

**SOURCE-CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF POLITICAL PROCESSES IN CENTRAL
IRAN DURING THE RULE OF AMIR TIMUR****Abdullayev Elbek Abduqahhor o'g'li**

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19691132>**Abstract**

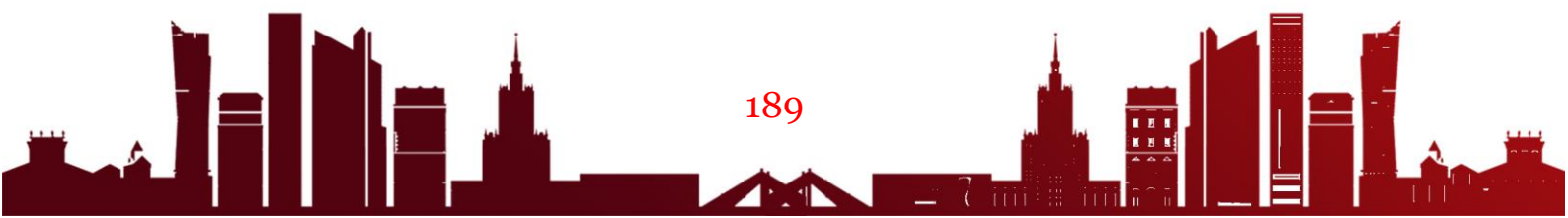
This article analyzes the role of selected historical sources in elucidating political processes in Central Iran during the reign of Amir Timur (Tamerlane). Based on information derived from these sources, the political developments that occurred in Central Iran under Timurid rule are examined. The data obtained from historical sources are subjected to comparative analysis. The study investigates the reasons for the incorporation of Central Iran into the Timurid state and examines the political processes that unfolded in the region between 1387 and 1405.

Keywords: Ghiyath al-Din Ali, Ruznama-yi Ghazavat-i Hindistan ("Diary of the Indian Campaign"), Nizam al-Din Shami, Zafarnama, Khwaja Taj al-Din al-Salmani, Tarikhnama, Mu'in al-Din Natanzi, Muntakhab al-Tawarikh-i Mu'ini, Sharaf al-Din Ali Yazdi, Mu'izz al-Ansab, Mujmal-i Fasihi

Introduction

The period of Amir Timur and the Timurids represents one of the most significant chapters in the history of Central Asia. During this era, a centralized state was established, agriculture, craftsmanship, and trade flourished, and science, literature, and the arts reached their zenith. Consequently, it is no coincidence that a considerable portion of historical works composed in the second half of the 14th and the 15th centuries is dedicated to the history of Amir Timur and the Timurid state [2:126].

Works devoted to the history of Amir Timur and the Timurids directly reflect the life, activities, and military campaigns of the state's founder, Amir Timur. Through the study of these works, valuable information can be obtained regarding the territories incorporated into his state and the history of states that maintained economic and political relations with the Timurid Empire. Among these, information related to the history of Central Iran and the Muzaffarid dynasty, conquered by Amir Timur, can also be studied through sources dedicated to Timurid history.

Methods and Degree of Scholarly Attention



In this article, an attempt has been made to elucidate the main objective of the research by employing principles of historicism, comparative analysis, systematization, classification, and problem-chronological methods.

Information relevant to the topic under investigation can be found in a number of scholarly works, including: Retveladze E.V. and Alimova D.A., *History of Uzbekistan: The Era of Amir Timur and the Timurids*; the collective monograph *Amir Timur in World History*; Doniyorov A., *Historiography of the Peoples of Central Asia*; Arslonzoda R., *Source Studies*; Ahmedov B., *Sources of Uzbekistan's History*; Madraimov A. and Fuzailova G., *Source Studies*; Madraimov A. and Fuzailova G., *Historical Source Studies*; Usmonov B., *The Image of Amir Timur in Russian Historiography*; and Usmonov B., *Political History of Uzbekistan in the Era of Amir Timur and the Timurids*. Analysis of the available information indicates that this specific topic has not been the subject of dedicated scholarly investigation.

Results and Discussion

The earliest works dedicated to the history of Amir Timur were composed during his lifetime. One such work is *Ruznama-yi Ghazavat-i Hindistan* ("Diary of the Indian Campaign"), authored by Ghiyath al-Din Ali. This work initially provides a general overview of Amir Timur's activities up to 1398, followed by a detailed account of his campaign to India [2:127]. In Ghiyath al-Din Ali's work, certain information relevant to the topic under study can be found regarding Amir Timur's Iranian campaign of 1387. In particular, details concerning the campaign to Isfahan and the events that transpired there are comprehensively described [4:43]. Furthermore, the *Diary of the Indian Campaign* contains information about Amir Timur's Iranian campaign of 1393, details of his battle with Shah Mansur, subsequent events, and the execution of members of the Muzaffarid dynasty [4:48]. However, the information provided by the author is notably brief compared to other historical sources, and many historical details are omitted.

One of the principal sources serving the study of Central Iranian history during Amir Timur's period is Nizam al-Din Shami's *Zafarnama*. This work was composed during Amir Timur's lifetime at his direct command.

Nizam al-Din Shami was born in Tabriz. When Amir Timur captured Baghdad in 1393, he enlisted Nizam al-Din, who was present in the city, into his service. Until 1404, he served as a court chronicler in Amir Timur's entourage and participated in his military campaigns. In 1402, Timur commissioned him to write his history. Shami completed the *Zafarnama* in the spring of 1404 [2:127].



Two copies of the Zafarnama exist: the first was presented to Amir Timur upon his return from the Azerbaijani campaign in 1404 (its title remains unknown). The second was dedicated to Mirza Umar, son of Miranshah. This copy differs little from the aforementioned first version. The work is entitled Zafarnama; certain stylistic revisions were introduced, and a preface along with a brief appendix (zayl) dedicated to Mirza Umar was added [10:527]. From this, one may conclude that Nizam al-Din Shami served Mirza Umar during his final years and resided in his native Tabriz [1:167].

Manuscript copies of the Zafarnama are preserved in libraries in Armenia, England, France, Iraq, and Turkey. The critical edition of the text was published by F. Tauer in Prague in 1937 and 1956. In 1996, a Persian translation of the work by Y. Hakimjonov, edited by A. Urinbojev, was published [5:108].

Amir Timur commissioned the Zafarnama to be written in a simple and comprehensible style, as he was dissatisfied with the literary style of Ghiyath al-Din Ali's Diary of the Indian Campaign. Although the work does not cover events from the final year of Amir Timur's life, it remains one of the most important sources for studying the history of Central Asia, Khorasan, the Middle and Near East, and several adjacent regions during the 13th and early 14th centuries. Furthermore, this work provides opportunities for investigating events related to Central Iran and the Muzaffarid dynasty. The Zafarnama contains valuable information regarding major events connected with Central Iran, its conquest, the "Three-Year," "Five-Year," and "Seven-Year" campaigns and their associated events, details of the capture of Isfahan and Shiraz, the death of Mirza Umar Shaykh, the rebellion in Yazd province, the dispatch of Muhammad Sultan to Fars province, and the rule of Mirza Umar Shaykh's descendants in Fars.

Khwaja Taj al-Din al-Salmani's Tarikhnama holds significant importance for understanding socio-political events that occurred in Transoxiana and Khorasan between 1404 and 1409, i.e., following Amir Timur's death. This work is also referred to as Zayl-i Zafarnama ("Supplement to the Zafarnama"). Information about the work and its author remains insufficient. It is known that Khwaja Taj al-Din al-Salmani was a skilled calligrapher who served in the Muzaffarid court (in the chancery department). After Amir Timur's capture of Shiraz (1393), he was brought to Samarkand along with other scholars and appointed to serve in Timur's court. In March 1409, following the suppression of Khalil Sultan's rebellion and the transfer of supreme authority to Shah Rukh Mirza, Khwaja Taj al-Din al-Salmani was taken to Herat and, in 1410, began composing this work at Shah Rukh's command. The author intended to cover the final years of the



Sahibqiran (Amir Timur) and the period of Shah Rukh Mirza. Accordingly, this work was meant to serve as a continuation of Nizam al-Din Shami's Zafarnama. However, the work only covers the history of 1404–1409, as the author was subsequently punished on charges of involvement in a conspiracy against the vizier Sayyid Fakhr al-Din [1:173]. The Tarikhnama provides a detailed account of the commencement of Amir Timur's campaign to China, Khalil Sultan's seizure of the Samarkand throne, and events during his reign [12:10]. The reliability of the account of events from this period is attributed to the fact that the author was a direct participant in these events.

The work was translated into German by Hans Robert Roemer and published in 1956. A Turkish translation was completed by Ismail Aka in 1988 [11:234]. Ziya Bunyatov translated the work into Russian, and it was published in Baku in 1991 [12:10]. Although the source does not address the issue of Central Iran during Amir Timur's period, it discusses events from the early post-Timurid period, struggles for the throne, and the political situation in Iran and its surrounding regions during these conflicts.

One of the important historical sources composed shortly after Amir Timur's death is Muntakhab al-Tawarikh-i Mu'ini ("Selected Histories of Mu'ini"), authored by Mu'in al-Din Natanzi, who was born in Natanz, a town in Isfahan province.

Mu'in al-Din Natanzi completed his work in Hijri 816 (1413/14 CE) and initially dedicated it to Sultan Iskandar ibn Mirza Umar Shaykh (1384–1415), grandson of Amir Timur and governor of Fars province at that time [8:11].

This work by Mu'in al-Din Natanzi is composed in the style of universal history and covers the history of Eastern lands from ancient times up to 1405 [2:130]. The work consists of an introduction and three books; the third book constitutes the main and most valuable part. It includes information on Turkic-Mongol tribes and their origins, Genghis Khan and his descendants, Mongol khans who ruled in Northern China, khans of the Chagatai Ulus, the Ilkhanids, Jalayirids, Chupanids, Muzaffarids, khans of the White Horde, and amirs who ruled in Transoxiana between 1346 and 1370 [6:112].

Manuscript copies of Muntakhab al-Tawarikh-i Mu'ini are preserved in the British Museum, the Library of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg (two copies), the National Library in Paris, and libraries in Tehran and Mashhad. Based on the Paris and London manuscripts, the complete text of the work was published in Tehran in 1957 by the French



scholar J. Aubin. Based on this edition, the work was translated into Uzbek by Gh. Karimi and published in Tashkent in 2011 [8:234].

Through Natanzi's work, one can obtain important information regarding Amir Timur's "Three-Year," "Five-Year," and "Seven-Year" campaigns and the detailed events of these expeditions, relations with representatives of the Muzaffarid dynasty, and the genealogy of Muhammad Muzaffar's descendants. This work holds particular significance for the present study, as information concerning the origins of the Muzaffarid dynasty and relations among its members is scarcely found in other historical sources.

The author of the work widely known as *Zafarnama-yi Timuri*, *Fathnama-yi Sahibqirani*, *Tarikh-i Jahangusha-yi Timuri*, or simply *Zafarnama* is Sharaf al-Din Ali Yazdi (d. 1454), a prominent historian of his era. Originally from the village of Taft in Yazd province, Iran, he was well-versed in various fields of knowledge [5:112].

Sharaf al-Din served for several years in the courts of Shah Rukh Mirza in Herat and his younger son Ibrahim Sultan in Fars [13:3]. The foundation of Sharaf al-Din Ali Yazdi's *Zafarnama* is Nizam al-Din Shami's work of the same title. However, Sharaf al-Din did not merely copy his predecessor's work; he introduced additions and clarifications and enriched it with new materials [5:112].

Sharaf al-Din Ali Yazdi's *Zafarnama* consists of an introduction and a main body. The introduction presents the history of the Mongol Empire and possesses an almost independent character, hence its designation in scholarship as *Muqaddima-yi Zafarnama*. The main body describes the life and activities of Amir Timur. The introduction was completed in 1419, and the main body in 1425 [2:133].

Numerous manuscript copies of the work exist and are preserved in libraries across Russia and foreign countries. The text has been published in India (1885–1888), Iran (1957), and Tashkent (1972). The work has been translated into Uzbek, English, French, and Turkish; selected excerpts have been published in English and Russian [1:177].

This source is of unparalleled significance for studying the life and activities of Amir Timur. Political processes in Central Iran during Amir Timur's rule are also comprehensively covered in this work. Examples include: Amir Timur's campaign to Iran, events in Isfahan, the division of Iran among the Muzaffarids, Amir Timur's second Iranian campaign, details of his battle with Shah Mansur, the deposition of the Muzaffarids and the distribution of Iran among his amirs, the



tragedy of Mirza Umar Shaykh, events in Sirjan and Yazd, the dispatch of Muhammad Sultan to conquer Hormuz, the "Seven-Year War," the punishment of Amirzada Pir Muhammad and the granting of Shiraz to his brother Amirzada Rustam, and later, the pardon of Pir Muhammad's offense and the reassignment of Shiraz to him and Isfahan to Amirzada Rustam. These events are not covered as comprehensively in other works.

Mu'izz al-Ansab ("The Glorifier of Genealogies") is an anonymous work providing information on the genealogies of the Chinggisid and Timurid dynasties. The earliest version of this work was prepared in 1426 at the command of Shah Rukh Mirza. Most Timurid rulers paid attention to the continuous updating of the work during their reigns. The final additions were made during the rule of Sultan Husayn Bayqara. Three manuscript copies of the work have been discovered: one in the British Museum, a second in the National Library of Paris, and a third in the Topkapi Palace Library in Istanbul. Based on the Paris manuscript, the Persian text of Mu'izz al-Ansab and its Russian translation were published by Sh. Kh. Vohidov in Almaty in 2006 [9:6].

The valuable aspect of this work lies in the presence of unique information about Amir Timur's ancestors and descendants not found in other sources. Specifically, it contains information regarding the names of Amir Timur's sisters, his brothers, his wives and concubines, and his children. Another important feature is that it provides information about children of the Sahibqiran who died in youth and whose names remain unknown. Information concerning Mirza Umar Shaykh, Amir Timur's son who ruled in Fars, and his descendants constitutes the most valuable part for this research. Notably, for each prince, valuable details are recorded regarding their wives, children, serving amirs, officials, warriors, and scribes in both Turkic and Persian.

Another work illuminating the history of Amir Timur is Emir Timur (Ibretü'n-Nâzirîn), authored by Mawlana Safi al-Din Muhammad ibn Mahmud ibn Fakhr al-Din al-Masihi al-Fushanji. This work was composed in Herat in Hijri 838 (1434–1435) and narrates events from Adam to the death of Amir Timur (807/1405) [7:VII].

Information about the life and activities of Mawlana Safi al-Din is relatively scarce. He was born in the village of Fushanj near Herat. Known by the pen name Masihi, he lived and created under the patronage of Shah Rukh Mirza and Baysunghur Mirza. He was the son of Mawlana Fakhr al-Din, one of the Herati scholars mentioned in Ibn Arabshah's Aja'ib al-Maqdur fi Nawa'ib Timur ("The Wonders of Destiny in the Calamities of Timur") [7:VII]. The work is preserved in



the British Museum under catalog number OR 7944 and was translated into Turkish and published by Ahmet Özturhan in 2021; prior to this, the work had not been translated or published.

This work briefly recounts events such as Amir Timur's first and second campaigns to Iran, the Isfahan rebellion and its conclusion, the granting of the Muzaffarid state to Shah Yahya, details of the battle with Shah Mansur, the execution of Muzaffarid dynasty members, and the death of Mirza Umar Shaykh. The work is relatively short in volume, and the events it describes are not presented in extensive detail.

The history of Amir Timur and the Timurids is also reflected in Mujmal-i Fasihi ("The Fasihi Compendium"), authored by Fasih Ahmad ibn Jalal al-Din Muhammad al-Khwafi (b. 1375). This work is composed in the style of universal history. It contains chronological information on historical events in the Muslim East from ancient times to the mid-15th century, as well as biographical data on prominent political figures, scholars, and poets [2:134].

The Persian text of Mujmal-i Fasihi was published by the Iranian scholar Mahmud Farrukh between 1961 and 1963. The original portion of the work was translated into Russian by D. Y. Yusupova and published in Tashkent in 1980 [3:346]. Furthermore, the same author translated the section of the work covering 1301–1442 into Uzbek and published it in Tashkent in 2018 [3:544]. The valuable aspect of this source is its presentation of events in chronological order and in concise form, distinguishing it from other historical works. Additionally, because events are presented as brief factual statements, the author's personal opinions, political influences, or attempts to alter information for someone's benefit are generally absent. The source contains numerous pieces of information related to Amir Timur and his Iranian campaigns, as well as the history of Muzaffarid rulers, including political events and certain cultural processes.

In the early 15th century, several historical sources concerning Amir Timur were also produced in Western European countries. During this period, Europe faced difficult circumstances. Unable to adequately respond to Ottoman Turkish aggression, European monarchs and the Pope turned their attention to the East and to Amir Timur. Consequently, interest in the figure of Timur emerged among Europeans. European envoys who visited Timur's court, as well as merchants and travelers who witnessed his military campaigns, wrote numerous books and memoirs about him [2:142].

Conclusion



Since the majority of sources are dedicated to the history of Amir Timur and were composed during the Timurid period, they tend to reflect a one-sided perspective in their treatment of events and the information they present, which creates difficulties in fully elucidating political processes. Therefore, it is necessary to draw conclusions through comparative analysis with works composed outside the Timurid court.

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