

SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE SCHOLARS EMERGING FROM KESH-SHAHRISABZ DURING THE ERA OF AMIR TEMUR AND THE TIMURIDS

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Annotation: This article discusses the scholarly and cultural life of the Kashkadarya region during the reign of Amir Temur and the Timurid dynasty, focusing on the activities of the scientists who lived and worked in the region. It highlights their effective contributions to the region's development and their remarkable achievements in various fields. The article draws on historical sources and literature to shed light on the events of that era.

Keywords: Amir Temur, Timurids, science, scholarship, Kesh, Nasaf, architecture, envoys, religious and secular sciences, poets, Qubbat al-ilm wa al-adab.

The Kashkadarya region has been one of the most prominent and well-known centers of science, culture, art, literature, craftsmanship, and architecture throughout ancient and medieval times. Every ruling dynasty that established its reign in this area created broad opportunities for the advancement of these fields. Specifically, during the era of Amir Temur and the Timurids, culture flourished, past traditions were revived in a new historical context, and the foundations for their continuation were laid. The main cities of the Kashkadarya region—Kesh (modern Shahrisabz) and Qarshi (Nasaf)—experienced remarkable development in the 14th and 15th centuries. These cities, with their long-standing traditions in science and education, received significant attention during this period. Amir Temur, during his rule, undertook extensive efforts to enhance his birthplace and its surroundings. He transformed Kesh into a cultural center by constructing grand palaces for state administration, special reception halls for foreign envoys, and madrasas. These

developments provided a major impetus for the revival of science and culture, especially within the broader Muslim world.

This renaissance in science and culture is intricately linked with the name and activities of Amir Temur. During that time, the favorable conditions established for scientific and literary pursuits in Central Asia allowed many scholars to live and work in peace, fostering prolific and enduring creativity.

During the era of Amir Temur and the Timurids, the growing interest in science and scholarship contributed significantly to the advancement of intellectual culture, the growth of production, and the development of craftsmanship. Amir Temur invited prominent scholars, hadith experts, and historians from various Eastern countries to the cities of his empire, providing them with extensive opportunities and material support. He specifically invited the most distinguished scholars to teach in madrasas. On this subject, Arminius Vámbéry noted in his writings that the salaries of madrasa teachers in Kesh were quite high [2, p. 6].

Sharafuddin Ali Yazdi, reflecting on the recognition of Kesh as a cultural center within Amir Temur's state, also highlights its historical significance. He expresses great satisfaction when discussing Kesh as a longstanding hub of scientific development. Yazdi writes:

"Some historical books state that Kesh has long been a gathering place for the great scholars of Islam. Among them were renowned hadith scholars and three esteemed imams: Abu Muhammad Abda' ibn Hamid ibn Nasr al-Keshi, Abdullah ibn Abdurahman al-Darami, and Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ismail. These religious scholars hailed from this land. During those times, people of knowledge gathered in this blessed city to benefit from their wisdom and virtues. From the East, a religious scholar from Iraq, Abu al-Husayn Muslim ibn Hajjaj al-Nishapuri, came to this area and studied under Abda' ibn Hamid al-Keshi. Many imams and distinguished individuals gathered here. They were provided with spaces to teach, and because of this, Kesh was referred to as 'Qubbat al-ilm wa-l-adab' (The Dome

of Knowledge and Literature)[7, p. 145]. The influx of students and scholars into the Shahrisabz region occurred during the reign of Amir Temur. Prominent teachers from across Transoxiana came to Shahrisabz, settled there, and provided education, paving the way for the emergence of renowned scholars from the region in later years. Notably, the gathering of scholars from various regions in one place enabled them to learn from each other's works. This played a vital role in the development of various fields, including religious sciences, and highlighted the invaluable contributions of local scholars.

In this regard, it is worth mentioning Khoja Jalaliddin Keshiy. He made significant contributions to the field of Sharia studies during the Timurid period and played a pivotal role in advancing religious knowledge. His works represent a bright chapter in the intellectual history of the era.

In later periods, during the reign of Mirzo Ulugh Beg, one of Amir Temur's beloved grandsons, many esteemed and renowned scholars lived and worked. Among them were Alloiddin Shami, Muhammad Olim, and Fazlillah. Ulugh Beg, deeply devoted to the study of history, often engaged in discussions with these scholars. Historians such as Hafiz Abru and Ibn Khaldun, well-versed in the history of the East and the world, admired the depth of knowledge of these scholars [7, p. 145]. According to Sharafuddin Ali Yazdi in the Zafarnama, Amir Temur, during his military campaigns, sought to establish peaceful negotiations and foster friendly relations with conquered lands by involving the nation's prominent scholars and religious figures. One such intellectual was Mawlana Jalaluddin Keshiy of Shahrisabz [1, p. 234]. His prolific works, aimed at resolving disputes and conflicts based solely on the people's interests, earned him recognition as a skillful diplomat and a leading expert in his field. In the 14th and 15th centuries, poets in Shahrisabz, like representatives of other fields, were actively engaged in their craft. Among them, Mawlana Soyili stood out with his remarkable works. Living in Qarshi in the 1460s, he gained the attention of Alisher Navoi. Born in Qarshi around the mid-15th

century, Mawlana Soyili (whose name, Soyil, means a seeker or beggar) was famed for his ability to effortlessly transcribe 500 verses in a single day [5, p. 89].

During this period, architecture in Shahrisabz flourished alongside other fields. The city boasted master builders whose works showcased their exceptional talent. One prominent example is the intricately patterned columns at Shahi Zinda, where the names of craftsmen Olim Nasafi and Ali Nasafi from Qarshi are inscribed in mosaic. Ali Nasafi, a distinguished architect and skilled builder of the 14th century, played a leading role in constructing some of the era's most famous buildings. He supervised the construction of the Odina Mosque in Nasaf and other significant architectural structures, including one of the mausoleums at the Shahi Zinda necropolis in Samarkand. This mausoleum, constructed under his guidance between 1370 and 1380, bears his legacy [6, p. 206].

The patterns created by this master craftsman have retained their beauty and vibrancy for over six centuries. Ali Nasafi passed on his architectural expertise to his students, ensuring that his work continued even after his death.

During this period, in the Kashkadarya region, one of the prominent representatives of Islamic historiography was Shamshiddin Kulol al-Keshiy, a successor of the famous Khojagon tariqa established by Khoja Abdulkhalik G'ijduvani. Shamshiddin Kulol was one of the disciples of Amir Said Kulol. Historical sources note that Shamshiddin Kulol was considered one of the "great companions" (ashobi kibor) of Amir Kulol and that he had traveled on foot from Qarshi to Hijaz, engaging in discussions with the renowned sheikhs of Iraq at the time [3, p. 100]. Shaykh Shamshiddin Kulol was the spiritual mentor (pir) of Amir Taraghay, the father of Amir Temur. The great conqueror himself considered Shamshiddin Kulol his spiritual teacher. This indicates that Amir Temur benefited from the company and teachings of the Sufi sheikh from a young age. Shamshiddin Kulol passed away a few years before the governance of Transoxiana came under Amir Temur's control. In 1373, upon Temur's instruction, the tomb of Shamshiddin Kulol was established

in Shahrisabz, and later, the remains of Timur's father were also interred there [3, p. 103]. Scholars and artisans from various parts of the world contributed significantly to the construction of this mausoleum. The people of Nasaf and Kesh not only formed the core of Amir Timur's army but also played a pivotal role in the advancement of science, knowledge, and culture. For instance, one prominent figure, Khoja Muhammad Keshiy, was highly regarded in diplomatic circles. During his mission to the court of King Henry III of Castile, he was received with great respect and honor. Khoja Muhammad participated in receptions at the royal palace and the estates of noble families, studying the language and customs of the people. Naturally, he also gathered valuable information about the strength, alliances, and relations of Castile and neighboring European states. After spending several months in Castile, Khoja Muhammad and his companions were granted permission to return by Henry III in 1403. They crossed the Amu Darya near Balkh and reached Samarkand in August 1404, passing through Termiz and Shahrisabz along the way [5, p. 87].

Mawlana Jalaluddin al-Khalidi al-Keshiy, a renowned Sufi sheikh and a disciple of Amir Said Kulol, also played a significant role during this period. Amir Timur utilized Mawlana Jalaluddin's knowledge and reputation to promote peace and stability in the country. Mawlana Jalaluddin was even sent as an envoy to certain states to resolve disputes. According to Sharafuddin Ali Yazdi, Mawlana Jalaluddin contributed significantly to the advancement of literature and diplomacy through his knowledge and piety. Amir Timur frequently recruited scholars from Nasaf and Kesh who were knowledgeable in religious and secular sciences and fluent in foreign languages. These individuals held various positions, including serving as ambassadors. One such individual was Khoja Muhammad Keshiy, whose skills and expertise made him a valuable asset in Timur's court.

In 1402, Khoja Muhammad, as an envoy of Amir Timur, traveled to Spain and spent a significant amount of time there, delivering lectures and issuing fatwas,

showcasing his intellectual prowess. Mawlana Jalaluddin also traveled to Khwarezm, where he resolved existing conflicts with the wisdom and amicability characteristic of learned scholars and devout leaders of the time [7, p. 176].

Another renowned diplomat of this era was Abdullah Keshiy. It is known that Sultan Barquq of Egypt maintained a hostile attitude toward the Timurid state. After Sultan Barquq's death, his successor, Sultan Faraj, was approached by Amir Temur, who sent Abdullah Keshiy to negotiate. Keshiy succeeded in persuading the sultan to sign a peace treaty, an event that highlights his exceptional diplomatic skills [4, p. 95].

In conclusion, it must be emphasized that Amir Temur undertook significant construction and development projects to strengthen his hometown of Kesh and enhance the well-being of its people. This is why the Timurid era is often referred to by scholars as a unique Renaissance period. While Amir Temur did not establish Kesh as his capital, he initiated numerous projects to improve the region, including the construction of rare architectural masterpieces such as palaces, mosques, madrasas, khanaqahs, gardens, caravanserais, fortresses, and bridges. Notable structures include the Ak-Saray Palace, Dorut Tilovat, and Dorus Saodat, as well as the distinctive medieval baths of the 14th and 15th centuries, which significantly differed from European models of the same period.

All these efforts were aimed at enabling people to live freely and prosperously. Amir Temur's unique and unparalleled affection for the Kashkadarya region ensured that the area never fell into neglect. Generous opportunities were provided for scholars and intellectuals to pursue their activities, allowing them to further develop their creative and intellectual endeavors.

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