart Kingdoms, and shows that shaky finances often meant that it did not.

Bernard, George W., ed. *The Tudor Nobility*. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1992.

Bernard and his contributors warn against a teleological interpretation of the Tudor nobility as late medieval “overmighty subjects” turning into early modern docile magistrates. Most contributors show cooperation between the nobility and the Tudor Crown, even if traditional historiography argues for the victory of the latter.

Mingay, G. E. *The Gentry: The Rise and Fall of a Ruling Class*. London: Longman, 1976.

Still a standard general overview of the English gentry. Although it ranges to “the present day,” it focuses on the period from the 16th century to the First World War. Provides estimates of the wealth of some of the groups within the gentry, but discusses their interdependence less. Comparable to Jones 1986 (cited under Comparative History).

Stater, Victor. *Noble Government: The Stuart Lord Lieutenancy and the Transformation of English Politics*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1994.

Discusses the fate of the *lord lieutenancy*—leadership of the militia in each shire—before and after the Civil War, showing the decline in magnate power.

Stone, Lawrence. *The Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558–1641*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1965.

Classic study on the “crisis” that led to a reduction in the wealth and power of peers and gentry by the middle of the 17th century. Argues this was as much the result of sociological factors (inflation of honors, government tasks, and the influence of the Reformation) as economic and financial ones (shrinking lands and incomes). Some of the statistical interpretations have been heavily disputed since, as have the Marxist and Weberian assumptions.

Stone, Lawrence, and Jeanne C. Stone. *An Open Elite? England, 1540–1880*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1984.

The Stones’ response to the criticisms of Stone 1965, arguing that the English aristocracy was not so much an open and upwardly mobile elite, but a very conservative group in itself. It mainly studies the purchase of lands by elites in the counties of Hertfordshire, Northumberland, and Northamptonshire. This interpretation has also been criticized, because land purchase can be a deceptive tool for measuring the so-called openness of elites, as can the choice of the case studies.

SCOTLAND

In Scotland, peers and gentry (*lairds*) were important in a war-torn rural era, as illustrated in MacDonald 2000 and Meikle 2004. There has been much debate about noble agency in the introduction of the Reformation in 1560 and the deposition of Mary Stuart in 1567. Where the Stuart regal union with England from 1603 onward created some Anglicization of the Scottish aristocracy, it mainly introduced Scottish nobles to the heart of the British court, carefully described in Brown 2000 and Groundwater 2010. English and Scottish peerages functioned separately until the Act of Union of 1707.

Brown, Keith. *Noble Society in Scotland: Wealth, Family and Culture from Reformation to Revolution*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000.

Comprehensive study of the Scottish aristocracy, with particular attention to the life cycle of nobles and their marriage strategies. Argues against a “rise of the lairds,” while demonstrating an Anglicization of the aristocracy during the regal union in the 17th century. Some critical observations have been made regarding the anecdotal evidence.

Groundwater, Anna. *The Scottish Middle March, 1573 to 1625: Power, Kinship, Allegiance*. Woodbridge, UK: Boydell, 2010.

Taking issue with Ellis 1995 (cited under British Isles), the author shows how local patronage networks in these border

sheriffdoms proved crucial for the Crown, before and during the regal union.

MacDonald, Alastair J. *Border Bloodshed: Scotland and England at War, 1369–1403*. EastLinton, Scotland: Tuckwell, 2000.

Revises some stereotypes about the feuding families in Scotland, and shows how, to some extent, cooperation between Crown and magnates came into being during the Hundred Years' War.

Meikle, Maureen M. *A British Frontier? Lairds and Gentlemen in the Eastern Borders, 1540–1603*. East Linton, Scotland: Tuckwell, 2004.

Building on Ellis 1995 (cited under British Isles), but focusing her argument on the lesser nobility (both Scottish greater and lesser lairds and English gentry), Meikle studies 454 landed families, with kinship rather than state formation proving crucial.

IRELAND

The peerage and lesser nobility in Ireland have traditionally been studied within the context of family history, or, more importantly, political history. On the one hand, there is a focus on repeated noble rebellion against English rulers, as in Power 2011, and relatedly the duel, as in Kelly 1995. On the other hand, the impact of English rule on the Irish peerage, and the Old English and Gaelic aristocracies, continues to be a subject of study, as in Kane 2010. The Irish peerage installed by Henry VIII remained open until the 1801 Act of Union, yet by the 17th century it stood out due its imposed Anglicization, as recently argued in Ohlmeyer 2012.

Kane, Brendan. *The Politics and Culture of Honour in Britain and Ireland, 1541–1641*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Cultural study of the Tudor peerage in Britain and Ireland alike, based on English, Latin, and Irish sources. It shows how codes of honor circulated among the different ethno-cultural groups in Ireland, as a reaction to English rule there.

Kelly, James. *“That Damn’d Thing Called Honour”*: *Duelling in Ireland, 1570–1860*. Cork, Ireland: Cork University Press, 1995.

Cultural history of the preoccupation of Irish aristocracy with honor and dueling.

Ohlmeyer, Jane. *Making Ireland English: The Irish Aristocracy in the Seventeenth Century*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012.

Authoritative study of the hereditary lay peerage, which was summoned to the Irish House of Lords, with attention to wider European developments in creating “service nobilities.”

Power, Gerald. *A European Frontier Elite: The nobility of the English Pale in Tudor Ireland, 1496–1566*. Hannover: Wehrhahn Verlag, 2011.

Extending Ellis 1995 (cited under British Isles), the author argues that the peers in this frontier region initially opted for loyalty to (the representative of) the English monarch, evolving into distrust only by the later 1560s.

France

For too long, and especially since Elias 1969 (cited under State-Building), the aristocracy of France has been cited as the standard model for elite formation on the Continent. Compared to England, the French nobility was more numerous (around 1% of the population), though still much smaller than in Spain, Hungary, or Poland-Lithuania. French noble culture insisted more on *dérogance*, the duty not to engage in commercial activities, with the attendant risk of forfeiture of status and privileges (see Constant 1985), and on the reflection of its personal experiences (see Dewald 1993, cited under Writing and Reading). It also witnessed remarkable upward mobility because of the venal system (*vénalité*), by which from the late 15th century aspirants could buy ennobling offices in royal institutions (see Mousnier 1979–1984 and Dewald 1980). Revisionist historiography, such as Harding 1978 (under State-Building), has questioned the long-claimed antagonism between the old *noblesse d'épée* (sword nobility) losing power and prestige to a rising *noblesse de robe* (robe nobility). In practice, there was extensive cooperation between both groups to uphold justice, bureaucracy, and even warfare (Bohanan 2001). Moreover, patronage ties and reproduction strategies could also cross the boundaries between different strata of nobility, as argued in Descimon and Haddad 2010, and also in Kettering 1986, Kettering 2002, and Haddad 2006, all cited under Patronage Studies. The submission of the aristocracy under absolutist rule has now largely been reframed as mutually advantageous cooperation between the parties concerned, or recognition of the similar social strategies of rulers and nobilities alike (Nassiet 2000). Nassiet 2012 stresses, for Brittany, the notable social differences within the Second Estate, with half of its members living in modest circumstances, seconded by Boltanski and Hugon 2011 for Normandy.

Bohanan, Donna. *Crown and Nobility in Early Modern France*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave, 2001.

Though the book covers the early modern period, it focuses mainly on the nobilities in the peripheral provinces under the Bourbon monarchs. Revises absolutist rule in favor of an ad hoc cooperation, often based on coincidental patronage mechanisms.

Boltanski, Ariane, and Alain Hugon. *Les noblesses normandes, XVI-XIX siècle*. Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2011.

In different chapters, leading French scholars provide an up-to-date analysis of the political, religious, and economic aspirations of nobilities in Normandy (and even Brittany).

Constant, Jean-Marie. *La noblesse française aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles*. Paris: Hachette, 1985.

As much a study of the old and new nobilities themselves as of their perception by contemporaries.

Descimon, Robert, and Élie Haddad, ed. *Épreuves de noblesse: Les expériences nobiliaires de la haute robe parisienne (XVIe-XVIIIe siècle)*. Paris: Société d'édition Les Belles Lettres, 2010.

Methodologically innovative. Studies the Parisian *haute robe* as the outcome of a complex interplay between social reproduction and elite distinction, and not as the outcome of the venal system or legal privileges.

Dewald, Jonathan. *The Formation of a Provincial Nobility: The Magistrates of the Parlement of Rouen, 1499–1610*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980.

Challenges almost every stereotype about the characterization of the *noblesse de robe* as parvenu progressive urban elite. In fact, the conservative robe nobles controlled considerable landed wealth, resembling the rural nobility more than the urban bourgeoisie.

Mousnier, Roland. *The Institutions of France under the Absolute Monarchy, 1598–1792*. 2 vols. Translated by Arthur Goldhammer. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979–1984.

Still an authoritative introduction to the hierarchies of the ancien régime, stemming from an expert on the Crown's venality system.

Nassiet, Michel. *Parenté, Noblesse et États Dynastiques, XVe-XVIe siècle*. Paris: École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 2000.

Anthropological study of the “making of” noble dynasties. Rethinks the political history of late medieval and early modern France as one of social strife between noble clans.

Nassiet, Michel. *Noblesse et pauvreté: La petite noblesse en Bretagne, XVe-XVIIIe siècle*. Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2012.

Studies the large body of “poor” nobles within a privileged order, in Brittany accounting for up to (or over) half of the order. These had to engage in commercial activities, ranging from agriculture to tavern-keeping. First published in 1993, then again in 1997, and now updated with recent bibliography.

Holy Roman Empire

Developments in the Holy Roman Empire showed a quite different path due to the absence of a strong central authority, as succinctly sketched in Duhamelle 1999. The *Reich* enjoyed dual authority based in the emperor and the empire's constituent lands, which were often ruled by princes. From the late Middle Ages onward, the emperor tried to extend his power over the princes, and they in their turn to the non-princely nobility in their territories. Press 1980 showed convincingly how mainly the *Reichsritter* (the “free imperial knights”) had the emperor as direct overlord, and were recognized as a noble corporation by him from 1547 onward, yet without direct representation in the imperial Diet; Zmora 1997 argues that the lower nobilities aimed for elite protection in this new corporation. Schmidt 1989 demonstrated that the *Hochadel* also opted for sorts of corporative associations, but acted mainly within the Diet. More than any other region in Europe, the Reformation deeply affected the nobility and its legal status here (See Religious History). Due to the many regional and social differences, few general overviews exist, yet Paravicini 2003–2012 points out the multifaceted landscape of elites, and Endres 1993 provides a good introduction. Studies are often in German, although there is more international attention for Brandenburg, and the Hohenzollern, and Habsburg dynasties. See also Central and Eastern Europe: Bohemian and Austrian lands.

Duhamelle, Christophe. “Les noblesses du Saint-Empire du milieu du XVIe au milieu du XVIIIe siècle.” *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 46 (1999): 146–170.

Good introductory article discussing the stratification of the nobility, the impact of the Reformation, the presence of the *Hochadel* at the Diet, and the representation of lower elites in the Emperor's army, the local courts and bureaucracies and the *Reichsritterschaft*.

Endres, Rudolf, ed. *Adel in der Frühen Neuzeit: Ein Vergleich*. Munich: Oldenbourg, 1993.

More a juxtaposition than a comparison of the many different sorts of noble corporations and higher and lower nobilities in the Holy Roman Empire.

Paravicini, Werner, Jan Hirschbiegel, and Jörg Wettlaufer, eds. *Höfe und Residenzen im spätmittelalterlichen Reich: Ein Handbuch*. 4 vols. Ostfildern: Thorbecke Verlag, 2003–2012.

Focused on *Grafen* und *Herren*, it gives a well-wrought overview of *physical spaces* of seigniorial and princely power in late

medieval Germany. This series served as the point of departure for the online resources of the website Residenzen-Kommission Arbeitsstelle Kiel, listed under online resources.

Press, Volker. *Kaiser Karl V., König Ferdinand und die Entstehung der Reichsritterschaft*. 2d ed. Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1980.

Good introduction to the political and princely motives behind the origins of the Free Imperial Knighthood.

Schmidt, Georg. *Der Wetterauer Grafenverein: Organisation und Politik einer Reichskorporation zwischen Reformation und Westfälischem Frieden*. Marburg: Elwert, 1989.

Classic study of how the *Hochadel*, too, united itself in a sort of corporation, in order to cope with the changing political, social, and religious bases of their power. Concludes with important tables, graphs, and appendices.

Zmora, Hillay. *State and Nobility in Early Modern Germany: The Knightly Feud in Franconia, 1440–1567*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Despite its title, this booklet has a narrow geographical scope. Argues against a declining power base of the lower nobility in the late 15th century, by showing that feuding actually brought some protection for elites. Demonstrates how the ongoing political organization of the Free Imperial Knighthood eventually changed the motives for feuding.

Brandenburg, Prussia, and the Hohenzollern Dynasty

Because of the later importance of the Prussian nobility in world history, its precedents, the aristocracy in Brandenburg, and its fate under the Hohenzollern personal union with Prussia, has received much attention. Hahn 1979 provides a classic introduction to the *Junkers* in 16th-century Brandenburg, with Hagen 2005 contextualizing landownership of this same group in a long-term perspective.

Hagen, William W. *Ordinary Prussians: Brandenburg Junkers and Villagers, 1500–1840*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Though brief on the pre-Westphalian period, this monograph shows long-term collaboration and negotiation patterns between landlords and tenant villagers. Based on thorough archival research.

Hahn, Peter-Michael. *Struktur und Funktion des brandenburgischen Adels im 16. Jahrhundert*. Berlin: Colloquium-Verlag, 1979.

Shows how the titled *Junkers* were the greatest landowners, with significant portions of *Gutsherrschaft* (demesne lands). Yet most *Junkers* also served as commanders of military troops.

Spain

Together with France and England, Spain has proven to be fertile ground for elite studies: the basic category of nobility in the Crowns of Castile and Aragón was *hidalgua*, a privileged status passing in the male line to all children (an average of 10 percent of the inhabitants of Castile, and in particular regions even up to 75 percent, being *hidalgos*). These privileges (mainly tax exemption) could be obtained from the king, and in Castile also from local courts—see the excellent overviews in

Gerbet 1994, García Hernán 1992 (cited under Primary Sources), and Soria Mesa 2007. There is debate about how much this openness was rendered obsolete in the 16th century by increasing judicial inquiries and the cultural quest for *limpieza de sangre* (purity of blood, untainted by Moorish or Jewish descent). Elliott 1989 argues that the differences between Castilian and Catalan aristocracy lay for the latter in its porous borders with the urban patriciate (see also the epochal Elliott 1963, cited under State-Building). Thompson 1992 illustrates how nobility retained a military outlook, especially in a society that housed many military orders. Yun Casalilla 1994 resumes the debate on how much the economic crisis of the aristocracy in the 17th century was also a political one.

Elliott, J. H. "A Provincial Aristocracy: The Catalan Ruling Class in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries." In *Spain and its World, 1500–1700: Selected Essays*. By J. H. Elliott, 71–91. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989.

Indicates the differences between Castilian and Catalan elites in the Spanish kingdoms, showing for the latter a relatively high degree of symbiosis with the urban patriciate. Provides an update of Elliott 1963 (cited under State-Building).

Gerbet, Marie-Claude. *Les noblesses espagnoles au Moyen Âge: XIe-XVe siècle*. Paris: Armand Colin, 1994.

Succinct overview up to 1517. Combines political history, elite formation, and noble factionalism in one narrative, with attention for regional diversities in the Peninsula (except Portugal).

Soria Mesa, Enrique. *La nobleza en la España Moderna: Cambio y continuidad*. Madrid: Marcial Pons Historia, 2007.

Informative overview on the different strata of the nobility from the 15th until the 18th century, its diverse social and cultural origins, and its economic basis.

Thompson, Ian A. A. *War and Society in Habsburg Spain: Selected Essays*. Aldershot, UK: Variorum, 1992.

Offers key introductions to both the military revolution debate in Spain and the changes in the nobility of Castile in the 16th-century.

Yun Casalilla, Bartolome. "The Castilian Aristocracy in the Seventeenth Century: Crisis, Re-feudalisation, or Political Offensive." In *The Castilian Crisis of the Seventeenth Century*. Edited by Ian A. A. Thompson and Bartolome Yun Casalilla, 277–300. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Revisits the old debate, proposing a mitigated view of the crisis in which the aristocracy economically lost considerably, but was ultimately able to protect its political interests (see also Economic History).

Portugal

Gonçalo Monteiro 2000 carefully demonstrated that by the late Middle Ages the basic noble category in Portugal became the *fidalgia* (which originated either in medieval lineages or by royal patent), a remarkably resilient elite throughout the early modern period. Still, Costa 2003 and Dutra 2006 maintain that its military function was gradually superseded by service at court, giving way to a new kind of nobility. It is beyond doubt that the Crown steadily intervened more strongly in order to bring about stratification in the Portuguese aristocracy. Under the regal union with Spain, the Habsburg dynasty tried to create a loyal, titled upper elite, but was nevertheless overthrown by a war in which malcontent nobility had a leading role (see Guillén Berrendero 2012). It was the Duke of Bragança who would be elevated as king, and he in turn engaged upon a stricter strategy toward nobles in his lands.

Costa, Rita Gomes. *The Making of a Court Society: Kings and Nobles in Late Medieval Portugal*. Translated by Alison Aiken. Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Shows how a handful of noble families used their networks and patronage to gain supremacy at court.

Dutra, Francis A. *Military Orders in the Early Modern Portuguese World: The Orders of Christ, Santiago and Avis*. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2006.

A selection of Dutra's important essays, based on archival research. By 1551 the military orders were integrated into the Portuguese Crown, making the king the most important landowner in the kingdom, while also providing him with a resource of loyal knights.

Gonçalo Monteiro, Nuno. "Aristocratic Succession in Portugal (from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Centuries)." In *Elites: Choice, Leadership and Succession*. Edited by Joao de Pina Cabral and António Pedroso de Lima, 133–148. New York: Berg, 2000.

Statistical analysis by a leading scholar of the remarkable dynastic stability among Portuguese elites, despite endogamy, and this in contrast to other European nobilities.

Guillén Berrendero, José Antonio. *La Edad de la Nobleza: Identidad Nobiliaria en Castilla y Portugal (1556–1621)*. Madrid: Ediciones Polifemo, 2012.

Not so much a comparative study, as a search for the common origins and mechanisms of noble distinction on the Iberian Peninsula.

Italian Lands

Due to the political fragmentation of the Italian peninsula, there was never an "Italian" nobility. Italian nobles only met at the papal court, on the European battlefields, or in the Order of the Knights of Malta, as shown in Reinhard 1979 (cited under Patronage Studies), Hanlon 1998 and Spagnoletti 1988, respectively. Italian historiography has long discussed the fate of nobilities along the lines of Braudel's *trahison de la bourgeoisie*, blaming the aristocratization and refeudalization of society for the decline of the region. Mozzarelli 1976, Aymard 1986, and Donati 1995 launched noteworthy attempts to study the nobility in its totality—within the urban and the family context—but the historiographical overview of Angiolini and Boutier 1998 shows that most studies remain regional and written in Italian. More international research traditions for Rome and Naples have, though, been spearheaded by Visceglia 2001, cited under Rome (Papal States) and Visceglia 1993, cited under Naples.

Angiolini, Franco, and Jean Boutier. "Les noblesses italiennes à l'époque moderne. Approches et interpretations." *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 45 (1998): 66–88.

The most recent non-Italian historiographical overview and a good place to start research.

Aymard, M. "Pour une histoire des élites dans l'Italie moderne." In *La famiglia e la vita quotidiana in Europa dal '400 al '600: Fonti e problemi; Atti del Convegno internazionale tenuto a Milano 1–4 dicembre 1983*. Edited by Frenando Pasqualone, 207–219. Rome: Pubblicazione degli Archivi di Stato, 1986.

A methodological plea to study the Italian elites sociologically, rather than in terms of failed state-building or the "patrician system," as well as a good historiographical overview.

Donati, Claudio. *L'idea di nobiltà in Italia, secoli XIV–XVIII.* Rome: Laterza, 1995.

Cultural history based on the *trattatistica*; discusses the difficult relationship between *onore*, *sprezzatura*, and *virtù* in the wake of the Renaissance and the Reformation up to the 18th century.

Hanlon, Gregory. *The Twilight of a Military Tradition: Italian Aristocrats and European Conflicts, 1560–1800.* London: Holmes & Meier, 1998.

Comprehensive analysis of more than four thousand Italian aristocrats, showing how the *Pax Hispanica* on the Italian peninsula drove them to the European battlefield.

Mozzarelli, Cesare. “Stato, patriziato ed organizzazione della società nell’Italia moderna.” *Annali dell’Istituto storico italo-germanico in Trento* 2 (1976): 421–512.

Rather programmatic statement calling for the “patrician system” (rather than nobility) to be considered a common ground of elite formation in the Italian peninsula. The article sparked a multitude of local studies.

Spagnoletti, Angelantonio. *Stato, aristocrazie e Ordine di Malta nell’Italia moderna.* Rome: École Française de Rome, 1988.

Studies the Order of Saint John from 1550 onward, with important tables. Through its membership, the knighthood offers a transregional window onto the Italian aristocracy.

ROME (PAPAL STATES)

For understandable reasons, the history of the “Roman” nobility has been linked much more to the papal court than to its urban and regional context. Hence, Ago 1990 provides a splendid analysis of the making and breaking of noble clienteles through papal intervention, while the contributions in Visceglia 2001 offer more classic analyses of the rise and fall of families within the institutional framework of the Papal States.

Ago, Renata. *Carriere e clientele nella Roma barocca.* Bari: Laterza, 1990.

Answering the call of Reinhard 1979 (cited under Patronage Studies), this is a comprehensive and classic study of patronage in 17th-century Rome.

Visceglia, Maria Antonietta, ed. *La nobiltà romana in età moderna: profili istituzionali e pratiche sociali.* Rome: Carocci, 2001.

Collected volume by leading scholar on nobility in the 16th and 17th centuries, including family histories and more institutional histories alike.

NAPLES

The powerful and landed nobility of Naples has often been cited as an example of the “refeudalization” of urban Italy in the early modern era (see Astarita 1992), while Visceglia 1993 tries to describe this process as the not to be foreseen outcome of social changes around 1560. Delille 1985 points at the remarkable continuity in the landholding of these elites, while Hugon 2011 reinterprets the “social order” and the societal aspirations of nobilities during the revolt in 1647–1648.

Astarita, Tommaso. *The Continuity of Feudal Power: The Caracciolo di Brienza in Spanish Naples*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Goes against dominant trends in Italian historiography. Argues for the continuity of a feudal system, based on a case study of the highest nobility in Naples.

Delille, Gerard. *Famille et propriété dans le Royaume de Naples (XVe-XIXe siècles)*. Rome: Bocard, 1985.

Shows the kinship relations between the local aristocracies, and the material and economic base of their social reproduction.

Hugon, Alain. *Naples insurgée. 1647–1648: De l'événement à la mémoire*. Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2011.

Unusual perspective on the Neapolitan Revolt against the Spanish Crown, in which aristocracies played an important role in the temporary founding of a republic. Rethinks the "social order" in this conflict.

Visceglia, Maria Antonietta. "Un groupe social ambigu: Organisation, stratégies et représentations de la noblesse napolitaine XVIe-XVIIIe siècles." *Annales, Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations* 48 (1993): 819–851.

Presents results from a larger Italian monograph, trying to avoid the "crisis" paradigm in favor of a complex sociological stratification. Discerns major transitions around 1560–1570.

Low Countries

The historiography of the nobility in the Low Countries has often been linked to the intervention of Burgundian-Habsburg rulers to create a dynastic nobility (see Janssens 2008). Traditionally, the nobility in the Southern Low Countries has been seen as a loyal pillar for Habsburg restoration after the Dutch Revolt, while it was thought that it disappeared from the political scene in the Dutch Republic after the death of the insurgent Prince William of Orange. Most of these stereotypes have now been revised in source-based monographs, listed under Burgundian and Habsburg Low Countries and Dutch Republic, and conveniently summarized in van Steensel 2014, cited under Economic History.

Janssens, Paul. "De la noblesse médiévale à la noblesse moderne: La création dans les anciens Pays-Bas d'une noblesse dynastique (XVe-début XVIIe siècle)." *Low Countries Historical Review* 123 (2008): 490–516.

Most recent overview article in a thematic issue of nobilities in the Low Countries, developing a rather classic thesis of growing state intervention in the definition of "nobility" in the (Southern) Low Countries.

BURGUNDIAN AND HABSBURG LOW COUNTRIES

The nobility in the Low Countries has usually been described within the context of the splendid court of the Dukes of Burgundy, with its remarkable social mobility (see *Les élites nobiliaires dans les Pays-Bas au seuil des temps modernes*, Cools 2001, and the classic studies by Paravicini cited under Reference Resources and Medieval Background). For the late medieval County of Flanders, Buylaert 2012 makes a case for looking at broader social processes of elite distinction in these highly urbanized regions (see also van Steensel 2014, cited under Economic History). Van Nierop 1993 (cited under Dutch Republic) clearly sketches what was at stake in the noble rebellion during the Dutch Revolt, while Soen 2012 indicates the ongoing attempts at reconciliation between rebels and loyalists by most members of the leading aristocrat families during the same conflict. Janssens 1998 argues that by the end of the 16th century the Habsburgs could redefine noble status as a

legal statute and princely prerogative.

Buylaert, Frederik. "The Late Medieval 'Crisis of the Nobility' Reconsidered: The Case of Flanders." *Journal of Social History* 45 (2012): 1117–1134.

Mitigating the crisis of the 15th-century nobility, Buylaert shows how in urbanized Flanders the nobility became less dependent on seignorial revenues between 1200 and 1600, while new nobles often stemmed from non-landed elites, obtaining social status by the recognition of their *vivre noblement*.

Cools, Hans. *Mannen met macht: Edellieden en de Moderne Staat in de Bourgondisch-Habsburgse landen (1475–1530)*. Zutphen, The Netherlands: Walburg Pers, 2001.

Studies the emergence of a "supraprovincial elite" in the wake of Burgundian-Habsburg state formation. Examines the importance of offices in the central and provincial government, as well as the Order of the Golden Fleece. Includes a detailed prosopography, with important archival references.

Janssens, Paul. *L'évolution de la noblesse belge depuis la fin du Moyen Âge*. Brussels: Crédit Communal de Belgique, 1998.

Overview of the growing state intervention in the definition of nobility. Includes tables and graphs, though Janssens 2008 (cited under Low Countries) provides a more recent bibliography.

***Les élites nobiliaires dans les Pays-Bas au seuil des temps modernes. Mobilité sociale et service du pouvoir*. Brussels: Facultés universitaires Saint-Louis, Centre de Recherches en histoire du droit et des institutions, 2001.**

Builds on the wave of studies of the relationship between nobility and state-building, stressing social mobility through service to the Burgundian-Habsburg rulers.

Van Nierop, Henk. "The Nobility and the Revolt of the Netherlands: Between Church and King, and Protestantism and Privileges." In *Reformation, Revolt and Civil War in France and the Netherlands 1555–1585*. Edited by Philip Benedict, Guido Marnef, Henk Van Nierop, and Marc Venard, 93–98. Amsterdam, 1999.

Juxtaposes the political, patronage and religious motives for noble rebellion during the Dutch Revolt, led by William of Orange and supported by a multitude of lesser nobles.

Soen, Violet. *Vredehandel. Adellijke en Habsburgse verzoeningspogingen tijdens de Nederlandse Opstand (1564–1581)*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012.

Shifts attention away from "rebel" William of Orange toward the grandees who attempted to negotiate peace and reconciliation during the Dutch Revolt, demonstrating their patronage networks and factional strife, reaching from the court in Brussels to that in Madrid.

DUTCH REPUBLIC

Against the traditional narratives of its sudden disappearance in the Dutch Republic, Van Nierop 1993 demonstrated that the nobility of Holland in fact continued to prosper and retained esteem in a largely bourgeois society. In addition, Janssens 2008 (cited under Low Countries) showed how the Nassau princely dynasty was proactive in its patronage amongst local elites. Aalbers and Prak 1987 examines the interconnections between noble and patrician elites in the emerging Republic, while Marshall 1987 focuses on gender patterns within the Utrecht gentry.

Aalbers, J., and Prak, Maarten, eds. *De bloem der natie: Adel en patriciaat in de Noordelijke Nederlanden*. Meppel, The Netherlands: Boom, 1987.

First edited volume on the multitude of connections between nobility and regents (urban patriciate) in the Republic.

Janssen, Geert. *Princely Power in the Dutch Republic: Patronage and William Frederick of Nassau (1613–1664)*. Translated by J. C. Grayson. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2008.

Innovative study of the “capriciousness” of patronage within the context of the Dutch Republic. William Frederick was both patron and client at the same time, and the documents he left behind give detailed insight into the mechanics of patronage in the private and public sphere. First published in Dutch in 2005.

Marshall, Sherrin. *The Dutch Gentry, 1500–1650: Family, Faith, and Fortune*. New York: Greenwood, 1987.

Interesting gender and family history of the lesser nobility. Despite the promising title, it focuses mainly on Utrecht and its “urban” gentry.

van Nierop, Henk. *The Nobility of Holland: From Knights to Regents, 1500–1650*. Translated by Maarten Ultee. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Authoritative study showing the continued economic and political resilience of the nobility, even in a region that has been seen as the bourgeois society *par excellence*. The important tables from the Dutch edition have unfortunately been omitted in the English translation. First published in Dutch in 1984 (Dieren: Bataafsche Leeuw).

Scandinavian Countries

Most of the literature is still written in Scandinavian languages, and few comparisons are made, except for Ulsig 2003.

Ulsig, Erik. “The Nobility of the Late Middle Ages.” In *The Cambridge History of Scandinavia*. Vol. 1, *Prehistory to 1520*. Edited by Knut Helle, 635–652. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Makes a case for studying the interdependence of crown and nobilities for all late medieval Scandinavian monarchies, despite their enduring competition for power, patronage, and control over castles.

SWEDEN

Since the generous 14th-century “Land Law” of King Magnus Eriksson, the privileges of the Swedish nobility in landholding and government were somehow defined, even if Retsö 2009 argued that the king remained the crucial landowner as fiefs often reverted to the Crown. After the successful rebellion of the noble magnate Gustav Vasa in 1523 and the installation of a Lutheran hereditary monarchy in 1544, a very small group of Swedish magnates continued to form the aristocracy, able to attend the Crown Council; as Persson 1999 argues, their ability to command cavalry became less important than their presence at court. Serfdom was never established practice here because Swedish peasants were free men, in contrast to other East Elbian regions. In the Swedish Empire the nobility of the Grand Duchy of Finland would have the same status and privilege as Swedish noblemen, and were represented in the Diet. In 1626 the system of Swedish nobility became codified by the ordinance of a House of Nobility in the Diet (*riddarhuset*). Swedish historiography stressed the importance of the collaboration between elites and the Crown, even under Gustav Adolf in the 17th century; this cooperation only disappeared in the second half of the same century (see Ågren 1976 and Upton 2007).

Ågren, Kurt. "Rise and Decline of an Aristocracy: The Swedish Social and Political Elite in the 17th Century." *Scandinavian Journal of History* 1 (1976): 55–80.

Older but still interesting interpretation along the lines of Stone 1965 (cited under Britain).

Persson, Fabian. *Servants of Fortune: The Swedish Court between 1598 and 1721*. Lund: Lund University Press, 1999.

A source-based account of the Swedish court as a sociopolitical factor of integration. The same author deals with the longer time span of 1523–1751 in Adamson 2000 (cited under Court Studies).

Retsö, Dag. *Länsförvaltningen i Sverige 1434–1520*. Stockholm: Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis, 2009.

Questions the binary opposition between fiefs/vassalage and late medieval state-building, showing that fiefs remained the crucial form of local administration necessary for the Crown.

Upton, A. F. "The Swedish Nobility, 1600–1772." In *The European Nobilities in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*. Vol. 2, *Northern, Central and Eastern Europe*. Edited by Hamish Scott, 11–40. London: Longman, 2007.

Some interesting remarks on the period before 1600; mitigated view of the 17th-century crisis.

DENMARK

Just like Sweden, the Kingdom of Denmark held changing territory throughout the Renaissance, including Norway, Greenland, etc. However, most research has been dedicated to the nobility of the mainland, which identified itself as a warrior estate. Ladewig Petersen 1967 and Jespersen 1983 argue the nobility became more and more a government and court elite in crisis. Aege Hansen 1972 shows how marriage strategies and tax-free land accumulation continued to be the most important means in elite distinction, in the absence of the rights of primogeniture. Jespersen 2007 and Lockart 2007 stress that by 1648 the old long rivalry between Crown and nobility broke down in favor of a hereditary monarchy installed in 1660, with the nobility losing its tax exemption and its governmental prerogatives.

Aege Hansen, Svend. "Changes in the Wealth and the Demographic Characteristics of the Danish Aristocracy, 1470–1720." In *Third International Conference of Economic History Munich, 1965*. Vol. 4. Edited by D. E. W. Elversley and Jesse S. Williams, 91–122. Paris: Mouton, 1972.

Good starting point, with much information and tables on the wealth of the landed elites in Denmark, and their relation to overall demography.

Jespersen, Knud J. V. "Social Change and Military Revolution in Early Modern Europe: Some Danish Evidence." *Historical Journal* 26 (1983): 1–13.

Brief analysis of the reaction of the Danish nobility toward changes in warfare.

Jespersen, Knud J. V. "The Rise and Fall of the Danish Nobility 1600–1800." In *The European Nobilities in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*. Vol. 2, *Northern, Central and Eastern Europe*. Edited by Hamish Scott, 11–40. London: Longman, 2007.

Very good introduction, with references to the antecedents of 1600. Focuses mainly on the crisis of the 17th century.

Ladewig Petersen, Erling. *The Crisis of the Danish Nobility 1580–1660*. Odense: Odense Universitetsforlag, 1967.

Different trajectory for the Danish nobility compared to Stone 1965 (cited under Britain). Stresses the importance of closed elite circuits, enhanced by the 1536 Reformation. Reprinted in *Social Historians in Contemporary France: Essays from Annales*, edited by Mark Ferro (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 157–179.

Lockart, Paul Douglas. *Denmark, 1513–1660: The Rise and Decline of a Renaissance Monarchy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Excellent overview, dividing the history of the kingdom into the growth of a “consensual state” (1513–1596) and its subsequent crisis in the Thirty Years’ War, leading to the installation of absolutist rule. The first part mainly addresses the fate of the Danish aristocracy.

Central and Eastern Europe

The Bohemian and Austrian (and even some of the Hungarian) lands could have been treated within the context of the Holy Roman Empire and its Habsburg dynasty. Still, since 1980 there has been a striking tendency in elite studies to compare the nobilities in central and eastern Europe specifically, as serfdom and service nobility were here of greater importance than in western Europe, although not of overriding importance (see the introduction in Scott 2007, but also some criticism in Hagen 2005, cited under Brandenburg, Prussia, and The Hohenzollern Dynasty). Some comparative attempts have been heavily debated, such as Subtelney 1986, while others have been applauded, such as Maćzak, et al. 1984; Banac and Bushkovitch 1985; and, above all, Evans and Thomas 1991.

Banac, Ivo, and Paul Bushkovitch, eds. *The Nobility of Russia and Eastern Europe*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985.

Few but important contributions on the early modern period, especially for Poland-Lithuania.

Evans, Robert J. W., and Trevor V. Thomas, eds. *Crown, Church and Estates: Central European Politics in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*. New York: St. Martin’s, 1991.

Focuses on the relationship of crown and estates in the Habsburg hereditary lands, but with some comparisons to Poland, Lithuania, Moldavia, and Ukraine. Provides much-needed information about political representations and collaborations of elites.

Maćzak, Antoni, Henryk Samsonowicz, and Peter Burke, eds. *East-Central Europe in Transition: From the Fourteenth to the Seventeenth Century*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1984.

All contributions focus on Renaissance and Reformation economies, and touch upon elite formation and the feudal system in passing.

Scott, Hamish M. “Introduction: Serfdom and Service Nobility.” In *The European Nobilities in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*. Vol. 2, *Northern, Central and Eastern Europe*. Edited by Hamish Scott, 1–10. London: Longman, 2007.

Short discussion of the differences and continuities between nobilities in Europe.

Subtelney, Orest. *Domination of Eastern Europe: Native Nobilities and Foreign Absolutism, 1500–1715*. Kingston, ON and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1986.

Bold comparison that surely overstates the “foreign” element in absolutism. Concentrates mostly on the success and failure of noble revolt, yet chiefly after 1650.

BOHEMIAN AND AUSTRIAN LANDS

The nobility of the Habsburg hereditary lands in Bohemia and Austria has always attracted the special attention of historians, because of the importance of the Bohemian noble rebellion for the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War (see Evans 1979). As shown in MacHardy 1992 and MacHardy 2003 (cited under Religious History), the nationalist interpretations of the conflicts have been abandoned in favor of a close study of state formation and patronage in these regions. Above all, through Duindam 2003 (cited under Court Studies) and Bůžek 2009, it has become clear that the Habsburgs were especially directive in creating a loyal and Catholic court elite in Vienna, Prague, and Innsbruck, by advancing the elite admission in the *Herrenstand* and diminishing the knights in the *Ritterstand* (see also Evans 1979 and Evans and Thomas 1991, the latter cited under Central and Eastern Europe). Increasingly, in cooperation with the Habsburg dynasty, an Austro-Bohemian transregional nobility came into being, even if the Bohemian rebellion divided many families.

Barker, Thomas M. *Army, Aristocracy, Monarchy: Essays on War, Society and Government in Austria, 1618–1780*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1982.

Takes a position in the Military Revolution debate. In Austria the army was even more necessary for a ruler confronted with rebellious lords. Military entrepreneurs often aspired to status at court, while the highest commands still remained in the hands of magnates.

Bůžek, Václav. *Ferdinand von Tirol zwischen Prag und Innsbruck: Der Adel aus den böhmischen Ländern auf dem Weg zu den Höfen der ersten Habsburger*. Translated by Thomas Pimisdorfer. Vienna: Böhlau, 2009.

Translation of a 2006 study in Czech. The author shows how the Habsburg governor aimed to have rulership accepted and acknowledged by local elites, not only through patronage, but also through extensive use of ceremonial, propaganda, and ritual.

Evans, Robert J. *The Making of the Habsburg Monarchy 1550–1700*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1979.

A now classic study, showing the rivalry between the Habsburg and local noble dynasties, especially in Bohemia and the Austrian lands.

MacHardy, Karin. “The Rise of Absolutism and Noble Rebellion in Early Modern Habsburg Austria, 1570–1620.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 34 (1992): 311–427.

Next to the monograph of 2003 cited under Religious History, this article shows how absolutism is a weak theoretical framework for analyzing Habsburg Austria. Returning to the themes of Evans 1979, MacHardy argues for the analysis of patronage and networks.

Neuber, Wolfgang. “Adeliges Landleben in Österreich und die Literatur im 16. und im 17. Jahrhundert.” In *Adel im Wandel: Politik, Kultur, Konfession 1500–1700*. Edited by Herbert Knittler, Gottfried Stangler, and Renate Zedlinger, 543–553. Vienna: Niederösterreichische Landesausstellung, 1990.

Cultural interpretation of rural life and its representation.

Winkelbauer, Thomas. *Ständefreiheit und Fürstenmacht: Länder und Untertanen des Hauses Habsburg im konfessionellen Zeitalter, 1522–1699*. 2 vols. Vienna: Überreuter, 2003.

By a leading scholar on the Austrian and Bohemian aristocracy, giving special attention to the religious context among the governing and social elites.

HUNGARIAN LANDS

The Greater Kingdom of Hungary hosted many nobles as well, up to 4.5 percent of the population (somewhere between Spain and Poland). In a classic study, Pach 1972 demonstrated that since the 15th century, nobles dominated society through their monopoly of agriculture and production. Although elite formation worked along the lines of other European countries, with magnates holding heritable titles and a group of lesser nobles, the 16th-century threefold partition of the kingdom hinders comparison; nevertheless, see Schimert 2007. Noble strife and factionalism caused the Hungarian magnate John Szapolyai to revolt against the Habsburg Ferdinand, who adopted similar strategies as in Bohemia and Austria in creating hereditary titles and extensive patronage links in the Hungarian lands under Ottoman pressure. Szelényi 2004 puts the importance of enserfment and nobility in these regions in perspective, pointing to the urban dynamics in Hungarian society.

Pach, Zsigmond Pál. “Sixteenth-Century Hungary: Commercial Activity and Market Production by the Nobles.” In *Economy and Society in Early Modern Europe: Essays from the Annales*. Edited by Peter Burke, 113–133. New York: Harper & Row, 1972.

Classic overview of the monopolies of nobles, mostly wealthy peasants engaging in commerce and the export of agricultural products from their lands, enabled to do so by ever-growing enserfment.

Schimert, Peter. “The Hungarian Nobility in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries.” In *The European Nobilities in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries. Vol. 2: Northern, Central and Eastern Europe*. Edited by Hamish Scott, 144–182. London: Longman, 2007.

This is the best historiographical overview with which to start research, sketching the outlook, numbers, and political history of the Hungarian nobility.

Szelényi, Balazs. “The Dynamics of Urban Development: Towns in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century Hungary.” *American Historical Review* 109.2 (2004): 360–386.

By questioning feudalization and enserfment in Hungarian society, this article provides valuable information on the situation of the nobility in the three parts of the Greater Kingdom of Hungary.

SWISS CONFEDERATION

In the Swiss Confederation, the aristocracy was both patrician and noble (see Grimm 1981), while noble titles became more important in the political machinery of the Confederation, despite its original anti-aristocratic undertone, a paradox discussed in Head 1997.

Grimm, Paul Eugen. *Die Anfänge der Bunder Aristokratie im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert*. Zürich: Juris, 1981.

Shows how some patrician families obtained important hereditary rights.

Head, Randolph. “Lordship, Authority, and Administration: the Exercise of Dominion in the *Gemeine Herrschaften* of the Swiss Confederation, 1417–1600.” *Central European History* 30 (1997): 489–512.

Shows the conundrum of an anti-aristocratic Confederation that acted as overlord over the *Gemeine Herrschaften* (condominions) at their disposal.

POLAND AND LITHUANIA

Poland, and later the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, formed a “Republic of Nobles” par excellence, in which between 8 and 10 percent of the population belonged to the *Szlachta*, the noble estate endowed with tax exemption and many other (and ever-increasing) hereditary legal and political privileges (Fedorowicz, et al. 1982). Dworzaczek 1977 argued that this noble society witnessed a remarkable social mobility and openness toward ennoblement as a result of the elective monarchy and the *Sejm* (a parliament exclusively comprising noble members); in practice, titles were often at odds with living standards. Sysyn 1981 and, above all, Frost 2007 warn for present-centric or nationalist narratives when studying the fate of the many types of nobility in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

Dworzaczek, Włodzimierz. “La mobilité sociale de la noblesse polonaise aux XVIe-XVIII siècles.” *Acta Polonia Historica* 36 (1977): 147–161.

Applies Stone’s model to an exceptionally open Polish elite.

Fedorowicz, J. K., Maria Bogucka, and Henryk Somsonowicz, eds. *A Republic of Nobles: Studies in Polish History to 1864*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1982.

Offers bibliographies for further reading, and a good glossary. Stresses the importance of serfdom and international developments for understanding a society dominated by nobles.

Frost, Robert. “The Nobility of Poland-Lithuania, 1569–1795.” In *The European Nobilities in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*. Vol. 2, *Northern, Central and Eastern Europe*. Edited by Hamish Scott, 11–40. London: Longman, 2007.

Probably the best introduction to grasp the fate of the numerous nobilities in the commonwealth.

Sysyn, Frank. “The Problem of Nobilities in the Ukrainian Past: The Polish Period, 1569–1648.” In *Rethinking Ukrainian History*. Edited by Ivan Rudnytsky, 29–102. Edmonton: University of Alberta, 1981.

Shows how national boundaries influence the traditional account of the Polish nobility.

RUSSIA

Elite formation in Russia followed quite different paths, with no legal privileges or fiscal exemptions for aristocrats during the late Middle Ages. Still, already in Muscovy and Kievan Russia some princely families were related to the ruling dynasty of Ivan IV. Originally, there was no distinctive word for nobility, while the denomination *boyar* related to those aristocrats appointed to his council by the tsar (see Kollmann 1987 and Kollmann 1999). Hence, for the 17th century, the concept of “service nobility” makes comparisons possible with wider European developments—see Crummey 1983 and Madariaga 2005.

Crummey, Robert O. *Aristocrats and Servitors: The Boyar Élite in Russia, 1613–1689*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton

University Press, 1983.

Collective biography of the few families that dominated Russia while remaining servitors of its ruler.

Kollmann, Nancy Shields. *Kinship and Politics: The Making of the Muscovite Political System, 1345–1547*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987.

Applies the abovementioned trend of patronage and court studies to the *boyar* service elite of Muscovy.

Kollmann, Nancy Shields. *By Honor Bound: State and Society in Early Modern Russia*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999.

Shows the political struggle—framed in terms of honor and precedence—between the formerly independent Princes and the *boyar* service elite in the later Muscovite state.

Madariaga, Isabel de. “The Russian Nobility in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries.” In *The European Nobilities in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*. Vol. 2, *Northern, Central and Eastern Europe*. Edited by Hamish Scott, 223–273. London: Longman, 2005.

Best introductory chapter, with excellent bibliography.

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