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SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE ROLE OF MIGRATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SCIENCE AND CULTURE DURING THE PERIOD OF AMIR TEMUR AND THE TIMURIDS

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Abstract

This article analyzes migration as one of the key factors that stimulated the development of science and culture during the period of Amir Temur and the Timurid dynasty. It also explores certain characteristics of cultural migration. Furthermore, the study reflects on scholars who migrated and carried out intellectual and creative activities in cities such as Samarkand and Herat as a result of migration policies.

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It is widely recognized that the Second Renaissance in the history of Central Asia emerged during the era of Amir Temur and the Timurid dynasty. Among the factors contributing to the emergence and development of this cultural and intellectual revival, alongside political and economic stability, various forms of migration that occurred during this period should be emphasized as a significant determinant.

During the reign of Amir Temur, migration policy played a crucial role in laying the foundations of this Renaissance. It was customary for Amir Temur, whenever he undertook military campaigns, to first identify scholars and intellectuals and send them to Samarkand. Following military expeditions, he would deliberately search for such individuals, assess their expertise in their respective fields, and subsequently relocate them. In Samarkand, favorable conditions were established for their scholarly and professional activities, which in turn facilitated not only forced but also voluntary migration.

These relocations included highly skilled professionals such as artisans, architects, decorators, scholars of various disciplines, physicians, stone carvers, carpenters, and other masters of specialized crafts who possessed a high level of expertise in their respective domains.

As a result of these processes, the fields that experienced significant development can be conditionally categorized into architecture and construction, arts and music, as well as various branches of science.

Particularly among these fields, architecture and construction experienced significant advancement. Highly skilled specialists brought to Samarkand from the Near East, India, and other regions collaborated with local craftsmen to create buildings, structures, and gardens in a distinctive and innovative style. These architectural works and gardens played a crucial role in shaping Samarkand as a major cultural center.

It is also important to emphasize the relatively stable environment in Transoxiana during this period, as well as the established practice of Amir Temur to commission monumental constructions to commemorate significant events. Prominent architectural masterpieces such as the Shah-i-Zinda complex, the Bibi-Khanym Mosque (Friday Mosque), and the Gur-e-Amir were constructed through the synthesis of diverse architectural traditions. Likewise, planned settlements surrounding Samarkand—such as Misr, Damascus, Baghdad, and Sultaniya—reflect this collaborative and integrative approach to urban development.

The gardens commissioned by Amir Temur were also predominantly constructed by skilled craftsmen who had been relocated from other regions. According to the work *Zafarnama* by Sharaf ad-Din Ali Yazdi, even during prolonged military campaigns lasting three and five years, Amir Temur organized the relocation of numerous artisans from Azerbaijan and Persia. For instance, in 1386, after imposing tribute on Tabriz, he ordered that renowned craftsmen of the city be transferred to Samarkand along with their households¹.

Similarly, following the 1393 campaign in Persia and the defeat of Shah Mansur, the sons of Shah Shuja—Sultan Shibli and Zayn al-Abidin—were sent to Samarkand along with groups of skilled craftsmen. As noted in *Zafarnama*, “skilled artisans from the province of Persia were relocated to Samarkand together with their families.”² Subsequently, after returning from these campaigns, Amir Temur commissioned the construction of gardens such as Bagh-i Shimal and Bagh-i Dilkusha in the vicinity of Samarkand. The chronicle records that master craftsmen from Iraq, Persia, Baghdad, and Shiraz were specifically employed in the construction of these gardens.

In 1398, following the capture of Delhi by the forces of Amir Temur, thousands of people were deported and sent to Samarkand for construction purposes within the empire. *Zafarnama* provides the following account: a large number of Indian artisans were captured and distributed among princes and commanders, while skilled stonecutters were reserved for state projects. It is noted that Amir Temur intended to construct a grand congregational mosque in Samarkand; consequently, orders were issued to retain all Indian stone masons specifically for this purpose. Upon his return from the campaign, these artisans were employed in the construction of the Friday Mosque in Samarkand³.

¹ Sharafuddin Ali Yazdiy. *Zafarnoma*. T.: Sharq, 1997. 107 b

² Sharafuddin Ali Yazdiy. *Zafarnoma*. T.: Sharq, 1997. 155 b

³ Махмудов, У. (2025). Основные причины и цели миграционной политики Амира Темура (На основе произведения

Another important primary source is the work *Aja'ib al-Maqdur fi Tarikh Taymur* by Ibn Arabshah, in which, in several instances, the names of individual craftsmen are explicitly mentioned. This significantly strengthens and, to a certain extent, corroborates the aforementioned arguments. For example, among the jewelers, the names of al-Hajj Ali Shirazi and al-Hajj Muhammad Hafiz Shirazi are recorded; among armorers, Shihab al-Din Ahmad; among painters and decorators, Abd al-Hayy al-Baghdadi, described as a highly skilled master; and in horticulture, Shihab al-Din Ahmad al-Zardkashi is mentioned⁴.

In addition, the text refers to prominent scholars in philosophy, theology (*kalam*), and logic, including Sa'd al-Din al-Taftazani and Sayyid Sharif al-Jurjani. It also mentions the distinguished Qur'anic scholar and specialist in recitation, Ibn al-Jazari, as well as the renowned hadith scholar and expert in chess, Ala al-Din al-Tabrizi. Furthermore, the source records that celebrated physicians such as Jamal al-Din and Sulayman, along with the painter Abd al-Hayy, were brought from Damascus.

The relocation of such talented individuals to Transoxiana during the reign of Amir Temur contributed not only to the advancement of their respective fields but also to the education of students who arrived voluntarily from various regions. As a result, these specialists later played a decisive role in achieving significant advancements in science, culture, art, and architecture during the Timurid period.

For instance, Sayyid Sharif al-Jurjani rose in Samarkand to the position of leading scholar of the entire region of Transoxiana. In addition to his teaching activities, he authored numerous treatises in Arabic and Persian on *kalam*, philosophy, logic, and grammar, including works such as *al-Usul al-Mantiqiyya*, *Tarjuman al-Qur'an*, and *Fann al-Mu'amma wa Usulihi wa Tasarifihi bi al-Farsiyya* ("The Science of Riddles and Its Principles and Forms in Persian"). He also composed commentaries on major works in jurisprudence and philosophy by scholars such as al-Sakkaki, al-Zamakhshari, Qutb al-Din al-Razi, and al-Taftazani. In addition to his scholarly pursuits, Jurjani was an admirer of poetry and composed refined ghazals. After the death of Amir Temur, he returned to Shiraz, where he later passed away.

The source also reports that Amir Temur brought the eminent musicologist Khwaja Abd al-Qadir from Baghdad. According to the account, orders were given to transfer the family members of Sultan Ahmad and skilled artisans from Baghdad to Samarkand, including Khwaja Abd al-Qadir, who was described as an unparalleled authority in the science of music. He subsequently became the chief court musician of Amir Temur.

Despite having been sentenced to death twice by Amir Temur due to an unfortunate incident involving Miranshah, Khwaja Abd al-Qadir survived both occasions—first by escaping in the guise of a dervish, and later through his exceptional recitation of the Qur'an, which moved the ruler to grant him clemency. After the death of Amir Temur, he initially served Khalil Sultan and later Shah Rukh.

When discussing the cultural and scientific flourishing of the Timurid period, it is essential to emphasize the significant role played by the Timurid princes and rulers who governed Transoxiana and Khurasan, particularly Mirzo Ulugbek and Husayn Bayqara.

While during the reign of Amir Temur the development of science and culture was largely driven by forced migration, in the Timurid period—especially under the aforementioned rulers—the significance of cultural migration increased substantially. Representatives of science and culture began to migrate voluntarily to major centers such as Samarkand, Bukhara, and Herat.

This transformation was primarily обусловed by the favorable conditions created by these rulers for the advancement of science and culture, as well as their active patronage of scholars. Moreover, the scholarly environment was further strengthened by the fact that scholars brought to the region during the time of Amir Temur played a crucial role in educating both local students and those who later arrived in Samarkand and Herat.

Шарафуддина Али Язди "Зафар-наме"). *Общество и инновации*, 6(12/S), 461–467. <https://doi.org/10.47689/2181-1415-vol6-iss12/S-pp461-467>

⁴ Ibn Arabshoh. *Ajoyib al-maqdur fi tarixi Taymur*. Temur tarixida taqdir ajoyibotlari. So'z boshi, arab tilidan tarjima va izohlarni Ubaydulla Uvatov tayyorlagan. 1-kitob. T.: Mehnat, 1992.

Mirzo Ulugbek established an academy that provided exceptionally broad opportunities for education and scientific research for its time. This institution emerged almost simultaneously with the earliest philosophical academies in Italy and nearly two and a half centuries prior to the establishment of the Royal Society in England (1660).

Within this academy, Ulugbek created such favorable conditions for scholarly activity that the renowned scholar known as Qadi Zada al-Rumi (Salah al-Din Musa ibn Muhammad ibn Mahmud), who was later honored with the title “Ptolemy of his time,” secretly traveled to Samarkand in pursuit of knowledge despite opposition from his family. He eventually became one of the principal teachers of the Ulugbek Academy. Although he had initially joined the circle of scholars during the seven-year campaign of Amir Timur and arrived in Samarkand in 1404, his primary scientific activity and contributions are associated with the period of Ulugbek’s rule.

Another prominent scholar who worked at the Ulugbek Academy and contributed significantly to the advancement of science was Jamshid al-Kashi. He was born in 1380 in Kashan (then part of the state of Amir Timur, present-day Iran). In 1413–1414, he compiled astronomical tables dedicated to Shah Rukh, the son of Amir Timur.

Following the construction of the madrasa in Samarkand by Mirzo Ulugbek, al-Kashi arrived in the city and, together with Qadi Zada al-Rumi and Ali Qushji, participated under Ulugbek’s leadership in the design and construction of the renowned Ulugbek Observatory⁵.

In Herat, a vibrant intellectual and spiritual environment was formed under the patronage of Husayn Bayqara and with the support of Alisher Navoi. In particular, in the khanqah “Khalosiya,” established by Alisher Navoi, eminent scholars such as Amir Jamal al-Din Ataullah Asili, Amir Sadr al-Din Ibrahim Mashhadi, and Khoja Imad al-Din Abdulaziz Abhari were engaged in teaching and scholarly instruction. Meanwhile, in the institution known as “Shifoia,” Mawlana Ghiyath al-Din Muhammad ibn Mawlana Jalal al-Din was actively involved in teaching medical sciences.

In conclusion, it can be stated that Amir Timur successfully laid the foundational groundwork for the Renaissance of his era. His role in politically unifying the state, strengthening the economy, and establishing a stable and just social environment, along with his policy of bringing learned individuals from various regions to Samarkand, played a decisive role.

The Timurid princes, having been raised within this intellectual and cultural environment, later became active patrons themselves. As a result, cities such as Samarkand, Bukhara, and Herat gained international prominence, attracting students and scholars who increasingly migrated to these centers voluntarily.

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