

Elites and Leisure

Arenas of Encounter in Europe

1815-1914

Encounters
of European Elites
in the 19th Century



CALL FOR PAPERS

The history of the nobility in Europe is well researched. For most European states comprehensive works inform on the 'rise and fall' of the historical formations which dominated the continent well into the 20th century and in some respects play important roles until today. However, the question of how the European nobilities succeeded or failed in retaining their social position often obscured the many manifestations of border-transcending sociability amongst old and new elites. These encounters and interactions were in most countries still dominated by the old aristocracy but – in more or less successful ways – also integrated new intellectual, technical or artistic elites or even saw the latter in the driver's seat.

This workshop will look at one specific category of places where old and new elites were linked, arenas where these groups not only met and interacted but also where the rules and conventions for new elites were forged. The envisaged places of encounter and (self)representation, in a wider sense, belong to the world of leisure. Thus, the workshop is less interested in the 'conspicuous consumption' of what Thorstein Veblen famously referred to as the leisure class, but in concrete places of encounter and the organizations and associations which established and ran these spaces and events.

All of this offers, as we believe, telling insights departing from the assumption that the political role of elites and their informal activities cannot be separated. Moreover, we believe that (trans)formation elites through encounter and sociability can only adequately be understood in their transnational dimension. This is why we would like to focus in particular on meeting places with a European (or even global) relevance. We do not draw on a definite list but the places in question should embody a transnational character, have a certain perdurability, and function, at least partially, as ideological meeting points.

Examples would be horse racing events like *Royal Ascot*, *Union Club Horse Races* (Berlin), *the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe* at Longchamp, the Belgian horse races in the Hippodromes of Wellington and Groenendael, sailing events like *Cowes Week* or *Kiel Week* or the *Tour de France*. One could also think of early car races like the *Grand Prix de l'Automobile Club de France* in Le Mans or the *Gordon Bennett Cup*. In the world of culture art festivals such as the *Bayreuth festival* devoted to the works of Richard Wagner or – in a completely different vein – the *Proms* in London would spring to mind as does the *Bloomsbury group* or the *Darmstadt Artists' Colony*. Meeting places with a much wider focus, such as World Exhibitions with their many

subcategories of meeting places or established, exclusive places as royal courts, undergoing a deep transformation in this period, could generally also form potential points of departure.

Most of these arenas of encounter and exchange were connected to prestigious and sometimes even transnational structures. These clubs and associations often ensured the durability of these events and fostered their supra-regional relevance. Their source materials (correspondence and diaries of key figures, membership lists and records, press coverage and contemporary pamphlets,...) provide access for historians.

In this framework, we invite papers on elitist spaces of encounter connected to the world of leisure. Papers should address the emergence of new (composite) forms of elites and/or their transformation. Relevant issues are the openness towards the new worlds of technology, industry, sports, and modernism in the arts but also the role of political and cultural ideologies, openly expressed or as undercurrents as they relate to the sociability and changing composition of elites. These processes are by and large scholarly situated in the second half of the 19th century. But as the transformations that we aim to study often transcend the time-frame papers looking at meeting places before or (briefly) after this period will also be considered.

Papers should strive to answer the question in how far composite elites were realized in the analyzed arenas and in how far they existed as a goal. Their authors should also ask the question in how far these arenas functioned as a concourse transcending existing social and ideological borders – and at the same time creating new borders (e.g. restrictions of access). Another pertinent perspective could be the perception/representation/framing of such events – with a view to elites – in the media or in literature.

Moreover, it should be asked if some of the places in question could be described as hubs of European elites, overshadowing other places or forming certain hierarchies (e.g. the role of Belgium as a particularly transnational meeting place of European elite before 1914). Eventually, the workshop should discuss questions of continuity, e.g. in how far the elite formations in question may be seen as predecessors of what later would be referred to as Jet-set, or, more specifically, preceding the rise of the transnational elites, which one would associate with transnational structures that arose later on in the 20th century (e.g. the League of Nations, the UN or the EC/EU).



This workshop is organized by KADOC-KU Leuven and MoSa-KU Leuven in the framework of the research-network Encounters of Elites in 19th Century Europe (<http://www.eece.eu>).

A publication of the workshops proceedings is planned.

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Andrea Ciampani (Università LUMSA di Roma, chairman)
 Jan De Maeyer (KADOC and MoSa-KU Leuven)
 Martin Kohlrausch (MoSa-KU Leuven)
 Thomas Kroll (Historisches Institut
 Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena)
 Giovanni Orsina (LUISS-Guido Carli Roma)
 Bogdan Szlachta (Uniwersytet Jagielloński, Kraków)
 Rita Tolomeo ("La Sapienza" Università degli studi di Roma)
 Peter Heyrman (KADOC-KU Leuven)

VENUE

Leuven, 28-30 May 2017 (KADOC/Irish College)

TIMING

- Call for Papers: February 2016
- Deadline for proposal submission: 1 June 2016
- Proposal notification: 1 September 2016
- Deadline for Papers: 1 May 2017
- Workshop: 28-30 May 2017

CONTACT

For any questions and to submit your proposal, please contact:

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PROPOSALS

Proposals should be submitted as PDF documents and contain

- a clear title of the envisaged paper
- a summary (max. 500 words), outlining the paper's goals, methodology and source materials
- CVs of author(s), with contact information, position and institutional affiliation.

Proposals will be selected based on topic relevance, innovativeness and the degree to which the proposal answers the call.

Proposals should be attached and emailed to the workshop organizers (peter.heyрман@kadoc.kuleuven.be) no later than 1 June 2016.

You should receive a confirmation of proposal receipt within 48 hours. Notification of acceptance will occur no later than 1 September 2016.