Who sponsored the construction of the Ernazar elchi madrassa in Bukhara?

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Annotation: The article analyses the history of the construction of Ernazar elchi madrasa in Bukhara and by whom its construction was financed. The author has tried to clarify to what extent the rumors are precise and what their historical background is.

Key words: Ernazar Elchi, Ernazar Elchi madrassa, ambassador, empress, trade, hajj, Ekaterina II.

The Ernazar Elchi madrassa in Bukhara attracted most Russian tourists from the early 19th century. There is a specific reason of it. The information that the madrasa was built by the means of the Empress of Russian Empire Ekaterina II (1729-1796) influenced further increase of Russian tourists’ desire to see it. According to P.P. Shubinsky who mentioned about madrasa at the end of the XIX century, the two-storey building of the Ernazar elchi madrassah, where 80 students were studying, was covered by properties that were endowed as waqf.

Much is said in scientific literatures and historical works that the madrasa of Ernazar elchi in Bukhara was built by the Russian empress Ekaterina II in the eighteenth century and the history of its construction is associated with the name of the Bukhara diplomat, great merchant and ambassador, Mullah Ernazar Maksud ughli who visited Russia several times.

The issue that grew interest is to find the answer whether the madrassa was really constructed by the money of Ekaterina II or by the means of Ernazar Maqsud ughli.

First and foremost, it is necessary dwell on briefly the personality of Mullah Ernazar Maksud ughli. Because, it is important to make a definite conclusion whether or not he had sufficient investment for the construction of a madrasah. The following points prove that Mulla Ernazar Maqsud ughli had a sufficient amount of capital to build a madrasah. First, he had enough investment, in his words, he was a large-scale merchant who dealt with...
international trade for 35 years in Bukhara, Khiva, India, Khorasan and the cities of Russian Empire. Even, he was considered a rich person who was aware of directing investments for the orders of rulers and officials from various countries. This is proven by historical evidences that he bought Russian slaves in Central Asian cities by the order of the Russian government at his own expense, and bought precious stones on the emperor's own order. It is worth mentioning that according to Firdavs al-Iqbal, Muhammadamin inoq who was seeking refuge from Khivan oppression in Bukhara because of political instability borrowed 40,000 dinars from Mulla Ernazar [1]. This proves that Ernazar Maqsud ughli was a large investor who can even lend money to prominent officials.

   Secondly, as is known, the Muslim who had good material means sponsored the construction of sacred cemeteries, mosques, schools, khanaqas or donated property as waqf for the benefit of trying to get the reward in Middle Ages. As is written in scientific literatures, Mulla Ernazar Maqsud ughli was a well-educated, intelligent, entrepreneurial, and noble person in Bukhara [2]. This means that he was a high spiritual person who could spend his revenue on building his madrasah.

Then it is necessary to write about the Empress of Russia, Ekaterina II. It is not worth giving information about her financial abilities. The purpose of the study is to focus on some of the reasons that provided her contribution to madrassa construction.

The study depicts that there are two reasons why Ekaterina II sponsors the construction of the madrassa. Initially, the first reason is discussed. Ekaterina II thought that running policy based on religious tolerance was important for Russia's development. She pointed out that religious tolerance was the most important way to maintain social security of multinational people in the territory of the Empire during her trip to Volga.

It is known that from the 1730's, the Russian government took decisive action to influence other religions, including Muslims. Many mosques and other non-Christian worshipping buildings were destructed due to the policy of abusing Muslims and non-Christians to convert Christianity in Russian Empire [3]. Therefore, Muslim community pleaded Ekaterina II to allow the mosque to be rebuilt.

Empress Ekaterina II welcomed this request and personally gave permission to build new mosques throughout the territory of the Russian Empire. By this, Ekaterina II refused the policy of her predecessors, Anna Ioanova and Elizabeth Petrovna who oppressed, persecuted and forced Christianity into other religions. In Russia, Jome Mosque (Marjoniy Mosque) was also built in 1770 with investments
of immigrants. This evidence can be considered a fact that during her reign, Ekaterina II ran the policy defending the interests of non-Christians in the empire including Muslims in religious policy and allowed the construction of mosques. From this point of view, it is possible to say that she might also sponsor the construction of the Ernazar elchi madrasah in Bukhara.

The second reason is linked with Russian Empire's commercial relations with Central Asia. It is known that during that period, most of Russian Empire's foreign trade was operated with Central Asian Khanates. The main part of the trade between the two regions was run by the efforts of Central Asian merchants. In addition, the Russian-speaking Muslim population of Tartars played an important role in the development of trade relations. Realizing this, Ekaterina II drew great attention to the development of trade relations with Khiva and Bukhara through Astrakhan [4]. In 1762, the Company of Russian merchants' trade relations with Khiva was set up in Astrakhan for this purpose. This economic advantage led Ekaterina II to take into account the religious interests of Muslim traders in the territory of Russian Empire.

Almost all the scientific literatures on the construction of the Ernazar elchi madrasa provide information that it was built by the investment of Ekaterina II. However, the information contained therein was not derived from historical sources or documents, but from the riwayats that were wide spread amongst population. That is to say, of the two who sponsored the construction of the madrasa has not been scientifically revealed up to present.

In 1882, V.V. Krestovskiy who arrived in Bukhara from Tashkent Bukhara in the embassy mission, which was sent by the Turkestan General Governorship visited the madrasa [5]. While talking with a mudarris [teacher] of madrasa, he asked for what reason the Empress of Russian Empire Ekaterina II she sponsored the construction of the madrasa how she became the founder. The mudarris could not clearly answer to this question, and the told two riwayats that were spread among the public about the construction of the madrasa.

According to one of these riwayats, "...living in very poor economic condition, Ernazar eshon was intending to build a madrasa in Bukhara. He devoted his whole life for the realization of this noble goal and wrote a book for a long period, preached a sermon and finally gathered donation at a certain amount of money and began the construction. However, the money he collected was not enough to finish the construction. Then Empress Yekaterina II decided to support the poor scientist, hearing of the process by chance that Ernazar Eshan who was
striving for this good work but failed to realize it. The Empress sent a small jug of gold. This money was enough to finish the construction of a madrasah" [6].

In the second version, which Mudarris described to V. V. Krestovsky, the following points are stated:

"In Sha'bon in 1199 (1784), Ma'sūm emir [Emir Shohmurod is mentioned here], coming to the power of Bukhara, sent Ernazar to Peterburg as his ambassador to form an alliance with Russia against Iran. Empress Ekaterina donated money for the construction and maintenance of the madrasah to strengthen commercial relations with Bukhara and by this to create a great opportunity for Russian trade, knowing that the action would be in favor of divine emir" [7].

The author concluded that none of these narratives had enough evidence to support the truth, and in any case, Empress Ekaterina II was involved in the construction of this madrassa.

The article that was published by Yakovlev in 1824, who studied the personality of Mulla Ernazar Maksud ughli shows that the author stated with no hesitation the role of the Empress in the construction of the madrassa [8]. The there was written information that Mullah Ernazar Maqsud ughli who had visited Empress Ekaterina II’s palace as an ambassador of Bukhara was presented valuable gifts by the Empress before returning homeland, as well as, a large amount of money for the construction of a madrassa in Bukhara.

At the end of the XIX century, a Russian historian P. P. Shubinsky also mentioned the history of the madrasa’s construction. He stated the information spread by people about the construction of the madrassa in his work. The author states that "being generous, to reward services to the Russian government", Mulla Ernazar Maksud ughli who visited Russian Empire as a Bukharan ambassador was donated some amount of money to construct a madrasa in Bukhara[9].

There are different kinds of approaches towards the amount of money invested in the construction of the madrasa in historical sources. For example, Yakovlev showed it in his article published in 1824 to be 4,000 rubles of silver while in P. P. In Shubinsky's article, it is mentioned "a small jug of gold” in the equivalent of 40,000 rubles [10]. Basing on the results of analyses in can be said that the reason why the amount of money or investment given by Ekaterina II is different in literatures is connected with narrations that were spread among population in that period.

However, P.P. Shubinskiyning concluded that the information that was spread among people did not correspond historical reality, that is, Ekaterina II had no connection with the construction of the madrasa. Because he made his
conclusion basing on documents about Ernazar Maqsud ughli’s ambassadorship which are stored in the Archive of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Empire. P.P. Shubinsky made this conclusion that Ernazar Maqsud's son has visited the palace of Ekaterina II as an ambassador on solving entirely different issues. Reflecting thoroughly on the activities of Ernazar Maqsud ughli ambassadorship, the researcher did not mention anything about the construction of the madrasa in his research.

In the studies which were conducted in recent years, one can meet information in different character about the role of Ekaterina II in the construction of Ernazar elchi madrasah. For example, H. Ghulomov, D.A. Vasilev and A. Jumanazar express an opinion that the Empress invested a large amount of funds for the construction the madrasa [11]. They all based on former studies and scientific literatures to come to this conclusion.

It can be said that the madrasa was built on the personal funds of Ernazar Maksud ughli. However, there is also some historical information that led to the spread of rumors among people that Ekaterina II spent money on the construction of the madrasa. Although the analysis of the collection of documents in the Archives of the Foreign Policy of Russian Empire about both diplomatic visits of Ernazar Maksud ughli does not provide any details about the funds allocated by the Empress for the construction of a madrasa, some of them point to the Empress’s somehow involvement in the work. That is, in the process of their analysis, there have been found out some sources related closely to this issue. For instance, it is written in one of the documents stored in the archive, in 1762 Ernazar Maksud ughli asked the Russian Empress to allocate funds for the construction of a mosque in Orenburg for Muslims of Bukhara, who came to there on business or in hajj, but not in Bukhara [12]. (no information has been found whether funding was provided for it or a mosque was built in Orenburg).

In addition, the historical data in these archives show that the son of Mullah Ernazar Maksud ughli was frequently in the reception of the Emperors Russian Empire on commercial affairs and as an official ambassador. In, on the basis of commercial affairs, he was in the palace of Elizabeth Petrovna (1762-1761), he served as official ambassador on behalf of Kazakh Khan Nuralikhon in the reception of Peter III, on behalf of Bukhara Khan in 1774-1775 for the first time and in 1779-1780 for the second time he was in the reception of Ekaterina II (1762-1796). According to a document registered by the Chancellery of the Ministry of Affairs of Russian Empire at on January 6, 1762 that is stored in the Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire, it is written that from 1745, he
visited Russian Empire several times for many years on merchandizing and by order of the emperor he was in Bukhara, India, Khorasan and in other dangerous places, “not caring for his life and resources” to distribute their orders[13]. That is, for almost 35 years almost until his death, he actively cooperated with Russian emperors, especially with Ekaterina II on commercial affairs.

Sometimes, there was observed some cases that Ernazar Maksud ughli could not fully return the his own money that was spent on buying the orders of Ekaterina II. On order to have a clear impression on this, there has been formed a table on the basis of documents kept at the Archive of Foreign Policy of Russia. There have been included only some of the information stated in the appeals of Ernazar Maqsud ughli, to pay his money from the state treasury.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time of expenditure</th>
<th>Investment by Ernazar Maqsud ughli</th>
<th>Why it was spent or lost</th>
<th>The amount of money given to him by the Empress</th>
<th>Retained funds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In 1763</td>
<td>28 300 rubles of commercial goods</td>
<td>They were robbed by pirates on the way</td>
<td>26 thousand rubles (1765)</td>
<td>23 thousand rubles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fron 1774 to 1775</td>
<td>10050 rubles + expenses for their food and travel expenses (the amount has not been determined)</td>
<td>21 Russian slaves from Central Asia were bought to take them to Russia</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>10 050 rubles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11 thousand</td>
<td>for the purchase of lapis lazuli</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>11 thousand</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
rubles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1775</td>
<td>80 thousand</td>
<td>8 thousand rubles for 14 horses; 40 thousand rubles for 117 pood lapis lazuli; 8,000 700 rubles for various goods; Costs of 60 people accompanying during travel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In particular, the data contained in the tables were derived from the statement of Ambassador Ernazar Maksud ughli to Ekaterine II, in June 1780 with a request for reimbursement [14].

However, it should not be inferred that Ekaterina II did not pay her debt to Ernazar Maksud ughli. According to the information that has been found, he returned money in the amount of 26,000 in 1765 rubles that is indicated in the table. Besides, on December 19, 1776 Catherine II provided an exemption with no customs tariffs for years in the sum of 10000 rubles to Ernazar Maksud ughli to deal with trading between Manghyshlak and Astrakhan across the Caspian Sea to develop trade. Even the Empress gave him a ship "Kazenny" for trade in the Caspian [15]. From this it can be concluded that possibly, Ekaterina II intended to return a part of money to Ernazar Maksud ughli giving him exemptions for five years without paying customs tariffs. There appears an idea that gifting a boat to Ernazar Maksud ughli, she intended to develop trade through the Caspian Sea and thereby to increase revenue for the state treasury. Ernazar Maksud ughli needed cash to expand his business.

There is no information about if Ernazar Maksud ughli used this ship. However, three years later, in 1779, when the son of Ernazar Maksud came to Russia again as an ambassador the second time, his goods in the amount of 24,953 rubles 27 kopecks were not brought on their ships, but in a caravan through Orenburg. There appears an idea that he probably carried his goods by both caravans and on his ship, depending on the relations between Russian Empire and the Emirate of Bukhara. According to historical data, the ships traveling between
Astrakhan and Mangyshlak needed restoration or reconstruction holding on return at that time[16]. Perhaps Ernazar Maksud ughli found no shipwreck engineer or money to fix his ship when he organized a trip from and to Astrakhan on his boat.

One of the commercial operations which is mentioned below is that the Ernazar Maksud ughli did in collaboration with Ekaterina II, refers to the issue being researched. In 1772, the Russian government ordered Ernazar Maksud ughli to return several Russian-speaking slaves who were in Central Asian cities. In 1775, he emancipated 21 slaves from Khiva and Bukhara, spending 10 500 rubles at his own expense, and covered all their travel expenses at his own expense and brought them to Russia [17]. Due to the order of Ekaterina II, he also purchased precious stones that cost 11000 rubles spending at his own expense. According to archival documents, this money and expenses were not returned to Ernazar Maksud ughli until the end of his life.

In short, Ernazar Maqsud's son repeatedly appealed to Ekaterina II in order to recover his debt of 17 thousand 50 rubles from 1774-1775 until December 1780 or the end of his life. According to the archival documents, the ambassador wrote that he had lived in the capital for two years in order to return his debt of 1763, which was mentioned in the table above. He had to his brother Avazberdi Maksud ughli in St. Petersburg in 1775 to return his money. However, it is clear from historical sources that this was not successful. According to the archival documents, Ernazar Maqsud sent a letter to Ekaterina a month or two before his death, when he was on his way home, asking him to return the debt. He also stated that he had left a note of confidence in the name of Ivan Petrovich to receive the money from him [18]. This means that Ernazar Maqsud ughli could not return his money from Ekaterina until the end of his life.

Analyzing historic data, the following conclusion has been done. Ernazar Maksud ughli had the madrasa built for his money recovered from Ekaterina II. Therefore rumors circulated among the population that the madrasah was built by expense or donation of Ekaterina II. This is unknown to us.

However, according to conclusions derived, Ernazar Elchi Madrasa was built at the own expenses of Mullah Ernazar Maksud ughli. The following points became the reason to conclude. Firstly, the amount of money spent by Ernazar Maksud ughli “for the construction of the madrasah” in the amount of 40000 rubles was paid him by Empress Ekaterina II for lazuli lapis stones brought for her in 1775 [19]. Ernazar Maksud ughli asked to return this amount together with other debts from Ekaterina II prior to his departure to Mecca in June 1780 (when he was ambassador) in Moscow.
Secondly, as described above, Mullah Ernazar did not receive any debts from Ekaterina II (21 thousand 50 rubles) until his death. This is confirmed by the historical information dated back to December 1780 [20]. According to it, ambassador Ernazar Maksud ughli who was heading from the capital of Russia to Mecca, left a letter of credence to his authorized person about the return of 21,550 rubles from Empress Ekaterina II on December 18, 1780. Short after, Ernazar himself died in Konya (Turkey) on his way to Mecca for pilgrimage in early 1781. That is, Ekaterina II did not repay a part of his debts for Ernazar Maksud ughli during his lifetime. Therefore, it is hard to believe that the Empress’s sponsorship in large sums for the construction of the madrasa without returning the debt to Ernazar Maksud ughli arge. Thus, the information given in the works of Yakovlev and A. Djumanazarova that Ernazar elchi returned his homeland with money donated by Ekaterina II and built a madrasa is wrong to believe.

Thirdly, if it is assumed that the funds spent on the construction of the madrasah were donated by Ekaterina II for the services of Ambassador Ernazar. According to this, it is possible to say that the madrasa was built by Mulla Ernazar Maksud ughli at his own expense. Because the money donated to someone belongs only to the person who has the right to dispose of it at his own discretion.

There is another aspect which should not be ignored it. The dates of the madrasa’s construction are also varied in literature. For example, in Abdusattor Jumanazar's work it is said that the time of its construction was approximately in 1794-1795 [21]. However, Victor Krestovsky hearing from a madrassa teacher, wrote that it had been operating since 1784.

Interestingly, Mullah Ernazar died in 1781. If the sources are looked up, it is proven that the madrasah was built after the death of Ernazar Maksud ughli. If so, it becomes clear that Ekaterina II returned her debt after his death. This means that after the death of Ernazar Maksud ughli, his money could be delivered to Bukhara in two ways. The first way is that the son of Ernazar Maksud ughli was with his son Mohammed Sharif, when he was travelling from Russian Empire to Mecca. After the death of his father, he went to Mecca and returned to Moscow in 1783, when he had completed his hajj [22]. Mohammed Sharif was given a recommendation on behalf of the Ottoman State Minister in Istanbul. It was written to the Russian government to help Mohammed Sharif’s return to his homeland. It shows that the son of Ernazar elchi Mohammed Sharif returned to Bukhara through Russia. Perhaps, he had specially returned to Moscow from the Hajj in order to return his father’s money from Ekaterina II. This may be assumed that he took the money to Bukhara and built the madrasah which was named after his father. Or the
money was spent on completing the madrasa whose construction had been started by his father. There has not been found exact information about this up to present.

The second is that it can be assumed that Ernazar Maksud ughli’s money was brought to Bukhara by his brother Avazberdi Maqsud ughli and it was spent on building the madrasa. According to the archival documents, he went to Mecca after his brother accompanying with 21 friends from Moscow in June 1781, and returned to St. Petersburg in November 1782[23].

In summary, the financial relationship between Ekaterina II and Ernazar Maksud ughli caused many rumors among population. The madrasa was built by Ernazar Maksud ughli, even though the money left to Ekaterina II was paid or not, regardless of who and when they were returned if it was returned, of even the madrasa was built by the money donated by Ekaterina II.

According to the documents dated 1884 which are stored at Central State Archive of the Republic of Uzbekistan., there is information that the government of the Empire of Russia had allocated for 7000 poluiimperial gold coins for the supplies of Ernazar elchi madrasa. However, there was no comment on why they had allocated funds for madrassa [24]. This information also encourages a different approach about the construction of the madrasah. Therefore, there appeared an assumption that the investment for the reconstruction of the madrasa was the money which Ekaterina II had had to return Ernazar Maksud ughi and thus it was brought to Bukhara later.

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