МАЗМУНЫ
СОДЕРЖАНИЕ

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КАЗАХСТАН В НОВЫХ ГЕОПОЛИТИЧЕСКИХ РЕАЛИЯХ МИРОВОЙ ПОЛИТИКИ И МЕЖДУНАРОДНОГО ПРАВА

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When I worked on the theme of the western historiography of ancient and medieval history of Central Asia the first book in my list of obligatory scientific literature was the remarkable book of an Austrian orientalist Otto Maenchen-Helfen “World of Huns. The study of their history and culture”. I admire a scholarship, encyclopedic knowledge and intellectual level of the author. For me, he is an example of a great scientist, a model of the highest professionalism, faithfulness to human and scientific principles. I think that the scientific heritage of Maenchen-Helfen deserves to be remembered.

Otto Maenchen-Helfen (26.07.1894-29.01.1969) — the eminent Austrian historian, orientalist, writer and traveler. He was a Marxist in his ideological views and sympathized with the Soviet Union. He worked at the Marx-Engels Institute in Moscow in 1927-1930, then in Berlin in 1930-1933. When the Nazis came to power in Germany, he returned to Austria, and after the Anschluss in 1938 he emigrated to the United States, eventually becoming a professor at the University of California, Berkeley. This historian had broad scientific interests. He left several compositions on orientalism: “Huns and Hsiung-Nu”, “Legend of the origin of the Huns”, “Manicheans in Siberia”, “The World of the Huns. The study of their history and culture”, “Journey to Tuva”. He also left a serious work about the life and work of Karl Marx.

All his life he was fascinated by the problems of the frontier. He expressed a big interest to archaeology in childhood. As a boy he dug Roman copper coins along the remnants of the earthen walls that, as late as the 17th century protected Vienna his native town from the East. His doctoral dissertation dealt with the “barbarian” element in Han lore. In 1929 he lived for months in the tents of Turkic-speaking nomads in northwestern Mongolia, where the clash between “higher civilization” represented by Tibetan Lamaism, and the “primitive” beliefs of the Turks was strikingly visible. In Kashmir the researcher got acquaintance with the findings of Kushan times. He spent many days in the museum at Minusinsk in southern Siberia studying the “Scythian” bronze plaques and cauldrons. In Kabul O. Maenchen-Helfen saw the inscriptions from Surkh Kotal and as he said: “It brought back to me the problems of the barbarians at Chine s border about which I had written a good deal in previous years” [1].

Otto Maenchen-Helfen wrote a book “Journey to Tuva” (Reise ins Asiatische Tuva, published in German in 1931). This study was translated in English in 1992. Hardly anyone outside Russia ever wrote about Tuva, there are only a few extant pictures, few foreigners ever even saw it in its days of independence (1921-1944). With considerable difficulty, and only because O. Maenchen-Helfen was teaching ethnology and sociology at the Marx-Engels Institute in Moscow at the time, the author managed to get to Tuva and become the only Westerner to write a book about that small, “independent” republic before its entry into the USSR. The historian tells about this land and its people, culture, reveals a wide range of issues (the government, conditions of life, cattle rearing, agriculture, etc.)

He had one more theme that has been haunting him as far back as he can recall - Attila and his avatars” [2]. His book “The World of the Huns. Study of their history and culture” became one of the most fundamental works ever published on the history of the Huns. Professor Otto Maenchen-Helfen developed a large-scale problem of the history of the Huns and related peoples for many years. After his death he left an unfinished manuscript. It was a source of the book “World of Huns. Study of their history and culture” which was published in 1973 by Berkeley, University of California Press.

O. Maenchen-Helfen differed from other historians of Eurasia in his unique competence in philology, archaeology, and the history of art. He did not need to guess the identities of tribes, populations, or cities. He knew the primary texts, whether in Greek or Russian or Persian or Chinese. This linguistic ability is particularly necessary in the study of the Huns and their nomadic cognates, since the name “Hun” has been applied to many peoples of different ethnic character, including Ostrogoth, Magyars, and Seljuk. Even ancient nomadic people
north of China, the Hsiung-nu, not related to any of these, were called “Hun” by their Sogdian neighbors. Maenchen-Helfen knew the Chinese sources that tell of the Hsiung-nu, and thus could evaluate the relationship of these sources to European sources of Hunnic history [3].

Another special competence was his expertise in the history of Asian art, a subject that he taught for many years. Maenchen-Helfen’s description of technical and stylistic consistencies among metal articles from Hunnic tombs in widely separated localities dispels the myth of supposed Hunnic ignorance of metal-working skills. Maenchen-Helfen emphasizes what distinguishes his studies from previous treatments is the extensive use of archaeological material: “In recent years archeological research has been progressing at such speed that I had to modify my views repeatedly while I was working on these studies” [4].

To Maenchen-Helfen archaeological evidence played a critical role in the determination of the origin of the Huns and their geographical distribution in ancient and early medieval times, as well as the extent of Hunnic penetration into eastern Europe and their point of entry into Hungarian plain [5].

He underlines the necessity for sharp and well-reasoned criticism of the sources of the Huns: “From the beginning these peoples were denigrated and demonized by European historians and dismissed as avatars of the eternal but faceless barbarian hordes from the east, against whom vigilance was always necessary, but whose precise identity was of little importance”. Otto Maenchen-Helfen criticizes hatred, fear of many Western European authors towards the Huns: “The same fierce hatred burned in Ammianus Marcellinus. He and the other writes of the fourth and fifth centuries depicted the Huns as the savage monsters which we still see today. Hatred and fear distorted the picture of the Huns from the moment they appeared on the lower Danube. Unless this tendentiousness is fully understood – and it rarely is- the literary evident is found to be misread.” So he begins his study with its reexamination [6].

According to some authoritative scholars Otto Maenchen-Helfen in his book: “World of Huns. Study of their history and culture” presented to us “the epic character of the great drama that took place on the Eurasian stage early in our era, the clash of armies and the interaction of civilizations. This book is a standard treatise not likely to be superseded in the predictable future” [7]. In his research Otto Maenchen-Helfen expresses humanity in such a racially charged field as Hunnic studies, it was a rare phenomenon in the German historiography of 30th years of XX century. The novelty and distinctive characteristic of Maenchen-Helfen’s research is seen in his ability to create a reliable account of the ancestors of the Turks and Mongols, free of the usual Western prejudice and linguistic limitations.

Otto Maenchen-Helfen made an invaluable contribution to the western historiography of the history of Central Asia. His writings are still relevant and interesting to modern historians, and are an example of highly professional research.

2 p. XV.
3 pp. XVI-XVII
4 p. XVI.
5 p. XXIV.
6 p. XVII.

Түйин
Бул макалада автор атакты неміс галымы, тарихшысы зәр шығастанушысы Отто Маеншен-Хелфеннің ғылыны кызметін, соның ішінде Ортаалық Азияның тарихымен байланысты оның енбектерін қарабарады.

Резюме
В данной статье автор анализирует научную деятельность знаменитого немецкого ученого историка и ориенталиста Отто Маеншен-Хелфена, в частности его работы, связанные с историей Центральной Азии.