

= Sviatoslav I of Kiev =

Sviatoslav I Igorevich ( Old East Slavic : ? ~ ??????? / ?????????? ?????????? , Sventoslav? / Svantoslav? Igorevi?? ; Old Norse : Sveinald Ingvarsson ; Russian : ?????????? ?????????? , Sviatoslav Igorevich ; Ukrainian : ?????????? ?????????? , Sviatoslav Ihorovych ; Belarusian : ?????????? ?????????? , Sviatasla? Iharavich ; Bulgarian : ?????????? , Svetoslav , Greek : ??????????????? , Sphendosthlabos ) ( c . 942 ? March 972 ) , also spelled Svyatoslav , Grand prince of Kiev . The son of Igor of Kiev and Olga , Sviatoslav is famous for his persistent campaigns in the east and south , which precipitated the collapse of two great powers of Eastern Europe , Khazaria and the First Bulgarian Empire . He also conquered numerous East Slavic tribes , defeated the Alans and attacked the Volga Bulgars , and at times was allied with the Pechenegs and Magyars .

His decade @-@ long reign over the Kievan Rus ' was marked by rapid expansion into the Volga River valley , the Pontic steppe , and the Balkans . By the end of his short life , Sviatoslav carved out for himself the largest state in Europe , eventually moving his capital in 969 from Kiev ( modern @-@ day Ukraine ) to Pereyaslavets ( identified as the modern village of Nuf?ru , Romania ) on the Danube . In contrast with his mother 's conversion to Christianity , Sviatoslav remained a staunch pagan all of his life . Due to his abrupt death in ambush , his conquests , for the most part , were not consolidated into a functioning empire , while his failure to establish a stable succession led to a fratricidal feud among his three sons , resulting in two of them being killed .

= = Name = =

Sviatoslav is the first ruler of the Kievan Rus ' recorded in the Primary Chronicle with a name of Slavic origin ( as opposed to his predecessors , whose names derived from Old Norse ) . This name , however , is not recorded in other medieval Slavic countries . Nevertheless , Sveinald is the Old East Norse cognate with the Slavic form as attested in the patronymic Old East Norse name of Vladimir : Valdamarr Sveinaldsson . This patronymic naming convention , continues namely in Icelandic and in East Slavic languages . Even in Rus ' , it was attested only among the members of the house of Rurik , as were the names of Sviatoslav 's immediate successors : Vladimir , Yaroslav , and Mstislav . This is questionable , however , as these names follow conventions well established in other Slavic lands , and it ignores Vladimir of Bulgaria , who ruled between 889 @-@ 893 . Some scholars speculate that the name of Sviatoslav , composed of the Slavic roots for " holy " and " glory " , was an artificial derivation combining those of his predecessors Oleg and Rurik ( they mean " holy " and " glorious " in Old Norse , respectively ) . On the other hand , such a compound structure name was already known from Great Moravia , as in the rulers named Svatopluk . Clearly Sviatoslav 's name belongs to this tradition , as he had a son by the name of Yaropolk , of much the same form , and a grandson by the same name , Sviatopolk .

= = Early life and personality = =

Virtually nothing is known about Sviatoslav 's childhood and youth , which he spent reigning in Novgorod . Sviatoslav 's father , Igor , was killed by the Drevlians around 945 , and his mother , Olga , ruled as regent in Kiev until Sviatoslav reached maturity ( ca . 963 ) . Sviatoslav was tutored by a Varangian named Asmud . The tradition of employing Varangian tutors for the sons of ruling princes survived well into the 11th century . Sviatoslav appears to have had little patience for administration . His life was spent with his družina ( roughly , " company " ) in permanent warfare against neighboring states . According to the Primary Chronicle , he carried on his expeditions neither wagons nor kettles , and he boiled no meat , rather cutting off small strips of horseflesh , game , or beef to eat after roasting it on the coals . Nor did he have a tent , rather spreading out a horse @-@ blanket under him and setting his saddle under his head , and all his retinue did likewise .

Sviatoslav 's appearance has been described very clearly by Leo the Deacon , who himself

attended the meeting of Sviatoslav with John I Tzimiskes . Following Deacon 's memories , Sviatoslav was a blue @-@ eyed male of average height but of stalwart build , much more sturdy than Tzimiskes . He shaved his blond head and his beard but wore a bushy mustache and a sidelock as a sign of his nobility . He preferred to dress in white , and it was noted that his garments were much cleaner than those of his men , although he had a lot in common with his warriors . He wore a single large gold earring bearing a carbuncle and two pearls .

= = Religious beliefs = =

Sviatoslav 's mother , Olga , converted to Eastern Orthodox Christianity at the court of Byzantine Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus in 957 . However , Sviatoslav remained a pagan all of his life . In the treaty of 971 between Sviatoslav and the Byzantine emperor John I Tzimiskes , the Rus ' are swearing by Perun and Veles . According to the Primary Chronicle , he believed that his warriors ( druzhina ) would lose respect for him and mock him if he became a Christian . The allegiance of his warriors was of paramount importance in his conquest of an empire that stretched from the Volga to the Danube .

= = Family = =

Very little is known of Sviatoslav 's family life . It is possible that he was not the only ( or the eldest ) son of his parents . The Russo @-@ Byzantine treaty of 945 mentions a certain Predslava , Volodislav 's wife , as the noblest of the Rus ' women after Olga . The fact that Predslava was Oleg 's mother is presented by Vasily Tatishchev . He also speculated that Predslava was of a Hungarian nobility . George Vernadsky was among many historians to speculate that Volodislav was Igor 's eldest son and heir who died at some point during Olga 's regency . Another chronicle told that Oleg ( ? - 944 ? ) was the eldest son of Igor . At the time of Igor 's death , Sviatoslav was still a child , and he was raised by his mother or under her instructions . Her influence , however , did not extend to his religious observance .

Sviatoslav had several children , but the origin of his wives is not specified in the chronicle . By his wives , he had Yaropolk and Oleg . By Malusha , a woman of indeterminate origins , Sviatoslav had Vladimir , who would ultimately break with his father 's paganism and convert Rus ' to Christianity . John Skylitzes reported that Vladimir had a brother named Sfengus ; whether this Sfengus was a son of Sviatoslav , a son of Malusha by a prior or subsequent husband , or an unrelated Rus ' nobleman is unclear .

= = Eastern campaigns = =

Shortly after his accession to the throne , Sviatoslav began campaigning to expand Rus ' control over the Volga valley and the Pontic steppe region . His greatest success was the conquest of Khazaria , which for centuries had been one of the strongest states of Eastern Europe . The sources are not clear about the roots of the conflict between Khazaria and Rus ' , so several possibilities have been suggested . The Rus ' had an interest in removing the Khazar hold on the Volga trade route because the Khazars collected duties from the goods transported by the Volga . Historians have suggested that the Byzantine Empire may have incited the Rus ' against the Khazars , who fell out with the Byzantines after the persecutions of the Jews in the reign of Romanus I Lecapenus .

Sviatoslav began by rallying the East Slavic vassal tribes of the Khazars to his cause . Those who would not join him , such as the Vyatichs , were attacked and forced to pay tribute to the Kievan Rus ' rather than to the Khazars . According to a legend recorded in the Primary Chronicle , Sviatoslav sent a message to the Vyatich rulers , consisting of a single phrase : " I want to come at you ! " ( Old East Slavic : " ????? ?? ?? ??? " ) This phrase is used in modern Russian ( usually misquoted as " ??? ?? ?? " ) and in modern Ukrainian ( " ??? ?? ?? " ) to denote an unequivocal declaration of one 's intentions . Proceeding by the Oka and Volga rivers , he attacked Volga Bulgaria . He employed Oghuz and Pecheneg mercenaries in this campaign , perhaps to counter the superior cavalry of the

Khazars and Bulgars .

Sviatoslav destroyed the Khazar city of Sarkel around 965 , possibly sacking ( but not occupying ) the Khazar city of Kerch on the Crimea as well . At Sarkel he established a Rus ' settlement called Belaya Vyezha ( " the white tower " or " the white fortress " , the East Slavic translation for " Sarkel " ) . He subsequently destroyed the Khazar capital of Atil . A visitor to Atil wrote soon after Sviatoslav 's campaign : " The Rus ' attacked , and no grape or raisin remained , not a leaf on a branch . " The exact chronology of his Khazar campaign is uncertain and disputed ; for example , Mikhail Artamonov and David Christian proposed that the sack of Sarkel came after the destruction of Atil .

Although Ibn Haukal reports the sack of Samandar by Sviatoslav , the Rus ' leader did not bother to occupy the Khazar heartlands north of the Caucasus Mountains permanently . On his way back to Kiev , Sviatoslav chose to strike against the Ossetians and force them into subservience . Therefore , Khazar successor statelets continued their precarious existence in the region . The destruction of Khazar imperial power paved the way for Kievan Rus ' to dominate north @-@ south trade routes through the steppe and across the Black Sea , routes that formerly had been a major source of revenue for the Khazars . Moreover , Sviatoslav 's campaigns led to increased Slavic settlement in the region of the Saltovo @-@ Mayaki culture , greatly changing the demographics and culture of the transitional area between the forest and the steppe .

= = Campaigns in the Balkans = =

The annihilation of Khazaria was undertaken against the background of the Rus ' -Byzantine alliance , concluded in the wake of Igor 's Byzantine campaign in 944 . Close military ties between the Rus ' and Byzantium are illustrated by the fact , reported by John Skylitzes , that a Rus ' detachment accompanied Byzantine Emperor Nikephoros Phokas in his victorious naval expedition to Crete .

In 967 or 968 , Nikephoros sent to Sviatoslav his agent , Kalokyros , with the task of talking Sviatoslav into assisting him in a war against Bulgaria . Sviatoslav was paid 15 @,@ 000 pounds of gold and set sail with an army of 60 @,@ 000 men , including thousands of Pecheneg mercenaries .

Sviatoslav defeated the Bulgarian ruler Boris II and proceeded to occupy the whole of northern Bulgaria . Meanwhile , the Byzantines bribed the Pechenegs to attack and besiege Kiev , where Olga stayed with Sviatoslav 's son Vladimir . The siege was relieved by the družina of Pretich , and immediately following the Pecheneg retreat , Olga sent a reproachful letter to Sviatoslav . He promptly returned and defeated the Pechenegs , who continued to threaten Kiev .

Sviatoslav refused to turn his Balkan conquests over to the Byzantines , and the parties fell out as a result . To the chagrin of his boyars and his mother ( who died within three days after learning about his decision ) , Sviatoslav decided to move his capital to Pereyaslavets in the mouth of the Danube due to the great potential of that location as a commercial hub . In the Primary Chronicle record for 969 , Sviatoslav explains that it is to Pereyaslavets , the centre of his lands , " all the riches flow : gold , silks , wine , and various fruits from Greece , silver and horses from Hungary and Bohemia , and from Rus ' furs , wax , honey , and slaves " .

In summer 969 , Sviatoslav left Rus ' again , dividing his dominion into three parts , each under a nominal rule of one of his sons . At the head of an army that included Pecheneg and Magyar auxiliary troops , he invaded Bulgaria again , devastating Thrace , capturing the city of Philippopolis , and massacring its inhabitants . Nikephoros responded by repairing the defenses of Constantinople and raising new squadrons of armored cavalry . In the midst of his preparations , Nikephoros was overthrown and killed by John Tzimiskes , who thus became the new Byzantine emperor .

John Tzimiskes first attempted to persuade Sviatoslav into leaving Bulgaria , but he was unsuccessful . Challenging the Byzantine authority , Sviatoslav crossed the Danube and laid siege to Adrianople , causing panic on the streets of Constantinople in summer 970 . Later that year , the Byzantines launched a counteroffensive . Being occupied with suppressing a revolt of Bardas Phokas in Asia Minor , John Tzimiskes sent his commander @-@ in @-@ chief , Bardas Skleros ,

who defeated the coalition of Rus ' , Pechenegs , Magyars , and Bulgarians in the Battle of Arcadiopolis . Meanwhile , John , having quelled the revolt of Bardas Phokas , came to the Balkans with a large army and promoting himself as the liberator of Bulgaria from Sviatoslav , penetrated the impracticable mountain passes and shortly thereafter captured Marcianopolis , where the Rus ' were holding a number of Bulgar princes hostage .

Sviatoslav retreated to Dorostolon , which the Byzantine armies besieged for sixty @-@ five days . Cut off and surrounded , Sviatoslav came to terms with John and agreed to abandon the Balkans , renounce his claims to the southern Crimea , and return west of the Dnieper River . In return , the Byzantine emperor supplied the Rus ' with food and safe passage home . Sviatoslav and his men set sail and landed on Berezan Island at the mouth of the Dnieper , where they made camp for the winter . Several months later , their camp was devastated by famine , so that even a horse 's head could not be bought for less than a half @-@ grivna , reports the Kievan chronicler of the Primary Chronicle . While Sviatoslav 's campaign brought no tangible results for the Rus ' , it weakened the Bulgarian statehood and left it vulnerable to the attacks of Basil the Bulgar @-@ Slayer four decades later .

= = Death and aftermath = =

Fearing that the peace with Sviatoslav would not endure , the Byzantine emperor induced the Pecheneg khan Kurya to kill Sviatoslav before he reached Kiev . This was in line with the policy outlined by Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus in *De Administrando Imperio* of fomenting strife between the Rus ' and the Pechenegs . According to the Slavic chronicle , Sveneld attempted to warn Sviatoslav to avoid the Dnieper rapids , but the prince slighted his wise advice and was ambushed and slain by the Pechenegs when he tried to cross the cataracts near Khortitsa early in 972 . The Primary Chronicle reports that his skull was made into a chalice by the Pecheneg khan .

Following Sviatoslav 's death , tensions between his sons grew . A war broke out between his legitimate sons , Oleg and Yaropolk , in 976 , at the conclusion of which Oleg was killed . In 977 Vladimir fled Novgorod to escape Oleg 's fate and went to Scandinavia , where he raised an army of Varangians and returned in 980 . Yaropolk was killed , and Vladimir became the sole ruler of Kievan Rus ' .

= = Art and literature = =

Sviatoslav has long been a hero of Belarusian , Russian , and Ukrainian patriots due to his great military successes . His figure first attracted attention of Russian artists and poets during the Russo @-@ Turkish War ( 1768 ? 1774 ) , which provided obvious parallels with Sviatoslav 's push towards Constantinople . Russia 's southward expansion and the imperialistic ventures of Catherine II in the Balkans seemed to have been legitimized by Sviatoslav 's campaigns eight centuries earlier .

Among the works created during the war was Yakov Knyazhnin 's tragedy *Olga* ( 1772 ) . The Russian playwright chose to introduce Sviatoslav as his protagonist , although his active participation in the events following Igor 's death is out of sync with the traditional chronology . Knyazhnin 's rival Nikolai Nikolev ( 1758 ? 1815 ) also wrote a play on the subject of Sviatoslav 's life . Ivan Akimov 's painting *Sviatoslav 's Return from the Danube to Kiev* ( 1773 ) explores the conflict between military honour and family attachment . It is a vivid example of Poussinesque rendering of early medieval subject matter .

Interest in Sviatoslav 's career increased in the 19th century . Klavdiy Lebedev depicted an episode of Sviatoslav 's meeting with Emperor John in his well @-@ known painting , while Eugene Lanceray sculpted an equestrian statue of Sviatoslav in the early 20th century . Sviatoslav appears in the 1913 poem of Velimir Khlebnikov *Written before the war* ( # 70 . ??????????? ?? ????? ) as an epitome of militant Slavdom :

Sviatoslav is the villain of the novel *The Lost Kingdom , or the Passing of the Khazars* , by Samuel Gordon , a fictionalized account of the destruction of Khazaria by the Rus ' . The Slavic warrior figures in a more positive context in the story " *Chernye Strely Vyaticha* " by Vadim Viktorovich

Kargalov ; the story is included in his book Istoricheskie povesti .

In 2005 , reports circulated that a village in the Belgorod region had erected a monument to Svyatoslav 's victory over the Khazars by the Russian sculptor Vyacheslav Klykov . The reports described the 13 @-@ meter tall statue as depicting a Rus ' cavalryman trampling a supine Khazar bearing a Star of David and Kolovrat . This created an outcry within the Jewish community of Russia . The controversy was further exacerbated by Klykov 's connections with Pamyat and other anti @-@ Semitic organizations , as well as by his involvement in the " letter of 500 " , a controversial appeal to the Prosecutor General to review all Jewish organizations in Russia for extremism . The Press Center of the Belgorod Regional Administration responded by stating that a planned monument to Svyatoslav had not yet been constructed but would show " respect towards representatives of all nationalities and religions . " When the statue was unveiled , the shield bore a twelve @-@ pointed star .

Svyatoslav is the main character of the books " Knyaz " ( " ????? " ) and " The Hero " ( " ????? " ) , written by Russian writer Alexander Mazin .

On 7 November 2011 Ukrainian fisherman Sergei Pjankow fished up a one metre long frankish sword from the waters of the Dnieper not far from the spot where Svyatoslav is believed to have been killed in 972 . The handle is made out of four different metals including gold and silver , and it is very possible that it belonged to Svyatoslav himself .