

AMIR TIMUR – THE FOUNDER OF A CENTRALIZED STATE AND MILITARY LEADER

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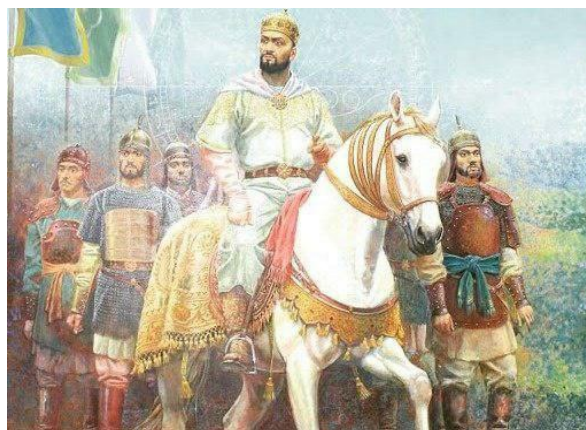
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Abstract: This article describes the brief life and activities of great warlord Amir Timur, his bravery in front of people, his loyalty and boundless love for the homeland and his people, his military activities, management system.

Key words: state, Maverannahr, Khurasan, empire, statesman, development, culture, history, strata, scholar, army, warrior.

Amir Timur – a distinguished statesman, a talented military leader, a skilled diplomat, a patron of science and culture, a figure who made a significant contribution to the development of human civilization.

Thanks to Amir Timur's unification of vast geographical territories with varying levels of culture into a single centralized state, conditions were created for a flourishing of culture, which scholars later termed the "Timurid Renaissance" [1]



During the reign of Amir Timur, a new type of statehood was first established in Central Asia. In his governance, he relied on three principles: steadfast faith, justice, and strong authority, the foundation of which was the principle "Strength in Justice." More than 600 years have passed since the death of Amir Timur, yet interest in this remarkable figure persists, and historians from many countries continue to study his life and activities, dedicating their works to him. [2]

Amir Timur was born on April 8, 1336, in the settlement of Khoja-Ilgar near the city of Kesh (now Shahrisabz). Amir Timur's father, Amir Taragai, was from a noble family of the Barlas clan, belonging to the military nobility of beks. In his renowned work, "Empire of the Steppes", René Grousset wrote about Amir Timur: "Timurid historians attempted to trace his lineage back to one of Genghis Khan's companions and even to attribute it to the Genghizid family. In reality, he was in no way Mongolian, he was a Turk. He belonged to one of the noble families of Transoxiana, belonging to the Barlas clan and possessing estates around Kesh, of which they were rulers." [3]

In 1370, at a kurultai of local nobility and military leaders, Amir Timur was proclaimed ruler of Maverannahr. Declaring Samarkand as the capital, Timur turned his attention to the organization of internal affairs within his state. His primary task was overcoming fragmentation and uniting disparate holdings into a strong, centralized state. Amir Timur retained the Mongol administrative system – the division into tumans – appointing loyal individuals as heads of tumans and hazrab.

The reign of Amir Timur lasted 35 years. He established a centralized state stretching from the Indus and Ganges to the Syr Darya and Zeravshan rivers, from the Tian Shan mountains to the Bosphorus. In addition to Maverannahr and Khwarazm, Amir Timur's state included Ferghana, Shash, the regions surrounding the Caspian Sea, Afghanistan, Turkey, India, Iran, Iraq, the Caucasus, the southern territories of Russia, and several countries of Western Asia. In total, he managed to unite 27 states and territories.

Timur, in order to strengthen and expand his empire, created a powerful and battle-ready army. Timur himself was a brave and talented commander. He demonstrated his military talent, for example, in the Battle of Kunduzcha (Kundurca near Chistopol, Russia), defeating the formidable forces of Tokhtamysh, or in the Battle of Ankara, defeating the troops of the Ottoman Sultan Bayezid the Thunderbolt. Along with the trophies, they brought to Samarkand, Shahrissabz, and Bukhara prominent scholars, skilled artisans, musicians and others. Timur spent the acquired wealth on the improvement of cities and settlements. He not only improved the cities of Maverannahr, Turkestan, and Khurasan, but rebuilt many cities in conquered lands (for example, Baghdad, Derbent, Baylaqan, and others).



Overall, it is essential to emphasize that the primary outcomes of Amir Timur's military and political activities included the formation and development of a strong, centralized state, the liberation of the peoples of Central Asia from Mongol domination, the cessation of feudal civil strife, and the establishment of stability and order, as well as the restoration of the Central Asian section of the Great Silk Road.

Amir Timur also made a significant contribution to the economic and cultural development not only of Maverannahr, but also of the countries of Central and Near East, fostering their rapprochement.

In order to establish a powerful empire, Amir Timur placed great importance on foreign policy. Active diplomatic engagement facilitated the creation of strong relationships with numerous countries. The export and import of goods developed, and trade and economic relations were established with China, India, the Russian state, Spain, France, England, Byzantium, and other nations.

Under Amir Timur, artisanal production and trade experienced further development. Centers of craftsmanship and commerce included Samarkand, Bukhara, Tashkent, Termez, Kesh, Qarshi, and others. Timur's reign witnessed a revival of the material and spiritual culture of Maverannahr. Extensive urban construction projects were undertaken, attracting the finest architects of Central Asia and Khurasan. He paid particular attention to the cities of Samarkand and Shahrissabz.

The skillfully organized political administration of Amir Timur became the cause of a powerful cultural upsurge, the development of spirituality, and the growth of the people's prosperity.

Amir Timur's political views found expression in his "Regulations" ("Code"). These "Regulations" function as a kind of constitution, outlining the process of governing the state and all related aspects. The very word "Regulations" derives from "to arrange," "to lay out," and in a certain sense, "to codify." In this instance, "Regulations" is understood as a charter, a compendium of rules.

Timur's "Regulations" were compiled by him based on various life experiences and their profound reflection. The immediate impetus for creating the "Regulations" was the desire to summarize his own experience in state administration, to formulate the rules by which he lived and which he recommended his descendants observe. Amir Timur wrote: "May these rules serve them as guidance, both in their conduct and in the governance of the state, so that they may preserve the state I leave to them". [4]

Timur's "Regulations" serve as a sort of testament from Timur to his descendants and comprise two parts: a biography of Amir Timur from 1342 to 1381 and the "Regulations" themselves, that is, a unique guide to the organization of the state and the army.

Written in Old Uzbek, it survived to our time only in a 17th-century Persian translation. The "Regulations" dedicates considerable attention to the main pillars of the state: officials and military commanders, down to the rank-and-file soldier. A vital component of the state's governance system was the army, to the strengthening and improvement of which Amir Timur gave exceptional importance. The "Regulations" defines the rights and obligations of all, from the ruler to the common warrior. Timur's army was the largest and most powerful army of the Middle Ages, both in organizational and tactical terms. The army was structured, as mentioned above, according to the decimal system: divided into tens, hundreds, thousands, and ten thousand. Under Timur, the foundation of state governance became law and its strict enforcement, respect and adherence to the precepts of Islam, and a firm, consistent policy.

Timur, in his "Regulations," stated that state governance was based on twelve principles. "Now, instructions to my illustrious sons and capable grandsons, who are destined to rule the country; I made twelve principles my motto and, thanks to them, achieved such a degree of governance. With the aid of these principles, I conquered the land, ruled it, and adorned the throne..." [5].

Timur divided his state into four parts among his sons: Balkh was given to the eldest, Jahangir; Fars to Umarsheikh; Iraq and the Caucasus to Miranshah; and Khurasan to Shahrukh. However, Maverannahr remained under Timur's direct control. Consequently, the empire of Amir Timur comprised a collection of united feudal domains. The distribution of authority within the system of power reflected a high level of political and legal culture.

The "Regulations" begins with an exposition of 12 rules of state governance. Timur bequeathed to his descendants: "May these rules serve them as guidance both in their conduct and in the administration of the state, so that they may preserve the state I leave for them." Among the rules: the regular holding of kurultays (congress) on all vital matters of public life. These were conducted not only in Samarkand (the capital of the state) but also in other regions, depending on where Timur himself was located; reliance on 12 distinct strata of society (scholars, shaikhs, pious individuals, officers, warriors, and the common people, viziers and secretaries, physicians and astrologers, historians and chroniclers, elders, artisans of every kind, travelers); consultation with the wise; adherence to laws and justice; respect for officers and soldiers. [6]

The rights and obligations of the emirs were clearly defined in the "Regulation". Emirs, like viziers, were to be of noble lineage and possess qualities such as discernment, courage,

enterprise, caution, and thrift, as well as experience in living amongst soldiers and tolerance. As stated in the “Regulation”, the law was equal for all – for the vizier and the emir, as well as for common subjects.

The “Regulation” emphasized the importance of punishing all those who violate the laws, abuse their authority, or fail to fulfill their duties. It was particularly strict regarding those responsible for maintaining order, the state officials. Rules for both moral and material rewards for loyal subjects were also outlined – from the rank-and-file soldier and ordinary citizen to the highest-ranking state officials.

The “Regulations” defined the fundamental principles of sensible taxation policy, which serves as a criterion for the economic development of the state and the replenishment of the treasury. “When collecting taxes, one must be wary of burdening the people or devastating the provinces, because the impoverishment of the people leads to the impoverishment of the state treasury.” Taxes were determined by the productivity of the lands and were differentiated. The primary tax was the land tax – “kharja” (commodity, goods), which was collected only after the harvest.

The “Regulations” states that “... power not based on religion and law will not maintain its position and strength for a long time. Therefore, I founded the edifice of my greatness upon Islam, adding to its rules and laws which I strictly observed throughout my reign.” Evaluating the significance of the “Regulations”, the renowned historian, translator, and publisher of this book into French, L. Langlès, in 1787, wrote: “Timur bequeathed to his descendants, along with the empire, a gift even more precious – the art of preserving it” [6]. Therefore, this book constitutes an important document both concerning the history of state development and law.

Amir Timur’s primary contribution to the peoples of Central Asia lay in ending feudal fragmentation and internecine warfare, liberating Maverannahr from Mongol oppression, uniting its population, and laying the foundation for a centralized state, establishing peace, and exerting every effort for the country’s further development.

The state created by Amir Timur relied on all existing social strata of the time and was governed on the basis of legality. Timur ensured the supremacy of law within the country.

Amir Timur entered history as a great builder, a patron of science and culture. He demonstrated immense initiative and dedication in restoring what had been devastated by years of feudal fragmentation and disturbances in the people’s economy, in rebuilding cities, and in improving the country. He made an invaluable contribution to the development of science and culture within the realm.

Thus, the foundation of Amir Timur’s state policy was the principle: **“Strength lies in justice.”**

The success of Amir Timur’s state was predicated on the following factors:

State governance was based on proven and effective laws and regulations;

Crucial state decisions were made after deliberation by competent politicians, elders, and military commanders in councils;

The strength of the state ensured internal and external security of the country, which naturally formed the basis for stable socio-political development of society;

Islam served as a means to implement the state’s progressive policies, uniting and mobilizing citizens;

The state demonstrated a commitment to creating favorable conditions so that citizens, according to their individual abilities, could secure their material well-being;

The state regarded science and culture as vital factors in societal development;

The rulers possessed strong organizational skills and were educated proponents of enlightenment; The construction and betterment of the country were under the close attention of the state, and so forth.

Today, as our state successfully addresses the tasks of building a socially-oriented New Uzbekistan, many aspects of Amir Timur's legacy appear remarkably relevant. A primary priority at this stage is stability within society, peace, and harmony among the people. The foundation for such stability in Uzbekistan must be the continued strengthening of the state and the principles of civil society.

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