

**THE COVERAGE OF SHOHRUKH MIRZA'S CULTURAL AND CONSTRUCTIVE
ACTIVITIES IN ISMAIL AKA'S WORKS**

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Abstract: This article analyzes the cultural and creative work and contributions of Ismail Aka Shahrukh Mirza in the works of these areas. In particular, it is highlighted that in this process, he was not limited to the construction of architectural monuments, but also the development of social infrastructure, support for religious and educational institutions, and the creation of favorable conditions for scholars.

Keywords: Creativity, science, religious and educational institutions, poets and artists, scientists, landscaping, economic revival, traditional medicine, jurisprudence and interpretation, literature, miniature, calligraphy, music.

Introduction. In the scholarly study of Shahrukh Mirza's activity, it is increasingly acknowledged in historiography that evaluating his personality solely within the framework of military campaigns and political processes is insufficient. The presence of important information in the works of contemporary and later chroniclers regarding the ruler's constructive activities and his contribution to the development of science and culture determines the relevance of this issue. Therefore, the period of Shahrukh Mirza is regarded in Timurid history as an era characterized by relative political stability and remarkable cultural flourishing.

Among the studies conducted in this field, the works of the Turkish Timurid scholar Ismail Aka occupy a special place. In his writings, he consistently highlights the cultural and constructive activities of Shahrukh Mirza, interpreting them as an integral part of the ruler's overall policy of state governance. In particular, the author explains the transformation of Herat into a major scientific and cultural center during the reign of Shahrukh through the ruler's direct patronage policy.

Literature Review and Methodology. Research dedicated to the activities of Shahrukh Mirza occupies an important place in studies concerning the Timurid period. Scholars such as V.V. Barthold, A.Y. Yakubovsky, B.A. Ahmedov, H. Bobobekov, and A. O'rinboyev addressed the activities of Shahrukh Mirza while examining the political and cultural history of the Timurids. Their studies analyze not only Shahrukh Mirza's governance but also his constructive policies. In particular, the role of Shahrukh Mirza and Gawharshad Begum in the formation of Herat as a major cultural center during the Timurid era is thoroughly highlighted.

Likewise, modern Uzbek historiography devoted to Timurid culture, architecture, and the development of science also pays considerable attention to Shahrukh Mirza's activities. These studies analyze his constructive policy in close connection with economic stability, urban development, and the growth of the spiritual environment. However, the issue of how Shahrukh Mirza's cultural and constructive activities are reflected in Ismail Aka's works has not yet been sufficiently studied as a separate research object.

This study employs a scientific methodology based on the principles of historicity, objectivity, and systematic analysis. During the research process, Ismail Aka's works were analyzed as primary sources, while the information contained therein concerning the cultural and constructive activities of Shahrukh Mirza was comparatively examined alongside other historical sources and modern scholarly studies.

Results and Discussion. In Ismail Aka's analyses, the constructive activities carried out by Shahrukh Mirza are evaluated as a comprehensive process. This process was not limited solely to

the construction of architectural monuments but also included the development of social infrastructure, support for religious and educational institutions, and the creation of favorable conditions for scholars. As a result, the strengthening of the spiritual environment and the revitalization of scientific and cultural life in society were observed.

The author particularly emphasizes the high level of attention and respect shown toward scholars at the court of Shahrukh Mirza. The ruler supported the distinguished scholars, poets, and artists of his time and created the necessary conditions for their creative activities. This situation is interpreted as one of the principal factors behind the flourishing of science and culture during the Timurid period. From this perspective, Ismail Aka portrays Shahrukh Mirza's cultural and constructive activities not merely as historical realities, but also as important instruments for ensuring state governance and political stability.

The article by the Turkish Timurid scholar Ismail Aka entitled "*Constructive Activities of the Timurids during the Reign of Shahrukh Mirza (1405–1447)*" serves as an important methodological basis for studying the constructive and cultural life of Shahrukh Mirza's era. This research is regarded as one of the first systematic approaches to the issue in Turkish historiography. The author primarily analyzes Shahrukh Mirza's activities in close connection with the constructive traditions established during the reign of his father, Amir Temur. In particular, it is noted that Amir Temur, alongside his military campaigns, carried out extensive beautification and construction projects, especially paying special attention to the development of Samarkand as the capital of the empire [1;52].

According to Ismail Aka, the constructive policy founded by Amir Temur acquired a more systematic and stable character during the reign of Shahrukh Mirza. In this process, Herat occupied a central position and was transformed into the political and cultural capital of the Timurid state. The author substantiates that the improvement of the Gazirgah area around Herat, the restoration of the Zoghan and Safid gardens dating back to the Kartid period, and their use as palaces and residences demonstrate the consistent continuation of urban planning policies under Shahrukh Mirza. In particular, the restoration of Bagh-i Safid and its conversion into the residence of Baysunghur Mirza is interpreted as an important manifestation of cultural and administrative centralization.

The study notes that the constructive activities undertaken by Shahrukh Mirza were not confined merely to the construction of palaces and gardens. In order to develop the infrastructure of Herat, he involved major officials such as Firuzshah and Alika Kukaldash in constructing new residential areas, palaces, and gardens around the Injil and Khiyaban canals. Ismail Aka particularly emphasizes that this process continued during the reign of Husayn Bayqara and was further developed by Alisher Navoi [2;5].

The author also connects Shahrukh Mirza's constructive activities with policies of economic recovery. In particular, the reconstruction of the city of Merv in 1410, the repair of irrigation facilities drawing water from the Murghab River, and the establishment of new irrigation systems are scientifically explained as measures that revitalized the economic life of the region. The active participation of amirs such as Alika Kukaldash, Musa, and Ali Shagani in this process is especially highlighted. Furthermore, the development of agriculture, the relocation of populations, and the creation of new infrastructure transformed Merv into an economic center within a short period, demonstrating the effectiveness of Shahrukh Mirza's policies.

Ismail Aka's research also extensively discusses Shahrukh Mirza's efforts in promoting science and religious-educational life. The construction of madrasas and khanqahs in Herat, the appointment of distinguished mudarrises and scholars, and the favorable conditions created for the development of disciplines such as fiqh and tafsir all reflect the ruler's enlightened policy. In particular, the ruler's personal participation in scholarly gatherings and his support for debates

among scholars are regarded as important factors contributing to the revitalization of the scientific environment.

According to the author, Shahrukh Mirza paid special attention not only to ensuring political stability but also to developing social infrastructure. Specifically, his construction of a dar al-shifa (hospital) in Herat demonstrates that public health occupied an important place in his social policy. Likewise, the reconstruction of the mausoleum of Khoja Abdullah Ansari near Herat in 1425 is evaluated as one of the important directions of the policy aimed at restoring and developing religious and spiritual centers [3;24].

Ismail Aka also emphasizes that the constructive activities of Shahrukh Mirza's era were not limited solely to the ruler's personal initiatives but were further expanded through the activities of court members, particularly his wife Gawharshad Begum. The mosque built in Mashhad by the architect Qavam al-Din Shirazi at the order of Gawharshad Begum and completed in 1418 demonstrates the high level attained by religious architecture during the Timurid period. The participation of Shahrukh Mirza together with Gawharshad Begum in the opening ceremony of this structure indicates the direct involvement of the ruler and the courtly environment in constructive activities. Moreover, Shahrukh's presentation of valuable gifts to the shrine of Imam Reza and the establishment of gardens and residences around Mashhad reflect the consistent implementation of beautification policies connected with religious centers.

According to the author, the construction projects carried out in Herat represent some of the finest examples of Timurid urban planning. The mosque built by Gawharshad Begum along the Injil canal stood out not only for its architecture but also for its artistic decorations. The fact that the inscriptions of this mosque were written by the famous calligrapher Ja'far Tabrizi, who worked in the court of Baysunghur Mirza, demonstrates the high level of development achieved by art and calligraphy during the reign of Shahrukh Mirza [4;34].

Ismail Aka evaluates the madrasa built by Gawharshad Begum as one of the most important architectural monuments of the era. Constructed gradually between 1418 and 1437 alongside the mosque, the madrasa demonstrates that large architectural projects during the Timurid period were implemented in a long-term and systematically planned manner. Information regarding the mudarrises who taught there appears in the works of Khwandamir, while references by Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur concerning his visit to the area confirm that the madrasa was one of the centers of scholarly life. The study further notes that although these structures continued to be admired for their architectural elegance in later centuries, they were destroyed at the end of the nineteenth century by Abdurrahman Khan for military-strategic reasons. This demonstrates that part of the material cultural heritage of the Timurid era has not survived intact to the present day.

In Ismail Aka's works, the cultural life of Shahrukh Mirza's era is portrayed as a comprehensive and multifaceted process. Although the author notes that Shahrukh Mirza himself did not leave behind a significant creative legacy, his interest in science and literature and his patronage activities became one of the important factors behind the cultural flourishing of the Timurid era. In particular, based on the narratives of Alisher Navoi and Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur, it is observed that although Shahrukh Mirza was not deeply engaged in poetry himself, his refined artistic taste and closeness to the literary environment were evident.

According to Ismail Aka, the cultural atmosphere formed at the court of Shahrukh Mirza was based on reading and scholarly communication. This is also confirmed in the writings of Abd al-Razzaq Samarqandi. According to him, Shahrukh Mirza regularly studied works on tafsir, hadith, fiqh, and history and actively participated in scholarly discussions. In particular, the marginal notes written on Hafiz-i Abru's *Zubdat al-Tawarikh* demonstrate the ruler's profound

knowledge of history. These notes mention religious and scholarly debates held in the presence of al-Qadir Billah, revealing the breadth of Shahrukh Mirza's intellectual outlook.

The study also highlights Shahrukh Mirza's attention toward manuscripts and scholarly heritage. In particular, his request in a letter sent to the Sultan of Egypt in 1428 for the works of Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani and al-Maqrizi demonstrates the ruler's interest in the leading scholarly literature of his era. This indicates that the process of collecting and exchanging scientific knowledge was highly active within the Timurid court.

Ismail Aka especially emphasizes that Herat became a major center of science and art during the reign of Shahrukh Mirza. According to the author, the presence of rare religious manuscripts in the royal library of Herat and their transfer to other regions strengthened the city's status as a center of Islamic scholarship. For example, the fact that works requested by al-Malik al-Zahir Chaqmaq were available in the Herat library and sent to Egypt demonstrates the high level of scholarly relations established at that time [5;43].

Furthermore, the author pays particular attention to the development of Turkic literature during Shahrukh Mirza's reign. The emergence of poets such as Lutfi, Yusuf Amiri, and Sayyid Ahmad, as well as the copying of works like *Qutadghu Bilig*, *Tazkirat al-Awliya*, and *Atabat al-Haqa'iq*, indicates that considerable attention was given to the Turkic language within the courtly environment.

Based on Ismail Aka's studies, the cultural activities of Shahrukh Mirza's period appear as a complex process closely connected with science, literature, and manuscript traditions. The scholarly and literary atmosphere formed during this period created the foundation for the emergence of great figures such as Husayn Bayqara, Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur, and Alisher Navoi in later generations.

In Ismail Aka's research, the era of Shahrukh Mirza is interpreted as one of the important stages of the Eastern Renaissance. According to the author, cultural life developed extensively during this period due to royal patronage and the high respect shown toward scholars and intellectuals. In particular, the activities of artists such as Ja'far Tabrizi, Shams al-Din Muhammad, Ghiyath al-Din Naqqash, and Khalil Musavvir in miniature painting and calligraphy, the leading role of Qavam al-Din Shirazi in architecture, and the contributions of creative figures such as Abd al-Qadir Maraghi and Yusuf Andijani in music all demonstrate the high level of artistic development achieved in various fields during the Timurid era.

Ismail Aka closely associates this process not only with art but also with the development of scientific thought. According to him, while Herat became a center of literature and art, Samarkand developed into a scientific center for the exact sciences under the leadership of Ulugh Beg. The activities of scholars such as Qazizada Rumi, Ghiyath al-Din Jamshid al-Kashi, and Ali Qushchi greatly contributed to the advancement of Eastern science. As a result, the scientific progress achieved in Samarkand is evaluated by the author as a vivid manifestation of the "Eastern Renaissance."

The study particularly notes that Shahrukh Mirza's cultural policy was based on supporting talented and capable individuals. For example, the fact that Amir Firuzshah served for thirty-four years and Alika Kukaldash for forty-three years in important state positions demonstrates that the ruler adhered to the principles of stability and loyalty in кадровая политика. Ismail Aka evaluates the court environment of Shahrukh Mirza not merely as a political center but also as a highly developed cultural milieu. The activity of hundreds of poets within this environment and the emergence of historians such as Hafiz-i Abru, Sharaf al-Din Ali Yazdi, and Ja'fari indicate the formation of a scholarly and literary school during the Timurid period.

The study further demonstrates that Shahrukh Mirza not only restored infrastructure but also implemented economic incentive measures. During his campaign to Qazvin, for example, he

sought to improve Azerbaijan and the region of Iraqi Ajam, granting temporary tax exemptions to populations in order to encourage the cultivation of abandoned lands. Through such measures, agriculture and production were revived, thereby contributing to economic stability.

In describing the economic life of Shahrukh Mirza's era, Ismail Aka also relies on certain historical sources, including the writings of Ahmad ibn Husayn. According to these accounts, the people of Yazd enjoyed a high standard of living: peasants freely brought their products to markets for sale, and the population generally enjoyed prosperity. Moreover, the diversity of agricultural products grown in different regions — such as Samarkand grapes and apples, Bukhara fruits, and tropical products from Kabul — demonstrates the vitality of economic life during the period.

However, the author refrains from portraying Shahrukh Mirza's activities in an exclusively positive light and also points to certain negative aspects. In particular, he notes that some regions suffered devastation as a result of military campaigns; for example, the destruction of irrigation systems in Sistan led to economic decline. This is also confirmed by the accounts of Isfizari.

In addition, Ismail Aka notes that although principles of justice were promoted in state administration during the reign of Shahrukh Mirza, instances of violence and abuse by tax collectors nevertheless occurred in practice. In this regard, information provided in the works of Zakariya ibn Muhammad concerning punishments and pressures imposed upon the population demonstrates the complexity of social life during the period.

Conclusion. In conclusion, the works of the Turkish Timurid scholar Ismail Aka present the cultural and constructive activities of Shahrukh Mirza as one of the most important factors of development during the Timurid era. The author convincingly demonstrates that alongside urban development, irrigation systems, and the construction of religious and scholarly institutions, broad opportunities were also created for the advancement of science, literature, and art. In particular, the transformation of Herat and Samarkand into major cultural and scientific centers is interpreted as a direct result of these policies.

At the same time, Ismail Aka does not idealize the activities of Shahrukh Mirza one-sidedly; he also considers the socio-economic problems of the period, shortcomings in the taxation system, and the decline observed in certain regions. Consequently, Shahrukh Mirza is portrayed not only as a constructive and enlightened ruler but also as a political figure who operated under complex historical circumstances, and his activities are evaluated in an objective and balanced manner.

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