
The Process of Politogenesis in Anglo-Saxon England and Rus': A Comparative Aspect*

Alexander Yerokhin

Bryansk State University

Evgeny Shinakov

Bryansk State University

ABSTRACT

In the present article we study the typological similarity in political and social structure of Anglo-Saxon England and Rus', as well as the nature and range of resources on their history. The content and correlation analysis applied to classify the archeological artifacts and to compare the images and plots of written texts dating to the period of Kievan Rus' can help to find out the objective reasons of such similarity. The state genesis in Anglo-Saxon England and Rus' proceeded under similar circumstances: with a certain role of aggressive and defensive wars, under the influence of the Roman (Byzantine) institutions such as religion, written language, the principle of codification of laws with the dominance of self-development of the state and the Scandinavian 'catalyst' working in different regions. Applying the method of typological homogeneity and synchrostadiality (i.e. a typological similarity of stages of political evolution in different societies) of the compared phenomena, structures and processes, the article compares the forms and models of the State. The analysis distinguishes identical compound elements within each state (as the correlation principle demands). These elements are the signs that may have different meanings depending on the peculiar content of sources that allows an objective comparison of states. The conclusions corroborate the initial hypotheses about the degree and reasons of similarity and the differences in the origin of the above mentioned states.

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Currently, one can observe an increasing interest in the processes of state formation. The phenomenon is associated with the development of an integrative discipline of political anthropology. Prioritizing the study of political institutions in different societies, it integrates the achievements of history, ethnography, political studies and other social sciences. This resulted in the accumulation of practical and theoretical knowledge that enables a re-evaluation of the well-known facts about the origin of the states in Europe.

There is a number of assumptions for conducting a comparative analysis of the state formation processes in Anglo-Saxon England and in Rus'. First of all, in both cases one observes the influence of the external (Scandinavian) factor on the processes under scrutiny. Second, in both cases a single state was formed through the merging of smaller polities with roughly similar ethnic composition. The third reason is that in both cases there are quite a few studies, reflecting recent advances in the field of political anthropology. In particular, in the Soviet and Russian historiography the concepts of chiefdoms and early states have almost never been used to explain the state formation processes.

The present article aims at a comparative analysis of the emergence of the state in Anglo-Saxon England and in Rus'.

From the chronological and geographical point, it is noteworthy that the study analyzes the processes within similar stages that occur in societies that are remote from each other in space and to a certain extent in time. To investigate Anglo-Saxon England politogenesis we should consider the period from the 5th to the 9th centuries. As for Rus', the similar processes took place here later, in the 8th – 11th centuries.

In historiography, there are no works devoted to the comparative analysis of state formation in Anglo-Saxon England and in Rus'. However, there are numerous scientific researches on the selected issues. Thus, it is possible to distinguish two groups of research topics in the field of historiography: 1) the study of formation of the ancient Russian state; 2) the study of formation of Anglo-Saxon England.

Within Russian historiography, Elena A. Melnikova was actually the first to apply the concept of political (social and cultural) anthropology to the actual (or at least described in sources) history of Russia. She considered 'the North confederation of tribes' of

the mid-9th century, headed by the aristocracy and 'Khagan' already as 'an early state of the retinue type' (Melnikova 1993). But, perhaps, Melnikova's usage of this term was of a random nature, because in the fundamental article written almost at the same period she emphasized the distinction between 'chiefdom' (which she interpreted as a tribe or even just an emerging alliance of tribes, including 'confederation') and a 'stratified society' (Fried 1967: 49–68) which was to become the basis of 'state organization' (Melnikova 1995). The early state as a separate stage of politgenesis was out of the question.

At the same time Nikolai Kotliar came to the conclusion about the starting point of the true statehood formation (though without adjective 'early') and about its second phase starting with Olga's reforms (Kotliar 1995).

In the late 20th – early 21st centuries, the concrete historical studies of Rus' gradually merged into a single stream integrating methodology, terms and concepts, elements and simple phraseology of political (social and cultural) anthropology. Unfortunately, the origins of Rus' remain largely beyond the research realm of anthropology, and besides, quite a few experts in Russian history turn to the theory of socio-cultural anthropology, and only some of them try to apply and expand its ideas particularly to the ancient Russian data. In fact, only some of Igor Ya. Froyanov's followers (or former colleagues) grasped his idea of alternativity. Thus, Andrey Dvornichenko (2006) denies the existence of the city-states opposing to 'civil community' not only in the eleventh-century Russia, but in Kievan Rus' as well.

Within contemporary Russian medieval studies, still the most actively debated are the issues of the time of formation and the character of the early Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, their German or late Roman origins, the role of royalty and nobility in the process of the state formation and formation of its various structural elements, as well as the influence of the church on this process. These points are often treated from completely opposite points of views. Even the chronological framework of the emergence of the Anglo-Saxon state is still debated. Thus, according to Alexander Gurevich and Klara Savelo, the transition to statehood occurred in the late 6th – early 7th century (Savelo 1977), and according to

Alexander Korsunsky it happened only at the end of the 7th century (Korsunsky 1963: 73).

Still things are changing in contemporary Russian historiography (Glebov 1998, 2003; Larionov 1993; Selitsky 2001). Some special studies on the history of Anglo-Saxon England and general surveys of the British historiography of the 20th century (Metlitskaya 2003; Sidorova 2004; Sharifzhanov 2004) demonstrate a more balanced assessment of both achievements and failures of their Western colleagues. Thus, Zoya Metlitskaya in her review 'Anglo-Saxon England and Norman Conquest' for the first time in Russian historiography considers the traditional approaches to the study of the Norman conquest as well as new trends in the study of the issue. She is interested in political, socio-economic and ethno-cultural aspects and implications of the events of 1066 (Metlitskaya 2003).

Among the recent Russian researches of the English historiography of the 20th century the most important is the monograph by Izmail Sharifzhanov *British Historiography in the 20th Century: The Key Theoretical and Methodological Approaches, Schools and Trends* (Sharifzhanov 2004), in which the author explores from a new perspective many traditional and recognized works of the Western historians.

In the post-war decades, the number of the British historians' general studies and studies related to various aspects of political and institutional history of the Anglo-Saxon history has significantly increased. One can mention monographs by Tryggvi J. Oleson, Peter Hunter Blair, Henry Royston Loyn, Henry G. Richardson and George O. Sayles (Blair 1956; Loyn 1962; Oleson 1955; Richardson and Sayles 1963). All these authors emphasized the high level of development of the Anglo-Saxon institutions of power in the mid-11th century, and they also pointed out that after William the Conqueror had conquered England, many features of the Anglo-Saxon state-political system survived and were adopted by the conquerors.

Among numerous books and academic articles, that appeared in the period between the 1970s and the 1990s and touched upon different aspects of political life of the Anglo-Saxon society, we should lay the emphasis on the monographs by Douglas J. V. Fisher (1993) and Henry Royston Loyn (1984: 169–171), as the authors fully disclose the problem of state formation in the English society.

The work of the English scholar Ann Williams (1999), which appeared in the late 1990s, takes a prominent place in the modern English historiography. She analyzes the activity of the authorities at different levels, the degree of their dependence on the king and his inner circle, reveals the general role of the institution of the royal authority in the development of the Anglo-Saxon state.

One should also mention the interesting works by Richard Abels (1998), James Campbell (1986), Herbert P. R. Finberg (1964, 1974), Eric John (1966), David P. Kirby (1967, 1991), Dorothy Whitelock (1952), and Barbara Yorke (1990). In these works the institutional history is considered within general context of socio-economic, political and cultural processes that took place in the British Isles in the early Middle Ages.

In addition to these basic researches, in the present article we make use of the publications related to the issues of political and institutional history of Anglo-Saxon England. Among them there are few books and a series of articles by different authors dealing with military and political aspects of history: the military organization of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms (Abels 1988; Hollister 1962; Powicke 1962), weapons and battle tactics (Brooks 1978; Hooper 1989), and military system of England of the early Anglo-Norman period (Prestwich 1981; Roffe 1990; Strickland 1992).

For the purpose of our study we should compare the mechanisms and factors of state formation in Anglo-Saxon England and in Rus'.

The formation of statehood in Britain started simultaneously with the Anglo-Saxon conquest, although it is more logical to call it colonization. During the period between the 5th and the 7th centuries, the Anglo-Saxons who settled the territory, created settlements and began to amalgamate into political-territorial structures.

The Anglo-Saxon conquest of Britain was a long and complicated process. The war between the Britons and the Anglo-Saxons in the 5th century was a struggle between the Roman Empire and the barbarians who conquered it. In the 6th century, the conflicts transformed into the battles between the Britons' independent kingdoms and the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, which was the result of Britain's post-Roman split into numerous independent units, in which the Anglo-Saxon invaders established their own king-

doms. In the 5th – 7th centuries, the Anglo-Saxon invasion passed through at least three phases. The first phase, which followed the withdrawal of the Roman legions from Britain, was characterized by the use of barbarian military troops that were auxiliary mercenaries' troops in the British kings' armies. Lands for settlement were given to the veterans in Britain, they called their fellow kinsmen, who arrived from their ancestral lands and joined them. The second phase started when the barbarians destroyed the Roman Empire, and there occurred a massive invasion by the tribes who came to Britain with the armed forces and subordinated the country's significant territories. The encounter with a different culture was a shock. The Romano-British culture was destroyed and replaced by the alien culture of the Anglo-Saxons. Thus, the Anglo-Saxons not only ransacked, looted and pillaged Britain's cities, but also burned monasteries and destroyed libraries. In the years that followed the 'great Anglo-Saxon invasion', or 'Adventus Saxonum', the Roman Britain economy was destroyed and the barbarian culture was introduced (Wilson 1971).

The term 'kingdom' is quite firmly established in academic literature, but it does not reflect the actual stage of development of the Anglo-Saxon polities.

According to the German standards (preserved, *e.g.*, in Scandinavia in more recent times), the king, whose actions caused damage to a society, could be expelled or killed. In the 8th century, aristocracy of certain kingdoms quite often resorted to this measure. Thus, in 774, Alchred of Northumbria was deposed, and in 757, Sigebert of Wessex was removed from power by a council of nobles 'because of acting unjustly'.

In the 7th – 8th centuries, the kings had a large military force to repulse the attacks from the outside. On the one hand, there were retinues composed of professional soldiers in the king's service and they received compensation fee, as well as allotments. Younger warriors lived mostly in the royal burghs and in addition to military functions performed other functions, often acting as royal officials. The thegns, that is people close to the King, stayed at court during a certain period of time, and they usually owned land and spent most of their time in their households. They were members of the royal council and officials and also participated in governing the state.

Thus, it becomes clear that the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms reached the level of complex chiefdoms, and they were in the process of state formation.

The state formation in Rus' proceeded in a different way. First of all, there were significant differences between the regions. In particular, this manifested in the predominance of different types of simple polities in certain regions of the future Ancient Russian state. In the 9th century, in terms of social-political stratification and ethnic principles one can distinguish the following regions: 'north', 'center', 'southeast' and 'south-west'. Let us examine them in detail.

The 'north' zone was characterized by the predominance of trading cities close to the polis path of development (Froyanov 1996). Novgorod and Ladoga played the central role in that region (Froyanov and Dvornichenko 1988). The sources give no direct references to its political history and structure, but they can be reconstructed using the comparative methods. So one of the authors of the present article draws a parallel between Novgorod and the agricultural city-state of Edo (Benin), Carthage, and Venice (Shinakov 2002). In particular, we note the following features:

- the noble families were settled in a single center and maintained control over a particular rural area;
- the governor was elected by the noble families, but not from their members;
- the tradesmen and craftspeople lived between tribal blocks;
- the suburbs and colonies on the outskirts of the cities were subordinated to the city, rather than to a certain family.

Evgeny Shinakov in his earlier monographs has thoroughly investigated the formation of the early state in Russia, the stages and mechanisms of state formation, as well as the forms of 'complex chiefdoms', including regional and comparative perspective (Shinakov 2002).

As for the 'early state' in comparative typological perspective, we have to refer to the works of experts not in Russian, but in other countries' early statehood (*e.g.*, Henri Claessen and Peter Skalník [Claessen 2004]).

Judging from the data on the ancient Russian (as well as other countries) history we can add to this list the clear and protected boundaries (as opposed to 'complex chiefdom'), and huge con-

structions or activities. The latter were not only a form of legitimation of power, and sometimes a hidden, 'provoked conflict', but also were supposed to demonstrate the increasing might of a new, larger and more consolidated formation, as well as to achieve concrete national targets, attractive for a new type of power. And so this new type of authorities transformed from the people's servant to their master. Perhaps, Hilarion's attempt to introduce the title of 'khagan' (equal to the emperor title) had the same demonstrative value for changing the nature of power. The right for power among the 'Rhos' (or 'Ruses') was not postulated anyhow and the scale of power of the khagan of the Rus' lands was not similar to a sovereign power but to that of a tribal chief (a head of corporation) which implies the abilities and 'luck' as power sanctions (Shinakov 1990).

The role of extensive and constant wars characteristic of some 'complex chiefdoms' as a part of their economy, decreased and that fact even arises some ideologists' discontent (Nasonov 1950). In many Slavic and Scandinavian countries such 'imperial' wars (e.g., waged by Svyatoslav) were often an instrument of changing the power's nature and the latest outbreak of exo-exploitation (at the expense of the conquered enemies), which is characteristic of the previous stage of politogenesis. For an early state the enrichment of the top at the expense of the subjects already became relatively more important, and the attempts to revive the old system (as, e.g., the military campaign of Vladimir Yaroslavich to Constantinople in 1043) would fail and end with 'God's punishment'. On the other hand, for the needs of national defense wars there was built a system of border fortifications, including such giants as Belgorod, and the mass demographic measures were aimed not only at populating those fortresses, but also at consolidating the tribes (often joined through military coercion), tribal reigns, and outlying centers with own dynasties (Shinakov 2006). In many respects such large-scale and long-term activities as the Christianization and the construction of grand cathedrals in the 'capitals' served the same purpose and contributed to the legitimation of the dynasty on a new basis.

As a result, in Russia during the period of the early state formation the ethnic division of the population was replaced by the social one. The 'stratified society' did appear, although it still pre-

served communities. Firstly, that society contained in an inchoate ('embryo') form the fractions of all possible classes (and which of them would become politically and economically dominant was the matter of the following developmental stage – the 'mature state'). Secondly, all these fractions were fixed in late legal codes (in accordance with the stages of the early state development) – in particular in the 'Charter of Vladimir Monomakh' and the longer version of 'Rus'kaya Pravda' ('Russian Truth'), reflecting the previously developed realities (the Russian law was of rather a judge-made law than preventive).

However, having compared the characteristics of the early state (both as a stage of politogenesis and as a particular period of the existence of the state) with realities reflected in sources, we discover that the state began to take shape (initially within a limited area) starting from Olga's reforms: taxes, the beginning of usurpation of rights (but only those of the Drevlians), that is 'statutes'; the emergence of a new type of relations between the authorities and the subjects (rape); the emergence of first private property (villages and grads/towns). The decisive moment was the period of Vladimir's reign, when church helped to introduce the death penalty (although temporarily and for robbers only). But his most important achievement was the replacement of the tribal division by the territorial one. The 'privatization' of lands and the codification of law occurred much later and proceeded much slower. The early state entered the period of the so-called 'feudal disunity'.

On the basis of the above-mentioned argument we can draw the following conclusions.

There were two leading factors in the politogenesis of Anglo-Saxon England: the Roman influence and the Anglo-Saxon conquests. This is where Anglo-Saxon England differs from Russia, which lacked state entities before the formation of the state and did not experience such a strong colonization process in the period under study.

All regional polities in England were formed as complex chiefdoms, while in Russia in every region there was a certain dominant type of polity: in the 'North' area that was the polis-type trading city, in the 'Center' – simple chiefdoms and confederations of tribes, in the 'South East' – the tribes, and in the 'South-West' – complex chiefdoms.

In both cases the state formation process proceeded under the influence of the Norman factor, but while in Russia it was the direct influence – the Normans became the apparatus of the forming state, in England its effect was implicit – the struggle against the Norman invaders forced the Anglo-Saxons to strengthen the initial political entities and develop the military sphere that led to the formation of the state.

The methodological basis of the comparative analysis is the principle of similar stages (but not the simultaneous ones) and typological homogeneity of the compared phenomena, structures and processes. The earlier classification of the forms and patterns of the state is accepted as a working hypothesis (Shinakov 2003).

Below we present a comparative table of the British and Russian statehood development in the period of Alfred and Vladimir. For the comparative analysis we use the following sets of characteristics:

1. Territorial and demographic structure;
2. Socio-economic framework;
3. Ways and mechanisms of state formation;
4. System (organization) of government;
5. The relationship between the state and society (including some of its fractions like classes, *etc.*);
6. Structure, sources and methods of forming and recruitment of the ruling stratum;
7. Structure of the elite (exploiting strata) of the society;
8. The exploited classes;
9. Form of government;
10. Functions of the state apparatus;
11. The ruling class's (the 'elite of the state') means of subsistence;
12. Patterns of spending the public funds.

The comparison was carried out not only along the essential characteristics, but also on the bases of the 'secondary' (derivative) attributes, which are more completely and precisely described in the sources. The latter include:

13. The character of the military forces and the dominant type of external conflicts inherent to this form;
14. Types of internal conflicts;
15. National policy;

16. The nature of law and procedure;
 17. Types and methods of ideological support of power.

The results of the comparison are presented in the following table.

Table 1

	England	Rus'
1. Territorial and demographic structure	The federation of separate kingdoms, headed by the Wessex family	'Center' and 'Slaviniyas', plus 'External Russia': territorial, patrimonial, vertical linkage
2. Socio-economic framework	The ranked society with incipient strata; the basis of the economy is agriculture, stabled cattle breeding	Ranked society with incipient strata; the basis of the economy is international trade, predatory wars, agriculture, stabled cattle breeding
3. Ways and mechanisms of the state formation	The military liberation way of state formation. The military-defensive, aggressive, 'family', bargain mechanisms	The military-plutocratic, partly aristocratic way of state formation. The military-defensive, aggressive, 'family', bargain mechanisms
4. System (organization) of government;	The presence of federal and local authorities with a tendency to strengthen the role of royal power and royal officials	Distribution of powers between 'federal' and local levels. The direct control through 'polyudie' (the process of gathering tribute by the rulers of Kievan Rus' from vassal East Slavic tribes). The upper level of the government is based on a corporate-labor principle
5. The relationship between the state and society (including some of its fractions)	Military coercion of the population, feudalization (hierarchization) of the society	Reciprocity with the elements of coercion between the levels of government, domination, subordination, exploitation of the 'Slavs' by the Rus'

6. Structure, sources and methods of forming and recruitment of the ruling stratum	The ruling clan is the Wessex kings; strengthening of the hereditary tendencies	'All Rhos' and ruling patrimonies. Slavic patrimonial aristocracy and bodyguard. Methods: origin, abilities, wealth, 'luck'
7. Structure of the elite (exploiting strata) of the society	Royal governors, nobility and service aristocracy getting feudal characteristics	The military men and merchants
8. The exploited classes	Community members (churls)	Community members, slaves (the minor part of the class)
9. Form of government	Patrimonial monarchy	Patrimonial hierarchical monarchy
10. Functions of the state apparatus	Military, repressive, trade organizing, judicial and redistributive functions of the state apparatus	Military and trade organizing and judicial functions of the lower level authorities, redistribution. Military deterrent, repressive (if necessary) functions of the highest level of the government. The self-sufficiency function of the state apparatus
11. The ruling class's source of the means of subsistence	System taxes, revenues from the domains, a tribute (especially from the Celts)	Private sources (trade revenues), robbery of 'foreign' territories (Byzantium, the Orient), a tribute, 'polyudie'
12. Patterns of spending of public funds	Military actions, fleet construction, maintenance of the army, the construction of fortifications	Additional provisions for <i>druzhin</i> s, ship construction, purchase of 'prestige goods'. Building of towns
13. The character of the military forces and the dominant type of external conflicts inherent to this form	Professional land forces and the navy (at the times of Alfred)	'The Marines' – professionals ('the 'Rus)'), militia and tribal retinues of the Slavs. Offensive and aggressive (unification), predatory and 'trade' conflicts

14. Kinds of internal conflicts	Confrontation between the Anglo-Saxons and the Normans	Interpersonal struggle for power (Rhos); interclan and tribal conflicts (Slavic including Finno-Ugric)
15. National policy	Activities to consolidate the population of ethnically isolated kingdoms into a single British nation, unified by a common Christian religion	National differences are 'overshadowed' by the corporate and pragmatic ones. Different law, different denominations. The process of mixing languages and cultures, and replenishment of the 'federal' top by the Slavs
16. The nature of law and procedure	Royal 'truths', concerning secular and religious issues, the system of crime and punishment, the Dane-law	Separate 'customary law' (mononorms) for the Rhos ('Russian law') and Slavs
17. Types and methods of ideological support of power	Christianization, concepts of the common history of kingdoms	Demonstration of force and 'luck' at different levels of power. In 'Slaviniyas', probably, religious-genealogical sanction

Analyzing the material presented in Table 1, we can draw the following conclusions. We can note the high degree of similarity between data in blocks 2, 6, 7, 9, 15. In particular, there is a similar social division and a form of government. However, the moderate correlation in blocks 1, 3, 4, 10 indicates, that the mechanisms of state formation were different. Thus, it confirms the thesis of political anthropology that different societies may achieve similar levels of social evolution in different ways. It is especially evident with regard to the materials of additional units, where the lowest level of compliance is demonstrated. The methods of power legitimation and the legal basis of the states were significantly different.

Thus, the comparative analysis demonstrates a high level of similarity between the polities that formed during the politogenesis process in Anglo-Saxon England and Ancient Russia, but it also shows the difference in the ways and mechanisms and also the main principles of the society structure.

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