

Section 3. History and archaeology

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ENEOLITHIC AND BRONZE AGE IN CENTRAL ASIA: HISTORIOGRAPHIC APPROACHES

Abstract. In this article was analyzed the historiographical approaches to the studies of the “Oxus Civilization”. The historiography is generalized, and the following tasks are formulated to identify the theoretical aspects of the history of the peoples of Central Asia in the Eneolithic and Bronze Ages.

Keywords: BMAC, Oxus sivilization, hypothesis, yearly farming, cattle breeding.

Central Asia is the common motherland of brotherly peoples who have historically formed in the region since ancient times. Therefore, the events and processes that took place in the region in different periods of history have common roots in the history of these brotherly peoples. At a time when international political relations have become contradictory, approaching the history of fraternal nations from this point of view is a necessary condition for ensuring the stability of inter-ethnic harmony and solidarity.

The Eneolithic and the Bronze Age are important in the daily life of the inhabitants of the Central Asian region, as the production farms formed at the last stage of the Neolithic period – the periods of widespread farming and animal husbandry. According to geological research, in the X millennium B.C. the natural climate warming process (In geological studies this process is called the deglaciation process. According to the research in the XVIII millennium B.C.

global warming and ice retreat that began in the millennium BC. XII accelerated in the millennium BC. X and a sharp warming process occurred in the millennium. Scientific studies show that this process is still ongoing) [1] created the basis for the emergence and widespread of the first production economic types – agriculture and animal husbandry, first in the Fertile Crescent (Western Asia and Western Iran), and later in the neighboring regions. According to archaeological, paleobotanical and genetic studies, the first ancestors of goats and sheep were tamed and domesticated in the Fertile Crescent settlements. The descendants of the same goats are remains from the settlement of Djeytun, the first Neolithic settlement of the region, as well as from the settlements belonging to the early civilizations of Europe and the Ancient East [2; p.124]. In addition, the first spiked plant – wheat was cultivated by mankind in the Fertile Crescent [3; p. 1862], after that, the cultivation of wheat became widespread in neighboring and

distant regions. It should be noted that the Fertile Crescent is the first domesticated area of only goats and sheep, and in wheat farming.

According to studies, agriculture discovered in the Neolithic era was mainly based on the protection of wild thorny plants from animals, as well as on the content in order to prevent their grains from spilling out before ripening due to lack of water, that is, on irrigation by transporting water. Traces of irrigation during the transport of crops of wild plants are first observed in the Kadan culture in southern Egypt. At the same time, the preparation of nutritious and varied food was mastered by harvesting and drying grain, its long-term storage for long periods without harvest-for winter.

Thus the first agricultural crop of a very simple type is formed. Thus, the first established agriculture consisted in the sowing of cereal grains, separated as seeds by communities, in relatively naturally irrigated and cultivated fields cultivated with stone tools, creating conditions for the ripening of the crop by irrigation based on the transport of water. when the possibilities of natural irrigation are limited.

Long-term studies of the Russian geneticist N. I. Vavilov, carried out in the first half of the 20th century, related to the cultivation of cereals, showed that the process of cultivation of various wild plants proceeded independently in different regions of the world, starting from the Neolithic era. Thanks to the research of N. Vavilov, who organized more than 180 scientific expeditions related to the history of growing plants in different regions of the world, the territory of the Central Asian region was also recognized as a place for growing plants [4]. So early agriculture is widespread in the southern regions of Central Asia under the influence of the Jaitun culture of the late Neolithic, especially the Eneolithic and Bronze Age.

Since the last quarter of the 20th century, many historical settlements related to the development of production farms have been found and studied in the southern regions of the region, and new spaces of such settlements have been discovered during archaeolog-

ical excavations carried out in recent years. The Dashli, Sopolli, Sarazm cultures based on these settlements fall into the sentence of the early farming cultures in the south of the region. Obviously, these settlements were “assimilated” by the inhabitants of the region during the Eneolithic and Bronze Ages, indicating an increase in the importance of Agriculture and livestock in the population’s life. However, the analysis of specific stages of social development in the area where these settlements were formed, or rather, the analysis of historical approaches to these settlements (cultures), is of great theoretical importance.

Archaeological studies of the early agricultural settlements of the Eneolithic and Bronze Ages in the southern regions of Central Asia began in the last quarter of the 19th century. As a result of excavations carried out until the 80s of the XX century, a large number of early agricultural settlements in the regions of modern Turkmenistan, southern Uzbekistan, southwestern Tajikistan and northern Afghanistan were identified and brought to the attention of the scientific community. The historiographical analysis of these studies is summarized in the dissertation of A. Bakiyev [5; p. 5–8]. In the course of careful analyzes, the researcher points out that the scientific and theoretical conclusions made about the settlements of the Eneolithic-Bronze Age in the region took place in the following three stages:

The first stage is research conducted in the late 19th – 70s of the 20th century. This stage is characterized by the discovery and localization of large monuments in the region. Since the 60s of the 20th century, the Nomozgoh, Sopollin and steppe cultures of the Bronze Age have been studied in the southern regions of Central Asia. Based on the stratigraphy of the monuments of the region and the analysis of architectural traditions, the classification of graves, objects of material culture and anthropological findings, scientific and theoretical conclusions about the formation of the first agricultural culture in the region arose.

The second stage began in the second half of the 70s of the XX century, based on the general mani-

festations of artifacts found in the archaeologically studied settlements in the southern territory of the region, as well as the culture of the inhabitants of the settlements, and taking into account the most ancient historical names of these territories, mentioned in the first sources as Avesta and Behistun inscriptions. In this regard, scientific and theoretical conclusions were made that these settlements should be recognized as a single Bactrian-Margian archaeological complex (BMAC). In 1976, the archaeologist V.I. Sarianidi for the first time generalized these cultures under the name BMAK and this term was accepted by most researchers [6; p. 5–8].

The third stage is scientific and theoretical conclusions based on research that began in the mid-90s of the 20th century and is ongoing. In these studies, scientific and theoretical conclusions were introduced into scientific circulation about the formation of a new center of civilization in the Bronze Age on the basis of the BMAC monuments on the basis of the first production facilities in the south of the Central Asian region. In scientific literature, this center of civilization was called different: the civilization of Oxus, Turan, Central Asia, Southern Uzbekistan, Bactria, Oxus-Amu Darya, Margiyana, Amu Darya and Great Khorasan. It should be noted that even today, systematic research is being carried out to study the specific characteristics of this center of civilization and the laws of its formation.

If we pay attention to the dynamics of research, which began in the last decade of the 19th century and continues today, mainly based on the conclusions of archaeological excavations, the following picture of the attempt to restore historical processes is formed:

1. In the southern regions of Central Asia, settlements formed on the basis of early agriculture and cattle breeding in the Eneolithic and Bronze Ages were considered settlements consisting of permanent settlements of communities (conclusions of the first stage).

2. Settlements formed on the basis of early agriculture and cattle breeding, located in certain agricultural oases, united in a unique structure – a city-

state, concentrated in the social and cultural spheres (conclusions of the second stage).

3. The city-states that were formed on the basis of early agriculture and cattle breeding formed a politically unified, centralized large state (or country) – the Oxus civilization (conclusions of the third stage).

In our opinion, a number of shortcomings are evident in the full substantiation of these conclusions. And these shortcomings can be seen in the following:

Firstly, these scientific and theoretical approaches were based only on the hypotheses of archaeological excavations in general, as well as on the analysis of discovered artifacts, since written sources on the history of the Eneolithic and Bronze Age in the south of the region, unfortunately, have not survived to this day or have not been compiled at all.

Secondly, the fact that the irrigation facilities necessary for agriculture, which form the economic basis of these monuments, have not yet been discovered (in fact, the first agriculture took place at the expense of natural irrigated areas). And this indicates that there is still a lot of research to be done to clarify the existence of the economic foundations of the “Oxus Civilization”.

Thirdly, the fact that no traces of large workshops or handicraft quarters, reflecting a specialized handicraft economy, have yet been found in these monuments indicates that the “Oxus Civilization” was a “unique” civilization that was formed only on the basis of early agriculture and cattle breeding.

Fourthly, the failure to find urban structures (for example, a palace) or a full-fledged city during the excavation of these monuments gives grounds to draw conclusions about the existence of the “Oxus Civilization” without any cities.

Fifth, during the excavations carried out in these settlements, there are no artifacts reflecting the processes of political governance (the name of the ruler, the name of the reigning dynasty, at least the seal of dynasties, which is considered a bright sign). This indicates that a decentralized civilization existed on the territory of the BMAC.

These conclusions put on the agenda the need to revise the scientific and theoretical conclusions about the daily life of members of the community of settlements, formed on the basis of early agriculture

and cattle breeding in the south of the region in the Eneolithic and Bronze Ages, based on systematic analyzes of historiographic research.

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