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CULTURAL AND LANDSCAPE ZONING IN THE NORTH-WEST RUSSIA

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This research was conducted in the framework of cultural geography — a relatively recent field of geography. This article considers the problems of geographical study of cultural landscapes of the North-West Russia, which includes Saint Petersburg, the Leningrad, Novgorod, Pskov, and Kaliningrad regions.

This article sets out to develop and test the methodology for historical and cultural zoning at the mesogeographical level.

The research and practical significance of the work lies in the identification of the features of formation of cultural landscapes in the North-West Russia, which can be used for the development of schemes of protection and rational management of territorial cultural and historical heritage.

The authors rely on historical and cultural zoning as the basic geographical method of research on cultural landscapes. To this effect, the article offers a hierarchy of historical and cultural zones comparable to the zoning systems applied in physical, historical, and cultural geography.

The major results of the research are the authors' taxonomy of historical and cultural complexes and the corresponding system of historical and cultural zoning of the North-West Russia presented on a sketch map. The article offers an exemplary description of historical and cultural provinces of the region.

The contribution of the research to the Russian geography of culture is the authors' variant of taxonomy of historical and cultural complexes and the formulation of basic principles of historical and cultural zoning at different hierarchical levels.

The research results can be applied, first of all, in the development of projects aimed at the protection and use of territorial cultural heritage in the framework of comprehensive schemes of territorial planning of the country's regions.

Key words: cultural landscape, cultural landscape systems, cultural landscape zoning, historical and cultural zoning, North-West Russia

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The North-West Russia is one of the earliest populated and cultivated regions of the country. The long history of reclamation of the territory affected its cultural landscapes, which formed under the influence of various factors (historical-cultural, ethnical, natural and others). It resulted in a rich diversity of the cultural landscape system [9; 13].

The systematisation of cultural landscapes makes it possible to apply to the study of the phenomenon the method of zoning as the most efficient and informative. The cultural landscape zoning is of complex nature; in each case, it requires an identification of a factor (or a group of factors) that plays the key role in establishing the borders of a certain area [14].

In the case of the cultural landscape of the North-West Russia, it is logical to use a hierarchical system of division into complexes of different sizes. Such systems are widely used in cultural landscape zoning [4; 6; 13]. An example of such a system is offered in the table, which shows a system of taxa applied in physiogeographic zoning, as well as a system of regions proposed by R. F. Turovsky [2; 13]. The hierarchical system of taxa includes the levels of organisation of landscape complexes from the largest (cultural landscape works) to the smallest represented by cultural landscape units (CLU). The most effective methodological technique of identifying the borders of taxa is the method of “floating properties” proposed by L. V. Smirnyagin [11]. This method makes it possible to identify the maximum number of interconnections and patterns of composite territorial objects, namely, cultural landscape complexes.

The North-West Russia can be considered a large cultural landscape system corresponding to a cultural landscape microregion (table 1) — a large territorial structure, at the level of which general patterns of cultural landscape space differentiation become pronounced. At lower levels of cultural landscape regions, we suggest identifying cultural landscape provinces and districts.

At the level of cultural landscape provinces and lower levels of zoning, the division of space according to a more complex set of features than that of the higher level of zoning takes place.

The borders of cultural landscape provinces are established according to a set of coinciding features and are based on the barriers and frontiers of different origin. Cultural landscape provinces are relatively homogenous regions. Their homogeneity is explained by a smaller area in comparison to taxa of higher levels. However, one should keep in mind that cultural landscape regions of any rank can be considered homogenous only conditionally, since cultural landscape systems within regions are often of nodal character.

Let us consider the identification of cultural landscape provinces in the case of North-West cultural landscape microregion. One can distinguish five cultural landscape provinces within the North-West microregion (fig. 1). The Kaliningrad region is analysed below at the level of an individual cultural landscape district.

The hierarchy of cultural landscape systems

Taxonomic unit	Description	Physio-geographic counterpart	Counterpart according to R.F. Turovsky [13]
Cultural landscape world	The largest cultural landscape system. The uniting factors are common traditions of the population, history, national identity. As a rule, cultural landscape worlds are comparable to civilisations (Russian, Western European cultural landscape world, etc.)	Natural zone	Cultural world
Cultural landscape macroregion	A sustainable system characterised by a cultural and historical unity, ethnical diversity and distinctive natural borders (for example, European part of Russia)	—	—
Cultural landscape mesoregion	Intermediate taxonomic unit	Landscape country	Area. Clusters of ethnic groups
Cultural landscape microregion	A cultural landscape system based on a historical and sociocultural unity. Microregions are comparable in terms of size to economic regions of Russia.	—	—
Cultural landscape macroregion or cultural landscape province (CLP)	A taxonomic unit, whose borders coincide to a great degree with historical, political, and administrative frontiers (for example, Pskov area, Novgorod area)	—	—
Cultural landscape mesoregion or cultural landscape district (CLD)	A taxonomic unit bringing together several cultural landscape regions (CLR). The borders are established on the basis of a combination of distinctive cultural-historical differences and natural features	Province	Krai. Subethnic group of a composite ethnoses
Cultural landscape region (CLR)	A cluster of cultural landscapes of similar type united by basic factors. "Floating properties" of zoning are activated at this level (natural barriers, ethnolinguistic, political and administrative and other borders)	Natural landscape	Region. Large city
Cultural landscape (CL)	A system of cultural landscape units (CLU) united by common cultural connections. Within CLs, CLUs the function of nodal formations is fulfilled; landscapes are characterised by the similarity of cultural, historical, social and other features.	Natural landscape	Locality. Large complex of cultural objects. Town, group of villages
Cultural landscape unit (CLU)	The smallest cultural landscape system consisting of a cluster of rural settlements with adjacent territories within the radius of everyday accessibility	Plot of land	Community. Village, city quarter

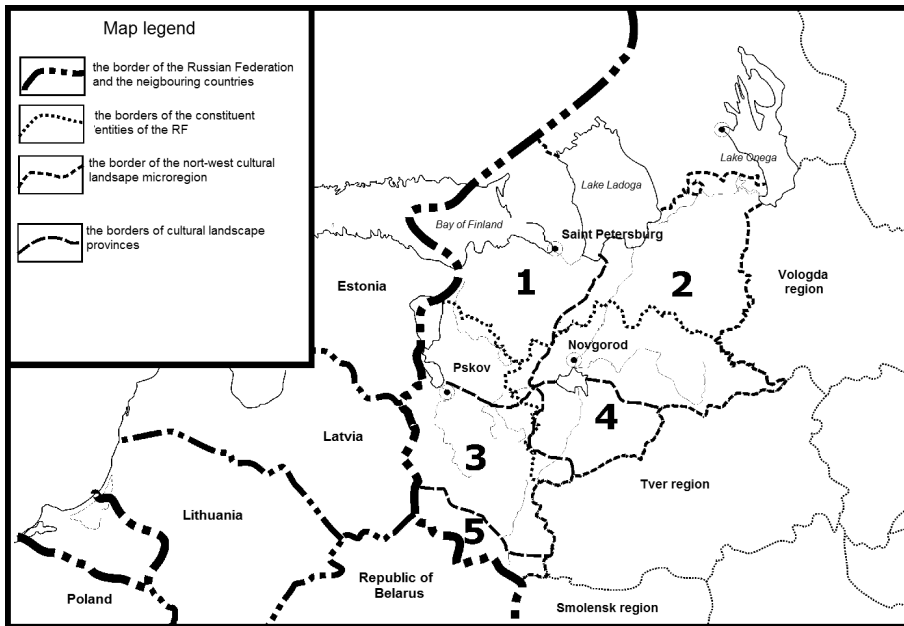


Fig. 1. Cultural landscape provinces of the North-West cultural landscape microregion:

1 — Saint Petersburg (North-West); 2 — Novgorod-Volkhov;
3 — Pskov; 4 — Ilmen-Lovat; 5 — South Pskov

1. The Saint Petersburg (North-West) cultural landscape province brings together territories with different cultural landscape histories. The linking cultural landscape structure is Saint Petersburg. A characteristic feature of the cultural landscape image of the Saint Petersburg province is contrasting landscape systems: alongside large landscape complexes of manors and estates neighbour on poorly cultivated territories.

2. The Novgorod-Volkhov cultural landscape province embraces the basins of the rivers Volkhov and Svir, the north-west slopes of the Tikhvin ridge and the Veps elevation. In the cultural-historical aspect, the territory was influenced by Novgorod, which affected the formation of cultural landscape features. However, in comparison with southern territories (south of Novgorod), the influence of northern Russian cultural landscape traditions is rather pronounced. For example, the area of northern dialects of the Russian language (Ladoga-Tikhvin and Onega groups) almost completely coincides with the territory of the province [1]. The basis for the identification of the Novgorod-Volkhov province is the principle of comparison of borders of different origins — administrative, ethnolinguistic, and natural landscape ones. So, the southern border of the province is drawn according to the combination of the natural border of southern taiga subzone and the coinciding border of occurrence of north Russian dialects. The western border coincides with the long-established (more than 100 years ago [8]) border of Novgorod lands and the border of north Russian dialects.

3. The Pskov cultural landscape province occupies the territory, which existed — culturally and historically — for a long time within the Pskov province and earlier the Pskov republic. The features of historical development shaped the Pskov cultural landscape characterised by a peculiar image, traditions and population identity [3]. This territory lies within the area of occurrence of the Pskov group of north Russian dialects. The northern borders of the province coincide with the natural landscape border of the southern taiga and mixed forest subzone, which is manifested in the changing structure of the population distribution and specific cultural landscapes. The southern and eastern borders of the province are historically stable administrative borders of the Pskov region (province) [8]. At the same time, the southern border of the Pskov cultural landscape province is the northern border of the occurrence of southern dialects of the Russian language.

4. The Ilmen-Lovat cultural landscape province is, on the one hand, a region that excludes the territories of the neighbouring provinces. On the other hand, the cultural landscapes of the Ilmen-Lovat province have a common natural basis — the most developed territories stretch along the valleys of the rivers Lovat, Polist, Rdeya, Pola and are separated from the neighbouring provinces by natural landscape barriers (the Polist marsh area) in the west, the border of the southern taiga subzone in the north, the northern slopes of the Valdai highlands in the south). In terms of linguistics, the western and southern border of the province coincides with the borders of occurrence of Novgorod dialects.

5. The south Pskov cultural landscape province is the northern border of the occurrence of southern Russian dialects affected by the Belarusian language. It is a transitional zone, which formed as a result of a close interaction between the Pskov and northern Belarusian cultural landscape traditions. As to the administrative aspect, this territory was for a long time (until the second quarter of the 20th century) a part of the Vitebsk province. It was a site of the formation of cultural landscapes characterised by features that made it possible to distinguish them from the neighbouring Pskov cultural landscapes.

A lower level of cultural landscape zoning is cultural landscape district (CLD). A CLD is a system of cultural landscape united, first of all, by historical development features and a similar natural basis. The structural changes taking place within cultural landscape systems at the level of toponyms in the course of interaction between the natural basis and human activity are accumulated and account for structural changes of a higher rank that manifest themselves at the level of cultural landscape districts.

Within the four cultural landscape provinces of the North-West microregion, we identified 13 cultural landscape districts; the territory of the Kaliningrad region is marked as the 14th CLD (fig. 2). Let us summarise the major groups of features and factors taken into account in the course of zoning of the North-West Russia at the level of cultural landscape districts.

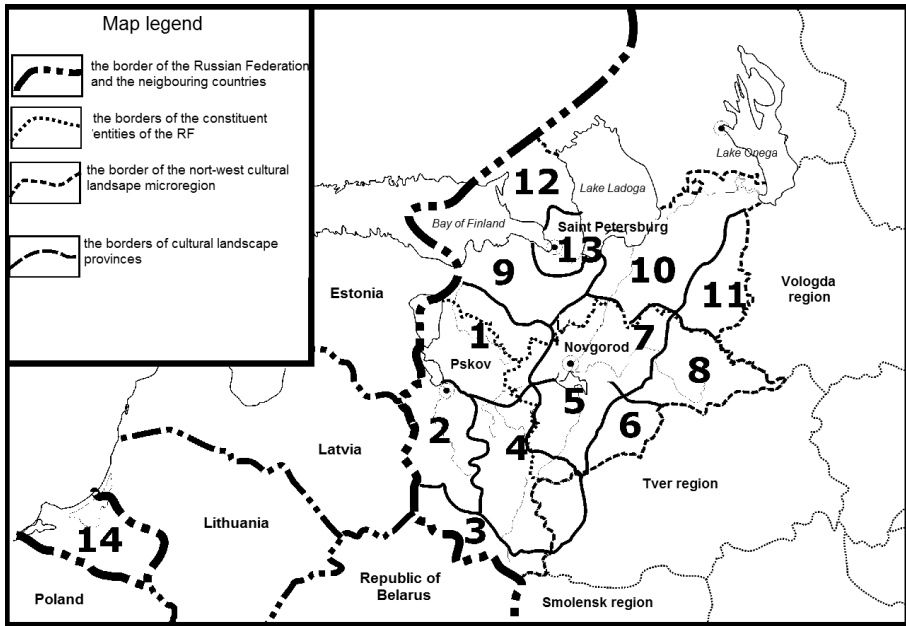


Fig. 2. The cultural landscape districts of the North-West cultural landscape of the North-West cultural landscape microregion:

- 1 — Gdov-Plyussa; 2 — Pskov-River Velikaya; 3 — Southern (Nevelsk-Sebez);
 4 — East Pskov (Shelon-Lovat); 5 — Ilmen; 6 — Valdai; 7 — Novgorod; 8 — Tikhvin;
 9 — Izhora-Ladoga; 10 — Volkhov-Svir; 11 — Vepsian; 12 — Vyborg;
 13 — Saint Petersburg; 14 — Kaliningrad

The first group of factors brings together the features of the natural basis of the territory. The territory of the North-West Russia is characterised by a set of natural landscapes, which form contrasting transitions and barrier borders. First of all, it is the interchanging plains with a developed river network and elevations (Luga, Sudoma, Bezhanitsy, Valdai, etc.) [1]. As a rule, elevations play the role of barriers for various features. Such features are historically developed administrative borders, linguistic borders, historical habitations of small ethnic groups (Vepsians, Izhorians, the Seto), ethnographic differences between the population of individual territories, etc. Alongside elevations, natural barriers are formed by swamp areas and poorly cultivated territories (Polist swamp area, part of the area surrounding Lake Ilmen, etc.) [2].

Of special importance are the borders between large natural communities. It is the border between the southern taiga and mixed forest subzones, which can be juxtaposed with the transitional zone of occurrence of northern Russian and mid-Russian cultural and linguistic traditions [1; 3]. Moreover, the southern border of the Baltic shield crosses the northern part of the Leningrad region; the cultural landscapes situated above this border significantly differ from the landscapes of the rest of the territory.

The second group of factors is composed by cultural and historical features of the territory development. The historical analysis of the territory consists, first of all, of the examination of the development features of the

Pskov and Novgorod lands and later the Saint Petersburg Province. Due to historical reasons, the territory of the modern Kaliningrad region is analysed individually. Within the zoning of cultural landscape complexes, of special importance is the administrative and state borders, which have existed for a long time [8], since they are stable and reflect cultural differences. For example, it is the border between the Novgorod and Pskov lands, the former northern border of the Vitebsk province, etc.

The third group of factors brings together ethnographic and linguistic features of the population such as the traditional rural household management, design and construction, folklore, everyday life traditions, etc. For example, there are significant differences in the traditions of rural construction in the western, eastern, and southern parts of the Pskov region: the houses differ in the types of yards (open and close ones), construction materials, decorations, etc. [3; 10]. Another example is the several groups of Russian dialects spoken in the North-West Russia [1].

The fourth group of zoning factors brings together all other features that were not included in the groups above. According to the principle of floating properties, such features can be abundant depending on the combination of the feature of a given territory. An example of such features is the associative identity of the population of certain territories in opposition to the neighbours (Pskovians, Novgorodians, etc.)

The Kaliningrad cultural landscape district should be considered as a structure, whose development took place independently of the other cultural landscapes of the North-West Russia. Cultural landscapes of the district are a result of long-term development and fusion of the cultural heritage of the Balts (Prussians), Germans and later the Soviet settlers — predominantly Russians. A characteristic feature of the district is that today its rich historical cultural potential is hardly pronounced and is manifested in the form of ruins, separate buildings, and other relics. In the course of World War II, most cultural and historical objects that shaped the cultural landscape were destroyed, whereas the indigenous population was almost completely deported. Thus, the starting point of the formation of modern cultural landscapes of the Kaliningrad district should be pinpointed to the second half of the 20th century — when the territory became a Soviet territory in 1945.

The analysed cultural landscape systems require further research and more accurate identification of borders. In-depth research can be conducted in the course of zoning of the territory in question at the level of cultural landscape regions, cultural landscapes, and cultural landscape units (see table). This objective suggests a study into the landscape connections at the microlevel.

The structure of cultural landscape complexes of the North-West Russia is non-homogenous and poorly studied, thus the development of a zoning scheme contributes to the identification of the principles of formation and development of the region's cultural landscapes. The understanding of such principles is an important condition for the maintenance and sustainable management of the cultural landscape heritage of the territory.

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