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0521836182 - Nobles and Nation in Central Europe: Free Imperial Knights in the Age of Revolution, 1750-1850

William D. Godsey

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## NOBLES AND NATION IN CENTRAL EUROPE

This is a study of Central European nobles in revolution. As one of Germany's richest, most insular and most autonomous nobilities, the Free Imperial Knights in Electoral Mainz represented the early modern noble ideal of pure bloodlines and cosmopolitan loyalties in the old society of orders. But this world came to an end with the outbreak of the revolutionary wars in 1792. Quite apart from the social, economic, and political dislocations and loss, the era from 1789 to 1815 also meant a cultural reorientation for the nobility. William D. Godsey, Jr. here explores how nobles in post-revolutionary Germany gradually abandoned their old self-understanding and assimilated with the new cultural 'nation' while aristocrats in the Hapsburg Empire, which had taken in many émigrés from Mainz, moved instead towards supranationalism. This is a major contribution to debates about the relationship between identity, cultural nationalism, supranationalism, and religion in Germany and the Hapsburg Empire.

WILLIAM D. GODSEY, JR. is Tenured Research Fellow of the Historical Commission at the Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna. He is the author of *Aristocratic Redoubt: The Austro-Hungarian Foreign Office on the Eve of the First World War* (1999).

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*Free Imperial Knights in the Age of Revolution, 1750–1850*

BY

WILLIAM D. GODSEY, JR.

*Historical Commission, Austrian Academy of Sciences*



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*For Baron Niklas Schrenck von Notzing*

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## *Preface*

The idea for this book on the Free Imperial Knights in Electoral Mainz goes back to a discussion with Ralph Melville in the late winter of 1996 at Mainz's Institute for European History, from whose windows the great Romanesque cathedral of St. Martin is visible. Later the same year, the idea was refined into a concrete proposal for a monograph and became part of a research project entitled, "Continuity or Revolutionary Break? Élités in Transition from the Old Regime to Modernity (1750–1850)," lavishly financed for more than a dozen fellows from 1996/97 to 2000 by the Institute for European History in Mainz with the support of the Gerda Henkel Foundation. I am grateful to the Institute and its director, Heinz Duchhardt, for the nearly four years of funding that enabled me to research a topic whose sources are so scattered throughout Central Europe. Of my former colleagues in Mainz, I should especially like to mention Frans Willem Lantink, who usually had the sharpest, and often the wittiest, perspective on Mainz and its cathedral canons and I am indebted to him for his perspective and suggestions.

A generous Lise-Meitner-Fellowship provided by the *Fonds zur Förderung der wissenschaftlichen Forschung* in Vienna enabled me to complete the first draft of the study. I am particularly obliged to Hannes Stekl of the Institute for Economic and Social History at the University of Vienna for his friendly support and hospitality during this stage of the work. Of great importance as well was the encouragement and assistance of Grete Walter-Klingenstein of the Historical Commission of the Austrian Academy of Sciences.

For permission to consult private archives, I should like to acknowledge Count Franz Eugen Kesselstatt (Kesselstatt Papers in Trier), Prince Franz Ulrich Kinsky (Kinsky Papers in the Palais Kinsky at Vienna), and Prince Alexander Schönburg-Hartenstein (Archiv des hochadeligen Sternkreuzordens at Vienna). This study would not have been possible without the obliging help of archival staffs in more than twenty institutions in three countries (Germany, Austria, and the Czech Republic). I have many good memories of times spent looking through the Dalberg correspondence in



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Brno and Worms, the archives of Cantons Middle Rhine and Lower Rhine in Darmstadt and Koblenz respectively, and the Sickingen papers in Linz. The locations of these collections are perhaps the best evidence of how much changed in Central Europe between 1792 and 1815. Especially large chunks of time were passed in the Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv in Vienna, and I should like to extend my appreciation to its director, Leopold Auer, also as a representative of his many archival colleagues elsewhere who were so hospitable.

I would further like to thank Tim Blanning, Chris Clark, Alon Confino, Hans-Peter Hye, Frans Willem Lantink, and especially James B. Collins, for having read the manuscript, in some cases more than once, and for their valuable commentary. None of them of course is responsible for whatever problems may remain and all have improved the manuscript. For other much appreciated help, I am indebted to Kurt Andermann, Lenard Berlanstein, Vaclav Bis, Jana Bisová, Harm Klueting, Arnout Mertens, Munro Price, Julian Swann, Arnold Suppan, and Christoph Tepperberg. I am very grateful to Michael Watson at Cambridge University Press for his always friendly and professional assistance.

Finally, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to Baron Niklas Schrenck von Notzing, whose superb library has once again furnished, this time for dozens of families of Free Imperial Knights, essential genealogical and biographical information that facilitated, even made possible, meaningful archival work. More than ten years ago, he made me aware of the modernity of the concept of *Uradel*, which is still used with all seriousness today not only by descendants of the nobility, but also by historians and many others. At that time we did not know where it came from or its background, nor could I have known that the term would be central to a study of noble culture and the origins of nationalism at that time not yet conceived. It is to him that this book is dedicated.

Poschiavo in Graubünden

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## *Abbreviations*

Abt. = Abteilung

Ah. = Allerhöchst(e)(es)

AVA = Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv

B.a.Sch. = Freiherr vom Stein, *Briefe und amtliche Schriften*

BStA = Bayerisches Staatsarchiv

Den.rec. = Denegata recentiora

DOZA = Deutschordenszentralarchiv

f. = folio

HHStA = Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv

HStA = Hauptstaatsarchiv

KA = Kriegsarchiv

LHA = Landeshauptarchiv

MEA = Mainzer Erzkanzlerarchiv

MZA = Moravský zemský archiv

N.P. = Fürst Metternich, *Nachgelassene Papiere*

Ob.Reg. = Obere Registratur

OKäA = Oberstkämmereramnt

OMeA = Obersthofmeisteramt

OÖLA = Oberösterreichisches Landesarchiv

præs. = præsentatum

r. = Rubrik

RHK = Reichshofkanzlei

RHR = Reichshofrat

Ri = Ritter

SOA = Státní oblastní archiv

StadtA = Stadtarchiv

StadtB = Stadtbibliothek

StK = Staatskanzlei

SÚA = Státní ústřední archiv