

The German Military Entrepreneur Ernst von
Mansfeld and His Conduct of Asymmetrical
Warfare in the Thirty Years War

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NOTE ON DATES

Two differing calendars, the older Julian and the more new Gregorian, were used in the seventeenth century. The former calendar was still retained by Protestants in Germany, England, Scandinavia, and the Netherlands, while the latter had been adopted in Catholic Europe. For the sake of clarity, all dates in the older Julian form have been converted into the Gregorian form by adding ten days to them.

NOTE ON CURRENCIES

The following rates roughly match the different forms of currencies appearing in the text:

Spanish escudos and ducats	1.5 German florins
German thalers	1.5 German florins
English pound sterling	6.75 German florins
Danish/Swedish thalers	1-1.5 German florins
Dutch guldens	1.25 German florins
French écus	2 German florins
French livres	0.7 German florins

ABBREVIATIONS

BANF	<i>Briefe und Akten zur Geschichte des Dreissigjährigen Krieges</i>
CSPV	<i>Calendar of State Papers Relating to English Affairs in the Archives of Venice</i>
EHR	<i>The Economic History Review</i>
HJS	<i>Historia Jyske Samlingar</i>
MF	<i>Mercure François</i>
NCMH	<i>The New Cambridge Modern History</i>

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Ernst von Mansfeld

Ernst von Mansfeld was a German nobleman of illegitimate birth, who participated in the early phases of the Thirty Years War as a military entrepreneur and mercenary commander. Mansfeld first joined the war when Duke Charles Emmanuel of Savoy sent him to the Bohemians' aid in 1618. Mansfeld's achievements in the Bohemian Rebellion were limited to the capture of Pilsen and a military defeat at Sablat. Mansfeld's allegiance shifted from the Bohemian Rebel Confederates to the Count Palatine Frederick V, when the Bohemian Estates elected Frederick V as their new King in 1619. The irate Ferdinand II, whom the German Electors had chosen as the new Emperor that very same year, challenged the Bohemians and the usurper Frederick V and defeated them in the battle of the White Mountain in 1620.

From 1621 onwards Mansfeld facilitated the war's escalation into the Holy Roman Empire. The dethroned pretender Friedrich V employed Mansfeld first to defend his Palatine lands from the Emperor and his Spanish allies, then to wage aggressive war in order to win back the Palatinate from the occupying Imperialists. Initially Mansfeld joined forces with Duke Georg of Baden-Durlach and Christian of Brunswick to promote the Palatine cause. When Frederick V discharged Mansfeld from his service in 1622, Mansfeld struck out with Brunswick and sought employment elsewhere, first making his way to Alsace and Lorraine, then to East Frisia, where the Dutch employed him to occupy that land on their behalf. At the end of 1623 Mansfeld dissolved his army and travelled to England.

In England Mansfeld raised another army to help the Dutch lift the siege of Breda. The malnourished, demoralised, and disease-stricken army failed in its mission and soon melted away due to lack of forage and pay. With his remaining troops Mansfeld entered Germany in 1625 and sought service with the Danish King Christian IV, who was waging war against the Emperor in his personal capacity as the commander of the Lower Saxon Circle. In Danish service Mansfeld fought his biggest battle, when he was defeated by the Imperialist commander Albrecht von Wallenstein at Dessau in 1626. After his defeat Mansfeld gathered yet another army and marched south towards the Habsburg Patrimonial Lands in Silesia and Moravia. When Mansfeld's last army dissolved under Imperialist pressure, Mansfeld made his own way towards Venice,

where he hoped to secure future employment. On his way to Italy Mansfeld succumbed to typhus and died in December 1626.

The above entry is the short and standard account of Mansfeld and his role in the Thirty Years War. Compared to the great actors of the Thirty Years War, Wallenstein, Gustavus Adolphus, and Richelieu, Mansfeld's role in the war seems modest and almost insignificant. Traditional historiography of the war has neglected Mansfeld and others of his kind, because private military entrepreneurs, mercenary commanders, and other non-state actors failed to promote the darling cause of nineteenth- and twentieth-century historians, the advancement of the territorial nation state. While kings and cardinals built empires and centralized nation states, military entrepreneurs and mercenary commanders fought their war at grass root level, safe from the idolatrous gaze of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century historians. Indeed, the dictionary entry in Friedemann Bedürftig's recent lexicon still reduces Mansfeld to "a classical *condottiere*," who "became great only in war, and lived only for war and from war," in other words, a mere soldier who served to satisfy his own hunger for war.¹

This dissertation attempts to revise the traditional image of Mansfeld as an anomaly and an outcast of early modern state formation. Rather as a failed servant of the nascent nation state, the dissertation aims to portray Mansfeld as an early operator in asymmetrical warfare, and even a successful one at that. The central question of the dissertation is to what extent did Mansfeld's conduct in the Thirty Years War correspond with what we in the postmodern age understand as asymmetrical warfare. The dissertation argues that elements of asymmetrical warfare can be identified in Mansfeld's operational conduct of warfare, in his illegitimate and immoral conduct of war, in the financing and supply of his armies, in his role as an agent for indirect warfare, in his central role in the early modern image and information wars, and in the strong counter-reactions his asymmetrical warfare elicited from his enemies.

1.2 Theoretical Approach and Structure

The dissertation is based on the theory of asymmetrical warfare. Asymmetrical is a geometrical term meaning something that is not identical on both sides of a central line,

¹ Friedemann Bedürftig, *Der Dreißigjährige Krieg: Ein Lexikon* (Darmstadt: Primus Verlag, 2006), p. 112

and generally defined by students of asymmetrical warfare through negatives² – hence the definition for terrorists as being “not a state” but “a non-state,”³ who “employ unconventional methods” to wage war.⁴ The American Joint Staff defines such warfare to be asymmetric that consists of “unanticipated or non-traditional approaches to circumvent or undermine and adversary’s strengths while exploiting his vulnerabilities through unexpected technologies or innovative means.”⁵ In its most rudimentary form asymmetric warfare has been described as “an evolved form of insurgency.”⁶

By and large, the use of the term asymmetric has been confined to contemporary conflicts, the insurgencies and counter-insurgencies that rage even at this very moment in countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan. However, some scholars dispute the novelty value of asymmetrical warfare, and instead argue, “that many of the strategic and tactical concepts of modern asymmetry are simply restatements of concepts developed decades, centuries, and millennia ago.”⁷

One reason behind this confinement of asymmetrical warfare to the modern age is the emergence of yet another military-theoretical concept, that of *fourth generation warfare* (4GW). According to this theory, Western warfare has evolved through four successive generations. The first generation came to be as a result of the Westphalian Peace in 1648, when state-raised mass armies first made their appearance on European battlefields. This first generation then gave birth to a second one during the Napoleonic Wars, when firepower stepped in to replace manpower. In the twentieth century a third generation emerged, in which mobility was the dominant military feature over any other. At the turn of the millennium came the fourth generation of warfare, a prisoner of the postmodern condition. The fourth generation of war, in which no single entity or polity holds the monopoly of violence, is described by 4GW as a return to the default condition of war that existed before 1648 and the modern state system. Now war has

² Kristian Sjøby Kristensen, ‘Tourists or Vagabonds? Space and Time in the War on Terror,’ *Alternatives* 33 (2008), p. 254

³ Department of Defense, *The National Defense Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington D. C.: US Department of Defense, 2005), pp. 3-4: <http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/pdfs/2006-01-25-Strategic-Plan.pdf>

⁴ Department of Defense, *National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism* (Washington D. C.: US Department of Defense, 2006), p. 13: <http://defenselink.mil/pubs/pdfs/2006-01-25-Strategic-Plan.pdf>

⁵ Internal briefing for the Joint Staff, June 1998, quoted in Kenneth F. McKenzie and Michael A. Flournoy, *The Revenge of the Melians: Asymmetric Threats and the Next QDR* (Washington D. C.: Institute for National Strategic Studies, 2000), p. 2

⁶ Thomas X. Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone: On War in the 21st Century* (St. Paul: Zenith Press, 2004), p. 2

⁷ Adam Lowther, ‘Asymmetric Warfare and Military Thought,’ in John J. McGrath, ed., *An Army at War: Change in the Midst of Conflict. The Proceedings of the Combat Studies Institute 2005 Military History Symposium* (Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2005), p. 111

become dispersed and undefined to the point where the distinction between war and peace has effectively vanished. War has become, in a word, asymmetrical.⁸

While there is no clear consensus on what constitutes asymmetrical warfare, a number of common signifiers appear in all studies on asymmetrical warfare. The operational asymmetry is one of them, and often favoured in the study of recent conflicts in Asia and the Middle East. The legality of war and the use of terror as a form of asymmetrical warfare is another dominant viewpoint in recent research. Challenge to state monopolies of violence and the supply of war is the one theme that is perhaps the most germane to the study of early modern warfare. Indirect and diversionary wars constitute the focus for studies of asymmetrical war initiation and military escalation. Recently much interest has also been directed towards the use of image and information as weapons in asymmetrical warfare.⁹

The dissertation will be organised into seven chapters. The first chapter will provide an overview of the theme, introduce the primary sources, and review existing research. The backbone of the dissertation is the way in which asymmetrical warfare manifested itself in the war waged by Mansfeld and his mercenary accomplices. The second chapter will start off this inquiry by looking at the asymmetries on the battlefield, and how Mansfeld and his opponents differed from each other in the ways in which they conducted military operations. Particular emphasis will be placed on the ways in which Mansfeld and his opponents made use of space and movement. In the third chapter the thesis will dive into the murkier stuff, the atrocities and acts of terror that gave Mansfeld his reputation as a disturber of public peace and a violator of the generally accepted rules of war. The fourth chapter will examine the way in which Mansfeld relied on contributions and outright pillage as ways of supplying his armies. Conversely this chapter will also shed light on the problems the House of Austria faced when it tried to maintain armed forces in the period before Albrecht von Wallenstein and his subcontracted Imperial Army. The fifth chapter will look at Mansfeld in an international context, as a 'non-state' actor and an Imperial subject, who nevertheless sold his services to foreign leaders waging their own diversionary wars within the Holy

⁸ William S. Lind, Keith Nightengale, John F. Schmitt, Joseph W. Sutton, Gary I. Wilson, 'The Changing Face of War: Into the Fourth Generation,' *Marine Corps Gazette*, October 1989, pp. 22-26

⁹ See Ivan Arreguín-Toft, *How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetrical Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Aki Huhtinen and Jari Rantapelkonen, *Image Wars: Beyond the Mask of Information Warfare* (Riihimäki: Finnish Army Signals School, 2001); T. V. Paul, *Asymmetric Conflicts: War Initiation by Weaker Powers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Ekaterina Stepanova, *SIPRI research report No. 23. Terrorism in asymmetrical conflict: Ideological and Structural Aspects* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008);

Roman Empire. The sixth chapter concentrates on those aspects of Mansfeld's warfare that bear resemblance to the modern phenomena of 'image' and 'information' wars. The seventh chapter asks what kind of response did the asymmetric warfare of the German military entrepreneur elicit from the Habsburg state. The final chapter offers a conclusion of the study.

1.3 Primary Sources

The most useful primary sources for the inquiry at hand are newsletters and pamphlets, which look at contemporaneous warfare through the eyes of an outside reporter, objectively rather than subjectively. This, however, does not mean that seventeenth-century publications offer us a disinterested and balanced account of the events, on the contrary: the one pamphlet most germane to our needs takes on the shape of an apology, and strives to present its protagonist Mansfeld in the best possible light.¹⁰ The English pamphlets too shared the same penchant for presenting champions of the Protestant cause in an uncritical manner. Conversely one should approach the horror stories of Mansfeld's alleged atrocities and transgressions with a pinch of salt, particularly when they emerge from the Viennese camp. The best example of the latter type of source is provided by the *Acta Mansfeldica* (? , 1623), which is an openly hostile Catholic response to Mansfeld's own apology. The French newsletter *Mercure François* seems to traverse the middle ground between the opposing views. Even though it already acted as the official outlet for Richelieu's propaganda, the *Mercure* had not yet developed the blatant anti-Habsburg bias that dominated its narrative in the latter phase of the Thirty Years War. The leading German news collection *Theatrum Europaeum* maintained an equally neutral overtone, despite the fact that it was being published in the Protestant-dominated Frankfurt am Main.

Another substantial corpus of primary sources is formed by letters and official documents. These usually shed light on the political and diplomatic aspects of asymmetrical warfare, specifically on the way in which foreign powers made use of Mansfeld and his armies as means to wage diversionary war against the Habsburgs. This dissertation uses sources from Germany, England, Venice, and other countries.

¹⁰ *An appolloge made in defence of the illustrious Prince, Ernestus Earle of Mansfield, Marquisse of Castel Novo, and Bontigliers, Baron of Heldrunen, Marshall of the Army of Bohemia, and the Provinces Incorporated thereunto, & c.* (Heidelberg-London: Edward Allde, 1622)

Letters by German princes from the period under investigation are collected in the series *Briefe und Acten zur Geschichte des Dreißigjährigen Kriege, neue Folge: Die Politik Maximilians I. von Bayern und seiner Verbündeten 1618-1651* (Munich-Vienna, 1966). The Anglo-Venetian diplomatic correspondence, published in the series *Calendar of State Papers*, is a particularly valuable source for matters relating to the diversionary wars waged by England, Venice, and Savoy. Other documents relating to Mansfeld can also be found in secondary works, such as the biographies written by Villermont and Ütterodt. The most striking lacuna in the documentary trail relates to Mansfeld's service with the Danish King Christian IV – this is because no printed collection of Danish state papers was available at the time this dissertation was being written.

1.4 Secondary Sources and Historiography

Secondary literature on the Thirty Years War can, and indeed does, fill entire libraries. The few works covering the life of Ernst von Mansfeld deserve to be singled out from this mass. The best work on Mansfeld is Walter Krüssmann's recent biography, which is based on meticulous archival research, and also incorporates all the relevant secondary material in order to provide the reader with an up-to-date synthesis of existing research.¹¹ No other work comes close to Krüssmann's *tour de force* in its sheer volume of details. The main deficiency in Krüssmann's work, however, is the lack of meta-level analysis regarding the nature of Mansfeld's warfare, his military entrepreneurship, and his place in the historiography of war and society.

The most notable biography before Krüssmann's time was written by Count Villermont in 1865. Villermont covered his subject's entire career in two rather thick volumes, which also include extracts from Mansfeld's personal correspondence. The problem with this classic biography is the author's naked bias. Villermont is best known for his equally extensive work on Count Johann Tserclaes Tilly, the General of the Catholic League, who as a Catholic Walloon was a hero figure to the Belgian Villermont. Mansfeld, on the other hand, was not, and his treatment in Villermont's book is rather unflattering. In fact, in Villermont's account Mansfeld becomes some kind of an anti-Tilly, an evil Doppelgänger, whom Villermont unfavourably compares to his own champion: "Autant la figure de Tilly est grande, belle, imposante et pleine

¹¹ Walter Krüssmann, *Ernst von Mansfeld (1580-1626): Grafensohn, Söldnerführer, Kriegsunternehmer gegen Habsburg im Dreißigjährigen Krieg* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2010)

d'attraits, autant celle de Mansfeldt est vulgaire, disgracieuse et inspire la répulsion," Villermont unflinchingly blasts away in the introduction to Mansfeld's biography.¹²

Other biographies include *Ernst Graf zu Mansfeld* (Gotha, 1867) by Ludwig Ütterodt zu Scharffenberg and *Der Grafen Erns von Mansfeld letzte Pläne und Thaten* (Breslau, 1870) by Julius Grossmann. Whereas Villermont vilified Mansfeld as a vulgar mercenary, Ütterodt sought to represent him as a forgotten national hero, "a steadfast defender of the German religious freedoms, of justice and light, without any memorial books dedicated to him or any monuments erected in his name."¹³ Julius Grossmann followed Ütterodt's lead, and criticized Villermont's "one-sided view," which had "failed to do justice to its subject."¹⁴ The fault line in this nineteenth-century debate was a national one: on one hand a French-speaking Walloon viewed the German Mansfeld as the embodiment of all that was evil in warfare; on the other the stout German historians defended their compatriot in the Droysenian spirit of pan-Germanic historiography (Grossmann indeed admitted to being commissioned to this task by Gustav Droysen himself).¹⁵ All these historians did injustice to their subject by anachronistically investing him with qualities that were the products of nineteenth-century historiography, and thus alien and incomprehensible to Mansfeld himself.

Mansfeld has also featured in every general history of the Thirty Years War. The two most distinguished contemporaneous annalists of the war, the Papal Nuncio Carlo Caraffa and the Imperial Count Franz Khevenhüller, were both Catholics and left behind a biased view of Mansfeld. The 'modern' historiography of the Thirty Years War begins with Friedrich von Schiller and his *Geschichte des Dreißigjährigen Krieges* (Leipzig, 1791). In the nineteenth century more publications began to appear all over Europe, of which the *Geschichte des Dreißigjährigen Krieges* (Prague, 1869) by Anton Gindely has withstood the test of time better than any other. In the twentieth century more monographs appeared, the most popular of them being *The Thirty Years' War* (London, 1938) by Veronica Wedgwood.

All these distinguished modern historians were more or less perplexed by Mansfeld. Schiller characterized Mansfeld and Brunswick as "fugitive banditti," who were

¹² Antoine Charles Hennequin, le comte de Villermont, *Ernest de Mansfeldt: Tome premier* (Brussels: Victor Devaux, 1865), p. iii

¹³ Ludwig Ütterodt zu Scharffenberg, *Ernst Graf zu Mansfeld (1580-1626)* (Gotha: Friedrich Andreas Press, 1867), p. i

¹⁴ Julius Grossmann, *Der Grafen Erns von Mansfeld letzte Pläne und Thaten* (Breslau: U. M. Kern's Verlag, 1870), p. iii

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. iii

nevertheless “worthy of immortality, had they been but as superior to their times as they were to their adversities.”¹⁶ Anton Gindely regarded any attempt to pass final judgement on Mansfeld as superfluous. He admitted that Mansfeld’s talents for raising armies and supporting them were incontestable, but nevertheless viewed his personal characteristics unfavourably. Gindely suggested that while the disorders of the time forced Mansfeld on his mercenary career, he nevertheless “possessed a natural bent in this direction.”¹⁷

Veronica Wedgwood approached Mansfeld’s formidable and infamous reputation with even more moderation. To her Mansfeld was a mercenary captain like any other, without such redeeming or damning qualities that would have singled him out from the military peers of his age. The virtues Mansfeld had were “those of the soldier only,” yet as an adventurer he was less dangerous “than others who were to follow him in the disastrous years to come.” The Thirty Years War was for Mansfeld a private matter, an opportunity to be exploited: “He saw nothing among the mountainous ranges of European politics but the footholds by which he would climb to his personal goal.”¹⁸ Wedgwood’s characterization is yet to be surpassed in its poetic force and historical insight. However, despite portraying Mansfeld’s personality with convincing lucidity, Wedgwood nevertheless stopped short of placing him within the wider context of early-modern military entrepreneurship and privatised warfare. This task has eluded even the most recent scholars of the Thirty Years War. “His motives remain unclear and his actions duplicitous,” Peter H. Wilson admits in the latest addition to the historiography of the Thirty Years War. “To most, he appears the archetypal mercenary who has come to characterize soldiers generally for this period.”¹⁹

1.5 Previous Research on the Thirty Years War as an Asymmetrical Conflict

No historian of the Thirty Years War has ever approached his subject from the perspective of asymmetrical or generational warfare. The preferred historiographical reference point has always been that of the centralized nation state, and the preferred military theory that of Carl von Clausewitz. While nineteenth-century historians such as

¹⁶ Friedrich von Schiller, *The History of the Thirty Years’ War* (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1846), pp. 102-103

¹⁷ Anton Gindely, *The History of the Thirty Years’ War, Vol. I* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1884), p. 398

¹⁸ C. V. Wedgwood, *The Thirty Years War* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1938), p. 88

¹⁹ Peter H. Wilson, *Europe’s Tragedy: A History of the Thirty Years War* (London: Allen Lane, 2009), p. 325

Schiller and Gindely presented the Thirty Years War first and foremost as a religious conflict, nineteenth-century historians such as C. V. Wedgwood, Georges Pagès, S. H. Steinberg, and Geoffrey Parker shifted the focus of analysis towards the territorial nation states and their hegemonic power struggles.²⁰ In the recent Anglo-German historiography of Johannes Burkhardt, Ronald G. Asch, and Peter H. Wilson, the research emphasis has once again shifted from international affairs to the Holy Roman Empire and its socio-political structures.²¹ Endemic, unorganised, private, or asymmetrical wars, however, have not yet risen to a central position in the historiography, which is still dominated by the question of European state formation.

The problems surrounding early-modern warfare have received more attention in the specialist literature. This literature usually revolves around the theory of early-modern Military Revolution. While the concept of the Military Revolution has helped military historians to shift the focus of research from battles and troop movements towards the issues of war and society, it has nevertheless failed to shed much light on the endemic 'small wars' that characterized much of early-modern warfare. Instead much interest has been directed towards the technological and organisational innovations of the early modern age, developments such as angle bastions, combined arms regiments, and naval technology. The theory of Military Revolution has also been used to explain European global domination and 'the rise of the West.'²²

The only attempt to draw parallels between the Thirty Years War and the endemic conflicts of our own age has been made by the political scientist Herfried Münkler. In fact, Münkler has even gone so far as to identify German military entrepreneurs like Mansfeld and Christian of Brunswick with the warlord militias and other non-state military operators in modern-day Somalia, Liberia, and Afghanistan. To Münkler the key problem is the monopoly of violence, which Münkler argues the modern state has again lost in the face of competition from non-state military operators.²³

Münkler's thesis repeats the central themes in 4GW and the writings of political scientists such as Kalevi J. Holsti and Martin van Creveld, who have both identified a

²⁰ Georges Pagès, *La guerre de trente ans 1618-1648* (Paris: Payot, 1949); Geoffrey Parker, *The Thirty Years' War* (London: Routledge, 1984); S. H. Steinberg, *The 'Thirty Years War' and the conflict for European Hegemony 1600-1660* (London: Edward Arnold, 1966)

²¹ Ronald G. Asch, *The Thirty Years War: The Holy Roman Empire and Europe, 1618-1648* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1997); Johannes Burkhardt, *Der Dreißigjährige Krieg* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1992); Wilson, *Europe's Tragedy*

²² Geoffrey Parker, *The Military Revolution: Military innovation and the rise of the West 1500-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988)

²³ Herfried Münkler, *The New Wars* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), pp. 32, 45

shift in the monopoly of violence. War before the Westphalian state system was messy, endemic, and protracted, they argue, and was finally institutionalised in the Westphalian Peace as a series of symmetrical duels between nation states and their organised mass armies. Now, however, this course of military evolution and state formation is completing a full cycle, when non-state actors have begun to assert themselves on the theatre of war.²⁴

A dissertation on Mansfeld is a way of examining the nature of one such non-state operator in the Thirty Years War. Because no previous studies on neither asymmetrical warfare in the Thirty Years War nor Mansfeld's role as a perpetrator of such warfare exists, this dissertation claims new ground in the historiography of the Thirty Years War. The way in which military historiography and established military theoreticians have so far explained the Thirty Years War will be presented in the following chapter.

2. OPERATIONALLY ASYMMETRICAL WARFARE

2.1 Military Historiography and the Thirty Years War

Mansfeld's military career can be said to have lacked both merit and brilliance. Such a dim view would not be entirely unsubstantiated. Mansfeld only ever fought three major battles at Sablat, Fleurus, and Dessau; of these three battles both Sablat and Dessau were manifest defeats, while Fleurus was something of a tie. Neither did Mansfeld win accolade as a siege tactician *à la* Marquis Spinola: while the forcing of Pilsen was a success, it nevertheless remained Mansfeld's only major undertaking in siege warfare, and even then he suffered the ignominy of having surrendered his prize without a shot fired in anger.

It is hardly surprising then that traditional military historiography has felt little need to dedicate more than a few trifling pages to Mansfeld and his ilk. Even today military history remains rooted in the Clausewitzian tradition, which produced many great volumes on the Thirty Years War in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Usually such works took on the form of biographies or detailed accounts of specific

²⁴ Martin van Creveld, *The Transformation of War* (New York: Free Press, 1991), p. 139; Martin van Creveld, *The Rise and Decline of the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 87; Kalevi J. Holsti, *Peace and War: Armed Conflicts and International Order 1648-1989* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 38; Kalevi J. Holsti, *The State, War, and the State of War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 29

battles and campaigns. The perfect example of the former case is provided by Gustavus Adolphus, whose numerous biographies overshadow all the other protagonists of the war – including historical heavyweights like Richelieu and Wallenstein. The latter form of military history is represented best by Hermann Voges's *Die Schlacht bei Lutter am Barenberge am 27. August 1626* (Leipzig, 1922), a meticulous study of the fateful battle between Christian IV and Tilly, and by *Sveriges krig 1611-1632* (Stockholm, 1936-1939), a massive multi-volume work commissioned by the General Staff of the Swedish Defence Forces.

The traditional Clausewitzian approach to the Thirty Years War is wrought with problems. The most glaring danger is that of anachronism. Nineteenth-century historians such as Gustav Droysen, the famous biographer of Gustavus Adolphus, evaluated the Thirty Years War from the perspectives of their own ethnically homogeneous, religiously uniform, and centrally governed nation states. The central questions were always political: “What kind of contribution did Gustavus Adolphus make in the contemporaneous European conflict? That is, in what position did he, did Sweden, stand in respect to the rest of Europe?”²⁵ The agents of said politics, the kings and the generals, always acted out of motives accessible to the nineteenth-century mind, usually in favour of national aggrandizement or “for the cause of religious liberty.”²⁶ For military historians in particular such assumptions were perfectly valid; after all, had not the great Clausewitz himself claimed that “war is a mere continuation of policy by other means?”²⁷ Therefore military operations had clearly discernible political objectives that never failed to make sense. Battles were fought to annihilate the enemy and cities conquered in order to expand the power base of the territorial nation state.

These traditional views have come under increased criticism from the 1970s onwards. Knud J. V. Jespersen in particular has criticized Hermann Voges, who described the battle of Lutter as a Clausewitzian *Vernichtungsschlacht*, and compared Tilly to the nineteenth-century German military strategist Alfred von Schlieffen. Such unhistorical associations, Jespersen rightly pointed out, were helplessly anachronistic.²⁸ As another military historian David Parrott has argued, political goals did not in reality dictate strategy, and battles were rarely decisive, even though seventeenth-century

²⁵ Gustav Droysen, *Gustav Adolf: Erster Band* (Leipzig: Verlag von Veit & Comp., 1869), p. viii

²⁶ L. W. Heydenreich, *The Life of Gustavus Adolphus* (Philadelphia: Lutheran Board of Publication, 1868), p. iv

²⁷ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* (Radford: Wilder Publications, 2008), p. 42

²⁸ Knud J. V. Jespersen, ‘Krigshistoriens lære og krigens historikere,’ in *Historia Jyske Samlinger, XII, 1-2* (1977), pp. 44-45

generals still sought battles with a firm belief in their ability to decisively tilt the scales in favour of one side or another.²⁹

Money and resources were more important in seventeenth-century warfare than firepower, tactical insights, or intricate military-political strategies. The lack of transport capabilities meant that armies had to make do with whatever resources happened to be in their immediate vicinity and strategy was reduced to “a crude concern with territorial occupation or its denial to the enemy.”³⁰

Rejecting the firmly seated notions of traditional military scholarship is not an easy task for the modern historian. A good example of this difficulty is provided by Peter H. Wilson, whose recent book attempts to re-evaluate many of the persistent assumptions that traditional historiography attaches to the Thirty Years War. Unlike most other historians, who focus their story on the politics, Wilson transfers the perspective from the cabinet room to the battlefield, and bases his own narrative on troop movements, sieges, and other military events. However, because of the aforementioned qualifications, seventeenth-century military campaigns lack such clear-cut goals and motives that would make them understandable to the twenty-first-century reader. Therefore Wilson falls back on commonly accepted terms such as ‘lines of communication,’ which explain the actions of seventeenth-century belligerents in a language that makes sense to the modern reader, but do not really ring true in the original historical context.³¹

2.2 The Origins of Habsburg Warfare

In terms of tactics seventeenth-century warfare tended to be either positional or mobile. Positional warfare was the norm in the west, while the latter form of warfare prevailed in eastern Europe, where cities were few and far between, and where armies had to cross vast distances in order to reach their enemies. The role of military technology in seventeenth-century warfare was generally more limited than historians would like to think. In fact, Robert I. Frost, a specialist of eastern-European military history, has warned historians from adopting crude technological determinism:

²⁹ David A. Parrott, ‘Strategy and Tactics in the Thirty Years’ War: The ‘Military Revolution’,’ in Clifford J. Rogers, ed., *The Military Revolution Debate: Readings on the Military Transformation of Early Modern Europe* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), p. 239

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 242

³¹ Wilson, *Europe’s Tragedy*, p. 739

For the effectiveness of technology depended fundamentally on the nature of the physical and social environment in which it was applied. Thus while cavalry may well have been all but useless in the siege warfare which played such a central role in the Eighty Years War between Spain and the Dutch rebels, it remained central to operations in eastern Europe throughout the period.³²

In support of his argument Frost refers to the spectacular lack of success that western armies exhibited in eastern Europe, failures such as the poor performance of the Saxon army in the Great Northern War (1700-1721),³³ but conversely one could also refer to the difficulties of the Turks and Tartars in dealing with the angle bastions of western defenders. Under such circumstances any conflict between two fundamentally different forms of warfare was bound to be asymmetrical.

The origins of the Austrian military doctrine can be found in the repeated and prolonged conflicts between the House of Habsburg and the Ottoman Empire. Most of the Imperial and Catholic League commanders who fought Mansfeld at some point or another – Marradas, Dampierre, Tilly, and Wallenstein – had participated in the Long Turkish War of 1593-1606. That war was fought mainly as a series of sieges in the Danube valley,³⁴ which has prompted the military historian Jeremy Black to suggest that there really was no clear contrast between western and eastern modes of warfare.³⁵ The central problem in Black's argument is, however, that the Turkish invasion was effectively thwarted by the positional warfare adopted by the Austrians.

The Ottomans had traditionally waged *ghazi* warfare against their Christian enemies in Europe. *Ghazi* warfare essentially meant protracted campaigns carried out by the *sipahi*, a landed military class much akin to the feudal knights of Christian Europe. The *sipahi* fought as cavalry, and were equipped in the medieval fashion with chain mail armour, swords, lances, bows, and arrows. Because cavalry formed the nucleus of the Ottoman military machine, the *sipahi* were augmented by other auxiliary cavalry contingents, such as the Crimean Tartars. During major military operations, as in the siege of Vienna in 1529, the cavalry troops were also accompanied by large contingents

³² Robert I. Frost, *The Northern Wars 1558-1721* (London: Longman, 2000), p. 311

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 312

³⁴ Fritz Redlich, *The German Military Enterpriser and His Work Force: A Study in Social and Economic history, Volume I* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1964), pp. 158-159

³⁵ Jeremy Black, *A Military Revolution? Military Change and European Society 1550-1800* (London: Macmillan, 1991), p. 19

of sappers, siege artillery, and infantry, the most famous soldiers among the last being the feared Janissaries.

However, as the military historian John Guilmartin Jr. has pointed out, advances in western fortifications technology posed a major difficulty to this traditional form of Ottoman warfare. Reducing the angle bastions built in the style of *trace italienne* proved to be beyond the means of local *ghazi* leaders. Conversely the Ottoman fortifications themselves – the barricaded Janissary camps and the dilapidated medieval castles of the *sipahi* – were highly vulnerable in the face of the more advanced western siege craft.³⁶ The Austrian commander Giorgio Basta understood the value of fortified positions as force multipliers, and could therefore wage asymmetrical warfare against a numerically superior enemy. The Austrians could hardly hope to defeat the Ottomans by positional warfare alone, but by that way they could, and did, frustrate the Ottomans' plans of extending Turkish power into Habsburg-held Royal Hungary.

Outside the angle bastions the Ottoman army still reigned supreme: the only real battle in the Long Turkish War ended in a Turkish victory at Mezökeresztes in October 1596,³⁷ and Günhan Börekci has convincingly argued that other western military advances such as volley fire by musketeers had already been successfully adopted by the Turks.³⁸ Therefore Basta could not claim victory over the Turks, and the war ended in a compromise solution with the truce of Zsitva Török on 11 November 1606.

2.3 Mansfeld and Military Space

It is proverbial that generals always prepare for the last war. That saying certainly applies to the seventeenth-century Austrian Habsburgs, whose archenemies the Ottomans still were. It is therefore hardly surprising that the Austrian military doctrine in 1618 called for the deployment of strongly fortified garrisons and siege works to counter the expected Ottoman cavalry threat. Ernst von Mansfeld, who had learned his military trade in the service of the Habsburgs, was naturally a proponent of that very doctrine. Consequently Mansfeld's first military undertaking in the Bohemian Rebellion was the siege of Pilsen in August-November 1618. At the time most of Bohemia was in

³⁶ John Guilmartin Jr., 'Ideology and Conflict: The Wars of the Ottoman Empire, 1453-1606,' in *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (Spring, 1988), p. 735

³⁷ Wilson, *Europe's Tragedy*, p. 99

³⁸ Günhan Börekci, 'A Contribution to the Military Revolution Debate: The Janissaries Use of Volley Fire During the Long Ottoman-Habsburg War of 1593-1606 and the Problem of Origins,' in *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hung.*, Vol. 59, No. 4 (2006), pp. 407-438

the hands of the rebels, and only a few loyalist enclaves survived in Pilsen, Budweis, and Krummau.³⁹

Mansfeld's performance in the siege of Pilsen was not impressive. The town's walls had offered adequate protection against the Hussites in the fifteenth century, and the town still boasted "a deepe ditch, and double walls, grounded vpon a rock, and full of a great number of towers."⁴⁰ Besieging the town was therefore a demanding enterprise that would have required thorough preparations, which Mansfeld had not made. Mansfeld undertook the siege with only six field pieces, and even when they finally did manage to breach Pilsen's medieval walls, their combined firepower was not enough to impress the defenders into surrendering their position.⁴¹ Only after Mansfeld had dragged bigger cannons from Prague, and the town's governor Felix Dornham had lost his life in the ensuing artillery bombardment, did the defenders finally offer to negotiate over Pilsen's surrender.⁴²

In 1621 Imperialist cunning finally forced Mansfeld to relinquish his position in Pilsen and adopt a more mobile form of warfare. While Mansfeld was away in Ulm beseeching assistance from the Protestant union, his garrison in Pilsen sold the town to Imperialists for 200,000 florins.⁴³ The absence of a territorial base forced Mansfeld to adopt a mobile form of war. The new war on the run had a destabilizing effect on the Habsburg strategy, which sought to contain the troubles inside the *Erbländer*. In the concept of asymmetrical warfare mobility indeed plays a much more central role than the possession of terrain.

Kristian Sjøby Kristensen has argued that all the actors in the on-going 'war on terror' are measured according to their ability to function in time: "Speed, instantaneous movement, and virtuality are seen as the most important characteristics of this war."⁴⁴ In his article on the current war on terror Kristensen uses the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman's concepts of *tourists* and *vagabonds* to construct a framework for understanding the role of space in modern asymmetrical warfare. Bauman argued that postmodern space could be experienced in two ways, either as freedom or as slavery. The first experience is that of *tourists*, who move or stay at their hearts' desire. The second experience belongs to

³⁹ *Appollogie of Mansfield*, p. 9

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 7

⁴¹ *Mercure François: Tome 5 (1617)* (Paris: Estienne Richer, 1619), p. 201

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 202

⁴³ Anders Svensson to Gustavus Adolphus and Axel Oxenstierna, 25 April 1621, in Leo Tandrup, ed., *Svensk agent ved Sundet: Toldkommissær og agent i Helsingør Anders Svenssons depecher til Gustav II Adolf og Axel Oxenstierna 1621-1626* (Aarhus: Universitetsforlaget, 1971), p. 87

⁴⁴ Kristensen, *Alternatives* 33 (2008), p. 250

vagabonds, who are forced to move because they are not welcome anywhere they stop: “The tourists move because they find the world within their reach irresistibly *attractive*. The *vagabonds* move because they find the world within their reach unbearably inhospitable.”⁴⁵

These roles certainly seem to fit Mansfeld and his Imperialist/Catholic League adversaries. After the loss of Pilsen, Mansfeld adopted a style of warfare that was increasingly mobile and unorthodox. Space became the critical component in this new war. In Kristensen’s application of the Bauman model, “warfare is won by imposing space on the opponent, making the opponent the *vagabond*, while maintaining one’s status as a *tourist*.”⁴⁶ This was the strategy that Mansfeld began to pursue in 1621.

Mansfeld’s retreat into the heavily forested and hilly Upper Palatinate was his first application of operationally asymmetrical warfare. The difficult terrain offered Mansfeld protection, while forcing his pursuer Tilly to choose routes that were susceptible to ambushes. And an ambush was exactly what Tilly had in store for him. In July 1621 Mansfeld surprised an advance guard of Wurzbürger cavalry under the command of Colonel Bauer de Eisenech, and slaughtered them to the last man. He then attacked a column of Bavarian reinforcements that Duke Maximilian had sent to Tilly’s aid, and dispersed them too.⁴⁷ On July the 18th Mansfeld attacked Tilly’s main force in its encampment. The Mansfelder assault was spearheaded by a combination of artillery and musketeers, which at the time was a highly unorthodox tactic.⁴⁸

According to an English military treatise from 1628, the use of artillery as the spearhead of an attacking formation was not characteristic of central-European warfare: “The planting of Ordnance in the Front of the maine Battaile, betweene the interuals, to breake the Enemies Battalia, was, and is at this day practiced by the *Turkes*, and other Nations.”⁴⁹ The other nations alluded to in the treatise were the Swedes, who at the time of the publication deployed mobile light artillery, the so-called ‘leather cannons,’ against their opponents in the Polish War. Mansfeld appears to have been the first commander to introduce such mobile artillery tactics to the German battlefields.

⁴⁵ Zygmunt Bauman, ‘Tourists and Vagabonds: Or, Living in Postmodern Times,’ in Joseph E. Davis, ed., *Identity and Social Change* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2000), pp. 22-23

⁴⁶ Kristensen, *Alternatives*, 33 (2008), p. 251

⁴⁷ Antoine Charles Hennequin, le comte de Villermont, *Tilly ou la guerre de trente ans de 1618 a 1632: Tome premier* (Paris-Tournai: Librairie de H. Casterman, 1860), p. 148

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 148-149

⁴⁹ Edward Cooke, *The Prospectiue Glasse of Warre. Shevving you a glimps of Vvarre Mystery, in her admirable Stratagemes, Policies, Wayes; in Victualling of an Armie, providing Money to pay Souldiers, finding out the Enemies Purposes, Traps and Stratagemes; Ordering of Marches, Framing of Battails, sundry Fights, Retreats, and the like, auoide Battell or Fight* (London: Roger Mitchell, 1628), p. 26

2.4 Mansfeld and Mobile Warfare

Mobile war was Mansfeld's greatest operational innovation in the Thirty Years War, even though in 1620 Mansfeld had still advised Frederick V to resort to positional warfare as the best form of defence against the Habsburg armies, which at the time consisted largely of Hungarian and Walloon cavalry.⁵⁰ The Bohemians should not engage the Imperialists on open ground, Mansfeld advised the Winter King, but should retreat into four fortified bastions in Pilsen, Písek, Tabor, and Wittignau:

But these foure places being fortified this manner, that storme may be stayed at the brinke, while the Prince of *Anholt* comes out of *Austria*, to aide those that are in extremitie. And by this meanes we may withstand the enemies forces this yeere, and in the meane time your Maiestie may haue leisure to thinke vpon the meanes how to repulse them altogether, better, than you can doe now.⁵¹

The Bohemians' defeat at the White Mountain in November 1620 and Mansfeld's own consecutive banishment to the Upper Palatinate in 1621 changed these views permanently. After the Catholic League army in the Upper Palatinate had received reinforcements from the Bavarian Duke, Tilly in his turn went on the offensive, and forced Mansfeld to seek safety within the walls of Weidhausen. In Weidhausen Mansfeld was well and truly cornered and closer to utter annihilation than ever before. The town was short of supplies, and the crowding of soldiers and civilians inside the town's walls gave rise to a pestilence that threatened to wipe out the entire army. Mansfeld, who realized that it was better to be the *tourist* rather than the *vagabond*, chose the only possible way out of the conundrum, and decided to escape from the Upper Palatinate, thus abandoning positional warfare as a mean to promote the cause of the exiled Frederick V. From now on space should enable Mansfeld rather than to constrain him.

Disengaging the enemy successfully was an art of war, in which only few commanders excelled. Edward Cooke discussed in his treatise the ways in which some commanders covered their retreat by leaving musketeers in convenient places, such as

⁵⁰ Mansfeld to Frederick V, 1 August 1620, in *Appollogie of Mansfield*, p. 38

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39

“Woods, Mountaines, Forrests, Rocks, banks of Riuers, Caues, Hills, hollow and deepe wayes, Corne-fields, and the like,”⁵² to wait for the pursuing enemy and ambush him.

Sometimes (as Count *Mansfield*) they fire houses to stay their Enemies following: and on that side the smoake fals (by reason of the winde) they lay an Ambush to intrap the Enemy. The like doe you, that the rest of your Army may passe with safetie.⁵³

Mansfeld attempted to use just such a ruse at Sablat, where he attempted to cover his retreat by setting fire to the village, and leaving part of his musketeers as a rearguard in the nearby forest. Mansfeld also used his wagons as an additional fortification, which method of defence he had apparently adopted from the fifteenth-century Hussites. At Sablat these ruses did not work, mainly because the wagons failed to cover every gap in Mansfeld’s defences. His soldiers were consequently trapped by Buquoy’s Hungarian cavalry and cut down before they could reach the safety of the woods.⁵⁴ Mansfeld and the few other survivors were lucky to reach Pilsen alive.

Made wiser by his experience at Sablat, Mansfeld adopted a new approach at Weidhausen. He pretended to enter into negotiations with Duke Maximilian, while at the same time making preparations for a hasty retreat into the Lower Palatinate.⁵⁵ The plot worked, and Mansfeld managed to slip away from Weidhausen unnoticed, then making his way unhindered 170 miles north in what must have been one of the most brilliant military manoeuvres of the entire Thirty Years War. Mansfeld’s escape was a major embarrassment to Duke Maximilian: the Emperor had specifically instructed him to destroy Mansfeld in the Upper Palatinate, and failing that, to at least isolate him there, so that the wily mercenary would not be able to carry the war deeper into Germany.⁵⁶

After escaping the Upper Palatinate Mansfeld never reverted to positional warfare again. Only in Haguenau did Mansfeld leave behind a garrison in the spring of 1622. Its role, however, was primarily to organise the collection of tribute and contributions rather than to create a permanent base against the Imperialists. The mercenaries at

⁵² Cooke, *Glasse of Warre*, p. 43

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 43-44

⁵⁴ *Appollogie of Mansfield*, pp. 11-12

⁵⁵ *MF: 8 (1621)*, p. 12

⁵⁶ Ferdinand II to Duke Maximilian, 18 July 1621, in Arno Duch, ed., *Briefe und Akten zur Geschichte des Dreissigjährigen Krieges, neue Folge: Die Politik Maximilians von Bayern und Seine Verbündeten 1618-1651: Erster Teil, zweiter Band Januar 1621-Dezember 1622* (Munich-Vienna: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1970), p. 287

Haguenau, who were “loath to be behinde their fellowes in glorious exploytes and profitable booty” soon joined Mansfeld’s main force after defeating Archduke Leopold’s scattered besiegers in a fierce sally.⁵⁷ From 1621 onwards Mansfeld’s warfare was therefore fast moving and unpredictable.

Mansfeld resorted to every available mean to increase the mobility of his troops. One such example was provided by the Englishman Sydnam Poyntz, who followed Mansfeld into Silesia in 1626: “There wee left our Canons, and there our Pikemen were made Dragoniers,” Poyntz later recalled.⁵⁸ When approaching Olmütz, Mansfeld “comaunded 3000 musquetiers to bee put in wagons 300 horse marching before them 200 behinde them.”⁵⁹ Mansfeld’s invention was brilliant: when he could not turn all the footmen into dragoons, he would load them in wagons and make them the equivalent of modern-day motorized infantry; by placing some of the cavalry behind and around the wagons, he could also make sure the wagons would keep up with the pace of the cavalry.

Mansfeld’s mobile army was also kept in a constant state of preparedness, awaiting any opportunity to launch sudden attacks against unguarded enemy positions. One such opportunity arose in 1624, when Mansfeld, informed by his spies of the disarray among Tilly’s Catholic League army, launched a lightning attack from East Frisia into the neighbouring bishoprics of Münster, Osnabrück, and Minden, thoroughly wasting them with fire and sword before Tilly finally managed to ride to the rescue.⁶⁰

If Mansfeld was a *tourist* who could enjoy an unlimited freedom of movement, Tilly on the other hand was a *vagabond*, who plodded from one siege to another. An English newsletter from 1622 clearly illustrates the Imperial/Bavarian predicament. Upon reaching the Lower Palatinate, Tilly and the Archduke Leopold held a council of war, in which it was decided to consolidate Imperial position in the Lower Palatinate by “surprising or enforcing the rest of the Townes.”⁶¹ In practice this approach meant the besieging of Heidelberg, Mannheim, and Frankendale, which were all strongly garrisoned by Anglo-German troops loyal to Frederick V. Nor would the sieges alone suffice in the pursuit of this goal. After the towns had been captured, strong garrisons

⁵⁷ *Three Great Overthrowes* (London: B. Alsop, 1622), pp. 7-8

⁵⁸ Sydnam Poyntz, A. T. S. Goodrick, ed., *The Relations of Sydnam Poyntz 1624-1636* (London: Camden Third Series Vol. XIV, 1908), p. 48

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 48

⁶⁰ Villermont, Antoine Charles Hennequin, le comte de, *Tilly ou la guerre de trente ans de 1618 a 1632: Tome premier* (Paris-Tournai: Librairie de H. Casterman, 1860), p. 252

⁶¹ *The 4. of Octob: 1622. A true relation of the affaires of Europe, especially, France, Flanders, and the Palatinate. Whereby you may see the present estate of her Provinces, and coniecture what these troubles and wars may produce* (London: Nathaniel Butter and Nicholas Bourne, 1622), p. 12

had to be placed in them, “for feare of new reuolts and hurliburlies: for they saw plainly, that the people bare a great good will to the *Palatine*, and would with all conueniency attend the restitution, and returne of their first Lord.”⁶² Even Duke Maximilian felt insecure enough to allocate a substantial part of the Catholic League army to garrison duties in his own Bavarian towns, whose defences were even further strengthened by placing a number of cannons on their walls.⁶³ Positional warfare also required a large siege train of artillery, building materials, and engineering tools. The large size of the Imperialist/Bavarian supply train made it a heavy burden on the march, and “Einquartierung der Bagage” became consequently a major source of vexation for the Catholic commanders.⁶⁴

While the Imperialists and Bavarians were thus tied down in positional warfare, Mansfeld and his new ally Brunswick were free to impose themselves on the Emperor’s erstwhile allies, such as the Lutheran Margrave of Hesse-Darmstadt and the ecclesiastical fiefdoms of Franconia, or to seek asylum outside the Empire, as they did when they quartered themselves in the French province of Champagne in 1622 and in the Dutch-controlled County of East Frisia in 1623 and 1624.

The fateful battle at Dessau too should be seen in the context of asymmetrical warfare. Mansfeld’s assault against a well-fortified bridgehead and a numerically superior enemy seems foolhardy at first glance, but remembering Mansfeld’s reluctance to get bogged down in a prolonged siege, his aggressiveness begins to make sense. Defeat at Dessau certainly did not prevent Mansfeld from assembling a new army in 1626. Mansfeld’s final campaign that year carried the violence right into the population centre of the Habsburg Empire. The primary aim was to weaken the Emperor’s ability to furnish new armies from the Patrimonial Lands. That, however, was not the only goal behind Mansfeld’s destabilization tactics. As Herfried Münkler has argued, offensive asymmetrical war carries with it a political message that is designed to create psychological rather than directly physical effects.⁶⁵ Chaos and destruction in the *Erbländer* would portray the Emperor as being unable to protect his own feudal subjects in their homelands, thus alienating the population of the Habsburg heartland from their masters. The anticipated result would be either popular rebellion against the House of Austria or the Habsburgs’ increased receptiveness to Mansfeld’s own desires (which

⁶² Ibid., p. 13

⁶³ Ibid., p. 13

⁶⁴ Duke Maximilian to Tilly, 6 April 1626, in Walter Goetz, ed., *Briefe und Akten zur Geschichte des Dreissigjährigen Krieges, neue Folge: Die Politik Maximilians I. von Baiern und Seine Verbündeten 1628-165. Zweiter Teil, dritter Band 1626, 1627* (Leipzig: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1942) p. 115

⁶⁵ Münkler, *New Wars*, p. 100

usually included titles, benefits, and enfeoffments). Such offensive form of asymmetrical warfare is usually called *terrorism*, and should be approached from the perspectives of *ius in bello* and the morality of war.

3. UNLAWFUL WAR

3.1 The Theory of Just War

Mansfeld's military career, perhaps even his very existence, violated almost every notion of 'just,' 'lawful,' and 'moral' warfare in early modern Europe. In the early seventeenth century, when the works of Hugo Grotius had not yet been published, the leading theorist on the laws of war was Saint Thomas Aquinas. According to his medieval principles, all wars were unlawful and sin. War could be justified only under three specific conditions. Firstly, war could only be waged by a sovereign ruler, i.e. a monarch, and never by a private individual. Secondly, war required a just cause, "namely that those who are attacked, should be attacked because they deserve it on account of some fault."⁶⁶ In other words, unarmed civilians, women and children in particular, could not become targets of military operations. Neither could the clergy be attacked, given the fact that the Catholic Church could never err and thus deserve punishment. Thirdly, the belligerents should have rightful intentions, so that they intend to advance good and avoid evil: "The passion for inflicting harm, the cruel thirst for vengeance, and unpacific and relentless spirit, the fever of revolt, the lust for power, and such like things, all these are rightly condemned in war."⁶⁷

A form of warfare that was amoral by early seventeenth-century standards was by definition asymmetrical as well. Modern understanding of 'just war' is based on Hugo Grotius and his *De iure belli et pacis*, first published in 1625, and already publicly referred to in the Westphalian peace protocols.⁶⁸ Grotius's definition of acceptable and non-acceptable warfare confirms to the basic tenets put forward by Thomas Aquinas. Thus, according to the military historian Roger W. Barnett, *ius in bello*, or lawful war,

⁶⁶ Thomas Aquinas, *The Collected Works of St. Thomas Aquinas. Electronic Edition. Summa Theologicae, Second Part of the Second Part* (Question 40), at Intellex Past Masters: <http://pm.nlx.com.libproxy.helsinki.fi/xtf/view?docId=aquinas/aquinas.02.xml;chunk.id=id1322294;toc.depth=1;toc.id=id322288;brand=default;query=>

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Edgar Müller, 'Hugo Grotius und der Dreißigjährige Krieg. Zur frühen Rezeption von *De iure belli et pacis*,' in *Tijdschrift von Rechtsgechiedenis* 77 (2009), pp. 505-506

“cannot be waged indiscriminately or disproportionately...Discrimination in war means that non-combatants cannot be attacked directly and deliberately.”⁶⁹ Any form of warfare that does not fit this definition is considered to be asymmetrical, often pure terrorism. Therefore what is regarded as unlawful warfare in modern times, applies to seventeenth-century norms as well, and vice versa. Perhaps the only difference comes in the form of modern-day understanding of the complexities of the new wars, in which “the effort, central to the laws of war to discriminate between the soldier and the civilian is full of moral ambiguity as well as practical difficulty.”⁷⁰ Unlike modern-day leaders, seventeenth-century rulers lacked the kind of consulting bodies where such moral problems could be discussed and rules of engagement formulated.

3.2 The Right to Wage War

Mansfeld violated these moral sensibilities in various ways. First of all, Mansfeld was not a sovereign ruler, but a private individual, and therefore did not enjoy *ius ad bellum*, or the right to wage war. Only the ‘state’ operators of the early modern era - monarchs, princes, estates, and republics - enjoyed that right. It is therefore no accident that Mansfeld’s condemnation in the *Acta Mansfeldica* begins with an attack against his hereditary status, namely stating that he was as an illegitimate heir to the Count Peter Ernst, and that Mansfeld’s later claims to the family title were therefore false.⁷¹ The *Appollogie* made no attempt to prove Mansfeld’s pedigree was flawless; instead the pamphlet concentrated on defending its subject against accusations of treachery against the Winter King, particularly over the bloodless surrender of Pilsen.⁷² The issue of Mansfeld’s birth remained an undecided one: to the Protestant posterity he was always the Count of Mansfeld; to the Catholic detractors, like his hostile nineteenth-century biographer Count Villermont, or even the *Mercure François* in 1622, Mansfeld remained a low-born *Bâtard*.⁷³ Charles Emmanuel had in fact invested Mansfeld with the title of Marquis of Castel-Nuovo, but such an obscure honour was not taken seriously by anyone outside Savoy. It is very telling of Mansfeld’s generally perceived

⁶⁹ Roger W. Barnett, *Asymmetrical Warfare: Today’s Challenge to the US Military Power* (Washington D. C.: Brassey’s, 2003), p. 68

⁷⁰ Adam Roberts, ‘International Law and the Use of Force,’ in *New Dimensions in International Security, Part II, Adelphi Papers # 266* (London: Brassey’s, 1991-1992), p. 63

⁷¹ *Acta Mansfeldica* (? , 1623), p. 6

⁷² *Appollogie of Mansfield*, p. 3

⁷³ *MF: 6 (1620)*, p. 429

lowly status that while he and Christian of Brunswick stayed in London, it was only Brunswick who was invited to join the Order of the Knights of the Garter.⁷⁴

The question of pedigree and noble legitimacy was no trifle matter, and it continued to affect Mansfeld's role in the war throughout his remaining years. Because Mansfeld was not a member of the Imperial Estates, or the sovereign head of a foreign principedom, the Emperor could not acknowledge him as a person of importance and enter into official negotiations with him. Therefore, when Mansfeld allegedly offered his services to the Emperor after the disaster at the White Mountain,⁷⁵ and again to Tilly and Infanta Isabella in 1622, the Emperor and his representatives could not publicly respond to these offers, given, as they were, by a private military contractor and not a sovereign prince. Instead they were forced to carry out their negotiations with Mansfeld in secrecy, or to ignore his approaches completely.

Even the dignity of an Imperial Ban was above Mansfeld. In January 1621 the Emperor placed the Imperial Ban on Marquis John George of Brandenburg, Prince Christian of Anhalt, and Count George Frederick of Hohenlose, and stripped them of their "honours, grades, dignities, offices, benefices, franchises, liberties, immunities, & of their fiefs, territories, & principedoms."⁷⁶ Mansfeld, however, had no privileges or fiefdoms to lose, and therefore another form of litigation had to be used against him. Instead of being placed under an Imperial Ban like the aforementioned members of the Imperial Estates, Mansfeld was declared an outlaw in February 1621, and a bounty was put on his head (100,000 thalers if taken alive, 12,000 if dead),⁷⁷ as if he was nothing but a common bandit - which the *Acta Mansfeldica* indeed claimed he was.⁷⁸ By modern standards Mansfeld and his private army would therefore have to be identified with the 'non-state actors' of our own age, in particular with the most illegitimate and abhorred ones, such as drug cartels, warlord militias, and terrorist organisations.

⁷⁴ John Chamberlain to Joseph Mead, 16 January, 1625, in Thomas Birch, ed., *The Court and times of James the First; Containing a Series of Historical and Confidential Letters: Volume Two* (London: Henry Colburn, 1849), p. 487

⁷⁵ *Acta Mansfeldica*, p. 76

⁷⁶ Declaration of an Imperial Ban against John George Marquis of Brandenburg, Christian Prince of Anhalt and George Frederick Count of Hohenlohe, 22 January 1621, in *MF: 6 (1621)*, p. 57

⁷⁷ Mattheus Merian, *Theatrum Europaeum, Band I* (Frankfurt am Main: Daniel Fieder, 1662), p. 469

⁷⁸ *Acta Mansfeldica*, p. 147

3.3 Unlimited War

Secondly Mansfeld violated against Aquinas's rule of limiting warfare to armed belligerents. Contemporary accounts are full of stories about atrocities committed by Mansfeld and his dogs of war. Some works, such as the *Acta Mansfeldica* and Nuncio Caraffa's *Commentaria de Germania Sacra Restaurata*, are openly hostile to Mansfeld, and should be approached with a pinch of salt. This, however, does not necessarily mean that their descriptions of Mansfeld's excesses are pure fabrication; rather they are exaggeration, if even that. Sydnam Poyntz, who served under Mansfeld's command in 1626, provides the most condemning testimony. According to Poyntz, the Mansfelders committed a two-hour long massacre in the Moravian village of Weisskirchen, where men, women, and children were indiscriminately put to the sword. Poyntz offered no explanation for this massacre and made no attempt to defend Mansfeld or even himself; the reader is left with the haunting impression that to Poyntz the events at Weisskirchen were simply business as usual.⁷⁹

Equally compelling evidence can be gathered from the civilian reactions to Mansfeld's presence. Here we must move from Moravia to East Frisia, where the local – predominantly Protestant – population rose up in violent rebellion against Mansfeld and his troops. The irate peasants killed scores of the latter in brutal manner: Villermont recovered from an unidentified source an incident, where one Frisian peasant offered a night's lodging to seven half-famished soldiers in his cottage, and then slit the sleeping soldiers' throats one by one.⁸⁰ The reason behind this violent popular reaction was the Mansfelders' unconstrained villainy in East Frisia, where they, according to the neutral (if not even pro-Protestant) *Theatrum Europaeum*, "robbed and plundered, violated wives and daughters in front of their husbands and parents, and hanged many local inhabitants."⁸¹

The most convincing evidence of Mansfeld's wartime excesses comes from the man himself. The *Appollogie of Mansfeld* was written first and foremost to defend Mansfeld from accusations of treachery and double-dealing against Frederick V, but its anonymous writer also used the opportunity to explain away the unbridled rapacity of Mansfeld's troops. Mansfeld, the *Appollogie* insisted, was not to be blamed for behaviour that was consistent with the nature of contemporaneous warfare:

⁷⁹ Poyntz, *Relations*, p. 48

⁸⁰ Villermont, *Mansfeldt, II*, p. 158

⁸¹ Merian, *Theatrum*, I, p. 736

Now as we cannot denie, much lesse excuse the excesse and insolencies, which the Souldiers as then committed, and did commit during that warre, for it is well knowne, that it is impossible to restraine and hold them under Discipline, if their wages be not paid to them. Neither they nor their horses can liue by the ayre, all that they haue, whether it be Armes or apparrell, weareth, wasteth, and breaketh. If they must buy more, they must haue money, And if men haue it not giue them, they will take it where they finde it, not as in part of that which is due vnto them, but without weighing or telling it. This gate being once opened vnto them, they enter into the large fields of liberty...⁸²

The *Appollogie* adds credibility to Catholic polemicists such as Nuncio Caraffa, who accused Mansfeld of committing “incredible and inexplicable” sacrileges in the Franconian bishoprics. There the Mansfelders had not only robbed the churches of their holy vessels, but defiled altars and mistreated priests as well.⁸³ Such accusations were extremely grave, given the fact that according to the generally accepted rules of war holy ground was a demilitarised zone. The *Appollogie* made no attempt to defend Mansfeld, but admitted his soldiers were habitual church-pillagers:

They spare no person of what quality foeuer he be, respect no place how holy so euer, neither Churches, Altars, Tombs, Sepulchres, nor the dead bodies that lye in them, can escape the violence of their Sacrilegeous hands. Wee know and confesse all this, and to our great grieffe haue seene many examples thereof.⁸⁴

However, the *Appollogie* allocated the heaviest burden of responsibility to the shoulders of the early modern state, which had fallen short of its obligations to support and maintain armies:

These are the mischiefes of the warre, which makes it become detestable, and abhominable. But what? Is it not enough to know it, and to complaine thereof. Wee must preuent the same by the true and right meanes, if wee will be exempted thereof. The only meanes to remedy

⁸² *Appollogie of Mansfield*, p. 23

⁸³ Carlo Caraffa, *Commentaria de Germania Sacra Restaurata* (Cologne: Cornelius ab Egmond, 1639), p. 138

⁸⁴ *Appollogie of Mansfield*, p. 24

all such disorders, and so may mischiefes, is Discipline: but how shall it be established, where money for their pay wanteth?⁸⁵

There can be no doubt that the lack of morale and discipline was partly derived from the character of Mansfeld's minions themselves. Loyalty obviously was not the dominating virtue among Mansfeld's followers. Desertion rate among Mansfeld's troops varied from one campaign to another, but there were occasions, as during ill-fated attempt to relieve Breda, when Mansfeld's army melted away almost in its entirety. The collapse of the 1625 campaign can only partially be blamed on disease among the troops and the lack of pay. The recruits were pressed into service in England, where many local communities saw in Mansfeld's recruitment effort an opportunity to rid themselves of defaulted debtors, vagrants, beggars, criminals, and other riff raff.⁸⁶ On their way to Dover these outcasts committed many outrages, "and all the way, as they passed, spoiled, as if it had been in an enemy's country, which was not wont to be so."⁸⁷

Not even high-ranking officers were safe from the lure of better opportunities in the opposing camp: after the disastrous battle at Dessau, Lieutenant Colonel Johann von Götz defected to the Imperialists' side, where he went on to pursue a colourful but not too successful military career.⁸⁸ The surrender of Pilsen has already been referred to; the actual surrender, however, was not carried out by the town mayor, who paid for the ignominy with his life, but by Colonel Fränk, who accepted the Emperor's bribe, and who in spite of his perfidy remained in Mansfeld's service.⁸⁹ Joachim von Carpzow, whom the modern-day medical profession might very likely categorize as a full-blown sociopath, provided the most extreme case of bad character among Mansfeld's lackeys. Two examples illuminate Carpzow's pathological condition. At one point Carpzow's wife and sister-in-law were captured by reconnoitring Croat horsemen. The indelicate Carpzow ransomed his wife, but not his sister-in-law; the latter consequently ended up as a camp prostitute for a Croat regiment.⁹⁰ In 1623 Carpzow decided that his wife had committed adultery. The fiendish cad then proceeded to court martial his own wife and passed a sentence of death on her. When the executioner hesitated to carry out the verdict, Carpzow volunteered to perform the deed himself. Concerned of his own safety,

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 24

⁸⁶ Redlich, *German Military Enterpriser, I*, p. 280

⁸⁷ John Chamberlain to Dudley Carleton, 18 January, 1625, in Birch, *Court and Times, II*, p. 490

⁸⁸ Redlich, *German Military Enterpriser, I*, p. 187

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 334

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 205

the executioner finally acquiesced to behead Carpzow's unfortunate wife.⁹¹ However, not all of Mansfeld's officers were licentious murderers or adulterous beasts: one Captain named Samuel Weiss was lauded by Villermont for his compassionate conduct and his good works towards the impoverished East Frisians.⁹²

3.4 The Motive for War

The third violation against the laws of war was caused by Mansfeld's lack of honourable intentions. Malice, thirst for vengeance, fever of rebellion, lust for power, avarice, and self-serving ambition were all motives more discernible in Mansfeld's campaigns than desire for peace and universal good. The Bohemian Estates, Mansfeld's first employers, had committed high treason by rebelling against the ordained and anointed King Ferdinand II. Serving the Palatine cause was equally dishonourable, for Frederick V had effectively usurped the Bohemian throne and therefore fully deserved the Imperial Ban, which had turned him and those that served him into outlaws.

Mansfeld's greatest sin was his design to make the war serve his own personal interests. Mansfeld's illegitimate birth prevented him from inheriting his family titles and fiefdoms, which all went to his elder legitimate brother. A surrogate for family estates was provided by his private army, which served Mansfeld as a kind of a mobile principedom that followed him everywhere he went. Military force made Mansfeld the *de facto* ruler of any locality he happened to occupy – for instance Pilsen, which Mansfeld ruled from 1620 to 1621 as if the town was his personal possession. Obviously Mansfeld's ambitions went beyond bullying small towns and pillaging abbeys. Like all members of the knightly class, Mansfeld too dreamt of glorious titles, high offices, and lucrative estates.

Primary sources certainly suggest that Mansfeld used the threat of warfare time and again to blackmail such concessions from Imperial representatives. The *Acta Mansfeldica* claimed he had offered to sell Pilsen to Duke Maximilian for the price of an unspecified sum of money and employment for himself and his troops in the Imperialists' ranks.⁹³ The *Appollogie*, on the other hand, argued that it was the Imperialists who offered Mansfeld "mountaines of gold" in exchange for Pilsen.

⁹¹ Ütterodt, *Mansfeld*, pp. 590-592

⁹² Villermont, *Mansfeldt, II*, p. 126

⁹³ *Acta Mansfeldica*, p. 76

Mansfeld refused to “play such a clerkes trickes,” and declined to sell his honour for such “a bad bargain.”⁹⁴ The most likely scenario is that the price the Imperialists offered for Pilsen was at the time deemed too low by Mansfeld.

In July 1622 Mansfeld engaged in clandestine negotiations with the Infanta Isabella, and offered to place his army under her command. The price, however, was high. The following terms were quoted by the Flemish envoy Count Henin in his despatch back to Brussels: a down payment of 300,000 *escudos*, a life-long pension from the Infanta, possession of the County of Vianden and its dependencies in Luxembourg, and finally an official recognition as an Imperial Prince.⁹⁵

These had not been the first round of negotiations between Mansfeld and Infanta Isabella: earlier in February secretary Pierre-Ernest Raville, a representative to the Infanta and the Electors of Mainz and Trier, had offered Mansfeld a sum of 200,000 thalers and 100,000 ducats if he transferred his army to Bavarian service.⁹⁶ Mansfeld, who at the time had been in winter quarters in Alsace, seems to have been initially interested in the offer, but after new allies had appeared on his side in the shapes of Christian of Brunswick and Margrave George of Baden-Durlach, Mansfeld turned down the offer and joined the other two paladins on a renewed springtime campaign. By July Mansfeld’s negotiation position had therefore dramatically altered, and he felt confident enough to increase the level of his demands. The new terms were far too exacting for Infanta Isabella, who was not even in the position to make Mansfeld an Imperial Prince, let alone enfeoff him with territories from the Empire. Mansfeld stayed in the Palatine service, but only briefly. Frederick V, who erroneously calculated that rapprochement with Emperor was still possible, dismissed the paladins from his service on 13 July 1622, and Mansfeld was forced to seek employment elsewhere.

At this point Mansfeld made an offer to Tilly. Mansfeld sent the following letter to Tilly on the very same day he was dismissed from the Palatine service:

Monsieur, we cannot conceal from you that we, the Duke of Brunswick and the entire army, have been dismissed by the King of Bohemia, in the form and manner, which you can see by the enclosed letter. In case it should please His Imperial Majesty to use us, we are ready to

⁹⁴ *Appollogie of Mansfield*, pp. 46-47

⁹⁵ Count Henin to Infanta Isabella, 16 July 1622, in Villermont, *Mansfeldt, II*, pp. 173-174

⁹⁶ Infanta Isabella’s instructions to Ernest-Pierre Raville, 28 February 1622, in Villermont, *Mansfeldt, I*, p. 354

enter his service in preference to any other, provided that the arrears are paid to our soldiers, and that we ourselves should remain, etc.

P.S. In case His Imperial Majesty should decide not to use us, it might at least please him to stop the proscription launched against us and grant a general amnesty to us as well as all the commanders of the army. In fact we will ease our sorties on the Empire the sooner you commit your words to get us this favour, and we ask you to avoid any further inconvenience by making us a reply as soon as possible.⁹⁷

The tone of the letter is very different from the list of demands Mansfeld had forwarded to Infanta Isabella in February. The reason was that the military situation had drastically changed since the winter's negotiations with Brussels. Baden-Durlach's army had been virtually annihilated at Wimpfen, and Brunswick too had suffered a painful defeat at Höchst. It is therefore understandable that Mansfeld, whose primary concern was to secure the continued existence of his army, his sole source of income, would waste no time attempting to seek new markets for his military enterprise. There was no talk of the Palatine cause nor German Liberties: what mattered to Mansfeld was his army's future employment and its past arrears. Everything else was just icing on the cake.

Unfortunately for Mansfeld, his hard-nosed pragmatism came across as disloyalty and cowardice unbecoming of a true gentleman. Mansfeld had unwittingly reminded his enemies of his position as a non-state actor, with whom no honourable bargain could be struck. Mansfeld's quickness to change sides after his long-time employer had dismissed him did not suggest that his loyalty to the Emperor would run any deeper either. As a Bavarian General Tilly had also a very tangible and pragmatic reason of his own to reject Mansfeld's offer straight off: Tilly knew how the Emperor was struggling to meet the costs of the Catholic League army, and how in fact he had been forced to mortgage Upper Austria and the Upper Palatinate to Duke Maximilian as securities for the accumulated arrears. Hiring Mansfeld's troops and taking up their arrears as well would seriously hamper the Emperor's ability to ever repay his debts to Duke Maximilian and the Catholic League, and it might indeed endanger Tilly's own position as the commander of the Catholic League army. Tilly therefore never even bothered to reply to Mansfeld's offer.

⁹⁷ Mansfeld to Tilly, 13 July 1622, in Villermont, *Mansfeldt, II*, pp. 76-77

3.5 Mansfeld in the Eyes of His Employers

To his Protestant employers Mansfeld was just another mercenary commander – not a fellow prince who should be treated with the dignity such a rank would have required, nor someone who could be authorized to wage war as a sovereign power or be expected to follow the rules of war to the letter. Mansfeld’s first compact with the Bohemian Estates was quite tellingly pragmatic and cynical. The Bohemians simply appointed Mansfeld as a General of the Artillery and a Colonel of a regiment 4,000 strong. There was no talk of cash or securities of any form or shape. The Bohemians were destitute, and it was their foreign allies who were expected to foot the bill for Mansfeld’s services. The only promise the Bohemians could make was to satisfy Mansfeld’s current needs “according to the vse and custome of the warre,” which effectively meant licensed plunder. The compact ended with a promise “to requite the good endeauors of the said Earle in all occasions, by all kinds of good Offices.”⁹⁸

The Winter King’s promises to Mansfeld were equally nebulous. Frederick V simply promised to acknowledge Mansfeld’s services by all the favours he could afford;⁹⁹ the problem was, however, that the new Bohemian King was almost as broke as the rebellious Estates, and could consequently afford very little. Frederick V had counted on the enthusiastic support of the German princes and his dynastic allies abroad, but the stupor of the Protestant Union and the haughty inactivity of his father-in-law James I left the Palatine Elector both bitterly disappointed and hopelessly destitute.¹⁰⁰ Frederick’s personal presence among the Mansfelders in 1622 failed to transfer any legitimacy to Mansfeld’s mercenary enterprise, as the Winter King was by then a king without a kingdom and an Elector without a voice in the Electoral College; Schiller quite rightly compared Frederick’s role in Mansfeld’s army to that of a “fugitive mendicant” following a “swarm of plunderers.”¹⁰¹

Mansfeld’s arrangements with other employers were no less jaded. After their dismissal from the Palatine service Mansfeld and Brunswick sought new employment from the States General. The Dutch had already invested 50,000 florins in Mansfeld’s

⁹⁸ Compact between the Bohemian Directory and Mansfeld, 20 August 1618, in *Appolloge of Mansfeld*, pp. 5-6

⁹⁹ Frederick V to Mansfeld, 30 November 1619, in *ibid.*, p. 20

¹⁰⁰ Wedgwood, *Thirty Years’ War*, pp. 104, 106

¹⁰¹ Schiller, *Thirty Years’ War*, p. 98

military enterprise in October 1621.¹⁰² After Mansfeld and Brunswick crossed into the United Provinces in the aftermath of the bloody battle at Fleurus, the States General agreed to roll them in Dutch service. The agreement between Mansfeld and the Dutch was of *ad hoc* nature. The Dutch initially agreed to enlist Mansfeld for a period of three months only, and Mansfeld's employment was limited to lifting the siege of Bergen-op-Zoom.¹⁰³ Mansfeld's army was never truly incorporated into the Dutch forces, and Mansfeld himself was never given any official Dutch rank. His occupation of East Frisia too was recognized as being of temporary nature only, and the Dutch never seem to have planned transferring the principality from Count Enno to Mansfeld.

Mansfeld's services for James I and Christian IV did not significantly differ from his earlier relationship with the Dutch. When James I in early 1624 allowed Mansfeld to recruit an expeditionary force in England, it was intended by the King that the force would be used for the specific purpose of recovering the Palatinate. At the time it was not at all clear whom Mansfeld actually served. According to Alvise Valaresso, the Venetian ambassador in London, Mansfeld was busy seeking employment in French service, while the Dutch regretted having let him go.¹⁰⁴ Earlier Mansfeld had approached the Venetian ambassador himself, and made vague references to future employment in Italy. Valaresso discreetly pointed out the opposition such a plan would encounter, "because public service requires that Mansfeld shall not leave Germany, away from which he might be a fish out of his element." Instead Valaresso alluded to the advantages Mansfeld might enjoy by staying in Germany, "where he had acquired so much experience and repute."¹⁰⁵ If these words of encouragement come across as a sales pitch to a worldly mercenary, it is probably because that was the way they were meant to be received.

When Mansfeld finally landed on the Dutch coast in early 1625, the policy of English neutrality *vis-à-vis* Spain was still being pursued by the ailing King James. The Dutch had expected Mansfeld to help them lift the siege of Breda, but the Stuart policy gave Mansfeld the perfect excuse to cower behind the walls of Osterhout and regroup his scattered forces. The Anglo-Spanish war in March 1625 and the death of James I in the following month did not induce Mansfeld to abandon his discretion and join the Earl of Oxford in his ill-fated attempt to break through Spinola's siege works around Breda.

¹⁰² Mansfeld to Prince Maurice of Orange, 1 January 1622, in Villermont, *Mansfeldt, II*, p. 406

¹⁰³ Villermont, *Mansfeldt, II*, pp. 108-109

¹⁰⁴ Alvise Valaresso to the Doge and the Senate, 12 April 1624, in *Calendar of State Papers Relating to English Affairs in the Archives of Venice, Volume 18: 1623-1625* (London: Institute of Historical Research, 1912), pp. 260-271

¹⁰⁵ Alvise Valaresso to the Doge and the Senate, 15 March 1624, in *ibid.*, pp. 240-248

The fall of Breda in June made Mansfeld's presence in the Netherlands unwanted. The Dutch had only wanted Mansfeld to assist them break the siege of Breda, and after the city's garrison had been fully retrieved according to the terms of surrender, there was no further need for Mansfeld's private manpower. The sooner Mansfeld and his mercenary riff raff left the Netherlands, the Dutch thought, the better.

While the siege of Breda was still going on in the Netherlands, other events were unfolding elsewhere in north-western Europe. In May 1625 the Estates of the Lower Saxon Circle held a meeting at Brunswick, where it was decided that the Estates should form a common *Defensionswerk* to protect the inviolability of the Circle. For this purpose the Estates suggested that their erstwhile leader Christian IV should make a 'conjunction' with Mansfeld and his troops.¹⁰⁶ This decision marked a clear departure from an earlier policy, when the Lüneburg *Kreistag*, assembling in March, had proclaimed its military preparations were directed "against the Mansfelder and other enemies."¹⁰⁷ At that point Mansfeld was clearly regarded as a hostile third party, who served his own designs and was therefore liable to be treated as a mere brigand. Mansfeld's previous outrages in the neighbouring Westphalian bishoprics no doubt affected his poor image in the eyes of the Lower Saxon Estates and Christian IV. A very illuminating example of King Christian's attitude towards Mansfeld comes from 1624, when Christian IV was visiting the palace of the Duke of Holstein-Gottorp. In one of the palace galleries Christian IV observed a painting depicting a gruesome scene from Livy's *Histories*, in which a man was being drawn and quartered. Smiling, the King commented: "Det ville ret være Mansfelderens løn."¹⁰⁸ Mansfeld too was reluctant to enter the service of the authoritarian Danish King, and attempted to secure employment from Lubeck first. Only when his plans for military service under Hanseatic colours fell through, did Mansfeld enter into negotiations with the Lower Saxons.¹⁰⁹

In October 1625 Mansfeld was officially transferred from Dutch service to that of the Lower Saxon Circle. The Dutch were only too happy to expedite his transfer, but Mansfeld himself did not view the prospect of serving Christian IV with much

¹⁰⁶ Merian, *Theatrum*, I, p. 854

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 849

¹⁰⁸ "That would be Mansfeld's just reward." Diary entry by Jacob Fabricius, 17 March 1624, in A. Andersen, ed., *Jacob Fabricius den Yngres optegnelser 1617-1644* (Tønder: Historisk Samfund for Sønderjylland, 1964), p. 139

¹⁰⁹ Ludwig Häusser, *Geschichte der rheinischen Pfalz nach ihren politischen, kirchlichen und literarischen Verhältnissen: Zweiter Band* (Heidelberg: J. G. B. Mohr, 1845), p. 460

enthusiasm.¹¹⁰ It is quite possible that Mansfeld was already aware of the Danish King's feelings towards him and other representatives of his trade. What Mansfeld did most certainly know about Christian IV was that the Danish King was a strict disciplinarian who punished severely those that failed him. Therefore Mansfeld kept his distance from Christian IV and the Lower Saxon Estates, and instead operated under his own command. In the spring of 1626 Christian IV was finally forced to recognise the *de facto* separation between Mansfeld and his confederates and grant Mansfeld an independent command of a Danish-German corps.¹¹¹ Mansfeld's independent command was evident even to his enemies, and in Vienna and Munich the Lower-Saxon *Defensionswerk* was understood to have three separate figureheads: Christian IV, Mansfeld, and Brunswick.¹¹² On the battlefield Mansfeld's independence manifested itself in his failure to co-ordinate military actions with Christian IV, and in his design to carry the war into the Habsburg *Erbländer*, which decision Mansfeld made on his own, without any prior consultation with the Danish King.¹¹³

3.6 The Emperor and the Rules of War

The necessity to follow generally accepted rules of war created an asymmetry between the Imperial war effort and Mansfeld. Already during the Bohemian Rebellion Ferdinand II took great pains to avoid the kind of excesses and collateral damage that went hand in hand with seventeenth-century warfare. Ferdinand II was particularly concerned over the inviolability of the Bohemian Jews and Catholics, who formed a small but prosperous loyalist minority inside the rebellious *Erbländer*. The elders of the Jewish congregation in Vienna had appealed to Ferdinand II on 5 May 1620, and asked him to see to it that the lives and possessions of their Bohemian brethren would be protected from Imperialist and Bavarian violence. The Emperor forwarded the Jewish concerns to Duke Maximilian, and asked him to make sure the Jews and Catholics of Prague would be protected from the marauding Catholic League soldiers. Duke

¹¹⁰ Paul Douglas Lockhart, *Denmark in the Thirty Years' War, 1618-1648: King Christian IV and the Decline of the Oldenburg State* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 1996), pp. 129, 136

¹¹¹ Christian Gottlieb Buder, *Geschichte des Dreyßigjährigen Krieges und des Westphälischen Friedens* (Frankfurt am Main-Leipzig: ?, 1750), p. 37

¹¹² Dr. Leuker to Duke Maximilian, 4 January 1626, in Walter Goetz, ed., *Briefe und Akten zur Geschichte des Dreissigjährigen Krieges, neue Folge: Die Politik Maximilians I. von Baiern und Seine Verbündeten 1628-165. Zweiter Teil, dritter Band 1626, 1627* (Leipzig: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1942), p. 5

¹¹³ Lockhart, *Thirty Years' War*, p. 145

Maximilian, who had a very cynical view of his own ability to control the lusts of his mercenaries, only promised to safeguard loyalist lives and possessions “to the extent it is at all possible in these unruly times.”¹¹⁴

Duke Maximilian’s reservations were perfectly justified, because the Imperialist and Catholic League mercenaries indulged in every excess imaginable once they were unleashed on the rebellious Patrimonial Lands. The Emperor’s Polish auxiliaries were particularly notorious. In a written complaint addressed to Ferdinand II in 1620, the Estates of Upper Austria charged the Polish ‘Cossacks’ “with maliciously reducing villages and cities to ashes, plundering poor and rich, violating boys and girls, and practicing inhuman cruelties.”¹¹⁵ Lower Austria suffered in similar ways at the hands of the Poles, who, “sparing neither Protestants nor Papists, procured so great enuy to themselues amongst all, in so much that they were partly slaine by their owne fellowe souldiers; namely, the *Wallons*, for committing of sacrilege, and partly were sent prisoners to *Creames* [Kremsier].”¹¹⁶ On their way towards Prague, Buquoy’s armies too committed a series of outrages, the most notorious of them being the storming of Písek, which suffered from a terrible wasting and plundering at the Imperialists’ hands.¹¹⁷

None of these excesses were approved by the Emperor or the Catholic League commanders. In fact, when Duke Maximilian learned of the atrocities in Upper Austria, he ordered the guilty offenders to be sought out and punished in the most exemplary manner possible – some even by crucifixion.¹¹⁸ After the theatre of operations moved to the Upper Palatinate in 1621, Duke Maximilian exhorted Tilly to impose his authority on Catholic League troops in a more forceful manner, his conduct having so far being “too subdued and benevolent” to Duke Maximilian’s taste.¹¹⁹ The reason behind Maximilian’s desire for stricter discipline was the delicate political situation in the Upper Palatinate, where the Bavarian Duke did not wish to needlessly alienate the local Estates “through improper behaviour.”¹²⁰ The only official concession Duke Maximilian made to ‘unlawful’ warfare during the Bohemian Rebellion was the pillage of Prague,

¹¹⁴ Duke Maximilian to Ferdinand II, 18 October 1620, in Georg Franz, ed., *Briefe und Akten zur Geschichte des Dreissigjährigen Krieges, neue Folge: Die Politik Maximilians I. von Baiern und Seine Verbündeten 1628-1651. Erster Teil, erster Band Januar 1618-Dezember 1620* (Munich-Vienna: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1966), p. 439

¹¹⁵ Gindely, *Thirty Years’ War*, I, p. 217

¹¹⁶ *The Last Newes from Bohemia, with all the adioyning Prouinces that be now up in Armes* (London: J. Bill, 1620) p. 32

¹¹⁷ Gindely, *Thirty Years’ War*, I, p. 238

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 232

¹¹⁹ Duke Maximilian to Tilly, 17 April 1621, in *BANF I:2*, p. 186

¹²⁰ Duke Maximilian to Tilly, 15 September 1621, in *ibid.*, p. 356

which Maximilian allowed to his mercenaries for a period of one day only, and on the theoretical condition that Catholic and Jewish houses would be spared from robbery. However, as “the soldiers could not conduct a political catechism on every doorstep in Prague,”¹²¹ loyalist houses too suffered from the molestations of the League’s foreign mercenaries.

It would of course have been counterproductive for the Emperor to purposefully employ ‘destabilization’ tactics in his own Patrimonial Lands, whose tax revenues his finances relied on. The atrocities and excesses of every sort committed in the Patrimonial Lands by the various passing armies did in fact leave behind a *terra deserta* of ruined cottages and depopulated towns, and seriously hampered the Emperor’s ability to maintain his own armies, therefore making him even more reliant on outside help and less able to pursue truly independent policies in Germany. The kind of licence Imperialist and Catholic League troops had enjoyed in Bohemia and Austria could not be tolerated in Empire proper.

Ferdinand II had to exercise strict prudence in Germany. During the period under our investigation (1618-1626), most of the German Estates were either allied with the Emperor or stayed neutral. By acting too rashly in Germany the Emperor therefore risked alienating existing friends and potential allies. The Emperor’s tact towards German princedoms manifested itself in various ways. Firstly, political discretion had to be exercised towards the non-hostile Protestant princes. The Emperor’s first major concession to the Protestant princes took place at the electoral meeting at Mühlhausen on 20 March 1620, when Ferdinand II and the Catholic Electors promised that there would be no attempt to forcefully restore the secularised ecclesiastical territories in the Upper and Lower Saxon Circles - at least not without first consulting the local Protestant Estates in a legal hearing. The Saxon and Brandenburg Electors were the two most powerful princes in Germany, and the Emperor took great care to honour the inviolability of their princely territories. Therefore, when Mansfeld, blatantly disregarding any concern over Brandenburg’s political neutrality and territorial sovereignty, retreated into Altmark after the defeat at Dessau to regroup his forces, the pursuing Imperialists were prevented from following their enemy into Brandenburg

¹²¹ Wedgwood, *Thirty Years’ War*, p. 128

territory, lest the vacillating Duke Georg Wilhelm be inadvertently pushed into the rebel camp.

Secondly, Imperial and Bavarian military resources had to be diverted to help the Emperor's distressed German allies. Among them the Catholic bishoprics of the Westphalian Circle were particularly vulnerable to Mansfeld's and Brunswick's predatory raids from Lower Saxony and East Frisia, and an independent Catholic League corps of 12,000 men under Count Anholt had to be permanently maintained in that remote corner of the Empire from 1621 onwards.¹²² The militarily weak Electorate of Mainz was another Achilles' heel in the Imperial war effort. While the Prince-Bishop of Cologne could rely on the assistance of Anholt's Westphalian corps, and the Elector of Trier basked under the warm friendship of France, the responsibility for defending the ecclesiastical Electorate of Mainz fell to the Emperor, who in his turn was forced to call in help from Spain and Bavaria.

Then there were also individual German princes, who from time to time had to be saved from Mansfeld and his confederates. One such individual was Landgrave Ludwig V of Hesse-Darmstadt, whose principality Mansfeld invaded in the summer of 1622, thus forcing Tilly and Anholt to divert their armies and come to the embattled Landgrave's aid.¹²³ At the same time Christian of Brunswick suddenly emerged from Westphalia to threaten Mainz. This new threat forced both Anholt and Tilly to change their direction and head towards Mainz, in order to prevent Brunswick's and Mansfeld's anticipated conjunction. Luckily for Tilly and Anholt, this change of plans allowed them to meet Brunswick together at Höchst, and score yet another major victory over the Protestant paladins. Ludwig V, on the other hand, was not favoured by the sudden turn of events, as his principality succumbed to Mansfeld's pillaging troops, and the Landgrave himself had to endure the ignominy of becoming Mansfeld's personal prisoner.¹²⁴

Thirdly, unlike the freebooter Mansfeld, the Emperor and his subordinates were responsible for upholding law and order within their dominions. Therefore the Emperor had to take seriously any demands from the Imperial Estates for vigilant law enforcement. Among the German Estates the Imperial Free Cities were more directly affected by the breakdown of law and order than any others. For instance, in 1622 the

¹²² Wilson, *Europe's Tragedy*, p. 332

¹²³ *A continuation of more newes from the Palatinate, 13. of Iune 1622* (London: Nathaniel Butter, 1622), pp. 4-7

¹²⁴ Merian, *Theatrum*, I, pp. 629-631

magistrates of Frankfurt am Main asked Duke Maximilian and Tilly “to keepe the ways cleere, of all Robbers and Theeues; That the Merchants might haue free accesse to come and trade there, it being not only beneficiall and necessary for the Germane nation and the Empire, but likewise for the Elector and diuers States of this Empire.”¹²⁵ Whether Duke Maximilian ever reacted to this particular petition remains unclear.

One last reason for the Emperor’s discretion in Germany was tax revenue, in particular the military taxes granted to the Emperor by the *Reichstag* and the Circle assemblies. However, as the methods of war finance were perhaps the single most decisive source of asymmetry between Mansfeld and the Viennese court, their investigation deserves to become the topic of another chapter.

In the Palatinate, Baden-Durlach, and the Lower Saxon principalities it was the Emperor who was free to act without restraint. Baden-Durlach was spared the miseries of war by Margrave Georg Friedrich’s timely abdication after his defeat at Wimpfen, but the Palatine cities were less fortunate. The fate of Gemersheim shall suffice as a woeful example. That city was besieged by the Archduke Leopold, who first had the city indiscriminately battered by eight large siege cannons, after which Gemersheim was taken by storm and thoroughly pillaged by the Archduke’s Croatian troops.¹²⁶ The same spectacle was more or less repeated in all the other Palatine cities, Heidelberg, Frankendale, and Mannheim.

Schwarzwald, whose inhabitants had resorted to popular uprising and guerrilla warfare, fared worst in the hands of the Imperialists. Angered by the contributions and levies imposed on them by the occupying Catholic League troops, the Schwarzwalders rose up in rebellion in 1625, and conducted a long and bloody guerrilla campaign against Tilly. Rebellion and dissent were punishable acts by themselves, as the common people had neither *ius ad bellum* nor the right to resist the Imperial administration, but what made the events in Schwarzwald even more appalling to Tilly, was the cruel and vindictive nature of the local insurgency. In his letter to Duke Frederick Ulrich of Brunswick, Tilly vividly described the atrocities committed by the Schwarzwalders *Harzskytterne*, or ‘bushwhackers’:

¹²⁵ *The 14. of September. A Relation of many memorable Passages from Rome, Italy, Spaine, France, Germany, the Lovv-Covntries, the Palatinate, and other Places; With Some Famous Exploits performed at Bergen-Vpzoom since the 4. of this Moneth, Stilo Nouo* (London: Nathaniel Butter, Bartol. Downes and William Shefford, 1622), pp. 11-12

¹²⁶ *MF*: 8 (1622), p. 321

The peasants burn and skin the soldiers' wives and children, maliciously mutilate ears, noses, hands and feet with axes, yes, even the necks and heads of soldiers and distinguished officers, skin them alive, tear away their skin in strips and leave them to lay half-dead by the roadside.¹²⁷

Tilly responded to such unconventional methods with cruelties of his own, namely by hanging all the captured guerrillas and burning down local villages.

4. METHODS OF WAR FINANCE AND SUPPLY

4.1 The Habsburgs and Their Sources of War Finance

The one crucial source of asymmetry between the Habsburgs and freebooters like Mansfeld was the way in which they raised and financed their respective armies. The Habsburgs, on one hand, represented law and state authority, while Mansfeld, on the other, was a private military entrepreneur and a social outcast, who only embodied banditry and disorder. The two differing positions offered their beholders both significant advantages and serious defects. In order to make comparative studies between the two positions, we must now turn our attention to the economic conditions and political structures under which the two belligerents operated in the 1620s.

The *Erbländer* of Emperor Ferdinand II consisted of his own family holdings in Styria, Carniola, Tyrol, and Carinthia. These were the fiefdoms which Ferdinand II had inherited from his father the Archduke Charles of Styria, the second son of Emperor Ferdinand I. Added to these were the lands which fell into Ferdinand's possession after the death of Emperor Matthias: Upper and Lower Austria and the Bohemian Kingdom. The latter realm was itself a composite state of four separate territories: Bohemia proper, Silesia, Moravia, and Lusatia. The Habsburg Emperors also held the Crown of St Stephen, which had brought into their possession the northernmost part of Hungary, while the rest of that once mighty realm had fallen into the hands of the Ottoman Turks.

The power of the Habsburgs in their *Erbländer* had traditionally been limited. The limits had been imposed by the local Estates, which were particularly powerful in the

¹²⁷ Tilly to Duke Frederick Ulrich of Brunswick, 22 September 1625, in Ole Stender-Petersen, 'Harzskyterne – Et glemt kapitel i Christian 4.s nedersachsiske krig,' *HJS, XIII, 3-4 (1979-1981)*, pp. 50-51

Bohemian Kingdom and Royal Hungary. Aside from the religious privileges, which lay at the root of the conflict between the Habsburgs and their Protestant subjects, the local Estates had also enjoyed the right to vote on all taxation. Outside the *Erbländer*, the Habsburg Emperors were obliged to summon the *Reichstag* to vote on military subsidies. The grants voted by the Imperial Estates could be substantial, but by gathering the German princes together the Emperors would also risk invoking all sorts of constitutional and confessional controversies.

The overwhelming majority of taxation was spent on defending the Empire against the Turks. This *Türkenhilfe* was not used only to pay the soldiers, but also to maintain fortresses and river flotillas along the Austro-Turkish Military Border.¹²⁸ Therefore it was preferable for the Habsburgs to make the local Austrian and Hungarian Estates pay for the upkeep of their own border defences along the Military Border. By 1618 the Military Border in Hungary was manned and supported by the local nobility alone, save for the few Austrian garrisons, which were at least partly paid by Vienna, but which had otherwise fallen under the military jurisdiction of the local aristocracy.¹²⁹ This state of affairs had satisfied Emperors Rudolf II and Matthias, who had no desire to subject themselves to the complaints and bickering of the tumultuous German princes for the sake of *Türkenhilfe* alone.

A rudimentary bureaucracy had been put in place by the Habsburgs to collect and distribute those monies that had been granted by the Patrimonial and Imperial Estates. The highest military authority in Austria was the *Hofkriegsrat*, which directed military operations from the Viennese Court. The revenues used for warfare were circulated through the coffers of the Court Chamber.¹³⁰ However, the size of this fiscal-military bureaucracy remained modest: Rudolf II only managed to maintain permanently three regiments, which were used to garrison key fortresses, and the Court Chamber too remained incapable of supporting a larger force in the *Erbländer*.¹³¹

¹²⁸ Gábor Ágoston, 'Empires and warfare in east-central Europe, 1550-1750: the Ottoman-Habsburg rivalry and military transformation,' in Frank Tallett and D. J. B. Trim, eds., *European Warfare 1350-1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 111

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 122-123

¹³⁰ V-L. Tapié, 'The Habsburg Lands 1618-57,' in J. P. Cooper, ed., *The New Cambridge Modern History IV: The Decline of Spain and the Thirty Years War 1609-1648/59* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 507

¹³¹ John A. Mears, 'The Thirty Years' War, the "General Crisis," and the Origins of a Standing Professional Army in the Habsburg Monarchy,' in *Central European History*, Vol. 21, Issue 2 (June 1988), pp. 124-125

4.2 The Crisis of the Habsburg War Finance

The system presented above proved wholly inadequate to the needs of the Habsburgs in the face of the Bohemian Rebellion in 1618. The Hungarians, who proceeded to elect Bethlen Gabor as their new sovereign in 1619, had joined the rebellious Estates in Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia. The Estates in Upper Austria openly collaborated with the rebels, while the other Austrian Estates hovered between thinly disguised hostility and haughty neutrality. Only the Tyrolean and Styrian Estates backed their native sovereign, but the poverty of these under-populated and barren Alpine provinces meant that their support could not be realized into effective military resources.

From military point of view the Bohemian Rebellion was not a religious or ideological struggle, but a conflict between the ruler and the elites. When the elites, whose responsibility and privilege the recruitment and management of military forces had been, withheld their support from the Emperor and in fact turned their military assets against him, the Emperor was forced to seek military assistance elsewhere.¹³² One contributor to the Austrian military effort during the Bohemian Rebellion was Spain, which paid subsidies and organized loans to help the fellow Habsburgs in Vienna. The Duke of Lerma, the acting first minister until 1621, was originally reluctant to subsidize the Emperor, because Lerma and his fellow ‘doves’ feared that by helping Ferdinand II they might unnecessarily prolong the war. Lerma was however overruled by the militant court party led by Balthasar de Zúñiga, the Spanish envoy at Prague, and in July 1619 Madrid paid Vienna 3.4 million thalers in war subsidies.¹³³ The Spanish help was not limited to money only, and in May 1619 7,000 Spanish soldiers arrived from Flanders to help the embattled Emperor; by March 1621 the Spanish had committed 40,000 troops to the Austrian Habsburgs’ aid.¹³⁴

The most instrumental support arrived from Munich. Duke Maximilian had placed the entire Catholic League at the Emperor’s disposal, but not out of sheer charity or undemanding Catholic solidarity. Bavaria was a rich Duchy, and Maximilian a rich prince; this meant that the running costs of the Catholic League army could be met by Bavaria and the three Catholic Electors, while the Emperor was left to foot the final bill. The arrangement between Duke Maximilian and Ferdinand II was based on pledges, not

¹³² Ibid., p. 130

¹³³ Parker, *Thirty Years’ War*, pp. 44-45

¹³⁴ Ibid., p. 45

cash. The Emperor was to concede to Bavaria all the conquest the Catholic League had made against the Palatinate, in addition to which the Emperor was forced to transfer Upper Austria to Duke Maximilian as a pledge against all outstanding arrears. Duke Maximilian, who was fully aware of the Emperor's financial difficulties, expected to be rewarded with Frederick's electoral title as well, in the likely event that the Emperor would be forced to default on his debts.

As the war escalated and new enemies entered the fray, even Bavarian finances began to wear thin. Therefore, from roughly 1621 onwards, the Emperor began to rely more and more on Imperial Contributions as sources of military revenue. These official *Kontributionen* should not be confused with the forced ransoms levied by the likes of Mansfeld, Brunswick, and other professional pillagers. The economic historian Fritz Redlich went to great pains in order to highlight the differences between the official *Kontributionen* of the former kind and the extortionist 'contributions' of the latter. The former source of revenue, much preferred by the Imperialists during the period under our investigation, originated from a regular tax raised by, and with the consent of, the Estates of the realm.¹³⁵ It was, in effect, a revised form of *Türkenhilfe*. The Emperor's correspondence refers to many instances of such voluntary *Kontributionen* being levied from the German bishops in the early 1620s.¹³⁶

The Emperor, however, became more and more inclined to simply demand *Kontributionen* rather than to plead for them. Thus in September 1621 we read him bluntly ordering the Swabian and Franconian cities to deliver him fifty months worth of *Reichskontributionen* in a single instalment of 320,000 florins.¹³⁷ The *Reichskontributionen* were not yet exacted at the sword's edge, but the Emperor was clearly getting impatient with the Estates and their time-consuming consensual procedures. That very same year the Emperor extended the monthly *Kontributionen* to the three Estates of the subjugated Upper Austria;¹³⁸ due process there was, we might imagine, greatly facilitated by the fact that the Austrian Estates were by then composed entirely of the Emperor's loyal servants. A more forceful contribution was imposed by Marquis Spinola on the occupied Lower Palatinate. As that principedom had effectively

¹³⁵ F. Redlich, 'Contributions in the Thirty Years' War,' in *The Economic History Review*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (1959), p. 247

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 247

¹³⁷ Ferdinand II to the Archbishop of Mainz and Landgrave Ludwig V of Hesse-Darmstadt, 1 September 1621, in *BANF: 1:2*, p. 339

¹³⁸ Franz Christoph Khevenhüller, *Annales Ferdinandeae: Neunter Theil* (Leipzig: M. G. Weidmann, 1724), pp. 1286-1287

become one large Spanish garrison, Spinola felt justified in ordering the subjugated Palatines to contribute to the Spanish military expenses. Spinola saw no need to seek the consent of the local Estates, and the contributions were imposed under the pretext of martial law. Because Spinola bypassed the local Estates and their subordinate magistrates in the matter, he was forced to set up his own agencies to collect the dues and distribute the receipts.¹³⁹ Therefore, already in the 1620s, we can see the Habsburgs gradually moving away from the old system of collecting contributions by general consent, and towards the less negotiable settlements imposed by rapacious military entrepreneurs such as Mansfeld or Brunswick.

4.3 Mansfeld and His Methods of War Finance in Bohemia

Mansfeld's methods of supplying his troops differed very much from those of the Habsburgs. The roots of Mansfeld's supply mechanism were in the institutionalised robbery of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century German *Landsknechter*. These mercenary knights had levied forced imposts known as *Brandschatzen*. The *Brandschatzung* was effectively a ransom in money or kind, levied against a promise not to loot and burn enemy property.¹⁴⁰ Akin to *Brandschatzung* was another form of payment, the *Ritterzehrung*, which was originally a form of alms given to poor knight-errants.¹⁴¹ Over the course of sixteenth century, the *Ritterzehrung* too had developed into a form of mild extortion, as it was often being demanded from friendly towns by armies on the march. In principle the *Ritterzehrung* remained a voluntary payment, but in practice it was being paid to avoid damages – much like the *Brandschatzung*.¹⁴²

Mansfeld did not start his military career in the Bohemian service as an extortionist and a plunderer. After he had conquered Pilsen, the town was placed under the authority of magistrates loyal to the Bohemian Directory, and later, under the pretender Frederick V. Mansfeld's role was initially limited to that of a commander of the town's garrison. As the Bohemian military situation deteriorated in 1619, Mansfeld sent request after request to Prague, asking the land officers to use their authority and command the townspeople of Pilsen and the surrounding country peasants to form work gangs to

¹³⁹ Redlich, *EHR 12* (1959), pp. 250-251

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 247

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 248

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 248

repair the town's defences.¹⁴³ What is interesting in Mansfeld's letters to the Prague government is the fact that they were sent from Pilsen itself; Mansfeld clearly felt that he lacked the necessary authority to command the local population to do his bidding, and felt obliged to respect the official chains of command. When the officials in Prague failed to induce the Pilseners to commit themselves full-heartedly in common military effort, the tone of Mansfeld's letters began to change. According to the *Appollogie of Mansfield*,

hee propounded a course which is much practised, and common in other Nations, and easily to be put in vse among them, which was a Contribution to be raised vpon the Countrey Pesants, offering to make an account of that which he should gather, and to deduct it out of his, and his Souldiers pay.¹⁴⁴

Mansfeld effectively suggested that the rebel government should skip due process, and simply take the required contributions by force, without consulting the local Estates at all. When the war was won and over, the local population would be compensated for their sacrifices. The Bohemian rebels, who had taken up arms against the Habsburgs in order to defend the rights of the local Estates to decide on matters of religion and finance, naturally turned down such an unscrupulous scheme, with turned stomachs and shocked faces one might imagine.

The land officers, however, were in Prague, and Mansfeld, together with his increasingly discontent mercenaries, was *in situ* in Pilsen. It should come to us as no surprise then, that while the appalled officials in Prague were reading Mansfeld's callous words, the mercenaries in Pilsen were already helping themselves with money and victuals from the hapless local population. For the remainder of the Bohemian war, Pilsen was a hostage to Mansfeld and his soldiers. Squatting in Pilsen naturally failed to satisfy Mansfeld's ambitions, and he became anxious to find some notable action that would "make enuie itselfe blush for shame."¹⁴⁵ In June 1619 he set out on campaign to reduce the remaining Imperialist strongholds in Bohemia, namely Krummau, Budweiss, and the Castle Thein. The results were disappointing, thanks to the pitiful condition of Mansfeld's army, which still lacked the necessary monies and victuals to carry out long and burdensome siege operations. Mansfeld was forced to borrow money at his own

¹⁴³ *Appollogie of Mansfield*, p. 22

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 23

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 31

account to pay for his troops' expenses, because the treasury in Prague still claimed it did not have the necessary means to provide for Mansfeld's army. Disgusted at the treasury's vacillation, Mansfeld himself travelled to Prague "to finde the means, to minister some comfort vnto his Armie."¹⁴⁶

While Mansfeld was in Prague, the rebel Estates in Upper Austria discharged a regiment of soldiers formerly employed by Mansfeld. The discontented and seditious soldiers made their way to Prague to demand their arrears from Mansfeld himself. At first Mansfeld made some attempts to satisfy the soldiers' avarice, by reimbursing them with two or three months' worth of pay. After a few days, however, Mansfeld was at his wit's end, on account of the Austrian Estates having failed to send him any money to pay for the soldiers. Mutinous soldiers were not satisfied with Mansfeld's excuses, and the unhappy situation escalated to the point where fifty drunken mercenaries assaulted Mansfeld's personal quarters and threatened to keep him there as their hostage until the arrears were settled. Alarmed by the sudden commotion, Mansfeld's officers rushed to their master's help: swords were drawn, shots fired, blood spilled, and lives taken. Finally the Winter King sent his personal guard to aid Mansfeld, and even the Prague burghers promised their protection to him.¹⁴⁷ Sedition was quelled by the authorities' public support of Mansfeld, but the morale of the army had already been damaged beyond repair. Mansfeld realized that no amount of disciplinary action or court-martialing would keep the mercenaries from rising against a military entrepreneur who failed to deliver money and loot to his work force; only prey would satisfy the dogs of war.

Disagreement over arrears finally induced Mansfeld to part ways with the Winter King and to establish himself as an independent military entrepreneur at Pilsen. Already in the early winter of 1621, right after the disaster at the White Mountain, Mansfeld was conducting small-scale cavalry forays north of Pilsen, collecting forced contributions from the frightened population and ransacking wealthy abbeys.¹⁴⁸ The abbey of Töpl fared the worst: a once mighty convent with an opulent sacristy and a voluminous library was sacked by the Mansfelders, after which the convent's walls were torn down.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 32

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 33-35

¹⁴⁸ Villermont, *Mansfeldt, I*, p. 278

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 279

4.4 Contributions and Pillage

From 1621 onwards Mansfeld's supply mechanism consisted of a variation of *Brandschatzung*, *Ritterzehrung*, and outright pillage. Nominally friendly or neutral communities were usually subjected to the *Ritterzehrung*. The communities were therefore expected to deliver contributions voluntarily, even though the threat of violence seems to have been implicated in Mansfeld's requests. Examples of *Ritterzehrung* can be found from the Württemberg territory in 1621, when the cities of Wimpfen and Heilbronn paid Mansfeld *gutwillige Ritterzehrung* worth of 12,000 and 20,000 florins respectively.¹⁵⁰ Nuremberg, however, seems to have paid bribes to Mansfeld personally, in order to ensure that the General would check the licentiousness of his troops in the city's proximity.¹⁵¹ Because German cities typically consisted of a religiously mixed population, Mansfeld generally demanded more tribute from Catholics and Jews than from the Protestant inhabitants. While wasting the Landgraviate of Hesse-Darmstadt in June 1622, Mansfeld demanded 150,000 thalers from the Jewish residents of Frankfurt am Main, an Imperial City that pursued a strictly neutral policy. In order to avoid any unpleasanties, the Jews of Frankfurt agreed to pay Mansfeld 12,000 thalers.¹⁵² Mansfeld could also take stern measures to induce urban dwellers to comply with his demands. Hence the Strasbourg diarist Johann Walter observed in 1621: "The Mansfelder soldiers have demanded 120,000 ducats from Hagenau. As a security they have taken several rich Burghers and Jews as hostages."¹⁵³

While invoking his right for *Ritterzehrung*, Mansfeld made little effort to safeguard the sensitivities of neutral parties or alleged allies. As an imperial outlaw and a non-state operator, it was implied in Mansfeld's very existence that laws did not bind him, and that he could consequently resort to brute force in order to get his own way. Mansfeld certainly did not care much about his reputation in the eyes of international financiers either, because credit was not a major source of revenue for him. Creditors typically supported Mansfeld's foreign employers, and not himself directly. One such creditor was the Italian Protestant Philip Burlamachi, who loaned money to James I,

¹⁵⁰ Redlich, *EHR 12* (1959), p. 248

¹⁵¹ Redlich, *German Military Enterpriser*, I, p. 337

¹⁵² *A letter sent from Maynhem concerning the late defeate giuen the Duke of Brunswicke by Monsieur Tilley* (London: Nathaniel Butter, 1622), p. 6

¹⁵³ Peter Milger, *Der Dreissigjährige Krieg Gegen Land und Leute* (Niedernhausen: Orbis Verlag, 2001), p. 144

who in his turn forwarded them to Mansfeld as military subsidies.¹⁵⁴ The only occasion when Mansfeld did receive direct credit was in 1621, when Strasbourg merchants advanced him money on the monthly subsidies paid by the Dutch States General.¹⁵⁵ Otherwise Mansfeld made no difference between contributions and credit. In the winter of 1621-1622 Mansfeld loaned 30,000 thalers from the burghers of Hagenau, and an additional sum from the town's Jewish residents. None of these loans were ever paid back, which effectively made them forced contributions.¹⁵⁶

Examples of extortion and pillage carried out by the Mansfelders are a legion, and there really is neither need nor available space to catalogue them in full. Two specific aspects of Mansfeld's conduct do however deserve to be singled out. Firstly, Mansfeld had no qualms about turning neutral or potentially neutral territories into war zones. East Frisia is perhaps the best example of Mansfeld's callousness. That territory was within the Dutch sphere of influence, and the alignment of its population towards the war in Germany was as yet undecided when Mansfeld entered the County. Soon Mansfeld's excesses drove the largely Protestant Frisians into open rebellion against Mansfeld and his Dutch paymasters. Another similar example is provided by Mansfeld's campaign into the *Erbländer* in 1626. Bohemia, Silesia, and Moravia were potential breeding-grounds for anti-Habsburg sentiments. However, instead of fanning the flames of dissent among the Emperor's Bohemian subjects, Mansfeld went out of his way to alienate them further from the Palatine cause by his wanton pillage and murder.

The second characteristic feature in Mansfeld's pillage was its anti-clerical nature. The unfortunate monastery of Töpl was only one of many abbeys to be ransacked by Mansfeld's troops. Whereas attacks against Catholic churches by Mansfeld's cohort Christian of Brunswick may have been expressions of the Mad Halberstadter's personal animosities, Mansfeld's own raids into ecclesiastical territory were more likely motivated by loot rather than religious sentiments. Catholic churches, monasteries, and abbeys were well-stocked with money, art, books, and silverware, in part due to the visually elaborate nature of the traditional sacraments and processions, in part as a result of the new baroque fashion, which called for opulence and artistic overkill in Catholic churches and ceremonies. Because the Catholic Church was also a major landowner in

¹⁵⁴ Redlich, *German Military Enterpriser*, I, p. 250

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 246

¹⁵⁶ Redlich, *EHR* 12 (1959), p. 249

the Rhinelandish *Pfaffengasse*, abbeys and monasteries operated partly as logistical centres, where the tithe-paying commoners, often forced to pay their dues in kind rather than cash, delivered grain and livestock. Lastly, because monasteries in particular engaged in viticulture, the wine cellars of abbeys and convents were usually filled with precious vintage. Indeed, in the summer of 1622 Mansfeld collected 5,000 bushels of corn and 500 cartloads of wine from the clerics of Speyer alone.¹⁵⁷ Mansfeld himself, however, was not interested in collecting contributions in kind. Thus, according to an English pamphlet from 1622, “he giveth the ordinarie spoyle to his souldiers, and hee taketh most of the coyne to himselfe.”¹⁵⁸ The reason for such conduct was that prospective recruits could not be lured into the army’s ranks with any commodity other than cash.

Unchecked licentiousness created a major asymmetry between Mansfeld and the Emperor. The latter had to think twice before demanding billeting and contributions from the German Estates, lest he drive neutral Protestants into the arms of the rebels or alienate friendly Catholics from a common war effort. The Imperialists had admittedly engaged in looting, murder, and other excessive behaviour during the Bohemian Rebellion, but after the war spread into Germany, the Emperor and his allies had to tread carefully in order to honour constitutional traditions, the Imperial *Wahlkapitulationen*, and the precious ‘German Liberties’. Mansfeld had no such constitutional or political scruples, and could therefore squeeze contributions from anyone unfortunate enough to find himself in his path.

Mansfeld’s unlimited warfare against religious institutions was one particularly striking source of asymmetry between the combatants. The Emperor had to appear as the guarantor of the Religious Peace of 1555; consequently he could not act against the Lutherans without attacking the very foundations of social order in the Empire. He could, and indeed did, oppress the Calvinists, who were excluded from the Peace of Augsburg, but robbing their churches brought no rich dividends. Whereas Mansfeld’s favourite prey, the Catholic abbeys and monasteries, were filled ceiling-high with treasures of all sorts, the austere Calvinist temples contained nothing but the most rudimentary (and often unbearably uncomfortable) furniture.

¹⁵⁷ Merian, *Theatrum*, I, p. 621

¹⁵⁸ *The 27. of August. Mansfelds arrivall in the Dykedome of Brabant, and is alreadie come on this side Bruxelles, Burning, Spoyling, and Ransoming the Countrey* (London: Nicholas Bourne and Thomas Archer, 1622), p. 13

4.5 Mansfeld as a Military Entrepreneur

Perhaps the most significant asymmetry between the Emperor and Mansfeld was the fact that the former was a *warlord* and the latter a *military entrepreneur*. The warlord was a purely political leader, who had no direct access to military means. In order to wage war, the warlord had to rely on the military entrepreneur, who raised the necessary forces and led them to battle. Nowhere does the difference between the two appear more conspicuous than in the act of recruitment. No seventeenth-century German warlord had either the ability or the means to raise forces by himself. The foremost reason for this was that, unlike the military entrepreneurs, the German princes had no access to credit. This sad state of affairs was well illuminated by the Saxon Duke's unsuccessful attempts in 1619 and 1620 to raise funds in Leipzig.¹⁵⁹ The same difficulties were faced by the Emperor, whose finances rested on the willingness of the Estates to support him. Added to the lack of credit was the warlords' inexperience in recruiting soldiers. In the Habsburg *Erbländer* the recruitment and maintenance of armed forces had traditionally been the responsibility of the local Estates, and the Emperors had not been expected to bother themselves with such mundane matters.

What enabled the military entrepreneur to rise to a dominant position was the nature of warfare in the early seventeenth century, when armies were raised at the beginning of the campaign season in spring and dissolved before the winter. This state of affairs required the existence of such individuals, who could be there when the snows melted, with cash at hand and ready to be offered to potential recruits. The *Handgeld* paid at the beginning of employment was a major incentive for any would-be mercenaries, because *Handgeld* was invariably paid in that most coveted item of the age, hard cash.¹⁶⁰ The reckless, wasteful, and profligate princes, incurably impoverished and unremittingly short of cash, could not meet this demand, and therefore it was left to the military entrepreneurs to raise troops at their own expense.

Raising armies was perhaps Mansfeld's greatest attribute as a military commander. Time and again his armies evaporated or melted away: in 1620 in the aftermath of the Bohemian Rebellion, in 1623 in East Frisia, in 1625 in Lower Saxony, and in 1626 after the defeat at Dessau. Yet every time Mansfeld came back with another army, sometimes even in increased strength. At the beginning of 1621, Mansfeld's military strength was

¹⁵⁹ Redlich, *German Military Enterpriser*, I, p. 239

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 274-280

approximately 5,600 infantry and 3,600 cavalry.¹⁶¹ By the end of the summer Mansfeld's army had reached an effective strength of 18,000 men.¹⁶² In six months Mansfeld had managed to double his troop strength. At the peak of his strength in mid-1622 Mansfeld commanded some 50,000 men.¹⁶³ These numbers soon diminished, and in late 1622 Mansfeld entered East Frisia with 12,000 infantry and 7,000 cavalry.¹⁶⁴ After encumbering the land with his unwelcome presence for one full year, Mansfeld finally dissolved his entire army. However, in early 1625, Mansfeld landed on the North Sea coast with yet another army of 13,000 men. This army too wasted away thanks to poor supply, desertion, and disease, and by the time Mansfeld reached the Lower Saxon Circle in the autumn, his ragged army had been reduced to 4,000 infantry and 500-900 cavalry.¹⁶⁵ Mansfeld again built a new army on the ruins of the old. In collusion with the Danish commander Fuchs von Bimbach, Mansfeld mustered a force of 18,000 men for the renewed campaign of 1626.¹⁶⁶ When this force was annihilated by Wallenstein at Dessau, Mansfeld came back with a final army of 16,000 men, which he had managed to recruit in less than two months.¹⁶⁷ Mansfeld's last army melted away in Hungary and the Balkans. Mansfeld maintained his characteristic belief in his ability to raise new armies, and was apparently planning to raise new troops for Venetian service when death finally put a stop to his warlike endeavours.

How did Mansfeld accomplish such feats of recruitment? Once again, Mansfeld's role as a non-state operator and an asymmetrical opponent to the Habsburgs comes forth in the historical inquiry. First of all, Mansfeld appealed to a large segment of potential recruits. The Austrian and Spanish Habsburgs had many enemies, and representatives of nations, principedoms, estates, and creeds hostile to the Habsburg cause flocked under the banners of Europe's foremost opponent to Habsburg rule. By the summer of 1621 Mansfeld's army consisted of 'old' regiments of German, Savoyard, and Bohemian troops, plus 'new' Saxe-Weimarian, Brandenburger, Grison, and Anglo-Scottish regiments.¹⁶⁸ The following year in Alsace, Mansfeld increased the size of his army to 43,000 men, mainly by recruiting among French Huguenots and Swiss Protestants.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶¹ Krüssmann, *Mansfeld*, p. 266

¹⁶² *Acta Mansfeldica*, p. 87

¹⁶³ Krüssmann, *Mansfeld*, p. 392

¹⁶⁴ Utterodt, *Mansfeld*, p. 476

¹⁶⁵ Krüssmann, *Mansfeld*, p. 576

¹⁶⁶ Henri Sacchi, *La guerre de trente ans, 2: L'Empire supplicié* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1991), p. 124

¹⁶⁷ Villermont, *Mansfeldt, II*, p. 337

¹⁶⁸ Krüssmann, *Mansfeld*, p. 276

¹⁶⁹ Parker, *Thirty Years' War*, p. 58

When the Duke of Lorraine that very same year rather foolishly sacked 2,500 of his mercenaries, the vagrant soldiers soon entered Mansfeld's service.¹⁷⁰ Later in the war Mansfeld also recruited contingents of English, Dutch, and Danish troops. In the final days of his military career Mansfeld even had the audacity to assume the command of the Janissaries sent to his aid by the Pasha of Buda.¹⁷¹

The second reason why mercenaries of various nationalities and creeds flocked to Mansfeld's standard was the lure of pay and booty. Mansfeld had quickly developed a reputation as a generous paymaster, who paid higher *Handgeld* and monthly wages than any other contemporaneous military entrepreneur.¹⁷² Such generosity was, however, deceptive. Even though Mansfeld paid generous *Handgeld* to fresh recruits, his soldiers soon found themselves lagging behind in scheduled monthly wages. The end result was the accumulation of pay arrears, which deficiency plagued Mansfeld and his military enterprise to the very end. What allowed Mansfeld to alleviate the discontent caused by the non-payment of monthly wages was the prospect of loot and the distribution of contributions among his men. The attraction of booty should not be underestimated. Whereas military entrepreneurs like Mansfeld were motivated by the prospect of social ascendancy rather than loot, the common mercenaries were drawn to those commanders who could line their soldiers' pockets with silver and gold.

In this sense the Imperialists were no better than Mansfeld and his mercenary horde: the Imperial Croats allegedly flew a standard, which depicted a wolf and the inscription: "Ich dürste nach Beute."¹⁷³ The only distinguishable difference was that the Imperialists sought to regulate looting. The Imperial regulations were based on the articles of war issued by Ferdinand I in 1527, which forbade plundering without the authorization and knowledge of the commanding colonel. There was to be a time and place for plundering, usually in the aftermath of a successful siege, and no individual soldier was allowed to leave camp and forage on his own.¹⁷⁴ Mansfeld, on the other hand, placed little restrictions on his men, and he himself was the first one to admit that his troops operated without any recourse to the established norms of warfare.

¹⁷⁰ Ütterodt, *Mansfeld*, p. 406

¹⁷¹ Poyntz, *Relations*, pp. 49-50

¹⁷² Redlich, *German Military Enterpriser*, I, p. 485

¹⁷³ "I crave for booty." Fritz Redlich, *De Praeda Militari: Looting and Booty 1500-1815* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1956), p. 21

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 9

5. INDIRECT WARFARE

5.1 Indirect Warfare in Early-Modern Europe

Indirect or diversionary war is a form of asymmetrical warfare, in which war is being fought through third powers or proxies, usually in secrecy, so as to avoid risking direct involvement in the conflict. Recent examples of indirect wars include the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Soviet war in Afghanistan.

The concept of indirect war was familiar to the seventeenth-century Europeans. The incessant religious and dynastic strife of the late sixteenth century had given European nations ample opportunities for waging indirect or clandestine wars against each other. England had permitted the Sea Beggars to operate from English ports during the Dutch Rebellion, the Dutch and the English had helped to maintain the Huguenot cause in France, the Spanish in their turn had fomented rebellion in Ireland and encouraged the ultra-Catholic Guise faction to exterminate the Huguenot leadership in France, while Venice, Tuscany, and the Papal State had incited France to take up arms against Spain.¹⁷⁵

The same Machiavellian pursuit of secret wars persisted into the early seventeenth century. The Spanish in particular had excelled in this tournament of shadows, mainly by employing mercenaries, pirates, and other non-state actors against their rivals. Therefore in the early seventeenth century the Republic of Venice came under attack from Uskoks and other pirates, who drew encouragement and support from the Spanish viceroy in Naples. Indeed, the whole Italian peninsula had become one massive battlefield in an early modern 'cold war', in which France, Spain, and Venice fought each other through local proxy powers such as Savoy, Mantua, and the Grey Leagues. Similar scenarios appeared elsewhere in Europe as well. In western Europe the new French King Henry IV subsidized the Dutch, who were still fighting against the Spanish. The Ottoman Turks secretly continued their struggle against the Habsburgs even after the Peace of Zsitva Török, by encouraging the warlike ambitions of the Transylvanian Prince Bethlen Gabor. Even in the far north a strange game of thrones was being played out by Sweden and Poland-Lithuania, who both supported their own

¹⁷⁵ J. H. Elliott, *Europe Divided 1559-1598* (London: Fontana, 1968)

proxies during the Time of Troubles, when rival factions and false Tsars contested the royal power in Russia.¹⁷⁶

Mansfeld first experienced the ways of indirect war during his early days in Habsburg and Protestant Union service. The Jülich-Cleves War of Succession, in which Mansfeld had initially participated on the Habsburg side, was a classic example of indirect warfare by third powers. The original dispute had touched the Houses of Brandenburg and Neuburg, who squabbled over the right of succession to the deceased Duke of Jülich-Cleves. Rudolf II, apparently acting on the instigation of his brother Albrecht, the Spanish viceroy of Flanders who feared that the strategically important Duchy might fall into the hands of Dutch sympathizers (both the rulers of Brandenburg and Neuburg were at the time Lutherans), ordered Mansfeld's employer Leopold of Passau to move into Jülich-Cleves with troops, and to sequester the contested Duchy in the Emperor's name. The two rival Houses united in their opposition against the Emperor, and sought support from the States General and Henry IV of France, who were anxious to keep Jülich-Cleves from falling into the hands of the Spanish. Henry IV went so far as to plan a direct military intervention in Jülich-Cleves, but the King's death at the hands of an assassin prevented the crisis from escalating into a full-blown war between France and the Habsburgs. Added to the external hegemonic rivalry between France, the United Provinces, and Spain, was the internal struggle within the Empire between the Protestant Union and the Catholic League. Duke John Sigismund of Brandenburg courted the favour of the Protestant Union by converting to Calvinism, while his Neuburg rival Duke Wolfgang William approached the Catholic League, converted to Catholicism, and married the sister of Duke Maximilian. A cessation of hostilities took place in 1614 with the Treaty of Xanten, but it took another 37 years before Brandenburg and Neuburg finally settled the dispute.¹⁷⁷

5.2 Mansfeld and Savoy

Mansfeld first became an agent of diversionary warfare in 1615, when the Protestant Union transferred him to Savoyard service. The decision to send Mansfeld to Savoy was part and parcel of the Protestant Union's anti-Habsburg policy. In his letter to Duke Charles Emmanuel of Savoy, Margrave Joachim Ernest of Ansbach-Bayreuth, one of

¹⁷⁶ Geoffrey Parker, *Europe in Crisis 1598-1648* (London: Fontana, 1979)

¹⁷⁷ Parker, *Thirty Years' War*, pp. 23-33

the leaders of the Protestant Union, promised Union assistance in raising a mercenary contingent under Mansfeld's command, on the condition that the troops would be used to attack the Spanish in Milan.¹⁷⁸

After the conclusion of peace between Spain and Savoy in 1617, it was Duke Charles Emmanuel's turn to employ Mansfeld as an agent of indirect war. After the cessation of hostilities against Spain, Charles Emmanuel had no further need for a troublesome adventurer like Mansfeld, whose troops, according to the *Acta Mansfeldica*, were seriously discomfiting the Savoyard peasantry.¹⁷⁹ The Duke informed the resident Venetian ambassador Ranier Zen that Savoy could not pay Mansfeld's troops, and to keep the mercenaries in service would be a violation of the peace treaty with the Spanish. He then went on to lament that "it would be a pity" if Mansfeld's troops were to be disbanded, and offered the troops to Venice.¹⁸⁰ The Venetians, who already had trouble with their own seditious mercenaries, declined the offer. The timely outbreak of the Bohemian Rebellion proved to be the only way to rid Savoy of its military burden.

Sending Mansfeld to Bohemia was not only an opportune way to get rid of a military entrepreneur who was becoming something of a nuisance, but also an opportunity to improve the standing of the *Casa Savoia* in the hierarchy of European princedoms. Duke Charles Emmanuel was, according to a wide historical consensus, a 'chameleon-like' political opportunist with broad territorial and international ambitions.¹⁸¹ While sending Mansfeld off to Bohemia in 1618 was a mere matter of convenience to Charles Emmanuel, the decision to further subsidize Mansfeld was motivated by dynastic ambition. The Venetian diplomatic reports suggest that Charles Emmanuel was initially reluctant "to take advantage of the disturbances in Bohemia and [to] retain troops for that purpose."¹⁸² Ambition soon replaced caution, and in September 1618 we discover Charles Emmanuel secretly subsidizing Mansfeld's operations in Bohemia with 20,000 ducats.¹⁸³ Ranier Zen's reports from Turin reveal the reason behind Charles Emmanuel's change of mind: the Duke believed that the uneasy dynastic alliance between France and Spain had come to its end, and that the marriages between Louis

¹⁷⁸ Margrave Ansbach to Duke Charles Emmanuel, 22 March, 1615, in Krüssmann, *Mansfeld*, p. 105

¹⁷⁹ *Acta Mansfeldica*, p. 13

¹⁸⁰ Ranier Zen to the Doge and the Senate, 23 June, 1618, in *CSPV: 15 (1617-1619)*, pp. 236-251

¹⁸¹ Toby Osborne, *Dynasty and Diplomacy in the Court of Savoy: Political Culture and the Thirty Years' War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 27

¹⁸² Signoria to Ranier Zen, 14 July, 1618, in *CSPV: 15 (1617-1619)*, pp. 251-266

¹⁸³ Ranier Zen to the Doge and the Senate, 25 September, 1618, in *ibid.*, pp. 315-328

XIII and Anne of Austria on one hand, and Philip IV and Isabella Bourbon on the other, were about to be dissolved. Such a breach of relations could only lead to an open war between Spain and France, Charles Emmanuel believed, and went on to insist that the time had come “to smash the House of Austria.”¹⁸⁴

For Charles Emmanuel, Mansfeld’s continued presence in Bohemia was clearly a method of fighting the Habsburgs indirectly. However, it was also a way of placing the Bohemian Confederates into Savoy’s debt, and by that way allowing the House of Savoy to exploit the Bohemian succession crisis, which had occurred after the death of Emperor Matthias in March 1619. Matthias’s sudden death meant that both the Imperial and Bohemian thrones had become vacant, and in June the Prince of Piedmont admitted to the Venetian ambassador in Paris that his father Charles Emmanuel had plans for the Imperial throne.¹⁸⁵ While the Savoyard Duke was admittedly ambitious, such a design was hopelessly beyond the means of an Italian prince who had no influence in the Electoral College; the Bohemian throne, however, was much more attainable, as its acquisition rested solely on the consent of the rebellious Bohemian Estates, who were already deeply indebted to Charles Emmanuel. Baron Dohna, the Palatine envoy at The Hague, reported to his English and Venetian colleagues that the Bohemians had indeed considered the candidacy of Charles Emmanuel, but that he was deigned “too Italian” for their Protestant tastes.¹⁸⁶

When Mansfeld sent word of the election of Frederick V as the new King of Bohemia, Charles Emmanuel put on a brave face and appeared to the Venetian ambassador pleased of this news.¹⁸⁷ Later the ambassador heard rumours that the Duke felt betrayed by the English. Count Palatine’s advisor Christian of Anhalt, it seemed, had promised Charles Emmanuel either the Imperial throne or that of Bohemia; Charles Emmanuel regarded it a failure on behalf of the English that they had not managed to force King James’s son-in-law to honour the Palatinate’s commitment to the House of Savoy.¹⁸⁸

Soon after the Bohemians had thwarted his dynastic ambitions, Charles Emmanuel withdrew his support from Mansfeld. The outcome of the royal elections had been a deep personal disappointment, which had been further worsened by the untimely

¹⁸⁴ Ranier Zen to the Doge and the Senate, 30 September, 1618, in *ibid.*, pp. 315-328

¹⁸⁵ Anzolo Contarini to the Doge and the Senate, 16 June, 1619, in *ibid.*, pp. 544-566

¹⁸⁶ Christofforo Surian to the Doge and the Senate, 11 September, 1619, in *CSPV: 16 (1619-1621)*, pp. 1-20

¹⁸⁷ Zuane Pesaro to the Doge and the Senate, 16 September, 1619, in *ibid.*, pp. 1-20

¹⁸⁸ Zuane Pesaro to the Doge and the Senate, 23 September, 1619, in *ibid.*, pp. 1-20

publication of Charles Emmanuel's correspondence with Mansfeld, to which affair we shall return later. After Frederick V lost both his Bohemian kingdom and his Palatine electorate, Mansfeld's itinerant army became the only way for the exiled Palatine court to keep its cause alive in Germany. The impoverished Winter King did not, however, have the necessary means to finance indirect war in Germany, and for that reason he was forced to fall back on the support of outside powers willing to bear the costs of Mansfeld's warfare. Such an arrangement naturally meant that Frederick V had to leave higher decision-making to his foreign benefactors.

Because of his affiliation with the Palatine cause, Mansfeld was the obvious intermediate for Calvinist powers outside Germany. The Dutch and the French Huguenots were, however, more interested in employing Mansfeld in direct rather than non-direct warfare. After Friedrich V had dismissed Mansfeld and Brunswick from Palatine service in 1622, the Huguenot Duke of Sedan invited the paladins to fight for Protestantism in France, where the Royalists were conducting a military campaign against traditional the Huguenot strongholds in La Rochelle and Languedoc. The French King's representative, the governor of Champagne Duke Charles de Nevers, was equally interested in taking Mansfeld in Royalist service for the simple reason of denying the formidable mercenary's services to the Huguenots. Nevers utilized a combination of military posturing and bribes, which finally succeeded in diverting Mansfeld away from French soil.¹⁸⁹

The Dutch too were interested in securing Mansfeld's warlike services for the relief of besieged Bergen-op-Zoom. Even though Spinola had already lifted the siege by the time Mansfeld arrived in the Netherlands, the States General still sought to retain Mansfeld's services. Mansfeld's employment in East Frisia as an 'occupier for contract' fulfilled in many ways the criteria for indirect warfare. East Frisia was a small principality situated between the United Provinces and the Duchy of Holstein. Emden, the capitol of East Frisia, had been effectively incorporated into the Dutch Republic in 1602, when the town burghers accepted a Dutch garrison there. From thereon Emden had evolved into a radical political and religious centre for Calvinism, and the focus for opposition to the ruling Lutheran Cirksena family in East Frisia.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁹ Krüssmann, *Mansfeld*, pp. 428-444

¹⁹⁰ Wilson, *Europe's Tragedy*, pp. 148-149

The accession of Count Enno III in 1599 worried the Dutch, because the new Count had good relations with Spain and was more determined to impose his authority on his subjects than his predecessors.¹⁹¹ In 1622 the Flemish commander Count Hendrik van Bergh was conducting a series of operations against the Dutch in Jülich, and it was feared in The Hague that the Spaniards might open another front against the Dutch in East Frisia with the connivance of Enno III. It was therefore agreed to send Mansfeld to East Frisia, where he might guard the Republic's eastern frontier against any surprise attack by the Spanish, and where his troops would create such a heavy burden on the local Estates that the ability of Count Enno III to arm the Frisians by himself would be seriously diminished.¹⁹² Mansfeld's mistreatment of East Frisia succeeded in reducing Enno III to such despair that he was moved to appeal for Swedish intervention (Gustavus Adolphus was Enno's nephew by marriage). Enno's distress served Gustavus Adolphus as an excuse for a planned Protestant alliance, which was in reality aimed against the Habsburgs and not Mansfeld.¹⁹³

5.3 Mansfeld in Anglo-French Service

In 1624 Mansfeld disbanded his army and travelled to England. At that time London was a veritable nest of international intrigue. James I and his confident George Villiers, the Duke of Buckingham, had weaved a web of dynastic and political relationships that extended to almost every royal house in Europe. For years James I had chosen to remain aloof from continental affairs, and had wished to appear as an arbiter between the belligerent powers. The reason for his careful foreign policy had been the prospect of a dynastic alliance between England and Spain, which James I had desired to accomplish by marrying his son Charles to the Spanish Infanta Maria.

In 1623 Charles and his new friend Buckingham carried out a harebrained scheme and travelled to Madrid *inognito* to woo the Spanish Infanta. The result was an unmitigated diplomatic disaster, when Philip IV, baffled by the unexpected appearance of such illustrious yet uninvited guests, sent the two suitors packing without the reward of a royal marriage. On their return to England embarrassment turned to anger, and the Protestant public clamoured for vengeance. Charles, grateful for an opportunity to save

¹⁹¹ Ibid., pp. 148-149

¹⁹² Ibid., p. 339

¹⁹³ Michael Roberts, *Gustavus Adolphus. A History of Sweden 1611-1632: Volume I, 1611-1626* (London: Longmans, 1953), pp. 220, 224

his own face, quickly politicised a private debacle, and accused the Spanish of having attempted to convert him to Catholicism by force.¹⁹⁴ The denied and shamed suitor then went on to claim publicly, “that though he had never loved popery, he had not hated it till he saw it in the court of Spain.”¹⁹⁵ All hope for an alliance with Spain had suddenly disappeared: “And this journey hath wrought one unexpected effect, that whereas it was thought the Spaniards and we should piece and grow together, it seems we are generally more disjointed and further asunder in affections than ever,” the renowned author John Chamberlain wrote to his friend Dudley Carleton, the English ambassador at The Hague.¹⁹⁶

When the Parliament convened in February 1624, Puritan MPs made demands for an indirect war against Spain on the continental theatre of war.¹⁹⁷ All eyes were on Mansfeld, who arrived in London the following month. Both the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Buckingham showed Mansfeld great courtesy, and Charles offered him lodgings at the very rooms that had been furnished for the expected Spanish bride.¹⁹⁸ At the instigation of the Crown Prince and the indignant Puritans, James I permitted Mansfeld to raise troops in England for a planned expedition to reclaim the Palatinate.

Even though the Puritans and other Protestant firebrands wished every conceivable ill on the Catholic Habsburgs, they hesitated to support direct English involvement in the continental war. The reason behind the Parliament’s lack of enthusiasm was not the fear of the Habsburgs, but rather the fear of the Stuarts. James I had not been in the habit to consult the Parliament on matters of great importance, which practice reeked of absolutist ambitions and alienated the King from his Parliament. James I, in his turn, regarded foreign policy as an *arcanum imperii*, and was wont to allow the Parliament any hand in such matters.

In early 1624 James I had agreed to terminate negotiations with Spain on the condition that the Parliament gave him its unlimited support for the duration of the war.¹⁹⁹ This the Parliament was unwilling to do, unless the King would fully commit himself to a war against Spain. James I was enough of a realist to understand that an

¹⁹⁴ Lucy Aikin, *Memoirs of the Court of King Charles the First, Volume I* (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green, and Longman, 1833), pp. 15-16

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 18

¹⁹⁶ John Chamberlain to Dudley Carleton, 4 November 1623, in Birch, *Court and Times, II*, p. 426

¹⁹⁷ Sir Benjamin Rudyard at the House of Commons, 10 March 1624, *Journal of the House of Commons, Volume I: 1547-1629* (London: History of Parliament Trust, 1802), p. 14

¹⁹⁸ Wedgwood, *Thirty Years’ War*, p. 182

¹⁹⁹ M. G. Schybergson, *Underhandlingarna om en evangelisk allians åren 1624-1625* (Helsinki: J. C. Frenckell & Son, 1880), p. 22

extended war against Spain would not help him achieve his primary foreign policy goal, the restoration of the Palatinate.²⁰⁰ Nevertheless, the only way to get subsidies from the Parliament was to create the impression that an anti-Spanish expedition was indeed on the cards, and for that purpose James I was forced to furnish a fleet. Ultimately, only six vessels were commissioned.²⁰¹ As the King was also forced to subsidize the armaments of his brother-in-law Christian IV, outside help was needed to finance Mansfeld's intended expedition to the Palatinate. The banker Burlamachi agreed to loan some of the monies, but the rest would have to come from foreign allies, such as the United Provinces and France.²⁰²

The years 1624-1625 witnessed a brief dalliance between the two royal courts in London and Paris. In absence of a Spanish match, the Stuarts consoled themselves with a French one. In May 1625, after complex negotiations touching mostly on issues of religious toleration, the new King Charles I and the sister of Louis XIII, Henrietta Maria, were married. The English alliance, it was hoped by the new French premier Cardinal Richelieu, would alienate the Protestant English from their Huguenot brethren and tie the Stuarts more firmly to the interests of the French monarchy.²⁰³

Mansfeld's presence in London during this major shift in Stuart foreign policy brought him to the attention of the French. Indirect war against the Habsburgs was part of Richelieu's ambitious foreign policy, and employing Mansfeld as a proxy served well the interests of the Cardinal's *raison d'état*. At the core of the Cardinal's foreign policy stood the idea of France's natural borders. The idea of 'natural' borders was alien to most seventeenth-century minds, because borders, to the extent they were even perceived to exist, were first and foremost feudal demarcation lines marking the end of one fiefdom and the beginning of another. Warfare along such frontiers was bound to be ambiguous and even asymmetrical, as the combatants usually had one foot on each side of the feudal boundary. Individuals like Charles IV of Lorraine were tied by feudal vassalage to both the Emperor and the French King, and it is hardly surprising that by exploiting his ambiguous position between two feudal overlords, Charles IV later evolved into one of Europe's foremost military entrepreneurs.

²⁰⁰ Robert E. Ruigh, *The Parliament of 1624: Politics and Foreign Policy* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1971), pp. 386-387

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 386

²⁰² Redlich, *German Military Enterpriser*, I, p. 250

²⁰³ Victor-L. Tapié, *France in the Age of Louis XIII and Richelieu* (London: Macmillan, 1974), p. 147

Richelieu never planned to restore the borders of ancient Gaul, as the French historian V. L. Tapié quite rightly pointed out.²⁰⁴ Therefore Richelieu's natural borders did not represent a design for proto-nationalistic expansion, but rather a desire to use geographical barriers to bolster France's defences against her enemies, and conversely, to exploit weak points along the Empire's feudal borders and (in particular) along the long and winding Spanish military road from Italy to Flanders. The Valtelline was an obvious choke point, and in 1623 Mansfeld had indeed offered to fight the Spaniards there on behalf of Louis XIII. The prospect was seriously considered by the French, who were at the time planning a joint campaign in the Valtelline with Venice and Savoy. Mansfeld, it was visualized in Paris, might provide a useful diversion against the Habsburgs with his operations from East Frisia.²⁰⁵ The projected diversionary war would have taken in place in the Spanish-occupied Franche Comté, through which the Spanish military road traversed.²⁰⁶ The French planned to send Mansfeld auxiliaries, which would have increased Mansfeld's troop strength to 25,000. Meanwhile, however, the nascent anti-Habsburg coalition agreed to subsidize Mansfeld with 60,000 *écus*, of which sum France paid half, Venice 20,000 *écus*, and Savoy 10,000.²⁰⁷ However, such diversionary war called for the existence of a solid anti-Habsburg coalition.

5.4 Mansfeld and the Anti-Habsburg Coalition

The anti-Habsburg coalition, as it existed, suffered from several contradictions. Firstly, the coalition of France, Savoy, and Venice was something of an alliance of convenience. The three powers rarely saw things eye to eye. For Richelieu the primary military-political goal was to secure the *frontière naturelle* by setting up a buffer zone of client states along the Franco-Imperial border.²⁰⁸ Venetian concerns, on the other hand, were limited to the defence of the Terra Firma, while the Savoyard plan was to wage diversionary war against the Habsburgs on all fronts, from Italy and Transylvania to Franche Comté and the Netherlands. The benefit for *Casa Savoia* was obvious, because the plan shifted the burden of warfare from Savoy to other powers. Secondly, France's own designs in the Empire contradicted each other. France wanted to suppress

²⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 140

²⁰⁵ Krüssmann, *Mansfeld*, p. 489

²⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 493

²⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 493

²⁰⁸ Hermann Weber, 'Richelieu et le Rhin,' in *Revue Historique*, CCXXXIX.2 (Avril-Juin, 1968), p. 279

the growth of Habsburg power in the Empire, but without taking action against Duke Maximilian and the three Ecclesiastical Electors. It goes without saying that in the prevailing situation, in which the opposing power blocks in the Empire were built on confessional solidarity, France could not hope to limit the effects of diversionary warfare to the Habsburgs only, without inflicting at least some degree of collateral damage on other Catholic princes as well. Thirdly, indirect warfare could not be waged on German soil without the participation of Protestant powers.

For Catholic France, co-operation with Protestant powers seemed an insurmountable obstacle. Charles Emmanuel's ambitious plan for simultaneous war on all fronts interested Richelieu, but selling the idea to the Catholic French was tricky. Richelieu certainly tried that. In 1625 a political pamphlet titled *La ligue necessaire* or *The necessarie league* was published in France and England. The pamphlet's argumentation bore more than just few traces of Richelieu's *raison d'état*, which suggests that the pamphlet had been commissioned by the Cardinal himself. The pamphlet criticized the existing league between France, Savoy, and Venice. One of the crucial defects of the Catholic confederacy, the pamphlet pointed out, was its failure to retain the services of Mansfeld. Neither could the existing league effectively perform its other functions: "The head is good, the two shoulders which haue vntill this time contributed to the vpholding, and action of it, want no good will; but their armes are not long enough."²⁰⁹ The anonymous author begged the French to put aside their prejudices towards the Protestants, and to form a new confederacy with England, Denmark, Sweden, the United Provinces, the Hanseatic cities, Bethlen Gabor, and the German Protestant princes.²¹⁰ Venice was then urged to pay its subsidies to Mansfeld with increased diligence, while the scheming Charles Emmanuel was reminded, "that this Union is not onely made for you."²¹¹

Forming an inter-confessional alliance against the Habsburgs proved difficult. The French Catholics were not the only ones who were suspicious of those who did not share their religious outlook. Christian IV was particularly outspoken about his mistrust of the French. To Christian IV, the confessional divide was an insurmountable barrier that prevented a close union between France and the Protestant powers of Europe.²¹² Christian IV also had his doubts regarding the depth of French commitment to the

²⁰⁹ *The necessarie league* (? , 1625), p. 4

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 6

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 8

²¹² Schybergson, *Evangelisk allians*, p. 41

common endeavour and their ability to bear the burdens of war.²¹³ So too did the Dutch and the Brandenburgers, who introduced a new champion for the anti-Habsburg cause, Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden.

In 1624 the Brandenburger envoy Christian von Bellin began to advocate Swedish participation in the newly forming Evangelical alliance. The French, whom Bellin deemed “too Jesuitical,” had no central part to play in the new arrangement.²¹⁴ Bellin and Gustavus Adolphus had devised their own plan for diversionary war, in which the Swedes would have landed at Bremen on the North Sea coast, and then continued their advance south along the River Weser. For this reason the plan was dubbed the ‘Weser Plan.’²¹⁵ Even though the Weser Plan called for Swedish supremacy in the actual fighting and decision-making, it did make provision for Mansfeld’s presence as well. Already in 1623 the Swedish King had envisioned a two-pronged attack against the *Erbländer*, in which plan Mansfeld and Brunswick were expected to play their parts. While the Swedes advanced from the north, Gustavus Adolphus suggested, Brunswick and Mansfeld might carry out a diversionary campaign in the south and invade the *Erbländer* through Saxony and Altmark.²¹⁶ The plan was, in a word, absurd. Gustavus Adolphus demanded the creation of an Anglo-Dutch-Swedish North Sea fleet under his own personal command, which from the Danish perspective was an utterly unacceptable proposition.²¹⁷ In addition to that, the Weser Plan required from the English and the Dutch the kind of military and economic resources they did not possess. When the Protestant allies and France met in the Hague conference in early 1625, the Weser Plan was finally buried, and the command of the anti-Habsburg campaign was officially conferred to Christian IV.²¹⁸

When Mansfeld landed on the Dutch coast in early 1625, he was officially in the pay of England, France, and the United Provinces. The original plan was to land in Calais, and to move thence towards the east, while collecting fresh French recruits along the way.²¹⁹

²¹³ Ibid., p. 41

²¹⁴ Ibid., p. 50

²¹⁵ Steffen Heiberg, *Christian 4. – en europæisk statsmand* (Copenhagen: Gildendals Bogklubber, 2006), 265

²¹⁶ Gustavus Adolphus’s instructions to Jan Ruthgers, the Swedish envoy at The Hague, 7 August 1623, in M. G. Schybergson, ed., *Sveriges och Hollands diplomatiska förbindelser 1621-1630* (Helsinki: Finska Vetenskaps-Societet, 1881), p. 44

²¹⁷ Utterodt, *Mansfeld*, p. 617

²¹⁸ Schybergson, *Evangelisk allians*, p. 96

²¹⁹ Utterodt, *Mansfeld*, p. 619

Louis XIII, however, was appalled by the thought that Europe's foremost freebooter and his mercenary horde would make their presence felt in France. The French King's anxiety reveals the central predicament in seventeenth-century diversionary warfare: such method of warfare only worked beyond one's own territory, because mercenaries like Mansfeld were an equal scourge to friendly and non-friendly territories alike. Louis XIII therefore suggested an alternative landing site at Bergen-op-Zoom, which would allow Mansfeld to circumnavigate "the hindrances and great preparations, which had been set up against him on the route of Flanders and Artois."²²⁰ In addition to helping him avoid any unwanted attention, the new route of attack would allow Mansfeld to surprise the besieging Spaniards at Breda, Louis XIII insisted.²²¹ His premiere Cardinal Richelieu echoed the King's sentiments: Mansfeld's transit to Germany, the Cardinal instructed Mansfeld's agent, would be easier through the Netherlands than Artois, as a contingent of Tilly's army awaited Mansfeld at Alsace.²²²

The fall of Breda in June 1625 rearranged the priorities of Mansfeld's diversionary warfare. The Dutch had only employed Mansfeld in the vain hope that his mercenary force might help the Prince of Orange relieve the beleaguered city; after Spinola allowed the Breda garrison to march out of the ruined city and regroup with Prince Frederick Henry's army, the need for Mansfeld's services ceased to exist. The English were equally anxious to see Mansfeld leave the Netherlands and join Christian IV of Denmark, to whom Charles I had pledged his military assistance. Louis XIII and Richelieu, on the other hand, were simply relieved to see Mansfeld move away from France.

Mansfeld's lifeline to England, France, and the United Provinces remained in existence even after Mansfeld transferred his theatre of operations to northern Germany. The Dutch, despite having avowed in July "never to have anything to do with him in the future,"²²³ still dispatched 3,000 infantrymen and 500 riders to Mansfeld's aid, after much of his original Anglo-French contingent had dispersed due to lack of money and forage.²²⁴ England promised to subsidize the Lower Saxon war with £50,000 per month,

²²⁰ Louis XIII to the French ambassador d'Espesses at The Hague, 2 January 1625, in Villermont, *Mansfeldt, II*, p. 261

²²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 261

²²² Richelieu to de Villars, 20 December 1624, in M. Avenel, ed., *Lettres, instructions diplomatiques et papiers d'état du Cardinal de Richelieu: Tome second 1624-1627* (Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1856), p. 59

²²³ Ütterodt, *Mansfeld*, p. 623

²²⁴ Villermont, *Mansfeldt, II*, p. 326

of which sum £20,000 was to be reserved for Mansfeld.²²⁵ In October 1625 the English also managed to send reinforcements through Bremen, while at the same time a French subsidy of 200,000 gulden was finally made available to Mansfeld.²²⁶

Mansfeld's role as a proxy in French and English pay complicated matters of war and peace in the Lower Saxon Circle. When Tilly and the Lower Saxon Estates attempted to negotiate a cease-fire in the winter of 1625-1626, the Emperor decreed that, "Mansfeld, as an outlaw, would be utterly excluded from the cessation of arms."²²⁷ No effective cease-fire could therefore take place, if a military-political player of Mansfeld's calibre was to be excluded from all negotiated settlements. In addition to the difficulties in peace making, Mansfeld's ambiguous position as a hired non-state operator made matters of military direction difficult for Christian IV. While agreeing on the monthly subsidy, the new English King Charles I had also promised to place Mansfeld under Danish command with the rank of Lieutenant General. This gesture was a serious affront to Mansfeld, who cherished his independence and was loath to serve Christian IV in such a lowly position. According to Villermont, Mansfeld then made up his mind to seek service in Venice, where he might secure himself a far more illustrious rank of Commander in Chief.²²⁸

Meanwhile, disobedience to Christian IV was to be the order of the day. Mansfeld had initially made quarters at Bremen, but the city's proximity to the Danish King discomfited Mansfeld to no end. After having received Dutch reinforcements and French subsidies, Mansfeld moved into the Duchy of Luneburg, which he proceeded to thoroughly pillage.²²⁹ Mansfeld then pursued his itinerary across the Elbe and into the pastures of Mecklenburg. Furious protests from the Duke Christian of Luneburg-Celle, the burghers of Lubeck, and the Dukes of Mecklenburg all received the same cold and indifferent response from Christian IV: Mansfeld was acting on his own authority, and the Danish King could not reign him in.²³⁰

At the outset of the 1626 campaign, Christian IV resolved the conundrum of Mansfeld's insubordination by granting him a separate command. The King's move was practical, as Mansfeld never ceased to work as an agent for foreign benefactors. Even after the disastrous defeat at Dessau, where Mansfeld lost his entire Dutch contingent,

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 326

²²⁶ Utterodt, *Mansfeld*, pp. 633-634

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 658

²²⁸ Villermont, *Mansfeldt, II*, pp. 326-327

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 328

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 329

foreign involvement still remained an essential part of Mansfeld's military enterprise. Mansfeld managed to rebuild his army in Altmark largely due to foreign help: nearly half of the new recruits arrived from Sweden, Denmark, Scotland, and other foreign countries. Even the French still continued to subsidize Mansfeld and his army.²³¹

5.5 Mansfeld and His Diversionary War in the Habsburg Lands

Mansfeld's final campaign in Silesia and Moravia was rich with diversionary war aspects. The Silesian campaign was, in effect, the only part of the ambitious Weser Plan that was ever carried out, as Mansfeld's sudden and unexpected plunge into the *Erbländer* distracted the Imperialists and forced Wallenstein to disengage from the war in Lower Saxony and rush to the aid of the Emperor's endangered estates. The downside for the Emperor's enemies was the fact that there was hardly anyone left in northern Germany to exploit Mansfeld's opportune diversion.

The potential for a diversionary campaign was realized further south, in Transylvania and Ottoman-held Hungary. In his letter to Joachim Ernest of Saxe-Weimar, Mansfeld explained that the purpose of the Silesian campaign was to make conjunction with Bethlen Gabor and by that way to further distract the common enemy.²³² Bethlen Gabor himself had proposed such co-operation to the Protestant delegates gathered at The Hague the year before. The plan suggested by Bethlen Gabor was anything but modest: it entailed co-operation between Transylvania, the Protestants rulers of northern Europe, the Ottomans, and even the Crimean Tartars. The Transylvanians and the Ottomans, Bethlen Gabor had suggested, would advance with two armies through Hungary and penetrate deep into the Austrian *Erbländer* in Styria, Illyria, and Croatia; meanwhile the Tartars would pour into Poland and neutralize that country as a potential threat to the Protestant alliance.²³³ However, upon witnessing the disunity among the participants in The Hague conference, the Transylvanian envoy declined to join the embryonic Evangelical alliance.²³⁴

After the setback at Dessau, Bethlen Gabor's original plan was partially revived by Mansfeld and Christian IV. The *Erbländer* still remained the final military objective, but instead of following the Elbe, as Bethlen Gabor had originally suggested,

²³¹ Grossmann, *Mansfeld*, pp. 1-2

²³² Mansfeld to Joachim Ernest of Saxe-Weimar, 30 October 1626, in *ibid.*, p. 11

²³³ Schybergson, *Evangelisk allians*, p. 80

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 105

Mansfeld's new route of attack was to be the River Oder.²³⁵ The new diversion echoed the objective of the late Weser Plan, which had aimed at separating the armies Wallenstein and Tilly. Christian IV supported the diversion by paying Bethlen Gabor a subsidy of 10,000 thalers for three months, and by allocating Mansfeld 7,000 Danish troops under the supervision of *Commissarius* Joachim Mitzlaff.²³⁶

Mansfeld's last campaign remained a distinctive one due to the presence of Turkish auxiliaries. The Turkish motives for providing military assistance to Bethlen Gabor and Mansfeld is a matter of debate. Some conjecture can, however, be made. The move for Turkish participation was made by the Pasha of Buda, who seems to have operated out of his own initiative. As the Pasha's main responsibility was to monitor the volatile border regions between the Ottoman Empire and Austria, it can be concluded that the Pasha sent his Janissaries to restrain diversionary warfare rather than to wage it. As the Ottomans had become engaged in a bloody war in Iraq against the Iranian Safavids, the Sultan had little desire to violate the peace with Austria.²³⁷ It is therefore likely that the Janissaries were sent to supervise Bethlen Gabor and Mansfeld, and to make sure that the German war would not spill into the Turkish-held Hungary. This theory is supported by the fact that the Janissaries appear to have been under instructions not to engage the Imperialists themselves. When Mansfeld did place some of the Janissaries in his front ranks, the Turks complained bitterly and made every effort to avoid combat with Wallenstein's vanguard units.²³⁸ Sydnam Poyntz even suggested that Mansfeld's unauthorized use of Turkish military assets induced the Pasha of Belgrade to assassinate him.²³⁹ Poyntz's imaginative conspiracy theory falls flat before the inconvenient fact that the Janissaries in Mansfeld's army belonged to the Pasha of Buda, not that of Belgrade. Another, equally plausible theory is that Bethlen Gabor simply goaded the Turks into sending him military aid. This theory is supported by Sir Thomas Roe's diplomatic dispatches from Constantinople, which suggest that the Transylvanian prince grossly exaggerated to his Ottoman overlords the threat posed by Wallenstein and the Imperial Army.²⁴⁰

²³⁵ Grossmann, *Mansfeld*, p. 23

²³⁶ Krüssmann, *Mansfeld*, pp. 600-602

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 600

²³⁸ Poyntz, *Relations*, pp. 49-50

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 50

²⁴⁰ Thomas Roe to Edward Conway, 7 August 1625, in *The Negotiations of Sir Thomas Roe, in his Embassy to the Ottoman Porte, from the Year 1621 to 1628 Inclusive* (London: Samuel Richardson, 1740), p. 423

The diversion was ultimately one of mixed success. For Mansfeld himself the diversionary campaign into the *Erbländer* spelled doom: Bethlen Gabor appeared late on the scene, and when he did finally confront Wallenstein, he quickly made peace again and disappeared back into the Transylvanian wilderness. Mansfeld, who was excluded from the peace negotiations, made his way further south, where his army dissolved and he himself succumbed to disease. However, the diversion also harmed the Habsburg war effort. Both the overall condition of the Imperial Army and Wallenstein's personal relations with Vienna had suffered considerably as a result of the hasty and ill-prepared campaign into the Austro-Hungarian borderlands. The same pestilence, which had claimed the lives of Mansfeld and Saxe-Weimar, also wreaked havoc among Wallenstein's soldiers. Of the 20,000 soldiers who started out from the Elbe, only 5,000 were left by the end of the campaign.²⁴¹ The lack of supplies, on the other hand, forced the Imperialists to extract resources from the *Erbländer*. The subjection of the Emperor's *Erbländer* to the vicissitudes of contributions and billeting inevitably led to the deterioration of relations between Wallenstein and the *Hofkriegsrat*. Vienna was rife with accusations that Wallenstein had devastated Habsburg *Erbländer* and magnate demesnes on purpose; Prince Liechtenstein and Cardinal Dietrichstein, whose Moravian estates had fared worst at the hands of both Mansfeld's mercenaries and Wallenstein's Imperialists, were more incensed than anyone else. It was fairly easy for Wallenstein to clear himself of all blame, as the expedition to the *Erbländer* had been undertaken contrary to his own advice.²⁴² Nevertheless, the incident left a stain on Wallenstein's personal reputation, and made him powerful enemies in the Viennese Court.

While Wallenstein battled the Imperial Court, Mansfeld perished in distant Bosnia. Even in the last days of his life, Mansfeld's mind was still alive with new plans for diversionary warfare, despite the fact that his French paymasters had abandoned him as a result of the Franco-Spanish peace treaty at Monzon.²⁴³ The English too were disinclined to subsidize any further operations on the Continent, as their own military expedition against Cadiz had turned out a costly failure.²⁴⁴ There is therefore little doubt that Mansfeld was seeking new employment in Venice – he had, in fact, boasted to his

²⁴¹ Golo Mann, *Wallenstein sein Leben erzählt von Golo Mann* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1971) p. 396

²⁴² J. Mitchell, *The Life of Wallenstein, Duke of Friedland* (London: Thomas Bosworth, 1853), p. 111

²⁴³ Krüssmann, *Mansfeld*, pp. 632-633

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 634

soldiers that a large cache of money awaited him there.²⁴⁵ At that time trouble was brewing in the disputed Duchy of Mantua, and it is likely that Mansfeld would have found new employment in the emerging conflicts between Mantua, Savoy, Venice, France, Spain, and the Emperor.

The journey to Venice through Dalmatia and Bosnia was long and exacting, and in order to cover his travel expenses Mansfeld borrowed 1,000 ducats from Bethlen Gabor. As a security for this loan Mansfeld pledged his artillery and munitions to Bethlen Gabor.²⁴⁶ Mansfeld also toyed with the idea of allowing his French engineers to teach the Turks “the Christian manner of fight and withall the Christian manner of fortifications” - for an appropriate fee, naturally.²⁴⁷ It remains unclear whether his French engineers ever found employment as military advisors to the Turks, or whether they too vanished into the slave markets of Buda like the rest of Mansfeld’s army. If such military assistance were in fact given, it would have counted as Mansfeld’s final involvement in indirect warfare.

6. IMAGE AND INFORMATION WAR

6.1 Propaganda and Apologies

The Thirty Years War was the first war in which all the participants engaged in large-scale and purposeful efforts to spread propaganda and misinformation. The ability to wage information war depended on a new innovation, the printing press, which spewed out propaganda, information, and rumour in various forms, be they pamphlets, booklets, or even primitive newspapers. Woodcuts and copper engravings allowed pictures to be presented alongside printed text, and new possibilities emerged for the use of visual image as a tool in the emerging information warfare.

The term ‘propaganda’ itself originates from the period of the Thirty Years War. The Latin word *propaganda* is not a noun but a gerundive. The word first appeared in the name of the Counter-Reformationist organization *Congregatio de Propaganda Fidei*, or the Congregation for the Propagation of Faith. The *Congregatio de Propaganda Fidei*, or simply *Propaganda*, was founded in 1622 by the Pope Gregory XV to help the

²⁴⁵ Poyntz, *Relations*, p. 50

²⁴⁶ Krüssmann, *Mansfeld*, p. 623

²⁴⁷ Poyntz, *Relations*, p. 50

Catholic Church derive maximum benefits from the victories of Ferdinand II against the Protestant Estates of Germany. In practice the *Propaganda* trained and dispatched missionaries to take control over the formerly secularised princedoms in Germany, and to carry out the work of conversion there.²⁴⁸ The word ‘propaganda’ has derived its modern meaning from the publicity efforts of the *Propaganda* to idolize the Catholic leadership and to smear the reputation of their Protestant opponents.

The true pioneers of early modern propaganda warfare were not, however, the Counter-Reformationist clerics, but their Protestant antagonists. One propaganda medium particularly characteristic to Protestants in the early years of the Thirty Years War was the public apology. These works were not apologies in the literal meaning of the word, but rather justifications for anti-seigneurialism, anti-clericalism, and other forms of radical or rebellious conduct. The Bohemian Rebels were particularly prolific apologists, producing a number of apologies for the defenestration of Slavata and Martinic, as well as for their expulsion of Jesuits from Bohemia. Such apologies were circulated throughout western Europe and translated many times over: one particular English imprint produced by George Purslow was a translation of a Latin text, which in itself was a translation of the German original.²⁴⁹ The contested throne of Bohemia provided a setting for another war of pamphleteers. Both Frederick V and Ferdinand II defended their own claims on the Bohemian throne by arguing in widely circulated dissertations on behalf of either the elective or hereditary nature of the Bohemian monarchy.

Taking the cue from the Bohemian publicists, Mansfeld produced an apology of his own in 1621. The apology was aimed at those potential friends and allies, who might have been miffed by the Mansfelders’ poor conduct in Bohemia, as well as by the perfidious abandonment of Pilsen.²⁵⁰ Mansfeld was particularly worried that potential benefactors abroad, “who haue liued so farre off from newes, that they neuer heard him so much as suspect,” might have been put off from subsidizing his war effort by malicious rumours, and for this reason the apology was aimed at a larger international audience.²⁵¹

The *Appollogie of Mansfield* was hardly a pioneering publicity job. Walter Krüssmann, who has admirably deconstructed the apology, has discovered a number of forerunners for Mansfeld’s tract, works such as William of Orange’s *Apologie ou*

²⁴⁸ Parker, *Thirty Years’ War*, p. 83

²⁴⁹ William Philip, *Newes from Bohemia* (London: George Purslow, 1619)

²⁵⁰ Krüssmann, *Mansfeld*, p. 339

²⁵¹ *Appollogie of Mansfield*, p. ii

défense de Guillaume Prince d'Orange from 1581 and the *res gestae* tradition of Roman Classicists. What set Mansfeld's apology apart from any previous propagandist tracts, however, were the conditions under which it was produced. The wording of the apology, Krüssmann argues, was formulated at Mansfeld's field chancellery, which at the time of the writing was in winter quarters at Haguenau.²⁵² Haguenau is also the place where the original German version of the text was most likely printed; it is unlikely that Mansfeld possessed a portable printing press of his own, but because printing presses were common throughout Germany and could be found in towns even smaller than Haguenau, producing copies of the text was a relatively easy thing to do. Mansfeld's enemies conversely faced an insurmountable task in limiting his ability to print his own propaganda, as the German cities, where most of the printing presses were situated, were by and large in the hands of Lutherans and Calvinists. Mansfeld's connections with the latter group also facilitated the circulation of his apology. The French translation appeared in 1622, and copies of it spread through the Calvinist printing presses in Strasbourg and Amsterdam.²⁵³ An English translation appeared that very same year in the Palatine capitol of Heidelberg, whence it immediately made its way to London. The urban, multilingual, and internationally connected Calvinist world was like a super highway of information, where the Catholic Emperor had no powers of moderation or censorship.

The propaganda war was asymmetrical in a way that did not necessarily operate to Mansfeld's advantage. His status as an illegitimate offspring and a private military entrepreneur left him vulnerable to aggressive enemy propaganda, which – unlike his own apology – aimed at slandering and vilifying the opponent rather than passively defending one's own actions. Adolf Hitler, the most enthralling propagandist of the modern age, viewed exactly this kind of aggressive propaganda as the most effective form, one that dehumanised the enemy and intimidated the audience at home. Hitler was particularly impressed by the 'atrocities propaganda' of the Western Allies, which drew its material from the German atrocities in Belgium and extrapolated them into scandalous proportions. Such propaganda, Hitler believed, was successful because it

²⁵² Krüssmann, *Mansfeld*, p. 340

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 341-342

“took into account the emotional, always extreme, attitude of the great masses and for this reason was believed.”²⁵⁴

The seventeenth-century German public was no less emotional than that of the twentieth century, and stories of Mansfeld’s atrocities found a receptive audience. The horror stories circulated mainly through the embryonic newspapers in Germany and abroad. The Frankfurt newsletter *Theatrum Europaeum*, which attempted to maintain an imbalanced view of the tragic events, reported all major atrocities carried out by any parties. The French *Mercure François* more or less followed suit. The only press that consistently presented Mansfeld in an uncritical light was that of England.

The Imperialists were newcomers to the propaganda war, and they failed to produce the kind of polemical atrocity propaganda that could have competed with the Protestant pamphlets. Among the Imperialists, the stories of Mansfeld’s excesses survived best in the memoirs of influential courtiers and priests, like those of Carlo Caraffa and Count Khevenhüller. The latter person referred to Mansfeld as “der Bastardt Mannsfeld,” which expression later recurred in Villermont’s biography.²⁵⁵ Nuncio Caraffa, on the other hand, made his best effort to portray Mansfeld as a sacrilegious defiler of altars and destroyer of churches.²⁵⁶

In a way the Imperialists did not even have to engage in propaganda war against Mansfeld, because Mansfeld himself did the work for them. The Achilles’ heel in Mansfeld’s image war was the fact that the stories of his excesses and atrocities were mostly true. We have already encountered Sydnam Poyntz’s testimony of the massacre at Weisshausen, but there were other impartial witnesses who testified of Mansfeld’s cruelties. The Strasbourg diarist Johann Walter was one of them. In the autumn of 1621 Walter wrote down in his diary the following condemning entry:

1621. The country has begun to feel the turmoil of war. At the beginning of autumn Count Ernst von Mansfeld arrived with his undisciplined hordes at Haguenau in Alsace, which city he took almost without opposition, and which undoubtedly will be forced to hand him a huge sum of money. The Jews there have been forced to carry a particularly heavy burden. Then Mansfeld’s godless people ruined the whole country with their robbing, burning, defiling, and awful dwelling, in a way that was never heard before. Looking around from the city, there was nothing but conflagrations in the villages; you could count 16 or more

²⁵⁴ Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (London: Pimlico, 1992), pp. 167-168

²⁵⁵ Khevenhüller, *Annales*, IX, p. 190

²⁵⁶ Caraffa, *Germania Sacra*, p. 138

frequent fires at once. Those of the poor country people who could escape came to the city with their wives and children, and some even brought their cattle. But under the circumstances many of the cattle had to be left behind, and died of hunger. Therefore the city was crowded with people to such extent that it was quite indescribable. This led to a cruel cost of living, and soon there was no longer any bread available. This misery has continued throughout the autumn.²⁵⁷

It is likely that the likes of Johann Walter, who had first hand experience of Mansfeld and his unfettered warfare, had already made up their minds about Mansfeld and that the Imperialist propaganda therefore only further enforced existing images.

6.2 Mansfeld Defamed and Ridiculed

Mansfeld's apology induced his enemies to produce an antithesis of their own, called the *Acta Mansfeldica*. This tract did not originate from the printing presses of the *Propaganda*, but from Bavaria, whose Duke wished to see Mansfeld alienated from his German supporters.²⁵⁸ Murder, robbery, arson, and rape were daily occurrences among Mansfeld's undisciplined troops, the *Acta Mansfeldica* proclaimed, and the only person responsible for this scandalous state of affairs was Mansfeld himself, who, contrary to the established norms of the age, failed to regulate the conduct of his soldiers.²⁵⁹ The picture the *Acta Mansfeldica* wanted to paint of Mansfeld was that of a capricious and unprofessional *condottiere*, whose loyalty and conduct could not be relied on. By modern standards the propaganda in *Acta Mansfeldica* comes across as somewhat subdued. Mansfeld's war crimes would have provided much ammunition for the kind of dehumanising atrocity propaganda that appealed to Adolf Hitler, but the *Acta Mansfeldica* took the high road instead and concentrates on undermining Mansfeld's standing as a member of the noble estate. Such an approach reflects the hierarchical and self-conscious mentality of the seventeenth-century nobility, who valued their standing among peers above all else. A nobleman of suspect birth like Mansfeld, who could not maintain discipline among his troops and whose word could not be counted on, was bound to be marginalized by his peers and shunned by princely employers, which was

²⁵⁷ Milger, *Dreissigjährige Krieg*, p. 127

²⁵⁸ Krüssmann, *Mansfeld*, pp. 19, 343

²⁵⁹ *Acta Mansfeldica*, p. 10

exactly the effect *Acta Mansfeldica* hoped to achieve. The image painted by *Acta Mansfeldica* still persisted in Count Villermont's hostile biography.²⁶⁰

The *Acta Mansfeldica* was not the only polemical work that aimed at ridiculing and defaming Mansfeld. There also exists a delightful satirical verse from the period of 1624-1626, which has survived in manuscript form in the archives of Wolfenbüttel. In 1862 the historians Julius Otto Opel and Adolf Cohn published the verse in their collection of folk songs from the era of the Thirty Years War.²⁶¹ It was this particular song, the *Mansfeldisch Trommenschlag*, which established Mansfeld's reputation as the new Attila, "Clericorum Attilam," the scourge of the Catholic Church.²⁶² This epithet too made its way into Villermont's unsympathetic book.

The song catalogued Mansfeld's many adventures and escapades, some of them less reputable than others:

Zog er in Bohemiam/Und hindurch Silesiam/Transit in Moraviam/Half verderben
Austriam/Durch List Bavariam/Liberat Frankenthaliam/Jagt hinweg den Cordubam/Lucratus
est Hagnoam/Und erschreckt Alsatiam/Weil er war den Tilly gram/Macht er des Armada
lahm/Apud Mingelshemiam/Zog wider in Alsatiam/Trieb hinweg mit Forcht und
Schaam/Leopoldi gloriam/Brannt per Lotharingiam/Nahm sein Weg in Galliam/Schlug sich
durch per Fleriam/Bis er kam in Belgiam/Macht zu Spott den Spinolam/Als er beläget
Bergam/Zog hernach in Frisiam/Simul et Holsatiam/Ram, Ram wider Ram/Kam wider in
Galliam...²⁶³

The *Mansfeldisch Trommenschlag* is not, however, a hostile Catholic verse, but a Protestant mockery, which makes fun of both Mansfeld and his Catholic opponents. In fact, the most scandalous verses are aimed at the Catholic clergy and their allegedly impious lifestyle:

Verführt dein clericum/Das lieb Christenthum/Verfolgt um und um/Dein Sachen stehn gar
krumm/Nam per sanctissimum/Apostolorum/Quorum numerum/Habes consortium/Et
meretricum/Et sodomiticum...²⁶⁴

²⁶⁰ Krüssmann, *Mansfeld*, p. 19

²⁶¹ Julius Opel and Adolf Cohn, eds., *Der Dreissigjährige Krieg: Eine Sammlung von historischen Gedichten und Prosadarstellungen* (Halle: Verlag der Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses, 1862), pp. 174-178

²⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 177

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 176-177

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 177

The undercurrent of ridicule also existed in the visual representation of Mansfeld's activities. The pamphlet *Labor vincit omnia* from 1622 portrays a lampoonist image of Mansfeld, who ploughs through the ecclesiastical territories with his army, while the prince-bishops sow coins in his trail. The pamphlet apparently implies that Mansfeld's sole political aim was the farming of contributions and the upkeep of his private military enterprise.²⁶⁵ Once again, the publicists' innuendo contained more than just few grains of truth.

There also existed a series of pro-Habsburg pamphlets that were something more than just straightforward political propaganda. The pamphlets, which ran under the title *Altera secretissima instructio*, attempted to affect the Palatine Elector's decision-making through insidious dissimulation and misinformation. The first pamphlet appeared in 1620, when, according to the *Mercure François*, it was being circulated at the meeting of the Protestant union and Catholic League representatives in Ulm.²⁶⁶ By 1627 the pamphlets had reached England. The *Altera secretissima instructio* tried to sway the Palatinate's foreign policy by appealing to the theory of *raison d'état*, which most likely was the reason why the aspiring political scientist Thomas Hobbes chose to translate the tract in English.

The pamphlets made their case by portraying the Palatinate's foreign allies as self-serving and untrustworthy. Of Christian IV the pamphlet had the following things to say: "He auoydes battle, and lookes about how to fly...He thinkes of his owne augmentation, not at all of yor restitution, but to make it a pretext."²⁶⁷ Of the United Provinces: "The high and mighty states of ye Low Contries will not restore you. The name of an exile lying on their hands is cheape amongst them. It is a burdesome thinge...They are squeamish at your pouerty, and laugh in their sleeue at the imitation of dignity royall, in beggary."²⁶⁸ Of France: "It is neuer safe to trust to French Papistes. Made they not peace without ye knowledge of their allies? Yet in that league consisted of your safety and ye growth and glory of all the confederate Kinges."²⁶⁹ Of Bethlen Gabor: "Therefore Gabor also forsakes vs. He seekes for mony, which gotten, he shewes his forces, but brings them not on. He selles vncertaynties, at a certayne price. He also, persuades you to Peace, and condemnes all our Counsells and discloses them. So

²⁶⁵ Günter Barudio, *Der Teutsche Krieg 1618-1648* (Berlin: Siedler, 1998), p. 196

²⁶⁶ *MF*: 6 (1620), p. 157

²⁶⁷ Noel Malcolm, *Reason of State, Propaganda, and the Thirty Years' War: An Unknown Translation by Thomas Hobbes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), pp. 154, 156

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 148, 150

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 140

he gratifies Caesar.”²⁷⁰ And finally, the pamphlet had a few words to say about Mansfeld as well:

What do wee promise to our selues from Mansfelt. When flies he not? Carelesse of ye warre, greedy for booty, easier to be gotten in peacefull contryes, then in that of ye enemy. Fitter for nothinge, then of frends to make enemyes, and of enemyes victors. Witsesse Lubecke, Saxony, Brandenburgh. Gabor also before the Emperor complayned of him, saying *I lament not his defeate, he himselve cares not for it, beinge a man that sets much by prey, but little by the bloud of his soldiers.*²⁷¹

6.3 The *Acta Bohemica* and the Imperialist Information War

Because the abovementioned characterizations, despite being hostile and politically motivated, contained much truth about the Elector’s allies, the *Altera secretissima instructio* traversed the ground between image and information war. However, the *Altera secretissima instructio* did not remain the only instance where information war impacted Mansfeld. During the period under our investigation, Mansfeld and his Imperialist adversaries became involved in a series of publicity incidents similar to the Wikileaks scandal of our own times. On two occasions the Imperialists gained possession of sensitive correspondence that was damaging to Mansfeld and his employers, and on another Mansfeld himself intercepted Imperialists communications that proved even more embarrassing to the Emperor. What connected these three events was the fact that, akin to the recent Wikileaks scandal, they all represented an aspect of asymmetrical warfare known as ‘white propaganda,’ or open information, whose originators and dispensers are made public, and the veracity of which cannot be therefore easily refuted.²⁷²

The first ‘white’ revelation occurred when Mansfeld’s field chancellery and the diplomatic correspondence it contained fell into Imperialist hands after the battle of Sablat. The captured correspondence described in detail the secret negotiations between

²⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 160

²⁷¹ Ibid., p. 158

²⁷² Aki-Mauri Huhtinen, ‘Nykyaikainen informaatioidankäynti,’ in *Studia Generalia 2010: Tieto muuttuvassa maailmassa*, 28.10.2010

Heidelberg, Turin, and Venice.²⁷³ Understanding the importance of his discovery, the Imperialist General Buquoy dispatched the papers to Vienna, whence they were forwarded to Spain. The revelation of secret diplomacy between the Bohemians, the Palatinate, Venice, and Savoy had two important consequences. Firstly, it revealed to the Habsburgs the magnitude and aims of the international alliance directed against them: “The rebel plan aims to utterly destroy the sovereignty of the Habsburgs and the existence of the Catholic religion,” Count Oñate, the Spanish ambassador at Vienna, declared at the end of July 1619, “and to form an exclusively Calvinist confederation from the various lands under the sceptre of Ferdinand II, a regime under an elected king, whose authority would be diminished to such a degree that the entire government would rest in the hands of the Estates.”²⁷⁴ Secondly, Oñate’s public condemnation of the rebel plans also brought into the light Charles Emmanuel’s central role in the anti-Habsburg coalition, and seriously embarrassed the Savoyard Duke, when his designs to become the new King of Bohemia were thwarted by the rebellious Estates that very same summer. The loss of secret correspondence cost Mansfeld his main benefactor, as the embarrassed Charles Emmanuel, eager to salvage at least the remains of his decorum, hastily ended his subsidies to the Bohemian Rebels.²⁷⁵

The second ‘white propaganda’ incident affected Mansfeld less directly. The affair involved the Palatine state papers at Heidelberg, which fell into the hands of the Imperialists after Tilly conquered the city in September 1622. Mansfeld, whom Frederick V had discharged from his service in July, made no attempt to relieve the city. The conquering Leaguers thoroughly ransacked Heidelberg. Among the loot was the Elector’s valuable library, the *Bibliotheca Palatina*, which the Papal librarian Leone Allatius transported in its entirety to Rome.²⁷⁶

The real prize, however, turned out to be the chancellery papers of the Elector’s foreign secretary, Prince Christian of Anhalt. The papers, which were soon published along with other documents captured after the Battle of the White Mountain as the *Acta Bohemica*, revealed the involvement of the Palatinate and Savoy in the Bohemian Rebellion, and the designs that Turin and Heidelberg had harboured for the Bohemian

²⁷³ Villermont, *Mansfeldt*, I, p. 155

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 155

²⁷⁵ Parker, *Thirty Years’ War*, p. 46

²⁷⁶ Wilhelm Schreiber, *Maximilian I. der Katholische, Kurfürst von Bayern und der dreißigjährige Krieg* (Munich: E. A. Fleischmann’s Buchhandlung, 1868), p. 293

throne.²⁷⁷ However, proving the culpability of the Palatine Elector to the outbreak of the war was already redundant, as the rebellion itself had been put out, the Palatine lands conquered, and Frederick V stripped of his titles and privileges as an Imperial Elector. Therefore the remaining value in the papers was in the unflattering way in which Anhalt had characterized the Palatinate's various friends and potential allies. Because both John George of Saxony and Christian IV of Denmark had been considered as potential candidates for the Bohemian throne, the *Acta Bohemica* included Anhalt's candid assessments of their respective personalities.

Honesty rarely is a virtue in diplomatic affairs, and the characterizations that followed were bound to blush faces in Dresden and Copenhagen. John George, we learn from the *Acta Bohemica*, was obsessed with hunting, feasting, and drinking, often practicing the latter till the wee hours of the morning, when the servants finally helped the intoxicated Elector to bed.²⁷⁸ Christian IV, on the other hand, "indulged in adultery and lust that placed their subjects in peril and danger."²⁷⁹ Some of the revelations shed light on the inner workings of Savoy, Saxony, and Denmark. John George was revealed to be the "natural enemy of noble privileges," who distrusted the nobility and placed men of low birth to positions of influence.²⁸⁰ Charles Emmanuel, who had implied of his willingness to change religion in exchange for St Wenceslas's Crown, was revealed by his former employee Mansfeld to have been a religious orthodox, who simply tried to bluff his way to the Bohemian throne.²⁸¹ Christian IV was described as a rich and courageous monarch, who nevertheless was bound by the limits of Denmark's aristocratic government, and who therefore "employed his riches for the profit of his offspring."²⁸²

6.4 The *Cancellaria Hispanica* and the Protestant Information War

The third publicity incident had much more severe political repercussions than the two previous ones. This time, however, the fall-out was on the Emperor. The 'white propaganda' event began to unfold when Mansfeld intercepted Imperial correspondence in November 1621. The letters, which were addressed to the Papal envoy Father

²⁷⁷ Villermont, *Tilly, I*, p. 205

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 209

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 206

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 207-208

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 206

²⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 206

Hyacinth in Brussels, were written by Ferdinand II himself.²⁸³ Enclosed with the letters were previous diplomatic documents for Father Hyacinth's benefit. Realizing the value of his catch Mansfeld immediately sent the letters to Heidelberg, where they were thoroughly scrutinized by Ludwig Camerarius, the Palatine Elector's chief diplomatic councillor. The following year the letters were published as a part of a polemical work known as *Cancelleria Hispanica*. The *Cancelleria Hispanica* was a brilliant indictment of the Habsburgs' anti-Palatine politics. The letters, particularly the one addressed to the Spanish premier Don Balthasar Zuñiga, revealed how Ferdinand II had secretly promised to Duke Maximilian the transferral of the Palatine Electorate, its lands, titles, and privileges to Bavaria. In the letter Ferdinand II strove to convince the reluctant Spaniards that the transferral of the Electoral title to Bavaria would ensure that "the Empire would stay forever in the hands of the Catholics, and therefore also of our house."²⁸⁴ As Ludwig Camerarius pointed out in his damning foreword to the *Cancelleria Hispanica*, such a clandestine transferral of the Electoral title violated the Emperor's own *Wahlkapitulationen*, the Golden Bull, and the constitutional traditions of the Empire.²⁸⁵

The publication of the *Cancelleria Hispanica* caused an outcry among the German Estates, and forced Ferdinand II to postpone the transferral of the Palatine Electorate.²⁸⁶ The public revelation of the Habsburgs' secret diplomacy also made it more difficult for Ferdinand II to win the backing of Spain for the planned transferral. Father Hyacinth was rapidly sent to Madrid, where he received only ambiguous answers from Philip IV. On one hand the Spanish King had appeared eager to facilitate the transfer before the Electoral College would meet to discuss the legitimacy of the affair, on the other Philip IV expressed only mild interest in making Duke Maximilian the new Elector Palatine.²⁸⁷ Father Hyacinth finally left Madrid under the impression that Spain was generally opposed to the transferral.²⁸⁸ It was clear that the untimely publication of the *Cancelleria Hispanica* had encouraged Madrid to distance itself from the whole business. Another reason behind the confused and contradictory Spanish approach may have been Zuñiga's death in October 1622, which left Madrid without an expert in German affairs.

²⁸³ Krüssmann, *Mansfeld*, p. 324

²⁸⁴ Ferdinand II to Don Balthasar Zuñiga, 15 October 1621, in Ludwig Camerarius, *Cancelleria Hispanica* (Freistad: ?, 1622), p.124

²⁸⁵ Camerarius, *Cancelleria*, p. 14

²⁸⁶ Parker, *Thirty Years' War*, p 60

²⁸⁷ Gindely, *Thirty Years' War, I*, p. 346

²⁸⁸ Parker, *Thirty Years' War*, p. 60

Deprived of Spanish support, Ferdinand II only managed to gain an appearance of legitimacy for the transferral, when he convened a limited gathering of Imperial Princes in the *Deputationstag* of Regensburg in January 1623. The lack of domestic and foreign support for the dubious transferral of the Palatine Electorate forced Ferdinand II to retract some of his promises to Duke Maximilian, and to grant him the Palatine Electorate only for the duration of the Duke's own life, therefore leaving the long-term ownership of the Palatinate open to dispute.²⁸⁹ Over time the Palatine dispute continued to fester, and ultimately provided the perfect excuse for Sweden and France to intervene in the German war and then to persist in the war until 1648, when the restoration of the Palatinate was finally achieved in the Westphalian peace settlement.

7. REACTION TO MANSFELD AND HIS ASYMMETRICAL WARFARE

7.1 The Emperor and the Problem of Asymmetry

There remains one last aspect of asymmetrical warfare that needs to be considered. What kind of reactions or counter-measures did Mansfeld's asymmetrical warfare draw from the Imperialists? All historical analogies of asymmetrical conflicts include attempts by the stronger side to reduce the impact of the enemy's asymmetrical methods and thus to bring the conflict to the symmetrical level of war, where the opponent is forced to acknowledge his inferiority before a superior foe. In our own times such reactions and counter-measures to asymmetrical threats are collectively known as counter-insurgency (COIN) operations.

However, unlike the confrontation between the Clausewitzian notion of 'big war' and the small-scale guerrilla war that dominates the asymmetrical setting of our age, the asymmetry in the Thirty Years War arose from military paradigms that were rooted in the feudal societies and crusading wars of the Middle Ages. The kind of war the Austrian Habsburgs were prepared to wage was static and aimed at defending the *Erbländer* from Turkish incursions. This strategy was further consolidated by a Military Revolution in the art of fortification, which resulted in the proliferation of angle bastions, fortifications that were nearly impervious to contemporaneous siege tactics. The Habsburgs had introduced a skeleton force of regular soldiers to man these

²⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 60

fortifications, but for all other contingencies they still relied on the resources provided to them by the Patrimonial Estates and the *Reichstag*. The Estates, who had neither the means nor the will to maintain standing armies, resorted to raising regiments for the duration of the campaign season and then disbanding them before the winter.

Mansfeld's continuing private war after 1620 forced the Austrian Habsburgs to reconsider their practices. Ferdinand II had already taken steps to keep permanently in arms at least a part of his army during the Bohemian Rebellion, but the war's sudden shift to Germany forced him to maintain unprecedented numbers of soldiers in the field. First the Emperor resorted to using allied armies, those of the Catholic League and Spain, but such outside help did not come free. Duke Maximilian held the Emperor's own *Erbländer* in Upper Austria as a pledge against the expenses Bavaria had incurred during the Bohemian Rebellion, and could only be bought off with a promise of a seat in the Electoral College. Spain, on the other hand, slowly dragged Austria into its own separate wars in Italy and the Netherlands.

Mansfeld's extended and unfettered warfare in Germany created an asymmetrical setting, in which the Emperor was unable to reciprocate his enemy's measures. While Mansfeld could billet his troops by force, the Emperor could not; while Mansfeld could ransom contributions from the unwilling Estates, the Emperor could not; while Mansfeld could pillage ecclesiastical institutions, the Emperor could not; while Mansfeld could move his troops outside the Empire's borders, the Emperor could not; while Mansfeld could escalate the war at will, the Emperor could not. It became increasingly obvious to Ferdinand II that the armies of Spain and the Catholic League could not be relied upon to effectively meet the various asymmetrical threats emanating from Mansfeld's erratic warfare.

7.2 Wallenstein and the Subcontracted Imperial Army

From the perspective of asymmetrical warfare it makes perfect sense that the Emperor would choose to fight fire with fire and place the Imperial war effort into the hands of another military entrepreneur, Albrecht von Wallenstein. Indeed, Schiller even ventured to suggest that as far as methods of war financing were concerned, Wallenstein was Mansfeld's committed disciple.²⁹⁰ The circumstances under which Wallenstein agreed

²⁹⁰ Schiller, *Thirty Years' War*, p. 110

to subcontract an army for the Emperor are often presented in the traditional historiography as exigent. Indeed, such a view is perfectly justifiable: the Emperor really had few alternative methods for raising an army of his own. The Patrimonial Estates had largely defected to the enemy side during the Bohemian Rebellion, and the remaining loyalists in Tyrol, Styria, and Carinthia were too few and too impoverished to be able to furnish any sizeable contingents for Imperial service. The trustworthiness of the Patrimonial Estates was only restored after the radical constitutional changes in 1627, when the Bohemian Crown was officially made hereditary in the Habsburg family, the *Landtage* amended with a clerical Estate, the Letter of Majesty abolished, the Protestant faith proscribed, and the local administration filled with men personally indebted to the Emperor.²⁹¹ The resurrection of the feudal levy, the *insurrectio*, proved another failure. Ferdinand II had called his vassals to arms in 1617, when he (still then the Archduke of Carinthia) had fought the Venetians over Gradisca. At the time only a handful of Austrian and Bohemian noblemen had responded to their liege lord's call. Among those few was Wallenstein, who had supplied Ferdinand II with 180 cuirassiers and 80 musketeers, whose upkeep and wages Wallenstein had paid from his own pocket.²⁹²

Despite such compelling reasons, Wallenstein's rise and the creation of a subcontracted Imperial Army in 1625 can also be seen as a calculated response to the 'messy war' waged by Mansfeld and other German military entrepreneurs. Even though the Emperor's policies were largely driven by necessity, there still remained room for options in the recruitment and composition of the Imperial Army. The Emperor could have relied on Wallenstein only to recruit and finance the army, and then have placed the actual military command in his own hands – which he in fact did after Wallenstein's assassination in 1634. This, however, the Emperor did not do in 1625, but insisted that Wallenstein himself should command the new army. As Golo Mann has pointed out, Wallenstein was initially reluctant to take up the burden of military leadership.²⁹³ When he did finally accept the command of the Imperial Army, Wallenstein imposed certain conditions on the Emperor that echoed the asymmetrical methods of Mansfeld. First of all Wallenstein demanded that the size of the planned Imperial Army would be increased from 20,000 to 50,000. Only the larger force, Wallenstein had insisted, would

²⁹¹ Tapié, *NCMH: IV*, pp. 519-520

²⁹² Mann, *Wallenstein*, pp. 142-143

²⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 372

allow the Imperial Army to spread itself over an area large enough to support the entire force.²⁹⁴ The second condition concerned the methods of extracting support. The Patrimonial Estates still being dysfunctional and unable to support the Imperial war effort, the war would have to be made to finance itself. For this purpose Wallenstein extracted from the Emperor an official instruction, in which the Emperor authorized Wallenstein to “collect tolerable contributions from the conquered areas.”²⁹⁵ While those Imperial Estates loyal to the Emperor were expected to be spared from the contributions, Wallenstein realized from the beginning that loyalists too would eventually have to be included in the sphere of the contributions.

The Imperial instruction of June 1625 changed the nature of the Imperialists’ warfare. From there onwards the Imperialists would follow in the footsteps of Mansfeld and other asymmetrical warriors of the earlier stage of the war. Even though Wallenstein derived his authority from the Emperor, he still remained a private military entrepreneur, whose actions could not ultimately be blamed on the Emperor. The obfuscation in the limits of Wallenstein’s authority served the Emperor well. On one hand Wallenstein’s victories would serve to strengthen the Emperor’s prestige, on the other the Emperor could always distance himself from Wallenstein’s excesses by claiming that the responsibility for them lay with Wallenstein alone. And excesses there were. Wallenstein was not overshadowed by Mansfeld in ruthlessness, but in fact excelled him: “The scholar surpassed his master,” Schiller later wrote.²⁹⁶ The Imperial contributions ceased to be an imbursement paid upon the consent of the Imperial Estates, but were rather extracted by force. The dreaded *Brandshatzung*, so generously resorted to by Mansfeld and Brunswick, became a method of persuasion repeatedly used by Wallenstein. So too did forced billeting and winter-quartering, which were unilaterally imposed by Wallenstein on all the Imperial Estates – even those, which were part and parcel of the Habsburg *Erbländer*.

By adopting the very methods by which the Emperor’s foremost enemies, the Protestant military entrepreneurs, had successfully waged asymmetrical warfare against the House of Austria, Wallenstein finally managed to gain the upper hand in the war. There is no doubt that the merit for the gradual pacification of Germany between 1625 and 1629 belongs to the sizeable subcontracted Imperial Army under Wallenstein’s

²⁹⁴ Khevenhüller, *Annales*, X, p. 802

²⁹⁵ The instructions of Ferdinand II to Wallenstein, 27 June 1625, in Gottfried Lorenz, ed., *Quellen zur Geschichte Wallensteins* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1987), p. 92

²⁹⁶ Schiller, *Thirty Years’ War*, p. 110

command. An Imperial Army, which eventually grew to almost 150,000 men, and which fed off the German Estates like a gigantic parasite, effectively killed off all competition from other potential military entrepreneurs. The available credit for them was no longer there, and neither were the recruits, rewards, nor the supplies. During the period of Wallenstein's greatest military success in 1625-1629, all those noble hotheads and callous mercenaries who wished to raise their own regiments and sell their services, were forced to seek employment with Wallenstein, who in fact expected all his Colonels and Captains to further subcontract the Imperial Army.²⁹⁷

Once Wallenstein had embraced the asymmetrical methods of his enemies, the war ceased to be in any sense asymmetrical. The shift towards symmetrical, regulated, and state-monopolized warfare was further facilitated by the Swedish intervention in 1630. As a result, Wallenstein's double position as the commander of the Imperial Army and a private military entrepreneur became increasingly awkward. Ferdinand II, who had little access to the credit markets, had been forced to borrow increasing sums from Wallenstein, whose position as a military entrepreneur provided him with reputable standing in the eyes of creditors all over Europe. As a security for these loans Ferdinand II had been forced to grant Wallenstein territories, privileges, and powers, which soon began to loom as potential threats to the Emperor's own position. When rumours began to circulate in early 1634 that Wallenstein was secretly negotiating with the Swedes and aspiring to become the new Emperor himself, Ferdinand II decided to remove Wallenstein by force. The outcome of this decision was Wallenstein's assassination at Eger in February 1634. The Imperial Army was brought under the Emperor's control, and the Colonels, who had previously acted as independent subcontractors, became effectively salaried employees in the Emperor's service.²⁹⁸

All private armies and military confederations were finally banned in the 1635 peace agreement of Prague.²⁹⁹ Military entrepreneurs still survived, but they were being gradually integrated into the framework of state-monopolized warfare. The last great *condottiere* of the Thirty Years War, Duke Bernhard of Saxe-Weimar, in fact possessed a double role as a private military entrepreneur and a salaried state employee. In 1630-1634 he served Sweden as a field commander, and indeed shared supreme command with Gustav Horn after the death of Gustavus Adolphus at Lützen. In 1635 Saxe-

²⁹⁷ Redlich, *German Military Enterpriser*, I, p. 258

²⁹⁸ Burkhardt, *Dreißigjährige Krieg*, p. 220

²⁹⁹ The Peace of Prague, 12 June 1635, in Tryntje Helfferich, *The Thirty Years War: A Documentary History* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2009), p. 175

Weimar re-appeared as a military entrepreneur, when he agreed to raise force of 18,000 men for French service in return for a payment of four million livres a year.³⁰⁰ In every other way Saxe-Weimar's methods of warfare nevertheless matched symmetrically those of his enemies and allies.

8. CONCLUSION

Mansfeld and his conduct of warfare were asymmetrical in their operational dimension, their legalistic and moral deficiency, in the ways in which the war was made to finance itself, in Mansfeld's role as an agent for indirect warfare, in the use and abuse of imagery and information as weapons of war, and in the response to an asymmetrical challenge that Mansfeld elicited from his enemies. The signifiers of symmetrical warfare, the clear political goals and the disposition to engage in decisive battles of annihilation, were conspicuously absent from Mansfeld's warfare.

The asymmetry in the operational conduct of the arose from Mansfeld's freedom of movement, which contrasted with the positional stance forced upon the Imperialists by the political circumstances in Germany and by the Habsburgs' own military traditions, the latter being grounded in Austria's on-going struggle with the Ottoman Empire.

Like most asymmetrical warriors of our time, Mansfeld too flouted the laws and moral norms of contemporaneous warfare. His enemies, once again, were not at liberty to follow suit, lest the legitimacy of the Emperor be undermined in the eyes of the German Estates and the Imperial subjects.

The most enduring legacy of asymmetrical warfare, and one that was more apparent than any other to Mansfeld's contemporaries, was to be found in the manner in which Mansfeld and his Habsburg opponents raised, financed, and maintained military forces. As a private military entrepreneur Mansfeld enjoyed the kind of liberties that were not available to the embryonic *Machtstaat* of Habsburg Austria. Credit and plunder formed the sinews of war for Mansfeld, while the greatest asset available to his Habsburg enemies, the ability to raise taxes for the purpose of war-making, had not yet evolved to the level where taxes alone could help the state raise and maintain standing armies.

Images and information were asymmetrical weapons in the hands of anyone who used them. Mansfeld's lowly status made him an object of revulsion and ridicule in the

³⁰⁰ Redlich, *German Military Enterpriser*, I, p. 234

eyes of his contemporaries. The Emperor, on the other, was imperilled by his own high status. As the highest authority in the Empire, the Emperor was expected to honour Imperial laws more vigilantly than anyone else. The revelations of his clandestine deals with Spain and Bavaria consequently harmed him more than the outrages and excesses in which Mansfeld had engaged. In the image war, it is the tall who fall the hardest.

Mansfeld's asymmetrical warfare led to a counter-reaction, when his enemies sought to symmetrize war. That reaction was the formation of a subcontracted Imperial Army, whose recruitment, management, and command was placed in the hands of another military entrepreneur, Albrecht von Wallenstein. His adoption and refinement of Mansfeld's asymmetrical methods had helped the Emperor to smother all flames of resistance in Germany by the end of 1629. The unanticipated success of Wallenstein's warfare and its unforeseen collateral effects, however, escalated the war further, and finally lead to a situation, in which the Emperor felt imperilled enough to dismiss Wallenstein by force and assume the responsibility for the war himself. As a result the Thirty Years War took a giant leap towards the kind of state-monopolized, organised, and symmetrical warfare that prevailed from 1648 onwards. The contest for the monopoly of violence between military entrepreneurs and territorial states was ultimately decided in favour of the latter.

The first generation of warfare thus began to take its shape, and Mansfeld's asymmetrical 'messy war' began to look more and more out of date. During the centuries that followed, Mansfeld was being viewed by historians and military theorists as an anomaly, whose methods and conduct were difficult to fathom in the age of standing armies and centralised nation states. Only now that the territorial nation state is losing its monopoly of warfare to warlord militias, private security contractors, and other non-state agents, does Mansfeld's asymmetrical warfare begin to remind us of the realities of contemporary war.

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