

Interesting & Useful Handout #1 Kievan Rus'

Proposed Course of Our Discussion:

- I. Basic Geographical Conditions
- II. The Political Landscape & Human Geography
- III. The Issue of Sources and the *Primary Chronicle*
- IV. The Problem of Rus' & the issue of Scandinavian Influence

Peoples & Languages:

Settled & forest peoples

- Slavs - various tribes, e.g. Derevlians, Severians, etc.
- Finnic - Merians, Cheremis, etc.
- Bulgars - Turkic group; some go to Bulgaria, others stay on Volga
- Baltic - along Baltic coast: Lithuanians, Prussians, etc
- Greeks - Byzantine Empire, Black Sea coast

Nomads

- Magyars = Hungarians (nomads with Ugric language)
- Khazars - Turkic; elite converts to Judaism and establishes a state (Khaganate)
- Pechenegs - Turkic; crucial force in destabilizing Khazar regime
- Polovtsians (or Cumans) - appear later and drive out the Pechenegs
- Vikings/Varangians/Normans – "nomads of the sea." from Scandinavia

Other items:

- Khazar Khaganate (Empire); *Pax Khazarica* (The Khazar peace)
- Trade routes: Saracen route from Baltic Sea, down Volga, to Caspian Sea
Route "from the Varangians to the Greeks" (Baltic-Dniepr-Black Sea)
- Normanist theory: issue of the origins of Rus'
- Rurik & the "calling of the Varangians"

A Basic Timeline

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| 650-850 | Khazar Khaganate at its height |
| 830 | Appearance of Rus' Khaganate (probably on upper Volga) |
| 860 | Rus' attack on Constantinople (one of the earliest records of Rus') |
| 862 | Traditional date for arrival of Rurik of the Varangians (founder Rurikid dynasty) |
| 882 | Supposed date that Oleg moved Rus' "capital" from Novgorod to Kiev |
| 907 & 911 | Rus' raids on Constantinople leading to trade agreements |
| 922 | Conversion of Volga Bulgars to Islam |
| 965 | Sviatislav inflicts major defeat on Khazars |