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AMIR TEMUR VA TEMURIYLARNING TARIXIY KUTUBXONALARI VA ULARNING YOZMA YODGORLIKLARI

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“Shahrisabz” davlat muzey-qo‘riqxonasi, kutubxona mudiri

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Annotatsiya

Maqolada Amir Temur va Temuriylar davridagi yozma yodgorliklarning bir qismi haqida ilmiy qarashlar tahlil qilinadi. Shuningdek, Amir Temur va temuriylarning yo‘qolgan kutubxonasi va uning bugungi kundagi ahamiyati ilmiy xulosalarga tayangan holda tahlilga tortiladi. Tahlilo jarayonida Kutubxonaning bugungi kunda mavjudligi yoki yo‘qolib ketganligi haqidagi qarshlar oydinlashtiriladi.

Kalit so‘zlar: Temuriylar, Amir Temur, Hazrati Bashir, Niyoztepa, yodgorliklar, kutubxonalar.

ИСТОРИЧЕСКИЕ БИБЛИОТЕКИ АМИРА ТИМУРА И ТИМУРИДОВ И ИХ РУКОПИСНЫЕ ПАМЯТНИКИ

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Аннотация

В статье анализируются научные взгляды на часть письменных памятников эпохи Амира Тимура и Тимуридов. Кроме того, на основе научных выводов рассматривается утраченная библиотека Амира Тимура и Тимуридов, а также её значение в наши дни. В ходе анализа проясняются противоречивые мнения о том, существует ли библиотека до сих пор или она утрачена.

Ключевые слова: Тимуриды, Амир Тимур, Хазрати Башир, Нийозтепа, коллекция Колбера, Рампур Разо, библиотеки, тайные библиотеки.

THE HISTORICAL LIBRARIES OF AMIR TIMUR AND THE TIMURIDS AND THEIR MANUSCRIPT MONUMENTS

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Abstract

The article analyses scholarly perspectives on a portion of the written monuments from the era of Amir Timur and the Timurids. It also examines, on the basis of scientific conclusions, the lost library of Amir Timur and the Timurids and its significance today. In the course of the analysis, the conflicting views on whether the library still exists or has been lost are clarified.

Keywords: Timurids, Amir Timur, Hazrati Bashir, Niyoztepa, the Kolber Collection, Rampur Razo, libraries, secret libraries.

It is well known from history that the great commander and sovereign Amir Timur founded a magnificent city in Samarkand, the capital of Transoxiana, which elevated the science, art, and culture of his era. In particular, the city was also home to the Timurid historical library, renowned for its written monuments and rare books. Today, the lack of sufficient research into the Timurid library and its manuscripts has led to differing opinions among historians and librarians.

Literature review and methodology: For nearly four centuries, scholarly and practical research has been conducted on the historical library of the Timurids, demonstrating that the library still exists today. Particular attention is paid here to the library and librarianship founded by Amir Timur. As proof of this, we can cite the following statement: “It was forbidden to take books out of Samarkand. Anyone caught stealing a book was sentenced to death. Books were protected as a priceless treasure. Amir Timur founded a palace library in his native city of Shakhrisabz, and later in the country’s capital, Samarkand.” [1]

First of all, let us turn to the written monuments of the Timurid period that have survived to this day. According to the Orientalist scholar Khayrulla Ismatullayev: “The British Museum, the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, Oxford, Cambridge, the Sorbonne, Harvard and Yale University libraries, as well as the libraries of the Netherlands, Germany, Spain, Italy, and the Vatican, and those in Turkey, Iran, and India, have been carefully preserving many of our manuscripts that we were unable to preserve ourselves.

This period, which was a Renaissance for the development of Central Asia, is of great importance to us. It is known that the works of Sultan Husayn Bayqara are held in the Chester Beatty Library in Britain under number 404, in the British Museum under number Or.208, in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris under number 993, and in the library of the Topkapi Palace Museum in Turkey under numbers E.N.1686 and A.2381. It has also been established that the letters Sultan Husayn Bayqara sent to the prominent figures of his time, as well as the edicts he issued, have been preserved in world libraries.

In the British Museum, Sultan Husayn Bayqara’s letter to Bayezid II is preserved under catalogue number Or.61, and another letter from him to Hasanbeg Bahadur is held in the same museum under catalogue number Og.1702.” [2]

Also, the world-famous Rampur Raza Library is located in the city of Rampur in the state of Uttar Pradesh, India. The library houses thousands of manuscripts relating to Mawara-un-Nahr, Khorasan, and other regions of the East. It contains dozens of books dedicated to the Timurids, concerning the life and work of Amir Timur.

For example, among them, the “Malfuzat-i Amir Timur” is of great value. The manuscript was translated from Chagatai Turkic into Persian in 1637 by Abu Tolib al-Orizi. This work is considered to be Amir Timur’s autobiographical memoir. It is also known as the “Vaqi’at-i Timuriy” and the “Tuzuk-i Timuriy”. The work consists of two volumes. While the first part is dedicated to the general art of governance, strategy, and politics, the second part, entitled “Tuzukat”, is devoted to Timur’s policies and methods of administration.

In the library there is another famous work – Sharaf al-Din Ali Yazdi’s *Zafarnama* (“Book of Victories”), as well as *Asnad-i Aulad-i Amjad-i Hazrat-i Sohib-Qiran*, which deals with Tamerlane and the Timurids (a short treatise in which the dates of Amir Timur’s accession to the throne are clearly indicated).

As we can see, the Rampur Raza Library in India houses rare works related to our history and literature, which require the younger generation to pay attention to this heritage and study it. [3]

According to the above source, this library currently contains works on Islamic jurisprudence, theology, philosophy, logic, astronomy, mathematics, rhetoric, linguistics, the theory of poetry, prosody, medicine, alchemy, talismans, falconry and birds, fairy tales, fables, anecdotes, and legends about animals, as well as sources in Arabic. The palace library in Samarkand was especially famous for its Arabic-language works on subjects such as Qur’anic exegesis and orthography, the biography of the Prophet (PBUH), collections of authentic hadith, the history of Abyssinia, the history of Baghdad, geometry, astronomy, magic, music, Islamic medicine, and pharmacology.

The palace library in Samarkand was very famous. According to the Russian scholar Dmitri Logofet, “In the early years of Amir Timur’s reign, this library was in Shakhrisyabz. It was later moved to Samarkand.” The library housed rare manuscripts in Greek, Latin, Persian, Syriac, Armenian, and other languages. It is worth noting that, like the famous libraries of the 11th–12th centuries, all the books were arranged by subject and kept in special chests. Khujand Afzal, Mavlono Alouddin Koshiy, and Jalol Khokiyy carried out scientific and creative work under the patronage of Amir Timur. [4][5]

A unique book, written at the behest of Akbar Shah and preserved in India, has also been reported. According to Dilorom Karomat, a researcher at the Institute of Art Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Khudobakhsh Khan Library is one of the richest libraries in India, where documents relating to the history of Uzbekistan are kept, in particular manuscripts in Arabic and Turkic languages concerning the history of the Timurids. The most unique and valuable of these manuscripts is the “Tarixi xonadoni Temuriya”, which contains 132 miniatures from the era of Amir Timur. [6]

Furthermore, another valuable manuscript has been identified. This is the astronomical manuscript “Zij-i Rassad-i Samarqand”, written in 832 AH (1428–29 AD) by an unknown copyist. This manuscript, written before Ulugh Beg’s “Zij-i Jadid-i Sultoniyy” (compiled in 1437 AD), is held in the Rampur Raza Library in India.

The manuscript of the work “Babar-nama” or “Babar’s Book”, which reflects the memoirs of Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur, is also considered a noteworthy find. The manuscript contains 145

illustrations depicting various subjects. Furthermore, 27 of the images depict Babur's personal life, 42 depict flora and fauna, and 27 depict significant historical episodes. In addition, there are 25 battle scenes, 12 domestic scenes, 7 hunting scenes, and 3 depictions of banquets. The manuscript lists the names of forty-nine artists. This manuscript is currently held in Kabul.

It is also worth noting the manuscripts of the Uyghur-script works "Me'rajnoma" and "The Glorification of the Prophet Muhammad", which were discovered in Istanbul in the 17th century. These manuscripts were acquired for the collection of the minister Jean-Baptiste Colbert during the reign of King Louis XIV. These unique manuscripts are evaluated by specialists as being distinguished by the elegance of their patterns, their very bright colours, and their powerful aesthetic impact. High-quality facsimiles of these two masterpieces were published by the Mueller Schindler publishing house.

Ali Qushji's mathematical treatise, "Risala-i Qushchiya", is also recognised as a valuable source. Held in the Raza Library's collection, this treatise is considered one of the author's finest works. [7]

The libraries of the Timurids Shahrukh Mirza, Boyinsungur Mirza, and Husayn Bayqara were in no way inferior to Timur's library in Samarkand in terms of the variety and number of literary, artistic, and scientific books.

Boysung'ur Mirzo established a vast library in Herat. In it, forty accomplished craftsmen were engaged in bookmaking under the chairmanship of the calligrapher Mavlono Ja'far Tabrizi, carrying out the necessary work for book production — paper-making, illustration, gilding, decoration, binding, calligraphy, and other fine and artistic crafts. Maulana Ja'far Tabrizi was the head of Boysung'ur Mirza's library, an expert in the Nasta'liq script, and a pupil of Mir Ali.

In the library and painting studio established by Mirza Boysung'ur, the following painters, calligraphers, and artists worked: Mawlana Shams Boysunguri was Boysung'ur Mirzo's master in calligraphy; Khalil Haravi, a consummate calligrapher who had mastered six styles of writing and was among those educated by Boysung'ur Mirzo, had a portrait of Amir Timur painted that has survived to the present day.

According to contemporary historians, these 40 artisans, each with their respective calligraphic styles, were marvels of their time and rare treasures. Boysung'ur Mirzo's library could well be described as a major academy of fine arts. For here, they did not merely copy books, but also reconstructed the scholarly-critical texts of rare manuscripts and compiled illustrated albums.

Today, the majority of the books created in the Boysung'ur library are preserved in the museums of Istanbul and Tehran. [8]

Above, we have partially learned which corners of the world today preserve the written monuments of the Timurid era. The main issue, however, concerns the historical library of the Timurids, which has been under research since the 17th century. Below, we discuss the research into this library.

Discussion: It is well known that in almost all sources we encounter views on whether the Timurid library still exists today or has been lost. However, none has yet provided conclusive scientific proof. We will briefly outline who has researched the historical library of the Timurids to the present day and what scientific conclusions have been drawn.

In Samarkand, many priceless manuscripts in Arabic, Persian, Turkic, Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, and Armenian were brought from countries and cities such as Istanbul, Iran, Turkey, India, Iraq, Bursa, Armenia, Isfahan, Hamadan, Shiraz, Baghdad, and Damascus, which were ancient centres of culture. According to scholars, in the first quarter of the 8th century, Timur brought to Samarkand a copy of the Qur'an in Kufic script, transcribed specifically from Basra-Bursa. [9]

Not only members of the palace but also readers from certain groups made use of Amir Timur's library. The books in the library were catalogued by subject and stored in chests. This system was established not only to keep track of the books but also to make them easy to use. After Timur, his unique library passed into the hands of his grandson, Ulugh Beg (1394–1449). During Ulugh Beg's reign, librarianship in Central Asia developed further. In particular, the library established in 1428–1429 adjacent to the Samarkand observatory by Ulugh Beg's commission had the richest collection of books. [10]

It is believed that the library which Ulugh Beg amassed began with the Pergamum manuscripts; when Timur captured the city of Pergamum, he also brought the manuscripts to Samarkand by caravan. The library was continuously enriched during Ulugh Beg's reign. It housed and carefully preserved the works of Plato, Hippocrates, Ptolemy, and Aristotle. In addition, there were the famous treatise on algebra by our compatriot, the great scholar Muhammad ibn Musa al-Khwarizmi; the works of Abu Rayhan al-Biruni, "Testimonies from Ancient Authors" and "The Key to Astronomy"; the astronomical tables of al-

Battani; Abu Ali ibn Sina's treatise "The Laws of Medicine"; as well as Ulugh Beg's "Zij-i Jadid-i Kuran" and "Ulugh Beg's Zij".

Ulugh Beg appointed his pupil Ali Qushchi as the head of his library. The subsequent fate of Ulugh Beg's library was also linked to Ali Qushchi, who died in 1449. [10]

The library's search operations began immediately after Samarkand was annexed to the Russian Empire. As early as 1869, this task was entrusted to the special missions officer attached to the Turkestan General-Governor, the Orientalist Alexander Kun. This graduate of the Faculty of Oriental Studies at Saint Petersburg University was proficient in Arabic, Persian, and Turkic languages. Moreover, since Kun's mother was Armenian, he also knew the language in which the earliest records of this famous library were written. [11]

After dawn, Alexander Ludvigovich inspected all the minarets of the mosques and madrasas in Samarkand and its vicinity. However, despite the considerable efforts expended, it proved impossible to find any trace of the lost library.

The legend of the richest collection of manuscripts intrigued European scholars and travellers. As early as the second half of the 19th century, renowned European scholars such as Vambéry, Skayler, and Wallace, along with several other enthusiasts who had visited Samarkand, were searching for this repository of books.

In 1881, a book entitled *By Steamer to Central Asia* was published in Paris, the author of which was Marshal Ney, Napoleon-Paul's grandson, a French military leader, journalist, and traveller, who visited significant parts of the Russian Empire in less than a month and a half. The three-volume article of this publication is dedicated to Samarkand. [12]

In 1403, the Spanish ambassador Ruy González de Clavijo, who visited Samarkand, recorded some information about the library in his diary. In 1863, the Hungarian Orientalist Armin Vambéry, during his travels across Central Asia, sought to uncover the "traces" of the famous Armenian-Greek library in Samarkand. After the Russian conquest of Central Asia, many orientalist and scholars from various countries turned their attention to the famous library of Amir Timur, interested in learning its fate. In 1868, Armenians residing in the Turkish province petitioned the government to locate the Armenian-Greek library of Samarkand and Bukhara. [16]

According to one version, excavations at the observatory where the library was located did not confirm this assumption. The search for the legendary library continued over the following decades. According to one version, the books were taken by the great astronomer Ali Qushchi's companion to one of the provinces of Afghanistan; according to another, they were buried in one of Samarkand's prisons. [13]

There were other options as well. Thus, Ali Qushchi's caravan did not even possess one-tenth of the Timur Library. Therefore, the majority of the collected works may have remained in Samarkand, buried under the ruins of the minaret that collapsed during one of the frequent earthquakes in that region. [14]

In the early 1960s, articles and notes began to appear in Uzbek media, claiming that the library had not been taken to Afghanistan at all, but was hidden in the mountains of Qashqadaryo, near the village of Hazrati-Bashir, located on the upper course of the river of the same name. The sensationalist authors even claimed that the books were kept in a specially equipped dungeon in the village of Hazrati-Bashir, named after the river of the same name, and that its location had thus been revealed. The press furor was supported by public opinion. [15]

Then, in the spring of 1963, the Academy of Sciences of the republic sent a group of Samarkand archaeologists to the designated area, which included the scholars S. Kabanov, K. Shakhurin, A. Asqarov, and the laboratory assistant A. Kobzev. To study the epigraphic monuments and historical books discovered, A. Juvanmardiev and T. Negmatov of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan were sent to Hazrati Bashir.

Having studied the local cemetery, which is surrounded by a century-old pistachio grove, the scholars discovered several ancient graves. One of these was the tomb of the holy man Hazrati-Bashir, and the other belonged to Amir Said al-Abtariy, who had served as the district governor during the Timurid era. Several other gravestones could not be identified. The archaeologists also examined an artificial cave (*chillakhona*), intended for forty days of prayer, and the ruins of an 18th-century mosque in the village. However, the main focus of their research was the Niyoztepa mound, which was supposedly home to an underground library. [13]

Following this trail, the archaeologists significantly expanded the search area, but the result was

the same. They only managed to uncover the remains of former settlements: the walls of houses, kitchen utensils, and fragments of pottery, which provided evidence that Hazrati-Bashir had been the centre of a small feudal estate during the Timurid period.

This expedition not only settled the question of locating Ulugh Beg's library in the territory of the eponymous village, but also corrected the existing versions about it. Previously, it was assumed that Ali Qushchi had come to this place with his library only because he was born here, and the basis for this assumption was a crude misrepresentation of the name of one of the neighbouring villages: instead of Qutchi, as he was long called, the people who, according to legend, had taken him away called him "Qushchi". [14]

Its discovery was the lifelong dream of scholars from various disciplines: orientalists, historians, and archaeologists. In their view, the library, which has remained the subject of legend and whose fate is still unknown, has survived intact. In this regard, various conjectures and hypotheses are put forward. Another scholar, B. Ahmedov, considers this version to be possible. According to the original plan approved by Ulugh Beg, Ali Qushchi, who had the necessary authority and was provided with unlimited funds, was caught up in the panic that followed the ruler's death and took with him everything he could — books, manuscripts, drawings, and so on — and hastily left Samarkand. He departed the country with a large caravan. "It is pointless to search for the library on the ground," says A. M. Belenitskiy, head of the Penjikent archaeological expedition. [13]

Associate Professor A. E. Khatipov of Samarkand University is convinced that the manuscripts have survived to the present day. The sultan's companions could not allow the remarkable collection of rare books to share the fate of the observatory. According to A. Khatipov, the books were hidden near the village of Hazrati Bashir. The scholars' opinions do not coincide, and the versions differ, but they all agree on one point — the manuscripts are intact; the library must be found.

More reliable information exists about the library's existence. Ulugh Beg's pupil, the mathematician Ali Qushchi, writes the following in the preface to his treatise "The Key to Arithmetic": "I did this for the library of the most great and noble Sultan Ulugh Beg Kurgan." [12]

Conclusion: In conclusion, the historical library of the Timurids has not been entirely lost. Fragments of it are now preserved as rare manuscripts in museums and libraries around the world. This suggests that the Timurid library, surrounded by mystery and scholarly interest, has been only partially discovered, while its main part remains unknown. Now, I will record my personal thoughts on the library's present fate, based on an analysis of scholars' opinions.

Firstly: Mirzo Ulugh Beg and all the other Timurids were well aware of how important the library was and that it was protected at the level of state security; they classified information about it. My conclusion is based on the fact that the sources record that even obtaining a single document from Timur's library was punishable by death. Admittedly, many scholars have conducted extensive research, but we must bear in mind that none of the early researchers lived in Central Asia. In my view, Amir Timur was such an enlightened ruler that he ensured his descendants would surpass him in scholarship.

Secondly: Mirzo Ulugh Beg himself may have concealed the library. My above remarks serve to support this assumption. Moreover, Ulugh Beg was a scholar and a thinker.

Thirdly: Ali Qushchi may have hidden the books in various places, taking a portion with him to Turkey. Scholarly views regarding his caravan confirm that this could be a more reliable explanation.

Fourthly: The library may have been located at the Niyoztepa site near the shrine of Hazrati Bashir, among the mountain ranges known as the Red Waterfall, and also beneath the now-submerged minarets of Samarkand, 70 km from the city. These conjectures are put forward based on the research of scientific investigators.

Thus, the historical library of the Timurids remains a mystery to this day, and the sources derived from it have been preserved in various corners of the world up to the present.

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