

THE MINISTRY OF HIGHER AND SECONDARY SPECIAL  
EDUCATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN



# Independent work

THEME: HISTORY OF SAMARKAND

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Samarkand-2013

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## History of Samarkand



There are cities which centuries-old history embodies the history of whole nation and countries, reflecting the way passed by many generations. Samarkand is one of the most ancient cities in the world. As other first centers of human civilization - Babylon and Memphis, Athens and Rome, Alexandria and Byzantium - Samarkand was intended to go through many events and shakes.

History of Samarkand goes back in remote days. Archeological finds and chronicle records of eyewitnesses and ancient historians allowed to establish with full reliability that a man lived on the territory of modern city many centuries before the Common Era.

Advantageous geographical location, rather favorable climate, abundance of natural springs with fine water, nearness of mountains with large wild fowl, flowing Zaravshan river - all these factors always provided favorable conditions for human settlements in that area, where strong walls, castles, majestic buildings and temples of Samarkand raised some centuries before the Common Era.

In historical events of ancient time the earliest mention about Samarkand (also known as Marakand) dates to 329th year B.C., in descriptions of eyewitnesses and participants of conquering army of Alexander the Great. By that time Samarkand was a big city with crowded population, developed crafts, trade, and culture. It had unassailable citadel and outside defensive wall with length of 10,5 kilometers.

According to new archeological excavations scientists concluded that Samarkand was founded much earlier than Greek-Macedonian conquer and already during the epoch of the Achemenids State (6-4th centuries BC) it was quite developed city. Hence the "age" of Samarkand is over 2500 years, starting from the origin on the forest hill of Afrosiab, though it is far older.

**Over the history the city saw half-savage tribes of Sacs and Massagets, iron flanks of Greek-Macedonian army, hordes of cruel Kara-Kidani. The city resisted the destructive invasion of fanatic Arabic commanders - followers of Islam religion.**

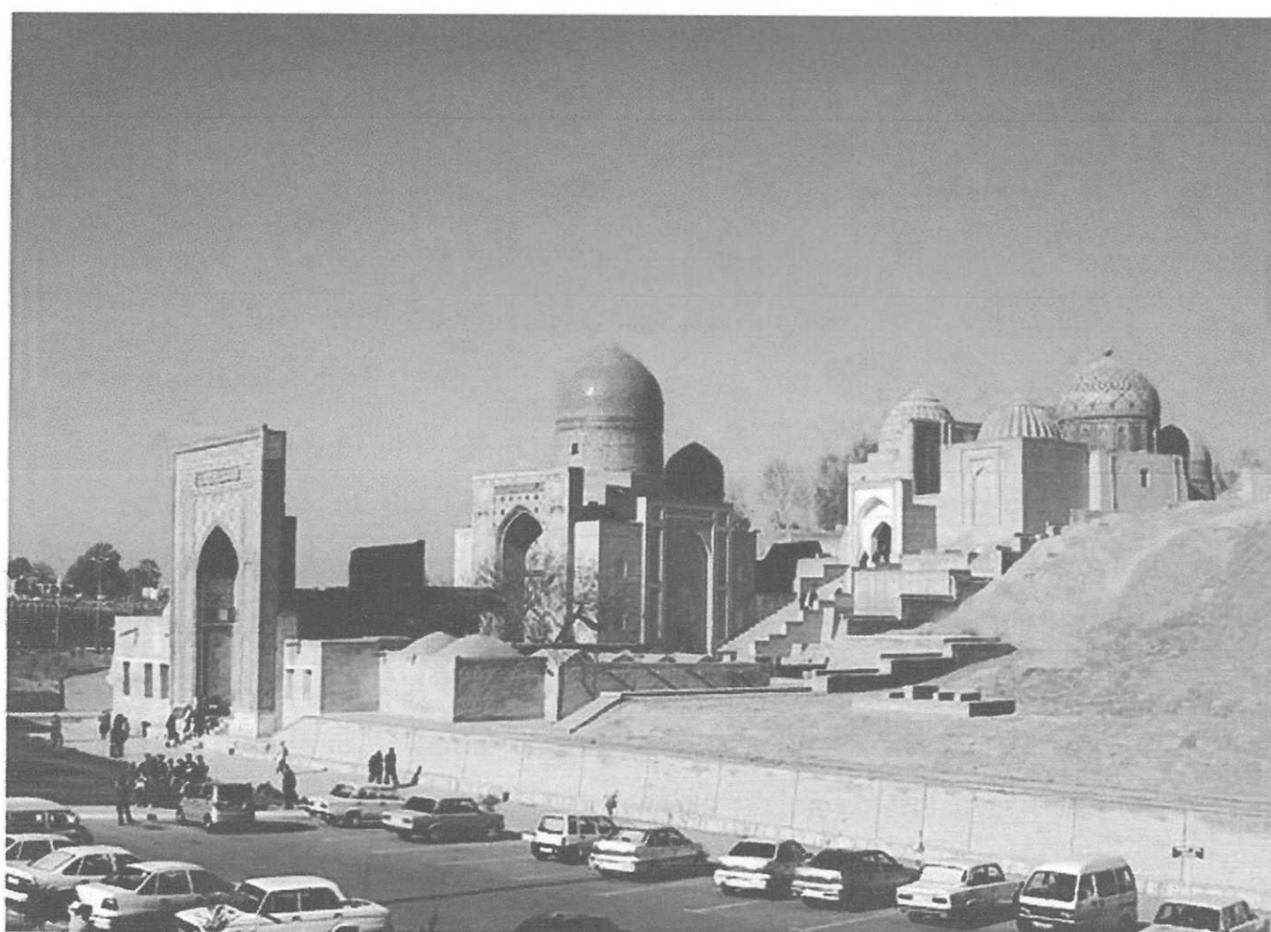
Bloody hordes of Ghengis-Khan attacked its peaceful houses with fire and sword. Samarkand became the capital of Great Empire of Tamerlane, ranged from Ind River to Bosfor.

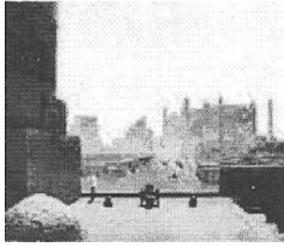
After Timur's death all his empire came to the power of his children and grandchildren. Samarkand and surroundings devolved to Ulugbek, Timur's grandson. Ulugbek ruled Samarkand during 40 years. For the whole history Ulugbek was the most peace-loving ruler. He almost did not participate in aggressive campaigns over ruling his state. He visited other countries many times but only to study traditions, culture, and customs of those countries. He was great scientist, astronomer, and mathematician; therefore he brought many scientists from different countries for science development in his county.

14-15th centuries is the period of the Golden Age of the city. City construction is at its zenith: the city is surrounded by strong fortified wall, new streets, paved of stone, are laid through the city, blue domes of magnificent ensembles tower above the city. Most of these objects survived our days and are the main symbols of the city.

Today Samarkand like most cities of Central Asia is divided into two parts: old and new city. New part is an administrative part of the city, including industrial and cultural centers, high educational institutions. Old part of the city includes historical monuments, shops, workshops, old private houses. Generally, an excursion is held in the old part of the city. Samarkand numbers 500 thousands people. This is multinational city, more than 100 nations live in Samarkand. Samarkand takes second place in Uzbekistan by number of population and territory.







Samarkand is attributed to many different and beautiful epithets. But the most philosophical of them - is Mirror of the World. And indeed, in its history it had seen a lot: the greatness of the capital of one of the largest empires the

source: world, and a collapse that devastated the city. All this Samarkand.

The exact age of this great city can not be established, but many sources point to 742 BC One of the first references were found in the sacred book of Zoroastrians, the Avesta. There is a place called Sughd (Sogdiana), and it is located in the valley Zarafshan (from Persian gold bearing "). In the VI century BC city with the adjoining areas was conquered by the famous Persian king Cyrus. A hundred years later, here in pursuit of the Persian king Darius, came the army of Alexander of Macedyn. Crossing the river Amudatiya, the troops of commander moved into a valley Politimeta (the Greek name Zarafshan) to Marakanda. These place names have become known worldwide thanks to Arrian, Strabon and Quintus Curtius Rufus, the chroniclers and biographers of Macedyn.,

At the same time here begins the largest rebellion against the Macedonian led by sogdians Spitamenes. Over 2 years his troops were engaged in guerrilla raids on the army of Alexander. But in the end the rebels were betrayed, the rebel leader was killed, and Samarkand was destroyed as a warning to others. After Alexander's death, his empire splits into three parts. Samarkand goes to Seleucus - one of the best generals of the Greek-Macedonian army. Later, the city becomes part of the Greco-Bactrian kingdom. Then here comes the Chinese dynasty Guyshuan created on the spot Sogda Kushan kingdom. The reason for this change of rulers of Samarkand is its strategic location - the city is located at the crossroads of many trade routes, including the Great Silk Road. In the middle of V century Samarkand came under the patronage of the Turkic Kaganate, retaining its independence, but giving control over trade routes. This period is characterized by relative stability and gradual development of the infrastructure of the city.

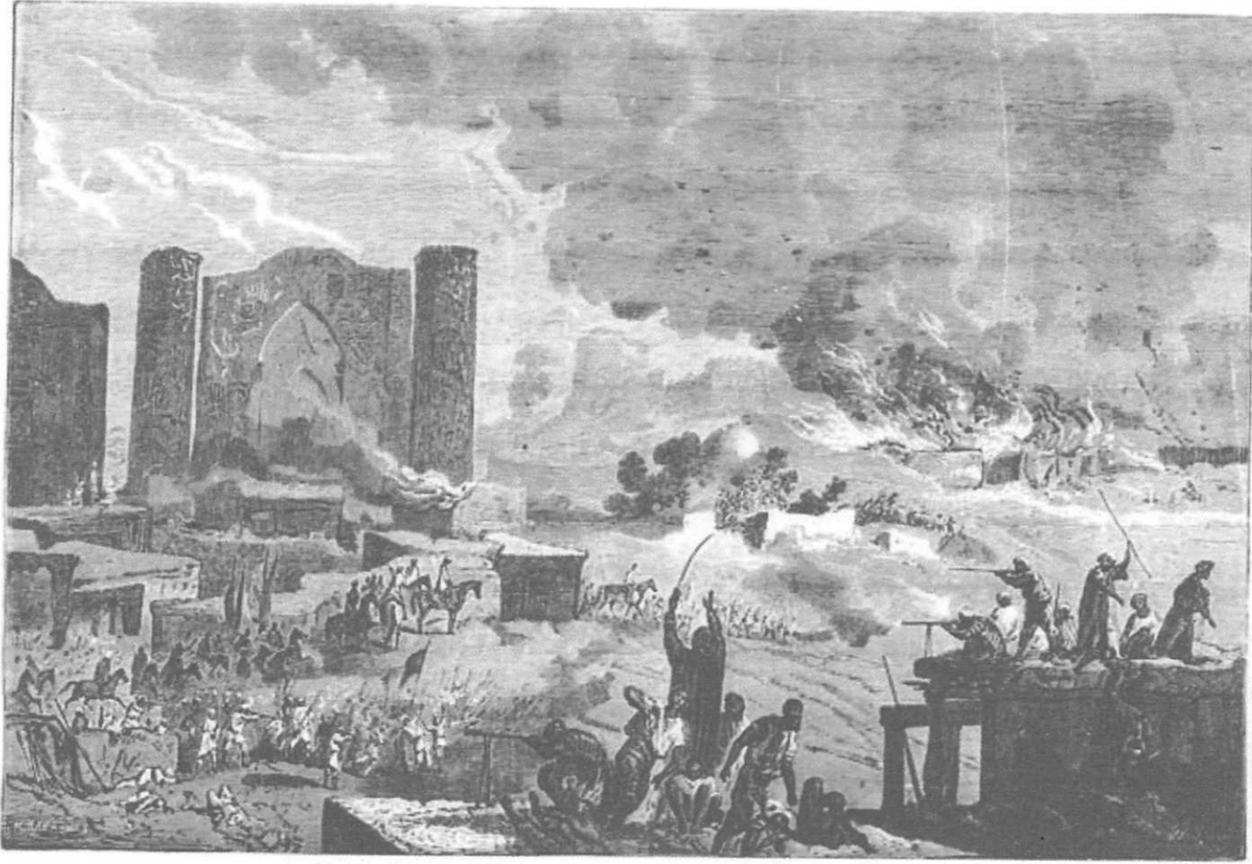
However, in 712 the city was besieged by the Arabs. Within a month it was fired by projectile guns, destroying buildings and walls. The invaders entered the city through the holes in the fortress wall, and after prolonged fighting on the streets still took Samarkand. The Arabs, by introducing a new religion, destroyed all the cultural monuments of Samarkand, written sources and all animal sculptures adorning the city. That is why, it is known very little on the history of Samarkand,

before the arrival of the Arabs, only because of archaeological finds and references in written sources from other countries and cities.

But during the period of Arab rule there was constantly rising rebellions, which ended only after the transfer of power to the local nobility. This marks a new cultural revival, the city reached a half-million population, and became a haven for scholars and Sufis of the East.

In 1220 Samarkand was conquered and destroyed by the army of Genghis Khan. The population of the city was partially killed, partly used for military purposes of the Mongols, and 30,000 artisans were deported to Mongolia. After some time the city revived.

The golden era in the history of Samarkand begins with the coming to power of Tamerlane, who chose it as the capital of his empire in 1370. According to the plan of Timur the beauty and majesty of Samarkand were to outshine all the capitals of the world. The great commander collected from around the world masters so that they would work in the capital. In this period there were built Gur Emir, Bibi Khanum, Shokhi-Zinda, which to this day affect with its beauty. After the death of Tamerlane, the ruler of Samarkand was his 15-year-old grandson Mirzo Ulugbek, who for 40 years of his reign, has transformed the city into a major research center. Under the motto "The pursuit of knowledge - the duty of every



Защита Самаркандской цитадели. Рис. П. Карлович, грав. В. Яковлев.



Muslim" there were built Ulugbek University and Observatory, for which there was not equal in the world for several centuries.

After the death of Ulugbek the ruler of the city for short time was another scientist Zakhiriddin Bobur, and when his rule completed, there began a gradual decline of the city, and in the XVI century, it has lost the status of the capital. The new round of urban development occurs when the ruler of Samarkand becomes Yalangtush Bahadur, from 1612 to 1656. It was he who completed the complex in Registan Square, built Tilla-Kori madrasah and Sherdor. At the end of XVII century because of troubled times people begin to leave the city. The city empties and wild animals begin to roam in the streets. And only in 70-ies of XVIII century, people start returning to the city to restore it. In May 1868 the troops of the Russian Empire capture Samarkand and make it the center of Zeravshan County, and later of Samarkand region as well. They pave the railroad and the city gets a new impetus to economic development. After the October Revolution in Russia, the city becomes the part of the Turkestan ASSR, and in the years 1924-1930 is the capital of the Uzbek SSR. In 1938, Samarkand has become the center of the homonymous province. To this day, Samarkand is one of the largest cities in Uzbekistan and throughout the Central Asia. Now it is a city-museum aged 2750 years. His mosques and madrassas have witnessed the rise and decline of several empires, but they continue to silently rise above the everyday bustle. Such is Samarkand - the Mirror of the World.

### **Bibi-Khanym Mosque, Samarkand**

The majestic blue domes of the Bibi-Khanym Mosque are the unusual sight. It takes one's breath even from understanding the scale of construction of this monument, impressing with its size and beauty. In antiquity the dome of this mosque was compared with the dome of heaven and the arch of portal - with the Milky Way.

As well as all Samarkand monuments the Bibi Khanym Mosque also has the beautiful legend. According to it, the terrible ruler built the mosque in honor of his favorite wife Bibi Khanym. After successful campaign to India Temur decided to build the biggest building of the East - the mosque - which should have exceeded all mosques of the world by its size. Sparkling walls, high minarets, wide portal of the mosque, decorated with carved marble, must have praised for centuries the name of Temur and his favorite wife.

Hundreds of architects, painters and builders were taken to Samarkand. The construction lasted for 5 years (1399-1404) and when Temur came back from another campaign it was ready-built. The yard of the mosque was surrounded by luxurious galleries, the arches of which lied on more than three hundred marble columns, minarets towered on each side of it.

Unfortunately soon after the completion of the construction, when the mosque became the place of ceremonial acts of worships, the building began collapsing. The idea of the creator to build such magnificent building was too bold for that period. The majestic arch of the portal, which according to Tamerlane's plan should have repeated the Milky Way, could not withstand the test of time and had collapsed in the very first years after the construction.

### **Gur-Emir tomb of Tamerlan**



Gur-Emir means "grave of Emir". Gur-Emir Mausoleum was built in 1404 for Timur's grandson Muhhamed Sultan. He had to become heir apparent of throne after Timur, but in 1404 he died and Timur ordered to build big mausoleum for his loved grandson. In 1405 Timur died in Otrar city and his sons decided to move his body

and bury him near his favorite grandson. From that time this mausoleum was called "burial-vault of timurids". Here two sons of Timur were buried-Shahruh and Miranshah, also second grandson Ulugbek, spiritual director of Timur Muslim sheikh from Medin-Mir Seid Bereke and some Shah-Hodja.

Gur-Emir Mausoleum consists of several parts: yard of Muhammed Sultan ensemble, to the right of mausoleum hanaka(the place where Muslims can pray), to the left is medresse and in the center the mausoleum itself decorated from each side with minarets. Unfortunately neither the medresse nor hanaka were saved. In 1996 it was big reconstruction here when Samarkand celebrated 660 years from Amir Timur's birthday. Original design is saved inside. Decorators only drew on original thin layer of paint.

Every headstone is made from marble, only Timur's headstone | is from nephritis, it was brought by order of Ulugbek and put on grave of Timur. All headstones in upper mausoleum are saved very well, but in lower because of floods almost all of them were destroyed. Lattice that set off all headstones was made in 15th century from marble by Ulugbek order.



All headstones were opened in June 1941. There is a legend that related to this event. Before opening three old men told scientists not to disturb ashes of dead, especially Timur's ashes, because by opening his grave they could restore the spirit of war. But scientists had goal to know whether Ulugbek was beheaded, and Timur was lame, because in history Timur is mentioned as Tamerlan-"iron lame man". After opening sarcophagus scientists saw grave where skeleton of Timur was. By analysis of skull bone anthropologist Gerasimov made first portrait of Timur and his entire dynasty. Scientists concluded that he was really lame because his one leg was shorter than another. They also established that Ulugbek was beheaded. His skull was near skeleton.