

Les 16th Century France: Glossary

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A

Abbot

[Cleric](#) in charge of a monastery.

Almoner

One of the king's chaplains, responsible for distributing charitable funds.

Annate

A portion of the first year's revenue from a benefice paid to Rome in exchange for the bulls of office for a newly appointed bishop. These payments, per the Concordat of Bologna, originally helped to finance the Crusades.

Anobli

Any family that had "recently" been ennobled, typically after 1400.

Apanage

A land providing an income to and governed by a younger child in the royal family (apanagiste). All 16th century apanages revert to the crown in case of extinction of the male line. These are inalienable lands; they cannot be sold, mortgaged, used as a dowry. The apanagiste lacks regalian rights, e.g. to coin money, pass laws, which are retained by the king.

Archbishop

An archbishop is the highest-ranking [cleric](#) responsible for a region called an archbishopric or archdiocese.

Archer

A soldier armed with a pistol. Historically, they used bows but the anachronistic name was kept despite the update in weapons. As a member of a lance fournie, the archer is mounted on horseback, wears a cuirasse, carries a sword, spear and pistols.

Arquebuse

Firearm with a length of about one meter using a matchlock in the early part of 16th century or a flintlock mechanism by the end of the century.

Arrêt

A judgment issued by a royal court.

B

Bailli

A bailli is the royal officer in Northern France in charge of collecting taxes, administration and justice in a district (similar to a county) called a bailliage. A sénéchal performs a similar function in the South of France in a district called a sénéchausée.

Bans

An announcement made at church three weeks in a row before an impending wedding. It solicits information from the congregation about any potential impediment to the wedding, e.g. a preexisting spouse.

Benefice

A benefice is a right; given by the Church to a cleric, to receive compensation in return for (supposedly) providing a spiritual function, e.g. care for souls, celebration of mass. The compensation is the income, irrevocably attached to the Church property and not inherited by the family of the benefice holder. Loosely, the term benefice refers to the property itself.

Bishop

A bishop is the chief priest for a diocese, though not required to reside therein.

Book of Hours

This volume typically contains psalms, prayers, excerpts from the Bible, a liturgical calendar that lists the feast days of the Church year, the Hours of the Virgin (eight prayers to the Virgin Mary), the Hours of the Cross, Hours of the Holy Spirit and the Office for the Dead (said though the night before a burial).

Breviary

A breviary defines the requirements for celebrating mass throughout a liturgical year by listing the lessons, psalms etc. for the feasts of the and for the seasons of the year eg Easter.

Bull

Loosely, a letter written by the Pope to which a lead bulla (Latin for seal), inscribed with the name of the pontiff, is attached by a cord. Each bull is known by the first few Latin words therein. Bulls are not official in France until registered at Parlement. These letters may be constitutions (decrees sent to all the faithful), encyclicals (guidance sent to bishops), decretals (replies to questions) etc.

C

Cabinet

One of the king's private rooms: used for small meetings, dressing, storing clothes and the location of one's chaise percée.

Cahier

See: États Généraux .

Canon Law

The law of the Church, Corpus Juris Canonici, and the basis for civil laws on marriage, usury, benefices and crimes against Catholicism. Its' own basis is

a series of pronouncements by Pope John XXII, Clement V, Boniface VIII and Gregory IX among others.

Cardinal

The College of Cardinals is a the group high clerics in the Catholic Church whose members elect a new Pope in Rome after the death of the incumbent. However, elections often happened before all the cardinals arrived in Rome.

Cartel

An insulted party can issue a written challenge to a duel as the result of receiving a démenti.

Cas Royal

A legal case involving the king's person, his royal domain or a number of crimes such as lese-majesté, forgery of the royal seal, ennoblement, usury, legitimization. Local courts forward these cases to the royal courts in the bailli or sénéchausée. They may later be appealed to Parlement.

Chambre Ardente

See: tournelle.

Chambre des Comptes

This court is responsible for collection of revenues from royal domain and handles legislation about the king's finances.

Chambre des Enquêtes

TBD

Chambre des Requêtes

TBD

Chasse à Courre

Hunt on horseback for boar, deer, etc.

Château

During the Middle Ages, nobles built châteaux-forts ie walled enclaves, primarily for protection, not living comfort. Contrast: palace.

Chevalier

A mounted knight who is part of the heavy cavalry.

Children of France

The Children of France are the children of a French king. They do not use the rank of prince or princess.

A son of the king is known by his title eg Monsieur le Duc d'Alençon not Prince François.

A daughter uses the qualifier 'de France' e.g. Marguerite de France not Princess Marguerite.

Contrast: prince.

See: Madame, Monsieur.

Civil Register

Historically, the state kept no records of the population. The Catholic clergy kept records of baptisms, marriage banns, marriages, and deaths primarily to record fees paid for these services. Eventually, these records were used used in civil litigation to establish the heir to a disputed inheritance, a problematic practice for those of other faiths.

Cleric

Very loosely, a cleric is a member of the clergy, the complete ecclesiastical community, including the regular and secular clergies in the Catholic Church. The regular clergy lives according to designated rules or vows (regula), typically away from society (e.g. inside cloisters) and include many disparate types of orders, e.g. Hieronimites (monks), Jesuits (priests, i.e. authorized to conduct religious services). Protestant sects usually have

no regular clergy. A secular cleric, e.g. parish priest or bishop, lives outside cloisters, supposedly amidst his congregation. See: absenteeism.

Committimus, Letter of

Those holding letters of committimus have the right to bypass lower courts and have their case heard by Parlement.

Companie d'Ordonnance

The fundamental heavy armored cavalry unit in the French army, consisting of 50 to 100 lances fournies.

Confession of Augsburg

The Confession of Augsburg is a Lutheran Confession of Faith (statement of faith and definition of Lutheran doctrine) written by German reformer Philip Melanchthon in 1530 with Martin Luther's approval.

Confraternity

A confraternity is an association, officially sanctioned by the Church, of people sharing a common interest, e.g. the same trade. . They perform charitable works and celebrate the patron saint's day, member marriages and religious ceremonies. A confraternity of penitents is a congregation with statutes prescribing various penitential works (eg fast, the use of a discipline, wearing a hair shirt) or good works (eg work with the poor or bury the dead). The members of each confraternity wear a habit (hooded robe with a corded belt of a specific color eg white, blue, black etc.

Constable

Head of the French army, a lifetime appointment: the Constable cannot be dismissed.

Coucher

The ceremonial bedding of the king that is attended by many courtiers. The ceremony was not fully developed by the 16th century, yet the King's bedtime was nevertheless a relatively public event.

Counter Reform

Response of the Catholic Church to the loss of members to Protestantism.

Council

The king and senior nobles each had councils of advisors. Membership was by invitation only.

Cujus Regio, Ejus Religio

Catholicism and Lutheranism coexist in 16th century Germany using the principle of *cujus regio, ejus religio*. Other Protestant sects are forbidden. The region is composed of numerous small principalities and each prince chooses a religion and his subjects must be of this chosen religion. The two religions do not coexist in the same place. Contrast: religious toleration.

D

Dauphin

The Dauphin is eldest son, ie heir apparent, of the French king. The rank derives from his traditionally being accorded the Dauphiné, but this was not done for the sons of Catherine de Medici. So, it is not a title per se.

Deacon

The deacon acts as an assistant to priests, but is not a priest himself: he can give the sacrament to the congregation but cannot bless it. He might visit the sick and arrange for burials.

Decime

A gift from the clergy to the king of approximately a tenth of its annual income.

Dîme

A tithe, a tenth of the value of agricultural production paid to the Catholic Church.

Démenti

A démenti is the accusation of dishonorable behavior, e.g. telling a lie, that provides a pretext for a duel.

Dérogeance

The custom by which a noble engaging in a demeaning activity loses his noble privileges.

Divine Right of Kings

A belief that a king holds his power directly from God.

Dominican Order

The popular name for the Order of Friars Preachers in charge of the Inquisition. Domingo de Guzman founded this order of mendicant friars between 1215 and 1221.

Droits Féodaux

Feudal rights, concerning a fief, that assure the grantor of the fief, i.e. the suzerain (overlord) the fealty and homage of his vassals.

E

Écu (de Soleil)

The écu was the only gold coin minted in France with a value of approximately three livres per écu.

Edict

A letter from the king containing legislation on a specific topic.

États Généraux

The États Généraux is an assembly of several hundred delegates, theoretically representing the entire spectrum of the king's subject but

actually selected from the upper crust of the three groups (états): Catholic clergy, nobility and bourgeoisie. There is no standardized way to elect deputies from region to region. It is not a legislative body but deputies can submit petitions (cahiers) detailing problems, proposing legislative solutions, approving new taxes or selecting a regent for a minor king. Meetings are held on an irregular basis and only the king can convene a meeting.

Excommunication

A form of censure that prevents a member of the congregation from participating in church services and society, in particular, the person may not receive communion. A public ecclesiastic tribunal pronounces the excommunication but has jurisdiction only over its own subjects. Thus, only the Pope can excommunicate a king.

F

Faubourg

Suburb, i.e. a location outside a city's ramparts.

Fief

A fief is generally a piece of land but can be a position eg judgeship or a privilege, it is not always a piece of land. A suzerain grants a fief to a vassal. The recipient owes homage, fealty (faithfulness) and possibly some (military) service or fee to the granting feudal overlord. A fief is held a foi et hommage: the basis for the grant is faith and homage. The recipient of the fief, ie the vassal, has the right to the appellation Seigneur. There is an entire feudal pyramid: one can simultaneously be vassal to an overlord and also suzerain to one's own vassals. This type of feudal relationship was anachronistic by the 16th century: fealty was granted de facto to the person distributing rewards (positions, money etc) to the underling.

But, this system helps understand complicated relationships between 16th “countries” eg the Duc de Lorraine owned the Duché de Bar, for which he owned allegiance to the French King, thus we get a glimpse of the pecking order of the time. The Lorraine holdings of the duc were outside the scope of authority the French King, while Bar was in scope. Tuscany infeudated to Spain at the time, thus any anti-hispanic policy of the Tuscans could lead to invasion by the much more powerful Spain.

Franks

The Germanic tribe that conquered Gaul (a land of Celts) around the 5th century around the time of the fall of the Roman Empire.

G

Gabelle

A tax on salt, the only known preservative for foods.

Gallican

A supporter of local French control of the Catholic Church, above papal control from Rome.

Gendarme

See: compagnie d'ordonnance.

Gens d'Armes

A group of gendarmes.

Gentilhomme

A gentleman.

Good Works

Feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, visiting those in prison, burying the dead, giving shelter to the homeless, visiting the sick and clothing the naked qualify as good works in the Catholic church.

Governor

A Governor is the king's highest local representative in a specific province. These leaders are always nobles responsible for the defense of the province (war is his *raison d'être*) and other duties depending on the specific wording in the letters patent granting him the office. Governors convene and control provincial parlements, and are the liaison between the king and the local nobles. They may develop a large local clientèle - a power base for recruiting soldiers - by providing employment for the locals, an education used for his clients' children

Grand Falconer

This officer of the king's household oversees the royal hawking birds and staff.

Grand Louvetier

The officer of the king's household that is in charge of the animals and staff for hunting wolves, not because they make good meals but because they kill the animals that do.

Grand Master (of France)

The Grand Master of the king's household is responsible for furnishing and maintaining the royal residences.

Grand Provost

The top cop and bouncer at court. He stopped duels and fights and insured that courtiers paid their creditors. There are actually two positions: Grand Prévôt de l'Hôtel du Roi and Grand Prévôt de France.

Grand Veneur (de France)

This officer of the king's household is in charge of maintaining the hunting grounds, keeping them stocked, supervising the immense staff required, caring for the dogs, horses and personnel for the *chasse à courre*.

Grands (Les)

Loosely speaking, the highest aristocrats in France.

Gregorian Calendar

Julius Caesar created the Julian calendar that was used in most of Europe through the Renaissance, with a simple correction for the fact that a year is not exactly 365 days long. However, a large error had accumulated by the time of the Renaissance. The Gregorian calendar was invented in 1582 by Pope Gregory XIII to provide a more precise correction using the leap year concept. It was adopted at different times in different countries due to its association with the Catholic Church.

H

Halberd

A battle-axe on an 8 ft. long pole. The Swiss guards were famed for carrying them.

Hieronimite

A monastic order taking its name from St Jerome and using the rules of St Augustine. King Philip II founded a Hieronimite monastery at the palace of El Escorial where the kings of Spain are buried.

Hôtel De Ville

Town hall, the seat of a city's government.

Hôtel du Roi

The royal household including courtiers, guards and domestics. Many nobles are actually part of this staff, e.g. Gentlemen of the Bedchamber.

Hôtel

A well-to-do family's townhouse, e.g. in Paris, typically in the shape of a square enclosing a central courtyard.

Hours of the Day

Church bells tell people the approximate hour of the day based on the rising and setting sun. The day begins in the middle of the night with Matins rung around midnight, Lauds at 3 am, Prime - the first hour of the waking day - at 6 am (daybreak), Tierce at 9 am, Sext at noon, None at 3 pm, Vespers at 6 pm and Compline at 8 pm.

Hundred Years War

The Hundred Years war began in 1328 when the throne went from Charles IV, the last Capétien King to a distant relative Philip of Valois rather than to Charles' sister Queen Isabelle, the Queen Mother of England. The English kings spent until 1453 trying unsuccessfully to claim Isabelle's supposed inheritance.

I J & K

Inalienability

The concept that the king cannot sell or give away part of the kingdom.

Index of Forbidden Books

The Catholic Church forbids its members to own or read the books on the list called the Index (of Forbidden Books). Numerous groups each published their own lists of forbidden books during the 16th century.

Inquisition

The organization with the the Catholic Church responsible for the elimination of heresy and using death and torture as means to achieve the desired result.

Jesuits

Ignatius Loyola founded the Society of Jesus in 1534. The society, approved by the Pope in 1540, played a significant role in the Counter-Reform by its three goals: teaching, service to the nobility and missionary work abroad.

L

Lance Fournie

A lance fournée is a support group for each [gendarme](#) (noble on horseback) and includes two or three mounted archers and one or two non-combatant pages or grooms.

Landsknecht

German mercenary infantryman typically armed with an [arquebuse](#).

Legate

An ambassador sent by the Pope on special missions: they are temporary, not permanent representatives.

Lèse-majesté

A crime de lèse-majesté is punishable by death because it is an affront to the dignity of a ruler similar to an act of treason. It is a concept derived from Roman Law.

Lettre de Marque

Sovereigns grant a lettre de marque to right a previous wrong. Typically, it licenses a private citizen, a privateer (ie a legally sanctioned pirate) to arm a ship to attack merchant vessels (not naval vessels) from a named country. For example, a Dutch merchant ship receives a license to seize Spanish cargo in retaliation for the Spanish taking of a Dutch ship. The issuing nation receives some percentage of the booty as compensation for the license.

Lettre de Cachet

This is a private order (unrecorded at any parlement) for the addressee from the king. It is folded, sealed (closed) with the king's personal seal (cachet) and countersigned by the king's Secretary. It can be read only by

breaking the seal, whereas communications for public consumption (e.g. an edict) have seals hanging from ribbons. Contrast: [Lettre Patente](#).

Lettre de Jussion

The king can issue a lettre de jussion after receiving a remonstrance (from Parliament over an edict they do not wish to register). The letter commands Parlement to immediately register the edict.

Lettre Patente

A letter countersigned by the King's Secretary, openly addressed to the parlements, for registration by these courts.

Contrast: Lettre de Cachet.

Lever

The ceremonial wakening of the king, attended by many courtiers. The ceremony was not as highly ritualized ceremony as it would become under Louis XIV.

Lieutenant General

A high-ranking military officer often used in lieu of a Constable or to help a province Governor. The nature of the job depends on the exact wording in the lettres patentes used to create the office.

Lit de Justice

A personal appearance of the king before any parlement to force registration of an edict.

Livre (Tournois)

A fictional unit of money, used only for accounting: there are no coins minted in this system. The livre tournois system (livre, sol, denier) is non-decimal and like the old British pound system: there are 12 deniers per sol, and 20 sols per livre.

M

Madame

A sister or daughter of the king is addressed as Madame, whether she is married or not. In modern use, this term is only for a married woman.

Madame is not a title *qv.*

Maitre des Requêtes

Judicial officer sent to the provinces to gather information on or supervise the finances, courts, receive complaints and requests and resolve questions on the *taille*. They are under the aegis of the Chancellor and the royal council.

Maîtresse en Titre

An officially recognized mistress of the king, typically given a title and place at court, not a one night stand or brief fling.

Malcontent

A pejorative term for religious moderates from either faith that shared two key beliefs. First, from a personal perspective, each Malcontent felt that the crown had insufficiently recognized (paid) his services while the foreigners, i.e. Italians and members of the houses of Guise and Lorraine) became rich. Second, from a political perspective, they want to maintain the prestige of the crown while curtailing absolutism in favor of power sharing between the king, the nobles and the États Généraux. Malcontents espoused this political goal to varying degrees: Navarre's adherence to this belief lessens over time, as he gets closer to the throne, he becomes more of an absolutist.

Midi

Roughly, the southern half of France, south of a line drawn from Bordeaux to Lyon. Culturally, it is quite different from northern France.

Mignon

Originally, a term of moderate affection, a synonym for darling: e.g. a darling son or sibling. It came to refer to the curled, ruffled, powdered and perfumed court retainers of Henri III i.e. dandies. This was at a time when personal hygiene was nearly non-existent, so, the term mignon was highly pejorative and tantamount to an accusation of homosexuality.

Minim

A mendicant monastic order founded on principles of great humility and abstinence.

Monarchomach

A pejorative term for a (typically) Protestant writer or pamphleteer who supports the existence of the monarchy but believes the États Généraux (which is an elitist rather than democratic assembly) should have preeminence over the King. Thus, the États can depose a tyrant for the good of the state. Francois Hotman, Philippe Duplessis-Mornay and Theodore de Bèze are the best known of these. The Protestants subsidized them all.

Monsieur

The eldest brother of the king.

Musket

An early firearm: a matchlock musket with a length well in excess of a meter. The musket is fired from the ground (not horseback) with the barrel resting on a forked stick to hold it up.

N

Noble

A legal status that confers certain privileges.

Noblesse d'Épée

The ancient warrior class of French nobles. The men wear short tunics and capes that permit drawing their swords.

Noblesse de Race

The ancient hereditary class of nobles.

Noblesse de Robe

The new magistrate class within the nobility ie those recently ennobled.

[Robin](#) is a nickname for a member of this class and refers to the long floor-length gowns typical of magistrates.

Nuncio

Nuncios are ambassadors from Rome that permanently reside in a foreign country.

O

Office

A permanent government job (not a location) purchased from the crown in exchange for a regular salary and services, e.g. legal or financial.

Ordonnance

A form of legislation, issued by the king, on a large number of topics, contrast: edict.

Oratory

An oratory is a place, other than a parish church, for prayer and order.

P & Q

Parlement

A parlement is an assembly concerned with appeals litigation not legislation for a specific region of France. When spelled with a capital letter P, this refers to the Paris Parlement that has jurisdiction over nearly a third of France.

Peer

A peerage is a dignity (not a title) attached to a specific fief, e.g. a duchy. The king creates a new peer by issuing lettres patentes for registration in Parlement: this court receives the new peer when he makes a solemn oath to defend the crown. The oath is not required of most non-peer nobles. Peers have the right to sit in Parlement and to be judged by this highest court of the land. In 1576, the dignity of first peer of France was automatically attached to the first Prince of the Blood to require his oath of allegiance at Parlement. Contrast: noble.

Forneron's [Les Ducs de Guise](#), v 1 , p 45 gives the dates that duchies were promoted to peerages as

<<En résumant ce qu'en donnent Pasquier (Recherches de la France, édition de 1619, p. 146), Saint-Simon (Mémoires, t. I, p. 79 et 271), le Père ANSELME (Histoire généalogique) et Lalanne (Dictionnaire de l'histoire de France), on peut rétablir dans l'ordre suivant les duchés-pairies :

1507 Nemours. 1573 Rethélois.

1510 Longueville. 1573 Mayenne.

1514 Vendôme. 1575 Saint-Fargeau.

1527 Guise. 1581 Joyeuse.

1536 Etampes. 1581 Epernon.

1538 Nevers (Clèves). 1581 Piney-Luxembourg.

1538 Montpensier. 1581 Elboeuf.

1547 Aumale. 1581 Retz.

1552 Montmorency. 1587 Halluin.

1566 Château-Thierry. 1588 Montbazou.

1567 Gravelle. 1588 Rohan.

1569 Mercœur. 1588 Soubise.

1572 Uzès. 1589 Ventadour.

Les duchés-pairies érigés de la mort de Henri III à celle de Mazarin sont ceux de :

Vendôme, la Trémouille, Sully, Roanmois, Beaufort, Luynes, Lesdiguières, Brissac, Chaulnes, Richelieu, Puylaurens, Saint-Simon, la Rochefoucauld, la Force, Valentinois, Rohan-Ghabot, Mazarin.

Ensuite vient ce que Saint-Simon a appelé « cette étrange fournée des quatorze en 1663 », qui comprenait les duchés-pairies de Verneuil (petit-fils de Henri IV), Oenèvres (Estrées), Grammont, la Meilleraye, Rethel (Mazarin), Villeroy, Mortumart, Poix (Créquy), Saint-Aignan, Bandan (Foix), la Roche-Guyon (Liancourt), Tresmes, Ay-en-Noailles), Cambout (Coislin). >>

Pignerole

Capital of the province of Turin, in Italy.

Politique

A pejorative term for a person opposed to both Protestant and Catholic extremism, believing in the need for peace and a stable and strong government above the demands of religion. This term was in use during the reign of Charles IX. Power should be the king's and not shared, whereas a Malcontent would limit absolutism and seek personal financial gain. François de Montmorency and Catherine de Medici are examples of Politiques.

Precedence

Nobles appear at royal ceremonies according to rules of seniority eg clerics rank before laypeople and peers (always noble) rank above non-peer nobles. Numerous exceptions occur and the king handles each on a case-

by-case basis. Princes of the Blood were first given precedence around mid 16th century and the practice was formalized in 1576.

Similarly, representatives of countries appear in a certain order at foreign courts - theoretically ambassadors of major countries before minor countries.

Precedence of both kinds was constantly in flux and a major source of headaches at court.

Prince of the Blood

A Prince of the Blood is a male with a (typically) distant claim to the French throne belonging to a cadet branch of the royal family. This rank grants him the privilege of a seat on the royal council. The first legitimate (non bastard) Prince of the Blood has the closest claim to the throne, outside of the immediate royal family. Peers take an oath to uphold the crown, something not required of a non-peer Prince of the Blood. See: peer.

Prince

This rank is rarely used in France except for sovereign eg the Prince of Orange or for lower ranking members of the royal family lacking the title of duke, e.g. the Prince de Condé.

Contrast: children of France.

Quarante Cinq

Henri III's praetorian guards.

R

Recorded Customs

Each French province or city has its own legal system and set of pragmatic customary laws and dating back as far as to the days of the Franks, Romans and Celts. These codes of law were often not recorded (written down) until the late 16th century.

Regalian Rights

Rights enjoyed by a sovereign. This concept is derived from Roman Law since a king is the “emperor” in his kingdom. These rights include the right to administer high justice, coin money, and collect taxes and act in a diplomatic capacity.

Regency

A regent temporarily administers the fief of a minor or absent noble. There is no requirement that a regent be a Prince of the Blood or a male. Louise de Savoie was regent during Francois I’s captivity in Spain in the late 1520s when the Princes of the Blood - the Bourbons - were disgraced due to the treason of the Constable of Bourbon. Catherine de Medici acted for her husband Henri II during the 1550s while he fought outside France. The last regency (prior to the 16th century) for a minor king was during the 15th century reign of Charles VIII: his elder sister Anne held the position.

Reître

A German mounted mercenary armed with several pistols.

Relic

An object (e.g. piece of clothing or part of the body) used to remember a saint. These are housed in magnificent precious metal and jewel-encrusted reliquaries. These often have prominent places in religious processions.

Remonstrance

Legislation is not official until registered at Parlement. The latter issues a remonstrance when it refuses to enact the new law. A remonstrance is a written complaint critiquing a royal edict in attempt to force the King to modify it. The king can counter the remonstrance with a lettre de jussion to force registration of the edict as is.

Rente

A rente is interest paid to the purchaser of the 16th century equivalent of a municipal bond. For example, a banker pays a lump sum to the crown.

Subsequent yearly municipal revenues provide a steady income to the buyer for the duration of the loan. This allows the king to borrow at interest (a workaround for the Church prohibition on usury) since: a city, not the king, pays the interest. Municipal revenues allowing the king to secure loans at reasonable rates back payments.

Robin

A nickname for a member of the [noblesse de robe](#).

Roman Law

Roman civil laws were compiled in the Codex Theodosianus (the Theodosian Code) and Emperor Justinian's Corpus Iuris Civilis, the Code of Civil Law.

The Pope banned the study of Roman (civil) law in Paris in 1219, so only canon law is taught in the capital. The centers for erudition in Roman law were thus all in the south of France.

Royal Domain

The royal domain was the set of lands personally owned by the King as a feudal overlord: he is seigneur of the lands in the Royal Domain where his vassals pay him homage and fealty. Originally, revenues from the royal domain (ordinary income of the crown) pay for the king's personal expenses while taxes (extraordinary income) pay for army provisions, ammunition and mercenaries. Royal lands are inalienable: if used as security for a loan, the king has the unwritten right to buy the lands back. In the 16th century, if given as an apanage to a relative, the lands revert to the king, if the relative's line becomes extinct. Provosts, baillis, and sénéchaux administer the royal domain at various levels of fiefs.

Royal Styles & Titles

In 15th century, most European kings and the Holy Roman Emperor were styled Highness. In the 16th century, King Henry VIII of England used the style of Majesty and Emperor Charles V used the style Imperial Majesty. Francois I used the styles Sa Majesté (to refer to the king in the third person) and Votre Majesté (when speaking directly to the king).

The word majesté is arbitrarily feminine in the French language, and in no way reflects the sex or sexual preference of the monarch.

The French king is the first son of the Church (because Clovis was the first European King to convert to Christianity) and called the Most Christian king ie Sa Majesté Très Chrétienne. As such, the French King has precedence over the Spanish King, if they were ever to appear together and the French ambassador should have precedence over his Spanish counterpart. But, [precedence](#) was a highly fluid concept.

The French King also has a plethora of lesser titles including numerous ecclesiastic titles eg abbot of various monasteries.

S Sacre

The French equivalent to a coronation, however, it has significant religious aspects so the sacre is closer to the consecration of a priest than to an English coronation ceremony.

Salic Law

A set of laws, written in Latin, compiled in the 6th century by the Salian Franks, the Germanic tribe that conquered Gaul around the 5th century. Daughters and members of female lines cannot inherit lands according to Article 62 of the law. The intent is to prevent the crown from passing out of the country, in the case where the daughter marries a foreigner. The

Hundred Years War between England and France began when Isabella of France, a daughter of King Phillip IV of France, who was married to the King of England pressed her claim to her dead brother's throne over a distant male relative.

Seigneur (abbreviated Sr)

Seigneur is not a title: anyone in possession of fief has the right to this appellation. See: [fief](#).

Seize

Aldermen from the Parisian districts famous for their rebellion against Henri III.

Sovereign

The highest suzerain, i.e. an independent prince enjoying regalian rights over his fief(s).

Spain

Spain did not exist in the modern sense of the word. Iberia was divided into multiple kingdoms eg Aragon and Castile belonged to Philip II but Portugal did not. Navarre was a kingdom divided - most of its territory had been conquered by Philip's antecedents, yet, he was not nominally monarch thereof. The Albrets held the title yet not most of the land.

Suzerain

Any feudal overlord. See: [fief](#).

Synod

An assembly of church representatives, convoked in accordance with church law.

T to Z

Taille

A tax theoretically levied temporarily during wars; it was de facto permanent during the civil wars. It is levied on commoners in the north and in Dauphiné and on the owners of non-noble lands elsewhere.

Te Deum (Laudamus)

A religious chant sung to celebrate joyous occasions such as the sacre of the King or for a great military victory.

Title

Duke, Count, Baron etc. are examples of titles. There is always a piece of land, ie a fief, in conjunction with a title. For example, the Viscount of XYZ owns the parcel of land (fief) called XYZ. Only nobles can have titles. Thus, nobility and a fief are pre-conditions for having a title and a fief-less noble has no title.

Ultramontanist

A French Catholic who supports the authority of the Pope, temporal and secular, over that of the French king or local clergy. This term is not a synonym for someone who opposes other religions eg Protestantism.

Vassal

See: [fief](#).

Contrast: [suzerain](#).

Vidâme

A vidâme is the layperson who manages the temporal estates of a high cleric.

Vulgate Bible

St. Jerome compiled the Vulgate Bible around the year 400 AD. The Catholic Church adopted this bible at the Council of Trent in 1546 aware of the errors in translation from the original Hebrew and Greek into Latin. A new translation was promulgated in the 1590s.

Courts, Courts and More Courts

There are lots and lots of courts: the 16th century French like to litigate. There are nearly 400 courts within 30 km of the center of Paris. This is an expensive process requiring courtrooms, gallows, jailers, bailiffs to administer the court, sergeants to serve arrest warrants, and a procureur fiscal to collect fines. In large districts, all of these people would have assistants.

First, there the local seigneur (which sometimes is the king) paid to administer local justice in his domain. Seigneur is not a title - anyone in possession of fief has the right to this appellation.

There are three sets of seigniorial courts: high, middle and low depending on the severity of the crime or fine. The size of the penalties for each crime determined which court handles the case (high justice covered large fines, capital crimes etc.) Exactly how this is administered varied from region to region: large regions might have one judge might serve in all three capacities, or there might be three distinct judges. Secondly, there are separate courts for ecclesiastical matters. The Constable controls a third set of courts for military matters. Cas royaux somehow concern the king; crimes of counterfeiting or crimes of lese-majeste, or issues relevant apanages. These cases are taken out of local court hands and referred immediately to the fourth type of court, the royal court. A whole battery of courts renders royal justice at different levels. The most important of which is Parlement that competes for jurisdiction with most of the other royal courts:

- Simple matters that concern commoners only are handled by the local royal provost.
- The next level up is the bailliage court, presided by the bailli, who acts as an appeal judge. Matters concerning nobles are directly referred to this level.
- The next level up is the Presidial court. Henri II created sixty Presidials to relieve the burden of the parlements.

- The highest royal court is the Paris Parlement that handles litigation but also has a budding legislative function.
- The Cour des Comptes manages the royal domain and audits royal treasury receipt. It can veto excessive gifts by the king.
- The Cour des Aides adjudicates on tax matters, e.g. the payment of the taille and the gabelle to the king.
- The Cour des Monnaies handles cases concerning debased coinage or counterfeiting the royal seal.

English civil wars that began in 1399 when Lancastrian Henry IV overthrew his cousin King Richard II. The wars lasted until the defeat of Yorkist Richard III in 1485 by Henry VII.