

Cultural, Architecture and Economic Situation of Herat During The Timurids

Timurlular Döneminde Herat'in Kültürel, Mimarlık ve EkonomiK Durumu

ABSTRACT

The Timurid period was shaped by Amir Timur's conquest of Samarkand, followed by Turkistan, Khurasan (modern Afghanistan), Iran, Baghdad, and more. It spanned from the end of the 14th century to the early of the 16th century. After succeeding the Mongolian Ilkhanians, the Timurids, especially during the reigns of Shah Rukh and Sultan Hossein Bayqara, undertook extensive restoration efforts, particularly in Herat, which they made the center of their political activities. The research findings show that Amir Timur showed interest in literature, science and art, although progress in these areas was limited during his time. The pinnacle of these cultural achievements was reached when Shah Rukh relocated the capital from Samarkand to Herat. Herat flourished culturally, socially, and economically during this period, attracting scholars, artists, and academics from across the Islamic world. Multiple educational and developmental institutions were established in Herat. This article aims to examine Herat's cultural, social, and economic situation during the Timurid period, specifically during the reigns of Shah Rukh, and Hossein Bayqara. It evaluates the cultural revolution of that era through authoritative and primary works. This exploration raises questions about why Herat was chosen as the capital and what factors drove its literary, cultural, and economic growth. These questions are addressed through regular assumptions and qualitative research, supported by note-taking.

Keywords: Timurids, Khurasan, Herat, Shah Rukh

ÖZET

Timurlu dönemi, Emir Timur'un Semerkant'ı fethiyle şekillenmiş, bunu Türkistan, Horasan (modern Afganistan), İran, Bağdat ve daha fazlası izlemiştir. Bu dönem 14. yüzyılın sonundan 16. yüzyılın başlarına kadar devam etmiştir. Moğol İhanlıların yerine geçen Timurlular, özellikle Şahruh ve Sultan Hüseyin Baykara dönemlerinde, olağanüstü siyasi faaliyetlerinin merkezi haline getirdikleri Herat'ta kapsamlı restorasyon çalışmaları yürüttüler. Araştırma bulguları, Emir Timur'un edebiyat, bilim ve sanata ilgi gösterdiğini, ancak bu alanlardaki ilerlemenin onun döneminde sınırlı olduğunu gösteriyor. Bu kültürel başarıların zirvesine Şahruh'un başkenti Semerkant'tan Herat'a taşınmasıyla ulaşılmıştı. Herat, bu dönemde kültürel, sosyal ve ekonomik alanlarda gelişti ve İslam dünyasının dört bir yanından âlimleri, sanatçıları ve akademisyenleri kendine çekmişti. Herat'ta çok sayıda eğitim ve gelişim kurumu kurulmuştur. Bu makale, Timurlular döneminde, özellikle de Şahruh ve Hüseyin Baykara dönemlerinde Herat'ın kültürel, sosyal ve ekonomik durumunu incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Dönemin kültürel devrimini, otoriter ve birincil kaynaklar aracılığıyla değerlendiriyor. Bu araştırma, Herat'ın neden başkent olarak seçildiği ve edebi, kültürel ve ekonomik büyümesini sağlayan faktörlerin neler olduğuna dair soruları gündeme getirmektedir. Bu sorular, fişlendirme ile desteklenen düzenli varsayımlar ve nitel araştırma yönetimle ele alındı.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Timurlular, Horasan, Herat, Şahruh

INTRODUCTION

Afghanistan boasts a rich and vibrant history. Its civilization flourished in its ancient major cities, including Balkh, Ghazni, Herat, Kabul, and Kandahar. During this era, the Timurid sultans of Herat ushered in a remarkable cultural and intellectual renaissance that endured for nearly a century. They gave rise to kings, ministers, poets, artists, and warriors of exceptional caliber, a rarity in our nation's history. Timur's descendants fully assimilated into the culture and civilization of Khurasan, Afghanistan, Herat, and Kabul during the Timurid heyday, contributing significantly to a golden age of literature, art, poetry, Sufism, and knowledge. Figures like Shah Rukh, Baysanqar, Sultan Abu Said, and Sultan Hossein played pivotal roles in this flourishing period. Over the span of a century, Timur's descendants and their offspring, influenced by the rich culture of Khurasan and the knowledge-friendly atmosphere of Herat, overcame the military victories of Timur. They achieved eminence, leaving behind a legacy of scientific, literary, artistic, and Sufi glory. This period produced notable figures in various fields, including Amir Ali Shir Navai in politics and literature, Molana Jami in mysticism and poetry, and Master Kamaluddin Behzad, a shining star in the world of art.

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Under the reign of the Timurid sultans, particularly Mirza Shah Rukh, the city of Herat expanded exponentially, surpassing the size and prosperity of the days of the Ghorian and Kurt dynasties. During the rule of Hossein Bayqara, Herat reached the zenith of its grandeur. The Timurids extended their influence over vast territories, encompassing Turkestan, Mongolia, and Mesopotamia. Amidst this expansive empire, the splendid city of Herat radiated like a brilliant sun.

The current research is of particular importance. Because the assessment of the cultural, social, and economic conditions of Herat in the 15th century makes it possible to determine the position of this city as the capital of the Timurid government, that is, it is the time when the Timurid capital was moved from Samarkand to this city and Herat became the most important city in Central Asia. The primary objective of this article is to offer a comprehensive yet concise insight into the attributes and prosperity of this period of renaissance and growth in Asia. It aims to shed light on the significance and advancements of Khurasan and, at its heart, the historic city of Herat, which, as history would reveal, would evolve into a prominent hub of science, knowledge, and civilization, largely influenced by the enduring legacy of the Timurids.

Research Methodology

The article uses a qualitative, descriptive-analytical research design. First, information and reports pertaining to the time period from the ascent of Timur to the end of Sultan Hossein Bayqara's tenure were extracted in order to assess the cultural, social, and economic situations of Herat. The research findings are then presented after the data has been analyzed.

Literature Review

In relation to the historical city of Herat, research has been done by historians and scientists, and among them, we introduce the first-hand and most important works that we have used in this article. *Rawda al-Janat fi Ousaf Madine Herat*, which is the best work of the Timurid era about Herat and other cities of Khurasan, was written by Moinuddin Asfzari in 1492. *Al-Saadin* is informed by Kamal al-Din Abd al-Razzaq Samarkandi and includes the history of Shah Rukh and other Timurid kings. The author of *Zafarnameh* is Sharaf al-Din Ali Yazdi, who describes the events of the period of Amir Timur, Shah Rukh and Ulugh Beg. *Zubdat al-Tawarikh* is a book by Hafiz-i Abru, a famous and distinguished writer of Herat court during the reign of Mirza Shah Rukh. In his work, which he wrote in the 15th century of AD, he wrote in detail the situation and characteristics of Herat. *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh Mu'ini*; the work of Mu'in al-ddin Natanzi belongs to the 15th century of AD, which includes the general events of the world until the death of Timur. In this research, in addition to the mentioned works from other books such as the art of the Timurid era by Abdul Hai Habibi, *Nuzhat al-Qulub* by Hamdallah Mustaufi, Persian poetry in the era of Shah Rukh by Ehsan Yar Shater, *Timurids and Turkmens* by Hossein Mirjafari and the works of foreign researchers such as historical geography *The lands of the Eastern Caliphate* by Guy Le Strange, the historical geography of Iran by Barthold, from Saadi to Jami by Edward Brown have been used, and all of these works provide sufficient information about Timurid history, and from other researches that have been used, in the list of sources It has been mentioned.

Brief History of Herat City

Herat is one of the ancient cities of Ariana (the old name of Afghanistan), which is mentioned and praised in the Minoan Avesta book. In paragraph 11 of the "Vandidad" section of the Avesta book, it is defined as follows: "I, who am Ahura Mazda, dwell in the best places and cities that I have created (Hari = Herat) is full of greenery" (Zoroastert, 1948: 11). Mentioning the name of Herat in the Avesta itself is a decisive proof that this city existed and was known by the same name many centuries before the rise of the Sassanid government.

Conquest of Herat by the Arabs: The Arab attacks on Khurasan began in 650 AD during the caliphate of Hazrat Uthman ibn Affan, and in the same year Neishabur, Herat and Marv were conquered (Al-Balazari, 1967: 410-412). When Hazrat Uthman bin Affan became the caliphate, he sent Abdullah bin Amer bin Kariz to the province of Basra in 650 AD. In the year 650 AD, Abdullah bin Amer set his sights on Khurasan and sent an army under the command of Khalid bin Abdullah al-Hanafi to the battle of Herat. The border constable of Herat saved Herat, Pushang and Badghis from destruction through a peace treaty in exchange for one million dirhams. During the Islamic period, Herat was called "Qibla al-Islami" and it was known as "Qibla Ahrar" or "Abrar". Herat had four gates that reached Balkh from the north, Neishabur from the west, Sistan from the south, and Ghor from the east (Lestrange, 1998: 434).

When the influence of the Arab government in Iran and Khurasan became weak and for the first time after the extinction of the great Sassanid state, the dynasty of independent kings such as: Tahirians,² Saffarians,³ Samanians,⁴ Ghaznavids and Khwarazmshahs arose in Khurasan. The Herat has achieved a prestigious position in the world of politics, science and literature, and a large group of men: science, literature, hadith, jurisprudence, philosophy and wisdom, poetry and writers have emerged from that city.

From the beginning to the Islamic conquest, Herat city underwent many changes, and this city suffered many losses due to Mongol attacks and massacres of the Khwarezmshah army, Timur's troops, earthquakes, famines, and plagues. Although Herat was destroyed during the Mongol period, it regained its greatness again. As during the Timurid era, it became the capital of the Timurid dynasty from the time of Shah Rukh and reached the peak of development and excellence. According to Barthold, the rulers of Herat always tried to preserve the greatness of Herat (Barthold, 1993: 109).

The ancient city of Herat was sometimes completely ruined and once completely prosperous, it was the most important city in the region and the largest school of science, literature and fine arts of Persian (Dari) languages and was the capital of the Timurid empire. Khurasan was divided into four parts during the Arab period, that is, in the Middle Ages, and each part was named after one of the four big cities that were the seat of that part or all the provinces at different times and they were Neishabur, Merv, Herat and Balkh. Currently, the Herat part of Khurasan is the second largest city in Afghanistan and the center of Herat province, which is located in the west of this country (Lombard, 2011: 408).

The Cultural and Architecture Situation of Herat during the Timurid Period

The Cultural Situation of Herat during the Timurid Period

In light of Timur's visionary spirit, one might initially expect his cultural legacy and that of his successors to mirror that of the Mongols. However, a closer examination of the Timurid era reveals it as a bright and fruitful period for cultural and artistic endeavors. The Timurid era laid the foundation for the evolution of activities such as architecture, painting, calligraphy, gilding, book cover crafting, and historiography. Several factors contributed to this phenomenon, including the encouragement and support of artists and scholars by Timur and his successors, as well as the wealth and booty they amassed through conquests. The flourishing of the arts, particularly fine arts, can be attributed to the influx of Iranian, Khurasani and Afghani artisans and intellectuals who were relocated to Samarkand and Herat under Timur's orders, propelling the growth and development of architecture and various art forms. During the Timurid era, the seat of power shifted to Khurasan and, subsequently, the capital moved from Samarkand to Herat. Herat emerged as the most brilliant cultural center in Afghanistan's history and the artistic epicenter of Central Asia for a century (1405-1507 AD). This artistic renaissance harnessed the creative talents of individuals from Khurasan, Iran, Turan, and throughout the vast Timurid Empire, resulting in a great era of art and literature. Shah Rukh, upon establishing his capital in Herat, nurtured the city's artistic heritage, which was further enriched by his successors (Nariman, 2018: 173-174).

Following the death of Abu Said in Azerbaijan, under the orders of Hassan Agh Qyunlu, Sultan Hossein Bayqara assumed control of Herat. However, Mohammad Mirza, the son of Mirza Sultan Mohammad and grandson of Baysanqar, who had the support of Uzun Hasan and Turkmen soldiers, captured Herat. He was known for his reckless behavior. Sultan Hossein, who had been wandering in the deserts, launched a sudden attack and, after defeating Mohammad Mirza, reclaimed Herat in 1470 AD. From that point until the end of his life, Khurasan experienced relative stability, with no major disasters. This period of calm, lasting for about forty years, allowed Khurasan, especially Herat, which had become an environment conducive to knowledge and art since the times of Timur, Shah Rukh, and Bayqara, to flourish and prosper (Brown, 1937: 429).

The Timurids emphasis on poetry, literature, and painting reveals that during their era, not only were their basic material needs met, but they also sought to fulfill their spiritual needs. According to economic scholars, human needs can be categorized into two main types: material and vital needs, and spiritual and intellectual needs. Throughout history, even from the Stone Age, humans have displayed a constant pursuit of spiritual needs such as poetry, painting, writing, and literature. These pursuits have been a hallmark of human culture and have endured alongside the fulfillment of basic material needs, which often took precedence. The progress of the Timurid period

² Taherians: They were a local dynasty that established the first independent government in Khurasan after the domination of the Arabs. The founder of their government is Tahir bin Hossein Pushangi. Their rule lasted more than half a century between 821-872. The capital of their government was the city of Nishapur. Ghobar, 2015:107-109.

³ Samanians: The founder of this dynasty was Saman Khoda from Balkh, located in the north of present-day Afghanistan. The Samanid government was established by Ismail in Bukhara between 892-999. They ruled in Mavarlanhar and parts of Khurasan. Bosworth, 1992: 159-162; Ghobar, 2015: 120-121.

⁴ Safarians: The founder of this dynasty is Yaqub bin Leith Safar. This dynasty came to power after the Taherians and held power in Sistan and Khurasan between 867-903. Stanely, 1911: 129-130.

in Herat serves as an example of how, during this era, basic material needs were met to such an extent that it allowed for the pinnacle of poetry, courtesy, music, and industry to flourish (Mir, 2001: 150).

In the era of the Khurasan Timurids, particularly in Herat, which served as the hub for Persian and Turkish literary poets and talented artists, luminaries like Abdul Rahman Jami, Sultan Hussein Mirza, Amir Ali Shir Nawai, and Kamaluddin Behzad shone brightly. Herat boasted numerous madrasas, which were the epicenters of education during the Timurid period, including Shah Rukh Mirza Madrasa, Goharshad Madrasa, and Sultan Hossein Bayqara Madrasa, constructed in 1492. Scholars from various corners of the Islamic world flocked to these educational centers. Renowned teachers of that era included Maulana Jalaluddin Owahi, Maulana Jalaluddin Yusuf Hallaj, Nizamuddin Abdul Rahim, and Maulana Khwaja Naseruddin Lotfullah, who were under the supervision of Ustad Ali Tabrizi.

Shahzade(prince) Baysangar, a poet and calligrapher of the Timurid era, actively sought to support artists. In 1420 AD, he established an art library in Herat and attracted numerous artists to the city. The Timurid kings and princes demonstrated a genuine commitment to the advancement of culture, art, and science (Safa, 1948: 125). Herat's architects initially distanced themselves from the arts due to the Mongol invasions, resulting chaos, and the rule of local rulers. However, as time passed and the invading tribes encountered the rich cultural heritage of the defeated people, they embraced and adopted it. Herat's architecture experienced a renaissance, leading to the construction of religious and cultural landmarks (Mirjafari, 2011: 128).

During Amir Timur's 36-year reign, his focus remained on warfare and territorial expansion. Despite this, he invested great efforts in the development of Samarkand. He gathered architects, ualama, artists, and skilled professionals from all corners of the conquered territories, sending them to Samarkand. Consequently, Timur didn't allocate the same level of attention to other cities in his empire, including Herat. However, during the reigns of his successors such as Shah Rukh, Baysanqar, Abu Said, and Sultan Hossein, whose main center of political, civil, and scientific activities was Herat, special attention was dedicated to this city. This era marked the glorious age of science and knowledge in Herat. According to author Habib-Us Siyar, of the 210 poets from the Timurid period, only 23 lived during Amir Timur's time, while the rest belonged to his successors (Mir, 2001: 150). During Shah Rukh's 43-year rule (1447-1405), Khurasan underwent changes that benefited the region culturally, socially, economically, and politically. Shah Rukh officially established Herat as his capital (Mustaufi, 2002: 42).

With Herat becoming Shah Rukh's capital, it prospered day by day. Shah Rukh's presence in Khurasan and Herat led to development, security, and the establishment of a scientific and cultural center in those areas. During Shah Rukh's era, significant cultural progress was made, particularly in fields like art and intellectual research, encompassing painting, music, historiography, architecture, and more (Holt, 1998: 112).

Sultan Hossein Bayqara's rule may not be evaluated positively from a political-military perspective. However, from a scientific-cultural standpoint, it is considered one of Herat's most prominent eras. During this period, Herat became the largest center of culture and art within the Timurid territory. Sultan Hossein's robust support for culture provided the backdrop for the growth of science and art. Amir Ali Shir Nawai, a minister, scientist, and poet, played a special role during this magnificence. Herat became an ideal place for the nurturing of distinguished individuals. Sultan Hossein, with the collaboration and guidance of Amir Ali Shir Nawai, transformed Herat into a significant hub of science, literature, and culture in Khurasan. Consequently, cultural centers like madrasas, hanakah (monasteries), and libraries were constructed in Herat, drawing ulama (scholars) and artists from across the Islamic world, who were encouraged by the Sultan. One renowned school in Herat was the Nizamia Madrasa, originally built during Khwaja Nizam al-Mulk's time and later renovated under Sultan Hossein Bayqara's orders (Delirish and Shatri, 2013: 66-67).

The progress achieved by Herat in various fields during Sultan Hossein Bayqara's 38-year reign (1469-1506) was so significant that even the most famous European capitals couldn't compete with it. The development and prosperity reached a level that chroniclers couldn't refrain from mentioning. The influence of Herat and its art during the Bayqara period extended to the painting style adopted by the courtiers and princes of Baburian India. This style showcased a fascinating blend of Afghani techniques and past Indian styles. The Baburis embraced the miniature style of "Behzad," the royal court painter in Herat, integrating it with a distinctive three-dimensional profile portrait painting style unique to Behzad. It included combinations of landscapes, gardens, and wall paintings, contributing to the design and artistry of India (Hardy, 1990: 32).

Furthermore, the bookbinding industry reached its zenith during the Timurid period in the 15th century, particularly within the school of Herat. This era witnessed the creation of opulent manuscripts adorned with exquisite calligraphy, gilded engravings, paintings, and precious covers. Herat's artistic movement resulted in the Timurid sultans fostering the development of engraving, calligraphy, and painting by gathering artists from various regions

in the city. Shahzade Baysangar established a large manuscript production workshop in Herat, employing, according to one account, 23 artists (Ehsani, 1989: 20), and according to another, 20 artists (Zaki, 1993: 125), who specialized in painting, gilding, and calligraphy, each worked separately.

The Architecture of Herat City in the Timurid Period

During his presence in Samarkand, Timur's soldiers lived in their tents outside the city (Clavijo, 1965, p. 38). But with the passage of time, they got used to the city life. Timur's interest in building mosques and various buildings and gardens is also a clear sign of his desire and inclination towards urbanization (Mirjafari, 2011: 71). Timur had built magnificent palaces for women and princes, and he constantly held festive gatherings in the gardens.

Timur's successors were passionate supporters of construction and ruled the golden age in which all arts, including architecture, reached a new peak of perfection. For this reason, they built schools and monasteries in the Timurid era in cities including Herat and became a hot spot for receiving poets, musicians, calligraphers, painters, etc. (Nawai, 1985: 96). Shah Rukh was the founder of the Herat School, which began in 1414 and was completed in 1434. He was a resourceful and constructive man and a supporter of all kinds of arts. His big madrasa in Herat was comparable in size and grandeur to the biggest Timurid building in Samarkand. In addition, Sultan Hossein Bayqara also built many buildings in Herat city, including the Jahanara Garden and the palaces in it which took more than two decades to build.

Shah Rukh used to encourage architects, plasterers and craftsmen. As during his reign in Herat, a city that became the center of science, art and architecture of the Islamic world, he built excellent madrasas, hanakahs and mosques (Abu, 1996: 13). In the following section, we will mention some examples of valuable works of this period that have been restored and renovated in this city.

Herat Grand Mosque (Masjid-i Jami Herat)

At the end of his rule, Sultan Ghiyath al-Din Muhammad bin Sam built this mosque. Shah Rukh commissioned Amir Jalaluddin Firozshah to restore it. The mosque's arch was damaged during Sultan Hossein Bayqara's rule, reducing it to ruins. But in 1498, Amir Ali Shir Nawai tried to fix it. A project that was previously projected to take three or four years was finished in just six months because of his unshakable commitment and diligence (Talbot, 1996: 228). The careful tiling, which was originally planned to take five years, was completed in just one year. This structure is still standing and is well-known for being one of the most important mosques in Afghanistan and Central Asia (Figure 1-2).

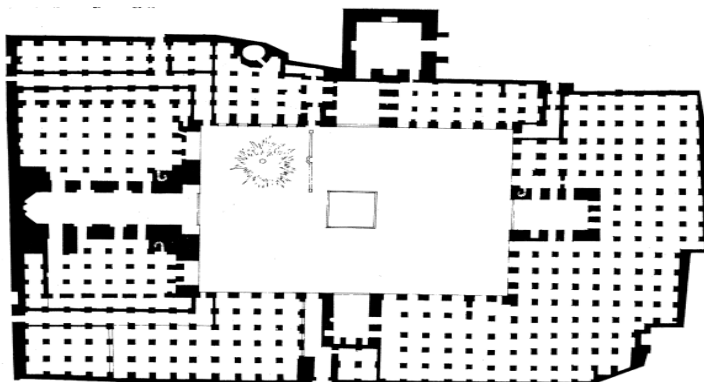


Figure 1: Grand Mosque before restorations (Golomberg, 1983, p. 97).

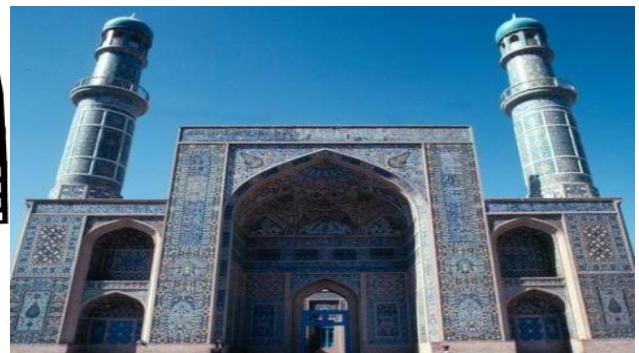


Figure 2: The Grand Mosque Right now.

Other notable works and structures in Herat city include the Chahar Souq Mosque of Mirza Alaa al-Dawlah, built by Shah Rukh (Mir, 1966: 9-12). Amir Firozshah's madrasa and hanakah, Akhtar al-Din Castle, the awe-inspiring Goharshad Grand Mosque, which attracted crowds every Friday (Godard, 1996: 132), and the Jame Ali Shir Mosque, distinguished by its porch made of gold and a tiled minaret. The Sarmazar Jami Mansion was constructed under the order of Sultan Hossein. The mausoleum of Imam Fakhr Razi, and the Jame Mosque of Ziyaratgah, one of Shah Rukh's creations adorned by Khwaja Fazaluddin Mohammad. The tomb of Goharshad Agha, still standing in Herat, is a square-shaped building displaying the architectural grandeur of the Timurid era (Wilson, 1987: 182).

The gardens of Herat city include Marghni Garden, Gazergah Garden, Zaghan Garden (Shah Rukh's residence), New Garden, Zubideh Garden (one of the works of Mohammad Joki), and Agh Sera (White Garden). These gardens boasted an abundance of various fruits, with grapes, in particular, flourishing in around a hundred different varieties, each with its own distinct name. It is worth noting that Herat currently hosts more than 120 types of grapes, solidifying its reputation as one of Afghanistan's most renowned cities.

The Economic Situation of Herat in the Timurid Period

Herat had experienced relative economic growth before the Timurids arrived. According to Ibn Hawqal, who wrote his book around 952, "Herat is one of the important cities of the Khurasan region, fortified with a strong wall. The Jame Mosque is located within the city, while the Daralamare (palace) lies outside the walls in a place known as Khurasan Abad. The city of Herat served as the center for trade and the storage of goods from Khurasan, Sistan, and Fars"(Ibn, 1987: 173).

Yaqut described the economic situation of Herat city in 1211 when he visited the city, stating: "Herat is a major city in the Khurasan region. During my visit to Khurasan in 1211, I did not encounter any city more important, larger, more beautiful, cleaner, or more populated than Herat. It boasted numerous gardens, flowing waters, and abundant blessings. Herat was teeming with scholars, scientists, and wealthy inhabitants" (Al-hamawi, 2001: 658-659).

In his book *Nuzhat al-Qulub*, penned around 1330, Hamdallah Mustaufi described Herat during the Ghurid rule: "During the reign of the Ghurians, Herat had twelve thousand shops, six thousand baths, caravanserais, and radiator houses, as well as 359 madrasas, hanakhs, firehouses, and 444,000 houses" (Mustaufi, 2002: 151).

However, during the Timurid era, especially under the rule of Shah Rukh and Sultan Hossein, Herat experienced tremendous growth, with its population surpassing that of the Ghorian dynasty and reaching unprecedented heights. Agricultural development efforts persisted almost until the end of the Timurid era. Despite the severe damage inflicted by the Mongol invasion on Khurasan and its lingering effects in subsequent centuries, the Timurid sultans, known for their urban and cultural outlook, prioritized agriculture, fostering relative peace. Khurasan's agricultural productivity reached its zenith, thanks in part to Sultan Hossein Bayqara, who revitalized many of Khurasan's lands and constructed numerous water channels (Asfzari, 1959: 317).

Shah Rukh and his wife, Goharshad, played a pivotal role in enhancing cities and improving the lives of the people. They commissioned the construction of numerous buildings in Herat and settled other key economic centers such as Samarkand, Tabriz, and Shiraz. Consequently, during the reign of Shah Rukh and other Timurid sultans, Khurasan thrived and reached its most advanced state in history. Recognizing Herat's growing economic importance, it was selected as the capital of the Timurids.

Over his forty-three years of rule in Herat, Shah Rukh spared no effort to restore the city's ruins. According to Hafiz-i Abru, a renowned historian of the Timurid era, Shah Rukh ordered the covering of most of Herat's markets, which had previously been open and caused problems for craftsmen and traders during rains. Streets overlooking the market were rebuilt, bazaars were constructed using plaster and bricks, and grand, luxurious arches were erected. Openings were strategically placed in the roofs to provide light to the markets, and the chambers of traders and merchants were organized systematically (Abru, 2001: 11).

Shah Rukh had various motivations for choosing Herat as the capital of his government, including strategic and defensive considerations, the moderate climate, proximity to large and densely populated cities, and most importantly, the fertility of its agricultural lands and its location along the trade routes of Central Asia, India, and Iran. After the transfer of the capital from Samarkand to Herat, the city occupied a privileged position in every regard. Subsequently, during Shah Rukh's era and that of his successors, trade and agriculture flourished, numerous fertile lands were reclaimed, and a wide range of economic and social activities thrived.

Conclusion

During Amir Timur's period, there was no significant progress in the cultural and economic fields, and the people of this region even endured losses. However, under the rule of his successors, including Shah Rukh and Sultan Hossein Bayqara of Herat, they reached the pinnacle of growth and splendor in both material and spiritual aspects. Furthermore, throughout history, Herat has consistently been regarded as the heart of Khurasan, the key to Asia, and the gateway to Afghanistan, extending to the Indian subcontinent. While Herat has always held a central role with a recognizable name and significance, its most remarkable era of splendor and rebirth undoubtedly occurred during the Timurid period.

Over the hundred-year span of Timurid rule, particularly during the reigns of Shah Rukh and Sultan Hossein Bayqara, Herat achieved its zenith in the realms of science, literature, architecture, and economics. Despite the ravages inflicted upon Herat by historical conquerors like Genghis and Timur, it managed to resurrect its lost grandeur and became a hub of knowledge and artistic expression in Asia. The significance of this transformation is evident in the historical records of the time, especially after Herat was selected as the capital of the Timurid dynasty, surpassing even Samarkand in importance, as attested by the surviving documents of that period.

The findings of the research show that the transfer of the Timurid capital from Samarkand to Herat led to the progress and well-being of the general situation of this city at different levels. Although Emir Timur paid attention to progress in the cultural and economic sectors, most of his reign was spent on campaigns and conquests. On this account, he could not leave significant achievements in this area. But the efforts and interest of his successors, including Shah Rukh Mirza and Sultan Hossein Bayqara, became the main factor in the growth of Herat in the cultural, social and economic sectors.

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