



The Martial Ethic in Early Modern Germany: Civic Duty and the Right of Arms (Early Modern History: Society and Culture)

B. Ann Tlusty

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For German townsmen, life during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was characterized by a culture of arms. Because the urban citizenry, made up of armed households, represented the armed power of the state, men were socialized to the martial ethic from all sides. This book shows how civic institutions, peer pressure, and the courts all combined to create and repeatedly confirm masculine identity with blades and guns. Who had the right to bear arms, who was required to do so, who was forbidden or discouraged from using weapons: all these questions were central both to questions of political participation and to social and gender identity. As a result, there were few German households that were not stocked with weapons and few men who walked town streets without a side arm within easy reach. Laws aimed at preventing or containing violence could only be effective if they functioned in accordance with this framework.

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