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THE EVOLUTION OF SAMARKAND DURING THE TIMURID DYNASTY AND THE INTERACTION AND FUSION OF ITS CIVILIZATIONS

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Abstract. In the latter half of the 14th century, Timur officially established a powerful empire centered in Central Asia, historically known as the Timurid Empire (1370–1507), ushering in more than a century of Timurid rule. The establishment of the Timurid dynasty marked the end of a long period of fragmentation and warfare, bringing unprecedented peace and order to Central Asia. Consequently, transportation networks rapidly expanded and improved, the economy flourished, and frequent exchanges of people and ideas took place, leading to a vibrant cultural scene. Timur and his successor, Ulugh Beg, prioritized imperial governance and urban development, designating Samarkand as the capital and investing heavily in its systematic planning and construction. Under the strong impetus of the state, Samarkand attracted outstanding artists, scholars, and craftsmen from Persia, India, Arabia, and even Europe, who collectively contributed to the city's development, fostering significant advancements in architecture, art, and technology. Therefore, during the Timurid dynasty, Samarkand not only served as the political and economic center of the empire but also developed into a brilliant international metropolis, becoming a crucial hub on the Silk Road and significantly promoting East-West trade and cultural exchange.

Keywords: cultural exchange, diversity, Timurid Dynasty, Samarkand.

Samarqandning Temuriylar sulolasi davridagi evolyutsiyasi, uning sivilizatsiyalarga o‘zaro ta’siri va uyg‘unlashuvi

Annotatsiya. XIV asrning ikkinchi yarmida Temur rasmiy ravishda O‘rta Osiyoda joylashgan, tarixda Temuriylar imperiyasi (1370–1507) nomi bilan mashhur bo‘lgan qudratli imperiyaga asos soldi. Temuriylar sulolasining barpo etilishi uzoq davom etgan tarqoqlik va urushlar davriga barham berib, O‘rta Osiyoda misli ko‘rilmagan tinchlik va osoyishtalikka erishdi. Binobarin, transport tarmoqlari jadallik bilan kengaydi va takomillashtirildi, iqtisod gullab-yashnadi, tez-tez odamlar va g'oyalar almashinuvi sodir bo‘ldi, bu esa jonli madaniy sahnaga olib keldi. Temur va uning vorisi Ulug‘bek imperatorlik boshqaruvi va shaharsozlikni birinchi o‘ringa qo‘yib, Samarqandni poytaxt etib belgiladilar va uni tizimli rejalashtirish va qurishga katta mablag‘ sarfladilar. Davlatning kuchli turtkisi ostida Samarqandga Fors, Hindiston, Arabiston va hatto Yevropadan taniqli rassomlar, olimlar va hunarmandlar jalb etilgan bo‘lib, ular birgalikda shahar rivojiga hissa qo‘shgan, me’morchilik, san’at va texnologiyada sezilarli yutuqlarga erishgan. Binobarin, Temuriylar sulolasi davrida Samarqand nafaqat imperiyaning siyosiy va iqtisodiy markazi bo‘libgina qolmay, balki yorqin xalqaro metropolga aylanib, Ipak yo‘lidagi hal qiluvchi markazga aylandi va Sharq va G‘arb savdo va madaniy almashinuvini sezilarli darajada rivojlantirdi.

Kalit so‘zlar: madaniy almashinuv, Temuriylar sulolasi,

Samarqand, xilma-xillik.

Эволюция Самарканда в период династии Тимуридов, а также взаимодействие и слияние его цивилизаций

Аннотация. Во второй половине XIV века Тимур официально основал могущественную империю в Центральной Азии, известную в истории как Тимуридская империя (1370–1507), положив начало более чем столетнему правлению Тимуридов. Установление династии Тимуридов ознаменовало конец длительного периода раздробленности и войн, принеся беспрецедентный мир и порядок в Центральную Азию. В результате быстро расширились и улучшились транспортные сети, процветала экономика, происходил частый обмен людьми и идеями, что привело к бурной культурной жизни. Тимур и его преемник, Улугбек, уделяли первостепенное внимание имперскому управлению и городскому развитию, назначив Самарканд столицей и вложив значительные средства в его систематическое планирование и строительство. Под сильным влиянием государства Самарканд привлекал выдающихся художников, ученых и ремесленников из Персии, Индии, Аравии и даже Европы, которые в совокупности внесли свой вклад в развитие города, способствуя значительному прогрессу в архитектуре, искусстве и технологиях. Таким образом, во времена династии Тимуридов Самарканд не только служил политическим и экономическим центром империи, но и превратился в блестящий международный мегаполис, став важнейшим узлом на Шелковом пути и значительно способствуя торговле и культурному обмену между Востоком и Западом.

Ключевые слова: династия Тимуридов, культурный обмен, многообразие, Самарканд.

Introduction. Throughout history, cities situated at the crossroads of great civilizations have preserved the most precious treasures of human heritage. Among these cities, Samarkand – located at the heart of the Great Silk Road and serving as the capital of the Timurid Empire – undoubtedly holds a unique place. The 14th and 15th centuries were not only an era of military and political genius under Amir Timur, but also a period of profound transformation in the city's social, architectural, economic, and intellectual structures, resulting from the remarkable system of cultural and scientific patronage he established.

The purpose of this article is to analyze the multidimensional evolution of Samarkand during the Timurid period, to demonstrate how the city became a center of synthesis and harmony between East and West, local and universal, science and art, and to evaluate the lasting contributions of this process to world civilizational history. Through Timur's conquests, artisans, scholars, and craftsmen brought from all directions turned the city into a "global laboratory", where Persian, Turkic, Mongol, Arab, Indian, and even European elements merged to create a new aesthetic and intellectual language.

From the magnificent madrasas of Registan Square to the Ulugh Beg Observatory; from the grandeur of the Bibi Khanum Mosque to the modernization of the city's water canals and trade networks – the changes that took place in every field were not merely an architectural ascent, but a civilizational project. This study examines Samarkand's evolution during this period not only as a reflection of political success, but as a unique historical model in which humanity's shared heritage was shaped, and diverse cultures coexisted through dialogue and harmony rather than conflict.

Literature Review on the Topic.

1. Primary Sources and Works on General Historical Context

a) Early Sources

Ibn Arabshah's "History of Timur" – Despite being written from an adversarial perspective, it provides valuable information about the life and development of Samarkand. Sharafuddin Ali Yazdi's "Zafarnama" – The official Timurid history containing detailed records of the city's construction projects and administrative structure. Clavijo and Ruy González de Clavijo's "Embassy to Samarkand" – The diary of the Spanish ambassador offering a firsthand view of Samarkand during Timur's reign.

b) Modern General Studies

Beatrice Forbes Manz's "The Timurid Samarkand" – A deep study of the city's political and social structure. S. A. Azimjanova's "Architecture of the Timurid Period" – A systematic study of architectural evolution. R. D. McChesney's "Central Asian Culture" – A broad examination of economic and cultural interaction processes.

2. Literature on Architecture and Urban Planning

a) Major Works

G. A. Pugachenkova's "Architectural Monuments of Samarkand" – Analyzes changes in architectural styles and influences from various cultures. L. Yu. Mankovskaya"s "Timurid Architecture" – Studies the synthesis of Persian, Turkic, and local traditions. Robert Hillenbrand's "Islamic Architecture" – Interprets Samarkand's architecture within the broader context of the Islamic world.

b) Specialized Studies

A. M. Pribytkova's "Samarkand School of Architecture" – Identifies the city's distinctive stylistic features. Bernard O'Kane's "Timurid Art" – Explores the synthesis of cultures in decorative arts and painting.

Research Methodology. During the research, the methods of synthesis, abstraction, historicism, and logic were used.

Synthesis (extraction) is the process of combining the parts, aspects, parts, and elements separated by analysis into a single whole. The synthesis method allows the researcher to understand the connections and connections between the parts, aspects, and elements of the whole and their relationships with the whole.

Abstraction is the separation and study of the properties of the objects under study, excluding the private, less significant aspects, revealing their essence.

Historicism is a method of theoretical knowledge of the unity of the processes of emergence, development, and decay of the object or phenomenon under study, its connection with other events in the process of historical development. Historicity is understood as the expression in thought of the process of the emergence, existence, development and decay or disappearance of the object or phenomenon under study in specific conditions.

Logicality is the expression of this historicity in the researcher's mind in the form of a generalized, abstracted, concretized, reduced, abstract concreteness purified from coincidences. Logicality expresses the most necessary and basic aspects, properties, and laws of historicity. Historicity and logic are closely related.

Analysis and results. *The Founding of the Timurid Dynasty.* In the latter half of the 14th century, a remarkable military commander and political leader, Timur, rose to prominence in Central Asia. He unified a vast territory stretching from present-day Georgia to the Indian subcontinent, encompassing vast lands in West Asia, Central Asia, and South Asia. In 1370, Timur officially established a powerful empire centered in Central Asia, historically known as the Timurid Empire (1370–1507), ushering in more than a century of Timurid rule. The establishment of the Timurid dynasty ended a long period of fragmentation and warfare, bringing unprecedented peace and order to Central Asia. Consequently, transportation networks rapidly expanded and improved, the economy flourished, and cultural exchange thrived. During this period, Central Asia, as a crucial hub between East and West, initiated an era of multi-civilizational exchange and integration. Historically, Central Asia served as the "central square" of the world's four great civilizations - the meeting point of Chinese civilization, ancient Babylonian civilization, Indian civilization, and Aegean civilization. It was also the region where nomadic and settled agricultural peoples interacted most frequently,

competed most fiercely, and clashed most significantly. Genghis Khan's westward campaigns were not only military conquests but also facilitated interaction and exchange among diverse ethnic groups, promoting the spread of Central Asian civilization and the integration of diverse cultures. The dynasty created by Timur was centered in Central Asia, encompassing vast regions of northern nomadic powers and the centers of southern agricultural Islamic civilization. It inherited the legacy of the Chagatai Khanate, one of the four Mongol khanates, and also belonged to the Islamic world. Therefore, the Timurid dynasty was influenced by both Turkic-Mongol and Persian-Islamic traditions. Timur's subjects included both nomadic peoples and settled Persian agriculturalists, demonstrating that the Timurid dynasty was built on the integration of multiple civilizations. From a holistic historical perspective, examining the formation and development of Central Asian cities in terms of the overall development and unity of world history, the various ethnic groups and civilizations of Central Asia, through their interactions and continuous development, gradually broke down their isolation and fragmentation, ultimately merging into a closely interconnected global unity. Cities are one of the most important symbols of human civilization. The heart of a city is its culture, and this culture revolves around the chain of interaction between people and the city. Timur recognized the role of cities in his self-glorification and the expansion of his rule, and therefore vigorously built and developed cities. Timur's strong support and promotion facilitated the formation and development of cities, and the frequent cultural exchanges added new elements to Samarkand. The blending of different civilizations brought unprecedented prosperity to Samarkand, resulting in a city that retained elements of Egyptian, Greek, and Jewish cultures, forming a diverse pattern of coexistence and intermingling of various cultures.

Cities in Central Asia have historically enjoyed continuous prosperity, not only experiencing significant growth in number and size but also gradually improving in functional zoning, such as palaces, mosques, residential areas, markets, and commercial streets. The development and construction of these cities were inseparable from the support of the natural environment, such as latitude, water sources, and climate, which profoundly influenced the production and activities of the population, and thus played a role in the formation and distribution of cities. As the crossroads of the ancient Silk Road, cities in Central Asia not only promoted the first great integration and innovation of Eastern and Western civilizations but also played a crucial role in trade and economic development. Cities nurture culture, culture makes cities immortal, and cities spread civilization and promote cultural integration. Storing, transmitting, and creating culture is a fundamental mission of cities. Large-scale conquests of other peoples inevitably lead to extensive interaction, integration, and assimilation between different ethnic groups and cultures.

Timur's Achievements in Urban Development. Timur's emphasis on urban development was reflected not only in policy support but also in the actual allocation of resources and implementation of plans. Samarkand, an ancient city located on the Silk Road, served as the capital of the Timurid Empire and was considered an important showcase of the empire's glory. Emperor Timur spared no effort, utilizing vast human, material, and financial resources, to transform it into a model city that combined functionality and artistry. Under his leadership, the city layout was meticulously designed, with wide and orderly streets, a well-developed water supply system, and comprehensive public facilities, providing residents with convenient living conditions. At the same time, Timur paid particular attention to the diversity and innovation of architectural styles, widely incorporating architectural techniques and aesthetic concepts from different civilizations. This open and inclusive attitude resulted in Samarkand's architecture exhibiting a unique multifaceted character, combining the grandeur of Islamic mosques, the exquisite elegance of Persian gardens, and the rugged features of some local traditions [1.387-388]. These buildings were not only functional spaces but also symbols of cultural exchange and integration, reflecting the highly developed level of civilization and interaction during the Timurid dynasty.

Samarkand during the Timurid period was not only the administrative center established by the rulers in the conquered territories, but also a radiating center for interactions among numerous ethnic groups, laying a solid foundation for promoting inter-ethnic exchange and the blending of Eastern and Western cultures. Although these central cities were "oases" in the "desert", they

influenced the surrounding regions and the local populations living together, and even the religiously conservative Jewish communities were at one point impacted by Greek culture. From 1370 to 1390, Timur placed great importance on the development of national industry and commerce. He ordered the construction of a commercial market spanning the entire city of Samarkand and encouraged merchants to set up shops there. It is recorded that in a letter to King Charles VI of France, Timur strongly requested that France send merchants, stating, “The world prospers because of merchants” [2.50]. This shows that Timur placed great importance on commercial development. Subsequently, Samarkand gradually rose to become an international commercial metropolis, where merchants from various countries and rare goods from all corners of the world converged.

A deeper exploration of the cultural fusion within the Timurid dynasty during the medieval period and its impact on the rise of Samarkand will not only help us deepen our understanding of the political, economic, and cultural aspects of contemporary Central Asian countries, but also reveal that Samarkand experienced its most significant development during the Timurid dynasty in the 14th and 15th centuries, serving as the capital of the powerful Timurid Kingdom. Due to its location between China and Central Asia, it was historically a vital hub for trade and commerce. Numerous research findings on Samarkand have been produced both domestically and internationally. Primary sources such as the “Shahrukh’s Travels”, “Babur's Memoirs”, “Marco Polo‘s Travels”, and “Clavijo‘s Embassy to Samarkand”, edited by Shahrukh, are invaluable for studying the city of Samarkand, providing a wealth of data on Samarkand during the Timurid period. These primary sources meticulously document the city's layout, architectural styles, and social life at the time. In-depth analysis of these materials reveals that the architectural style of Samarkand during the Timurid dynasty exhibited a diverse character. Architectural elements from different regions and ethnic groups blended together, incorporating the opulent decorative style of Persia, the practical architectural concepts of the Turkic people, and influences from architectural techniques of the Central Plains of China. This diverse architectural style was not only evident in palaces and religious buildings but also widely present in residential buildings and public facilities, becoming an important component of Samarkand's urban culture.

The Spanish envoy Clavijo noted that during the Timurid dynasty, the number of artisans from various regions in Transoxiana exceeded 150,000 [3.157]. Indeed, handicrafts flourished in Central Asia. Timur relocated numerous artisans captured during his foreign campaigns to Samarkand and other cities, including weavers, gilders, glassmakers, weaponsmiths, and potters, which greatly boosted the development of handicrafts in the region, especially in the capital city of Samarkand. As Clavijo described, in this capital city, there was no shortage of skilled craftsmen in any trade [4.280]. Therefore, in contrast to the flourishing state of handicrafts during the Timurid dynasty, the city of Samarkand incorporated elements of diverse cultures.As the former capital of the Timurid Empire, Samarkand remained a center of weapons manufacturing in Transoxiana until the early 16th century, producing a variety of weapons including swords, sabers, daggers, battle axes, armor, and helmets. Clavijo commented that, “In the early 15th century, the weapons manufactured in Samarkand were still outdated, and the craftsmen's iron casting techniques were also poor” [5.132]. However, by the latter half of the 15th century, the quality of weapons manufactured in the region had significantly improved and began to be sold to areas beyond Transoxiana. Building on the solid foundation of over a century of development under the Timurid dynasty, the khanate's handicrafts maintained a high degree of specialization. This specialization strongly contributed to the economic and cultural revival of Samarkand, leading to the rapid development of the city. It greatly enriched the cultural life of the Transoxiana region. Samarkand’s weapon manufacturing not only achieved significant technological advancements, but its craftsmanship also gradually displayed a unique artistic style. Craftsmen combined traditional Islamic motifs with local Central Asian geometric patterns, transforming weapons from mere practical military equipment into works of art that showcased status and prestige [6.52-53]. This manufacturing philosophy, combining practicality and aesthetic value, further enhanced Samarkand’s position in regional trade. With the export of weapons, Samarkand’s cultural influence also expanded, attracting more merchants, scholars, and artists, injecting new vitality into the city’s diverse culture.

Painting styles are diverse. Civilized interaction is a necessary condition and method for human existence and development. Miniature painting, a form of book illustration art, primarily involves creating illustrations for literary works. From papermaking to the final book, everything is handcrafted. Miniature painting flourished in Persia, a result of the interaction of various external and internal factors. The influence of the Chinese imperial court painting system and its artistic style was one of the most important external factors. The art of miniature illustration emerged during the Ilkhanate dynasty (1256–1355), when Persia was ruled by the Mongols. The Mongols introduced the imperial court painting system, which had been established in China during the Song Dynasty, to Persia, causing a fundamental and qualitative transformation in book illustration art in West Asia. After about a century of development, it matured at the end of the 14th century and reached its peak of prosperity during the Timurid dynasty (1370–1507), becoming an outstanding representative of Central Asian painting art. Thanks to the efforts of Timur and his descendants, such as Shahrukh and Baysunghur, Central Asian cities like Samarkand experienced significant development. Timur not only brought artisans, literati, scholars, and artists from other regions to Samarkand but also promoted the prosperity and development of local art, architecture, and other economic activities.

During the reign of Shahrukh (1380-1420), after the time of Timur, Shahrukh was a great patron of the arts. He loved literature and art, and under his rule, Herat flourished, especially in the fields of art, literature, and history, which received greater attention and development. Shahrukh paid particular attention to diplomatic activities [7.47-48]. In 1419, China sent envoys to Shahrukh, and in the same year, Shahrukh also sent an embassy to China. This embassy returned to Herat in 1422. Furthermore, Shahrukh was committed to diplomatic relations with China, maintaining very close ties with the Ming Dynasty, with frequent exchanges of embassies between the two countries. This initiative significantly promoted cultural exchange in painting between the two countries and fostered multifaceted exchanges between Central Asia and the Ming Dynasty.

With the exchange and mutual learning of different cultures and arts in Central Asia, their visual characteristics have formed unique artistic styles in different historical periods. The research focuses on the images, connotations, and development of miniature paintings during the Timurid dynasty, exploring the historical and cultural origins of world civilization exchange and mutual learning, and elevating the social phenomena reflected in miniature paintings to the level of ethnic integration.

The Herat and Samarkand schools of painting, as the two pillars of miniature painting within the Timurid dynasty, not only promoted the flourishing of domestic miniature painting but also profoundly influenced the painting styles of surrounding countries. Timurid miniature painting had a far-reaching impact on the Ming Dynasty.

In summary, although academic research on Samarkand in the Timurid dynasty and “Silk Road civilization exchanges” is still insufficient, the influence of Timur the Great and his empire on Samarkand is evident. Samarkand is not only one of the oldest cities in Central Asia but also an important hub of the Silk Road, and the Timurid era was a peak in its development history. References indicate that Timur the Great created a powerful Timurid Empire with its capital in Samarkand, and its political, military, and cultural influence was profound. Samarkand thus became the political, economic, and cultural center of Central Asia, and many famous buildings and cultural sites were built during the Timurid era.

Conclusion. Timur and his successors established Samarkand as their capital, investing heavily in systematic planning and construction. They improved the city layout, water supply, and public facilities, and emphasized diversity in architectural styles, incorporating Persian, Islamic, and local architectural techniques to create a unique character. The city served not only as the political center of the empire but also as a hub for industry, commerce, and international trade. Timur built a commercial market that spanned the entire city, attracting merchants from various countries and making it a thriving center of global trade.

1. Specific Manifestations and Impacts of Cultural Exchange.

Samarkand, by attracting artists, scholars, craftsmen, and captured artisans from Persia, India, Arabia, and Europe (in industries such as textiles, gilding, and weapons manufacturing),

fostered significant advancements in architecture, art, technology, and handicrafts. The high degree of specialization in handicrafts led to the development of weapons manufacturing techniques that were both practical and aesthetically pleasing, and these weapons were exported, driving economic and cultural revival. At the same time, the city became a center of interaction and exchange for multiple ethnic groups, where Greek and Jewish cultures, among others, coexisted and influenced each other, promoting East-West trade and cultural dissemination.

2. Historical Significance and Research Value.

Samarkand in the 14th and 15th centuries represented the most crucial period of development for the Timurid dynasty. As a key node on the Silk Road and an international metropolis, it significantly contributed to the process of global integration. Its development experience provides historical context for understanding the politics, economy, and culture of contemporary Central Asian countries. Primary sources such as the “Travels of Shahrukh” and “The Embassy of Clavijo” provide detailed accounts of the city’s layout, architectural style, and social life, confirming its multicultural characteristics and level of civilization and interaction.

3. Samarkand experienced unprecedented development during the Timurid period, leveraging its unique geographical location to facilitate cultural exchange and the integration and development of diverse cultures along the Silk Road. During this time, Samarkand was not only a transit point for trade but also a crucial hub for the dissemination of knowledge and technology. Scholars from different regions exchanged ideas there, contributing to advancements in astronomy, mathematics, medicine, and other disciplines. Simultaneously, the city’s architectural styles and artistic creations reflected the interweaving of various cultural elements, forming a unique aesthetic system. This coexistence and interaction of diverse cultures not only shaped the urban landscape of Samarkand but also left behind a rich cultural heritage, becoming an important case study for understanding cultural exchange in the medieval period.

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