

= Mezhyhirya Monastery =

The Mezhyhirya Savior @-@ Transfiguration Monastery ( Ukrainian : ?????????????? ?????? @-@ ?????????????????? ?????????? , Mezhyhirskiy Spaso @-@ Preobrazhenskiy Monastyr ) was an Eastern Orthodox female monastery that was located in the neighborhood of Mezhyhiria .

The monastery served as a historic Princely residency of Rurik dynasty during the Medieval times located just 10 kilometres ( 6 @.@ 2 mi ) to the north of Vyshhorod . Today , the territory is part of the Vyshhorod Raion , Kiev Oblast ( province ) in northern Ukraine . The location is situated in the Mezhyhirya ravine , on the right bank of the Dnieper River in close proximity to the Kiev water reservoir .

Founded in 988 AD , the Mezhyhirya Monastery was one of the first monasteries established in the East Slavic state of Kievan Rus ' . Throughout its existence , it was destroyed , and then restored numerous times , yet it was not spared destruction by Soviet authorities in 1935 . At the time of its height , the Mezhyhirya Monastery was considered a spiritual center of Rus royal Rurikid house and later Cossacks . Currently , the area of the former monastery is located on a fenced @-@ in woodland territory next to Novi Petrivtsi village and is directly connected with a private residence for Ukrainian government officials .

As an important monastery of the Zaporozhian Host , the Mezhyhirya Monastery left a rich legacy behind it . The monastery was mentioned in one of Taras Shevchenko 's poems , " Chernets , " written in 1847 , and was the subject of a drawing by him . Nikolai Gogol 's novel , " Taras Bulba , " published in 1835 , also mentions the monastery .

= = History = =

= = = Foundation and early history = = =

The monastery is mentioned for the first time in the early 14th century , although Yevgeniy Bolkhovitinov claimed that it had been founded by the first Metropolitan of Kiev , Michael , along with Greek monks arriving from Byzantium in 988 AD . The claim is likely spurious , since Mezhyhirya is not listed by modern authors among the monasteries of Kievan Rus .

In 1154 , the Prince of Vladimir @-@ Suzdal Yuri Dolgoruki divided the territory surrounding the monastery 's grounds amongst his sons . His son Andrei I Bogolyubsky received the lands nearest to the monastery , now the city of Vyshhorod . Not too long afterwards , he is alleged to have moved the monastery to its current location in the hills of the Dnieper , giving the monastery its name , " Mezhyhirya . " Bogolyubsky despised the city of Kiev , therefore moving to Suzdal , in modern @-@ day Russia . On his trip , he took with him the " Theotokos of Vladimir " icon , a gift from Constantinople Patriarch Luke Chrysoberges to Dolgoruki . The icon is one of the most venerated Orthodox icons , now located in the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow .

With the Mongol invasion of Rus ' by Batu Khan in 1237 @-@ 40 , the monastery is supposed to have been completely destroyed . These legends were written down much later . The monastery is known to have existed in the 14th century , though . In 1482 , it was attacked by the Crimean Tatars under Meñli I Giray . Reconstruction on the monastery began only 40 years later . In 1523 , the monastery was transferred to the King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania Sigismund I. In addition , the monastery was given a full reign over its territory . In 1555 , the complex consisted of four churches , including and one cave church .

= = = Cossack monastery = = =

During the 16th century , the monastery frequently lost and regained its ownership rights . On the funds of the monastery 's new hegumen Afanasiy ( a protégé of prince Konstanty Wasyl Ostrogski ) , the monastery 's old buildings were demolished , and new ones were built in their place . In 1604 , the Gate Church of Ss . Peter and Paul was constructed , in 1609 - the Mykilska Refectory , and the

Transfiguration Cathedral in 1609 @-@ 1611 . Under his rule , the monastery was considered as the second lavra ( cave monastery ) in Ukraine .

After its reconstruction , the Mezhyhirya Monastery became a regional center of the Zaporozhian Host , serving the host as a military monastery . In 1610 , the monastery received the status of a stauropegic monastery ( orthodox church autonomy ) , under the Patriarch of Constantinople . The universal ( act ) of Hetman Bohdan Khmelnytsky issued on May 21 , 1656 transferred the neighboring settlements of Vyshhorod , Novi Petrivtsi , and Moshchany under control of the Mezhyhirya Monastery . In effect , the universal made Khmelnytsky the monastery 's ktitor . After the destruction of the Trakhtemyrivskyi Monastery by a Polish szlachta army , the Mezhyhirya Monastery replaced it as the main cossack military monastery . As a military monastery , retired and elderly cossacks from the Zaporozhian Host would now come to the monastery to retire and live in until the end of their lives . At that time , the monastery 's expenses were paid off with the help of the cossack 's Sich Host .

In 1676 , the area was burned down after a fire started in the wooden Transfiguration Cathedral . With the help of Ivan Savelov , a monk who lived in the monastery and later became a Patriarch of Moscow , the complex was reconstructed . Two years later , with the help of the cossack community , the Annunciation Church was constructed near the monastery 's hospital .

In 1683 , the Sich Rada voted that the ministers in the Sich 's Pokrovskyi Cathedral ( the main cathedral of the sich ) should be only from the Mezhyhirya Monastery . In 1691 , monasteries located near the Sich were placed under the Mezhyhirya Monastery 's authority . Under hegumen Feodosiy at the end of the 17th century , considered as a period of prosperity , the Mezhyhirya Monastery became one of the largest monastery 's in Ukraine .

At the request of Peter I of Russia , the stauropegic status of the monastery was revoked ; it was later reinstated in 1710 . In 1717 , a large fire destroyed a large portion of the monastery 's buildings . The monastery 's " military " status was reconfirmed by cossacks in 1735 . In 1774 , with the funds of the last Koshovyi Otaman Petro Kalnyshevsky , the Ss . Peter and Paul Church was reconstructed . Ukrainian architect Ivan Hryhorovych @-@ Barskyi designed some of the buildings , including the monk 's residence .

= = = Decline and Soviet demolition = = =

A period of decline began with the abolition of the Zaporozhian Host by Catherine II of Russia . In 1786 the Russian Imperial government closed the monastery and confiscated its valuable treasures . The remaining Zaporozhian Cossacks soon afterwards left Zaporizhia , and moved to the Kuban region . There they founded the Kuban Cossack Host , which still exists to this day . The cossacks were able to leave with some of the monastery 's manuscripts , some of which are now kept in the Krasnodar Krai Archive .

In 1787 , Catherine II of Russia came to Kiev ( Kyiv ) for a visit and wished to see the Mezhyhirya Monastery . She never got to see it , because the monastery mysteriously burned down the night before her arrival .

In 1796 , a German engineer found that the area had suitable clay for the making of faience , and two years later , founded the Mezhyhirya Faience Factory , the first one in Ukraine , at the site of the unused monastery . By 1852 , the faience factory had become the largest industrial complex in Kiev . During its existence , the factory produced a variety of crockery and ornamental vases and figurines . In 1884 , the faience factory was closed down after it failed to bring any profit .

In 1894 , the Mezhyhirya Monastery was rebuilt and transformed into a women 's monastery . After its reconstruction , the monastery was transferred to the authority of the Intercession of the Saints Monastery in Kiev .

After the Russian Revolution , the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic 's capital moved from Kharkiv to Kiev in 1934 , and the city was in need of a suburban residence for government officials . Mezhyhirya was chosen as the site of the new government residence . The decision of the Politburo in April 1935 ordered the demolition of the whole complex . Before the scheduled demolition in 1936 , the architecture and buildings of the monastic complex were photographed . During the demolition

, an underground library was discovered , full of handwritten manuscripts . There are speculations that the discovered books belonged to the lost library of Yaroslav the Wise , or perhaps of a later period , during the times of the Zaporozhian Host . The only thing that remains now of the monastic complex is a water well .

During Soviet times , the area served as a residence for Leonid Brezhnev and Volodymyr Shcherbytsky , who worked in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic 's government at the time . During this period , its location was concealed from the public .

= = Ownership controversy = =

In 2008 the Mezhyhirya residence was amid an ownership controversy between the former Ukrainian Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich and the new Ukrainian government , led by Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko . The transfer of the 1 @.@ 4 km <sup>2</sup> Mezhyhirya official residence in Novi Petrivtsi , Vyshhorod Raion ( district ) to the " Nadra Ukraine " firm on July 11 , 2007 by Viktor Yanukovich pulled the territory from under government ownership .

= = Private residence of Viktor Yanukovich = =

On July 9 , 2007 , President Viktor Yushchenko signed a secret presidential decree # 148 , according to the local business newspaper Delo which referred to the information of the State Directorate of Affairs . The document states : " The government dacha on the territory of the recreational complex " Pushcha @-@ Vodytsia " is presented for a use to the head of Kabmin , Viktor Yanukovich . " Later the document has never appeared on the website of the head of state nor in any other open source of information . A single official confirmation of it was given to the newspaper by the State Directorate of Affairs . The directorate explained that the recreational complex " Pushcha @-@ Vodytsia " includes the recreational resort " Pushcha @-@ Vodytsia " and the Mezhyhirya residency . The residency that is located in the village of Novi Petrivtsi was occupied by Yanukovich in the last several years .

The newspaper notes that at the same time , July 9 , at the website of the President appeared another document - an order in which he obliged the prime @-@ minister to execute the decision of the RNBO and secure the financing of early elections . The newspaper speculated that it was a trade exchange of power for the state dacha . In the late February 2008 Yanukovich confirmed that he indeed possesses a dacha in the Mezhyhirya residency awarded by a presidential decree . According to the data of the State Directorate of Affairs , the territory of residency occupies 136 @.@ 8 hectares ( 338 acres ) . It is enclosed in perimeter by a five @-@ meter [ tall ] iron fence and inside it is secured by operatives of " Titan " . Yanukovich claimed that he only uses one of the houses which has an area of 250 square metres ( 2 @, @ 700 sq ft ) and after which is secured 1 @.@ 5 hectares ( 3 @.@ 7 acres ) of land . Yanukovich also stated that with help of the State Directorate of Affairs he was able to conduct a substantial renovations of the property and confirms that in 2007 some area was bought by some private entity after which he had to pay monthly 11 @, @ 000 hryvnias for rent . In interview to BBC he acknowledged that lives at the Mezhyhirya 's cottage sometime since 1999 or 2000 .

= = Further developments = =

On July 11 , 2007 , Yanukovich issued a government order # 521 , according to which the National Joint @-@ Stock Company " Nadra Ukrainy " received the state residency and a territory of 137 ha in Mezhyhirya . Soon " Nadra Ukrainy " concluded a barter with another company " Medinvesttreid " ( Medinvesttrade ) after which the above @-@ mentioned government assigned residence was exchanged for two properties at Parkova alleya ( Park alley ) in Kiev . " Medinvesttreid " , in its turn , sold the newly acquired property of " Nadra Ukrainy " to some other company " Tantalit " . Since May 2008 the Ministry of the Interior was conducting a search for the director of " Medinvesttreid " , Hennadiy Herasymenko , who in their opinion was involved in a scheme to get the former state

residence out of state property . On February 12 , 2008 Yushchenko signed a decree for relieving a state property security personnel from duties at the State cottages area in Mezhyhirya . His decree canceled the previous presidential decree of January 12 , 2006 where the security personnel was assigned to properties at Zalissya , instead of Zalissya and Mezhyhirya .

Subsequently , Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich privatized the complex , already residing there while prime minister . At the time , the property 's price was estimated at around 1 billion hryvnias ( \$ 200 million ) . After Yulia Tymoshenko 's election , her cabinet annulled the decree which transferred the property to the " Nadra Ukraine " firm , and again placed the territory under government control . However , on July 28 , 2008 , the Economic Court of Kiev City annulled the Cabinet 's decision and returned the Mezhyhirya residence back under Yanukovich 's ownership .