

## REVIEW

*Mary Elizabeth Ailes*  
*Courage and Grief: Women and Sweden's*  
*Thirty Years' War*

University of Nebraska Press:  
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MARY ELIZABETH Ailes' analysis provides a good introduction into the experience of women linked to the Swedish army of the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648). The monograph is organised in four different chapters which acknowledge the fact that the women at the heart of the study were far from being a heterogeneous social group. The first chapter deals with the role and attitudes towards married and unmarried women on campaign, as well as towards widows who formed part of the baggage trains. This is followed by an examination of the impact of the Swedish subscription system on peasant women who remained in Sweden. Perhaps the most interesting part of Ailes' work lies in the analysis of officers' wives who remained at the home front and negotiated their lives and estates without the help of their husbands. The book is rounded off by a chapter on Queen Christina and female military leadership. Ailes certainly manages to raise a number of important and interesting points on specifically female experiences in warfare and is clearly familiar with some of the available source material available in Swedish archives. However, it is surprising that the analysis of widows' petitions and other vital sources remains fairly short and, in parts, uncritical. For example, Ailes takes the pleas of the widows to the Swedish authorities at face value without scrutinising to what extent they might have been exaggerated.

It has to be noted that the analysis draws mostly on secondary literature rather than primary sources which is curious as a more detailed analysis of the original letters in Svenska Riksarkivet and Krigsarkivet would have offered a more original perspective. Certainly there is more to say on some of the chosen case studies with closer textual analysis. Whilst Ailes is familiar with

the Swedish and English historiography of the seventeenth century Swedish army, she has not relied on any German secondary sources. The absence of any references to important English-language publications by Alexia Grosjean and Steve Murdoch is also odd and has been observed in a previous review of Ailes' work by the late Jan Glete. Overall, the monograph is readable and provides a survey of the topics it seeks to address. The individual chapters set ambitious frameworks and deal with important research questions but ultimately remain too short to address these comprehensively. To anyone familiar with Swedish scholarship on the subject, the arguments presented are not unfamiliar. The main contribution of this work is to bring those to the attention of the English speaking world.

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