



LATVIA-RUSSIA

CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION PROGRAMME



CO-FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION, THE REPUBLIC OF LATVIA AND THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Pskov

**a guidebook to historic
city centre**

This publication has been produced with the financial support of Latvia-Russia Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2014-2020. Its contents are the sole responsibility of Pskov City Administration and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Programme, Programme participating countries Latvia and Russia, alongside with the European Union.

A special city

of russian history

The ancient city of Pskov, located at the confluence of the Pskova and the Velikaya Rivers, was first mentioned in the "Tale of Bygone Years" under the year 903. But its history goes much further and dates back about 2000 years according to archaeological data.



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PSKOV IS MOTHER LAND OF PRINCESS OLGA,

the first Christian ruler of Rus and its first saint. Olga, during whose reign a fortified settlement turned into a town, is considered the founder and the patron saint of Pskov.

Once, standing on the left bank of the Velikaya River, princess Olga saw the three rays of light crossed at one spot on a high cliff covered with a forest and prophesied a big and glorious town to be founded there.

A smithed cross and Olginskaya chapel at the place from where princess Olga saw the heavenly sign according to the legend.





The seal of Pskov Hospodariat

Being initially the tribal centre of "krivichi" in the 10th – beginning of the 12th centuries, Pskov was a part of Old Russian state and then of Novgorod land. In 1348 it became the capital of Pskov Veche republic. In 1510 it was incorporated into the Grand Principality of Moscow.



Veche in Pskov. By Viktor Vasnetsov

THE VECHЕ (ASSEMBLY) SQUARE

is the centre of political life of Pskov of the 13th – 14th centuries. The Veche, a popular assembly of the period of Pskov republic that dealt with the most important state matters, gathered here.



Pskov Veche republic (Pskov Hospodariat) – a unique medieval state formation on the territory of Rus. The history of Russian democracy originates in Novgorod and Pskov republics.



THE ARCHITECTURAL MODEL OF THE KREMLIN "PSKOV – THE HOME OF THE HOLY TRINITY"

in the form of the 15th century, the heyday period of the city.

“ We are admiring Pskov. God, what a great city! Like Paris!... ”

the Roman Catholic priest Piotrovsky, a personal secretary of Stephen Bathory, 1581.



Up until the beginning of the 18th century Pskov was one of the biggest towns of Russia and Europe.

“ This city is so spacious, that its circumference embraces several cities, and in Germany there is no city equal to Pskov. ”

Livonian chronicles, 13th century

The Home of the Holy Trinity

Pskov was founded as the Home of the Holy Trinity. It was here in the 10th century where the first Orthodox church in Rus was built. Until the 14th century it was the only church devoted to the Holy Trinity.

2

THE CATHEDRAL OF THE HOLY TRINITY

is the heart of Pskov and its main symbol. The domes of the Cathedral floating high above the city are visible from anywhere in the city.



The height of the Trinity Cathedral is 78 metres and its iconostasis is 42 metres high.





**A UNIQUE SEVEN-TIERED
ICONOSTASIS**

of the Trinity Cathedral of the 17th century is a rare example of the “Flemish carving.”



**THE RELIQUARY WITH THE
RELIQS OF THE PSKOV SAINTS:**

the blessed princes Vsevolod-Gabriel and Dovmont-Timothy, the martyr Ioasaph Snyatogorsky and the fool –for-Christ Nikolai of Pskov.



**CHIRSKAYA ICON
OF THE MOTHER OF GOD**

showed the miracle of lacrimation during the pestilence in 1420 and is venerated by the Pskovites for making them free of the disease.

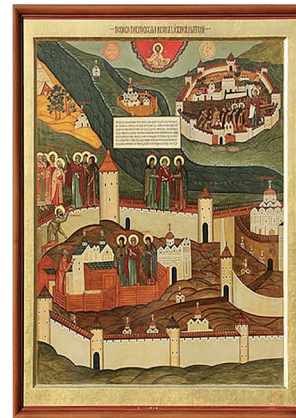


Mosaic icon-over-the-gates of the Pskov Kremlin “The Old Testament Trinity.” sketched by E. Klimov



**THE NAME OF THE SAINT
PRINCE VSEVOLOD-GABRIEL**

is connected with the building of the first stone church of the Holy Trinity, construction of the Velikiye (Great) Gates and building of the Annunciation church. The legends have preserved many examples of his assistance and patronage at the turning points of the military history of the city.



**THE PSKOVO-POKROVSKAYA
ICON OF THE MOTHER OF GOD
OF THE 16TH CENTURY**

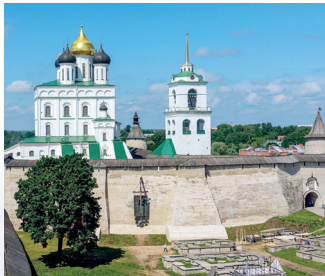
is unique not only for its subject, showing the events of the period of Pskov siege by the troops of the Polish king Stephen Bathory in 1581-1582, but also for depicting a detailed plan of Pskov in it.



There are 40 functional churches within the boundaries of modern Pskov.

The fortress- city

Pskov fortress is one of the mightiest and most impregnable medieval fortresses of Europe. Being the only of its kind, it had five rings of defence, three of which have been preserved up to the present day.



THE PERSI

– is the “chest” of the Pskov Kremlin, its southern assault wall.

1

THE KROM (KREMLIN)

is the heart of Pskov fortress, the historic and architectural as well as city-planning centre of Pskov.



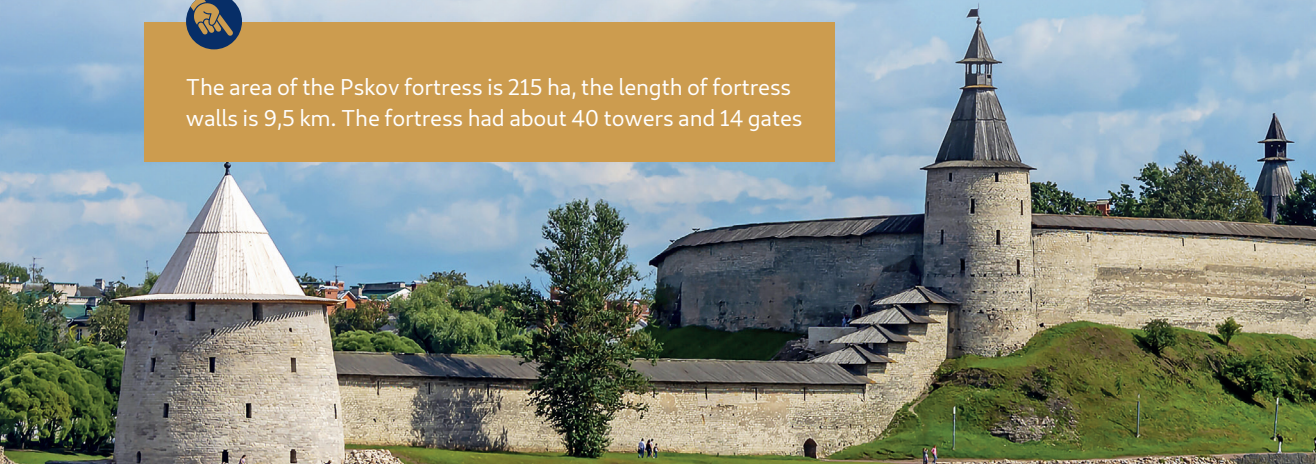
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THE POKROVSKAYA (INTERCESSION) TOWER

is the mightiest Pskov tower and one of the largest ones in Europe. It is included into fortification system of the Okolny (outer) Town of the 15th – 16th centuries – the fifth ring of defence of Pskov.



The area of the Pskov fortress is 215 ha, the length of fortress walls is 9,5 km. The fortress had about 40 towers and 14 gates



8

THE DOVMONT TOWN

is a unique architectural complex that had no analogues in Rus. It was constructed as an added defence line of Krom in 1270-1280 during the period of principdom of Dovmont. It used to be the administrative and spiritual centre of Pskov land of the 14th-15th centuries.



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THE PLOSKAYA AND VYSOKAYA (FLAT AND HIGH) TOWERS

in the ancient time were connected by a wall with the waterway openings that were blocked by the movable lattice gates to protect the entrance to the Pskova River.

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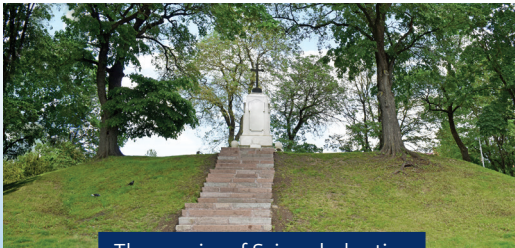


On the premises in Dovmont town in the 12th – 14th centuries there were more than 20 religious and civil stone constructions. The foundations of half of them can be seen nowadays.

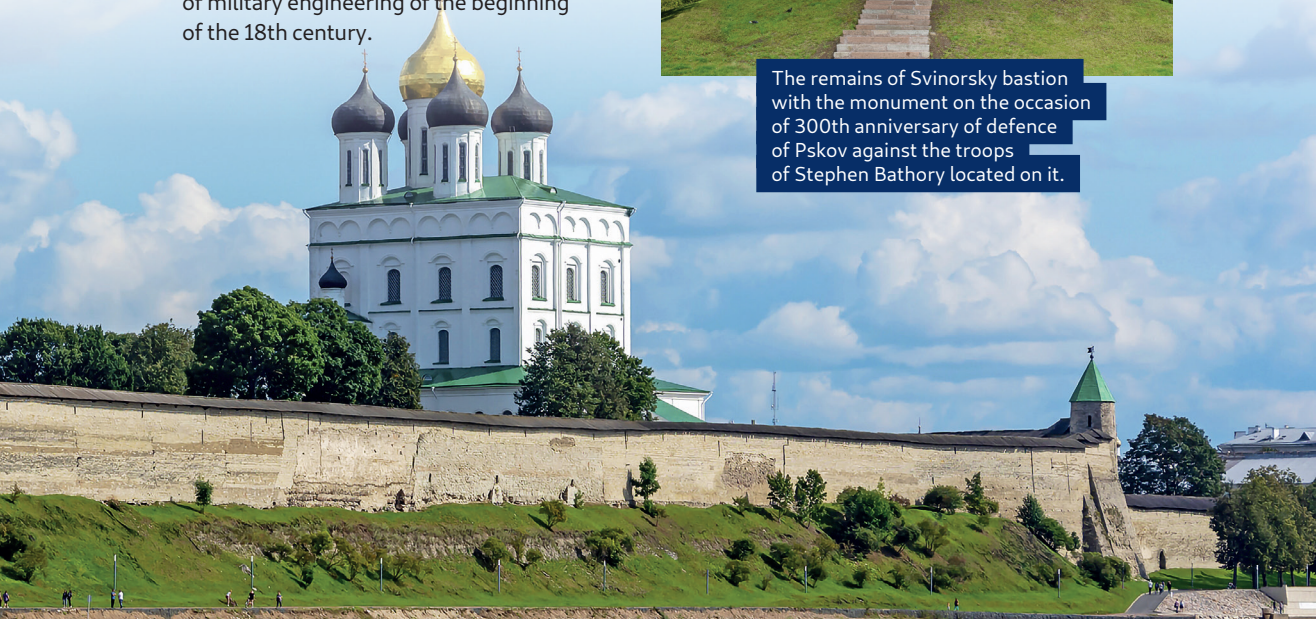
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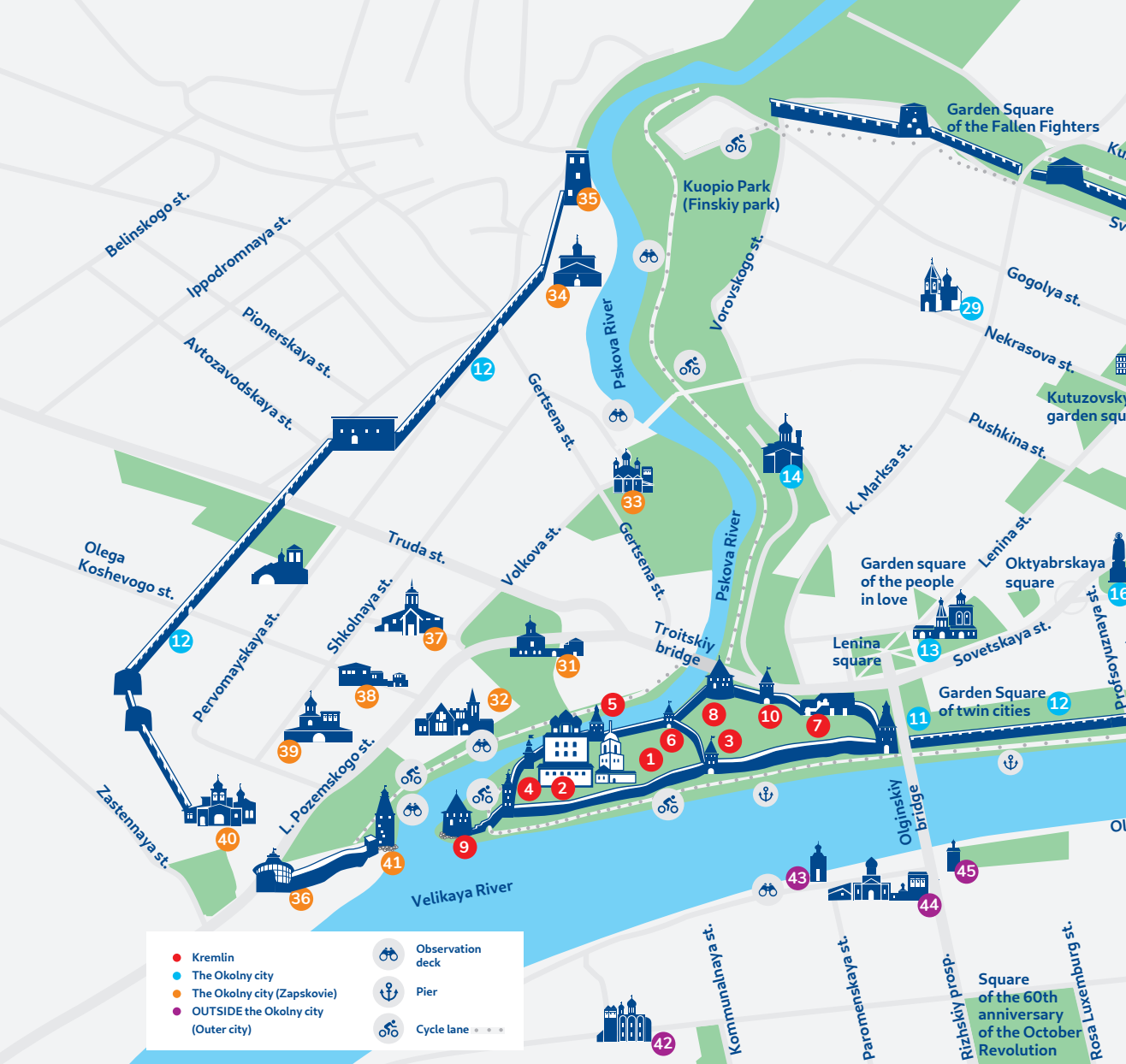
PETER'S BASTIONS,

constructed during the beginning of the Great Northern War, became the "sixth line" of Pskov fortifications. It is one of the largest fortifications of the kind, an example of military engineering of the beginning of the 18th century.



The remains of Svinorsky bastion with the monument on the occasion of 300th anniversary of defence of Pskov against the troops of Stephen Bathory located on it.

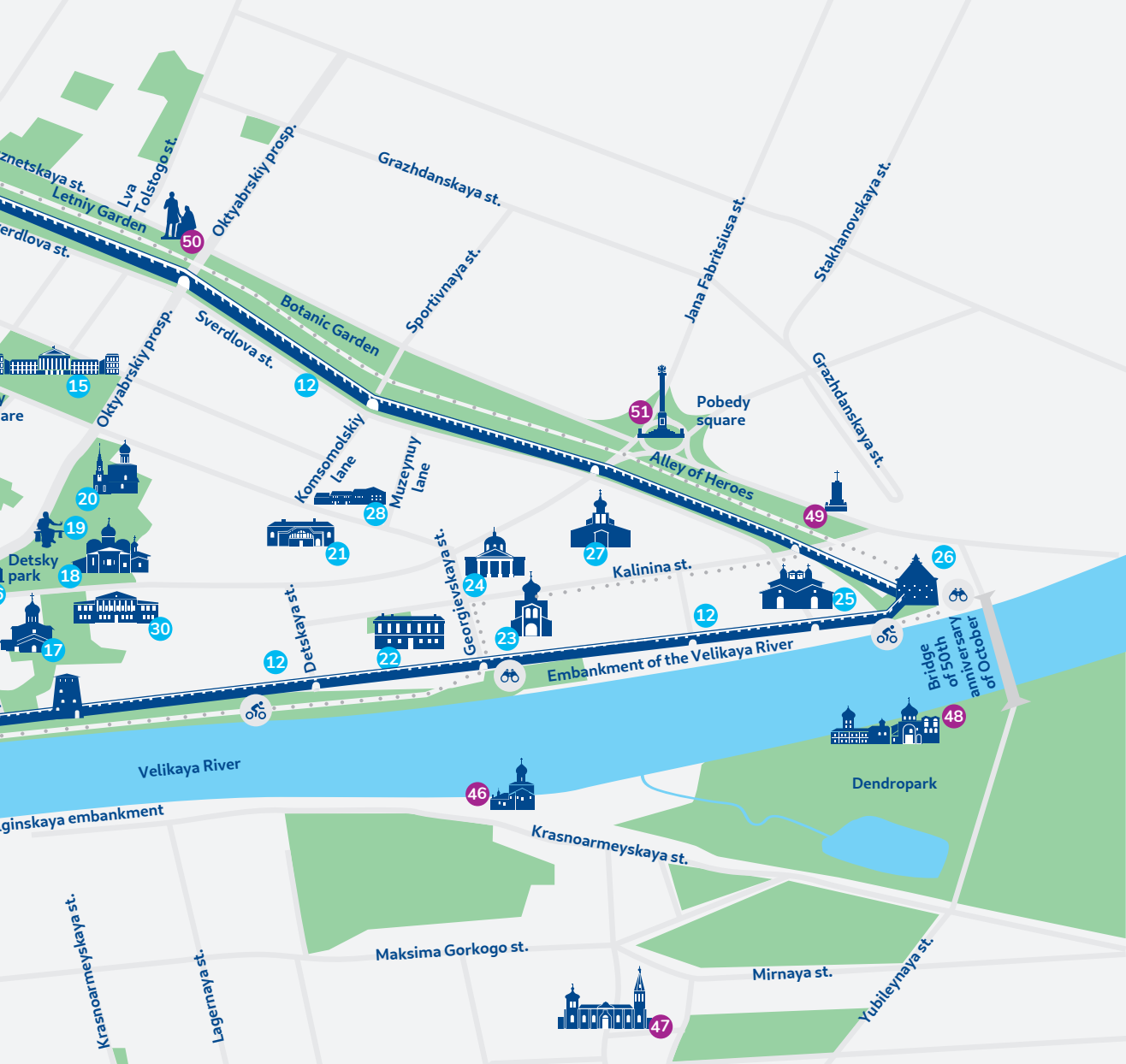




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A city of

military glory

For 800 years Pskov has been the centre of defence of the north-west of Russia against foreign invaders. Ambitious plans of famous western military commanders – Polish king Stephen Bathory and Swedish king Gustav Adolf – crashed on the walls of Pskov fortress, while Karl XII did not even dare to storm the town.



Pskov successfully stood 26 sieges. The longest one – in 1581-1582 during the Livonian War – lasted 5,5 months while the famous “Pskovskoye sidenje” (Pskov siege) – the episode of 1615 of the Russian-Swedish War – 2,5 months.



THE SWORD OF PRINCE DOVMONT

is one of the main Pskov sacred objects, a symbol of independence and invincibility of ancient Pskov. It belonged to the Pskov prince, who became a legend during his lifetime, a talented military leader, who had not a single defeat during his 33 years of principedom.

The first Red Army units stopped here the Keiser troops on their way to Petrograd in February 1918. During the years of the Great Patriotic War Pskov was transformed into a powerful defensive post. Unfading act of courage of the Pskov paratroopers of the 6th troop took its place in the history of Russia.



The siege of Pskov by the Polish king Stephen Bathory in 1581.
By Karl Brullov (1839-1843)

THE MONUMENT “BATTLE ON THE ICE”

commemorating the victory of Alexander Nevsky over the Livonian knights on the ice of Chudskoye lake on 5 April, 1242. It was erected on Sokolikha hill on the way of the Russian troops to the battle place.



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“THE VARLAAMOVSKY CORNER”

is the fortification complex of the Okolny (outer) town at the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries connected with the defence of Pskov against the troops of Swedish king Gustav Adolf in 1615. In ancient times there was a fortress and northern gates.



The Varlaamovsky corner

The course of the long Livonian War was decided under the fortress walls of the Pokrovsky corner of the Okolny (outer) town.

“ It is true that Pskov... shielded Russia from the greatest danger and the memory of it will not be obliterated out of our history until we lose our name and love for our motherland. ”

Nikolai Karamzin



The monument commemorating the first victory of the Red Army in 1918.

THE BATTLE NEAR PSKOV

in 1918 laid foundation for forming the Red Army and celebrating of the Soviet Army Day – nowadays the “Defender’s Day” holiday.



“CANOPY”

is the monument to the 6th troop.



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THE TITLE “THE CITY OF MILITARY GLORY”

was awarded to Pskov in 2009.

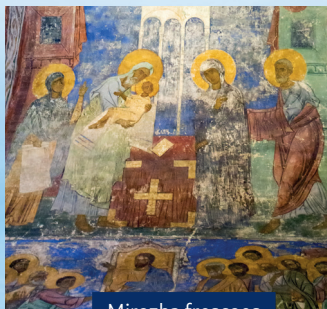
The city of medieval

culture

Pskov – is a city with a distinctive outlook, one of the medieval centres of stone architecture, monumental and icon-painting that gave the world unique monuments of cultural heritage.



10 Pskov churches are on the Unesco's World Heritage List.



Mirozha frescoes



THE SNETOGORSKY MONASTERY

was founded in the end of the 13th century by the Pskov prince Dovmont. Its church of the Nativity of the Mother of God was built in 1311 in the image of the Mirozhsky monastery and was frescoed two years later

THE FRESCOES OF THE CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY OF THE MOTHER OF GOD

are the only preserved work of art of the Old Russian monumental painting of the 1st half of the 14th century and an outstanding example of the Pskov School of Painting.



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THE CATHEDRAL OF THE TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR SAVIOR OF THE 12TH CENTURY

in the Mirozhsky monastery is a cross-domed church, having a unique architectural type for the Old Russian art. It is one of the best examples of Russian architecture of the pre-Mongol period.

UNIQUE MIROZHA FRESCOES

were created presumably by the Greek masters and are one of a kind in the whole world in terms of the area covered with painting and the degree of preservation.





18

THE CHURCH OF ST. BASIL THE GREAT ON THE HILL

of the 15th-16th centuries with the characteristic features of the Pskov church.



33

The Church of Epiphany in Zapskovie, 15th century

Belfries and a famous Pskov "necklace" (a decorative element) "porebrik – begounets - porebrik" – is a characteristic feature of Pskov masters.



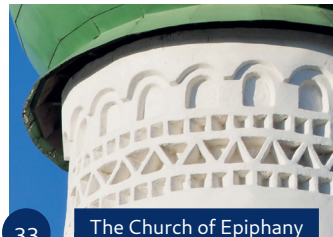
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ADMINISTRATIVE CHAMBER

– the central body of Pskov government in the 17th century.



There are more than 300 architectural monuments of the 12th – 20th centuries preserved in Pskov. In terms of quantity and variety of the monuments of civil architecture Pskov has no equals among Russian cities. About 40 of them have been preserved up to the present day.

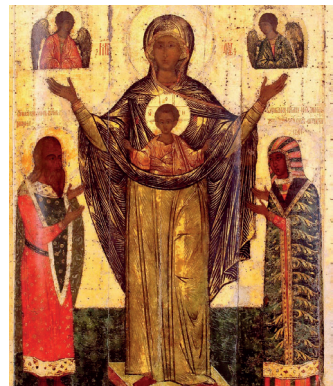


ONE OF THE MAIN SACRED OBJECTS OF PSKOV – THE ICON OF MIROZHSKAYA MOTHER OF GOD

(the second half of the 16th century, a copy of the icon of the 13th century) with the figures of afore standing saint prince Dovmont (Timothy) and his wife princess Maria (Martha in monasticism), also honored as a saint, the granddaughter of Alexander Nevsky.



A collection of Old Russian painting of the Pskovo-Izborsky united museum-preserve counts more than 700 icons.



A medieval centre of trade and crafts

The skill of Pskov stone masons, smiths, smelters, shoe-makers, fishermen and potters has been long known far beyond the town boundaries.



10

THE RYBNITSKAYA TOWER

of the Pskov Kremlin derived its name from the Rybny Torg (Fish market) located on the bank of the Pskova River.



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ACCORDING TO THE LEGEND

the Pskovites got the nickname "skobary" courtesy of Peter I, who, possessing exceptional strength, didn't manage to unbend a timber dog made by the skilled Pskov smiths.



"Denga Pskovskaya (Pskov coin)" with the image of prince Dovmont

THE FAMOUS PSKOV SNETOK (SMELT),

a small fish of the smelt broodline, is a local gastronomic brand.

Pskov of the period of independent veche republic had its own money that were coined at the Pskov mint from 1425 till 1510.

Pskov played an important role in the trade process of Russian land with the West as a leading partner of the Hanseatic League.



"GOLD EMBANKMENT"

was named the "German bank", because the Germans had residence there.



By the XVII century there were more than 40 kinds of crafts in Pskov.



PSKOV

became home for the Hansa Days of the New Age in 2019.

Mysterious city – *heavenly and underground*



44

Pskov is safeguarded by its heavenly patrons and according to the legends it will be standing until the pigeon at the cross of the church of Dormition at Paromenje (by the ferry) will be sitting there.

An underground system of defence constructions, girding the whole town and leading far behind the fortress wall, the ruins of churches and towers, treasures and burial places concealed under the bastions – all these have become known not only from the archaeological excavations but from multiple legends as well.



ONE OF THE MOST MYSTERIOUS PERSONAGES IN PSKOV HISTORY IS NICHOLA SALOS,

who had been fool-for-Christ for more than 30 years. In 1570 he went up against tzar Ivan the Terrible himself and by his fearless patronage saved Pskov from massacre. It is believed that even nowadays fool-for-Christ Nicholai protects the city.

28

THE POGANKIN CHAMBERS

is one of the most outstanding monuments of Russian civil architecture of the 17th century. Inside a massive stone building there is a number of secret rooms and passages, concealed niches and hiding spots. Even the surname of the owner of the chambers – merchant Pogankin – is shrouded in legends: whether he got it for his cruel disposition or for ill-begotten riches.



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THE GREMYACHAYA TOWER

is shrouded in many legends. According to one of them, in its dungeon among immeasurable treasures an enchanted princess is fast asleep and no one has managed to set her free.



Text: Vladimirova, Translation: Kidenova N.
Authors, sources of photo materials: proch2, evdoha, Caid, wizarid, Igor-SPb, Kannap, sikaraha, www.fotostockphotos.com,
Christina Bitenix, www.vk.com/draganesh, Dmitriy Roman, www.vk.com/subkepadjan, Valentin, www.vk.com/artist31,
Victor Gruznov, www.fotokto.ru, unknown authors, www.moneyk.ru, www.365saints.blogspot.com, en.wikipedia.org, www.museums-pskov.ru, www.towattravel.ru,
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This publication has been produced with the financial support of Latvia-Russia Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2014 – 2020. Its contents are the sole responsibility of Pskov City Administration and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Programme, Programme participating countries Latvia and Russia, alongside with the European Union.

Latvia-Russia Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2014 – 2020 supports joint efforts for addressing cross-border development challenges and promotes sustainable use of existing potential of the area across border between the European Union and Russian Federation.



The Programme website is www.latruscbc.eu

This publication has been produced in the framework of the project LV-RU-002 "Preservation and promotion of the cultural and historical heritage in Latvia and Russia" / LV-RU HERITAGE