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FROM SITE ON TRADE ROUTE TO KEY ROYAL CITY

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The second half of the Xth century was a time when the “trading cities” moved under the royal power. Profits from trade that went along the Dnieper gradually became a source of power for the rulers of Kyiv. As in the North of Europe in the East, uncontrollable trade factors here become the mainstay of royal power. The city of Tropol, which is located on the Dnieper, was first mentioned in written sources at Xith century as belonging to the Kyivan prince. However, there is reason to believe that it was founded earlier and is known from the runic inscription as Ustaholm. Archaeological research here shows the existence of the city on an area of about 30 hectares. This is the third largest settlement at this time on this section of the Dnieper. It had three lines of fortifications and a special channel with the “Water Gates” around, possibly used as a harbor for ships. There are three types of sites on the Dnieper, which functioned to provide a way across the Dnieper. These are open settlements, fortresses, fortified harbors. The time of their appearance can be attributed to the Xth century. Some of them were clearly outside the jurisdiction of the princes of Kyiv. However, from the end of the Xth and during the first half of the XIth century. all these points were conquered by them. It was then that cities grew around some fortresses, and in between new fortresses were built, which marked the new borders of Kiev's royal power, which moved to the South. These boundaries were defined in more detail by a large-scale defense system known as “serpent`s ramparts” - an analogue of Danevirke.

Keywords

city, royal power, Rus, Dnipro, trade route, control

Note/comment