

## **Bushido and The Code of Chivalry:**

Comparative Historical Research of Medieval Military Mindsets in Multidisciplinary Analysis.

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This paper examines the historical and methodological problems of comparative research of the sources of codes of honor and the features of the medieval military classes' mentalities, particularly those of Japanese samurai and European knights.

To this day relevant questions remain about the uniqueness of the worldview and attitude of people in various enclaves of civilization. The process of globalization, dictating tolerance to the "alien," determines the social responsibility of the scientist: the adequate reconstruction and comparison of various cultures, analysis of their similarities and differences, and the search for the origins of cultural specificity. The social importance of this study is due to public interest in samurai and knightly ethics. Such interest is often associated with the ability to compare individual values and aspects of medieval military culture (such as honor, loyalty, and attitude toward women, wealth, and power) with the modern "codes of honor" of closed communities (their values and norms of behavior).

The scientific relevance of the work is prompted by the historiographic tradition of studying the culture of military classes. I will briefly address the main challenges of the current historiography of this topic. Currently, there are many scientific and popular works concerning samurai and chivalric culture. However a comparative analysis of culture made with the involvement of the medieval Japanese and European sources remains rare in this area. Even fewer comparative works analyze the folding and the evolution of culture of the military estates, from the culture's origins to its transformation through time. The connection of the warrior codes with the cultural tradition of the entire state, with its socio-economic structure, and the problem of foreign borrowings and the independent development of society is rarely viewed in comparative-historical research on this topic. Moreover the psychological and emotional side of life of the medieval soldier is relatively unknown in comparative studies. This highlights the importance and novelty of this study.

The scientific literature is still portrayed in a diametrically opposed approach to the study of mentality, which suggests a natural question about the possibility of adequate reconstruction of shifts in emotional mentality. Multidisciplinary methodology makes it possible to test the results, which also determines the scientific novelty and relevance of this work. In my dissertation I discuss issues related to the historical and methodological validity of such comparisons. A number of questions are raised when comparing samurai and knightly culture. Could it be that one and the same cause led to the appearance of entirely different traditions of military estate in the East and West? Could the phenomenon of culture have completely different origins? Actual comparative-historical analysis of the "The Nibelungenlied" and "The Tale of the Heike" have allowed me to reveal the differences and specific features of the samurai culture and Western European chivalry in their early forms. These sources were chosen for several reasons. Both works are classic examples of the literature of early chivalric and samurai medium. They both are continuations of folk epics and legends, expressed now in writing. "The Tale of the Heike" and "the Nibelungenlied," like all epics, are reflections of the medium in which they were written, its realities and culture. However both sources are not quite folk literature but estate literature: literature of samurai and knights. These transients in the medieval literature are closely related to the development of military estates and land use in Japan in VII-XIII centuries and Germany in

the IV-VII centuries. Therefore, both of these works reflect the stage of formation and accumulation of the moral and behavioral norms that formed the chivalric code and bushido.

An approximate structure of the dissertation:

1. Introduction
2. Historical and cultural interior and basic value orientations of bushido and chivalry
3. Comparative-historical analysis of the mentality within a multidisciplinary analysis
  - a. Death as the most important military ritual
  - b. Humility
  - c. The image of the supreme ruler
  - d. Woman warrior in medieval literature
  - e. Literary features of texts and their meaning
  - f. Verification of the findings and the general comparison of the codes
4. Conclusion

The main goal of my research is to identify the differences and specific features of the samurai and Western European knighthood (as a literary image) that existed during the folding and heyday of the military estates (with the help of sources) as well as the historical roots of these differences. The main research problems considered in the proposed dissertation are the selection of common (typological) features of the samurai estate and knighthood as the basis for comparison, analysis of the historiography of the issue, determination of the main directions of analysis, the selection of specific features of the samurai estate and the knighthood, and the attempt of its analysis and search for their cultural and historical roots.

However, such a comparison requires a reasonable basis for comparison, which is related to a number of historical and methodological problems. Thus, there is the problem of the legitimacy of the comparison of Eastern and Western cultures in general. This problem arises both from large-scale historical debate and the attempt to compare two very different medieval literary works. It is known that historic and calendar time does not frequently coincide, especially when it comes to two distant regions and their vastly different cultures. In this case we can talk about the extraordinary similarity between the processes taking place in Japan in the VII-XIII centuries and Germany in the IV-VII centuries. During this time in both regions the transition from an old to a new order took place, and with it the development of land-use patterns based on relationships of subordination; thus an entire system of these relations developed.

A question of the validity of the comparison is parsed in details in the introduction of the dissertation. Key similarities of the behavioral standards of samurai and knights are analyzed. By analyzing these similarities I define several typological characteristics to justify such a comparison. I consider the literature to analyze the methodological approaches used by previous researchers. Such an analysis is necessary for the formation of our own methodological base taking into account the shortcomings of researchers' approaches remaining gaps and lacunae in the study of the issue. In my published articles "Comparative historical study of the 'Tale of the Heike' and 'The Nibelungenlied': Basis for comparison," [1] and "Bushido and Chivalric Virtue: A Comparative Analysis of 'The Song of the Nibelungs' and 'The Tale of Heike'" [2] I highlight the overriding typological properties of the military estates and define the main directions of comparative historical research of the mentality (mindset and culture) of medieval military estates.

Special attention is devoted to a study of the historical situation and the specifics of the historical development of the regions allowing us to connect the transformation of the behavioral and ethical

norms of bushido and the chivalric code directly with the development of the region and its socio-historical processes. On this basis we can make an attempt to explain the causes of the specific features that exist in the Bushido and chivalric code. This question is the subject of a chapter of the dissertation titled "Historical and Cultural Interior and the Main Value Orientations of Bushido and Chivalry." This chapter's focus is to analyze the origins of samurai estate and knighthood, as well as an etymological analysis of the terms that denote the members of the medieval Japanese and European military estates. A content analysis of the text of the original manuscript "A" of "The Nibelungenlied" was conducted to deepen the analysis of the terms reflecting social structure. Using it I discovered which of these terms are used more frequently in the text of the "Song of the Nibelungs." On the basis of this data I try to draw certain conclusions about the social structure of medieval society in Germany.

My research is a comparative historical study of mentality itself, which is the subject of the chapter "Comparative-historical research of the mentality in the focus of multidisciplinary analysis." This chapter is thematically divided on certain lines of the comparison of culture of military estates: 1) the attitude toward death and customs associated with it; 2) humility as a specific rule for the samurai; 3) the image of the supreme ruler in the military estates; 4) the image of woman warrior in medieval literature; 5) the epic of military estates, their language, and literary features. The lines of comparison may be supplemented during work on the dissertation. Thus, the possible direction of comparative historical research of the undertaken sources can be a study of how the hero is presented in "The Tale of the Heike" and "The Nibelungenlied," and how a hero is depicted in the Japanese and German traditions. In this regard it is possible to consider the assessment of victory and defeat in the literature of medieval military estates. The concepts of cunning and wit in the Japanese and German traditions also require deeper analysis. A possible direction of research may also be a study of the religious institutes in Japan and Germany, and their influence on the formation of values and norms of bushido and chivalric code.

In two recent publications, "The Differences in War Rituals Between Knights and Samurai: Specific Cultural Features or Misconceptions?" [3] and "Submission to Authority and Social Norm in Medieval Military Estates of Japan and Germany," [4] I presented the results of comparative analysis. In particular I analyzed rituals associated with death and the perception of death in the military estates, such as decapitation and drinking the blood of the enemy. The most detailed results are presented in an article entitled, "Submission to Authority and Social Norm in Medieval Military Estates of Japan and Germany" [4] written in collaboration with Professor I.Yu. Nikolaeva. We discuss some of the value orientations of the culture of military estates in medieval Germany and Japan. Revealing the differences, we make assumptions about the origins of humility and attitudes concerning suicide using different methods in complex.

The historiographical base of dissertation is made up of monographs by such well-known researchers as: Hiroaki Sato, Ivan Morris, Archibald Lewis, Winston L. King, Alexander Mescheryakov, Boris G. Mogilnitsky, Aron Gurevich, Nikolaj I. Conrad, Andreas Heusler, Philippe Ariès, Ernest Lavis, Alfred Rambaud, James George Frazer.

After a comparative historical analysis, we see the whole complex of cultural differences, which can be divided into three major groups. The first group includes differences in rituals, images, and phenomena, the origins of which lie in the archaic which is common to all mankind: rituals of drinking blood, decapitation, the image of a woman warrior. The second group consists of different rituals, images, traditions and events that represent specific features of national culture, formed under the influence of climatic, geographic, social, psychological and historical factors: the ritual of seppuku, the phenomenon of modesty as a category of samurai culture, the image of the supreme power, literary traditions of the

ancient Germans in the language and plot of "The Song of the Nibelungs", traditions and norms in the gender area. The third group (closely related to the previous one) comprises the differences due to borrowing specific details of foreign cultures: philosophical and religious (Buddhist) rationale for seppuku, the Chinese literary tradition, the plots in the text and the Sino-elements in the language of "The Tale of Heike," European royal regalia, the image of the Icelandic virgin queen-warrior, taken from the northern songs and sagas.

Let us consider each of the groups.

In the first group I have included differences in rituals, images, and phenomena, the origins of which lie in the archaic which is common to all mankind. I have analyzed one of the brightest of these rituals: the ritual of drinking blood. At first glance, as a particular feature of German culture, this ritual was in fact an echo of the archaic custom that George Frazer in his research classifies as an example of homeopathic magic.

Similar conclusions I'm also doing relative to the other military custom: decapitation. This tradition was distinguished by the researchers of "The Tale of the Heike" as a bright feature of the Japanese military culture, borrowed from China. However, I assume that, like the ritual of drinking blood, the custom of decapitation has deeper, more archaic roots. This is evidenced by the fact that the custom is often mentioned in myths and fairy tales from around the world. This is accompanied by widespread belief that the head is the seat of the soul and the perception of the head as the most important "head" and "capital" organ of human body (as evidenced by the nearly widespread similar semantics of the words with the same root, which means head). The archaic roots are evidenced by the widespread perception among many peoples of the identification of face with honor. As a result, we come to the conclusion that what seemed like a particular feature of Japanese culture, just as in the previous example is peculiar to other cultures.

Another example of the archaic heritage is the image of women warriors in the texts. The frequent occurrence of this image in the myths, legends, and fairy tales of many peoples has allowed us to consider it as an archetype. Thanks to research by I.M. Dyakonov, I tied the origin of this archetype to the social group of women accompanying the troops into battle campaigns. If I use K.G. Jung's definition of archetypes – "universal primordial innate psychic structures that make up the contents of the collective unconscious" – the image of the woman-warrior seems to us a special case of manifestation of the fear of women (matriarchy in the collective unconscious), mythologized and enhanced through the empowerment of women of great physical strength, courage, beauty and high social status.

The second group I have assigned ritual differences, images, traditions and events, which are the specific features of national culture, shaped by climatic, geographical, social, psychological and historical factors. The most evident example is the ritual seppuku, which is a symbol of recognition by the Japanese medieval society of suicide as the norm. Asked about the reasons for the approval of suicide by Japanese society, I turned to the analysis of the living conditions of medieval Japan. As a result of this analysis, I have shown that the natural conditions and low demographic capacity of the landscape of Japanese islands contributed extremely uneven distribution of the population and its high density in areas suitable for rice cultivation.

It is these areas, constantly experiencing problems with overpopulation, that became centers of intense development of Japanese society and culture. From the above, I have assumed that in order to survive the society had to develop a mechanism for getting rid of the weak, unnecessary elements, such as old people and criminals. So, coupled with the introversive nature of medieval Japanese society and its

demographic problems, attitude about sedentarization and a set of other internal mental attitudes, such as an exaggerated sense of shame, fear of loss of face / honor, complemented with a specific "King Lear complex" led, I believe, to Japanese society's recognition of suicide as a norm of behavior.

Climatic, geographic and socio-psychological factors played their importance in the occurrence of such a norm of social behavior as modesty. I hypothesized that, if modesty is taken as a sign of restraint in self-expression and interaction with other people, and restraint as a taboo on the excesses, it is possible to search for the origins of modesty, as a category of Japanese culture, in scarcity, in the limited resources of the Japanese islands. On the other hand, I agree that it is logical to consider modesty as a consequence of the traditional rigid hierarchy of Japanese society on the grounds of social and material well-being, age and sex. The rigidity of the corporate and government social hierarchy is complemented by the extensive use of the dichotomy of senpai-kohai (Head-slave, the senior-junior), permeating all aspects of life in Japan.

The formation of specific features of images of supreme power in medieval Japan and Germany is, how I see it, the consequence of climatic, geographical, social, psychological and historical factors. Responding to a question about the origins of the differences in the images of the supreme power, I was reminded of the original roles of the rulers in Europe and Japan. So the image of the king in the "Song of the Nibelungs" reflected that the institution of royalty in Europe originates from the military - the leading of which may in its turn be explained by natural geographical factors. Since konung was originally a military leader, the most frequent adjectives to kings in the "Song" became the terms "powerful" and "brave".

The Emperor of Japan initially performed priestly functions. That provided the dominant position of the ruler among tribal aristocracy. State development was inextricably linked to the economic sphere (as opposed to military in Germany). The leading role of the economic sphere was due to insulating landscapes, attitudes about sedentarization, and, based on this, the virtual absence of international contacts. As magical support of rice cultivation came from spirits of ancestors of communities, with the union of tribes and social stratification, patrons throughout Yamato became spirits of the imperial family. Therefore the most common epithet to the emperor in "The Tale of the Heike" was the concept of "blessed."

Under the influence of socio-psychological and historical factors, the traditions and norms in the area of gender were formed. I can note differences that existed in the German and Japanese societies with regard to compliance by women to the norms of behavior prescribed by their culture and tradition. In this case, gender analysis has become a mirror of society, as the differences in the degree of subordination in normal gender behavior showed the differences in authoritative norm as the degree of subordination of the individual to social norms and power. Based on this thesis, I have assumed that the authoritarian rule of Japanese medieval society was more rigid; the individual was an integral part of society and was very strong internally, mentally tied to their social group attitudes, class and state.

Thus, the Japanese woman warrior Tomoe, despite its isolation from the standard of women's employment, however, follows the standards of female behavior in respect to her men, and does not allow even the thought of disobedience. It is different from the situation we see in European society, which, on the one hand, more easily admits deviations from the traditional rule, and on the other hand, has greater respect for the individual.

The specific features of national culture are clearly visible in the literary traditions of both works. These are the poetic heritage of the ancient Germans, expressed in the language and plot of "The Song of the

Nibelungs," and non-rhyme, syllabic poetry of Japanese, found in "The Tale of the Heike" as genre of "waka" and its variants: a tanka and renga.

In the third group I classified the differences due to borrowings of specific details from foreign cultures. This, in my opinion, is the philosophical and religious (Buddhist) justification according to which suicide was carried out by men's ripping their abdomen. In Buddhist philosophy it is the belly (of "hara") which is considered the seat of vital energy "ki", so in cutting his stomach, the soldier is not just taking his own life, but also liberating his "inner beginning," his "soul." The literary features of "The Tale of the Heike" were also influenced by the Chinese culture. In the dissertation I have given an example of borrowed plots and some Chinese literary traditions in the text of "The Tale". Also, I have noted such a language feature of "The Tale of the Heike" as the inclusion of Sino-elements, the basic meaning of which was to bring samurai to the high capital courtly culture, which, in its turn equaled to China.

Similarly to Chinese influence in Japan, German culture was subjected to the influence of Roman Empire. As its legacy I considered the main regalia of the European kings - the crown. Another influence on medieval German culture is the interaction with its sister Scandinavian culture, which at the time of the advanced Middle Ages had already found its distinct specificity. Manifestation of this interaction is, in our view, the inclusion in the text of the "Song of the Nibelungs" of the image of the Icelandic virgin queen-warrior, a classic for Scandinavian medieval literature, taken from the northern songs and sagas.

Thus, analyzing the number of differences in the allocation of comparative historical analysis of "Song of the Nibelungs" and "The Tale of the Heike," I have divided them into three meaningful groups based on their origins (archaic, specific national and foreign).

[1] Serkova, Olga. "Comparative historical study of the 'Tale of the Heike' and 'The Nibelungenlied': Basis for comparison." The dialogue of cultures as a historiographical problem: students' seminars' (Department of History, TSU) sourcebook. Tomsk: Tomsk State University Press, 2009. P. 45-48.

[2] Serkova, Olga. "Bushido and Chivalric Virtue: A Comparative Analysis of 'The Song of the Nibelungs' and 'The Tale of Heike.'" Problems of History, International Relations and Documentation: National Youth Conference's Sourcebook #7. Tomsk: Tomsk State University Press, 2011. P. 67-69

[3] Serkova, Olga. "The differences in war rituals between knights and samurai: specific cultural features or misconceptions?" Student and the future of Russia: Abstracts from the 14th Russian Student Scientific Conference, Samara: The Modern University for the Humanities (MUH) Press, 2011. P. 147-150

[4] Serkova, Olga and coauthor Irina Nikolaeva "Submission to authority and social norm in medieval military estates of Japan and Germany." Dialogue with time. Intellectual History Review. 38. Moscow: IWH RAS, 2012. P. 227-240