

AMIR TIMUR AND THE PERIOD OF THE TIMURIDS

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ABSTRACT: *The article examines the division of Timur's conquests between his sons, Miranshah and Shah Rokh, and the subsequent expansion of Shah Rokh's territories, reuniting Timur's empire. Despite internal rivalries and external conflicts with Uzbek confederations, the Timurids made significant contributions to literature, historiography, and miniature painting. The court of the last great Timurid ruler, Husayn Bayqara, supported renowned figures such as Jami, Behzad, and Shah Muzaffar, fostering a vibrant Persian culture.*

Key words: *Tamerlane, dynasty, guri-amir, conquests, Transoxania, timurids.*

Amir Timur, also known as Tamerlane, was a great military leader and statesman who played a significant role in the history of Uzbekistan and the surrounding regions. **Timur** or **Tamerlane** was a Turco-Mongol conqueror who founded the Timurid Empire in and around modernday Afghanistan, Iran,

and Central Asia, becoming the first ruler of the Timurid dynasty. An undefeated commander, he is widely regarded as one of the greatest military leaders and tacticians in history, as well as one of the most brutal and deadly. Timur is also considered a great patron of art and architecture as he interacted with intellectuals such as Ibn Khaldun, Hafez, and Hafizi Abru and his reign introduced the Timurid Renaissance. Amir Timur established a vast empire that stretched from the Volga to India, leaving a lasting impact on Central, South, and West Asia, as well as the Caucasus, the Volga region, and Russia. Amir Timur's reign saw the emergence of the Great Silk Road, a historic trade route that connected East and West, fostering trade and cultural exchange between Europe and Asia. He also established trade and diplomatic relations with major European countries such as England and France. His empire became a center of scholarship and science, with Samarkand, one of the cities under his rule, becoming a hub of intellectual and artistic achievements. Amir Timur's legacy extends beyond his military conquests. He was a patron of science, education, trade, culture, and craft, and his rule promoted scientific advancements and artistic endeavors. His mausoleum, the Gure-Amir, located in Samarkand, stands as a testament to his grandeur and is considered one of the gems of Islamic art. The impact of Amir Timur on Uzbekistan's history and culture is profound. His name is revered, and his memory is celebrated in various ways, including the construction of the Amir Timur Museum in Tashkent. His story and achievements continue to inspire and captivate people, both within Uzbekistan and around the world.

Timur, born in 1336 near Samarkand in present-day Uzbekistan, was a Turkic conqueror known for his brutal conquests spanning from India to Russia and the Mediterranean Sea. His dynasty, the Timurids, also made significant cultural achievements. Timur's reign was marked by his military campaigns and the cultural patronage of his empire. However, he is often remembered for his ruthless tactics during conquest. He died in 1405 near Chimkent, now Shymkent, Kazakhstan. Timur, a member of the Barlas tribe, which had become Turkicized and settled in Transoxania, grew up in the Chagatai khanate. After the death of

Transoxania's ruler, Amir Kazgan, in 1357, Timur pledged his loyalty to Tughluq Temür, the khan of Kashgar, who had captured Samarkand. Tughluq Temür appointed his son Ilyas Khoja as governor of Transoxania, with Timur as his minister. However, Timur soon fled and joined forces with his brother-in-law, Amir Husayn. Together, they defeated Ilyas Khoja in 1364 and embarked on a conquest of Transoxania, gaining control of the region by 1366. Around 1370, Timur turned against Husayn, besieged him in Balkh, and, following Husayn's assassination, declared himself the sovereign of the Chagatai line of khans and the restorer of the Mongol empire in Samarkand. Before the end of 1399, Timur embarked on his final major expedition with the aim of punishing the Mamluk sultan of Egypt and the Ottoman sultan Bayezid I for seizing some of his territories. He first regained control over Azerbaijan and then marched on Syria, where he stormed and sacked Aleppo, defeated the Mamluk army, and occupied Damascus in 1401. The deportation of Damascus' artisans to Samarkand dealt a severe blow to the city's prosperity. In the same year, Timur also captured Baghdad, massacring 20,000 of its citizens and destroying its monuments. After wintering in Georgia, Timur invaded Anatolia, where he destroyed Bayezid's army near Ankara on July 20, 1402, and captured Smyrna from the Knights of Rhodes. Timur received offers of submission from the sultan of Egypt and John VII, co-emperor of the Byzantine Empire, before returning to Samarkand in 1404. He planned an expedition to China but fell ill and died in February 1405 in Otrar, near Chimkent. His body was embalmed and buried in the grand tomb called Gur-e Amir in Samarkand. Before his death, Timur had divided his territories among his surviving sons and grandsons, and after years of internal struggles, his youngest son, Shah Rokh, reunited the lands. Timur's most lasting memorials are the Timurid architectural monuments of Samarkand, covered in azure, turquoise, gold, and alabaster mosaics; these are dominated by the great cathedral mosque, ruined by an earthquake but still soaring to an immense fragment of dome. His mausoleum, the Gur-e Amir, is one of the gems of Islamic art. Within the sepulchre he lies under a huge, broken slab of jade. The tomb was opened in 1941,

having remained intact for half a millennium. The Soviet Archaeological Commission found the skeleton of a man who, though lame in both right limbs, must have been of powerful physique and above-average height.

The Timurid dynasty, which flourished in the 15th and 16th centuries CE, was of Turkic-Mongol origin and descended from the conqueror Timur, also known as Tamerlane. This period of Timurid rule was renowned for its remarkable revival of artistic and intellectual life in Iran and Central Asia. After Timur's death in 1405, his conquests were divided between two of his sons. Miranshah received territories such as Iraq, Azerbaijan, Moghan, Shirvan, and Georgia, while Shah Rokh was left with Khorasan. The Timurid dynasty left a lasting impact on the cultural and artistic landscape of the regions they ruled, with their architectural monuments in Samarkand, such as the Gur-e Amit mausoleum, showcasing their artistic brilliance. Between 1406 and 1417, Shah Rokh expanded his territories to include those previously held by Miranshah, as well as Mazandaran, Sistan, Transoxania, Fars, and Kerman, effectively reuniting Timur's empire, with the exception of Syria and Khuzistan. Shah Rokh also maintained nominal suzerainty over China and India. During his reign from 1405 to 1447, Shah Rokh restored economic prosperity and undertook extensive repairs to the damage caused by Timur's campaigns. He fostered the growth of trading and artistic communities in the capital city of Herat, where a library was established, making it the center of a vibrant and culturally rich Persian society. The Timurid dynasty, under Shah Rokh's rule, witnessed a resurgence of Persian culture and artistic brilliance in the region. After the death of Shah Rokh, internal rivalries within the Timurid dynasty began to erode their solidarity. From 1449 to 1469, there was a constant struggle between the Timurid Abu Said and the Uzbek confederations of the Kara Koyunlu ("Black Sheep") and Ak Koyunlu ("White Sheep"). When Abu Said was killed in 1469, the Ak Koyunlu ruled unopposed in the west, while the Timurids retreated to Khorasan. Despite the political turmoil, the arts, particularly literature, historiography, and miniature painting, continued to flourish. The court of the last great Timurid ruler, Ḥusayn Bayqara (1478–

1506), supported renowned figures such as the poet Jami, the painters Behzad and Shah Muzaffar, and the historians Mirkhwand and Khwandamir. The vizier Mir Ali Shir played a significant role in the revival of Chagatai Turkish literature and Persian literature. Although the Timurid dynasty eventually collapsed, with the fall of Badi al-Zaman to the Uzbek armies in 1507, the Timurid ruler of Fergana, Zahir al-Din Babur, survived and went on to establish the Mughal Empire in India in 1526.

In conclusion, the legacy of Amir Timur and the Timurids continues to be remembered in the region's history and culture. Their contributions to art, architecture, and literature have left a lasting impact on the cultural heritage of Central Asia and beyond. Today, the monuments and artifacts of the Timurid period serve as a reminder of a time when this region was a center of artistic and intellectual innovation.

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