

# ВОЗНИКНОВЕНИЕ И СТАНОВЛЕНИЕ СРЕДНЕВЕКОВЫХ ЕВРОПЕЙСКИХ ГОСУДАРСТВ

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## MIGRATIONS AND STATE FORMATION IN THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES: A VIEW FROM THE WEST\*

*Abstrat:* Migrations of “tribes”, and mobility of elites, figure in many narratives of state formation and nation-building. But the frequent assumption that early medieval migrations regularly led to state formation is not borne out by a critical look at western European cases between the fifth and eleventh centuries AD. The outcomes of migrations in this period varied considerably. The case studies discussed in this paper include the Anglo-Saxon immigration into England and other migrations of the fifth — seventh centuries AD in western Europe, and the Viking immigration into the British Isles as well as other Scandinavian cases of the ninth — eleventh centuries AD in the west. Taken together, these cases demonstrate that migration does not necessarily lead to state formation. But even in the absence of state formation, some social change among migrants is likely because migrations require organisational leadership.

State formation appears to have been a likely consequence only where immigrants encountered native populations of a certain level of social complexity. The reason might lie in the nature of segmentary (tribal) organisation: it presupposes social links and shared ancestry among the lineages of the tribe. This imposes size limitations, but more importantly restrictions in terms of identity. After conquest by an immigrant population or elite, one possible solution is that the native population is reduced to the status of slaves who are attached to the households of lineage members. The alternative would be the creation of a joint state based on a common ideology (such as afforded by Christianity in early medieval western Europe).

*Keywords:* Anglo-Saxons, Vikings, migration, colonization, state formation

Early state theory has tended to focus on conditions of state formation and the structures of early states<sup>1</sup>, with only occasional

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<sup>1</sup> The early state / Eds H.J.M. Claessen and P. Skalnik. Den Haag, 1979; Lull V. and Micó R. Archaeology of the origin of the state: the theories. Oxford, 2011; overviews:

references to the need for a cause that triggers state formation<sup>2</sup>. The assumption that migrations provide such a trigger is, however, much older than recent theory, and can be found in nineteenth and earlier twentieth century romanticizing (or nationalist or even racist) accounts of how migrations spread civilization and statehood across Europe and beyond<sup>3</sup> (Fig. 1).

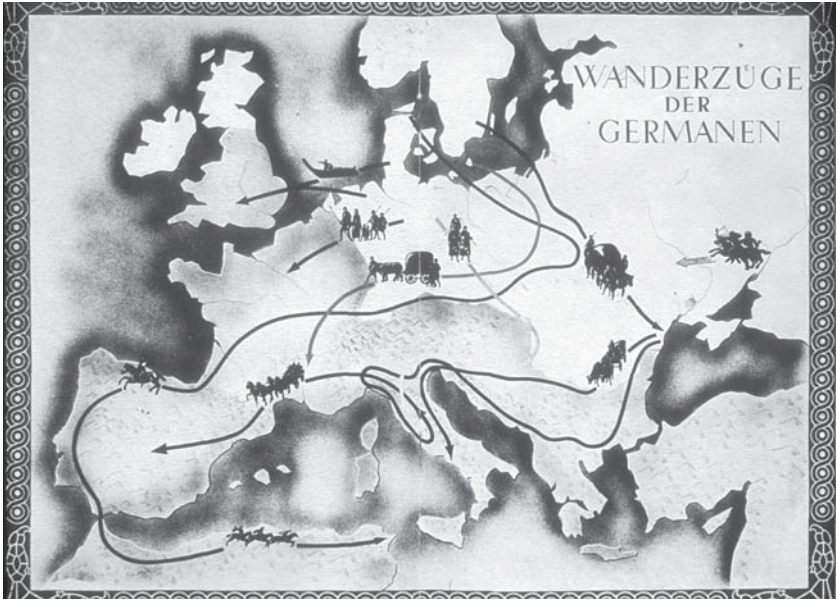


Fig. 1. German museum display showing the “Migrations of the Germani” (Schoppa 1969)

In reverse perspective, accounts of conflicts with migrating or marauding “tribes” have played a significant role in nineteenth and twentieth century narratives of state formation and nation-building. It is intended here to examine this assumption by looking at early

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*Chapman R.* Evolution, complexity and the state // *Socialising complexity: Structure, interaction and power in archaeological discourse* / Eds S. Kohring and S. Wynne-Jones. Oxford, 2007. P. 13–28; *Yoffee N.* Deep pasts: Interconnections and comparative history in the ancient world // *A companion to world history* / Ed. D. Northrop. Oxford, 2012. P. 156–170.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. *Claessen H.J.M.* Was the state inevitable? // *The early state, its alternatives and analogues* / Eds L.E. Grinin, R.L. Carneiro, D.M. Bondarenko, N.N. Kradin and A.V. Korotayev. Moscow, 2004. P. 72–87; *Higham C.* From the Iron Age to Angkor: New light on the origins of a state // *Antiquity*. 2014. Vol. 88. P. 822–835.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. *Strasser K.T.* Deutschlands Urgeschichte. Frankfurt, 1933. P. 92.

medieval migrations and state formation in parts of western Europe (fifth — eleventh centuries AD). The fact that the subject of migration in the past has long been unfashionable in western European archaeology and is only now making a slow come-back has also led to a lack of debate and publications on this particular question<sup>4</sup>.

In the discussion below, the term “migration” is used for cases of mobility in which a group leaves a distinct origin area and moves to a distinct destination area where it settles down<sup>5</sup>. By contrast, the term “expansion” is applied where the origin area is not given up, and origin and destination areas are contiguous. “Colonization” describes cases in which a group or population moves into a previously unoccupied or abandoned area. A “state” is a polity with a non-segmentary (non-tribal) organization, with a central authority of some kind, and with some form of taxation (monetary or in kind) which is intended to support elements of administrative and military organization controlled or overseen by the central authority. While this very general definition is probably uncontroversial, the archaeological recognition of states is a difficult and challenging subject which deserves further debate<sup>6</sup>. That is not the purpose of this paper, nor is the discussion of the archaeological identification of migrations.

### **Post-Roman migrations (fifth — seventh centuries AD)**

Among the many population movements of Germanic peoples during and after the collapse of the Western Roman Empire, the Anglo-Saxon migration stands out because a large part of it happened across an extensive body of water (the North Sea). It originated in areas of northern Germany and southern Scandinavia which had never been under Roman control, and targeted the southeastern parts

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<sup>4</sup> *Härke H.* Archaeologists and migrations: a problem of attitude? // *Current Anthropology*. 1998. Vol. 39 No. 1. P. 19–45; *Härke H.* The debate on migration and identity in Europe // *Antiquity*. 2004. Vol. 78. P. 453–456.

<sup>5</sup> For concepts and terminology, cf. *Anthony D.W.* Migration and archaeology: the baby and the bathwater // *American Anthropologist*. 1990. Vol. 92. P. 895–914; *Anthony D.W.* Prehistoric migration as social-process // *Migrations and invasions in archaeological explanation* / Eds J. Chapman and H. Hamerow. Oxford, 1997. P. 21–32; *Fra-chetti M.D.* Migration concepts in Central Eurasian archaeology // *Annual Review of Anthropology*. 2011. Vol. 40. P. 195–212.

<sup>6</sup> *Cherry J.* Generalization and the archaeology of the state // *Social organisation and settlement (British Archaeological Reports, S 47)* / Eds D. Green, C. Haselgrove and M. Spriggs. Oxford, 1978. P. 411–438.

of England which had been abandoned by the Roman Empire in the early fifth century, about two generations before the arrival of significant numbers of Anglo-Saxon immigrants. By that time, the former Roman provinces of Britannia had reverted to a pattern of small, apparently tribal kingdoms<sup>7</sup>. From the middle of the fifth to the early sixth century, a substantial number of Germanic immigrants arrived, numbering perhaps as many as 100,000 to 200,000 who made up a minority of about 10 — 20% in the native population<sup>8</sup>. The language and material culture of the pagan immigrants spread rapidly and became dominant across southeast Britain while the partly Romanized, Christian natives became archaeologically almost invisible<sup>9</sup>.

This was not an organized, military invasion as it was portrayed in older accounts (Fig. 2), but a gradual process of immigration and settlement, partly by self-contained family or clan groups, less often by warbands<sup>10</sup>. This process seems to have led to a multitude of small tribal polities developing into kingdoms<sup>11</sup>. In socio-political terms, they were essentially “conquest societies” operating a form of temporary “apartheid” system in which the natives were a subordinate population ruled by the militarily and politically dominant immigrants, with only limited interbreeding between the two groups<sup>12</sup>. According to historical and archaeological consensus, state formation in Anglo-Saxon England did not begin until the seventh century or even later, indicated by royal dynasties, written laws, taxation, and long-distance

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<sup>7</sup> *Esmonde Cleary A.S.* The ending of Roman Britain. L., 1989; *Jones M.E.* The end of Roman Britain. Ithaca; L., 1996.

<sup>8</sup> *Härke H.* Anglo-Saxon immigration and ethnogenesis // *Medieval Archaeology*. 2011. Vol. 55. P. 1–28.

<sup>9</sup> *Härke H.* Invisible Britons, Gallo-Romans and Russians: Perspectives on culture change // *Britons in Anglo-Saxon England* (Publications of the Manchester Centre for Anglo-Saxon Studies, 7) / Ed. N. Higham. Woodbridge, 2007. P. 57–67.

<sup>10</sup> *Härke H.* Anglo-Saxon immigration.

<sup>11</sup> *Beda Venerabilis*, *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* (HE): *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*/ Transl. B. Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors. Oxford, 1969.

<sup>12</sup> *Härke H.* Kings and warriors: Population and landscape from post-Roman to Norman Britain // *The peopling of Britain: the shaping of a human landscape* / Eds P. Slack and R. Ward. Oxford, 2002. P. 145–175.; *Thomas M.G., Stumpf M.P.H. and Härke H.* Evidence for an apartheid-like social structure in early Anglo-Saxon England. *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*. 2006. Vol. 273. P. 2651–2657; *Wolf A.* Apartheid and economics in Anglo-Saxon England // *Britons in Anglo-Saxon England* (Publications of the Manchester Centre for Anglo-Saxon Studies, 7) / Ed. N. Higham. Woodbridge, 2007. P. 115–129.



Fig. 2. Arrival of the Anglo-Saxons under Hengist and Horsa in AD 449 on the shore of Kent, England (woodcut, nineteenth century)

trade under royal control<sup>13</sup>. This means that state formation happened about two centuries after the start of the immigration, and more than a century after the end of the migration. It is also significant that state formation in England ran in parallel with the Christianization of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms<sup>14</sup>, and that it involved the increasing acculturation and assimilation of the native Britons<sup>15</sup>.

This delayed state formation in England is in marked contrast to the pattern observed in the cases of Goths, Vandals, Lombards and Franks<sup>16</sup>. Their migrations, some of them over large distances across

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<sup>13</sup> The origins of Anglo-Saxon kingdoms / Ed. S. Bassett. Leicester, 1989; *Yorke B. Kings and kingdoms of early Anglo-Saxon England*. L., 1990; see Grenville G. Astill, this volume.

<sup>14</sup> The cross goes north: Processes of conversion in northern Europe, AD 300–1300 / Ed. M. Carver. Woodbridge, 2003; *Higham N. An English empire : Bede and the early Anglo-Saxon kings*. Manchester, 1995.

<sup>15</sup> *Härke H. Population replacement or acculturation? An archaeological perspective on population and migration in post-Roman Britain // The Celtic Englishes III (Anglistische Forschungen, 324)* / Ed. H.L.C. Tristram. Heidelberg, 2003. P. 13–28.

<sup>16</sup> *Heather P. The fall of the Roman Empire*. L., 2005; *Idem. Empires and Barbarians*. L., 2009; *Todd M. Migrants and invaders: The movement of peoples in the ancient world*. Stroud, 2001. For a different perspective, see *Halsall G. Barbarian migrations and the Roman West, 376–568*. Cambridge, 2007.

the European continent, all resulted in fairly rapid, though not always immediate, state formation. The Lombards (or Longobards), for example, migrated for long distances overland, from the Lower Elbe region to Northern Italy. There are no historical or archaeological indicators of Lombard state formation during the first half of the sixth century when they settled in Pannonia, but only after conquest of, and settlement in, Italy from AD 568 onwards<sup>17</sup>. The cases of the Goths<sup>18</sup> and Vandals<sup>19</sup> are closely similar regarding the onset of state formation which happened only after settlement in former Roman territories with developed socio-political systems and large native populations. In the case of the Franks, their original short-distance migration across the Rhine, and the following expansion of their polity from what is now Belgium, made them the masters of much of Western Europe, and direct successors to the Roman Empire in these provinces<sup>20</sup>. The common features of these Continental cases are that these peoples took over Roman territories as going concerns; they had been exposed to Roman civilization to varying degrees before finally moving into Roman provinces; and they were already Christians when they made that final move. All these factors made it easier for them to establish functioning administrations, issue coins and raise taxes, and integrate the native populations into their polities. In terms of size, the historical sources imply that they made up around 10% of the native populations in their respective settlement areas, but with marked regional differences and concentrations<sup>21</sup>.

### **Scandinavian migrations (ninth — eleventh centuries AD)**

From around AD 800, Viking groups from Denmark and Norway moved into the British Isles, crossing the North Sea, and later the North Atlantic, in their robust and efficient sailing boats. They came from regions which had trading contacts to the British Isles, Western

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<sup>17</sup> *Menghin W.* Die Langobarden: Archäologie und Geschichte. Stuttgart, 1985.

<sup>18</sup> *Bierbrauer V.* Archäologie und Geschichte der Goten vom 1.–7. Jahrhundert. Versuch einer Bilanz // Frühmittelalterliche Studien. 1994. Vol. 28. P. 51–171; *Heather P.* The Goths. Oxford, 1996.

<sup>19</sup> Das Reich der Vandalen und seine (Vor-)Geschichten / Ed. G.M. Berndt. Wien, 2008; *Merrills A. and Miles R.* The Vandals. Malden, Mass., 2010.

<sup>20</sup> *Gregory of Tours.* Historia Francorum: Gregory of Tours. The History of the Franks / Transl. L. Thorpe. Harmondsworth, 1974; Die Franken: Wegbereiter Europas / Ed. A. Wiczorek. Mainz, 1996.

<sup>21</sup> *Musset L.* The Germanic invasions. L., 1975.

Europe and the countries around the Baltic Sea, and were undergoing processes of centralization towards regional kingdoms<sup>22</sup>. The Scandinavian incomers into the British Isles moved initially in small groups, most of them predominantly male, creating larger armies only later in the ninth century AD<sup>23</sup>. Discounting the initial phase of raiding across the British Isles, their activities and their impacts on the destination areas differed from region to region: occupation of land and urbanization in eastern and north-eastern England<sup>24</sup>; rural settlement in Scotland and on the northern and western isles<sup>25</sup>; trading and the introduction of urbanism in Ireland<sup>26</sup>. In all these regions, the pagan immigrants encountered Christian natives, sometimes in large numbers<sup>27</sup>. The Scandinavians probably numbered less than 10% in most regions<sup>28</sup>, with genetic evidence pointing to much higher proportions (up to 30% or more) in the Scottish isles and the Isle of Man<sup>29</sup>.

The socio-political outcomes of the Viking settlements varied, depending on numbers and types of activities. In Scotland and the isles, the incomers created earldoms which may have been similar to the Scandinavian pattern of pre-state organisation, intermarrying with natives, but with an elite leadership of Scandinavian descent<sup>30</sup>. In Ireland and northeast England, the towns of Dublin and York became centres of Viking kingdoms which had all the hallmarks of early states: they issued coins, raised taxes, concluded treaties, and sent armies out

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<sup>22</sup> Sawyer P. *The age of the Vikings*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. L., 1971.

<sup>23</sup> Loyn H.R. *The Vikings in Britain*. Oxford, 1994; Sawyer P. *Kings and Vikings : Scandinavia and Europe AD 700–1100*. L., 1982.

<sup>24</sup> Richards J. *The English Heritage Book of Viking Age England*. L., 1991.

<sup>25</sup> Graham-Campbell J. and Batey C.E. *Vikings in Scotland: An archaeological record*. Edinburgh, 1998; Sharples N.M. and Smith R. *Norse settlement in the Western Isles // Scandinavian Scotland — Twenty years after* / Ed. A. Woolf. St Andrews, 2009. 103–130.

<sup>26</sup> Edwards N. *The archaeology of early medieval Ireland*. L., 1990.

<sup>27</sup> *Cultures in contact: Scandinavian settlement in England in the ninth and tenth centuries* / Eds D.M. Hadley and J.D. Richards. Turnhout, 2000; Griffiths D. *Vikings of the Irish Sea: Conflict und assimilation AD 790–1050*. Stroud, 2010.

<sup>28</sup> Härke H. *Kings and warriors*.

<sup>29</sup> Goodacre S., Helgason A., Nicholson J., Southam L., Ferguson L., Hickey E., Vega E., Stefánsson K., Ward R. and Sykes B. Genetic evidence for a family-based Scandinavian settlement of Shetland und Orkney during the Viking period // *Heredity*. 2005. Vol. 95. P. 129–135.

<sup>30</sup> *Orkneyinga Saga* / Transl. Hermann Pálsson and P. Edwards. Harmondsworth, 1978; Barrett J.H. *The Norse in Scotland // The Viking world* / Ed. S. Brink and N. Price. L., 2008. P. 411–427.

on campaigns<sup>31</sup>. In these two cases, the identical outcomes of Viking settlement are interesting because the preconditions were different: Ireland (and Scotland) had seen no moves towards state formation before the Viking settlement, whereas the English kingdoms overrun and occupied by the Vikings were clearly early states. In Ireland, organized military resistance against the immigrants led to a slow, gradual process of native state formation, with more power vested in the hands of the previously nominal High King<sup>32</sup>. In England, the Anglo-Saxon reconquest of the Viking territories in the tenth century led to the unification of the country in a single state ruled by the dynasty of Wessex<sup>33</sup>.

How does this compare with other Viking migrations and expansions in the west? Scandinavian settlement in northern France led in the tenth century to the creation of a “modern”, efficiently administered state, with the Scandinavian elite becoming thoroughly acculturated and adopting French language and customs as well as Christian belief<sup>34</sup>. The conquest of Anglo-Saxon England in 1066 by these Normans and their multi-ethnic mercenaries (including Flemish and Bretons, in particular) was essentially the expansion of the Norman state<sup>35</sup>, but it created in England and Wales a “conquest society” divided sharply along ethnic lines, with the natives being in a legally, socially and politically inferior position<sup>36</sup>. The Viking migration to Iceland in the late ninth century was the colonization of a pristine, unsettled territory, and the outcome was the continuation of Scandinavian pre-state social organization, dominated by powerful families and their respective heads<sup>37</sup>.

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<sup>31</sup> *O’Corráin D.* Ireland before the Normans (Gill History of Ireland, 2). Dublin, 1972; *Richards J.* The English Heritage Book.

<sup>32</sup> The impact of the Scandinavian invasions on the Celtic-speaking peoples c. 800–1100 A.D. / Ed. B. O’Cuív. Dublin, 1983.

<sup>33</sup> Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: English historical documents c. 500–1042 / Ed. D. Whitelock. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. L.; N.Y., 1979; *Campbell J.* The Anglo-Saxon state. L., 2000.

<sup>34</sup> *Douglas D.* The rise of Normandy. Proceedings of the British Academy, 4th series. 1947. Vol. 33. P. 101–130; *Stenton F.M.* The Scandinavian colonies in England and Normandy. Transactions of the Royal Historical Society. 1945. Vol. 27. P. 1–12.

<sup>35</sup> *Golding B.* Conquest and colonisation: The Normans in Britain, 1066–1100. N.Y., 1994.

<sup>36</sup> *Garnett G.* Franci et Angli: the legal distinctions between peoples after the conquest. Anglo-Norman Studies. 1985. Vol. 8. P. 109–137.

<sup>37</sup> Landnámabók Íslands / Ed. Finnur Jónsson. Copenhagen, 1925. (English translation: Book of the settlement of Iceland / Transl. T. Ellwood. Kendal, 1898.); *Jones G.* The Norse Atlantic Saga. Oxford, 1964.



## Conclusions

The cases discussed above demonstrate that early medieval migrations in the west did not necessarily lead to state formation. This highlights that the assumption of such a link is derived to a large extent from written sources which often present a biased narrative serving as a conquest or foundation myth for medieval dynasties and states<sup>38</sup>. The Anglo-Saxon case shows that in such narratives the same elites may be represented as the legitimate descendants of Germanic migrants (Fig. 2), and — under different historical circumstances — as heroic defenders against the next wave of Viking migrants and invaders (Fig. 3).



*Fig. 3. King Alfred fighting the Vikings in AD 877 at Swanage Bay (mural in the entrance hall of Westminster Palace, late 1930s)*

A critical examination of the evidence, both historical and archaeological, suggests a varied and complex pattern. Where state formation resulted from migration, it seems to have been a consequence of the earlier level of socio-political organisation of immigrants and

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<sup>38</sup> *Härke H. Conquest ideology, ritual, and material culture // Image, memory and monumentality. Archaeological engagements with the material world: A celebration of the academic achievements of Professor Richard Bradley (Prehistoric Society Research Paper 5) / Eds A.M. Jones, J. Pollard, M.J. Allen and J. Gardiner. Oxford; Oakville, 2012. P. 108–115.*

natives in each case: where the natives already had a complex social organisation or offered organized opposition to the immigration, state formation encompassing the immigrants was much more likely than in other cases. But even if a state did not result, immediately or with some delay, from an immigration situation, some social change among the migrants is likely because migrations require organisational leadership. Thus, permanent leaders and kings emerged among the Anglo-Saxons in England while the Old Saxons in the North German homelands continued their system of elected war leaders (dukes) in the absence of kingship<sup>39</sup>. On the other hand, the case of the colonization of Iceland shows that profound social change should not be expected in all cases of long-distance mobility.

Thus, while state formation was not a necessary outcome of migration, it may have been a likely consequence where immigrants encountered native populations. One of the reasons might lie in the nature of segmentary (tribal) organisation: it presupposes social links and shared ancestry among the lineages of the tribe, with all its members tracing themselves back to a real or imaginary ancestor<sup>40</sup>. This imposes size limitations: the largest segmentary societies recorded by ethnographers have sizes of about one million, with smaller sizes being much more typical<sup>41</sup>. There are also restrictions in terms of identity: large numbers of alien natives (or immigrants) cannot easily be integrated into a social group identity built on kinship and descent<sup>42</sup>.

Where immigration leads to conquest, one possible solution is that the native population is summarily reduced to the status of slaves who are attached to the households of lineage members; it seems that this was temporarily the case after the Anglo-Saxon immigration into England<sup>43</sup>. The alternative for multi-component populations, with sub-populations

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<sup>39</sup> *Capelle T.* Die Sachsen des frühen Mittelalters. Darmstadt; Stuttgart, 1998.

<sup>40</sup> *Fried M.H.* The notion of tribe. San Francisco, 1975; *Service E.R.* Primitive social organisation. N.Y., 1962.

<sup>41</sup> *Barnard A. and Spencer J.* Routledge encyclopedia of social and cultural anthropology. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. L., 2010.

<sup>42</sup> See Kinship and social organisation (American Museum Sourcebooks in Anthropology, 10) / Eds P. Bohannan and J. Middleton. Garden City, N.Y., 1968; *Mair L.* Primitive government. Harmondsworth, 1962.

<sup>43</sup> *Härke H.* Early Anglo-Saxon social structure // The Anglo-Saxons from the Migration Period to the eighth century: an ethnographic perspective (Studies in Historical Archaeoethnology, 2) / Ed. J. Hines. Woodbridge, 1997. P. 125–170; *Thomas M.G., Stumpf M.P.H. and Härke H.* Evidence for an apartheid-like social structure.

of roughly equal status (though not necessarily of equal size), would be the creation of a joint state based on a common ideology, such as afforded by Christianity in early medieval western Europe.

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#### МИГРАЦИИ И ОБРАЗОВАНИЕ ГОСУДАРСТВА В ПЕРИОД РАННЕГО СРЕДНЕВЕКОВЬЯ: ВЗГЛЯД С ЗАПАДА

*Аннотация:* Миграции «племен» и подвижность элит фигурируют во многих повествованиях о становлении государства и формировании наций. Но часто встречающееся утверждение, что миграции в период раннего Средневековья непременно вели к образованию государства, не выдерживает критики, если применить его к тому, что происходило в Западной Европе между V и XI вв. Миграции этого периода заканчивались по-разному. Исследования по данной теме, обсуждаемые в статье, касаются англосаксонской иммиграции в Англию и прочих миграций V–VII вв. в Западной Европе, а также иммиграции викингов на Британские острова, равно как и прочих миграций скандинавов в IX–XI вв. на западе Европы. Все эти случаи свидетельствуют, что миграция не всегда приводила к образованию государства. Но даже если до образования государства дело не доходило, не исключено, что среди мигрантов возникали социальные изменения, поскольку во главе мигрантов обязательно стоял вождь.

Государство образуется, скорее всего, только тогда, когда иммигранты встречаются с местным населением, занимающим более высокий уровень общественного развития. Одной из причин мог быть характер сегментар-

ной (племенной) организации: она предполагает общественные племенные связи и общих предков в составляющих племя линиджах. Этим объясняются ограничения численности, а также (и это важнее) ограничения в смысле идентичности. Вследствие завоевания иммигрантами (или иммигрантской элитой) местное население порой превращалось в рабов, прикрепленных к хозяйствам членов линиджей и работавших на них. Альтернативой могло быть образование единого государства, основанного на общей идеологии (в период раннего Средневековья в Западной Европе такой идеологией стало христианство).

*Ключевые слова:* англосаксы, викинги, миграция, колонизация, формирование государства