

The Kul Sharif Mosque[1][2] (Tatar: Cyrillic Кол Шәриф мәчете, Latin Qol Şärif mäçete; Russian: Мечеть Кул-Шариф, romanized: Mechet' Kul-Sharif) located in Kazan Kremlin, was reputed to be – at the time of its construction – one of the largest mosques in Russia, and in Europe outside of Istanbul.[3]

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History[edit]

Originally, the mosque was built in the Kazan Kremlin in the 16th century. It was named after Kul Sharif, who was a religious scholar who served there. Kul Sharif died with his numerous students while defending Kazan from Russian forces in 1552. It is believed that the building featured minarets, both in the form of cupolas and tents. Its design was traditional for Volga Bulgaria, although elements of early Renaissance and Ottoman architecture could have been used as well. In 1552, during the Siege of Kazan it was destroyed by Ivan the Terrible.[4]

Several countries contributed to the fund that was set up to rebuild Kul Sharif Mosque, namely Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates. Nowadays the mosque predominantly serves as a museum of Islam. At the same time during the major Muslim celebrations thousands of people gather there to pray.

The Kul Sharif complex was envisioned to be an important cornerstone of Kazan's architectural landscape. Besides the main mosque building it includes a library, publishing house and Imam's office.

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