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Honour and Fighting Social Advancement in the Early Modern Age

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Abstract – The article considers the importance of military service in social advancement, here understood as filling the role of “prince” in feudal law and thus participating in the government of an estate, in the transition from the Late Middle Ages to the Renaissance or Early Modern Age. In the context of a city burgher or a petty noble or knight advancing into a government role, did honour require that the individual have experience in fighting – in war, military organisation and leadership? How did mercenaries figure? What role, if any, did *Fechtmeister*, *Fechtbücher*, *Fechtschulen* or *Kriegsbücher* play?

Keywords – Social advancement, honour, medieval, renaissance, war, military organisation, estate, prince, feudal law, knight, city, mercenary, duel, *Fechtmeister*, *Fechtbuch*, *Fechtschule*, *Kriegsbuch*

I. OBJECTIVE AND STRUCTURE

I.1. Introduction

The proposition I am advancing is threefold:

1. In the Holy Roman Empire of the late middle ages and early modern times, i.e. between about 1400 until about 1550, the ruling stratum was comparatively open to social advancement. After about 1550, the ruling stratum became less permeable. This closing-off marked the constitutional transition toward absolutism and typified the *anciens régimes* up to the French Revolution. This constitutional development is dealt with in part II.
2. During the same time, warfare underwent a fundamental change: Advances in firearms transformed battle from a hand-to-hand fight of individuals into a ranged contest of drilled troops. Warfare changed from a warrior-dominated culture to a soldier-dominated culture. Part III looks at this change.
3. Despite these fundamental transformations, martial prowess was and remained one of the self-defining attributes of individuals in the ruling stratum – those in it, those rising into it and those aspiring to it. Active service experience and the acquisition of the relevant skills in arms, tactics and organisation were elements conducive to, and constituent of, honour and corresponding social advancement. These questions are addressed in part IV.

Propositions 1 and 2 no more than reflect the current state of research; proposition 3, though, is novel in that it offers an explanation for the mechanics of social advancement in this tumultuous period in European history. Before this period, the relevant constitutional environment did not exist; after this period, the ruling classes closed themselves off against social risers.

The remainder of this introduction provides some background on the importance of bearing arms, especially the sword, the nature of the feudal order, and on honour.

The question is not whether burghers fought; that they did – in defence of their towns, in aggressive wars, as mercenaries, in duels – has been amply documented.¹ The question here is about the reasons for them doing so, and specifically, whether their martial interests were related to social advancement; and what that had to do with honour. In this context, I'm defining "social advancement" as an increase in the individual's constitutional position: Does he (and for practical purposes the individuals involved are nearly exclusively males) have a role in government?

In terms of geography, I shall focus on Switzerland and south-western Germany – partly due to foreknowledge, partly due to the availability of literature and sources.

I.2. Arms and the Man

In European culture, the sword is accorded a power and symbolism no other weapon – and few if any other object – enjoyed, then or since. Swords were the mark of a prince's right to rule, ceremoniously carried before him in procession, unsheathed and erect; and it consecrated the right to sit in judgement over life and death.² It represented the free man, government and power – in the rural Swiss estate (canton) of Appenzell Inner-rhoden, cantonal votes and elections have been held by public assembly on the last Sunday in April on the *Landsgemeindeplatz* in Appenzell since about 1378; male voters carry a side-arm to show their eligibility to vote.³

¹ Jean Chandler, 'The Guild and the Swordsman', *Acta Periodica Duellatorum*, 2 (2014), 27–66; Jean Chandler, 'A brief examination of warfare by medieval urban militias in Central and Northern Europe', *Acta Periodica Duellatorum*, 1 (2013), 106–150; Matt Galas, 'Statutes of the Fencing Masters of Bruges (1456)', in *Arts de Combat*, ed. by Fabrice Cognot (Paris: AEDEH, 2011), pp. 137–152; B. Ann Tlusty, *The Martial Ethic in Early Modern Germany* (Chippingham and Eastbourne: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Reinhard Baumann, *Landsknechte* (München: C. H. Beck, 1994), pp. 62–71. Duelling has recently received closer attention – see Ulrike Ludwig, Barbara Krug-Richter and Gerd Schwerhoff (eds.), *Das Duell* (Konstanz: UVK, 2012).

² Michel Huynh, 'Usages Symboliques and L'Objet Mythique', in *L'Épée*, (Paris: Éditions de la réunion des musées nationaux, 2011), pp. 53–101; Thomas Laible, *Das Schwert*, 2nd Ed., (Bad Aibling: Wieland, 2008), pp. 12–17; Mike Loades, *Swords and Swordsmen* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2010), pp. xiii–xvii, and pp. 161–162; Fabrice Cognot, 'Par-delà formes et fonctions', in Jaquet, *Art*, pp. 27–42, pp. 32–36; Stephan Meder, *Rechtsgeschichte*, 5th Ed., (Köln/Weimar/Wien: Böhlau, 2014), pp. 151–153; Hermann Bischofberger, *Rechtsarchäologie und Rechtliche Volkskunde des eidgenössischen Standes Appenzell Innerrhoden* (Obereggen: Bischofberger, 1999), pp. 724–728.

³ <<http://www.ai.ch/de/politik/sitzung/>>; Bischofberger, pp. 79–83; Huynh, p. 99.

Originating in Germanic tribal law, defending one's rights and physical integrity was the responsibility of the free, arms-bearing – honourable – male, and violent self-help was the primary recourse for protecting that honour.⁴ Citizens were encouraged to wear swords, and mandates are extant where the authorities bemoan the new fashion of going abroad armed with a quarterstaff instead of a sword.⁵ Depriving a person of his right to bear arms excluded that person from all aspects of citizenship,⁶ including obviously an intrinsic part of that status: Military service.

In the Swiss confederacy, military service eligibility usually began with age fourteen. When the estate was under attack, all effectives were drafted, but active service in “foreign” ventures was ultimately voluntary.⁷

⁴ Heinrich Mitteis / Heinz Lieberich, *Deutsche Rechtsgeschichte*, 16th ed., (München: C H Beck, 1981), Kap 6 II 3., 4. (p 27–28); Brian M. Downing, *The Military Revolution and Political Change* (Princeton NJ: PUP, 1992), p. 24; Walter Schaufelberger, *Der Wettkampf in der Alten Eidgenossenschaft* (Bern: Haupt, 1972), p. 147; Florian Hitz, ‘Kriegführung um 1500’, in *Freiheit einst und heute* (Chur: Calven, 1999), 149–172, p. 154; Tlusty, pp. 56–57, p. 124; Meder, p. 128 – bearing in mind that “honour” referred as much to the material aspect of honour (i.e. assets) as to status. Defence of one's honour ranked equal to defence of one's life and limb for criminal law purposes: N°140 of Emperor Charles V's *Peinliche Halsgerichtsordnung* of 1532, the *Constitutio Criminalis Carolina* (<http://www.smixx.de/ra/Links_F-R/Constitutio_Criminalis_Carolina_1532.pdf>): *Was eyn recht notweer ist: 140. Item so eyner mit eynem tödtlichen waffen oder weer überlaufft, anficht oder schlecht, vnd der benöttigt kan füglich an ferlichkeyt oder verletzung, seines leibs, lebens, ehr und guten leumuts nicht entweichen, der mag sein leib vnnd leben on alle straff durch eyn rechte gegenweer retten, Vnd so er also den benöttiger entleibt, er ist darumb nichts schuldig, ist auch mit seiner gegenweer, biß er geschlagen wirdt zu warten nit schuldig, vnangesehen ob es geschriben rechten vnnd gewonheyten entgegen wer* (What is proper self-defence: If someone attacks with a deadly weapon, and the attacked cannot escape without endangering his life, limb, honour or good reputation, then the attacked may save his life and limb through an appropriate defence. And even if he kills the attacker, he is not guilty. He also need not wait for the attacker to strike first, regardless of whether this may be against written law or custom). See also N°165 *Bamberger Halsgerichtsordnung* of 1507 (Bamberg: Hans Pfeil, 1507) – which helpfully adds, “as many ignorant people believe” (“... als etlich vnuerstendig lewt meinen.”).

⁵ “... der Mann ein gut Schwerdt, oder Rappier tragen solle, nach Eidgenössischer und Unserer Landesart, und nach Sitte der alten Teutschen.” (“... the man shall wear a good sword or side-sword, pursuant to Swiss and our country's practice, and the custom of the Germans of yore.” Berne 1585 – Emanuel von Rodt, *Geschichte des Bernerischen Kriegswesens*, 2 Vols., (Bern: Jenni, 1831), Vol. II pp. 65–66.

⁶ Tlusty, pp. 23–24, pp. 71–76; Bischofberger, pp. 706–710; Hitz, p. 154; a 1541 Appenzell ARh *Landsgemeinde* resolved that whoever breached the peace by force of arms (“mit Wehr und Waffen”) should lose “his arms and armour, both pointy and broken-off” (“... er keinerlei Wehr und Waffen, spitziges noch abgebrochenes, nicht tragen wolle...”) and his honours (“Ehren”) for three years – (*Landbuch des lands Abbenzell Aufferer Rooden*, ca. 1770, Cantonal Library Trogen CM Ms 18, Art 147 p. 98).

⁷ August Bernoulli, ‘Die Organisation von Basels Kriegswesen im Mittelalter’, *Basler Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Altertumskunde*, 17 (1918), 120–161, pp. 123 and 157–158; Chandler, *Militia*; Walter Schaufelberger, ‘Das eidgenössische Wehrwesen im Spätmittelalter im Lichte der modernen Mili-

Sporting events featuring demonstrations of strength and marksmanship (essentially paramilitary training) were very popular and encouraged, especially the various shooting competitions, first with crossbows, but soon with firearms. Complaints about mischief with firearms (e.g. using a burgher's door for impromptu target practice or riddling the side of a barn with holes) betray an easy familiarity with the weapon. But the authorities were equally concerned with directing these events into "wholesome" channels like fitness, innocent diversion, representation and "diplomatic" exchanges with friendly neighbours, as they were with suppressing their testosterone-soaked exuberance.⁸

Other than the sword, there was no standardisation of arms; the Swiss responding to call-ups showed up with the arms they had or preferred.⁹ To the authorities' chagrin, the individuals tended to eschew the pike and the arquebuse, and preferred halberd and

tärgeschichtswissenschaft', *Neujahrsblatt der Feuerwerker-Gesellschaft in Zürich*, 166 (1975) 13–14; Walter Schaufelberger, *Der Alte Schweizer und sein Krieg* (Zürich: Europa, 1952), pp. 65–76; Hans Conrad Peyer, *Die Verfassungsgeschichte der alten Schweiz* (Zürich: Schulthess, 1980), pp. 65–66. Though service was compulsory, there were ways out, like providing a (paid) stand-in: *ibid.*; Roger Sablonier, 'État et structure militaires dans la Confédération autour des années 1480', in *Cinq-centième anniversaire de la bataille de Nancy (1477)*, Nancy: Université de Nancy, 1978), 429–447, p. 431; Ralph Bosshard, 'Militärunternehmer aus dem Thurgau gegen Ende des 15. Jahrhunderts', *Thurgauer Beiträge zur Geschichte*, 134 (1997), 7–116, pp. 26–27. In Berne, men clubbed together to hire paid substitutes: v. Rodt, I pp. 6–7. Military service was linked to political participation, so men in subject territories were not obliged to serve until absolutism turned the population into subjects – Bosshard, pp. 20–21. On the range of coming-of-age: Tlusty, pp. 23–24.

⁸ Schaufelberger, *Wettkampf*; Bernoulli, *Kriegswesen*, pp. 143–147; Chandler, *Guild*, pp. 58–62; Tlusty, pp. 189–217; Bosshard, p. 69; Schaufelberger, *Krieg*, pp. 47–49; Schaufelberger, *Wehrwesen*, pp. 21–22 – early guns were expensive, but could be drawn from the local arsenal for practice and active service. Universities wrestled with the same mischief issues: Paul F. Grendler, 'Fencing, Playing Ball, and Dancing in Italian Renaissance Universities', in *Sport and Culture in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by John McClelland and Brian Merrilees (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2009), 295–318, p. 306.

⁹ Schaufelberger, *Krieg*, pp. 16–20; Sablonier, p. 432; Tlusty, p. 135. For the standard weapons and kit, acquired by the individual, the guild or the arsenal: Bernoulli, *Kriegswesen*, pp. 140–142. The authorities sought to direct this by forbidding certain weapons e.g. the *Kreuzdegen*, a long estoc, or the *Schäfflin*, a short spear (javelin) – v. Rodt, I pp. 49–50; E. A. Gessler, 'Vom Kreuzdegen', *Anzeiger für Schweizer Altertumskunde*, n.s. 24/3 (1922), 157–175; W. Rust, 'Notizen über das solothurnische Wehrwesen des XVI. Jahrhunderts', *Allgemeine Schweizerische Militärzeitung*, 26/46 (1880), Part 1: No. 37, 301–303; Part 2: No. 38, 310–313, p. 311. On the other hand, there were repeated mandates to have, maintain and show especially defensive armaments, and the authorities obliged citizens with armour and weapons who did not heed a call-up to lend their equipment to those who did and were lacking pieces; detailed records were kept (Rust, pp. 301–302).

longsword – Schaufelberger suspects the reason is to maintain mobility when it came to the battle's most lucrative phase, the *après-action* pillage and plunder.¹⁰

I.3. The Feudal Order

It is virtually impossible for us moderns, used to Cartesian systems and modern constitutional theory, to grasp the bewildering complexity of the feudal order and its legal structure.¹¹

Feudal law was never a clearly defined, let alone codified, concept or system. Historically, feudal law developed from the fusion of Germanic tribal law, where interpersonal relationships were key, with the concepts of late, already highly abstract Roman law.

A central feudal concept was the *enfeoffment*, by which a higher person (the lord) conferred on a lower person (the vassal or tenant) a discrete package of privileges and obligations, a *fief*. The “privilege” side regularly meant rights of government over, and monetary exploitation of, land, people or an office; the “obligation” side initially encompassed a certain limited period of personal, as a rule military, service, but in later times devolved into an obligation to furnish men and equipment or simply money (*scutage*).¹²

With the *enfeoffment*, and though the lord remained the ultimate owner, the vassal became the *owner* of the *fief*,¹³ assumed the commercial risk associated with it and exercised the power inherent in the *fief in his own right*; this is the key and today incomprehensible feature of feudal law. It is important to note that the *enfeoffment* was a contract: A vassal could sue the lord for compliance with the feudal contract.¹⁴

Language has its pitfalls; key feudal law terms are *beneficium*, *honor* or *virtus*:

¹⁰ Schaufelberger, *Krieg*, p. 20; Sablonier, p. 432; Rust, p. 301; Bernoulli, August, ‘Basels Kriegführung im Mittelalter’, *Basler Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Altertumskunde*, 19 (1921), 106–129, p. 115; Downing, p. 60.

¹¹ For a discussion on definitional problems regarding the term “feudalism”, see Elizabeth A. R. Brown, ‘The Tyranny of a Construct’, *American Historical Review*, 79/4 (1974), 1063–1088.

¹² Meder, pp. 224–227; for an example of the progression from pure feudal administration to bureaucratic administration see e.g. the 14th C Habsburg administrative reforms in Zurich: Erwin Eugster, ‘Adel, Adels Herrschaften und landesherrlicher Staat’, in: *Geschichte des Kantons Zürich, Band I*, various editors, (Zürich: Werd 1996), 172–208, pp. 197–198.

¹³ In Roman law terms: not merely *possessio*, but *dominium*; and it was not a transfer of *dominium*, since the lord retained the *dominium directum*, but the vassal acquired a *dominium utile* to the extent defined in the feudal contract; Meder, p. 228.

¹⁴ Generally: Mitteis and Lieberich, Kap 27 (pp. 165–173); Meder, pp. 223–233; Bischofberger, p. 82; Downing, pp. 23–24. As another complication, a vassal could hold more than one *fief*, and from different lords.

- *Beneficium* can innocently mean simply “advantage”, “benefit”, “favour” – but in the legal terminology of the feudal order it means “fief”.¹⁵
- *Honor* is understood today as meaning “honour”, an unquantifiable quality; in mediaeval Latin, *honor*, and the plural *honores*, could mean “fief”, often in the sense of “office”, a very quantifiable asset with a money value.¹⁶
- *Virtus* is understood today as “virtue” (“*Tugend*”), a quality similar to “honour”; but it too could mean “fief” in the sense of an asset with money’s worth.¹⁷

A “person” in this sense could be an individual or a collective, e.g. a city or the inhabitants of a valley. The package of privileges and obligations of a person constituted that person’s estate, and defined that person’s position in the feudal order. In this article, I shall be using the term “estate” to refer to collectives or individuals with a position in the feudal order.¹⁸

A key concept in the feudal constitution of the Holy Roman Empire was that of “prince” – “princes” were tenant-in-chief (i.e. a direct, unmediated vassal of the Emperor) with a portfolio of privileges which, for practical purposes, made them “independent” or “sovereign”. One of the privileges princes held was the right to award fiefs. Individuals, rural collectives or cities could rate as princes.¹⁹ Petty nobility were nobility who had the right to hold fiefs, but not the right to award fiefs.²⁰

¹⁵ Meder, p. 225; ref. DuCange “*beneficium*”: *Scriptoribus mediae ætatis, dicitur prædium fiscale, quod a Rege vel Principe, vel ab alio quolibet ad vitam viro nobili utendum conceditur. Ita autem appellatum est, quod is ex mera dantis Beneficio ac liberalitate illud possideat.*

¹⁶ Ref. DuCange “*honor*”: *præterea appellata Beneficia, seu prædia, quæ ad vitam viris nobilibus assignabantur, ad militare servitium, a quibus feuda postmodum profluxere*; see also the DRW “Ehre”: III 5a: *Recht, Privileg* (“*es sey umb aigen, leben, gelt, gült oder pfantschaft ... und ander ir ere und recht und guet gewonhait*” – 1347 altbaierische landständische Freibriefe 16); III 5b: *Nutzung*, III 11c: *Ehre und Gut* (“*daß man im gut gebe oder im anders ere biete fur sinen schaden, daß sol man tun nach siner werdeckheit*” – 1275/87 Schwabenspiegel). Correctly: Christine Reinle, ‘Spätmittelalterliche Landesverwaltung als Karrieresprungbrett?’, in Schultz, *Aufstieg*, 221–242, p. 239.

¹⁷ Ref. DuCange “*virtus*”: *Possessio, prædium*; the DRW has not yet captured entries T-Z (“*Tugend*”).

¹⁸ The German technical term is *Stand*, which is less ambiguous than the English “estate”, but still refers to both the entity and the attributes of a feudal class; in English, a vestige of this concept is found in the traditional Church of England marriage sermon: “Marriage is an honourable estate”. I want to avoid referring to e.g. the Swiss estates as “cantons”, since “canton” implies a territorial organisation under central administration, and the hallmark of the period is the effort of authorities to weld the disparate feudal rights into a centralised territorial administration.

¹⁹ Without initial capital, “prince” is here used as a category, describing a feudal function. With a capital “P”, it refers to the rank of nobility, e.g. the Prince-Abbot of St Gallen. In the context of this article, certain rural collectives (e.g. Schwyz and Appenzell) and Imperial free cities would rate as princes. Peyer, *Verfassung*, pp. 12–21, pp. 75–84.

²⁰ Rainer Bach, “*der ritterschaft in eren*” (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2002), pp. 2–3; Peter-Michael Hahn, ‘Ein Geburtsstand zwischen Beharrung und Bewegung’, in Schultz, *Aufstieg*, 193–220, p. 195.

I.4. “Honour” or “Honours”?

Social advancement is closely linked to the concept of honour – but the nature of the link is not straightforward. Though this article cannot exhaustively deal with this question, I submit that it suggests aspects of the link which have not received much attention in linguistic, historical or legal literature: While there is an abundance of research on the nature of honour, the meaning of honour and the loss of honour,²¹ there is very little on how to *gain* honour.

Though this needs to be substantiated through further research, this article suggests that “honour” was both an incremental and a binary property – “honour” as a binary property consisted of and was gained by incremental “honours”. Secondly, an “honour” could well be a very concrete asset, e.g. a fief, often in the form of an office.²² So social advancement both required a certain basic stock of honour(s), but also brought honours, thus allowing the individual – or the next generation – to achieve even higher honours, status and office.

The sources of honour seem to change during the period under review – in medieval times, honour was an amalgam of wealth, feudal status, social class, military valour, relationship and ancestry;²³ some of these were vague and innumerate, others (especially feudal status in the sense of fiefs of land, civilian offices and military commands) were concretely defined in terms of position and, crucially, income. This type of honour was of similar concern for all free persons, and the law did not lightly dishonour a free man.²⁴ As the ruling stratum closed itself off and social advancement became more difficult in the 16th C, honour became binary and was reduced to one aspect: bloodline.

²¹ See Sybille Backmann, Hans-Jörg Künast, Sabine Ullmann and B. Ann Tlusty, *Ehrkonzepte der frühen Neuzeit* (Berlin: Akademie, 1998); Achim Geisenhanslüke and Martin Löhnig (eds.), *Infamie* (Regensburg: Gietl, 2011); George F. Jones, *Honor in German Literature*, (Chapel Hill NC: UNC, 1959).

²² E.g. Hans Wellmann, ‘Der historische Begriff der „Ehre“’, in: Backmann/Künast/Ullmann/Tlusty, 27–39, p. 36.

²³ Gerhard Fouquet, ‘Stadt-Adel’, in Schultz, *Aufstieg*, 171–192, p. 190 refers to “*Ehrkapital*”; Malte Prietzel, ‘Schauspiele von Ehre und Tapferkeit’, in Backmann/Künast/Ullmann/Tlusty, 105–123, p. 121, quoting the *Jouvencel* (1466), where honour is equated with property – Jean V du Bueil, *Le Jouvencel* (Paris: Renouard, 1889 – 2 Vols. <<http://archive.org/stream/lejouvencel-parj00bueigoog#page/n11/mode/2up>>), II pp. 103–104.

²⁴ See part I.2 and Fn 6 – the “dishonouring” punishment of being banned from bearing arms was temporary. Another example is the punishment of the pillory – if the pillory was applied by the executioner, the punishment was dishonouring; if it was applied by someone else (e.g. a church punishment), then it would cause temporary embarrassment, but not loss of honour – Bischofberger, pp. 514–515. In 19th Century Germany, defending one’s honour the honourable way – i.e. duelling – was sanctioned with a special, non-dishonouring punishment: *Festungshaft* (house arrest at a military installation without forced labour: §§201–210, §17 and §20 *Strafgesetzbuch für das Deutsche Reich* of 1871). When Tlusty refers to “bourgeois honour”, e.g. pp. 90–91, this is an

II. GOVERNING, SOCIAL CLASS AND SOCIAL ADVANCEMENT

II.1. Transitioning from the Feudal Order to Absolutism

The constitutional story of Europe from about 1100 to the French Revolution is the gradual transition from a feudal order to absolutism – absolutism being the system of government where all power in the commonwealth proceeds from the prince (as an individual or governing council) and is implemented through the prince's agents. In absolutism, there are no class privileges, or rather, to the extent class privileges exist, they exist by the whim of the prince (in the feudal order, class privileges exist as of right).²⁵

Governing and fighting – asserting the claim to government internally and externally – embodied the ruling class' honour and so defined and legitimated it.²⁶ Suppressing private violence (*pax* and *treuga*, the *Landfrieden* movement)²⁷ and replacing it with ruler-directed dispute resolution (law courts) became a key objective of princes, gradually resulting in a differentiation between increasingly proscribed individual or collective private violence (feud)²⁸ and organised war, a process that was not completed until the 17th C.²⁹

instance of the burghers appropriating for themselves the egalitarian, inclusionary concept of “honour” supposedly inherent in old Germanic tribal law and opposing it to the nobility's efforts to define “honour” as an elitist, exclusionary and bloodline-based property.

²⁵ For the whole section, ref. Downing (pp. 56–83) – in my view, Downing overemphasises the military side as driver for the constitutional change to absolutism – the trajectory of constitutional change was already set long before the military change occurred; but there were certainly synergistic effects after 1400, and Downing carefully traces the steps and import of the development.

²⁶ Margret Wensky, ‘Städtische Führungsschichten im Spätmittelalter’, in Schultz, *Aufstieg*, pp. 17–2817–18; Eugster, pp. 174–178; Jack Gassmann, ‘Thoughts on the Role of Cavalry in Medieval Warfare’, in *Acta Periodica Duellatorum*, 2 (2014), 149–178, p. 153; Philippe Contamine, *War in the Middle Ages* (Malden MA/Oxford/Carlton: Blackwell, 1986), p. 238; Bach, pp. 2–3; Matthias Rogg, ‘„Ei oder Henne?“’, *Difference and Integration*, 3 No. 3 (2003), 1–24, pp. 1–2; Baumann, pp. 18–19; Meder, pp. 172–175, pp. 230–231; Downing, pp. 24–25.

²⁷ Hiram Kümper, *Regimen von der Wehrverfassung* (Giessen: Universitätsbibliothek, 2005), pp. 23–30; Peter Bührer, *Die auswärtige Politik der alten Stadtrepublik St. Gallen 1291–1798* (St. Gallen: Zollikofer, 1954), pp. 10–11; Meder, p. 187; Hitz, pp. 150–151; Peyer, *Verfassung*, pp. 15–16.

²⁸ The boundaries were not always clear – Albert Sennhauser, *Hauptmann und Führung im Schweizerkrieg des Mittelalters* (Zürich: Fretz und Wasmuth, 1965), pp. 130–134; Bernoulli, *Kriegführung*, p. 107; Schaufelberger, *Wehrwesen*, pp. 10–12; Hitz, p. 150. In Switzerland, the issue was complex – on the one hand, the city estates, keen to prove their competence as Imperial princes and reliant on safe roads for their trade, professed to abhor the marauding bands of veterans; on the other hand, the “crises” precipitated by this freelance violence netted the Swiss lucrative fiefs – Peyer, *Verfassung*, pp. 65–68; Sablonier, p. 440; Schaufelberger, *Wehrwesen*, p. 11; Hitz, pp. 155–156.

²⁹ Sablonier, p. 433; Schaufelberger, *Wehrwesen*, pp. 10–12; Walter Schaufelberger, ‘Kriegführung und Kriegerum zur Sempacher Zeit (1385–1389)’, *Schriftenreihe der Gesellschaft für militärhistorische Studienreisen (GMS)*, 4 (1986), pp. 36–39; Sennhauser, pp. 156–163; Hitz, pp. 150–151; Tlusty, pp.

After the severe economic crises, change in climate, wars and epidemics in the Europe of the 14th C, population growth, industrial production and trade boomed in the 15th C.³⁰ There were several consequences: The growing dominance of the money economy over the agricultural sector benefited the cities, to the detriment of farmers as well as the landed gentry and nobility.³¹ The money economy called for new organisational patterns and management tools, requiring literacy, numeracy and administrative skills, and so opened up opportunities in “middle management” that had previously simply not existed. These professional administrators acted as agents of their employer, not as owners, and were often salaried.³²

II.2. Nobility

In the Holy Roman Empire, it was not the Empire that developed into a state, but its main constituent principalities – Saxony, Bavaria, Brandenburg-Prussia etc.; large swathes of the Empire lacked constitutional consolidation, especially the ecclesiastical principalities, the Imperial free cities and the sometimes tiny statelets in Swabia and Franconia, in south-western and central Germany.³³

From the 16th C on, for constitutional purposes the nobility divided into roughly three classes: Reigning territorial nobles; other Imperial tenants-in-chief (*Reichsgrafen*); and the rest, comprising both higher nobility with purely princely fiefs and petty nobility.³⁴

57–58. Until then, there was also no differentiation between the violent enforcement of security internally (police) and externally (military/defence) – Tlustý, p. 34.

³⁰ On economy and technology generally Frances & Joseph Gies, *Cathedral, Forge and Waterwheel* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1995), pp. 166–236. From 1340 to 1400, the population of Central and Western Europe dropped from 80 to 50 million – Rogg, *Militär*, p. 3. Bühner, pp. 34–35.

³¹ Rogg, *Militär*, p. 3; Eugster, pp. 189–191.

³² Christian Hesse, ‘Qualifikation durch Studium?’, in Schultz, *Aufstieg*, 243–268; pp. 244–245; Oliver Landolt, ‘Zur zeitlichen Belastung von städtischen Ratsherren und anderen politischen Führungsschichten im Spätmittelalter und der frühen Neuzeit’, *Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte*, 20 (2005), 47–59, p. 48; Eugster, pp. 192–200, pp. 299–236; Waugh, pp. 814–816. Whether feudatory or bureaucrat, responsibilities were administrative, fiscal, judicial and military; the difference lay in who bore the commercial risk (a vassal did, a bureaucrat didn’t).

³³ Peyer, *Verfassung*, pp. 11–12; Downing, pp. 21–23; that southwestern and central Germany were the prime recruiting-grounds for mercenaries (Baumann, p. 71) is surely no coincidence.

³⁴ Mitteis and Lieberich, Kap 39 VI (pp. 287–289); Hahn, pp. 195–196. Within the HRE, the Imperial cities were nominally princes, but had virtually no say in the Diet – which is why the Imperial cities largely ignored Maximilian I’s Imperial reform. A different distinction was between older (*Turnieradel* – i.e. the nobility admitted to tournaments) and newer nobility – this was a purely social distinction, not a constitutional one: Richard Barber and Juliet Barker, *Die Geschichte des Turniers* (Düsseldorf/Zürich: Artemis & Winkler, 2001), pp. 86–87; Schaufelberger, *Wettkampf*, pp. 49–51; Peter Fleischmann, ‘Professionalisierung oder Ausschluss von Führungseliten in der Reichsstadt Nürnberg?’, in Schultz, *Aufstieg*, 49–72, p. 52; Hahn, pp. 208–217; Wensky, pp. 18–19; Klaus Graf, ‘Adel als Leitbild’, in *Gelungene Anpassung*, ed. by Carl Horst and Lorenz Sönke,

While promotion from commoner to the petty nobility was routine, it was nearly impossible for the petty nobility to rise to the *Reichsgrafschaft*.³⁵ The petty nobility in the noble estates suffered the same pressures as it did in the collective estates: If they even still held land or other fiefs, the income was not sufficient to finance an independent aristocratic lifestyle.³⁶ As in the collective estates, the reigning nobles abandoned the feudal tools of government in favour of a centralised absolutist bureaucracy.³⁷ Unless a remunerative marriage or mercenary venture brought in enough cash to enable status-appropriate financial independence,³⁸ the petty nobility increasingly gravitated toward jobs in the princely administration. To differentiate themselves from the richer burghers, the nobility found their exclusive fora in the knightly societies and the tournament, which changed from a martial training event to a conspicuously expensive, exclusive sport.³⁹

Only in the administration of Church holdings, especially in the ecclesiastical principalities and to a lesser extent in the secular Catholic principalities, did the nobility still enjoy their traditional role and status.⁴⁰

(Ostfildern: Thorbecke/Schwabenverlag, 2005), 67–81, p. 73 – in addition to the full set of 16 noble great-great-grandparents (though a commoner female ancestor could be waived if her dowry was substantial enough – Sven Rabeler, *Niederadelige Lebensformen im späten Mittelalter*, (Würzburg: Gesellschaft für fränkische Geschichte, 2006), p. 80), a participant had to derive his income honourably, i.e. from office, spoils or rents, not from a trade.

³⁵ Hahn, pp. 193–194; a spectacular example who succeeded was Albrecht Wallenstein (Baumann, pp. 167–168; Hahn, pp. 202–203), who made it from Bohemian landed gentry to Imperial prince – a presumption that probably contributed to his assassination; another example is Hans Waldmann (ref. Part III.2; Sablonier, pp. 440; Sennhauser, pp. 154–155).

³⁶ Matthias Rogg, ‘„Ein Kriegsordnung neu gemacht”’, in Schultz, *Aufstieg*, 357–386, pp. 362–363.

³⁷ Hesse, pp. 244–245; Hahn, p. 197, pp. 210–211.

³⁸ Schaufelberger, *Wettkampf*, p. 51; a prime example is the Bohemian petty noble Christoph von Thein (1453–~1525), whose successes against the Turks enabled him to buy an Imperial fief and become *Reichsgraf* – Bach, p. 98; also Reinle, p. 235. M. v. Stürler, ‘Kriminalprozeß des Teutsch-Sekelmeisters Hans Frischherz, enthauptet in Bern vor dem Rathause am 5. März 1640’, *Archiv des Historischen Vereins des Kantons Bern*, 10 No. 1–2, (1881–1882), 19–76, p. 27: Bernese families that had relied on mercenary income fell on hard times when the Italian Wars wound down.

³⁹ Prietzel, *Ehre*, p. 105; Barber/Barker, pp. 12–13, on the *Turniengesellschaften* pp. 88–91. Cities initially sponsored burghers to participate, but as costs spiralled and the burden to the taxpayer became hard to justify, this ceased: Andrew Brown, ‘Urban Jousts in the Later Middle Ages’, *Revue belge de philologie et d’histoire*, 78 No. 2 (2000), 315–330, p. 319, p. 324 and *passim* – the finding that jousts did not constitute martial training was a key part in the legal opinion recommending that Lille stop subsidising the events (p. 328). On the sometimes tumultuous Swiss jousts: Schaufelberger, *Wettkampf*, pp. 45–52. Cities too continued to hold tournaments during the late 14th and 15th C, but not much is known about them – *ibid.*, p. 50; Barber/Barker, pp. 81–82.

⁴⁰ Hahn, pp. 197–198; Graf, pp. 67–68; for the Schaumbergs and Eybs: Rabeler, pp. 49–50, pp. 168–169. In Lucerne, a position as capitular canon (*Chorherr*) of the College of (Bero-)Münster was a sought-after income-generating job for members of the ruling council families – Gregor

II.3. Knights – Key Function in the Feudal Order

Carolingian government reforms organised the institution of the *ministerialis*, an unfree retainer of a lord tasked with administrative functions in the lord's estates. By the High Middle Ages, the *ministeriales* had transformed into the knightly class: Noble themselves, but without the right to grant fiefs, and obliged to render military service to their liege lords. They mediated the governing function of the feudal order, with the personal ("individual") right and obligation to defend the feudal order by force of arms.

By the Late Middle Ages, some knights retained their own land fiefs, but others (the city-based knights) acted as administrators of feudal rights – land, markets, law courts, roads and bridges etc. – of higher lords, monasteries and towns, though all basically remained fighters. It was not unusual for a knight, usually with his entourage of 2–4 additional mounted fighters, to sign up for a campaign undertaken by an estate to which he was not beholden, against payment.⁴¹

As towns began to manage their fiefs (now conceived of as territory) themselves, knights were often obliged to choose between remaining in the city and arranging themselves with the city's ruling structure, e.g. as *Constabler*, or to move out of the city.⁴²

The rural nobility remained nominally "independent" and maintained a noble lifestyle, if they could afford it – which became progressively more difficult as agriculture as a

Egloff, '„Eine fette Würde“', in *Stift und Wirtschaft*, ed. by Lorenz Sönke, Andreas Meyer *et. al.*, (Tübingen: Thorbecke Jan, 2007), pp. 193–209.

⁴¹ A nobleman only had to serve out his feudal obligation; outside of that, he could serve his lord against pay or participate in the military adventure of a prince who was not his liege lord – e.g. Bach, pp. 97–98; Schaufelberger, *Sempach*, pp. 26–27; Baumann, pp. 18–19, quoting Wolfram von Eschenbach's 13th C *Parzival* (I 17 11): *er [Gahmuret] bôt sîn dienest umbe guot / als noch vil dicke ein rîter tuot* ("he offered his services for pay / as a knight is wont to do"). The Habsburgs' efforts to avenge their 1315 defeat at Morgarten were delayed until 1386 because there was a distinct lack of enthusiasm among the regional knights to face the obstreperous peasants and burghers of the Swiss Eight Estates (and Leopold III eventually lost both the battle of Sempach and his life – Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst: Das Mittelalter* (Hamburg: Nikol, 2008), pp. 662–664). Friedrich VI von Zollern's hires for his 1407–1408 Pyrrhic victory against Rothenburg left him so deeply in debt that he himself signed on with King Sigismund of Hungary, an assignment that netted him 80,000 Hungarian Guilders and the margraviate of Brandenburg, once Sigismund was elected Emperor – Bach, pp. 131–135, referring to the chronicles of Ludwig V von Eyb.

⁴² Erwin Eugster, 'Die Entwicklung zum kommunalen Territorialstaat', in *Geschichte des Kantons Zürich, Band I*, various editors (Zürich: Werd 1996), 298–335, pp. 301–306; Bernoulli, *Kriegswesen*, pp. 120–121, pp. 128–129; Fouquet, pp. 173–174. Nobles who did integrate into the structures of collective estate government did not give up their nobility – Graf, pp. 68–69. In noble estates, the movement was reversed – rising burghers left the towns and strove to acquire nobility: Hesse, pp. 253–254. Graf (p. 71) also suggests that the city-resident nobility, being in close contact with the written-record-focussed city traders, were therefore the first to invest in family chronicles and *Hausbücher*, which was then imitated by the patriciate; ref. also Bach on the genre.

wealth generator took second place to trade and industry.⁴³ Also, the incessant warfare devastated the countryside, putting further economic pressure on the rural nobility and driving them to seek arrangements with the local prince.⁴⁴

II.4. Feudal Collectives and Their Government

In the collective estates – rural estates like the Swiss estates of Schwyz, Glarus or Appenzell, or cities –, the governing entity was usually a small or privy council, presided or represented by a *Schulthess*, *Landammann* or *avoyer*, and which exercised executive, legislative and judicial power within the estate. As a rule, the privy councillors were elected by a larger, popularly elected council, or co-opted by the sitting privy councillors.⁴⁵

In the 13th C, these councils were in a process of formation, and different estates saw different classes entering the councils.⁴⁶ Generally, the classes can be identified as guild masters; wholesale merchants, traders and financiers; mine- and mill-owners; petty nobility; and substantial landowners, but delimitations were blurred. Due to epidemics and war, the ruling classes saw high turnover and were fairly open to social risers.⁴⁷

As these estates grew in size, wealth and confidence, they externally saw themselves as princes of the Empire, with on one hand the rights to grant fiefs, form alliances, etc., but on the other hand also having responsibility to maintain, and enforce by arms, the peace of the land (the *Landfrieden*) within their fiefs.

By the 15th C, the various estates were consolidating their constitutions and were striving for a centralisation of power with the privy council; the ruling classes became better defined. They began taking over the government and administration of their own estates through a staff of paid functionaries in the service of the estate's government,⁴⁸

⁴³ A Brown, pp. 316–317; Bach, pp. 98–99; Rogg, *Militär*, p. 3; Chandler, *Militia*, pp. 115–119; Bosshard, pp. 30–31; Schaufelberger, *Sempach*, pp. 26–27 – economic pressures pushed knights into remunerative service.

⁴⁴ Rogg, *Militär*, p. 3. Zurich: Eugster, pp. 308–311; St Gallen: Ernst Ziegler, *Die Milizen der Stadt St. Gallen* (Rorschach: Löpfe-Benz, 1992), p. 25; Bühler, pp. 19–20; Berne: v. Rodt, I pp. 8–10; the von Bonstetten in Zurich: Bosshard, p. 31.

⁴⁵ On this section: Peyer, *Verfassung*, pp. 48–55; for Nuremberg: Fleischmann, pp. 50–52. In estates that did not rate as princes, filling council seats was difficult and often attracted only the second-rate – Bühler, p. 35 (for St Gallen); Landolt, p. 47.

⁴⁶ Sablonier, p. 439; Wensky, pp. 18–19; Stefan Pätzold, 'Für Kommerz, Kommune und Kirche', *Concilium medii aevi*, 6 (2003), 133–149, p. 135; Graf, p. 75; Delbrück, pp. 688–689.

⁴⁷ Peyer, *Verfassung*, p. 55; Fouquet, pp. 186–187; Kurt Messmer, 'Zum Luzerner Patriziat im 16. Jahrhundert', in Messmer/Hoppe, 31–214, pp. 58–59; at the battle of Arbedo 1422, so many Lucerne worthies fell (over 100 burghers, among them 10 of 36 privy and 30 of 64 grand councillors) that the privy council forced citizenship on all inhabitants of more than one year's residence.

⁴⁸ Peyer, *Verfassung*, pp. 55–61; for Nuremberg Fleischmann, pp. 52–58. For Lucerne Messmer, pp. 74–75; the Frischherz trial in Berne (ref. v. Stürler) gives a fine insight into the practicalities of public administration.

instead of managing them with the tools of the feudal order – i.e. enfeoffing knights with the job. The result was a loss of privileges and autonomy for ecclesiastical and noble fiefs and for local communities within their “territory”.

As the estates did so, the members of their ruling stratum increasingly saw themselves as having the same social standing as the nobility – like the nobility, the privy councillors were exercising government.⁴⁹

II.5. The Mechanics of Advancing to the Nobility

There were several ways of advancing to the nobility – immediately evident are the cases where an individual formally received the dubbing, as many did before major battles. Another clear event is the granting of a letter patent, which a noble prince might do to reward special service⁵⁰ or outstanding performance, or simply sell for cash.⁵¹

But it was not always clear when nobility was achieved. A common avenue for advancement in the period between the 14th and the late 15th C was for a commoner to grant a loan to the prince, and as security obtain a remunerative fief, such as the toll collection at a bridge or ford, or the wardenship over a monastery. Such an office required the individual to seal documents, which in turn meant that the individual needed a coat of arms. Also, the office may have linked to it the obligation to render mounted service. Both of these were indications of nobility, but not constitutive. The first individual in the office may not have considered himself noble, but his grandson – after three generations of class-appropriate, honourable life and intermarriage – may well in retrospect identify his grandfather as the first generation to have advanced to the nobility.⁵²

⁴⁹ Messmer, pp. 140–142. In this sense, the ruling burghers were not “aping” the nobility, they quite naturally assumed the trappings – and responsibilities – of those who govern, and defence was an integral part of rulership – Pätzold, pp. 135–136; Graf, p. 79; Fouquet, pp. 172–174. In a somewhat different vein (but in my view with the same result), Graf (pp. 75–76 and *passim*), referring to Grünenberg and his *Wappenbuch*, posits the defining quality of nobility as *Tugend* (the literal German translation for Latin *virtus*, for which refer to part I.3 above and Fn 134).

⁵⁰ Hans Georg Wirz, ‘Zürcher Familienschicksale im Zeitalter Zwinglis’, *Zwingliana*, 6/4 (1935), 194–222, p. 219. An interesting situation is related in Wirz (pp. 200–201): in 1492, long after the Habsburgs had lost practically all their feudal rights in Switzerland, Emperor Frederick III elevated Albrecht von Bonstetten, the Dean of the monastery of Einsiedeln (over whose much reduced estate the Habsburgs remained wardens), and his two younger secular brothers to the nobility and gave them the right to effect twenty further elevations at their discretion – three of which were lavished on the Wirz brothers, reliable feudatories of the monastery. The stated objective was to engender a Habsburg/Empire-friendly faction in Zurich (ref. Part III.2).

⁵¹ Graf, pp. 79–80; Fouquet, p. 177.

⁵² Reinle, pp. 230–237; Hesse, pp. 254–255; Wensky, pp. 18–20; Bach, pp. 55–57 for the Ehenheim family; Bernoulli, *Kriegswesen*, pp. 121–122; coat-of-arms ref. also Graf, p. 69. In determining who was noble before the 15th C, bloodline was less relevant than status-appropriate (honourable) lifestyle, but after the 15th C, as the social classes closed themselves off, determining

There were several criteria for determining whether a person had acquired the honours to be considered for elevation to the privy council or the nobility (and there does not seem to be a differentiation between the two), among which were the person's availability to spend time on official duties and do so in the appropriately representative manner, both of which in turn required independent wealth, an income derived from rents and not from petty commerce or a trade.⁵³ Drilling deeper, a key formal requirement was that the person held at least one fief (in the legal language: *beneficium*, *honor*, *virtus*) – a fief of course would provide income in the form of rent.⁵⁴

II.6. Other Avenues: The Study of Law and Theology

In the Late Middle Ages and early Renaissance, the study of law needs to be understood as the science of public administration. Lawyers were the specialists who assisted the ruling class in implementing the machinery of absolutism.⁵⁵ Lawyers consequently had high status and played an important role in government, but their careers tended to be limited to the role of specialists.⁵⁶

the nobility of a family on the basis of ancestry became a cottage industry in many court chanceries: A Brown, p. 317; Graf, p. 80; on the importance of the horse and mounted service: Loïs Forster, 'Le cheval d'armes', in Jaquet, *Art*, pp. 173–203.

⁵³ Reinle, pp. 238–239; Messmer, pp. 137–144; Hahn, pp. 208–210; Wensky, pp. 18–20; Fouquet, pp. 179–180; also Wolfgang Herborn, 'Entwicklung der Professionalisierung der politischen Führungsschicht der Stadt Köln', in Schultz, *Aufstieg*, 29–48, p. 44, for Cologne. Income from rents freed up the individual to seek "honour": Wensky, pp. 17–18.

⁵⁴ In this context, "fief", "office" and "honour(s)" are synonymous – Pätzold, pp. 136–137; in Wensky's words: *Subsistenzergewerb durch Herrschaft* (p. 17); Fouquet, pp. 171–172; Meder, pp. 226–226; in the *Sachsenspiegel* (I 40), breach of fealty results in the loss of honour and of ability to hold fiefs, but not of life (Meder, p. 173 – "*xl: wer truvelos beredit wirt oder li vluchtig us des riches dienste teme verurteilt man sine ere und sin lenrech und nit sinen lip.*" HAB Cod. Guelf. 3.1 Aug. 2°; Heinemann-Nr. 1642); most writers on the subject equate honour with status – which is no doubt correct, so long as "status" is understood in its full legal meaning as the complex of an individual's privileges and obligations, and not simply as social standing; Fouquet refers to "*Ehrkapital*" (p. 190). I agree with Wellmann (p. 38) when he identifies "honour" with social – one is tempted to say "caste" – identity; in Wellmann's example, he offers an 18th C quote that uses *Ehren*: "*in einem kleinen Städtgen ist es sehr empfindlich, wenn [...] Lotterbuben [...] sich in unsere Gesellschaft eindringen und aller Ehren fähig werden*" ("in a small town it is quite problematic if [all sorts of social undesirables] force their way in our society and become eligible for all honours").

⁵⁵ Stefan Brakensiek, 'Juristen in frühneuzeitlichen Territorialstaaten', in Schultz, *Aufstieg*, pp. 269–290 (pp. 269–270); Grendler, p. 297; Marc Sieber, 'Die Wanderung als Bildungselement', *Basler Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Altertumskunde*, 65/1 (1965), 101–112, pp. 108–109; Louis Carlen, 'Juristen und Jurisprudenz im Wallis zur Zeit des Kardinals Schiner', *Blätter aus der Walliser Geschichte*, 14 (1967/68), 99–114, pp. 104–105; Meder, p. 240.

⁵⁶ With exceptions: the Bernese chancellor and diplomat Thüring Fricker in 1473 received both a knighthood and a doctorate in law in Pavia, Sieber, pp. 111–112. In Nuremberg, lawyers even from eligible families were deliberately excluded from political careers – Fleischmann, pp. 68–71

Joining the clergy, too, opened up an individual career. The situation was different in Protestant estates than in Catholic estates: In Protestant estates, the church was a “state church”; advancement in the church hierarchy meant advancement in government generally.⁵⁷ But here, as with lawyers, the role was a specialist one, the advancement limited to the individual. The Catholic Church organisation offered far greater scope for a career, though of necessity, the advancement was limited to the individual.⁵⁸

While theology and law opened up an individual career, a university degree in the liberal arts did not seem to substantially benefit a career. Literacy and numeracy were taught to a sufficient degree in town schools that a university education did not confer any specialised advantage.⁵⁹ Medicine as well was a highly lucrative profession, but also did not aid social advancement.

II.7. A Case in Point – Ludwig VI von Eyb, the Younger, 1450–1521

The family were old-line Franconian ministerial petty nobility. Ludwig’s father, Ludwig V von Eyb the Elder (1417–1502), was the author of the *Memorabilia*, a description of his own feuds and his military and civilian service with first Friedrich I Markgraf von Brandenburg-Ansbach and later Albrecht Achilles Markgraf (later Kurfürst) von Brandenburg, as well as other works. Two of Ludwig V’s brothers had church careers; of Ludwig VI’s three brothers, one had a church, two others specialist civilian careers.⁶⁰

Ludwig’s adolescence involved accompanying his father on campaign, a stint with Pfalzgraf Otto II von Pfalz-Mosberg-Neumarkt, pilgrimage to Jerusalem where he, like his elder brother before him, was knighted, and finally marriage in 1478. In the same year, Ludwig joined a consortium of petty nobles to acquire the fief of Rothenberg Castle from Pfalzgraf Otto II, which put him at odds with Nuremberg. He was appointed *Hof-*

and *passim*; Hesse, p. 246. Cologne too excluded lawyers; in 1489 it anyway elected a lawyer burgo-master, a certain Dr. Johann Hirtz, but soon regretted it. Hirtz promptly sued the city to keep his privileges as a law professor in addition to those of burgomaster; no other lawyer was elected until 1611 – Herborn, pp. 34–38 and p. 44. Lawyers in the Valais: Carlen, pp. 100–104. On lawyers generally: Brakensiek. The study of law was expensive, so lawyers tended to come from well-to-do families, especially burgher families, anyway.

⁵⁷ Brakensiek, pp. 279–281.

⁵⁸ However, placing relatives in high church office could be immensely beneficial to the greater family, as ecclesiastical princes could procure Imperial fiefs for their relatives and so aid the secular lines to advance into the *Reichsgrafenstand* – Hahn, pp. 197–198.

⁵⁹ Hesse, esp. pp. 259–260, 267; Reinle, p. 239; Johann Mösch, *Die Solothurnische Volksschule vor 1830*, Vol. 1 (Solothurn: Gaßmann, 1910), pp. 1–21 (Solothurn sponsored students to study at foreign schools, *ibid.* pp. 7–8); Fribourg’s public school dates to 1181 – F. Heinemann, ‘Geschichte des Schul- und Bildungslebens im alten Freiburg bis zum 17. Jahrhundert’, *Freiburger Geschichtsblätter*, 2 (1895), 1–146, p. 13.

⁶⁰ Bach, pp. 109–117; Rabeler, pp. 79–82; the clerical brothers were afforded university educations, both Ludwigs weren’t; the quality of their writing nevertheless points to a good education.

meister (master of the household) of the Bishop of Eichstätt the following year, with administrative, legal, fiscal and military duties.⁶¹

1486 saw him as *Hofmeister* to Otto II. Otto's fiefs reverted to the prince-electoral line of the Counts Palatine on his death 1499,⁶² but Prince Elector Philipp the Upright appointed Ludwig *Viztum* (governor) of Otto's former estate. In this capacity, Ludwig became active in the war of succession against Nuremberg and Brandenburg that followed the death without male issue of Duke George (the Rich) of Bayern-Landshut in 1503; he had to raise the levy in his governorship, prepare its defence, and work with the Prince Elector's mercenary recruiter. The war was an embarrassment for Ludwig, since he owed feudal allegiance to both sides – the downside to his success in accumulating fiefs.

Ludwig saw some minor action with his troops, but nothing decisive. However, several of his personal estates were plundered, causing him considerable loss. He stayed in Palatine employ until 1510 shortly after Philipp's death, and then entered the service of the Margrave of Brandenburg; but only two years later he was back in the Palatine, where he remained until his death. Though he had inherited the not insubstantial family estates on his father's death in 1502, he remained an employee all his life.⁶³

III. THE CHANGING FACE OF WAR

III.1. Warfare between ca. 1400 and ca. 1550

The period between about 1400 and 1550 saw a fundamental change in warfare and military organisation in Europe. Whereas in the period up to about 1400, armies in the field tended to be fairly small and structured around a core composed of knights,⁶⁴ with a tendency toward a predominance of mounted fighters, armies after about 1550

⁶¹ Rabeler, pp. 79–97; he also participated in the tournaments of the *Vier Landen*.

⁶² Rabeler, pp. 159–170; his employer nominated him as judge for the newly formed *Reichskammergericht* in 1495, but was unsuccessful.

⁶³ Rabeler, pp. 297–327. Rabeler does not refer to Ludwig's *Kriegsbuch*; its dating to 1500 places its creation into his time as *Viztum* in the Palatinate, possibly as preparation for his duties as regional Commander-in-Chief (Heidemarie Bodemer, *Das Fechtbuch* (Stuttgart: Institut für Kunstgeschichte, 2008) 330 – also the dedications on pages a r and 299r of the MS B.26 University Library Erlangen-Nürnberg, <http://digital.bib-bvb.de/view/bvbmets/viewer.0.5.jsp?folder_id=0&dvs=1419242587352~143&pid=4555786&locale=en&usePid1=true&usePid2=true>).

⁶⁴ “Knight” here means the knight proper along with his lance or *gleve*, i.e. 3–5 additional mounted fighters: a heavily armed man-at-arms and more lightly equipped squires with lances or crossbows – Gassmann, pp. 156–159; Dennis E. Showalter, ‘Caste, Skill and Training’, *The Journal of Military History*, 57 (1993), unpaginated <<http://deremilitari.org/2014/07/caste-skill-and-training-the-evolution-of-cohesion-in-european-armies-from-the-middle-ages-to-the-sixteenth-century/>>, Part I; Bernoulli, *Kriegswesen*, pp. 157–161; Schaufelberger, *Sempach*, pp. 27–31. Fighting was a prime avenue to gaining honour – Wensky, p. 18.

showed the structure that would obtain until World War I: Larger in size, with clearly defined infantry, cavalry and field artillery arms, each arm professionally officered and with the infantry the undisputed queen of the battlefield.⁶⁵

The nature of fighting, too, changed. Into the Italian Wars, fighting was inevitably hand-to-hand – the opposing infantry forces would join and then fight it out with pikes, halberds, swords and similar weapons. Ranged weapons – longbows and crossbows – did exist and were tactically relevant, but were not dominant. Manoeuvring was a matter of maintaining cohesion of the *Gewalthaufen*.⁶⁶

The serviceable arquebuse changed that. By the Eighty Years' Spanish-Dutch War, the pike-and-shot formation, the fearsome *tercio*, was the central battlefield unit; hand-to-hand combat weapons were secondary. Unit drill and complex manoeuvring became vital, and infantry could dominate the battlefield without ever joining.⁶⁷

The mediaeval knight clearly saw fighting and ruling as essential elements of his personal *raison d'être*, and maintained a warrior identity to a point of fault. At least until the 14th C, warfare was the realm of warriors, with all the profiteering indiscipline that implied. As war became more complex, its practice required professionals – soldiers.

III.2. Officers and Gentlemen

To the extent literature on warfare focuses on military leaders, it is usually the commanding generals; small unit commands – NCOs, subalterns and other field officers – are hardly dealt with.

⁶⁵ Rogg, *Eliten*, pp. 360–365 and Rogg, *Militär*, pp. 3–5; Rainer Wohlfeil, *Heerwesen und Gesellschaft in der frühen Neuzeit*, (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2006), pp. 1–3; Showalter Part I; Bach, pp. 96–97; George Grosjean, 'Miliz und Kriegsgenügen als Problem im Wehrwesen des alten Bern', *Archiv des Historischen Vereins des Kantons Bern*, 42/1 (1953–1954), 129–171, pp. 144–145, 148; Baumann, pp. 16–18; Daniel Jaquet, 'Introduction', in Jaquet, *Art*, 15–23, p. 17. For the whole section, ref. also Downing, pp. 56–83, Part II.1 and Fn 25.

⁶⁶ Sablonier, p. 436; v. Rodt, I pp. 228–231; Schaufelberger, *Krieg*, p. 51; Schaufelberger, *Wehrwesen*, pp. 18–20; Jan Willem Huntebrinker, 'Geordneter Sozialverband oder Gegenordnung?', *Militär und Gesellschaft in der Frühen Neuzeit*, 10/2 (2006), 181–199, p. 189; Bernoulli, *Kriegführung*, p. 108; Rogg, *Militär*, p. 4 counts pikes among the ranged weapons, which is debatable; according to Bernoulli, *Kriegswesen*, p. 135, a typical *Gewalthaufen* featured four to five *Hauptleute*: One or two on foot with the standard, fifes and drums in the *Gewalthaufen* to direct it; two mounted to maintain formation from the outside; and an arquebusier captain on foot. Ranged weapons: *ibid.*, pp. 142–143; Delbrück, pp. 760–761.

⁶⁷ Schaufelberger, *Wehrwesen*, p. 22. In Switzerland, too, governments began to introduce mandatory drill; as boring drill under the *Trüllmeister* replaced the free-wheeling fun of the boys' day out under the *conférencier Pritschenmeister*, the authorities found that too large attendance at events was no longer a problem – Schaufelberger, *Wettkampf*, pp. 132–136. For the whole section: Kümper, pp. 47–49.

For noble estates, the question is fairly banal, as the estate's contingent would be led by the respective noble and his direct appointees and feudatories. The issue is not well researched for the collective estates, though the identities of most field officers are known; where armies were composed of levies, each estate contributed units between a few dozen to a few hundred strong (in modern parlance in the strength of platoons, companies or battalions), and the various estates recorded by name the leaders (*Hauptleute*), ensigns (*Venner*) and other "officers" of their units.⁶⁸

So far as I can see, Sennhauser is the only author to have focused on this question.⁶⁹ From his research, and from a reading of *vitae* of individuals from governing families in the collective estates, it is quite clear that in the 14th and early 15th C, the *Hauptleute* were first and foremost nobles – their leadership was generally accepted.⁷⁰

As burghers accumulated a high enough census, they too became eligible or obliged to serve mounted;⁷¹ and as they naturally slid into the nobility's civilian leadership roles, so they also slid into the nobility's military leadership roles.

From the 15th C onwards, members of either the governing council or otherwise prominent and being groomed for higher office – and eligible by status or census to render mounted service – were in charge of the estate's contingent.⁷² The social origins of the leaders of sub-contingents are not always clear; where units were drawn from the membership of a guild, a high member of the guild would lead it. The rural contingents were regularly led by the bailiff (*Vogt*), an intermediate-level office for a rising individual. Overall, though, the records show that the councils preferred experienced hands as their top officers.⁷³

⁶⁸ V. Rodt, I pp. 112–128; Sennhauser, p. 14, pp. 23–31; Bernoulli, *Kriegswesen*, pp. 133–134.

⁶⁹ Sennhauser; Bernoulli (*Kriegswesen*, pp. 131–137) also addresses the issue; Schaufelberger, *Wehrwesen*, references Sennhauser in condensed form.

⁷⁰ Sennhauser, pp. 31–34; both in the cities and the rural estates, the nobility sat in the governing councils; Bernoulli, *Kriegswesen*, pp. 133–134 and *passim*; Schaufelberger, *Wehrwesen*, p. 14. In Bavaria, minor offices were avenues for advancement for commoners, but offices involving substantial military obligations were reserved for old-line nobility (*Turnieradel*) – Reinle, pp. 228–229.

⁷¹ Bernoulli, *Kriegswesen*, pp. 141–142; v. Rodt, I pp. 37–39; Reinle, pp. 232–233; Niccolò Machiavelli, *I sette libri dell'arte della guerra*, (n.p.: n.pub., 1796) also recommends drawing the mounted fighters from the wealthy: pp. 61–62.

⁷² Sablonier, p. 430; Landolt, p. 53; Pätzold, pp. 135–136; Ziegler, p. 35; at the battle of Arbedo 1422, 10 Lucerne privy councillors and 30 grand councillors were killed; Marignano 1515 and Kappel 1531 each saw 6 Zurich privy councillors fall; the 1573 plague in Zurich took 7, the one in Lucerne in 1575 4 privy councillors – Sennhauser, pp. 36–37; Peyer, *Verfassung*, pp. 66–67; Hans Conrad Peyer, 'Die Anfänge der schweizerischen Aristokratien', in Messmer/Hoppe, 1–28, p. 12. Delbrück, p. 685, cites the effectiveness of Swiss officers.

⁷³ Sennhauser, pp. 35–36, pp. 146–149; Bernoulli, *Kriegführung*, p. 108; Bernoulli, *Kriegswesen*, pp. 125–126, pp. 132–136, pp. 157–161; Wirz, pp. 219–220. The Zurich *Webrordnung* (Articles of

The estates also allocated “advisors” to the unit commanders, who served both as staff and represented the political leadership of the estate in the field.⁷⁴

To what extent military experience was an implicit *requirement* for higher civilian office is not clear – in Zurich, Berne and Nuremberg, it was.⁷⁵ Messmer has shown for 16th C Lucerne that privy councillors-in-waiting tended to have the lesser military commands, and the higher military commands were associated with privy council appointments.⁷⁶

Biographical data also suggest a parallelism between rising political office and rising military office;⁷⁷ given the ubiquity of fighting commoners, selected *curricula vitae* are not necessarily persuasive, but they are nevertheless instructive:⁷⁸

Feer, Heinrich (?–1492, Lucerne): parlayed a family fief allowing navigation on the Reuss into a fortune; 1467 grand councillor as the first of his family, 1477–1492 privy councillor and various other high civilian and military offices; 1488 ennobled by Matthias Corvinus.

Gambach, Jean (1403–1474, Fribourg (Freiburg im Üechtland)): started as maker of sickles, then 1430 *banneret/Venner* (ensign) of a section of town, with military and administrative duties; councillor 1437; burgomaster 1438; 1442 ennobled; instrumental in negotiating Fribourg’s shift from Savoy to Berne/the Swiss.

Defence) of 14th September 1529 deliberately excluded experienced officers and other ranks from Zurich’s forces as their ideological (religious) purity was suspect, which very likely led to Zurich’s ignominious defeat in the Second Kappel War 1531 (in which Zwingli too was killed) – Kurt Spillmann, ‘Zwingli und Zürich nach dem ersten Landfrieden’, *Zwingliana*, Part I: 12/4 (1965), 254–280; Part II: 12/5 (1966), 309–329, pp. 311–312.

⁷⁴ Sennhauser, pp. 23–25, pp. 128–130, pp. 146–156; v. Rodt, I pp. 119–124; Bernoulli, *Kriegführung*, pp. 109–112, p. 121; Bernoulli, *Kriegswesen*, pp. 124–125, 157–161; Schaufelberger, *Wehrwesen*, pp. 14–15; Kurt Neubauer, *Das Kriegsbuch des Philipp von Seldeneck vom Ausgang des 15. Jahrhunderts* (Heidelberg, 1963), p. 44.

⁷⁵ Zurich: Eugster, p. 316 (pre-Reformation); Nuremberg: Fleischmann, p. 70; Berne: Part IV.4.

⁷⁶ I.e., individuals moved between civilian and military offices; only later were careers either civilian or military. Also, it was not a matter of a family sending one son into the military and another into the civilian career (as was the case with ecclesiastical careers). Rogg, *Eliten*, pp. 370–371.

⁷⁷ Messmer, pp. 85–88. Sablonier, p. 430; Landolt, p. 53; Schaufelberger, *Wehrwesen*, p. 14; for nobility as well, military service was seen as helpful to a civilian career at court – Bach, pp. 97–98.

⁷⁸ Refer to the entries in the HLS under the respective names (for the Wirz brothers: entry “Wirz [ZH]”) and the following: Feer: Messmer, p. 33; Gambach: Niquille; Hochreutiner: Ziegler, p. 48; Kraft: Messmer, p. 85; Malers: Sennhauser, p. 154; Varnbüler: Ziegler, p. 35; Vogler: Alexa Renggli, ‘Hans Vogler der Ältere (1442–1518) und der Jüngere (1498–1567), Altstätten’, in *Rheintaler Köpfe*: (Berneck: Verein für die Geschichte des Rheintals, 2004), pp. 349–356; Waldmann: Eugster, pp. 328–331; and Wirz: Wirz, pp. 200–207.

Hochreutiner, Heinrich (?–1513, St Gallen city); merchant, 1499 supreme *Hauptmann* of the St Gallen troops in the Swabian War, 1501 ennobled, 1505–1513 burgomaster.

Kraft, Hans (?–1575, from Zofingen (subject territory)); 1552 citizen of Lucerne, 1562 captain in French services, then several Lucerne offices, 1567 grand councillor, 1570–1575 *Stadtschreiber* (head of the civilian administration) of Lucerne, 1573–1574 colonel in French services.

Malters, Heinrich von (?–?, from Lucerne subject territory (Malters)); 1444–1449 *Stadtreiter* (town rider) in Berne, 1445 as squire the leader of a unit of 60 journeymen in the Breisgau campaign; mentioned in despatches for maintaining exemplary order, promoted to *Hauptmann* by Berne; seconded to Nuremberg in its quarrel with Brandenburg; 1463 *Ammann* (bailiff) of the Bernese vale of Hasle.

Varnbüler, Ulrich (1440–1496, St Gallen city); 1476 *Hauptmann* of the St Gallen contingent at the Swiss victory over Burgundy; burgomaster 1481.

Vogler, Hans (the Younger 1498–1567, Altstätten, St Gallen prince-abbot territory); father established family fortune in the administrative service of the Prince-Abbot of St Gallen; Hans the Younger initially followed in his footsteps, then 1521–1522 served as lieutenant in a Rheintal contingent in French services first in France, then in Northern Italy; back in Altstätten first *Schreiber* (head of the civilian administration), then *Stadtammann* (bailiff), then leader of the Protestant Rheintal towns against the Prince-Abbot; after Zurich's defeat at Kappel 1531 counterreformation in the Rheintal; Hans fled, entered service of Counts of Württemberg.

Waldmann, Hans (1435–1489, Zurich): apprenticed in Zurich as tailor and tanner; 1458–1460 freelance mercenary in the *Plappartkrieg* (Cow Pat War) with Konstanz; a lucrative marriage in the 1460s allowed him to join the *Constaffel*; 1473 master of the guild of grocers (*zum Kämbel*); 1476 Zurich contingent leader at Murten (knighted before battle), 1477 Nancy, 1478 Bellinzona, accepted commissions from numerous foreign princes; from 1480 deputy burgomaster, successfully schemed to replace the burgomaster 1485; his dubious loyalties and imperiousness, especially the killing of all farmers' dogs, led to his fall and decapitation.

Wirz, Heinrich, Hans and Jakob (?–?, Zurich): the three brothers, from a family of ministerial feudatories of the monastery of Einsiedeln, 1495 all benefited from Albrecht von Bonstetten's Habsburg nobility patents (Fn. 50). Heinrich built a new representative manor and assumed the life of a landed gentleman; to afford it, he had to participate in mercenary ventures. For one of them, in 1500, Heinrich defied the Swiss exclusive mercenary contract with France to sign up with Galeazzo Visconti on Ludovico Sforza's side, who

wanted Milan back. Hans in 1500 was made *Statthalter* (governor) at Wädenswil, a Commandery of the Knights of St. John, and stayed there. Thanks to a step-brother, Jakob 1509 was able to join the wine merchants' guild (*zur Meisen*) and entered one of the Zurich councils, but had to leave the council sometime after 1515 when he was appointed *Ammann* (reeve) of Einsiedeln's manor in Zurich. The brothers participated in various campaigns, and both Heinrich and Jakob fought at Marignano 1515 as knights.

With the professionalisation of warfare and the emergence of an officer corps, we find two types of officers: Professional soldiers and political appointees. The lower nobility, and those without prospects of inheritance, gravitated toward the newly opening professional officer roles.⁷⁹ The political appointees were the scions of the collective estates' ruling families, taking their turn in a military role, and the social risers.

III.3. Military Bureaucracies

Warfare also changed in other respects: The growth in both the economy and the population caused the size of armies to increase dramatically, not only because of the greater number of bodies available, but also because the resources and logistical infrastructure now existed to manage, supply and move them.

A larger, more complex military required specialists: engineers, logistics, signals, artillery, medics and so on.⁸⁰ A key specialist was the *Büchsenmeister*, the “master of the cannon”, who dealt with gunpowder, field and fortress artillery, demolitions, rockets, incendiaries, smoke etc. These activities required considerable skill, training and experience. *Büchsenmeister* were correspondingly highly valued and remunerated; but they were always employees of the estate. While there are *Büchsenmeister* who had political careers, these specialisations – like the civilian specialisations in law and the clergy – do not seem to have been stepping stones in a political career.⁸¹

Greater size and complexity also meant a military bureaucracy to keep track of, and arrange for, pay, victualing, fodder, transportation, remounts, ammunition, quartering and sundry supplies. These tasks require advanced skills in organisation and manage-

⁷⁹ Wohlfeil, pp. 3–4; Bernoulli, *Kriegführung*, p. 107; Bach, pp. 97–107; Rogg, *Eliten*, p. 362, p. 364; Baumann, p. 172; Bosshard, pp 30–31 – spoils were an honourable, status-appropriate income.

⁸⁰ Wohlfeil, p. 5; Huntebrinker, *Sozialverband*, pp. 188–190; v. Rodt, I pp. 119–124; Bernoulli, *Kriegswesen*, p. 136; Bernoulli, *Kriegführung*, pp. 110–112, 120. Signals: fifers, drummers, trumpeters – Bernoulli, *Kriegswesen*, pp. 156–157; v. Rodt, I pp. 119–124; Downing, pp. 65–67.

⁸¹ Bernoulli, *Kriegswesen*, p. 136, pp. 151–153; Rainer Leng, ‘getruwelich dienen mit Buchsenwerk’, in *Strukturen der Gesellschaft im Mittelalter*, ed. by Dieter Rödel and Joachim Schneider (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1996), pp. 302–322; Volker Schmidtchen, *Bombarden, Befestigungen, Büchsenmeister* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1977), pp. 176–196. One such exception was Leonhard Merz, *Büchsenmeister* for the city of St Gallen during the Swabian War 1499 and later burgomaster of St Gallen – Ziegler, p. 46.

ment, as well as treasury and accurate record-keeping.⁸² Staffs usually deal with these issues, and here, a political appointee could be useful, both for portable civilian skills and because of his closeness to the estate's elite that had to provide the supplies.⁸³

III.4. Mercenaries

The Swiss victories over Burgundy in the 1470s created a bull market for the heavy infantry that had defeated Charles the Bold; prime suppliers were the Swiss (*Reisläufer*) and their cousins across the Rhine in Swabia (*Landsknechte*).⁸⁴

Fighting was a commercial proposition during the entire period under review; what changed was the level of constitutional consolidation of the players. Into the High Middle Ages, it is difficult to clearly differentiate between the respective economic and political objectives of the fighters and their employers. Only once the constitutional order had solidified to such an extent that legitimate private violence was effectively curtailed and warfare became an expression of political will of the warmaking authorities, and not the fighters', can one definitively speak of mercenaries.⁸⁵

On the "client" level, the prevalence of mercenaries was at the same time a manifestation of authorities' inability to organise the troops they needed from their own resources, and also a solution to that challenge: a mercenary unit came willing to fight,

⁸² Rogg, *Eliten*, pp. 360–365 and Rogg, *Militär*, pp. 5–7, p. 12. Ironically, these skills were underdeveloped in Switzerland: Grosjean, pp. 143–144; Schaufelberger, *Wehrwesen*, p. 16.

⁸³ Concrete examples of logistical challenges Bernoulli, *Kriegführung*, p. 120; Bernoulli, *Kriegswesen*, p. 133; Schaufelberger, *Krieg*, p. 79–133; Huntebrinker, *Sozialverband*, pp. 188–189; Hitz, pp. 156–158. The *Kriegsbücher* refer to, define and list the functions of various "offices" (*Ämter*) in the fighting units; though there is a differentiation of battlefield and garrison functions, we do not as yet see a differentiation between function and rank – Rogg, *Eliten*, pp. 371–379; Sennhauser, p. 21.

⁸⁴ On the entire section: Baumann; Bosshard; Sablonier, pp. 434–435; Bach, pp. 96–97; Wohlfeil, p. 7; Chandler, *Militia*, pp. 129–132; Hitz, pp. 152–156; Contamine, pp. 135–137.

⁸⁵ I.e. in Morillo's typology (Stephen Morillo, 'Mercenaries, Mamluks and Militia', in *Mercenaries and Paid Men*, ed. by John France (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2008), 243–260, p. 260), before the constitutional consolidation, fighters remained on the "socially embedded" side of the schema as militia, warrior elite, stipendiaries or volunteers. Sablonier, p. 431; Bosshard, pp. 26–27; Bach, pp. 3–4. Jan Willem Huntebrinker, '„Gartknecht" und „Passport"', *Policy Working Papers*, 14 (2007) describes this development – by the 16th C, travelling mercenaries in regulated employment carried a *Passport* or *licenza* to distinguish them from vagrants, adventurers and deserters. Until the regulation of the mercenary status, volunteer *Freischaren*, *Knabenschaften* and *Saubanner* freelanced for themselves, challenging a durable *Landfrieden* and effective military and civil order; e.g. Emperor Frederick III 1442 and 1471 outlawed soldiers, noble or not, mounted or on foot, without lord or with a lord who could not enforce the law – *ibid.*, pp. 5–6; Bosshard, pp. 33–34; Peyer, *Verfassung*, pp. 65–67. Schaufelberger, *Sempach*, pp. 37–39; Bernoulli, *Kriegswesen*, pp. 128–131; Sablonier, p. 431; Sennhauser, pp. 138–163; Hitz, pp. 151–155, pp. 163–166.

trained, fully equipped, with its command structure already in place, and their cost was only for the duration of the emergency.⁸⁶

Expanding populations, limited employment opportunities, youthful adventurism and the prospect of wealth attracted both commoner and nobleman to the mercenary life, and by the 16th C, mercenary service was an accepted profession which could provide an individual with a career in its own right.⁸⁷

Between the two were the mercenary entrepreneurs who on one hand raised, equipped, officered and paid the unit, and on the other hand hired their unit out to a warring party. In especially south-western Germany, the constitutional order was fluid, and enterprising nobles entered the *Landsknecht* business. Since they had no princely legitimation, there was a strong focus on legalising the formations by drawing up articles of war, requiring all members of the regiment to swear on them and a staff of provosts to enforce the articles.⁸⁸

In Switzerland, freelance mercenary hiring was effectively prohibited by the 16th C; the estates charged a foreign prince for the right to hire Swiss troops and then franchised the raising of the units to approved individuals, often members of their own ruling elite. The benefit was two-fold – on one hand, the income from the franchise benefited the estate and provided the chosen franchisees with large, status-compatible – honourable – income; on the other hand, especially after the Swiss Estates abandoned any coor-

⁸⁶ Bernoulli, *Kriegführung*, pp. 106–107; Schaufelberger, *Wehrwesen*, p. 11; Schaufelberger, *Sempach*, pp. 32–36. This development showed also at the highest level – when Maximilian was captured by the burghers of Bruges in 1488, his father Emperor Frederick III raised the Imperial levy, which assembled reluctantly and proved ineffective. For his 1492–1493 punitive expedition into Burgundy, Maximilian again called on the levy, which was ignored; Maximilian then raised a force of only 6,000, of which 2,000 Swiss, “voluntary” participants (a coalition of the billing, in today’s parlance), and his subsequent *blitzkrieg* against King Charles VIII of France was spectacularly successful – Bach, pp. 95–96; Bosshard, pp. 55–59. Ludwig von Eyb complains that the cost of the Bohemian mercenaries in the war of the Landshut succession consumed the entire inheritance – Rabeler, p. 307 and Part II.7.

⁸⁷ Sablonier, p. 437; Schaufelberger, *Krieg*, pp. 144–164; Schaufelberger, *Wehrwesen*, p. 15; service in *Landsknecht* formations erased the old social class and gave the individual a new social class identity: Huntebrinker, *Sozialverband*, pp. 196–197; Wohlfeil, p. 4; Marcus Coesfeld, ‘Lohnkempfen im Spätmittelalter’, *SoziologieMagazin*, 6/2 (2013), 54–66, p. 64. By the end of the 16th C and as *Landsknecht* regiments became standardised, the social distinctions re-emerged – Baumann, pp. 207–211; Hitz, p. 155.

⁸⁸ Huntebrinker, *Sozialverband*, pp. 184–185; Rogg, *Militär*, pp. 8–9; Neubauer, pp. 44–45; Bosshard, pp. 33–34. For the *curriculum vitae* of a noble entrepreneur, Witolt von Schaumberg (1446–1510), Ludwig the Younger’s brother-in-law: Bach, pp. 98–99: for the entire section and *Landsknechte*: Baumann. Baumann (p. 71) ascribes the high number of mercenaries in Swabia to loyalty towards the Empire; I suspect the reason is the constitutional weakness of the region.

minated active foreign policy in the wake of Marignano, the active service experience of its officers provided the leadership of the estates with up-to-date military know-how.⁸⁹

IV. MARTIAL TRAINING AND SOCIAL ADVANCEMENT

IV.1. Organised Training of Fighting Units

Reporting on his travels in Germany during 1457–58, Enea Silvio Piccolomini (the later Pope Pius II) commented on the high state of armaments, and the skills of both nobleman and commoner in using them.⁹⁰ Noblemen learnt to fight as part of their education; this section examines whether there was organised military training of the rank and file (with a corresponding training role for the “officers”), and whether organised military training played any role in burghers’ social advancement in the collective estates.

It has to be borne in mind that the political constitutions were still in the process of consolidation in the 15th C; the military structures were no more sophisticated.⁹¹ Schaufelberger has done intensive research on the question of organised military training in the Swiss estates, and has definitively shown that there was no government-organised military training until the end of the 16th, beginning of the 17th C.⁹² Until the advent of

⁸⁹ Grosjean, p. 142; Sennhauser, pp. 134–137; Messmer, pp. 85–88; Delbrück, pp. 690–692. The authorities in the Swiss Estates were deeply concerned about the conflicting loyalties resulting from foreign princes paying Swiss entrepreneurs to raise troops within their domains, at a time where the Estates were still pursuing their own aggressive “foreign policy” – they sought to alternately forbid and regulate the practice (*Pensionenstreit* – Peyer, *Verfassung*, pp. 67–68; Bosshard, pp. 42–47; Heinzpeter Stucki, ‘Das 16. Jahrhundert’, in *Geschichte des Kantons Zürich, Band II*, various editors, (Zürich: Werd, 1996), pp. 172–281 220–221 (Zurich strictly forbade mercenaries post-Reformation); Sablonier, p. 440; Messmer, pp. 77–85; Bühner, pp. 25–26; Wirz, p. 222, Spillmann, pp. 254–255; Hitz, pp. 152–154). In the late 16th C, foreign princes funded bursaries for the foreign studies of Lucerne students, provided they render mercenary service on completion of the studies – Messmer, p. 144; foreign service had its risks – one 1575 French battle cost the life of 5 (of 64) grand and 3 (of 36) Lucerne privy councillors in French service – Messmer, p. 62.

⁹⁰ *De ritu, situ, moribus et conditione Germaniae descriptio* – HAB <<http://diglib.hab.de/inkunabeln/64-18-quod-6/start.htm>>, pp. 45–46: *Quanta insuper eorum principum vel civitatum armorum peritia est, quantus usus, quanta reip[?] disciplina...* (How great is the skill at arms of their princes and cities, their practice, their [?] discipline!); Chandler, *Militia*, p. 112; Tlusty, pp. 134–145.

⁹¹ Sablonier, p. 438; Rogg, *Militär*, pp. 10–12; Hitz, pp. 155–156.

⁹² Schaufelberger, *Krieg*, pp. 42–53; Schaufelberger, *Wettkampf*, pp. 139–140; Bosshard, pp. 31–32; Downing, p. 56. At that time, arquebuse and later musket drill began to gain relevance. Various authors have concluded from the Swiss’ successes that there *must* have been organised training, but there is a clear lack of evidence in the contemporary sources – discussion in Grosjean, pp. 134–139; v. Rodt I pp. 223–234; Schaufelberger, *Wettkampf*, pp. 139–140; Schaufelberger, *Wehrwesen*, pp. 20–21; Delbrück, p. 684. Since the sources contain innumerable authority mandates on the organisation of the call-up, arms, arms inspections, provisioning etc., it is hard to believe the authorities never had cause to comment on training.

such organised training, the Swiss gained their weapon experience in the incessant feuds, minor engagements and major wars of the time.⁹³ Another challenge to formal training was that weaponry was not standardised.⁹⁴

However, the 15th C did see a transition to government-sponsored training; in 1479 Nuremberg hired three St Gallen military instructors with the brief to train 150–200 militia-men in the use of the Swiss pike, for an annual salary of 25 Rhenish Guilders each.⁹⁵

While there is also no definitive evidence that mercenary entrepreneurs engaged in organised training, seasoned mercenaries did command higher prices (*Doppelsöldner*). It was therefore in the entrepreneur's interest to leverage the experience of his expensive, "bloodied" veterans to train and steady his green recruits. Similarly, a professional and successful mercenary leader would find it easy to attract volunteers.⁹⁶

A case in point is Konrad Gächuf, a freelance mercenary entrepreneur in the Thurgau in the late 15th C. Gächuf first appeared in chronicles in 1473, when he was reeve of a manor of the monastery of Münsterlingen, and died around 1504. 1474 he was listed as a mounted participant in the force the Prince-Abbot of St Gallen raised against Héricourt. He was likely among the eighty or so Swiss officers knighted before the battle of Morat/Murten on 22nd June 1476, many of whom – including Hans Waldmann – went on to have stellar military, mercenary and political careers. A chronicler in 1477 refers to him as *vir quamvis ignobilis, tamen in armis strenuus* during latter phases of the Burgundian Wars, where he apparently participated under his own banner.

The Burgundian Wars must have been lucrative for Gächuf; he purchased rights in the manor of Herrenhof, and he subsequently appears as mercenary entrepreneur in the service of e.g. Archduke Sigmund of Tirol, Emperor Maximilian and the city of Nuremberg in theatres from Flanders to Hungary. To recruit his mercenaries, Gächuf organised sporting events in the Thurgau which doubled as job fairs and basic military training events. Several complaints were levied against him at the *Tagsatzung* (the congress of the Swiss estates) because his recruitment activities were not limited to the

⁹³ Schaufelberger, *Wehrwesen*, pp. 20–21; Schaufelberger, *Wettkampf*, p. 140; Schaufelberger, *Krieg*, p. 47; Sablonier, p. 433; v. Rodt, I pp. 223–234; Sennhauser, p. 128; Grosjean, pp. 139–141; Contamine, pp. 217–218; Delbrück, p. 684.

⁹⁴ Fighters showed up with the arms they had or preferred – ref. Part I.2 and Fn 9.

⁹⁵ Alb. Gümbel, 'St. Gallener als militärische Ausbildner in Nürnberg 1479', *Zeitschrift für schweizerische Geschichte/Revue d'histoire suisse*, 5/2 (1925), 230–235; Schaufelberger, *Wettkampf*, p. 142; Schaufelberger, *Krieg*, pp. 49–50; Bosshard, pp. 31–32; for an unknown reason, the contract was terminated at the end of 1480 and the instructors given an honourable discharge; in 1507, the Bavarian *Landtag* also required pike training: Sixt Wetzler, 'Überlegungen zur europäischen Fechtkunst', in Ludwig, Krug-Richter and Schwerhoff, 61–76, pp. 67–68. Also Contamine, p. 217. Machiavelli strongly recommends training for both physical toughness and in arms: pp. 85–88.

⁹⁶ Baumann, p. 166; Rogg, *Eliten*, 367–369 – impoverished nobles, trained in arms, also filled the training function. Machiavelli (p. 50) also advocates mixing steady veterans and raw recruits.

Thurgau, but extended to the populace of Appenzell as well as the City and Prince-Abbey of St Gallen; however, Habsburg diplomatic intervention on Gächuf's behalf spared him any consequences.⁹⁷

IV.2. Individual Training

Even if action on the battlefield already in the late 14th C ceased to be an aggregation of one-on-one combats, there remained situations in warfare where individual weapons skill was a distinct advantage.

Still in the early 15th C, chronicles refer to knights challenging each other to one-on-one combat on the boundaries between opposing camps.⁹⁸ Even after that practice ceased, it would typically be mounted individuals – knights or equivalent – who would be sent out on reconnaissance missions, protecting supply and communications, liaison, raids, as escorts or perform screening duties, all of which involved small detachments where action took the form of skirmish rather than battle⁹⁹ – situations where an individual's skill could help extricate him from contact with the enemy. The foremost fighter in a mine shaft or on scaling a wall too would have to be able to use his arm skilfully.¹⁰⁰ So for the mediaeval or renaissance equivalent of junior field officers, skill at arms remained a useful, even vital capability¹⁰¹ – as well as a lucrative one, since military exploits brought spoils, an honourable form of income.

⁹⁷ Bosshard, p. 32 and pp. 66–72 – the name spelling varies. The Thurgau was a subject territory of the Swiss estates; mercenary recruitment (of intense constitutional importance in the “sovereign” estates) initially received less scrutiny there – this changed in the 16th C; ref. also Fn 7.

⁹⁸ Malte Prietzel, *Kriegführung im Mittelalter* (Paderborn/München/Wien/Zürich: Schöningh, 2006), pp. 266–268 (quoting Froissart regarding challenges, but also other sources); also pp. 289–292; Prietzel, *Ehre*, pp. 120–123; the preface of e.g. Hans Talhoffer's MS Thott (MS Thott.290.20) on 1v talks initially of a secret duel, later specifically of judicial duels – Wiktenauer.

⁹⁹ Forster, p. 175; Machiavelli, p. 230; generally on operational doctrine and tactics: Gassmann.

¹⁰⁰ Bernoulli, *Kriegswesen*, p. 160; Pätzold, p. 136. In the Bernese *Twingherrenstreit* (1470–71), the commoner leader of the city argued that the commoner infantry won Berne's signal battle victories, from Laupen 1339 to the Old Zurich War 1440–46, while the knights – represented by Hans Fränkli, a commoner furrier of Bohemian extraction (HLS) – countered that their protection of the supply lines and reconnaissance enabled the success – v. Rodt, I pp. 35–36; Delbrück, pp. 689–690; see also Gassmann.

¹⁰¹ See Giovanni dall'Agocchie, *Dell'Arte di Scrimia* (Venice: Tamborino, 1572), p. 3r: *Per esser dunque lo schermo parte principale delli essercitij militari, si uede ch'è sommamente necessario a gli huomini* (Since fencing is then the main part of military practice, one sees that it is supremely necessary for all men) – <http://www.umass.edu/renaissance/lord/pdfs/DallAgocchie_1572.pdf>. Bernoulli, *Kriegführung*, pp. 108–109. This remained so until the end of the 19th C, ref. e.g. D. A. Kinsley, *Blades of the British Empire* (Kinsley, 2012); also a passage in Hans Jakob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen's *Der abenteuerliche Simplicissimus* (set during the 30 Years' War), Book 2 Chapter 29: *[Als Klosterwache] trieb ich das Junkernhandwerk ...; das Kloster war auch von ... einem Musketier salvaguardiert, derselbe war seines Handwerkes ein Kürschner und dabero nicht allein ein Meistersänger, sondern auch ein trefflicher Fechter, und damit*

Consequently, the education of young gentlemen continued to feature, beside academic subjects like music or languages or physical activities like riding, swimming and running, paramilitary activities like hunting and combat skills like fencing and wrestling.¹⁰²

IV.3. Purveyors of Individual Training – *Fechtmeister*, *Fechtbücher* etc.

As demonstrated, individual weapons skills were useful in action, and at least the nobility learnt these weapon skills as part of their education, beginning in childhood. This aspect of education would be communicated in hands-on, individual or at least small-group training under the tutelage of an experienced veteran. Whether the scions of the upper and the aspiring commoner class did so as well, is unclear, though Messmer at least suggests it is so for the patricians of Lucerne.¹⁰³

Professional fencers – as judicial duellists-for-hire – existed since the early Middle Ages. The itinerant ones, who may have supplemented their income with fencing demonstrations, were grouped with other socially dubious folk;¹⁰⁴ it is not persuasive that the nobility and para-nobility would have hired this type of person as teacher in what was clearly understood as a princely skill. On the other hand, the *curricula vitae* of renowned fencing masters such as Fiore de' Liberi and the dedications in the *Fechtbücher* of the time suggest that there were employment opportunities for genuinely qualified experts.¹⁰⁵ Also, there would otherwise have been no incentive to obtain Imperial

er seine Kunst nicht vergäße, übte er sich täglich mit mir für die lange Weil in allen Gewehren ([As guard of the monastery] I exercised the gentleman's trade...; the monastery was also guarded by ... a musketeer, he was by profession a furrier and therefore not only a master singer, but also an accomplished fencer, and so he would not forget his art, out of boredom he practiced daily with me in all manner of weapons) – <<http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/5248/64>>.

¹⁰² Wetzler, pp. 67–68; Grendler, pp. 301–306 for the 16th C student at Pavia and further references; while there are ample written records for the instruction in the academic subjects, the nature of the education in the physical activities requires practice, not written instruction. For the education of young princes Benjamin Müsegades, *Fürstliche Erziehung und Ausbildung im spätmittelalterlichen Reich* (Ostfildern: Thorbecke, 2014), pp. 216–218. Daniel Jaquet, 'Fighting in the Fightschools late XVth, early XVIth century', *Acta Periodica Duellatorum*, 1 (2013), 47–66, p. 48. Hunting: Gassmann, p. 154. Much of the evidence on swords and fencing comes from spending records, Müsegades, pp. 219–220; v. Erlach, scion of a prominent Berne patrician family and himself destined to achieve high office, during his 1592 stay in Padua as a 17-year-old hired a fencing master (Franz Ludwig von Erlach, 'Rodell alles was ich ußgäben 1592 Was ich zu Padua ußgäben hab', transcribed in *Berner Taschenbuch* 34 (1885), 251–268). Ref. also Hans Talhoffer in the Königsegg Manuscript MS XIX.17–3 introduction page 1v – Wiktenauer.

¹⁰³ Messmer, pp. 142–144. Prosopographical and expenditure records studies might show this as a general phenomenon, but I am not aware of such studies having been done. Though fencing is regularly advertised as a "noble" or "honourable" art, it is beyond question that training cut across social classes and was not, and was not seen as, a noble prerogative – Wetzler, p. 68.

¹⁰⁴ Coesfeld, p. 57: Fighters in steady employment did have social status; Jaquet, *Fight*, pp. 56–57.

¹⁰⁵ Jaquet, *Introduction*, pp. 21–22.

privileges as a guild, as the Frankfurt am Main-based *Marxbrüder* did in 1487 and the Prague-based *Freifechter* did in 1570.¹⁰⁶

The term *Fechtschule* refers to an occasional demonstration or seminar held by an itinerant or local *Fechtmeister*, or to a friendly competition as part of a festive event.¹⁰⁷ Permanent public venues for learning fighting did exist, but they were not ubiquitous. City records do refer to the odd *Fechtmeister*¹⁰⁸ or contain authorisations for the opening of *salles*, and the authorities extoll the moral virtues of learning to fight,¹⁰⁹ but the authorities do not seem to have seen it necessary to ensure that a *salle* existed at all times.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ Kevin Maurer and Christopher VanSlambrouck, 'Who were the Winkelfechter?', Meyer Frei Fechter Guild (IL MFFG), 14th August 2013, <<http://www.freifechter.com>>; Jaquet, *Fight*, pp. 55–56; Tlusty, pp. 211–214; Bodemer, pp. 58–59.

¹⁰⁷ Jaquet, *Introduction*, p. 22; Chandler, *Guild*, pp. 59–60; Tlusty, p. 211. For Strasbourg / Joachim Meyer: Olivier Dupuis, 'Joachim Meyer, escrimeur libre, bourgeois de Strasbourg (1537? – 1571)', in *Maîtres et techniques de combat à la fin du Moyen Âge et au début de la Renaissance*, ed. by Fabrice Cognot (Paris: Association pour l'Édition et la Diffusion des Études Historiques, 2006), 107–120, pp. 109–110; possibly, Meyer started his fencing career at a *salle* in his native Basel: Dupuis, p. 109. For Switzerland: Schaufelberger, *Krieg*, pp. 49–50; Schaufelberger, *Wettkampf*, pp. 141–149. Basel appointed *Schirmmeister* around times of war – 1380, 1445 – but whether for troop training is not clear: Bernoulli, *Kriegswesen*, p. 142; Grosjean, p. 140.

¹⁰⁸ For Switzerland: Schaufelberger, *Krieg*, pp. 49–50; Schaufelberger, *Wettkampf*, pp. 142–143; like the *Büchsenmeister*, the *Fechtmeister* mostly came from outside Switzerland. Peter Schweizer of Berne left numerous traces in Swiss and German sources at the end of the 15th and early 16th C: Jaquet, *Fight*, pp. 58–62; *Franckfurter Fechter Ordnung* (Sammelhandschrift Cod.I.6.20.5, Sigmund Schining, UB Augsburg – <http://www.pragmatische-schriftlichkeit.de/transkription/Cod.I.6.2.5._16.03.09.pdf>, transcribed by Olivier Dupuis), pages 9v, 10v (registered as "*haubtman*"), and several others: Hanns Puß (Ettingen/Basel (?)), raised to master (12r); Lorenz Komer (Zurich), raised to master (13r); Peter Burckhart (Fribourg), a journeyman furrier 1544 (17r and 17v); Heinemann, p. 89; Mösch, p. 20.

¹⁰⁹ E.g. the Solothurn privy council approving the fencing ordinance for the *salle* of Hans Tägensch, furrier, in 1546 (*Rechtsquellen des Kantons Solothurn*, ed. by Charles Studer, Vol. 2, *Mandate, Verordnungen, Satzungen des Standes Solothurn von 1435 bis 1604* (Aarau: Sauerländer, 1987), p. 332 <www.hroarr.com/fechtordnung-of-the-city-of-solothurn/>); Mösch, p. 20; Tlusty, p. 214.

¹¹⁰ Schaufelberger, *Wettkampf*, p. 93, p. 141; Jaquet, *Fight*, pp. 54–55; Tlusty, pp. 210–217. Chandler, *Guild*, p. 60 suggests that fencing etiquette may have cut down on unintentional injuries in the all too common affrays. I am using *salle* to differentiate a permanent school with its own venue from *Fechtschule*. The privy councils who authorised *salles* may not have felt a need for a permanent school since they had their own ways of training and the rank and file infantry did not need much training. That privy councillors did train fencing casually is suggested by a vignette from Lucerne, where the town hall janitor banned fencing from the premises (Weber, pp. 212–213): *d̃z niemand me fürhin uff dem rætt busß sol schirmen, er sy wer der we – Item von der schirm schuel wegen, die etlich haben wellent uff dem rathus. Und von Huseris wegen, wie Kündig mit jm so ũbel gerett hæ̃t.*

Fencing guilds existed, but seem to have been concentrated in the Low Countries and north-eastern France.¹¹¹

As a primarily practical discipline, fighting would have been taught by doing, not by manuals, yet written records exist. So what was their purpose, who were they intended for, especially the manuscripts? A printed book would obviously have been meant for a larger public, but a manuscript can only have been intended for one person, either the author as a *pro memoria*, or a wealthy patron. The *Haus-* or *Familienbuch*, a genre that originates in the 15th C, was clearly in the *pro memoria* category, and, to the extent they contained fighting or military subjects, recorded the instruction received, experience or advice of an individual.¹¹² Others (commonly referred to as *Fechtbücher*) were obviously written for structured teaching, but whether the purpose was battle, trial by ordeal, duel, self-defence, tournament/sport, or moral instruction – to the extent the categories can even be neatly separated – is not always evident and changes over time.¹¹³

Liechtenauer's *Zettel*, at the beginning of the Late Middle Ages, is clearly addressed at the young nobleman and focuses on knightly combat with the sword.¹¹⁴ Joachim Meyer's 1570 *Gründtliche Beschreibung der Kunst des Fechtens* is a sophisticated multiweapon treatise dedicated to his noble patron, but directed at the young burgher gentleman.¹¹⁵ Meyer's contemporary Paulus Hector Mair's introductory rant, in all its reactionary baroque prolixity, hits similar themes: Individual discipline, training for leadership for both the high- and low-born, and patriotism, though skill at arms in action receives only

¹¹¹ Galas, pp. 138–140; Contamine, p. 216.

¹¹² Ref. Bach, pp. 1–7; Jaquet, *Introduction*, p. 20.

¹¹³ Jaquet, *Introduction*, pp.19–23; Jaquet, *Fight*, p. 53; Wetzler, pp. 65–68.

¹¹⁴ “*Junck ritter lere...*” in several manuscripts – Wiktenauer on Johannes Liechtenauer.

¹¹⁵ *Vorrede an den Leser* (<www.hroarr.com/manuals/liechtenauer/joachim-meyer-1600.pdf>, courtesy <www.umass.edu/renaissance/lord/pdfs/DallAgocchie_1572.pdf – B1v>), where Meyer writes, after listing the deleterious conduct an honourable fencer should eschew: “... sondern vilgedachte dise kunst gründlich zuuerstehen, und zu erfahren einen rechten erbarn ernst anwenden, sich des vnnützen Bawrengetresch entschlagen, und also aller Männlichkeit zuchte und erbarkeit befleissigen, auff das (wann sie solche kunst selbes recht vnd wol erlernt, vnn ein ehrliches leben führen) volgends auch andern vnd sonderlich der jugent für zustehn, vnnd hiemit zu dienen tüchtig mögen erachtet werden”; ref. Jeffrey L. Forgeng, *The Art of Combat* (London: Greenhill/New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 42: “... and instead they will seek to thoroughly understand this art, and to learn to apply a true honourable earnestness, to purge themselves of useless peasants’ brawling, and to be diligent in all manliness, discipline, and breeding [*or respectability, honourability*], **so that** when they have truly and fully learnt this art, and lead an honourable life, then **they may be thought able to direct others**, and particularly the youth, **and thereby be of service**” [*my emphasis*; the cumulation of compounds of “*Ehre*” is striking]. Also Wilhelm Hoffman’s preface to Jakob Sutor *New Künstliches Fechtbuch* (Frankfurt a.M.: Hoffman, 1612 – Wiktenauer).

cursory mention.¹¹⁶ The *Rast Fechtbuch* on the other hand opens with general tips on fighting for the kill on foot and mounted.¹¹⁷ Therefore, a generalised statement that *Fechtbuch* instruction was divorced from fighting in action is clearly untenable.¹¹⁸

Nor is the distinction between *Fechtbuch* and *Kriegsbuch*¹¹⁹ as neatly categorical until the late 16th C, when the *Fechtbücher* begin to focus on a specific weapon or school and the *Kriegsbücher* turn into compendia for regiment-level unit organisation, leadership, tactics and laws of war; until then, fighting-related treatises freely mix judicial duelling, field combat, war engines from the *Bellifortis* and gunpowder-related esoterica.¹²⁰

IV.4. Berne and the *Äussere Stand*

The town of Berne was founded in around 1191 by Duke Bertholt V of Zähringen, and later claimed Imperial privileges dating back to 1218. Its ruling class between the end of the 14th to the beginning of the 15th C consisted of rural nobility moving to the city and ennobled wealthy city merchants, both joining old-line city-resident ministerials. By the end of the 15th C, the depleted ranks of the nobility and a rising class of burghers with administrative experience formed a patriciate, which initially remained open, but closed itself off by the late 16th C – i.e. the eligibility for government became hereditary.

¹¹⁶ Paulus Hector Mair had a noteworthy civilian career, but does not seem to have done any active military service.

¹¹⁷ *Rast Fechtbuch* (Augsburg Reichsstadt “Schätze” Nr. 82) page 1r – Wiktenauer.

¹¹⁸ E.g. Bodemer, p. 66, Tlustý, p. 215 or Kümper, pp. 65–66 – the sourcing for the assertion, if made at all, is often self-referential and not strengthened by repetition. Modern authors in reviewing the *Fechtbücher* overemphasise the civilian duelling aspect to the detriment of warfare, e.g. Lionel Lauvernay, “Bienheureux Roi qui seul une si grande œuvre a lu”, in *Arts de Combat*, ed. by Fabrice Cognot, (Paris: AEDEH, 2011), 9–31, pp. 18–21 (writing about the treatise of Giovan Antonio Lovino, around 1580), finds the “rapier” blade shown by Lovino untypically short and heavy (a side-sword?), and the unpaired weapons plays oddly reminiscent of military usage. Contrast the statement in dall’Agocchie’s treatise (Fn. 101); Wetzler: given the importance of fencing, it is not believable that there was no interest in fencing skills (p. 64). Bodemer has canvassed the extant *Fechtbuch* literature for her dissertation from an art historian’s vantage; unfortunately, for the subject-matter of this article, the work is of little use, as key assertions are left unsourced.

¹¹⁹ Jaquet, *Introduction*, p. 20; Neubauer. The first in a new type being Konrad Kyeser’s *Bellifortis*, Kümper, pp. 54–57. For a discussion on the forms of military literature: Kümper; tactical considerations do not appear until mid-15th C (*ibid.* pp. 66–68), often in the form of analysis of actions from antiquity, e.g. Machiavelli’s excellent *Dell’arte della Guerra* (1519–1520), covering everything from a polity’s military constitution to battle formations and tactics, or Sextus Julius Frontinus, *Die vier bücher Sexti Julii Frontini des Consularischen manns von den gueten Rätthen und Ritterlichen anschlegen der gueten hauptleut* (Mainz: Schöffler, 1532).

¹²⁰ E.g. the 1389 Codex Döbringer (MS 3227a, Germanisches Nationalmuseum) or Talhoffer’s 1459 Thott *Fechtbuch* (MS Thott.290.2^o) 12r–48v; Ludwig von Eyb’s *Kriegsbuch* (Fn 63) mixes unconventional unpaired weapon techniques with the *Bellifortis* (all accessible via Wiktenauer).

Berne was governed by a *Kleiner Rat* (privy council) made up of patrician *Burger*. The members of the *Kleiner Rat* were co-opted from among the *Grosser Rat* (grand council), which in turn was made up from a broader section of the populace. *Grosser Rat* and *Kleiner Rat* constituted the *innere Stand*, the “inner” or ruling estate.¹²¹

Parallel to the *innere Stand*, Berne had the institution of the *äussere Stand* – the “outer estate”. The structure of the *äussere Stand* mirrored the structure of the *innere Stand*, but without executive or legislative power. Essentially, the offices of the *äussere Stand* provided the next generation of *Burger* (and up-and-coming families) the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the processes and mechanics of wielding power, prior to their elevation to the *innere Stand*.¹²²

On top of the function to mirror the *innere Stand*, the *äussere Stand* had a specific assignment: In the late 14th C, the *äussere Stand* gathered the war-veteran youth of the city under officers supplied by the experienced nobility to act as the city’s rapid reaction force. After the Burgundian Wars, it was responsible for the organisation of manoeuvres for the militia, for which the *innere Stand* would allocate a budget.¹²³ The *äussere Stand* therefore represents a formalisation of the rising burgher’s career structure, involving experience in both civilian administration and military skills and leadership; I am not aware of another commonwealth where comparable structures existed.¹²⁴

V. CONCLUSIONS

V.1. Honour – What You Have and Who You Are

The focus of this article was to show that from the 14th through to the 16th C, honour and martial prowess were and remained the self-defining attributes of individuals in the ruling stratum – those in it, those rising into it and those aspiring to it.

Feudal law retained from Germanic tribal law the notion of honour as intrinsically “belonging” to a free person, that is an individual who had a stake in and responsibility

¹²¹ For the history and early constitution of Berne: Urs Martin Zahnd, *Vom Hochmittelalter bis zum Ende des Ancien Régime*, HLS entry “Bern (Gemeinde), Kap. 2. v. Stürler, pp. 26–28 incidentally relates the social advance of the Frischherz family in Berne. For the patriciate in Nuremberg Fleischmann, p. 52; Pätzold, pp. 136–137.

¹²² For a history and structure of the *innere Stand*: Wolfgang Friedrich von Mülinen, ‘Vom Aeusseren Stand und dem Urispiegel’, *Blätter für bernische Geschichte, Kunst und Altertumskunde*, 12/1 (1916), pp. 1–32; Basilius Hidber, ‘Der ehemalige sog. äußere Stand der Stadt und Republik Bern’, *Neujahrsblatt für die bernische Jugend*, (1858).

¹²³ Sennhauser, pp. 162–163; Hidber, pp. 5–8; v. Mülinen, pp. 5–8; v. Rodt, II pp. 93–94.

¹²⁴ Somewhat similar is the *Bruderschaft der Schwarzhäupter* (Brotherhood of the Black Heads), a martial society headquartered in Livonia and with chapters all over the Baltic; its members were young, unmarried merchants who did not yet qualify for membership of the merchant guild – Chandler, *Guild*, pp. 56–57.

for that individual's community. From Roman law, feudal law imported the notion of possession; honour was treated as an asset – intangible, but worth money: rights, privileges, fiefs, offices and ancestry.

To some extent, therefore, honour could be bought, but the matter is more complex; as honour is (just another) asset, it is not an immensurate, binary quality, i.e. not a question of “you have it or you don't”. Honour is an incremental quality, you could have more or fewer honours. As honours accumulated, the individual became eligible for even higher honours. Also, honours, in the form of civilian or military office, meant income.

In mediaeval times, social advancement was directly linked to this incremental notion of honours; as the ruling elites closed themselves off, one criterion of honour became dominant: bloodline.

V.2. Social Advancement – A Question of Honour

For commoners, social advancement did not necessarily mean rising into the nobility, but into the governing councils of the estate. By the 16th C, the self-confidence of the commoner elite ruling collective estates had built up to the extent that a title of nobility was a decoration, not a concrete step up.¹²⁵

For all avenues of social advancement, the key issue was honour – class-appropriate lifestyle, financed through a class-appropriate income, i.e. an income which did not require the individual's permanent attendance or manual labour,¹²⁶ an income derived from land rent, civilian office or military service.

Wealth was evidently not sufficient, but it was nonetheless essential: Wealth allowed the family to gain or purchase honours, fiefs and offices, or to advance loans for which fiefs or offices were pledged to the family, or to pre-finance a mercenary force; it permitted a class-appropriate lifestyle; it enabled the family to confer dowries on the daughters and

¹²⁵ Schaufelberger, *Wettkampf*, pp. 49–50, quoting the 16th C Glarus chronicler Valentin Tschudi. Burghers who were honoured by a monarch might choose not to use the titles conferred on them, as with both Jakob Fugger and his CFO Matthäus Schwarz – Valentin Groebner, ‘Die Kleider des Körpers des Kaufmanns’, *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung*, 25 (1998), 323–358, p. 335. Fouquet points out that though Jakob Fugger the Rich was ennobled in 1511, it took until 1539 for a Fugger to be co-opted into the Augsburg privy council (p. 181). Though I otherwise agree with Fouquet's general line of argument, I believe he errs in seeing nobility rather than government as the aim of social advancement – which I believe he indirectly acknowledges by admitting that the princely Imperial free cities represent an exception to his rule (pp. 177–179, pp. 185–189).

¹²⁶ See part II.5. An exception seems to have been made for manual labour involving high-value raw materials – goldsmiths, silk spinners and, importantly for the fencing tradition, furriers: Wensky, pp. 21–22; Pätzold, p. 135; Maurer and VanSlambrouck; Fn 100, 101, 108 and 109.

so increase the prospects of a class-advancing marriage; and, as importantly, it freed the individuals to spend time on governing, which was usually not remunerated.¹²⁷

For both nobility and burghers, another necessary but not sufficient pre-condition for social advancement was the holding of certain fiefs (any fief in the case of burghers advancing to the nobility or the governing councils, an Imperial fief in the case of nobility aspiring to the *Reichsgrafschaft*).¹²⁸

V.3. Professionalisation of Civilian and Military Leadership

The feudal order saw ruling as synonymous with fighting, and the traditional mediators of both civilian and military leadership were the knights. As we enter the 15th C, the collective estates are establishing princely dominions; a corollary of exercising princely power was to be responsible for the estate's security and the peace of the land, which in turn implied armed service. These estates' ruling classes joined an elite where the ideological framework did not yet see civilian and military leadership as separate specialities, and where knights initially still formed a significant part of the new collective rulership. The newly ruling commoners – guild masters, merchants, patricians – assumed the worldview, responsibilities and practices of the old ruling classes.

Until the consolidation of constitutional structures, violence – in the form of feuds, raids, brigandage and war – was endemic, and gaining experience took no effort. Since war was not a “state” matter, neither was training for war. As the 16th C progressed, violence was less ubiquitous and more formalised, specialised and professionalised; the government functions of administration, finance, justice and defence began to separate, loosening the identification between governing and fighting. In their civilian roles, knights were replaced by professional bureaucrats, so knights gravitated toward military leadership – officer positions in mercenary and princely service. The leadership of the collective estates however still saw a need to maintain military skills within the ruling class, and they required military experience as part of an individual's career path; this

¹²⁷ Pätzold, p. 135, pp. 138–139; Herborn, p. 44; Hahn, pp. 208–210; Messmer *passim*; Fouquet, pp. 180–192; in the 14th C, the workload made offices unattractive and cities had to compel individuals to accept, and even as offices were remunerated in the 16th C, not everyone was keen: Landolt, pp. 47–50; Jeanne Niquille, ‘Un avoyer Fribourgeois du quinzième siècle: Jean Gambach’, *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Geschichte*, 1/1 (1951), 1–38, p. 10 – Jean Gambach had to sell his business to free himself up for government work; often, the estates made positions with high income available to up-and-coming or ruling council families, as in Zurich (Stucki, pp. 225–226) or Lucerne (Egloff, Fn 40); for Basel Bernoulli, *Kriegswesen*, pp. 120–121.

¹²⁸ Ref. Fn 54. I suspect the common 19th C limitation of suffrage to landowners is a vestige of this requirement.

kept military knowledge in the estate up-to-date and enabled the leadership to preserve, in today's constitutional parlance, the civilian control of the military.¹²⁹

Until that consolidation was achieved, the members of the ruling class were expected personally to fight, command and lead, and they were exposed to situations where they learnt and tested these skills. To learn fighting, there was a “market” for status-appropriate – honourable – personal martial arts training.¹³⁰ To learn and test command, there was a deliberate policy to give up-and-coming members of the ruling class an opportunity for hands-on experience on campaign, as field officer or on a staff. So long as war was endemic, this experience could be gained in the estate's own forces.¹³¹ As war became formalised and more rare in the 16th C, a secondment to a foreign prince or a mercenary regiment was *de rigueur* and is mentioned in biographies in the same manner as touristic, academic or civilian service experience abroad.¹³²

V.4. Social Advancement as an Intergenerational Project

It was highly unusual – and precarious – for social advancement to be accomplished in one generation; it usually took two, more regularly three generations of status-appropriate lifestyle and sufficient (but not too many) healthy heirs, for a family to complete the advance. Advance was measured in increments – it required honour to be eligible for a status-advancing office, military or civilian, and acquiring the office meant acquiring the honour(s) attached to it.¹³³

¹²⁹ Ref. Machiavelli, pp. 25–28, 44–47 and the first book generally: The citizen army is the bulwark against tyranny, and in a well-ordered polity, officers should be drawn from the population and everyone should have a civilian occupation so as not to rely on continual warfare.

¹³⁰ Training even in supposedly “out of fashion” weapons like the longsword remained popular into the 17th C (witness the reprints of Meyer's work – Dupuis, p. 108), either because it still played a military role (Galas, p. 139) or because, as the most complex weapon, it served as martial arts *studium generale* (Wetzler, p. 69) – in any event, so long as warfare involved bladed weapons (well into the 19th C), training in their use was a military skill. The issue of training for the “duel of honour” is, in my view, a red herring – the same social classes that duelled also governed and officered the estate's troops, and therefore were the classes that sought martial skills training; also, since honour is intimately linked to source of income, defending it was completely rational.

¹³¹ Baumann, pp. 62–71. The victorious “generals” in Switzerland's key early battles all had extensive foreign experience: Rudolf von Erlach (Berne) victor at Laupen 1339, had witnessed six major battles abroad; Adrian von Bubenberg (Berne) had been with the Duke of Burgundy, Hans von Hallwyl (Berne) with the Pödebrady, and Hans Waldmann (Zurich) had his own colourful history – all were instrumental at Murten/Morat 1476: v. Rodt, I pp. 232–233.

¹³² Sieber; Messmer, pp. 138–144; v. Rodt, I p. 233; Fleischmann, p. 70; Mösch, pp. 7–8; v. Erlach (*implicite*).

¹³³ Reinle, pp. 232–235; Fouquet, pp. 186–187; though the term is sometimes used, there was no set *cursus honorum* in the sense it was conceived in the Roman Republic – remember also that aspiring consuls were expected to have at least served a stint as legate in one of the legions.

One of the key reasons for the generational phenomenon was that a *homo novus* had to be embedded in the ruling class for the advancement to be solidly supported, by intermarriage of various members of the advancing family with members of the aspired-to class. Family members who did not pursue immediately class-advancing careers, e.g. lawyers or clergy, could and did contribute to the project by judicious marriage or enhancing the family's wealth. Where this embedding was missing – as in the case of Wallenstein or also Hans Waldmann –, the consequence could be fatal.¹³⁴

V.5. Conclusion

In this article, I have simplified much that is more complicated or, depending on time and place, significantly more complicated. Considering the time and geography covered, that was unavoidable – but it also means that local circumstances or a specific event might accelerate the pattern in a given time or place,¹³⁵ or break it in another. Nevertheless, the basic premise remains that commonwealths tended from a fief – and so personality-based, feudal order towards a centrally organised state with a professional bureaucratic administration and professionally officered military, and the social order became progressively less permeable between ca. 1400 and the French Revolution.¹³⁶

As a final thought, the politics of south-western Germany and Switzerland were remarkably successful militarily, economically and politically¹³⁷ – despite huge numbers of experienced, enterprising veterans, both officers and other ranks, there were no coups, no

¹³⁴ In detail Robert A. Nye, 'De l'honneur nobiliaire à l'honorabilité bourgeoise', *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 105 (December 1994), pp. 46–51; also on embedding Wensky, pp. 26–27; Fouquet, pp. 186–191; for Geneva Anja Victorine Hartmann, 'Vom Refugeé zum Ratsherren?', in Schultz, *Aufstieg*, pp. 171–192; for Lucerne: Messmer, pp. 56–57 (Pfyffer), 144–152 and *passim*; Reinle, pp. 236–241; Brakensiek, pp. 283–289; a specific example, *in concreto* Zurich, in Wirz; and the Frischherz family in Berne (descendants of the fencing master): v. Stürler, pp. 26–28; Konrad III Grünenberg from Konstanz, author of the *Wappenbuch*: Graf, pp. 68–69; see also Peter Schuster, 'Ehre und Recht', in Backmann/Künast/Ullmann/Thusty, 54–62, pp. 47–50, especially quoting Nicholas of Oresme "*mes nientmoins, aucuns telz ou leurs enfants pevent estre peu a peu disposéz a aucune vertu, et venir a estat honorable*" ("but nevertheless some of them, or their children, can bit by bit gain "virtue", and come to an honourable estate") – though I believe Schuster here falls into the '*faux amis*' trap Wellmann (p. 30) warns about in that Schuster assumes *virtus* means *Tugend* (i.e. "virtue" as in "virtuous"), when duCange shows as meanings *possessio*, *praedium*. That the nobility faced the same challenges: Bach, pp. 113–114.

¹³⁵ Cf. Hartmann – the revocation of the Edict of Nantes 1685 brought another stream of Huguenot refugees to Geneva, which temporarily mixed up the ruling stratum; *implicite* Messmer, p. 63. On additional social stratifications Wensky, pp. 22–27.

¹³⁶ Peyer, *Verfassung*, pp. 107–113; Hartmann; Messmer, pp. 31–34.

¹³⁷ I disagree with Thusty's assessment (pp. 9–10 and pp. 269–272) that militias were militarily irrelevant; it is demonstratively untrue for the 15th and 16th C, and the 30-Years' War devastated the cities of south-western Germany economically, but not militarily; the Imperial free cities existed until the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire 1804.

condottieri-turned-princes as in Northern Italy. Even a dominating figure and war hero like Hans Waldmann could end up on the scaffold. The governing classes were obviously reasonably successful in retaining civilian control of the military and in calibrating the spread of the respective rewards and burdens of government on a sufficiently broad and inclusive basis.

VI. LITERATURE AND RESOURCES

VI.1. On-Line Resources

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DUcANGE (et al.): *Glossarium mediæ et infimæ latinitatis* <<http://ducange.enc.sorbonne.fr>>

HAB: Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel <<http://www.hab.de>>

HLS: *Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz / Dictionnaire Historique de la Suisse / Dizionario storico della Svizzera* <<http://www.hls-dhs-dss.ch>>

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