

## The meaning of Sumerian culture for the reconstruction of cultural patterns existing in societies speaking languages belonging to the Ainu-Minoan stock

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### Abstract

Sumerian language belongs to the Ainu-Minoan stock. The relatedness of languages supposes a certain similarity of the corresponding cultures. Sumerian culture is especially valuable for understanding conceptions existing in cultures of the Ainu-Minoan stock because throughout its history it developed by its internal logic, without experiencing serious external influences, and also had a well-elaborated tradition of recording different aspects of its own life. The closer a certain Ainu-Minoan culture (in geographical, historical, and social aspects) is to Sumerian culture, the more it is possible to project onto it items of Sumerian culture. Cultures remote from Sumerian culture both in time and geographically have usually only the most basic features in common with it. However, if the question is a reconstruction of patterns/mechanisms of a certain culture of the Ainu-Minoan stock, then Sumerian culture can be used more as a certain ideal example rather than as a source of direct analogies/projections.

**Keywords:** Sumerian culture; Ainu-Minoan stock; cultural patterns

Languages and cultures are congruent structures. (In the current context culture is considered as a set of ideas and their distributions.)

A language can be represented as an ordered pair of the following view:  $\langle A; \Omega \rangle$  where  $A$  is a set of certain grammatical meanings/concepts, and  $\Omega$  is a set of distributions determined upon  $A$ .

A culture can be represented as the same ordered pair  $\langle A; \Omega \rangle$  where  $A$  is a set of concepts and  $\Omega$  is a set of distributions determined upon  $A$ .

And it is possible to say that culture is nothing else, but the conceptual/pragmatic level of language: when we learn the pragmatic level of a language we learn the corresponding culture and when we learn a certain culture we learn the pragmatics of the corresponding language.

And thus, the relatedness of languages supposes to a certain extent also a certain similarity of the corresponding cultures, i.e.: people speaking related languages share somehow alike conceptions of world view.

Recently it has been shown that the Sumerian language belongs to the Ainu-Minoan stock (for more details see Akulov 2022). This fact is interesting and valuable not only by itself but also in the sense that the Sumerian culture can be used to understand what cultural patterns were spread in societies of peoples speaking different languages belonging to the Ainu-Minoan stock.

Sumerian culture is especially interesting and valuable for reconstructing conceptions existing in cultures belonging to the Ainu-Minoan stock not only because of its considerable antiquity, but because throughout its history it developed by its internal logic, without experiencing serious external influences, but on the contrary, seriously influenced on other cultures, and also had a well-elaborated and long lasted tradition of pretty detailed recording different

aspects of its own life. It is well known, that the best way to get into the mechanism of a culture is to refer to the texts produced by this culture for itself.

And also Sumerian recordings have come down to us in the form in which they were recorded, i.e.: they haven't been distorted by a late commentary tradition. (The Akkadians, who replaced the Sumerians, treated the Sumerian heritage with great reverence, borrowed Sumerian ideas, and technologies, although, of course, the Akkadian society differed from that of the Sumerians.)

One can say that in such a case, Chinese culture should be of no less significance for understanding the patterns of Ainu-Minoan cultures, because it also exists by its logic and because it also has a long tradition of recording itself and unlike the Sumerian culture has been documented much better and still exists. Of course, Chinese material is also very important for reconstructing patterns of Ainu-Minoan cultures, however, it should be kept in mind that Chinese culture is to a greater extent subjected to influences of other cultures. One of the most famous and notable examples of the influence of other cultures on Chinese culture is the spread of Buddhism in China. There are no alike cases in Sumerian history.

How Sumerian material can be used in reconstructing cultural patterns of different poorly described cultures of the Ainu-Minoan stock? The closer a certain Ainu-Minoan culture (in geographical, historical, and social aspects) is to Sumerian culture, the more it is possible to project onto it the items that are known about Sumerian culture. For instance, it is quite logical to suppose that Minoan and Hattian cultures were rather alike that of Sumerians. On the other hand, Ainu-Minoan cultures remote from Sumerian culture both in time and geographically have usually only the most basic features in common with it.

The very basic patterns that can be singled from Sumerian culture are the following: 1) centrifugal and 'anarchist' tendencies, 2) pretty tolerant attitude towards different issues of sex and gender issues, 3) Sumerian culture demonstrates a noticeable development of science and technologies, a relatively high ability to transform nature.

Centrifugal and 'anarchist' tendencies were pretty strong during the whole Sumerian history: the Sumerians didn't create a large centralized empire and always lived in small city-states (see Westenholz 2002), and the power of *lugal/ensi/en* – rulers of those city-states was usually limited by the council of elders and the people's assembly, i.e.: Sumerian states always were pretty loose. I am to note that 'anarchist' tendencies are rather well-developed in cultures of different ethnicities speaking languages of the Ainu-Minoan stock (see Nonno 2019), so the case of the Sumerian culture here just corroborates the general tendency.

From the earliest recordings it can be concluded that the Sumerians had pretty tolerant attitudes toward sex (Denning 1996). Also, evidence of this is the fact that one of the most important deities of the Sumerian pantheon is the goddess Inanna who has androgynous features: Inanna is a goddess, but her gender sometimes can be ambiguous (Asher-Greve, Westenholz 2013: 17). And also a very noteworthy fact is that the so-called *gala* priests played a significant role in the cult of Inanna; these *gala* priests were transgender priests or priests of converted gender (Leick 2013). It should be noted, however, that some Ainu-Minoan cultures changed their relaxed attitude toward sex and gender issues to a rigor/'puritan' under the influences of other cultures, mainly under the influence of different Abrahamic religions.

As for the achievements of Sumerian science and technology, they are too well-known to be described in detail here: Sumerian irrigation, mathematics, architecture – all this was very

advanced for its time. Other Ainu-Minoan cultures also demonstrate advances in technologies, the most tangible examples are: Minoan culture, Hattian culture, Chinese culture, ancient Ainu culture (Jōmon).

Cultures of the Ainu-Minoan can be subject to a wide variety of influences of other cultures and thus sometimes can demonstrate little adherence to the above-described basic values. And on the other hand, some ancient cultures of Ainu-Minoan stock that existed near Sumer could directly borrow much from Sumerians while originally they weren't much alike Sumerian culture.

Thus, it is possible to say that if the question is a reconstruction of patterns/mechanisms of a certain culture of the Ainu-Minoan stock, then Sumerian culture can be used more as a certain ideal example of what a culture of Ainu-Minoan stock could be if it develops itself according to its logic, rather than as a source of direct analogies/projections.

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