



RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE IN CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES DURING THE ERA OF AMIR TEMUR

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Abstract. *This article highlights Amir Temur's role not only as a military leader but also as a key figure in architectural and cultural development across Mawarannahr and Khorasan. He contributed immensely to the construction of cities, mosques, madrasas, mausoleums, palaces, gardens, and baths, with enduring examples in Samarkand, Shahrisabz, Bukhara, Tashkent, and Turkistan. Amir Temur personally oversaw building projects, restoration works, and urban planning, while attracting skilled craftsmen, architects, and artists. His monumental constructions, such as the Bibi-Khanym Mosque in Samarkand, illustrate his dedication to culture, science, and public welfare, and have been praised in historical sources including Dastur al-Muluk, Zafarnama, and the accounts of Ruy González de Clavijo.*

Keywords: *Amir Temur, Mawarannahr, Samarkand, Shahrisabz, Bukhara, Tashkent, Turkistan, Architecture, Construction, Mosques, Madrasas, Palaces, Gardens, Bibi-Khanym Mosque, Timurids, Culture, Art, Historical heritage, Urban development.*

INTRODUCTION

Amir Temur, widely known as Tamerlane, is celebrated not only as a formidable military leader but also as a visionary patron of architecture, culture, and science (Bartold, 1963; Rou, 2005). During his reign, he significantly transformed the urban and cultural landscape of Mawarannahr and Khorasan, particularly in major cities such as Samarkand, Shahrisabz, Bukhara, Tashkent, and Turkistan (Keren, 2010). Beyond his military campaigns, Temur personally supervised numerous construction projects, including mosques, madrasas, palaces, mausoleums, and gardens, attracting skilled artisans and architects from across the Islamic world (Clavijo, 1928). His architectural initiatives symbolized the power, prestige, and cultural ambitions of his empire, leaving a lasting legacy that continues to inspire admiration today (Bartold, 1963).



MAIN PART

It should be emphasized that while Amir Temur participated in numerous military campaigns, he was also a key driving force behind major construction developments in Maverannahr and Khurasan (Yazdi, 15th c.). He was not only a military commander but also a great builder and patron of science, culture, and the arts (Rou, 2005).

The unparalleled achievements of Amir Temur in architecture are evident in the monuments preserved in Shahrisabz, Samarkand, Bukhara, Tashkent, and Turkistan (Keren, 2010).

Amir Temur gave special attention to construction and restoration projects in Samarkand in order to elevate the city's global reputation (Clavijo, 1928). In *Dastur al-Mulk*, Khoja Samandar Termizi describes Temur's construction policy as a conscious effort aimed at public welfare and prosperity (Samandar Termizi, 1638–1740).

According to Clavijo's observations—cited by Kayun—Temur's architectural projects in Kesh astonished even the most skilled European craftsmen (Kayun, 2001; Clavijo, 1928). Amir Temur also established a tradition of commemorating military victories through monumental architecture and brought skilled masters from India, Shiraz, Isfahan, and Damascus to Maverannahr (Keren, 2010).

In general, Amir Temur and the Timurids undertook extensive construction projects, including madrasas, mosques, palaces, mausoleums, gardens, and baths, richly decorated by craftsmen and artists (Bartold, 1963). The gardens of Samarkand were renowned to such an extent that they were compared with legendary gardens of the Islamic world (Rou, 2005).

Amir Temur's construction activities extended beyond Maverannahr to other regions under his control. This is documented in *Zafarnama*, where Nizām al-Dīn Shāmī emphasizes that Temur regarded construction as a duty toward the welfare of humanity (Shami, 1425). Urban development projects in Baylaqan and Herat further illustrate the scale and organization of Timurid construction policy (Matla' al-Sa'dayn, 15th c.).

During Amir Temur's reign, Samarkand underwent a dramatic transformation. As noted by the prominent historian V. Bartold, "the golden age of Muslim architecture is closely associated with Amir Temur and his descendants" (Bartold, 1963). This assessment is supported by Sharaf al-Din 'Ali Yazdī and the travel accounts of Ruy González



de Clavijo, both of whom emphasize Temur's direct supervision of urban projects (Yazdi, 15th c.; Clavijo, 1928).

In 1399, Amir Temur personally oversaw the construction of the Bibi-Khanym Mosque in Samarkand, dedicating it to his wife Saroy Mulk Khanum (Keren, 2010). L. Keren describes this project as one of the largest architectural undertakings of the Timurid era, involving dozens of architects, engineers, calligraphers, and craftsmen from across the empire (Keren, 2010).

The mosque later became known as Bibi-Khanym from the eighteenth–nineteenth centuries (Rou, 2005). Clavijo's diary further confirms Temur's personal involvement in presenting Samarkand's monuments to foreign envoys (Clavijo, 1928).

Jean-Paul Rou also notes that Amir Temur ordered the restoration of neglected Christian holy sites in Merv, demonstrating religious tolerance and respect for sacred architecture (Rou, 2005).

CONCLUSION

Amir Temur's reign represents a unique synthesis of military power and cultural patronage. His architectural initiatives profoundly shaped the urban identity of Central Asia, particularly Samarkand, which became a symbol of Timurid civilization. Through monumental construction and urban planning, Amir Temur established a lasting architectural and cultural legacy that continues to define the historical heritage of the region (Bartold, 1963; Keren, 2010).

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