



Warrior Pursuits (The Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science)

Brian Sandberg

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This cultural history of civil warfare in early seventeenth-century France examines how warrior nobles' practices of violence shaped provincial society and the royal state.

Warrior Pursuits analyzes in detail how provincial nobles engaged in revolt and civil warfare in southern France between 1598 and 1635. The southern French provinces of Guyenne and Languedoc suffered almost continual religious strife and civil conflict in this period, providing an excellent case for investigating the dynamics of early modern civil violence. Brian Sandberg's extensive archival research on noble families in these provinces reveals that violence continued to be a way of life for many French nobles, challenging previous scholarship that depicts a progressive "civilizing" of noble culture. He argues that southern French nobles engaged in warrior pursuits -- social and cultural practices of violence designed to raise personal military forces and to wage civil warfare in order to advance various political and religious goals. Close relationships between the profession of arms, the bonds of nobility, and the culture of revolt allowed nobles to regard their violent performances as "heroic gestures" and "beautiful warrior acts." Warrior nobles represented the key organizers of civil warfare in the early seventeenth century, orchestrating all aspects of the conduct of civil warfare -- from recruitment to combat -- according to their own understandings of their warrior pursuits.

Building on the work of Arlette Jouanna and other historians of the nobility, Sandberg provides new perspectives on noble culture, state development, and civil warfare in early modern France. French historians and scholars of the Reformation and the European Wars of Religion will find Warrior Pursuits engaging and insightful.

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