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SCIENCE, ENLIGHTENMENT AND ARCHITECTURAL ACTIVITY DURING THE PERIOD OF NADIR MUHAMMAD KHAN

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Abstract

The article studies science, enlightenment and architectural activities in the Bukhara Khanate during the reign of Ashtarkhani Nadir Muhammad Khan (1642–1645). The ruler supported scholars and poets in the palace, continued the activities of some madrasas, and also sponsored the construction of religious and educational structures - madrasas, chorbags, and a dome over the tomb of Hazrat Ali. At the same time, Nadir Muhammad Khan's attitude to science during a period of political instability and his role in the Naqshbandi order are analyzed.

Keywords. Nadir Muhammad Khan; Ashtarkhanis; Bukhara Khanate; science; enlightenment; architecture; patronage; Naqshbandi order.

The Ashtar Khanate era is one of the important stages of political, educational and cultural development in the history of the Bukhara Khanate. During this period, the attitude of the rulers to science and religious and educational activities, their support for scholars and poets at the palace, as well as the construction of architectural monuments played an important role in the formation of the country's cultural life. The reign of Nadir Muhammad Khan (1642–1645) is distinguished by its own unique features. Although he was faced with managing power in a politically complex and unstable period, he provided limited but significant patronage to science and education.



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During the reign of Nadir Muhammad Khan, scholars and poets worked in the palace, some madrasas continued to operate, and religious and educational institutions, gardens, and domes were built in Balkh and Bukhara over the tomb of Hazrat Ali. At the same time, the ruler's role in the Naqshbandi order and his policy of agreement with the religious and clerical layer had a positive impact on the activities of scholars.

This article analyzes the scientific, educational, and architectural activities of Nadir Muhammad Khan, as well as the works and structures created under his patronage. It also examines the impact of political instability and internal struggles on scientific and educational life.

During the reign of Nadir Muhammad Khan (son of Dinmuhammad Khan, brother of Boqi Muhammad Bakhodir Khan), a representative of the Ashtar Khan dynasty, the cultural, scientific and architectural life of the Bukhara Khanate actively developed. In the work *Tazkirat ush-shuaro* by Mutribiy Samarkandi, Nadir Muhammad Khan is described as a ruler with a sharp mind, a passionate and noble nature from his youth. He turned his palace into gatherings of scholars and virtues, aroused interest in science and literature, and constantly communicated with poets and people of enlightenment[1]. Thus, the personal characteristics of Nadir Muhammad Khan allowed him to act as a patron of cultural and scientific life.

The reign of Nadir Muhammad Khan, who ruled the Bukhara Khanate in 1642–1645, has been assessed differently. While Indian historians, particularly those critical of him for the failure of the Balkh Wars waged by the Baburs, describe him as a generous and magnanimous ruler. Although the assessment of the Balkh historian Muhammad Yusuf Munshi is not impartial, Nadir Muhammad Khan was valued as a skilled negotiator who sought to eliminate abuses in the



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country.[2] These aspects shaped the ruler's attitude towards science and cultural life during a period of political instability.

Nadir Muhammad Khan's relationship with science can be seen in two ways. On the one hand, he attracted scholars and poets to the palace, recognized and encouraged them; on the other hand, political instability, internal struggles and struggles for power did not give science much room. Especially in the period between his removal from the throne in 1645 and his return to power in 1647, palace life was completely disrupted, which created an unfavorable environment for scholars and scientists.

At the same time, Nadir Muhammad Khan, taking into account the political and religious influence of the Naqshbandi order, conducted his policy in agreement with the clergy. This protected some scholars, but did not cover all groups. During the reign of Nadir Muhammad Khan, some madrasas continued to operate, and Sufi scholars and poets received financial support from the palace.

One of the most important works created under the patronage of Nadir Muhammad Khan is Bahr-ul-asrar ("Sea of Secrets"), which was written in Persian between 1645 and 1651 at the behest of Nadir Muhammad Khan.[3] Muhammad ibn Abulqasim of Balkh also presented his work on the universe and geography entitled Ajoyib-ut-tabaqat to Nadir Muhammad Khan. The work provides valuable information about Balkh and its neighboring regions, the cities of Transoxiana, including Fergana. The historian Mahmud ibn Wali, who lived and worked during this period, also created the work Bahru-l-asrar fi manoqibi-l-akhyor, which collected historical, geographical and philosophical information under the patronage of Nadir Muhammad Khan. Unfortunately, only one volume of this work has survived, but it contains information up to the reign of Nadir Muhammad Khan.[4]



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As for architectural activities, Nadir Muhammad Khan built a new madrasa in Balkh province, created gardens around it, and built a dome over the tomb of Hazrat Ali[5]. He rebuilt the residential part of the Balkh Arch and built new buildings, which became a religious and cultural center along with the palace.[6] Four educational rooms, a mosque, and a large library were built in the courtyard of the madrasa, and the ruler donated 2,000 volumes from his personal library. These aspects indicate that Nadir Muhammad Khan patronized science and culture, as well as his desire to develop socio-cultural life.[7]

Nadir Muhammad Khan also enriched the religious and educational heritage by building mosques in Bukhara, buildings around the Balkh Arch, and domes over the tomb of Hazrati Ali. The works created under his patronage, the scientific and cultural environment in the palace, architectural monuments, and religious structures show the era of Nadir Muhammad Khan as an important period of cultural and scientific development in the history of the Ashtar Khans. At the same time, the fact that his activities took place against the backdrop of political instability and internal struggles allows us to further appreciate Nadir Muhammad Khan's pursuit of scientific and cultural development.

In conclusion, the activities of Nadir Muhammad Khan in the fields of science, enlightenment, and architecture played an important role during the Ashtar Khanate. He supported scientific and educational activities in agreement with the religious and clerical layer, encouraged the activities of scholars and poets at the palace, and enriched the country's cultural heritage through the buildings he built and the works he created.



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