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SCHOOL ESSAY IN HISTORY OF ART

**“Exploring the ideology of Nikolay Lvov's Palladian church architecture
and its influence on the identity formation of the Russian élite
during the reign of Empress Catherine II.”**

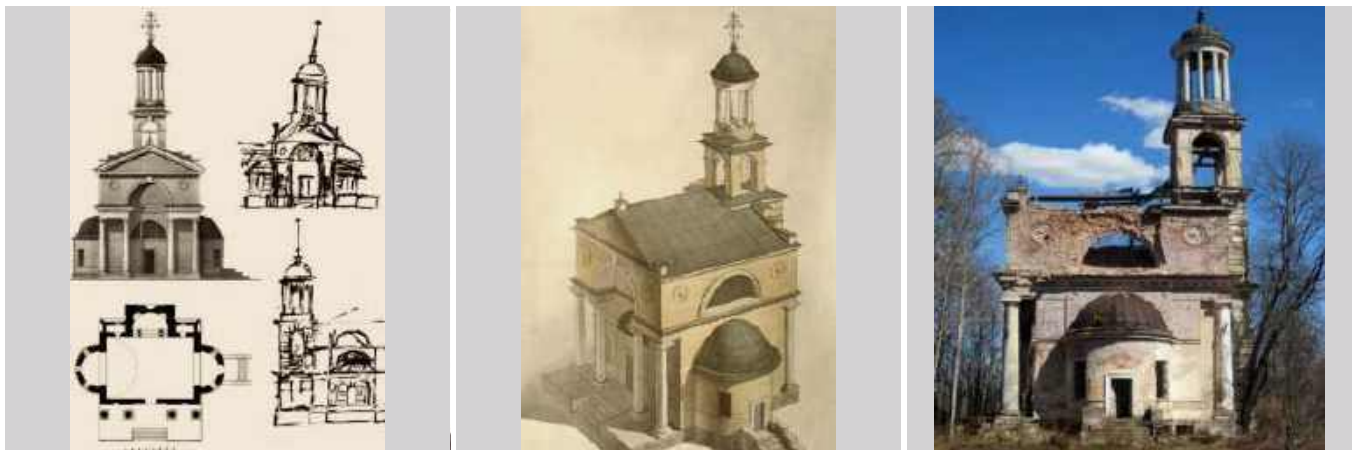


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Exploring the ideology of Nikolay Lvov's Palladian church architecture and its influence on the identity formation of the Russian élite during the reign of empress Catherine II

This essay argues that the Palladian style found in the religious works of Nikolay Lvov was used as an ideological tool to project a new vision of Russia, one that fundamentally aligned with the state's effort to westernise both the country and its élite on a cultural level. If we are to take Umberto Eco's semiotics of architecture, each building communicates meaning, and therefore, even buildings that were not consciously envisioned as buildings that emanate ideology, nonetheless, once placed within the sociopolitical context, reflect certain trends in the formation of Russian identities. Many of Nikolay Lvov's works in fact did serve as ideological platforms that redefined the relationship between Russia and Europe, and further reflected the Russian élite's desire to westernise and associate themselves with Europe. Nikolay Lvov's estate architecture is omitted from this study, for lack of space, but it is nonetheless important to note that Lvov has arguably been called the key factor in popularising the form of the *usadba* primarily thanks to the significant amount of country estates that he built throughout his lifetime.¹ This essay will primarily cover Lvov's church architecture. The Church of Vladimir in Gornitsy, St Catherine's Church in Murino, the Church of St Peter and Paul in Pereslegino, the Rotundal Church at Nikolskoye-Cherenchitsy, are intimately tied to the unique phenomenon of the Russian *usadba*, as much as they were built on Russian country estates. The *usadba* significantly influenced the formation of a new Russian noble identity, a pattern explored by Priscilla Roosevelt in her chapter "Russian Estate Architecture and Noble Identity." Therefore, if we are to attribute Lvov as being the key factor in popularising the Palladian villa, which in turn generated the *usadba* phenomenon, then without realising, he is arguably a very important figure that influenced the identity formation of the Russian nobility.



The Church of Vladimir in Gornitsy, (1790-95), by N.A. Lvov

The aim of this study is to fill a gap in existing scholarship surrounding the architectural works of Nikolay Lvov. The aesthetic and functional aspects of his neo-Palladian architecture have been already researched, with Federica Rossi's monograph on Nikolay Lvov worth reading for a

¹ Ревзина, Ю., & Швидковский, Д. (2016). *Палладианство в России при Екатерине Великой и Александре I. Часть II. Искусствознание, (1-2)*, 358-377.

general overview of the man's architectural ensemble, yet many have failed to analyse the ideological and symbolic dimension that manifested itself, whether implicitly or explicitly, in his architecture. Whilst Ilya Putyatin has published many works exploring the Christian symbolism of Lvov's church architecture, he has not touched upon the way Lvov's church architecture reflects broader cultural and secular patterns during that period. As such, this essay wishes to link Catherine the Great's nationalistic propaganda, and the Russian élite's westernisation within a broader cultural context of the Russian Enlightenment, and how these ideas reflect themselves in Nikolay Lvov's church architecture.



The Church of Saint Peter and Paul in the village of Pereslegino, (1785-1802), by N.A. Lvov

Scholarship, notably Roosevelt, has acknowledged the importance of the rural estate post-1762 in the formation of a group identity for the Russian élite, by which estate ownership conveyed membership in a privileged group, along individuals' adoption of Western cultural norms.² The study was a general overview of Russian estates, and this essay, rather than focusing on Nikolay Lvov's estate architecture to reinforce Roosevelt's hypothesis, wishes to analyze the architect's provincial church architecture, notably examples in Mogilev, Pereslegino, Murino, Gornitsy, and Nikolskoye-Cherenchitsy. As many were built on estates, adjacent to the main mansion, for each nobleman had to have access to a church by virtue of being a member of the established Russian Orthodox Church, this essay argues that Roosevelt's view can equally be applied to religious architecture. In other words, Lvov's provincial church architecture is also reflective of if not membership to the élite per se, very much still embodying Enlightenment ideals and acting as a visual platform by which the nobility could visually associate themselves with the West, in itself another factor key to being a member of the Russian élite.

Dmitry Shvidkovsky traces the arrival of Palladianism in Russia under Catherine the Great in his book "Russian Architecture and the West". Whilst art historians have identified earlier traces of Palladianism in Russian architecture, notably in Petrine Russia, Palladianism became popular under Catherine the Great after she started to take preference on a Palladian-inspired classicism that, in Shvidkovsky's words, showed a sensual appreciation of ancient forms. Eager to appear as an enlightened sovereign, the empress was not afraid of adopting the latest architectural trends

² Roosevelt, P. (2003). *Russian Estate Architecture and Noble Identity*. In J. Cracraft & D. Rowland (Eds.), *Architectures of Russian Identity, 1500 to the Present: 1500 to the Present* (pp. 66–79). Cornell University Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctv3s8r1n.9>

that were popular in Europe and replicating them at home. Shvidkovsky argues that the popularity of Palladianism in Russia can be attributed to Catherine the Great, who saw in Palladianism the best architectural embodiment of Russian enlightenment values. Whatever the empress built was by extension replicated by her courtiers and later on by most of the Russian aristocracy. Whilst questions are raised to what extent Russian aristocrats shared Catherine II's passionate love for the architectural style, one of them, Nikolay Lvov, can certainly be called the most avid native follower of Palladio in Russia during the 1770s, 1780s and 1790s.³ Tired of French architects, Catherine the Great invited Charles Cameron and Giacomo Quarenghi, two avid Palladianists, to Russia. The aforementioned architects were pivotal in influencing Nikolay Lvov's architectural worldview.⁴ Nikolay Lvov became the first native Russian to actively call himself a follower of Palladio. Ilya Putyatin suggests that it was Quarenghi who instilled in Lvov a greater appreciation for classical antiquity, and that it was he who advised Lvov on his 1781 trip to Italy.⁵ However, Lvov also discovered Palladio for himself after he acquired a rare 1616 copy of Palladio's *I Quattro Architettura* at an auction house in Venice whilst on his Italian "grand tour." and being fluent in Italian, was able to study the sources in the original.⁶

Sergey Kavtaradze mentions that whilst an important style, Palladianism should be considered as part of a broader cultural trend. It arrived through multiple channels to Russia, and thereby emerged not as a rigid doctrine but as a flexible, evolving language. This led to the emergence of what Kavtaradze dubbed "Romantic Palladianism", embodied by Lvov rather than Cameron and Quarenghi, due to the new emotional and cultural contexts that it was placed in.⁷ Furthermore, Nikolay Lvov was a true dilettante, an amateur enthusiast which enabled him to innovate freely, thereby following the English Palladian tradition exemplified by Inigo Jones who passed his skills down to such gentlemen-artists as Kent and Burlington. In her insightful article about problems scholars face when researching about Nikolay Lvov's architecture, Miliugina puts forward the proposition that Lvov was not an art theorist. His aesthetics are, in her own words, of a living, spontaneous, moving nature, and therefore does not correspond to the ideas about traditional theories and treaties. This, according to Miliugina, reveals itself in the Italian Diaries and other published works by the "Russian Leonardo".⁸ This corresponds to Palladio's own architectural treatise, which lacks heavy dogmatism and instructs its readers to creatively interpret the classical tradition, adapting it to modern needs if necessary.

³ Shvidkovsky, D. (2003). *Catherine the Great's Field of Dreams: Architecture and Landscape in the Russian Enlightenment*. In J. Cracraft & D. Rowland (Eds.), *Architectures of Russian Identity, 1500 to the Present: 1500 to the Present* (pp. 51–65). Cornell University Press.

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⁴ Глумов А. Н. Львов. М., 1980, с. 37

⁵ Путятин И. Е. Кваренги и Львов: «Паломничество к итальянским святыням», или Рождение образа храма русского ампира. Часть 2 // *Искусствознание*. № 1-2/10. М., 2010. С. 275-309. (1,7 а.л.)

⁶ Ревзина, Ю., & Швидковский, Д. (2016). *Палладианство в России при Екатерине Великой и Александре I. Часть II. Искусствознание*, (1-2), 358-377.

⁷ *Палладианство в России. Сергей Кавтарадзе. Лекция*. (2022, January 27). [Video]. YouTube. Retrieved May 12, 2025, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FMba1t36vIg>

⁸ Милюгина, Е. Г., & Строганов, М. В. (2008). *Гений вкуса: НА Львов. Итоги и проблемы изучения*.



St Joseph's Cathedral, Mogilev, (1785-1796), by N.A. Lvov

Lvov's first major commission happened to be St Joseph's Cathedral (1780), built in Mogilev, present-day Belarus, named after the Austrian Emperor Joseph to commemorate the military alliance made between Russia and Austria against the Ottoman Empire. Built between 1785-1798, the cathedral embodied the geopolitical "Greek Project" that Catherine II had vis-à-vis Ottoman Turkey, in which Russia dreamt of conquering Constantinople and establishing a new Russian-ruled Byzantine Empire. Greek architecture, as seen with the use of the Greek Doric, coupled with a dome inspired from the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, reflected Catherine's desire to visually showcase her geopolitical ambitions to cultured viewers. Hence, the architectural motifs acquired a specific function: nationalistic propaganda.⁹ Nikolay Lvov was a true interpreter to the classical tradition. Inspired by the Roman pantheon yet unable to replicate a dome open to the sky, Lvov adapts the architecture to the Russian climate, creating an innovative "double-oculus" system design.¹⁰ As Nashokina rightfully points out, Nikolay Lvov was the most consistent Palladian of the 18th century. Most of his works have Palladian associations, yet in her view, the end result of almost each case is highly original. Nashokina has summarised the essence of Lvov's creative method, which can be summarised as follows: employing the typical techniques inherent in Palladio, yet innovating by creating his own solutions, mostly tied around the need to reconcile Palladian architecture with the Russian climate and local tradition.¹¹ Nikolay Lvov created another architectural work, the Church of Saint Peter and Paul in the village of Pereslegino (1785-1802), which Alter and Petrov, in their study for UNESCO, concisely analyzed. They have stated Pereslegino as a revisitation of St Joseph's cathedral, yet in my opinion the ideological function has been lost for the fact that the building has been replicated for its aesthetic value and not for the political symbolism that the Mogilev church represented. Nonetheless, Pereslegino is described as more refined in form, with a number of "remarkable and unique features" reflecting the architect's innovative treatment of form and surface: "a façade with two bell towers; a canteen with a half-cylinder arched roof and

⁹ Shvidkovsky D. *The Empress and the Architect. British Architecture and Gardens at the Court of Catherine the Great*. New Haven & London, 1997.

¹⁰ Глумов А. Н. Львов. М., 1980, с. 39.

¹¹ Нащокина М.В. Палладианские виллы в русских усадебных интерпретациях: Конец XVIII - первая треть XIX века.. *Искусствознание*, N. 1-2 /2010:

double-filed colonnades along the sides; and, most notably, a double dome where the outer layer bears frescoes of the apostles that can be seen through the inner layer."



Borisoglebsky Cathedral, Torzhok, (1785-1796), by N.A. Lvov

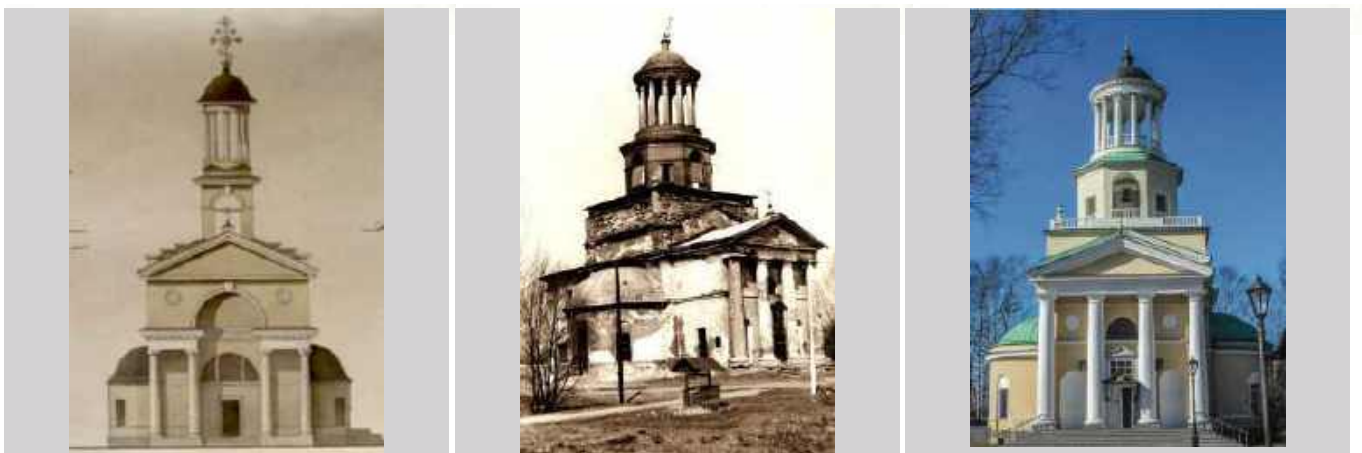
Arguably the architectural chef d'œuvre of Nikolay Lvov, the Borisoglebsky Cathedral is stylistically anchored in a neo-Palladian and strict classical style, revealed by its compact, laconic form, with well-found proportions, strict Doric porticos, which all influence in creating an overall sense of completeness and harmony.¹² According to the art historian Vasily Uspensky, the Borisoglebsky Cathedral, arguably Lvov's architectural masterpiece, reconciled Rus' with Europe under the Palladian portico and marks the definite entry of Palladianism in Russian culture.¹³ Built within the walls of an ancient monastery, the cathedral, directly inspired by Palladio's iconic Villa Capra, as well as layouts by Sebastiano Serliano, imposed itself on the town landscape. Palladio praised the Villa Capra for its location atop of a hill, rendering it visually pleasant, which is what we have here with the Borisoglebsky Cathedral.¹⁴ It has all the characteristics of a Palladian building, marked by the symmetrical, cubic layout, with four porticos and a centric dome. The central dome shares many similarities with Lord Burlington's house in Chiswick: octagonally-shaped, with Diocletian windows on the sides. The porticos have Roman Doric columns, probably chosen for their elegant simplicity. The first two, faced opposite each other, have six columns, whilst the remaining two porticos only have two, as it is built inward, similar to the façade of Palladio's Villa Nanni Mocenigo, although this design is also reminiscent of the Athenian Treasury in Delphi. Personally, the choice for such a design over an open loggia is potentially due to the fact that it shields the faithful from the harsh Russian winters. The Borisoglebsky Cathedral has several elements of traditional Byzantine-inspired Russian church architecture. Firstly, the building has five domes, four low cylindrical drums adorning the central dome, typical of Orthodox architecture, with the Orthodox Christian crosses atop the domes rendering the religious connotations very clear. Here, the fusion of neo-Palladianism with traditional Russian church architecture by Nikolay Lvov arguably serves as an

¹² Никулина Н. И. Николай Львов. Л.: Лениздат, 1971. с. 89

¹³ Успенский, Василий Михайлович. Палладианская Россия. Николай Львов и миф русской усадьбы / Василий Успенский. - (Художник). - Текст : непосредственный // Русское искусство. - 2015. - № 2. - С. 74-83 : ил. - Примеч. - ISSN 1729-9063.

¹⁴ Tavernor, R. (2005). *Palladio and palladianism*. Thames and Hudson, p. 78.

implicit message in which Russia wanted to become more European yet retain its distinct identity, most obvious on a religious dimension in which Russia's Orthodox Christianity sets it apart from Western Europe. As Uspensky suggests, symbolically this stylistic syncretism sends a clear message to the viewer: aspects of European culture, in this instance reflected in the cathedral's resemblance to the Villa Capra, can co-exist with traditional Russian culture. In a sense, the choice of Palladianism here also reflects the state's westernising, and by extension modernising, efforts, in that arguably the building's geometry, symmetry and laconic form, personifies the values of the Russian Enlightenment: reason triumphant and divine order. Hence, the Borisoglebsky Cathedral embodies the successful assimilation of Palladianism into Russian culture, serving as a visual platform to project state ideology. Whilst Russia has had a long tradition of absorbing Western influences to formulate a native architectural idiom, the choice of Palladianism sends a clear ideological message: both the state and the Russian noble élite desired to culturally associate themselves with Europe, by imposing in the heart of an ancient monastery, arguably the quintessence of Russianness, a monumental monument built in pure Palladian style.



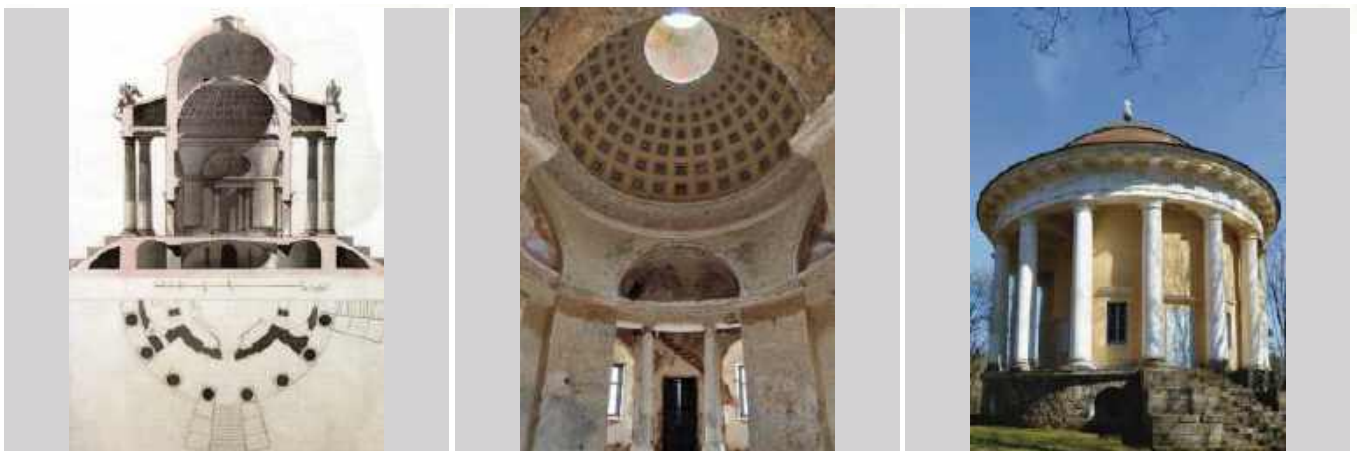
Church of Saint Catherine's, Murino (1786-1790), by N.A. Lvov

Situated in the suburbs of St-Petersburg, the Murino Church built on the Vorontsov's estate, exemplifies the distinctiveness of Russian Palladianism. Firstly, Lvov differs from Palladianism in that he experiments with pure geometric forms.¹⁵ As Uspensky explains, the compositional layout was initially designed to become a private church, but in the process it was decided that it would become a parish church. Therefore, an octagonal belfry topped by a rotundal belvedere was added, placed directly above the building. This echoes typical traits of XVII-XVIII Russian religious architecture, called "иже под колоколы" (under the bells).¹⁶ This tradition stipulates that the belltower must be placed directly on top of the church, contrary to the usual church layouts found in the West. The Murino church thus exemplifies the skillful, innovative approach employed by Nikolay Lvov, in which a typical Russian parish church's functionality remains in place, whilst being rebranded with a European neoclassical façade. The religious essence

¹⁵ Shvidkovsky, D. O. (2007). *Russian architecture and the West*. Yale University Press. (pp. 263-265)

¹⁶ Успенский, Василий Михайлович. Палладианская Россия. Николай Львов и миф русской усадьбы / Василий Успенский. - (Художник). - Текст : непосредственный // Русское искусство. - 2015. - № 2. - С. 74-83 : ил. - Примеч. - ISSN 1729-9063.

remains intact, yet in appearance it has seemingly become more westernised, which in turn reflects the contradictions in Russia's westernisation processes. On the surface, it became more European, yet the extent to which it truly became European remains contested. Finally, it is worth stating the Murino church served as a prototype, centric church with bell tower on one vertical axis, for other religious monuments constructed by Lvov, notably the Church of the Vladimir Icon of the Mother of God, in the village of Gornitsy (1789-1795), and the Gate Tower in the Borisoglebsky monastery situated in Torzhok. The former is another church built on a former noble estate, in this instance it was commissioned by the estate owner Pyotr Beklemishev. Per Alter, another example of Lvov's bold experimentation with composition., as seen with Lvov's willingness to not only fuse western classical architecture with Orthodox architecture, but simultaneously alter traditional church architecture. For example, the apse, traditionally reserved for the altar, has been placed on both sides. Palladian, the entryway is a four-column portico, with the "иже под колоколы" motif reappearing, essentially a bell tower that is topped by a belvedere right above the altar area.¹⁷



Rotunda Church-Mausoleum, Nikolskoye-Cherenchitsy, (1789-1802), by N.A. Lvov

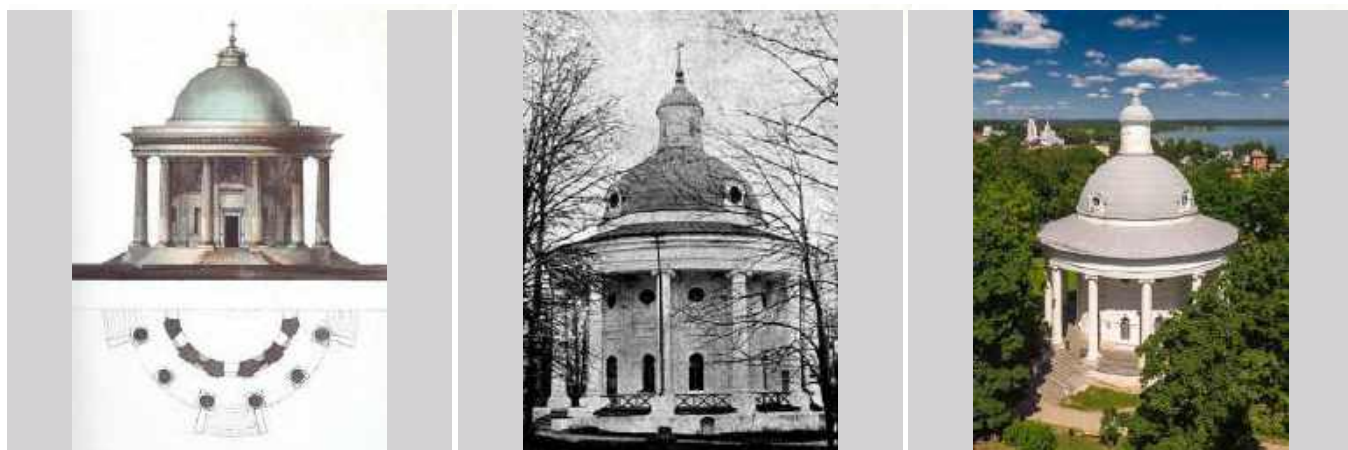
Finally, the last prototype worth visiting is the Rotundal Church-Mausoleum that Nikolay Lvov constructed at Nikolskoye-Cherenchitsy, his home estate in the Tver province. As a mausoleum, the Church is the site where the architect was buried following his death in 1804. The architectural influences of the design are several, from Cameron's Temple of Friendship at Pavlovsk, itself inspired by William Chambers' Temple of Pan at Stowe, to, inevitably, Bramante's Tempietto, and by extension, the ancient temple at Tivoli. Proportionally, it fulfills Vitruvian requirements.¹⁸ The rotundal form was considered as the ideal for a Christian Church during the Renaissance, both from its sacred meaning, and from the point of view of its strength and durability. Notably, Palladio supported this view, calling for churches to be built in the forms of rotundas.¹⁹ According to Putyatin, the Rotundal Church at Nikolskoye-Cherenchitsy embodied

¹⁷ Альтер, О. С., & Петров, А. С. (2022). Новая номинация UNESCO "Исторический центр Торжка и усадебная архитектура Николая Львова". Первоочередные задачи и пути решения. Журнал Института Наследия.

¹⁸ Брайцева О.И., Будылина М.В., Харламова А.М. Архитектор Н.А. Львов. М., 1961

¹⁹ Tereshina, O. B. (2018, November). Rotundal temple in Russia: European roots and Russian traditions. In *IOP Conference Series: Materials Science and Engineering* (Vol. 451, No. 1, p. 012127). IOP Publishing.

the concept of "sacralization" of secular buildings, in which churches did not become secularised but on the contrary secularised forms, borrowed from villas or pavilions, suddenly become imbued with spiritual meaning.²⁰ This reflects Palladio's own approach and the broader trend in Russian Palladianism to connect secular life with Christian faith through architecture. The Rotundal Church in Nikolskoye is also reflective of the Romanticism found in not only Lvov's architecture but also his poetry, in which the building is, in Ilyin's words, simple in composition, perfect and complete in form. Ilyin further traces the influence the belief of the "natural man" had upon Lvov. Striving to achieve an overall architectural harmony in the ensemble, Lvov strived, very much as Palladio did, to have a built environment, placed in a nature, that enabled the inhabitant, in this case the Russian nobleman, to reveal his inner feelings and bring out the best qualities in man.²¹ Such lofty ideals reflect the influence of the Enlightenment upon the architect, and to a lesser extent, implicitly shows the extent to which Lvov's was westernised in as much as he was fully immersed in exploring the ideals of the European enlightenment. Hence, the Rotundal Church definitely serves as another example in which the Palladian-inspired Rotundal Church-Mausoleum shaped the noble identity. As a sentimentalist poet, Lvov was involved in an artistic group of poets associated with the cultural phenomenons of the Russian Enlightenment. His love for nature and belief in the ideal of private life is arguably reflected in his provincial architecture.²²



The Church of the Great Martyr Catherine, Valdai, (1786-1793), by N.A. Lvov

Following the charter of the nobility signed by Peter III in 1762, most of the Russian nobility was freed from military service, causing the mass influx of noblemen to return to their native estates, to live with their families and domestics.²³ Many were small and dilapidated, and hence the

²⁰ Путьтин И. Е. Кваренги и Львов: «Паломничество к итальяским святыням», или Рождение образа храма русского ампира. Часть 2 // Искусствознание. № 1-2/10. М., 2010. С. 275-309. (1,7 а.л.)

²¹ Ильин М. А. О палладианстве в творчестве Д. Кваренги и Н. Львова // Русское искусство XVIII в. М., 1973. С. 103–108.

²² Альтер, О. С., & Петров, А. С. (2022). Новая номинация UNESCO "Исторический центр Торжка и усадебная архитектура Николая Львова". Первоочередные задачи и пути решения. Журнал Института Наследия.

²³ SHVIDKOVSKY, D. (2005). The Founding of Saint Petersburg and the History of Russian Architecture. *Studies in the History of Art*, 66, 78–97. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42622378>

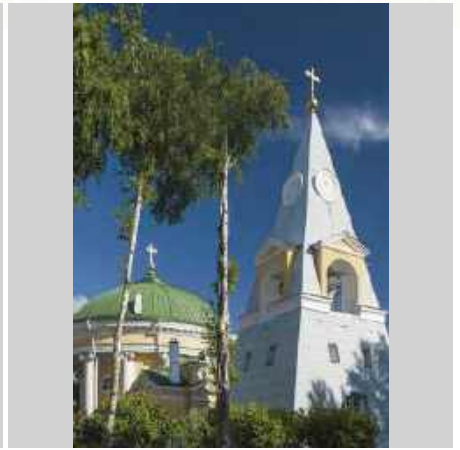
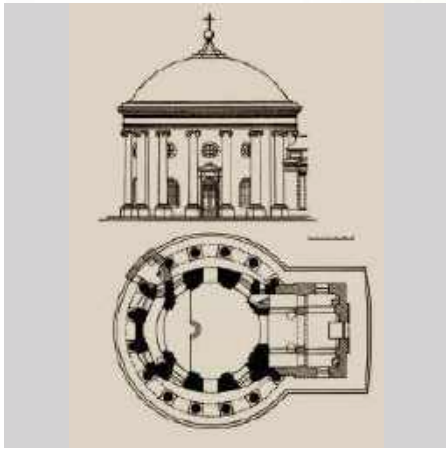
1760s onwards saw the emergence of the *usadba*, the Russian word for country estate, in which Russian noblemen built for themselves a country house to retire to, essentially acting as an antithesis to work in the urban capital. The *usadba*, in other words the Russian country estate, as a cultural phenomenon was primarily influenced from the Palladian works of Nikolay Lvov, and inevitably the landscape gardens associated with the country estates. In as much as it was destined to be a place visited by the Russian nobility, the church itself is reflective of broader, cultural trends in Russian élite society, in which, appropriating western architecture to their own environments, the Russian aristocracy imbued their domestic environment with a new, distinctly European flavour. Embedded in their homes was the influence of Palladianism. The Church Mausoleum symbolically reflects that Lvov's ideals were inevitably closely aligned with those of the Russian Enlightenment.



The Transfiguration Cathedral, Vyborg (1781), by N.A. Lvov

To conclude, this paper explored the way in which Nikolay Lvov's architecture represents a unique fusion of Enlightenment ideals and imperial aspirations, all instrumental in shaping a new Europeanised identity amongst the Russian nobility. While prior scholarship has emphasised his stylistic innovations and sources of architectural inspirations, this study has highlighted the implicit, ideological functions and state propaganda, found in Lvov's architecture, positioning him as a pivotal figure whose architectural works helped influence the changing identities of the Russian noble élite. Future research in this yet understudied aspect of Russian architectural history should consider tracing the exact sources of inspiration, whether French classical architecture, Piranesi's engravings or specific Palladian buildings, and identifying them with Lvov's various, architectural works.

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The Church of the Holy Trinity (Kulich & Paskha), (1785-87), by N.A. Lvov

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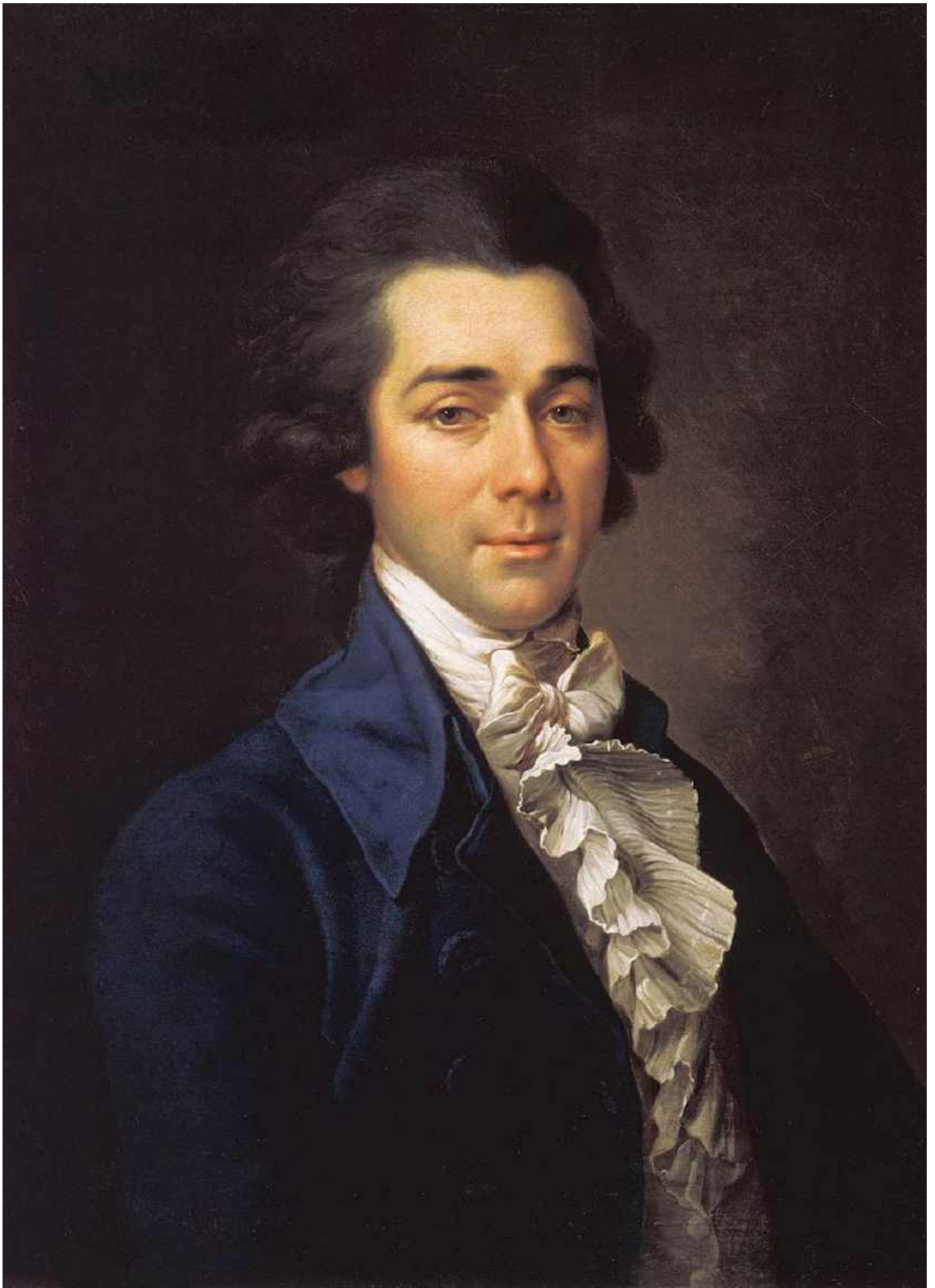


Church of the Holy Mandylion (Spassky Church), Torzhok, (1804-11), by N.A. Lvov

POST SCRIPTUM

The following appendix and documents is an extensive anthology of various works by Nikolay Alexandrovich Lvov (1753-1804), dubbed the "Russian Leonardo" for a reason. My first acquaintance with Nikolay Lvov dates back for quite a few years, probably around when I was 13 or 14, and I was completely taken by surprise, of a pleasant nature, by the fact that such an incredible person existed in the history of culture. He was, apart from being an architect, an engineer, poet, diarist, musician, statesman, ethnographer. A man of many talents in whom I see the very apex of what the Russian enlightenment produced. An "Homo Universalis" in the truest sense of the word. Many of his architectural works lie in ruins or have been destroyed during the Soviet Period. Hence in a sense the fact that I chose Nikolay Lvov may be attributed to my desire to making this relatively unknown architect in the West more known and raise awareness to the plight of such a rich architectural heritage. My relationship with Palladianism has dated back even longer, with English Palladianism having exerted an unparalleled influence on me, it still does, reflected in the fact that I even went as far as designing my own Palladian Rotunda. The anthology will hopefully provide readers a more holistic understanding, a spatial dimension of Nikolay Lvov's work and enable the reader to immerse themselves into the charming world of Nikolay Lvov.

Paul Ostroverhy



Nikolay Alexandrovich Lvov
by Dmitri Grigorievitch Levitsky

PAUL OSTROVERHY

LOWER SIXTH, STOWE SCHOOL, UNITED KINGDOM

APPENDIX I

NOTES AND AUDIO PODCAST

FOR THE ESSAY:

**“Exploring the ideology of Nikolay Lvov's Palladian church architecture
and its influence on the identity formation of the Russian élite
during the reign of Empress Catherine II.”**

**Timeline of Main Events
Cast of Characters**

**Stowe's Garden versus Tsarskoje Selo Garden
Stowe's Rotunda versus Lvov's Rotunda**

**Mind Map of the Essay
Audio Podcast of the Essay**

<https://paulostroverhy.com/lvov/lvovpaulpodcast.wav>

THIS ENGLISH ORIGINAL
WAS WRITTEN WITH THE ASSISTANCE
OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND OTHER
LANGUAGE GENERATION SOFTWARES



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TIMELINE OF THE MAIN EVENTS

1762: Catherine the Great issues a charter freeing Russian noblemen from lifelong service. This leads to an influx of nobles moving to the countryside w need for adequate residences.

1760s-1770s: French classicist architecture is popular in Russia. Catherine the Great becomes dissatisfied with this style.

Undated (Post-1760s/1770s): Catherine the Great turns to Palladianism and invites G. Quarenghi and Ch. Cameron to work at her court, introducing Palladianism proper to Russia.

Undated (Prior to 1781): Nikolay Lvov travels extensively throughout Europe, including Germany, France, and Italy, to acquaint himself with Western art.

1781: Nikolay Lvov travels through Italy, studies classical antiquity and the works of Andrea Palladio, and witnesses Palladio's built works in Vicenza. He acquires a rare 1616 edition of Palladio's "Four Books of Architecture" at an auction in Venice.

After 1781: Nikolay Lvov translates all four books of Palladio's "Four Books of Architecture" into Russian and draws up to 200 copies of Palladio's drawings.

1780s: Nikolay Lvov's first building in St. Petersburg, the Main Post Office, is built. It is described as Palladian.

1780s (Concurrent with Postal Office): Lvov builds churches on magnates' estates outside St. Petersburg (now within the city), such as St. Catherine's on the Vorontsovs' estate in Murino, which show experiments with pure geometric forms and resemble French classicism.

1785: Nikolay Lvov designs the Borisoglebsky Cathedral in Torzhok and the church at the Vorontsovs' estate in Murino.

1785-1787: The Kulich and Pascha church is built in St. Petersburg, designed by Nikolay Lvov, featuring a rotunda and pyramid.

1795-1796: The Borisoglebsky Cathedral in Torzhok, is built.

1798: Nikolay Lvov publishes his translation of Palladio's "Four Books of Architecture" with his own accompanying sketches.

Likely during this period: Nikolay Lvov develops his own heating and ventilation system, documented in his book "Russian Pyrostatics."

During Lvov's career: The St. Joseph's Cathedral in Mogilev is commissioned by Empress Catherine to commemorate a military alliance between Russia and Austria. Lvov designs this cathedral incorporating political messages through architectural allusions. The double-dome oculus system is first used here.

During Lvov's career: The double-dome technique is reproduced in churches at Dikanka, Arpachevo, Nikolskoye-Cherenchitsy, and the estate of Znamenskoye-Rayok.

During Lvov's career: Nikolay Lvov designs and builds other notable works, including the Church of the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God in Arpachevo, the Rotunda-Church in Valdai, the Church-Mausoleum in Nikolskoye-Cherenchitsy, the Church of the Vladimir Icon of the Mother of God in Gornitsy, the Znamenskoye-Rayok estate, Soymonov's House, and contributes to the reconstruction of Derzhavin's St. Petersburg Residence.

Undated (Possibly during construction of Murino church): The decision is made to make the Murino church a parish church instead of a private church-mausoleum, requiring the addition of a bell tower.

Post-1804 (Lvov's death): The entrance-gate bell tower in Torzhok is built by Lvov's design.

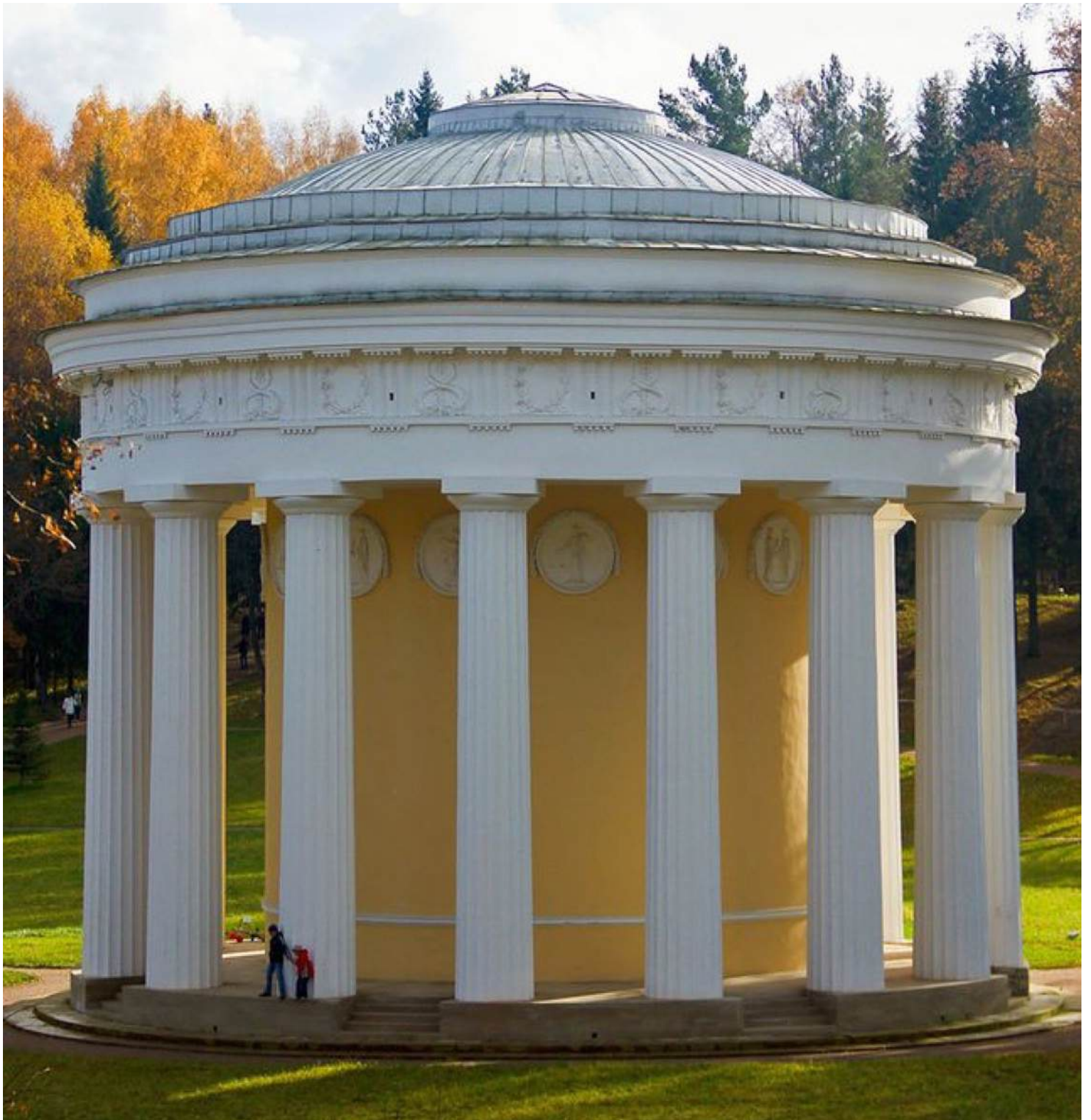
CAST OF CHARACTERS

- **Nikolay Lvov:** (D.O.B. 2007 - this seems incorrect based on context, likely a typo for his birth year being much earlier, given his activity in the late 18th century) The principal figure of the source. A native Russian architect, multidisciplinary artist, and scholar who became the first Russian to declare himself a follower of Palladio. He is known for translating Palladio's "Four Books of Architecture" and developing a distinct "Russian Palladianism" by adapting classical and Palladian forms to the Russian climate, local traditions (especially church architecture), state ideology, and his personal preferences. He was an "amateur" or "dilettante" architect who experimented freely with forms.
- **Catherine the Great:** The Empress of Russia who viewed architecture as a means to showcase her political ideals and implement her ideas about enlightened autocracy. She initiated the shift in Russian architecture towards classicism and Palladianism and invited European architects to her court. She commissioned some of Lvov's key works, including the St. Joseph's Cathedral in Mogilev.
- **Andrea Palladio:** A Renaissance Italian architect whose work profoundly influenced Nikolay Lvov. Lvov studied his "Four Books of Architecture" and built works, adopting and adapting his principles and motifs.
- **Giacomo Quarenghi:** An Italian architect invited to work at Catherine the Great's court. He was trained in the northern Italian tradition of Palladianism and, along with Charles Cameron, helped introduce Palladianism to Russia. The source notes that his Russian Palladian style differed from Palladio's in certain aspects.
- **Charles Cameron:** A British architect inspired by Anglo-Palladianism, also invited to work at Catherine the Great's court. He, along with Giacomo Quarenghi, played a key role in bringing Palladianism to Russia. His St. Sophia Cathedral near Tsarskoye Selo is cited as an inspiration for Lvov's Borisoglebsky Cathedral.
- **A. A. Bezborodko:** The Secretary of State for Catherine II, under whose protection Nikolay Lvov worked when commissioned for the Postal Office in St. Petersburg.
- **William Kent:** An English Palladianist mentioned as an influence on Russian Palladianism, particularly his work on Holkham Hall.
- **Lord Leicester:** The owner of Holkham Hall, commissioned William Kent for the project, which is cited as an example of Anglo-Palladianism that influenced Russian Palladianism.
- **Lord Burlington:** An English architect whose house in Chiswick is mentioned as a potential inspiration for Lvov's Borisoglebsky Cathedral, through its use of a Diocletian window, itself inspired by Scamozzi's Villa Pisani.
- **Vincenzo Scamozzi:** An Italian architect whose Villa Pisani is cited as an inspiration for Lord Burlington's house in Chiswick, which in turn influenced Lvov.
- **Gavriil Derzhavin:** A Russian poet and statesman, mentioned in the context of using the term "house-like" churches in relation to the Borisoglebsky Cathedral. Lvov also contributed to the reconstruction of his St. Petersburg Residence.
- **Vasily Uspensky:** Mentioned as an architectural historian who points out observations about Lvov's works, particularly the church in Murino and its "izhe pod kolokolnye" layout.

- **Fedor Voronikhin:** A Russian architect mentioned as having used the double dome system, first employed by Lvov in Mogilev, for the Kazan Cathedral in St. Petersburg.
- **Bramante:** An Italian Renaissance architect whose Tempietto is mentioned as a potential source of inspiration for Lvov's rotunda churches.
- **Giovanni Battista Piranesi:** An Italian artist and engraver whose engravings modified Palladian models before they were used by Russian architects. He is also mentioned as someone Tommaso Temanza sent Quarenghi to meet. His depiction of the Pantheon with its two towers is also cited as a possible inspiration for a church in Ukraine similar to Dikanka.
- **Tommaso Temanza:** An Italian architect mentioned as a teacher to both Giacomo Quarenghi and Teodoro Wolkoff, and someone who influenced Russian Palladianism through his students and interactions.
- **Charles de Wailly:** A French architect mentioned as a teacher who influenced Russian Palladianism.
- **Charles-Louis Clérisseau:** A French architect mentioned as a teacher who influenced Russian Palladianism.
- **Teodoro Wolkoff:** Mentioned as a student of Tommaso Temanza in St. Petersburg who made progress in architectural sciences.
- **Sergey Prokudin-Gorsky:** A Russian photographer who famously captured a photograph of the entrance-gate bell tower in Torzhok, built according to Lvov's design.
- **Joseph II:** The Austrian Emperor who concluded a military alliance with Catherine the Great in Mogilev, which the cathedral there was commissioned to commemorate.
- **Kochubey:** The family on whose estate in the Poltava Province the Dikanka church, designed by Lvov, is located.
- **Vorontsovs:** The family on whose estate in Murino, outside St. Petersburg, Nikolay Lvov designed a church.
- **Soymonov:** The owner of a manor house designed by Nikolay Lvov, cited as an example of his adherence to Palladian compositions.
- **Tamara:** The owner of a country home for which Nikolay Lvov created plans, cited as an example of his adherence to Palladian compositions.
- **Rossi:** Referencing a YouTube lecture on Russian architecture, cited for observations about the differences in Russian Palladianism and the political messages in the Mogilev Cathedral.
- **Shvidkovsky:** Referencing the book "Architecture of Russian Identity," cited for information about Palladianism coming to Russia and the influence of Anglo-Palladianism.
- **Brumfield:** Referencing the book "Landmarks of Russian Architecture," cited for information about the cross-domed layout of the Borisoglebsky Cathedral and its relation to Byzantine-inspired Russian Church architecture.
- **Sh. Y.:** Referencing a source providing a description of the Borisoglebsky Cathedral.
- **Kavtaradze:** Mentioned as a source supporting the possibility of Lvov's membership in a Masonic lodge.
- **Paul Ostroverhy:** The author of the draft essay, a student at Stowe School, United Kingdom.
- **The author of the Colta.ru article:** An unnamed author of an article on Russian Palladianism, offering a perspective on its relationship with European architectural trends and mentioning teachers like Temanza, de Wailly, and Clérisseau.



Catherine the Great
by Lampi, Johann Baptist Elder, 1751 – 1830
Oil on canvas, 79 x 61cm



Tsarskoe Selo
Temple of Friendship, 1770s
Architect: Charles Cameron
St. Petersburg region, Russia

STOWE'S VS TSARSKOJE

A detailed comparative architectural analysis of key monuments in Stowe Gardens (England) and Tsarskoe Selo (Russia), highlighting their similarities, differences, Palladian/Roman influences, technical characteristics, and potential connections to N. Lvov's work.

Stowe Gardens: <https://www.neonbubble.com/travel/stowe-gardens/>
Tsarskoje Selo: <https://tzar.ru/>

1. Palladian Bridges

Stowe Gardens – Palladian Bridge (1738) (left image)

- **Architect:** James Gibbs
- **Design:** Three-arched bridge with a five-bay Ionic colonnade and pedimented pavilions; coffered ceiling.
- **Materials:** Ashlar stone with rusticated arches.
- **Influence:** Inspired by Palladio's designs and the bridge at Wilton House.

Tsarskoe Selo – Marble (Palladian) Bridge (1774)

- **Architect:** Unknown; possibly influenced by Charles Cameron.
- **Design:** Similar to Stowe's bridge, featuring Ionic columns and pedimented pavilions.
- **Materials:** Ural marble.
- **Influence:** Directly inspired by English Palladian bridges.

Comparison:

- **Similarities:** Both bridges feature classical Ionic colonnades, pedimented pavilions, and serve as ornamental structures in landscape gardens.
- **Differences:** Stowe's bridge uses ashlar stone; Tsarskoe Selo's is constructed from Ural marble.



2. Columns

Stowe Gardens – Grenville Column (1749) (left image)

- **Architect:** Possibly Earl Temple.
- **Design:** Doric rostral column adorned with ship prows; commemorates Captain Thomas Grenville.
- **Materials:** Stone with lead statue (originally).

Tsarskoe Selo – Chesme Column (1774–78)

- **Architect:** Antonio Rinaldi.
- **Design:** Doric rostral column with ship prows and bronze eagle atop; commemorates Russian naval victories.
- **Materials:** White and pink marble with bronze elements.

Comparison:

- **Similarities:** Both are rostral columns celebrating naval achievements, featuring ship prows and classical design.
- **Differences:** Chesme Column is more elaborate, with additional bronze elements and bas-reliefs.



3. Pyramids

Stowe Gardens – Vanbrugh's Pyramid (1726) (left image)

- **Architect:** Sir John Vanbrugh.
- **Design:** 60-foot-high pyramid; served as a garden monument.
- **Status:** Demolished in 1797; foundations remain.

Tsarskoe Selo – Pyramid Pavilion (1770–72)

- **Architects:** Vasily Neyelov and Charles Cameron.
- **Design:** Stone pyramid serving as a garden pavilion.
- **Materials:** Stone blocks.
- **Comparison:**
- **Similarities:** Both are pyramid-shaped structures serving as ornamental features in gardens.
- **Differences:** Stowe's pyramid was larger and served as a monument; Tsarskoe Selo's functions as a pavilion.



4. Temples

Stowe Gardens – Temple of Concord and Victory (1747–49) (left image)

- **Architect:** William Kent.
- **Design:** Rectangular cella with peristyle of 28 Ionic columns; inspired by Roman temples.
- **Materials:** Stone.

Tsarskoe Selo – Temple of Friendship (1770s)

- **Architect:** Charles Cameron.
- **Design:** Circular temple with Ionic columns; dedicated to friendship.
- **Materials:** Stone.

Comparison:

- **Similarities:** Both temples employ Ionic columns and classical design principles.
- **Differences:** Stowe's temple is rectangular; Tsarskoe Selo's is circular.



5. Arches

Stowe Gardens – Corinthian Arch (1765–67) (left image)

- **Architect:** Thomas Pitt, Lord Camelford.
- **Design:** Triumphal arch with Corinthian columns; serves as an eye-catcher in the landscape.
- **Materials:** Stone.

Tsarskoe Selo – Gothic Gate

- **Architect:** Unknown.
- **Design:** Gothic-style arch with six-lobed pillars and cast-iron figures.
- **Materials:** Stone and cast iron.

Comparison:

- **Similarities:** Both serve as ornamental gateways in the landscape.
- **Differences:** Stowe's arch is classical; Tsarskoe Selo's gate is Gothic in style.



6. Ideological and Aesthetic Principles

- **Palladian/Roman Influence:** Both Stowe and Tsarskoe Selo incorporate classical architectural elements, reflecting the Enlightenment ideals of harmony, order, and beauty.
- **Symbolism:** Structures like the Grenville and Chesme Columns commemorate naval victories, embodying national pride and historical memory.
- **Aesthetic Integration:** The placement of these monuments within landscaped gardens demonstrates a deliberate effort to create picturesque vistas and evoke emotional responses.



Church-Mausoleum
at Nikolskoye-Cherenchitsy, 1790
Tver region, Russia

STOWE'S ROTUNDA VS LVOV'S ROTUNDA

Comparative Architectural Analysis:

Temple of Ancient Virtue (Stowe) vs. Church-Mausoleum (Nikolskoye-Cherenchitsy)

1. Architectural Typology & Function

- **Temple of Ancient Virtue** (Stowe, designed by William Kent, c. 1737)
 - A **neoclassical garden temple**, built as a **secular monument** to celebrate four ancient Greek figures: Socrates, Homer, Lycurgus, and Epaminondas.
 - It serves as a **didactic folly**, embodying the **British Enlightenment ideal** of moral philosophy and civic virtue through landscape architecture.
- **Church-Mausoleum at Nikolskoye-Cherenchitsy** (designed by Nikolay Lvov, 1790s)
 - A **religious-funerary structure**, built as both a **church** and **mausoleum** for the Lvov family.
 - Serves a **liturgical function** while also housing a **commemorative tomb**, blending **sacred space** with **private memory**.

2. Stylistic Sources & Architectural Language

- **Stowe** draws heavily from **Palladian classicism**, filtered through **British Enlightenment ideals**, especially the work of **Inigo Jones** and **William Kent**. It is inspired by ancient Roman temples but scaled down for the picturesque garden setting.
- **Nikolskoye-Cherenchitsy** is influenced by **Palladio**, **Roman antiquity**, and **Byzantine Orthodox tradition**. The rotunda form reflects Lvov's deep study of **the Pantheon**, but also integrates the **Russian Orthodox cross-in-square** tradition through adaptation.

3. Form & Geometry

- **Stowe's Temple:**
 - Circular **rotunda** with a **domed roof** and **ionic colonnade**, based loosely on the **Temple of Vesta at Tivoli**.
 - Emphasizes **symmetry, proportion**, and **idealised antiquity** in miniature.
 - Open-sided (peripteral), allowing **continuous visibility** of its symbolic interior statues.
- **Lvov's Rotunda-Mausoleum:**
 - **Centrally planned rotunda**, similar in volume to Palladio's **Villa Rotonda** or the **Pantheon**, but adapted for **Orthodox liturgy**.
 - Employs a **double-dome system**, with an **internal oculus** to admit light while preserving warmth in the Russian climate.
 - The walls are **solid and closed**, fitting its **funerary-sacred** role. It is both **monumental** and **introspective**, not designed for the open gaze but for the **ritual interior**.

4. Symbolism & Cultural Ideology

- **Stowe:**
 - A political and philosophical **statement of Whig virtue**, linking modern Britain with **republican antiquity**.
 - By honouring pagan figures in temple form, the structure **subordinates religious ritual to moral philosophy**, reflecting **Enlightenment secularism**.
 - Located in a **garden**, it's meant to be **strolled around and admired**.
- **Lvov's Mausoleum-Church:**
 - A private act of **Christian piety**, remembrance, and innovation.

- **Lvov's Mausoleum-Church:**

- A private act of **Christian piety**, remembrance, and innovation.
- Blends **classical purity** with **Orthodox theology**, producing a truly **Russian Palladianism**.
- The use of ancient forms (dome, drum, rotunda) is **symbolic of eternity**, resurrection, and cosmic harmony.
- Reflects Lvov's role as a **Masonic and Enlightenment thinker**, merging **universal forms** with **Russian identity**.

5. Materiality & Context

- **Stowe:**

- Built in **local limestone**, set within a **planned English landscape**.
- Intended to be seen from multiple garden axes, its form is **iconic and external**.

- **Nikolskoye-Cherenchitsy:**

- Constructed with **brick and stucco**, integrating **heating and ventilation** techniques designed by Lvov.
- Surrounded by **trees and rolling landscape**, but designed for **internal liturgical use** rather than visual delight.

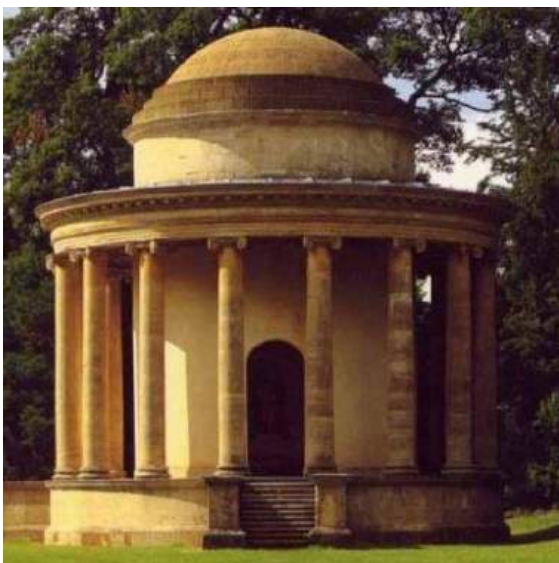
6. Conclusion:

Though both are **rotundas** that draw from **classical antiquity**, they express **radically different cultural values**:

- The **Temple of Ancient Virtue** is an outward-facing, rational, secular celebration of **moral exemplars**, part of a garden of **ideas and ideals**.
- The **Lvov Church-Mausoleum** is an inward-facing, sacred, and philosophical reflection on **eternity, memory, and national identity**, adapted with ingenuity to **Russian climate, religion, and symbolism**.

Together, they illustrate the **parallel uses of classical architecture** in Enlightenment Europe:

- in Britain, for **moral-political landscape statements**;
- in Russia, for the **synthesis of universal form with Orthodox and national expression**.



Temple of Ancient Virtue



Church-Mausoleum



Nikolay Lvov's Influence on Russian Palladianism

Palladianism in Lvov's Architecture

Examples

Plans for noble estates (St Petersburg outskirts)

Echoes Villa Capra (La Rotonda)

Seymourov manor house

Tatarov's country home

Postal Office, St Petersburg

Difference from Palladio/Quarenghi

Multiplication of columns in portico

Expansion of volumetric forms

Shift away from Palladio (urban facade needs)

Seen in English Palladianism (Holkham Hall)

Borisoglebsky Cathedral, Tverzhok

Znamenskoye-Rayok

Inspired by Villa Capra

Inspired by St Sophia Cathedral (Cameron)

Central cubic composition

Porticos on all four sides

Roman Doric columns

Classical allusions (Athenian Treasury)

Octagonal central dome

Diocletian window (Chiswick House inspiration)

Combines Palladian motifs and composition

Differs (Religious context)

Four Key Factors

1. Climate

Russia not Italy

Buildings according to climatic conditions

Deviation from canons necessary

Lvov translated Palladio, noted climate difference

Refused dogmatic copying (imitator not artist)

Refined interpreter, not imitator

Considered geographical/climatic context

Architectural Innovations

Double-dome oculus system (compatibility)

First used at Mogilev Cathedral (inspired by Pantheon)

Reproduced in other churches/estates

Integrated heating/ventilation system (Russian Pyrostatics)

Prevents heat loss

Two-dome system

Light streaming from side windows

Considered Russian stoves backward

Fulfills Vitruvius' demand for utility

Used at Dikanka, Nikolskoye-Chertkovo

Improves acoustics, lighting, comfort

2. Local Tradition (Church)

Combination with Russian Church architecture

Borisoglebsky Cathedral (variation of Villa Rotonda)

Combines Palladio with local tradition

Church of St Catherine, Marino

Used in other churches (Gomel'sky, Tverzhok entrance-gate bell tower)

Possibility to combine demonstrated

Multitiered structure

Traditional Palladian four-column portico

Addition of octagonal belfry/rotunda/belvedere

Inspired by Glanum mausoleum (possible)

'Izbe pod kokolozhoye' layout (Old Russian tradition)

Centric church with bell tower on central axis

Unique combination with neoclassicism

3. State Ideology

Cathedral in Mogilev commissioned by Catherine

Commemorate military alliance (Russia/Austria)

Geopolitical Greek project

Dominate Ottoman Empire, recreate Byzantium

Architectural allusions as political messages

Projects state ideology, creates distinct Russian style

Greek Doric orders

Byzantine flavour (Hagia Sophia interior dome)

Roman Pantheon inspiration (central dome)

Symbols recognizable to educated man

4. Personal Preference

Dilettante / 'general culturist'

Architectural activity as philosophical

Lack of professional education

Greater creative freedom

Experimentation with forms

Unique artistic expression

Innovations and experiments

Kulich and Pascha church (Rotunda and Pyramid Church)

Paper architects of French classicism

Abstract and monumental approach

Integrating primal forms (cubes, pyramids, squares)

Echoes Temple of Vesta, Pyramid of Cestius

Experiments with architectural form

Possible Masonic Influence

Pyramid's symbolic significance

Common among Enlightenment figures/friends

Combine rationalism with mysteries of ancient architecture

Conclusion: Distinct Russian Palladian Style

Beyond mere replication of Italian models

Lvov adapted forms to Russian realities

Climatic adaptations, local tradition, personal preference, state ideology

Stylistically evolved from classical and neo-Palladian

Innovations: double-dome, heating system, church structure adaptations

Marino ('Izbe pod kokolozhoye') highlights Russian element

Church architecture shows Russian element most clearly

Established native classical idiom

Grounded in Vitruvian triad (firmitas, utilitas, venustas) for Russian context

How Lvov Differed from Palladianism

Other Influences and Considerations

Lvov's Buildings (Examples)

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AI GENERATED PODCAST:

Based on the Essay:

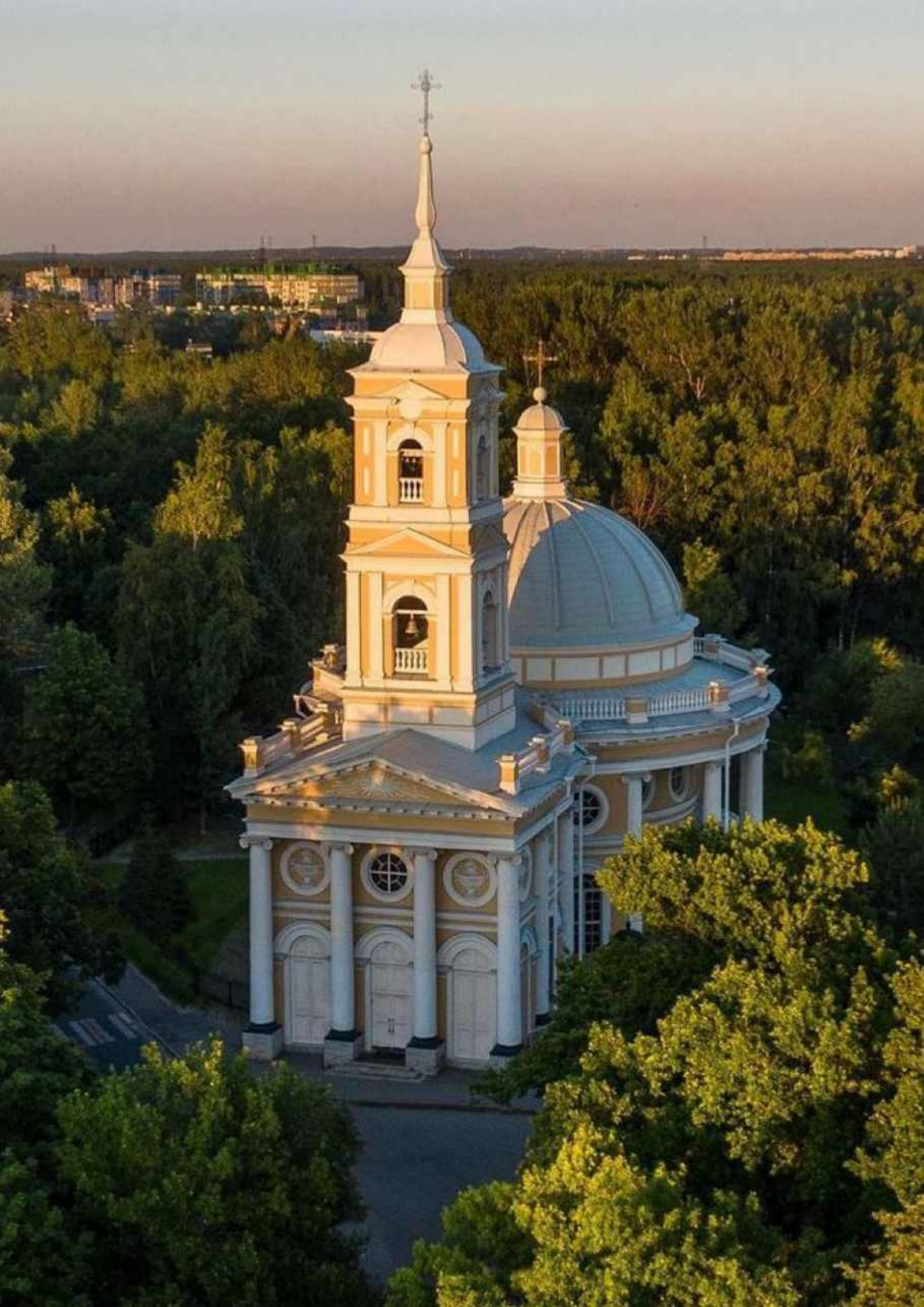
“Exploring the ideology of Nikolay Lvov's Palladian church architecture and its influence on the identity formation of the Russian élite during the reign of Empress Catherine II.”



<https://paulostroverhy.com/lvov/lvovpaulpodcast.wav>



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NIKOLAY LVOV'S ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

NOTES FOR THE ESSAY:

“Exploring the ideology of Nikolay Lvov's Palladian church architecture and its influence on the identity formation of the Russian élite during the reign of Empress Catherine II.”

THIS ENGLISH TEXT
WAS TRANSLATED FROM RUSSIAN WIKIPEDIA
AND EDITED WITH THE ASSISTANCE
OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND OTHER
LANGUAGE GENERATING SOFTWARES

A COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF BUILDINGS CONSTRUCTED OR DESIGNED BY NIKOLAY LVOV

The images follow the sequence below:

1. History of the building
2. Initial architectural plans or engravings from the time
3. Photos or drawings from the Russian Empire period
4. Photos taken during and after the Bolshevik Revolution
5. Photos of the building and its interiors in its current state
6. Aerial photographs of the site and the building
7. Restoration projects, if any



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ST.PETERSBURG

CHURCH OF ELIJAH THE PROPHET IN POROHVYH.

Background

In 1715, far from the city, where this church now stands, the Okhtinsky gunpowder factories were founded. In 1717, a wooden chapel was built on their territory, consecrated in the name of St. Elijah the Prophet. In 1721, the chapel was dismantled and in its place, construction began on a wooden church of Elijah the Prophet, consecrated in 1722. In 1742-1743, the wooden church was replaced by a wider wooden one, but on a stone foundation, the Church of Elijah the Prophet. Its consecration took place on July 18, 1743. In 1760, a warm winter chapel was added to the church, consecrated in the name of Dmitry Rostovsky on December 27, 1760. A small cemetery was founded within the church fence.

The construction of the church that stands there now began in 1782. The church was built according to the design of the architect Nikolai Lvov, presumably with the participation of Ivan Starov. It was completed and consecrated in 1785.

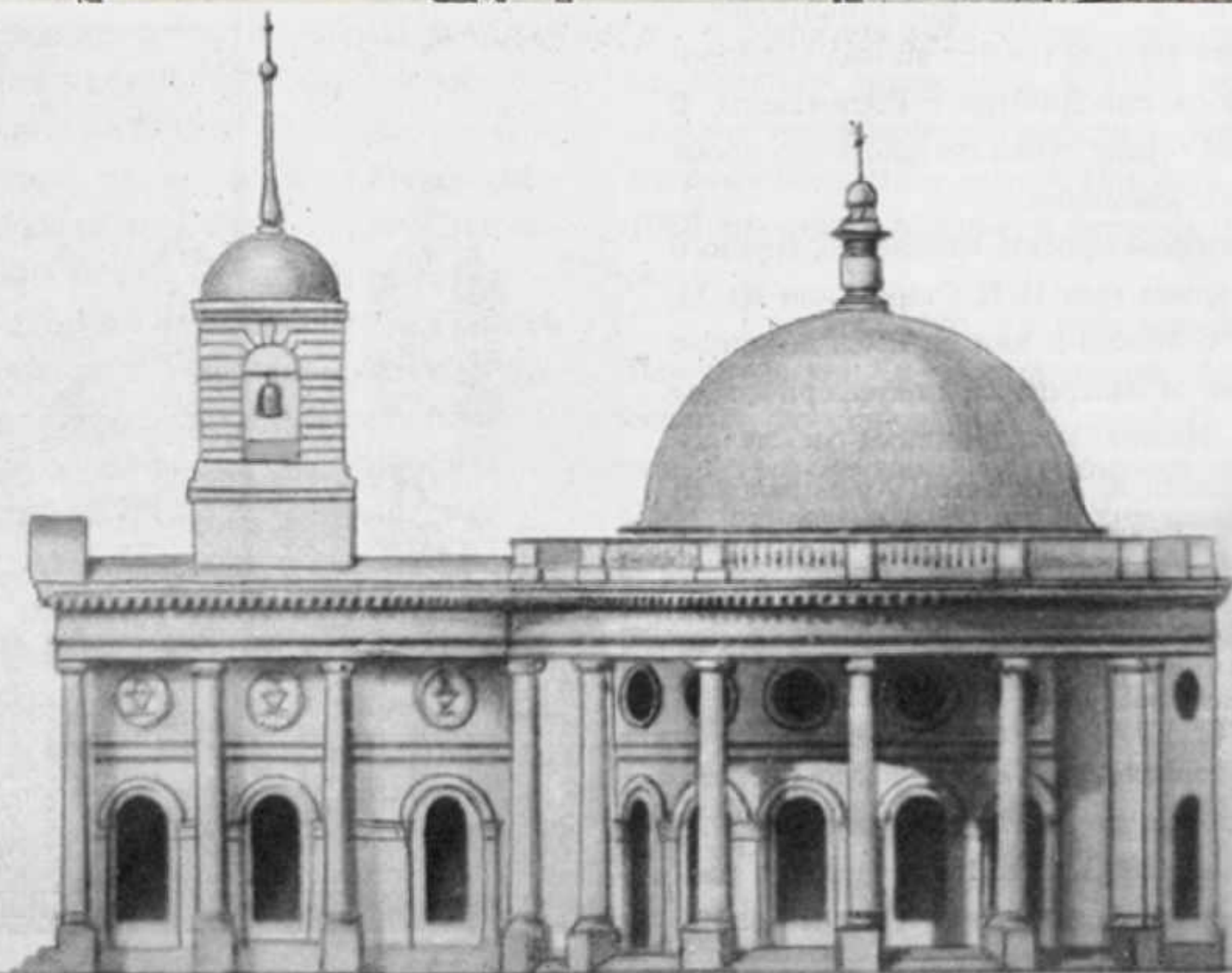
Architecture

The Ilyinskaya Church was built in the style of early Russian classicism and is a round rotunda surrounded by a colonnade of sixteen Ionic columns. The walls are painted yellow. Between the two columns there are windows: arched at the bottom and round at the top. A round balustrade runs along the edge of the roof. A little closer to the center of the roof there is a squat black dome on a low, almost absent drum. The dome is crowned with a lantern with a cross. Inside the church hall there are no pylons dividing the hall into naves. The entire hall is painted blue, imitating the sky. In the center of the ceiling there is a large image of Jesus Christ.

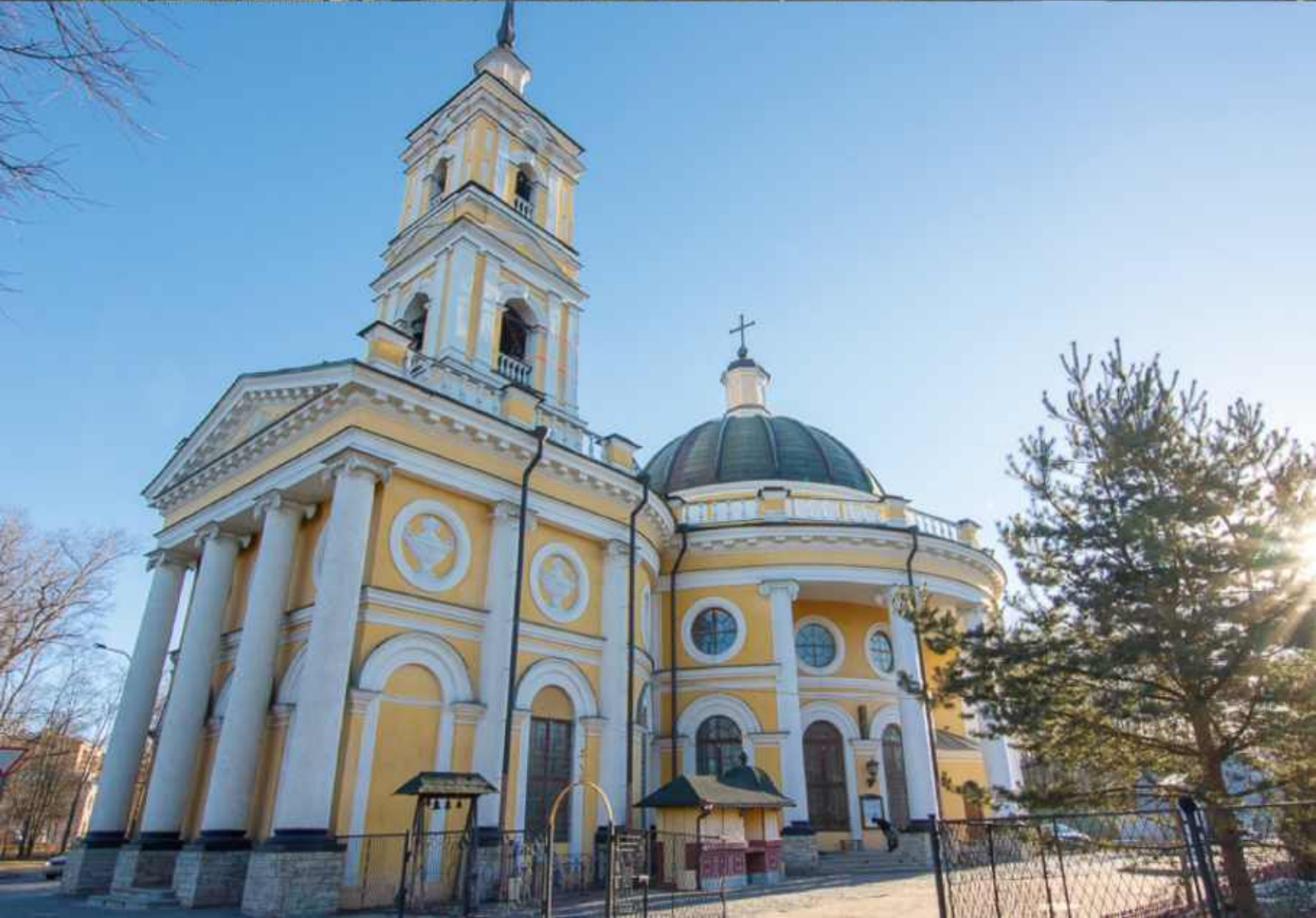
History

View of the church and bell tower from a drone, 2022

In 1805-1806, according to the design of the architect Fyodor Demertsov, a warm side chapel was added to the church, consecrated in the name of Alexander Nevsky. The front facade of the extension was decorated with a four-column Ionic portico with a triangular pediment. This side chapel and the main volume of the church were not combined into a single whole, but were located close to each other. The northern and southern facades of the extension are decorated with two Ionic columns. A single-tier bell tower with a spire rose above this extension. In 1875-1877, the Alexander Nevsky side chapel was united with the main building of the church by constructing an apse in the eastern part of the side chapel and a narthex in the western part of the church. In 1901-1902, another reconstruction of the church was carried out, during which the bell tower was built up by one tier and the shape of the dome was slightly changed. The minor consecration of the rebuilt church took place on July 8, 1911. The bell tower is decorated with pilasters, both tiers on each side are completed by a triangular pediment. The second tier is completed by a small dome. Its top, in turn, is a lantern crowned with a spire with a cross. On May 8, 1923, the church was given the status of a cathedral. From that moment until 1938, the church belonged to the Renovationists. On July 11, 1938, the Ilyinsky Cathedral was closed, its building was transferred to the Moscow Patriarchate. In 1974, a fire occurred in the church building. In 1983, after the fire, restoration of the church began, in 1988 it was returned to the diocese. The Royal Doors from the iconostasis of the Great Church of the Winter Palace (1762) were installed in the altar barrier of the main aisle [1]. On December 22, 1988, the Alexander Nevsky aisle, which was not damaged by the fire, was consecrated. In 1989, the main church was consecrated and is still in operation today.









CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY, KNOWN UNDER THE NAME "KULICH AND PASKHA"

History

The Church of the Holy Trinity is known under the name "Kulich and Paskha", which was given to it by the architectural solution - the ensemble of the church is made in the form of Easter dishes - kulich and paskha. The idea to give the building the shape of kulich and paskha belongs to the customer of the construction, Prosecutor General Alexander Vyazemsky, the owner of the village of Aleksandrovskeye, the site of the construction of the church. From an architectural and compositional point of view, the unusual shape of the bell tower for Russian art reproduces the Pyramid of Cestius in Rome.

It was created, according to many architectural historians, under the impression of the architect Lvov's trip to Italy in 1781.

In the same way, the round church in plan is associated with the round temples of Vesta in Rome and Tivoli, which were studied and sketched by the architect Lvov. Italian prototypes were also known to Russian architects from the engravings of Giovanni Piranesi and A. Parboni.

Despite all its originality, the church, built as an estate church, turned out to be inconvenient for worship as a parish church. To increase the area of the church, in 1858 a narthex was added to the entrance, and a vestibule to the altar.

In 1874, the future Supreme Ruler of Russia, Admiral Alexander Kolchak, was baptized in this church. The document about his birth testifies:

...in the 1874 register of the Trinity Church in the village of Aleksandrovsky, St. Petersburg district, under No. 50, it is shown: Naval artillery of Staff Captain Vasily Ivanovich Kolchak and his legal wife Olga Ilyinichna Kolchak, both Orthodox and first-married, had a son, Alexander, born on November 4 and baptized on December 15, 1874. His godparents were: naval staff captain Alexander Ivanovich Kolchak and the widow of the collegiate secretary Darya Filippovna Ivanova.

During Soviet times

The church was one of the few churches in Leningrad that functioned for a long time during the Soviet era (before the Great Terror). On October 10, 1937, its rector, Archpriest Leonid Dyakonov, was arrested and executed on December 5[7]. In March 1938, the church was closed and began to be used as a club. At the same time, all of its furnishings were destroyed; including the icon of the Holy Trinity, which had been the main relic of the church for many years (this icon was donated by the peasants of the village of Aleksandrovskeye in 1824), which disappeared without a trace. Eight years later, on April 17, 1946, the church reopened for services. (Permission to open it was received in November 1945, the clergy were appointed on December 10, 1945). The solemn consecration of the church was performed on June 1 by Metropolitan Gregory of Leningrad and Novgorod. All the relics currently kept in the church were collected from other churches. Thus, the blue and gold iconostasis from the mid-18th century was transferred from the Annunciation Church on Vasilievsky Island, from the chapel in the name of the Conception of John the Baptist located in the choir of this church.

Photograph from the 1960s

Currently, the church houses a particularly revered icon of the Mother of God "Joy of All Who Sorrow" (with pennies), which was brought by private individuals who kept it after the closure of the church in 1932, created in honor of this icon near the former Glass Factory on the Neva, where it was located until the destruction of this church in 1934 [8].

The icon of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker (also especially revered) located on the left kliros, which was previously located in the Nikolskaya cemetery church in the city of Kolpino, was transferred to the church in December 1947 by the Piskarev sisters, residents of Kolpino, who kept it during the war. On December 13, 2013, this icon was transported to the Trinity Cathedral in Kolpino, where it has been located since then in a shrine, on the south side of the altar.













ST.PETERSBURG

THE NEVSKY GATES OF PETROVAVLOSK FORTERESS

History

The first wooden gates and a pier were built here in 1714–1716. In the early 1720s, the gates were rebuilt in stone by the architect Domenico Trezzini.

On August 30, 1723, a ceremony was held in front of the Nevsky Gates to bring Peter I's boat into the fortress for permanent storage: the boat approached under its own power, fired a welcoming volley, and was carried through the gates into the Tsar's bulwark by hand.

On March 13, 1731, an order was given to build "gates with architectural decorations on the water side of the fortress". Every few years, the boat was taken out and ceremoniously placed on the water, but the gates still looked too poor for these ceremonies.

In 1746-1747, another reconstruction of the gate was carried out and its cladding with Pudost stone, probably according to a modified design by Trezzini. This design has been preserved in the current appearance of the gate on the side facing the Peter and Paul Cathedral: a four-meter arch with a keystone is flanked by pilasters and crowned with a triangular pediment, which is decorated with a relief composition depicting a coat of arms, banners and military armor. In 1762-1767, the architect D. Smolyaninov and engineer N. Muravyov developed a design for a granite pier to replace the wooden one. The project was only realized in 1777 due to the facing of the fortress walls, when engineer R. T. Tomilov built a ceremonial three-arch granite pier with parapets, ice cutters and a platform with three staircases leading down to the water.

In 1780, architect Nikolai Lvov was asked to create a new project for the Neva Gates.

The new gates were built according to this project in 1784-1787, and in this form they have survived to this day (from the Neva side). The height of the new gates was 12 m, the width - 12.2 m. They rest on a plinth almost a meter high. To the right and left of the arch are twin columns of the Tuscan order with diamond rustication, supporting a triangular pediment. The plinth, columns and pediment are made of polished silvery-white Serdobol granite. The pediment is decorated with a relief image of an anchor with crossed palm branches and a fluttering ribbon (unknown sculptor based on a drawing by Lvov, alabaster). Two bombs with tongues of flame are installed on the edges of the pediment.

Under the vault of the arch there are marks about the floods of 1752, 1777, 1788, 1824, 1924 and 1975.

The gates were nicknamed the "gates of death" because they were used to take condemned prisoners to the Commandant's Wharf, from where they were taken to the place of execution.

The gates were restored in 1952-1953.



Ворота въ С.^н П.: Сырцова Крѣпости .
проектированны 1780 - годъ: копѣею 1780 .





SAINT CATHERINE CHURCH, MURINO

History

On January 17, 1786, the owner of the village of Murino, Count Alexander Romanovich Vorontsov, approached Metropolitan Gabriel with a request to build a church. The funds for the construction were allocated by the Count's father, who asked to name the church in the name of Saint Catherine, in memory of the deceased wife of his youngest son Semyon, Countess Catherine Alekseevna.

In May 1786, according to the design of N. A. Lvov, a single-altar parish church was founded next to the estate. On February 25, 1790, the church was consecrated.

There is an assumption that the icons for the iconostasis were painted by V. L. Borovikovsky.

The church kept the icon of the Mother of God "Joy of All Who Sorrow", which previously belonged to Princess Natalia Alekseevna.

In 1856, the bell tower was rebuilt; In 1914-1915, during repairs, the outer walls of the building were reinforced.

On the night of October 18, 1918, the watchman was killed and the church was robbed. On May 2, 1922, valuables were confiscated from the church, sealed and delivered to the district commission for the Murinskaya volost.

The wedding scenes from the film "Dubrovsky" were filmed in the church.

On May 3, 1938, on Radonitsa, the last service was held before the church was closed. In 1940, the building was transferred to a club.

In 1941, in connection with the advance of Finnish troops, a resolution was adopted to liquidate the church. During the war, the temple was not damaged. It served as an observation post and a temporary shelter for refugees.

In 1944, Orthodox residents of the village of Murina and nearby settlements filed a petition to register a religious community and transfer the church building to it. This petition was repeated in 1946, 1947 and 1948, but the believers did not receive a response to their appeal.

After the war, the church building was transferred for the "needs of the national economy". It was rented by the Pargolovo enterprise "Zagotpunkt" and the Murino village store, which converted the premises into a salt warehouse. Vegetables were stored in the altar. There was a glass container collection point.

In 1965, the Commissioner for Religious Affairs in Leningrad and the Leningrad Region N. M. Vasiliev, in the course of implementing the resolution of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR "On Certain Facts of Violation of Socialist Legality in Relation to Believers", made an unexpected decision - to give the Orthodox church to the Lutheran community. The Lutheran Finns repeatedly petitioned him to transfer any church that had been empty in the Leningrad Region since the 1930s, but received the following answer: "I consider it appropriate to transfer the building of the former Orthodox church in Murino to the Lutheran believers." On March 23, 1965, the chairman of the executive committee of the Vsevolozhsk city council, V. N. Leontyev, did not agree with the opinion of the authorized representative N. M. Vasilyev and categorically refused his request to transfer the church in the village of Murino to the Lutherans. Then Leontyev and the Orthodox gave the same categorical refusal.

In the 1960s, during preparations for the demolition of the Trinity-Lesnovskaya Church, its parishioners unsuccessfully petitioned to receive the Murinskaya Church for "free use." In response to this, in 1968, the Vsevolozhsk District Executive Committee adopted a resolution **"On the deregistration and demolition of an 18th-century architectural monument in the village of Murino."** Fortunately, it was not carried out.

A ten-meter plaster hockey player was being molded in the building. It was also proposed to use the premises as a museum or a concert hall.

In the summer of 1988, the church was finally returned to the Orthodox community. After this, intensive cosmetic restoration began. On December 6 of the same year, on the eve of the patronal feast, Metropolitan Alexy of Leningrad and Novgorod consecrated the restored church. At the same time, the metropolitan presented the church with an icon of the Holy Great Martyr Catherine with the inscription: "This holy image of the Great Martyr. "The Catherine Church was presented to Metropolitan Alexy of Tallinn and Estonia on November 25, 1980 by Metropolitan Barnabas of Cyprus in the city of Katarini, Greece, in memory of his service in the city that bears her name".

Architecture

The church was built in a rather rare architectural type "under the bells", in the classical style. Four vertical parts are combined in one building: the basement - the vaulted rooms of the tomb; the church, which occupies the main volume of the building; the bell tier (bell tower); belvedere (rotunda) with a Corinthian colonnade (12 columns). The last two tiers were made of wood.

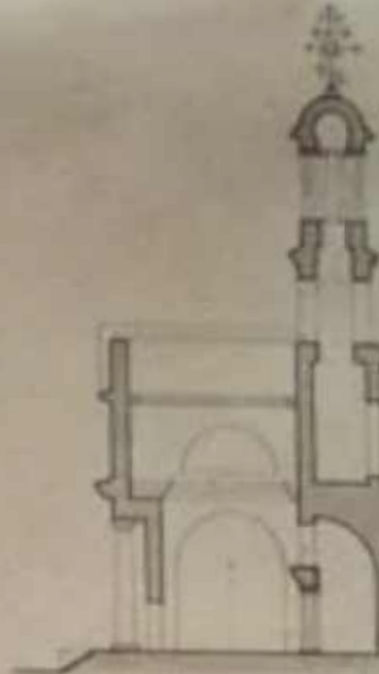
The interior is dominated by smooth semicircular lines. Light enters only through small windows in the apses. There are fluted Doric columns, coffered vaults and a dome. The semicircular iconostasis is decorated with white Corinthian columns with gilded capitals.



Saint Catherine church
Murino, St.Petersburg region, Russia



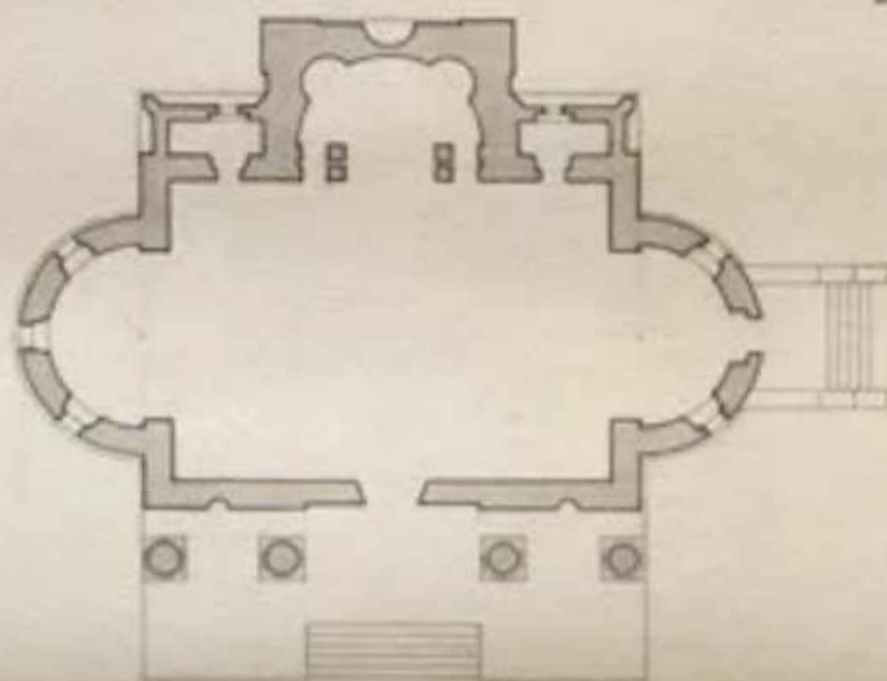
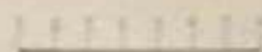
Слева́я часть



Спра́ва



Целостный фасад











Features of the Palace

The Priory Palace is not as lavish as other suburban palaces near St. Petersburg. Its fame lies in its unusual construction technology, distinctive appearance, and the striking harmony between the palace and the surrounding landscape.

It is the only surviving architectural structure in Russia primarily built using *rammed earth* technology—compressed layers of loam bound with lime mortar. This technique was used not only for the palace walls but also for the fence and auxiliary buildings. The retaining wall is constructed of the renowned Pudost stone, a material commonly used in many Gatchina buildings. The palace tower was built using Paritsky stone.

The Priory is located on the southeastern shore of the Black Lake, within a park that was later renamed “Prioratsky” (formerly known as the “Small Menagerie”).

Constructed in the Russian pre-Romantic architectural style of the late 18th century, the Priory was designed as a stylized interpretation of a medieval Catholic monastery. The tower plays the role of a bell tower, and all the buildings are unified around an enclosed courtyard and blind fence. Like a monastery, the Priory is situated in a secluded location and emphasizes austerity in its interior decoration. At the same time, the structure also evokes the image of a medieval castle, while incorporating elements of Classical architecture—such as the horizontal articulation of façades and ornate ceilings as focal points of the interior.

Scholars have long noted the precision of the Priory's site placement and the originality of its composition, particularly its rejection of symmetry. No two viewpoints of the palace are alike: from the Black Lake, it appears as though the building stands on an island; the retaining wall gives it the look of a fortress; from the south, it resembles a Gothic chapel; from the north, it seems to rise out of the water; and from the main entrance, it takes on the appearance of a country estate. Even the kitchen is designed in the rustic style of a traditional Russian log hut.

History of Construction

The creation of the Priory is closely linked with European political events at the end of the 18th century. Following the French Revolution, the Order of Malta lost many of its properties. Seeking assistance, the Order appealed to Emperor Paul I of Russia, who had recently ascended the throne. In January 1797, Paul signed a convention that established the “Grand Priory” of the Order of Malta in Russia. The administration of the Priory was housed in the former Vorontsov Palace in St. Petersburg, which was transferred to the Order.

Soon thereafter, Paul I decided to build a summer residence for the Prior of the Order, Prince Condé. He selected Gatchina—his own country estate—as the site.

Before construction began, the architect Nikolai Lvov had already experimented with rammed earth structures, including a small “hut” built in 1797 for Paul's favorite, E. I. Nelidova. In the garden of the Gatchina Palace, a corner section with a foundation was built under Lvov's supervision using rammed earth. The durability of the structure was tested by ladies of the court, who attempted to pierce it with umbrellas, and by officers striking it with broadswords. Impressed by its strength, Paul I gave Lvov permission to select the site for the Priory and begin construction.



Preparatory work began in the autumn of 1797. The rammed earth walls of the palace and its auxiliary buildings were completed remarkably quickly—from June 15 to September 12, 1798. The cost of the walls was 2,000 rubles, a fraction of the estimated 25,000 rubles it would have taken to construct them in stone. The palace was accepted by the emperor on August 22, 1799, and officially granted to the Order of Malta the following day. By that time, Paul I had already become the de facto Grand Master of the Order, making him the Priory's true owner.

On October 12, 1799, within the Priory Palace, the Knights of the Order ceremonially transferred three sacred relics to their new Grand Master: a fragment of the True Cross, the Icon of the Mother of God of Philermos, and the right hand of St. John the Baptist. To commemorate this event, a church holiday was established in 1800—marking the transfer of these relics from Malta to Gatchina.

In 1800, the emperor and his sons, Alexander and Constantine, stayed at the palace during military maneuvers.

Later History of the Priory

Following the death of Paul I, Emperor Alexander I—protector of the Order—transferred ownership of the Priory to the state treasury. The palace was rarely used. Members of the imperial family occasionally visited for brief vacations. In the 1820s, with permission from Empress Maria Feodorovna, a Lutheran church temporarily occupied the building. During the 1840s, Nicholas I occasionally permitted generals to use the Priory during military exercises. Notably, it hosted the first meeting between Princess Maria of Hesse and Alexander Nikolaevich (the future Alexander II).

The Priory was depicted by artists such as Taras Shevchenko and M. V. Dobuzhinsky.

After Alexander III became emperor and moved the royal residence to Gatchina, the palace was converted to house singers from the court chapel. Between 1884 and 1887, major renovations were carried out by architect N. V. Dmitriev, who adapted the building for year-round residence for 50 people. Modern heating, plumbing, and reinforced ceilings were installed. Apartments were later provided for members of the court, including Lieutenant General N. I. Kutepov and his family.

In 1913 and 1914, the palace hosted a number of charitable exhibitions. During World War I, it served as a hospital. Following the 1917 October Revolution, the Priory came under the jurisdiction of the Gatchina Palace Museum, although it was not converted into a museum itself. Remaining historical furnishings were moved to the Grand Gatchina Palace.

In 1924, the Priory housed an excursion station, and between 1930 and 1940, it was used as a recreation center for workers from Leningrad factories.

The palace survived World War II, although parts of the fence, a guard booth, and the roof were destroyed. After the war, it was used by a military construction unit, later becoming a youth center (House of Pioneers and Schoolchildren), and finally, from 1968 until restoration began, the district's local history museum.

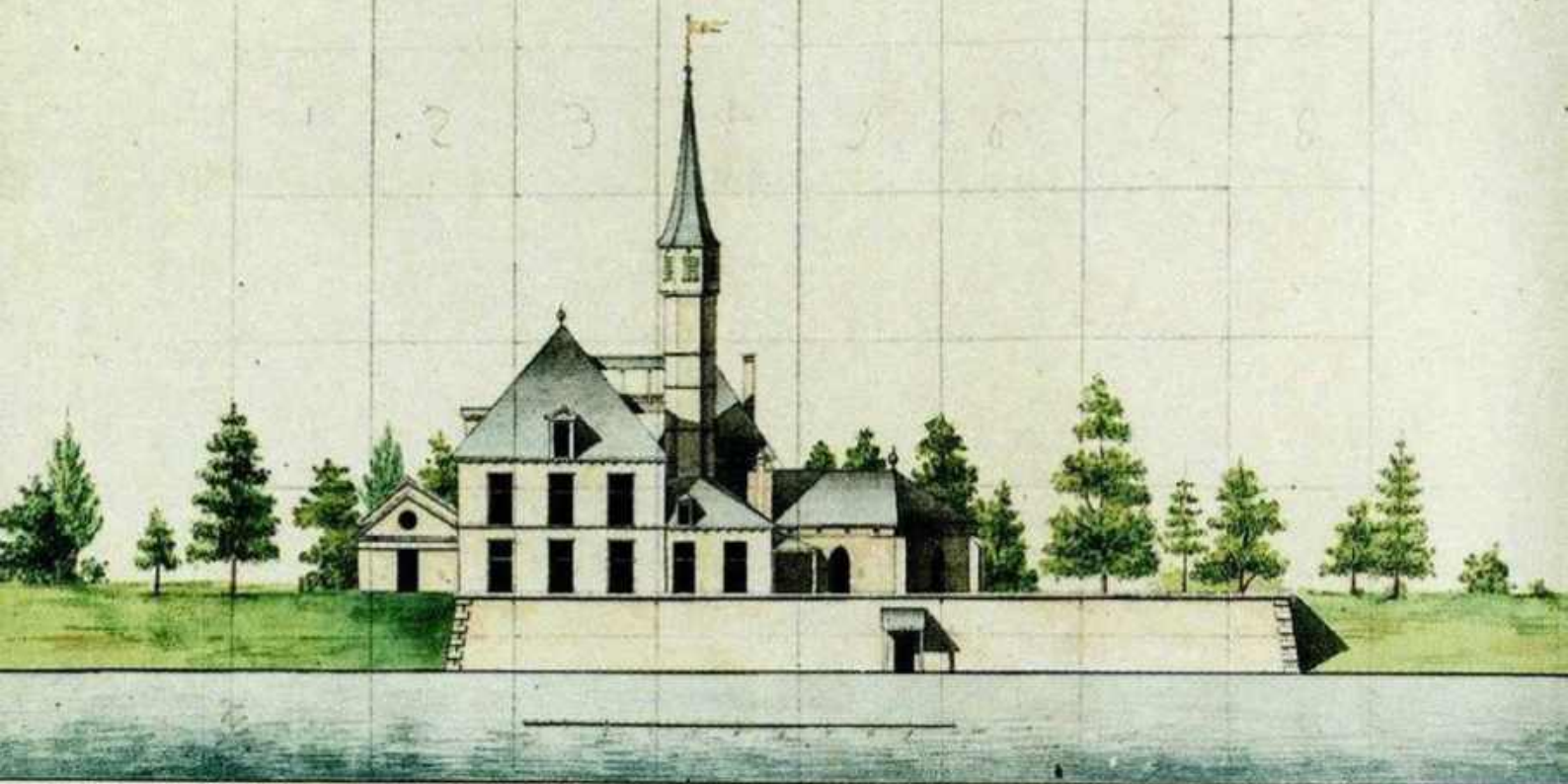
Restoration work began in the early 1980s and was largely completed by 2004, when the Priory Palace was opened to the public.

Legends of the Priory

As with many historic sites, the Priory Palace is surrounded by legends. The most famous tells of an underground passage connecting it to the Gatchina Imperial Palace. Remarkably, during foundation stabilization work, restorers discovered a real stone-lined tunnel. The passage begins at human height and gradually narrows. Though incomplete and of unknown purpose, some believe it to be part of a still-unexplored network of underground communications beneath Gatchina.

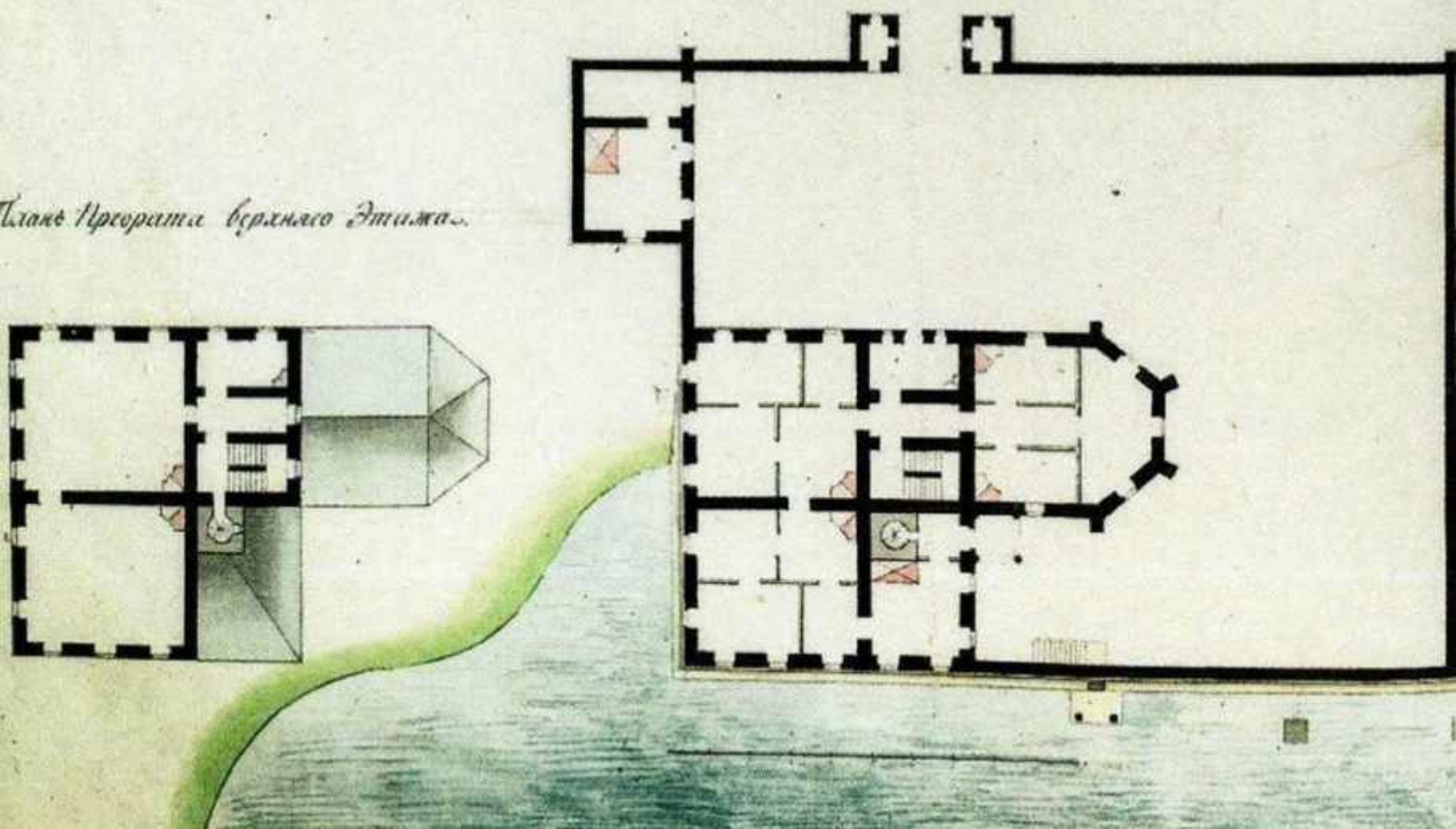


фасада Пріората со стороны Чернаго озера



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Планъ Пріората Верхняго Этажа.





о. Пріоратскій дворець. № 3.





TRANSFIGURATION CATHEDRAL, VYBORG

The Transfiguration Cathedral is an Orthodox church located on Cathedral Square in the city of Vyborg. It serves as the cathedral of the Vyborg Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church and is regarded as the most significant architectural monument of the Classical period in Vyborg.

History

The cathedral was commissioned by Empress Catherine II, who issued a decree on December 18, 1786. It was designed by architect Nikolai Lvov, although modifications were later made by the provincial architect of Vyborg, I. Brockman, who reduced the overall size of the building but preserved Lvov's decorative design. Originally, the church featured a dome and a Tuscan-columned portico at the main entrance. Over the next century, the church's appearance evolved considerably. Its original bell tower was the adjacent Clock Tower, but a new, separate bell tower was later constructed. Eventually, the new tower was joined to the main church.

When the Vyborg Vicariate of the St. Petersburg Diocese was established on September 5, 1859, the church was elevated to cathedral status for the city of Vyborg.

Between 1863 and 1866, the refectory was rebuilt by architect Grigory Karpov. Later, from 1888 to 1898, the bell tower and altar underwent reconstruction under architect A. Isakson. The refectory included two chapels—one dedicated to Saint Nicholas and the other to Our Lady of Sorrows.

On October 24, 1892, the Vyborg Vicariate became the independent Vyborg and Finnish Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church, and the Transfiguration Cathedral became its principal church. As more than a century had passed since its original construction, the cathedral was extensively renovated, resulting in the appearance it has today.

20th–21st Century Restoration

On February 11, 1921, the Vyborg and Finnish Diocese became part of the Finnish Autonomous Orthodox Church. After the Soviet-Finnish War, the cathedral returned to the jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Church in 1947. In 1962, the title "Bishop of Vyborg" was reintroduced for vicars of the Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) Diocese.

In 1990, Archpriest Lev Tserpitsky was appointed rector of the cathedral and immediately launched restoration efforts. The damaged roof was replaced, and the facades were reinforced. Thanks to his initiative, the interior was restored: the old murals were cleaned, a new iconostasis and icon cases were installed, and liturgical items and furnishings were acquired.

On March 12, 2013, the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church restored the independent Vyborg Diocese, and the cathedral once again became the seat of the Bishop of Vyborg and Priozersk. Until 2017, the church also housed the bishop's office, diocesan administration, and accounting departments, which have since been moved to a nearby building.

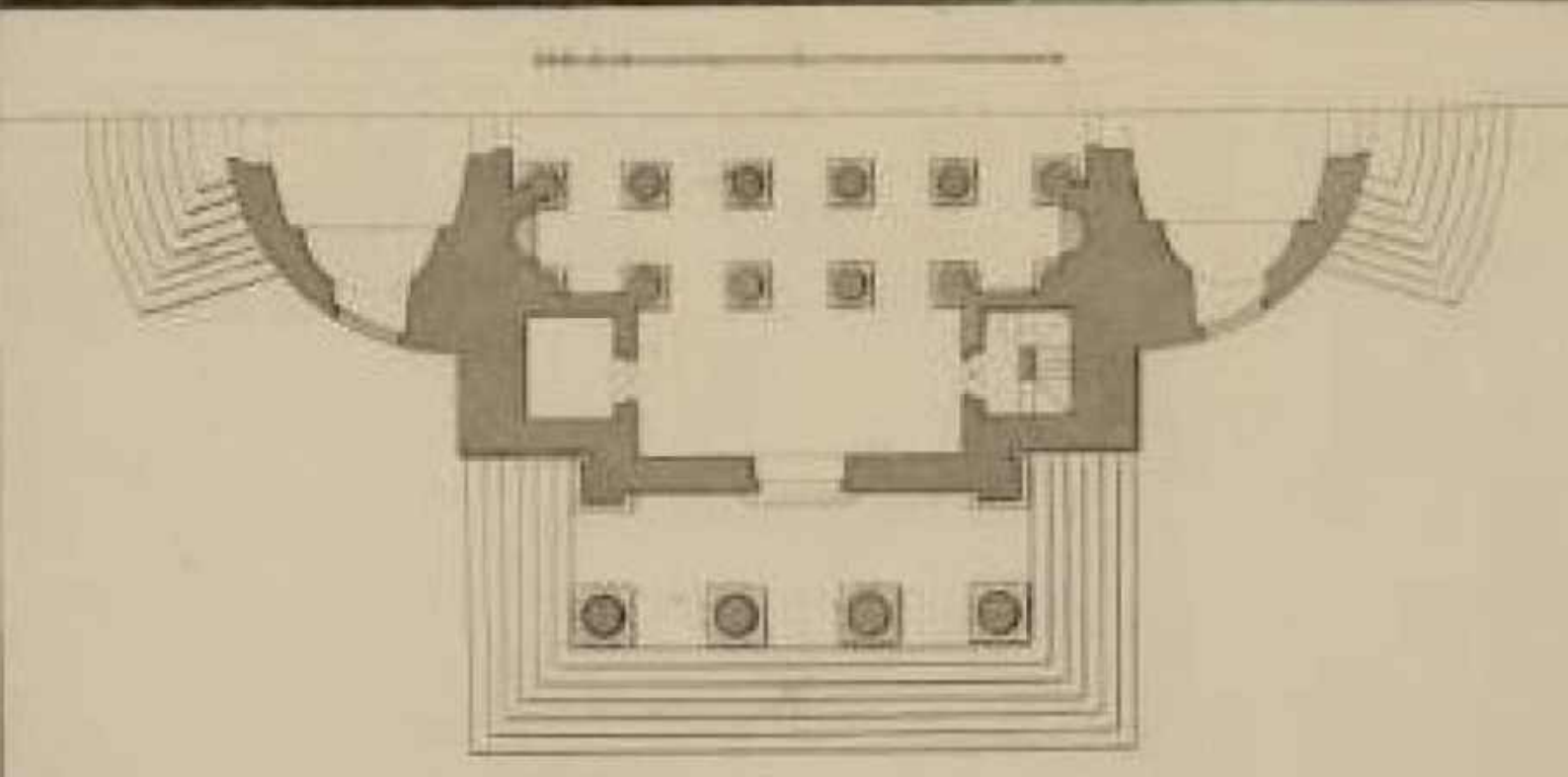
The Bell Tower Clock

In 1797, a tower clock was installed on the cathedral's bell tower. However, its chimes conflicted with those of the nearby city police department's tower clock. Due to this issue—and the deteriorated condition of the mechanism—the clock was removed in the 19th century. A new clock was finally installed on the bell tower in 2012.



*Edificio religioso monumental
construido
por el Sr. D. Antonio de
Hidalgo y Jorjón.*

El Encanto



— Соборъ.



Wiiipuri

Kyrkan







CHURCH OF THE GREAT MARTYR CATHERINE, VALDAI

History

The church is located between Truda Street and Komsomolsky Prospekt, standing on a hill in the center of the city garden. It was built in 1793 by order of Empress Catherine II, based on a design by the architect Nikolai Lvov. The church complemented the ensemble of the Government Offices and the Travel Palace.

This is a rotunda-style building with a classical Ionic colonnade that surrounds the church on three sides, leaving the eastern (altar) side open. The church has an external diameter of 21.8 meters; the central hall measures 10.7 meters in diameter, and the total height, including the cross, reaches approximately 30 meters. The walls are decorated with Ionic pilasters, equal in number to the columns of the colonnade. The altar section and gallery share a single sloping roof. The central cylindrical volume is topped with a hemispherical dome that features four lucarnes. Above the dome rises a drum, crowned with a smaller dome topped with an orb and a cross.

The spaces between the pilasters on the central volume are divided by two tiers of windows. The lower tier contains seven large windows with semicircular tops, decorated with platbands and keystones at the apex of each arch. Above these windows are recessed niches adorned with molded garlands. In the upper tier, each bay between the pilasters holds a round window — twelve in total — decorated on the exterior with flat moldings and expanding inward into rosettes. The two tiers are separated by decorative string courses and a band of meanders. Three entry portals on the north, west, and south sides mirror the design of the first-tier windows.

Inside, the temple's central hall is connected to the altar area through three arched openings. The only decorative element in the interior is a cornice encircling the base of the dome. The church also includes a basement, accessible from the southwest side.

Funding for the church's construction was provided by Empress Catherine II. It served as the palace church for her Travel Palace, though religious services were held there only infrequently. Only a few of the palace complex's original buildings have survived.

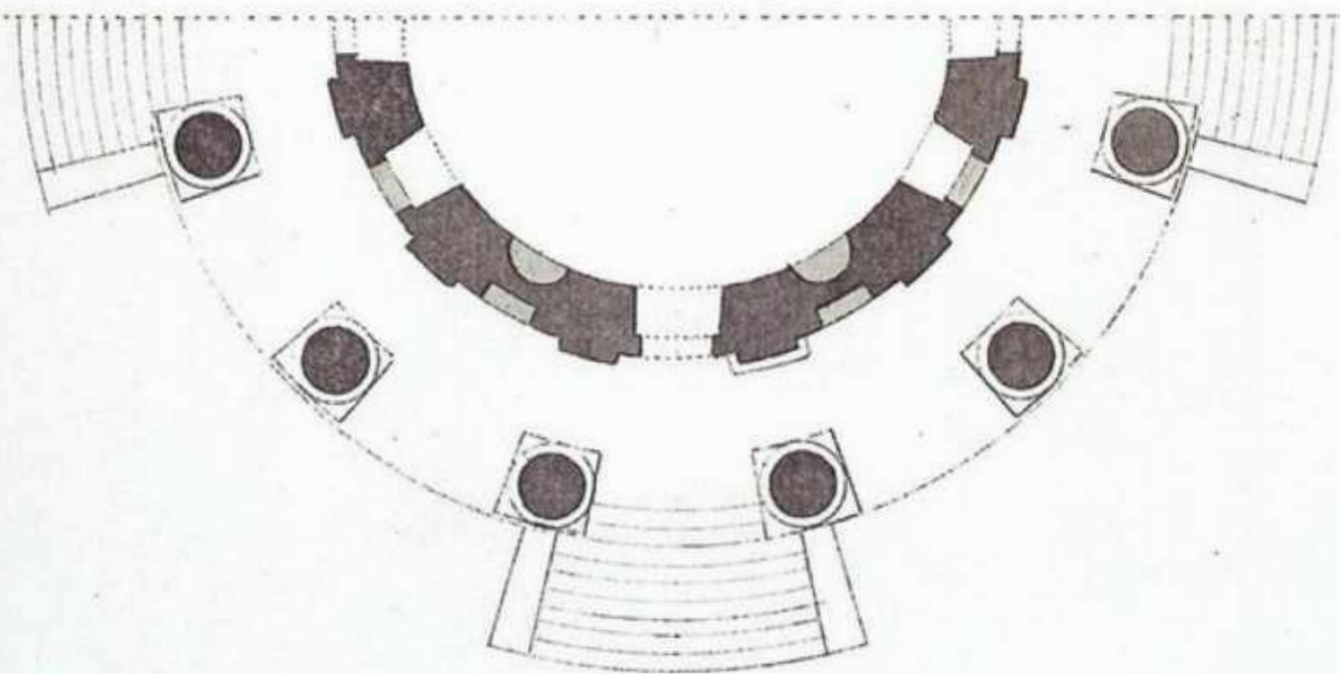
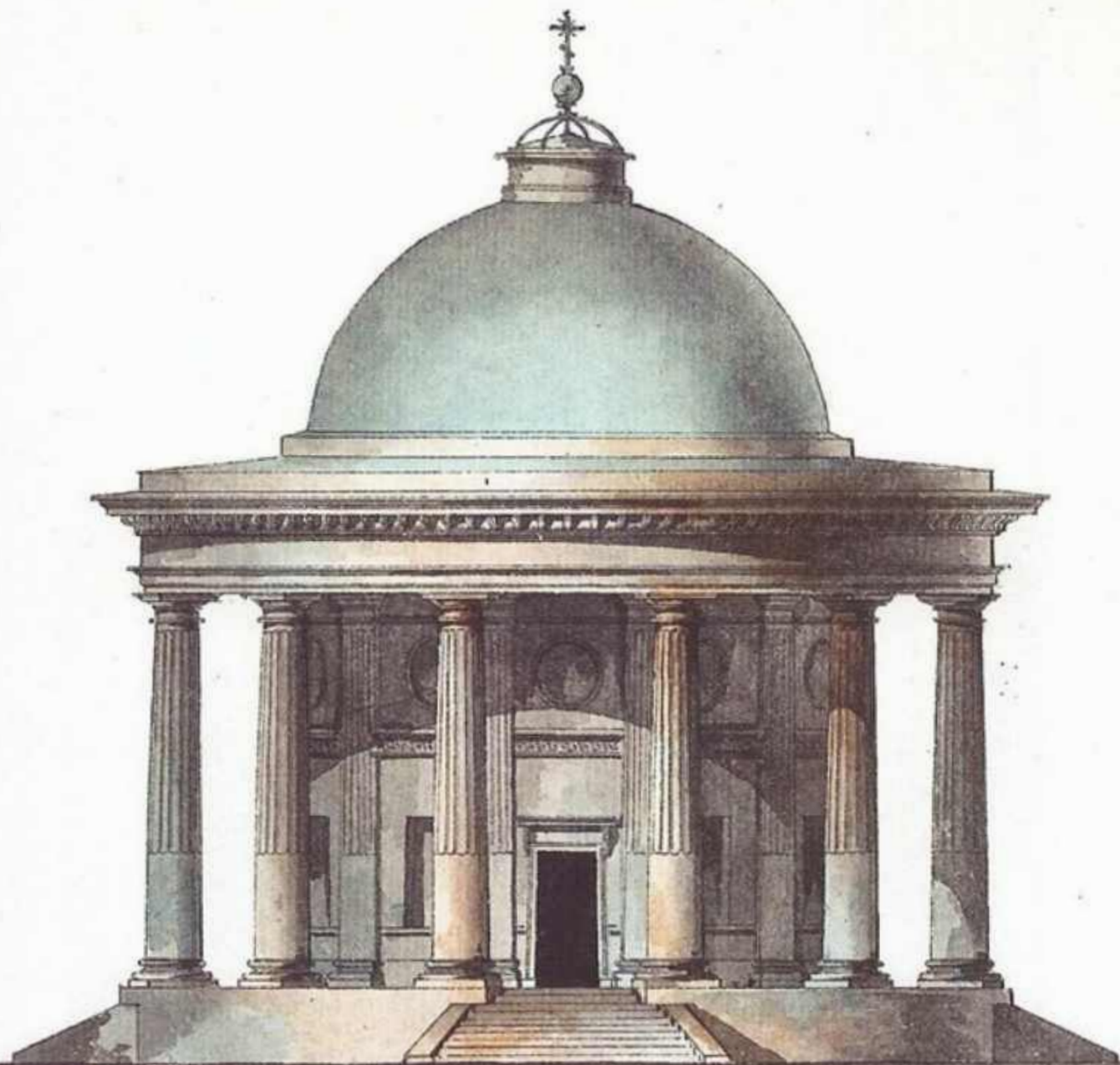
The Church of the Great Martyr Catherine (also known as the Lvov Rotunda) is an inactive Orthodox church in the city of Valdai in the Novgorod region. It is currently occupied by the Bell Museum.

Lvov's Project and Its Modifications

According to the 2013 collection *N. A. Lvov: Life and Work*, it was discovered shortly before the publication of that volume that the church was constructed under the supervision of the provincial architect I. Dmitriev, who made modifications to Lvov's original design. Drawings signed by Dmitriev, found in archival materials, confirm his involvement.

Lvov's design resembled that of his church in Yagotin, the Ukrainian estate of the Razumovsky family, built in the 1790s. Although the Yagotin church no longer exists, it is known from two surviving images: a drawing in von Gun's book *Journey through Little Russia* and a photograph dating from the 1910s. Differences between the drawing and the photo suggest either later reconstruction or inaccuracies in von Gun's depiction.

Researchers note that the Church of the Great Martyr Catherine became more similar to the Yagotin church after Dmitriev's alterations. He replaced the Roman Doric columns with more decorative Ionic ones and added a plinth beneath them, raising the overall height of the temple by 0.5 meters. To further enhance verticality, he eliminated the dome's skylight and instead topped it with a taller drum and a small cupola. He also added lucarnes at the dome's base — an element not present in Lvov's own designs. In addition, Dmitriev incorporated stucco garlands and window surrounds, decorative features that were uncharacteristic of Lvov's strict classical style.









TVER REGION

BORISO-GLEBSKY MONASTERY, TORZHOK

History

Founded by Ephraim of Novotorzhsk in 1038, the Borisoglebsky Monastery is one of the oldest monasteries in Russia, located in the city of Torzhok, Tver Oblast. It belongs to the Tver Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church. Established even earlier than the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra, it is often called "one of the oldest, and perhaps the most ancient" monastic foundations in Russia, due to the absence of written records of any earlier monasteries.

Tradition

The monastery has no written history prior to the 16th century, and even the list of abbots begins only with those appointed during the reign of Ivan the Terrible. According to 17th-century hagiographic texts, the monastery was founded in 1038 by Ephraim, a boyar of Hungarian origin who had served as a groom to Prince Vladimir I of Kyiv. After the murder of Boris and Gleb by Svyatopolk, Ephraim chose to retire from secular life and established a monastery on the banks of the Tvertsa River in their memory.

Ephraim is said to have founded the monastery on a hill by the river, where a church dedicated to Saints Boris and Gleb was built in 1038. This church gave its name to the entire monastic complex.

History

The first documented mention of the monastery dates to 1534. In 1577, during the reign of Ivan the Terrible, two chapels were added to the original Borisoglebsky Cathedral.

When Torzhok was captured by Polish forces in 1607, the cathedral was severely damaged. The oldest surviving structure of the monastery is the Church of the Entry of the Virgin (Vvedenskaya Church), built in the 17th century on the site of a wooden church that had been burned during the attack, along with members of the monastic community and local residents.

In 1717, the Church of the Entry of the Lord into Jerusalem was constructed between the abbot's buildings. These structures were restored in the 1980s. A devastating fire in 1742 caused significant damage to the entire complex.

The monastery's revival began in the latter half of the 18th century. Before the 1764 ecclesiastical reform, the monastery held over 2,200 peasant households and administered three dependent monasteries: the Nativity Monastery, the Bogoslovsky Monastery in Udomlya, and the Semenovskaya Hermitage. After the reform, the monastery was classified as second class.

Between 1785 and 1796, a new cathedral was built on the site of the old Borisoglebsky Cathedral by order of Empress Catherine II, based on a design by the architect Nikolai Lvov. On June 9 (20), 1785, the Empress herself laid the foundation stone, funding the construction. To commemorate the occasion, she was presented with a silver trowel and a gold brick, which were kept in the monastery.

In 1804, the Spasskaya Gate Church and Bell Tower were laid. According to some researchers, Lvov also designed this structure, though the construction was overseen by architect Yakov Ananyin. Another notable feature is the Candle Tower, located in the corner of the monastery wall opposite the bell tower, which has an unusual silhouette. It was restored during the 1970s and 1980s.

Following the fall of the monarchy, the monastery was dissolved in 1925. A high-security prison was established on its grounds and remained there for about 50 years. Later, the buildings were used as a medical-labor facility for alcohol rehabilitation. Since the late 1980s, the site has housed the All-Russian Historical and Ethnographic Museum, whose management has worked extensively to restore the architectural ensemble, which had been severely damaged during its use as a prison.

Return of Monastic Life

In 1993, believers returned to the monastery, and a decision was made to share its use between the Orthodox Church and the museum. In 1995, the first five monks settled on the grounds. That same year, Patriarch Alexy II of Moscow and All Russia visited the monastery during celebrations marking the 400th anniversary of the Nilus Stolobensky Hermitage.

On June 24, 1998, the feast day of Saint Ephraim, liturgical life officially resumed at the monastery. Since 2008, it has been part of the "Culture of Russia" program and is gradually being restored. A pilgrimage center has been opened for visitors wishing to venerate the monastery.

On July 21, 2019, Patriarch Kirill visited the monastery. Later that year, on September 29, Metropolitan Savva consecrated a cross for the restored Gate Church. On December 26, 2020, Metropolitan Amvrosy (Yermakov) consecrated the Church of the Entry of the Virgin.

The monastery maintains several dependencies, including the Cathedral of the Transfiguration and the Church of Saint Clement, Pope of Rome.



Spassky Church, Borisoglebsky Monastery
Torzhok, Tver region, Russia

ARCHITECTURAL ENSEMBLE

BORISOGLEBSKY CATHEDRAL

The original stone church, built in 1038, had a single altar. The founder of the monastery and his disciple were later buried beneath its floor in the right-hand corner of the narthex. In 1577, a chapel was added on the right in honor of the founder, and in 1589, another on the left in honor of Saints Joachim and Anna. With the chapels, the church measured approximately 20 meters in length and 26 meters in width. Its three domes were topped with iron crosses, the central one featuring a footrest and gilded cherubim and seraphim.

In 1784, due to its dilapidated state, the cathedral was dismantled. On July 11 (22), the relics of the monastery's founder were transferred to the Church of the Entry of the Virgin during reconstruction. On August 16 (27), the central cross was removed, and by late November, the old structure was fully dismantled. During this process, sacred vessels and other church items used by Saint Ephraim were discovered within a column. The iconostasis was transferred to the Church of the Entry of the Lord into Jerusalem in 1786, and some icons were sent to the Church of the Entry of the Virgin; others were sold in 1789 for 400 rubles to the village of Yesenovichi.

Between 1785 and 1788, 22,750 rubles were allocated by the state for the construction of a new three-altar cathedral; with private donations, the total reached 50,000 rubles. The design was created by Nikolai Lvov, and construction was supervised by the local architect Fyodor Butsi. In 1795, Vladimir Borovikovsky painted 37 icons on cardboard for the new iconostasis, for a fee of 1,600 rubles. The iconostasis, crafted in 1789, was carved from wood and gilded with black gold around its perimeter.

The new cathedral measured roughly 31 meters in both length and width, with a height of about 30 meters to the tip of the central cross. The altars were consecrated on June 11 (22), 1785. The side chapel of Joachim and Anna was rededicated to Saint Catherine the Great Martyr, with vestments donated by Empress Catherine II herself.

In 1839–1840, the original cast-iron floor was replaced with wood, the iconostasis was renewed, and the walls and columns were plastered to imitate marble. Stone vaults were also added, and the total renovation cost reached 15,000 rubles. On June 11 (23), 1841, the altars of the side chapels were consecrated in honor of Saints Ephraim (right) and Arkady (left) of Torzhok.

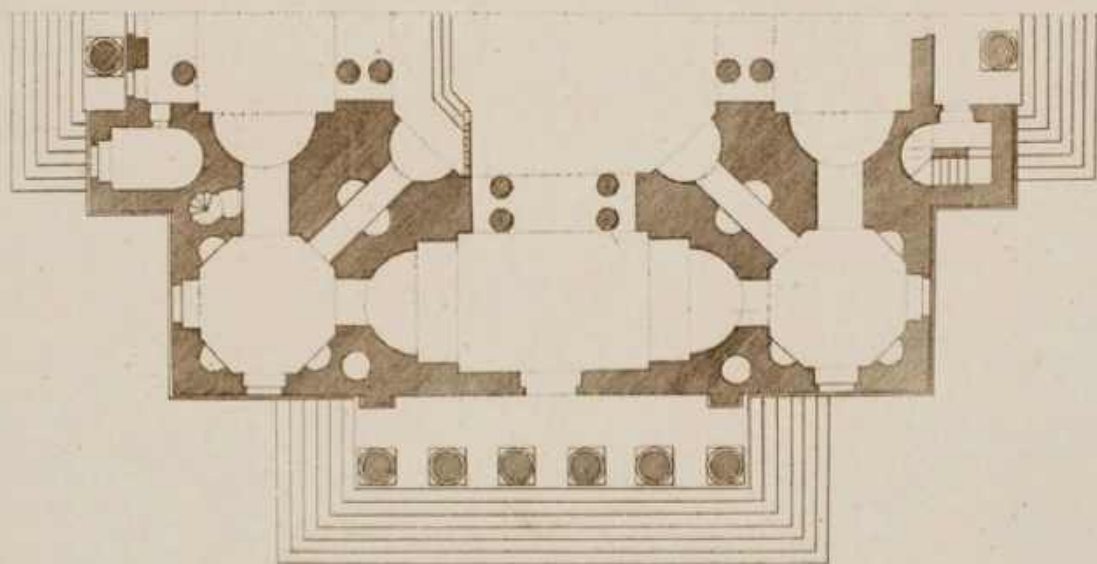
In 1876, a new altar was installed in the main chapel, crafted by S. F. Verkhovtsev. In 1892, with funding of 30,000 rubles, the interior was replastered and ornamented with stucco, new windows and doors were installed, and five chandeliers were hung. Frames were replaced and the entire cathedral was repainted. Oversight was provided by local architect V. I. Nazarin, and the cathedral was consecrated on October 2 (14), 1895.

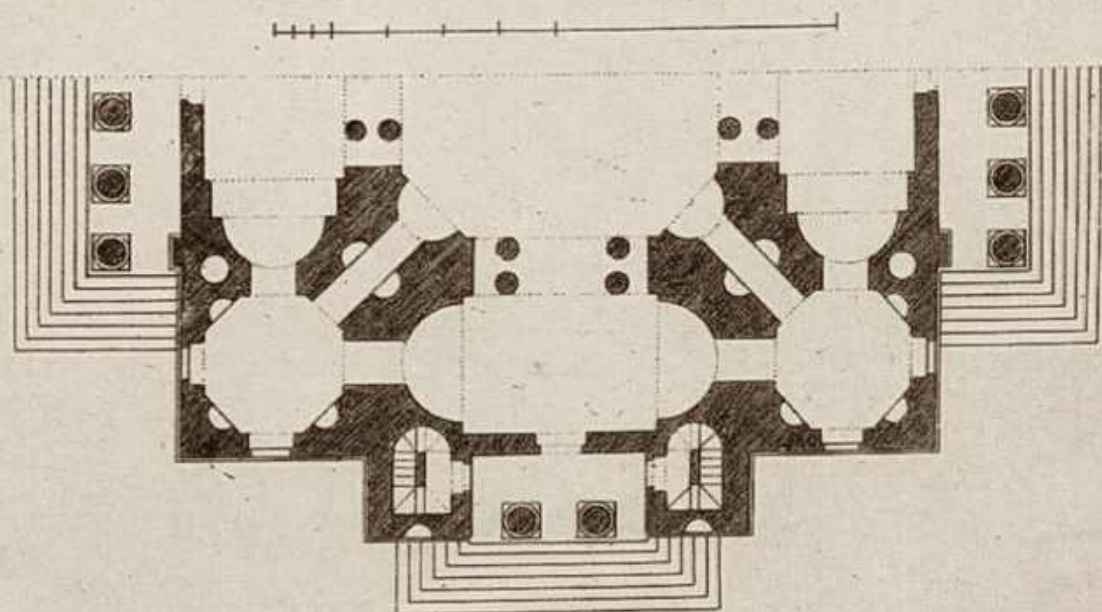
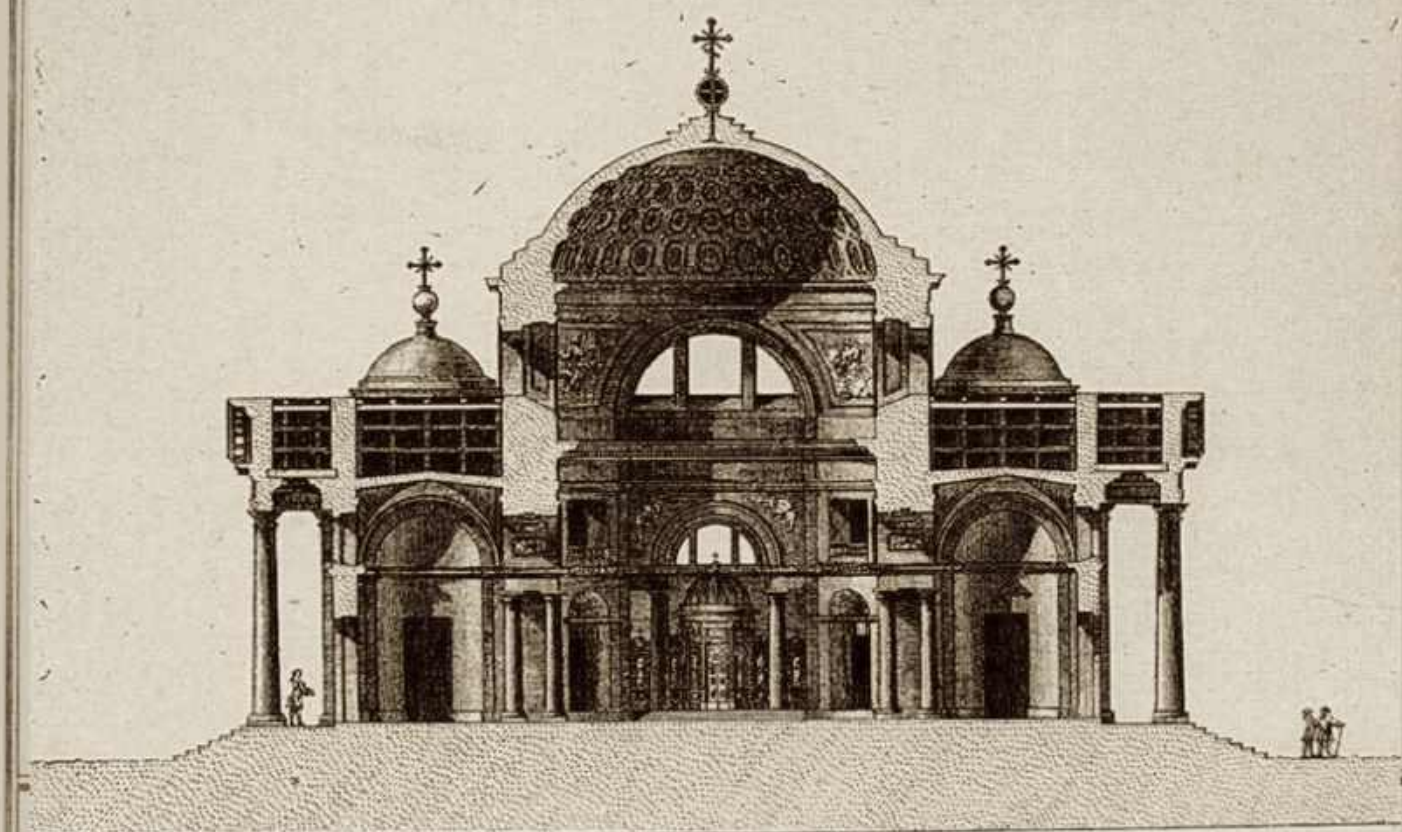
Church of the Entry of the Virgin This single-domed stone church was built in 1620 on the site of an earlier wooden structure that had been burned by Polish invaders. It was redesigned in 1833, and in 1879, a side chapel was added on the left in honor of Saints Joachim and Anna. A new stone stairway and porch were later added, and in 1887 the dome was gilded and a furnace for heating was installed.

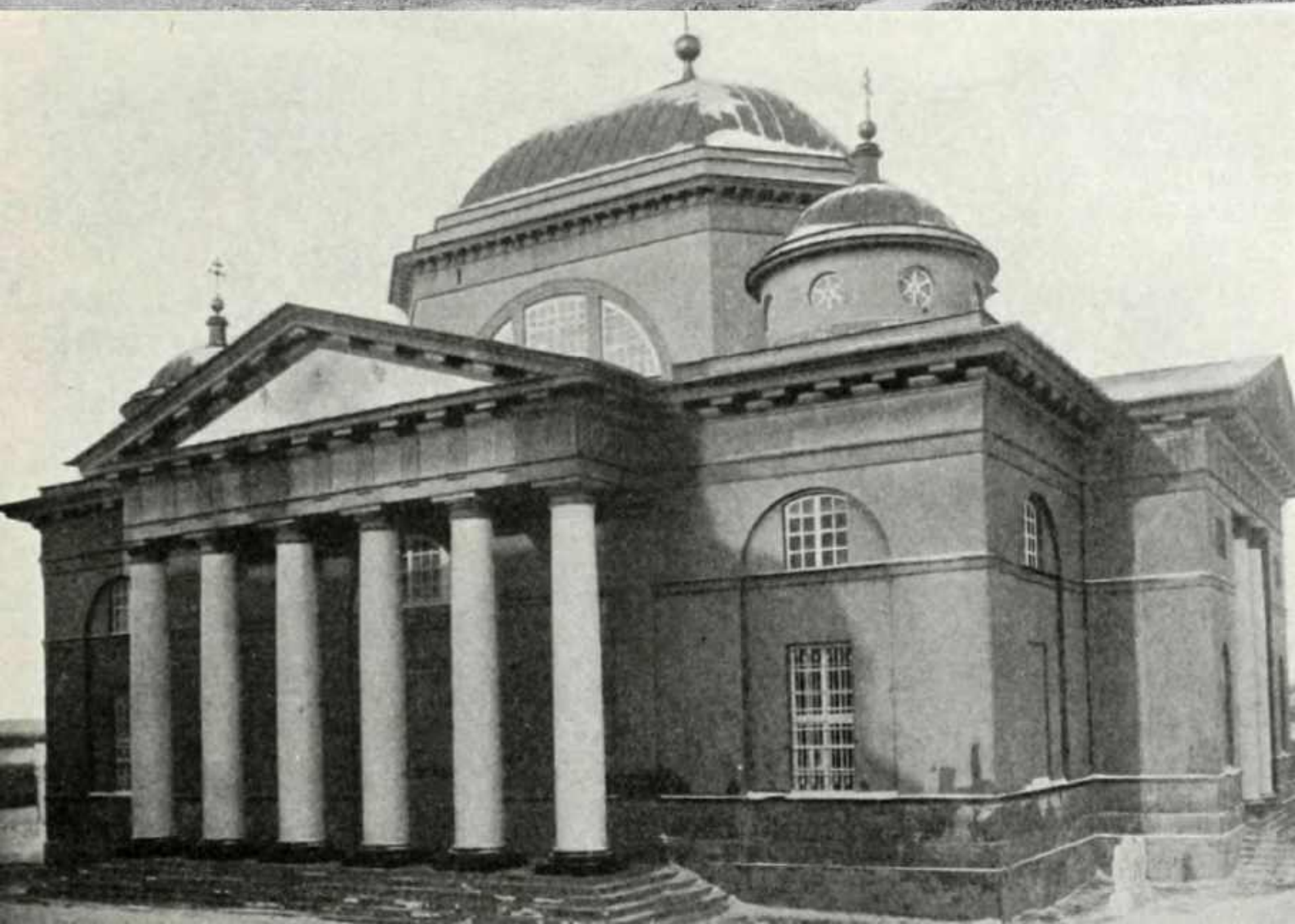
Church of the Entry of the Lord into Jerusalem Built of stone in 1717, this church originally had no iconostasis. In 1786, the iconostasis from the dismantled Borisoglebsky Cathedral was installed here.

CHURCH OF THE HOLY MANDYLION (SPASSKY CHURCH) WITH BELL TOWER

Built between 1804 and 1811 on the site of the former Church of the Exaltation of the Cross, this church was consecrated on August 27 (September 8), 1811. It features a three-tiered bell tower measuring approximately 51 meters in height, equipped with a working clock. The largest bell weighed around 8,200 kilograms.





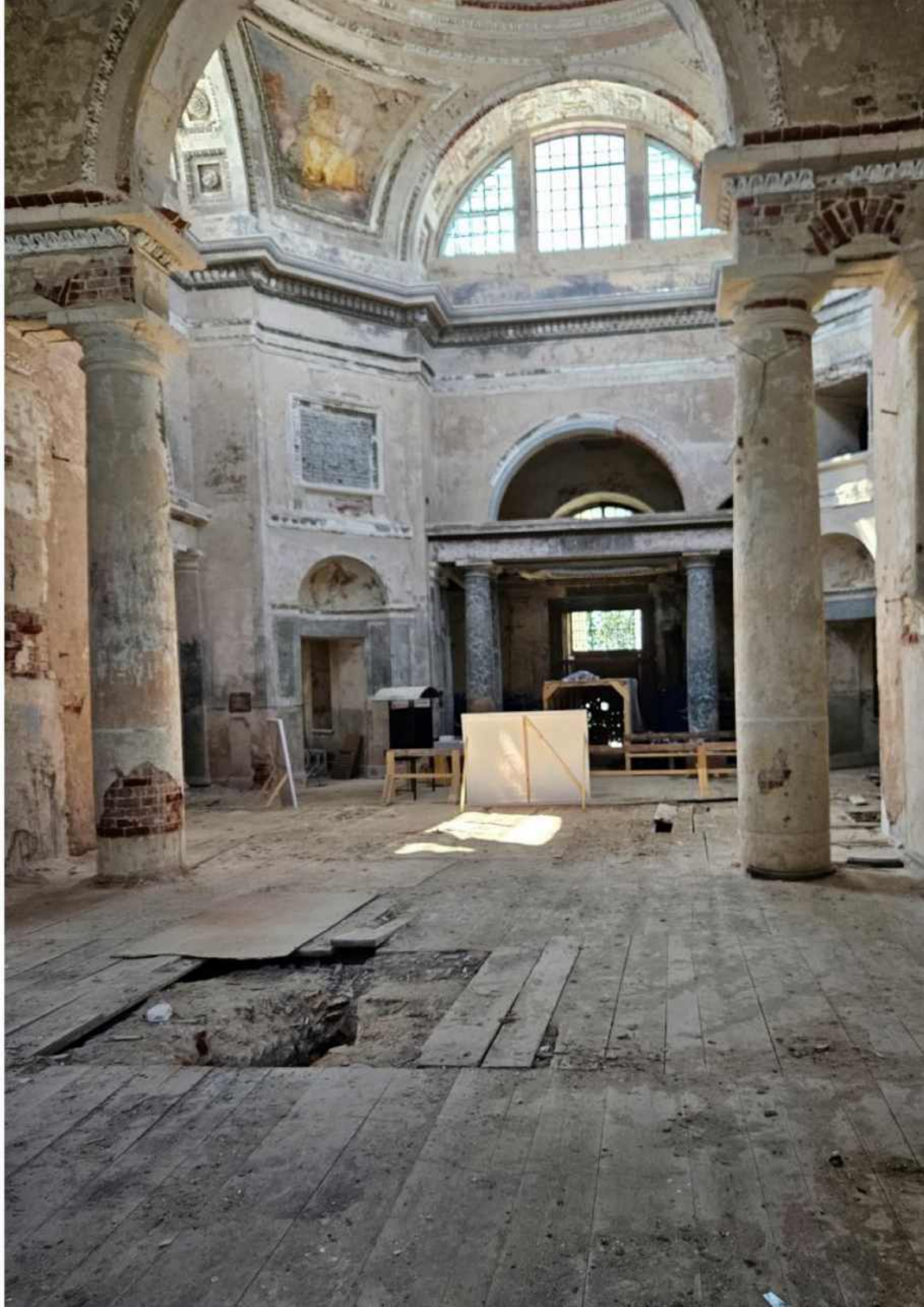








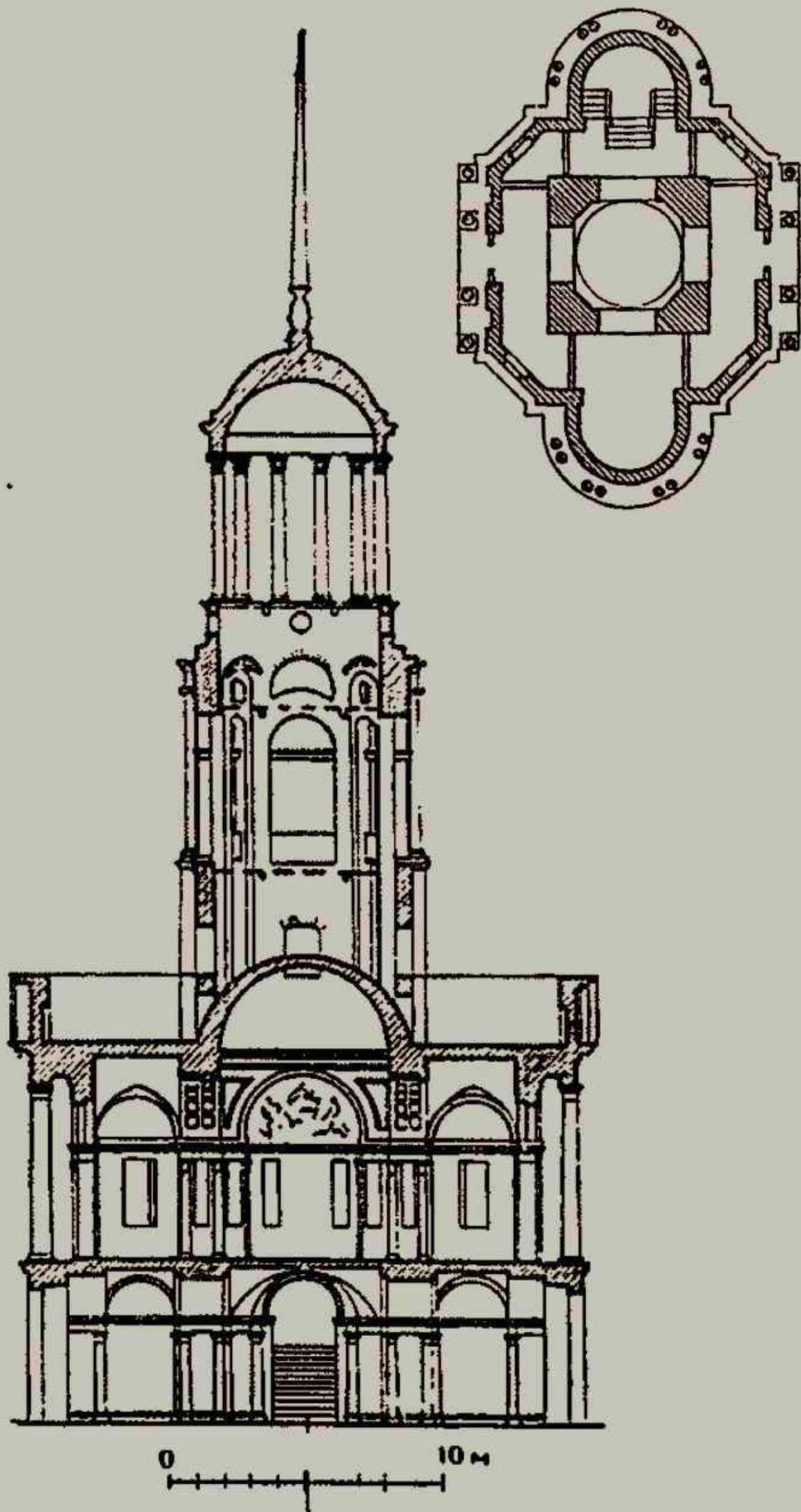








Church of the Holy Mandylion (Spassky Church) with Bell Tower
Borisoglebsky Monastery, Torzhok, Tver region, Russia













Znamenskoye-Rayok is a historic estate in the Tver Region (Maryinskoye rural settlement, Torzhok District), constructed in the second half of the 18th century by General-in-Chief Fyodor Glebov. It is a federally protected cultural heritage site.

Overview

Also known as the Streshnev Estate, the palace-and-park complex was built between 1743 and 1787. While no direct documentation survives, the estate is widely attributed to architect Nikolai Lvov. Other individuals believed to have been involved in its design and construction include K. Butsi, A. Trofimov, the Englishman W. Irwin, and the Italian architect F. Rusca.

The architectural ensemble features a central manor house connected to a circular colonnade (court of honor), which links the house to side wings (coach house and greenhouse) and an entrance gate. Many of the estate's original pavilions and gazebos were lost in the 1930s. A cascading series of ponds remains, including the upper and middle chamber ponds.

Restoration and Public Access

Today, the estate grounds are overseen by the All-Russian Historical and Ethnographic Museum in Torzhok. Public visits are limited due to the site's deteriorated condition and structural hazards. In February 2024, during a meeting with cultural professionals from the Tver Region, President Vladimir Putin expressed support for a comprehensive restoration project. The initiative aims to both preserve the monument and integrate it into the local economy. Tver Region Governor Igor Rudenya pledged local infrastructure support. Upon completion, the restored estate is expected to become a major cultural and tourist center, hosting exhibitions, guided tours, and events focused on Russian estate culture.

UNESCO waiting List

The Streshnev Estate at Znamenskoye-Rayok, along with nearby sites such as the Nikolskoye-Cherenchitsy estate and architectural monuments in Torzhok and the surrounding villages (Arpachevo, Vasilevo, Gornitsy, Zagorye/Pereslegino, and Pryamukhino), has been added to the UNESCO waiting List of World Heritage Sites.

Berezhki-Rayok Valley

Before the 1917 Revolution, the Berezhki-Rayok valley was owned by various noble and military families, including the Rozhnovs, Glebov-Streshnevs, and Dubasovs. Following the bankruptcy of a previous tenant (2002–2016), parts of the estate and 200 hectares of the historical territory were acquired in 2017 by Rai Development (RD). These lands span the Glebov family's former holdings, including the villages of Rayok, Vasilyeva Gora, Svischevo, and Seltso.

Church of the Sign of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Historical records from the first half of the 17th century mention the existence of the Church of the Sign and its adjacent church settlement in what was then the Rai churchyard. The estate's spiritual heart is the Church of the Sign of the Mother of God, built in 1766 by General-in-Chief Ivan Fyodorovich Glebov, father of F. I. Glebov. Before the 1917 Revolution, the church housed sacred family icons of the Glebovs, including Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker and the Sign of the Mother of God, as well as works by artist Vladimir Borovikovsky. Charitable restoration work at the church is currently being conducted by RD.

Residence Villa Rayok (Former Sanatorium Building)

Located between the Church of the Sign and the main manor house is the U-shaped Villa Rayok, a residential structure that frames a formal court of honor. This mansion, nestled in the 18th-century landscape park, once served as a school and later as part of a sanatorium.

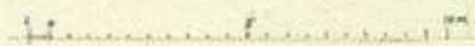
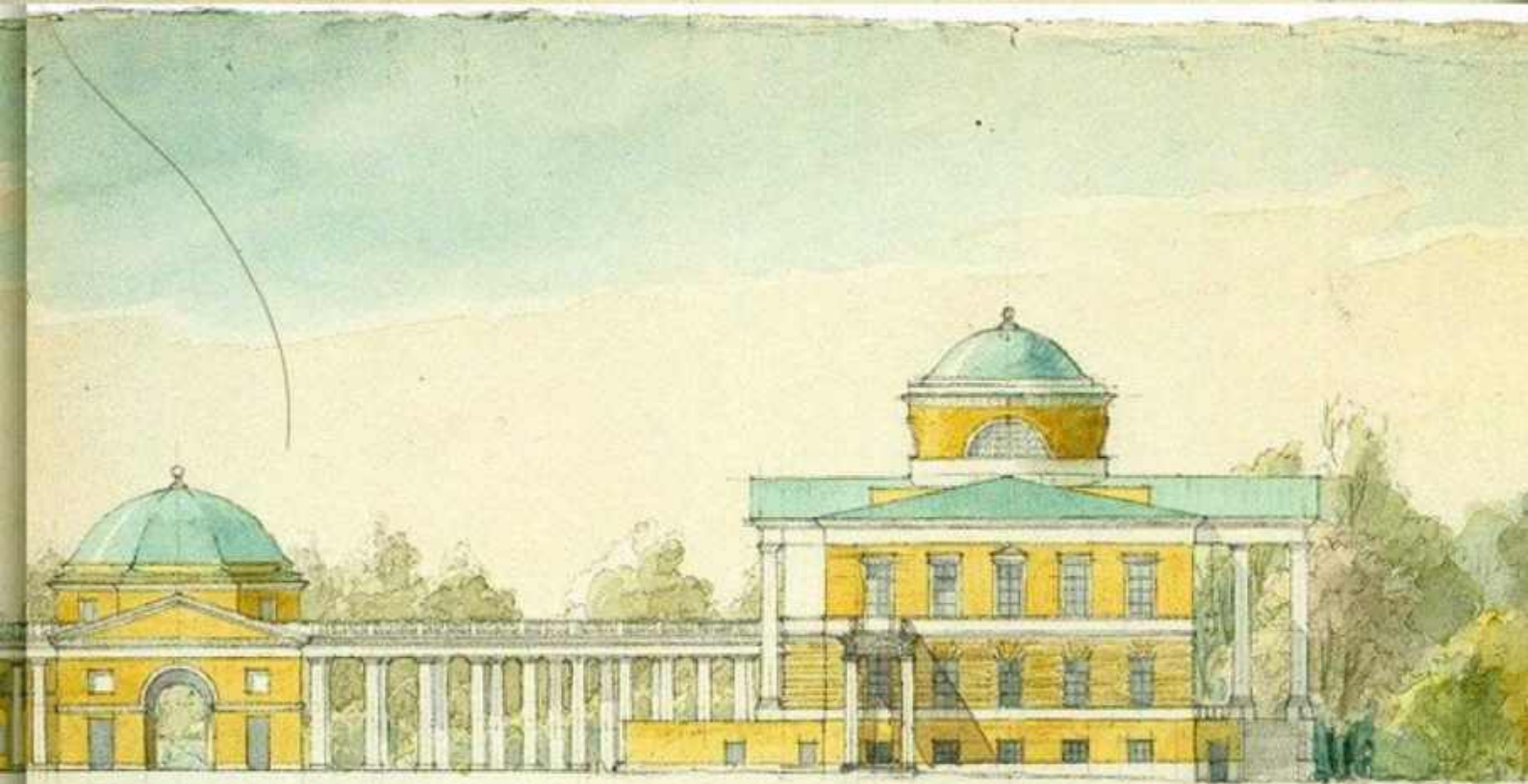
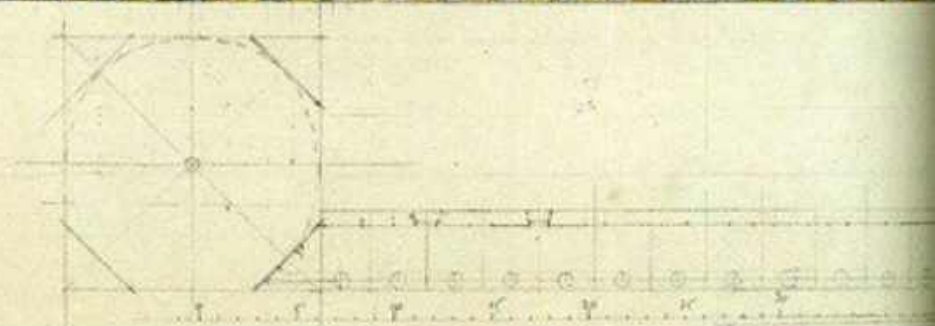
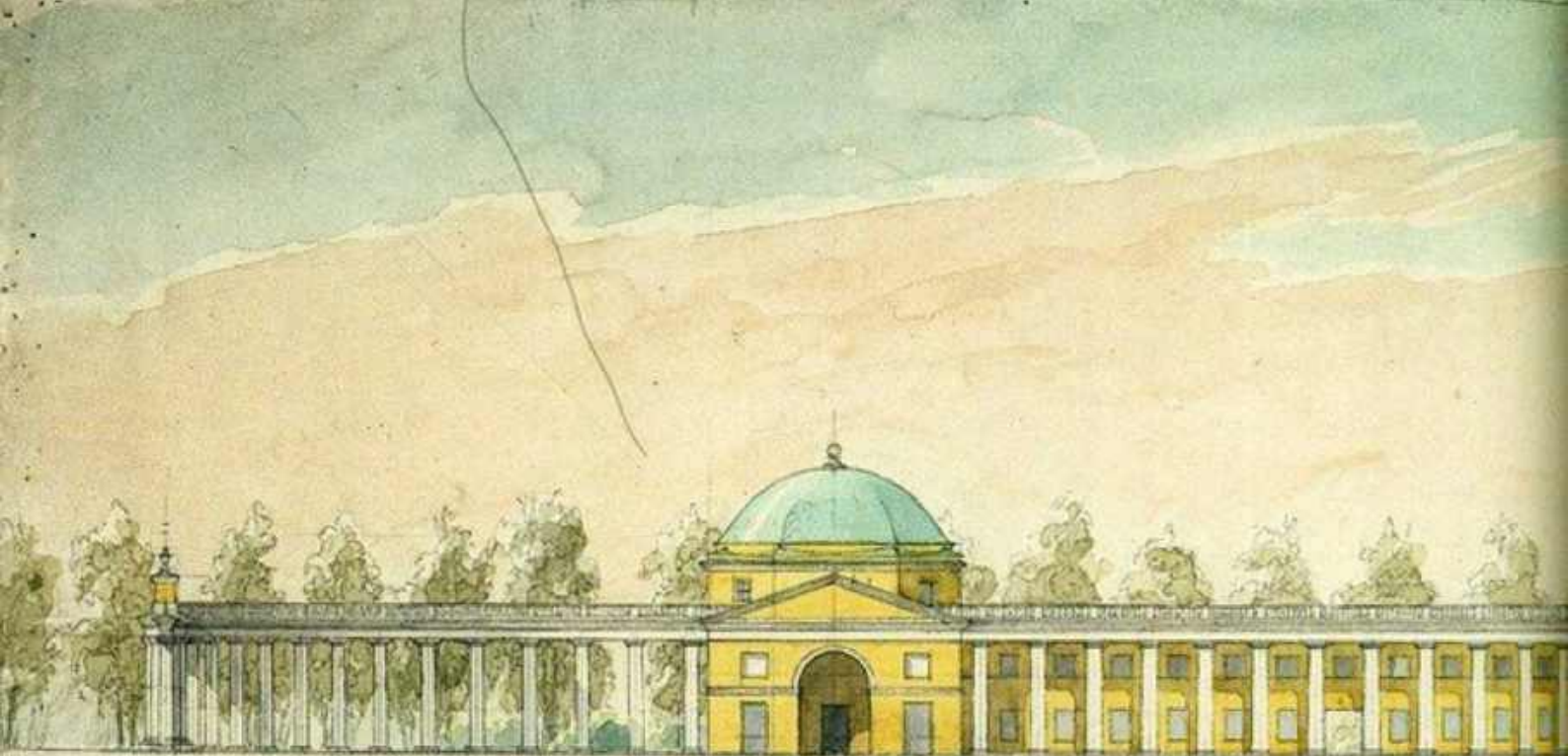
From 1967, the Kalininskaya Boarding School for 120 pupils operated here, alongside infrastructure including a boiler house, water tower, and staff cottages. In 1974, a second phase was added, including a food wing and administrative offices. In 1984, a sauna and indoor pool were built on the eastern side.

Today, this Soviet-era residence with vaulted ceilings, panoramic windows, and rooftop terraces is closed to the general public and opens only for private events.

Thermarium Hotel Villa Rayok (Parable House and Thermal Baths)

In 1861, a parable house stood in the eastern part of the church and garden grounds. After World War II, the building was expanded to serve as a thermal water and mud therapy clinic, operating until 1996. From that time, the only occupants were a family of storks who lived on the chimney for four generations, until 2022. The mansion is currently undergoing redevelopment and is scheduled to open in 2026 as an exclusive thermarium-style hotel with accommodations for 30 guests.





Ул. Заводская (Рига)
 УЧЕБНО-ПРОЕКТНО-РЕСТАВРАЦИОННОЕ
 УЧРЕЖДЕНИЕ
 1960

проект на башню (см. план).
 За реконструкцию существующей башни.

арх.









ROTUNDA MAUSOLEUM, NIKOLSKOYE-CHERENCHITSY

**The Rotunda Mausoleum of Nikolay Lvov:
A Synthesis of Palladian Vision and Christian Symbolism.**

The rotunda mausoleum designed by Nikolay Lvov on his estate at Nikolskoye-Cherenchitsy near Torzhok is one of the most emblematic works of Russian Enlightenment classicism, merging architectural erudition with profound spiritual symbolism. Constructed in the early 1780s, it served as Lvov's own burial place and exemplifies his unique interpretation of Palladianism, filtered through his travels in Italy and deep engagement with classical, Byzantine, and early Christian sources.

The structure's external appearance is dominated by a twelve-column rotunda placed atop a massive bell tower, which acts as both a symbolic and physical bridge between the upper and lower churches. The upper church is dedicated to the Resurrection and illuminated from above by a central oculus, reminiscent of the Pantheon in Rome and St. Costanza's rotunda. The lower church, accessed from beneath the bell tower, functions as a crypt and evokes early Christian catacombs. It includes a grotto-like chamber and two mysterious, narrow underground corridors, heightening the tomb's sacred atmosphere.

Architecturally, Lvov drew inspiration from Roman antiquity and Andrea Palladio's Tempietto Barbaro, while also referencing the Jerusalem Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the mausoleum of Galla Placidia in Ravenna. The rotunda's dome is coffered with rosettes and rests on a Corinthian entablature adorned with reliefs of grapevines and birds - symbols of resurrection and eternal life. The layout of the upper church suggests a centralized cross plan, with symmetrical exedras on the east and west. The entrance, reached by a cyclopean stone ramp, was designed to suggest ascension—both physical and metaphysical - from the earthly domain of the tomb below to the celestial realm symbolised by the upper dome.

The composition reveals a deliberate spiritual program. The number of steps leading to the crypt (seven) alludes to the cardinal virtues, and the southern orientation of the bell tower aligns the structure with the sun, invoking Christ as the "Sun of Righteousness." Even the inclusion of two carved rosettes - Sun and Moon - on the portico evokes a cosmological reading of the passage from life to death and resurrection.

Lvov's rotunda is not merely a funerary monument but a didactic work of architecture. It transforms Enlightenment rationalism and Palladian rigor into a vehicle for Christian moral teaching. The harmonious integration of architecture, symbolism, and landscape reflects Lvov's belief that sacred architecture should guide the viewer not only through space but toward spiritual understanding. Despite later misconceptions branding the monument as "Masonic" or "pagan," it is fundamentally Christian in both purpose and message, embodying the resurrection through form, light, and spatial progression.

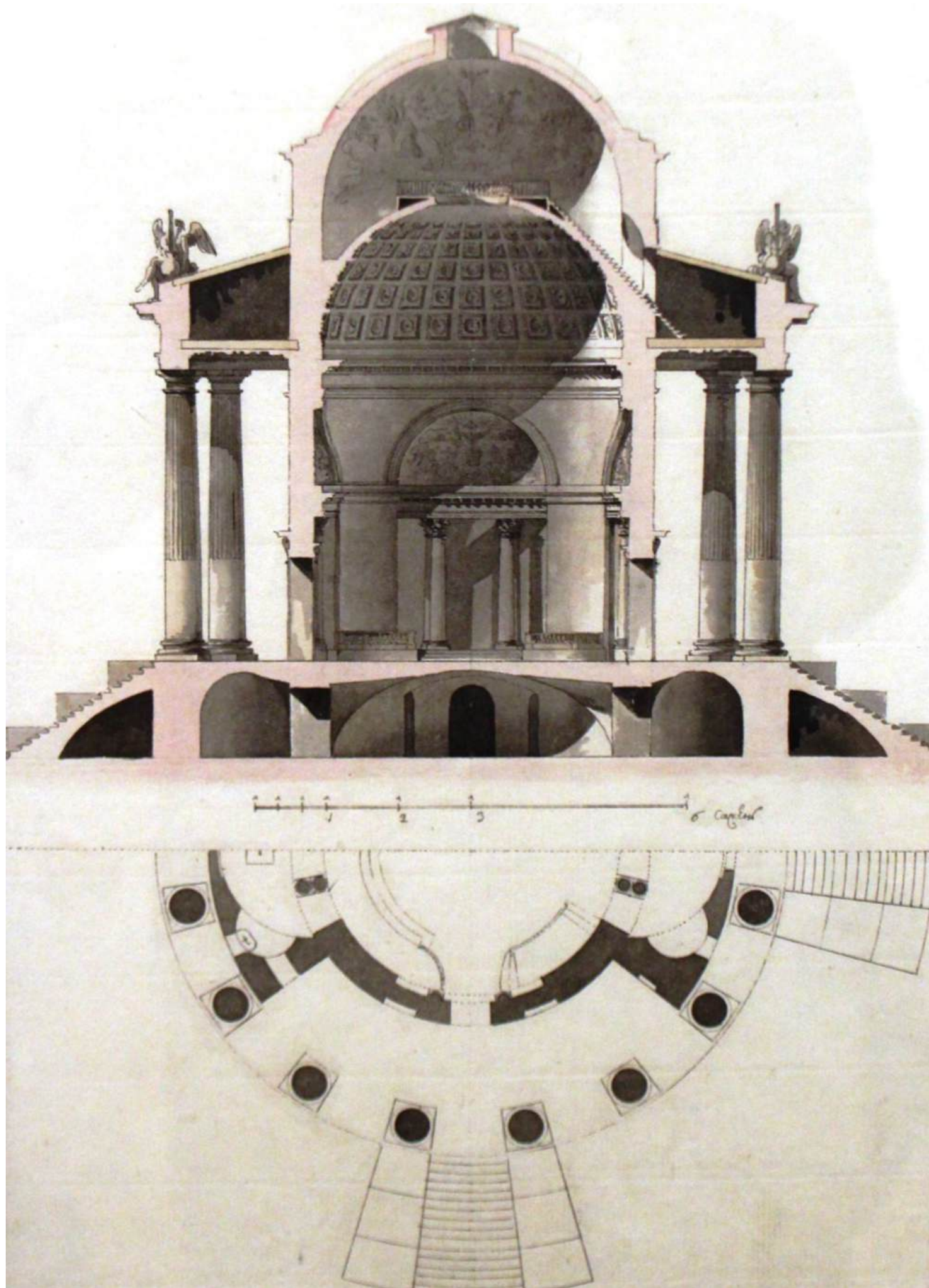
Today, the mausoleum stands in partial ruin, a fragile yet majestic relic of Lvov's visionary genius. Its architecture remains a testament to the intellectual ambition of Russian classicism and a uniquely personal synthesis of artistic, religious, and philosophical ideals.



Church-Mausoleum, at Nikolskoye-Cherenchitsy, 1790
Tver region, Russia



Church-Mausoleum at Nikolskoye-Cherenchitsy, 1790s
Nikolskoje-Cherenchitsy, Tver region, Russia



Church-Mausoleum, at Nikolskoye-Cherenchitsy, 1790
Tver region, Russia



Church-Mausoleum, at Nikolskoye-Cherenchitsy, 1790
Tver region, Russia



Church-Mausoleum, at Nikolskoye-Cherenchitsy, 1790
Tver region, Russia



Church-Mausoleum, at Nikolskoye-Cherenchitsy, 1790
Tver region, Russia



Church-Mausoleum, at Nikolskoye-Cherenchitsy, 1790
Tver region, Russia

FUNDRAISING PROJECT

For the restoration of the Church of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul

<https://nasledie-iris.org/projects/petropavlovskij-hram-razrabotka-proekta-restavraczii/>

Status: Historical and Cultural Monument of Regional Significance

Date of Construction: Late 18th century

Date of Consecration: 1803

Architect: N. A. Lvov

Location: 79 km from Tver by car, 40 km from Torzhok

Historical Background of the Village

Pereslegino is situated on the Rachaina River, 26 km south of the city of Torzhok. Since the late 18th century, the area belonged to the prominent noble family of Poltoratsky. By 1859, the village had 27 households and 257 residents. Pereslegino was known for its traditional fairs. The Church of Saints Peter and Paul has long been, and remains, the main architectural and spiritual landmark of the village.

History of the Church

The Church of Saints Peter and Paul is a gem of Russian architectural heritage and one of the finest works of the celebrated architect Nikolai Lvov—often referred to by his contemporaries as the “Russian Leonardo.”

The stone church was erected in the late 18th century on the site of an older wooden structure. Its construction was funded by parishioners and the local landowner, Mark Poltoratsky—Actual State Councillor and Director of the Imperial Court Chapel. The church was consecrated in 1803 by Archbishop Pavel of Tver and Kashin.

Designed in the Classical style, the church inspires awe even in its ruined state. Of particular note are the Ionic columns and the majestic double dome, through whose vertical openings the images of the twelve apostles are visible.

An early inventory describes it as:

“A stone church with two chapels, covered with an iron roof. The dome and crosses are made of gilded iron. It has two bell towers, also with iron roofs, domes, and gilded crosses, and six bells. The altar and royal doors are carved and gilded. The image of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary is painted on the royal doors, with a radiant halo above, also carved and gilded. To the right of the royal doors, the icon of the Saviour in a marble-like iconostasis is partially gilded and painted...”

In the 1930s, the church was closed. Its liturgical objects were looted, and the building was repurposed for utilitarian needs.

In 2018, the Church of Saints Peter and Paul was officially included in the regional register of historical and cultural monuments. It is also under consideration for inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage Tentative List as part of the serial nomination “*Historical Center of Torzhok and the Estate Architecture of Nikolai Lvov.*”

Церковь Загорье (Переслегино) 1908г.





The Church Today

For decades, the church has remained in a state of disrepair. The vaults of the side aisles have collapsed, parts of the roof are missing, and the central dome is at risk of collapse. The brickwork is rapidly deteriorating.

With the blessing of Metropolitan Ambrosius of Tver and Kashin, and at the request of the church's rector, Father Alexander Rabtsun, the **White Iris Charity Foundation** took responsibility for the site. In 2021, we completed the first phase of conservation work, made possible by the success of our project *"Let's Save the Churches of Novotorzhskaya Land and Stepurino"*, which was supported by a grant from the Presidential Fund.

As part of the conservation plan, the church was temporarily covered with a waterproof fabric roof. We reinforced the rafters, replaced the sheathing, and sealed openings in the domed structure. The windows were closed with ventilated wooden shutters. The north wall, which had shifted, was stabilized with steel channels. These emergency measures halted further decay caused by rain and snow and preserved the building from further structural collapse.

In 2024, we reinforced the structural and foundation systems of the church and improved the surrounding grounds.

This would not have been possible without the help of generous supporters who contributed financially and volunteers who participated in community clean-up efforts.

As art historian and Russian State University for the Humanities lecturer Arseny Petrov noted:

"The architectural design of the Church of Saints Peter and Paul is on par with churches in Moscow and St. Petersburg. It is not a provincial monument - it is of national significance for the history of Russian culture. Preserving it is a great achievement."

What's Next

Our goal is the full restoration of this sacred and cultural landmark. To achieve this, we are launching a fundraising campaign to support the research and development of a restoration project.

Your donations will help fund the following:

- Chemical and material analysis
- Historical, archival, bibliographic, and archaeological research
- Refinement of architectural measurements and drawings
- Structural engineering assessments
- Development of concept and preliminary designs
- Final restoration project documentation
- Essential administrative expenses

We thank everyone who contributes to saving this architectural masterpiece.



White Iris Charity Foundation
<https://nasledie-iris.org/>





RESTORATION PROJECT

of the Church of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul

Pereslegino Village, Torzhok District, Tver Region

2016 to 2023

Head of Project and Chief Architect:

Kirill Yakovlev

Architects: :

Yaroslav Sedoplatov, Tatyana Popova, Marina Karpova, Nikita Trofimov

Chief Engineer: :

Stanislav Slovitsky

Chief Designer: :

Anton Smirnov

Designers: :

Kira Besprozvannaya, Natalya Lyalinova

Project Initiators: :

Kirill Yakovlev and Anton Smirnov (concept design), :

White Iris Charity Foundation

<https://nasledie-iris.org/>

Project Stages:

1. Site Survey and Measurements
2. Conceptual Design
3. Architectural and Archaeological Documentation
4. Emergency Stabilization Work (construction documentation and scientific supervision)



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Архитектурное бюро

«ТЕКТОНИКА»

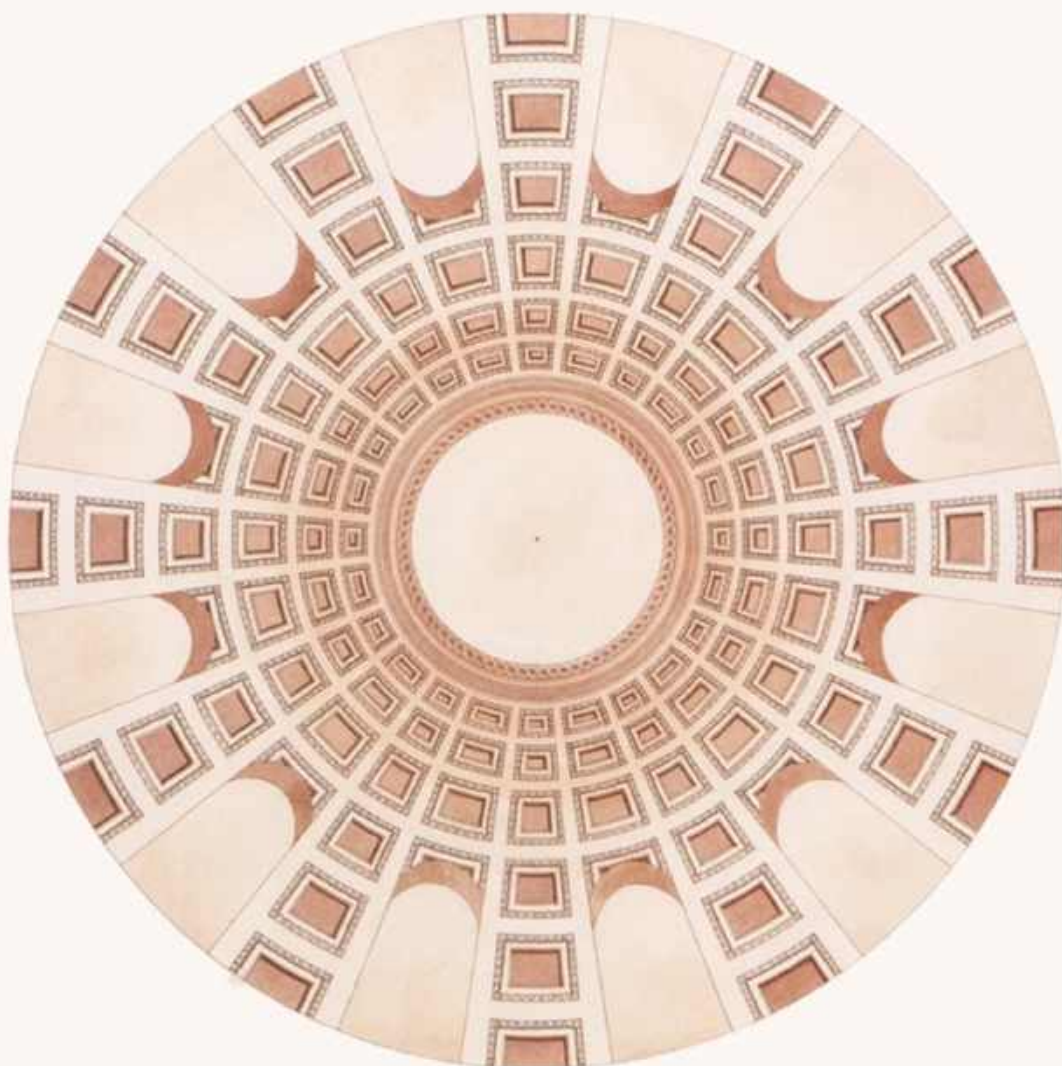
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ЗАПАДНЫЙ ФАСАД



Фасад в осях Н-А

