
Origins of the Early Russian State: Anthropological Perspectives

Nikolay N. Kradin

*Institute of History, Archaeology, and Ethnology,
Far-Eastern Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences,
Vladivostok*

ABSTRACT

The origin of State in Russia is one of permanently debatable issues among the Russian scholars. The present article discusses this problem in the context of some anthropological approaches. The important role of such factors as a foreign trade and war is shown. The importance of the ideas of chiefdom, early state and heterarchy in establishing the political complexity in the early Rus' is considered.

Keywords: *state origins, chiefdom, early Rus', ancient Russia, early state, heterarchy, political anthropology.*

INTRODUCTION

In the seminal volume *The Early State* (Claessen and Skalník 1978), there were presented twenty-one cases of complex polities from Eurasia, the New World, and the Pacific. Only three examples were from Europe: France, Norway and Scythia. In the present article the origins of early Russian State (Early Rus' or Rus' kingdom) will be present.¹ This is one of the questions asked in the Russian history and archaeology. Many volumes and articles have been written on this subject. It is only in the last few decades that many new books and papers on the formation of the state in the Rus' have been published (Melnikova 2011, 2012; Makarov 2012; Petrukhin 2013, 2019; Dvornichenko 2014; Temushev 2016; Shinakov 2020 *etc.*). However, in spite of the considerable volume of publications, there are many other themes and aspects of Rus' history that are worthy of closer study. These include,

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for example, the use of the achievements of cultural anthropology, especially, economic and political anthropology.

Norman Yoffee complains that American archaeologists give too much attention to anthropology and lose sight of history (Yoffee 2005). He is, undoubtedly, right and contemporary archaeology is a social science no less extent than the humanities or the arts (Smith *et al.* 2012). However, the majority of the Russian-speaking archaeologists and historians of the Early Rus' have made insufficient use of the achievements of anthropology. This may sound strange today, but, as before, the ideas of Morgan and Engels, especially, the obsolete concept of the *military democracy*, still occupy the minds of many of them. Therefore, my appeal is directed in the opposite direction – forward, to the anthropology! In this article, I will attempt at showing how various theories and approaches of anthropologists can be used in the study of the origins of the state in the Rus'. This is not to say that nobody has done it before me. It is possible that the comparative ethnological data were, for the first time, used by Igor Froyanov in his famous book *Kievan Rus: Essays in Sociopolitical History* (1980). He included in his theory the provisions of the prestige economy and adopted from anthropology some conclusions about the pre-state societies. Subsequently, this approach was developed in the studies of his followers Andrey Dvornichenko (1993) and Yuri Krivosheev (1999). Later on, the important anthropological studies on the origins of the state (Service 1975; Claessen and Skalnik 1978, 1981) were used by the Soviet/Russian scholars in studies of the Early Rus' (Pavlenko 1989; Dvornichenko 1995, 2006; Melnikova 1995; Puzanov 2007; Shinakov 2009, 2020; Shchavalev 2020, 2021). However, the great anthropologisation of Slavic studies has not yet been achieved (for good exceptions, see Stepanov 2010, 2023).

This article discusses some perspectives of using the achievements of the economic and political anthropology for understanding the processes of the origin of the state in Rus'. Such important questions as the role and relationship of various factors of the origin of the statehood, the role of the chiefdom theory, and the criteria of state are considered. The scope of the article does not allow us to cover all important aspects of the subject. So, here it is not possible for me to mention all the authors and all the points of view expressed on certain issues discussed. The concrete elaboration of the problems to be solved should be carried out by the experts in this field and requires not only the acquaintance with the modern theoretical approaches, but also a deep knowledge of the written and archaeological sources on this subject.

INTERNAL FACTORS

It has been repeatedly stated that the process of state origins is a complex multifactorial phenomenon caused by both internal (ecology, economic system, population, technology, and ideology *etc.*) and external (war, pressure, long-distance trade, diffusion *etc.*) factors (Carneiro 1970, 2012; Renfrew 1972; Service 1975; Khazanov 1979; Claessen and Skalník 1981; Haas 1982; Pavlenko 1989; Korotayev 1991; Claessen 2000; Turchin 2003, 2016, *etc.*). As Johnatan Haas has rightly pointed out, many theories certainly explain the origin of the state only in cases where they serve to illustrate the confirmation of certain points of view (Haas 1982: 130). At the same time, none of the above factors is universal. At present, the majority of historians, anthropologists and archaeologists recognize that the state formation is a complex, multivariate process affected by a large number of different variables (Peregrine, Ember, and Ember 2007: 84).

Such prerequisites for the emergence of the early Russian state as the economic growth, ecology, the role of the Vikings, religion, the influence of Byzantium, the pressure of nomads have been analyzed in many studies (Łowmiański 1957; Vernadsky 1959, 1973; Kargalov 1967; Bulkin, Dubov, and Lebedev 1978; Sverdlov 1983; Lebedev 1985; Pavlenko 1989; Petrukhin 1995; Puzanov 2007; Klein 2009; Shinakov 2009; *etc.*). I will consider some other factors that are directly related to this issue. According to the cross-cultural data, there is a strong correlation between the type of economy (agriculture), population density and the level of political centralization (Korotayev 1991; Kradin 2006, 2013). For this reason, the expansion of agriculture, in whatever form and with whatever specific characteristics, may eventually lead to an increase in population. As a result, the competition for resources gradually increases, bringing a wide variety of consequences: secession and migration, demand for more intensive agricultural techniques, increase in the number of conflicts and wars, improvement of economic management, and so on. As always, the problem lies in the details: it is not entirely clear when exactly the threshold of demographic density will be reached that will lead to a reorganization of the mechanisms of social governance.

The Old Slavic settlements of the seventh and eighth centuries were separated by a distance of 1.5-2 km from one another and grouped into the nests. The distance between the nests was about 5-10 km (Sedov 1982; Timoshchuk 1990: 80). These conclusions agree to some extent, with data from written sources. Procopius of Caesarea in *History of the Wars* (IV, 28–30) said that Sclaveni

...they stay in the poor huts, locating far from each other and changing as often as possible the land of settlements... they line in the country, placing their dwellings here and there in dispersion. For this very reason, they occupy the enormously extensive land (Procopius 1950: 297–298).

Boris Timoshchuk (1990: 85) suggested that in the sixth and seventh centuries, the population of communities reached 150–200 people. When the community outgrew its size, the excess population would split off and move to a new territory.

By the mid-first millennium AD, the slash-and-burn agriculture had become widespread. The Slavs cultivated millet, barley, and flinty wheat. The fundamental changes in the economy of the early Slavs occurred by the end of the first millennium AD. At that time, new agricultural techniques were introduced. The new convertible agriculture (two and probably three crop rotations) appeared. Such new crops as the soft wheat, beans, peas, hemp, rye sown in autumn were used (Sedov 1982: 238; Timoshchuk 1990: 90). While in the osteological materials of the sixth and seventh centuries, the bones of wild animals made up more than a third of the total amount of bones, then in the sites of the eighth and ninth centuries their percentage decreased sharply. One may speak of the progress in the local metallurgy (Timoshchuk 1990: 91–92).

The archeological studies make it possible to trace the demographic growth. As an example, we will use the book by Boris Timoshchuk which was devoted to the territory of the south-western Rus'. According to his data (Timoshchuk 1990: 86–97), the exhaustive survey of 21 micro-regions allowed identifying 25 settlements with pottery of the Prague cultural tradition of the sixth and seventh centuries. In the same territory, 125 sites (monuments) of the eighth to tenth centuries were identified which suggests a strong demographic increase (almost near fivefold!). The similar dynamics is confirmed in the other regions as well (Telnov 1999: 315).

Timoshchuk drew attention to such important features as the size and layout of ancient settlements, and the position of settlements in the general structure of migration. In his opinion, the archaeological sites of the second half of the first millennium AD can be divided into several large groups: 1) the smallest ancient settlements consisting of up to five dwellings; 2) small settlements with 6–16 dwellings; 3) large settlements which can consist of several groups of dwellings; 4) large settlements with traces of the craft industry; 5) settlements satellites of fortresses (Timoshchuk 1990: 14–29). In addition, the author identi-

fies three types of fortresses of the period: fortresses-refuges, ceremonial fortresses, and fortresses-administrative centers (*Ibid.*: 29–54). In all cases, the latter fortresses had the functions of proto-towns.

The situation was similar in neighboring Slavic societies (Curta 2019, 2021a, 2021b). There was a certain similarity, for example, with the processes in Poland. In the middle of the first millennium AD, complex societies were formed there. In the eighth to tenth centuries, the growth of settlements and fortresses is recorded, the so-called ‘urban republics’ are formed. From the second half of the tenth century the formation of centralized polities begins (Lozny 1995; 2010; 2011; 2013).

The presented data suggest the existence of several levels of a hierarchy (settlements of different size and functional specialization, fortress-refuges and fortress-sanctuaries, fortress-centers with villages-satellites) during this period. This confirms the possible existence of chiefdoms among the Slavs in the second half of the first millennium AD.

THE SLAVIC CHIEFDOMS

The theory of chiefdom is among the most obvious achievements of the world anthropology. The chiefdom is considered to be the first form of the public hierarchy that preceded the emergence of the state. There are a number of works in which the basic concepts of the theory have been explained in detail (Earle 1987; 1997; 2021; Kradin 1995; 2021; Carneiro, Grinin, and Korotayev 2017 *etc.*). Summarizing different views on the essence of chiefdom, one can identify the following essential features of this form of the socio-political organization: 1) the existence of the hierarchical organization of the power which, according to the archaeological data, is reflected in different sizes of settlements; 2) the presence of social stratification and restriction of access to key resources and tendencies of separation of the endogamic elite from the ordinary masses into the isolated social category; 3) in the chiefdom, there is a vertical redistribution/reallocation of the surplus product and gifts. The power of the chief was based on prestige economy; and 4) the chiefdom is characterized by the common ideological system and/or common cults and rituals. Some scholars believe that the supreme power in the chiefdom is of a sacralized, theocratic nature.

It is important to remember that chiefdoms can be simple and complex depending on the number of hierarchy levels. Simple chiefdoms have a single level of hierarchy. It is a group of communal settlements hierarchically subordinated to the chief's residency – as a rule, a larger settlement. The population of the simple chiefdom reaches several thousand people. The complex chiefdom is a larger political entity which consisted of several simple chiefdoms. Their population was already

measured in tens of thousands of people. The typical features of complex chiefdoms include ethnic heterogeneity, exclusion of the administrative elite and a number of other social groups from direct productive activities. The various Old Slavic princedoms (*kniazenie*), traditionally called tribes or tribal confederations in Russian literature, should correspond typologically to chiefdoms of varying complexity. However, in most cases, this is a problem of archaeological interpretation.

The main archaeological features of the chiefdom are the hierarchy of settlements and the stratification in burial customs. The question how the chronicle information of different princedoms (*kniazenia*) is connected with the specific archaeological data can be answered only after special archaeological surveys of the concrete regions. However, the experience from other regions of the world shows that the greater the quantity of new archaeological data, the more complex its interpretation within the framework of simple explanatory schemes. As the factual material accumulates, the archaeological interpretations demonstrate a wide variety of political systems that could emerge under the similar environmental conditions. On the one hand, there are complex societies without a pronounced hierarchical structure; on the other, there are classic chiefdoms of varying complexity and early states. Between them, there is no small number of intermediate entities with different economic bases, political organizations and ideological institutes (Feinman and Neitzel 1984; Fargher, Espinoza, and Blanton 2011).

In confirmation of the above, it is worth quoting the wise observations of Timoshchuk, who has been quoted here many times:

The archaeological examination of the East Slavic settlement clusters shows that the villages in each cluster gravitate towards the concrete center ... However, these centers were not monotypical. Among the communal centers of the eighth and ninth centuries, there were fortress-refuges, fortress-administrative-economic centers and fortress-sanctuaries. They could have included large villages with well-developed crafts. On the territories of some of the most developed settlement clusters from the eighth to the tenth centuries, the community centers with a fairly complex structure were discovered. For example, the center of the Revnyansky cluster of settlements of the tenth century consisted of two fortresses: a refuge and an administrative and economic center, while the center of the Magalyansky cluster included a fortress-refuge, a large village and a craft settlement. The settlements with different functions could be part of the com-

munity centres, but as a rule the community centres including synchronous sites (monuments) with identical functions were not discovered (Timoshchuk 1990: 75–76).

According to folklore, the early Slavs were characterized by the archetypal beliefs in the chief as the organizer of economic and religious life. However, such functional characteristics were typical of weakly stratified agrarian societies. The prince acted as a ploughman, a ritual donor of fertility, a generous organizer of banquets and dispensations and a governor of the harem (Shchavelev 2007: 168–176). Such a figure is little different from a characteristic of the African chief who is concerned only amusing himself with women and drinking alcohol in peace times (Southall 1991: 92).

Of course, this is not to say that the Slavs did not go to war with each other and with foreign enemies and that they had no military leaders. On the contrary, the Byzantine sources note the aggressive nature of the Antes and Sclaveni with whom they had to engage in military confrontations (Procopius of Caesarea 1950: 297). However, the sources also point out that the Slavs initially had no experience of organizing sustained military operations and had only primitive weapons more suitable for hunting (Gindin and Litavrin 1994: 279; Nefedkin 2003: 79–81; Shchavelev 2007: 175). This is how the Slavs were described by Arab writers several centuries later. The Slavs are portrayed as inhabitants of the primeval forests, with little knowledge of agriculture, but engaged cattle-breeding and forest bee-keeping. At the same time, ‘their armament consists of spears, shields and lances, while they have no other weapons’ (Novoseltsev 1965: 388–389).

EXTERNAL FACTORS

The other archetypal situation was characteristic of the North German region. Here, chiefs, priests and military leaders coexisted and struggled for power for a long time. The resources were decentralized, which prevented the establishment of strict formal control. Military campaigns and the control of trade routes were the important means of achieving high status and power (Kristiansen 2010, 2011). It is not for nothing that the Vikings (*Rus'*)² are described by Arab writers (Ahmad ibn Rustah, Ahmad ibn Fadlan) as an indecent, impudent, willful and aggressive nation of ‘bad disposition’. They make war on all unbelievers around them and emerge victorious’.

And these people come on shipboard for the Slavs, seize the Slavs, reduce them to slavery, take them to Khazaran and Balkar and sell them there. They have no plantations and no

cultivated land. And they usually use the plantations of the Slavs. When a son is born (from them), they take out the sword and place it by his side, and the father says: 'I have no gold, silver, or cattle to leave to you an inheritance. Here is your inheritance, take it all with the sword yourself'. They sell sable, squirrel and other furs (Novoseltsev 1965: 399).

It is no coincidence that war and trade are mentioned together. It is well known that war was one of the most important factors for the emergence of state. As early as the nineteenth century, the so-called conquest theory of the origins of the state emerged, according to which statehood emerges only as a result of the conquest of one society by another. In this case, the conquests of nomads or the Vikings were more often cited as examples. Therefore, some researchers write about a special *maritime* production mode of the Vikings (Ling, Earle, and Kristiansen 2018). This feature makes them similar to the nomads, for whom war was also the basis of the *xenocratic* mode of production and the main resource for the formation of steppe empires (Kradin 1993, 2002). However, according to archaeological and ethnological data, it is known that the long-distance trade is also an important component for increasing the power of the rulers of chiefdoms and early states. By obtaining rare and exotic goods from abroad and distributing them within society, the ruler controlled the redistribution of wealth, enhanced his prestige and promoted his influence over his subjects (Webb 1975; Ekholm 1977; Kipp and Schortman 1989; Hall, Kardulias, and Chase-Dunn 2010 *etc.*).

All of the aforesaid applies to the early Rus. However, the pre-Soviet historians noted the crucial role of foreign trade in the establishment of the Rus polities (Klyuchevsky 1908). George Vernadsky, who immigrated to Europe and then to America, shared the same opinion (1959, 1973). Dogmatic Marxism rejected these ideas. The Soviet scholars began to write about the leading role of internal factors (agriculture, surplus product). Nevertheless, since the 1970s, many archaeologists and historians rightly turned to the idea of the important role of foreign trade for the origins of the early Rus polities (Lebedev 1985; Nosov 1992; Kirpichnikov 1997; Nosov *et al.* 2005; Melnikova 2012; *etc.*). Since the Vikings have controlled the trade routes between the Baltic, Byzantium and Khazaria, they should have had a certain number of defensive posts. This particular circumstance (the fact of the 'invitation', even if it happened, was only the cause) was responsible for their gradual penetration into the Slavic environment.

This is confirmed archaeologically by the widespread appearance in the eighth and especially in the ninth centuries of the so-called 'open trade-craft settlements' – OTCS (*otkrytye torgovo-remeslennye poselenia* – *OTRP*, in Russian) with various ethnic populations, numerous finds of trade imports, components of the *druzhina* culture etc. (e.g., in Ladoga, Rurik fortress, Timerevo, Gnezdovo) (Bulkin, Dubov, Lebedev 1978: 139). The lifestyle of the Rus' as described in the sources suggests that foreign trade and the gift exchange played a critical role in their lives. According to Ahmad ibn Rustah,

their sole occupation is trading in sables, squirrels and other furs, which they sell to buyers. They raise money and put it into their belts... They make good use of their slaves and take care of their clothes because they trade in [them] (Novoseltsev 1965: 397).

Of fundamental importance was the collection of *gafol* (Russian: *poludye*). The Byzantine Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus in *De Administrando Imperio* (IX) describes it as follows:

When the month of November begins, their chiefs, together with all the Russians (*Rus*), leave Kiev at once and go on the 'poliudia', which means 'rounds', that is, to the Slavonic (*Σκλαβηνίας*) regions of the Vervians and Drugovichians and Krivichians and Severians (*Suvars*, *Σεβέρων*, *Σεβερίων*; *Marquart Serbs*, *Σερβίων*) and the rest of the Slavs (*Σκλάβων*) who are tributaries of the Russians (*Rus*). There they stay throughout the winter, but then, starting from the month of April onwards, when the ice on the Dnieper River melts, they return to Kiev. Then they pick up their 'monoxyla', as I said, and outfit them, and come down to Romania (Constantine 1967: 63).

In the absence of a state apparatus, this was the only way to obtain tribute from dependent nations. When collecting the tribute, the princes and chiefs got the furs that were sold on the markets of Byzantium and the Arab East.

During this period, the quantity of dirhams in the Rus' increased, reflected in the appearance of numerous treasures. The treasures are interpreted as evidence of private property and commodity relations. However, this is not quite the case. Much of the money was not returned to the circulation of goods. In practice, money was withdrawn from the economic activities and concentrated on the insurable event, often, in the afterlife. Aron Gurevich gives many examples from the

Norwegian Epos which confirm the possibility of such an interpretation. In particular, he describes the case from the *Saga of Ongentheow* where one of the characters, receiving a fatal wound, jumps into the depths of the sea together with his treasure chest (Gurevich 1993: 23–25). He decided to take his treasures with him to the afterlife. The symbolic significance of the treasures at that time can be probably confirmed by the fact that many dirhams were decorated with runes and images of weapons and ships.

The banquet was the other essential part of the *gafol*. During the visit of the controlled dominions, the Rus' (*Varangians*) leaders dined with their warriors and local Slavic chiefs. The organization of mass banquets required large investments, which increased the prestige of the organizers. It was just during the joint feasts, that the gifts were exchanged and the contacts were established. During these banquets, the serious problems of the domestic political life were settled, as well as the court sessions, and religious and other ceremonies were held. Finally, the banquet was a universal mechanism for forming and maintaining group (collective) identity (Gurevich 2005: 692–697). The Old Russian chronicles contain numerous data on banquets accompanied by mass dispensations, as in the case of the *potlatch* (Froyanov 1980: 137–149; Lukin 2006). The folkloristic data confirm the importance of this means of communication tool in the Old Slavic society (Shchhavelev 2007: 170, 206).

The symbolic exchange of gifts allowed the transformation of physical resources into relations of psychological dependence and prestige, which in turn provided the opportunity to receive new resources and, by giving them away, to enhance even more prestige. The social status was therefore raised by the mechanisms of the prestige economy: on the one hand, through organization of mass festivities at which the accumulated wealth was demonstratively given away or destroyed; on the other hand, through development of exchange couplings and the creation of a network of dependent persons and debtors who could not give anything in return (Mauss 1990 [1925]; Sahlins 1972; Godelier 1996; Earle 2002).

THE HISTORICAL DYNAMIC: WHAT IS A STATE?

Starting from the ninth century, the major changes took place in the structure of the Old Russian settlements. While in the sixth–eighth centuries, the usual villages (*selishcha*) of medium and large size are mainly characteristic then, in the ninth century, according to estimates of Boris Timoshchuk, the number of the ‘fortresses-refuges’ and fortresses-administrative centers in the south-western Rus' increases

sharply, and from in the tenth century, they gave way to the 'fortresses-holy places' and 'princely fortresses' (Timoshchuk 1990: 67, tables 1–2; author's terminology). It seems that similar processes were characteristic of the whole territory of the ancient Rus. According to the chronicles, in the ninth and tenth centuries 25 towns were known in Rus'. The sources of the eleventh century, mention 64 new towns (Kuzza 1989: 40). The rapid growth of the fortified settlements (more than twofold) is evident. In the tenth to eleventh centuries, new fortification techniques were introduced which required a great deal of labour. The fortifications usually included several lines of defense and consisted of earth ramparts-platforms with crib works above. The ramparts were reinforced with embankments, stone and brick constructions. Inside these fortresses, there were dwellings and buildings of various types (houses of the armed forces (warriors) along the ramparts, crib houses of the elite, household and other buildings). As a rule, the settlements of craftsmen and farmers were located in the immediate vicinity of the fortress (Timoshchuk 1990: 34, 55–62).

When was the state founded in Rus'? This is one of the key issues. Usually, this question was answered in one of three ways. Firstly, the dynastic criterion (the name of one or another ruler who was considered to be the first true monarch) was taken as a reference point. In pre-Soviet literature, Rurik was traditionally considered the first ruler of the Rus'. On this basis, the statehood in the Rus' was measured from the moment of calling of the Varangians in 862. In the second case, the main criterion is the formation of a unified community (tribe, nation, country, *etc.*). In this case, it entirely depends on the choice of the society (Antes, Slavs, Eastern Polans, Drevlians, *etc.*). The third variant is based on the use of the Marxist criteria of the statehood (classes and exploitation). In this case, some authors can consider as a criterion the appearance of the written code of laws ('class law'), others – the introduction by Olga of *pogost* (coaching inn for princes and ecclesiastics, tax collection point), while the third – the establishment of the state institutions and classes, *etc.*

In this context, it is necessary to take into account two important points. First of all, it is necessary to mention what we mean by the 'state'. Often scholars do not understand each other because they give different meanings to this term. In the first meaning, the term 'state' is used as a synonym for the concept of *country*. The second variant considers the state as a special form of government of the complex society, a *machinery* of power which is often identified with *bureaucracy*. In this article, the concept of the state is used in only the second meaning.

The state is not simply a group of people ruling over society. Persons engaged in administrative functions exist everywhere – in the Iroquois confederation, in the Greek city-state, in the Zulu chiefdom. In the state a *large group of people* are involved in administrative work and have a common ideology. This group may be divided into specialized subdivisions or departments (ministries, offices, *etc.*), or, it may be non-institutionalized and exist at the court, or at the ruler's headquarters. It is also necessary to take into account that the governing bodies of heterarchic or homoarchic societies differ from those of territorial hierarchical states which developed multi-level bureaucratic hierarchies (Trigger 2003: 219–220). In addition, it is important to note that the persons performing administrative functions are divided into: 1) general functionaries, whose activity can cover several areas of work; 2) special functionaries, who carry out their duties in only one area of management; 3) informal persons, whose professions were not directly related to the management, but who, by virtue of their status or for other reasons, can influence the decision-making process (Claessen and Skalnik 1978: 576). Since general functionaries and informal persons can exist not only in early states but also in chiefdoms, only the category of *special functionaries* can serve as a criterion of statehood. After all, the state is not a number of individuals engaged in administrative activities, but a set of particular *organizations and institutions*. These institutions have an internal structure and consist of a certain number of members who receive a reward for the performance of special duties.

The other difficulty lies in the fact that the formation of the state is a complex process, which is easier to present as a theoretical model but which is difficult to define by specific historical examples. History is constantly being completed as a fact and we can only record the major milestones of the passage of time. Any date is only a conditional value chosen for the convenience of describing the infinite and non-stop process. The evolution of society presupposes a full range of changes in many parts of the whole. At that, some elements can change rapidly, while others change slowly, and some elements of life are the result of internal transformations, while others are subject to the external influences and diffusion. For this reason, it is desirable to consider the issue under study in an integrated way, with due consideration of the whole set of factors, criteria and tendencies.

In all cases, the general line of state origin was realized through the monopolization of key administrative positions by the ruling groups. Since the nationhood (in the form of special administrative machinery), class structure and private property are developed in the

process of long-term transformation, many researchers came to the conclusion that it is appropriate to identify some intermediate stages between the pre-hierarchical, non-state societies and established pre-industrial states (civilizations). In anthropology and archaeology, there is an opinion that it is necessary to identify three stages of the politogenesis in the pre-industrial societies:

1. Pre-state society in which the popular majority was already excluded from public administration ('pre-feudal society', 'pre-class society', 'proto-state-chieftdom', 'chieftdom', 'analogues of state' *etc.*);

2. An early state with inchoate administrative institutions but without private property ('early-class society', 'early-feudal', 'archaic', 'barbarian' or 'estates' state *etc.*);

3. An established pre-industrial state with bureaucracy and private property ('traditional state', 'mature state', 'agrarian state', 'estates-class society', 'pre-industrial state', *etc.*) (Service 1975; Claessen and Skalnik 1978; Vassilev 1983; Johnson and Earle 1987; Gellner 1988; Pavlenko 1989; Ilushechkin 1990; Kradin 2001; Grinin *et al.* 2004; Grinin 2008; 2009; 2011; Skalnik 2009; 2012 *etc.*).

The theory of early state is of the utmost importance for politogenesis in Rus'. The provisions of the theory were formulated to the fullest extent possible in the volume of *Early State*, published under editorship of Henri J. M. Claessen and Petr Skalnik (1978), and developed in quite a number of special thematic publications (Claessen and Skalnik 1981; Claessen and van de Velde 1987, 1991; Claessen and Oosten 1996 *etc.*).

The following features are characteristic of the early state: 1) the preservation of clan ties and emergence of extra-clan relations among the elite; 2) the source of the functionaries' subsistence was remuneration from the population and salary from the centre; 3) the creation of written laws; 4) the existence of the system of formal judges, who decided the majority of legal problems; 5) the receipt of the surplus product by the elite in the form of regular tribute and compulsory labor; 6) common and special functionaries (Claessen and Skalnik 1978: 22, 641).

According to the degree of complexity, the Claessen and Skalnik identified three types of early states – *inchoate*, *typical* and *transitional* (Claessen and Skalnik 1978: 22, 641). The cross-cultural analysis of the early state theory performed by Dmitri Bondarenko and Andrey Korotayev (2003) shows that in the so-called typical early state, the characteristics of state organization – special officials, judicial staff, written code of laws *etc.* – appear.

Let us consider how are the above-mentioned characteristic of the early state can be attributed to the history of ancient Russia in differ-

ent periods. For convenience, the data can be presented in the form of the following Table.

Table

Attribute	9 th century	10 th century	11 th century
1. <i>Clan/ extra-clan ties</i>	clan relations among the Slavic chiefs, personal relations in the Vikings' <i>druzhina</i> (warriors)	<i>lestvica</i> – agnatic seniority or <i>tanistry</i> / personal relations with <i>druzhina</i> (warriors, armed force)	<i>lestvica</i> – agnatic seniority or <i>tanistry</i> / personal relations with <i>druzhina</i> , <i>posadnik</i> (the mayor of town), <i>boyars</i> (elite men)
2. Remuneration / <i>salary from centre</i>	remuneration	remuneration	remuneration
3. <i>Written legal codification</i>	No	No	<i>Pravda</i> of Yaroslav the Wise; <i>Pravda</i> of his descendants
4. <i>Formal judges</i>	No	No	princely court
5. <i>Tribute and compulsory labor</i>	<i>poludye</i> (gafol)	<i>poludye</i> , <i>pogosts</i> (coaching inn for princes and <i>druzhina</i>) of Olga, <i>urok</i> (exact tribute) of Vladimir, compulsory labor	tribute, <i>vira</i> (compensation for murder), legal charge, penalties, compulsory labor
6. <i>Special functionaries</i>	No	<i>voevoda</i> (principal commander of force)	<i>tiun</i> (mayor of palace), <i>posadnik</i> , <i>tysiatsky</i> (military leader of thousand) <i>etc.</i>

It is evident from this scheme that the complete set of the attributes of the early state does not appear until the eleventh century.

In the Rus', the clan relations (*lestvica*) were infused with personal relations emerging between the princes and their warriors. The feedings of the governors and their accompanying military units coexisted with the payment of money and gifts to the warriors (*druzhina*). It is also difficult to speak of the time of appearance of the fixed tributes and servitudes. Already at the stage of chiefdom, the elite took advantage of privileged access to common resources and their redistribution, which far from always, can be revealed in the written sources. It is known that, at early stages, the *poliudie* (gafol, collection of tribute [Kobishchanov 1987]) was the primary sources of revenue for the Varangian elite. During the reign of Princess Olga an attempt

was made to fix the sizes of the extortions ('renders') and points of their concentration ('trading posts') were introduced, although scholars have different views on the internal content of these institutions. Later, various fixed charges (e.g., *uroki* under Vladimir) appear, which are later accompanied by trade tariffs, legal dues, penalties, etc.

The attraction of large masses of people to the construction of monumental structures is characteristic not only of existing states, but also of chiefdoms. The archaeological data indicate that the new types of fortifications in Rus', which required large labor costs, appeared in the tenth century (several defense lines, earthed ramparts-platforms with crib works). With regard to the three most important attributes of the early state, it should be noted that the written laws appear in Rus' from the eleventh century (*Pravda Russkaia* in abridged and detailed versions). In all cases, it is just there that such an institution as the Princely court is mentioned for the first time. Meanwhile, new terms were introduced to denote the ordinary and special functionaries (*tiun*, *ognishchanin*, *posadnik*) in Claessen's terminology. It seems that the solution of these questions (problems) is nowadays of fundamental importance for the determination of the time of the Old Russian state formation.

It is possible that many researchers will consider it is necessary to add the warriors to the persons involved in administrative activity. In the Old Russian state formation, the critical role was played by the Varangian *druzhina* (armed force). The warriors not only formed the elite military unit but also served as an important lever of the princely power and, in addition, carried out his diplomatic, administrative, economic and other orders. It is logical that this led Elena A. Melnikova to develop the concept of the 'druzhina state' (1995, 2011). At the same time, the warriors cannot be considered as a full-bodied administrative apparatus. They carried out the tasks assigned to them as necessary and from time to time (at that, a functionary is not the same as an officer). Nevertheless, it was the *druzhina* (armed force) that became the talent foundry of the Old Russian statehood.

HETERARCHY AMONG THE VIKINGS

In the early 1990s and especially in the new millennium, the unilinear theories of the state origin were subjected to criticism (Yoffee 2005; Pauketat 2007). Gradually, the bilinear and multilinear theories have gained widespread acceptance. The first (hierarchical or networked) is based on the vertical structure of power and centralization. The second (heterarchical or corporative) model is characterized by a wider distribution of wealth and power, segmental social organization and a uni-

versalizing cosmology are characteristic (Berezkin 1995; Korotayev 1995; Crumley 1995; Blanton *et al.* 1996: 1–14; Bondarenko and Korotayev 2000; Berent 2000; Feinman 2001; Haas 2001; Bondarenko, Grinin, Korotayev 2004; Grinin 2004, 2009; Bondarenko 2006, 2007; Chapman 2008; Chacon and Mendoza 2017 *etc.*).

It is important to point out that when using this approach one should try to avoid some mistakes. The heterarchical strategy should not be considered as earlier and as more egalitarian than the hierarchical strategy. Heterarchy is no less complex than a hierarchy. For example, we can mention the Greek polities and later medieval market town-states that were no simpler than the contemporaneous territorial kingdoms and empires of West and East Asia. The heterarchy/hierarchy strategies are not simply different lines of political transformation; it is a dichotomy that can occur at different levels of complexity (Kowalewski 2000: 180). In pre-state societies, there is a dichotomy between complex communities and chiefdoms (Bondarenko 2007; Wason and Baldia 2000). Some researchers believe that the hierarchy/heterarchy dichotomy can be found in chiefdoms. Robin Beck, Jr. (2003) identifies the ephemeral constituent hierarchies in chiefdoms and the authoritarian apical hierarchies. Later it is a dichotomy between polities and territorial states (Berezkin 1995, 2000; Korotayev 1995), between early and mature states and their analogues (Grinin 2009, 2011).

Similar ideas were expressed in the Soviet period. It is no coincidence that the main historical dissident, Igor Froyanov, drew a parallel between the cities-states of Rus' and those of ancient Greece (1980; Froyanov and Dvornichenko 1988). The heterarchical society (corporate strategy) is characterized by a wide distribution of wealth among different social groups, which is typical of the cities-states of the ancient Rus'. The power in the Rus' cities was distributed among several political forces – princes, boyars, city elite. The magnificent tombs and graves of the elite, which sharply separated them from the ordinary masses, are absent. The presence of agrarian rituals of fertility, cults of various gods (*Perun, Volos, Roda*) show the collective nature of the ideology and suggest the absence of personal apotheosis.

The ancient Rus' polity was not a discrete whole. It would be a simplification to see in Rus' only heterarchical republican cities towns. Rus' presented the ethnically and culturally close to each other, different polities – complex chiefdoms, heterarchical city-states and so on. Here, it is important to note that the heterarchical structure was characteristic of the Viking societies since prehistory (Kristiansen 2010, 2016). The existence of this system in Scandinavia and the Baltic area

was determined by the distribution of resources over a large territory and the difficulty of the centralized control. Military campaigns were an important factor in the advancement of the youth as well as the receipt and redistribution of prestige goods for the elite. The control over the trade routes played an important role. The Vikings built the advance posts of their presence on the Slavic territory (OTCS – ‘open trade-craft settlements’). This allowed them to extend their influence to the local Slavic chiefdoms, heterarchies and other polities as well as to establish control over the external trade routes.

The heterarchical complex polities were established in which the military groups of Vikings and chiefs played an important role. This was reflected in the legend of the Viking invasion of Novgorod in 862 and the subsequent occupation of Kiev. However, modern scholars show a discrepancy between the archeological data of the ninth century and historical texts which were written later, in the twelfth century. Nevertheless, according to archeological data, the presence of the Vikings is undoubtedly established from the tenth century onwards, and later they had dominating influence on the establishment of the Rus' country (Makarov 2012).

In reality, it was the multiplicity that included several different complex and simple segments. Different scholars called them by different terms (*zemlia* [land], *plemennoe kniazenie* [tribal principedom], *city-state*). This circumstance was responsible for the specific nature on the Russian territory of the processes of origin of complexity and state different from the classical model of the early state dynamics in the theoretical model of Henri J. M. Claessen. The historical curiosity of ‘the Invitation of the Varangians’ lies in the fact that the Vikings brought to the Rus' heterarchy rather than statehood. Only later did this contribute to the formation of the early state in Rus'.

NOTES

¹ The term *Early Russian State* (*Early Rus'*) is more correct than the term *Ancient Russian State* (*Ancient Rus'*). Chronologically it was period of the early Middle Ages.

² The etymology of the word *Rus'* is connected with Finnish *ruotsi* oarsmen; and Estonian *rootslane* – Swedes (Melnikova and Petrukhin 1990–1991).

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