
Early State Theory and the Evolution of Pastoral Nomads

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The problem of the emergence of the state is among the everlasting questions of the humanities and social sciences. To this subject, many books and papers were devoted. However, the majority of theories have considered the formation of the state, mainly by the example of the settled agricultural societies. Such a state of affairs is explainable as the change to a settled way of life and agriculture has opened the main track to civilization and modern society. However, it would be important to know and take into account also other variants of social evolution since the neglect of similar developments has often produced serious barriers in the path of different economic, political and cultural reforms. With regard to the societies of pastoral nomads, it is sufficient to remember the consequences which the forced modernization of nomads has produced during the period of Soviet industrialization and collectivization.

As for the researchers of the past, only the eminent Arabian thinker of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Ibn Khaldun, has included the nomads in his scheme of history and, also, the nineteenth century developers of the so called conquest theory of state origin (Humpflowitz and Oppenheimer) which suggested that the state came into being as the result of conquest by militant nomads, or Vikings, of agricultural societies and the establishment of exploitation of the subordinates by the conquerors. Within the framework of the influential paradigms of the twentieth century (modernization theory, civilizational approach, neo evolutionism), the nomads, however, got little attention.

In the modernization theory, only Gerhard Lenski included the nomadic societies into his scheme, but considered them as a dead-end variant of social transformation (1973: 132, 299ff.). The philosopher of history, Arnold Toynbee, wrote of the frozen civilization of nomads (1934). The neo evolutionist anthropologists, concentrating on the typology of political systems, have also lost sight of the nomads in their constructions. Not even in the most competent works, we will find chapters considering the place of nomadism in evolution and either special typologies of the

societies of pastoral nomads. Morton Fried discusses four levels: egalitarian, ranked, stratified societies, and state (1967). By Elman Service, the number of such levels is higher: local band, community, chiefdom, archaic state and nation-state (1971, 1975). Though the latter scheme has been corrected time and again, as a rule the problem of the specific type of social evolution of the societies of pastoral nomads has not been considered. At best, nomads are used as an example of a secondary tribe or chiefdom, and the military character of their society and the establishment of a pastoral state system on the basis of conquest of agrarian civilizations are noted (Johnson and Earle 2000: 139, 263–264, 294–301).

The subject of nomads is found more often in the works of the supporters of the world-system approach (Chase-Dunn 1988; Abu-Lughod 1989; Hall 1991, 2005; Chase Dunn and Hall 1997; Chase-Dunn, Hall and Turchin 2007 etc.), however, the standpoint according to which the nomads are considered in these works is beyond the scope of this paper.

Much greater attention to the problem of the periodization of nomadism within the framework of world history has been given in the Marxist and, especially, Soviet social sciences (see details on this discussion in Russian: Kogan 1980; Halil Ismail 1983; Kradin 1987, 1992; and in English: Khazanov 1984; Gellner 1988a; Bold 2001; Kradin 2002b, 2003, etc.; Barfield, Bondarenko and Kradin 2003).

According to the Marxist scheme of the modes of production, the nomads were placed in the scheme of five formations (stages of history). And so, the steppe empires of Hsiung-nu, Turks and Mongols were considered as slave-holding, early-feudal and mature feudal states respectively. The introduction of the scheme of five formations in the history of nomadism had no justification. In later times, the less ideological scheme – the division into early and late nomads – was accepted. The so called early nomads (till the middle of the first millennium A.D.) were considered here as pre-state, early-class or early-feudal societies. The formation of mature statehood in the form of the nomadic feudalism occurred in the Middle Ages. That was the time of the late nomads. In its most consistent form this theory was formulated in several of the great collective publications of 1950–1960s, such as *The World's History*, *Essays of the USSR History*, *History of Siberia*, *History of Mongolia*.

Now, the pedantry and strained nature of many questions of this discussion are evident. More than one lance was broken in the discussions about the question which was the basis of feudalism among nomads: ownership of land or ownership of livestock. Researchers, knowing well the peculiarities of nomad ecology, understood that the ownership of land is impossible in the case of a mobile way of life. The disparity in land tenure is expressed in the fact that a rich man possesses a larger quantity of livestock and wanders quicker (as he has more horses) in order to occupy more convenient pasture plots (Khazanov 1984: 123–125; Masanov 1995: 173–177 etc.). The question was also debated as to whether the

exploitation is the relationship between the rich owners of cattle and poor men taking from them the cattle for pasture or the form of mutual aid characteristic of the primitive society (Markov 1976). At that time, this question was not only of theoretical importance. Resting upon the conclusions of academic research, the party leaders and the functionaries of the political police have followed a policy of repression (see details: Abylkhozin 1991: 4, 100, 179–180).

It is now obvious for the researchers that the *saun* system of the nomads represented a specific functional mechanism of pastoral economics. The system was determined by the ecology of arid zones and the peculiarities of animals' pasture organization (Dulov 1956: 234–235; Khazanov 1984: 153–157; Masanov 1995: 190–199). Restraint of the private property of animals has led to the destruction of this system and to a crisis of cattle-breeding in the Soviet time. After the collapse of the USSR, this mechanism automatically revived with the privatization of livestock (Kradin 2004: 105–107).

After the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU a small step was set in the direction of a democratic transformation of the country, and the ideological pressure of communist despotism over the social sciences was raised a bit. However, this was sufficient to make it possible that many new approaches were sought and non-traditional solutions of scientific problems were proposed. So, a new discussion of the Asiatic mode of production began (see Dunn 1982; Gellner 1988b; Jaksic 1991 etc.). Beginning in mid-1960s, new, basic viewpoints concerning the social organization and evolution of nomads were formed. These ideas have existed to the beginning of 1990s, and some of these concepts have their followers till now: (1) the concept of a pre-class nomadic society (Markov 1976; Vainstein 1980); (2) the concept of an early state of nomads (Khazanov 1975; Pershits 1976; Escedy 1981, 1989; Bunyatyan 1985; Kychanov 1997); (3) different feudal interpretations of nomadism (Tolybekov 1971; Natsadorzh 1975; Pletneva 1982; Zlatkin 1982; Manai-Ool 1986); (4) concept of a nomadic mode of production (Markov 1967; Bonte 1981, 1990; Masanov 1991).

In the last several decades, a basic discussion developed in the USA and West European countries on the question which factors had been of considerable importance in the course of the formation of super-tribal institutions among nomads. Two different points of view were proposed. The adherents of the theory of external dependence believe that nomadism depends on the environment and the neighbouring agricultural-urban societies. This opinion goes back to the works of Owen Lattimore (1940). The adherents of this approach think that the extensive pastoral economics, the low population density, and the absence of a settled way of life do not create the necessity to develop some form of institutionalized hierarchy. Therefore, there was no necessity of a state among the nomads. Their need of the products of agriculture and handicraft were fulfilled by attacking their settled neighbours or by exchanging the miss-

ing products through trade. As the farmers depended to a lesser degree on trade, they were far from establishing the contacts. Therefore, in both variants, the nomads had need of a super tribal organization. As a consequence the state of nomads appeared only there and only if they were forced to enter into contact with the higher organized settled societies. However, the cattle-breeders have not adopted the state from their more civilized neighbours but have created their own original political system considered as an effective adaptation of the larger and more developed type – at least from the viewpoint of the social-economic system – of their neighbours (Irons 1979; Barfield 1981, 1992; Khazanov 1984; Fletcher 1986; Jagchid and Symons 1989; Golden 2001, 2003 etc.).

The followers of the theory of nomadic autonomy believe that nomads could have independently established a rudimentary state and that their society had been divided into the classes of aristocracy and common people. Because of the special concern of genealogical relations among the nomads, such a state can be called consanguineal (Krader 1968: 83–103; 1978). Based on the limited nature of the pastoral economy, the concept of origin of the steppe empires is, in the opinion of Nicola di Cosmo, erroneous because the nomads were, to some degree, aware of agriculture. The starting point for the emergence of the state on the steppe was a structural crisis within the tribal society. This crisis could be caused by various economical, political or other reasons. This crisis has led to the militarization of the steppe society, the forming of permanent military subdivisions and special armed forces of the steppe khans. With time, this has caused the strengthening of chiefs realizing the military functions while, with the advent of a charismatic leader and rituals explaining his sacral status, the prerequisites for the genesis of a state were present. The centralization of power resulted in territorial expansion, the growth of incomes and the appearance of a governmental establishment (Di Cosmo 1999: 12, 15–26, 38; 2002: 167–186).

The flight of theoretical discoveries in the field of politogenesis in anthropology and archaeology fell on the second half of the twentieth century (Kristiansen 2005: 37) and was related to the works of neo evolutionist anthropologists (called processualists in the archaeology). It is probable that many of the western colleagues would not agree with such a high evaluation of neo evolutionism as post-modernism seems dominant now in anthropology and in the archaeology a critical attitude to the generalizing constructions of the post-processualists is found. Only a small circle of researchers considers themselves among the followers of the evolutionist paradigm. However, in actual practice, nearly all researchers use concepts and schemes developed by the neo evolutionists. To make sure that such is the case, it is enough to take any textbook of cultural anthropology: such elements as community, chiefdom, state etc. are integral attributes of the chapters devoted to political systems.

One of the important achievements in this field was the theory of the early state. This theory was developed in the mid-1970s and came as an answer to the dogmatic Marxist interpretations of the pre-capitalist socie-

ties. It is a very important theory and it exerted in particular a great effect on the Russian political anthropology and on me personally. In the theory of the early state, there are common features with the conception of the pre-feudal society of the Soviet medievalist Neusykhin, according to whom yet before feudalism originated in Europe, hierarchical political structures had existed. Somewhat later, Petr Skalník was led to the same conclusions assuming that many political structures of pre-colonial Africa were not feudal and would be more properly called early states. Later on, these ideas were developed by him in his doctoral thesis which could not be defended in a socialist country. The author himself had to leave his country for a long period.

Just in the emigration years, the creative alliance between Petr Skalník and Henri Claessen (1978, 1981) was formed and the first two volumes devoted to the early state appeared. In these books, especially, in the first one, the authors consider the early state as the centralized socio-political organization for regulation of social relations in a complex stratified society divided into at least two basic strata or emerging social classes, the rulers and the ruled, between whom the relations are characterized by the political domination of the former and tributary obligations of the latter; legitimized by a common ideology of which reciprocity is the basic principle (Claessen and Skalník 1978: 640). According to the degree of development, the authors identified three types of early states – inchoate, typical and transitional (Claessen and Skalník 1978: 22, 641). The early states might in time be transformed into the mature states in which a developed bureaucratic machine and private property are found (Claessen, van de Velde, and Smith 1985; Claessen and van de Velde 1987; Claessen 2002).

This theory was positively received by the nomadologists. In a series of works on the early state, there are chapters in which this theory is adapted to the societies of nomads (Khazanov 1981, 1984; Kürsat-Ahlers 1994, 1996 etc.). The significant contribution was made by Anatoly Khazanov. He notes that, of the early state of nomads, the lack of private property of the primary resources is characteristic and there is social differentiation, and there are found taxes and other obligations of the common people to the ruling groups (Khazanov 1984: 299). He identifies three types of early states of nomads the first of which is based on the levying of tribute, the second one on conquest and the creation of a complex society while the third type is based on economic and ethnic specialization within one ecological zone (Khazanov 1984: 231–233). Other researchers agree to his conclusion that the nomads could create early states indeed.

Peter Golden notes that the stateless society was more typical for the nomads of West Eurasia. In the Mongolian steppes, the circumstances were different. Here, the nomads were forced to enter into relations with the powerful Chinese empire for raids or for the extortion of tribute and trade privileges; because of this they have established nomadic empires which can be classified as states (2001, 2003). Nicola Di Cosmo is a fol-

lower of the early state of nomads (1999: 9, note 28; 2002: 167ff.). However, he agrees also with the fact that

since nomads, as a consequence of high mobility and sparse population, did not develop administrative networks unless they ruled a territory that included large numbers of sedentary people, most nomadic polities would fall into the category of chiefdoms or complex chiefdoms (Di Cosmo 1999: 9).

The theory of early state also had a considerable impact on the subsequent development of the Russian political anthropology. Most likely, this was determined by the fact that neoevolutionism was intellectually close to the Soviet historians and anthropologists who sought new models of explanation of the origin of the state. The generation of our teachers – Anatoly Khazanov, Lew Kubbel, and Leonid Vasiliev – and, through their works and ideas, the next generation of home political anthropologists proved to be under the influence of neoevolutionism. Khazanov (1979) was the first who acquainted the Soviet anthropologists with new ideas. After that, Vasiliev wrote two well known articles where the essence of the theory of chiefdom and early state was set forth in detail (1980, 1981). Subsequently, he applied these ideas to the history of China (1983) and the pre-industrial East (1993). Kubbel's book on political anthropology (1988) became a handbook for the scientists of my generation.

In my first two books I wrote that the nomads could not establish the state in the course of an internal evolution (Kradin 1987, 1992). However, coming under the charm of the theory of the early state, I changed my position. In a personal letter of January 4, 1993, Henri J. M. Claessen wrote to me with regard to my first article (Kradin 1993) published in English:

You seem to suggest that nomadic chiefdoms were weak, while other chiefdoms were more stable. I do not know whether the data on chiefdoms do support this view. The majority of chiefdoms – whatever their means of subsistence – were rather weak organized. On the same page, you state that ‘archaeological evidences of civilization which correspond to the state... correlate closely with only those pastoral societies which had the settled agricultural states under their authority’. Now, in itself your statement is correct. Urbanism, monuments etc. are found in nomadic states only under these circumstances. I have no problem, with that, but I cannot see why there is a correspondence between these aspects of civilization and the state. Or, said in other words: can we speak only of states if monuments and cities are found there? This is certainly not the position I would defend. In our 1978 ES-volume (which you quote) no such connections are made – and efforts there to detect such relationships failed. It is, eventually, the other way around: the state is a precondition for civilization.

This letter as well as a long correspondence with Anatoly M. Khazanov who was always the adherent of the opinion that the nomads were able to reach the early statehood level have significantly influenced the transformation of my views. Khazanov calls the states established by nomads dispositional and believes that they correspond to inchoate early states (Khazanov 1984: 296). For this reason, in a number of my works of 1994–1996, especially in the first edition of the book *The Hsiung-nu Empire*, it was written that the nomadic empires can be classified as early states (Kradin 1995a, 1995b, 1996).

Now, it seems to be evident that my zigzag in 1994–1996 was a mistake because, in the theory of the early state, clear differences between chiefdom and early state were not only undetermined but it became clear that the so called inchoate early states (dispositional states according to Khazanov) are no states at all, but represent the very real chiefdoms! In order to be certain of this, it is enough to look at the characteristics of the inchoate early state. The following traits were characteristic of it: 1) predominance of clan relations; 2) functionaries lived at the expense of a part of the redistribution collected by them; 3) there was no legal codification; 4) there were no special judicial bodies; 5) redistribution, tribute and requisitions were not strictly determined; 6) weak development of management personnel (Claessen and Skalník 1978: 23, 641).

What in these traits does not conform to the chiefdom? Practically everything does. Even such a highly uncertain trait as the management personnel in the rudimentary form is applicable to the description of chiefdoms since each chief always had a circle of confidants. With what kind of state we can be dealing if a main criterion of statehood – specialized management personnel – is not found there? The cross-cultural analysis of Claessen's concepts performed by Bondarenko and Korotayev (2003) shows that in so called typical early state, the characteristics of a state organization – special officials, judicial manpower, written code of laws etc. – do appear. Therefore, only since that stage of evolution, one can speak about the formation of states.

Afterwards, the opinions of the founders of the theory of the early state have slightly changed in this respect. In private talks with Peter Skalník in Vladivostok and Prague in 2004–2005, I succeeded to find out some interesting points about the history of the development of the concept and of its evolution, which allow us also to understand the transformation of my own views. The chiefdoms in the first volumes on the early state are presented as very unstable polities, incapable to withstand fission. Skalník himself told me that initially they knew little of the chiefdom concept and did not practically touch on it in the first book (see also Skalník 2004). Only in the second volume, the question of differences between the chiefdom and early state was broached (Claessen and Skalník 1981: 491). Nevertheless, in the concept of the early state chiefdoms were presented as very unstable and inclined to collapse, although, in fact, it is

well known that chiefdoms could be very great and able to resist collapse. It is not accidental that many of the societies which are described in the volume of Claessen and Skalnik as inchoate early states (Claessen 1978: 593) were considered by Elman Service in his work on the origin of states only as chiefdoms (Service 1975: 150ff.; see also Earle 1997: 33–46, 200–203). In other words, where other researches identified chiefdoms, Claessen and his supporters saw already early forms of the state.

In this connection, it seems to be necessary first to revise the classical typology of early states maintaining only one type, the typical early state (transitional early states should be considered as the existing mature pre-industrial or traditional states). Secondly, it should be recognized that those societies which were earlier interpreted as inchoate early states, should be considered as complex chiefdoms or, where the nomads (in the book of the early state, these are Scythian and Mongols) are considered, as something more complex in structure. So, the concept of the super complex chiefdom of nomads of Eurasia was finally formed (Kradin 2000, 2002a etc.). Thirdly, it is necessary to consider to what degree, the traits of the typical early state are applicable to the nomadic empires.

What most typical features of the early state were identified by Claessen and Skalnik? What features of the early state could be found in nomadic empires? As an example, I will compare data of the first and last nomadic empires of Inner Asia: Hsiung-nu and Mongols (see details Kradin 1996, 2002a; Kradin and Skrynnikova 2006). Of the typical early state, the conservation of clan-lineage relations is found but also some development of extra clan relations in the management subsystem (Claessen and Skalnik 1978: 22, 641).

In the Hsiung-nu society, the highest posts were occupied by the representatives of the ruling lineage and several noble clans (Watson 1961: 163–164; Kradin 2002a: 202ff.). A similar system was characteristic of other empires of nomads. Only the Mongol society is prominent at the period of the establishment of the power of Chinggis Khan in 1206. In § 202 of the *Secret History*, a detailed list of 95 commanders of thousand nomads is given. Among them, there are no near relations of Chinggis. For the most part, they are his companions-in-arms. However, after Chinggis's death, the old clan relations prevailed at the highest levels of management. This could be traced on the basis of examination of long genealogical lists presented in the *Jami' al-Tawarikh* by Rashid ad-Din. At the same time, the persons related to the ruler by private contacts remained in the administrative staff machinery.

Another feature of the early state is related to the way of the income acquisition by the administrative elite. Here, the income of the functionaries is based on the exploitation of their subjects and remunerations received from the centre (Claessen and Skalnik 1978: 22, 641).

The elite of the nomads always received presents from the pastoralists. Shan-yü of Hsiung-nu had no money to pay the chiefs and patriarchs.

They gave their companions-in-arms presents (Barfield 1981; Kradin 1996). Payments in money were absent during the reign of Chinggis Khan. Later, during the reign of Udegei, the officials in the North China territory still did not earn a salary. They lived at the expense of the subordinate peoples. Wages were introduced only during the reign of Khubilai when the whole of China was conquered. However, they were not high. Therefore, the officials did rob the people and extorted bribes.

One of the most important aspects of the early state is the appearance of a written code of laws (Claessen and Skalník 1978: 22, 641). Hsiung-nu had no written laws. About the place of the Yasa in the Mongol society there exists no agreement. Some researchers refer to the chronicles of Persian and Arabian historians and believe that the Yasa really existed (Riasanovsky 1937: 83–86; Morgan 1986: 165–166). Other scholars deny the existence of the Yasa (Ayalon 1971). This problem is of special interest to me. The fact is more important that the Yasa was kept away from strangers and that only a limited circle of the elite from amongst descendants of the empire founder had access to it. It was not used in the customary legal practice. In this case, we should consider it as only the first steps towards the creation of written laws.

Another aspect of the early state is the availability of juridical specialists, who considered the majority of legal questions (Claessen and Skalník 1978: 23, 641). The presence of persons who investigated the disputes and conflicts was known before 1206. For example, such functions were imposed to Belgütei (SH § 154; Rachewiltz 2004: 771). Paragraph 203 of *Secret History* declares that in 1206 Chinggis Khan charged Shigi Qutuqu to take part in court examinations (SH § 203; Rachewiltz 2004: 134–136). For his benefit, the kebteuls – night guards – were given to him (SH § 234). And although it looks that jarçyçi had a much wider circle of duties than only the judicial obligations, this aspect argues for the recognition of the empire of Chinggis Khan as an early state.

Another feature of the early state consists in the fact that the requisitioning of a share of the surplus product by rulers was of a specified nature and performed by means of levying of tribute and through forced labour (Claessen and Skalník 1978: 23, 641). The levy of cattle from the nomads and other obligations were known since the reign of Ugedei Khagan. Mongols did not collect taxes from the farmers during the reign of Chinggis Khan. The basic form of income then was booty. Only after the death of Chinggis Khan, as the territory of the Jurchen state had been conquered, taxes from the sedentary residents were introduced at the suggestion of Yeh-lu Ch'u-ts'ai in 1231.

A maximal confusion arises with respect to – in our view – the last and most important feature. According to Henri Claessen, special officials and their assistants appear in early state (Claessen and Skalník 1978: 23, 641). However, the number of functionaries in the state machinery is not stipulated in this case. According to Claessen's more precise definition, 'this apparatus can be limited to a few functionaries only' (personal letter

to Kradin of 23.03.2006). It is difficult to agree with this point of view because, in this case, the boundary between chiefdom and early state is eliminated.

The state is not simply a group of persons ruling over the society. Persons engaged in administrative functions exist everywhere – in the tribes of the Iroquois, in the Greek city-state, in the Zulu chiefdom. In the state a large group of people is involved in the administrative labour and has a common ideology. This group may be divided into specialized sub-units or departments (ministries, offices etc.) or, in principle, it may be not institutionalized and exist at the court, or in the headquarters of the ruler. It is also necessary to take into account that the bodies of management of the heterarchical or homoarchical societies differ from those of the territorial hierarchical states which did develop multilevel bureaucratic hierarchies (Trigger 2003: 219–220). In addition, it is important to note that the persons carrying out the administrative duties are divided into: 1) general functionaries, whose activity can cover several lines of work; 2) special functionaries carrying out the duties only in one field of management; 3) informal persons whose professions were not directly related to the management, however, they, by virtue of their status or other reasons, can influence the decision-making (Claessen and Skalnik 1978: 576). As general functionaries and informal persons can exist not only in early states but also in chiefdoms, only the category of special functionaries can serve as the criterion of the statehood. Finally, the state is not a number of individual persons engaged in administrative activities but a totality of particular organizations and institutions. These institutions have an internal structure and consist of a particular number of members receiving a reward for execution of special duties.

The specialized administrative institutions are well known in the early state societies and, all the more, in the existing traditional states. For example, in the empire of Charlemagne, an extensive central machinery of state existed. It included the chief executive officers, the councillors, and secretaries. And their number was larger than the one during the reign of the Merovingians and they were well-educated. State orders were, as before, issued in the verbal form but the written language was more and more encouraged (Le Goff 1977). Here, it is important to note that the presence of persons charged with one or another economic function at the court of the ruler and the existence of the state machinery are not the same things. For example, at the court of the French kings in the 11th – 12th centuries, there were found courtiers and functionaries who were responsible for the kitchen, the delivery of wine, the wagons, horses and entertainments. However, the political aspects of the state were represented at the court by the presence of officials, persons responsible for the treasury and the status symbols of the royalty (Stukalova 2001). Over the centuries of the Middle Ages and Renaissance, the number of officials in the European countries had increased. So, in the early 18th century, the number of func-

tionaries in England reached about ten thousand people while in France about four thousand people played that role (Volkov 1999: 149, 276).

However, in the Eastern countries, the number of functionaries was much higher. Most likely, their number was maximal in China. Already, during the Han Dynasty, the number of functionaries reached 120 thousand while, in the times of the Tang Dynasty, the bureaucratic staff had increased up to 370 thousand people. The number of functionaries in the different departments varied from 64 people in the Ministry of Public Works to 319 people in the Ministry of Officials (Bokshchanin 1993: 282, 296, 304). In Japan, in the early 8th century, there were about 900 metropolitan functionaries and about 4.5 thousand clerks and attendants. In the province, the total number of functionaries lay between 37.000 and 39.000 people (Volkov 1999: 147, 235). In the central staff of the Korean state of Shilla, there were approximately 1.300 civil and 3.700 military officials. In Koryo, the number of military officials increased by several hundred people while that of civil bureaucrats increased about two times (Volkov 1987: 55, 107). Only by the mid-nineteenth century, when the West finally excelled the Eastern countries in the gross product and military technology, the number of functionaries in the states of the capitalist world-system became estimated in the hundreds of thousands and even to exceed in some countries a million people (Volkov 1999: 149, 276).

For this reason, we can not say that the nomads had a state machinery. The Hsiung-nu knew many titles of the rulers of the segments of the empire. In addition, there were a number of special functionaries (ku-tu-hou). The Chinese chronicles report that 'the Ku-tu marquises assist the Shan-yü in the administration of the nation' (Watson 1961: 163–164). In a special work Pritsak (1954: 196–199) asserts their place in the Hsiung-nu political system. However such functionaries were limited in number, they did not make a special machinery. In the empire of Chinggis Khan, there were no large groups of special functionaries. In Chapter 85 of *Yuan shih*, devoted to the description of the officialdom, the following was said:

The Yuan Tai-tsu [Chinggis Khan – *N. K.*] Chinggis Khan has risen from the northern lands and he has consolidated (under his power) his people. The tribes were in the wildness, there was no system of cities and suburbs. The customs of the country were ingenuous and generous, there was no complexity of numerous matters of official concern, the ten thousand commanders have controlled the troops, the administrative cases and punishments have been managed by the functionaries determining the punishments. Not more than 1–2 relatives of the emperor and most influential subjects were used for these posts. When the Great Chinese plain was acquired, Tai zun [Ugedei Khagan – *N. K.*] has, for the first time, set up ten lu ('roads' – province in China) and a taxation department, has chosen the Confucian dignitaries to use them (in this department). Jurchens being subordinate were

rewarded in accordance with their previous posts: if they had titles *xingsheng* or *yuanshuai* they have been designated to the posts of *xingsheng* or *yuanshuai*. Initially, permanent laws were not established (*Yuan Shih*: ch. 85).

It follows from this lengthy quotation that, during the period of Chinggis Khan's government, there was no management personnel. Such personnel started to be organized only during Ugedei-khagan's government. The formation of the bureaucratic machine in the Mongolian *ulus* was related to the person of Yeh-lu Ch'u-ts'ai. In 1231, Ugedei was delighted with Ch'u-ts'ai's skill to make a list of the loot and to store it. After that, he appointed Yeh-lu Ch'u-ts'ai as chairman of the state secretariat. This authority had no clear organizational structure before Khubilai. However, it was the institution where the most significant decisions and decrees were prepared for distribution to the provinces, and tokens, seals and other attributes of the imperial power were made. According to Ch'u-ts'ai's advice, a system of taxation for the conquered Chinese territory was established which replaced the institution of feeding of Mongolian chiefs from the territories designated for them. Ch'u-ts'ai began to actively form the state machinery from amongst former Confucian bureaucrats on the Chinese territory.

The completion of the bureaucratic machinery falls during the years of government of the fifth Mongolian khagan – Khubilai. According to the calculations, the total number of ranking functionaries in the Yuan period in China was 22.490 people including 506 in the capital, 2.089 court officials and 19.895 in provinces. 6791 persons of them were *semuren* and 15.738 Chinese. Taking into account the fact that the number of Mongols should be not less than that of *semuren*, the total number of functionaries in the Yuan periode should be not less than 33.000 to 34.000 people (Borovkova 1971: 8). Thus, one can say that the developed form of the state of the Mongols appears only under Khubilai when the Mongolian Empire is transformed into the Yuan dynasty. Claessen calls such a type of state the mature one (1984), Earle speaks of the agrarian state (Johnson and Earle 2000), and Gellner about the traditional state (1988a).

Many researchers believe that the Mongolian army can be considered as one of the state institutions. Mongols in the epoch of Chinggis Khan had no professional army but presented a peoples army. This did not escape the attention of Juvaini:

It is an army after the fashion of a peasantry, being liable to all manner of contributions and rendering without complaint whatever is enjoined upon it, whether *qupchup*, occasional taxes, the maintenance of travellers or the service upon the post stations with the provision of mounts and food therefore. It is also a peasantry in the guise of an army, all of them, great and small, noble and base, in time of battle be-

coming swordsmen, archers and lancers and advancing in whatever manner the occasion requires (Juvaini 1997: 30).

Sometimes, the researchers consider also that the decimal system of the army presented a state institution. The contemporaries of the Mongolian empire well understood that the disciplined army had nothing to do with a bureaucratic state. 'When [they] alarm [at once even] several hundred troops [they] have not almost any documents. From the captain of thousand soldiers, commander of hundred soldiers, and junior commanding officer of ten men, [all of them] realize the [command] by way of transfer of [verbal] orders', – wrote the author of the work *Men-ta pei-lu Zhao hong* (Munkuev 1975: 67).

Thus, for the Hsiung-nu society, only one feature of the early state (judges) can be identified. Two other features can be considered as embryos (unsuccessful attempt to introduce taxes during the reign of Shanyü Laoshan and the presence of common functionaries ku-tu-hou). The remaining features belong to the chiefdom. As for the empire of Chinggis Khan, it falls into the category of chiefdom in accordance with four features and into the category of early states by two features (out-of-clan administrators, judges). It is interesting that in Dmitri Bondarenko and Andrey Korotayev's work (2003: 112) on the cross-cultural interpretation of the early states data base of H. J. M. Claessen, the nomadic societies are placed exactly between the so called inchoate and typical early states. I think that this conclusion is true with respect to the remaining empires of nomads not conquering the sedentary nations. However, if the Mongolian society during the reign of Ugedei – Chinggis's son – is analyzed then the relationship among the aspects will be absolutely different. During this period, China, Central Asia and Russia were conquered. The empire of Ugedei is characterized by only two aspects of chiefdoms (the way of income acquisition by the elite, and the absence of written laws). The remaining ones suggest that the Mongolian society was a state.

In other publications, Claessen has additionally studied the characteristics of the early state. Up to now, his analysis of 21 societies is an unsurpassed example of the structural analysis of a mass of empirical data. As a result, he came to the following conclusions. First, comparing the states and preceding societies, H. J. M. Claessen has concluded that 'there is reason to suppose that states will have a higher population density than non-states under comparable geographical or ecological conditions' (Claessen 1978: 586). By the highest standards, that is the case. Cross-cultural studies suggest the presence of a firm correlation between the population density and the degree of the political centralization. However, it is incomprehensible when the threshold of demographic density causing the reconstruction of the mechanisms of society management should come because the early state societies could have absolutely different population densities (Korotayev 1991: 152, 157). At the same time, the population density which is more often found among the farmers in the pre-hierarchical types

of societies and chiefdoms with different degrees of complexity is characteristic for the nomads, too (Korotayev 1991: Table VII, XI).

If the famous cross-cultural sample of 186 societies of George Murdock (Murdock and Provost 1973; about nomads see Kradin 2006b) is used one can note a strong correlation between: 1) development of political hierarchy and degree of settled way of life; 2) development of political hierarchy and agriculture; 3) development of stratification and degree of settled way of life; 4) development of stratification and agriculture (Kradin 2006a: Tables 4–7). Here, the correlations with agriculture are more pronounced. An especially strong correlation is traced when comparing stratification and agriculture. In 26 cases of 29, developed class societies (*i.e.* those with three or more social strata according to Murdock) have intense (arable, irrigative) agriculture. Only in 2 cases, extensive agriculture forms the basis of the economy. And only in 1 case, this extensive agriculture does not form the basis of the economy.

The correlation between developed political hierarchy and agriculture is also quite high. Only two of 58 complex chiefdoms and states are characterized by a weak development of agriculture (less than 10 %, namely the Khalkha Mongols and Kazaks). However, these examples demonstrate that the nomadic societies were able to form a highly developed hierarchy without development of agriculture. The nomadic empires are the most powerful of them. This is not a simple exception but an important feature of the evolution of nomadic societies which were able to establish great empires in the world history without developed class stratification.

The above correlations allow us to make three fundamentally important conclusions for the study of nomadism:

According to the sample of 186 societies of Murdock, all developed class societies are without exception characterized by a permanent settled way of life. The pure nomadic societies can not, in principle, establish a developed three level class structure.

According to the sample of Murdock, agriculture as the basis of the economy – which should be, as a rule, high farming – is necessary for establishment of a developed class society.

Hence, one can assume that the formation of stable forms of statehood and civilization should be based on the incorporation of agricultural societies into nomadic empires and the establishment of complex agrarian and urban economics.

It may be that the most important feature of the early state societies was identified by Claessen with the use of a structural analysis. His cross-cultural studies show that

social stratification in early states was a fairly complex matter. Several social categories with differential access to material and other resources were generally to be found. We distinguished between two basic social strata, an upper and

a lower one, and moreover discovered that in the majority of cases a middle stratum also existed. The upper stratum we took to comprise the sovereign, the aristocracy to which belonged a.o. the sovereign's kin, holders of high offices and clan and lineage heads, and the priesthood. The middle stratum was composed of such categories as ministeriales and gentry. To the lower stratum belonged a.o. smallholders and tenants, and less frequently such categories as artisans, traders, servants and slaves (Claessen 1978: 587–588).

Irrespective of whether we determine the classes by using a functionalist or a conflict approach, we can not find in the nomadic societies the middle social class which, according to Claessen, comprised a.o. ministeriales and provincial gentry. Of practically all great nomadic societies, the division into no more than two large social groups is characteristic: an elite connected with the management of the society (super tribal aristocracy, tribal chiefs) and the common nomads engaged in cattle-breeding and forming the basis for the army during raids (Markov 1976: 142, 193–196, 230–234, 263–267, 302; Khazanov 1984: 152–166, 299–300; Kradin 1992: 100–125; Masanov 1995: 188–213 etc.; in archaeological sources, for example, see Kradin, Tishkin, and Kharinsky 2005). This division is clearly reflected in the appropriate social terminology: *bäg* and *qara budun* (black people) among Turks, *khans*, *noyons* and *qarachu* (black people) among Mongols, *ak-syeck* (blue blood) and *qara-syeck* (black blood) among Kazakhs etc. Slavery and other forms of inequality were rather underdeveloped among the nomads of the Eurasian steppes.

Only with the conquest of agricultural states and their inclusion into the composition of nomadic empires, the complex multi-level social structure was formed which can be traced by the example of the Yuan dynasty in China. The population was divided here into four large social categories: Mongols proper, natives of the West and Central Asia (*semu jen* or *semuren*), the population of the North China (*han jen*) and inhabitants of South China (*nan jen*) (Schurmann 1956; Munkuev 1965). However, in this case, we are dealing with a multiethnic nomadic society with a ruling class from amongst the steppe conquerors and certain pastoral social stratum rather than with a nomadic society proper.

Hence, it is not unreasonable to suggest that the developed class structure can be only established within the framework of a sedentary agricultural society and there is no reason to assume that the nomads were able to reach the stage of early and mature state without the conquest of sedentary people. This was hampered by the scanty resources of the arid ecology, which restricted the ability of the nomadic pastoralists to the large-scale cultural transformations. I think that, from the viewpoint of general evolution, they have created a super complex chiefdom. However, the society of steppe pastoralists differs from the sedentary agrarian inhabitants to such an extent that one can say that the nomads were characterized by their specific pathways of social evolution (Barfield, Bon-

darenko, and Kradin 2003). This conclusion fits well into the modern interpretations of the evolutionary processes (Crumley 1995; Korotayev 1995; Blanton, Feinman, and Kowalewski 1996; Berent 2000; Haas 2001; Trigger 2003; Grinin 2004; Bondarenko 2005, 2006 etc.). Cultural evolutionism has travelled a long path from the unilinear to the multilinear one (see Claessen 2000a: 5ff.; 2000b: 169ff.). The theory of the early state is one of the most important approaches explaining the origin of cultural complexity. Its role and effect is high as before. It has made not only a great contribution to studying politogenesis among the pastoral nomads, but also has stimulated the development of multilinear approaches. Now, new problems and perspectives face the theorists and empiricists of the state origins which are possibly due to the fundamental studies of the schools of early state.

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