

## THE CULTURE OF CALLIGRAPHY AND MINIATURES IN THE SCIENTIFIC AND SPIRITUAL LIFE OF SAMARKAND AT THE TIMURID TIME (LATE 14<sup>TH</sup> – EARLY 15<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY)

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**Abstract:** The problem of studying the material and spiritual culture of the era of Amir Temur and Temurids is very relevant. Especially in the dynamics of their development and relationships. The cultural heritage of the capital city of Samarkand of this period is considered one of the most striking pages. Which captures the history of the development of science and literature, architecture and art. The cultural monuments of Samarkand that have come down to us require special attention during their preservation and digitalization. In which Polish specialists are actively involved.

**Keywords:** Samarkand, UNESCO, 2750, Great Silk Road, Amir Temur, Ulugbek, synthesis of culture and traditions, calligraphers and miniaturists, architectural epigraphic.

### Introduction:

Located on the central route of the Great Silk Road, the city of Samarkand is a bearer of the historical and cultural tradition. In 2007, under the auspices of UNESCO, the city celebrated its 2750th anniversary. This is a conditional date marking the approximate milestone of the initial formation of the centuries-old history of his culture and art. Samarkand throughout its history has been and remains a crossroads of cultures of nations and a pearl of world civilization.

Samarkand was located in extremely favorable natural conditions, was distinguished by a mild climate, fertile soil and was the center of an oasis, abundantly supplied with water. The location of the city in the center of Maverannahr, at the point where the main transcontinental trade routes, going from north to south and from east to west, intersected since ancient times, connecting the countries of ancient civilizations and the peoples of the steppe belt, defined the city as a culmination point. This location determined the special role of the city, which has repeatedly become the capital over the course of many centuries.

The Great Silk Road is going through the last period of its heyday during the reign of the Timurid dynasty. This flourishing was largely due to the steps taken by the founder of this dynasty, Amir Temur (1370-1405). Having created a huge state from the Aegean and Mediterranean Seas to the borders of China and from the Kipchak steppes to the Arabian Sea, he tried to restore and secure the caravan routes

of the Great Silk Road, thereby providing the main prerequisite for reviving trade between Western and Eastern countries [8, p. 108].

The creation of a centralized state by Amir Temur, the unification of disparate regions, the end of civil strife and attacks of nomads created objective prerequisites for the development of domestic and foreign trade, stimulated the growth of handicraft production, the expansion of trade and economic ties. The revival of trade led to the intensive development of crafts, the strengthening of international relations between the state of Amir Temur and the Timurids.

Amir Temur went down in world history not only as an outstanding military leader and statesman who created a powerful and prosperous state. He turned his capital, Samarkand, into one of the cultural and scientific centers of the world.

## 2. Synthesis of culture and traditions in the Timurids.

Within Maverannahr, which is especially noticeable in the capital, there was a process of fusion of cultures and traditions, which, based on the local culture, were transformed and modified, which led to the birth of a new style in art and innovations in technology. Samarkand, on the other hand, became the largest center that determined the general style of the era not only within Maverannahr, but throughout the entire Timurid state [13, p. 280]. Undoubtedly, a certain stimulus and development of this process was brought by foreign masters who, by the will of the conqueror, ended up in Samarkand. The presence of foreign artisans and architects in Timurid Samarkand.

Thanks to Amir Temur, the artisan class of skilled craftsmen was concentrated. This era is characterized by the narrow specialization of craftsmen, as well as the strengthening of specialization, in particular of the city of Samarkand, in the manufacture of a special kind of "the best writing paper", especially velvet. Separately, it should be said about Samarkand craftsmen who received orders from high-ranking officials from other cities for the manufacture of gravestones with carvings on them, which contained quotations from the Koran and ornaments made in fine Arabic script. He brought the best and talented forces of builders, architects and artists from all countries conquered by him.

It is generally accepted that Temur forcibly removed a huge mass of craftsmen who participated in decorating his beloved capital in the position of prisoners. Undoubtedly, this fact cannot be denied. Sources say this. Craftsmen and other skilled craftsmen, exported from the countries conquered by Temur, were forced to go mainly to Samarkand. Measures were taken to ensure that they could not return back, strict control was established on the crossings across the Amu Darya – crossing the river was allowed only from the left bank to the right, a special written permission was required to travel in the opposite direction.

At the same time, a careful reading of the handwritten primary sources suggests that Temur attracted a certain contingent of high-class specialists who worked on the basis of free choice. A number of documents indicated how Temur attracted court architects, engineers and builders, inviting them to draw up plans and drawings of prestigious buildings conceived by him. Moreover, they were free to use their own initiative and inspiration, which would be strange for the captives [13, p. 279]. The craftsmen moved to Samarkand and they were provided with conditions for living and working.

Interaction of various cultural influences - Persian, Turkic-Mongolian, Middle Eastern, Indian and Chinese, makes Timurid art a new syncretic, original and brilliant art, which reaches its climax during the

reign of the founder of the dynasty in Samarkand, but continues its development under his sons, grandchildren and descendants in Herat, Khorasan, Fars, up to India [2, p. 291].

As a result, it was in Temurid architecture that the creative genius of these people saved in battles, brought to Samarkand to decorate this city, which became the capital of the empire, was most clearly manifested. Amir Temur was a conqueror, builder and philanthropist, had a delicate taste for art and culture.

Galina Pugachenkova explains. Why architecture plays a special role in this period: "Architecture is a part of the daily life of the city and with its best creations subtly affects the aesthetic education of the people, because develops taste and forms a sense of beauty, becoming an expression of the ideal, requests and aspirations of his era" [11, p. 14]. Some aspects of the architecture of the Temurid epoch are highlighted in the works of the famous Canadian scientists L.Golombek and D.Wilber [3; 4; 5].

This article attempts to study samples of calligraphy from the Timurid era, which have come down to us in manuscript books, miniatures, architectural monuments and on gravestones. We tried to highlight some issues related to the social status of calligraphers, miniaturists, the degree of participation of calligraphers in the creation of architectural epigraphy and their creative collaboration with architects.

Calligraphers of the Medieval East received general education in madrassas, students with good handwriting and artistic taste studied and improved in calligraphy from masters of this type of arts. The upper strata of feudal society, representatives of the ruling dynasties, viziers, officials and secretaries of divans, scientists, theologians, artisans and even slaves were engaged in calligraphy [6].

Calligraphers and artisans involved in the production of handwritten books in the 15th-17th centuries. most of them worked in workshops at the palace libraries. They surrounded their craft with secrecy, which aroused the ridicule of their intelligent contemporaries [12, p. 71].

By the nature of their activities, calligraphers were familiar with manuscript literature and belonged to the cultural circle of medieval society, and the art of writing was associated with the widespread use of applied mathematics in the medieval East.

The production – writing of books was mainly carried out by those calligraphers for whom this art form was a source of livelihood. The medieval tradition considers the outstanding geographer Yakut, the slave of the Abassid Mustasim (XIII century), as the teacher of calligraphers.

Reflecting the worldview of the cultural circle of his time, Kazi-Ahmed asserts that Yakut achieved perfection, beauty, grace, subtlety and clarity of writing not because he adhered to the established foundations and rules, but was engaged in a creative search and, above all, improved the calligrapher's tool of work - kalam, giving he has a different point, and "as for the essence of the letter, it is the same that Ibn Mukla invented, from a circle and a point" [6, p. 65]. Kazi-Ahmed, characterizing the skill of the calligrapher Khoja Abdalkhai, the inventor of the "talik" handwriting, first of all notes that "he found proportions, grace and foundations" of this handwriting [6, p. 89].

Artisans of various profiles with a clear division of labor participated in the creation of handwritten books: kyagazgars - papermakers, polishers, ironers, book writers, ornamental artists, miniaturist painters, book binders, artisans of leather processing, gilders, etc. The social status of an ordinary book writer was little different from position of a medieval artisan and is characterized by the words: "Beautiful handwriting is an asset for the poor, decoration for the rich and perfection for a

scientist" [6, p. 59].

### 3. Calligraphy and Samarkand paper.

Calligraphers and miniaturists preferred Samarkand paper of the highest quality. Paper has become an important tool in shaping the culture of humankind. The transmission of texts, images and diagrams on paper throughout history has played an important role in the dissemination of cultural, economic, religious and other information.

Throughout human history, paper has been an important tool in the formation of culture. Samarkand paper was considered the best in the world for calligraphy and miniature painting, which were performed with a pen.

In the art of Central Asia, the connection between the technique of miniature painting, written monuments of the Timurid dynasty and paper is of particular importance.

Excavations 1968-1970 showed. That along with the movement of city life after the defeat of Samarkand by the troops of Genghis Khan (1220) outside the former Afrasiab, there were still inhabited areas on the latter, where artisans engaged in the production of paper, washerwomen and other poor people settled [1, p. 36].

The high quality of this paper contributed to its export from Samarkand to other countries. Its quality was highly appreciated by poets, calligraphers and writers [7, p. 64, 66-70]. The famous Samarkand paper was transported along the routes of the Great Silk Road. Sa'alibi, Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur and Mahmud ibn Wali call writing paper produced by Samarkand craftsmen among the most important goods supplied to other cities of the then cultural world.

During the reign of Amir Temur and Timurids, the demand for paper products constantly increased. This was facilitated by the development of science and poetry. Cultures in general. Including managerial culture, execution of state decrees and orders in the form of special papers, the growth of business correspondence. All this required a lot of writing paper, and top-notch paper. The latter was used mainly by the sovereign and his entourage. Amirs, high officials, which is why it was called "Sultan".

On Samarkand paper, Ulugbek his letters addressed to the sovereigns of different countries. Scientists and writers wrote on this paper, and all this required a large amount of writing paper, which contributed to the expansion of its production, especially paper of high quality. Masters of Samarkand made paper of different grades and types: the most expensive - Sultan, "pure white" and "ordinary", as well as marble paper intended for finishing the margins of a manuscript book: "kagaz-i obri", and others [10, p. 18].

The paper was sold in the bazaar. In the main market of Samarkand, it was possible to buy different types of writing paper. In documentary sources, paper sellers (kogozfurush) are mentioned along with papermakers.

Paper was a commodity exported to other countries. Under Emir Temur and Timurids, Samarkand remained one of the main centers for the production of writing paper in the East. The mass production of relatively cheap, high-quality writing paper has become an important factor in the development of science, literature and art. Many famous books of the era of Amir Temur and the Timurids were written on Samarkand paper.

### 4. Calligraphy of architectural monuments.

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Calligraphers also took part in the creation of architectural epigraphic ornament. Such masters were called *kundenavis* or *mashshak*-large-scale writers. The participation of calligraphers in the painting of buildings testified to their high skill. Kazi-Ahmed emphasized that five out of six Yakut's students - outstanding "sitte masters" (six classical handwritings) wrote on buildings. One of them, Seid-Haydar, surpassed his teacher Yakut in skill, and he is called "Kundenavis". Pupils of Sitte Masters and calligraphers of succeeding generations, who achieved a high level of excellence in their art, also wrote on buildings, while the talented calligrapher and large-scale writer Abdallah Seirafi was originally a master of glazed tiles [6, p. 68-70].

Judging by the reports of sources, the *Kundenavis* or *Mashhaks* were not only the creators of architectural epigraphy, but also of architectural ornament. According to Kazi-Ahmed, they painted the building "as a whole ... inside, on the outside, above, below and the portal", performing "miracles and sorcery" [6, p. 70]. Written sources about calligraphers and construction inscriptions complement each other. So, on the facade of the Tuman-Aka mausoleum (1405) in Shahi-Zinda it is written: "Inscription [letter] of Sheikh Mohammed, son of Khoja, an ornamentalist Tugropist from Tabriz". It is noteworthy that Sheikh Mohammed emphasizes the nickname of his father, the calligrapher Tugropist-virtuoso, who was also an ornamentalist. The skill, talent and knowledge of Sheikh Mohammed can be judged by his magnificent creation - the Tuman-Aka mausoleum with slender and sophisticated proportions and wonderful ornamental decoration. It combines ingenious *girikhs*, floral motifs and graceful *sulsom* inscriptions, made in polychrome ceramics, where the eye is caressed by the enchanting range of colors of white, blue, black, blue and yellow.

Separately, it should be said about the Samarkand craftsmen who carried out orders from high-ranking officials from other cities for the manufacture of gravestones, with quotes from the Koran and ornaments carved on them. Such work contained in itself executed fine Arabic script, which became another form of calligraphy art. The gravestones preserved in the monuments of the Timurid era are considered examples of this case.

Samarkand achieved unsurpassed success in the times of Ulugbek in the field of architecture and its tiled decoration. The era of Ulugbek is distinguished by a rather narrow specialization of artisans in the field of construction and artistic stone processing. Skilled craftsmen - marble carvers captured the finest patterns on the slabs of the portals of the Ulugbek madrasah in Samarkand. Under Ulugbek, the building of Gur-Emir became the burial vault of the Timurids, where gravestones were covered with calligraphic inscriptions [10, p. 18].

The marble music stand located in the courtyard of the Bibi-khanym mosque in Samarkand, dating from the time of Ulugbek (1394-1449), was intended for the Koran, which was taken out and placed on the music stand during solemn services. The music stand on nine stands consists of a horizontal plate and two triangular prisms that form a "bed" for an open book.

The ornamental decor of the music stand is similar in style to the design of handwritten books and is evidently the result of a collaboration between a calligrapher and a master mason; the proportions of the music stand reflected the influence of the Samarkand school of architects of the time of Ulugbek (1409-1449).

In conclusion, it should be noted that Samarkand is a city of centuries-old history, established,



developing and still retaining its historical appearance and cultural center. This city with its unique historical monuments is a bearer of a great historical and cultural heritage.

The glory of the city of Samarkand is the result of the work of artisans, masters of fine applied arts, who combined in their works the mutual influences of these directions from different regions. As a result, an original synthetic culture has developed.

Samples of calligraphy of the Timurid epoch in the course of the last century have been carefully studied by orientologists, historians, philosophers, mathematicians, art historians as the primary sources of the history of peoples, their culture, science and art, bringing new information. As a result of the study of the content of samples of calligraphy, miniature painting, calligraphy, decoration of books, the art of binding, art schools and their periods were revealed.

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