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Scientific Analysis Of The Ancient Historical Culture Of Khorezm

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ABSTRACT

This scientific article examines some aspects of the history of culture and statehood of Khorezm. The Khorezm region has a rich historical and cultural heritage and is a region that created a unique civilization. Conclusions and recommendations are developed on the basis of scientific analysis.

Keywords:

Khorezm, history, ancient civilization, folk culture, historical processes.

The most ancient settlement was discovered by the Khorezm expedition in 1939 in the sands north of the city of Turtkul. Here, in the vicinity of the fortress of Janbas-kala, a flat basin was discovered, at the bottom of which numerous flint tools, shards of clay vessels, ashes, animal and fish bones lay on the sand. This area became the object of many years of research. During excavations it was revealed that in the lower part of the hard crust of pinkish-gray loam, between its layers, prints of broad-leaved marsh plants unexpected in the desert were clearly visible, and below in the dune sand an ash spot stood out - the outline of a once burnt dwelling.

The settlement was located on a sandy hill. The house, the remains of which fell within the boundaries of the excavation, was huge, almost oval (24 x 17 m). It was built from wooden poles, its pointed roof was supported by three rows of pillars. The house housed 100-120 people. In the center of the room there was an ever-burning hearth, around which all the residents gathered — members of the clan community — to resolve community matters and, probably, to perform religious rites. Small hearths located along the walls belonged to individual families. The wind had not yet had

time to disperse the traces of the fire, when the inhabitants of the settlement suffered a new misfortune. During the rise of the flood waters, the hill was flooded and a swamp formed at the site of the camp, into which excess flood waters periodically fell, depositing a forty-centimeter layer of lake sediments. Thus, two natural disasters, which fell one after another on the inhabitants of the settlement, brought good luck to the archaeologists. The burnt-out layer contains abandoned flint arrowheads, knife blades, scrapers, bone awls and piercers, and shards of hand-molded round-bottomed vessels, richly decorated with ornaments.

The Janbas-kala fortress, near which the settlement was discovered, is located near the area of the Kelteminar canal. The newly discovered archaeological culture was named after him. In subsequent years, 18 more sites with finds related to the Kelteminar culture were discovered; now more than a hundred are known.

Settlements of the subsequent period, discovered in Khorezm, are dated to the middle of the 2nd millennium BC. The things found there differ from those of Kelteminar, although the preservation of some previous traditions is noticeable. In the materials related to this new

culture, which developed in the territory of Khorezm, conventionally called "tazabagyab", as in the materials of slightly later cultures, Suyargan and Amirabad, along with flint tools, fragments of bronze are found.

The first mention of Khorezm in written sources dates back to this time. The country of Khvairizem, named in the ancient Zoroastrian religious books of the Avesta, is identified with it. Khvairizem is a country where numerous armies are led by courageous leaders, where nature provides everything necessary for cattle breeding; it is the "abode of blessing and abundance", where "all the gifts of the earth began to grow in abundance."

Now, as a result of careful research, the sequence of development of its fertile lands and the sequence of development of types of irrigation structures have been established for many regions of Central Asia. The most ancient agriculture is noted in two physical-geographical zones - in the deltas of lowland rivers and in the foothills, where mountain streams and rivers carry out and, dying out, deposit fertile sediments in the valley[1]. In addition, in the foothills (for example, Kopet-Dag in Turkmenistan) some species of wild cereals are widespread - wheat, barley, etc., which became the ancestors of our grain plants. According to scientists, agriculture in the areas of mountain river outflows arose as early as the 4th millennium BC.

The Tazabagyab people cultivated mainly the "Cairo lands", i.e. areas of river floodplains, low lake shores, where the ground waters provided the necessary humidity for growing crops. However, already in the Bronze Age, not only the lands along shallow, sediment-filled channels and delta channels were used. In the area of the Tazabagyab settlement of Kokcha-2, the remains of a unique system of primitive irrigation were discovered. The bed of a side channel was limited by a miniature dam, along which "fields" (only 2x2 m in size) were located, bordered by clay ridges. During the highest water level in the channel, its excess was retained and sent directly to the fields, sufficiently saturating them with moisture. Later, this "system" became more complex. The

Suyargans supplied water to cultivated areas through small (several tens of meters) canals, which made it possible to distribute it more accurately, and water came to the fields of settlements attributed to the Amirabad culture from larger channels, and the length of the branch canals, from which several branches in turn departed, reached several kilometers.

By the beginning of the 7th-6th centuries BC, irrigation systems based on large main canals had already been fully developed in Khorezm. Studying the location of irrigation structures, S. P. Tolstov established that the irrigation system of ancient times seemed to repeat the configuration of the ancient delta of the Amu Darya. The canals were laid along the old riverbeds. "One gets the impression," wrote S.P.Tolstov, "that people were consciously restoring the disappearing...ancient delta." [2]

There is almost no information about the history of archaic Khorezm in written sources, if we do not count the mention of the Greek historian Hecataeus, dating back to the 6th century BC, about the country of the Khorasmians, "consisting of plains and mountains", or the story of Ctesias about the campaigns of the legendary Assyrian king Ninus, where among many tribes the "Khoromnians" are listed. Archaeological materials are also not complete enough, but they still allow us to draw some important conclusions.

The settlements of that time were very different from the settlements of Neolithic tribes and from later ancient fortresses. They were located on high hills-remnants (locally - on gyrs) and were fortified with powerful walls with loopholes cut into them and with protruding towers. During the study of the archaic settlement of Kyuzeli-gyr, it turned out that most of the area surrounded by walls was not built up. The living quarters ran along the walls and were connected to them as a single whole. Such fortifications were called "fortified settlements with residential walls". The vast spaces inside the fortress probably served as a kind of corral for cattle, the protection of which was vital in moments of military danger.

The grand irrigation system of archaic Khorezm, attested by archaeological works,

could not have been built without the presence of a single strong authority. Consequently, in Khorezm by the 4th century BC a strong state with centralized authority, a single government, "rising above small communities" had already been formed.

During the reign of Cyrus (558-529 BC), Persian troops began to invade Central Asia. The power of the Achaemenid dynasty was established. There is somewhat more information about these times. In the works of Greek scholars, and later Roman ones, we find some data on the nature of Central Asia, on the life, customs and morals of local tribes and fragmentary notes on political events.

Very valuable comments have been preserved in Herodotus's "History", where the author devotes much attention to the relationship between Achaemenid Iran and the Central Asian states. If we look at the dates of Herodotus' life and travels, as they appear to modern researchers, then Herodotus' visit to Persia can apparently be attributed to the beginning of the reign of Artaxerxes I (i.e. 70-80 years after the death of Cyrus). The years of the brilliant reign of Darius I, the noisy time of Xerxes' campaigns passed, and numerous legends had already been formed about the last period of Cyrus's activity and the circumstances of his death. According to the version chosen by Herodotus, Cyrus loses the battle with the Massagetae and dies at the hands of the warriors of the insidious Massaget queen Tomyris. This legend is very important, since Strabo indicated that the Khorezmians were also part of the Assagetae.[3]

Of course, Khorezm could not resist the huge empire of Cyrus. It is difficult to say whether it was conquered by the army of Cyrus or became part of the empire on the basis of a treaty. There is no exact data. But by the beginning of the reign of another representative of the Achaemenid dynasty, Darius I, Khorezm, according to Herodotus, like other Central Asian states - Margiana, Parthia, Bactria - was already subordinated to Iran, was part of one of the satrapies and paid its share of the obligatory tax.

The latest information about the participation of Khorezmians in the ranks of

the Persian troops dates back to 464-461 BC. In Egypt, in Elephantine, where a Persian garrison was once stationed, documents were discovered, apparently from the archives of a local judicial institution. Among them is a complaint from Dragoman, the son of Harshin, a Khorezmian serving in the garrison detachment. Thus, Khorezm was drawn into the sphere of influence of the peoples of Western Asia, who had by that time reached a higher cultural level[4]. The participation of the Khorezmians in the campaigns of the Achaemenids also played an important role. Babylon and Egypt with their ancient agricultural culture, Greece with its highly developed crafts and art, and other countries visited by the Khorezmians could not help but influence the culture of Khorezm and many branches of its economy, in particular, handicraft production.

The close ties between Khorezm and other regions of Central Asia at that time are well proven by the similarity of clay pottery, one of the main archaeological materials.

Intertribal ties were further strengthened in the common desire for independence, in the fight against conquerors. It is difficult to determine the exact date of the establishment of the independence of Khorezm, but in any case, already in the 4th century BC Khorezm acts as a completely independent state, occupying an important place on the map of Central Asia[5].

The first information about this state by the Chinese dates back to the end of the 2nd century BC. In 129-128 BC, Zhan-Qian visited it, sent to the Yuezhi tribes neighboring the Kangyuis and spent more than 13 years on the journey. Kangju, according to Zhan-Kyan, is a large state with a strong army. Subsequent information that made it into the chronicles also portrays it as an independent state. It is reported that Kangju is "proud and does not bow down", notes are given about the various lands under the control of the Kangju and the oppression that their neighbors suffer from them. Moreover, the military power of Kangju is growing and strengthening. Zhan Qian reported that the number of combat troops in Kangju in 128 reached 90,000, while another,

later chronicle (Qianhanshu), dating back to 79-39 BC, already speaks of 120,000.

In the 4th century BC, Khorezm became a large slave-owning state. We can talk about this regardless of the resolution of the issues of complete identification with Kangju, based on archaeological data. The leading form of economy was agriculture. The irrigation system built by slaves reaches its highest level of development. Crafts and trade are widely developed. At the abandoned by that time settlement of Kuzeli-gyr, archaeologists cleared an entire pottery quarter from sand: the remains of a workshop where vessels were formed, kilns consisting of two tiers - a firebox and a special kiln. Pits filled with burnt gypsum, which was mixed with clay, lumps of ready clay dough, fragments of vessels defective during firing, dozens of different devices and stands were found. All these finds made it possible to trace many details of production, which already had the character of commodity production. A similarly large block was discovered in the Bazar-Kala fortress.

During the excavations, abundant materials were collected: dozens of huge hums, various clay dishes, tableware and kitchenware used for cooking, animal bones. A great many clay figurines were found. Among them are images of animals: heads of horses, rams, camels, a hedgehog figurine. There are many images of people. Of interest is the terracotta - a mother feeding a small baby - an image of the mother goddess, widespread among many peoples. One of the best examples of the artistic creativity of the ancient Khorezmians should rightly be considered a realistically executed terracotta - the head of an old woman found in the vicinity of Koy-Krylgan-kala.

The period from the end of the 1st century BC to the 3rd century AD, the most important in the history of Khorezm in ancient times and in the development of its material culture, is almost not covered by written sources. This was the time of the dominance of the vast slave-owning state of Kushan in Central Asia and India. And information about the Kushan Empire itself, which united under its rule peoples of different tribes and languages, is extremely scanty. An exact

chronology of events has not yet been developed, and the milestones in the history of individual peoples that were part of the empire have not been outlined.

The most important source for studying the political and economic life of ancient states are coins. The study of coin finds in the territory of Central Asia allowed us to establish that in terms of the intensity of money circulation, Khorezm at that time occupied one of the first places, second only to Bactria and Margiana, which had long been connected by convenient trade routes with many countries. The finds of coins allowed us to determine the approximate dates of the period of Khorezm's dependence on the Kushan Empire. In the 2nd century, the coins of one of the founders of the dynasty, Kanishka, and subsequent rulers displaced local coins from circulation. But already at the turn of the 2nd and 3rd centuries, the Khorezm kings minted their tamgas on Kushan coins, and by the beginning of the 3rd century, the first coins with Khorezm inscriptions appeared.

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