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HISTORY OF ORTHODOXY AND ATTITUDE TO IT IN TURKESTAN

ТУРКИСТОНДА ПРАВОСЛАВЛИК ТАРИХИ ВА УНГА МУНОСАБАТ

ИСТОРИЯ ПРАВОСЛАВИЯ В ТУРКЕСТАНЕ И ОТНОШЕНИЕ К НЕМУ

Annotation. At the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries, representatives of the Christian religion began arriving in the territories of Turkestan conquered by Tsarist Russia. During this period, Orthodox churches were built and started functioning. The Orthodox were warmly received and supported by the local population, demonstrating a centuries-old tradition of tolerance. From 1865 to 1914, several churches were constructed and renovated in Turkestan.

Key words: Turkestan, church, orthodox, Semirechye, Central Asia, muslims

Аннотация. XIX аср охири – XX аср бошларида Чор Россияси томонидан босиб олинган Туркистон ҳудудига христиан дин вакиллари кириб кела бошлаган. Шу жумладан, православ черковлари қурилиб, фаолият олиб бора бошлаган. Православларни маҳаллий аҳоли қўп асрлардан бери сингдирилган бағрикенглик билан қабул қилган ва қўллаб-қувватлаган. 1965-1914 йилларда Туркистон ҳудудига бир нечта черковлар қад ростлаган, таъмирланган.

Ключевые слова: Туркистон, черков, православ, Семиречье, Ўрта Осиё, мусулмонлар

Аннотация. В конце XIX – начале XX века на завоеванные царской Россией территории Туркестана стали прибывать представители христианской религии. В этот период были построены и начали функционировать православные храмы. Православные христиане были тепло приняты и поддержаны местным населением,

демонстрировавшим многовековые традиции терпимости. В период с 1865 по 1914 год в Туркестане было построено и отремонтировано несколько церквей.

Ключевые слова: Туркестан, церковь, православные христиане, Семиречье, Средняя Азия, мусульмане.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, following the Russian conquest of Turkestan, the influx of settlers from Russia with their religion and customs intensified. From the onset of Russia's presence in Central Asia, there was notable interest in Christianity among the Muslim population.

Throughout the entire period of Russian presence in Turkestan, the number of Orthodox Christians was ten times less than that of other populations in the Semirechye and Trans-Caspian regions, and in the "indigenous" areas it was 33 times less in the Syrdarya region, 65 times less in Samarkand, and 60 times less in the Fergana region. Only in the Semirechye region did the Orthodox population reside relatively compactly, while in the others they were "scattered" over vast spaces inhabited by Muslims.

The first Orthodox parish in Central Asia was established in 1847 in Fort Alexandrovsky, on the eastern shore of the Caspian Sea. In 1850, the Kopal parish was opened in Semirechye, followed by the Sergiopol parish in 1853 and the Perov parish in 1854. During the 1850s and 1860s, as Central Asia was conquered, Orthodox parishes were established in other locations as well. By 1868, there were 30 such parishes.

The annexation of Central Asia led to the emergence and continuous increase of the Orthodox population in the region. By 1868, the Orthodox population in the Turkestan region exceeded 20,000, with three-quarters of them living in the Semirechye region. By the start of World War I, there were about 350,000 Orthodox Christians in Central Asia [1].

In 1872, there were 29 Orthodox churches in two regions of the Turkestan General-Governorate—14 in Semirechye and 15 in Syrdarya [5]. By early 1917, there were 174 churches in the five regions of the Turkestan diocese [12]. Depending on their subordination, Turkestan Orthodox churches were classified as "military" and "diocesan."

By early 1917, the Russian Orthodox Church had 78,000 religious institutions of all types,

including 1,025 monasteries [31]. Against this backdrop, there were about 180 Orthodox places of worship in the Turkestan region.

According to the last Turkestan bishop, Innocent, at the beginning of 1917 there were five monastic “communities” in Central Asia: the Issyk-Kul Holy Trinity Men’s Monastery, the Tashkent St. Nicholas Women’s Monastery, the Vernensky Iver-Saraphim Monastery, and the Ashgabat Kazan Women’s Community [30].

By 1914, there were already 92 church-parish schools in Central Asia [16].

In the 1880s, the senator-auditor of the Turkestan region, Gire, emphasized that Muslims showed genuine curiosity about Orthodox worship and sought to visit Orthodox churches [3].

Archpriest A. Zhelobovsky, who visited the Turkestan region in the early 20th century, noted that Muslims increasingly attended church services [29]. This interest among Muslims did not imply a “temptation” to convert to a new faith, but rather indicated that they did not harbor fanatical animosity towards Orthodoxy and its liturgy. “Curious” Muslims approached Orthodoxy and its worship practices with more tolerance than Old Believer Christians or sectarians.

Muslims made a significant contribution to the construction of Orthodox churches in Central Asia, with some of these churches being built directly by them. Thus, Muslims saw nothing wrong in strengthening the material foundation of another religion through their efforts.

Muslims participated in the construction of Orthodox churches in Central Asia. In 1890, the construction of an Orthodox church in the city of Auliye-Ata was entrusted to a Muslim named Karimboi Muratbaev, who replaced Orthodox contractors N. Chekmezov and T. Zatylnikov. Most of the builders and suppliers of construction materials were predominantly Muslims [26].

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Muslims built Orthodox churches in the village of Bogoroditskaya in the Tashkent district and in the village of Kornilovskaya in the Shymkent district. In 1896, the head of the Caspian region, A. N. Kuropatkin, ordered the inclusion of the name of Muslim Shokhbakhov in the “church commemoration,” recognizing his participation in the construction of a church in the village of Mikhailovskoye. [27] According to the “Turkestan Gazette,” local Muslims donated two carpets for

the opening of an Orthodox church in Ura-Tyube in 1894 [11].

In 1905, Tashkent Muslim merchants allocated 1,000 rubles for the construction of the city’s Orthodox cathedral [12]. In 1913, the well-known Turkestan merchant Saidkarim Saydazimbaev donated 500 rubles for this purpose [13]. In the early 1870s, the first bell for the “hospital” church in Turkestan was cast by a Muslim craftsman [7]. In 1883, 143 Bibles and 317 Gospels, translated into local languages, were sold to curious and interested Muslims; in 1884, 7 Bibles and 542 Gospels were sold, including a significant number of so-called “Parts” [19]. More and more immigrants showed great interest in Christian literature.

V. Nalivkin noted that Muslims regarded Orthodox Christians with condescension, considering them “pagans” and “polytheists” for acknowledging the “Trinity” [2]. After the arrival of Russia in Central Asia, Muslims consciously began to adhere to the Islamic doctrine regarding “Ahl al-Kitab” – “People of the Book” – in their attitudes toward Christians.

In 1868, the Orthodox population of Turkestan numbered more than 20,000 people [8]. On the eve of World War I, there were 350,000 Orthodox Christians living in Central Asia. Although most of them were located in the Semirechye region, they accounted for only 9.76% of the total population of 1.3 million people [1]. In the Caspian region, this figure was 9.3%, while in other regions it was 3.12% in Syr Darya, 1.6% in Samarkand, and 0.63% in Fergana [6].

In 1868, there were 30 Orthodox parishes in Turkestan, which were administratively divided into: Zailiysky, Lepsinsky, and Tashkent. They had a military character and were under the command of the Supreme Commander of the Army and Navy. The eastern regions of Turkestan belonged to the Tomsk diocese, while the western regions were under the Orenburg diocese. Initially, in the summer of 1868, Kolpakovsky, the military governor of the Semirechye district, discussed with Bishop Alexy of Tomsk and Semipalatinsk the creation of an independent Orthodox diocese in Central Asia. Kaufman wrote a letter to the Ober-Procurator of the Holy Synod D. Tolstoy, proposing to establish an independent Orthodox diocese for all of Turkestan, with its center in Verny rather than in Tashkent [20].

On May 4, 1871, the Tsar approved the State Council's proposal to establish an Orthodox diocese in Turkestan starting January 1, 1872. Alexander II appointed Sofonov as the first bishop of the Turkestan and Tashkent diocese. On May 4, 1902, Archbishop Arkady of Turkestan appealed to the Turkestan Governor-General Ivanov to raise funds for relocating the cathedral from Verny to Tashkent. Ivanov requested the Holy Synod to open "archiepiscopal" churches in Tashkent and "vicarial" churches in Verny [21].

Like other dioceses, the administration was under the religious consistory of Turkestan. The consistory oversaw the correspondence of the archbishops and monitored the construction and repair of churches and temples [4].

By the early 20th century, the Orthodox Church in Turkestan consisted of 8 protosynkellos, 101 priests, 1 protodeacon, 12 deacons, and 60 psalmists. Six Turkestan priests had been awarded the degree of candidate of the theological academy [18]. To elevate the clergy's standards in Turkestan, Archpriest A. A. Zhelobovsky proposed establishing a seminary in the country to train military priests familiar with "local" languages [22].

By early 1917, there were 180 Orthodox churches and 5 monasteries in Turkestan. The Orthodox churches in Central Asia mainly included churches and monasteries. In 1872, the Turkestan Governor-General oversaw 29 Orthodox churches, 14 of which were in the Semirechye district and 15 in the Syrdarya district [5].

By early 1917, the number of churches in the 5 provinces of the Turkestan diocese reached 174 [17]. These included the St. George Church in Samarkand, the Alexander Nevsky Church in New Margilan, the St. Nicholas Church in Chordzhu, and the Spaso-Preobrazhenskaya, Sergievskaya, and Iosifo-Georgievskaya churches in Tashkent.

In Turkestan, there were various types of churches, including mobile, "Cossack," residential, cemetery, railway, and others. When the first main Orthodox church was established – the Turkestan diocese – it served as the cathedral administrative institution (this was a small church in the Big Almaty stanitsa). In 1879, the construction of a real cathedral began in Verny, which took 5 years due to a lack of funds. The construction of the Protection Church of the Holy Virgin was completed in March 1884.

The largest Orthodox cathedral in Central Asia was the Spaso-Preobrazhensky Cathedral in Tashkent. It was built at the initiative of Kaufman in July 1871 in honor of Alexander Nevsky and Nicholas the Wonderworker. The construction lasted 17 years, and in 1881 the project was approved after changes were made due to funding issues. In 1882, Governor-General Chernyaev established a "Special Economic Committee" for the construction. The church was consecrated on July 11, 1888. A total of 213,545 rubles was spent on its construction [23].

In 1902, Governor-General Ivanov received permission from the Tsar to build the main Orthodox church in Central Asia, funded by a three-year imperial collection. The fundraising progressed very slowly, raising only a minimum of 122,503 rubles and 64 kopecks over 10 years, which was less than one-third of the amount needed for the cathedral [14].

It also took more than 20 years to collect funds for the construction of the Orthodox cathedral in Samarkand. At the beginning of the 20th century, there were 6 rural settlements in 60 Russian villages in the Syrdarya region. By 1911, there were only two rural Orthodox parishes in the entire Fergana region: the Spassky and the Rozhdestvensky. A similar situation existed in the Samarkand and Caspian regions.

In early 1891, following the Tsar's directive, the State Council resolved to allocate 256,000 rubles over 4 years for the construction of churches in Central Asia and 200 rubles per year for the maintenance of each church. In 1901, the government allocated 201,377 rubles and 50 kopecks for the construction of 7 churches in the Fergana region. In 1906, the Ministry of Defense allocated 37,000 rubles for the construction of a second church in Kokand. The Governor-General of Turkestan, D. I. Subotic, drew the Ministry of Defense's attention to the need for churches in Osh, where there was no Orthodox church, and in Samarkand, where there was only one small church [25].

In many parts of Central Asia, the Orthodox population began to build churches at their own expense. The oldest Iosifo-Georgievskaya Church in Tashkent was built with these funds [15].

The first Orthodox cemetery church in Central Asia was built with contributions from the Orthodox population. Churches were also established in

Chaldovar, Vysokoye, Mamaevka in the Shymkent district; Stepnoy, Nikolayevsk, Lugovoy in the Svyato-Otetsky district of the Syrdarya region; and Gavrilovsk, Teplo-Klyuchenka in the Semirechye region. Religious institutions were created in Chust and other cities of the Fergana region.

Most Orthodox religious institutions in Central Asia were financed by private individuals. In 1892, Russian merchant P. Medintseva bequeathed her entire estate of 783,266 rubles and 62.5 kopecks to the Orthodox Church, of which the Holy Synod allocated 7,000 rubles for the construction of churches in Turkestan. A church was built in Kokand in 1905 with funds from Moscow companies that established business connections with Central Asian partners [24].

Local craftsmen also made significant donations. Merchant of the first guild and trade adviser N. Ivanov built an Orthodox church in the village of Nikolsk near Tashkent in 1890 in memory of the clashes between Chernyaev's troops and the Cossacks. The church was built in the Russian-Byzantine style and cost Ivanov 55,000 rubles. Its diverse architectural designs could rival those of the churches in Rostov, Uglich, and Vladimir [10]. Merchant V. Kuznetsov of the first guild repeatedly invested in the construction and interior decoration of churches [32]. In 1891, businessman D. Zakho personally financed a very expensive bell for the Tashkent hospital church.

Due to a lack of funding, the appearance and interior of Orthodox churches were very simple. Over time, the church buildings became morally outdated. Some churches were closed by the government due to the state of emergency [9].

The end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century were marked by seismic activity in Turkestan, which caused significant damage to Orthodox religious buildings in the Semirechye region.

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