1 CUNEIFORM SYSTEM OF WRITING AS ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS VALUE

Roman Vasko

ABSTRACT

This section of the monograph examines the preconditions for the emergence of the first writings, the oldest of which is the cuneiform writing system, invented by the ancient Sumerians, which became a catalyst in the formation of key values in ancient civilizations. The etymological versions of the word civilization are commented and it is substantiated that its internal form is based on the feature reflected in the word civis "citizen" and its numerous genetic derivatives in different languages, including the English equivalent city. The conclusions of historians, archeologists and culturologists have been reaffirmed. The first civilizations took place against the backdrop of ancient city-states, where citizens adhered to established norms of behaviour and lifestyle, showing respect and esteem for the city's values and traditions. To fix all kinds of civilizational existence, writing emerged as a conscious act of the ancient Sumerians. The history of Sumerian values is briefly considered, which had three periods: early dynastic, Akkadian and late Sumerian. Some facts of value priorities in other ancient civilized states are given. The periods in the history of the development of the Sumerian language are characterized by the nature of the writing of the cuneiform monuments found, which are distinguished by well-known Sumerian scholars of today. Genetic and typological versions of the origin of the Sumerian language have been analysed, which are currently controversial. It is concluded that the cuneiform system of writing ensured the formation of key values (cognitive, hedonistic, utilitarian, aesthetic and moral) for the existence of ancient civilizations.

KEYWORDS

First writings, Sumerian civilization, cuneiform system of writing, Sumerian language, values of ancient civilizations.

Axiology as a science of values dates back to the works of ancient philosophers, in particular Aristotle, who argued that subjects and objects become valuable to man as a result of social practices of their evaluation [1]. Social practices began to take shape in primitive groups and have long been adjusted since the time of the first civilizational states [2].

If we discuss the formation of values in the world of civilization, then, first of all, it is necessary to discuss the problems of glottogenesis in general with the subsequent linguogenesis, and especially to consider the preconditions for the emergence of writing.

It is no longer disputed that language was the most important of the primary values for the representative of syncretic consciousness. It became an important tool for intuitive and practical knowledge of the world and at the same time the original knowledge of ancient man, which relays the results of this knowledge in verbal form. Of course, thought (usually in the form of an image) is formed independently of linguistic objectification, but it is expressed and acquires energy in the corresponding word as a result of semiosis. Therefore, it is no coincidence that the origins of the sacred word as a primary value for people of the cosmogonic world were associated with respect for the spoken word [3]. Gradually, other, no less important spiritual constants, which demonstrated the dependence of each society on its language, became valuable to man.

Humboldt, W. once wrote about this value role of language and emphasized that "language is a continuous work of the spirit aimed at making sound suitable for the expression of thought [...]. Language is the spiritual energy of the people [...] and at the same time its spiritual strength; they are developed together and reflect a person's cognitive abilities [...]; the language of the people is its spirit, and the spirit of the people is its language" [4].

The views of the German philosopher, the founder of theoretical linguistics, are evidence that the civilized community lives as long as it does not go beyond the "circle" of its language, and that it undergoes significant transformation and even destruction, losing its own language. Wharf, B., the American ethnolinguist, wrote that "we distinguish certain categories in the world of phenomena not because they (these categories) are self-evident" [5]; on the contrary, the world seems to us, according to Stefanova, N. as a motivational value continuum [...], which is a colour spectrum (kaleidoscope) of interaction [...] of complex or simpler value constructs-concepts [6]; in other words, the world is a kaleidoscopic stream of impressions organized by human consciousness and expressed in the national language system.

1.1 THE TERM CIVILIZATION AND ITS ETYMOLOGICAL ORIGINS

One of the first signs of the birth of civilizational communities and their values was the construction of cities, which is reflected in the internal form of the word *civilisation* – from Fr. *civilisation*, derived from *civiliser* "to civilize, enlighten", which reaches Latin *civilis* "polite" < "social / civil", suffixed formation from the Latin noun *civis* "citizen". Etymologized related forms are genetic equivalents to the reconstructed roots *ke(i): koi-, which meants "to respect, to value, to fear" and which are genetically related to the polysemic roots *k'ei-(1) "to be located, to be in rest, to rest" and *kei-(2) "movement". These are the roots of the Sanskrit word शिव /śiva/, which was the name of Shiva, one of the Hindu deities who represented the movement, and which genetically also dates back to the French words *civil*, *civilité*. In French, the word civil came into use quite late in the XIII century, and the word *civilité* in the XIV, with the meaning "respectful, polite". The verb *civiliser* appeared even later. In English, the genetic derivative is the word *city* "city" derived from the Ancient English form *hiw* "family" [7].

We comment on how various etymological and other sources explain the origin of the original meanings of the roots ke(i): koi- with their semantic transitions preserved in Latin. In the culture of ancient Rome, the behaviour of citizens who were obliged to obey the laws of Roman law was considered civilized. Elaborating on the meaning of "polite" in the word *civilis*, Benvenist, E. suggested that during the long period between primitive barbarism and human life in civilized society, as well as starting from city-states, there was a gradual transition to progress in education and social behaviour [8].

Civilizations of different peoples had their differences. Historians talk about various ancient civilizations [9, 10]. Sometimes this term refers to the history of an individual nation or state (ancient Egyptian civilization, Sumerian civilization, Elamite, etc.).

1.2 HISTORY AND VALUES OF SUMERIAN CIVILIZATION

The Ancient civilizations (and the countries of the Fertile Crescent are generally called their cradle) are traditionally considered to be the first ones. Well-known theories suggest that the civilization of the Middle East, much earlier than in Egypt, developed in southern Mesopotamia in the valleys of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers. But in the IV millennium BC Sumerians came here, a people of unknown origin (**Fig. 2.1.1**).

The Sumerian name comes from the Akkadian forms of šumeru "Sumer", lišān Šumeri(m) "the Sumerian language", which means, according to one version, "the noble / refined language", and according to another "the native language". The term "Sumerian" was introduced into scientific circulation in 1869 by Julius Oppert, the German-French researcher-orientalist. Unlike, for example, Ukrainian in many other, mostly European languages, this name does not begin with š-, but with s- (for example, in German in the Old Testament, this letter is available in Mesopotamian and proper names) [11].

The invention of writing became the most important contribution of the Sumerians to the history of world civilization in the early IV millennium BC. It became a powerful accelerator of progress in all spheres of activity, both the Sumerians and the Semitic ethnic group (Assyrians and Babylonians), who began to use it. In the second half of III millennium BC the early dynastic rule of the Sumerian dynasties ends. It is replaced by the Akkadian dynasty for almost 200 years [12–14]. The first ruler of this dynasty is known by the Semitic name Sharrum-ken / Sargon (*šarrum kēn*, i.e. "true king"). Sargon chose the city of Akkad as his place of residence. The name of the Sargon dynasty (Akkadian dynasty), the language spoken by Sargon (Akkadian language), as well as the country in which he lived (Akkadian), originate from this toponym. The same name became an ethnonym for the Semitic-speaking population. Sargon himself originated from it: they were later called Akkadians [13, 15].

Sumerian, Babylonian, and Assyrian texts used a system of symbols called cuneiform signs. The marks were applied to the clay tablets with the help of a triangular stylus made of reeds, which

after embossing left a wedge-shaped imprint on the clay, i.e. a trace in the form of a small triangle, a wedge. That is why such a letter was called cuneiform [16]. The direction of writing also changed: the Sumerians wrote in a column from top to bottom, the Babylonians from left to right. Sumerian cuneiform was borrowed from the Babylonians in a transformed form by the Assyrians, their northern neighbours, and from them by the Persians, Urartians, and other peoples of the Middle East.

Fig. 2.1.1 Modern Territories Inhabited by the Sumerians

With the help of writing, first of all, property accounting and production control were established, economy planning became possible, a stable education system appeared, and the fund of cultural artifacts increased. A new kind of tradition emerges, based on the canon of the written text. Based on these facts proven by many world scientists [17–19] there is every reason to believe that the main civilizational value of the Middle East was the world's oldest writing, including cuneiform, the Sumerian type. Later it was borrowed from neighbouring states and actively used in Babylonia, Assyria, the Hittite kingdom, the Hurrian state of Mitanni, Urartu, ancient Iran, the Syrian cities of Ebla and Ugarit.

With the development of trade with Persia, Elam, Assyria, India and the Mediterranean coast, the Sumerian settlements became prosperous city-states, which created a mature civilization of the urban type.

In the IV millennium BC Sumerian cities of Uruk, Kish, Lagash, Ur became the centres of small states that were theocracies with the power of local deities (**Fig. 2.1.2**). The representative of the deity on Earth was the high priest (patesi), endowed with religious and administrative powers.

○ **Fig. 2.1.2** Sumerian city-states: *a* — Sumerian city-state Uruk; *b* — Sumerian city-state Kish;
c — Sumerian city-state Lagash; *d* — Sumerian city-state Ur

1.3 STAGES OF FORMATION OF VALUES IN THE SUMERIAN CIVILIZATION AND IN NEIGHBOURING CIVILIZATIONAL STATES

There are three periods in the history of Sumer: early dynastic, Akkadian and late Sumerian.

In the first period, the Temple of the Chief God was the centre of power in each city was. The ritual was performed for it. It also set not only socio-cultural norms, but provided stability and stability of accepted rules and traditions. They worshiped and valued the High Priest, the ruler of the city-state. During the wars, a leader was elected, who also played a major role in the state, because wars between city-states were very frequent.

The values of the second Sumerian period were the unification of city-states into one state. Sargon made the first serious attempt to create a centralized state. He came from a low stratum of society. It was a Semite, a representative of the people who increasingly inhabited Sumer. As a result of the seizure of power, Sargon became the founder and ruler of the Sumerian and Akkadian kingdoms with its capital in the city of Akkad. He relied on the inhabitants of the Sumerian city-states, dissatisfied with the power of priests and nobility.

The kingdom of Sumer and Akkad and its Sargonid descendants lasted about 180 years. Sumer was then conquered by the Kutian tribes living east of Mesopotamia. Later, the people of Mesopotamia managed to defeat these tribes, and there is a centralized Sumerian state, ruled by the so-called third dynasty of Ur, the last in the history of southern Mesopotamia, the Sumerian dynasty (this will be mentioned below) [20].

In the great civilized nations, culture flourished, libraries were created, and works of art appeared. To retain power over vast lands, rulers had to seek new forms of government, create new laws, build fortresses and cities to protect themselves from neighbouring states.

In the Northwest of Mesopotamia, new great powers were formed, including the Hittite kingdom, the first military power. The Hittites, who represented the Indo-European people, built their values around their farming and livestock way of life. In the Hittite kingdom, people were the first in the world to learn to smelt iron. They made not only tools from it, but, above all, chariots and weapons of conquest. They were quite a militant people. Therefore, treasures and riches, as well as the development of new lands and the conquest of other peoples, were very significant and valuable for it.

No documents have survived on how the Hittite state perished. It is believed that this death is due to the influx of "peoples from the sea". Most likely, these are the inhabitants of the Balkan Peninsula, western Asia Minor and the surrounding islands, who raided ships in the Middle East.

States such as Assyria and Urartu played an important role in the formation of civilizations. Assyria originally occupied a small territory. Its centre was the city of Assyria. The Assyrians were engaged in agriculture, livestock, trade. Tribes lived in the area of Lake Van (the territory of modern Eastern Turkey). The Assyrians called it the Urartians. Assyria constantly attacked these areas, which accelerated the unification of the Urartians. In the X century BC, the union of Urartian tribes became the kingdom of Urartu.

The new period of prosperity of the Sumerian state fell on the XXI–XX centuries BC in the era of the third dynasty of Ur. This period ended with the disintegration of southern Mesopotamia due to the mass resettlement of West Semitic Amorite tribes. There are alliances of city-states with the Amorite rulers (XIX – early XVIII century). There was a gradual transition of power to the Amorite dynasties. Mesopotamia reached its peak during the reign of Hammurabi (1792–1750 BC), who chose the city of Babylon as the capital of its state.

The famous and very valuable Hammurabi Code became the first collection of laws in the history of civilization, regulating legal relations in all spheres of life (**Fig. 2.1.3**). As for science, education, technology and culture, they were so developed and widespread in all the surrounding areas that the new states of the Middle East became direct descendants of Sumerian and Babylonian traditions and values.

The most important value in the ancient civilized states was scientific knowledge directly related to economic activity. For example, farmers had to know exactly when to start sowing and when to harvest. To do this, you had to be able to count time, watching the celestial bodies: the sun, moon, planets and stars. Thus, astronomy as the science of celestial bodies appeared. Hundreds

of cuneiform tablets with records of astronomical observations of that time have been preserved in Mesopotamia (**Fig. 2.1.4**).

⬡ **Fig. 2.1.3** Image of Hammurabi's Collection of Laws

⬡ **Fig. 2.1.4** Cuneiform Artifact with Records of Astronomical Observations

Along with scientific knowledge for the civilized nations of the Middle East, religious beliefs were important as a key value for these peoples. In all states there was a complex pantheon of gods, each of which was responsible for a particular natural phenomenon or sphere of human activity. Usually, there was a supreme god. However, even at this time, polytheistic religious ideas

gradually changed to monotheism. The first monotheistic religions began to emerge. It required a radical restructuring of human values about the world and their place in it. Judaism, the religion of the ancient Jews, was one of these. It has long been and remains a monotheistic religion.

Some scholars attribute to world religions and Zoroastrianism, which appeared in the ancient Indo-European peoples of Iran. Civilizational states used the religious attributes of the ritual of worshiping the gods for their own needs, but over time, the ritual has spread to the sphere of state ceremonies. In a broad sense, the ritual meant dedication, involvement in religion and the value system of the ethnic group and the state [21]. And here it should be noted that the basis for the plots of the three holy books of Judaism, Christianity, Islam were Sumerian and Akkadian myths.

1.4 HISTORY OF LANGUAGE AND WRITING AS THE MAIN VALUES OF ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONAL STATES AND PEOPLES

As it was noted above, language, writing, science and education were the main achievement and value artifact of Middle Eastern civilizations. They changed people's attitudes: genetic and territorial kinship was complemented by spiritual and cultural associations based on belonging to the same written tradition and associated value system.

Let's dwell on this in more detail. The first cuneiform alphabet was concluded in the city-state of Ugarit in the fourteenth century (territory of modern Syria on the border with Turkey). The Sumerians wrote on clay tiles with pointed sticks. The scribe pressed his / her wand lightly against the damp clay, and a stream remained on the clay. For strength, the clay was fired. A box of tiles formed a "book" and a set of boxes formed a "library". Assyrian scholars copied Sumerian and Babylonian cuneiform clay tablets (**Fig. 2.1.5**). It is thanks to the Assyrians that the ancient texts of Mesopotamia have come down to us.

○ **Fig. 2.1.5** Samples of Cuneiform Clay Tiles

Excavations in Babylon and the ancient capital of Assyria, Nineveh, have uncovered many writings, including the vast library of Assyrian King Assyria-Banipal (7th century BC), which contained more than 30,000 clearly catalogued clay books. After reading ancient tiles / books, their scholars imagined and described a unique image of Sumerian culture, which until the first decipherment was closed to images of later cultures (and even the Bible does not mention Sumer, although several transformed plots of Sumerian myths).

As it was mentioned above, writing was first used to record economic documents of temples, then sacred hymns in honour of the gods, later began to record legends about gods and ancient (epic) heroes. The epic of Gilgamesh (XXIII century BC) was one of the most famous and oldest literary works (**Fig. 2.1.6**). By content and form it can be compared with the ancient poems of Homer, which were created 1500 years later.
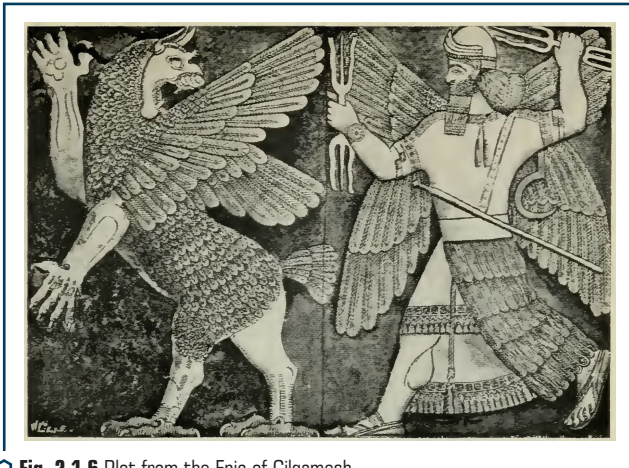
○ **Fig. 2.1.6** Plot from the Epic of Gilgamesh

Cuneiform was the letter of diplomats, it was used in their foreign policy correspondence, even the pharaohs of the New Kingdom (Amenhotep III, Akhenaten). According to cuneiform sources that have survived to the present day, decoders suggest that cuneiform was used in one form or another by the authors of the Old Testament, Greek philosophers from Alexandria, and scribes from Syrian monasteries and Arab-Muslim universities. They were known in Iran and even in medieval India.

According to the nature of writing and language, monuments are divided into archaic, Old Sumerian (up to the XXV century BC), classical (XXIV-XXII centuries BC), New Sumerian (XXI century BC), late Sumerian (early II millennium BC, mostly literary, partly economic texts) and post-Sumerian.

In all the monuments of the Sumerian language found, scholars distinguish two dialects: the eme-ku dialect itself, in which the vast majority of texts are written, and the eme-sal sociolect

"transformed language", known from the texts of later monuments. The decipherers note that since the language of the goddesses and mortal women is reproduced in the texts on the sociolect "emesal", it is likely that this version of the Sumerian language was used / spoken by women. Dialects differ significantly from each other and mostly in phonetic terms compared to morphology and vocabulary [22].

The origins of early Sumerian cuneiform go back to pictography. But the content of the inscriptions and the technique of their application led to the transformation of icons into logograms. All cuneiform signs are divided into four categories:

1) logograms / ideograms that express only the meaning of the root (content plan);

2) syllabograms, which indicate the sound of the composition (plan of expression);

3) actual figures;

4) determinatives, signs that are not pronounced, but indicate to which lexico-semantic field (thematic group) the word belongs [21].

The first type of writing, consisting only of ideograms, was designed to activate memory through visual perception. Then, for ease of reading, scribes began to mark each sign with a special name. It was an abbreviation of the Semitic word, and the designation was a certain ideogram. As a rule, one-syllable designations developed composite sound writing, which could not quickly replace and generally displace the former ideographic writing, sanctified by religion. It follows that in cuneiform there are two types of writing: ideographic and compound, which in one way or another contain relics of pictography.

In 1877, Ernest de Sarzek, the French consul in Iraq, excavated the ruins of a city near Tello Hill in southern Iraq, whose statues and writings were very different from those already known to science. The cuneiform of this city was close to the picture, and the statues depicted bald beardless people of medium height, with rather short limbs, but with large ears and eyes. Of course, these archaeological finds were the victory of Julius Oppert's hypothesis: where Sarzek discovered the Sumerian city of Lagash [18]. Since then, archaeological expeditions have revived, and in 1899 archaeologists and historians from the University of Pennsylvania discovered the sacred Sumerian city of Nippur, and the English expedition of Leonard Woolley in the 1920s excavated the city of Ur.

According to the classification of monuments by the nature of their writing in the history of the Sumerian language [23, 24] there are also six main periods:

— archaic (3000–2750 BC) is a stage of pictography itself, when grammatical morphemes are not yet graphically expressed. These are mostly texts of monuments from the archaeological finds of Uruk IVa. The order of written signs does not always correspond to the order of reading. These are economic, legal and educational texts;

— Old Sumerian (2750–2315 BC) is the first stage of cuneiform writing, when the most important grammatical morphemes are already transmitted in writing. The monuments decipher texts on various topics, including historical (Lagash, Uruk, etc.) and religious-literary (Abu Salabih, Fara and Ebla). The language of this period is considered to be the **classical Sumerian language** [18]:

– bilingual (2315–2000 BC), when a large number of Akkadian and bilingual texts and simply descriptions appeared;

– Neo-Sumerian (2136–2000 BC), when almost all grammatical morphemes are expressed graphically. Religious-literary and official-business texts of Gude, the ruler of the second Lagash dynasty (2136–2104 BC), were written in this language. Most texts of official business and legal nature have survived from the III dynasty of Ur (2100–1996 BC), including the laws of Shulga, correspondence between kings and officials. But Sumerians [25] note that for the scribes of many texts of this period, the Sumerian language was no longer a native language, but mastered in school, i.e. a second language;

– Late Sumerian, or Old Babylonian Sumerian (2017–1749 BC), when absolutely all grammatical morphemes are expressed graphically. This period is represented by religious-literary and magical texts of the Nippur school, Sumerian-Akkadian dictionaries, lexical, grammatical and terminological reference books, the laws of Lipit-Ishtar, King Isin. The bilingual royal inscriptions have survived from the Babylonian dynasty (1894–1749 BC) and reflect a marked influence in the vocabulary and grammar of the Akkadian language;

– post-Sumerian (1749 BC – I century BC): represented by religious-literary, liturgical and magical texts (copies of the previous period), in particular, written in the sociolect eme-sal, Sumerian phrases and glosses in Akkadian texts.

And even in the last stage of development after the fall of the third dynasty of Ur, the Sumerian language remained in southern Mesopotamia for many centuries, along with the Akkadian language of education, science and liturgy. This is due to the fact that the speakers of the Sumerian and Akkadian languages have been in contact with each other for centuries. Akkadian grammar and phonology contain relics of Sumerian influence. Vocabulary also has a lot of borrowings from the Sumerian language, and vice versa.

In medieval Europe and in the Renaissance, "Chaldean wisdom" (the ancient Greeks called the Chaldeans astrologers and physicians from Mesopotamia) was revered first by hermeneutical mystics and then by oriental theologians. But over time, errors in the reproduction of ancient traditions accumulated, and the Sumerian language and cuneiform were so forgotten that the sources of human knowledge had to be rediscovered to never forget. And it was possible to discover this image thanks to the main invention of the Sumerians – writing, which best allows us to understand the history of the ancient civilized world.

1.5 GENETIC AND TYPOLOGICAL VERSIONS OF THE ORIGIN OF THE SUMERIAN LANGUAGE

In the historical period, the Sumerian language was used by the peoples of southern Mesopotamia (the territory of modern Iraq). As it was already mentioned above, the oldest cuneiform fixations of the Sumerian language can be dated to the end of the 4th or the beginning of the 3rd millennium BC. At the same time, according to the observations of Kasyan, A. it played the role

of a living vernacular language of communication even before the beginning of the 2nd millennium BC, and the languages of science and worship – until the end of the 1st millennium BC [26].

In classical linguistic comparative and later macrocomparative studies [27], in particular, in Nostratic theory, there have been attempts to connect the Sumerian language with various language families (Altaic, Kartvelian, Sino-Tibetan, etc.), as well as with separate languages: with Basque and even with Chukchi [28–31]. However, the question of the genealogical connections of the Sumerian language remains open up to this day.

In order to make assumptions about the relationships of two languages, at least two criteria should be used: two languages can be recognized as related if, firstly, there is a sufficient number of (etymological) matches between the basic vocabulary of both languages and, secondly, if there is a sufficient amount of etymological overlap between the main grammatical indicators (number, case, person) of the two languages [32]. If we are talking about the basic vocabulary (i.e. the list of Swadesh, M. [33]), then the lexicostatistical method with its two stages (preliminary and classical) is an effective tool for checking the presence of language relationship. The classic procedure of lexicostatistics is used in a situation where there is already a selected group of genetically related languages, between which regular phonetic correspondences have already been found. On the contrary, preliminary lexicostatistical verification is used when the genealogical affiliation of the language under study is not yet known.

Regarding the genetic affiliation of the Sumerian language, Kasyan, A. offers two moderate versions: this is the idea of relationship with the Munda family, according to Dyakonov, I. [34], and the inclusion of the Sumerian language in the Sino-Caucasian macrofamily, according to Bengtson, J. [26].

The Munda family consists of at least 20 languages distributed in Central India and Bangladesh (apparently belongs to the Austroasiatic (macro-)family [35]. Dyakonov, I. [34] suggested that the Sumerian language and the Munda languages may be related and proposed a historical scenario of the migration of Sumerian ancestors from India to Mesopotamia.

The scholar proposed 34 Sumerian-Mundian root etymologies for CVC-type structures and several grammatical parallels. Kasyan, A. applied a lexicostatistical test to these etymological versions: he selected Sumerian lexemes with Swadesh meanings and checked whether they could be reconstructed for Proto-Mundian [26].

The preliminary lexicostatistical test gave very modest results: in the versions of Dyakonov, I. [34], a sufficient number of matches between the Sumerian and Munda basic vocabulary was not found. Does this mean that the hypothesis of Sumerian-Mundian relationship is false? It cannot be denied unequivocally, because the comparison between the two languages (Sumerian and Proto-Mundian) should be made on the basis of Swadesh's entire 100-word list, and not on individual words. The assumption that the Sumerian language can be a separate branch in the Austroasiatic (macro-)family should also be tested [26].

The next version of Bengtson, J. is an assumption of the relationship of the Sumerian language with the languages of the Sino-Caucasian macrofamily. The scientist proposed various Sino-Cau-

casian etymons for 41 Sumerian words in the basic vocabulary (mostly from Svodesh's list [33]). Etymologized Sumerian words meet the following criteria:

1) are included in the 100-word list;

2) their transcription (phonetic reading) corresponds to modern ideas about the concept denoted by the word;

3) Bengtson, J. compared these words with roots that are reconstructed for one of the branches of the Sino-Caucasian macrofamily [26].

But, like the previous Sumerian-Mundian version, Bengtson's assumptions do not have sufficient arguments in favour of a convincing proof of the genetic relationship of the Sumerian language with the languages of the Sino-Caucasian macrofamily.

At present another possible hypothesis is being discussed regarding the relationships of the Sumerian language with the Hurrian-Urartian languages. And if the Neo-Sumerian period in the history of the Sumerian language was described above, associated with the texts preserved from the III dynasty of Ur, then genetic parallels of the compared languages are quite possible.

The discussion about the place of the Sumerian language in the Nostratic macrofamily has also not been exhausted. Scholars explain this by the fact that even now it is not known for sure where the first Sumerians were located, i.e. where their ancestral homeland could be geographically [9, 10], and this hinders linguistic searches for the relationship of this language with other possible relatives [36].

As for the structural typology of Humboldt, W. which classifies all languages of the world into 4 main types, the answer of linguists is obvious. He attributed the Sumerian language to agglutinative ergative type, where sentences are built from nominative and verb chains, in which the main word "prefixes and suffixes are glued and each of them has its own grammatical meaning. This is the main characteristic of all agglutinative languages. The subject of the transitive verb stands in a special case — ergative, while the subject of the intransitive verb and the object of the transitive verb — in one case — the absolute" [23].

Sumerian cuneiform, perfected by the Babylonians and Assyrians, was later borrowed by the Phoenicians in the creation of their script and alphabet, which formed the basis of the writings of the vast majority of the world's peoples.

CONCLUSIONS

As a result, it should be noted that the emergence of writing among the peoples of the Fertile Crescent was the result of the formation of ancient states and, accordingly, an artifact of Sumerian civilization. Writing as a value was a conscious act of human activity.

The Sumerian language, and later its writing, is a reflection of cognitive, hedonistic, utilitarian, aesthetic and moral values, which established the norms and procedures, laws and traditions in the civilized states of the Ancient East.

Cognitive values were formed on the basis of the need to obtain information about the world around them and the sense of danger that could threaten the state. This factor has become one of the determinants of the emergence of writing.

The hedonistic values of the man of civilized society felt as part of it, mastering the way of life, the power of the state, increasing the development of all spheres of life and so on.

Utilitarian values primarily consisted of awareness of the importance of providing material goods in a civilized environment. Utilitarian values in general reveal the ontology of human ideas about such concepts as value, profit, wealth, etc., on which the ancient states were formed by appropriating material goods as a result of hostilities. If we consider the internal form of the name of the category "value", it comes from the word price, the original meaning of which was "reward".

Aesthetic values, the central concept of which is considered to be beauty, in ancient civilizational cultures were formed on the sensory perception of heavenly (divine) beauty, and, as a consequence, obtaining aesthetic pleasure. Hence, the motivational value interest of the representatives of ancient civilizations in the grace, monumentality and grandeur of the buildings of the temples of the gods, their heights stretch to the sky.

Moral values crystallized in the ancient states on the basis of the actions of people in their relationships with other people, which were ritualized in such components of society as customs, rites and traditions.

The structure of values in the ancient states was a multilevel network of their configuration, the result of which was a holistic meaning, important for the civilized life of the societies of that time, where the key role was played by language and writing. At present, the discussion around the genetic links of the Sumerian language with other languages of the world has not been exhausted.

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