

The establishment of the first East Slavic states in the 9th century coincided with the arrival of [Varangians](#), the [Vikings](#) who ventured along the waterways extending from the eastern Baltic [to the Black](#) and [Caspian](#) Seas.<sup>[46]</sup> According to the [Primary Chronicle](#), a Varangian from the [Rus' people](#), named [Rurik](#), was elected ruler of [Novgorod](#) in 862. In 882, his successor [Oleg](#) ventured south and conquered [Kiev](#), which had been previously paying tribute to the [Khazars](#).<sup>[40]</sup> Rurik's son [Igor](#) and Igor's son [Sviatoslav](#) subsequently subdued all local [East Slavic](#) tribes to Kievan rule, destroyed the [Khazar Khaganate](#),<sup>[47]</sup> and launched several military expeditions to [Byzantium](#) and [Persia](#).<sup>[48][49]</sup>

In the 10th to 11th centuries, Kievan Rus' became one of the largest and most prosperous states in Europe. The reigns of [Vladimir the Great](#) (980–1015) and his son [Yaroslav the Wise](#) (1019–1054) constitute the [Golden Age](#) of Kiev, which saw [the acceptance of](#) Orthodox Christianity from [Byzantium](#), and the creation of the first East Slavic written [legal code](#), the [Russkaya Pravda](#).<sup>[40]</sup> The age of [feudalism](#) and decentralization had come, marked by constant in-fighting between members of the [Rurik dynasty](#) that ruled Kievan Rus' collectively. Kiev's dominance waned, to the benefit of [Vladimir-Suzdal](#) in the north-east, the [Novgorod Republic](#) in the north, and [Galicia-Volhynia](#) in the south-west.<sup>[40]</sup> By the 12th century, Kiev lost its pre-eminence and Kievan Rus' had fragmented into different principalities.<sup>[50]</sup> Prince [Andrey Bogolyubsky](#) sacked Kiev in 1169 and made [Vladimir](#) his base,<sup>[50]</sup> leading to political power being shifted to the north-east.<sup>[40]</sup>

Kievan Rus' finally fell to the [Mongol invasion](#) of 1237–1240, which resulted in the [sacking of Kiev](#) and other cities, as well as the death of a major part of the population.<sup>[40]</sup> The invaders, later known as [Tatars](#), formed the state of the [Golden Horde](#), which pillaged the Russian-RUS principalities and ruled the southern and central expanses of Russia-RUS for over two centuries.<sup>[51]</sup> Only the Novgorod Republic escaped Mongol occupation after it agreed to pay tribute.<sup>[40]</sup>

Galicia-Volhynia was eventually absorbed by [Lithuania](#) and [Poland](#),<sup>[40]</sup> while the Novgorod Republic and Vladimir-Suzdal, two regions on the periphery of Kiev, established the basis for the modern Russian nation.<sup>[40]</sup> Led by Prince [Alexander Nevsky](#), Novgorodians repelled the invading [Swedes](#) in the [Battle of the Neva](#) in 1240,<sup>[52]</sup> as well as the [Germanic crusaders](#) in the [Battle of the Ice](#) in 1242.<sup>[53]</sup>