



Ancient World Values Survey: Romantic love

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► To cite this version:

| Nicolas Baumard. Ancient World Values Survey: Romantic love. 2021. hal-03907620

HAL Id: hal-03907620

<https://hal.science/hal-03907620>

Submitted on 20 Dec 2022

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This version: 28/09/2021

If you detect a mistake or want to complement this survey, please email
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Introduction

DELIMITATION OF THE SAMPLE

The sample was decided a priori based on the amount of data in literary history and economic history. 19 areas were included:

- 2000 BCE – 500 BCE: Egypt (from Ancient Egyptian) and Mesopotamia (from Sumerian and Akkadian).
- 500 BCE – 500 CE: Eastern Mediterranean (from Ancient Greek), Western Mediterranean (from Latin), India (from Sanskrit and Tamil), Central Asia (from Persian), China (from Chinese)
- 500 CE – 1800 CE: England (from English), France (from French), Germany (from German), Italy (from Italian), Spain (from Castilian), Low Countries (from Dutch), Ireland (from Irish), Wales (from Welsh), Iceland and Norway (from Old Norse), Russian (from East Slavic), Japan (from Japanese), Arabic world (from Arabic), India (from Sanskrit, Tamil and Urdu), Central Asia (from Persian), China (from Chinese)

In order to have comprehensive series, we then completed the series with additional literary traditions when needed (Persian in Early Modern India, Latin in Early Medieval France, etc.). This method is common practice in cultural history. For instance, the authors of the *Handbook of Spanish Literature* write: ‘As “Spain” did not exist as a political entity in the Middle Ages, we will have to understand the term “medieval Spanish literature” to be merely a useful shorthand for something like “the literature written in the medieval period in that geographical area corresponding, roughly, to the borders of the present-day Spanish state.”’ (Gies, 2004). Such a definition means that a survey of Spanish literature will include ‘a number of languages and literary traditions we identify today with names like Latin, Occitan, Catalan, Galician-Portuguese, and Aragonese, in addition to the Arabic, Hebrew, and Castilian.’ (Gies, 2004).

TEMPORAL AND SPATIAL LEVEL OF ANALYSIS

The temporal and spatial level of analysis were decided based on the availability of economic data. Before the 19th c., it is impossible to go below the national level for most countries. The only exception is the Roman Empire where some estimates allow for distinguishing between the Western part and the Eastern part of the Empire, which corresponds to our Latin and Greek areas.

To limit bias in data analysis, we use standard historical periods whenever possible, deferring to Wikipedia to label each period. In particular, we use the same temporal division for all European countries: Early Medieval period (500 – 1000), Central Medieval period (1000 - 1300), Late Medieval period (1300 – 1500) and Early Modern period (1500 – 1800). These temporal division do not always match the evolution of economic development. However, they allow for limiting the degrees of freedom in the analysis. In the end, the combination of the 19 geographical areas and their standard historical periods leads to 77 cases of observation.

PRESENTATION OF THE SURVEY

The survey is organized by geographic areas (e.g. Greece, England, etc.), and within one geographical area by historical periods, with the earlier periods first.

Comparison within the same area (e.g. Archaic Greece and Hellenistic Greece) are thus naturally presented in the relevant section (e.g. Greece). The survey thus starts with the most ancient traditions (e.g. Ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia) and ends with the most recent (e.g. Iceland and Norway, Russia).

In each case, the survey proceeds as follow:

- Economic Development across periods (when possible Living Standards and Human Development indicators were added)
- Evolution of love in cultural history

Results

Table 1: Relative importance of romantic love by area and by period

Periods		References	Evolution
Least developed	Most developed		
Late Republic (Latin)	Early Empire (Latin)	Dixon, 1992; Ewald, 2003; Jeppesen-Wigelsworth, 2010; Norena, 2007	Increase
Early Medieval Europe	Central Medieval Europe	de La Roncière, 2009; Duby, 1981, 1988; Joye, Santinelli, & Bühner-Thierry, 2013; Reddy, 2012; Rougemont, 1939; Schnell, & Schield, 1998; Stone, 2011	Increase
Late Medieval Europe	Early Modern Europe	de La Roncière, 2009; Duby, 1981; Duby, 1988; Reddy, 2012; Rougemont, 1939; Schnell, & Shields 1998; Stone, 2011	Increase
Early Medieval Norway	Central Medieval Norway	Ariès, 1982; Coontz, 2006; Daumas, 1996; Daumas, 2004; Macfarlane, 1986; Stone, 1977	Increase
Medieval Russia	Medieval Europe	Levin, 2018; Sobol, 2011	Increase
Medieval Russia	Early Modern Russia	Sobol, 2011	Increase
Early Modern Russia	Early Modern Europe	Sobol, 2011	Increase
Pre-Tang Dynasties	Tang Dynasty	Luo, 2015; Owen, 1995, 1996; Yue, 2012	Increase
Tang Dynasty	Song Dynasty	Bossler, 2011	Increase
Song Dynasty	Ming Dynasty	Carlitz, 2011; Lee, 2006; Pan, 2015	Increase
Ming Dynasty	Qing Dynasty	Lee, 2006; Pan, 2015	Increase
19 th c. China	19 th c. W. Europe	Lee, 2006; Pan, 2015	Increase
19 th c. Japan	19 th c. W. Europe	Bassino, Broadberry, Fukao, Gupta, Takashima, 2019; Baten, & Van Zanden, 2008; Butel, 2012; Keene, 1999; Morris, 2013; Morton, 1997; Pan, 2015; Suzuki, 2010; Yokota-Murakami, & Yokota, 1998	Increase

1. Ancient Egypt (2000 BCE – 300 BCE)

To the best of our knowledge, there is no systematic study of the diachronic evolution of romantic love in Ancient Egypt outside of literary history.

2. Mesopotamia (2000 BCE – 550 BCE)

To the best of our knowledge, there is no systematic study of the diachronic evolution of romantic love in Mesopotamia outside of literary history.

3. Greek world (800 BCE – 1800 CE)

To the best of our knowledge, there is no systematic study of the diachronic evolution of romantic love in Ancient Greece outside of literary history. Studies of romantic love do not differentiate one period from the other. There are works on the evolution of marriage or sex in Ancient Greece (Cantarella, 2002; Harper, 2013; P. Veyne, 1992). However, they do not specifically discuss romantic feeling.

Cantarella, E. (2002). *Bisexuality in the ancient world*. Yale University Press.

Harper, K. (2013). *From shame to sin*. Harvard University Press.

Veyne, P. (1992). *A history of private life : From pagan Rome to Byzantium*. Belknap.

4. Indian world (800 BC – 1800 CE)

To the best of our knowledge, there is no systematic study of the diachronic evolution of romantic love in India outside of literary history.

5. Persian world (500 BCE – 1800 CE)

To the best of our knowledge, there is no systematic study of the diachronic evolution of romantic love in the Persian World outside of literary history.

6. Latin world (300 BCE – 500 CE)

Table 1: Relative importance of romantic love by period (predicted and observed)

Periods		Prediction	Observations
Least developed	Most developed		
Late Republic	Early Empire	Increase	Increase

FROM THE LATE REPUBLIC TO THE EARLY EMPIRE

A range of cues indeed suggests that love became a more important value between the late Republic and the early empire: tomb inscriptions celebrating conjugal happiness, letters from exile lamenting the absence of the loved spouse (from Cicero, Ovid, Pliny), debates in

the senate revealing the emotional bounds between spouses in aristocratic circles, philosophical treatises emphasizing the role of love in marriage (Plutarch's *Conjugal Precepts*, Musonius Rufus), biographies of exemplary women, etc. The evolution is visible notably in collection of anecdotes (such as Valerius Maximus's collection of stories of outstanding conjugal affection) or in collection of biographies (such as Plutarch's *Parallel lives*): in both cases, manifestations of love are rare before the 1st c. BCE and are of a different character, stressing duty rather than sentiment (Dixon, 1992). In the same way, idealized scenes of marriage became increasingly common on the senatorial sarcophagi in the imperial era. Whereas the more ancient sarcophagi focused almost exclusively on the military accomplishments of senators, later sarcophagi display more domestic and private scenes, emphasizing family and children (Ewald, 2003; Norena, 2007). The evolution is also visible in moral philosophy. 'Where Aristotle saw relations between husband and wife as hierarchical and less intense than those between parents and children (*Nichomachean Ethics*, 8.12) (...), Musonius Rufus's chapters on marriage (fragments 13a-14) stress the complementary qualities and responsibilities of husband and wife and the special quality of married love' (Dixon, 1992). Finally, the study of thousands of inscription suggests a change in values: epithets depicting a loving/beloved wife (*amantissima*, *dulcissima*) and a faithful and chaste wife (*fidelissima*, *castissima*, *pudicissima*) are appear rather late in the Roman material and statistically more frequent in the 3rd c. than in the 1st. c. (Jeppesen-Wigelsworth, 2010). To sum up, the cultural evolution of love in fictions seems to parallel the cultural evolution of love in others cultural domains.

Dixon, S. (1992). *The Roman Family*. JHU Press.

Ewald, B. C. (2003). Sarcophagi and senators : The social history of Roman funerary art and its limits- Verlag Philipp von Zabern, Mainz am Rhein 2001). Pp. 146, pls. 24. ISBN 3-8053-2696-3. *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, 16, 561–571.

Jeppesen-Wigelsworth, A. D. (2010). *The Portrayal of Roman Wives in Literature and Inscriptions* [PhD Thesis]. University of Calgary.

Norena, C. F. (2007). Hadrian's chastity. *Phoenix*, 296–317.

7. China (300 CE – 1800 CE)

Table 2: Relative importance of romantic love by area and by period (predicted and observed)

Periods		Prediction	Observations
Least developed	Most developed		
Pre-Tang Dynasties	Tang Dynasty	Increase	Increase
Tang Dynasty	Song Dynasty	Increase	Increase
Song Dynasty	Ming Dynasty	Increase	Increase
Ming Dynasty	Qing Dynasty	Increase	Increase
19 th c. China	19 th c. W Europe	Europe > China	Europe > China

FROM PRE-TANG DYNASTIES AND TANG DYNASTY

Although love stories have been central in the study of the cultural evolution of romantic love in China, a few works have considered additional materials such as biographies, anecdotes, epitaphs, poetry or judiciary texts. These works demonstrate a clear increase in the cultural importance of romantic love from the Tang dynasty onward that parallels the evolution depicted in the above sections on literary narratives.

The Tang dynasty first saw the emergence of a new ‘culture of romance’ to use Stephen Owen’s famous label (Owen, 1995, 1996). In this new culture, officials were not celebrated only as filial sons or righteous civil servants, as in earlier times, but also as devoted lovers.

‘Prior to the ninth century, the identity of men and women were generally defined by family lineage, social status or moral character. Those deemed praiseworthy were then esteemed as members of the elite, or as upright officials, filial sons or virtuous wives, and kind mothers. During the ninth century, however, men and women began to be judged by the quality of their romantic sentiments.’ (Yue, 2012)

Literati started to write about their romantic associations with courtesans in their youth, gifted poets wrote of themselves as participants in romantic affairs, and funerary inscriptions, despite their very conservative character, start evoking romantic feelings toward the deceased as well as the quality of the his or her emotional life. In the same way, the celebration of the love between the Emperor Xuanzong of Tang (685 – 762) and his concubine Yang Guifei in the “Ballad of Eternal Sorrow” (*Changhen ge*) and its companion work, “An Account of the ‘Ballad of Eternal Sorrow’” (*Changhen ge zhuan*) hen Hong demonstrates the increasing value of love defining people, including political leaders (Luo, 2015). There is thus an agreement between literary history and cultural history.

Luo, M. (2015). *Literati storytelling in late medieval China*. University of Washington Press.

Owen, S. (1995). What Did Liuzhi Hear? The “Van Terrace Poems” and the Culture of Romance. *Tang Studies*, 1995(13), 81–118.

Owen, S. (1996). *The End of the Chinese ‘Middle Ages’: Essays in Mid-Tang Literary Culture*. Stanford University Press.

Yue, H. (2012). Romantic Identity in the Funerary Inscriptions (muzhi) of Tang China. *Asia Major*, 33–62.

FROM THE TANG DYNASTY AND THE SONG DYNASTY

The cultural importance of romantic love also increased between the Tang and the Song, although scholarship is more limited. This increase is notably visible through women’s private poetry (Bossler, 2011), literary biographies of courtesans (Bossler, 2011), as well as through funerary texts concerning women who start celebrating not only their fidelity, but also their emotional commitment to their lover (through voluntary seclusion, illness, even suicide) (Bossler, 2011, 2013).

Bossler, B. (2011). Fantasies of Fidelity : Loyal Courtesans to Faithful Wives. *Beyond Exemplar Tales: Women’s Biography in Chinese History*, 158–74.

Bossler, B. (2013). *Courtesans, concubines, and the cult of female fidelity*. Harvard University Press.

FROM THE SONG DYNASTY AND THE MING DYNASTY

Under the Ming dynasty, love became a central value, in particular in marriage. For instance, Katherine Carlitz notes the striking emphasis by male epitaph writers in late Ming times on conjugal affection between husbands and wives (Carlitz, 2011). The ethical discourse on love started also to evolve. While the traditional Confucian ethics granted more value to the link between father and son, and between parents of the same clan, Ming intellectuals granted an increasing importance to the attachment between spouses. The renowned iconoclast Li Zhi (1527–1602), for example, write that

‘Husband and wife comprise the beginnings of human life. Only after there has been a husband-wife relation can there be a father-son relation (...) Should the relationship between husband and wife be proper, then all the relations among the myriad of living things and nonliving matter will also be proper.’ (cited in Lee, 2006)

Also, the old orthodox Confucianism proscribed overt manifestations of conjugal attachment and commended suicidal women (in defense of their chastity) in terms evocative of heroism (*lie*) rather than sentimentalism (*qing*). Ming intellectuals challenged the Confucian ideology and granted priority of sentiment over heroism, obedience and duty (see Lee, 2006 for a review). This movement culminated in Feng Menlong’s famous collection of stories untitled *The Anatomy of Love* (Lee, 2006; Pan, 2015a, Wang, 1994).

Carlitz, K. (2011). Lovers, Talkers, Monsters, and Good Women : Competing Images in Mid-Ming Epitaphs and Fiction. *Beyond Exemplar Tales: Women’s Biography in Chinese History*, 175–92.
Lee, H. (2006). *Revolution of the heart : A genealogy of love in China, 1900-1950*. Stanford University Press.
Pan, L. (2015). *When True Love Came to China*. Hong Kong University Press.
Wang, R. G. (1994). The cult of Qing: Romanticism in the late Ming period and in the novel Jiao Hong ji. *Ming Studies*, 1994(1), 12-55.

FROM THE MING DYNASTY AND THE QING DYNASTY

The rise of romantic love continued during the Qing dynasty (Lee, 2006; Pan, 2015a; Paul, 1993). This is notably visible in women’s writing of love poetry which served as a major means of communication in expressing affection and offering mutual emotional support between husband and wives, and probably ‘helped spur the development of conjugal love and companionate marriages within the gentry class’ (Paul, 1993). There is thus an agreement between literary history and cultural history.

Lee, H. (2006). *Revolution of the heart : A genealogy of love in China, 1900-1950*. Stanford University Press.
Pan, L. (2015). *When True Love Came to China*. Hong Kong University Press.

EARLY MODERN CHINA COMPARED TO EARLY MODERN EUROPE

Several works have compared the relative importance of love in China and Europe at the time when China came into contact with the European literature in the end of the 19th. They show that when Chinese and Europeans started to read each other’s literature, they were strike by how limited the importance of love was in the Chinese culture (Lee, 2006; Pan,

2015a). A good example of this cultural dynamic is the case of the French novel *La dame aux camélias* which was one of the first European novels translated into Chinese. First published in 1848, the novel deals with the conflict between true love and social respectability.

Armand Duval, the male character, wages a double-front battle against his bourgeois father who wants a respectable marriage and against his aristocratic milieu who regards women first and foremost as sexual conquest. The story celebrates constancy, disinterestedness, reciprocity, spiritual communion, and selfless sacrifice on the other against money, social rites, standards of distinction, intrigues, hierarchies, and calculation.

La dame aux camélias instantly claimed a devoted and broad readership base, captivating readers with its portrayal of modern love and inspiring local versions. For instance, Xu Zhenya (1889–1937), the author of the bestseller of the period, *Jade Pear Spirit* (1912), styled himself as the ‘Dumas of the Orient,’ recognizing his debt to the French novel. As historian Lynn Pan notes: ‘no character in any Chinese novel would have avowed love so much.’ Here are some examples:

‘I love you as I never believed I could love anybody,’ (Marguerite)

‘We love each other! What does the rest matter?’ (Armand)

‘...no man has ever loved you as I do.’ (Armand)

‘Let’s be clear about this: are you really in love with me?’ (Armand)

‘This love of ours, my dearest Armand, is no ordinary love. You love me as though I’d never belonged to anyone else . . .’ (Marguerite)

Although 18th c. works such as *Dream of the Red Chamber* share some similar features as *La Dame aux Camélias* (the confessional mode, the forging of new gender relations, and the heroism of renunciation), many Chinese readers recognized that Dumas makes the love between Armand Duval and Marguerite Gautier noble and self-sacrificing, ‘raising it to a loftier plane than any Chinese would have done before their exposure to Western fiction’ (Pan, 2015a, p. 94). Even today, as the Chinese writer Eileen Chang write: ‘we Chinese don’t much love, and even our love stories don’t often tell of love’ (Pan, 2015a, p. 7)

These remarks on the difference between European and Chinese literary traditions match observations by cultural historians of love. For instance, Arthur Waley, the great orientalist and Bloomsbury figure, opposed the importance of love in Europe to the importance of friendship in China:

‘It has been the habit of Europe to idealize love at the expense of friendship and so to place too heavy a burden on the relation of man and woman. The Chinese erred in the opposite direction, regarding their wives and concubines simply as instruments of procreation. For sympathy and intellectual companionship they looked only to their friends.’ (Pan, 2015a, p. 7)

Another example is the invention of new words to describe the emotions found in European novels. For Zhang Xichen (1889 – 1969), the Chinese language had no word to the English ‘love’ which is the reason so many readers did not understand that the English ‘love’ did not mean ‘lust’. A considerable amount of magazine articles were devoted to explain the signification of ‘love’ and to coin new Chinese words *aiqing* and *qingai* (Pan, 2015a).

Finally, the gap between Europe and China regarding love was also visible in politic. To the May Fourth generation 1915–1921 fighting against traditional Confucian values, the absence of love in Chinese marriages was one of the clearest signs that the Chinese culture was backward and that a revolution was needed. The battle for the right to love of “free love” was seen as a battle between tradition and modernity, love and kinship ties, East and West, feudalism and enlightenment, hypocrisy and authenticity, old and young (Lee, 2006).

To conclude, there is an agreement between observations in literary history and cultural history regarding the relative importance of romantic love in early Modern Europe and Early Modern China.

Lee, H. (2006). *Revolution of the heart : A genealogy of love in China, 1900-1950*. Stanford University Press.
Pan, L. (2015). *When True Love Came to China*. Hong Kong University Press.

8. Arab World (400 – 1800)

During the classical period (9th c. – 11th c.), more than twenty works on the theory of romantic love appeared from both the Islamic East and the Islamic West (Giffen, 1972). The most comprehensive works deal with the nature of love, Arabic terms for love, its causes, its varieties, the experiences that accompany it, the protocol to be observed by the lover (the exchange of letters, tokens, poems and so on). The very existence of this literature testifies the cultural importance of love during the classical period. It is difficult though to compare this material with earlier and later periods for philosophical and scholarly reflections are lacking in these periods. Hence, the surge in the reflections on love could be a consequence of an increase in all kinds of theoretical reflections. Legal or artistic materials would be more decisive. However, to the best of our knowledge, no scholarly work has been dedicated to the study of love outside the literary and philosophical domains.

Giffen, L. A. (1972). *Theory of profane love among the Arabs : The development of the genre*. University of London Press.

9 - 14 Western Europe: England, France, Germany, Italy, Low Countries and Spain (500 – 1800)

Table 3: Relative importance of romantic love by area and by period (predicted and observed)

Periods		Prediction	Observations	Agreement with the narrative literature
Least developed	Most developed			
191 Early Middle Ages	Central Middle Ages	Increase	Increase	Yes
192 Late Middle Ages	Early modern period	Increase	Increase	Yes

FROM THE EARLY MEDIEVAL PERIOD TO THE CENTRAL MEDIEVAL PERIOD

The Frank, the Anglo-Saxon and the Carolingian cultures did not accord much place to attachment, passion, and marriage based on love (de La Roncière, 2009; G. Duby, 1981; Joye et al., 2013; R. Stone, 2011b). In these cultures, romantic love is a negative passion that disturbs dynastic strategies (often polygamous) that are deemed more important than attachment and reciprocity. By contrast, the importance of love clearly increases during the Central medieval period (Duby, 1988; Reddy, 2012; Rougemont, 1939). This is visible in fiction, but also in the normative literature, in particular in religious treatises (Schnell & Shields, 1998). There is thus an agreement between literary history and cultural history.

de La Roncière, C. (2009). Le mariage au Moyen Âge. *Histoire du mariage, Paris*, 209–429.

Duby, G. (1981). *Le chevalier, la femme et le prêtre. Le mariage dans la France féodale*.

Duby, G. (1988). *Mâle Moyen Âge : De l'amour et autres essais*. Flammarion.

Joye, S., Santinelli, E., & Bühner-Thierry, G. (2013). *Le couple dans le monde franc: (Ve-XIIIe siècle)*. Presses universitaires de Vincennes.

Reddy, W. M. (2012). *The making of romantic love : Longing and sexuality in Europe, South Asia, and Japan, 900-1200 CE*. University of Chicago Press.

Rougemont, D. L. (1939). *L'Amour et l'Occident*. Plon.

Schnell, R., & Shields, A. (1998). The discourse on marriage in the middle ages. *Speculum*, 73(3), 771–786.

Stone, R. (2011). *Morality and masculinity in the Carolingian empire* (Vol. 81). Cambridge University Press.

FROM THE LATE MEDIEVAL PERIOD TO THE EARLY MEDIEVAL PERIOD

The cultural value of romantic love continued to increase in the Early Modern period. The study of private correspondence, diaries, manuals of good manners, letter-writing manuals and portraits show a massive change regarding the importance of love. While social status and parental approval are central in marriage in the 16th c., love became more and more important, to the point that, by the end of the 18th c. personal choice of partners had replaced arranged marriage as a social ideal, and individuals were encouraged to marry for love (Ariès, 1982; Coontz, 2006; Daumas, 1996, 2004; Macfarlane, 1986; L. Stone, 1977).

Quantitative series are limited. Yet, Figure 5 shows the importance of several issues in conjugal life according to religious manuals of marriage in Early Modern France (Daumas, 2004). As we can see, the importance of love increases from the 16th c. to the 17th c.. In the same way, in letter-writing manuals, the proportion of women love letters referring to love increases from 12% in the early 17th c. to 45% in the early 18th c. (Daumas, 2004). Finally, one study found that before the 1760s fewer than 10% of French couples seeking annulments argued that marriage should be based on emotional attachment to be fully valid, but by the 1770s more than 40% thought so (Coontz, 2006). There is thus an agreement between literary history and cultural history.

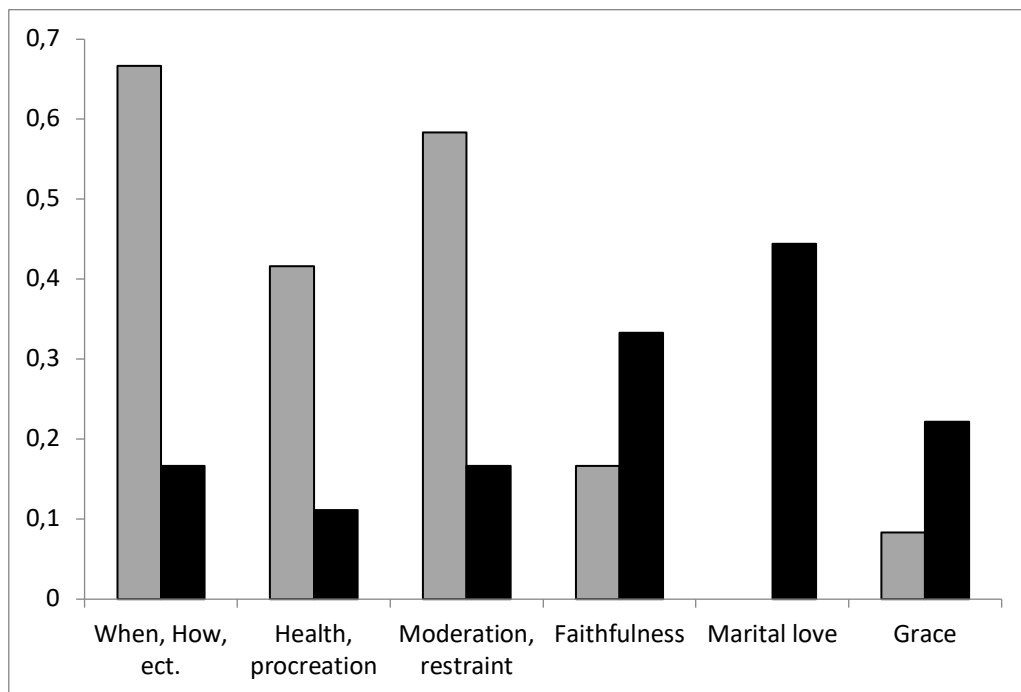


Figure 1 | Proportion of French treaties on marriage discussing love in marriage in the 16th (grey) and 17th (black) centuries (Daumas, 2004).

- Ariès, P. (1982). Le mariage indissoluble. *Communications*, 35(1), 123–137.
 Coontz, S. (2006). *Marriage, a history : How love conquered marriage*. Penguin.
 Daumas, M. (1996). *La tendresse amoureuse aux XVIe-XVIIe siècles*. Perrin.
 Daumas, M. (2004). *Le mariage amoureux : Histoire du lien conjugal sous l'Ancien Régime*. Armand Colin.
 Macfarlane, A. (1986). *Marriage and love in England : Modes of reproduction 1300-1840*.
 Stone, L. (1977). *The family sex and marriage : In England 1500-1800*.

15. Wales (500 – 1800)

To the best of our knowledge, there is no systematic study of the diachronic evolution of romantic love in Wales outside of literary history.

16. Japan (700 – 1800)

Table 4: Relative importance of romantic love by area and by period (predicted and observed)

Periods		Prediction	Observations	Agreement with the narrative literature
Least developed	Most developed			
19 th c. Japan	19 th c. W. Europe	Europe > Japan	Europe > Japan	Yes
19 th c. China	19 th c. Japan	Japan > China	Japan > China	Yes

EARLY MODERN JAPAN COMPARED TO EARLY MODERN EUROPE

As for China, there is no scholarly study of the evolution of love in Japan. However, just as for China, a few works have studied the period during which Japan entered into contact with the

European culture at the end of the 19th c., a few decades before China. And, as for China, there is an agreement between literary history and cultural history.

In literary history, the consensus is that Japanese literature was less romantic than its European counterpart, and that romantic love is a foreign notion. For instance, historian of Japanese literature Donald Keene writes: 'Romantic love, probably the most familiar theme in Western literature, was celebrated for the first time by Japanese poets in the 1880s.' (Keene, 1999, p. 24). In the same way, the poet and essayist Kitamura Tōkoku (1868–94) thought that 'the kind of love portrayed by Plato, Dante and Byron' was absent in Japan and that men of letters of the period (the Edo) preceding his own (the Meiji) had no 'other means to express romantic sentiments than to describe carnal lust.' (Yokota-Murakami & Yokota, 1998, p. 87).

This contrast between Japan and Europe regarding romantic love has a parallel in cultural history for the consensus in history of Japanese mentalities is that romantic love up until the 19th c. was less developed than in the West (Butel, 2012; Morton, 1997; Pan, 2015; Suzuki, 2010; Yokota-Murakami & Yokota, 1998). 'In Japan, love as the West understood it was thought to be something Japanese people had not known before it entered their country with Christianity' (Pan, 2015, p. 114).

Japanese historians Yokota-Murakami and Yokota explain further how alien to the male-female relationship romantic love was:

"If the premodern regime of Japanese male sexuality, which mostly encompassed prostitution, entailed condescending patronage on the part of a man and humble servitude on that of a woman, love as friendship required mutual respect. Concern for love and respect had, apparently, never been concurrently expressed in premodern Japanese texts. (...) Only through reading European literature did a connotation of "respect" arise within the significative system of "love" of Japanese literati.

Such a male-female relationship was in complete contradiction to the hierarchical gender structure and the hedonistic masculine sexuality of premodern Edo upper- and middle-class society. The semi-feudal (male) system of passion depended on the division between prostitutes (*yujo*) as objects of love, and housewives (or, literally, "ordinary women", *jionna*) as domestic servants and agents of reproduction." (Yokota-Murakami & Yokota, 1998, p. 87).

Kuriyagawa Hakuson, author of a best-seller treaty on love *Modern Views of Love* (1921) notes that:

'The Japanese language utterly lacks words comparable to the English word "love," and as for the statements "I love you," or "*Je t'aime*," there is no way whatsoever of rendering them into Japanese. The Japanese language is entirely incapable of expressing the sort of feeling contained in these statements . . . And the reason the vocabulary is lacking is that the thought which such vocabulary might express is not there.' (cited in Pan, 2015, p. 114)

A new term, *rabu*, had to be coined for talking about ‘love’. Here is what Tōkoku wrote to a friend about this new concept:

‘Our love [*rabu*] stands outside sexual passion, we love in our hearts, we love in our hopes: in contrast to the sexual love of others, we possess a much stronger love. Even though we are not yet one body, I feel as if we are already together. We will build an impregnable fortress of love where no enemies will frighten us.’ (Morton, 1997, p. 84)

As Yokota-Murakami & Yokota note: “The fact that “love” had to be first called *rabu*, the neared phonetic equivalent in Japanese for “love”, and that it was subsequently necessary to invent a completely new signifier, strongly suggest that the signified of “love” was, at least to the eyes of Japanese literari, in no way similar to the related concepts in the Japanese vocabulary.” (Yokota-Murakami & Yokota, 1998, p. 87)

In the late 1880s and 1890s, another new term, *ren’ai*, was popularized and accepted as the Japanese translation of the English (and European) concept of love (Yokota-Murakami & Yokota, 1998, p. 42). This concept was popularized in particular by a manifesto ‘Disillusioned Poets and Women,’ that Tōkoku published in 1892. The text was the first in Japan to idealize *ren’ai* as the most important aspect of human existence. The opening words of the text are famous: ‘Love is the key to life’s secrets. Love exists first, then human life. If one takes away love, what is left of the meaning of life?’ (Suzuki, 2010, p. 9). Iwamoto Yoshiharu, one of the first writers to use *ren’ai* in the sense of Western romantic love wrote in 1890 in the review of a Japanese translation of a Balzac novel: ‘Japanese men love (*ren’ai-suru*) very superficially. They don’t love (*ai-suru*) from deep within their soul’ (Yokota-Murakami & Yokota, 1998, p. 87).

It is worth noting that, in this process of cultural transmission, Japan was ahead of China. Despite a much longer history of contact with West and despite the long isolation of Japan until 1868, it is the more affluent and dynamic Japan that started to catch-up with the West in terms of the evolution of love (on the advance of Japan in 1900, see Bassino et al., 2019; Baten & Van Zanden, 2008; Morris, 2013). The translation of European novels started earlier in Japan (many Chinese translations were in fact retranslation from Japanese translations). The coining of new words, in particular news words related to love appeared earlier, started also earlier in Japan (the Chinese term *lian’ai* is actually inspired by the Japanese *ren’ai*) It is also in Japan that the first theories of love appeared, such as in *Modern views of love*, published in Japan in 1922 and translated in Chinese a year later (Pan, 2015). These observations fit well with the idea that love became more important earlier in Japan than in China, in line with the affluence hypothesis.

To conclude, there is an agreement between observations in literary history and cultural history regarding the relative importance of romantic love in early Modern Europe and Early Modern Japan.

Bassino, J.-P., Broadberry, S., Fukao, K., Gupta, B., & Takashima, M. (2019). Japan and the great divergence, 730–1874. *Explorations in Economic History*, 72, 1–22.

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- Keene, D. (1999). *Seeds in the heart : Japanese literature from earliest times to the late sixteenth century*. Columbia University Press.
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- Suzuki, M. (2010). *Becoming modern women : Love and female identity in prewar Japanese literature and culture*. Stanford University Press.
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17. Ireland (700 – 1800)

To the best of our knowledge, there is no systematic study of the diachronic evolution of romantic love in Ireland outside of literary history.

18. Old Norse world (800 - 1800)

Table 5: Relative importance of romantic love by area and by period (predicted and observed)

Periods		Prediction	Observations
Least developed	Most developed		
Early Medieval	Central Medieval	Increase	Increase

FROM EARLY MEDIEVAL NORWAY TO CENTRAL MEDIEVAL NORWAY

In *Strategies of passion*, Bjørn Bandlien studied the importance of romantic love during the medieval period, using not only the narrative literature but also skaldic poems, runic inscriptions, legal decisions, canon law and clerical historiography. He demonstrates that there is a clear evolution from the Early Medieval period where love was ‘caught up in a discourse on honour’ and ‘still a force of chaos’ to the Central Medieval period (especially after 1250) where ‘love was no longer a sign of weakness, but a symbol of his good nature’ (Bandlien, 2005). There is thus an agreement between literary history and cultural history regarding the relative importance of romantic love in Norway.

Bandlien, B. (2005). *Strategies of passion : Love and marriage in medieval Iceland and Norway* (Vol. 6). Brepols Pub.

19. East Slavic world (1100 - 1800)

Table 6: Relative importance of romantic love by area and by period (predicted and observed)

Periods		Prediction	Observations
Least developed	Most developed		
Medieval Russia	Medieval Europe	Increase	Increase
Medieval Russia	Early Modern Russia	Increase	Increase
Early Modern Russia	Early Modern Europe	Increase	Increase

MEDIEVAL RUSSIA COMPARED TO MEDIEVAL EUROPE

Historians have noted that the attitude of medieval Russian culture regarding romantic love were extremely negative. As Eve Levin writes in *Sex and Society in the World of the Orthodox Slavs 900–1700*, the attitude of the Orthodox Church to love was even more negative than its Western counterpart (Levin, 2018). Unlike Western Christian writers, Eastern Christian considered sexual relationships of any kind as a manifestation of fallen nature', and 'sexual desire and love were viewed as antithetical emotions, even within the domain of Christian marriage' (Levin, 2018). In her comparison between medieval Western European, Levin writes that the medieval Slavs:

'denied that love, an emotion of generosity and devotion, could be connected to sexual desire. The medieval Slavs could scarcely conceive that sexual activity might be more fulfilling physically or emotionally with one partner than with another.'

Levin concludes:

'The idea of romantic love, which became dominant in Western literature and ultimately in legal and popular conceptions of marriage, remained unfamiliar in the East. (...) Medieval Slavic brides and grooms did not expect to receive emotional support from their spouses, much less from their in-laws. Men expected strongest their strongest relationships to be with their natal family, particularly parents and brothers, and from familial connections.' (Levin, 2018)

The negative attitude toward love is also visible in the 17th *The Tale of Savva Grudtsyn*. In this narrative fiction, love play an important role. However, the origins of love are, characteristically, the devil's intervention, and love is essentially depicted as a dangerous and disturbing activity (Sobol, 2011). As a traditional Russian proverb says: 'If blind love fixes itself into someone's heart, it will either cripple him or blind him' (Sobol, 2011).

What is also interesting is that cultural contact with the West did not impact Russian culture until the economic take-off of the 17th c.

'despite centuries of political interaction between the Slavic Orthodox and Roman Catholic states, key Western concepts of sexuality, such as Augustine's conjugal debt and the idea of courtly love, remained unknown in the East until the middle of the seventeenth century.' (Levin, 2018)

To conclude, there is an agreement between observations in literary history and cultural history regarding the relative importance of romantic love in Medieval Europe and Medieval Russia.

Levin, E. (2018). *Sex and Society in the World of the Orthodox Slavs 900–1700*. Cornell University Press.

Sobol, V. (2011). *Febris erotica : Lovesickness in the Russian literary imagination*. University of Washington Press.

FROM MEDIEVAL RUSSIA TO 18TH C. RUSSIA

The cultural gap between Medieval Russia and 18th c. Russia is visible in the way the first romantic writers considered themselves in relation to the Slavic tradition. For instance, Trediakovsky, the translator of French romantic works, refused to use the Old Slavonic as he viewed his work as secular and as 'a book of Sweet Love'. In *Febris erotica: lovesickness in the Russian literary imagination*, historian of Russian literature Valeria Sobol writes:

'Trediakovsky's attempt to justify his linguistic and stylistic choices reveals his awareness that the work he chose to translate does not fit into the mainstream of the Russian literary tradition, that, both thematically and stylistically, it has no precedent in his native country'. (Sobol, 2011)

Despite its enormous popular success, Trediakovsky was accused of corrupting the Russian youth.

'Once again, underlying his contemporaries' indignation is the idea that passionate love as a psychological and even physiological phenomenon had not existed in Russia before it was introduced from the outside, through cultural institutions and literary texts.' (Sobol, 2011)

This clearly reveals that the conception of love has been changing between the medieval and the early modern period, both in literature and in cultural values.

Sobol, V. (2011). *Febris erotica : Lovesickness in the Russian literary imagination*. University of Washington Press.

EARLY MODERN RUSSIA COMPARED TO MEDIEVAL EUROPE

Early modern Russians were well aware that romantic love was much highly regarded in the West than in their own country. One of the earliest private journals in Russian culture, Prince Kurakin's *The Life of the Prince Boris Ivanovich Kurakin, Which He Himself Wrote*, records the following amorous episode from the author's travel in Europe:

'And during my stay there I was inamorat with a chitadinka (citydweller), famous for her beauty, her name was signora Francesca Rota, whom I had for a medresa (mistress) for my entire stay. And I was so inamaroto (sic) that I could not spend even an hour without her who kostet (cost) me 1000 chervonnys during those two months. And I parted with great lament and sorrow, and even now that amor cannot leave my heart and, I believe, will not. I took her persona in my memoria and promised to come back to her again.' (cited in Sobol, 2011)

As Valeria Sobol writes:

'It can hardly escape the readers' attention that every word related to the prince's love experience is Italian, sometimes transliterated, sometimes not: 'inamorat,' with its broken version 'inamorato', 'medresa' and significantly 'amor'. Obviously, the

'translation' of Western love vocabulary presented a linguistic as well as a cultural, difficulty for the author.' (Sobol, 2011)

A few decades later, though, in Mikhail Danilov's *Diary* (1771), a very similar situation is described without any difficulty: the Russian language now have the adequate vocabulary to describe romantic love, from *strast'* (passion) to *liubimyi predmet* (the object of love). There is thus an agreement between literary history and cultural history regarding the relative importance of romantic love in Early Modern Europe and Early Modern Russia.

Sobol, V. (2011). *Febris erotica : Lovesickness in the Russian literary imagination*. University of Washington Press.