
State Origins in Anthropological Thought

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ABSTRACT

The state origins are the perpetual issue in social studies. The contemporary conceptions of the state formation differ in multiple ways from the classical theories. The state was resulted by two interrelated processes – consolidation of the society (integrative theory) and regulating of structural clash in the society (conflict theory). At present there are several most popular theories revealing the different ways of the state origin. In recent years many scholars believe that the societal complexity is not always related to the formation of statehood. They adhere to the multilinearity theory of social transformation and identify several forms of political systems alternative to the state.

INTRODUCTION

The state, its origin, peculiarities and structure are, perhaps, most debatable questions of the science of society. There are many different points of view in this respect. In ancient times and the Middle Ages in Europe, there were conceptions that power was given to the ruler from God (sacral theory) or that it was a natural phenomenon – similar to relations between the family's father and his younger relatives (patriarchal theory). In the early modern times, the so-called theory of social contract (Tomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau) suggested that the state originates as the product of the internal contract between people who surrender a part of their freedom and power to the state in order to provide the public order and inviolability of the property. In the 19th century, the aggressive (Überlagerung) theory of the state origin of Lud-

wig Gumplowicz and Franz Oppenheimer evolved. Its followers believed that first states had appeared as a result of the external factor – conquests by the militant nomads or Vikings of the agricultural societies and establishment by the winners of the exploitation of subordinates.

At the same time, the fundamentals of the Marxist theory of classes and state were created according to which the state represents the political machine for oppression by the ruling classes of the working masses. This was first formulated by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in their *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. At the same time, considering the cradle of state, Marx and Engels have advanced several different models of the statehood genesis. In Marx's *Grundrisse* and in *Anti-Dühring* by Engels, the origin of state and classes in the non-European societies is described as a process of the gradual usurpation by the chiefs of their administrative functions and transformation of the initial servants of people into their masters. In parallel with this way of development, classes in Europe appear through the forming of the stratum of exploited slaves from among the persons being no members of the community (polis). Here, the statehood performs the functions related to the maintenance of the slave-holding relations.

In *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, Engels has pictured a different process, in fact the single-line structure of the state origin: development of economy leads to the growth of the surplus product, appearance of the material inequality and classes. To guard their property, the ruling classes invent the state, at first, slave-holding and then feudal. Later on, this conception has been accepted as the official one in the USSR and other countries ruled by communist parties. As a result, in the majority of scientific works as well as practically all textbooks the state formation process has been described exclusively following the Engels' model.

In the 20th century, the study of the state origin problem continued. The aggressive theory had a certain influence on German Marxists such as Karl Kautsky and Henrich Cunow, its effect can be traced in the works of Germans Richard Thurnwald, Diedrich Westermann, and Americans Lawrence Krader and Robert Carneiro. Perhaps the most detailed criticism of the aggressive theory belongs to the American ethnologist Robert Lowie. In the book

Origin of State Lowie showed that conquest does not always result in the state. In the history there were examples of states which were formed without conquests. In the end, for conquest to result in the statehood, both societies of conquerors and conquered should be characterized by some stratification. Therefore, not only war can be the major cause for the state origin. Lowie himself has been the follower of the functional version; he has believed that the organizational activity of leaders could lead to the formation of the state although he has not demonstrated how this process should proceed in history.

In anthropology, a return to the active investigation of the state has taken place after the WWII, beginning from the 1950s. This was called forth by several reasons: accumulation of new factual, largely archaeological and ethnographic material, certain intensification of the influence of Marxism and the beginning of the second discussion about the Asiatic mode of production, the appearance in the West of such important theoretical lines as new or processual archaeology in the study of pre-history and neo-evolutionism in the cultural anthropology and ethnography. Let us consider only some aspects of the renewed discussion in more detail.

CAUSES FOR STATE ORIGINS

The researchers identify the large quantity of factors leading to the formation of statehood. In the 1950s, the noted historian of East and critic of the Soviet totalitarianism Karl August Wittfogel advanced the irrigation (hydraulic) theory of the state origin according to which the initial statehood (primary states) and development of power are directly related to the need for the society of the construction and management of large-scale irrigative structures (Wittfogel 1957).

Ester Boserup has come with the suggestion that a demographic growth will be the state prerequisite. When the whole inhabited territory is developed and population increases to the maximum, the necessity in the agriculture intensification emerges. This assumes improvement of the administration organization which is accompanied with the differentiation of statuses, increase in the cultural complexity and state genesis (Boserup 1965).

Partly, these ideas are invoked in the circumscription theory of Carneiro who showed that the state genesis is largely related to

the population growth and intensification of competition for resources which in turn results in an increase of conflicts and wars. The natural way out in this case is the introduction of political hierarchy. On the one hand, it strengthens the domination of the groups winning in the conflicts and, on the other hand, intensifies the production to solve demographic and economic problems (1970).

Gregory Johnson and Henry Wright, studying mechanisms of response of social systems to different stresses, came to a conclusion that the social system can increase its size to a certain threshold only. In the case of excessive increase in load, the efficiency of the existing decision-making organization reduces. To cope with the overloads originated, in the introduction of the organization hierarchy, *i.e.* the state. Considering the systems of settlements in Mesopotamia, they arrived at the conclusion that a transition from the two-level political organization to the three-level one was accompanied by changes in architecture, specialization of settlements, large-scale urbanization. In their opinion, all of this gives grounds to assume that two-level hierarchy (local communities and center) was characteristic of chiefdoms while three-level one (villages, district centers and capital) was typical of early states (Johnson 1973; Wright and Johnson 1975).

Another popular model is the trade one. Its basic premise is based on the fact that long distance trade is a significant component in the strengthening of power of rulers of chiefdoms and early states. Receiving rare and wonderful goods from abroad and distributing them within the society, the monarch has controlled the re-distribution network, enhanced his prestige and increased his influence on subjects (Webb 1975; Ekholm 1977; Schneider 1977; Peregrine 2000).

Important role in the strengthening of the state mechanism was played by ideology. It has legitimated the existing status inequality. Most likely, the formation of ideology of the existing system of domination was as equally important moment as the economic and political coercion (Claessen and Oosten 1996; Skalník 1999; Smith 2003 etc.).

On the whole, as the comparative-historical investigations of the last decades showed, there is no common obligatory cause for the emergence of the state. Quite different internal and external factors such as increase in the surplus product, technological de-

velopment, population growth, ecology, war and conquest, external influence and trade, ideological factor etc., exerted influence on the state origin processes (Claessen and Skalník 1978, 1981; Haas 1982; Pavlenko 1989; Maisels 1990; Korotayev 1991; Claessen 2000, 2002; Peregrine, Ember and Ember 2007 etc.). Mathematical simulation in anthropology and historical sociology has the big prospects. It gives relief vision of processes of transformation, allows to check a role of various factors (Turchin 2003; Cioffi-Reviella 2005; Korotayev, Malkov and Khalturina 2006 etc.)

ESSENCE OF THE STATE

In the political anthropological literature, two major approaches to the understanding of the early statehood are identified. According to the integrative version, the archaic state originates due to organizational needs with which the chiefdom power organization cannot cope. Moreover, the early state power has the consensual rather than forced character. It is based on the sacral (*i.e.* holy) ideology (Service 1962, 1975, 1978). In the opinion of the followers of the conflict version, the statehood is a tool of stabilization of the stratified society ridden by conflicts as part of the struggle between different groups for the key life support resources. This version explains the state origin from the relations of exploitation, class struggle, war and interethnic domination (Fried 1967, 1978). From the viewpoint of the integrative approach, the state is presented as the political system with more complex economic and social infrastructure. Generally, among the indicators which characterize clearly the statehood formation listed are the specialized handicraft and trade, large-scale monumental construction, urbanization, origin of written language and law.

Service considers the state creation from the viewpoint of benefit which it brings to its citizens. He recognizes that the subjects should pay a certain price to the rulers for that they fulfill their organizational duties. However, Service refuses to see exploitation in this price believing that benefits from joint efforts are evident and exceed payment for services. He motivates this by the fact that he does not know the cases of revolts in the early states (1975). These arguments found their development in the conception of mutual exploitation in accordance with which in the early state the religious-ideological doctrine of the mutual exchange of services

between the producing masses and the ruling elite is established. The formers undertake to accurately pay taxes and duties while the latter are considered to be responsible for protection and well-being of the subjects performing the administrative functions in accordance with their supernatural faculties (Claessen and Skalník 1981; Claessen and van de Velde 1991; Skalník 1996).

The conflict approach, in contrast, assumes to consider the state as a political organization designed to solve internal and external conflicts and to regulate structures at the fundamentally new level of integration. Some researchers (followers of the aggressive theory) directed the attention to the forcible, military resolution of economic problems while others (Fried 1967; Haas 1982; Earle 1997, 2002) called attention to the fact that, as a result of unequal access to the resources, the conflicts which are prevented by the methods of the physical and ideological control reach crisis. Marxist authors again concentrate attention on the fact that the state is an institution of the exploiter in the class society.

The polemics between Service (1975, 1978) and Fried (1967, 1978) generated considerable excitement. However, not many researchers are ready to take one or the other side. It is evident for everyone that these are mutually exclusive positions. In reality, however, both integration and conflict are at one time present in the state nature. Indeed, the state performs important social functions (protects people against external enemies, offenders, executes the organizational functions etc.). At the same time, the power bearers have the enlarged access to resources and different blessings while the subjects should consent to their own lower status.

In historical and anthropological thought much attention was given to the ambivalence of power. The state is the power instrument. It is two-faced as much as the power itself. It helps and punishes simultaneously. Even in Classical Antiquity, there was an ambivalent attitude to the state, it was perceived as an inevitable evil (Jacobson 1997).

INDICATORS OF STATE

It is a traditional practice to list three major signs of the state: territorial division, taxes and creation of the special management personnel. Beyond doubt, it is true with respect to the modern states. At the same time, the studies of anthropologists showed that many

already existing pre-industrial states (for example, in Africa) remained to be based on the clan-tribal division. The divide between re-distribution and taxes is very fuzzy and to be established from case to case. Finally, one cannot always draw a distinction between the rudimentary authorities in chiefdoms and the early form of the state (Kubbel' 1988; Bondarenko 2008).

The present-day researchers mention different number of criteria which might suggest differences between the state and the preceding forms, however, not many of them insist on universal indicators. For example, from the viewpoint of the followers of the integrative approach, the most pronounced indicators of the pristine state are the construction of large-scale monumental structures (temples, tombs, palaces etc.), emergence of urban dwellings and written language. To these components, such a criterion as the population and population density is added. At that, it is emphasized that the population of chiefdoms have numbered as a rule tens of thousands of ethnically uniform people whereas in the early states the population has already reached hundreds of thousands and even millions of people of different ethnic associations and groups (Johnson 1973). In the opinion of the Marxist authors, the state differs from the chiefdom by the presence of class exploitation and specialized coercive organs.

In his well-known paper on the urban revolution Childe (1950) has identified the archaeological criteria of the civilization stages. When using archaeological sources, it should be remembered that the conception of the city is very uncertain and such indicators of civilization and the state such as written language, presence of highly developed trade and handicraft, monumental and urban architecture can already be found in the stateless society and, on the contrary, they can be absent in the early-state formations. Many early states of Africa did not know written language, however, societies having no state system but using written language (Celts, Iberians) are known. Social stratification found in the funeral ceremony is characteristic of both states and chiefdoms. It is not likely that one can correctly determine, from the development level of handicraft, trade or number of hierarchy levels, if the society under consideration is a chiefdom or a state. Monumental structures are characteristic of not only civilizations but they were found in the chiefdoms and others types of complex societies (Renfrew 1972; Maisels 1999; Trigger 2003; Yoffee 2005; Pauketat 2007 etc.).

Some time ago I examined the question about the state and civilization criteria in archaeology in a cross-cultural perspective. The source is the database on 186 societies which was published in the paper by Murdock and Provost *Measurement of Cultural Complexity* (1972). The analysis of the correlation coefficient between all the features reveals a strong relation between the political integration (state), social stratification (classes), writing & records, population density, money and technical specialization. The highest correlation is observed between hierarchy and stratification. This gives grounds to make a conclusion that for the most part the state has developed in parallel with class formation. However, the presence of side variants suggests that, in specific cases, the mature stratification has been observed in the societies with a weak hierarchy, while the multilevel hierarchy was established in weakly stratified societies. The study of the correlation between writing & records on the one hand and hierarchy on the other shows that there are many societies with a developed hierarchy but without a written language. But there are also other examples when societies have a developed written language but their hierarchy is not developed. The correlation between the stratification and writing & records is stronger. This is attributable to the idea that the class society should have a developed ideology. In conclusion, we can suppose that developed class structure, permanent residence, agriculture as the basis of economy and metallurgy are obligatory (but inadequate) archaeological criteria of the societies of the highest complexity (civilizations). If, as a result of excavations, these scales are not found, the society under study cannot be considered a civilization (Kradin 2006; see also Peregrine, Ember and Ember 2007).

From Max Weber follows the tradition to determine the state as an organization having a monopoly for application of legitimate force. This peculiarity, in opinion of many anthropologists, is the most important difference between the chiefdom and the state. The ruler of chiefdom had only consensual power, *i.e.* authority. In the state, the government may apply sanctions using the legitimized violence (Service 1975; Claessen and Skalník 1981; Claessen and van de Velde 1991). Not everybody does agree with this. Robert Carneiro believes that many early state formations have had insufficient monopoly in the application of force referring to the Anglo-Saxon laws in which it was written that anyone could kill

a thief (not appealing to the special law-enforcement bodies) and even receive for this certain remuneration (Carneiro 1981: 68).

Some researchers consider, that the main sign of the states is the government and/or bureaucracy (Gellner 1981; Berent 1994; Korotayev 2003; Bondarenko 2006; Kradin and Skrynnikova 2006 etc.). But how many officials constitute the state government – some persons (Claessen 2008: 12–13; Claessen, Hagesteijn and van de Velde 2008: 250) or large collective with groups identity (Kradin 2008: 115–116). In my opinion, persons fulfilling the administrative duties are everywhere – in the Iroquois tribe, Greek city polity, African chiefdom. Therefore, these persons should be divided into: 1) general functionaries whose activity can cover several kinds of affairs; 2) special functionaries fulfilling the duties only in a controlled field; 3) informal persons whose professions are not directly related to the administration, however, they, by virtue of their status or other reasons, can exert influence upon the decision-making (relatives, courtiers, priests etc.) (Claessen and Skalník 1978: 576). As the general functionaries and informal persons can exist not only in the early states but, for example, in the chiefdoms, only categories of the **special functionaries** can serve as the statehood criterion. Perhaps, it is the only universal criterion of the state society. With the utmost brevity, the fact of the matter was expressed by Karl Wittfogel: the state is the government of professionals (1957: 239).

In addition, we can call the administration (government) organization as the state if it consists of **large quantity** of men. The state is no individuals concerned with the management (administrative) activity but the management personnel, *i.e.* a totality of appropriate organizations and institutions. These institutions have the internal structure and consist of the certain number of employees receiving the remuneration for performance of specific duties. The structure can include the specialized subdivisions or departments (ministries, offices etc.) or, in principle, cannot be institutionalized and be at court, headquarters ('staff' in the Max Weber conception) of the ruler. It should be also taken into account that authorities of the heterarchical societies differed from those of the territorial states which should establish the multilevel bureaucratic hierarchies (Trigger 2003: 219–220).

Thus, the line of demarcation between the chiefdom or another complexity polity and state becomes vague and amorphous on

closer examination. It is evident that there are no universal indicators of the state aggregate. However, how many indicators constitute a system; two of three, three of five or any other ratio? The next important question is the stages of states transformation, distinction between early and mature state. This problem has been investigated in details in three volumes by Leonid Grinin (2007b).

BILINEAR THEORIES OF STATE ORIGINS

In spite of the single-line view of history in Marxism, just in the works of Marx, in his conception of the Asiatic mode of production one can find elements of multi-linearity of state formation. In *Grundrisse*, in 1857–1861 Karl Marx has identified three forms of *Gemeinwesen*: Asiatic, antique and German, which can be interpreted as the independent models of the transition to statehood. The second idea was formulated in 1878 by Fridrich Engels in *Anti-Dühring* where he, conforming to Marx's remarks, has come out with a suggestion of two ways of the state formation – Asiatic and Western ancient. Later on, this version was supported in the works of the Russian Marxist Georgy Plekhanov who has considered these modes of production as two coexisting types.

The bilinear theory was formulated most authoritatively in his *Oriental Despotism* by Karl Wittfogel (1957). The Western path of evolution is characterized by the formation of society with private property, equal political rights of citizens and constitutional state limited by laws. This model of evolution was most strikingly embodied in the ancient city states. Some researchers trace its certain signs in the societies of the mountain people. Private property is of subordinate significance for the Oriental society; position of a human is determined by his power, place in the administrative hierarchy. There are no citizens in the society but there are only subjects. Many other followers of the Asiatic mode of production have also declared themselves in the 1950s – 1980s for the bilinear theory (Godelier 1964; Tökei 1966 etc.).

In the last two decades of the 20th century, these ideas were developed and corrected in accordance with the newest achievements of political anthropology. Leonid Vasil'ev considers that the general line of the social evolution is a process of the gradual transformation of autonomous communal formations into chiefdoms and from them into early states and, later on, into the mature ones.

This process has proceeded on the basis of the monopolization of access to administration and control of production and redistribution. As the power and place in the hierarchy determine the status of individual, the private property has a subordinate character. As a result, the state mode of production has been formed (Vasil'ev believes that this term is more successful than the term *Asiatic* owing to its universality). The European structure (private-ownership mode of production) represents a mutation the prototype of which goes back to the Phoenician model. However, this mode of production has been realized with the most consequentiality in the ancient Greece and Rome. Commodity relations, private property, political equality of the city state citizens are characteristic of this model of society. Law was oriented toward the observance of legality and protection of interests of the citizens. Eventually it has caused the dynamism of West European development and led to the formation of the constitutional state and civil society in the modern era (Vasil'ev 1983, 1993). The views of Vasil'ev were supported and developed by many other Russian researchers (Kiselev 1985; Pavlenko 1989; Korotayev and Chubarov 1991 etc.).

A number of researchers believe that there are no substantial differences between East and West. According to so-called Montesquieu law, the sizes of society correlate with the type of political regime. Republic is characteristic of small societies, monarchy of medium ones and despotism of large societies. There is certain logic in such position as considerable territory really requires greater administrative efforts of the ruling power-holders (the only striking exception is the U.S., which however is decentralized into states). The less sizeable territory allows the population to exercise efficient control over rulers, to prevent the monopolization of political power by individual persons and, if necessary, to introduce the direct democratic governance. Aglarov, adhering to this idea, draws the direct analogy between the communal orders of the Mountain Daghestan and ancient Greek city states. Aglarov has identified two variants of the Daghestan mountain communes: dispersed *Jamaates* (communes) consisting of several small villages and urbanized *Jamaates*, originating as a result of sinoikism. *Jamaates* were combined into free societies and the latter formed the confederation of Mountain Daghestan (Aglarov 1988).

Other researchers insist on the still higher distribution of the *polis* variant of evolution. Yuri Berezkin proved clearly that

the socio-political organizational alternative to the chiefdom was characteristic of not only mountain people. He compares the archaeological model of chiefdom with data from excavations of a number of pre-historic societies of Central Asia and Turkmenistan. Evaluating the possible populations of these societies, he comes to the conclusion that their populations correspond to those of typical chiefdoms. However, the archaeological criteria of chiefdoms were lacking in these cultures. The dispersed separation of communities occurred instead of the hierarchical system of settlements; poor manifestation of the property and/or social inequality instead of sharp edge between the elite and ordinary members of a commune and great number of small (family?) ceremonial places instead of monumental temple architecture. Berezkin discovered the ethno-historical analogies in the Apa Tani society of the East Himalayas studied by Fürer-Haimendorf (Berezkin 1995, 2000; Fürer-Haimendorf 1962).

In addition Andrey Korotayev pointed out the so-called mountain societies in connection with the problem the Greek miracle. He showed that the decentralized political systems of mountain associations bear fundamental similarity to the Greek *poleis*. Korotayev extended considerably the list of societies similar to *poleis* with the historical and ethnographic examples from Europe, Africa and Asia. As Korotayev believes, the democratic character of political organization of the mountain societies should be considered to be natural. This was caused by a number of the interconnected reasons. Comparatively small sizes of societies enabled the direct participation of all society members in the political life (*Montesquieu law*). The rugged terrain did not contribute to the integration of the mountaineer communities into the greater hierarchical structures (e.g., chiefdoms) and equally prevented them from subordination to the neighbouring states of the plains. The similar protective function against the neighbours could be performed by not only mountains but also bogs (Byelorussia), seas, deserts, lifeless territories as well as a combination of one or others (Carthage, medieval Iceland, Dubrovnik, Kazaks of Zaporozhye and similar free societies). It is obvious that Korotayev recognizes that this reason alone cannot explain the phenomenon of the Greek miracle nor that all of the mountain societies were democratic (for example, the Inca Empire). However, there is no doubt that the peculiarities

of the democratic system of a number of the ancient Greek *poleis* are based on exactly the above mentioned regularities (Korotayev 1995).

These ideas intersect with other bilinear theories in the contemporary anthropology and archaeology. Already Woodburn (1980, 1982) and his followers in this question (Artemova 2000) showed a considerable variability of the complexity degree of the hunter-gatherer societies. Some of them were really distinguished by the egalitarian social organization, equality of all their members (African Bushmen, Hadza). Other societies (*e.g.*, Australians) are characterized by a concentration of the leadership in the hands of adult men, by development of the internal sex-age inequality, monopoly for information in the hands of adult men. These conclusions were later on extrapolated to the North-American materials (Fitzhugh 2000; Schweizer 2000). Similar complexity is also fixed in the archaeological materials, for example, in the Mesolithic of Denmark or in the Neolithic Jomon in Japan (Price 1981). Later on, these approaches have developed into the conceptions of network and corporate emphases, and hierarchical and homoarchival evolution. The network model is characterized by the concentration of the wealth, developed vertical hierarchy expressed in burial places and prestigious consumption of elite. Of the corporative model, the dispersion of the wealth and power, more moderate accumulation, segmental organization and communal cults are characteristic (Ehrenreich, Crumley and Levy 1995; Blanton *et al.* 1996; Kowalewski 2000; Wason and Balda 2000 etc.). All of this suggests the multilineal character of social evolution.

STATELESS ALTERNATIVES IN COMPLEXITY

From the above follow two important consequences. First, not only mountain but also other small polities protected by natural barriers can create the hierarchical forms of government. This allows us to conclude that, in parallel with forming the hierarchical societies (chiefdoms and states), there is other line of social evolution – non-hierarchical societies (Berezkin 1995, 2000; Ehrenreich, Crumley and Levy 1995; Korotayev 1995; Bondarenko and Korotayev 2000; Kradin *et al.* 2000; Bondarenko, Grinin and Korotayev 2004; Bondarenko 2006, 2007; Grinin 2004, 2007a etc.). It is a common practice in the archaeology to call these two different strategies

of evolution as network and corporative (Blanton *et al.* 1996; Marcus and Feinman 1998; McIntosh 1999; Wason and Baldia 2000; Kowalewski 2000; Haas 2001 etc.). All this gives grounds to assume that social evolution is multilinear. The essence of this phenomenon was well expressed by Ernest Gellner (1983). The political units in the agrarian epoch differ considerably in size and type. But they could be approximately divided into two kinds or, more likely, poles: local self-governing and great empires. On the one hand, there are the city-states, remainders of tribal communities, peasant communities etc. doing their own business with very high coefficient of the political participation and with unpronounced inequality and, on the other hand, vast territories controlled by the force concentrated at single place.

Secondly, high degree of political activity (protestness by Eisenstadt [1978]) is characteristic of the residents of small (including mountain) societies, while the subjects of the agrarian states located in the plains (first of all, peasants) display more passive political behavior. The last circumstance was noted by many known researchers of the peasant societies such as Eric Wolf, James Scott, Eric Hobsbawm, Teodor Shanin and others. It is interesting that participation of masses of mountain people in political processes was caused by the blocking of the antidemocratic tendencies. In small polities citizens can have the social control over the rulers. In the late 18th century, so-called anti-aristocratic revolutions of the Caucasian Adygeis have resulted in killing and expelling of many local princelings. The regime of the inherited chiefs of the Tibeto-Burman plateau was thrown over in the mid-19th century. The similar democratic coup has taken place among the Naga of the North-Eastern India. On this basis, the victories of the Athenian *demos* over aristocracy and the Roman *plebs* over patricians do no longer seem unexpected.

The attempts to check this model on the basis of the formal cross-cultural methods demonstrate the stable correlations between such indices as 'family size', 'clan (tribal) organization', on the one hand, and democracy degree of the political organization, on the other. In particular, hierarchical societies are characterized by the strict over-community structures, clan organization, community consisting of great number of families whereas for non-hierarchical societies are typical territorial organization, territorial

community and small forms of family (Korotayev 2003). It is also conceivable that this bilinearity has some more fundamental grounds because it is characteristic of not only high civilizations but can be also traced at the earliest stages of the history of humankind and even among primates (Butovskaya 2000).

The Israeli anthropologist Moshe Berent believes that the classic *polis* could not be considered a state. According to him *polis* was the society without a state for which Berent gives a great number of various arguments. In the *polis*, there was no state machinery and the control over the administration of the society was exercised by all its citizens (Berent 1994, 2000).

In Athens it is possible to distinguish also between 'government' in the sense of political institutions and officials and 'government' in the sense of people who formulated policy. While political institutions and offices were staffed by amateurs, thus exhibiting no division of labour, one can speak of a certain kind of a division of labour considering existence of 'professional politicians' in Athens, *i.e.* the demagogues and those who proposed and spoke in the assembly. Yet this was certainly a non-state government if one would call these people government. The Athenian leader had no formal position and state coercive apparatus at his disposal. He was simply a charismatic individual, a demagogue, who could persuade the people in the assembly to accept his policies, but still risked losing his influence (and his life!), and having his policies rejected at any moment (Berent 2000: 229).

For certain, Berent's concept will be subjected to discussion among the specialists in the field of ancient history. However, it should be noted that a similar discussion about the character of the Roman statehood has already taken place in 1989–1991 on the pages of the Soviet journal *Vestnik Drevney Istorii* (*Bulletin of Ancient History*). The initiator of the polemics, Elena Shtaerman posed the point of view much like Berent's. According to her opinion, the classic Roman *polis* of the republic period cannot be considered as a state. The machinery of the executive power was insignificant. There were no offices of the public prosecutor or police. There were no taxes and no personnel for their collection.

The duties from provinces and rent for the public lands were collected by tax-farmers. The plaintiff himself guaranteed appearance of the defendant in court and should ensure the serving of a sentence. All of this suggests, in her opinion, that in Rome of the day, there were in essence no authorities able to enforce execution of laws and the laws themselves had no sanctions. Shtaerman considers the Sulla dictatorship, Pompeius rule, the first triumvirate and Caesar's triumph as the stages on the path to the statehood. But only during the reign of Augustus the process of the state formation (administrative machine, praetorian guards, cohorts of guard, professional army) was completed (Shtaerman 1989).

Almost all participants in that discussion declared themselves against this concept. Only two persons supported Shtaerman's opinion. One of them assumed that the reason for this lies in the reliance of the Russian historians of antiquity on empirical, anti-theoretical studies (it is interesting that the other scientist supporting the position of Shtaerman was a foreigner). However, I assume that this is not the point. From the viewpoint of the Marxist theory of history, the antique society was taken as a certain standard – the classical model of the ancient slave-owning state. It was to the orientalist to rack their brains over the question how and why their societies differed from the classical antique standard, what place has been occupied by slavery in the civilizations they studied, to ask why peasants and not slaves constructed the Pharaoh's pyramids, to find out where the private property in the East disappeared, why the equally evident difference between the antiquity and the Middle Ages in Asia did not take place in the same way as between the antiquity and feudalism in Europe.

There were no similar problems in the history of antiquity. Here, all was in the right position – classes, exploitation and ownership. The significance and role of the slavery for Greece and Rome seemed to be evident. In Rome, even great revolts of slaves – nearly revolutions – were recorded. There was a logically consistent theoretical base. Already the classics of socialism, especially Engels in *The Origin of the Family* have set out the Marxist view on the major questions of the origin of state and classes in Greece and Rome. These provisions were made more accomplished by the Soviet academicians in the 1930s and were replicated in millions of textbooks for the secondary schools and higher

institutions of education. Thereafter, it only remained for scientists to confirm the correctness of the Marxist doctrine or to present numerous details of either particular question more exactly. Most likely, the complexity of these circumstances played a spiteful joke on the Russian history of antiquity and called forth its persistent immunity to the theoretical and comparative investigations and the revision of seemingly generally accepted axioms.

However, the recognition of the Greek and Roman societies having no state forces meant to look absolutely in a different way at many problems. If the viewpoint is taken that *polis* was not state, it should be considered that stateless society does not need to be of necessity primitive and, therefore, civilization does not necessarily suggest the existence of statehood. The followers of the multilinear theory of the historical process substantiate the viewpoint that the absence of statehood does not necessarily suggest a low level of the society (Bondarenko and Korotayev 2000; Kradin *et al.* 2000). As an example, one can cite the civilization of Celts (Gauls). The Celts have occupied a large part of the Western and Central Europe in the 1st millennium B.C. In the technological respect, the Celts have taken the lead over many peoples of Europe. They have constructed deep mines to produce salt and mercury, they have learnt ahead of the others to smelt iron and make steel, to produce steel weapons, glassy seamless furnishings, cradle in the Alps. This was the numerous, ethno-political community with common language, religion and money. In the Celtic society occurred complex social differentiation and a great number of ranks. However, the Celts had no written language and no common state. All in all, about a hundred of Celtic polities have existed. The archaeologists assume that they are most of all similar to chiefdoms. During the transition from Hallstatt to La Tène period, the hereditary power of chiefs disappeared and the control passed into the hands of the nobility and elective city councils. The Celtic *oppidia* represented true cities with long streets, blocks of craftsmen, sanctuaries, powerful fortification works. The greatest of them had areas in the range of 600–1600 ha. When judging from Caesar's reports to the Roman senate, the legionnaires have destroyed several hundreds of *oppidia* and the numbers of killed Celts were estimated at hundreds of thousands (Crumley 1974).

Another alternative to the state is the social evolution of the complex societies of pastoral nomads. The ethnographic investigations of the cattle-breeding people of Inner Asia and Africa show that extensive pastoral economy, low population density, lack of settled way of life do not suppose a necessity of establishing the institutionalized hierarchy. Thus, one can assume that the need in the statehood was not internally necessary for nomads (Markov 1976; Khazanov 1984; Barfield 1989; Kradin 1992; Golden 2001; Kradin and Skrynnikova 2006 etc.). The complex hierarchical organization of the power in the form of nomadic empires and similar political formations has been developed by nomads only in those regions where they have been forced to have the long and active contacts with higher organized agricultural-urban societies (Scythians and the ancient East and Mediterranean states; nomads of Inner Asia and China; Huns and Roman Empire; Arabs, Khazars; Turks and Byzantium etc.).

This has predetermined the dual nature of the steppe empires. On the outside, they looked as the despotic aggressive states as they were established to withdraw the surplus product from the outside steppe. The pastoral nomads have appeared in this situation as the class-ethnic group and specific *xenocratic* (from Greek *xeno* – outward and *cratos* – power) or *exopolitarian* (from Greek *exo* – out of and *politeia* – society, state) political system. Figuratively, one can say that they were something like superstructure over the settled-agricultural basis. From this viewpoint, the establishment of nomadic empires is a particular case of the aggressive theory of the state origin. At that, the nomadic elite has performed functions of the highest links of military and civil administration while the ordinary nomads have formed the skeleton of a violence machine – the army. At the same time, the empires of nomads remained on the inside based on tribal relations, without establishing taxation and exploitation of nomads. The power volume of the steppe society ruler was based on his ability to organize military campaigns and to re-distribute receipts from trade, tribute and raids on the neighboring countries. From this viewpoint, it is more correct to characterize empires of nomads as the supercomplex chiefdoms (Kradin 1992, 2002; Kradin, Bondarenko and Barfield 2003 etc.).

CONCLUSION

The modern conceptions of the state formation differ in multiple ways from the classical theories of the state and law. First, it was ascertained that there are many reasons which had influence on the political centralization. Secondly, the present-day historians, archaeologists and anthropologists are inclined to agree that the state genesis was caused by two interrelated processes - necessity of the public consolidation as the society becomes complex (integrative theory) and necessity of regulating the conflict situations in the society (conflict approach, class theory). Thirdly, the modern science is not inclined to interpret the state formation and development as a unilinear process. There are several most popular theories revealing the different ways of the state origin. Most often, the researchers compare the development of the Western and Eastern societies. However, in recent years, a number of authors believe that the societal complexity is not always related to the formation of statehood. They adhere to the multilineal theory of social transformation and identify several forms of political systems alternative to the state.

All of these questions are most actively developed in the anthropological and archaeological sciences. However, other sciences related to the study of the state (history, political and social sciences, law) should also take part in developing the new conceptions. It will allow us not only to enrich the teaching process with fresh ideas but also will impart new pulses for development of theoretical concepts of the state within the framework of the above sciences. Many modern aspects of the problem of the theory of *polis*, state and law can be rightly interpreted and explained only in relation to the history of the origin and transformation of these phenomena.

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