

[AccueilRevenir à l'accueilCollectionBoite_013 | Bibliographies diverses. Pauvreté. Hermaphrodites. Anormalité. Criminalité. OnanItem\[Michael Roberts, The Military Revolution, 1560-1660, p. 16-17\]](#)

[Michael Roberts, The Military Revolution, 1560-1660, p. 16-17]

Auteur : Foucault, Michel

Présentation de la fiche

Coteb013_f0167

SourceBoite_013 | Bibliographies diverses. Pauvreté. Hermaphrodites. Anormalité. Criminalité. Onan

LangueFrançais

TypeFicheLecture

RelationNumérisation d'un manuscrit original consultable à la BnF, département des Manuscrits, cote NAF 28730

Références éditoriales

Éditeuréquipe FFL (projet ANR *Fiches de lecture de Michel Foucault*) ; projet EMAN (Thalim, CNRS-ENS-Sorbonne nouvelle).

Droits

- Image : Avec l'autorisation des ayants droit de Michel Foucault. Tous droits réservés pour la réutilisation des images.
- Notice : équipe FFL ; projet EMAN (Thalim, CNRS-ENS-Sorbonne nouvelle). Licence Creative Commons Attribution - Partage à l'Identique 3.0 (CC BY-SA 3.0 FR).

Notice créée par [équipe FFL](#) Notice créée le 18/03/2021 Dernière modification le 23/04/2021

his forces became virtually self-supporting.¹ The occupation of territory thus became a legitimate strategic objective; and conversely, the commander who could not deny to the enemy the territory he desired, must take care so to devastate it that it became useless to his adversary. Thus, as Piero Pieri observes, frightfulness became a logistical necessity,² a move in a struggle for supply which was itself the result of the increased size of armies, and the low level of administrative techniques. Already, however, there were signs of better things. Despite his own dictum, Gustavus was not content to plunder Germany haphazard; and among other innovations he introduced a system of magazines, by which supplies and war material were concentrated at strategic points such as Erfurt, Nuremberg, Ulm and Mainz;³ it was a development that looked forward to the eighteenth century.

Nevertheless, the menace of the self-supporting army, wandering at large over central Europe, lasted sufficiently long to induce in Germany's neighbours a sharpened consciousness of frontiers, and a new determination to make them defensible. Richelieu put the point clearly when he wrote in his *Testament politique* that a well-fortified frontier was necessary to prevent the raids of a marauding enemy.⁴ A generation later the idea of a frontier as one or more lines of fortified places was well developed, and from it there followed the rather new notion that frontiers must be "rectified" to meet strategic requirements. The age of Vauban, the age of the *Réunions*, is not far ahead.⁵

The armies which carried through the military revolution—upon which that revolution impinged—were nearly all mercenary armies. It has indeed been argued, and with some force, that the great military innovations throughout history have generally coincided with the predominance of mercenaries;⁶ and it has been urged, more specifically, that the Maurician reforms were possible only in a mercenary force, since the prolonged drilling and high degree of professional skill which they demanded would have been impossible

1. Moriz Ritter, 'Das Kontributionssystem Wallensteins', *Historische Zeitschrift*, 90 [N.F. 54] (1903), *passim*.
2. Pieri, 'Formazione dottrinale', p. 100.
3. See, e.g., *Axel Oxenstiernas Skrifter och Brefvexling*, I. vii. 126.
4. Richelieu, *Testament politique*, ed. L. André (Paris, 1947), pp. 375-6.
5. For Vauban and the notion of the 'pré carré', see *Makers of Modern Strategy*, ed. E. M. Earle, (Princeton, 1944), pp. 40-6.
6. Paul Schmitthenner, *Europäische Geschichte und Söldnertum*, (Berlin, 1933).

to obtain from a citizen militia.¹ But though this last contention (as we shall see in a moment) cannot be sustained, there is no doubt that the use of mercenaries was attended with certain obvious advantages. A mercenary army cared not at all if the war were prolonged, or fought far from home; it economized the state's own manpower, and hence its wealth; the system of recruiting through captains relieved the government of a good deal of administrative work. There were, of course, many countervailing disadvantages: the mercenary was undisciplined, unreliable, and averse to battle; his arms and equipment were unstandardized and often bad;² the employer was invariably swindled by the captains; and the whole system was ruinously expensive. So expensive, indeed, that the smaller and poorer states were forced to look for alternatives. Around the turn of the century, many of the lesser German states—and even some quite big ones such as Saxony, Brandenburg and Bavaria—began to experiment with local militias.³ Military writers such as Machiavelli and Lazarus von Schwendi had urged the superiority of the citizen army, with many a backward glance at the military virtues of republican Rome.⁴ But it was forgotten that the classical authors whose military teachings formed the basis of the Maurician reforms all dated from times when the Roman forces were citizen-armies no longer. The event proved that the half-trained militias were incapable of mastering the modern art of war. Their failure in Germany was universal, ignominious and complete; and it seemed that those were right who contended that in the new conditions only mercenary armies could be effective. The Swedish victories, however, were a warning against too hasty a conclusion; for the Swedish army was a conscript national militia—the first truly national European army—and it proved capable of mastering military techniques much more complex than had been seen before. The second and more important stage of the military revolution, in

1. *ibid.*, p. 26; Pieri, 'Formazione', p. 94: "le esigenze della nuova tattica esigono insomma degli eserciti mercenari permanenti".
2. See on this Eugen Heischmann, *Die Anfänge des stehenden Heeres in Österreich* (Vienna, 1925), pp. 199-200.
3. For these attempts see E. von Frauenholz, *Die Landesdefension in der Zeit des dreissigjährigen Krieges*, (Munich, 1939); H. Wertheim, *Der toller Halberstädter*, I. 69-75; M. Lenz, *Landgraf Moritz von Hessen in Kleine historische Schriften*, (Munich and Berlin, 1920) II. 128-31; C. Jany, *Geschichte der Königlich Preussischen Armee*, I. 26-29, 61; Laskowski, 'Uwagi', p. 39; K. C. Rockstroh, *Udviklingen af den nationale haer i Danmark i det 17. og 18. Aarhundrede*, (Copenhagen, 1909), I. 4-38, 65; H. Kretzschmar, *Sächsische Geschichte*, (Dresden, 1935), II. 39.
4. For Lazarus von Schwendi, see E. von Frauenholz, *Lazarus von Schwendi. Der erste deutsche Verkünder der allgemeinen Wehrpflicht*.

