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AMIR TEMUR: A GREAT STATESMAN

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АМИР ТЕМУР — ВЕЛИКИЙ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННЫЙ ДЕЯТЕЛЬ

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Abstract. This article provides a source-based analysis of the administrative measures implemented by Amir Temur following his accession to power. It specifically examines the significance of the “Tuzuk-i Temuri” (The Institutes of Temur) and its pivotal role in the governance and structural organization of the Timurid Empire. The study highlights the strategic reforms that consolidated state authority and the philosophical foundations of his leadership.

Аннотация. На основе первоисточников анализируются события в государственном управлении, осуществленные Амиром Темуром после его прихода к власти. Особое внимание уделяется изучению «Уложений Темура» и их роли в системе административного управления империи Тимуридов. Рассматриваются стратегические реформы, направленные на укрепление централизованной власти и принципы справедливого правления.

Keywords: Sahibqiran, military leader, historical sources, just governance, powerful, conqueror.

Ключевые слова: Сахибкиран, полководец, источник, справедливое управление, могущественный, завоеватель.

This year marks the 690th anniversary of the birth of Amir Temur, a globally recognized statesman and Sahibqiran. In terms of the sheer volume of literature dedicated to a single historical figure, Amir Temur occupies a preeminent position worldwide. To date, more than 2,000 works have been authored by Eastern and Western scholars regarding our great ancestor. Recording the history of the Timurid era necessitates an extensive knowledge of both Eastern and Western historical contexts. To truly comprehend that epoch, it is essential to closely study the lives of the prominent statesmen and military commanders of antiquity. This endeavor primarily requires the ability to read and analyze primary sources and factual materials documented in Arabic, Persian, Turkic, Russian, English, French, German, Italian, and Spanish. The scholarly works mentioned above were produced by researchers possessing such linguistic and analytical expertise.

These studies evaluate every facet of Amir Temur’s activities. Scholars in the Western world are particularly intrigued by how he successfully governed an empire encompassing 27 different states amidst the turbulent conditions of the Middle Ages. At the core of the state established by Amir Temur lay a system of just governance which he personally developed. Regarding this, the French scholar Alphonse de Lamartine noted: “Europe has never established such a government based on

just laws — neither under Alexander, nor Attila, nor even under Napoleon, the new conqueror of Muscovy.”

Furthermore, Western researcher Beatrice Forbes Manz, in a section of her study titled “Temur’s Personality,” describes him as a man of strong character, a skilled politician, an adept military leader, and a highly educated individual.

This study employs a multidisciplinary approach, utilizing historical-comparative and source-based analysis methods to evaluate the administrative legacy of Amir Temur. The research is primarily based on the critical examination of “Tuzuk-i Temuri”, alongside other significant historical texts such as Nizam al-Mulk’s “Siyasatnama”, which influenced Temur’s political philosophy.

The article analyzes the perspectives of Western researchers, such as Beatrice Forbes Manz and Alphonse de Lamartine, comparing them with Eastern historiographical traditions to provide a balanced view of Temur’s statesmanship. To understand the structural organization of the empire, the study categorizes Temur’s reforms into legislative (Kurultai) and executive (Divans) systems. The study investigates the social stratification established by Temur, specifically the twelve social categories and the twelve essential qualities of a ruler as defined in his codes.

By synthesizing these methods, the research provides a comprehensive overview of how Temur integrated Islamic Sharia law with secular state regulations to maintain the integrity of a vast, multiregional empire [1].

It is well-established that the state was not an ancestral inheritance for Temur. He established this great empire through prolonged and arduous struggles. On April 10, 1370, Amir Temur emerged on the stage of history as the ruler of Mawarannahr. Consequently, the immediate task became the effective governance of the newly established state. In administering his realm, Amir Temur drew extensively upon historical political management experiences. Structurally, this state was predominantly based on military-political regulations.

Likely due to his profound interest in the science of history, the powerful monarch possessed a comprehensive understanding of various ancient and medieval Eastern states, including their political and administrative management methods and governance systems. His system of state administration was built upon a unified, centralized political order across all territories under his control, enriched by the management techniques widely utilized in medieval Central Asian states. A prime example of this is Amir Temur's extensive use of Nizam al-Mulk’s work, “Siyasatnama”, as a guide in state affairs, and his inclusion of ideas from the “Siyasatnama” within the “Tuzuk-i Temuri”.

As a statesman, Amir Temur possessed immense organizational capabilities. He unified Mawarannahr into a single state and divided the conquered territories into four major domains (mulk), granting them as “suyurghal” (fiefs or gifts) to his children: Khorasan, Jurjan, Mazandaran, and Sistan (centered in Herat) were granted to Shahrukh; Western Iran, Azerbaijan, Iraq, and Armenia (centered in Tabriz) were granted to Miran Shah; Fars, specifically the southern part of Iran (centered in Shiraz), was granted to Umar Shaikh; and Afghanistan and Northern India (centered in Ghazni) were granted to Pir Muhammad.

Consequently, Amir Temur's state consisted of a system of unified and integrated domains. While full authority within these regions rested in their hands, these rulers paid a portion of the “kharaj” (land tax) and other taxes to the central government in Samarkand. Furthermore, they were obligated to provide military forces to the supreme ruler during military campaigns.

To manage his vast empire, in addition to consulting the historical works mentioned above, Amir Temur adhered to eight pre-existing foundations of statehood [3]: Independence: maintaining independence in terms of state policy; Political Integrity: ensuring the political unity of the state and society remains intact; Legal Governance: governing the state and society on the basis of specific laws, orders, and ideology; Regulated Systems: establishing formal rules that coordinate the

management system; Socio-Economic Oversight: keeping the state of socio-economic relations within society under state attention; Cultural Development: constant concern for the progress of science and culture; Internal and External Integration: managing internal development issues of the state and society according to the conditions and orders of each period, while utilizing existing external factors; Visionary Leadership: ensuring that those at the head of the state perceive the past, present, and future with deep reflection, strong faith, high spirituality, and patriotism.

Amir Temur added a ninth foundation to these principles: ensuring the development of society and the interests of all social classes. Furthermore, Amir Temur practiced 12 essential qualities for a ruler: the ruler must be a man of his word; he must be just; he must issue judgments independently in every matter; he must be firm in his decisions; his commands must be implemented; he must not entrust the affairs of the kingdom to just anyone; he must listen to everyone's opinion; he must conduct affairs with deliberation and without haste; he must keep the military and subjects in a state of both hope and fear; he must perform all tasks of his own free will; he must not allow others to partner in his specific duties; he must keep state affairs confidential and remain aware and vigilant [4].

In the “Tuzuk-i Temuri” (The Institutes of Temur), it is recorded that Amir Temur categorized the population into specific social strata to effectively govern his territories. These were primarily divided into twelve distinct social groups: Sayyids, scholars, and sheikhs; learned individuals with extensive experience; devout practitioners and those who offer prayers; military officers, soldiers (sipahi), and senior commanders (sarhang amirs); rank-and-file soldiers and the general masses; wise and intelligent advisors who understood state administration in the most minute detail; viziers, secretaries, and heads of the divans (administrative departments); medical practitioners, astronomers, and engineers; historians; Sufis and those possessing spiritual knowledge (arifs); artisans and craftsmen; and foreign travelers and merchants, whose goals and interests were a primary focus of protection.

In managing the empire, the Sahibqiran adhered to four fundamental principles: 1) counsel (kengash); 2) deliberation and advice (mashvaratu maslahat); 3) firm decisions, entrepreneurship, and vigilance; and 4) caution [4].

The administrative system of Amir Temur's state was divided into two branches: legislative and executive. The legislative branch was known as the Kurultai, which was primarily attended by the leaders of prominent Turkic tribes and convened by the supreme ruler. Issues such as war and peace, as well as the determination of the state's internal and external policies, were discussed and codified at the Kurultai.

The executive system consisted of the “divans” (councils/departments) and other high-ranking state institutions. This system was responsible for implementing the decisions of the Kurultai, royal decrees, and the daily affairs of the state. Historical sources emphasize that Amir Temur paid particular attention to the appointment of viziers, who served as the primary pillar of his state. In the Timurid state, a vizier was required to possess four specific qualities: being of honorable and pure descent, possessing high intellect and sagacity, being well-informed about the conditions of the military and the subjects, and treating them with kindness, demonstrating endurance and a peace-loving nature. Any individual possessing these four qualities was deemed worthy of the rank of vizier and was granted four specific privileges: trust, respect, discretion, and authority [4].

Amir Temur prioritized the rule of law in state administration. A judgment against an accused individual was only passed after their guilt was proven before four witnesses. It is noteworthy that the law applied equally to everyone—whether a vizier, an emir, a governor, or a prince. For instance, Prince Miranshah Mirza, the governor of Western Iran and Azerbaijan, was dismissed from his post for neglecting state affairs in favor of a life of pleasure. Some of his associates were even sentenced

to the highest form of punishment. Similarly, Pir Muhammad Sultan, the governor of Fars, was removed from office for his negligence during the “Seven-Year War” (1399–1404). During the reign of Amir Temur, both religious and secular sciences flourished. As a devoted patron of the science and culture of his time, the Sahibqiran accomplished significant work [6].

He held deep respect for devout clergy, sought their blessings, and protected followers of marginalized sects. He also cared for dervishes and the poor. Recognizing religion as a pillar of social ideology, he focused heavily on Islam and sought to educate both his soldiers and all citizens in the Islamic spirit. His enduring motto, “Strength is in justice,” serves as a testament to his superior leadership abilities. Furthermore, Amir Temur relied extensively on the advice of his spiritual mentors (pirs) in imperial affairs. The “Tuzuk-i Temuri” details these mentors and their instructions. Zainuddin Abu Bakr Taybadi, a prominent Khorasani sheikh, advised Temur to adhere to the principles of counsel, deliberation, vigilance, and caution in governance. Additionally, figures such as Sayyid Baraka, Mir Sayyid Sharif Jurjani, and Ali Akbar from the Termez Sayyids actively participated in the advisory councils of the Timurid court [4].

Amir Temur’s historical contribution lies in his refinement of the administrative system and its legal foundations within a new historical context. To ensure constant awareness of external and internal emergencies, he maintained a specialized courier network consisting of one thousand infantrymen, one thousand camel riders, and one thousand horsemen. Throughout the empire, post stations (yamkhanas) were established at intervals of a single day’s journey. Each station kept between 50 and 200 head of horses and transport animals.

In every Islamic state, the rules and regulations of Sharia occupy a leading position. From this perspective, legal relations in Amir Temur’s state were also based on the principles set forth in the Holy Qur’an and the Hadith. The legal and statutory elements of his administration are reflected in the “Tuzuk-i Temuri”. This work discusses state affairs, the military sphere, the subjects, and all strata of the social structure. According to the “Tuzuklar”, Amir Temur personally supervised secular matters and administered the necessary punishments. While the execution of Sharia-related matters was entrusted to the Sharia judge (qadi), separate judges were appointed within various branches of the state administration to handle judicial, criminal, and punitive affairs. For instance, specific judges were designated for the military and separate judges for the subjects.

Among the numerous historical works written during the reign of Amir Temur and the Timurids, the “Tuzuk-i Temuri” undoubtedly holds a unique significance among those dedicated to the life and activities of the great conqueror. The work is also known by other titles, including “Malfuzot-i Temuri” and “Vaqeot-i Temuri”. This masterpiece became famous not only among a narrow circle of rulers but throughout the world. The survival of numerous manuscript copies to the present day serves as evidence of its global reach. Copies of the work can be found in the libraries of Russia, India, Iran, Turkey, Egypt, England, Germany, Denmark, and other countries.

The work was first published in Oxford, Great Britain, in 1783, followed by editions in India in 1785 and 1890, and in Paris in 1787. In 1830, an English edition was released in which previous ambiguities were rectified. The “Tuzuk-i Temuri” was translated into Urdu and published in Delhi (1855) and Bombay (1908). Furthermore, it was published multiple times in Persian in Tehran (1868, 1963, 1992), and in 1991, it was released in the Azerbaijani and Kazakh languages in Baku and Almaty, respectively [5].

The “Tuzuk-i Temuri” is a historical and legal treatise consisting of two parts and 56 sections, outlining the Sahibqiran’s perspective on state structure and the governance of nations. Numerous Eastern rulers utilized this work and held it in high regard. Notably, Shah Jahan (1628–1657), the Khan of Kokand Muhammad Alikhon (1821–1842), and the Emir of Bukhara Abdulahadkhan (1885–

1910) commissioned excerpts from the “Tuzukot” and adhered to its principles throughout their administrative activities [4].

Conclusion

In conclusion, the statehood established by Amir Temur represents a unique synthesis of nomadic traditions, Islamic jurisprudence, and sophisticated administrative innovations. The research demonstrates that Temur’s governance was not merely a product of military conquests but was anchored in a rigorous legal framework — the “Tuzuk-i Temuri”. This work functioned as a foundational constitutional code, ensuring the political integrity of a vast empire while maintaining social justice across diverse territories. The analysis of historical sources reveals that Temur’s administrative success was built upon several key pillars: the centralization of authority, the professionalization of the executive branch through a meritocratic system of viziers, and the integration of the religious and secular spheres. By establishing a unified legal system where even the ruling elite were subject to the law, Temur created a stable environment that fostered the Timurid Renaissance – an era of unprecedented scientific and cultural flourishing in Turan.

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