

1054



Yaropolk I of Kyiv

The period beginning with the reign of Yaropolk I Sviatoslavych (972-980), was an era of internal consolidation. In 980, he was killed by his brother Volodymyr the Great, who seized power with the help of Varangian mercenaries. Kyivan Rus' became one of the pre-eminent states of Europe. In 988, Volodymyr adopted Christianity as the official religion of Rus', which facilitated the spreading of Byzantine culture throughout the state, and reinforced the political unity and cultural cohesion of Rus'.



Volodymyr the Great

Volodymyr the Great died in 1015. His son Sviatopolk the Accursed killed three of his brothers and seized power, but he was opposed in a bitter war. At first, Polish prince Bolesław I the Brave helped Sviatopolk, but took the opportunity to capture the Cherven towns from Rus'. When Sviatopolk abandoned this alliance, his brother Yaroslav the Wise captured Kyiv with an army of Varangians.



Sviatopolk I

A series of wars followed between Yaroslav the Wise and his brother Mstyslav Volodymyrovych, who had developed an important power base as prince of Tmutarakan. The two brothers ruled jointly, until Mstyslav died without an heir in 1036, leaving Yaroslav the Wise as grand prince of a reunited Rus'.



Yaroslav the Wise

Yaroslav the Wise's reign as unchallenged grand prince (1036-1054) was one of the highest points in the history of Rus'. The process of internal consolidation was greatly furthered by Yaroslav the Wise's codification of the law in Ruskaia Pravda. Culture flourished: the magnificent Saint Sophia Cathedral was built in Kyiv, the Kyivan Cave Monastery (Pechersk Lavra) was founded, a library was established, and learning and education were encouraged. Yaroslav the Wise also appointed the first local hierarch as Kyivan metropolitan, thus asserting Kyiv's independence of Constantinople.

(sources: britannica.com and encyclopediaofukraine.com)

