The Rise and Decline of Ancient Civilizations

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This book concerns the formation of ancient civilizations in the Near East and the central Mediterranean world. It examines five civilization models (Model of Egyptian Civilization, Model of Mesopotamian Civilization, Model of Anatolian Civilization, Model of Central Mediterranean-Aegean Civilization, Model of Eastern Mediterranean Culture – Phoenicia, Syria, Palestine) and the dynamics of their development. Its theoretical part discusses the structure and analysis of civilizations, stages of development of civilization, the specifics of artistic thinking and touches on topics such as the phenomenon of cultural transformation in space and time. The book is intended for readers who are interested in the development of ancient civilizations and the specifics of their artistic thinking. In the process of systematizing and classifying these cultures/civilizations, we specifically highlight three parameters: a) geographical-regional, b) ethnic, and c) the individual "spiritual" phenomenon of the culture. In the course of our research, it became evident that each model encompassed a specific historical-geographical space and, at various stages of development, was tied to certain historical-chronological periods.

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INTRODUCTION

Contemporary humanities scholars, exploring the cultural history of mankind through various methodologies and approaches, strive to delve into the cultural layers of ancient epochs through analysing existing empirical materials, in an attempt to reconstruct complex models of ancient civilizations and uncover the mechanisms underlying the interconnections between them. Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going? – the answers on these questions epitomise ontology of the history of civilizations.

Human beings have displayed an intellectual need to gain insight into their own quest and essence since ancient times. The interest in the essence of one's own existence and nature can be traced back to prehistoric times, when human beings perceived themselves as integral and harmonious parts of nature, though, due to their way of life, they had already emerged as a species distinct from the wild world.[1]

The concepts of *civilization* and *culture* emerged at an early stage of humanistic thinking. However, initially, they did not represent historical-philosophical categories in the modern sense and did not fully encompass all aspects of societal existence and consciousness.

The term *civilization* is derived from the Latin word *civitas*, meaning "civil society" or "state". Some words derived from *civitas* include *civis* – meaning "citizen", and *civilis* – "civil", while *civilitas* (as a noun) denotes positive qualities of a citizen, such as education and morality.[2] In ancient Greece, the equivalent of the Latin term *civitas* is *πόλις* (polis) – meaning a city, state, society and the words derived from it include: *πολίτης* (politis) – meaning "citizen", and *πολιτεία* (politeia) – meaning "state", "civil" (according to Aristotle, the man of the ancient world was a "political animal")[3]. Later, the concept of *civilization* began to imply, first of all, an

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[1] ე. ავალიანი, კულტურა და ცივილიზაცია,ზოგადი მიმოხილვა. თბ., 1997. 3.

[2] Е. Рашковский, Востоковедная проблематика в культурно-исторической Концепции А.Дж. Тойнби. М., 1976. 118.

[3] For comparison of the terms: Civitas and *πόλις* see. И. Маяк, *Populus, Cives, Plebs* – Начала Республики. ВДИ. I. 1989. 66. cf. Э. Фролов, Рождение греческого

advanced level of the development of peoples or groups of peoples - considering socio-economic and cultural parameters (in this case, *civilization* was viewed as the antithesis to *barbarism* or *savagery*); in another context, *civilization* refers to a certain unity of social-historical-cultural constructions for specific individuals or groups of people. The latter allows to consider the plurality of civilizations and their interconnectedness.[4] For example, for O. Spengler, *civilization* is the ultimate destiny of the *culture*. Every *culture* has its own *civilization*. For Spengler, *culture* and *civilization* are equated with certain periods of societal development. "Civilizations are the most external and artificial states of which a species of developed humanity is capable. They are a conclusion, the thing-become succeeding the thing-becoming, death following life, rigidity following expansion."[5]

It is noteworthy that the term *culture* was initially associated with agriculture and literally meant cultivating the soil and raising crops.[6] Later, the semantic load of this word extended to human intellectual-cognitive activity and came to mean rearing, education, development, and respect.[7] In the ancient Greek world, the concept of *culture* can be linked to the term *παιδεία* (paideia), meaning rearing, cognition, science, and scientific knowledge.[8]

In XIX-XX centuries, *civilization* and *culture* became almost synonymous concepts pertaining to society, history, ethics, and even acquiring ethnological significance. In contemporary philosophy of history, the correlation between these two concepts is a subject of research. Sometimes they are equated, but some scholars differentiate between these two concepts and even juxtapose them to demonstrate contrast between them.[9]

полиса. Становление и развитие раннсклассовых обшеств. Л., 1986. 20. See also: M. Kaser, Römische Rechtsgeschichte. Göttingen, 1950. 20.

[4] cf. Е. Рашковский 1976.,120. See aslo, Ц. Арзаканьян, Культура и цивилизация: Проблемы теории и истории. ВИМК. №3. 1961.

[5] О. Шпенглер, Закат Европы. т. I. М., 1923. 31.

[6] Herder borrowed the term *culture* from Cicero's treatise *Cultura Animi*, which dealt with agriculture.

[7] cf. Философский Энциклопедический Словарь. М., 1983. 292.

[8] cf. Словарь Античности. "Культура". М., 1989. 300.

[9] cf. И. Данилевский, Россия и Европа. Взгляд на культурные и политические отношения славянского мира к Германо-романскому. СПб., 1985.; И. Бердяев, Новое религиозное сознание и общественность. СПБ. 1907.; И. Данилевский, Новое средневековье. Берлин, 1924. ; И. Данилевский, Опыт философии творческой судьбы, Берлин, 1923; О. Шпенглер. Закат Европы. М., 1923; (see

The philosophy of history has no comprehensive definition of the concept of *culture*, though there are many definitions of this concept, such as: *culture* is the totality of material and spiritual wealth that humanity has acquired throughout history and in the process of social practice, which manifests the historically achieved level of development of a society.[10]

Another definition states that *culture* is a specific way of organization and development of society, human creativity, and beliefs, realized in the products of material and spiritual quest, within the framework of established social norms. *Culture* is a representation of historical and concrete forms, the form of existence of a society at various stages of development, within certain epochs and ethnic-national unity.[11] In the domain of Soviet Union, discussions around the *nature of culture*, led to a consensus. Most former Soviet scientists viewed *culture* as the quality, character, and result of human activity, as a unity of spiritual and material values.[12] From the viewpoint of the forms of societal existence and consciousness, culture is divided into two categories – material and spiritual (the latter includes Art). Some scholars go further to believe that artistic culture is not part of the spiritual category but rather represents a self-contained component of *culture* synthesizing both material and spiritual forms of activity.[13] In a narrow sense, *culture* covers key elements of human spiritual activity - cognitive, emotional, and practical and value-related connections to the world. The forms of cognitive activity reveal the social-historical-cultural attainments of society. [14]

In XIX-XX centuries, European existentialists (existentialism - philosophy of life), in the process of studying the morphology of culture, arrived at the decision that culture, as such, manifests itself in artistic forms and that Art represents the reflection of culture (Nietzsche, Spengler, Dilthey). For instance, Dilthey frequently interprets the essence of social

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also the 1983-1998 publications).; A. Toynbee. A Study History. vol. 1-12, London, 1936-1961.

[10] cf. ფილოსოფიური ლექსიკონი (translated from Russian) Edited by I. Frolov. Tbilisi. 1987. 295.

[11] cf. Философский Энциклопедический Словарь. М., 1983. 292.

[12] cf. Художественная культура в докапиталистических формациях. Под ред. М. Каган. Л., 1984. 23.

[13] cf. Ц. Арзаканьян, Трактовка гуманизма в буржуазных концепциях культуры и цивилизации в кн.; От Эразма Роттердамского до Бертрана Рассела. М., 1969.; М. Каган, Человеческая деятельность. М., 1974; В. Давидович, Ю. Жданов, Сушность культуры. Ростов н/Д, 1979.

[14] cf. Художественная Культура 1984. 11; ქართული საბჭოთა ენციკლოპედია. VI. საქართველოს მეცნიერებათა აკადემია. თბ., 1983. 67.

movements and, in the process of analysing types of consciousness, turns to exploring the artistic thinking of the relevant epochs, studying the issues from this perspective, in his opinion, Art reflects existing relationships more vividly than the relations of production do.[15] In our view, one of the main goals of a researcher in culture is to restore key parameters of the vanished cultures of the past as much as possible, while at the same time being able to comprehensively study the *spiritual* and *material* layers of culture. In this case, it may be much more difficult to restore the *spiritual* layer, which, in our opinion, underlies and determines the nature of the *material* layer (consciousness determines existence). The issue related to the genesis of culture, specifically the forms that preceded the inception and development of culture, the factors that underlay the formation of culture, and other related issues remain controversial. Some support the idea that the foundation of culture was myth, others associate it with Art, while proponents of Jung, Freud, and Eliade believe that the archetype is the primary source of the genesis of culture.[16]

Sociologists M. Mauss and E. Durkheim assume that various civilizations, whether Buddhist, French, or Islamic, are distinguished from each other by their forms of thinking, specific types of thought. Therefore, they suggest introducing the term *mentality* in relation to cultures or civilizations. [17] For sociologists, civilization is primarily collective and specific, although this is not what Durkheim refers to as *collective consciousness*, which is confined to a certain segment of the population. Moreover, unlike local cultures, civilization is rational and universal and, at the same time, progressive:[18] "Over time, civilizations become stronger, more general, and more rational." [19]

According to Toynbee, culture is a living, intelligent, rational phenomenon. He introduced the term "intelligible field of historical study*"*, with regard to society.[20] *Intelligible fields* (intelligible – Lat. intellectual) have a characteristic spirituality unique to them. Toynbee writes in one of his works that the study of civilization is essentially no different from the study of literature. In both cases, we try to gain insight into the human soul, or in simpler terms, into works of art. Civilization is the creation of countless individuals and many generations. In this regard, it differs from a

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[15] История буржуазной социологии XIX – начала XX века. М., 1979. 152.

[16] Hermeneutics is believed to be associated with this school of thought.

[17] A. Kuper, Culture. The Anthropologists account. Harvard, 2000, 27.

[18] Op. cit. 27.

[19] Op. cit. 27.

[20] cf. J. Ortega y Gasset, Una Interpretacion de la Historia Universal en Toma a Toynbee. Madrid, 1960. 57. 56-84

poem or an article not qualitatively but quantitatively. This is a social manifestation of art, which, like ritual and drama, is expressed in social creativity; it is impossible to give it a better name than a tragedy – considering its plot, and history itself is where the tragedy is set.[21]

Our research primarily focuses on the models of high cultures[22] associated with the Near East and Mediterranean regions.[23] This vast historical-geographical area is connected with the processes of formation and development of the earliest cultures. The excavations conducted by J. Mellaart in Anatolia, Çatalhöyük, and Hacılar substantiated this view and were of particular importance, revealing a highly developed Neolithic culture, which spread from south-eastern Anatolia to Africa, the Aegean Region, the Cyclades, from the Apennines to Spain, and in the south, strong traces of this culture were found in Syria-Palestine. Naturally, this was a great victory for the proponents of the theory of Mediterranean unity – "the Mediterranean world became the image of the unity of mankind."[24]

In this extensive region, five cultural models can be identified and analysed. Various opinions have been expressed by modern scientists regarding the nature of these cultural models in the region. In his work "Greek Civilization," R. Gordeziani identifies three main models: the "Mesopotamian", the "Egyptian", and the "Aegean-Hellenic" models. M. Kagan distinguishes between the "Mesopotamian," the "Egyptian," and the "Hittite-Achaean (Ahhiyan)" models in this geographical region. According to him, relations of production form the basis for the classification of the models, such as: the slave-owning mode of production with its two large

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[21] Toynbee 1945,438-453.

[22] Spengler distinguishes between two types of culture in his classification of cultures: primitive culture and high culture. According to Spengler, every primitive culture contains an "it"—a cosmic element that is manifested everywhere as a microcosmic origin—in myth, customs, technology, and ornaments. Primitive culture is chaotic; it does not represent an organism or a sum of organisms. However, with the emergence of high culture, instead of "it" (in this case, the author uses the neuter pronoun "оно," which we translate as "it," meaning "cosmos"), there arises a unified and powerful tendency, during which culture becomes spiritualized. High culture represents a vast, gigantic organism from which a uniform language of forms and history emerges, extending into myth, technology, and art, and also encompassing the peoples and classes that embody it. Cf. Шпенглер 1998, II. 37.

[23] According to Spengler, ancient world history in its early stages is essentially limited to the eastern part of the Mediterranean basin. Шпенглер 1923, I. 24.

[24] cf. F. Braudel, The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II. New York, 1972. 276.

basic branches — state-public and communal-private.[25] We, in turn, identify five cultural models — Egyptian, Mesopotamian (so-called Babylonian-Elamite), Hittite-Hurrian, Aegean-Hellenic, and Eastern Mediterranean (Syrian-Phoenician) — based on the following main argument: first and foremost, we believe that these cultural models are *primary civilizations* that emerged from the archaic, pre-civilization layers and gave us models of *high cultures*. They precede other cultural models in time and, in turn, give rise to new societies.[26] In addition, we systematize and classify them according to several parameters: a) geographical-regional factors, b) ethnic characteristics, and most importantly, c) the *spiritual specificity* of the culture (reflected in the worldview and, in general, in the consciousness of the society).[27]

According to Spengler, the *spirituality* of culture is a universal source; culture emerges at the moment when a great spirit awakens within a society in a chaotic, primordial spiritual state, bringing forth a specific image or form from formlessness, which blossoms in a strictly defined space and environment. Culture dies when this spirit fully realizes its potential in people, languages, religions, arts, statehood, and science. Its lifespan covers a succession of great epochs. Every culture is in symbolic connection with matter and space, and when it exhausts itself, it turns into a civilization[28]. We believe that the spirituality of culture is primarily associated with a conscious beginning that shapes the form of existence of society. Despite the *individual* nature of consciousness, one important trend is noticeable in all the models we have identified: in the conscious beginnings of these societies, the irrational always dominates over the rational, with a tendency towards a certain *symbolic* thinking.[29] While studying cultural models, we believe that their ideology and religion, which are structurally heteronomous, should be analysed, as they codify various systems, specifically, the social relationships between individuals.[30]

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[25] Toynbee identifies 21 cultural models and one universal civilization. He distinguishes between several so-called cultural-historical types. See Рашковский 1976, 96. Also, refer to A. Toynbee, Mankind and Mother Earth, Oxford, 1976.

[26] cf. A. Toynbee, Study of History (I-XII) 1936-61. I v. 240-261.

[27] From the point of view of antiquity, we will single out cultural models of the Nile and the Euphrates. cf. Шпенглер 1998, II. 25.

[28] Шпенглер 1923, 118.

[29] The emergence of the cultures of the Near East are based only on the so-called Mythopoetic materials. Thus, the opinion has been expressed that from this point of view, these cultures are unhistorical. cf. Рашковский 1976, 109.

[30] About the formation of religious ideology, see М. Вебер, Избранное образ общества. Социология религии. М., 1994. 90. (on the example of the ancient

Mythology forms an integral part of religion.[31] The structure of myth is inherently twofold: it is connected to religion through its rational form, and to Art through its plot and symbols.[32]

According to experts of culture and the history of religion, the early stage of human history was associated with so-called *mythological thinking*, while historical thinking was connected with the Judaic-Christian religion and partly with the ancient world.[33] Levi-Strauss's research suggests a similar system of classification (mythological thinking is associated with historical thinking), which corresponds to different stages of the development of human culture.[34] Scientists provide various explanations for the phenomenon of mythological thinking. For example, according to Weber, mythological thinking lies at the roots of developed symbolism.[35] According to G. Dumézil's concept, "myth is a dramatic representation of the fundamental ideology of any society."[36]

According to O. Freidenberg, "even in the early historic period, humans develop a systemic perception of the world, both at the social-material and spiritual levels. Humans create certain systems, which fundamentally distinguish them from the animal world. The older the culture, the stronger are the connections within it, the more enclosed and static it is in nature. Myth is a cognitive representation. In the era of myth-making, every aspect of actual reality is cognized through the same means. Mythology is a representation of the only possible form of cognition, which does not question the reliability of what it cognized."[37]

Jewish world). See also Художественная культура. 1984. 118. See also М. Элиаде, Словарь религии, обрядов и верований. М., 1997. 9.

[31] There is a difference of opinion in science regarding this issue. cf. С. Токарев, Е. Мелетинский, Мифология – в кн: Мифы народов Мира. I. М., 1980. 13; Cf. M. Eliade associates a myth to both religion and literary texts. M. Eliade, The Quest. History and Meaning in Religion.Chicago.1969.

[32] М. Элиаде, История и Космос. М.,1987. 256.

[33] Элиаде 1987, 14. (Mythological thinking is connected with the so-called age of ancient cultures).

[34] See К. Леви-Строс, Структурная антропология. М., 1983.; К. Леви-Строс, Печальные тропики. М., 1984.; К. Леви-Строс, Зарубежные исследования по семиотике фольклора. М., 1985.

[35] Вебер 1994, 84.

[36] G. Dumezil, Heur et Malheur du Guerrier. Aspects Mythiques de la Fonction Guerriere Chez Les Indo Europeens. Paris, 1985. 15. According to Toynbee, the myth carries within itself the element of knowledge of reality, reality is personified in the myth. Dramatizing the world view of myth through invention. Toynbee 1939,v. 6. 438-453.

[37] О. Фрейденберг, Миф и литература древности. М., 1978. 15, 24, 28.

Mythological interpretation of the reality transforms the empirical world into a superconscious and super-sensual (spiritual) layer, where naturally, the spiritual layer is manifested in the empirical world.[38]

The initial stages of human history are shrouded in some mystery for us; however, it is an axiom today that ancient cultures developed in closer connection with nature than modern societies. Therefore, the worldview and the system of perception of these cultures are partly incomprehensible to us. Cosmic unity, the cosmos as a whole, is the dominant principle in the consciousness of ancient cultures, and the activities of a person living in this world replicate the cosmogonic act of creation.[39] The cosmos is a universal order that has been established over centuries and regulates social relationships. People in ancient societies strove for this *cosmic order*, which is periodically confronted by destructive chaos.[40]

The feelings, perceptions, aspirations, and emotional world of humans is gradually reflected in mythopoetic — mythological thinking, which is created from symbolic images and takes the form of myths and rituals.[41] In the age of ancient cultures, in the process of discovering the world, the advantage is given to irrational-mythological thinking, which dominates over secular mentality.[42] Therefore, in our research, we will focus on the form of mythological thinking in ancient cultures, which is manifested in the creative works of these cultures. We use the term *artistic perception* to denote the aesthetic and, at the same time, religious-symbolic significance of an art monument. At the same time, we will focus on discussing and analysing the issues related to individual religious symbols.[43]

After providing a general overview of the cultural model, in the chapter "The Specifics of Artistic Thinking," we will highlight the connections between historical reality and artistic thinking at various stages of the development of a specific cultural model, i.e., between the variables, which, to some extent, follow the same path.

The cultural models we have identified form a conglomerate of *high cultures* are characterized by a *universal state*, *universal religion*, and a *writing system*. The combination of these characteristics further confirms the structural similarity of these models.

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[38] cf. Рашковский 1976.,108.

[39] Элиаде 1987, 5. cf. Художественная культура 1984. 112.

[40] Элиаде 1987, 5.

[41] E. James, Myth and Ritual in the Ancient Near East. London. 1958. 15.

[42] See E. Dodds, The Greeks and the Irrational. Berkeley, 1951. See also S. Morris, Daidalos and the Origins of Greek Art. Princeton. 1992.

[43] Works on hermeneutics see Heidegger, Dilthey, Eliade. cf. A. Barbosa da Sylva, The Phenomenology of Religion as a Philosophical Problem. Uppsala, 1982.

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The emergence of a *universal state* is preceded by a certain preparatory stage within society, often considered as a prehistorical phase. The formation of a *universal state* begins around the mid-third millennium BCE (in Egypt and Mesopotamia), where an ethnos consolidates within one society, constructing a structured cosmos from destructive chaos.[44] The existence of one ruler symbolizes exertion of authority of a single leader over the entire society, which is followed by emergence of social groups. In such a society, processes of economic integration, controlled by one individual and their socially advanced entourage, is underway.[45] A specific social group of people emerges, which also governs the ideological orientation of the given society. In ancient Near Eastern societies, this orientation is represented in the form of religious and spiritual thinking.

What does *universal religion* mean? First and foremost, this does not necessarily imply monotheism. While religion is often associated with monotheism, Max Weber's research made it clear that the essence of religion lies not in its structure but in its functional purpose, which in itself becomes a unique historical phenomenon. The main feature of this phenomenon is the rationalization of the human relationship with the divine, i.e., bringing this relationship into a certain system that excludes all randomness.[46] Several aspects can be identified within this system: 1) the cult or cults existing on the ideological level within the state; 2) a certain social class that propagates the ideology of this cult; 3) the broad masses of worshipers within the given society; and 4) finally, the written or oral tradition of religious ideology, representing the spiritual, religious, and moral code of the society.[47]

The creation of a writing system by society is generally perceived as a phenomenon concurrent with state formation. The development of a written language is one of the first distinguishing features of the historical world. Hence, nothing characterizes culture as distinctly as its intrinsic connection to writing.[48] The formation of a writing system is linked to high cultures.[49]

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[44] ავალიანი 1997, 12-13.

[45] Regarding the process of formation of the state, cf. Художественная культура в докапиталис¬тических формациях. 1984. 109, 117.

[46] Вебер 1994, 254.

[47] ავალიანი 1997, 13.

[48] cf. Шпенглер 1998, II. 155.

[49] Шпенглер 1998, 38.; According to Spengler, the spoken language belongs to the person in general, and the writing belongs only to the cultured person. Unlike spoken

The creation of a writing system is a need of society to deposit into a *memory bank* some valuable achievements, representing the unique accomplishments of a given culture. Writing serves as a means of preserving and transmitting recorded knowledge from generation to generation.[50]

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Naturally, it is interesting to define a cultural model, its structure, and determinants of the dynamism or static nature of this structure. Regarding these issues, we have some views, which will be shared below.

An interesting hypothesis about the phenomenon of societal structure was proposed in the 1920s in the sociological monograph by Émile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss.[51] In the process of classifying certain social types, the scholars identified the so-called dualistic, polar tendencies characteristic of these societies. The model of the entire world was based on this structure and was divided into different zones according to their level of complexity (for example, sky and earth, high and low). Similarly, the social model of society was divided into polar groups (classes, totemic groups).[52] The dualistic principle underlay the entire historical society. As for ideas, they are organized in accordance with the societal model, stemming from the organization of society itself.[53] This theory was quickly embraced by European scientists, with Claude Lévi-Strauss expanding the theory of structuralism to myth, eventually leading the scholar to conclude that the roots of polarity lie within the structure of matter itself,[54] while opposing tendencies create a unified system that becomes clear only through their simultaneous analysis.[55]

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language, it is not fragmented, but is entirely conditioned by the political and religious fate of the world culture. Шпенглер 1998,155.

[50] According to one of the opinions expressed in modern science, the creation of writing, which was realized as a direct result of the Neolithic era, initially served a purely practical, economic purpose, accounting. At a later stage, it was universalized to cover political-administrative and religious-practical activities. cf. Художественая культура 1984, 110.

[51] The English translation of this work belongs to R. Nidem. See Émile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss, Primitive Classification. Chicago. 1963.

[52] cf. Элиаде 1987, 199.

[53] Элиаде 1987 199.

[54] cf. C. Levi-Straus, Anthropologie Structure. Paris, 1958. 248-254.

[55] Op. cit. 248-254.

In the process of analysing the structure of society, we applied the method of metaphorization and used the well-known Chinese mythologem of *Yin-Yang* (clearly showing the abovementioned polarity).

Based on our interpretation, two fundamental principles can be distinguished within society, which oppose and, at the same time, complement each-other. This results in the so-called *Coincidentia Oppositorum* (coincidence of opposites). [56]

The *Yin* embodies the female, closed, conservative force, while *Yang* represents the male, mobile, open force. [57] If we look at the symbol, we will see that both parts conta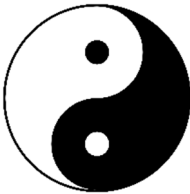in a small element of the opposite force in the form of a dot.[58] If we assume that these two forces represent the building blocks of a society. In this case: *Yin* (the black part of the symbol) is spiritual, irrational, which we will designate with the symbol "A", and Yang (the white part of the symbol) is material, rational, which we will designate with the symbol "B". Every cultural model has its own specific form of spirituality - an individual "A," which is materialized from spirituality into various forms of societal existence (social, political-legal, etc.). [59] On the one hand, we have the *primordial* spirituality "A" and, on the other hand, the process of its materialization (here we introduce the third element, the so-called "Dao" - the way), which[60] does not often fully reflect the "A" element, meaning "A" spiritual and A$^/$ (the symbol of "Dao," "the process of materialization") are not identical. [61]

Fig. 1

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[56] Элиаде 1987, 244. See also ე. ავალიანი, "კულტურისა და ცივილიზაციის ცნებათა მითოლოგიზაციის ფენომენი (მოხსენებათა თეზისები)" საქართველოს კულტურის სამინისტრო. თბ., 1997.

[57] For the interpretations of the symbol see H. Maspero, La Chine Antique. Paris, 1927.; M. Granet, La Pensee Chinoise. Paris, 1934.

[58] Interconnectedness between Yin and Yang testifies to their unity. cf. C. Hentze, Bronzegerat, Kultbauten, Religion im Altesten Chine der Shangzeit. Anvers. 1951. 192.

[59] For Spengler, *soul* is something that should be realized, *world* is something that is already realized, whereas *life* is the process of realization. cf. Шпенглер 1923, 63.

[60] cf. Элиаде 1987, 248. cf. footnote 3.

[61] For more clarity, we provide an example: as it is known, the religious orientation (and beginnings) of the cultural models of the Mediterranean and the Oriental world was connected with the cult of the Anatolian great mother goddess of the Neolithic period, the belief that this goddess was a *universal deity* for these societies is confirmed by historical material. (See ე. ავალიანი "მედიტერანული დიდი
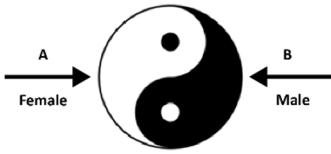
A   B
Female   Male

Fig. 2

A "spiritual," after passing through the $A^{/}$ -materialization process, becomes materialized in the so-called *material existence*, which we conventionally denote with the letter "B". Before "A" passes through "$A^{/}$" and becomes materialized as "B", it has to ***find its own path of development*** (that is, choose from alternative paths), which becomes acceptable considering the subjective reality of the given culture and is established as a "***specific path of development***" of this culture in the future. The two models of the Hellenic society known to us, Athens and Sparta, shared a common spirituality - "A", but each had chosen a specific path of development. The path chosen by Athens proved to be viable and resulted in the formation of the first democratic state, while the choice of Sparta was impracticable, and the path proved disastrous for the development of this society over time. Thus, "A," which was common for these two Hellenic societies, developed through different paths - "$A^{/}$" and gave us two different "B" elements (one of which became a viable society that is considered to be a predecessor of modern European society, while the other can be referred to as a model *frozen in time*). As we can see, $A^{/}$ is the *key moment* in the evolutionary process of any culture. It is of ambivalent nature (that is, it can be rational and irrational, and it is natural that a wrong path leads to the death of a culture).

Graphically, this process can be represented as shown in the figure below (see Fig. 3), where A is spiritual, irrational, the initial principle associated with femininity, which, as we noted, contains a small male element (see Fig. 2). $A^{/}$ - alternative path of ambivalent nature, and B is rational, materialized, associated with masculinity, containing a small female element within itself (see Fig. 2).

დედა ქალღმერთის კულტის ზოგიერთი ასპექტისათვის".). Therefore, these cultures had a common spiritual, initial layer and they should be identical. Although, in our opinion, these cultures are connected by many common aspects, and especially this is manifested in the religious aspect, the societies were different from each other, and this difference should probably be sought in $A^{/}$ - in the specific path of materialization that all these cultures went through independently.
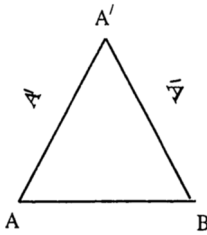
Fig. 3

The combination of these elements gives us a *distinct type* of culture or civilization, which we refer to as the *cultural pyramid* (see Fig. 3).[62]

The mytho-symbolic model of the cultural pyramid presented by us can be interpreted using psycho-philosophical categories and presented in the following forms: *feeling*, *judgment*, and *action*, where the category of *feeling* can be identified with A - *Yin* (female, irrational), judgment can be identified with A$'$ (which can be rational and irrational), and action with B - *Yang* (materialized male category). Since B i.e., *action* is the final step after *feeling* and *judgment*, it thus incorporates the characteristics of A and A$'$. The fact that B - *action* is material does not completely exclude the presence of irrational A within it.

The version presented above is the *ideal* model of society, though it is not of a sustainable nature.

At various stages of societal development (which we will discuss below, while analysing the understanding of the *pyramid of society* from a historical perspective), the balance (equilibrium) in the *pyramid* can be disturbed. Out of many, in only two variants presented by us, the equilibrium in the *pyramid* is disturbed in the following cases:

According to version 1, when spirituality (the so-called *feeling*) is diminished and the characteristic A$'$ is in exaltation, embodying only the purely rational (i.e., judgment is based solely on the rational), then the original *spirituality* is vanished from this *pyramid of society*, leading to the culture being deprived of its *spirituality* and adopting a path of development unfamiliar to its reality; a remarkable example of which can be brought from the recent history: after the October Revolution, various cultures with distinct and individual spirituality (A) adopted an *artificial* socialist ideology (i.e., spirituality) as a common path of development A$'$. In this case, the driving force was rational judgment, when all local cultures had a common path ahead –toward a common goal. Ultimately, we got the B, which was inorganic and artificial for all cultures and could not ensure the harmonious development of the societies.

According to version 2, if the rationality of judgment - A$'$ is diminished and A is in exaltation, then the possibility of an alternative choice (rational choice) in the development of society is excluded. In such a society, the

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[62] According to Granet, society and the world represent an organized unity based on cyclicality, where alternating and, at the same time, complementary manifestations are harmonized. cf. Granet 1934.

spiritual A practically guides the path of development - A$^{/}$ judgment, irrational. At this time, vital forces drop to a minimum, and the driving force of the development of society is mainly limited to established religious dogmas, reducing the degree of innovation. In this sense, Etruscan and Spartan societies are of certain interest. Both the Etruscan and Spartan societies *emerged* from a predetermined future.[63] For example, in Etruscan religious literature, the period was predetermined when Etruscan society would cease to exist. Whereas, the Persian books gave a detailed chronology of the coming of Judgment Day and of the Messiah.[64] As is evident, in both cultures, the *feeling* is in exaltation; the element of fatalism is practically allowed in their consciousness; society is completely guided by *spirituality*.

<p style="text-align:center">*   *   *</p>

In the third historical version of the interpretation of the *cultural pyramid*, we partially rely on the *mythologized* and *psycho-philosophical* versions, in an attempt to present our perspective through these two lenses.

No society has the ability to eternally maintain internal stability or to establish universal forms that remain unchanged over time (i.e., maintain the status quo). The existence of historical societies is determined by the interdependence between opposite trends embedded in the dialectical unity of the given society.[65] One of these trends is towards organization, stabilization, and self-reproduction, creating a so-called constructive model (which we refer to as *A^c - constructive*). The other trend leads to fragmentation, changes, and self-renewal. At first glance, the phenomena, such as social upheavals, revolutions, ethnic conflicts, wars for global power distribution, reforms, etc., may be perceived as destructive.[66] We use *A^d - destructive* to denote this trend. In the course of the evolutionary development of society, the alternation of these two elements is crucial. Studying the events occurring within the model of society suggests that a historically developed society, through the implementation of its social-political structure (the so-called universal state apparatus) and ideology (universal religion), as well as through means of communication (writing system), makes every effort to maintain its status quo (i.e., A^c), through the

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[63] cf. Шпенглер 1998,28.

[64] Шпенглер 1998,28.

[65] ე. ავალიანი. "ეგვიპტური ცივილიზაციის განვითარების ძირითადი ეტაპები, მხატვრული აზროვნების სპეციფიკა. კულტურის ისტორიის საკითხები". III, თბ., 1997. 168.

[66] ავალიანი 1997,169.

self-reproduction of previously developed forms rather than through renewal.

A society that has reached a certain threshold of historical maturity exhausts all the means for self-reproduction, and gradually becomes outdated in the face of existing historical realities. At this stage, the equilibrium within society is gradually disrupted (due to emergence of new social forces, invasions by foreign forces, ideological confrontations; Toynbee refers to this stage as the *time of troubles*)[67], and the model becomes prone to collapse.
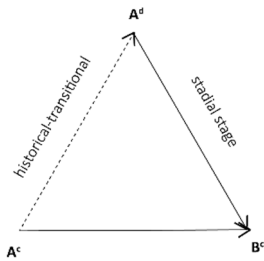
Fig. 4

In fact, the mechanism of self-reproduction of society, with its resilient normative code, fails to meet the new historical demands and becomes regressive – the process that can be reversed through the activation of the *self-renewal* mechanism. At this time, the contradictions that have emerged within society are resolved by the destructive force (A^d), which helps develop a new system of rational values while destroying the old. We refer to this stage as the *historical-stadial-transitional stage*. At this stage, society temporarily returns to the initial chaos; however, along with the partial rejection and destruction of the old, the society searches for paths of self-renewal.[68] In our view, the path of cultural development (A^l) resembles the so-called **stadial-transitional stage**, which implies an attempt to find a new, right course of development — a right path. For clarity, we provide an example: the development of ancient Greek society was hindered due to specific geographical-demographic factors, such as overpopulation and economic stalemate. Greek cities chose different paths of development, meaning their historical-stadial-transitional stage unfolded in different ways. Athens solved its problems through a rational approach, weighing its capabilities against the reality, and laid the foundation for the process of colonization – one of its most extensive forms in the ancient world, simultaneously solving the problems of overpopulation and economic stalemate. The societies separated from the Mother Civilization proved to be quite viable in a foreign

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[67] cf. A. Toynbee, A Study of history. L., 1948.
[68] For example, the ancient Egyptian society, which was characterized by a conservative ideology and a particular inclination toward stability (stemming from its historical reality), faced several stadial-transitional phases. For more details, see the chapter: The Main Stages of the Development of Egyptian Civilization.

environment,[69] thus preserving their ideological orientation and finding the optimal path of self-renewal. At this *historical-stadial-transitional* stage, the Spartan variant differed from that of Athens. As is known, this society failed to achieve historical evolution and became a *frozen culture*.[70] Frozen cultures are characterized by the so-called anabiosis – a phenomenon of the reduction of vital forces to a minimal level. At this stage, the culture (civilization) tries to preserve its existing form not through evolution but through revolution and self-reproduction. Ultimately, this process ends in the depletion of the spirituality of the culture.[71] As is known, the Spartan society failed to properly solve the problems it faced by means of conquests of neighbouring states and military dictatorship, and their small revolutions could not ensure the evolutionary development of the society.

The model of society that finds the right mechanism for self-reproduction in the new historical reality undergoes transformation. We refer to this new historical reality as B^c *- historical composite*, which represents: the combination of elements of A^c and A^d, plus the new B^c with its own elements. That is, B^c itself is a historical reality composed of constructive and destructive elements. This process of transition can be graphically represented as follows: 1. A^c is the initial historical reality that already has a constructive form. 2. A^d is destructive, which, while destroying the old (though not completely), seeks a new path in a historical-stadial-transitional stage 3. B^c is the new historical composite —a new state of society that necessarily contains the elements of A^c and A^d (tradition-innovation), meaning it is a sum of the previous experience and new innovative discoveries (see Figure 4). However, after a certain period (*t*-time), it itself takes on the form of A^c,

Fig. 5

which at a certain stage reaches the maturity threshold that requires self-renewal. This path of historical development and evolution resembles a circular motion, where one cycle is replaced by another, and the *pyramid of society* shifts in space with varying amplitudes and speeds (see Figure 5).
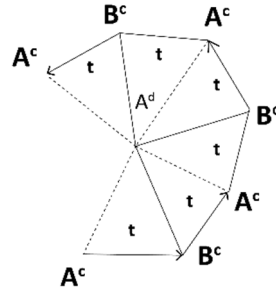
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[69] We will later discuss the phenomenon of the transformation of cultures across space and time.

[70] For the information about frozen cultures, s   A. Toynbee. Study of History. L., 1934. I. 45.

[71]   ავალიანი 1997, 13

In this circular motion, where one cycle is replaced by another, the starting point—the major centre—is somewhere around A^d which emerges as the most active element in the process of evolution (see Figure 5). The time factor (t) in this process of evolution is different. The processes of development of different historical epochs are characterized by different time categories. This process may continue infinitely or may find itself in a dead-end at a certain stage.

<p style="text-align:center">* * *</p>

Different civilizations or cultures, despite their individuality, demonstrate certain level of interconnectedness and shared legacies. The mechanism of this legacy is quite diverse, and one form of interconnectedness between these cultures and civilizations can be explained by the phenomenon of the transformation of cultures in space and time[72] (which can also be referred to as a stadial-transitional stage).

A mother civilization/culture, having reached a certain level of maturity, through metastasis (understood as cultural migrations where a society changes its historical environment), implants daughter cultures in completely foreign environments. These daughter cultures, after a certain period in the new historical environment, become independent cultural models.[73]
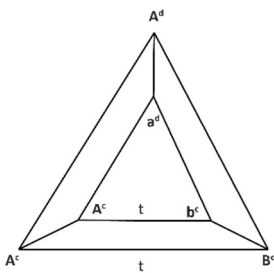
The historical organisms implanted into foreign environments maintain their distinctiveness in coexistence with neighbouring cultures. Their individuality, especially in the spiritual realm, is reflected in the mental system of the culture.[74] This process can be graphically represented as follows (see Figure 6). The mother pyramid of

Fig. 6

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[72] See Э. Мейер, Экономическое развитие древнего мира. СПБ. 1898. 116. Also, cf. ე. ავალიანი, კულტურების სივრცესა და დროში ტრანსფორმაციის ფენომენი (ძველი ცივილიზაციები). თბ., 1997.

[73] ავალიანი 1997, 5.

[74] For example, the Greek pole ´ ity-states) established during the colonization movement in the Mediterranea   egean and Black Sea regions, the network of Greek city-state in the southern part of the Apennines. These poleis, in the process of interaction with completely different cultures, preserved the Hellenic worldview and, at the same time, served as a catalyst in the development of local societies. Cf. ავალიანი 1997, 22. See Note 5.

society gives birth to a small pyramid, but in a different space and time.

This mother civilization manages to self-renew and self-reproduce in an entirely foreign environment.

We provide two examples from the Mediterranean region of the first millennium BCE, to illustrate the above given theory. In this context, two ancient mother civilizations are of interest, whose daughter cultures emerged later in the ancient world. The models of these societies can be paired as follows:[75]

Mother Civilization	Daughter Culture
Eastern Mediterranean Lydian world of Asia Minor	Etruscan culture on the Apennine Peninsula[76]
Eastern Mediterranean world of the Phoenicians	North African-Punic culture

The diagram presented below illustrates the results of these processes in the Apennines and North Africa, where independent cultural models emerged.

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[75]   ავალიანი1997,5. See also, E. Avaliani, The Cult of Tanit in the context of the Punic cultural model of North Africa. Numismatica E Antichita Classiche XXVIII. Quaderni Ticinesi. Lugano,1999. 26.

[76] We think that the problem of the origin of the Etruscans, which is related to the Lydian world, is controversial. However, we are deeply convinced that the Etruscan language, religion and mental system are related to ancient Eastern civilizations and traditions. cf. D. Briquel, L'origine Lydienne des Etrusques. Rome, 1991.

First millennium BCE[77]

Eastern Mediterranean Basin
Mother Civilizations: Asia Minor Ecumene, the world of the Phoenicians

Migration

Migration

| Apennines | | Africa |

Daughter Civilization

Etruscan Cultural Model

VIII century BC

Daughter Civilization

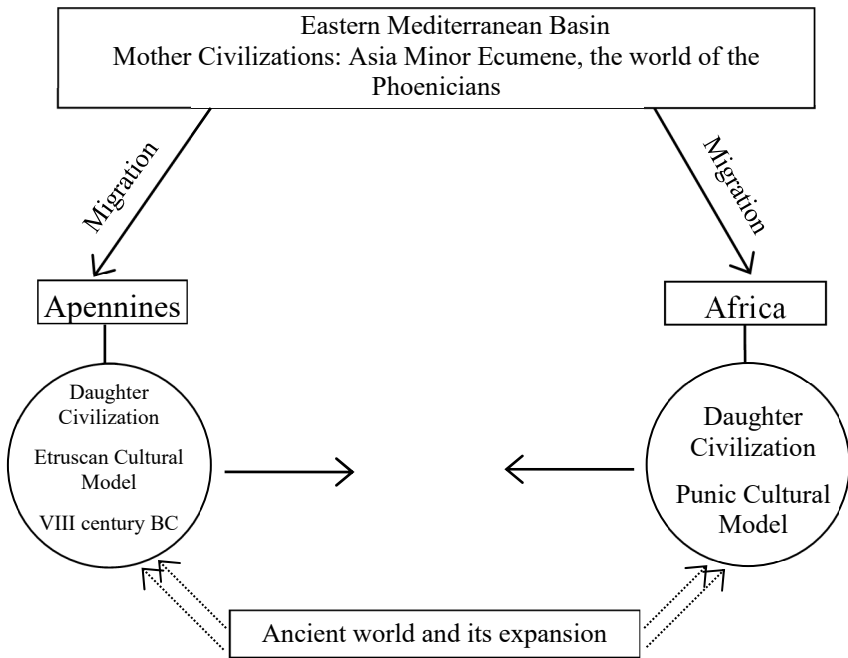Punic Cultural Model

| Ancient world and its expansion |

Diagram 1

As we can see, as a result of cultural migration, the society that found itself in a new environment, after a certain period of time, begins to form and function as an independent culture. Therefore, we believe that new daughter cultures carry on legacy of the mother civilization, though due to the space and time difference, they may be quite distant from each other.

As already mentioned, cultures or civilizations exhibit certain connections or shared legacy with each-other. Regarding these connections and legacy, another interesting phenomenon, *cultural synthesis*, can also be considered. *Cultural synthesis* implies the blending or merging of different cultures or civilizations resulting in mutual influence in different fields of culture. This phenomenon is especially interesting for us in the context of

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[77] Diagram 1 is taken from the work by E. Avaliani "Cultures in the Space and Time... 14.

the interaction between Mediterranean and Near Eastern cultures.[78] Ancient cultures or civilizations developed and matured through the processes of interconnection and interaction, not in romantic isolation.[79] In the Near East and the Mediterranean basin, several cultures that developed as a result of these kind of interaction can be distinguished. One of this type can be found in Mesopotamia, where, in the process of Sumerian trade relations, contacts were established with neighbouring cultures, and this process culminated in what we know as the Semitic-Sumerian cultural symbiosis.[80] Sumerian and Semitic inscriptions were found in Ebla, indicating that this territory represented a venue of interaction between Mesopotamian and Eblaite cultures. Asia Minor was one of the regions that established close trade-cultural connections with Mesopotamia, starting from the third millennium BCE. Besides the Near East, the Mediterranean world represented another significant region in view of the *cultural synthesis*, where various cultures merged. The cultural interactions between the Eastern Mediterranean, Egyptians, Minoan Cretans, and Mesopotamians became particularly active in 1600-1200 BCE, during the Middle and Late Bronze Age. Italy also found itself involved in these processes. The process of cultural synthesis continued during the so-called Orientalizing and Hellenistic periods.[81]

The five cultural models identified above are the main objects of our research. Although, our goal is also a general analysis of the stages of the formation and development of these societies in space and time. According to Spengler, through these cultural models we try to identify the general form of culture, its *spirit* or archetype, which is specific to only the given culture. Our chronological framework is quite broad in this regard, starting from the Neolithic Age, followed by the Bronze Age, and partially the Iron Age, during which some of these cultures enter the so-called stage of civilization, while some of them give rise to new local cultures (e.g., Punic, Etruscan).

In the process of reconstructing these models, the research methodologies used include the following:

a) In the study of cultures and societies, first of all, we try to reconstruct the ideology, consciousness, and worldview orientations of these societies, to simplify the understanding of contemporary political and social

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[78] The author of the theory about the Cultural Syntheses is Professor C. Gordon, cf. H. Marblestone, Professor Cyrus H. Gordon's Contributions to the Classics. Biblical Archaeologist. v. 59. I. 1996. 22-29.

[79] Op. cit. 22.

[80] C. Gordon, Forgotten Scripts. Their Ongoing Discovery and Decipherment. 2 ed. New York. 1965-1976. 15.

[81] cf. O. Murray. Early Greece. Cambridge, 1993.