

RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Situation In Movarounnahr In The 17th Century Based On Maliho's Anthology

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Abstract

This article examines the socio-political, cultural, and intellectual situation in Movarounnahr during the 17th century based on the analysis of Maliho's anthology. The study highlights the role of literary sources as historical evidence in reconstructing the period's realities, including governance, social hierarchy, and cultural life. Particular attention is given to the depiction of political instability, the influence of regional rulers, and the condition of urban centers such as Bukhara and Samarkand. Maliho's anthology serves not only as a literary compilation but also as a valuable historical document reflecting the worldview, values, and daily life of the society of that time. Through textual analysis, the article reveals the interconnectedness of literature and history, demonstrating how poetic and narrative elements encode important information about the era. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the historical dynamics of Movarounnahr and the significance of literary heritage in Central Asian studies.

KEY WORDS

Movarounnahr, 17th century, Maliho's anthology, socio-political situation, cultural life, Central Asia, historical sources, literary analysis, Bukhara, Samarkand.

INTRODUCTION

In the first half of the 17th century, when Movarounnahr was experiencing a relatively peaceful period, its cultural centers – Bukhara, Samarkand, and Balkh – turned towards prosperity, and architecture developed to a certain degree in these cities. In Bukhara and Samarkand, several monumental buildings were erected that are considered great monuments of architectural art. These constructions did not begin by order of the central khanate government, but rather at the initiative of individual amirs of the Ashtarkhanid state and were completed with their funds. This is not surprising, for although the Ashtarkhanid khans were nominally the supreme rulers of the country, in practice power and immense wealth were in the hands of the feudal noblemen of the tribes and the amirs.

The cities and provinces, along with their wealth and revenues, were at their disposal.

Yalangtush, one of these amirs – governor of Samarkand and a major landowner of his time – commissioned grand buildings in the Registan square of this city in order to leave his name in history. At his order, master architect Abdujabbor constructed, opposite the magnificent Ulughbeg madrasa, another grand madrasa, which became famous as the Yalangtush or Sherdor Madrasa. Later, by order of Yalangtushbi, another large madrasa was built on the third side of the square; due to the abundant use of gold in its ornamentation, it was called Tilloqori. As a result, a very beautiful and harmonious ensemble emerged, consisting of

three splendid madrasas surrounding the square on three sides. Today this ensemble is considered one of the most renowned and finest monuments of Samarkand architecture in the world.

Review Of The Literature

In studying the cultural, scholarly, and literary life of Movarounnahr in the 17th century, the Persian biographical-annotative tradition (*tazkiranavislik*) is an important source. The main basis of this research is the *tazkira* "Muzakkiru-l-Askhab" by Maliho Samarqandi (ABIOS collection, no. 58/I), which reflects in detail the literary milieu of Bukhara and Samarkand in the second half of the 17th century. This source has particular significance in illuminating the development of urban-circle literature and the activities of more than 200 poets. Among supplementary sources is the Balkh section of Mahmud bin Vali's "Bahr al-Asrar" (written 1043/1633; published 1360/1981), which covers court literature in Balkh in the first half of the 17th century. The Iranian *tazkiranavis* Mirza Muhammad Tahir Nasrabadi's "Tazkira-yi Nasrabadi" (1384/2005 ed., pp. 437–444) elucidates the connections of Movarounnahr poets with the Safavid court, complementing the Bukharan courtly literary milieu. In modern scholarship, B. A. Akhmedov's work (1985) examines historical-geographical literature; I. S. Braginsky's selected works (1972) and Ya. Ripka's history (1970) analyze the general development of Persian-Tajik literature. In Tajik literary studies, S. Sa'diyev (1985) and R. Hodizoda, U. Karimov, S. Sa'diyev (1988) have made important contributions to the study of 17th-century Tajik literature. A. Golchin Ma'ani's "History of Tazkiras" (1363/1984, vols. 1–2) reveals the evolution of the *tazkira* genre. Together, these sources allow for a comprehensive portrayal of the complex landscape of 17th-century Movarounnahr's cultural life – showing that, even under political instability, scholarly and literary traditions continued.

Research Methodology

The study is based on a comprehensive (complex) approach. Maliho Samarqandi's *tazkira* "Muzakkiru-l-Askhab" is analyzed in detail as the principal source. Its information (poets' biographies, lists of works, scholarly activities) was studied contextually. Maliho's *tazkira* was also compared with other sources ("Bahr al-Asrar," Nasrabadi's *tazkira*), and the specific features of the literary milieu of Bukhara, Samarkand, and Balkh were identified. Differences between urban and court literature were compared and examined in terms of the impact of 17th-century socio-political conditions (the instability of the

Ashtarkhanid period) on cultural and scholarly processes.

Analysis And Results

In this period, another large architectural ensemble was constructed in Bukhara at the order of one of the Ashtarkhanid state's high officials – Nodir Devonbegi – today famous as Labi Hovuz. The ensemble takes its name from the large pool (*hovuz*) that constituted its central and most important part. Other parts of the ensemble were the old Kukaldosh Madrasa (built in the 16th century), the new Nodir Devonbegi Madrasa, and a *khanaqah*. Labi Hovuz became the most pleasant and picturesque place in Bukhara. Sayido, in his poem in praise of Bukhara, lauded this site as an exceedingly beautiful and heart-pleasing corner of the city. Labi Hovuz became a gathering and resting place for scholars and men of letters, and thus earned the name "the poets' support" (Maliho Samarqandi, no. 58/I: 238). Opposite the 15th-century Ulugh Beg Madrasa in Bukhara, another monumental madrasa named after Abdulaziz Khan was built. Thus, another architectural ensemble was formed – considered even more beautiful and harmonious than the Labi Hovuz ensemble. These outstanding 17th-century architectural monuments represent the continuation and development of Movarounnahr's earlier architectural art.

In the second half of the 17th century, due to increasing political instability and worsening conditions, not only were no notable new buildings erected in Movarounnahr, but many architectural monuments of earlier periods also fell into ruin. This was especially true of the Timurid-era monuments in Samarkand. Although the decay of Timurid architectural monuments had begun in the 16th century under the Shaybanids, it intensified during the Ashtarkhanid period, particularly in the second half of the 17th century. Maliho, speaking of the general dilapidation of Samarkand during the reigns of Abdulaziz Khan and Subhan Quli Khan, specifically describes the devastation inflicted upon three great Timurid monuments – the city's Great Jami' Mosque, the Gur-e Amir mausoleum, and Amir Timur's madrasa (Maliho Samarqandi, no. 58/I: 218–220). Although some governors of Samarkand at various times attempted to repair the mausoleum and the madrasa, these efforts bore no fruit (Maliho Samarqandi, no. 58/I: 220). The ruinous state of Timur's mausoleum and madrasa was reported as far as the lands of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb. Yet Aurangzeb, too, could not take measures to repair and restore these ruins; he limited himself to sending funds as "alms and offerings dedicated to the spirits

of the ancestors" for the madrasa's community and the local populace (Maliho Samarqandi, no. 58/I: 220).

According to Maliho, in this period most of the madrasas and mosques in Samarkand were in ruins and vacant, having turned into taverns and wine-shops. At first glance, this might suggest that scholarly life had perished in Movarounnahr during this time. However, Maliho's tazkira shows that science and scholarship continued to develop: a number of scholars wrote scholarly works and taught in madrasas. In his tazkira, Maliho mentions only those scholars who, being men of letters, were also engaged to some degree in poetry and literature alongside scholarly activity. In recounting the circumstances and works of these poet-scholars and writer-scholars, Maliho sometimes refers in general terms to their "ta'lifāt and tasnifāt" (compositions and classifications), and at other times enumerates their works individually. From his information about these scholars, one can form a clear picture of the general state of scientific development in this period.

Above all, Maliho's tazkira makes it evident – and this is a crucial and noteworthy point – that during this period not only the officially sanctioned religious sciences but also the worldly sciences such as hay'at and zij (astronomy and astronomical tables), handasa (geometry), jabr and muqābala (algebra and equations), chemistry, and other secular disciplines were known and flourishing. On the basis of Maliho's tazkira, one might even conclude that in this period the secular and exact sciences attracted the attention of leading scholars more than the religious sciences. The most prominent scholar of the time, Mullo Tursun Faroiziy Samarqandi, was engaged in secular and exact sciences. Maliho describes Faroiziy as a polymath, proficient in all branches of knowledge, and lists the various fields in which he excelled, including mathematics, astronomy, chemistry, and others. These sciences included farā'id (inheritance law/calculation), masāḥat (measurement, land surveying), a'dād (numbers), jabr (algebra), muqābala (mathematical equations), arismotiḳī (arithmetic), hay'at (cosmography/astronomy), nujūm (astrology), zij (astronomical tables), usturlāb (astrolabe), chemistry, and others. Faroiziy also knew himyā (talismanic science), simiyā (magic), and jafr (divination). He was also skillful in the religious sciences – fiqh, hadith, and tafsir. However, nearly all the works of his that Maliho lists pertain to non-religious sciences. Among Faroiziy's scholarly works were "Ghāyat al-Waṣāyā" (on the chapter of wills), "Masā'il-i Ḥisābiyya" (arithmetical problems), "Sharḥ-i Sirojiyyat al-Jabriyya" (on

algebra and equations), "Jāmi' al-Ḥisāb," "Risāla-yi 'Itqiyya" (on manumission documents for slaves and concubines), "Sharḥ-i Wiqāya" (on fiqh – religious law), "Hāshiya-yi Sharḥ-i Ashkāl al-Ta'sīs," "Sharḥ-i Mu'ammā-yi Ṣaghīr of 'Abd al-Rahman Jami," and "Sharḥ-i Farā'id-i Hijām." This list does not fully encompass Faroiziy's scholarly works. Another work of his, "Tuhfat al-Amir," also survives and pertains to issues of inheritance (farā'id). Of Faroiziy's scholarly and literary works, only this one is currently known.

Another prominent scholar and poet of the time, Qazi Lutfullah Shakir Bukhari, was also learned in both religious and non-religious sciences. As Maliho notes, he was engaged in fiqh and hadith, kalam and tafsir, hikmat and hay'at (philosophy and cosmography), mantiq (logic), as well as nahw and sarf (Arabic grammar) (Maliho Samarqandi, no. 58/I: 153). He taught in the madrasas of both Bukhara and Samarkand. During his own student days, Maliho studied most of the books on hay'at, in particular "Sharḥ-i Chaghmini" and Ali Qushchi Samarqandi's treatise written in Persian, under Lutfullah Shakir. Maliho mentions only one Persian treatise on hay'at among Lutfullah Shakir's scholarly works, considering it very useful. Evidently, this scholar paid more attention to philosophy (hikmat and logic) and the natural sciences, especially hay'at. As a poet, Lutfullah Shakir achieved even greater fame and, as we have seen, occupied a prominent place in the literature of the era.

From the range of learning and research of these two scholars, it becomes clear – and this is very significant – that during this period not only the official religious sciences but also the earlier traditions of developing secular sciences, particularly the sciences from Ulugh Beg's time, remained alive to some extent despite the strengthening of feudal reaction. The fact that scholars of the time wrote purely scientific works alongside religious ones indicates that the sharp conflict between the sciences had diminished or disappeared altogether. In any case, the religious sciences lost their former absolute dominance in the madrasas, where a number of secular sciences were also taught. For this reason, for example, Tursun Faroiziy and Lutfullah Shakir also taught secular sciences in the madrasa. Certainly, their teaching of these subjects was done within the madrasa curriculum. We know this especially clearly from Maliho's information about the talented scholar and poet of the century, Mirsharif Munsifo (Munsifo) Samarqandi. Descended from the great scholars of Samarkand, in 1088/1677 he went to Bukhara to study and,

at the Gharbiya Madrasa, engaged in learning handasa (geometry), tanjim (astral science/astrology), zīj numeration, and especially “Sharh-i Chaghmini,” one of the most authoritative books on hay’at. In a short time he mastered these sciences so thoroughly that even his renowned madrasa teacher took pride in having him as a student (Maliho Samarqandi, no. 58/I: 165). It follows that Munsif studied these sciences under the direct supervision of a madrasa teacher. It may be said that in the 17th century there were not a few such multi-disciplinary scholars who, in addition to the official religious sciences, also mastered various types of official and unofficial secular sciences. Among the more than 15 scholars and mudarrises mentioned in Maliho’s tazkira – cited because they were engaged in poetry and literature – apart from the three figures named above, undoubtedly several others were involved to some degree in non-religious sciences. Unfortunately, however, in mentioning most of these scholars, Maliho not only fails to list their works individually but often does not even note which sciences they pursued.

Some of the scholars mentioned in Maliho’s tazkira were religious scholars – that is, engaged exclusively in religious sciences. The most renowned religious scholar, mudarris, and chief scholar of Bukhara in this period, Mir Muhammadsharif of Shahrisabz, also wrote poetry under the pen name Sharif. Although Maliho describes him as eminent in the “rational and transmitted sciences” (‘ulūm-i ‘aqliyya wa naqliyya), the list of his works makes it clear that all of them pertain to religious sciences. Mir Muhammadsharif wrote several treatises in the form of marginalia and commentaries on a number of well-known books on religious matters, including “Sharh al-Sharh” on Mulla Jalal’s “‘Aqa’id,” a “Hashiya” on “Tahdhib,” a “Hashiya” on “Isbat al-Wajib,” a “Hashiya” on Jami’s “Sharh,” and others (Maliho Samarqandi, no. 58/I: 102).

It is worth noting that in this period fortune-telling, divination, and the sciences of magic and talismans were also developed. Not only random tricksters and charlatans, but also respected and serious individuals such as scholars and poets engaged in these sciences and crafts. In his tazkira, Maliho speaks of many scholars and poets of the era who practiced raml and jafr (types of divination), chemistry and simiya (sleight-of-hand, magic), himiya (talismanic science), tilsimat and murabba‘at (sorcery), and others. This indicates that raml and jafr, sorcery, magic, and talismans were officially recognized as special sciences and crafts. Otherwise, even an official and serious scholar of high standing such as Mullo

Tursun Faroiziy, who held the position of chief qazi of Samarkand, would not have engaged in “magical” sciences like simiya and himiya. Mullo Tursun learned these sciences from his father, Qazi Poyanda Zominiy, who was also among the prominent enlightened figures and poets of early 17th-century Samarkand. In connection with mentioning Mullo Tursun, Maliho relates several remarkable anecdotes about his father in the tazkira, all of which indicate that his father was fully versed in the sciences of magic and sorcery. According to one such story, during his boyhood and primary school years a qalandar took an interest in him. But the boy’s father prevented their acquaintance. Then the qalandar gestured with his finger at the boy’s neck, and to all the people present it appeared as if his head had been severed from his body. As soon as the qalandar departed, the boy returned to his original state and hurriedly set out after him. However much they tried, they could not bring him back from the road. He spent some time traveling with that qalandar, and then returned to his parents. Thereafter, whatever knowledge or topic his friends and companions asked him about, he would relate its principles and details, its foundations and particulars (Maliho Samarqandi, no. 58/I: 44). Evidently, he had learned those sciences from the qalandar. Possessed of powerful skills, the qalandar would have first taught his disciple the art of magic – that very science by which he had separated the boy from his parents and taken him along. It becomes clear that qalandars (dervishes) studied magic and talismans for specific purposes. Yet, as we observed when examining the conditions of poets, magic and talismans served as a craft and means of livelihood for many of them.

The grave socio-political situation, economic crisis, and general cultural backwardness in Movarounnahr in the 17th century did not extinguish its literary life. Although the difficult conditions in the country did not favor the development of literature, and most Ashtarkhanid rulers and amirs did not show care and patronage towards poets and men of letters, this illustrious field did not cease to develop; on the contrary, it continued its earlier rich traditions. Poetry and literature did not develop in the khans’ courtly milieu, but outside it – that is, in the urban environment. Literary development became tied to the circles of the cities, especially to the craftsman strata. This trajectory of development of classical literature, which began mainly from the 15th century, reached a peak in the 16th–17th centuries, yielding notable results. Maliho Samarqandi’s tazkira “Muzakkiru-l-Askhab” is a vivid witness to the progress of Persian literature within urban circles in the

17th century. However, written mainly in 1688–1689, this tazkira reflects the literary scene of the mid and second half of that century. From it, one cannot form a picture of how literature flourished in the first half of the 17th century in Movarounnahr.

There is currently no primary source that thoroughly covers the first half of the century's literature; more precisely, such a source did exist but, unfortunately, has been lost. Maliho reports the existence of this source in his tazkira. In the preface, noting earlier tazkiras, he refers to Sodiqi Samarqandi's tazkira, written immediately before his own work. According to Maliho, this author's tazkira encompassed poets from the time of the Shaybanid 'Abdullah Khan II (1561–1598) up to the time of the Ashtarkhanid Nodir Muhammad Khan (1642–1645) (Maliho Samarqandi, no. 58/I: 7). From this it follows that Sodiqi Samarqandi's tazkira was written and refined in the late 16th and the first half of the 17th centuries. Maliho describes this work as a complete and comprehensive tazkira, noting that its author "wrote about rulers and scholars, amirs, students of knowledge and viziers, poets and huffaz (those who have memorized the Qur'an), and about anyone from the people of trades and crafts who bore a pen name and from whom even a single verse had emerged – those he had seen, heard of, or conversed with, as well as others" (Maliho Samarqandi, no. 58/I: 7).

Thus, following Mutribi Samarqandi's "Tazkirat al-Shu'ara" (written in 1605) and prior to Maliho Samarqandi's "Muzakkiru-l-Askhab," there existed an essential source that more fully reflected the state of literature in Movarounnahr during the first half of the 17th century – but it has not survived. Nevertheless, the very emergence of such a full and comprehensive tazkira in the first half of the 17th century is clear evidence that literature developed and flourished in Movarounnahr during this period. It may be said that the poets mentioned in this tazkira were in most cases representatives of literature outside the court, since this tazkira was composed within the Samarkand literary milieu, where – unlike the literary milieus of Bukhara and Balkh – court literature did not exist in this period. Therefore, like the tazkiras of Mutribi and Maliho, it reflected urban literature. This is also apparent from Maliho's remarks about "Riyaz al-Shu'ara," where he notes that the men of words mentioned in it belonged to different groups and strata of urban society. On this basis, one may conclude that the tazkira "Riyaz al-Shu'ara" was important not only as a principal source for the first half of the century, but

also for fully and broadly reflecting urban literature. Had this tazkira been in our possession, it would have enabled us to depict the flourishing of literature in the urban environment of this period.

Mahmud bin Vali's historical work "Bahr al-Asrar" provides information on certain poets of the first half of the 17th century. In it are mentioned poets who lived and created in the city of Balkh – Khirgohi Hisari, Marhami, Rashhi, Mug'oni, Shaykh Naz'i, Nazmi Fuluri, Avazbek Toliqoni, Vola, Sa'd al-Din Zaygham, Ta'niy (محمود بن امير بخش بلخ از تاريخ بحر السرار. با تصحيح و تعليق و فهرس مايل هروی. – ولی کتابدار، سال 1043، با تصحيح و تعليق و فهرس مايل هروی. – (کابل، 1360. 337-ص). All of these were representatives of court literature who had gathered around the heir apparent to the khanate's throne as Balkh became the Ashtarkhanids' second capital. In general, during the 17th century there existed in Balkh a literary milieu primarily connected with the court of the heir apparent. Compared to the literary milieus of Bukhara and Samarkand, this milieu was smaller. Its distinctive feature, unlike the two mentioned milieus, was that court literature mainly developed there, while urban literature did not gain significant prestige and attention. For this reason, this literary milieu tended to attract needy poets from other cities. In the country's capital, Bukhara, alongside the strong and influential urban literature, a courtly literary circle also formed under some officials. From Maliho's tazkira it is known that such a literary circle existed, for instance, at the court of Abdulaziz Khan (1645–1680). Due to lack of sources, however, we have no information about the courtly literary circle in the earlier period of Ashtarkhanid rule, i.e., before Abdulaziz Khan's reign. Nonetheless, it is plausible that at least in the court of a powerful ruler like Imam Quli Khan (1611–1642) a literary circle emerged. The fact that many poets of Movarounnahr are recorded in the work of the Iranian tazkiranavis Mirza Tahir Nasrabadi as having served in the courts of Imam Quli Khan and Abdulaziz Khan strengthens this supposition (تذکره نصرآبادی، مشتمل بر شرح حال و آثار قریب هزار شاعر عصر صفوی، تالیف میرزا محمد طاهر نصرآبادی اصفحانی با تصحيح وحید دستگردی. – تهران، 1384. 444-437-ص).

Fortunately, a principal and valuable source for the literature of the second half of the 17th century has survived – Maliho's tazkira "Muzakkiru-l-Askhab," which provides the basis for determining a relatively complete picture of Movarounnahr's literary life and, in general, the course of the development of Persian literature in this period. However, Maliho's tazkira reflects the flourishing of Persian literature in two principal

literary milieu – Bukhara and Samarkand. Its shortcoming is that it omits representatives of the Balkh literary milieu. Maliho did not have the opportunity to go to this city, meet its poets, and include them in his *tazkira*. Yet, since the Balkh literary milieu did not occupy a central place in the literary life of the era and did not encompass all poets, this omission is not considered particularly serious. Despite the exclusion of Balkh's poets, the *tazkira* reflects a broad panorama of the country's literary life by listing the numerous representatives of the two principal literary milieus – Bukhara and Samarkand. In Maliho's *tazkira*, more than 200 poets and writers of Movarounnahr are mentioned; all were his contemporaries and for the most part created in Bukhara and Samarkand in the second half of the 17th century. The very fact that so many poets and writers emerged in these two milieus during Maliho's lifetime is vivid evidence of the flourishing of Persian literature in the 17th century.

Of the 200 authors Maliho mentions, more than 70 lived and created in Samarkand. If we add to this those who had first lived and come of age in Samarkand and then, for various reasons, moved to the country's center, Bukhara, to continue their literary activity, the number of poets of the Samarkand milieu in Maliho's *tazkira* is significantly higher than that of Bukhara. However, in our view, this number does not reflect the true proportion of the strength of these two literary milieus. Since Maliho himself was born and raised in Samarkand, he was acquainted and conversant with almost all the city's writers, both great and small, famous and obscure, and included them in his *tazkira*; but though he traveled to Bukhara twice, it appears he did not manage to hear of and meet all the poets there. He mostly met the well-known and renowned poets of Bukhara, but did not have the opportunity to seek out and see the milieu's lesser-known and second-tier poets. Even among the 14 poets he met during his second visit to Bukhara, whom he mentions in an appendix to his *tazkira*, almost all were known and prominent men of letters. Therefore, one may say that a number of second-tier and even some known, ordinary poets of the Bukharan milieu were left out of Maliho's *tazkira*. Kiram Bukhari, a poet of Abdulaziz Khan's era whose *divan* of poetry has reached our time, can serve as an example. Judging by the poems in his *divan*, Kiram was among the skillful and tasteful poets; yet his name does not appear in Maliho's *tazkira*. This poet is mentioned only in Nasrabadi's *tazkira*. In general, approximately 20 poets of the second half of the 17th century belonging to the Bukharan milieu are mentioned in Nasrabadi's *tazkira* whose names we

do not find in Maliho's *tazkira*. This alone indicates that in Bukhara, the political and cultural center of the country, literary leaders were gathered in numbers greater than those recorded by Maliho. Among Samarkand's poets, however, Maliho mentions many minor and second-tier, young and amateur poets as well. Even so, his *tazkira* also lists many renowned and powerful poets of the Samarkand milieu who held their own place and status in the literature of the time. Among such talented and famous poets of the Samarkand milieu were Ibadullah Imtihan, Niyozboqi Toroj, Muhammadvafo Javhar, Shihobi Miyankoli, Muhammadshah Shohid, Ibadullah Unvon, Obid Mumtoz, Mullo Mone', Muhammadbadi' Maliho, Avazboqi Masiho, Nakh'at, 'Abd al-Ghafur Nazokat, and others. To this group one can also add Muhammadamin Sarafroz, Sami' Sodot, Fitrat Zardoz, 'Abdullah Khoki (Sayyid), Sami' Samarqandi, Khoksor Hisori, and others – most of whom were born and raised in Samarkand and later, for various reasons, moved to Bukhara, and some to Balkh. According to Maliho's *tazkira*, more than 20 Samarkand poets in total moved to Bukhara and other places mainly because the city was falling into ruin and life there had become unbearable. Yet as poets they matured in Samarkand, and a certain period of their creativity is connected precisely with this literary milieu. These figures indicate that despite the general ruin and decline in the second half of the 17th century, Samarkand did not lose its importance as a literary center; rather, in terms of the number of poets and their literary power, it stood alongside Bukhara as one of the country's largest literary centers.

The vibrancy of literary life in Samarkand and the emergence of numerous poets from this milieu do not indicate that the city provided favorable conditions for creativity. On the contrary, Samarkand's poets lived and created under extremely harsh conditions. The main reason for the flourishing of literary life in Samarkand under such difficult circumstances was the prestige of literature within the urban circles. Since the 15th century, literature had developed within the urban milieu in Samarkand and had penetrated its various social circles and groups. Poetry and literature had so captivated the hearts of the city's connoisseurs and become so ingrained in their nature that revolutions and changes of the time, life's hardships and difficulties, could not quench their interest and passion for the art of words. For this very reason, even under the extremely difficult conditions of the 17th century, literature in this urban milieu did not lose its prestige and traditions; it even developed further. Almost all

of the Samarkand poets mentioned in Maliho's tazkira created within the urban milieu; they had no connection with the court or with the chancelleries of rulers.

As in earlier periods, in Bukhara too there existed a well-known and famous urban-circle literature. Its renowned and talented representatives in Bukhara were Muhammadjon Musta'id, 'Abdulqayum Ulfat, 'Abdullah Mulham, Mustafid, 'Abdullah Behjat, Khwaja Yusuf Mazhar, Yagona Nasafi, 'Abd al-Rahman Sho'la, Boqikhwaja Khoshe', Bismil, Vohib, and others. However, alongside the urban literature in Bukhara, there also existed a court-circle literature. The difference from the Samarkand milieu lies precisely here. Since Bukhara had become the country's political center and the seat of supreme rulers since the early 15th century, court literature had an established tradition; with periods of development and decline, it continued to exist. Although this literature experienced some revival during the reign of Abdulaziz Khan, in terms of its prestige and content it was very weak and insignificant compared to the strong and rich urban literature. The character of the era's literature was determined not by the courtly literary circle but by the literature outside the court – that is, the urban-circle literature. The development and notable achievements of 17th-century Persian literature are linked precisely to urban literature. Urban literature developed in tandem in both principal milieus – Samarkand and Bukhara. The laws and path of development of this literature were common in both milieus; therefore, they constituted inseparable parts of a single Persian literature.

Conclusion And Recommendations

The 17th century in Movarounnahr was an important period during which cultural, scholarly, and literary life continued to develop despite difficult socio-political conditions. Maliho Samarqandi's tazkira "Muzakkiru-l-Askhab" is a principal witness to this process, describing in detail the architectural monuments built in the relatively peaceful first half of the century (Sherdor, Tilloqori, Labi Hovuz) and the subsequent ruination of the second half. The achievements in architecture, realized not by the central authority but by the initiative of local amirs, indicate the weakness of the state. In scholarly life, alongside religious sciences, the development of secular sciences (astronomy, geometry, algebra) is observed; scholars such as Mullo Tursun Faroiziy and Qazi Lutfullah Shakir Bukhari continued the traditions of Ulugh Beg. Divinatory and talismanic sciences were also widespread and were studied by official scholars. The most important feature of literary life was

its shift from the courtly milieu to the urban circles, especially among craftsmen. Maliho's tazkira, mentioning more than 200 poets, confirms the predominance of the literary milieus of Samarkand and Bukhara. Despite harsh conditions, the Samarkand milieu led as a center of urban literature, while in Bukhara a weak courtly circle coexisted with urban literature. The general conclusion is that the continuity of culture derived not from central patronage but from urban traditions and local initiative.

Based on the above analysis and results, we propose the following for this research:

- Prepare a complete scholarly transliteration edition of Maliho's tazkira.
- Systematically publish the works of 17th-century Movarounnahr poets and create a digital database.
- Deepen comparative studies between urban and court literature.
- Examine the place of secular sciences in madrasa education in dedicated monographs.

Research in these directions will serve to deepen the understanding of Central Asia's cultural heritage and to introduce it into international scholarly discourse.

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