

ZAHIRIDDIN MUHAMMAD BABUR'S CREATIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE ACTIVITIES

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Abstract

This work highlights the creative activity of Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur. The study analyzes his contribution to urban planning, the construction of parks and buildings, and the development of cultural life. Babur's historical place as a creative ruler is substantiated.

Keywords: Sharq uyg'onish davri, Amir Temur, Umarshaikh Mirza, Kutlug Nigorkhanim, Andijan, Akhsi, Samarkand, Fergana, Kabul, India, Afghanistan, Babur's Garden, Agra, Shah Jahan, Taj Mahal, Babur's Book, Akbar.

Introduction

In the history of the Uzbek and broader Eastern Renaissance, the figure of Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur holds a special place. He was not only a great statesman, a talented military commander, and a refined literary figure, but also an intellectual of remarkable insight and a ruler who continued and developed the traditions of constructive statecraft, leaving a profound mark on history. Babur's name is often associated with military campaigns, political struggles, and the rare literary masterpiece *Boburnoma*. However, in his activity, issues of construction, urban improvement, city planning, and the creation of a vibrant cultural environment occupied an important position, and this aspect remains one of the topics that has not yet been sufficiently and systematically studied.

Babur's views on construction and development were closely connected with his worldview, life experience, and spiritual maturity. He was a ruler who valued the harmony between human beings and nature, the balance between the city and its surrounding environment, and the unity of beauty and practicality. In particular, the descriptions of gardens, water structures, cities, fortresses, and architectural monuments presented in the *Boburnoma* reveal his attitude toward creative and constructive activity. This work is not only a collection of historical memoirs, but also an important source reflecting the urban planning and landscaping culture of that period.

After conquering India, Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur initiated large-scale constructive activities in this country as well. The establishment of gardens in cities such as Delhi and Agra, as well as efforts to reshape the urban environment on the basis of Central Asian traditions, clearly demonstrate Babur's work as a constructive ruler. Taking into account

the natural and climatic conditions of India, he introduced new approaches and paid particular attention to water management and irrigation structures. In this process, Babur appeared not only as a ruler, but also as a direct participant, supervisor, and creative initiator.

Another important aspect of Babur's constructive activity is that he understood urban development not merely as a matter of outward appearance, luxury, or personal taste, but as a crucial factor in state stability and social progress. He clearly realized that well-maintained cities, fertile lands, and a comfortable living environment formed the foundation of public loyalty and economic prosperity. Therefore, Babur carried out his constructive initiatives in close connection with his socio-political policies.

Furthermore, the connection of his constructive views with the traditions of the Timurid period and their role in the formation of the Mughal Empire in India is revealed. Today, it is important to study not only the military or political activities of historical figures, but also their contributions to construction and cultural heritage. Through Babur's constructive activity, it is possible to draw significant conclusions about the culture of urban planning in Central and South Asia at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the relationship between ruler and society, and intercultural interactions.

We often speak of the immense благоустройство and construction works carried out in Movarounnahr and Khurasan in various spheres of culture, literature, and the national economy by Amir Temur, known as Sahibqiran. The constructive endeavors of Sahibqiran became a lasting tradition for his descendants. Our great compatriot Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur was no exception to this tradition. Although nearly five centuries have passed since Babur's death, the historical and cultural heritage left by Babur Shah and his descendants continues to amaze the peoples of the world.

The cities of Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva, Shahrisabz, and Andijan within our homeland possess a long history. In particular, whenever Andijan is mentioned, one inevitably recalls the great thinker and statesman Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur. In Andijan, Babur undertook the strengthening of the fortress and defensive structures built by his father, Umar Shaykh Mirza. This fortress served as an important military and political center of the Fergana Valley. During his youth, Babur established several gardens in Andijan. In his masterpiece, *Boburnoma*, he especially highlights the beautiful gardens around Andijan, notably "Bog'i Davlat." According to the information presented in the *Boburnoma*, during the Timurid period Andijan ranked third among the largest cities of Movarounnahr, after Samarkand and Kesh (Shahrisabz). The city was surrounded by massive defensive walls and had three gates. The citadel was located on the southern side, and nine water channels flowed into it without flowing back out. Situated on the Great Silk Road, Andijan was the capital of the Fergana province of the Timurid state, regularly visited by trade caravans from China, India, and other lands. The literary environment of Andijan was exceptionally advanced, and during the Timurid era it flourished even further. Students seeking knowledge from various parts of the world studied in the madrasas of Andijan [1].

Babur waged a long and arduous struggle to preserve and strengthen the declining Timurid state and to establish a large centralized state in Central Asia. However, when historical

circumstances made this impossible, he conquered Afghanistan and later India, founding a vast empire. The empire he established left an indelible mark on the political, economic, and cultural development of Afghanistan and India [2]. In 1504, after Muhammad Shaybani Khan captured Andijan, Babur set out toward the south and in September of the same year established his authority in Kabul. From the Afghan capital, Kabul, Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur ruled for 21 years. During his reign there (1504–1525), he paid great attention to construction and beautification projects. In particular, Babur initiated extensive improvement and development works in Kabul, thereby earning the respect and admiration of the people.

In Kabul—and in Afghanistan as a whole—Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur regarded the land as his own homeland. He initiated extensive works in construction, urban improvement, crafts, and agriculture. Wherever Babur set foot, he left a lasting mark. One of the most remarkable examples is the magnificent and uniquely charming garden built in the Afghan capital, Kabul—Gardens of Babur (“Bāgh-e Bābur”). In the *Boburnoma*, it is repeatedly noted how the climate, fresh air, vast pastures, and healing waters of Kabul deeply impressed him. The garden, adorned with a wide variety of flowers and fruit and ornamental trees brought from different regions of the world, remains one of the capital’s finest attractions. Today, the Gardens of Babur serve as a public park and a venue for major state and community events.

During his lifetime, Babur also established a number of other splendid gardens, including “Bāgh-e Istalif,” “Bāgh-e Navro‘zi,” “Chorbogh,” “Bāgh-e Behishti,” “Bāgh-e Nur,” and “Bāgh-e Khilvat” [3]. Remarkably, although certain flowers and trees were partially repeated due to Kabul’s climatic conditions, each garden differed significantly in design and composition. Some consisted mainly of fruit trees, while others were richly decorated with diverse flowers. From Movarounnahr, he brought the famous pomegranates of Quva, the crimson apples of Bakhmal, the sweet apricots of Konibodom, the Husayni grapes of Oltiariq, and the figs of Samarkand to be planted there. Unfortunately, many of these gardens survive today only in written sources.

In addition, the “Bala Hissar” palace in Kabul was built by Babur and later restored by his son Kamran Mirza; today, only its ruins remain. Historical documents record that the crown prince Humayun was born in this palace in 1508. The city of Jalalabad was also adorned at Babur’s initiative with the garden “Bāgh-e Safa.” In 1508, in honor of the birth of his heir, he established the garden “Bāgh-e Wafa” in Odinapur, planting there flowers and fruit and ornamental trees mainly brought from Movarounnahr, saying that he intended them to remind him of his motherland [4]. Before each campaign, Babur held feasts and military councils in this garden. In 1506, he founded “Chorbogh-e Kandahari” in Kandahar, followed by another “Bāgh-e Chorbogh” along the banks of the Argandab River, whose beauty and freshness continue to captivate visitors [5]. His children—Humayun, Gulbadan Begum, Kamran, and Hindal—were born during this period. In the spring of 1506, he buried his mother, Qutlugh Nigar Khanum, who had passed away, in the “Bāgh-e Navro‘zi” built there earlier by Ulugh Beg.

As a sovereign, after Afghanistan he became the ruler of the vast land of India. The role of Babur and the Baburids in the rise and cultural development of India is incomparable. Just as in Afghanistan, Babur carried out numerous socially beneficial reforms in India and exerted a profound influence on the country's progress. Upon first entering India, he was disheartened by its lack of organized gardens and landscaped spaces. From his descriptions of India, one can imagine the scale and importance of the beautification works he later undertook there. He introduced a highly developed Eastern culture, ended fragmentation and internal conflicts, unified provinces, strengthened centralized rule, and paid great attention to the development of crafts, science, and agriculture.

The great Indian thinker and statesman Jawaharlal Nehru, in his works *The Discovery of India* and *Glimpses of World History*, expressed heartfelt thoughts about Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur: "Babur was a charming personality, a true representative of a Renaissance ruler. He was brave and enterprising. Among cultured and attractive men, he was one of the most refined. He was free from religious bigotry and fanaticism. Babur loved art, and especially literature" [6]. The fact that such sincere words were written by a representative of the Indian nation further strengthens our pride and affection for our great compatriot.

Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur made an immense contribution to medieval culture, literature, and poetry. In general, all members of the Baburid dynasty attached great importance to culture and the arts. In India, especially in astronomy, literature, architecture, and fine arts, significant achievements were made during their rule. Among the finest examples of Baburid architecture are the Humayun's Tomb, the Agra Fort, and the Lahore Fort, all of which are included in the UNESCO World Heritage List. Architectural monuments of the Baburids are found not only in India, but also in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh [7].

Moreover, the *Boburnoma*, created in India, is one of Babur's most renowned works, providing valuable information about the nature, climate, people, customs, and political life of India. It is a masterpiece of Uzbek literature, an invaluable source for the history of Central Asia and India, and a significant scholarly and spiritual heritage. It serves as an important reference not only for historians, but also for writers, scholars, and researchers of spirituality. Babur's intellectual depth, literary mastery, and keen observation elevated this work to one of the rare treasures of world cultural heritage. Although a Muslim ruler, Babur demonstrated tolerance toward Hindus and other religious communities. While his reign in India was not long, his reforms laid a solid foundation for the stable development of the Mughal Empire. These transformations were further developed by later rulers, especially during the reign of Akbar.

In conclusion, it can be said that Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur truly regained his rightful recognition in his homeland after Uzbekistan achieved independence. By decree of the President of the Uzbekistan, the 510th anniversary of Babur's birth was solemnly celebrated in 1993. In Andijan, a theater, a library, and a national park named "Bobur National Park" were established in his honor. Within the complex of Bobur National Park, the "Babur and World Culture" Museum and a symbolic mausoleum of the poet were constructed.

Monuments to the poet were erected both in the city center and within the memorial complex of the park.

One of the central streets in Andijan, as well as parks and streets in Tashkent and Namangan, and a recreation park in Xonobod of the Andijan region, were named after Babur. In addition, a medal named in his honor was established by the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan. Gradually, the name of our great ancestor has been firmly restored to its достойное place in history.

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