
Comparative Analysis of the Process of Initial State Genesis in Rus' and Bulgaria

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ABSTRACT

There has not been completed yet the typological research of European polities' forms (of the complexity level of 'barbarous' statehood, 'complex chiefdoms', and rarely – 'early states' – in terms of political anthropology), and of the pathways of their emergence. This research can be amplified with the study of the First Bulgarian kingdom before Omurtag's and Krum's reforms (the end of the 7th – the early 9th century) and synchronous to it complex chiefdom of 'Rosia' (in terms of Porphyrogenitus) of the end of the 9th – mid-10th century. They have typological similarity in military and contractual character of pathways of state genesis (in 'Rosia' it is supplemented by foreign trade) as well as in the form of 'barbarous' (pre-Christian) statehood. It has a multilevel – 'federal' – character. At the head there were the Turks-Bulgarians and the 'Rhos' ('Ruses'), whose settlements had limited territory, the 'slaviniyas' with their own power structure were subordinated to them and supervised by the 'federal' power strong points. The 'supreme' power domination is supported not only by the fear of weapon, but also by the treaties based on reciprocity. The common interest was, for example, the participation in robbery of the Byzantine Empire and international trade. At first in a peaceful way, later with conflicts, Bulgaria was transformed into a unitarian territorial state by the reforms of the pagans Omurtag and Krum, and then of the Christian Boris (the latter had led to the conflict within the top level of power – among the Turkic-Bulgarians aristocracy). In Russia the multilevel

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statehood had almost split up after the Russian-Drevlyan conflict in the time of Igor, but was revived on a new basis as 'an early state' due to activity and reforms of Olga and Vladimir the Saint.

The stage of 'complex chiefdoms' (Service 1971 [1962], 1975, 1978; Claessen 2000, 2006; Claessen and Kloos 1981; Claessen and Skalnik 1978a, 1978b; Carneiro 1970, 2000, 2004; Haas 1982; Kradin 2000, 2004) or the potestal-political one (Kubbel 1988), including the transitional period to the 'early state', is studied and compared within the framework of political-anthropological theory of state genesis. The term 'a barbarian state' is more developed and up to use in the East European historical science, and it actually reflects the same stage of political genesis as the above-mentioned political anthropology terms, and it is also partly accepted by its modern adherents (Korotayev 1997, 2000, 2004; Bondarenko 2001; Popov 1990). It is also apt because it contaminates state genesis and sociogenesis as a transitional period between 'wildness' and 'civilization'. In particular, both in Rus' and in Bulgaria the 'barbarian' period of state genesis almost coincided with the pagan époque of their existence. The acceptance of the world religion in the form of Orthodoxy marks both the end of this époque of their cultural history and the final stage of the 'barbarian' period in history of 'complex chiefdoms' and a transition to 'an early state' in terms of modern theory of state genesis. Yet, in Rus' the formal act of 'the state baptism' took place close to the middle point of this transition, while in Bulgaria it almost terminated it.

The methodological basis of comparative analysis is the observance of principle of synchrostadiality (not the chronological simultaneity) and typological homogeneity of the compared phenomena, structures and processes. As a working hypothesis we take our previously worked out classification of forms and models of statehood, approved by the data on different Slavic states and peoples (Shinakov 1993a, 2000a, 2000b, 2001, 2002a, 2003, 2005).

The aim is the attributing of both Rus' and First Bulgarian Empire to a particular stage of state genesis and to a definite form of statehood. Actually, elsewhere we have already done this with respect to Rus' (Shinakov 1993a, 2000a, 2002b). That work has been similar in methodology to the one we have carried out to clarify the statehood form of the Ukrainian Hetman state. For the sake of comparison, the same set of attributes (elements) of the form is used, but at the given stage of research the comparative analysis

is applied not to all statehood forms (more precisely to their 'ideal models') but with different principle and different aim – to compare them with each other. Moreover, the work in respect of Rus' (yet at an empirical level and without application of content analysis and correlation) has been already performed.

The sources on the subject are rather diverse (in respect of their category and type) and versatile (from the point of their ethnic origin and political engagement). We have previously presented on a number of occasions the analysis of sources on Rus' in the respective aspect (Shinakov 1987, 1990, 1993b, 2002b; Shinakov and Guryanov 2002) which saves the trouble of returning to it. As for Bulgaria, there have been analyzed *The Bulgarian Khans Names List*, works by John Exarchos, Theophanes, Nikiphor, Ennody, as well as the epigraphy data. All these sources have been often used by Bulgarian and Russian specialists in First Bulgarian Empire (*e.g.*, Andreev 1994; Angelov 1987; Ivanova 1987; Litavrin and Naumov 1991 *etc.*), and we could not pass by their works and analytical publications on the sources. However, as a matter of fact the systematic and complex analysis of these resources in the comparative-structural aspect has not been carried out yet. The authors considered this question with regard to the application not to Bulgarian but to Russian realities (Shinakov 2006a). Below there is given a comparative table of elements of Bulgarian and Russian 'barbarian' statehood. The attributes are taken from one of the authors' work on the Ukrainian Hetman state (Shinakov 2006b: 98–99):

1. Territorial-demographic structure.
2. Socio-economic basis.
3. Ways and mechanisms of state formation.
4. System (organization) of government.
5. Type of interrelations between state and society (including its particular fractions as classes, estates *etc.*).
6. Composition, sources and ways of forming and recruitment of the ruling stratum.
7. Composition of the social elite (exploiting classes).
8. The exploited classes.
9. Form of government.
10. Functions of the state apparatus.
11. Sources of the existence of the ruling stratum ('state elite').
12. Directions of public funds expenses.

In addition to the basic, essential attributes the comparison was held on the basis of the 'secondary' (derivative) ones, which are

more completely and precisely (and the main thing, unambiguously) reflected in sources. They are the following:

13. Character of the armed forces and the prevailing type of foreign conflicts immanent to the given form.
14. Types of internal conflicts.
15. National policy.
16. Character of law and legal proceedings.
17. Types and methods of ideological support of power.

Table 1

	Bulgaria	Rus'
1	2	3
1	'Center' and 'Slaviniyas', hierarchic federation; territorial-patrimonial, vertical relations	'Center' and 'Slaviniyas' + 'External Rus'; territorial-patrimonial, vertical relations
2	Ranged society with arising strata; economical basis is semi-nomadic (camp) cattle breeding, agriculture, predatory wars	Ranged society with arising strata; economical basis is international trade, predatory wars, agriculture, stable cattle breeding
3	The model is military, partly aristocratic; mechanisms are military-aggressive and defensive, meritocratic, 'kinship', contractual, legal	The model is military-plutocratic, partly aristocratic; mechanisms are military-defensive and aggressive, 'kinship', contractual
4	Division of power at 'federal' and local levels. System of 'federal' military deputies. Within the higher level of power there is a patrimonial (aristocratic) principle, arising of the official-serving principle	Division of power at 'federal' and local levels. 'Polyudie' as a direct government. Within the higher level of power there is a corporate-patrimonial principle
5	Reciprocity. Dominance-subordination against pre-Slavic autochthonous population, elements of enforcement between the levels of power	Reciprocity with elements of enforcement between the levels of power, dominance-subordination, exploitation of the Slavs by the Ruses
6	Military aristocracy, all proto-Bulgarian against the Slavs, Slavic bodyguard? Principles are abilities, origin, force, wealth	'All Rhos' and ruling patrimonies. Slavic patrimonial aristocracy and bodyguard. Methods are origin, abilities, wealth, 'luck'

1	2	3
7	Military men, cattle- and land-owners	Military men, merchants
8	Community men, slaves a little, local pre-Slavic population	Community men, slaves a little
9	Patrimonial hierarchic monarchy	Patrimonial hierarchic monarchy
10	Military-organizing, judicial, redistribution. Function of self-sufficiency	Military and trade-organizing, judicial at the low level of power, redistribution. Military-frightening and repressive if necessary at the high level of power. Function of self-sufficiency
11	Robbery of 'the aliens' (Byzantine), tribute, private sources (cattle breeding)	Private sources (trade incomes), robbery of 'the aliens' (Byzantine, the Orient), tribute, 'polyudie'
12	'Feeding' best warriors, bodyguard; prestige of power. Building of towns, fortresses	'Feeding' bodyguard, ship-building, usage in trade to gain the subjects of 'prestige consumption'. Building of 'grads' (towns)
13	Cavalry and infantry as a home guard, Slavic bodyguards, pre-Bulgarian 'best warriors' and aristocrats. Offensive and predatory, defensive	'Marines' – professionals ('Ruses'), Slavic home guard and tribal bodyguards. Offensively-aggressive (unifying), predatory, 'commercial'
14	Interpatrimonial inside proto-Bulgarian aristocracy	Interpersonal in the struggle for power (Rhos); interpatrimonial and tribal (Slavic including Finno-Ugric)
15	Preservation, but not accentuation of national differences, then the integration at the legal level. Mixture of languages and cultures, adding of the Slavs to 'federal' top. Confessional differences are kept till the baptism	National differences are 'shadowed' by corporate-pragmatic ones. Different law, different confessions. Process of mixture of languages and cultures, Slavic adding to the 'federal' top

1	2	3
16	Before reforms of Omurtag and Krum different 'customary law' for the proto-Bulgarians and Slavs. Later – a single written law, whose source is power	Separate 'customary law' (mononorms) for the Rhos ('Russian law') and Slavs
17	Spiritualization of ruling patrimony to deity – Tengri Khan, genealogical sanction	Demonstration of force and 'luck' at different levels of power. In 'Slaviniyas', probably, religious-genealogical sanction

So, the basic components of the complex analysis have turned out to be the following:

a) the mechanisms of genesis of 'barbarian' statehood structures both reflected in the sources and in the categories of political anthropology;

b) the structure of statehood in statistics, its correlation with the social basis (a 'ranged' or 'stratified' society, according to Morton Fried 1967);

c) the reasons of formation and functions of power structures (in reality and in pagan and Christian ideological grounding);

d) the composition, sources of recruitment and incomes of the ruling elite or elites;

e) the role of war and the form of military organization in creating, functioning and transformation of a certain form of statehood;

f) time, reasons and mechanisms of 'barbarian' statehood transformation into 'the early state' one;

g) the reasons of 'choosing the way'.

A. The First Bulgarian kingdom was formed in a military-contractual way. The same can be said about the initial Russian state – 'the Northern confederation' (Melnikova 1993) with its center in Novgorod. The difference is that in the former case it was made by means of a military-aggressive mechanism, and in the latter – by the military-defensive one. By the way, the seizure of Nizhnedunayskaya lowland by the proto-Bulgarians under Asparukh was rather relative because it was accompanied by the contract with the Severs and Slavic 'unity of seven tribes' (Typkova-Zaimova 1991: 45–47) as a defense from Byzantine attempts to restore its power in the region. As a result of the defensive-

liberation struggle of five Slavic and Finno-Ugric tribal alliances and principalities (of the chiefdom level) with the Varangians, a new formed proto-state association appeared which was named in literature 'the Northern confederation' (Melnikova 1993). The conventional dates for the initial events are 679–681 for Bulgaria, and 859–862 for Rus' (in reality, with the account of the discrepancy of chronicle dating it is 852–854).

B. Both pre-state societies best fit the definition of a 'two-level pre-state'. In respect of Rus' it becomes evident after the comparison of the data by Gardizi, Al-Masudi with Russian Primary Chronicle (*Povest vremennykh let*) and with Constantine Porphyrogenitus (1991). The idea has been expressed with regards to Rus' by one of the authors of the present paper and in respect of Bulgaria – by E. Koicheva and N. Kochev (1991: 52).

C. In Bulgaria the necessity of submission of the Slavs to the proto-Bulgarians might have been determined by the necessity of joint warfare actions against Byzantine.

Within the proto-Bulgarian society the khans' authority rights were based on their kin's origin from Tengri Khan. The types of power legitimation of particular pagan Slavic rulers in Bulgaria are unclear contrary to the Eastern Slavs. Among the latter there dominated either a 'first settlement' model of legitimation of power institutionalization (the Polyans, Vyatichs, Radimichs) or a patriarchal one (the Drevlyans) or the model probably connected with monopolization of power by a certain social-professional stratum (corporation) (the Krivichs) (Shinakov 2000a). The term 'paktiots' was used in the interrelations of the 'Rhos' with the *slaviniyas*' rulers and it can be interpreted both as allies and as tributaries (Constantine Porphyrogenitus 1991). There was a common interest of the Slavic top to participate in trade and robbery in Byzantine what was impossible without such large-scale actions organized by 'Rhos'. This interest replaced the initial 'force authority', dominating in the Arabic sources concerning the 'Ruses' and 'Slavs' (Shinakov 1990).

In the resources the right for power among the 'Rhos' (or 'Ruses') is not postulated anyhow and the degree of power itself belonging to the 'hakan Rus' reminds not a sovereign power but that of a tribal chief (a head of corporation) which implies the abilities and 'luck' as power sanctions.

D. The composition, sources of recruitment and providing of the ruling elite totally correspond to the époque of 'barbarity' or a transitional period from chiefdom to the early state, *i.e.* complex chiefdom.

E. Permanently influencing military aspect defined to a great degree the specificity of a statehood form and was the reason of the typical similarity between pre-state formations in Bulgaria and in Rus'.¹

F. The sequence of events that determined the process of transformation of a complex chiefdom into an early state looks as follows.

For Bulgaria: 1) the change of social basis of the top power level (settling of the proto-Bulgarians); 2) the reforms began only in the incorporated regions (Krum); 3) the major part of the territorial-administrative, law, governmental (Omurtag) reforms had led to an intensive mutual integration of social-ethnic bases of both power levels and their representatives; 4) the final stage of these reforms was the acceptance of an integrating world religion (Boris I); 5) the conflict with the proto-Bulgarian patrimonial aristocracy that lost the privileges and its 'demonstrative' suppression; 6) the defense from the Hungarians and Byzantines; 7) the ambitious building and demographic actions; 8) foreign expansion, an attempt to create an empire. The apotheosis was an acceptance of a title 'basileus' by Simeon (913); 9) the end of the expansion, change of character and sources of the military-bureaucratic top's incomes by acquiring land possessions (Peter I). Beginning of the early state transformation into a mature one in the form of primarily official-bureaucratic and feudal-hierarchic (Shinakov 2001).

For Rus': 1) the actual consolidation of the 'Ruses' and 'Slavs' within the framework of a single, although syncretic, heterogeneous bodyguard subculture (by the middle of the 10th century); 2) external and internal crisis of the 'two-level' authority (941–944); 3) a 'provoked conflict' and its ritually-precedent suppression by princess Olga; 4) the beginning of territorial-administrative, governmental, tax-financial and law reforms only at the incorporated territories (after the Drevlyans' revolt) and domain (private) lands; 5) an attempt to introduce world religion and departure facing the threat of conflict during Olga's reign; 6) foreign expansion, Sviatoslav's attempt to create an 'empire';² the emphasis on exo-exploitation; 7) internal conflict within the ruling clan and the end of territorial consolidation after Sviatoslav's death (975–984); 8–9) parallel functioning of the defensive war factor and large-scale border strengthening meant to eliminate the tribal borders and the influence of regional, military-patrimonial aristocracy, as well as to integrate the former tribes into a new, early state structure

in combination with overall reforms in all spheres (986–1000); 10) the massive monumental temple and fortification building including whole ‘grads’ (towns); 11) the acceptance of integrating and prestigious world religion; 12) the law reform and transition of the law under the state's control (1016–1113); 13) the change of the ruling class (*druzhina* top) status, its transformation into boyar-landowners (starting from the middle and second half of the 11th century), that marked the beginning of the early state transformation into a mature one.

The mechanisms of both the former (the emergence of a ‘two-level’ pre-statehood) and the latter (its conversion into an early statehood) transformations with respect to Rus' has been surveyed in detail in the one of the present authors' monograph (Shinakov 2002b, 2009), as well as in his articles (*Idem* 2002a, 2007). This work is to be carefully and thoroughly fulfilled for Bulgaria with the help of the content-analysis.

As a result, it becomes possible to estimate the duration of the stages and phases of state genesis for Bulgaria and Rus'. In Bulgaria the stage of the emergence of complex chiefdom in the form of ‘a two-level power’ lasted from 679 till the mid-8th century; in Rus' – from the mid-9th till the middle of the 880s. The heyday of the two-level pre-statehood in Bulgaria falls on the mid-8th – beginning of the 9th century (before Krum's and especially Omurtag's reforms), in Rus' – from the middle of the 880s till 941.

The phase of transformation and crisis of the pre-statehood of the given stage and form in Bulgaria lasted from Krum – Omurtag's reforms (conventionally from the first-second decades of the 9th century) till 865 (the year of the mutiny of proto-Bulgarian pagan nobility and its suppression by Boris I).

In Rus' the stage of transformation began, on the contrary, with the crisis of 941–944 and completed in general with Vladimir I's reforms (the second half of the 80s – the early 90s of the 10th century). The case of Rus' is also peculiar as the ‘complex chiefdom’ final stage chronologically (from Olga's reforms) but not territorially coincides with the stage of early statehood formation which completed by the 20s of the 9th century (except some law details and ancestral vestiges). It is remarkable that both in Bulgaria and Rus' the dates of the approval of Orthodoxy as a state religion (864/865 and 988/989) are rather conventional but they symbolically represent the beginning of the prevalence of the new (early state) development trends over the old (‘chiefdom’, patrimonial)

traditions during the transitional period. These very 120 years separate the formal dates of the end of the 'two-level proto-statehood' in both countries. In Rus' the stage of 'a two-level proto-statehood' formation began 30–40 years after the beginning of the transformation process into the early state in Bulgaria that allows speaking about the typological resemblance of the initial development conditions and not about the borrowings.

From the typological viewpoint both Ancient Rus' and First Bulgarian kingdom were referred by the famous Slavist Vladimir D. Korolyuk to the so-called 'contact zone' between the countries of the Roman-barbarian synthesis and the non-synthesis zone (Korolyuk 1972, 1975). Its peculiarity is determined by the fact that the power of the Roman governmental and cultural institutions was indirectly influenced (though to a different degree) by Byzantine as well as by the strong influence of the nomadic factor (though varying in different countries of this zone). In Bulgaria this influence is obvious. In Rus' in the 9th century the role of proto-Bulgarians was played by the 'sea nomads' (for the Eastern Europe – river) – 'varyags' (the varangians) (or the 'Ruses' in the eastern sources and 'Rhos' in the Byzantine ones). The nomads and more precisely the semi-nomadic early state Khazar khaghanate, played the same role for the 'two-level' Rus' of the second half of the 9th century as the Byzantine empire did for the synchronostadial Bulgaria of the 8th – beginning of the 9th century, that influenced the further transformation of both states. The role and place of the Slavs in the statehood formation both in Bulgaria and in Rus' were absolutely identical and it is not without reason that in both countries the Slavic ethnopolitical component turned out to be the dominant one.

NOTES

¹ The role of the war factor in the development of such a statehood form was figuratively reflected by Nikolay M. Karamzin: '...Oleg bored by the silence which is so dangerous for a military state ... decided to begin a war against Empire' (Karamzin 1989: 103).

² Original point of view on the situation in case of realization of Sviatoslav's empire ambitions was stated by the 19th century historian M. P. Pogodin: 'He decided not to move the capital (it is a false expression), but simply speaking to move into another apartment, to another Slavic tribe in the suppressed country of Bulgaria and transfer a seed [of the Russian statehood – *E. Sh.*] into another soil! It was a toss of Bulgaria to become Rus', Normandy' (Pogodin 1847: 475). In terms of political anthropology one may speak about the moving of a preserved as an atavism old Russian-team 'power level' to another low level – 'Slaviniyas'. But by that time in

Bulgaria they had already finished to exist for 150 years like 'a two-level proto-state' as a whole.

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