

ABSTRACT

HODNET, ANDREW ARTHUR. *The Othering of the Landsknechte*. (Under the direction of Dr. Verena Kasper-Marienberg).

This thesis offers a socio-cultural analysis of early modern German media to explore the public perception of the *Landsknechte*, mercenaries that were both valued and feared for their viciousness, and their indifference displayed towards the political motivations of their clients. Despite their ubiquity on European battlefields, and their role in repulsing the 1529 Ottoman invasion of Austria, by 1530 the *Landsknechte* and their families were perceived as thoroughly dishonorable by central Reformation society and were legally excluded from most urban centers.

This study engages with a critical assessment of contemporary songs, religious pamphlets, broadsheets, political treatises, autobiographic sources, and belletristic representations of the *Landsknechte* to explore the paradoxical relationship that they maintained with the state actors that relied on their employment. Through engaging with the cultural genres present in these depictions, the othering of the *Landsknechte* stems from their origin as the militaristic arm of Emperor Maximilian I's attempted centralization of the Holy Roman Empire, continuing with the economic challenge the mercenary lifestyle posed to traditional social structures, and ending with their inextricable association between with the increasingly destructive and intrusive military-fiscal state.

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The Othering of the Landsknechte

by
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DEDICATION

Dedicated to Elisabeth ‘Buffy’ Williams and Betboo, whose compassion and support has made my journey possible.

BIOGRAPHY

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After graduating, he took time away from academic pursuits to assist with the family business after his mother was diagnosed with lung cancer. After her passing in 2012, the author worked to support his family until he accepted a private sponsorship to move to Durham, North Carolina in 2015. In August 2016, he joined the graduate program in history at North Carolina State University.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES	v
Introduction	1
Chapter 1: The Democratization of Violence	5
<i>Landsknechte</i> Organization.....	11
Chapter 2: The Reformation Public	19
Forsaking the City.....	26
Gendered Notions and the <i>Landsknecht</i>	39
Chapter 3: Vilification	64
Conclusion	92
References	98

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1 <i>Knight & Landsknecht</i> , Paul Dolstein, c.1505	8
Figure 1.2 Detail of Maximilian I's Prayer Book, Plate 43, Albrecht Durer, 1495.....	9
Figure 1.3 <i>Soldier and Wife</i> , Daniel Hopfer, c.1530	16
Figure 1.4 Plate 16 of the <i>Schwytzer Chronica</i> , Johannes Stumpf, 1554	16
Figure 2.1 Plate 26 of <i>Der Weißkunig</i> , Hans Burgkmair, 1519.....	23
Figure 2.2 Plate 27 of <i>Der Weißkunig</i> , Hans Burgkmair, 1519.....	24
Figure 2.3 <i>Augsburg Burghermeister and Wife</i> , Unknown Artist, 1544	28
Figure 2.4 <i>Brothel Scene</i> , The Brunswick Monogrammist , c.1545	32
Figure 2.5 <i>Cobbler</i> , Niklas Stör, c,1530.....	34
Figure 2.6 <i>Tailor</i> , Niklas Stör, c,1530	35
Figure 2.7 Detail from <i>Large Peasant Holiday</i> , Sebald Becham, c.1530	40
Figure 2.8 Plate 71 of <i>Der Weißkunig</i> , Hans Burgkmair, 1519.....	44
Figure 2.9 Plate 76 of <i>Der Weißkunig</i> , Hans Burgkmair, 1519.....	45
Figure 2.10 Page 10 of <i>The Book of Clothes</i> , Matthäus Schwarz, 1560.....	47
Figure 2.11 Page 43 of <i>The Book of Clothes</i> , Matthäus Schwarz, 1560.....	48
Figure 2.12 <i>Landsknecht</i> , Urs Graf, 1523.....	49
Figure 2.13 <i>Landsknecht</i> , Urs Graf, 1519.....	50
Figure 2.14 The Cobbler Hans and his Girl Ursula, Erhard Schön, 1568	52
Figure 2.15 <i>Die Lebens alter des Mannes</i> , Jörg Breu the Younger, 1540.....	56
Figure 2.16 <i>Age of the Woman at the Age of Ten and Twenty Years</i> , Tobias Stimmer, 1565	57
Figure 2.17 <i>Soldier Embracing a Young Woman</i> , Daniel Hopfer, c. 1530	58
Figure 2.18 <i>Young Woman and Death as a Soldier</i> , Niklaus Manuel, 1517	59

Figure 2.19 Plate 35 of <i>Von der Artzney bayder Glück</i> , Heinrich Steiner, 1532.....	60
Figure 2.20 Plate 83 of <i>Von der Artzney bayder Glück</i> , Heinrich Steiner, 1532.....	61
Figure 2.21 Detail of <i>Infantry Battle Scene</i> , Hans Holbein the Younger, c,1530	65
Figure 2.22 Plate 217 of <i>Von der Artzney bayder Glück</i> , Heinrich Steiner, 1532.....	68
Figure 2.23 Plate 31 of <i>Der Totentanz</i> , Hans Holbein the Younger, 1538.....	70
Figure 2.24 ‘X’ of Holbein alphabet, Hans Holbein the Younger, 1540	72
Figure 2.25 Plate 58 from <i>Von der Artzney bayder Glück</i> , Heinrich Steiner, 1532	75
Figure 2.26 Plate 67 from <i>Von der Artzney bayder Glück</i> , Heinrich Steiner, 1532	76
Figure 2.27 Detail from <i>The Triumph of Death</i> , Pieter Bruegel the Elder, c.1562	77
Figure 2.28 Plate 174 of <i>Der Weißkunig</i> , Hans Burgkmair, 1519.....	80
Figure 2.29 Plate 89 of <i>Von der Artzney bayder Glück</i> , Heinrich Steiner, 1532.....	82
Figure 2.30 Detail from <i>The Massacre of the Innocents</i> , Pieter Bruegel the Elder, c.1565	84
Figure 2.31 <i>Crucifixion</i> , Daniel Hopper, c.1520.....	85
Figure 2.32 <i>Removal of Bolt</i> from <i>Der Feldbuch der Wundarzney</i> , Hans von Gersdoff, 1517 ..	89
Figure 2.33 <i>Serratura</i> from <i>Der Feldbuch der Wundarzney</i> , Hans von Gersdoff, 1517.....	90
Figure 3.1 <i>The Dead Landsknecht</i> , Albrecht Altdorfer, c.1530	95

Introduction

In 1516, English statesman Thomas More published his reflection on Renaissance Humanism, *De optimo rei publicae statu deque nova insula Utopia* (lit. “On the Best State of the Republic on the New Island of Utopia”) where, historian Quentin Skinner asserts, More adopted a Ciceronian pragmatist approach answering the question of “True nobility” within society¹. When it came to matters of defense, More enunciated that his Utopians “...detest war as a very brutal thing, and which, to the reproach of human nature, is practiced by men than by any sort of beasts²,” preferring instead to concentrate on matters of crafting, religion, and trade. Being masters of commerce, the Utopians have ample gold and silver with which to pay others to wage war on their behalf, principally members of a race of people who live far outside of the bounds of Utopian society, the “rude, wild, and fierce” Zapolets. Hailing from the wilderness five hundred miles East of the Island of Utopia, the Zapolets have forsaken agriculture, housing, and industry, and “know none of the arts of life, save those that lead to the taking it away [sic],” choosing instead to engage in mercenary service punctuated with heartless avarice; “There are few wars in which they make not a considerable part of the armies of both sides: so it often falls out that they who are related, and were hired in the same country, and so have lived long and familiarly together, forgetting both their relations and former friendship, kill one another upon no other consideration than that of being hired to it for a little money by princes of different interests³.”

¹ Skinner, Quentin. "Sir Thomas More's Utopia and the Language of Renaissance Humanism." Edited by Anthony Pagden. In *The Languages of Political Theory in Early-modern Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. Pp. 134-138

² Moore, Thomas. *The Utopia of Sir Thomas Moore*. Edited by Ralph Robinson and H. B. Cotterill. London: MacMillan, 1937. Pp. 57

³ Ibid, Pp. 59-60

Every aspect of More's Zapolets, including the location of their homeland, their ubiquity on European battlefields, their nomadic lifestyle that eschews immobile property, and their willingness to disregard social and familial loyalties for monetary gain, mark them as transparent stand-ins of the *Landsknechte*, organized mercenaries of Germanic origin that were employed by every army in Western Europe by 1516⁴. The Utopians reliance on the Zapolets for the projection of martial power combined with Zapolets' exclusion from Utopian society also mirrored the actions of the growing fiscal military state, though this observation would have hardly been perceived as novel in the sixteenth century. Machiavelli's 1521 political treatise, *Arte della Guerra*, warned rulers to keep mercenaries employed and on the march, lest they take root and "Strip [the Prince] of his kingdom⁵," while Holy Roman Emperor Charles V would state in 1530 that the "inhuman tyranny" imposed by the "blasphemous and cruel" *Landsknechte* were a greater threat to the stability of his empire than the Turks⁶.

This thesis will explore the paradox of necessity and exclusion that defined the experience of the *Landsknechte* in Renaissance society; as the principal arm of a state bolstered with democratized violence, the mercenary was, through the machinations of customary and legal reform, marginalized to a state of Otherness. This approach will concentrate specifically on *Landsknechte* in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, avoiding the reasons for the generalized opprobrium displayed to mercenaries through history⁷, which will grant a more nuanced view of marginalized micro-societies set against a backdrop of the centralization of the

⁴ Hale, J. R. *War and Society in Renaissance Europe, 1450-1620*. Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1998. Pp. 62-63

⁵ Machiavelli, Niccolò. *The Art of War: A Revised Edition of the Ellis Farnsworth Translation*. Translated by Neal Wood. New York, NY: Da Capo Press, 1990. Pp. 20

⁶ Harrington, Joel F. *The Faithful Executioner: Life and Death, Honor and Shame in the Turbulent Sixteenth Century*. New York: Picador/Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2014. Pp. 8-9

⁷ Mockler, Anthony. *The Mercenaries*. Sugarland, TX: Free Companion Press, 1981.

Early Modern state. Likewise, the term “Othering” will be utilized when discussing the evolution of the *Landsknechte*’s place in Early Modernity, rather than “Disenfranchisement” or “Marginalization,” for several key reasons. For one, the character of Early Modern Society defies easy categorization between ‘Central’ and ‘Marginal’ social groups, as contemporary accounts speak towards greater degrees of intersectionality between different partitions of the social order during the milieu of daily life⁸. For example, the *Landsknechte* at different times permeated central society through their use in the enforcement of Holy Roman Imperial decrees and the physical protection of important political figures, while at other times restricted from settling within urban jurisdictions or travelling through city walls- an examination of this effect through the lens of linear disenfranchisement or marginalization would ultimately prove hollow and reductive. The term ‘Othering’ as it is used in this thesis branches from Armand Arriaza’s “Society of Orders,” where Early Modern European society is perceived to be underpinned by a crisis between the declining noble estate and the rise of the bourgeoisie class which was mediated by the edification of social orders⁹. The gradual removal of populations from the framework of Early Modern orders through “Othering,” allows a more accurate representation of the *Landsknechte*’s position, as even when they were vaunted as the defenders of Christendom during the Invasions of Suleiman the Magnificent in 1529, contemporary sources still regarded them as an order separate from the rest of society.

⁸ Kallenberg, Vera. *Intersektionalität & Kritik: Intersektionalitätsforschung in Deutschland, Frankreich Und Den USA*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag Für Sozialwissenschaften, 2010. Pp. 14-16

⁹ Arriaza, Armand. "Mousnier and Barber: The Theoretical Underpinning of the "Society of Orders" in Early Modern Europe." *Past & Present*, no. 89 (1980): 39-57. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/650657>.

To that end, this approach will concentrate on a socio-cultural perspective of primary sources, including published literature¹⁰, private memoirs¹¹, commissioned artwork¹², printed illustrations¹³, and published songs intended for public consumption¹⁴. The first section will outline a basic understanding of the discourse of warfare from the mid-fifteenth-century to the middle of the sixteenth century, to describe the increasing participation of the European populace in the conduct of war. Then, a brief outline describing the historical development and significance of the *Landsknechte* will be explored, with careful attention being paid to sources of Othering generated by the conduct of the mercenaries themselves. An exploration into the burgeoning world of Press media and the Reformation Public will follow, along with an examination of how the rapid exchange of ideas contributed to the *Landsknecht*'s marginalization. Urban culture and gendered notions will be touched on next, finalized with an in-depth study of cultural symbols as expressions of social anxiety. This discourse will make a conscious effort to avoid straying too far into militaria or the politics of the Holy Roman Empire under Maximilian I, and focus as much as possible on a purely socio-cultural historical approach, though some clarification on either subject may be necessary.

¹⁰ The published collections of Niccolò Machiavelli, Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam, Martin Luther, and Thomas More.

¹¹ Posthumously published memoirs by contemporary figures, such as Robert III de la Marck, le Chevaier Bayard, Peter Dornach, Götz von Berlichingen, Sebastian Vogelsberger, Matthäus Schwarz, King Charles IX of France, Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I, and Holy Roman Emperor Charles V.

¹² Works painted by Pieter Bruegel the Elder, Hans Holbein the Younger, the Brunswick Monogramist, and Albrecht Artdorfer.

¹³ Works by Albrecht Durer, Haniel Hopfer, Johannes Stumpf, Hans Burgkmair, Niklas Stör, Sebald Becham, Urs Graf, Erhard Schön, Jörg Breu the Younger, Tobias Stimmer, Heinrich Steiner, and Hans von Gersdoff.

¹⁴ The published songbooks of Hans Sachs, Hans Witzstadt, and Jörg Graff.

Chapter 1: The Democratization of Violence

The formation of the *Landsknechte* as a distinct socio-economic community lay in the historical discourse by which the conduct of warfare left the sole domain of the second estate and would become a principle motivation behind the centralization of state bureaucracy observed during the Early Modern Era¹⁵. Historian Bert Hall traced this process back to the 1302 Battle of the Golden Spurs, where a combination of earthwork defenses and Flemish infantry armed with *Goedendag* pole arms defeated a charge of French shock cavalry, stunning contemporary expectations¹⁶. Through the course of the Hundred Years' War (1337-1453), armies of the French and English monarchies employed greater numbers of infantry forces for tasks that were considered 'beneath' the fighting nobility, including recontouring, poliorcetics, and logistic support- tasks that became more important as the war stagnated between major battles¹⁷.

It was during the latter stages of the Hundred Years' War that groups of pikemen descending from the foothills of the Alps appear in the rosters of English and Italian Free Companies, achieving notoriety for utilizing disciplined ranks of pikes and halberds to actively engage cavalry on the battlefield, without the need for defensive earthworks¹⁸. A contemporary French observer of the nascent Swiss pike square, marveled at the combination of mobility and the discipline under fire that the pike square exhibited, opining that the age of static stone castles was to fall way to "the walking citadel of the battlefield¹⁹." A Swiss pike, weighing over thirty

¹⁵ Parker, Geoffrey. *The Military Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500-1800*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. Pp. 4

¹⁶ Hall, Bert S. *Weapons and Warfare in Renaissance Europe: Gunpowder, Technology, and Tactics*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2006. Pp. 34-35

¹⁷ Rogers, Clifford J. "Military Revolutions of the Hundred Years War." Edited by Clifford J. Rogers. In *The Military Revolution Debate: Readings on the Military Transformation of Early Modern Europe*, 55-94. Boulder: Westview Press, 1995. pp. 55-94.

¹⁸ Turnbull, Stephen. *The Art of Renaissance Warfare: From the Fall of Constantinople to the Thirty Years War*. London: Frontline Books, 2018. Pp. 44

¹⁹ Oman, Charles. *A History of the Art of War in the Middle Ages*. Mechanicsburg, PA: Greenhill Books/Stackpole

pounds and extending to over sixteen feet long, was a weapon that demanded discipline from the entire square to use effectively, as its size and limited striking motion made it a poor weapon in single combat, especially against cavalry²⁰. When properly coordinated however, a square could flaunt a veritable forest of steel barbs, turn to meet a flanking foe within seconds, and advance quickly enough to overtake artillery batteries between salvos²¹.

The victory of the Swiss *Reisläufer* over the artillery trains of Charles the Bold during The Burgundian Wars in 1477 demonstrated the impact that drilled and motivated infantry could possess, even against numerically and technologically superior foes. After fending off a French invasion of Burgundy at the 1479 Battle of Guinegate with the assistance of 11,000 *Reisläufer*, Archduke Maximilian I of the Hapsburg Dynasty sought to replicate the Swiss method of democratized violence with his own German subjects²². After purchasing the aid of *Reisläufer* captains to train several thousand Swabian recruits in the manner of the pike square, Maximilian I placed Tyrolian knights at the heads of his newly-raised infantry regiments, and encouraged them to instill, as Fritz Redlich defined it, “a spirit of knighthood, transmitted to the new infantry whose battle morale thus reached a level unknown to the rabble of the foot soldiery of the Middle Ages²³.”

The first written record of the word “*Landsknecht*” appears in a court document laid before the Swiss Diet in 1486 by the Helvetian general Konrad Gäsuff, wherein he complains bitterly about his service in training his native Swiss *Reisläufer*, stating that, “...he would rather

Books, 1998. Pp. 41-62

²⁰ Delbrück, Hans. *History of the Art of War, IV. The Dawn of Modern Warfare*. Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 1990. Pp. 11

²¹ Hall, Pp. 32-33

²² Delbrück Pp. 4-7

²³ Redlich, Fritz. *The German Military Enterpriser and His Work Force: A Study in European Economic and Social History*. Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1964. Pp. 17

arm and train the Swabian or other *Landsknecht*, because one of them is worth two of us²⁴.” The precise translation of the term *Landsknecht* and which spelling is most accurate to the period, is a topic of heated debate among Renaissance historians; Martin Nell and Günther Franz insist that the “*Land*” prefix specifically refers to the German countryside (as opposed to the Swiss mountains), which produces the most common translation, “Servant of the German Land.” However, Hans Delbrück and Larry Silver disagree with the proto-nationalist nomenclature of the term, “*Land*”, pointing out that early *Landsknecht* companies were inclusive of many Swiss soldiers²⁵. Charles Oman, referencing the difficulties that Maximilian I encountered with other members of the Holy Roman nobility, posited that the archduke himself chose the name, “perhaps to disguise the fact that he was raising a permanent standing army, for whose appearance the Diet of the Empire had no particular enthusiasm²⁶.” Curiously, Paul Dolnstein, a *Landsknecht* who left a written memoir of his campaign in Frisia and Flanders through the late fifteenth century, never uses the word “*Landsknecht*” himself, instead opting for *Knecht*, *Deutscher*, or *Mann* instead²⁷.

²⁴ Oman, *Sixteenth Century*, Pp. 75-76

²⁵ Skjelver, Danielle Mead. *There I, Paul Dolnstein, Saw Action: The Sketchbook of a Warrior Artisan in the German Renaissance*. Edited by Hans Peter. Broedel. Ann Arbor, MI: ProQuest, 2012. Pp. 20-21

²⁶ Oman, *Sixteenth Century*, Pp. 74

²⁷ Skjelver, Pp. 19



Figure 1.1: *Knight & Landsknecht*

Paul Dolnstein, Pen on Leather, c. 1505

Figure 1.1, the final page of Paul Dolnstein's journal, depicts what he wished for on the battlefield; to combat a knight, his social superior, as his martial equal. The knight's stooped posture and disarmed sword suggests that the *Landsknecht* has emerged victoriously from the fight.



Figure 1.2: Detail of Maximilian I's Prayer Book, Plate 43
Albrecht Durer, Pen on Paper, 1495

Figure 1.2 is a detail from the margins of a prayer book Maximilian I commissioned from Albrecht Durer depicting a *Landsknecht* and a knight locked in combat. Maximilian I commanded on horseback, but often fought on foot alongside his *Landsknechte*, though this image is more likely an allegorical representation of Maximilian I's conflict with elements of the Imperial nobility who resisted his efforts towards centralization.

The formation of the first *Landsknechte* companies, and their success in early battlefield engagements signaled the full democratization of warfare in Europe, as commoners of any background could now participate in battle to a degree reserved for the noble estate only a generation earlier, and to a scale never seen before. The difference that democratization made in the conduct of warfare was distinct enough for Italian contemporaries to label the new method of fighting, “[*Guerra*] *Alla moderna*” (“Modern Warfare”)²⁸²⁹, and for the motif of *Landsknechte* overcoming armored knights to enjoy popularity in late fifteenth-century popular

²⁸ Sandberg, Brian. *War and Conflict in the Early Modern World: 1500-1700*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016. Pp. 24

²⁹ Brian Sandberg, Malcom Vale, and Charles Oman all utilize the phrase “*Alla Moderna*,” meaning “by modern means” in Italian, as used by contemporary writer Nicollò Machiavelli, with the “*Guerra*” (lit. “Warfare”) being inferred. As utilized by Sandberg, Vale, and Oman, the term “*Moderna*” was used to differentiate methods of warfare between the Medieval and Renaissance period, and not as a term reflective of 19th and 20th century philosophical attitudes.

culture (see Figures 1.1³⁰ and 1.2³¹). French Knight Pierre Terrail de Bayard, who was forced to share the battlefield with *Landsknechte* mercenaries in 1505, would acerbically question, “Does the emperor think it fitting to put so much noblesse in risk and peril by the side of conscripts, who are cobblers, blacksmiths, bakers, and laborers, and who do not hold their honor in like esteem as gentlemen³²?” Even Louis XI, whose forces had been defeated at Guinegate in 1471, issued the following pronouncement when addressing his war council the following year; “War has become very different. In those days, when you had eight or ten thousand men, you reckoned that a very large army; today is quite another matter. One has never seen a more numerous army than that of the lord of Burgundy, both in artillery and in munitions of all sorts; yours is also the finest which has ever been mustered in the kingdom. As for me, I am not accustomed to see so many troops together. How do you prevent disorder and confusion among the mass³³?”

How then, did the *Landsknechte* organize this new engine of democratized *guerra alla moderna*?

³⁰ Dolnstein, Paul, ed. Skjelver, Pp. 167

³¹ Dürer, Albrecht. *Dürers Drawings for the Prayer-book of Emperor Maximilian I: 53 Plates*. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2014. Pp. 43

³² Terrail, Pierre. *The History of the Chevalier Bayard*. Edited by Joseph Sterling. London: Printed for George Robinson, 1781. Pp. 173

³³ Vale, Malcolm. *War and Chivalry: Warfare and Aristocratic Culture in England, France and Burgundy at the End of the Middle Ages*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia, 1981. Pp. 148-149

***Landsknechte* Organization**

The roots of the bureaucratic structure of the *Landsknechte* company lies in the challenge faced by Maximilian I when attempting to organize his Swiss *Reisläufer* before the Battle of Guinegate. The Burgundian military system that the archduke was used to, the *bandes d'ordonnance*, was itself a bare iteration of the French *companies d'ordonnance* system, and separated the army into *bandes* made up of 600 horsemen (cavalry and mounted archers) and 300 footmen (arquebusiers, arbalesters, and pikes)³⁴. Though Maximilian I credited himself with the creation of the *Fähnlein/Haufen* system, Larry Silver contends that the new system, which separated cavalry and infantry bureaucracies and solidified the chain of command, was directly imported from the government of the Helvetian Confederacy³⁵.

Regardless, by 1490 the character of the *Landsknechte* military culture and organization had stratified itself around the fetishization of Maximilian I, who had not only proclaimed himself as the “Father of the *Landsknechte*” but would also commonly refer to the mercenaries under his direct employment as his “Children³⁶.” In his 1517 autobiography, *Der Weißkunig* (lit. “The White King”), Maximilian I not only praised his *Landsknechte* as the guardians of Imperial Hegemony in Central Europe, but also stressed that a personal connection edified in the sharing of cultural symbols between mercenary and Emperor was necessary to prevent rebellion. Chapter 47 of *Der Weißkunig* frames this argument through the conversation between Maximilian I and an ambitious stable-groom: “Thus must a mighty lord know all kinds of horses and have them properly bridled. Once one of his grooms spoke to the king, telling him that he

³⁴ Nimwegen, Olaf Van. "The Transformation of Army Organization in Early-modern Western Europe, C. 1500-1789." Edited by Frank Tallett and D. J. B. Trim. In *European Warfare, 1350-1750*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. pp. 163

³⁵ Silver, Larry. "Shining Armor; Emperor Maximilian, Chivalry, and War." In *Artful Armies, Beautiful Battles: Art and Warfare in Early Modern Europe*, edited by Pia F. Cuneo. Leiden: Brill, 2002. Pp. 79

³⁶ *Ibid*, Pp. 73

would surpass his own riding master. The king answered him by saying; ‘There is an old proverb, a nail holds the horseshoe, a horseshoe holds a horse, a horse holds a man, a man holds a castle, a castle holds a city, a city holds a country, a country holds a kingdom, and I say to you: behold me and my might, and you will not say that a *Knecht* should be over his lord. For whatever lord lived in only trusting his *Knechte* and in the power of his horse, he will be deceived and conquered by his enemies. Whichever lord, however, understands a thing for himself, need not abandon himself to another³⁷.’”

The association with Maximilian I was also embraced by the *Landsknechte* themselves, particularly evident in the motifs displayed in symbols of company identity such as badges, clothing styles, and banners. After his marriage to Mary of Burgundy in 1477, Maximilian I adopted the traditional symbols of the Burgundian nobility, namely red staves arranged in a St. Andrew’s Cross flanked by sparking shards of flint, in his own familial heraldry and the banners displayed by his *Landsknechte*³⁸. The Lucerne Chronicle, an illuminated manuscript illustrated by Diebold Schilling the Younger, depicted Maximilian I’s *Landsknechte* during the 1499 Swabian War as wearing Burgundian Crosses as badges roughly sewn onto clothing³⁹, while *Der Weißkunig* depicts entire mercenary companies displaying the heraldic trappings of Maximilian. The *Landsknechte* being depicted as Maximilian’s “children” would persist for years after the Emperor’s death in 1519; For instance, *Landsknecht* songwriter Hans Witzstat, writing in 1530, penned the lyric, “God grant mercy to the almighty honest Emperor Maximilian, with whom came up an order, travelling through the lands, with pipes and drums. *Landsknechte* they are

³⁷ Maximilian, and Hans Burgkmair. *Weißkunig*. Edited by Marx Treitzsaurwein. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1956. Pp. 237

³⁸ Benecke, Pp. 14

³⁹ Ganz, Paul. "The Lucerne Chronicle of Diebold Schilling." *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 63, no. 366 (1933): 127-28. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/865463>.

called⁴⁰.” Whether this association served as a genuine affection towards the patronage of Maximilian I, or simply as a cultural trope that granted legitimacy and cultural identity to the *Landsknechte* company that transcended the geographic loyalties of individual mercenaries remains unclear, as many *Landsknechte* would rebel against Maximilian I during the disastrous Venetian campaign of 1499, while still adhering to the military structure that the emperor “invented⁴¹.”

The *Fähnlein* (“Little Banner”) system started when an official letter of appointment from the *Haufen* (lit. “Heap”, but in this instance, “Company” is more appropriate) was granted to a recruiter or freelance entrepreneur, who was then tasked with securing the promises of a certain number of men to appear, in full uniform and equipment, to a muster location on a certain date. A surviving example of one of these appointment letters, granted to Friedrich von Reiffenberg in 1530 for the recruitment of 8,000 *Landsknechte* for Henry VIII, stresses the importance of each recruit’s fitness and obedience; “They shall first diligently see that every Standard be furnished with four hundred of good persons sound and able, and to muster out of them those that be crooked, lame, or faulty, and to see that their furniture of harness, weapons, etc. be according to their covenants, and the whole ensign be well appointed and in good order... nor let pass any that is reported to be a strifemaker, wrangler, or quarreler⁴².”

Once the initiate and his equipment passed inspection, he was interviewed by the *Obrist* (“Colonel”) of the *Haufen*, and placed into a *Fähnlein*, a division led by a *Hauptmann* (“Captain”) numbering 400 men total, which in turn was made up of squads of individuals numbering six to ten men called a *Rott*. Each *Fähnlein* was equipped with a team of drummers,

⁴⁰ Rüter, Pp. 193-194

⁴¹ Brady, pp. 122-123

⁴² Millar, Gilbert John. "The Landsknecht: His Recruitment and Organization, With Some Reference to the Reign of Henry VIII." *Military Affairs* 35, no. 3 (1971): 95. doi:10.2307/1983992. Pp. 97

fiefers, and trumpeters, whose training allowed them to quickly set a marching cadence or communicate with other groups of *Landsknechte* over long distances and above the cacophony of gunfire and artillery⁴³. With training, complex maneuvers involving dozens of different weapon types and thousands of men could be coordinated across smoke-obscured battlefields with relative ease, as was demonstrated at a military demonstration outside of Milan in 1495. As written by Lombardi physician Alessandro Benedetti; “All eyes fixed on the German phalanx, which formed a quadrangle of 6,000 men... Following the German custom, such troops have so many drums that it nearly breaks one’s eardrums to hear them. Armored only with half-plate, they march in close formation, the foremost with long, pointed pikes, those behind with lances raised upright, followed by halberds and two-handed swords. At the appropriate sign from their standard-bearers, the whole troop moves right, left, or backwards, as though it were on a raft. On its flanks are gunners and crossbowmen. Parading before Duchess Beatrice, this troop instantaneously converted itself into a wedge, then it divided into two wings, which moved, one fast, and one slowly, so that one part revolved around the other, and the seemed to form a single body⁴⁴.”

The final step of the muster involved a ceremony titled “*Der Musterung Umzug*,” (lit. “The Muster Parade”), where all the recruits summoned to the muster were brought before the commanding officers of the *Haufen*, who read aloud the *Artikelbrief* (lit. “Letter of Articles”), which delineated in explicit detail the rights and responsibilities owed to every *Landsknecht* within the *Haufen*, regardless of rank or experience⁴⁵. The oldest surviving *Artikelbrief*, upheld by a *Haufen* in the Netherlands in 1546, contains numerous articles relating to wages (Article I),

⁴³ Richards, John, and G. A. Embleton. *Landsknecht Soldier: 1485-1560*. Oxford: Osprey, 2002. Pp. 5-6

⁴⁴ Brady, Thomas A. *German Histories in the Age of Reformations, 1400-1650*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009. Pp. 108-109

⁴⁵ Richard, Pp. 5

the right of Emperor Charles V to appoint new commanding officers to the Company without consulting the soldiers (Article II, enacted shortly after the 1527 Sack of Rome), lawful assembly procedures for soldiers to air grievances (Article X), and a penal offenses against the murder of civilians, the rape of women, and the desecration of altars (Article XXXVI)⁴⁶. Finally, the new *Landsknechte* and their families commit to upholding the *Artikelbrief* by swearing with the *Schwurhand* (a gesture with religious undertones, made by extending the index and middle finger on the right hand upwards) and passing under an arch made of pikes and halberds, signaling an unambiguous departure from a civilian life into a military one⁴⁷.

Once a muster was complete, all *Landsknechte*, as well as their present family members, camp followers, and draft animals would organize into the *Tross* (lit. “Baggage Train”), which would serve as a mobile home, commercial center, and fortress if necessary. The exact size of these moving communities, especially the population of women and children (See Figure 1.3⁴⁸), can be extremely difficult to ascertain, as camp audits detailing the number of non-combatants in a military campaign were rarely, if ever, recorded; as Maurizio Arfaioli noted in his examination of sixteenth-century Florentine mercenaries, the “[Camp followers’] presence is more easily inferred than proven⁴⁹.” For instance, during his initial invasion of Italy in 1494, Charles VIII of France estimated that he would have to feed approximately 50,000 mouths every day to maintain an army of 20,000 combatants⁵⁰.

⁴⁶ Nimwegen, Pp. 165

⁴⁷ Hale, *War and Society*, Pp. 150-151

⁴⁸ Lynn, 219

⁴⁹ Arfaioli, Maurizio. *The Black Bands of Giovanni: Infantry and Diplomacy during the Italian Wars (1526-1528)*. Pisa: Edizioni Plus - Pisa University Press, 2005. Pp. 68

⁵⁰ Lynn, John A. *Women, Armies, and Warfare in Early Modern Europe*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008. Pp. 12



Figure 1.3: Soldier and his Wife

Daniel Hopper, Etched Plate on Paper, c. 1530

Note that while the *Landsknecht's* wife is laden with a knapsack filled with household cooking items, she is also carrying a full purse, suggesting that women in the *Tross* held financial responsibilities in addition to domestic ones. The walking stick and pomegranate is indicative of a restless, but reasonably comfortable life.



Figure 1.4: Plate 16 of the *Schwytzer Chronica*

Johannes Stumpf, Woodcut on Paper, 1554

The plunder of enemy resources after a successful battle remained a strong economic incentive for many men and women to join *Landsknechte* companies, though plundering 'friendly' territory often occurred in cases of extreme hardship or client delinquency. Note the active participation of women and children in this depiction of plunder.

The *Landsknecht* army employed by Henry II of France (1519-1559) possessed an estimated population of 90,000 to 100,000 people when the *Tross* was considered, giving it a higher population than sixteenth-century Milan, and only slightly less populated than London⁵¹. Even beyond the mobility demanded of a mercenary company to adequately project force on behalf of a client, a large *Tross* required movement simply to avoid starvation, as local fodder and provisions would be quickly stripped bare by so many mouths. *Landsknechtshaufen* mitigated this strain on logistics by employing officers singularly charged with resource acquisition, including *Quartiermeister* (lit. “Quartermasters”), who would ride ahead of the *Tross* and arrange with town councils to sell provisions at fair prices, and *Brandmeister* (lit. “Fire masters”), who specialized in threatening villages and homesteads with arson to obtain supplies⁵². Plunder (See Figure 1.4⁵³), both as a method to acquire resources and bolster war funds, remained a strong incentive for company enlistment throughout the sixteenth century, and into the Thirty Years’ War, even as the buying power of mercenary wages drastically plummeted after the 1570’s⁵⁴. The *Tross* also gained notoriety in the public consciousness by its permissive attitude towards gambling as a method of resource allocation, as it allowed *Landsknechte* who were too sick or wounded to participate in an attack the chance to obtain a share of the plunder, and to strengthen the interpersonal bonds within the *Fähnlein*⁵⁵⁵⁶. As such, the daily life of the *Landsknecht* and his family would prove to be a fascinating genre to the consumers of the

⁵¹ Hale, *War and Society*, Pp. 159

⁵² Evans, Richard J. *The German Underworld: Deviants and Outcasts in German History*. London: Routledge, 2014. Pp. 74

⁵³ Lynn, Pp. 148

⁵⁴ Swart, Erik. "From “Landsknecht” to “Soldier”: The Low German Foot Soldiers of the Low Countries in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century." *International Review of Social History* 51, no. 01 (2006): 75. doi:10.1017/s0020859005002336.

⁵⁵ Schwartz, David G. *Roll the Bones: The History of Gambling*. Las Vegas, NV: Winchester Books, 2013. Pp. 93

⁵⁶ Hale, John Rigby. *Artists and Warfare in the Renaissance*. New Haven (Conn.): Yale University, 1991. Pp. 24-26

Reformation public culture, as it presented a tangible vision of life capable of thriving outside of the walls of cities, and the bounds of Christian morality⁵⁷.

The human costs of the democratized *guerra alla moderna* demanded a military bureaucracy firmly invested in Othering its participants from civilian society, as exemplified by the *Fähnlein*, *Haufen*, and *Tross* establishments. However, while affixing the cause of Othering squarely on the *Haufen*'s active attempts at removing the *Landsknecht* from society, it does not adequately explain why the *Landsknecht* continued to remain Othered after the drums of war had fallen silent. After all, many organizations in Early Modern Europe possessed similar ceremonies to *Der Musterung Umzug*, such as induction rituals observed in academic fraternities or journeyman groups⁵⁸, without experiencing the pervasive removal from society that *Landsknechte* experienced. The next two chapters will investigate several social and political elements emerging during the Renaissance, how they pertained to the perception of the *Landsknecht* mercenary and his family, and how they assisted in their marginalization.

⁵⁷ Ibid, Pp. 4-7

⁵⁸ Darnton, Robert. *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History*. New York: BasicBooks, 2009. Pp. 75-107

Chapter 2- The Reformation Public

Writing in 1676, English poet Andrew Marvell wrote a history of the Protestant Reformation that took special care to divorce its causes from divine providence, choosing instead to focus on what he considered to be the driving force behind the Reformation: the printing press. When the replication of knowledge relied upon the patient hand of a clerical illuminator, controversial ideas could be easily stifled before gaining popular traction. However, Marvell asserted that the advent of the printed book not only led to the flood of information endemic to the Reformation, but to stronger efforts to stem that information; “The issue of the brain was no more stift’d then [sic] the issue of the womb... that a Book should be to stand before a Jury ere it be borne unto the World, was never heard before⁵⁹.” To the poet, this dualism between dissemination and censorship not only explained the Reformation’s spread, but its violent turmoil as well, drawing upon the physical similarity between the printing press and the mechanical bullet mold to enunciate his point; “O Printing! How hast thou disturbed the Peace of Mankind! That Lead, when molded into bullets, is not so mortal as when founded into Letters!⁶⁰”

While the relationship between the printing press and religious upheaval wasn’t as bluntly direct as Marvell depicted it, the history of the press in Europe is inextricably linked with the Reformation, as well as the spread of ideas during the Renaissance in general. While the earliest woodblock prints produced in Europe date to a 1395 set of Bolognese playing cards, higher quality printed medium did not become affordable until the 1444 invention of the Gutenberg Press in the Imperial city of Strasbourg⁶¹. By the end of the Fifteenth Century, further

⁵⁹ Eisenstein, Elizabeth L. *Divine Art, Infernal Machine: The Reception of Printing in the West from First Impressions to the Sense of an Ending*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012. Pp.58

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* pp. 60-61

⁶¹ Brady, Thomas A. *German Histories in the Age of Reformations, 1400-1650*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009. Pp. 24

improvements to the Gutenberg Press, combined with more efficient paper mill production, and an increasingly wealthy pool of investors across Europe,⁶² led to literature prices accessible to a consumer base outside of the privileged classes; "...a good estimate of cost would be one or two pennies (Pfennig) per sheet, which would make for a cost of, say, eight pennies for average pamphlets of four sheets yielding up to thirty-two printed pages. This is about a third of a day's wage for a journeyman artisan, equal to the price of a hen, or a kilogram of beef, or a pound of wax, or the cost of a wooden pitchfork- not insignificant, but certainly within reach of the 'common man,' the pamphlet's intended target⁶³."

According to Lucien Febvre, by 1500, "There was scarcely a town in Germany, Italy, France, or the Low Countries that did not have a printing press," the combined production of which reached 20 million combined prints by the beginning of the Reformation, and 200 million prints by the end of the Sixteenth Century⁶⁴. The language employed by most of these early printed works, as well as the origin of the printing press, led to printed material to referred to as "The German Art," quickly becoming a foci of German identity and pride⁶⁵. A 1469 Addendum to Cicero's *Letters* included the passage, "From Italy once each German brought a book/ A German now will give more than they took," while German humanist Sebastian Brandt waxed, "Through the genius and skill of the German people, there is now a great abundance of books... Not only do the Germans excel in strength of character and arms, they hold the scepter of the world as well!⁶⁶"

⁶² Febvre, Lucien, and Henri-Jean Martin. *The Coming of the Book: The Impact of Printing, 1450-1800*. London: Verso, 2010. Pp. 36-39

⁶³ Edwards, Mark U. *Printing, Propaganda, and Martin Luther*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005. Pp. 16

⁶⁴ Febvre, Pp. 180-186

⁶⁵ Brady, Pp. 26

⁶⁶ Eisenstein, Pp. 31

This veritable wealth of information freely available to the public eye created an easy avenue through which public sentiments and newsworthy information could be shared across vast geographical expanses, creating a “Worldly Culture” in formerly insular communities⁶⁷. The milieu of public consciousness, expressed as a cycle vacillating between rumors, letters, songs, pamphlets, sermons, and pronouncements, and observable in every rung of the social ladder, propelled the writers and artists of these tracts as important scions of popular culture, with contemporary sources referring to them as “The Fourth Estate⁶⁸.” However, the precise receptiveness of the common populace towards this new “Worldly Culture” is shrouded in uncertainty, as even the most conflagrative lines of text would be rendered impotent if its reader was illiterate. The few primary accounts reflecting the literacy rates of early Sixteenth Century Europe are too anecdotal to be accurately representative, forcing experts to extrapolate upon literature sales, tax receipts, and legal records to flesh out a rural literacy rate between 5-15% and an urban literacy rate between 30-60%⁶⁹.

Perceptive to this disparity, and eager to reach a larger market, publishing houses commonly paired lines of text with illustrations designed to evoke interest in illiterate consumers by playing upon cultural symbols and tropes. Illustrated prints were pervasive enough that as early as 1465, the manufacture of biblical playing cards, illustrated broadsheets, and pamphlets far exceeded the production of bound books, causing Johann Gutenberg to proclaim that his final invention, a mechanism to replicate biblical illumination with pressed egg tempera (that was

⁶⁷ Stone, Lawrence. "Literacy And Education In England 1640-19001." *Past and Present* 42, no. 1 (1969): 69-139. doi:10.1093/past/42.1.69. Pp. 69-75

⁶⁸ Matheson, Peter. *The Rhetoric of the Reformation*. London: T & T Clark International, 2004. Pp. 27-48

⁶⁹ Stone, Pp. 70

⁷⁰ Eire, Carlos M. N. *Reformations: The Early Modern World, 1450-1650*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016. Pp. 9-12

never completed), would outperform the success of his earlier press⁷¹. Illustrated sheets themselves were often highly venerated by those who owned them, particularly if they carried a religious connotation; Printed representations of saints were believed to hasten recovery and stem gangrene if bandages were made from them⁷², holy symbols on playing card helped allay the sinful nature of gambling⁷³, and block prints made of carved wood or etched metal used to press images were akin to holy relics, due to their efficacy in spreading religious virtue⁷⁴.

Shortly after the creation of his first Landsknecht companies, Maximilian I opened a school devoted to the training of sophisticated engraving techniques and created a municipal postage system based off moveable typeset that stretched from Strasbourg to Vienna⁷⁵. Though the Archduke poured enough money in these projects to earn harsh rebuke from his father⁷⁶, he felt so personally invested in the future of print media that he would credit himself with inventing both wax stylus engraving, and the municipal postage service in *Der Weißkunig* (Figures 2.1 & 2.2)⁷⁷.

⁷¹ Childress, Diana. *Johannes Gutenberg and the Printing Press*. Minneapolis: Twenty-First Century Books, 2008. Pp. 10-16

⁷² Hind, Arthur Mayger. *An Introduction to a History of Woodcut: With a Detailed Survey of Work Done in the 15th Century*. New York: Dover, 1963. Pp. 10

⁷³ *Ibid*, Pp. 14

⁷⁴ Hind, Pp. 5-10

⁷⁵ Benecke, Gerhard. *Maximilian I (1459-1519): An Analytical Biography*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982. Pp. 156

⁷⁶ *Ibid* Pp. 157

⁷⁷ Maximilian, and Hans Burgkmair. *Weisskunig*. Edited by Marx Treitzsaurwein. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1956.



Figure 2.1: Plate 26 of *Der Weißkunig*

Art by Hans Burgkmair, Etched steel plate, 1517-1519

In this plate, Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I is depicted inventing a new method of engraving steel plates for the purpose of print reproduction.



Figure 2.2: Plate 27 of *Der Weiskönig*

Art by Hans Burgkmair, Etched steel plate, 1517-1519

In this image, Maximilian I is “inventing” a municipal post system reliant on printed form heads. While evidence exists for these inventions existing before Maximilian I’s lifetime, the amount of effort and capital he invested into these ventures were unprecedented for a European monarch. Note the presence of a *Landsknecht* on the right side of plate 27.

Unsurprisingly, given the ubiquity of mercenaries on European battlefields, and the prevalence of a *Weltkultur* (lit. “World Culture”) view enriched by a deeply illustrative print media, *Landsknechte* would become a common fixture of Renaissance era art and culture by 1500, replete with common physical characteristics and symbolic motifs⁷⁸; Historian Matthias

⁷⁸ Andersson, Christiane, and Charles Talbot. *From a Mighty Fortress: Prints, Drawings, and Books in the Age of Luther 1483-1546*. Detroit: Detroit Institute of Arts, 1983. Pp. 68

Rögg identified over 4,000 Reformation-era prints that depicted *Landsknechte* that have survived to modernity⁷⁹. The next section will engage with depictions of *Landsknechte* in the European popular media utilizing the approach pioneered by Andrew Pettegree⁸⁰ by drawing attention away from the individual subject at hand, and instead exploring how each piece speaks towards a larger movement that reinforces the cultural Othering of the *Landsknechte*. To that end, the term “genre” will be applied with a structuralist conception that describes thematic elements without delving into exclusive classification, as described by Barbara Lewalski⁸¹. Emulating this process will allow for a study of nonfictive genre divorced from reductive antiquarianism, and free to dissect the metamorphosis of European society in the Sixteenth Century in a similar manner employed by Renaissance historians, such as Philip Sidney and Stephen Gosson⁸².

⁷⁹ Rögg, Matthias. *Landsknechte Und Reisläufer: Bilder Vom Soldaten: Ein Stand in Der Kunst Des 16. Jahrhunderts*. Paderborn: Schöningh, 2002. Pp. 3

⁸⁰ Pettegree, Andrew. "The Reformation as a Media Event." *Archiv Für Reformationsgeschichte - Archive for Reformation History* 108, no. 1 (2017). doi:10.14315/arg-2017-0115. Pp 1-4

⁸¹ Lewalski, Barbara Kiefer. *Renaissance Genres: Essays on Theory, History, and Interpretation*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986. Pp. 2-8

⁸² Ann, Imbrie E. "Defining Nonfiction Genres." Edited by Barbara Kiefer Lewalski. In *Renaissance Genres: Essays on Theory, History, and Interpretation*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986. Pp. 54-69

Forsaking the City

The precise origin of German urban culture, characterized by a staunch independence that would frustrate attempts at civil unification from the Middle Ages to Bismarck's day, remains a point of contention among historians to the present day. Colonization models popular in the nineteenth and early twentieth-century⁸³ have faced harsh scrutiny from modern historians such as Peter Wilson, who argues that urbanization occurred only after pan-European migrants were promised town charters offering greater degrees of freedom in exchange for land development; "The new laws included better property rights, lower inheritance dues, and reduced feudal obligations. Migrants faced considerable hardship, as expressed by the thirteenth-century German proverb "*Tod-Not-Brot*": The first generation found death, the second experienced want, but the third finally got bread."⁸⁴ Hailing from disparate regions of Europe, each group of migrants transplanted their own systems of custom and law into the many towns of Central Europe, giving birth to communities for whom a rigid social system based on urban production was not only an edifice of civil liberty, but of survival itself⁸⁵.

By 1481, the year Maximilian I first started recruiting mercenaries drawn from German territories, almost every urbanized center in the Holy Roman Empire existed in a state of rigid

⁸³ The Colonization model of German Urbanism, known as the *Drang nach Osten*; "Drive to the East" model purports that Frankish urbanites occupied "Virgin Land" in the Rhineland.

⁸⁴ Wilson, Peter H. *Heart of Europe: A History of the Holy Roman Empire*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2016. Pp. 96

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, Pp. 94-97

social hierarchy stratified by degrees of honor dictated by occupation, gender, wealth, and piety⁸⁶. Occupations considered to be honorable, such as goldsmiths, bakers, and tailors enjoyed high status and power within their city councils, while dishonorable professions, such as leather-workers, blacksmiths, and potters, had to settle for middling positions in local society.

Tanners, gravediggers, executioners, butchers, and dog-catchers, trades that were associated with ignoble bloodshed and the grim pallor of death, were considered to be especially dishonorable (*'unehrlich'*), and were legally prohibited from habituating inner-city districts, visiting common facilities, and openly fraternizing with 'honorable' trades⁸⁷. These social layers were deeply entrenched within the character of urban living, with communal and social bonds (*Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*) being reinforced through complex systems of symbols, rituals, primary group relationships, and sumptuary laws (particularly regarding clothing and weapons see Figure 2.3)⁸⁸.

Social mobility in urban centers was nominally regulated by the local Burghermeister councils, who frequently met to adjudicate matters of social advancement (in the case of a journeyman presenting a masterpiece, for example), the settlement of besmirched honor (the disputed cause or outcome of a sanctioned duel), or the social demotion of a guild member (performing a dishonorable act unbefitting of his social station)⁸⁹. Since even casual association with a fellow citizen of a lower rank carried the risk of social opprobrium from the council, corruptive properties were attached to *unehrlich* trades, instilling a deeply rooted fear of social

⁸⁶ Harrington Pp.15-17

⁸⁷ Roper, Lyndal. *Oedipus And The Devil*. London: Routledge, 1994. Pp. 108-110

⁸⁸ Rublack, Pp. 132

⁸⁹ Eibach, Joachim. "Burghers or Town Council: Who Was Responsible for Urban Stability in Early Modern German Towns?" *Urban History* 34, no. 01 (2007): 14-26. doi:10.1017/s0963926807004300. Pp. 17-20

pollution among the middle and upper echelons of society. For example, marriages across different social levels not only required the explicit permission of the Burgher council, and the betrothed's parents, but always involved the social "pollution" of the station of the spouse—unsurprisingly, these marriages were rarely completed⁹⁰.



Figure 2.3: Augsburg Burghermeister and Wife, from the Herwart Family's *Book of Honor*
Unknown artist, Ink on Parchment, 1544

16th Century fashion among urban elites traditionally stressed loosely-worn embroidered clothing of exceptional quality to demonstrate wealth and social standing without flaunting the "sinful" human form. Black and dark ochre clothing was favored in formal wear, symbolizing intractability and regional pride, as dark colors could never be re-dyed and did not rely on foreign trade for production. The *Burghermeister* wears a signet ring and a *Fechtwaffen* sword as conspicuous symbols of social rank.

The increased wages and greater social mobility incited by the fourteenth-century Black Death crisis remained in effect far into the reigns of Holy Roman Emperors Sigismund and Frederick III, in part due to the inefficacy of Imperial wage controls over the semi-autonomous German cities⁹¹. This insured the relative stability of the Burghermeister council system, as

⁹⁰ Stuart, Kathy. *Defiled Trades and Social Outcasts: Honor and Ritual Pollution in Early Modern Germany*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2006. Pp. 24-27

⁹¹ Cohn, Samuel. "After the Black Death: Labour Legislation and Attitudes towards Labour in Late-medieval Western Europe." *The Economic History Review* 60, no. 3 (2007): 457-85. doi:10.1111/j.1468-0289.2006.00368.x.

threats of social relegation were balanced with comfortable living wages and the opportunity for family units to advance by apprenticing their children in growing higher-ranked guilds. However, by 1481 rising populations across Europe combined with the consolidation of bullion in nascent banking families (The Medici in Florence and the Fuggers in Augsburg, in particular) resulted in the stagnation of wages, the arresting of social mobility, and the decrease in buying power for the urbanized artisan⁹².

Drawing on the records of the *Oberösterreichisches Landesarchiv*, Fritz Redlich demonstrated that, in 1525, a low-skilled day laborer in the Imperial city of Linz earned 1.66 Florins a month⁹³ while a journeyman mason earned 2.50 Florins in the same period⁹⁴. By contrast, a *Landsknecht* mercenary initially started service at a pay rate of 4.00 Florins after 1500⁹⁵ - specialized soldiers such as *Dolmetscher* (Interpreters), *Köche* (Cooks), and *Pfeiffer* (Fiefers) were paid 8.00 Florins a month, *Schreiber* (Adjutants) 24.00 Florins a month, and *Feldärzte* (Field Doctors) 40.00 Florins a month⁹⁶. These pay rates, initiated by Maximilian I, and enshrined in the *Landsknecht* company's *Artikelsbriefe*, hypothetically never fluctuated for

⁹² Häberlein, Mark. *The Fuggers of Augsburg: Pursuing Wealth and Honor in Renaissance Germany*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012. Pp. 31-45

⁹³ Given a 25-day work month

⁹⁴ Calculated by the amount of pure gold present in an Italian Florin (~3.5 grams) and the current exchange rate for gold (~140 USD), that leaves a rough equivalent monthly wage of \$232 for the laborer, and \$350 for the journeyman. Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Florin>

⁹⁵ Redlich, Pp. 127-128

⁹⁶ Miller, Douglas, John Richards, and Gerry Embleton. *Landsknechte 1485-1560*. St Augustin: Siegler, 2004. Pp. 6

the duration of the mercenary's employment, adding considerable appeal for an artisan frustrated with rising inflation or increased operating costs⁹⁷.

To off-set the cost of recruitment, neophyte *Landsknechte* were required to purchase their clothing, "*Trosszeug*" (camping tools), and equipment upon passing the initial inspection by the *Obrist*, before receiving their first month's pay⁹⁸. The precise cost of introductory equipment could vary wildly due to local market forces, the quality of the items purchased, and the professional aspirations of the *Landsknecht* himself; an aspiring *Koch* would have to purchase much different equipment than a *Schwarzer Ritter*, for instance. A correspondence written by Duke Albrecht of Saxony to Maximilian I in 1495 requesting funds to clothe his *Landsknechte*, equated two sets of military clothing to 10 Florins, which Maximilian I agreed was fair⁹⁹.

Another sixteenth-century source related by Graz historian Hans von Zwiedineck-Südenhorst places the price of a halberd at 45 Kreuzers¹⁰⁰, a sword varying between 1.5 to 4.0 Florins, an Ashwood pike at 36 Kreuzers, handguns between 2 and 7 Florins, and a suit of field plate armor at 12 Florins¹⁰¹. An urbanized artisan dissatisfied with his pay and strict social atmosphere would

⁹⁷ Millar, *Military Affairs*, Pp. 96-97

⁹⁸ Miller, Pp. 4-5

⁹⁹ Redlich, Pp. 129

¹⁰⁰ 1 Florin = 60 Kreuzers

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, Pp. 130-131

be able to sell the tools of his trade to pay for his new equipment, a factor that enterprising recruiters and unscrupulous quartermasters were quick to seize upon¹⁰².

By 1490, printed broadsheets known as “*Bilderbogen*” had been commonly employed by government and religious officials to disseminate information in a public space in a more cost-effective manner than bound books or pamphlets. Comprising of a single large sheet that would be tacked onto walls or signposts (See Figure 2.4), multiple images often flowed together to form a narrative, and were accompanied by printed text intended to be read aloud to the benefit of the viewing audience¹⁰³. While military *Bilderbogen* often did pictorialize acts of romantic chivalry to better legitimize a ruling patron, such as the broadsheet publication of Ludovico Ariosto’s 1513 work, *Orlando Furioso*, thousands of broadsheet prints intended for public display were populated by *Landsknechte* and their lives outside of the walls of the city¹⁰⁴. Accomplished military enterprisers, such as Guillaume von der Mark, his nephew Robert II, and the knight Franz von Sickingen frequently plied the inns and taverns along the Meuse Valley and the Ardennes in the early years of the Reformation, spending considerable sums to publish and hang broadsheets lionizing the lifestyle of the mercenary, with Sickingen successfully recruiting

¹⁰² Martines, Lauro. *Furies: War in Europe, 1450-1700*. New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2014. Pp. 52

¹⁰³ Ruff, Julius R. *Violence in Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. Pp. 14-17

¹⁰⁴ Sandberg, Brian. *War and Conflict in the Early Modern World: 1500-1700*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016. Pp. 41-42

12,000 *Landsknechte* in one year alone¹⁰⁵. In 1529, Printmaker Hans Guldenmunde printed, under compulsory Imperial contract¹⁰⁶, two series of *Bilderbogen* encouraging *Landsknechte* recruitment as the forces of Suleiman I marched closer to Vienna¹⁰⁷.



Figure 2.4: Brothel Scene

The Brunswick Monogrammist, Painting, c. 1525-1545

Painted by an anonymous Netherlandish painter, *Brothel Scene* plays into the ‘Tavern’ genre popular with sixteenth-century painters, which depicted peasant or outsiders in their home setting, far away from the homes of the wealthy commissioners. Note the *Bilderbogen* tacked up on the central wall panel displaying various *Landsknechte* and a “Little Ursula” scene. Danielle Skjelver asserts that the mason marks and scrawling on the wall represents a written form of *Rotwelsch*, a thieves’ argot popular with itinerant traders, artisans, and mercenaries¹⁰⁸.

¹⁰⁵ Redlich, Pp. 35

¹⁰⁶ Guldenmunde’s print house was drafted after he published several works mocking Hans Sachs in 1527.

¹⁰⁷ Hale, *Artists and Warfare in the Renaissance*, Pp. 62

¹⁰⁸ Skjelver, .Pp. 41-44

Niklas Stör, a print master of Nuremberg who studied in the workshop of Hans Burgkmair, produced hundreds of images of *Landsknechte*, of which dozens of plates survive to the present day. One print titled “The Cobbler” (see Figure 2.5¹⁰⁹) is accompanied by a block of text, which translates as;

“May Shoemaking go to the Devil;
I’ve had to suffer too long
Before making a week’s wage.
However, things are different over there.
I want to take up something else
And go wandering in a doublet and trousers
To see if I can’t earn some money in the war.
I’ll leave this place like all the other good fellows.”

Another print titled “The Tailor” (see Figure 2.6¹¹⁰) has the following text included, translated;

“Stay, good fellow, I want to go with you.
What has happened to you is my fate too;
I must sit long hours for little pay
With which I can hardly survive.
Therefore I must take up something else

¹⁰⁹ Moxey, Keith P. F. *Peasants, Warriors, and Wives: Popular Imagery in the Reformation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004. Pp. 90

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.* Pp. 90

And start sewing with a hop pole¹¹¹

In the open field to the sound of pipes and drums

And see if I can't earn a little money there.

These depictions of *Landsknechte*, through their body language and positioning, display a sense of candidness bordering on the vulnerable, as they expose their backs and emotional apprehensions to the viewer. Humor is also employed to further elucidate the humanity of the subjects casting away the society they were born into; The tailor musing that he would,

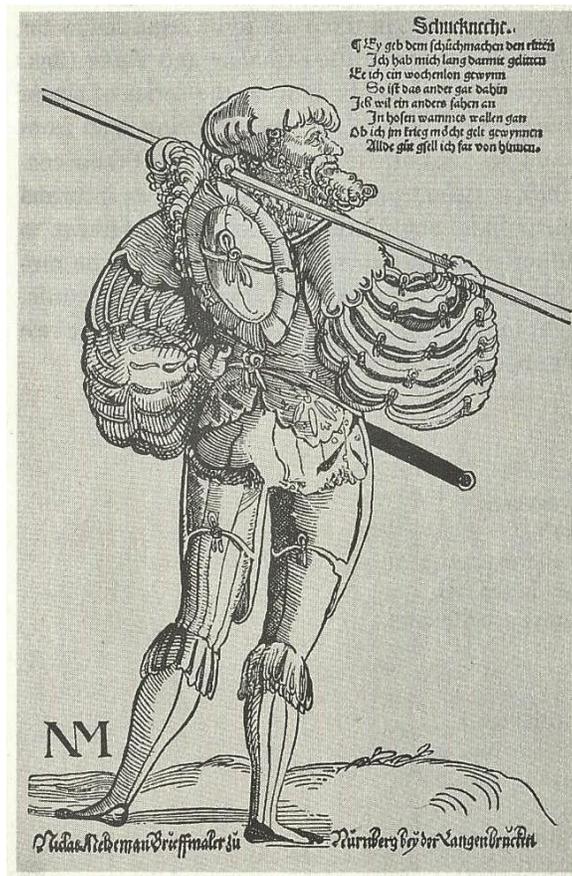


Figure 2.5: The Cobbler

Niklas Stör, Woodblock Print on Paper, c. 1530

It is worth noting that these artisans already possess the requisite clothing and weaponry, implying that they have already sold their tools, signifying a permanent break from their guild. Note the distinctive St. Andrew's Cross cut into the hip of the Cobbler.

¹¹¹ In this context, "Hop pole" was a slang term for a pike.

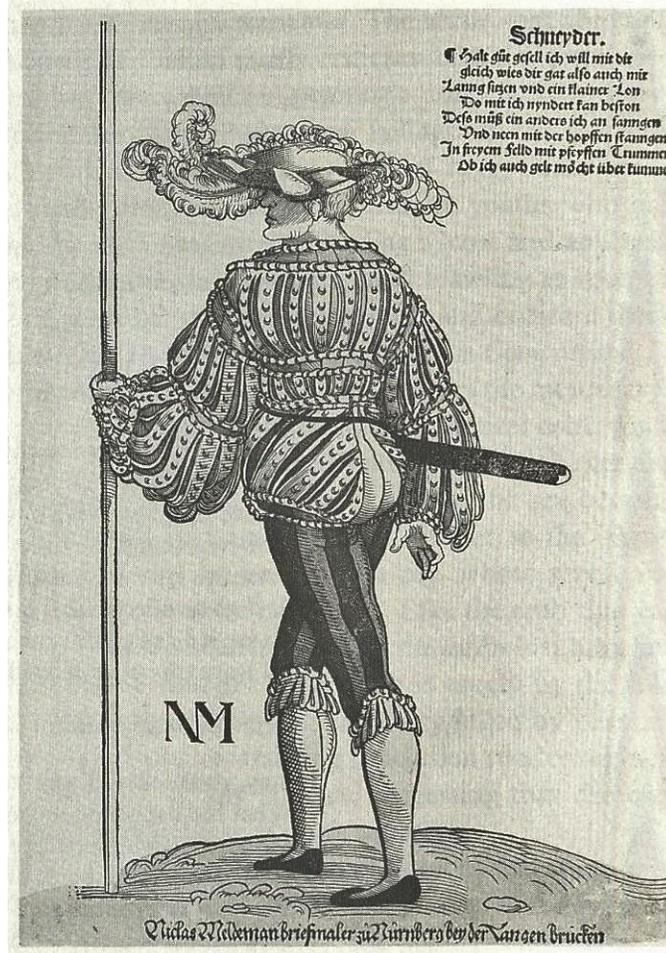


Figure 2.6: The Tailor
 Niklas Stör, Woodblock Print on Paper, c. 1530

“Start sewing with a hop pole,” to the command of drummers and fifers further normalizes the act of rebellion against urban society by forsaking it entirely.

Once free from the social stratification of the city, and sorted into a *Fähnlein* within the *Landsknecht* company, former artisans and students could apply their skills in the field to obtain better paying positions¹¹². For instance, Martin Schwarz, a journeyman cobbler, joined one of the first *Landsknecht* companies in 1481 to escape the destitution of Augsburg. Within a few years, he was leading his own company of 2,000 *Landsknechte* through several successful campaigns

¹¹² Nimwegen, Pp. 161

against the Flemish Rebellion before being killed by Henry VII's forces at the Battle of Stoke Field in 1487¹¹³. King Francis I of France's primary point of contact when recruiting *Landsknechte* for his own military in 1515 was *Hauptman* Sebastian Vogelsberger, who was a baker before taking up the sword¹¹⁴. Poet Georg Niedeck decided to join a Landsknecht company after completing his bachelor's degree at the University of Marburg, condemning the terrible economic conditions of the city as his primary motivation for leaving; "When poverty oppressed me too much and became too bad, I tarnished and was tired of living in this fraternity furthermore¹¹⁵." Profiting from the skill he learned at the University, Niedeck became a scribe for colonel Corn Pennink in 1547, and eventually was promoted to the rank of *Hauptmann*.

Unsurprisingly, the mobility demanded of *Landsknecht* companies bitterly conflicted with the cultural ethos of both rural and urban communities who considered a life anchored to a singular geographic area with immobile property intrinsically tied to familial honor and duty. Erasmus of Rotterdam gives voice to this conflict in his 1523 work, *The Soldier and Carthusian*, describing a conversation between a Carthusian monk and a *Landsknecht* freshly returned from a long campaign in Italy. Upon being asked if he regrets staying behind, the Carthusian replies; "Spaciousness doesn't matter so long as the comforts of life aren't lacking. Many men seldom or never leave the city in which they are born. Were they forbidden to step out of it, they'd be most unhappy and obsessed by an extraordinary longing to quit the city. This is the common mood, which I myself do not share¹¹⁶." After explaining how he remained tranquil within the confines

¹¹³ Parrott, David. *The Business of War: Military Enterprise and Military Revolution in Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014. Pp. 57

¹¹⁴ Hale, *War and Society*, Pp. 147

¹¹⁵ Rütger, Stefanie. "Dangerous Travellers; Identity, Profession, and Gender Among the German Landsknechts (1450-1570)." Edited by Marianne O'Doherty. In *Travels and Mobilities in the Middle Ages: From the Atlantic to the Black Sea*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2015. Pp. 195

¹¹⁶ Erasmus, Desiderius. *The Colloquies of Erasmus*. Translated by Craig R. Thompson. Chicago: University of

of the city, the Carthusian fires back at the *Landsknecht* who seeks a doctor for his ‘Spanish Pox’¹¹⁷; “I’ve explained my choice. Now I ask you in turn to explain yours and to tell *me* when all good doctors disappeared. You left a young wife and children at home and off you went to the army, hired for a trifling wage to cut men’s throats, and that at risk of your own life. For you were dealing with armed men, not toadstools or poppies!”¹¹⁸”

Hans Sachs, a master singer and prolific Lutheran writer seated in Nuremberg, also wrote many tracts condemning young men who joined *Landsknecht* companies, equating the willingness to abandon urban life with a moral failing on the part of the mercenary¹¹⁹. In his 1532 poem, *Argument between a Housemaid and a Young Man*, Sachs uses a dialogue between two young citizens to deride *Landsknecht* dress and custom, while his *Comparison between a Mercenary and a Crab* states that both subjects are clad in pitted armor, are detritus-eating lowly vermin, and lose limbs to combat so often, that they have learned to replace them at will¹²⁰¹²¹. For Sebastian Franck, a humanist professor at the University of Ingolstadt, mobility was the primary sin of the *Landsknecht*, as it represented the penultimate betrayal of the communal *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* ethos critical to urban society; “[The *Landsknechte*] flee from their old, poor and sick parents, leave their good wives and uneducated lovely children, their sweet home country and also their duty to work¹²².”

Chicago Press, 1965. Pp. 129

¹¹⁷ i.e. Syphilis

¹¹⁸ Ibid. Pp. 131

¹¹⁹ Moxey, Pp. 88

¹²⁰ In the *Landsknecht*’s case, it is with “an iron replacement,” probably referencing Götz von Berlichingen, a rogue knight and *Landsknecht* leader known for replacing his right hand with an iron prosthetic after it was lost in battle in 1504.

¹²¹ Sachs, Hans. *Hans Sachs*. Edited by J. Nover, Verlagsanstalt Und Druckerei A.-G. (Vormals J.F. Richter), 1895. Pp.208-14, 242-50

¹²² Rüter, Pp. 2070

The conspicuous association between recruitment *Bilderbogen* and the *Landsknecht* representations in popular culture cemented the mercenary's ambiguous image as the paradigmatic example of the betrayal of *Gemeinschaft*, and the failure of urban councils to provide economic opportunities for its younger generations. However, considering recent historical review challenging the traditional notion of a primarily stagnant Early Modern population¹²³, the vilification of physical mobility alone fails to account for the Othering of the *Landsknecht*. Existent memoirs of contemporary mercenaries can contest that stereotypical assertion as well. Urs Graf, a *Reisläufer* who fought with and against *Landsknechte* through the turn of the sixteenth century, maintained a wife and a moderately successful goldsmithing business in Zurich, which he was able to freely return to when not on campaign¹²⁴. Likewise, Paul Dolnstein, a *Landsknecht* and master bridge-builder, was able to maintain a good standing in his guild during his service, completing the restoration of Torgau bridge for Prince Frederick of Saxony in 1499¹²⁵. Accounts such as these demonstrate a semblance of metamorphosis between the domination of “part-time” mercenary service to “full-time” *Landsknechte* who held no sentimental attachment for the lands from which they hailed from¹²⁶.

While mobility did play a part in social and legal Othering of the *Landsknechte*, other thematic factors must come into account that better supplement the reasoning behind the marginalization of people intrinsic to the survival of the burgeoning fiscal-military state.

¹²³ Wiesner, Merry E. *Early Modern Europe, 1450 - 1789*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2013. Pp. 17-19

¹²⁴ Graff, Urs. *Urs Graf*. Edited by Emil Major and Erwin Gradmann. London: Home & Van Thal, 1947. Pp. 7-14

¹²⁵ Skjelver, Pp. 10-13

¹²⁶ Oman, *War in the Sixteenth Century*, Pp. 78-80

Gendered Notions of the *Landsknecht*

Based on the abundance of “cultural fragments” available, including court transcripts, written anecdotes, folklore, and artistic representations, historical research of the last twenty years shows that the German Renaissance was accentuated by a crisis in gendered power relations, even if the precise nature and effect of that crisis continues to be hotly debated by Renaissance historians¹²⁷. By the reign of Frederick III, martial ethos and masculine identity had been intertwined in the social and legal custom to a degree that shocked contemporary writers hailing from other regions of Europe. A Roman cardinal writing in 1437 remarked, “All Germany is a gang of bandits and, among the nobles, the more grasping the more glorious,” while an anonymous priest writing in 1438 noted that the marriage between power and masculine violence even extended to the ecclesiarchy, bemoaning that bishops, “make war and cause unrest in the world; they behave like secular lords, which is, of course, what they are¹²⁸.” Burghers in particular were expected to act with this martial ethos in mind as, prior to the domination of city councils during the reign of Charles V, they were the first line of defense against any crisis that would threaten the safety of the town¹²⁹. Public rituals, sumptuary laws, sanctioned duels, civil processions, and festivals (see figure 2.7¹³⁰) edified the notion that the protections offered were an extension of masculine violence, a phenomenon observable through all strata of urban and rural communities.

¹²⁷ Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil*, Pp. 39-42

¹²⁸ Brady, Pp. 96

¹²⁹ Eibach, Pp. 14-15

¹³⁰ Moxey, Pp. 36



Figure 2.7: Detail from *Large Peasant Holiday*
Sebald Becham, Print on Paper, c. 1530

Different activities of a large festival are presented here in one image, though in reality, these events would occur over the course of a day. In addition to music, dancing, and horseback racing, other events serve to lionize masculine violence and engrain it into the social fabric of the community. A wrestling match, walking on the edges of *Langenmeißer* (a weapon characterized with the burgher), and climbing a pole to plant a guild flag near a caged cockerel all carry masculine undertones obvious to a contemporary observer. A brawl involving brandished *Langenmeißer* and a severed hand suggests that the interstice between masculinity and violence often became physical at these festivals. Note the presence of a *Landsknecht* at the gambling table on the lower-left corner¹³¹.

In addition to the ready embrace of violent force in service to the community, masculine virtue was also dependent on other factors in a person's life, such as the stratum of his profession, participation in local governance, and the quality and quantity of his possessions. The *Hausvater* ("House Father"), the paradigmatic ideal of masculine and civil virtue in Reformation normative ideology was expected to act and dress within his station, strictly govern his household in accordance with Christian values, and maintain a respectable holding of both operating capital, tools, and raw workable materials. Insults against any of these qualities, such

¹³¹ Ibid, Pp. 35-38

as an accusation of threatening a household's possessions by gambling or falling into debt, were considered an attack on masculine identity as well as moral character, and usually demanded swift remediation through litigious action¹³². Through this relationship, the "paradox" of the burgher identity, tersely balanced between gracious civility and masculine violence, could be settled and utilized, not just in the protection of the city-state, but in the philosophical reconciliation of where an individual stood within his community¹³³.

However, a martial ethic that was inexorably linked to the long-term prosperity of a stationary community was incongruous to the style of warfare emergent during the Renaissance. The survival of the Holy Roman Imperial state under Maximilian I depended on the ability to project sustained military force to a dizzying variety of geographic destinations, requiring professional mercenary companies to march or sail hundreds of miles a year¹³⁴. With the ownership of landed property becoming increasingly impossible for most *Landsknechte*, expressions of masculine pride and communal identity were sought elsewhere. Many songs penned by *Landsknechte* that survive to the present day lionize the act of mobility itself as an expression of freedom and martial virtue. The song '*Ein new Lied wie die Landsknecht leben müssen*' ('A New Song on How Landsknechts Have to Live'), written by Hans Witzstat in 1530, invokes men to join his company, comparing the mobility of *Landsknechte* to the crusades of chivalrous orders like the Knights Hospitaller or the Templars¹³⁵. Another *Landsknecht* song writer, Jörg Graff, famous for losing his eyes in a brawl with his fellow mercenaries, also drew the correlation between the *Landsknechte* and earlier knightly orders in his song, '*Ein schön Lied*

¹³² Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil*, Pp.108-109

¹³³ Tlusty, B. Ann. *The Martial Ethic in Early Modern Germany Civic Duty and the Right of Arms*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. Pp. 267

¹³⁴ Parrott, Pp. 57

¹³⁵ Rüther, Pp. 194

von der Kriegsleut Orden ('A beautiful song from the Warrior Order'), including the verse, "He must tramp around the land, until he hears of hostilities between Lords. Then, there is no country so far that he will not hasten there in honor until he finds his calling¹³⁶."

The increasing removal of landed proprietorship from the culture of the itinerant mercenary also imputed the growth of the violent aspect of an itinerant masculine identity to the extent that, by 1500, masculinity and war as cultural norms were indistinguishable in European culture¹³⁷. It is difficult to state with certainty whether European popular culture was influenced by a *Landsknecht* fashion born from plunder (The "invention" of slashed clothing was anecdotally ascribed to *Reisläufer* stripping the clothes off of Burgundian nobles after the 1476 Battle of Grandson¹³⁸), or if mercenaries adopted existent fashion trends as a demonstration of the riches won in battle¹³⁹. Maximilian I fully embraced the conflation between masculine identity and bellicosity, believing so fervently that martial prowess was a greater signatory of legitimized rule than noble trappings or titles that he would often wear the armor of a *Doppelsöldner*, and fight on foot with his *Landsknechte* in major battles (See figure 2.8 and 2.9). One example of this attitude being put into practice was described in *Der Weißkunig*, where Maximilian I, after personally leading his men to victory at the Battle of Therouanne, sits with a captured French nobleman, who does not recognize the young Archduke due to his plate armor. After Maximilian I removes his helmet, "...the noble prisoner saw his face and thought: This is not the young [Maximilian I], for they would not have let him go into battle, but rather for a

¹³⁶ Ibid, Pp. 198

¹³⁷ Hale, *Artists and Warfare in the Renaissance*. Pp. 50-55

¹³⁸ Laver, James. *The Concise History of Costume and Fashion*. New York: Scribner, 1979. Pp. 78

¹³⁹ Payne, Blanche, Geitel Winakor, Jane Farrell-Beck, and Elizabeth Curtis. *The History of Costume from Ancient Mesopotamia through the Twentieth Century*. New York: HarperCollins, 1992. Pp. 241

captain, who leads such an army, he is too young; on account of the reverence, such as one only shows to a king, he thought that it must be someone special...¹⁴⁰” The nobleman is then sent back to the distant King of France to report that the battle had been lost, and to enunciate to the reader the superiority of the Maximilian I’ leadership¹⁴¹. Even if the account of the battle falls prey to personal embellishment, it demonstrates that, to Maximilian I, direct participation in the conduct of war was a far greater elucidation of legitimacy and masculine power than any monarchical title.

Where Maximilian I and his *Landsknechte* travelled, so too did their fashions leave impressions upon the popular culture of Europe, as flowing, loosely -belted garments that hid

¹⁴⁰ *Weißkunig*, 1956, Pp. 352

¹⁴¹ Silver, Pp.79



Figure 2.8: Plate 71 of *Der Weiskünig*

Hans Burgkmair, Etched steel plate, 1517-1519

While European leaders still presided over major battles in person during the Renaissance, most chose to lead on horseback away from the actual combat to minimize danger to themselves. By contrast, Maximilian I not only made a habit of personally engaging with enemy forces, but did so on foot alongside his *Landsknechte*, causing several injuries during his career. Plate 71 depicts Maximilian I personally treating with his men, including a *Landsknecht Hauptmann* in the center, and Hungarian auxiliaries to the left..



Figure 2.9: Plate 76 of *Der Weißkunig*

Hans Burgkmair, Etched steel plate, 1517-1519

Plate 76 enunciates the flow of the battle, rather than singular actors, with Maximilian I's actions, leading his infantry on foot, and exchanging blows with the Swiss, being described in the accompanied text of the autobiography. In this image, the Imperial *Landsknechte* are identifiable by the St. Andrew's Cross and sparking flint motif adorning on their clothing and banners, while the retreating Swiss *Reisläufer* are depicted wearing the white Theban Cross. This visual identity would perpetuate in the works of other artists in the early sixteenth century as a method of readily differentiating German and Swiss mercenaries.

the natural shape of the wearer fell way to clothing that crisply outlined the curves of the human body, whilst artificially embossing masculine traits with puffed shoulders and bulging codpieces. *Landsknecht* inspired fashions took root in teenagers and young adults eager to prove their masculinity, including the growing of beards, the cropping of hair, and the wearing of

*Katzbalgers*¹⁴², much to the chagrin of older generations (see figures 2.10 and 2.11). Erasmus derided *Landsknecht* fashion in *The Soldier and the Carthusian*, stating, “How many colors are you painted with? No bird changes his feathers as much as that. And then how slashed everything is, how unusual or outlandish! Add to that your haircut, half-shaven beard, and the tangled bush on your upper lip, sticking out on each side like a cat’s whiskers¹⁴³!” Lutheran writer Andreas Musculus lambasted those who wore *Landsknecht* clothing for its roguish appeal, stating that, “Clothes do not damn you/ That is true/ neither do they sanctify you/ that is also true so that remains true as well/ as the proverb says/ the feathers show you what bird it is... So if your slashed hose does not damn you/ so your own heart still does/ which you have revealed through such clothing/ your clothes show what sense/ thoughts and spirit you must have¹⁴⁴.”

Other voices critiqued the material costs associated with such clothing, stating that the dependence on Italian weavers and dye-makers was asserting a subversive influence, not just on localized industry, but on the cultural identity of the German city itself. German humanist Conrad Celtis, while under the patronage of Maximilian I, wrote in 1492, “But from the south we are oppressed by a sort of distinguished slaver, and under the impulse of greed, that old and accursed aid to the acquirement of comfort and luxury, new commercial ventures are constantly established, by which our country is drained of its wonderful natural wealth while we pay to others what we need for ourselves¹⁴⁵.” Still others claimed that *Landsknecht* clothing were “Hellish flames” that not only expressed vanity and hubris, but also “encouraged servitude to the

¹⁴² Derived from the Swiss ‘*Baselard*’, the *Katzbalger* (lit. “Cat-gutter”) was the characteristic weapon of the *Landsknecht* by the 16th Century, identifiable by a broad edge, flared pommel, and figure-8 hand guard.

¹⁴³ Erasmus, *Colloquies*, Pp. 128

¹⁴⁴ Rublack, Pp. 110

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, Pp. 131

world, the flesh, and the Devil¹⁴⁶.” Lastly, as stated by Lyndal Roper, the pronouncement of masculine sexuality that *Landsknecht* fashion removed the temptation of



Figure 2.10: Page 10 of *The Book of Clothes*

Matthäus Schwarz, Ink on Paper, Completed c. 1560

Matthäus Schwarz, an accountant for the influential Fugger family, compiled an annotated book describing his fashion choices as he grew up in Augsburg from 1496 to 1560. Written on Page 10, when Schwarz was 13 years old, is “In Summer of 1510, my father clothed me in this manner.” The loose mantle and drab colors reflect the ideal manner of dress of traditional burghers imposed on a boy unable to buy his own clothes.

¹⁴⁶ Burke, Peter. *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*. Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1994. Pp. 210-213



Figure 2.11: Page 43 of *The Book of Clothes*

Matthäus Schwarz, Ink on Paper, Completed c. 1560

At age 14, Schwarz begins to dress himself in *Landsknecht* fashion, and would continue to do so throughout his life. Page 43, when Schwarz is “23 and 1/3 years old,” stands out due to the scrawl added below the caption stating, “My waist had a width of one ell (~45 inches).” Whereas a wide girth had been a sign of fashionable prosperity in previous generations, it is a reason for discontent for Schwarz, as it impedes his martial aptitude, and thus, his perceived masculinity¹⁴⁷.

flesh from the sole dominion of femininity; “Their precocious virility was disturbing because it was an excess of masculinity so extreme as to escape sexual categories altogether¹⁴⁸.”

¹⁴⁷ Schwarz, Matthäus, and Veit Konrad Schwarz. *The First Book of Fashion: The Books of Clothes of Matthäus and Veit Konrad Schwarz of Augsburg*. Edited by Ulinka Rublack, Maria Hayward, and Jenny Tiramani. London: Bloomsbury Academic, an Imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing, Plc, 2015. Pp. 64, 94

¹⁴⁸ Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil*, Pp. 118

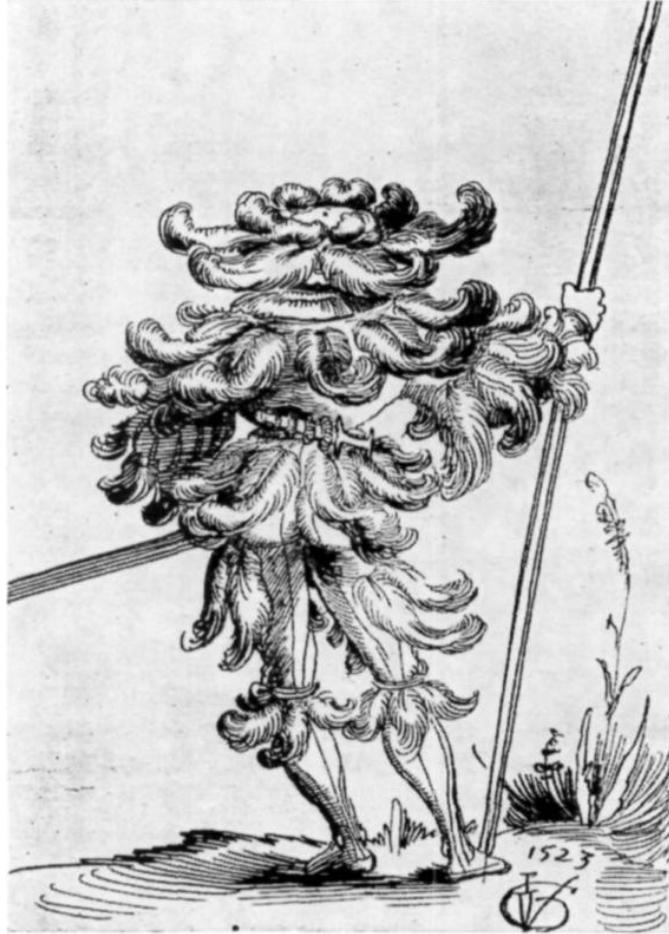


Figure 2.12: Satirical depiction of a *Landsknecht*

Urs Graf, Etched Plate on Paper, 1523 and 1519

Living as a Goldsmith and Printmaker in Zurich, Urs Graf also fought as a *Reisläufer*, and thus possessed an especially vitriolic attitude towards *Landsknechte*. Figure 2.12 lampoons the proclivity of *Landsknechte* to wear ostrich plumes as symbols of masculine triumph, as well as the “bird-like” style of slashed clothing.

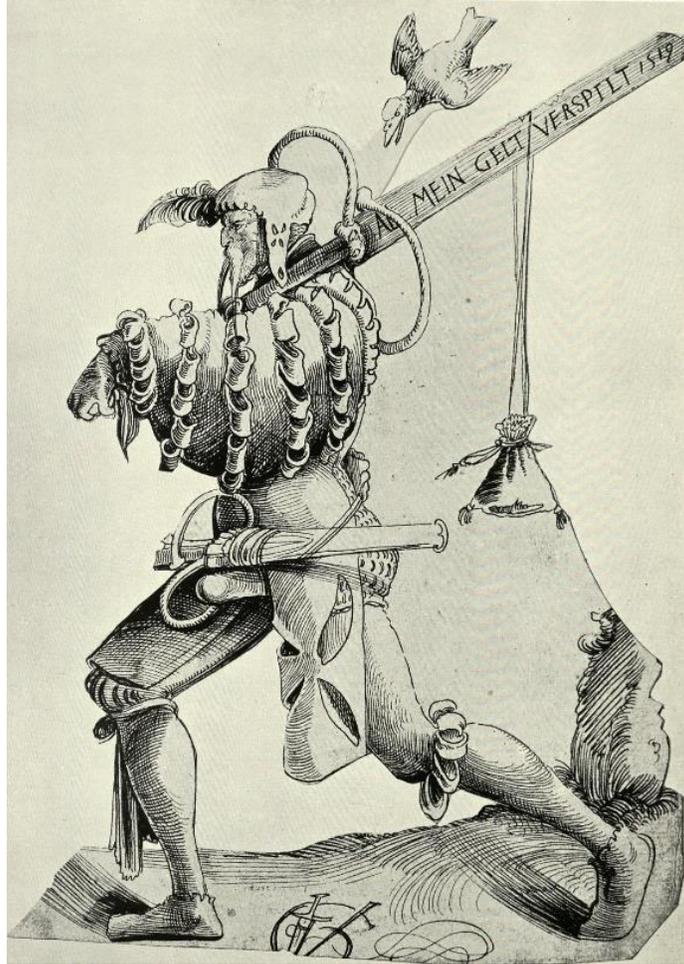


Figure 2.13: Satirical depiction of a *Landsknecht*

Urs Graf, Etched Plate on Paper, 1523 and 1519

Figure 2.13 is thrusting a comically large codpiece through the quillon of his *Katzbalger* as he marches. The writing on the blade of his *Zweihander* translates as “My money is gambled away,” while an empty purse with a missing bottom dangles behind the subject. Both subjects display a vainglorious sexuality that parodies both the style of the *Landsknecht* and the violence which defined their livelihoods.

Landsknechte themselves became sexual objects in minds of the Reformation Public, which often employed symbolism to widely express sexual escapades too graphic for general consumption (See Figures 2.12 and 2.13¹⁴⁹). One example of this verbose symbolism is represented in the song “*Der Landsknecht und die Wirtin*” (“The *Landsknecht* and the Landlady”), which, on the surface, is about a mercenary attempting to lodge in an Inn owned by

¹⁴⁹ Major, Pp. 14

a married landlady after she has bolted the front door shut. However, the symbolism employed in the verses, “I don’t know what he promised her/ So that she opened the lock-bar” strongly infers that the lock-bar represents the landlady’s chastity, which the *Landsknecht* eventually defeats through his charisma and sexual appeal¹⁵⁰. Siennese playwright Pietro Aretino used the image of the *Landsknecht* in his 1532 sexual farce, *Ragionamento*, where he depicts one attempting to break into a nunnery dressed as a priest, while Agnolo Firenzuola utilized contemporary military imagery in a sexual context in his 1533 comedy *Il Marescalo*¹⁵¹.

Other writers portrayed the virility of the *Landsknecht* not as a source of comedy, but as a disturbing element of feminine seduction; Anglican reformer Thomas Becon chided a company of *Landsknechte* under Tudor contract by proclaiming, “What whoredom is there committed among them! What maid escapeth unflowered? What wife departeth unpolluted¹⁵²?” An unknown French commentator wrote in 1543, “All women mainly love men of action and turn above all to those of war. Did not Venus herself turn from Phoebus, the most beautiful of the gods, to Mars¹⁵³?” In German print, the theme of the virile *Landsknecht* seducing a virtuous woman into a life of mercenary perdition manifested in the stock character “Little Ursula,” as termed by Renaissance historian John Lynn¹⁵⁴. In 1568, engraver Erhard Schön

¹⁵⁰ Rüther, Pp. 202

¹⁵¹ Simons, Patricia. *The Sex of Men in Premodern Europe a Cultural History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. Pp. 107

¹⁵² Hale, *War and Society in Renaissance Europe*, Pp. 123

¹⁵³ *Ibid.* Pp. 124

¹⁵⁴ Lynn, John A. *Women, Armies, and Warfare in Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge University Press, 2008. Pp. 15-17



Figure 2.14: *The Cobbler Hans and his Girl Ursula*
 Erhard Schön, Woodcut on Paper, 1568

Here, the cobbler has not only already exchanged his tools for *Landsknecht* equipment, but given the halberd and fluted plate armor, is determined to become a *Doppelsöldner*, an especially dangerous position in the *Haufen*. The armored codpiece, position of the *Katzbalger*, and orientation of the halberd also serve a symbolism for over-stated masculinity. Ursula is shown wearing clothing suited for long-distance walking, including a hiked dress, sun hat, closed bonnet, and a leather back satchel.

illustrated a young couple conversing in a manner mocking the earlier recruitment *Bilderbogen*

(See Figure 2.14¹⁵⁵). The poem included with the image translates as;

Little Ursula;

My Hans I want to run with thee

¹⁵⁵ Lynn, Pp. 17

To the Bright Band in Friuli.
Perhaps so much may be my winning
Much more than ever I could whilst spinning.
With yarn and twine I'll spin no more
To become thereafter a Cobbler's whore.

Cobbler Hans;
In good health, pretty little Ursula
Shall we go hence to Friuli.
The making of shoes I will abandon.
When in many wars I have won
Great wealth and manifold honors,
Who then knows whom fortune favors?

Printed over thirty years after Niklas Stör's *Bilderbogen* series, and nine years after the end of the Italian Wars, Hans and Ursula's grandiose dreams about achieving titles and riches on the battlefield possesses a tragic quality would arouse pity in a contemporary observer. Whereas the masculinity on display in Stör's work was indicative of righteous strength seeking its proper outlet on the battlefield, the masculine quality Hans exudes serves only as the progenitor of misery and destitution for both Hans and Ursula¹⁵⁶.

¹⁵⁶ Moxey, Pp. 90-91

The use of the term “whore” (*Huren*), as Little Ursula describes herself, must also be approached with a degree of historical context pertaining to the vital role that women held in the *Tross* beyond their capacity as domestic and sexual partners. As John Lynn notes, the majority of skilled labor, including financial management, resource acquisition, equipment repair, and first aid, fell upon the responsibility of the women of the *Tross*¹⁵⁷. Specialized officers within *Landsknecht* companies called *Hurenweibel* (lit. “whore sergeant”), who were charged with ensuring that labor accords between mercenary and sutler were amicable, and that petty disagreements were mediated before erupting into violence¹⁵⁸, speaks towards the notion that feminine labor was considered an absolute necessity to the conduct of Renaissance warfare. Lynn asserts that the derogatory connotation behind the term “*Huren*” by contemporary writers stems from the abandonment of normalized social expectations placed on young men and women, noting that many references to male *Landsknechte* as “*Huren*” also exist¹⁵⁹.

The middle sixteenth-century also witnessed the sexualized image of the *Landsknecht* being utilized when problematizing sexuality across confessional lines. Martin Luther’s relationship with Katharina von Bora during the Reformation challenged traditional attitudes towards sex and marriage, blurred the distinction between public and private spheres of life, and called into dispute the intrinsic value of self-denial and celibacy¹⁶⁰. Radical movements branching off Luther’s Reformation opined that the laws regarding marriage and sexuality could be completely rewritten to allow for more libertine sexual pursuits within the bounds of marriage, such as the Anabaptist Movement’s embrace of polygamous marriage¹⁶¹.

¹⁵⁷ Lynn, Pp. 14-16

¹⁵⁸ Richards, Pp. 27

¹⁵⁹ Lynn, Pp. 18-19

¹⁶⁰ Eire, Pp. 715

¹⁶¹ Arthur, Anthony. *The Tailor King: The Rise and Fall of the Anabaptist Kingdom of Münster*. New York, NY:

However, after the Anabaptist Rebellion of Münster was crushed in 1535, mainstream reformers embraced, as Lyndal Roper stated, "...the universalization of household workshop values which both ensured the orthodox movement's popular support and steered it away from its revolutionary potential¹⁶²." The desire to enshrine a version of sexual morality anchored to the traditional *pater familias* model drove many Protestant cities such as Augsburg to establish courts of moral decency, such as the Discipline Lords and Marriage Judges, and to publish *Bilderbogen* extolling the benefits of monogamous domesticity¹⁶³.

One example, etched by Augsburg engraver Jörg Breu the Younger, depicts the "The life age of Man" as an arch bridged between a rocking cradle and a closed tomb, and bound by the image of God's judgement holding dominion over the world (See Figure 2.15). Significantly, the personifications of the subject's youthful years are clad in *Landsknecht* clothing, and exhibit a changing relationship towards the specter of death that hovers over the arch of life; The ten-year-old subject sits placidly while actively ignoring Death, while the twenty-year-old subject is shown in the midst of leaping to his feet, clutching the shaft of his banner, and defiantly staring Death in the face. By contrast, the thirty-year-old subject is shown collapsing in despair and horror, having been humbled by the arrows of mortality, while the forty-year-old subject, having discovered the immortal property of holy scripture, and the gift of eternal life it offers, decides to devote the rest of his life to civility and domesticity.

Dunne, 2000. Pp. 92-94

¹⁶² Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil*, Pp. 97

¹⁶³ Roper, Lyndal. *The Holy Household: Women and Morals, in Reformation Augsburg*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001. Pp. 74-82

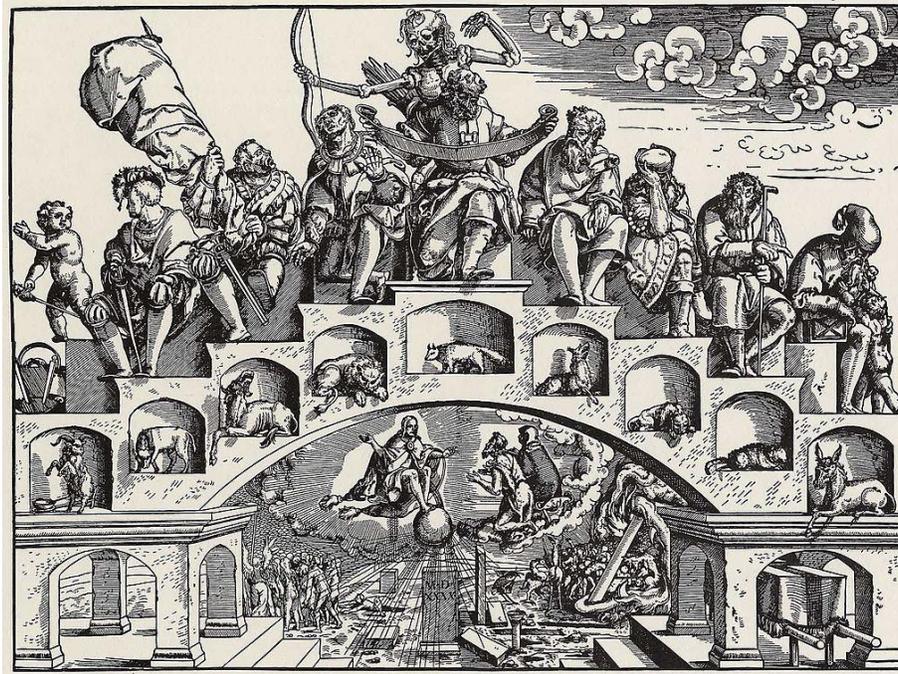


Figure 2.15: *Die Lebens alter des Mannes* (“The Life Age of the Man”)

Jörg Breu the Younger, Etched Plate on Paper, 1540

The steps comprising this arch pictorialize ten-year intervals within the man’s life, starting at infancy. Note the *Landsknecht* clothing and weaponry at ages 10 through 30.

Forces within the Counter-Reformation also sought to reform sexual practices among their congregations in the middle of the sixteenth-century, stressing the value of celibacy as a spiritual and physical status most pleasing to Godly providence, and as a quality necessary for the priesthood, who were charged with the rite of transubstantiation, and the custody of divine relics¹⁶⁴. When the Council of Trent reconvened under the auspice of Pope Pius IV in 1562, the twenty-fourth session of the doctrinal acts was enacted, which not only championed the excellence of celibacy, but also forbade concubinage, brothels, and dueling within Catholic cities¹⁶⁵. The feminine resistance of temptation was also stressed as a virtue, which impelled the

¹⁶⁴ Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil*, Pp. 174

¹⁶⁵ Hall, Marcia B., Tracy Elizabeth Cooper, and Costanza Barbieri. *The Sensuous in the Counter-Reformation Church*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2016. Pp. 31

publication of pamphlets celebrating piety throughout a woman's life, wherein the *Landsknecht* offering debauched temptation remained a common trope (see Figure 2.16).



Figure 2.16: *The Age of the Woman at the Age of Ten and Twenty Years*

Tobias Stimmer, Woodblock on Paper, c. 1565

In this image, part of a set pictorializing the expectation of feminine virtue at different stages in life, the twenty-year-old subject rejects the advances of a *Landsknecht*, identifiable by the St. Andrew's cross slashed into his thigh, and the arquebus bandolier hanging off of his hip. The theme of this "Age Genre" piece prioritizes the self-discipline of the female subject, in contrast to Breu's male subject, who finds redemption after a violent youth.



Figure 2.17: *Soldier Embracing a Young Woman*
Daniel Hopper, Etching, c.1530

In Hopper's work, a young woman wearing a *Landsknecht's* helm pulls a his hands from her breasts while an apple, the biblical symbol of temptation, dangles overhead. In the background, another couple is consummating their love while a stray dog also succumbs to temptation by eating their food. The occluded eyes, brambled hair, and syphilis-pocked face of the *Landsknecht* further enunciates the value of restraining female sexuality to the viewer.



Figure 2.18: *Young Woman and Death as a Soldier*

Niklaus Manuel, Drawing, 1517

Manuel's piece, a drawing intended for replication, favors a blunter approach by depicting a more visceral sexual act between lovers, one of whom displays the trappings of a *Landsknecht*, whose entrails dangle loosely along with his slashed *Plunderhosen*.

The fate of women who had fallen prey to the sexual wiles of a handsome *Landsknecht* was also a frequently depicted trope in the Reformation Public, which utilized combinations of subtle imagery (See Figure 2.17) and brazenly repulsive depictions of necrophilia (See Figure 2.18) to instill a justifiable fear of temptation¹⁶⁶.

¹⁶⁶ Hale, *Artists and Warfare*, Pp. 38-39

The youthful folly and brash temptation that the *Landsknecht*'s overflowing masculinity entailed was also extended to politically-charged works of literature being popularly consumed by the Reformation Public. One particularly well-received work of political commentary that employed this trope was a sixteenth-century interpretation of Petrarch's *De remediis*, titled, *Von der Artzney bayder Glück*, which was reprinted in nine separate editions between its initial publication in 1532 and 1620¹⁶⁷.



Ich erfrewet das ringen. Vernünfft: Wie wann der zuseher vnütz vnd der ringer vnynnig ist: Freud. Ich lige an ringlicher vbung. Vernunfft. In einem yeglichen wort/erscheine wöllliches herren du leiß eigen seyest/dann dises dienet/wie oben er

Figure 2.19: Plate 35 of *Von der Artzney bayder Glück*
Heinrich Steiner, Woodcut on Paper, 1517-1532

Plate 35 depicts two *Landsknechte* in the foreground engaged in a vicious duel with *Zweihandlers* while two more wrestle in the background. The wagon and open field indicates that this scene is taking place in the wilderness of the *Tross*. Charles V and his two sons, Maximilian II and Ferdinand I, raise their hands in alarm, but are powerless to halt the melee.

¹⁶⁷ Rublack, Pp. 28-29



Ich habe ein liebe müter. Vernünfft. Dū bist yr aber
 empfiger schrecken/vnd ewigs verlangen. Freud. Lyeb ist mir meyn
 müter. Vernunfft. Grof ist die liebe/des vatters/nach hefftiger 8

Figure 2.20: Plate 83 of *Von der Artzney beyder Glück*
 Heinrich Steiner, Woodcut on Paper, 1517-1532

Plate 83 depicts two *Landsknechte* greeting their mothers upon their return from war, who react in revulsion to their armed flamboyance¹⁶⁸. Both images represent an allegorical criticism of a system of purchased coercion unfettered by royal mandate or social constraint.

While on its surface, *Von der Artzney*, appeared to be a translation of Petrarch's fourteenth-century musings from Latin to vernacular German, political commentary was added into the metaphors by humanists Sebastian Brandt and Georg Spalatin, the latter of whom was the personal secretary of Duke Frederick the Wise, one of Maximilian I's staunchest opponents in the *Reichsreform* movement¹⁶⁹. Work on *Von der Artzney* originally began in 1517 as a directed political critique of Maximilian I's governance, but due to the death of Maximilian I in 1519, the bankruptcy of the original publisher, and the addition of over 200 additional pages of

¹⁶⁸ Rögg, Pp. 138

¹⁶⁹ Benecke, Pp. 99

illustrated commentary, the final work was not published until 1532¹⁷⁰. The *Landsknechte* depicted in the work display the trappings of hyper-masculine violence typical for the period, but also serve as an allegory to the system of purchased coercion that Maximilian I “created” and failed to control¹⁷¹ (See Figures 2.19 and 2.20).

However, propaganda lionizing the strength and virtue of the *Landsknechte* also has a presence within the Reformation Public, particularly in times when an existential threat to a specific territory presented itself. In 1532, when it seemed that a secondary Ottoman invasion of Austria was an inevitability, an anonymous pamphlet titled, *A Christian Expedition against the Turks* was published. In this tract, a *Landsknecht* company personally led by God and captained by Charles V, proclaims that the only way to avert Turkish domination was for all members of the company to act under the strict guidelines of Christian morality, a prospect that angers several mercenaries who protest that they “joined a company, not a cloister¹⁷².” Eventually being convinced of their righteous cause, the rebellious *Landsknechte* enshrine their temporal obedience out of a desire for spiritual betterment instead of monetary gain.

Even in tracts and passages praising *Landsknechte* for their strength and bravery, the process of Othering is still enacted, as the mercenary must receive divine intervention to tame his wild nature and experience combat for no other reward than spiritual enlightenment-reintegration into settled society is never the outcome of even the most ‘Just’ war¹⁷³. A gendered exploration of the *Landsknechte* as a paragon of violent masculinity stripped of any expectation of civil virtue reveals a fascinating correlation between the role of sexuality in Early Modern

¹⁷⁰ Rublack, Pp. 29

¹⁷¹ Nimwegen, Pp. 165

¹⁷² Moxey, 97-98

¹⁷³ Moxey, Pp. 100

Germany and the philosophy of the Reformation Body Politic. As stated by English humanist Thomas Starkey in 1535, “Like as in every man there is a body and also a soul, in whose flourishing and prosperous state both together standeth [sic] the weal and felicity of man, so likewise there is in every commonalty, city and country, as it were, a politic body, and another thing also, resembling the soul of the man, in whose flourishing both together resteth [sic] also the true common weal¹⁷⁴.” Just as religious leaders of Europe regarded youthful sexuality as a necessary evil that allowed the propagation of Christendom, so too was the ready availability of hardened *Landsknecht* mercenaries perceived to be ruefully necessary for the defense of the state. Since neither unrestrained sexuality or mercenary violence could be tolerated within the bounds of central society, cultural forces relegated them to the margins of civilization- never existing too far out of reach, but firmly held in a state of Otherness.

¹⁷⁴ Harvey, A. D. *Body Politic: Political Metaphor and Political Violence*. Newcastle, U.K.: Cambridge Scholars Pub., 2007. Pp.25

Chapter 3- Vilification

After the successes of the *guerra alla moderna* modus on the battlefields of Grandson, Nancy, and Guinegate, the armed forces of European states began to grow in population, complexity, and cost at a staggering rate, a phenomenon J.R. Hale coined as “The Military Reformation¹⁷⁵.” For example, in 1490 Maximilian I was barely able to raise just over 24,000 *Landsknechte* for his entire army, while in 1532, Charles V had easily raised over 100,000 soldiers¹⁷⁶ to defend against the Turkish invasion¹⁷⁷. Higher numbers of men on the battlefield, combined with more effective weapon systems, higher rates of disease, and the increased importance of tactical logistics meant that battles during the Renaissance were more decisive, and inflicted higher numbers of casualties than battles during the Middle Ages. This divide between Medieval and Early Modern was especially punctuated in conflicts where only one faction had adopted *guerra alla moderna*; In 1492, Maximilian used his *Landsknechte* with terrifying effect to crush an army of rebellious Frisians ten times larger than his own, causing the chronicler Worp von Thabor to ruefully declare that, “[The Frisians] went as a flock of sheep without a shepherd... That is why they were defeated, because victory depends more on the art of fighting, than on strength or bravery¹⁷⁸.”

The nature of pike and shot tactics also made unit cohesion and morale axioms of battlefield survival, impelling mercenary armies to purposefully cultivate more vicious affectations, both to attract prospective clients, and to harangue their foes (See Figure 2.21)¹⁷⁹.

¹⁷⁵ Hale, *War and Society*, Pp. 46-48

¹⁷⁶ Excluding the number of camp-followers, which was often greater than the numbers of combatants.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.* 62

¹⁷⁸ Nimwegen, pp. 163

¹⁷⁹ Hale, *Artists and Warfare*, Pp. 170



Figure 2.21: Detail of Infantry Battle Scene

Hans Holbein the Younger, Etched Plate on Paper, c.1530

The moment when opposing pike hedges closed in on one another was dubbed a “Bad War” by contemporary observers. With pikes either sundered, or rendered useless by the proximity of the enemy, halberds, *Zweihanders*, and short swords would be employed to terrible effect.

The granting of mercy towards defeated enemies also became increasingly rare in the sixteenth century, as deliberate massacres not only enhanced a company’s fearsome reputation, but also removed a competing company as a rival on the growing mercenary market¹⁸⁰. Nuremberg humanist Willibald Pirckheimer, who was chosen by his city council to lead a company of *Landsknechte* against the *Reisläufer* in the 1499 Swabian War, described the aftermath of a particularly disastrous battle; “Nobody was spared in memory of the pain earlier inflicted: noble and non-noble were slaughtered like cattle without any difference being made. Many boarded ships and killed those who trusted themselves to the waves and stretched out their hand and

¹⁸⁰ Kortüm, Hans-Henning. *Transcultural Wars from the Middle Ages to the 21st Century*. Berlin: Akademie, 2006. Pp. 66

begged for mercy with tears; others shot down with their guns those who had climbed trees, like birds; still others set fire to houses where there were enemies so that on all sides, screaming, howling, begging and death groans were heard and the escape killed more than even the battle¹⁸¹.”

The viciousness with which this new form of mercenary warfare was waged, and the willingness to violently engage with an enemy quickly became deeply intertwined with the culture of the *Landsknechte*, become a beacon of masculine pride and cultural identity. A *Landsknecht* marching ballad popular after the 1525 Battle of Pavia states; “In blood we had to go, in blood we had to go, up to, up to, up to the tops of our shoes. Merciful God, look at the misery¹⁸²!” Niklaus Manuel, an artist and mercenary active in the Swabian War, illustrated the savagery that this culture possessed when he recorded a battle cry supposedly common to *Landsknechte*; “We’ll move against your enemy ‘till the very women and little children cry Murder! That is what we long for and joy in¹⁸³!” Robert III de la Marck, a minor French noble who led *Landsknecht* companies in the Hapsburg-Valois wars, opined that the men who best exemplified the character of a “Good” *Landsknecht* were the ones eager to engage with “Bad War¹⁸⁴.”

To contemporary observers, the scope of warfare had also widened in the sixteenth century to include waging war on the landscape itself, either through the construction of defensive earthworks, or to actively deny foraging resources to an antagonistic army. The aftermath of a protracted battle would transform the countryside into a stark mockery of its

¹⁸¹ Kortüm, Pp. 67

¹⁸² Arfaoli, Pp. 7

¹⁸³ Hale, *Artists and Warfare*, Pp. 34

¹⁸⁴ Harari, Yuval N. *Renaissance Military Memoirs: War, History, and Identity, 1450-1600*. Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK: Boydell Press, 2004. Pp. 77-78

former state, stripped bare to the blanched soil, and littered with the broken detritus of war. Blaise de Monluc, a Valois nobleman who led a *Landsknecht* company to victory against the forces of Charles V in the Italian Wars, described the condition of the barren French landscape after a grueling campaign; “You would have seen men and horses all amass in a heap among each other, both the one and the other, [and] the dying lying among the dead, made such a horrible and pitiful spectacle, that it was miserable to the persistent and obstinate enemies; and anyone who has seen the desolation, could not reckon it to be lesser than that described by Josephus [Flavius] in the destruction of Jerusalem, and Thucydides in the Peloponnesian Wars¹⁸⁵.” Unsurprisingly, disease and famine would be rife in areas where major battles were fought, with surrounding rural communities often taking generations to fully recover from a battle’s devastation¹⁸⁶.

¹⁸⁵ Sherer, Idan. *Warriors for a Living: The Experience of the Spanish Infantry in the Italian Wars, 1494-1559*. Leiden: Brill, 2017. Pp. 64

¹⁸⁶ Gutmann, Myron P. *War and Rural Life in the Early Modern Low Countries*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016. Pp. 70



Figure 2.22: Plate 217 of *Von der Artzney beyder Glück*

Heinrich Steiner, Woodcut on Paper, 1517-1532

This series of plate criticizes the Holy Roman Empire's dependence on *Landsknechte*, and the monetary costs they entail. In this plate, a mounted *Landsknecht*, possibly a *Hauptmann*, cruelly slays an unarmed traveler, while a lion prepares to devour a bound peasant nearby. The juxtaposition serves as a fairly unambiguous message: Both beast and mercenary prey on the weak in the wilderness, and to foster either one invites disaster to the state.

The media culture of the Reformation Public brought a interpretation of the carnage of the battlefield to urban centers hundreds of miles away from the site of hostilities, often charged with religious or political undertones attached (See Figure 2.22). Narratives of particularly devastating battles would often involve religious or supernatural elements such as birthing of horrific creatures, such as the "The Monster of Ravenna," a creature born shortly after the bloody, and well-publicized Battle of Ravenna in 1512¹⁸⁷. In the eyes of the Reformation Public, battles of the *guerra alla moderna* had become preternatural events, where the bounds between

¹⁸⁷ Niccoli, Ottavia, and Lydia G. Cochrane. *Prophecy and People in Renaissance Italy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990. Pp. 35-36

mundane and miraculous had become perforated, staining those who had directly participated in the ignominy of perfidious bloodshed¹⁸⁸. This dishonorable association between the *Landsknechte* and death in Early Modern Europe would take on several forms observable in print media and artistic representations with religious or political themes.

One particularly fascinating example of this phenomenon exists in a print series by German printmaker Hans Holbein the Younger who printed an iteration of the common *Totentanz* (lit “Dance of Death”) genre of popular art. Emerging in the aftermath of the 1348 Black Death, the *Totentanz* depicted the concept of death, usually personified as a withered corpse with a skeletal face, interacting and dancing with various members of society in ghastly imitation of life. Present in European culture in the forms of frescos, songs, and sculpture, the theme enunciated in the Dance of Death was a somber reminder that death applied to everyone in society regardless of rank, wealth, or prestige. Holbein’s 1538 woodcut version, which sold well enough to warrant fourteen editions through the next three centuries, carries a similar theme, with Death interacting with his victims in an aggressive, unopposed manner¹⁸⁹. However, Plate 31, depicts a *Landsknecht* actively locked in combat with a shield-wielding Death atop of a pile of dead mercenaries, while another Death figure leads a column of *Landsknechte* with a drum in the background (see Figure 2.23).

¹⁸⁸ Daston, Lorraine. "Marvelous Facts and Miraculous Evidence in Early Modern Europe." Edited by Peter G. Platt. In *Wonders, Marvels, and Monsters in Early Modern Culture*, 76-104. Newark: Univ. of Delaware Press, 1999. pp. 76–104.

¹⁸⁹ Oosterwijk, Sophie, and Stefanie A. Knöll. *Mixed Metaphors: The Danse Macabre in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*. Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars, 2011. Pp. 28



Figure 2.23: Plate 31 of *Der Totentanz*

Hans Holbein the Younger, Woodcut on Paper, 1538

The plate armor and *Zweihänder* wielded by the *Landsknecht* indicates that he is a *Doppelsöldner*, the elite shock troops of a company whom, as their name implies, are paid twice as much as a standard soldier in exchange for taking on more dangerous work in the company.

As the central theme of Holbein's *Totentanz* is that submission to Christ is the only way to avoid Death, the *Landsknecht* is designed to appear to the contemporary viewer as being hubristic in his fight against death, for even if he wins his duel, he remains as a Death's puppet to be summoned by its drumbeat¹⁹⁰. An anonymous artist described another interaction between Death and a hubristic *Landsknecht* in a 1504 print, which included the following dialogue in poetic verse;

Death;

However bold and strong and tall you may be

¹⁹⁰ Oosterwijk and Knöll, Pp. 367-377

And however many men have suffered your violence,

You must nevertheless give in to me.

I have long denounced your pride.

Your halberd no longer has the power to cut.

Your feathers and dagger must fall,

Since I intend throwing them into the grave

Your fashionable beard and great deeds

Will not help you now;

All your battles have come to an end.

Quickly, away from here and be smart about it.

Landsknecht;

Oh, grim death, what are you doing here?

I did not believe you existed any more

Until I saw your gruesome face.

I had eliminated all fear.

Many trials I have withstood.

On Italian and German soil;

However, my brave weapons are no use to me now.

I shall call upon my heavenly lord

And throw away my dagger and halberd

To wait upon the grace of God and Mary.¹⁹¹

Though the subject of this poem acquiesces without engaging in direct combat, the tone of Death's admonishment derides the *Landsknecht* for his dress and weaponry, both being attempts to flaunt life and perseverance in a setting where a solemn respect for the dead would be more appropriate. Even within the egalitarianist message of the *Totentanz*, the *Landsknecht* still exists as an aberrant Other that flippantly attempts to contravene that natural order, and by extension, the salvific will of God.



Figure 2.24: 'X' of Holbein Alphabet
Hans Holbein, Woodcut on Paper, 1540

Death has come for the souls of these two gamblers, but a demonic creature has appeared to protect the life of the *Landsknecht* on the right. As Death attempts to snuff out the mercenary's life, symbolized by a candle, the demon continues to re-light it with his breath.

The apostatic nature that artists attributed to the *Landsknecht* was often depicted more bluntly in other sources, as observed in Hans Holbein's Alphabet series (see Figure 2.24), where the *Landsknecht* casually gambles while Death and the Devil clash over his soul. Through this

¹⁹¹ Moxey, Pp. 83-87

lens, the association between the *Landsknechte*, devils, and gambling became a common trope in the art and literature of the Reformation Public, as all three were perceived, to some capacity, as aberrations of the natural ordination of God. To the increasingly moralistic societies of the Reformation, the link between the *Landsknecht*, who paraded through corpse-strewn battlefields wearing “Hellish” colors, was obvious. Lutheran preacher Andreas Musculus wrote in 1563 that the colorful clothing of the *Landsknecht* was proof positive that the Devil had abandoned the desert and was now tempting mortals into sin within the comfort of the city walls¹⁹². Erasmus of Rotterdam also linked the Devil with the *Landsknecht*’s brazen fashion in this 1522 metaphorical exchange between the artisan Hanno, and his friend Thrasymachus, who had abandoned his trade a few years previously to join a *Landsknecht* company;

Thrasymachus;

I saw and did more wickedness there [in service] than ever before in my whole life.

Hanno;

Has a soldier’s life any attraction at all?

Thrasymachus;

Nothing’s more wicked or more ruinous.

Hanno;

Then what possesses those men- some hired for pay, others for nothing- who run off to war dressed as if they were going to a party?

Thrasymachus;

I can only suppose they’re driven by devils and have given themselves over wholly to an evil spirit and to misery in such a way as to go to Hell before their time.¹⁹³

¹⁹² Rublack, Pp. 110

¹⁹³ Erasmus, *Colloquies*, Pp. 13

The infernal character given to the *Landsknechte* also served as a barb with which critics of the Holy Roman Imperial government could attack fiscal policies or political maneuvering without risking *Lèse-majesté* by directly impugning the character of the Emperor. In an example taken from Plate 58 Steiner's *Von der Arzney bayder Glück* (See Figure 2.25) the devil appears before a befuddled Charles V while in the process of inspecting the royal treasury and urges him to continue the spending rates that his grandfather, Maximilian I, was infamous for. After Charles V is enticed into spending the money, Plate 82 depicts a company of *Landsknechte* billeted in a town receiving their pay, only to be shown assaulting local women on the very next page (See Figure 2.20). Another panel from *Von der Arzney bayder Glück* depicts the Devil gambling with a *Landsknecht*, using the same coins he was tempting Charles V with earlier (See Figure 2.26).



Freud. Ich hab doch vberflüssige reichrumb. Ver.
 Jetzt verwunder ich mich nicht/ob du auch gleich wol mit freundt-
 chafften/dich vberflüssig geachtet hast/ist nicht new noch vngewö-
 nich/das die heuser der reichen mit schlechten freundschaften vnd

Figure 2.25: Plate 58 from *Von der Artzney bayder Glück*

Heinrich Steiner, Etched Plate on Paper, 1517-1532

On Plate 58, the Devil tempts the newly-elected Holy Roman Emperor Charles V to spend lavishly, like his grandfather and predecessor, Maximilian I.



Ich gelust mit Würfflen zů spylen. Vernunft.
O ein grosser vñ vnerfettigter tumpffel/O trauriger/auch schnell
ler des hauptgüts hinflus/O vngewitter des gemüts/güts lobs
wolcke/anraigung der laster/vnd zum verzweiffen ein weg/ Dor

Figure 2.26: Plate 67 from *Von der Artzney bayder Glück*

Heinrich Steiner, Etched Plate on Paper, 1517-1532

On Plate 67, a tavern full of *Landsknechte* are shown relishing in sin. The *Landsknecht* on the left spitting on a crucifix and the armed brawl are apparently so common in this sordid environment that it does not interrupt the card game in the background, or the dice game with the Devil in the foreground.

In *Von der Artzney*, the association between the *Landsknechte* and the devil is symbolic of the looming presence of the burgeoning military-fiscal state, which Steiner blames on Maximilian I, absolving Charles V in the process. The *Landsknechte* themselves are characterized as being irrevocably tainted by the promise of mercenary gold or possessing an evil that found release through the greater sins of the military-fiscal state.

A slightly more forgiving correlation between *Landsknechte* and Death is observed in Pieter Bruegel the Elder's 1562 masterpiece, *The Triumph of Death* (See Figure 2.25).



Figure 2.27: Detail from *The Triumph of Death*

Pieter Bruegel the Elder, Oil on Panel, c.1562

The *Landsknecht* on the left raises his *Zweihander* against the figure of Death, possibly in homage to Hans Holbein's work, only to be gripped and slain by his own purse strings. The *Landsknecht* on the ground wielding a broken pike shaft and drawn *Katzbalger* is characteristic of the frenzied desperation of a "Bad War," and would indicate to a contemporary observer that this was a valiant, but forlorn fight.

On the lower-left corner of the piece, two young men vainly attempt to fend off a literal army of Death- the slashed clothing, distinctive weapons, and overturned Backgammon table are all indications that Bruegel intended his audience to recognize them as *Landsknechte*. In this instance, the relation of the *Landsknechte* to the military-fiscal state exists in inverse to the image presented in *Von der Arzney*; instead of the *Landsknecht* acting in concert with the Devil to defraud the king for their benefit, here the devil is entirely absent, while an armored apparition of Death works in the lower-right corner to steal from a barely-living king, while the *Landsknecht* merely fights to survive¹⁹⁴. During this painting's completion, Charles V had already firmly begun the process of proletarianizing the *Landsknechte*, having ordered the execution of

¹⁹⁴ Thon, Peter. "Bruegel's *The Triumph of Death* Reconsidered." *Renaissance Quarterly* 21, no. 3 (1968): 289-99. doi:10.2307/2859416.

mercenary leader Sebastian Vogelsberger only a few years before¹⁹⁵. J.R. Hale asserts that Bruegel, known for his talent at inserting broad sociological trends into his artwork, had divested from earlier depictions of Death as instruments of God, and instead chose to depict it as the burgeoning presence of the military-fiscal state into people's lives¹⁹⁶. In that regard, Bruegel does not include the *Landsknechte* to normalize them, but rather to demonstrate that they too are falling victim to the growing state, despite their Otherness from society.

In addition to appearing in the Reformation Public as tainted by Death, spurning the natural process of Death, and standing as Death's victim, *Landsknechte* also make conspicuous appearances as torturers and executioners, both in fictive and realistic capacities. Executioners, despite being acknowledged as a vital facet of Early Modern society, occupied an extremely dishonorable social station that would be passed down familial lineages into perpetuity¹⁹⁷. The comparison between mercenary and executioner would appear obvious, as both professionally dispensed state-sponsored lethal violence, and often against the will of local leaders. Erasmus of Rotterdam famously pushed back against this comparison, hoisting the executioner as more the more honorable between the two, stating in 1515, "We recoil in horror from an executioner, because he cuts the throats of condemned criminals, although he is paid by order of law to do it; but men who have left their parents, wives, and children to rush off to war uncompelled, not for honest wages but asking to be hired for some infamous butchery¹⁹⁸."

¹⁹⁵ Swart, Erik. "From "Landsknecht" to "Soldier": The Low German Foot Soldiers of the Low Countries in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century." *International Review of Social History* 51, no. 01 (2006): 75. doi:10.1017/s0020859005002336.

¹⁹⁶ Hale, *Artists and Warfare*, Pp. 139

¹⁹⁷ Harrington, Pp. 19-23

¹⁹⁸ Erasmus, Desiderius. *Erasmus against War*. Translated by J. W. Mackail. Boston: Merrymount Press, 1907. Pp. 16

However, inspection of written and artistic materials reveals deeper connections between *Landsknechte* specifically, and ritualized dispensation of corporal punishment and execution. The first link originates from the legal system of the *Tross*, of which two forms of criminal justice existed for the *Landsknecht*, as described by the *Haufen*'s *Artikelbrief*; the *Veltweyfelgericht* (lit. "Military Sherriff Court") court, and the *Speißgericht* (lit. "Court of Spears"). The former comprised of a public trial which adjudicated matters of criminal law, and presided over by officers appointed to the position, including a regimental provost serving as the prosecution and a *Voerder* (roughly, "Legal advocate") who would serve as the accused's defense¹⁹⁹. The latter, which comprised of a plaintiff and defendant arguing their cases in front of an assembly of the *Fähnlein*²⁰⁰, who would then vote on the matter, settled matters of honor. The time required for a comprehensive trial was a luxury that the *Tross* could seldom spare, rendering the judgement cast by either court as final, with no right to appeal. Since monetary fines or punitive mutilation (the standard sentences of minor crimes in settled towns²⁰¹) inhibited the fighting ability of the *Haufen*, punishment was almost invariably death- either by beheading by *Zweihander* for criminal cases, or by running a gauntlet of spears for egregious honor cases (hence the name of the court²⁰²).

¹⁹⁹ Nimwegen, Pp. 166

²⁰⁰ Approximately 100 men

²⁰¹ Harrington, Pp. 64-65

²⁰² Nimwegen, Pp. 167



Figure 2.28: Plate 174 of *Der Weißkunig*

Hans Burgkmair, Etched Plate on Paper, 1517-1519

A depiction of criminal justice being meted out to *Landsknechte* who broke the accords in the *Artikelbrief* and was sentenced to beheading via *Zweihander*. Executioners in *Landsknecht* companies, called *Sharfrichter* (“Sharp Judge”), were usually chosen from the ranks of *Doppelsöldner*, due to their skill with the weapon. Though considerably bloodier than hanging, execution by a skilled swordsman was considered relatively humane and honorable, prolonging it as a common form of execution in Germany until the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Maximilian I, while on campaign with his *Landsknechte*, was particularly entranced by the speed and dignity with which his mercenary executioners dispensed justice, seeing it as the ultimate extension of executive power, and having the act depicted in all three of his biographies (see Figure 2.28). Witnessing a legal system first hand, that could transgress feudal boundaries and dispense justice without deference to social rank would become one of the major impetuses behind Maximilian I’s attempts to enact a unified legal code across the Holy Roman Empire (*Reichskammergericht*), a policy that would be opposed by urban communities who chose to live

by their own legal codes (*Gerichtsordnung*)²⁰³. Maximilian I's resolve to reform the German legal code often required him to personally interdict in matters of local law and economic custom. One relatively early example of this process in action occurred in Innsbruck in 1490, when Maximilian I circumvented the town charter to allow the local executioner to charge a stipend for his services; "For each execution he shall receive ten pounds Bernese and a rope and gloves without fail. We order all prelates, commanders, courts, lords, knights, esquires, bailiffs, district judges, judges, customs officers and local officials to give the executioner his fees without delay²⁰⁴."

Inevitably, as these actions by Maximilian I were considered wholly opprobrious by local councils wishing to pursue their own legal codes, the image of the brightly-colored *Landsknecht* executioner surrounded by headless bodies, quickly became a symbol of Imperial tyranny, and would appear in numerous works of literature and propaganda (See 2.28). Thus were *Landsknechte* perceived as 'lower' than executioners by local urban leaders, not just by their association with death, but also through association with an increasingly powerful centralizing element within the state that sought to forcibly strip them of their prerogative power and social identity²⁰⁵.

²⁰³ Merback, Mitchell B. *The Thief, the Cross and the Wheel: Pain and the Spectacle of Punishment in Medieval and Renaissance Europe (Picturing History)*. London: Reaktion Books, 2001. Pp. 130

²⁰⁴ Benecke, Pp. 147-148

²⁰⁵ Eibach, Pp. 20-22



Figure 2.29: Plate 89 of *Von der Artzney bayder Glück*
 Heinrich Steiner, Etched Plate on Paper, 1517-1532

In this image depicting the betrothal of Maximillian I's son, Philip the Handsome, to Joanna of Castile, the emperor is too absorbed by a nearby execution among his *Landsknechte* bodyguards to observe the ceremony, much to the sorrow of the arranged couple. To the right of the image is a depiction of Cain slaying Abel, highlighting the moral inequity of Maximillian I's *Reichskammergericht* legal reforms, as perceived by the councilors of Augsburg.

Even the act of execution, removed from the discourse of political centralization, was deliberately designed as a ritualized ceremony of Othering, steeped in symbolism, and involving the active participation of hundred of members of society. As related by historian Joel Harrington, the pronouncement of a capital offense at the end of a trial was dramatically concluded by the expulsion of the condemned from the geographic bounds of the community, and conveyance to the *Richtstätte*, an ordained scaffold deliberately placed outside of the walls of the city²⁰⁶. After the execution had been performed, the condemned was either buried in unhallowed ground, or gibbeted above ground as an unambiguous warning to potential law-breakers nearing the town walls. As German towns grew in size and number during the

²⁰⁶ Harrington, Pp. 80

Renaissance, the *Richstätte* would become a ubiquitous fixture of inter-urban travel and pilgrimage. To the artists of the Reformation Public, to whom religious artwork was a consistent source of patronage and income, the *Richstätte*, and its display of broken, exposed bodies would provide an easy reference point for depicting the torture of saints, and the crucifixion of Christ²⁰⁷. Historian Mitchell Merback asserts that by the 1520's, the biblical Golgotha and the German *Richstätte* would become so directly linked with one another, that Reformation artists would purposefully illustrate the Passion to appear to take place outside of Free Imperial Cities; “Practically every theatrical detail conveys this. Buildings and forest are unmistakably Germanic; the ‘Roman’ soldiers who adjust and secure the Cross upright appear in the contemporary dress of the German mercenaries, or *Landsknechte*. Apart from the Three Marys and the St. John figure praying with upraised hands, there are no characters in the plain biblical garb typical of northern Passion imagery²⁰⁸.”

Landsknechte would also appear in other biblical motifs, especially if there was need of infanticidal soldiers (See Figure 2.29²⁰⁹) or murderers of saints, but depictions of Calvary are where they most consistently appear (See Figure 2.30)²¹⁰.

²⁰⁷ Merback, Pp. 257-258

²⁰⁸ Ibid, 261-262

²⁰⁹ Rabb, Theodore K. *The Artist and the Warrior Military History through the Eyes of the Masters*. New Haven (Conn.): Yale University Press, 2011. Pp. 89

²¹⁰ Hale, *Artists and Warfare*, Pp. 243



Figure 2.30: Detail from *The Massacre of the Innocents*

Pieter Bruegel the Elder, Oil on Panel

German *Landsknechte* are depicted working with Spanish *Tercio* mercenaries in enacting King Herod's order. Bruegel likely intended this piece to serve as a commentary on Hapsburg aggression in the Low Countries at the beginning of the Eighty Years' War, hence the snowy terrain.



Figure 2.31: Crucifixion

c. 1565 and Daniel Hopper, Etching, c. 1520

Hopper's illustration of Calvary depicts an unflattering *Landsknecht* prodding at Christ's body with a boar spear, while a soldier dressed in Hungarian fashion wields the Spear of Longinus.

In describing both Golgotha and the *Richstätte*, the concept of 'shame' serves as a central element and is heavily referenced in both early Modern executions, and the Biblical Passion. According to thirteenth-century arch-bishop Jacobus de Voragine, "The pains of the Passion were fivefold. The first pain consisted in the shame of the Passion. For he bore it in a shameful place, Calvary being reserved for the punishment of criminals²¹¹." By illustrating their "shameful

²¹¹ Merback, Pp. 41

places” with the contemporary equivalent of Roman legionaries, artists of the Reformation Public married the image of the *Landsknecht* with spiritual ignominy, justifying their exclusion from society as outsiders of both the Reformation city, and the Kingdom of Heaven.

Through their myriad associations with Shame, Death, and the Devil, the *Landsknechte* as the edifice of *guerra alla moderna*, had become marginalized to a degree that their physical bodies had transgressed into a state of profane Otherness. Given the ferocity and the sheer number of people involved in sixteenth-century battles, the removal of the sacred element of mercenary bodies by Renaissance rulers would be necessary for the conduct of warfare. Robert III de la Marck’s memoir of the 1513 Battle of Novara against the Swiss *Reisläufer* not only reveals how fury with which Renaissance warfare was conducted, but also how casualties were internalized as a transaction between one’s own forces and the enemy’s; “And there died many a good *Landsknechte*, for of three or four hundred men who were in the first rank, only the Adventurer and his brother, and a gentlemen [sic] called Fontaine and Fuillalme de Lympel and two halberdiers who were the Adventurer’s guardsmen were saved, and all the captains were left there [on the field of battle], except two. And you should be told that all the flower of the Swiss was left there [on the field of battle], and more Swiss [died] than *Landsknechts*²¹².”

The beginning of the Italian Wars in 1494, which saw the first major conflict between states employing *guerra alla moderna*, also marked the transition from battles being narrated as exercises of chivalric pride, Christian reconquest, or episodic dynastic vengeance, and instead as numerical transactions between political or military entities. The accounts of war related in the Reformation Public discarded narratives of individual acts of heroism in favor of portraying battle as a numerical abstraction of distance, resources, and casualties. By the ascension of Holy

²¹² Harari, Pp. 78

Roman Emperor Charles V in 1519, cenotaphs erected to commemorate major battles were inscribed with the number of dead and wounded, as the destruction of war had firmly passed from being described qualitatively to being calculated quantitatively as another expenditure of state²¹³. Ambroise Paré, a surgeon working for an Imperial *Landsknecht* company during the 1552 Siege of Metz, remarked on the callousness that rulers steeped in transactional warfare engaged with when he sent a letter to Charles V describing the high numbers of casualties within the siege camp. After being informed that none of the dead were of noble birth, but were entirely composed of “Poor soldiers,” the emperor, “said he it makes no matter if they die, comparing them to caterpillars and grasshoppers which eat the buds of the earth- Food for worms- Was life now held cheaper²¹⁴?”

Wages paid to mercenaries acted as assuagement, decoupling the loaded valor of common men, and the necessary sacrifices that *guerra alla moderna* often required, both for commanding officers and the soldiers themselves. Monetary remuneration also served as a major tactical advantage for mercenary armies, as they incentivized battle-hardened veterans to re-enlist with companies that offered better wages. When describing the difficulties French military officers encountered when recruiting mercenaries, Charles Oman described the correlation between this early form of Capitalism, and efficacy in battle; “...[French] captains only looked out for men with stout shoulders, not for men with stout hearts, and would enlist any big men that they could lay hands upon, without regard for their morale, whereas among the Swiss and even among the *Landsknechts* the very best material served with the pike, and the

²¹³ Gagné, John. "Counting the Dead: Traditions of Enumeration and the Italian Wars." *Renaissance Quarterly* 67, no. 3 (2014): 791-840. doi:10.1086/678775.

²¹⁴ Hale, *War and Society*, Pp. 84

‘Doppelsöldner,’ or soldiers with extra pay, who fought in the front ranks, were formidable veterans²¹⁵.”

Memoirs written by early *Landsknecht* commanders, who were drawn from the ranks of minor nobility steeped in chivalric martial attitudes, would often mistake cause and effect when attempting to goad their mercenaries into acts of extraordinary bravery. French knight Blaise de Monluc, while serving as the head of a *Landsknecht* company during the 1558 storming of Thionville, described an episode where an enemy squadron had retreated into a breach in the outer walls. Grabbing the nearest mercenary, Monluc commanded, “‘Jump inside soldier, and I will give you twenty escus!’ He told me that he would not do it, for if he jumps inside, he is a dead man. And he resisted me with all his force... Then all of us together threw the soldier in, head first, and made him brave against his will. When I saw he was not shot at, we threw in two more harquebusiers, partly of their own will, partly by force²¹⁶.” The transactional effect that money had upon the bravery of his commoner mercenaries was perceived by Monluc to be so linear, that he was flabbergasted and reduced to force when twenty escus did not immediately turn a passing soldier into a suicidal fanatic.

²¹⁵ Oman, *Sixteenth Century*, Pp. 45

²¹⁶ Harari, Pp. 95



Figure 2.32: Removal of a Bolt from *Der Feldbuch der Wundarzney*
 Hans von Gersdoff and Hans Wechtlin, Woodcut on Paper, 1517

The patient in this piece is shown having a crossbow bolt being dislodged from his sternum- The proximity of the bladed projectile to the heart makes this procedure particularly difficult. The absence of anesthetic has necessitated the aid of a soldier to manually hold down the patient. The battle raging in the background serves as a warning against putrefaction in an interesting inversion of the Body Politic; the body is symbolized as a state under assault by a foreign army.



Figure 2.33: *Serratura* (“Amputation”) from *Der Feldbuch der Wundarzney*

Hans von Gersdorff and Hans Wechtlin, Woodcut on Paper, 1517

This patient is shown having his left leg amputated after a gangrenous foot injury, while a man wielding a padded fist stands ready to knock the patient into unconsciousness should he start to wake. Despite the extreme danger involved with any form of pre-germ theory surgery, literary sources and the abundance of Early Modern prosthetics suggest that many patients lived for years after amputation.

The casual disregard shown towards the bodies of *Landsknechte* can also be keenly reflected in a widely circulated medical textbook authored by Hans von Gersdorff in 1517 titled, “*Feldbuch der Wundarzney*” (lit. “Field Book of Surgery”). Gersdorff, a field medic employed by a German mercenary company, worked with engraver Hans Wechtlin within the *Tross* to illustrate the dissected bodies of fallen *Landsknechte* over the course of five years. The

illustrations (See Figures 2.31 and 2.32), which depict common battlefield injuries, organ systems, procedures for amputation, and the design of bone setting and trepanning machines, were received well enough to warrant multiple printed editions, and could found as reference material in European colleges for centuries afterwards²¹⁷.

In a philosophical parallel to the use of criminal bodies in eighteenth and nineteenth-century medical dissections, the desecration of mercenary bodies for medical research was not considered a moral factor due to the Otherness that their bodies and souls inherited through their participation in *guerra alla moderna*. As pointed out by historian Charles Tilly, the supremacy of mercenary warfare (“Purchased Coercion”) made the conduct of state defense deadlier, more expensive, and, through the introduction of new financial institutions, deeply intrusive to the lives of average citizens²¹⁸. The actions of the Reformation Public also made the experience of war more intimate and immediate than ever before, leaving people steeped in traditional social roles, like urban burghers, to conceptualize the changing world around them in cultural handles tangible to them. The creeping decline of artisan economies, increased availability of New World bullion, and the proliferation of more dangerous weapon systems, while certainly factors contributing to rise of mercenary warfare, took place over centuries and would have been barely perceptible to those living in Renaissance communities. Instead, writers and artists of the Reformation Public attempted to find reason for their sons and daughters abandoning their homes for the untamed carnage of the battlefield by contextualizing in the concepts most accessible to them; Death, Shame, and the Devil.

²¹⁷ Choulant, Ludwig, and Mortimer Frank. *History and Bibliography of Anatomic Illustration*. New York: Hafner Publ., 1962. Pp. 62-66

²¹⁸ Tilly, Charles. *Coercion, Capital, and European States: AD 990-1992*. Cambridge (Mass.): Blackwell, 2015. Pp. 78

Conclusion

In 1557, Charles V passed a new iteration of the *Constitutio Criminalis Carolina*, which placed further restrictions on the ability for *Landsknechte* to appoint officers within their *Haufen*, and prohibited their passage through towns unbidden²¹⁹. In the same year, Hans Sachs published a book containing some of his most renowned songs, titled “*Ausgewählte Poetische Werke*.” Song number forty-four, titled, “Saint Peter with the *Landsknechte*” describes St. Peter’s insistence on allowing a gang of dead *Landsknechte* into the gates of heaven, despite the warnings of his angels. Upon entering heaven, the riotous *Landsknechte* start carousing and fighting with the angels, prompting St. Peter to ask God for an answer:

“The Lord said, "To every angel,
He should take a drum at once
And step in front of Heaven’s Gate '
And make a noise out there. ”

-

That's what Peter did.
As soon as the angel beat the noise,
The *Landsknechte* ran without delay
Speed out of the Gates of Heaven,
Believing, they could answer the noise.

-

Saint Peter closed the heavenly gate,
Lock 'the *Landsknecht*' from the place.

²¹⁹ Swart, Pp. 75-82

Not one has been in there since then,
Because Peter does hum with them.
But take this poem here as warning,
As without Angels, Hans Sachs speaks here.”

Later in the same book, on chapter forty-eight, Sachs would record another song, titled, “The Devil with the *Landsknecht*,” where the devil, sensing a great sin being committed in a billeted townhouse, hides behind the stove and waits for the owners to return. As four *Landsknechte* return to the house after a successful pillage, one of the mercenaries lights the stove, and notices the Devil;

“And now the *Landsknecht* carried a hum
as he carried the pillage to the stove.
The *Landsknecht* said to the host:
“Hey, behind the stove, I’ll advise
that we eat the poor devil hiding behind!”

The horned devil did then speak,
“*Landsknechte* are a wicked people on this Earth!
How could I not make them turn?
They hate me, so take care
And refuse the *Landsknecht* eternal!”

Both songs, composed by an artist with intimate familiarity with *Landsknechte*, utilizes humor to satirize a theme that would have been obvious to contemporary listeners by the end of

Charles V's reign; the Otherness of the *Landsknecht*, which was so deeply engrained in Renaissance culture that even the rulers of the afterlife damned them to eternal marginalization.

At its foundations, the cultural Othering of the *Landsknecht* was the result of an overenthusiastic embrace of the nascent humanist ideals inherent with the German Renaissance, without regard to traditional attitudes or morality. The *Haufen* allowed for a prototypical representative democracy that was earnestly invested in the well-being of its constituents, allowing for *de facto* legal representation through the *Voerder* system, and a suspension of geographically-based custom and law. However, when those egalitarian ideals were backed by military force against the interests of centralizing states, the *Landsknechte* were branded as chaotic beasts loyal only to their own desires, prompting the abolishment of the *Voerder* system in 1556²²⁰. Freedom to acquire riches and social gratification according to one's natural talents and effort, as was envisioned by the provisions of the *Artikelbrief*, seemed to represent the total encapsulation of the *Novus hominae* ideal of the Renaissance. When that ideal drew too many men and women away from their traditional stations in urban centers, suddenly, the *Landsknechte* became depicted as lascivious predators of youth and innocence.

However, more than any other factor towards the Othering of the *Landsknechte* was its utter convenience to the centralizing Hapsburg state. After all, as Machiavelli points out, one of the key strengths of mercenaries in general is their ability to incur grievous numbers of casualties without harming the productive capacity of your countrymen. By correlating the presence of Maximilian's centralized state with the *Landsknecht*, the populace's frustrations with Imperial governance could be directed towards a demographic that could be characterized as avaricious, rapacious, murderous, diseased, and soulless, instead of the heads of state. Rulers after

²²⁰ Swart, Pp. 82

Maximilian I, who had purchased their own companies of *Landsknechts*, would engage with similar scapegoat tactics when their own actions caused some great calamity; the Danish King Christian II would blame his *Landsknechts* for the Stockholm Bloodbath in 1520, Georg Turchess von Waldburg blamed his *Landsknechts* for the massacre at Frankenhausen in 1525, and Charles V would state that the Sack of Rome in 1527 was more the result of the *Landsknechts*' inherent bloodlust, rather than his failure to pay or feed them.



Figure 3.1: *The Dead Landsknecht*
Albrecht Altdorfer, Ink and Charcoal Drawing, c.1530

Perhaps the sincerest pictorialized symbol of the *Landsknecht*'s Othering within the context of the Reformation state comes from Albrecht Altdorfer's *The Dead Landsknecht* (See Figure 3.1²²¹). In it, a *Landsknecht*, clad in slashed clothing and *Plunderhosen*, lays dead and forgotten within the wilds of the forest, with the trees each symbolizing the competing estates structures of European states. The piece focuses on the corpse, lying prostrate and exposed within the beast's natural habitat- a series of arches to the right lead into a vaulted tomb, to which neither tree limb, nor *Landsknecht* have access to. Akin to the shedding of broken tree limbs, the death and Othering of the *Landsknecht* is presented as a tragic, yet natural outcome of the growing power of State²²².

Indeed, as European states became larger and more centralized in the latter half of the sixteenth century, less tolerance was displayed towards the *Landsknechte*'s adherence to the *Artiklebrieff* and the relative autonomy that mercenary companies were allowed to operate under. Gradual efforts towards proletarianization, spanning the reigns of two Holy Roman Emperors, and four decades, had been fostered by the relative peace in Europe achieved after the Peace of Augsburg in 1555 and the death of Suleiman the Magnificent in 1566, which diminished the *Landsknechte*'s ability to leverage physical protection for political autonomy. By the ascension of Holy Roman Emperor Rudolph II in 1576, signatories of *Landsknecht* cultural identity originally fostered by Maximilian I, such as distinctive ceremonies, clothing, and weaponry, had faded into obscurity, with the final contemporary use of the word "*Landsknecht*" dating to 1581²²³.

By the intensification of the Eighty Years' War in the late 1580's, mercenaries had ceased being referred to by colorful idioms reflective of personal agency, such as *Tercio*,

²²¹ Hale, *Artists and Warfare*, Pp. 4

²²² *Ibid.* Pp. 5-6

²²³ Swart, Pp. 82

Reisläufer, or *Landsknecht*, and instead were broadly composed of a multi-national morass of soldiers with little bargaining power with the state, known collectively as *Soldäten*, or “those who sold themselves²²⁴.” By the seventeenth century, and the outbreak of the Thirty Years’ War in 1618, the ability of the *Landsknechte* to leverage their mastery of purchased coercion had passed into romanticized admiration by the common soldier. Contemporary writer Johann Grimmelshausen noted in 1688 that the *Soldäten* of the Thirty Years’ War pined for the days when a mercenary could achieve a modicum of honor serving in battle, and that by 1630, the “...only paradise afforded to a mercenary is to chance upon a fat farmer” with soldiers existing so far into the margins of society that the only life available to a retiring soldier is as a beggar or vagabond²²⁵.

²²⁴ Ibid, Pp. 86-92

²²⁵ Grimmelshausen, Hans Jakob Christoph Von. *Simplicissimus*. Edited by Mike Mitchell. Sawtry: Dedalus, 2012. Pp. 53

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