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SOCIOCULTURAL ASPECTS OF THE KAZAKH STATEHOOD

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this research is to analyze the sociocultural aspects of the Kazakh statehood at different stages of its development. The notions of "state" and "statehood", their peculiarities, as well as the correlations between a state and the spiritual and cultural life of society are studied. Theoretical methods, particularly, the systematic approach, which covers the generalization and synthesis in historical knowledge, and the comparative-historical method are applied. The paper proves that problems of civilization foundations of the Kazakh statehood could be solved only on the assumption of extremely broad perspectives, which influence its development, as well as spiritual, moral and cultural factors of social development.

Key words: state, statehood, nomadic society, steppe nomads, civilization development

GLI ASPETTI SOCIOCULTURALI DEL CONCETTO DELLO STATO KAZAKO

SINTESI

Questo articolo si propone come scopo di analizzare gli aspetti socioculturali della statualità kazaka nelle diverse fasi del suo sviluppo. Studia le nozioni dello Stato e della statualità, le loro peculiarità nonché le correlazioni tra lo Stato e la vita spirituale e culturale della società. Nella ricerca l'autrice si è avvalsa di metodi teorici, in particolare dell'approccio sistematico, che comprende la generalizzazione e sintetizzazione del sapere storico, e del metodo storico-comparativo. L'articolo dimostra che i problemi alla base della civiltà relativi alla statualità kazaka si potrebbero risolvere solo sul presupposto di prospettive estremamente ampie che potrebbero influenzare il suo sviluppo, nonché i fattori spirituali, morali e culturali dello sviluppo sociale.

Parole chiave: Stato, statualità, società nomade, nomadi delle steppe, civilizzazione

INTRODUCTION

In the civilizational paradigm, the role of the State is a matter of particular importance. According to some historians, the State is the main reason of civilization's formation, while others associate it with the phase of the rise of civilization. To all effects and purposes, the recognition of the State as one of the major characteristics of civilization is generally accepted by the academic community.

Firstly, it is worth mentioning that in terms of civilizational formation of the society, the State or national identity need to be considered not as a superstructural element, legitimate means of power, which reflects class conflict in the society, but as a functional, stable, and evolutionary component of civilizational regulation. According to Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt, an expert in the theory of civilization, one should regard legitimation as the "evaluation of rulers and their deeds in the frames of values, essential for the society and ideas regarding the rule of law" (Yerasov, 2001, 157). He mentions only the difference between traditional, charismatic, legal and rational legitimacy, developed by M. Weber.

Considering such a social phenomenon as the national identity within the framework of the civilization theory, it is impossible to be limited by the epistemological analysis of common factors of origin and development without taking into consideration the axiological appraisal of its inward nature. The core of the problem, therefore, does not consist in the observation of judicial aspects of given social and political institution formation, but in its axiological perception by the society. In fact, only the axiological perception of the State as a cultural and social institution, intended to function for the sake and good of the people, gives researchers vast opportunities to understand the true essence of its different types and variations.

According to the civilizational theory, the type of State, its social nature is defined not so much by objective material factors as by ideal and spiritual ones.

Thus, the civilizational approach suggests three important principles of correlation between the State and spiritual and cultural life of the society, which will be used to define the model of national identity, as an alternative to the single line theory of social evolution of the Eurasian steppe nomads' civilization:

- Firstly, the essence of the State is defined not only by the correlation of existing forces, but also by notions of the world, values, conduct ideals, obtained during the historical process and transferred within the cultural framework. While examining the State, it is essential to consider not only the social interests and active forces, but also the entire past historical experience;
- Secondly, governmental power, as a central phenomenon of the world of politics, can be simultaneously considered as part of cultural life. It

allows avoiding schematization of the State and especially the policy it pursues as a result of an abstract game; on the contrary, it helps reveal the connection between governmental power and the prestige of moral, axiomatic orientations, fully formed worldview, symbolism, etc.;

- Thirdly, cultural diversity in time and space enables us to understand why certain types of states existed under certain conditions and stopped developing under different ones. In the field of state life, particular significance is attributed to the differences caused by uniqueness of national cultures and special features of the national character.

The chronological scope of the research covers the period of the Kazakh Khanate – XV–XVIII century. However, since the entire evolution process of statehood in Kazakhstan was examined in the course of the analysis, this chronological scope can be extended to cover the period of the emergence of nomadism as an economic system, in other words, at least since 1000 B.C.

Theoretical methods were used in the research, in particular, the systematic approach, which covered generalization, synthesis, comparison, abstraction in historical knowledge, as well as the comparative-historical method. Special techniques were also applied, which borrowed from other disciplines; for instance, sociology analyzed the civilizational basis of the Kazakh statehood, the national identity within the framework of the civilization theory, the sociopolitical organization of the Eurasian steppe nomads' civilization, while, for example, the notion of "population" was studied from a linguistic point of view.

INSTITUTION OF STATE IN THE NOMADIC SOCIETY

In spite of the conclusions of certain researchers, who reckon nomad societies have all the main State attributes, there is a different popular opinion, formed on the basis of certain contemporary theories of State, that nomad cultures in general and the Eurasian steppe nomads' civilization in particular and therefore the subcivilization of Kazakhs did not have an actual institution of State: "In this respect, it is important to emphasize that nomads lacked more or less developed forms of rule and its institutional form – statehood. Coordination of public functions which underlay the processes of centralization with further bureaucratization of public and political life of society could not evolve into any developed forms of statehood... military potestarian organizations cannot be regarded as state organizations" (Masanov, 1995, 160).

If this statement is accepted as correct, how is it possible to explain the indisputable fact of the existence of powerful mechanisms, which united the nomad society into a consolidated and controlled governmental organism? How can one explain the use by Eurasian steppe nomads of the notion of "state", which originates from

the Old Turkic era and is expressed by the word “el”, which directly or indirectly corresponds in all Turkic dialects to the meaning of “connection, relation, union” (Maksudi, 2002, 214)? This is without taking into consideration the Orkhon inscriptions, wherein the words “il” or “el” meant “state, country”, and the famous work of Yusuf Khass Hajib – “Kutadgu Bilig” – devoted to the Turkic state structure organization. Finally, it should be reminded that in Chinese historiography, the term “*Sin go*” (nomadic country) appeared, which literally meant “moving country” or nomadic country, a state of nomads who “move with their livestock”; according to some sinologists, this term dates back to the times of Sima Qian (Kychanov, 1997, 264).

The attempt to examine the history of the nomadic state as a politico-legal formation separate from the living ethno-social organism and territorial settlement of nomads inevitably loses authenticity and reliability. Because of such an approach, one can conclude that nomads did not have a traditionally accepted state model, which, in a certain way, would make it schematic or excessively theorized, lacking consideration of nomads’ social and political life. According to historiographical materials, early governmental forms of nomads “were the leading and shaping power of the entire steppe world; their influence spread to other tribes and nations that did not achieve the level of these states” (Martynov, 1989, 291).

It should be admitted that the existing point of view regarding the absence of the state institution in the nomadic society appears due to reduction or attempts to view the nomadic state within the frames of Western or Eastern states without mentioning the inadmissibility of its different types’ assimilation, such as African or Eurasian nomadism. It is easy to notice that such an approach seems to be tendentious, wherefore the examination of one phenomenon by means of simple application of existing theoretical constructs to a very specific and living material of nomadic society suggests a one-sided and predictable result. Needless to say, an objective examination of territorial organization, as well as specifics of the nomadic state requires a different approach, which could play the role of a sufficient and effective cognitive instrument.

It is well known that the definition of parameters of nomadic societies’ social structure in general, and Eurasian nomads in particular, changed periodically, depending on the Soviet Union ideology, which was based on the Marxist formation theory of state typology, where social and political formations defined a certain historical type of state. Thus, one can observe that in this problem’s historiography, among different theories and hypotheses, the most interesting one is the theory of Markov (1998) about a “mixed method of production” of nomadic societies, which affords ground for suggesting that some lifestyle attributes or formation belonging were acquired by nomads due to contacts with different

civilizations. Specifically, such fictive social institutions, which did not play any significant role, were introduced into the Eurasian steppe nomads’ civilization. These are slave owning, which based on capture of war prisoners, feudalism, due to the contact with geo-social organisms and, eventually, capitalistic – a social-economic structure, which occurred recently because of world geopolitics. Although a one-way connection of all super-structural elements of nomadic societies with a settled “external world”, the idea of asymmetrical relations between nomads and their settled surroundings, the confirmation that without them “...nomads would never be able to exist on their own” (Khazanov, 2000, 69), seem to be unacceptable.

Therefore, in the author’s opinion, it is more justified to talk not about borrowing, but specifics in the organization of the nomadic state, where unity of the three constants in the state triad – “territory,” “population” and “power” – played the key role in the state character formation of Eurasian steppes nomads. An additional point is that it is possible to better understand the nature of the nomadic state if one were to dwell on such notions as “state” and “statehood”, since the question of statehood is one of initial borders of the civilizational area, social space that separates one region from another. A research of the nomadic state using these characteristics, in the author’s opinion, can help clarify ambiguity and accomplish the tasks of this work.

The notions of “state” and “statehood”

It is expedient to start by defining the term that seems to be the most adequate one to apply to the political organization of the Eurasian steppe nomads’ civilization – “state” or “statehood”, the meanings whereof, according to researchers, are not entirely identical. For instance, an encyclopedic dictionary of political science provides the following definition: “Statehood – a special feature, which marks the historical development of countries (nations, groups of nationalities, tribe unities and other similar formations), which managed to create their own state or reconstruct the country, lost for certain reasons. Statehood is not only a social heritage and an indicator of state development, but also the ideology, social, political, and cultural orientation, which direct the country to its development and defense. There are certain symbolic attributes of autonomous statehood, such as national language, national symbols, and specific forms of society’s political organization” (Aver’ianov, 1993, 64).

Consequently, statehood is not only equal to the state, but has a much broader meaning. Certainly, the state plays an important role because it accumulates power; it becomes a carrier of sovereignty, the protector of society’s cultural values. However, statehood suggests that all systems of people’s relation to the organization of life at a certain historical period, the sophisticated complex of elements, structures, institutions of public

power, are conditioned by the specificity of social and economic, political, moral and spiritual living conditions of a certain nation or unity of nations at a certain stage of the society's historical development. Among political scientists, a similar interpretation of the given phenomenon was made by Pastukhov (1994), according to whom "...statehood is a product of society in general. Its history is almost similar to the history of the society. States are products of the Modern age. Statehood historically develops into the state".

To conclude, it could be noted that statehood is:

- Firstly, a complex notion, which reflects the qualitative status of a governmentally organized society at certain historical period;
- Secondly, of national and spiritual nature, is nationally and culturally oriented, because it reflects the spiritual and social values, accumulated by a certain nation (nations);
- Thirdly, a concrete historical phenomenon, because it characterizes society at certain stage of its development within a certain historical situation.

THE KAZAKH SOCIETY: EURASIAN STEPPE NOMADS' STATEHOOD

The notion of "statehood" embraces different types and forms of governmental organization of the society at different stages of its development. The problem of statehood becomes very relevant during the modern period of scientific knowledge, especially since there is a problem of theoretical understanding of the long history of the Kazakh society state legal organization. At that, the methodological approach characteristics of the Kazakh statehood at different stages of its development should contain a scientific assessment, evaluative judgment of what things were done effectively according to life quality criteria and when they were done, while also including the things that were done wrong, falsely. They should eliminate unsolvable conflicts and contradictions. In addition, all this should be considered, taking into account specific historical peculiarities, culture, Kazakh traditions, national and social psychology, religious and spiritual development of Kazakhstan at certain stage, etc.

Thus, in contrast to the traditional formation of a state as publically political power, Eurasian steppe nomads' statehood developed in a centuries-long intercivilizational dynamics, the key characteristic of which was its focus on interior life. In comparison with the "primary" eastern civilizations, where the state became a uniting and organizing structure, defining social and economic structures, and with "secondary" states of the western civilization, which were only components, mostly dependent on the cultural and religious system of statehood, in nomadic societies the state formed as a special type of ethno-social and ethno-territorial unity. This refers to the inequality of social development, i.e. the time

difference in historical stages that the communities went through, to the influence on this process of not only objective, but also certain subjective factors, which becomes one of the fundamental principles. As a result, it leads to a difference in the time when statehood occurs i.e. the process of state development at different nations. Hence, in this context, the author considers reasonable the conclusion made by the authors of the monograph "Kazakhstan: evolution of state and society": "... a state is a result of the Western and Eastern civilizations, while the Great Steppe statehood (not state) is a basis (not a result) of the civilizational process. This is the fundamental difference between their political characteristics" (Abenov et al., 1996, 24-25).

The Kazakh statehood is not restricted only by the borders of the Kazakh khanate (XV–XVIII c.), because it supposes the formation and development of the Kazakh society, its different forms, types and functions at different stages of history, continuity and renovation of political, structural and territorial organization of the Kazakh society in general, in a word, the state-legal processes that take place during the long period of the Turkic ethnos human activity. Consequently, in order to theoretically understand the Kazakh statehood, it is necessary to consider the political power, genetically beginning with the early nomad states of Saks, Huns, Mongols, Usuns, Turks, Kazakhs, taking into account the very important state-legal reforms that were conducted at the times of such rulers as Modu Chanyu, Bumin Qaghan, Istämi, and finishing with the Kazakh khans Esim, Kasym, Tauke, Kenesary: "the nomadic civilization was the most original one in terms of the social structure organization of the society, especially in the matter of statehood. Hundreds and thousands of years passed, but the essence of nomadic statehood remained the same: the power was traditional (monarchical), while the basis or fundament was formed by tribes that led a nomadic stock-raising lifestyle. Conservation of tribes does not indicate underdevelopment of the society that is at the stage of primitive-communal system but amazing adaptation to nature by human beings, conditions of nomadic lifestyle and relevant production practice" (Irmuhanov, 2003, 107).

Preliminary methodological studies regarding the meaning of the "Kazakh statehood" notion, its content, the reasons to use it at the modern stage and the general issue of the Kazakh statehood theoretical study had to be made before proceeding to the study of the Kazakh statehood civilizational basis and its possible consideration from the civilization theory's perspective.

Thus, territorial and special factors play a great role in making a state unique. The dominating influence of the territorial factor should be regarded as a special feature of the nomadic civilization. Natural climatic conditions not only became a major constant in economic life, but also left an indelible imprint on the system of political, spiritual, and existential values. It is impossible to avoid noticing the obvious fact that the entire



Inside a Kazakh yurt (1911). From Wikimedia Commons

structure of the Eurasian steppe nomads' civilization was imbued with a worldview of harmonious development of the human being and the natural environment, our ancestors' perception of the land as the beginning of life, ancestors' dwelling – "Atameken", respectful and trusted attitude towards it, generated in this civilizational area a land ownership form, which happened without regard to the fact that they did not maintain strict continuity of governmental tradition, founded by the already mentioned Modu Chanyu, according to whom "the basis of a state" for nomads was the land: "Primal fear is the prevailing feeling of a farmer who sits on his small, infertile land plot in his divided small country and struggles with northern nature for poor crops... so he lives in constant dread of accidents, concerned about his future, in a constant struggle with weeds, afraid of hail, frost, droughts and floods. By contrast, initial trust is the prevailing feeling of a nomad. Without any plans, he tends his flocks in the immense endless steppe, which seems inexhaustible. He is carefree, he does not know the difficulties of settled life, and he is certain of the inexhaustible nourishing power of the Earth Mother. Unlike farmers, he reaps his fruits of labor not from an enemy, but from a kind and generous mother" (Schubart, 2000, 89).

Besides, when understanding the nature of sociopolitical organization of the Eurasian steppe nomads' civ-

ilization, special attention is drawn to the connection between demo-social organisms and territory. Thus, in comparison with fixed territorial borders of geo-social organisms, territorial borders of demo-social organisms had a natural spatial structure. Skipping the complicated problem (which requires a separate study) of the natural predetermination of territorial borders' outlines of the Eurasian steppe nomads' civilization, the author notes that due to their mobility, nomadic social organisms were more independent in the territories they occupied than farmers who depended directly on the initially occupied territories. The mobility of the entire social construction as a unified entity should be admitted as the representation of such independency of demo-social organisms in relation to the territorial factor: "The separation of the population forming the social organism as a comparatively independent element is associated with the fact that the social organism fundament – system of relations – got its own spatial and territorial organization, which was different from the population organization" (Semenov, 1982, 56).

Eurasian steppe nomads' statehood was different because of the constant movement of separate social organisms within the unity, which, in its turn, was defined by essential features of the civilizational structure and specific historical internal and external impulses. Prob-

ably for these reasons, typical features of the nomads' political and potestarian system that were mentioned by nomadologists, such as the ephemeral and temporary character, military intendant, non-stratification, economical autarchy, duality of steppe empires, which were centralized in terms of foreign affairs, but consultative and heterogeneous in terms interior ones, the absence of bureaucracy and managerial redistributive activity, the absence of succession to the throne, etc. do not allow acknowledging the state as a form of organization.

As a result, the underestimation of the dominant phenomenon of sociopolitical structure self-mobility caused the rejection of any possibility of functioning and development of the state institution and its attributes in the context of the nomadic lifestyle. The author absolutely agrees with the conclusion of nomadologist Kychanov (1997), who confirms the following: "realization that the administrative office or any other department of the nomadic state, located in a yurt and moving with livestock in search of grass and water, essentially does not differ from some district yamen or an office in a palace. Administrative office mobility did not transform it from an administrative body into a patriarchal or military democratic institution".

Thus, the social belonging of nomads at any level is realized by means of flexibility of its own public organization through free reconstruction of their social structure. Such a peculiarity of nomadic organisms' transformation in temporary, integrated, homogeneous unities in extreme situations determined the concentration of civil service in the military and judicial fields. Consequently, it is understandable that administrative structures that were on a higher level than the traditional social institution formed in the nomadic society not as a result of class formation, but based on military and tribal organization. For example, state authority historically originated through the transformation of military democratic organization forms into military potestarian chiefdoms, and from chiefdoms into the state structure – the phenomenon called the "aristocratic way" in political science. Such systems of public relations as a foundation of military organization of nomads' nation became not only cultural nomads' traditions, but also a basis for the political organization of a "free nation" (including the Kazakh nation), which is independent, freedom-loving, representing the symbol of its cultural self-identity. It should be mentioned that according to the ancient Turks, an organizational structure is not sufficient for the existence of a state. Another factor of existence of "ils" is independency. For example, based on Orkhon inscriptions, Turkish researcher Sadri Maksudi Arsal concluded: "At the time of Kutlug-Khaghan, the Turks undoubtedly had an organizational structure. However, despite the fact that they were governed by Turkic tuduns, they were Chinese civil servants, who obeyed Chinese governance. Turks who left the Orkhon inscriptions considered that before Kutlug they did not have "il". Turks left their "il" and "tore" (Maksudi,

2002, 215). The same situation was noted during the study of the late history of Kazakhstan in the Mongol rule era. However, sociopolitical structures of Ulus of Jochi, Ak-Horde, Moghulistan, Nogai Horde, Abulkhair Khanate, despite the inherited autocratic forms of governance, typical for Genghis Khan, were slightly different, transformed and adapted to the nomadic Turkic lifestyle, more democratic superstructural institutions. As an example, there are terms of Turkic origin that were used by Mongols in military and governmental fields: *орда, оғлан, би, жырау, тархан, түмен, жарлық, тамғашы, бітікші, жасауыл, шығын, түтін*, etc.

Thus, preliminary studies of the territorial organization character of the nomadic state (in this case, nomadic nations of the Eurasian steppes) prove the presence of specific features that are not equal to western and eastern counterparts, because this is a case of a "home ground factor" that was invented by W. Ajons (Kradin and Bondarenko, 2002, 26), according to whom, mechanisms and means of territorial organization are distinguished by extreme mobility.

Naturalness of the nomadic society territorial borders is of key importance in the reflection of economic, political, and spiritual organization of nomadic life. From this point of view, the domination of the territorial principle played a leading role in the formation of nomadic civilization outlines.

The legal basis of nomadic statehood is founded on the implicit need for power integration, which saves the huge conglomerate of ethnically homogeneous tribes from endless conflicts. A similar initial principle can be applied when defining the civilizational basis of the Kazakh statehood, which implies that it originated as a super-territorial heterogeneous unity, consisting of several substrates, and formed by three areas, namely nomadic, nomadic and agricultural, and agricultural and nomadic. In this case, by the super-territory, which is a "material basis for the formation of an ethnical unity of people" (Kozlov, 1967, 106), the author means the integrity of the elements of culture and household, specific for certain geographical parts. It seems quite reasonable to emphasize the emergence of the source of political regulative functions – statehood – as the last step towards social unity. It was based on the equivalence of the military political organization (*zhurt*→*el*→*memleket*, people→state→statehood) and the ethnical unity, where the khanate functioned as a form of governmental power. In terms of ideology, it was believed that all three Kazakh zhuzes, alongside the Kirghizes, Karakalpaks, Kattagans, Zhaimas (Tynyshpaev, 1993, 151), originated from common great ancestor Alash-khan.

It is expedient continue with the consideration of the next structure-forming component of a state – the "population", "nation" category, which is associated with demo-social organisms of the Eurasian steppe nomads' civilization and is directly related to a certain social unity or a group of social organisms, depending on their in-



Abylai Khan was khan of Kazakh Khanate from 1771 to 1781. From Wikimedia Commons

ternal tribal belonging rather than geo-social organisms, which are united regardless of the differences inside the group. In the author's previous works, attention is drawn to the special organization of a complicated, internally differentiated horizontal-vertical system of social coordinates of Eurasian steppe nomads and it is noted that despite the external integrity of the entire social organism, the place of an individual or a group of individuals was defined based on the belonging to a certain family, then to a tribe, and, eventually, to zhuzes and state, while the population, being a separate phenomenon, different from a social organism, can be regarded only in geo-social societies. For example, when talking about the population of France, one implies the French, Germany – Germans, England – English, etc., because there are no internal differentiation criteria.

Moreover, it would be interesting to note that in the traditional Kazakh society, there is no definition of the word "*turgyn*", which could become an equivalent of the static category of "population" in the civil society, while the most adequate word to reflect relations between a state and a unity of people is the term "*zhurt*" (Zhanuzakov, 1999, 251), which, at the same time, being a synonym of the word "*el*", "*halyk*" (state, population), showed their close connection and interdepend-

dence on one hand, and defined a more dynamic status of the ethnic unity of this state type on the other hand.

Such peculiarity of population organization, based on principles of consanguinity, explained the formation of another type of statehood in the Eurasian steppe nomads' civilization, where people were regarded not as a source to exploit, but a source of political power itself: "in Turkic *"ils"* there were three elements of governmental power, three elements that used power: the khan, beys, and people (*"budun"*). The participation of these elements in the governing power is different. While the khan's power is unlimited, the bey's power is relatively limited. The power of people appears at certain periods. However, according to the Turkic worldview, people become a constant source of political power" (Maksudi, 2002, 215).

In Turkic states, "population" (*budun*, *zhurt*, *halyk*) not only represented the nationals, but was an element that played a certain role in the governing of the country and had great power, because people not only participated in *kurultays* and their decisions regarding the election of khans and beys, but, primarily, they became a source of "tore" formation, which was a type of code of laws, basic principles of the state that everybody obeyed. However, the main factor that defined the status of the population is its role as the bearer of traditions, beliefs, customs, habits, views, which are the basis and heritage of the entire country. This circumstance caused an appropriate respectful attitude to people by their governor. The Orkhon inscriptions and other works on the history of the steppes have many examples proving this statement.

The first person to raise the problem of defining the origin of the "consanguinity" notion in the nomadic society was Arabic researcher Ibn Khaldun (1965). According to him, "*asabiya*," which means "group instinct" (translated by G.-H. Bousquet) or "connection of people of the same origin" (translated by Batsiyev S.), becomes a basis of solidarity and consolidation of nomads, in contrast to the citizenship in a territorial state (Khaldoûn, 1965, 36).

Due to *asabiya*, nomadic nations were more successful at seizing power, expanding the territories of their "empires", and, if the governing power was lost by one of the *asabiyas*, then the power could be transferred to a different *asabiya*. So long as they have *asabiyas*, they can transfer power, and only the nation that loses *asabiya* is conquerable and will soon die out. Taking into account the similarity of features of Bedouin nomads and the Nuers of Eastern Africa described by Ibn Khaldun (Evans-Pritchard, 1940, 55), where these segments and lineages were united by relations of actual or fictive congeniality, and the more complicated model of the Balochi and Tuaregs, where people were divided into clans and smaller divisions, down to households, and representatives of Eurasian steppe nomads' civilization, one should mention that alongside the similarities,

the horizontal social mobility, in comparison with the nomadic communities mentioned above, was a more powerful, centralized sociopolitical organization, which is demonstrated by the phenomenon of zhuzes that played a role of administrative territorial, political and legislative, economical regulative mechanisms in the traditional Kazakh society: “The Kazakh khanate as a state is a symbiosis of two origins – political, represented by the institution of supreme power and the special class, and tribal organization of power, represented by the chiefdom and potestarian structure. The chiefdom plays the role of the main powerful and efficient element of governing power and, at the same time, acts as a buffer between the people and the political class. That is the explanation of its high stability level” (Artykbaev, 1999, 46).

Consequently, it is the tribal tradition of the Eurasian steppe nomads, which is based on the principle of “from clan to state”, that explains the fact of a rapid formation of new states instead of former disintegrated ones, since tribes and tribal unities in this case became a fundament for the formation of new states.

Thus, here it is possible to see two more aspects of interrelation between the population and the state in nomadic societies. The first one concerns the permanency of the “basis” and the instability of superstructural institutions of nomadic societies, while the second aspect concerns the non-egalitarian democratic principles of sociopolitical institutions’ organization. Since the last issue is directly related to the category of “power”, attention should be focused on the specifics of its implementation in the Eurasian steppe nomads’ civilization.

There is a tendency in scientific world to revive approaches that caused scientists’ keen interest in the phenomenon of power, which is directly associated with “socio cultural way of ruling”, and, according to Bessmertniy (1995), includes: “specifics of political discourses being used in a given community, special ideas about governing power and its functions, notions of acceptable and unacceptable types of governing power; the image of governing power (including notions of how sacral or transcendental it is), which guarantees people’s obedience; special features of symbolic representation of power, accepted forms of its self-presentation and different cultural toposes in general...”. In other words, this type of analysis of the power phenomenon prioritizes the complex of sociocultural notions of governmental power and its changes.

Therefore, before studying the notions of governmental power in the Eurasian steppe nomads’ civilization, it is important to differentiate the two types of power: social and political. Social power is defined as a “special feature of a group of interrelated individuals, their common ability to act, existing as a distribution of knowledge ...and knowledge is a generally accepted conviction, belief, which is constantly related to social activity” (Ivanov et al., 1994, 92), while, contrast to it,

political power is characterized by the ability to direct activity of people, social groups, classes by means of economical, ideological, organizational, and legitimate influence and with the help of reputation, traditions, and force. To put differently, the main difference between political power and power itself consists in an inextricable connection with one or another form and type of statehood development.

It is well known that since ancient times, the notion of governing power in the Eurasian steppe nomadic society was primarily associated with something sacral and traditional, fair and lawful. The power perception archetypes were also accepted in the Kazakh society of XV–XVIII centuries, because, according to the classification of Shatsky (1990), it belongs to the integral type of traditionalism, when during a long period of time traditions remain unchanged, they are preserved and authentically reproduced in the ethnic society and “viewed as valuable for life and ensuring prosperity” knowledge and experience. Such traditionalism can be “fulfilled only if the traditionalistic point of view spread in all spheres of life – political, economic, cultural, religious – and these spheres are united by a common understanding of sacred, inherited from the past”.

Thus, traditional power is based on personality, loyalty and belief in the holiness of a legitimately elected charismatic person, who rules based on law and justice. That is the reason behind the special features of the consensual origin, sanctity, democracy of power in the Eurasian steppe nomads’ civilization. For example, the notion of a governor as a charismatic person, responsible for the prosperity of the entire nation was widely spread among Turks. Governors of steppe states were people “blessed by the heavens” – “*kut*”. “Heaven’s blessing” giving the right to rule was obtained not only by one person, but also by the entire clan, dynasty. In ancient and contemporary Turkic languages, the semantics of the word “*kut*” has different meanings: soul, life force, dignity, bravery, luck, happiness, well-being, etc. In this context, another meaning of this word becomes very important: “strength of political power, force and right to rule a state, greatness (greatness of power).” The word “*kut*” that was a part of every governor’s title had a meaning, different from that of “happiness.” This word could contain the meaning of “strength of political power, strength to rule a state, greatness of supreme power”. Generally speaking, this word implied “full authority” (*salakhiet*); in French legal language it was represented by “*Autoire de l’Etat*” (authority of the State), “*Souverainete*” (sovereignty), in German terminology – “*Staatsmacht*” (power of state) or “*Staatsgewalt*” (supremacy of a state), in Roman law terminology – “*imperium*” (supreme power)” (Maksudi, 2002, 118).

According to the Turk understanding, the state, “*El*”, apart from maintaining peace and order, has a high aim: to guarantee law and justice. These are the words about the essence of justice, uttered by Khan Kunto dı in the



Kerey and Janybek, founders of the Kazakh Khanate. From Wikimedia Commons

“Holy Knowledge”, written by Yusuf Khas Hajib:
*I am a sign of justice, the law of the truth,
 Which is holy and glorious...
 And this is the throne where I sit so almighty
 Look at it: supported by three legs:
 It is solid, inviolable
 All legs are immovable there is no sway at all
 But if only one fails
 Then the others and the throne will break after all...
 Look at me – I am always fair
 And the wiggles of true and wrong are delicate
 Truly I manage all the affairs
 Who is before me? A slave or a bey
 I honestly do not care
 For power is justice which is a base
 And power that is true is alive and healthy
 Strict justice only gives strength to the power
 The path of a bey is to follow a fair road
 My deeds bring blessing to people around*

When law is fair, it will blossom the stones (Balasagunskii, 1983, 101) (translated by G. Beisenova).

Despite the poetical nature of these lines, once can notice the connection between the image of the “silver khan’s throne on three steady legs” with three classic subjects of nomadic countries (khans, beys and buduns), three notions of power (law, justice, kut), and three Kazakh Zhuzes, not to mention the triadic perception of Space, Time and Cosmos by Eurasian steppe nomads.

Therefore, the research analyzes the sociocultural aspect of the Kazakh statehood development at different stages. The social and historic phenomena, studied in the given paper, are explained by the original search for harmony with themselves, with society or the environment by the representatives of the Eurasian steppe nomads’ civilization. Consequently, the statehood formula of the Eurasian steppe nomads’ civilization is based on the axiomatic and moral principles, while attempts to find social origin features of proprietary types are of primary importance.

SOCIOKULTURNI VIDIKI KAZAŠKE DRŽAVNOSTI

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POVZETEK

Poglavitni cilj raziskave je analiza sociokulturnih vidikov kazaške državnosti na različnih stopnjah njenega razvoja. Avtorica preučuje pojma države in državnosti ter njune posebnosti in ugotavlja, da omenjenih pojmov ne moremo enačiti, saj je pomen državnosti veliko širši. Država igra pomembno vlogo kot zbirnik moči; tako postane nosilka suverenosti in zaščitnica kulturnih vrednot družbe. V članku se nadalje raziskujejo korelacije med državo ter duhovnim in kulturnim življenjem družbe, pri čemer se uporabljajo teoretične metode, zlasti sistematični pristop, ki zajema posploševanje, sintetiziranje, primerjavo, abstrahiranje v zgodovinskem videnju, ter primerjalno-zgodovinsko metodo. Avtorica dokazuje, da bi bilo teoretične probleme civilizacijskih zasnov kazaške državnosti moč rešiti samo ob predpostavki izjemno širokega pogleda na njen razvoj kot tudi na duhovne, moralne in kulturne dejavnike družbenega razvoja. Poda tudi formulo državnosti za civilizacijo evrazijskih stepskih nomadov, ki temelji na aksiomatičnih in moralnih načelih.

Ključne besede: država, državnost, nomadska družba, stepski nomadi, civilizacijski razvoj

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