

THE ADMINISTRATIVE GOVERNANCE SYSTEM OF AMIR TEMUR IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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Abstract. *This text is devoted to the governance policies of Amir Timur, his reformist activities, and foreign policy in the Middle East. Drawing upon the section “Laws of State Administration” from the work (“Temur’s Code”), the study highlights Timur’s righteousness, prioritization of the welfare of the people and religion, respect for esteemed individuals, and his experience in maintaining stable administration over conquered territories. Emphasis is placed on his humanity and justice in matters of taxation, provincial governance, and support for religious scholars and intellectuals. The text also addresses his policies of cooperation and peacebuilding with neighboring states and the prevention of internal conflicts. Additionally, the perspectives of French historian Jean-Paul Rouanet and other scholars are cited, stressing the necessity of evaluating Amir Timur’s activities within the historical context of his era.*

Keywords: *Amir Timur, governance policy, “Temur’s Code”, justice, reforms, taxation system, Middle East, religious figures, public welfare.*

In the chapter “Regulations for Governing the Sultanate” of Amir Temur’s Code, Timur extensively outlines his political views. He emphasizes that in every country he conquered, he honored the distinguished local figures—sayyids, ulama, nobles, and spiritual leaders—granting them respect, assigning them offices, and providing them with salaries. This chapter is particularly instructive in demonstrating Timur’s personal virtues and spiritual character. Contrary to the assertions of some biased scholars, Timur’s actions were not driven merely by personal gain, tribute collection, or conquest. Rather, his primary objectives were the welfare of the subjects, the promotion of Islam, and the establishment of justice in all conquered lands.

As highlighted in previous chapters, when the Sovereign led campaigns into neighboring territories, his foremost concern was the interests of Transoxiana (Mawara’un-Nahr), particularly its security. He understood that the peace and prosperity of his realm could only be ensured through the cooperation and loyalty of neighboring or subordinate rulers. From his own experience, Timur knew that discord or rivalry among neighbors or allies—reminiscent of the era of Amir Husayn’s rule—would inevitably lead to internecine warfare and unnecessary conflicts that could devastate the population and exhaust the state’s resources.

The strong administrative system established by Amir Timur is well attested in the acknowledgments, remarks, and illustrative accounts found in Temur's Code. A particularly compelling piece of evidence of the Sahibqiran's commitment to justice is his own statement: "[Of my own volition] I returned the governance of the province that submitted to me to its local administration," he writes, "and I honored them with gifts and generosity, bringing them into my service. Those who did not submit, I punished in accordance with their deeds²³". This passage provides substantial support for a comprehensive and accurate assessment of Amir Timur's achievements.

At this point, it is appropriate to cite a passage from the essay "Amir Timur" by the French scholar Jean-Paul Roux, who provided an exceptionally impartial and accurate evaluation of Timur's activities: "In recent years," the scholar writes, "an increasing number of historical studies published on the life and activities of Timur demonstrate a fair and unbiased approach toward him. This is not surprising, as for centuries historians who attempted to study Timur's deeds often evaluated them through the lens of their own era and prevailing ideologies." It should also be emphasized that many historians, when assessing Timur's activities, have limited themselves to a critical examination of events and incidents, neglecting to study the mindset, traditions, and worldview of people living in that era. Indeed, if we evaluate the wars, battles, and massacres of Timur's time through the eyes of modern individuals, they naturally appear horrifying and inhumane. In short, a common shortcoming among contemporary historians is their failure to recognize that the rulers of the 14th–15th centuries were products of the socio-political environment of their time. Customs and traditions that constituted the "laws of life" for people of that era naturally seem unnatural or inhuman to us, and judging them negatively would be unscientific²⁴.

It is evident that the French scholar, in his work, accurately summarized the main shortcomings characteristic of research conducted during the Soviet period. Indeed, the merits of historical figures should be assessed not from the perspective of the present day, but in the context of the role they played in their own time. Only in this way can historical truth be preserved and history remain unaltered.

When evaluated from the perspective of his own era, Amir Timur's activities must be recognized as truly grand and remarkable. Indeed, the unity of word and deed is evident at every step of his actions. His loyalty to his promises and the generous treatment of all rulers who did not resist him stand out as exemplary. For instance, Timur left the ruler of Shirvan, Amir Shaykh Ibrahim Darbandi, as well as the governors of Fars, Iraq, and

²³ "Түзуклар". Б. 119.

²⁴ Ж.П.Ру. Амир Темур. Эссе. | "Жаңон адабиети", журнали, 2002 йил, 1-сон, Б. 12. Француз тилидан Абдумурод Күчибоев таржимаси.

Kerman in their positions; he bestowed the city of Shiraz upon Shah Yahya; and he showed great favor to Kara Usman, Mutahhartan, Muhammad of Karaman, as well as to the Georgian ruler Buqrot (Bagration) and later to Gurgin (George VII). In particular, the respectful treatment of Sultan Yıldırım Bayezid, who was captured at the Battle of Ankara, and the pardon and restoration of authority to his sons—Amir Musa, Suleiman, and Isabek—demonstrate that Amir Timur's considerations regarding justice, the strengthening of Islam, and the protection of his subjects from tyrannical rulers were not mere formalities, but deeply principled and practical actions.

The Sahibqiran entrusted the governance of newly conquered territories to loyal and reliable officials. Certain regions were assigned to his sons and grandsons. In these vast domains, it became imperative to undertake constructive work and to strive for the welfare, stability, and well-being of the populace.

For this purpose, Amir Timur selected a group of distinguished and pious scholars and issued a decree assigning each of them to a specific border region of the state: "...so that they may travel to their designated areas, thoroughly examine the affairs of the country, and, if any injustice has been inflicted upon the oppressed or any act of violence committed against the weak, remove the thorn of harm from the feet of the afflicted. If anything has been forcibly taken, they shall verify it and restore it to them from the regional treasury. They are to document the situation and report it to the central authority so that, henceforth, such acts of oppression may be kept far from the people"²⁵. After describing these just measures, Shomiy also highlights another reflection of the Sahibqirān that was of crucial importance for the governance of his realm: "Up to this point, great effort has been exerted in the affairs of world conquest; from now on, the royal intention shall be devoted to elevating the symbols of global governance. Therefore, let no one hesitate to bring to our court any information they possess. Whatever pertains to the reform of the state and the protection of the oppressed, they must report without negligence, presenting it openly with trust and complete confidence"²⁶. In modern terms, Sahibqirān's statement can be regarded as a program of state significance. Shomiy's work also cites another decree of the Sahibqirān, which can be considered a programmatic document for his era: "Just as we have constructed prominent structures in the land of Turan, so too let there be lasting monuments in the land of Iran, in memory of His Majesty"²⁷.

²⁵ Низомиддин Шомий. Зафарнома. Форс тилидан Ю. Ҳакимжонов таржимаси. Нашрга тайёрловчи А.Үрринбоев. Тошкент, "Ўзбекистон" 1996. Б. 404.Б. 370.

²⁶ Шомий. "Зафарнома". Б.371.

²⁷ Шомий. "Зафарнома". Б.371.

Amir Timur regularly monitored the effectiveness of the administrative system he had established through trusted officials. To this end, ministers were appointed to each province, including newly conquered territories. In Temur's Code, this is described as follows:

"I have also ordered the appointment of three ministers to each province. One of them is responsible for the populace, ensuring the proper collection of taxes and submitting regular reports. He is to record the amounts of taxes, the names of taxpayers, and safeguard the funds collected from the people. The second minister oversees military affairs, maintaining accounts of the funds allocated to the army and those yet to be disbursed. The third minister is charged with regulating the property of the missing or absent, travelers and merchants, harvests accumulated through various means, the estates of the insane, and inheritance-less property, as well as fines collected under the judgment of the qazis and the Shaykh al-Islams"²⁸. Note the humanitarian and just spirit in which this directive was formulated. The final provisions of this instruction are imbued with profound human compassion:

"I have also commanded that the property of the deceased be delivered to their heirs. If no heir exists, it should be devoted to charitable works or sent to the Great Mosque of Mecca." Those who have labeled such a great figure—who institutionalized these principles of humanity as "cruel," "aggressor," or "bloodthirsty" are distorting historical truth. It is evident that such defamatory claims were deliberately made under the influence of particular political inclinations and ideological biases.

Amir Timur's tax system provides a notable example of his just governance over the territories under his authority. The Sahibqiran regarded the taxation system as a fundamental instrument for organizing and elevating the state, ensuring its prosperity and security. Consequently, he never allowed taxation to burden the populace unduly. He understood that oppression of the subjects would lead to the impoverishment of the country, the depletion of the state treasury, and ultimately the disintegration of the army, leaving the realm in a vulnerable condition. Establishing a fair tax system and preventing injustice toward the people formed one of the core pillars of Timur's administrative framework. He elaborated on these principles in detail in his work, Temur's Code²⁹.

In Amir Timur's administrative system, particular importance was attached to maintaining regular and accurate awareness of the state of the country, the army, and the populace. Designated officials were tasked with providing him with written reports on developments in each province and city, including the actions of local governors, the condition of the people, the activities of the military, and the movements of foreign or

²⁸ "Тузуклар" Б.125.

²⁹ "Тузуклар". Б. 122-125.

hostile forces. Strict and decisive measures were established to ensure the effectiveness and reliability of this reporting system. In the Temur's Code, he wrote: "If anyone acts contrary to this order and fails to record the events accurately, let the fingers of the scribe who neglected his duty be cut off. If the scribe conceals the service of any soldier, or deliberately falsifies the report under the guise of another account, let his hand be severed. If the false report is written with slander or malicious intent, let him be executed. Furthermore, I have decreed that these reports must be delivered to me daily, weekly, and monthly without fail"³⁰. It is well documented that even Amir Timur's fiercest adversaries acknowledged the effectiveness of the meticulously organized administrative system he established.

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³⁰ "Тузуклар". Б. 120.