

KENNETH SWOPE

The Art of Being Awesome: Grand Strategy in the Ming Dynasty

Until fairly recently, scholars tended to discount the military might and achievements of China's Ming (1368-1644) Dynasty, unfavorably comparing it with the more vigorously expansive Mongol Yuan (1279-1368) and Manchu Qing (1644-1911) "conquest" dynasties. However, in the process of seeking to identify a distinctively Chinese strategic culture, a number of political scientists and international relations scholars have looked to the Ming, creating a variety of models to explain Chinese strategic behavior in general, in the process finding that the Ming was far more aggressive and martially inclined than previously assumed. Drawing on wide readings of Ming documents and considerations of shifting Ming policies as they related to changing constellations of emperors and officials, this talk will examine Ming "Grand Strategy" and consider its broader geopolitical implications.



Kenneth Swope is the General Bufford Blount Professor of Military History and a Senior Fellow of the Dale Center for the Study of War and Society at the University of Southern Mississippi. He received his undergraduate degree from the College of Wooster (Ohio) and his M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Michigan. His research interests encompass the military, social, political, and diplomatic history of early modern East Asia. His most recent book, *The Military Collapse of China's Ming Dynasty, 1618-1644*, makes use of recently published primary source materials to tell the story of the tragic demise of imperial China's last native ruling house. It was featured on the podcast, "New Books in Military History," and named a *Choice Outstanding Academic* title.



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Room: 209
Mechanical
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**Faculty host:
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**Chao Center for
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