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Paper title: “Post-Jōkyū War Consciousness: A Cultural “Middle Age” for Japan?”

Paper abstract:

Originally likened to European feudalism, Japan’s medieval period has recently been recast with criteria and chronology more specific to Japan, cutting Japanese historiography off from global history. This paper tentatively posits one avenue to reintegrate Japan into the global middle ages through the concept of a Eurasian medieval culture, defined as the tension between a nostalgic classical past and a salvific present that marks many medieval sources. In my research, the defeat of a Japanese emperor by a new warrior regime in 1221—the so-called Jōkyū War—was resonant with this same tension, as observers either bemoaned the loss of traditional institutions or celebrated their downfall through scathing critiques. In some texts, moreover, these issues were grounded in the discourse of ancient China, Japan’s “reference culture,” showing again how medieval thinkers aware of their classical past navigated competing models of religion and civilization.

Related Bibliography:

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