

Putin Visits Newly Unearthed Remains of Dmitry Donskoy

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Vladimir Putin. kremlin.ru

President Vladimir Putin on Thursday visited the sarcophagus of medieval warrior prince Dmitry Donskoy, whose remains were recently uncovered during restoration work at Moscow's Cathedral of the Archangel.

Lying within the Kremlin fortress, the Orthodox cathedral served as the burial site for more than 40 Russian tsars and princes down the centuries.

The body of Grand Prince Donskoy was known to lie there, but its discovery last month in a crypt by the southern wall surprised historians, who had believed it was located elsewhere in the building.

Putin lit a candle inside the frescoed cathedral and stood beside the white-stone sarcophagus as experts explained to the president how they had identified the remains as those of the

14th-century prince, the RIA Novosti news agency reported.

The Russian Orthodox Church announced the discovery on Tuesday, saying the well-preserved remains were nearly complete and belonged to a man of just under 180 cm (5 feet, 11 inches), who had died of natural causes between the ages of 35 and 45.

"All of these characteristics correspond with written sources and historical testimony concerning the life and death of the grand prince," it said.

Donskoy, who died in 1389 aged 39, ruled the principalities of Muscovy and Vladimir, which would later become the core of the Russian state.

A prominent figure in Russian history, Donskoy oversaw the construction of the first stone Kremlin fortress, increased the territory of Muscovy and routed Mongol forces in a famous battle near the Don River in 1380.

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