

1. A legend about the foundation of Kyiv



План Киева от 988 до 1240 гг. Рис. Н. Закревского

Kyiv is the capital of Ukraine with a long-lasting history, both the city and the country. According to chronicles, Kyiv was founded at the end of the 5th century.

приде въ Синопию. Полянѣмъ же живущимъ особѣ и владѣющимъ роды свои, яже и до сея братѣя бяху Поляне, и живяху каждо съ родомъ своимъ на своихъ мѣстехъ, володѣюще каждо родомъ своимъ. И быша 3 брата, единому имя Кий, а другому Щекъ, а третьему Хоривъ, и сестра ихъ Лыбѣдь. И сѣдѣше Кий на горѣ, кдѣ нынѣ увозъ Боричевъ, а Щекъ сѣдѣше на горѣ, кдѣ нынѣ зовется Щековица, а Хоривъ на третьей горѣ, отнюдуже прозвася Хоривица; створиша городокъ, во имя брата ихъ старѣйшаго, и наркоша и Клевъ. И бѣше около города лѣсъ и боръ великъ, и бяху ловяще звѣрье. Бяхуть бо мудрѣ и смыслени, и нарицахуся Поляне, отъ нихъ же суть Поляне Кияне и до сего дни.

By now it is a city of at least sixteen hundred years old. The story of how it was founded we know from a legend mentioned in the **Primary Chronicle** or the **Tale of the Bygone Years** (the end of XI – beginning of XII century) – the first written source about the history of Kyivan Rus'. Here we can see the legend written by **Nestor Litopysets**, the author of the chronicle, in Old Slavic, Ukrainian, and English.

Поляни ж жили осібно і володіли родами своїми,
І до цих братів, отже, були поляни,
І жили кожен з родом своїм, на своїх місцях,
І володів кожен родом своїм.
І були три брати. Одному ім'я Кий,
А другому — Щек,
А третьому — Хорив,
І сестра їхня — Либідь.
І сидів Кий на горі, де нині узвіз Боричів,
А Щек сидів на горі, що й нині зоветься
Щекавиця.
А Хорив — на третій горі, від нього ж
прозвалася Хоривиця.
І в ім'я брата свого старшого заклали городок
І назвали його Кнів.
І був коло города ліс
І бір великий,
І були [вони] мисливці на звірів.
І тямущі та мудрі були,
І називалися поляни,
І від них же поляни-кияни і до сьогодні.

Інші же, не вѣдуще, ркоша, яко Кий есть перевозникъ бысть; у Києва бо перевозъ бѣше тогда съ оная страны Днепра, тѣмъ глаголаху: на перевозъ на Киевъ. Аще бо быль перевозникъ Кий, то не бы ходилъ къ Царюграду; но сий Кий княжаше в роду своем; и приходившю ему къ царю не свѣмы, но токмо о семъ вѣмы, якоже скажуть, яко велику честь приялъ есть от царя, которого не вѣмъ и при которомъ приходи цари. Ідушю же ему опять, приде къ Дунаеву, и възлюбилъ мѣсто и срубил городокъ малъ, и хотѣше сѣсти с родомъ своимъ, и не даша ему близь живущин; еже и до нынѣ нарѣчють Дунайци городище Киевѣць. Киевци же прішедшю въ свой городъ Киевъ, ту и сконча животъ свой, и брата его Щекъ и Хоривъ и сестра ихъ Либѣдъ ту скончашася.

Інші, не знаючи, кажуть, що Кий був перевізником; бо біля Києва був перевіз тоді з того боку Дніпра, тому й говорили: «на перевіз на Київ», а коли б Кий був перевізником, то не ходив би до Цареграда. Але цей Кий княжив у роду своєму; і ходив він до царя, якого — не знаю, але тільки знаю те, як переказують, що велику честь мав від царя, якого — не знаю і при якому приходив царі.

Ідучи назад, прийшов [Кий] до Дунаю, і вподобав місце, і поставив городок малий, і хотів сісти з родом своїм, і не дали йому ті, що жили поблизу, ще й донині називають дунайці городище Києвець. Кий же прийшов у свій город Київ, тут скінчив життя своє, і брат його Щек, і Хорив, і сестра їхня Либідь — тут померли.

URL: <http://litopys.org.ua/pvlyar/yar01.htm>

"While the Polianians lived apart and governed their families (for before the time of these brothers there were already Polianians, and each one lived with his gens on his own lands, ruling over his kinsfolk), there were three brothers, Kyi, Shchek, and Khoryv, and their sister Lybid'. Kyi lived upon the hill where the Borychev trail now is, and Shchek dwelt upon the hill now named Shchekoyitsia, while on the third resided Khoryv, after whom this hill is named Khoryvytsia. They built a town and named it Kyiv after their oldest brother. Around the town lay the wood and a great pine forest in which they used to catch wild beasts. These men were wise and prudent; they were called Polianians, and there are Polianians descended from them living in Kyiv to this day.

Some ignorant persons have claimed that Kyi was a ferryman, for near Kyiv there was at that time a ferry from the other side of the river, in consequence of which people used to say, "To Kyi's ferry." Now if Kyi had been a mere ferryman, he would never have gone to Tsar'grad. He was then the chief of his kin, and it is related to the great honor he received from the Emperor in whose reign he visited the imperial court. On his homeward journey, he arrived at the Danube. The place pleased him and he built a small town, wishing to dwell there with his kinsfolk. But those who lived nearby would not grant him this privilege. Yet even now the dwellers by the Danube call this town Kyivets. When Kyi returned to Kyiv, his native city, he ended his life there; and his brothers Shchek and Khoryv, as well as their sister Lybid', died there also."

However, Ukrainians know the legend about Kyi, Shchek, Khoryw, and their sister Princess Lybid' not from historical sources only. The legend of how Kyiv was founded is studied by pupils at school at the very first grade, and not only by those who live in Kyiv.

The founders of Kyiv lived on the Old Kievan Mountain (Starokyivska) that is also known as Kyivytzia. The first settlements of the polianian tribe used to live here too at the time of Kyiv foundation (V-VI century).

The legend is a remarkable narrative for Ukrainians and Kyivans, hence, there is a monument to the founders of Kyiv – Kyi, Shchek, Khoryw, and their sister Princess Lybid in Kyiv.

The monument serves as a symbol of Kyiv and Ukraine and depicts three brothers-founders at the backside of the boat, and Princess Lybid' at the front.



URL:

[https://id.pinterest.com/pin/461267186808129596/?amp_client_id=CLIENT_ID\(&mweb_unauth_id=&simplified=true](https://id.pinterest.com/pin/461267186808129596/?amp_client_id=CLIENT_ID(&mweb_unauth_id=&simplified=true)

On 21 February 2022 Vladimir Putin in his speech said that Ukraine was established by Vladimir Lenin in 1917 (see, <https://www.gazeta.ru/politics/news/2022/02/21/17325103.shtml>).

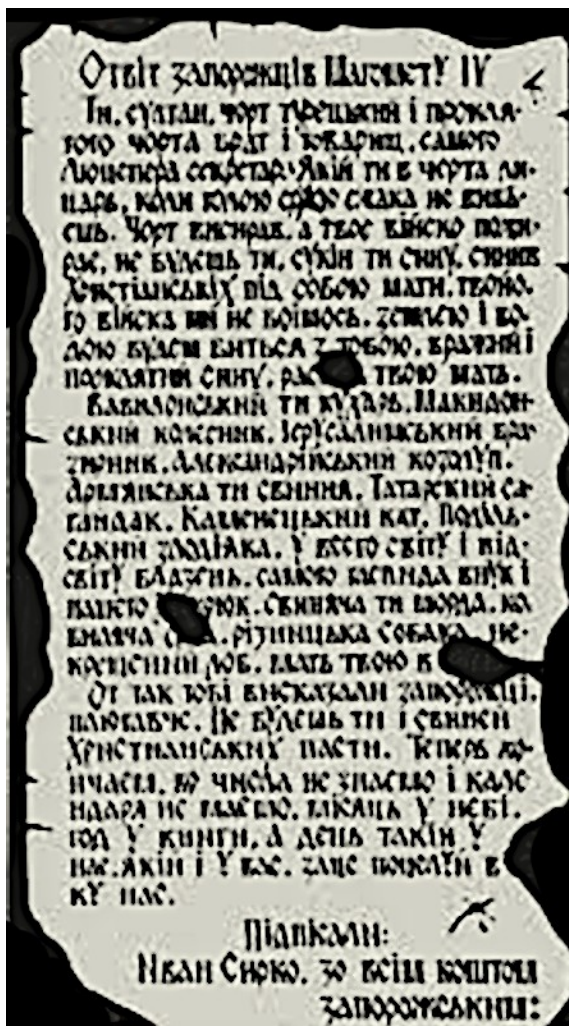
The historical and symbolic importance of the monument is so significant that Ukrainians made a meme based on the original shape of the monument to the founders of Kyiv: Another meme creation refers to the book of Genesis, the sixth and seventh days (Genesis 1 and 2, "The Creation of Heaven and Earth"):

*"And he created Ukraine and Bandera on the sixth day.
And saw that it was good.
And he rested on the seventh day from all his work..."*



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<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10160036225798552&set=pb.673578551.-2207520000..&type=3>

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The story has developed further. There is an iconic letter, written in 1676 by Ukrainian Cossacks as a response to Ottomanian sultan Mehmed IV. He demanded from the Cossacks to surrender:

You, sultan, Turkish devil, damn brother and comrade, the secretary of Lucifer himself. What the hell is the knight you are if you don't kick a hedgehog with your bare ass? Devil shitted out, and your army devours. You will not, the sun of a bitch, have Christian sons under you, we are not afraid of your army, we'll be fighting with you on land and water, you, damn son of nemesis...

You are a Babylonian cooker, Macedonian chariot driver, Jerusalem brewer, and Alexandrian goat-trasher. You, Armenian pig. Tatarian quiver, Kamenets executioner, Podolian thief, the grandson of the gasped, and the clown of the whole world and underworld... You are, pig snout, mare ass, butcher's dog, unbaptized forehead...

That's what the Cossacks (Zaporozhtsi) told you, scoundrel! You are unlikely to graze even Christian pigs. Now we are finishing, do not know what day it is because we don't have a calendar, the moon is in the sky, the year is in the book, and we have the same day as you have. Hence, kiss our ass.

URL:

<https://m.facebook.com/139716303318604/photos/%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%BB%D0%B8%D1%81%D1%82%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%B7%D0%B0%D0%BA%D1%96%D0%B2%D1%82%D1%83%D1%80%D0%B5%D1%86%D1%8C%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BC%D1%83%D1%81%D1%83%D0%BB%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%BD%D1%83%D0%B7%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%B7%D0%B0%D1%86%D1%8C%D0%BA%D0%B8%D1%85%D1%87%D0%B0%D1%81%D1%96%D0%B2%D1%96%D1%81%D0%BD%D1%83%D1%94%D0%BF%D0%B5%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%BA%D0%B0%D0%B7%D0%B7%D0%B0%D1%8F%D0%BA%D0%B8%D0%BC%D1%82%D1%83%D1%80%D0%B5%D1%86/235727050384195>



The process of writing the letter was depicted by Ilya Repin in a famous painting *"Reply of the Zaporozhian Cossacks"* (1880-1891).

This letter serves as a symbol of Ukrainian power and freedom-loving spirit. Hence, it was impossible not to involve it in memes about Lenin who created Ukraine:

"Cossacks writing a letter to Lenin, asking him to create Ukraine,"



Cossacks' letter is legendary also because it showed resistance to Ottoman Empire, and inspired Austrian military chiefs to resist Ottoman Empire too. The letter was translated to German in 1683 and broadly distributed during the Battle of Vienna in 1683. It made Ottoman Empire give up on attacks on Europe.

URL:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reply_of_the_Zaporozhian_Cossacks#/media/File:Ilja_Jefimowitsch_Repin_-_Reply_of_the_Zaporozhian_Cossacks_-_Yorck.jpg

URL:

<https://armyinform.com.ua/2022/02/23/yak-lenin-stvoryv-ukrayinu-banderu-i-knyagyny-olgu-merezhu-pidirvaly-memy-i-fotozhaby-ukrayincziv/>

Козаки пишуть листа
леніну з проханням
створити Україну.

Cossack's letter serves as a progenitor to multiple letters to invaders of Ukraine, including Hitler, Stalin, and Putin. The last one was made as a short two-minute comedy movie, made by Babylon13 studio in 2014.

The movie shows how Ukrainian soldiers, who fight in Donbas against the Russian invasion, write the letter to the "tsar" of Russian president Vladimir Putin:



The video can be accessed:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bVm-yFrmoAo>

The last remake was made in 2022 as a visual replication of the events: