

ABOUT THE CREATIVE ACTIVITY OF THE TIMURID PRINCESS GAVHARSHODBEGIM

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Abstract. *The article analyzes the activities of Gavharshadbegim, who made a great contribution to the development of architecture and culture in the history of Maveronnahr and Khorasan in the 15th century, based on scientific sources. His achievements in the field of creativity, the construction of architectural monuments in Herat, and his contribution to the development of science and enlightenment are highlighted.*

Keywords: *Amir Temur, Shahrukh Mirza, Gavharshadbegim, Maveronnahr, Khorasan, mosque, madrasa.*

Introduction

The Timurid era, known for its cultural renaissance and architectural advancements, produced several influential figures who significantly contributed to the intellectual and artistic legacy of the Islamic world. Among these prominent personalities was Princess Gavharshodbegim, the wife of Shahrukh Mirza and daughter-in-law of Amir Temur. Her name is inseparably associated with the flourishing of architecture, education, and enlightenment in the 15th-century regions of Maverannahr and Khorasan.

While many historical accounts focus on male rulers and military conquests, Gavharshodbegim's patronage of art, architecture, and science highlights the vital role of royal women in shaping the cultural landscape of their time. This paper aims to explore the creative and philanthropic activities of Gavharshodbegim based on historical and architectural sources. Her initiatives in building monumental structures, including mosques and madrasas in Herat, her support for scholars and artists, and her efforts to elevate cultural life in the Timurid Empire, will be analyzed to provide a comprehensive view of her legacy. Understanding her contributions offers valuable insight into the broader socio-cultural developments of the Timurid period and reinforces the importance of female leadership in historical narratives.

Methodology

The Timurid era is of special and important importance in the history of our country. During the Timurid era, the economy and culture of Maveronnahr rose to a new level, and great changes took place in the fields of science, literature, art and architecture. Amir Temur and his descendants made a huge contribution to the development of the country, became famous for their political and military achievements. During this period, the Timurid princesses also actively participated in the development of the socio-economic and cultural life of our country. The Timurid princesses made a significant contribution not only to their social status and influence, but also to the development of the country, to the development of science, culture, art and architecture. One of such princesses is Gavharshodbegim. Gavharshodbegim left a name in the history of Maveronnahr and Khorasan for her contribution to the development of science, culture and architecture. As the wife of Shahrukh Mirza, she actively participated not only in palace life, but also in its broader socio-political and cultural life.

Results

T. Fayziyev especially recognizes the services of Gavhar Shod Beg in the development of the empire and the prosperity of the capital Herat: “During the reign of Shahrukh Mirza, Khorasan grew significantly politically, socially and culturally. The capital of the country, Herat, became one of the most influential cities in the East in economic and cultural development. Naturally, the contribution of the “practical ruler” princess Gavhar Shod Beg in such a development of the country is incomparable. During this period, construction work was in full swing in Herat and other regions of the country. Mosques-madrasas, a khanaqoh, a mausoleum, a dahma, a guest house, a hospital, a ravat, a bridge and cisterns were built. In the first years of Shahrukh Mirza’s reign in Khorasan, he built a madrasa and a khanaqoh (1410-1411) on the southern side of the Herat fortress. After that, princes and Queens also contributed to the beautification of the city by building madrasas, mosques, khanaqohs, hospitals and similar buildings.

A patriot by nature, knowledgeable and intelligent, Gavhar Shod Begum tirelessly cared for the development of the country. Cultural and educational life was in the first place in her program. Perhaps that is why her children and all her grandchildren were fans of science and were engaged in poetry. Gavhar Shod Begum supervised a lot of construction work in Herat. She herself built two large madrasas in Herat. Gavhar Shod Begum's consort was Queen Milkat Agha (the real name of this queen was Mulk Agha, and she was the wife of Umar Sheikh Mirza, the second son of Amir Temur. After the death of Umar Sheikh Mirza in 1394, according to the will of her father-in-law Amir Temur (who submitted to and married Shahrukh Mirza) built a madrasa in the city of Herat, a hospital called "Dorushshifo", a dormitory called "Dorulhadis", two baths, and a madrasa, library, and mausoleum eight farsakhs (stones) from the city, and Prince Aloud Davla Mirza built a hospital. But at the same time, private owners and wealthy people were allowed and encouraged to build buildings as a charity.”[4,22-23 p]

Gavharshodbeg was an active initiator of creative work. He preferred to spend his income mainly on large-scale construction projects and charitable donations. Historical sources also describe his work with great attention. “The great Madrasa and magnificent building that Mahdi Ulyo Gavharshod Agha was building in the north of Herat in Sari Puli Injil was completed this year. It is such a building that no one can find its like in all the administrative lands of the world. The high-minded left-handed (masters) have made the beauty and strength of this building a sight for the eye to behold, giving it a height and raising the basis of craftsmanship to such a high level that even if the clear-minded writer of the high sky’s office writes its commentary and description with the golden pen of the sun (as ink) on the silver tablet of the bright moon, it would be worthy; even if the wordsmiths of the seven climates, the bright stars of the sky of maturity, write with the blackness of the world-seeing eye (as ink) on the camphor white of the eye, it would be worthy.

This great When the maqam imarat, with the zeal and effort of the well-known bonu, had attained the highest level of splendor and elegance, Hazrat Haqqani Sa'id, before the scholars settled there and the scholars were appointed, he found it advisable to perform the Friday prayer in that heart-warming place and soul-warming place on Fridays and to decorate the high sermon with the name of his holy name on the top of the pulpit, which had the claim to be superior to the nine-legged pulpit of the sky. Sheikh Shahabuddin ibn Sheikh Ruknuddin ibn Sheikhul Islam Sheikh Shahabuddin al-Bistami was appointed as the preacher there.

The one who decreed the sea and the climates of Durud (Haqqani Sa'id) visited that glorious maqam on Friday during his eighth journey (October 4, 1432), and Sheikh Shaqabuddin delivered the sermon He began to perform the sermon, delivered a mature sermon with a pleasant voice and

sweet language, but during the sermon he moaned and sighed inappropriately several times; Hazrat Khaqan Sa'id found this action and situation extremely unacceptable, and after fulfilling the etiquette and conditions of praying and praying to the king (God), who brings things to order, he ordered Sheikh Shahabuddin to be released. The great Mawlana Shamsuddin Muhammad ibn Avdad was appointed as the preacher.” [1,24-25 p.]

This madrasa was later mentioned many times in historical sources. Many princes were buried in this madrasa. It should be noted that this madrasa also served as a mosque. The first prince buried in this madrasa was Mirzo Baysunkur, the favorite son of Gavharshad Beg. “At that time, the country of Khorasan, especially the kingdom of Herat, was so prosperous that it was impossible to imagine it being any more. The crowd that had gathered from the outskirts of the Safid garden to the Gavharshad Agha madrasa, where it was decided to bury the prince, was so dense that such a crowd had never been seen before. They changed all their traditional clothes and put black on their heads, and the whole path was as dark as the night of the Hijra from the black clothes, even from the smoke of the fire.

The prince’s coffin was placed on a palanquin and carried with great pomp and grandeur to the Gavharshad madrasa and the high dome (there), and they buried it in the black soil of the new temple.” [1,35-36 p] It is worth noting that after this event, the Gavharshodbegim madrasah became a place of entertainment for the Timurid rulers. Historical sources do not explicitly mention how the death of Gavharshodbegim's favorite child, Mirzo Baysunkur, affected his position at the palace. However, an analysis of the sources shows that there were no major changes in Gavharshodbegim's place in the political and cultural life of the Timurid state. The queen, while fully preserving her position, paid attention to the upbringing of Mirzo Baysunkur's children and tried to prepare them as the main contenders for the throne in the future.

The architectural complex of Gavharshod Begum is a mosque built (1405-1419) in the center of Mashhad (Iran) in honor of Gavharshod Begum, the wife of the ruler of Herat, Shahrukh Mirza (architect Qavomiddin Shirazi). There are four rooms on four sides of a large courtyard with a veranda, which are large and domed in appearance. It is entered through a huge porch with a minaret. The tops of the minarets are decorated with a cage. The mosque is decorated with elegant and beautiful decorations made of colored tiles. The north side of the mosque is the mausoleum of Imam Reza, the east side is a madrasa, and the west is the city caravanserai, which are interconnected with the mosque by a walkway. The height of the mausoleum of Gavharshod Begum is 27 m. It is located between the two western minarets and is built in the north-west corner of the madrasa.

The Musalla Complex (also known as the Musalloh Complex or the Gawharshadbegim Musallosi) is a former Islamic religious complex in Herat, Afghanistan, containing examples of Timurid architecture. Much of the 15th-century complex is now in ruins, and the surviving buildings are in need of restoration. The ruins of the complex consist of the ruins of Herat's five Musalloh minarets, the Mausoleum of Alisher Navoi, the Mausoleum of Gawharshadbegim, and a large mosque and madrasa complex. Construction of the complex began in 1418 under the leadership of Queen Gawharshad Begum, wife of the Timurid ruler Shahrukh Mirza, and culminated in the construction of a madrasa by Sultan Husayn Bayqara in the late 15th century. The complex was severely damaged during the Panjde Incident of 1885, when the British and the then Afghan rulers demolished most of the buildings. Due to earthquakes and wars, four of the minarets collapsed during the 20th century.

Discussion

The creative activity of Princess Gavharshodbegim reflects the cultural sophistication and intellectual ambition of the Timurid dynasty. As a patron of architecture and science, she played a central role in transforming the city of Herat into a prominent cultural and educational center of the Islamic world. Under her guidance and financial support, several monumental constructions were erected, including the famous Gavharshad Mosque and madrasa complex, which still stand as masterpieces of Timurid architecture. These structures are notable for their elegant proportions, refined ornamentation, and innovative use of space and light, all of which signify a high level of architectural knowledge and aesthetic sensibility.

Beyond physical architecture, Gavharshodbegim was also deeply invested in the promotion of science, literature, and religious education. She invited scholars, poets, and theologians to her court, creating an environment conducive to intellectual discourse and artistic creativity. Her support helped establish a vibrant cultural atmosphere where knowledge could flourish. The presence of libraries, madrasas, and scientific gatherings during her time further underlines her role as a catalyst for enlightenment and academic development.

Additionally, her activity must be understood in the broader context of Timurid politics and society, where royal women were often involved in statecraft and philanthropy. Gavharshodbegim, through her patronage, symbolized the integration of political influence and cultural production. She not only complemented her husband Shahrukh Mirza's rule but also asserted her individual vision by leaving a lasting architectural and educational legacy. In examining historical records, it becomes evident that Gavharshodbegim's initiatives were not mere reflections of royal luxury but rather purposeful efforts to foster spiritual, scientific, and cultural progress. Her contributions highlight the multidimensional role of women in the Timurid period and challenge conventional perceptions of gender roles in medieval Islamic societies.

Conclusion

Gavharshodbegim was one of the highly cultured, intelligent and enlightened queens of her time, and her patronage of architecture was immortalized not only in the form of historical monuments, but also in the form of a symbol of love for culture and art. Gavharshodbegim's architectural patronage is an important page in the high cultural and educational stage of the Timurid era. Her efforts serve as an example not only for her time, but also for today's generations.

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