



MIRZO ULUGH BEG'S PATRONAGE OF LITERATURE AND HIS ROLE IN THE CULTURAL LIFE OF FIFTEENTH-CENTURY TRANSOXIANA

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Abstract. *In the development of world astronomy, medieval Eastern astronomy—particularly the scholarly activity of Central Asian scientists—occupies a special place. During this period, especially in the fields of the theory of the motion of the Sun, Moon, and planets, as well as practical astronomy related to determining time and geographical coordinates, Central Asian scholars, including Uzbek intellectuals, left a remarkably rich scientific legacy. At the same time, belles-lettres also underwent a significant stage of development. During the reign of Mirzo Ulugh Beg, literature flourished alongside the natural sciences in Samarkand and throughout Mawarannahr (Navoiy, 1997).*

Keywords: *Mawarannahr, belles-lettres, thinker, astronomy, literary gathering, scientific heritage, scholars, theory, practical astronomy, mathematics and philosophy.*

INTRODUCTION

Mirzo Ulugh Beg is remembered in history not only as a great astronomer and mathematician, but also as a patron who paid profound attention to literature. His role in the cultural life of fifteenth-century Samarkand and Mawarannahr was closely connected not only with science, but also with artistic creativity. Numerous sources provide information about his interest in poets and writers and his encouragement of their creative activity (Davlatshox, 1967).

Ulugh Beg's interest in belles-lettres is noted in such works as Alisher Navoi's *Majolis un-nafois*, Fakhri Heravi's *Ravzat us-salotin*, and Abu Tohirkhoja's *Samariya* (Navoiy, 1997; Davlatshox, 1967). Some sources also confirm his inclination toward poetry. For instance, Ulugh Beg's Persian verses reflect themes of beauty and kingship (Davlatshox, 1967).



MAIN PART

Mirzo Ulugh Beg studied not only the works of poets of his own era, but also the literary heritage of scholars who lived several centuries earlier. In *Tazkirat ush-shuaro*, Davlatshoh Samarqandi provides numerous examples illustrating Ulugh Beg's respect for poets (Davlatshox, 1967). For example, he highly valued the works of Jamoliddin and Kamoliddin Isfahani, who lived in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Additionally, the divan of the Shirvan poet Falaki Shirvani was presented to Ulugh Beg and personally read by him (Davlatshox, 1967). This demonstrates the breadth of Ulugh Beg's intellectual interests, extending beyond science to literature.

Within the Timurid dynasty, literary gatherings and scholarly debates among princes were widespread. Ulugh Beg's brother, Baysunghur Mirza, collected various manuscripts of the *Shahnameh* and commissioned a critical scholarly edition of the text. This work was read and discussed at Ulugh Beg's literary assemblies (Ahmedov, 1967). At the same time, considerable responsibility was placed on the study of valuable sources related to literary theory and criticism.

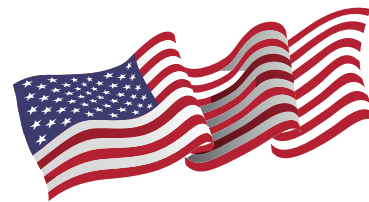
Mirzo Ulugh Beg's Interest in Literary Works

During his travels to other regions, Ulugh Beg also became acquainted with writers and their works. For example, Davlatshoh, who lived and worked in Herat, presented Ulugh Beg with his work *Nigoriston*. Several manuscript copies of this work are still preserved at the Institute of Oriental Studies named after Abu Rayhan Beruni (Davlatshox, 1338).

In Mawarannahr and Khorasan, belles-lettres primarily developed in Persian and Turkic languages. Ulugh Beg was well acquainted with the works of poets of his time and maintained direct relations with many of them. The poetry of Ismatullah Bukhari, Lutfiy, Atoiy, and Sakkokiy was highly esteemed during Ulugh Beg's reign (Lutfiy, 1987; Rustamov, 1963). Qasidas dedicated to Ulugh Beg reflect his respect for literature and his encouragement of poets (Buxoriy, 1987).

Poets Writing in the Turkic Language

Among the poets of Samarkand and Mawarannahr, many composed their works in the Turkic language. Poets such as Harimiy Qalandar, Mirzo Hoji Soghdiy, and Mawlono Sakkokiy were well known in their time (Navoiy, 1997). Ulugh Beg appreciated their creativity and provided them with support. In *Majolis un-nafois*, Alisher Navoi mentions these poets individually and emphasizes their relationship with Ulugh Beg (Navoiy, 1997).



Prominent poets such as Lutfiy also enjoyed Ulugh Beg's patronage. Although Lutfiy's Turkic poetic *Zafarnama* has not survived, existing verses allow us to obtain information about his connection with Ulugh Beg (Lutfiy, 1987). This further confirms Ulugh Beg's deep interest in literature.

The Harmony of Science and Literature

Ulugh Beg maintained active relations not only with poets, but also with scholars from various scientific disciplines. Shaykh Ahmad ibn Khudoydod Tarozi dedicated his work *Funun ul-balagha* to Mirzo Ulugh Beg. This treatise contributed to strengthening the status of the Turkic language as a scientific and literary medium (O'zbek tili va adabiyoti, 2003). In this way, Ulugh Beg's patronage made a significant contribution not only to belles-lettres, but also to literary studies and the development of science.

CONCLUSION

In the first half of the fifteenth century, Samarkand and Mawarannahr flourished not only in the fields of natural sciences and architecture, but also in belles-lettres and literary scholarship, largely due to the patronage and support of Mirzo Ulugh Beg. His attention to literature, encouragement of poets, and harmonious integration of science and the arts became one of the fundamental pillars of the cultural life of the period. Mirzo Ulugh Beg is remembered not only as a great scientist, but also as one of the leading patrons of literary life of his era (Navoiy, 1997; Rustamov, 1963; O'zbek tili va adabiyoti, 2003).

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