

THE "EARLY STATE" PROJECT

«ՎԱՂ ՊԵՏՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ» ՆԱԽԱԳԻԾ

ПРОЕКТ «РАННЕЕ ГОСУДАРСТВО»

Mariam Khanzadyan

Մարիամ Խանզադյան

Мариам Ханзадян

Արևելագիտության ինստիտուտ, Գիտությունների ազգային ակադեմիա, Հայաստան
Institute of Oriental Studies, National Academy of Sciences, Armenia
Институт востоковедения, Национальная академия наук, Армения

mkhanzadyan@orient.sci.am

Ներկայացվել է՝ 11.11.2024; գրախոսվել է՝ 20.03.2025; ընդունվել է՝ 18.04.2025

Received: 11.11.2024; Revised: 20.03.2025; Accepted: 18.04.2025

Представлено: 11.11.2024; рецензировано: 20.03.2025; принято: 18.04.2025

© Հեղինակ, 2025: Տարածվում է Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 Licence-ի պայմաններով

© The Author, 2025. Distributed under the terms of Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 Licence

© Автор, 2025. Распространяется на условиях Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 Licence

DOI: 10.53548/0320-8117-2025.1-104

Abstract – The "Early State project", originally conceived by H. Claessen and P. Skalník, along with its subsequent conferences, discussions, and publications, represented a significant phase in anthropological and historical research. The «Early State» project reaffirmed the value of synchronic and cross-cultural analysis in identifying universal patterns in the emergence of statehood, emphasizing the early state as a distinct developmental phase shaped by ideology, economic surplus, and supra-communal authority, and differing significantly from more advanced political systems. We believe that the conclusions and classifications of the "Early State" project can be effectively applied to the study of early states in the Armenian Highland. In particular, if we consider some of the state formations that emerged in the western part of the Armenian Highland during the 2nd millennium BC (such as Hayasa and Pakhuwa), they can be classified as "inchoate early states" according to Claessen's classification. This means that the political systems of these states were predominantly shaped by kinship, familial, and community ties. The next stage of development should have been the transition to Claessen's "typical early state" phase. However, due to the Near Eastern crisis of the 12th century BC, the political formations of the Armenian Highland declined and disappeared from the historical stage.

Ամփոփում – «Վաղ պետություն» նախագիծը, որի ակունքներում կանգնած էին Հ. Կլասենը և Պ. Սկալնիկը, իր հետագա գիտաժողովներով, քննարկումներով և հրապարակումներով հանդերձ, կարևոր փուլ դարձավ XX դարի մարդաբանական և պատմագիտական հետազոտություններում: «Վաղ պետություն» նախագիծը վերահաստատեց համաժամա-

նակյա և խաչաձև մշակութային վերլուծությունների կարևորությունը, որոնք էական դեր են խաղում պետականության ձևավորման գործընթացում համընդհանուր օրինաչափությունների բացահայտման գործում, ընդգծեց «Վաղ պետությունը»՝ որպես զարգացման առանձնահատուկ փուլ, որի ձևավորման հարցում կարևոր են գաղափարախոսությունն ու տնտեսական ավելցուկը, և որը զգալիորեն տարբերվում է առավել զարգացած քաղաքական համակարգերից, որոնք թևակոխել էին հետագա փուլեր: Մենք կարծում ենք, որ «Վաղ պետությունը» նախագծի եզրահանգումներն ու դասակարգումները հնարավոր է օգտագործել նաև Հայկական լեռնաշխարհի վաղ պետությունների ուսումնասիրության ժամանակ: Մասնավորապես, եթե դիտարկելու լինենք մ.թ.ա. XV–XIV դարերում Հայկական լեռնաշխարհի արևմտյան հատվածում ձևավորված որոշ պետական միավորները (Հայասա, Պախուվա), ապա, կլասսեսյան դասակարգման համաձայն, կարող ենք դրանք համարել «սաղմնային վաղ պետություններ», այսինքն՝ այնպիսի պետություններ, որոնց քաղաքականության ոլորտում գերակայում էին ազգակցական, ընտանեկան և համայնական կապերը: Զարգացման հաջորդ փուլը օրինաչափորեն պետք է լիներ կլասսեսյան «տիպիկ վաղ պետություն» փուլը, սակայն մ.թ.ա. XII դարի առաջավորասիական ճգնաժամի պատճառով Հայկական լեռնաշխարհի քաղաքական միավորներն անկում ապրեցին և դուրս եկան քաղաքական ասպարեզից:

Аннотация – Проект «Раннее государство», у истоков которого стояли Х. Классен и П. Скальник, сыграл важную роль в политогенетических исследованиях последней четверти XX века. Проект «Раннее государство» подтвердил ценность синхронного и кросс-культурного анализа для выявления универсальных закономерностей в процессе становления государственности, подчеркнув «раннее государство» как особую фазу развития, в формировании которой важное значение имеют идеология и экономический излишек и которая существенно отличается от более развитых политических систем. Мы полагаем, что выводы и классификации проекта «Раннее государство» могут быть применены и при изучении ранних государств Армянского нагорья. В частности, если рассмотреть некоторые государственные образования, возникшие в западной части Армянского нагорья в XV–XIV вв. до н.э. (такие как Хайаса и Пахува), то в соответствии с классификацией Классена их можно отнести к «зачаточным ранним государствам». Это означает, что в политической системе этих государств преобладали родственные, семейные и общинные связи. Следующим этапом развития логически должен был стать переход к стадии «типичного раннего государства» по Классену. Однако в результате ближневосточного кризиса XII века до н.э. политические образования Армянского нагорья пришли в упадок и исчезли с исторической арены.

Հիմնաբառեր – նեոէվոլյուցիոնիզմ, պետականություն, «Վաղ պետություն», Կլասսեն, Սկալնիկ:
Keywords – Neoevolutionism, statehood, "The Early State", Claessen, Skalník.

Ключевые слова – неозволюционизм, государственность, «Раннее государство», Классен, Скальник.

Introduction

Within neo-evolutionist polytogenetic studies, the Early State project holds a significant place, with Henri Claessen as one of its principal authors and leading figures. Henri Claessen was a Dutch cultural anthropologist, an honorary professor at the Faculty of Social Anthropology at Leiden University, and an honorary member of several academic institutions. His academic career began with his PhD thesis titled

Van vorsten en volken (Of Princes and People) (1970), where he compared the structural characteristics of five historic societies (Tahiti, Tonga, Dahomey, Buganda, and the Inca Empire) and laid the foundation for his later, larger comparative project – ("The Early State" concept (Colombijn & Hagesteijn 2022, 373). That project was, in fact, the major evolutionary concept of the late 20th century. Its key features were the comparative methodology and the theoretical synthesis of individual scholars' studies. *"The theoretical perspectives of the authors often varied considerably, and Claessen and Skalník attempted to synthesize various theoretical perspectives in their editorials, introductions to, and summaries of these articles"* (Oosten & Van de Velde 1994, 294). The term "Early State" was introduced by P. Skalník as an alternative to the Soviet concept of the "early class state", which he opposed (Skalník 2004, 79).

The core idea of the "Early State" concept is that the "Early State" represents an evolutionary stage between chiefdom and state. Later, H. Claessen formulated it as follows: *"Early states are structurally different from political forms as chiefdoms or big men systems. As they are structurally different from earlier (or other) forms, we can consider the transformation from the one into the other as evolutionary. Evolution is defined here as the process of structural change"* (Claessen 2010, 17).

The Structure and Theoretical Foundations of "The Early State"

The Early State consists of three parts. The first part, Thesis, includes an introduction to the problem, existing hypotheses, and theoretical articles (R. Cohen, A. Khazanov, L. Krader). The second part, Antithesis, presents an analysis of 21 cases of early states, covering societies that were not directly interconnected and spanning from ancient Egypt to 19th-century Ethiopia (Jimma). Notably, this section also includes a chapter dedicated to the early state of Georgia (Koranashvili 1978, 257–268). The third part, Synthesis, offers the authors' general conclusions, which will be discussed below.

The comparison was conducted using the facet-comparison approach, meaning that instead of comparing entire systems, specific aspects of these systems were analyzed (Claessen 1978, 536). According to J. Oosten and J. van de Velden, H. Claessen's work is eclectic in its amalgamation of several theoretical perspectives. These include comparativism, Marxism, and cultural materialism (Oosten & Van de Velde 1994, 296) / D. Bondarenko and A. Korotayev argue that the concept of the 'Early State' originated within the framework of neostructuralism. Its founding fathers, H. Claessen and P. Skalník, sought to overcome the atemporality of classical structuralism by combining structuralism with elements of neoevolutionism (Bondarenko & Korotaev 2003, 106).

The authors note that the concept of the **state** lacks a universally recognized and all-encompassing definition (Claessen & Skalník 1978a, 3). They suggest defining the state as a specific type of social organization that is historically constrained (Claessen & Skalník 1978a, 4).

R. Cohen, one of the authors of the theoretical studies, maintained that social organization or complexity alone does not transform a society into a state (Cohen

1978, 32). In his view, an early state is a centralized and hierarchical political system where the central authority holds control over most of the coercive forces operating within society (Cohen 1978, 36, 38). R. Cohen states that in the case of early states of antiquity, it is not possible to make precise conclusions regarding the availability, shortage, or surplus of material resources (such as environmental and human resources) and the impact of these factors on state formation. According to him, the environment plays a significant role, but when necessary, the obstacles created by the environment (such as forests) can be overcome (Cohen 1978, 38–39). *"On the other hand, no matter what the soil-type or the climate (outside of the extreme latitudes), being in a zone of state-building seems to have been a prime factor in developing such traits. In this sense pure location, but not the physical conditions of the environment are important predictors"* (Cohen 1978, 39).

The global distribution of early state formations suggests the existence of six distinct zones of state-building: (1) a continuous band across Europe, North Africa, and the Nile Valley, the Far East, and South Asia including India, China, and Japan; (2) a middle American development including both Mexico and Yucatán; (3) a South American development in the high Andes; (4) a West African zone; (5) an East African zone in the lake region and the Ethiopian highlands; (6) a Polynesian zone (Cohen 1978, 38–39).

According to A. Khazanov, another theorist in the volume, the early state differs not only from later-period states but also from ancient states of the same era. At the time of its formation, the early state is a socio-political organization that retains many features of the preceding developmental phase, possesses a complex and unstable social structure, and exhibits various forms of dependence (Khazanov 1978, 78). The development of such states follows distinct trends: the gradual rejection of prehistoric legacies in social and political structures, the consolidation and institutionalization of state organization, the stabilization of social composition, the crystallization of specific forms of dependency (with one dominant type emerging), and the promotion of civilization. Only upon the completion of these processes do early states cease to be classified as 'early' (Khazanov 1978, 78).

The third theorist, Lawrence Krader, defines the state as an organization that regulates relations within and between social classes. However, social classes have differentiated attitudes toward the state: state institutions function in the interests of the class that appropriates the social surplus (Krader 1978, 93).

Structural Characteristics of Early States

In his concluding chapter, H. Claessen outlines the following structural characteristics of early states:

1. *Territory – "The selected early states have a defined territory, which is divided into territorial regions and has loosely determined borders. The people permanently residing within these borders are considered subjects or citizens of the state (99% importance)"* (Claessen 1978, 539).

2. *Independence* – "The early state is an independent organization (99% importance)" (Claessen 1978, 539).

3. *Trade and Markets* – Early states typically engage in trade, including the presence of markets and long-distance trade. Trade and markets generate revenue for the ruling elite (99% importance) (Claessen 1978, 541–544).

4. *Division of Labor* – "Early states have specialists engaged in full-time labor throughout the workday (99% importance) (Claessen 1978, 544).

5. *Subsistence* – In early states, the dominant form of subsistence is agriculture. However, this does not necessarily mean irrigation-based farming, nor does it require the use of plows. Early states are characterized by "the production of surplus goods (99% importance) (Claessen 1978, 544–545).

6. *Social Stratification* – There is a distinct social hierarchy consisting of at least two strata (Claessen 1978, 546, 549). All selected early states have a ruler (along with their lineage) and a nobility (100% importance)" (Claessen 1978, 548). Additionally, there are smallholders and tenant farmers (99% importance). By "smallholders", H. Claessen refers to members of clans and lineages who hold individual shares of land within territories considered communal property of the lineage (Claessen 1978, 548). H. Claessen disputes M. Fried's claim that social stratification arises only when public property is replaced by private ownership, arguing that in early states, public land ownership is the most common form". The primary source of income for small landowners and tenants is "primary production" (100% importance) (Claessen 1978, 554).

7. *Legitimization of the Ruler* – In early states, the ruler holds a ritual status, their high position is determined by their genealogical status, and they perform ceremonial functions (99% importance) (Claessen 1978, 557–559). The ruler is the formal legislator, the supreme judge, the highest military commander, and typically has a personal bodyguard force (99% importance) (Claessen 1978, 560–563).

8. *Inequality* – The **upper stratum**: The ruler's relatives belong to the nobility, and holding high office is an indicator of noble status (100% importance). Birth status is more important than property ownership in determining nobility (Claessen 1978, 569). The **lower stratum**: commoners are obligated to pay taxes and tributes, serve in the military, and provide services to the nobility (Claessen 1978, 573).

9. *Administrative Structure* – Early states typically have a three-tiered administrative system (local, regional, national) (Claessen 1978, 579).

H. Claessen argues that the following characteristics **cannot be considered structural**:

- *Population* density and its consequences: these factors vary depending on available resources, land area, country, and historical period (Claessen 1978, 539–540).
- *Urbanization*: while urbanization is not essential for the existence of an early state, its role increases as the state develops (Claessen 1978, 540–541).

- *Infrastructure* (roads, bridges, waterways): a significant portion of the selected early states had no developed infrastructure. However, similar to urbanization, the role of infrastructure grows as the state advances (Claessen 1978, 541).
- Peter Skalník identifies five functional spheres within early states – administrative, economic, ideological, military, and political. However, these spheres are so interwoven that it is nearly impossible to speak of a purely political or economic domain in isolation (Skalník 1978, 613). Peter Skalník contends that the early state retained a more or less reciprocal nature throughout its existence. The mechanism of exploitation functioned as an unbalanced reciprocal system, which did not generate enough income for the ruling elite to significantly differentiate their standard of living from that of common people. As a result, class struggle did not exist in the early state, and mutually antagonistic social classes were not yet fully developed. Exploitation remained covert and was compensated for by a general ideology of mutual aid. Nevertheless, the dynamics of social inequality were at play, and over the course of centuries, this process ultimately led to the emergence of a fully developed state with a class-based structure (Skalník 1978, 614).

When analyzing the state formation factors in the selected cases, the authors conclude that the motivation for state development was *an action or event that occurred long before the actual emergence of the state and was not deliberately aimed at creating it*. Another observed pattern is that state development exhibits a snowball effect: once set in motion, it accelerates progressively. This phenomenon is present in all studied processes as a result of mutual reinforcement, a form of positive feedback (Claessen & Skalník 1978b, 624).

The authors identify the following factors of state formation in the selected cases: population growth and demographic pressure; war, the threat of war, conquests, and raids. Regardless of their specific causes, these pressures lead to the emergence of stronger leadership and more robust organizational structures, whether for defense or for attack (as seen in Ankole, the Aztecs, Hawaii, Iberia, the Incas, Jimma, Kachari, and the Volta region). The consequences also include the permanent need for regular supplies of food and other commodities to maintain armed forces, pay warriors, and establish communication networks. While war itself does not directly cause state formation, it significantly promotes it, along with the threat of war and broader social stress (Claessen & Skalník 1978b, 626). Additional factors include expansion through conquest, increased surplus production and taxation, ideology and legitimation, and the influence of pre-existing states.

In conclusion, the authors consider the presence of *an ideology and an economic surplus* to be essential conditions for state formation. Social inequality is regarded as more of a consequence of state formation than as a cause. According to the authors, urbanization is also not a decisive factor in the emergence of the early state. Some early states developed without cities and towns, whereas in others, urban centers only began to play a significant role long after the formation of the state (Claessen & Skalník 1978c, 644). Other factors (population growth, warfare, conquest, borrowed

ideas, and the like) must be analyzed on a case-by-case basis, as they do not have a universal character (Claessen & Skalník 1978b, 629).

According to the authors, the transition from chiefdom to state requires the following qualitative changes or factors (expressions of the development of legitimized power):

1. Power (whether coercive or consensual) ensures the implementation of its decisions,

2. Power (whether coercive or consensual) prevents the fission of social organization over an extended period. These two types of power already indicate the presence of a sociopolitical complex form, a central authority, social inequality, sufficient state resources, and other attributes (Claessen & Skalník 1978b, 630).

The phase of the early state is considered to have ended when its ideological basis ceases to be founded on reciprocity and on the concept of the supernatural qualities of the ruler. Instead, administrative and redistributive aspects come to the forefront, along with the development of an efficient governmental apparatus (Claessen & Skalník 1978b, 633).

The authors conclude that *"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 – the rulers and the ruled – whose relations are characterized by the political dominance of the former and the tributary obligations of the latter, legitimized by a common ideology of which reciprocity is the basic principle"* (Claessen & Skalník 1978c, 640).

The Types of Early State

The authors classify early states into three types: inchoate, typical, and transitional. The proposed criteria include the level of development of trade and markets, the mode of inheritance of principal functions, the existence of private ownership of land, the type of remuneration for officials, the degree of development of the judicial system, and the degree of development of the taxation system.

Accordingly, an early state is considered **inchoate** if kinship, family, and community ties dominate in politics, where full-time specialists are represented in limited numbers, taxation is vague and ad hoc, and social contrasts are mitigated by reciprocity and direct contact between the ruler and the ruled (Claessen 1978, 589).

An early state is considered **typical** if "ties of kinship are counterbalanced by those of locality, where competition and appointment counterbalance the principles of heredity, where non-kin officials and title-holders play a leading role in government administration, and where redistribution and reciprocity dominate the relations between the social strata" (Claessen 1978, 589).

An early state is considered **transitional** if "the administrative apparatus is dominated by appointed officials, where kinship affects only certain marginal aspects of government, and where the prerequisites for the emergence of private ownership of the means of production, of a market economy, and of overtly antagonistic classes are already found" (Claessen 1978, 589).

Further developments of the Early State project

Following the Early State project, new conferences were held, leading to the publication of the edited volumes *The Study of the State* (1981), *The Internal Dynamics of the Early State* (1984), *Development and Decline: The Evolution of Sociopolitical Organization* (1985), and *Ideology and the Formation of the (Early) State* (1996). Additionally, the concept of Early State continued to develop among Russian scholars. In the words of P. Skalník, especially Russian neo-evolutionist ethnographers, archaeologists, and anthropologists, in their attempt to break free from the straitjacket of dogmatic Marxism, took up the challenge of the Early State concept, seeking to find its proper place (Skalník 2009, 20). Studies by Russian scholars have been published in the following volumes: *Alternatives of Social Evolution* (2000), *The Early State, Its Alternatives and Analogues* (2004), and *Homoarchy: A Principle of Culture's Organization* (2006). In 2008, the journal *Social Evolution and History* published a special issue (v. 7/1) dedicated to the 30th anniversary of the Early State concept. As a result of discussions on the *early state* concept, Leonid Grinin proposed a new typology of states, distinguishing early, developed, and mature **states** (Grinin 2008). Meanwhile, Nikolay Kradin suggested removing the category of inchoate early states, considering them instead as chiefdoms (Kradin 2008).

In *Development and Decline*, the authors propose the **Complex Interaction Model**, which represents the interrelation of decisive factors in the formation of the state. These factors, or determinants, include:

1. The societal format (population size, settlement patterns, and infrastructure);
2. The totality of economic factors (resources, technologies, including magic and applied science, and productive relations);
3. The totality of ideological factors (myths, religion, science, laws, and norms – including kinship ideology) (Claessen & Van de Velde 1985b, 255).

The interaction between these factors leads to changes in one or more of them, creating the conditions for the emergence of more complex socio-political structures. Once such a socio-political structure is established, it becomes the **fourth determinant** in the model and acts as a co-determinant – provided that the process is not halted or delayed by negative feedback (Claessen & Van de Velde 1985a, 129–130). The development of the **Complex Interaction Model** involved a transition from the comparison of polities to the search for an early state model, aimed at explaining structural changes within it (Oosten & Van de Velde 1994, 300). The combination of these four factors is itself a rare phenomenon; what is crucial is their mutual reinforcement and the presence of positive feedback. If the influence of these factors varies significantly, then instead of a state, an alternative form of socio-political organization may emerge – such as a big-man system or a heterarchy. However, if the factors contradict or obstruct one another, negative feedback occurs, leading to stagnation, and ultimately, the failure of state formation (Claessen 2002, 111).

The Early State Project played a significant role in anthropological and politogenetic discourses of the 1980s and 1990s. A portion of comparative studies on early

states (Feinman, Marcus 1998). Comparative Study of Thirty City-State Cultures, 2000) was based on the conclusions and approaches of the Early State Project. More broadly, this project revived scholarly interest in the study of state formation within the social sciences (Feinman 2008, 55). Naturally, the Early State project also faced criticism. Robert Carneiro provided a detailed review of the Development and Decline volume, where he specifically opposed Claessen's evolutionary framework as a series of structural transformation phases (Carneiro 1987, 756–762). He argued that it was incorrect to present ideology as the primary cause of state formation, stating that *"ideology is being made the horse and material conditions the cart."* Carneiro also pointed out that the role of warfare had not been given due attention. In response to this critique, H. Claessen and P. Van de Velde argued that warfare is not an independent factor but rather a symptom (indicator) of deeper underlying causes, such as demographic, economic, and ideological factors. They further emphasized that their proposed model and warfare operate on different scales-warfare represents a short-term fluctuation, whereas the Early State Model is based on medium- and long-term factors (cf. Claessen & Van de Velde 1988, 782). Furthermore, he considered Claessen's Complex Interaction Model to be an approach rather than a theory (Carneiro 1987, 764).

E. Southall discussed the inchoate phase of the early state, noting that it is the most intriguing yet, unfortunately, the least well-documented of all phases. He pointed out that discussions on this phase often overlook the most crucial process – namely, how people were "tricked" into forming a state until the moment when they no longer had the ability to change anything (Southall 1991/2017, 77).

Several characteristics of the Early State project have been noted, such as the lack of a strict methodology, the unsystematic nature of the 21 selected case studies, and the fact that the articles included focus on the social, political, economic, and religious foundations rather than offering an in-depth examination of a specific variable or institution (e.g., warfare, trade, economic redistribution, or social stratification) (Webster 1980, 426–427).

In 2009, P. Skalník published the article *Early State Concept in Anthropological Theory*, attempting to address why the Early State project is either absent or only briefly mentioned in anthropological and politogenetic syntheses. He concluded that the likely reason is that the Early State Concept was the last manifestation of unilinear thinking in anthropology and the social sciences.

"The variety of stateless polities, indeed pluralism of pathways, forms, and structures, was forced into a narrow evolutionary bottleneck streamlining all polities into the logic of the state as it exists today. In fact, a Eurocentrist straightjacket of the modern state... was projected backwards by the search for the evidence of the evolutionary sequence, viz. inchoate, typical, and transitional early state" (Skalník 2009, 18).

Conclusions

The Early State project, along with its subsequent conferences, discussions, and publications, represented a significant phase in anthropological and historical research. It has grown into one of the most thoroughly elaborated and influential Europe-born approaches to the analysis of pre-industrial complex societies (Bondarenko 2008, 19). In the words of G. Feinman, *"In the future, when that conceptual framework is built, The Early State is likely to be recognized as a key brick in its foundation"* (Feinman 2008, 61).

- The project reaffirmed the effectiveness of synchronic analysis of political formations from different historical periods for identifying common theoretical criteria. Particular emphasis was placed on the concept of the "early state" as a distinct phase in the emergence of statehood, characterized by developmental patterns that differ significantly from those of political systems that have entered more advanced stages of state development.

- Ideology and the presence of economic surplus were identified as essential preconditions for the formation of early states. Ideology encompasses both the socio-political community's acceptance of supra-communal authority and the effectiveness of the newly established state apparatus in constructing and maintaining the political system.

- The "Early State" project highlighted the value of cross-cultural research, which enables the identification of universal patterns beyond spatial and temporal limitations, while at the same time appropriately recognizing specific historical contexts and avoiding the imposition of a single developmental path upon all state formations.

We believe that the conclusions and classifications of the "Early State" project can be effectively applied to the study of early states in the Armenian Highland.

In particular, if we consider some of the state formations that emerged in the western part of the Armenian Highland during the 2nd millennium BC (such as Hayasa and Pakhuwa), they can be classified as **"inchoate early states"** according to Claessen's classification. This means that the political systems of these states were predominantly shaped by kinship, familial, and community ties. Notably, evidence of these community ties has been preserved, including sororate law in Hayasa and the "councils of elders" in the Upper Euphrates regions and in Hayasa itself, among others. The next stage of development should have been the transition to Claessen's **"typical early state"** phase. However, due to the Near Eastern crisis of the 12th century BC, the political formations of the Armenian Highland declined and disappeared from the historical stage (Kosyan, Grekyan 2024, 278).

Acknowledgements

We express our gratitude to the Orientalists Aram Kosyan and Yervand Grekyan for the valuable information and advice they provided during the preparation of this article.

References/ Գրականություն/ Литература

1. Քոսյան Ա., Գրեկյան Ե. 2024, Հայկական լեռնաշխարհի միջավայրային պատմությունը: Շրջակա միջավայր, կլիմայական փոփոխություններ և քաղաքակրթական գործընթացներ (Ք.ա. X-I հազարամյակներ), Երևան, Հնագիտության և ազգագրության ինստիտուտի հրատ.:
- Kosyan A., Grekyan Y. 2024, The Environmental History of the Armenian Highland, Natural Environment, Climate Changes, and Civilizational Processes (X-I Millenia BC), Yerevan, Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography Press.
2. Bondarenko D. 2008, Kinship, Territoriality and the Early State Lower Limit, *Social Evolution & History*, N 7 (1), 19–53.
3. Bondarenko D., Korotayev A. 2003, Early State in Cross-Cultural Perspective: A Statistical Reanalysis of Henri J. M. Claessen's Database, *Cross-Cultural Research*, N 37 (1), 105–132.
4. Carneiro R. 1987, Cross-Currents in the Theory of State Formation, Review of "Development and Decline. The Evolution of Sociopolitical Organization", by Henri J.M. Claessen, Pieter Van De Velde and M. Estellie Smith, *American Ethnologist*, N 14 (4), 756–770.
5. Claessen H. 1978, The Early State: A Structural Approach, Claessen H., Skalnik P. (eds), *The Early State*, The Hague, Mouton Publishers, 533–596.
6. Claessen H., Skalnik P. 1978a, The Early State: Theories and Hypotheses, Claessen H., Skalnik P. (eds), *The Early State*, The Hague, Mouton Publishers, 3–30.
7. Claessen H., Skalnik P. 1978b, Limits: Beginning and End of the Early State, Claessen H., Skalnik P. (eds), *The Early State*, The Hague, Mouton Publishers, 619–636.
8. Claessen H., Skalnik P. 1978c, The Early State: Models and Reality, Claessen H., Skalnik P. (eds), *The Early State*, The Hague, Mouton Publishers, 637–650.
9. Claessen H., Van de Velde P. 1985a, The Evolution of Sociopolitical Organization, Claessen H., Van De Velde P., Smith E. (eds), *Development and Decline: The Evolution of Sociopolitical Organization*, Massachusetts, Bergin and Garvey, 126–140.
10. Claessen H., Van de Velde P. 1985b, Sociopolitical Evolution as Complex Interaction, Claessen H., Van De Velde P., Smith E. (eds), *Development and Decline: The Evolution of Sociopolitical Organization*, Massachusetts, Bergin and Garvey, 246–263.
11. Claessen H., Van De Velde P. 1988, Response to Carneiro, *American Ethnologist*, N 15(4), 782.
12. Claessen H. 2002, Was The State Inevitable, *Social Evolution & History*, N 1 (1), 101–117.
13. Claessen H. 2010, On Early States – Structure, Development, and Fall, *Social Evolution & History*, N 9 (1), 3–51.
14. Cohen R. 1978, State Origins. A reappraisal, Claessen H., Skalnik P. (eds), *The Early State*, The Hague, Mouton Publishers, 31–76.
15. Colombijn F., Hagesteijn R. 2022, In Memoriam Henri J.M. Claessen. Scholar, Teacher, and Organizer (1930–2022), *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, N 178 (4), 373–378.

-
16. Feinman G. 2008, Variability in States: Comparative Frameworks, *Social Evolution & History*, N 7(1), 54–66.
 17. Grinin L. 2008, Early State, Developed State, Mature State: The Statehood Evolutionary Sequence, *Social Evolution & History*, N 7(1), 67–81.
 18. Koranashvili G. 1978, Early States in Ancient Georgia, Claessen H., Skalnik P. (eds), *The Early State*, The Hague, Mouton Publishers, 257–268.
 19. Krader L. 1978, The Origin of the State Among the Nomads of Asia, Claessen H., Skalnik P. (eds), *The Early State*, The Hague, Mouton Publishers, 93–108.
 20. Kradin N. 2008, Early State Theory and the Evolution of Pastoral Nomads, *Social Evolution & History*, N 7(1) 107–130.
 21. Oosten J., Van De Velde J. 1994, Henri J.M. Claessen Constructing the Early State, *The Rise of a Research Programme, Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, N 150 (2), 291–304.
 22. Skalník P. 1978, The Early State as a Process, Claessen H., Skalnik P. (eds), *The Early State*, The Hague, Mouton Publishers, 597–618.
 23. Skalník P. 2004, Chieftdom: a Universal Political Formation?, *Focaal*, N 43, 76–98.
 24. Skalník P. 2009, Early State Concept in Anthropological Theory, *Social Evolution & History*, N 8 (1), 5–24.
 25. Southall A. 2017, The Segmentary State: From the Imaginary to the Material Means of Production, *Early State Economics, Political and Legal Anthropology*, vol. 8, 75–96.
 26. Claessen H., Skalnik P. (eds) 1981, *The Study of the State*, The Hague, Mouton Publishers.
 27. Webster D. 1980, The Early State. H.J.M. Claessen, P. Skalník, *American Anthropologist*, N 82 (2), 426–427.