

Sources of horse domestication

Sources of the horse domestication in the region are rooted in the neolith epoch in which the necessary conditions for the composition of elements of future production economy developed:

1. Under conditions of the steppe landscapes of the interfluvium and stable water regime of the river valleys the economy of population was based on the highly-productive fishing at the secondary role of hunting and gathering.
2. Highly-productive fishing was the basis of the sedentism of the population.
3. Fishing as the key form of economy could function only on the basis of wide use of collective labor: construction of dam, enclosure for fish, observation over water bodies, and others - it conducted to the achievement of relatively high level of the social development.
4. Fishing and sedentism defined the specific character of the silicic industry , technology of ceramic production, weaving and other works.
5. Conditions of the management of the fishing in the steppe stripe contributed to the rise of the productive economy as the emergence of the elements of fishing and first contacts of a man and wild horse. In the epoch of late Neolithic and Eneolithic ages the water and temperature regimes changed dramatically.

Continuous spring overflowing, the splashes of the water abundance destroyed traditional forms of economy. The climate humidifying led to the blossom of the steppe ecosystem, diversity of plant associations, formation of hierarchical structure of the animals ecology, in which the prominent place the hoofed animals took. As early as in XIX century, according to the naturalists reports, in the steppe Eurasia numerous herds of kulans met, sometimes united into the groups of 1000 heads. The hunting for a wild horse was traditional for the people of steppe. However, the special need in its improvement and development relates to the late Neolithic – Eneolithic age and is formed gradually, with the increase of the number of horses in the humid steppes and loss of the stability of the fishing.

The significant information about the character of interrelation of a man and horse gives the landscape situation of Botay settlement and its suburbs. Next to the settlement the piece of steppe of 10-12 ha, intruding the pine forest which now could be turned into the exemplary enclosure for cattle at minimum cost. The plot, certainly, was free from wood. From the side of steppe the “enclosure” was confined by the rapid slope of the original terrace, at the foot of which the tracks of recently functioning sources preserved.

The purposefulness in the choice of place for the creation of Botay settlement does not leave doubts. This fact is proved additionally by the landscape situation of other eneolithic monuments Roshchinsk, Krasnyj Yar. Notwithstanding the fact whether they take the areas in the river system or at the water divide near lakes and springs, eneolithic settlements are necessarily located in the plateau next to the relict pine wood. The obligatory condition was the presence of natural obstacles: balks and deep gorges, shore steeps and wooden fences of the stalks of pine wood. They could serve the reliable fence from the hoofed animals.

Certainly, the boundaries of ancient and modern forests could significantly differ. However, the repetition of situations and location of soil maps confirm us in the justification of non-detailed reconstructions, but the conclusion: next to the eneolithic settlement more or less significant according to the area enclosures existed. By their creation natural barriers at the area which were supplemented by artificial constructions, the presence of inner source of water.

The original idea of the enclosure for the society of fishermen and hunters is connected, as it was marked, with the creation of the potential source of food for necessity occasions. However, it became also the prerequisite for the horse domestication and its acquisition for the horseback riding.

As it is known, the opinion about the impossibility of the primary domestication of animals, if this kind of animals is the object of the specialized hunting and main source of human food. Fishing herewith is not considered sufficiently stable work. By analyzing various points of view, V.A.Shnirelman came to the conclusion that the primary domestication was possible only in the environment where the elements of agricultural economy existed. In fact, the ethnographic materials being available for the specialists reliably testify the fact that the domestication of swine, cattle and small cattle in its sources is connected with the formation of agriculture and highly-developed collecting.

However, regarding the horse this statement can not be reliable. In the eneolith the idea of keeping of animals in the enclosure "for meat" regrew into the idea of the use of horse for the control for herds and hunting. It is a principally important moment in the revelation of the mechanism of horse domestication. The horse started to be used not only for reservation, but also as the means of labour, hunting and pastoral economy, as the component of the control for the herd. It was a new, highest stage in the development of agriculture of the consumptive type and simultaneously the beginning stage of the productive stage.

It is necessary to underline one more time that in the Ural-Kazakhstan steppes in the epoch of the Eneolithic Age the ecological niches with the carved zone landscape which conduced to the sharp increase of the livestock of wild horses. These niches were correspondent with the

behavioral peculiarities of the horse for which in the state of herds the reflector border of inhabitation within 120-150 km exists. The horseman on the horseback is not a shepherd yet, but also is not the hunter in the full sense of the word got the possibility to follow the freely grazing herd, exercise the observation and control, also the culling of single species and their placement into the enclosure.

Domestication of the horse for the use as the tool of hunting, from the point of view of domestication, primarily was the adaptive, spontaneous process. This process went through with intervals, extremely slowly, probably, during the whole late Neolithic-Eneolithic Age. And only at the end of the late Eneolithic Age, under the conditions of ecological crisis, the human fully realized the horse breeding as the most important branch of economy, but already in the system of multisectoral cattle-breeding.

The use of horse cardinally changed the conditions of hunting in favor of a man and incomparably increased the productivity of labour. The possibility of control for the wild herd, the content of the definite livestock of horses in the enclosures, which were functioning as the modern fenced pastures, highly-developed fishing – all of that provided extremely high level of social-economic development of Botay society.

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