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Цивилизационное  
измерение

# civilizational models of politogenesis



**RUSSIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES  
CENTER FOR CIVILIZATIONAL AND  
REGIONAL STUDIES**

**CIVILIZATIONAL MODELS OF  
POLITOGENESIS**

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## **The “CIVILIZATIONAL DIMENSION” Series**

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The volume represents an attempt of a complex study of the politogenetic processes in their regional and temporary variety. The authors hope that their survey can and should also promote a better understanding of the general tendencies and mechanisms of cultural and sociopolitical evolution, of the interrelation and interaction of cultural, social, and political formats in the human society. The authors believe that the use of principles and methods of the civilizational approach in politogenetic studies, on the one hand, and the inclusion of the politogenesis into the problem area of civilizations studies, on the other hand, creates the effect of novelty in terms of both anthropology and civilizations studies, enriches their scientific toolkit and expands heuristic limits.

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**I. PRECONDITIONS FOR ALTERNATIVITY  
AND INITIAL PHASES OF POLITOGENESIS**

## INTRODUCTION

It has always been peculiar to evolutionists to compare social and biological evolution, the latter as visualized by Charles Darwin. But it also seems possible and correct to draw an analogy with another great discovery in the field of biology, with the homologous series of Nikolay Vavilov (1921; 1927; 1967). However, there is no complete identity between cultural parallelism and biological homologous series. Vavilov studied the morphological homology, whereas our focus within the realm of social evolution is the functional one. No doubt, the morphological homomorphism also happens in the process of social evolution (*e.g.* on the Hawaii Islands where a type of the sociocultural organization surprisingly similar with other highly developed parts of Polynesia had independently formed by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century [Sahlins 1958; Goldman 1970; Earle 1978]). But this topic is beyond the present monograph's problematique.

What is important for us here is that there are reasons to suppose that an equivalent level of socio-political (and cultural) complexity, which makes it possible to solve equally difficult problems faced by societies, can be achieved not only in various forms but on essentially different evolutionary pathways, too. Thus it is possible to achieve the same level of system complexity through differing pathways of evolution which appeared simultaneously (and even prior to its origins [Butovskaya & Feinberg 1993; Butovskaya 1994 and this volume]) and increased in quantity alongside socio-cultural advancement (Pavlenko 1996: 229–251). Hence, human associations may be compared not only “vertically” (hierarchically) but also “horizontally” (non-hierarchically) in that they may be on the same or on different evolutionary staircases, but comparable with each other in the sense implied by the principle of the “law of homologous series” in biology.

Hence, on the first level of analysis, all evolutionary variability can be reduced to two principally different groups of homologous series, just because any society is based either on a vertical or horizontal principle (Bondarenko 1997: 12–15; 1998a; 1998c; 2000; Bondarenko & Korotayev 1998; 1999a; 1999b).

However, on the further level of analysis this dichotomy turns out not

to be rigid at all. No doubt, it is necessary to qualify that a certain hierarchy could be found in any society. The actual organization of any society employs both vertical (dominance – subordination) and horizontal (apprehended as ties among equals) links. Nevertheless, those links play different parts in different societies. Hence, according to the relative role of the two types of links, all the societies could be ranged along an axis with an indefinite dividing line between societies yearning towards either extreme. It is important to emphasize that this axis should not be regarded as an evolutionary line which correlates with the staircase of growing socio-political complexity. The growing socio-political complexity could go hand in hand with the “hierarchization” (*i.e.* the development of vertical links), but it could well be accompanied by the “de-hierarchization” (*i.e.* the growth of the relative importance of horizontal links).

Take, *e.g.* the famous Sahlins/Service staircase of the “*levels of cultural integration*” (Service 1971 [1962]; its outline is, however, already contained in Sahlins 1960: 37): *band - tribe - chiefdom - state*. The scheme implies precisely the evolutionary interpretation of the above-mentioned axis whereas less hierarchized societies are automatically considered to be less developed than more hierarchical ones. It implies that the growth of cultural complexity (at least up to the stage of the agrarian state) is inevitably accompanied by the growth of inequality, stratification, the social distance between the rulers and the ruled, the “authoritarianism” and hierarchization of the political system, decrease of the political participation of the main mass of population etc, *i.e.* by the constant growth of the relative importance of vertical ties. Of course, these two sets of parameters seem to be related rather closely. It is evident that we observe here a certain correlation, and rather a strong one. But, no doubt, this is just a correlation, and by no means a functional dependence. No doubt, this correlation implies a perfectly possible line of socio-political evolution – from an egalitarian, acephalous band, through a big-man village community with much more pronounced inequality and political hierarchy, to an “authoritarian” village community with a strong power of its chief (found for example among some Indians of the North-West Coast – see *e.g.* Carneiro 2000), and then through the “true” chiefdoms having even more pronounced stratification and concentration of the political power in the hands of the chief, to the complex chiefdoms where the political inequality parameters reach a qualitatively higher levels, and finally to the agrarian state where all such parameters reach their culmination (though one could move even further, up to the level of the “empire” [*e.g.* Adams 1975]). However, it is very important to stress that on each level of the growing po-



litical complexity one could find easily evident alternatives to this evolutionary line.

Already among the primates with the same level of morphological and cognitive development, and even among primate populations belonging to the same species, one could observe both more and less hierarchically organized groups. Hence, the non-linearity of socio-political evolution appears to originate already before the *Homo Sapiens Sapiens* formation (Butovskaya & Feinberg 1993; Butovskaya 1994 and this volume).

If we then proceed to the human societies of the simplest level of socio-cultural complexity, we shall see that the acephalous egalitarian band is indeed found among most of the unspecialized hunter-gatherers. However, as has been shown by Woodburn (1972; 1979; 1980; 1982; 1988a; 1988b) and Artemova (1987; 1989; 1991; 1993; Chudinova 1981; see also Whyte 1978: 49–94), some of such hunter-gatherers (the inegalitarian ones, first of all most of the Australian aborigines) display a significantly different type of socio-political organization with much more structured political leadership concentrated in the hands of relatively hierarchically organized elders, with a pronounced degree of inequality both between the men and women, and among the men themselves.

On the next level of the political complexity we can also find communities with both hierarchical and non-hierarchical political organization. One can mention *e.g.* the well-known contrast between the Indians of the Californian North-West and South-East: “*The Californian chiefs were in the center of economic life, they exercised their control over the production, distribution and exchange of the social product, and their power and authority were based mainly on this. Gradually the power of the chiefs and elders acquired the hereditary character, it became a typical phenomenon for California... Only the tribes populating the North-West of California, notwithstanding their respectively developed and complex material culture, lacked the explicitly expressed social roles of the chiefs characteristic for the rest of California. At the meantime they new slavery... The population of this region had an idea of personal wealth...*” (Kabo 1986: 20). One can also immediately recall the communities of Ifugao (*e.g.* Barton 1922; Meshkov 1982: 183–197) lacking any pronounced authoritarian political leadership compared with the one of the communities of the North-West Coast, but with a comparable level of overall socio-political complexity.

Hence, already on the levels of simple and middle range communities we observe several types of alternative socio-political forms, each of which should be denoted with a separate term. The possible alternatives to the chiefdom in the prehistoric South-West Asia, nonhierarchical (horizontally

oriented) systems of complex acephalous communities with a pronounced autonomy of single family households have been analyzed recently by Berezkin who suggests reasonably Apa Tanis as their ethnographic parallel (1995a; 1995b; 2000). Frantsouzoff finds an even more developed example of such type of politics in ancient South Arabia in Wadi Hadramawt of the 1st millennium BC (1995; 1997; 2000).

Another evident alternative to the chiefdom is constituted by the tribal organization. As is well known, the tribe has found itself on the brink of being evicted from the evolutionary models (Townsend 1985: 146; Carneiro 1987: 760). However, the political forms entirely identical with what was described by Service as the tribe could be actually found in *e.g.* medieval and modern Middle East (up to the present): these tribal systems normally comprise several communities and often have precisely the type of political leadership described by Service as typical for the tribe (Service 1971 [1962]: 103–104; Dresch 1984a: 39, 41; see also: Chelhod 1970; 1979; Chelhod *et al.* 1985: 39–54; Dostal 1974; 1990: 47–58, 175–223; Obermeyer 1982; Dresch 1984b; 1989; Abu Ghanim 1985; 1990: 229–251; etc).

The point is that we are dealing here with some type of polity that could not be identified either with bands, or with village communities (because such tribes normally comprise more than one community), or with chiefdoms (because they have an entirely different type of political leadership), or, naturally, with states. They could not be inserted easily either in the scheme somewhere between the village and the chiefdom. Indeed, as has been shown convincingly by Carneiro (see *e.g.* 1970; 1981; 1987; 1991; 2000), chiefdoms normally arose as a result of the political centralization of a few communities without the stage of the tribe preceding this. On the other hand, a considerable amount of evidence could be produced suggesting that in the Middle East many tribes arose as a result of the political decentralization of the chiefdoms which preceded the tribes in time. It is also important to stress that this could not in any way be identified with a “regression”, “decline”, or “degeneration”, as we can observe in many of such cases that the political decentralization is accompanied by the increase (rather than decrease) of the overall social complexity (Korotayev 1995a; 1995c; 1995d; 1996a; 1996b; 1996c; 1997; 1998; 2000). Hence, in many respects the tribal systems of the Middle Eastern type appear to be alternatives (rather than predecessors) of the chiefdoms.

We have argued elsewhere (Korotayev 1995b) that in general there is an evident evolutionary alternative to the development of the rigid supra-communal political structures (chiefdom – complex chiefdom – state) constituted by the development of the internal communal structures together with

the soft supra-communal systems not alienating the communal sovereignty (various confederations, amphictyonies etc.). One of the most impressive results of the socio-political development along this evolutionary line is the Greek *poleis* (see [Berent 1994; 1996; this volume] regarding the statelessness of this type of political systems) some of which reached overall levels of complexity quite comparable not only with the ones of chiefdoms, but also with the one of states.

The “tribal” and “*polis*” series seem to constitute separate evolutionary lines, with some distinctive features: the “*polis*” forms imply the power of the “magistrates” elected in one or another way for fixed periods and controlled by the people in the absence of any formal bureaucracy. Within the tribal systems we observe the absence of any offices whose holders would be obeyed simply because they hold posts of a certain type, and the order is sustained by elaborate mechanism of mediation and the search for consensus.

There is also a considerable number of other complex stateless polities (like the ones of the Cossacs of Ukraine and Southern Russia till the end of the 17th century [Chirkin 1955; Rozner 1970; Nikitin 1987; etc.], or the Icelandic polity of the “Age of Democracy” till the middle of the 13th century [Olgeirsson 1957; Gurevich 1972; Steblin-Kamenskij 1984]) which could not yet be denoted with any commonly accepted terms, and whose own self-designations are often too complex (like “Kazachye Voysko”) to have any chance to get transformed into general terms.

Still, the other evident alternative to the state seems to be represented by the supercomplex chiefdoms created by some nomads of Eurasia – the number of the structural levels within such chiefdoms appear to be equal, or even to exceed those within the average state, but they have an entirely different type of political organization and political leadership; such type of political entities do not appear to have been ever created by the agriculturists (e.g. Kradin 1992: 146–152; 1996; 1999; 2000; this volume; Skrynnikova 2000).

And this is not all. There is another evident problem with Service's scheme. It is evidently pre-“Wallersteinian”, not touched by any world-system discussions, quite confident about the possibility of the use of a single polity as a unit of social evolution. It might be not so important if Service were speaking about the typology of polities; yet, he speaks about the “levels of cultural integration”, and within such a context the world-system dimension should be evidently taken into consideration<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> There is considerable difference in the general “world-system” and civilizational approaches. While the former tends to develop the globalistic viewpoint on history, the latter emphasizes

The point is that the same overall level of complexity could be achieved both through the development of a single polity and through the development of a politically uncentralized interpolity network. This alternative was already noticed by Wallerstein (1974; 1979; 1987) who viewed it as a dichotomy: *world-economy* – *world-empire*. Note that according to Wallerstein these are considered precisely as alternatives, and not two stages of social evolution. As one would expect, we agree with Wallerstein wholeheartedly at this point. However, we also find here a certain oversimplification. In general, we would like to stress that we are dealing here with a particular case of a much more general set of evolutionary alternatives.

The development of a politically uncentralized interpolity network became an effective alternative to the development of a single polity long before the rise of the first empires. As an example, we could mention the interpolity communication network of the Mesopotamian civil-temple communities of the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC which sustained a much higher level of technological development than that of the politically unified Egyptian state, contemporary to it. Note that the intercommunal communication networks already constitute an effective evolutionary alternative to the chiefdom. *E.g.* the socio-political system of the Apa Tanis should be better described as an intercommunal network of a few communities (incidentally, in turn acting as a core for another wider network including the neighboring less developed polities [chiefdoms and sovereign communities] – see Führer-Haimendorf 1962).

We also do not find it productive to describe this alternative type of cultural integration as a world-economy. The point is that such a designation tends to downplay the political and cultural dimension of such systems. Take for example, the Classical Greek inter-*polis* system. The level of complexity of many Greek *poleis* was rather low even in comparison with a complex chiefdom. However, they were parts of a much larger and much more complex entity constituted by numerous economic, political and cultural links and

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regional trends and tendencies of evolution. At the same moment, our employment of the “world-system” approach in this part of the Introduction, in our opinion must not be apprehended as a contradiction in our “civilizational” monograph. First, there is an important aspect the respective approaches share: both of them stress supra-local (of more than one society) trends of changes in different spheres; and, second, pre-modern “world-systems” as they are represented in the corresponding approach supporters’ works (except the Gunder Frank version [*e.g.* Frank & Gills 1993]) look very similarly with what is called “civilizations” within another approach [*e.g.* Abu-Lughod 1989; Sanderson 1995; Chase-Dunn & Hall 1997]. Furthermore, it looks very much like that in the States the general understanding of the necessity to study evolution and history on the supra-local level came through Wallerstein while in reality it was the civilizational approach (especially of the Danilevsky – Spengler – Toynbee “brand”; see below) for which this principle became most fundamental much earlier.

shared political and cultural norms. The economic links no doubt played some role within this system. But the links of the other types were not less important. Take, *e.g.* the norm according to which the inter-*poleis* wars stopped during the Olympic Games, which guaranteed the secure passage of people, and consequently the circulation of enormous quantities of energy, matter and information within the territory far exceeding the one of an average complex chiefdom. The existence of the inter-*poleis* communication network made it possible, say, for a person born in one *polis* to go to get his education in another *polis* and to establish his school in a third. The existence of this system reduced the destructiveness of inter-*poleis* warfare for a long time. It was a basis on which it was possible to undertake important collective actions (which turned out to be essential at the age of the Greek-Persian wars). As a result, the *polis* with a level of complexity lower than the one of the complex chiefdom, turned out to be part of a system whose complexity was quite comparable with that of the state (and not only the early one).

The same can be said about the intersocietal communication network of Medieval Europe (comparing its complexity in this case with an average world-empire). Note that in both cases some parts of the respective systems could be treated as elements of wider world-economies. On the other hand, not all the parts of the communication networks were quite integrated economically. This shows that the world-economies were not the only possible type of politically decentralized intersocietal networks. Actually, in both cases we are dealing with the politically decentralized civilization, which for most of human history over the last few millennia, constituted the most effective alternative to the world-empire. Of course, many of such civilizations could be treated as parts of larger world-economies. Wallerstein suggests that in the age of complex societies only the world-economies and world-empires (“historical systems”, *i.e.* the largest units of social evolution) could be treated as units of social evolution in general. Yet we believe that both politically centralized and decentralized civilizations should also be treated as such. One should stress again the importance of the cultural dimension of such systems. Of course, the exchange of bulk goods was important. But exchange of information was also important. Note that the successful development of science both in Classical Greece and Medieval Europe became only possible through an intensive intersocietal information exchange, whereas the development of science in Europe affected, to a significant extent, the evolution of the Modern World-System.

It is important to stress that the intersocietal communication networks could appear among much less complex societies (Wallerstein has denoted them as “mini-systems” without actually studying them, for a recent



review of the research on the archaic intersocietal networks see Chase-Dunn & Grimes 1995; Chase-Dunn & Hall 1993; 1994; 1995; 1997). Already it seems to speak about the communication network covering most of the aboriginal Australia. Again we come here across a similar phenomenon – a considerable degree of cultural complexity (complex forms of rituals, mythology, arts, and dance compared to the ones of the early agriculturists). This could largely be explained by the fact that relatively simple Australian local groups were parts of a much more complex whole: a huge intersocietal communication network that apparently covered most of Australia (*e.g.* Bakhta, Senyuta 1972; Artemova 1987).

Of course, in no way do we reject the fact of existence and importance of the state in world history. What we argue, is that the state is not the only possible post-primitive evolutionary form. From our point of view, the state is nothing more than one of many forms of the post-primitive socio-political organizations which are alternative to each other and are able to transform to one another without any loss in the general level of complexity. The forms discussed in this volume, both state and non-state are among them.

It appears reasonable at this point to consider separately the so-called *Early State* concept. It originated in the 1970s within the framework of neo-structuralism. Its founding fathers, Claessen and Skalnhk, from the very beginning attempted at overcoming the atemporality of the “classical” structuralism and to synthesize the structural and dynamic dimensions, *i.e.* to combine structuralism with elements of neoevolutionism. This, of course, has initially altered the basically structuralist orientation still evident in the first volume of *The Early State* series (1978 —; see especially Claessen & Skalnhk 1978: 533–96). As one of the most active supporters and a historiographer of the concept, Kochakova, points out, the first volume of the series represented a “static” comparison of early states while the next three were devoted to their dynamic consideration (Kochakova 1999: 6). In this respect, the Early State concept supporters' publications of the late 80s and 90s are especially characteristic. In particular, the alteration of the structuralist orientation of the concept under consideration revealed itself in the critics of the “political systems” theory by Skalnhk (1991), the Claessen's attempt to evaluate the heuristic potential of evolutionism (Claessen 1989–1992), and, especially, in the introduction entitled “*The Origins of the State Reconsidered*” by Eisenstadt, Abitbol, and Chazan<sup>2</sup> to the volume devoted to early

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<sup>2</sup> Eisenstadt, of course, held the position substantially different from the one of Claessen from the very beginning of his academic career. The same is basically true with the other two authors of the mentioned work as well.

states of Africa (Eisenstadt, Abitbol & Chazan 1988: 1–27). In the latter the authors openly declare the necessity of the creation of a synthetic theory which might combine the evolutionary analysis of the general and the structuralist analysis of the unique in the process of state formation.

However, in its evolutionary dimension the *early state* concept has inherent characteristics of unilinearity and directionality (see: Carneiro 1987: 757; Bondarenko 1998b: 18–22; Kradin 1998: 10–12). In particular, it becomes evident from the prevalent typology of Early States. The *inchoate*, *typical*, and *transitional* Early States are distinguished by the level of development (Claessen & Skalník 1978: 22, 589, 641). What is substituted for the “multilinearity” and “non-directionality” within the respected concept, is actually just the possibility of the evolutionary movement forward/backward along the essentially single staircase of the “stages of social evolution” (Claessen & Skalník 1981). Yet, notwithstanding the basically rather sympathetic attitude of the *early state* proponents towards the “true” (“Western”) Marxism and, in general, the overall leftist nature of this anthropological trend (see: [Webb 1984; Bondarenko 1998b]), its adherents still represent the *mature state* as an exception to the general rule; whereas the general rule appears to be represented by the *early state*. This idea was expressed for the first time within the Early State series in 1987 and then became an integral part of the concept (Claessen & van de Velde 1987: 20; Claessen & Oosten 1996: 9). And it seems that in other works by the creators and supporters of the Early State concept prior to 1987 this idea was not present as well. For example, it is absent in an important article by Claessen which appeared in 1984 (Claessen 1984: 365). Not by chance the highest type of the early state was determined just as *transitional* (to the mature state, of course) in the 1978 volume (Claessen and Skalník 1978: 591). At the same time, this idea is not present even in much more recent, made after 1987, publications of some followers of the respective concept (see, e.g.: Kochakova 1995).

But the state as such, let us point out once again, is considered by the Early State concept supporters as an inevitable form of the post-primitive political organization, which has no alternatives. However, according to this concept, secondary characteristic features of the Early State may not be identical in different societies because they might have not only evolutionary but regional specific aspects as well. What is regarded to be common for all the Early States, is the absence of the private ownership of the means of production, antagonistic social classes and the presence of redistribution as a means of the immediate producer exploitation (see, e.g.: Claessen 1984: 365).

That was the first book of the series where Claessen and Skalník gave the definition of the Early State: “*The early state is a centralized socio-*

*political organization for the regulation of social relations in a complex, stratified society divided into at least two basic strata, or emergent social classes — viz. the rulers and the ruled — whose relations are characterized by political dominance of the former and tributary relations of the latter, legitimized by a common ideology of which reciprocity is the basic principle*” (Claessen & Skalnhk 1978: 640). In the subsequent years the “Early-Staters” attempted at a fuller elaboration of the given definition components, but they have never questioned its validity (Claessen, & van de Velde 1987: 4; Claessen & Oosten 1996: 9). Furthermore, Claessen in fact spreads (with some insignificant changes and additions) his and Skalnhk’s definition of the *early state* on the state as such arguing the following: “...*the state is an independent centralized socio-political organization for the regulation of social relations in a complex, stratified society living in a specific territory, and consisting of two basic strata, the rulers and the ruled, whose relations are characterized by political dominance of the former and tax obligations of the latter, legitimized by an at least partly shared ideology, of which reciprocity is the basic principle*” (Claessen 1996: 1255).

We believe that numerous publications of the Early State concept advocates on the legitimization of power problem form the most interesting part of their research. Nevertheless, the interrelations between the supralocal institutions of authority and the local social institutions (the community above all), as well as the local institutions’ influence on the formation, evolution, and the nature of the “royal” power are usually left without adequate attention. Thus ideology turns out to be reduced to the level of the supreme power “legitimizing”. Consequently, both ideology and political power itself appear to be “suspended” without any organic links with the social, cultural, and administrative institutions with which they are in reality connected and correlated.

The refusal to consider the political process in the holistic cultural context is especially evident here. In his *Complex Interaction Model* Claessen singles out four *formats* within which structural changes in a society may take place. The overall social dynamics is therefore explained within the *Model*. These four formats are the *societal format*, i.e. infrastructure, communications, and control; the *economic development format*, i.e. trade and markets, incomes and expenditures of the state; the *legitimation format*, i.e. the balance between power of consensus and cohesion; and the *bureaucratic organization format*, i.e. the effectivity of the bureaucratic machine. In those cases when development (“*the process of qualitative reorganization of a society*” from simpler to more complex) in each of the formats tends to support the development in other formats, the evolution of an early state takes place

and it transforms into a mature state if there is no external counteraction (Claessen 1984; Claessen & van de Velde 1987: 7–20). In other words, Claessen makes an attempt to reveal internal mechanisms of the Early State evolution. But this attempt can hardly be considered successful especially if one takes into account that on the concrete analysis level in his (and other Early-Statists') publications the first two formats always turn out to be secondary with respect to the third and the fourth formats. This is openly declared in more recent writings by Claessen (see, e.g.: Claessen & van de Velde 1987; Claessen & Oosten 1996).

The “*regional differences*” among early states are naturally acknowledged (see especially: [Claessen & Skalnik 1981: 59–86; Claessen & van de Velde 1987: 39–49; Claessen & Oosten 1996: 365–370]; see also: [Claessen 1987]). Yet, they are considered to be only multiple forms which “cover” basically the same contents of the Early State as “*a scholarly construction, an ideal type, based on historical, archaeological and anthropological data*” (Claessen & Oosten 1996: 9). The possibility of existence of alternatives to the state, including the Early State is not even discussed by the concept adherents, for the universality of the state as the antithesis to the primitivity is self-obvious for them.

As one of its consequences, this leads the Early Statists to the implicit rejection of the civilization approach to the problem of politogenesis for they practically deny its most fundamental idea according to which different civilizations may follow essentially different pathways of evolution. From this point of view, the monograph *Rozhdenie afrikanskoj tsivilizatsii* (*The Birth of an African Civilization*) by one of the most active Early State concept supporters, Kochakova is very demonstrative. Civilization for her is nothing more than a group of societies which have states and social classes as the major characteristic. Features of cultural similarity they all share only determine the territorial limits of such a “civilization” (Kochakova 1986: 9–17). It is also not by chance that the mentality of a society members (which is straightly connected with its civilizational type of modal personality and through which its evolutionary pathways are directly influenced) is reduced by Early Statists to the notorious “ideological factor”.

No doubt, Claessen and his followers' thought does not stand steel (see for more details: [Kochakova 1999: 46–55]). As regards the Early State theory dynamics in the late 1980s – 1990s, one's attention is drawn by the fact of the rejection by its adherents to consider as identical the mechanisms of political organization within the pre-state and early state societies, on the one hand, and within the modern states, on the other. They consider the Early State as based on the consensus, whereas the Modern State is regarded to be

based on the use of violence monopolization; they also pay more attention to the *regional differences* (Claessen & Oosten 1996), attempt at considering the ideological factor as independent in connection with the problems of redistribution, ritual, legitimization of power by means of its sacralization ([Claessen & Oosten 1996]; see also: [Skalnhk 1991]), reveal interest to the evolution of kinship relations (Eisenstadt, Chazan, Abitbol 1988), and work on further typologization (for example, they have introduced the *Early State Empire* category [Claessen & van de Velde 1987]).

All this testifies to the still existing internal potential of the Early State theory elaboration. However, one has also to notice the ongoing preservation within this theory of the following features: its basically unilineal approach, and as a result, the construction of the diachronical typologies only, the actual understanding of the state as a system of administrative institutions, the understanding of the processes in the administrative subsystem as having priority over the other subsystem etc.<sup>3</sup>

Why have we decided to consider the *civilizational models of politogenesis*<sup>4</sup>? We are sure that taking into account of the general character and

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<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, it seems necessary to mention that in one of his most recent papers Claessen criticizes his own earlier writings on the ground of their excessive unilinearity stressing the point that “we cannot escape to accept the idea that there are more streams in evolution than the one and only stream leading to the state” (Claessen 2000); thus, his position appears to be approaching ours more and more. We would also like to stress that we accept Claessen’s proposal to view the evolution “as *the process by which structural reorganization is affected through time, eventually producing a form or structure which is qualitatively different from the ancestral form*” (Claessen 2000; the definition itself belongs to Voget [1975: 862]; however, this was Claessen who supported it most strongly in our field – see Claessen & van de Velde 1982: 11ff.; 1987: 1; Claessen, van de Velde, & Smith 1985: 6ff.; Claessen 1989–1992: 234; Claessen and Oosten 1996 etc. See also e.g. Collins 1988: 12–13; Sanderson 1990). We also agree with Claessen entirely when he maintains: “*Evolutionism then becomes the scientific activity of finding nomothetic explanations for the occurrence of such structural changes*” (2000). Of course such an understanding of evolution differs completely from the one of that very scholar who introduced this notion into scientific discourse and who proposed its definition which retains its esthetical appeal up to the present – “*a change from an incoherent homogeneity to a coherent heterogeneity*” (Spencer 1972 [1862]: 71), which implies the understanding of evolution as a dual process of differentiation and integration. Within the notion of evolution suggested above this will be of course one [1] of the possible types of evolutionary process in addition to [2] the evolution from complex to simple social systems and [3] structural changes on the same level of complexity (roughly corresponding to such main directions of biological evolution in Severtsov’s [1949; 1967] terminology as [1] *aromorphosis* [~ *anagenesis* in the sense in which this term was originally proposed by Rensch {1959, p.281–308; see also Dobzhansky *et al.* 1977; Futuyma 1986: 286}], [2] *degeneration*, and [3] *idioadaptation* (~*cladogenesis* Rensch 1959: 97f.; see also Dobzhansky *et al.* 1977; Futuyma 1986: 286) – thus, it appears to correspond rather well to the notion of evolution in modern biology.

<sup>4</sup> The notion of “politogenesis” was elaborated in the 1970s and 80s by Kubbel (e.g. 1988) which employed it for defining the process of state formation. But it has become evident by today that



type of culture is essentially important for the understanding of given societies' political culture as its integral part which directly influences the direction and course of the politogenetic process. And we believe that this aspect of the wider problematique of factors and conditions of the complex political organization formation might be well examined within the civilizational approach framework.

Originally, in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century, French (Mirabeau, Montesquieu, Holbach, Condorcet) and Scottish (Ferguson, Millar, Smith) Enlighteners developed the idea of civilization as the highest progressive stage of the essentially unilineal evolutionary process. It did not possess any substantially spatial connotations: though the stage of civilization was considered to be achieved by that time in Europe and its settler colonies only, it was regarded basically possible for other peoples of the world to rise up to this level too. That time the study of civilization took into account predominantly the spiritual dimension of human life; the formation of civilization was regarded as the result of the improvement of human nature, the increase in the morality, the development of civil feelings, and, eventually, of the "progress". Out of this the socio-political and economic institutions of the civil society attributed by them to a "civilized" nation were derived (see: Febvre 1991 [1930]: 239–281; Renjov 1993).

The understanding of civilization in Anthropology during the first decades of its history was basically the same. Evolutionists (Tylor [1866; 1871; 1881], Lubbock [1870], Morgan [1877]) pinned all the peoples on the only imaginable for them evolutionary staircase and used the notion of civilization for characterizing societies situated on its highest stair, principally achievable for any people of the universe, not being an "exceptional privilege" of the Europeans and North Americans. Evolutionists based their assumptions on the universal characteristics of an individual psyche, a non-material phenomenon which, nevertheless, as they supposed, determined the form and essence of social and political events.

From the 18<sup>th</sup> century on, the priority of the human being, his culture, spirituality has always remained a distinctive feature of the civilizational approach. But the approach as such was becoming more and more diversified. Lucien Febvre wrote in 1930: "... *the notion of civilizations of uncivilized tribes has already become usual since long time*" (Febvre 1991 [1930]: 240).

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processes of archaic societies' political evolution should not be reduced to the rise of the state exclusively because this is only a particular case of those processes. The approach to this notion we suggest, as to the one denoting the process of any form of complex political organization formation, looks more justifiable from the etymological point of view too: in ancient Greece the word "*politeia*" meant the political order of any type.

He goes on to maintain that in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century there happened the “... *divergence of the notion of the civilization into two*;.. [the supporters of] *one of them finally arrived at the conclusion that any group of human beings, notwithstanding the means of its influence, material and intellectual, on the surrounding world, possesses a civilization of its own*; [the supporters of] *the other (now old) is the concept of the higher civilization, which white nations of Western Europe and North America possess and spread...*” (Febvre 1991 [1930]: 280–281). Hence, the spatial approach to this notion, *i.e.* the idea of “civilizations”, consolidated. Thus, this viewpoint did not suppose straight connection between the notion of civilization and a certain stage of development (though the foundations of such an approach also date back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, ascending to Vico, Voltaire, and Herder [Ionov 1997: 137–138]).

But in this context the stress on the spiritual essence of the phenomenon of civilization has become even stronger. It is evident in works of the first “local civilizations” theories' creators (Rückert and Spengler in Germany, Buckle in Britain, the Slavophiles [Khomyakov, Kireevsky, Aksakov], Chaadayeve, and Danilevsky in Russia). They demarcated local civilization boundaries on the basis of religion, mental characteristics, “cultural-historical type”, etc. of a given large region population (see, *e.g.*: Rashkovsky 1990; Ionov 1997; Khachaturjan 1997). This tradition found its further development in the works by Toynbee (1934–1954; 1948) and many other civilization approach theorists.

In the framework of Anthropology the spatial approach to civilization revealed itself for the first time in writings by German (Frobenius [1898; 1921], Gräbner [1911], Baumann and Westermann [1948]), Austrian (Schmidt [*e.g.* 1910] and others) and later American (Goldenweiser [1922], Wissler [1923; 1931], Kroeber [1957; 1962]) diffusionists, though not all of them employed that notion. However, many of them, while defining civilizations (*Kulturkreise*, “Areas”) boundaries, composed rosters of characteristic features of every civilization which included phenomena of social, political, and material culture at one time. Nevertheless, the priority of spiritual aspects over them all was acknowledged by Frobenius, Schmidt, Kroeber. Meantime, it appears necessary to stress that all of them shared the spatial understanding of the civilization and refused to consider it as a definite evolutionary stage.

It was already the 20<sup>th</sup> century when a new trend within the civilizational approach appeared. Its essence is manifested in attempts to combine the global aspect with the local one, *i.e.* to reveal the connection between changes of cultural types and human spirituality at the universal scale, on the one hand, and local civilizations, on the other. Jaspers (1949) and Eisenstadt

(e.g. 1978; 1986) are those who represent this tradition in the most prominent way.

The most well-known anthropological version of such an approach, albeit of a more materialistic kind, is Sahlins' concept of "*general and specific evolution*" (Sahlins 1960). The neoevolutionistic idea of general and specific evolution was meant to solve that much "cursed" problem of the correlation of the universal and the particular in history, society, and culture. But it does not offer anything principally new in comparison with classical evolutionism and Marxism. As in the epoch of classical evolutionism of the 19<sup>th</sup> to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, a teleologic unilinear vision of humanity's socio-cultural history still stands behind the idea of "general evolution". Within such an approach differences among societies and culture areas with the same basic level of complexity look like nothing more than local variants of each other, different in form but identical in content. Again, only the vision of evolution as a multilinear or even non-linear process is capable of outlining a way out of this deadlock (see: Bondarenko 1997: 10–11; Korotayev 1998a).

On the other hand, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, due to the influence of such scholars as Weber (e.g. 1920), Sorokin (e.g. 1992), Jaspers (1949), Parsons (1966), Eisenstadt (1978; 1997) the tradition ascending to the 18<sup>th</sup> century Enlighteners, the creators of the first theories of civilization, was further developed. This tradition explains the socio-political systems of local civilizations through their cultural characteristics, human personality and mentality types, etc. Meantime Sorokin, Jaspers, Parsons, and Eisenstadt shaped their civilization theories in an evolutionary way, synthesizing the evolutionary and civilizational approaches. At the same moment, their civilization typologies recognize civilizations of different levels, yet, on the other hand, most of them consider civilizations of one level (type), e.g. the "Axial" civilizations, as "isometric", of equal value, that is, in some respects alternative to each other.

Our approach basically stems from this tradition. Naturally, we do not consider such an "idealistic" approach to be the only working one. The opposite influence of the socio-political system on the cultural pattern, modal personality type, the whole structure of a civilization and its constituent societies is beyond any doubt. However, in the present monograph we are mainly interested in the studying of the influence of the socio-cultural factor on the political subsystem evolution within various civilizations in the process of politogenesis.

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Finally, a few words should be said about the choice of our sample. It is noway occasional. We tried our best to include into the sample societies known from archaeological, anthropological and historical sources belonging to civilizations of all the historical periods (*i.e.* Ancient, Medieval and Modern), all the inhabited continents and to all the main economic types (foragers, horticulturalists, intensive plough agriculturalists, cattle-breeders), of course, as well as to a great variety of the socio-political organization types from most simple societies to pre-industrial states.

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## BIOSOCIAL PRECONDITIONS FOR SOCIO-POLITICAL ALTERNATIVITY\*

### Introduction

Studies in human evolution, ethology, and neurophysiology ultimately raise the question of the human's place in the animal world and his/her behavioral uniqueness (Parker & Gibson 1979; Tanner 1987; McGrew 1992; Butovskaya & Feinberg 1993; Picq 1994; Moore 1996). New findings in molecular genetics, primate socioecology, and human ethology open new perspectives in revealing of our closeness to other living creatures. The continuity of social life observed between non-human primates and the humans is fundamental for understanding the formation of human society in the course of evolution (Butovskaya & Feinberg 1993). The capacity for self-recognition, purposefulness, long-term memory, prediction of other's actions, deception, the understanding of social bonds within the group – these are some, but by no means all, prerequisites of human society, those which are actually observed in extant great apes. Like many other phenomena of human life, certain aspects of culture can be explained from the standpoint of natural sciences (Rodseth *et al.* 1991; Eibl-Eibesfeldt & Sutterlin 1992). The most important task is to reveal the continuity between the human society and primate social structures, and to solve certain problems concerning the biological roots of human social institutions and properties such as systems for transferring social information, systems of kinship, marriage, and social stratification (Butovskaya & Feinberg 1993; Butovskaya 1999a; 1999b). The present chapter, based on recent primatological evidence, attempts to demonstrate some basic features of social structure and in-group – out-group social relationships observed among non-human and human primates. The special attention will be paid to comparative analysis of social hierarchy types and their relevance to certain ecological conditions. Possible influence of phylogenetic inertia on the hominids' social behavior will be also discussed. Besides, the possible correlation between social relationships and intelligence will also be discussed.

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**Socioecology and social complexity:  
female-bonded and non-female-bonded societies**

Modern humans are known to possess the highest interpopulational differences in social structure and types of hierarchical relationships compared to non-human primates. Are these differences in any way connected with socioecology? The information from the field of primatology seems to give some general answer to the question. According to the socioecological paradigm, the degree of complexity of social relationships and social mechanisms aimed at preventing social tension depends on the ecological context in which the species exists. The species, then, is regarded as one of the components of the local ecosystem, whereas social relationships are viewed as factors optimizing the adaptation of groups within this species to the respective ecosystem.

Two basic hypotheses concerning the reasons underlying group formation and the maintenance of within-group cohesion were proposed. The first one concentrates on the necessity to form cohesive groups in order to compete successfully for food resources with the conspecifics (Wrangham 1980). Also, correlation has been established between the terrestriality, food preferences and group size (Clutton-Brock & Harvey 1977; van Schaik 1989). According to Dunbar (1988), terrestrial frugivores and generalized omnivores tend to form large foraging groups with differentiated competitive relationships among females. The group size can also depend on the environment. Observations of chimpanzees in different environmental settings have revealed a tendency to a higher level of cohesiveness in dry and open environments (Mt. Assirik, Senegal, see Tutin *et al.* 1983). Larger, mixed parties containing adult males are reportedly more common in non-forested habitats than are solitary individuals or parties without males. According to the second hypotheses, high predator pressure is sufficient for the selection favoring a gregarious way of life (van Schaik & van Hooff 1983). Both the predator pressure and between-group competition hypotheses agree that the differences between species should exist with respect to within-group social relationships of females. Thus the level of within-group competition reflects the pattern of resource distribution and the quality of these resources (van Noordwijk & van Schaik 1987; van Schaik 1989).

Social relationships are outcomes of ecological pressures on individuals, and social behavior is aimed at enhancing inclusive fitness which is different in males and females (this rule remains stable in human species). Indeed, it was found that the reproductive success of males and females depended on different factors. While food is the main limiting females' reproductive success factor, the males' reproductive success is supposed to be

limited by the access to females (Wrangham 1980). The between-group contest is the primary stimulus for female bonding because its effect on the fitness of females is supposed to outweigh the effect of within-group competition (Butovskaya, 1999a). Although females may form groups to reduce the risk of predation as well as in the process of group formation, the within-group competition for food may arise (van Schaik 1989). Wherever food is easily monopolized, the within-group competition is of the contest type (long-tailed macaques, rhesus macaques) and female relationships are more despotic and nepotistic (kin-oriented), resulting in a female-bonded (matrilineal) group structures (van Noordwijk & van Schaik 1987; van Schaik 1989). In the situations when food resources are small and dispersed, the competition is of the scramble type (*Saimiri spp.*, Mitchell *et al.* 1991), and non-female-bonded groups are likely to emerge. The competition between females is virtually absent where resources are abundant and distributed over large patches (*Presbytes thomasi*, Sterck *et al.* 1997). In such cases, female relationships will be highly egalitarian and dispersive, and the existence of a non-female-bonded group structure is highly probable.

Female-bonded or non-female-bonded groups are formed mainly because the effect of the within-group contest is generally more important than that of the between-group contest. Many non-female-bonded species are folivorous (*Gorilla gorilla beringei*, Watts 1994) while most female-bonded ones are frugivorous (*Macaca spp.*, Schaik 1989; Butovskaya 1993). In the situations when animals feed basically on large fruit trees and supplement their diet with other types of food, the within-group competition may be low (*Tonkeana macaques*). In contrast, the likelihood of the between-group competition may be high and a female resident pattern should be expected (*Erythrocebus patas* (Chism & Rowell 1986).

The mentioned above Van Schaik's model mainly sought to explain the reasons underlying the group formation in females. Later, it was attempted to predict social relationships in males (van Hooff & van Schaik 1994). As females, the limiting resource for males, can not be easily shared, it was suggested that the cooperation among males is less common and mainly takes the form of reciprocal altruism and cooperative alliances.

An explanation of female grouping evolution in primates demands understanding feedback connections in the evolution of social relationships (Sterck *et al.* 1997). One of these catalyzing stimuli is the infanticidal strategy of males which must certainly have affected female strategies in species where infants were endangered. The risk of infanticide can promote the formation of multi-female, multi-male groups. This is so due to the fact that within such a social structure, females can make paternity less certain (by not

displaying external signs of ovulation, by promiscuous mating, etc.) thus ensuring a multi-male protection for their infants. The infanticide risk may be the fundamental reason for grouping in situations when predation risk, within-group contest and between-group contest are low (Sterck *et al.* 1997). The comparison of congeneric species (those of the genus *Macaca*, for example) has revealed that patterns of coping with social tension are less developed in more arboreal species compared with more terrestrial ones (long-tailed macaques compared to stumptailed and *tonkeana*). This is due to a greater importance of sociality for the survival of single individuals in terrestrial species where group life provides a defense against predators and an access to resources under competition with conspecific groups.

The prerequisite for an efficient social structure is a positive balance between individual cost and the benefit which sociality provides to single individuals. This balance may vary across conspecific populations, ultimately resulting in the emergence of between-population differences in dominance style and, respectively, in various behavioral models aimed at preventing social tension and removing its effects.

#### **Male-female pair-bonding, female cooperation and infanticide**

The present variability of hierarchical relations in modern humans may be viewed as an outcome of the evolution of hypothetical ancestral group of early hominids. Some general features of the latter social behavior could be suggested basing on the modern data in primate socioecology. There are reasons to believe that the system of relationships in early hominids was male-resident and based on male competitive alliances. At the same time, we suggest that early hominid societies were largely female-centered (Table 1) (Butovskaya 1999a). In chimpanzees, most females are not related, yet their coalitions are known to be stable and selective; kinship and friendly bonds overlap, and “*the distinction between friend and foe seems infinitely sharper for females*” (de Waal 1990: 53). Sometimes mothers travel with their adult daughters and cooperation in such cases is well expressed (Goodall 1986). Contrary to common chimpanzees, in bonobos females generally have high social status and may be dominant over males (de Waal 1987; Kano 1992; Ihobe 1992). In human societies females definitely follow the same patterns since their ties are highly stable. In many traditional societies, women who have moved to their husbands' homes establish close relationships, involving both household activities and child rearing, with their female in-laws, their social status being connected with age and time spent in the group (Table 1).

**Table 1.**

**Grouping patterns of African Apes, Man and Early Hominids**

Species	Bonds	Cont. Aggression		Dominance		Alliances	
		M	F	M	F	M	F
Gorilla	M-F	H	L	D	S	CA	N
Chimpanzee	M-M, F-F*	H	L	D	S	CA	FrA
Bonobo	M-M, F-F, M-F	L	L	D*	D*	CA	FrA
Homo Sapiens	M-M, M-F, F-F	H	L	D	D*	CA	FrA
Early Hominids	M-M, M-F*, F-F	?	L	D	D*	CA	FrA

*Note:* M-F -male-female bonds; M-M - male-male; F-F - female-female; F-F\* - close friendly bonds between females are possible under some conditions; H- high; L- low; D - males are dominant over females; S - females are subordinate to males; D\* - males and females could be dominant under different conditions; CA- competitive alliances; FrA - friendly preferences; N- none; ? - not predicted (Butovskaya 1999a).

Another largely neglected factor that promotes the development of friendly ties between female primates is the risk that males might commit infanticide (as will be shown below, such adaptations exist in several primate species). As some recent studies suggest, infanticide is an important reproductive strategy in primates (Angst & Tommen 1977; Daly & Wilson 1988; Hiraiwa-Hasegawa, 1992). Perhaps infanticide is an efficient reproductive strategy of males in the modern society as well. As shown by Schiefenhovel (1989), infants born in adulterous consortships or those from previous marriages run the risk of being killed in 15 out of 39 traditional societies practicing this custom. Although in most cases infanticide was performed by females (including the infants' mothers), males or their kin were doubtless the active side. Data on Ache, the modern hunters-gatherers of Paraguay, suggest that fatherless children are 15 times more likely to be killed at the age of 2 to 15 than are those who have fathers (Hill & Kaplan, 1988). In Western societies, stepchildren are reported to be 65 times more likely to die within the first two years of life than are those who live with both biological parents (Daly & Wilson 1988). Infanticide reduces the female's inclusive fitness. No wonder female primates have developed strategies aimed at preventing infan-

ticide. While in some taxa, like macaques and vervets, females are cohesive and jointly defend infants against new males, others, such as colobuses and langurs, practice emigration and group fissioning.

### **Social hierarchy and dominant sex**

The dispersal patterns and the expression of hierarchical relations may differ in closely related species even if both are subjected to intense predator pressure. One of the examples is provided by two species of squirrel monkeys, *Saimiri oerstedii* and *Saimiri sciureus*, (Mitchell *et al.* 1991). Direct feeding competition between the groups seems to be absent while that within groups was reported to be low in *S. oerstedii* and marked in *S. sciureus*. As could be predicted, female relationships were undifferentiated, female hierarchy lacked, and there were the females who dispersed from their natal groups in *S. oerstedii*. In *S. sciureus*, on the other hand, a clearly expressed female dominance hierarchy was observed, stable within-group alliances were frequent. This species was characterized by female philopatry.

The data from primate socioecology revealed the complex interconnection between dispersal patterns and patterns of inter- and between-sex dominance relations. For example, both chimpanzees and bonobos are male-philopatric. But they strikingly differ in the pattern of inter-male and inter-female relationships (Table 1). In chimpanzees, males maintain close connections with each other. Such associations are tightly connected with formalized dominance hierarchies, and alliances are likely to change following the restructuring of male-dominance relations (Goodall 1986). Grooming is not a reflection of attachment between the male kin, but rather a social tactics to form alliances against other individuals. In bonobos, on the other hand, male dominance hierarchy is less clear-cut, males show loose associations, alliances in aggressive conflicts are rare (Susman 1987). Moreover, females frequently dominate males in conflicts over food (Kano 1992). It is suggested that only cooperation and mutual support of females enables their dominance (Franz 1999; Kano 1992). Because most of adult females in bonobo groups are usually non-kin, the only explanation of this phenomenon is that newly emigrant females practiced a special model of “social adaptation”, they established friendly bonds with older and highest ranking females. Unlike in male chimpanzees, grooming relations in female bonobos are correlated with friendly bonds and in no way grooming in this species can be explained as a pay-off for support from the side of higher-ranking animals. It means that dominant bonobo females were not groomed more than subordinate ones and even initiated more grooming down the hierarchy (Franz 1999). Food sharing between the males is less common. Female-female relationships in bonobos



are characterized by a high level of sociability: females frequently affiliate with each other, and appeasement actions are quite common (Nishida & Hiraiwa-Hasegawa, 1987). Although food sharing is more frequent in male-female pairs, it is not exceptional in female-female pairs as well, involving even non-related adult females (Hohmann & Fruth 1993); such cases would be almost impossible in chimpanzee communities (Kuroda 1984).

These differences would be easier to understand if we examined the patterns of competition between males for reproductive females. In bonobo females, the period of pseudo-estrus is much longer than in chimpanzees, and the dominant males' attempts to monopolize estrus females may be less beneficial (Ihobe 1992). Taking the case with early hominids, we can expect that the absence of visual signs of ovulation might have produced the same effect on the male-male relations as in bonobos, that is, the decrease of within-group competition between the males (Table 1). Secondly, like in some primate species, menstrual cycles of females from the same group could become synchronized, making the strategy of monopolization of receptive females by the dominant male inefficient.

Close male relations may exist in female-bonded species, for example among bonnets (*Macaca radiata*) and stumptails (*M. arctoides*) (Butovskaya & Kozintsev 1996a). In these species even non-related males are highly tolerant to each other and spend much time in close proximity. They intervene in dyadic disputes among other males and frequently reconcile after conflicts (Silk 1992; Butovskaya 1993). Yet, I have shown that male stumptailed monkeys can manipulate their affiliative preferences in favor of more profitable partners. Kin ties, nevertheless, do exist, and sometimes males prefer to choose relatives for affiliation if the rank factor is excluded (Table 2).

In the hunter-gatherer societies, dispersal patterns are different; they are highly institutionalized and regulated by the social tradition. The origins of various patterns in each case may be unknown, but it is important that this variation seems to indicate that the residence pattern may not be used as a crucial parameter for reconstruction of social relations in ancestral populations. In many cases the social status of males and females in respect to opposite sex may be estimated as situational and relative, but not absolute.

### **Kinship and dominance style**

Kinship relations seem to be among the most important factors for the maintenance of group cohesion. Numerous field observations have demonstrated that relatives are more predisposed to support and protect each other. They may cooperate in the rearing of infants (females), or protect fe-

males from alien males (males). It was also demonstrated that close connections between relatives are based on familiarity. The familiarity factor is important for both males and females irrespective of the type of migration. Even in female-bonded macaque societies, close kin relations between the male and his female relatives may be stable over the entire lifespan (stump-tails and *tonkeana* macaques). Related females, if they have not emigrated, are usually more attached to each other in male-phylopatric species than the non-related (Goodall, 1986). In gorillas, close female kin preferentially support each other in aggressive encounters (Watts, 1992).

The degree of intensity of social relations among group members, as well as the degree of their rigidity, is far from being homogeneous. It has been demonstrated that in the genus *Macaca*, in which all species form matrilineal social structures, some positive correlation exists between the degree of despotism and the strength of kin ties (Table 2) (Silk 1982; Butovskaya 1993; Matsumura 1999). The general rule for this taxon can be formulated as follows: more despotic societies are more nepotistic. Altruistic behavior under such conditions is basically directed towards close kin (mother-children, siblings, grandmother-granddaughters). It is highly probable that altruistic behavior, having evolved in the context of close kin, can be redirected towards other group members, for instance, in situations of reciprocal altruism. A model of group selection based on the assumption of the absence of homogeneity on the level of the within-group interactions reflects the real state of affairs in primate societies and appears to be fruitful for the explanation of the origin of altruistic behavior in the hominid evolution.

Recent works on social relationships in various macaque species have demonstrated a high degree of co-adaptation between various behavioral traits. It has been shown that highly intense and severe aggression (high frequency of biting and wounding) is closely related to fleeing and submission, while in the situations with a low risk of injuries, a high probability of reconciliation is expected (Table 2). The asymmetry in dominance and kinship relations is in close positive correlation with the asymmetry of interactions. In species with small rank differences reconciliatory tendencies are high, inter-individual distances are minimal, aggressive interactions are largely bi-directional, affiliative interactions between group members are very common regardless of rank or relatedness between the partners (*Macaca arctoides*, *M. tonkeana*, *M. radiata*, *M. sylvanus*) (Thierry 1988; Butovskaya 1993, 1995; Butovskaya & Kozintsev 1996a; Silk 1992).

In contrast, species with marked hierarchical relations display mostly unidirectional and severe aggression, the choice of affiliate partners is largely limited to kin and groupmates of similar rank, victims and aggressors

are less inclined to reconcile (Table 2) (*M. mulatta*, *M. fascicularis*, *M. fuscata*, *M. nemestrina*) (de Waal & Luttrell 1989; Thierry 1990; Butovskaya 1993). Usually adult males dominate over females. But in the species with despotic dominant relations matrilineal ties are so strong that sometimes females may jointly attack a dominant male and even injure him (rhesus monkeys, longtailed macaques). Consequently, in these species dominant males could fail to control the within-group aggression from time to time. This became especially evident during disputes over power between matrilineal lines (Table 2). For example, we observed the case of severe fights between dominant and second-ranked matrilineal lines in which 6 animals were killed and many others severely injured in a colony of longtailed at the Sukhumi Primate Center. All attempts of the dominant male to stop the aggression were not effective. The conflict resulted in redistribution of power in the group: the former dominant matrilineal line lost and became the lowest one, while the opponent matrilineal line seized the dominant position.

The division of macaque species into egalitarian and despotic is not absolute. Generally, these species display different states of equilibrium, varying along a continuum from a more egalitarian type to more despotic (Thierry, 1990). A comparison of five macaque species based on our data and those obtained by other scholars is presented in Table 2 (Thierry 1988; Aureli *et al.* 1989; de Waal and Luttrell 1989; Butovskaya 1993; 1995).

It may be expected that egalitarian social relationships would be more beneficial in situations when large groups of conspecifics are more likely to survive and reproduce. Close within-group alliances irrespective of kinship relations reduce the chances for the development of dominance asymmetry between non-relatives. It is possible to suggest that human ancestors who entered open territories inhabited by a large number of predators possessed a mild egalitarian dominance style (Butovskaya 1999a).

**Table 2.**

**Basic traits of social structure and within-group social relationships in five species of the genus *Macaca***

Parameters	Species				
	<i>MT</i>	<i>ST</i>	<i>PT</i>	<i>LT</i>	<i>RH</i>
Contact aggression	Rare	Medium	Medium	High	High
Non-contact aggression	Medium	High	High	Medium	High
Risk of injury	Very low	Low	Medium	High	High
Severe injuries	Minimal	Minimal	Medium	High	High
Formal biting	Friendly	Friendly-dominant	No	No	No
Bi-directional aggression	High	High	Medium	Low	Low
Demonstration of submission	Rare	Medium	Frequent	Very frequent	Very frequent
Body orientation during submission	Face	Face > bottom	Bottom > face	Bottom > face	Bottom
Reconciliation after conflicts	High	High	Medium	Low	Low
Kin-preference in Reconciliation	Absent	Absent	High	High	High
Control of aggression by the male leader	Effective	Effective	Medium	Medium to low	Medium to low
Support	Victim	Victim	No preferences	Aggressor	Victim
Kin- preference in support	None	Some	High	High	High
Permissiveness	Very high	High	Medium	Low	Low
Kin-preference in Affiliation	No	Medium	High	High	High
Direction of Grooming up the Hierarchy	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mothers permit other females to carry their infants	Frequent	Some times	No	No	No
Male interactions with infants	No	Yes	No	No	No

*Note:* MT – *tonkeana* ST – stumptailed; PT – pigtail; RH – rhesus;

LT – longtailed (Butovskaya 1993;1995; Butovskaya & Kozintsev 1996; Petit & Thierry 1994; Thierry *et al.* 1990).

### **Group life history and social organization**

In a number of cases group differences in social organization can hardly be attributed to feeding ecology or population density. The problem is that of the individual components in the formation of a social style and tension regulating strategies. Relationships within a group largely depend on the group history and characteristics of single individuals (Datta 1989; Butovskaya 1995). Our data on two groups of longtailed macaques may be a good model. Differences of dominance style that we found between two groups of *M. fascicularis* approached inter-specific differences in magnitude. Two groups were kept in cages under identical conditions. Their diet was identical, too. The groups consisted of eight and ten adult animals respectively, and each one included an alpha male. The crucial difference was that one of the groups (group H) consisted of animals which were high-ranking by birth, while another one (group L) comprised only those whose mothers were low-ranking (Butovskaya & Kozintsev 1996b).

Values of Landau's index indicated that the hierarchical structure in both groups was moderately linear. However, nearly all parameters of aggressive behavior were significantly higher in group L, with the sole exception of injury rate. Reconciliation in group H was very rare, and victims seldom redirected aggression to other individuals. Also, they rarely sought consolation from the third parties. The alpha male in group H was virtually the only animal which comforted the victims after aggression.

Female aggressors in group L initiated reconciliation seven times more often than did their counterparts in group H. In group L, victims sought contacts with their friends, who soothed them, nine times more actively than victims in group H did. While ritual biting was fairly common in group L, it was almost never practiced in group H (Butovskaya & Kozintsev 1996b). In terms of the dominance style, group H may be described as a community of a despotic type, and group L as an egalitarian one. The two groups can be regarded as a model for evolution of various dominance styles and various mechanisms of coping with social tension under identical ecological conditions (Butovskaya & Kozintsev 1996b). Thus, conspecific groups can display marked differences in the dominance style and can use various ways of regulating social equilibrium not only due to differences in ecological conditions, but also as the consequence of the group history, and individual traits of group members.

### The phylogeny and similarity in social organization

Sometimes, however, the variation of social strategies can not be ascribed neither to ecological factors nor to group history. In some cases phylogeny may be “a major determinant of social relationships” (Thierry *et al.* 1999). This hypothesis seems to be correct for an explanation of main patterns of social organization in the genus *Macaca* (Thierry, 1999). Thus, according to the four-grade scale of social organization proposed, dominance styles and patterns of social activity are distributed from rigid to relaxed egalitarian. *Macaca mulatta*, *M. fuscata* belong to grade 1, being the most nepotistic, with largely asymmetric and dictatorial relationships (Thierry 1985; 1999; Butovskaya 1993). Low-ranking individuals always keep an eye on the alpha male (this is the essence of the attention structure phenomenon), try to please him and avoid direct competition with him for food or sexual partners. They must demonstrate submission to the alpha male in order not to be attacked by him. Grade 2 represented by *Macaca fascicularis* and *M. nemestrina* species demonstrates a great similarity in social patterns to grade 1, but all the traits are less extreme. Grade 4 represented by Solawesi species (*M. tonkeana*, *M. nigra*), exhibits the most symmetrical and egalitarian social relations (Thierry 1985; Matsumura 1999). Grade 3 includes *M. arctoides*, *M. assamensis*, *M. radiata*, *M. thibetana* etc.) and is similar to grade 4. In this grade group social relationships are mild and high-ranking animals are interested in maintaining relationships with the subordinates (Butovskaya 1993). In both grades 4 and 3 the overall affiliation level within the group is higher, subordinates enjoy greater freedom and can themselves initiate contacts with dominants. A typical pattern used by dominants to neutralize their aggressive motivation is ritual biting; the probability of injuries is low.

Reconstruction of the ancestral state of the macaque social organization on the basis of empirical data revealed that *M. sylvanus*, *M. silenus* and *M. arctoides* (grade 3 species) are the most likely candidates (Thierry 1999). This conclusion is supported by morphological and genetic data, at least for *M. sylvanus* and *M. silenus* – both resemble the ancestral macaque (Cunningham *et al.* 1998). The radiation of macaques might have occurred in three waves and in the process of divergence differences in dominance styles reached extreme points (despotic and egalitarian). The Macaque Model of social evolution seems to be of some value for the understanding of the origin of different social systems in human groups. Despite the fact of extreme variability of human social systems, ways and models of their formation could have been similar to those demonstrated for non-human primate species (phylogeny, socioecology, group history).

### **Socioecology and social intelligence**

A complex social environment requires a sophisticated communication system, and the same environment secures the preservation and transmission of tool-using traditions in a community. Other things being equal, species living in larger groups tend to possess a more developed tool-using capacity and more complex communication system compared to other closely related taxa. The important factor in the development of cognitive abilities is nutrition. Socio-ecologists were the first to have recognized the relationship between types of nutrition and relative brain size (Clutton-Brock & Harvey 1980; Foley & Lee 1991). Results of a multiple regression analysis based on 68 independent parameters taken from the main primatological database (119 species) suggest that brain size is independently and positively correlated with the proportion of fruits in the diet and with the size of the social group (Barton 1999: 170). On the other hand, the ontogeny imposes certain restrictions on the development of the mammalian brain by limiting the variability of certain areas (Finlay & Darlington 1995). The prolongation of childhood results in the development of evolutionary younger brain structures, neocortex in the first rate (Barton 1999: 176). The adaptive specialization of the brain proceeds in a certain direction. In diurnal primates frugivorous taxa have a larger primary visual cortex, especially the parvocellular visual pathway, than the folivorous ones have. The evolution of color vision that had occurred in frugivorous primates affected the neocortical growth. In haplorhine primates (monkeys and apes), the development of the visual channel is correlated with the development of complex social systems (Allman 1987: 639).

Frugivory, then, has contributed to the evolution of social intellect, although in an indirect way. Common ancestors of chimpanzees and humans were apparently frugivorous and their brains were affected by the above-mentioned changes. Specialization that had ultimately resulted in the emergence of spoken language would have been impossible without the high level of cognitive abilities and a propensity for manipulatory and tool-using activities. According to some authors (Whyten & Byrne 1997), the anthropoid clade has undergone selective pressures favoring greater Machiavellian intelligence. This produced a higher capacity for learning and using social knowledge and resulted in the increase of the brain size. Life in social groups makes subtle social manipulation more beneficial and safe both for the actor and for other group members than an open conflict. For example, female baboons engaged in sexual intercourse with young males can avoid the alpha male's interference by staying behind the whole group and inhibiting loud copulation calls or by quietly traveling in an atypical manner (as *Ateles* fe-

males do when in this situation they walk quietly on the ground despite belonging to a typically arboreal taxon).

Deception strategies are much more sophisticated in apes than in monkeys. Great apes, unlike monkeys, demonstrate their understanding of deception as a means of social manipulation. The development of social deception, typical of species with a complex social structure and intense social life, may certainly be viewed as an important means of coping with social tension. Cognitive capacities of lower catarrhines (for example, of hamadryas baboons) evidently suffice for using specific forms of social manipulation aimed at restoring bonds between former opponents in situations where direct reconciliation is difficult for some reasons (for instance, when the rank difference is large and the subordinate individual is afraid to approach the dominant). Here a hamadryas female's behavior after a conflict with another female from the same harem may provide an example. The victim immediately complains to the male and, after having received support from him, sits down on his side and begins grooming him intensely. The female which initiated the conflict sits down on the opposite side of the male and does the same. After a while, the females move closer to each other and eventually begin grooming one another while the male goes away.

Ontogenetic changes resulted in the appearance of another unique feature of the human: the menopause. Prolonged childhood and the related helplessness of children resulted in the mothers' much greater dependence on other group members. Until recently, it was believed that the solution was mainly provided by males (fathers). However, according to a hypothesis put forward by Blurton Jones, Hawkes and O'Connell (1999), grandmothers were more efficient helpers. In modern hunting-gathering and early agricultural societies, both matrilineal and patrilineal, maternal grandmothers often provide grandchildren with the larger share of vegetable food. They also take care of elder children. From the standpoint of evolutionary psychology, then, menopause is adaptive. Elder women have less chances for raising their own children because of the increased likelihood of death; however they can enhance their inclusive fitness by taking care of their grandchildren and thus increasing their chances for survival.

### **Conclusions**

1. Some positive correlation exists between the rigidity of dominant relations and nepotism. In the *genus* *Macaca*, species with more despotic dominant style of relations are more kin-oriented.

2. In certain cases a strong friendly bonds with non-kin may be highly beneficial. This is specially the case with female bonobos. The fe-



male-centered societies may be formed even on the bases of male-resident structures.

3. Closely related species may practice different dominance styles. The *genus* *Macaca* is a good example. Different macaques species may be distributed along the imaginable scale, ranging from the highly mild and egalitarian relations to highly despotic and rigid ones.

4. To understand why the certain dominance style has evolved in the case of each, we need to take into account socioecological, phylogenetical and life history factors.

5. The case of the *genus* *Macaca*, seems to be a perfect model for understanding the process of differentiation of dominance styles in different human cultures.

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### INITIAL STAGES OF POLITOGENESIS

“Origin, emergence or creation of social inequality” traditionally was and to some extent still is (*e.g.*, Haydon 1995) the theme of numerous studies in human prehistory and social anthropology of pre-state societies. The very word “origin” or “creation” shows that a scholar takes as granted that there was such a period in early human evolution when inequality did not exist: ancient human communities could be imagined as egalitarian and relations within them could be characterized in terms of “social equality”. At the same time, from the very beginning of the studies in social evolution there did exist scholars which *a priori* regarded inequality as an inherent in the so called “human nature” (*e.g.*, Henry Main, Edward Westermarck). Modern studies in sociobiology and ethology of primates definitely show that our “nearest relatives” all have a status hierarchy (more or less significant) and thus make us assume that humans inherited some forms of hierarchical relations, *i.e.* social inequality, from their animal ancestors (Whinterhalter and Smith 1992: 3-23; Fitzhugh 1998: 8). Therefore, as it has already been stated by a number of authors, though in different ways (Burch & Ellan 1994; Schweitzer 1998), we should search not for the origin, or emergence, or roots of social inequality, but rather for factors that could cause this or that concrete form or type of social inequality and for mechanisms which could shape specific structural features of hierarchical social systems in human communities. As well as for the reasons for the development of really egalitarian social systems.<sup>1</sup> For egalitarianism – definitely characteristic of some human communities – by no means is a given (Shweitzer 1998: 1). It is the product of particular evolutionary processes to the same extent as various other structural forms of social inequality are.

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<sup>1</sup> Unlike the authors of some neoevolutionistic studies (Fried 1967; Service 1975) as well as the authors of some recent works (*e.g.*: Schweitzer 1998) I use the notion “egalitarian society” in its direct meaning: it is a society in which all the people have equal access to all material and spiritual values of their culture and have equal personal freedom, equal opportunities for decision-making. Respectively, I call the societies to which this definition does not apply “non-egalitarian”. *E.g.*, the Chukchi or the Eskimo sea hunters cultures are egalitarian in Service’s or Schweitzer’s understanding and non-egalitarian in mine.

It is more common for social scientists (and not only for Marxists) to connect the evolutionary processes of structuring social inequality predominantly with the spheres of material production and property relations. It is less common to connect such processes with the sphere of ideology, especially with the sphere of religious activity (Wason 1998). And it is very common to regard the only one supposed model or mechanism of such processes as original or primary one – no matter if it is the “delayed return”, the activity of “aggrandizers”, or something else (Woodburn 1980: 1982; Barnard & Woodburn 1988). My assumption is that various types or displays of social inequality may have been shaped by quite different phenomena. Different mechanisms of hierarchical systems structuring or institutionalization could act parallelly in the same culture or could be specific to particular cultures in particular periods and circumstances. These mechanisms could be rooted in the sphere of material production and property relations, on the one hand, as well as outside this sphere, on the other.

For example, in some Melanesian societies one may find simultaneously: 1) delayed return as a characteristic feature of the mode of subsistence, universally causing, according to James Woodburn, institutions of status hierarchy and structured inequality in property relations; 2) the activity of “aggrandizers” (bigmen), stimulating, according to Clarke and Blake, development of the same institutions; and 3) complicated ceremonial practices, also producing ranking of the status or authority positions. But among the Chukchi reindeer herders of Chukotka one finds only the “model” of delayed return and “accumulation of wealth”, while among some of the Australian hunter-gatherers – only the “model” of ceremonial status differentiation. The last case is, in my opinion, especially interesting from the theoretical point of view. It demonstrates – in the most pure and uncomplicated form – one of the main types of institutionalized social inequality that is very widely spread all over the world: inequality, which has **monopolization** of specific knowledge and occupations (closely connected with ideology) by certain social groups or (sometimes) individuals as its structural foundation and starting mechanism.

As it was repeatedly noticed in the recent anthropological literature, even among the so called “relatively simple” hunter-gatherer societies, various groups, while having the similar lifestyles and similar modes of subsistence, displayed an essential difference in systems of social relationships and organizational structures.

For example, among the Mbuti, the !Kung, the Hadza and some other African hunters and gatherers, as well as some Asian (*e.g.* the Palian of South India), the interpersonal relations in local communities were almost

completely egalitarian; no groups or individuals were in superior positions with respect to other groups or individuals; at least formally. Even the informal variety in individual prestige or personal influence, inevitable in any social unit, tended to be leveled by the community attitudes. Moral concepts and the entire socio-psychological climate in these egalitarian societies consistently blocked any ambitious aspirations. And this in turn was connected with the lack of competition in social life and human activity (Gardner 1965; 1991; Turnbull 1965; Marshall 1976; Lee 1979; Woodburn 1979; 1982; Begler 1987; Endicott 1988; *al.*).

But most of the Australian Aborigines, on the contrary, had a system of social organization which was definitely non-egalitarian.<sup>2</sup>

As it is well known, there was a considerable difference in social status between men and women in Australian Aboriginal societies. If we compare the norms and customs which regulated gender relations there with those of the Mbuti, the Hadza, or the !Kung, it will become clear how does the real equality of gender status, rights and obligations look like.

In most Australian Aboriginal societies, as described in anthropological literature, betrothal arrangements and marriage "contracts" were a future spouses male relatives' prerogative though in some groups mothers of both brides also had their say. Marriages of young people were arranged by their elder kin. Men at a mature age often had certain opportunities to marry by their own choice. Women either did not have such opportunities at all at any age (except the cases of elopements) or had much more limited opportunities than their menfolk. Even widows which had adult children, depended in this respect on their male kin including their own sons (White 1970: 21; Goodale 1971: 56). A special term – *redistribution of widows* – may even be met in the literature on Aboriginal marriage norms. Divorce, as a rule was rather easy for men and difficult for women. In many groups the elopement connected with considerable risk was the only way for a woman to break down the marriage.

Polygyny was widespread and the cases when one man had simultaneously five or six wives were not regarded as violations of the norms though such cases, of course, could not be numerous. Frequently husbands were much older than wives, especially than second or third, etc. wives, and a large age gap between spouses was not considered to be abnormal either.

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<sup>2</sup> Generalizations on Australian Aborigines represent a summary of conclusions made on the basis of critical analysis of various literary sources in the author's book *Lichnost i sotsial'nye normy v rannepervobytnoj obshchine* (*Personality and Social Norms in Early Primeval Community*) (Artemova 1987).



There was an attempt on the part of some scholars to connect aboriginal polygyny and marriages between very young women and elderly men with economic considerations: wives themselves being burdened by little children needed the assistance of each other, otherwise they were not able to cope with their domestic tasks. At the same moment, elderly men who could not hunt much needed the younger women's assistance. But women constantly assisted each other, without being wives of one husband, and young relatives according to the norms took care of old men. Besides, the very shape the Australian aboriginal polygyny took is not, as it appears, in line with such an explanation. It seems difficult to connect with economic needs attempts of a man at a mature age which already has seven wives (four of whom are young and healthy) to obtain the eighth one, a girl of twelve. Or attempts of males on their sixties to secure for themselves as future brides girls only recently born. Evidently such cases were not quite rare. Most likely these men were ruled by considerations of personal prestige or by the urge to strengthen their personal position in the network of social relations and in certain cases, by sexual motives as well.

It is not accidental that there often was close correlation between the degrees of personal authority of a man and the number of wives he could obtain. This is in conformity with the fact that most frequently the heads of polygynous families were not senile men, but men who belonged to the most authoritative category of "elders" formed by men of mature and elderly age.

In their ordinary affairs married women had a considerable amount of freedom of action and choice in everyday life, but there still were certain situations when traditions prescribed them to obey their husbands. And if a woman refused to obey, it was not considered to be inadmissible for a man to attain the submission of his wife with the help of brutal physical force.

Many authors argue that in the traditional situation women worked much harder than men. Certainly, a generalization on this point should be made especially carefully. Some scholars, not unreasonably, have criticized statements of this kind. The specific character of the gatherer's labor in the Australian environment is such that it demands more time than hunting. But this does not mean that hunting is much easier; most likely, it is quite the opposite. But at the same time, a comparison of some traditional duties of men and women, not directly connected with the obtaining of subsistence, shows that the amounts of the work they had to do were not equal and some of women's responsibilities looked like services for men. For instance, while on the way from one camp-place to another, women often carried babies and all belongings of the family, the men were walking without any burden. In some groups women had to carry their husband's spears, or other weapons

*e.g.*, heavy wooden swords used by men in Central Australia in warfare. As witnessed by some early and later observers, big stones used for making primitive ground-stones were also dragged by women.

But although women in many Aboriginal societies provided most of food, took care of children and fulfilled many other tasks, they were believed to be less important than men by a traditional concept, which seems to be particularly clearly revealed in funeral traditions. The death of a man was regarded to be a much more severe loss for entire community than the death of a woman, and was commonly followed by much more complicated and prolonged rituals with considerably more numerous participants.

All important decisions concerning the life of a social group as a whole (or of another social unit) were made by men, at least only men took part in formal discussions of public affairs at the camp or local group's councils though women, of course, had opportunities to influence men's opinions.

Only men, as a rule, played the roles of formal and informal leaders. Only men, with rare exceptions, could be magicians, sorcerers or healers. Men controlled totemic cults as well as other religious practices the importance of which for the Aboriginal culture can hardly be exaggerated. And it is an established fact that in the vast majority of Aboriginal societies women were partly or totally excluded from those sections of ritual activity that, according to Aboriginal beliefs, ensured the very existence of human life and the life of surrounding nature. The material and spiritual paraphernalia of those sacred rituals – songs, myths, dances, sacred objects and sacred totemic sites – were also concealed from women and any violation of prohibitions securing the secrecy of sacred ritual affairs had to be severely punished, death penalty not excluded.

Actually, in a number of Aboriginal societies there were women's secret rites in which men did not take part, though their exclusion from this kind of religious activity was not connected with similar severe prohibitions or sanctions. It also appears that secret female rituals were essentially less complex in structure and were attended by a considerably smaller number of participants than sacred rituals controlled by men. Leadership as well as entire organization of women's rites seems to be of predominantly informal character. Their content was mostly focused on love magic, women's sexuality, childbirth child growth and some other subjects of specific female interests and desires, quite often **personal** in character.

At the same time, it appears that the literature on Aboriginal Australians contains more than enough evidence of **institutionalized** superiority of men's status and inferiority of the women's one, as well as the evidence that

the female personal independence and individual will were limited or constrained by traditional norms much more strictly.

In contrast with the Australian data the available evidence on the African hunters and gatherers contain almost no signs of formalized gender inequality. Although among the Mbuti, the Hadza, the !Kung and the Nharo, as described by Turnbull, Woodburn, Lee, Marshall, Barnard, Guenther and some other authors, marriages were arranged by elder relatives of future spouses, both the girl and the young man had their own say and might repudiate the marriage. Second marriages could be arranged by the personal choice of both the man and the woman. The divorce was equally easy for both sexes. The age differentiation between the spouses, as a rule, was not very large, though the man might often be several years older than his wife. Polygyny did exist, but appeared to be rather rare, and the cases when men had more than two wives simultaneously seem to be exceptional.

There were traditional norms of division of labor between men and women in the subsistence sphere as well as division of gender roles in ritual practices and artistic activity in these groups of African hunters and gatherers, as well as among Australian Aborigines. But women apparently had no duties that looked like services for men, nor were they excluded from those spheres of activity which were regarded as most important for the entire society, or most honorary, interesting or captivating for the participants.

Unlike the Australian Aborigines, these African hunting and gathering people evidently had no idea that it was a shame for a man to fulfill female work. At least males in their societies did not shun the gathering of food or firewood, bringing water to the family camp, cooking food and so on. They also carried various loads, along with women, what was very important in the conditions of migratory life.

Barnard writes about a slight female dominance in the husband/wife relationships among the groups of the Nharo he studied. Marshall witnessed certain male dominance among the !Kung of the Nyae Nyae area (Barnard 1980: 199; Marshall 1976: 177). But at the same time she emphasizes that no "*formalized modes of the obedience*" were required of women, and that women were by no means subjugated. She also mentions that she found no evidence of wife-beating, with which literature on Australian Aborigines is abounded.

In some African hunter-gatherer societies men played a more active role in ritual practices than women. For instance, among the !Kung and the Nharo, men were the main performers of the trance dance, the ritual that was central to the San culture. But women also took part in this magic-religious experience and there seems to have been no secrecy involved. In some San

societies the so called male hunting rites (sometimes also denoted as “*male initiation*”) were inaccessible to women, and during those rites some secret religious information was transmitted to the novices. But at least partly this was counterbalanced by rather elaborate female puberty rites, some stages of which were inaccessible to men. It is worth mentioning that female puberty rites among African hunters and gatherers were apparently much more complicated and were more important social events than in Australia.

These comparisons inevitably raise the following theoretical question: why do societies with very similar lifestyles and the same mode of subsistence have different stereotypes of gender relations? What is the nature of the respective differences?

These questions must be considered in the context of broader and deeper problems connected with the existence of an essential difference in the systems of social relationships and organizational structures of Australian and African hunter-gatherer communities under consideration.

There was a considerable difference in social status among the Australian Aborigines not only between men and women, but also between the men who composed the group of “elders”, on the one hand, and all the rest which were not yet included into this group, on the other. And it seems that, at least in some parts of Aboriginal Australia, not all the men at a mature or elderly age managed to “enter” the group of “elders”, which thus was not simply an age group in a strict sense. To be included, a man had to conform to specific conditions of entry. One man could be qualified much earlier than another.

The “elders” accumulated considerable authority in religious affairs and in the every day life of Australian Aboriginal communities and possessed some privileges secured by the rules that regulated distribution of certain kinds of food (especially valued food) as well as matrimonial relations; in particular, marriage arrangements. As Keen argues, in the traditional Yolngu society (North-East of Arnhem Land Peninsula), “*Control of religious knowledge had been a key element in the political economy of marriage, country, and ceremony. There was a direct link between religious prerogatives and power...*” (Keen 1997: 300).

Among the elders, there were men of special individual status: ritual leaders, custodians or guardians of sacred objects and totemic centers, sorcerers and “native doctors”.

There previously was a discussion: did Aborigines have “secular” formal leaders in traditional situations or not? In spite of some authors’ attempts to prove the latter opinion, it appears that at least in some parts of the country the headmen of local groups or camps (or some other units) did exist.

Their activity was predominantly connected with the organization of inter-group (inter-community) relationships. Besides, as Strehlow and the Berndts argued, religious leaders in many cases had considerable authority outside the ritual sphere and there was no clear-cut distinction between “secular” and religious affairs as well as between “secular” and religious authority in the Aboriginal culture. It may be supposed in connection with this topic that the existence of two types of formal leaders – the organizers of religious ceremonies and the headmen of certain residential units – was due to the fact that the composition of the groups of people which performed rituals together and of those which lived together did not coincide. The authority or organizational activities of leaders of various types spread to various contingents of people.

On the whole, it can be argued that Australian Aborigines had a system of institutionalized authority positions which represented some kind of hierarchy.

Evidently, this system was more developed in certain parts of the North and the South-East of the continent – those with a comparatively high original density of the population, and it was less developed in some arid central regions with very low population density.

In the functioning of this system an extremely important role was played by the institute of formal ritualized initiation into special secret/sacred knowledge. Only men who passed at least the primary stages of initiation into esoteric knowledge connected with religious cults had authority over women and adolescents. The “elders” were men who passed all or almost all the stages of such an initiation. However, certain sections of religious knowledge were reserved for religious leaders of certain types. “Professional” magicians, sorcerers and “native doctors”, also acquired special esoteric information during the initiation of a special kind.

Thus the institute of initiation in some sense divided people into several status categories. And the whole amount of the spiritual heritage was divided into several sections, some of which were accessible to everybody, while the others – only to certain status categories.

Esoteric knowledge, secrecy was guarded by numerous and multi-form taboos, the violation of which incurred severe punishments, and also by means of a special method which could be denoted as “prescribed, or sanctioned misinformation”. Beckett called this phenomenon another way: “*noble lies*” (Beckett 1977: XI). Those who were initiated into secret affairs deliberately conveyed to outsiders false ideas or notions about the esoteric sections of culture. Such a deception, in contrast to ordinary lies, was regarded as a matter of necessity, a rightful and proper way of behavior since it was

perceived as a *conditio sine qua non* of the success of magic rites or totemic cult rituals. At the same time, such a prescribed religion-hallowed deception served as a means of maintaining and strengthening the social supremacy of those who resorted to it and, in some situations, even as a means of psychological compulsion under which the uninitiated had to obey the initiated.

Strict secrecy of certain kinds of activity and knowledge as well as sanctioned misinformation, had a deep moral and psychological impact both on the uninitiated and initiated, maybe even a greater impact on the latter. They considered themselves to be the “owners” of “real knowledge” and to be closely connected with great mystic supernatural powers capable of influencing the fate of both the entire community and separate individuals. Having also the legal right to spread (“for the common good”) false and oversimplified information (intended for “profane” perception) among the outsiders, they inevitably became convinced of their own essential importance, of high social value of their personalities. And the sense of superiority gave them the assurance that they were entitled to certain privileges.

Thus a society without class division and private property, a society which even did not produce any material surplus and had “*no mechanism for the accumulation of material wealth*”, (an expression of Woodburn) could nevertheless create rather effective mechanisms of social differentiation in some respects similar to those existing in so called civilized societies where certain social groups monopolized certain sections of information and especially prestigious occupations. So, apparently, to create such mechanisms, it is not necessary to pass a long way of development of productive economy. It appears that monopolization of special knowledge and occupations *per se* was a powerful force that structured and shaped social inequality. And, in connection with this, it seems to be incorrect to extend, as it is done sometimes, the notion of “property” to the sphere of religious rites and ideas accessible only to limited contingents of people (Keen 1988). Such an extension, as well as the attempt to connect the concept of delayed return with the economic system of Australian Aborigines (Woodburn 1980), in a certain sense, obscures the very important point that various types or displays of social inequality may have their roots in quite different phenomena.

In the conditions of nomadic hunter-gatherer way of life, social inequality could scarcely take more complicated and more developed forms than it had among Australian Aborigines. But perhaps it was so not because of the absence of more sophisticated technologies in the subsistence sphere (the absence of material surplus and so on). More likely it was so simply because of low population density and small numbers of community members. Maybe just for this reason, the above named mechanisms of status differentiation

especially affected gender relations among the Australian Aborigines. There is an impression that a similar situation existed in the traditional context in some hunter-gatherer societies of Aboriginal America, *e.g.*, among the Ona of Terra del Fuego, who had ceremonial lodges and secret rituals with limited membership or participation (first of all, women were excluded).

The questions: why various groups of hunters and gatherers with the same mode of subsistence created different systems of social relations; why in some hunter-gatherer societies monopolization of socially important information and hierarchy of institutionalized authority positions developed while in other they did not; why, to the contrary, in some societies the mechanisms of the so called social leveling had been created – all these questions are very complicated, and, in spite of a number of special investigations, seem to be still unresolved.

As far as I know, the most original approach to the problem is offered by Woodburn who has made a thorough study of the subject. He suggests that Australian Aborigines and African hunters and gatherers, despite the same mode of subsistence, had different economic systems and therefore different social organization. He considers the problem in the framework of general distinction between societies with immediate-return economic systems and societies with delayed-return economic systems. In the first case there is no or almost no time gap between the accomplishment of work and the acquiring and consumption of the yield. In the second case a gap (more or less considerable), *e.g.* a delay, always exists, and the existence of delay imposes basic organizational requirements for a set of ordered, legally differentiated and defined relationships, through which crucial goods and services are to be transmitted in a specified and regulated manner. This, in turn, leads to status hierarchy, while in societies with immediate-return there are no such long-term, load-bearing relationships and status inequality (Woodburn 1980: 97-98). Apart from these distinctive traits of economic and social systems, there is a number of others, all of them closely interdependent. The hunter-gatherer societies referred to in this paper as “egalitarian” are classified by Woodburn as belonging to the first category, while all agricultural societies and all other hunter-gatherer societies are classified as “delayed-return” (*i.e.*, of the second category).

In general, this typology appears to be of great theoretical importance since it denies any direct straightforward correlation between the mode of subsistence and the economic system as well as social system as a whole. Therefore this typology challenges various oversimplified theories of human evolution. It also rejects any straightforward correlation between the mode of subsistence and ecological environment. As Alan Barnard stated, the Wood-

burn's model "*rejects technology as a major factor and downplays the role of environment*". Instead of that the model sets up "*ideology*" as "*the causative principle*" (Barnard 1983: 205). It follows, if my understanding is correct, that societies with immediate-return did not pass over to agriculture or to more efficient forms of foraging economy not because of technological and environmental obstacles, but due to peculiarities of their socio-normative culture, moral attitudes and the psychological climate of their community.

But the same, as it seems, was the case with the Australia Aborigines. All what I know about their traditional life, prompts me to think that they did not develop more efficient economical forms of hunting and fishing (as some indigenous societies of the North-West American Coast or the Far East of Asia), in spite of rather sophisticated technological attainments and favorable ecological conditions in a number of regions because of preventive mechanisms of their own culture – mechanisms in many respects very similar to those of the !Kung or the Hadza.

Woodburn, however, regards the Aborigines as delayed-return societies. He admits that they obtained the means of subsistence and consumed the yield of their labor in a manner similar to that of the hunters and gatherers with immediate-return. But he suggests that delayed-return among Aborigines has its *focal point* not in the very organization of the labor process and the manner of consumption of its yield (as in all other societies with delayed-return economic systems, particularly among hunters and fishermen which invested labor in certain durable labor-consuming artifacts – those which considerably increase the efficiency of hunting and fishing) but in the right of men to control marriage relations of their junior female kin. Acquiring the right to decide when and whom their daughters, younger sisters, sisters' daughters will marry, the men engage long-term enterprise which binds them with various fast ties. These ties carry with them various obligations and benefits, put men in the positions of interdependence and create the relationships of subordination between them, especially between younger men, eager to obtain wives and older men having the right to arrange marriage alliances. This is of course undeniable, but what part did the phenomenon designated by the notion "return" play in this system?

If I do not misunderstand Woodburn, he sees the display of delayed-return *per se* in food, other goods and various services that Aboriginal men (and women, too) received from their sons-in-law, sisters' husbands or husbands of their sisters' daughters and some other male affinals. It is a return for the labor of "farming women" and "farming them out" – bringing women up and of organizing their marriages (Woodburn 1980: 108-109). But as Woodburn mentions himself (considering it to be an element of delayed-



return), certain societies with immediate return practiced “bride-service” for several years after marriage when spouses lived together with the wife’s parents and husband regularly gave them part of his hunting bag. Among the Australians with their virilocal and patrilocal marriage residence the “payment” for a wife was arranged on the “prolonged installment system” and often took the form of different artifacts and various services. It appears to be hardly possible to define which “return” for the labor of bringing up daughters “weighs” more.

Of course, the right of men to arrange marriages of their junior female (and often also male) kin closely correlates with the system of status hierarchy and other specific traits of the Aboriginal social relationships. But the notion of “return system”, as it seems, does not help to understand the very essence of such a correlation because the status difference between men and women and the status difference among the men themselves have, perhaps, the same source lying outside the economic system. It is probably not by chance that in order to prove that Aborigines had a delayed-return system, Woodburn had to extend the very notion of “return system” to the sphere of phenomena which, in the case of all other societies, he did not include into the category of factors determining the character of the return system. Therefore his hypothesis about the Aborigines is perceived as rather strange and artificial against the entire background of his clear-cut and beautiful construction. Maybe, as all other generalizations, this one is not absolute: not only delayed-return produces “long-term”, “load-bearing” relationships among the people and inequality of social status. Perhaps similar forms of relationships as well as “non-egalitarianism” may have another basis and may co-exist with the immediate-return economic system. Maybe, also, the Aborigines in this respect were not alone among the hunter-gatherer societies: a similar situation could exist in some indigenous societies of America. Finally, maybe Australian Aboriginal societies really did have economic systems which differed this or that way from the economic systems of the Hadza, the !Kung, or the Mbuti but the focal point of this difference should be sought somewhere else.

At the present moment, it seems there is no convincing proof that the distinctions in the social relationships under consideration were caused by the difference in economic systems.

Undoubtedly, egalitarianism of the above mentioned African and Asian hunters and gatherers, on the one hand, and non-egalitarianism of Australian Aborigines, on the other hand, are caused by a complicated combination of various factors.

But, as it appears, one of the most important among them is the degree of social life intensity – collective cult practices and inter-group (inter-community) contacts, in particular. In none of the above mentioned egalitarian societies were these spheres of activity so complicated and so ramified as they were in traditional societies of Australian Aborigines in the North, East and South-East of the continent. Prolonged, complex and versatile religious ceremonies which often formed elaborate cycles, traditional corrobories with numerous participants from various communities, a ramified system of inter-group ceremonial exchanges the networks of which covered vast areas of the continent, comparatively frequent warfare among neighboring groups who on such occasions formed special parties of warriors (revenge expeditions) – all this demanded rather close social ties between the people, rather clear-cut structural principles of group composition and certain organizational efforts as well. Where the people were divided into active and passive participants, where leaders and organizers of collective social activity came to the fore, rules or norms of subordination were formed. These norms in turn progressively affected current social life in all its spheres including economy.

As the Berndts wrote, it is especially significant what people do outside the sphere of necessity (Berndt and Berndt 1977: 519). Among the Aborigines, the overwhelming part of activity outside the “sphere of necessity” was connected with their religious cults and other spiritual occupations. We often underestimate what a powerful factor of the entire social development the so called “non-utilitarian” activity is – the activity which appears to be one of the main psychological requirements of the human beings. It is not, as a rule, demanded by the real needs of current life but, in the end, it leads people out to new levels of cultural achievements (Asmolov 1984).

Intensive spiritual activity, joint elaborate religious practices gave the Aborigines opportunities to develop and accumulate rich intellectual, spiritual heritage. At the same time, these occupations gave them the means to create hierarchical relationships and mechanisms of social differentiation.

It is not surprising that these occupations were, in a large measure, the prerogatives of males. The specific features of “gatherer labor” and the responsibilities of mothering did not allow women to display the same degree of public and ritual activity as men. And the development of regulatory rules, inevitable in any joint or collective human occupations, gradually consolidated the leading position of men in that sphere and resulted in women’s exclusion from certain sections of ritual and public life.

The monopolization of certain kinds of information and the right of prescribed misinformation being the means of psychological compulsion, led to some restrictions of women’s independence, to their subordination outside

the ritual affairs which, in turn, allowed men to exploit, to some extent, women's labor, their matrimonial ties and even their sexuality.

Among the males the mechanisms of social differentiation acted in the same, although, presumably more complicated, manner (Barnard & Woodburn 1988: 27-31). And it seems that the "long-term", "load-bearing" ties between the men determined rather their religious status, their entire social positions, the degree of their personal prestige and their opportunities of wife-obtaining than their access to crucial resources of subsistence.

The essential conditions that favored relatively intense social life, and collective religious practices, in particular among the Australian Aborigines, were a relatively permissive ecological situation in many parts of the country, and the availability of vast spaces of land where people of various bands could travel to contact each other without fear of more powerful enemies. Other hunter-gatherer societies under consideration did not have such a combination of conditions. However, it is hardly possible to reduce all the causes of difference in the intensity of social life between hunters and gatherers under consideration to geographical, ecological factors and factors of social and cultural environment (encapsulation of or isolation from alien cultures). Apparently, all these factors do not give an exhaustive explanation whether we consider them separately or jointly.<sup>3</sup>

Different peoples create different cultures not only because of living in different environments (natural and cultural) – and having different historical backgrounds, but also for other complicated and predominantly unclear reasons that are partly connected with the largely uninvestigated sphere of psychological phenomena. Figuratively speaking, each culture, as each man or each woman, has his or her own individuality, which develops under the influence of many various factors (some of them possibly do not subject to scientific definition).

I am far from thinking that if the !Kung or the Palian in some fantastic way were put in the same environment as Australian Aborigines, they would produce the same system of social relations. I also do not think that Australian Aborigines, on the one hand, and the Mbuti, the Hadza or the Palian, on the other, represent different stages of human evolution. I am rather prone to regard the egalitarianism of the latter as well as non-egalitarianism of the former as the results of their own specific and very long traditions of cultural development.

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<sup>3</sup> This is very convincingly shown by Woodburn in the publications named above and in (Woodburn 1988).

None of these cultures create the background for generalized or universalized retrospection into the deep past. But, perhaps, some general considerations may be suggested. Powerful and prestigious closed corporations having monopoly of certain social knowledge may develop or may not develop in societies with the same mode of subsistence or of production. At the same time, such corporations may exist in societies of quite different types – with different modes of subsistence – whatever typology is used: among foraging hunters and gatherers or among shifting agriculturalists as well as in modern industrial societies with class relations or in those which tried to eliminate classes and private property for the means of production, as it was in the former Soviet Union. The Communist Party in the whole and its Central Committee in particular represent excellent examples.

The existence of powerful closed corporations – monopolists of some important knowledge correlates very often with the obvious difference in gender status. As such corporations tend to emerge under quite different historical and socio-economic circumstances, it is possible to suppose that their existence is deeply connected with some socio-psychological phenomena which cross-cut the boundaries of cultures, epochs, continents, civilizations, socio-economic formations and so on. Maybe these corporations were to ensure the socio-political monopoly of males and correspondingly, a low, or at least not high female status as such institutions were created predominantly in the processes of male activities, in response to some psychological needs characteristic precisely of men?

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**II. HIERARCHICAL  
ALTERNATIVES OF POLITOGENESIS**

### **Hawaiian Islands (AD 800–1824)**

Seven major islands make up the Hawaiian chain, located in the north central Pacific Ocean, just within the tropics spanning 19° to 22° north latitude. The Hawaiian Islands are a string of volcanic peaks that erupted as the earth crust moved westward across a hot spot. The chain of peaks is isolated from all other major islands or land masses by more than 5000 km.

Each island has a central peak that slopes sharply to the sea. The environment is a tropical paradise with warm weather, heavy rainfall, and dramatic scenery. Hillsides bear lush vegetation and tracery waterfalls factoring out effects of the island land masses, expected annual rainfall is 1500–2000 mm, with rain falling through the year but concentrated in the winter months (Thomas 1965: 34). Vegetation patterns show marked contrasts between the wetter windward side of islands and the leeward dry sides. Temperatures are remarkably constant throughout the year at sea level, averaging from 23–27° C (74–80° F) with little diurnal variation.

The island chosen for my primary study was Kaua'i, the most westerly and oldest of the main Hawaiian group (Earle 1997: Fig. 2.7). It is only 40 km across, about 1400 sq. km in land area. The single central mountain cone rises to 1548 m. Known as the 'Garden Island,' Kaua'i has heavily eroded, volcanic slopes; streams radiate from the central mountain cutting deep valleys to the coast. Soils are volcanic, with rich alluvial deposits along the valley floors and at the mouths of the streams.

The steep topography determines a wet-dry contrast in rainfall. As the trade winds hit the northeastern side of Kaua'i, air is forced upward and cools, producing rain. On the windward side, annual precipitation at the coast is about 1300 mm, increasing to 10,000 mm at the mountain crest; to leeward, rainfall decreases to below 500 mm annually. Following these sharp gradients, vegetation varies from dense tropical rain forests to virtual deserts. Within a compact area, soil, water, and vegetation vary dramatically, and this variation strongly affected agricultural productivity across the Island.

At contact the social organization of the Hawaiian Islands was the most complex of any Polynesian chiefdoms and probably of any chiefdoms known elsewhere in the world. A strong separation existed between the chiefs and their followers. The chiefs were organized into the ruling lineages of the



different major islands – Kaua'i, O'ahu, Maui, and Hawai'i. Stretching back for 20 generations and more, genealogies were remembered by specialists attached to the paramounts. The paramount chief, supposedly the highest-ranking personage of the ruling lineage was the sovereign; in theory, a chief's genealogical distance from the paramount determined rights to an office such as chief of a local valley community. In reality the competition for such positions was intense and highly personal; most chiefs were very closely related to the paramount (within a first-cousin relationship) and had frequently fought by his side in wars of succession and conquest.

Chiefs lived to rule. The community chief was the *ali'i 'ai ahupua'a*, the chief who ate from a community. Lower-ranked chiefs could be a member of the paramount's retinue, as his warrior or one of the many attendants to assist the chief and to carry his symbols of office, such as his *kahili* (fly-swatter) and spittoon. Lower ranked chiefs also served as managers (*konohiki*) of a chief's *ahupua'a* (community), putting commoners to work on the chief's lands and on other special projects. The *konohiki* acted as the local chief, organizing the economic activities of the community. If an irrigation system needed repair, the *konohiki*, as representative of the overlord, organized the work project and the feast to follow. The *konohiki* also mobilized labor to obtain the goods given annually to the paramounts. When the paramount, representing the god Lono, arrived at the community's shrine, gifts were offered up to him.

Commoners made up most of the Hawaiian population. They lived in their communities, where they subsisted on the agricultural plots received from their chiefs, on fish from the sea, streams, and the chiefs' ponds, and on wild foods gathered along the coast and from inland forests. Deprived of access to the chiefs' memory specialists, commoners could not keep genealogies; in fact it was prohibited (*tabu*) to keep a genealogy that might demonstrate a commoner's distinction (Kamakau 1961: 242; Malo 1951 [1898]: 60; Sahlins 1971). This contrast in kinship knowledge emphasized the sharp division between the chiefs and their commoners. The identity and organization of the commoners derived from the community where they resided and from the chiefs to whom they owed work.

Primary historical sources richly document Hawaiian chiefly society during the periods just prior, during, and following western expansion into the north Pacific. In 1778, the British explorer and navigator Captain James Cook anchored off Waimea Bay on the south coast of Kaua'i. He was greeted with the extreme respect due a high chief or god: "*The very instant I leaped ashore, they [the islanders] all fell flat on their faces, and remained in that humble posture till I made signs to them to rise. They then brought a great*

*many small pigs and gave us without regarding whether they got any thing in return...*" (Cook 1967: 269)

The dispersed settlement at Waimea presented to Cook a dramatic view of Hawaiian life within an indigenous complex chiefdom (Earle 1997: Fig. 2.8). Small walled houselots were scattered across the valley floor, and upvalley a major irrigation complex had been constructed for taro cultivation. Women pounded the tapa cloth, and men worked in the fields. The Hawaiians eagerly traded food, feathers, and sexual service for novel European goods, especially iron. Explorer, trader, and missionary followed, and they recorded details of the political and daily life of the turbulent Hawaiian society as it was incorporated into western history and the world economy (see Broughton 1804; Campbell 1967 [1822]; Dixon 1789; Ellis 1963 [1827]; Portlock 1789; Turnbull 1813; Vancouver 1798; Whitman 1813-1815). But our vision is not one sided. Hawaiian chiefs, taught to read and write in their native Hawaiian, recorded oral histories of the island polities, their personal remembrances and analyses, and marvelously detailed ethno-ethnographies (Beckwith 1932; I'i 1959; Kamakau 1961, 1964, 1976; Malo 1951 [1898]). Kamakau described that fateful moment on Kaua'i: *"The valley of Waimea rang with the shouts of the excited people as they saw the boat with its masts and its sails shaped like a gigantic sting ray. One asked another, "What are those branching things?" and the other answered, "They are trees moving about on the sea." Still another thought, "A double canoe of the hairless one of Mana!" A certain kahuna named Ku'ohu declared, "That can be nothing else than the heiau of Lono, the tower of Ke-o-lewa, and the place of sacrifice at the altar"* [1961: 92]. Captain Cook may have been thought a human manifestation of the god Lono, returning to Waimea, a location important in his narrative (Sahlins 1985; Valeri 1985), but the military uses of the European ships and their iron were the magic that the Hawaiians soon sought for their own political aims.

The subsequent Hawaiian monarchy, crafted through conquest with the aid of Europeans and their military technology, was structured on a European model and began elaborate legal record keeping that documented the rapid social and economic transformation, but also detailed aspects of traditional Hawaiian society as precedents for legal actions.

The archaeological record that documents the development of Hawaiian society is as yet not as bountiful. Initial work inventoried archaeological sites, many of which were known through historical documentation. On Kaua'i, Wendell Bennett, later to gain fame as a South American archaeologist, began his professional career with a doctoral dissertation documenting the sites of Kaua'i (Bennett 1931). Many of these were religious shrines (*heiau*) for which he developed the first site typology. During the 1950s,

especially with the work of Emory, Hawaiian archaeologists established chronologies with many small-scale excavations including work on the Napali coast of Kaua'i. Systematic work on the settlement patterns and economy began in the 1960s with extensive valley surveys on O'ahu, Molokai, and Hawai'i (Green 1967, 1980; Kirch and Kelly 1975; Rosendahl 1972).

Following on this new direction in economic and social archaeology, my doctoral dissertation analyzed the subsistence and political economy of the north coast of Kaua'i at time of European contact (Earle 1973). I participated in an ethnohistorical project organized by Marshall Sahlins (1971, 1992; Linnekin 1987) to analyze the Great Mahele, the creation of fee-simple (private property) land ownership through the islands; valleys (former *ahu-pua'a*) were deeded to the chiefs, and small subsistence plots, to the commoners. From the beginning Sahlins (1971, 1992; Kirch 1992) sought to unite documentary and archaeological research. I was responsible for reviewing the historical records for the Halelea District on the north coast of Kaua'i and then for conducting an extensive mapping project to document the extent and technological character of its historic irrigation systems (Earle 1978).

During the 1970's and 1980's, research was augmented by large-scale, Cultural Resource Management projects to inventory archaeological sites and to excavate those threatened by development. CRM work combined the earlier perspective on settlement, economy, and social organization with extensive attempts to date sites and describe the long-term evolutionary trajectory of society (Cordy 1981; Hommon 1986; Kirch 1984, 1985; Dye and Komori 1992). We can now sketch the long-term history of the Islands' settlement and development of the complex society seen at first western contact.

The Hawaiian Islands were first settled in the centuries after Christ, perhaps around AD 400. The island environment, as it existed at first colonization, was much different from what Cook saw 1400 years later.

Originally the islands were forested; stands of ohia and koa stretched down to the coast. The species diversity in these forests was, however, fairly impoverished (Kirch 1982a). Since the range of species that colonize an island is limited to those species that can reach it, distance from continental land masses effectively limits species colonization. Moving out eastward into the deep Pacific, the numbers of plant and animal species decline. Because the Hawaiian Islands, and other Polynesian island in the Central and Eastern Pacific, were among the most isolated land masses in the world, the variety of endemic species that were useful to humans was small. Except for the bat, no land mammals reached the islands; among birds, several species of duck, geese, ibis, and rail that were endemic to the islands were hunted for food.

Pelagic and inshore fishes and sea mammals were, however, the most abundant wild food resources.

With both intended and unintended consequences, the colonizing Polynesians transformed the original island environments. The Polynesian colonists must have understood the relatively 'impoverished' nature of the environment that they were settling, and so they transported with them the plants and animals needed to establish an economically viable resource base. One can imagine the crowded sea-going canoes loaded with immigrants, their pigs, dogs, and chickens, cuttings and tubers of domesticates such as taro, sweet potato, sugarcane, and bananas, and a full assortment of seeds, nuts, and cuttings for coconut, candlenut, medical plants, and fiber plants that would be encouraged to go feral in the newly colonized islands. Initially the settlers of Polynesian islands depended heavily on marine resources (Kirch 1984); in Halawa, Molokai, an initial protein dependence on fish in the diet gave way to domesticated pig and dog (Kirch and Kelly 1975: 68-9). As in the Galapagos Islands, larger endemic birds, such as the geese, rail and ibis were easy game, evolved without the threat of large predators, such that they were often flightless and probably did not fear human hunters who soon killed them off; other species were driven to extinct through environmental change (Olson and James 1984). Much of the Polynesian islands came to have a 'transported environment' with many economic species introduced by Polynesians to replace a fragile and limited natural resource base (Kirch 1982a).

Transforming the environment irreparably, cutting the forests for farming exacerbated deforestation and soil erosion. The land-snail sequence shows a loss of forests and savanna coupled to burning presumably for agricultural fields (Kirch 1982b; Christensen and Kirch 1986). On the small island of Kaho'olawe, after AD 1400, a movement of settlement inland must have been based on forest cutting for shifting cultivation; the subsequent retreat of settlement to the coast was then apparently caused by local exhaustion of fragile soils and erosion (Hommon 1986; cf. Spriggs 1991). But the erosion of the upland, formerly forest, soils would have, correspondingly, increased sedimentation on the valley floors and created new farming opportunities (Spriggs 1986).

These new alluvial soils on the valley floors and river mouths were transformed into irrigated taro fields (Allen 1991). What had been created was a totally artificial and highly productive environment that contained the artificial pond fields for taro fed by irrigation canals, embankments between the fields planted with coconuts, bananas and sugarcane, and larger ponds used to raise fish (Earle 1997: Chapter 3). The intensely farmed valleys and

grass-covered hills observed by Cook above Waimea were, like most of the island landscape, a cultural artifact.

The changing island environment corresponded to a long-term increase in people and a sizable final population. I imagine an original small founding population, perhaps no more than a few hundred, increasing with further immigration and growth to several thousand by AD 800. Initially settling on the most productive lands, people would have occupied all good lands first, spreading to the drier leeward shores and interiors somewhat later (Cordy 1974). An increasing dependence on agriculture supported the spread of population through the islands, and, after AD 1200, rapidly expanding populations required sustained agricultural intensification. But how high did the population of the Hawaiian Islands reach and when did it get there?

Certainly the peak population for the Hawaiian Islands was the highest for any archipelago in Polynesia, but the final figure is hotly disputed (Stannard 1989; Nordyke 1989). The first rough estimations by Capt. James Cook and his crew members range from 240,000 to 400,000 for all the islands. A careful, and long accepted, evaluation of the historical evidence by Schmitt (1971) came to a lower estimate range of 200,000 to 250,000 people, which Nordyke (1989: Table 1) increases somewhat to 310,000. Stannard (1989) tops all modern estimates with 800,000 people, assuming potential growth rates and agricultural resources for the Islands. Obviously the question of numbers is unresolved, and probably cannot be resolved with further analyses of the historical records and demographic projections. What is needed is systematic evaluation of the archaeological record.

Dating settlements and individual houses can start to resolve questions of population growth and its final maximum. One way to quantify population growth is to evaluate the relative frequency of radiocarbon dates for an archaeological sequence, assuming of course that archaeological work has not been unduly directed towards the sites of particular time periods or localities (Rick 1987). Using this technique to analyze 495 age determinations from the Hawaiian Islands (18 from Kaua'i), Dye and Komori (1992) established a population growth curve: following a long period of gradual build up (AD 400-1200), population for the Islands grew rapidly, peaking at perhaps 160,000 around AD 1500. Then, until western incorporation at the end of the eighteenth century, population may have stabilized or declined. These estimations, especially the stall in growth, are not broadly accepted because of potential problems in the representativeness of the radiocarbon samples (Kirch, personal communication). Samples may under-represent late growth in prime areas, because the archaeology that recovered the dated samples was concentrated in marginal location; the locales where large num-

bers of Hawaiians lived have been destroyed by modern building. Understanding variable growth and decline across the islands is the challenge for future archaeologists (Kirch 1990)

The general growth in population prior to AD 1500 can be accepted, and it links to the environment transformation as the original forests were cleared for agricultural fields. But the major reconstruction of the environment, involving the construction of the artificial agricultural environments discussed in (Earle 1997: Chapter 3), took place largely after AD 1500 when population growth appears to have slowed substantially (cf. Kirch 1990). Although it is possible that the decline proposed by Dye and Komori was more of a concentration of population, continued growth is conjectural. We can conclude that the initial expanding population evidently caused an intensification of agriculture, but that the post-1500 technological transformation (with the rapid expansion of irrigation) was not driven by population growth. Rather, the population concentration on regions with intensive irrigation draws attention to quite different dynamics of the political economy.

During initial colonization, the settlers would have carried with them early archaic, or Proto-Polynesian principles of rank and leadership. Although the operational strength of these principles would have been a weak source of power alone, they would have provided important legitimation for authority constructed subsequently from the other sources of power. Polynesian social structure is often described as a conical clan—a non-exogamous, ambilateral, and ranked sociopolitical organization. Ranking is based on the measured distance from a senior line, whereby the highest ranked individual is the eldest son in the direct line of eldest sons. Theoretically each individual has a unique rank "precisely in proportion to his distance from the senior line of descent" (Sahlins 1958: 141). Common throughout Polynesian languages is the term for chief (*arike*, Proto-Polynesian; *ali'i*, Hawaiian). These chiefs probably maintained their distinction as leaders in different ways, but minimally as owners and organizers of the sea-going, colonizing canoes.

Through the thousand year sequence considered here, the complexity of Hawaiian political organization increased dramatically. The oral histories tell of an expansion of political power and the subsequent scale of political integration. Through conquest and intermarriage, the scale of the chiefly polities was extended by successful paramounts. Relying on oral histories for the island of Maui, Kolb (1994) describes the progressive fashioning of more inclusive chiefdoms. By AD 800, settlement had spread across much of Maui. As reconstructed for Proto-Polynesian culture (Kirch and Green 1987: 431), early Hawaiian populations were probably organized at this time by principles of simple chiefdoms, in which chiefs led local land-holding de-

scent groups. During the Formative Period (AD 1200–1400), chiefdoms expanded in scale, and during the Consolidation Period (AD 1400–1500) two regional chiefdoms formed on the eastern and western ends of Maui respectively. Each attempted to expand territory against the other. On the western coast of Hawai'i, Cordy (1981: 180–181) describes archaeologically that a buffer zone without settlement formed during this phase. Eventually during the Unification Period (AD 1500–1650), the island-wide Maui chiefdom was fashioned through successful conquest. At the same time, 'Umi conquered the whole of Hawai'i. The long-term trend to expand through conquest continued during the Annexation Period (AD 1650–1820) as the island chiefdoms of Maui and Hawai'i fought repeatedly with each other in an attempt to fashion inter-island polities. With western ships, guns, and special personnel, the young paramount of Hawai'i, Kamehameha, conquered Maui in 1790 as his first successful campaign to fashion the Hawaiian state.

The emergence of stratification has been documented archaeologically by a growing differentiation in labor invested in burial monuments (Tainter 1973) and in elite house platforms (Cordy 1981). Prior to AD 1400, house platforms were not distinctive, but, following this time, a few households with elaborate terraces and enclosing walls were constructed. These striking houses demonstrate an emergent chiefly segment that used group labor to set themselves apart. During the Consolidation period on Maui (AD 1400–1500), the construction of religious monuments (*heiau*) increased dramatically (Kolb 1994). This increased control over labor, as evidenced by the scale of the monuments, reflects the institutionalization and strengthening of leadership as the chiefdoms of eastern and western Maui formed. The pattern documented in both the archaeological and historical record is a long and dramatic trend towards increasing scale and institutional structure for the chiefdoms of the Hawaiian Islands.

By time of contact, Hawaiian society was rigidly divided into classes. The commoners were the rural farmers, fishermen, and craft producers. They lived in *ahupua'a* that extended from the mountains to the sea, often incorporating a river valley. Men toiled in the irrigated or dry-land taro fields or netted fish on the inner shore; women collected a wide range of wild foods and prepared the tapa cloth. Commoner genealogies were short, reaching back only to the grandparents' generation. The basic social unit appears to have been the household, but several households could join together to form a cooperative company along an irrigation system (Earle 1978: 153). Adoption linked families across generations and within communities. Certain individuals were 'big men,' and other commoners clustered their households near to the big men's house (Sahlins 1992: 208), but ranking was informal.

The Hawaiian chiefs were, in contrast, a people apart. The chiefs held *mana*, power that flowed through the individuals and demonstrated their feared divine essence. Commoners would prostrate themselves or jump overboard to keep below their chiefly gods, as was done for Cook when he first set foot on Kaua'i.

To summarize, the sequence for the Hawaiian Islands documents a long-term trend during which the environment was transformed into a cultured world owned by a class of ruling chiefs. This sequence is perhaps exactly what a cultural ecologist might expect. Increased population density resulted in agricultural intensification, environmental degradation, and increasing chiefly management of the economy. This scenario is partly correct, but it misses the subtleties of the evolutionary sequence. Yes, population did increase and the extension of slash-and-burn practices did alter the environment significantly, but development of the intensive, irrigation technology and of the stratified chiefdoms appears to have taken place quite rapidly, not growing slowly to meet expanding needs for subsistence. After the rapid construction of the irrigation complexes, when productive capacity was greatly expanded, population may not have continued to grow.

The chiefs of Hawai'i were able to craft a remarkably successful power strategy founded on a highly productive agricultural base. Surpluses in staples, which derived from the irrigation systems, supported artisans, warriors, and priests attached to the ruling line. Control over the intensive and productive agricultural economy was the primary source of power that provided the resources to control the other power media. The thousand, and more, year sequence in Hawai'i witnessed a sustained evolutionary development of complex chiefdoms that verged on state societies.

At contact, the primary source of social power was economic. The Hawaiian ali'i were owners of major agricultural facilities that include both irrigation complexes carpeting the valley floors and dry-land fields, that edged up the volcanic slopes. From the improved, highly productive fields, community farmers harvested taro and other crops, which fed a sizable commoner population and financed the chiefly superstructure. The agricultural systems were, in Geertz's (1963) term, capable of considerable 'involution.' A little more work, perhaps weeding the fields again or reclearing the ditches, always produced more food. The common farmer's harder work produced the surplus to support the ruling chiefs.

The high productivity and substantial investment of the agricultural facilities held the farmers on their land. Commoners were reluctant to forgo the advantages of those fields that had been built on the Islands' best soils. A community's *konohiki* 'put' his people to work building new irrigation sys-



tems, farming fields set aside for the chiefs, obtaining feathers for the chiefly cloaks, building the temples and roads (generally supplying labor for diverse initiatives of the chiefs).

The irrigation systems and comparable dry land complexes were the physical representation, the very essence, of the ordered political economy. Use rights in a measured and defined parcel in the taro pond fields were exchanged for the commoners' labor that produced the surplus to fund the political economy. The origin of the agricultural systems becomes a question of great theoretical significance; they were the ultimate lynch pin of the power strategy. Over a relatively brief period, the extensive complexes of Hawaiian agriculture were constructed. This was not a slow process, gradually solving local problems. It was rapid, a development initiated and overseen by the chiefs and their *konohiki*. The settling in of human populations on the islands created certain needs to intensify production, but ultimately the place that developed field complexes held in the system of staple finance was critical for the sustained evolution in Hawai'i.

Although the agricultural systems were ultimately primary, the other sources of social power were certainly critical extensions. Warfare was of special significance early on. Throughout Polynesia, chiefs struggled with each other for domination, attempting to extend their community's resource base and ultimately their sphere of domination. Warfare among the Hawaiian chiefs and their polities was a leitmotif of the oral histories. First district and then island-wide chiefdoms were fashioned through conquest. Warfare was the crucible for regional polities, the instrument of political expansion.

Ideology linked the chiefs with the gods, representing the chiefs as fundamental to life (fertility) and death (war) (Valeri 1985). Although monument construction continued into the historic time, it peaked relatively early in the sequence, roughly AD 1200–1400 (Kolb 1994). Apparently connected to the expansion of the new polities through conquest, the construction of the temples forged a new cultural landscape. In the new regional chiefdoms, the lands as structured by the chiefs were now owned by them. Monumental construction then diminished, replaced by elaborated ceremonies on the monumental stages. At this time, the primary effort in constructing the cultural landscape shifted towards the agricultural systems and its hierarchical land ownership. In the creation of the Hawaiian chiefdoms, ideology institutionalized and sustained a new social order, but investment in the ideology was periodic and strategic.

The power strategy of the Hawaiian chiefdoms came eventually to rest firmly on the intensive agricultural facilities. Surplus generated by the emerging hierarchical society and its political economy can be directed in a

number of ways. Military might expanded the polities, but their expansion made them difficult to control. A chief away on conquest could lose his home base through treachery and rebellion. Ideology legitimized and institutionalized new political order, but it can always be reinterpreted and co-opted. More resources invested in monuments helped create an owned landscape, but ultimately the splendor of ceremonial events is inflationary. Splendor demands more splendor, higher expenditures that can literally bankrupt the chiefly power strategy. On the Hawaiian Islands, the economic base of social power proved ultimately significant, because resources invested in the construction of the facilities increased the surplus that the chiefs could mobilize. The system, during the period under consideration, had virtually unlimited potential.

The initial power strategy, emphasizing warfare and ideology, was thus transformed with the development of the infrastructure for a staple finance system. The potential development in the political economy then provided the life blood for the reconstructed and centrally controlled power strategy seen at contact. The potential for sustained growth suggests that Hawaiian chiefdoms would, eventually, have re-invented themselves as states. Only relatively small techniques were needed to make conquest warfare feasible and effective. The Hawaiian chiefs knew what they needed and were quick to recognize the strategic use of the Western weapons of war. Kamehameha aggressively sought new sailing crafts and gunnery to conquer the islands of Maui, Molokai, and O'ahu and to fashion the first Hawaiian state. The ingredients were in place; solutions were sure to have been developed whether or not the European explorers had arrived on the scene.

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**BENIN**  
**(1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC – 19<sup>th</sup> century AD)\***

The task of this chapter is to trace in general outline the process of maybe the most impressive precolonial Tropical African polity formation in terms of the 13–19<sup>th</sup> centuries Benin Kingdom character and socio-political structure.

The ancestors of the Bini came to their final place of inhabitation in the depth of tropical forest to the west from the river Niger in its lower current and the delta region from the savanna belt, most probable, the Niger-Benue confluence area. After about three thousand years of life in the savanna, they started penetrating into the forest in the 3<sup>rd</sup>–2<sup>nd</sup> millennia BC and finally migrated there in the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC (Bondarenko & Roese 1999). It seems reasonable to suppose that the proto-Bini were inclined to leaving their historical pro-motherland due to climatic changes in North and West Africa from the 7<sup>th</sup> millennium BC on. They resulted in the cutting down of the savanna grassland territory both from the north (because of the progressive aridity that led to the extension of the Sahara desert) and from the south where the tropical forest advanced (Omokhodion 1986: 3–4). The savanna then became unable to provide support to the same quantity of people as before, and made these or those groups to migrate.

But the peoples of the Kwa ethno-linguistic group, including ancestors of the Bini were not the first peoples to settle in the forest belt of the Upper Guinea coast. In the territory of medieval Benin the human being first appeared not later than five thousand years ago, if not earlier (Connah 1975: 247–248). The Bini recall the country aborigines as the “Efa”.

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Very little can be said about the latter up to our present-day knowledge and hardly there is a hope for its radical increase without additional archaeological surveys. But what is evident, is that the autochthonous peoples of the forest, being already hoe agriculturalists by the Bini's advent (Esan 1960: 75; Agiri 1975: 166), of which their settlements' stable, permanent character is an important indicator, had the local community level as the utmost for the socio-political organization (Bondarenko & Roese 1998a).

It is reasonable to suppose that at first, from the arrival and sedentarization of the Kwa in the forest, two blocks of ethnic groups co-existed there living open-fieldly. But eventually the Bini, evidently by force imposed themselves above the Efa having transformed ethnocultural differences into socio-political either. Then, partially due to intermarriages, partially and predominantly culturally because of the prestigious character of the elite culture, the Bini assimilated the Efa though their descendants hold some quite important priestly posts within the Benin system of religious and tightly connected with them political institutions practically up till now (see Eweka 1992: 74; Bondarenko & Roese 1998a: 24–25).

The first Bini-speakers in the forest were still foragers and it no doubt took them time for all-sided adaptation under new ecological conditions to undergo not merely economic but also sociocultural and political changes. The transition to agriculture took place later, in the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC — the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium AD (Shaw 1978: 68; Ryder 1985: 371; Connah 1987: 140–141) though hunting and gathering stayed rather important means of subsistence for a thousand years more (Morgan 1959: 52; Roese and Rees 1994). In the social sphere, the formation of the extended family community and its institutions of government marked this radical change and characterized that period of the Bini history from the socio-political viewpoint (Bondarenko & Roese 1998b).

The rise of independent communities turned out the earliest stage of the process that finally resulted in the appearance of the Benin Kingdom. Since then the extended family community was the primordial, substratum socio-political institution of the Bini. It stayed the basic one — socio-politically, culturally, economically — later, during and after the formation of supra-communal levels of the Benin society. And just its norms in the socio-political sphere, its mentality and picture of the Universe not only permeated and fastened together all the levels of the later complex Benin society. The extended family community also formed the background and pattern for the evolution of the Bini society though changes at the transition from lower

levels to higher were of not only quantitative but of qualitative character as well (see: Bondarenko 1995a: 134, 227–230, 257–264, 276–284).

Hoe agriculturalism was among the factors that promoted such a course of events. The woody natural environment of the region prevented the introduction of the plough and individualization of agricultural production promoting the formation of the community just of that type and conserving the extended family community as the basic social unit for hardly not an immense prospect (Bondarenko 1995a: 101–117). It still exists generally the same in Biniland today. And just this stability of the basic socio-political unit lets us extrapolate ethnographic data on earlier periods of the Bini socio-political history with quite a considerable degree of plausibility (Bradbury 1964).

The principle of seniority, so characteristic in a greater or lesser degree of all the levels of the Bini social being in the time of the kingdom, was rooted in the communal three-grade system of male age-sets (for details see: Thomas 1910: 11–12; Talbot 1926: III, 545–549; Bradbury 1957: 15, 32, 34, 49–50; 1969; 1973a: 170–175; Igbafe 1979: 13–15; Bondarenko 1995 a, 144–149). Each age-grade carried out definite tasks, its members shared common duties, distinctive from those of the other two grades. The obligation of the eldest age-grade members, just called the *edion*, the “elders” (sing. *odion*) was to rule on the family (*egbe*) as well as on the communal levels. The ancestors’ cult fixed the position of every person in the Universe and in the Benin society as its the most important part. And just elder people naturally were considered the closest to the ancestors thus being able to play the role of mediators between them and the living better than anybody else.

The *edion* age-grade members, including heads and representatives without fail of all the extended families which the given community comprised (Egharevba 1949: 13–14; Bradbury 1957: 29; 1973a: 156), formed the community council. That well-organized council of elders appointed and invested the oldest person of the community, the head of the senior age-grade to be the council and the whole community leader as well. He bore the title of *odionwere* (pl. *edionwere*). So, the head of the whole community could easily represent not the family of his predecessor: there was not one privileged family in the initial Bini community. (In the case when there was only one extended family forming the community, the heads and representatives of its nuclear families became the family and the community council members at one time. And the heads of the community and the extended family, the *odionmwan* also coincided in one person. But such communities were exceptions to the rule [Egharevba 1949: 11]).



The community council gathered on the initiative of the head of the community or of an extended family council (Sidahome: 114). It took a real and active part in the management, discussing and solving (at the head's right of the decisive voice) the whole range of the communal problems: those connected with land use, legal proceedings and so on and so forth (Egharevba 1949: 11; Bradbury 1957: 33–34; 1973a: 172, 179–180; 1973b: 243; Sidahome: 127; Uwechue: 145).

The most archaic form of government, the public assembly probably was of some significance that distant time, too for we find reminiscences of it in the council members' right to apply to wide circles of communalists for consultations and maybe in rare "deaf" hints of the oral tradition (Egharevba 1965: 15). The existence of the public assembly is ethnographically fixed among socio-politically less developed ethnic groups of Southern Nigeria including some Bini and kindred to them (Talbot: III, 565), what also can be considered an indirect proof of its presence in early Benin.

The major reason for the very existence of the institution of *edionwere* in people's minds reflected in the principles of their appointment, defined the ritual function as the most important among *edionwere*'s duties. Besides this, the worship of the deities and the ancestors on behalf of the people by the *odionwere* further strengthened the position of this dignitary. But in the initial Bini community its head, the *odionwere* was not merely the ritual leader. He was responsible for the division of the communal land, was the judge on the communal level, the keeper and guard of traditions, etc. (Bradbury 1957: 32–33; 1973a: 176–179). *Edionwere* received gifts from those governed by him, but they were practically entirely of the prestigious and ritual character (Talbot: III, 914): economically they depended on their families.

However, in the middle of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium AD (Obayemi 1976: 256) the conditions for further political centralization and concentration of power grew ripe.

The division of authorities in the community into ritual, left for the *odionwere*, and profane was the next step of the Bini socio-political organization evolution. That step was connected with the process of overcoming the communal level as the utmost with the formation of the first major supra-communal level of the societal organization. This level appeared in the hierarchical form of the chiefdom.

It is remarkable that prior to that time communities also could form unions (Egharevba 1952: 26; 1965: 12). Joint meetings of councils of such unions members' communities were presided over by the senior *odionwere*,

chosen according to age or in conformity with the precedence of certain villages over others (Bradbury 1957: 34). But such a union of communities was not a chiefdom, “*an autonomous political unit comprising a number of villages or communities under the permanent control of a paramount chief*” (Carneiro: 45) for such unions voluntarily comprised basically still independent and politically equal to each other communities. The head of a union was the oldest man of all the union’s *edion*, not obligatory a representative of a concrete community (hence not a “paramount chief”) for, due to the fact of independence and equality of communities-members of the union, there was not a privileged, politically dominating one among them though a prominent *odionwere* taking over political responsibility and caring for the people might acquire great power.

But the chiefdom as a form of socio-political organization quickly superseded the union of independent and equal communities in the degree of spread over Biniland and its role in further socio-political and historical fortunes of the people. At the same time, both independent communities and unions of independent equal communities went on existing alongside with chiefdoms. And later, within the kingdom such formerly independent local communities enjoyed autonomy and their *edionwere* were comparable by their status to heads of also autonomous chiefdoms (Bradbury 1957: 34; Bondarenko 1995a: 164–173, 184–185). Thus two types of communities appeared: without a privileged family in which the only ruler, the *odionwere* could represent any kin group, and with such a family in cases when the *onogie* existed in a community alongside with the *odionwere* (Thomas 1910: 12; Egharevba 1956: 6; Bradbury 1957: 33; 1973a: 177–179). And just communities of the second type formed cores of chiefdoms.

It was not basically obligatory for the division of authorities in the process of chiefdoms formation to happen. Some scholars even postulate the sacrality of the paramount authority as one of the chiefdom’s characteristic features (see: Kradin: 16–17). There are some indications that powerful personalities among the *edionwere* might go a step further and undertake the venture to bring under their rule neighbouring communities with less fortunate leaders. Igbafe describes such a situation as follows: an *odionwere* “...would justify his claim to rule other rulers of small communities by surrounding himself with supernatural airs and attributes and would plead divine mission as an explanation for his leadership role” (Igbafe 1974: 2). And even in this century there are some communities in Biniland in which the hereditary, not elect of the *edion* members ruler is the priest (*ohe*) of a com-

munal deity, though these cases may be of the later, the Kingdom period origin (Bradbury 1957: 33).

But under concrete Bini conditions *edionwere* generally proved to be unable to ensure the success of military activities via which the road to the chiefdom passes. Then, the *odionwere* still was too tightly connected with his local community, was associated with it only and was considered only its legitimate ruler as the descendant of just its inhabitants' ancestors. His profane endeavors were restrained by his sacral, ritual duties that were the main for him, irrespective of whether he was the only head of the given community or shared power with the *onogie* (see Bondarenko & Roesse 1998: 369–371). Due to these reasons, the Bini chiefdoms formed exclusively round communities with the division of authorities into the *odionwere*'s ritual and the *onogie*'s (pl. *enigie*) profane, including military, offices. (Though the *odionwere* exists in every Benin community up till now). So only the bearer of the profane office could become the head of the chiefdom (Bradbury 1957: 33; Egharevba 1960: 4). The *onogie*'s community was as privileged in the chiefdom as the family of the community head in the latter. And the ancestors' cult of the chiefdom head was similar to those of the family and community heads on the higher level and to the royal ancestors' cult on the lower one (Bradbury 1973b: 232).

The definition of the *odionwere* and the *onogie*'s offices as correspondingly ritual and profane is to some extent conditional for the former might preserve some duties of the latter kind. But they could never be the most important, essential for him, on the contrary to the *onogie* who was concentrated practically on profane responsibilities only. Not by chance “*in villages without enigie meetings of the village council take place either at the house of the odionwere or in a special meeting-house, ogwedio, which contains the shrine of the collective dead (edio) of the village.*” But “*in villages with a hereditary headman meetings are convened at his house*” (Bradbury 1957: 34). Thus sometimes the *odionwere* and the *onogie*'s spheres of activities could overlap and the actual division of authority in a concrete village partially depended on the relative strength of its two rulers (Bradbury 1957: 33, 65, 73–74). But that was possible only on the communal level, for the *odionwere* of the *onogie*'s village most often had not enough influence on the supra-communal level, that of the chiefdom with his community as the privileged one.

So, the transition of the Bini sociopolitical organization from the communal to the first supra-communal level, the process which started in the Western African forest belt in the middle of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium AD was con-

nected with the appearance of the institution of the profane ruler (*onogie*) in a part of local communities alongside with the older office of the *odionwere*. The appearance of the *onogie*, first made the communal system of government more complicated and, then the complexity of the sociopolitical organization of the Bini increased either.

There also was the chiefdom council that was similar to corresponding familial and communal institutions. Besides the heads of the whole chiefdom and communities, the chiefdom composed of, the chiefdom *edio* formed that council (Egharevba 1949: 11; Sidahome 1964: 100, 158, 164). Thus the senior age-grade played the leading part in governing the chiefdom, as it played it on the family and community levels (Bradbury 1957: 16).

The chiefdoms formation represented an important step in the process of both ethnic and sociopolitical unification of the Bini, for the quantity of their independent societies (previously always equal to local communities) decreased while their size, territorial and by population enlarged. But why and how did chiefdoms appear among the Bini? What their rulers, the *enigie* were? And what is the link between the processes of the rise of chiefdoms and proto-cities in Biniland?

The very possibility of the increasing of the sociopolitical integration level by means of the neighboring communities' unification was determined by the development of agriculture, the growth of its productivity on the basis of new technologies that appeared due to the introduction of iron and, as the result, the increase of population quantity and density just from the middle of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium AD (Connah 1975: 242; 1987: 141–145; Oliver & Fagan 1975: 65; Obayemi 1976: 257–258; Atmore & Stacey: 1979: 39; Darling 1981: 114–118; 1984: II, 302; Shaw 1984: 155–157). This, in its turn simultaneously led to a violent competition for environmental resources, the land for cultivation first of all. The impetus given by the introduction of iron and thus the development of agriculture was so great that it has even been suggested, though it really looks “mysterious” “that the density of rural population in the area five hundred years ago was ten times what it is today...” (Isichei 1983: 266; also see Connah 1975: 242; Darling 1981: 107, 111), and in the middle of the 20th century the population density in then Benin Division was about 73 per sq mile (Bradbury 1957: 19). In particular, a survey of an ancient linear earthworks in Umwan north of Benin City revealed that the wall enclosed a territory of about 17 sq miles with the population of about 6,000 (Connah 1975: 242; Maliphant et al. 1976: 128).

But the chiefdom is not a mere union of communities. It is a hierarchically organized society in which one of the communities is privileged for

only its head becomes the chief of the whole society and not always the factors mentioned above lead to a hierarchical form of a supra-communal society (Berezkin 1995a; 1995b; Korotayev 1995a; 1995b; Bondarenko 1997c: 11–15; 1998b; c). Thus there must be some additional factors pushing a group of communities on this way of unification. Up to our present-day knowledge, it is reasonable to postulate two factors of such a kind.

The choice of an evolutionary pathway which a given society will follow during the next period of its history is in the decisive measure a result of the all-round adaptation of the society to outer conditions of its existence, the environment, not only natural but also socio-historical. Both of them promoted the hierarchical, towards and via chiefdoms evolution of the Bini. The natural environment dictated the type of subsistence economy that demanded regular land clearings and extenuation of agricultural territories. *“Even before the first contacts with Europe West African cultivators cut down vast areas of forest and replaced it by cropland and fallow”* (Morgan 1959: 48). Thus besides conserving the hierarchically organized extended family community this way of production led to conflicts with neighbors for the land. And the sociopolitical situation, the life alternate with the first, pre-Bini settlers, the Efa with their natural claims for superiority over newcomers also was an obvious cause for the military way of unification and chiefdom organization of neighboring groups of the Bini communities. The introduction of iron played an extremely important role in the intensification of military activities in the area, not less important than in the demographic sphere (Bondarenko 1999: 25–26).

But the matter is that, as it seems the unification of the Bini communities was peaceful (Igbafe 1974: 2–3; Obayemi 1976: 242; Connah 1987: 136; Eweka 1989: 11). At the same time, it is reasonable to conclude that the unification of a few communities, though it was peaceful was a union for the sake of more effective military struggle against another group of communities, a separate community or foreign invaders. It is obvious that the Efa might be such an “irritator” for the Bini. Where a few Bini communities lived side by side they could unite; communities separated from other Bini had none to unite with and stayed independent beyond the chiefdom system.

The hereditary leader appeared in a group of communities naturally, spontaneously in the course of the struggle against enemies having demonstrated exceptional bravery, strength, finesse, talent to rise people for heroic deeds. For the most valuable for people under such circumstances dignity is connected with the war, just that heroic leader becomes the most popular figure in that group of communities. First he became the recognized by all

the communities military chief and then transcended his authority into the inner-group of communities sphere settling disputes between members of different villages under his control, convoking and presiding over chiefdom meetings, stationing title-holders in all the villages it comprised (Bradbury 1957: 34). Eventually, he made his post hereditarily attributed to his native community thus transforming it into privileged (as well as his own family in the latter), on the one hand, and into a community with the division of authorities, on the other hand. And that was the moment of the hierarchy among the communities, the moment of the chiefdom appearance.

So we may conclude that the Bini chiefdoms were born out of peaceful unification of communities in finally victorious struggle against the Efa for the land, as a result of which the latter were gradually assimilated (Bondarenko 1999: 27). But of course later or even parallelly the Bini chiefdoms could also start opposing each other (Darling 1988: 129).

There were not less than 130 chiefdoms all over Biniland (not only inside but also within the *Ogiso*'s possessions) in the beginning of the 2nd millennium (Obayemi 1976: 242). The Biniland linear earthworks — walls and ditches (*iya*) are signs of their existence in the past (Connah 1975: 237—242; Obayemi 1976: 242; Isichei 1983: 135—136, 265—266; Darling 1984: I, 119—124, 130—142; 1988: 127). At the present state of the Bini studies, we may regard the Idogbo (Iyeware) (Darling 1984: I, 119—124) and Okhunmwun (Iyek'Uselu) (Darling 1984: I, 130—142) chiefdoms, thoroughly examined by Darling classical patterns or examples of that type of society in the country.

He estimates the first case as illustrative for the phase of “the rise of a petty chiefdom.” Idogbo comprised six villages on the territory of 6 sq km surrounded by primary *iya*. Darling especially stresses that the *iya* promoted the pacification and unification of neighboring villages in the chiefdom in the struggle for the land. And at the same moment, the *iya* were helpful at war-time defending the chiefdom from invaders (also see: Darling 1984: II, 303—307). All the settlements within the chiefdom unanimously recognized the Idogbo village's seniority. Traditions of both Idogbo itself and all her neighbors agree that the former originated within the primary *iya* in the pre-dynastic period when it was known as “Edogbo” meaning “neighbor”.

The further evolution of the Idogbo chiefdom in pre-dynastic times was evidently connected with the subsequent growth of population pressure within the *iya* for it is likely that most of the separate village wards which constructed the primary *iya* later moved out and became nuclei of new set-

tlements correspondingly erecting new *iya* enclosures. As the result, the chiefdom embraced several settlements over a territory of at least 2,400 ha.

Okhunmwun is considered by Darling “a powerful petty chiefdom”. Seven villages with the total population of 1,120–1,750 comprised it on about 17 sq km. By Darling, 1,500 people is just a sufficient size of a socio-political organism for the erecting the original *iya*, *i.e.* in the majority of cases for its constituting as a chiefdom. The Okhunmwun chiefdom came into being as a result of the increase of population density engendered by double population pressure: due to migrations and natural growth of the local population.

Now it is also easy to explain why the *enogie* came to power being as a rule younger than *edionwere* and why the very division of authority in chiefdom-forming communities happened. The elders (the *edionwere*) were not able to demonstrate bravery and strength in the battle field. Furthermore, it was not a senior’s duty to fight. That was an obligation of the second age-grade, the *ighele* members. Just from the *ighele* the military leader, the future head of the chiefdom naturally singled out. And that is why “*when an onogie dies, the eldest son automatically succeeds him*” (Sidahome 1964: 49; also see Bradbury 1957: 33), regularly just an *ighele* member. Not by chance the *ighele* meeting place was the center of the whole chiefdom’s public life (Obayemi 1976: 243). All this was a blow to the monopoly of the gerontocratic principle of management among the Bini.

The city formation among the Bini was directly connected with the rise of chiefdoms. The process of city formation started practically simultaneously with the period of rapid growth of chiefdoms. As a matter of fact, early proto-city centers were not simple amalgamations of communities but actually chiefdoms (Jungwirth 1968a: 140, 166; Ryder 1969: 3; Onokerhoraye 1975: 296–298; Darling 1988: 127–129; Bondarenko 1995a: 190–192; 1995d: 145–147; 1999). The heads of the proto-city communities formed the chiefdom council. It looks plausible that in Benin City these heads were the later *Uzama Nihinron* chiefs (Ikime 1980: 110; Isichei 1983: 136), members of the first category of title-holders established by the first ruler of the 2<sup>nd</sup> (*Oba*) dynasty, Eweka I. The *Uzama Nihinron* leader, the *Oliha*, on whose initiative the most important decisions of these chiefs in the pre-*Oba* time are also attributed, could well be the *onogie* of the then Benin City chiefdom and the head of the council which consisted of communal *edionwere* and other *edio* including three other later *Uzama Nihinron* members. So, the rise of chiefdoms was both a precondition and an aspect of the

city formation process being an outcome partially of the same factors; for example, the demographic growth of communities.

Someone getting acquainted with the Benin history may be misled by an outstanding role of Benin City in it and think that the Bini society was being built up round her from the very beginning. In reality, the process of growth and unification of chiefdoms and communities was on in different parts of Biniland and not less than ten proto-city settlements had appeared at the time of chiefdoms' rapid growth, by the brink of the millennia (Darling 1988: 127). They struggled with each other for the role of the sole place of attraction for the overwhelming majority if not all the Bini, of the focal point of their culture in the broadest meaning of the word, their political and in connection with it sacro-ritual center. The 130 Bini chiefdoms and a great many of independent communities drew towards different proto-cities. At last, Benin City gained victory (Talbot 1926: I, 153, 156–157; Egharevba 1949: 90; 1960: 11–12, 85; Ryder 1969: 3; Onokerhoraye 1975: 97; Bondarenko 1995a: 93–96; 1995c: 216–217; 1995d: 145–146). Due to the obtaining of the exclusive political function and position, she grew and became a true traditional city while the rest proto-cities went down to the level of big villages (Darling 1988: 133).

That was also the eventual fortune of Udo, the most violent rival of Benin City (Talbot 1926: I, 160; Macrae Simpson 1936: 10; Egharevba 1964: 9), though oral historical traditions prompt that probably just she was the original settlement of the *Ogiso* ("rulers from the sky"), the Benin supreme rulers of the mysterious so-called "1<sup>st</sup> dynasty" of the late 1<sup>st</sup> — the early 2<sup>nd</sup> millennia AD. With its coming to power the period of the Bini chiefdoms' flourishing is associated, and its reign gave an additional impetus to their further appearance and growth. And at the same moment, that was the time of the first attempt of establishing not only supra-communal but also supra-chiefdom authority in the country; to be distinct, in the part of Biniland round Benin City, the appearance of which predated the 1<sup>st</sup> dynasty time (Roese 1990: 8; Aisien 1995: 58, 65).

The *Ogiso* rule is supposed to last for a few centuries. In the very beginning of the period the country's name was Igodomigodo ("Town of Towns" or "Land of Igodo") (Egharevba 1965: 18). It is considered that altogether 31 "kings" ruled, but this figure, of course may be conditional, hardly it is not so. Above all, the *Ogiso* lists made by different native historians are not completely identical in terms of the length of the *Ogiso* period, the rulers names and the order of their appearance on the throne (Egharevba 1960: 3; Eweka 1989: 12; 1992: 4).



There is very little material available about the coming to power and reign of the first *Ogiso*, Igodo. Maybe he is a purely mythological figure. The version of the oral tradition offered by politically engaged local historians tells that he lived long and had a great number of descendants. He was Bini but resided not in Benin City but a few kilometers east of her, at the settlement of Ugbekun, and died there (Egharevba 1965: 13; Ebohon 1972: 80–83). Ugbekun is, even today, the residence of the *Ohenso* (*Ohen Iso*), the priest of the shrine of the *Ogiso* (“*aro-iso*” means “altar of the sky”) which each *Oba* is obliged to visit before the coronation ceremony (See Jungwirth 1968b: 68; Ebohon 1972: 80–81; Roesse 1993: 455). It is reasonable to conclude that just due to its reputation of the cradle of the Benin polity this village became an important religious and ritual center: Ebohon describes eight other shrines besides *aro-iso* at Ugbekun, devoted to various “juju” — local deities, not straightly connected with the sociopolitical history of the country (Ebohon 1972: 82–83).

Darling writes: “... *Benin’s territorial and political rights have been transposed back in time to legitimize later conquests – new termed “rebellions” within its subsequent kingdom area. ... Udo – an independent rival kingdom until its early 16th century conquest by Benin – is regarded as having been rebellious since Ogiso... times...*” (Darling 1988: 131) In the light of this we may suppose that the first *Ogiso*’s coming to power and the establishment of the very institution of the *Ogiso* was far from being peaceful; Igodo was not “made” the *Ogiso*, as Egharevba, as well as another Benin court historian, Eweka wishes to represent the event (Eweka 1989: 11), but “became” him.

A completely different traditional version of the founding of the 1<sup>st</sup> dynasty was put down by indifferent to local “political games” Europeans — Macrae Simpson, Talbot, Page, and Jungwirth (Macrae Simpson 1936: 10; Talbot 1926: I, 153; Page 1944: 166; Jungwirth 1968b: 68). According to it, the first *Ogiso* was a warrior of Yoruba origin. It argued that Yoruba “...*raiders, entering Benin from the North-west, in the neighbourhood of present day Siluku, gradually penetrated Benin where they eventually established themselves in complete mastery. The first raid was led by Ogodo... He made little headway, but his son Ogiso appears to have had more success*” (Macrae Simpson 1936: 10).

Talbot’s relation of the version heard by him holds that the first Yoruba chief’s name was Igudu. Then came Erhe, a son of the ruler of Ife with some of his followers. However, they were not able to gain any influence. The Erhe’s son *Ogiso* finally went back to Ife (Talbot 1926: I, 153).

With Ere, also Yoruba, the son (or grandson) and successor of Igodo, as it seems, the first real figure appears on the Benin historical stage. He actually was the most prominent among all the *Ogiso* while we now know nothing or only names about many of his successors.

Ere changed the name of the country from Igodomigodo to Ile meaning “House”; this name was in use till the very end of the *Ogiso* period (Egharevba 1956: 3). Under the rule of Ere the permanent establishment of the monarchy and administration of the supra-communal level were introduced (in particular, four of the later *Uzama* members’ offices: the *Oliha*, *Edohen*, *Ero*, and *Eholo N’Ire*). Not by chance even in 1979, as the final act of the present *Oba* coronation ceremony, “near the palace at a site crowded with visitors, the new king announced the name by which he would be known: Erediauwa: <<Ere... has come to set things right>>” (Nevadomsky 1993: 73).

The oral tradition unanimously attributes to Ere numerous improvements; the first symbols of royalty and objects of the ancestors cult as, in modern terms, the official ideology of the society among them. These were a simple crown (*ede*), collars or necklaces made of pearls (*edigba*), anklets made of pearls (*eguen*), the round lather fan (*ezuzu*), the round royal throne (*ekete*), the rectangular throne or stool (*agba*), the state sword (*ada*), the ceremonial sword (*eben*), the round box made of bark and leather (*ekpokin*), the wooden ancestors ceremonial heads (*uhunmwun-elao*), the big royal drum (*agba*), etc. (Egharevba 1956: 39; 1960: 1; 1969: Preface).

The time of Ere’s reign is the crucial point, the culmination of the whole *Ogiso* era in the sense that events and innovations attributed just to his period determined the very aspect of Benin City and the society on the whole, her economy and politics right up to the fall of the *Ogiso* dynasty. As it was enthusiastically expressed by Egharevba, “*Ere was the greatest of all the Ogiso, for he played a splendid part in the prosperity and solidarity of the Benin kingdom of the first period*” (Egharevba 1965: 14). Though hardly there can be any doubt that a lot of deeds and innovations (including some of the symbols of royalty enumerated above [Ben-Amos 1980: 14 {Fig. 10}]) are only attributed to Ere and his time being in reality outcomes of other, mainly less distant epochs. But in the overwhelming majority of cases we have no opportunities to date them otherwise than accepting their oral tradition’s relation to Ere.

As well as we are not able to answer why did he chose just Benin City, one of many Bini proto-cities of that time as the place of residence. But what can and must be argued, is that this act was the turning point of the Be-

nin City and the Bini in general history. Just Ere made extremely significant steps towards the former's transformation into a true city. His deeds also played a considerable part in the further economic growth of Benin City and the increase of her influence in the region, her ability to compete with other chiefdoms and proto-cities.

The first unions of craftsmen that throughout the pre-colonial Benin history coincided with primary social units — communities (see Bondarenko 1991b; 1995a: 117—124), are also said by the tradition to appear in Benin City during the reign of Ere. These unions became privileged; their leaders, heads of corresponding communities were later incorporated into governmental institutions. Among these, according to the tradition forty initial craft unions there were unions of carpenters (*Owinna*, *Onwina*), wood and ivory carvers (*Igbesanmwan*), leather workers (*Esohian*), weavers (*Owinnanido*, *Onwina n'Ido*), pottery makers (*Emakhe*), iron smiths (*Uleme*) and brass smiths (*Igun-eronmwon*) (Egharevba 1956: 39; 1960: 1; 1965: 13—14; Eweka 1989: 11).

It is of course not self evident that the oral tradition relates the pure truth in this case either. For example Ryder does not believe it (Ryder 1985: 385). But the crafts Egharevba enumerates in his records of the oral tradition are no doubt among the most ancient and important for the authority in the general context of the Bini culture, including political culture as its integral part. Bearing this in mind, as well as the whole block of Ere's reputed innovations, we can conclude that there is nothing unreal in the admitting of these court kindred craft unions' creation by Ere.

Ere initiated the building of the *Ogiso* palace in Benin City. Egharevba relates that the palace had the size of 0.5 to 0.25 miles. It consisted of "... *many gateways, chambers, council halls and a big harem divided into sections*" (Egharevba 1960: 4). The figures seem to large; maybe that was the size of the whole palace complex. The moving of the palace alongside with the seat of the government from Ugbekun to Benin City is credited to Ere as well. In front of the palace Ere opened the central "*Ogiso*" market (Egharevba 1956: 2; Ebohon 1972: 60). The erection of wall-and-ditch systems may have already taken place during the reign of Ere. Egharevba mentions a certain Erinmwini who constructed such earthen ramparts for his sovereign (Egharevba 1965: 14). Parallel to it, the name of the country, Igodomigodo, was changed to Ile ("Land") (Egharevba 1956: 3). This name was retained until the end of the *Ogiso* dynasty.

Ere is also credited with the renaming or founding of quite a number of settlements, for instance Ego (Egor), Erua, and Idumwowa (Egharevba

1965: 12). Three of Ere's younger brothers were appointed heads of settlements: Ighile became the *Ovie* of Ughele, another one the *Ogie Oboro* (or *Obi*) of Uboro-Uko (Uburuku), and the third one the *Enogie (Onoje)* of Evboikhinmwini (Egharevba 1956: 2; 1965: 13). In the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century more than a hundred Bini villages' *enigie* claim their origin from different *Ogiso*'s sons (Egharevba 1960: 4). These relations may be interpreted as a sign of some widening of Benin boundaries, embracing of previously independent or founding new, initially dependent communities by them.

Ere, if we believe Egharevba was followed by Orire (Egharevba 1965: 14) who obviously was a worthy successor. And with him the Igodo's line ended. The next about twenty *Ogiso* are reputed to be representatives of different local, Bini chiefdoms despite attempts of each *Ogiso* to establish his own true dynasty. Naturally, the level of political stability decreased (Igbafe 1974: 6). We must also not ignore Talbot's relation that Ere was followed by his son whose personal name was just *Ogiso*. This ruler, by Talbot "... *made little headway and later returned to Ife*" (Talbot 1926: I, 153). We will further discuss the possible important common meaning of the both versions in an appropriate place without fail.

The rule of the last *Ogiso*, Owodo, is traditionally assessed extremely negative. Traditions say, he ruled very autocratically, without consulting his advisors. He was eventually banished from the throne and went to the settlement of Ihimwirin near Benin City where "... *died very miserably*" (Egharevba 1960: 3–4; Eweka 1989: 14).

The first attempt to establish a supra-chiefdom authority resulted, in particular in the appearance of some titles, holders of which were later incorporated into the administrative mechanism of the 13–19<sup>th</sup> centuries Benin Kingdom (for details see Eweka 1992; Roese 1993). But they did not form an integral governmental system in the *Ogiso* time. Originally, the majority of these titles, like those of the future *Uzama Nihinron* members mentioned above were attributed to communities *edionwere* and *enigie* of chiefdoms within then Benin. Of course, this fact reflected general weakness of the supra-chiefdom authority under the *Ogiso* regime. These title-holders treated the *Ogiso* "*almost as primus inter pares*" (Eweka 1992: 7). The situation with the earliest title-holders also demonstrates that strictly speaking there was not the "center" as such that time, but at different moments various "parts of the whole" played the role of the center: chiefdoms changed each other on the top of the 1<sup>st</sup> dynasty Benin political hierarchy. Besides, there were titles that did not survive the end of the *Ogiso* period.

The most important among dignitaries were the *Esagho*, the “premier” and commander-in-chief of the army and the group of “king-makers” collectively recalled as the *Edionevbo* (Egharevba 1960: 4; 1965: 18; Eweka 1989: IV). Native historians remark that the king-makers of the *Ogiso* were identical with four of the future *Uzama Nihinron*, king-makers of the 2<sup>nd</sup>, the 13<sup>th</sup> century on, dynasty (Egharevba 1960: 4; Eweka 1992: 9, 27, 35).

In the Bini’s perception, the *Ogiso* (“kings from the sky”) period was the time of social creation of the world, of regulating social chaos (Bondarenko 1995a: 46–47, 204–205). From the “objective”, anthropological point of view, the *Ogiso* period really was that of the first immediate steps towards the creation of glorious “Great Benin” as a united supra-communal society too, though Ryder was of course right arguing that the Benin Kingdom had never included all the Bini, on the one hand, or consisted of the Bini only, on the other hand (Ryder 1969: 2). That was the period of flourishing of the Bini chiefdoms, the first supra-local form of their sociopolitical organization, and also of the first attempt to establish not only supra-communal but already supra-chiefdom, kingly authority and office at one and the same time.

This became possible because the first rulers of the *Ogiso* dynasty were foreigners from Ife who brought the very institution of kingship to the Bini. But the chiefdom level had been the objective limit of the sociopolitical organization for the Bini by the time of the *Ogiso*’s establishing, they were not ready to accept adequately political innovations brought from Ife, where the kingdom had been existing for a few centuries by that moment, yet. Thus initially the kingship institution and authority were simply imposed on the Bini multiple independent communities and chiefdoms without any genetic, organic connection with them, their social structures and political institutions, well elaborated and acceptable enough for the existence just on these levels of social being.

Benin of the *Ogiso* time may be characterized as a complex chiefdom — a group of chiefdoms under the leadership of the strongest among them — with a “touch” of “autonomous” communities which being within Benin did not belong to any Bini chiefdom. But the ambivalence of the initial situation crucially influenced the immanent instability of the supra-chiefdom institutions and the course of further historical events. The “1<sup>st</sup> dynasty” is just a conditional, not completely correct (though widely used) general name for the *Ogiso* rulers. In reality, they did not form a united dynasty in the proper sense of the word. The third *Ogiso* became the last in their Yoruba, Ife line. He returned to Ife but by that time the very institution of the supreme

supra-chiefdom ruler had already been established firmly enough in Benin, never mind its outside origin and correspondence to the level of sociopolitical organization, not achieved by the Bini yet. It is reflected in the fact that, according to a version of the tradition just the last ruler from Ife had the personal name *Ogiso* (see above).

The next about twenty *Ogiso*, as has already been pointed out, were not relatives to each other. And they, as well as all the later the 1<sup>st</sup> dynasty rulers were the Bini, heads of chiefdoms within then Benin, the strongest at the very moments of emptiness of the throne. And none of those rulers managed to found his line of the *Ogiso*, to make his chiefdom the strongest in Benin for a considerable time span, not in straight connection with his personal abilities: the society still was not ready to accept the stable supra-chiefdom authority.

Under such conditions, the rulers of the Benin City chiefdom, the *Edionevbo* later the *Uzama Nihinron* members enjoyed the most preferable position. They went on governing Benin City as their chiefdom while at the same time since Ere's reign she was not a usual Bini chiefdom any longer. Despite her real strength, Benin City became the outstanding symbol of the supra-chiefdom authority for all those included into the *Ogiso* government's orbit, their capital. The future *Uzama* had to bear the *Ogiso* above themselves as supreme rulers of the whole country. But they were autonomous in their governing Benin City simultaneously being influential enough outside their own chiefdom and evidently generally being considered higher than rulers of any other chiefdom in Benin of what without the *Ogiso* they could not even dream. They had a great measure of freedom of action in attempts to spread their influence outside Benin City. The *Ogiso*, people from not the Benin City chiefdom were greatly dependent on their support. We can admit that the Benin City chiefs influenced greatly the course of the struggle between other chiefdoms, by their support, applying to the principle *divide et impere*, promoting the strengthening of the most favorable for them at a given moment, the becoming of its head the next *Ogiso*. The future *Uzama* were true king-makers at those times. The *Ogiso* could be more a screen than an obstacle for their activities.

For the last eight or so reigns the truly dynastic way of transmission of the *Ogiso* office was restored. We have no evidence capable to help us to reconstruct that historical situation and to learn exactly why and when did it happen or what a chiefdom's head was at last a success in establishing the dynasty. We may only suppose that could be Udo and some stories of the Udo—Benin rivalry reflect just this historical episode. But what is obvious, is

that this event reflected and then promoted further consolidation of the Benin society on the supra-chiefdom level and that mainly just during that dynasty's being at power the conditions for stable kingly office's existence in Benin grew ripe once and for all. It happened due to first quantitative and only then qualitative changes in revealing of the same factors that led to the complication of the sociopolitical organization before. Thus in the anthropological sense the process of the establishing of the really hereditary kingship was evolutionary, not revolutionary (see: Igbafe 1974: 7). "... *in Benin there was no sudden transformation of the political structure coinciding with the advent of the dynasty*" of the *Oba* (Oliver 1967: 31).

Correspondingly, by the end of the *Ogiso* period the further prolongation of the situation when chiefdoms (and autonomous communities) bore the supra-chiefdom authority while the *Ogiso* governed by practically the chiefdom, *enigie*'s methods became impossible. Eventually the 1<sup>st</sup> dynasty was not a success in establishing an effective central — supra-chiefdom (and supra-autonomous communities) authority though just this is the most important condition of any complex chiefdom's existence (Vassiliev 1983: 36—37). The society entered the time of the political system crisis.

The first attempt to overcome it was the step backwards — the abolition of the monarchy in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The oral historical tradition holds that "*Owodo was banished for misrule by the angry people, who then appointed Evian as administrator of the government of the country because of his past services to the people*" (Egharevba 1960: 6). The latter was well-known as one of the most "important" people in the Owodo's time. He was "... *called the good citizen, because he was generally good and kind, helpful, merciful, sympathetic and generous... As a patriot, Evian was always ready to tackle any emergency in Benin, just to make the land remain peaceful without fear and harm*" (Egharevba 1970: 2). But it was impossible neither to govern Benin as a chiefdom any longer nor as a simple community further more. The "republic" as Egharevba calls it, was not a non-hierarchical, democratic alternative to the complex chiefdom. It was the outcome of the communalists' reaction that had no chances to survive for a long time though common communalists in their starvation to restore the *odionwere* system still prevented the first of only two post-*Ogiso* "republican" rulers, Evian from establishing his own dynasty what he desired to do (Egharevba 1960: 6; 1970: 5—6; Eweka 1989: 15). Already during the rule of the second "republican" ruler, Ogiamwen Benin was put on the brink of breaking into fragments (Ebohon 1972: 3) — separate communities and their unions, possibly including chiefdoms.

And soon another, the decisive step forward, the most crucial for the whole history of Benin was made on the Benin City chiefdom leaders, first of all the *Oliha*'s, initiative. It is natural that the *Edionevbo* chiefs so negatively apprehended the overthrow of the last *Ogiso* and eventually initiated the restoration of the supreme all-Benin authority. They meant to continue controlling in a considerable degree the whole Benin, not only Benin City in the new dynasty's shade. And they were a success in it for about half a century, till the military victory over them, a "*coup d'état*" (Ryder 1969: 5) of the fourth *Oba* Ewedo after which their real power gradually but inevitably decreased.

Being interested in the unity of the former *Ogiso*'s possessions but under their, not another Bini chiefdom heads' heel, they invited Oranmiyan, a prince from Ife "to settle peace and concord" in the country by ascending the throne. He came and though later preferred to return to his native city, still founded the new dynasty: his son from a noble Bini woman was crowned *Oba* under the name Eweka I by the *Uzama* in about 1200 AD (by the oral tradition in interpretation of native historians [see, e.g. Egharevba 1960: 8, 75; Ebohon 1972: 3; Eweka 1989: 15–16, 18]). But for the Bini that was a continuation of the *Ogiso* line for it is evident that an Ife prince was chosen by the Benin City leaders not by chance. As a compatriot of the first rulers of the *Ogiso* line, Oranmiyan was to symbolize the restoration of the pre-"republican" order, the transition of the supreme authority from the *Ogiso*. This fact could ensure him the recognition by the people, decrease the feeling of serious changes in their minds and hearts and all in all pacify the society. In reality, under the Benin City chiefdom heads for they of course hoped to control the foreigner not in a lesser degree than the *Ogiso* before the last eight or so reigns.

The very fact of a true dynasty formation by a few last *Ogiso* witnesses of, as it turned out not final but nevertheless painful, weakening of the Benin City chiefdom's positions in the country at that time what the leaders of the former were absolutely not going to bear. A foreigner in the *Ogiso* palace undoubtedly seemed them less dangerous for their power than a representative of a stable local, Benin House of supreme rulers. They could regard him practically an ideal figure for the restoration of their might.

But the *Oba* eventually managed to establish effective supra-chiefdom authority. In the result, Benin City transformed from the strongest segment (chiefdom) of the country into the center that was not a segment of the whole but stood above all the segments including Benin City as a chiefdom. That was a kind of power and authority of another, higher than that of



the chiefdom “quality”. The *Oba* achieved this result in a severe, sometimes bloody struggle against local rulers and the *Uzama* chiefs as heads of the Benin City chiefdom first of all. It ended only more than half a century after the establishment of the 2<sup>nd</sup> dynasty (see Bondarenko 1995a: 234–236). The fourth *Oba*, Ewedo built a new palace on another spot and left forever the one that had been erected as far back as for the first *Oba* in the *Uzama* chiefs native part of the city. He created a new category of title-holders as a counterbalance to the *Uzama Nihinron*. Then he ordered that the *Uzama* members should not really select the ruler among the royal family members; the head of *Uzama Nihinron*, the *Oliha* should only crown the *Oba*. Ewedo also prohibited the *Uzama* members to have symbols of power identical to royal. Last, but not least, he was a success in depriving them from the privilege of conferring titles (Egharevba 1960: 10–11).

With the establishment of really effective supra-communal and supra-chiefdom authority by the first rulers of the 2<sup>nd</sup> (the *Oba*) dynasty in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the historical search of the most appropriate for the Bini forms of social and political organization on all the levels of their being was finally over. Benin found the sociopolitical “frames” in which all the changes of the subsequent centuries prior to the violent interruption of her independent existence took place.

I have argued elsewhere that the Benin Kingdom of the 13–19<sup>th</sup> centuries represented a specific kind of complex non-state hierarchically organized society, generally not less developed than the majority of early states. (Not by chance the “early state” concept founders and supporters unreservedly attribute the polity under consideration as an early state [*e.g.* Kochakova 1986; 1996; Shifferd 1987; Claessen 1994], even of its the most developed — the “transitional” type [Kochakova 1994]). A society of this type of the socio-political organization may be called a “megacommunity” (Bondarenko 1994; 1995a: 276–284; 1995b; 1996; 1997a; 1998a). Its structure may be depicted in the shape of four concentric circles forming an upset cone. The “circles” were as follows: the extended family (the smallest self-sufficing unit [Bondarenko 1995a: 134–144]), the extended family community, the chiefdom, and finally, the broadest circle that included all the three narrower ones, *i.e.* the megacommunity as such. The Benin Kingdom as a whole in which megacommunal structures and institutions were not alien at all.

The very existence and prosperity of the megacommunity inhabitants were “guaranteed” by the presence of the sacralized supreme ruler, the *Oba*. And just in his sacral duties both the megacommunal nature and charac-

ter of the society and the *Oba*'s essence as of the megachief were reflected especially clearly (Palau Marti 1964; Kochakova 1986: 197–224; 1996; Bondarenko 1991c; 1995a: 203–231). In particular, the supreme ruler's family (as well as those of titled chiefs — members of central administrative bodies) not only preserved its traditional structure but generally existed in accordance with norms determined by that very structure (see Bondarenko 1995 a: 194–203; 1997d).

The importance of belonging to the family of the community (and/or the chiefdom) founder as a factor of assuming the office of its head, the presence of the element of sacrality, duties of the community (and/or the chiefdom) ancestors' cult chief performer, the communal (and/or the chiefdom) land manager, of the judge, etc., etc. and sharing the power with the council, control by family heads at one moment — all this and much else can be attributed to the supreme ruler. But again, all this was characteristic of the *Oba* on the highest level, at which, for example the cult of the *Oba*'s ancestors became an all-Benin one, and the *Oba* himself was the supreme priest of the whole country. The *Oba* was considered the master of all Benin lands, though in reality he had not more rights on them than the *odionwere* on his community fields, and so on.

Of course, these and other changes of the kind were not merely quantitative. Not occasionally among the *Oba*'s titles and praise names there was *obasogie*: “the *Oba* is greater than the chief” (Omoruyi 1981: 14). The *Oba* was not only the supreme priest but an object of worship himself (and the tribute paid to him was to some extent regarded as a kind of sacrifice). He was considered all-mighty and the only legal law-giver. In the course of time the supreme ruler received the right to appoint lineages from which the majority of the central government chiefs were recruited. If in the community the property was inherited alongside with the title, on the megacommunal level material values and the prestigious position, that of the *Oba* first of all were distinctively separated from each other (Bondarenko 1993: 151–158; 1995a: 203–229).

However, it is important to point out that the *Oba* did not desert the Benin communal organization. The “communal spirit” revealed itself in his support (including material) by the people, and his subjects not at all perceived the supreme ruler as a strange for the community power. And the fact that his power was considered like a continuation and strengthening of the legitimate community heads' authority on the new level (and really was so genetically and to a significant extend essentially), imparted the sociopolitical stability to the society, while the community also communicated it the

socioeconomic firmness. Objectively, the most important role the *Oba* played, was that of the symbol of the all-Benin unity. Through his image people realized their belonging to a much broader unit than their native communities or chiefdoms, *i.e.* to the megacommunity as a whole. It stayed and even became more so when in the time of decline of Benin, from the 17<sup>th</sup> century on the *Oba* lost his “profane” power in favor of megacommunal chiefs but concentrated in his hands immense sacral power, not less real within the context of the Benin culture in general and political culture in particular (Bondarenko 1991a; 1992b; 1995a: 222–228, 229–230).

It is remarkable that such a four-circles socio-political system corresponded to the Bini’s picture of the Universe (*agbo*) in which there also was the hierarchy of four concentric circles: the man (with four soles of different orders) — the terrestrial space, including the Benin megacommunity — the world of ancestors’ spirits and senior deities — the Universe as such, as a whole (Bondarenko 1995a; 1997b).

The picture of the Universe turned out “Beninocentric”. The second circle of the Universe, *i.e.* the terrestrial part of the society was considered the central, basic for the whole Universe. And Benin seemed the focal point of it and of the whole Universe; myths told how the Earth and the life had appeared just there (see, *e.g.* Ebohon 1972: 5; Eweka 1992: 2–4; Isaacs & Isaacs 1994: 7–9; Ugowe 1997: 1). The community was the center of that society; in the Bini minds, it hence turned out the very heart of the Universe’s heart, the core of its core. And in reality the community as the basic institution fastened together all the levels of the hierarchical structure of the Benin society. All of them were penetrated by, at all of them, reflecting and expressing the essence of that society, communal by character ties and relations dominated (Bondarenko 1995a: 90–181).

And the fact that the community was of the extended polygamous family type was of fundamental importance because of its essentially hierarchical social structure and antidemocratic value system. This way the gerontocratic principles and forms of communal management, on the one hand, and the evidently hierarchical (conic) type of the Benin megacommunity since its appearance with the establishing of the *Oba* dynasty, on the other hand, were determined (see Bondarenko 1997c: 13–14; 1998b: 98; 1998c: 198–199; Bondarenko & Korotayev 1998: 135; 1999).

From the *Ogiso* time the megacommunity inherited and even strengthened such traits, characteristic of the complex chiefdom (see Kradin 1991: 277–278; 1995: 24–25) as, *e.g.* ethnic heterogeneity (Ryder 1969: 2) and non-involvement of the supra-chiefdom level managing elite into the

subsistence production (Bondarenko 1993: 156—157; 1995a: 229, 253). The degree of social stratification in the society also increased (Bondarenko 1993; 1995a: 90—275).

But while the simple and the complex chiefdoms represent basically the same, chiefdom pattern of the socio-political organization, the same “quality” of the authority and power (“*The general rights and obligations of chiefs at each level of the hierarchy are similar...*” [Earle 1978: 3]), the difference between both of these types on the one hand, and the megacommunity on the other hand, is really principal and considerable. In particular, the *Ogiso*, in straight accordance with the anthropological theory (Vassiliev 1980: 182) had no formalized and legalized apparatus of coercion at their disposal. While the formation of effective central authority is vitally important for the complex chiefdom (see above), it usually proves unable to establish political mechanisms preventing the disintegration (Claessen & Skalník 1981: 491). Hence the breakdown into simple chiefdoms and independent communities is the typical fortune of the (complex) chiefdom (Earle 1991: 13). Thus, the megacommunity is a possible way of transformation of the complex chiefdom, an alternative to its disintegration. So, evidently, the break-down was the fortune of the majority of the 130 early Bini chiefdoms, and about ten proto-city settlements mentioned above, potential centers of complex chiefdoms, like the *Ogiso* Benin one did not consolidate their power over neighbors and degraded to the level of big villages. Sooner or later they were absorbed by Benin.

Only the Benin megacommunity of the 13—19<sup>th</sup> centuries (for correctness, in this case it should be said “the megacommunal political institutions”) formed the real “center” that was “above” all the sociopolitical components of the country and was able to establish really effective supra-chiefdom authorities. And just this became the decisive “argument” in the competition of Benin with other “proto-cities” for the role of the all-Bini center. Not occasionally Benin started dominating over them right after the submission of the *Uzama* by Ewedo, from the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century (see Bondarenko 1995a: 94—95). And that is why the megacommunal institutions, including the monarchy of the *Oba* dynasty and different categories and associations of titled (megacommunal) chiefs (see Eweka 1992; Roese 1993) were stable. And just because of this we may argue that with the advent of Oranmiyan and the establishment of his dynasty the Benin sociopolitical organization changed radically from “the extended family — the extended family community — the chiefdom — the complex chiefdom” pattern to the megacommunity “formula” determined above.

The judicial system, the system of imposing and collecting tribute, etc. became logical in terms of the hierarchical character of the society. For example, now there appeared the “staircase” of courts from those presided by community leaders to the highest, with the *Oba* as its official chairman. The two criteria for the examination of a case in the court of this or that level were the weight of the crime and if people from the same or different social units were involved into it (see, e.g. Dapper 1671: 492; Egharevba 1949: 11; 1960: 35; Bradbury 1957: 32–33, 41–42; Sidahome: 127; Talbot: III, table 19).

The *Ogiso*’s might extended over the territory of approximately 4,500–5,000 sq km. Egharevba writes that the *Ogiso*’s possessions comprised about a hundred settlements (Egharevba 1960: 4). Roese and Rose have been able to put on the map 68 of “villages and towns” enumerated by the native historian (Roese & Rose 1988: 306 [map]). Evidently, “villages” mean autonomous communities and “towns” mean chiefdoms, like those described by Darling (see above). For rather a long time — till the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century the square of the country stayed practically the same though its territory not once changed its configuration (calculated by: Darling 1984: I, 44 [map]; Roese & Rose 1988: 306, 308, 309 [maps]).

It seems also possible to suppose the approximate number of inhabitants and population density of the *Ogiso* Benin. The typical Benin chiefdom, as we already know from Darling had the population of about 1,500 people. If we then divide the supposed by the archaeologist population of that chiefdom into the quantity of villages (communities) it consisted of, we will find out that the average community size was about 200 people. We do not know the proportion between chiefdoms and autonomous communities. We may only speculate that the distribution could be approximately equal. If we accept the Egharevba’s relation with its of course conditional yet not senseless, as Roese and Rose have shown number of major settlements in Benin of the 1<sup>st</sup> dynasty, the figure for its total population will be 85,000 people.

There is also another possibility to calculate the approximate quantity of inhabitants in Benin prior to the establishment of the 2<sup>nd</sup> dynasty. The complex of ramparts on the country’s territory consists of more than 500 “communal enclosures”, about 30% of which were erected in the *Oba* times [see: (Keys 1994: 13)]. Thus in order to find out the figure we are interested in, we must subtract “about 30%” from “more than 500” and then to multiply by 200 (the average size of the Bini community in the *Ogiso* period). In the result, having multiplied 350 by 200, we get 70 000, the figure which is a bit less than the first way of calculation gives.

Thus, there are grounds for the arrival at the conclusion that the population of the 1<sup>st</sup> dynasty rulers' possessions was from 70 000 to 85 000 inhabitants. This figure — several dozen thousand — is generally characteristic of the complex chiefdom ( Steponaitis 1978; Carneiro 1981: 48; Johnson, A.W. & Earle 1987; 1991: 3; Kradin 1995: 24).

Hence, the population density in the *Ogiso* Benin possibly was between 14-15 and 20 people per sq km.

But the population of the country and correspondingly its density grew. The way out of evident economic, social, and political problems raised by this fact was found in migrations of parts of population outside then Benin, when necessary supported by the strength of arms. This way out was natural for migrations and military actions against neighbors happened from time to time earlier. But from the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century they became frequent and regular. This meant the birth of the “empire”. And on the height of its power (in the 16<sup>th</sup> century) the Benin “empire”, the regional superpower of the time, due to the Bini migrations and military activities spread for hundreds kilometers to the north and west and reached natural frontiers in the south (the Atlantic Ocean) and in the east (the Niger river).

The population of the megacommunity was no doubt greater than in any complex chiefdom. A proof to this statement comes from the relation that the highly organized (Roese 1992) Benin army numbered from 20 to 50 thousand people on the dawn of the “empire”, in the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century (Egharevba 1956: 34; 1966: 13). And in the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century the Benin army included recruits from dependencies and comprised of 180 thousand home guards and 20 thousand guardsmen (Dapper 1975 [1668]: 502). What a complex chiefdom could boast of such an “empire” and such an army?

It is also senseless to compare the small “proto-city” settlement of the *Ogiso* period, so characteristic of complex chiefdoms (see Kradin 1995: 24) with Benin City of the megacommunity time. It just started enlarging and reshaping its architectural appearance, sociopolitical and cultural role in the society from the time of the first *Oba*. European visitors estimated the city's population as being 15 thousand people in the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Dapper 1671: 487) and even from 80 to 100 thousand inhabitants on the brink of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries (see in Pacheco Pereira 1937 [1505–1508]: 64). In the 16–18<sup>th</sup> centuries, delighted Europeans ranked Benin not lower than the largest and most impressive cities of their continent (see Bondarenko 1992a: 54).

Though the initially local, communal nature of the society came into contradiction with the empireous political and cultural discourse, the principles and system of the formation and managing the empire (the preservation of local rulers in subjugated lands, migrations of the *Oba*'s relatives with followers to weakly populated territories, the Bini administrators of the dependencies' residence in Benin City, not in "colonies", the reproduction of the same ideological "pillars" which support the *Oba*'s authority in Benin, etc., etc.) witness that by the moment of Benin's occupation by the British in 1897 the megacommunity still was the true form of the Benin society proper to which socio-politically varying "provinces" were joined. So, it still managed to absorb and "reinterpret" those elements of the empireous discourse which could seem insurmountable for an essentially local, ethno- and socio-centric form of sociopolitical organization thus avoiding the reformation of itself and the interrelated transformation of people's mentality and picture of the Universe.

Both the *Ogiso* and the *Oba* Benin were "multipolities", *i.e.* societies within which structural elements of different socio-political types and levels of development coexisted and interacted (Korotayev 1995a: 72–73; 1998: 125–127). Under the *Oba*'s regime one multipolity (autonomous extended family communities + chiefdoms  $\approx$  the complex chiefdom) was changed by another: autonomous extended family communities + chiefdoms = the megacommunity. (In both cases the autonomous community was equal to the chiefdom in terms of rights and obligations towards the highest authorities of the time [Egharevba 1949: 79; Bradbury 1973a: 177]). But the megacommunity differed not only from the complex chiefdom but from the state as well.

It is hardly possible to count how many theories of the state there are. But Godiner is right pointing out (though a bit too toughly) that any, even the most sophisticated theory reduces the notion of the state to the "*specialized institution of managing the society*" (Godiner 1991: 51; also see Belkov 1995: 171–175); at least, theories center round such an institution. In particular, Claessen in such a "summarizing" different viewpoints and reflecting the modern level of Cultural Anthropological theorizing recent edition as "*Encyclopedia of Cultural Anthropology*", in fact spreads (with some insignificant changes and additions) his and Skalník's definition of the "early state" (Claessen & Skalník 1978: 640) on the state as such and argues the following: "... *the state is an independent centralized socio-political organization for the regulation of social relations in a complex, stratified society* (bolded by me. — D.B.) *living in a specific territory, and consisting of two*

*basic strata, the rulers and the ruled, whose relations are characterized by political dominance of the former and tax obligations of the latter, legitimized by an at least partly shared ideology, of which reciprocity is the basic principle*" (Claessen 1996: 1255).

And the natural criterion of its existence is the presence of the bureaucracy — the category of professional managers, officials who fill these "specialized institution". Actually, the latter is specialized just because of the professional status of those involved into the process of its functioning. These, now looking quite simple postulates are broadly accepted in Cultural Anthropology and practically go without saying.

As it is well-known, Weber is just the person to whom generations of scholars in different fields are indebted for the most elaborated notion of the bureaucracy (Weber 1947 [1922]: 329–341 *et al.*). Just his vision of this phenomenon, either explicitly or implicitly formed the background of the majority of modern theories of the state. So, let us look through the list of the bureaucrats' characteristic features Weber singled out (Weber 1947 [1922]: 333–334). Do they fit titled (supreme, the megacommunal level) chiefs — administrators of the 13–19<sup>th</sup> century Benin Kingdom?

*"(1) They are personally free and subject to authority only with respect to their impersonal official obligations; (2) They are organized in a clearly defined hierarchy of offices; (3) Each office has a clearly defined sphere of competence in the legal sense; (4) The office is filled by a free contractual relationship. Thus, in principle, there is free selection; (5) Candidates... are appointed, not elected; (6) They are remunerated by fixed salaries... (7) The office is treated as a sole, or at least the primary, occupation of the incumbent; (8) It constitutes a career... (9) The official works entirely separated from ownership of the means of administration and without appropriation of his position; (10) He is subject to strict and systematic discipline and control in the conduct of the office."*

The establishment of a really effective supra-chiefdom (and supra-autonomous communities) authority permitted the *Oba* to put an end to separatist moods within the former *Ogiso* possessions. This let the *Oba* do what their predecessors turned out incapable to do: to create a complicated and very well elaborated system of political institutions of the supra-chiefdom (the megacommunal) level and titles for chiefs united into several associations. The formation process of the megacommunal political institutions system was in the fundamental outline finished by *Oba* Ewuare the Great in the mid 15<sup>th</sup> century parallelly with the first "conscious" (and very successful)



attempts of pursuing the “imperial” policy (see Bondarenko 1995a: 231—257).

So, are there any grounds to regard Benin titled chiefs bureaucrats, *i.e.* professional officials? (For general descriptions and detailed analyses of the evolution of the Benin chieftaincy system from which a considerable share of the evidence analyzed and some conclusions made below are extracted, see [Read 1904; Egharevba 1956; 1960: 78—80; Bradbury 1957: 35—44; Eweka 1992; Bondarenko 1993: 158—165; 1995a: 231—257; Roese 1993].)

Any Benin chief belonged to one of two broad categories: his title was either hereditary (what is impossible if he is really a bureaucrat — see Weber’s point 9) or not. There were rather few hereditary titles in the Benin Kingdom: those of the highest ranked among all the chiefs the *Uzama Nihinron* members (from the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century there were seven of them) and of several other, less important dignitaries. The *Uzama Nihinron* was established in the 13<sup>th</sup> century by the first ruler of the 2<sup>nd</sup> dynasty — Eweka I, and the majority of other hereditary titles appeared in the time of *Oba* Ewuare, in the mid 15<sup>th</sup> century.

Non-hereditary title-holders were considered “appointed by the *Oba*” and fell into two major groups, besides some other, secondary by their significance is the administrative mechanism. The first of those two categories was called the *Eghaevbo N’Ogbe* (the “palace chiefs”). This institution was established by the fourth supreme ruler, Ewedo within the framework of his anti-*Uzama* actions in the mid 13<sup>th</sup> century. The *Eghaevbo N’Ogbe* were divided into three “palace societies”. Each of these “societies”, in its turn, was also divided into three groups like traditional age-sets of the Bini.

The significance of the *Eghaevbo N’Ogbe* was great. This association members received their might due not only to their official titles and rights but also, maybe even first of all owe to their closeness to the supreme ruler. One of their main tasks was to serve mediators between the *Oba* and the people (Agbontaen 1995), for the prohibition to communicate with his subjects freely seems to be among the supreme ruler’s taboos already in the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Hence, the palace chiefs could rather easily “regulate” the information flows to and from the palace in their own interests. From the narrative European sources of the 17<sup>th</sup> —19<sup>th</sup> centuries one can see that these chiefs really did it, and also to see, what a considerable might the *Eghaevbo N’Ogbe* under the leadership of *Uwangué* concentrated in their hands that time (see Da Híjar 1972 [1654]: 248—249; Anonymous 1969 [1652]: 309; Dapper 1975 [1668]: 503; Van Nyendael 1705: 435; Smith

1744: 228–230; Dutch 1978 [1674–1742]: 334; Roth 1968 [1903]: 92; Ryder 1969: 103). Eventually, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century the palace chiefs, and not the supreme ruler's lineage or the *Uzama* members furthermore, played the decisive role in the selection of the descendent to the throne (Ryder 1969: 16–18).

Another major category of non-hereditary title-holders, the *Eghaevbo N'Ore* (the “town chiefs”) was established later, in the mid 15<sup>th</sup> century by Ewuare, already as a counterbalance to the palace chiefs though basically they were ranked lower than the *Eghaevbo N'Ogbe*. They struggled actively with the latter for the influence on the *Oba*. They also fought for power with the supreme ruler himself. And all in all, the town chiefs were a success (see, e.g. Smith 1744: 234–236).

The *Eghaevbo N'Ore*'s struggle for power was led by the head of this category of title-holders, the *Iyase*. In the course of time, he became the most powerful and influential figure in the Benin administrative system and society. The antagonism of the *Iyase* to the *Oba*, as Kochakova remarks, “*runs all through the whole space of the Benin history*” (Kochakova 1986: 244; see: Egharevba 1947).

So, the *Eghaevbo N'Ogbe* and *Eghaevbo N'Ore*, whose behavior was very far from that “ordered” to them by Weber (in point 10) were the principal associations of non-hereditary chiefs in the Benin Kingdom. But the *Oba* appointed chiefs just formally, for, first, to be distinct, the supreme ruler appointed only the lineage out of which its members (officially not involved into the administrative system) selected a concrete person for receiving the title. Second, due to the strength of the tradition and the real might of the palace and town chiefs, titles were held within the same extended families for hundreds years though officially every lawfull Bini could claim for a non-hereditary title.

Thus in reality there was no free choice of administrators and their appointment by higher authorities. In practice, administrators were not appointed at all as well as there was no free selection of them on the societal level; they were elected within definite lineages, extended families (compare with Weber's points 5 and 4). It is reasonable to suppose (especially if one trusts evidence of the folk-lore [Sidahome 1964: 163 et al.]) that during the last centuries of the Benin Kingdom existence the *Oba* only blindly confirmed the candidatures proposed to him and this procedure in its essence transformed into a mere *pro forma*, the performing of an ancient ritual (“anti-point 9” of Weber).

The chiefs were not simple officials at the supreme ruler's service. On the one hand, the *Oba* regularly established ties of relationship with them (what contradicts Weber's point 1) marrying the titled chiefs' daughters (Bradbury 1957: 41) and then giving their own daughters in marriage to the chiefs (Egharevba 1956:31; 1962). On the other hand, they constantly preserved close connections with the communal organization. They participated in the central bodies' activities as representatives of their communities and titled lineages, not as individuals (hence, the Benin realities did not fit point 7 of Weber). It was unreal to dig titled chiefs up from their native social units and to send them to govern "strange" communities. Under the conditions when all the circles of the megacommunity were penetrated by, at all of them communal in their essence ties and relations dominated, the division of the country into merely administrative units (including by means of transforming into administrative units communities and chiefdoms) was impossible.

The supreme chiefs always were first and foremost title-holders. All the privileges they received in accordance with titles and were not rewarded just for posts they held. The post was an unavoidable enclosure to the title. For example, in reality the post could demand from the holder of the "*Oba's* wardrobe keeper" title not cleaning and airing of his robes at all, but attending to certain duties noway connected with such a kind of activities. These duties were not clearly defined and separated from those of other chiefs as well as all the categories of titled chiefs comprised officials of all kinds — priests, war leaders, etc. (compare with what Weber wrote in point 3). Furthermore, a chief could be deprived from his post by the *Oba's* command, but the title, once given rested with the chief till the end of his life. Egharevba openly writes as regards this that the supreme ruler: "...could... suspend any titled chief from his post, but the chief must still hold his title for life" (Egharevba 1949: 24; also see: 1956: 6; Igbafe 1979: 4).

There was a general notion of higher and lower titles and more or less main duties but there was no fixed hierarchy neither within categories of supreme chiefs (most often, only their heads were definitely known) nor within these or those spheres of activities — administrative, priestly and so on (compare with point 2 of Weber).

The material well-being of the supreme chiefs (at least prior to the period of active trade with Europeans [Bondarenko 1995a: 153—157]) was based on the receiving of a share of what had been produced in their communities. It was not founded either on the tribute once or twice a year collected from the whole population of the country or on "presents" of the *Oba* chiefs

used to get from time to time. And fixed salaries have never been due to them at all (nothing in common with Weber's point 6).

As titles belonged to the same extended families for centuries, there was no free competition for titles in the society. Then, there were no opportunities for making the career, for chiefs held first and foremost titles. And titles, besides their lack of a well-defined hierarchy, were not subjected to their changing by a person. Having once received a title, he was not able not only to lose it by the *Oba*'s command, but to receive another one, too (see Weber's point 8).

So, none of all the Weber's ten features characteristic of bureaucracy and bureaucrats fits the Benin Kingdom supreme (titled) chiefs. Megacommunal institutions became really central, not those of a chiefdom claiming for governing the supra-chiefdom society. But under the conditions of the essentially communal Benin society, even those who governed it on the highest level were not officials, *i.e.* "bureaucrats". Thus, in accordance with the practically generally accepted idea of intimate connection between the state and the bureaucracy, the Benin megacommunity was not a state.

And summing up all the aforesaid in this chapter, it seems reasonable and grounded to classify the megacommunity as a specific type of the complex hierarchical socio-political organization. This type of organization was alternative to the statehood, for it is also clear that from all points of view Benin was not less developed than the majority of early states.

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**BENIN**  
**(1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC – 19<sup>th</sup> century AD)\***

The task of this chapter is to trace in general outline the process of maybe the most impressive precolonial Tropical African polity formation in terms of the 13–19<sup>th</sup> centuries Benin Kingdom character and socio-political structure.

The ancestors of the Bini came to their final place of inhabitation in the depth of tropical forest to the west from the river Niger in its lower current and the delta region from the savanna belt, most probable, the Niger-Benue confluence area. After about three thousand years of life in the savanna, they started penetrating into the forest in the 3<sup>rd</sup>–2<sup>nd</sup> millennia BC and finally migrated there in the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC (Bondarenko & Roese 1999). It seems reasonable to suppose that the proto-Bini were inclined to leaving their historical pro-motherland due to climatic changes in North and West Africa from the 7<sup>th</sup> millennium BC on. They resulted in the cutting down of the savanna grassland territory both from the north (because of the progressive aridity that led to the extension of the Sahara desert) and from the south where the tropical forest advanced (Omokhodion 1986: 3–4). The savanna then became unable to provide support to the same quantity of people as before, and made these or those groups to migrate.

But the peoples of the Kwa ethno-linguistic group, including ancestors of the Bini were not the first peoples to settle in the forest belt of the Upper Guinea coast. In the territory of medieval Benin the human being first appeared not later than five thousand years ago, if not earlier (Connah 1975: 247–248). The Bini recall the country aborigines as the “Efa”.

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Very little can be said about the latter up to our present-day knowledge and hardly there is a hope for its radical increase without additional archaeological surveys. But what is evident, is that the autochthonous peoples of the forest, being already hoe agriculturalists by the Bini's advent (Esan 1960: 75; Agiri 1975: 166), of which their settlements' stable, permanent character is an important indicator, had the local community level as the utmost for the socio-political organization (Bondarenko & Roese 1998a).

It is reasonable to suppose that at first, from the arrival and sedentarization of the Kwa in the forest, two blocks of ethnic groups co-existed there living open-fieldly. But eventually the Bini, evidently by force imposed themselves above the Efa having transformed ethnocultural differences into socio-political either. Then, partially due to intermarriages, partially and predominantly culturally because of the prestigious character of the elite culture, the Bini assimilated the Efa though their descendants hold some quite important priestly posts within the Benin system of religious and tightly connected with them political institutions practically up till now (see Eweka 1992: 74; Bondarenko & Roese 1998a: 24–25).

The first Bini-speakers in the forest were still foragers and it no doubt took them time for all-sided adaptation under new ecological conditions to undergo not merely economic but also sociocultural and political changes. The transition to agriculture took place later, in the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC — the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium AD (Shaw 1978: 68; Ryder 1985: 371; Connah 1987: 140–141) though hunting and gathering stayed rather important means of subsistence for a thousand years more (Morgan 1959: 52; Roese and Rees 1994). In the social sphere, the formation of the extended family community and its institutions of government marked this radical change and characterized that period of the Bini history from the socio-political viewpoint (Bondarenko & Roese 1998b).

The rise of independent communities turned out the earliest stage of the process that finally resulted in the appearance of the Benin Kingdom. Since then the extended family community was the primordial, substratum socio-political institution of the Bini. It stayed the basic one — socio-politically, culturally, economically — later, during and after the formation of supra-communal levels of the Benin society. And just its norms in the socio-political sphere, its mentality and picture of the Universe not only permeated and fastened together all the levels of the later complex Benin society. The extended family community also formed the background and pattern for the evolution of the Bini society though changes at the transition from lower



levels to higher were of not only quantitative but of qualitative character as well (see: Bondarenko 1995a: 134, 227–230, 257–264, 276–284).

Hoe agriculturalism was among the factors that promoted such a course of events. The woody natural environment of the region prevented the introduction of the plough and individualization of agricultural production promoting the formation of the community just of that type and conserving the extended family community as the basic social unit for hardly not an immense prospect (Bondarenko 1995a: 101–117). It still exists generally the same in Biniland today. And just this stability of the basic socio-political unit lets us extrapolate ethnographic data on earlier periods of the Bini socio-political history with quite a considerable degree of plausibility (Bradbury 1964).

The principle of seniority, so characteristic in a greater or lesser degree of all the levels of the Bini social being in the time of the kingdom, was rooted in the communal three-grade system of male age-sets (for details see: Thomas 1910: 11–12; Talbot 1926: III, 545–549; Bradbury 1957: 15, 32, 34, 49–50; 1969; 1973a: 170–175; Igbafe 1979: 13–15; Bondarenko 1995 a, 144–149). Each age-grade carried out definite tasks, its members shared common duties, distinctive from those of the other two grades. The obligation of the eldest age-grade members, just called the *edion*, the “elders” (sing. *odion*) was to rule on the family (*egbe*) as well as on the communal levels. The ancestors’ cult fixed the position of every person in the Universe and in the Benin society as its the most important part. And just elder people naturally were considered the closest to the ancestors thus being able to play the role of mediators between them and the living better than anybody else.

The *edion* age-grade members, including heads and representatives without fail of all the extended families which the given community comprised (Egharevba 1949: 13–14; Bradbury 1957: 29; 1973a: 156), formed the community council. That well-organized council of elders appointed and invested the oldest person of the community, the head of the senior age-grade to be the council and the whole community leader as well. He bore the title of *odionwere* (pl. *edionwere*). So, the head of the whole community could easily represent not the family of his predecessor: there was not one privileged family in the initial Bini community. (In the case when there was only one extended family forming the community, the heads and representatives of its nuclear families became the family and the community council members at one time. And the heads of the community and the extended family, the *odionmwan* also coincided in one person. But such communities were exceptions to the rule [Egharevba 1949: 11]).

The community council gathered on the initiative of the head of the community or of an extended family council (Sidahome: 114). It took a real and active part in the management, discussing and solving (at the head's right of the decisive voice) the whole range of the communal problems: those connected with land use, legal proceedings and so on and so forth (Egharevba 1949: 11; Bradbury 1957: 33–34; 1973a: 172, 179–180; 1973b: 243; Sidahome: 127; Uwechue: 145).

The most archaic form of government, the public assembly probably was of some significance that distant time, too for we find reminiscences of it in the council members' right to apply to wide circles of communalists for consultations and maybe in rare "deaf" hints of the oral tradition (Egharevba 1965: 15). The existence of the public assembly is ethnographically fixed among socio-politically less developed ethnic groups of Southern Nigeria including some Bini and kindred to them (Talbot: III, 565), what also can be considered an indirect proof of its presence in early Benin.

The major reason for the very existence of the institution of *edionwere* in people's minds reflected in the principles of their appointment, defined the ritual function as the most important among *edionwere*'s duties. Besides this, the worship of the deities and the ancestors on behalf of the people by the *odionwere* further strengthened the position of this dignitary. But in the initial Bini community its head, the *odionwere* was not merely the ritual leader. He was responsible for the division of the communal land, was the judge on the communal level, the keeper and guard of traditions, etc. (Bradbury 1957: 32–33; 1973a: 176–179). *Edionwere* received gifts from those governed by him, but they were practically entirely of the prestigious and ritual character (Talbot: III, 914): economically they depended on their families.

However, in the middle of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium AD (Obayemi 1976: 256) the conditions for further political centralization and concentration of power grew ripe.

The division of authorities in the community into ritual, left for the *odionwere*, and profane was the next step of the Bini socio-political organization evolution. That step was connected with the process of overcoming the communal level as the utmost with the formation of the first major supra-communal level of the societal organization. This level appeared in the hierarchical form of the chiefdom.

It is remarkable that prior to that time communities also could form unions (Egharevba 1952: 26; 1965: 12). Joint meetings of councils of such unions members' communities were presided over by the senior *odionwere*,

chosen according to age or in conformity with the precedence of certain villages over others (Bradbury 1957: 34). But such a union of communities was not a chiefdom, “*an autonomous political unit comprising a number of villages or communities under the permanent control of a paramount chief*” (Carneiro: 45) for such unions voluntarily comprised basically still independent and politically equal to each other communities. The head of a union was the oldest man of all the union’s *edion*, not obligatory a representative of a concrete community (hence not a “paramount chief”) for, due to the fact of independence and equality of communities-members of the union, there was not a privileged, politically dominating one among them though a prominent *odionwere* taking over political responsibility and caring for the people might acquire great power.

But the chiefdom as a form of socio-political organization quickly superseded the union of independent and equal communities in the degree of spread over Biniland and its role in further socio-political and historical fortunes of the people. At the same time, both independent communities and unions of independent equal communities went on existing alongside with chiefdoms. And later, within the kingdom such formerly independent local communities enjoyed autonomy and their *edionwere* were comparable by their status to heads of also autonomous chiefdoms (Bradbury 1957: 34; Bondarenko 1995a: 164–173, 184–185). Thus two types of communities appeared: without a privileged family in which the only ruler, the *odionwere* could represent any kin group, and with such a family in cases when the *onogie* existed in a community alongside with the *odionwere* (Thomas 1910: 12; Egharevba 1956: 6; Bradbury 1957: 33; 1973a: 177–179). And just communities of the second type formed cores of chiefdoms.

It was not basically obligatory for the division of authorities in the process of chiefdoms formation to happen. Some scholars even postulate the sacrality of the paramount authority as one of the chiefdom’s characteristic features (see: Kradin: 16–17). There are some indications that powerful personalities among the *edionwere* might go a step further and undertake the venture to bring under their rule neighbouring communities with less fortunate leaders. Igbafe describes such a situation as follows: an *odionwere* “...would justify his claim to rule other rulers of small communities by surrounding himself with supernatural airs and attributes and would plead divine mission as an explanation for his leadership role” (Igbafe 1974: 2). And even in this century there are some communities in Biniland in which the hereditary, not elect of the *edion* members ruler is the priest (*ohe*) of a com-

munal deity, though these cases may be of the later, the Kingdom period origin (Bradbury 1957: 33).

But under concrete Bini conditions *edionwere* generally proved to be unable to ensure the success of military activities via which the road to the chiefdom passes. Then, the *odionwere* still was too tightly connected with his local community, was associated with it only and was considered only its legitimate ruler as the descendant of just its inhabitants' ancestors. His profane endeavors were restrained by his sacral, ritual duties that were the main for him, irrespective of whether he was the only head of the given community or shared power with the *onogie* (see Bondarenko & Roesse 1998: 369–371). Due to these reasons, the Bini chiefdoms formed exclusively round communities with the division of authorities into the *odionwere*'s ritual and the *onogie*'s (pl. *enigie*) profane, including military, offices. (Though the *odionwere* exists in every Benin community up till now). So only the bearer of the profane office could become the head of the chiefdom (Bradbury 1957: 33; Egharevba 1960: 4). The *onogie*'s community was as privileged in the chiefdom as the family of the community head in the latter. And the ancestors' cult of the chiefdom head was similar to those of the family and community heads on the higher level and to the royal ancestors' cult on the lower one (Bradbury 1973b: 232).

The definition of the *odionwere* and the *onogie*'s offices as correspondingly ritual and profane is to some extent conditional for the former might preserve some duties of the latter kind. But they could never be the most important, essential for him, on the contrary to the *onogie* who was concentrated practically on profane responsibilities only. Not by chance “*in villages without enigie meetings of the village council take place either at the house of the odionwere or in a special meeting-house, ogwedio, which contains the shrine of the collective dead (edio) of the village.*” But “*in villages with a hereditary headman meetings are convened at his house*” (Bradbury 1957: 34). Thus sometimes the *odionwere* and the *onogie*'s spheres of activities could overlap and the actual division of authority in a concrete village partially depended on the relative strength of its two rulers (Bradbury 1957: 33, 65, 73–74). But that was possible only on the communal level, for the *odionwere* of the *onogie*'s village most often had not enough influence on the supra-communal level, that of the chiefdom with his community as the privileged one.

So, the transition of the Bini sociopolitical organization from the communal to the first supra-communal level, the process which started in the Western African forest belt in the middle of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium AD was con-

nected with the appearance of the institution of the profane ruler (*onogie*) in a part of local communities alongside with the older office of the *odionwere*. The appearance of the *onogie*, first made the communal system of government more complicated and, then the complexity of the sociopolitical organization of the Bini increased either.

There also was the chiefdom council that was similar to corresponding familial and communal institutions. Besides the heads of the whole chiefdom and communities, the chiefdom composed of, the chiefdom *edio* formed that council (Egharevba 1949: 11; Sidahome 1964: 100, 158, 164). Thus the senior age-grade played the leading part in governing the chiefdom, as it played it on the family and community levels (Bradbury 1957: 16).

The chiefdoms formation represented an important step in the process of both ethnic and sociopolitical unification of the Bini, for the quantity of their independent societies (previously always equal to local communities) decreased while their size, territorial and by population enlarged. But why and how did chiefdoms appear among the Bini? What their rulers, the *enigie* were? And what is the link between the processes of the rise of chiefdoms and proto-cities in Biniland?

The very possibility of the increasing of the sociopolitical integration level by means of the neighboring communities' unification was determined by the development of agriculture, the growth of its productivity on the basis of new technologies that appeared due to the introduction of iron and, as the result, the increase of population quantity and density just from the middle of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium AD (Connah 1975: 242; 1987: 141–145; Oliver & Fagan 1975: 65; Obayemi 1976: 257–258; Atmore & Stacey: 1979: 39; Darling 1981: 114–118; 1984: II, 302; Shaw 1984: 155–157). This, in its turn simultaneously led to a violent competition for environmental resources, the land for cultivation first of all. The impetus given by the introduction of iron and thus the development of agriculture was so great that it has even been suggested, though it really looks “mysterious” “*that the density of rural population in the area five hundred years ago was ten times what it is today...*” (Isichei 1983: 266; also see Connah 1975: 242; Darling 1981: 107, 111), and in the middle of the 20th century the population density in then Benin Division was about 73 per sq mile (Bradbury 1957: 19). In particular, a survey of an ancient linear earthworks in Umwan north of Benin City revealed that the wall enclosed a territory of about 17 sq miles with the population of about 6,000 (Connah 1975: 242; Maliphant et al. 1976: 128).

But the chiefdom is not a mere union of communities. It is a hierarchically organized society in which one of the communities is privileged for

only its head becomes the chief of the whole society and not always the factors mentioned above lead to a hierarchical form of a supra-communal society (Berezkin 1995a; 1995b; Korotayev 1995a; 1995b; Bondarenko 1997c: 11–15; 1998b; c). Thus there must be some additional factors pushing a group of communities on this way of unification. Up to our present-day knowledge, it is reasonable to postulate two factors of such a kind.

The choice of an evolutionary pathway which a given society will follow during the next period of its history is in the decisive measure a result of the all-round adaptation of the society to outer conditions of its existence, the environment, not only natural but also socio-historical. Both of them promoted the hierarchical, towards and via chiefdoms evolution of the Bini. The natural environment dictated the type of subsistence economy that demanded regular land clearings and extenuation of agricultural territories. *“Even before the first contacts with Europe West African cultivators cut down vast areas of forest and replaced it by cropland and fallow”* (Morgan 1959: 48). Thus besides conserving the hierarchically organized extended family community this way of production led to conflicts with neighbors for the land. And the sociopolitical situation, the life alternate with the first, pre-Bini settlers, the Efa with their natural claims for superiority over newcomers also was an obvious cause for the military way of unification and chiefdom organization of neighboring groups of the Bini communities. The introduction of iron played an extremely important role in the intensification of military activities in the area, not less important than in the demographic sphere (Bondarenko 1999: 25–26).

But the matter is that, as it seems the unification of the Bini communities was peaceful (Igbafe 1974: 2–3; Obayemi 1976: 242; Connah 1987: 136; Eweka 1989: 11). At the same time, it is reasonable to conclude that the unification of a few communities, though it was peaceful was a union for the sake of more effective military struggle against another group of communities, a separate community or foreign invaders. It is obvious that the Efa might be such an “irritator” for the Bini. Where a few Bini communities lived side by side they could unite; communities separated from other Bini had none to unite with and stayed independent beyond the chiefdom system.

The hereditary leader appeared in a group of communities naturally, spontaneously in the course of the struggle against enemies having demonstrated exceptional bravery, strength, finesse, talent to rise people for heroic deeds. For the most valuable for people under such circumstances dignity is connected with the war, just that heroic leader becomes the most popular figure in that group of communities. First he became the recognized by all

the communities military chief and then transcended his authority into the inner-group of communities sphere settling disputes between members of different villages under his control, convoking and presiding over chiefdom meetings, stationing title-holders in all the villages it comprised (Bradbury 1957: 34). Eventually, he made his post hereditarily attributed to his native community thus transforming it into privileged (as well as his own family in the latter), on the one hand, and into a community with the division of authorities, on the other hand. And that was the moment of the hierarchy among the communities, the moment of the chiefdom appearance.

So we may conclude that the Bini chiefdoms were born out of peaceful unification of communities in finally victorious struggle against the Efa for the land, as a result of which the latter were gradually assimilated (Bondarenko 1999: 27). But of course later or even parallelly the Bini chiefdoms could also start opposing each other (Darling 1988: 129).

There were not less than 130 chiefdoms all over Biniland (not only inside but also within the *Ogiso*'s possessions) in the beginning of the 2nd millennium (Obayemi 1976: 242). The Biniland linear earthworks — walls and ditches (*iya*) are signs of their existence in the past (Connah 1975: 237—242; Obayemi 1976: 242; Isichei 1983: 135—136, 265—266; Darling 1984: I, 119—124, 130—142; 1988: 127). At the present state of the Bini studies, we may regard the Idogbo (Iyeware) (Darling 1984: I, 119—124) and Okhunmwun (Iyek'Uselu) (Darling 1984: I, 130—142) chiefdoms, thoroughly examined by Darling classical patterns or examples of that type of society in the country.

He estimates the first case as illustrative for the phase of “the rise of a petty chiefdom.” Idogbo comprised six villages on the territory of 6 sq km surrounded by primary *iya*. Darling especially stresses that the *iya* promoted the pacification and unification of neighboring villages in the chiefdom in the struggle for the land. And at the same moment, the *iya* were helpful at war-time defending the chiefdom from invaders (also see: Darling 1984: II, 303—307). All the settlements within the chiefdom unanimously recognized the Idogbo village's seniority. Traditions of both Idogbo itself and all her neighbors agree that the former originated within the primary *iya* in the pre-dynastic period when it was known as “Edogbo” meaning “neighbor”.

The further evolution of the Idogbo chiefdom in pre-dynastic times was evidently connected with the subsequent growth of population pressure within the *iya* for it is likely that most of the separate village wards which constructed the primary *iya* later moved out and became nuclei of new set-

tlements correspondingly erecting new *iya* enclosures. As the result, the chiefdom embraced several settlements over a territory of at least 2,400 ha.

Okhunmwun is considered by Darling “a powerful petty chiefdom”. Seven villages with the total population of 1,120–1,750 comprised it on about 17 sq km. By Darling, 1,500 people is just a sufficient size of a socio-political organism for the erecting the original *iya*, *i.e.* in the majority of cases for its constituting as a chiefdom. The Okhunmwun chiefdom came into being as a result of the increase of population density engendered by double population pressure: due to migrations and natural growth of the local population.

Now it is also easy to explain why the *enogie* came to power being as a rule younger than *edionwere* and why the very division of authority in chiefdom-forming communities happened. The elders (the *edionwere*) were not able to demonstrate bravery and strength in the battle field. Furthermore, it was not a senior’s duty to fight. That was an obligation of the second age-grade, the *ighele* members. Just from the *ighele* the military leader, the future head of the chiefdom naturally singled out. And that is why “*when an onogie dies, the eldest son automatically succeeds him*” (Sidahome 1964: 49; also see Bradbury 1957: 33), regularly just an *ighele* member. Not by chance the *ighele* meeting place was the center of the whole chiefdom’s public life (Obayemi 1976: 243). All this was a blow to the monopoly of the gerontocratic principle of management among the Bini.

The city formation among the Bini was directly connected with the rise of chiefdoms. The process of city formation started practically simultaneously with the period of rapid growth of chiefdoms. As a matter of fact, early proto-city centers were not simple amalgamations of communities but actually chiefdoms (Jungwirth 1968a: 140, 166; Ryder 1969: 3; Onokerhoraye 1975: 296–298; Darling 1988: 127–129; Bondarenko 1995a: 190–192; 1995d: 145–147; 1999). The heads of the proto-city communities formed the chiefdom council. It looks plausible that in Benin City these heads were the later *Uzama Nihinron* chiefs (Ikime 1980: 110; Isichei 1983: 136), members of the first category of title-holders established by the first ruler of the 2<sup>nd</sup> (*Oba*) dynasty, Eweka I. The *Uzama Nihinron* leader, the *Oliha*, on whose initiative the most important decisions of these chiefs in the pre-*Oba* time are also attributed, could well be the *onogie* of the then Benin City chiefdom and the head of the council which consisted of communal *edionwere* and other *edio* including three other later *Uzama Nihinron* members. So, the rise of chiefdoms was both a precondition and an aspect of the



city formation process being an outcome partially of the same factors; for example, the demographic growth of communities.

Someone getting acquainted with the Benin history may be misled by an outstanding role of Benin City in it and think that the Bini society was being built up round her from the very beginning. In reality, the process of growth and unification of chiefdoms and communities was on in different parts of Biniland and not less than ten proto-city settlements had appeared at the time of chiefdoms' rapid growth, by the brink of the millennia (Darling 1988: 127). They struggled with each other for the role of the sole place of attraction for the overwhelming majority if not all the Bini, of the focal point of their culture in the broadest meaning of the word, their political and in connection with it sacro-ritual center. The 130 Bini chiefdoms and a great many of independent communities drew towards different proto-cities. At last, Benin City gained victory (Talbot 1926: I, 153, 156–157; Egharevba 1949: 90; 1960: 11–12, 85; Ryder 1969: 3; Onokerhoraye 1975: 97; Bondarenko 1995a: 93–96; 1995c: 216–217; 1995d: 145–146). Due to the obtaining of the exclusive political function and position, she grew and became a true traditional city while the rest proto-cities went down to the level of big villages (Darling 1988: 133).

That was also the eventual fortune of Udo, the most violent rival of Benin City (Talbot 1926: I, 160; Macrae Simpson 1936: 10; Egharevba 1964: 9), though oral historical traditions prompt that probably just she was the original settlement of the *Ogiso* ("rulers from the sky"), the Benin supreme rulers of the mysterious so-called "1<sup>st</sup> dynasty" of the late 1<sup>st</sup> — the early 2<sup>nd</sup> millennia AD. With its coming to power the period of the Bini chiefdoms' flourishing is associated, and its reign gave an additional impetus to their further appearance and growth. And at the same moment, that was the time of the first attempt of establishing not only supra-communal but also supra-chiefdom authority in the country; to be distinct, in the part of Biniland round Benin City, the appearance of which predated the 1<sup>st</sup> dynasty time (Roese 1990: 8; Aisien 1995: 58, 65).

The *Ogiso* rule is supposed to last for a few centuries. In the very beginning of the period the country's name was Igodomigodo ("Town of Towns" or "Land of Igodo") (Egharevba 1965: 18). It is considered that altogether 31 "kings" ruled, but this figure, of course may be conditional, hardly it is not so. Above all, the *Ogiso* lists made by different native historians are not completely identical in terms of the length of the *Ogiso* period, the rulers names and the order of their appearance on the throne (Egharevba 1960: 3; Eweka 1989: 12; 1992: 4).

There is very little material available about the coming to power and reign of the first *Ogiso*, Igodo. Maybe he is a purely mythological figure. The version of the oral tradition offered by politically engaged local historians tells that he lived long and had a great number of descendants. He was Bini but resided not in Benin City but a few kilometers east of her, at the settlement of Ugbekun, and died there (Egharevba 1965: 13; Ebohon 1972: 80–83). Ugbekun is, even today, the residence of the *Ohenso* (*Ohen Iso*), the priest of the shrine of the *Ogiso* (“*aro-iso*” means “altar of the sky”) which each *Oba* is obliged to visit before the coronation ceremony (See Jungwirth 1968b: 68; Ebohon 1972: 80–81; Roesse 1993: 455). It is reasonable to conclude that just due to its reputation of the cradle of the Benin polity this village became an important religious and ritual center: Ebohon describes eight other shrines besides *aro-iso* at Ugbekun, devoted to various “juju” — local deities, not straightly connected with the sociopolitical history of the country (Ebohon 1972: 82–83).

Darling writes: “... *Benin’s territorial and political rights have been transposed back in time to legitimize later conquests – new termed “rebellions” within its subsequent kingdom area. ... Udo – an independent rival kingdom until its early 16th century conquest by Benin – is regarded as having been rebellious since Ogiso... times...*” (Darling 1988: 131) In the light of this we may suppose that the first *Ogiso*’s coming to power and the establishment of the very institution of the *Ogiso* was far from being peaceful; Igodo was not “made” the *Ogiso*, as Egharevba, as well as another Benin court historian, Eweka wishes to represent the event (Eweka 1989: 11), but “became” him.

A completely different traditional version of the founding of the 1<sup>st</sup> dynasty was put down by indifferent to local “political games” Europeans — Macrae Simpson, Talbot, Page, and Jungwirth (Macrae Simpson 1936: 10; Talbot 1926: I, 153; Page 1944: 166; Jungwirth 1968b: 68). According to it, the first *Ogiso* was a warrior of Yoruba origin. It argued that Yoruba “...*raiders, entering Benin from the North-west, in the neighbourhood of present day Siluku, gradually penetrated Benin where they eventually established themselves in complete mastery. The first raid was led by Ogodo... He made little headway, but his son Ogiso appears to have had more success*” (Macrae Simpson 1936: 10).

Talbot’s relation of the version heard by him holds that the first Yoruba chief’s name was Igudu. Then came Erhe, a son of the ruler of Ife with some of his followers. However, they were not able to gain any influence. The Erhe’s son *Ogiso* finally went back to Ife (Talbot 1926: I, 153).

With Ere, also Yoruba, the son (or grandson) and successor of Igodo, as it seems, the first real figure appears on the Benin historical stage. He actually was the most prominent among all the *Ogiso* while we now know nothing or only names about many of his successors.

Ere changed the name of the country from Igodomigodo to Ile meaning “House”; this name was in use till the very end of the *Ogiso* period (Egharevba 1956: 3). Under the rule of Ere the permanent establishment of the monarchy and administration of the supra-communal level were introduced (in particular, four of the later *Uzama* members’ offices: the *Oliha*, *Edohen*, *Ero*, and *Eholo N’Ire*). Not by chance even in 1979, as the final act of the present *Oba* coronation ceremony, “near the palace at a site crowded with visitors, the new king announced the name by which he would be known: Erediauwa: <<Ere... has come to set things right>>” (Nevadomsky 1993: 73).

The oral tradition unanimously attributes to Ere numerous improvements; the first symbols of royalty and objects of the ancestors cult as, in modern terms, the official ideology of the society among them. These were a simple crown (*ede*), collars or necklaces made of pearls (*edigba*), anklets made of pearls (*eguen*), the round lather fan (*ezuzu*), the round royal throne (*ekete*), the rectangular throne or stool (*agba*), the state sword (*ada*), the ceremonial sword (*eben*), the round box made of bark and leather (*ekpokin*), the wooden ancestors ceremonial heads (*uhunmwun-elao*), the big royal drum (*agba*), etc. (Egharevba 1956: 39; 1960: 1; 1969: Preface).

The time of Ere’s reign is the crucial point, the culmination of the whole *Ogiso* era in the sense that events and innovations attributed just to his period determined the very aspect of Benin City and the society on the whole, her economy and politics right up to the fall of the *Ogiso* dynasty. As it was enthusiastically expressed by Egharevba, “*Ere was the greatest of all the Ogiso, for he played a splendid part in the prosperity and solidarity of the Benin kingdom of the first period*” (Egharevba 1965: 14). Though hardly there can be any doubt that a lot of deeds and innovations (including some of the symbols of royalty enumerated above [Ben-Amos 1980: 14 {Fig. 10}]) are only attributed to Ere and his time being in reality outcomes of other, mainly less distant epochs. But in the overwhelming majority of cases we have no opportunities to date them otherwise than accepting their oral tradition’s relation to Ere.

As well as we are not able to answer why did he chose just Benin City, one of many Bini proto-cities of that time as the place of residence. But what can and must be argued, is that this act was the turning point of the Be-

nin City and the Bini in general history. Just Ere made extremely significant steps towards the former's transformation into a true city. His deeds also played a considerable part in the further economic growth of Benin City and the increase of her influence in the region, her ability to compete with other chiefdoms and proto-cities.

The first unions of craftsmen that throughout the pre-colonial Benin history coincided with primary social units — communities (see Bondarenko 1991b; 1995a: 117—124), are also said by the tradition to appear in Benin City during the reign of Ere. These unions became privileged; their leaders, heads of corresponding communities were later incorporated into governmental institutions. Among these, according to the tradition forty initial craft unions there were unions of carpenters (*Owinna*, *Onwina*), wood and ivory carvers (*Igbesanmwan*), leather workers (*Esohian*), weavers (*Owinnanido*, *Onwina n'Ido*), pottery makers (*Emakhe*), iron smiths (*Uleme*) and brass smiths (*Igun-eronmwon*) (Egharevba 1956: 39; 1960: 1; 1965: 13—14; Eweka 1989: 11).

It is of course not self evident that the oral tradition relates the pure truth in this case either. For example Ryder does not believe it (Ryder 1985: 385). But the crafts Egharevba enumerates in his records of the oral tradition are no doubt among the most ancient and important for the authority in the general context of the Bini culture, including political culture as its integral part. Bearing this in mind, as well as the whole block of Ere's reputed innovations, we can conclude that there is nothing unreal in the admitting of these court kindred craft unions' creation by Ere.

Ere initiated the building of the *Ogiso* palace in Benin City. Egharevba relates that the palace had the size of 0.5 to 0.25 miles. It consisted of "... *many gateways, chambers, council halls and a big harem divided into sections*" (Egharevba 1960: 4). The figures seem to large; maybe that was the size of the whole palace complex. The moving of the palace alongside with the seat of the government from Ugbekun to Benin City is credited to Ere as well. In front of the palace Ere opened the central "*Ogiso*" market (Egharevba 1956: 2; Ebohon 1972: 60). The erection of wall-and-ditch systems may have already taken place during the reign of Ere. Egharevba mentions a certain Erinmwini who constructed such earthen ramparts for his sovereign (Egharevba 1965: 14). Parallel to it, the name of the country, Igodomigodo, was changed to Ile ("Land") (Egharevba 1956: 3). This name was retained until the end of the *Ogiso* dynasty.

Ere is also credited with the renaming or founding of quite a number of settlements, for instance Ego (Egor), Erua, and Idumwowa (Egharevba

1965: 12). Three of Ere's younger brothers were appointed heads of settlements: Ighile became the *Ovie* of Ughele, another one the *Ogie Oboro* (or *Obi*) of Uboro-Uko (Uburuku), and the third one the *Enogie* (*Onoje*) of Evboikhinmwini (Egharevba 1956: 2; 1965: 13). In the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century more than a hundred Bini villages' *enigie* claim their origin from different *Ogiso*'s sons (Egharevba 1960: 4). These relations may be interpreted as a sign of some widening of Benin boundaries, embracing of previously independent or founding new, initially dependent communities by them.

Ere, if we believe Egharevba was followed by Orire (Egharevba 1965: 14) who obviously was a worthy successor. And with him the Igodo's line ended. The next about twenty *Ogiso* are reputed to be representatives of different local, Bini chiefdoms despite attempts of each *Ogiso* to establish his own true dynasty. Naturally, the level of political stability decreased (Igbafe 1974: 6). We must also not ignore Talbot's relation that Ere was followed by his son whose personal name was just *Ogiso*. This ruler, by Talbot "... *made little headway and later returned to Ife*" (Talbot 1926: I, 153). We will further discuss the possible important common meaning of the both versions in an appropriate place without fail.

The rule of the last *Ogiso*, Owodo, is traditionally assessed extremely negative. Traditions say, he ruled very autocratically, without consulting his advisors. He was eventually banished from the throne and went to the settlement of Ihimwirin near Benin City where "... *died very miserably*" (Egharevba 1960: 3–4; Eweka 1989: 14).

The first attempt to establish a supra-chiefdom authority resulted, in particular in the appearance of some titles, holders of which were later incorporated into the administrative mechanism of the 13–19<sup>th</sup> centuries Benin Kingdom (for details see Eweka 1992; Roese 1993). But they did not form an integral governmental system in the *Ogiso* time. Originally, the majority of these titles, like those of the future *Uzama Nihinron* members mentioned above were attributed to communities *edionwere* and *enigie* of chiefdoms within then Benin. Of course, this fact reflected general weakness of the supra-chiefdom authority under the *Ogiso* regime. These title-holders treated the *Ogiso* "*almost as primus inter pares*" (Eweka 1992: 7). The situation with the earliest title-holders also demonstrates that strictly speaking there was not the "center" as such that time, but at different moments various "parts of the whole" played the role of the center: chiefdoms changed each other on the top of the 1<sup>st</sup> dynasty Benin political hierarchy. Besides, there were titles that did not survive the end of the *Ogiso* period.

The most important among dignitaries were the *Esagho*, the “premier” and commander-in-chief of the army and the group of “king-makers” collectively recalled as the *Edionevbo* (Egharevba 1960: 4; 1965: 18; Eweka 1989: IV). Native historians remark that the king-makers of the *Ogiso* were identical with four of the future *Uzama Nihinron*, king-makers of the 2<sup>nd</sup>, the 13<sup>th</sup> century on, dynasty (Egharevba 1960: 4; Eweka 1992: 9, 27, 35).

In the Bini’s perception, the *Ogiso* (“kings from the sky”) period was the time of social creation of the world, of regulating social chaos (Bondarenko 1995a: 46–47, 204–205). From the “objective”, anthropological point of view, the *Ogiso* period really was that of the first immediate steps towards the creation of glorious “Great Benin” as a united supra-communal society too, though Ryder was of course right arguing that the Benin Kingdom had never included all the Bini, on the one hand, or consisted of the Bini only, on the other hand (Ryder 1969: 2). That was the period of flourishing of the Bini chiefdoms, the first supra-local form of their sociopolitical organization, and also of the first attempt to establish not only supra-communal but already supra-chiefdom, kingly authority and office at one and the same time.

This became possible because the first rulers of the *Ogiso* dynasty were foreigners from Ife who brought the very institution of kingship to the Bini. But the chiefdom level had been the objective limit of the sociopolitical organization for the Bini by the time of the *Ogiso*’s establishing, they were not ready to accept adequately political innovations brought from Ife, where the kingdom had been existing for a few centuries by that moment, yet. Thus initially the kingship institution and authority were simply imposed on the Bini multiple independent communities and chiefdoms without any genetic, organic connection with them, their social structures and political institutions, well elaborated and acceptable enough for the existence just on these levels of social being.

Benin of the *Ogiso* time may be characterized as a complex chiefdom — a group of chiefdoms under the leadership of the strongest among them — with a “touch” of “autonomous” communities which being within Benin did not belong to any Bini chiefdom. But the ambivalence of the initial situation crucially influenced the immanent instability of the supra-chiefdom institutions and the course of further historical events. The “1<sup>st</sup> dynasty” is just a conditional, not completely correct (though widely used) general name for the *Ogiso* rulers. In reality, they did not form a united dynasty in the proper sense of the word. The third *Ogiso* became the last in their Yoruba, Ife line. He returned to Ife but by that time the very institution of the supreme

supra-chiefdom ruler had already been established firmly enough in Benin, never mind its outside origin and correspondence to the level of sociopolitical organization, not achieved by the Bini yet. It is reflected in the fact that, according to a version of the tradition just the last ruler from Ife had the personal name *Ogiso* (see above).

The next about twenty *Ogiso*, as has already been pointed out, were not relatives to each other. And they, as well as all the later the 1<sup>st</sup> dynasty rulers were the Bini, heads of chiefdoms within then Benin, the strongest at the very moments of emptiness of the throne. And none of those rulers managed to found his line of the *Ogiso*, to make his chiefdom the strongest in Benin for a considerable time span, not in straight connection with his personal abilities: the society still was not ready to accept the stable supra-chiefdom authority.

Under such conditions, the rulers of the Benin City chiefdom, the *Edionevbo* later the *Uzama Nihinron* members enjoyed the most preferable position. They went on governing Benin City as their chiefdom while at the same time since Ere's reign she was not a usual Bini chiefdom any longer. Despite her real strength, Benin City became the outstanding symbol of the supra-chiefdom authority for all those included into the *Ogiso* government's orbit, their capital. The future *Uzama* had to bear the *Ogiso* above themselves as supreme rulers of the whole country. But they were autonomous in their governing Benin City simultaneously being influential enough outside their own chiefdom and evidently generally being considered higher than rulers of any other chiefdom in Benin of what without the *Ogiso* they could not even dream. They had a great measure of freedom of action in attempts to spread their influence outside Benin City. The *Ogiso*, people from not the Benin City chiefdom were greatly dependent on their support. We can admit that the Benin City chiefs influenced greatly the course of the struggle between other chiefdoms, by their support, applying to the principle *divide et impere*, promoting the strengthening of the most favorable for them at a given moment, the becoming of its head the next *Ogiso*. The future *Uzama* were true king-makers at those times. The *Ogiso* could be more a screen than an obstacle for their activities.

For the last eight or so reigns the truly dynastic way of transmission of the *Ogiso* office was restored. We have no evidence capable to help us to reconstruct that historical situation and to learn exactly why and when did it happen or what a chiefdom's head was at last a success in establishing the dynasty. We may only suppose that could be Udo and some stories of the Udo—Benin rivalry reflect just this historical episode. But what is obvious, is

that this event reflected and then promoted further consolidation of the Benin society on the supra-chiefdom level and that mainly just during that dynasty's being at power the conditions for stable kingly office's existence in Benin grew ripe once and for all. It happened due to first quantitative and only then qualitative changes in revealing of the same factors that led to the complication of the sociopolitical organization before. Thus in the anthropological sense the process of the establishing of the really hereditary kingship was evolutionary, not revolutionary (see: Igbafe 1974: 7). "... *in Benin there was no sudden transformation of the political structure coinciding with the advent of the dynasty*" of the *Oba* (Oliver 1967: 31).

Correspondingly, by the end of the *Ogiso* period the further prolongation of the situation when chiefdoms (and autonomous communities) bore the supra-chiefdom authority while the *Ogiso* governed by practically the chiefdom, *enigie*'s methods became impossible. Eventually the 1<sup>st</sup> dynasty was not a success in establishing an effective central — supra-chiefdom (and supra-autonomous communities) authority though just this is the most important condition of any complex chiefdom's existence (Vassiliev 1983: 36—37). The society entered the time of the political system crisis.

The first attempt to overcome it was the step backwards — the abolition of the monarchy in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The oral historical tradition holds that "*Owodo was banished for misrule by the angry people, who then appointed Evian as administrator of the government of the country because of his past services to the people*" (Egharevba 1960: 6). The latter was well-known as one of the most "important" people in the Owodo's time. He was "... *called the good citizen, because he was generally good and kind, helpful, merciful, sympathetic and generous... As a patriot, Evian was always ready to tackle any emergency in Benin, just to make the land remain peaceful without fear and harm*" (Egharevba 1970: 2). But it was impossible neither to govern Benin as a chiefdom any longer nor as a simple community further more. The "republic" as Egharevba calls it, was not a non-hierarchical, democratic alternative to the complex chiefdom. It was the outcome of the communalists' reaction that had no chances to survive for a long time though common communalists in their starvation to restore the *odionwere* system still prevented the first of only two post-*Ogiso* "republican" rulers, Evian from establishing his own dynasty what he desired to do (Egharevba 1960: 6; 1970: 5—6; Eweka 1989: 15). Already during the rule of the second "republican" ruler, Ogiamwen Benin was put on the brink of breaking into fragments (Ebohon 1972: 3) — separate communities and their unions, possibly including chiefdoms.



And soon another, the decisive step forward, the most crucial for the whole history of Benin was made on the Benin City chiefdom leaders, first of all the *Oliha*'s, initiative. It is natural that the *Edionevbo* chiefs so negatively apprehended the overthrow of the last *Ogiso* and eventually initiated the restoration of the supreme all-Benin authority. They meant to continue controlling in a considerable degree the whole Benin, not only Benin City in the new dynasty's shade. And they were a success in it for about half a century, till the military victory over them, a "*coup d'état*" (Ryder 1969: 5) of the fourth *Oba* Ewedo after which their real power gradually but inevitably decreased.

Being interested in the unity of the former *Ogiso*'s possessions but under their, not another Bini chiefdom heads' heel, they invited Oranmiyan, a prince from Ife "to settle peace and concord" in the country by ascending the throne. He came and though later preferred to return to his native city, still founded the new dynasty: his son from a noble Bini woman was crowned *Oba* under the name Eweka I by the *Uzama* in about 1200 AD (by the oral tradition in interpretation of native historians [see, e.g. Egharevba 1960: 8, 75; Ebohon 1972: 3; Eweka 1989: 15–16, 18]). But for the Bini that was a continuation of the *Ogiso* line for it is evident that an Ife prince was chosen by the Benin City leaders not by chance. As a compatriot of the first rulers of the *Ogiso* line, Oranmiyan was to symbolize the restoration of the pre-"republican" order, the transition of the supreme authority from the *Ogiso*. This fact could ensure him the recognition by the people, decrease the feeling of serious changes in their minds and hearts and all in all pacify the society. In reality, under the Benin City chiefdom heads for they of course hoped to control the foreigner not in a lesser degree than the *Ogiso* before the last eight or so reigns.

The very fact of a true dynasty formation by a few last *Ogiso* witnesses of, as it turned out not final but nevertheless painful, weakening of the Benin City chiefdom's positions in the country at that time what the leaders of the former were absolutely not going to bear. A foreigner in the *Ogiso* palace undoubtedly seemed them less dangerous for their power than a representative of a stable local, Benin House of supreme rulers. They could regard him practically an ideal figure for the restoration of their might.

But the *Oba* eventually managed to establish effective supra-chiefdom authority. In the result, Benin City transformed from the strongest segment (chiefdom) of the country into the center that was not a segment of the whole but stood above all the segments including Benin City as a chiefdom. That was a kind of power and authority of another, higher than that of

the chiefdom “quality”. The *Oba* achieved this result in a severe, sometimes bloody struggle against local rulers and the *Uzama* chiefs as heads of the Benin City chiefdom first of all. It ended only more than half a century after the establishment of the 2<sup>nd</sup> dynasty (see Bondarenko 1995a: 234–236). The fourth *Oba*, Ewedo built a new palace on another spot and left forever the one that had been erected as far back as for the first *Oba* in the *Uzama* chiefs native part of the city. He created a new category of title-holders as a counterbalance to the *Uzama Nihinron*. Then he ordered that the *Uzama* members should not really select the ruler among the royal family members; the head of *Uzama Nihinron*, the *Oliha* should only crown the *Oba*. Ewedo also prohibited the *Uzama* members to have symbols of power identical to royal. Last, but not least, he was a success in depriving them from the privilege of conferring titles (Egharevba 1960: 10–11).

With the establishment of really effective supra-communal and supra-chiefdom authority by the first rulers of the 2<sup>nd</sup> (the *Oba*) dynasty in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the historical search of the most appropriate for the Bini forms of social and political organization on all the levels of their being was finally over. Benin found the sociopolitical “frames” in which all the changes of the subsequent centuries prior to the violent interruption of her independent existence took place.

I have argued elsewhere that the Benin Kingdom of the 13–19<sup>th</sup> centuries represented a specific kind of complex non-state hierarchically organized society, generally not less developed than the majority of early states. (Not by chance the “early state” concept founders and supporters unreservedly attribute the polity under consideration as an early state [*e.g.* Kochakova 1986; 1996; Shifferd 1987; Claessen 1994], even of its the most developed — the “transitional” type [Kochakova 1994]). A society of this type of the socio-political organization may be called a “megacommunity” (Bondarenko 1994; 1995a: 276–284; 1995b; 1996; 1997a; 1998a). Its structure may be depicted in the shape of four concentric circles forming an upset cone. The “circles” were as follows: the extended family (the smallest self-sufficing unit [Bondarenko 1995a: 134–144]), the extended family community, the chiefdom, and finally, the broadest circle that included all the three narrower ones, *i.e.* the megacommunity as such. The Benin Kingdom as a whole in which megacommunal structures and institutions were not alien at all.

The very existence and prosperity of the megacommunity inhabitants were “guaranteed” by the presence of the sacralized supreme ruler, the *Oba*. And just in his sacral duties both the megacommunal nature and charac-

ter of the society and the *Oba*'s essence as of the megachief were reflected especially clearly (Palau Marti 1964; Kochakova 1986: 197–224; 1996; Bondarenko 1991c; 1995a: 203–231). In particular, the supreme ruler's family (as well as those of titled chiefs — members of central administrative bodies) not only preserved its traditional structure but generally existed in accordance with norms determined by that very structure (see Bondarenko 1995 a: 194–203; 1997d).

The importance of belonging to the family of the community (and/or the chiefdom) founder as a factor of assuming the office of its head, the presence of the element of sacrality, duties of the community (and/or the chiefdom) ancestors' cult chief performer, the communal (and/or the chiefdom) land manager, of the judge, etc., etc. and sharing the power with the council, control by family heads at one moment — all this and much else can be attributed to the supreme ruler. But again, all this was characteristic of the *Oba* on the highest level, at which, for example the cult of the *Oba*'s ancestors became an all-Benin one, and the *Oba* himself was the supreme priest of the whole country. The *Oba* was considered the master of all Benin lands, though in reality he had not more rights on them than the *odionwere* on his community fields, and so on.

Of course, these and other changes of the kind were not merely quantitative. Not occasionally among the *Oba*'s titles and praise names there was *obasogie*: “the *Oba* is greater than the chief” (Omoruyi 1981: 14). The *Oba* was not only the supreme priest but an object of worship himself (and the tribute paid to him was to some extent regarded as a kind of sacrifice). He was considered all-mighty and the only legal law-giver. In the course of time the supreme ruler received the right to appoint lineages from which the majority of the central government chiefs were recruited. If in the community the property was inherited alongside with the title, on the megacommunal level material values and the prestigious position, that of the *Oba* first of all were distinctively separated from each other (Bondarenko 1993: 151–158; 1995a: 203–229).

However, it is important to point out that the *Oba* did not desert the Benin communal organization. The “communal spirit” revealed itself in his support (including material) by the people, and his subjects not at all perceived the supreme ruler as a strange for the community power. And the fact that his power was considered like a continuation and strengthening of the legitimate community heads' authority on the new level (and really was so genetically and to a significant extend essentially), imparted the sociopolitical stability to the society, while the community also communicated it the

socioeconomic firmness. Objectively, the most important role the *Oba* played, was that of the symbol of the all-Benin unity. Through his image people realized their belonging to a much broader unit than their native communities or chiefdoms, *i.e.* to the megacommunity as a whole. It stayed and even became more so when in the time of decline of Benin, from the 17<sup>th</sup> century on the *Oba* lost his “profane” power in favor of megacommunal chiefs but concentrated in his hands immense sacral power, not less real within the context of the Benin culture in general and political culture in particular (Bondarenko 1991a; 1992b; 1995a: 222–228, 229–230).

It is remarkable that such a four-circles socio-political system corresponded to the Bini’s picture of the Universe (*agbo*) in which there also was the hierarchy of four concentric circles: the man (with four soles of different orders) — the terrestrial space, including the Benin megacommunity — the world of ancestors’ spirits and senior deities — the Universe as such, as a whole (Bondarenko 1995a; 1997b).

The picture of the Universe turned out “Beninocentric”. The second circle of the Universe, *i.e.* the terrestrial part of the society was considered the central, basic for the whole Universe. And Benin seemed the focal point of it and of the whole Universe; myths told how the Earth and the life had appeared just there (see, *e.g.* Ebohon 1972: 5; Eweka 1992: 2–4; Isaacs & Isaacs 1994: 7–9; Ugowe 1997: 1). The community was the center of that society; in the Bini minds, it hence turned out the very heart of the Universe’s heart, the core of its core. And in reality the community as the basic institution fastened together all the levels of the hierarchical structure of the Benin society. All of them were penetrated by, at all of them, reflecting and expressing the essence of that society, communal by character ties and relations dominated (Bondarenko 1995a: 90–181).

And the fact that the community was of the extended polygamous family type was of fundamental importance because of its essentially hierarchical social structure and antidemocratic value system. This way the gerontocratic principles and forms of communal management, on the one hand, and the evidently hierarchical (conic) type of the Benin megacommunity since its appearance with the establishing of the *Oba* dynasty, on the other hand, were determined (see Bondarenko 1997c: 13–14; 1998b: 98; 1998c: 198–199; Bondarenko & Korotayev 1998: 135; 1999).

From the *Ogiso* time the megacommunity inherited and even strengthened such traits, characteristic of the complex chiefdom (see Kradin 1991: 277–278; 1995: 24–25) as, *e.g.* ethnic heterogeneity (Ryder 1969: 2) and non-involvement of the supra-chiefdom level managing elite into the

subsistence production (Bondarenko 1993: 156—157; 1995a: 229, 253). The degree of social stratification in the society also increased (Bondarenko 1993; 1995a: 90—275).

But while the simple and the complex chiefdoms represent basically the same, chiefdom pattern of the socio-political organization, the same “quality” of the authority and power (“*The general rights and obligations of chiefs at each level of the hierarchy are similar...*” [Earle 1978: 3]), the difference between both of these types on the one hand, and the megacommunity on the other hand, is really principal and considerable. In particular, the *Ogiso*, in straight accordance with the anthropological theory (Vassiliev 1980: 182) had no formalized and legalized apparatus of coercion at their disposal. While the formation of effective central authority is vitally important for the complex chiefdom (see above), it usually proves unable to establish political mechanisms preventing the disintegration (Claessen & Skalník 1981: 491). Hence the breakdown into simple chiefdoms and independent communities is the typical fortune of the (complex) chiefdom (Earle 1991: 13). Thus, the megacommunity is a possible way of transformation of the complex chiefdom, an alternative to its disintegration. So, evidently, the break-down was the fortune of the majority of the 130 early Bini chiefdoms, and about ten proto-city settlements mentioned above, potential centers of complex chiefdoms, like the *Ogiso* Benin one did not consolidate their power over neighbors and degraded to the level of big villages. Sooner or later they were absorbed by Benin.

Only the Benin megacommunity of the 13—19<sup>th</sup> centuries (for correctness, in this case it should be said “the megacommunal political institutions”) formed the real “center” that was “above” all the sociopolitical components of the country and was able to establish really effective supra-chiefdom authorities. And just this became the decisive “argument” in the competition of Benin with other “proto-cities” for the role of the all-Bini center. Not occasionally Benin started dominating over them right after the submission of the *Uzama* by Ewedo, from the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century (see Bondarenko 1995a: 94—95). And that is why the megacommunal institutions, including the monarchy of the *Oba* dynasty and different categories and associations of titled (megacommunal) chiefs (see Eweka 1992; Roese 1993) were stable. And just because of this we may argue that with the advent of Oranmiyan and the establishment of his dynasty the Benin sociopolitical organization changed radically from “the extended family — the extended family community — the chiefdom — the complex chiefdom” pattern to the megacommunity “formula” determined above.

The judicial system, the system of imposing and collecting tribute, etc. became logical in terms of the hierarchical character of the society. For example, now there appeared the “staircase” of courts from those presided by community leaders to the highest, with the *Oba* as its official chairman. The two criteria for the examination of a case in the court of this or that level were the weight of the crime and if people from the same or different social units were involved into it (see, e.g. Dapper 1671: 492; Egharevba 1949: 11; 1960: 35; Bradbury 1957: 32–33, 41–42; Sidahome: 127; Talbot: III, table 19).

The *Ogiso*’s might extended over the territory of approximately 4,500–5,000 sq km. Egharevba writes that the *Ogiso*’s possessions comprised about a hundred settlements (Egharevba 1960: 4). Roese and Rose have been able to put on the map 68 of “villages and towns” enumerated by the native historian (Roese & Rose 1988: 306 [map]). Evidently, “villages” mean autonomous communities and “towns” mean chiefdoms, like those described by Darling (see above). For rather a long time — till the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century the square of the country stayed practically the same though its territory not once changed its configuration (calculated by: Darling 1984: I, 44 [map]; Roese & Rose 1988: 306, 308, 309 [maps]).

It seems also possible to suppose the approximate number of inhabitants and population density of the *Ogiso* Benin. The typical Benin chiefdom, as we already know from Darling had the population of about 1,500 people. If we then divide the supposed by the archaeologist population of that chiefdom into the quantity of villages (communities) it consisted of, we will find out that the average community size was about 200 people. We do not know the proportion between chiefdoms and autonomous communities. We may only speculate that the distribution could be approximately equal. If we accept the Egharevba’s relation with its of course conditional yet not senseless, as Roese and Rose have shown number of major settlements in Benin of the 1<sup>st</sup> dynasty, the figure for its total population will be 85,000 people.

There is also another possibility to calculate the approximate quantity of inhabitants in Benin prior to the establishment of the 2<sup>nd</sup> dynasty. The complex of ramparts on the country’s territory consists of more than 500 “communal enclosures”, about 30% of which were erected in the *Oba* times [see: (Keys 1994: 13)]. Thus in order to find out the figure we are interested in, we must subtract “about 30%” from “more than 500” and then to multiply by 200 (the average size of the Bini community in the *Ogiso* period). In the result, having multiplied 350 by 200, we get 70 000, the figure which is a bit less than the first way of calculation gives.

Thus, there are grounds for the arrival at the conclusion that the population of the 1<sup>st</sup> dynasty rulers' possessions was from 70 000 to 85 000 inhabitants. This figure — several dozen thousand — is generally characteristic of the complex chiefdom ( Steponaitis 1978; Carneiro 1981: 48; Johnson, A.W. & Earle 1987; 1991: 3; Kradin 1995: 24).

Hence, the population density in the *Ogiso* Benin possibly was between 14-15 and 20 people per sq km.

But the population of the country and correspondingly its density grew. The way out of evident economic, social, and political problems raised by this fact was found in migrations of parts of population outside then Benin, when necessary supported by the strength of arms. This way out was natural for migrations and military actions against neighbors happened from time to time earlier. But from the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century they became frequent and regular. This meant the birth of the “empire”. And on the height of its power (in the 16<sup>th</sup> century) the Benin “empire”, the regional superpower of the time, due to the Bini migrations and military activities spread for hundreds kilometers to the north and west and reached natural frontiers in the south (the Atlantic Ocean) and in the east (the Niger river).

The population of the megacommunity was no doubt greater than in any complex chiefdom. A proof to this statement comes from the relation that the highly organized (Roese 1992) Benin army numbered from 20 to 50 thousand people on the dawn of the “empire”, in the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century (Egharevba 1956: 34; 1966: 13). And in the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century the Benin army included recruits from dependencies and comprised of 180 thousand home guards and 20 thousand guardsmen (Dapper 1975 [1668]: 502). What a complex chiefdom could boast of such an “empire” and such an army?

It is also senseless to compare the small “proto-city” settlement of the *Ogiso* period, so characteristic of complex chiefdoms (see Kradin 1995: 24) with Benin City of the megacommunity time. It just started enlarging and reshaping its architectural appearance, sociopolitical and cultural role in the society from the time of the first *Oba*. European visitors estimated the city's population as being 15 thousand people in the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Dapper 1671: 487) and even from 80 to 100 thousand inhabitants on the brink of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries (see in Pacheco Pereira 1937 [1505–1508]: 64). In the 16–18<sup>th</sup> centuries, delighted Europeans ranked Benin not lower than the largest and most impressive cities of their continent (see Bondarenko 1992a: 54).

Though the initially local, communal nature of the society came into contradiction with the empireous political and cultural discourse, the principles and system of the formation and managing the empire (the preservation of local rulers in subjugated lands, migrations of the *Oba*'s relatives with followers to weakly populated territories, the Bini administrators of the dependencies' residence in Benin City, not in "colonies", the reproduction of the same ideological "pillars" which support the *Oba*'s authority in Benin, etc., etc.) witness that by the moment of Benin's occupation by the British in 1897 the megacommunity still was the true form of the Benin society proper to which socio-politically varying "provinces" were joined. So, it still managed to absorb and "reinterpret" those elements of the empireous discourse which could seem insurmountable for an essentially local, ethno- and socio-centric form of sociopolitical organization thus avoiding the reformation of itself and the interrelated transformation of people's mentality and picture of the Universe.

Both the *Ogiso* and the *Oba* Benin were "multipolities", *i.e.* societies within which structural elements of different socio-political types and levels of development coexisted and interacted (Korotayev 1995a: 72–73; 1998: 125–127). Under the *Oba*'s regime one multipolity (autonomous extended family communities + chiefdoms  $\approx$  the complex chiefdom) was changed by another: autonomous extended family communities + chiefdoms = the megacommunity. (In both cases the autonomous community was equal to the chiefdom in terms of rights and obligations towards the highest authorities of the time [Egharevba 1949: 79; Bradbury 1973a: 177]). But the megacommunity differed not only from the complex chiefdom but from the state as well.

It is hardly possible to count how many theories of the state there are. But Godiner is right pointing out (though a bit too toughly) that any, even the most sophisticated theory reduces the notion of the state to the "*specialized institution of managing the society*" (Godiner 1991: 51; also see Belkov 1995: 171–175); at least, theories center round such an institution. In particular, Claessen in such a "summarizing" different viewpoints and reflecting the modern level of Cultural Anthropological theorizing recent edition as "*Encyclopedia of Cultural Anthropology*", in fact spreads (with some insignificant changes and additions) his and Skalník's definition of the "early state" (Claessen & Skalník 1978: 640) on the state as such and argues the following: "... *the state is an independent centralized socio-political organization for the regulation of social relations in a complex, stratified society* (bolded by me. — D.B.) *living in a specific territory, and consisting of two*



*basic strata, the rulers and the ruled, whose relations are characterized by political dominance of the former and tax obligations of the latter, legitimized by an at least partly shared ideology, of which reciprocity is the basic principle*" (Claessen 1996: 1255).

And the natural criterion of its existence is the presence of the bureaucracy — the category of professional managers, officials who fill these "specialized institution". Actually, the latter is specialized just because of the professional status of those involved into the process of its functioning. These, now looking quite simple postulates are broadly accepted in Cultural Anthropology and practically go without saying.

As it is well-known, Weber is just the person to whom generations of scholars in different fields are indebted for the most elaborated notion of the bureaucracy (Weber 1947 [1922]: 329–341 *et al.*). Just his vision of this phenomenon, either explicitly or implicitly formed the background of the majority of modern theories of the state. So, let us look through the list of the bureaucrats' characteristic features Weber singled out (Weber 1947 [1922]: 333–334). Do they fit titled (supreme, the megacommunal level) chiefs — administrators of the 13–19<sup>th</sup> century Benin Kingdom?

*"(1) They are personally free and subject to authority only with respect to their impersonal official obligations; (2) They are organized in a clearly defined hierarchy of offices; (3) Each office has a clearly defined sphere of competence in the legal sense; (4) The office is filled by a free contractual relationship. Thus, in principle, there is free selection; (5) Candidates... are appointed, not elected; (6) They are remunerated by fixed salaries... (7) The office is treated as a sole, or at least the primary, occupation of the incumbent; (8) It constitutes a career... (9) The official works entirely separated from ownership of the means of administration and without appropriation of his position; (10) He is subject to strict and systematic discipline and control in the conduct of the office."*

The establishment of a really effective supra-chiefdom (and supra-autonomous communities) authority permitted the *Oba* to put an end to separatist moods within the former *Ogiso* possessions. This let the *Oba* do what their predecessors turned out incapable to do: to create a complicated and very well elaborated system of political institutions of the supra-chiefdom (the megacommunal) level and titles for chiefs united into several associations. The formation process of the megacommunal political institutions system was in the fundamental outline finished by *Oba* Ewuare the Great in the mid 15<sup>th</sup> century parallelly with the first "conscious" (and very successful)

attempts of pursuing the “imperial” policy (see Bondarenko 1995a: 231—257).

So, are there any grounds to regard Benin titled chiefs bureaucrats, *i.e.* professional officials? (For general descriptions and detailed analyses of the evolution of the Benin chieftaincy system from which a considerable share of the evidence analyzed and some conclusions made below are extracted, see [Read 1904; Egharevba 1956; 1960: 78—80; Bradbury 1957: 35—44; Eweka 1992; Bondarenko 1993: 158—165; 1995a: 231—257; Roese 1993].)

Any Benin chief belonged to one of two broad categories: his title was either hereditary (what is impossible if he is really a bureaucrat — see Weber’s point 9) or not. There were rather few hereditary titles in the Benin Kingdom: those of the highest ranked among all the chiefs the *Uzama Nihinron* members (from the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century there were seven of them) and of several other, less important dignitaries. The *Uzama Nihinron* was established in the 13<sup>th</sup> century by the first ruler of the 2<sup>nd</sup> dynasty — Eweka I, and the majority of other hereditary titles appeared in the time of *Oba* Ewuare, in the mid 15<sup>th</sup> century.

Non-hereditary title-holders were considered “appointed by the *Oba*” and fell into two major groups, besides some other, secondary by their significance is the administrative mechanism. The first of those two categories was called the *Eghaevbo N’Ogbe* (the “palace chiefs”). This institution was established by the fourth supreme ruler, Ewedo within the framework of his anti-*Uzama* actions in the mid 13<sup>th</sup> century. The *Eghaevbo N’Ogbe* were divided into three “palace societies”. Each of these “societies”, in its turn, was also divided into three groups like traditional age-sets of the Bini.

The significance of the *Eghaevbo N’Ogbe* was great. This association members received their might due not only to their official titles and rights but also, maybe even first of all owe to their closeness to the supreme ruler. One of their main tasks was to serve mediators between the *Oba* and the people (Agbontaen 1995), for the prohibition to communicate with his subjects freely seems to be among the supreme ruler’s taboos already in the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Hence, the palace chiefs could rather easily “regulate” the information flows to and from the palace in their own interests. From the narrative European sources of the 17<sup>th</sup> —19<sup>th</sup> centuries one can see that these chiefs really did it, and also to see, what a considerable might the *Eghaevbo N’Ogbe* under the leadership of *Uwangue* concentrated in their hands that time (see Da Híjar 1972 [1654]: 248—249; Anonymous 1969 [1652]: 309; Dapper 1975 [1668]: 503; Van Nyendael 1705: 435; Smith

1744: 228–230; Dutch 1978 [1674–1742]: 334; Roth 1968 [1903]: 92; Ryder 1969: 103). Eventually, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century the palace chiefs, and not the supreme ruler's lineage or the *Uzama* members furthermore, played the decisive role in the selection of the descendent to the throne (Ryder 1969: 16–18).

Another major category of non-hereditary title-holders, the *Eghaevbo N'Ore* (the “town chiefs”) was established later, in the mid 15<sup>th</sup> century by Ewuare, already as a counterbalance to the palace chiefs though basically they were ranked lower than the *Eghaevbo N'Ogbe*. They struggled actively with the latter for the influence on the *Oba*. They also fought for power with the supreme ruler himself. And all in all, the town chiefs were a success (see, e.g. Smith 1744: 234–236).

The *Eghaevbo N'Ore*'s struggle for power was led by the head of this category of title-holders, the *Iyase*. In the course of time, he became the most powerful and influential figure in the Benin administrative system and society. The antagonism of the *Iyase* to the *Oba*, as Kochakova remarks, “*runs all through the whole space of the Benin history*” (Kochakova 1986: 244; see: Egharevba 1947).

So, the *Eghaevbo N'Ogbe* and *Eghaevbo N'Ore*, whose behavior was very far from that “ordered” to them by Weber (in point 10) were the principal associations of non-hereditary chiefs in the Benin Kingdom. But the *Oba* appointed chiefs just formally, for, first, to be distinct, the supreme ruler appointed only the lineage out of which its members (officially not involved into the administrative system) selected a concrete person for receiving the title. Second, due to the strength of the tradition and the real might of the palace and town chiefs, titles were held within the same extended families for hundreds years though officially every lawfull Bini could claim for a non-hereditary title.

Thus in reality there was no free choice of administrators and their appointment by higher authorities. In practice, administrators were not appointed at all as well as there was no free selection of them on the societal level; they were elected within definite lineages, extended families (compare with Weber's points 5 and 4). It is reasonable to suppose (especially if one trusts evidence of the folk-lore [Sidahome 1964: 163 et al.]) that during the last centuries of the Benin Kingdom existence the *Oba* only blindly confirmed the candidatures proposed to him and this procedure in its essence transformed into a mere *pro forma*, the performing of an ancient ritual (“anti-point 9” of Weber).

The chiefs were not simple officials at the supreme ruler's service. On the one hand, the *Oba* regularly established ties of relationship with them (what contradicts Weber's point 1) marrying the titled chiefs' daughters (Bradbury 1957: 41) and then giving their own daughters in marriage to the chiefs (Egharevba 1956:31; 1962). On the other hand, they constantly preserved close connections with the communal organization. They participated in the central bodies' activities as representatives of their communities and titled lineages, not as individuals (hence, the Benin realities did not fit point 7 of Weber). It was unreal to dig titled chiefs up from their native social units and to send them to govern "strange" communities. Under the conditions when all the circles of the megacommunity were penetrated by, at all of them communal in their essence ties and relations dominated, the division of the country into merely administrative units (including by means of transforming into administrative units communities and chiefdoms) was impossible.

The supreme chiefs always were first and foremost title-holders. All the privileges they received in accordance with titles and were not rewarded just for posts they held. The post was an unavoidable enclosure to the title. For example, in reality the post could demand from the holder of the "*Oba's* wardrobe keeper" title not cleaning and airing of his robes at all, but attending to certain duties noway connected with such a kind of activities. These duties were not clearly defined and separated from those of other chiefs as well as all the categories of titled chiefs comprised officials of all kinds — priests, war leaders, etc. (compare with what Weber wrote in point 3). Furthermore, a chief could be deprived from his post by the *Oba's* command, but the title, once given rested with the chief till the end of his life. Egharevba openly writes as regards this that the supreme ruler: "...could... suspend any titled chief from his post, but the chief must still hold his title for life" (Egharevba 1949: 24; also see: 1956: 6; Igbafe 1979: 4).

There was a general notion of higher and lower titles and more or less main duties but there was no fixed hierarchy neither within categories of supreme chiefs (most often, only their heads were definitely known) nor within these or those spheres of activities — administrative, priestly and so on (compare with point 2 of Weber).

The material well-being of the supreme chiefs (at least prior to the period of active trade with Europeans [Bondarenko 1995a: 153—157]) was based on the receiving of a share of what had been produced in their communities. It was not founded either on the tribute once or twice a year collected from the whole population of the country or on "presents" of the *Oba* chiefs

used to get from time to time. And fixed salaries have never been due to them at all (nothing in common with Weber's point 6).

As titles belonged to the same extended families for centuries, there was no free competition for titles in the society. Then, there were no opportunities for making the career, for chiefs held first and foremost titles. And titles, besides their lack of a well-defined hierarchy, were not subjected to their changing by a person. Having once received a title, he was not able not only to lose it by the *Oba*'s command, but to receive another one, too (see Weber's point 8).

So, none of all the Weber's ten features characteristic of bureaucracy and bureaucrats fits the Benin Kingdom supreme (titled) chiefs. Megacommunal institutions became really central, not those of a chiefdom claiming for governing the supra-chiefdom society. But under the conditions of the essentially communal Benin society, even those who governed it on the highest level were not officials, *i.e.* "bureaucrats". Thus, in accordance with the practically generally accepted idea of intimate connection between the state and the bureaucracy, the Benin megacommunity was not a state.

And summing up all the aforesaid in this chapter, it seems reasonable and grounded to classify the megacommunity as a specific type of the complex hierarchical socio-political organization. This type of organization was alternative to the statehood, for it is also clear that from all points of view Benin was not less developed than the majority of early states.

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**III. NON-HIERARCHICAL  
ALTERNATIVES OF POLITOGENESIS**



**CLASSIC LOWLAND MAYA  
(AD 250–900)**

**Introduction**

The study of Pre-Columbian cultures is of great importance for the construction of multilinear and non-linear models of sociocultural evolution. The origin of the complex society in America was not connected with the Old World and its whole history demonstrates a strong tradition of independent sociocultural development. Among the Mesoamerican cultures of the Classic period Lowland Maya is the best documented one due to the extensive corpus of hieroglyphic inscriptions and richness of archaeological evidence.

Maya Lowlands is a vast area which includes the Mexican South (the states of Chiapas, Tabasco, Campeche, and Yucatan), the northern departments of Guatemala, Belize and a part of Honduras. It is a limestone plain about 90-200 m above the sea level. The major part of the area is covered with humid tropical forests. The main rivers flow in the west (Usumasinta), south (Pasion), and east (Hondo, Belize, and Motagua), while the center of the Maya area is full of swampy places and lakes.

The Lowlands are divided into five regions:

1. Peten, or Central region includes territories of the modern Guatemalan department of Peten, south of the Mexican state of Campeche, northern and central Belize. The main ancient cities here are Tikal, Uaxactun, Naranjo, Motul de San Jose, Yaxha, Rio Azul (all in Guatemala), Calakmul (Mexico), Caracol, Altun Ha (Belize).
2. Pasion River region, or Petexbatun comprises the drainages of Pasion and Chixoy Rivers with the cities of Altar de Sacrificios, Dos Pilas, Aguateca, Ceibal, Arroyo de Piedra and Tamarindito.
3. Usumasinta, or Western region is situated in the middle and low portions of the Usumasinta River drainage along the modern Mexican-Guatemalan frontier. Tonina, Palenque, Pomona, Piedras Negras, Yaxchilan, Bonampak and Lacanja are the most important centers.
4. Southeastern region embraces the Motagua River drainage (Copan, Quirigua) and southern parts of Belize (Pusilha).

5. Yucatan, or Northern Lowlands (on the contrary to four above mentioned regions forming Southern Lowlands). This is all the north of the Yucatan peninsula with a large number of different archaeological sites.

The majority of the written sources from the Classic period come from Southern Lowlands. There is no doubt that in the 1st mil. AD the Maya society in Yucatan was not less developed than in the south. But Southern Lowlands, especially the Peten region, served as a center which influenced all other territories. Main characteristics of the Classic Maya civilization (hieroglyphic writing, calendar, architecture, art styles) were modeled and elaborated in Peten and later were distributed through all the Lowlands.

The initial stages of the complex society formation in Maya Lowlands became more or less clear only in recent times. A moderate picture of the Preclassic Maya society was radically changed by the discovery of several large and medium-sized Middle and Late Formative centers (Nacbe, El Mirador, Guiro, El Tintal) in Peten. There are also evidence for the development of the complex society in Northern Yucatan (Edzna, Dzibilchaltun, Komchen) and the Pasion region (Altar de Sacrificios, Ceibal). But we still lack of a regional context for these discoveries, and the settlement patterns which could serve as a basis for the analysis of the Formative Maya politics organization is not clear yet either. Late texts attribute the founding of the ruling dynasties to the Preclassic times, but they give no more than royal names from the genealogical tradition.

The appearance of multiple monumental inscriptions in the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD is a crucial moment. Although the hieroglyphic writing was well known in Maya Lowlands from the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> mil., Preclassic examples are still rare and not easy readable. "Monumental boom" probably marked a radical change in Maya Lowlands and formation of the Classic period society.

#### **The family and the community. Inner-communal relations**

For the post-primitive societies the community can be considered as the basic, substratum social unit. To a marked degree the community structure and inner-communal relations define the direction of social development. The Classic Maya community research is one of the most complicated problems in Maya studies as it is based only on the archaeological data without any supporting written or ethnographic evidence. Although Postclassic materials, recorded in the Early Colonial sources, were often used in the reconstruction of the Classic Maya social organization, nowadays scholars believe that they must be analyzed with a great care because of a significant

chronological distance between the Classic and Postclassic periods. Nevertheless Postclassic materials still do form a substantial part of our sources.

The data presented below proceed from the parts of Maya Lowlands – Central Peten (Tikal, Uaxactun, Yaxha-Sacnab), Pasion River drainage (Ceibal, Dos Pilas), the Belize River valley (Buenavista, El Pilar), Northern Yucatan (Coba) and the Motagua River valley (Copan). We believe that such a selection could help to create more or less complete picture of the Classic Maya society.

The household was the basic unit of the Classic Maya settlement system. Archaeologically it is reflected as a group of structures (from one to five or six), situated on a common platform or arranged around a patio (small inner court). There are two main categories of households: consisted of 1 structure and of 2-6 structures. In the core of Maya Lowlands the last category was the most widespread (Rice & Rice 1980: 451; Rice & Pulestone 1981: 149; Tourtellot 1988: 310-311), but the controversial situation is observed in the Belize River area (Ford 1991: 38).

Site	Solitary structures	Groups
<u>Nuclear zone</u>		
Tikal (Peten)	26%	74%
Yaxha area (Peten)	6%	94%
Ceibal (Pasion region)	15,5%	84,5%
<u>Belize River area</u>		
El Pilar	30%	70%
Yaxox	65%	35%
Bacab Na	90%	10%
Barton Ramie	95%	5%

These figures vary significantly, but it is evident that in the core of the Maya area (Northeast Peten and the Pasion River region) solitary structures are less frequent than in the Belize River valley. Yaxha and Barton Ramie data are quite surprising and probably reflected some local peculiarities, for example scarcity of the land.

Really, the number of the structures might be more than we can observe now on the surface. A part of them (30-50%) was constructed from perishable materials and without observable rests. These were probably auxiliary buildings like storages and kitchens. According to the level of elaborateness, we are working mainly with residences and ceremonial structures.

Residences are relatively large structures (20-25 m<sup>2</sup>) which usually consisted of more than two rooms. They are frequently accompanied by the rests of small buildings that were interpreted as “kitchens” because of the findings of *metates* (groundstones). The chemical analysis realized in the Classic Maya households at Coba (Quintana Roo, Mexico) demonstrated that the “kitchens” were actually rich in carbonates that reflected the process of food preparation. On the contrary, the nearby areas were rich in phosphates that represented food consumption. Excavations revealed three such cooking areas and four residential structures in two related households (Unit 2-14 and Unit 15-37) on the periphery of Coba (Manzanilla & Barba 1990: 42-44).

These data strongly support the idea that a residence was a house of a nuclear family. Thus, a household represents an extended family community which normally consisted of 3-4 nuclear families. The predominance of households of this type in the core area signifies that the extended family community was the basic social unit of the Classic Maya society, like of many other archaic and traditional societies. But the problem with a strange situation in the Belize River area is still unsolved. Annabel Ford supposed that a large number of the solitary structures implies a simpler socio-political organization of the Belize River area Maya (Ford 1991: 38). But is the division of the nuclear family a trait of a simpler organization? Quite the opposite, it implies the disintegration of the extended family community that is usually considered as a result of intensive social-economical processes.

In the Bullard's three-tiered scheme of settlement hierarchy (Bullard 1960) 5-12 households (“*mound aggregates*”) were united into *clusters*, typically within the square of 200-300 m<sup>2</sup>. Logically, this category may correspond to a large community: village in the rural area and *barrio* (quarter) within urban settlements. But the data from the excavations at Tikal – one of the major and most important Maya cities – showed that it was impossible to define clusters in the city zone. Some other Classic cities demonstrate a similar picture. At Dos Pilas (the Pasion region) groups (= households) were distributed all over the site without any clustering. At the same moment, we observe *mound groups* – settlement units of 5-20 households in the Mopan-Macal valley in Belize (Ball & Taschek 1991: 150-157), which are the lowest element of the settlement hierarchy. It is interesting that this correlates with a high percentage of the solitary structures (nuclear families) in the neighboring Upper Belize River area. Maybe the peripheral regions developed another way than the core area? But there is another explanation. Tourtellot, analyzing the typology of structures at Ceibal, noted that row houses (buildings several rooms wide) and range type structures (either two or more interconnected rooms deep and two or more wide) “*could be easily regularly multi-*

*family rather than nuclear family dwellings*” (Tourtellot 1988: 356). In this case the Belize data really could be regarded as an evidence of modest life in this region.

The clusters of households (patio groups) also can be observed in the residential zone of Copan (the Motagua River valley, the Southeast region) where they consisted of 3-10 separated households. They could be considered as communities within the limits of the city. The nature of these units is far from being clear. Most of archaeologists see them as lineages and think that the communities tallied to kin groups. But this conclusion is not based on the genetic data analysis and therefore should be treated with care.

Every household had a special building with possible ritual functions – a kind of sanctuary or a shrine. They have small area and are characterized by the absence of chemical rests and relatively rich ornamentation. Practically all scholars agree that they served as ancestor’s shrines and blood-letting rites were performed there. In the elite groups the small pyramids and mounds correspond to this type of structures.

Several examples from different regions of Maya Lowlands permit us to arrive at the conclusion that the community patriarchs controlled these shrines and therefore the ancestor’s worship as such:

1. Cobá. The group of two households (Unit 2-14 and Unit 15-37), which was mentioned earlier, was constructed between 600 and 800 AD by an extended family. Primarily it constructed two residential structures, several auxiliary buildings and a shrine (Unit 2-14). Later neighboring and attached Unit 15-37 with two residences was built. These two units touched each other and were partly contemporaneous. They shared a route of access and had similar ceramic types. It is very well possible that the construction of the second household was an outcome of the family growth when one of its offspring married. But two units continued to use the same sanctuary that was situated in the founder’s unit (Structure E12) and participated in domestic cults. Two earliest residences (E4 and E8) were the largest and had stuccoed floors while the late buildings (E15 and E32) were less elaborated (Manzanilla & Barba 1990: 42-44).

2. Copan. Group 9M-22 excavated by the *Proyecto Arqueológico Copan* in 1981-84 was situated in the Las Sepulturas residential zone to the northeast from the Main Group (Sheehy 1991). It was an intermediate between elite non-royal groups (like 9N-8) and simple households. Group 9M-22 consisted of three patios designated A, B, and C. The first one was the largest and the most important in 750-900 AD and consisted of 17 structures. According to the ceramic data, the possible founder of the shrine lived in 9M-22B. His successor built a residence (Structure 194-B), where his father

was buried, and a small temple (197-3<sup>rd</sup>), and later placed the altar in the plaza center shifting the focus of leadership to the Group 9M-22A. About 780 AD there were two families in the group: monogamous (Str. 196) and possible polygamous leader's ones (194-B for himself and may be 193-2<sup>nd</sup> for his wives). The third-generation family head was the most important person. The ruler gave him the right to commission relief sculptures of the ancestors, mythological animals and deities on the facade of his residence (195-B). He possibly controlled the Patio B where the ancestor stucco head identical to those of Structure 195-B was found. In this period the extended family consisted of the leader's polygamous family (Str. 195-B and 193) and three monogamous (194, 196 and 245). On the incised schist plaque from the Temple 197 the man performing some ritual was depicted. This scene probably shows the third-generation leader performing an ancestor cult ritual because the protagonist holds a serpent – a symbol, associated with ancestors in the Maya art (Sheehy 1991: 4-12). We think that the entire Group 9M-22 at Copan represents a lineage which consisted of three extended families. The leadership belonged to the family of Patio A, which monopolized the ancestor's cults.

It seems that the leadership in the Classic extended families belonged to the eldest family. For example at Ceibal (the Pasion region, Guatemala) the largest and most elaborated dwellings were also the earliest (the so called "Class K structures"). At Copan (9M-22) the founder's residences were decorated with the stucco sculptures and turned to be small palaces (Sheehy 1991: 8-9). In the household clusters (communities) the authority was in the hands of privileged extended families. In the Mopan-Macal valley mound groups regularly included plazuela groups – more elaborated groups of structures with associated prestige goods (marine shells, polychrome ceramics etc.). They are often parts of settlements and therefore may be interpreted as the community headmen's households.

At Copan we have another interesting example. Group 9N-8 was the largest in the Las Sepulturas zone and consisted of 10 patio groups focused on Patio A. This was the eldest compound constructed in the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD. Without doubt it was the household of some elite family connected with the royal court and its occupants even had a right to erect the hieroglyphic monuments. But the other patios (B, C and H) and J were more modest and possibly were occupied by the lateral lines of the lineage. The rest of the group, especially Patios D, E, H and J, were probably the residences of the servants and dependent persons.

So, the Classic Maya extended family community appears to be a hierarchical group typically consisting of 3-6 nuclear families. They were

united by the common origin and ancestor's cult. The leadership was in the hands of the head of the eldest family that performed common ancestors' cult rituals. We can define the next level of the social organization – large communities from 5-12 extended families, although we do not have evidence for their existence from the core area of Maya Lowlands (Central Peten). In the regions where they existed (Southeast, Belize) they were also organized hierarchically. Community headmen had the access to prestige goods and according to the data from the Mopan-Macal valley; their status was close to that of the secondary elite.

### **Myth, history and hieroglyphic writing**

Elaborated system of the hieroglyphic writing was one of the greatest achievements of the Maya culture. Although writing was created in the Preclassic epoch by the Olmecs, only Maya conserved it through 2000 years. Now the corpus of Maya inscriptions is enormous – thousands of monuments and ceramic vessels. The Maya hieroglyphic writing appeared in the 2nd half of the 1<sup>st</sup> mil. BC in the Guatemala Highlands. Having spread all over Maya Lowlands in the first centuries AD it conserved till the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

The main types of the hieroglyphic sources of the Classic period are monumental inscriptions. The texts were inscribed on stone or wooden monuments set on central squares of cities or inside buildings. All of them are “historic” by their content and tell about the deeds of the Classic Maya elite. In this sense they represent a materialized power of the royal dynasties of the Classic Maya kingdoms. For example at Piedras Negras (Usumasinta River drainage, nowadays in Guatemala) stelae that described the lives of local rulers were erected in series, each recording one reign.<sup>1</sup> Action was the focus of both the text and the scene. “*He did it*” or “*It is his image doing it*” – these are the main formulae of the Classic inscriptions.

It is very interesting that practically all the epigraphic texts are written from the third person: “*It is his image doing it*”, “*He did it*” and not “*I did it*” as in the Ancient East. It seems that Maya scribes pretended to be objective, to create a “real” image of history. According to the Mesoamerican cyclical concept of time, the same events occur on the same dates. So, to record event signified to create the perpetual cycle in the future and on the contrary, to destroy a monument signified to destroy the future. When in 637 AD the Naranjo kingdom (Eastern Peten) was defeated by Caracol and

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<sup>1</sup> This helped Tatiana Proskouriakoff in 1960 to define the dynastic chronology of Piedras Negras kings that became one of the key points in the study of hieroglyphic texts (Proskouriakoff 1960; 1963; 1964).

Calakmul, the winners set a hieroglyphic stairway describing the history of the war. Fifty years later, when a Naranjo ruler in its turn won the war with Caracol, he ordered to reassemble the stairway in order to create a chronological and historical nonsense.

Another consequence of the cyclical concept of time was that the myth and history were brought together. All the mythological events (creation of the world, birth of the ancestor gods) had their exact dates. At Palenque (Usumasinta River drainage, Mexico) they are organically included into the history of the ruling dynasty. It was very important for Maya not only to connect a contemporary fact with its mythological prototype but also to set an exact chronological distance between them.

The key figure which united the myth and history was the ruler. In the ideal model it was the supreme ruler which represented all the polity and as the eldest person in the eldest lineage kept the relations between this world and the supernatural one, between ancestors and the living. He has only been a protagonist of the inscription that recorded his birth, genealogy, first blood-letting ceremony, first war, accession, etc. For example, we know a few names of the royal children which did not become rulers themselves. But this concept was realized different ways in different regions. In Peten and Pasion River drainage it was so and only supreme rulers commissioned monuments (with rare exceptions). On the periphery, where the influence of non-royal noblemen was stronger, they accompany supreme kings, especially in the case of usurpation. The unique opportunity for us to know the structure of power of Usumasinta polities was the result of struggle for the Yaxchilan throne in 742-752 AD. The winner, Yaxun Balam IV had to pay more attention to subsidiary lords (*sahaloob*). On the monuments they accompany him in battles and at ritual performances.

Nevertheless the influence of the tradition of "Singular" was so strong that even at Yucatan (Xkalumkin, Uxmal, Chich'en Itza), where polities without supreme rulers existed in the Terminal Classic (830-1000 AD), co-rulers were listed one by one. Their actions are not described as "*They* (Actors 1, 2, 3) *did it*" but rather "*He* (Actor 1) *did it together with him* (Actor 2), *together with him* (Actor 3)".

Monumental inscriptions disappeared together with the crisis of Classic Maya civilization in the Terminal Classic in 830-1000 AD. Late examples from Mayapan were only bad copies of early stelae. It seems that these two facts were directly connected. As some scholars believe, the crisis was a process of reorganization of Maya society, change of the direction and mode of evolution. New forms of socio-economic relations and political



organization emerged and epigraphic inscriptions strongly connected with the old structure, were substituted by codices.

### **The structure of Classic Lowland Maya polities**

The basic unit of the Classic Lowland Maya political system was a small polity (kingdom). Rulers of these kingdoms were called *ahaw* (from Common Mayan \**a:xa:w* “owner”, “master”).<sup>2</sup> The office was designated with a special term *ahawil* (later *ahawlel*) or “kingship”. At the same time *ahaw* was the name for both the rank and office, and members of the ruling dynasty (sons, daughters, brothers and siblings) also bore this title. Therefore later the title *k’uhul ahaw* (“divine king”) appeared for the supreme ruler and *ahaw* became a common designation for all noblemen meaning the “lord”. The heir bore the title *ch’ok ahaw* or “unripe, young lord” (Stuart 1993: 322-332).

It seems that in the Classic Maya “political conception” all the kingdoms were considered equal and untouchable. In the Classic period no polity was deleted from the political landscape. Some kingdoms could lose their autonomy and be united under the power of one king, but in this case the supreme king received a complex title, in which all his supplementary titles were enumerated. Such examples are well known in the Usumasinta region in the Late Classic (600-900 AD): the Yaxchilan realm consisted of kingdoms of Siyahchan (proper Yaxchilan) and Pet, the Pomona realm also included two kingdoms (Pakabul and Pia), probably the same was the situation with Piedras-Negras (joined kingdoms of Yokib and K’inil). Sometimes names of polities coincided with their capitals’ names, but it was not a common rule. Movement of the capital never led to a change of the polity name as it happened with pairs Bejucal – Motul de San Jose (Peten) and Tres Islas – Machaquila (the Pasion region). When descendants of the Tikal dynasty fled to the south and founded the new capital at Dos Pilas (Chanha), they preserved the ancient title *k’uhul Mutul ahaw* – “divine Mutul king” – and used it through all their history.

The internal structure of the Classic Maya polities is far from being clear. The data vary from region to region and even from polity to polity. The most interesting writing evidence proceed from the Usumasinta region but, in contrast, the most fruitful archaeological excavations were realized on the eastern side of the Maya area.

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<sup>2</sup> Titles “*the king of polity*” were called “*Emblem Glyphs*” by the Guatemalan scholar Heinrich Berlin (Berlin 1958).

A number of epigraphic works in the 1960s–80s demonstrated that the western part of the Maya area – the Usumasinta region – was shared between several polities, sometimes united into weak hegemonies, but mostly independent (Proskouriakoff 1960; 1963; 1964; Mathews 1980; 1991; 1997; Schele 1991; for synthesis see Culbert 1988). The late tradition attributes the foundation of local dynasties to the 4<sup>th</sup>–5<sup>th</sup> centuries AD, but the hieroglyphic inscriptions, monumental sculpture and other indicators of the complex socio-political structure appeared only in the 6<sup>th</sup>–7<sup>th</sup> centuries. The main peculiarity of Usumasinta texts is a great attention their authors pay to non-royal nobility, especially to the category called *sahal* (Mathews & Schele 1991; Stuart 1993: 329–332). This title probably derived from Cholan *sah* (“small”). *Sahal*’s act like supreme rulers – they accede, wage wars and so on. We know about 8 “seatings” or “enterings” to this office (*sahalil*): 1) El Cayo (689, 729, 764 and 772 AD) and an unknown town (730 AD) in Piedras Negras realm; 2) Laxtunich (in 786) in the Yaxchilan realm; 3) Lacanha (in 743) in the Bonampak realm. Frequently the *sahal* title is used in possessed construction *u-sahal* (“his *sahal* of the king”). The functions of *sahal* are the exact copy of the king’s ones but in the smaller scale. It is evident that *sahal*’s were dependent “provincial” rulers; some of them could erect their own monuments. Several women from *sahal* families married kings. Inscriptions also mention titles “head *sahal*” and “young *sahal*”, but the role of this difference is not clear (Stuart 1993: 328–332).

The office of a provincial lord could also be inherited. Such dynasties existed at El Cayo (a. 650–729 AD and 764 - a. 800 AD), Lacanha (a. 730 - a. 760 AD). What was the level of control of the supreme ruler over his underlords? Houston suggested that in the Piedras Negras polity they were replaced simultaneously and it could be timed to the king’s accession. Also the post of the *sahal* could be not for life – for example the El Cayo ruler Chak Tun Ak Chamay (689–732) died 4 years after his successor acceded (Chinchilla & Houston 1992: 66–68). In some cases, when a kingdom lost its autonomy, the former king lost his status and could become a *sahal*.

The *sahal* of the Late Classic period strongly resembles the *batab* (provincial ruler) of Pre-conquest Yucatan, but we see a considerable difference. If for the Postclassic system it is possible to say that *batab* was its key figure, it is totally incorrect for the Usumasinta valley polities. The Late Classic title and post did not exist independently, it was always connected with the “holy king”. We think that the institute of *sahaloob* was artificial within the ancient Maya political organization. They partly replaced the *ya-haw* category of Early Classic, changing the character of power structure. The data from Yaxchilan Early Classic “chronicle” on Lintels 60, 49, 37, 35

(CMHI 5, 103, 105, 107; Tate 1992: 170) may in some aspects reflect these processes. In this inscription the most important victories and captives are mentioned. First seven Yaxchilan rulers (320 – a.470) captured kings themselves, the 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> (a. 470 – a. 550) – with their subordinates called *u-yahawte* (“the lord from the lineage of”). Nobody is named *sahal* – they appeared only in the 7<sup>th</sup> century at Piedras Negras and in the 8<sup>th</sup> century at Yaxchilan. The change of structure from the system of vassals toward that of controlled provincial rulers is evident.

In the 7<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> centuries AD the politics of the Usumasinta valley consisted of several “districts” which were governed by secondary rulers. Unfortunately written sources do not mention the lower elements of this system. In the Yaxchilan realm we can identify at least 4 districts: Chicozapote, Laxtunich, La Pasadita and Dos Caobas. All of them are situated 10-20 km far from Yaxchilan, and thus constitute the territory about 700-900 sq. km. The Piedras Negras realm consisted of 5 or 6 “sahaldoms”, but we can identify only El Cayo. Moreover, some lesser kingdoms were subordinated to Piedras Negras, as, for example, La Mar. Its rulers were called the *ahaw*, and probably belonged to a lateral lineage of the main royal dynasty.

Excavations in the Belize River valley (Ball & Taschek 1991; Ford 1991) revealed several territorial communities (150-300 sq. km each) with complex settlement and socio-economic patterns. With these new data the Mopan-Macal valley turns to be best archaeologically documented in respect to the settlement hierarchy and socio-political organization (Ball & Taschek 1991).

Mound group – the lowest element – consists of 5-20 households and probably reflects the community. They regularly include plazuela groups – community headmen’s residential compounds. Associated artifacts (marine shell, ceramics etc.) indicate higher status of their occupants than among the commoners.

Plaza groups are larger and architecturally more elaborated compounds which occur both in rural area and in urban centers. They are also characterized by restricted access from the countryside. The material rests suggest high “absolute” status for their inhabitants but that group’s elaborateness and monumentality reflects different “relative” positions.

Regal-residential center – isolated palace or an acropolis-like complex in the rural area. Ball and Taschek describe such centers as “*introverted*” sites “*of social-ceremonial, funerary and devotional activities as well as residence*” with the primary role as “*rural, high-level, elite-residence complex*” (Ibid: 151). They also provide housing for the serving dependent, lower status population, but associated significant “town” is absent. In con-

trast, the capital of the Mopan-Macal valley community Buenavista del Cayo was a multifunctional “urban” settlement (regal-ritual center). About 7% of its area was dedicated to craft activities including attached palace masters and non-elite urban specialists. These two latter types also have from one to four special buildings of probable administrative/adjudicative functions (Ibid: 150-157).

We see a very similar picture in the neighboring zones (El Pilar, Baking Pot, Pacbitun, Las Ruinas de Arenal). It seems that they all were territorial and not political units, and some of them were parts of the larger realm of Sa’il (Naranjo). This suggestion is supported by inscriptions on two polychrome vessels founded in an elite burial at Buenavista. Naranjo was one of the most important Peten kingdoms in the Late Classic period. Besides the Belize River valley, it included territories to the north down to Holmul River, which were governed by royal kinsmen, which resided in Holmul – the center, comparable to Buenavista by size and complexity. Naranjo, Holmul and Buenavista form a single ceramic group (Zacatel series). Each of these towns had a proper “palace school” which used local clays, technical and stylistic methods. It seems that subordinated lords had no right to erect hieroglyphic monuments and their ties with the overlord were reflected in the parade ceramics (Ball 1993: 249-252).

The socio-economic structure of the Naranjo polity was rather complex, too. The similarity of burial patterns at the plazuela and plaza groups indicates that the status of the community leaders and of the secondary elite were very close. Such “wealth” goods as obsidian was found in 56% of all households in the El Pilar “district”. In the valley and uplands, where the majority of population lived, this proportion is even more – 78%. But the elite continued to control the obsidian procurement (trade) and elaboration. A specialized obsidian-working complex, El Laton was situated 4.5 km south from El Pilar and was dominated by the elite residential compound like regal-residential centers of the Buenavista “district”. In contrast, the pattern of chert production and distribution is highly decentralized – unfinished cores and hammers are mainly concentrated in the foothill zone. Probably chert tools – most important for rural utilitarian and agricultural needs – were produced on the household level by not full-time specialists (Ford 1991: 37, 42). The same picture we see in the ceramic industry – specialized workshops existed only in large urban centers and they were connected primarily with the elite’s needs of polychrome vessels. The rest of the society used pottery made by non-attached communal craftsmen (Ball 1993: 258-260). All this corresponds to the model of Prudence Rice (1987): a decentralized system where the central power controls only the “prestige” sector of econom-

ics. In the “commodity” sector there were no full-time, barrio-like specialization and hierarchical distribution. The main role was played by local exchange, kinship ties networks and so on (Ibid.: 76-80).

Thus, a large polity centered at Naranjo consisted of 6 or 7 “districts” and occupied about 1500-2000 km<sup>2</sup>. It had the settlement hierarchy of 5 levels with three central-place settlements between the capital and local communities. It seems that at least 2 elements of this hierarchy – regal-residential centers and plaza groups – were not connected with local “natural” growing of political organization. Plaza groups do not have enough space to place rural population during the religious ceremonies and all their ceremonial architecture is related only to the ancestors’ cult rites of no more than one extended family. So it is more possible that plaza groups had only politico-administrative functions.

Territorial communities of the Belize River area strongly resemble “original” simple chiefdoms. We see the evolution of the Naranjo polity from such a chiefdom through the unification of neighboring chiefdoms to the early state. The evidence for the complex chiefdom organization are the first hieroglyphic inscriptions and construction of the new acropolis complex. In the beginning of its history Naranjo acts as a vassal of powerful Calakmul in its struggle with Tikal, but in 590–630 AD the new polity also claims for the hegemony in Peten. In this time the history of the Naranjo dynasty was rewritten. “Black Pecari?” was proclaimed as the official ancestor of the royal lineage which acceded in legendary times in the large text on Altar 1 (CMHI 2: 86-87). One of his descendants founded the city of Naranjo in 259 BC. All these changes were made during the long reign of Ah Sa... (late 6<sup>th</sup> century). The new concept of Naranjo history was emphasized by double genealogical tradition – he was named both 8<sup>th</sup> and 35<sup>th</sup> ruler of the dynasty. After the defeat of Naranjo by Caracol and Calakmul in 626-637 AD the Belize River chiefs regained independence and we may observe a short-term local splendor at Buenavista and Las Ruinas. The revitalization of Naranjo in the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century was accompanied by the establishment of new settlement patterns in the Belize valley and spreading of political frontiers of the Naranjo state.

Comparing the rest of Peten, where most ancient and important Maya urban centers were situated, and the Usumasinta region, we assume that here the *sahal* title was practically unknown. In one case the *sahal* is mentioned in the context of bringing tribute to the Motul de San Jose lord. We do not know, if this office and rank were hereditary in Peten or not. Secondary centers rarely have monuments with carved inscriptions, and they date back to the beginning of Early Classic or Terminal Classic. It seems that

the influence of this group of the elite was limited in Peten in comparison with the Usumasinta region.

Inscriptions provide some indirect data about the structure of the central Peten kingdoms. If secondary rulers were not members of the royal dynasties, they were simply called “he from”. There is interesting title *ho’ pet Oxhabte’ bakab* (“the ruler of five parts of Oxhabte”), which refers to the kings of Rio Azul (northern Peten). The word *pet* or “part” sometimes is used in texts from other sites (Naranjo, Tikal). It is possible that it was a notion for the “districts” like territorial communities in the Belize River valley. There was another pattern in the northern portion of Peten, dominated by Calakmul. Different inscriptions mention local lords, who acceded into *ahawil* (*ahawlel*) or “kingship”, but were not called kings of their own polities. Probably they were members of a larger Calakmul royal dynasty and governed subordinated centers. Although their office could be inherited, sometimes other rulers intervened between a father and a son.

Archaeologically, Peten secondary centers (also called “minor centers” or “towns”) are very different. They vary from considerable multi-group sites with hieroglyphic monuments to small sites consisting only of modest civic-ceremonial nucleus and surrounding residential units. In this case it probably depended on the geographical position of the town, its history and relations with the central authority. But normally they can be detected by (1) small number of hieroglyphic inscriptions or by the presence of only plain stelae without texts;<sup>3</sup> (2) relatively small amount of monumental architecture. Of course, the best evidence are mentions of the interaction with the supreme king in the written sources, but this looks problematic now. We have a lot of ruins of secondary centers in the central Peten and a number of the local polities’ names, but we are not able to connect these two sets of data.

In sum, the Peten polities differed from those of the Usumasinta region. The local elite was not so important and did not enjoy such prerogatives. It is clear that the level of centralization in Peten was much higher and kings had more power.

One of the most important titles frequently used all over Classic Maya Lowlands was the *ak’hun* or *ah k’uhun*. Earlier it was read *ah ch’ulna* or “courtier” (Houston 1993), but later the reading has been modified to *ah k’uhun* – “scribe” (“he of the sacred books”) or *ak’hun* – “messenger” (from *ah ak’hun* – “he, who delivers a paper”). Recent research showed that they

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<sup>3</sup> Plain stelae also present in primary centers. Several scholars, basing on the rests of paint on some plain stelae, have suggested that texts on them had been painted.

employed a very wide set of functions, mainly connected with the court life and administrative duties (Lacadena 1996; Barrales 1999). According to the analysis of the polychrome vases' iconography, they served a king as scribes in different contexts inside the palace as well as in the reception of gifts and tribute. In the epigraphic records they could be military chiefs of various types, king's retainers, etc. Secondary rulers could also have their messengers, as it is evident from the inscriptions of Palenque. Although women also wore this title, they never performed any specific activity, connected with the *ak'hun* rank (Barrales 1999).

All these evidence indicate that the *ak'hun* / *ah k'uhun* constituted the administrative body of the Classic Maya kingdoms. It was a general notion for officials, without distinction between the court and central apparatus. It is unknown whether an administrative specialization of officials existed in the Classic period, but it seems doubtful. All the mentions of this institution are dated to the Late Classic (600-900 AD), simultaneously with the appearance of the *sahal*'s, but 300 years is too a short period for a well established functional specialization to develop. There are other titles and offices in the inscriptions, mainly connected with the court: the *ah sakhun bas* ("the keeper of the royal headband"), *yahaw k'ak'* ("lord of the fire", a kind of priest?), *ah teyub* ("he of the tribute"), *ah ts'ib* ("scribe-painter"), *ah uxul* ("sculptor"), etc. In the analysis of the administration and court of the Lowland Maya kingdoms it is important to distinguish titles of office, rank and occupation from each other. The *Ak'hun* / *ah k'uhun* was a rank and office, the *ah sakhun bas* and *yahaw k'ak'* were offices <sup>4</sup>, and *ah ts'ib* and *ah uxul* were occupations. This difference can be traced by the use of the possessed forms: only officials could be *yak'hun* / *yah k'uhun* ("his messenger") of the ruler.

Iconography and hieroglyphic texts also provide some data that different groups of nobility had different rank markers. An indicator of the personal status was his headdress, and a common term for taking the office was *k'alah hun tuba'* ("it was tied the headband on his head"). The names of the royal items were *sakhun* ("white crown") and *bolon-tsakab k'ak'-xok hun* ("nine knots, fiery shark crown"); they usually had images of the gods and deified ancestors. The "Lord of fire" *yahaw k'ak'* wore *k'ak'hun* ("fiery headband"). Headdresses of simple officials consisted of a cotton band, but they were very specific due to brushes and a small bundle of paper.

There are dispersed mentions of tribute in the hieroglyphic texts. The *ah teyub* ("he of the tribute") title implies that there were special tribute

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<sup>4</sup> The difference between the office and the title can be traced in the hieroglyphic inscriptions. There were special notions for offices (kingship, sahalship, etc.).

collectors, but in the scene of the tribute presentation, such a person is depicted with the headdress of *ak'hun* / *ah k'uhun*. The notions for tribute are *ikats* ("burden"), *yubte* ("bundle of the tribute"), *tohol* ("price"), but their concrete economic meaning is unknown. However, as it is seen from the scenes painted on the polychrome ceramics, this activity was also conducted by officials.

### **Kingdom interaction, hegemonies and territorial realms**

From the very beginning of the study of Maya epigraphy it became evident that the polities did not develop in isolation and were placed within a complex network of political and cultural interaction.

For a long time two models of the Classic Maya political organization were widespread among specialists. The first defended the existence of several large regional states with the administrative hierarchy of the first, second and third-level sites. It was based mainly on the archaeological data and "conditional reading" of the hieroglyphic inscriptions (Marcus 1976; 1993; Adams & Jones 1981). The most elaborated form it acquired in the recent work of Joyce Marcus. She claimed to create "*a model based on the Lowland Maya themselves*" (1993:116), but in our opinion made two important errors. First, she identified the apogee of political organization with a large centralized polity and, second, used the pre-conquest situation as the pattern for her constructions while such an essay should be based primarily on the information taken from the Classic writing sources.

Peter Mathews (see 1991) expressed another opinion, which was supported by the other epigraphers and archaeologists. According to this model, Classic Maya Lowlands consisted of several dozens of different political units sometimes united in weak hierarchies but mostly independent (see Sabloff 1986; Culbert 1988; Houston 1993; Stuart 1993). In latter cases the subordinated rulers kept their autonomy, expressed in "Emblem Glyphs". Their ties with the hegemon were designated by the title *yahaw*, "his lord" or "vassal". This title was personal and described the relationship between two individuals and not political structures. For example, in the inscription on the Stela 2 of Arroyo de Piedra (the Pasion River region) the local ruler is called *yahaw* of the deceased king of neighboring Dos Pilas. Typical hegemonies of this type existed in the Usumasinta region. The rapid growth of Tonina in the early 6<sup>th</sup> century can serve an illustration. In 711 K'an Hok' Chitam II of Palenque was captured and maybe sacrificed. His architectural projects were finished by a certain nobleman which did not belong to the ruling dynasty, and the heir to the Palenque throne Akal Mo'-Nab III did not accede till 722. In 715 the Bonampak ruler called himself *yahaw* of K'inich Baknal Chaak,



holy lord of Tonina in his inscription. But by the end of the 720-s there were no more mentions of the Tonina dominance in the hieroglyphic texts of the Western region. At the peak of its expansion Tonina dominated its rival and neighbor for 12 years and controlled the territory as far as the Usumasinta River (about 100 km to the east).<sup>5</sup>

This view was radically changed by the works of Simon Martin and Nikolai Grube who demonstrated that in late 4<sup>th</sup> – late 7<sup>th</sup> centuries such hierarchical relations comprised practically all the Southern Lowlands. Now the political history of the Classic period seems to focus on the struggle for the hegemony in the Maya world between the most important kingdoms (Martin & Grube 1995; Grube 1996; Martin & Grube, 1998; in press).

The first historically known large political unit appeared on the political scene of Maya Lowlands in the beginning of Early Classic (250-600 AD). It was situated in the central part of Peten and included the most ancient Maya cities (Tikal, Uaxactun, etc.). Although earlier it was widely accepted that it was created by Tikal kings who conquered Uaxactun at 378 AD and subsequently subdued neighboring Peten polities (Schele & Freidel 1991: 130-164; Sharer 1994: 185-191), now it is believed that originally Tikal was not the capital, but one of subordinated kingdoms (Stuart 1998).

The creation of the Peten “paramountcy” was accompanied by dynastic changes. Under 378 AD hieroglyphic inscriptions recorded that old Tikal dynasty was overthrown by force, and power was seized by a new group which brought new ideology, new iconographic style, and veneered deities with evident Teotihuacan origin.<sup>6</sup> One of the newcomers Siyah K’ak’ became a paramount ruler of Peten with the title of *kalomte*.<sup>7</sup> Central Mexican connections of new dynasts gave a basis to consider them as foreigners. Recently Stuart, Grube, and Martin supposed that in fact they were directly from Teotihuacan. According to their interpretation, Siyah K’ak’ was a military chief of the Teotihuacan king (known by the Maya name Hats’am Kuh, 374-439 AD) who invaded Peten and became its ruler. Nun Yax Ayin, a son of Hats’am Kuh, was inaugurated as the new Tikal king under the auspice of the elder kinsmen. Later Tikal lords called themselves *ochk’in kalomte*

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<sup>5</sup> The author earlier also supported this view on the Classic Maya political organization (see Beliaev 1998; 2000)

<sup>6</sup> This event was previously considered as a mention of the conquest of Uaxactun by Tikal.

<sup>7</sup> This important title still lacks of any proper translation. Its general meaning is clear (“hegemon”, “paramount king”), but the origin is unknown. It looks possible that it is connected with *kal* (“axe”, “scepter”, “to clear field”?)

(“western hegemon”), underlining their “Mexican” origin (Stuart 1998; Martin & Grube, in press).

This proposition is still under evaluation and was criticized by some epigraphers. The “arrival of strangers” is too close to the myth about wanderings, so common in the Mesoamerican tradition. In the texts describing this event the main protagonist is Waxaklahun Uba’ Chan (“Eighteen Images Serpent”), which was identified as an important Teotihuacan deity (so-called “Mosaic Serpent”). Waxaklahun Uba’ Chan patronized the establishing of new rulers and provided them with sacral power. I agree that it is necessary to treat such accounts in the ancient texts carefully (see: Boot 1999). However, it rises the interesting problem of the role of foreign impact in Maya history. By 200-100 BC there have already been developed states in the Central Mexican Highlands. Relations with Teotihuacan considerably intensified the socio-political evolution of the Kaminaljuyu polity in Maya Highlands (Sanders & Michels 1977). In Maya Lowlands the Teotihuacan influence reflected in architectural forms can be traced well prior to 378 AD, but the mass spread of new artistic style and ideology began only from this date. It is clear that this complex was used by the Central Peten rulers to consolidate their positions and, possibly, to free themselves from community ties. Even if Tikal dominated Uaxactun before the “Mexican” dynasty establishing, the development of complex forms of political organization received a strong impulse. It seems that the importance of the “Arrival of strangers” was a kind of the “epos of migration” to legitimize their power. Recently Belkov attracted the scholars’ attention to this phenomenon, *i.e.* to the situation when rulers in traditional societies create a situation of “provoked dependency” and, loosing some attributes of their power, acquire a new, higher status (1996: 66-71).

The first Peten paramount ruler, Siyah K’ak’ (378–402?) probably resided in Uaxactun, and other kings were his *yahaw* or vassals. He was replaced by Nun Yax Ayin I from Tikal who ruled till 420 AD and left his son to govern the city after his death. When the latter himself became *kalomte* (426 AD), he united both titles thus transforming the Peten “paramountcy” into the Tikal hegemony. During these and subsequent reigns (402 – ca. 500 AD) Tikal became the major city in Southern Lowlands and its authority was recognized up to Copan. In this time the title *k’uhul ahaw* (“divine king”) appeared, referring to the Tikal rulers; the title *ochk’in kalomte* became a designation for the highest position in the Maya world. “Western hegemons” employed different methods to control subordinated territories, including marriages, royal visits and establishing sons as kings. The exact degree of the subordinated kings’ autonomy is unknown, though

officially the *yahaw* acceded by the order of overlord. Some vassal rulers even could be replaced, as it happened with the Copan lord about 530 AD. Manifestations of disobedience were suppressed with armed force.

Northern Peten seems to develop separately. Calakmul, an ancient city as well, was the dominant center in this region which never displayed so abundant Teotihuacan traits and stayed within the Maya tradition's limits. In 562 AD Calakmul defeated Tikal in alliance with its former underlord Yahawte K'inich from Caracol (Belize) and overthrew the "Mexican" dynasty. This caused an 80-year decline, during which no monuments were erected and few architectural projects were realized in the city. It would be interesting to see Calakmul as a center of "Maya" tradition opposing "Teotihuacans", but in fact by the 6<sup>th</sup> century the meaningful differences between them were lost. The new hegemony existed for about 130 years (562-695 AD) and controlled practically all Southern Lowlands, maybe except the Southeastern zone (Copan) and the far west (Palenque). We have no data for Northern Yucatan, but two polities in the central portion of the peninsula recognized the Calakmul authority in the mid-6<sup>th</sup> century. We do not know if the structure of this superpolity changed comparing to the previous epoch. The Calakmul kings accepted the whole set of methods used by their predecessors: royal visits, marriages, military raids, etc. The relative weakness of this system explains why they had to wage long wars – with Palenque (599-611) and Naranjo (626-631). In Central Peten hegemons made use of the help of Caracol lords who served as a kind of vice-governors in this area.

Tikal restored its positions by the 640-s and began a new cycle of wars. In this time the main Calakmul supporters were former Tikal rulers, who escaped to the south, to the Pasion region (Petexbatun) and founded the new Mutul<sup>8</sup> kingdom with the capital in Dos Pilas. This long conflict can be called "Maya World Wars" because of their length and scale. Series of wars lasted for 50 years (ca. 645-695) and practically all the important Maya kingdoms from all the regions took their part in the struggle. Although Tikal twice (in 657 and 679) suffered severe defeats, finally the luck was on its side and the Calakmul hegemony collapsed. It marked the end of the epoch of large hegemonies in Maya Lowlands. It seems that the very concept of a paramount ruler was discredited. First, the title *ochk'in kalomte* lost its meaning – the "western (foreign) hegemon" and changed it to the "hegemon of the west". In this sense it was adapted in the Usumasints region and was frequently used in Yaxchilan. The rethinking of this idea led to appearance of the *lak'in kalomte* ("eastern hegemon") in Lamanai (Belize) and the *nal ka-*

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<sup>8</sup> Mutul (probably, "Place of Birds") was the ancient name of the Tikal kingdom.

*lomte* (“northern hegemon”) in Oxkintok (Northern Yucatan). The Copan kings also left the “western hegemon” title and called themselves the *nohol kalomte* (“southern hegemon”). Second, former peripheral kingdoms became officially independent and took an active part in the political history-making. The Palenque king, who supported Tikal, never mentioned any vassality to somebody. The Dos Pilas ruler in the beginning was a *yahaw* of Calakmul, but after the victory over Tikal in 679 AD he had the same rank as his former overlord. The 8<sup>th</sup> century seems to be the epoch of regionalization of Maya Lowlands. This conception was excellently expressed by Copan historians who in 731 AD called “four skies” or “four on high”: the king of Copan, the king of Tikal, the king of Calakmul, and the king of Palenque.

It is very difficult to analyze the structure of Tikal and Calakmul hegemonies. They occupied very large territories – practically all Southern Lowlands and included dozens of second-level polities. At the same time, they were very amorphous, and sometimes kingdoms, subordinated to the same hegemon, attacked each other. The notions used in the inscriptions do not make the situation clear. For example, the same formula *u-chabhiy* (“he ordered it”) is used to describe the king’s actions in different contexts: the erection of monuments, conquests or capture of enemies, and inaugurations of subordinates. In the Usumasinta region we can suppose that the difference between the *sahal* and *yahaw* was that of the secondary ruler and vassal, but in Peten the political hierarchy consisted mainly of *yahaw*. Nevertheless, I think that carefully studying epigraphic accounts we can better understand the processes which occurred in Southern Lowlands in the 8<sup>th</sup> century. Central Peten will be taken as an example.

After 700 AD Tikal was the major power in the center of Peten. The only rival left was Naranjo in the eastern part of Peten. Naranjo, having strong ties with Calakmul and Dos Pilas, began to struggle with the polities situated around the lakes Peten-Itza, Yaxha and Sacnab, and by 715 AD occupied some of them, including Yaxha, which was the largest. The Yaxha king was forced to escape and the victors opened the royal tombs and threw their content into the lake. In order to strengthen his power, the king of Naranjo married a princess from another small kingdom, creating a system of dependent territories, which could be directly controlled. Tikal preserved very strong positions in the north and northeast, controlling such important centers as Xultun, Rio Azul and different smaller towns. It is important to note that Xultun and Rio Azul were kingdoms, but all the evidence indicate that they were not independent. Until 771-780 AD very few hieroglyphic monuments were erected around Tikal (see Culbert 1991: 137). Very frequent were marital alliances between Tikal and other polities. Possibly there

were two strategies: (1) loyal dynasts received wives from the royal lineage as the Yaxha king defeated by Naranjo, who married a Tikal princess, and (2) high kings and their kinsmen married women from dependent towns. The latter way had long dating back to Early Classic, but did not lose its place. For example, Sacpeten (near the Peten-Itza Lake) was co-ruled by a son of the supreme king and a local woman.<sup>9</sup> The case of Uaxactun is especially interesting. In Early Classic Uaxactun had prerogatives of the first-rank center (stelae with inscriptions, large-scale construction, etc.). In Late Classic main buildings constructed in this site were palaces and not temples (Idem.). It is known that in the early 8<sup>th</sup> century the Uaxactun ruler was a son of a Tikal noble lord, not even the king (CMHI 5: 166). In 744-748 AD Naranjo was defeated and the kingdom disintegrated. Its rulers did not restore their position until 770-775 AD while Tikal control over Yaxha and other polities around the Lakes was restored and strengthened.

To mark his new status in the regional hierarchy, the Naranjo king Tiliw Chan Chaak (693 – ca. 730) took the title of *Wuk Tsuk* (“Seven Parts” – the ancient name for Eastern Peten), thus pretending to be the ruler of the whole region. His Tikal contemporary Hasaw Chan K’awil revived the title *kalomte*, meaning that only he and his successors were real *kalomte*. What was new is that they invented the special office of *kalomtel*, rising themselves up to a new level in the power hierarchy. Another interesting indicator is that all over Central Peten only the Tikal king was called “divine”, while in other regions it was a common title in all the kingdoms irrespective their size.

Formally, there is little difference between mechanisms of integration at the regional and supra-regional levels. But it was evidently easier to control neighboring polities than those situated on another side of Maya Lowlands. This fact contributed greatly to the evolution of the regional systems of polities into a single states. There was marked difference between the position of Motul de San Jose (also situated not far from Tikal) and Yaxha or Xultun. Although sometimes the Motul de San Jose kings were vassals of Tikal, they had the status of “divine kings” and used the title of *kalomte*. I believe that in Late Classic in Maya Lowlands true territorial realms, uniting different kingdoms, appeared. They were concentrated in the Peten (Tikal, Naranjo, Calakmul) and Pasion (Dos Pilas) regions. In the Usumasinta basin such political units did not exist and this region consisted of small kingdoms which were permanently struggling with each other.

## Conclusions

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<sup>9</sup> Information provided personally by Simon Martin and Christian Prager.

Classic Maya polities represent an example of socio-political and cultural evolution along the line which is the most usual in the eyes of a great many of anthropologists: the local community – the simple chiefdom – the complex chiefdom – the early state. The main indicators of subsequent changes we see in hieroglyphic inscriptions and monumental architecture: their appearance signified the transition to the chiefdom and their institutionalization accompanied the institutionalization of the early state organization. According to the hieroglyphic and archaeological data, this process was like in the Oaxaca valley: the consolidation and centralization of power first began on the high levels of cultural complexity and only then was they were distributed on the lower levels (Kowalevski *et al.* 1995:133).

We understand the early state as one of the variants of the complex sociopolitical organization of the hierarchic type which not always precedes the mature state. Rather they are different sociopolitical and cultural forms, the most fundamental distinction between which lies is in the relative role of territorial and kinship ties. This interpretation is based on those of Claessen and Van de Velde (1987) and Bondarenko (1997: 13–14). In the Maya case the early state is characterized by: 1) a complex central politico-administrative apparatus; 2) a complex social stratification; 3) an ideology, which postulated the divine origin of the royal dynasty and primary elite; 4) the control over the long-distance trade, the production and distribution of prestigious goods by the elite; 5) the dominance of lineage groups in other sectors of the socio-economic subsystem.

The political landscape of Classic Maya Lowlands was not homogenous. The power hierarchy within small polities was represented by the king, which simultaneously was the ruler of the capital, on the one hand, and by hereditary secondary rulers, governors in subordinated lands, on the other hand. In Late Classic (600-900 AD) larger territorial realms (Tikal, Calakmul, Naranjo, Dos Pilas) appeared. It is especially well attested in the Tikal case, when several small and medium-size kingdoms were united under the power of Tikal rulers, who used the titles *kalomte* and “divine king” as designations of the supreme king’s office.

It is difficult to apply here such a common characteristic of the state organization as hierarchy of the decision-making levels. Generally archaeologists have detected three or four-tiered settlement hierarchy in Maya Lowlands, but it seems that the actual picture depended on many different factors. Nevertheless, for defining the state, it is very important to note the existence of elements of the settlement hierarchy imposed by the royal power, as it was in the Naranjo kingdom. The state character of the Classic Maya polities is also supported by the existence of the central administrative apparatus, which

consisted of officials (*ak'hun / ah k'uhun*). The functional specialization of the court and central administration members was not established. There was no division between the civil and military hierarchies. Unfortunately, our sources do not provide information about socio-economic relations within the kingdoms (tribute, gifts, etc.).

At present, the general model of politogenesis in Maya Lowlands can not be constructed. The problem is that a lot of factors influenced this process. Our examples (Naranjo, Yaxchilan) represent cases of secondary state formation under the influence of ancient kingdoms of Central Peten (Tikal, Uaxactun, Calakmul). To understand the processes which led to the emergence of the state in Central Peten, we must attract Preclassic materials. But the archaeological study of the Preclassic Peten is only beginning and we are lack of a regional context for new findings. The "Teotihuacan problem", which we mentioned in connection with the formation of Tikal hegemony, also shows that all the models should take into account the fact that Maya Lowland did not develop in isolation, and inter-regional interaction was one of the most important evolutionary factors in Mesoamerica.

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**THE IROQUOIS**  
**(15<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> centuries AD)**

The process of politogenesis is that of the change and development of a society's political structure and the formation of a new type of power and government structures. It does not result invariably in the creation of a kind of statehood. The stateless path of the social development is also possible, at least, in the case of postprimitive societies.

The Iroquois, namely, the political confederation that went down to history as the Iroquois League, as well as the forming ethnic community (this fact was reflected in the endoethnonym of Ho-de-no-sau-nee) demonstrate an example of such a development. Having a sufficiently developed social and especially political organization, which enabled the alliance of five (later on six) Iroquois tribes to occupy the dominant position in the north-eastern part of the New World, perhaps, for more than two hundred years, the League showed no obvious signs of social stratification and property differentiation in its structure. Throughout the period of its existence, from its emergence in the 15<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> centuries to its fall in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, it was characterized by a complicated and efficient system of organization of the society, which functioned, however, without any bureaucratic government institutions, retaining its egalitarian traditions and having no pronounced hierarchy, whereas the very notion of state, even in its primordial form, presupposes a hierarchy. Thus, the functions of the state, e.g., guarantees of protection and security of the members of a society, or large-scale organized hostilities aimed at subjugating the neighbor peoples, were assumed by a nonstate system of political organization. The latter situation was especially characteristic of the League.

The Iroquois League, the main subject of this study, included only a part of the ethnic communities who spoke the languages of the Iroquois group. The confederation consisted of five tribes, which compactly occupied the territory of the present state of New York. Their geographic location from the east to the west was in the following order: the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga and Seneca. Later on, the tribe of Tuscarora was admitted to the League. The ethnonym of Iroquois is often applied to the League tribes in historical studies. Besides, the Iroquois languages were spoken by the Huron, the old enemies of the alliance of five tribes, who lived to the north of

them between the Lakes Ontario and Huron, neutral tribes on the northern shore of Lake Erie and the Erie tribe on its southern shore, the Susquehanna to the south of the five tribes, in the territory of modern Pennsylvania. All these groups belong to the northern branch of the Iroquois languages. The only but numerous representatives of the southern branch of the Iroquois linguistic stem are the Cherokee.

The peoples who belonged to the Iroquois cultural community populated compactly the eastern Great Lakes region, surrounded by a number of Algonquin tribes from all sides. The fact that the first attacks of the alliance smashed the Iroquois-speaking groups who did not belong to it does not contradict the existence of an all-Iroquois cultural community even a little. In many aspects of their cultural make-up, the Iroquois stood by themselves among the neighbor Algonquin groups, at the same time having few differences in this respect, including the set-up of the socio-political institutions, from their main enemies, the Huron. Researchers consider Huronia and Iroquoisland a single cultural province (Fenton 1978a [1971]: 110).

The Iroquois' socio-political structure has been described in details and studied thoroughly. The League was a confederation of independent but kindred tribes. The creation of a complicated society, organized on a democratic basis in the form of a confederation, cannot be considered an exclusive achievement of the Iroquois. One can find at least four more large enough tribal alliances in the North-East of North America alone, but the mechanism of the Iroquois League functioned most smoothly and efficiently in the region. Ralph Linton expressed an opinion once that tribal confederations emerge when the tribes need unity to face a common enemy, but local government undergoes no changes after the alliance is concluded. This fact presupposes a democratic set-up of the society together with a lack of stability in it (Linton 1936: 341). However, the Iroquois, whose social set-up was combined harmonically and efficiently with the alliance's policy, managed to avoid such an instability.

This work deals with the main mechanisms that conditioned the functioning of the Iroquois society, and an attempt is made to reflect its complicated and efficient socio-political organization, which was a voluntary association of social units of a higher level than a community but managed to do without state institutions.

The Iroquois symbolically compared the political set-up of their League with a long house. The five tribes were like five hearths of the house, and their "fires of councils" - the emblem of civil jurisdiction - formed a continuous chain from the Hudson to the Niagara (Morgan 1983 [1851]: 27). The Mohawk, who lived on the Mohawk banks and in the upper reaches of

the Hudson, were considered the guardians of the eastern entrance to that imaginary house. Its western door, guarded by the Seneka, opened onto the Niagara (Tooker 1978: 418). The independence of each tribe was unlimited, and there was no common chief to lead the whole tribal alliance. The supreme ruling body was the League Council, which combined undivided legislative, executive and judicial power and managed practically all common affairs of the League. That council met in the Onondaga valley, populated by the tribe with the same name, in the centre of the confederation's territory. Although the Onondaga were the custodians of the council hearth and the wampum that depicted the structure of the League organs, it did not make the Onondaga superior to other alliance members or its ruling tribe. Formally, the tribes were divided into the "elder brothers" (the Onondaga, Mohawk and Seneka) and "younger brothers" (the Cayuga, Oneida and Tuscarora) (Tooker 1978: 428), but it did not affect their equality in practice. Each of the five tribes delegated sachems (civil chiefs) to the League Council, whose number always was fifty. The Onondaga accounted for 15 sachemates, the Seneka for 8, the Mohawk and Oneida for 9 each and the Cayuga for 10 (Morgan 1983 [1851]: 41). The uneven distribution of the sachemates among the tribes did not testify to their unequal position in the confederation, since a decision could not be made without a full consent of all tribes and all sachems (Morgan 1983 [1851]: 65). Thus, if even one of the, e.g., Seneka sachems opposed a decision, it was not made, even if all the 14 Onondaga sachems and even all other sachems of the League voted in its favour.

Morgan defined the political set-up of the League as an oligarchy, explaining it by the fact that the council of sachems concentrated the whole authority in its hands (Morgan 1983 [1851]: 40), and the post of a sachem was hereditary in a clan. However, a sachem might put forward a proposal at the League Council only after agreeing it upon within the clan. He spoke on behalf of the whole clan. A decision to be made was first discussed in a clan by the women, and then the warriors held a meeting (Lafiteau 1983 [1724], I, 86). Besides, the hereditary transfer of sachemate did not mean that this process took place without any choice, because it was a worthy person that was nominated by a clan to that position. According to Lafiteau, first the eldest woman of a clan discussed that question with the women of her *owachira* (extended family), which occupied, as a rule, one long house, and then with other women of the clan. Thereafter, the chiefs and elders of the tribe approved the candidate at a meeting of the whole tribe. Their choice was not invariably based on primogeniture and depended on the candidate's personal qualities (Lafiteau 1983 [1724]: I, 81-82), although most of the sachems were elected from among elderly meritorious warriors (Averkieva 1974:

235). Thus, when a sachem died or was dismissed, his successor had not to be his closest relative in the female line. Any clan member might be elected to that post by the clan council and then the tribal council who was considered worthy of that position. However, the final approval of the sachems was with the League Council (Morgan 1934 [1877]: 76). The functions of the so-called Funeral Council included bemoaning a late sachem and “elevating” his successor to the office. It means that the structure of government of the League really was anything but oligarchical. For the sake of justice it should be noted that Morgan himself did not mean absence of democracy by oligarchy; on the contrary, he considered the sachems' equality and stability of their position a system that was capable of protecting the society from concentration of too much power in one man's hands (Morgan 1983 [1851]: 60; 1934: 84). Lafiteau noted that, in spite of the society's all efforts aimed at the prevention of whatever manifestations of chiefs' (sachems') despotism, some of them enjoyed some privileges. The criteria of the granting the privileges were either the numerical strength of a clan or a chief's personal abilities (Lafiteau 1983 [1724]: I, 81). Even manifestations of inequality in the Iroquois society were based on elements of meritocracy.

Almost all decisions made by the League, be they on wars or various civil affairs, were discussed preliminarily by the same instances that elected and approved sachems. An assistant was elected for each sachem from among the members of his maternal clan. Candidates for this post, too, were first recommended by women at the tribal council. Unlike a sachem, he did not need the consent of the League Council to be approved (Lafiteau 1983 [1724]: I, 84).

Sachems were purely civil persons. When a sachem went to a war, all his authorities were suspended for the period of his participation in the hostilities (Morgan 1983 [1851]: 44). Apart from sachems, the Iroquois had a category of chiefs, alias military commanders, whose authority was based on their military merits alone. Whereas sachemate may be considered, albeit with some reservations, a kind of office, and sachems were essentially officials, military chiefs were promoted only on the basis of their personal abilities, wisdom, eloquence, authority among the tribe-mates and military merits (Speck 1945: 26). Although individual initiative was gradually replaced by political and military actions of the whole group (Fenton 1978b: 315), and it is difficult to overestimate the League's important role in the successes of the Iroquois conquests, their military raids, like those of all other Indians of North America, were often started at a private person's initiative. The commanders of the military squads whose raids were a success enjoyed the reputation of lucky warriors. It was from among the warriors who had won a spe-

cial fame that military chiefs were promoted. It seems reasonable to treat a commander of a military squad and a military chief the same. For quite understandable reasons, the number of military chiefs was unlimited.

Some information is available in the early sources that permits a conclusion about an organized military system with a relatively strict discipline among the Iroquois. Apart from small military squads with purely voluntary membership, formed for plunder raids or, more often, to earn glory and public recognition (Lafiteau 1983 [1724]: II, 10-11), the Iroquois went into large-scale military actions, which resembled regular troops' activities (Lafiteau 1983 [1724]: II, 16-22). Actually, the Iroquois had, of course, no regular troops, but their functions were performed by large united military groupings. Formally, there was no compulsory conscription during wars, but, as a rule, nobody refused to take part in a raid. In this case, the collective public interests were preferred to the individual ones. It is even reported that disobedience to a military commander during such an action was punished by death (Lafiteau 1983 [1724]: II, 23-25), but, undoubtedly, such cases were exceptional.

The complicated military organization required an efficient government system, and there were two positions of military commanders in the Council with equal authorities. They were hereditary in two Seneca clans (Morgan 1934 [1877]: 86). These commanders-in-chief guided hostilities when the united forces of the whole League or some of its subjects waged a war.

Later on, the post of Pine Chiefs was set up in the Council. The Pine Chiefs spoke at the Council on behalf of women and warriors, reporting their opinions on various questions. As a rule, the most gifted and prominent speaker was elected to this position (Fenton 1978b: 314). *"This honorary title was conferred by the Council on a man as a sign of recognizing his special personal merits"* (Averkiewa 1974: 238).

Apart from the League Council, the sources mention self-government bodies of lower ranks, such as the tribal council ("senate"), which consisted of elders called *Agokstenha* in the Mohawk language. Their number was almost unlimited, and everybody could come to the council meeting and express his opinion there (Lafiteau 1983 [1724]: I, 84). Every subject of the League was essentially an independent political unit in its domestic affairs. This "senate" presumably was nothing but a self-government body on the level of a tribe or village, consisting of the most venerable and distinguished people. Sachems guided the activities of such tribal and clan councils when they were free from working at the League Council. Various chiefs, i.e., the people who had earned a special authority, were indispensable

members of such councils. Any full-fledged representative of the community was entitled to express his opinion at a council meeting even without being its member. It is not a surprise that its membership was unlimited. Even playing a fundamental role in the society, women were not entitled to attend tribal council meetings. As it was mentioned above, the Pine Chiefs spoke on their behalf and implemented their mandates.

There was another category of the population, the *agorkenrhagete* (warriors), i.e., young people who were able to carry arms (Lafiteau 1983 [1724]: I, 85). It seems plausible that the entire uncomplicated social structure of an Iroquois tribe was represented *par excellence* by two population groups based to a great extent on the age criterion. One of them was the elders, who were, as a rule, unable to fight because of their advanced age but had shown themselves in the military field in the past, which applied to almost any Iroquois with rare exceptions. The other group consisted of warriors, i.e., all adult males other than the elders.

This social set-up created no preconditions for the development of social differentiation and emergence of statehood institutions or power exercised from a single centre. Almost no contradictions are traced within the Iroquois society, among its strata. There were no dependent groups; there was no single person who concentrated power in his hands even relatively, as it happens, e.g., under the chiefdom system; there was no bureaucratic management machinery personified by various officials, without which a state system cannot function even in an embryonic version. Lafiteau noted ironically that the Iroquois were happy being ignorant about a written legal code, lawyers, prosecutors or bailiffs. He added that they would be the happiest people on the earth if only they were to have also no charlatans who were very bad healers (Lafiteau 1983 [1724]: I, 91). Surely, he explicitly compared the Iroquois society with the realities of the European society of the 17th and 18th centuries, but this comparison is revealing because of absence of any officials in the government system of the League. Yet, having no state institutions as such, the Iroquois society, based on the principles of democracy, was organized as a complicated system, whose apex was the confederation of tribes. It would be unjustified to describe a society with such a complicated organization as primitive. The strength of the League did not lie in its ability to centralize authority. It would be, probably, more proper to classify its political structure as decentralized.

The main function of a myth in a traditional society is to fix and stabilize social standards. The myth of the Great Peace Accord, concluded by the five tribes when the League was created, included a fundamental commandment: the tribes should not be at odds in whatever circumstances.



Really, there were no serious problems among the League members as long as it existed. The wampum was a material expression of the unshakeable social standards. It was the agreement of the five tribes on not being at odds and settling differences through the ritual of wampum payment (Fenton 1978a [1971]: 123) that made the Iroquois a real political force. They were able not only to dominate the neighbor Indian tribes but to successfully confront the Europeans for a long period. The war between the League and New France was waged throughout the 17th century with varying success, and the Iroquois were the winners on many occasions. For instance, writing a letter to Cardinal Richelieu on March 28, 1640, Jerome Lallemant, a Jesuit, directly mentioned that the smallpox epidemic, which had inflicted a considerable harm on the Huron, was a serious menace to the existence of New France, since the weakening of the Huron "screen" substantially facilitated the Iroquois' raids upon French settlements (Jesuit Relations 1959:17:222). The alliance of the five tribes was a force both the French and the English had to reckon with.

Thus, the line of democratic government runs throughout the Iroquois society, from an *owachira* (household) through clans and tribes as independent political units to the alliance of equal kindred tribes, a system of an essentially nonstate character, which performed a state's functions, such as large-scale conquest policy and protection of the society members. One can agree with Fenton's words without any hesitations when he says that the Iroquois League was based on kinship (Fenton 1978a [1971]: 123).

Each individual of that "state", irrespective of his or her sex, age, clan or tribal affiliation, was protected by the public system. For instance, when a murder happened, the guilty party paid a compensation to the victim party in the form of wampum threads. Unconditionally, this kind of the solution of the problem is characteristic of most of primitive societies and is not a manifestation of the state functions. However, the Iroquois regulated that process especially carefully. When a murder took place within a household, its members settled the matter among themselves without any public examinations, as it is customary in primitive societies (Lafiteau 1983 [1724]: I, 92). When it happened within a clan, the decision was with the clan council. When the culprit and the victim belonged to different clans of the same tribe, not to mention murders of the people of another tribe (naturally, if it was a League member), the conflict was settled by the tribal or League council respectively. Usually it was done by imposing a compensation, regulated by a complicated ceremonial, which reflected various aspects of the harm inflicted on both the victim and the whole community. In total, 60 gifts were provided for as a compensation for a murder. The first nine gifts included some thou-

sands of wampum beads to “dry the tears” of the bereaved family (Lafiteau 1983 [1724]: I, 95-96). Other gifts, too, were considered a compensation for various aspects of the both moral and material damage and were subject to a strict gradation. Generally, it is difficult to overestimate the importance of wampum as a symbol that maintained stability of the League and strengthened its unity and its role in arresting internal feuds.

Those who were guilty of especially grave crimes might be sentenced to death, indeed. Lafiteau narrates a case of this kind that happened in a Mohawk village. A wife left her husband as a result of a quarrel. In answer, the abandoned husband, helped by his friends (most probably, relatives. - D.V.), attacked his wife and her brothers when they were hunting. Most of the brothers were killed, but the wife and her younger brother managed to escape, reach the village before the assaulters and inform the community about the murders. The council deemed it impossible to limit the sanction for such a grave crime to a compensation, and the culprits were sentenced to death (Lafiteau 1983 [1724]: I, 99-101). Thus, the justice system was based on the kinship relations system but reached a quite high level.

The brightest characteristic of the egalitarianism of the Iroquois society is the question of the existence of any categories of dependent people therein.

As for the claims made by some Russian researchers concerning patriarchal slavery among the Iroquois, the existence of that phenomenon seems doubtful, indeed. According to numerous sources, the fate of a prisoner captured by the Iroquois was either full adoption to their ethnic milieu or being burnt at the stake after brutal tortures. Perhaps, there was no third option. E.E. Blomkvist mentioned the existence of domestic slaves among the Iroquois, noting that *“the Jesuits explicitly call them slaves in their reports and say that their life was completely in their owners' hands”* (Blomkvist 1955: 85). Yet the author does not refer to concrete sources. She only mentions J.F. Lafiteau's report on the high social status of the Iroquois women, who, along with other privileges, were entitled to decide the slaves' fate (Blomkvist 1955: 84). A prisoner's life was really in the hands of the women of the clan he had been transferred to. It depended on their decision whether he would be adopted or killed. The women's right to make this decision was a manifestation of the act of adopting a son. A mother proclaimed a prisoner her son, and, therefore, there was no question of his inferior position thereafter. But, after he was adopted, nobody could make a decision on his life. If somebody killed him or inflicted any harm on him, the culprit was subject to the same sanctions as those applied for such actions against a native Iroquois.

Yulia Averkieva also writes about social inequality in the Iroquois society and development of “*internal contradictions of... free people, slaves and clients, of the Iroquois and large prisoner groups from among the subdued tribes who had been included into an Iroquois tribe*” (Averkieva 1974: 232). Judging from this statement, the author distinguished slaves and prisoners, whose status was different, in her opinion.

Since the Iroquois society was egalitarian and all people of the Long House enjoyed equal rights, enslavement of some League members by other ones was hardly possible both individually and on the tribal level. It means that slaves and prisoners belonged essentially to the same category of people. Moreover, I failed to find any mentions of slavery among the Iroquois in the sources. Lafiteau employs the terms of prisoner and slave (bondman) in his fundamental work. However, it may be concluded from the content of the text that they are synonymous in this case. The missionary noted that the condition of a slave who had been granted life was grave enough among the Algonquin tribes but easy enough among the Iroquois and Huron, which was in direct proportion to the terrible destiny of those doomed to burning (Lafiteau 1983 [1724]: II, 111). A prisoner enjoyed a lower social status than his master and made the hardest work even among the northern Algonquin, who were behind the Iroquois in their social development and complexity of the social structure. It is a different matter that the master own life was often not easier in the harsh natural environment of the Canadian North.

The Iroquois, who were much more developed in this respect, did not have even this kind of gradation within the society. A prisoner did not belong to the fighter who had captured him. It was upon the village council to decide which family he should be transferred to. The right of accepting or rejecting a prisoner was with the eldest woman (Lafiteau 1983 [1724]: II, 86). After the adoption ceremony, a former prisoner became a full-fledged member of the family, clan and tribe that adopted him or her. They were given new names that had belonged to the persons they were supposed to replace (Lafiteau 1983 [1724]: II, 85), i.e., they became Iroquois and were not “*second class citizens in the Iroquois society*” as some authors believe (Averkieva 1974: 230; Kubbel 1988: 229). Thus, a non-Iroquois woman could become the head of a maternal family in the course of time, and a man might acquire the highest social status, become a chief or even a sachem due to his personal merits and qualities (Lafiteau 1983 [1724]: II, 85). Some prisoners were even allowed to choose between staying with the Iroquois and returning to their own tribes (Lafiteau 1983: 2: 112; Morgan 1983 [1851]: 180). It was the well-developed adoption system that ensured the political superiority of the alliance of the five tribes to other ethnic communities of the

East of North America (Lafiteau 1983: 2: 112). It was the source of maintaining and, probably, increasing the League's military potential by replenishing its squads with new warriors instead of killed ones (Fenton 1978a [1971]: 128; Lafiteau 1983 [1724]: II, 112).

Mass adoption was not rare. Apart from adopting individual prisoners, the League incorporated whole clans of the subdued ethnic groups (from among the Huron, neutral tribes, Erie, various Algonquin tribes) and even almost whole tribes. They were quickly assimilated within the *Ho-de-no-sau-nee* milieu. However, two phenomena of quite different natures must be distinguished in this case: adoption of strangers and incorporation of new tribes as equal subjects of the League. The translation of the *Ho-de-no-sau-nee* ethnonym as "*the people of the House that can lengthen*" (Blomkvist 1955: 83) seems felicitous. The Long House symbolized the structure of the League, and the inclusion of a new tribe into it meant a "lengthening" of that House, joining of another "hearth" to it. For instance, in 1722 or 1723, the Tuscarora, who spoke a language of the northern branch of the Iroquois linguistic group, were admitted to the League, becoming its sixth, essentially equal member (David Landy 1978: 519). Although none of the fifty sachemates was allocated to that tribe, it would be not absolutely correct to describe it as a League member without full rights.

At the same time, the Iroquois often deported almost whole defeated tribes to the territory of the League and included them into it. For example, after they defeated the Huron in 1649, most of the latter were brought to Iroquoisland and dissolved in the Iroquois milieu soon (Heidenreich 1971: 274-275). A Jesuit report of 1654 mentions the arrival of the envoys of the *Anniehronnons* (Mohawk. – D.V.) Iroquois tribe to New France, whose purpose was not only to sign a peace treaty with the French but to shift the remaining Huron to their lands, where the latter's relatives already inhabited after being captured earlier (Thwaites 1959 [1896-1901]: XLI, 46). One of the secret tasks of the *Onontaehtonns* (Onondaga. – D.V.) delegation at the peace negotiations was to separate the Huron colony from the French and carry away whole families together with women and children to Iroquoisland, which the Huron were afraid of very much, according to a French missionary (Thwaites 1959 [1896-1901]: XLI, 58). As a rule, the deported people lost their ethnic affiliation, ceasing to be a Miami, a Delaware or a Huron and becoming an Oneida, a Mohawk or a Seneca. William Fenton wrote that the adopted strangers became more Iroquois soon than the Iroquois themselves (Fenton 1978a [1971]: 128). It means that they could not be lower socially than the Iroquois by birth in any event. This rapid assimilation is a very interesting phenomenon, whose causes require a special investigation. Obvi-

ously, complicated ethnic processes took place in this case. So, when ethnically alien components were included into the Iroquois community *en masse*, they did not become, however, separate subjects of the League. Thus, in my opinion, it is not totally correct to claim that the Iroquois had a system of governing the conquered lands and subdued peoples (Averkieva 1974: 228). The latter did not become “junior” members of the League, “*alias its exploited members, who did not enjoy full rights*” (Kubbel 1988: 229). Their people were adopted by one of the five (six, after the Tuscarora joined the League) tribes and dissolved in their milieu.

In spite of the militarized character of the Ho-de-no-sau-nee League, aimed at outward expansion, the professional warriors did not form a separate social stratum. It is a different matter that each Iroquois was nobody but a professional fighter. So, it seems doubtful that regular squads with warfare as their only occupation emerged among them in the 18th century (Averkieva 1974: 224). Iroquois sachems often complained to the English that fur-trade was in decay because their males were permanently occupied by military raids. According to Y.P. Averkieva, this fact confirms the existence of a military stratum in the Iroquois society (Averkieva 1974: 224), replaced by adopted prisoners in hunting and fur-trade as less prestigious occupations. I think that these arguments are not convincing and even are a strong evidence in favour of absence of such a stratum. A decrease in fur-trade as a result of males' permanent military raids means that there were no regular military units and all men, without exception, were warriors. The existence of professional warriors presupposes other categories of the population with hunting as their function. Then fur-trade would not fall into a decay. Since it happened, one may conclude that the adopted members of the Iroquois society took part in wars side by side with the native Iroquois.

An important role in the politogenesis of the Iroquois belonged to the strategically advantageous geographical location of their territory. To consider the landscape, they occupied convenient valleys of central New York between the water-shed mountain ranges, which fact enabled them to use water paths with an easy access to all important areas of the north-east of North America, such as the the St. Laurence valley, sub-Atlantic territories in the south-east and the Ohio valley in the south-west. It ensured the Iroquois' strategical superiority. It substantially facilitated their military raids to various parts of the region and was an important factor of their success. The compact and densely populated territory of the five tribes was covered by a ramified network of tracks, along which the main U.S.A. highways were built later on. So, communication among the tribes was not difficult. It follows thence that the intertribal contacts were intense, their connection was

especially firm and made them aware of their common interests, consolidating the Ho-de-no-sau-nee as a single ethnos. At the same time, being protected by the mountains in the east and occupying the upper reaches of all relatively major rivers of the region, the Iroquois were immune initially to the Europeans' direct impact, the eastern Algonquin being most affected by all manifestations of their main blow.

The second factor was the isolation of the Iroquois cultural community among the Algonquin groups with their substantially different culture, which fact finally became the motive force for their consolidation. It is difficult to explain the enmity within the Iroquois community, between the Iroquois and Huron, from this standpoint. Probably, the reason was that the both were quite numerous ethnic groups. The Huron also formed a confederation of four tribes (Sagard 1976: 79), where two tribal components were considered senior, like the Onondaga, Mohawk and Seneca among the Iroquois, because of being, perhaps, the initial basis of the Huron confederation (Trigger 1976: 1: 163). The Huron were, most probably, more numerous than the five tribes (Speck 1945: 19-20; Dobyns 1966: 402). Besides, both the Iroquois and the Huron were characterized by relatively small territories and high density of the population, caused by their agricultural economy. Large Iroquois and Huron villages might have been inhabited by some 5000 people. Researchers have found a correlation between the transition to agriculture and growth of the population long ago. At the same time, hunting remained a major element of life support, which resulted in overconsumption of the resources of the exploited territory.

Attempts have been already made to explain the wars of the pre-colonial period between the Iroquois and Huron by the shortage of resources for life support (Gramly 1974: 601-605). In my opinion, they are well substantiated and interesting. Gramly found that at least two deer skins and a half were needed yearly for a Huron's garments. Starting from Trigger's data to the effect that the whole population of Huronia numbered 18000 on the eve of the European colonization, he calculated that they needed 64000 deer skins annually (Gramly 1974: 602). Their hunting territory was maximum 150 miles long (Gramly 1974: 604). The deer population that could subsist there was insufficient to provide the Huron with the necessary number of skins. It led to the overconsumption of the essential resources and their search elsewhere, namely in the Iroquois territory. The Iroquois also felt deer shortage, which was the reason of the wars (Gramly 1974: 605).

If one takes into account that the number of the Huron might have been more than 18000 (the earlier sources give the figure of some 30000, which is not impossible, in my opinion), this explanation of one of the rea-

sons of the Iroquois' wars looks quite convincing. Moreover, this and other environmental factors might have caused the consolidation of both the Iroquois proper and all other groups of the Iroquois cultural community and formation of confederations. Their rather small territories coupled with the gradually growing density of the population, along with relatively large permanent settlements, upset the balance between the society and environment, which prompted the Iroquois to conquer new territories. The above applies only to the territories that were environmentally similar to their own ones (it holds, in particular, for the Huron, Erie and neutral tribes). The result was the perfection of the social and political organization of the society. Equality of its components became a pledge of successes, since the specific features of the Indians' wars often required small mobile squads. In this setting, independence of individual tribes in hostilities was a must. When joint actions were required, it was not difficult to unite the forces on the equality conditions. Thus, the League developed from the very start as a military form of organization of the society. Later on, this form was the basis of its aggressive character, which was no longer determined by the environmental reasons.

Though there were no pronounced internal antagonistic contradictions in the Iroquois society, the external ones seem to have been intrinsic to it to some extent. We mean the Ho-de-no-sau-nee's relations with other ethnic communities of various levels. However, such contradictions are characteristic of all societies, including those with the lowest level of socio-political organization. The opposition "we vs. they" becomes effective here, and then it is natural to consider any member of any other group than the fellow-countrymen a being of a lower rank. The only form of exploitation of the defeated peoples reliably fixed among the Iroquois, naturally, other than military plunder, was tribute collection. As for Averkieva's opinion on the existence of overseers for the subdued groups, appointed by the League from among the Oneida (Averkieva 1974: 233), it seems disputable to me. Nothing gives grounds to claim that a vicegerency-like institution existed among the Iroquois. The geography of their territorial interests was really vast, but seizure of other tribes' territories by the League must be considered conditional by and large. Dealing with such tribes as the Tutello, who were among the junior League members along with the Tuscarora (Tooker 1978: 428) and depended on the Iroquois, or the Delaware, who also depended on them (Morgan 1983 [1851]: 179), it is necessary to take into account that these tribes themselves, experiencing the Europeans' pressure, had to settle in the League's lands and seek its protection.

As this was mentioned above, the Erie, neutral tribes and partly Huron were assimilated by the Iroquois and augmented the League tribes'

numerical strength. Their lands were really seized by the Iroquois. After defeating the Erie in 1654, they expanded their territory up to the Niagara and the southern shore of the Lake Erie (White 1978: 416). Naturally, they used that region for their economic needs. Earlier, it had been exploited by the Erie, whose life support system did not differ even slightly from that of the Iroquois. The neighbors' lands, being an environmental equivalent of their primordial territory in the central part of New York, with mixed broad-leaved caducous forests, corresponded to the Iroquois' wildlife management system, whose basis was agriculture and sedentary life in comparatively large permanent settlements and therefore were of interest to them. The natural environment of Huronia did not differ substantially from that of Iroquoisland (Fenton 1978b: 297). Yet even in this case the Iroquois preferred not to found new settlements in Huronia but to deport its inhabitants to the Long House land.

When one speaks about the seizure of the territories in, *e.g.*, Michigan or South-East Canada by the Iroquois, one must bear in mind that it does not mean that they directly subdued their population, who lost their independence as a result. It means only that the inhabitants of the said regions felt a permanent danger of an attack of the Iroquois military squads. The St. Laurence basin was a site of permanent clashes between the Iroquois and other tribes that lived there. The early French sources are full of reports on such encounters. They particularly annoyed the local population by ambushes at portages. Their permanent raids made some Algonquin groups leave the fertile lands on the St. Laurence banks and shift to the inner areas in the upper reaches of the Ottawa (Champlain 1966: 31 quatrieme voyage). But the Iroquois themselves did not settle there. They blocked the upper reaches of the St. Laurence over the course of almost entire 17<sup>th</sup> century. The trade paths that connected the western Indians with Quebec lay to the north of that convenient water artery, across a system of numerous and inconvenient portages (Heidenreich 1971: 266; Jennings 1984: 91). Moreover, the Iroquois raids affected even the inner taiga regions of Labrador. According to Albanelle, a Jesuit, the Iroquois killed or captured 80 local Indians near the Lake Nemisko, located between the James Bay and Lake Mistassini around 1665 (Thwaites 1959 [1896-1901]: LVI, 182). Thus, they did not introduce their government in an overwhelming majority of the territories they conquered but controlled them by sending military expeditions thereto regularly. The latter were so intense that the local Indians' dependence on the Iroquois became obvious, but no Iroquois government agencies were created in their lands.



One can agree, though with some reservations, with Hunt's and Russian authors' opinion that the reason of the Iroquois wars was their striving to get as much fur as possible and exchange it to European goods (Hunt 1940: 32-33). It was not a chance that the Iroquois wars of the 17th century were called beaver wars (Jennings 1984: 87). The territory their life support cycle was confined to was not very vast, whereas the density of the population, determined by agricultural economy, was very high for aboriginal North America. The same applies to the Huron. That is why the Iroquois destroyed almost all beavers in their land and had to raid the tribes who lived to the west and especially to the north of them, whose territories were rich in peltry for environmental and demographic reasons. However, even starting from this fact, it is difficult to explain their penetration into the depths of the Canadian taiga, which was essentially alien to their environmental culture and located more than a thousand kilometers from the land of the Long House, as it was in the case of appearance of their military squad near the Lake Nemisko. Neither can one refer to this fact to explain the Iroquois' frequent skirmishes with the Montagnais and Algonquin in the early 17th century (Champlain 1966: 208), when beavers were still found in Iroquoisland and the peltry market had not yet developed.

One should remember also that, talking to the English, the Iroquois elders referred to nothing but frequent military campaigns as the reason of the recession in beaver hunting and resulting shortage of peltry. It permits an assumption that the Iroquois wars were not waged invariably for peltry alone.

The above-mentioned statement of the Iroquois elders was made in the 18th century, when the League was involved into the wars between the French and English as the latter's ally. Then the Iroquois tribes took part in the conflict between the English and Americans. It resulted in a cardinal change in the League's socio-political structure. It is an example of a change made by external social factors in the form of contacts between different societies in the politogenesis process, turned thereby to a totally different path. In the situation that developed by the 1770s, the tribes' interests differed so much that the Cayuga, Seneca, Mohawk and Onondaga sided with the English at a meeting of the League Council, while the Tuscarora and Oneida supported the colonies (Averkieva 1976: 263). It was, perhaps, for the first time in the League's history that the fundamental principle of unanimity was violated. It was since that time that the Iroquois fell under the United States' full control and ceased to exist as an independent society; their political development moved in a new direction, if it may be described as a development at all.

As for their conquests in the south, they cannot be explained by the search of peltry sources or other economic reasons (Averkieva 1974: 248), because these regions were not very rich in peltry. Fenton's opinion that the Iroquois' southward raids against the Cherokee, Catawba, etc. had no economic motives seems substantiated. These clashes were of no advantage to the Iroquois' allies, the English, either, for they occurred in their rear (Fenton 1978a [1971]: 134). Apart from the Indian warriors' traditional striving for glory and full-fledged membership in the society due to military merits, another factor seems to be the maintenance of the alliance's military power, which resulted in the preservation and enhancement of its authority on the interethnic level. It equates the League's rank with that of early state formations.

It was due to the well-developed and smoothly functioning political organization that the people of the Long House, who had no state institutions, managed to dominate the north-east of the New World for more than two centuries. Since the Iroquois fought with all their immediate and many distant neighbors, it was the equal and voluntary alliance that made them strong.

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**THE BERBERS**  
**(19<sup>th</sup> – early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries AD)**

This chapter is a study of institutions and practices of power and order as they existed in highland Berber villages of Maghrib in the pre-colonial and early colonial periods. At that time this region used to be regarded as a backward periphery of the “civilized” world without real political institutions. For all the state officials, Ottoman, French and post-colonial, it was a typical case of the *Marches*, the wild frontier zone, inhabited by people which could barely be characterized as having any kind of political culture (Lavissee & Rembo 1938: IV, 289–291; cf. Gellner 1970: 205). However, the general purpose of this chapter is to examine major political institutions of the pre-modern Berber society such as the family, clan and village community. Using the well-known Foucauldian notion, the object of this study can be defined as “**micro-physics**” of non-state power and order existing among Berber highlanders in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The work is based mainly on data collected by French colonial administrators in Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco. Comparing these materials with those obtained by contemporary Western anthropologists during their case studies, the author attempts at rethinking the legacy of colonial science.

To understand the conditions of institutions and practices of power existence in the pre-modern Berber society, we need a greater sense of the regional positioning of Berber villages at the period of this work. Let us start with a brief characteristics of geographical and economic setting in which the Berber type of local social and political organization of Muslim highlanders has been formed.

There was a great variety of rural settlements in pre-colonial North Africa. Four major types of settlements can be distinguished among Berbers on the eve of French expansion in Maghrib. Sedentary highlanders and farmers of the plains lived in permanent fortified villages, which were called *taddert* in Berber or *qsar* and *deshra* in local Arabic dialects. There also were mixed settlements of dardeners, craftsmen and traders in Sahel known as

*balda*. Transhumant groups of cattle-breeders and peasants spent winter in their seasonal villages (*meshta* in Berber), which were built around communal stores which also served as fortress towers for local clans or village communities. Such store-towers were called *ghelaa*, *aghadir*, *tigremet* in Berber. To the aforesaid, one should add seasonal camps (*zmala* in Berber, *duar* in Arabic) of dispersed pastoral groups. Below we shall use the unique notion “**village**”, while speaking of all the above mentioned types of settlements. This notion is rather relevant for studies of the common Berber pattern of local village institutions and practices.

The diversity of village types in Maghrib was the result of both ethnic complexity and geographical contrasts of the region. Here variations in landscape and weather conditions can be so great, that within the space of a few miles one's impression of the region changes completely. There are three main geographical zones in Maghrib: poorly populated tropical deserts in the South, the zone of subtropics along the Mediterranean coast, the climate and landscapes of which are similar to South Europe, and a number of oases. Even more than water, land was lacking in Maghrib. The land which could be cultivated included only 1/6 of the territory of Algeria, about half of Tunisia and 55% of Morocco (Vidyasova 1982: 9). Thus the existence of the majority of the Berber population has always depended not so much on agriculture as on cattle-breeding and sometimes on irrigated horticulture. As the well-known French geographer Bernard has pointed out, the life in an arid environment, where droughts were frequent, have made from Berber villagers a kind of semi-nomads who had to combine agriculture and horticulture with transhumant cattle-breeding (Bernard 1949, 88–89; cf. Vidyasova 1982: 10).

Invasions of nomadic tribes, which formed a part of a widespread westward movement from the Arabian peninsula to the Atlantic coast, was a very significant feature of pre-modern Maghrib. Nomads overran the medieval Berber society and settled on the former Berber lands from the early middle ages up to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. This resulted in a very complex ethnic, political and economic situation in the Berber regions on the eve of the French conquests. A contemporary Russian economist Vidyasova has proposed the most detailed classification of cultural and economic types of local villagers at that period (Vidyasova 1987: 230–237). Among the Berbers she distinguishes semi-nomads of steppes and mountains occupied with irregular primitive agriculture; semi-resettled farmers in Tunisia and Algerian Kabylia; resettled horticulturists in the highlands of Kabylia, Rif, the Atlas and coastal plains as well. The picture of main peasant and semi-peasant types in Berber regions of pre-modern Maghrib in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and the first

half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century can become more complete, if we add to the above-cited classification sedentary farmers engaged in irrigated agriculture and horticulture in highland valleys of the Anti-Atlas (cf. Vidyasova 1987: 237, 254).

All the types of Berber villagers practised mixed agriculture in which farming, horticulture, cattle-breeding and crafts were usually combined. One of these activities was principal for a peasant household. So the grain economy dominated in Berber villages in a number of coastal plains. In Kabylia, Rif and Sahel, plantations of olive-trees, fig-trees and sometimes hornworts were the milestone of the village economy. Transhumant cattle-breeding was the principal source of existence for semi-nomadic groups in highlands and lowlands of Maghrib (Bernard 1949: 250, 255–256, 260; Anonymous s.d.: 228–230). Other economic activities played a supplementary role in the household. For instance, peasants of the Kabylia and Rif types and Sahel villagers were often engaged in different crafts and trade in local Friday markets. Non-married youths eventually retired from Kabylia villages to highland valleys of Aures or to towns of the old Ottoman Algeria for a year or more, where they used to work as masons, tanners, gardeners, water-carriers, door-keepers. Some of them became mercenaries in Ottoman and local tribal troops (Morizot 1962: 15; Johnson 1964: 226).

The polyfunctional character of the village economy allowed local fellaheen to live in semi-autarkic communities isolated from one another as well as from nomads and townsmen. Economic self-sufficiency of Berber settlements was attested by French anthropologists in remote highland regions of Maghrib even to the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (e.g. Louis 1975: 256). Of course, it doesn't mean, that the pre-modern Berber society constituted a completely closed system, a hard-surfaced, separate entity as many colonial scholars thought (Daumas 1853: 195; Desparmet 1948: I, 47). In fact Berber villagers often interacted with their outer environment in a highly complex dynamic fashion. There were no clear-cut stable boundaries between nomads, sedentary peasants and townsmen. But the basis of political and social organisation of the Berber villagers consisted of local institutions such as the family, clan and local community.

What was the village family in the 19<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> centuries? Its best description belongs to the well-known sociologist Bourdieu (Bourdieu 1963: 59). He depicted a Berber extended family or *aham* ("big house") in Kabylia. A similar organisation of the family (*hamula*) was described among nomadic tribes of the Atlas by another French scholar, Montagne (Montagne 1947: 52). In both cases a typical extended family consisted of several patrilineal, patrilocal and endogamous households spanning three or even four genera-

tions of blood relatives. This unity implied living under the authority of the senior and the most powerful male relative or the so-called “family patriarch”. As a rule, members of an extended family settled together, their houses forming a village quarter with a common courtyard. Houses, cultivated land and cattle constituted the indivisible family property or *mulk* according to the norms of Islamic law (Bourdieu 1963: 11–14).

In day-to-day labour and at holidays all members of the extended family lived, worked and amused together. According to their sex and age, they formed a number of relatively closed groups – those of children, teenagers, married men and women and elders (Schorger 1969: 279; Basagaña & Sayad 1974: 29–31). The extended family played the major role in the Berber society of the pre-colonial period. Village communities often emerged from political confederation of such families and economic fusion of their households. The existence of a village depended crucially on family unity and solidarity (Bourdieu 1963: 18–19; Louis 1975: 256–257; Bennoune 1986: 44).

A similar family structure was observed in Aures, Ouarsénis and other Berber regions of the Maghrib (Bernard 1949: 83; Lizot 1973: 114–115). Anthropologists, which conducted fieldwork there, have stressed that the more land and buildings belong to a family, the more important role it played in the village life (Launay 1963: 239). Among transhumant Berber tribes the economic basis and social prestige of the family were naturalised in its common grain store kept in a store-tower (Bernard 1949: 94–95).

Extended families of Berber villagers have appeared to be very stable. Case studies, carried out in the 20<sup>th</sup> century Algeria showed, that their organization and main functions have not changed much for the last 100–150 years (Montagne 1947: 57; Favret 1967: 79). The reason for this stability was the indivisibility of the family property as well as daily economic co-operation. One should also take into account a rational organisation of this social unit. As members of households of the same family often intermarried, its solidarity became stronger and stronger. There was an **endogamic** tradition or **habitus**, using a Boudieuan notion, in Maghrib, favoured cross-cousin marriages. Among the Berbers and indeed among other indigenous peoples of North Africa the marriage with an uncle’s daughter from the father’s side (*bint al-‘amm* in Arabic) is still regarded as the best party. If a youth has no such cousin he seeks for the future wife among his cousins from his mother’s side (*bint al-khall* in Arabic). A villager in the High Atlas was quoted as saying: “I want to marry my cousin (*bint al-‘amm*) in order to defend and to enlarge my family. Show me the man, who will refuse to marry his cousin if he has got any of them!”

The rate of cross-cousin marriages is still very high in the Berber rural areas. Sometimes it comprises 2/3 of all the local marriages (Louis 1975: 257, sq.; Matveev 1993: 114–115).

Apart from the reasons mentioned above the stability of extended families can be explained from the point of view of their psychological importance for fellaheen. Villagers cannot imagine a person without family. Everyone must belong to a family. From the birth a baby is regarded as a member of his parents' family. In all the Berber and Arabic dialects children are called by names of their parents: "son/daughter of so-and-so" (*ibn fulan/bint fulan* in Arabic) (Bourdieu 1979: 126–127, 273, n. 59; Landa 1988: 36). The family also determines the social positioning of growing up villagers. Only after the birth of his first baby a man or woman becomes the full member of village community. From this time they are addressed to as '*abu fulan* or '*umm fulan* ("father of so-and-so" or "mother of so-and-so") (Favret 1967: 83; Mamméri 1952: 41). The extended family protects all its members during their whole 'life-time. In cases of misfortune or accident, illness or death relatives always give a financial and psychological support to any member or household belonging to their family. Men of ripe ages must help their old parents. They are responsible for their funerals and all the rituals which accompany it. All these views were and still are shared by different Berber peoples in Maghrib (Basagaña & Sayad 1974: 78; cf.: Fei Hsiao Tung: 1988: 57–58).

In the eyes of Berber villagers a man without the family was like a fish without water, *i.e.* helpless, doomed. The attitude of the village community towards a man without kin was very unfavourable. He was seen as a pariah. According to Berber songs and proverbs, "the worst kind of slavery is to have neither family nor kin", "a man without sons should be regretted" (Sonneck 1902: 57; La poésie algérienne 1963: 168).

The family was the basic social and cultural unit of the village and had many functions, not all of which were explicit. First of all, it guaranteed the continuity of local "tradition" or cultural heritage of the village society. The patriarch transmitted to his heir land, knowledge and social status of the community member. The growing up of the children and teenagers was organized within the family. Many village boys received some kind of primary Islamic training informally from their kinsmen. After graduating from advanced mosque schools a few of them were able to become village imams; others lived a normal agriculturalists' life but with a special reputation for learning and piety. Only after completing the "education" within his family the youth went to the outside world: he became a seasonal migrant or a sol-



dier or got married and became a member of his native village community (Louis 1975: 256).

Family also relaxed inevitable conflicts of generations, decreased opposition between fathers and sons. Peasants are proverbially conservative. So did the Berber villagers. The reasons for this are plain. As a rule, extended family included three and sometimes even four generations. Village youths maintained main contacts with their older kinsmen. Economically and intellectually they depended upon their parents. Grown-up and even married young men continued to live with their parents. Gradually social role of the youths was changing. Observers of the colonial period have often described the situation in which the former young dissident, who used to rebel against local traditions, became the head of a nuclear family group or even the patriarch. He became the defender of “traditions of our fathers and grandfathers” (*ʿasabiya* in Arabic) (Duvignaud 1968: 98; Bennoune 1986: 374). The importance of family ties was so great, that even migrants, which moved from villages to towns continued to support poor patriarchs of their families. They still regarded themselves as dependent on the family for protection against outsiders (Chikhachev 1975: 9–10).

The role of family as a principal keeper of local culture was not specific feature of Berber villagers of the pre-modern Maghrib. Modern scholars discovered similar functions of extended family in other regions of Muslim and non-Muslim world. An American sociologist A. Rugh depicted extended families among contemporary Egyptian fellaheen (Rugh 1984). Davydov studied them in Afganistan and Iran (Davydov 1979). Similar family units (*tukhums*) were examined among highlanders of the North-Western Caucasus and Transcaucasia by the well-known Soviet ethnographer Kosven (Kosven 1961). His Chinese colleague Fei Hsiao Tung described the extended families of peasants (*tszya*) in South China (Fei Hsiao Tung, 1989). Thus we can conclude that there is a common typical feature of a number of pre-state local and peasant societies.

The importance of the extended family in the Berber village was obvious. On the contrary, the significance of the village community was much more difficult to interpret. The social structure of pre-colonial Maghrib was very fluid in its institutions and boundaries (Gilsenan 1982: 47). At that period the Berber village constituted a kind of the lineage community. In Kabylia several extended families, the heads of which were descended patrilineally, i.e. strictly through males only, from a common ancestor generally four or five generations back, formed a lineage or *taharrubt* in Berber. In Morocco the latter was called *ires* (“a bone”). Besides blood relatives, each lineage comprised families of clients which had joined it in the past and pre-

sent times. The main function of the lineage was the protection of members from aggression by supporting them in quarrels. A number of lineages constituted a village faction which was called *adrum* (*iderman* in plural), *soff* or *harfiqt* (Tillion 1938: 43). Factions were important social and political groups which had emerged during constant inner conflicts between villagers. Each of them possessed a common name, quarter, cemetery and often local saint shrine. Two or more factions formed the village community (Bourdieu 1963: 11–12, 31).

Politically and socially the majority of the Berber villagers belonged to the most oppressed part of rural populations in Maghrib. Their villages were ruled by rival powerful clans of local military (*qa'id*) and religious (*mrabtin*) aristocracy (Landa 1976: 49–51). That's why they have no explicit institutions of the village community. Only Berber highlanders have preserved a relatively independent community organisation (*harruba* in Kabylean Berber). Their villages were governed by the council of elders called *jema'a* in Arabic or *tajma'at* in Berber. As such the latter included representatives of all the village lineages and factions. Every year they elected the head of village community (*'amin*, *sheikh*) charged to keep order and bring criminal to justice of the council of elders. The latter was to meet regularly at central place or at the village mosque on Friday. *Jema'a* settled land and criminal cases according to the local customary (*'adat*) and Islamic law, organised village markets or *baazars*, collected taxes which were to be transmitted to Ottoman officials or to clans of local nobility (Ratsel 1903: II, 501).

But even self-governed village communities had no unity. They were split up into two or more rival factions. The council of elders had to settle their permanent quarrels and clashes concerning land boundaries, women and family honour, social status, etc. (Daumas 1853: 199; Mamméri 1952: 36). It should be noted that these political cleavages in Berber villages were often vertical cleavages, which run across social hierarchy, and not horizontal cleavages of class conflict. This fact was acknowledged even by Marxist scholars (Gellner 1970: 204–219; Landa 1976: 56; cf. Alavi 1988: 346).

The “factionalism” of the pre-modern Berber society is often characterized as “*ordered anarchy*” (Wolf 1969: 237; cf. Daumas 1853: 4, 290), and it is often alleged that it signifies lacking of a real community organisation. The pre-modern village is seen as an “*amorphous body and not an organic unity*”. Many contemporary scholars reject the notion of “village community” while identifying local villagers. On their opinion, the lack of common vested interests among lineages and factions as well as the limited

character of material goods prevented them from grouping into a kind of community (Tillion 1957: 395; cf. Adams 1986: 175–176). In the present chapter, I would like to dissolve such conceptions and give the reader a more cautious awareness of what the village community in fact meant in the pre-modern Berber society.

To my mind, the mentioned above concept misinterprets the world outlook, or the **cognitive map** of the pre-modern Berber society. It treats the pre-modern Berber society as an association of individuals which gathered in order to achieve their common interests. But, as is well known from the works of contemporary anthropologists, the existence of pre-modern social bodies is as a rule not connected with any distinct goal (Rugh 1984: 31, 32). Berber villagers are grouped in clusters based on local kin system to which they belong from birth. In contrast, many social units of the modern industrialized society are often based on common economic, cultural, political or other vested interests. Thus the above cited concept substitute the cognitive map of pre-modern village society for that of the modern town one. By fault it uses the notion of social space adopted in the contemporary town society in order to characterize the political culture of pre-modern village.

To understand a real meaning of the village community for its members we should analyze local notions of order and power. Basing on data collected in Algeria and Morocco in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, we shall try to look at the village by the eyes of fellaheen who lived there. These evdebs show that the village is often compared to the family. Kinship relations are regarded as the commonest type of social and political relations. Thus the peasant mentality conceived any social or political institution of the village or from the outside world as the continuation of the extended family (Montagne 1947: 48–50). In practice the relationships between villagers were organized like quasi-familial ones. They used to call concrete attributes of family such as land, house and blood kinship to define both the village community and family villagers. It should be noted, that there are a lot of synonyms to the word “family” in Berber dialects.

In Kabylia the family is often treated as a “big house” (*aham* or *beyt* in Arabic). People living in one house are usually addressed to as members of the household (using the Arabic loan-words *’ahl al-beyt*). The expression *’ahl al-buyut* signifies descendants of rich and respected family or village clan. As Bourdieu and other modern scholars have shown, the structure of traditional Kabylia house symbolizes the organisation of an extended family (Bourdieu 1979: 140–143; Colonna 1987: 27). For instance, the main pillar of the house is concerned as the family patriarch. Like a family, the house is

divided into segregated female and male parts correspondent to socially sexual distinction within a family.

Berbers live and work more in the street than in their houses. Nowhere there is privacy in its modern, Western meaning within the limited confines of village. In most Berber settlements houses are built very closely. In the highlands of the Atlas the village looks like an enormous hive. Plane roofs of lower houses serve as courts for the higher houses. The house constitutes a real indivisible "*part of the village*" (Maunier 1926: 52; Bernard 1949: 95). Not only a house but also a village quarter forms an important social unit. Because close neighbors often intermarry the village quarters often have some kinship unity as well. In the High Atlas and Kabylia some village quarters were actually called after lineages. A Kabylia villager, being asked about the meaning of the house, answered that "*to make a house or a family you first need neighbors*". The Berber proverb states: "*Seek for a neighbor before [building] a house*" (Bernard 1949: 93–94).

The Berbers also define the family by the Arabic loan-word *al-'a'ila*. It means "mutual assistance" with a special reference to reciprocal interrelations between blood relatives within a family. From the same root are derived notions "bread-winner" (*'a'il*), "family dependence" (*'i'ala*), "dependent" (*'ayil*). Linguistic analysis of these terms shows the important role of **reciprocity** in the village society. Here an informal institution of mutual neighbor assistance was practised in a large scale. More often it was applied during the harvest time. The whole village population took part in the main agricultural works. If a peasant family failed to reap on its field, it asked for assistance its fellow-villagers. In turn it organised a common feast for workers called *tuviza* (Bennoune 1986: 348; Launay 1963: 53). Villagers used to help their relatives and neighbors, when they constructed a house and mosque or repaired roads (Maunier 1926: 38). The important role of reciprocity in the village society is stressed in a number of local sayings. For example, a Kabylia proverb states: "*when people do not work together, nobody in the community (jema'a) can do anything*" (Bennoune 1986: 355).

Cooperating in the everyday life and work, villagers are grouping on the basis of their sex and age. As for the family, blood kinship is the principal criterion of membership. Thus the family is also called *'ahl* ("people, inhabitants" [of a community] in Arabic). The personal ties of men through men, women through women, children through children, and elders through elders formed the core of main formal groups in the village society. Most observers have stressed, that the villagers' notion of social units is very concrete (Bourdieu 1979: 65). Every group had rights and duties of its own. Men worked in fields and gardens. Women were responsible for housekeeping.

Children and teenagers helped their parents. In the Highlands they usually worked as shepherds. Experienced elders supervised over all the household activities (Mamméri 1952: 31, 33, 151).

Social spaces of different sex and age groups were always strictly divided. Fields and main public places of the village such as the mosque, market and coffee-houses were reserved for men. The elders often gathered in the main square by the village mosque. By contrast, the world of women was more oriented towards family. In the day-to-day village life women customarily met at the places of collective family works such as fountains or rivers. In Kabylia young men regularly held evening-parties (*seja*) in the fields, where they sang and danced. Women and girls couldn't attend these parties. As one would expect in a Muslim society, the sexual distinction was strongly emphasized. A man and a woman, if not blood relatives, couldn't even speak in the street and in houses (Daumas 1853: 166, 186–188; Ratsel': 1903: II, 500–501; Bourdieu 1979: 122–125).

Villagers' meetings, which gathered for certain occasions like harvest home, fetes of local saint shrines, celebration of Prophet's nativity and other important religious and social events were of special importance. During these meetings villagers realized themselves as a common family (*'ahl al-qarya* in Arabic). Feeling of emotional affection among close relatives (*qara'ib* in Arabic) reinforced the sense of inner solidarity of villagers at that moment (Gellner: 1970: 206). It should be noted, that the majority of village inhabitants were incorporated into a common kinship network. It extended from village to village and provided vital channels for all sorts of activities and for arranging of marriages which will in turn forge new kin ties. Observers have stressed that a villager can remember hundreds of his still living relatives from both his father's and mother's sides (Gellner 1970: 209; cf. Rugh 1984: 57). The same feeling was associated with the **“patron – client” relationships**, very typical of the Berber village. The emotional affection to the “family” was shared by powerful patrons and their clients which were often adopted by their lineages. It resulted in strengthening the village unity. Although sharp contrast which existed among the village population divided it into several social classes, there was a well-developed sense of internal solidarity.

The village unity has not always been explicit. In the everyday life each village existed as a number of competing lineage communities, which in turn were divide into several sexual and age groups. The common solidarity of villagers is mobilized only in cases of emergency or important social gatherings, mentioned above. As the well-known specialist on the North African village Ayrout has pointed out, the *“fellaheen seeks for intercourse only if*

*the matter concerns land and blood shared by all village inhabitants*” (Ayrou 1963: 110, 152). The most important events in the life of family and village, – such as harvesting, saint’s day, birthday, marriage or funerals, – gathered the whole village population. Such unstable, “pulsating” character of the Berber village community caused ambiguity in its ethnographic descriptions. Some authors have stressed “collectivism” of villagers (Gellner 1970; Launay 1963), while others have revealed only their day-to-day “factionalism” (Bourdieu & Sayad 1964; Favret 1967; Lizot 1973).

Although the majority of the village population spent almost all their life within the confines of local community, there occurred irregular contacts between villagers and the outside world. The village has never constituted a closed cluster. It is important to stress here, that in the pre-colonial period such contacts had a collective character and were supervised by lineage authorities. The Berber village was part of wider social and political communities – those of tribes and Sufi brotherhoods.

As for local tribes, they were of a mixed, the Berber and Arabic, origin. There were two different types of tribal organization in pre-colonial Maghrib. In the first case several villages inhabited by sedentary farmers formed a tribe, or ‘*arsh*’ in Berber. Every tribe descended from a common mythical ancestor. It possessed a waste common territory also called ‘*arsh*’. The tribe was ruled by a military chief (‘*amin ul-’umana*’) elected every year by the council of elders, called *jema’a*, which was composed of representatives of the villages. It represented the highest judicial power of the tribe. During wars and political troubles many tribes formed military and political coalitions – so-called *taqbilt*. This kind of tribal organization was observed in Berber villages of the Kabyle and Rif types (Bourdieu 1963: 11–12; Hart 1972: 25). Semi-nomadic groups and recent sedentary farmers formed tribes with the same attributes such as common land (‘*arsh*’), military chief and sometimes council of elders (*tajma’at*). But its basic social unit was the faction (*harfiqt* in Berber and *ferqa* in dialectal Arabic) composed of sub-fractions, which in turn included several lineages, and not a village. This kind of tribe was known among the Berbers of Aures, the Atlas and some other regions (Montagne 1947: 48–50; Gellner 1970: 205).

The Berber tribal institutions were of lasting vitality. They persisted long after the French colonial regime has been established and were finally destroyed by reforms of the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As official colonial records showed, in the 1930s tribes covered more than half of the Tunisian rural population (Vidyasova: 1987, 238); 709 tribes were recorded in Algeria in 1935 (Anonymous 1938: 184–185), and more there were 760 tribes in Morocco in the early 1950s (Hoffmann 1967: 238). Scholars of the colonial

period used to see “backwardness” of epy tribal society in this phenomenon, which was said to represent “*archaic structures survived from the primitive clans*” (Daumas 1853: 191, 195; Julien 1952: I, n. 365).

However, the re-thinking of the colonial evidence by contemporary anthropologists and historians have shown, that the Berber and other tribes in Maghrib had a very complex and not a primitive organization. Apart from blood relatives, it included a wide social coalition of different rural and urban groupings, such as the nomads, peasants, craftsmen, traders, ruled by clans of military (*juad*) and religious (*mrabtín*) nobility (Wolf 1969: 214; Gellner 1970: 205). New tribes continued to emerge up to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Vidyasova 1987: 260). In the pre-modern Maghrib tribes had important political meaning. So under the Ottoman and the early French rule some of them were used by the state as a military and police forces. They supported law and order in the countryside and collected taxes from other tribes and villages. Such “state” tribes were called *mahzen*. The same tradition of the tribal political organization existed in pre-colonial Morocco. According to official records, in the late Ottoman Algeria *mahzen* tribes included 10 or 20% of the village population (Lavissee & Rembo 1938: IV, 290; Landa 1976: 44).

The tribal institutions and practices played a supplementary role in the village life. They protected the village society from destructive outside invasions. In the pre-colonial period tribe had no permanent administration. Tribal *jema’a* and *tajma’at* did not intervene into inner affairs of village communities (Daumas 1853: 204). The sense of tribal solidarity of villagers was mobilized very rarely – in cases of wars, rebellions and other important disasters (Skorobogatov 1987: 110, 174). In the everyday life the role of family and lineage preponderated that of the tribe. The tribal solidarity reinforced the common village solidarity. Extra lineage quasi-kin ties form new numerous relationships between households and individuals. It should be noted, that the peasant conception of the tribe was constructed on the notion of family as that of clan and village. That’s why the names of Berber tribes include the notion “children, descendants” (*ayt* and *uld* in Berber and *beni* in dialectal Arabic) (cf. Tillion 1938: 42–54).

At the same time, the Berber villagers were covered by the network of local Sufi brotherhoods. The latter played a crucial cultural and political role in the pre-colonial society of the Marches in Maghrib. Most of the Berber tribes had their own saint patrons, among which there were descendants of the Prophet – the noble Sherif families. Their shrines (*kubba*) often became places of pilgrimages of those attracted by *baraka* (blessings) and miracles of the saint. Around saint shrines special lodges (*zawiyat*) which

consisted of a fortress, Islamic school and lodges for pilgrims and strangers were often built (Gellner 1970: 207; Landa 1976: 58–59). In pre-colonial Morocco the most popular shrine was the *zawiya* of Sidi Sayd Hansala which belonged to his descendants (the clan Hansala clan). In Algeria the same role played the Sufi order Rahmaniya founded in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century by a *mrabtin* Ben ‘Abd ar-Rahman from Kabylia in this phenomenon. After his death two shrines of him were built in the town of Constantina and in highlands of Kabylia. By this reason he was called “Possessor of two Shrines” (*Zu-l-Qabrein* in Arabic) (Ratsel’ 1903: II, 503; Skorobogatov 1987: 114).

From the 11<sup>th</sup> century up to the end of the French conquest *zawiyat* were important centres of political organisation and power of the Berber villagers. Lineages of holy men (*mrabtin*) descendants were headed by representatives of local branches of Sufi brotherhoods. Apart from *zawiyat* they were based on huge *waqf* property called in Berber *habus*, property of Islamic taxes such as *‘ushr* and *zakat*. *Mrabtin* clans possessed their own troops and were able to stop military conflicts between tribes. In the first period of the French occupation of Algeria Sufi orders headed by *mrabtin* nobility played a crucial role in the political mobilization of the Berber rural population and in organization of the tribal resistance to the French (Gilsenan 1982: 141–151). Here one should mention movements of ‘Abd al-Qadir, Muqrani, rebellion of the tribe Uled Sidi-Sheikh in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Algeria (Julien 1961: I, Ageron 1964: 8; Lavissee & Rembo 1938: IV, 296, 303).

Thus, tribal institutions, Sufi orders and practices strengthen the solidarity of the village. It was the powerful means of military, political and cultural protection of the Berbers against possible aggression of the outside world and the state. It should be added, that an important function of these practices was to provide a barrier to the access of strangers into the Berber village. The Attitudes towards strangers at the period of our study were, on the whole, antagonistic. This kind of social and political organization of the Berbers caused a political segmentation of local society. But, on the other hand, it provided it with a strong inner autonomy based on local social and political institutions. The situation in the Berber Marches of Maghrib described in this chapter, preserved till the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> – the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Later it was upset and then demolished by drastic state reforms of the colonial and post-colonial times.

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# **NORTH-EAST YEMEN** **(1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> millennia AD)**

Due to certain factors<sup>1</sup> the first South Arabian states arose in the area of the Internal Yemeni Lowland (*al-Mashriq*). At the beginning, in the early 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC, the main area of the South Arabian civilization looked like a bow-like strip along the edge of the Ṣayḥad desert (with the main centers in the areas of Maʿrib, Timnaʿ, Shabwah and the wadis al-Jawf and Markhah – Beeston 1975a: 5; 1975b: 28; Baʿalqaḥ 1985: 20–21; Robin 1984: 198; 1991c: 52; 1991e: 63; 1996 &c.). Civilization penetrated into the Yemeni Highlands sometime later, and this process seems to have been often connected to the subjugation of the considerable territories of the Highlands by the Lowland states, first of all by the Sabaean and Qatabanian “commonwealths”. It was also connected to the cultural influence of the Lowland communities, colonization &c.<sup>2</sup>

In the Middle Period (the 1<sup>st</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> centuries AD) we see the Highlands politically dominating in Yemen (Beeston 1975a: 5; 1975b: 29; Rhodokanakis 1927: 113; Robin 1982b: 17; 1984: 212; 1991c: 52; 1991e: 63, 67 &c.; Korotayev 1993d; Korotayev 1995a: 83–84). Some role in the process of the transition of the dominant position from the internal Lowlands to the Highlands was certainly played by the transfer of the main incense trade routes from land to sea. This must have caused a considerable decline in the economic importance of the edge of the Ṣayḥad desert (Ryckmans 1951: 331; Bowen 1958a: 35; Irvine 1973: 301; Robin 1982a, I: 98; 1982b: 17; 1984: 212; Crone 1987: 23–36; Audouin, Breton & Robin 1988: 74 &c). Quite a significant role may have also been played by the processes of the Arabian aridization (see for example Fedele 1988: 36; Robin 1991e: 63; 1991f: 88). But the most important factor seems to have been the silting of the irrigation systems.<sup>3</sup> As a result, the

<sup>1</sup> I have tried to present their description and analysis in: Korotayev 1993c; 1995a: 79–81.

<sup>2</sup> The main role here seems to have belonged to the Sabaean center; however, the role of the Qatabanian center also seems to have been rather important (especially in the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC – see e.g. von Wissmann 1968). The Minaean-Madhabian center also appears to have exerted considerable cultural influence on certain areas of the Highlands (see e.g. C 609; von Wissmann 1964: 319, 343–344, 355; Robin 1982a, I: 48–49; Baʿalqaḥ 1988 &c).

<sup>3</sup> It seems to be partly caused by the degradation of the natural plant cover of the Western slopes of the Yemeni Mountains due both to the anthropogenic factors and the probable climatic change (e.g. Robin 1991f: 88).

situation in the Lowlands became similar to an ecological catastrophe (Serjeant 1960: 583; Piotrovskij & Piotrovskaja 1984: 107; Robin 1984: 220–221; 1991f: 88; Sauer *et al.* 1988: 102).<sup>4</sup>

With respect to the Sabaeen cultural-political area the situation can be also described in the following words: several factors mentioned above caused a significant decline of the Sabaeen state and civilization by the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC.<sup>5</sup> The weakening state organization seems to have become incapable of providing guarantees of life and property to individuals, and it was the clan organization that took on these functions to a considerable extent.<sup>6</sup>

Though the Sabaeen state, which seems to have found itself on the brink of the complete collapse at the end of the Ancient Period, in the late 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC, considerably reconsolidated during the Middle Period (in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries AD), it remained rather weak, especially in comparison with the Ancient Sabaeen state. Indeed, the inscriptions witness to the existence of quite a strong state organization in the center of the early Sabaeen Commonwealth. For example, this relatively developed state apparatus let the Sabaeen *mukarribs* erect dozens of various buildings (irrigation structures, temples, city walls &c) in many parts of the Commonwealth.<sup>7</sup> We know relatively much about the Ancient Sabaeen civil officials who could be appointed (*s<sup>2</sup>ym*) to organize certain constructions or to be in charge of a certain city &c.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup> In addition, it might be reasonable to mention as one of its likely causes “an increase in the saline content of the soils and clays due to centuries of intensive irrigation” comparable to the well-known Mesopotamian case (Sauer *et al.* 1988: 107).

<sup>5</sup> For example, direct evidence for the dramatic decline of the Sabaeen state at the end of the Ancient Period has been recently found by Robin in the materials of the German Archaeological Expedition in Maʿrib (Robin 1989b: 222); see also *e.g.* Pirenne 1956: 174–178; von Wissmann 1968: 10 &c.

<sup>6</sup> It is almost a rule that in agrarian societies the weakening of the state organization causes the consolidation of the clan structures (for more detail see Korotayev & Obolonkov 1989; 1990).

<sup>7</sup> C 366 a; b; 367 + Lu 16; 490; 622; 623; 627; 629; 631; 632 a; b; 634; 636; 957; Ga 46 [Ga MM]; Gl 1122 + 1116 + 1120; 1558 [= MAFRAY-al-Asaʿh 6]; 1560 [= MAFRAY-al-Asaʿh 5]; 1561; 1567 [= MAFRAY-ad-Durayb 3]; A 710; 775 [MAFRAY-Hirbat Saʿuʿd 4]; 776 [= MAFRAY-Hirbat Saʿuʿd 2]; 777 [= MAFRAY-Hirbat Saʿuʿd 8]; MAFRAY-al-Asaʿh 2; 3; 7; -Hirbat Saʿuʿd 6; 10; Ph 133 [= MAFRAY-al-Asaʿh 1]; R 3943; 3945; 3946; 3948 [= Gl 1550 = MAFRAY-ad-Durayb 4]; 3949; 3950; 4399; 4401; 4429; 4494; 4844 [= MAFRAY-Hirbat Saʿuʿd 1]; 4850 [= MAFRAY-Hirbat Saʿuʿd 3]; 4904 [= Gl 1559 = MAFRAY-al-Asaʿh 4]; 4906; 5096 &c. The epigraphic sigla see in: Avanzini 1977; Beeston *et al.* 1982; Korotayev 1995a; 1996; 1997; 1998.

<sup>8</sup> C 375 [= Ja 550]; 439; 494; 496 [= MAFRAY-Hirbat Saʿuʿd 13]; 566; Ja 552; 555; 557; MAFRAY-al-Balaq-al-Ġanuʿb 1 [= Gl 1719 + 1717 + 1718]; R 4428; 4635; 4845 bis; Ry 584; Sh 20 &c; see also Ryckmans 1951: 62–64, 83, 85, 88–90, 92; Audouin, Breton & Robin 1988: 74–76 &c.

In a sharp contrast with the relatively scanty Ancient epigraphy the numerous Middle Sabaeen inscriptions of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries AD give us almost no information of this kind.<sup>9</sup> In general, the Middle “Sabaeen” inscriptions do not witness to the existence of almost any specific features of the regular state in the Middle Sabaeen cultural-political area, neither a regular civil administration nor a regular system of taxation<sup>10</sup> nor an artificial administrative-territorial division. The silence of the sources does not seem to be fortuitous, as the Middle Sabaeen political system did not really need these institutions. This system appears to have consisted of the weak state in its center and strong autonomous chiefdoms (*shaḏbs* of the second order) on its periphery. The only really well attested obligation of these *shaḏbs* was to provide military service (*s<sup>2</sup>wḏ*) to their kings. However, this apparently very loose system turned out to work very effectively.

In any case, there are serious grounds to suppose that by the end of the Ancient Period the Sabaeen state had significantly weakened and notwithstanding its partial reconsolidation during the Middle Period it had never regained the strength it had in the Earliest Subperiod (in the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC). As a result we can see by the Middle Period the consolidation of the clan organization (e.g. Korotayev 1995a; 1998: Chapter VIII) which acted as a partial substitute for the weak state and remained really strong during the whole of the Middle Period (Korotayev 1998: Part I; see also Korotayev 1993a; 1993b; 1993c; 1994a; 1994c; 1994d; 1995a; 1995b; 1996).

As has been mentioned above, the Middle Sabaeen political system may be characterized as consisting of a weak state in its center and strong chiefdoms on its periphery. However, there is no doubt that this was a real *system*, i.e. it had properties which could not be reduced to the characteristics of its elements.<sup>11</sup> It should be also taken into consideration that the state and chiefdoms were not the *only* elements of this political system. It included as

<sup>9</sup> This fact has been already noticed by Ryckmans (1951: 62–64, 175–176).

<sup>10</sup> Though, if Kitchen's interpretation of line 16 of Shibḏanu 1 (Kitchen 1995) is correct, this inscription may be considered as evidence for existence of some kind of regular taxation in some parts of the Sabaeen cultural area after its final subjugation by the Himyarite kings in the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. It does not appear completely unlikely taking into consideration the much higher degree of the political centralization of the Himyarite kingdom (see below) and the fact that the Himyarite kings tried to establish some kind of a similar centralized regular state administration in the Sabaeen cultural-political area.

<sup>11</sup> It does not seem productive either to consider the Middle Sabaeen cultural-political area as an agglomerate of political units, like an alliance of states, or tribes: the level of the political integration of this entity was rather high, quite comparable to that of an average early state. Hence, this entity must be considered as belonging to the same level of political integration as e.g. early state rather than an alliance of early states.

well, for example, a sub-system of temple centers<sup>12</sup> and the civil community of Maʿrib,<sup>13</sup> as well as some true tribes (not chiefdoms) in the area of the Sabaean Lowlands (primarily the tribes of the Amirite confederation – see e.g. von Wissmann 1964; Robin 1991f; 1992b &c). With the transition from the Ancient to the Middle Period the Sabaean political system was essentially transformed, becoming as a whole very different from the “state”, but remaining, however, on basically the same level of political complexity. Without losing any political complexity and sophistication, the Middle “Sabaean” managed to solve in quite different ways the problems which in complex societies are normally solved by states, such as the mobilization of resources for the functioning of the governing sub-system, territorial organization of a vast space and the provision of guarantees of life and property.

The Middle “Sabaean” experience seems to demonstrate that an integrated territorial entity (even when it is considerably large, complex and highly developed in comparison with e.g. an average chiefdom) need not necessarily be organized politically as a state. This appears to show that for the “early state” (in Claessen’s sense of this term [see Claessen & Skalník 1978]) the transition to the “mature state” or complete “degeneration” into “tribes” and “chiefdoms” were not the only possible ways of evolution. One of the possible alternatives was its transformation into a “political system of the Middle Sabaean type”. The real processes of political evolution seem to have been actually much less “unilinear” than is sometimes supposed.

This impression appears to be emphasized by the fact that a significant transformation seems to have occurred in the area in the Early Islamic Period (see e.g. Robin 1982a; 1982b; Piotrovskij 1985; Dresch 1989: 191),<sup>14</sup> and by the late Middle Ages the political system of the former “Sabaean” region seems to have consisted mainly of a bit stronger state in its center and true tribes (not chiefdoms) on its periphery.<sup>15</sup> Within this system the tribes and state

<sup>12</sup> There is no doubt that the Middle “Sabaean” temples had important political functions; however, the level of their autonomy appears to have been normally very high, and by no means could they be described as integral parts of the administrative sub-systems of the Middle “Sabaean” state and chiefdoms (see Korotayev 1998: Chapter V, or e.g. Korotayev 1995d).

<sup>13</sup> It does not appear reasonable to characterize this civil community either as a “chiefdom”, or as a true “tribe”. There are also some grounds to suppose the existence of autonomous civil communities in Nashq and Nashshaʿn. The *shaʿb* of Sʿirwaʿh also seems to have had some evident features of the civil community (see especially Ja 2856).

<sup>14</sup> Thus, according to Dresch in al-Hamdaʿn’s time (the 10<sup>th</sup> century AD) “Upper Yemen may well have been in a state of transition from a quasi-feudal system to the tribal one” (Dresch 1989: 191); similar conclusions have been produced by Gochenour (1984a: 36ff.).

<sup>15</sup> In the meantime in the Southern Highlands (in the former Himyarite area) there persisted more regular state structures (see e.g. Burrowes 1987: 9; Dresch 1989: 8–15, 192; Obermeyer 1982: 31–

constituted one well integrated whole (Stookey 1978: 79–95, 171–173; Obermeyer 1982; Piotrovskij 1985: 70, 97–100; Gerasimov 1987: 45–55; Dresch 1984b; 1989; Abuṣṣāḥ 1985: 98–138; 1990; vom Bruck 1993 &c). There does not seem to be any adequate term to denote systems of this kind.

It might be reasonable to apply here some term like a “multipolity”, defining it as a highly integrated system consisting of heterogeneous polities (e.g. of state and chiefdoms, or state and tribes).<sup>16</sup> The following reservation seems to be necessary here: the medieval political system of North-East Yemen (as well as the Middle Sabaean political system [the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries AD]) included in addition to state and tribes (of course, not chiefdoms as it was in the Middle Sabaean case) some other important elements. It seems sufficient to mention here the “religious aristocracy” (*sayyid/saʿīdah*), tracing their descent to Muḥammad, and performing in the tribal areas e.g. important mediating political roles, as usual without occupying there any formal political functions and remaining mainly outside the tribal (and in many cases state) hierarchy (Serjeant 1977; Chelhod 1970a: 80–81; 1975: 70–71; 1979: 58f.; Gerholm 1977: 123; Stookey 1978: 95; Obermeyer 1982: 36–37; Dresch 1984b: 159f.; 1989: 140–145; Abuṣṣāḥ 1985: 212–227; 1990). Within the medieval North-East Yemen political system the *sayyids* appear to have taken some functions of the pre-Islamic (or, to be more correct, pre-monotheistic) system of temple centers, on the one hand, and ones of the *qayls*, on the other (though, unlike the *qayls*, the political leaders of the pre-Islamic *shaʿb*, the *sayyids* in

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32; Stookey 1978: 50, 124; Weir 1991: 87–88; Wenner 1967: 38 &c). I would emphasize that the state organization in the Southern Highlands was already significantly stronger and more regular than in the North in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries AD (see e.g. C 448 + Ga 16 [Hakir I]; R 4230; Baṣṣāḥ & Robin 1980: 15; Robin 1981b: 338; Baṣṣāḥ 1994; Korotayev 1995a), whereas in that period in the North we find a much stronger clan organization (Korotayev 1998: Chapter VIII; see also e.g. Korotayev 1993c: 51–53, 56; 1995 a: Chapters I, III).

<sup>16</sup> There does not seem to be any ground to consider the multipolity as a local South Arabian phenomenon. Extra-South-Arabian examples of multipolities of the North Yemeni Zaydī type (“state + tribes”) could be easily found e.g. in the Middle East of the last two centuries (see e.g. Evans-Pritchard 1949; Eickelman 1981: 85–104; Tapper 1983; Al-Rasheed 1994 &c); the extra-Yemen examples of the multipolities of the Middle Sabaean type (“state + chiefdoms [+ ‘independent’ communities]”) could be easily found again in the Middle East (where a considerable number of the so-called tribes are rather chiefdoms in Service’s terminology [Service 1971 /1962/: 144; Johnson & Earle 1987: 238–243 &c]). Outside the Middle East this type of the multipolity can be found e.g. in Western Africa (the Benin Kingdom in some periods of its history – Bondarenko 1994; 1995, and perhaps some other West African “kingdoms” [Service 1971 /1962/: 144]). Of course, two above-mentioned types of multipolities do not exhaust all their possible types. E.g. none of them seems to be appropriate with respect to the “State of the Saints” of the Central Atlas, whose periphery consisted of tribes, but whose center can be characterized neither as a state, nor as a chiefdom, nor as a tribe (Gellner 1969).



most cases did not act as formal political leaders of the North Yemen *qabḫlah*. “The true source of political power lies with the tribal leaders who will accept no control from their peers. The solution to this impasse was worked out even prior to Islam by the evolution of the organization centered upon the sacred enclave, managed by an hereditary religious aristocracy respected and protected by the tribes” (Serjeant 1977: 244).

There does not seem to be any grounds to consider this transformation as “degeneration”, “regress” or “decline”, as there was no significant loss of the general system complexity and elaboration, one complex political system was transformed into another one, structurally different, but not less complex, highly organized and sophisticated.

It appears possible to present some argument in support of the interpretation of e.g. the transformation of the pre-Islamic “Sabaeans”<sup>17</sup> *s²ḫbʰ H²S²Dᵐ* into the Medieval (and Modern) *qabḫlat H²aḫshid* as a transformation of a chiefdom into a tribe (or tribal confederation). Of course the notions of *tribe* and *chiefdom* are considerably polysemantic. This is especially true with respect to the notion of tribe, which is used by some scholars to denote certain entities well covered by the definition of chiefdom. This is true e.g. with respect to Malinowski’s notion of *tribe-state* (Malinowski 1947: 259–261; see also e.g. Sahlins 1968: 20–21; Popov 1982: 75; on the misleading interchangeable use of the notions *tribe* and *chiefdom* see Fried 1975: 60–65, 88–98). Within such an approach, of course, the Middle “Sabaeans” *shaḫb* of the second order may well be denoted as a *tribe*.

As it was introduced into the scientific circulation by Service (in 1962, in the first edition of the *Primitive Social Organization* [Service 1962]), the notion of *chiefdom* was quite clearly delimited from the *tribe*. However, later

<sup>17</sup> It is necessary to mention that the Sabaeans (*SʰBḫ*) •Ḥḥḥ only one of the *shaḫbs* belonging to the Sabaeans cultural-political area. The members of all the other *shaḫbs* (like *H²aḫshid*, *Bakḫl*, *Ghaymaḫn*, *S²irwaḫh²* &c) of this area are **never** denoted as “Sabaeans” (*ḫḫSʰBḫ*) in the original texts. So to distinguish the “Sabaeans”, the inhabitants of the area most of whom were not Sabaeans and who would have been never denoted as such in the inscriptions, and the Sabaeans proper (the members of the *shaḫb Sabaḫ* who would be denoted as Sabaeans, *SʰBḫ*, *ḫḫSʰBḫ* in the inscriptions) it might be reasonable to designate the former as “Sabaeans” (in quotation marks) and the latter as Sabaeans (without quotation marks). Hence, for example “the Sabaeans clans” would mean “clans affiliated to *shaḫb Saba*”, like *H²ZFRᵐ*, *GDNᵐ*, *ḫḫTKLᵐ*, *MQRᵐ* &c; whereas “the “Sabaeans” clans” will denote all the clans of this area including non-Sabaeans clans of *H²umlaḫn*, *H²aḫshid*, *S²irwaḫh²*, *Ghaymaḫn* &c. “The Sabaeans Lowlands” (with respect to the Middle Period) would mean the part of the interior Yemeni Lowlands mainly populated by the Sabaeans, the areas of *Maḫrib*, *Nashq* and *Nashshaḫn*, whereas “the “Sabaeans” Highlands” denote the region of the Yemeni Highlands mainly populated by non-Sabaeans, but constituting an integral part of the Sabaeans cultural-political area. Yet as such a convention does not exist at present I have to continue the current tradition of denoting all the inhabitants of the Sabaeans cultural-political area as Sabaeans.

this term also began to acquire more and more polysemy approaching closer and closer to the notion of tribe (as it was defined by Service) in the work by some scholars (see e.g. Sahlins 1968: 20–21; Renfrew 1974 &c).

However, the “terminological famine” in the modern palaeosociology is to my mind so strong that to use the notions of *tribe* and *chiefdom* synonymously would be an impermissible luxury. Yet, if we decide to use these notions to denote two different forms of political organization, a certain priority should be given to the criteria of their difference proposed by the scholar who introduced the notion of *chiefdom* into the wide scientific circulation. I mean, of course, Elman R. Service (Service 1971 [1962]: 133–169).

However, one has to admit that, unfortunately, Service does not give any really rigorous definitions of both the tribe and the chiefdom. Yet he proposes some clear criteria using which one can differentiate between these two forms of political organization.

Thus, how does Service define the main differences between the political organization of the tribe and the chiefdom? The political organization of the tribe is described in the following way:

*“Leadership is personal ... and for special purposes only in tribal society; there are no political offices containing real power, and a 'chief' is merely a man of influence, a sort of adviser. The means of tribal consolidation for collective action are therefore not governmental... Tribe... is composed of economically self-sufficient residential groups which because of the absence of higher authority take unto themselves the private right to protect themselves. Wrongs to individuals are punished by the corporate group, the 'legal person'. Disputes in tribal society tend to generate feuds between groups”*<sup>18</sup> (Service 1971 [1962]: 103).

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<sup>18</sup> It seems necessary to stress that, speaking logically, what should be treated as an essential characteristic of the tribal *organization* is not the conflicts between the residential groups (which is completely normal as well for the primitive societies lacking any specifically tribal organization (they are considered by Service to belong to “*the band level of sociocultural integration*” [Ibid.: 46–98]), but the fact that the tribal organization puts certain limits to such conflicts, makes the feuding parties conflict according to certain rules, provides to the parties highly developed mechanisms of mediation &c, quite often effectively blocking the most disintegrating consequences of such conflicts, but without the alienation of the resident group “sovereignty” (actually Service speaks about this on the pages which follow this quotation, though, to my mind, without the necessary clarity). It seems also essential to stress that the situation described by Service may not be necessarily connected only with the complete absence of any supra-tribal political structures (“higher authority”), but also with their weakness (as is attested with respect to the most tribes of the Middle East); whereas their weakness in many “tribal areas” could be often partly caused by the effectiveness of the tribal organization which makes it frequently possible for the quite developed population to live without any strong state structures.

Nevertheless it appears necessary (in order to avoid an undesirable synonymy) to add to what was described by Service such a criterion as the “supracommunity” of the tribal organization – the above-mentioned type of political organization can only be reasonably designated as *tribal* proper if it covers more than a single community, otherwise we shall simply deal with just one of the possible types of the communal organization. Here I agree completely with the following statement of Fried: “...*An essential element of the concept of tribe [is] transcendence of the individual community and, pari passu, that tribalism [consists] in functions aggregating otherwise discrete villages into an interacting whole*” (Fried 1975: 39).

The actual usage of the notion of *tribe* by Service does not contradict this (Service 1971 [1962]: 99–132), though he has not described this criterion in a quite clear way.

The socio-political organization of the *chiefdom* is characterized by Service as follows:

*“The great change at the chiefdom level is that specialization and redistribution are no longer merely adjunctive to a few particular endeavours, but continuously characterize a large part of the activity of the society. Chiefdoms are REDISTRIBUTIONAL SOCIETIES with a permanent central agency of coordination”* (Service 1971 [1962]: 134). *“When chieftainship becomes a permanent OFFICE in the structure of society social inequality becomes characteristic of the society, followed finally by inequality in consumption... The creation of the hereditary office of chief, with its high status for the person who occupies it, naturally carries the possibility of other statuses of high degree... A chief's high status raises the status of every member of his family above ordinary families, and ultimately that of the families in his local kin group to some extent... A chief necessarily has a 'nobility', even though they are only his own family... A further important feature lies in the chief's ability to plan, organize, and deploy public labour”* (Ibidem: 139–140). *“A chiefdom is in a sense pyramidal or cone-shaped in structure...”* (Ibidem: 142).<sup>19</sup>

Finally, Service describes directly some important differences between the chiefdom and the tribe:

*“...A chiefdom differs radically from a tribe or band not only in economic and political organization but in the matter of social rank – ... tribes are egalitarian, chiefdoms are profoundly inegalitarian”* (Ibidem). *“The most*

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<sup>19</sup> The socio-political organization of the chiefdom is described in a very similar way by most of the other political anthropologists: Friedman & Rowlands 1977; Vasil'ev 1980; Earle 1987; Carneiro 1981; 1991 &c.

*distinctive characteristic of chiefdoms as compared to tribes ... is ... the pervasive inequality of persons and groups in the society. It begins with the status of chief as he functions in the system of redistribution. Persons are then ranked above others according to their genealogical nearness to him. Concepts involving prescriptions, proscriptions, sumptuary laws, marriage rules and customs, genealogical conceptions, and etiquette in general combine to create and perpetuate this sociopolitical ordering, and in turn have an effect on social structure and status terminology and etiquette behaviour. A charismatic ephemeral leader of the type found in tribes ... has the functions and attributes that result from his own capabilities.<sup>20</sup> An 'office', on the other hand, is a position in a sociopolitical structure that has ascribed functions and conventional attributes no matter who occupies it" &c (Ibidem: 145–146).*

It is quite evident that the Middle Sabaean *shaḏb* of the second order comes rather well under the definition of the chiefdom by Service<sup>21</sup> (though, naturally, not without certain reservations), whereas the Islamic Yemeni *qabīlah* corresponds as well to Service's description of the "ideal" tribal organization (though, again, not without some reservations).

Robin has already pointed out to the qualitative difference between the position of the *shaykhs* of the modern Yemeni tribes and the one of the *qayls* of the Middle Sabaean *shaḏbs* (Robin 1982a, I: 83–85). Indeed, the North Yemeni *shaykh* is *primus inter pares* (Obermeyer 1982: 36; Dresch 1984a; 1984b: 156–157; 1989: 38–116; Abuḥ Ghaṣnim 1985: 115–133, 209–212, 259–266; vom Bruck 1993: 94–95 &c), whereas the Middle Sabaean *qayls* were separated from the ordinary members of the *shaḏbs* by an enormous social distance. E.g. the relations between the *qayls* and their *shaḏb* are normally expressed in the *ḥdm – ḥmr*, "the subjects – the lords",

<sup>20</sup> It is quite difficult not to notice that the description of the "ideal" tribal leader by Service resembles rather closely the modern description of the position of the *shaykhs* among the Yemeni *qabaḥil*: "A *shaykh* cannot ... make undertakings on his men's behalf simply on the basis of his formal position; each undertaking which affects them must be specifically agreed to..." (Dresch 1984a: 39). "The power which a *shaykh* may have over groups of tribesmen is not conferred on him by his position. He must constantly intervene in their affairs, and intervene successfully" [in order to preserve his power] (Ibid., 41; see also Chelhod 1970a; 1979; 1985: 39–54; Dostal 1974; 1985; 1990: 47–58, 175–223; Obermeyer 1982; Dresch 1984b; 1989; Abuḥ Ghaṣnim 1985; 1990: 229–251; vom Bruck 1993: 94–95 &c).

<sup>21</sup> The Middle Sabaean *shaḏb* of the second order seems to correspond similarly well to the definitions of the chiefdoms by the other scholars, e.g. "an autonomous political unit comprising a number of villages or communities under the permanent control of a paramount chief" (Carneiro 1981: 45); "an intermediate form of political structure that already has a centralized administration and a hereditary hierarchy of rulers and nobility, where social and property inequality is present, but that still lacks a formal and all the more legalized apparatus of coercion" (Vasil'ev 1980: 182). See also Earle's definition of the chiefdom presented below.

categories; these very categories were also applied to the relations between clients and patrons, subjects and the King, people and deities (in R 3910 the singular absolute form for  $\text{𐩦𐩣𐩬𐩢}$  [𐩦𐩣𐩬𐩢<sup>m</sup>] is even used to denote the slaves sold in the Maʿrib market – for detail see e.g. Korotayev 1995b). In most Middle Sabaean inscriptions authored by the ordinary members of the Middle Sabaean *shaʿbs* they beg the deities to grant them the benevolence (*h 𐩬𐩣 𐩬𐩣 w-rd 𐩬𐩣*) of their lords, the *qayls* (and sometimes even ask them to protect the dedicants against their lords' wrath [*g 𐩦𐩣𐩬𐩢* – e.g. C 352, 16]). Of course, such a style of relations between leaders and commoners appears to be almost inconceivable for the modern (and medieval) North Yemeni tribes.

It seems rather remarkable that the term *sayyid*, “lord”, which even in the Early Islamic period was used to denote heads of the tribes (Piotrovskij 1985: 77; Dresch 1989: 169, 191–192), later was completely forced out in the North Yemen by a much more neutral *shaykh*, “old man”, whereas the use of the term *sayyid* was restricted to denote only the members of the “religious aristocracy” placed in the tribal zone of the North Yemeni multipolity mainly outside the tribal organization, under the tribal protection, but not above the tribes.

I would like to stress that there does not seem to be any grounds to consider the transformation North-East Yemeni chiefdoms into tribes as “degeneration”, “regress” or “decline”, as there was no significant loss of the general system complexity and elaboration, one complex political system was transformed into another one, structurally different, but not less complex, highly organized and sophisticated.

It seems necessary, however to mention also at least the most important of the reservations concerning the identification of the Yemeni *qab 𐩦𐩣𐩬* and the *tribe* as defined by Service.

The political organization of the Yemeni *qaba 𐩦𐩣𐩬* is relatively<sup>22</sup> egalitarian. However, the North-East Yemen tribal system as a whole in no way can be considered as egalitarian. The point is that in addition to the members of the tribes (constituting in the tribal areas the majority of the population and the main mass of the plough agriculturalists) the tribal communities include numerous “quasi-casts”<sup>23</sup> of unarmed<sup>24</sup> “weak” population, placed outside the

<sup>22</sup> First of all with respect to the Middle Sabaean *shaʿb*.

<sup>23</sup> A certain similarity between the South Arabian and Indian traditional systems of the socio-cultural stratification has already attracted the scholars' attention (e.g. Chelhod 1970a: 83; 1979: 59). However, they also stress some essential differences between these two systems (Chelhod 1970a: 83; 1979: 59; 1985: 33; Dresch 1989: 153; Rodionov 1994: 42).

<sup>24</sup> Excluding the traditional Yemeni dagger (*janbiyyah*): practically all the Northern Yemenis (including the *d 𐩬𐩣 𐩬𐩣 𐩬𐩣*) have it, but the weak must place it firmly to the left, unlike the

tribal organization, but “under protection” of the tribes (*d Ɂu Ɂ afa* 𐤁𐤍𐤏, “the weak”):<sup>25</sup> butchers and barbers (*maza* 𐤌𐤓𐤏𐤃), the tribal “heralds” (*da Ɂa* 𐤁𐤓𐤏𐤃 𐤍), merchants (*bayya* 𐤁𐤓𐤏𐤃 𐤍), horticulturalists (*Yhashsha* 𐤓𐤏𐤃𐤓𐤏𐤃 𐤍), craftsman, first of all weavers (*s Ɂa* 𐤓𐤏𐤃𐤓𐤏𐤃 𐤍), servants (*akhda* 𐤏𐤃𐤓), placed at the very bottom of the hierarchy &c; traditionally the Jewish population of the area also belonged to “the weak” (Serjeant 1977; Chelhod 1970a: 63, 73–80, 83–84; 1975: 76–82; 1979: 48, 54–57; 1985: 15–37; Obermeyer 1982: 36; Piotrovskij 1985: 64, 87; Dresch 1984b: 159; 1989: 117–123; Stevenson 1985: 42–47, 63f.; Abu 𐤁𐤓𐤏𐤃 Gha 𐤓𐤏𐤃𐤓𐤏𐤃 1985: 234–249 &c).<sup>26</sup> The general picture of the social stratification of the tribal areas is further complicated by the presence of the above-mentioned *sayyids* and (not yet mentioned) *qa* 𐤓𐤏𐤃𐤓𐤏𐤃 𐤍 (the learnt families, not tracing their descent to Muh 𐤌𐤓𐤏𐤃 ammad), who were also under the protection of the tribes,<sup>27</sup> playing quite important roles in the functioning of the tribal

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members of tribes (*qab* 𐤓𐤏𐤃𐤓𐤏𐤃 𐤍), wearing their daggers straight at the front of their belts (Chelhod 1970a: 75; 1979: 55; Stevenson 1985: 44; Dresch 1989: 38, 120; vom Bruck 1993: 92–93). The only exception here is a rather special “weak” quasi-cast, *dawa* 𐤁𐤓𐤏𐤃𐤓𐤏𐤃 𐤍 (the tribal “heralds”), who wear their *janbiyyahs* like the tribesmen (Dresch 1989: 120; and in addition to that *dawa* 𐤁𐤓𐤏𐤃𐤓𐤏𐤃 𐤍 traditionally carried lances – *ibid.*: 406). The *sayyids* and *qa* 𐤓𐤏𐤃𐤓𐤏𐤃 𐤍 wear their *janbiyyahs* on the right – (which seems to signify quite correctly their special position in the tribal world – Chelhod 1970a: 75; 1979: 55; Dresch 1989: 136; vom Bruck 1993: 92; in addition to that, “*le poignard porté par le descendant du Prophe 𐤓𐤏𐤃𐤓𐤏𐤃 𐤍 ... est généralement plus décoratif*” [vom Bruck 1993: 92]).

<sup>25</sup> It seems reasonable to stress that the “protection” provided to the “weak” population by the tribes is in no way an empty word. The failure of the tribe to defend a “weak” person under their protection (e.g. to secure the payment of fine for an offense committed against him) constitutes a very strong blow upon the reputation (*sharaf*, “honour”) of the tribe, whereas the amount of such a compensation often exceeds four-fold (and sometimes [though very rarely] eleven-fold) the fine for a similar offense committed against a tribesman (Dresch 1989: 118, 407). In addition to that, “the call to right wrongs committed against them will generally be answered by large numbers of men from the tribe in question, whereas the call to support a fellow tribesman may be far less compelling” (Dresch 1984b: 159; see also e.g. Obermeyer 1982: 36). Also “*it's forbidden for a person of superior rank to tease the 𐤓𐤏𐤃𐤓𐤏𐤃𐤓𐤏𐤃 𐤍 (one of the designations of the “weak” – A.K.) or to wrong them. If such a thing happened then the whole society would take their side to obtain justice from their oppressor*” (Chelhod 1979: 55; 1970a: 75; see also e.g. Stevenson 1985: 44).

<sup>26</sup> The formation of this system of the “quasi-casts” might be dated to the 12<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> centuries (Piotrovskij 1985: 87).

<sup>27</sup> There appears to be a certain similarity in the tribal zone in the position of the “weak quasi-casts”, on the one hand, and that of the *sayyids* and *qa* 𐤓𐤏𐤃𐤓𐤏𐤃 𐤍, on the other: both are under the protection of the tribes, which virtually have the monopoly of the legitimate use of violence. However, the Yemenis themselves make such a comparison extremely rarely: “*𐤓𐤏𐤃𐤓𐤏𐤃𐤓𐤏𐤃 𐤍 in both Dhu 𐤁𐤓𐤏𐤃 Muhammad and Dhu 𐤁𐤓𐤏𐤃 Husayn claim ... to be hijrah [under the special protection by the tribes – A.K.], 'because we are all bi-l-muh 𐤌𐤓𐤏𐤃 addash (protected by an eleven-fold fine) like the qa 𐤓𐤏𐤃𐤓𐤏𐤃 𐤍 and sayyids'... On the plateau I have not heard either tribesmen or dawa 𐤁𐤓𐤏𐤃𐤓𐤏𐤃 𐤍 suggest such equivalence between 'heralds' and men of religion...*” (Dresch 1989: 407).

systems<sup>28</sup> (Serjeant 1977; Chelhod 1970: 81f.; 1975: 70–71; 1979: 58f.; Obermeyer 1982: 36–37; Piotrovskij 1985: 65, 87, 101; Dresch 1984b: 159f.; 1989: 136–157; Abu Ḥaḥḥim 1985: 212–227; 1990 &c).<sup>29</sup>

In many respects the tribe of the North Yemeni type could be regarded as a rather developed form of the political organization, whose complexity could quite be compared with that of the chiefdom (and it is by no means more primitive than the chiefdom), implying first of all a very high level of the development of the political culture and the existence of an elaborated system of the political institutions and the traditions of arbitration, mediation, search for consensus &c, a wide developed network of intensive intercommunal links on enormous territories populated by tens and hundreds thousand people. Such tribal system can to a certain extent organize (without the application of any centralized coercion) all these masses of population which often exceed the population of an average chiefdom by 1–2 orders of magnitude.

E.g. Earle defines the chiefdom as “*a polity that organizes centrally a regional population in thousands*” (Earle 1991: 1); whereas an average North Yemen tribe includes 20–30 thousand members (Dresch 1984a: 33), and such a relatively highly integrated North Yemen tribal confederation as Ḥaḥḥid consists of seven tribes (*Ibid.*; Chelhod even lists 14 tribes belonging to this confederation – Chelhod 1970a: 84–85; 1985: 57–58; see also Stevenson 1985: 48). Of course, one should not forget either dozens of thousands of the

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<sup>28</sup> “Non-tribal quasi-casts” of the North Yemen tribal zone constituted the minority of its population (“*Outside the few towns ... the weak people are not numerous, two or three families in a village of thirty tribal families is not unusual*” [Dresch 1989: 123]). However, it is completely necessary to take them here into account, as they were one of the most important factors making the North Yemen tribal world what it was – a very complex and highly organized (and by no means “primitive”) system, quite comparable according to its complexity with most pre-industrial state systems with a similar size of population (e.g. with the non-tribal state systems of the Yemen South Highlands and Lowlands).

<sup>29</sup> The *sayyids* and *qaḥḥ* themselves considered their status to be higher than that of the tribesmen, though there do not seem to be sufficient grounds to regard them as the dominant strata of the North Yemeni tribes (e.g. Dresch 1984b: 159; 1989: 136–157). In the tribal zone the monopoly to apply violence actually belonged to the tribesmen and not *sayyids*. Notwithstanding the *sayyids*' very high reputation, these were the *shaykhs* and not *sayyids* who acted as real political leaders of the tribe (the latter became *shaykhs* rather rarely, whereas most *sayyids* do not seem to have really sought this; according to Dresch's observations, “*there is no reason why someone who happens to be a sayyid should not also be a shaykh, although this is unusual*” [Dresch 1989: 156]). In these respects the relations between the *sayyids* and the tribesmen resemble to a certain extent the ones between the *brahmans* and *kshatriyas* in ancient India (cp. e.g. Bongard-Levin, Il'in 1985: 301–304). At the meantime it is rather evident that the presence of the *sayyid* families (having a high reputation among the tribes, but not dominant over them) in the tribal zone must have been a powerful integrating factor within the North Yemeni multipolity whose state center was headed for most of this millennia by the representatives of the “religious aristocracy” (*sayyids*), the *Zayd* imams (e.g. Stookey 1978: 95, 149–155; Chelhod 1985: 26–29).

members of the “weak quasi-casts” (as well as quite considerable numbers of *sayyids* and *qaṣṣids*) who are not formally members of the tribes, but who are also to a certain extent organized by the tribal structures (which e.g. guarantee the security of towns, markets, religious centers &c within the tribal area). As a result the mass of the population organized to a certain extent by the tribal confederation *Hāshid* appears to exceed substantially (by 1–2 orders of magnitude!) the respective figures for an average chiefdom. In addition to this one should not forget the ability of the tribal organization of this type to form in conjunction with other polities (not necessarily states – see e.g. Gellner 1969) political systems, multipolities, with the complexity of even a higher order.

The notion of “tribe”, as it is used by the social anthropologists for the description of the socio-political organization of the Northern Yemenis (or, say, the population of many areas of Afghanistan, Cyrenaica, Atlas &c) in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries appears rather useful, as it denotes quite a distinct form of supra-communal political organization, which does not seem to be adequately denoted by any other current terms, like “chiefdom” (let alone “state”, or “community”). We can observe here such a type of political organization, when the functioning of quite stable forms of intercommunal integration takes place without the monopolization by the tribal leaders of the legitimate application of violence, without their acquisition of any formal power over the communities and the commoners, when e.g. the conflicts are solved (or the collective “tribal” actions are undertaken) not through the decisions of authoritative officials, but through the search by the tribal leaders (lacking any formal, absolute, independent from their personal qualities, power) for the consensus among all the interested members of the tribe (or the tribes) &c.

Thus, it transpires that political structures of the Yemeni *qabaṣil* type<sup>30</sup> can be most appropriately denoted as “tribes”, whereas the Middle Sabaean (the 1<sup>st</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> centuries AD) supra-communal entities, the *shaṣbs* of the second order could be with complete justification denoted as “chiefdoms”. In the meantime within such an approach one would have to admit the absence of the tribal organization proper in the Sabaean Cultural Area of the pre-Islamic age.<sup>31</sup> That is why there are certain grounds to speak about the transformation

<sup>30</sup> And not amorphous agglomerates of primitive communities, or such socio-political entities which can be adequately denoted as “communities” or “chiefdoms” (for a critical survey of cases of such a use of the term “tribe” see Fried 1975).

<sup>31</sup> At least in its highland part, as the semi-nomad population of al-Jawf (e.g. some part of the Amirites [*s<sup>2</sup> ṣb<sup>n</sup> / s<sup>2</sup> ṣb<sup>n</sup> MR<sup>m</sup>*]) might have already had tribal organization in the Middle Period (on the Amirites see e.g. Ghul 1959: 432; von Wissmann 1964: 81–159; Baṣṣāh 1990: 282–283; Robin 1991f; Korotayev 1995e).



of the chiefdoms into tribes in the “Sabaean” Highlands in the Early Islamic Period.

The approach considering the tribe as a relatively late, non-primitive form of political organization can in no way be regarded as new. In fact, as is well known, quite a similar conclusion was arrived at by Fried already in the 60s (Fried 1967; 1975). Indeed, Fried maintains that the tribe<sup>32</sup> is a non-primitive form of political organization which arose in relatively recent time under the structurizing impact of already formed state systems on unstructured (or extremely loosely structured) agglomerates of independent primitive communities.

While agreeing completely with Fried's approach to the tribe as a non-primitive late form of political organization, I am inclined to suppose (basing myself mainly on the South Arabian data) that there were some other ways in which the tribal organization could arise, e.g. through the transformation of the chiefdoms. Generally speaking, I would state that Fried seems to have a bit overestimated the role of the structurizing influence of the state, almost completely refraining from the study of the internal dynamics of the evolution of the non-state political systems leading to the formation of the tribal organization.

I do not see any grounds to consider the formation of the North Yemen tribal organization as a result of the structurizing influence of the states on the unstructured primitive population. Some significant influence was rather exerted on the part of the North Arab tribes, who were in close contact with South Arabia during all its late pre-Islamic and Early Islamic history (i.e. precisely in the period of the formation of the tribal organization in this area – Piotrovskij 1985: 8, 64, 69–70; Chelhod 1970a: 69–72; 1979; 1985: 45–46; al-Hadad 1978: 68, 81–96; Hufner 1959; Robin 1982b: 29; 1984: 213, 221; 1991f; Wilson 1989: 16; von Wissmann 1964a: 181–183, 195–196, 403–406; 1964b: 493 &c).

However, though the significant impact of the North Arabian tribes on the formation of the “tribal ethos” in the area appears very plausible (this will be discussed in more detail below), some of the above-mentioned scholars (Chelhod, Piotrovskiy, Robin) seem to underestimate the significance of the internal “logic” of the evolution of the area in this process.<sup>33</sup> To my mind, the genesis of the North Yemen tribal organization can be considered to a considerable extent as a realization of some long-term internal trends towards

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<sup>32</sup> Of course, if one understands “the tribe” as a distinct form of the supra-communal political integration, and does not use it as a synonym of “chiefdom”, or “community”.

<sup>33</sup> Cp. e.g. here much more cautious position of Dresch (Dresch 1989).

“egalitarization” which could be observed in the area since the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC. It could be considered as a result of the prolonged search by the main agricultural population of the Northern Highlands for the optimum (for this area) forms of the socio-political organization.

It seems possible to detect some trends towards “egalitarization” already for the pre-Islamic age. For example, in the Ancient Period (the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC) of the Sabaeen history immovable property was considered to belong to heads of extended families (thus, a head of such a family would denote this property as “his” /-hw/ [Bauer 1964: 19–20; 1965: 209–217; Lundin 1962; 1965; 1971: 233–245; Korotayev 1993c: 51–53; 1995a: Chapter III; and 1998: Chapter VIII]), whereas in the Middle Period (the 1<sup>st</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> centuries AD) such property would be considered as belonging to the whole clan nucleus of the clan communities (and consequently in the Middle Sabaeen inscriptions [even installed by single authors] we get across only the mentions of “their” [-hmw] immovable property, but almost never “his” [-hw] lands, fields, vineyards &c – Korotayev 1993c; 1995a: Chapter III; 1998: Chapter VIII). To my mind, this may be regarded as a result of certain “democratization” of internal organization of Sabaeen lineages.

The formation of the tribal organization in the Northern Highlands in the Islamic age seems to have been accompanied by the further “democratization” of the land relations, though in a very remarkable way, through the achievement of a very high level of their individualization (Dresch 1989). In this area the land relations appear to have passed the way from the possession of the extended family lands by their heads in the Ancient Sabaeen Period (the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC) to the emphatically collective possession of the arable lands by whole lineages in the Middle Period (the 1<sup>st</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> centuries AD) and further (it seems not without some influence of the *shar* 𐩣𐩬𐩪𐩠𐩨𐩢𐩪 towards the individual possession of the arable lands by all the adult members of the tribes (the women's land property rights need special consideration for which I have no space here [cf. Mundy 1979; Dresch 1989: 276–291]). The last transformation seems to correlate rather well with the genesis of the tribal organization and the general egalitarization of the socio-political structures, as such a system of land relations effectively prevented the formation of anything like powerful qaylites of the pre-Islamic age with their huge consolidated and indivisible land possessions. It is also rather remarkable that the genesis of the tribal organization in the Northern Highlands appears to have been accompanied by the weakening of the “economic communalism”: the Middle Sabaeen inscriptions, whose authors constantly mention the assistance of their communities in their economic activities (C 224, 4; 339, 4; 416, 4; 585, 2; Ga 6, 3; R 3971, 4; 3975 + Ga 32, 3–4; 4033, 2a; Robin/ al-Hajar 𐩣𐩬𐩪𐩠𐩨𐩢𐩪 1, 6; /Khamir 1,

4; /Ṣaṣṣni 13+14, 2; Ry 540, 1–2 &c), stand in the sharpest contrast with the descriptions of the economic relations in the tribal Yemeni North characterized by an extremely low level of the communal economic co-operation: “*The lack of co-operation in practice is perhaps not as marked as in stories told of the past, but it is still marked enough. Neighbours occupying adjoining houses or working adjoining plots may help one another gratuitously in time of trouble, usually, as Doughty put it, 'betwixt free will and their private advantage'; one would work to repair someone else's terrace if one's own terrace might be placed in some danger, for example, but hardly for long otherwise*” (Dresch 1989: 301).

It is also very remarkable that a similar transformation occurred with respect to the title *qayl*: in the Ancient Period it was mainly an individual title, belonging to individual persons, whereas in the Middle Period in the Sabaeen cultural-political area (but not in the Himyarite South!) it started to be considered as mainly an attribute of whole qaylite clans, but not their individual members (Korotayev 1990: 8–12; 1993c: 50–51; 1995a: Chapter I; 1998: Chapter VIII; see also Robin 1982a, I: 79 and Avanzini 1985: 86–87). Notwithstanding the remaining great social distance between the qaylite clans and the main mass of the members of the Middle Sabaeen *shaṣbs*, this transformation may well be considered as a step towards the North Yemeni tribal model (cp. Dresch 1984a).

It seems appropriate to mention here a rather democratic internal organization of the Middle Sabaeen (the 1<sup>st</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> centuries AD) local communities, the *shaṣbs* of the third order, demonstrating some evident similarities with the communal organization of the population of the Yemeni Uplands of the current millennium (see Korotayev 1998: Chapter I and e.g. Korotayev 1994b). The genesis of the North-East Yemen tribal organization can well be considered as the process of the extension of quite democratic principles of the Middle Sabaeen communal organization to the supra-communal level (corresponding to the level of the Middle Sabaeen *shaṣb* of the second order).

The genesis of the North-East Yemen tribal organization can be also considered as a result of the protracted struggle of the main agricultural population of the Northern Highlands in order to raise their social status. This struggle seems to have been mainly rather “quite”, and that is why it was noticed by the historical sources rather rarely (see, however, e.g. al-Hamdaṣni 1980: 328). In any case there are certain grounds to suppose that the main mass of the North Highlands agricultural population used the political

upheavals of the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium AD in order to raise significantly their social status.<sup>34</sup>

No doubt, a certain role in the formation of the high-status tribal agricultural population was played by the above-mentioned influence of the political culture of the North Arabian tribes. One of their most important contributions here appears to have been the transmission to the Arabian South of the “genealogical culture”. The pre-Islamic South Arabian communities were *shaḏbs*, emphatically territorial entities.

*“In strong contrast to the North Arabian practice of recording long lists of ancestors (attested also for the pre-Islamic period in the Safaitic inscriptions), E[pigraphic] S[outh] A[rabian] nomenclature consisted simply of given-name plus name of the social grouping (usually the bayt), with optional insertion of the father's given-name, but never any mention of an ancestor in any higher degree. One is irresistibly reminded of the remark attributed to the caliph ḠUmar, 'Learn your genealogies, and be not like the Nabataeans of Mesopotamia who, when asked who they are, say "I am from such-and-such a village", ' which Ibn Khaldun quotes with the very significant comment that it is true also of the populations of the fertile tracts of Arabia... [The] qabḏla... [is] fundamentally kinship-based and totally different in nature from the shaḏb... In the Qur'an (49:13) jaḏalnaḏ-kum shuḏuḏb<sup>a n</sup> wa-qabaḏ il<sup>a</sup> clearly refers to two different types of social organization, and Ibn Khaldun when speaking of the settled populations of Arabia is careful to use the word shuḏuḏb and not qabaḏ il, reserving the latter for the nomads”* (Beeston 1972a: 257–258; see also *Id.* 1972b: 543; Ryckmans 1974: 500; Robin 1982a, I; 1982b; Piotrovskij 1985: 53, 69 &c).

In the Early Islamic age under the influence of the North Arabian tribal culture which acquired the highest prestige in the Muslim World many South Arabian *shaḏbs*, while remaining essentially territorial (Dresch 1989; Serjeant 1989: XI), were transformed into *qabaḏ il*, tribes structured formally according to genealogical principles.<sup>35</sup> On the other hand, to some extent this

<sup>34</sup> Whereas the political instability characteristic for South Arabia during most of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium helped them to preserve this high status. On the other hand, the Northern tribal population seems to have contributed significantly to the perpetuation of this political instability.

<sup>35</sup> It should be mentioned that the “qabilization” of some Sabaeen *shaḏbs* seems to have begun already before the Islamic Age. Here the most remarkable is the inscription Fa 74, dated (lines 6–12) to the month dhuḏ-Madhraḏaḏn of year 614 of the Himyarite era, which corresponds to July AD 499, or 504. On its line 6 *S'Bḏ KHL*<sup>n</sup> is denoted as *ḏs<sup>2</sup>rt*. It should be mentioned that *S'Bḏ KHL*<sup>n</sup> was the “central” *shaḏb* of the Sabaeen cultural-political area (the temple-civil community of its capital, Maḏrib), which already in the Middle Period (the 1<sup>st</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> centuries AD) had a very special socio-political organization, quite different from the one of the other Sabaeen *shaḏbs* (Loundine 1973a; b; Lundin 1969; 1984; Korotayev 1994e &c), but consistently denoted during this Period

transformation seems to have also been the result of the intense work by the South Arabians aimed at the working out of their own genealogies, as well as their passionate (and quite successful) struggle for the recognition of their genealogies by the Arab World (and for integration in this way into the Arab ethnos dominant within the Early Islamic state [the 7<sup>th</sup> – the middle of the 8<sup>th</sup> centuries AD] in quite high positions – Piotrovskij 1977; 1985).

One should not of course forget that the Yemenis managed to achieve very successfully something which almost nobody else did:

*“With the conquests, the Arabs found themselves in charge of a huge non-Arab population. Given that it was non-Muslim, this population could be awarded a status similar to that of clients in Arabia, retaining its own organization under Arab control in return for the payment of taxes... But converts posed a novel problem in that, on the one hand they had to be incorporated, not merely accommodated, within Arab society; and on the other hand, they had 'FORGOTTEN THEIR GENEALOGIES',<sup>36</sup> suffered defeat and frequently also enslavement, so that they did not make acceptable *ḥalāl* ٥; the only non-Arabs to be affiliated as such were the *ḥamra* ٥ and *Asaḥwira*, Persian soldiers who deserted to the Arabs during the wars of conquest in return for privileged status... It was in response to this novel problem that Islamic *al-ʿaḥd* ٥ [i.e. the system of integration of the non-Arab Muslims into the Islamic society in capacity of the dependent *maʿaḥd* ٥ – A.K.] was evolved” (Crone 1991: 875).*

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only as *sʿḥb*, and never *sʿrt* (Ja 653, 1; 735, 1; Sh 7/1; 8/1 &c); whereas the term *sʿrt* (corresponding to the Arabic denomination of clan-tribal groups [of a certain level], *ashrah*) was used in the Sabaic inscriptions to denote the Arabic “genealogical” *qabaḥil* ٥ as distinct from the South Arabian territorial *shaḥbs* (Beeston 1972a: 257–258; 1972b: 543; Ryckmans 1974: 500; Piotrovskij 1985: 53, 69 &c). It should be mentioned, that the *shaḥbs* of the internal Lowlands might have been not so absolutely “anti-genealogical” as the Highland *shaḥbs* long before Islam (Robin 1979; 1982b). In addition to that the fact the *shaḥb Sabaḥ Kahlaḥn* was one of the first to be affected by the process of “qabilization”, might be also explained by the point that Maḥrib is situated on the edge of the internal desert, i.e. in one of the South Arabian zones subjected in the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium A.D. to the most intensive infiltration of the Arabs. It should be also stressed that there is some direct evidence for the integration of a certain number of the Arabs into the *shaḥb Sabaḥ* ٥ in the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD. E.g. Ry 507 (July AD 518, or rather 523 – line 10) mentions certain *TMM bn MḥD* ٥ *ḏ-QSMLT SB ٥Y* ٥, “Tamḥm, the son of Maḥdaḥn, of Qasmalat, the Sabaeen” (line 12). As has been convincingly shown by Piotrovskiy (1985, 54–57), this Tamḥm is of Arab origins from the bedouin tribe Qasmalah (= al-Qasaḥmil) known in the area of Najraḥn; whereas *SB ٥Y* ٥ is nothing else but a very clear denomination of oneḥs affiliation to the *shaḥb Sabaḥ* ٥ (Beeston 1978: 14).

<sup>36</sup> The emphasis is mine. This is simply to draw attention again to the important role of the possession of valid genealogies for one's integration in the Early Islamic society as its full-right member – A.K.

In any case it is a bit amazing that such a highly-qualified specialist in early Islamic history as Crone has managed to overlook another (and much more important!) exception – the Yemenis (most of whom do not seem to have been Arabs by the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD). The possible explanation here might be that the Yemeni efforts aimed at persuading the Arabs that the South Arabians were as Arab as the Arabs themselves,<sup>37</sup> or even more Arab than the Arabs (*al-ʿArab al-ṣaḥrīyah* as distinct from *al-ʿArab al-mustaḥribah* [e.g. Piotrovskij 1977: 20, 23, 29; 1985: 67; Robin 1991e: 64 &c]), and that they had always been Arabs, turned out to be so successful that they managed to persuade in this not only themselves, not only the Arabs (see e.g. Ibn al-Kalbi 1966, I: 40–41), but also the Arabists as well.

Notwithstanding all the difference between the Yemenis and the above-mentioned groups of the Persian soldiers (it seems sufficient to mention that the Yemen population was quite comparable by the 7<sup>th</sup> century with the number of all the Arabs taken together), some similarity between these two cases also appears to have existed. As in the case of the Persian soldiers the Yemenis seem to have managed to enter early Islamic society as full members very much because early Islamic society badly needed the military manpower, whereas the Yemenis constituted a substantial part (and sometimes even majority) of most Islamic armies.

*“One reads that the warriors of [the early Islamic conquests] were northerners... It now seems very doubtful that they were predominantly northerners, let alone exclusively so, for the manpower required for such speedy and vigorous military campaigns was to be found only in the Yemen. The Yemen of the 1<sup>st</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> century, like the Yemen of today, was the only area of the Arabian Peninsula of sufficient population density to provide large numbers of troops. What is more, we are not simply talking of the other ranks. The presence of vast numbers, often in the majority, of Yemenis participating in the great Islamic conquests of the 1<sup>st</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> century in predominantly tribal companies from the highest to the lowest rank is amply attested and, what is more, they were seasoned fighters, not in any way raw recruits. It follows also that great numbers of those Yemenis participating in the conquests settled in the territories which they helped to conquer”* (Smith 1990: 134; a detailed factological substantiation for this statement can be found in al-Madaʿij 1988: 69–70, 86–88, 123–125, 127, 132, 140–143).

While remaining a realist, one naturally has to suppose that the Yemenis managed to enter the Islamic society (and the Arab ethnos) so smoothly as its

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<sup>37</sup> And these efforts were by no means senseless, as some Arabs for some time refused to recognize the Arab identity of the Yemenis (e.g. Piotrovskij 1985: 67).

full members (and not like dependent *mawa* <sup>موا</sup>) not because the genealogies which they worked out looked so convincing, but mainly because of the very important role of the Yemenis in the Islamic conquests.<sup>38</sup> It rather seems that because of the very important role of the Yemeni manpower the Arabs allowed themselves to be persuaded that their fellows in the *jiha* <sup>جها</sup> were as Arab as they were (and, consequently, that the Yemenis' genealogies were as authentic as their own). To insist on the non-Arab identity of the Yemenis, on the invalidity of their genealogies would have led to the alienation of a very strong military power, whereas none of the fiercely confronting each other Arab factions of early Islamic society could afford such a "luxury".

As a result, the main mass of the agricultural population of the Northern Highlands found themselves in possession of deep, ancient (and quite veritable even from the point of view of the Northern Arabs) genealogies, which provided quite a strong "ideological" basis for the struggle by this population for the preservation of their high social status. The "genealogical ideology" (the representation of the tribes and their confederations as descendants of certain eponym ancestors tied by kinship relations) turned out to provide also a suitable basis for the development of the tribal political culture, assisting in the working out of the mechanisms of flexible interaction of the tribal entities of various levels.

On the other hand, as a result of the considerable decline of the state structures<sup>39</sup> in the Northern Highlands after a relatively short period of their consolidation at the beginning of the Islamic age, the population of the area confronted the necessity to defend themselves by themselves. To a certain extent the genesis of the tribal organization (for which there were already certain pre-conditions in the area) can be considered as the Highlanders' response to this challenge. The tribal organization, having been formed, turned out to be so effective in many respects, that until the most recent time it resisted quite successfully all the attempts by the state systems (which periodically strengthened in South Arabia) to eradicate (or significantly weaken) it.

In the Islamic age the main result of the interaction of the tribal and state organization in the Northern Highlands turned out to be not the undermining or liquidation of the tribal structures, but the emergence of the North Yemen multiplicity. Within this multiplicity, though the relations between its state center

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<sup>38</sup> Of course, one should not also forget here such important factors as the basic cultural (including linguistic) proximity of the Arabs and Yemenis, the intensive contacts between the South Arabian civilization and the Northern Arabs during all the time of its existence, a significant degree of the arabization of Yemen prior to Islam (due to infiltration to the area of considerable groups of Arabs) &c.

<sup>39</sup> As well as the political systems of the chiefdoms.

(headed most of this millennium by Zaydī imams)<sup>40</sup> and its tribal periphery were far from being without conflicts, some equilibrium was achieved, the functions of the system elements were (quite informally) delimited, reciprocally (to a certain extent) acceptable “rules of game” were worked out.

A significant role in the preservation of the North Yemeni tribal organization was, no doubt, played by the geographical environment of the Northern Highlands. On the one hand, the very rugged terrain of the area helped significantly the tribes in their struggle for the preservation of their autonomy (cp. Korotayev 1995c). On the other hand, the limited economic potential of the meagre and arid North-East Highlands<sup>41</sup> did not create sufficient stimuli which would push the state centers to struggle with an adequate vigour for the complete subjugation of the area to the full state control. The same factors also hindered the processes of the internal stratification of the Northern tribes (e.g. Dresch 1984b: 156; 1989: 8–15). The transformation of the warlike, armed and independent tribesmen into the mass of obedient peasants, submissive tax-payers demanded tremendous effort and expenses on the part of the states, whereas promising very limited economic yields. The much more humid and fertile Southern Highlands (with a significantly less rugged terrain) were much more attractive in this respect.<sup>42</sup>

The genesis of the tribal organization in the North-East Yemeni Highlands can be also well considered as the “response” by the area socio-political system to the “challenge” of the second socio-ecological crisis of the North-East in the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium AD.<sup>43</sup> With respect to the Highland area this crisis seems to have been at least partly caused by the “prestige economy” of the Highland chiefdoms which led to the overstrain of

<sup>40</sup> It should be mentioned that this state center originated with the direct support of the Northern tribes (e.g. Obermeyer 1982; Gochenour 1984b; Dresch 1989: 167–173; Abu Ḥaḥḥānim 1990).

<sup>41</sup> The main exception here, the Ṣanʿāʾ Plain, seems to belong firmly to those very exceptions which only confirm the rule, as this was precisely Ṣanʿāʾ which served as the main stronghold of the state organization in the Northern Highlands for most of the last two millennia (e.g. Serjeant, Lewcock 1983; Lundin 1988).

<sup>42</sup> E.g. Stookey explains the absence of any serious attempts to subjugate the Northern tribes on the part of the Rasulid state (the 12<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> centuries) in the following way: “*The Rasulids were not militant proselytizers by temperament, and chose to maximize their secular satisfactions within the productive areas they could handily govern, rather than to dissipate their energies in an apocalyptic struggle for control of territory which had little to offer in the way of potential revenue*” (Stookey 1978: 124).

<sup>43</sup> Robin 1984: 220–221; 1991e: 67; Dayton 1979: 127 &c. This crisis affected most seriously the North-East Lowlands which experienced a dramatic decline already by the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD and after that they never managed to overcome this decline completely. But this crisis affected the North-East Highlands as well. However, the Highland population did manage to get out of it without any fall in the level of its self-organization (though also without the complete recovery of the area natural environment).



the very fragile natural environment of the region (e.g. to the extreme degradation of the natural vegetal cover of the East of the Northern Mountains).<sup>44</sup> The socio-ecological environment of the region does not appear to have been able to sustain the prestige consumption of the *qayls* and their entourage. The overcoming of the second socio-ecological crisis seems to have been achieved through the “seizure”, the “ousting” of the qaylite aristocracy by the region socio-political system through the genesis of the tribal organization which in this area secured the reproduction of a rather complex and developed agricultural society by the procurement of a very “economical” surplus production.

On the one hand, the tribal organization of the area population made it possible for the tribesmen to struggle successfully (with the arms in their hands) for the preservation of a rather low level of taxation on the part of the state center of the North Yemen multipolity. On the other hand, it secured the effective control by the tribal agricultural population over resources used for the maintenance of the non-agricultural strata of the tribal zone (including its intellectual and political elites).

In the process of the area social system adaptation to the worsening economic-ecological conditions and the finding its way out of the socio-ecological crisis some role seems to have been played by the above-mentioned development of the highly individualized private land property relations and the dissolution of the system of the communal economic mutual help. The social anthropologists (basing themselves mainly on the oral information gathered from the informants of the senior generation) have described a rather severe (though rather effective at the same time) traditional (it seems to have existed up to the 1950s) model of the tribal zone population behaviour in the years of famine (caused by the droughts, rather frequent in the area): in such cases the neighbours would not tend to help each other through the sharing of the scarce resources, but rather the heads of the less economically effective households would sell their land to the more economically effective agriculturalists and move to *S=anṣaʿa* to serve in the Imam's army (incidentally, this seems to demonstrate that the taxes which the tribesmen paid to the Imams could be to a certain extent regarded as a sort of “premium” payments to the “insurence fund” of the North Yemen multipolity). As a result, the more effective agriculturalists

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<sup>44</sup> E.g. Robin gives the following striking example: “...Dans le mont *Sḥawla* *ṣn* près de *dh-Bḥn*, totalement *dūnudū* de nos jours, a-t-on tué au cours de trois chasses, vers le début de l'ère chrétienne, 4000 bouquetins; un tel nombre d'animaux sauvages ne pouvait vivre que si la montagne était couverte de broussailles” (Robin 1984: 220–221; the data mentioned by Robin are taken from the qaylite inscription Robin/Kuhḥ1 = Ja 2874; according to Robin this degradation of the natural vegetal cover appears to have taken place in the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium AD).

would increase their land possessions, and the less effective ones would save their lives (e.g. Dresch 1989: 300–301).

In the process of the agricultural population adaptation to the severe natural environment of the North-East Highlands (especially to the frequent droughts) a significant role appears to have been played by the development of the market relations in the tribal zone of the North. The Yemeni tribal system appeared to have been able to provide their achieving of the level which seems to have been extremely high for a pre-industrial agrarian society. Here a considerable role appears to have been played by the development of such an important North Yemen tribal institution as *hijrah* (e.g. Abuṣ Ghaṣnim 1985: 214f.; vom Bruck 1993: 87–88; Chelhod 1970a: 81–82; 1975: 79–80; 1979: 58–59; 1985: 28–29; Dresch 1989; Kropp 1994: 89; Nielsen 1994: 43; Puin 1984; Stevenson 1985: 63–65 &c).

The *hijrah* is an institution which puts under protection (often documentally formulated) of a tribe (or a group of tribes) of a certain object. At the meantime the object of *hijrah* could be some people (for example, a family of sayyids [“religious aristocrats” tracing their descent from Muhṣammad] living in the territory of the given tribe), the places of the meetings between the tribes, markets, towns (populated often mainly by the “weak” population, as well as by the sayyids and qadis [learnt families not tracing their descent from the Prophet] rather than by the tribesmen) &c. In many respects it was due to this institution that the tribal organization managed to sustain in its zone a rather high level of development of market relations – through the establishment of the *hijrahs* guaranteeing the protection by the tribes of hundreds of markets which covered the whole tribal zone of the North Highlands. The tribes which proclaim, say, the given market as their *hijrah* take as their obligation (often documentally recorded) the securing of its full safety – e.g. through the guaranteeing of the compensation for a crime committed at the market being paid, say, eleven-fold (*bi-ʿl-muḥ ṣaddash*). In general, within the territory of the market (or any other place) proclaimed to be a *hijrah* it is forbidden to commit any violence, even if it is legitimate from the point of view of the tribal law (*ṣada ṣṭ*). “All spilling of human blood is forbidden and it's equally forbidden to start a fight or even come to blows there. Here the murderer can meet the son or brother of his victim without fearing for his life” (Chelhod 1979: 58; 1970a: 82; see also e.g. Dresch 1987: 432; 1989; Stevenson 1985: 63–65 &c); whereas the tribe failure to secure the fulfilment of such obligations constitutes a considerable blow upon its reputation (*sharaf*, “honor”).

Here a significant role appears to have been played by the creation of the already mentioned (see note 26 above) rather effective system of protection by the tribes of numerous “quasi-casts” of unarmed “weak” population who are not



worsening ecological conditions and helped to overcome the second North-East Yemeni socio-ecological crisis (of the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium AD).

On the other hand, within such conditions the full-scale system of the communal reciprocity could lead to the dying out of whole communities. Such things appear to have happened earlier, which seems to be evidenced by the oral tradition (some of which has been recorded rather recently, however it is well confirmed by very early written sources – al-Ḥamdaʿn 1916: 135; 1368h [1948]: 20, 202; al-Ḥimyar 1916: 51, 73; 1978: 49, 160; see also Belova 1987: 156; 1992: 253–266; 1996; al-Selwi 1987: 155 &c) on the existence a few centuries ago of the rather impressive practice of *iṣṭifaʿ*, when in the time of droughts or other natural disasters whole communities which were unable to feed themselves, but which feared to affect their reputation by seeking help of other communities preferred to seat down in a circle and starve to death but not to lose their honour (Serjeant 1987: 37–38). This tradition (which even indicates *maṣʿaʿid*, the places where such events took place) appears rather trust-worthy, as it describes a rather logical reaction of high-status tribal agricultural population with developed notions of its honour and reputation, but which has not yet found less painful ways out of the socio-ecological crisis.<sup>45</sup> It seems necessary to stress that by the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium AD this population appears to have found such less painful ways of “honourable” reaction to the periodical droughts. It is remarkable that the information of the recent *iṣṭifaʿ* tradition concerns a rather distant (though not pre-Islamic – Serjeant 1987) past.

There are certain grounds to suppose that due to the transformation of the communal structures, the genesis of the tribal organization and the development of the market system the North-East Yemen Highland socio-ecological crisis of the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium AD was more or less overcome.

Thus, the tribal organization seems to have matched rather well the Northern Highland ecological milieu, as it objectively protected a very fragile and vulnerable economic-ecological environment of the area from overexploitation through the procurement of a very “economical” production of

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<sup>45</sup> The information of the Medieval Yemeni authors refers mainly to Pre-Islamic North-East Yemen (the very word *iṣṭifaʿ* is considered as “Himyarite”), which could serve as additional evidence for the beginning of the second socio-ecological crisis already in the Pre-Islamic period. It is also remarkable that the concrete person mentioned by the Medieval Yemeni sources as practising *iṣṭifaʿ* was a noble woman (from the well-known Sabaeen aristocratic clan Muraʿthid [*MRTD*]) – al-Ḥamdaʿn 1916: 135; al-Ḥimyar 1916: 51, 73; 1978, 160. At the meantime in the more recent tradition dealing with the Islamic period (Serjeant 1987) *iṣṭifaʿ* is practised by the high-status agricultural population.

surplus by preventing the excessive taxation (and exploitation in general) of the agriculturalists,<sup>46</sup> precluding any exorbitant growth of the parasitic or prestige elite consumption, while permitting the existence of quite a developed and complex social and cultural structures (including a network of non-agricultural towns, markets, centers of traditional learning &c protected by the tribes). It is even difficult to avoid an impression that the tribal organization was almost the only political form which in the pre-industrial world could secure the sustainable reproduction of complex highly-organized social systems in the extremely meagre and vulnerable economic-ecological environment of the North-East Yemeni Highlands. As Dresch notices, “*the land of Haṣṣhid and Bakṣl would provide a poor economic basis for any elaborate exploitative class*” (Dresch 1984b: 156; see also 1989: 8–15). I would even say that in the pre-industrial age the socio-economic system of the area was to be freed from “any elaborate exploitative class” (which would have made the North Highland agriculturalists produce excessive surplus destroying finally the vulnerable environment) in order to become sustainable.

It seems reasonable to consider the tribe as the chiefdom alternative<sup>47</sup> rather than a “pre-chiefdom”<sup>48</sup> form of political organization (whereas in some respects the tribe of the North Yemeni type appears to be an even more developed form of political organization than the chiefdom). And in any case there does not seem to be any ground to consider as “primitive” the tribal organization of the Islamic Middle East, which (like the Middle Eastern states) formed as a result of long “post-primitive” evolution as a specific (and quite effective) version of socio-political adaptation of some quite highly developed regional populations to certain natural and socio-historical environment.

*“As for tribalism, every educated person should be aware that large-scale societies have organised themselves for centuries without the complex apparatus of government and administration we usually take for granted. Our usual theories of society and the state, whether drawn from Hobbes or Rousseau or whomever, are therefore partial, and on this score there is something tribalism of the kind found in Yemen might teach nearly all of us – lessons in political philosophy”* (Dresch 1994: 65–66).

<sup>46</sup> According to the Zaydī doctrine the harvest taxation must not have exceeded rather modest 5–10% (depending on the type of the land – e.g. Stookey 1978: 88), and the Northern tribes managed to secure the level of taxation not exceeding these figures for most of this millennium. The almost complete absence of any significant exploitation within the tribe (e.g. Dresch 1984b: 156; 1989: 276–319) seems to be here of no less importance.

<sup>47</sup> Whereas in certain respects (as this has already been mentioned above) the tribe seems to be an even more developed political form than the chiefdom.

<sup>48</sup> Or even “pre-state” one. Quite agreeing with Fried I would rather consider it as a “para-state” form of political organization.

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




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**GREECE**  
**(11<sup>th</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> centuries BC)<sup>1</sup>**

In his discussion of the monarchical form of constitution Aristotle poses the following problem for kings: *“The ... question, which also raises difficulties, is that of the king's bodyguard. Should the man who is to be king have a force about his person which will enable him to coerce those who are unwilling to obey? If not, how can he possibly manage to govern? Even if he were a sovereign who ruled according to law, and who never acted at his own discretion and went outside the law, he must necessarily have a bodyguard in order to guard the law”* (Aristotle Politics III.15, 1286b27-30. Tr. Barker 1946).

This passage would seem very strange to the modern reader, who would take it for granted that such a bodyguard should exist. And that it should exist not only in connection with a special kind of constitution, kingship, but rather with every form of constitution. Yet the question of a “bodyguard” as an enforcement apparatus does not arise at all in Aristotle's discussions of the other two forms of government, that is aristocracy (or oligarchy) and democracy (or polity). The reason for this is that unlike what has been traditionally assumed the *polis* was not a State but rather what the anthropologists call a “stateless society”. The latter is a relatively egalitarian unstratified community characterized by the absence of coercive apparatuses, that is by the fact that the application of violence is not monopolized by an agency or a ruling class, and the ability to use force is more or less evenly distributed among an armed or potentially armed population. As the *polis* was stateless, there was not a ready made state-apparatus, one over which anyone who wished to, or was urged to, rule could preside. Thus a bodyguard had to be especially created for him. The same problem did not exist for aristocracy and democracy, because in these forms of constitution there was actually no ruler and both kinds of constitution were expected to derive

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<sup>1</sup> This paper was extracted from my Cambridge Ph.D. thesis. I owe special thanks to the late Professor Ernest Gellner who commented on my thesis and on earlier versions of this paper and to my supervisor Dr. Paul Cartledge who has also helped me to bring this paper to its present form.



the force needed for their defense directly from their “natural” followers: aristocracy from the body of “best men”, and democracy from the demos. This observation could be demonstrated by occasions in which such constitutions had collapsed. At Athens, for example, in 462 the absence of 4000 hoplites, who had been taken by Cimon to help Sparta subdue the Helot revolt in Messenia, facilitated the democratic advances initiated by Ephialtes, while the absence of thousands of *thetes*, when the fleet was stationed at Samos, was vital for the oligarchic coup of 411 (Finley 1981: 29).

While it is agreed today that the early State played a significant role “in the direct exploitation of the producers through taxation, compulsory labor and other obligations” (Khazanov 1978: 87), the statelessness of the Greek *polis* means exactly that it was not an instrument for the appropriation of surplus production, and those modes of early agrarian State exploitation did not exist in ancient Greek world (at least before the Hellenistic Empires).

The statelessness of the Greek *polis* makes social anthropology a proper discipline for its analysis. However, such an analysis could not be carried out without qualifications. The main obstacle to the application of social anthropology to the Greek arena seems to be that anthropologists tend to identify the stateless community with the tribe (Gellner 1981: 24-25; 1988a: 152; 1991: 64), while it is agreed that the classical *polis* was not tribal and it is strongly doubted today whether tribal forms existed in ancient Greece even in archaic times. Being both, stateless and non-tribal, the Greek *polis* poses a serious problem for many basic assumptions of modern social anthropology. Thus, for instance, the assumption that the State is a necessary condition for civilization, or that stateless communities are “primitive”, while Greek society was both civilized and stateless. Consequently modern social anthropology not only ignored the statelessness of the ancient *polis* but on the contrary its evolutionary school reinforced the myth of the classical “Greek State” while adding to it another myth, that of the archaic “Greek Tribe”.

## I. *Polis* and State<sup>2</sup>

### a. *Definitions*

Broadly speaking, the traditional definitions of State could be classified into those based on (a) stratification and (b) authority or the structure of the government itself (Cohen 1978a: 2-5; 1978b: 32-4; I have modified

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<sup>2</sup> I have already argued some of the main points which appear in this section in previous papers. I repeat them here for the clarity of the argument. See, Berent 1996: 36-59; 1998.

Cohen's position slightly limiting myself to traditional definitions of the State).

Definitions based on stratification stress the correlation between States and the existence of permanent social classes. In those definitions the State is either identified with the ruling class or viewed as dominated by the ruling class, and is used as an instrument for the appropriation of surplus production. Though those definitions have been usually associated with Marxism, and especially with Engels's "*Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State*" (1884 [1972]), stratification is considered today as a universal correlate of the early (and pre-modern agrarian) State (Claessen and Skalník 1978: 20-21). Thus Gellner observes that "*In the characteristic agro-literate polity, the ruling class forms a small minority of the population, rigidly separated from the great majority of direct agricultural producers, or peasants. Generally speaking, its ideology exaggerates rather than underplays the inequality of classes and the degree of separation of the ruling stratum. This can turn into a number of more specialized layers: warriors, priests, clerics, administrators, burghers. The whole system favours horizontal lines of cultural cleavage, and it may invent and reinforce them when they are absent*" (1983: 9-10).<sup>3</sup>

Gellner himself does not think that his model of the agrarian State applies to the classical Greek world, pointing out that the Greek world lacked horizontal cultural differentiation and a military-clerical domination (1983: 14; 1988a: 22). The citizens of the *polis* were not professional soldiers or administrators. Further, the cultural horizontal cleavages which Gellner sees as characteristic of stratified agrarian communities were absent in the Greek case; the Greeks emerged from the Dark Age as the "nation" of Homer, that is, no class had a monopoly on literacy and culture. Indeed Gellner calls Greek society a "*domination-free society*" (1988a: 22).

Yet, the existence of exploitation (notably slavery) or of privileged groups (notably the citizens) in the *polis* could not be denied. In the same manner one could not deny that in a certain sense the citizens did have a monopoly on the application of physical force. These have led to attempts to

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<sup>3</sup> Gellner's position is different from that of classical Marxism. According to the latter, stratification, or the emergence of classes, must precede that of the State. Thus, classical Marxism sees the State as a "third power" and the prize of the class-struggle between the ruling and the ruled. Gellner, on the other hand, identifies the ruling classes with the (agrarian) State and limits its struggles for power to the ruling strata only (that is, in Marxist terms he identifies only "one power" - the ruling classes). See, Mann 1988: 48-49. And see also below.

modify Gellner's model of the agrarian State in order to make it applicable to the ancient Greek arena. I will return to these attempts later on.

A second set of definitions of State focuses on the structure of the governmental system itself, looking for institutional hierarchy and centralization, territorial sovereignty, the monopoly of the application of physical coercion (Cohen 1978b: 34). Here the best starting point would probably be Max Weber's celebrated definition of the state as that agency within society which possesses the monopoly of legitimate violence (Weber 1978: 54). Thus as Gellner observes "*The 'state' is that institution or set of institutions specifically concerned with the enforcement of order (whatever else they may be concerned with). The state exists where specialized order-enforcing agencies, such as police forces and courts, have separated out from the rest of social life. They are the state*" (1983: 4).

This definition is far from being true for the *polis*. The rudimentary character of State-coercive apparatus in the *polis* has been noted by Sir Moses Finley among others. With the partial exceptions of Sparta, the Athenian navy, and tyrannies, the *polis* had no standing army. Only in the case of tyrannies were militias used for internal policing (Finley 1983: 18-20). (Tyrannies were indeed attempts to centralize the means of coercion, that is to create a State). As for police, it seems to be agreed that the ancient *polis* "*never developed a proper police system*" (Badian 1970: 851); the nearest thing to it was usually a "*small number of publicly owned slaves at the disposal of the different magistrates*" (Finley 1983: 18).

The absence of public coercive apparatuses meant that the ability to apply physical threat was evenly distributed among armed or potentially armed members of the community, that is, the citizen-body. Thus, as Lintott has observed, policing was done by self-help and self-defense (that is with the help of friends, neighbors, family) (Lintott 1982; Rihll 1993: 86-87). There was no public prosecution system, and cases were brought to the popular courts either by interested parties or by volunteers. In the same manner, court orders were not carried out by the officials but by the interested parties, sometimes by self-help.

In Athens, for instance, what could be seen as a State law-enforcement apparatus, were the Eleven who had the charge of the prison and executions, and who, like most Athenian magistrates, were ordinary citizens chosen by lot for one year. The Eleven did not normally make arrests on their own initiative. Those were carried out by self-help, by interested individuals or by volunteers (Lintott 1982). In other words the prisoners were brought to the Eleven. Further, imprisonment was not normally a form of

punishment imposed by the courts in the classical *polis* (Todd 1990: 234) (which is not surprising, since prisons are typically part of the bureaucratic machinery of the State); in Athens it was more usual to detain people in the public prison under the supervision of the Eleven until they were tried or while they were awaiting execution (by the Eleven).<sup>4</sup> The Eleven were also responsible for the execution without trial of *kakourgoi*, that is, robbers, thieves and other criminals who were caught red-handed and confessed. Again the *kakourgoi* were not arrested by the Eleven but brought to them by ordinary citizens (Hansen 1976: 9-25).<sup>5</sup> There was also in Athens a corps of Scythian archers “*probably more decorative than useful, especially for keeping order in law-courts and assemblies*” (Badian 1970: 851). Anyway, they were not “*any kind of police force in the general modern sense*” (Hansen 1991: 124).<sup>6</sup>

To the extent that this apparatus could be described as a police force, its rudimentary character becomes obvious when one is considering the size of the population in Attica (that is above 200,000 including non-citizens (Gomme and Hopper 1970: 862). Thus Finley emphasizes that: “*Neither police action against individual miscreants nor crisis measures against large scale ‘subversion’ tells us how a Greek city-state or Rome was normally able to enforce governmental decisions through the whole gamut from foreign policy to taxation and civil law, when they evidently lacked the means with which, in Laski’s vigorous language, ‘to coerce the opponents of the government, to break their wills, to compel them to submission’*” (Finley 1983: 24).

As for the differentiation or the separation of State institutions “*from the rest of social life*”, Finley has noted also that Athens, with all its impressive political institutions and empire, had virtually no bureaucracy at all (Finley 1977: 75). Athens’s political institutions, the Assembly (*ekklesia*) the Council (*boule*) and the Law-courts (*dikasteria*), were popular, not differentiated from the demos.<sup>7</sup> The various offices in Athens (most of the

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<sup>4</sup> Also a man condemned to pay a fine could face imprisonment until he paid it (MacDowell 1978: 257).

<sup>5</sup> However, *ephegesis* was a process (rarely mentioned by the sources) in which arrest was carried out by the Eleven probably because the prosecutor lacked the power to make the arrest (Hansen 1976: 24-27).

<sup>6</sup> Sparta had a “secret police” (the *krupteia*), but only for use against the Helots and not against the Spartiates (Badian 1970: 851; Cartledge 1987: 30-32). Even so, Sparta is an exception which would need a special discussion.

<sup>7</sup> This is the traditional view. However, Hansen argues that the *dikasteria*, the law courts, were a differentiated body. See, for instance, Hansen 1989: 102.

magistrates, including the archons but not the generals [*strategoi*] were designated by lot for one year (Finley 1977: 75). Designation of political offices by lot for short periods is another way of preventing the differentiation of a state. It also bore directly on the “constitutional” and actual power of those officials. *“This leads to the elision of anything that could properly be termed an executive power, and reduces officers to individuals not distinct from the demos”* (Osborne 1985: 9).

In Athens it is possible to distinguish also between “government” in the sense of political institutions and officials, on the one hand, and “government” in the sense of people who formulated policy. While the political institutions and offices were staffed by amateurs, thus exhibiting no division of labor, one can speak of a certain kind of a division of labor considering the “professional politicians” in Athens, that is the demagogues and those who proposed and spoke in the assembly. Yet in the sense that these people could be called a government, this was certainly a non-State government. The Athenian leader did not have any formal position and State coercive apparatus at his disposal. He was simply a charismatic individual, a demagogue, who could persuade the people in the Assembly to accept his policies, but still risked losing his influence (and his life!), and having his policies rejected at any moment (Finley 1985: 24).

#### b. *Slavery*

The existence of exploitation (notably slavery) or of privileged groups (notably the citizens) and the fact that to a certain sense the citizens did have a monopoly on the application of physical force have led to attempts to modify (Gellner's) model of the agrarian State in order to make it suitable for the ancient Greek world. An analysis of these modifications could elaborate further on the differences between the *polis* and the agrarian or early State.

The most obvious modification for the model of the Agrarian State would be to follow I. Morris in drawing the main horizontal line (which separates rulers from ruled) between the citizens and the slave population (Morris 1991: 46-49). Again, seeing the citizens as a “ruling class” conflicts with Gellner's model of the agrarian State because the absence of a division of labor: the citizens were not professional soldiers or administrators. Thus a further modification seems to be suggested by Runciman who says that two necessary conditions are paramount in a *polis*: *“First, a polis must be juridically autonomous in the sense of holding a monopoly on the means of coercion within a territory to which its laws apply. Second, its form of social or-*

ganization must be centered on distinctions between citizens, whose monopoly of the means of coercion it is, who share among themselves the incumbency of central government roles, and who subscribe to an ideology of mutual respect, and non-citizens, the product of whose labour is controlled by the citizens even if the citizens do the same work (when not under arms)" (1990: 348).

Runciman still considers coercion in what he calls "*a citizen-state*", as a means of appropriation of surplus production. His model assumes that the citizen-body acts as a sort of a centralized body towards the slaves or the non-citizens in general. Is this view justified?

With the conspicuous exception of Sparta, the absence of any organized militias or otherwise professional bodies for internal policing is recognized today. How, then, were the slaves controlled?

Ancient Greece was characterized by chattel slavery; that is, slaves were usually owned by individual masters and not by the public. Further, and this is important, the control of the slaves was also "private", that is, by self-help. In an illuminating passage in the Republic Socrates equates the slave owner with the tyrant. It is the business of the slave-owner to control the slaves. But why is it that "*Such slave-owners ... don't live in fear of their slaves*". The answer is that "*the entire polis (pasa e polis) would run to help (boethei) him*" (Plato, Republic 578d-e. Plato, Republic 361a-b.).<sup>8</sup> That Socrates refers here to self-help rather than to any organized or professional help becomes more obvious from what follows: But imagine now that "*some god were to take a single man who owned fifty or more slaves and were to transport him and his wife and children, his goods and chattels and his slaves, to some desert place where there would be no other free man to help him; wouldn't he be in great fear that he and his wife and children would be done away with by the slaves?*" (Plato, Republic 578e).

The emphasis here is not on the absence of a State in some desert place, and not even on the absence of citizens, but rather on the absence of other free men who constitute the natural group from which help could come. In Xenophon's phrase in a similar passage all the slaveowners in the com-

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<sup>8</sup> Tr. Desmond Lee, 2nd revised ed., Harmondsworth, 1974. Here, I must say, the traditional translations are imbued with statism, thus P. Shorey translates "*because the entire state is ready to defend each citizen*" (Loeb edn, London 1935) and Desmond Lee translates "*Because the individual has the support of society as a whole*". What is missing is the notion of self-help which is projected by the verb *boethein*. *Boe* means a shout and also a cry for help. The *boe* was a main way of calling the neighbours for help and people were supposed to run in response to a cry for help. The verb *boethein* became one of the standard Greek words for giving assistance. See Lintott 1982: 18-20.

munity act together as “unpaid bodyguard” (Xen. Hiero, 4.3; and see Fisher 1993: 71-72).

The absence of any ready militia to crush slave-revolts is complementary to the fact that “*slaves never represented a cohesive group either in their masters' or their own mind so for all their exploited situation they did not engage (for the most part) in social conflict*” (Figueria 1991: 302; see also Vidal-Naquet 1981: 159-167), and that we don't know of any slave revolts in ancient Greece again with the conspicuous exception of Sparta. As for the latter, the Helots were not at all chattel slaves but a local population which was enslaved by Sparta and were only able to revolt outright because of their ethnic and political solidarity, while “*these conditions did not obtain for chattel slaves of classical Greece*” (Cartledge 1985: 46).<sup>9</sup> And indeed the Greeks had already discovered that slaves were easy to handle when they were disoriented, thus Aristotle says that: “*This is the way in which we suggest that the territory of our polis should be distributed, and these are the reasons for our suggestions. The class which farms it should ideally, and if we can choose at will, be slaves - but slaves not drawn from a single stock, or from stocks of a spirited temper. This will at once secure the advantage of a good supply of labor and eliminate any danger of revolutionary designs*” (Aristotle, Politics VII. 10, 1330a24-29).<sup>10</sup>

Disorientation and deracination were important tools for the control of the slaves. Another was manumission and a certain incorporation into the Greek society. In their analysis of slavery in Africa Kopytoff and Meir suggest that while emphasis has been usually laid on “*how slaves are excluded from the host society ... the problem for the host society is really that of including the stranger while continuing to treat him as a stranger*” (Miers and Kopytoff 1977: 15-16). Consequently African slave societies offer social mobility to the slaves from the status of the total stranger towards the incor-

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<sup>9</sup> The Helots were not slaves in the ordinary sense. They were an identifiable and cohesive population who have been enslaved *en bloc* by conquest. They were, therefore Greek, not foreign; they tended to be property of the city as a whole, not just owned by individuals. Hence Garland in his *Slavery in Ancient Greece* ch. 2 classifies them as “community slaves”. Since these were actually communities many scholars (e.g. Ste Croix in his “*Class Struggle*”) find it helpful to classify them as “state-serfs” rather than as slaves (Fisher 1993: 23-24).

<sup>10</sup> Plato (*The Laws* 777) says that “*The frequent and repeated revolts in Messenia, and in states where people possess a lot of slaves who all speak the same language, have shown the evil of the system often enough ... if slaves are to submit to their condition without giving trouble, they should not all come from the same country or speak the same tongue, as far as it can be arranged*” (Plato, *The Laws*, Tr. Trevor J. Saunders. Penguin edn, 1970), and see Garland 1988: 177-183).

poration into the kinship group in what Kopytoff and Meir call the “*slavery to kinship continuum*” (*Ibid.*: 19-26). In classical Greece manumission and a certain mobility existed along with what might be called a “*slavery to citizenship continuum*”. One potential source of large scale manumission in the *polis* were shortages in warriors and rowers for the army and the navy (Fisher 1993: 67-70). The fact that usually the process of incorporation was arrested at a very early stage and full incorporation of slaves into the citizen body was rare and could have taken more than one generation does not undermine its existence and importance (Morris 1991: 174). It is important to note that Greek slaves were incorporated also culturally into the Greek society. Plato's and the Old Oligarch's complaints that in Athens slaves could not be identified by their physical appearance were perhaps an overstatement of this phenomenon. In other words, the cultural horizontal cleavages which Gellner sees as characteristic of stratified agrarian communities were absent in the Greek case.

The absence of coercive apparatuses made the *polis* less equipped for domination through conquest. The price of such domination would have been the creation of a Spartan-type community, that is turning the community into a military camp.<sup>11</sup> Consequently, in many cases, though Greek colonization started indeed with a conquest, the new *poleis* preferred either to annihilate the local inhabitants, or expel them, or to sell them as slaves, rather than to enslave them and create a Spartan-type community (Rihll 1993: 92-105). The absence of coercive apparatuses also prevented the increase of the number of slaves beyond a certain point. Thus the relative number of slaves within the total population seems also to conflict with Gellner's model of the agrarian State. While in the latter the rulers form only a tiny fraction of the total population, in the Greek *polis* the slaves (“the ruled” in this case) were at most 35-40 percent of the total population (Fisher 1993: 34-36; Cartledge 1993: 135).

### c. *Exploitation*

The idea that the (agrarian) State was an instrument for the appropriation of surplus production is not confined to Marxists, and it is agreed today that the early State played a significant role “*in the direct exploitation of the producers through taxation, compulsory labor and other obligations*” (Khazanov 1978: 87). This feature of the *polis*, according to which internal

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<sup>11</sup> Such communities also existed on the island of Crete, in Thessaly, Heraclea on the Black Sea, Syracuse and few others. See Fisher 1993: 32-33.



coercion was not organized or professional but rather exerted by self-help, that is, by volunteers, means that the *polis* was not a State, but rather, as Aristotle says, an association or partnership (*koinonia*). This does not mean, of course, that the *polis*' economy was not based also upon the appropriation of surplus production of the slaves (or the "poor" in general), but that exploitation and slavery could exist in stateless conditions. This point is made clearer when we examine to what extent modes of exploitation associated with the agrarian State existed in the *polis*. Khazanov observes that: ... "*one characteristic of most, if not all, early states deserves special attention because it may well turn out to be one of their distinctive features. I am referring here to the significant role played by the early state in the direct exploitation of the producers through taxation, compulsory labor and other obligations*" (ibid.).<sup>12</sup>

In their Pre-capitalist modes of production Hindess and Hirst include direct State taxation, appropriation and compulsory labor in the ancient mode of production (Hindess and Hirst 1985: 86-87). Among modern historians Ste. Croix applies the same modes of exploitation to the Greek *polis*. He distinguishes between what he calls direct and individual exploitation on the one hand (wage-laborers, slaves, serfs, debtors etc.) and indirect or collective, that is State exploitation, on the other. The latter is defined by Ste. Croix as "*when taxation, military conscription, forced labor or other services are exacted solely or disproportionately from a particular class or classes ...by a State dominated by a superior class*" (Ste. Croix 1981: 44).

Let us examine to what extent these modes of State-exploitation (taxes, forced conscription and forced labor), existed in the *polis*.

As for taxation, Ste. Croix himself admits that "*in the cities before the Hellenistic periods it may often have been quite light*" (Ste. Croix 1981: 206). In fact the absence of direct taxation of citizens has been a recognized feature of the *polis* (Austin, Vidal-Naquet 1977: 121; by contrast there was no hesitation in taxing non-citizens. See, *Ibid.*: 122-123.). Taxation usually characterized tyrannies, yet the latter were indeed attempts to create centralized power, that is to create a State. Further, not only was direct taxation not imposed on the poor of Athens, it was also the legal duty of the rich to undertake liturgies. The liturgy-system was a system whereby the rich carried a large financial burden and were recompensed by corresponding honours. It points to the fact that generally speaking the economic burden of the *polis*

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<sup>12</sup> Khazanov does not consider the Greek "State" to be an Early State but "*the next, higher state of development*" (1978: 77).

fell directly upon the rich rather than the poor citizens and points further to the Greek *polis* being an association rather than a State. Of course, it could be still claimed that the economic burden fell indirectly on the poor - the rich exploited the poor. Yet this was “individual exploitation” rather than “State-exploitation”.

If we move to Ste. Croix's second mode of State-exploitation, that is forced conscription of the poor, Ste. Croix himself admits that, “*In the Greek cities military service ... (the hoplite army) was a 'liturgy' expected of those I am calling 'propertied classes'*” (1981: 207). However, invoking Marx who has already noted that “*Military service hastened to so great an extent the ruin of Roman plebeians*”, Ste. Croix (1981: 208) maintains that while conscription bore heavily on the poor it “*presented no really serious burden on the well-to-do, who did not have to work for their living*” (Ste. Croix 1981: 207-208).

However, as Paul Millett says, while this was true for the Roman plebeians, “*in Athens, if anything, the reverse seems to have been the case, with wealthier citizens bearing the costs of the campaigns while the mass of the people enjoyed any benefits*” (Millett 1993: 184; Pritchett 1991: 473-485). Ste. Croix's claim that military service impoverished the poor ignores the centrality of war in the economy of agrarian society in general and the *polis* in particular. War also promised the participants a direct share of the booty (Pritchett 1971: 82-84; 1991: 363-401, 438-504) and through soldiering people could escape poverty, that is could be fed and paid (Pritchett 1971: 458-459).<sup>13</sup>

Further, the history of Athens becoming a democracy shows that, from the class point of view (though perhaps not from the individual point of view) conscription was a privilege, not a duty. It was the invention of the infantry hoplite army which hastened the downfall of the aristocracy-cum-oligarchy, and the centrality of the Athenian navy in maintaining the empire hastened the development of democracy. From the opposite reasons and from a purely class point of view it was not in the interest of the oligarchy to arm the masses (that is to “conscript” them). Aristotle has pointed out their dilemma: “*Changes may happen in oligarchies owing to internal reasons and without any attack from outside alike in war and in peace. They happen in war when members of the oligarchy are compelled by distrust of the people*

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<sup>13</sup> Another matter is the fact that one of the prime targets of war in ancient Greece had been the destruction of crops and other agricultural resources (see Foxhall 1993: 134-136). Thus long invasions did not affect all alike - farmers were hit harder than those without land and some farmers were hit harder than others (see Osborne 1987: 154; Foxhall 1993: 142-143).

*to employ an army of mercenaries. If a single man is entrusted with the command of these mercenaries, he frequently becomes a tyrant, as Timophanes did at Corinth; and if command is vested in a number of persons, they make themselves a governing clique. Fear of such consequences sometimes forces oligarchy to employ a popular force, and thus to give the masses some share in constitutional rights*" (Politics V.6, 1306a20-26, and see also Plato, Republic 551e).

It is exactly the decentralized and relatively egalitarian nature of the *polis* which made forced "conscription" the enemy of class domination. Consequently, arming the masses, that is increasing the military participation ratio, had to be accompanied by the increase of the political participation ratio. Thus "conscription" was not forced upon the disenfranchised but rather was forced by external conditions, like wars, upon the franchised.

It seems, then, that when one examines closely Ste. Croix's argument about class exploitation in the Greek *polis* his argument is very weak concerning what he calls "*indirect and collective*" exploitation by a "*State dominated by a superior class*".

The absence of public coercive apparatuses was, then, complementary to absence of these modes of State-exploitation which characterized early States. Consequently to a large extent the Greek *polis* was not an instrument for the appropriation of surplus production. Here a major question arises: how did the Greek achieve the "good life"? or in other words, how did they manage to sustain civilized life? Slavery was one way to achieve the "good life", but it could not be enough, probably because there were not enough slaves. We must remember that in agrarian States, the small civilized minority who appropriates the surplus production of the vast majority, consists of tiny fraction of the entire population, while in Athens the slaves were at most 35-40 percent of the total population. The absence of coercive apparatuses made the increase in the number of slaves beyond a certain point impossible and dangerous.

Thus slavery had to be reinforced and supplemented by war. This should not surprise us. As Gellner has pointed out, in the agrarian world wealth can generally be acquired more easily and quickly through coercion and predation than through production. Whether in a certain agrarian society violence would take the form of coercion or predation depends on how the means of coercion are distributed. Most agrarian societies are authoritarian, that is stratified State-societies, where the means of coercion are centralized or monopolized by a ruling class. In such societies coercion takes the form of State domination and State appropriation of surplus production. Yet there is

another kind of agrarian societies - egalitarian stateless communities. These societies are characterized by a high Military Participation Ratio, that is, almost everybody carries arms in wartime. What characterizes such communities is that they resist coercion. In such stateless communities violence would take the form of defense, predation and war against the outside world (Gellner 1991: 62-63).

The centrality of war and booty in the economy of the *polis* has long been recognized. In the *Phaedo* Plato says that “*All wars are undertaken for the acquisition of wealth*” (66c) and Aristotle points out five modes of acquisition “*the pastoral, the farming, the freebooting, the fishing, and the life of the chase*” and he sees war as a “*natural mode of acquisition*” (Aristotle, *Politics* I.8, 1256b23). Indeed “*warfare in the ancient Greek world was a mode of production*” (Rihll 1993: 105).<sup>14</sup> And Finley comments on this as follows: “*Why did the Greek poleis war with each other incessantly? No simple answer is available. In the present context, the suggestion may suffice that Greek poleis lacked the resources in men, land and materials with which to provide for their citizens the 'good life' that was the avowed purpose of the state. They could overcome chronic scarcities only at the expense either of a sector of their own citizenry or other states*” (Finley 1981: 33; 1985: ch. 6, esp. 158-159).

## II. The Two Plans of Government. Social Anthropology and the Greek *Polis*

### a. *Social Anthropology and the Myth of the Greek State*

The statelessness of the Greek *polis* makes social anthropology a proper discipline for its analysis. Yet social anthropology not only ignored the statelessness of the ancient *polis*, but on the contrary reinforced the myth of the classical “Greek State” while adding to it another myth, that of the archaic “Greek Tribe”.

It was the evolutionist tradition which prevailed in social anthropology in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which reinforced the idea of the classical Greek State. According to evolutionism, human societies have been constantly evolving following the same pattern, though not necessarily the same timetable. The existence of primitive stateless communities (such as the Iroquois of North America) meant, according to evolutionism, that each historical western societies had also gone through this tribal stage

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<sup>14</sup> Millett says “*As far as the Greek themselves were concerned warfare was conceived as potentially profitable*” (1993: 183-184).

before they evolved into their State-form. The task of historians and anthropologists alike was to try to establish the various evolutionary stages in history for every society (Kuper 1988: 1-7; Crone 1986: 56-58). Greek society was not exempted; on the contrary, it was used to exemplify the first historical transition from a tribal community into a State. As Lewis Henry Morgan put it in his *Ancient Society* “*It may be here premised that all forms of government are reducible to two general plans, using the word plan in its scientific sense. In their bases the two are fundamentally distinct. The first, in order of time, is founded upon persons, and upon relations purely personal, and may be distinguished as society (societas). The gens is the unit of this organization; giving as the successive stages of integration, in the archaic period, the gens, the phratry, the tribe, and the confederacy of tribes, which constituted a people or a nation (populus). Such ... was the substantial universal organization of ancient society; and it remained among the Greeks and the Romans after civilization supervened. The second is founded upon territory and upon property, and may be distinguished as a state (civitas). ... Political society is organized upon territorial areas, and deals with property as well as with persons through territorial relations. ... It taxed the Greeks and the Romans ... after they had gained civilization, to ... inaugurate the second plan of government, which remains among civilized nations to the present hour*” (Morgan 1877 [1964]: 13-14).

It is not only the assumption that the classical Greek *polis* was a State which is important here, but the idea of duality, that is that in principle there could be only two modes of government, tribal (and stateless, though Morgan does not use this term) on the one hand, and States on the other. Another important duality which appears in the above quotation is that of State = private property on the one hand and tribal (and stateless) community = commune, on the other. Consequently if private property and “class” conflict could be found in classical Greece, than the *polis* must have been a State (see, for example: Starr 1986: 43-45). A third important duality used by Morgan is that of tribe = primitive on the one hand and State = civilization on the other. From this one might conclude that if the Greek *polis* was civilized, then it must have been a State.

Here, of course, the contribution of classical Marxism to the notion of the Greek “State” should be emphasized. There could be little surprise that Morgan's theory was accepted enthusiastically by Marx and Engels and was incorporated into the canonical Marxist teachings (Gellner 1988b: 39-68). The classical Marxist text in this matter is Engels's “*Origins of the Family, Private Property the State*”. According to Engels the first evolutionary stage

of the Greeks was a stateless commune: “*The gentile constitution had grown out of a society which knew no internal contradictions, and it was only adapted to such a society. It possessed no means of coercion except public opinion*” (Engels 1884 [1972]: 228).

However, such society was not equipped to deal with private property and class-conflict once they appeared, thus it needed a State: “*But here was a society which by all its economic conditions of life had been forced to split into freemen and slaves, into the exploiting rich and the exploited poor; a society which not only could never reconcile these contradictions, but was compelled always to intensify them. Such a society could only exist either in the continuous open fight of these classes against one another or else under the rule of a third power, which apparently standing above the warring classes, suppressed their open conflict and allowed the class struggle to be fought out at most in the economic field, in the so called legal form. The gentile constitution was finished. It was shattered by the division of labour and its result, the cleavage of societies into classes. It was replaced by the state*” (Engels 1884 [1972]: 228).

Engels leaves no doubt as to the “State” character of the ancient polis: “*The people's army of the Athenian democracy confronted the slaves as an aristocratic public force and kept them in check; but to keep the citizens in check as well, a police force was needed ... . This public force exists in every state; it consists not merely of armed men but also of material appendages, prisons and coercive institutions of all kinds*” (Engels 1884 [1972]: 230).

A contemporary Marxist interpretation of the so called “class struggle” in ancient Greece could be found in Ste. Croix’s *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World* where he says: “*We can accept the fact that what we call 'the state' was for the Greeks the instrument of the politeuma, the body of citizens who had the constitutional power of ruling. ... Control of the State, therefore, was one of the prizes, indeed the greatest prize, of class struggle on the political plane. This should not surprise even those who cannot accept the statement in the Communist Manifesto that 'political power, properly so called, is merely the organized power of one class for oppressing another'*”.<sup>15</sup>

Indeed, the notion of class struggle as offered by Greek sources in which the “classes” fight for domination on more or less equal terms seems to fit neatly into the classical Marxist notion of class struggle. Let us take the

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<sup>15</sup> Ste. Croix 1981: 287.

following numerical calculation put forward by Aristotle when he advocates the rule of the middle “class”, the middling group of citizens: *“It is clear from our argument, first, that the best form of political society is one where power is vested in the middle class and, secondly, a good government is attainable in those poleis where there is a large middle class - large enough, if possible, to be stronger than both of the other classes, but at any rate large enough to be stronger than either of them singly; for in this case its addition to either will suffice to turn the scale, and will prevent either of the opposing extremes from becoming dominant”* (Politics IV.11, 1295b34-39).

While it seems to fit neatly into the classical Marxist scheme, this description is problematic from standpoint of the model of the early agrarian State proposed by Gellner. According to Gellner in agrarian stratified State-societies politics is limited to struggles within the ruling elite, thus there is no question of the ruled, the vast number of unarmed direct producers (which suppose to be the equivalent of the Greek “poor”), assuming control of the State. In fact, it is here where Gellner’s model seems to conflict with classical Marxism (Hall 1985: 28-32) Consequently from Gellner’s point of view what Aristotle describes here is a decentralized and egalitarian community. The ability to use force is distributed among armed or potentially armed members of the community, thus each class can command force, and, as expected in an egalitarian community, force is directly related to the size of the group. It might be related also to the type of weapons available to the various groups. Thus the rich could probably afford to be fewer than the poor, since they could afford better arms (such as the hoplite armor). However, society is still egalitarian and decentralized, since the disadvantage of the poor in weapons could be overcome by their numbers. From Aristotle’s calculation it is also obvious that the various elements of society are, if not of the same size, at least of a similar order of magnitude. The situation in agrarian stratified State-societies is different. In the latter the ruling classes are only a tiny minority of the total population while the vast majority are peasant producers. Thus force is totally divorced from numbers. Further, as already noted, in agrarian stratified communities politics is limited to struggles within the ruling elite, thus there is no question of the ruled, the vast number of direct producers, assuming control of the State.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> As Michael Mann observes, the direct producers and expropriators could unite against the State political elite, not to transform it, but to evade it. Thus when the ruled are involved in class conflict in agrarian States, they are not aiming at the control of the State, but rather at its disintegration (see Mann 1988: 51-56).

We may reach here an interesting conclusion: the only reason classical Marxism was able to read into the Greek sources its notion of class struggle, a notion in which every class could potentially prevail, was exactly because the Greek *polis* was not an (agrarian) State, but rather a stateless and relatively egalitarian community.

It is important to note the “middle class” in Aristotle’s quotation above prevails because it is large enough, not because it establishes dominance over the other sections of the community. It has no means to do so: the armies engaged in the so called “class struggle” or *stasis* are non-professional citizen armies, and they exist only as long as the hostilities last. There is, of course, the possibility that a victorious party would want to achieve domination, and that it would not dissolve and disarm itself, but rather go on to establish a tyranny. Tyrannies were indeed attempts to gain and centralize power, that is to create a State, and the only case where militias or bodyguards were available for the purpose of ruling.

Yet, normally the purpose of *stasis* was not the establishment of tyranny but rather change or appropriation of the constitution. The most obvious aspect of a constitutional change was a decrease or increase of the citizen body. Citizenship, quite apart from the implications of political, legal and religious status, carried with it substantial economic gains. Thus only citizens could own land, [in the Athenian case] only citizens could share the profits of the mines. Only citizens had access to public funds (liturgies, booty, and (in the Athenian case) the levies that came from the empire). Only citizens had the right to assistance with respect to food supply. Further, as Aristotle tells us, the constitution was an arrangement of offices and it determined the offices and their distribution within the various “elements” of the citizen body. Sometimes offices carried with them profits, as in the case of the Athenian juror, the *dikastes* (Finley 1976; reprinted in Finley 1981: 81-82; Garnsey 1988: 80).

Thus, though each “class” wished to impose its constitutional preferences upon the others, this was not meant to be done by a government which imposed law and order, but rather by the vivid memory of the outcome of the last armed struggle, or *stasis*, plus the new constitutional arrangements. In other cases, such the one which Aristotle advocates, in which one group or class was “large enough”, the outcomes of *stasis* could be foreseen in advance and the threat of *stasis* could be enough to bring about the constitutional preferences of the dominant group (see also Berent 1998).



b. *Social Anthropology and the Myth of the Greek Tribe*

While modern social anthropology enhanced the myth of the Greek State it was also partially to be blamed for the creation of another myth, that of the “Greek tribe”.

Indeed, the traditional view, dominant until recently, was that the classical *polis* had evolved from the archaic *polis* which was tribal. There is no doubt that the myth of the “Greek tribe” was directly related to that of the “Greek State”: from 19<sup>th</sup> century evolutionist point of view the classical Greek State must have evolved from tribal forms. The notion of the latter seemed to be supported by the existence of the Athenian *phylai*, *gene* and *phratries*, which looked like lineage systems. Yet the notion of the Greek tribe has in the last two decades come under fierce attack which has started by the works of two French scholars, F.Bourriot and D.Roussel (Bourriot 1976; Roussel 1976). According to these two scholars the tribal model of archaic Greece was mainly a product of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century rationalizing. Heavily influenced by the evolutionist anthropological theories of the day, historians postulated that primitive Greeks must (like Morgan's Iroquois) have had “tribes”, “phratries” and “clans” (Donlan 1985: 295-296; Roussel 1976: 99-103). Roussel and Bourriot refuted the notion of the archaic Greek tribal community basically by pointing out there is no literary evidence in Homeric and Archaic literature of clan property, clan cults and joint family, nor that the obligation of assistance in blood-feuds (that is, self-help) rested within a joint family; rather they showed that the word *genos* is used in its normal meaning of birth or family origins (Smith 1985: 53; see also Bourriot 1976: 240-300; Roussel 1976: 30-31).<sup>17</sup> Further, they showed that there is no archaeological evidence which supports the existence of continuous burial plots from the Dark-Age to the classical times (Bourriot 1976: 850-899; Smith 1985: 54-55).

Finley, who adopted enthusiastically Roussel's findings suggested that the notion of the tribal “*polis runs counter to the evidence*” and that “*In so far as it is not merely the by product of a linear theory of human social evolution, it reflects a fundamental confusion between family and clan or tribe*” (Finley 1983: 444-5; 1985: 91; Murray 1990: 13).

Comparing the archaic Greek social structure with contemporary theories of tribal structure gives reasons for further doubts over the alleged

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<sup>17</sup> These features formed the traditional nineteenth - century notion of the tribal community based on the definition of the *genos* originally formulated by George Grote and modified by Lewis Morgan.

tribal nature of archaic Greece. Segmentary theory, which is associated with the works of E.E. Evans-Pritchard and E. Gellner, suggests that when a tribal community is divided in times of conflict, the division should be according to lineage. However, the divisions within the *polis* were usually ad-hoc associations. Self-help was exerted on an *ad hoc* basis by family, friends and neighbours in order to respond to particular situations or emergencies. The Greek political divisions in the case of civil war, the *staseis*, were “temporarily organized groups of citizens” (Wheeler 1977: 168) and were not identical with the so-called Greek kinship units. The absence of segmentation in the Greek *polis* should be added to the proof that these were not kinship groups (at least as those are envisaged by segmentary theory).

It is important to emphasize that the inadequacy of social anthropology to the ancient Greek arena goes far beyond the shortcomings of evolutionism. Contemporary social anthropology has still retained the classical evolutionist basic assumption of the “two plans of government” and its derivatives and it still identifies the stateless community with the tribe, or, as Gellner put it, social anthropology rejects the Hobbesian notion of the individualistic state of nature: “Long before modern social anthropology made the same discovery, Ibn Khaldun knew full well that the state of nature is not individualistic, but tribal. ... in the wilderness, the state of nature is a reality: the maintenance of order and the righting of wrongs is in the hand of an armed population itself, and not of a specialist law enforcement agency, i.e. the state. But this statelessness is not individualistic. Those who partake in it feel affection for their fellows of the same lineage. Order is maintained, at least in some measure, by the mechanisms of stateless tribal organization” (1981: 24-25).

In another place Gellner says that “agrarian man seems to face the dilemma of being dominated either by kings or by cousins” (1991: 64). Thus if one assumes, within the framework of social anthropology, that the *polis* was stateless one has also to assume that it was tribal. Yet, the Greek *polis* was neither a State nor a tribe and consequently the Greek citizen was dominated neither by kings nor by cousins. To a large extent the Greek “state of nature” was indeed individualistic.

Further, contemporary social anthropology accept Morgan’s supposition and still considers the (tribal) stateless community as primitive and the State as a necessary condition for civilization. Thus Sahlins observes that “A civilization is a society both massive and divided within itself. The population is large, perhaps ethnically diversified, divided by its labors into specialized occupations and, by unequal interests in the means of power, divided into

*unequally privileged classes. All the cultural achievements of civilization depend on this magnitude and complexity of organization. Yet a society so large, heterogeneous, and internally divided cannot stand without special means of control and integration ... The cultural richness that we call civilization has to be instituted in state form*" (Sahlins 1968: 6-7; Khazanov 1978: 89-90; Crone 1986: 49-50).

Yet, the Greek *polis* and Greek society in general were both civilized and stateless. Further, Greek society was civilized in a manner which was different than that of authoritarian agrarian communities. While in the latter civilized life pertain only to a tiny minority which composed the ruling classes, in the Greek world civilization was shared by all. The Greeks indeed emerged from the Dark-Age as the Nation of Homer and the cultural development of Archaic Greece pertained to the life of almost everyone in the Greek world (Snodgrass 1980: 160-161).

It is obvious, then, that the notion of the "two plans of government" employed by social anthropology is inadequate for the ancient Greek arena. We need now a "third plan" which would be able to explain the existence of civilized life in the stateless conditions of ancient Greece. Yet, in the absence of the State, how were the internal divisions and the various interests checked? Further, in the absence of a central authority which symbolized and imposed identity, on the one hand, and the absence of kinship identity (and, in fact, also a territorial one<sup>18</sup>), on the other, how did the Greek *polis* manage to keep its cohesion? The answers to these questions lie beyond the scope of this paper.

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<sup>18</sup> That the *polis*, as a political entity, or political system (to distinguish it from the *polis* in the sense of the city), was not defined by territorial terms was pointed out by Finley, Hansen and others. Finley says: "*The polis was not a place, though it occupied a defined territory; it was people acting in concert...*" (Finley 1963: 56; 1982: 3-4; Hansen 1991: 58-59).

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#### **IV. HIERARCHICAL ↔ NON-HIERARCHICAL**

##### **FORMS: MODELS OF TRANSITION**



**ROME**  
(8<sup>th</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries BC)

The possibility to generalize the Ancient Roman evidence theoretically from the viewpoint of politogenesis still remains a problem, in spite of the traditional character of this approach. To elucidate the regularities, a researcher has to expand the field of his studies and establish precise phasic analogies with the traditional societies, whereas this task proves unrealizable both because the Roman evidence themselves are used, as a rule, overtly or covertly, as a basis for comparisons, and because many stages of the politogenesis had been left behind in Europe by the Iron Age, and therefore the conventional comparisons lead to an unjustified archaization of the Roman society without weakening the subjective character of the evaluations. For instance, many authors still attempt interpretation of the military alliances of the archaic epoch (from the heroes of the Trojan War and Penelope's fiances to Spartan *syssitiae* and Roman *sodalitas*) as male houses (Andreev 1964) and treat the unity of the genealogical and potestal characteristics, reflected in the term of *patres senatores* (“fathers-senators”) (Dozhdev 1993b: 34 ff.) as a social reality of the so called “early stage of the primary formation”, namely age classes (Ivanchik & Kullanda 1991: 192-216, esp. 195-197). It is not surprising that this approach results in the interpretation of the formal fixation of the conscription age as, again, an indication to the age classes, and an attempt to reconstruct the rules of succession of royal power in early Rome may lead even to the “discovery” of the system of cross-cousin marriages among the ruling houses of Latium (Koptev 1998: 27-52, 28, 30-36).

The negative experience of including the ancient societies into universal (unilinear) models of overcoming the clan system and military democracy still hampers an unbiased analysis of concrete historical phenomena. Even a real progress in studying the most ancient Roman society is still based on the clan theory: the thesis on the neighbor character of the primary communities was contrasted with its earlier postulated clan character (Sereni 1955; Mayak 1983: 260; Shtaerman 1984: 151); Servius Tullius's reform, though interpreted not as the introduction of territorial-administrative division of the population but as its perfection (already in: Last 1945), is con-

trasted nevertheless with the alleged earlier genealogical system of recording membership of a community (Gjerstad 1972: 151; De Martino 1979a: 162-182; Tondo 1981: 92; Capogrossi Colognesi 1990: 41-42); finally, the very formation of statehood in Rome is still studied on the basis of contrasting the patrician clan system with the more progressive (military-democratic) plebeian one (Palmer 1970: 152f; De Martino 1979b: 51-71). As it was pointed out (Moreau 1978: 48), the very assessment of the clan relationships in the early Rome is usually based on a misleading idea of coincidence of parental and social structures and inevitably results in false generalizations (Franciosi 1978; 1988). The study of the most ancient Roman society in isolation from the parallels that suggest themselves, in the context of a polylinear development of statehood, even if it does not facilitate the task, ensures the necessary methodological purity of the research and seems to clarify the question to an extent. The below picture of the formation of the Roman state, the suggested legal evaluations and the attempt to find out a continuous line that determines its specific features as a version of the political development are based on the recognition of the civil community (*civitas*) as the phenomenological and conceptual kernel of the problem. Rome was founded in the urban epoch.

All the Latin cities, united in the Latin League of 30 cities (Dionys., 3,31,4; 34,1), were colonies of Lavinium or Alba (which was considered, in its turn, subsequently a colony of Lavinium), Rome being the latter's colony (Liv., 1,52,2; Dionys., 1,45,2; 66,1; 67,2; 3,31,4). The undesirability or even impossibility of exceeding the number of 30 may explain both the collegial character of the leadership of the colonist groups that founded Rome, led by two brothers instead of organizing two expeditions (cf. Dionys., 2,53,4), and the initial practice of sending additional colonists to the existing cities, which was often accompanied by their reassignment to Rome, instead of founding new ones (Dionys., 2,53,2 sq; 36,2; 50,5; 53,4). As in the subsequent epochs, a scheme was employed during the foundation of Rome that went back - in accordance with the mythological approach that required that any creative activity should reproduce the divine creation act (Eliade 1995: 37 ff.) - to the primary practice of founding a city (*metropolis*). The fixed number of the colonists, 3000, reflects the magic of the number of 30, suggesting that a hundred of warriors was the basic unit. Hundred is represented also in the ancient procedure of land delimitation (*centuriatio*) - allocation of a parcel of 200 jugers (Varro., de 1.1., 5,35; Paul.Diac., 46 L). Each hundred of warriors got its lot of land when Rome was founded (Dionys., 2,7,4). The primary people was divided by Romulus in 30 parts called *curiae* (Cic., de rep.,

2,8,14; Dionys., 2,7,47). The structural correlation between the grouping of warriors and land delimitation demonstrates the military-administrative character of a *curia*, the primary structural unit of the Roman society.

The conception of the colonial origin of Rome, on the one hand, permits one to match all data on the initial set-up of its society and, on the other hand, poses the problem of elaborating a new strategy of the phasic interpretation of early Rome and possible study of politogenesis on the basis of its data. Really, if Rome was a derivate formation, all innovations made by its founder kings (both those ascribed to Romulus and those dated to later periods due to the first kings' legendary functional specialization), which form a series of constituent acts that followed each other over a period of time, must be perceived as aimed at reproducing the traditional procedures in the new city. Generally, their appearance among the Latins must be considered a much earlier event (before the mid-8<sup>th</sup> century BC), whereas the Roman institutions proper, which met the requirements of the community in question, its numerical strength, geographical environment, military and foreign policy tasks, should be treated as a possible (but not necessary) reaction to the concrete historical context of the first centuries of the Roman history.

It is apparent that the primary local social structures cannot avoid the impact of both the emergence of an urban center and further urbanization on the Tiber banks. There are even less reasons to postulate the existence of principal differences in the previous epoch, although it is often described as pre-urban. It is an arduous task to distinguish the sought-for qualitative leap. Scantiness of the available data, their inevitable doubtfulness and lack of agreement in the suggested conceptual generalizations doom the interpretation of the Roman archaic data to be hypothetical and time-serving. Besides, the use of the models created on the basis of traditional societies is productive only if it presupposes the unilinear development of the public organization of the society, and it is the latter thesis that is questioned nowadays. The construction itself of a consecutive series of progressive changes in the community set-up, which may serve as a kind of scale for the phasic interpretation of other societies (as it was conventional to use the Roman data in the scholarly researches of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries) will become possible only after a relevant criterion is established to put in order, first of all, the Roman evidence itself.

The emergence of an urban center on the Tiber bank is secondary to the earlier settlements (*vici* – villages) and their associations – rural communities (*pagi*). Thus, the inclusion of those communities into a united people

may be presented only as a result of their merger (*synoecism*). However, this reconstruction does not make it clear was the foundation of the city a consequence of the merger process or, on the contrary, a catalyst for the merger trends. In the latter case, the origin of the urban center and its inhabitants proves to have nothing to do with the local population, and famous *synoecism* is a result of the inclusion of the communities into a new entity. This interpretation agrees with the tradition concerning the division of the Roman population into 30 *curiae* by the chief of the settlers, the king who founded the city. The opposite former interpretation relies on the information on the initial existence of less than 30 administrative centers in the vicinities of Rome. For instance, the procession that crossed the City performing the ancient ritual of the Argean festival stopped 27 times in various places. Starting from this, De Francisci substantiated the secondary and artificial (administrative) character of a *curia* (De Francisci 1959: 484). Then the tradition concerning the division of the population into *curiae* and of land among them proves a result of projecting the later organizational structures into the antiquity, to the very moment of the emergence of Rome, whereas actually the local centers were just gradually included into the new association, the latter itself proving a product of the centripetal trends of those primary formations. A possibility appears in this context to assume a degree of independence of the “primary” rural communities, which persisted within the framework of the new entity, even if one recognizes their neighbor rather than clan nature. This very circumstance seems to be the decisive factor that caused modern scholarship to prefer the theory of *synoecism*: a “natural” origin of the *curiae*, their autonomous, self-governed character, the fact that their internal structure was supposed (expected) to be primary to the megacommunity permitted the establishment of a conceptual succession with the habitual clan theory, which is already unacceptable in its classical form.

However, the facts that the subdued Latins were shifted to Rome and divided into *curiae*, which accompanied and expressed granting of citizenship to them (Dionys., 2,46-47; 50; 55; 62,2; 70; 3,29,7; Liv., 1,28,7; 30,2), contradicted the thesis of a natural character of the *curiae*. Attempts were made to overcome the latter obstacle by indicating that, beginning with Marcus Ancius (the fourth king), the settlers were not attached to *curiae* (Mayak 1993b: 66-68). The supposed new practice is interpreted as a testimony to the closeness of the clan *curiae* to strangers and, following Niebuhr (Niebuhr 1811: 180-189), as the source of the *plebs*, contrasted with the patrician *populus* (people-host). In our case, the *ex silentio* argumentation,

which is unsound methodologically by itself, creates more problems than it solves. Really, it does not explain how *curiae* could adopt new settlers earlier and how they could develop their alleged clan nature (Niebuhr 1811: 371 ff.; Mommsen 1864: 146; 1888: III, 69) afterwards.

The postulate on the plebeians' secondary and external origin is no less contradictory. Anyway, after Servius's centuriation reform, when, according to the followers of the conception under criticism, the united patrician-plebeian *populus* formed (Mayak 1989: 79-80), the curial assembly also was supposed to represent the whole people (Dionys., 6,89,1; 9,41,2; Macr., Sat., 1,15,10; Cic., pro Corn., 1, fr. 23 apud Ascon.). Recognizing plebeians' presence in *curiae* after Servius, this doctrine has to explain how had they been admitted thereto. Then, one has to assume a radical change in the nature of *curiae*, which became structural units of a new, civil organization after the reform (Tokmakov 1998: 78), although the latter created the centuriation organization parallel to the curial one without affecting the *curiae*. Such reasonings overturn the only (speculative) argument advanced much earlier concerning the expulsion of the plebeians from *curiae*: otherwise, why was the centuriation organization needed? This is how the entire construction loses the last signs of logic.

As a matter of fact, the sources directly mention the inclusion of the peoples resettled by Ancus Marcius into the ranks of citizens (Liv., 1,33,2-3; 5; Cic., de rep., 2,18,33), and Dionysius tells about their attachment to "tribes" (*tribus* – a larger unit of people comprising 10 *curiae*) (Dionys., 3,37,4). The numerical disagreement with 27 sanctuaries in the Argean ritual may testify not to a gradual formation of the alliance of 30 *curiae*, considered a result of a purposeful advance towards the cherished sacred number, but to the conservation of the social reality that preceded the colonists' advent, was close to *synoecism* and was realized within the military structure of the group from Alba Longa. If a *curia* had been a natural alliance, transformed into an administrative one later on, the purpose of achieving the cherished number of 30 in the course of the formation of the Roman community might emerge only after such a change in the nature of the *curiae*. Then, 27 Argean sanctuaries would testify to the concluding stage of that path, when the social units had already acquired the qualities of administrative subunits of the homogeneous society.

Not to mention that the identification itself of the Argean sanctuaries with curial ones starts from the hypothesis concerning a gradual increase in the number of *curiae* until it reached 30, it is dubious that it was practi-

cally possible to “make up” the necessary number by adding new *curiae* (or to oust the “excess” ones, if any). A strict numerical limitation would rule out any other criterion of the inclusion of a local community or village into the new association, which means that the existing *curiae*, too, would be considered administrative units, which makes no difference with the described tradition of dividing the whole people into 30 parts. Finally, the hypothesis concerning a gradual increase in the number of *curiae* to 30 presupposes a long-term policy aimed at a merger or conquest with magic purposes and therefore the primary nature, even though ideological one, of the “artificial” number with reference to the “natural” social reality. Thus, without solving the problem of the origin of the numerical series based on the figure of 30 (Palmer: 15 ff.), this hypothesis itself cannot avoid the assumptions it was supposed to overcome.

At the same time, the evidence of the tradition, confirmed by the most reliable sources among the available ones, namely, the information on religious festivals, testify invariably that the number of the *curiae* was 30 as early as the time of Romulus. For example, Dionysius (Dionys., 1,38) mentions 30 (not 27) Argean sanctuaries; quoting Varro's *Archaeology*, he reports (2,21) that Romulus instituted 60 priest positions in order to perform rites for the sake of the whole community in *phylae* and phratries, each *curia* electing two of them. When the second king Numa ruled (Dionys., 2,64), a special kind of hierurgy appeared, performed by 30 *curios*, who made common sacrifices on behalf of phratries. The cult of Vesta, too, was exercised by *curia* chiefs in each of the 30 “phratries” separately (Dionys., 2,65). Besides the hearths of the phratries, Numa created a common hearth in Forum (Dionys., 2,66). Perhaps, an echo of this tradition may be found in the definition of *curia* made by Fest, who also reports that Romulus created sanctuaries for each of the 30 parts he had divided his people into. During the *Fordicidia* festival, which belongs to the cycle of the fertility festivals (Gjerstad 1972: 148; Mayak 1983: 104), a part of cows was sacrificed at the Jupiter temple and 30 of them in the *curiae* (Ovid., *Fast.*, 4,635-636; Varro, *de l.l.*, 6.15). This testimony corroborates the primordial nature of the number of 30, which was primary at least with regard to the supposed *synoecism* of the *curiae*.

Curial hierurgies were often accompanied by joint dining (Dionys., 2,23; 65-66; Paul.Diac., 49 L), which confirms the parallel with Spartan *syssitia* (Plut., *Lyc.*, 10), egalitarian associations (brotherhoods) of messmate warriors, found in the deep antiquity (Rathje 1990). According to Aristotle

(Arist., Pol., 4,9-11) they were introduced in Italy by legendary Italus (!). The character of the warriors' association is emphasized also by the conventional etymology (Walde 1938) of the word *curia* < \**co-vir-ia* ("co-manhood"), which rules out a natural character of that unit. The etymology corresponds to the archaic social notion *viritim* ("per man"), which describes both the voting procedure in the curial assembly (Liv., 1,43,10 - contrasted with the classes of the centurial organization, the term expresses homogeneity and atomicity of the association) and the procedure of land allocation to warriors (Varro, de re rus., 1,10,2 - on the act of egalitarian and universal land distribution during the foundation of the city; the word meant "per head").

The idea of egalitarian equality in a *curia* was represented by the structure of the priest *collegium* of *Salii*: 12 identical pedestrian warriors, armed by small round shields and still ignorant of the hoplites' armaments (Tagliacatella Scafati 1988: 48 f). The tradition ascribes its creation to Numa. The primary nature of this *collegium* is confirmed also by its geography, which reflects the earliest stage of the development of the Roman community: *Salii Collini* and *Salii Palatini* were connected with the *Septimontium* territory (Quirinal and Palatine). It is the *Salii's* hymn that mentions numerous *poploi* (in text *poploe* – the ancient plural form: Hoffmann & Leumann 1963: 271 ff.) instead of the single *Populus Romanus* (Fest., 224 L s.v. *Pilumnoe poploe*). This fact indicates the geographically central location of these *poploi*, contrasted with the rural autonomous subcommunities around the City rather than the stage that preceded *synoecism* of various communities in the region, which formed the united *populus* subsequently (e.g., Pliny (Plin., HN, 3,68) quotes the list of the *populi* of pre-Roman Latium, who correspond to rural settlements, *pagi*, and are contrasted with *oppida*, urban settlements). The military and egalitarian character of the priest *collegium* that existed in the *colles'* and *montes'* territory permits us to consider the said *poploi* separate *curiae* – subunits of the Roman troops (*pilumnoe* meaning "armed with *pila*"; *pilum* – a typical hoplites' spear: Snodgrass 1964: 138), components of the *populus* (infantry, phalanx: Valditara 1989: 204 ff.; 225 ff.).

Servius's commentary to Verg., Aen., X.202 also supports this understanding of the term: "*gens illi triplex, populi sub gente quaterni*" ("its tribe is triplex, each tribe is of four peoples"), he writes about Mantua. The same idea of a division into homogenous parts is expressed in Laelius Felix's (Gell., 15,27,5) reasoning on the kinds of assemblies: "*Cum ex generibus hominum suffragium feratur, "curiata" comitia esse, cum ex sensu et aetate*

"centuriata", cum ex regionibus et locis, "tributa"... " ("When voting is based on the divisions of people, the assembly is curial; when it is based on qualification and age, the assembly is centurial; when it is based on regions and territories, the assembly is tributal"). *Genus* ("genre") consists of numerous homotypic phenomena, resulted by *divisio* (division on a specific basis) and is contrasted with "species", a unique phenomenon distinguished within a genre by *definitio* ("definition"). For instance, Paulus Diacon writes in his epitome quoted in Fest's dictionary (Paul. Diac., 137 L): "*Maiores flamines appellabantur patricii generis, minoris plebei*" ("the flamines from among a patrician class were called senior and those from among a plebeian one junior"). Here the word *genus* means a group, a class and may be omitted from the translation at all (unlike Mayak 1993b: 71).

The contradiction between *synoecism* of the communities and parts of the City and interpretation of a *curia* as a military subunit of a united host is resolved by recognizing the administrative functions of a *curia*, which served later as a cell for the inclusion of conquered Latins into the Roman community. Relative autonomy of *curiae*, which manifested itself in the Fornacalia festival, does not contradict their military-administrative character. On the other side, the features that draw a *curia* close to the *syssitiae* as a sacral brotherhood of warriors do not permit us to consider its egalitarian and military aspect a secondary component and believe that it developed only after the final number of these units, which had been allegedly natural earlier, was fixed, when a *curio* is deemed to be a relic of an independent kinglet of the epoch that preceded *synoecism*. The latter interpretation leads to mixing different stages of the historical development that manifested themselves in the military and administrative functions of a *curia*, and their formation seems simultaneous and mutually conditioned.

The social reality of the epoch when the City was founded, as well as the development level of military science and arms, presupposes an already differentiated (ranked) society with chariot battles as the customary military technique. To harmonize autonomy of *curiae* and both political (king and curial assembly) and religious unity of the Roman community (*synoecism*) in the Septimontium epoch, to explain identity of the terms (*populus* – *poploi*) and to date *Salii's* military egalitarianism to the pre-hoplite epoch, one cannot do without recognizing a *curia* a subunit of the colonist group that settled near the Seven Hills - a structure based on the principles of equality and commonness, on a warrior's right for spoils of war (Sinaiskij 1907: 55) and corresponding to the equality among the people who



were subject to the king's charismatic authority (Coli 1973: 321 sqq.).

Side by side with the egalitarian *populus* (people-host), the tradition mentions *gentes* ("clans"), hierarchical autonomous formations within the primary Roman community, witnessed also in the historical period (Dionys., 6,47,1; 7,19,2; 10,43). They differ from military-administrative units not as much in their size as in the principles of collective organization. *Gens* is quite a numerous (sometimes some thousands of warriors) group of persons united by a common name, common territory, common cemetery and common objects of worship. The hierarchy that distinguishes a "clan" from a "people" is formed by *gentiles* ("clan-mates") proper, who originate from a legendary ancestor, *sodales* (companions), noble and rank-and-file warriors connected with the group chief (*princeps gentis*, "military chief") by a loyalty oath (*coniuratio*: Nemirovsky 1983: 125), and clients, people of humble origin who turned for protection (*venire in fidem*) of one of the heads of the patriarchal families that formed the gens.

Some characteristic features make a client resemble the patron's (*patronus* "pater-like", *pater (familias)* - "head of the family") close relative. A client bears the patron's clan name (*nomen gentilicium*) and takes part in the clan hierurgies (Dionys., 9,19,1). Testimonies are known to the effect that a client needed the patron's permission to marry (Plut., Cat.Maj., 24,2-3; Liv., 39,19,5), like a dependent son. Describing the details of the clientele founded by Romulus, Dionysius compared clients with close relatives three times. A patron must do everything for his client what a father does for his son (or a head of the family, the master of the house for his dependent) in the field of monetary operations and contracts (Dionys., 2,10,1); the clientele relations are succeeded by a younger generation from elder ones and do not differ even a little from the succession among blood relatives (2,10,4); a client must help his patron in exercising public offices as relatives do (2,10,2).

At the same time, unlike a dependent free (not slave) member of a family (*familia*), is an object of another person's right (subject to another's authority), "*persona alieni iuris (alienae potestatis subiecta)*" (see Albanese 1979: 56 ff.; Smirin 1985: 10 ff.; Dozhdev 1993b: 58 ff.; Franciosi 1992), a client is an independent person - "*persona sui iuris*" (object of his own right). This fact manifested itself in the fixation of certain occasions when a client had to pay his patron (redemption from captivity, marrying out a daughter, etc.: Dionys., 2,10,2; Plut., Rom., 13,2) and in the contractual character of the initial relations with the patron. Despite an inequality of the parties as the main precondition of the emergence of the clientele relations

(Mommsen 1864: 356), a client acted as an independent and active person when they were established. This independence was drawn from nothing but the client's public status as a citizen: being a male warrior, he was perceived by the community in all respects as an equal participant of *comitiae*, host, land distribution, the right to be tried by the king, etc. Being involved into clientele, he waived independence in the private sphere. For instance, taking part in court proceedings, a client always could count for the patron's protection as a *vindex*, as well as for representation in the proceedings, when a patron litigated to protect his client's interests on his own behalf. Similarly, adoption of a *nomen gentilicium* and comparison of clients with children not only express their membership in the *gens*, as Magdelain believed (Magdelain 1971: 103) but mean that the normal consequence of the establishment of the clientele relations was forfeit of the socially important individuality of one's own, its assimilation and absorption by the patron's authority (cf. Lo-brano 1984: 31 ff.).

The most ancient clientele regime demonstrates that there were other authorities than the king in the community, whose influence was private (the clan hierurgies were called "*sacra privata*", private hierurgies, unlike those exercised by the *curia*) but universal, characterizing the primary community. The tradition mentions the clientele establishment among Romulus's first constituent acts (Dionys., 2,9,2; 10; Cic., de rep., 2,9,16; Plut., Rom., 13), thus fixing its pre-urban origin. Competing with a warrior's egalitarian and public status, the attractiveness of a client's position reflects, apart from the real differentiation within the community, the existence of a non-egalitarian principle of its set-up. This principle was institutionalized in the royal council of "fathers" (*patres*). According to the ancient ideas on the magic of words, the semantics of this term, studied by G. Mancuso (Mancuso 1972: 18-26), expresses the essence of this institution, too, by pointing to the authority the *patres* had enjoyed as bearers of a special charisma even before they became members of the royal council. Developing this approach (Dozhdev 1993b: 39, 49), one can demonstrate that the authoritarian semantics of the term (*pater* – "lord") is combined with the genealogical one (*patres* – "ancestors"), which is sufficient to state that the council was created (simultaneously with the foundation of the City) at such a stage of the development of the ideas on public authority when it was ascribed to the eldest persons in the genealogical line (cf. similar combination of two meanings in the term *princeps* – "forefather" and "chief") and, from the genealogical standpoint, the founders ("progenitors") of the clan or its branch were con-

sidered charismatic leaders.

Side by side with the king and the assembly, the *patres* (council) was a fundamental structure in the public authority system. Politically, the coexistence of *patres* and *populus* manifested itself in two different acts of the approval of a king's enthronization: *auctoritas patrum*, performed by the "fathers", and *lex curiata de imperio*, issued by the people at the curial assembly (Tondo 1981: 81 ff.). The two social groupings, which were distinct in the military sphere, were institutionalized as two organs of political power, playing equal roles in the formalization of the king's public authority as the only embodiment of the community's unity.

Thus, the tradition concerning the beginning of Rome fixed a binary division of the community into equestrians and pedestrians, patrons and clients, senators and people, patricians and plebeians. Historicity of the evidence on the structural distinction between the equestrians and pedestrians within the initial Roman host is confirmed by the trend towards connecting the division into three tribes exactly with the equestrians and believing that the traditional names of "Titienses, Ramnes, Luceres" belonged to them alone (Liv., 1,13, unlike Cic., *de re pub.*, 2,8,14). Such versions of the traditional description of the division of the people (host) by the founder king cannot be a product of secondary retrospective construction and undoubtedly reflect the most ancient reality. The distinction is confirmed by opposition "*magister equitum* – *magister populi*" (Valditara 1989: 139 ff.), known at the end of royal and beginnings of the republican period (Liv., 2,6,6; 2,8,4), but which can be traced back to the times of Ancus Marcius (Dionys., 3,40,4; 3,41,4; 4,3,2; 4,6,4). Anyway, the equestrians are considered here a formally defined group within the initial community and host and, their rank is deemed equal to that of the pedestrian warriors.

The universal character of the distinction between the patrons and clients in the traditional societies does not permit a sufficiently accurate judgement on the level of social differentiation within the early Roman society. However, being indefinite by itself, this division becomes heuristic enough with regard for other oppositions. Specifically, the distinction between the cavalry and infantry indicates that the development stage that corresponds to the chariot battle, when a chief stands on the chariot and hurls spears supplied by virtually unarmed armor-bearers (as described in the *Iliad*), had been already overcome. Thus, the achieved level of social differentiation was not limited to the "patron – client" dichotomy, which overlapped with the differentiation of the new groups of the military and administrative

nature with a special organization, which were distinct functionally and socially. The said opposition appears amorphous and therefore primary with respect to them. In that epoch, it had already no public importance: it did not coincide with the universal military and administrative division of the population, remaining a widespread and easily accessible but just a particular method of establishment of formal social relations.

The clear-cut division of the nobility's and people's political influence, its institutional formalization and fixation in the separate organs of power - the senate and the assembly - mean not so much segregation of the two estates (the nobility was represented in the assembly) as the universal character of the representation principle, equally applied to both the people and the nobility. The society proves shaped completely, organized as an integer, and political participation becomes a duty rather than a right, the mode of an individual's existence in a civil collective, which acquires a totalitarian character of an organization that absorbs and rejects whatever individual will other than that presupposed by the existing form. Private initiative is ousted beyond the framework of the political organization, which encompasses not only the people, organized in an egalitarian manner, but the genealogically constructed hierarchy of the nobility.

The land use principles applied by the aristocracy are connected with its nature, with the structure of *gentes* and the role of *patres*. It is not a chance that Fest connected the latter term with the principles of land use by a gens in his definition (Paul., ex Fest., p. 288 L): "*Patres senatores ideo appellati sunt, quia agrorum partes adtribuerant ac si liberis propriis*" ("The fathers-senators are called so because they allot a part of their land to the weakest persons, as if they are their own children"). The identification of the "weakest" ("poorest") people with clients, commonly accepted by the scholarship (Mommsen 1888: III, 83, Anm. 2; De Martino F. 1972: 1, 29), is expressed in their comparison with children. However, the latter is connected in this text not with the clients' legally fixed position (weak like children) but with their role in the land allocation itself: they are granted land parcels "like one's own children". In other words, the land allocation is conditioned by the recipient's subordinate position, construed as the inclusion into the sphere of the benefactor's authoritarian power (his genealogical line or family group), as loss of the client's independent individuality. This situation is totally opposite to the reason for the land allocation to warriors based on the recognition of the individual value of each of them by the public authorities, when parcels are distributed on the *per man* (*viritim*) basis.

Fest's indication, the only firm basis for the reconstruction of the patrician landownership, has long been interpreted as a testimony to the apartness of the nobility's landed estates: the so-called *ager gentilicius* ("clan's lands") is a term that does not appear in the sources and was introduced by Th. Mommsen (1936: 252). This interpretation presupposes that such lands were at the patrician *gentes*' disposal and were exempted from the community's (the king's) general control. From this standpoint, it proves unacceptable to identify *ager gentilicius* with public lands (*ager publicus*) seized by the patrician *gentes* and their clients, allegedly as an expression of the equality of the *patriciate*'s civil rights (Mayak 1993a, 1993b: 127 ff.); this approach is widespread within the framework of the conception of the initial "clan" character of the Roman community. This conception is based on numerous evidence testifying that *ager publicus* was seized by the patricians in the first centuries of the republic, whereas the plebeian tribunes declared such seizures (*occupationes*, *possessiones*) unholy and illegal (*iniuria*) and demanded allocation of land to poor plebeians (Tibiletti 1949: 29).

Agrarian agitation always accompanied political one (the plebeians waged struggle for the access to the supreme *magistratures* – Serrao 1979), and at last the plebeian tribunes made the authorities adopt a package of laws – *leges Liciniae Sextiae* – in 367 BC. The political component of the reform was that one of the consuls should be a plebeian thenceforth. The agrarian component (*lex Licinia de modo agrorum*, whereto a special importance was attached) consisted of the imposition of a land occupation ceiling of 500 jugers, which, probably, stopped land seizure and permitted the poor strata to get land in the newly conquered territories. As a matter of fact, *ager publicus* is considered public because of being conquered by the Roman people (*populus*) and belonging to the whole community until being transferred to citizens as private property (*dominium ex iure Quiritium* – "ownership on the basis of the *Quirites*' right"). In the royal epoch, such lands belonged to the king, so the possibility of its unauthorized seizure was doubtful, whereas the existence of the nobility's vast landed estates could become an expression of the patriciate's civil privileges in the very royal epoch (before Servius's reform), when, according to this conception, the Roman people was formed by the clan nobility alone (together with clients).

Since the "inclusion" of the *plebs* into the category of citizens cannot be dated to the republican epoch (although it is very tempting to explain the patriciate's exclusive right to be elected by the fact that citizenship was their privilege) – it would contradict the data on the *plebs*'s attempted "seces-

sion” from Rome at the very beginning of the new epoch, in 494 BC – to preserve the harmony of the theory, its adherents have to connect the patriciate's exclusive “access” to *ager publicus* with their political privileges that emerged after the republic was established. The politically dominant group, thus, realizes its advantages in the economic sphere (Burdese 1952: 54). Since it is a *gens*-based (*i.e.*, “clan” in terms of the dominating theory) group, one can detect a conflict between the classes-estates in the agrarian and political struggle of the first centuries of the republican epoch, one of the parties being a survival of the “clan” system and another a “progressive” and democratic force, and the said struggle is classified then as the historical conflict between the statehood and clan-tribal structures. Contrary to the implied methodological task, this view does not permit a clear-cut distinction of the stages of the state formation, for the historians have to distinguish the patrician, clan (“*gens*-based”), *i.e.*, a pre-state *civitas* from the patrician-plebeian *civitas*, which represented the state proper. It already smacks of a political scientist's deafness. It was not a chance that Shtaerman considered political successes of the *plebs* the most important factor that hampered (not promoted) the state formation in Rome (Shtaerman 1981: 102). Besides, the conception under criticism ignores a number of essential facts, whose analysis leads to a different historical reconstruction.

The problem of the correlation between clientele tenure of the patrician lands and public land allocation (*adsignatio*) is often discussed on the basis of the tradition concerning the shift of Atta Claus, a noble Sabine, to Rome in the first year of the republic. Claus was accompanied by relatives, sodales, clients (Plut., Popl., 21,5), who numbered in total up to 5 thsd. All of them were granted citizenship and given land across the Anion (Liv., 2,16,5: “*his civitas data agerque trans Anienem*”), a place for the cemetery (Suet., Tib., 1,1) and for houses (Serv., in Aen., 7,706; Plut., Popl., 21,9) in the City; Claus became a senate member and thus the progenitor of the famous patrician clan of Claudii (*princeps gentis* – Suet., Tib., 1,1).

The sources differ while describing the land allocation procedure. Dionysius says (Dionys., 5,40,5) that Atta Claus himself received land to distribute it among his people; Plutarch (Plut., Popl., 21,9) reports that, apart from houses in the City, the people who accompanied Claus were given 2 jugers of land each, and Claus himself received 25 jugers; Suetonius distinguishes the land across the Anion for the clients and that in the city near the Capitol for a cemetery to bury his clan-mates, emphasizing that it was allocated on a public base (*publice accepit* – Suet., Tib., 1,1). Thus, on the one

hand, there are indications to centuriation (2 jugers per head) made by the public authorities, and, on the other hand, a common land expanse was allocated to be disposed by the head of the settlers at his discretion. Agreeing that an authentic reconstruction of the events is impossible (Capogrossi Colognesi 1981: 252 ff.), one cannot but note a clear-cut opposition between two principally different land allocation procedures. It is natural to explain the predominance of the public aspect by the fact that the emergence of the *gens Claudia* within the Roman community, as well as that of the *tribus Claudia* (the rural area named after the Claudii), is secondary; this structure was assimilated into the social organisms that had already formed in the Roman community by the emergence of the republic. Dionisius's report on the land allocation to Claus's clients by himself after he had received it from the Roman community, which describes a procedure that obviously contradicts the usual centuriation practice, could not appear without reasons and may be considered a reliable testimony to the patricians' principal independence in the land distribution in the territories that were far from the center.

Turning to the analysis of the agrarian struggle of the 6<sup>th</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> centuries BC, one should first of all pay attention to the fact that the plebeians demanded not an access to *ager publicus* but its public delimitation (centuriation) and transfer to private owners (Capogrossi Colognesi 1981: 17 ff.). The *Quirite* (based on the right of a citizen, a *Quirite*) regime of civil ownership (*dominium ex iure Quiritium*), recognized in public and fixed in accordance with the civil community's law (*ius civile* – “civil law”), is contrasted with the nobility's unauthorized presence (*possessio*) on the Roman people's lands, proclaimed unlawful (*iniuria*). To continue, after Licinius's law was adopted, the agitation against the occupation of public lands ceased, in spite of its violations. Licinius himself, the plebeian who authored the bill, was among the violators of land ownership ceiling (Liv., 8,6,9; Dionys., 14,12(22); Plut., Cam., 34,5; Va.Max., 8,6,3; Vell. Pat., 2,6,3). An impression forms that the plebeians had not been debarred before it from *ager publicus*, and in 367 BC the nobility's possessions only changed their status on the basis of a *lex publica* (“public statute” – the main form of *ius civile*) and were no longer considered *iniuria*.

In our opinion, it was Capogrossi Colognesi who was most successful in the interpretation of the latter definition, demonstrating that the point is that the regime of land use by the patricians was alien (before *lex Licinia*) to the *ius civile* system. He suggested a reconstruction, where *lex Licinia* appears as not a mere limitation of the occupation scale but its qualitative trans-

formation, application of the categories of the *Quirites'* rights thereto. Contrasting the old system of use of *ager publicus* with the new regime of private possession, Capogrossi proclaims the former a form of existence of famous *ager gentilicius*, an alleged relic of the precivil social relations. The plebeian possession of *ager publicus* proved a phenomenon of the same rank as the information about the plebeian *gentes*, an exception from the rule, an imitation of the patrician nobility. The *plebs* as an *ordo* ("estate") appears as an agent of the *ius civile* principles, under which the clan standards lose their importance and are no longer applied (Gai., Inst., 3,17: "*totum gentilicium ius in desuetudinem abiisse*"). To continue this line (not completed logically by Capogrossi, see Dozhdev 1993a: 226), one has to identify the *plebs* with the *populus Romanus Quiritium* and to proclaim the *patriciate* an anachronism, which was alien to this social reality. Anyway, if one follows this conception, identifying *iniuria* with *gentilicia* for no other reason than that it is alien to the principles of *Quirites'* private ownership (and possession), the *plebs*, characterized negatively in respect of (through) *gens*, appears as a collective of *Quirites*. This quite legitimate view negates the theories that suppose that the source of *plebs* might be outside Rome. In spite of admitting the secondary character of the transformation of the *plebs* into an *ordo*, as it became customary in the Roman studies after the works by Momigliano and Richard (1978), this approach leads to the question on the relationship between the *patriciate* and *populus* in the royal epoch, making it unacceptable to identify them, as it was done since the time of Niebuhr and Mommsen.

Dealing with the early Roman social reality, one should distinguish the *populus* - the host under the king's command - and *gentes* - aristocratic autonomous alliances, which were in a political and historical opposition to the royal power. Whereas the *populus* is a group based on the principles of a universal egalitarian military organization, the *gentes* are alliances with a hierarchical structure, the criterion of the hierarchy being the character of the personal relations with the leader: from kinship to subordination of independent persons on the basis of the identification (*fides*) of the interests and socially important individuality of the participants of such an alliance. The origin of the *populus* is from the colonist group from Alba Longa, while *gentes* are secondary to it, but they are formations based on the social units that emerged before the City was founded. Territorially and geographically, *populus* correlates with *Urbs* and *gentes* with *pagi*, transformed communities of the pre-urban epoch (see De Francisci 1959: 161 ff.; Mayak 1983: 210-211).



The geographical aspect of the said dichotomy is fixed most definitely on the basis of the historical sources. The most important fact is the coincidence of the names of 10 *tribus rustici*, rural administrative regions, with those of the largest patrician *gentes*, noted by Mommsen (1936: 85; 1988: I, 77). As it was demonstrated by Alföldi (1963: 307 ff.), those *tribus* were situated around the most ancient *ager Romanus*, located on the basis of studying the geography of the most ancient Roman cults, and were a result of the patrician expansion thereto. Alföldi himself dated those events to the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, whereas the antiquity of the cults he studied testifies to an earlier chronology of the supposed expansion (cf. Humbert 1978: 58 ff.). Actually, the dating problem is limited to the relationship between the Fabii's expedition to Cremera and emergence of the *tribus Fabia* in that region. In our reconstruction, the Fabii's expedition is a relic of the ancient practice rather than its culmination. The other six *tribus*, located near the city walls, had territorial names, as well as the later ones, other than the aforesaid 10 *tribus*. The land parcels of the *tribus* of the inner belt were used by the united *populus* who were not divided into individuals, while the outer *tribus* were occupied by the patrician *gentes*. Centuriation was performed on the lands conquered by the whole *populus*, led by the king. The expansion of the *populus Romanus*, connected with the emergence of the 14 *tribus rustici* (not named after patricians), next to the *tribus Claudia* founded in 495 BC, permits an identification of the principles of the occupation of the most ancient territories united in 6 central *tribus* (named after the localities rather than the *gentes*), which amounts to recognizing that land was allocated there per head on the basis of universality and equality.

The tradition concerning Atta Claus's settlement in Rome testifies to a compact location of the land parcels of clan members and their clients as the reason for naming the whole region after the gens afterwards. The same narration demonstrates the process of the formation of that social organism from the chief's companions who settled compactly in a new territory and were named after their chief. A similar behavioral paradigm - a military expedition to the frontier and subsequent settlement on agricultural lands - is seen in the gens *Fabia*'s expedition (for details see Dozhdev 1993b: 31 ff.).

In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Vasilii Sinaiskij (1913) advanced a theory on founding ancient cities on private persons' initiative. His well-documented conception was based chiefly on the Greek data. In another work (Sinaiskij 1923), he applied his scheme to the Roman history to reconstruct the process of the gradual emergence of territorial *curiae* in the region

of Seven Hills (he distinguished a *curia* as a military subunit of the Roman host and as a territorial unit). According to Sinaiskij, the motive of founding new *curiae* was the necessity to build fortresses in the outskirts of the Roman territory in order to protect the frontiers: an initiative group settled around such a fortress, becoming a territorial-administrative subunit of the Roman community in the course of time. The same process, albeit better coordinated with the spatial geographical characteristics (frontier fortresses were not needed to protect the *Septimontium* population, who had numerous fortresses in *colles* and *montes*) and socio-political realities of the early Roman history (what was the difference between the new and old *curiae* and where are their traces in the socio-political institutions of early Rome), should be considered the basis of the emergence of the patrician *gentes* at the beginning of the royal epoch. On the initiative of authoritative persons, groups of warriors were sent to the lands that bordered upon the *ager Romanus* to guard the Roman frontiers round the year. They built fortresses and cultivated land around them, as the Fabii and their 4 thsd. clients did (Fest., p.450 L; Gell., 17,21,13; Serv., in Aen., 6,845). That land belonged to the group itself according to the right of war, unlike the land conquered by the host commanded by the king (*populus*). In the course of time, the inhabitants of such a settlement, easily identified with a *pagus*, adopted the name of their chief (whence the clan names of the rural *tribus* along the outer belt of the initial Roman possessions), thus indicating that they were from among the expedition participants or their scions, which entitled them for privileges, first of all, political ones, because the chief of such a group used to become one of the *patres*, members of the royal council.

If one recognizes an egalitarian *curia-syssitiae* and hierarchical *gens* phasically distinctive social structures, the difference between the regimes of landownership of patricians (nobility) and plebeians (the hoplite host, *populus* of the early Republic) may be interpreted as a projection of two historical versions of the socio-economic development into the sphere of agrarian relations of a single epoch, and the conflict between the estates becomes a projection into the sphere of political relations, at the same time giving the most convincing explanation of the formulation of the claims on patrician lands as unholily seized *ager publicus* made by the plebeians (or rather ideologists of the civil collective who defeated the nobility).

Methodologically, it is important to admit that egalitarianism could not be achieved in that epoch (the Iron Age) without a large-scale alliance with a strong leadership. True, the same condition was required to allegedly

fix the number of the natural units and therefore inequality of *populus* and *gentes* and unavoidable conflict between them as early as the Roman community was just forming.

The Roman king was an absolute monarch, bound only by the very nature of his power, which was not subject to outer institutional limitations. There was a council (*consilium*) of elders (*patres*) under the king, which became the senate later on. The initially charismatic and then traditional idea of superiority of the elders was institutionalized in the council on the community (universal) level. They were considered closest to the ancestors, the forefathers of the families who formed the community. The council had consultative functions (Cic., *de rep.*, 2,14; Dionys., 2,56,3; Plut., *Rom.*, 27,1; Dio Cass., fr.5,11). The council did not compete with the king, but the very necessity of its formation and functioning (cf. Tarquinius's tyranny; the tradition reports him to ignore the senate - Liv., 1,49-3-7) testifies to its both limiting and legitimizing role. Legitimation applies to individual decisions rather than to the royal power as such and consists, first of all, of defining the procedure, the formal technical aspect of the anticipated action. A similar role, though more abstract and elevated ideologically, belonged to various priest *collegia*, whose main function was divination - appeal to the gods in connection with the planned actions (Catalano 1960: 124 ff.). Most often they asked the gods whether the plans were timely, whether the day in question was auspicious for such an action (not whether the king's decision was pleasant to the gods). However, realization of the plan might be stopped for a long period, if not postponed at all.

Such limitations were formal and not connected with the natural limits of the royal power or the character of the tasks it accomplished. They made the royal will be expressed through the will of the whole people and their agencies, which imposed the framework of a generally recognized and valid procedure on the king and subordinated him to universal requirements. Sieved through such mediations, which fulfilled the function of modern bureaucracy, the royal power lost the character of direct and arbitrary coercion of the community into obeying one man's will, acquiring the features of a legal institution, based on universal principles and generally valid and recognized standards. That power embodied the will of the whole community, which became abstract (independent of a concrete purpose) and general (independent of a specific person or group) as a normative requirement thanks to the mythological, ritual and procedural fixation by various specialized agencies, which acted permanently on the basis of stable ideas, shared by

everybody.

The king was surrounded by bodyguards (*celeres*), the mounted guard recruited from three tribes. From the standpoint of this institution, the king was a function of the community, a derivate (meta)formation that completed the hierarchy of community associations (which appeared a system of subunits from the standpoint that took the king as the reference point). Notably, the tradition connects the names of the three tribes – “*Tities, Ramnes, Luceres*” – with the said three *celeres* detachments, each being 100 people strong.

The king appointed also two *quaestors*, the assistants with judicial and police functions (so-called *quaestores parricidi* – *quaestors* for grave crimes, *quaestor* being from *quaestio*, inquest). It is significant that the *quaestors* were approved by the assembly, so that the king publicized his decisions not only about the rules of behavior, declaration of war and peace conclusion (Dionys., 2,14,3; 4,20,4; 6,65,3; Liv., 1,32,13) but on the formation of his suite, who acquired the importance of officials of the community level thereby. Tacitus (Annals, 11, 22) reports that the *quaestors*, who had appeared as early as the royal epoch, were appointed by the consuls in the republican period and then, 63 years after the abolition of the royal power, elected by the people (*populus*, i.e., centurial assembly). Obviously, the *quaestors* were appointed initially by the kings themselves, who confirmed their choice at the assembly. Tacitus mentions the curial law on power, restored by Junius Brutus with respect to consuls, which made the consulate regime resemble the royal power and seems to confirm that there had been an ancient practice of presentation of *quaestors* by kings at the assembly. This interpretation is confirmed by Plutarch's information (Rom., 20,3) and Ulpian's text in the Digest (quoting Junius Gracchus) about the history of this magistratus: “*ipsi [scil. Romulus et Numa Pompilius] non sua voce, sed populi suffragio crearent*” (“they, i.e., Romulus and Numa Pompilius, appointed them to the office not by their ordinance but by the people's voting”). Approval of the royal decisions on behalf of the Roman people visualizes the functional limitations of the royal power, which had the community as its object and audience, was a derivate of the community and instrumental with reference to it.

Rome acted as the Roman people in its international relations rather than as the king or kingdom (*regnum*). The most ancient formula of declaration of war, taken by Livius (Liv., 1,32,13) from the archives of fetial priests, reflected the situation of the royal epoch. It read as follows: “...*quod populus*

*Romanus Quiritium bellum cum Priscis Latinis iussit esse senatusque populi Romani Quiritium censuit consensit conscivit...* ("since the Roman Quirite people decided to wage a war with the ancient Latins and the senate of the Roman Quirite people decreed, agreed, recognized..."). Moreover, the assembly enjoyed certain authorities independently of the kings. For instance, quoting pontifices' and augures' books, Cicero (Cic., de rep., 2,54) claims that the rule of appealing to the people's assembly (*provocatio ad populum*) against a death sentence was known as early as the royal epoch. Being doubtful concerning the possibility of disputing a decision made by the king himself, Cicero's information is confirmed (and concretized) in Livius's narration (Liv., 1,26,5 sq.; cf. Dionys., 3,22,6) about the murder of Horatia by her brother, who won the fight between the Horatii and Curiatii. Sentenced for the murder by special judges (*duoviri perduellionis*, an office instituted by king Tullus Hostilius), Horatius appeals to the people and is forgiven. Thus, the royal authority proves dependent on the people in governing the community, and, creating specialized organs of power as the system becomes complicated, it indirectly creates also new functions of the people's assembly, strengthening the people's role in the government of the community and institutionalizing the assembly as a universal body for control and legitimation of political decisions.

*Civitas* is a civil community: here full political participation reigns, determined by the fact that every male warrior (*vir*) is recognized as a citizen (political subject). The civil society and the state coincide. The civil collective enjoys political authority by itself: the people's assembly represents the whole people-host (*populus*), and that is why its decisions apply to everybody, have universal validity, corresponding to the modern notion of law (*lex publica*) both in name and in essence. The assembly's supreme legislative authority was combined also with the supreme judicial authority, which manifested itself in the most important question: a Roman citizen could only be sentenced to death only by the people's will (*provocatio ad populum*). At the same time, being a subject of political law did not mean participation in government: the division into the governors and governed did not coincide with political participation. The principal difference between the republic (*res publica*) and royal system (*regnum*) manifested itself in nothing but selectivity, limited term and accountability of magistrates. Formally, a king was enthronized by Jupiter, and his power derived from the god (Liv., 1,18,9). The people were always in a subordinate (governed) position, which corresponded to the situation when individuals were not law subjects. Electivity of

officials, whose authority derived from the people's sovereignty, is not only a vivid tool for the realization of direct democracy but a form used to overcome self-government, which was impossible with the given level of the division of the political functions, determined in the final analysis by the achieved scale of population.

Coincidence of the qualifications of a citizen and an owner, of political and civil society, of the public and the private deprives the people (the community as a whole) of the status of a law subject, with the exception of international relations. The impossibility to exercise specifically political authority over a territory, clearly distinct from the property right prevents *civitas* from collection of the estate taxes, deprives the community of its supreme title to land, with the exception of the land expanse specially allocated to it (*ager publicus*). Analysis of the land ownership on *ager publicus* which is commonly regarded as a constitutive feature of the civil community, permits to recognize specific social and political role of nobility within *civitas*. Contrasted with collective of citizens, nobility assumes, thus, a significance of a special function proper to this type of the statehood.

The people (*populus*) is not an owner and therefore not a political sovereign regarding the objects in its territory. The objects that belong to the community (including public land) are granted a special regime as the things withdrawn from commercial circulation (*res extra commercium*). They either cannot be individualized or have an immanently public importance (Dozhdev 1996: 304 sqq.). The latter are deemed to be owned by the community as a whole (by the people), ensuring, thus, materially the existence of that collective abstraction and embodying its status of a subject. Technically, such public (people's) property may form in two ways. Such objects either are created specially for the whole people to satisfy the whole community's requirements, such as a fleet, ports, bridges, roads, markets, theatres, etc., or become the whole people's property until being privatized, which requires a certain period of time. Then, the period of universal ownership is an indispensable stage of the ownership of such objects. In this case, their public origin is due to the public act of their acquisition as a result of a conquest (new territories) or purchase at the community's expense (bread to be distributed free of charge), so that the emergence of the whole people's ownership is always a consequence of a common need and respective activity as the content and realization of a community's unity. Such pragmatic interpretations as the thesis about the conscious creation of a reserve of vacant land miss a substantial aspect of the ownership institution: formalized (recognized) possession con-

stitutes the formal status of a subject (social recognition) of the possessor himself, thus being a necessary kind of activity of any institutionalized subject. When it is stated that an army and fleet are the attributes of statehood, such explanations are nearer the gist of the matter.

The consumption properties of publicly owned objects are inessential for their role as attributes of a civil community: for instance, in arable lands have the status of public property, which is typical of them. But the public objects that can yield fruits and return are subject also to a special management regime and play a special role in the functioning of the civil community as a complicated social formation. A community is interested in exploiting such objects and using the return they yield for public needs, whereas the productive use of objects necessarily presupposes isolated, individualized activity, which inevitably conflicts with the collective nature of the subject of static ownership of such property. A peculiarity of such a situation is that, whereas managing activities may be exercised, indeed, by the executive bodies of a community (magistrates), the economic activities (production, exchange, distribution) require private initiative alone, unless public slaves' labor and public agencies' managing activities are resorted to. The question requires special studies as to why this organizational form of the use of public income sources, which is possible in principle, did not develop in the ancient civil community, where there were no economic ministries or agencies. To begin with, it may be pointed out that the exchange relations between a public manager and a private employee or entrepreneur contradict the principles of the public relations of domination and subordination, and the relations of public nature connected with performance of duties cannot be realized within the framework of the relations regulated by private law (property relations), which can exist only between individually free (formally independent) persons. A free citizen as an employee or entrepreneur cannot pay compulsory public duties, otherwise his activity the duties are connected with loses its private character (and freedom becomes a service, a duty), and a *magistratus* cannot be legally entitled to impose a rent, for he is not a private (legal) person, unlike, *e.g.*, a modern state-owned company.

The universal and direct character of civil participation deprived the public authority in a *civitas* of its necessary apartness by ruling out the possibility of such a degree of the individualization within the public sphere that would be sufficient to formally mediate the relations with private persons: the Roman public authority could not act as a legal person in property relations. So, the problem of the management of public property required a

parapublic initiative, recognition of the public importance of a private manager and respective removal of property interest outside the public organization. The all-embracing character of the civil organization, which embraced the private property relations, too (when secularized public relations - the state in the purely political sense - were possible only in the military sphere as a remarkable exception), at the same time endowed an individual citizen with a public potential that was sufficient to entrust him with essentially public functions. This very entrusting opened the door to the official admission (and recognition) of private interest to the public property sphere. It is logic that this role fell to the lot of the nobility, who demonstrated the strongest structural distinction against the background of the general public organization and functionally enjoyed the political monopoly. This is the basis of the farming system, which was not characteristic of the Roman republic alone, but it was there that it reached the highest degree of development (Rostovtsev 1895).

To get access to the public revenue sources, one had to overcome a series of transitions from the public to the private. The first stage was a *magistratus* (*censor* or *quaestor*) whose decision (*lex* – an ordinance of normative importance) was needed to transfer a piece of public property to commercial use in the interests of the Roman people, namely: the citizens received the right to use that property on the condition of periodical rent (*vectigal*) payment. The next stage was a publican (farmer), *manceps* (or a publican company, *societas publicanorum*), who paid the whole amount of the stipulated payments (Fest., 508 L: s.v. *Vectigal aes*) to the Roman people's exchequer, after which the *magistratus* granted him the right (*ius vectigalis*) to collect the revenue or rent (duties) for the said property. The publican himself acquired the status of a public official (Pseudo-Asconius, in Verr., 33 (p. 113 ed. Baier): “*Mancipes... rei publicae repraesentant*” (“*Farmers... represent the republic*”). Finally, the chain ended with a rent payer, a private person who immediately carried out economic activity using the public property on the basis of the *magistratus*'s ordinance. Formally, the access to a public revenue source was conditioned by rent payment; on the other hand, the performance of this duty ensured public importance and official recognition of a “leaseholder's” presence itself. All links of this chain proved included into the public sphere, and their private property interest was transformed into the performance of a public duty of a property character.

Let us emphasize that the Roman people had no alternative to this form of management of public property. The nobility realized their political



dominance in the form of preferential access to the public wealth. The opposite aspect of the objective dependence of the public property interest on the private initiative was unavoidable concentration of the private entrepreneur initiative in the public property sphere. The very existence of the civil community and the fact that it possessed certain revenue sources proved the condition and context of the development of the property component of power, when the advantage of enjoying public authority was embodied in its officially recognized management function, which led to personal enrichment at the expense of the public wealth. As is clear from permanent protests of plebeian tribunes and existence of a series of special legal institutions, advance payment of the expected amount of proceeds to the people's exchequer was not a real practice (Labruna 1971: 241 ff.): a publican presented only a guarantee (guarantor or pledge), receiving free hand to manage a piece of public property in exchange.

The most ancient form of the guarantee was as follows: a publican presented bails (guarantors) - *praedes* (Pauli ex Fest., 249 L: "*Praes est is, qui populo se obligat...*", i.e., "*Praes is one who is under an obligation to the people...*"), who immediately depended on the creditor (people), so that when the publican failed to meet his commitment, recourse was taken upon their persons. As the potential character of responsibility developed, when the role of a (potential) bail might be played by the debtor himself, who remained personally free at the fulfillment stage, publicans became personally responsible. The commitment was made in the form of a special ritual (*mancipatio*), whence the word for a publican - *manceps* (Pauli ex Fest., 137 L: "*Manceps dicitur, qui quid a populo emit conductive, quia manu sublata significat se auctorem emptionis esse: qui idem praes dicitur, quia tam debet praestare populo, quod promisit, quam is, qui pro eo praes factus est*" – "*Manceps [one who takes by hand] is one who concludes a purchase or lease contract with the people, because by putting his hand he demonstrates that he acts as an obliged party to the contract; he is also called praes, because he must ensure [praestare] to the people that his promise will be fulfilled as firmly as one who vouches for him*"). A defaulting publican was reduced to the condition of an insolvent debtor (*nexus*), which was close to debt slavery, until he found a sponsor who would redeem him. Describing the condition of such a publican, the law of the *municipium* of Malacitana employs the formula of the cancellation of a binding transaction and redemption of the debtor (*solutio per aes et libram* - Gai., 3,174): "*qui eorum soluti liberatique non sunt*" (lex municipii Malacitani, 64, 29).

At a more advanced stage, guarantors or publicans themselves presented land parcels (*praedia* - Varro, de l.l., 5,40; see Wesener 1974: col. 450) as securities for their commitments (*fides Mancupis*), which might be sold by the people at public auctions "*ex legi paediatrica*" to compensate the loss (ibid., 64, 47-59; Cic., de dom., 18,48; pro Balb., 20,45; Phil., 2,78).

However, the *praes* enjoyed the preferential right to redeem his parcel in this situation (lex municip. Malacit., 65) and thus might avoid the loss of the property by paying its auction price. This mortgaging regime, which differed from that regulated by private law (Gai., 2,61), requires a special study as a specific transaction between a pseudo-public person and a public body (the people) with private property as its object. Perhaps, it was the publican's special public status that ensured his right to redeem the mortgaged parcel (Karlöwa 1902: 58).

It is clear that the occupants of public lands who imitated rent payment belonged to the same circle as publicans or even to the same company: the common risk enabled the companion who played the role of a publican to compensate the possible expenses for the redemption of the mortgaged parcel at a public auction. The broad field for misuses provided by this public property management scheme is, in our opinion, anything but a class stratagem, it seems an unavoidable consequence of the system that enabled a community as a whole to appropriate a sizable share of the revenue sources, when the impossibility to individualize a subject required a private initiative from outside to make such a property efficient and profitable. The said opportunities for misuses are anything but mandatory though natural under such a system: it differs from modern *mafia* by being recognized and protected by the public authorities as their immediate product (their common features are as follows: the farming system presupposes an underdeveloped state, insufficient apartness of the public sphere, absorption of the civil society by public connections, domination of the patronage-clientele relations and of a respective ideology).

It was to protect private possession of public lands that the institution of possessor protection emerged in the Roman law: there was an administrative prohibition (*interdictum*) of use of force in order to alienate a piece of property that belonged factually to a person. Payment of rent (which coincided with the estate tax in its legal characteristics, because such a tax cannot exist but as rent in the setting of a civil community) legitimizes a private owner's presence on a public parcel, ensuring his protection from competitors. The public character of the occupation, provided for by a special ordi-

nance of a *magistratus* (*lex censoria* or *lex quaestoria*), ruled out direct physical conflicts among the occupants of the public wealth, transforming the claimants' informal leadership into formally equal relations, regulated by administrative order. At the same time, the basis of the protection was the fact of the recognized presence, so that the competition among the oligarchs acquired extralegal forms of the division of “dainty morsels” both at the occupation stage and in the course of competition among the publicans.

This construction outlasted centuries. Whereas all private possessions on public land (*ager publicus*) in Italy were transformed into private property (*ager privatus*) under the agrarian law of 111 BC, the Roman provinces preserved the farming system on municipal lands up to the end of the Roman empire (Kühn 1864: 35 ff.; Liebenahm 1900: 424 ff.; Kolb 1984). Liturgies (public duties connected with property expenditures for the maintenance of public structures, post, fire brigades and other local services) were distributed by a municipal council (*curia*) among its members, who were made responsible for the management of certain public revenue sources (land, mines, ports, bridges, etc.). Emperors, who resided in Constantinople in that period, regularly interfered in municipal affairs, instructing *decurios* (local council members) to put the urban services in order, sending special officials to cities to exercise the duties of an all- imperial importance (who got involved into the curial system of urban self-government and changed their status: Sil’vestrova 1999), compelling *decurios* to pledge their property for municipal duties and, finally, prohibiting refusal to perform duties and resignation from *curia* (Ausbüttel 1988: 11 ff.).

A notable measure, which bears an information about the principle of the functioning of the urban services, was the reassignment of municipal offices (functions) through confiscation of urban lands in order to use the proceeds received therefrom for the urban needs (Jones 1964: 131 ff.) considered most important by the imperial authorities (such as repair of the city walls when the menace of barbarians' attacks existed). Due to such measures, the persons who were in charge of the respective spheres formally retained their municipal status but actually became the emperor's officials, acting thenceforth under his instructions rather than exercising local self-government (Delmaire 1989: 645 ss). It is clear that these changes were necessitated by inefficiency of the earlier system, inherited from the republic, as a result of permanent misuses. Here the caste character of the estate of senators acquires an opposite form: in the course of time the emperors totally banned resignation from the *curia* (whereas admission thereto continued),

imposing hereditary membership of the councils: a synthesis of public and civil relations was created artificially in a sector of the community, its apex, with whose activity the all-imperial state interests were connected (Kotula 1982: 102 ss).

The place of the people was occupied in the new administrative set-up (where an individual civil community, *municipium*, was a management object within the framework of the bureaucratic monarchy) by the aristocracy, for it alone was perceived as a subject capable of bearing responsibility and therefore not merely representing the whole urban community but identical to it. This new universality of public participation created the socio-political context wherein the ancient civilitarian model organically reproduced its typical features: elimination of the public participation in the public property management, imparting a pseudo-public character to private entrepreneur activities in the public sector, farming out (both literally and figuratively) the public functions to influential representatives of the elite.

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**THE HSIUNG-NU  
(BC 200 – AD 48)\***

**Introduction**

The Hsiung-nu history is one of the most interesting pages of the history of the Eurasia steppe's people in the ancient epoch. In the late 3<sup>rd</sup> – early 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries BC the Hsiung-nu established the first steppe empire which consolidated many ethnic groups of Inner Asia. Over a period of 250 years, a dramatic confrontation between Hsiung-nu and their southern neighbor – the Chinese Han dynasty. At the end of the first century AD, the Hsiung-nu era in Inner Asia was over but from this point a new stage in their history, the Hun invasion to the West and their devastating conquests in the Old World, begins.

Basic sources on the Hsiung-nu history are data of the chronicles (see Lidai 1958; Bichurin 1950/1851; Groot 1921; Watson 1961; Taskin 1968, 1973), as well as materials of archaeological excavations in Mongolia, Russia and China (Dorzsuren 1961; Unehara 1960; Rudenko 1969; Konovalov 1976; Davydova 1995; 1996 etc.). At present we have at our disposal a few important contributions (Egami 1948; Bernshtam 1951; Gumilev 1960; Ma Chanshou 1962; Davydova 1985; Suhbaatar 1980 etc.) where various aspects of the history and culture of the Hsiung-nu society are elucidated. However, many questions still remain unsolved and debatable. This paper will consider some of these problems.

**Formation of the Hsiung-nu empire**

A significant number of various special and popular studies has been devoted to the problem of the origin of nomadic empires. Joseph Fletcher, referring to the works of the Chinese historian Ch'i-ch'ing Hsiao, believes that all theories explaining the causes of the formation of the nomadic empires and their invasions to China and other agricultural countries can be reduced to the following seven versions according to the main cause proposed within their framework; the proposed causes are: (1) greedy and predatory nature of inhabitants of steppe region; (2) climatic changes; (3)

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overpopulation of steppe; (4) unwillingness of agriculturalists to trade with nomads; (5) necessity of additional livelihood sources; (6) need in the creation of supertribal unification of nomads; (7) nomads “psychology”, *i.e.* aspiration of nomads to feel themselves equal to agriculturalists, on the one hand, and the faith of the nomads in their divine destiny to subjugate the whole World given to them by the Heaven – Tenggeri (Fletcher 1986: 32-3).

Most of the factors listed above have their rational aspects. However, the importance of some of them has been overestimated. Current paleogeographic data do not confirm a strict correlation between the global periods of the steppe drying and the periods of expansion or decline of nomadic empires (Ivanov & Vassiliev 1995, table 24, 25). Several scholars demonstrated that the thesis about “class struggle” in the nomadic societies was erroneous (see Markov 1976; Khazanov 1984; Kradin 1992). The place of the demographic criteria is not well understood, because the growth of the livestock was normally faster than that of the population. The increase of livestock led to the destruction of grasses and the crises of the ecosystem. Nomadic life can contribute to development of some military characteristics. But the number of agriculturalists was many times as high and they had ecologically complex economy, reliable fortresses and more powerful technological base.

As a whole, from the ecological point of view, the nomads had no need in the state. The specific character of pastoralism assumes a dissipated (disperse) existence mode. The concentration of large herds at the same place led to the overgrazing, excessive trampling down of grass, growth of the danger of the spread of infectious animal diseases. The cattle can not be accumulated to infinity, its maximum numbers were determined by the productivity of the steppe ecosystem. In addition, regardless of all the possible carefulness of the cattle owner, all his herds could be destroyed by murrian (*dzut*), drought or epizootic. Therefore, it was more profitable to give cattle for pasture to the kinsmen not sufficiently provided for or to distribute it as “gifts” thereby raising one's social status. Thus, all the production activities of the nomads were carried out within the family, or related lineage groups using only episodically the labor co-operation of the segments of infratribal and tribal levels (Lattimore 1940; Bacon 1958; Krader 1963; Markov 1976; Khazanov 1984; Masanov 1995 etc.).

Those circumstances led to the situation when the intervention of the nomads' leaders was very insignificant and could not be compared with numerous administrative obligations of the rulers of the settled agricultural societies. By virtue of this fact, the power of the leaders of the steppe socie-

ties could not develop to the formalized level on the basis of regular taxation of cattle-breeders and the elite had to be satisfied with the gifts and irregular presents. Besides, any oppression of mobile nomads by the tribal chief or another person claiming his personal power could lead to mass decampment (Lattimore 1940; Markov 1976; Irons 1979; Khazanov 1984; Fletcher 1986; Barfield 1989; Kradin 1992; 1995a; Masanov 1995 etc.).

In such case, what did incite the nomads to raids and to create the 'nomadic empires'? Owen Lattimore, who lived for a long time among the herders of Mongolia, wrote that a nomad could easily manage with the products received from his herd of animals only, but a pure nomad would always remain poor (1940: 522). Nomads need foodstuff of agriculturalists, products of craftsmen, silk, armor and refined adornments for their chiefs, the chiefs' wives and concubines. All those items could be got by two ways: war and trade. Nomads used both ways. When they felt their superiority or invulnerability, they mounted their horses and went on a raid. When a neighbor was a powerful state, nomads preferred peaceful trade. But quite often the agrarian state governments tried to take control over such trade. In this case, nomads had to assert their right to trade with arms.

The complex hierarchical organization of authority in the form of "nomadic empires" and similar political forms was developed by nomads only in those regions where they had long and active contacts with better organized agricultural-urban societies (Scythians and ancient oriental and western states; nomads of Inner Asia and China, Huns and the Roman Empire, Arabs, Khazars, Turks and Byzantia etc.) (Lattimore 1940; Khazanov 1975; 1984; Barfield 1981; 1989; Fletcher 1986; Kradin 1992; 1995a; 1996a). In Khalkha-Mongolia, the first steppe empire – Hsiung-nu – emerged just when the first Chinese national centralized state – the Ch'in empire and afterwards the Han empire – appeared in the Middle China plain after a long period of internal wars (Kradin 1996a: 19–27, 34–49).

As a whole, the history of the Hsiung-nu power formation fits the general picture of the nomadic empires origin in Eurasia. There are four possible identified variants of the steppe polities origin: (1) the "Mongolian" – by the usurpation of power; (2) the "Turkic" – by the process of struggle for independence; (3) the "Hunnish" – migration to the territory of an agrarian state; (4) the "Khazar" – the sedenterization of a great "world" steppe empire. The Hsiung-nu case represents the first and most widespread model, when the appearance of a talented and successful leader among nomads led to consolidation of all the tribes and khanates "living behind the felt walls". Such a leader of the Hsiung-nu was Mao-tun. Ssu-ma Ch'ien depicts how he

became the ruler (*Shan-yu*) of the Hsiung-nu and captured the throne (Lidai 1958: 15–16), however, in this story, the echoes of true historical events and epic elements mixed up (for detail see Kradin 1996a: 28–34; 1996b). Unfortunately, epic works do not reflect a real historical chronology. Thus, the events described in this story cannot be considered as historically reliable.

The problem of contacts between nomads and agriculturalists is among those discussed permanently. The fundamental question is the role of nomads in these interactions. Some scholars believed that nomads were first of all robbers and conquerors which brought death and destruction to sedentary peoples. Other authors regarded that nomads were creators of an original mobile culture. The supporters of the latter point of view usually tend to describe the relations between nomads and sedentary population within the framework of various theories of “symbiosis”. It seems to be erroneous to see the relation between nomadic and sedentary people only as confrontation or, on the contrary, as a kind of symbiosis. Actually, the situation was much more complicated. In the course of the Hsiung-nu empire existence, the relations between the nomads and Han did not remain static but were subjected to specific evolution. Four stages of the Hsiung-nu – Han relations may be distinguished (for details, see Kradin 1996a: 42–68).

During the first stage (200–133 BC) the Hsiung-nu tried to alternate war and raids with periods of a peaceful co-habitation with China for the extortion of higher profits (see Barfield 1981; 1989). The first raids were carried out to obtain booty for all members of the imperial confederation regardless their status. The *Shan-yu* was to ensure the support of the majority of dependent tribes. As a rule, after a devastating raid, the *Shan-yu* sent ambassadors to China with the offer of new agreement of “peace and relationship”, alternatively, the nomads continued their raids until the Chinese applied with their own offer. After making the agreement and obtaining gifts, the raids ceased for some time.

However, after a while booty finished or became worthless, and the herders began to demand a satisfaction of their interests from chiefs and the *Shan-yu*. By virtue of the fact of the border, the *Shan-yu* was forced to “release a steam” and to issue an order to raid again.

The second stage of the Hsiung-nu – Han relations (129–58 BC) fell into the reign of the Han emperor Wu-di, who decided to abolish the strategy of pacifying the aggressors from the North. The war has been waged with a variable success and left both sides lifeless. No one of the enemies reached the final victory. The experience of the campaign showed that despite the numerical superiority of the Chinese, nomads had unquestionable advantages

in the steppe war. The only important achievement of the active anti-Hsiung-nu policy of Wu-di was a strengthening of the Han positions in East Turkicstan. However, a “cold war” between the Steppe and China continued as far as a civil war within the Hsiung-nu tribes commenced.

The third stage of the Hsiung-nu – Chinese relations (56 BC – AD 9) began when the *Shan-yu* Hu-han-yeh expressed his fealty to the Han emperor. A policy of getting rid of the nomads by “gifts” was formally replaced by the system of “tributal” relations. The Hsiung-nu were undertaken to recognize the suzerainty of China and to pay a nominal “tribute”. For this, the emperor provided the *Shan-yu* his protection and still gave him gifts in reply. In fact, the vassalage of the nomads camouflaged the old policy of goods extortion in the terms which reflected the Chinese ideological superiority, with the only difference that reply gifts of the Chinese emperor were vastly larger than before. Additionally, when it was necessary, the *Shan-yu* could obtain Chinese agricultural products to support his people.

The fourth stage (AD 9-48) was similar to the first one by its content. The pretext for breaking peaceful relations was territorial claims of the Chinese emperor Wang Mang, his intervention into the internal affairs of the nomads and, finally, the substitution of the *Shan-yu* seal by the Chinese ambassadors. But, comparing to the first period, the nomads shifted the strategy of their foreign policy towards the activation of military raids. It looks possible that it was related to the weakening of the Chinese frontier and to an unstable political situation within the country. If earlier the northern frontiers of China were protected by a network of signaling-guard duties and towns, and most crucial sections of the Great Wall were protected by garrisons, in the beginning of the Late dynasty of Han (since AD 23), the Chinese government could not maintain such an army any more. The raids were considered to be safer and less punishable for the steppe inhabitants than before.

### **Structure of society and power**

The *Shan-yu* was on the top of the Hsiung-nu society. In official documents of the times of the Hsiung-nu empire’s prosperity, the *Shan-yu* is called “*born by the heaven and earth, raised by the sun and moon, great Shan-yu of Hsiung-nu*” (Lidai 1958:30). His power as well as that of the rulers of other Eurasian steppe empires was based on external rather than internal sources. *Shan-yu* used raids to obtain political support of the tribes - members of the “imperial confederation”. Furthermore, using the threats of raids, he extorted “gifts” from the Han empire (for its further distribution among relatives, chiefs of tribes, and warriors). He also extorted the privilege

to trade with the Chinese in the regions adjacent to the borderline for all his subjects. In the internal life the *Shan-yu* had much less authority. The majority of political decisions on the local level were made by tribal chiefs.

Thomas Barfield assumes that it is possible that the Han politicians relied on a simple human avidity and hoped that *Shan-yu* will make dizzy from the quantity and diversity of rare “wonders” and will store them up in his depository for the envy of his subjects or will squander them for extravagant behavior. However, the Chinese intellectuals did not understand the principles of power in the steppe. The psychology of nomads differs from that of agriculturalists and town-dwellers. The status of the ruler of a nomadic empire depended primarily on the possibility to provide his subjects with “gifts” and material wealth by external trade and making raids. Therefore, the necessity to support stability of the military-political structure rather than personal avidity (as the Chinese believed erroneously) was the reason for permanent demands of the *Shan-yu*. The worst insult which could be deserved by a steppe ruler was the accusation of stinginess. Thus, spoils of war, gifts of the Han emperors and international trade were the main sources of political power in the steppe. Consequently, the “gifts” flowing through their hands did not weaken, but, on the contrary, strengthened the power and influence of the ruler in the Hsiung-nu “imperial confederation” (Barfield 1989: 36-60).

In the eyes of Chinese historians, the Hsiung-nu empire was an expansionistic state with the autocratic power. But actually, the Hsiung-nu society was quite a fragile mechanism. Even during the periods of splendor under Mao-tun and his nearest successor, the military-hierarchical system only co-existed and complemented to a complex genealogical hierarchy of tribes but never changed it. In theory, *Shan-yu* could demand obedience from his subjects and issue any order, but, in fact, his political power was limited. The supratribal power existed in the Hsiung-nu empire because (a) the membership in the confederation provided the tribes political independence and a number of other significant advantages, and (b) the *Shan-yu* guaranteed them considerable inner autonomy within the empire. Thus, the actual power of tribal chiefs and elders was autonomous from the center. When the tribes were dissatisfied with the policy of the “metropolis”, the undesirable for the center alternative of their decampment to the west or to the south, under the patronage of China always occurred.

The *Shan-yu* had numerous relatives which belonged to his “king”’s clan of Luan-ti: brothers and nephews, wives, sons, daughters, etc. Besides the relatives of the *Shan-yu*, other noble “families” (clans): Hu-yan, Lan Hsu-

pu and Quilin composed the highest Hsiung-nu aristocracy. The next level of the Hsiung-nu hierarchy was occupied by tribal chiefs and elders. In the annals they are usually referred to as “subordinate kings”, “chief commanders”, “household administrators”, *chu-ch'u* officials (Lidai 1958: 17; see also Groot 1921: 55; Watson 1961a: 163-164; Taskin 1968: 40). Probably, a part of the “chiefs of thousands” were tribal chiefs. The “chiefs of hundreds” and “chiefs of tens” were, most likely, clan leaders of different ranks. The economic, judicial, fiscal, military, and religious functions were considered as the responsibilities of chiefs and elders. Slightly lower on the hierarchical ladder, the chiefs of non-Hsiung-nu tribes were situated. The Hsiung-nu had a particular strata of service nobility – advisers (which were immigrants from China) and bodyguards.

The majority of the population of the Hsiung-nu empire consisted of ordinary nomads – herders. Basing on some indirect data, one can assume that many of the most important features of their economy, social organization and way of life bore very little difference from those of the nomads of the Mongolian steppes of more recent times (Egami 1956; 1963; Kradin 1996: 86-90).

There is no information concerning different categories of poor persons and persons not processing full right engaged in herding. It is also unknown how widely the slave-owning relations were spread among the Hsiung-nu, although sources are full of data about the Chinese captives. The recognition of the slavery development level in the Hsiung-nu society as relatively low corresponds to the cross-cultural anthropological studies results which clearly demonstrate that slavery was widely spread in none of pastoral societies (for details see Nieboer 1907: 237–265; Khazanov 1975: 133–148; 1984: 160–161; Kradin 1992: 100–111 etc.). Those researchers are most likely right (Gumilev 1960: 147; Davydova 1975: 145; Rudenko 1969; Khazanov 1975: 143–144), which believe that the overwhelming majority of prisoners in the Hsiung-nu society were engaged in agriculture and handicraft in specially established settlements. As for their socio-economic and legal position, the majority of these persons (many of them were free deserters) certainly were not slaves. Their social status probably differed from conditional “vassalage” to some similarity to serfdom. The Ivolginskoe fortes near the city of Ulan-Ude in Buryaita was a classical example of this type of settlements (Davydova 1968; 1985; 1995; 1996; Hayashi 1984 etc.).

The archaeological data supplement the information of writing annals to a great extent. Even for the period prior to the formation of the nomadic empire, social stratification revealed itself in the archaeological data.

At the bottom of society there are ordinary burial places of ordinary nomads. Above there are graves of the tribal ruling elite representatives with a great amount of pommies of banners, adornments for chariots, rare arms, jewelry and plates with highly artistic images of animals made of gold, rods, etc. (the burial ground of Aluchzaiden and Hsugoupan in the Chinese Inner Mongolia [Tian Guanchin' & Go Susin 1980a; 1980b]).

During the period of the Hsiung-nu prosperity, the social stratification has further increased. The higher was the status of individual, the greater were expenses for the erection of the funeral structure and more splendid were the things put into the grave. In the picturesque taiga Hentay, Mongolia, the world-famous Noin-Ula burial places were discovered, and in the Il-movaya pad in Southern Buryatia monumental "royal" and "princely" mound graves of the Hsiung-nu elite are located. Their building required considerable efforts (Unehara 1960; Rudenko 1969; Konovalov 1976). The burials of ordinary nomads were simpler and poorer. Generally, these are round or quadrangular stone burial mounds of 5-10 m in diameter. The depth of the grave hole usually was 2-3 m. At the bottom of the hole, a wooden coffin (more rarely a framed coffin) stood. The burial place was accompanied by individual goods of households, arms, harness, implements, adornments and funeral food (Dorzsuren 1961; Konovalov 1976; Tsevendorz 1985; etc.). Sedentary people's graves on the Ivolginskoe fort territory were even simpler and poorer (Davydova 1995; 1996). All this reveals a complex multi-component character of the Hsiung-nu social structure (in details see Kradin 1999: 405-467, 471, 476-494; Kradin, Danilov, & Konovalov 1999).

### **Evolution of political system**

The Chinese historian Ssu-ma Ch'en gave a detailed description of the administrative system of the Hsiung-nu empire (Lidai 1958: 17; see also Groot 1921: 55; Watson 1961a: 163-164; Taskin 1968: 40). Under Mao-tun the empire was divided into three parts: the center, the left wing, and the right wing. The wings, in their turn, were divided into subwings. The whole supreme power was concentrated in hands of the *Shan-yu*. Concurrently, he was in charge of the center – tribes of the "metropolis" of the steppe empire. 24 highest officials who were in charge of large tribal associations and had military ranks of "chief of a ten thousand" at the same time, were subordinate to the *Shan-yu*. The elder brother of the *Shan-yu* and successor to the throne was in charge of the left wing. The *Shan-yu*'s co-ruler and the head of the right wing with a co-ruler also were his nearest relatives. Only they had the highest titles of "kings" (*wang* in Chinese). "Kings" and six most noble

“chiefs of ten thousands” were considered to be “strong” and were in command of not less than ten thousand riders. The rest of “chiefs of ten thousand” in fact headed less than ten thousand cavalymen (Lidai 1958: 17; Watson 1961a: 163-164; etc.).

The lowest level of the administrative hierarchy consisted of local tribal chiefs and elders. Officially, they were submitted to 24 deputies from the center. However, in fact the dependence of tribal leaders was limited. The *Shan-yu*’s court was far apart, and local chiefs enjoyed support of related tribal groups. Thus, the imperial deputies’ control over the local authorities was limited and they were forced to take into account the interests of subordinate tribes. The total quantity of these tribal groups within the Hsiung-nu imperial confederation is unknown.

The use of military (“chiefs of ten thousands”, “chiefs of thousands”, “chiefs of ten hundreds”) as well as traditional (“kings” = *wang*, “princes” of different ranks, “chief commanders”, “household administrators”, *chu-ch’u* officials, etc.) terms by the Chinese historians inclines us to the idea that the military and civil hierarchy co-existed. Each of them had functions of its own. The system of non-decimal ranks was used at the war-time when a great quantity of warriors from different parts of the steppe joined one or several armies (Barfield 1989: 38).

The power of the *Shan-yu*, highest commanders and tribal chiefs was supported by strict but simple traditional laws. On the whole, as the Hsiung-nu laws were estimated by the Chinese chronicles, the Hsiung-nu’s penalties were “simple and easily realizable” and were mainly reduced to strokes of the can, exile and death penalty. It provided an opportunity to resolve the conflict situations at different levels of the hierarchical socio-political pyramid quickly and to maintain stability of the political system as a whole. It is no mere chance that for the Chinese, accustomed to the unwieldy and clumsy bureaucratic machine from the childhood, the management system of the Hsiung-nu confederation seemed to be extremely simple: “*management of the whole state is similar to that of one’s body*” (Lidai 1958: 17).

The well-balanced system of ranks developed under Mao-tun, did not remain static. The Chinese historian Fan Yeh gave the same detailed description of the Hsiung-nu’s political system in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD as his eminent predecessor Ssu-ma Ch’ien did for the earlier times (Lidai 1958: 680; Taskin 1973: 73). It provides a unique opportunity to observe the political institutions dynamics of the Hsiung-nu throughout 250 years. The most considerable differences between the authority in the Mao-tun epoch and in the Hsiung-nu society before its collapse may be summarized as follows:



1. There was a transition from the tribal military-administrative division to the dual tribal division into wings.

2. Ssu-ma Ch'ien wrote about a developed military-administrative structure with "chiefs of ten thousands", but Fan Yeh did not record the "decimal" system and mentioned a set of the civil titles of "kings" (*wang*) instead of military ranks of "chiefs of ten thousands".

3. According to Fan Yeh, all the first ten of the so-called "strong chiefs of ten thousands" became more independent from the *Shan-yu*.

4. The order of succession was changed: traditionally the throne passed from the father to the son (except several extraordinary cases), but in the 1<sup>st</sup> century the order from uncle to nephew became predominant.

5. A principle of joint government, when the ruler of a nomadic empire had a co-ruler controlling a junior by the rank "wing" has prevailed in the Hsiung-nu society. The title and office of the junior co-ruler was inherited within his lineage, but his successors could not claim for the *Shan-yu*'s throne.

Therefore, these changes demonstrate a gradual weakening of the autocratic relations in the empire and their substitution for federative relations as demonstrated, particularly, by the transition from the triple administrative-territorial division to the dual one. The military-hierarchical relations lost their importance and the genealogical hierarchy between the "senior" and the "junior" tribes occupied took their place.

### **Supercomplex chiefdom**

How should the Hsiung-nu society be classified in the light of the anthropological theories of socio-political evolution? Could the Hsiung-nu create a state of their own? Can it be considered as a state or not? These questions are still discussed by scholars, especially Marxists (for details see review in Kradin 1996a: 10-18). There are two most popular groups of modern theories aimed at giving an explanation to the process of origin and to the nature of the Early State. The conflict, or control theories concentrate around the relations between exploitation, class struggle, war and interethnic predominance. The integrative theories largely tend to explain the phenomenon of the state in terms of it as a higher stage of economic and public integration (Fried 1967; Service 1975; Claessen & Skalknik 1978; 1981; Cohen & Service 1978; Haas 1982; 1995; Gailey & Patterson 1988; Pavlenko 1989; Kradin & Lynsha 1995; etc.). However, from the viewpoint of both the conflict and the integrative approaches, the Hsiung-nu nomadic empire cannot be unambiguously interpreted as a chiefdom or a state.

The similarity of the Hsiung-nu empire to the state can be easily demonstrated by its relations with the outer world (the military-hierarchical structure of the nomadic society, international sovereignty, specific ceremonial in the foreign-policy relations). At the same time, the internal structure of the “state-like” empires of nomads (except some quite explainable cases) was based on non-forcible (consensual and gift-exchange) relations and they existed at the expense of the external sources without the establishment of permanent taxation of the herders. Finally, in the Hsiung-nu empire the main characteristic feature of statehood was absent. According to many modern theories of the state, the major point which distinguishes the state, is that while the chiefdom's ruler has only the consensual power, in the state the government can apply sanctions by the use of legitimated violence (Service 1975: 16, 296-307; Claessen & Skalkin 1978: 21-22, 630, 639-640; etc.). The character of power of a steppe empire's ruler was more consensual and did not leave its bearers any hope to prevent from the monopoly of legal organs. The *Shan-yu* was primarily a redistributor and his power was provided by personal abilities and the knowledge-how to get from the outside of the society prestigious goods and to redistribute them between subjects.

For such societies, which were more numerous and structurally developed than complex chiefdoms but, at the same time, were not states, the notion of the “supercomplex chiefdom” has been proposed (Kradin 1992: 152) and then accepted by nomadologists (Trepavlov 1995: 150; Skrynnikova 1997: 49) although clear logical criteria for the supercomplex chiefdom's distinguishing from the complex one have not been defined up to the present moment.

The crucial structural difference between complex and supercomplex chiefdoms was established by Robert Carneiro in special papers (1992; 2000). Carneiro prefers to call them “compound” and “consolidated” chiefdoms respectively. In his opinion, the difference between simple chiefdoms and compound ones is purely quantitative by nature. Compound chiefdoms consist of several simple ones and subchiefs of districts (*i.e.*, simple chiefdoms' rulers) are ranked lower than the supreme chief who is the ruler of the whole polity. However, Carneiro pointed out that compound chiefdoms are rarely able to overcome the subchiefs' separatism when they are united in greater polities, and such structures disintegrate quickly. A mechanism of effective struggle against disintegration into structural components Carneiro traced on the example of one of the greatest Indian chiefdoms of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Powhatan on the territory of the present-day American state of Virginia. In order to cope with centrifugal aspirations of the segment chiefs, the

supreme chief of this polity began to replace them with his supporters who were his near relatives. This gave an important structural impulse to the following political integration.

The similar structural principles were observed by Thomas Barfield in the Hsiung-nu history (1981: 49; 1989: 38–39). The Hsiung-nu power consisted of multi-ethnic conglomeration of chiefdoms and tribes, united into the “imperial confederation”. The tribal chiefs and elders were incorporated into the “imperial” decimal hierarchy. However, they were to a certain degree independent from the central policy as their power rested on the support of their fellow-tribesmen. In his relations with the tribes, members of the imperial confederation, the *Shan-yu* relied upon the support of his nearest relatives and companions-in-arms which bore the title of “ten thousand commander”. They were placed in the head of special supratribal subdivisions integrating the subordinate or allied tribes into “tumens” which numbered approximately 5-10 thousand of warriors. These people could support the metropolis' policy in the provinces.

Other nomadic empires in Eurasia were organized the similar way. The system of uluses (which scholars often denote by the Celtic word *tanistry* [Fletcher 1986]) existed in all of them: in the Wu-sun (Bichurin 1950b: 191), the European Huns (Khazanov 1975: 190, 197), the Turkic (Bichurin 1950a: 270) and Uighur (Barfield 1989: 155) Khaganates, the Mongolian Empire (Vladimirtsov 1934: 98-110).

Furthermore, in many nomadic empires special officials of low rank realized the central power's control over tribes. In the Hsiung-nu empire such persons were called “marquises” Ku-tu (Pritsak 1954: 196-9; Kradin 1996a: 77, 114-7). There were officials designated to control tribal chiefs in the Turkic Khaganate (Bichurin 1950a: 283). The Turkic also sent their governor-general (*tutuks*) to control the dependent people (Bichurin 1950b: 77; Taskin 1984: 136, 156). Chinghis Khan, after the reform of 1206, appointed special noyons to control subordinate tribes (Cleaves 1982: 243).

The nomadic empires as supercomplex chiefdoms are true prototypes of early states. If the population of a complex chiefdom is usually estimated in tens of thousand people (see: Johnson & Earle 1987: 314) and they are ethnically homogenous, the population of a multi-national supercomplex chiefdom was many hundreds of thousands and even more people (nomadic empires Inner Asia amounted to 1-1,5 million pastoral nomads) and their territory was several orders larger than that of simple and complex chiefdoms.

From the neighboring agricultural civilizations (developed pre-industrial states) viewpoint, such nomadic societies were perceived as independent subjects of international political relations and, quite often, as polities equal in status (Chinese called them *so*). These chiefdoms had a complex system of titles, held diplomatic correspondence with neighboring countries, contracted dynastic marriages with agricultural states, other nomadic empires and “quasi-imperial” polities of nomads.

There were different markers of a very high level of complexity in “nomadic empires”: the urban construction (already the Hsiung-nu began to build fortified settlements whereas the “headquarters” of the Uighur and Mongol empires were true towns), the construction of splendid burial-vaults and funeral temples for the representatives of the steppe elites (Pazyryksky burial mounds in Altai, Scythian burial mounds in Northern Black Sea Area, burial places in Mongolian Noin-Ula, burial mounds of the Saks time in Kazakhstan, the statues of Turkic and Uighur Khagans in Mongolia, etc.). In several supercomplex chiefdoms the elite attempted to introduce the clerical profession (Hsiung-nu), in another there was an epic history of people written down in runes (Turkics), while there is a temptation to call some of the typical nomadic empires (first of all, the Mongolian Ulus of the first decades of the 13<sup>th</sup> century) “states”. This idea is supported by references to the law system (*Yasa*), legal institutions of power, written clerical work and the creation of laws (the so-called “Blue book”) in the “*Secret History of Mongols*” and by attempts to introduce a taxation system under Ogodei (Kradin 1995b). However, one must not forget that there was no bureaucratic board of professional administrators in the Hsiung-nu empire, and that the elite did not have the monopoly for legitimate application of force. These facts provide sufficient grounds for the characterizing the Hsiung-nu empire not as a state but rather as a supercomplex chiefdom.

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## CONCLUSIONS

In this volume we have tried to show that the societies with the same overall level of cultural complexity might be organized both hierarchically and non-hierarchically. This idea has been demonstrated by the data from Hawaii, medieval Benin, and the ancient Maya, on the one hand, and the Iroquois, the Berber, medieval Arabia, and ancient Greece, on the other. What is important to stress, is that hierarchically organized societies should not be *a priori* regarded as higher than non-hierarchical ones in terms of their cultural complexity levels. Is it reasonable to admit that, for example, the classical Greek culture was less developed than the pre-contact Hawaiian one?

At the same time, though hierarchical and non-hierarchical (democratic) societies represent distinct evolutionary pathways, the transition of a particular society from one basic organizational principal to another is quite possible. This may be not only the transition from non-hierarchy to hierarchy (as in the Hsiung-nu case) but *vice versa*, from hierarchy to non-hierarchy as well (as it happened in Rome when the Republic was established and further democratized with the Plebian political victories). In such cases, the organizational background changes, but the overall level of cultural complexity may not only increase or decrease; it may well stay practically the same.

Thus, in the world-historical perspective, the hierarchical and non-hierarchical evolutionary pathways are equally important and mainstream. Though with the transition from simple to medium-complex societies we do observe an evident trend towards non-hierarchical structures being supplanted with hierarchical ones (*i.e.* the transition from voluntary associations of democratically organized communities to much more rigid and autocratic chiefdoms [see, *e.g.* Carneiro 1998]), the non-hierarchical systems do not seem to disappear at any level of cultural complexity. What is more, the adequate understanding of the human history does not appear to be possible if one does not take into consideration those non-hierarchical alternatives.

It has been our intention in this volume to demonstrate the role of culture in the defining the evolutionary pathway which a given society takes in the course of its history. Of course, as has been declared in the Introduction, we do not consider the culture factor the only one important for this

process. Furthermore, we realize completely that culture itself is a result of influence of many variables (ecological, social, etc.) which differ from one geographic area/historical period to other. At the same time, we are also convinced that the culture factor should not be reduced to what is generally denoted as “ideology”. It must be so at least because culture is a precondition for the setting of the socio-political parameters, while ideology is basically a derivative from them.

The general type of culture influences crucially the essence of the political culture characteristic of a given society. In its turn, the political culture determines the human vision of the ideal socio-political model which, correspondingly, may be different in various cultures. This way the political culture forms the background for the character, type, forms of the politogenesis, including the enrolling of the politogenetic process along either the hierarchical or non-hierarchical evolutionary pathway.

As has been shown by Butovskaya (this volume), among the primates in general “*some positive correlation exists between the rigidity of dominant relations and nepotism*”; the primate communities “with more despotic dominant style of relations are more kin-oriented”. It looks like that here we have come across rather a persistent pattern which appears to be found in the human societies as well. *E.g.* the egalitarian Bushmen could well be contrasted with the non-egalitarian Australian Aborigines according to this parameter (Artemova, this volume). What is more, this pattern seems to persist in much more complex cultures as well (see Bondarenko 1997: 13–14; 1998a: 98; 1998b: 198–199; 2000; Bondarenko & Korotayev 1998; 1999a; 1999b; 2000). However, within such cultures the connection between the “kin-orientedness” and the socio-political “hierarchicity” is much more complicated. The kin-orientedness (as well as its opposite) is normally institutionalized and sanctioned by conspicuous bodies of cultural norms, myths, beliefs and traditions, which in their turn influence significantly the politogenetic processes.

For example, in Benin (Bondarenko, this volume) kin relations initially dominated absolutely on the substratum level of social organization. In the political sphere, the gerontocratic principle of coming to power and its transferring corresponded to it. All this was sanctioned and legitimized by the ancestors’ cult, which hierarchically-oriented its believers and formed the background of the whole Bini outlook. Even when the society became as complex as the majority of pre-industrial states, it was still based on kin ties at all the levels of complexity (though in modified forms). The ancestors’ cult, one of the undeniable milestones of the Bini value system became the basis of that complex society’s ideology and thus, in tight interrelation with

the fundamental importance of the kin organization at all the levels, inevitably determined the hierarchical socio-political pattern of the Benin Kingdom. Note that all the other hierarchical socio-political systems treated in this volume (the Australian Aborigines, the Hawaiians, the Mayans, pre-republican Rome, and the Hsiung-nu) are characterized by strong kinship ties.

Of course, this stands in a sharp contrast with the classical Greek democratic *poleis* which originated on the basis of communities with rather weak internal kinship ties (Berent, this volume). The matter is that kin relations are hierarchical by its very nature (the division into the elder and the younger, men and women). The weakening of kin relations stimulates people, on the one hand, to rely on their personal abilities and opportunities and, on the other hand, to broaden the sphere of social relations treating other people of the same social status within the society as a whole as their equals. All this leads to individualization and rationalization of not social relations only, but of the human mentality, culture as well. Besides, this also leads to the appearance of the law and legal systems which presuppose the equal rights of the citizens (Dozhdev 1990; 1993: 170–179).

Hence, it does not seem to be a mere coincidence that in ancient Rome the development of the democratic *civitas* was accompanied by the loosening of the kinship ties (Dozhdev, this volume), or that the egalitarianization of the North-East Yemeni communities in the Middle Ages went hand in hand with the disintegration of the kin mutual assistance and the transition from the clan ownership of land to the individual one (Korotayev, this volume). Note that the highlanders of North Africa living in rather similar environment but having much stronger kinship ties are characterized by a much less egalitarian socio-political organization (Bobrovnikov, this volume). The case of the Iroquois who are remarkable for both their egalitarian political organization and apparently strong kinship ties (Vorobyov, this volume) seem to contradict this. Note however that the Iroquois have rather a peculiar kinship organization which is characterized by both matrilinearity and matrilocality. As has been noticed by Divale (1974: 75) matrilineal residence physically disperses the men who would form fraternal interest groups, whereas this inhibits the internal warfare which makes it possible for a large non-hierarchical political entity to function successfully in absence of any rigid supracommunal structures.

We do not believe that all these are just a coincidence. Note that the formation of modern democracy in Europe was also preceded by a significant loosening of the kinship ties resulting first of all in the almost total disintegration of the unilineal descent groups (whereas they persisted till the modernization era [or often till the present] in most of the non-European cultures

of the Old World). In one of our earlier papers (Korotayev & Tsereteli 2000) we have shown that in general the presence of the unilineal descent groups is negatively correlated with the communal democracy; this correlation is especially strong for the complex traditional societies ( $\Phi = -0.5$ ;  $\Gamma = -0.84$ ). On the other hand, we have shown that the communal democracy correlates positively with the supracommunal one (Korotayev & Bondarenko 2000) and that the presence of the unilineal descent groups in the traditional pre-Modern cultures shows a very strong and significant negative correlation with the Christianization. Though the traditionally proposed factors of the decline of the unilineal descent organization look significant at the first glance, their strength turns out to be much weaker ( $\rho = -0.26$  for the statehood;  $\rho = -0.18$  for class stratification and  $\rho = -0.28$  for commercialization) than the one of the “deep christianization” ( $\Phi = \rho = -0.7$ ) (Korotayev & Tsereteli 2000). This suggests that the christianization of Europe might have contributed to the development of the modern democracy there through the important role it played in the destruction of the unilineal descent organization in this region.

The democratizing influence of Christianity on the socio-political relations revealed themselves once again in the time of Renaissance and Reformation. By the way, the democratization process in the pre-Christian Europe, in Greece and Rome, was tightly connected with definite processes in the sphere of human spirituality and world outlook expressed in the best and most important way in the classical ancient mythology. Not by chance having formed at the dawn of democracy (during the Archaic period in Greece and in the early days of the Republic in Rome), the ancient mythology promoted those very rationalization and individualization (some authors even write “secularization”) of the mentality which led to the dehierarchization of those peoples’ socio-political systems (Vernant 1974; 1985; Zajtsev 1985; Shtaerman 1985: 22–48). (Members of other democratic societies from our sample – the Iroquois and the North-East Yemenis – also shared the mythology or quasi-mythology which determined their democratic political culture and political behavior [Fenton 1978 [1971]: 109–123; Dresch 1989].)

It is evident that the general culture type is intrinsically connected with its respective modal personality type. On the other hand, within the notion of the civilization implied by us in the Introduction, the modal personality types correspond to various civilizations, determine their spatial limits and general cultural outlook, including the sphere of political culture and institutions. Thus, we argue that it is possible to distinguish civilizational models of politogenesis. There are many such models, but in the broadest

sense all of them belong to the hierarchical or non-hierarchical set of pathways.

The fundamental characteristics of modal personality types are transmitted by means of socialization practices which correspond to the value system generally accepted in a given society. From this stems the important role which the study of the socialization practices could play in the enhancement of our understanding how the culture determines the politogenetic processes. One may argue, of course, that these are the processes of political evolution which determine the evolution of the socialization practices. Yet, quite on a few occasions it seems possible to show that this could just be the other way round.

For example, in one of our earlier papers (Korotayev & Bondarenko 2000) we discovered a significant negative correlation between the polygyny and democracy (on both the communal level and the supracommunal ones). What could account for the significant negative correlation between the polygyny and the communal democracy? The first explanation which comes to one's mind is to consider the communal democracy as an independent variable, whereas the polygyny would appear as a dependent one. It seems natural that within non-democratic communities the members of their elites would use their monopoly over the power resources in order to maximize the number of their wives; hence, the polygyny would appear as just one more dimension of undemocracy of the respective communities.

However, there are some data which provoke doubt with respect to such an interpretation. Those data come first of all from the Circum-Mediterranean region (comprising Europe, West Asia, and North Africa). This region could be easily divided into two subregions – the Christian and Islamic ones. The point is that the communal elites in the Christian Circum-Mediterranean subregion had no option of having more than one wife, as this was most strongly prohibited by the Christian Church (e.g. Goody 1983: 44–46; Herlihy 1993)<sup>1</sup>. Yet, in this region the negative correlation between the

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<sup>1</sup> Note that even in the Islamic world the Christian Church imposed the monogamy within the Christian communities in the most rigid way: “*The Moslems were astonished mainly by the fact that the female slaves in the Christian and Jewish houses were not at the sexual disposal of the houses' heads... The cause of this was that the Christian regulation in the East considered the liason of a man with his female slave as lechery which should have been expiated by the formal penance... The Khalif al-Mansu:r once sent to his phisician Georgios three beautiful Greek female slaves and 3,000 golden coins. The phisician accepted the money, but returned the girls back saying to the Khalif: 'I cannot live with them in one house, because for us, the Christians, it is permitted to have one wife only, whereas I already have a wife'...*” (Mez

polygyny and communal democracy reveals itself as evidently as with respect to all the other regions (Korotayev & Bondarenko 2000).

Hence, one would suppose that the monogamy could well be one of the possible factors of the development of the communal democracy and not only its result.

What could account for the “democratizing” influence of the monogamy? It seems reasonable just to connect it with the difference in the socialization practices within polygynous vs. monogamous families. The “non-democratizing” influence of the polygyny might be connected, among other factors, with the well-known “father-absence” factor (Burton & Whiting 1961; Bacon, Child, & Barry 1963; B. Whiting 1965; Munroe, Munroe, & Whiting 1981; Kon 1987: 32–33 &c). The above-mentioned authors have shown that the boys raised within the environment consisting mainly of women tend to develop personalities inclined towards aggressive domination-oriented behavior. Another important contribution belongs to Rohner (1975) who has shown that the development of the above-mentioned personality strongly correlates with the lack of the parental warmth, whereas such a lack is most typical for the polygynous families (especially for the non-sororal ones) characterized by the low degree of co-wives' co-operation – as a result, the co-wives are left too often face-to-face with their children without any hope for external assistance. It is well-known that such a situation provokes the lack of sufficient parental warmth and affection, excessively severe punishment of children (J. W. M. Whiting 1960; Minturn & Lambert 1964; Rohner 1975; Levinson 1979), which tend to produce the aggressive domination-oriented personality specified above. One would expect that the presence of the respective modal personality would contribute to the prevalence of the non-democratic power structures. Our quantitative cross-cultural test of this hypothesis has supported it (Korotayev & Bondarenko 2000).

Just at this point we come to the most difficult problem of the causation direction. Is it really possible to consider the strict prohibition of the

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1996 [1922]: 159). However, in the Islamic world Christians did not constitute anything more than a confessional minority; thus, this fact would not affect Murdock's codes with respect to the Moslem ethnic groups. Of course, within the Christian states the Church had much more opportunities to impose the strictest monogamy among the whole population including the uppermost strata. Of course, one could easily recollect at this point an apparently contradicting case of the polygynous Mormons. Note, however, that “*the Mormon Church officially abandoned polygamy 101 years ago [in 1890] after it was forbidden by Utah law in a deal required by Congress for the territory to become a state. The church now excommunicates members for polygamy*” (Johnson 1992: 129).

polygyny by the Christian Church as one of the causes of the development of the modern democracy in Europe? On the one hand, the transition from the general to occasional polygyny among the intensive plow agriculturalists seems to be caused mainly by economic factors (Burton & Reitz 1981; White 1988; White & Burton 1988) which made the polygyny impossible for the main part of the intensive agriculturalists. However, this does not appear to explain the total prohibition of the polygyny for everybody including the members of the upper strata (who always retained the economic opportunities to support more than one wife). Hence, the total absence of the polygyny in the Christian part of the Circum-Mediterranean region (but not in its Moslem part<sup>2</sup>) could be hardly explained by anything else but by the strict prohibition of the polygyny by the Christian Church. Though some regulations which established the monogamy as the norm were imposed by the Church still in the Roman times, even in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, when marriage was declared a sacrament, the Church had to struggle severely against rudiments of polygyny among both the elite and common people, for example in France. And the struggle for the observation of the Christian marital norms among the elite strata of the knighthood went on even in the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Bessmertnyj 1989).

Of course, it might be not coincidental either that within the two religions strictly prohibiting the polygyny (classical Judaism and Christianity) the respective norms originated in the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC within the intensive agriculturalist society of Palestine mainly through the activities of the independent (non-temple) prophets (coming basically from non-elite strata) who appear to have managed to impose the monogamous marriage already predominant among the commoners on the elites (e.g. Diakonoff, Neronova, & Jakobson 1983).<sup>3</sup>

Of course, when in the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD the Christian Church imposed the regulations which made the monogamous nuclear family the predominant family form (i.e. the ones which prohibited close marriages, discouraged adoption, condemned polygyny, concubinage, divorce and remarriage) it in no way tried to contribute to the development of modern democracy in West-

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<sup>2</sup> It appears remarkable that we would find the total absence of polygyny in Christian societies neighboring the Moslem societies living under entirely similar economic and ecological conditions and practicing (at least occasionally) polygyny (e.g. the Montenegrans [Jelavic 1983: 81–97; Fine 1987: 529–536] vs. the Highland Albanians [Pisko 1896; Durham 1909; 1928; Coon 1950; Hasluck 1954; Jelavic 1983: 78–86; Fine 1987: 49–54, 599–604, etc.]).

<sup>3</sup> It might be not a coincidence either that the Prophet of Islam (whose social status moved during his life from the middle to upper-class level) retained the legitimacy of the polygyny.



ern Europe more than one millennium later. As has been suggested by Goody (1983: 44–46), the Church appears to have striven towards obtaining the property left by couples lacking legitimate male heirs. However, the unintended consequence of those actions was the formation of a relatively homogenous macro-region consisting of nuclear monogamous families.<sup>4</sup> We do not believe this is a coincidence that a few centuries later we find this region consisting predominantly of democratic communities (Udal'tsova 1985–1987). And it could also hardly be a coincidence that it was this very region where the modern supracommunal democracy originated.<sup>5</sup>

The study of the socialization practices' role in the cultural determination of the politogenetic processes will be the subject of the next volume of our series. Such a study appears to be especially necessary, since this role does not seem to have been studied comprehensively by anyone at all yet.

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<sup>4</sup> Of course, the Greeks and Romans were monogamous well prior to the Christianization. Note, however, that the pre-Christian Germans, Celts, and Slavs were quite polygynous in the pre-Christian period (Herlihy 1993: 41). Hence, the formation of the zone of uninterrupted monogamy in Europe could be hardly attributed to anything but the Christianization.

<sup>5</sup> This point seems to be able to clarify the causal direction of the link between the communal and supracommunal democracy. In this respect, it appears to be rather significant that the formation of the communal democracy in Europe preceded the development of democracy of the supracommunal political structures.

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