



THE IMPORTANCE OF MILITARY CUNNING AND UNCONVENTIONAL ACTIONS IN THE MOST IMPORTANT VICTORIES OF AMIR TEMUR

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Annotation. *The article examines the main campaigns of Amir Temur, his contribution to the development of world military art, the importance of military cunning as an effective measure to achieve victory in the most important battles of Amir Temur, their influence on the development of the states of the Eurasian continent.*

Key words: *strategy, tactics, battle, combat, military cunning, non-standard actions, commander, troops, battle order, weapons, political missions, security.*

INTRODUCTION

One of the most significant periods in the history of Uzbekistan's statehood is associated with the name and remarkable reforms of the great ancestor of the Uzbek people, Amir Temur (1336–1405). As is well known, the period of his rule (1370–1405) holds a special place in world history. His battles, combat tactics and military strategy are studied in many military academies of foreign countries.

Let us consider two aspects of Amir Temur's activities as a military leader and politician, as well as the importance of military cunning and unconventional actions to achieve victory in his most important battles, which had a great influence on the formation of the military-political situation on the Eurasian continent in the late 14th – early 15th centuries.

To achieve the main military-strategic goals in campaigns and battles, our great ancestor masterfully used methods of military cunning and non-standard actions as an effective measure to achieve military-strategic and political goals. Thus, the campaigns and battles against the Golden Horde Khan Tokhtamysh in 1391 and 1395, the battle at Ankara in 1402 have their own characteristic features in achieving strategic goals, which in turn served political goals. To more fully define the place and role of military cunning and unconventional actions in achieving these politically important victories, it is necessary to consider the distinctive features of their use in these battles.

Battle of Kunduzcha (June 1391). The first distinctive feature of this campaign against Tokhtamysh was the long march of Amir Temur's 200,000-strong army before the decisive battle on the banks of the Kunduzcha River. The troops had to travel 2,500 km across the steppes, which is an exceptional example in world military history. Sahibkiran carefully assessed the situation and chose a route that would



protect his troops from the enemy during the transition and at the same time they would remain unnoticed until they met the enemy (Figure 1) [1; p.168].

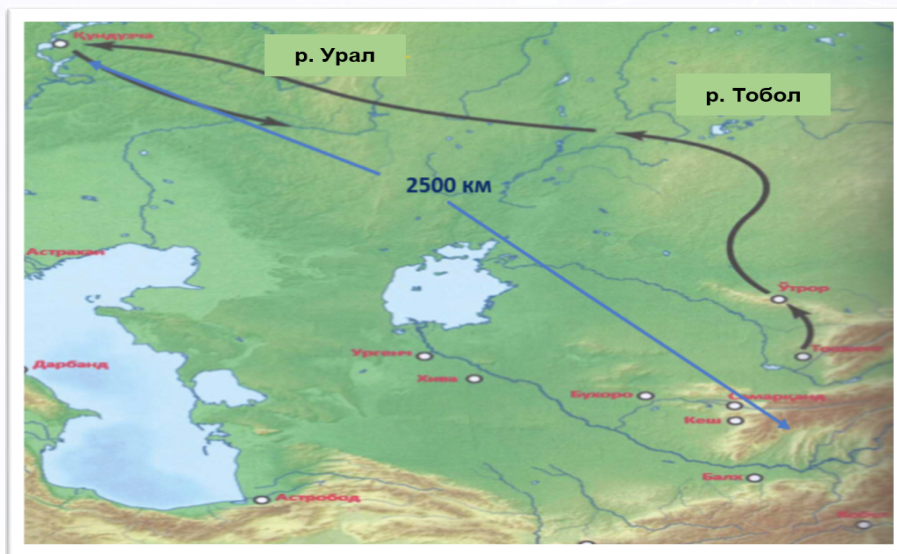


Figure 1. 2500 kilometer march of A.Temur's army (January - June 1391)

To this end, Amir Temur effectively used unconventional actions, which constituted an important element of his military cunning in this campaign and misled Tokhtamysh regarding the true position and advance of Sahibkiran's main forces.

During this march, after the troops had crossed the Ural River, he sent out several manglai (advanced units-vanguards) far ahead on a wide front, numbering several thousand horsemen each, who in turn sent out hirovuls (guard patrols) ahead of them and thus created a pre-battle formation of troops, ready for immediate deployment for entry into battle.

Tokhtamysh's advance units reported to him about the movement of a large number of troops, but could not determine which advance units were followed by the main forces of Amir Temur. Tokhtamysh carefully watched the movement of Sahibkiran's troops, and at the same time, not knowing the true, real position of his main forces, carefully avoided meeting without even thinking of entering into battle. Retreating, the Mongols devastated the land behind them, turning it into a scorched desert. Sahibkiran chose the places for crossing the two rivers: Tobol and Ural, which had to be carried out, upstream or downstream, knowing that they would be ambushed by the Mongols or they would be destroyed.

Thanks to such effective measures, for five months Tokhtamysh's army was constrained in its actions and deprived of the opportunity to raid Maveranahr in the absence of its ruler. With these unconventional actions, Amir Temur achieved an important goal - he protected his state and people from Mongol raids during the campaign.



In addition, it is necessary to note two more strategic goals that were achieved by this long march of his huge army:

1. The main supply routes and approaches for additional reinforcements for Tokhtamysh's army, leading from the steppe regions of the Golden Horde from the Sea of Azov, were taken under control.
2. The retreat routes of Tokhtamysh's army back to its capital were cut off [2; p.170].

The second distinctive feature was Amir Temur's use of a new military trick - the tactic of "psychic" attack. Before the battle, when the armies were in full view of each other, he ordered the detachment of his grandson Mirza Abubakir to pitch tents, lay out red carpets and begin preparing festive food. According to the description of the historian H. Dadaboev in his book "Amir Temuring harbiy mahorati", this was "a deliberate demonstration of contempt for the enemy, which stunned and greatly undermined the morale of Tokhtamysh's troops even before the battle began" [3; p. 49]. In preparation for this battle, Amir Temur for the first time built a battle formation in seven kuls (corps) in an unconventional way. This gave him an advantage over the enemy in creating a more powerful reserve. Sharafiddin Ali Yazdi writes about this as follows: "Sohibkiran himself went and organized the army in seven kuls. No king built his army like this and I have not heard of this" [4; p.136].

The third distinctive feature was the trick that Amir Temur used to completely demoralize the Mongolian army. On the third day, in the midst of the battle, Tokhtamysh's standard-bearer, who had secretly gone over to Amir Temur's side, threw the standard to the ground (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Tokhtamysh's standard-bearer overturns the banner and throws it to the ground



In those days, the banner played an important role in maintaining high morale and fighting spirit among the warriors. Its overturning meant the death of the leader or the defeat of the entire army. Seeing that the banner was overturned, Tokhtamysh's army panicked and fled so quickly that, not seeing the main banner and not knowing where to gather, they scattered and were mostly exterminated: some died from weapons, others drowned in the Volga [5; p.170].

Battle of the Terek River (April 1395). Before the battle began, Tokhtamysh managed to transport his army across the Terek River before the approach of Amir Temur's troops, build obstacles and make the only crossing impossible. Seeing this, Sahibkiran sent his army along the southern (right) bank, and Tokhtamysh's army went along the northern (left) bank. Both sides, watching each other, continued moving for three days.

On the third day, Amir Temur effectively used the following military trick: he ordered to set up camp, and when darkness fell, to leave women in the camp, dressed in armor and helmets, to imitate a long halt of the army in the camp for rest and not to leave it until they were removed by his order. He ordered all the soldiers to take two more horses, in addition to his own, and under cover of night to move at a forced march back to the crossing point.

Within three days (according to other sources, one night), Sahibkiran's army reached the crossing, forded the Terek and moved at an accelerated march towards Tokhtamysh's camp (Figure 3).



Figure 3. The crossing of A. Timur's troops across the Terek River using military trickery



Tokhtamysh's army still continued to stand in its camp without moving, since Tokhtamysh was convinced that Amir Temur's army also continued to be in the camp on the opposite bank of the river.

As they approached Tokhtamysh's camp, Amir Temur gave his soldiers one day of rest and began to build a battle formation for the upcoming battle [7; p.172-173]. The appearance of Sahibkiran's troops in the rear was a complete surprise for Tokhtamysh. He began to prepare for the battle in a hurry, but Amir Temur already had the strategic initiative, and in this battle, he defeated Tokhtamysh.

By winning these two battles, achieved through the skillful and effective use of unconventional actions and military cunning techniques, Amir Temur successfully accomplished military-strategic tasks and achieved the main political goal. Tokhtamysh suffered crushing defeats, and the Golden Horde lost its power and disintegrated into small khanates, which contributed to the final liberation of the Russian principalities from Mongol dependence.

Battle of Ankara (July 1402). In the victory over the army of the most powerful Ottoman Empire of that time, Sultan Boyazid, in the Battle of Ankara in July 1402, an important role was also played by the successful use of military cunning by Amir Temur.

First, Sahibkiran besieged Ankara, behind whose walls the Turkish army had taken refuge. Then, in order to take an advantageous position for his troops and force the enemy to accept battle from an inconvenient position, he lifted the siege of the city, withdrew the army to a location favorable for building a battle line, and destroyed the only source of water that fed the camp of Boyazid's troops.

Very soon they began to feel thirsty, which had a negative impact on the morale of the Turkish Sultan's soldiers, and the long-term non-payment of wages caused great discontent among them and the multi-ethnic 18,000-strong Asian mercenary army of Boyazid. Amir Temur took advantage of this circumstance very effectively. Through secret negotiations, 18,000 Tatar mercenaries went over to Sahibkiran's side in the midst of the battle, which significantly weakened the right flank of the Turks, and this in turn created good conditions for the rapid encirclement of the main forces of Boyazid's troops and his defeat. (Figure 4.)

As a result of the defeat of the troops of Sultan Boyazid in the Battle of Ankara in July 1402, in this leader with the beginning of the Middle Ages, the masterful use of Amir Temur military tricks, successfully achieved in this important victory military-strategic tasks, the achievement of the main political goals: the Ottoman



Empire, a crushing defeat and the end of its existence. It disintegrated in possession [6; p.185].

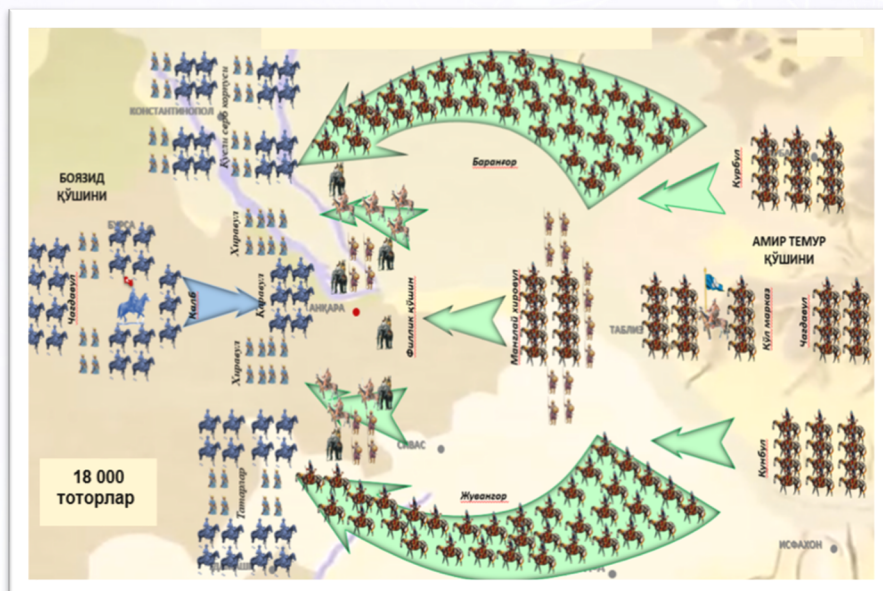


Figure 4. Battle of Ankara 1402 (flanking of the main Turkish forces).

And of course, the most important place in this victory over the strongest Turkish army at that time is occupied by the skillful and effective use of military cunning by Amir Temur both in preparation and during the battle.

Speaking about the military art of Amir Temur, it is impossible not to emphasize that his strategy and tactics were decisive. The strategic basis of campaigns and battles consisted of active offensive actions, skillful use of cavalry masses and infantry, rapid transition from defense to offensive actions, as well as forms and methods of warfare based on deep knowledge.

Summing up the activities of Amir Temur as a great military leader and commander, we can say that he created a strong army, which had great differences from the armies of other Asian states, which had its own characteristics. Amir Temur's army had a well-organized organization and a certain order of formation. Each warrior had to know his place in a dozen, a dozen in a hundred, a hundred in a thousand and a thousand in the fog. The troops were able to move in formation and were distinguished by the color of their equipment, clothing and banners.

The great commander considered the strictest discipline and centralization of army leadership, the essence of which was that all troops were subordinated to a single command, to be the most important condition for success in war and in the implementation of strategic and operational-tactical plans. All commanders were subordinate to the commander-in-chief and strictly carried out their duties. “I suggested to all the chiefs,” wrote Temur in the “Code,” “that they carry out my



orders with the strictest precision. A chief or a simple soldier who dared to evade or violate my instructions was subject to severe punishment” [7; p. 46].

The main goal of Timur’s military campaigns was to protect his country from external enemies and provide a peaceful life for the people. His victorious campaigns led to the formation of a huge empire, where a strict centralized system of governance, the safety of trade routes and the peace of the people were ensured.

Vast territories of Eurasia: from Central Asia in the east to the Aegean Sea in the west were subordinated to Amir Temur. Two huge empires of the East – Turkish and Egyptian, submitted to the great commander.

The historical greatness of Amir Temur consists in the fact that he fulfilled three epochal missions assigned to him by history itself:

- ***The first mission*** is to unite the territories of Central Asia into a single centralized state, creating safe conditions for the life of its people;
- ***The second mission*** is the defeat of the Golden Horde by Sahibkiran, after which it was never able to restore its former power. This, in turn, contributed to the weakening of its power over the Russian principalities and created the conditions for the final liberation from Mongol dependence. With the collapse of the Golden Horde, the main route of the Great Silk Road from China to Europe now passed through the state of Amir Temur, the road was carefully guarded, caravans with traders felt completely safe, the only condition for them was mandatory trade in the cities of the state of Sahibkiran;
- ***Amir Temur’s third mission*** is connected with the victory over the Ottoman Sultan Bayezid in July 1402 in the Battle of Ankara. Having defeated the Ottoman Empire, Amir Temur contributed to its fragmentation into small possessions and eliminated the Ottoman threat hanging over Europe. Now Europe could “breathe a sigh of relief”. It took 50 long years for this state to be reunited. This half-century respite was very important for the states of Central and Eastern Europe. It delayed the Ottoman expansion to the West for half a century. And only in 1453 did Sultan Mehmet II besiege Constantinople, capture it, give it the name Istanbul and make the city his capital.

Considering the activities of Amir Temur as an outstanding and progressive politician of his time, one cannot help but note that he was undoubtedly a brilliant military leader, combining the wisdom of a statesman. He stopped feudal strife, a bloody struggle for power, created the most powerful centralized state and a strong army under his control (Figure 5).



In the state of Amir Temur, all spheres of spiritual culture reached unprecedented prosperity. In his era, science and literature, architecture and urban development, folk traditions, rituals, holidays, and sports games were powerfully developed. And this in turn contributed to the creation and expansion of various educational centers, which quite rightly became the basis of the Eastern Renaissance and gave a powerful impetus to the further enrichment of world culture.

CONCLUSIONS

1. We still have to study in more depth the historical legacy of our great ancestor, deeply comprehend his activities in building a powerful state and creating a strong army, and especially the role and place of military cunning and non-standard actions in his military art.
2. Deep knowledge and solid assimilation by the officer corps of the rich historical heritage in the field of military development and the military leadership skills of Amir Temur will significantly expand their military horizons and worldview, and will also serve as a basis for activities in the further development of the Armed Forces of our state at the present stage.



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