



State of Russia in the 9th - early 10th centuries

On the territory occupied by Slavic tribes, two Russian state centers were formed: Kiev and Novgorod, each of which controlled a certain part of the trade route "from the Varangians to the Greeks." In 862, according to The Tale of Bygone Years, the Novgorodians, wishing to end the internecine struggle that had begun, invited the Varangian princes to rule Novgorod. The Varangian prince Rurik, who arrived at the request of the Novgorodians, became the founder of the Russian princely dynasty. The date of the formation of the ancient Russian state is conventionally considered 882, when Prince Oleg, who seized power in Novgorod after Rurik's death, undertook a campaign against Kiev

After killing Askold and Dir who were ruling there, he united the northern and southern lands into a single state. The legend about the vocation of the Varangian princes served as the basis for the creation of the so-called Norman theory of the emergence of the ancient Russian state. According to this theory, the Russians turned to the Normans (as the natives of Scandinavia were then called) in order for them to put things in order on Russian soil. In response, three princes came to Russia: Rurik, Sineus and Truvor. After the death of the brothers, Rurik united the entire Novgorod land under his rule.

He ruled with the help of a council of other princes and warriors. The collection of tribute was carried out by the Grand Duke himself with the help of the senior squad (the so-called boyars, men). The prince had a younger squad (greedy, youths). The most ancient form of collecting tribute was "polyudye". In late autumn, the prince traveled around the lands subject to him, collecting tribute and judging. There was no clearly established norm for the delivery of tribute. The prince spent the whole winter going round the lands and collecting tribute. In the summer, the prince and his retinue usually made military campaigns, subjugating the Slavic tribes and fighting with their neighbors. Gradually, more and more of the princely warriors became landowners. They ran their own economy, exploiting the labor of the peasants they enslaved.

Gradually, such vigilantes became stronger and could in the future resist the Grand Duke both with their own retinues and with their economic strength. The social and class structure of the early feudal state of Rus was indistinct. The class of feudal lords was variegated in composition. These were the Grand Duke with his entourage, representatives of the senior squad, the prince's inner circle - boyars, local princes. The dependent population included slaves (people who lost their freedom as a result of sales, debts, etc.), servants (those who lost their freedom as a result of captivity), purchases (peasants who received a "kupu" from the boyar - a loan with money, grain or by draft), etc. The bulk of the rural population was made up of free community members, smerds. As their lands were seized, they turned into feudal-dependent people.