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## The Role and Place of Amir Temur in the History of Azerbaijan

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### Abstract

This article analyzes the role and place of Amir Temur in the history of Azerbaijan. Amir Temur made a trip to Azerbaijan as a result of which it became part of the empire of Amir Temur. Amir Temur actively defended Shirvanshakhs, gave him more land for management. During Temur, the most peaceful life in Azerbaijan was and a number of structures were built. Baylakon city is newly built. Temur's army completely built the city in one month. They also dug up a large Nakhri Barlos canal. Despite the fact that Tokhtamysh with the help of Temur came to the throne, he raided Azerbaijan and claimed Iran. The article analyzes those events. We can say that Azerbaijan expanded and flourished during Amir Temur.

**Keywords:** Amir Temur, Azerbaijan, Shirvanshakhs, Nakhri Barlos, Tokhtamysh

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## Amir Temur'un Azerbaycan Tarihindeki Rolü ve Yeri

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### Öz

Bu makale, Amir Temur'un Azerbaycan tarihindeki rolünü ve yerini analiz etmektedir. Amir Temur, Azerbaycan'a bir sefer yaptı ve bunun sonucunda bölge Amir Temur İmparatorluğu'nun bir parçası oldu. Amir Temur, Şirvanşahları aktif olarak savundu, ona yönetim için daha fazla toprak verdi. Temur döneminde Azerbaycan'da en huzurlu yaşam oldu ve bir dizi yapı inşa edildi. Baylakon şehri yeni inşa edilmiştir. Temur ordusu şehri bir ay içinde tamamen inşa etti. Ayrıca büyük bir Nakhri Barlos kanalı kazdılar. Temur'un yardımıyla Tokhtamysh'in tahtına gelmesine rağmen, Azerbaycan'a baskın yaptı ve İran'ı iddia etti. Makale bu olayları analiz ediyor. Azerbaycan'ın Amir Temur döneminde genişlediğini ve geliştiğini söyleyebiliriz.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Amir Temur, Azerbaycan, Şirvanşahlar, Nakhri Barlos, Tokhtamysh

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## **Роль и место Амира Темура в истории Азербайджана**

### **Резюме**

В данной статье анализируются роль и место Амира Темура в истории Азербайджана. Амир Темур совершил поездку в Азербайджан, в результате чего он вошел в состав империи Амира Темура. Амир Темур активно защищал Ширваншахов, давал им больше земель для управления. В период правления Амира Темура в Азербайджане была спокойствие и мир и там были возведены ряд сооружений. Армия Темур полностью построил город Байлакон за один месяц. Его армия выкопала большой канал Нахри Барлос. Несмотря на то, что Тохтамыш с помощью Темура взойшел на престол, он совершил набег на Азербайджан и захватил Иран. В статье анализируются те события. Во время правления Амира Темура Азербайджан расширялся и процветал.

**Ключевые слова:** Амир Темур, Азербайджан, Ширваншахи, Нахри Барлос, Тохтамыш.

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## **Introduction**

At the end of the XIV century, great socio-political changes took place in the regions of Eurasia. The emergence of the state of Amir Temur led to a change in the alignment of political forces in the regions.

Amir Temur expelled the Mongols, founded a single centralized state in Movarounnahr and pursued an active foreign policy. Amir Temur set a goal to overcome threats from the north, placing a benevolent ruler on the throne of the state of the Golden Horde. With his help, Tokhtamysh Khan ascended the throne of the Golden Horde and began to seize the lands of Amir Temur and looked at Azerbaijan and Iran that were under his influence.

The article reveals the place and role of Amir Temur in the history of Azerbaijan. At that time, the most powerful state on the territory of Azerbaijan was the state of the Shirvanshahs. Shirvanshah diplomatically worked in alliance with Amir Temur and not only saved his country, but also created great opportunities for its peace and prosperity. During the reign of Amir Temur, an important bridge was built in the history of the peoples of Azerbaijan and Central Asia. This article briefly examines the place and role of Amir Temur in the history of Azerbaijan.

### **Main part**

Amir Temur is considered one of the greatest personalities in the world, he played a big role in the history of mankind. In his personality and activity there are attractive aspects and a lot of unknown.

The structure of his empire included 27 countries of the world. The significance of the personality of Amir Temur and his activities in these countries separately requires a wider and more objective study. In historical science, this issue has not been fully studied to date, and the role of Amir Temur in the history of Azerbaijan is also not sufficiently covered.

In this regard, the work of scientists, such as: S. Akhmedov “Amir Timur in the history and culture of Azerbaijan”<sup>1</sup>, Z.Z. Piriev “Azerbaijan during Temur”<sup>2</sup> and other authors who are more likely to consider issues of the cultural plan. Amir Temur’s trips to Azerbaijan are covered in textbooks and lecture texts, which in itself is a positive fact, but insufficient for a complete understanding of such problems as: his role and place as a person in the history of Azerbaijan.

As we know, the military campaign of Amir Temur against Azerbaijan began in 1385. At that time, the state of the Shirvanshakhs was in the northeastern regions of Azerbaijan, in the Shirvan region, however, it was in vassal dependence on the Jalayirids. Dozens of uprisings of the local population were brutally suppressed, all attempts to create independent

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<sup>1</sup>S.Akhmedov, *Amir Timur in the history and culture of Azerbaijan* <http://forum.turan.info/archive/index.php/t-6011.html>.(11.12.2020).

<sup>2</sup> Z.Z. Piriev, *Azerbaijan during Temur Role and place of Amir Temur in world history*, Tashkent, Uzbekistan, 1996, p. 37.

states were thwarted by the Mongol forces.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, a threat from the Mongol Khan Tokhtamysh loomed over Azerbaijan.

In 1385 (86), the Golden Horde Khan Tokhtamysh with an army of 90,000 invaded Azerbaijan. After passing through Shirvan and devastating a number of its cities, he headed towards Tabriz. In 1382, Tokhtamysh destroyed Tabriz.<sup>4</sup>

Tabriz was a very famous trade and economic center in the East, and it was also known as “Kubbatul Islam” (“Domes of Islam”). But after the devastation of Tokhtamysh, this city was depopulated for several years. Later, by order of Amir Temur, this city was rebuilt, anew. In 1388 (89) and 1390. coins with the name of Tokhtamysh were minted in Baku, Shemakhi and Shabran.

During this period of time, Azerbaijan was a bone of contention between the Golden Horde and Amir Temur. Ibrahim I did not consider it possible to enter into armed confrontation with Amir Temur and Tokhtamysh. He preferred a policy of non-intervention and the use of uncompromising rivalry. To preserve his state, the ruler Shirvanshakhs Ibrahim I (1382-1417) came to the great Amir Temur in Karabakh and brought him precious gifts in recognition of his authority.<sup>5</sup> So S. Akhmedov in his work notes “Amir Timur’s attitude to the Shirvanshakhs state is of interest. This Azerbaijani state, with its capital in Shemakha, was headed by Ibrahim I, an extraordinary person who played a large role in the history of Azerbaijan from the late XIV - early XV centuries. Amir Timur, who for many years was exposed only as a destroyer and conqueror, could liquidate the Shirvanshakhs state, wipe the city of Shirvan from the face of

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<sup>3</sup> S. Akhmedov, *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Nizamiddin Shomiy, *Zafarnoma*, Tashkent 1996, p.132-133.

<sup>5</sup> N. Shomiy, *Ibid.*, p.137.

the earth. However, he began to support the activities of Ibrahim I, aimed at restoring the economy and culture of the region. ”<sup>6</sup>

In addition to his possessions, Amir Temur gave him several more areas. The territories subordinate to him reached Mount Elbrus. By order of Amir Temur, Shobiron and Shamakhi were included in his states. In historical chronicles it is written that Gilon was one of the shopping centers of the South Caspian Sea, but this city was not subordinate to anyone until Amir Temur came. This city was also transferred to Ibrahim Shirvanshakh.<sup>7</sup>

Amir Temur accepted him as his co-ruler. As a result, Ibrahim I remained as the ruler of the Shirvanshakhs.

Using the enmity between Timur and Tokhtamysh, Ibrahim I obtained agreement on the internal independence of Shirvan, and also persuaded Timur to suspend the devastation of Georgia and make peace with Tsar George VII. At the request of Timur, Shirvans took part in his campaigns against Tokhtamysh and the Turkish Sultan Bayezid I. In the battle on the Terek River in 1395, the army of Timur won a landslide victory over Tokhtamysh. Thus, one of the dangerous opponents of Ibrahim I, who threatened his state from the north, was neutralized by the forces of Amir Temur. As a result, Amir Temur did not allow Tokhtamysh to conquer Azerbaijan.

The campaigns of Amir Timur in 1385 - 1395, the wars with the Jalairids, of course, caused great damage to the economy of Azerbaijani cities, but it was they that brought something more to the state of the Jalairids - a crushing blow was dealt and thereby the process of creating independent Azerbaijani states was accelerated. It can be said that Amir

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<sup>6</sup> S. Akhmedov, *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> N. Shomiy, *Ibid.*, p.137.

Timur contributed to the liberation of the territory of Azerbaijan from Mongol rule.<sup>8</sup>

The activities of Amir Temur eliminated the threat from Georgia to Azerbaijan. After the arrival of Amir Temur from the Indian campaign, he found out that Georgian troops again invaded Azerbaijani territories.<sup>9</sup> Using the separation of the small states of Azerbaijan, the Georgians conquered some places of Sheki and Ganja.<sup>10</sup> Amir Temur, having once again visited Karabakh in 1399-1400<sup>11</sup> eliminated this threat.

In 1395, Amir Temur handed over to Ibrahim I Derbent, entrusting Shirvanshakh with protection of the Derbent Pass. As we know, this was the strategic location of the empire of Amir Temur, because there was a customs post.

Thus, Ibrahim I protected his country from imminent attacks and devastation, and, without paying Timur tribute, like other vassals, he won the position of a sovereign who really ruled his country. Thanks to this, the army of Timur circumvented the state of the Shirvanshakhs. It should also be noted that diplomacy, strategy, political maturity and foresight saved Shirvanshah Ibrahim I from the threats of Amir Temur.

Amir Temur always defended, respected and helped someone who did not oppose him. So we know that the ruler of Constantinople was a Christian, he recognized the power of Amir Temur, as a result, this city was under the protection of Amir Temur. He had no plans for the conquest of Azerbaijan, but, as we know, his enemy Tokhtamysh, despite the fact that with the help of Amir Temur he became the khan of the Golden Horde, waged a hostile war against Amir Temur himself.

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<sup>8</sup> S. Akhmedov, *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> N. Shomiy, *Ibid.*, p.277.

<sup>10</sup> Sharafiddin Ali Yazdiy, *Zafarnoma*, Shark Tashkent 1997, p.331.

<sup>11</sup> S. A. Yazdiy, *Ibid.*, p.331.



In our opinion, from a geopolitical point of view, Azerbaijan was very interested in Amir Temur. From historical chronicles, we know that Amir Temur has been to Azerbaijan several times and from there made some trips. Wintered several times in Karabakh. The favorable location of the Caucasian space impressed Amir Temur very much, in particular, caravan roads made it possible to reach the sea and connect with distant states.

Azerbaijan was also interested in Amir Temur by the fact that this state was Muslim, Turkic-speaking and quite developed. Despite the fact that Azerbaijan was included in the empire of Amir Temur, it retained its independence. As the Azerbaijani historian S. Ahmadov wrote in his campaigns, Amir Timur was guided by the principle "the world will prosper thanks to trading people", trying to create a single trade and economic space, ensure the safety of trade routes, the development of craft and trade. In his campaigns against Azerbaijan, no similar cruelties and destruction were observed that were inflicted by the Mongol invasion at the beginning of the 13th century. In addition, the defeat of the troops of Khan Tokhtamysh, the subsequent ruin by Amir Timur of the cities of the Golden Horde contributed to the movement of trade routes to the south, that is, to Azerbaijan. The southern route of the Great Silk Road, from China through Samarkand to Europe, again began to pass through Azerbaijan lands, primarily through Tabriz. This explains the significant leap in the development of Tabriz and its transformation in the 15th century into one of the largest cities in the East.<sup>12</sup>

During the reign of Amir Temur, civil wars were stopped in Azerbaijan, different areas of production developed, which contributed to the overall development of this region. A large canal with a length of about 70 km was also built. This canal was previously built by one of the rulers,

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<sup>12</sup> S. Akhmedov, *Ibid.*

but during this period, due to the closure of the road of this canal, there was no water in it, as a result of which it was not possible to field the land. Amir Temur ordered a re-dig this channel. With the help of the tavachi administrators, the military units were divided and the front of work for the construction of this channel was designated. The entire army and even the admirals of Amir Temur themselves participated in the construction of this canal. Amir Temur called this canal Nakhri Barlos.<sup>13</sup> After construction, even steamboats walked along this canal. In the vicinity of this channel appeared settlements, sown lands and gardens.

In addition, Amir Temur built a number of structures in Azerbaijan. Among them can be noted the restructuring of the city of Baylakon.<sup>14</sup> According to historians of that time, no one lived in this city at that time and there were not even animals. Experienced architects and engineers of that time were involved in this building. They drew up a future plan of the city, marked the places of 4 markets, a bathhouse, caravanserais, squares, gardens, residential buildings.<sup>15</sup> By order of Amir Temur, the plots were divided by number of troops, which were supposed to complete their work within a month. The outskirts of the city were surrounded by a wall with a length of about  $2400 \times 0.54 = 1296$  m, a wall thickness of  $11 \times 0.54 = 5.94$  m, a height of  $15 \times 0.54 = 8.1$  m, a thickness of  $30 \times 0.54 = 16.2$ , depth  $20 \times 0.54 = 10.8$  m. In this city, two gates were built from two sides.

Bastions were built on the corners of the walls, loopholes and merlons, as well as places for stone-throwers, were built in the middle of the curtain. A ditch with a width of 30 and a depth of 20 cubits was dug around the city.<sup>16</sup> This city was rebuilt with the participation of the troops of Amir Temur. According to Sharafiddin Ali Yazdiy, Nizamuddin Shamiy and other

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<sup>13</sup> S. A. Yazdiy, *Ibid.*, p. 253-254.

<sup>14</sup> S. A. Yazdiy, *Ibid.*, p. 278.

<sup>15</sup> S. A. Yazdiy, *Ibid.*, p. 278.

<sup>16</sup> S. A. Yazdiy, *Ibid.*, p. 352.

historians, the Sultans would build this city for years, and thanks to the participation of the Temur military, the city was built within a month. Protective walls were also built in Derbent.

In conclusion, I would like to note that as a result of these events, integration processes begin to develop, concepts of a single space are emerging in the East, we can say that the process of globalization is beginning and roads are opening for familiarization and interpenetration of economies and cultures of different countries and peoples of the world.

## Conclusion

From the above, it can be concluded that Azerbaijan was also in the process of socio-political changes at that time. The rivalry between Tokhtamysh Khan and Amir Temur was caused by the desire to own the territories of Azerbaijan and Iran. Despite the great political confrontation between Amir Temur and Tokhtamysh Khan, the country's skilled diplomat and head of state Ibrahim Shirvanshah overcome all difficulties and worked in alliance with Amir Temur. Peace was maintained in Azerbaijan even at that time, when great wars and conflicts intensified in the regions. Amir Temur often spent the winter in Karabakh and loved the region very much. Along with the expansion of the territory of the Shirvanshahs, large-scale construction work was carried out here. Amir Temur paid great attention to this region. Thanks to the efforts of Amir Temur and the construction of important irrigation structures, not only peace and tranquility and expansion of the territory were observed, but also many settlements were established around the area and new lands were developed.

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