

## MECHANISMS OF EARLY SOCIAL EVOLUTION: FROM PALEOLITHIC TO STATEHOOD

*The article focuses on the main driving forces and mechanisms of the first major socio-evolutionary transitions after the end of anthropogenesis: from the Upper Paleolithic and Mesolithic to the Neolithic, then to barbarian chiefdoms and to early states. Particular attention is paid to the changing role of organized violence and shifts in mentality (from myths to epics and religions). The definition of the state and the criteria of statehood remain debatable. On the basis of R. Carneiro's criticism of M. Weber's classical definition as well as M. Berent's original concept of the non-state status of ancient Greek polities, a synthetic definition of the state was proposed by adding a new characteristic to those identified by Carneiro and Weber: a formal structure of governing positions, independent of kinship relations, which is reproduced in generations. The author highlights the typical features of early states, which distinguish them both from the preceding stage of chiefdoms and from mature statehood. It is shown that the importance of kinship persisted throughout the further development of political systems, in particular in such specific forms as bureaucratized parochialism ('mestnichestvo').*

**Keywords:** social evolution, Neolithic Revolution, chiefdoms, chiefdoms, signs of statehood, definition of the state, monopoly of violence, structure of managerial positions, early states

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