

RELATIONS BETWEEN REPRESENTATIVES OF DIFFERENT RELIGIONS IN THE TEMURID EMPIRE: THE EXAMPLE OF CHRISTIANITY

Kenjaev Sardor Nurmurod o'g'li

Independent researcher at the Department of Social Sciences of the Bukhara State Pedagogical Institute, Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Historical Sciences, Associate Professor.

sardorkenjayev46@gmail.com

+998931445555

Annotation: *This article analyzes the social, political, and cultural relations formed between representatives of various religions in the Timurid Empire using Christianity as an example. The article highlights the policy of religious tolerance that existed during the Timurid era, the role of Christian communities in society, and their participation in trade, diplomatic, and cultural relations. Also, on the basis of historical sources, the processes of cooperation and interaction between Muslims and Christians are studied, and the specific aspects of interfaith relations in the Timurid state are revealed.*

Keywords: *Timurids, Lev X, Christianity, tolerance, confession, diplomacy, culture, trade, cooperation, politics.*

The Timurid period is considered one of the significant milestones in Central Asian history, characterized by political stability, economic growth, and cultural progress. The empire established by Amir Temur and his successors in the late 14th and early 15th centuries covered vast territories and was inhabited by people belonging to various ethnic groups, cultures, and religious beliefs. In managing such a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional state, a policy based on religious tolerance, mutual respect, and compromise was of great importance. The last Christians in Samarkand and Central Asia were reportedly persecuted by his grandson, Mirza Ulugh Beg. However, due to the lack of reliable records, details regarding the decline of Syrian Christians in the region remain obscure. During the period of Russian rule in 1867, the construction of Orthodox churches in major cities to serve Russian and European settlers and officers led to the return of Christianity to the region.

He (Amir Temur) appeared in Europe at an unfavorable time for Christianity. The great disintegration of the Latin Church was accompanied by the plague of princes and feudal strife, and the weak Byzantine Empire, at whose gates the Ottoman Turks stood, submissively awaited the fate of its empire. Nevertheless, there is hope for Europe. From the East, the great commander, talented chess player, theologian, and master craftsman Amir Temur was advancing toward the lands of the Ottoman Turks under the command of

numerous cavalry units. Thus, in the 15th–16th centuries, Amir Temur was famous in European political circles (among the Catholic Church and the most powerful autocrats of that time); Pius II, Giovanni, who visited the court of Pope Leo X and Pope Clement VII in 1513, the geographer Ortelius, who was the cartographer of the Spanish King Philip II in 1575, and the historian of Charlemagne, Pedro Mexías, wrote about him. During his stay in Asia Minor, Amir Temur expressed his desire to establish regular trade relations with Western countries in diplomatic correspondence with King Charles VI of France and King Henry IV of England. One of the important conditions set by both sides was the provision of freedom of trade to merchants regardless of their religious affiliation.

The letters of the kings emphasized the need to increase the personal and commercial literacy of Christian merchants. In a letter from Henry IV, Mirza Miranshah was referred to as "Mirassa Amirassa." The King expresses gratitude for the King of Miran's friendly and benevolent attitude toward Catholics and for his "particular favor toward the clergy and Franco-Catholics, which ensured the personal and professional safety of Christian merchants and, at the same time, favored commercial interests." The letter expresses the hope that "the great sovereign, the patron of the Catholic faith... will not henceforth renounce such pious and blessed intentions," and since "his majesty has voluntarily, for the glory of God, chosen to conclude a friendly agreement with us on certain matters concerning state affairs and for the sake of peace from now on, let it be known to his majesty that we earnestly desire that this agreement be signed on our behalf by the said archbishop." The King of England expresses full confidence in Archbishop John: he is well-informed about the affairs of the English.

The letter concludes: "At our request and in the name of His Majesty, we ask you to fully trust [the Archbishop's] words, as well as to receive all those subordinate to him and several other persons specially assigned to him; describe everything to us precisely, and we, for our part, will fulfill His Excellency's wishes." The letter was written in Hertford, north of London, in February, evidently in 1402 (the year is not specified in the letter). Henry IV's letter to Amir Temur was written in response to Sahibkiran's letter, which has been preserved to this day. The above circumstances indicate that Amir Temur and the Timurids maintained diplomatic relations with neighboring countries in the history of international relations and diplomacy. It begins as follows: "Henry, by the grace of God, King of England and France, as well as ruler of Ireland, greetings and peace to the great and mighty King Temurbek, a friend who loves God, and the savior of all." The letter states that Amir Timur's constant friendly attitude toward the King of England (which he learned from Archbishop John) is highly valued in England, even if the King does not deserve it. Amir Timur was thanked for this. The king agreed to the proposal to establish free trade relations between the subjects of Amir Temur and those of Henry. He also writes: "We are

in favor of your continued sympathy for us and our subjects, if they come to your possessions, and if your merchants come to our possessions."

The conclusions drawn from Ibn Arabshah's data are also confirmed by the information left by Rui González de Clavijo, the ambassador of King Enrique III of Castile (Spain) (1390-1407), who visited the court of Amir Temur in 1403-1406. In his work "Diary of a Journey to the Palace of Temurbek in Samarkand," published after his return to his homeland Spain in 1406, he wrote about the peaceful and tranquil life of believers in the Jacobite, Greek Catholic, Nestorian, and Armenian Grigorian churches of the Christian religion in the state of Amir Temur. The work also mentions the spread of Christianity to China and India, and the subordination of Christians in these lands to the empire of Amir Temur.

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