B. Ann Tlusty. *The Martial Ethic in Early Modern Germany: Civic Duty and the Right of Arms*.

Early Modern History: Society and Culture. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. xv + 372 pp. $95. ISBN: 978–0–230–57656–8.

Put simply, B. Ann Tlusty's *The Martial Ethic in Early Modern Germany: Civic Duty and the Right of Arms*, a recent addition to Palgrave's Early Modern History: Society and Culture series, is a very important contribution to our understanding of the culture of arms in early modern Europe, and a book that will undoubtedly serve as a model for future work on urban militarism. This meticulously researched study of civic defense in South German towns from 1500 to 1800, which is based on solid archival work, is not about war or armies. In fact, Tlusty makes a point of downplaying the military significance of the civic militias, describing them as old-fashioned failures, but noting quite correctly that "neither war nor antagonism is necessary for the practice of the martial ethic" (7). Tlusty's concern, then, is not with the military effectiveness of town militias, but with individual militiamen, the citizen householders required by law to possess weapons for the defense of their towns.

An investigation of the laws that governed the procurement, storage, and handling of these weapons, whether in times of war or for the purposes of policing, acts as the starting point of the book, but only insofar as establishing an ideal by which to understand the relationship of men (and at times women) to their arms. Full membership in the civic commune required that men swore oaths to protect their towns, service that could only be carried out if each possessed weapons suitable to the task. Using a series of case studies, Tlusty explores how bladed weapons

(swords, halberds, pikes, and knives) and later firearms shaped masculine identity in these communities and how weapons were "more than merely tools of defense" (28) in that they helped define who was and was not a citizen. Any man who could not meet his obligations, either owing to age, infirmity, debt, or legal sanction, could be stripped of his weapon and find himself excluded not only from defensive activities but even the right to visit his local tavern! As Tlusty argues throughout, the ownership of weapons differentiated the symbolically masculine from the feminized (women, children, the elderly, and Jews), though she points out that women and Jews both had access to weapons, and court records reveal that each used them as a means of self-defense.

The ubiquity of weapons in South German cities, towns, and villages — wonderfully represented in the illustrations found throughout the book — in many ways wrests the sword and the duel from the hands of the early modern nobility. In the case of the German states, Tlusty is less convinced that the practice of duelling simply trickled down from the elites to find a place in bourgeois society in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, finding instead that the tradition of duelling has deeper roots that date from the mid-sixteenth century. It seems only natural that with South German burghers required to carry weapons, they resorted to their use when they believed their honor had been defamed. Similarly, Tlusty writes that the sword was the "weapon of choice" (164) for townsmen, functioning not only as a mark of civic participation, but also as a status symbol and fashion statement for men as low in rank as the journeyman. However, the poor were less likely than the middling sorts to possess weapons, owing primarily to the cost, while the author found evidence in Augsburg and Rothenburg that artisans possessed more weapons per household than their wealthier uptown neighbors.

In a chapter dedicated to martial sports and technological challenge, Tlusty examines the peaceful use of weapons, particularly the rise of German shooting societies (*Schützengesellschaften*), which, she concludes, were not connected to the town militias, like the Dutch *schuttergilden* or the London military societies, and served no military purpose. The shooting brotherhoods lacked any hierarchical structure that could be readily transferred to the muster ground or battlefield, and though the shooting matches fostered civic pride, Tlusty asserts that they were purely for fun.

In conclusion, there is much in Ann Tlusty's book for scholars and students from a variety of fields. Those interested in gender studies, urban history, crime and society, military history, and the history of state formation, as well as anyone wishing to better understand the Continental roots of Second Amendment debates will find reading this book both enjoyable and informative.

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