

## The Early Russian Civilization

### A. Beginnings of the Russian State

1. The Slavs were the most important and numerous people of the multi-racial Russian heritage.
2. The Varangians. Bands of Swedish Norsemen who sailed along the Russian waterways plundering Slavic villages in the hopes of joining the prosperous trade with the east. They were eventually welcomed and their culture was absorbed.
3. Rurik established the first ruling dynasty of Russia (capitaled at Ngorod).
4. Under Oleg, Kiev became the prominent city in a loose confederation of city-states.
  - a. Along the shores of the Dnieper River, centrally located between Scandinavia and the Byzantines
  - b. Became Russia, land of the Rus (sea-farers, rowers)

### B. Influence of Byzantine Culture

1. Close cultural ties with Constantinople
2. Cut off from western thought and ideas
3. Accepted the Orthodox Church
4. Russian language from Slavic, from Greek
5. Russian architecture modeled after Byzantine models

### C. The Height of Kievan Russia

1. Yaroslav the Wise
  - a. Great territorial expansion
  - b. Marriage alliances with royal families (FR, PO, SW, NO)
  - c. Sponsored Russian code of laws
  - d. Made Kiev a rival of Constantinople
  - e. Built schools and libraries