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THE BATTLE OF CAJAMARCA: THE CIVILIZATIONAL COST OF MILITARY (MIS)EDUCATION**

(Translation in *Extenso*)

Abstract

This paper analyses the Battle of Cajamarca as a paradigmatic example of the civilizational cost of military miseducation. Exploring the context, course, and consequences of the battle between the Spanish conquistadors led by Pizarro and the Inca, commanded by the divine ruler Atahualpa, the author argues that the victory of the drastically outnumbered Spanish force over the Inca army was not merely the result of technological and tactical superiority, but primarily a consequence of the Spanish commanders' superior educational tradition, including military education in the broader sense. Through the analysis of advantages in weaponry, tactics, and the foundations for strategic decision-making on both sides, the author demonstrates that the Spanish conquistadors derived their advantage from a wide array of knowledge – military engineering, tactics, the social sciences, and a deep understanding of enemy culture – while the Inca, deprived of literacy and an institutionalized educational system, relied on superstition and improvisation. The author concludes that this battle must not remain a mere historical curiosity but should serve

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as a warning about the necessity of systematic, high-level intellectual military education in modern armed forces to prevent potential strategic catastrophes in future conflicts – catastrophes that could mark the end of a culture or even an entire civilization.

Keywords: military education, military engineering, tactics, strategic-level education, Battle of Cajamarca, Inca Empire, conquistadors.

INTRODUCTION

History of civilizational-wise significant changes and shifts might be *prima facie* seen as a centuries-old story about a series of single and decisive events that changed the course of history and shaped the direction of movement of our species. History textbooks are filled with big and significant single events, findings, discoveries, natural disasters and battles, and related names of magnificent people who seemingly independently influenced the future of entire nations, peoples, and civilizations. However, without in any way diminishing the true historical significance of individuals who are nowadays part of a general culture of humanity, as well as some central events of our exciting story, it seems incredibly naive to perceive historically paradigmatic changes as products of exclusively one event or one man, no matter their significance. Significant phenomena and events, as a rule, represent a final critical juncture of the eruption of numerous accumulated deep causes and motives that, quite possibly, accumulate and precipitate for decades and centuries, and their articulation into one concrete event cannot be stopped or postponed.

One can get the impression that this is very clearly evident, precisely in observing the history of political movements of societies and their internal or mutual conflicts. Even though this path of a long historical movement is painted by moments that represent turning points – great revolutions, uprisings, combats, battles, invasions, campaigns, and finally wars – they are almost definitely only a crown of long-term and, above all, complex processes that have been simmering for decades or even centuries under the seemingly calm surface. One such symbolic turning point in the history of an entire civilization indeed is the famous Battle of Cajamarca from the beginning of the 16th century, which, according to the majority of authors who dedicated their careers to researching the

Inca civilization in South America, has marked the point in which begun the end of an entire relatively developed civilization. Still, following the logic of the necessity of deeper reasons and causes of every grand and turning point in history, the Battle of Cajamarca should be perceived as an articulation of many factors that led to the military breakdown of an immensely superior force in numbers. Among numerous factors that contributed to the defeat of the Inca army, of which some have been examined and explained in detail by researchers specialized for this period and/or the Inca civilization, special attention is given to the influence of (mis)education of warriors-participants of this battle on its outcome, and thus the introduction into the collapse of the entire civilization. A look at the impact of (lack of) education in the sphere of military affairs, and related spheres, in the Battle of Cajamarca can still be used today, after almost five centuries, as an exceptional reflection on the importance of military education in all societies, as well as the potentially cataclysmic cost of its lack today.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE BATTLE OF CAJAMARCA

In the rich history of human civilization, one phenomenon is rarely examined as essentially and epochally significant as the entire series of natural and social-humanist sciences is with Columbus's discovery of the "new world". Namely, the "discovery" of America, i.e., Northern, Central and South America, by European sailors at the end of the 15th century marked an epochal change and the beginning of a new phase in perceiving and examining the world – from the perspective of geography and cartography, the perception of the appearance of the planet was completely changed; from the standpoint of biology begun the era of the so-called "Columbus's exchange" of flora and fauna and new genetic combinations; from the perspective of anthropology and sociology, almost everything we knew of societies and cultures had been turned upside down; from the standpoint of economy, the world was in a completely new beginning of the trade process, exploitation of resources, etc. Still, it seems that the significance of this phenomenon is best illustrated in the perception of this phenomenon from the standpoint of history as a science, since indeed the discovery of America is taken as the moment that marks the end of the Middle and the beginning of the New Century.

Not long after the “discovery” of the new world did one of the most significant and, at the same time, most controversial processes in the known history of humankind begin, which social sciences explain not only as a military imperial endeavor but also as a process of an essential and complete transformation of social and economic relations, and the culture as well, not only of the undiscovered but also until then known “Old” World. Of course, we are speaking of the proselytizing “conquest” of America by the Spanish conquistadors with the declared goal of noble civilizing and Christianizing “savage” peoples, with the inevitable “collateral” and profane reward in the form of gold and adventurous glory. Even though in the first years upon the discovery of America, the Spanish expeditions conquered Caribbean islands such as Cuba and Haiti, the first grand success and triumph of conquistadors against one powerful empire was Cortés’s conquest over contemporary Mexico, i.e., the then-empire of the Aztecs. Already in 1519, that is, less than 30 years after Columbus discovered America, the famous Spanish conquistador Hernan Korteze succeeded in defeating the Aztec emperor Moctezuma II and taking over the capital Tenochtitlan, which soon marked the fall of one grand empire of the new world under the boots of a small expedition that came from the old one. The second big American civilization, which succeeded in establishing the biggest empire of the New World and the entire planet at that moment, was the Inca civilization (Cartwright 2016). At its peak in the early 16th century, the Inca empire, Tawantinsuyo, occupied a significant part of South America, primarily the present-day Peru, Chile, and Ecuador territories. The rapid collapse of the Inca Empire marked the beginning of the end of an entire civilization, opening up the path for European empires and the spread of Europeans onto the newly discovered continent, which has remained until present days an overseas outpost of European religion, culture, and the entire European civilization.

CLASH OF CIVILISATIONS AT CAJAMARCA

The battle in the city of Cajamarca on the Peruvian plateau on November 16, 1532, in the history of warfare, is marked as one of the 100 most significant battles ever led (Davis 2001, 190–194). This battle’s significance and general historical importance “can be sought at many levels, where different analyses could certainly be reached” (Sowell 1993, 68), given that it is an event that has shaped the future of a continent and

civilization at different levels. However, from the narrow perspective of military science, this battle is surely that significant and precious for research primarily because, in this battle, the victory was taken by the side which was 476 times (!) smaller in number than the opponent, that is, it is “one of the seemingly ‘most impossible’ episodes in the history of warfare (Guilmartin 1991, 36).

Francisco Pizarro (1478–1541), besides Hernán Cortés, by all means, the most famous Spanish conquistador, left in September 1532 his base in San Miguel de Piura on the west coast of South America towards the Andes and the city of Cajamarca, which he reached with his 168 soldiers¹ on November 15. To the surprise of the Spanish, the city was abandoned entirely since the Inca forces retreated to a hill near the city. At the head of the Inca army, which numbered an impressive 80,000 soldiers, was the god-emperor Atahualpa himself, with his entire court retinue and imperial officials. The conquistadors entered the abandoned city and took over the objects surrounding the central city square. After a sleepless night, Pizarro called the god-emperor Atahualpa to meet in Cajamarca on the central city square. Deployed and hidden in the buildings around the square, the Spanish waited for Atahualpa to enter the city with around 6,000 soldiers, and after a short dispute between Atahualpa and the Dominican friar who accompanied Pizarro,² they attacked their enemies from an ambush. In an attack in which the Spanish used cavalry, infantry, cannons, and rifles, all 6,000–7,000 of Atahualpa’s soldiers were killed in less than an hour while he was captured (Kubler 1945, 419). Not only that not a single Spanish soldier was killed,³ and the conquistadors asserted that only the night saved the rest of Atahualpa’s army outside the city from destruction (Dajmond 2022, 86). Pizarro kept Atahualpa in captivity for almost eight months, all until he extracted an incredible ransom in gold and silver from the Incas. Still, even after receiving everything he asked as the price for the ransom of the god-emperor, on July 26, 1533, Pizarro finally executed Atahualpa. The Battle

¹ Pizarro’s “unit” consisted of 106 infantrymen and 62 cavalries, from which Pizarro also had two cannons (Cartwright 2016).

² According to historical sources, Valverde gifted Atahualpa with the *Holy Scripture*, which the leader of the Incas threw to the ground, angry with the fact that anyone even talked about some “other” God in his presence. Valverde then angrily called on Pizarro to order an attack due to the great insult to Christianity that Atahualpa had committed since he was “not impressed” with the word of God (Seed 1991, 17).

³ The only recorded injury was a cut sustained by Pizarro himself, caused by a careless swing of the sword by one of the conquistadors (Davis 2001, 193).

of Cajamarca and the death of Atahualpa were the introduction to the further advance of the conquistadors and the final collapse of the Inca Empire, which followed soon. How was such an outcome even possible, and which factors led to a completely contra-intuitive dissolution of the conflict, in which a little bit less than 200 Spanish triumphed over the 80,000 soldiers of the Inca Empire? Finally, how could such a mighty empire, counting more than ten million people, be destroyed that fast by a few hundred Spanish (Wachtel 2008, 207)?

FACTORS AND CAUSES OF PIZZARO'S “IMPOSSIBLE” VICTORY

Every reductive monocausal explanation of any complex phenomenon by the necessity dictated by nature is shallow, superficial, and, in essence, wrong. When speaking of historically significant phenomena in which thousands of people participate and whose consequences and implications concern tens of millions, it is clear how pointless it would be to seek one unique and singular cause/reason. In the context of our research, this does not refer solely to the attempt at explaining the entire empire and civilization numbering more than ten million people, in which more than 30 languages are spoken, but also any attempt to explain the outcome of the Battle of Cajamarca by reducing it to one cause, no matter how attractive and comfortable as a “solution” to the problem of explaining one completely unexpected outcome of the clash of 168 and 80,000 people. The weakness and collapse of the Inca Empire were certainly not caused *solely* by heavy defeat in this battle, nor *solely* by the death of Atahualpa – the internal weaknesses of the empire were evident even before November 16, 1532. According to Conrad and Demarest, the internal “economic structure and religious ideology of the Tawantinsuyu Empire” was not sustainable and led to economic collapse (Guilmartin 1991, 40); fierce civil war between the brothers-pretenders to the throne – Atahualpa and Huáscar⁴ significantly weakened the empire from inside, while, according to the most significant interpreters of the said period, exactly this weakness led to the Atahualpa’s decision to let Pizarro’s men even to start their journey towards Cajamarca and his misjudgment about potential allies in the fight against his brother (Kubler 1945, 414–418).

⁴ According to historical sources, Atahualpa killed almost 200 sons of his belated father to eliminate potential pretenders to the throne, as well as the entire Huáscar family (Davis 2001, 192).

Additionally, six to seven years before the encounter with Pizarro, the empire was already under attack from a dangerous European “conqueror”, as deadly epidemics caused by European microbes causing illnesses such as smallpox spread across the continent and, in some places, wiped out almost 90% of the population (Sowell 1993, 68; Cartwright 2016; Dajmond 2022, 95).

The list of causes that led to the victory of the Spaniards in the Battle of Cajamarca and the capture of Atahualpa is not short. However, if we were to seek the smallest common denominator, i.e., for the sublimation of different causes and reasons for Pizarro’s triumph into one common root, we would end our search with success with *education*, that is, *the lack of education* of the opposing military leaders and their warriors. Each of the key factors that, in synergy, determined the outcome of this famous battle can essentially be perceived as a product and result of a lack of education from the military affairs field and education that is indirectly but imperatively important for military leaders.

Superior weapons of the conquistadors

There is a clear consensus among historians and researchers who have studied the Battle of Cajamarca that the *superior weaponry* of the conquistadors compared to that of the Inca warriors was of great importance for the outcome of this battle. Namely, conquistadors were equipped with steel swords, spears, and armor, while facing them were soldiers equipped with clubs and stone weapons, “armored” only with primitive leather and woven tunics (Kubler 1945, 421; Dajmond 2022, 87). Unlike advanced Spanish steel, “the civilizations from the Andes did not possess even bronze weapons, let alone steel ones” (Guilmartin 1991, 41). A significant difference was that the Europeans had *horses*, animals never seen before by the inhabitants of the New World, and thus, they “never learned how to defend from the cavalry attack” (42) or adjust to that type of combat. However, researchers place the most emphasis on the fact that Pizarro’s forces possessed *firearms* entirely unknown to their enemies and which were able to cause deadly damage that the Incas had never dreamed of.

The fact that the scale of Spanish supremacy in weapons and equipment was similar to the supremacy of the Incas in numbers and that the victory was taken by the better armed and equipped army, even though significantly inferior in numbers, speaks in favor of the decisive

importance of scientific and technological development in the military field, as well as education in the fields of construction and weapons improvement in the broadest sense. Moving within the discourse of contemporary armies and modern military education, today we could say that the historical example which is the focus of our interest in this paper indicates the historically exceptional significance of education in the field of defense technologies in the broadest sense, i.e., in the fields of military mechanical engineering, military electronic engineering, and military chemical engineering. The Battle of Cajamarca showed that the *power of knowledge* in developing weapons and equipment could compensate for a huge disproportion in the size of the two opposing armies.

Still, to avoid the aforementioned trap of reductivity and monocausality in explaining complex phenomena, it should be stressed that all the previously mentioned factors were insufficient for the triumph of 168 soldiers, no matter the superiority of their weapons, over tens of thousands of their enemies. Even the most significant comparative advantage of the Spanish – firearms – could not bring an advantage on its own. Namely, Pizarro had at his disposal only two primitive cannons, which took a long time to charge before being fired next time, while the total number of rifles was only ten. Moreover, they were arquebuses, muskets known for relatively imprecise shooting and taking a long time to load the rifle for every next shot (Dajmond 2022, 89). Equally important was *how* the Spanish soldiers used their weapons.

Superior tactic of the conquistadors

The Battle of Cajamarca also stressed that *knowledge* of how to most efficiently and most effectively use the personnel, weapons, and equipment available to the commander on a tactical level is at least equally important as the material-technical factor of the military power itself. Even though, according to historically available data, a “minimal number of Spanish had any direct military experience from Europe” (Hennessy 1993, 14), and thus practically exactly in Cajamarca had their “Baptism of fire” in combat, their organization, cohesion and discipline were categorically advanced compared to their enemies, primarily thanks to their commander Pizarro, often described as “a decisive military strategist who single-handedly conducted appointment and commanding the troops” with extensive preparations and planned reconnaissance before the battle (Seed 1991, 16). The revolutionary Spanish tactic and

“combat method” from the end of the 15th and the beginning of the 16th century had no rivals even among the European armies, let alone in a clash with an opponent who lacked elementary tactical education.⁵ As Guilmartin (Guilmartin 1991, 55; 64) concludes, “tactical innovations of Gonzalo de Córdoba [...] as well as the appearance of *tercio*, probably before the permanent military formation in the contemporary sense of the word, are the evidence of Spanish warfare ingenuity in this key era” and the finesse of the Spanish soldiers’ combat, perfected during the wars in Italy. The ingenuity was confirmed in full in the battle in which the Spanish battled an almost 500 times bigger in size enemy.⁶

Pizzaro used the tactical naivety of Atahualpa,⁷ who retracted the army from the city onto the hill nearby and used the “architecture of this city of the Incas, which resembled a labyrinth” (Cartwright 2016) to set deadly ambushes with very few people and equipment. Pizzaro divided his cavalry into several strike groups and did similarly with the infantry while positioning the few people with rifles and two cannons onto the highest points of buildings surrounding the square where he met the Incas. As he was well aware of the “multiplying effect of surprise of combat efficiency” and “significance of tactical coordination” of troops (Guilmartin 1991, 54), the Spanish commander kept his troops completely hidden until the order was given that through a coordinated attack by several cavalry and infantry strike groups, accompanied by cannon and rifle fire from the rooftops completely paralyze the enemy, bring panic and havoc among their ranks.⁸ Moreover, finally defeated to such an

⁵ This does not mean that the Incas were incapable of learning during the war and adapting to what they saw and experienced in battle. However, the lack of education that would enable them to *enter* the fight prepared and adapted instead of paying the expensive price of learning proved to be cataclysmic.

⁶ The Battle of Cajamarca, of course, was not the only confirmation of this fact. In the next few years, the Spaniards succeeded in defending with only around 200 people cities that were attacked by several dozen and even hundreds of thousands of soldiers (Dajmond 2022, 88). According to historical sources, about 190 conquistadors managed for almost a year to defend from the siege of Cusco in 1536/1537, although the size of the army that besieged Cusco during that year ranged between one hundred and four hundred thousand soldiers! (Guilmartin 1991, 50).

⁷ Davis records that “the fact that Atahualpa left such a fortress to people with firearms clearly shows that he did not have a clue about what he was facing” (Davis 2001, 192).

⁸ Pizzaro also relied on the sound of horns and bells he put on horses to produce greater fear and panic among the Incas (Dajmond 2022, 85). It could even be said that Pizzaro’s idea, as well as the behavior of Incas in Cajamarca, are the blatant historical examples of the definition of panic in combat several centuries later Todor Pavlović provided,

extent that well-informed observers of the event would write centuries later that “it was not a battle, but a massacre” (Davis 2001, 193). Even though the circumstances, of course, changed compared to what Pizarro faced in 1532, the significance of researching and knowing his tactical decisions is not small even today, given that, as Todor Pavlović writes, there is a connection between what tactics are now and what they once were: every development is a continuous continuation of the changes in the initial sprout” (Pavlović 2025, 43).

The exquisite capability of commanding and optimally using people, equipment, and the space in which the Battle of Cajamarca took place is a practical demonstration of the importance of the education of commanders in the field of tactics, but also in the fields of what we would call today command and control. Faced with a drastically more numerous enemy in enemy territory and far from any reinforcements, Pizarro relied on a coordinated and well-thought-out use of the resources at his disposal, making ample use of the advantages of the terrain in which the battle was being fought, as well as the tactical elements of surprise and instilling panic in the enemy ranks.

Military education of the “strategic” level

The conquistador commander’s exquisite skill in using the product of the Spanish military technical thought and the tactical-command finesses and innovations “honed” during the decades before his arrival in the New World⁹ was instrumental in achieving the ultimate, strategic goal of destruction of the Inca Empire and takeover of the entire continent. The key assumption for achieving the final goal was the capture of the God-emperor Atahualpa in combat, since such a scenario was the only one that rationally ensured the fulfillment of the strategic intention of the conquistadors. Pizarro managed to turn the distinctive feature of the complete centralization of authority in the personality of the

according to which panic is not produced only “with real danger, but also with the idea created of it”, and which turns the military caught by it into a “crowd of frantic fugitives” (Đukić i Starčević 2025).

⁹ We must not forget Pizarro’s exquisite skill in the sphere of what we today call military logistics in the context of military science, in the dimension in which the absolute superiority was on the side of the Incas (Guilmartin 1991, 50). Pizarro managed to equip his unit for a long march to an unknown location and then fight in unfamiliar terrain, with no chance of any logistical communication with the “base” or the supply of any resources for this endeavor.

God-emperor in the civilization and culture of the Incas, militarily articulated through direct, strategic command and control, into their greatest weakness, which he then exploited with “cruel efficacy” to the maximum (Guilmartin 1991, 54) – even after the capture of Atahualpa, the army of the Incas remained for almost eight months under his direct command, which they carried out without question while he was in the hands of the Spanish.¹⁰ Of course, Pizarro was not only guided by the example and lessons learned from his famous “colleague” conquistador Hernán Cortés, who had only conquered around fifteen years earlier, to be exact. On November 14, 1519, “arrested” by trickery, that is, captured the Aztec Emperor Moctezuma in his capital, Tenochtitlan. That way, it quickly conquered Mexico and sent Aztec civilization into history (Davis 2001, 192). However, he also “set his ambush to Atahualpa openly, following the footsteps of the successful Cortés strategy” (Dajmond 2022, 94). As Sowell (1993, 69) aptly notes, the Spaniards *learned* quickly and thus, in only a decade and a half of conquering the New World, “they *learned* how to attack and defeat the mighty imperial force” they could never be able to defeat by “classical” approach and fight to the last man.

At this level, the drastic disparity and difference in the level of education between the Incas and the Spanish is perhaps most evident. Pizarro’s idea was not only based on the previous experience of Cortés but also on the fact that the Spaniards made a significant effort to *examine* and *understand* the culture of the people in the New World, i.e., the culture and habits of their war enemies, and thus, they arrived before Cajamarca completely prepared. Additionally, the military and historical education of the Spaniards enabled them to also rely on the experiences of not only the legendary military leader El Cid from the glorious period of Reconquista of the 11th century but also on more recent experiences from the Italian wars during which, on many occasions, victories were reached by capturing the “noble” hostages, such as the King Francis I of France, who was captured by the Spanish in the Battle of Pavia, or Pope Clement VII, captured during the fall of Rome (Covey 2019, 2). In short, the conquistadors belonged to the “tradition of education”, in which there was a centuries-old practice of education and learning of “civilizations

¹⁰ Dozens of thousands of Atahualpa’s soldiers who surrounded Cajamarca did nothing to save their God-emperor, neither during the battle nor during his captivity, since he ordered them so via Spanish intermediaries (Davis 2001, 192). It is only natural that such, or any other unfavorable order, would never pass the first obstacle and “censorship” of his captors.

distant from Europe, and about several hundred long European histories” (Dajmond 2022, 94). The conquistadors did not arrive at the New World by carrying only advanced weapons and tactical knowledge, but also the invaluable heritage of *knowledge* on history, culture, man, and human societies accumulated over centuries. On the other hand, the commander-in-chief of the Incas, like his colleague Moctezuma, was prone to superstitions and misbeliefs, completely uneducated and not at all interested in understanding the enemy (Hennessy 1993, 11). Moreover, Atahualpa, even in captivity, remained completely limited by assumptions of his culture and was unable to comprehend and understand the motives of his captors or their final goal, which cost him his life and his empire, even though he filled the chambers of conquistadors with gold and silver (Kubler 1945, 422–425).

Again, avoiding the trap of reductionism and monocausality of complex phenomena, one should in no way diminish the influence of the superior weapon and tactical superiority of the conquistadors; however, it seems that the crucial and essential weight in the Battle of Cajamarca was the Spanish military education of a “strategic” level. Knowing the military history and psychology, the opponent’s culture, society, social and state structure, civilizational habits, and ways of thinking about the world and the conflict enabled the Spaniards to use superior tactics and weaponry to reach the final strategic goal, the Battle of Cajamarca. The Spaniards’ belonging to a tradition of education enabled them to make war decisions not based on personal whims or “signs from heaven”, but on “drawing” from an almost endless reservoir of knowledge accumulated over millennia from the most diverse areas of human social existence. Returning to the discourse of contemporary military education, we can conclude that the vast and decisive influence on the outcome of the battle which determined the fate of a civilization, in which a drastically numerically inferior side, completely isolated and cut-out, triumphed in the heart of the enemy territory, has the winner’s *strategic-level education*, i.e., education in the fields of history, sociology, philosophy, political science, anthropology and psychology. In one word, knowledge from the field of social and humanistic sciences.

CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE OF THE LESSON FROM CAJAMARCA

The Battle of Cajamarca is not and should not remain just an interesting dash from the rich history of warfare, only a curiosity and an interesting fact from military history. When examining the outcomes and lessons learned from the analyzed battle from the standpoint of contemporary societies and modern military education systems, it is important to stress two key things so that the lessons from Cajamarca would remain relevant and applicable in the 21st century. First, an obstacle to military education among the Incas was the lack and tradition of illiteracy – today, we could hardly imagine a conflict in which one side would belong to the tradition of illiteracy. However, the appearance of anti-intellectualism in many contemporary armies of the world points that even in literate societies and literate systems, resistance to *education*, i.e., *functional and operational literacy*, can emerge, especially when speaking of the key education of strategic level, which asks for deeper understanding of occurrences and processes significant for military affairs. This is precisely the key level of education that enabled the Spaniards to shake down an entire empire with, from the current standpoint, a banally small army.

Second, though equally important, it is necessary to distinguish between military education and military training. Moreover, just as it would undoubtedly be disastrous for any army to forsake training for the sake of intellectual education, due to the very nature of the army as an institution, history seems to indicate that neglecting education at the expense of training would be equally disastrous in the event of a conflict with an army that did not neglect that same education. As Jeftić and Vuruna (2009, 164) write regarding the reform of military education in the Republic of Serbia, “we are speaking of two processes which only together can give the desired result”. Kime and Anderson (1997, 4), in their study on the difference between education and training in the military, take a step further and state that at the dawn of the third millennium, military training is completely ineffective if the foundation of military education is missing. Therefore, military education must be understood as a strategic issue in every modern army, especially those facing not-so-naïve security challenges, risks, and threats.

CONCLUSION – CIVILIZATIONAL PRICE OF (MIS)EDUCATION

The Battle of Cajamarca represents one of the most significant battles in the history of the study of war, as it opened a historical abyss into which a monumental empire and, with it, an entire civilization soon plunged irretrievably. Sublimation of the entire discussion on the factors and causes of the “impossible” win of the conquistadors over the Incas is most precisely formulated from the anthropological standpoint, according to which the “encounter between Atahualpa and the Spaniards constitutes an episode which would the French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss call ‘the lesson of literacy’, i.e., a classical scene of encounter between the literate and illiterate culture” (Seed 1991, 8). The literacy of the European civilization enabled the military education of Pizarro and conquistadors, which, through the synergy of knowledge from the field of military engineering, tactics, logistics, social and humanistic sciences, etc., brought down at Cajamarca a numerically and logistically completely and categorically superior empire, thus marking the beginning of the end of the entire civilization and all its attributes - culture, language, religion, art, etc. The epistemological vacuum created by the tradition of illiteracy, and thus the miseducation of military leaders and soldiers of the Incas, could not be compensated for even by the advantage measured in hundreds of thousands of soldiers clashing with a vastly smaller army; however, the army, which consisted of less than 170 soldiers, also carried with it the accumulated knowledge and experience of a glorious and advanced thousand-year-old European civilization.

The Battle of Cajamarca represents an illustrative and blatant example of the civilizational price of the lack of education of military leaders – the ones standing between civilization and its irreversible historical abyss. Thus, it is necessary that contemporary armies, including the Military of Serbia in the contemporary security environment, have in mind at any moment the significance and importance of optimal and systematic military education of members of the military profession, as well as to perceive it in its true essence – as a necessary high-intellectual and functionally different from military training.¹¹ Looking through the theoretical prism of Habermas (1971, 301–317), military education from different fields must have a goal to develop all three types of knowledge

¹¹ Naturally, such education is just as meaningful in the context of “expanded deterrence”. More on this concept in (Blagojević 2025, 41–57).

– analytical, hermeneutic and critical – so that modern officers could know “what”, “how” and “why” in the moments when the fate of an entire civilization and culture potentially rests on their shoulders.

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БИТКА КОД КАХАМАРКЕ: ЦИВИЛИЗАЦИЈСКА ЦЕНА ВОЈНОГ (НЕ)ОБРАЗОВАЊА**

Резиме

У овом раду аутор анализира Битку код Кахамарке као парадигматичан пример цивилизацијске цене војног необразовања. Истражујући контекст, ток и последице битке између шпанских конкистадора предвођених Пизаром и Инка на чијем је челу био бого-цар Атавалпа, аутор указује да победа бројчано драстично инфериорне шпанске војске над војском Инка није била резултат само технолошке и тактичке надмоћи, већ превасходно последица супериорне традиције образовања, укључујући ту и војно образовање у ширем смислу, из које су дошле шпанске војсковође. Кроз анализу предности у наоружању, тактици и темељу за доношење стратегијских одлука обе стране, аутор показује да су шпански конкистадори своју предност деривирали из широког обима знања из области војног инжењерства, тактике, и друштвено-хуманистичких наука те познавању непријатељске културе, док су Инке, лишене писмености и институционализованог система образовања, своју судбину препустиле сујеверју и импровизацији. Аутор закључује да ова битка не сме остати пука историјска занимљивост, већ напротив мора представљати опомену о нужности систематског војног образовања на високо-интелектуалном нивоу у савременим војскама, како би се избегла потенцијална стратегијска катастрофа у будућим конфликтима која може означити крај једне културе или чак цивилизације.

Кључне речи: војно образовање, војно инжењерство, тактика, образовање стратегијског нивоа, Битка код Кахамарке, царство Инка, конкистадори.

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