

SSWH4: ANALYZE THE IMPACT OF BYZANTINE AND MONGOL EMPIRES



ELEMENT B: ANALYZE THE IMPACT BYZANTIUM HAD ON KIEV, MOSCOW, AND THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE

BYZANTIUM’S IMPACT ON KIEVAN RUSSIA

- Political unity came to Russia in about 862 when Scandinavian Vikings, called Varangians unified the Slavic peoples and founded the city of Novgorod.
- In 880, the opportunity for lucrative trade with Byzantium by way of the Dnieper River led the Varangian princes to move their capital south to Kiev.
 - This led to regular economic and cultural contact between the two states.
 - According to principle source on early Russian history, The Primary Chronicle, Prince Vladimir (980 to 1015) decided to seek out a new faith for his people, he sent envoys to investigate the options.
 - The envoys that visited the Orthodox Christians of the Byzantine Empire returned with grand tales of monumental architecture that made them feel that God must dwell among the Byzantines.
 - These stories may have contributed to Vladimir’s decision to order the mass baptism of his people in 989.
- This conversion ushered in an era of close cultural ties between the Kievan state and Byzantium.
 - This connection led to regular economic and intellectual exchange as well as the adoption of the Cyrillic alphabet which had been developed earlier by Byzantine missionaries working to convert the Slavs of Eastern Europe.



BYZANTIUM’S IMPACT ON MUSCOVITE RUSSIA

- Kiev’s power declined after the Mongol invasion leading to the rise of Moscow as the new center of political power.
 - This corresponded to the decline and collapse of the Byzantine Empire in the late 1400s.
 - The Russian ruler Ivan III used this to his political advantage by announcing publicly that Russia would be the “Third Rome” and claiming for himself the title Czar a slavification of the Caesar.
 - This claim became an enduring form of political legitimacy in the Russian Empire.


