The Moscow Times
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Russia Erects First Statue to Ivan the Terrible

October 03, 2016



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A statue of 16th-Century Tsar Ivan the Terrible has been erected in the city of Oryol, Interfax news agency reported Monday.

The bronze statue of Tsar Ivan IV, the first of its kind in Russia, was erected near the city's Epiphany Cathedral at the confluence of the rivers Oka and Orlik, the spot where Oryol was founded by Ivan's decree in 1566 to serve as a fortress to protect his southern borders.

The construction of the statue was postponed in July after locals petitioned against the planned monument. According to Viktor Pankov, the petition's author, the objections related to the planned location of the monument in front of the city's youth theater, and not to the figure of the notorious 16th-century ruler.

The unveiling date had originally been set for Aug. 5 to coincide with the 450th anniversary of the founding of Oryol, 350 kilometers South-West of Moscow. Vadim Potomsky, the region's

governor, announcing the postponement, promised to gauge public opinion and consult with the community in hopes that a compromise could be found.

In a statement to local media on Monday, Potomsky said that everyone who had seen the statue was “happy and pleased.”

“The only question people ask is why it took so long to put up", he said, adding that the statue would be unveiled before November.

Ivan the Terrible ruled Russia for 37 years, during which time he established a centralized Russian state and acquired vast territories through military conquest. His paranoid and violent nature saw him found Russia’s first secret police force, murder his son in a fit of rage and blind the architect of Moscow’s St. Basil’s Cathedral.

Original url: https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2016/10/03/russia-erects-statue-a55574