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THE SOCIAL-ECONOMICAL AND CULTURAL LIFE OF THE POPULATION IN THE LOWER AMUDARYO

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ABSTRACT

The Social-economical and cultural life of the population in the areas of lower Amudaryo is detailed on the basis of items and written recourses.

KEY WORDS: ***Khorezm, the Southern Aral Sea, Central Asia, Neolithic, Bronze Age, Tozabogyop, Amirabad, The Andronovo culture.***

INTRODUCTION

During the Bronze Age, the Southern Aral Sea communities developed the material culture and economic forms of this geographical area, adapted to the natural environment consisting of special peculiarities and the traditions of construction of houses, labor tools and household items did not correspond to the lifestyle of the local population. In this process, it is necessary to take into account not only the characteristics of the natural environment, but also the development of the productive forces and the level of use of technological innovations.

The production of agricultural products in the history of the Khorezm oasis, the characteristics of collective crafts and occupations, the issue of restoration of the economic and social system on the basis of archaeological materials and socio-economic relationships have not been sufficiently studied. These issues were only partly reflected in some monographs and scientific articles.

Until recent years, the following problems have not been properly studied and the factors that are directly related to them have not been widely analyzed as a matter of concern:

- the issue of the use of hovels with lattice-columns, light huts and hovels with half cellars as housings in the Southern Aral Sea areas for a very long period of time (nearly more than 3 thousand years);

- preserving and dominating the primitive method of hand-made earthenware crockery, one of the main indicators of the level of development of material culture;

- the chronologically late appearance of harvesting of crops and livestock in Khorezm oasis and the issue of the leading form of economy in the domestic production compared to the southern provinces of Central Asia;

- features of relations between ancient societies, socio-economic relations, society system and management.

The memorials, which were widely studied from archeological point of view in the Southern Aral Sea area, are characterized by the advanced and last stages of the Bronze Age. The information available in scientific literature can be described in the following table generally.

The houses of Tozaboghop culture consisted of separate semi-cellars, the size of which is as follows: 105-129-132-140 square meters (the largest ones), 72-80-90 square meters (average), 21-34-62 square meters (small ones). Along Amirabad's semi-cellars, there were identified houses containing two or three semi-cellars, but their size hardly varies; only one large living space comprised about 165 square meters and the depth of cellars was 0,4-0,8 meters in length[1].

In the central part of the semi-cellar, there was identified a large hearth and pits surrounding it whose inside was plastered with mud.

Bronze items were found in small quantity in the memorials of Tozaboghyop culture. They mainly contain knives, sickles, awls, needles, arrowheads, bracelets, earrings and rings – rare weaponry and jewelry. Kinds of bronze sickles and arrowheads of Amirabad culture increased, as well as there were found stone moulds used for making bronze sickles and arrowheads[2]. Taking into account the presence of moulds in at the Kukcha 15 and Jonbos 21 memorials of Tozaboghop culture, it is supposed that bronze items were made by local masters. Metalworking was a home-based (household) craftsmanship like pottery.

Bronze Age settlements identified in the South Akchdarya River basin were not enclosed with defensive walls. This situation indicates that there was no need to protect from outside aggressions. Locations do not have specific plans; houses were straggling. M.A. Itina wrote that the Bronze Age communities did not use the semi-cellars for a long period of time, they time by time changed their living places in the period while the water levels had declined in the branches of river basins; as well as there were seasonal houses connected with the form of economy of breeding livestock on pastures.

By the middle of the 2nd millennium BC, no archeological data on the culture of farming in the southern Aral Sea region were identified and people of Tozaboghyop are considered as the oldest local farmers in the region. S.P. Tolstov and Y.G. Gulomov emphasized the existence of farming in the Khorezm oasis during the Bronze Age[3]. There were found and observed the traces of aancient fields and branches of irrigation ditches in Jonbos-Kukcha oasis as a result of the B.V. Andrianov's researches. The surface of fields (namely, garden plot lands) comprised 16x10, 10x10, 7x7 meters long and the length of ditches was 150-200 meters long[4]. There were no wheat, barley and millet seeds in the dwellings. Garden plot lands were located on the shores of the river banks, near water. Perhaps, as a result of elevated groundwater, farmers were able to use the possibility of the soil getting wet. It is not advisable to over-extend the farming capacities of the Bronze Age during food production process by the population of the Southern Aral Sea area. In the last Bronze Amirabad period, there were no large irrigation facilities in the Akchadarya basin and the areas under cultivation were limited.

By comparison, in the southern part of Central Asia, cultivated areas of artificial irrigation in Eneolithic oasis were 50-70 hectares[5]. In southern Uzbekistan, during the Bronze Age, average 47-52-72 hectares of areas under crops surrounding Sopollitepa were cultivated in different stages. In the lives of the population in Sopollitepa, hunting also played an important role, together with husbandry and livestock breeding[6]. In the Bronze Age oasis in the territories of northern Afghanistan (South Bactria), the sown area was about 40 to 45 hectares and there weren't found remains of large artificial structures.

S.P. Tolstov wrote that in the last stage of the Amirabad culture (beginning of the 8th-7th centuries BC), there appeared a large irrigation system with developed branches and that the existence of this system could be thought of as slavery relations among primitive societies[7]. M.A. Itina is a supporter of this idea, based on the preliminary findings of the archeological researches carried out at Yakkaporson 2 memorial, she came to conclusion that in the 9th-7th centuries BC, the "new social form of government – the transition to the slavery- system" would emerge at the threshold of the collapse of the primitive society in the culture of the Amirabad communities. However, the indicators related to cultivated areas in the Akchadarya basin and the volume of cultivation of land, the level of agricultural use of artificial irrigated lands and other factors (general quantity of population and location density) do not serve as the basis for M.A. Itina's conclusions.

Methods of providing the Southern Aral Sea kin societies with food has not been sufficiently studied on the basis of systematic approach peculiar to the important role of the economic system.

Considering the fact that people of Tozaboghyop had come out of the steppe tribes where the Srubnaya (Wooden) and Andronovo cultures were spread and they were spread in the territories of the Akchadarya basin because of migrations, it is possible to come to conclusion that irrigated farming did not prevail in their areas at first.

The Andronovo culture tribes in Southern Ural were engaged in cattle breeding, and the agriculture on kayir (estuary), which were occasionally harvested in the riverbeds, served as assistant task in their lives[8].

According to archaeological findings, 60 of the pets found in the Tozaboghyob culture are cows, 349 small cattle, 17 horse and 2 camel bones. During the Amirabad era, the bones of pets make up 28.5% of cows, 50% of small cattle and 18.5% of horses. As it can be seen, small cattle was superior in the composition of domestic animals. It was easy to feed goats and sheep in steppe pastures. Bulls and cows were fed in the meadows around locations.

Camels and horse bones were found in the Bronze Age memorials of the Southern Aral Sea. They were mainly used in agriculture and as transportation vehicles. The horse breeders' seasonal migration played a major role in the development of new areas with pastures.

The livestock breeding farm was an important branch of the economy, which was of particular importance in the economies of the South Aral Sea region communities. Livestock provided the population with meat, dairy products, wool and skin.

It is important to pay attention to hunting in the process of food supply to local kin societies. There

were found deer and antelope bones in the Bronze Age memorials of the Akchadarya basin. In the conditions of the desert, hunting for these fast-moving animals was a difficult task. It is also possible to predict that, apart from the single hunter who used arrows, the method of surrounding and capturing wild animals was also used.

There are no fish bones found in the memorials of Tozaboghyob. Taking into account the location of spaces on the small lakes and the riverside of the Akchadarya river rich in fish, it's possible to conclude that fishery in the Bronze Age was undeniably developed. As a proof of this conclusion, it is possible to mention a bronze fishing rod found in Baroqtom 8 memorial, which resembles the one of Zamonbobo culture[9].

According to the supposition of M.A. Itina, it is likely that eating fish was prohibited during the Bronze Age and the appearance of such a habit might have been derived from worshiping for fish – the idea of totemism. Traces of worshiping for fishery in the southern part of the Aral Sea are peculiar to the long history and it was reflected in ethnographical data[10].

In our opinion, fishing didn't lose its importance in the life of the Bronze Age communities of Southern Aral Sea together with hunting wild animals and birds. The tasks connected with mastering nutritional products in nature were further developed as an additional task to production economy. This conclusion can be confirmed by the presence of numerous fish bones in the sub-cultural layers of Qangha 2, Amirabad's culture.

In the process of satisfying the needs of society, craftsmanship, various occupational professions and occupations played an important role. In the study of their interdependence and development, one should pay attention to the following methodological approaches and functions:

- determination of professional level and technological features of production;
- establishment of territorial location in the addresses;
- determining the degree of exchange of household goods and craftsmanship products[11].

According to the main signs, the Bronze Age weaponry and articles of the southern Aral Sea were produced in house condition. Home craftsmanship was connected with making stone and bronze instruments and earthenware crockery. Spinning, textile development and leather production were stimulated by cattle breeding. Members of society made various types of instruments and goods, based on the lifestyle and household needs of farming branches. Making dishes from clay in striping method and making instruments from stone were not hard work. Used in the field of archeology, i.e. according to the method of trassology, producing stone instruments in modern condition, medium sized chopping tool can be made within 10 hours[12].

Bronze items were also made in house condition. According to M.A. Itina, it is possible to guess the appearance of specialized masters engaged in the production of bronze items, based on the foundations of stone moulds in separate settlements at Yakkaporson memorial.

In our opinion, most of the items are home-mastership products. Handmade earthenware crockery continued primitive traditions from qualitative point of view. According to ethnographic data, making dishes from clay in hands and firing them on bonfire had become the task and duty of women for long periods of time. In home condition, farmers, cattle-breeders and hunters could make their own instruments. It is also possible that some of the bronze items and decorations could be derived from the mutual exchange of teams.

Household craftsmanship, first of all, satisfied the daily needs of members of society. At the same time, some of the products (such as clothes, carpets, wool and leather goods) were used for internal and external exchange.

Taking into consideration the properties of archaeological materials, it is assumed that raw materials, jewelry, labor weaponry and equipments were shared in the process of ancient exchange.

As a result of the emergence of the means of transportation, the opportunities for exchanges, opportunities for domestic and foreign economic relations expanded. There were found copies of clay wheels at Bayramqazgan, Kukcha 15 and Kukcha 16 locations of Tozaboghyob period. During the Bronze Age in Central Asia, wheel was invented and there appeared carts with domestic animals (camels, horses, donkeys) added. This is confirmed by the earthen statue of the camel, the pieces of pottery sculptures and the earthen statues of horses and camels added to the cart found in Oltintepe in South Turkmenistan[13].

During the Bronze Age, horse-breeding was widely developed in Volga areas, South Ural, Kazakhstan and the western Siberian steppes and the usage of horses began to spread widely. Horses played a major role in the lives of old-fashioned tribes[14]. Due to domesticating horses, the area of livestock farmers' borders expanded, new pastures and water sources were mastered and winter and there appeared possibilities of moving to winter and summer pastures[15].

As a result of the development of bronze metallurgy, there was a growing need for metals such as copper and tin. The copper and tin deposits were located in the central Kyzyl-Kum, neighboring the Aral Sea region[16]. During the Bronze Age copper and tin fields were actively exploited by the steppe tribes and raw-material obtained from them and the cast metal pieces produced by mining at mining workshops near them played a major role in the internal and external exchange processes. Transport equipments were used for load transportation at mining affairs. It is possible to assume that the donkeys and camels were distinguished

by their ability of carrying heavy load. Written sources show that during the Bronze Age, donkeys were the main transportation means in Mesopotamia (between the Dajla and Frot rivers). The donkey was able to carry a load of 60 kg and walk about 35 km per day.

Archaeological materials found in houses and memorials are important in the study of family and social systems, processes of social relations. In Khorezm oasis, hovel shaped semi-cellars and light huts served as the main form of local housing, i.e. the habits of using housings peculiar to livestock-breeding tribes were traditionally used.

In the Southern Aral Sea areas at the Lower Amu Darya basin, there were considerable differences in socio-economic development of the local tribes in the southern provinces during the period of cattle breeding and crop cultivation. Their advantage over long periods of time is explained by the fact that practical knowledge on advanced technological inventions, farming and craftsmanship, innovations and inventions in building and architecture were spread weakly in Khorezm oasis during Neolithic, Eneolithic, Bronze Ages.

The uneven socio-economic development of the tribes and nations is characteristic of the world's historical processes and advanced technological and cultural achievements were introduced in different regions as a result of the advancement of cultural and economic ties and the population migration. In this regard, researchers pointed out that "it is necessary to pay attention to the particular law on the formation of the first and subsequent hearths of the civilization, which was linked to the gradual expansion of economic, technological and cultural achievements".

In the 70s of the 20th century, V.M. Masson analyzed the theoretical-methodological significance of using archeological data in the study of socio-economic problems[17] and described the reflection of natural and social factors in building construction in the following table:

In our view, it would be expedient to link all the factors (social, economic, ecological) in using the information in this table and the size of houses often results from the implementation of the plan (in general, the planning process).

I.M. Dyakonov wrote that the family of Lagash consisted of four to five family members in the ancient East, based on the analysis of the family lists of the Schumer Documents[18]. According to V.M. Masson, G.N. Lisicina and A.A. Askarov, the family of Neolithic, Eneolithic and Bronze age can be determined on average 4-5-6 people[19].

The opinions about the fact that the great tribal family of the Bronze Age of the South Aral Sea consisted of 35-40 people are a bit discussable. A large family could consist of 3-4 small families taking the social-economic condition and level of life of the ancient times into consideration. In the studied houses at Yakkaporson 2 memorial of Amirabad culture, there also lived representatives of kin societies containing large families. Taking into account the total population of 500-550 people estimated by M.A. Itina, Yakkaporson resembles the tribal center. The above quantitative indicators of the population are relative at a special degree. It is estimated that average 1,700-2,400 people lived at the Geoxur 1 settlement of Eneolithic Age (South Turkmenistan, the foots of the Kopetdogh mountain), which is relatively larger than the Yakkaporson settlement according to surface size[20].

Archaeological evidence of Tozabogyob culture indicates the property and social equity of the members of the community. In the houses, there were discovered hand-made earthenware crockery, stone and bronze instruments, which are of similar quality. Researchers paid their attention to semi-cellar materials separated with their size in Kukcha 15 memorial. Bones of two cows, six small cattle, pigs, camels and horses were found in this house. This resulted in the conclusion that large numbers of patriarchal families that had been positioned in the final stage of the primitive society's history as the bones were not found in other places. It was also concluded that the burial woman was standing high on the basis of finding five bronze bracelets in the burial equipment of the Bronze Age woman burial tomb. However, there are no signs of social stratification and property disparity in the number of household items and the number of types of decorative semi-deserted houses belonging to large families.

At the stages when Tozaboghyob and Amirabad cultures were developed, large patriarchal families, consisting of a few small families, had separate houses with semi-cellars, private property, land plot, livestock, food reserves and production instruments. Compared to ethnographic data, such families continued the kin traditions of the primitive society. They were united together by the common law of working together for the well-being of the family, common property, labor supplies and food supplies, as well as common home and lifestyle. At the same time, it should be emphasized that large family groups were formed during the Bronze Age, which could provide themselves economically in Khorezm oasis.

According to the information in Avesto, a large family was managed by the owner of the house – an elderly parent and such families were united into the kin community, the head of the community was called "seed owner" or "vispat of he kin" [21]. It is worth mentioning once again that the social relations of the great family societies of the Bronze Age in the Southern Aral Sea are characterized by the peculiarities of the kin system. It is possible to assume that the representatives of the former community tried to unite in order to solve problems resulting from their own internal and external relations. Control and regulation of the team's internal relations became the task of the heads of large families and kin elders. Carrying out

farming affairs was based on organizational and management activities.

Studying the problems of the ancient social system and social relations based on archeological data is a very difficult task. But, lack of written sources implies the use of this approach. The available information is the basis for the following points:

- the Bronze Age settlements in Khorezm oasis were not surrounded by defensive walls. This situation indicates that the need for defense against foreign military invasions was not high;

- there were no public buildings and temples found related to faith and fulfilling customs;

- the ancient graves learned consisted of plain pits and the burial items taken out of them are the basis for the conclusion of social equality;

- no special facilities for storage of agricultural products and foodstuffs have been found;

- the development of the branches of home-craftsmanship was primarily focused on meeting domestic needs of kin communities.

It is known that the emergence of surplus products in various regions was caused by production economy and the appearance of copper and bronze metallurgy. In our opinion, because of the fact that the development of the Bronze Age production forces in the Southern Aral Sea areas was not at high level, there was no suitable condition for local large families and their kin communities to produce surplus agricultural products and handicrafts. In this regard, it is worth mentioning once again the condition of uneven development of the tribes of the Bronze Age from socio-economic points of view.

In lower Amudarya, the methods of construction with wattle and daub walls and raw bricks and the problem of the emergence of architecture has become the subject of debate in scientific literature. The reason for the late formation of wattle and daub and raw brick construction in lower Amudaryo oasis later than the southern provinces of Central Asia is mainly due to unequal economic and cultural development of the ancient tribes that began in the Neolithic period. The development of wattle and daub and raw brick construction in the oasis did not result from the evolutionary development of deep local roots but it appeared as a result of external migrations – the migration of the Marghian and Bactrian population to Khorezm in the early Iron Age.

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