



Seminar

ELISE DERMINEUR

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Queen Lovisa Ulrika of Sweden and Eighteenth-Century Politics

Wednesday, 7 December, 4:15 p.m.

In the Thunberg Lecture Hall
SCAS, Linneanum, Thunbergsvägen 2, Uppsala
www.swedishcollegium.se

The seminar will be followed by a reception. Prior registration is required.
Please contact rsvp@swedishcollegium.se no later than 2 December to sign up.

In collaboration with *Uppsala Interdisciplinary Seminar in Eighteenth-Century
Studies* and the *Department of History, Uppsala University*.

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ABOUT ELISE DERMINEUR

After studying history at the Université de Strasbourg, Elise Dermineur received a Ph.D. in History in 2011 from Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN, for the thesis ‘Women in Rural Society: Peasants, Patriarchy and the Local Economy in Northeast France, 1650–1789’. This thesis shows that the experience of women in early modern rural France illustrates some of the ways emerging social practices modified and altered the traditional patriarchal model, thereby adjusting the social practices to the economic and social context while skirting around legal norms.

In 2011, Dermineur was a Max Weber Fellow at the European University Institute, Florence. Between 2011 and 2013, she held a postdoctoral fellowship at Umeå University. From 2013 to 2015, she worked as a Research Fellow at Lund University on the project ‘Marrying Cultures: Queens Consort and European Identities, 1500–1800’, funded by the Humanities in the European Research Area (HERA). Her research interests range widely, from the history of justice and economics to gender and women’s history. Above all, she is deeply interested in the study of rural communities in early modern Europe.

Dermineur’s publications include articles published in the *Journal of Social History*, *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, *Traverse Revue d’Histoire – Zeitschrift für Geschichte*, among others. Her article titled ‘Female Peasants, Patriarchy and the Credit Market in Eighteenth-Century France’ was awarded in 2009 the Ronald S. Love Prize by the Western Society for French History. She is currently completing a biography of the Swedish queen Lovisa Ulrika (1720–1782).

As a Pro Futura Fellow, Dermineur will examine the paradigms of private credit and debt in early modern Europe from 1500 to 1800, with particular reference to French rural communities.

ABSTRACT

As crown princess (1744–1751), queen (1751–1771) and then queen dowager (1771–1782) of Sweden, Lovisa Ulrika took an active role in political matters in a period that was difficult for the monarchy. The Swedish monarchy had been confronted by a complex and difficult situation following Sweden’s defeat in the Great Northern War (1700–1721) and found itself deprived of many of its traditional royal prerogatives. The defeat had precipitated an end to the absolutism of Karl XII, which was replaced by a parliamentary monarchy. The position Adolf Fredrik and his queen, Lovisa Ulrika, was an uncomfortable one; the monarch’s hands were tied by the constitution that had been drafted after the defeat, restricting his prerogatives to almost nothing.

To Lovisa Ulrika, a monarchical regime was the only authentic and possible natural order for any given society; it was also the best option available to stabilize and unite the country, reconcile its members with each other, and prevent foreign intrusion. From the moment she arrived in Sweden in 1744, and throughout her life, Lovisa Ulrika worked tirelessly towards increasing the power of the monarchy. Described variously as fierce, proud, haughty, intelligent, self-conscious of her due royal prerogatives, filled with political ambitions, and accused by many of her contemporaries of wanting to restore absolutism, she never diverted from her objective, despite obstacles and adversities. As such, she embodied the perfect example of a female consort who was in turn a political agent, instrument and catalyst. This talk examines in details these three roles through her example.