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SECRETS OF THE MIDDLE AGES. WHO WERE THE KNIGHTS: GREAT WARRIORS OR SIMPLE ROBBERS?

There are a lot of theories or, even, legends about the knights. Most researchers called them courageous warriors, king's valiant servants, gallant gentlemen of beautiful ladies, who had to face many dangers. The other opinion is that the knights were very greedy and cruel robbers, who made their wealth with weapons, and the main activities were robberies.

One way or another, the knights are a great part of medieval history. We can frankly say, they, like a real military power, had written our history. But, in fact, who were those knights and why are there so many opinions about their nature.

First of all, we need to say that a knight was a great feudal lord, who had to participate in different wars. The knights could easily refuse their involvement, if they saw that the battles would bring them nothing; because their entire equipment cost a lot – helmet, shell, shield, spear, sword – they paid much gold to be able to fight. Knights entered a fight when they were absolutely certain that the victory would bring them money, jewels or, even, new lands. So, the main benefits those feudals had from the war were glory, wealth, land, etc.

But, it is enough to just have nice weapons? A good knight needs to know how to use them perfectly from the childhood. That is why they had to train every day and train hard. Small boys had to learn to wear heavy armor since they were 6-8 years of age. About 500 years ago, there were no schools for knights. The son of a lord or a knight was sent away to live at another lord's household, where he would start as a

page. His main duty was to serve the lord and his family their meals; he was educated by observing knights' behavior and good manners. At the age of 14, these young men became squires and were allowed to accompany their lords. If a squire was good enough, he could aspire to be a knight, and there was a very complex ceremony to confer knighthood. After such a ceremony, their real way of a knight would begin – they could take part in wars and campaigns.

As for their military tactic, there are also lots of theories and questions. It is too difficult to say how they waged a war, because in Europe at that time the knights were left to themselves. It was one of the most important reasons why some wars were lost. The knights were not the only ones who took part in campaigns. Every knight brought with him a significant number of servants, armed with spears and axes, who formed infantry units. There is a lot of information in various sources indicating that the knights didn't take good care of their own infantry. If they wanted to engage a deserving enemy, the knights could ride over their own soldiers with horses. Furthermore, there was no military discipline. A knight was a single warrior, a professional since birth. He knew that he had to be the first one and in a fight, he tried to show his bravery as much as he could. However, the knights were not in a hurry to die, and they preferred to run away or surrender to captivity rather than be killed.

The knights were known not only for their campaigns, however. The Middle Ages were permeated with the spirit of highly valued knightly valor. No less important was the knight's faith. They swore to protect the weak, be brave in battle, love their homeland (we can see it in the traditional chivalry literature), and remain morally pure.

Analyzing all given above facts, we can sum up that the era of the knights had a distinct culture that influenced the medieval way of life. Although the knights were robbers and captured cities, they were above all a military force behind European countries, and they always tried to protect their native state.

References

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