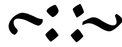

Introduction

Thomas von Lobecke went insane one night in 1558. He was a *Landsknecht*, a German infantry soldier, and had led a typical soldier's life committed to "gorging, boozing, fornication and contempt for God" when he broke into a Catholic church in Flanders and vandalized it.[1] He stripped naked, forced open chests and boxes, dressed himself in liturgical vestments, and paced through the church singing. When the local clerics found him in the morning, they noticed that all the communion wafers had disappeared from the tabernacle and asked the mad soldier what had happened to them. Lobecke replied that he had eaten them all in an effort to make up for the twenty-odd years in which he had not received the sacrament.

Whether this scene really took place is secondary to its meaning. In the popular imaginary of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the story and its protagonist would have appeared neither surprising nor accidental. Lobecke fit a stereotype that associated soldiers with behaviors antithetical to the Christian life: whoring, boozing, gambling, cursing, blasphemy, luxurious dress, and, obviously, fighting and killing. While the notion that God punishes arch-sinners by smiting them with insanity may no longer seem intuitive to many twenty-first-century readers, the stereotype of the amoral, irreligious early modern mercenary has survived rather intact. Many historians writing today will probably still consider the Lobecke story an obviously stylized but essentially accurate illustration of early modern military immorality.

This book takes a more skeptical stance on the stereotype and a more positive view of soldiers' religious sensibilities. At the root of my argument lies the conviction that the stereotype of the irreligious soldier is frankly implausible. Why would hundreds of thousands of men reject wholesale the culture in which they had been raised just because they chose a particular profession? It would indeed be sensational if Europe's religious wars had been fought by anti-Christians, but this book can only offer a more modest claim: by and large, the following chapters suggest, soldiers were ordinary Christians whose views of the divine and the holy differed little or not at all from those of their civil-

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ian contemporaries. They prayed, they followed the Christian life as well as circumstances permitted, they got married and baptized (and all too often buried) their children. Many also drank, whored, gambled, blasphemed, brawled, raped, killed, and dabbled in magic. All things considered, they appear to have been rather average early modern Christians.

The main focus of this book lies on the German-speaking lands of the Holy Roman Empire in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, a period of profound military as well as religious change. The military sphere had begun to undergo dramatic transformations in the fifteenth century and continued on this trajectory in the following centuries. This "military revolution," whose causes, interpretation, chronology, and impact have exercised historians for several decades, stood in a dynamic relationship with the wider sociopolitical transformations in Europe.[2] Medieval warfare had centrally relied on the knightly heavy cavalry, composed predominantly of noble fighters, while commoners had mostly played an auxiliary role on the battlefield. It was not just the introduction of firearms but especially a groundbreaking fifteenth-century innovation in infantry tactics that had triggered a fundamental change in the size and social composition of European armies. Swiss infantry commanders developed a way to maneuver huge blocks of pikemen across the battlefield and turned a previously predominantly defensive formation into an effective offensive one. The Swiss *Reisläufer* were the first masters of this new form of fighting, but soon their northern neighbors copied them. The German infantry troops who employed these tactics became known as *Landsknechte*. Compared to the knightly cavalry, equipping these troops was cheap and training was relatively swift, but the pike formation needed hundreds of men in order to be effective. The spread of a new type of fortification, commonly referred to as the *trace italienne*, also contributed to the heightened demand for manpower, as armies now needed large contingents of workers, miners, and sappers as well as soldiers in order to engage effectively in sieges. The army train, composed of soldiers' wives, their children, victualers, craftsmen, and other people who made a living in the military economy, often outnumbered the fighting men. Combined, these changes caused an at least tenfold inflation of army size that continued throughout the early modern period.[3]

Warfare and the maintenance of troops were also becoming more permanent. Medieval campaigns tended to be seasonal affairs, lasting from spring until the autumn, but from the fifteenth century onward, states began to establish growing numbers of standing forces. After the formation of the Spanish *tercios* in the Italian Wars, the French Wars of Religion and the Dutch Revolt became the first major conflicts in which the old pattern of seasonal assembly and disbanding was broken and regiments were maintained over years, sometimes decades.[4] The Thirty Years War, finally, saw the greatest numbers of men permanently under arms that Europe had hitherto known. Soldiering had become

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a full-time profession and by extension an identity for commoners. As we will see in greater detail in the first chapter, this massification of the military caused great anxiety among contemporaries: commoners choosing to join the armies were not only thought to cause social strife by deserting their civilian profession, they also rebelled against God's social order, in which the military was the designated habitat of the nobility.

Beyond the military sphere, the religious landscape of Europe underwent rapid and fundamental change during our period of study. From its unlikely origins in the rather provincial German town of Wittenberg, the Reformation and its effects fragmented Latin Christianity and altered the sociocultural framework with breathtaking alacrity in the decades after 1517.[5] The heretical movement that became known as Lutheranism attracted followers from all walks of life, many of whom, guided by their independent interpretation of Scripture or inspiration from the Holy Spirit, took Luther's early message in wildly divergent directions. The first half of the sixteenth century witnessed the emergence of a dizzying array of new religious ideas, each laying claim to being the only interpretation of the faith that merited the label "Christian."[6] Over the course of the sixteenth century, the three major confessions of Catholicism, Lutheranism, and Calvinism gained a theological profile alongside a fourth category of miscellaneous religious movements that the labels "radical" or "Anabaptist" struggle to contain.

It is important to underline the international character of warfare in the period and the implications for the topic of this book. In war, Christians from all over Europe, from Portugal to Russia and Lapland to Sicily, encountered one another and their interpretations of the faith. Recent studies have revised the previously monolithic view of the three main confessions and show that both the Catholic–Protestant binary and the confessional labels "Catholic," "Lutheran," and "Calvinist" obscure great inter- and intra-confessional differences.[7] Religious practice and attitudes varied considerably from place to place, making it sometimes very difficult for Christians to recognize coreligionists from elsewhere. Even more confusingly, hybrid forms of worship emerged in many locales and across Europe a multiplicity of local religious "flavors" developed that often defy neat categorization.[8] The religious landscape was therefore constantly morphing well into the eighteenth century and the phenotype of Christianity practiced in a given community could not necessarily be assigned to a confessional camp with certainty. While to church leaders the definition and implementation of uniform doctrine was of utmost importance, communities and individuals were shaping and diversifying the religious options available to them, sometimes boldly, sometimes tentatively, in some cases consciously, in others obliviously. The consequences this had for the often multiethnic, multiconfessional armies of the period are obvious: Christians with often widely divergent religious beliefs and practices had to fight alongside and against one another. The ques-

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tion of religious coexistence, toleration of difference, and its limits in the armies during Europe's "wars of religion" is therefore a pressing one and is the subject of Chapter 4. As a whole, this book illuminates how early modern military authorities as well as the people who lived in the armies coped with the challenge of confessional diversity, a topic that has thus far received little attention from military historians. We know a lot about increasingly sophisticated logistics, financial systems, the emergence of the fiscal military state, and the evolution of military strategy on the battlefield; what we will examine in the following chapters is how the military sphere managed the problem of religious pluralism.

The pluralization of Christian creeds and the emergence of confessional cultures were also reflected in the types of conflicts that erupted.[9] In the Holy Roman Empire, the Peasants' War (1524–25), the Anabaptist "Kingdom" of Münster (1534–35), the Schmalkaldic War (1546–47), and the Cologne (or *Truchsessische*) War (1583–88) all displayed a strong religious element. In many ways, confessional strife culminated in the Thirty Years War (1618–48), which drew in all major European powers at different stages.

The term "religious war" has been criticized as being too diffuse.[10] Franz Brendle and Anton Schindling have suggested the term "confessional war" (*Konfessionskrieg*) as a better characterization of the conflicts within Western Christendom, as genuine "religious wars" were only officially waged against the Ottomans.[11] Whether or not a war was fought over religion was by no means an unambiguous matter. Brendle and Schindling have stressed the importance of differentiating between the experience and interpretation of conflicts at four different levels: those of (1) the policymakers; (2) the groups and individuals actively and passively affected by the events; (3) the authors and readers of propaganda; and (4) the level of memory. The fact that the same conflict could be interpreted differently at each of these levels brings the issue into sharp relief: while imperial propaganda, for example, was consciously trying to dissimulate wars against Protestant princes as secular policing measures against rebels and breakers of the imperial peace, confessional propaganda focused almost exclusively on the religious dimensions of these conflicts and framed them unambiguously in binary terms of confessional opposition. For the larger population, too, confessional and religious motives and interpretations were believable and often dominant, and popular memory also recalls the Reformation period as one marked by religious strife.[12] We consequently have to ask where the military stood in all this. Did soldiers interpret their actions and experiences in the framework of confessional politics, and did they gain motivation through this interpretation of events as has been suggested?[13] Were they "mercenaries" in the pejorative sense, who only fought for pay? Or did they develop a mode of interpretation that was particular to their professional perspective?

In trying to answer these questions, we are treading new ground. Thus far, soldiers have featured in social and cultural studies of the Reformation era

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mainly as amorphous agents of the state, while military historians, with few exceptions, have studied the social history of the military from many different angles apart from the religious one. Writing about the religiosity of soldiers is not straightforward, not least because source materials that could illuminate military life from the inside are scarce and uneven before the later seventeenth century. The problem becomes even more pronounced when the inquiry concerns military religious practice or beliefs because contemporaries did not find these topics noteworthy enough to write about them and many aspects of religious life in the armies were not typically regulated or recorded. Another fundamental obstacle for historians interested in peaceful or non-agonal behaviors is that these are rarely documented. There is no occasion to produce records when people are getting along. We are thus forced to trawl through sometimes only tangentially related materials in the hope of catching glimpses of what interests us. From the perspective of modern and many early modern historians, the evidence presented here may sometimes seem impressionistic, and this is a limitation that should be acknowledged. I have, however, profited greatly from cultural histories of medieval warfare.[14] The medieval evidence often seems comparable to that which I was confronted with, and the methodologies of medievalist historians taught me to collate material from disparate sources. I have assembled the evidence I could find and striven to support my interpretations with comparisons to the civilian context, and hope, not surprisingly, that the result will be convincing.

In examining military religious life, we also must overcome a great deal of contemporary and historical prejudice. Echoing sensationalist or anxious early modern characterizations of soldiers, historians have emphasized the "unchristian" behaviors of the soldiery and tend to conclude that early modern armies were predominantly composed of amoral undesirables. Maybe because of the almost uniformly negative judgments of their contemporaries (which we will analyze in depth in Chapter 1) this stereotype has gone widely unchallenged and few historians have troubled themselves with the examination of the religious convictions of early modern soldiers. From the nineteenth century onward, the perceived lack of ideological and patriotic' attachment rendered the mercenary anathema to the nationalist fervor of the age. Gustav Freytag's lurid descriptions of the Thirty Years War's horrors shocked and titillated his readers and influenced both the popular imaginary and academic assumptions about soldiers for generations.[15] In the twentieth century, nationalists, socialists, and national socialists struggled with the ideological noncommitment of the *Landsknecht*. For socialists, the soldier was a class traitor who enforced princely despotism and preyed on the peasant. On the other side of the political spectrum, the unpatriotic, mutinous *Landsknecht* was antithetical to the national(-socialist) ideal and early modern German warfare was declared "entirely degenerate."[16] After 1945, military history became an academic "urchin"

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(*Schmuddelkind*) in Germany that few social or cultural historians were comfortable approaching.[17] While Anglo-American and French scholars wrote a "new" military history from the 1960s onward, their German colleagues only began to explore these questions with a three-decade delay. Since the 1990s, the social and cultural historiography of the early modern military has grown rapidly and has provided many valuable insights. The religious history of the military remains conspicuously unexamined, as—Michael Kaiser and Stefan Kroll's 2004 edited collection aside—there has been hardly any research into the spiritual dimension of soldiering in the German context before the end of the seventeenth century.[18]

This lack of serious interest has not prevented dismissive or negative but essentially unresearched comments repeating the putative truism of the irreligious soldier.[19] While it may be recognized, for example, that "the ethos of soldiering encouraged an *affected* disregard of established norms of religious behavior," this affectation swiftly morphs into an actual spiritual deficiency, amounting at most to a "mechanistic, death-bed type of piety."[20] Ultimately, soldiers are thought to have been "remarkable for the lack of any religious sensibility at all," which would indeed be remarkable were it not for the assumption that "the army milieu as a whole tended to be dechristianizing."[21] How army life could have achieved the cultural feat of "deprogramming" early modern soldiers is hard to fathom. The problem with such statements, apart from portraying soldiers as religiously abnormal, is that they imply the existence of a yardstick against which faith can be measured. Certainly, despite the doctrinal differences between the confessions, there remained a shared ideal of Christian comportment. But theologians and moralist writers were also painfully aware that few Christians actually met their exacting standards.

Questions regarding the influence of religious and confessional norms on the military sphere are posed throughout this book. The confessionalization paradigm has shaped especially German historiographical debate since the 1980s and questions surrounding the processes, the dynamics, and even the existence of confessionalization and the closely associated subject of "social discipline" shape historians' assumptions about early modern culture.[22] In essence, the confessionalization thesis argued that the statements of belief (*confessio* in Latin) that the three main churches formulated simultaneously demarcated them from one another and provided the internal programs of spiritual and social reform. The churches pursued these reform agendas in cooperation with the states, which, in turn, used ecclesiastical structures to exert political control into every parish. Heinz Schilling and Wolfgang Reinhard, the originators of the confessionalization thesis, took a strongly statist view and envisioned these changes as top-down processes, but this characterization of a "confessional coercion-state" (*konfessioneller Zwangsstaat*) soon elicited criticism.[23] Microhistorical and historical anthropological studies have seriously challenged many

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aspects of the confessionalization paradigm and have shown that religious pluralization and the development of confessional profiles was multilayered, nonteleological, unpredictable, contradictory, and chronologically messy. When it occurred, it was a process characterized by negotiation, pragmatism, and compromise with locally specific dynamics, rather than straightforward implementations of clearly defined reform programs from above.[24] It remains to be seen to what degree we can detect confessionalizing processes in the military of the period. It may seem intuitive to expect strong confessionalizing tendencies in such a hierarchical setting, but we have to bear in mind that the structures we have come to associate with the military were themselves evolving rapidly in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and, as we will see in the second chapter, the fact that the armies of the period were confessional composites proved a powerful obstacle to confessionalizing agendas that warlords may have harbored.

We also have to ask how the men and women who found themselves in the multiconfessional setting of the armies handled the challenge of religious diversity in their daily lives. Confessional coexistence has attracted scholarly attention only comparatively recently but there now exists a sufficient number of studies that illuminate the dynamics and contingencies of life in multiconfessional communities.[25] In most post-Reformation towns and villages, two or more confessions coexisted in a peaceful manner. Most people more or less decidedly identified with a confession in the later sixteenth century, but this did not mean that they were uncritical of their own creed or automatically hostile toward members of another. Bob Scribner described ordinary people's "tolerance of practical rationality" and C. Scott Dixon has discussed the "practical philosophy of tolerance," the latitudinarian "beliefs and attitudes of the people in the cities, towns and villages who actually experienced religious diversity at first hand."[26] Willem Frijhoff has introduced the very useful concept of *omgangsoecumene*, often translated into English as "the ecumenicity of everyday life" but maybe more accurately rendered as "the ecumenicity of social intercourse" or "acquaintance."[27] *Omgangsoecumene* highlights the fact that social contact often blurred confessional distinctions or emphasized other categories and norms of social life that were simply more relevant to the situation and the type of interaction.

Communities in general were centered around ideals of neighborliness and forbearance and dependent on reconciliation of their members, and oftentimes this moral system simply overrode matters of religion.[28] Many communities adopted an indifferent attitude toward religious allegiance and fanatics who threatened to whip up trouble between the members of bi- or multiconfessional communities were often met with unified, pan-confessional opposition.[29] So, while authorities could be pursuing policies of confessional purity, the populace often took a much more accommodating or indifferent stance. In

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the absence of interference from above, Protestants and Catholics often lived peacefully together in the same communities, the same neighborhoods, streets, and houses. Confessional tension did increase in the decades around 1600 but the Thirty Years War led to a "growing dislike of religious fanaticism,"[30] and while Protestant and Catholic communities drifted apart and tended to segregate in the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, these tended to be gradual and nonconfrontational processes.

This is not to imply that the coexistence of the different denominations was without problems. Confessional conflict did erupt, but these tended to be isolated and painful occasions that served as reminders of the importance of negotiating difference peacefully.[31] Ultimately, it is important to emphasize that communities did not have to break apart over religious matters and that peaceful coexistence, toleration, cooperation, and indifference were as much part of post-Reformation society and culture as were conflicts; whether confessional conflict arose depended on the individual circumstances, on the willingness of communities to compromise, and not least on individuals.

What sets this book apart from the existing studies of confessional coexistence is that it does not examine a local or regional system of confessional coexistence but a professional one. In villages or towns, local tradition and custom, familial and neighborly relationships, parish and guild structures, and rehearsed strategies of accommodation could function as stabilizers that counterbalanced the disrupting influence of confessionalism. Armies, on the other hand, were transient and temporary communities, in which people from all over Europe encountered one another and had to negotiate their regional, linguistic, and confessional differences. The strategies of coexistence that military communities developed thus had to be accessible and accommodating to Christians from very diverse backgrounds, and they had to be transferrable, as individuals and groups moved in and out of regiments, changed sides, or were taken prisoner. Achieving a mode of coexistence was also arguably even more important in military life than it was in civilian contexts because in the armies, the struggle for survival was even more desperate. Horrific as they often were, battles were not the main cause of attrition. Military communities were constantly imperiled by hunger, disease, inclement weather, and often hostile civilian populations, and as the attempts of the authorities to provision or even pay troops typically failed, in-group cohesion was as vital as it was fragile. De-accentuating confessional difference and cultivating strategies of coexistence were therefore of great importance.

Here, we are touching on an inherent tension in this study: we have to acknowledge that the military was a distinct socio-professional setting that functioned according to distinct imperatives, logics, and norms. On the other hand, the military was also a reflection of the society that produced it and while soldiers and their families consciously and deliberately entered a new social sphere

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when they joined the armies, they must have already possessed an ability to recognize and, if necessary, adapt to the demands of coexistence. The question, then, is not so much whether military life made people tolerant, which seems difficult to explain, but how the military context managed to mute and contain confessional antagonism.

The question of how confession and confessional thinking influenced life in the civilian and the military realms is a devious one because it suggests that there is a metric that could measure it. Older discussions surrounding confessionalization and social discipline tended to envision clerical and political elites as normative monopolists who laid out their vision of a pious polity in a variety of genres (creeds, church ordinances, moralist tracts, legal mandates, etc.) and handed these ideals down to the general populace, cast as passive recipients whose options were to conform or to deviate. This elitist concept has given way to a much more permeable and interactive view of religious change, but the underlying assumption that there existed a dominant set of religious and confessional norms that governed every aspect of life has remained widely unchallenged. This has led to a curious tension between what historians consider the normative framework of early modern culture and the conflicting behaviors we observe in the people who inhabited it.

To assume that soldiers were religiously atypical or that their circumstances somehow eroded Christian values presupposes a civilian reality in which these ideals were, in fact, realized. But this was not the case: early modern culture functioned according to different normative systems that governed different social settings. Normative imperatives often aligned but equally as often diverged, and they could even create contradictory behavioral expectations.

This is the central argument of Hillard von Thiessen's recently proposed analytical model of "normative rivalry" (*Normenkonkurrenz*).[32] The great advantage of Thiessen's model is that it considers religious norms as one among several normative systems that coexisted in early modern culture and that governed behaviors in different social contexts: there were religious norms, social norms, and norms that aimed at the common good, and these at times reinforced each other (Thiessen calls this "norm convergence") but often caused conflicting expectations on peoples' behaviors that led to normative rivalry. Even among the same social or professional group and in the same setting, contradictive norms could demand contradictory behaviors. A concrete example from the military sphere is the treatment of the female enemy population: military custom legitimized rape under certain circumstances but there also existed a quasi-chivalric norm to exempt women from military violence. Both behaviors could be sanctioned, and how soldiers acted toward women depended on setting, group dynamics, and not least the individual.

These normative contradictions were a fact of life and led to a constant state of indistinctness, which, according to Thiessen, defined early modernity as an

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"Age of Ambiguity." People were usually able to accept this ambiguity and navigate it without necessarily realizing that they were favoring one set of norms over another in a given situation. Neither did they endure moral anguish by acting in ways that modern observers may consider inconsistent, contradictory, or hypocritical.[33] It was also accepted that different norms applied depending on the social role a person fulfilled in a given situation. By accepting that religious norms did not have an automatic primacy but had to compete with other normative systems in every aspect of life, from the family up to the level of international politics, we can free ourselves from the impulse to question why a given individual or groups compromised the demands of their faith in certain situations; they merely behaved in a manner suggested by other social or political norms.[34]

This normative ambiguity was by no means a harmonious state of affairs and the desire to establish an unequivocal normative system that could guide life in all matters was related to another characteristic of the period, namely the drive for purity.[35] That historians initially conceived of social disciplining and confessionalization as an elite attack on a backward and recalcitrant "popular culture" was influenced by the manner in which early modern theologians and moral writers of all confessions positioned themselves in opposition to a society that they considered fundamentally unchristian.[36] But their designs for an ideal society that completely surrendered to religious norms were explicitly not a reflection of how most people actually behaved and only a rather small segment of the intellectual elites ever attempted to realize this new moral utopia.[37]

Historians do well to remember this when they struggle with the temptation to criticize behaviors and beliefs in unduly contemporary, if not downright subjective terms. The idea that soldiers' "bad reputation" was "often well deserved" and that some new recruits "were probably fairly decent characters, although in an environment reputedly permeated with drink, gambling and violence they may not have stayed that way for long" is but one example that can illustrate this point.[38] Do gambling or drinking necessarily betray an indecent character? Is violence not a necessary virtue for a soldier? Do people who exhibit such behaviors "deserve" infamy? It seems important to reflect, briefly, on these questions because they are difficult to escape.

A feature of much social history, especially "history from below," is the tendency to find ancestors with whom we can empathize and maybe turn to for inspiration. Soldiers, in Peter Wilson's words, "occupied an ambiguous place in society as servants of the authorities who engaged in activities breaching the most basic Christian commandments."[39] This ambiguity is not only confined to the early modern period, it also affects the writer who approaches them today. Soldiers do not lend themselves easily to empathy, as their behaviors all too often appall. Peter Hagendorf, whose experiences figure repeatedly in this book, seems to have been a caring father and husband who mourned the deaths of

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eight children and that of his first wife Anna Stadlerin. But between marriages he also captured and maybe raped two young women.[40] Which of these aspects of Hagendorf's character should the historian emphasize? Neither, it seems, but the example shows the futility of trying to write about soldiers in the heroic mode or write them off wholesale as immoral.

A cultural-historical analysis of how soldiers interpreted and justified violence while maintaining their self-image as good Christians can shed some light on the nature, contingency, and elasticity of moral and religious norms in early modernity. This should not be mistaken for an apology, nor is it my intention to romanticize military life or soldiers when I analyze their attempts to limit violence in war or question the assumption that military violence was often confessionally motivated. Soldiers were still professionally and probably habitually violent; the point I am making is simply that confessional hatred seldom prompted the violence. Trying to understand the dynamics and contingencies of confessional conflict and confessional coexistence also aims at restoring a degree of agency to ordinary people in their navigation of the choppy religious waters of the Reformation period and the pitiful reality of war. Normative systems do not automatically determine actions but suggest patterns of behavior with an at times considerable scope for agency. Actors mostly behave in ways that have proven successful in the past, but at times they also act creatively or contravene expectations. They retain agency within historically and situationally contingent parameters, and the aim of this book is to examine the nature of these parameters in early modern military culture, the patterns of behavior we can observe, and the ways in which soldiers acted against this horizon of norms.

The following chapters move from the general sociocultural context to the peculiar professional one that shaped and regulated soldiers' daily lives before aspects of religious life in the armies are discussed. The first chapter problematizes and unpacks the stereotype of the irreligious soldier and introduces us to the sociocultural matrix within which we have to examine military religiosity. The vituperative allegations of military godlessness, as we will see, were leveled against soldiers rather uniformly in the period from 1500 to 1650 and changed little over time. While the stereotype has at times been recognized, historians have failed to contextualize it diachronically and synchronically, with the result that early modern soldiers appear exceptionally wicked. An exploration of similar allegations through time uncovers the long history of condemning soldiers as amoral or unchristian and suggests that the early modern vituperations did not necessarily reflect reality but the deep-seated Christian unease with men who make a living by killing. In a second step we will examine why this stereotype gained renewed purchase around 1500 and why soldiers at the time elicited such profound anxiety. Finally, the stereotype's influence on the lives of soldiers and their families must be considered.

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The second chapter moves into the military sphere proper and analyzes the religious structures of the military and the character of institutionalized religion in the armies. The legal parameters were set out in the articles of war that were issued by the warlords and which each soldier pledged to follow. These martial law codes have survived in great numbers and allow us to trace how authorities sought to police religious practice among their troops. The chaplaincy of the period has received little scholarly attention, probably because field preachers were reputedly as impious as the men they tended to. As we will see, army chaplains were not inferior to civilian clergy; they were expected to meet the same criteria of comportment and fulfill the same pastoral duties. Devotional literature and prayer books for soldiers allow us to assess what religious values were conveyed to soldiers. The picture that emerges is one of undoubtedly "Christian" but not "confessional" values that military authorities sought to foster.

The third chapter examines the role religion played in soldiers' lives and the ways in which they deviated from certain religious norms. Autobiographical accounts form the main source base here and it becomes evident that military diarists were not, in fact, "godless" but "Christians" in every meaningful way. The examination of three transgressive behaviors that were commonly tied to soldiers (blasphemy, magic, and illicit or violent sex) rethinks the way in which "deviance" has been treated in the military. Interpreting these transgressions from the vantage of the soldiers themselves and comparing them to the way in which civilians actually behaved, rather than how moralists thought they should behave, the picture that emerges is far less extraordinary. All these "deviant" behaviors were widespread among the early modern laity; soldiers could merely indulge in them more freely than their civilian contemporaries.

The fourth chapter examines the occurrence of military religious violence in the generally tolerant context of army life. I argue that coexistence was characteristic of military everyday life, and that religious violence was atypical. The rare moments in which genuine religious violence occurred show that military religious violence followed much the same logic as civilian confessional conflict did. In their acts of religious violence, soldiers not only displayed hatred but betrayed a keen understanding of doctrinal difference and very accurately targeted those elements of worship and theology that separated their own from their victims' faith. Mostly, however, soldiers did not struggle with religious diversity and toleration, or, probably more often, indifference, was an integral fact of military life. Soldiers tended to ignore matters of confession and dealt with one another as Christians, not as sectarians. A survey of military attitudes toward the enemy shows that, generally speaking, confessional difference did not exacerbate violence between enemies and that a restrained and honorable conduct of war was, again, binding for all Christian soldiers. The picture of coexistence and violence that emerges is therefore rather surprising: Europe's

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"religious wars" were fought by armies composed of Christians of all denominations who mostly managed to contain confessional strife both in their own units and across enemy lines.

The last chapter examines military attitudes toward dying, death, and burial. Disease, hunger, and cold—rather than battle—killed soldiers and their families with relentless constancy, so that death was even more frequent an occurrence in the armies than in civilian communities. Unlike their sedentary contemporaries, however, people living in the military context had to face death in often chaotic circumstances that made adherence to the precepts of the *ars moriendi*, the art of dying well, difficult or impossible. Whether in battle or in the camp, soldiers and their families often died without clerical guidance, did not receive rites, and, if they were buried at all, ended up in mass graves in which friends and enemies were interred, irrespective of confession. The pragmatism that characterized soldiers' lives is thus encapsulated in military attitudes toward death and burial practices as well.

A Note on the Terminology

The term "soldier" will be used more frequently than "mercenary" in this book for practical as well as semantic reasons. German historians especially tend to differentiate between "mercenary" (*Söldner*) and "soldier" (*Soldat*),[41] but this distinction carries ideological overtones that seem unhelpful to me. Most of the men we will encounter in this book were mercenaries in the sense that they did not necessarily fight for their rightful ruler or their native country and they received pay for their services. Both German words, *Söldner* and *Soldat*, and their cognates in other European languages have the same etymological root, Latin *sol*[*i*]*dus*, which means either the late Roman coin or simply "pay." "Mercenary" is derived from Latin *mercennarius*, meaning "paid" or "hired," or "hired worker," while the root *merces* translates as "pay" or "wage." "Mercenary" and "soldier" thus both originally denoted men who rendered military service in exchange for pay. In the period of study, the differentiation between "mercenaries" and "soldiers" is always difficult and never objective and so it appears best to favor the more neutral word. A commonly used German term in the period of study was simply "Knecht," which will also be rendered as "soldier" as its modern English translation "servant" does not have military connotations and its English cognate "knight" denotes a socially more elevated, mounted warrior. *Landsknecht* (plural: *Landsknechte*) refers to German infantry soldiers until ca. 1600, when it widely fell from usage and "Knecht(e)" or "Soldat(en)" became standard.

The second issue concerns the terms "Christian," "religion"/"religious," and "confession(al)." As we will see, throughout the "confessional age" a vital com-

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mon ground of doctrinally unmarked Christian values and norms remained that could be cultivated to allow the functioning of a multiconfessional professional group such as the military. I will therefore use "Christian" or "religious" when referring to such shared concepts, positions, or values with which Christians of all confessions could identify. Care should be taken not to confuse the "religious" with the "confessional." If we consider "confession(al)" to refer to articulated and distinctly Catholic, Lutheran, or Reformed outlooks, "religious" might describe a less partisan, more universally "Christian" piety or worldview. These distinctions will become clearer in the course of this study, but at this point it may suffice to caution against conflating "Christian"/"religious" and "confessional" as they denote different approaches to faith.

Notes

1. Kirchhof, *Wendunmuth*, vol. 1, 130–31.
2. Roberts, "The Military Revolution." For a relatively recent overview of the military revolution debate see Tallett's introduction to *European Warfare*.
3. Parker, *The Military Revolution*, 1–5; Tallett, *War and Society*, 9.
4. Gunn, "War and the Emergence of the State," 56.
5. On Wittenberg as the idiosyncratic point of origin for the Reformation, see Rublack, *Reformation Europe*, ch. 1; Roper, *Martin Luther*, ch. 4.
6. The emergence and usage of confessional labels during the German Reformation has recently been the subject of two enlightening studies: Witt, *Protestanten*; and Jörgensen, *Konfessionelle Selbst- und Fremdbezeichnungen*.
7. On the variety of Catholic practice across Europe see Nolde, "Andächtiges Staunen"; and from a pan-European perspective, Ó hAnnracháin, *Catholic Europe*. Diversity in the Lutheran context is examined by Kaufmann, *Konfession und Kultur*.
8. See for example Forster, *Catholic Germany*, 29; Plath, *Konfessionskampf*, 95, 96n, 100; or Spohnholz, "Multiconfessional Celebration of the Eucharist."
9. See most recently Maurer, *Konfessionskulturen*.
10. Brendle and Schindling, "Religionskriege," 19–22; Haug-Moritz, "Schmalkaldische Krieg," 94. See also Bremer, "Rhetorik und Semantik des Begriffs 'Religionshändel.'"
11. Brendle and Schindling, "Religionskriege," 19.
12. Ibid., 17.
13. Just two examples are Burkhardt, *Der Dreißigjährige Krieg*, 134; Trim, "Conflict, Religion and Ideology," 290.
14. Especially Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence* and *Holy Warriors*; Caferro, *John Hawkwood*; and Prietzel, *Kriegführung im Mittelalter*.
15. Freytag, *Bilder*, vol. 3.
16. Frauenholz, *Lazarus von Schwendi*, 20.
17. Pröve, "Vom Schmuddelkind zur anerkannten Subdisziplin?"
18. Kaiser and Kroll, *Militär und Religiosität*.
19. For example Redlich, *German Military Enterpriser*, vol. 2, 476; Fiedler, *Kriegswesen*, 90; Mellinkoff, *Outcasts*, vol. 1, 26; Swart, "From '*Landsknecht*' to '*Soldier*,'" 78–79; Barudio, *Der Teutsche Krieg*, 165.
20. Tallett, *War and Society*, 127–28. Emphasis added.

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21. Ibid., 128.
22. For discussions of the "confessionalization" and "social discipline" paradigms see Loetz, *Mit Gott handeln*, 50–56; the contributions in Brockmann and Weiss, *Das Konfessionalisierungsparadigma*; and the discussion between Forster et al. in "Religious History beyond Confessionalization."
23. Reinhard, "Zwang zur Konfessionalisierung?"; Schilling, *Konfessionskonflikt und Staatsbildung;* and Schilling, "Konfessionalisierung im Reich."
24. Schmidt, *Dorf und Religion*; Schmidt, "Sozialdisziplinierung?" More restrained early criticism was voiced in Schulze's review of Schilling's *Konfessionskonflikt*. See also Robisheaux, *Rural Society*; and Plath, *Konfessionskampf*. Schilling himself later argued for a "pincer-movement" (*Zangenbewegung*) in "Disziplinierung oder 'Selbstregulierung'", 680.
25. A selection of monographs includes Grochowina, *Indifferenz und Dissens*; Luria, *Sacred Boundaries*; Volkland, *Konfession und Selbstverständnis*; Kaplan, *Divided By Faith*; Kaplan, *Reformation and the Practice of Toleration*; Dixon, Freist and Greengrass, *Living with Religious Diversity*; Spohnholz, *Tactics of Toleration*; Christman, *Pragmatic Toleration*; Kirchner, *Katholiken, Lutheraner und Reformierte in Aachen*; Luebke, *Hometown Religion*; and Scholz, *Strange Brethren*.
26. Scribner, "Preconditions of Tolerance and Intolerance," 38; Dixon, "Introduction," 9.
27. Frijhoff introduced this concept in 1979 ("La coexistence confessionnelle"). For a later reflection on the topic see his *Embodied Belief*, ch. 2.
28. Hsia, *Social Discipline*, 137.
29. Greyerz, *Religion und Kultur*, 181.
30. Forster, "Thirty Years' War," 167.
31. Luebke, *Hometown Religion*, 6.
32. Thiessen, *Das Zeitalter der Ambiguität*.
33. Ibid., 24.
34. Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger has observed the same tendency at the level of imperial politics in *Des Kaisers alte Kleider*, 85.
35. Burschel, *Die Erfindung der Reinheit*.
36. Hendrix, *Recultivating the Vineyard*; Thiessen, *Zeitalter der Ambiguität*, 41–43.
37. Ibid., 48.
38. Swart, "From '*Landsknecht*' to '*Soldier*,'" 78.
39. Wilson, *Europe's Tragedy*, 834.
40. Peters, *Peter Hagendorf*, 109–10.
41. For example Baumann, *Landsknechte*; Burschel, *Söldner*.

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