

The Swearing in of the Lansquenets (1555)

Abstract

Lansquenets were foot soldiers who fought as mercenaries in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and whose characteristic weapon was a pike. Introduced by Emperor Maximilian I, lansquenets were initially recruited mainly for the Imperial Habsburg army, but they eventually fought for many other European princes as well. While their combat experience made them useful to military commanders, they were somewhat unpopular with the public since they turned into pillaging vagabonds when their pay was withheld. This woodcut shows lansquenets being sworn in after being recruited. They are gathered in a circle around the colonel, who is reading them their rights and obligations. After this, they swore an oath to either the emperor or the colonel. The ensign (shown in the upper right) had to swear an additional oath to defend the ensign flag with his life.

Source



Source: Swearing-In of the Lansquenets, woodcut by an unknown artist, 1555.
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