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### ON THE HISTORY OF MINARETS

#### *Continuation*

In this connection one should mention the important role played by renowned scholars, including those from abroad, who worked in our country at that time and tried to oppose the bureaucrats in the fight over the preservation of Uzbekistan's cultural heritage.

Special attention could be given to matters that concern the conservation of minarets dating to the epoch of Temurid Renaissance, which have lost their upper tiers.

This primarily concerns minarets at Gur-Emir mausoleum in Samarqand (early 15th c.) built adjacently to the square yard of the compound with four minarets at its corners, which included the madrasah of Mukhammed-Sultan (Amir Temur's grandson) and khanaka (late 14th c.).

These constituted an integrated ensemble of which only the mausoleum, the inner courtyard with the portal, and the first tiers of the two minaret have survived.

The original look of the latter can be reconstructed as they have structural similarity with three-tier minarets in cult structures in Herat.

One of them, at Gaukhar-Shad musalla-mosque has been completely preserved, and only two tiers survived of the one at Nigmatiye

4. The genesis of minarets has been studied by scholars in sufficient detail. It has been established that they have pre-Islamic origin and regional specificities, even within the boundaries of Uzbekistan.

As noted by the researchers, particularly by M. E. Masson, G. A. Pugachenkova, and L. Y. Mankovskaya, the design of Central Asian minarets is

based on the shape of fortress wall towers known since Bronze Age, which could have served as prototypes for the minarets with round shaft; memorial stambha posts in Buddhism (14); mile posts marking the distance and serving as spatial landmarks for nomadic tribes (1, 67); cylindrical or conic burj-towers with idols mounted on the top or with burning fire; and lighthouses.

According to Ernst Ditz, a major authority in Islamic architecture studies, by the time the cult necessitated the creation of a minaret to proclaim azan from it, tower-like structures in the shape of watchtowers, residential towers, and mausoleum-towers were already a well-known and common architectural form in Asia.

Besides, Ditz believed that competition with bell-towers in the Christian cult was an important factor for the evolution of minarets.

In his opinion, corner minarets have oriental origin where they, by the way, were borrowed from by classical architecture as early as in Hellenistic period (8, 21–22 ). Later on the scholar was inclined to think that the jaya-stambha victory posts near Kabul, which belong to the Buddhist period, were the forerunners of Islamic minarets (9, 53. Abb. 52 and 53).

Fergusson says that the renowned “ribbed” minaret near Delhi (early 13th century) was erected by Kutb-ed-din precisely as jaya-stambha, that is, as a symbol of conquest that is quite understandable and clear for the Indians.

Considering Syria to be the place where minaret first appeared in Islamic architecture, the majority of researchers note that minarets square in plane dominated there and in other places in the early centuries of Islam, attributing circular minarets to a later period (14, 3–4).

“There are certain indications that even before Islam Central Asia already had minaret-like cult structures. For instance, in Samarqand that was a place of pilgrimage for “infidels” (pagans) they installed a tower with an idol before which people prostrated as soon as they saw it from afar, and when they were leaving the city, they walked backwards until they could not see the idol any more” (11, 250; 14, 4).

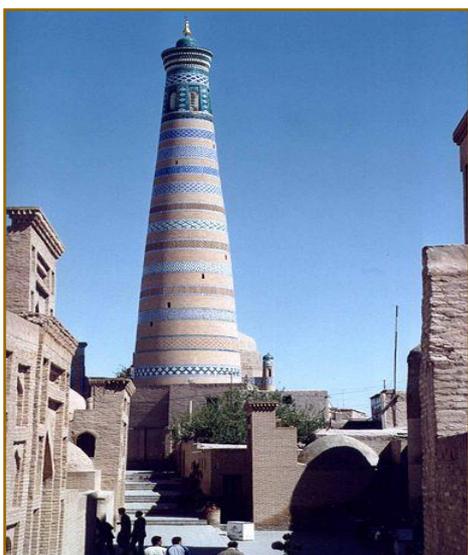
The high-rise form of the aforementioned structures was determined by utility functions, including:

- increased visibility of the lighthouse fire, watchtowers, atashkeds – temples with fire altars on staged platforms, and pedestals for idols;
- acoustic advantages (for bell-towers);
- special devices in zikkurat-observatories on staged pyramids.

Not less important was their ideological function: tall buildings were considered to symbolize the connection between Earth and Sky; the embodiment of the Tree of Life and other artefacts of cosmological mythology linked to pre-Islamic cults; as well as a symbol of the kings' power or a triumph monument.

One of the most ancient of these structures that survived on the territory of Old Termez ancient settlement site is the Zurmala Tower (2nd c. AD). It is a Buddhist stupa made of air brick in the shape of cylindrical monolith that was once crowned with a dome mounted on a rectangular stylobate.

The discovered fragments suggest that it was faced with baked red brick and stone blocks featuring scenes from Buddhist mythology in high relief.



The Islam-Khoja minaret

Among later date minarets, one that distinguishes itself particularly is a structure created by master Khudaibergen-Khoja – the Islam-Khoja minaret, one of the biggest in Central Asia: it is 44.6 m high, with base diameter of 9.5 m (early 20th c.).

It rises over the entire city of Khiva and can be seen from a very long distance. The structure looks particularly impressive from a close perspective: buildings situated at its base amplify its scale and grandeur.

The Islam-Khoja minaret is one of the finest structures in Khiva – the ultimate product of the long-lasting evolution of architectural structures of this kind.

Yet it is the other minaret that was supposed to become the biggest and grandest in the world: Kalta-Minor, which, even uncompleted, is striking in its daring concept and dimensions (diameter 14 m; height 26 m). Starting from the 14th–15th centuries minarets in Central Asia have become more numerous than it was necessitated by ritual functions.

They were built as a symbol of national or personal prestige, or as an essential aesthetic, rather than functional, component of a building.



The kalta-Minor minaret

The minaret verticals played a crucial role in determining the appearance of oriental cities (in Central Asia this is most apparent in the Khiva's Ichan-kala) and created a clear system of spatial landmarks facilitating visual perception of a city, pinpointing the sites of large mosques, madrasahs and complexes.

Minarets differ in terms of their positioning in space (single-standing, or built-in), crown shape (round shaft with a lantern on top, or multi-tier acicular), and the type of architectural segmentation of the shaft that can be vertical (gauffers), horizontal (figured brickwork, facing), smooth or grid-like. Let us consider these properties in view of selecting a substantial criterion for typology classification of Central Asian minarets.

Single-standing minarets were usually found at a mosque or a public cult complex. Minarets were positioned in a certain way relative to the main building: the corner position in front of a mosque (Chilburja, Bashana, Dahistana mosques, 9th-10th cc.; in Bukhara it is Kalan minaret, 12th c.; in Khiva it is Kalta-Minor by the Mukhammed-Aminkhan madrasah, 19th c.; same is true for the Islam-Khoja minaret, early 20th c., etc.), or at the centre in front of a mosque (the 19th century mosques of Samarra, Ibn Tulun in Cairo; the 12th c. Khasan mosque in Rabat, etc.); a single-standing minaret could be incorporated into a building that would be constructed later on (the 18th c. Juma; the 1841 complex of Seid Sheliker-bai in Khiva).



Magoki Attari Bukhara

Built-in minarets were constructed as an integral part of major public buildings, following a single design and ornamentation framework.

Minarets were included in a composition of Timur's giant peshtaks, rising at the corners of palace-type complexes, and in terms of functionality only those of the

first group sometimes performed a utilitarian function; yet even among them were some two-tier monuments that could not be used for azan due to their great height. Minarets that lost connection with their practical purpose and retained only their ideological and image function were different in shape from the "utilitarian" ones. The crown part of single-standing Central Asian minarets of pre-Mongolian and late feudal period contained a vaulted lantern – covered rotunda, where azanchi choir climbed to call the faithful to prayer.

Built-in minarets were either two- or three-tiered and very tall, and instead of spacious lanterns convenient for azan they terminated with a decorative element – stalactite cornice.

In seismic Central Asian environment none of the aforementioned monuments preserved the upper tiers; their shapes are reconstructed by analogy with the known 14th-16th century monuments of Iran and Afghanistan.

From time to time, in the history of Central Asian architecture there appeared a multi-tier type of minaret (mid 12th c., early 15th c., first half of the 17th c.).

Among the prototypes of Central Asian minarets one can single out the cult structures of Indian tribes – a sacred pillar with cubic base buried into the ground, an octagonal skirt and cylindrical upper portion crowned with a cupola (6, 431–432).

This shape is prevalent among single-tier minarets (one vivid example is the base of Balasagun minaret that was discovered during archaeological excavations of recent years).

The minarets of Uzgen and Jarkurgan had an explicit faceted skirt; it was there regardless of the ways in which the shaft surface was made – smooth in most cases – in single-standing minarets of Maverannahr, Fergana and Khorezm.

The segmentation of a minaret with decorative gauffers, similar to the tower-like mausoleums of Khorasan and India, was observed in one single monument – the Jarkurgan minaret, which should also be considered an exception in Central Asian architecture.



Minaret of mosque Bolo-Khauz  
Bukhara

Consistent typological characteristics of minaret within the boundaries of Central Asia include: the shape of the shaft (cylindrical, conical with an entasis); tiered structure (single-, two-, and three-tiered); terminating shape (lantern, sharafa). Base shape (the completeness of the range ‘cube-octagon-cylinder’) and status (single-standing or built-in) are “species characters”. Varieties can be observed in the development of the shaft’s tiers and individual proportions, ornamentation and decoration technique.

Typological arrays are created within one single group of a round-shafted minaret. Single-tier minarets with a pendent lantern are characteristic of Maverannahr and Fergana. These include: the 10th-12th cc. monuments of Rarz,

Fatmev, and Aini (7, 55–58); the 10th c. Buran tower; the early 10th c. minaret in Uzgen; Kalan minaret in Bukhara; the 1196-1197 minaret in Termez; the 1570–1571 Gau-Kushon in Bukhara (3, 51); one in Gijduvan dating to the second half of the 16th century; minarets in Vangazi, Chor-Bakr and Bahauddin complexes near Bukhara Jami and Mion-Khazret in Kokand; Kaftarlik in Margilan, and Kurgancha in Qarshi.



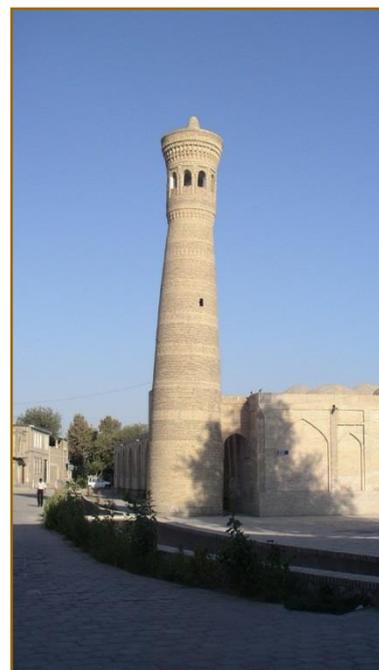
Lantern in the body of a conic shaft is observed in the minarets of Khorezm: one at Juma mosque, dating to the 18th century (3, 51); in the 1842 Seid-Sheliker-bai complex; Tura-Murad-tura, Abd-al-bobo, Chilla-Ovliya, Magomed Magarram, Bika-jan-bika, Tort-Shabaz, Palvankari, and Islam-Khoja in Khiva (13, 149, 173–180). Two- or three-tier single-standing minarets can be found in Jarkurgan and Kunya-Urgench; the built-in ones – in Bibi-Khanym mosque in Samarqand; at the corners of a square courtyard between madrasah and khanakah of Muhammed Sultan ensemble in front of Gur-Emir, and in Shir-Dor in Samarqand (12, 121–125).

That this group would, most probably, include the minarets of Gur-Emir mausoleum in Samarqand, as well as those of Bibi-Khanym mosque, which, apparently, have lost their upper tiers. They all have strong similarity to their contemporary three-tier structures of the 15th century musalla Gaukhar-Shad (1417/18) in Herat, one of which has been fully preserved.

Specific mentioning should be given to more ancient tower-like structures serving different purposes: watchtowers, security and postal installations; some were also used as columbaria with recesses in the walls, where pigeons nested.

Similar structures and ways of using them are known from the two thousand years old towers in mountain fortress of the Israeli King Herod on the shore of the Dead Sea.

Perhaps, a circular late medieval fortress tower in Kaptarkhona area near Termez could have something to do with this kind of structures.



As traditional architectural elements, minarets were also erected during the construction of madrasahs, which also had their inner mosques. There is an opinion expressed by G. A. Pugachenkova, which apparently proved erroneous in its concluding part, that “minarets are specific structures of the Muslim cult, built at a mosque and intended for calling the faithful to prayer, yet these are also introduced in the decoration of madrasah where there is no need in it”. However, as demonstrated by history, experience and the author’s personal observations, minarets at madrasahs were widely used to announce the start of training sessions, meal breaks, news and unplanned meetings.

Corner towers that resemble minarets in style used to adorn the fortified rabats – the first militarized Arab settlements, which were the forerunners of caravanserais (guesthouses), in the form of guldasta towers decorating entrance portals and citadel gates, fortified residences of rulers, their palaces and country mansions, garden fences, and traditional residential architecture. The Ark in Bukhara is the most remarkable manifestation of it. In this case minarets also performed defence functions and were used for visual observations.

There are many instances of using minaret shape as a decorative element in small terracotta hearths, which are connected with the hearth cult (927, p. 206-234). In conclusion we should note that tower-like structures such as minarets, which have become an important symbol of traditional architecture in oriental countries, and in Uzbekistan in particular, have different functionality and rather profound philosophic meaning.

Based on their name (minaret – “emanating light”) one can argue that not only the light of a lighthouse was meant here, but also spiritual light and the need to aspire for education and enlightenment for every faithful one.

This understanding of the meaning of high-rise structures is very relevant in all times and in all civilized societies.

We believe that the name of a TV tower in Malaysian capital – Minara – is also quite symbolic in this regard.

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