

THE NOBLE AND ROYAL TITLE IN AMERICAN CULTURE

AMERICANS AND TITLES

Americans are indecisive about royal and noble titles. While pretending to disdain titles and the titled, the fact is that Americans love them and are fascinated and captivated by them. For example, we have “king-size” beds (and queen-size, too). The “king-size” tube of toothpaste is the biggest one--usually. We have the prom queen, the movie queen, the porn queen, the king of the rodeo, the king of comedy. A friendly and helping man is “a real prince,” a sweet-tempered woman is “a lady.” There’s Duke Ellington, Counts Basie and Chocula, the King of Swing and the Queen of Disco, Elvis the King of Rock, Michael Jackson the King of Pop, and we even have among us a mononymic rock star...Prince. When movie actress Grace Kelly became Princess Grace of Monaco, America swooned (Even if the rest of European monarchy and nobility didn’t. Grace Kelley was considered a parvenu and somewhat vulgar because of her movie career, but she was never “vulgar,” and embodied her name of Grace very well indeed.), and Grace’s popularity soared. Yes, and millions of Americans arose at 2:00 AM one morning to watch the Prince of Wales marry Lady Diana--and they watch, now through the tabloids, with equal wonder at that marriage’s difficulties. Let a foreign nobleman, noblewoman, or monarch come to America for a visit, and Americans will flock to each and all, especially if the titled visitor has a suave manner and an interesting accent--and, of course, that great entitler, money. So, naturally, Americans aren’t interested in titles. Certainly not. Oh no. After all, doesn’t the American Constitution prohibit Americans from receiving, using, or even

acknowledging titles? The answer is--no, it doesn't. What Article I: Section 9, Paragraph 8 of the Constitution says is this:

No Title of Nobility shall be granted by the United States: And no Person holding any Office of Profit or Trust under them, shall, without the Consent of the Congress, accept of any present, Emolument, Office, or Title, of any kind whatever, from any King, Prince, or foreign State.

The primary purpose of the Paragraph was to prevent the United States from creating a system of nobility, at least in the British style of the detested King George III. The secondary purpose was to prevent foreign royalty from co-opting an official of the United States government and to prevent royalty from using the promise of a gift of a noble title as a bribe to obtain preferment from a government official, at least not without the full knowledge and consent of Congress, the assumption being that the "Consent of the Congress" would not be forthcoming. This is the same section of the Constitution which prevents the President (or his wife), members of Congress, and Justices of the Supreme Court from personally accepting gifts from foreign governments, all such gifts being received by the President on behalf of the U.S. Government. Many such gifts are displayed at the Smithsonian. Note that the Constitution does not hold titles in contempt, nor does it reject them as worthless--just the opposite, the Constitution equates the noble title with any other valuable gift, that is, a title is seen as valuable property which can be given and used and which has such significant intrinsic worth that it has the power of currency and, therefore, cannot be received without an act of Congress.

The second part of the Constitutional prohibition is less rigid. That is, the Section does not apply to private citizens, nor does it prevent a private citizen from accepting or holding a royal or noble title, because the phrase “Office of Profit or Trust” in this Section is interpreted to refer to elected and appointed high federal officials and members of the armed services who, during their tenure of service, are prevented from accepting noble or royal honors. Once these persons are again private citizens, they are free to be honored, as, for example, the “honorary” knighthoods granted by Queen Elizabeth II to Former Presidents Reagan and Bush and to retired/retiring Generals Norman Schwarzkopf and Colin Powell. These honorees probably can not use the title “Sir,” but, because they are members of Orders of Chivalry, i.e., they are knights, they can (and undoubtedly will) use the postnominals of the Orders they hold. Even though the Constitution prevented the development of the traditional European honors model, the United States certainly has developed an honors system that in many ways resembles the establishment of nobility. For example, for its military, there is the Purple Heart, the Congressional Medal of Honor, and many others. Private citizens can receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the annual awards given to performers at the Kennedy Center, and others. The key difference seems to be that, unlike European honors, American honors carry postnominals (single letter abbreviations after the name which denote the honor conferred), not prenominals which are titles before the name. Americans don’t seem to mind postnominals such as “Ph.D.” (Doctor of Philosophy) or “K.C.” (Knight Commander) or “Bart.” (more properly, “Bt.,” Baronet). It’s those prenominals that they balk at (“Sir So-and-So” or “Dr. Whatshisname” or “Lord Whosis”).

The point is that while the Constitution prohibits the giving of a title of nobility by the American Government (Congress, the President, or the Judicial) or the receipt of the same “from any King, Prince, or foreign State” by high public officials during their terms of office, or by military personnel while enlisted, private American citizens, themselves, are free to accept and use titles of any kind whatever, noble or otherwise.

THE USE OF TITLES IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY

Citizens of the United States like to think of the U.S.A. as classless and untitled, cherishing these egalitarian concepts as marks of the unique American opportunity for upward mobility in class and power. In everyday practice, however, Americans are very much aware of how to create and use titles to establish class and wield power. A primary example of the importance of a title as a mark of power and status is the title “Ms.” (rhymes with fizz), created some years ago by feminists for use in the place of “Miss” or “Mrs,” both of which titles show a woman’s relationship to a man. The title “Ms.” is egalitarian in that it shows gender only, exactly as does the modern “Mr.” (L.G. Pine, in *The Story of Titles*, discusses the original and modern uses of “Mister,” a variation of “Master.” Interestingly, like “Ms.,” most royal and noble titles are themselves egalitarian in that they show gender only--for example, a Queen is not necessarily the wife of a King, a Baroness is not necessarily the wife of a Baron.) The general acceptance and use of the once artificial “Ms.” show that Americans clearly understand and acknowledge the value and importance of the title as an empowering device.

THE FONS HONORUM OF NOBLE AND ROYAL TITLES

A legitimate noble title always has a legitimate royal source, called a *fons honorum* (Latin: “source of honor,” the “fountainhead” from which the legitimate title is issued). What is important to know (and what Americans have to be firmly instructed in and regularly reminded about) is that noble titles do not come from governments, but from heads of royal families, called a “royal house.” Thus, the royal house is a dynastic family holding hereditary royal title and prerogatives usually based upon modern or ancient geographical rulership; the royal dynastic family need not necessarily currently head a government or rule a nation. A government is not, of itself, royal, nor can a government declare itself royal--it is persons who are royal or noble, and it is the head of that government who is royal. Thus, a government as an entity is not and cannot be a *fons* for royal or noble titles (Which makes the American Constitution’s prohibition perfectly proper.). In fact, the universal practice is that a government which prefers a royal head of state doesn’t create it, but goes, instead, to one of the royal houses (in Europe or elsewhere) to find a monarch to reign. Observe the actions of the British Parliament when, in 1701, it became apparent that King William and Queen Anne were not going to leave any heirs in line for the throne. Parliament wanted, of course, a Protestant sovereign, but even the British Parliament had not the authority to create royalty, nor could the King and Queen declare an heir. Therefore, Parliament, understanding that governments do not beget royalty, began to carefully scrutinize Europe’s royals, searching for a suitable candidate to come to the throne after King William’s death. Having analyzed genealogies and religious proclivities, Parliament settled on the Electress of Hanover, who had the virtue of being the granddaughter of James I. However,

the Electress died before the British throne became available, so the office passed to her son, George Ludwig who became King George I of England.

Of course, some countries in the Middle East have seen commoners elevate themselves to royal status, as, for example, Reza Pahlavi (1878-1944) a commoner and an army officer who seized power in Iran, declared himself Shah, and then--like Napoleon--crowned himself. His son, Muhammad Reza Pahlavi (1919-1980) inherited the throne of Iran, but was deposed in 1979. There are other examples of colonels cum kings. Middle Eastern countries, being Muslim, don't go to the Christian royal houses of Europe for their rulers. They don't have to, there being sufficient Muslim royal houses. Even if there weren't, the fact is that tanks and militia breed a potent throne and that a quantity of gunpowder, liberally applied, can make any blood blue. Any student of medieval European history knows the royal power of gunpowder.

The terms "exile" and "abdication" also sometimes present problems for those who are unfamiliar with them. "Exile" occurs when a monarch leaves his or her country because of invasion, uprising, or because a democratic referendum establishes a republic. Merely because the monarch has relocated does not mean that he or she ceases to be royal (since royalty is vested in a person, not a government), nor does the person lose royal prerogatives, including the right and power to confer titles. A government can be taken away from a monarch, but royal prerogatives cannot be "taken away," not by vote, not by revolution, not by invasion. Today legitimate royal courts in exile exist, headed by monarchs who have fled uprisings, invasions, or referenda, but who have not relinquished their royal rights, as for example, the royal

court of Albania under King Zog (1895-1961), who, in 1939, was forced to flee Albania to avoid capture by Mussolini's invading Fascist army. After WWII, Albania became a communist satellite, and Zog remained in exile. Zog (the name means "Bird") never relinquished the throne of Albania, and when Zog died, his son, the Crown Prince, assumed the throne as King Leka of Albania, who reigned in exile and still a king. Many exiled Albanians considered King Leka their king--and /Burke's/ lists him as royal. King Leka died 30 November, 2011. His son now holds the exiled throne as titular King of the Albanians. Other examples of exiled royal courts could include those of King Michael of Romania (b. 1921), Humbert II (1904-1983), the King of Italy who was exiled by a 1946 national referendum that established Italy as a republic, and King Constantine of the Hellenes.

However, while royal prerogatives cannot be taken away, they can be relinquished. The relinquishing of royalty is called "abdication." When a monarch "abdicates," he or she gives up all royal rights and prerogatives in favor of the person next in line to the throne. After abdication, the ex-king (the only correct use of the term) cannot reclaim royal rights and cannot grant titles of nobility or confer knighthood. An important point established by international agreement is that abdication is not--and never has been--a "destruction" of the throne or a "dissolution" of the monarchy, but a passing on of the prerogatives of the throne to the person next in line of succession. Sometimes the ex-king receives titles of nobility from the new monarch, and sometimes the ex-king simply becomes a commoner and lives quietly in obscurity, as, for example, Alexander I, Tsar of Russia from 1801-1825, who gave up his throne and assumed the name and life of of a commoner, Feodore

Kuzmich. (However, there is much mystery to this whole affair. See the Chapter on Alexander I in Stanley B.-R. Poole's book, *Royal Mysteries and Pretenders*.)

Other royal courts, reigning and non-reigning, exist in many countries, including some residing in the United States. Some of these courts are remnants of the Western Holy Roman Empire, which certainly did not disappear in 1806 as historians often claim, and others are part of the Eastern (Byzantine) Holy Roman Empire founded by Constantine the Great, several hundred years before the Western Holy Roman Empire. As Friedrich Heer says in his 1967 classic work, *The Holy Roman Empire*, "Francis II was called upon [by Napoleon] to divest himself of the imperial crown, in terms so threatening that he had no choice but to comply. He did so on 6 August 1806, and at the same time dissolved the 'Roman Empire,' an act for which he had no legal justification." When the Western Holy Roman Emperor "dissolved" the empire, the Byzantine Porphyrogenitus, as the ranking Byzantine (Eastern) potentate, considered himself as the successor, as did the Byzantine royalty and nobility, who eventually came together as the government-in-exile of the (Eastern) Holy Roman Empire.

The present Byzantine Emperor, Caesar Dominus Pius Flavius Johannes VII Daniel IV Alexander Augustus, came to the office as any emperor--he was born to it, of a distinguished royal lineage that ruled in the ancient Byzantine empire, which at one time even included parts of Italy. The Byzantine kingdoms and principalities tended to stay together, even though the royalty of the "German" Holy Roman Empire renounced rights and titles with

abandon, so that only their monarchist followers were left hoping for restoration. Meanwhile, the Byzantines went right on with the idea of a non-political government “in exile,” which is where they are today. Many monarchists are focused on the Western (read German) royalty, not the Eastern, and so many are intent upon the idea of a political restoration that the idea of a non-political, in-exile restoration that maintains and nurtures the ideals of royalty, nobility, and chivalry never occurs to them. And besides, the Byzantines learned long ago to just go about their business among themselves, and not stir up the hornet’s nest of Germany. Certain imperial princes, especially those in exile in South America, denied any “dissolution” of the ancient empire by forming a “League of Princes of the Holy Roman Empire,” just as Napoleon’s imperial prince supporters had formed the Confederation of the Rhine. The Confederation vanished with Napoleon, but the League still exists today as the Byzantine Holy Roman Empire, in exile, headed by His Imperial and Apostolic Royal Majesty, The Emperor CÊsar Dominus Pius Flavius Johannes VII Daniel IV Alexander Augustus who has not relinquished his rights or powers.

A royal dynasty can be created by force of arms, by grant, and by creation. Some princely families (in America and elsewhere) have received letters patent from the Porphyrogenitors (“born to the purple”), Princes of the Blood Royal of the Byzantine Holy Roman Emperor who have, in modern times as in ancient, the authority to grant or create hereditary princes who then head ancient non-political principalities of the Holy Roman Empire. In creating a prince by grant, Porphyrogenitors assign a principality to the prince, and the prince then becomes the fons for his nobles and knights. The assignment of a

non-political principality is an ancient practice, and, on occasion, the monarch further grants the principality in perpetuity and the prince is no longer a vassal prince, but is elevated to the rank of a sovereign prince, i.e., a monarch in his own right.

The non-political, or titular, principality is one which once existed, but which is currently extinct, having been in past centuries absorbed by force of arms into another country. However, if the Holy Roman Emperor never relinquished rights to the principality (and he rarely did), it is still considered by the “Holy Roman Empire-in-Exile” as within the provenance of the Blood Royal Princes, but “non-political.” That is, the geographical boundary of the principality no longer exists, but the title to the principality continues as legitimate and is considered quite real not only by the League of Princes of the Holy Roman Empire-in-Exile, but also by many other European royalty and nobility.

Even some monasteries of the Holy Roman Empire were created principalities, and the abbot made a prince. The Roman Catholic Church also followed that practice, as, for example, the Abbey of San Luigi which was recognized by the Church and France as a principality on August 25, 1883 at Tunisia and Tripolitania, and the abbot, Fr. Henrice Pancomez was selected as the abbey’s first Prince-Abbot. Also, the Pope, from time to time, creates a titular bishop who holds the authority of a See that has ceased to geographically exist. This practice was derived from the Holy Roman Emperor’s practice of creating hereditary princes of ancient but extinct principalities.

Americans usually think of a prince merely as the son of a king or queen (deriving the idea from the world's most visible monarchy, the British), and Americans, again, have to be instructed and reminded that a prince can be a monarch in his own right--as, for example, Prince Rainier of Monaco who holds the title /Serene/, denoting his status as a sovereign head of a royal house, with all the rights and privileges of the sovereign, including the right to create nobles and knights for his royal houses. Unlike Rainier who reigns as well as rules, there are Americans who are themselves hereditary (and even sovereign) princes of non-reigning royal houses. A non-reigning royal house, just as a reigning one, may legitimately have a full complement of nobility and one or more Orders of Chivalry, and the head of the house, regnant or not, retains full powers to create legitimate nobles and knights as needed or desired.

Of course, Americans know about such titles as king, queen, prince, duke, marquis, earl (and its European equivalent, the count; for Americans, the most famous count is the fictional vampire Dracula, an identity which causes some problems for genuine counts.), viscount, and baron, but they think that these titles are strictly British and are issued only by the British Crown. But royalty and nobility are not only not "strictly British," they are not even primarily British--Britain's modern monarchy itself has a Continental source (Germany), and there are many other royal houses in Europe, Latin America--and even in the United States. Concerning the royal houses in the United States, Americans are usually astonished to discover that one can be a solidly patriotic American and yet still belong to a royal house or hold a legitimate hereditary title from

the fons of a royal house. Perhaps Americans have the idea that the term democracy excludes the term royalty, but a hereditary and non-regnant royal house can exist very nicely within a democracy. For example, Italy is a democracy, yet an Italian can be a hereditary count. Likewise, America as a democracy can--and does--easily host hereditary American counts (and barons and marquis, and dukes) of princely royal houses headed by hereditary and legitimately titled princes who happen to hold American citizenship.

The idea that titles come from royal houses, not governments, is a very difficult thing for Americans to grasp--so difficult, in fact, that modern monarchs seldom attempt to explain the fact to Americans, whose heads are filled with fairy tale kingdoms and visions of cinematic "royalty." All those King Arthur movies have taken a toll on the real thing. Furthermore, Americans have complicated their ideas of royalty by readily granting royal status to cinema actors. The term "movie queen" is well known. Clark Gable was called "the king," and John Wayne was called "the duke." In music, Elvis Presley was "the king." The American press, otherwise so efficient in glorifying movie actors, has a particularly difficult time grasping the idea of noble titles as emanating from a royal house, not a government, so much so that royal houses in America simply avoid the press whenever possible. For example, the press can't seem to understand the fact that a prince is not necessarily the son of a king, but can also be a sovereign monarch in his own right with rulership over a geographic or hereditary principality.

The identity of royalty and government is so firmly fixed in the American mind that it takes a considerable amount of education and reeducation to help Americans to see that a royal house is not political or governmental, but familial--a family. Hence, Americans (because they have no experience in these matters) have to be instructed and regularly reminded that monarchies--including the royal house of England--come from Europe and Eastern Europe and exist there (or elsewhere in exile) to this very day. There are only some dozen or so "governing" European monarchs remaining today--which is odd, considering that until the early 1900s, the most common form of government in the world was the monarchy, a system that had survived from Old Testament days. But monarchies have fallen on hard times, and even surviving monarchies are, at most, constitutional. Americans are usually surprised to learn that such countries as Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and Belgium have monarchies.

Americans sometimes have some difficulty understanding the non-reigning, non-political, non-governmental royal house. In the case of noble and royal titles, Americans are not at all stupid, just unfamiliar with certain usages and customs, and an unruffled explanation of one's legitimate use of a noble title can suffice for the American who wants to know--otherwise, the title can simply be used without explanation. A common question from an American to a nobly titled American is, "Well, what do you do with a title? What does it mean?" The answer is, "Well, what does a book do with its title? It is used for self-identification and is clearly stamped on its binding so that it can be identified." The questioner could also be asked, "Well, what do you do with your title of 'Mr./Mrs./Ms./Dr.?' " Usually, the questioner gets the idea. Titles

are, in fact, personal property and are always used at the discretion of the holder (not the user, as some seem to think).

THE AMERICAN FONS

So, Americans are fascinated with titles, and for some Americans mere fascination is insufficient--they want a title. Once one understands that a legitimate title has a legitimate fons honorum, the problem for the title-seeking American becomes one of finding a legitimate fons--and then actually acquiring the title. Because of the influence of the Constitution, there are no laws at the federal, state, or local levels that control the acquisition and use of titles. Of course, one could merely assume a title, such as was done in the 19th century which abounded in "doctors" who never went to school and "professors" who never taught, but the possibility of being exposed as a fraud always made self-conferment a danger. Further, there were always laws against committing fraud, but these laws dealt with actual damages incurred, not to the use of a self-conferred title. There were (and are) no laws preventing the use of the titles "Dr." or "professor"--until the fake "Dr." takes out an appendix or the fake "professor" tries to conduct a class at university.

Americans are familiar with and are fairly comfortable with the titles of doctor, professor, and reverend, the American equivalents to life peerage titles. The "life peerage" is the British practice of granting a title of nobility that is vital, i.e., not inheritable, but ceases to exist upon the death of the holder. A famous life peer was Lord Laurence Olivier (or: Laurence, Lord Olivier), who held the title of baron. Upon his death, Olivier's title became extinct. The advantage to the British Crown of awarding life peerages is

obvious--the great can be honored with a noble title without the need to distribute royal lands or wealth and without disturbing the peace of mind of the ancient hereditary nobility who may not welcome a parvenu. The life peerage is virtually unknown among the other European monarchies, whose titles, when granted, are invariably hereditary and whose patents of nobility usually ennoble the entire family. England considers the European practice extravagant, but Europe considers the British practice parsimonious.

The titles doctor, professor, and reverend are not inherited or granted from a sovereign, but, in true American fashion, they are personally earned through the application of the American work ethic (there is a certain amount of intelligence involved, of course, but it is also true that the Ph.D. can result as much from diligence as intelligence.). Americans like the idea of “working for” a title, so three organizations have evolved in America to fill the need for a “work ethic nobility”--higher education, fraternal orders, and religion.

AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION AS A FONS

From higher education come two coveted prenominals, the titles “Dr.” and “Professor,” both of which are, in some areas of this country, treated with as great a respect as any European title of nobility. (This is especially true in certain areas of the American deep South where, sometimes, a “Dr.” or a “Prof.” may not even have to produce a driver’s license to pass a check.) The holder of a doctor’s degree (whether the Ph.D., the Ed.D., the D.Psy., or the M.D., or any other variation) is granted the non-transferable, vital (non-inheritable) title “doctor,” which makes the doctor’s title an American equivalent to a life peerage. There are, however, two versions of the doctorate,

the “earned” doctorate and the “honorary” doctorate, awarded honoris causa. The earned doctor’s degree is a result of approximately ten years’ of personal (well, not totally personal, since a scholar’s spouse commonly participates in getting that degree, often by holding down two or more jobs and by providing free reading and editing services, not to mention acting as a sounding board for academic theory. The ten years are a total of four for the undergraduate, two for the Master’s Degree, and four--sometimes five--for the doctorate). effort on the part of the scholar. The earned doctorate is the foundation of the true title of American nobility, the honorary doctorate.

As the titles granted by a reigning monarch, so the honorary doctor’s degree (usually awarded during a university’s commencement exercises) is an award for an individual’s outstanding service to mankind in general and the university in particular--which, in one sense, means that the president of a university cloaks himself in the power of the state and takes on the role of the sovereign prince. (University professors generally agree that the real vestiges of the feudal system are not found in Europe, but in the halls of academe where the Chairman is Baron to the Dean, and the Dean is vassal prince to the sovereign president.) The honorary degree most often awarded is the “Doctor of Humane Letters.” Does the holder of an honorary degree have the right to the title of “doctor”? Yes, absolutely, although writers of books of etiquette seem to think that the holder of the honorary doctorate should not use the title, which is utter nonsense and sheer snobbery on the part of “etiquetticians.” Indeed, certain etiquetticians, apparently impressed by the physician’s annual income, claim that only the M.D. should use the title “Dr.” in public--which is not only further nonsense and snobbery, but also ignorance,

since the title “doctor” means “teacher”--and medical doctors are not teachers. Furthermore, since the Ph.D. (and, in general, the other doctors) holds three degrees (B.A./S., M.A./S., Ph.D.) to the MD’s two (B.S. and M.D.), there is no question that the Ph.D. has a firmer academic grip on the title of “doctor” than does the M.D.

While the title of “Dr.” is derived from the degree, the title of “Professor” is derived from a profession, that of college/university scholar/teacher. It is believed in some university communities that the title of “professor” is a superior title to “doctor,” and at many fine universities a professor is insulted if addressed as merely “doctor.” (This is not usually the case in the American South, where the titles are often used interchangeably without giving offense.) Those outside the university setting usually don’t know that there are three ranks of professor, those of assistant (usually granted upon being hired), associate (often granted after five to seven years if tenure is given), and full (granted at least after an additional five to seven years, although often longer), and that one is promoted to a higher rank not only after a passage of a lengthy period of time, but also only after measurable and outstanding contribution in the areas of scholarship (publication of articles and books), teaching, and university and public service. Unlike the nobleman who only has to please his monarch, the professor who wishes to be promoted must be approved first by his/her department, then the Chair of the Department, then the Dean of the College, then the Vice-President for Academic Affairs, then the President, and--finally--the Board of Trustees. The prestige and power attached to the ranks of assistant, associate, and full professor are actually limited to the university community itself, since, in general, the public doesn’t use the title “professor,”

probably because the patent medicine hucksters of 19th century America appropriated the title and brought it into disrepute.

THE AMERICAN FRATERNAL ORDER AS A FONS

America's attempt to provide a fons of nobility for its people can be most clearly seen in its highly-developed fraternal order system, the primary example of which is Freemasonry. (The comments which follow also apply to such fraternal groups as the Oddfellows, the Knights of Columbus, the Woodmen of the World, and others.) Of course, Freemasonry is a British system, and many of the current royalty and nobility of England hold high offices in British Freemasonry--including Prince Philip who takes his Masonic duties very seriously. (It is more accurate to say that Freemasonry is Irish, since the first Grand Lodge in the world was organized in London in 1717 by Irish residents who belonged to independent Irish lodges back in their home country. Prior to 1717, all Masonic Lodges were independent.) Indeed, the royalty and nobility of other European countries also have active roles in their respective Masonic Grand Lodges--the Grand Master of the Swedish Grand Lodge is King Charles XVI Gustav.

After 1717, Freemasonry consisted of three degrees (initiations), those of Entered Apprentice, Fellowcraft, and Master Mason, and no more. It was in 18th century France that the "high degrees" beyond the first three degrees of Entered Apprentice, Fellowcraft, and Master Mason developed, which development included the creation of whole systems of degrees that granted elaborate titles. Perhaps Frenchmen, having discarded all royal and noble titles in their Revolution, began to long for their heritage and fulfilled their

longing by creating simulated noble titles for the Masonic “high degree” systems such as the “Emperors of the East and West,” the “Rite of Strict Observance,” and many others. The supreme achievement in degree-granting titles was the Masonic French Rite of Memphis-Misraim, which conferred some 186 degrees, along with 186 titles! Officials of this Rite granted forms of address which even the most power-mad monarchs would envy. “Sovereign Prince Commander of the Stars” is only one example among the Rite’s many degree titles. The Rite of Memphis-Misraim is now considered “clandestine” (illegal and unrecognized) by all regular Masonic authority.

When the “high-degree systems” entered America, the titles came with them, and Americans took to them with relish. The Rite of Memphis-Misraim flourished in the American west, but then faded away, buried under its own weight and under the scandal of the selling of degrees. But when the Emperors of the East and West came to America, it underwent a transformation from a 25-degree system to a 33-degree system, renamed itself The Scottish Rite, gained respectability, and became the best-known of the two regular and legitimate Masonic “high degree” bodies (the other being the York Rite). Titles of royalty (but not nobility) abound in The Scottish Rite: “Prince of the Sun,” “Rose+Croix Prince of Heredom,” “Prince of the Royal Secret,” and “Sovereign Grand Inspector General.” Of course, Masons who belong to The Scottish Rite understand their Order to be a fraternal organization and do not presume to hold authentic titles of royalty. The York Rite confers neither royal nor noble titles, but does confer a title of knighthood, the Knight of the Temple. So too, members of the Masonic Order of the Temple understand their organization to be a fraternal Order, not an

authentic Order of Chivalry, and these Masons do not claim to hold authentic knighthood.

The American comes to a Masonic title either by taking an initiation (for example, to be a Prince of Heredom, one takes the 18th Degree of the Scottish Rite), or by being elected to the dignity of a Masonic office. High Masonic dignitaries are usually shown the greatest of deference and respect by their Masonic members, and, like the monarchs of old, they are often feted at great banquets held in their honor. Actually, should modern monarchs insist on the same level of treatment that some Masonic dignitaries receive, they would be in danger of their thrones! No criticism of the system is intended, since Freemasonry is a fine and worthwhile philosophic and philanthropic institution whose officers serve without pay, often at great expense to themselves. But there is no doubt that Freemasonry is, for Americans, a dream fulfilled--a constitutional monarchy in which even a common laborer can rise to the position of, if not sovereign prince, then at least archduke.

THE CHURCH AS FONDS

The Church--whether Catholic, Orthodox, or Protestant--also confers titles. In fact, in historical times, the Roman Catholic Church attempted to arrogate to itself the power to grant all titles, including that of Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. The Holy See of Rome, as a city-state, today reserves to itself the right to grant the Papal titles of prince, marchese, and count which it occasionally bestows upon worthy Roman Catholics. The Holy See of Rome also grants to its clergy the title of Monsignor, which then supersedes the title "Father." Of course, both the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches grant

titles such as Archbishop and Patriarch, and so on. Generally, Protestant Churches grant the title of “reverend” to their clergy, although certain Protestant groups prefer “pastor” or “brother.” The full range of ecclesiastical titles is covered well in L.G. Pine’s *The Story of Titles*. However, Pine makes some rather snide comments about the Church’s use of titles, saying that titles are incompatible with Christianity. In fact, Pine, in this particular case, hadn’t the faintest idea what he was talking about. The New Testament writers went to great length to show that Jesus was a Prince of the (non-regnant) Royal House of David, and royal titles abound in both the Old and New Testaments. Pine certainly knew about secular titles, but apparently he knew little about Biblical royalty, and even less about the royal titles of Jesus, who was not only considered “King of the Jews” by no less than Pontius Pilate, but “King of Kings” by Christians.

THE ORDER OF CHIVALRY AS FONDS

In the case of Orders of Chivalry, Americans have a truly difficult time. Most Americans are exposed to knights through old MGM movies or through news reports about the knighting of distinguished British actors such as Sir Richard Burton or Dame Edith Evans, or, more recently, Sir Anthony Hopkins. Generally, Americans have no trouble whatever in addressing these knights correctly--“Sir First Name.” When European knights enter the scene, Americans again have some difficulty substituting “Chevalier” for the title “Sir.” (Happily, the title for both the British and European knighted woman is “Dame,” so confusion is less likely.) Of course, Americans can learn the proper address of a European knight when he or she has an accent and is obviously not an American, but when Americans are knighted in genuine Orders of

Chivalry that follow the European custom (as most do), there are two problems.

The first problem is that Americans are so used to fraternal orders using the title of “knight” that the “Order of Chivalry” and the titles granted by it have little meaning and require explanation. It takes patience and a clarity of mind to explain that there is a difference between an authentic knight of an Order of Chivalry and members of the Knights of Columbus, Knights of Labor, Knights of Pythias, and--heaven forebear!--Knights of the Ku Klux Klan.

The second problem is that Americans are not accustomed to the idea that Americans can be knighted...and they can as, for example, when the Queen of England grants “honorary” knighthoods to distinguished Americans. Of course, the term “honorary” doesn’t mean “but not really,” but only is a gentle subterfuge used to prevent protests from those who might object to the (perfectly proper and legal) receipt of knighthood by prominent Americans who have thereby received grants of minor nobility and a minor noble status. The Queen of England rarely grants knighthoods to Americans. More commonly, other European Orders of Chivalry are active in America, where are found various religious Orders of Chivalry as well as Dynastic (royal house) Orders. In the United States, authentic Orders of Chivalry headed by royalty or nobility include the Knights of Christ, the Order of the Noble Companions of the Swan, the Sovereign Order of St. John of Jerusalem, The Religious and Military Order of Knights of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, the Royal Order of the Three Crowns, the Order of the Crown of Lauriers, and others. The idea of an American holding an authentic knighthood is so far

removed from the experience of most Americans that they find it difficult to grasp the meaning--or think that the legitimate American knight is kidding about the accolade, or, worse, is somehow deluded.

SOME COMMON FORMS OF NOBLE AND ROYAL ADDRESS

Americans are fond of the idea of equality, believing that “all men are created equal” and believing that eschewing titles and being on a first-name basis constitutes not only equality, but also friendliness. Undoubtedly, all men are created equal, but not all achieve equally, and using a first name without permission is not friendly, but rude, even in America. Of course, it is not possible in this small space to cover all possibilities; therefore, the reader should take note that the following usages are not prescriptive, but, in general, follow the European model. The Knightly Gentleman of a European (non-British) Order of Chivalry in formal speech and in writing may be addressed as “The Right Honorable Chevalier John Smith,” or “The Right Honorable Chevalier Smith,” depending upon the usages of the Order to which the Knight belongs. Some Orders use the “Right Honorable” and some do not, but, in general, the phrase may be used without error. Informally he is titled Chevalier (sheh-vul-YAY; sometimes, shuh-VALL-yay) Christian name, thus: “Chevalier John.” Even more informally, the Knight also may be simply addressed as “Chevalier.” The untitled first name of a Chevalier is never used alone. In British usage, the title “Sir” is a prenominal to the first name only, so that there is a “Sir John,” but not a “Sir Smith.”

The Knightly Gentlewoman of a European (non-British) Order of Chivalry in formal speech and in writing may be addressed as “The Right Honorable

Dame Mary Smith,” or “The Right Honorable Dame Smith,” depending upon the usages of the Order to which she belongs. Informally, she is titled Dame /Christian name/, thus: “Dame Mary,” or very informally as “Dame.” The title “Lady” is a courtesy that denotes the non-chivalric wife of a Chevalier and is not used to address a woman of knightly rank. The untitled first name of a Dame is never used. Note also that , in British usage, the title “Lady” is the equivalent of “Lord” and is used to address a female Peer.

Ecclesiastical rank and title take precedence over secular rank and titles. Clergy, therefore, often use only ecclesiastical prenominals (“Rev.” or “Father” or “Bishop”), omit chivalric prenominals (“Sir” or “Chevalier”), and list postnominals only in writing. In some religious Orders of Chivalry, chivalric prenominals are formally combined with the ecclesiastical ones thus: “The Right Honorable Chevalier the Rev. first name and surname” or “The Right Honorable Dame the Rev. first name and surname. If a Priest, the formal title in some usages is “The Right Honorable Chevalier the Rev. Fr.” followed by the full name. If a Bishop, the formal title is “The Right Honorable Chevalier the Rt. Rev.” and his full name, thus: “Rt. Rev. the Right Honorable Chevalier John Smith.” When in doubt, it is always correct to address clergy with ecclesiastical prenominals, according to the usage of the denomination. The untitled first name of clergy is never used.

The non-chivalric wife of a Knight is often addressed as “Lady” as a courtesy. In speech and in writing, that is, informally and as a courtesy, she may be addressed “Lady” plus her Christian name, thus: “Lady Jane.” The non-

chivalric husband of a Dame is titled “Mr.” unless he holds a title in his own right.

Titles of nobility of royal houses are those of baron, viscount, count, marquis, and duke. (Note: Some royal houses do not confer the title of viscount.) For the first three (or four) titles, it is proper to use the pre-nominal qualifier “His/Your Excellency” plus the titular designation which may be a surname alone or a surname with a place designation. Sir Anthony Wagner, Garter King of Arms, makes it quite clear in his book, *A Herald's World*, that a surname without a place designation is perfectly correct for a title of nobility, and that he often counseled new British peers how to keep their surnames intact as noble titles. If a place designation is used, Garter sees it merely as “an address.” See Garter’s book, pages 20-21 and 126-129. In European (but not British) custom, proper usage refers to “Baron Last Name,” as in “Baron Smith.” As the highest-ranking nobility, the duke’s pre-nominal is “His/Your Grace.” Note that the British usage for all peerage titles is “Lord” plus the titular (or last) name, as in “Lord Snowden,” the titular name of Anthony Armstrong Jones, or “Lord Olivier,” the titular name of Baron Laurence Olivier (Laurence, Lord Olivier). When signing documents, nobles use only the last name, and one may hear nobles speaking to each other using the last name only (a usage which close American male friends have adopted).

In formal occasions, where one holds multiple titles, the practice of “diminishing title” applies, where the highest to lowest titles come before the name. Titles are generally ranked in descending order, thus: quality title (His/Her Excellency or His/Her Grace), ecclesiastical title, noble title,

academic title. For example, if John Smith were a Priest, a Knight, a Doctor of Philosophy, and a Baron, he would very formally be introduced, following the rule of diminishing title, as His Excellency the Rev. Baron Dr. Smith of Connor. (That is, in very formal presentational speech, as, for example, if Baron Smith were being presented at a formal evening dinner or at court. The complete title would also be used in formal writing, as, for example, an official invitation or an official letter or document. The full title might also appear on the envelope of a formal document such as an invitation.) Formal titles can prove unwieldy, so, for informal situations, single titles suffice. Thus, Smith could also be correctly addressed as His/Your Excellency or Baron Smith. However, since ecclesiastical rank may take precedence over secular titles, it also would be correct to address Baron Smith as Father Smith (but not "Father John"). Those who wished could address him in common conversation simply and correctly as Dr. Smith. Note that titles of nobility preclude and supersede the use of "Chevalier" or "Dame" when the noble is also a knight, so Baron Smith would not be addressed as Chevalier Smith.

Monarchs are usually addressed as "Your Majesty" if a king or queen, then, in conversation, the title "Sir" or "Ma'am" (while some say the word rhymes with "harm," other more modern authorities say it rhymes with "jam") is used. The "Crown Prince" is usually the son of the king or queen and is the one designated to inherit the throne. The Crown Prince is the one usually thought of by Americans when the title of "prince" is heard. The correct form of address for the Crown Prince is established by the Monarch. In fact, the Monarch establishes all correct forms for his or her dynasty.

The Sovereign Prince is addressed as “Your Highness Prince X” or using the prenominal as established by the Royal Dynasty to which the Prince belongs. In conversation with the Sovereign Prince, “Your Highness” is used once, followed by the use of “Sir,” although it is not incorrect to occasionally repeat the title of “Your Highness” during the course of the conversation. Unlike the Crown Prince or the Papal Prince, the Sovereign Prince exercises all sovereign rights within his dynasty.

MANUALS AND GUIDEBOOKS

American etiquette books are of little help in establishing the correct use of noble and royal titles, and, in some cases, are not only incorrect, but exhibit insufferable arrogance by pretending to limit and control legitimately owned titles, claiming a “correctness” that simply doesn’t exist. For one wishing to find a useful guide for royal and noble etiquette, there are only a few reliable sources, mostly British, mostly difficult to obtain. One is *Titles and Forms of Address: A Guide to the Correct Use*, a standard work by “Armiger” now in its 14th edition (London: A.C. Black, 1971). Robert William Chapman’s *Names, Designations and Appellations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press) is good, but outdated, its last edition being in 1936. Dorothy M. Newman’s *Forms of Address: Honours, Orders, Decorations, Medals, Religious Orders in Canada, Great Britain, and the U.S.A.* (St. Louis: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1980) is very inclusive. If available, a useful general guide is *Debrett’s Correct Form: An Inclusive Guide to Everything from Drafting Wedding Invitations to Addressing an Archbishop*. Also, L.G. Pine’s classic work *The Story of Titles* (republished by Barnes & Noble as *Titles: How the King Became His Majesty*) is very interesting and useful. These books are to be used as guides; the best

procedure in any circumstance is to determine and follow the practice of the holder of the title.

Also, one may find books about the honors system itself, including Michael De-la-Noy's *The Honours System* (New York: Allison and Busby, 1985); John Walker's *The Queen has been Pleased: the British Honours System at Work* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1986); James McMillan's *The Honours Game* (London: Frewin, 1969); and Cyril Francis James Hankinson's *My Forty Years with Debrett* (London: R. Hale, 1963).

CONCLUSION

Some titles are hereditary, and some titles are vital, but in every instance, a title is property, and, as with any other piece of property, the owner is perfectly free to use it, without apology, whenever he or she wishes, keeping in mind both propriety and requirements. The titled believe that the correct use of forms of address ennobles both the user and holder. In the mock modesty and ersatz intimacy of American culture, where unsanctioned first-name usage is casually assumed by the ignorant or the willfully rude, proper use of legitimate titles is an educating and stabilizing link with tradition in an otherwise uncertain and rebellious culture which so desperately needs to learn self-respect, as well as the respect of others.

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