Notes on the contents

This issue looks at the nobility in Finland from the Middle Ages to the late 19th century. This privileged group that for centuries controlled the majority of the resources of the society is an important subject of research due to its economic and social influence.

The research of hereditary upper class, or the secular nobility, has aroused the interest of many historians in the 21st century. The research has focused in particular in the individual, families, gender, questions of identity and cultural and social research themes articulated through class.

A similar direction can be seen in international historical research of the nobility. One of the reasons for this is that many sources dealing with the nobility have been preserved to our days. These sources allow us to look at, for example, the history of everyday life in centuries from which little material is available. The sources produced by the nobility also enable the research of other social groups varying from bankers to servants.

The articles of this theme issue provide examples of the various ways in which the history of the nobility is currently researched. On one hand, research reveals continuums and traditions that defined the actions of the nobility. On the other, it reminds us of various interruptions and changes that took place, and of the nobility's need to react to contemporary pressures for change.

Tuula Hockman's article takes a look at the factors that enabled the mediaeval family of Tott to rise to economic and political power. She shows that the success of the Totts was a consequence of good marriages, wealth strategies and commerce. Hockman points out that the members of the family practiced systematic and skilful cooperation.

While business has often been seen as alien to the nobility, in practice, the situation was different. In their article, Juha-Matti Granqvist and Sofia Gustafsson discuss the opportunities of an 18th century nobleman to participate in business life. Their object of study is Admiral Carl Tersmeden, whose ledger and journal entries tell a tale about balancing between the worlds of nobility and bourgeoisie.

Ilkka Nummela examines the economic conditions of the Finnish nobility in the period of autonomy. Using estate inventory records as his sources, he studies the changes that took place in the average wealth of the nobility. In his analysis, Nummela draws attention to an important theme: economic inequality within a class.

In their article, Henrika Tandefelt and Maria Vainio-Kurtakko explore the following question: what was it like to be a nobleman in early 19th century Finland? The writers analyse two different noblemen, Viktor Magnus von Born and Albert Edelfelt, along with their life and career choices. Tandefelt and Vainio-Kurtakko remind us that while belonging to the nobility created a certain framework for all members of the class, individuals were able to make very different choices within this framework.

In addition to referee-reviewed articles, the theme issue features two extensive review articles. In the first one, Johanna Ilmakunnas, Marko Hakanen, Anu Lahtinen and Alex Snellman analyse the historical research of the nobility in Finland and take a broad historiographic look on the subject. In her article, Ulla Koskinen focuses on analysing the representation of 16th century Finnish nobility in general accounts of Finnish history. Furthermore, many of the works reviewed in the book review section touch on the history of the nobility in Finland and elsewhere.

Janne Haikari – Marko Hakanen – Anu Lahtinen – Alex Snellman

Historiallisen Aikakauskirjan uudet kirjoitusohjeet ovat osoitteessa
http://agricola.utu.fi/ohjeet kirjoittajille/