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WHICH WAS CHRISTIANIZED IN 988**



Third revised edition

1988

**UKRAINIAN FESTIVAL COMMITTEE
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND**



Map: H. Kolodiy

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St. Volodymyr the Great

Bohdan F. Kortschmaryk

IT WAS RUCE-UKRAINE AND NOT RUSSIA WHICH WAS CHRISTIANIZED IN 988

In 1988 Ukrainians throughout the world celebrate their Millennium of Christianization of Ruce-Ukraine.¹

A thousand years ago, in the year 988, Ruce-Ukraine and its people formally accepted Christianity. Surprisingly, if not ironically, the atheistic government of the Soviet Union, the Moscow Russian Orthodox Church and the entire Russian Community in the diaspora are spreading historically unsubstantiated, unjustified propaganda and are desperately attempting to convince a misinformed world that in 988 it was Russia, and not Ukraine and the Ukrainian people, that accepted Christianity.

It is necessary, therefore, to explain some of the most significant, factual and well-documented information concerning the celebration of the "millennium" of Russian Christianity. The Russian celebration cannot withstand historical and scientific criticism since this involves examination of accurately recorded history, particularly at the end of the first half and the beginning of the second half of the thirteenth century.

This is done for two basic and principal reasons. First, to clearly underscore the historical fact that Kyivan² Ruce was not the cradle of three Slavic brethren nations,³ as most of the Russian and pro-Russian researchers are, at all costs, trying to convince a misinformed world; and secondly, that the reader may clearly comprehend the historical fact that the commencement of Muscovite-Russian national identity is rooted only, and exclusively, in the Principality of Muscovy, whose "true founder... was the son of Nevsky, Daniel" (1263-1303), who almost three centuries after Kyiv and Ruce-Ukraine formally adopted

¹ Geoffrey Chaucer's (c.1340-1400) spelling of the term Ruce is used for three fundamental and important reasons. First, Ruce is an historical and natural term native to the English language of the Medieval period, its usage being almost contemporaneous with the existence of the Kyivan Empire-state itself. Second, the term Ruce cannot be readily confused with the term Russia. Finally, the term Ruce cannot be manipulated by the distorters and falsifiers of Ruce-Ukrainian history as can be the terms Rus or Rus'.

² Transliterated from the Ukrainian, the terms Kyiv, Kyivan, and Dnipro are used in lieu of the russified terms Kiev, Kievan, and Dnieper throughout this paper.

³ B.F. Kortschmaryk, *Russian Interpretation of Ukrainian Historical Source Materials*, Shevchenko Scientific Society, Paper No. 37, New York, 1974, pp. 6-10.

Christianity, "made Moscow his political capital."⁴ The distinguished Russian historian, V.O. Kluchevskii, emphasizes that was precisely the youngest son of Alexander Nevsky, "Daniel, (who) became the forefather of the Principality of Muscovy."⁵

In particular, one must be clearly aware that when the northeastern lands of the European East, inhabited by heterogeneous Ugro-Finnic tribes, were part of the vast Kyivan Empire, these tribes, according to the chronicles, not only before the Mongolo-Tatar invasion, but also after the complete fall of the Kyivan Empire, continued to preserve their respective original territorial and ethnic identities consequently remaining "Chudian," "Myrianian," "Muromian," "Mordovian," "Riazanian," "Rostovian," and "Rostovo-Suzdalian," but never "Muscovian" or "Great Russian."⁶

Certainly, a definite portion of the northeastern lands of Eastern Europe that were former colonies of the Kyivan Empire may be considered and called Muscovite as of the second half of the thirteenth century, but not yet Great Russian, concordant with the creation of the Principality of Muscovy, which appears no earlier than 1263 and 1282 (i.e. in those times when Kyivan Ruce no longer existed as a singular multinational entity).

Concerning the beginnings of the true and factual creation of the Muscovite nation, at first within the framework of the Principality of Muscovy and eventually within the boundaries of the always aggressive Muscovite tsardom (which at the time of Peter I was transformed into the "Russian Empire"), the English language edition of *Outline History of the USSR*, published in Moscow in 1960, clearly and unequivocally states that "the Russian nation began to take form in the 17th century."

⁴ V. Milkovich, "Vostochnaia Yevropa" *Istoria Cheloviechestva*, G. Gel'molt, second edition, SPB., 1903, Vol. V, p. 509; V. Kluchevskii, *Kurs russkoi istorii*, 3rd ed. Moscow, 1925, No. 2, p. 13; *Patriarchal (Nikon) Chronicle, Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei*, Moscow, 1965, Vol. X, p. 143; F.B. Kortschmaryk, *Christianization of the European East and Messianic Aspiration of Moscow as the "Third Rome."* Toronto-New York, 1971, p. 10; V.A. Kuchkin, *Formirovanie gosudarstvennoi territorii severno-vostochnoi Rusi v X-XIV vv. AN SSSR, Inst. Istarii. Moscow, 1984, p. 316; Jerome Blum, Lord and Peasants in Russia. Princeton University Press. Princeton, 1961, p. 67: "The story of the rise of the Muscovite dynasty... began... when Daniel, youngest son of Alexander Nevsky... was made prince of the provincial town of Moscow, thereby converting it into the capital of an independent albeit small and unimportant, principality."*

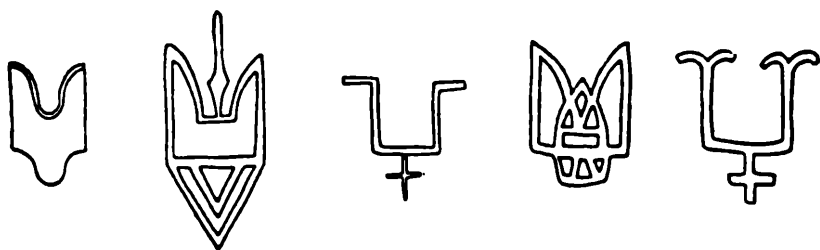
⁵ V. Kluchevskii, *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁶ B.F. Kortschmaryk, *Concepia M. Hrushevskoho ta "orhanichna" cilst.* W. Sh. London, 1977, No. 6, p. 754; *Lavrentian Chronicle, Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei*, Moscow, 1962, Vol. I, pp. 460 and 470; *Patriarchal (Nikon) Chronicle, Ibid.*, Vol. X, pp. 105, 106, 109 and 114; *Vladimirian Chronicle*, P.S.R.L. Moscow, 1965, Vol. 30, pp. 87-90; *Uvarov Chronicle*, P.S.R.L. Moscow-Leningrad, 1963, Vol. XXVIII, pp. 210 and 211.

⁷ *Outline History of the U.S.S.R.*, Translated from the Russian by George H. Hanna. Moscow, 1960, p. 85; Richard Hallie, *Slavery in Russia, 1450-1725.* The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1982, p. 392.

Clarifying these fundamental and well-documented historical points, pertaining primarily to the creation of the Principality of Muscovy and the beginnings of the formation of the Russian nation, it is also prudent to focus upon the erroneous and unfounded emphasis of some researchers on the alleged fact, that in the second half of the 12th century Kyivan Christianity, already extant, was in opposition to "Christianity in Moscow."

This incorrect methodological approach is a matter of utmost importance mainly for the following reasons. Firstly, Moscow, until the creation of the Principality of Muscovy, had no significant political, let alone cultural-religious, role in Eastern Europe. Secondly, Muscovite Christianity began to separate from that of Kyiv only in the first half of the 14th century, after Constantinople authorities tendentiously relocated the historically traditional Kyivan Metropolitan See (Metropolitanate) to Moscow (1326). Moreover, this later epoch is notable not only for the commencement of the formation of a separate Muscovite nation, but also for the emergence of a separate Russian Church which progressively became the main tool of Russian (Muscovite) rulers in achieving their far-reaching political goals. Ukrainian-Russian mutual relations began only after the creation of the Principality of Muscovy, and were initially made manifest by a struggle between the Halych-Volynian Kingdom and the Principality of Muscovy for the historically traditional Kyivan Metropolitan See.



Various forms of the national emblem of Kyivan Ruce-Ukraine.

Taking into account that the northeastern lands of Europe, inhabited by heterogeneous Ugro-Finnic and Baltic tribes, continued to preserve their respective territorial and ethnic identities, then by the same logic, Christianity and the highly developed Kyivan culture spread directly from Kyiv to the lands of the Chudian, Myrianian, Muromian, Mordovian, Riazanian, Rostovian and Suzdalian peoples, but in no instance to Muscovy or "Great Russia," because the strict existence of such a territory prior to the creation of the Principality of Muscovy is not confirmed by any of the chronicles.

In light of the afore-cited facts, it is emphasized that the entire "millennial" celebration of Christianity in "Russia" does not withstand even the smallest scientific or historiographic criticism.



Coins of Volodymyr the Great showing him on the throne (obverse) and trident symbol on the reverse side.

Furthermore, a most effective and convincing argumentation defending historical truth (particularly in clarifying the tendentious celebration of the "millennium" of Christianity by Russia) are three historically reliable and irrefutable facts. First, when Volodymyr the Great, whom the Ukrainian Church recognized as its apostle-saint, with the aid of clergy from Kyivan Ruce-Ukraine, Bulgaria, and Greece in 988 conducted the official Christianization of Kyivan Ruce-Ukraine, neither Moscow, nor Russia, nor all the more a Russian nation, as such, existed.

Second, the basin of the Moscow river (the later nucleus of Muscovy and Russia) was initiated at that time by war-like Balts known as Galindians, who had successfully resisted incorporation into Volodymyr's Empire, and owed him neither allegiance nor tribute.⁸ These people manifested no inclination whatsoever towards an early importation of Ruce-Ukrainian culture or spirituality. Most of them were still sun-worshipping pagans with little knowledge of Slavonic speech when Batu Khan's hordes conquered Kyiv and put an end to its brilliant medieval civilization (1240).

Third, Volodymyr, as the distinguished Russian academician E. Golubinskii states clearly, "Christianized only half of the Ruce," that is only Ruce proper, "and left unchristianized the other half," that is the colonial lands, "which by its population was foreign as the provinces of Rostov and Murom with the greater part of the province of Novgorod, or even if Slavic, was not Rucen, as the land of the Viatichians,"⁹

Finally, when taking into account that "the beginnings of the formation of the Russian (or more properly, Muscovite) nation are tightly intertwined with the creation of the Principality of Muscovy and conditioned with the voluntary and forced intermixing of the "slavonicized" Ugro-Finnic tribes with Mongolo-Tartars,"¹⁰ by the same token the actual and true "cradle" of the Muscovite nation was not

⁸ G.D. Knysh, "Eastern Slavs and the Christian Millennium of 1988," *Studia Ukrainica* 3, University of Ottawa Press, 1986, pp. 13-35. Also published in booklet form by the Central Jubilee Committee of the Ukrainian Catholic Church (Winnipeg), 1987, pp. 15-18.

⁹ E. Golubinskii, *Istoria russkoi tserkvi*, Moscow, 1901, Vol. I, p. 198.

¹⁰ V. Milkovich, *Ibid.*, Vol. V., p. 506; V. Kluchevskii, *op. cit.* Moscow, 1937. No. 1, p. 309; B.F. Kortschmaryk, *Concepcia*, *Ibid.*, p. 754.



Golden coin of
Volodymyr the Great



Silver coin of
Yaroslav the Wise

Kyivan Ruce, but only, and almost exclusively, the Mongolo-Tatar Empire with which the Muscovite rulers fostered intimate cooperation,¹¹ and whose political principles they absorbed and made their own. The consequences of this Mongol training have endured until current times, and have become a major threat to the entire free world.

It is a historical truth that the Kyivan Ruce (Old Ukraine) was already a powerful nation in the mid-ninth century, when it became a major concern even to Byzantium itself. The fact that the great Kyivan prince, Askold, in 860 waged a naval campaign against Constantinople (his fleet being comprised of 200 warships, as written in the chronicles), bears witness to the undisputed strength of Kyivan Ruce in the ninth century.

During the rule of Yaroslav the Wise (1019-1054), the son of Volodymyr the Great, the Kyivan Ruce Empire was at the peak of its development and ranked among the greatest, strongest, richest and most cultured world powers.

It has to be noted that medieval historians, both Ukrainian and foreign, have very perceptively characterized the opinion of European rulers about the might of Kyivan Ruce, by emphasizing that for that very reason these rulers strived to become dynastically linked with the Kyivan Ruce monarchs.

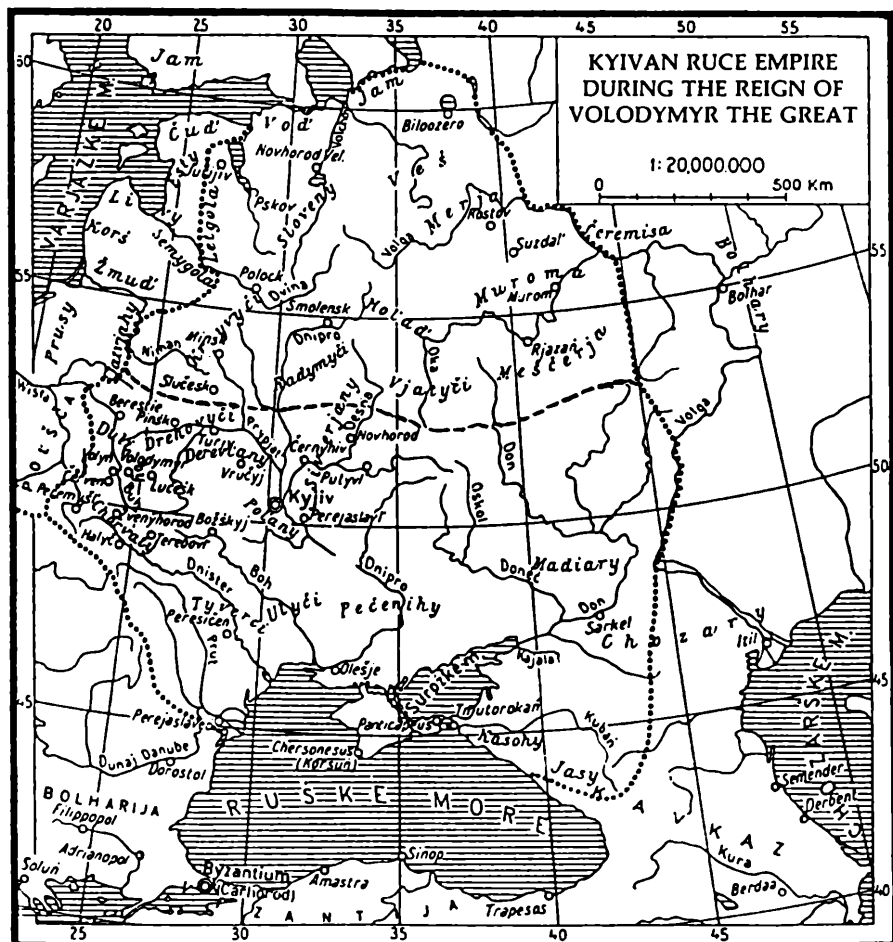
The French historian Levesques, quoting the words of Bishop Gautier Saveriaux (who as the head of the French royal delegation traveled to Kyiv to ask for the hand of Anna, the daughter of Yaroslav the Wise), wrote: "This Land," namely the Kyivan Ruce, "is more unified, happier, stronger and more civilized than France herself" (1048).

The contemporary English historian E.A. Harvey, explaining among other things, why European rulers strived at all costs to become dynastically related to the Kyivan imperial throne, echoes this ancient evaluation when he enthusiastically exclaims:

¹¹ I.D. Byliaiv, *O dokhodakh Moscovskaho gosudarstva*. SPB., 1884. No. 4, p. 27; V. Kluchevskii, *Ibid.*, Vol. II. pp. 22 and 44; M.K. Liubavskii, *Leksii po drevnei russkoi istorii do kontsa XIV veka*. Moscow, 1915, p. 218.

"Let us now go East to Old Ruce, to Kyiv, Golden Kyiv, second only in glory to the Imperial City of Constantinople itself. Standing on her three hills above the broad Dniπρο, she knew a civilization and culture that most nations of the West only dreamed about. She was rich, prosperous, progressive, and deeply religious...."

As has been shown, the 988-1988 Millennium of Christianity celebration is historically, uniquely and exclusively a Ukrainian, not Russian, celebration and heritage. Ukrainians world-wide welcome others to share in their proud celebration.



LEGEND: Borders of Kyivan Ruce Empire. --- Ruce proper and colonies dividing line.

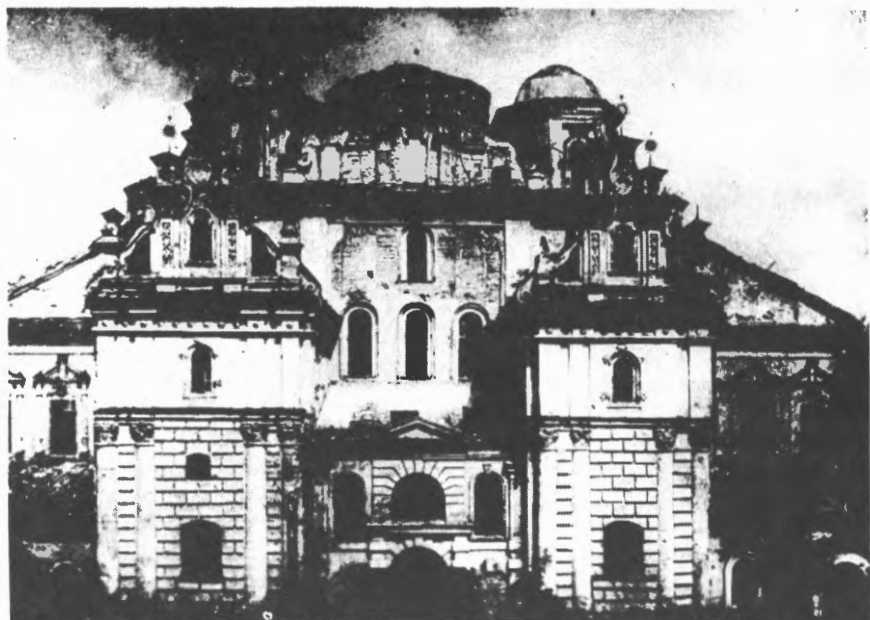


St. Sophia's Cathedral in Kyiv,
built by Yaroslav the Wise and dedicated in 1037.



St. George's Cathedral in Lviv.

SOVIET-RUSSIAN PERSECUTION OF RELIGION IN UKRAINE



St. Michael's Church in Kyiv during its demolition by the Soviet Russian Government in 1934-36



The Iconostasis of St. Michael's Church in Kyiv. It was remodeled in 1718, although the Church itself was built in 1108-1113. In 1934-36 the Russian Communists razed the Church.



St. Michael's Church within the gold-roofed Monastery in Kyiv, built in 1108-1113. The picture was taken during the independent Ukrainian National Republic in 1917. The Church was demolished by the Soviet Russian Government in 1934-36.



The ruins of a part of the Pecherska Lavra which the Bolsheviks destroyed by explosion in 1941.



The Assumption Church in the Monastery of the Caves (Pecherska Lavra), in Kyiv, built in 1078, destroyed in 1941.



The portals of the Holy Epiphany Church in Kyiv. The Church, founded by Hetman Ivan Mazepa in 1690-1693, was demolished in an anti-religious campaign by the Soviet Russian Government in 1935.



Church on the Economic Gates of the Pecherska Lavra, 1696-1698. The Kyivan Monastery of the Caves, "cleared" of monks in 1961.



Transfiguration of Our Lord Church in Chernihiv, erected 1036, destroyed in 1934.



Queen Anna, daughter of Yaroslav the Wise
and wife of French King Henry I.



King Yaroslav the Wise and his family, fresco in
St. Sophia, 11th century. In center is Anna
Yaroslavna, the future Queen of France