

Abstracts

Towards Revision and Synthesis Recent Trends in the Historiography of the Nobility in the Medieval Low Countries

Arie van Steensel

The history of the nobility in the medieval Low Countries has attracted considerable attention, both scholarly and popular. This contribution provides a chronological and thematic overview of the historical research of the past three decades on the topic. It argues that the historiography of the nobility in the central Middle Ages needs revision, in particular in the light of international historiographical debates. The current picture of the late-medieval nobility is detailed, yet fragmented due to the predominantly regional approaches, and would benefit greatly from comparative and trans-regional approaches. Finally, this article argues that a synthesis of the history of the nobility would be highly relevant for the purpose of broader, interdisciplinary research on the political, socio-economical and cultural history of the Low Countries in the Middle Ages.

Early Modern European Nobilities and the State Recasting the Classic View

Jeroen Duindam

Traditionally, nobilities of the early modern period were largely seen as remnants of earlier ages, as agents of a medieval past who were gradually pushed aside by activist 'new monarchs' centralising their states. This persuasive perspective has changed profoundly over the last four decades. Indisputably, states became stronger, but more often than not nobles were in control of the state apparatus, serving the monarch as well as themselves. However, it is evident that the noble order itself changed considerably during this period in terms of membership, legitimation, and social style. The changeability and flexibility of the noble elite emerge as a constant, contrasting with the equally remarkable tenacity of some elements in the repertoire of noble 'distinction'.

The Nobility During the Dutch Revolt and the Dutch Republic Old and New Perspectives

Conrad Gietman

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries historians have consistently emphasized the profoundly bourgeois character of both the Dutch Revolt and the ensuing Dutch Republic. Consequently, there has been little interest in academic circles for the nobility. Only during the 1980s, when research into the elites of Holland (the so-called regents) became more widespread, some interest was shown into the existence of the early modern Dutch nobility. This initial research into the nobility focused mainly on social and economic factors; in the 1990s cultural and social spheres of influence also received attention. Recently, various new perspectives have been applied. Historians have, for instance, discovered the representation of aristocratic power and the existence of patronage. The most ambitious approach yet has been the introduction of anthropological concepts of honour and the theoretical framework of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu.

Aristocratic Distinction and Remaining on Top Thirty Years of Research into the Dutch Nobility in the Long Nineteenth Century

Yme Kuiper

Research into the nobility in the Netherlands is a fairly recent phenomenon. From the late 1970s onwards historians and sociologists actively involved in elite history started to occupy themselves with the nobility, patricians and aristocratic lifestyle. Initially this happened under the influence of British historians such as L. Stone, F.M.L. Thompson and D. Cannadine. Currently, more attention is paid to the German and French historiography on the relationship between the nobility and the bourgeoisie, as in the work of H. Reif, E. Conze and M. de Saint Martin. The article focuses on the state of the art of Dutch noble studies on the long nineteenth century (1780-1914). The author argues for a more international comparative approach, centring on five main questions: 1. how did noble families succeed in maintaining their position?; 2. how did the nobility relate itself to the Dutch monarchy?; 3. which forms of distinction did nobles use in order to distinguish themselves from the bourgeoisie?; 4. did the loss of noble, political privileges also mean a loss of wealth and prestige?; 5. until when did land and a country lifestyle remain important for the noble identity of the family?

Educating Johan Willem Friso of Nassau-Dietz (1687-1711) Huguenot Tutorship at the Court of the Frisian Stadtholders

Michaël Green

This article examines Huguenot involvement in the educational practices at the Stadtholder's court of Friesland, based on the examples of the tutors of Johan Willem Friso of Nassau-Dietz. At the time, a princely upbringing at the Stadtholder's court served two purposes: preparing the

future commander of the military forces and preparing the future head of the local court. Throughout the seventeenth century, Huguenot refugees in the United Provinces were often hired as tutors for noble and bourgeois families, and several of them were employed by the Orange-Nassau family. This article will determine why exactly Huguenots were employed. In general, the educational process will be analysed, partly on the basis of the personal correspondence of the Stadtholder's family.

Art Collecting, Patronage and Status Display The Art Collection of Hendrik van Slingelandt (1702-1759) as a Means of Social Distinction

Martin van den Broeke

Hendrik van Slingelandt (1702-1759) was mayor of The Hague. He was well known as a genealogist and art collector. He used his genealogical and art collections to strengthen his noble status as baron of the Holy Roman Empire and descendant of an old Dutch noble family. Van Slingelandt organised that the painter Mattheus Verheyden (1700-1777) made family portraits; views of locations which played a role in the family history were made by the artist Aart Schouman (1710-1792). These drawings were considered works of art but were also a source of information about the family history. Connecting research into collections of the elite and the way these elites tried to distinguish themselves, makes clear how these collections served as a means of social distinction. Art collecting, patronage and class consciousness were interwoven. Through their collections the elite emphasised its status as well as a love for art.

Discussion: *Towards a New Template for Dutch History* by Brusse and Mijnhardt

Yme Kuiper and Vincent Sleebe, Jan de Vries, Piet van Cruyningen, Paul Brusse and Wijnand Mijnhardt

In 2011, two Dutch historians, Paul Brusse and Wijnand Mijnhardt, published a small book on the Dutch history of the last centuries, entitled *Towards a New Template for Dutch History. De-urbanization and the Balance Between City and Countryside* (Zwolle, 2011). Based upon research in the province of Zeeland in the south west of the Netherlands, they concluded that the Dutch history of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries should be viewed in light of a shift in balance from towns to countryside, thus opposing the traditional sequence of rural, pre-industrial and industrialized societies. Since their book also addresses the role of gentry and patricians, the editorial board of *Virtus* decided to invite several historians to comment upon Brusse's and Mijnhardt's thesis. Kuiper and Sleebe investigated the demographical and social foundations of the newly proposed paradigm, as well the position of old and new elites and their estates. De Vries focused on the concept of de-urbanization; Van Cruyningen, finally, looked at the role of rich farmers and a disappearing gentry in the changing social relations in the Zeeland countryside.

