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MUSLIM ARCHITECTURE OF THE TURKIC REPUBLICS: “DIPLOMACY OF ARCHITECTURE” AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

Abstract. A common problem in the development of the architecture of the post-Soviet and, above all, the Turkic republics is the ultimate narrowing of the scale of formal searches for Muslim architecture. One of the reasons for this was the “diplomacy of architecture” implemented by Turkey – the proposal and financing of ready-made standard projects, adapted to local conditions. The implementation of this practice is supported by the presence of standard projects, the experience and reputation of Turkish architectural ateliers, active commercial and missionary activities. The constant cloning of Turkish neo-Ottoman projects not only limits the possibilities of the architectural experiment of the contemporary mosque but also inhibits the development of national architectural education and visual self-identification.

Key words: architecture of a contemporary mosque, neo-Ottoman trend, “diplomacy of architecture”, visual self-identification, Turkic republics.

Introduction. Three decades of independence make it possible to speak not only about the unconditional achievements of national cultures, but also about the unity of the emerging problems. One of these problems, common not only for the Turkic republics but also for Eastern European countries (including Russia), is the extremely limited scale of architectural form searches in the field of Muslim religious architecture [3, c. 178–179].

The resumption of the construction of mosques after many years of declarative atheism solved several problems at once: 1) utilitarian (to provide believers with places of worship); 2) ideological (to demonstrate the state’s concern for meeting the spiritual needs of citizens); rhetorical (to use cult

architecture for the monumental expression of traditional values). Proceeding from the fact that the architecture of the mosque is not normative and, in principle, can be anything [2], the broadest possibilities of choice of samples were opened before officials, religious associations, Muslim communities and architects of independent countries. The Arab countries of North Africa and the Persian Gulf turned out to be in a similar situation in the middle of the XX century, realizing their own religious construction as a field for an international architectural experiment: recognition of the possibility of almost unlimited transformability of buildings of a contemporary mosque led to the desire of architects of religious buildings to use unusual constructive and compositional solutions, turn to new materials, experiment with forms, interior, light, etc. [6, c. 276–296, 351–370; 7, c. 46].

We have to admit that the Turkic republics have not yet taken advantage of the given opportunity of choice, and religious construction, with all its activity, took imitative forms.

The interpretation of the main material. In 1992, Turkish Prime Minister S. Demirel proposed to the government of Turkmenistan, which had proclaimed independence, to build a mosque in Ashgabat as a symbol of freedom. The Turkish construction and restoration company “Vakif İnşaat” was engaged in the implementation of the Azadi-jami project; completed by 1998 the building was named after Ertogrul, a Turkic commander, father of Osman. “The programmatically laid down and openly declared in this building the search for cognation between Turkmenistan and Turkey, spiritual and physical, is even more emphasized by the nature of the architecture oriented to Ottoman classical samples” [6, c. 320]. The project of the mosque was developed by H. Tayla, the author of the Ankara Kocatepe-jami, and this project was not a replica or historical reconstruction but a combination of Ottoman examples.

Despite the secondary nature of Azadi-jami architecture, the very fact of the appearance of the first Muslim religious building in the capital of the independent state was interpreted as a demonstration of a break with the Soviet past and the restoration of the priority of national values.

In relation to the initiative and participation of Turkey in the construction of the Ashgabat mosque, a special term has arisen in Turkish literature –(or “diplomacy of the mosque”), by analogy with “panda diplomacy”, a well-known Chinese tool for establishing cultural contacts [10, p. 201–208; 11, p. 143; 12, p. 60–65]. This is a gift that is difficult to refuse for both religious reasons (which would be regarded as an obstacle to the construction of a

mosque and meeting the needs of believers) and financial (building on your own will cost much more).

It is important that the Republic of Turkey was ready for the new opportunities. After the “incident of the Kocatepe mosque” – the replacement of the avant-garde project of V. Dalokai with the neo-Ottoman building of H. Tayla – the neo-Ottoman trend firmly prevailed in Turkish religious architecture [4, c. 385–387; 13, p. 6–16].

The architecture of the Turkish Republic, despite the constant interest in the latest Western trends, has used the conservative image of the “Great Ottoman mosque” precisely as a brand reminiscent of the “golden age”. The return to the theme of the mosque after World War II took the form of a modernized version of Sinan’s works (Sisli Mosque in Istanbul, 1949; Maltepe-jami in Ankara, 1959), and from that moment on any participation of the state in religious Muslim construction, not to mention direct government order, led to the appeal to the established brand. Any serious deviations from the familiar image towards architectural modernism are possible only in religious buildings erected in Turkey by private order [3, c. 157–160; 4].

In 1973, the Main Directorate of Waqfs, using the materials of the Kocatepe-jami project competitions, published drawings and design documentation for “typical” mosques, which were to be followed by local authorities; a year later, the Office of Religious Affairs selected for a special anniversary album of the most “representative” examples of mosque architecture for 50 years of the Republic, excluding from their number the monuments of the international style and the most “avant-garde” structures [9]. At competitions for mosque projects in large cities the choice of the jury unambiguously led to the emergence of modern versions of the classical Ottoman mosque, defiantly referring to traditional values and using the rhetorical connotations of the national visual brand (the Sabanci mosque in Adana, 1998–1999; Mimar Sinan-jami in Ataşehir, Istanbul, 2007–2012; Buyuk Camlica, Istanbul, 2012–2018).

Similar standard projects were used by Turkish architectural bureaus in the revitalization of Muslim construction at the turn of the XX–XXI centuries. One side of this process was the order of the Turkish diasporas both in Europe and Asia (for example, mosques in Pforzheim, Berlin, Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Tokyo, Kuala Lumpur, Sharjah, Beirut), the other was the construction of mosques in the territories of the former USSR.

In the first case, we should talk about “nostalgic” architecture, justified by both the high level of tradition and the ethnic and linguistic homogeneity of Turkish migrant communities. Neo-Ottoman mosques, often part of Turkish cultural centers, have proven to be markers of ethnicity and in-demand tools for identifying specific communities among other Muslim diasporas.

The use of Turkish projects in the Turkic republics was determined by at least two reasons. First, the “parade of sovereignties” caused an instant response from pan-Turkist and Islamist organizations, which saw broad prospects for missionary and cultural activities in Central Asia and the North Caucasus. Already in December 1991 under the Turkish Foreign Ministry, the Agency for Turkic Cooperation and Development was created, whose activities were aimed at “coordinating all types of activities at the state level in the name of the unity of the Turks”, developing and implementing a program of cooperation with the Turkic republics [1, c. 352]. The search for national identity and forms of its expression in the new states turned to the rich Turkish experience, meeting on the part of state, public and religious organizations both the willingness to share this experience and the well-tested mechanisms of national and Islamic education, enlightenment, and cultural exchange.

Secondly, the financial side turned out to be important: Turkish architectural bureaus had ready-made “standard” designs of mosques, easily adaptable to the requirements of a specific order and transferred to other cultural and geographical conditions, taking into account the possibility of using local materials, art crafts, decoration techniques, since the 1970s.

In the 1990s – 2000s the “Ottoman style” was actively used in the construction of new mosques in both traditionally Muslim regions and in cities of Russia and Ukraine where Muslim diasporas grew (St. Petersburg, the towns of the Urals, the Middle Volga region, Penza, Donetsk, Mariupol). The need for places of worship, the lack of trained architects working in the field of religious architecture, the traditional conservatism and unpretentiousness of the communities, as well as the already mentioned reasons – religious contacts, the willingness to provide assistance from the Turkish side and the presence of Turkish projects – led to the fact that many buildings were either recognizable versions of neo-Ottoman structures, or the result of the adaptation of the “Ottoman style” to local conditions, expressed in the construction of the next “cubes with a dome and a minaret” [3, c. 172]. This adaptation was justified by references to the Pan-Turkist (Turanist, Pan-Islamist) doctrine, political

ambitions (quick replacement of Soviet rhetoric with national, and sometimes even nationalist), but not least the relative cheapness of the transformation of the “standard” project in comparison with the original development and the opportunity to assign a significant part of the construction financing to sponsoring Turkish or international religious organizations.

Accuracy of adherence to prototypes, as well as adherence to the “style” were not among the priority tasks – any argumentation was enough to justify the open borrowing of forms, up to the choice of a Turkic eponym or toponym as the name of the mosque, and the usual rhetorical move is to declare the likeness of a new structure a well-known Ottoman monument (for example, the Istanbul Blue Mosque, despite the compositional differences, the insufficient number of minarets and clearly more modest sizes). It is difficult not to notice the “Turkish trace” in the mosques Shahidler in Baku (1996, the official residence of the religious attachés of the Turkish Embassy), Nur Astana (2002–2005, the construction was carried out by the Turkish company “Pasiner”) and Hazret Sultan in Nur-Sultan (2010–2012, the builder was the Turkish company “Sembol Insaat”), Gurbanguly-haji in Mary (2001–2009, the Turkish “Kilic Insaat” participated in the work), Borborduk (Central Mosque) in Bishkek (2012–2018, Turkish funding, the opening of the mosque took place in the presence of the President of Turkey). On the websites of some of these buildings the titles of “the largest mosque in Central Asia”, “the largest religious building in Central Asia”, etc. are disputed, but it is impossible to talk about their architectural – planning, constructive, compositional – originality.

Of course, behind every such project is the passionate work of architects; every mosque is the pride of the Ummah. However, already in the first Russian scientific analysis of the architecture of a contemporary mosque it was noted: “The absence of international forms of high architecture of the mosque and the absence of invitations for leading architects makes the architectural appearance of the mosque unworked, iconographically dull, as a rule repeating the style of the Turkish mosque. One gets the impression that for contemporary architecture in Russia there are no other architectural styles besides Turkish. When in many countries of the Middle East we see clear traces of this architectural style, there is nothing strange that the Ottoman Empire introduced its own architectural style. Russia was never conquered by Turkey, but nevertheless the Ottoman architectural style is firmly entrenched in the emerging mosques” [7, c. 46].

One of the largest projects of contemporary Muslim architecture was the “Heart of Chechnya” mosque in Grozny (2006–2008). It became the emblem of the capital of the North Caucasian republic, participated in the competition for the symbols of Russia, was depicted on coins. Despite a number of undeniable architectural finds its resemblance to the Istanbul Blue Mosque and the “classic Ottoman style” is emphasized in all descriptions and releases, and even the authorship of the project unfortunately is difficult to establish, but the participation of Turkish builders is indicated.

Buyuk Juma-jami in Simferopol (2016–?) was to become the “banner of the entire national and human rights movement of the Crimean Tatar people” and “the largest mosque in Eastern Europe”. The terms of the order of the Spiritual Directorate of Muslims of Crimea stipulated an orientation towards the “Ottoman type”; according to one of the authors of the approved project I. Yunusov, “we were obliged to look in the Ottoman mirror” [6, c. 190–193]. The choice of landmarks can be justified both by the historical ties (vassal, allied, dynastic) of the Crimean Khanate with the Ottoman Empire and by the activity of the Turkish patronage of Islamic organizations and religious construction in the post-Soviet Crimea [5, c. 36–45]; however, the very possibility of some kind of architectural experiment and creation of a work reflecting the diversity of modern interpretation of the forms of the mosque was sacrificed to the customer’s conservative idea of what the “visual symbol of the repatriation of the Crimean Tatars” should become. In the descriptions of the mosque under construction a certain “Crimean Tatar style” is delicately mentioned [14], but the questions are: how is it manifested? how exactly does it differ from the “Ottoman”? did it even exist? – remain rhetorical.

The contemporary Turkish mosque is developing along the path of creating a generalized image of Ottoman designs, combining elements of famous buildings and referring to all prototypes at once. However, in Turkey itself, the limiting narrowing of the scale of formal searches for religious architecture has been harshly criticized for a long time. Thus, researcher B. Batuman called the architectural image of the neo-Ottoman mosque “ideological simulacrum”, rightly seeing in it a means of visualizing state ideology, combining idealized ideas of national identity with Islamist values [8, p. 334, 340–342]. The use of the same architectural image in relation to the Turkic republics is only partly justified by ethnic and linguistic proximity, – thus, the political rhetoric embedded in the

appearance of a typical religious building is emasculated and, for these reasons, is artificially adapted to local conditions, and sometimes quite roughly.

Outside Turkey, references to the “traditional” image lose their relevance. The use of familiar architectural forms allows us to push the historical and political connotations into the background when implementing projects within the framework of “diplomacy of architecture,” especially against the background of the lack of our own experience of modern religious construction and when using pan-Turkic argumentation. Unfortunately, the contemporary mosque as an independent architectural topic has not yet become a separate subject of study in architectural universities: this topic is being replaced by copying existing monuments under the guise of following the national tradition or adapting borrowed projects.

The reckless spread of the image of the “Turkish mosque” looks like an analogy to the general “colonial style” that manifested itself at the end of the XIX century in the architecture of British India and South Africa, Dutch Indonesia, and Spanish South America. The consequences of “diplomacy of architecture” in the field of cult architecture are not only cloning of monotonous “pan-Islamist” samples, but also the inhibition of the development of national architectural education, restricting artistic taste and narrowing the possibilities of an interesting experiment that a truly contemporary mosque is quite capable of. We have to admit that the result of “diplomacy of architecture” in the case of “internationalization” of the neo-Ottoman trend turns into “gifts of the Danaans”, limiting the scale of an independent architectural experiment of the “gifted”, fettering creative initiative and displacing original national projects in various ways.

Conclusion. 30 years of independence is enough time to satisfy the needs of the community in places of worship at the expense of the same type of clone mosques and inventing supposedly new rhetoric invested in them. Obviously, after solving the utilitarian problem, there should be a need for the emergence of not borrowed and even more imposed forms of the mosque, but their own, modern, reflecting trends in understanding the possibilities of new materials, lighting, understanding the space of cult architecture. Many Arab countries have succeeded. Perhaps it is the turn of the Turkic republics.

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**TÜRK RESPUBLİKALARININ MÜSƏLMAN MEMARLIĞI:
“MEMARLIQ DIPLOMATİYASI” VƏ ONUN NƏTİCƏLƏRİ**

Postsovet və hər şeydən əvvəl türk respublikalarının memarlığının inkişafında ümumi problem müsəlman memarlığının formal axtarışlarının miqyasının son dərəcə daralmasıdır. Bunun səbəblərindən biri də Türkiyənin həyata keçirdiyi “memarlıq diplomatiyası” – yerli şəraitə uyğunlaşdırılmış hazır standart layihələrin təklifi və maliyyələşdirilməsi olub. Bu təcrübənin həyata keçirilməsi standart layihələrin mövcudluğu, türk memarlıq atelyelərinin təcrübəsi və nüfuzu, aktiv kommersiya və missioner fəaliyyəti ilə dəstəklənir. Türk neo-Osmanlı layihələrinin davamlı klonlaşdırılması təkcə müasir məscidin memarlıq eksperimentinin imkanlarını məhdudlaşdırmır, həm də milli memarlıq təhsilinin və vizual özünü identifikasiyanın inkişafına mane olur.

Açar sözlər: müasir məscid memarlığı, neo-osmanlı cərəyanı, “memarlıq diplomatiyası”, vizual özünüidentifikasiya, türk respublikaları.

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**МУСУЛЬМАНСКОЕ ЗОДЧЕСТВО ТЮРКСКИХ РЕСПУБЛИК:
«ДИПЛОМАТИЯ АРХИТЕКТУРЫ» И ЕЕ ПОСЛЕДСТВИЯ**

Общей проблемой развития архитектуры постсоветских и прежде всего тюркских республик является предельное сужение шкалы формальных поисков мусульманского зодчества. Одной из причин этого стала реализуемая Турцией «дипломатия архитектуры» – предложение и финансирование готовых типовых проектов, приспособляемых к местным условиям. Реализация этой практики подкреплена наличием типовых проектов, опытом и репутацией турецких архитектурных ателье, активной коммерческой и миссионерской деятельностью. Постоянное клонирование турецких нео-османских проектов не только ограничивает возможности архитектурного эксперимента современной мечети, но и тормозит развитие национального архитектурного образования и визуальную самоидентификацию.

Ключевые слова: архитектура современной мечети, нео-османская модель, «дипломатия архитектуры», визуальная самоидентификация, тюркские республики.

FIGURES



Fig. 1. Azadi-jami, Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, 1993–1998.



Fig. 2. Shahidler mosque, Baku, Azerbaijan, 1996.



Fig. 3. Nur Astana mosque, Nursultan, Kazakhstan, 2002–2005.



Fig. 4. Borborduk, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, 2012–2018.