

G O L D E N H O R D E
(QIPCHAQS)

WHITE HORDE

MEDIAEVAL MAWARANNAHR
AND THE CHAGHATAY DOMAINS

0 50 100 150 200
Miles

CASPIAN SEA

ARAL SEA

KHWARAZM

QIZIL QUM DESERT
(RED SANDS)

QARA QUM DESERT
(BLACK SANDS)

MAWARANNAHR
(TRANSOXIANA)

HUNGRY STEPPE

BALKASH L.

SEMIRECHYE
(Land of the Seven Rivers)

MOGHULISTAN
(Jats)

FARGHANA

TIEN SHAN
Celestial Mts

PAMIRS

KUNLUN MTS

KHORASAN

HINDUKUSH

HIMALAYA MTS

GREAT SALT DESERT

KINGDOM OF HULAGU

3000-9000ft
Over 9000ft

از عساکر فیروزی آثار که بجانشی در عقب کر نیکنان رفت بودند سلطان مجنود خان
به ایله رم با یزید پسید و اورا دتیکه کرده و دست بسته بدرگاه عالم نپاه آورد



عق مکارم پادشاهانه در حرکت آمد و امر فرمود که اورا دست کشاده بجزیرت
آورند و چون بعین تملاتی استعدا یافت مور و اورا به اعش از واکرام تملتی

Ottoman Sultan Bayazid brought captive before Timur after the Battle of Angora. From a manuscript of the Zafar-nama of Sharaf al-din Yazdi, copied in 1552. Safavid style.

TAMBURLAINE
THE CONQUEROR

by

HILDA HOOKHAM



LONDON
HODDER AND STOUGHTON

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First printed 1962

*Made and Printed in Great Britain for
Hodder and Stoughton Limited by
The Camelot Press Limited
London and Southampton*

FOREWORD

THE simplified system of transliteration adopted in this book is as far as possible based on that used by Professor Minorsky in recent translations of V. V. Barthold's works, and elsewhere. The avoidance of diacritical signs makes the text more easily readable. Those who wish to consult specialized works will recognize the names if they are familiar with this transliteration.

Annotation has been kept to a minimum. Sources of quotations are mentioned in the narrative or in notes at the end of each chapter, where other works are briefly indicated which have been used in the chapter. Full titles are given in the General Bibliography at the end of the book.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

IT is a pleasure to be able to acknowledge my debt to the works of V. V. Barthold, which have been made available recently to the English speaking public through the efforts of Professor Minorsky; and to Professor Minorsky's own works, including the Lectures on Persian History which I have been able to consult in advance of publication. I wish to thank Professor I. I. Umnyakov, of the History Faculty, Uzbek State University, Samarqand, for his generous response to enquiries and requests for material.

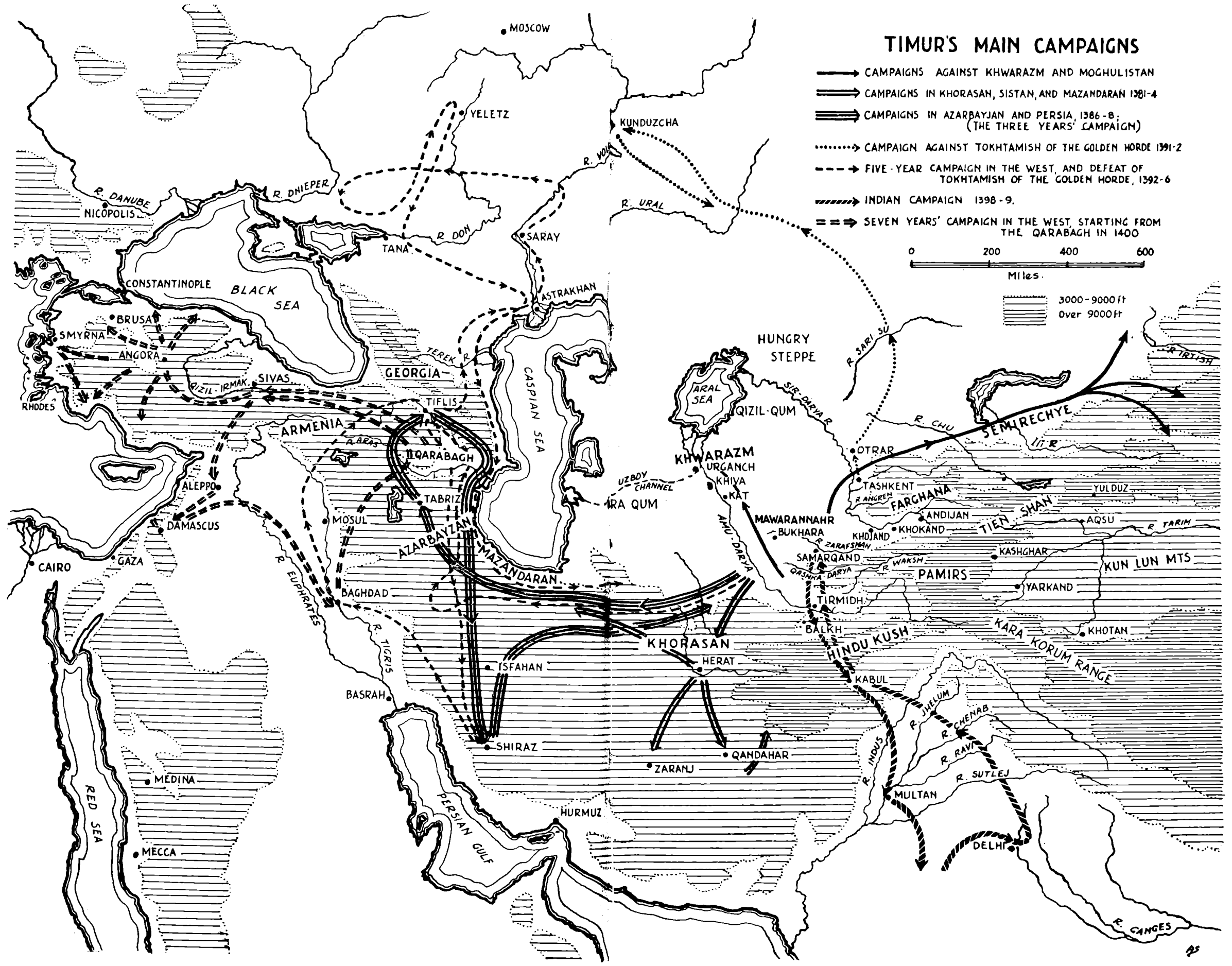
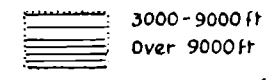
I am indebted to the Department of Oriental Books and Manuscripts, and to the Department of Coins and Medals, of the British Museum, for their assistance on many occasions; to the Trustees of the British Museum for permission to publish reproductions from the Zafar-nama (Or. 1359) showing Sultan Bayazid brought captive before Timur, and the tower of skulls raised at Herat, the battle scene from the Khamseh Nizami (Add. 25, 900), and the silver coin of Timur; to the Directors of the History Museum, Moscow, for their answers to my questions and for supplying photographs of Gerasimov's reproduction of the head of Timur; to the Society for Cultural Relations with the U.S.S.R. for permission to reproduce pictures of the Gur-Emir, the Cathedral Mosque, and the Shahi-Zinda in Samarqand; and to B. Quaritch (publishers) for permission to use two reproductions from the Zafar-nama manuscript illustrated by Bihzad, the Construction of the Cathedral Mosque and the Attack on the Mountain Strongholds.

Dr. J. Needham and the Cambridge University Press kindly gave me permission to consult sections of Volume IV of Science and Civilisation in China, in advance of publication.

I take this opportunity of welcoming the revival of interest in oriental masterpieces reflected in the publication of recent translations, many under the auspices of U.N.E.S.C.O., and of acknowledging my debt to Dr. J. A. Boyle's translation of Juvayni, and to the works of W. J. F. Fischel and W. Popper of California University on Ibn Khaldun and Ibn Taghri Birdi. It is to be hoped that additional oriental classics will become more widely available.

TIMUR'S MAIN CAMPAIGNS

- CAMPAIGNS AGAINST KHWARAZM AND MOGHULISTAN
- ⇒ CAMPAIGNS IN KHORASAN, SISTAN, AND MAZANDARAN 1381-4
- ≡ CAMPAIGNS IN AZARBAYJAN AND PERSIA, 1386-8; (THE THREE YEARS' CAMPAIGN)
- CAMPAIGN AGAINST TOKHTAMISH OF THE GOLDEN HORDE 1391-2
- - - FIVE-YEAR CAMPAIGN IN THE WEST, AND DEFEAT OF TOKHTAMISH OF THE GOLDEN HORDE, 1392-6
- //// INDIAN CAMPAIGN 1398-9.
- == SEVEN YEARS' CAMPAIGN IN THE WEST STARTING FROM THE QARABAGH IN 1400



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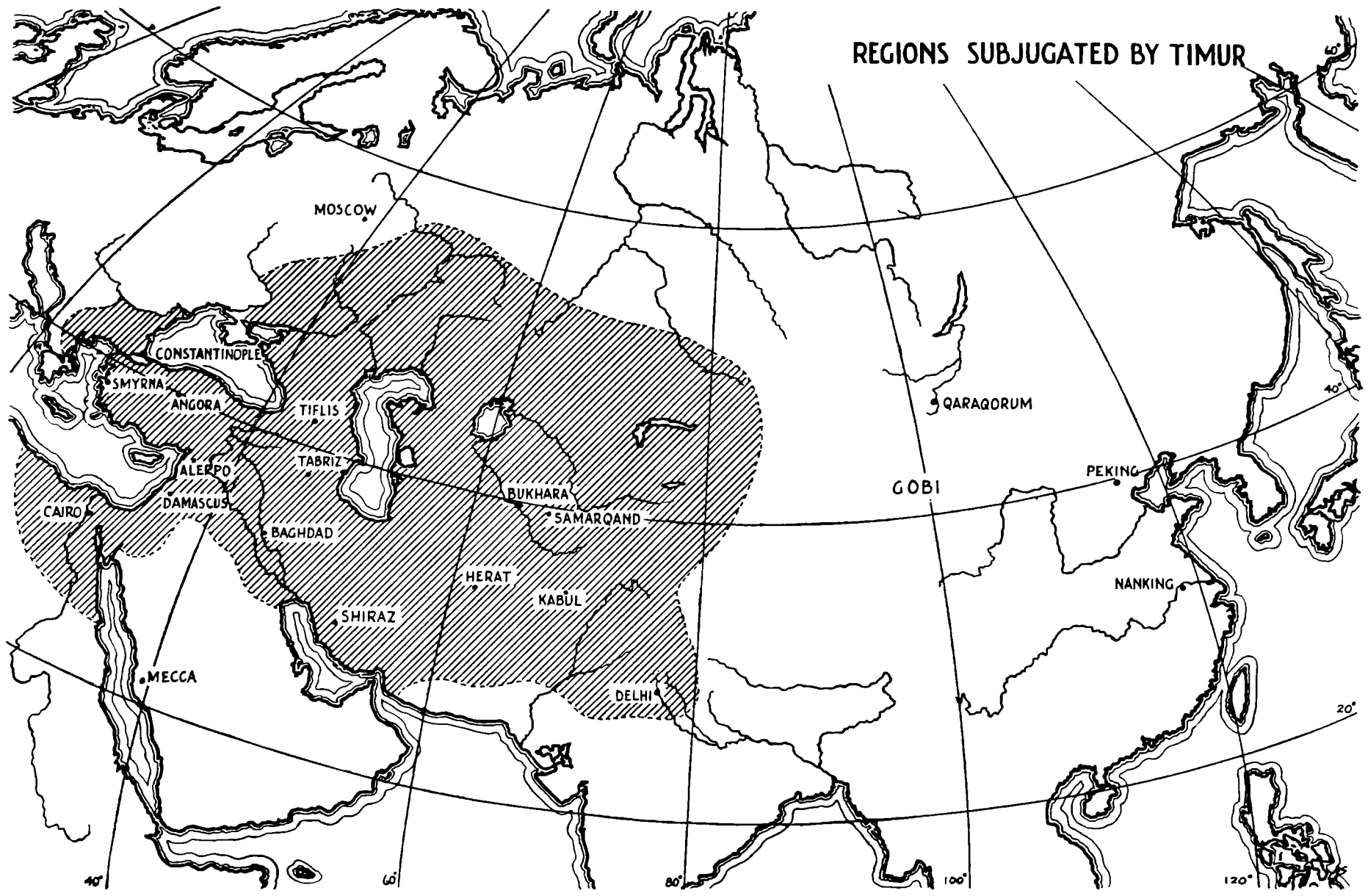
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¹ From a MS. of the *Zafar-nama* of Sharaf al-din Yazdi, copied in 1552. (Brit. Mus. Or. 1359. f. 413r and f. 120.)

² From MS. of poems of Nizami, dated 1442; illustration attributed to Bihzad. (Brit. Mus. Add. 25900 f. 231 v.)

³ From a MS. of the *Zafar-nama* of Sharaf al-din Yazdi, copied in 1467. Illustrations attributed to Bihzad.

REGIONS SUBJUGATED BY TIMUR



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* *Repeated on back endpaper*

† *Repeated on front endpaper*

INTRODUCTION

All Asia is in arms with Tamburlaine . . .
The scourge of God and terror of the world.

C. Marlowe: *Tamburlaine the Great*

TAMBURLAINE "is now scarcely more than a name. Though his career inspired a play by Marlowe and occupied nearly a chapter of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, most educated people today would be at a loss to give him a date or his place in history. Yet he is one of the world's great conquerors, of the same class as Chingiz-khan, Alexander, Attila and Napoleon; in short, a scourge of humanity."¹

This criticism of our knowledge is as valid now as it was when it was written a quarter of a century ago. It has, however, rather less justification, for many sources, translations, and commentaries on the period are available, and the region is accessible to the traveller with means.

Christopher Marlowe, the Elizabethan poet, wrote his blank-verse drama, *Tamburlaine the Great*, in the fifteen-eighties. By then the story of the Conqueror had become legendary in Europe. The sources from which Marlowe drew his material (mainly Pedro Mexia and Petrus Perondinus), were heroic romances rather than history.² With its caged sultan, its convoy of princes yoked to Tamburlaine's chariot, and its general carnage, the play appealed to the public, and productions of it are recorded up to the Puritan intervention in the mid seventeenth century. There was no further performance in England until that of the Old Vic in 1953. Handel wrote his opera *Tamerlane* in 1724, but apart from this both the legend and the history have been much neglected.

His name was Timur, meaning "iron", a name which is frequently found in Asia, both in this form and with modifications. "Timur-i-Lenk" signifies Timur the Lamé; this title of contempt was used by his enemies, and gave rise to "Tamburlaine" or "Tamerlane".

The reality is no less impressive than the romance, and the life-size Timur the Lamé dwarfs the hero of the stage. This is because Timur was exceptionally successful, rather than because his activities and ambitions were unique. He was possibly the last of the mighty nomad conquerors to achieve such successes at the head of those aristocrats of the steppe, the nomad warrior-lords. He was perhaps the last nomad chief to establish political dominion over agricultural and pastoral peoples, on an imperial scale.

The Tatar conqueror burst forth on the European horizon at a moment when Christendom did not appear to advantage. Timur the Lame was making himself master of Asia in the second half of the fourteenth century, while, in the west, the Great Schism was enervating the Latin Church; outbreaks of pest alternated with conflicts between feudal princes; and the emaciated empire of Byzantium, with the Ottoman Turks at the gates of Constantinople, was awaiting the final unction.

In the face of the Ottoman terror from the east, which was sweeping like another flood through the Balkan lands and which had already practically engulfed the remnants of Byzantium, the factions of Christendom had sunk their differences sufficiently to mount one last, spectacular crusade against the menace of Islam. The defeat of the knights of Christendom, at Nicopolis in 1396, was as spectacular as their effort. The courts of the west had difficulty in scraping together the ransom money for surviving sons and brothers made captive by the Ottoman Sultan.

The fifteenth century opened on a Europe even more depressed by faction, plague, and defeat. But the star of hope blazed once more in the orient: Timur, an old Tatar "cripple from the Far East, an intellectual specialist in chess, theology and conquest", was approaching the Ottoman dominions at the head of a mammoth army of horsemen.³

The envoys of Christian potentates came to the court of the Tatar conqueror soliciting help against the Ottoman enemy. Emperor Manuel II of Byzantium used the services of two Dominicans, Fathers Francis and Sandron, who were furnished with friendly appeals from the colony of Genoese merchants at Pera, and from the Genoese overlord, Charles VI of France. Negotiations were facilitated by the appointment of a Dominican (possibly the Englishman, John Greenlaw) to the oriental see of Sultaniya, in the west of Timur's empire.⁴ In the summer of 1402, Timur had in fact smashed the Ottoman forces at Angora and had taken captive their Sultan Bayazid. After that, the streams of envoys and caravans were in spate. Reprieved but impoverished, Constantinople sent its humble tribute. Timur's pennant, hoisted by the Genoese of Pera, flew over the Bosphorus. Merchant princes of Venice paid their respects. An embassy from Henry III of Castile and Leon brought gifts and greetings. And from both Henry IV of England and mad Charles VI of France, who were enjoying an uneasy truce in the Hundred Years' War, came amiable remarks about commerce and felicitations on the victory over Bayazid. Along the transcontinental highways of Asia came also the envoys of the Mongol khans and the Ming emperor of China. East and west paid court to the nomad conqueror who worshipped Allah and who had massacred Christian, Muslim, and other "infidels" by the scores of thousands.

The Tatar was nearly seventy years old, lame in right arm and leg, but indefatigable in the saddle. He had begun as a robber chief with a small band of followers from his native valley just south of Samarqand, in Central Asia. He had established his dominion over the lands between the Amu-Darya and the Sir-Darya (the Oxus and the Jaxartes) in the thirties. Then for three decades he had led his mounted archers against every state between Mongolia and the Mediterranean, and each one had succumbed to the onslaught. Princes of all Asia and Europe now paid him homage or respects. Across deserts and through mountain defiles the baggage trains, heavy with plunder, made their way back to the capital of his empire, to Samarqand the Protected, the oasis city in the heart of Transoxiana. To Samarqand came the caravans of elephants and treasure from the ravaged plains of the Punjab and the Sultanate of Delhi; the loot of the Volga regions and the Qipchaq steppes; the tribute of Egypt—gold, ostriches, and, amongst other rarities, a giraffe; florins from Byzantium, tapestries from Castile; master-craftsmen from Damascus, scholars of Baghdad, captive Turks from Anatolia; merchants from the bazaars of the Mediterranean, and from China. In the wake of the Tatar hordes, from Hurmuz on the Indian sea-board to Chistopol by the Volga, stood the ruins of intransigent towns, and the towers built by Timur's warriors from the skulls of their victims.

Shortly after the defeat of the Ottoman Turks, Timur had satisfied his own holy zeal by the reduction of Smyrna, the last Christian stronghold in Asia Minor, and by the slaughter of its Christian defenders. Christian bells had been replaced by the call of the muezzin. Then the Tatar turned back from the waters of the Aegean. He turned his arrogant back on Europe, the pride of whose chivalry had been annihilated six years previously in the last impetuous crusade against the Turks (1396). He turned away from the uncouth Europe of Pope and anti-Pope, and of deranged princes, infidels, and boorish peasants. For Europe was held in contempt by the illiterate Timur, no less than by the scholars of Islam. Ibn Khaldun, the Arab historian, a contemporary of the Lame Conqueror, included nothing north of Spain in his *Universal History*; he remarked only that reports had reached him of late "that the philosophic sciences were thriving in Europe. But God knows what goes on in those parts."⁵

Timur turned back to cross high Asia, not merely homewards to imperial Samarqand, where the craftsmen of subject nations laboured to build palaces, gardens, and mosques. He was en route for China, a quarter of the earth's circumference away. China was still practically unknown to Europe at that time. Indeed, between the seventh and the twelfth centuries, with one exception, there was no Latin or Greek reference revealing a

living knowledge of the east. Later on, Marco Polo was regarded as an imposter, and the accounts of the Catholic envoys (Carpini, Rubruck, and so on) of their journeys to the Mongol khans were little known.⁶ However, for the Lame Conqueror and his plundering hordes, the world at the opening of the fifteenth century offered but one further challenge fit for their attention—China, the richest empire on earth.

Byzantium had gained through the victory of the Tatar conqueror a half-century of respite from the Ottoman Turk, and Europe began to stir from the cramp of religious dogma and scholasticism. Timur the Lame played a game of chess with his court philosophers, and moved east with his hordes and with the captive Ottoman Sultan. He was moving this time against the idolators of the Celestial Empire.

Timur was one of a long series of conquerors who had ruled high Asia for fifteen or twenty centuries. His was one of a series of empires which, since the time of Alexander the Great in the fourth century B.C., had stretched across Persia, northern India, the Russian steppes, and China. Central Asia had formed their pivot. It is a mistake to regard Central Asia merely as a corridor between Far and Near East, as a transit station on the great Silk Road, or even as a province on the periphery of other empires. The concept of Timur the “frontiersman”, put forward by A. J. Toynbee in his *Study of History*, seems to be out of period.⁷ Such a concept might apply politically to nineteenth-century Central Asia, which was then a “frontier” challenge to Russia and to the British in India. The concept is less applicable to earlier periods. The relationships between nomad and settled communities, predatory or otherwise, cannot be defined in simple political “frontier” terms.

No more acceptable is the view that Central Asia’s role in history has been purely transmissive: “While perpetually transmitting the influences of other civilizations, the Oxus-Jaxartes basin appears never to have succeeded in itself becoming a centre from which influence and energy have radiated outwards in different directions.”⁸

Timur fell heir to a political, economic and cultural heritage rooted in Central Asia itself. He was born in 1336 (the Year of the Mouse, according to the Mongol calendar) in an oasis valley between Samarqand and the Hindu Kush mountains. The traditions of Alexander the Great were still alive in those regions. Timur’s grandson, Iskandar (Alexander), never tired of recalling the exploits of his namesake seventeen centuries before. Alexander the Great had conquered the same range of countries between the Aegean and Sir-Darya, as Timur had, but in the reverse direction. But Timur’s troops, unlike those of Alexander, did not hesitate to penetrate thousands of miles east beyond the Sir-Darya into Siberia, and

north into the Volga regions. Nor did they refuse to be led far into the plains of India.

Timur continued the traditions of conquest and empire, of plunder and servitude, as well as the cultural traditions, which had become deeply established in Central Asia. He was a native of the regions whence came in the ninth and tenth centuries works on philosophy, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, geography, history, and literature, in Arabic and Persian. These later stimulated Renaissance Europe and provided a basis for western scholarship for many centuries. Timur was of that nomad stock which cultivated the military arts inherited from Chingiz-khan, which scorned the settled peasant, and which took fierce pride in the skills of the mounted wanderer. The advent of Timur was no freak occurrence. His achievements were not fortuitous. He was the most able child of his period.

Timur had the hardy physique of the nomad, despite his infirmity. Perpetual mobility, extremes of desert heat and lacerating cold, were tolerated with an endurance rarely to be found amongst sedentary peoples. Lifeless wastes and mountain ranges were obstacles regularly crossed by the nomads, who penetrated regions that defied nineteenth-century travellers. Timur never took up a permanent abode. He personally led his incessant campaigns. When not campaigning, he moved his camp from one region to another, according to season and grazing facilities. His court moved with him, along with his administrative apparatus, his household, and his hordes of nomads, all ready, on the instant, to take up arms. When Timur did visit his capital, Samarqand, at rare intervals between expeditions, he stayed but a few days in the palaces, and then moved back to the pavilions of his encampment set in the plains beyond the city.

Timur was unlettered but not ignorant. His physical vigour was matched by his mental vitality. He delighted in the company of scholars, and with them mastered many subjects. He knew the history of his own and other peoples. He sent his envoys and agents as far as Castile in the west and Nanking in the east, and they brought him information about the rulers, the people, the religion, the commerce, and the geography of the lands they traversed. When H. A. L. Fisher stated that after the hundred years of Tatar (Chingizid) domination (1264-1368) "the veil suddenly fell . . . central Asia once more plunged into chaos, China retreated into impenetrable darkness",⁹ he used these expressions in the same insular way in which it was said that a fog over the Channel had cut off the continent of Europe from England. There was no veil over the mind of Timur, which recorded the aspect of the Asian continent more clearly

than any atlas. In intervals between affairs of state, and at moments of rest when campaigning, Timur contended with the experts of his court at chess and listened to the epics of his people. Timur could discuss, with leading scholars of Islam, questions of history, religious dogma, and the practical sciences. He was above all master of the military techniques developed by Chingiz-khan. His hordes of elite Tatar troops, privileged and devoted, were the basis of his power. Timur was not limited in his choice of weapons. He used every weapon in the military and diplomatic armoury of the day. He never missed an opportunity to exploit the weakness (political, economic, or military) of the adversary. Intrigue and alliance served his purposes. The seeds of victory were sown before an engagement by his agents who moved amongst the ranks of the enemy, and were reaped later on the battle-field.

He conducted sophisticated negotiations with neighbouring and distant powers, as diplomatic archives from England to China bear out. Mobility and surprise were his major weapons of attack, but this chess-playing nomad knew when to hold back and how to wait. His dispositions were such that he could change course, or target, if circumstances provided superior alternatives. Grousset, the French orientalist, criticized Timur's campaigns on the grounds that they lacked geographic coherence.¹⁰ Geographic coherence may be convenient for the textbook, but not for successful nomadic warfare. The sanctions of Islam to wage war against the infidel, the needs of his kingdom in Central Asia, and the predatory urge of the nomad lords, provided Timur with the elements necessary for successful aggressive campaigns. He used them to the full.

It is the destructive nature of Timur's campaigns which has so often been recorded, and, indeed, the barbarity of the consequences to those who resisted him can hardly be exaggerated. What have not so often been noticed are the political and other consequences of his conquests and his rule. As far as Europe was concerned, the fall of Constantinople and the death agony of Byzantium were delayed for half a century by this Tatar. The last crusade had collapsed, and this delay had more than a passing significance for Christendom and Europe.

Moreover, the defeat of Sultan Bayazid at Angora altered the course of development of the Ottoman Empire, whose capital was transferred to the European mainland. Henceforth the main direction of the Turkish drive, although delayed, was westwards into Christendom.

Of no small consequence to the emerging Russian states were the blows struck by Timur against the Golden Horde, the Chingizid empire that dominated the plains from Siberia to the Caucasus. The Tatars no longer lorded it over the northern steppes. The continental caravan trade, between

Far and Hither Asia, which during the time of the Golden Horde had been largely diverted to a route north of the Caspian and the Aral Seas, flowed once again during the period of Timur and his sons through Samarqand and Transoxiana.

Timur's dynasty survived in Central Asia for a century, despite fratricidal strife; it maintained active contact with China, India, and western Asia. Samarqand became a centre of scholarship and science. It was here that Ulugh-beg, grandson of the Conqueror, set up the Observatory and constructed the astronomical tables, of which the first English Astronomer-Royal, in the seventeenth century, made extensive use.¹¹ During the Timurid renaissance of the fifteenth century, Herat, south-west of Samarqand, became the home of the brilliant school of Persian miniaturists; the most illustrious was the artist Bihzad.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, when the descendants of Timur were driven from Central Asia, his great-great-great-grandson, Babur, established himself first in Kabul, and later conquered Delhi. He founded the line of Muslim emperors in India known as the Great Mogols.

Both constructive and destructive aspects of the epoch of Timur are still very little known, especially in the west.

Much of the evidence and many of the sources about him have perished during five centuries of strife since his death. That which has survived is richly varied. Court secretaries kept records, in Persian prose and Turkic verse, of the campaigns of his reign. These records were used by men of letters at court to write historical narratives. Timur challenged the accepted literary standards of his time by demanding that the history of his conquests should be written in a simple style, comprehensible to all, although elegant enough not to offend the tastes of the cultured. One of the original court records, the diary of the Indian campaign (by Ghiyath al-din Ali),¹² has come down to us. So too has the Book of Victory, the *Zafar-nama*, compiled towards the end of the life of the Conqueror by Nizam al-din.¹³ Nizam used the Indian diary and other materials (except the Turkic verse) presented to him from the court records. We can see by comparison that the original accounts were, in general, faithfully followed. About ten years after the death of Timur a history of the Conqueror was written for his grandson Iskandar in Fars by the Persian scholar Musavi.¹⁴ A decade later a comprehensive history was compiled at the court of one of Timur's grandsons, and written up in exceedingly florid Persian by Sharaf al-din.¹⁵ This account, also called the Book of Victory, was based on the sources available to Nizam as well as on the Turkic material. It was a popular work and many copies were made. One of these was illustrated by the miniaturist Bihzad, in the second half of

the fifteenth century. Other court histories were compiled in that century, containing much of the material used by Nizam and Sharaf, but with additional sources. Amongst these are the works of Hafiz-i Abru,¹⁶ Abd-al Razzaq,¹⁷ and Mirkhond.¹⁸ As semi-official accounts, these histories include much adulation of the Conqueror, and tend to exaggerate his piety and devotion to Islam. Their factual basis can, however, be checked by reference to independent sources.

Among these, from the Islamic world, is the record of Ibn Arabshah, who was captured as a boy at the fall of Damascus and taken to Samarqand.¹⁹ His bitter account of Timur's life, in rhyming Arabic prose, when shorn of poetic venom, substantiates much of the material in the court chronicles. Like Milton, Arabshah found it difficult to restrain his admiration for the devil. Extracts from many other contemporary Persian and Arabic sources, mainly hostile, describe phases of Timur's campaigns. Studiously neutral, however, is the account of the great Arab historian, Ibn Khaldun,²⁰ who had many meetings with Timur at the time of the Syrian campaign, and who may have had more to reveal than he was prepared to commit to paper.

To the records of court flatterers and hostile Muslims, we may add a neutral source of a different kind: the detailed observations of the astute Christian envoy Clavijo,²¹ the Spanish ambassador, who followed Timur's court to Samarqand and who stayed there at the most spectacular period of Timur's rule. Another Catholic account, inaccurate, but interesting as a subjective impression, is that of the Bavarian squire Schiltberger,²² who followed his knight to the Crusade, was captured by Bayazid at Nicopolis and then by Timur at Angora. He served Timur, and after him, his son and his grandson. Eventually Schiltberger escaped to Europe, to renounce the faith of Islam which he had found it discreet to adopt during his captivity. He recorded his story.

The Catholic envoy, Archbishop John, left a *Mémoire*²³ on the court of Timur.

Amongst the sources, too, are many references to events surrounding the life of Timur in the records of Muslim, Latin, and Byzantine scholars and merchants. From the Far East come the histories of Moghulistan, and the records of the Ming dynasty in China. Diplomatic correspondence with the Tatar conqueror is preserved in the archives of a number of oriental and western capitals. Further tangible evidence is also available. There are the coins, struck by Timur, showing his triangular device, of which the British Museum, amongst others, has a selection. Above all, there are the monuments of Samarqand, covered in azure, turquoise, gold, and alabaster mosaics. There stands the hulk of the great Cathedral

Mosque, ruined by earthquake, but soaring still to an immense fragment of dome. There stand the shrines built by some of Timur's wives. And there stands the lame Tatar's own mausoleum, perfectly restored. Within the sepulchre Timur lies under a huge but broken slab of jade. Beside him lie his chief divine and some of his descendants. The tomb was opened in 1941, after resting intact for half a millennium. The Soviet Archaeological Commission found the skeleton of a man who, though lame in both right limbs, must have been of powerful physique, tall, for a Tatar, and of haughty bearing. With these remains were bristles of a chestnut moustache.²⁴

What was the nature of Timur's victories, and his impact on history? No answer can be attempted without an introduction to the centuries of development in Central Asia and the situation which he faced as a young man.

NOTES

¹ J. H. Sanders: *Introduction to Tamerlane*, by Ibn Arabshah, 1936.

² P. Henderson: *Christopher Marlowe*, 1956.

³ H. A. L. Fisher: *History of Europe*, 1935.

⁴ See Chapter XII.

⁵ Ibn Khaldun: Muqaddimah (quoted by B. Lewis, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 1957).

⁶ G. H. T. Kimble: *Geography in the Middle Ages*, 1938.

⁷ A. J. Toynbee: *Study of History*, 1935-9.

⁸ A. J. Toynbee: *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, Vol. III, 1923-5.

⁹ H. A. L. Fisher: *History of Europe*, 1935.

¹⁰ R. Grousset: *L'Empire des Steppes*, 1952.

¹¹ Launcelot Hogben: *Mathematics in the Making*, 1960.

¹² Ghiyath al-din Ali: *Indian Diary*.

¹³ Nizam al-din Shami: *Zafar-nama*.

¹⁴ Musavi: *Tarikh-i khayrat*.

¹⁵ Sharaf al-din Yazdi: *Zafar-nama*.

¹⁶ Hafiz-i Abru: *Zubdat al-Tavarikh*.

¹⁷ Abd-al Razzak: *Matla al-sadayn*.

¹⁸ Mirkhond: *Rauda al-Safa*.

¹⁹ Ibn Arabshah: *Tamerlane*.

²⁰ Ibn Khaldun: *Muqaddimah*.

²¹ Clavijo: *Embassy*.

²² Schiltberger: *Bondage*.

²³ Archbishop John: *Memoirs*.

²⁴ It was from the skull revealed at this opening that Gerasimov reconstructed the head of Timur, reproduced facing p. 32.

STEPPE NOMADS AND THE OLD SILK ROAD

An historical retrospect, from Antiquity to Chingiz-khan

I

ANTIQUITY

To the south of the Asian continent an immense chain of mountains reaches across a quarter of the globe. Its extremes overshadow the Black Sea in the west and dwindle down to the Yellow Sea in the east, and between these bounds soar some of the earth's most impressive ranges. From the central cluster of the Pamirs stretch, to the north-east, the Tien-shan or Celestial Mountains; to the south-east, the giant Himalayas; and to the west, the Hindu Kush. The mountains contain systems of untraversed glaciers and peaks, but their foothills give rich alpine pasturage. The valleys on the northern flanks become almost treeless as they descend. No river from these slopes reaches the open sea; a few flow into great inland lakes, and the rest disappear into the sands.

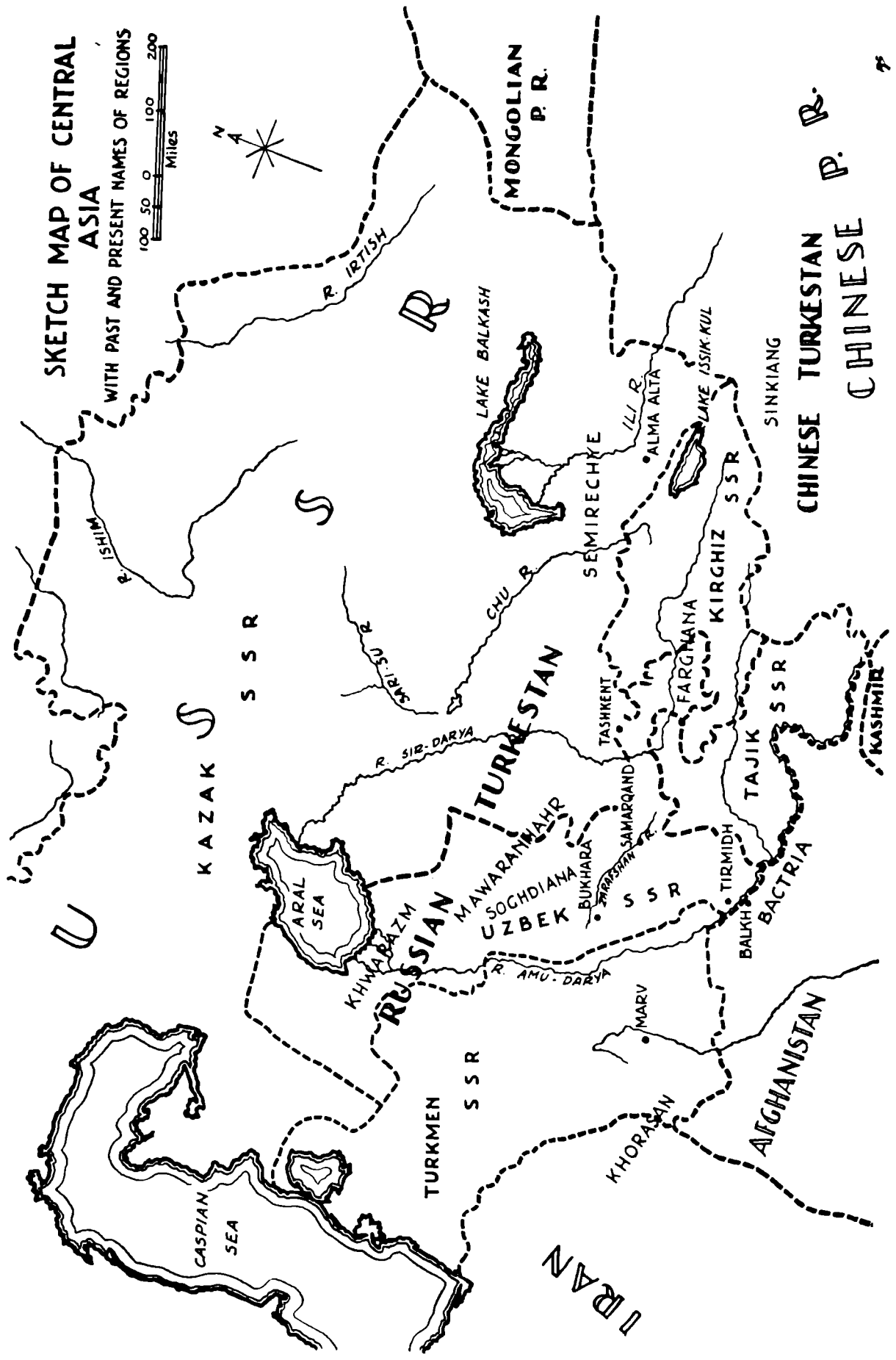
Along these northern foothills and in the valleys are oases, fertile islands of cultivation surrounded by desert; beyond the deserts are the steppelands of Russia and the great Siberian plain. From the oases, the ice-bound peaks on the one hand, and the desert sands on the other, are visible to the naked eye.

The oases between these inhospitable regions formed stages in a highway between the lands of the Far East, India and the Mediterranean, the vital links of which were those of Central Asia. Located between the principal centres of ancient culture—China, Mesopotamia, and India—the Central Asian regions derived and contributed considerable benefits in the trade between them. Periods of peaceful development led to the extension of irrigation and cultivated areas, around which important states were established. War, or nomad raids, were sufficient, however, to reduce these achievements and to bury cultivated areas under the sands.

The two most important rivers of these lands, the Amu-Darya and the Sir-Darya, empty their waters into the inland Aral Sea. Between the Caspian and the Amu-Darya are the black sands of the Qara Qum; between the Amu- and the Sir-Darya rivers, the red desert sands—the Qizil Qum. (Qara means black, and qizil, red.) Beyond the east bank of the Sir-Darya lies the Hunger Steppe. Known as the Oxus and the

SKETCH MAP OF CENTRAL ASIA

WITH PAST AND PRESENT NAMES OF REGIONS



CHINESE TURKISTAN P. R.
CHINESE

Jaxartes, these rivers were regarded by mediaeval commentators as two of the four rivers of Paradise. Indeed, the oases and garden kingdoms that flowered in the valleys may have seemed like the veritable Eden to travellers from mountain and desert. The quality of their fruits—apples and melons, grapes and apricots—has been noted from antiquity till today. Towns are named Alma Ata (today the capital of Kazakhstan) meaning “father of apples”; and Almaliq, further east, which means “apple orchard”. Legend ascribed the discovery of the wine-making process to the Iranian prince-astrologer Jamshid, who took home in barrels some of the superb Samarqand grapes. On opening the casks, he found that the grapes had fermented, and he ordered the acid fruit to be placed apart labelled “poison”. Some nights later he quarrelled with his favourite wife, who in her despair drank some of the contents. When she awoke from a heavy sleep, her cares had departed. This remedy became a habit with her, until Jamshid discovered her secret and shared her joy. But Jamshid, they say, became a drunkard and was driven from his throne.

The lands between the two rivers became known (in Arabic) as Mawarannahr, “What is Beyond the River”, i.e. Transoxiana, and here is the heart of Central Asia. In the nineteenth century these regions were called Russian and Chinese Turkestan. Today they are the Soviet Socialist Republics of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Kirghizia on the western side, and the north-west regions of Sinkiang in the People’s Republic of China, on the eastern. The earliest settlers were Iranians. Later came Huns, Turks, Tatars, all nomads from the northern steppes and from Mongolia. Neither settlers nor nomads were isolated from other peoples or centres of culture. On the contrary, the desert and mountain barriers which surrounded them had been breached since the days of pre-history. The peoples of Central Asia who overcame these natural enemies were sometimes on the periphery, but quite frequently at the hub, of Asian affairs.

Civilized communities existed in Central Asia several thousand years ago; they developed irrigation for agriculture, towns, trade, and handicrafts. The existence of similar prehistoric art throughout Asia from the Mediterranean to the Huang Ho justifies the belief that there were trade routes across Asia in early times, the merchant caravans making some but not all the different stages of the route.¹ The Sumerians, for example, imported lapis lazuli from the region of the upper Amu-Darya (Badakhshan), which they exchanged for the products of the craftsmen of Ur.² Excavations in the area of Khwarazm, to the south of the Aral Sea, where the Amu-Darya has its delta, have shown that primitive irrigation works existed three thousand years ago.³ At that time the region was full of

lakes joined by many channels, one of which conveyed waters from the Amu-Darya into the Caspian. The closely populated islands and river-banks were one of the centres of development of the eastern Indo-European peoples.

By the seventh or sixth centuries B.C. a large, centralized, slave-owning state had developed around the fertile delta of the Amu-Darya (Khwarazm—the modern Khiva), a state which endured many centuries. It is thought that the Zoroastrian faith of fire-worshippers originated in this region, and that here their sacred book, the Zend-Avesta, was composed. This faith—that of the Magi—became dominant in ancient Persia and Central Asia, and is preserved by the Parsees of northern India. The funeral rites of these fire-worshippers included the depositing of the bones of the dead in ceramic ossuaries, and the earliest examples of these bins, dating from the sixth and fifth centuries B.C., have been discovered in Khwarazm.⁴

In addition to Khwarazm, settlements of importance had developed in Central Asia by the time of the Persian conquests there in the sixth century B.C.: in the Zarafshan valley, lying across the centre of Mawaran-nahr; in Bactria, the region between the Hindu Kush and the great arc of the Amu-Darya; and at Marv, west of Bactria on the Murghab River. The peoples in these oasis settlements retained their tribal organization, but made use of slaves. In the fifth century the Persians were using both Indians and Khwarazmians in their campaign against Greece. The historian Herodotus (483–25 B.C.) gave at this time the earliest account of a trade route across Asia which had been travelled by Aristes of Marmara some two centuries earlier. Aristes mentioned the mighty nomad warriors to be met in the steppes across the Ural River, “rich in horses, wealthy in sheep, wealthy in cattle”. Beyond these were the Hyperboreans, the “dwellers beyond the north wind”, who extended to the sea—a reference perhaps to the Chinese.⁵

Alexander the Great, king of Macedonia, invaded Asia Minor, Iraq, and Persia in the fourth century B.C. He defeated the army of the last Persian king, Darius, and in spring 329 marched north through the Hindu Kush to spend two years fighting in Central Asia, between the middle reaches of the Amu-Darya and the Sir-Darya.⁶ Arrian (who wrote a life of Alexander five centuries later) mentioned that while Alexander was camping on the Amu-Darya, two springs came up near his tent, one of water and the other of oil. This was regarded as an augury, and sacrifices were offered up. In the twentieth century A.D., Soviet geologists, whose interest had been aroused by this report, found oil at the spot indicated, near Tirmidh, and in other parts of the valley.⁷

Alexander met very strong resistance in Central Asia, led by the local chiefs Spitamenes and Oxyartes. He conquered Bactria, but not before one of his Macedonian divisions had been cut to pieces near Maracanda, a town in the Zarafshan valley whose name survives as Samarqand. The reverse was avenged and the Maracanda stronghold was captured. Amongst the prisoners was Roxana, the comely daughter of a resisting chief. According to Arrian, Alexander "condescended to marry" Roxana. It was in this region, too, that the Macedonian king killed his councillor and friend, Cleitus, in a fit of drunken passion.

A number of Alexandrias were founded, the most distant one on the banks of the Sir-Darya—where today is Khojand—three and a half thousand miles east of Macedonia. Alexander left strong garrisons in the area, whose governor Seleucus became ruler of the provinces. From the Seleucid state arose the independent Graeco-Bactrian kingdom which included the Zarafshan valley and the south of Mawarannahr. This state became known as the "Kingdom of a Thousand Towns".⁸ Walls were erected round the various oases, the first defences of this kind in Central Asia, against nomad attack. Khwarazm had liberated itself from Persian domination long before the invasion of Alexander; it maintained its independence of the subsequent Graeco-Bactrian empire, which endured from the third to the second century B.C.

During this period there were connections between Central Asia and the cultures of India and the eastern Mediterranean. About the third century B.C. contact also began with China.

2

CHINA, THE HUNS, AND THE OLD SILK ROAD

The earliest contacts with China arose as a result of the conflicts between the developing Chinese state and her northern neighbours, the nomadic Mongol tribes.

In the third century B.C., after a period of agrarian and general development, the warring states of China became united under the domination of the state of Chin, and the Chinese empire was established under the first emperor, Chin Shih Huang Ti. Many economic and administrative reforms were introduced. With the forced labour of armies of peasants, extensive irrigation works and a network of highways were constructed. Power was centralized, and the script as well as money, weights and measures were standardized. The first Chin emperor not only subdued the other Chinese kingdoms but successfully fought the nomads to the north,

who during preceding centuries had been forced into less and less favourable territory by Chinese agrarian expansion.⁹ The walls of the settled states in the north, built first for internal controls, were strengthened and linked up to form the Great Wall. This stretched eventually from Kansu in the west to Manchuria in the east, and involved the labour of hundreds of thousands of peasants conscripted for the purpose.

The Han dynasty which followed (206 B.C.—A.D. 220) was also pre-occupied with the nomads who, despite the Wall, had renewed their challenge to the Chinese empire, and who disturbed the allegiance of the peoples in the Chinese border regions.

The dominant nomads were then the Hsiung-nu (Huns), who lived in the region of Mongolia, and ranged with their droves from Lake Baikal and the Yenisei River in the north, to Tibet in the south. The Hsiung-nu hordes were "horse-riding, flesh-eating, kumiss-drinking nomads whose country was the back of a horse. They moved from place to place with their flocks and herds, towards the north in the summer, to the south in the winter, always in search of fresh pasture. Horses, cattle and sheep were their usual possessions, but they also had camels, asses, and mules. They had no towns or cities of any description, and though they had no agricultural occupations, each tent or household seems to have had a share of the land for its own exclusive use. When mere babies they were taught to ride on sheep and shoot rats or birds with a tiny bow and arrow. As they grew older, they practised their skill on foxes and hares. Everyone, from the highest to the lowest, fed on flesh and milk; used the skins of the animals slaughtered as clothing; and wore a coat of felt made out of animal hair."¹⁰

This form of pastoral, horse-riding nomadism, supplementing the products of the herds with those of the chase, could be self-sufficient in the essentials of food, clothing, and shelter. It was a form which, through its mobility and skill in archery, was excellently equipped for aggressive warfare. The nomads made powerful bows of reeds, or of spliced wood and horn. They used stirrups on their mounts, and could aim with deadly accuracy galloping as well as standing, shooting to the side or the rear as well as forwards.

But pastoral resources were rapidly expendable and produced little in the way of reserves. Alive, herds could be maintained upon any given winter pasturage only within limited numbers. Dead, their value as carcasses, as food, was rapidly expended, and only the hide retained a value. Agriculture, on the other hand, produced greater and more durable reserves. The nomadic urge was therefore to acquire greater or better grazing lands on the one hand, and the products of the settlements on the

other. Few, if any, nomad tribes have existed entirely without the products of agrarian communities. These they have secured by maintaining, themselves, a mixed economy; by trade and alliances; or by aggression.

The Hsiung-nu also extended their dominions; under the rule of Baghdur (209–173 B.C.) they defeated their Mongol neighbours, and all the hordes from the north of China to Lake Baikal came under their sway. Kuyuk, son of Baghdur, continued the conquests and drove the nomad tribes of the Yueh-chih branch of the Mongols from their domain between the lakes Lob Nor and Koko Nor. "In good Tatar fashion" Kuyuk made himself a wine-goblet out of the defeated king's skull.¹⁰ The Yueh-chih passed the Tien-shan (Celestial Range) and made their way to the Sea of Aral and the steppes of Central Asia, conquering the northern provinces of the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom. They established themselves sufficiently strongly to be courted by the emperors of China as allies against their mutual enemy the Hsiung-nu.

In fact the Han emperor, Wu Ti (140–87 B.C.), sent a mission in 138 to seek out the Yueh-chih and to propose an alliance. The mission "was of cardinal importance for the . . . establishment of what has come to be known as the old Silk Road".¹¹ It was led by Chang Chien; he fell into the hands of the Hsiung-nu and was made prisoner. Ten years later Chang Chien escaped and continued his mission, reaching Central Asia and the headquarters of the Yueh-chih, where his proposals were rejected. On the return journey he once more became a prisoner of the Hsiung-nu, but this time succeeded in escaping after two years. He reached home with one companion survivor. An account of all that Chang Chien had learned of Central Asia and India was given to the emperor. Wu Ti was anxious to open trade routes and in particular to extend his political influence over these rich regions, and he sent Chang Chien again as envoy to Central Asia. Trade developed, and each year the Han imperial court despatched at least five missions to the west, accompanied by several hundreds of people. They carried with them silk and metal goods, which they exchanged for horses, jade, coral, and other goods from Central Asia and the Levant. These missions seem in the main to have had political objectives: to secure allies against neighbouring nomad antagonists. The economic urge for the development of trade as such came primarily from the west, where there was a demand for the bolts of Chinese silk which were of luxury value.

The Hsiung-nu, badly hit by the attacks of the Chinese, by drought and plagues of locusts, became vassals of the Chinese emperor; their horde weakened and dispersed. The way was clear for advances into Central Asia by the Chinese. The envoys had reported on the splendid

steeds of Central Asia, especially those of Farghana, the valley along the middle reaches of the Sir-Darya. Chang Chien had commended these "blood-sweating steeds whose stock is the offspring of supernatural horses".¹² The failure of the Chinese missions to secure specimens of these steeds—the envoys were killed—provided the excuse for an expedition against Farghana. An army of one hundred thousand was sent, of whom nearly half died of exhaustion, hunger, and thirst on the ill-prepared four-thousand-mile march across mountains and desert. But Farghana was subdued, and an annual consignment of stallions was included in the tribute to be sent to China. After this defeat in 102 B.C., Central Asia remained under the influence of China for several centuries. The people of Farghana learnt the art of making vessels of silver and gold, and iron weapons, from the Chinese, who also introduced the technique of sinking wells. Around the oases of Mawarannahr there were urban settlements and the land was cultivated; and from these regions the Chinese for their part learned the cultivation of the vine and of clover.

The products of China were not destined solely for Central Asia. A considerable demand for the unique silk tissues came from Persia and the states to the west. The caravans started out from China via Shensi and the upper reaches of the Huang Ho in Kansu; the route then passed either north of the Tien-shan range to join the other routes through Mawarannahr; or they crossed the thousand miles of desert—the Tarim basin—enclosed on the north by the Tien-shan and on the south by the Kunlun range, by keeping to the northern or southern fringes of the basin where strings of oases were fed by river waters. The route through the Tarim basin was the one most developed in the early centuries of the Han dynasty. Chinese outposts, with fortresses and garrisons, walls and lookout towers, guarded against nomad attack as far as the eastern flanks of the basin.¹³ From Mawarannahr the trunk route went by stages across Khorasan (west of the Amu-Darya) to Mesopotamia and to the Mediterranean. The whole route extended some six thousand miles from Shensi in China to Tyre in the west. It became known as the Silk Road.

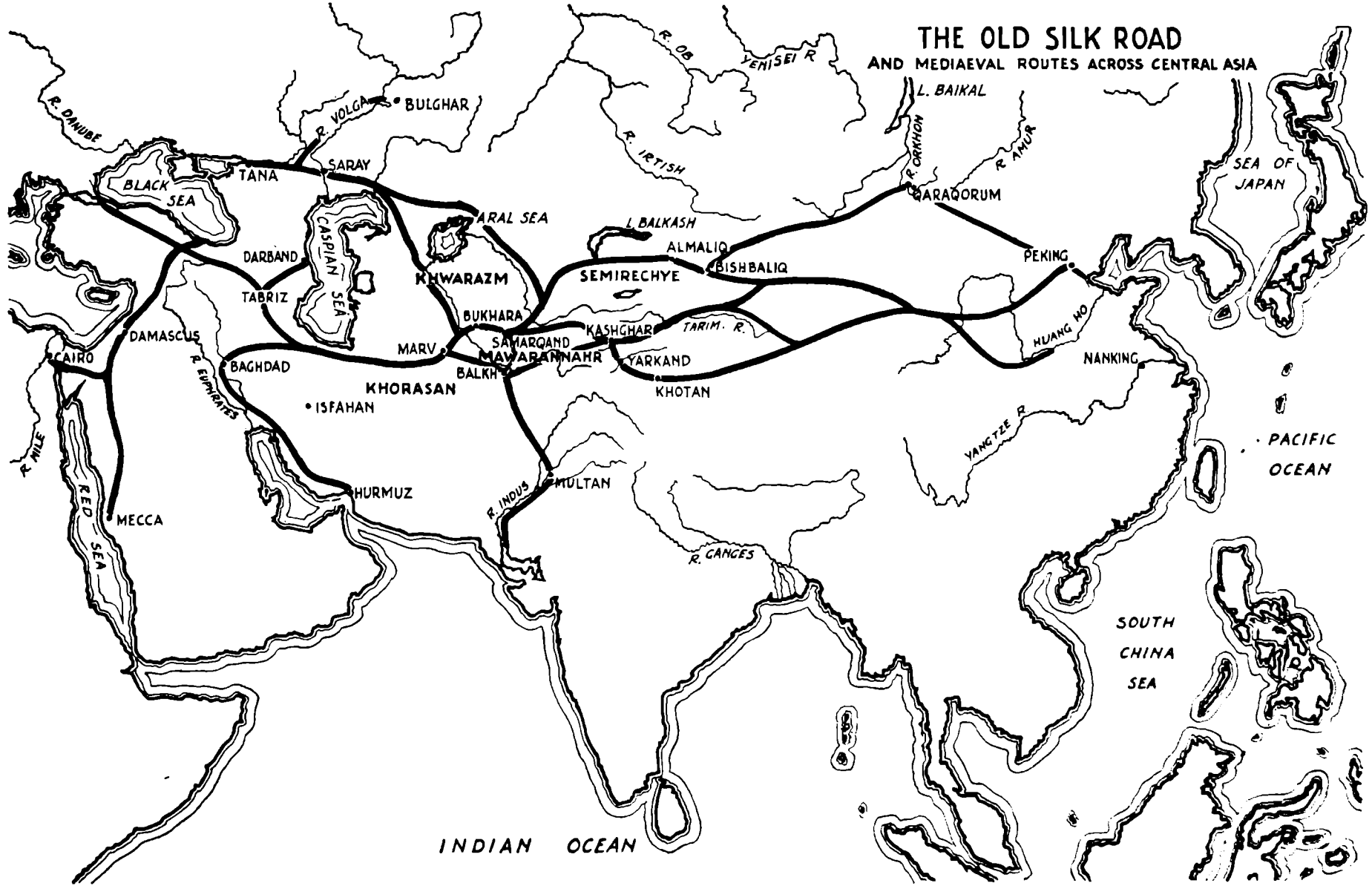
The demand for silk developed rapidly after the opening of this route, and Chinese silks came to be highly favoured by Roman ladies. It was believed in Europe that silk grew on trees, and that the Chinese alone knew the secret of its culture. In the Augustan period Rome provided an insatiable market, and paid for her silks in woollen goods, specie, glassware, and cut crystal. Transcontinental as well as local merchandise travelled in relays; few if any of the caravans traversed the length of the Silk Road. Local products formed a considerable portion of the trade which passed along the different stages of the trail. Khwarazm, Soghdiana

(the Zarafshan valley), and Farghana became thriving merchant centres. The Silk Road stimulated the demand for Central Asian products such as horses and fodder crops. Irrigation extended in the Farghana valley where fruit—especially grapes—and cotton were produced. In the towns artisans plied new crafts: the manufacture of metal goods, learned from the east, and of glassware, learned from the west.

Meanwhile, the Yueh-chih tribes, driven west from the Mongolian regions by the Hsiung-nu, had abandoned their nomad habits, and settled. Towards the first century A.D. a vast Indo-Central-Asian state had been established astride the Hindu Kush, known as the Kushan empire. The Kushans became the foremost power in high Asia, exchanging embassies with the Chinese and with the Romans. Mark Anthony, for example, had sent ambassadors, and the Kushans sent a return embassy to the court of Augustus.¹⁴ Most of north India was united with Central Asia in the empire of the Great Kushans, and at the end of the first century A.D. Khwarazm was added to their empire. Strong cultural links developed between India and Central Asia. In the dead city of Toprakkalah in Khwarazm, a palace has been excavated in which one of the halls of the apartments bore the name "The Hall of the Dark-Skinned Guards". The sculptures which ornament the walls are of warriors close in physical type to the Dravidian inhabitants of southern India. Other halls in the palace of Toprakkalah were known as the "Hall of the Kings", the "Hall of Victories", the "Hall of the Deer". The palace dates from the third century A.D., when the rulers of Khwarazm were already independent of the Kushans.¹⁵

Spiritual as well as trade missions followed the great Silk Highway, from which branch roads led off to India and different centres in Hither Asia. Buddhism came through the passes of the Hindu Kush from India and took root in Central Asia alongside the Zoroastrian faith. At the beginning of the first century of our era, Buddhism was introduced into China from Central Asia. Important journeys were made between India and China by both overland and ocean routes. Fa-Hsien, a Buddhist monk, and some fellow-students, set out across the Gobi desert in A.D. 399, and reached India through the passes of the Hindu Kush; ten years later they returned to China by sea, bringing with them the Buddhist scriptures they had collected.¹⁶ Another Buddhist pilgrim, Hsuan-tsang, having been refused permission for the journey by the Emperor of China, set out alone across the desert, finding the track by the droppings of camels and by their skeletons (A.D. 629). He continued along the caravan route to Shash (Tashkent) and Samarqand. He too spent ten years studying the Buddhist classics in India. He followed the Silk Road again on the

THE OLD SILK ROAD AND MEDIAEVAL ROUTES ACROSS CENTRAL ASIA



return journey and reached China laden with manuscripts—to receive an official welcome.¹⁷

Both pilgrims left a record of their journeys. The deserts presented to them supernatural as well as natural perils. “In this desert there are a great many evil spirits and also hot winds; those who encounter them perish to a man,” said Fa-Hsien. Hsuan-tsang too found the Tien-shan passes bedevilled with dragons. “Frequently fierce dragons impede and molest travellers with their inflictions. Those who travel this road should not wear red garments nor carry loud-sounding calabashes. . . .” The least neglect of these precautions would cause the monster to raise a storm of violent winds and flying sand which would flay the traveller to exhaustion.¹⁸

It may not be irrelevant to note that this region, troubled with “spirits” or “dragons” even in Marco Polo’s day, was in prehistoric times the haunt of dragon-like dinosaurs. In the red sandstone canyons of Nemegetu, south of the Gobi, “burial grounds” of dinosaurs have been discovered. Amongst numbers of other skeletons was that of a tyrannosaur, the largest known terrestrial carnivore, “with powerful claws on the hind legs and metre-long jaws, reminiscent of those of a fabulous dragon”.¹⁹

After five centuries in the possession of the Kushans, Central Asia was overrun by the Ephthalites or White Huns, those same nomadic tribes who continued across the steppes and appeared in Europe under Attila in A.D. 430. The origin of these tribes has not yet been fully established. Little more than a century later these Huns were dislodged by Turks, a group of tribes from Mongolia who may have been descendants of the Hsiung-nu (Huns) who had been scattered and driven away by the Chinese in the first century B.C.

The Turkic tribes were still organized in clans, but a polarisation had taken place in the social structure: an upper hierarchy of nobles commanded the warrior forces and had acquired immense military power. In the second half of the sixth century their military strength, it was claimed, numbered four hundred thousand archers always ready for attack. At the other end of the social scale slavery had developed. The Turkic tribes subjugated nomadic and agrarian neighbours and established the most extensive nomad empire known to that date, making tributary to themselves the kingdoms of Asia from the Chinese frontiers to the borders of Persia and Byzantium. This empire, which the Turks ruled either through their own military overlords or through local vassal princes, gave scope for commercial development throughout the continent. Trade was further stimulated by the rise of the Chinese Tang dynasty at the beginning of the seventh century, which introduced a period of great economic and cultural development in China.

Substantial caravans passed between China and Central Asia. In exchange for horses, carpets, and jade, the Chinese provided bolts of finest silk, bronze mirrors, and porcelain. The merchants of Central Asia acquired a monopoly of the silk trade, and their colonies extended along the three main branches of the Silk Road to China—along the northern flanks of the Tien-shan; along the northern arc of the Tarim basin and skirting south of the Tien-shan mountains; and along the southern rim of the Tarim, skirting the mountains of Tibet. To Suyab in the Tien-shan, north of the Issik-kul Lake, the ordu (camp) of the supreme Khan of the Turks, came envoys from all over the known world, from Byzantium and from China, with caravans of gifts. The Soghdians (from Soghd, the former name of the Zarafshan river, on which Samarqand and Bukhara stand), were the most enterprising merchants in Central Asia; they established particularly flourishing outposts in the Chu and Talas valleys; they irrigated, and grew rice, vines, and apricots. The dances and music of Central Asia and of India spread to China. The eastern gate of Samarqand was called “the Chinese Gate”.

For ten centuries, from the second B.C. to the eighth A.D., Central Asia was linked by conquest and by commerce with the east. Commercial activity along the Silk Road fluctuated according to the economic and political condition of the empires which it served, but caravans with both local and long-distance merchandise continued to ply the different stages and branches of the route. Roman demand for silk declined with that empire. However, even when silk production ceased to be a Chinese monopoly and spread in the early centuries of our era to Central Asia, India, and south-east Europe, the demand for Chinese silk continued. In Persia especially, Chinese silk was regarded as the finest of all. If the sea route via India provided an alternative to the transcontinental highway, it was no less hazardous, and frequently took more than twice as long as the overland route, being dependent amongst other hazards on seasonal winds. Quality goods of moderate bulk therefore used the Silk Road across high Asia.

By the end of the sixth century A.D., the empire of the Turks had fallen, through dissensions, into two kingdoms, eastern and western. Inscriptions on two great monoliths discovered to the west of the Orkhon river, which date from the first half of the eighth century, refer to the battles which the Turks had fought in the preceding century against enemies from the west, Soghdiana, and from the south, the Chinese, amongst many others.²⁰ The western kingdom, which included most of Central Asia, became divided into a number of semi-independent feudal possessions headed by princes who were only nominally subjected to the Turkic

khans. The most powerful of these local rulers was the prince of Samarqand. The territories between the two rivers, the Sir-Darya and Amu-Darya, were studded with citadels of nobles who were continually in conflict with each other. The western Turkic empire, which had already suffered blows from the armies of the Chinese Tang emperors, was in no position to oppose effectively a new wave of conquests which surged upon Central Asia. This time, however, after a lapse of a thousand years, the invasion came not from the east but the west: the first from the west since the days of Alexander the Great.

3

ISLAM

The rise of militant Islam in Arabia in the first half of the seventh century rewarded the nomad Bedouin hordes (who formed the greater part of the early raiding parties) with great plunder from the fertile lands of Syria and Iraq in the north. Inspired by these early successes, by the evident weakness of their neighbours, and by the battle-cry of Islam, they pushed on into Persia. By the middle of the century, the Arab warriors had overrun Khorasan, the eastern province of Persia, and Kabul in the Hindu Kush. "The Caliph Othman promised the government of Khorasan to the first general who should enter that large and populous country, the kingdom of the ancient Bactrians. The condition was accepted, the prize was deserved; the standard of Muhammad was planted on the walls of Herat, Marv, and Balkh; and the successful leader neither halted nor reposed till his foaming cavalry had tasted the waters of the Oxus."²¹

Having established their mastery over Khorasan and a capital at Marv, the Arabs continued their expeditions east beyond the Oxus into Mawarannahr at the beginning of the eighth century. Resistance was considerable; the agricultural populations of the oases and valleys of Mawarannahr found an ally against the Arabs in the Turkic nomads; local princes turned to the Turkic khans and the Chinese emperors for aid. In 712, however, Samarqand fell to the Arabs; at the end of the 'thirties the Turks were defeated on the Sir-Darya, and by 751 the Arabs had routed both the Turks and the Chinese on the banks of the Talas river further east. Semirechye, the "Land of the Seven Rivers", east of Mawarannahr, was left, despite the fall of the Turkic empire, in the possession of Turkic peoples. Mawarannahr continued to resist, although overrun. In the seven-seventies, a revolt of peasants was led by Mokanna "the Veiled"; the rebellion was suppressed only after seven years of resistance. Harun al

Rashid (786–809) was ruling in Baghdad when revolt once more broke out in Samarqand. The Caliph himself set out with an army to subdue the city. He never reached it. Suffering from a grave malady—the fruits, it is said, of a lifetime of dissipation—he died en route and was buried near Tus in Khorasan. It took the Arabs three-quarters of a century to subjugate Mawarannahr completely.

The Arab state extended, through conquest, from the shores of the Atlantic to Central Asia. In most cases the Arab Caliphate retained the local princes as their vassals, but they sent governors to the larger towns and established permanent Arabian garrisons there. The agrarian population, which previously had rendered feudal services to their overlords, were now required to pay additional heavy land and irrigation taxes in kind to the Arabs.

Buddhist temples in Central Asia were converted into mosques. The Muslim faith spread, but not without resistance. The Arab tongue became the language of state and literature. The obligation to make a pilgrimage to Mecca once during a Muslim's life helped to develop the pilgrim and trunk routes throughout the realms of Islam, increasing mobility and the knowledge of geography. The existence of the Arab empire helped both to assure the safety of the caravan routes against predatory nomads, and the extension of urban life. Centred first in Damascus and then in Baghdad, the empire enjoyed a highly developed trade between India and China on the one hand, and the Slav lands, Byzantium, and western Europe on the other. The most important overland and sea routes between east and west lay within the confines of Islam. For five centuries Europe's contact with Central and Far Asia lay through the intermediary of the Islamic empire, which was able to impose heavy taxes on the products of the east. Political disturbances did not necessarily affect commercial activity or cultural contact within the Muslim world. Muslim traders plied the caravan routes and established themselves in market centres far beyond the borders of their own empire. The Muslim commercial fraternity could be found from Spain to China, and the trade between Mongolia and China passed into their hands. Muslim specialists in all spheres of commerce, science, and letters were in demand at the court of princes throughout the Asian continent. They entered the service of infidels as military advisers, commercial agents, and irrigation specialists, and performed many services profitable to their princes and themselves.

The authority of the Arab Caliphate over Central Asia collapsed at the beginning of the tenth century. The nominal vassals of the Baghdad Caliphs, the Samanids (they were chiefs from Saman, in the region of Balkh south of the Oxus), consolidated their own power in Mawarannahr

and Khorasan. They succeeded in controlling the petty rulers and established a centralized state, from the Caspian to the Hindu Kush, capable of resisting the attacks of the nomads. The relative tranquillity thus enjoyed was favourable to economic and cultural development, and secured for Mawarannahr an ascendancy in those spheres rivalling or eclipsing that of Baghdad. The peoples of Central Asia came to the forefront of Islamic affairs.²²

To the east-west trade, which traversed the various stages of the great trunk route, was added extensive commerce with the Volga regions through the intermediaries of Khwarazm. Arab travellers and geographers left detailed accounts of Mawarannahr in the tenth and eleventh centuries. Samarqand grew to be the most substantial town of Central Asia, irrigated, according to their descriptions, by innumerable canals, and surrounded by orchards, gardens, and palaces. Cypress trees grew there magnificently. The markets in the suburbs were crammed with merchants and merchandise from all parts: with the produce of Persia, India, and China, and furs and slaves from the Volga. The Khwarazmians themselves—who could be recognized by their high fur caps and claret-red robes—specialized in almond pastry and magnificent water-melons; these were exported to the court of the Caliphs packed in lead moulds with snow. The fine craftsmanship of Chinese products at that time—the period of the Sung dynasty—secured them a ready market in Central Asia. The silk came from government or private ateliers in China, together with fine pottery and porcelain.

Local products from Mawarannahr had also established a continental reputation and were in great demand. The silk and cotton fabrics of the valley of the Zarafshan were widely sought after: the looms of Samarqand produced the famous crimson cloth—cramoisy, cloth of silver and gold, brocades, satins, and other silk tissues. Her coppersmiths were noted for their lamps and pots of an exceptional size. Other goods mentioned are felt cloaks, tents, soap, carpets, and many kinds of jars and goblets.²³ Of special significance was the manufacture of paper. Chinese craftsmen captured at the battle of the Talas in A.D. 751 brought their craft to Samarqand, which became the centre of the industry. Towards the end of the tenth century Samarqand paper had replaced papyrus and parchment in the lands of Islam, and even when the manufacture had spread to the west, Samarqand paper was considered without equal.

Bukhara, the Samanid capital, lay one hundred and fifty miles west along the “royal road” from Samarqand. It was, by the tenth century, a walled city around which clustered villages, palaces, and gardens enclosed by another wall, which one Arab writer²⁴ thought to be a hundred

miles in circuit. There were markets, baths, and open squares beyond count. He describes the canals from the Zarafshan river, which watered the city and surrounding plain and then became lost in the sands. Bukhara, too, produced famous melons. The prayer rugs from its looms and its gold embroideries had achieved renown. Carpets and cloth for garments, tanned hides, oils, hemp, cordage, sulphur, filberts and walnuts, copper goods, were also amongst her exports. Maqdisi considered that "there is nothing to equal the meats of Bukhara, and a kind of melon they have called ash-shaq, the bows of Khwarazm, the porcelain of Shash (Tashkent), and the paper of Samarqand."²⁵ He could have added that the metal products of Farghana, especially the arms, found a ready sale even in Baghdad.

Bukhara became also a spiritual metropolis. By the ninth century Mawarannahr had been converted to Islam, and Bukhara became recognized as one of the strongholds of the Faith. Schools of theology developed and the Muslim religious high school, the Madrasa, made its appearance first in Mawarannahr, and later in the western provinces of Islam. The town of Tirmidh on the Amu-Darya remained a theological centre down to the fifteenth century, and Bukhara until the nineteenth, by which time it had degenerated into a preserve of bigotry and fanaticism. The population of Mawarannahr provided bodies of volunteers, Ghazis—"warriors for the Faith", who went to fight the infidel "wherever a holy war was in progress and wherever booty might be expected".²⁶

Islamic cultural life, at the most fruitful period of Arabic learning, centred round Khorasan and Mawarannahr. Ibn-Sina (Avicenna), the "shaykh and prince" of the learned, worked in Bukhara. Physician, philosopher, physicist, poet, he had the good fortune as a young man to cure the Samanid Sultan of Bukhara, and received in consequence the privilege of using the remarkable royal library. Ibn-Sina's works were translated into Latin and remained the guide to the study of medicine in Europe until the seventeenth century. His contemporary, al-Biruni, of Ghazni, was another outstanding Muslim scholar—physician, astronomer, mathematician, natural scientist, and historian. Al-Farabi was a philosopher, musical theorist, and mathematician; he was born in Mawarannahr. Al-Khwarazmi constructed one of the oldest astronomical tables and his work introduced that science into Europe. Umar al-Khayyam, who studied and taught at Marv, greatly advanced the science of algebra. Since Fitzgerald's translation of the quatrains, Khayyam has been well-known in the English-speaking world as a free-thinking poet who praised wine and love; but his scientific work was greater than his poetry. Scholarship and literature began to flourish in Persian as well as Arabic. Firdausi's

Shah-nama (Book of Kings), the romantic epic of Persian folk-lore, dates from this period and comes from this region.

Mawarannahr became an advanced Islamic state, politically, economically, culturally. The “enlightened absolutism”²⁷ of the Samanids succeeded for some time in controlling the local princes and in keeping at bay the nomads on their borders.

The prosperity attained by Mawarannahr in the tenth century could not fail, however, to attract increasingly the neighbouring warlike nomads. Extensive trade links had been established with the nomads, but that did not prevent them from plundering, whenever possible, the vulnerable merchant caravans and town. Walls of sunbaked bricks or earthen ramparts had been built around the settlements and oasis towns of Central Asia, but these afforded no more than temporary protection. By the end of the tenth century the Samanid state had succumbed to the attacks of Turkic neighbours, and to their own reliance on Turkic warriors from the territories under their rule, as recruits for their armies.

Islam was a slave-holding society. But slaves were not the main basis of production; they were employed primarily for domestic and military use.²⁸ Slaves of Turkic origin, steppe nomads captured in Central Asia or the plains of the north, were valued especially for their fighting qualities, their horsemanship, archery, and hardiness, and they were trained from childhood for military purposes. The Samanids established a guard of Turkic slaves who became formidable military leaders and acquired positions of privilege.

When the Samanids were attacked from the east by a Turkic people from Semirechye, they had no reliable defence, and Samarqand and Bukhara were overrun in A.D. 999. These Turks, who came to be known as the Qara-khanids, were a people with “broad faces, small eyes, flat noses, sparse hair, iron swords, and black clothing”.²⁹ They had quite recently, under their own khans, adopted the faith of Islam. They transferred their residence to Samarqand, but ruled the country by a system of fiefs which became practically independent, under the control of princes who were forming an increasingly strong landed aristocracy. Cultural and commercial activities were not interrupted by Turkic conquest. Bazaars were the flourishing centres of urban life, towns expanded, and monuments were erected by some of the khans. The Kalyan Minaret, one hundred and seventy feet high, which was built in Bukhara at this time (A.D. 1127), survives, together with other buildings of this period. During sand-storms, the fires lit on the top of this minaret served as beacons to the camel caravans. During the eighteenth and nineteenth

centuries the tower was used as a place of public punishment. From the top criminals were cast down to their death.

At the same time as the Samanids succumbed to the attacks of the Qara-khanids from the east, their territories were dismembered from the south. An independent kingdom was established in the regions of the Hindu Kush, under a dynasty descended from the Turkic guards of the Samanids. This kingdom was ruled from Ghazni (south-west of Kabul). The most powerful ruler of this dynasty was Mahmud of Ghazni (A.D. 998-1030).

Mahmud passed for a pious monarch—in his public if not in his private life—and led a succession of “holy wars” against heretics abroad, as well as indulging in numerous persecutions at home.³⁰ His campaigns for faith and conquest led him afar, and by the end of his reign he dominated not only the Afghan regions but Khorasan and Iraq; parts of Mawarannahr, and Khwarazm, to the north; and to the south, the Punjab, Multan and Sind. He was patron—but an illiberal one—to the poet Firdausi. The scientist and historian Biruni from Khwarazm was taken to his court as a captive.

This wave of conquests by the Qara-khanids and the Ghaznavids was followed by another wave of conquests by nomad Turks. These hordes had moved into Mawarannahr in the tenth century, roaming the lower reaches of the Sir-Darya. In the following century they had moved on into Persia and consolidated their rule under Seljuk, one of their chiefs. They had been of a lower culture than the Qara-khanids, but became fervant Muslims and Warriors for the Faith. The Seljuks established their domination over Persia and Syria, and conquered the greater part of Anatolia from the Greek Christian empire of Byzantium. They captured Baghdad, and although the Caliphs remained nominal rulers, they had already lost real power, which passed to the Seljuk Grand Sultan of Islam. The Seljuk Turks (or Turkomans) then turned back eastwards and dislodged the successors of Mahmud the Ghaznavid and the Qara-khanids from Mawarannahr. By the twelfth century the Seljuk empire extended over the greater part of Islam. The Grand Sultan of Islam in the twelfth century ruled these dominions principally from the city of Marv, west of the Amu-Darya.

In their turn the Seljuks were challenged from the east, this time by a non-Muslim, nomadic people who had been dislodged from their domination of the regions north of China. These peoples, the Qara-Khitay, possibly of Mongol origin, had ruled the northern provinces of China at the beginning of the tenth century, after the fall of the Tang dynasty.³¹ Moving west, the Qara-Khitay subdued the Turkic tribes in their path

and established themselves in Semirechye, numbering some forty thousand tents (households). In A.D. 1141 the army of the Qara-Khitay sultan, the Qaghan—"Khan of Khans"³²—routed the army of the Seljuk Sultan north of Samarqand. Christendom at this time was crusading against the Seljuk Turks in Syria, and the welcome news that the Seljuk Sultan had been defeated in the east was one of the earliest sources of the legend of "Prester John", which spread through Christian lands. It was believed that an eastern potentate, a Christian, was ready to make common cause with them against their enemy, the Muslim infidel.

The Qara-Khitay domination, like that of the Turks, introduced little change in the social and economic order in Mawarannahr. Local dynasties continued to exist as the vassals of the Qaghan, whose representatives visited the provinces only for the purpose of collecting tribute. Trade continued to develop and the caravan routes were open for both local and continental produce. The Qara-Khitay, although not converted to Islam, made much use of Muslim specialists. Balasaghun, a town in the Chu valley, which had been the capital of the Qara-khanids, became the centre of the vast Qara-Khitay empire. It was famous for its Muslim and Buddhist temples, its network of water-pipes, its great market, and was known throughout the east. Today some half-buried ruins and a brick minaret survive.

The commercial activity of the tenth to twelfth centuries had been of particular benefit to the north-west region of Mawarannahr, Khwarazm. These oases on the lower reaches of the Amu-Darya, south of the Aral Sea, acted as the entrepot for the Volga and steppe trade with the nomads. From the main city of Khwarazm, Urganch (Khiva), the caravans could go east to Otrar, where they joined the next stage of the trunk route to China; or the main route could be joined at Bukhara to the south. From there the stages went east to China, or south via the Hindu Kush to India, or west, via Marv through Khorasan to the Levant. In particular demand were the slaves which Khwarazm secured from the Volga hinterland. Local trades and crafts were also stimulated, as well as crop-raising and stock-breeding in the surrounding districts. Khwarazm built up its own state power and the rulers of Khwarazm, the Khwarazmshahs, once vassals of the Seljuks, rose against them and defeated the Seljuk Sultan at the end of the twelfth century. At first these Muslim Khwarazmshahs accepted the aid of the Qara-Khitay and paid tribute to them. Later, however, they assumed the role of Sultans of Islam who were destined to lead the fight for the Faith against the infidels. Khwarazmshah Muhammad defeated the Qara-Khitay in 1210 and established himself as master of a great part of Central Asia including Mawarannahr, Persia,

and Afghanistan. Khwarazm became the centre of a huge feudal empire which reached from Iraq to the Sir-Darya, and from the Aral Sea to the banks of the Indus. Shah Muhammad attracted to his court at Urganch the scholars of Islam. He accumulated by conquest and by commerce the wealth from Hither and Far Asia which helped to make his capital one of the greatest towns in the Muslim east.

Once more Mawarannahr was the heart of a powerful state ranging across the centre of Asia, a state this time paramount in Islam. But Shah Muhammad's dreams took him beyond Islam. He aspired to world domination, and planned the conquest of China. He was forestalled by a further wave of nomad conquerors from the east, the hordes of Chingiz-khan.

4

CHINGIZ-KHAN

The nomad hordes of Chingiz were a primitive pastoral people whose livelihood was herding, the hunt supplying them with subsidiary means. At first they roamed in clans, several clans living together forming a tribe or horde (*ordu*). The livestock belonged to the clan and was grazed jointly. They moved in an established territory, and when they camped, arranged themselves in a circle, forming a protective ring against enemy attack. By the eleventh century, however, these Mongols, like the Turks, had passed the patriarchal stage and were roaming in hordes consisting of groups of families; they were unified by their dependence on a great lord or *bahadur*—knight or hero, and had a greater aggressive strength. The family, instead of the tribe, had acquired the ownership of livestock and grazing-lands, and some families had become richer than others. *Bahadurs* were elected from dominant families to wage war. They frequently seized power in their native tribes, and owned large numbers of cattle and slaves. The poorer families worked for the *bahadur* and his kin, looking after the herds, making *kumiss*, shearing the sheep, making felt, and so on. In this stratified nomad society the poorer families had become dependent vassals; they possessed some beasts and implements of their own, but used the pasturage only according to the pleasure and conditions fixed by the nomad lord. In addition to the services mentioned, the vassals rendered dues, such as animals for meat, and herds, temporarily, for their milk.³³

The armed struggle intensified between different chiefs for better pastures, greater herds, more vassals, that is to say, for the domination of neighbouring tribes. This struggle spread sometimes over vast areas.

Around the chiefs developed a body of guards (nokods), pledged to the service of the chief and trained in his household as military leaders who could be used for these predatory purposes. Vanquished families and hordes became vassals of the victor, and their grazing lands came under his control.

The development of this nomad aristocracy with trained guards provided a military force capable of sustained aggression, supported by the provender of a legion of vassal herdsmen and their pastures. At this stage, too, the striking power of the Mongols became more effective through the introduction of iron into their tools and weapons.

Temuchin (Chingiz-khan) was born of a powerful Mongol chief in the eleven-sixties. When he was a youth, his father was killed and the family passed from power to distress. His mother kept the family alive on fish broth and herbs. However, thanks to circumstances and to his own prowess, Temuchin recovered the family fortunes, the flocks and the nokods. With the help of neighbouring khans the young chief routed the Tatars, an important horde to the south-east of Mongolia. He assembled a body of nomad warriors, extended his power over other hordes, and by 1206 had disposed of all rivals. A council of the nomad feudal aristocrats, the qurultay, proclaimed Temuchin "Qaghan of all Mongolia", under the name of Chingiz-khan, meaning "Oceanic Khan", i.e. Ruler of the Universe. He revived the family name of Mongol, which was applied by the Chinese to his people and those amalgamated with them. The people of Mongolia called them Tatar, and the two terms are now used indiscriminately. In Europe the word was associated with Tartarus (hell), and the term thus came to be spelt Tartar.

Chingiz-khan organized and reorganized his personal bodyguard of nokods who served as his mainstay. They were subject to the severest discipline. The first failure to appear on duty was punished by thirty strokes of the rod, the second by seventy. The third occasion resulted in expulsion and further beating. Only the khan, however, had the right to sanction the punishment of guards.³⁴ The majority of Chingiz generals came from this guard, and thus the leadership of the military forces throughout the empire was in the hands of men personally tested by the khan. He ruled over a great empire of Mongol, Turkic and Manchurian tribes, was head of all their kubitki (tents), and his family held the other hordes as their patrimony. The different parts of the empire were divided amongst the khan's family, to whom submitted in their turn the lords or chiefs roaming in that particular dependency. The subjugated hordes were left either under their own lords or subordinated to the khan's warriors.

The Mongols were far from being ignorant of the attainments of

Chinese and Central Asian civilization. Chinese merchants from the east and Muslims from the west frequently visited Mongolia. Together with the merchant caravans came artisans of the different crafts, who took up residence at the mobile courts of the nomad lords. Chingiz-khan encouraged the caravan trade, and himself gathered from the Muslim merchants detailed information regarding the countries of Central Asia and the Near East. These Muslims accompanied him on his campaign to the west and were trusted councillors. So, too, he profited from the services of the Uyghurs, a branch of the Turkic peoples who had settled in various oases north of the Tarim, neighbouring on Semirechye. They had wide trade connections and had developed a considerable degree of culture, having a literature and a script which Chingiz-khan adopted for his own unlettered people. By 1211 both the Uyghur khan and the Muslim khan of Semirechye had submitted to Chingiz.

The conquest of China was begun in 1211, and by 1215 the generals of Chingiz-khan had entered Peking. The Tatars rapidly acquired the military techniques of their subjects, and thereafter employed battering-rams, mangonels, and flame-throwing machines using naphtha, in their campaigns against the west.

The conquest of Central Asia was achieved in less than three years, 1219-21. The dominions of the Khwarazmshah, Sultan Muhammad, who had liberated many parts of Muslim Central Asia from the Qara-Khitay, extended at this time throughout Transoxiana, and included a considerable part of Khorasan and north-west Afghanistan (Bactria). According to Juvayni,³⁵ the Sultan had brought about "complete peace and quiet, and security and tranquillity, and had achieved the extreme of prosperity and well-being; the roads were secure and disturbances allayed: so that wherever profit or gain was displayed, in the uttermost west or the farthest east, thither merchants would bend their steps." "Transoxiana", he continues, "comprises many countries, regions, districts and townships, but the kernel and cream thereof are Bukhara and Samarqand." Then, quoting a contemporary Arab geographer, Yaqut: "Beyond (Bukhara) lieth a city which is called Samarqand, wherein is a fountain of the fountains of Paradise, and a tomb of the tomb of the prophets, and a garden of the gardens of Paradise."

To these realms had come envoys of Chingiz-khan, to negotiate trade. Three Muslims in the employ of Chingiz-khan offered the Sultan peace and safe commercial relations, to which the Sultan replied favourably. Shortly afterwards a caravan of some four hundred and fifty merchants, Muslims, arrived from Mongolia with five hundred laden camels. They reached Otrar on the Sir-Darya, frontier town of Muhammad's territory.

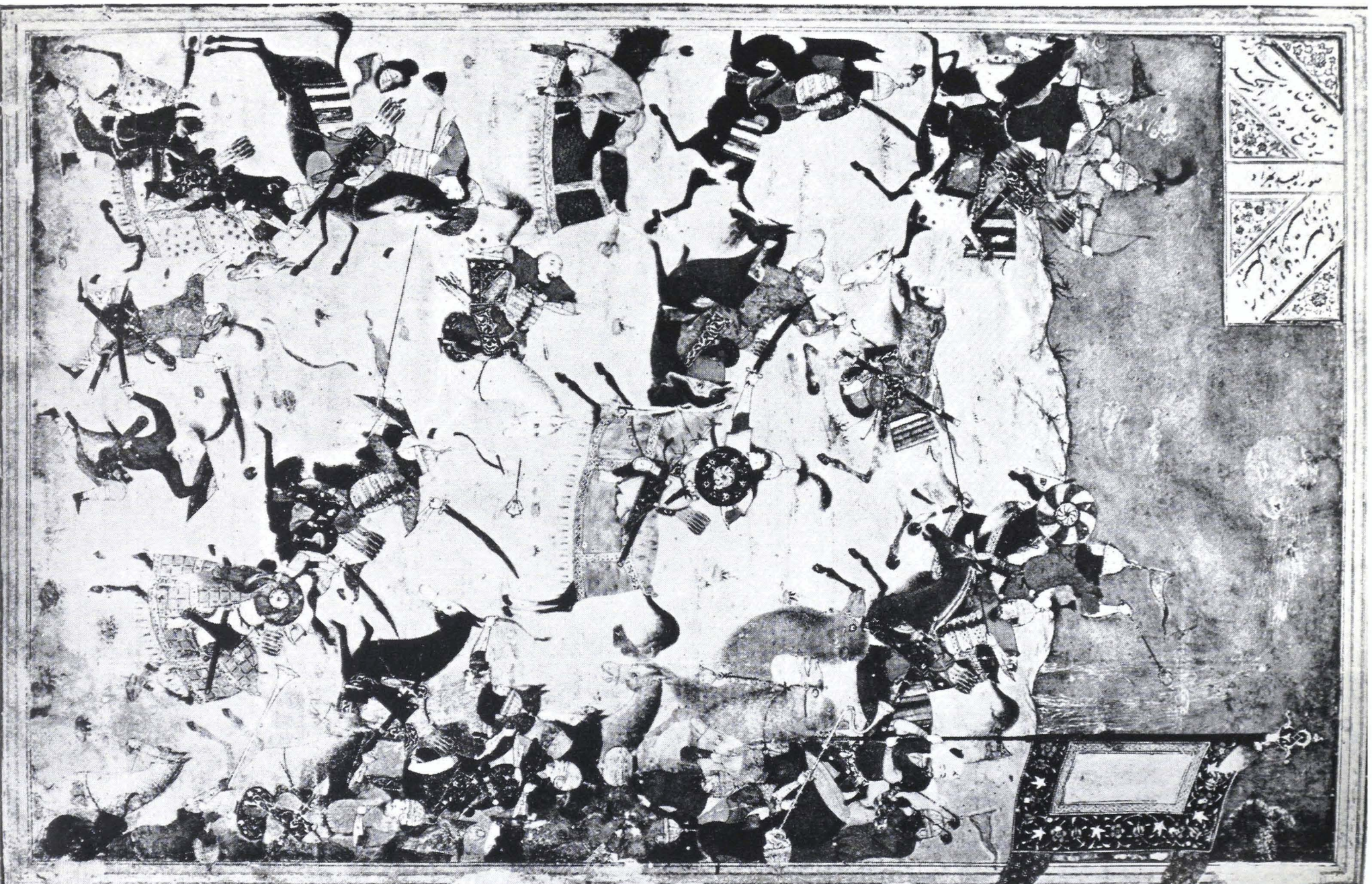
Here they were detained as spics, and murdered. Only one camel-driver escaped and returned to Mongolia. Subsequent envoys of the Great Khan's were also murdered, by order of Muhammad, who was cherishing dreams of conquering China. Chingiz set out to meet the challenge.

Sultan Muhammad had not, however, secured the goodwill of the inhabitants of Mawarannahr. He was on bad terms with the military Turkic aristocracy; he had alienated the clergy by his actions against the Caliph, and Muslims in general by the massacre of the merchants. Despite the wealth of Urganch, the capital of Khwarazm, and the brilliance of his court; despite the prosperity and culture of the other towns of his dominions, and the high degree of artisan production and commerce; despite the numerous troops at his disposal, effective resistance to attack was difficult because of the divisions and rivalries that existed in the ruling circles, and his extreme unpopularity amongst the people—however highly Juvayni rated the blessings he had bestowed. Muhammad himself would not concentrate sufficient forces in one place; he feared his generals and believed them capable of turning against him. Regional governors, the higher clergy, and indeed some military chiefs, alarmed at the prospect of losing their possessions, surrendered to Chingiz-khan and became his vassals. The Mongol conqueror was left free to concentrate his troops at the most favourable target and opportunity.

In 1219, Chingiz reached Otrar, by the Sir-Darya, with his sons and an army of some hundred and fifty thousand men, against the more numerous forces of the Khwarazmshah. Detaching troops for different objectives which he entrusted to his sons, he reached Bukhara. Muhammad's forces abandoned the defence after three days, and the town was pillaged and burnt. From the defeated cities levies were raised and captives taken. These were used for the construction of siege works; they were also formed into an advance guard and shield against other cities under attack. Samarqand, which according to Juvayni was defended by as many as a hundred and ten thousand troops with twenty elephants, held out less than a week. The people were driven from the town, with the exception of the priesthood, who, in contrast to those of Bukhara, had shown no opposition to the Mongols. Thirty thousand of the survivors were chosen for their craftsmanship and distributed amongst the sons and kinsmen of Chingiz. They were taken away to ply their crafts in the Mongol camps. A similar number were drafted into the levy. The remainder were given permission to return to the town, and as a thank-offering were required to pay a ransom of two hundred thousand dinars, which was extracted several times over. Only one quarter of the former population remained.



Reconstruction of the head of Timur, by Gerasimov.



Battle scene. From a manuscript illustrating poems of Nizami dated 1442 and

The captives in the Mongol camps came from far beyond Asia. An envoy of Louis IX of France met, at the court of Monke Khan in the middle of the thirteenth century, a woman from Lorraine, captured in Hungary. The envoy was also told of a William who served as a goldsmith to the khan's court, and who had come from Paris.

After the first defeat of his forces, Muhammad the Khwarazmshah had fled to the west bank of the Amu-Darya. Chingiz sent his sons to besiege the capital, Urganch, "with an army as endless as the happenings of time". The inhabitants put up a bitter resistance for several months. Quarter by quarter, house by house, the Mongols took the town, destroying the buildings and slaughtering the inhabitants. Then they drove the survivors out into the open; those that were artisans or craftsmen, of whom there were more than a hundred thousand, were separated from the rest; the children and young women were reduced to slavery and borne off into captivity; and the men that remained were divided among the army, and to each fighting man fell the execution of twenty-four persons (1221). After the massacre of the inhabitants, according to one report, the Mongols destroyed the dam, and water flooded the town. "Khwarazm (Urganch) became the abode of the jackal and the haunt of the owl and the kite" (Juvayni).

Muhammad meanwhile had fled through Persia, and eventually found refuge on an island in the Caspian Sea, where he died the same year. Resistance was continued by his eldest son, Jalal al-din. He fought the Mongols in Afghanistan, and on the banks of the Indus gave unsuccessful battle to the main force of Chingiz-khan (November 1221). With the remnants of his defeated army he escaped into India.

"Now one man had escaped from Bukhara after its capture," says Juvayni, "and had come to Khorasan. He was questioned about the fate of that city and replied: 'They came, they sapped, they burnt, they slew, they plundered, and they departed.'"

The entire kingdom of Khwarazm passed into the hands of Chingiz, together with a considerable part of Persia. Thus Mawarannahr became part of a single infidel administration, extending from northern China to Persia, which was based on Mongol customary law and which acted in the name of the Mongol Great Khan. Four Mongol empires were to emerge from the conquests of Chingiz and his stock. One of these consisted of Mawarannahr and neighbouring territories. Here Timur was born in the fourteenth century, the nomad chief who inherited the military talent if not the blood of Chingiz, and the ambition to dominate all four of the Mongol empires.

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THE NEW MASTER OF MAWARANNAHR

1360 (Year of the Mouse)—1370 (Year of the Dog)

WHEN Chingiz-khan set out from Mongolia in 1219 for the conquest of Central Asia, he was about sixty years old. Feeling perhaps intimations of mortality, he summoned to his court the Taoist hermit Chang-Chun, who had a reputation as a mystic possessing the secret of longevity. This hermit was the leader of a sect known as the Golden Lotus, or the Completely Sublimated Sect. Reluctantly he followed Chingiz-khan across the mountains and deserts, but had not caught up with him when he reached Samarqand. Here the hermit found most acceptable winter quarters despite the devastation of the conquest, and felt inclined to wait. The impatient emperor, however, ordered the hermit to his camp in the Hindu Kush, north of Kabul, where the army was encamped after the victory over Jalal al-din on the Indus. The Taoist was asked about the medicine of immortality. "To take medicine for a thousand days does less good than to lie alone for a single night," the monk affirmed; the emperor had already produced a numerous progeny and could afford to husband his strength.¹ Chingiz-khan, after an absence of seven years subjugating Central Asia and Khorasan (eastern Persia), reached home in 1225. He died two years later, the remedy possibly having been fatal either in the breach or in the observance. Chang-Chun died the same year, aged nearly eighty.

Chingiz had in his lifetime divided his empire amongst his sons. Tuli, the youngest son, received, in accordance with the law of the steppe, his father's original domain, Mongolia, and the bulk of the regular Mongol army. The degree of remoteness of the fiefs corresponded to the age of the sons. The eldest son, Juchi, received the furthest, the territories from the Irtysh westwards "as far as the hoof of Tatar horse had penetrated", according to Juvayni. These regions were still to be subjugated, but Juchi died shortly before his father, and his son, Batu, established himself there as khan of the Golden Horde. Ogedey, the third son, received as his ulus (domain) the lands of western Mongolia. After the death of his father he was proclaimed Great Khan, Qaghan, to whom all the other princes were subjected. He left his own fief after the proclamation of the qurultay (council), and took up residence in his father's original dominion in Mongolia on the Orkhon. Here at Qaraqorum (Black Camp) he established

the first residential capital, building palaces for his household and his court.

It was Chaghatay, the second son, who inherited as his portion the lands of Central Asia, including Mawarannahr, the southern part of Khwarazm, Afghanistan, and Semirechye, (Land of the Seven Rivers—stretching east of the Sir-Darya, and including the Chu and Talas steppes). Chaghatay's ordu (camp) was in the Ili valley; he moved north in the summer, and south in the winter. Chaghatay enjoyed only the revenues of these lands; the government remained under the control of the Great Khan. The invaders were not capable of administering the vast and complicated empires won from the Qara-Khitay and the Khwarazmshah, and local nobles and merchants were installed as vassals and governors.

The devastation of the conquest, disastrous in some places, was rapidly repaired in others. Those craftsmen that remained found a ready market for their products, and merchants for their wares. Samarqand quickly revived, and so did Bukhara, where there were revolts subsequently of townspeople and local peasants under the leadership of a sievemaker named Tarabi (1238). Urganch, main centre of Khwarazm, was restored, but Marv remained in a state of ruin. Chang-Chun who followed Chingiz found the routes open, with bridges of stone and wood intact. Although the population of Samarqand was depleted, according to him, from one hundred thousand families to a quarter of that number, the city was nevertheless much to his liking. There were a variety of goods in the bazaars, and the gardens he considered to be superior to those of China; in the circumstances, he contrived to spend the winter of 1221-2 and the following summer in Samarqand. He also noticed, however, many hungry people in the town, and at night the glare of flames could be seen in the surrounding hills, lit by bands of ruined peasants turned robbers.

When Ogedey became Great Khan he appointed Mahmud Yalavach, a rich Khwarazmian merchant and moneylender, viceroy of the Chaghatay ulus. Mahmud established himself at Khojand, having at his disposal Mongol detachments commanded by a darugha (governor). The darughas were military officers charged also with fiscal and civil administration. Their duties included making a census of the inhabitants; establishing the tribute to be levied on the rural and urban folk, and the supervision of its collection and delivery to the court; the establishment of communications and posting stations; and the recruitment of troops from the natives. The posting stations were, of course, in the service of the khan and his administration, and were not a public service. These darughas were the basis of Mongol administration throughout the empire.

Mahmud's son Masud continued to administer the Chaghatay ulus in the name of the Great Khan until his death in 1289.

The forces at the disposal of the darughas had as their core the Mongol troops originally allocated by Chingiz to his sons. There was at this time no mass migration of Mongols to the west, although the original allocations of hordes were probably subsequently followed by others. According to Barthold, out of a total regular army of one hundred and twenty-nine thousand, the youngest son Tuli received with the Mongolian patrimony one hundred and four thousand troops. Each of the three elder sons received four thousand, the remainder being distributed amongst other members of the dynasty. In 1251, as a result of a *coup de palais* at a great qurultay of the Chingizids, the descendants of Ogedey were excluded from the imperial throne, which was transferred to Monke, son of Tuli. Batu Khan of the Golden Horde had been prime mover in this *coup*. His alliance with Monke was directed not only against the Ogedeys but the Chaghatays. Control of Central Asia passed from the descendants of Chaghatay to Batu Khan, and after him to his brother Berke, who succeeded him as khan of the Golden Horde.

In the twelve-sixties, a grandson of Chaghatay, Alghuy, took advantage of dissensions between the sons of Tuli to re-establish himself in the Chaghatay ulus (1260-66). He settled accounts with the agents of the Golden Horde, and married the Princess-Regent Orqina, widow of another of Chaghatay's grandsons. Masud Yalavach continued as his finance minister. This keen administrator knew not only how to serve many masters but how to levy funds sufficient to equip a strong army. For the first time the Chaghatay dominions became practically independent of the rule of the Great Khan to the east, and the khan of the Golden Horde to the north.

By 1260 four Mongol empires had been formed: Khubilay, grandson of Chingiz, had succeeded his father Tuli as Great Khan. He then established himself as emperor of China, and transferred his capital from Qaraqorum to Peking. Berke, grandson of Chingiz, ruled the extensive domains of the Golden Horde from Siberia to eastern Europe. Hulagu, brother of Khubilay, had established an empire in the Levant, ruling Persia, Mesopotamia, and Armenia. Alghuy ruled the Chaghatay empire in Central Asia. In the first three empires, a degree of political and administrative unity had soon been established, the conquerors assimilating the cultural standards of the conquered and installing themselves in capitals of considerable wealth and power. In Central Asia, however, the conciliation of nomadic with settled interests proved more difficult. The Mongol conquest was not a migration of peoples. Only those families which

formed the military aristocracy of the hordes accompanied the Chingiz princes to whom they had been attached. But the presence of this nomad aristocracy exaggerated the antagonisms in Central Asia. The political unity of the Chaghatay empire, which encouraged economic and cultural development, provided a prosperity which was enjoyed almost exclusively by the great lords, the merchants, and the dignitaries of the Muslim church who had submitted to the conqueror. They received privileges from the khan in the form of yarliqs (charters), entitling them to dues and services. On the other hand, the subjected peoples had to provide food and keep for the army, forage, and post-horses. The upkeep of the troops imposed a great burden on town and country. Agents of the darugha drew up lists of nearly all the crafts which were to supply, by fixed dates, articles for the treasury, the court, and the army. Armourers, tanners, and weavers suffered especially.

The feuds which soon developed between the Mongol empires themselves were especially disadvantageous for the Chaghatay ulus, whose prosperity depended considerably, although not entirely, on the caravan trade with the other Mongol empires. The intercontinental trade which had previously passed through Mawarannahr was deflected to a route passing north of the Caspian to the Volga and the Black Sea, the domain of the Golden Horde.

Divisions appeared also within the Chaghatay ulus itself; between, on the one hand, the Muslim nobility of the towns and settled regions of Mawarannahr in the west of the domain; and, on the other hand, the military nomadic Mongol lords wandering mainly in the pastures of Semirechye, in the east. The Chaghatay khans after Alghuy were attracted by the rich Islamic settlements in Mawarannahr. Indeed, Alghuy's successor, Mubarak (1266), was converted to Islam; his enthronement as khan took place not in the nomad ordu in the valley of the river Ili, but in Mawarannahr, in the Angren Valley, near the Sir-Darya. With Mubarak came several of the Mongol military clans which had been attached to the Chaghatay ulus: amongst others the Jalayirs, who claimed as their territory the Angren valley near Khojand, and the Barlas clan (to which Timur belonged), which claimed the rich Qashka-Darya region south of Samarqand. The process of assimilation was rapid, and by the turn of the century these clans, although still claiming the title and nobility of Chaghatays (a title which came to be applied to the supporting clans as well as the actual families of the Chaghatay), had accepted Islam and were regarded as Turkic. Strong sections among the nomad nobility resisted this tendency, however. They rejected Islam and poured scorn on settled occupations, fearing the loss of their military ascendancy.

At a *qurultay* held in the Talas valley in 1269, the aristocrats of the steppe won the day. It was agreed, according to Rashid al-din, not to settle in the towns, to prevent the use of their cattle for ploughing and sowing, and to live in their mountains and pasture-lands according to their time-honoured traditions. Mubarak was deposed, and for nearly half a century the khans once more roamed the steppes and remained pagans.

Such decisions did not resolve the conflict between the herdsmen and the settled. The nomad aristocrats contemptuously called the Chaghatays in Mawarannahr “*qurannas*”—mongrels, half-breeds. They called themselves Moghuls: thus they pronounced the name “Mongol”; and the region they inhabited, the eastern part of the Chaghatay ulus, became known as Moghulistan. (It was also thus pronounced in Afghanistan and in India, where Babur, a descendant of Timur’s, established the “Mogol” dynasty in the sixteenth century.) On the other hand the Mawarannahr, western, Chaghatays called their eastern kinsmen “*jete*”, meaning robbers, rascals, and the name “*Jats*” clung to the nomads of Moghulistan.

The ulus fell into two parts: Mawarannahr in the west, and Moghulistan in the east, each ruled by a different branch of the Chaghatay family.

In Moghulistan, continuous dynastic wars and internal strife depleted the economy of the country, and trade with neighbouring areas declined. The routes became dangerous; robber chiefs attacked the caravans and imposed heavy taxes on the goods. The peasant population escaped from their villages and took to the hills, leaving fields and oases derelict. Villages disappeared; rubble only remained of those cities where merchants and envoys had gathered from east and west. Agriculture gave place to pasture-lands and steppe.

Mawarannahr, although also torn by strife, fared differently. Early in the fourteenth century, this region, the Land Beyond the Rivers, came under the rule of the Chaghatay khan Kebek (1318-26), who introduced many administrative reforms, laying the basis of a unified state. In particular he revised the tax-collecting system, which had been the source of profound discontent. Kebek used as the unit of his administration the Mongol *tuman*, a term applying not only to a military division some ten thousand strong, but also to an area charged with providing and supporting these effectives. (The word *tuman* relates also to money: a *tuman* of dinars—ten thousand dinars.) He transformed into *tumans* the existing feudal overlordships and fiefs. The country had suffered economically from the absence of a unified monetary system, each town governor or feudal lord previously having issued his own. Speculation in currency had resulted from this, to the detriment of trade, and commerce

degenerated into barter. Mawarannahr had been deprived, moreover, of the advantages of much of the transcontinental traffic which at that period was passing by the northern route to the Volga. Kebek unified the coinage and was in fact the first Mongol khan in Central Asia to strike money in his own name for the whole state. This coinage, based on the Persian standards, was called Kebek money, and "kebek dinars" were still in use at the time of Timur and his descendants.

The Chaghatay khans of Mawarannahr had transferred their base from the Ili valley, first to the Angren valley, east of the Sir-Darya, then to the Qashka-Darya, a valley south of, and parallel with, the Zarafshan. Kebek not only made this favoured valley the base for his camp, but built here a palace, after which the settlement was named Qarshi (meaning palace). It was in this valley of the Qashka-Darya, the valley of the Chaghatay khans of Mawarannahr, that Timur was born, some ten years after the death of Kebek.

The measures introduced by Kebek Khan brought relief to the settled population, but were met with hostility by the nomad aristocracy still flourishing within Mawarannahr; after Kebek's death they attempted to restore the policy adopted by the Talas qurultay of 1269. Kebek's brother Tarmashirin, who succeeded him (1326-34), embraced Islam and moved his headquarters to Bukhara, but he was overthrown by the nomadic leaders because of his failure to respect the traditions of Chingiz-khan. The struggle continued against Tarmashirin's successors until the effective power of the Chaghatay khans in Mawarannahr was destroyed. Emir Qazaghan, chief of the nomad aristocracy, rose against the khan Qazan, who was killed in battle (1347). The emir assumed power, but not the title of khan. Respect for the Chaghatay dynasty was such that a member was sought out and enthroned. From this time onwards, however, the khans were figureheads; real power was held by the representatives of the local nomad military aristocracy, first Qazaghan, later Timur. Qazaghan led the life of a nomad chief, wintering and summering in different pastures, and leading successful plundering expeditions to Khorasan and Khwarazm. In 1358, at the instigation of the Moghul khan, Qazaghan was assassinated while out hunting, a sport to which the nomad aristocracy was much given. No ruler followed him who was strong enough to control the dissensions and separatist tendencies of the feudal lords.

Local dynasties sprang up in various provinces. Khwarazm, which had been divided between the Golden Horde and the Chaghatay ulus, became reunited under the rule of the Sufis, a Turkicized Mongol dynasty. Balkh, Kabul, and adjacent districts were in the hands of Emir Qazaghan's grandson, Emir Husayn. Other areas in the Hindu Kush foothills were in the

hands of local shaykhs. Begs of the Jalayir clan ruled the Angren basin. Towns were under the control of different religious dignitaries or hereditary governors. Wars and disorders amongst the local princes, emirs, and shaykhs “served only to increase the misery of the country, and tumult and sedition spread everywhere”.²

In the region of Shahrisabz, the Green City, in the Qashka-Darya valley, the Barlas family ruled. The Qashka-Darya is a short, snow-fed river flowing parallel to the Zarafshan and the Amu-Darya. It begins in the mountain range to the south, is in flood in July, and ends in marshy lakes. The lower slopes of the southern mountains were covered with alpine meadow, while beyond, where bears roamed and snow-griffins nested, the gorges provided excellent hunting. Like the Zarafshan, the Qashka-Darya watered a valley famed for its fertility, producing pomegranates and other much-sought-after fruits. The mountain slopes provided rose-pink rock salt and a special kind of manna.

Timur was born on April 9th, 1336 (Year of the Mouse),³ near Shahrisabz. He was the son of Taraghay of the Barlas clan, Mongols who had come with the Chaghatays into Mawarannahr, and had become Turkicized. The family had seen better days, but was still of consequence. The rule of Shahrisabz and its dependencies was in the hands of a clansman, Hajji Barlas, and Timur’s father, Taraghay, was closely connected with the nobility both of Mawarannahr and of Moghulistan. Efforts were subsequently made to establish that Timur was descended from the Golden Family of Chingiz-khan—a claim which many generations and families of Mongols throughout Asia have tried to establish for themselves. A genealogy tracing Timur’s descent is engraved on his dark jade tombstone in Samarqand. It indicates that Timur and Chingiz-khan had a common forebear, Buzanchar, who was descended from the maid Alan-goa. This legendary virgin was ravished by a moonbeam.⁴ However, the official court historians made no claim that he was descended from Chingiz, and during his lifetime Timur did not make such a claim for himself: he remained content with the title of emir, not khan, and used the official designation “Gurgan” (son-in-law) to show his connection by marriage with the royal Mongol house.

From his youth Timur had proved himself apt at the skills of the steppe nomads: “gentlefolk of his sort have ever preferred the country to the town.”⁵ He was one of those who knew the points of a horse and could distinguish at a glance by the outward shape between good and bad stock.⁶ He was a good horseman and excelled in archery. Through participation in the conflicts between the rulers of Mawarannahr he became rapidly

acquainted with military affairs. Collecting around himself a force of well-armed horsemen, he embarked on predatory expeditions into the lands of neighbours, and attacked merchant caravans. He was generous in the distribution of booty to the members of his band, and achieved a considerable popularity in his home valley, especially amongst the young men of the nomad families. No records exist of Timur's activities before 1360, although the usual crop of stories (mainly apocryphal) was circulated later about his birth and youth. The court histories mention nothing up to this time about Timur, although they include details about other people of note; had Timur distinguished himself in anything other than a predatory capacity, had he been anything else besides a robber chief, the official records would not have passed over this period in silence. It appears, moreover, that Timur's youthful raids were not always successful. On one occasion he lost his way and wandered for a week, almost dying of hunger and thirst. Then he came upon the herds of the Emir Husayn, grandson of Qazaghan. The story goes that Timur displayed his skill with horses so effectively that he became herdsman to the Emir.⁶

Of the legends that circulated about Timur's birth and youth, even the hostile ones spoke of the fiery coals that flew about at the time of his nativity. "It is also said that when he came forth from his mother's womb his palms were found to be filled with blood; and this was understood to mean that blood would be shed by his hand."⁷ His supporters related stories about his infant piety and his respect for divines. We know only, however, that he never learned to read or write, but that from childhood he could speak both the Turkic and Persian languages, and was familiar with the lives of the nomad herdsmen, the valley settlers, and also, through his connections with the ruler Hajji Barlas, with the conditions of the townsfolk. Islam had been completely established in the towns of Mawarannahr, and the Barlas family had also assimilated the faith. At the end of the thirteen-thirties the plague swept through Central Asia. There is no indication of its effects upon the Qashka-Darya valley or the Barlas clan.

The assassination of Emir Qazaghan in 1358 and the subsequent strife proved an opportunity for the khan of Moghulistan, Tughluq-Timur,⁸ to invade Transoxiana with the object of restoring the unity of the Chaghatay ulus. Tughluq-Timur had also adopted the faith of Islam and had a hundred and sixty thousand of his followers circumcised. The Moghul nomads, however, did not take readily to this faith. The Moghul khan advanced towards the Qashka-Darya. Hajji Barlas, the chief, renouncing the unequal struggle, fled from Shahrissabz to Khorasan. He was

later assassinated. Tughluq-Timur reached the Qashka-Darya without serious opposition.

At this point the court chronicles introduce Timur into the history of Mawarannahr (1360, Year of the Mouse).

Timur at that time had a following which might have been used with effect in the struggle. He did not, however, pose as the champion of the Transoxianian nobility against the Jat invaders. Instead, he entered the service of the Moghulistan khan. Tughluq-Timur willingly accepted the submission and transferred to Timur the government of the Qashka-Darya area. Thus, at the age of twenty-five, Timur became ruler of a small but rich tuman in place of his clansman. He entered into a close alliance with the ruler of Balkh, Emir Husayn, who was master of important provinces in Afghanistan. This alliance helped to consolidate the position of both families in Mawarannahr. It was reinforced by a marriage; Husayn's sister, Uljay-Turkan-gha, became one of Timur's wives.

Timur did not stay long in the service of the Moghul khan. When Tughluq-Timur made his own son, Ilyas-khoja, governor of Mawarannahr, Timur, dissatisfied with his secondary position in the administration, broke with the Jats and sought out Emir Husayn, who had fled into the desert after a defeat by Tughluq-Timur the previous winter. Leading the life of adventurers, the two existed by cunning and the sword. A number of stories of Timur's prowess gathered round that inauspicious period of his career in the early thirteen-sixties. In 1362, pursued by the agents of Tughluq-Timur, Timur and Husayn were left with but seven men after one encounter, of whom three soon after deserted. Indeed, the story goes that in that encounter Husayn had his horse shot from under him and had to use the mount of his wife. The two emirs decided to separate. With a wife and one loyal supporter, Timur set off. In the desert they met a band of Turkoman cavalry who prepared to attack. Timur hid his wife in a water-hole, and commended her to Allah. The leader of the band, however, recognized Timur as the popular chief, and equipped him with horses and a guide. Timur rejoined Husayn. Both were then captured and detained by a brother of the generous Turkoman and they spent two months in prison near Marv (1362). On release they were provided, says the chronicler, with one thin horse and an old camel.

The two separated again and spent the winter more or less as outlaws, Timur remaining six weeks in hiding at the house of his sister Qutluq-Turkan-gha in Samarqand. Reassembling, Timur and Husayn joined the service of the khan of Sistan, a province in the south of Khorasan, with a troop of some hundred supporters. They were attacked by an enemy

band, and in the combat Timur received arrow wounds in his right arm and right leg (1363). His arm and hand became withered, and his leg was lamed, so that he limped for the rest of his life. Thus his enemies described him as Timur-i-lenk—Persian for Timur the Lame, which became in the west Tamburlaine.

Many years later Timur met in Sistan the chief who had wounded him, and ordered that he be shot through with arrows.

A rather different version of the wounding of Timur appears in Arabshah, who says that the injuries were received while sheep-stealing. Clavijo, the Castilian ambassador, heard an account which fits both versions: "At this time Timur had with him a following of some five hundred horsemen only; seeing which the men of Sistan came together in force to fight him, and one night when he was engaged in carrying off a flock of sheep they all fell on him suddenly and slew a great number of his men. Him too they knocked off his horse, wounding him in the right leg, of which wound he has remained lame all his life; further he received a wound in his right hand, so that he has lost the little finger and the next finger to it."

A legend, still current in Central Asia, ascribes the injuries to Timur's right hand to a separate incident in his early manhood. Coming one day in very unfavourable circumstances upon an enemy host, Timur rode ahead of his band and sought to avoid a general encounter by challenging the hostile leader to single combat. The challenge was accepted, and a rider galloped up sabre in hand, giving the battle-cry of his tribe. The cry was that of the Barlas; the opponent was Timur's own father. Timur stopped the attacker by seizing the upraised blade of the sabre in his own hand, inflicting permanent injuries on his fingers from the inner side. (M. Gerasimov, who examined Timur's skeleton when the tomb in Samarqand was opened in 1941, found amongst other infirmities that the fingers of the right hand had indeed received injuries which could only have been inflicted from the inner side.)⁹

The exploits and successes of the two emirs attracted to them in those times of discord a sizeable force of horse and foot-soldiers, and the support of various lords who had previously submitted to Tughluq-Timur. Timur was able to recapture Shahrisabz, where he had many supporters, and together with Husayn took the field against Ilyas-khoja, son of the Moghul khan. Ilyas-khoja narrowly escaped capture and fled precipitously towards the river Ili, pursued by the emirs as far as Tashkent. Transoxiana was thus free of the Jats. After a grand victory hunt and various relaxations, the emirs returned to Samarqand where they made a ceremonial entry "as imposing as it was agreeable to the

people", who hoped for a government less harsh than that of the Jats.¹⁰

But the emirs were by no means free of the jealous ambitions of the feudal princes who surrounded them. At the qurultay, or grand council of nobles, it was agreed to enthrone as khan, according to the ancient custom of the country, someone of the dynasty of Chingiz-khan, a Chaghatay. It was hoped that under the authority of that name, the rule of Husayn and Timur might secure recognition and support. A suitable candidate was secured, a docile Chaghatay named Kabul-shah, who wrote poetry and had renounced the uncertainties of political life for the garb of a darvish. Amidst popular rejoicing he was stripped of this garb and adorned with the imperial mantle. The people were regaled at the expense of the court, and nothing was spared that could mark the occasion with appropriate pomp and festivity. Ex-darvish Kabul-shah was placed on the royal throne, and given the imperial cup according to royal Turkic custom. After this, khans, emirs, chiefs, and lords prostrated themselves in front of him nine times. (The number nine was held in particular reverence by the Mongols.) Then Timur, displaying the political sagacity which characterized his career, acted as host to Husayn and the other nobles. He gave a splendid banquet, treating the others as guests on his territory.

Ilyas-khoja, who had succeeded his father as khan of Moghulistan, was hardly disposed to accept the loss of Mawarannahr without retaliation, and in 1365 set out westwards with a large army. Husayn and Timur, prepared for the attack, went to intercept him. The two armies met near Tashkent, across the river Sir-Darya. The battle was remarkable not only for the tenacity of the fighting but for the cloudburst which turned the battlefield into mud. Thunderbolts fell and lightning unnerved even the most hardy. The Mongols feared thunder. Friar Rubruck and others reported that when it thundered "they put all strangers out of their houses, wrapped themselves up in black felt and lay hidden until the thunder was over." No such protection was available on this occasion. The battlefield was drowned in the storm. Earth could not be distinguished from water; horses and cattle swam in it. It seemed, said the chronicler, as if the earth were dissolving into primeval chaos.

The battle was not decided that day. In the morning it was resumed, and Timur, seizing an advantage, called on Husayn, who was in command, to advance. Husayn refused. Finally both emirs were forced to flee, leaving their dead in the mire. Their losses totalled more than ten thousand men. They crossed the Amu-Darya with their remnants, leaving the road to Samarqand open to the enemy. Timur's supporters afterwards placed the blame for the defeat in the "Battle of the Mire" on Husayn's lack of

dash and co-operation. Blame was also placed on the occult powers of the enemy, who fearing themselves the weaker, called up the storm with the aid of the magic "yada" stone. This stone was popularly believed to have the power of rain-making. Being forewarned, the enemy was also better protected against the storm.

Since the conquest by Chingiz-khan, Samarqand had no protective walls or citadel. The only defence left to her was that organized under the leadership of the Sarbadars. The Sarbadars led a movement, widespread in Khorasan, of small merchants and craftsmen in opposition to the invading Mongols and to the Mongol order, which placed such heavy burdens on the settled populations of those areas. An independent Sarbadar state had been formed in Khorasan in the thirteen-thirties under the rule of a governor instead of an hereditary dynasty. They raised their own troops and issued their own coinage. Levies from the population had been reduced.

The name Sarbadar means "gallows-bird". It was better, they said, to go to the gallows than to bow before the Mongol. "A gang of evil-doers dominates and oppresses the people," said Emir Abdur Razzaq of Bayhaq, one of the leaders of the movement. "By God's grace we will do away with the oppression of these tyrants, failing which we will see our heads on the gibbet (Sar-ba-dar) since we can no longer endure these tyrannical aggressions."¹¹

The Sarbadar movement was strong in Samarqand in the 1360's among the craftsmen, shopkeepers and some of the Muslim teachers, who also regarded themselves as Ghazis, fighters for the faith of Islam. The leaders, Maulana (Reverend) Zada, a teacher at the Madrasa (Muslim college), and Abu-Bakr, a cotton cleaner, addressed an assembly before the mosque of some ten thousand citizens, nobles and humble folk. The Maulana, girded with a sword, attacked the rulers who collected illegal taxes (Muslim law limited the number of taxes on the Faithful), and in the hour of need abandoned the people to their fate. The greatest of ransoms could not save them; their only salvation was to fight in their own defence. Addressing the nobles he asked, "Who amongst you will lead the defence of Islam?" They were silent. He then addressed the people, asking for their support if he organized the defence. Thus the defence was begun by the Samarqand people "without princes at their head",¹² against the Jats.

The main highways were left clear, but the narrow side-streets were barricaded and chains were hung across. Nests of archers were stationed at key points. The Jat horsemen were to be allowed to approach and were then to be attacked from the flanks. The population, from boys of twelve to old men, took up arms. The city was besieged. The enemy made

several attempts to enter the suburbs, but were repulsed with considerable losses. The population of Samarqand, however, was numerous. The citizens were unaccustomed to the fatigues of war. Food became scarce and prices rose; artisans no longer had work. The situation in the city deteriorated. But before Samarqand was reduced to extremities an epidemic smote the horses of Ilyas-khoja's army, which had been expecting an easy victory. Three-quarters of the mounts perished. They could scarcely supply their scouts. The siege of Samarqand was raised, and the Jats made a miserable retreat from Mawarannahr, without booty or ransom, their quivers tied to their backs and their sabres across their shoulders, the majority of them on foot. For about a year Samarqand was in the hands of the Sarbadars.

News of the victory quickly reached Timur and Husayn. They returned to the Qashka-Darya and the Amu-Darya valleys respectively for winter pasturage, and then joined forces the following year and set out for Samarqand, camping in the famous meadows between Shahrissabz and Samarqand known as Kani-gil—the Rose-mine. The Sarbadar leaders had by this time (1366) established a government of their own in the city, a development inauspicious for hereditary feudal princes and ambitious emirs. Timur's court biographer says that the emirs had important work to do in punishing the insolence of these people who were occupying leading positions, and who had completely upset state and religion by their violence. The leaders were treacherously invited, with fair promises, to meet the emirs in their camp; they were then arrested. Husayn charged them with the horrible crimes they had committed, and Abu-Bakr and the rest, with one exception, were executed. The exception was Maulana Zada, for whom Timur interceded at the very foot of the gallows. This action, in which Timur posed as a champion of the people, helped to build up popular support for him in Samarqand, at the expense of Husayn the oppressor. After that the emirs re-established law and order amongst the inhabitants who had been seduced by the Sarbadars.¹³ Husayn (Qazaghan's grandson) became chief emir, with Timur, his vassal and right-hand man.

Common successes and marriage ties, however, were no proof against the conflict which arose between them. Each was in the way of the other. It is possible that Timur had formed earlier connections with the Sarbadars, especially the aristocratic elements among them, and that differences may have arisen between him and Husayn over the policy to be adopted towards them.¹⁴ Shortly after the suppression of the Sarbadars, Husayn showed his greed as a ruler and imposed a levy on Timur's supporters, claiming that he was recovering old debts. The losses in the Battle of the Mire had been very great, and Timur's allies were unable to meet the

demand. Timur helped pay the dues with his own possessions, giving, with his contribution of gold and silver, the ear-rings and bracelet of his wife, Husayn's sister. Such acts as this were long remembered, and Timur added to his reputation for great generosity to his associates. Husayn recognized his sister's jewels, but did not return them. His reputation for meanness was to lose him support from amongst those sections on which he might have relied, the nomad lords. Intrigues and discord broke into open conflict between Husayn and Timur, involving other feudal rulers. Princess Uljay-Turkan-gha died at that time; one hostile source suggests that Timur killed her.¹⁵ The last real link between the emirs was broken.

For the next four years (1366-70) Timur was "alternately at war with Husayn and friendly with his enemies, or again reconciled with him and commissioned by him to fight his former allies".¹⁶ The struggle was by no means favourable at first to Timur. He lost and then regained the Qashka-Darya region. He seized Bukhara, but did not hold it for long. Husayn, gathering together a substantial force, re-established himself throughout Transoxiana. Timur judged the odds to be much against him, and departed to Khorasan, where his family had already been despatched for safety. He resumed the life of outcast and adventurer, making common cause with raiders on Mawarannahr and provoking an attack by the Jats against Husayn. Faced with a new threat from Moghulistan, Husayn patched up an alliance with Timur. A reconciliation was effected amidst ample protestations of friendship and devotion to Islam, and Timur regained his domains in the Qashka-Darya. The Jat attack failed to mature, because of internal Moghul discords.

Timur spared no time or effort in developing supporters amongst the church dignitaries and urban population as well as amongst his clansmen. Husayn felt that sentiment was veering against him, and began to strengthen his position in the region of his original dominions, Balkh, where he began to build a citadel. This offended the nomad aristocracy, who opposed settlement in towns and the building of fortresses by their rulers; for thus the rulers rendered themselves less dependent on their tribesmen. Timur headed the opposition. He had succeeded in gaining the support of the settled population for whom constant strife was disastrous. He showed concern for urban administration and the condition of local agriculture. Merchants, craftsmen, and agricultural workers needed the establishment of a state power strong enough to end the feudal conflicts. Timur won the support of these sections and of the Muslim clergy, moreover, without driving away the many nomad and sedentary lords, begs and princes, who, reacting against the avarice of Husayn, had turned to him. One of these was Kay-Khusrau, whose brother had been

killed in 1360 by Husayn and whose territories had been seized.

According to Arabshah, "Timur was active in plunder, pillage and spoliation, and gathered supplies and collected resources and won to his side the common people and the leaders alike, who obeyed him whether they wished it or not.

"So he gained the realms of Transoxiana and subdued the population by force and compulsion."

Judging the moment opportune to deal with his most serious rival, Husayn, Timur marched south towards Balkh (1370). He passed the sombre cleft in the mountains to the south of the Qashka-Darya called the Iron Gate, to Tirmidh on the Amu-Darya. This town had become an important Islamic centre after the Arab conquest, and retained its spiritual pre-eminence down to the fifteenth century. Here studied and taught Muslim divines whose prestige extended to the furthest regions of Islam. It was here that Timur met the venerable sage Sayyid Baraka, a native of Mecca who was descended, they said, from Muhammad. (Sayyid was the title given to the Prophet's descendants.) Shaykh Baraka had come to Mawarannahr to seek an extension of mosque properties. He had received a rebuff at the hands of Husayn, but Timur had granted him the town of Andkhoy and its environs in fief.

This pious old man presented Timur with a standard and a great drum, symbols of royalty, which he had ready for the occasion. He also forecast a great future for the emir. Timur, who respected favourable auguries, let the predictions become widely known, and attached the Sayyid to his court together with a number of other religious dignitaries who enjoyed authority in Mawarannahr. Shaykh Baraka became Timur's spiritual protector and constant companion. After death they were buried in the same mausoleum, with Timur's face turned towards the Sayyid and to Mecca.

The city of Balkh was surrounded, and after a fierce struggle a breach was made in the walls. The battle continued till nightfall and was resumed next morning. Blood flowed in rivers and famous heads rolled like balls in a game of polo.¹⁷ The city fell to Timur. The court chroniclers state that the sixteen-year-old son of Timur, Omar-Shaykh, gave proof of his valour during the campaign. Husayn in his citadel lost hope and asked for quarter, offering to depart on a pilgrimage to Mecca if his life were spared. Timur promised him his life if he surrendered. Husayn left the fortress, but, mistrusting his former ally, went to the mosque instead of Timur's camp and hid in the minaret. There he was discovered by a man who had climbed up to see if he could catch sight of a lost horse. The man promised to reveal nothing, but immediately reported Husayn's whereabouts to

Timur. When Emir Husayn saw troops approaching, he left the minaret and hid in a hut. Unfortunately he left part of his cloak sticking out, and was discovered.

The captive emir was brought to Timur, who, they say, was moved to tears by his memories of their former friendship. Husayn's fate was debated in council, and Timur showed himself reluctant to break his word that his rival's life should be spared. Other hands were to be stained with the blood of Husayn. Now Husayn had killed the brother of Kay-Khusrau, one of the chiefs who at that stage had thrown in his lot with Timur. The lame emir did not intervene when Kay-Khusrau departed to slaughter Husayn, according to the right of vendetta recognized in Islam. Some time later Kay-Khusrau himself fell victim to the law of vendetta, at the hands of Husayn's men. Rivals, the greater and the lesser, perished. But Timur kept his own hands clean.

The two sons of Husayn were burnt and their ashes cast to the wind. Other allies of the defeated emir fled to India. The citadel of Balkh was pillaged and destroyed, and the palace reduced to rubble.

They brought to Timur the ladies and household servants of Husayn, together with the great treasure he had amassed. From the ladies of the harem Timur appropriated Saray-Mulk-khanum, daughter of Qazan, the last effective Chaghatay khan of Mawarannahr. She was a princess of Chingiz descent, and through her Timur received the title of honour used on all ceremonial occasions, on the coins struck in his name, and in the Friday prayer, the title of "Gurgan"—"Son-in-Law"—of the Great Khan. Saray-Mulk-khanum was five years younger than Timur. She became his chief wife; although she bore him no children, or none that survived, she came to enjoy the emir's confidence, and was responsible for the upbringing of two of his favourite grandchildren. Timur took the three other wives from the harem of his defeated rival; the rest of the women were distributed amongst his supporters.

The victory over Husayn made Timur first amongst all the rulers of Mawarannahr. A qurultay was called after the fall of Balkh ("Mother of Cities", which until the conquest by Chingiz-khan had been one of the foremost cities of Khorasan), and assembled there were all the princes and begs, the lords of the army, and captains of tumans and thousands. In addition to the Sayyid Baraka, the famous shaykhs of Tirmidh came and declared for Timur, giving the emir the strong links with the Muslim church which in general were to continue throughout his rule. The support of the shaykhs was of great political value for Timur.

The qurultay invested Timur with imperial command. Although he had declared himself the inheritor and continuer of the empire of the

Chaghatay, Timur nevertheless felt the need to complete the submission of the feudal nobility, by continuing to instal a Chaghatay khan. The death of the previous puppet, Kabul-shah (who had supported Husayn), was arranged, and he was replaced by the khan Suyurghatmish. The hostile but eloquent Ibn Arabshah recorded: "My master the learned Imam, accomplished, consummate, and excellent, pearl of the age, phoenix of his time, wisest of men, teacher of the world, glory of religion, teacher of those who rightly and subtly study philosophy, polestar of his time, guide of the age, Abu Abdullah of Muhammad, son of Muhammad, son of Mohammad Bukhari, citizen of Damascus (may Allah Almighty make eternal the days of his life and increase Islam and the Muslims through his fortunate benedictions) said that Timur killed the said Sultan Husayn in the year 771 A.H. and was raised to royal rank from that moment . . .

"After slaying the Sultan (Husayn) he appointed a deputy in his own name, one Suyurghatmish of the seed of Chingiz-khan . . . to repel the calumnies of detractors and cut off the piercing point of every tongue. And he was only entitled *Timur, the Great Emir*, although under his sway were ruler and subject alike; and the khan was in his bondage like a centipede in mud . . ."

The enthronement of Timur took place later, when the weather had improved. Timur mounted the throne and placed a golden crown upon his head, and bound himself with the imperial girdle in the presence of princes of the blood royal, the emirs and lords, who prostrated themselves before him. They brought him magnificent presents, and scattered on his head showers of gold coins and precious stones, according to custom, and called him Emperor of the Age, Conqueror of the World, and Sahib-Qiran, *Lord of the Fortunate Conjunction* (of the Planets).

Timur distributed the treasure of Husayn and the riches of the citizens of Balkh amongst the generals and chiefs of the army, the emirs and governors of cities. The women and children of Balkh were also distributed, as slaves.

At the age of thirty-four Timur the lame had established himself as master of the southern regions of Mawarannahr, with powerful supporters amongst the merchants and craftsmen of the towns, the agricultural population, and the clergy. More important to him still, he had become the recognized chief of the aristocratic nomad elements, the Chaghatays, whom he began to form into a disciplined military force devoted to his service. He had seized power from his only important rival in Mawarannahr, the Emir Husayn, chief of the nomad aristocrats, who "in times of prosperity and security, had never given a single dinar or a crust of bread to a needy warrior".¹⁸

NOTES

- ¹ Ch'ang-Ch'un: *The Travels of an Alchemist*, tr. Waley.
- ² Nizam al-din Shami: *Zafar-nama*.
- ³ *Mongol Calendar*, see p. 66.
- ⁴ P. Pelliot: *Histoire Secrète des Mongols*, 1949; and A. Z. V. Togan, 1949.
- ⁵ Clavijo: *Embassy*.
- ⁶ Ibn Arabshah: *Tamerlane*.
- ⁷ Ibid and Ibn Taghri Birdi: *History of Egypt*, tr. Popper.
- ⁸ Timur was a common name in Central Asia; Tughluq-Timur was not related to Timur the Lame.
- ⁹ M. Gerasimov: *Man as He Looked in Past Ages*, 1961.
- ¹⁰ Sharaf al-din Yazdi: *Zafar-nama*.
- ¹¹ E. G. Browne: *Literary History of Persia*, 1920.
- ¹² Sharaf al-din Yazdi: *Zafar-nama*.
- ¹³ Abd-al Razzaq: *Matla al-sadayn*.
- ¹⁴ A. Jakoubovsky: *Timur*, 1946.
- ¹⁵ Ibn Taghri Birdi: *History of Egypt*.
- ¹⁶ V. V. Barthold: *Ulugh-beg*.
- ¹⁷ Nizam al-din Shami: *Zafar-nama*.
- ¹⁸ Sharaf al-din Yazdi: *Zafar-nama*.

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LORD OF THE FORTUNATE CONJUNCTION

THE basis of Timur's power in Mawarannahr was the coincidence of interest between nomad and sedentary populations, a coincidence which he consistently fostered. The predatory activities of the nomad hordes, and the struggles between the feudal lords, were bringing ruin to the western regions of the Chaghatay ulus, much as they had brought ruin to the economy of the eastern—Moghulistan. However, in Mawarannahr the Mongol-Turkic chiefs, partly settled, partly nomad, exercising feudal rights over the peoples, were becoming more closely linked with the commercial interests of the merchants and caravan routes. They had begun to acquire property in towns, to build palaces, and they had adopted the faith of Islam. Artisan production and the caravan trade had stimulated monetary relationships. A centralized state power served the needs of commercial magnate and feudal khan; its aggressions served the predatory ambitions of both feudal and nomad lord. In more senses than one was Timur the "Lord of the Fortunate Conjunction", Sahib Qiran. The planets and social relations alike were conjoined in his favour. Timur exploited these advantages fully.

The military force which established the centralized state, and served as the instrument of Timur's aggressive despotism, was primarily nomadic—mounted herdsman, skilled in archery. It was a military force based on the organization and customs of the hordes of Chingiz-khan, and in no sense inferior to them. Many witnesses left accounts, covering two centuries and more, of the main features of the nomad military organization and prowess: Catholic envoys, like Carpini and Rubruck; Venetian merchants like the Polos; the Persian minister of the Mongol khans, Juvayni; the shaykh from Tangier, Ibn Battuta; Levantine and European captives, like Arabshah and Schiltberger; western envoys, like Clavijo—and others.

The hordes of Mawarannahr, Mongol-Turkic in origin, called sometimes Tatars, sometimes Chaghatays—although by no means of the royal Chingiz clan—formed Timur's main force, the core and leadership being drawn from his own clan relations, the Barlas. They were a people who long retained their aversion to the life of the town, contemptuous of the labouring peasantry, the "tajiks", skilled at archery and animal husbandry, devoted to the standard of the Conqueror, infinitely enduring, and as innumerable as the devils in hell. "They esteem themselves lords and

think that nothing should be denied them by any man," said Friar William Rubruck.

Timur, too, despised the tajik. His descendants by tajik mothers were passed over in favour of those of purer nomad Mongol blood. Those who, like his grandson Pir-Muhammad, Prince of Fars in Persia, showed a greater inclination for palace pleasures than for military expeditions, were punished—according to the law of Chingiz-khan—by beating. The enemies that Timur most despised were the tajik princes of Persia, who were soon deposed and destroyed; or the Christian princes of Europe, whose envoys were treated with little respect, whatever the envoys themselves made out to their masters. The enemies that the Conqueror did not dismiss lightly were those of Mongol-Turkic origin, such as Tokhtamish, khan of the Golden Horde, and Sultan Bayazid, the Ottoman Turk from western Asia Minor.

These nomads suffered "heat and cold, hunger and thirst, more patiently than any other nation; when food is abundant, they gorge on it gluttonously, but when there is scarcity, sour milk tempered with boiling water suffices them . . . for their cooking fires they use no wood but only the dried dung of their herds, and it makes the fire for all purposes of roasting and boiling."¹ They cultivated no corn, and used little of it, trading horses, skins, and slaves with merchants from the settled areas for the grain and fabrics they needed, or seizing it in raids. To feed their numerous livestock of camels, oxen, sheep, and goats, and "more horses and mares than in all the rest of the world",² they moved from region to region in search of pasturage. They did not wander at random. Each horde had its accepted territory, each clan within the horde its recognized place; there were regular areas for summer and for winter grazing, and routes established according to season. Rubruck noted that every captain, according to the great or small number of his people, knew the bounds of his pastures, where he ought to feed his cattle, winter and summer, spring and autumn. In winter the hordes descended to the warmer regions, southward. The Tatar horses were no less hardy than their masters; they could support themselves in winter by digging under the snow for grass, being dependent on no other fodder or straw.

On campaigns, Timur travelled immediately behind the vanguard, which was composed sometimes of several tumans. The Lame Conqueror was completely adapted to life in the saddle, and only towards the end, or in sickness, was he carried sometimes in ox-waggons or litters. Behind him came the hordes of mounted warriors, and following them, the infantry. Behind the infantry, and travelling more slowly, came the baggage train; this included members of the royal household, mounted

or in wagons, and their paraphernalia; it included also the treasury—money, jewels, reserves of clothing, arms, and other equipment. The heavy baggage was protected by strong tumans of Chaghatays both on the march and during engagements, and although it was sometimes the object of attack, in no campaign did it fall into the hands of the enemy.

After the baggage train came the families of the nomads, with their herds, carts, and kibitki (tents). When not in action or on duty, the nomad warriors joined their households and continued their familiar existence with them.

Through desert terrain or in the hot season, the hordes frequently travelled at night, camping and driving off the herds to such pasture as was available during the daytime. They drew water from deep steppe wells or desert water-holes. Pots were boiled on camp fires fed with dried dung.

When Timur called his people to war, said Clavijo, all assembled, including wives and children, and marched with him, surrounded by flocks and herds. The droves of sheep, camels, and horses provided the basic sustenance of milk and meat for the hordes wherever they went. "None ever separate from their women and children, or from their herds and flocks. These all march with them as they go to war, migrating from one place to the next. When thus on the way the women who have small children carry them along in little cradles which, as the woman rides on horseback, she lays on the saddle bow in front. Such cradles are conveniently supported by broad straps which pass round the body, and thus the children are carried along. Indeed, the women appear to ride as comfortably and lightly thus burdened with their offspring as though they were free of them. The poorer folk have to load their families, with their tents, on their camels, but the children are worse off than those who travel with their mothers on horseback, for the camel goes with much rougher step than the horse." Arabshah, amongst others, gives an account of the military qualities of the nomad woman: "There were also in his (Timur's) army many women who mingled in the mêlée of battle and in the fiercest conflicts and strove with men and fought with brave warriors and overcame mighty hordes in combat with the thrust of the spear, the blow of the sword and shooting of arrows; when one of them was heavy with child and birth-pangs seized her when they were on the march, she turned from the way and, withdrawing apart and descending from her beast, gave birth to the child, and, wrapping it in bandages, soon mounted her beast and taking the child with her, followed her company; and there were in his army men born on the march and grown to full age who married and begot children and yet never had a fixed home."

The round tents—kibitki—consisted of a wicker frame over which a felt covering was stretched. A hole at the top let smoke from the fire out and the light in. These were easily portable and quickly erected. In Mawarannahr it was the custom to erect and dismantle the kibitki at each change of encampment; in the Volga regions the tents were transported intact on waggons without first being dismantled. The shaykh Ibn Battuta who travelled the Volga regions and Mawarannahr during the decade of Timur's birth, described his journey in the northern territory: "On a waggon is put a light tent of wooden lathes bound with strips of hide and covered with felt. Waggons have four large wheels and are drawn by two or more horses, or by oxen or camels according to weight. One can do anything one likes inside—sleep, eat, read or write, during the march . . . We saw a vast town on the move with all its inhabitants, containing mosques and bazaars, the smoke from the kitchens rising in the air. On reaching the encampment they took the tents off the waggons and set them upon the ground, for they were very light, and they did the same with the mosques and the shops."

At the end of the fifteenth century the Arab historian Ibn Khaldun met Timur outside Damascus and saw his camp. He wrote afterwards in his autobiography:

"The people are of a number which cannot be counted; if you estimate it at one million it would not be too much, nor can you say it is less. If they pitched their tents together in the land they would fill all vacant spaces, and if their armies came even into a wide territory the plain would be too narrow for them. And in raiding, robbing, and slaughtering settled populations and inflicting upon them all kinds of cruelty they are an astounding example because of what they attain thereof from the time of their youth onwards, and in this follow the custom of the Bedouin Arabs."³

The nomads travelled complete with all possessions: the vassal herdsman with meagre tent and a camel, the chief with elaborate pavilions, tents, studs of horses, wives, and slaves. Traders and craftsmen followed the armies, supplying, according to conditions, the supplementary needs of the mobile community: saddlers, blacksmiths, coppersmiths, armourers, food-vendors. When expeditions provided booty, this was frequently bartered or sold to specialists in these bazaars.

Archbishop John of Sultaniya said that Timur always lived "in the open field" in tents of fine silk—for the multitude of his people was so great that they could not inhabit a city. "However, everything that is necessary is brought to them and bought and sold as if in the market of a city. There are many in his host who bring victuals from distant countries to

sell; they even buy men (slaves) and spoils and all other goods . . . everyone eats on the ground . . . they take their food without tables and cloths, but they are quite tidy. They have meat and rice in abundance, but eat little bread, although it can be found in abundance.”

Clavijo visited the camp of the great horde of Timur outside Samarqand, and he saw not only the ordered distribution of the nomad tents, hundreds, and thousands, the bazaars of craftsmen and vendors each in their appointed place, but “baths and bathers established in the camp, who pitching their tents had built wooden cabins adjacent, each with its iron bath that is supplied with hot water, heated with cauldrons which, with all the furniture necessary to their craft, they have there. Thus all was duly ordered and each man knew his place to go beforehand.” The camps were as noisy as cities, with the creaking of wheels, the clanging of metal in the workshops, the jangle of camel bells and bullock carts, the haggling in the bazaars, and the blare of trumpets.

The horde, in Timur’s time, as under the house of Chingiz, was a military, feudal form of society. The princes of the blood—the ruling clan—received in fief from the supreme monarch the territories over which they had dominion. The princes of this clan assembled in a qurultay, or council of state, when major decisions were to be taken, principally in connection with the launching of a major campaign or the election of a new khan: blood royal was essential, seniority less so. Timur summoned ordinary councils of his emirs and chiefs before and during his expeditions, but by the end of his rule the qurultay had become as much a public festival as a political council, where vassal khans demonstrated their submission and presented superb gifts, and where Timur displayed his power before the envoys of foreign potentates.

The vassal nomads owed dues and military and other services. The Persian minister Juvayni described the Tatar army as one “after the fashion of a peasantry, being liable to all manner of contributions and rendering without complaint whatever is enjoined upon it, whether levies, occasional taxes, the maintenance of travellers or the up-keep of post-stations with the provision of mounts, and food therefor. It is also a peasantry in the guise of an army, all of them, great and small, noble and base, in the time of battle becoming swordsmen, archers, and lancers, and advancing in whatever manner the occasion requires. Whenever the slaying of foes and the attacking of rebels is purposed, they specify all that will be of service for that business, from the various arms and implements down to banners, needles, ropes, mounts, and pack animals such as donkeys and camels . . .”

Clavijo passed a nomad encampment where flocks were being

numbered for taxation. Another horde, possessing twenty thousand camels, as well as droves of rams, ewes, and cows, paid a yearly tribute, so he heard, of three thousand camels and fifteen thousand sheep.

Timur inherited the organization of the army by tuman (ten thousands), thousands, hundreds, and tens, from the Mongol armies of Chingiz. This hierarchical system divided each domain into military formation, according to the number of men in the levies required from that region. The tuman—meaning literally “ten thousand”—is used frequently in the sense of a large tribal group, or an army division of considerable size: it also applies to a district—the region of Samarqand at the time of Timur consisted of seven tumans—but these figures did not always correspond with the effectives provided by those regions. The thousand—*hazara*—was sometimes more, and the *khoshun*—hundred—was frequently used in Mawarannahr to designate a force of from fifty to several hundred. Each ten had its commander, and from each ten commanders in a hundred, one was appointed chief, and so on. Each unit and commander knew their place and function, both on the march and in camp. The feudal servitude was absolute: “no man may depart to another unit than the hundred, thousand or ten to which he has been assigned, nor may he seek refuge elsewhere.”⁴ The system ensured to the state the performance of services and the receipt of supplies and taxes, and extended throughout the Mongol states of Asia and into the Islamic world as far as Egypt of the Mamluks.⁵

The Mongol armies were traditionally divided into three main forces: the two wings, and the centre. The position of the tuman within those forces was also established by tradition. “Every man has his appointed station; those appointed to the Right Wing, the Left Wing, or the Centre, have their allotted places, which are handed down to them from father to son. Those of most trust and consequence are stationed on the extremities or flanks of the two wings.”⁶ The Left Wing normally ranked higher than the Right.

The full customary law and organization of the Tatar horde has not come down to us. It was codified and made explicit by Chingiz-khan, who “established a rule for every occasion and a regulation for every circumstance; while for every crime he fixed a penalty. And since the Tatar people had no script of their own, he gave orders that Mongol children should learn writing from the Uyghurs; and that these *yasas* and ordinances should be written down on rolls . . .” Juvayni gives an account of some of these ordinances, but the “*yasa*”—customary law—of Chingiz-khan is taken for granted by many other contemporary sources. Timur and his house “sacredly observed the rules of Chingiz.

In their parties, their courts, their festivals, in their sitting down and rising up, they never acted contrary to the institutions of Chingiz.”⁶

A provision was specifically made for posting stations, “yams”. Throughout their empire the Mongol conquerors made arrangements for the upkeep of such stations, requiring a number of mounts, men, provisions, and other necessities to be established. The upkeep of the yam devolved on the tuman—in other words, the local peasantry. In Juvayni’s time two tumans had to supply the needs of one yam. Every year the stations were inspected. The yams provided a service for the ruler, his messengers, and officials; it was in no sense a general service. The system provided an effective means of communication and information, both in the times of the Chingizids (according to Polo) and in Timur’s dominions. Clavijo mentions that the messengers of Timur—the elchis—had the right to requisition the horse of anyone, of no matter what rank, if he needed a fresh mount on the journey; they preferred to ride their horses to death rather than to delay an official communication. They were capable of riding up to one hundred and fifty miles a day.

Other yasas dealt with pillaging and the distribution of booty. The military-feudal hordes, whether in the service of Chingiz-khan or of Emir Timur, served no longer the primitive tribal need of animal husbandry and the chase, but the predatory ambitions of the nomad chiefs. Booty from pillaging expeditions had become a regular part of Tatar income. Everything was pillaged—gold, precious vessels, furs, corn, arms, as well as herds and slaves; they could all either be sold or used. The signal for general pillage was the hoisting of a black banner over Timur’s camp. Tatar warriors were forbidden to pillage until licence to do so had been granted. This was a very strict rule in the interests not of the defeated, but of the khans. Arabshah tells of Tatar soldiers crucified by the orders of Timur for unauthorized pillaging in Damascus. Mignanelli remarked that the absolute discipline imposed on man and beast was obeyed to a “miraculous” extent. Once permission had been granted, the soldier had equal rights with the chief, but had to make over a proportion of his loot to his chief. Any sharing of booty, including women and children, amongst the warriors was done according to established custom. The Chinese chronicler Meng-Hung said that after the capture of a town the booty was divided proportionately between the higher and the lower ranks of the army, the tenth due to the Great Khan having first been set aside. According to Nasir al-Din Tusi, one-fifth of the booty was levied for the Great Khan, and the remainder was divided among the army. The horsemen and foot-soldiers received their booty in the proportion respectively of two to one. The waters, lands, and provinces became the

property of the imperial treasury.⁷ An inventory was kept of all royal receipts. Distribution of booty, according to custom and rank, was a major preoccupation in Timur's army. It was widely known how well Timur's supporters fared in this respect. Of the non-military qualities most admired by the steppe warriors in their leaders, that of material generosity came undoubtedly first. Victory in a predatory raid was respected in proportion to the booty captured and distributed. From his earliest days Timur had secured adherents because of his generosity with the spoils. Throughout his life he commanded the loyalty of his nomad hordes and attracted allies from enemy ranks because his primary concern was to satisfy their predatory appetites—at the expense of his neighbours' wealth. Valour in battle was readily recognized and liberally rewarded.

On the other hand, Timur's rival Husayn acquired a damaging reputation for stinginess. His acceptance of his own sister's jewels in payment of debts was a case in point. He was miserly to the point of wearing clothes made of poor cotton cloth, and where the saddle wore them through he stuck on patches. Such a reputation, based on fact or legend, was bound to affect his popularity amongst the Chaghatay nobles and warriors. Meanness and greed were shameful and vicious qualities in a ruler.

Severe punishment was meted out for theft, especially of horses. A horse thief, if caught, had to restore nine horses as well as the original one, to escape punishment; failing this he surrendered his sons; in the absence of sons, his life.⁸ Death by hanging was considered more honourable amongst the Tatars, than by decapitation. Lesser thefts were punished by strokes of the rod—a punishment which again could be avoided only by paying nine times the value of the object stolen.

While many parts of the *yasa* related to military discipline and honourable conduct in battle, others related to the purely feudal prerogatives of the prince. Carpini observed that "whatever is given to them in charge, be it to fight or to lose their lives, they obey without grumbling. For if he demands any man's daughter, or sister, even if a virgin, they presently deliver her to him without any contradiction." So, too, Juvayni: "When moonlike damsels are found in the army they are gathered together and despatched from the tens to the hundreds and each man makes a different choice up to the commander of the *tuman*, who makes his choice also and takes the maidens so chosen to the khan or the princes."

The customary laws of Chingiz-khan served as the basis of civil as well as of military administration, and in practice the Emir Timur applied the *yasa* in preference to the law of Islam, the *Shariat*, for which he affected a reverence. It applied to the military units, to the nomads and peasants, and to town artisans, all of whom were assessed for levies and dues.⁹ The

Chingizid princes appointed darughas—governors—who were responsible in the different regions for the census of inhabitants and the regulation of the tuman, the recruitment of the army levies, the posting stations, and the collection of taxes and their delivery to the court. Muslims were frequently appointed to such positions. Timur himself also made use of state officials, officers of the highest rank, tuvajis (aides-de-camp), to whom he assigned important duties. They issued the summonses for the levying of troops with their equipment. They were responsible for calling the royal princes to the qurultay, for checking the number of enemies slaughtered during a campaign, and other delicate missions. Timur also instituted the custom of securing from the military chiefs signed receipts on delivery of the monarch's orders.

When the troops were levied they were required to bring with them "according to former and present customs" provender for a year, a bow, a quiver, thirty arrows, and a shield. Every two horsemen had to have a spare mount between them, and every ten should have a tent, two spades, a pick-axe, a scythe, an awl, an axe, a hundred needles, rope, a hide, and a cooking-pot.¹⁰ Carpini observed that the Tatars were required to have at least one bow, three quivers full of arrows, an axe, and ropes to draw the water-engines. The richer had single-edged swords with sharp curved points, pointed helmets and coats of mail, while their horses had chest and shoulders protected by mail. Some chiefs might also wear a "kuyuk", a sleeveless velvet jacket, lined or covered on the outside with a scaling of metal discs. A simple soldier might have a leather suit, but no coat of mail or kuyuk. He used reflex compound bows of horn and spliced wood, small and suitable for use when mounted. The shields were small, and round. Their arrow-heads cut both ways, like a two-edged sword; they carried a file in their quivers to sharpen them up.

Under Chingiz-khan the main element of the army was nomadic, and was composed predominantly of mounted archers. A subsidiary role was played by the settled peoples of the conquered territories who were pressed into service. This remained true of the armies of Timur, whose arms were also of the Mongol type, but it is likely that the role of the non-nomadic sections was more substantial. The settled populations provided the infantry and the artillery units of the period—soldiers for labouring and siege works, operating catapults, battering rams, fire-arrows, and flame-throwing machines. The Mongols had learned from the Chinese the explosive qualities of gunpowder and they used it for sapping and mining. (Although incendiary naphtha had been used by the Arabs from the seventh century, it was through Central Asia that gunpowder was introduced to the Near East and to Europe in the thirteenth and fourteenth

centuries.)¹¹ The Mongols used the flame-throwers, and containers or grenades filled with naphtha, to burn down enemy defences. Fire-arrows made by fixing slow-burning gunpowder to arrow-heads, set light to any combustible materials. Stones could be projected by gunpowder explosions. Muin al-din Natanzi mentioned that fire-weapons were used by Timur's forces in 1379, at the siege of Urganch, and Nizam al-din Shami compared the primitive projectiles of the Indians at the battle of Delhi in 1399 unfavourably with the "loud-throwing guns" of Timur. These machines may have been the "thunder carriages" of the Chinese annals, mangonels which could cast stones weighing half a ton or more, or incendiaries.

Engineers, who accompanied the armies, were capable of constructing pontoon bridges of rafts and reeds across the rivers, although the Tatars were able to swim their horses over even the widest. They placed their weapons, clothing and other articles in hides which were drawn together to form watertight bags. Over these they slung their saddles, making floating crafts on which the nomads were pulled across behind their horses. One swimmer usually went ahead to guide a string of horses. Scaling equipment, scaffolding, and other constructions were used in attack on fortress and towns. When halts were called in striking distance of the enemy, ditches were dug round the camp, ramparts were equipped with defensive weapons, and lookout positions erected.

Despite these supplementary weapons and the support of infantry, the basis of Timur's strength was the hordes of nomad archers, massed, organized and deployed with such skill that they have been described as the peak of military achievement in the epoch before firearms became decisive.¹²

The Tatars were great masters of tactics. They matched their skill in the saddle with their cunning in manoeuvre. They spared no effort to inform themselves of the position and intentions of the adversary, exploring his weaknesses, dividing his forces, delivering unexpected blows through the exploitation of their own mobility, dissembling and decoying, and wresting victory from a frequently strong but disheartened adversary. The Christian envoys found the Tatars "beyond all measure deceitful and treacherous. While they speak fair at the beginning, in the conclusion they sting like scorpions. For crafty they are, and full of falsehood . . . whatsoever mischief they intend to practise against a man, they keep it wonderfully secret, so that he may by no means provide for himself . . . the Tatar fights more by cunning than by main force."¹³

Timur, according to these standards, was no mean Tatar, remarkable as an organizer and as a leader in battle. He alone decided the direction of

each campaign, weighing military and political advantages; he never missed an opportunity presented by the weakness or instability of a neighbouring state; he never allowed a chance to pass to occupy his Chaghatays with the seizing of a neighbour's wealth; nor did he give his military lords and nomads time to become restless. His campaigns had no pre-established order, although preparations were checked in every detail and all contingencies were provided for. Geographic continuity of operations was in itself of little value to Timur; attacks that could be anticipated by the enemy might be avoided or successfully met by them. To dart north, and then south; to face east, and then switch to the west; to attack, and then to withdraw, laden with plunder—these were the aggressive mobile tactics which best suited Timur and his hordes. For, however rich the plunder, the coffers and bellies of the hungry hordes speedily emptied after every season.

A Catholic envoy recorded a story circulating in Timur's camp, one of many which illustrated the emir's cunning. Before he became Lord of Mawarannah, Timur received the envoys of the hereditary khan, it was said, who summoned him to submit or to prove himself in battle. Being in no position to accept the challenge to battle, Timur feigned sickness. In front of the envoys he began to vomit blood. The blood was that of a wild boar, a basinful of which he had just swallowed. The envoys retired and reported to their khan that the troublesome chief was nigh death or already dead. The khan and his court, carelessly disporting themselves, after this news, with their wives and children, fell easy victims to the attack of the vigorous Timur.¹⁴ A story in similar vein says that a former ally of his, one Idigu, was approached to renew an alliance between them. Idigu replied that he had lived for twenty years in the service of Timur; he knew perfectly well to what he might safely give credit; he understood the ways of Timur so well that it was not thus he was to be beguiled! He clearly perceived that what had been said was but to ensnare him.¹⁵

Nizam al-din Shami described the tactics that won victory for Timur over the Moghuls in the early 1360s when Timur's band of followers was still very small. The Jats had sent a force of overwhelming strength against Timur; so he sent a small detachment to the rear of the enemy, ordering them to light fires on all the hills. The Jats, believing themselves to be surrounded, took to flight. Timur pushed on to his native valley, the Qashka-darya, with no more than two hundred horsemen. Leafy branches were attached to the horses flanks. The dust raised was so thick that they gave the impression of being a large army. Again the enemy fled, and Timur was able to occupy Shahrisabz without a fight.

Mignanelli, present during the invasion of Syria, observed that Timur's embassies were really spying missions. In the synagogue at Aleppo he had spies disguised as Jews and quoting the Talmud. "He had men skilled in Arabic, Greek, Hebrew and in every language."

Hostile Arabshah paid tribute to Timur's military subtlety: "He was of rare temper and depth so deep that in the sea of his plans the bottom could not be touched, nor could one reach the high peak of his government by a smooth or rough path. He had placed through his realm his informers and in other kingdoms had appointed his spies; and these were emirs like Atilmish, one of his allies, or learned fakirs, like Masaud Kaha-jani, his chief minister, or traders seeking a living by some craft, ill-minded wrestlers, criminal athletes, labourers, craftsmen, soothsayers, physicians, wandering hermits, chatterers, strolling vagabonds, sailors, wanderers by land, elegant drunkards, witty singers, aged procuresses and crafty old women, like the deceiver Dalla, and men who had won much experience and journeyed through east and west . . .

"They brought to him events and news from the furthest borders, described to him what things were excellent there and were remarkable, made known to him the weights received there and the prices of things, marked their posts (halting places) and cities, mapped their roads . . . set forth their leaders, emirs, magnates, excellent men, nobles, rich and poor, the name, surname, title, and family of everyone and craft which they practised and tools which they used. And in this way he marked those things with his attention and by his prudence had all kingdoms in his power . . .

"But how great was his cunning, deceit, and dissimulation . . ."

Alongside the mass slaughter of enemies, whose decapitated heads were erected into towers as a warning to others, the Tatars maintained their tradition of personal valour. Timur set the example of courage and iron will-power, directing himself the most difficult operations and leading critical assaults. His tenacity and resolution were frequently as important in securing the day as the efficacy of his tactics and the skill of his archers.

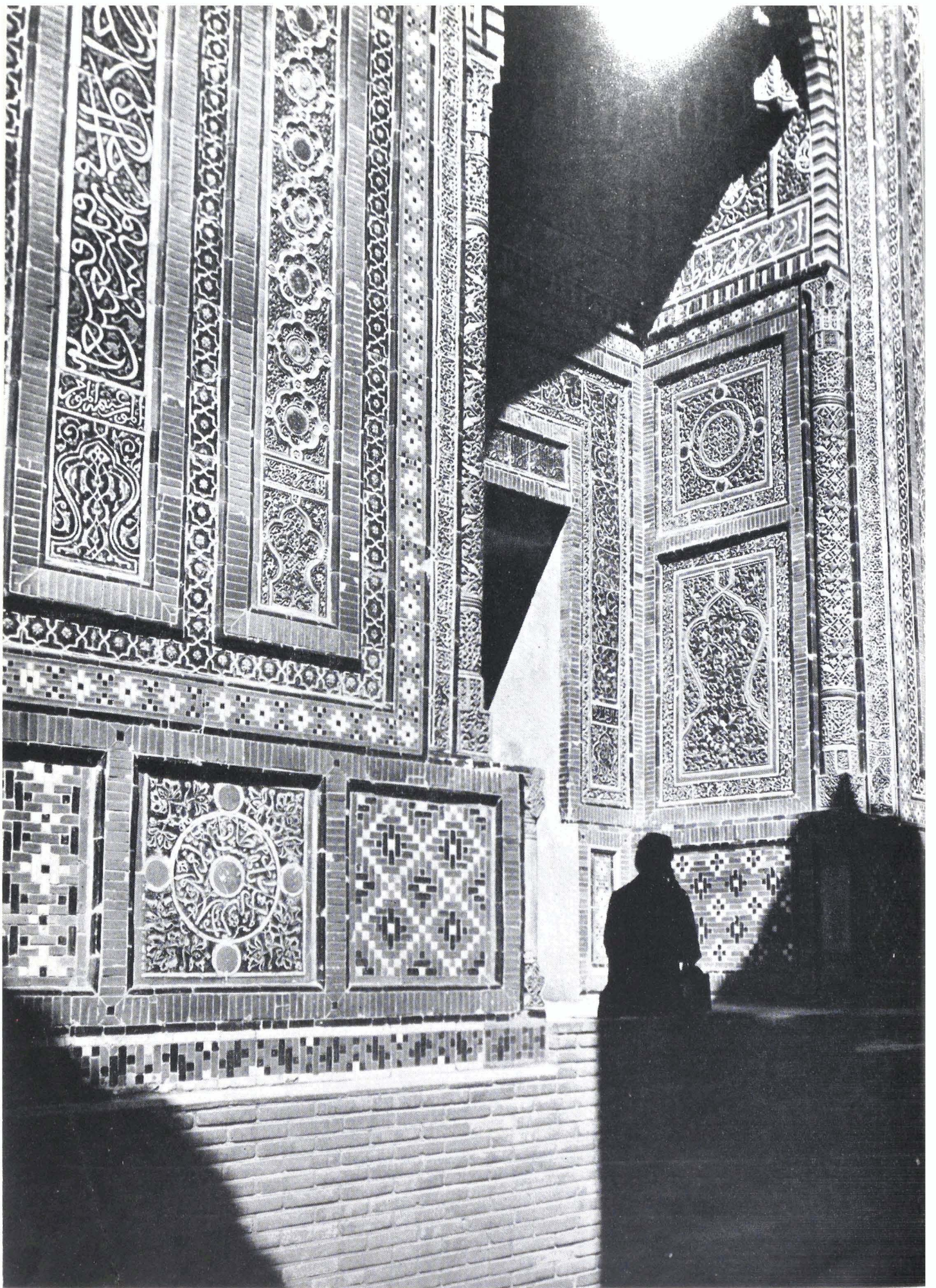
Deeds of outstanding valour on the part of individual warriors, simple soldiers as well as chiefs, were frequently recorded in the official chronicles, just as they were celebrated in nomad folk-epics. The popular hero—bahadur—accomplished miracles of prowess or loyalty to his companions, and would be rewarded by Timur with promotion to the rank of chief of a hundred or a thousand, or, in the case of those of higher rank, by receiving the privileges of the "tarkhan". This was a special honour accorded, since the days of Chingiz, to those who had served with the greatest distinction in battle. The tarkhan was exempt from all taxation; the booty seized by him in war or in the chase became his own property,

آورند و از سرهای کشتهگان منار بساختند و به اوج عبرت و اجتناب برافراختند
مصراع مکرکس که چنان کند چنیش آید پیش و چون بر تو این خبر از قمر آهنگسای امیرزاده



سپهانشه بر پیشگاه خاطر خاطر حضرت اعلی یافت پر لیلج لازم الاتباع نفاذ یافت و ملک
عیثاٹ الدین کرد ارگ سمرقند بپسین بود و برادرش ملک محمد و پسر کوچکیش امیر غوری

The Tower of Skulls raised after the Battle of Herat. From a manuscript of the Zafar-nama of Sharaf al-din Yazdi copied in 1552. Safavid style of painting. Brit. Mus. Or. 1359.



Detail from the shrine of Timur's sister in the Shahi-Zinda, Samarqand.

without his being required to surrender the normal proportion to the khan; the tarkhan was called to answer for a crime only after the ninth occasion that it had been committed; he occupied a place of honour on state occasions, and had access to royal audience at all times without having first to secure the normal permission.

The ruler granted charters—yarliqs—to those whom he wished to reward or appoint to office. Sometimes these patents granted hereditary rights to dominions, sometimes to privileges in other directions. Many of the yarliqs granted exemption from payment of imperial dues and taxes, the lord thereby being entitled to receive in full the cash and kind extorted from the vassals. The yarliqs were supported by engraved tablets of wood, silver, or gold. The tablet with which the Polo family was presented gave them safe-conduct throughout the Great Khan's dominions, provided them with the lodging they needed, changes of horses and escorts between the yams.

Foremost in privileges, and in devotion, were the Chaghatays, Timur's nomad tribesmen from Mawarannahr, who were the basis of his military power. They constituted the main body of his mounted archers: a disciplined horde feared in combat, benefiting from the plunder of war, and demanding it; but in peace-time this privileged section was a scourge of the population. They were allowed to herd their flocks wherever they wished, "wandering summer and winter without let or hindrance". The clansmen were free of all burdens, and paid no taxes, but "they served Timur constantly in his armies, fighting for him and acting as his guard".¹⁶ What army in the world, asked Juvayni, could equal the Mongol army? "They were archers who by the shooting of an arrow would bring down a hawk from the hollow of the ether, and on dark nights with a thrust of their spearheads would cast out a fish from the bottom of the sea; who thought the day of the battle the marriage night and considered the pricks of lances the kisses of fair maidens."

Although the settled population of Central Asia and the steppe aristocracy in general had adopted the faith of Islam, the vassal nomads clung frequently to their tribal gods. They were shamanists, idolators worshipping spirits of nature, especially fire, earth, and water, and practising the cult of the dead. They were tolerant in matters of religion, respecting the priests of different faiths and deriving comfort from favourable omens from whatever the sect of origin. John de Plano Carpini, a Franciscan friar, considered the Tatar customs partly praiseworthy, partly detestable. Arabshah the Muslim found them entirely detestable: "He had in his army Turks that worshipped idols and men who worshipped fire, Persian Magi, soothsayers and wicked enchanter and unbelievers. The idolators

carried their idols; the soothsayers spoke in verses and devoured that which had died and distinguished not between the strangled and the beasts slain with a knife. Diviners and augurs, who observe times and seasons, examined the entrails of sheep and from what they saw therein judged concerning the fortune of every place and what would befall in every region of the seven climes.

“They have their days, months, and years; each year is named after some animal and in this way they reckon the years that are past . . .” The calendar of the Mongols consisted of a twelve-year cycle, each named after an animal, in the following order: Mouse, Ox, Tiger, Hare, Dragon (or Fish), Serpent, Horse, Sheep, Ape, Fowl, Dog, Pig. The year, in this cycle, began in the spring. A Kirghiz legend says that when the animals came up in procession to have the years named after them, the camel, as the noblest, came first; but a mouse crept up on to his head and succeeded in getting the first year named after himself, while the camel was entirely omitted.¹⁷

Another legend, however, ascribes the animal cycle to the hunting activities of a Turkic khan; to escape him the animals fled to the Ili River, across which they swam to escape. The order of escape became that of the calendar cycle.¹⁸ The day, from sunrise to sunset, was divided into parts: sunrise; eating time; mid-day, and sunset.

The sport to which the Tatars were most attached was hunting, even when they had a sufficiency of food in their own flocks or could supply themselves by raids on their neighbours. Chingiz-khan had greatly encouraged hunting, not for the sake of the game alone, but for the skill and endurance it developed, serving as training for the army. Timur favoured his men with the pleasures of the chase on all occasions when his campaigns provided opportunity. The hunts arranged for Chingiz-khan, Khubilay khan, and Timur were on the same grandiose pattern, with precise regulations laid down: “Whenever the khan sets out on a great hunt he issues orders that the troops stationed around his headquarters and in the neighbourhood of the ordu shall make preparations for the chase, mounting several men from each company of ten in accordance with instructions and distributing such equipment in the way of arms and other matters as are suitable for the locality where it is desired to hunt. The right wing, left wing and centre of the army are drawn up and entrusted to the great emirs; and they set out together with the royal ladies and the concubines, as well as provisions of food and drink. For a month, or two, or three they form a hunting ring and drive the game slowly and gradually before them, taking care lest any escape from the ring . . . by day and by night, they drive the game in this manner like a

flock of sheep. Finally, when the ring has been contracted to a diameter of two or three parasangs (usually a little more than three miles), they bind ropes together and cast felts over them; while the troops come to a halt all around the ring, standing shoulder to shoulder. The ring is now filled with cries and commotion of every manner of game and the roaring and tumult of every kind of ferocious beast . . . When the ring has been so much contracted that the wild beasts are unable to stir, first the khan rides in together with some of his retinue; then, after he has wearied of the sport, they dismount upon high ground in the centre of the ring to watch the princes likewise entering the ring, and after them in due order, the noyons (lords), the commanders and the troops. Several days pass in this manner; then, when nothing is left of the game but a few wounded and emaciated stragglers, old men and greybeards humbly approach the khan, offer up prayers for his well-being and intercede for the lives of the remaining animals asking that they be suffered to depart to some place nearer to grass and water . . .”¹⁹

The vassal Tatars retained, with their tribal gods, their ancient marriage customs. They were polygamous; but—as in other instances of this institution—polygamy was practised in so far as wealth made it possible. For “whensoever a Tatar has many wives, each one of them has her family and dwelling place by herself. And sometimes the Tatar eats, drinks, and lies with one, and sometimes with another.”²⁰ Moreover, according to very ancient tradition, the son took over the wives of the deceased father, with the exception of his own natural mother. In the same way, younger brothers took over the widows of the elder brethren who pre-deceased them. This applied also in the household of Timur; when his eldest son died, the widow, a princess of the golden family of Chingiz, passed to a younger son.

Wives were purchased, being paid for with animals, household goods, water and pasturage rights, and luxuries, according to the status of the families. The marriage ceremonies included vestiges of the marriage-by-capture ritual. Rubruck discovered that “no man can have a wife till he has bought her. Sometimes it happens that their girls are very stale before they are married, for their parents keep them until they can sell them. They keep the first and second degrees of blood kin inviolable, as we do; but they have no regard of the degrees of affinity: for they will marry at one time or by succession, two sisters . . . they believe that after death the widow shall return to her own husband. And hence comes the abominable and filthy custom among them, namely that the son marries sometimes all his father’s wives except his own mother. The court or house of the father or mother falls always by inheritance to the younger

son. He is to provide for all his father's wives, for they are part of his inheritance . . .

“Therefore when any man has bargained with another for a maid, the father of the said damosel makes him a feast: in the meantime she flies to some of her kinsfolk to hide herself. Then her father says to the bridegroom: ‘Lo, my daughter is yours, take her wheresoever you can find her.’ He and his friends must then seek her till they find her, and having found her must take her by force and carry her off with a semblance of violence to his own house.”

It is as if you shot me straight in the breast, dear father.
You sold me for a herd of horses, dear father.
You have more room now in the yurt, dear father
And in it there is no room for me any more, dear father.

The new bride is not always welcome in the new yurt (tent):

The sign of an evil wife is
That she knows not the customs,
That she is of evil smell
And is not good for anything. . . .
Her handkerchief hangs fluttering in the wind,
Her pants hang disorderly over her boots,
Her hair sticks out of her hair covering,
And her breasts sag down.²¹

Amongst the nomads, vital tasks were carried out by both women and men. The duties of the women were to drive the carts; to erect or pack their tents on the carts, and take them down again; to milk cows, and make butter; to dress and sew skins (which they usually did with a thread of tendons), to make sandals, socks, and other garments. The duties of the men were to make bows and arrows, stirrups, bridles, and saddles; to build tents and carts; to churn kumiss and make bags for it; to keep camels and to load them. Men and women alike tended the sheep and goats.

Despite the Muslim reticence in matters concerning women, both Ibn Battuta and Arabshah felt bound to record the unusual position of equality occupied by Mongol women, as compared with those in Islam. This applied to women of rank as well as to the humble. The chronicles give repeated evidence of women rulers and regents—for example Orqina, regent of the Chaghatay ulus—up to and even after the adoption by the Mongol khans of the faith of Islam. Al-Omari stated that the Tatar women took part in the administration of state, issuing edicts like men. Several yarliqs (orders or charters) have been preserved which were

issued in the names of queens. Ibn Battuta remarked on the respect shown to women by the Turks, noting that they did not veil themselves and were perfectly visible from the open doors of their tents. Sometimes a woman would be accompanied by her husband, "and anyone seeing them would take him for one of her servants." Timur's queens and other royal princesses gave state receptions and held their own banquets; they appeared but lightly veiled before their guests. They undertook public works and founded religious establishments. The harems of the nobility were guarded by eunuchs.

The victims of the Tatars have never failed to find their appearance devilish. Emir Khusrau, poet of mediaeval India, fell into their hands at the end of the thirteenth century and was made prisoner: "There were more than a thousand Tatar infidels and warriors of other tribes, riding on camels, great commanders in battle, with steel-like bodies clothed in cotton; with faces like fire, with caps of sheep-skin, with heads shorn. Their eyes were so narrow and piercing that they might have bored a hole in a brazen vessel . . . their faces were set on their bodies as if they had no neck. Their cheeks resembled soft leathern bottles, full of wrinkles and knots. Their noses extended from cheek to cheek, and their mouths from cheekbone to cheekbone . . . their moustaches were of extravagant length. They had but scanty beards about their chins . . . they looked like so many white demons, and the people fled from them everywhere in affright."²² Western envoys in the fifteenth century were similarly impressed, except that to them the devils were dark: "All these wandering Chaghatay folk appeared to us with faces so burnt by the sun that for ugliness they might well have come straight out of hell itself. . . ."²³

Carpini gave a terse description of the nomad dress: "the garments of their men as of their women, are all of one fashion . . . jackets framed after a strange manner, of buckram, scarlet, or brocade. Their gowns are hairy on the outside, and open behind, with tails hanging down to their hams. They do not wash their garments . . ." Timur's warriors wore pigtails, in the Mongol fashion. When one of his grandsons went over to the enemy at Damascus, they cut off his pigtail and changed his clothes. Timur was reputed to have designed a special head-dress, a felt cap for his soldiers, to make them easily recognizable.²⁴

Babur, a descendant of Timur, at the beginning of the sixteenth century described the dress of the Mongol princes, which had remained substantially unchanged: caps embroidered with gold thread; long robes of Chinese silk, finely embroidered; and their equipment of quivers, sabres, maces, javelins, and battle axes. "All their women sit on horseback like men, and they bind their gowns about their waists with a blue silk scarf.

They also bind a piece of white silk like a muffler or mask under their eyes. . . .”²⁵ Women, like men, wore voluminous breeches.

“Women ride on horseback in the manner of men, and if they are properly dressed for riding, one sees nothing but the nose and eyes. It is shameful for a woman not to wear trousers.”²⁶ Marco Polo had noted the importance of this baggy wear; some women, he said, folded into the pleats of their trousers “anything up to a hundred ells of cotton cloth. This is to give the impression that they have plump hips, because their menfolk delight in plumpness.” Archbishop John commented on the fat “tartaresque” faces of the ladies, and Rubruck before him had observed: “These gentlewomen are exceedingly fat, and the smaller their noses, the fairer they are esteemed. They daub their faces with grease, and they never lie down in bed when having their children.” Eyebrows “like beavers” painted black with kohl, and joined at the bridge of the nose, were also regarded as a beautiful thing in women. Great ladies wore elaborate high head-dresses which appeared from a distance to be the helmets of soldiers, with lances carried upright.

The visible symbols of power and respect were the gifts presented on occasion, especially in sets of nine, a number much revered. Robes of honour, made of rich gold brocade, were presented as recognition of rank and distinction. Conversely, absence of gifts to a superior was both insulting to him and indicative of the malice or insignificance of the visitor. The Christian friars who travelled in the garb of poverty had difficulty in commanding respect for themselves or their masters, the Christian Pope, and St. Louis of France. Friar John at the khan’s camp saw on a hill five hundred carts of gifts, full of silver and gold and silk garments. These were divided amongst the emperor and his chiefs, each bestowing in turn gifts on his followers. The Friar, however, spent a month at the court of the great khan Guyuk “in such extreme hunger and thirst that we could scarce hold body and soul together. The provisions allowed us for four days were scarcely sufficient for one day. Neither could we buy any sustenance, because the market was too far off.” By contrast Ibn Battuta, equipped to give and disposed to receive, discovered that the Turks did not follow the hospitable custom of Islam, which he had already enjoyed, of assigning lodgings to visitors and giving him money for his expenses, but they “sent him sheep and horses for slaughtering and skins of kumiss, which is their form of benefaction”. On his journey through Central Asia Battuta acquired so many horses that he dared not mention the number lest some sceptic accuse him of lying.

Besides hunting, the Tatars took great pleasure in banqueting and drinking, both of which they did immoderately when occasion permitted.

Viands, including whole roast horses, featured in abundance at Tatar banquets. What could not be consumed on the spot was taken home by the servants of the guests: not to do so would be a mark of disrespect. From one state banquet Clavijo could have had carried to his lodgings enough food to last his embassy for half a year, he said.

Drunkennes has been considered the hereditary vice of the Tatars. Many rulers hastened their own end through this addiction. Jahir, court poet in Persia at the end of the twelfth century, wrote in one of his quatrains (despite his Muslim faith, which prohibited the drinking of wine): "It is better to be drunk in Hell than sober in Paradise."²⁷ "The man who drinks very freely and can swallow the most wine is called a bahadur—hero," said Clavijo, while Carpini noticed that though the Tatar was often drunk, he did not become quarrelsome in his cups. Women drank as freely as the men, and Clavijo, whose abstinence provoked astonishment, noticed at the state banquets and entertainments that the empresses, wives of Timur, consumed quantities of wine themselves and made sure that their guests were not long sober.

Timur's attachment to Mongol tradition is evident from his own dynastic ambitions. He did not claim the title of khan or personal descent from the golden family of Chingiz. Nor did his own court historians make any such claim. He continued to maintain, until the last years of his reign, a puppet khan of the Chaghatay line; after Kabul-shah, Prince Suyurghatmish was proclaimed khan in 1370; on his death eighteen years later, his son Sultan Mahmud succeeded him. Recognition of sovereignty was formally indicated by including the name of the sovereign in the Friday prayer in the Mosque and by minting money in his name. Coin was minted in the name of both Timur and the Chaghatay khan up to the end of Timur's reign, and both names were included in the Friday prayer, the Khutba. This was the limit of the recognition given to the khan, and all other honours traditional to the sovereign were paid to Timur alone. The alliances that Timur sought for himself and his family were with the Mongol nobility, of the house of Chingiz. The wife he took from the harem of Emir Husayn, Saray-Mulk-khanum, daughter of the Chaghatay khan of Mawarannahr, Qazan, became his chief wife (although not the first): the Greater Queen. Saray-Mulk was about five years younger than Timur, who seems to have held her in considerable respect, although she is not known to have borne him any children. She received several of the royal grandchildren as wards, however. From the time of this marriage Timur bore the title 'Gurgan'—son-in-law (of the Great Khan). When, twenty-seven years later (1397), Timur took to wife the daughter of the Moghul khan Khizr-Khoja, this princess, Tukul-khanum, by virtue of

her Chaghatay blood, became the second queen—the Lesser Lady—Kichik Khanum. Ibn Khaldun, the Arab historian, mentioned that on the death of the puppet Chaghatay khan Suyurghatmish, Timur had married the khan's widow.

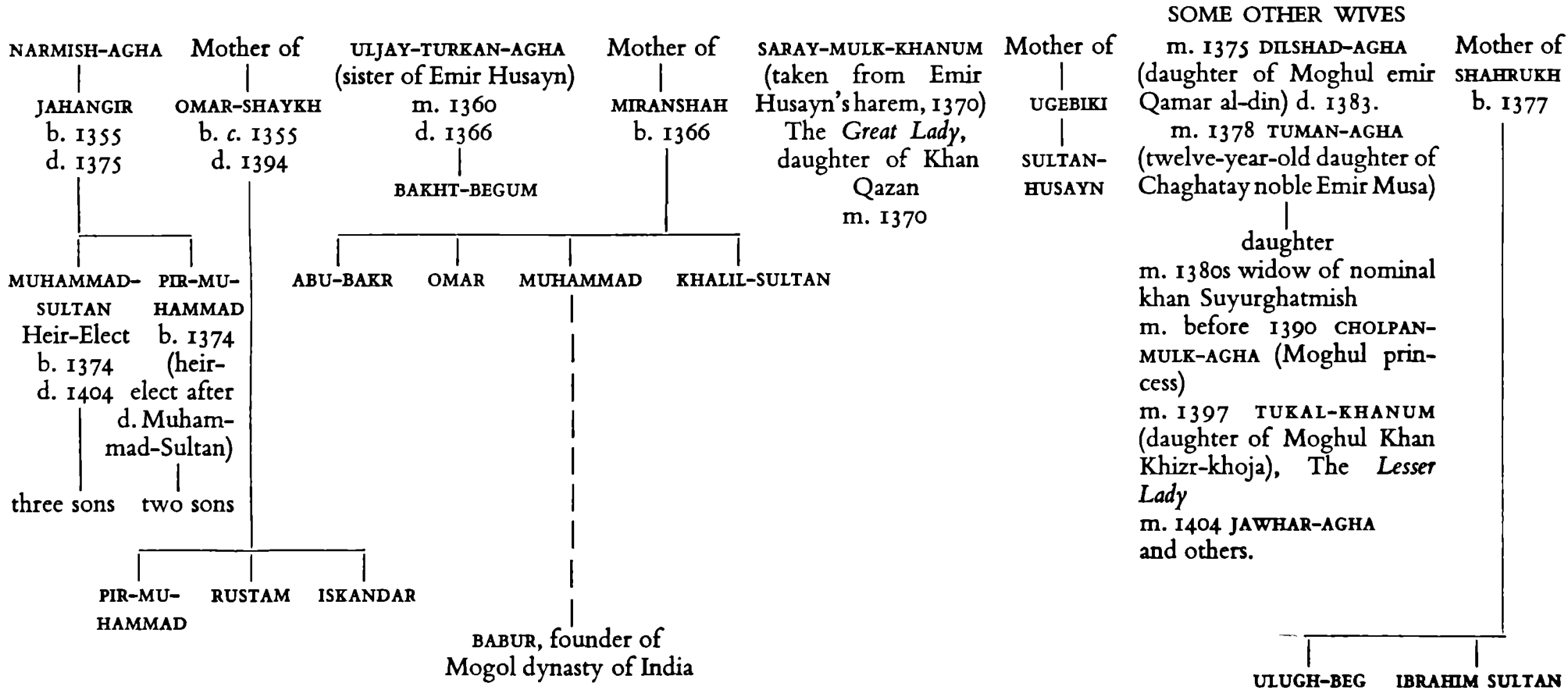
Timur's eldest son, Jahangir, was married to a princess of the Juchi line, the vigorous Khan-Zada, the daughter-in-law whom Timur came to regard most highly. Through her Jahangir too became entitled Gurgan. Their son was to become the Conqueror's heir.

Not much is known about Timur's wives, or even how many he had. Clavijo saw eight queens in 1404, including the Greater and the Lesser Ladies, and Cholpan-Mulk-agma, who for beauty was like "a moon when it is full and the sun before it is setting", and who accompanied Timur on his campaigns in the thirteen-nineties. Arabshah, with his usual malice, reported that this queen had been killed because of the suspicions that had been cast upon her. He also mentioned that Timur "used electuaries of stones and in old age was wont to deflower virgins". The eighth queen, according to Clavijo, was one he had just married (he was then nearly seventy). Many other names of wives and concubines are mentioned from time to time in the chronicles, and some pre-deceased Timur by many years. Gardens and palaces were laid out by the Emir in Samarqand and in other agreeable parts of his dominions, for the pleasure of his queens. The Paradise Garden was laid out for Tuman-agma, the twelve-year-old daughter of a Chaghatay noble whom Timur married in 1378. She, too, gained a position of respect in Timur's household. She bore the Conqueror a daughter. A garden with a palace was also laid out in the Samarqand suburbs in honour of the Tukul-khanum, the second queen. It was called Dilkusha—Heart's Ease.

The education of the children and grandchildren was an affair of state. If a boy was born, he was taken from his mother and given as ward to some other queen; at an early stage the child would be provided with a guardian—atabeg—who was to ensure an education appropriate for a future monarch. As there was no established order of succession, and the empire was regarded as the inheritance of the whole royal clan, there could be no differentiation in the education of the princes.

In 1360, when Timur was still the leader of a nomad band, he already had two sons. Jahangir was then four years old. Khwandamir mentions the name of the mother—Narmish-agma—but nothing more.²⁸ The other son, Omar-Shaykh, was, according to Sharaf al-din Ali's statement, two years older than Jahangir, but most references give Jahangir as the elder. A third son, Miranshah, was born in 1366, and Shahrukh, the youngest, in 1377. The first two sons died long before their father. The third,

SOME OF THE WIVES AND DESCENDANTS OF TIMUR



Miranshah, showed signs of mental disorder and was deposed by his father from his kingdom. The fourth, Shahrukh, son of a concubine, did not receive from his father the independent authority and recognition accorded either to his brothers in their time, or to some of the grandchildren. Shahrukh was a devout Muslim, much devoted to the Shariat, the Muslim law, and possibly did not demonstrate the admiration for military prowess and Mongol tradition which his father preferred. In any case, his mother appears to have been not Mongol but Iranian, and Shahrukh was of distinctly tajik appearance, as Gerasimov's reconstruction from his skull shows.²⁹ Timur also had a daughter, Bakht-begum, by one of his earlier wives. Arabshah reported of her that she was "a virago, who did not love men, having been corrupted by the women of Baghdad". The Catholic Archbishop of Sultaniya, who also picked up court gossip, said that Timur's pleasure was always with women and that he did not enjoy the delight of men; and that with the help of medicines, on which he daily spent thousands of ducats, the Lord of the Fortunate Conjunction frequently had association with women.

The Conqueror never acquired the taste for a sedentary existence. He resided for a few weeks or even only a few days at a time in the palaces he constructed or captured, and then moved back to his camp. He moved with his entire court and nomad horde, going from winter to summer pasture-lands, the queens, princes and ladies of the household following usually with the heavy baggage, except for those he had selected to accompany him throughout. At convenient halting places between campaigns, Timur would send urgent messages to Saray-Mulk-khanum and the other queens to join him quickly with the royal children.

Timur held his court, received ambassadors, conducted state affairs, not in cities and palaces, but in the pavilions of his camp. Where he was, there was the centre of his state. Messengers from all parts of his dominions, and envoys and potentates alike from distant lands, were expected to follow and to catch up with him wherever he might have established his camp. Some of the Lame Emir's most spectacular courts were held in camp in the valley of Kani-gil, outside Samarqand, in the pastures near Kabul, and in the alpine meadows of the Qarabagh (Black Garden), Timur's favourite winter quarters in the eastern Caucasus.

Timur was guarded and surrounded so that no one could approach close to him unless summoned. Then the person summoned was grasped by the arms and walked towards the Conqueror. As the visitor approached, his escort was changed to that of emirs or princes, trusted relatives of Timur. Thus Clavijo, the Spanish ambassador, was conducted to the presence of the Conqueror.

The rules of his court were obeyed with the utmost strictness. Licence and excess were permitted by imperial decree in celebration of victories, but not otherwise. "As for wine, it is forbidden for all the court to drink it, except for Christians, who can drink it at their dinner and not otherwise; for after dinner, if thirsty, they must drink water or kumiss.

"It is also forbidden in his court to take or to allow dishonest women, each one had his wife and his household with him. No one in his court dare speak against women, especially against good ones. He gives great honour to old men and old women," said Archbishop John.

Accompanying Timur's court were also the justices and officials who administered the law to the royal court, to the hordes, and to the subjected provinces. There were judges for different kinds of offence—criminal and administrative departments. Arabshah speaks of Timur himself administering justice in Fars (Persia) "clad in a red robe", when he ordered the death of the Muzaffari princes. Decrees and decisions were drawn up, approved by Timur, copied, sealed, and registered, a whole series of attorneys and officials being involved.

Note: Timur's insignia of three circles composing a triangle, in centre.



A silver coin struck during the early period of Timur's rule, dated 1376.

Timur used as his insignia on coins and seals three circles set in the form of a triangle, with the apex pointing downwards. This, thought Clavijo, signified that Timur was Lord of all three portions of the world. Others suggest that the triangle of small circles represents Sahib Qiran, "Lord of the Fortunate Conjunction" of three planets. This symbol appears with the words "Rasti-Rusti", meaning "Truth is Safety",³⁰ and which surrounded the triangle. Timurid coins in the British Museum bear this device; so does the Persian letter from Timur to the king of France, Charles VI of Valois, in the French archives. The device was seen by Clavijo on the palace Timur built at his birth-place, Shahrisabz.

Timur's military power was based on his Tatar warriors, and his military and civil administration on Chingizid custom; the basis of his political power in Mawarannahr lay, however, in the coincidence of interests between these nomad hordes seeking scope for their predatory attacks, and the feudal magnates of Mawarannahr. The need of a strong central power for the development of urban and agrarian life, and the protection of the trade routes, brought to Timur the support of the settled Muslim population. This was facilitated by the fact that the Tatar lords had adopted the faith of Islam, even if this had not meant the wholesale conversion of their hordes; and the nomad lords themselves had been strengthening their ties with the settled regions. It was this ability to satisfy the needs of the settled and the nomadic aristocracy, that secured Timur the support of the feudal magnates, the merchants, and the leaders of the church. Emir Husayn failed through lack of this support. He had no contact with these sections and could secure only nomad backing. Mawarannahr's nobility was divided against him.

Timur had cultivated his connections with the settled nobles, the merchants and the Muslim clergy. He had helped the shaykhs, and made himself popular with the Sarbadars. Emir Husayn by contrast had shown himself to be unsympathetic to the former, and hostile to the latter.

These were factors which had a decisive influence on the outcome of the conflict between Timur and Husayn for power in Mawarannahr. Timur's own clan had provided him with valuable links with town life and the church. Descended from the Tatar warriors who had come with Chaghatay, they were chiefs of the nomads of the Qashka-Darya area, and had close connections with the feudal nobility of the towns and trading areas. Timur's father had a reputation as a pious Muslim, a friend, they said, of scholars and darvishes. The chroniclers who wrote during the reign of Shahrukh, Timur's son, who was devoted to the Muslim rather than the Mongol code, are likely to have exaggerated Timur's Muslim zeal. Stories began to circulate about the piety of Timur's youth and his respect for the shaykhs of Islam. Later Timur was heard to attribute his success to the prayers offered on his behalf by one of the shaykhs. The Emir gave prominence to the encounter with the Sayyid Baraka and the favourable auguries of that occasion; he courted auspicious omens and influential members of the Muslim community; the Muslim clergy, the ulama, became a permanent feature of his court and accompanied him on his campaigns.

In conquered territories the spiritual leaders were protected and brought to Timur, who had a taste for discussions with such scholars of Islam—philosophers, leaders of sects, historians, astronomers, mathematicians.

They were encouraged to converse freely with him, and if they impressed him were either called to his service at court or in Samarqand, or given permission to remain in their own country. It was usual for the scholars and divines to receive protection during campaigns and when towns were given over to pillage. Many, such as Nizam al-din Shami, who later wrote a history of Timur's victories, and Ibn Khaldun, the Arab historian, availed themselves of this protection. Timur's attachment to the forms of the Muslim faith were widely publicized, during his lifetime and after. His mosque accompanied him everywhere and the prayer rituals were diligently observed by his court at dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset, and the early part of the night. These observances included, after the ablutions of face, hands, arms, feet, and ankles, prostrations and salutations in the direction of Mecca. The noon prayer on Friday, in congregation, was also observed, and the formal prayers would include recommendations in honour of Timur Gurgan, Lord of the Fortunate Conjunction, as well as the name of the puppet Chaghatay khan. During the annual feast of Ramadan, the ninth month of the lunar year, no food could be taken during the hours of daylight. The month ended with a feast, an occasion which in Timur's court became one of magnificent banqueting. Dispensations from the arduous obligations were of course available for the sick, for those on a journey, and when the conditions of the campaign so required.

Timur visited the shrines of saints, especially at crucial moments in his campaigns. The Conqueror prostrated himself publicly in prayer before battle and never failed to demonstrate that he and his hordes were under the protection of the Divine Being. Before battle, too, Shaykh Baraka, one of Timur's closest associates, offered up prayers for victory, in view of the assembled hordes.

Other obligations to which Timur gave recognition were: the giving of alms—Timur frequently celebrated his victories by lavish charitable distributions—and abstinence from gambling, usury, wine, and from the flesh of the pig. Timur felt himself empowered, nevertheless, at periods of public rejoicing, to suspend such taboos, especially the one concerning wine; his victory feasts did not differ in this respect from the celebrated orgies of his Mongol forebears. Moreover, the Prophet's recommendation that four wives were sufficient for a good Muslim did not apply to Timur. Nor is there record of any strong urge on the part of the Sahib Qiran to fulfil the other Muslim obligation, that of making a pilgrimage to Mecca once in his lifetime. The traditions of Islam were exploited only to consolidate his power and to justify his actions. To this end the Muslim faith was used to support the despotic form of Timur's state power. On

the palace erected for him at Shahrisabz were inscribed the words: "The Sultan is the Shadow of Allah On Earth."³¹

In addition to providing acceptable interpretations of the scriptures, Timur let it be known that he received direct revelations from the Almighty. These not only gave divine sanction to his enterprises—"he does nothing whatsoever, nor wishes to do anything, without the special commandment of God"—but provided practical advantages: "He says that he knows the thoughts and cogitations of men; these are revealed to him by an angel. That is why no one dare council against him, because he will know immediately."³²

His skilled use of divination earned Timur the reputation in some quarters of resorting to the black arts. Ibn Khaldun stated that Timur was one of "the greatest and mightiest of kings", and that:

"Some attribute to him knowledge, others attribute to him heresy because they note his preference for the 'members of the House' (of Ali); still others attribute to him the employment of magic and sorcery, but in all this there is nothing; it is simply that he is highly intelligent and very perspicacious, addicted to debate and argumentation about what he knows and also about what he does not know."

Astrologers accompanied Timur's court and were employed in assessing the conjunctions of the planets on all important occasions. Timur had little use, however, for such divination unless it provided support for his own intentions. Before the battle of Delhi the astrologers, reflecting the general uneasiness of the hordes in India, did not find an auspicious conjunction of the stars. But Timur, judging his preparations ready for the test, ignored their hesitations. He found and interpreted in his own favour a text from the Qoran; and launched the battle.

Oppressed Muslims of the subjected areas were not likely to accept the ravages of Timur and his hordes as the work of true Ghazis, Warriors of the Faith. They regarded Timur as an infidel, as the agent of the devil. Arabshah gave a story which showed that even amongst the shaykhs closest to the Conqueror, and amongst his own Chaghatay forces, there were those who dared to be critical. Timur summoned his grandson and heir-elect, Muhammad-Sultan, with fresh troops from Samarqand to Syria, at the beginning of the fifteenth century. Muhammad-Sultan took with him his teacher and mentor, Jamal al-din Ahmad Khwarazmi. The shaykh followed his master reluctantly, through both religious scruple and physical weakness. Sick with fatigue at the night marches, the shaykh separated himself from the rest and fell in with two Chaghatay soldiers, who listened to his reading of the Qoran. They were "weak like timber rotted with age, lean, unkempt, pallid, clothed in torn rags,

and dusty". These stragglers, who evidently had not benefited from the spoils of the campaign, asked the great man: "Is the food of this army permitted, or is it forbidden and unclean?" The shaykh replied: "Most of it is forbidden, nay, by Allah! it is all oppression and sin, since it is gathered by spoil, plunder, raiding and rapine." Many of the campaigns were justified—as they needed to be justified to the settled Muslim communities—as holy wars against the infidels, wars to defend by the sword the territory and religious heritage of Islam. Those who fought and died on such righteous missions were assured an immediate place in Paradise.

In fact, considerations of Faith did not prevent many of the "holy" wars being fought by idolators against Muslims. Hostility between different Muslim sects provided excuse enough for the slaughter of Muslims: in Mazandaran (south of the Caspian) because the Muslims were followers of the Shi-a sect; in Syria the citizens of Damascus were given over to pillage and the sword after they had been accused of antagonism to the Shi-a doctrine. (The great schism of Islam between the Sunni and Shi-a sects produced bitter conflict and further fragmentation—as happened in the Christian world. The Sunnis supported the original dynasty of the Caliphs and were in general the more orthodox and less fanatical. The Shi-a sect supported the dynasty of Ali, rival claimants for the Caliphate, and in the early days represented a social revolt against the Arab aristocracy.)³³ Doctrinal disputes were ready to hand to support the expediency of any campaign. Christians were slaughtered in Georgia as idolators, but were courted (if not trusted) in Europe, as allies against the Muslims of the Ottoman dominions.

We may believe with Gibbon, that "a superstitious reverence for omens and prophecies, for saints and astrologers, was only affected as an instrument of policy". With the blessing of the shaykhs, Timur could lead his hordes against all the kingdoms of the seven climes, destroying infidels because they were not Muslims and Muslims because they were not faithful.

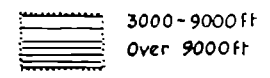
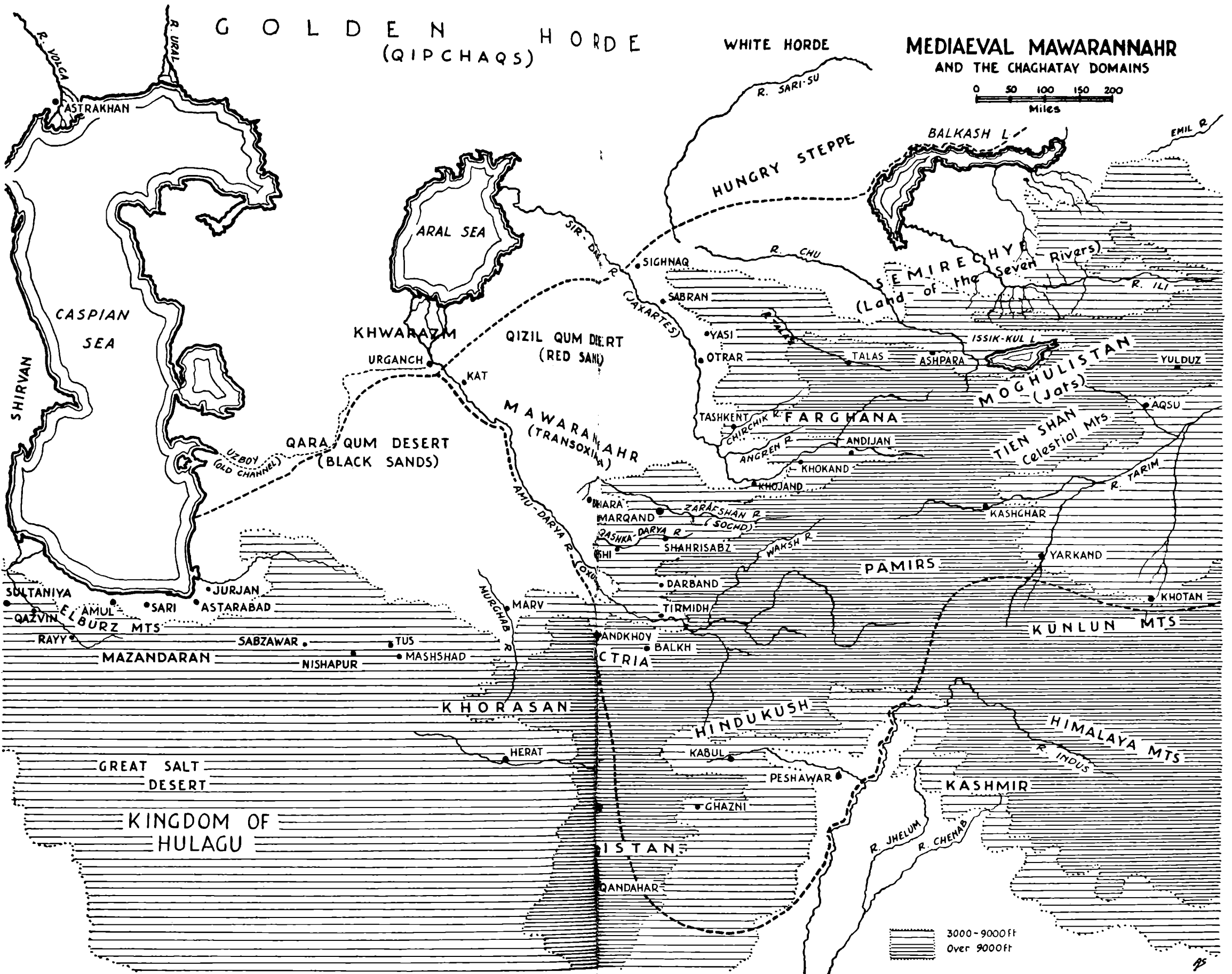
Timur's youth was spent on horse-back and he had no other education. He spoke Turkic and Persian, but was literate in neither language. He later surrounded himself with scholars, who accompanied him on his campaigns, but was himself the intellectual leader of his court. He valued knowledge, above all that of a practical kind—medicine, astronomy, mathematics, architecture, and particularly history.

Timur maintained with him experts in science and astrology, in medicine and in necromancy, according to Archbishop John. Those of "value and good condition" he treated with much honour. Timur himself

GOLDEN HORDE (QIPCHAQS)

WHITE HORDE

MEDIAEVAL MAWARANNAHR AND THE CHAGHATAY DOMAINS



delighted in arguments and questions. When at rest, especially on campaigns, he would have works read to him on many subjects, but history was the one with which he was most familiar.³⁴ He established the position of Story-Reader at his court; Timur's memory was acute and he knew well the history of the Tatars, the Arabs and the Persians. His knowledge impressed the Arab historian Ibn Khaldun, when he was granted audience after the defeat of Damascus. Timur used his knowledge of history and of Islamic tradition to inspire his troops with examples from the past.

Of Timur's court secretaries, some were drawn from those fluent in Persian, which was then regarded as the language of literature in Mawarannahr, although most of the people spoke Chaghatay Turkic, as Clavijo noticed. Others, however, were Uyghur scribes who wrote Chaghatay Turkic using the Uyghur alphabet. "In these characters they write their despatches, orders, open letters, epistles, catalogues, measurements, annals, poems, histories, reports, public acts, the prices of corn fixed by public authority and all that concerns their civil law and even the laws of Chingiz-khan." Timur employed special secretaries to record the events of his campaigns, commanding them to write not with the poetic extravagances favoured by the Persian and Arabic writers, but in an unadorned and direct style. These were the basis of subsequent court histories of Timur, one of which, by Nizam al-din, the *Zafar-nama*—Book of Victory—was prepared for Timur during his lifetime. One of the original Persian diaries has also survived, the record of the Indian campaign, by Ghiyath al-din Ali; but none of the Turkic verse.

Timur appears to have had some appreciation of art—as distinct from treasure—for in addition to the precious objects gathered in the Gok Saray (Blue Palace) in Samarqand, Timur had his own collections of artistic works. Amongst other rarities were fine manuscripts, which, like Manichean works, were famous for their exquisite handwriting and their illustrations. (The Manichean religious system, founded by Manes, in Persia in the third century A.D., later spread to Central Asia. Manes was supposed by tradition to have been gifted artistically and to have illuminated a number of texts.) Musicians, orators, artists, sculptors, gardeners, and craftsmen of every kind were assembled at Timur's court, gathered together from the kingdoms he had overrun.

Amongst the goods for which Timur had a preference, according to Archbishop John, who was anxious to encourage trade between the court of Timur and the west, were: very fine tissues, particularly of crimson, rose-colour, white, and green; leather goods; coral; crystal vessels and goblets adorned with gold, silver, and gems; fine tapestries; saffron, thoroughbred steeds; dogs; and large Spanish mules.

Timur, who “checkmated every king equally in war and play”, spent much of his leisure playing chess. He played on equal terms with the outstanding masters of his time. The game was more elaborate than the normal one, consisting of a board of ten squares by eleven, the pieces being increased by two camels, two giraffes, two sentinels, two war-engines, a Vizier, and others.³⁵

No pictures of Timur have come down to us. The Persian and Indian miniatures of the Conqueror are formal representations and not portraits. The frescoes painted in his palaces to immortalize his campaigns and himself disappeared before the palaces. The few contemporary descriptions, and the examination of the contents of his tomb, indicate that Timur was a man of Mongolian features and build, with reddish beard, upright bearing, well-built, and relatively tall for a Mongol—about five foot seven inches. He was lean and muscular, able to spend several days on end in the saddle, where he probably felt less inconvenience from his lameness. The index finger of the right hand was damaged and the bones of that arm knit at the elbow. His hand, however, functioned and was in fact very strong. His right thigh had grown fast at the hip and the right leg was shorter than the left. This infirmity, which he endured since early manhood, caused his frame to be somewhat twisted, with the left shoulder higher than the right. His proud bearing does not seem to have been affected by this. The lameness did prevent him from walking far, and in later life he was carried by servants to the saddle, or to a horse-borne litter or bullock-cart. Timur was not reticent about the origin of his injuries. Ibn Khaldun recorded: “His right knee is lame from an arrow which struck him while raiding in his boyhood, as he told me; therefore he dragged it when he went on short walks, but when he would go long distances men carried him with their hands. He is one who is favoured by Allah. . . .”

In May and June 1941, an archaeological commission under Professor A. A. Semenov, M. M. Gerasimov, and others, opened the tomb in Samarqand where Timur was reputed to be buried. They examined the skeleton and remains, which included fragments of muscle and skin, and some hairs of the head, eye-brows, red moustache and beard. The skull indicated Mongol features, and the skeleton an upright bearing, despite the slope to one side occasioned by lameness, which was evident in the bones of the right arm and leg.³⁶

The fullest description of the Emir was left by his bitter enemy, Ibn Arabshah:

“Timur was tall and lofty of stature as though he belonged to the remnants of the Amalekites, big in brow and head, mighty in strength

and courage, wonderful in nature, white in colour, mixed with red, but not dark, stout of limb, with broad shoulders, thick fingers, long legs, perfect build, long beard, dry hands, lame on the right side, with eyes like candles, without brilliance; powerful in voice; he did not fear death; and though he was near his (seventieth) year yet he was firm in mind, strong and robust in body, brave and fearless, like a hard rock.

“He did not love jest and falsehood; wit and sport pleased him not; truth, though troublesome to him, pleased him; he was not sad in adversity nor joyful in prosperity . . . He did not allow in his company any obscene talk or talk of bloodshed or captivity, rapine, plunder and violation of the harem. He was spirited and brave and inspired awe and obedience. He loved bold and brave soldiers, by whose aid he opened the locks of terror and tore in pieces men like lions and through them and their battles overturned the heights of mountains . . .

“A debater, who by one look and glance comprehended the matter aright, trained, watchful for the slightest sign; he was not deceived by intricate fallacy nor did hidden flattery pass him; he discerned keenly between truth and fiction, and caught the sincere councillor and the pretender by the skill of his cunning.

“When he had ordered anything or given a sign that it should be done, he never recalled it or turned thence the reins of his purpose, that he might not be found in inconstancy and weakness of plan or deed.”

He was called the Unconquered Lord of the Seven Climes; Sahib Qiran, Lord of the Fortunate Conjunction.

NOTES

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⁸ Ibn Battuta: *Voyages*.

⁹ I. P. Petrushevski: *Questions of History*, 1947.

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¹² E. Razin: *History of the Art of War.*, Vol. II, 1940.

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¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ E. Schuyler: *Turkestan*, 1876.

¹⁸ V. V. Barthold: *Histoire des Turcs d'Asie Centrale*.

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²⁴ Ibn Arabshah: *Tamerlane*.
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²⁶ Archbishop John: *Memoirs*.
²⁷ E. G. Browne: *Literary History of Persia*, 1920.
²⁸ V. V. Barthold: *Four Studies*.
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- ³⁰ *Ibn Khaldun and Tamburlaine* (see W. J. Fischel's Notes).
³¹ A. Jakoubovsky: *Samarqand at the Time of Timur and the Timurids*, 1933.
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³⁴ Hafiz-i Abru: *Zubdat al Tavarikh*.
³⁵ Ibn Arabshah.
³⁶ M. Gerasimov: *Portrait of Tamburlaine*, 1947.

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THE KINGDOM OF CHAGHATAY

1370 (Year of the Dog)—1380 (Year of the Ape)

and later campaigns against Khwarazm and Moghulistan.

I

TIMUR'S attachment to Mongol tradition and his ambitions regarding the Mongol empire became evident immediately on his accession to power. Internal enemies as well as Muslim neighbours to north and east were to succumb to his attacks.

When the qurultay of Balkh enthroned Timur in A.D. 1370, he declared himself the inheritor and continuer of the empire of the Chaghatay, the empire bestowed by Chingiz-khan upon his second son. These dominions were, however, no longer intact. Khwarazm, the rich oasis region in the north-west, at the delta of the Amu-Darya, had been divided in the early days of the Mongol empires between the Golden Horde and the Chaghatay ulus. In the second half of the fourteenth century, north and south Khwarazm had become united under the Sufi dynasty, and independent of the Mongol states of which they were formerly vassals.

The rest of the Chaghatay domain was also divided between the western kingdom of Mawarannahr and the Hindu Kush provinces, and the eastern kingdom of Moghulistan.

For the next twenty years Timur was occupied—although not exclusively—with removing the vestiges of opposition within Mawarannahr, and with establishing his authority over the entire region which had formed the original Chaghatay ulus. During this period his expeditions were directed primarily against Khwarazm to the north, and Moghulistan to the east.

Moghulistan, the eastern section of the original Chaghatay ulus, stretched from the Sir-Darya to the Tarim basin and to the Irtish. It comprised two main regions: the area north of the Tien-shan, with the two great lakes Issik-kul (the Hot Lake) and Balkhash; this province was known as Semirechye, the Land of the Seven Rivers flowing into Balkhash. The other was the region south of the Tien-shan, and included the Tarim basin. Through these regions, both north and south of the mountains, ran the three variants of the trunk route to China, with their important stations Bishbaliq and Almaliq on the most northerly variant; Kashghar

and Aqsu south of the Tien-shan; and Yarkand and Khotan on the route south of the Tarim.

The conflict that had ensued under the nomad lords when the split had occurred in the Chaghatay ulus had ruined urban life in the eastern provinces. From 1306 to 1370, twenty khans had succeeded each other. Towns that had existed and prospered under the Qara-Khitay had become by the fourteenth century in Moghulistan names merely of encampments. Cultivation of the soil had also been abandoned as a result of Moghul opposition to settled life. "From a distance", said one traveller quoted by al-Omari, "one sees a well-built village, with beautiful green surroundings. But on approaching in the hope of meeting inhabitants, only deserted houses are found. The population is composed entirely of nomads, shepherds and graziers who do not cultivate the soil or sow crops. There is no other verdure but that of the steppes." The main stations on the trunk road survived, although the caravans were subject to nomad attack, but few of the other towns remained.

Ilyas-khoja, the Moghulistan khan, had been defeated in Mawarannahr at the hands of the Sarbadars (1365), and shortly after his retreat had been assassinated. A rival, Qamar al-din, seized power, and as a precaution he exterminated all known relatives of the previous khan. Timur took advantage of these disturbances to send a series of expeditions into the Jat country, to which insubordinate elements from Mawarannahr had been attracted: former allies of Husayn, as well as the Jalayirs, who were traditional enemies of the Barlas tribe. Such expeditions were both predatory and preventative. Although villages had been engulfed by the steppe under the rule of the nomad chiefs who rejected sedentary life, their lands offered fertile grazing, especially round Yulduz in the Tien-shan (north of the Tarim basin), where the Moghuls had their main summer quarters. The prevention of Jat attack by anticipatory expeditions into their lands secured the advantages of pasturage and pillage, together with congenial occupation for Timur's Chaghatay warriors. He directed them, however, not through the luxuriant oases of his eastern province, Farghana, but by the more northerly route through the steppe beyond the Sir-Darya to Semirechye.

The first expedition in 1370 put the Jats to flight and seized considerable booty. Then, between 1375 and 1390, a series of expeditions into Moghulistan, intermittent with major campaigns in other directions, brought the eastern neighbours into uneasy submission.¹

A legend from this period persists, about a mound of stones towering over the San-Tash Pass to the east of the Issik-kul lake, high in the Tien-shan mountains. On one of the expeditions into Moghulistan Timur's

archers chased the Jats through this pass, and he ordered each of his men to take a stone and pile it up as he went by. After defeating the Jats, Timur's host returned; each warrior retrieved his stone and carried it to Samarqand. When the last warrior had taken his stone, the huge pile was still there—the losses of Timur's forces had been so great.

Timur set out on an expedition against the Jats again in the winter of 1374. It was an exceptionally hard winter, however, and even the horses had to be left to perish while the soldiers tried to save themselves. Timur returned to Samarqand until the violent cold had abated. He started out once more. By that time Qamar al-din had gathered a force to invade Mawarannahr, but Timur had regained the initiative and led his troops to the gorges near the Ili river where the Moghuls had retreated. Qamar al-din was overtaken and defeated; he took flight, pursued by Timur's son Jahangir, deep into the forested mountains. The Moghul detachments were overtaken and cut to pieces, but Qamar al-din escaped. The country was ravaged, the booty consisting of carpets, horses, arms and women; and the hordes of Timur spent two months enjoying their victory in the pastures of the Tien-shan valleys. Amongst the prisoners taken were the wife of the Moghul chief and his daughter, Dilshad-agma. Timur married the girl, and celebrated the marriage after the custom of his ancestors, with great festivities in the Mongol fashion. There was no lack of music or wine.

On Timur's return to Mawarannahr he put down a rising of the Jalayir tribe, the Barlas rivals, who, during his absence, had laid siege to Samarqand. He completed the destruction of their horde by dispersing the remnants amongst other peoples, tumans, and regions; their territories were distributed amongst loyal princes.

The following year, 1376, provided Qamar al-din with an opportunity to invade Farghana, the eastern province of Mawarannahr bordering on Moghulistan. When Timur turned his forces east, however, the Jats fled, but laid an ambush which nearly succeeded in isolating and defeating Timur. The battle then turned against the Jats, and Qamar al-din, wounded, sought safety in flight. Timur pressed home his advantage the next two seasons by two more expeditions against Moghulistan.

These expeditions were serious reverses for Qamar al-din, although they failed to effect his capture. When, six years later (1383), Timur inflicted another defeat upon him, his power was in decline and his position as ruler undermined. In 1389 a rival, Khizr-khoja, was enthroned as khan of Moghulistan. Prince Khizr-khoja claimed Chaghatay descent. He was said to be the son of Tughluq-Timur, former Moghul khan, and half-brother of Ilyas-khoja who had been defeated by the Sarbadars at

Samarqand. As a babe in arms Khizr-khoja had escaped the general massacre of the royal family arranged by Qamar al-din, and on reaching manhood had been building up his own forces.

At this period Timur was projecting a decisive campaign against his dangerous and hostile neighbours to the north—the rulers of the Juchi empire, known as the Golden Horde. In an effort to clear his eastern flank, two expeditions were mounted against the Jats who might prove aggressive under their new khan. The first expedition set out in 1389 after a preliminary successful skirmish with the Golden Horde near the Sir-Darya. The main problem of warfare in the nomad territory was to seek out the enemy. Timur's preparation had included the provision of guides for the different tumans and the circulation of information about routes to the commanders. The expedition drove deep into the Jat country: to Atqan-Suri, where there was snow and ice, although it was summer; it passed across the plain of the "Stallion's Mane", to that called "The Galloping Stallion", where one of Khizr-khoja's generals was defeated. Timur then divided his army in two, one section led by his son Omar-Shaykh, the other led by himself. Omar-Shaykh caught up with the Jats and inflicted another defeat near the valley "The Dog Does Not Drink"; he joined the royal camp with many prisoners and much booty. The captives, in chains, and the spoil, were sent off to Samarqand, while the army refreshed itself in the Moghul camping grounds by the Emil river. Here a general council was held, and it was decided to ravage the southern provinces. The troops were to be sent by different routes, with guides and detailed directions, and were to reassemble at Yulduz. An indecisive battle took place with Khizr-khoja's army, which was chased by Timur beyond the pass known as "The Gate of the Mouse".² The khan fled, abandoning his kingdom to save his life. The different bodies of troops sent out by Timur pillaged the countryside, taking possession of numbers of horses, camels, sheep, and other flocks, together with slaves of both sexes. This booty was divided amongst the warriors. The reassembled army then camped at Yulduz, "The Star", where, say the annals, the streams are so fresh and the grass so fine that the poets are for ever singing its praises; so succulent are the meadows that the scraggiest mounts have only to be there a week, and they become fat and robust. After the celebrations, in which "the golden wine-cups were presented by the hands of beautiful girls", Timur returned to Samarqand by forced marches, arriving in three weeks. The journey, some fifteen hundred miles, normally took the caravans two months. The court and troops were refreshed by a grand hunt in the region of Bukhara, where the streams and lakes of the disappearing Zarafshan provided plenty of game, especially swan and wild fowl.

The Emir Qamar al-din was still at large, and, after the flight of his rival Khizr-khoja, attempted to re-establish himself in Moghulistan. This occasioned another expedition by Timur the following year (1390). Qamar al-din went north and crossed the Irtish River into the country of sables and ermine. Timur sent a force of thirty thousand horse in pursuit. They reached the river, and one half crossed over; both banks and islands were scoured for the elusive emir. On the trunks of the pine trees beyond the river they burnt an inscription saying that Timur's troops had passed beyond the shores of the Irtish. But their search was unavailing; the campaign had been long; the men were living on what they obtained from the hunt, and on roots. The search was abandoned and the troops returned to Samarqand.

The last had been heard of Qamar al-din. According to Moghul tradition he was afflicted with dropsy towards the end of his life, and could no longer keep up with his fleeing forces. His people carried him into the depths of a wood after one of the encounters from which they were taking flight, and left him with provisions for several days, and two concubines. The rest fled. When they found it safe to return, they found no trace of the emir or of his attendants. This was about 1393.

As for the khan Khizr-khoja, he made his peace with Timur and was recognized as ruler of Moghulistan. A few years later, in 1397, he sent his sister, Tukul-khanum, to be Timur's bride, and, as she was of the royal line of Chaghatay, she received the status of second queen in the royal household—the Lesser Lady: Kichik Khanum.

While awaiting the arrival of his latest bride, Timur was in camp near Shash (Tashkent) east of the Sir-Darya; he was also making preparations for a campaign against China. He found time, moreover, to order the construction of a shrine at Yasi (now the town of Turkestan) on the banks of the Sir-Darya, in honour of the tomb of the twelfth-century Turkish shaykh Ahmad Yasavi, venerated by the nomads on account of his activity amongst them. The Dilkusha palace and gardens at Samarqand were laid out in honour of Timur's bride, the Moghul princess.

2

Intermittently with the early expeditions east against the Jats of Moghulistan, were the expeditions of greater political and military consequence which Timur mounted against the Sufi dynasty, rulers of Khwarazm, the Land of Light, on the lower reaches of the Amu-Darya.

When the Central Asian empire of Khwarazmshah Muhammad fell to Chingiz-khan, the region of Khwarazm itself was divided into two parts:

the north, with the fine city of Urganch, was included in the Juchi ulus which came to be known as the Golden Horde; the south, with the town of Kat, became part of the Chaghatay ulus. Mongol dominion had stimulated the caravan trade between China and the Mediterranean. The benefit had been felt not so much by Central Asia, with its internal discords, but by the Mongol empire in the north, the Golden Horde. Many of the caravans by-passed Mawarannahr, going north of the Caspian to the Volga and thence to the Black Sea. Khwarazm was an important stage on this northern route, and, reviving quickly from the Chingiz destruction, continued as an entrepot for regional and inter-continental traffic. Ibn Battuta described the capital, Urganch, in the days when it came under the rule of the khan Uzbek of the Golden Horde in the thirteen-thirties, and was administered on his behalf by a powerful emir. It was, he said, the largest, greatest, most beautiful, and most important city of the Turks, shaking under the weight of its population, with bazaars so crowded it was difficult to pass. "On the day I was riding in the bazaar I became stuck in the crowd, unable to go either forward or backward . . ."

His recollections were no doubt influenced by the fact that he left the city much wealthier than when he entered it; he must also have been impressed by his profitable visit to the emir Qutluq, whom he found reclining on a silk carpet with his feet covered, as he was suffering from gout, a malady common among the Turks . . . "tables were brought in with roasted fowls, cranes, young pigeons (game was abundant in the thickets of the Amu-Darya delta), bread baked with butter, biscuits and sweetmeats, which were followed by other tables with fruit, pomegranates prepared for the table, some of them served in vessels of glass with wooden spoons, and wonderful melons. On our return to the academy, the emir sent us rice, flour, sheep, butter, spices, and loads of wood . . ." Travellers from Europe noted Urganch as a market centre for every kind of goods.³ The city had been a centre of Muslim scholarship and theology since the twelfth century, and was still attracting artists and men of letters. In the early fourteenth century many impressive buildings were erected.

In the second half of the fourteenth century discords weakened the Golden Horde, as they had weakened the Chaghatay ulus, and, profiting from these troubles, an independent state was set up in Khwarazm under the rule of the Sufi dynasty. The khan Husayn Sufi began the unification of the southern provinces with the northern, and occupied the fortified town of Kat, and Khiva.

But Timur had come to power in Mawarannahr during this time, claiming the entire heritage of the Chaghatay ulus. The Sufis threatened

not only to be dangerous political rivals, but to draw away from Mawarannahr the economic advantages of the caravan trade. In 1372, Timur sent an envoy to Husayn Sufi demanding the return of the southern provinces of Khwarazm. The envoy received the expected answer to this unfriendly message: what had been won by the sword, said Husayn Sufi, could be taken away only by the sword. Timur readily accepted the challenge. His army was assembled, pay distributed, a grand hunt arranged, various embassies bearing impressive gifts were received, and Timur departed, leaving a kinsman, Emir Sayf al-din, to guard Samarqand and to direct affairs of state. Having crossed the desert, Timur's troops took the town of Kat by assault, but not without meeting strong resistance. The men of the city were slaughtered, women and children enslaved, and the town pillaged. A chief in Timur's army, who had not displayed the required valour, was beaten, according to the yasa of Chingiz-khan; then he was tied to the tail of an ass, and sent thus back to Samarqand.

The loss of Kat inclined Husayn Sufi to come to terms with Timur. But he was dissuaded by one of Timur's chiefs, Kay-Khusrau, who had been responsible for the killing of Timur's rival Emir Husayn at Balkh.⁴ Kay-Khusrau had not benefited by Timur's accession to power as much as he felt entitled, and he encouraged the Khwarazm khan to continue his resistance, in the belief that the troops of Kay-Khusrau would come over to him at a decisive moment in the struggle. Instead of coming to terms, Sufi gave battle. But the tide did not turn in his favour, the troops did not come over, and he was driven back into his capital Urganch. He shut himself up in the city fortress and died soon after, eaten, they said, with chagrin. His brother Yusuf Sufi took his place; he offered his submission to Timur and the hand of Husayn's daughter Savin-beg, known as Khanzada—the khan's daughter—for Timur's son Jahangir. The princess was the granddaughter of Uzbeg, khan of the Golden Horde, and therefore of the family of Chingiz. Her beauty, moreover, was widely extolled.

The terms were agreed and Timur retired to Samarqand with his hordes. Kay-Khusrau was arrested and condemned before a tribunal. His treasure was divided according to Mongol custom, and he himself done to death by officers of the late Emir Husayn of Balkh, on the principle of vendetta.

Yusuf Sufi did not keep the agreement. He occupied Kat once more, ravaged the surrounding countryside, and failed to despatch the princess. The following spring (1373) Timur mounted a second expedition against him. The dust of his approach was sufficient to bring appeals for pardon from Yusuf. These were granted, with guarantees, and preparations were

advanced for the royal wedding. A suitable escort was prepared and the illustrious bride, Khan-zada, departed from Khwarazm with a worthy suite of caravans filled with treasure: crowns, a golden throne, jewelry, precious girdles, coffers crammed with gems and padlocked with gold, tapestries, sumptuous couches, canopies, pavilions, and tents. According to the chroniclers, the air was filled with fragrance, the earth carpeted with flowers.

Two campaigns had brought the province of south Khwarazm within the state of Timur, reuniting an important section of the Chaghatay ulus.

In 1375, Timur was occupied with one of his expeditions against the Jats of Moghulistan. His son, Prince Jahangir (entitled Gurgan, like his father, because of his marriage with a Chingizid princess), had previously been in charge of the advance guard of the troops sent against the Moghuls. On this occasion, however, he had been left in Samarqand, very sick. When Timur returned from the expedition, he was met by the nobles who had come out from Samarqand clad in blue and black, their heads covered with dust, beating their breasts and tearing their clothes. The air was heavy with the sound of lamentations for the death of Jahangir, Timur's first son, of whom he was especially fond. He had lived to be twenty. The prince left one son, by his wife Khan-zada, named Muhammad-Sultan. Timur preferred this grandson to all others, eventually appointing him his heir. A second son to Jahangir, Pir-Muhammad, by another princess, was born forty days after his father's death.

For a long time Timur was inconsolable. Emir Sayf al-din Barlas, who had been Prince Jahangir's tutor, was so affected that he begged permission to leave his duties to make a pilgrimage to Mecca. Khan-zada, according to Mongol custom, became the wife of a younger brother-in-law, Miranshah, Timur's third son.

Yusuf Sufi, regretting the lost power of Khwarazm, rose once more in revolt. In 1379, Timur was ready to punish him. Urganch, the great capital, was laid under siege. Every morning outside the walls of the city, Timur's hordes raised their battle-cry. Detachments were sent off to ravage the surroundings which yielded up their girls, slaves, horses, camels and sheep. It is of this occasion that the story is told of Yusuf's boast that he was prepared to meet Timur in personal combat: "Why should the world face ruin and destruction because of two men? Why should so many faithful Muslims perish because of our quarrel? Better that we two should find ourselves face to face in open field to prove our valour!" The challenge was accepted. Timur ordered his light duelling armour, took his sabre and shield, and galloped towards the moat surrounding the walls. The emirs and chiefs of his court had pleaded with him, saying that

neither honour nor reason demanded that he should run such risks. The old Emir Sayf al-din Barlas, returned from his pilgrimage, seized the bridle of Timur's horse to restrain him. "If the Emperor himself has to do the fighting, what purpose is served by all the brave troops of his army?" Timur raised his sabre and made Sayf al-din let go the bridle. Timur reached the moat and called out that he was ready to meet Yusuf in personal combat. Yusuf Sufi did not appear. Timur called out again, saying that death was preferable to a breach of faith. But Yusuf preferred life to honour. Timur waited long and then returned to his camp, where his valour was greatly praised.

Soon after, Timur received the first melons of the season from Tirmidh. Thinking it an incivility not to share the fruit with his neighbour who was deprived of such pleasure, Timur put some in a golden dish and ordered them to be taken across the moat and handed to the guards for Yusuf. Khan Yusuf did not appreciate the gift. The dish was given to the gate-keeper and the melons flung into the moat.

The great city of Urganch was attacked with fire-arms and stone-throwers and the citadel was practically destroyed. Yusuf had to move from it elsewhere. Still the resistance continued, however, and the siege lasted over three months. Yusuf, like his brother, ate his heart out and died. The proud citizens, defending themselves to the last, were overrun in a general assault. An enormous treasure was captured. Scholars and men of letters were sent to dignify Shahrissabz, Timur's birthplace. Amongst them was Sadud-Din Masud ibn Umar at-Taftazani, who, according to contemporary opinion, was "the chief man of learning in the world, and the exemplary of scholars amongst the sons of men."⁵ He is said to have written a commentary on Arabic grammar at the age of sixteen. At first Timur allowed him to return to Khorasan where he was born, and there he received a professorship. When, however, Timur learned of his outstanding reputation as a scholar, he was summoned to Samarqand, where he lived with honour.

Some ten years later, under Shah Sulayman Sufi, Khwarazm rose again in revolt, instigated by the khan Tokhtamish of the Golden Horde in the north, who had become a serious rival to Timur. In 1388 (Year of the Dragon), the Lord of the Fortunate Conjunction set forth, filled with wrath. It was his final campaign against Khwarazm. He seized Urganch, the Sufi dynasty was wiped out, and the city levelled to the ground. After ten days of destruction, only the mosque with its minarets was left standing. Timur ordered that barley be sown where once stood the splendid city. The people of Urganch, craftsmen and skilled workmen of every kind, men of letters and artists, who according to Arabshah "equalled

those of Samarqand in subtlety but excelled them in magnificence and elegance, being devoted to poetry and humane learning, admirable in various kinds of fine arts and accomplishments, especially in the science of music and tone, whose very children in their cradles when they cried did so in harmony . . ." were carried off to Samarqand to use their arts and talents in the embellishment of that city.

The victories over Moghulistan and Khwarazm endorsed Timur's claim to the inheritance of Chaghatay. Although the reintegration of Mawarannahr and Moghulistan was never established, the Central Asian empire of Chaghatay had been reconquered. A dangerous rival for the command of the caravan routes had also been removed. The trade which had flowed through the bazaars of Urganch, so crowded that Ibn Battuta could not pass, now passed to Samarqand, heart of Timur's expanding kingdom. Later Timur allowed one of the quarters of the city to be restored; but the region never recovered its former position. After the devastation, the Uzboy, the channel from the Amu-Darya into the Caspian, opened and the river ceased emptying into the Aral. "When war devastated the country, people were unable to maintain the dams and the irrigation works, and the Amu-Darya broke through the Uzboy. Such was the state of things in the fourth century A.D. (after the invasion of the Huns); in the thirteenth century (after the invasion of Chingiz-khan); and at the end of the fourteenth century (after the inroads of Timur)." ⁶

Anthony Jenkinson, the Elizabethan sea-captain and merchant, who may have been the first Englishman to visit Central Asia, stayed twice at Urganch in the fifteen-sixties; despite its ruins it was serving as a caravan halt, where customs duties were paid per capita for men, camels, and horses. He reported earth walls, and buildings also of earth, "but ruined and out of good order. It hath one long street that is covered above, which is the place of their market". ⁷ "There used to advance convoys of travellers from Khwarazm, making the journey in waggons as far as the Crimea, securely and without fear, a journey of about three months . . . But now through these places from Khwarazm to the Crimea, of those people and their followers, nothing moves or rests and nothing ranges there, but the antelopes and the camels . . ." ⁸

By the end of the thirteen-seventies the Lord of the Fortunate Conjunction was paramount in the lands of the Chaghatay ulus, the Mongol empire in Central Asia. In 1380, he was ready to occupy his hordes with predatory operations against a second of the four Mongol kingdoms, against the rich domains won by Hulagu in Persia, Mawarannahr's western neighbour.

NOTES

- ¹ Dughlat: *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*.
² The interpretation of Mongol names from V. V. Barthold: *History of Semirechye*.
³ Pegolotti: *Merchants' Handbook*, tr. Yule.
⁴ See p. 50.

- ⁵ E. G. Browne: *Literary History of Persia*.
⁶ S. P. Tolstov: *Twenty Years of Excavation in Khwarazm*.
⁷ R. Hakluyt: *Voyages*.
⁸ Ibn Arabshah: *Tamerlane*.

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Nizam al-din Shami: *Zafar-nama*.
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THE CROWN OF HULAGU AND THE THREE YEARS' CAMPAIGN IN PERSIA

1380 (Year of the Ape)—1388 (Year of the Dragon)

THE Mongol conquests of Asia had not ended with the death of Chingiz-khan in 1227.

Twenty-five years later, a great army had moved west from Mongolia under the command of Hulagu, grandson of Chingiz-khan, on a long-projected mission to subdue Persia. "From the dread of the report thereof the mountains began to quake and the hearts of kings to tremble."¹ The preparations for the expedition had been characteristically thorough. Two men out of every ten from the eastern and western armies of Monke, the Great Khan, were allocated to Hulagu, together with troops contributed from the tumans of Batu and Chaghatay. Elchis—envoys—were despatched a season earlier across Asia to reserve all pasturage along the proposed line of advance. "In all the countries from Turkestan to Khorasan and uttermost Rum (Asia Minor) and Georgia, grass fell into the category 'But to this tree come not nigh!'"² Emirs and local rulers were made responsible for the levying of provisions and the loan of flocks for the troops en route. A thousand Chinese engineers accompanied the expedition to discharge catapults, naphtha-throwers and machines for shooting fire-arrows; they were specialists in siege operations.

Timur, in the following century, was well acquainted with the story of this campaign, its profitable sequel, and the subsequent decline of the Mongol kingdom established by Hulagu.

Hulagu had set out in autumn, 1253, making leisurely advances across Mongol-dominated Asia, his progress not wanting in official receptions and ceremonies. The realms of Chaghatay in Central Asia provided their quota of festivities as well as their levy of troops. Orqina,³ regent of the Chaghatay ulus, welcomed and feasted Hulagu when he reached the province of Semirechye. Further on across Central Asia Hulagu was joined by the minister Masud Beg and the emirs of Mawarannahr. Together they passed the summer in the mountain pastures of Mawarannahr, setting out again when the "violence of the sun's heat had abated". In autumn 1255, they camped in the meadows of Kani-gil (the Rose-mine), near Samarqand. Here Masud Beg erected "a tent of gold and silk tissues, of which the covering was of white felt, and for nearly forty days they

remained in that neighbourhood with constant revelry and merrymaking . . .”⁴ A century and a half later Timur was to hold a similar festival in Kani-gil, preparatory to setting out on operations in the opposite direction, against China.

The next halting-place was Shahrisabz, Timur’s birth-place. In these pleasant valleys Hulagu stayed another month, receiving the dignitaries and their gifts from the province of Khorasan. Then they beat the drum of departure and crossed the Amu-Darya, with its giant lizards and tiger-infested jungle of reeds. (Tigers still roam in the sub-tropical valleys where the Vaksh and Panj rivers join to form the Amu-Darya. A Soviet State Preserve has been created here to protect the wild life.) The Amu-Darya was the boundary between the Turkic-speaking people of Mawarannahr and the Persian-speaking people of the west. A tiger hunt was organized. The troops formed the usual hunting circle, but as the horses were nervous of the tigers, Bactrian camels in rut were mounted. Thus “ten tigers of the field were bagged by the tigers of the battle-field.”⁴

Hulagu crossed the Amu-Darya at the beginning of 1256. At the end of that year he defeated the Ismailis, a warlike sect which had resisted every other attack made upon it. The Ismailis, or Assassins, were a fanatical Muslim sect organized by al-Hasan in the second half of the eleventh century. They had gained possession of various strongholds of which the most formidable was Alamut—“The Eagle’s Nest”—in the mountains south of the Caspian. The organization was secret, their method, the assassination of enemies. The term “assassin” is derived from the Arabic “hashshasun”—those addicted to the drug hashish, which they said was given to the faithful of this sect to induce ecstasy. Marco Polo made famous these methods by his description of “the Old Man of the Mountain”, the Grand Master of the Order, and the gardens of Alamut. (The Agha Khan is head of one branch of this sect which has survived to the twentieth century.)

The armies of Hulagu swept through Persia and by 1258 he had captured and sacked Baghdad, a city three thousand miles west of Qaraqorum—as the crow flies. The Abbasid Caliphate—which had already lost its real power—was destroyed. The Caliph himself was wrapped in a carpet and beaten to death. They say that Mongols disliked the shedding—in the literal sense—of royal blood.

A new Mongol state was formed which included Iraq and the Fertile Crescent in the west, Fars in the south, and Khorasan in the east, of Persia; and in the north, the lands of the Medes (today Armenia, Azarbayjan, and part of Georgia). These were regions which had seen centuries of economic development and had achieved a high level of



civilization. Baghdad, however, together with the Caliphate, was in decline and had been so since the tenth century; neglected irrigation works in the lower reaches of the Tigris and Euphrates had produced a further decline in the prosperity of these regions.⁵

It is a matter of dispute how lasting were the destructive effects of the Mongol invasion of Central and Western Asia. Baron d'Ohsson in the first half of the last century spoke of the Mongols as "surpassing in cruelty, the most barbarous people, transforming flourishing lands into deserts", and of their governments as being "a triumph of depravity".⁶ E. G. Browne, of the twentieth century, also refers to the "hateful appearance and disgusting habits . . . unscrupulous perfidy . . . reeking charnel houses . . ." and to the usual fate (worse than death) of women at the hands of the Mongols.⁷ In the case of Persia, the process of assimilation to higher economic and cultural levels was not a long one, and the Mongols were soon stimulating a commercial and productive revival.

Trade and the trade routes had already begun to transfer from the southern to the northern districts of Persia. The richest provinces conquered by Hulagu were those of Azarbayjan. Here the Mongols found thriving markets and artisan industry whose products, especially textiles, were in wide demand. Here, too, between the Caspian and the Caucasus, were incomparable pastures, on the lower slopes of the ranges in the winter, higher up for the summer meadows. Here, in the Qarabagh, a century and a half later, Timur was to find his most congenial winter quarters. And here the city of Tabriz became the capital of the Hulagid empire, and according to Mustawfi, the finest and largest city in all the lands of Turan.⁸

Under Mongol rule the southern Iraq provinces, it is true, continued to decline, but in favour of the northern regions through which passed the trunk route from Khorasan, Mawarannahr, and China, as well as the route from China via the Darband Pass, the Volga, and the empire of the Golden Horde. The latter route had acquired a great importance, with an increasing flow of local and continental traffic. Relations busier than ever before were established between the civilizations of the Near and Far East, both by land and by sea. Despite the armies of tax-collectors and functionaries that ransacked the Hulagid empire, under Mongol rule a new period of economic and cultural development began in Persia, if not for the southern, certainly for the northern provinces. In Tabriz a concourse of merchants and envoys and pilgrims assembled; they converged not only from the trans-Asian routes, but from the Christian kingdoms of Trebizond and Constantinople in the west; from Syria

via Antioch and Aleppo; from Cairo and Damascus; from India via the Persian Gulf and Hurmuz; and from the pilgrim route coming from Mecca via Baghdad.

The Tabriz market, organized in sections for the different wares and crafts, brought a substantial income to the Il-khans in tariffs and tolls: there was the musk and ambergris bazaar, the bazaars of the jewellers, and those for silk-stuffs, taffetas, cottons; for unguents, lacquers, and for the spices of India and the rhubarb of China, for which the market was renowned.

Mustawfi, in 1340, described the magnificent buildings to be seen in Tabriz and in its two suburbs, together with the gardens irrigated by the river-waters and nine-hundred-odd underground water-channels installed by rich folk. The fruit of Tabriz was good, plentiful, and cheap; the people fair-skinned and handsome—but of proud and boastful bearing, and untrustworthy as friends. Rich and poor alike occupied themselves with business, and wine-bibbers went about “with shameless effrontery”. The revenues of the city received by the Treasury in 1341 amounted to nearly nine million dinars.

The trans-Asian traffic flourished, and the highways to the west were also busy. Mongol domination in the thirteenth century gave temporarily to Europe direct access to the trade in spices and other oriental products, a trade which had previously been mainly in the hands of Muslim states. The Il-khans were courted by the merchant-princes of Genoa and of Venice, in the expectation of greater access to the caravan centres and their luxury goods. They were also courted by the Catholic Popes, who hoped that the Il-khans might become converts to Christianity. On the other hand, the Il-khans were interested in alliances with European rulers directed against their mutual enemy, the Mamluk Sultans of Egypt. Il-khan Arghun (1284-91) sent envoys to Christendom with this end in view. His envoy to the court (in Gascony) of Edward I of England was a Christian Uyghur born in Peking, who had come to the Levant as a pilgrim. Edward received a leopard in a cage as gift from the Il-khan.⁹ Like the negotiations a hundred years later between Timur and the west, directed against the common enemy the Ottoman Turks, the overtures came to nothing.

The economic and cultural development of the Hulagid empire reached its peak at the end of the thirteenth century in the reign of Ghazan. He, to the chagrin of the west, preferred the Crescent to the Cross, and adopted the faith of Islam, the first of the Il-khans to do so. Settled life was encouraged and Ghazan introduced financial reforms, including a uniform currency—inscribed in three languages: Arab, Mongol, and

Tibetan. This was the currency subsequently adopted by Kebeck in Mawarrannahr.¹⁰ Ghazan promoted the cultivation of land that had fallen into disuse, and attempted to prevent the extortions of tax-collectors from ruining the cultivators. From this period date many fine buildings with which Tabriz in particular was embellished, as well as scientific, literary, and historical works of unique value.

The Il-khan commissioned his Minister, Rashid al-din, to write a history of the Mongols. This work, which drew on oral sources as well as written materials no longer available, provides the foundation of much of the current knowledge of Mongol political and social organization. The work was completed by a companion volume containing a general history of the world, and especially of the lands of Islam.

After Ghazan the Hulagid empire entered a period of decline, as a result of internal and external struggles. During the Mongol period there was an increase in large land-holdings, and hostility between the peasantry and the ruling classes heightened.¹¹ Moreover, from the beginning of Hulagu's rule, conflict had broken out with the Mongol empire to the north, the Golden Horde, over the desirable provinces of Azarbayjan, which separated the two empires. The khan of the Golden Horde had claimed this territory as the prize due to him for his share in the conquest of Persia. Negotiations and skirmishes alternated with full-scale battles between the two Mongol powers. It was to avoid being caught up in the hostilities in 1262 between the Hulagids and the Golden Horde that the Polo brothers (senior) left the territory of the latter and went to Bukhara in the Chaghatay dominions. Later in the century the Polos availed themselves of the opportunity to leave the court of Khubilay Khan in Peking by acting as escort to the Mongol princess who was being sent as bride to Arghun the Il-khan of Persia. Over two years later (1294) the envoys arrived in Persia, having preferred the sea route to the overland route where disorders were rife. (The overland route in times of relative peace took no more than eight months.) Arghun meanwhile had died; so his son Ghazan got the bride.

The Il-khans had also been weakened by wars against neighbouring Syria, which Hulagu had never succeeded in conquering, and which was ruled by the Mamluks of Egypt after they had cast out the Crusaders. In the marches of Armenia and Asia Minor, independent Turkic tribes, the Black Sheep and White Sheep Turkomans, challenged the former vassals of the Il-khans, the Seljuks. The ambitions of local feudal lords and the intrigues at court (to which the great Vizier Rashid al-din fell victim in his seventieth year) still further weakened Mongol rule; so that in 1335, when the Il-khan Abu-Said died without a son, Mongol domination

came practically to an end. Persia degenerated into a collection of politically weak feudal states, torn by dynastic quarrels and religious disputes, but rich enough still to be a source of rivalry between themselves, and to provide an irresistible temptation to a predatory neighbour. Timurid historians found it significant that the year of Abu-Said's death was the same—Muslim—year as the birth of Timur.

When Timur became master of Mawarannahr he regarded himself as the inheritor and continuer of the Central Asian empire of Chaghatay. At the end of the thirteen-seventies, when opposition had been destroyed and his dominions extended to the north and to the east, the Emir's ambitions extended beyond Central Asia to world conquest. "Just as there is only one God in Heaven, so the earth can support only one King," said the chronicler, adding that the earth was a small thing compared with the ambition of this prince, who began to concern himself with the affairs of his western neighbour, the quarrelling segments of the Hulagid empire.

Timur had roamed as an outlaw in the regions west of the Amu-Darya and knew at first hand the wealth that Khorasan had to offer. Through this province came the trunk route from Mawarannahr and China, joined by a branch from India at Balkh. In the markets along these routes, especially at Herat, could be found the produce of the Mediterranean as well as that of Khorasan: silks and cottons—stuffs for turbans, veils, cloaks, saddle-cloths, and cushions; brocades of silk and cloth of goat-hair; felts and carpets; the splendid turquoises of Nishapur; cooking-pots, belts, cereals, oil of sesame, manna, aromatics, millstones and arsenic; confections of pomegranates, grape honey, almonds and pistachios; the steel so admirably forged at Herat; Khorasan gold and silver; rubies and lapis-lazuli from Mawarannahr. In these markets could be bought horses, mules, sheep, camels—cheap, and slaves—dear.¹²

In the height of its splendour in the twelfth century Herat boasted, according to Mustawfi, twelve thousand shops in its markets, and six thousand hot baths. He added that besides the caravanserais and mills, there were then three hundred and sixty colleges, as well as a darvish convent, a fire-temple, and nearly four hundred and fifty thousand houses inhabited by a settled population. The city was moreover defended by stout walls and a fortress that was supposed to be indestructible.

Since the fall of the Il-khans, Herat had become the capital of the independent kingdom of the Karts, an Afghan dynasty (previously vassals of the Il-khans), ruling over the lands immediately west of Mawarannahr. In the thirteen-fifties the Karts had suffered the predatory raids of Emir Qazaghan from the east. The Karts belonged to the Sunni

sect and disputed various territorial and doctrinal claims with their neighbours further west, where a kingdom of Shi-a Sarbadars had been established.

Timur prepared his campaign for the conquest of the Hulagid territories with a casuist's regard for political justification, and one by one he picked off the different provinces, beginning with those of Khorasan. "The men here are warlike and carry arms, being given to treachery; and they are Sunnis in creed."¹³

A qurultay was assembled in 1379, and to it was summoned Ghiyath al-din Pir Ali, the Kart prince of Herat, in the capacity of vassal. The conquests of the Emir Qazaghan were used as justification for regarding Herat as tributary to the rulers of Mawarannahr. Pir Ali, a valiant enough fellow, played for time. He did not, he said, feel safe to come without a suitable escort. Emir Sayf al-din Barlas was despatched to provide the safe conduct. Pir Ali still showed no signs of setting out, and old Barlas noted that the fortifications of the city of Herat were being strengthened. He returned without his charge, and reported to Timur.

The position was clear, and in 1380 Timur was ready. His second surviving son, Miranshah, then fourteen years old, was proclaimed ruler of Khorasan. Accompanied by distinguished emirs and lords of the steppe, and with fifty companies of cavalry, the boy rode west on the first lap to make good the claim. He wintered with his troops in the meadows of Balkh, and next spring (1381) was joined by the hosts of Timur. On the way Timur visited the shrine of the crazy darvish Baba Sangu at Andkhoy. The saint's welcome consisted in casting a piece of raw meat, the breast of a sheep, at the Lord of the Fortunate Conjunction. This Timur declared to be a most happy omen; it was clear from it that Allah intended him to conquer Khorasan, which had always been called the breast, or the heart, of the world.

A little further on Timur had a long conversation with another holy man, the venerable Zayn al-din Abu Bakr of Tayabad, celebrated for the purity of his life and his austerity. It seems that this hermit refused the summons to Timur's presence, saying that he had no business with the Emir. If the Emir had business with him, then it was up to him to pay the visit. Timur came. Years later Hafiz-i Abru was told by the Emir that Zahn al-din was the only ascetic who had filled him with awe. Ibn Arabshah went further and said that when the shaykh laid his hands on the back of the kneeling conqueror, Timur felt as if he were being crushed between heaven and earth. There followed a discussion in which Timur was reported to have asked the old man why he did not use his influence to curb the ruler of Herat, who had turned to violence, tyranny, and for-

bidden pleasures. The shaykh replied that he had indeed spoken, but he had not been heard. "God has now sent you against him . . ." After that, said Arabshah, when Timur went out from the old man with the righteousness of his cause confirmed, "his hump stood erect and he said, 'I am the Lord of the World by the Lord of the Kabah.'"¹⁴ (The Kabah is the Black Stone sacred to the Muslims, one of the main objects of the pilgrimage to Mecca.)

With such auspicious auguries to sustain them, the hosts of Timur poured into Khorasan. The steppe was covered with tents, banners, cavalry, foot-soldiers, arms, and baggage. The hubbub of the drums, the sound of the great seven-foot trumpets at dawn, the noise of wagons and camel bells resounded throughout the land, and the people of Khorasan were filled with apprehension. Fushanj, a town to the south of Herat, was the first to fall, in spite of its solid fortifications and ample provisions. The day was not without its adversity for the Tatars, however, for one of their chiefs and some of the men fell into the moat and were drowned.

Ghiyath al-din Pir Ali, prince of Herat, and his Afghan troops were prepared to resist in their impregnable fortress; but they were unable to inspire a like determination in the people of the city. In an attempt to organize resistance, Pir Ali sent criers round to rally the people to the parapets and ramparts. The cries fell on deaf ears. The inhabitants preferred to protect their goods and their fine houses; they feared for their merchandise and their well-stocked bazaars; they preferred to trust the promise of the Conqueror that their lives and property would be spared if they refrained from defending the city.

Pir Ali therefore sent his sister, his eldest son, and one of his emirs to offer submission. Timur returned the sister and son, but retained the emir, questioning him on the condition of his country; and he demanded the presence of the ruler of Herat himself. Swallowing his pride, Pir Ali came and kissed the imperial carpet; with him were the city elders and ulama, the eminent men of Herat. The city's treasure, including large quantities of silver money, uncut precious stones, brocades, and golden thrones, were seized and brought laden on camels to Timur's encampment in the meadows. Fearing a subsequent uprising, Timur ordered that the defensive walls and towers of the city were to be destroyed. Only the citadel remained untouched. In return for their lives, the citizens were required to pay a heavy ransom.

The gates of Herat, superbly bound with wrought iron and covered with inscriptions, were removed and despatched to Shahrisabz, Timur's birthplace, which he was embellishing. Thither too were sent the scholars

of Herat, including the leaders of the church. Pir Ali was installed as vassal governor.

Several towns were sacked by the Tatars and then Timur returned for the winter to the Bukhara pastures, fine game country, where the victory celebrations were held. (The sons of Chingiz, Chaghatay and Ogedey, used to go hunting in this region, sending weekly, as a sample of their bag, fifty camel-loads of swans to their father.)¹⁵ Herat was one of the strongest and finest cities of Khorasan, in fact of all the Hulagid territories, bearing comparison with Tabriz and Baghdad. It had fallen to Timur as easily as an autumn fruit. Herat was to become, with Samarqand, one of the main centres of power of the state of Timur and of his descendants.

The joys of conquest were, however, clouded by domestic loss. Princess Ugebiki, one of Timur's daughters, married to a noble of Chaghatay descent, had fallen into a decline, and in 1382, surrendered her life to the angel Izrail.¹⁶ She left a son, Sultan-Husayn, who was to have a chequered career. She was buried at Shahrisabz, where Timur built a memorial to her.

Two years later the populace of Herat revolted. Co-operating with them were bands of Afghans. Miranshah, son of Timur and ruler of Khorasan, had been wintering with his forces on the banks of the Murghab river to the north of Herat. He sent two emirs with troops ahead to Herat, and followed with the rest of his army. The revolt was suppressed without mercy. A tower was erected with the heads of the slain, and on the living was imposed a considerably larger ransom than before. The Kart prince, Pir Ali, and his family, who had already been brought to Samarqand and imprisoned, were accused of complicity and said their last prayers. The last representative of the dynasty, Pir Muhammad, was put to death in Samarqand by Miranshah six years later (1389), also on the grounds of complicity in the Khorasan risings. One version relates that Miranshah jovially cut off the head of Pir Muhammad at a banquet, subsequently explaining his violence as due to excessive drink. Fortuitously or not, the Kart dynasty was liquidated and Herat remained one of the great cities of Timur's empire.

At the same time as the submission of Herat, in 1381, the Sarbadar state further west offered allegiance to Timur. These "gallows-birds" had been in conflict with their Kart neighbours not only in matters of doctrine, but over the city of Nishapur. Timur had been in friendly contact with the Khorasan Sarbadars, and the ruler, Imam Ali Muayyad, on his own initiative, transferred his province with its capital of Sabzawar to Timur.¹⁷ Several years later the Imam Ali was killed fighting in Timur's service.

To the north of Khorasan the Elburz range of mountains overhangs the shores of the Caspian: the peoples of this region, Mazandaran, were protected not only by mountain strongholds but by the dense forest which covered the approaches. The hill slopes around the southern shores of the Caspian were rich in fruits and produced some of the best silk in Central Asia; lower down towards the sea-board, however, stagnant water collected in the depressions and the region was swampy and unhealthy; some of the grasses of Mazandaran were poisonous and the horses died of them. From their strongholds the tribesmen attacked the Khorasan caravans and their princes offered a stubborn resistance to Timur.

In the spring of 1382, Timur set out again for Khorasan to put down the resistance of Emir Wali of Mazandaran and his neighbour the prince of Kilat, Ali Beg. Kilat was a mountain fortress near Tus, difficult of access and prepared for resistance. Timur besieged the place and made little headway. He then made a feint departure, whereupon Ali Beg let loose once more the herds of horses, the sheep and other animals into the surrounding pastures. Timur returned, and blocked up all the paths and passages leading through the mountains to Kilat. Thus, deprived of all livestock and sustenance, the town was reduced to a sepulchre. Eventually Ali Beg was forced to submit, and came to Timur bearing the sabre and shroud which, according to Tatar tradition, signified that the bearer was willing to fight to the death for his lord. Emir Wali and his provinces south of the Caspian were also reduced to submission.

Timur returned to winter near Samarqand, sent an expedition to Moghulistan, and then set out again himself for the west where rebellions had flared up. Isfizar, south of Herat, "where the people were Sunnis and very bigoted",¹⁸ had risen in revolt. The walls and fortress of the place were mined and destroyed. Two thousand captives were taken, piled living one above the other and cemented with layers of clay and bricks, to form towers, and to serve as a warning against further resistance.

From the human towers of Isfizar the Tatars swept, a hundred thousand strong, further south into Sistan, putting down resistance with the arrow and the sword, and completing their work by making "mountains with the bodies, and towers with the heads" of the slaughtered. Zaranj, the capital of Sistan, a city protected from the moving sands of the desert by a dyke, a city with windmills and date-palm groves, was taken after heavy fighting, during which the horse was shot from under the Conqueror. As a result, the walls were razed to the ground, and every person perished. "Whatever was in that country, from potsherds to royal pearls, from the finest fabrics to the very nails in the doors and walls, was swept away by the winds of spoliation."¹⁹ Zaranj became a nameless ruin.

Timur went east again, pillaging and destroying, to Qandahar, which was taken by assault; the commander of the garrison was hanged.

By the mid-'eighties, Timur held, in addition to Mawarannahr, the whole of Khorasan; Afghanistan; Sistan; and a considerable part of Mazandaran as far as Sultaniya.

After the death of the Hulagid Il-khan Abu-Said in 1335, a Mongol chief of the Jalayir tribe (not of the house of Chingiz), made himself master of the western regions of the empire beyond Khorasan and the Great Desert. The Jalayirs took possession of the Baghdad and Azarbayjan regions (including Tabriz and Sultaniya), but had difficulty in maintaining their rule over the northern, Azarbayjan provinces. In the thirties-eighties four Jalayir brothers fell out. The reigning sultan was killed by his brother Ahmad, who seized the throne, only to face further fratricidal conflict.

In 1384 came the news of the approach of Timur from Khorasan. Sultan Ahmad fled, and Sultaniya was surrendered to a handful of the Emir's troops. Thus one Hulagid capital, Sultaniya, fell easily to Timur; Tabriz, the main prize, still awaited the conqueror strong enough to take it. But Timur returned to Samarqand after Sultaniya, his troops laden with booty, for the usual victory celebrations. According to the custom of these occasions, pearls and gold coins were scattered over the Conqueror and festivities were arranged. Domestic sorrow had clouded several of these occasions, for in 1383 Timur had lost one of his wives, Dilshad-agma, the daughter of the Moghul Emir Qamar al-din, whom he had married eight years before. An even greater loss followed—that of his elder sister Qutluq-Turkan-agma, who had given him sanctuary when he was an outlaw, and for whom Timur appears to have had a special regard.

More than one powerful prince had his eyes on the riches of Tabriz. In the days of the Il-khans these regions had been the source of dispute between them and their cousins of the Golden Horde. Tokhtamish, who had been established as khan of the Golden Horde with the aid of Timur, felt the same urge to claim the splendid Caucasian border provinces and Tabriz as had his predecessors. Tokhtamish followed up Timur's departure from Sultaniya to Samarqand for seasonable pleasures, by sending an expedition through the Darband pass into Azarbayjan and seizing Tabriz. The governor was unable to put up effective resistance, and the city, according to the indignant biographers of Timur, was cruelly pillaged; the hordes of Tokhtamish committed enormities that surpassed human imagination. Then, laden with booty, the wealth amassed by the city

during many decades, including three hundred tumans of gold, and with long trains of slaves, the troops of Tokhtamish departed by the same route as they had come, west of the Caspian. Sultan Ahmad returned.

THE THREE YEARS' CAMPAIGN

1386 (Year of the Tiger)—1388 (Year of the Dragon)

The campaigns of a single season were over. The horizons had extended; the challenges were greater. In 1386, the Year of the Tiger, Timur embarked on the first of his long-term campaigns to complete the subjugation of the Hulagid dominions and to secure for himself the benefits of the western stages of the great caravan routes. He meant also to forestall any further presumptuous incursions on the part of his former protégé Tokhtamish. The tuvajis had been ordered to mobilise the troops for a three years' campaign. Emirs were appointed to govern Mawarannahr during Timur's absence. Prince Omar-Shaykh, Timur's eldest surviving son, was made ruler of Farghana in the east. Without disclosing the direction of his main attack, Timur departed eastwards also, in the direction of the Sir-Darya.

Suddenly his forces appeared in Luristan, in the extreme west of Persia. Predatory ambitions had been laced with religious zeal. The mountain tribes of Lurs were harassing the caravans of pilgrims en route for Mecca. Timur undertook personally to avenge these abominable actions and, selecting two warriors from every ten, he led them by forced marches to the attack on the robber strongholds. Captured opponents were cast over the mountain precipices. It was on this hard-fought expedition that Timur lost three of his emirs, who were taken ill, said the records, either through the decree of destiny or the intemperate air. Here, too, Imam Ali Muayyad Sarbadar was wounded in combat and died shortly after.

Timur rejoined his main army and advanced rapidly on Azarbayjan and the capital Tabriz. Sultan Ahmad Jalayir, who had been gathering forces for its defence, once again fled, abandoning troops and baggage. A detachment sent in pursuit caught up with the Sultan and a hot struggle ensued. The leader of Timur's force was wounded, and Ahmad escaped. Tabriz surrendered without a struggle (1386); indeed, a number of the city's emirs, opponents of Sultan Ahmad who "towards the end of his reign took to opium-eating and corrupt fancies", had offered their submission to Timur; these were followed by the rulers of the outlying provinces.²⁰ The inhabitants of Tabriz, however, paid for their lives, and

their previous submission to Tokhtamish, with a great ransom: huge indeed were the resources of this caravan entrepot. Schiltberger, a Bavarian page who fell captive to Timur, reported that "the king of Persia has a larger revenue from the city of Tabriz than has the most powerful king in Christendom, because a great many merchants come to it."

The Tatar court and the army remained in the environs throughout the summer of 1386, and Timur received the submission of the local rulers. The masters in each craft and of each science in Tabriz were sent off to Samarqand. Resistance, which had flared up again in Mazandaran under Emir Wali, was suppressed; the emir himself was captured and decapitated; his head was brought, according to the custom of the yasa of Chingiz-khan, and was presented at the foot of Timur's throne.

In the autumn, the governorship of Tabriz was conferred on Muhammad-Sultan, the promising son of Jahangir, Timur's first-born and favourite, and the imperial standard then moved north to wage sudden war against the infidels of Georgia in the Caucasus. Here a proud and militant people worshipped not Allah the One God, but the One God of the Christians. They had maintained their Christianity in the face of strong Muslim neighbours, and their territory had frequently been a battleground between the Cross and the Crescent. However, God had recommended to his prophet Muhammad to make war on the enemies of the faith, and Timur had long been considering an attack on these regions, which overlooked the trade routes between the Volga steppes and Persia, and which controlled the passes through the Caucasus available to his rival Tokhtamish for sudden attack southwards. Not until these passes and these people were submissive to Timur would the Lame Conqueror feel free to punish his protégé in the way he deserved for daring to encroach on the wealthy provinces of Azarbayjan. This was the first of six remorseless campaigns.

The force of Timur's attack was such that he and his hordes reached the Georgian capital Tiflis, in regions so high that the air itself was filled with ice and frost. The city, strongly fortified, prepared to resist. It was besieged, weakened by assault machines, and taken by storm. Timur himself led the assault troops, protecting his head from showers of Georgian arrows with a wattle shield. Bagrat, King of Georgia, and his family, were taken prisoner and bound in chains.

Subsequently Bagrat was brought to Timur's presence in the winter pastures of Qarabagh. Timur received the Christian king and invited him to become a Muslim, giving him "a thousand good reasons"²¹ for so doing. At last the king saw the error of his ways, or at least the expediency

of renouncing them. He accepted the Muslim faith, declaring that there was no God but the One God and that Muhammad was his prophet. Bagrat was restored to liberty and to his people, sustained by the great quantities of gifts which he had received from the Conqueror. The Georgian king had presented Timur with a coat of mail which was believed to have been forged by the prophet David with his own hands. Georgia then had six years' respite.

The King of Shirvan, who controlled the vital Darband pass on the western coast of the Caspian, submitted and went one better. He presented Timur with a splendid collection of gifts, nine of each kind, according to custom, except for slaves, of whom there were but eight. When taxed with this omission, he presented himself at Timur's feet, as the ninth slave. This gallantry much pleased the Lord of the Fortunate Conjunction, who heaped favours upon him and restored him to the dominion of his people.

The rulers of the coastal provinces of Gilan, who for centuries had maintained their independence, secure in their mountain citadels and protected by woods and marshes, came also and made their submission.

The Georgian victories were celebrated by a hunt in the Tatar fashion. The troops were ranged in a circle enclosing a considerable area of hills and plain. The circle gradually closed in, preventing the game from escaping, and driving all the living creatures closer together. When the central arena was filled with livestock and the circle tightly closed, the Great Emir and princes of the blood entered first, according to the rules of the chase, and killed such beasts as they pleased. When they had finished their sport, the soldiers entered in their turn, killing whatever they pleased. Stags, does, and tigers were amongst the wild animals driven into the circle. There was so much game that after everyone had been satisfied, many beasts were released, and so much game had been killed that it could not be transported and was abandoned to the birds of prey and to other wild animals.

Timur marched away from Georgia, his army laden with the spoils and the pillage of the chase, the fallen strongholds, and the countryside. When they reached the foot of Mount Elbruz (the highest mountain in the Caucasus and in Europe), Timur, at the head of his victorious army, ordered the imperial standard to be raised. Exalted by their surroundings, the hordes and their chief made known the depth of their faith and the purity of their intentions. They offered up praises to Allah, to mark the triumph of the faith of Islam, and the destruction of the religion of the infidels.

The winter had not passed, however, before the recalcitrant Tokhtamish, khan of the Golden Horde, again sent an expedition to ravage the Darband region. Timur despatched a number of his emirs as envoys to

recall to Tokhtamish the terms of his treaties with Timur, and his obligations to him. Troops under Miranshah followed the envoys in case they were attacked. The attack occurred; Miranshah arrived in time, and returned to Timur with a number of Qipchaq prisoners. (The Qipchaqs were the nomads wandering in the regions controlled by the Golden Horde.) These prisoners received an unusual reception. Timur spoke to them reproachfully of the fickleness of their ruler, Tokhtamish, whom Timur regarded as a son, and who owed him much. Why did he wish to cause the death of so many Muslims? Tokhtamish should abide by the treaty and not reawaken war between them. The prisoners were then set at liberty, provided with money and supplies, and a guide to conduct them back to the khan of the Golden Horde.

Timur finished the winter in pastures by the Gukchah Tangiz—the Blue Lake—whither he had summoned the royal household, including Queen Saray-Mulk-khanum, and several royal grandchildren. When he had news of their approach, Timur mounted horse and went to meet them. Gold pieces and precious stones were scattered over him, according to custom, but in such quantity that the officers grew tired of gathering it up.

As the spring of 1387 set in, Timur continued his campaigns westward across Armenia and into Asia Minor. These regions between Mesopotamia and Asia Minor were in the hands of tribes of Turks, from amongst whom two federations emerged in the fourteenth century: the Qaraqoyunlu, the Black Sheep Turkomans, and their rivals the Aq-qoyunlu, the White Sheep Turkoman tribes. Qara-Muhammad, chief of the Black Sheep Turkoman tribes, had helped Sultan Ahmad Jalayir to power in Tabriz, but the two had recently fallen out and were preparing to fight it out over the spoils of Tabriz.²² At this point Timur appeared. The Turkoman tribes, although Muslim, had committed the error of attacking profitable caravan trains and the pilgrims going to Mecca. Once more there was an excuse for a holy war. Timur advanced on Erzerum, an important station on the caravan route, and took it on the day of his arrival. Prince Taharten, the emir of Arzinjan, next along the line of march, hastened to declare his submission. Timur then despatched three corps of picked troops under the command of his son Miranshah in pursuit of the main Turkoman horde, the Black Sheep, and their chief Qara-Muhammad. This chief had failed to obey the summons to appear before Timur to make his submission. Miranshah advanced into the lands of these disturbers of the peace, and the court records say that he made a fine haul of horses, camels, sheep, and other goods, and took the greater part of the women and girls as slaves. But according to a seventeenth-century history of the Black Sheep tribes, Miranshah's first expedition

produced no results, and several more were sent, which were badly mauled by the Black Sheep.²³ Qara-Muhammad, however, retired to the security of the mountains and was preparing for further resistance when death overtook him. He was succeeded by his son Qara-Yusuf.

Timur meanwhile led the attack on Mush and Akhlat, and continued the conquest of Armenia with the capture of the fortress of Van. This citadel rose steeply from the side of the lake, and "had never yet fallen before the attack of the foe". The fortress was invested on three sides and the assault on the walls began. Within two days the Prince of Van had surrendered and was paying homage to Timur, but not so the inhabitants. They fortified the roads and continued their resistance. Timur's engineers set up battering rams, and on the twentieth day of the siege the Tatars entered, sabre in hand. Those who resisted were either slaughtered immediately or bound by neck and arms and thrown down from the summit.

The siege of Avnik castle, a stronghold half-way between Erzerum and Lake Van, held by Qara-Yusuf's brother Misr, continued for nine months. The young Turkoman prince was finally induced by guile to surrender, and was sent with his family as prisoners to Samarqand.

Some time previous to this campaign Timur had received a communication from Shah Shuja Muzaffar, ruler of Fars, the rich southern province of Persia. The Muzaffari dynasty had served the Hulagids in the thirteenth century and were governors of Yazd. After the death of the last Il-khan, Abu-Said, they extended their rule to Kirman, and in 1353 succeeded in wresting Fars with its capital of Shiraz from its former ruler. By the end of the thirteen-fifties the Muzaffari prince, Shah Shuja, had seized Isfahan and was disputing Tabriz with the Jalayirs.

Shah Shuja Muzaffar, a patron of the arts and in particular of the poet Hafiz, had come to the throne in 1357, after blinding and imprisoning his father. He was otherwise of a feeble, if impulsive disposition. "He was so torn by faintness that he could not endure fasting either at home or abroad, and often prayed God the Forgiver to raise no disputes between himself and Timur. When he was so close to his destined goal and the valet of death folded up and removed from him the carpet of hope, he summoned his relatives and sons and divided the kingdom and countries between them." Having already accepted the Great Emir as his overlord, the old shah appointed Timur his executor, confirming this by an open document, "like one who adds wind to a storm".

The letter, written by Shah Shuja on his deathbed, to Timur "wise as Solomon and great as Alexander",²⁴ expressed his loyalty and devotion to the Conqueror, asking protection for his sons and brothers, the heirs to

the kingdom. Shiraz, capital of Fars, was bequeathed to Shuja's son Zayn al-Abidin; Shuja's brother Sultan Ahmad received Kirman; one nephew, Shah Yahya, received Yazd, and another nephew, Shah Mansur, received Isfahan. Characteristic dissensions followed the death of Shuja in 1384, and Timur, "seized with grief, restrained and held down his anger, but nevertheless waited in that matter for an opportunity which he might seize".

The opportunity presented itself in the autumn of 1387, after Timur's attacks on Armenia in the north. Zayn al-Abidin, heir of Shuja, had been summoned to the Tatar court to render his submission, but had not put in an appearance. Timur rode south past Hamadan to Isfahan. Now Isfahan was a great and beautiful city, "full of excellent men and teeming with nobles". "The price fixed for corn and other grain is here always moderate," said Mustawfi, "and fruit is extremely cheap in the market. Winter and other summer crops are excellent. The fruit is extremely delicate, more particularly apples, quinces, pears, yellow plums and apricots. Water-melons are very sweet . . . to eat much of them is unwholesome. Fruits are exported to India and to Greece. Isfahan has rich pasture-lands, and every four-footed beast that is fattened here becomes twice as strong as it would be if fattened elsewhere . . . many meadowlands, of extent unrivalled . . . good hunting grounds, all kinds of game . . ."

Timur ranged his army in battle-formation and camped in full view of the city. The governor and city elders judged it prudent to offer their submission to the Conqueror, and hurried forth with the city keys. Timur made a triumphal entry, and having installed a governor and a garrison, he returned to his camp. Instructions were issued for the seizing of all arms and mounts. Officers were appointed to guard the gates. The city dignitaries were taken before the Divan and the ransom—practically the total wealth of Isfahan—was fixed. The city was divided into districts over which emirs and troops were appointed to take charge of the collection of the ransom. Timur detained the city elders in his camp.

During the night Isfahan awoke to the drum-beats of a blacksmith, who raised the alarm and rallied the city populace against Timur's guards. More than three thousand Tatar soldiers, belonging to the garrison or those who had entered the town for their own purposes, were slaughtered. Then the insurgents ran to the town gates and attempted to fortify themselves against the rest of Timur's army. When morning came, "Timur perceived that evil crime. Satan puffed up his nostrils and he forthwith moved his camp and drew the sword of his wrath and took arrows from the quiver of his tyranny and advanced to the city, rearing,

overthrowing, like a dog or lion or leopard.”²⁵ He ordered the destruction of the whole population and the division of the property amongst his troops. The city was taken by assault, and after troops had been allocated to protect the quarters of the city elders, the slaughter of the rest of the population was organized. Each tuman, thousand, and hundred was ordered to secure a prescribed number of heads of the Isfahan population. Tuvajis of the Divan were appointed to supervise the collection. Many of Timur’s Muslim warriors were reluctant to kill their fellow-Muslims. They bought their quota of heads from others not troubled by such scruples. At the beginning, Isfahani heads were selling at twenty kebek dinars each. Later, when the quotas were being achieved, the law of supply and demand fetched the price down to a half-dinar per capita. Finally, there were no more purchasers. Some citizens who had escaped by hiding during the day, emerged at night; it was mid-November (1387), and they found the streets covered with a light fall of snow. Their tracks were followed, and they too perished.

Seventy thousand heads were piled in heaps outside the city walls and later erected into minarets.

Having nominated two emirs to govern the city for a year, Timur moved south into the province of perfumes, Fars, which exported to the distant lands of Asia and Africa its unguents—attar of red roses, palm-flower water, perfumes distilled from southernwood, saffron, lily, jasmine, myrtle, orange and willow flowers. Shiraz, the once great capital of Fars, submitted immediately, hastening to pay a ransom of ten million silver kebek dinars. Zayn al-Abidin, the Muzaffari prince whom Timur had “treated with kindness”, according to Arabshah, took flight as soon as the news of Timur’s approach had reached him. He had fled to the supposed protection of his cousin Shah Mansur. But Shah Mansur, no less perfidious than his kind, seduced the troops of Zayn Al-Abidin, and, seizing their prince, had imprisoned him in a castle. Here he was, as a precaution, blinded. Meanwhile the other Muzaffaris, Shah Yahya of Yazd and Sultan Ahmad of Kirman, together with many local chiefs, hastened in their turn to submit to the Conqueror. They were received with honour and confirmed in office. But the Tatars continued to ravage the countryside.

The hordes with Timur moved south again, passed the ancient capital Istakhr (Persepolis), to camp outside the city of Shiraz, which in addition to its ransom supported the cost of an imposing festival celebrated in honour of the arrival of the Lame Conqueror and his victories. Timur’s name was read in the Khutba, the Friday prayer, from the pulpits of the

mosques, and a public sacrifice was made of a camel. Governors were appointed to the newly subjugated regions, fiefs formally granted to submissive princes, and yarliqs were sealed with the royal seal. The most able craftsmen with their tools and families, together with the most illustrious men of letters, including the learned Sayyid al-Jurjani, were sent to the royal city of Samarqand. Court secretaries drew up Victory Letters which described in a most agreeable style the exploits that had taken place; these were despatched by the fastest couriers to Samarqand, some fifteen hundred miles away. The capital and all the other dominions were informed that the empire of the Hulagids, up to the confines of Iraq, had submitted to Timur, the Lord of the Fortunate Conjunction.

Shiraz, according to Mustawfi, was a pleasant city but spoiled by the filthy streets, the people having made no privies. However, at most times sweet-smelling herbs were not wanting, and were commonly sold in the market. The people of the city, lean and brown-skinned, were also addicted to holy poverty, and never devoid of saintly persons—or for that matter of avaricious persons. By reason of the lack of justice the city could also be called, he said, the Robbers' Haunt.

Amongst the many illustrious men of Shiraz at that time none had achieved wider fame than the poet Hafiz, the "immortal and incomparable". Hafiz, who had been patronized by Shah Shuja, achieved great celebrity in his lifetime; two kings of India invited him to visit their courts. Of his own fame he wrote:

The black-eyed beauties of Kashmir and the Turks of Samarqand
Sing and dance to the strains of Hafiz of Shiraz's verse.

In another verse Hafiz had said:

If that unkindly Shiraz Turk would take my heart within her hand,
I'd give Bukhara for the mole upon her cheek, or Samarqand.

They say that Timur summoned the poet to him. "With the blows of my lustrous sword have I subjugated most of the habitable globe, and laid waste thousands of towns and countries to embellish Samarqand and Bukhara, my native towns and seats of my government; and you, miserable wretch that you are, would sell them both for the black mole of a Turkic woman of Shiraz!" "Sire," replied Hafiz, with a deep obeisance, "it is through such prodigality that I have fallen on such evil days!" Timur is said to have been much pleased with this reply and to have given Hafiz a handsome present. The meeting, if it took place, would have been two years before the poet's death (1389).²⁶

As the couriers were hurrying with the tidings of victory to all corners

of his empire, another courier was racing from Samarqand to Shiraz, a journey which was accomplished in seventeen days. He brought dire tidings from Mawarannahr: Timur's fickle protégé Tokhtamish, khan of the Golden Horde, had struck from the north. While Timur was securing Tabriz and the Hulagid realms in the west, Tokhtamish had switched the direction of his attack from the Caucasus to the east, and had thrown his hordes against Mawarannahr itself. Timur's son Omar-Shaykh, ruler of Farghana, had only just escaped capture in battle with the Golden Horde troops near Otrar on the Sir-Darya. Omar-Shaykh was Timur's eldest surviving son. He, of all Timur's descendants who spent their lives campaigning, was the only one during the Conqueror's lifetime to meet his end on the battlefield. But that was several years later: an arrow-shot hit him when he was putting down rebel bands in Persia. Now he was fleeing for his life in his own kingdom.

The Farghana valley, next to the valley of the Zarafshan, which supported Samarqand and Bukhara, and the Qashka-Darya valley, which supported Sharhrisabz, was the fairest in Mawarannahr. Babur, a native of Farghana, wrote nostalgic praises of its abounding grain and fruits. Its pheasants were so fat, he said, that four people could dine off the broth of one of them, and still not finish it. He wrote about the river of Andijan, and the gardens overlooking the river; in spring the tulips and roses would blow in profusion; the violets were particularly elegant. Travellers loved to rest in the meadows of clover. The inhabitants themselves, thought Babur, were remarkable for their beauty.

Now the Jats from Moghulistan in the east had joined the rebel attack, and were trampling the Farghana oases.

Urganch, capital of Khwarazm, had also joined the rebels. The hordes of Tokhtamish were pillaging the countryside; Bukhara was under siege; Timur's own birth-place, the Qashka-Darya valley, had been penetrated, and the palace built by the last effective Chaghatay khan Qazan, at Qarshi, had been burnt to the ground.

NOTES

¹ Juvaini: *Tarikh-i Jahan-Gusha: History of World Conqueror.*

² Ibid.

³ See p. 37.

⁴ Juvaini: *Tarikh-i Jahan-Gusha: History of World Conqueror.*

⁵ B. Lewis: *The Arabs in History.*

⁶ d'Ohsson: *L'Histoire des Mongols.*

⁷ E. G. Browne: *Literary History of Persia.*

⁸ Mustawfi Qazwini: *Nuzhat al-Qulub.*

⁹ W. Heyd: *Commerce du Levant au Moyen Age, 1936.*

¹⁰ See p. 40.

¹¹ A. K. S. Lambton: *Landlord and Peasant in Persia*, 1953.

¹² G. le Strange: *Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*, 1905.

¹³ Mustawfi Qazwini: *Nuzhat al-Qulub*.

¹⁴ Ibn Arabshah: *Tamerlane*.

¹⁵ Juvaini: *Tarikh-i Jahan-Gusha: History of World Conqueror*.

¹⁶ Muslims prefer to avoid direct mention of death. The Angel Izrail, according to Muslim lore, is the Angel of Death.

¹⁷ A. Jakoubovsky: *Timur*.

¹⁸ Mustawfi Qazwini: *Nuzhat al-Qulub*.

¹⁹ Sharaf al-din Yazdi: *Zafar-nama*.

²⁰ V. Minorsky: *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 1955.

²¹ Sharaf al-din Yazdi: *Zafar-nama*.

²² V. Minorsky: *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*. 1955.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibn Arabshah: *Tamerlane*.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Daulatshah: *Memoirs of the Poets*, ed. E. G. Browne.

TOKHTAMISH AND THE GOLDEN HORDE

1387 (Year of the Hare) — 1391 (Year of the Sheep)

THE Sahib Qiran, Lord of the Fortunate Conjunction, had been challenged during the winter of 1387-8 by the ruler of another Mongol empire. He had been challenged by his former protégé and ally, Tokhtamish, khan of the Golden Horde.

This was the first opposition of consequence to the victorious march of Timur's hordes. It was a challenge which could prove mortal to the security of the state which Timur had consolidated in Central Asia. The dominions of the Golden Horde spread in an engulfing arc north of Mawarannahr, which was geographically more compact, and, with its irrigated valleys and oasis cities, was therefore more vulnerable to attack than the sprawling territories of the Horde. Raids south across the Sir-Darya into Mawarannahr meant immediate harm to the settled areas which were beginning to feel the benefits of a strong centralized power. On the other hand, raids north upon the Golden Horde might press forward for weeks without striking an effective blow against the enemy.

The challenge had come, moreover, from an adversary to be reckoned with, a Tatar whose nomad forces measured up to Timur's forces, with skills corresponding to the skills of Timur's warriors; from a Tatar who met cunning with cunning—trained in fact by Timur—and who matched ambition with unwearying ambition. The challenge came from an opponent anxious to re-establish the power built up by the Golden Horde in the first half of the fourteenth century, together with its command over the profitable caravan trade and merchant centres. Timur's campaigns against the Golden Horde were not primarily of predatory intent. They were a military necessity; they were also vital politically and economically, in a defensive sense. According to Clavijo, the eventual victory over Tokhtamish was the one which, of all his victories, Timur regarded most highly. The domination of eastern Europe and Asia from the Black Sea to the Irtish by the Golden Horde was in many respects crucial for both continents. It was the decisive threat to Timur.

When Chingiz-khan had divided his empire he had accorded to Juchi, his eldest son, as his patrimony, the steppe-lands furthest west from Mongolia, "as far as the hoof of Tatar horse had travelled". (The bahadur, hero, of the Mongol epics traditionally rode "as far as the hoofs of his

steed brought him".) The greater part of these regions remained still to be conquered in the lifetime of Chingiz, although one Mongol corps sent in pursuit of the fleeing monarch of Central Asia, the Khwarazmshah Muhammad, had crossed into south-eastern Europe and the Volga regions. Shortly before his death Chingiz-khan had commanded Juchi to complete the conquest of the Qipchaqs, the nomads of the southern Russian steppes. The Qipchaqs, called also "komans" by west Europeans, and "Polovtsi" ("People of the Steppe") by the Russians, were nomads of Turkic origin. They roamed the regions between the lower Volga and the Dnieper, but the term came to be applied to all the nomad warriors of the empire of the Golden Horde.

Juchi died shortly before the Great Khan, and his son, the fierce Prince Batu (1227-56), inherited the task and the dominions. Following the launching of the campaign by the qurultay of Qaraqorum in 1235, Batu, in command of the expedition, overran the Qipchaq steppes, the Bulghar region on the Volga, the Russian principalities, the Crimea, and the Caucasus. By 1240 Kiev had fallen, and the road to Poland, Hungary, and other western states was open to Batu. In the spring of 1241 he crossed the Carpathians and defeated King Bela IV of Hungary. The Mongol horses pastured on the Hungarian plains during the summer and autumn. That year the Great Khan Ogedey died. Batu retraced his steps, but retained in his empire territories as far west as the Black Sea. The Juchi ulus (so-called in oriental chronicles) became known in Russian literature as the Golden Horde, a term possibly derived from the golden or royal pavilions of Batu. (Carpini related that the Great Khan Guyuk was enthroned in a camp called the Golden Ordu.) Gold was the imperial colour.

The northern Mongol empire included extensive pasturage, rich grain areas, and trade routes. The most important of these routes followed the Volga south from Bulghar, where it met the transcontinental routes between China and the Levant. The importance of the Bulghar region as a granary was increased through the relative ease of distribution along the Volga. Immense convoys of slaves also passed down the river from northern lands where the tribes captured their enemies or hunted each other; the fighting qualities of these nomads secured a ready market for them in Central Asia and the Middle East.

North Khwarazm, with the capital Urganch, former centre of the empire of Muhammadshah, also fell to the Golden Horde. From the tenth century onwards the Volga regions and Khwarazm had been linked by vigorous trading interests. The northern regions sent to Urganch by the Volga route the finest furs: sables and ermine, skunk, fox, martin and

beaver, spotted hare- and goat-skins. With these furs which the Bulgars received from the "land of shadows" beyond, came wax, arrows, birch-bark, high fur caps, fish glue, fish teeth, amber, tanned hides, honey, hazel nuts, falcons, swords, armour, maplewood, sheep, cattle and horses. Caravans of many thousands of horses would come from the Qipchak steppes for export to India, where they were in great demand, the rate of survival of horses in India being low.

To the south-west, the Golden Horde dominions stretched to the Caucasus and the Black Sea. Western merchants, deprived of their bases in Syria by the Egyptian Mamluks, seized the opportunity to secure bases along the Black Sea where, in terms of maritime enterprise, the Mongols were no match for them. The merchants of Venice and Genoa especially were anxious to have more direct access to the transcontinental trade than had been possible before the Mongol conquests, and by the end of the twelve-sixties the Genoese had already been granted concessions in the Crimea. In the struggle between these two Mediterranean rivals, Genoa was victorious, and established several colonies, the most important of which was at Kaffa in the east of the Crimea. Another trading station was established at Tana (Azov) at the mouth of the river Don, where the Venetians also secured a base.¹ Tana acquired special importance as the western terminus of the northern caravan route from China, via the Volga, the route which was to attract a large part of the intercontinental traffic. Rubruck on his journey (1253-5) found the Horde in command of all lands from the river Danube "to the rising of the sun".

The nomad prince Batu was alive to the advantages that the trade routes brought and favoured their development through his dominions. Chinese and Muslim merchants were encouraged, concessions and yarliqs were granted. The lower Volga, where nomad and sedentary economies met, was selected as the centre of the new Mongol empire, and on the east bank he founded a capital, Saray ("Palace"), where captive craftsmen built palaces and markets. Here the khans of the Golden Horde had their temporary residence, remaining nomad, however, for most of the year. Exactions in the form of innumerable dues and taxes weighed heavily on nomad and rural populations, artisans and merchants, but commercial activity increased both under Batu and his successor Berke (1256-66), who founded, somewhat to the north of the original city, a second Saray.

After Berke the khans of the Horde were puppets in the hands of Nogay, the chief of a tuman who had risen to a leading position in the state. For forty years he wielded power, fomenting rather than repressing feudal strife and factions within the Horde, and continuing the conflict which had broken out with the Hulagids over the provinces of Azarbayjan,

which Batu had claimed as his due for the help given in the Persian campaign. Power was resumed by the khans at the turn of the century after Nogay's death by assassination, and during the rule of Uzbek (1312-40), the Golden Horde achieved its zenith. (A century after Timur a part of the Golden Horde calling themselves Uzbeks after this khan, conquered Samarqand and settled in Mawarannahr; the region is today known as Uzbekistan.)

With the help of his Emir Qutluq, who became governor of the Crimea and Viceroy of Khwarazm, Uzbek removed his most dangerous rivals and resumed the encouragement of trade and the merchants of Islam. He became a Muslim, although he maintained, like many of his forebears, a liberal attitude towards Christianity and other religions. During this period the Golden Horde enjoyed a position of military and economic ascendancy. Trade was attracted north, where the Horde acquired a monopoly position on the transcontinental caravan route, at the expense of the Central Asian Chaghatay dominions. Previously established cities, such as Kaffa, Soudak, and Kertch in the Crimea, Urganch in Khwarazm, and Bulghar on the Volga, rose to considerable importance, while new cities like the two Sarays and Krym (in the Crimea also) developed rapidly. Uzbek concluded agreements with the Genoese in Kaffa; the Venetians were permitted to maintain their colony at Tana at the mouth of the Don, for which concession they paid a tax of three per cent. In the bazaars of Tana there was keen trade in corn, salt, wine, cheese, Tatar and Russian children for slaves, as well as in silks and Indian spices. The Genoese organized the service of a fleet in the Caspian. From Tana, according to the Merchant Handbook of Pegolotti, it took nine months by caravan stages to China; less by the imperial posting stations.

The khan Uzbek moved his capital from the Old Saray of Batu to the New Saray of Berke, on the Volga, a little further to the north. The new capital was furnished with mosques, palaces, colleges, and workshops, merchant quarters and bazaars, from the tribute of the subject peoples. Ibn Battuta visited New Saray in the thirteen-thirties. He described it as "one of the finest towns, of immense extent and crammed with inhabitants, with fine bazaars and wide streets. We rode out one day with one of the principal men of the town, intending to make a circuit of the place and find out its size. We were living at one end of it and we set out in the morning, and it was after midday when we reached the other . . . It has thirteen cathedrals and a number of other mosques. The inhabitants belong to divers nations; among them are Mongols, who are the inhabitants and rulers of the country and are part Muslims, Ossetes, who are Muslims,

Qipchaqs, Circassians, Russians, and Greeks, who are all Christians. Each group lives in a separate quarter with its own bazaars. Merchants and strangers from Iraq, Egypt, Syria and elsewhere, live in a quarter surrounded by a wall, in order to protect their property." Excavations in the nineteenth century indicated that the capital of New Saray at the height of its prosperity must have counted more than a hundred thousand inhabitants. Further excavations in 1922, confirmed this description.² The districts of New Saray comprised the citadel, the palace area with other mansions of the nobility, a district of bazaars and an artisan district, together with a palace suburb and two districts of gardens.

It was of this period of the commercial pre-eminence of the Golden Horde that the Florentine Pegolotti could write (about 1340) in his *Merchants' Handbook*, that "the road from the Black Sea to Cathay is perfectly safe whether by day or by night." He advised merchants who desired to make this journey "in the first place to let the beard grow and do not shave. At Tana furnish yourself with a dragoman (interpreter)—get a good one. . . . And if the merchant likes to take a woman with him from Tana, he can do so; if he does not like one there is no obligation, but if he does he will be kept much more comfortably . . ."

Like his predecessors, Uzbek maintained commercial and diplomatic relations with the Mamluks of Egypt, their bond being common hostility towards the Hulagids, who claimed Azarbayjan from the Golden Horde.

Uzbek's son, Janibeg (1340-57), was the last strong khan of the Horde. The Black Death struck the south of his realms in 1346, passing through the Crimea, where it was said to have claimed eighty-five thousand victims. After Janibeg internal conflicts re-emerged. Several princes disputed the throne, and they were unable to maintain their control over their vassals. The Russian feudal princes in particular were becoming stronger; their cities were being fortified, the princes ceased coming to Saray to pay homage, and their tribute stopped. The merchant caravans could no longer be assured of the safety of the trade routes, and the commerce and crafts of the towns began to decline.

Provinces under independent dynasties broke away from the suzerainty of the Golden Horde. In Khwarazm, the northern section with its capital of Urganch became independent of the Horde and was reunited with the south under the rule of the Sufis. Over the south-eastern regions bordering on Moghulistan, and comprising the Left Wing of the Golden Horde, the khan Urus, descended from Juchi, ruled independently. This fief was known as the White Horde, as distinct from the Right Wing, or Blue Horde, and which had been the patrimony of Batu. The White Horde had originally been of superior rank to the Blue Horde, but Batu had

rapidly established his sovereignty over the combined hordes, known as Golden.

In the Golden Horde itself, Khan Janibeg had been strangled after his son Berdibeg had seized the throne through a palace coup. But it was the emir Mamay, son-in-law to the Khan Berdibeg, who wielded power and who became master of the regions of the Crimea. Mamay later succeeded in securing the enthronement of his own candidate as khan, and through this puppet, Emir Mamay gained control of Saray. Neither the Emir nor his docile khan, however, were able to re-establish the unity of the Golden Horde.

The position of Mamay and the Horde was further challenged by the developing strength of Muscovy and the rise of the Muscovite prince Dmitri, who took up arms against the Horde and led the first crushing defeat of the Mongol armies in Russia for over one and a half centuries. This took place on the banks of the Don River at Kulikovo; after a fierce struggle Dmitri (celebrated in Russian annals as Dmitri Donskoy—Dmitri of the Don) put the army of Mamay to flight. The year was 1380, when Timur had consolidated his hold over the Chaghatay empire and was turning his attention to the Persian realms of Hulagu in the west.

Other preoccupations had not prevented Timur from following closely these developments amongst his northern neighbours. He had not been an idle spectator of the political and economic conflicts weakening the Golden Horde. Between the years 1360—when Timur had come to power in Mawarannahr—and 1380, some twenty-five rulers had claimed power in the Horde. The main rivalries had developed between the Right Wing and the Left Wing of the Horde—i.e. the Golden Horde under Emir Mamay and the White Horde under Urus. The latter realm, which formerly had been one of the backward regions of the Juchi ulus, had been gaining in economic and political strength, and the khan Urus was seeking an opportunity not only to establish himself in Saray but to reunite under his rule all the main sections of the Horde.

Such a situation was dangerous for Timur. Whereas conflict amongst his northern neighbours was advantageous to him, the possibility of their union was menacing. The Lord of the Fortunate Conjunction sought an early occasion to intervene.

The occasion had first presented itself in 1376, Year of the Dragon. Divisions had arisen amongst the nobility of the White Horde concerning the campaign to be directed against Mamay. One of the nobles, a prince of the royal blood, who had opposed Urus, had been killed, and his son Tokhtamish had fled, seeking sanctuary at the court of Timur.

Timur was only too satisfied to have a potential ally from the White Horde in service against Urus, who in addition to dangerous political ambitions also harboured Jalayir rebel fugitives from Mawarannahr. Timur welcomed Tokhtamish as a son; gave him presents of gold, precious stones, arms, robes of honour, magnificent girdles, tissues and furnishings, horses, camels, tents and pavilions, drums, banners, slaves. Tokhtamish was assigned territories in the borderlands between Mawarannahr and the White Horde—Otrar and Sighnaq—and was provided with troops. Tokhtamish attacked Urus Khan several times, but on each occasion without success; and after each defeat, Timur provided his protégé with fresh troops, further encouragement, and more gifts. For thus Urus was being prevented from pursuing his more dangerous designs elsewhere.

The first clash between Urus and Tokhtamish had occurred as soon as the latter had been installed in his border domains; one of the sons of Urus launched an attack on him. The son was killed in combat, but Tokhtamish was forced to retire. Encouraged and re-equipped by Timur, he returned, only to face another army sent by Urus, which repeated the trouncing. Tokhtamish, beaten and isolated from his troops, fled, flung himself into the Sir-Darya, and escaped, practically naked and wounded in the hand, into a wood on the other side. He was discovered hiding in the undergrowth by a Barlas chief sent by Timur to search for him. The unsuccessful protégé was taken back to Bukhara where Timur was in camp. Envoys soon arrived from the White Horde demanding that Timur should give up Tokhtamish and send him back to Urus Khan. "Tokhtamish killed my son and has taken refuge in your territory! Give up to me my enemy! If not, prepare for battle!"³

Timur refused, and, assembling his forces, led them himself against the army of Urus which had arrived at Sighnaq. Winter (1376-7), however, had set in; rain turned to snow and it froze so hard that the two armies faced each other for nearly three months without either side being able to move. Then, after an inconclusive combat, both armies retired. In the spring of the next year, 1377, Year of the Serpent, Timur returned for a further attack upon Urus, having placed Tokhtamish in command of the avant-garde. At this point news came that Urus had finished his days. Timur provided his protégé with everything necessary to establish himself as khan of the White Horde, including in his gifts a horse from his own stud "which in swiftness outstripped the wind". "Take good care of this horse," Timur advised, "some time or other it will be useful to you." Tokhtamish suffered a further defeat at the hands of the khan who succeeded Urus, and was again forced to flee. The swift mount that Timur had presented to him proved his salvation.³

However, the new khan of the White Horde did not have the competence of his father. Reports were soon reaching Timur's court that the khan spent days and nights in debauchery, that he slept till midday, and that he was oppressing his people. Timur once again equipped Tokhtamish with a strong army.

This time the protégé was able to achieve victory and to establish himself as khan of the White Horde (1378).

Timur had hoped, with this turn of events, to have secured a vassal, and an ally for his policy against the Golden Horde. Tokhtamish did not fulfil these expectations. Having established his control over the White Horde, he took over also the policy of the former khan, and began a campaign to reunite the two Hordes, Golden and White. He gathered his troops at Sighnaq and departed north-west to measure his forces against those of Mamay, emir of the Golden Horde. For several years he struggled. Then, making full use of the defeat of the Golden Horde in 1380 at Kulikovo, Tokhtamish attacked Mamay on the southern front and crushed him. The battle took place at Kalka, near the Sea of Azov, in the same year (1380). Tokhtamish became khan of the combined Hordes. The Juchi ulus was reunited under a strong and it is said handsome ruler.

At the time when Timur was adding the Hulagid empire to his Chaghatai dominions, his protégé Tokhtamish, master of the Juchi ulus, was riding north from his capital, Saray, to re-establish the former power of the Horde. He had claimed from the Russian princes the homage traditionally paid by them to the Tatar khans, but they, encouraged by the victory at Kulikovo, had refused. Tokhtamish invaded the Russian principalities, sacking and burning the cities. In 1382 he sacked and burnt Moscow. Tatar rule was re-established and the Russian states were forced to pay tribute as before. Tokhtamish consolidated these successes with further campaigns, which restored the power of the Horde to something approaching its position during the period of Uzbek Khan. The Golden Horde had emerged as a rival of consequence to the Lord of the Fortunate Conjunction.

By 1385, Tokhtamish, like his predecessors, was laying claim to Azarbaijan, then in the dominions of Sultan Ahmad Jalayir. Timur's Khorasan expeditions had taken him as far as Sultaniya, in 1385, and he had returned to Samarqand with his booty for the usual celebrations. Striking south along the Caspian coast, Tokhtamish had descended on Tabriz with his Qipchaq hordes. The city, without a chief capable of leading it, struggled for about a week, "like a half-dead hen doing an unwilling act", and was then seized.⁴ Pillage and slaughter continued for ten days, and then Tokhtamish retired, laden with booty.⁵

The revival of the power of the Golden Horde under Tokhtamish was intolerable to Timur. It menaced his borders. It sought those areas of pasturage, and those trade centres, which Timur regarded as suitable prizes for himself and his own warriors. Maintaining its domination over highly developed urban centres, peasantry, and steppe nomads, the reunited Golden Horde threatened the development of the state of Mawarannahr, whose agricultural regions and urban populations needed unity and protection from feudal discord. It opposed one Tatar empire against another Tatar empire; either could destroy the other.

The first clash came in spring of 1387. By this time Tokhtamish no longer found himself tied by the feelings of loyalty or obligation to his patron which he may earlier have professed, and sought only to remove Timur from the path of his own advance. Timur was wintering in the Qarabagh when Tokhtamish again broke through the Darband Pass early in 1387. Timur sent some emirs to parley, together with a small force. These were attacked and would have met defeat but for the arrival of Miranshah in command of further troops.

Timur, characteristically, negotiated until he was ready to strike. Moreover, he had allies amongst some of the emirs of the Golden Horde, as well as agents, to keep him informed. He returned the prisoners that had been taken, together with sufficient food and equipment for the convoy. At the same time he sent a message reproaching Tokhtamish, in tones more sorrowing than angry, recalling the obligations due from the protégé to the benefactor.

The appeal was addressed to deaf ears. Taking advantage of Timur's continued absence in Persia on the Three Years' Campaign, the khan of the Golden Horde descended upon Mawarannahr with his hosts of Qipchaq warriors. He stirred Shah Sulayman Sufi of Khwarazm into revolt against Timur, and in the winter of 1387 attacked along the Sir-Darya, with the support of the Moghul Jats. Prince Omar-Shaykh, separated in battle from his troops, had been in danger of capture.

Timur, receiving this news in Shiraz in Persia, settled the governments of the newly seized cities and provinces; then he followed in the wake of the troops that had been despatched to Mawarannahr by forced marches, and returned to his capital.

The news of his return was sufficient to put the enemy to flight; some, by way of Khwarazm, others further east by way of the Qipchaq steppes. But the ruins were smouldering at Qarshi. Bukhara had been besieged.

After fifteen years of lucrative advances into neighbouring territory, such reverses were difficult to support. They were all the more bitter in that they had occurred in Mawarannahr, which was becoming accustomed

to receiving not attacks but convoys of prisoners, craftsmen, and skilled workers, and baggage trains heavy with the loot of Persia and the western provinces. Timur, however, was not to be provoked before he felt himself ready, and bided his time. A tribunal was held to investigate the defeat of Prince Omar-Shaykh near Otrar. The prince, his son, was exonerated, having given "incontestable proofs of valour". One of his chiefs, Qutche Malik, who had distinguished himself by driving back three hundred of the enemy from Khojand with a mere handful of warriors, was rewarded. He received the suzerainty of a region for himself and his heirs in perpetuity, and the distinction of being made a member of the Order of Tarkhan. On the other hand, a commander who had given no proof of valour, had his beard shaved off. (The shaving of beards, once grown, was regarded as particularly shameful.) His face covered with rouge, and coiffed as a woman, he was made to run bare-foot through Samarqand.

Timur's next step was to punish Khwarazm and to prevent a repetition of the revolt. Sulayman Sufi fled and took refuge with Tokhtamish, while Timur removed all the inhabitants of Urganch with their possessions to Samarqand, and levelled the city to the ground. Barley was sown on the ruins.⁶

That autumn (1388), when Timur returned to Samarqand, he arranged nuptials for his sons and grandsons, in accordance with the instruction of Muhammad that men should marry and multiply. The city, and especially the Paradise Garden, were covered with rich carpets, tall pavilions were erected, there were hangings everywhere, encrusted with pearls and precious stones. Prince Omar-Shaykh, ruler of Farghana, and Prince Shahrukh (aged eleven), his two sons, together with his grandsons Muhammad-Sultan and Pir-Muhammad, sons of Jahangir, were married to princesses who, we are assured, were as beautiful as the houris of Paradise. Houris, according to Muslim tradition, are nymphs whose beauty and innocence never fade. After these happy festivities, the troops were given leave, Prince Miranshah returned to his Khorasan dominions, Prince Omar-Shaykh to Andijan in Farghana (on the borders of the White Horde domain), and Timur passed the winter at Samarqand, in all felicity, according to the annals, and preparing his campaign against the khan of the Golden Horde.

Tokhtamish, however, did not wait. With forces raised from the Qipchaq steppe, from the Bulghar region of the Volga, and from the Crimea, he attacked before the year was out. Timur's emirs advised postponement of the counter-attack; the winter was again severe, and not all the hordes had been assembled. Timur replied in anger that the council of

delay was the council of despair. With the troops of Samarqand and of Shahrisabz, he cut a road through the snow and advanced by night marches. He was joined by Omar-Shaykh and the Farghana reinforcements. They drove the enemy once more beyond the Sir-Darya, capturing a member of Tokhtamish's council and a number of state secretaries. The winter was indeed too hard for further action, and the Qipchaqs were not pursued beyond the river.

With the return of spring (1389) the troops that had been summoned from different parts of the empire began to arrive and joined the imperial camp. A bridge had been constructed over the Sir-Darya near Khojand, and the army crossed to seek out the enemy. In command of the avant-garde was Qutluq-oghlan (one of the sons of Urus Khan, and therefore an enemy of Tokhtamish), who had sought asylum with Timur.

Tokhtamish was further to the north-west, besieging the frontier town of Sabran, and pillaging other towns. The approach of Timur's troops caused him to retire and disappear into the steppes of his original home. His rearguard only was attacked and beaten. This was not, however, the type of victory that Timur sought. He could not be free to undertake any other campaign so long as Mawarannahr was exposed to attack from the north. Nor could he afford to fight a defensive war on his own territory. Such a war brought ruin to the settled population, and no satisfaction to his own nomad warriors, whose skills and inclination favoured attack rather than defence. Timur decided to carry the attack to the enemy. But not before his own preparations were complete.

First, he secured his rear. The news of Tokhtamish's attacks had encouraged revolts in Khorasan. Miranshah was despatched with troops to deal with them. On the way he passed by Samarqand and put to death the last of the Kart princes, removing a cause of further disorders in Khorasan (1389). Secondly, Timur mounted an expedition against the Jats of Moghulistan. The Jats, having suffered defeat at his hands some years earlier, had been lending what support they could to Tokhtamish. They had also been building up their forces under a new prince, Khizr-khoja, who was recognized as khan in 1389. Khizr-khoja fled before the carefully organized forces of Timur. The Tatars cleared the mountains and forests of Moghulistan of animals and everything that could be taken away as loot. After celebrations in the mountain meadows of Yulduz, Timur returned to Samarqand to conclude preparations for the major campaign.

Orders were despatched for a qurultay to be held in the Qashka-Darya valley near Shahrisabz. All the emirs and lords of the army, the chiefs of

tumans, thousands, hundreds, and even the chiefs of tens, were summoned, as well as the governors of provinces and the princes of the blood. The solemn banquet which traditionally marked such occasions was more than usually impressive. Amongst the orders issued was one for the expansion of the army. This was to be achieved primarily by the reinforcement of the existing regiments. The chronicles say that the warriors who had seen service in numerous campaigns had become excessively rich with the booty they had amassed; the officers were preoccupied with keeping account of their wealth; intrigues were developing for the protection of those princes whom they judged would one day be the masters. As the responsibility for the mounts, equipment, and condition of the forces rested with the chiefs in charge of the tumans and khoshuns, there was a strong tendency for the effectives of any division to fall short of the nominal strength. The increase in the real strength of each corps would fall as a charge upon the officers, and diminish the possessions which distracted them from their duty.

Each chief, in accepting his orders, prostrated himself before the Emir; and each one gave a written undertaking to ensure the arrival at the rendezvous of the troops for which they had been assessed. The tuvajis in charge of the levy were three of the most distinguished emirs—Hajji Sayf al-din, Shams al-din Abbas, and Jahanshah Yaqub. The qurultay was rounded off by the nuptials of Prince Omar-Shaykh.

In the autumn (1390) Timur departed at the head of his army, crossed the Sir-Darya, to winter at Tashkent. Those on foot had been mounted, and all had received equipment. On the way Timur blessed the enterprise by visiting the shrines of saints, and by distributing ten thousand kebek dinars in charity. Despite these precautions, however, the Conqueror himself fell ill, and lay stricken for over a month. The consternation of the emirs and princes was matched by the fear of the people that they would be plunged again into civil strife. Their prayers succeeded, and after forty days Mawarannahr received the news that their sovereign was recovering.

Pir-Muhammad Jahangir, Timur's grandson, and Shahrukh, his son, were appointed to govern the empire in his absence, and, supported by distinguished emirs, these princes were sent back to Samarqand. The ladies of the royal household were also sent back, except for Queen Cholpan-Mulk-agma, a Moghul princess, and very beautiful, who was honoured with the special attentions of the Lord of the Fortunate Conjunction during this campaign.

The army was reviewed, the pay distributed, and the guides allocated to the chiefs of the hordes. In January 1391, Timur left Tashkent with his

court at the head of an army two hundred thousand strong, and set out to the sound of the trumpets for the regions of the White Horde, the Hunger Steppe and the valley of the Sari-su.

Through the snow and rain the imperial standard, the court, the emirs, and the regiments moved north. Shortly after their departure they were met by ambassadors from Tokhtamish. The envoys were received with the normal honours, and Timur granted them an audience. With a thousand compliments they presented nine splendid steeds as gifts, and a royal falcon, demanding pardon for their master Tokhtamish, whose base actions had been undertaken "at the instigation of some malicious people" and for which he was now ashamed and repentant. If Timur were ready to run the pen of forgiveness through the list of his errors, Tokhtamish was now ready to submit and to serve him.⁷

The conqueror took the bird on his fist, but did not make the normal signs of welcome. He replied, "When your master Tokhtamish was wounded and fled from the enemy, I received him like a son. I took up his cause and made war on Urus Khan on his behalf. I sacrificed my cavalry and equipment, which were lost that hard winter. However, I continued to support him, and placed this country in his hands. I made him so strong that he became khan of the Qipchaqs, and he mounted the throne of Juchi. But when fortune began to smile on him, he forgot his obligations to me. He chose the time when I was occupied with the conquest of the kingdom of the Persians and the Medes to betray me, sending troops to ruin the borders of my realm. I pretended to take no notice, hoping that he would be shamed into regretting his action. But he was so drunk with ambition that he could not distinguish good from bad; he sent another army into my country. It is true that as soon as we marched against him his advance guard turned tail at the very dust of our approach. Now, when Tokhtamish has heard of our approach, he craves pardon, not seeing any other way of avoiding the punishment he deserves. But since we have seen him break his word and violate his treaties so often, it would be imprudent to trust his word. With the aid of God we shall carry out the resolve we have undertaken. If, however, it should be that he speaks the truth, and desires peace with all his heart, let him send to us Ali-Beg, his minister, who can then negotiate with our chief emirs." Timur then dismissed the ambassadors, ordering that they should receive the normal courtesies, but that their actions should be watched. According to Nizam al-din, however, the ambassadors were held captive.

At the beginning of March, Timur took council with the princes and emirs, and the army broke camp and advanced, passing Yasi (Turkestan), and Sabran. They then entered the Hunger Steppe, where they supposed

the hordes of Tokhtamish to be. For three weeks they rode hard, until their mounts were reduced to extremities, and many died through lack of water and exhaustion. The first object of the expedition had failed. There had been no junction with the enemy; and the forced marches had weakened the army. At last they reached a river, the Sari-su, where the horses were refreshed, and thanks were offered to Allah. It took several days to cross, as the waters were in flood, but a passage was found and the army swam over. The following night two deserters left the camp and made off to join Tokhtamish; they were followed but could not be found. The army continued its march across the arid steppe, camping where there were water-holes.

In April they reached the Ulugh-Tagh mountains. Timur climbed one of the summits to admire the view of the Qipchaq steppe, the barren plains which spread beneath him like an ocean. He ordered his masons to raise a monument of stone "high as a minaret", on which was engraved the date when Timur passed that place at the head of his army. This inscription said that in 793 (1391), the Year of the Sheep, the Sultan of Turan had come with a force of two hundred thousand against the king of Bulgharia, Tokhtamish Khan.

The monument was discovered in the 1930s on the left bank of the Sari-su River, in the Karsakpai region, Kazakhs tan. It has three lines of Arabic text and eight lines in the Uyghur alphabet; the latter are horizontal not vertical lines, as would be expected of Uyghur.⁸

The march continued, the army hunting the food it needed. They were over three months out from Tashkent; they had crossed desert and steppe and mountain, but with no sign of Tokhtamish and his Qipchaq Horde. Food was becoming exhausted, and game grew scarcer. "Which-ever way you turned," said Sharaf al-din, "you could go for seven months in the desert without meeting a single person, or any cultivated land." Soon all supplies were consumed. The market that accompanied the army was empty. Prices had risen to famine height. A sheep had sold for a hundred dinars, and flour was so scarce that it could not be bought for money.

Timur ordered the warriors of the guard, the emirs of the tuman, the chiefs of thousands, hundreds, and tens, to forbid the cooking of meat.

The whole army was to be satisfied with a meal broth usually served to slaves. The emirs themselves set an example by eating this broth. One bag of flour, together with a few herbs, supplied sixty dishes. The ration was one dish of broth a day for each soldier. But even this ration gave out before all were served. Troops scoured the desert for the scantiest pittance—the eggs of wild birds, rodents, and edible grasses.

Then Timur commanded a Tatar hunt. The tuvajis published orders

that the emirs of the Left Wing and the Right Wing were to supply the men to form an immense circle. The circle closed in, driving every living creature before it. After two days, the circle was filled and the kill started, led by Timur. Deer and gazelles as large as buffaloes had been rounded up. Timur chased up and down, killing a quantity of beasts, from dawn until the eating time, which was two and a half hours before midday, when he returned to his tent. Then the soldiers threw themselves upon the game. The army lived for a considerable time upon this meat.

At the end of the hunt, Timur held a review of his troops. The review was carried out as meticulously as if it had been held in the plains of Kani-gil by Samarqand, in full ceremonial attire. Timur himself was robed to fit the occasion: he wore a gold crown emblazoned with rubies, ermine headgear, and carried the ivory baton tipped with the golden head of a bull. Each division had banners aloft and carried their horse-tail standards, the "tugh". These standards, often surmounted by a crescent, were the rallying point of the Tatar troops. (Timur's horse-tail standard is preserved over his tomb in Samarqand.) The divisions were reviewed in turn. Timur started with the Left Wing, passing before the ranks composed of the tuman of Berdi-bek. Timur took care to note that each soldier had his lance, his mace, his dagger, his leather shield, his bow, and the quiver with thirty arrows in it. He saw that their mounts were covered with tiger skin, and that each man had a sabre dressed to the left, and a half-sabre on the right side. As the emperor approached, the general, according to custom, leapt from his horse, and pointed out the condition of the equipment, the quality of his men, their address and bearing; then, kneeling before Timur, and holding his horse by the bridle, Berdi-bek kissed the earth and gave the traditional prayer for the emperor, exalting his power and vowing obedience unto death. Timur praised the spirit and condition of the men, saying that with such valiant soldiers, his kingdom would always flourish.

Timur passed on to other tumans, which were inspected in the same way, each time the emir presenting his troops and drawing attention to their condition, the perfect ranks, and the faultless equipment. The tuman of Khudaydad Husayni was praised for its good order, and Timur passed on to the thousands from the Sulduz Horde, who came next in battle order. These were armed with bows, arrows, lassoes, scimitars, and maces. The chief rendered homage and received praise.

The main corps of the army of Andijan, commanded by Timur's son, Omar-Shaykh, was reviewed next, with its banners flying. Timur remained a long time here because the corps was so numerous. Omar-Shaykh, too, knelt before the emperor his father, congratulating him on

his conquests which already extended "from the frontiers of China to the Caspian Sea". Timur was satisfied with the army of his son. He moved on to the regiment of Sultan Mahmud-khan. Sultan Mahmud was the son of the Chaghatay khan Suyurghatmish; on the death of his father (1388) he had received the title, if not the honours and authority, of khan of the Chaghatay ulus. The tuman of Emir Sulayman-shah followed Sultan Mahmud, and Sulayman-shah made the usual salutations and presented gifts to the emperor, who embraced them. Then he reviewed the troops of the young prince Muhammad-Sultan, his grandson, the son of Jahangir, who was then fifteen years old. The young prince made his submission like the others. His grandfather told him, "Our family, lit by such a torch as you, will never lack brilliance and splendour."

Next came the guards' regiment, all the chiefs making their submission and vows. Then the Right Wing of the army commanded by his son Miranshah . . . and the other corps of the army, each in rank and fully equipped, proudly presented by their chiefs: tumans and hazaras, khoshuns and tens; the hosts of Mawarannahr and of Khorasan, covering the great steppe beyond which the enemy had vanished without trace.

The review lasted two full days, from dawn until nightfall, and the emperor found his army well equipped and in a good heart. It ended with the beating of the great kettle-drums, to which the drums of all the divisions responded, and to the sound of the Tatar battle-cry "Surun", which filled the plains. The army broke camp and moved off, in battle formation as was their custom, pushing on further towards Siberia.

The land through which they passed was still deserted. The days grew longer. The air became damp and misty. They were approaching the "Land of Darkness" (Siberia) which, according to Ibn Battuta, "is reached from Bulghar after a journey of forty days . . . the only way of reaching it is on sledges drawn by dogs, for the desert being covered with ice, neither man nor beast can walk on it without slipping, whereas dogs have claws that grip the ice. The journey is made by rich merchants who have a hundred sledges or thereabout, loaded with food, drink, and fire-wood, for there are neither trees, stones, nor habitation in it. The guide in this country is the dog which has made the journey many times . . . and when food is made the dogs are served first before the men. When the travellers have completed forty stages they alight at the Darkness. Each one of them leaves the goods he has brought there and they return to their usual camping-ground. Next day they go back to seek their goods, and find opposite them skins of sable, minever, and ermine . . . Those who go there do not know whom they are trading with or whether they be jinn or men, for they never see anyone."

The scouts, sent out for information, roamed the solitudes and returned, still without news of jinn or man.

Timur's young grandson, Muhammad-Sultan, begged to be sent out with a reconnaissance group; this request was granted, and the lad set off with a party of picked scouts, at an auspicious moment selected by the court astrologers. They were two days out when they discovered a track; this led eventually to a spot where fires had been lit in five or six places, and which were still not extinct. The prince and the emirs with him despatched the news to Timur.—“The fires may be those of our own scouts, or of the enemy—” Timur sent expert guides to reconnoitre the district. They were ordered to take every precaution against surprise attack, but to discover the exact whereabouts of the enemy. They sped night and day until they struck the river Tobol, a tributary of the Irtysh which flows north into the Arctic. Having crossed the river, the scouts found the embers of numerous fires. But not a soul beside.

Timur broke camp with his army and crossed the river, making a ford with branches and driftwood, for the horses were too starved to swim the troops across. They joined up with the advanced troops. The enemy still remained hidden. Another party was sent out under Shaykh Dawud Turkoman, to capture some prisoners at all costs. Shaykh Dawud was a man of stout heart and experience, who had passed a great part of his life in the steppe. After two days and nights in the saddle he discovered a few poor huts. He lay hidden for the night, and was rewarded next day when a man rode out who was immediately seized and sent to Timur.

The man knew nothing of Tokhtamish and his Horde. He and his companions had left their tribe and come to the huts about a month before. But ten unknown horsemen, fully armed, had come there on a foray ten days before, and had retired to the woods close by. A detachment was sent to surround the hamlet and bring in the other men. A further party was despatched to comb the woods for the ten horsemen. They were discovered and put up a resistance. Some were seized, and others were killed in the combat. The prisoners were brought to Timur. For the first time he had definite news of the enemy.

The great army turned west, passing lakes and rivers, and taking every precaution against surprise attack from the enemy well acquainted with the terrain. They pressed on by forced marches to the Ural river. Timur avoided the fords pointed out by the guides, as he suspected ambushes, and swam his army across further upstream. They went on for another week and reached the Samara river. Then scouts came in, saying that they had heard the cries of enemy troops. Shortly afterwards Muhammad-Sultan brought in a prisoner, one of the Qipchaq soldiers of Tokhtamish.

He disclosed that a great many hordes had been in that region, but they had decamped and retired on hearing news of the approach of Timur's army. Timur ordered that his men should keep to their battle formation, no one was to become separated from his unit, and no fires were to be lit at night. During the day they advanced to the sound of their drums and cymbals.

Three more prisoners were brought in, and the information became precise. They said that Tokhtamish had no news of Timur's army until the two deserters had found him and reported that the Lord of the Fortunate Conjunction was coming with an army as numerous as the leaves of the trees and the sands of the desert. At this Tokhtamish had blazed with fury and said that he would raise a double army. He had issued orders for troops to be levied from every province of the Golden Horde.

Timur waited for all sections of his army to assemble; then they continued their advance, Left Wing and Right Wing and Centre, in battle order, equipped, and with large and small shields at the ready. Each night precautions were taken against surprise attack, even to the extent of setting up observation posts and surrounding the camp with ditches and ramparts. Neither Timur nor Tokhtamish under-estimated the other. The great Emir called together his chiefs, from the emirs down to the centurians, for an eve-of-battle council. He spoke about the military situation very frankly to them, encouraging them, and presenting them with robes of honour. He ordered a distribution of further equipment to the troops, including special shields, iron maces, breast-pieces for the mounts, coats of mail, sabres, bows and arrows.

Still they advanced without making contact with the enemy, who retired, with fresher troops and a knowledge of the terrain, quicker even than Timur's rapid advance. The Qipchaqs seized all the fodder the locality could supply. The region was muddy and wet; the horses floundered in the mire. The mists became daily more depressing. The prisoners were coming in in greater numbers, including a force which had been on the way to join Tokhtamish, but had missed the rendezvous. On the other hand, a scouting party of Timur's had been ambushed by a detachment from the Horde. A number of them, including several chiefs, had been killed holding off the enemy while their comrades returned to give information to Timur. Movement was hampered by the bogs and the mists. However, Timur went with a punitive party of thirty men and beat off the enemy. It was Timur's concern to punish ruthlessly and immediately any breach of faith which led to the slaughter of his warriors, and, equally quickly, to reward and encourage valour and resolution on

the battlefield. Those who distinguished themselves in this first encounter had "placed a foot on the road of manhood", and were publicly praised and rewarded. The surviving chiefs were made knights of the Tarkhan. In addition to the material rewards given to them, they and their children were exempted from punishment for any crime unless it had been committed nine times. The privileges were to continue for their families unto seven generations. The fallen emirs were awarded posthumous titles and distinctions, and their families were heaped with favours.

For nearly five months the imperial standard had been on the march. The long northern summer days had set in. It was raining heavily: everything was obscured by low cloud. By special dispensation of the ulama, the evening prayer was omitted from the daily routine. The clouds continued so low, and the rain so heavy, that it was impossible to see more than three paces ahead. The armies still had not connected. Leaving skirmishing parties to hold up Timur's advance, Tokhtamish kept constantly beyond reach of the pursuing hordes.

After six days the weather cleared. It was mid-June, 1391, Year of the Sheep. A messenger arrived saying that guards regiments of both sides had made contact. Timur ordered the army into the field: but not in the traditional formation—Centre, Left and Right Wings. Timur's revised formation consisted of three main corps, the centre and the two wings; but each of the wings had a vanguard, and the centre was strengthened with a van and a reserve. The vanguard was placed under the command of Sultan Mahmud, the Chaghatay khan, with Emir Sulayman-Shah as his general. The command of the centre, the most numerous, was given to the young prince Muhammad-Sultan, with many experienced chiefs to support him. The third corps, the rearguard and reserve, was commanded by Timur himself. It was composed of the Guards Regiment and twenty companies of picked veterans. This corps had its position well behind the centre, ready to give support where it was most needed. The troops of Andijan, under the command of Omar-Shaykh, formed the Left Wing, with their van led by emirs Berdi-bek and Khudaydad Husayni. The Right Wing was the charge of Miranshah; emir Hajji Sayf al-din commanded the van.

The chronicles say that the cavalry and infantry marched in battle order and the movement of this mass was like the turbulent ocean: troops armed with sabres and shields, arrows and bows; with maces and halberds; with lances and pikes; the majority wearing breast-plates, the princes and emirs with coats of mail or iron corselets; and everyone wearing helmets so polished that they dazzled the sight.

The enemy was also in battle order, but the normal three-corps formation with the centre and the two wings forming a crescent. They too were splendidly equipped, and led by princes of the royal blood of Juchi and emirs of the highest distinction. At last the two armies had come within sight of each other.

Then Timur, in full view of the enemy, ordered his tents and pavilions to be set up and his carpets spread, as if he were going to retire to his camp. This display of equanimity was to unnerve the enemy.

According to Sharaf al-din, the hosts of Tokhtamish were more numerous than the hosts of Timur; however, Timur counted on the help of God more than on the multitude of the soldiers and the weight of their arms.

On the morning of the battle (June 18th) the Lord of the Fortunate Conjunction, in full view of his army, dismounted and prostrated himself twice on the earth, asking God for his help and for victory. When he had remounted, the troops, now dressed for battle, raised their hands to heaven crying "Allah Akbar"—"Allah the Almighty", the battle-cry of Islam. Imam Sayyid Baraka, who had been attached to Timur's court since the days when he had prophesied Timur's future before the first victory at Balkh, had also been praying with extraordinary vigour. When he had finished he seized a handful of earth and flung it in the direction of the enemy, saying "May your faces be black with the shame of your defeat!" Turning to Timur, "Go where you will, you will be victorious!" Raising their banners and standards, the Tatars beat the great drums, gave the battle-cry "Surun", and started the combat to blasts from the huge war trumpets.

"Then both armies, when they came in sight one of the other, were kindled, and mingling with each other became hot with the fire of war, and they joined battle, and necks were extended for sword-blows and throats outstretched for spear thrusts and faces were drawn with sternness and fouled with dust, the wolves of war set their teeth and fierce leopards mingled and charged and the lions of the armies rushed upon each other and men's skins bristled, clad with the feathers of arrows, and the brows of the leaders drooped and the heads of the chiefs bent in the devotion of war and fell forward and the dust was thickened and stood black and the leaders and common soldiers alike plunged into seas of blood and arrows became in the darkness of black dust like stars placed to destroy the Princes of Satan, while swords glittering like fulminating stars in clouds of dust rushed on kings and sultans, nor did the horses of death cease to pass through and revolve and race against the squadrons which charged straight ahead or the dust of hooves to be borne into the air or the blood

of swords to flow over the plain, until the earth was rent and the heavens like the eight seas.”⁹

At one stage in the battle the Left Wing under Omar-Shaykh was sorely pressed by Tokhtamish, who had succeeded in breaking through and was attacking from the rear. Timur at that time was pursuing the main corps of the Qipchaqs, but returned with reserves to the assistance of the Wing, and the enemy was driven back. A break-through of the ranks of the Sulduz horde was also checked. Arabshah, who sought wherever possible to diminish Timur's military achievements, reports that part of Tokhtamish's army withdrew owing to a quarrel between two of his leaders. However, the battle, which had been fought tenaciously by both sides, turned in Timur's favour. The ambitious protégé took flight, his emirs and chiefs and the remnants of his army following him. Timur at last descended from his horse and gave thanks to Allah for victory.

The battle had taken place at Kunduzcha, east of the Volga (between Samara and Chistopol). Timur sent seven out of every ten of his cavalry in pursuit of the enemy. Caught between the Tatars and the great river, the warriors of the Golden Horde were slaughtered en masse or taken prisoner. Those who had sought refuge in the islands of the Volga were brought back in chains. Their women, children, baggage and immense booty fell into the hands of the victors. Only the chief prize—Tokhtamish—escaped.

Those who had been sent out to collect the booty returned to Timur's camp charged with horses, camels, cattle, sheep, and trains of captives, of both sexes and all ages. Even the poorest of Timur's army, the labourers who, said Sharaf al-din, by their work and the sweat of their bodies hardly found sufficient to live on, amassed so many horses and sheep that when it was a question of returning they could not take it all. Foot-soldiers returned with ten or twenty head of horses, and mounted soldiers with a hundred or more. The booty collected for Timur was numerous beyond count.

Amongst the slaves were beautiful girls, a selection of whom were set aside for the seraglio of the Conqueror, the rest being distributed amongst the emirs. Five thousand boys were also selected to be trained for the imperial household and the special service of the emperor.

Arriving on the banks of the Volga, where the Golden Horde khans, of the seed of Juchi, used to camp, Timur gave orders for a general festival, the most superb to be held in those regions. The viands at the banquets were served on golden dishes, and the wines in cups of gold. Everything was supplied in abundance, at the hands of fair captives. Music was specially composed, celebrating the victory over the Qipchaqs,

the conquest of the empire of Juchi, son of the great Chingiz-khan. The chronicler remarks that during the rejoicing the most beautiful women of the imperial harem were close to Timur, and that each chief also had maidens, cup in hand. The whole army took part in these festivities. For nearly a month they forgot the fatigues of war, and enjoyed the pleasures that destiny had provided for them.

Timur seems to have been intent on destroying the power of the Golden Horde rather than on organizing his dominion over the state. He gave the khanate of the Qipchaqs in fief to princes of Chingiz stock, who, enemies of Tokhtamish, had fought with him: Idigu, Qutluq-oghlan (grandson of Urus Khan, of the White Horde), and Qunche-oghlan. These princes set out, with yarliqs granting them great privileges in return for their submission, with orders to reassemble their scattered subjects and bring them back to Timur. But once out of Timur's way, they forgot their obligations and made off with those they had been able to gather, across the steppe. Only Qunche-oghlan, a close associate of Timur, who had "participated even in his most intimate parties", and who had spent days together with the Conqueror playing chess, returned with some of his subjects, as he had promised. But when he heard what Qutluq had done, he too seized the opportunity one night to flee. Timur did not pursue him. Satisfied with enormous booty, and an endless suite of captives, male and female, he began the march home.

The Chaghatay warriors noticed the unusual method of transporting the yurts (tents) practised by many of their captives. Instead of assembling and dismantling the tents, as did the Chaghatays, their captives did not take down their tents. They placed them as they were, upon the camels, and had them thus transported to the next encampment, where they were set down intact.

The camp had become so huge, they said, that if once you lost sight of your tent, it would take days to find it again.

Timur returned by the most direct route home, across the deserts, leaving Emir Hajji Sayf al-din and the other emirs to bring up the rest of the army and the baggage trains. He pushed rapidly ahead to Sabran, then to Otrar, crossed the Sir-Darya and reached Samarqand. He was greeted by the princes, and the queens and other royal ladies he had left behind, and enjoyed several days of further public festivity. He then returned to the pastures near Tashkent. Here he was joined by Hajji Sayf al-din, eleven months practically since they departed from that place. The plain was covered with troops, their captives, and their livestock. Timur wanted those of the royal household who had not accompanied

him, as well as other dignitaries who had not participated in the campaign, to share in the spoil, and so he made a generous distribution to them of young girls and fine boys, sheep and cattle and horses.

The court passed the winter (1391-2) with Timur, and a great hunt was organized as a diversion. When spring returned, Timur took the road to his capital.

In the spring (1392), on the meadows of Kani-gil, the Rose-mine, the marriages were celebrated between the sons of Omar-Shaykh—Pir-Muhammad and Rustam—as well as Abu-Bakr, son of Miranshah, and daughters of distinguished Chaghatay emirs and tarkhans.

Miranshah returned to his capital of Herat. Prince Pir-Muhammad, second son of Jahangir, was appointed to the kingdom of Mahmud of Ghazni, the Hindu Kush regions between Khorasan and India, which included the centres of Qandahar, Ghazni, and Kabul.

The danger from the Golden Horde, if not completely eliminated, had been removed at least for the time being. Twenty years of campaigning abroad had been crowned with one of the most decisive victories for the Lame Conqueror.

NOTES

¹ W. Heyd: *Commerce du Levant*, 1923.

² F. V. Ballod: *Old and New Saray*, 1923.

³ Nizam al-din Shami: *Zafar-nama*.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ see p. 108.

⁶ See p. 94.

⁷ Sharaf al-din Yazdi: *Zafar-nama*.

⁸ A. I. Ponomarev: *Timur's Inscription*, 1945. The monument is now in the Hermitage Museum, Leningrad.

⁹ Ibn Arabshah: *Tamerlane*.

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THE FIVE YEARS' CAMPAIGN IN PERSIA, MESOPOTAMIA, AND THE QIPCHAQ STEPPES

1392 (Year of the Ape)—1396 (Year of the Mouse)

MAWARANNAHR waited anxiously. It was May (1392), and already excessively hot. A hundred thousand troops, reassembled to continue the campaign in the west only a few months after their return from the victory over the Golden Horde, were halted on the plains outside Bukhara.

Timur lay dangerously sick. Princes and heirs had hurried to the royal camp. Muhammad-Sultan, son of Jahangir, who had already crossed the Amu-Darya with troops of the advance guard, left his forces and returned, at the summons of the Emperor. The queens were there—Saray-Mulk-khanum and Tuman-agma—together with the royal children and grandchildren.

The most able Turkic and Arab doctors had been called, and were working under the supervision of Emir Hajji Sayf al-din. The Great Emir and his court realized, however, that corporal remedies would be effective only if Allah so decided. The Qoran was recited and gifts were sent to the shrines of great shaykhs; charities were distributed; the finest horses from the imperial stables were sacrificed, their flesh providing meat for the poor.

At last the prayers of the people and the charity of princes had their reward. In June the Emperor was restored to health, and in July he set out on one of his longest campaigns, to Persia and Iraq, the empire of Hulagu. Timur was then in his fifty-seventh year.

After the preventive war against the Golden Horde, Mawarannahr feared little from her northern or eastern neighbours. Tokhtamish, defeated if not destroyed, now faced the rivalry of Idigu, Qutluq-oghlan and Qunche-oghlan, princes of the royal blood of Juchi. These had fought with Timur against Tokhtamish and had received parts of the ulus in fief. Although they had not brought back their hordes as vassals to Timur, there was little ground for supposing that a sufficient degree of unity could be restored within the Horde to be dangerous to Mawarannahr.

The two expeditions into Moghulistan (1389 and 1390) had driven the Jats beyond the Irtish, where their khan had disappeared. The independent power of Khwarazm had been destroyed. Urganch, the capital, had been sown with barley and her citizens were slaves in Samarqand.

Henceforth all campaigns would be conducted on the soil of the enemy. Mawarannah was safe. Imperial Samarqand called herself "the Protected". Timur could resume his campaigning in the west.

The empire of Hulagu had not remained submissive during Timur's four years' absence. The Khorasan revolts of '89 had been put down by Miranshah, but rebellious strongholds maintained their grip on the inaccessible territories south of the Caspian, protected by the sea to the north and by swamps and virgin forest inland. From these strongholds the rebels could attack the caravans plying the great Khorasan road from Samarqand through to Tabriz and Baghdad. In the south of Persia the Muzaffari princes, reinstated by Timur as his vassals before his departure, betrayed and attacked each other, and the region had endured, in addition to Timur's depredations, four years of further disorders.

It was time for the Conqueror himself to intervene. After their exertions against the Qipchaqs, his victorious Hordes were ready to plunder in the more familiar and comfortable climes of Persia. Timur raised a new standard to fly over the imperial army. On it was featured a dragon. The *tuvachis* assembled the troops, who had orders to hold themselves ready for a campaign of five years.

The Hordes, with Prince Muhammad-Sultan in command of the van and Timur at the head of the main army, had set out from the meadows of Samarqand in May, 1392. Shortly after, near Bukhara, Timur had fallen sick.

In July, when the march was resumed, the queens were sent back to Samarqand with Prince Shahrukh, Timur's youngest son. The Emperor then advanced through Khorasan to the shores of the Caspian and the strongholds of the rebels. On his way he was welcomed and feasted by Khan-zada, widow of Jahangir and wife of Miranshah. As a Chingizid princess and mother of the heir-elect, she held a privileged position at court.

Beyond Astarabad the going was hard. The troops felled trees to open a way through the forest. Three roads were cut "as wide as an arrow's flight", one for the main corps of the army, and one each for the wings. Across the swamps the army advanced a bare league a day. But the war was a holy war. Timur had come to bring the true Sunni doctrine to the heretics who had strayed to the Shi-a sect, which was strong in this region. Citadels were stormed and capitulated; towns were attacked from both land and sea. Boats from the Amu-Darya were fired with flaming pitch and sent against the sea walls of the towns. The Caspian itself looked as if it were alight.

On the capitulation of the Shi-ites, Timur, who enjoyed theological

disputation, pointed out to their leaders the errors of their ways, exhorting them to return to the salvation of the Sunni doctrine. One venerable captive, Sayyid, and his son, were taken by boat to Khwarazm, perhaps along the channel of the Amu-Darya, then emptying into the Caspian. Other nobles were taken to Samarqand and thence to Tashkent. Many folk, being neither venerable nor noble, were put to the sword.

The region also harboured survivals of the Ismaili sect. Those discovered were destroyed, with the exception of their elders, who were believed to be descendants of the Prophet.

By autumn Mazandaran was subjugated, and Timur sent back to Samarqand a victory letter supported by examples of the treasures and rare products of the region. At the same time he summoned his son Shahrukh, his grandsons, and his queens to join him at Jurjan, to the south-east of the Caspian, where he had ordered the construction of a palace. This province was rich in streams, and the hillsides and plains were covered with orchards producing oranges, grapes, and dates. The pomegranates, olives, water-melons and egg-plants were of high quality. Silk was produced in quantities. The jujube-trees frequently had two crops of fruit in a season. The great defect of this region, however, was its intense summer heat. Flies were troublesome, and bugs so large that they were commonly known as "wolves".¹ It was here, where the Jurjan river empties into the Caspian, that the Khwarazmshah Muhammad had ended his days, shortly after his flight from Chingiz-khan.

In spite of the snow and the hurricane blowing through the Zarafshan valley—it was November and the area is subject to storms at that time—the imperial household set out and reached Bukhara. There they had to shelter for a few days in a hospice built by Timur for the indigent. They started out once more and were met by a courier from the impatient Master with a message that they should leave the heavy baggage and press on ahead. But Shahrukh had developed eye-trouble, and as he could not travel quickly, the household proceeded slowly with him. By Marv the eye-trouble had cleared, and they then travelled day and night for thirteen days, when they were met some distance out by Timur, who escorted them to the palace at Jurjan.

It was not long before the Conqueror left the jujubes of Jurjan and resumed arms for the campaign in Georgia, Persia, and Iraq. This time Shahrukh accompanied the campaigners. Muhammad-Sultan, son of Jahangir, had been sent ahead with his brother Pir-Muhammad to Sultaniya. The Muzaffari governor had taken flight on news of their approach. Sultaniya was a splendid city, second only to Tabriz, on the great Khorasan highway. It was founded by the Mongol Il-khans and later became

their capital. A number of Mongol settlements had also been made in this region, which afforded good pasturage, and it was here that the imperial household subsequently remained while Timur was engaged in his Persian campaigns.

The two princes stayed a week in Sultaniya, replenishing their troops, and, having garrisoned the town, rode south. They were in the broad mountain region which the Greeks called Media, the Land of the Medes. To the west of this province the mountain ranges were inhabited by a hardy people, the Kurds; and through this region passed the highway from Khorasan to Baghdad. The princes received the order to reduce the Kurds to submission. They were fortunate in securing the co-operation of a local chief, Shaykh Ali Bahadur, who offered himself as guide and envoy, hoping to receive the province in fief as reward for his services. Returning one day from a mission to a local prince, Shaykh Ali Bahadur paused for a meal and was struck dead by the knife of a Kurd who regarded him as a traitor. The assassin was seized by Shaykh Ali's men, who put him to the most violent torture; after which he was burnt.

Timur had proceeded to Rayy with a corps of élite warriors—three men picked from every ten—leaving Miranshah to bring up the heavy baggage which was coming from Astarabad. Timur was accompanied by Queen Cholpan-Mulk-gha and two other ladies from his harem.

The Georgians had not been docile during Timur's six-year absence. Encouraged first by the audacious attacks of Tokhtamish against Timur, and then by the latter's preoccupation with that foe, the Georgians had asserted their independence. King Bagrat the Great had died and had been succeeded by his son Giorgi VII, who was in no mind to make concessions to the Tatar. On the contrary, Timur suspected that the Georgians were maintaining links with fugitive Tokhtamish and giving him access to the passes through to the south.

With the dual purpose, therefore, of punishing the "disturbers of the peace", and of reconnoitring for Tokhtamish, who was beginning to reassemble a following, Timur launched a second invasion of Georgia (1393). Looting as he went, and overcoming strong resistance, he again reached Tiflis, where he stayed some time before moving back to the eastern Caucasus, and then south into Persia. He punished as he went the tribes of Luristan, who like their neighbours the Kurds, were inveterate rebels. The rendezvous with the rest of his forces was Shustar on the Dujayl River, which empties a hundred or so miles to the south into the Persian Gulf along with the Tigris-Euphrates. At Dizful, a day's ride to the north of Shustar, Timur paused to admire the bridge by which they crossed the river, a construction composed of fifty-six tall and low arches

alternately, over eleven centuries old. (It is related that when the Roman emperor Valerian fell into the hands of King Shapur, who ruled the Persian empire in the third century A.D., the emperor was employed on the building of a weir at this point during his seven years' captivity.)

Timur had already reached the territory of the Muzaffari princes, over whom he had been appointed protector by the late Shah Shuja. During the Conqueror's absence these princes had succumbed to the most energetic of their number, Shah Mansur. Mansur had arrested and blinded his cousin Zayn al-Abidin, who had taken sanctuary with him on the approach of Timur; he had driven his brother Yahya from Isfahan and from Shiraz, which he had seized as his own capital.

At Shustar the governors appointed by Shah Mansur had followed the example of their colleague in Sultaniya, and had taken flight, leaving the city dignitaries to make their submission to the Tatars. Timur accepted the submission and ransom, reassembled his army outside the city, and rode south to punish Mansur.

On the way he attacked the mountain stronghold of Qalah Safid, the White Castle, considered impregnable. It was built on a peak where a handful of men could control the approaches and ward off an army, and which was inaccessible to battering-rams and flame-throwers. The fortress was attacked on all sides, but night fell before any impression had been made on the defences. Next morning the Tatars again faced the arrows and stones showered upon them by the defenders, until one fellow, Aqbuga, scaled the rocks where no one else had noticed a foothold. He threw himself into the attack single-handed, protected only by his shield. Others followed him, and unfurling their banners and raising their horse-tail standards, they seized the defenders and flung them over the mountain side. The fortress was seized. Blind Zayn al-Abidin, who had been imprisoned there by his cousin, was released, and Timur promised to avenge the wrongs he had suffered. The ladies the soldiers had seized were also released.

Aqbuga, who had first scaled the heights of the White Castle, was rewarded with money, materials for tents, girls, horses, camels, mules, and other things that make life pleasant. Previously he had possessed one solitary mount.

At the news of Timur's return to Shiraz, Shah Mansur fled from his capital. But shame, or the courage of desperation, led this representative alone of all the Muzaffari princes, to give battle. He returned, and with a force of some three or four thousand came back to meet the hosts of Timur in the plain of Patila. The information that had been received as to the strength and quality of Mansur's forces gave Timur no reason for

concern. But his main corps of thirty thousand seasoned cavalry was thrown into disorder by this sudden attack of a few thousand, who advanced with banners flying and their prince Shah Mansur at their head. The enemy cut right through the Tatar ranks to the spot where Timur and some emirs had halted, amazed at the temerity of the Persian prince. Sharaf al-din says that Mansur himself fought his way through the guards as far as Timur, who reached for his lance but found that the bearer had fled. The Conqueror received two blows on his helmet from Mansur's scimitar. But Shah Mansur was driven off, and his troops were scattered. Wounded in head and shoulders, he fled towards Shiraz. He was captured by Tatar troops, who brought his head back to Timur. His defeated forces were also overtaken, at the citadel named the Red Castle, and torn to pieces. By the time Ibn Taghri Birdi came to write his history, this resistance had become legendary: Shah Mansur had become the bravest horseman of all the rulers who fought Timur, "for he went forth to meet him with the two thousand horsemen while Timur's army numbered almost a hundred thousand."

Sharaf al-din attributed the death of Mansur to the valour of Shahrukh, then aged sixteen, and taking part in his first campaign. He cast the head at his father's feet saying: "May the heads of all your enemies roll at your feet like this." Shahrukh later denied this feat. (Sharaf wrote under the patronage of Shahrukh.) Arabshah's version says that one of Timur's allies, masquerading in the ranks of Mansur's forces, came over with his troops to Timur as soon as the battle started.

Timur entered Shiraz in triumph for a second time. Eight of the nine great city gates were closed; the ninth, over which flew the imperial standard, remained open, and there the court officials entered and, guided by the records which they took from the local administrators, they collected the treasure of the city, of Shah Mansur, and of his court. This booty of fabrics, mules, and horses was divided by Timur amongst his emirs. The inhabitants also paid dearly for their lives.

Court secretaries composed the Victory Letters which were despatched throughout the empire. The following month Timur and his troops spent in festivities, enjoying the red wine of Shiraz, the music of harp and organ, and the nicest girls. Some of the scholars of Fars, and the many artists and craftsmen—for the Muzaffaris had been patrons of the arts—were sent off to Samarqand. Other scholars, such as the celebrated al-Firuzabadi, hastened to pay their respects to Timur, and were received with honour.

After the defeat of Shah Mansur the other Muzaffari princes hurried to prostrate themselves before the Conqueror, bringing gifts of precious stones, horses, mules, pavilions, and rare objects. They and their gifts

were at first well received. But a deputation of nobles opportunely petitioned Timur not to restore the government of the country to the quarrelsome Muzaffaris "who would undoubtedly bring the land to ruin". Timur was disposed to accept their arguments and designs; the princes were arrested and their houses pillaged. Mirza Omar-Shaykh, Timur's eldest surviving son, formerly ruler of Farghana, received the kingdom of Fars in fief, and the prince gave a magnificent banquet to the Conqueror and his court in celebration of the event.

Then Timur broke camp and turned north towards Isfahan, enjoying the pleasures of the hunt en route. He ordered the death of the Muzaffaris, half a dozen of whom were executed, "passing through the hands of justice according to the law of Chingiz-khan, to the great satisfaction of the citizens of the realm". Two were spared—blind Zayn al-Abidin, and a brother, who also had been blinded, but by his father Shah Shuja. These two princes were taken to Samarqand where they ended their days "in tranquillity" on an estate placed at their disposal.²

At Isfahan Timur spent a few days in the royal palace, and went north once more, destroying miserable infidels wherever they resisted. He met Saray-Mulk-khanum and other royal ladies in the agreeable pastures near Hamadan. When the royal household had assembled the sovereignty of the "kingdom of Hulagu" was conferred upon Prince Miranshah, Timur's second surviving son. This dominion consisted of the north of Persia and Azarbayjan and Iraq (Mesopotomia) in the south. The subjection of the latter province had not been completed, however. Sultan Ahmad Jalayir, the last representative of the family which had seized power in Iraq after the fall of the Hulagids, waited uneasily in Baghdad. Already he had lost Azarbayjan to Timur. He despatched the venerable Grand Mufti Abdurrahman Isfarayni as his envoy to Timur, furnishing him with impressive presents and excuses for his own failure to put in an appearance to pay homage to the Conqueror. The huge stags, leopards, Arab steeds, saddles of gold (everything in sets of nine), and the Mufti himself, were well enough received; but not the excuses. The venerable Mufti returned to his master without an answer.

Suddenly Timur appeared with a corps of picked troops at a village some twenty-seven leagues from Baghdad, having made the journey by forced marches night and day. Timur travelled mounted by day, carried by litter at night, by the light of huge torches. The inhabitants were interrogated. Had they in fact warned Baghdad of his approach by carrier pigeon? They could not deny it. As soon as the dust of the Tatars had appeared on the horizon they had sent the news by carrier pigeon to Sultan Ahmad. Timur therefore made them send another pigeon saying

they had been mistaken: the dust they had seen was caused by Turkoman troops fleeing to avoid encounter with the Conqueror. On receipt of the first message, however, Sultan Ahmad had taken the precaution of removing many of his things to the west bank of the Tigris. Timur said his prayers and distributed charity to the poor. He set off without respite for Baghdad, Abode of Peace (1393).

The Sultan had flown. He had crossed the river, destroying the bridge and boats behind him. The Tatar troops flung themselves into the Tigris and swam their horses across despite the current, spreading throughout the country like ants and locusts. The inhabitants were dumbfounded at their number. Timur returned to Baghdad, which offered no resistance. Indeed, according to Ibn Taghri Birdi, Timur professed to come as a liberator to Baghdad, which had suffered under the tyrannical rule of Ahmad, and at the invitation of the city elders. While Timur received the submission of the city, his emirs rode in pursuit of the Sultan. The fugitives were overtaken beyond the Euphrates near Karbala, but Sultan Ahmad escaped across the stony desert towards Damascus, abandoning much of his wealth, his wives, and sons. He took refuge with Barquq, Mamluk Sultan of Egypt, who received him with much warmth. Arabshah attributes a malicious verse to the nimble sultan Ahmad, who escaped capture by flight on more than one occasion:

Although my hand is palsied in war,
Yet my foot is not lame in flight.

Once more the long trains of captives left for Samarqand, including the best craftsmen of Baghdad, the masters of sciences and arts, and the son and wives of Ahmad. Amongst the artists was a master taken from the royal ateliers, Abd-al-Hayy, one of the finest illuminators of his day. He was to be employed in decorating Timur's palaces. Another was the composer Khwaja Abd-al Qadir. Some scholars, who had been wise enough to prostrate themselves before Timur at the first opportunity, were not sent to Samarqand. One such was Nizam al-din. He was called upon later, however, by Timur to compose a history of Timur's campaigns.

Victory letters took the latest tidings to the kingdoms and cities of the empire so that celebrations could be held. The Conqueror himself celebrated for two months in the palaces of Baghdad, which had been built with fragrant woods and black and white jade. Baghdad, renowned for its confections and syrups, also offered the facilities of the pleasure houses along the banks of the Tigris. Meanwhile, the citizens collected and paid the ransom with which they had bought their lives. The money was distributed between the emirs and troops of Timur's army.

Here Timur received his grandson Muhammad-Sultan who had been charged with clearing the Kurdistan mountains of rebels and making secure the caravan roads. Sharaf al-din bore witness to the success of these expeditions, having himself made many journeys along the roads which had become safe as houses. Previously the caravans, even if protected by an escort of archers, had been obliged to make detours to avoid the robber bands.

Although Baghdad had lost her pre-eminence among the cities of Persia and Iraq, she retained the legacy of trunk roads which radiated from her gates. The great Khorasan Road started from east of Baghdad and went north-east to Hamadan, Rayy, through Khorasan to Samarqand, and thence to China. Cross-roads branched off to the north to Sultaniya and Tabriz, and southwards to Isfahan and Shiraz. The northern road from Baghdad followed the Tigris to Mosul and Amid, and led to Asia Minor. The north-western route followed the Euphrates and led to Syria and the Mediterranean. Two great pilgrims' roads went south-west from Baghdad, one via Kufah and the other via Basrah, at the head of the Persian Gulf. Timur sent Miranshah south to take control of Basrah.

An embassy was sent to Barquq, Sultan of Egypt, proposing a treaty of friendship and commercial relations. Timur recalled in his message that in the past the Hulagids had made war on the predecessors of the Egyptian sultans, who had ill-treated the people of Syria, but that later cordial relations had been established between the two empires. Since the death of Abu-Said there had been no monarch in Persia who could take control of affairs there. Now that the victorious sword of Timur had reduced to obedience the lands of Persia and Iraq bordering on the territories of Egypt, it was in the interests of general tranquillity that the trade routes should be free and that the merchants of the two nations should be able to come together in security. This would render their countries prosperous, bring abundance to the towns, and maintain the peoples in peace, said Timur.

He then departed from Baghdad with an expeditionary force to reduce the stronghold of Takrit, some hundred miles further up the Tigris. Takrit was the seat of rebels who, according to the representations of the merchants of Baghdad, attacked and pillaged the caravans, especially those from Syria and Egypt, which were the richest. The merchants, in their representations to Timur, had added that no battering rams or war-machines could reach this famous stronghold overlooking the river.

The first part of the journey Timur made by boat up the Tigris. He soon remounted and proceeded along the river bank, pausing for a tiger hunt in which five beasts were killed. Arriving at Takrit, he ordered that the fort be captured, no matter what the cost. The town was surrounded

and besieged, and work began on destroying the walls. The tuvajis divided the walls between the troops, marking with a red line the sections each regiment had to sap, and setting the orders in writing. The entire force of the army assembled there, seventy-two thousand men, were employed sapping the walls. Timur's tent was placed opposite the citadel, so that he could see the progress of the work. In a short time the foremost troops had pierced the rock to a depth of fifteen or twenty yards.

Sultan Hasan, independent ruler of Takrit, had sent his younger brother to Timur offering submission when the Tatars first arrived. Timur demanded that Hasan should give himself up. Three days after the siege had begun Hasan sent his mother to parley with Timur, offering his sons as hostages. But Hasan would not come himself; he had decided to resist to the last. Breaches made in the walls by the attackers were repaired, and some holes filled. Then Timur ordered that the supports be taken from the tunnels made in the rocks and the cavities filled with wood and pitch. These were fired, and the great walls tumbled. Resistance, however, continued. The men of Takrit were fighting for their lives. Hasan was forced to retreat to a mountain hideout, and the defeated forces left in Takrit demanded quarter. Timur refused. Hasan was captured and brought, together with his supporters, to Timur. The inhabitants were separated from the soldiers. Orders were given that the former should not be molested; but that the latter were to be divided among the tumans of Timur's army to be tortured and put to death. Tuvajis constructed minarets with their skulls, which were inscribed "Beware the fate of wrong-doers." Timur also ordered that one of the walls of the fortress should be left standing, as an indication to posterity of their strength, and as a monument to those who had been able to destroy them.

The campaigns of 1393 (Year of the Cock) ended with a rendezvous of all the troops on pastures west of the Tigris, between Takrit and Baghdad. Prince Muhammad-Sultan, grandson, and Miranshah, son of the Emperor, returned, having cleared the lower reaches of the Tigris. They established garrisons in the cities of Wasit and Basrah, and controlled the pilgrim roads to Mecca. While the troops relaxed and enjoyed a Tatar hunt, the couriers were taking an imperial edict to the princes, governors, and lords of provinces and towns, to all the shaykhs and chiefs of tribes of the Turkomans, demanding their submission. "You have been without a master and without a sovereign, and you have done as you pleased. But now you must submit to our orders. Stop your attacks on the highway; end your brigandage. If you do not submit yourselves to our orders, you will have yourselves to blame for the consequences."

Timur then went north-west to the upper courses of the Tigris and

Euphrates, to make good his threat and to reduce the plains of northern Mesopotamia.

The Prince of Mosul, who had made submission several months earlier, treated the Conqueror and his court to a sumptuous banquet. Timur crossed the river to the ruins of Nineveh to visit the shrines of the prophets Yunus (Jonah) and Jurjis (St. George). He donated ten thousand kebek dinars for the construction of suitable mausolea for these saints, and distributed charity to the poor. Two or three weeks later Timur appeared before Ruha (Edessa), one of the last towns before the Syrian marches. The local prince had abandoned his city at the news of Timur's approach. The Tatars greatly admired the stone buildings, visited the local shrines, and spent there two or three pleasant weeks. Timur distributed the treasure to his troops.

These Tatar moves north-west in the direction of the main routes into Syria caused great concern to Sultan Barquq of Egypt and Syria. After the fall of Baghdad he had given sanctuary to the fugitive Sultan Ahmad, and had re-equipped him with forces to secure his reinstatement in Baghdad. The alliance between the two was cemented by Barquq's marriage with one of Ahmad's daughters who had escaped capture. After the fall of Baghdad, moreover, Barquq had received the envoys of Timur. But the Mamluk Sultan, foremost Defender of Islam, Protector of the Caliph in Cairo (whither the last representative of the Caliph's family had fled in the days of Hulagu, the Chingizid conqueror), was not disposed to treat with the upstart from the east. Timur's main envoy to Cairo, Atilmish, was held prisoner, and the other envoys were killed. Atilmish was related to Timur by marriage.

A further letter came to Cairo from Timur, in rhyming measures, according to Ibn Taghri Birdi, which contained warnings and threats: "Rejoice then—at the news of your abasement and disgrace, O sinful and rebellious race! Among you the opinion prevails that we are unbelievers, but we by God are convinced that ye are the unbelieving disbelievers. And we have been sent to rule you by a God whose orders decide all, and whose decrees provide all. . . .

"We have done all our duty unto you, since we have sent an embassy unto you; so kill not those now sent, as you did those who first to you went, lest you as is your wont violate custom and precedent, and disobey Him who is over all the world omnipotent . . ."

The reply from Barquq, accusing Timur of confused rhetoric, accepted the challenge:

"For you were the fires of hell created, kindled that your skins be incinerated . . .

“Oh, wonder of wonders! boars with berries or lions with hyenas to dismay, and the brave with a rabble to affray! For our horses are Barcan, our arrows Arabian, our swords are from Yaman, and our armour Egyptian . . . If we kill you, how good will be the gain! and if you kill one of us, only a moment between him and Paradise will remain.”³

To back up these words, Barquq held a review of his troops and a distribution of expense money to the soldiers. Dispossessed Ahmad of Baghdad was still in Cairo when the review took place, “a mighty display of strength, splendour, magnificence, and elegance in appointments and dress. In the procession were led two hundred of the Sultan’s own horses with full war accoutrement, so magnificent with their many golden, silver, and brocaded furnishings of every colour and description that the mind became bewildered at the sight of them. The Sultan then signalled to the battalions of the emirs, which likewise were most magnificent in their display, one emir having vied with another in fitting out his battalion, and each one as it passed appearing more gorgeous than the last.” Then Barquq, fearing that the direction of Timur’s advance threatened reprisals for the attack on the Tatar envoys, marched north to Damascus, despatching also contingents to the banks of the Euphrates.

While in Damascus Barquq received envoys from Sivas, in the marches of Asia Minor; the ruler felt himself threatened by Timur’s advance, and awaited Barquq’s assistance. Agents came from Tokhtamish, khan of the Golden Horde, offering Barquq an alliance against Timur; the proposals were accepted. Next arrived the ambassadors of the Ottoman Sultan Bayazid, of Asia Minor, sending funds in support of Barquq’s effort against Timur; for the Egyptian Sultan, despite his magnificent displays, was much in debt.

Timur was in fact contemplating operations against the Mamluk Sultan of Egypt. But he was not yet ready. He had ordered the Prince of Mardin—a rocky fortress between the upper reaches of the Euphrates and the Tigris—to appear before him to tender his submission, and to supply troops for an attack on Syria and Egypt. Neither prince nor troops had appeared; on the contrary, Isa, Prince of Mardin, had sent word about his dilemma to Barquq. Suddenly “outstripping the birds”, the Tatar troops turned back east from Ruha to mete out punishment to the foolhardy prince.

The Tatar troops were ranged outside Mardin when news was brought to Timur of the death of his eldest son Prince Omar-Shaykh, ruler of the province of Fars. He had been recalled to Timur’s camp and on the journey through Kurdistan, where he had been besieging a fortress, he received an arrow-shot from one of the local tribesmen. He had died

instantly. It was not easy to break the news to the Emperor. But Timur heard the account, they say, without moving a muscle. The kingdom of Fars was bestowed on Pir-Mohammad, son of Omar-Shaykh. The prince's body was taken to Shiraz and from there a royal escort, including wives and sons, accompanied it to Shahrīsabz; there Timur had already erected splendid sepulchres for his father, for his son Jahangir, and for others of his family.

Timur withdrew from Mardin. Prince Isa had renewed his promises but had not honoured them. Timur's men had been insulted in the city. But conditions were difficult for the Tatar hosts. It was the end of winter, and pasturage was scarce for so large a number of horse. He returned to the better pasturage in the Tigris valley near Mosul, not, however, without casualties. On the journey storms broke and rains flooded the valleys. Camels and mules sank in the mud so that only their ears were visible; many beasts perished. Tents were abandoned, and the cavalry went on foot. At last, in March, Timur and the Guards emerged from the floods on to solid earth with plenty of grass. The troops that followed after them spread out felts, matting, and the cloth of their pavilions on the ground to make their passage possible.

Timur remounted and refurbished his troops from the proceeds of a punitive expedition against a chieftain who had dared to pillage a caravan of gifts sent to Sultaniya for the queens and princes. He then returned to the assault and capture of Mardin, which provided him with a further booty of mules and camels, girls and boys, and splendid horses. The citizens begged for their lives with an enormous ransom. They were fortunate. At that moment a courier arrived from Saray-Mulk-khanum, announcing the birth at Sultaniya of a son to seventeen-year-old Shahrukh. In celebration of the event Mardin was spared, and even the ransom was renounced. The new grandson was Ulugh-beg, who was to become a distinguished astronomer and patron of arts and sciences. Shahrukh had been married since he was eleven, but his first wife may not have been the mother of Ulugh-beg. The mother, Gauhar-Shadagha, was a Chaghatay princess, a woman of great character and distinction; but as was customary the child was placed in the care of another queen (probably Saray-Mulk-khanum herself) and given a tutor. This was the spring of 1394, the Year of the Dog.

Sultan Barquq of Egypt arrived with his troops at Damascus, ready to match his strength with that of the Tatar conqueror.

Timur continued to move north, against the town of Amid, at a junction on the upper Tigris. The town surrendered, but the Tatars were

unable to destroy the mighty walls. Other highland centres in Armenia were reduced, despite the depth of the snows especially to the east of Lake Van. There were great losses of horses, camels, mules, and men over the precipices.

The Conqueror summoned his family from Sultaniya, where they had spent the winter. Shahrukh was sent out ahead to meet them. Timur, impatient as usual, left the main army and set off himself to find them. The imperial household followed Timur north to the beautiful Armenian valley of Qars, and it was here in the early autumn that Shahrukh's second son (of a different mother) was born. This was Ibrahim-Sultan. He was given to Queen Tuman-agma's care.

Sultan Barquq, seeing the direction of Timur's movements, moved north in August with his forces, from Damascus to Aleppo.

The upper reaches of the Tigris and Euphrates had been largely subdued by the autumn. Expeditions had been sent against Qara-Yusuf, chief of the Qara-qoyunlu (Black Sheep Turkomans); Timur had already wrested Avnik, a Turkoman stronghold on the upper reaches of the Aras, from Qara-Yusuf's son Misr, who had been captured and sent to Samarqand. The Prince of Arzinjan on the borders of Rum (Asia Minor), who had submitted during the first campaign in Persia, had given good service against Misr the Turkoman, and was confirmed in his principality. Timur's western dominions bordered at that stage the Persian Gulf, Syria and Asia Minor; some three thousand miles—by the most direct route—lay between his capital and his western limits. Within those limits, the caravans of the Middle East and of Central Asia plied the trunk roads, every campaign sending its baggage trains of booty and captives east to Samarqand. The imperial household remained at Sultaniya when not enjoying with Timur the east-Caucasian alpine pastures of Qarabagh.

By November, Sultan Barquq of Egypt was convinced that his enemy Timur was afraid to meet him and was returning home. Barquq broke camp and made tracks for Cairo.

Timur had avoided issue with the Mamluk Sultan of Egypt and Syria at a time when the Tatar forces were in no condition to oppose a considerable foe. When their strength was restored, Timur turned them not against Egypt but against an enemy likely to be more dangerous by far to Mawarannahr—the reassembled troops of Tokhtamish, khan of the Golden Horde.

While in the Caucasus, Timur sent several detachments into Georgia on a third campaign "inspired by religious zeal against the Christians". They returned with news of victories and with great booty. The main purpose

of the expedition, however, had not been achieved: this had been to punish the Qipchaq troops of Tokhtamish Khan that had come through the passes, with the cognisance no doubt of the Georgians, and were harrying the countryside to the south (1394). As soon as the Tatar forces made contact with them, however, the Qipchaqs slipped away again through the Iron Gates of Darband.

Tokhtamish had been defeated three years earlier (1391) at Kunduzcha, but the Golden Horde had not been destroyed. By 1393 the inconstant khan had recovered sufficiently to be sending demands from Tana for the submission and traditional tribute from the Polish king Jagellon. Pursuing the long-standing policy of the Golden Horde khans to seek alliance with Egyptian sultans against their common adversary the rulers of Persia, Tokhtamish sent in 1394, and again the following year, envoys to Sultan Barquq to negotiate an alliance against Timur. Timur's own envoy had been killed by the Mamluk Sultan, and he was contemplating a campaign against Syria and Egypt. When, however, the news came that the troops of Tokhtamish were crossing the Caucasus, Timur turned north. "It is good when the game comes and throws itself into the hunter's net."

He had departed forthwith to seek out the impudent Qipchaqs, but they had fled. Timur ordered the winter quarters to be prepared, and camped south of the Aras near the Caspian. He sent for his family, which had been despatched to Sultaniya, and his sons, queens, and other ladies joined him. To Prince Miranshah, ruler of this territory as far north as the Darband Pass, was born a son at this time. The court gave itself up to festivities; every day, said the chronicler, provided fresh amusement.

Winter was barely over when Timur made a general distribution of pay from his treasury to the troops. The ladies were sent back, some to Sultaniya, and Saray-Mulk-khanum and Tuman-agma to Samarqand, whither Shahrukh had gone the previous autumn as governor. During the winter there had been an exchange of embassies between Timur and his former protégé. Recalling the past, the Conqueror demanded a treaty of submission from Tokhtamish, but the reply failed to give satisfaction. Timur held a review of his forces, and, knowing the Qipchaqs still to be in the area, advanced in battle order, each of his wings protected by an advance guard.

Both sides were manoeuvring for position in the restricted valleys, and Tokhtamish again succeeded in slipping away and avoiding battle. The armies met, however, on the banks of the river Terek, north of the Darband, in April (1395).

Clavijo, Castilian ambassador at the court of Timur nine years later, heard an account of the pursuit of the elusive Tokhtamish: "Timur . . .

marched and in all haste pursued him, though his horsemen were fewer in number than those of Tokhtamish. Following in their tracks he came up with the Qipchaq host on the banks of the great river Terek which flows near by Tartary, and Timur immediately made effort striving to seize the ford, it being his intention to pass over.

“In all those parts this ford was the sole passage by which that river could be crossed. When, however, Timur reached the river bank, he found that Tokhtamish had already passed to the further side, who, learning that Timur was at his heels, immediately halted to guard and hold the ford which he now caused to be further protected on his side by wooden beams. On coming up Timur, finding that Tokhtamish was in possession of this passage, halted, sending envoys to Tokhtamish demanding why he acted thus, and assuring him that he, Timur, had not come to make war on him, being indeed his good friend, and calling on God to witness that he, Timur, on his part had never intended any aggression against him. Tokhtamish, however, would listen to none of his message, knowing well the guile of Timur. The next day, therefore, Timur broke up his camp and proceeded to march up the river bank on the south side, seeing which Tokhtamish did likewise, and marched his host along the northern bank keeping pace opposite him. Thus, the one following the other, both hosts took the way upstream, and at night camped each over against the other with the river in between. This business went on and was repeated during three days, neither army outstripping the other, but on the third night as soon as his camp was formed Timur issued orders that all the women who marched with his soldiers should don helmets with the men’s war-gear to play the part of soldiers, while the men should mount and forthwith ride back with him to the ford, each horseman taking with him a second mount led by the bridle. Thus the camp was left in charge of the women, with their slaves and their captives under guard, while Timur went back by forced march the three days’ journey to where the river could be crossed. On coming to the ford the army halted that night, and the following day passed over the river, next marching back along the opposite bank when at nine of the morning they fell on him . . .” According to Nizam al-din, the armies spent the night face to face. Next day battle was joined. Fierce hand-to-hand fighting took place. At one stage the Qipchaqs broke through to Timur himself, who was in command of the reserve. He was fighting sabre in hand, his small pike broken and his arrows exhausted. Shaykh Nur al-din and fifty of his men formed up in front of the emperor, protecting him with a hail of arrows. Others seized enemy wagons with which they formed a barricade in front of him and broke the ranks of the enemy. Other companies

hastily formed themselves into a bodyguard until the Guards themselves arrived with flying banners, drums and trumpets sounding. They held out against the fierce pressure of the enemy until the tide of battle turned. Muhammad-Sultan led an attack from the left flank which drove through the Qipchaq ranks and put them to flight. This grandson, always dear to Timur, was now a thousand times more so.⁴ The Qipchaq ranks reformed again and again and returned to the attack, but it was the effective support and co-operation, which the different units of Timur's army were able to render each other, which brought them decisive victory. The Golden Horde army was routed, their camp and baggage trains fell into the hands of the Conqueror.

“Timur ever counted this the most notable of his victories . . .”⁵

It was indeed the most notable of victories. The direct route north to the heart of the Golden Horde and its richest urban centres lay open to Timur. He installed a son of Urus (the former White Horde khan) as Qipchaq khan, and, leaving the booty with the baggage train, Timur went in pursuit of Tokhtamish. He sped north along the west bank of the Volga and then crossed to the east. Tokhtamish disappeared into the Bulghar forests. Timur followed him a considerable distance, and then crossed back to the west, ravaging the countryside as far west as the Dnieper and as far north as Yeletz, by the Don on the borders of the Qipchaq khanate and the Russian states. At this point, in August, Timur turned south, again with immense booty, but without Tokhtamish.

Timur did not reach Moscow. The Yermolinski chronicles relate that Grand Prince Vassili I of Muscovy collected his forces and set out for the river Oka, while the people of Moscow, great and small, took defensive measures. Amongst these was the summoning from Vladimir of the wonder-working ikon of the Holy Virgin. Its arrival at Moscow was marked by great ceremony—and by the departure of Timur south from Yeletz, in fear, thought the chronicler, either of Russian arms or the faculties of the Virgin ikon. Timur turned south in fact in an encircling movement round the territories of the Golden Horde.

The victors reached Tana, on the mouth of the Don river, a commercial entrepot with substantial colonies of merchants from Genoa and Venice, as well as Catalans, Biscayans and other western traders. The merchants sent a deputation to Timur laden with gifts, hoping thus to purchase their salvation. Timur promised all they asked, and dismissed them, sending one of his emirs as their escort back to the city. Many trusted the Tatar's amiable promises. Others, taking advantage of the fleet of six or eight Venetian galleys which were making their regular annual visit to the port, secured asylum on board. When Timur's troops

entered the city, the Muslim population was separated from the rest and set free. The others, mainly Christians, learned too late of Timur's real intentions, and were slaughtered or enslaved. Their banks, churches, and depots were fired. Amongst the captives were the three sons of Miani, a Venetian magistrate, one of whom had taken part in the delegation to Timur. All three managed to regain their freedom at the price of twelve thousand ducats ransom. Their possessions remained with the Tatars.⁶

From Tana the Conqueror crossed the Don and Kuban steppes, where the Circassian peoples set fire to the prairie to deprive the invaders of food and fodder. The mounts were in particular straits and many died. It was already winter by the time the Tatars, having retraced their steps to the lower waters of the Volga, reached Astrakhan. The river was beginning to freeze and the inhabitants defended the city by building walls with blocks of ice over which they threw water, so that the whole edifice froze together. The governor surrendered, the people and animals were driven from the city, which was demolished. The governor was pushed beneath the ice of the river.

The capital of the Horde, Saray, where the caravans used to be made up for the transcontinental journey, was the next victim. The inhabitants were driven out into the snow, and the city burnt to the ground. This was the revenge taken for the destruction of the palace of Qarshi in Timur's home valley of the Qashka-Darya eight years before. The blow was decisive. The capital city of the khans of the Golden Horde never recovered. Other cities on the Volga eventually replaced her. The catastrophe was as sudden as it was decisive. Excavations in the nineteenth century revealed cellars filled with supplies ready for the bazaars: fragments of glass vessels and painted crockery; plates; ink-wells; pieces of hide and leather already cut for boots and shoes; lengths of silk; garments: all with traces of scorching. Then there were knives, blades of swords, axes and spades; bowls for ritual washing; pokers, touchwood, tinder-boxes; small and large pots, copper cups and goblets; bronze candlesticks; bone knitting needles, and the remains of chisels; necklaces, burnt paper; birch-tree bark and plaited grasses, also singed; nails, hooks, door-hinges bolts and padlocks; pieces of burnt bread, rye, and nuts—filberts, acorns, almonds, and pistachios. There were dried figs, prunes, raisins, peaches, cloves, pepper, peas, beans, and some grains of coffee. There were also three stone cellars where quantities of crystal were found with colouring matter—deep blue, yellow, azure, green, red and white; links of horse-collars, bridles, bits, iron chains, horse-shoes, boxes of iron rings; pitch; strips of leather; hones, slates, mortars; skittles and balls of baked earth; copper wire; aloes; sulphur, alum, salt-petre . . .⁷

Skeletons without heads, hands, or feet were also found in excavations at Saray. This was the great Saray where the Muslim travellers had noted the extraordinary number of foreign merchants. Here the Italian or Hungarian merchant had come to bargain for the silks of China and the Siberian pelts.⁸ Here, said Ibn Arabshah, "they say that a slave of one of the magnates of this city fled and fixed his abode in a place by the side of the road and opened a shop where he supported himself by trade; and that base fellow remained for about ten years—but his master never met him or found him or saw him, because of the size of the city and the multitude of its people . . ."

The defeat on the Terek and the destruction of Saray were blows from which the Golden Horde itself did not recover. Her caravan routes were ruined. The intercontinental road travelled by the elder Polos and by Ibn Battuta was closed. The Horde lost its interest for the merchants of east and west. The victims were not only the Volga cities of Saray and Astrakhan, the first two stations on the route from the Black Sea to Central Asia and China, but the ports of Kaffa and Tana. Tana lost the market of Saray which had supplied her with northern products, especially slaves, but trade with Asia was still sufficiently attractive for both the Genoese and Venetians to attempt to maintain bases there. However, the Venetian travellers Barbaro and Contarini in the fifteenth century reported the commercial decline and devastation of Tana and Astrakhan. Jenkinson, the English traveller, found Astrakhan in 1558 to be "small and beggarly" and the route to Bukhara subject to attack.

It was evidently Timur's intention to destroy the northern trade route which connected the Near and Far East, and to redirect the caravans on to the route through Central Asia, which had commanded the intercontinental trade in pre-Chingiz times. Urganch, the next station on the northern route, had been destroyed in 1388. After the fall of Saray, the northern transcontinental route was practically abandoned. Instead of the route via Tana, Saray, Urganch, Otrar, and Talas, the caravans once again took the road through Sultaniya, Herat, Balkh, and Samarqand; and the revenues henceforth went into the pockets of Timur and his vassals. Timur's policies for the empires of the Hulagids and of the Golden Horde were thus opposite, but complementary. In the former he was the guardian of the trade routes which connected with and radiated from Mawarannahr; here he carved fiefs for his sons. In the latter, he destroyed the trade route which by-passed his own state; and here he patronized one rival khan after another, and enflamed the conflicts which sapped still further the waning strength of the Horde. In the fifteenth century the Golden Horde broke up into independent khanates in Kazan, Crimea and Siberia.

The son of Urus installed by Timur as khan of the Horde failed to establish himself. Tokhtamish emerged from the forest, reclaimed his throne, and a year later was attacking the Genoese colonists in the Crimea. Idigu, another former protégé of the Conqueror, tried also to establish himself as master of the Horde, but managed to rally only a fraction of its former strength. The third rival, Qutluq-oghlan, succeeded in becoming khan of the reduced Horde, and maintained peace, if not friendship, with the Lord of the Fortunate Conjunction. Both Clavijo and Archbishop John repeat stories which indicated that the princes of the Golden Horde, and especially Idigu, remained thorns in the flesh of the Conqueror, matching his Tatar cunning with their own, even though they could no longer be any danger to him. The dispossessed Tokhtamish sought refuge with the Prince of Lithuania, who took his part in vain against Qutluq-oghlan. Nine years after his defeat on the Terek, Tokhtamish turned up at Otrar where he waited while his roughly clad envoys went to Timur's court once more as suppliants.

Ibn Arabshah, who wrote not long after Timur's death, described the condition to which the lands of the Golden Horde had been reduced: "There used to advance convoys of travellers from Khwarazm making their journey in wagons, securely without terror or fear, as far as the Crimea—a journey of about three months; in width there is a sea of sand as broad as seven seas, through which the most skilful guide could not show the way nor the most crafty of experienced men make the journey, and those convoys did not take supplies or fodder or join to themselves companions—this because of the multitude of the people, and the abundance of security, food, and drink among the inhabitants . . ." Having described the struggle for power in the defeated Horde between Tokhtamish and Idigu, Arabshah continued: "Therefore from these causes the cultivated part of Dasht (Qipchaq) became a desert and a waste, the inhabitants scattered, dispersed, routed and destroyed, so that if anyone went through it without a guide and scout, he would certainly perish losing the way, even in summer; since winds, lifting and scattering sands, hide the way, passing over it, and wipe it out. But in winter, since snow falling there collects on the road and covers it, for the ground is desert without marks of a road and its halting places are thrown into confusion, its stages and watering-places are fearful wastes and the roads utterly deadly and difficult."

The winter of 1395-6 was exceptionally hard, and Timur's army was not in good condition. Provisions were short and prices in the camp soared. Horses perished in great numbers. The Emperor ordered the

tuvajis to distribute amongst the troops the booty seized at Astrakhan and Saray, and to mount those in need. The army left the desolate Qipchaq country and returned to winter pastures in Georgia. The campaign had lasted three and a half years. With the return of spring in 1396 (the Year of the Mouse), the army unfurled its banners, crossed the Terek which was still under ice, and once more brought the sword and the Faith to the stubborn peoples of Georgia. Then the army moved south through the Darband Pass, the wagons laden with spoils, and each soldier accompanied by half a dozen beautiful captives.

The "Campaign of Five Years" had, in fact, destroyed in four seasons the one opponent capable of offering decisive resistance to the Lame Conqueror. It had secured the vital centres and stages of the trade routes of the Levant, as well as the plunder of the provinces from the Caucasus to the Persian Gulf and the Indian seaboard. It had brought Timur's conquests to the marches of Anatolia, thus challenging the dominion of Bayazid the Ottoman Turk. It had brought the Tatar conquests to the marches of Syria, dominion of Barquq of Egypt. Both sultans were disposed to cross swords with Timur the Lame.

But the Conqueror returned to Samarqand the Protected. He spent in his kingdom the longest interval between any of his campaigns—two seasons. During these two years he devoted himself with furious energy to the development and adornment of the capital; and to preparations for further campaigns, the objective of which he alone decided.

NOTES

¹ G. le Strange: *Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*.

² Sharaf al-din Yazdi: *Zafar-nama*.

³ Ibn Taghri Birdi: *History of Egypt*, tr. Popper.

⁴ Nizam al-din Shami: *Zafar-nama*.

⁵ Clavijo: *Embassy*.

⁶ W. Heyd: *Commerce du Levant*, 1923.

⁷ V. V. Gregoriev: *Four Years of Archaeological Research in the Ruins of Saray*, 1847.

⁸ Al-Omari, quoted by G. le Strange, and Ibn Battuta: *Voyages*.

OTHER WORKS CONSULTED

L. V. Cherepnin: *Formation of Russian Centralized State*.

R. Grousset: *L'Empire des Steppes*.

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IMPERIAL SAMARQAND

1396 (Year of the Mouse)—1398 (Year of the Tiger)

Then shall my native city Samarcanda
 . . . pride and beauty of her princely seat
 Be famous thro' the furthest continents:
 For there my palace royal shall be plac'd . . .

Christopher Marlowe: *Tamburlaine the Great*

TIMUR could not remain in Persia after the defeat of the Qipchaqs, according to Arabshah, because of the weight of the booty and the multitude of the prisoners that had accumulated. "So he made for the kingdom of his Samarqand, where he shook his bags and emptied his pouch."

The homeward march was delayed till summer, 1396, in order to deal with pockets of resistance in Azarbayjan and Fars. In the latter kingdom, a revolt had taken place in Yazd, a station on the caravan road from Nishapur to Shiraz. The rebels had seized the officer left in charge, together with the revenues he had collected and a consignment of fabrics destined for the Empress Saray-Mulk; out of these they had cut for themselves some very fine robes. With fresh Khorasan troops, Timur besieged the city. The rebels held out until many of the population were dying of hunger; the leaders then tried to escape by a tunnel which had been dug under the city walls. They were captured, and cut to pieces, or burnt alive. Yazd was reduced to great straits during the rebellion and siege; houses were empty of inhabitants, and shops were ruined. On its capture, Timur forbade reprisals against the citizens, or pillaging. In fact he ordered steps to be taken for the re-establishment of the city and its trade. (This according to Sharaf al-din, a native of the city, who was anxious to flatter his master.)

A force was also ordered to Shustar to clear the robbers from the trunk roads of Luristan, north of Fars. They were then to proceed south along the Persian Gulf to secure the submission of the cities as far as Hurmuz, the entrepot for the sea-borne commerce with India. Shaykh Nur al-din was despatched to Shiraz, capital of Fars, to control the receipt of revenues.

Timur spent Ramadan in the plains near Hamadan, in prayer and pious observations. The Lord of the Fortunate Conjunction was turned sixty.

Dismissing his troops to their normal summer quarters, he set out in

July for Samarqand, having achieved a five-year campaign in four. He rushed home by forced marches, crossed the Amu-Darya at Amul; here he was welcomed by a family party composed of the Greater Lady Saray-Mulk-khanum, Tuman-agma, another queen, Sultan-Bacht-Begum, his daughter, and other ladies and princes who came along with Shahrukh, the youngest of Timur's sons, who had been in charge of Samarqand. Gold coin and precious stones were scattered over the Emperor, and he was presented with a thousand richly caparisoned mounts and a suite of a thousand mules of uniform colouring. Timur was fond of mules.

Timur then went to the mausoleum in the valley of his forebears and paid his respects to the memory of Taraghay, his father, and his two first-born sons, Jahangir and Omar-Shaykh. Each day in the shady courtyard before the mosque, twenty sheep were cooked and distributed as alms, in honour of the royal dead of the Barlas clan.

From the bags that Timur shook and the pouch that he emptied, came the plunder and revenues with which he intended to make Samarqand the greatest capital in Asia. Along the routes from the Levant to Samarqand flowed the wealth from the three main sources that filled the imperial exchequer: duties and taxes from commerce; tribute from vassals; and plunder pure and simple.

Taxes on commerce and the town crafts, regarded as unlawful in Islam, were nevertheless regularly gathered. Rashid al-din, minister of the Ilkhans of Persia, spoke appreciatively of these dues (the tamgha), as the most liquid taxes in the realm.¹ Revenues from trade formed an important part of Timur's income. Schiltberger observed that the Conqueror's attention to the consolidation and protection of caravan routes within his dominions brought great financial benefits for him.

Clavijo made the journey from Trebizond to Samarqand in four months at the beginning of the fifteenth century. He found that, with the exception of the first few stages, where the traveller was troubled by the exactions of the local chief, "the whole country was at peace under the rule and government of Timur". From Tabriz all the way along the Khorasan road, relays of horses were kept ready at posts a day's ride apart, for imperial envoys. Passing a castle at the foot of Mount Ararat in Armenia, the Castilian ambassador remarked: "This castle was in the occupation of a lady, and she was a widow who owned it, paying however tribute to Timur for the lordship of the same and the lands that lay around it. Formerly this castle had been a stronghold of robbers and highwaymen who lived by plundering travellers. Timur had taken it by storm, and put to death the chief of the brigands (who had been the husband of the lady mentioned above, now his widow). Timur had left

orders that—lest highwaymen should again harbour and shut themselves in here to practise their evil deeds—every door should be removed from the castle gateways, and never replaced, always remaining open . . . when we were there we found all its gateways still without gates. The castle stands at the foot of the great mountain where the Ark of Noah came to rest . . . The Lady gave us a very hospitable reception that night, supplying us for all our needs.” Guards were sent to keep watch day and night over the ambassadors, their baggage, and their horses; “and should ought come to be missed, those of the township or settlement had fully to make the loss good.”

The ambassador’s progress along the main caravan trail, and his stay in Samarqand, convinced him that trade had been fostered by Timur with a view to making his capital the noblest of cities. Every year merchandise of all kinds came in from Cathay, India, Tartary (Qipchaq country), and many other quarters besides, “for in the countries round the Samarqand territory, commerce is very flourishing”. In Tabriz, he reported a concourse of merchants and merchandise, caravanserais, splendid bath-houses, public squares where food was “nicely served forth for present eating”, fountains and iced water in copper jugs for the thirsty traveller, and an estimated two hundred thousand householders within the city limits. At Sultaniya, next stage on the route, and an imperial residence, merchants congregated from Afghanistan, Gilan, Syria; from Genoa and Venice; from Kaffa, Trebizond, Turkey, Baghdad and Hurmuz. Ray and Nishapur, further along the Khorasan road, were all substantial places. After Nishapur, instead of bearing south to Herat, the envoys, who were being hurried along by their Tatar escort, went on to the shrine of Mashhad, to Tus, and across the desert to Andkhoy and Balkh, where they crossed the Amu-Darya into Mawarannahr.

Along this route, the caravans brought to Samarqand the fine silks of the Caspian province, the renowned jewels and gold- and silver-ware of Sultaniya, as well as the produce of India and China, which came by the southern sea-route to Hurmuz and thence north by camel caravan. More fabrics, glass, and metal-ware were brought from Syria and Asia Minor.

The land route from India, over the Hindu Kush to Balkh, brought the “lesser spices”—nutmeg and clove, mace and ginger, and cinnamon both in flower and as bark. Furs, leather goods and linen came in from the Qipchaq country. The six-months caravan trail from the east, from the Huang Ho river in China, along the fringes of the Tarim basin to Almaliq and Kashghar, brought from Cathay the most precious of all merchandise from foreign parts: the finest silks (“those that are best are those without embroidery”), precious stones including agates and pearls, medicinal

rhubarb, spices, and musk—for the Chinese musk was considered best after the famous musk of Tibet. Clavijo noted Chinese porcelain at Timur's court. He came to Samarqand, in fact, shortly after a caravan of eight hundred camels had arrived from Khanbaliq (Peking).

Despite the fact that customs duties were considered in Muslim countries to be contrary to religious law, taxes and percentages formed an important source of state revenues. Customs and tolls were collected at the caravan cities and at junctions. Non-Muslims were frequently charged twice the rate due from Muslims. Two points were especially profitable to Timur. One was the "Iron Gate" of Darband, where the eastern spur of the Caucasus range comes down to the Caspian. The narrow pass between mountain and sea, in the kingdom of Shirvan, had become subject to Timur during his first campaign in Azarbayjan. It was the gateway between Persia and the Golden Horde, and yielded him a "very considerable yearly tribute from customs". The other was situated in the mountain range between Samarqand and Balkh, two days' ride south from Shahrīsabz; this was another "Iron Gate", also called Darband. Clavijo summed it up as "the Guard House of the Imperial City: the pass that traverses it is a narrow cleft where the passage seems to have been cut by the hand of man, with the mountain wall on either side rising vertical to an immense height. It is only by this one pass that all who travel up to Samarqand from India the Less (Afghanistan) can come: nor can those who go down from the Imperial City voyaging to India travel by any other route."

The Darband in Mawarannahr was described in similar terms by the Buddhist monk Hsuan-tsang in the seventh century. Chang-Chun followed Chingiz-khan through these Iron Gates. Clavijo calculated that between the two Darbands there was a distance of at least one thousand five hundred leagues, "and of this territory Timur is Lord. . . . The Lord Timur is sole master of these Iron Gates, and the revenue is considerable to the state from the customs imposed on all merchants who come from India . . ."

Archbishop John, no doubt with his own purpose in view, remarked on the facilities granted to merchants: "He (Timur) sees willingly foreign merchants and grants them favour and security throughout his lands . . . if any merchant is despoiled anywhere in his lands, all those of the country where the merchant was robbed must render him double what he lost, and must render to Timur five times the amount in question."

If Schiltberger, the Bavarian captive, thought that the king of Persia received from Tabriz alone a larger revenue than the most powerful king in Christendom, Clavijo added that the city of Sultaniya was so full of

commerce that it brought into the imperial treasury each year a vast income from customs. The Castilian ambassador had a keen eye for business, and noted that the exploitation of certain mineral resources was the monopoly of the emperor. Timur had sole rights over the mines of Badakhshan in the Hindu Kush, whence the Amu-Darya draws its waters; from these mines came sapphires, lapis-lazuli, and the rose-red balas rubies. The mines were strongly guarded, and the value of the stones was increased by restricting the supply that reached the market.

Revenues from commerce were but one part of the state resources. Another source consisted in the feudatory tribute exacted in cash, kind, and services from the subject peoples. The realms conquered by Timur were feudal states, and he placed in authority over them, as his vassals, either princes of his own family, loyal feudal magnates whom he wished to reward, former rulers who had submitted and given proof of loyalty, or those—as in the case of the Golden Horde and Asia Minor later—who were likely to cause trouble to his enemies. The feudal possessions (fiefs), great or small, were hereditary, and the rulers were normally completely responsible for their administration and the levying of taxes and tribute. From this they paid the demands of the state treasury and retained as much as possible in surplus for themselves.

The privileged group of feudal lords who had been made Tarkhan received, in addition to their other rights, exemption from the usual levies and taxes. However, the peasants, townsfolk, and merchants bore the same burdens and paid as much as before: the lord received the entire income as his own. The system of tribute and taxation under Timur also continued the practices of the Mongols. Nomad herdsmen provided services and taxes in kind. Clavijo noticed a horde gathered in Khorasan to be numbered for taxation; they paid something in the order of three thousand camels and fifteen thousand sheep in tribute. Vassals were also required to provide pasturage for imperial studs and herds. A chief was executed in Samarqand while the ambassador was there; he had received a consignment of three thousand mounts from the imperial stud to pasture, but had not restored the proper number. His promise to return six instead of three thousand, if time were granted him, did not save him from the gallows.

Arable lands were divided into small peasant holdings. Besides the land the feudal lord provided ploughs, seed, and oxen, and usually controlled the vital water supply. The basic tax was the land tax levied in money and in kind, and reaching sometimes half the product in question. The *kharaj* (the land tax), exacted throughout the settled regions, produced revenue in three main ways: on the basis of the area under cultivation; on the basis

of a division of the harvest; and as an annual payment to the treasury made irrespective of the area under cultivation or its crop. The rate was not fixed. It varied according to the type of crop and according to the method of irrigation. Water in Asia was frequently more precious than land or gold; water was life itself. Although in Muslim lands it was in theory the gift of Allah that none might own, in practice it was the monopoly of the lords. Areas dependent on rainfall alone were taxed least heavily; the areas watered by natural streams were taxed more heavily, while the regions dependent on wells and irrigation channels were taxed most heavily of all.

Archbishop John reported that from all his towns and villages Timur took a tithe in tax, and a quarter of all the rents. This enabled him to maintain his innumerable mounted archers and his foot soldiers. Poll-taxes were also sometimes levied, especially on non-Muslims. Other taxes included the traditional Muslim alms taxes, as well as taxes on enterprises such as mines. The taxes and service bore heavily upon townsfolk, peasants, and herdsmen (except the privileged Chaghatays). In addition to the onerous upkeep of the yams, they had to keep up irrigation canals by their labour, as well as pay tax for the water received in the dry season. Slave and peasant labour was levied for the building of city walls and other fortifications, for palaces, mosques, and colleges. Their labour maintained, or constructed, roads and bridges. As in the case when they were levied for war, the people had to bring with them their own food and tools. On Clavijo's return journey the men of Qazvin were required to turn out to open a road through the snow for the party. Then their work was taken over by men of the next village, who beat down a passage through the snow.

Despite the amounts retained by the subject princes, the privileged nobles, and the tax-gatherers in general, the tribute received by the imperial exchequer was immense. In 1397 when Muhammad-Sultan returned from the subjection of Hurmuz on the Persian Gulf, the defeated ruler had promised a tribute of six hundred thousand dinars. And when, in 1398, Shaykh Nur al-din brought the tribute from Persia to present to Timur in Kabul, the court controllers worked three days and nights registering it all. After the defeat of the Ottoman Turks, officers were sent through Rum (Asia Minor) "surveying its districts to their furthest borders and accurately and diligently exacted a fifth part of their resources".² One occasion at least is recorded when Timur reprimanded his officials for the excessive tribute they were trying to extract from the Sultan of Kashmir—an ally whom Timur wished to court, probably on account of the projected China campaign. Safety could sometimes be

secured by prompt submission and the ready supply of tribute and gifts: "When Isfandiari learned that he (Timur) did no violence to those who submitted to him and complied with his orders, he hastened to present himself to him and prepared to approach him and brought excellent presents and gifts of great price and Timur received him courteously and dealt familiarly with him . . . then he (Timur) instructed him and the Princes of Qaraman and the Emirs of those countries who had shown themselves ready to obey and submit to him, to have public prayers recited and money coined in the names of Mahmud-Khan and the great Emir Timur Gurgan. And they obeyed his orders and shunned what he forbade and so were safe from plunder and havoc."²

However, the safety thus secured applied only to princes and their possessions, but not to the peoples, for whom the extortioners of tribute were simply plunderers. Arabshah gave a vivid, if not literal, account of the activities of the officers who were sent to every corner of Rum "accurately and diligently" exacting a fifth part of the resources: "Some took out the brain from the skulls for the sake of wealth, seeking thence without hindrance whatever they wished, with one hand or with both hands; some lay on the prominence of the chest, the heads and faces of the submissive being bent over its back and some stretched the fingers of their oppression without check to its wrists and elbows, attacking its belly and hips from the west and east with the feet of rapine. They shaved heads, amputated necks, crushed arms, cut off shoulder blades, burnt livers, scorched faces, gouged out eyes, split open bellies, blinded the sight, made tongues mute, blocked the hearing, crushed noses to the earth, lacerated mouths, shattered chests, crushed backs, pounded the ribs, split navels, melted hearts, severed sinews, shed blood, injured private parts, did violence to souls, poured out bodies like molten images"

The obligation to supply the needs of the army was frequently disastrous for an area. Deserted villages were to be seen along the Khorasan route in the wake of Timur's forces. Between Sultaniya and Tehran, Clavijo came upon a ruined castle and a depopulated settlement. The troops who had passed that way before them had found inadequate supplies of fodder. They were therefore allowed to cut down the standing crops, which were then ripe. After Timur the camp followers plundered what was left. "Wheresoever we might come and whensoever, no matter at what hour, if those of the settlement or township did not forthwith very quickly bring all that was required, they received merciless blows and beatings . . . On our arrival, the escort, or those who were in charge of us . . . would seize on the first person come to in the street, making him

prisoner. Now these Persians here about are wont to wear on their heads (a sort of turban) made by winding round in folds a long strip of cloth stuff: this a horseman will snatch off and undoing throw it round that man's neck and . . . bring the poor fellow up to his stirrup. Then giving kicks and blows they drive on . . . (to) the house of him known as the Reis (headman)."

The first words addressed to the Reis were seasoned with blows "bestowed then and there with no lack of vigour: as was a wonder to witness", together with the assertion that as the reception was poor the townfolk would be required to pay heavily with their goods for this negligence.

". . . These men always behave thus, without either consideration or pity, when they travel passing through on any business of the government, for they boast that in carrying out the commands of their Lord Timur, they may press to his service, even kill, all and any, for none may oppose them. Every man must keep silent whatever may be done by him the messenger, who is carrying out the Lord Timur's behest. He may call upon the captain-general himself of the army to serve, or to provide for the service of the government messenger.

"And indeed it was ever a marvel to us to note how throughout the whole countryside everyone lived in terror of these messengers who were the bearers of Timur's commands . . . Hence it is that the people of that village or town, knowing these Tatars to be the men of Timur's armies riding on some government errands, forthwith take flight with all speed as though indeed the Devil were after them. The merchants in shops who are selling their goods immediately set to to close their shutters, taking to flight like the rest or hiding in their houses. As they go they will call out to each other 'Elchi'—meaning the 'Ambassadors'—for with the arrival of (messengers) they know that a black day is on them . . . It is indeed as though the very host of Satan were present when these Tatars arrive at any place, what with the turmoil and commotion of their coming, and the pitiless acts they do."

A third source of imperial revenues—booty—was probably greater in quantity than either the revenues from trade or feudal tribute. The booty collected on campaigns had sometimes remote origins: the defeat of the Golden Horde provided treasures collected from the sack of Moscow, Tabriz, and other cities by Tokhtamish; from India came treasures collected by generations of Sultans of Delhi; from the defeat of the Ottoman emperor Timur acquired souvenirs of the knight Crusaders who went down in their thousands before the Turks at Nicopolis.

Of great significance were the prisoners who were transported to Mawarannahr. In addition to the women and slaves with which his troops were provided from this source, every defeated kingdom and city gave up to Timur its scholars, artists, and the finest craftsmen. Artisans, several thousand at a time, with their tools and their families, were taken from the conquered areas to Samarqand. When Urganch was captured in 1379 the craftsmen were taken to Timur's birthplace, Shahrissabz. Persia gave up her painters, calligraphers, musicians, historians, architects, and building craftsmen, many men of letters and theological leaders. From Syria Timur took silk-weavers, bow-makers, armourers, experts in the production of glassware and porcelain. From Asia Minor came gunsmiths, artillery engineers, silversmiths, masons, and rope-makers. Timur introduced the production of hemp and flax into Mawarannahr for rope-making, crops which according to Clavijo had not previously been cultivated there.

From India came the most skilled of her masons, builders, metal-workers, and gem-cutters. Arabshah pointed out that it was forbidden on penalty of death for the troops to start pillaging a defeated city before the emirs and court officials had made their selection of "an infinite multitude of lawyers, theologians, men who knew the Qoran from memory, and learned men, craftsmen, workmen, slaves, women, boys and girls . . ."

The population of Samarqand was so swollen with these trains of prisoners that there was no lodging for them within the city limits or in the suburbs. Clavijo saw them: the Muslims—Turks, Arabs, Moors; the Christians—Greek Orthodox, Armenian, Catholic, Jacobite and Nestorian Christians; the Hindus and the Zoroastrians—quartered temporarily in caves and in tents under the trees of the suburbs.

Timur's objects seem to have been both to assemble the finest craftsmen of Asia for the embellishment of his capital, and to repopulate Mawarannahr, extending her oases and towns. When Clavijo crossed the Amu-Darya he noticed not only that the language changed from Persian to Turkic, but that the traffic was one way. While everyone was admitted without permit into the country, none could depart without a warrant, even if he were a freeborn native. The bridge over the river was partly dismantled, and the remainder of the journey across the broad waters was made by boat. All the ferries and ferry-boats were controlled by guards.

Officials were sent out beyond the confines of Mawarannahr to gather in vagrants and orphans. These, the homeless, with their solitary cow, ass, or a couple of goats, would be driven back to the Land Beyond the River, to be employed as other captives.

The energy with which the campaigns of conquest were undertaken also characterized Timur's constructive activities within Mawarannahr. It is true that some projects were realized in widely separated regions of the empire—for example, the restoration of the town of Baylaqan in the Qarabagh and the building of a canal to supply it; the irrigation works in Khorasan on the upper course of the Murghab; the canal and constructions in the Kabul basin. Nevertheless, Timur's main activities were directed to Mawarannahr itself, although the Conqueror was so seldom there. Old towns expanded and new settlements arose. At the crossing of the Sir-Darya, where the trunk route from Samarqand approached Tashkent, the town of Banakath, which had been destroyed by Chingizkhan, was restored and supplied with a bridge and skiffs. The town was further developed by Shahrukh, Timur's son, and became known as Shahrukhiya. Nearby a canal was dug to irrigate the last miles of the journey to the Sir-Darya, which were not well watered. The *Turkestan Gazette* (December 1886) reported that the bed of this canal could still be traced.³

Balkh, which Ibn Battuta found in the 1330s “an utter ruin and uninhabited”, was “a very large” city by the beginning of the next century when Clavijo passed through. Its inner wall enclosed an area “densely populated: and unlike the other towns which we had come to in these parts, and which lay open, the two inner walls of Balkh are extremely strong . . .” Andijan, in the east of Mawarannahr, which was founded at the end of the thirteenth century, by the end of the fourteenth had become the flourishing capital of Farghana.

According to Sharaf al-din, Timur could not bear to see arable land lying waste. This was unusual in a Tatar, whose traditional attitude was scorn for the settled life of the peasant and refusal to submit to the drudgery of agriculture. Timur's concern was, however, to secure adequate supplies for his troops. He long meditated an eastern campaign against China, and with this in mind ordered the development of the lands bordering Moghulistan (Semirechye). A fort and settlement were established at Ashpara, east of the Sir-Darya. Land was to be cultivated and provisions stocked to supply the needs of the army. Emirs were appointed for this task, with four thousand horse in support. Timur also instructed that those skilled in corn-growing, tilling the fields and vineyards, whether high or low, from the borders of Samarqand to Ashpara, should leave their business and trade and give themselves up to farming: if compelled by necessity, a man should rather omit his regular prayers than his tillage.⁴

Unlike the rest of the empire, Mawarannahr was not divided up and given in fief to other princes. With the exception of the kingdom of

Farghana in the east, along the fertile middle reaches of the Sir-Darya, Timur kept Mawarannahr in his own hands. Mawarannahr received the benefits not only of imperial plunder but of the centralized state which eliminated local feudal strife. "Good order is maintained in Samarqand with utmost strictness and none dare fight with another or oppress his neighbours by force. Indeed as to fighting", added the astute ambassador from Castile, "that Timur makes them do enough, but abroad." The province of Samarqand itself consisted of seven tumans. Timur had applied himself, since assuming power in 1370, to the administration of the tumans of Mawarannahr and to securing the levies he required from them.

Mawarannahr paid for her privileges by enduring the despotic, personal rule of Timur. Chiefs that had resisted had been killed and all other local rulers had submitted. The return of the Conqueror to the Protected Capital was celebrated, amongst other ways, by the erection of gallows in public places and the meting out of justice to transgressors or dangerous individuals. "He began to enquire into those things which during his absence had befallen his realms and his subjects and to examine the affairs of the kingdoms and look into the affairs of great and small and applied himself to arranging the business of rich and poor . . . He respected princes, honoured the leaders, magnified those worthy of honour, extolled learning and the learned, fostered the excellent and their dignity, removed the double-dealers, subdued schismatics, strangled adulterers and crucified thieves, until by his care the condition of the empire was well ordered and the foundations of government were made completely to conform to the law of Chingiz-khan."⁵ In 1404, when Timur returned to Samarqand, the governor of the city was condemned for his misuse of power and the oppression of the people. The wealth he had acquired during his period of office was surrendered to the imperial exchequer. A friend who sought to buy a pardon for him with a huge ransom, was tortured to see if any further wealth could be extracted and was then hanged on the gallows, upside down, till he died.

"For those of his officers in all places who keep justice strictly there is no misery or fear; but for a mere nothing he (Timur) kills the greatest as the meanest of his officers . . ." said Archbishop John. When the accused officers were very rich, he made them pay huge fines, which were collected annually, together with herds of mules.

When the interests of settled population and traders conflicted with those of the Chaghatay nomads, it was the interests of the latter that were upheld. Supplies for the army were the prime consideration—mounts, food, fodder, and equipment. If the prices charged in the markets were considered too high, the traders also were brought to justice. Samarqand

butchers were put to death for over-charging for their meat. Shoe- and sandal-makers received penalties and fines for similar offences. When Timur's hordes were in camp outside Samarqand the tradesmen were ordered out from the city to sell their wares to the troops—a measure which they regarded as threatening their livelihood.⁶

It is probable, however, that despite their semi-servitude, the conditions of native craftsmen and traders in the towns of Mawarannahr, and especially in Samarqand, improved noticeably in the last decades of the fourteenth century. The increase in the caravan traffic brought a heavy demand for local products, both necessities and luxury items. The people of Samarqand had some share in the imperial plunder: on Timur's return, in 1396, from the Five-Year Campaign and the defeat of the Qipchaqs, the population was exempted from taxation for three years. Similarly, there was a remission of taxes and debts on his return in 1404.

Samarqand in the fourteenth century did not greatly differ in lay-out from other Central Asian oasis cities of that period, with their extensive suburbs of villas and gardens. Roads from the main highways and gates converged on the centre of the town, where a cupola covered the main market building. There were six main roads leading into Samarqand from the six gates. Water was brought by aryks—irrigation canals—sometimes piped, sometimes pleasantly bubbling over the stones in their little channels; a network of these channels brought water from the Zarafshan river, the “Gold-strewer”. They supplied the public reservoirs, private houses, and gardens of Samarqand at the expense of those of Bukhara further downstream. In antiquity the Zarafshan had been a tributary of the Amu-Darya; it dried up beyond Bukhara when the waters were diverted into canals. Arab geographers in earlier centuries had noted as many as two thousand places in Samarqand where benefactors, inspired no doubt by the Central Asian saying that “Man must either perspire or wither like a tree”, had provided free iced water, kept in fountains or copper cisterns.⁷ In the squares where the roads intersected were groups of public buildings—markets, caravanserais, chaikhanas, mosques, mad-rasas, shrines—and palaces of nobles.⁸

From the main highways ran innumerable crooked alleys, with congested, squalid structures of crumbling sun-dried brick; here were the workshops and homes of the craftsmen. The crafts were assembled in their own localities; one of the features of the “wonderfully elegant city” that most pleased Babur at the end of the century, when for a brief spell he became master of Samarqand, was that each trade had its own bazaar. The artisans were gathered in “brotherhoods”, or companies, according to their crafts—bowmakers, goldsmiths, ironworkers, weavers,

potters, tile-makers and so forth. These companies were called upon by Timur to furnish their products and display their skills for his victory celebrations.

Despite the huddled alleys, Samarqand was a city of greenery, even within her city walls. Shade-spreading plane trees, white poplars, and fruit trees overhung the houses, the chaikhanas and caravanserais, the squares and the reservoirs. The town appeared, said Clavijo, embowered amidst a forest of trees. The verdure, so delightful to travellers at the beginning of the fifteenth century, was not a feature special to the times of Timur. The Zarafshan valley, which provided antiquity with one of its four earthly paradises, was already in the times of the Samanids (in the tenth century) a province "fertile and rich beyond compare".⁷

In the thirteenth century, according to the account of Yaqut, a water supply was brought to houses by pipes, and the city boasted many markets and bath-houses—the markets being full of merchants and merchandise. Every house in both city and suburbs had its garden and trees. Even immediately after the seizure and destruction by Chingiz-khan, the Taoist monk Chang-Chun found everywhere orchards, groves, flower gardens, aqueducts, running springs, square basins, round ponds, in uninterrupted succession. "A delicious place; the water-melons there are as large as a horse's head . . . everywhere lakes, orchards, terraces, towers and tents . . . Even Chinese gardens cannot be compared with those of Samarqand. . . ."⁹

This was the city chosen by Timur as his capital, designed to become the most noble in the world, and on which his most grandiose ambitions were centred. Compared with the Imperial City, all other capitals were to appear humble villages. To this end a series of hamlets and suburbs were built beyond Samarqand which were named after great cities of Islam: Baghdad and Damascus, Cairo, Shiraz, and Sultaniya.

Although the Tatars scorned defensive warfare, Timur, on the assumption of power in 1370, turned his attention to the defences of the city which was to be his capital. Samarqand had remained without walls since the conquest by Chingiz-khan. By Timur's orders, in 1371-2, the fortified walls of the inner city, which had existed in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, were reconstructed. Clavijo described the walls as ramparts or earthen walls, protected by a very deep ditch; they were estimated by Babur at the end of the century to be five miles in circumference. Today this district is known as "Hisar"—fortress, citadel. The city itself, according to the ambassador, was rather larger than Seville, having an estimated population of some hundred and fifty thousand souls. Beyond the city, however, spread densely populated suburbs for a distance of one or two

leagues; "thus the population without the city is more numerous than the population within the walls."

At the same time Timur also restored the ancient citadel in the west of the Samarqand, Gok-Saray—the Blue Palace, which served mainly as the treasury and state prison for Timur and his successors. According to Babur, a prisoner who once entered this fortress was never expected to return. The Blue Palace had towers at the corners and walls encircling innumerable small courtyards, ateliers, and storehouses. It housed the archives; the treasury in coin; quantities of rare and precious objects; the weapon stocks and economic supplies for the army; and personal possessions of Timur. Alongside the palace were the administrative apartments of state officials. The treasure-houses and dungeons were in the cellars. In the halls above, Timur occasionally received his nobles, or sat in judgement on local matters. Beyond the palace, in the courtyards, were the crowded workshops of the pick of the master craftsmen brought from all parts of the empire. Here they laboured, making armour and helmets, bows and arrows; here were cobblers of boots and sandals, coiners of money, furriers, weavers of rare Samarqand crimson and purple velvet; here were makers of glassware, spinners of gold and silver filigree, working and dying in bondage to the Conqueror. Hundreds of soldiers were stationed in the citadel to guard the stores, the treasure, and the captives.

Apart from the craftsmen allocated to the Blue Palace, there were some allocated to the court, while others helped to swell the labour force of skilled workers in Samarqand itself. In general the effect of the captives was to increase the number of master craftsmen, rather than to introduce new crafts or techniques. The skills, for example, of the tile-makers and glazers from Persia were adapted to the methods already highly developed in Samarqand. In some spheres the Samarqand workers maintained their long-standing pre-eminence. Her metal-workers were famed for their stirrups, curb-bits and their needles. Samarqand paper was the best in the world, thought Babur, and her looms produced prized satins, crepes, taffetas, brocades, stuffs in gold and blue and divers tints, and her speciality, the crimson velvet, cramoisie, which was exported to all quarters. Samarqand bazaars also teemed with vendors of carpets and mats, saddles and girdles, knives, boots, pitchers, musk, ambergris, and spices of India.

The Zarafshan valley and the pastures beyond gave the city provisions in abundance. The livestock was magnificent, beasts and poultry all of a fine breed; the tails of the famous fat-tailed sheep weighed some twenty pounds each. The flocks were so abundant that even when Timur was in camp with his Hordes, a couple of sheep could be had in the market for a

single ducat. Large crops of corn were produced in the valley and a few pence would obtain a bushel and a half of barley. "Bread is everywhere plentiful and rice can be had cheap in any quantity." Throughout the city were the open squares where meats, ready cooked—roasted or in stews—were sold; roast fowls, geese, and game in general could also be bought ready for eating. These viands and victuals were set out "in a decent and cleanly manner, and their traffic goes on all day and even all through the night time."¹⁰ Babur praised the excellent bakeries and eating-houses. Samarqand sweet wine and champagne has today a deserved reputation; but at the beginning of the sixteenth century Babur wrote: "In all Mawarannahr there is no wine superior, in spirit and strength, to that of Bukhara. When I drank wine in Samarqand, in the days when I had my drinking-bouts, I used the wine of Bukhara." The aryks bubbling through the streets and gardens of Samarqand and its suburbs watered the orchards, melon-beds and cotton-growing plots. At Christmas-time there were so many melons and grapes to be had that it was marvellous, said Clavijo. "Every day camel loads arrived from the surrounding country and it is a wonder how many were sold and eaten in the market." Melons cured in the sun would keep for a twelvemonth.

By the end of the fourteenth century Samarqand's trade had outgrown the resources of her bazaars and market buildings. Nor were the existing facilities a sufficiently impressive reflection of the mighty Emir. In 1404, when Timur made a short visit to his capital, he ordered the cutting of a wide thoroughfare from one end of Samarqand to the other. This was to be the main bazaar, with a double row of shops on each side, vaulted passageways and galleries. The market was to lead from the Akhanin Gate, through the heart of the city, to the Charsu Gate on the other side. Part of the highway was cut and the bazaar buildings erected during Clavijo's stay. As usual the work was made the responsibility of two emirs who worked in competition with each other. The existing houses were pulled down and the alleyways were cleared along the route indicated by Timur. The workshops and homes were demolished at once, without warning to the occupants, who fled with what chattels they could seize. The Sayyids, privileged divines at court, dared to suggest that these folk should be compensated in some way. They bore the storm of Timur's anger, and were thankful not to lose their heads.

Working in shifts, the masons and builders came as soon as the former houses were down, and laid out the new street; they erected double shops, each with two chambers, front and back, before which were set high stone benches. The street had a domed roof with windows to let in the light. At intervals down the bazaar fountains were constructed. As soon as

the shops were ready the merchants moved in. "The masons who worked through the day at nightfall went home, their places being taken by as many as had gone, who worked throughout the night hours . . . the tumult was such day and night that it seemed all the devils of hell were at work here."¹¹ In twenty days the whole of this stretch of new bazaars had been erected. The cost was charged to the city.

Timur was concerned to develop a veneration for Samarqand as the centre of Islamic faith and to make it an object of pilgrimage. In addition to patronizing theologians who were transported to Samarqand, he encouraged the cult of one of the most famous local shrines, that of the Shahi-Zinda, or "Living King". On a hill just north of Samarqand, on the site of the ancient settlement of Afrasiyab, was reputed to be the tomb of Qasim ibn Abbas, cousin of the Prophet Muhammad. This saint, it is said, first brought the Faith to Samarqand. He was not entirely well received, and had his head cut off by the infidels. Tradition explains that when the saint was decapitated, he took his head and jumped into a well on this hillside. Outside the shrine dedicated to the saint—which exists to this day—there is still a well, the residence of Qasim ibn Abbas. He never really died. He awaits the day when he, "the Living King", will return to claim his own. Another tradition relating to the spread of Islam to Samarqand, says that three Arab missionaries rested on this hillside. Cutting up a sheep, they agreed to decide by lot the direction of their future journeys. One put his hand into the pot and drew out the head, which gave him first choice, and he decided to remain in Samarqand. Another drew the heart, and chose to return to Mecca. The third got the hindquarters and preferred Baghdad. Hence Samarqand became known as the head, and Mecca the heart, of Islam. As for Baghdad . . .

In the second half of the fourteenth century the sanctuary of Qasim ibn Abbas became popular as a burial place for great feudal princes and lords, and a collection of mausolea arose to commemorate those who were fortunate enough to have secured by their death the protection of the powerful saint. A number of Timur's relatives and emirs secured the rights of burial for themselves in this vicinity. Timur's sister Qutluq-Turkan-gha (d. 1382) was buried here in a mausoleum which she had built for her own daughter, Shadi-Mulk agha (d. 1372). Another of Timur's sisters, Shirin-Beg agha, who died in 1385, was buried here in a mausoleum where the influence of Persian master-craftsmen is visible in the porcelain tile decorations. One of the tombs is dedicated to the chief Burunduq, and yet another to an Emir Husayn who fell in 1376 during an expedition against the Jats of Moghulistan. A group of shrines was erected on this site by Timur's wife, Tuman-gha. The buildings were

constructed of baked bricks, with very little timber; they were covered with carved or painted tiles, or tile mosaics, the latter form introduced mainly by Persian artists. Turquoise and blue were the predominant colours, with sacred ornamental inscriptions in white. Gleaming blue domes surmounted the tombs. The interior walls, arches, and cupola, of one of the shrines, that of Shirin-Beg, were covered not with tile but with frescoes painted onto a white background. Fifteen groups of these buildings survive, some in a good state of preservation. Of the frescoes in the Shirin-Beg mausoleum, only a fragment remains, representing a landscape, with trees, streams, flowers, and birds, in Persian style.¹²

The cult of the "Living King" increased the importance of Samarqand as a centre for pilgrimage, but, with the exception of the great Cathedral Mosque which Timur constructed later, his main preoccupation was with secular architecture. This also interested him as a means of impressing on the living and conveying to posterity the extent of his power. In the suburbs of Samarqand he built some of his most luxurious gardens and palaces. The gardens, as large as parks, were designed symmetrically, being divided into four or sixteen squares, with palaces where the avenues crossed. They were filled with lawns, flower-beds, shaded walks, fruit trees, pools, streams, and pavilions. One of the earliest was the Paradise Garden, laid out in 1378 in honour of the twelve-year-old Tuman-agma, whom he was then taking to wife. It was here in the Paradise Garden in 1388 that the marriages were celebrated of his son Shahrukh, and his grandchildren by Jahangir, Muhammad-Sultan and Pir-Muhammad, to princesses beautiful as the houris of Paradise.

When Timur returned to his kingdom in 1396 after the Five-Year Campaign, he made one of his most protracted sojourns at his capital, occupying himself with many building projects.

The Northern Garden, dedicated to a daughter of Miranshah, was laid out at this time. It was designed by architects who prepared several models for the Emperor to choose between. Timur's own tent was erected near the site so that he could observe the progress of the work. The cornerstones of the palace were made from Tabriz marble, the courtyards were also paved with marble, and the exterior walls covered with porcelain. The interior was painted with frescoes by the best artists of Persia and Iraq. The direction of the work was in the hands of Abd-al Hayy, a master of the Iranian school of painters taken from the studio of Sultan Ahmad Jalayir when Baghdad was first seized in 1393. Although it was contrary to Islamic tradition to make representations of living creatures, Timur intended the frescoes to convey to contemporaries and to future generations the grandeur of his achievements. In his palaces he depicted

“his assemblies and his own likeness, now smiling, now austere, and representations of his battles and sieges and his conversations with kings, emirs, lords, wise men and magnates, and Sultans offering homage to him and bringing gifts to him from every side and his hunting nets and ambushes and battles in India, Dasht (Qipchaq) and Persia, and how he gained victory and how his enemy was scattered and driven to flight; and the likeness of his sons and grandsons, emirs and soldiers, and his public feasts and the goblets of wine and cupbearers and the zither-player of his mirth and his love meetings and the concubines of his majesty and the royal wives and many other things which happened in his realms during his life which were shown in series, all that was new and happened; and he omitted or exaggerated none of these things; and therein he intended that all who knew not his affairs, should see them as though present.”¹³

Neither the frescoes nor any other works of Abd-al Hayy, regarded as without rival in the purity, delicacy and in the vigour of his brush, survived. The frescoes probably disappeared rapidly; Babur does not mention them. In his old age the artist was overcome by religious scruples and destroyed many of his own works.¹⁴ The completion of this pleasure garden was celebrated with a royal festival, consecrated to “the pleasures of the kings of the Chaghatay”.

During these two years the Takhta-Qaracha Gardens and palace had also been laid out between Samarqand and Shahrisabz, in a park so vast that, said Arabshah, when one of the builders lost a horse, it grazed for six months without being discovered. This may have been the garden which Timur himself boasted was a hundred and twenty miles long. The marriage which Timur was planning between himself and the Moghul princess, daughter of Khizr-khoja—Tukal-khanum, the Kichik Khanum (1397)—provoked the construction of the Dilkusha Garden—Heart’s Delight. This was laid out in the meadows of Kani-gil, east of Samarqand; an avenue of pine trees led from the city’s Turquoise Gate to the Garden. The palace had a cupola covered with mosaics, and its three storeys were encircled by colonnades. Sycamores lined the walks, and each section of the garden was planted with different types of trees—some for their fruits, some for their flowers.

It was in the Garden of Heart’s Delight that ambassador Clavijo received his first audience with Timur. “He was seated under a portal before the entrance of a most beautiful palace that appeared in the background. He was sitting on the ground, but upon a raised dais before which there was a fountain which threw up a column of water into the air backwards, and in the basin of the fountain there were floating red apples.” Many tents and pavilions were pitched in the garden around. A few days later

Timur moved to another, the Plane Tree Garden, then not quite completed. Another Garden, with lofty towers built at each corner, the Spanish ambassador described as the finest he had seen. This was the New Garden. Every few days the Lord of the Fortunate Conjunction moved to a different Garden; thus it was that when the envoys were invited to an imperial banquet they were taken to yet another. Here Clavijo was able to see the details of the Palace, and he described the rose-silk wall-hangings, decorated with silver spangles; in the centre of each spangle was a precious stone. Silk pendants and tassels waved pleasantly in the breeze. Two gold tables before the doorway to different recesses bore seven gold flasks; a pair of them were ornamented with pearls, emeralds, and turquoises, and bore at their lips balas rubies. Here, however, the embassy was in disgrace, because having waited for their interpreter, they arrived too late to join the feast.

In the monarch's absence the Gardens were thrown open to the people of Samarqand, to enjoy the delights and even the fruits thereof. "When he had gone abroad . . . the citizens, rich and poor, went to walk therein and found no retreat more wonderful or beautiful than those, and no resting-place more agreeable and secure. Its sweetest fruits were common to all, so that even a hundred pounds weight thereof would not sell for a grain of mustard."

Arabshah mentioned also the "Sublime Garden" and "The Model of the World"; Babur, in addition to Gardens already noticed, describes the Garden of the Square with its two-storey Palace of Forty Pillars, which were of fluted and twisted stone. He refers also to a state pavilion in one of the Gardens overlaid with porcelain specially brought from China—the Chinese Palace. Altogether fifteen or sixteen of these Gardens with palaces and pavilions are mentioned by contemporaries in the fifteenth century.

It is interesting to compare these descriptions with those that Marco Polo gave of the palaces of Khubilay Khan at Peking: he said that the great palace of Khanbaliq was surrounded by a wall with fortresses. Eight citadels in this complex served as arsenals, one containing saddles, stirrups, and other items of harness for mounts; another contained the archery requisites—bows, and bow-strings, arrows, and quivers; a third cuirasses, corselets, and other armour of treated leather; and so on. Inside the palace itself the walls of the halls and chambers were covered with gold and silver and decorated with pictures of dragons, birds, beasts, horsemen, and scenes of battle. The ceilings were also thus adorned, so that the only thing visible was gold and pictures . . . ablaze with scarlet and green and blue and yellow and all the colours there are.

In the rear of the palace extensive apartments of the khan contained his private treasure: gold and silver, precious stones and pearls, gold and silver vessels. Here too were his ladies and his concubines.

The great external walls enclosed a park, with game—white hart, musk-deer, roebuck, stags, squirrels; the lake was supplied with swans and water-fowl and fish. And in the park also was a Green Mound, surmounted by a handsome pavilion, entirely green, “a vision of such beauty that it gladdens the hearts of all beholders.”

Enthusiasm for building extended to Timur’s household. The Great Lady, Saray-Mulk-khanum, raised a Madrasa in the north of Samarqand. Another queen, Tuman-gha, built a hospice for darvishes near the Shahi-zinda. The imperial heir, Muhammad-Sultan, built a palace and a Madrasa to the south-east of the city. Bukhara, about as large as Samarqand, received little royal embellishment during the life of Timur.

Timur did not stay long in his palaces; the satisfaction he derived from them arose from their political significance rather than from any personal delight they afforded him.

The White Palace of Aq-Saray at Shahrisabz (the Green Town) served the same political purpose. Timur’s birthplace in the Qashka-Darya valley was on the main caravan route between Samarqand and Balkh, that is to say, on the main highway to Khorasan and to India. Here the merchants gathered at the caravanserai amongst the pomegranate groves, and here, near the mausoleum of his father and his sons, Timur built his greatest palace. It was a structure similar in plan to the mosque which he was to construct later in Samarqand, but greater in size. In the palaces, as in the mosques, where activities were normally conducted out of doors, the courtyards, as much as the buildings, were important. As less was demanded of the structures, greater importance was given to the portals. Splendid portals were an established element in the style of building in the period of the Qara-khanids. Timur insisted that the portals to the White Palace and to his other buildings were more imposing than any yet seen in Central Asia or in the conquered lands. The palace had been started in 1380 by the master craftsmen wearing the red robes of Khwarazm, who had been brought there after the capture of Urganch. Twenty-four years later the palace was still not complete, and by then craftsmen from many other subjected nations had been set to work on it. Some blocks used in the building contain the signatures of the craftsmen working there; and some have inscriptions such as “Ali—Friend of Allah”. Such an inscription would be engraved by a supporter of the Shi-a sect.¹⁵

Past the huge portals, which included waiting-rooms, was a rectangular

courtyard, almost a hundred metres in length. Archways round the courtyard gave access to reception halls, and council chambers for the *tuvajis* and the imperial *Divan*. Another gateway led to a reception hall "where the walls are panelled with gold and blue tiles, and the ceiling is entirely of gold work. From this room we were taken up into the galleries, and in these likewise everywhere the walls were of gilt tiles. We saw indeed here so many apartments and separate chambers, all of which were adorned in tile work of blue and gold with many other colours . . . we visited a great banqueting hall which Timur was having built wherein to feast with the princesses, and this was gorgeously adorned, being very spacious, while beyond the same they were laying out a great orchard in which were planted many and diverse fruit trees, with others to give shade. These stood round water basins besides which were laid out fine lawns of turf. This orchard was of such an extent that a very great company might conveniently assemble here, and in the summer heats enjoy the cool air beside that water in the shade of these trees."¹⁶ At the end of the fifteenth century Babur described the palace in much the same terms.

The principal inscriptions on the main entrance to the White Palace were:

The Kingdom Belongs to Allah,

and:

The Sultan Is the Shadow of Allah On Earth.

Two tower-like, ruined portions of the façade survive; they are parts of the portal of the *Aq-Saray*, and are decorated with azure, green, and deep-blue porcelain.

Timur was never again to spend so long near his capital. During those two years from the summer of 1396 to the summer of 1398, Timur was occupied not only with construction but with making preparations for one of his major projects, a campaign in the east, against China. For this reason, as well as for dynastic considerations, he had arranged his marriage with another Moghul princess, *Tukal-khanum*, and had concluded a treaty with the Moghul khan, whose dominion lay astride the road to China. While awaiting his bride Timur had wintered in his eastern border provinces, near *Tashkent*. In addition to erecting a mausoleum to a saint of Islam at *Yasi* (Turkestan on the *Sir-Darya*), he had restored the river-crossing. Prince *Muhammad-Sultan*, eldest grandson and heir, ruler of the eastern province of *Farghana*, was instructed to consolidate bases in the frontier regions, and to develop soil cultivation along the route where husbandry had fallen into decay. Some of the most distinguished emirs, and a sizable military force were allocated to the prince for

the achievement of these preparations. At Ashpara, and further east, on the Issik-kul (Hot Lake), fortresses were begun.

It was here, in the eastern marches of Mawarannahr, that Timur received one of a series of embassies from the Chinese emperor, bearing quantities of rare gifts. The envoys were welcomed in customary fashion, but were not permitted to return to their country.

In spring, 1398, Timur returned to his capital, and summoned a qurultay. The Sahib Qiran had, however, other strings to his bow, and when opportunities presented themselves in India, his Tatar hordes marched not east, but south.

NOTES

- ¹ M. Minovi and V. Minorsky: "Nasir al-din Tusi on Finance", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 1940-2.
² Ibn Arabshah: *Tamerlane*.
³ E. Bretschneider: *Mediaeval Researches*, 1888.
⁴ Ibn Arabshah: *Tamerlane*.
⁵ *Ibid.*
⁶ Clavijo: *Embassy*.
⁷ V. V. Barthold: *Turkestan*.
⁸ G. A. Pugachenkova and L. I. Rempel: *Architectural Monuments of Uzbekistan*, 1958.
⁹ Cha'ng-Ch'un: *Travels of an Alchemist*, tr. Waley.
¹⁰ Clavijo: *Embassy*.
¹¹ *Ibid.*
¹² I. Stchoukine: *Les Peintures des Manuscrits Timurides*, 1954.
¹³ Ibn Arabshah: *Tamerlane*.
¹⁴ I. Stchoukine: *Les Peintures des Manuscrits Timurides*, 1954.
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¹⁶ Clavijo: *Embassy*.

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INDIA

1398 (Year of the Tiger)—1399 (Year of the Hare)

MAWARANNAHR, said Ibn Battuta, was one of the seven mighty kingdoms of the world, and it lay encircled by four of them—the kingdoms of the Golden Horde, of Persia, of China, and of India. (The other two kingdoms were Egypt, and Battuta's native kingdom of Morocco.) India, although not one of the Chingizid kingdoms, had long been attractive to Tatar raiders, who descended through the passes of the Hindu Kush, seized the ample booty that the northern plains and foothills of the Punjab provided, and returned the way they had come. The Great Snow Mountains, as travellers called the Hindu Kush, had been, since earliest times, a highway between India, Central Asia, and beyond. The mountains provided more than accessible defiles and barren outposts; they were highly prized provinces of empire. On the northern flanks, the regions of Wakhan and Badakhshan, whence flowed the Amu-Darya, were rich in alpine pastures and broad valleys; silver was mined in Wakhan, and gold found in the bed of its streams; the mountains of Badakhshan were famous for rubies, lapis-lazuli, and pure rock crystal.

In the fourth century B.C., Alexander's expedition crossed the Hindu Kush; he and the Seleucids who succeeded him in Central Asia ruled over an empire extending into Afghanistan. The provinces of these regions on the southern slopes of the main range were no less attractive than those on the north. Even Babur, nostalgic for Farghana and Samarqand, could find little fault with Kabul and the neighbouring country. The climate was delightful, the cold not extreme in winter, and the grass agreed well with the horses, of which seven or eight thousand were exported annually to India. Mosquitoes were few. The fruits of both hot and cold climates abounded. On the skirts of the mountains the meadows were brightened by many kinds of tulips. Through Babur's instructions the different kinds were counted; there were thirty-two or thirty-three, including a rose-scented tulip and a "hundred-leaved" tulip. "At the time when the Arghwan flowers begin to blow, I do not know any place in the world to compare with it." (The Arghwan is usually translated as "anemone"; but the name in Afghanistan is applied to a flowering shrub).¹ The Bactrian empire which followed the Seleucids, in the middle of the third century B.C., likewise lay astride the Hindu Kush Mountains; as did the empire of the Kushans at the dawn of the Christian era.

Buddhism, which was introduced from India into China by way of Central Asia in the first centuries A.D., extended the contacts between the regions north and south of the Great Snow Mountains. The series of Muslim invasions into northern India from Central Asia took place in the eighth century, and the frontiers of Islam were extended to the provinces of Kabul, Sind, and the Punjab. When the Samanids ruled in Mawarannahr in the tenth century, the Afghan Ghaznavid dynasty was amongst their vassals. On the fall of the Samanids the Ghazni princes seized power over the territory south of the Amu-Darya. Sultan Mahmud, the most powerful Ghaznavid, like others before him, found the mountains no barrier; at the beginning of the eleventh century he ruled over Afghanistan, Khorasan, some provinces of Mawarannahr, and led a formidable number of predatory expeditions north to Khwarazm and south to India and Kashmir. At the court of this conqueror, with the reputation for political, if not personal piety, were a number of distinguished scholars: Al-Biruni philosopher-historian, was taken by Sultan Mahmud from Khwarazm to Ghazni. Firdausi, the author of the Persian national epic poem *Shah-nama*—the Book of Kings—was paid by his niggardly patron, it is reported, in silver instead of gold. The disappointed poet went to the bath, and on coming out, bought a drink of sherbert and divided the money between the bath attendant and the sherbet seller. Neighbouring princes from Ghur (between Balkh and Kabul) replaced the Ghaznavids. They conquered Bengal and at the beginning of the thirteenth century had established themselves as sultans of Delhi.

The dynasties which followed extended their domination to Bengal, the Deccan, and some sections of the far south, maintaining Delhi as the Muslim capital of India. The power of the Sultans of India, especially the Tughluq dynasty, achieved renown throughout Islam. Ibn Battuta was the guest of Sultan Muhammad Tughluq who had inherited from his father (whom he had murdered in 1325) vast empire and treasure. Battuta described the citadel built on a rocky eminence where there were Tughluq “treasures and palaces, and the great palace of gilded bricks, which, when the sun rose, shone so dazzlingly that none could gaze steadily upon it. There he laid up great treasures, and it was related that he constructed a cistern and had molten gold poured into it so that it became a solid mass.” The sultan was “of all men the fondest of making gifts and of shedding blood. His gate is never without some poor man enriched or some living man executed.”

Sultan Muhammad Tughluq, like the Khwarazmshah, had cherished ideas of world-domination, and an ill-fated expedition was sent against China via Nepal and the Himalayas. About ten men are said to have

struggled back out of an expeditionary force of a hundred thousand; the survivors were killed by the irate sultan. Muhammad Tughluq's empire began to decline before his death (1351). Independent kingdoms were established in Bengal, Kashmir and the Deccan, and during the reign of his successors the dismemberment of the Sultanate of Delhi continued. Great provinces severed their allegiance. Muhammad's cousin Firuz Shah, who was his immediate successor, was of a more benevolent disposition; he built canals and palaces, mosques and tombs; but when he died, in 1388, a feeble nonagenarian, even the province of Delhi itself was disputed between rival sultans. "The infidels of Hindustan gathered strength, without paying the poll-tax and tribute, and put to plunder the villages of the Muslims."²

"When Timur learnt that Firuz Shah, the Sultan of India, had been carried out of the troubles of this world, he decided to take advantage of the disputes that ensued . . ."³

Tatar princes needed no extraordinary encouragement for predatory raids upon India. Early in the thirteenth century, when Muslim princes from Afghanistan were establishing themselves as sultans of Delhi, the horsemen of Chingiz-khan had appeared on the banks of the Indus in pursuit of Jalal al-din, son of the Khwarazmshah. Jalal al-din was defeated and fled to the court of Delhi, but Chingiz went no further into India. The ulus inherited by Chingiz' son Chaghatay stretched into the Hindu Kush and the Afghan provinces, where the Ghaznavids were forced to relinquish their northern dominions. A succession of Tatar pillaging expeditions into northern India followed from these bases. For Timur, no less than for his predecessors, the Punjab was regarded as a legitimate hunting ground for a Chaghatay prince.

Timur had been born in Shahrisabz, in the shadow of one of the northern spurs of the Hindu Kush. Here, along the valley of the Panj (the upper Amu-Darya), the ancient trade routes had come from China, to branch west for Persia, south for India. Balkh, Kabul, and the passes into India had formed part of the original dominions that Timur had secured after the defeat of Emir Husayn. The wealth of the Tughluqs, and the weakness of the disputing princes, provided the Conqueror with favourable opportunities for his nomad hordes, ever hungry for booty. The court of Delhi had been the refuge, moreover, of more than one hostile prince who had been ousted by Timur. The Conqueror seems to have had as little idea of permanent conquest and occupation of India as he had of establishing direct control over the Golden Horde. Booty, tribute, and nominal domination may have been sufficient objectives for an Indian expedition. By this time, however, Timur had already challenged the

might of Egypt in the west, and was making dispositions against China in the east. The moment was opportune for a campaign which amongst other advantages would secure his southern borders from danger when his main armies were deployed in major conflict elsewhere. It was also known that the unrighteous sultans of Delhi had long tolerated infidels in their lands.

Timur resolved to launch another sacred War for the Faith. Preliminary arrangements had already been made. On his return from the first Qipchaq expedition (1392) Timur had bestowed on Prince Pir-Muhammad Jahangir (born forty days after his father's death) the "throne of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni", providing many distinguished emirs to form his Divan and Court. This fine kingdom included the provinces south and south-west of the Hindu Kush down to the Indus: Kunduz, Kabul, Ghazni, and Qandahar. In the autumn of 1397, when Timur was diversely occupied with the construction of pleasure palaces around Samarqand, fortifying outposts on the eastern borders of his domains in anticipation of a campaign against China, and with his marriage to a Moghul princess, he had also ordered his grandson Pir-Muhammad Jahangir to march into India and begin the attack on the factious Indian princes. The prince had crossed the Indus and driven deep into the Punjab. By the end of 1397 (Year of the Ox) Multan was under siege.

Timur had wintered in the eastern provinces of Mawarannahr near Tashkent, where he had gone to meet his bride, and returned in the early months of 1398 to Samarqand and the Qashka-Darya. The troops were assembled. A qurultay was summoned at which Timur described the situation and announced his intentions:

A grandson of Firuz Shah has been enthroned in Delhi but this young sultan, Mahmud, has no authority over his nobles, who are fighting amongst themselves and against him. (The perpetual infancy of the Sultan Mahmud was despised even in the harem of Delhi.)⁴ One such noble, Sarang Khan, of Dipalpur, has seized the neighbouring Multan from Sayyid Khizr Khan, the governor, but is now himself besieged in that city by Prince Pir-Muhammad, and suffering two assaults daily. In Delhi, a brother of Sarang, Mallu Khan, having defeated his rivals and gained the city, exercises power in the name of Sultan Mahmud: these disorders invite our conquering troops.

Moreover, although the true faith is observed in many places in India, the greater part of the kingdom is inhabited by idolaters. The sultans of Delhi have been slack in their defence of the Faith. The Muslim rulers are content with the collection of tribute from these infidels. The Qoran says that the highest dignity a man can achieve is to make war on the

enemies of our religion. Muhammad the Prophet counselled likewise. A Muslim warrior thus killed acquires a merit which translates him at once into Paradise. Now that the empires of Iran and of Turan and most of Asia are under our domination, and the world trembles at the least movement we make, Destiny has presented us with the most favourable opportunities. The troops will ride south, not east. India through her disorders has opened her doors to us . . .

By March the army was on the move, some ninety thousand strong, involving many subject rulers and nationalities. The pick of the troops were, however, Chaghatays, who occupied the positions of consequence; indeed, many of the chiefs and lords were old associates of Timur from the Qashka-Darya. Prince Omar, son of Miranshah, was left as governor of Samarqand; pious Shahrukh, the Conqueror's youngest son, had become ruler of Khorasan, with his residence at Herat. Shahrukh was to remain ruler of Khorasan up to his father's death; after that, Herat remained his capital. Miranshah, however, was promoted to Persia and received the "crown of Hulagu".

The army crossed the Amu-Darya near Tirmidh by a pontoon bridge, and camped at Andarab, at the base of the main ridge of the Hindu Kush. Here Timur left the army and the heavy baggage, and went with a task-force through the Khawak Pass into the mountains of Kafiristan to seek out infidels and robbers in their strongholds. The heights here were so forbidding that even the great Alexander had failed, according to tradition, to conquer the wild tribes that inhabited them. These Kafir tribes, fire-worshippers, had acquired legendary features—they were said to be huge as giants, speaking an unknown language, clad in black, with hearts as dark as their clothes; others were said to go quite naked.

Deep snow and precipices frequently made the passage impossible for horses. In some places sun on the ice made it too slippery for progress during the day-time; advances could be made only at night when the surface froze. The task-force and its chiefs descended some of the defiles by rope. The old emperor was lowered over one precipice on a litter, from ledge to ledge. He descended more than a thousand feet in this way. At the bottom the lame Conqueror was obliged to go on foot, like his men. Efforts were made to lower horses by the same method, but most of them fell. Only two remained fit for service. The emperor mounted and his men followed unmounted.

However, the mountains were stormed. The Kafirs, offering bitter resistance, were hunted out and slaughtered; women and children were carried away; decapitated heads were piled into appropriate victory towers; and an inscription was left in the mountain rock to commemorate

the subjection of a hitherto unconquered people. A passage was cleared for his main army, and Timur rejoined them. The mountains had also been cleared of potential invaders of Mawarannahr. Establishing fortresses and garrisons along the route, Timur gained Kabul by August, and camped in the surrounding meadows.

Here Timur was detained by affairs of state and considerable diplomatic activity, receiving ambassadors from all corners of his empire and beyond. Here he gave audience to the envoys of two Qipchaq princes, Idigu and Qutluq-oghlan, who, according to their message, had repented of their past actions, which had been encouraged by the temptations of pride and ignorance. If pardoned, they would serve the Emperor and submit to the orders of his officers. At the same time came the envoy of Khizr-khoja, Khan of Moghulistan, who associated himself with the sentiments expressed by the Qipchaq neighbours. Another prince, Tayzi-oghlan, fugitive, possibly from the Mongol khan or the Ming Emperor of China, also reached Timur's court in Kabul and received hospitality. (The Mongol Yuan dynasty founded by Khubilay had been cast out of China in 1368 and replaced by the native Ming dynasty.) Ghiyath al-din Ali, however, says that Tayzi-oghlan was an envoy from China.

In Kabul Timur was joined by Shaykh Nur al-din, who had been left in Persia at the end of the Five Years' Campaign to collect the revenues. The presentation of these treasures took a full day to pass in review and the controllers worked three days and nights registering them all: leopards and birds of prey; robes of gold brocade and cloth of every colour; camels and quantities of mules; finely mounted weapons; Arab horses with gold saddles; pavilions, tents, couches, and hangings; vessels and gems in variety. Another full day was required for the review of the gifts that Nur al-din presented on his own behalf to Timur. A banquet was thrown in the shaykh's honour and a generous distribution was made of many of these "gifts" to the assembled lords and ambassadors.

The sojourn of the imperial camp in the delectable meadows of Kabul was marked by the cutting of a canal to bring water to an otherwise dry valley. The work was divided between different emirs and their troops. Villages were established along the banks and gardens planted.

With the completion of these affairs, the old Queen Saray-Mulk-khanum was sent back to Samarqand with the four-year-old grandson, her ward Ulugh-beg. Timur feared the effect of the Indian climate on the child's health, but parted reluctantly from him. Ulugh-beg's father, Shahrukh, had already been sent back from court to Herat, capital of Khorasan, of which he had been made governor in 1397. Timur, the army, and the heavy baggage, together with the other royal ladies, proceeded by

different routes into India, on the second lap of their journey. Sultan Mahmud-Khan (the nominal Chaghatay khan) was despatched with the Left Wing of the army by a northerly route to Delhi. Timur struck south for the rendezvous with Pir-Muhammad on the banks of the Sutlej river, beyond Multan. Emir Sulayman-shah, with an advance-guard of Khorasan troops, cleared the passage and fortified the route. Suppressing considerable opposition, Timur reached the Indus in September and in a matter of two days flung across it a bridge of boats and reeds. (This was near the point at which Jalal al-din, son of the Khwarazmshah, gave battle to Chingiz-khan and was defeated. Chingiz, like Alexander, did not proceed into the heart of India.)

En route Timur had found time to receive many more envoys and princes, including the ambassadors from Mecca and Medina, and those of Iskandar, the Muslim Shah of Kashmir, who offered his submission; the shah was ordered to join the imperial army at the head of his own troops.

At the river Jhelum, Timur met sturdy resistance from a local ruler who ventured to oppose him from a strong island citadel. The fortress was taken by storm; the ruler flung himself and his family into the river and perished. According to Ferishta, the ruler Mubarak stowed his treasure and his family in forty boats and escaped with them down the river, before the garrison surrendered.

Beyond the confluence of the Chenab and the Ravi rivers lay the ancient city of Talumba, which offered its submission and which, in consideration of a heavy ransom, the Emperor agreed to spare. Differences regarding assessment, and difficulties of collection, however, provided a pretext for pillage. Moreover, provisions were running low and the Tatars were hungry. The troops sent in to requisition grain began to ransack the place; houses were fired and inhabitants taken captive or massacred; only the city elders were spared. Before Timur reached his rendezvous near Multan his supplies had been further replenished from the granaries of the local rajas. What could not be consumed or carried away was burnt, to reduce the resistance of the enemy.

Timur camped on the banks of the Sutlej in October, where he was joined by Pir-Muhammad. The siege of Multan had lasted six months. Towards the end the inhabitants were reported to be eating corpses. Sarang Khan had surrendered in June, but the situation of the victors who then occupied the city was scarcely more enviable than that of the defeated. The Tatar horses had been stricken by epizootic disease during the summer rains and flooding, and most of them had been lost. Seeing the poor condition of the invaders, local princes who had previously submitted rose in revolt and advanced to the gates of Multan, where

Pir-Muhammad and the remnants of his cavalry were sheltering. When Timur approached, the enemy fled. The Tatar prince joined his grandfather who received him warmly, despite the sorry condition of his troops, some of whom had been forced to travel from Multan either on oxen or on foot. Ample booty was brought from the captured city, notwithstanding, for it took the controllers two days to register it. The trophies, in sets of traditional nine, were presented by the prince at a great banquet, and were subsequently distributed to nobles and officers according to merit. The emperor for his part presented thirty thousand mounts for his grandson's troops, and gave him the command of the Right Wing of the army for the rest of the campaign.

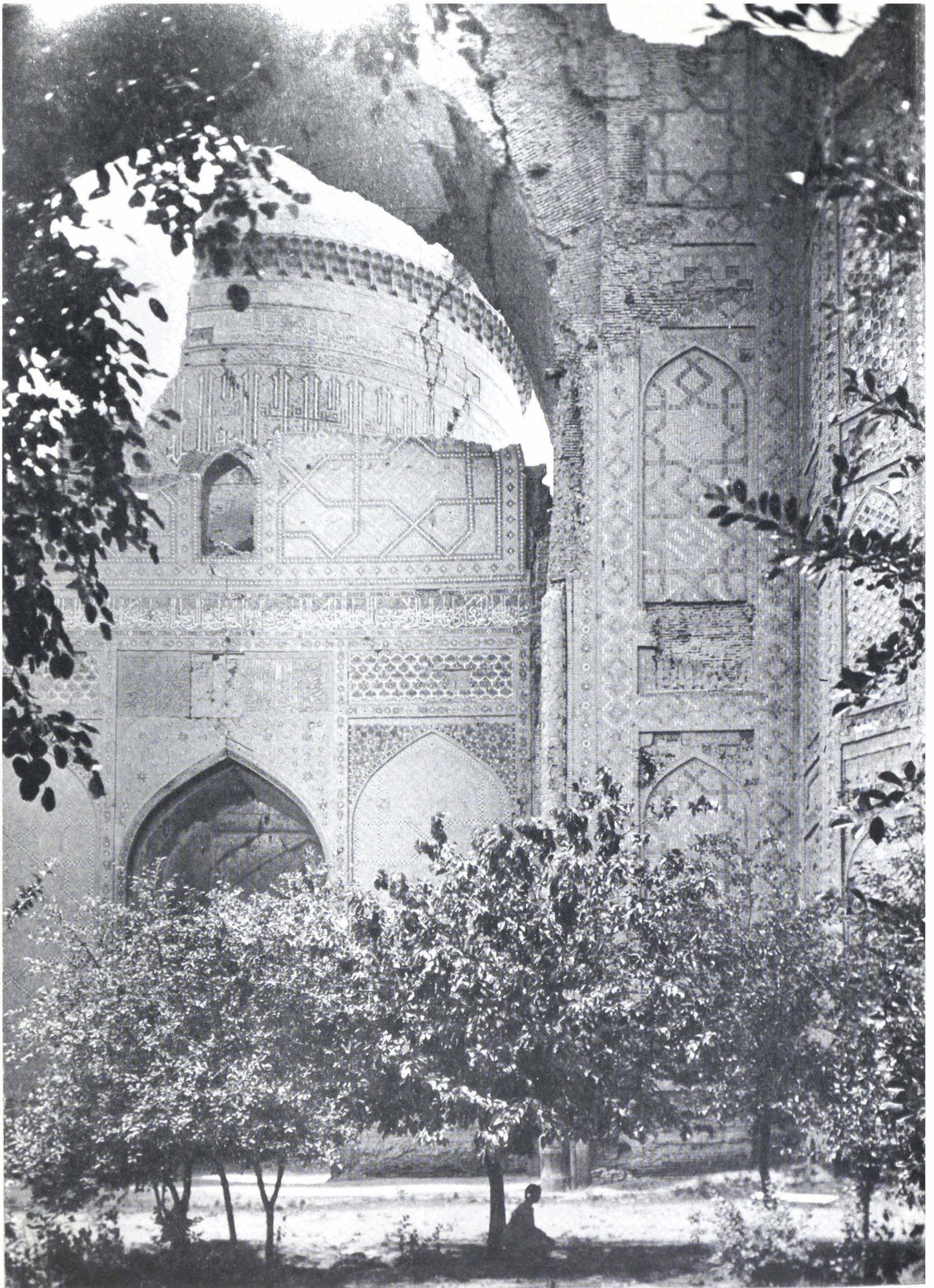
The felicity of the occasion was enhanced by the arrival of another grandson, Khalil, son of Miranshah and Khan-zada, together with the baggage train and the ladies of the imperial harem. The emperor was in great good humour, and was stimulated, said the chronicler, to read the Qoran and to distribute alms.

By December, Timur was before Delhi, "a great city, where men skilled in various arts are gathered; a home of merchants, a mine of gems and perfumes. Too great to besiege. . . ."5 His main army had been joined by the Left Wing, which had arrived from Kabul after capturing and plundering the fortresses en route. Timur himself had taken an assault troop of ten thousand and had scoured the countryside, punishing especially those places which had risen against Pir-Muhammad. As he advanced frequently by moonlight, villages emptied before him, and the inhabitants took refuge in the deserts and forests, and in fortified towns. One such was Bhatnir, which was filled to overflowing with refugees from Divalpur and Pak Pattun, together with their animals and possessions. Many found what shelter they could under the city walls. Timur took the town by storm and the citadel surrendered. Those fugitives sheltering there from Divalpur were put to death; they had risen against Pir-Muhammad and had slaughtered his garrison. Those from Pak Pattun, which had also revolted, were flogged and enslaved. Disputes again occurred over the collection of the ransom for the citizens of Bhatnir itself, and a general massacre ensued. The Hindus set fire to their own houses and cast themselves into the flames after their wives and children. The spoils were distributed to the Tatar troops, and Timur departed promptly. The air of Bhatnir was already foul with the quantity of putrefying bodies. "You would have said that no living being had ever drawn breath in that neighbourhood," commented a court chronicler.

The invader's rapid advance—"he marched with such vigour that



Construction of the Cathedral Mosque in Samarqand. From a manuscript of the Zafar-nama of Sharaf al-din Yazdi copied in 1467. Herat School. Illustrations attributed to Rihzad



The ruins of Timur's great Cathedral Mosque in Samarqand built after the Indian campaign. (Known as the Bibi-Khanum Mosque.)

he overtook the birds”—struck terror into the heart of the ruler of Delhi, Mallu Khan, who, having driven away one rival sultan, was now exercising power through the other, Mahmud Khan. Such troops as were available to the restricted kingdom were gathered within the city, which was also crowded with fugitives. The Indian forces were by no means insignificant. Their ten thousand horse and twenty thousand foot soldiers⁶ were supplemented by one hundred and twenty war elephants; these were protected by mail and surmounted by turrets containing the javelin- and flame-throwers, and crossbowmen. The tusks of these war elephants were fitted with scimitars, reputed to be poisoned.

At the beginning of December, Timur's reassembled army captured Loni, several miles north of Delhi, and taking advantage of the good pasturage, set up camp. Having made his preliminary inspection of the terrain, Timur called the great council and laid before them a plan for the siege of Delhi. Grain and supplies were to be collected from the surrounding country. While the hunting and foraging parties were away, Timur spent a day sight-seeing. His rapid advance on Delhi had not prevented him from paying a respectful visit, before the assault on Bhatnir, to the shrine of a Muslim saint, and he now found time to admire the palace of Jahan-numah, "Mirror of the Universe", which had been erected by the Sultan Firuz Shah on a ridge overlooking the Jumna river. At the same time, from this eminence, he inspected the countryside, selecting the site of a battlefield to which he hoped to draw the enemy.

Timur's reconnaissance party, consisting of no more than seven hundred cavalry, tempted Mallu to a sortie. As Timur returned to Loni his rear-guard was attacked by Indian foot soldiers and elephants. The attack was beaten off and Mallu was driven back into Delhi, leaving one of his crippled elephants behind. The sortie had unforeseen consequences for Indian prisoners. Since the crossing of the Indus, the Tatars had taken more than a hundred thousand male captives (apart from women and children), the majority of whom were Hindus—idolaters. When Mallu attacked, the prisoners could not conceal their joy at the prospect of liberation. This hope was fatal to them. Timur and his chiefs became apprehensive of a revolt breaking out in their rear, if the battle for Delhi should be hard fought. The order was given, and within the hour the entire number were slaughtered—"fifty thousand men, more or less. God knows the truth."⁷ Other accounts speak of a hundred thousand. It is said that when the record of this campaign was being read to Timur by one of his secretaries, he objected to the inclusion of the number of prisoners that had been slaughtered. He argued that a cook should be judged by the success of the dish he had prepared, not by

the blood on his hands when preparing it. Even the most venerable scholars who accompanied Timur's court were obliged thus to dispose of the slaves they had acquired. One such Maulana, who had never before killed so much as a sheep, had to kill the fifteen Indian slaves he had attached to his household.

There were further signs of uneasiness within the army. The war elephants inspired the Tatars with misgivings. According to hearsay, elephants were impervious to arrows and sabres. Their very motion caused currents of air strong enough to uproot trees. Both riders and mounts could be seized in the elephants' trunks and lifted high into the air . . . On the return of the hunting parties, Timur addressed the army chiefs and captains. The old Tatar spoke of the way the enemy ranks could be broken with sabre attacks, and their squadrons scattered. He instructed them not only in methods of attack, but how to retreat when too hard pressed; and how to rally and return to the offensive.

Some of the court sages and men of letters, when asked where they wished to be stationed during the battle, replied that they preferred to be near the camp of the ladies of the court. This request was attributed to fear of the elephants, although these animals were not unknown in Central Asia. The troops of the Khwarazmshah Sultan Muhammad had the support of twenty elephants in the defence of Samarqand against Chingiz-khan.⁸ The request did not include the venerable high court judge Nasir al-din Omar, who accompanied Timur on this expedition and who wrote the diary on which the account of Ghiyath al-din Ali may have been based. According to Ghiyath al-din, the qadi distinguished himself in the battle.

To allay the general apprehension, Timur ordered that the ranks should be protected by digging trenches and building ramparts reinforced with shields. Barbed stakes were placed in the ground. Buffaloes were roped together and fastened in position in front of the lines, with strong guards behind. One soldier in ten was told off to guard the heavy baggage and the camels laden with spoils, and the women and children captives.

Despite the preparations, the court astrologers were reluctant to assert that the planets were in a favourable position. Disregarding their misgivings, Timur ordered public prayers. The Lord of the Fortunate Conjunction could dispense with an unfavourable astral disposition as well as he could take advantage of a favourable one: "Neither fortune nor affliction depends on the stars. I confide myself to the care of the Almighty, who has never yet abandoned me. What does it matter if the planets are in this or that relationship? I will not delay the execution of my purpose for a single moment after I have completed the necessary

measures and taken the necessary precautions." The army was drawn up for battle. Timur commanded the centre. He ordered the great Qoran to be brought to him, and a text for the day was indicated. It was a good one; it spoke of the destruction of a people by the great effort of the all-powerful opponent. Timur made this known to the army as a sure sign of victory. The Almighty had taken them under His wing.

Delhi opened its gates and the army of Mallu and Sultan Mahmud advanced to give battle in the open. This was the move Timur desired. He did not wish for a long-drawn-out siege. He watched from a height where he could overlook the movement of the two armies. When they came face to face with each other, the Emperor, as was his custom, dismounted and prostrated himself on the earth, asking Allah for victory.

No one, however fearless, said the chronicler, could help being shattered by the opening clamour. Never had there been such a battle, never such a fearsome noise. Mingled with the din of cymbals, drums, and trumpets was the noise of the great drums beaten by Indians on the backs of the elephants, their gongs and battle-cries, and the voices of the battalions raised high in praise of God . . . the earth trembled.

Bundles of dried grass had been tied to the backs of camels and buffaloes to be set on fire when the elephants attacked. A number of elephants, recoiling from the blaze, trampled on their own troops. Others were brought down by the stakes and three-pronged spikes that had been driven into the ground by the Tatars. Pir-Muhammad led a charge, sabre in hand, and the Indian Left recoiled under the impact. An attack on Timur's advance positions failed when it was taken in the rear by a detached force. The Tatar Left beat off successive stubborn attacks from the Indians and then drove them to the gates of Delhi. Sultan Mahmud and Mallu escaped into the city, and during the retreat many of the inhabitants and numbers of soldiers were "stamped out under foot, and heaps of dead were left". Ferishta, the Muslim historian, who wrote a history of India at the end of the sixteenth century, did not miss the occasion to show his animosity to the Hindus: "The degenerate Hindus were totally routed without making one brave effort for their country, their lives, or their fortunes." Elephants were wounded and their trunks hacked off. Some were driven away "like cows". Prince Khalil (aged fifteen) also attacked an elephant with his sabre, overcame its guards, and at the end of the battle marched the beast back to present to his grandfather.

Later on the Emperor heard from his generals the accounts of the prodigies of valour performed by his men, his commanders, and by the princes of the blood. The old Tatar was greatly moved; he wept and kissed

the earth, giving thanks for such valiant subjects and for princes such as Khalil, whom he honoured with the title of Sultan.

Next day Timur made his triumphal entry into Delhi. Sultan Mahmud and Mallu Khan had fled during the night, leaving their ladies and children behind them. They were pursued; two of Mallu's sons were captured, a number of officers, and much booty. The imperial pavilion was erected at one of the gates and Timur received the submission of the city. The sherifs, qadis, members of the Divan, and the men of letters, threw themselves at his feet and were granted quarter. Protection was promised on the payment of a great indemnity. Victory music was played, and commemorative verses composed. The surviving elephants of Delhi were paraded before their new master. They were made to kneel before him and to give their special cry, as if they too were asking for quarter. Rhinoceroses were also paraded, but as they did not kneel, or bellow to order, they made less impression.

Messengers with the victory news were sent off at once throughout the empire, even to those regions a year's journey distant. Strings of elephants were dispatched at the double, as impressive testimony, to the royal princes at Tabriz, Shiraz, and Herat; others were sent to Shaykh Ibrahim of Shirvan, and to Prince Taharten at Arzinjan.

The following Friday the venerable and valiant Nazir al-din Omar went with the other sherifs of the court to preach in the Great Mosque and to pronounce the public prayer, the Khutba, in the name of the invincible Timur.

Court officials, treasurers, controllers, and city magistrates began their work at the city gates to collect the ransom from the citizens according to wealth and status. The city had not been given over to pillage, but there were many Tatar soldiers inside it. Several thousand were there for the requisitioning of sugar and corn. In addition to the emirs and controllers who were responsible for collecting the ransom, a number of Tatars with warrants had the right of entry. There were those, for example, whose task it was to separate fugitives from other places from the citizens of Delhi, for only the latter were covered by the amnesty. In the week following the city's submission the ladies of the imperial household decided that they would like to visit the famous palaces of the city. The city gate was left open out of respect for the visitors, and large numbers of additional troops found their way inside. One way and another, some fifteen thousand Tatars managed to collect within Delhi. The inevitable disturbances arose from disputes over the extortionate ransom, from the licence of the soldiers, and from the increasing despair of the citizens. They rose against the invaders, many setting fire to their own houses, into

which they cast themselves and their families. Within an hour Delhi was being sacked by Tatar troops over whom no control was possible. The emirs closed the gates to prevent others from entering, but the Tatars inside helped to open them again to their fellows outside. The army poured in and for three days the city was put to fire and the sword. Of these events Ferishta unjustly remarks that the desperate courage of the unfortunate Delhians was at length "cooled in their own blood. They threw down their weapons, submitting like sheep to the slaughter . . . In the city the Hindus were at least ten to one superior in number to the enemy; and had they possessed souls, it would have been impossible for the Mongols, who were scattered about in every street, house, and corner, laden with plunder, to have resisted. But though the Indians had the savage resolution of imbuing their hands in the blood of their wives and children, we find them still the slaves of fear . . ."

Delhi at that time consisted of a cluster of three districts; two of them, Siri and Jahan-panah ("the Refuge of the World"), were pillaged first. Indian survivors made for the third district, Old Delhi, where they collected in the Cathedral Mosque and prepared to resist. Entry was forced by troops led by two emirs, and the souls of those opponents of the Conqueror were despatched to hell. Minarets of skulls were made of the heads of the slaughtered; wild beasts and carrion disposed of the corpses.

Sharaf al-din, describing the incapacity of the emirs to control the Tatar riots, makes the excuse that Delhi suffered as a result of the bad conduct and infidelity of the citizens—the normal sanction, in fact, for pillage and massacre. Ghiyath al-din Ali, whose account is chronologically the earliest, said that "the soldiers hurried to pounce on the population like hungry wolves falling on a flock of sheep or eagles swooping on weaker birds". Nizam uddin Ahmad, historian of Akbar the Mogol emperor (descended from Timur), said that Timur granted quarter to the people of the city, and appointed a number of persons to collect the ransom. Some of the citizens, incensed by the harshness of the collectors, resisted and killed them. This daring incited the anger of Timur, and he gave orders to kill or make prisoners the people of the city. On that day many were captured or slain, but at length Timur was moved to pity and issued an edict of mercy.

How far these and similar events followed a pattern foreseen by the Conqueror is an open question. Timur made no provision for the occupation and control of the city. Nor was he in the habit of leaving wealth and resources in his rear for the use of enemies. His first consideration was to satisfy his troops, and there is little reason to suppose that he would have

felt inclined, even if he had had the power, to deprive them of the gratification regarded as normal after an arduous victory.

At all events, the Tatars became practically immobilised with their burden of loot. Some led a hundred and fifty slaves out of the city; even the humblest soldier had no fewer than twenty. They amassed jewelry, clothing, gold and silver vessels, and quantities of coin. The Hindu women who guarded their wealth in the form of bangles, necklaces, ear-rings and ankle-chains, and other adornments on their persons, were particularly vulnerable. Rare perfumes and unguents were ignored in the scramble for more precious treasure. The wealth accumulated by generations of sultans disappeared in a few days into the hands of the Tatars.

During this time Timur and his court were relaxing with banqueting and revelry, after the fatigues of war. No one had opportunity—or dared—to interrupt the august celebrations with the news that the troops were out of control and that Delhi was in flames.

After the relaxations, several days were spent sorting the captives who were brought in chains from the city. By order of Timur, the master-craftsmen, especially stone-masons, were separated out for the special service of the Emperor in Samarqand. During his fifteen days' stay in Delhi, Timur received the submission of and tribute from Indian princes who felt they had no other course open to them. Amongst the tribute were two white parrots which for many years had graced the ante-chambers of the sultans of India. Timur found this gift particularly pleasing, interpreting it as a happy augury. He packed up and departed, as swiftly as he had come, in a homeward direction.

The plains of northern India had probably no more permanent attraction for Timur's hordes than they had for the armies of Alexander or Chingiz-khan. Even Babur, founder of the Mogol dynasty in India, wrote: "Hindustan is a country that has few pleasures to recommend it. The people are not handsome; they have no idea of the charms of friendly society—no genius . . . no good horses, flesh, no grapes or musk melon . . . no ice in cold water, no good food or bread in their bazaars . . ."

On his way Timur paused for an hour at the splendid mosque of polished marble on the banks of the Jumna, a few miles north of Delhi, built by Sultan Firuz. He gave thanks to God, and moved north with his hordes on their sacred mission of punishing the infidels. After his departure, the territories through which he had passed were visited by pestilence and famine. Many died of sickness and of hunger. For two months Delhi was desolate.

Timur went north at the beginning of January, taking to the skirts of the hills. Meerut refused to surrender, but was stormed by Timur at the

head of a tuman which had made forced marches to this important stronghold. The town was fired and the resisting Hindus burnt alive. A detachment was told off under Emir Jahan Shah to ravage the villages on the banks of the Jumna, while Timur marched to the Ganges. A river battle was fought, and forty-eight boat-loads of Hindus were destroyed. Timur also destroyed many fire-worshippers (Zoroastrians) who had a celebrated shrine in those parts.⁹

Marching north-west along the foothills towards Kashmir, frequently by moonlight or by torchlight, Timur fought in the course of a month a score of pitched battles, took seven fortresses, and survived numerous smaller engagements in which his picked troops, outnumbered, were frequently hard pressed. Timur was then nearly sixty-three, and during this part of the campaign developed a painful tumour on his arm. It cleared quickly. The emirs suggested that the Conqueror should not himself engage in the close fighting; the old Tatar replied that the War for the Faith had two supreme advantages. One was that it gave the warrior eternal merit, a guarantee of Paradise immediately in the world to come. The other was that it also gained for the warrior the treasures of the present world. As Timur hoped to enjoy both advantages, so he intended to justify his claim to them.

The provinces of the Himalayan foothills were attacked and plundered; resistance was followed by merciless retribution. (Monkeys in some areas were no more submissive than the people. During the night they came to the Tatar camp and stole the clothing of the soldiers.) Timur was vigilant as ever to see that all his troops were satisfied. Should any Tatars return empty-handed from a raiding expedition, Timur arranged that they should share the pillage of more successful parties, or be despatched on the next more favourable expedition.

After some two months of sanguinary progress the envoys that had been despatched from Delhi to the Muslim shah of Kashmir, Iskandar, returned to the imperial camp. The shah had been on his way to tender his submission to Timur and to place himself at the Conqueror's service, said the message, but he had been intercepted en route by one of the ambassadors, with the order that he had been taxed three thousand horses and a hundred thousand derests of gold. Shah Iskandar had therefore returned to his country to collect the tax and promised to come with it to Timur. Timur disapproved of the tax levied; it was too heavy, he said, for a small country. He sent an envoy saying that Iskandar need not wait to bring the tribute; he should come at once: in ten days he was to be at the rendezvous on the river Indus.

By both cunning and the sword the Tatars overcame the resistance on

the homeward route. For example, the Hindu Raja of Jammu was captured by an ambush after he believed his district to be free of Timur's troops. Other captives had been put in chains, but the Raja was spared and his wounds were treated, for there were hopes of securing large tribute from Jammu. The Raja more than fulfilled these expectations; in addition to paying tribute, he abandoned his idolatry, and acknowledged that there was no God but the One God. He gave proof of his conversion, moreover, by eating the flesh of the cow.

A detachment had been sent meanwhile against Lahore, where the ill-advised prince Shaykha, who had previously submitted to Timur, and who had even accompanied the Conqueror for a time as his guide on the campaign, had been granted permission to return to his home. He had been ordered to rejoin the imperial army with fresh troops, but had not done so. Instead he had spent his time pleasurably in Lahore. He had also failed to treat with sufficient honour the imperial treasurer, Hindu Shah,¹⁰ and others of the royal court, when they were passing through the city on their way to join the Emperor. Lahore was captured and held to ransom, and the prince Shaykha was executed.

At the beginning of March, Timur held court for the princes and officers of the army, bidding farewell and dismissing them to their different provinces. They were eager to go. The Conqueror had left Delhi without a master, but he appointed one of the submissive Muslim princes as his viceroy over the Punjab and Upper Sind. This prince was Khizr Khan the Sayyid, reputed to be descended from the Prophet Muhammad. Khizr Khan had previously been expelled from Multan by Sarang Khan, and had made his submission to Timur at Delhi. Since then he had accompanied the Tatars on their punitive return journey. Timur knew him to be "a sayyid and a good man".

A Venetian merchant, Nicolo de' Conti, who came to the court of Timur and wished to visit India, found that "all was secure, for at that time the rule of Timur Beg extended from India to the Red Sea".¹¹ Khizr Khan continued to recognize the suzerainty of Timur, employing the name of the Conqueror on coins and in the Khutba, and sending tribute to him. Sultan Mahmud, Mallu Shah, and others returned in due course to Delhi and resumed their struggles for power. Eventually Mallu was defeated in battle by Khizr Khan the Sayyid, who some years later captured Delhi itself, and founded the Sayyid dynasty.

Having dismissed the levies from the different parts of the empire, the old Tatar returned hot foot to Samarqand. Interesting news had come from the west: Sultan Barquq of Egypt and Syria had passed from this perishable world. He had contracted a fever after a game of polo followed

by some refreshing dishes of honey and roast heron. A young son, Faraj, had been left to establish his authority over the ambitious factions of his court. Speeding home, Timur still found time and occasion to mete out chastisement to those who showed resistance in general, and to infidels in particular. The troops were, however, exhausted. Many were sick and those who lacked mounts could no longer cross unbridged rivers. Indian conditions had been particularly disastrous for the horses. Timur was obliged to remount many of the troops from his own herds, and to construct bridges for the river-crossings, to prevent further losses. Apart from this, the troops were still so laden with booty that they could at times make a bare four miles' progress a day.

Timur himself was indefatigable. Messengers were sent to warn Mawarannah of the Conqueror's return. He pressed on in advance of the army. Reaching Kabul, he left there the beautiful empress Cholpan-Mulk-gha, along with those troops whose horses and mules were in poor condition, to proceed when their strength was restored. Timur went forward along the road from Kabul to the Amu-Darya, a road not normally accessible to mounted traffic till the spring.

Then the Emperor was stricken with boils on his hands and feet. They disturbed his sleep and prevented him from taking the saddle. He was delayed several days, and then proceeded painfully, carried in a mule litter. The affliction increased, and the emperor was borne through the defiles of the Hindu Kush on this litter by his chamberlains, crossing and recrossing thus the tortuous mountain-river beds. Babur, too, was afflicted by boils, and by lumbago, in India; he blamed the rains and damp of Hindustan.

By the end of the month Timur had been met by a party consisting of the old empress Saray-Mulk-khanum, the Great Queen, his recent bride Tukul-khanum, the Lesser Queen, Tuman-gha, and other royal ladies and princes; his young grandson, Ulugh-beg, also came to meet him.

Timur recovered his health and sent messengers back across the Great Snow Mountains with orders to hurry up with the elephants. Samarqand prepared for another triumphal entry.

NOTES

¹ According to W. Erskine, translator of Babur's *Memoirs*.

² Yahiya bin Ahmad Sirhindi, tr. Basu.

³ Ibn Arabshah: *Tamerlane*.

⁴ Gibbon: *Decline and Fall*.

⁵ Ibn Arabshah: *Tamerlane*.

⁶ Ghiyath al-din Ali: *Indian Diary*. According to Sharaf al-din Yazdi (*Zafar-nama*), forty thousand infantry.

NOTES—cont.

⁷ Yahiya a bin Ahmad Sirhindi: *Tarikh-i Mubarakshah*, tr. Basu.

⁸ Juvaini: *Tarikh-i Jahan-Gusha: History of World Conqueror*.

⁹ Hafiz-i Abru: *Zubdat al-Tavarikh*.

¹⁰ Hindu Shah was an ancestor of the historian Ferishta.

¹¹ Pero Tafur: *Travels and Adventures*, tr. M. Letts.

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DYNASTIC QUESTIONS

TIMUR's restoration to health and return to Mawarannahr were celebrated by a triumphal progress to the imperial city. He was welcomed at the different stages by royal sons and grandsons. He stayed fifteen days at Shahrisabz, at his palace of Aq Saray. Thence to the palace of Takhta-Qaracha, in the huge park which he had laid out a few years before. From there to the Garden of Heart's Delight in the Samarqand suburbs. The Conqueror went into the capital to the baths, and made his ablutions. He visited the Shahi-Zinda shrine, where sisters, wives, and emirs were buried; he moved for a short time to the hospice erected by one of his surviving queens, Tuman-agma, and thence to the Madrasa built by the Greater Queen, Saray-Mulk-khanum. From there he moved to the Garden of the Plane Trees; then to the Garden the Model of the World; then to the Paradise Garden; and on to the High Garden, at which point the elephants and the baggage trains arrived from India. The captives, elephants, and plunder were paraded before the citizens. To his grandson, Muhammad-Sultan, ruler of Farghana, Timur sent the captive Prince Sarang Khan (who had surrendered Multan), some elephants, and other curiosities of India.

Between dispensing justice and making dispositions for the next campaign, the old man gave orders for the construction of a Cathedral Mosque of such grandeur as to be a fitting monument to his victories. So far Timur's main building projects had been of a secular character. Inspired perhaps by the mosque at Firuzabad on the Jumna, or by his own advancing years, he commanded that the best of the captive masons and craftsmen be immediately allocated to his Mosque; they were to be supported by the efforts of elephants and impressed labourers. Two hundred blocks of marble were ordered from Azarbayjan, Persia and India. Not a moment was to be lost. The site selected was near the Iron Gate of Samarqand, opposite the Madrasa of Saray-Mulk-khanum. Two important emirs were put in charge of the work, Khoja Mahmud Dawud, and Muhammad Jalad. Timur sent daily enquiries about the progress made. One of Bihzad's miniatures illustrating Sharaf al-din's *Zafar-nama*, the Book of Victory, shows the craftsmen and elephants labouring in the construction of the Cathedral Mosque; an interesting item in the picture is the master-builder holding a model of the Mosque in his hand, for the buildings were not erected from plans.

Timur was also preparing his next campaign; the feudal lords, nomad or settled, were more profitably occupied against an external enemy than in contesting for position amongst themselves. Moreover, the need to supply continual satisfaction for the predatory inclinations of the Chaghatai chiefs was reinforced by the need to counteract the opposite tendency towards indulgence and degeneracy, which arose from conditions of excessive looting and easy living. The Conqueror kept his own counsel, received information from all quarters, and prepared to turn to advantage any weakness of any enemy.

The Lord of the Fortunate Conjunction was also preoccupied with dynastic considerations. He summoned Prince Muhammad-Sultan from his border kingdom of Farghana. Muhammad-Sultan, eldest son of Timur's firstborn, Jahangir, combined the blood of Timur with the royal blood of Chingiz. He was a military leader of consequence, and had been made heir-elect. Timur's choice had been known for many years. In order to guard against the danger of a disputed succession, he had ordered the name of his successor to be included in the Friday prayer, the Khutba, and to be minted on coins. The dynastic succession was established and accepted.

As for the other royal princes, they had frequently disappointed the old man. The two elder sons had already been received to the mercy of Allah, and the eldest grandson, Muhammad-Sultan, son of Jahangir, took precedence over both surviving sons, who were born of tadjik concubines and for whom Timur did not seem to have a high regard. Timur's Mongol wives had not borne him sons. The younger son, Shahrukh, was a dedicated Muslim who appears to have set less store by military distinction and the nomad code of Chingiz-khan, than by the observance of the Shariat, the Muslim code of law. Shahrukh maintained his reputation for restraint when later he became King of the Medes and Persians. He was a "lover of peace", according to the archimandrite Thomas of Metsope. Shahrukh had succeeded Miranshah as the ruler of Khorasan, but was not called upon to undertake independent military actions.

Miranshah, the elder surviving son, presented a problem of a different order. At the end of the Indian campaign rumours had reached Timur that all was not well with the Hulagid kingdom—northern Persia, Azarbayjan, and Baghdad. From the first, Miranshah had proved himself incapable of dealing with external enemies. Sultan Ahmad Jalayir, who had fled from Baghdad in 1393 to the sanctuary provided by the Sultan of Egypt and Syria, returned the following year to his capital. Miranshah set out with a force to expel him, but retreated precipitately to Tabriz on receiving news of a conspiracy against him. Amongst those accused and

executed for complicity was the Qadi of Tabriz. Timur usually spared the foremost religious dignitaries. Miranshah was no more successful in the north. The stronghold of Alanjiq in Azarbayjan had been long under siege by the Tatars. Inside Alanjiq was Tahir, son of Ahmad of Baghdad. A detachment of Georgians had come to the relief of the city. They had beaten back the Tatars, recaptured the city, and released Tahir.

These defeats were accompanied by disorders within the kingdom, the result, it was said, of dissipation and excesses of violence. The prince drank and gambled incessantly. The state treasury, including the revenues due to the imperial Divan, had been squandered. Miranshah was reported to have profaned the tomb of Il-khan Uljaytu in the green-domed mosque of Sultaniya, and to have been responsible for the destruction of a number of other buildings in that city and Tabriz. These destructive activities were occasioned, according to reports picked up by Clavijo some years later, by a passion for notoriety: Miranshah, who had created nothing, would be remembered at least for the monuments he destroyed. "Forsooth I am the son of the greatest man in the whole world, what now can I do in these famous cities, that after my days I too may always be remembered?" Daulatshah related that Miranshah ordered the tomb of the historian Rashid al-din in Tabriz to be destroyed and his bones removed to the Jewish cemetery. Rashid al-din was of Jewish descent.

It is possible that buildings were destroyed in the customary search for loot and hidden treasure. Hostile accounts, however, attributed such acts to a morbid and frenzied nature, stimulated by the excessive drinking which shortened the lives of many a Mongol prince, and by the profligacy of his companions. Court records ascribe to the prince a mental derangement following a fall from his horse during a hunting expedition. Arabshah supports the theory of the prince's derangement by relating that Miranshah sent to his father on the Indian campaign a letter of somewhat provocative sentiments. In view of Timur's advanced age, the letter was supposed to say, and in view of his weak constitution and infirmity, he was no longer equal to raising the standards of empire. It would better befit his condition to sit as a devotee in a corner of the mosque and worship his Lord until life was withdrawn from him. "There are now men among your sons and grandsons, who would suffice to you for ruling your subjects and armies and undertake to guard your kingdoms and territory . . ." The letter pointed out how much greater was the glory of the prophets than that of conquerors—"You govern men, nay also you still administer justice, but unjustly; you feed, but it is on their wealth and corn; you act the defender, but by burning their hearts and ribs; you lay foundations, but foundations of afflictions; you go forward, but

on a crooked road . . . ” These are thoughts which Arabshah himself must have longed to express as a young captive.

Whether through brain-storms which alienated his reason, or through a simple urge for dissipation, the consequences were detrimental to the kingdom and to the trade routes. Certainly Miranshah was incapable of controlling the turbulent regions of insurgent Georgians, Armenians, Azarbayjanians, Turkomans, and other mountain tribes.

A few weeks after the Conqueror's return from India, Khan-zada, granddaughter of Uzbek khan, widow of Jahangir and wife of Miranshah, came urgently from Sultaniya to Samarqand, travelling by night and day. She was received by Timur in the Garden of the Plane Trees. To the stories of the disorders in the Hulagid kingdom the illustrious princess added accounts of the rebellious intentions of her husband, and the insults she endured at his hands; these had become intolerable.

Timur had returned to Samarqand in May, 1399. By October the hordes were again on the move. They were levied for a campaign whose anticipated length was seven years. They set off under the leadership of the indefatigable Emir, nearly sixty-four years old, world-conqueror and great-grandfather several times over.

Once more the road west had precedence over the road to China. Timur's immediate mission was the chastisement of his son. But that was to be merely the prelude to further conquest. For beyond the disordered Hulagid kingdom lay one more of the seven great kingdoms of the world: beyond Persia lay the realms of Syria and Egypt, whose late sultan had already drawn swords with Timur. The envoys who had been sent by Timur to Barquq after the capture of Baghdad to propose friendly commercial relations, had been imprisoned and murdered. Sultan Barquq had given a cordial reception to the envoys of Timur's enemy Tokhtamish; he had provided a sumptuous welcome for the fugitive ruler of Baghdad, Ahmad Jalayir, and had been the means of reinstating him in Baghdad. But now Sultan Barquq had perished; he had fallen sick and joined his fathers after a snack of honey and roast heron. His son Faraj was trying to make good his claim to the throne in Cairo.

Muhammad-Sultan, heir-elect, was left in charge of Mawarannahr when Timur's hordes moved west. Emir Sulayman-shah and others were sent in advance to investigate the charges made against Miranshah. They met no resistance. They salvaged what they could of the revenues due to the imperial exchequer, and reported that the debaucheries of the prince had been encouraged by the courtiers with whom he surrounded himself. Among those alleged to have corrupted him were a number of scholars:

Maulana Muhammad Quhistani, celebrated in all the sciences, skilled in poetry and a great conversationalist; Qutb al-din of Mosul, a noted musician, master of the lute; and others. These favourites, famous men of their day, received the death sentence. They carried the frivolous atmosphere of the court even to the scaffold: Muhammad of Quhistan turned to his companion and invited him to go first: "You had precedence over me in the king's company; precede me therefore now"; and his last words before the noose were a punning verse.¹

Encouraged by Sulayman-shah, Miranshah went out from Sultaniya to meet his father. He was kept waiting till the following day before audience was granted. The prince was deposed, and Timur himself made the necessary dispositions for the subjugation of the country. Timur "put to death those dangerous men and evil-doers, but did not harm Miranshah, his own son, whom he himself reared; complex affairs passed between the two, which none but Allah can unfold."² Despite his experiences, Miranshah's patronage of poets and scholars continued.

Fits of frenzy notwithstanding, Miranshah accompanied the campaigns of his father during the next five years (1399-1404). At the end of this period, the prince's reception of the Spanish envoys who were journeying to Samarqand, appeared to them to be in no way abnormal. He was then, said Clavijo, "a man of advanced age, being about forty years old; big and fat; suffering much from the gout." Miranshah was in fact born in 1366; Clavijo saw him in 1404 when he was thirty-eight.

The affair of the recapture of Alanjiq by the Georgians was also investigated by emirs of the imperial Divan under the charge of Shahrukh. On presentation of the report, judgement was given according to the customary law of Chingiz-khan. Two of the chiefs responsible were bastinadoed. A third, condemned to death but spared at the request of the royal princes, was punished instead by a beating back and front. All three were fined thirty horses each. Other officers found guilty were fined from fifty to three hundred mounts each. The horses thus collected were distributed to soldiers on foot. On the other hand, Prince Abu-Bakr, eldest son of Miranshah, who had also participated in the Alanjiq episode, had borne himself valiantly, according to the report. He was rewarded by his grandfather. Drastic punishment was meted out to the Georgians who had been responsible for the success of the revolt.

If some of the second generation seemed more worthy of the Conqueror's trust than the first generation, they too produced problems and disappointments. Some were quick to be assimilated to settled life and to the enjoyment of "tadjik" luxury. Pir-Muhammad, son of Omar-Shaykh, for example, seemed to prefer court life in Persia to campaigning.

He had succeeded his father as ruler of Fars, and had received the Conqueror's orders to join forces with his brother Rustam for an attack on Baghdad, after it had been reoccupied by Sultan Ahmad. But Pir-Muhammad delayed his departure with his troops, on the grounds of ill-health. Then, instead of riding forth in the direction of Baghdad, he returned to Shiraz. He was suspected of malingering, and accused, in addition, of preparing poisons for a purpose undisclosed. The emir Sayyid Barlas made an investigation, as a result of which the prince and his accomplices were arrested. Of the tajik councillors and experts in the distilling of poisons, some were executed, some imprisoned, and one had arms and legs amputated. Pir-Muhammad was taken in custody to Timur's court, and in accordance with the verdict of the imperial Divan, was bastinadoed. Rustam received the government of Fars in place of his brother.

What the one grandson lacked in military verve, another possessed to excess. Prince Iskandar, also son of Omar-Shaykh, had been installed as commander of Farghana, the eastern frontier province of Mawarannahr, when Timur rode west on the Seven Years' Campaign. In anticipation of operations against China, this fifteen-year-old prince left the capital Andijan and led an expedition deep into Moghulistan. The Moghul khan Khizr-khoja had departed this life; the Moghuls were preoccupied and divided, and the moment must have seemed opportune to the young prince. However, an expedition had been planned as a combined operation between the forces of Muhammad-Sultan from Samarqand and Iskandar; but the young prince had raced ahead independently with his frontier troops; he had ransacked Yarkand, pillaged the countryside, and then laid siege to Aqsu, attacking with sapping operations, battering rams, and other machines, until after a month the besieged offered their submission. Wealthy Chinese merchants who were at that time in the city were sent with conciliatory presents to negotiate the terms of surrender and ransom. A royal harem was captured. The town of Tarim was pillaged. Iskandar then drove further east to Khotan, a city some six or seven months' journey out from Khanbaliq (Peking). The city surrendered and many inhabitants fled to the mountains. Judging the rocky heights to be inaccessible, and the season too far advanced, the young prince returned and wintered at Kashghar. The country there was good for wild-camel hunts. Proud of his success, the young prince despatched gifts, including nine fine girls, to his grandfather Timur, and a similar tribute to Muhammad-Sultan, who had returned to Samarqand in disgust after failing to catch up with his impetuous cousin. For this and perhaps for other reasons the two princes had quarrelled. Iskandar was arrested by the

heir-elect—not without some resistance. His atabeg and servants were executed. Eighteen months later, when Muhammad-Sultan went to join the emperor with a levy of fresh troops from Mawarannahr, Iskandar went too, a prisoner. He received the same punishment as the other wayward grandsons, a flogging, according to the yasa of Chingiz-khan.

The discipline of the princes was a matter of deep concern to the old emperor. He demanded the same obedience as Chingiz had demanded from his offspring. Like his nomad forebears, Timur gave first consideration to the needs of his clan. For them were the hunting grounds, the summer and the winter pastures, the booty, the annual tribute, and the proceeds of the trade routes. Perhaps the princes of the blood were chafing under the prolonged authority of the head of the clan. According to Clavijo, Timur feigned mortal illness on more than one occasion to test the reaction of the emirs and princes, but nothing is known of the occasions or the results.

Considerations of mortality must in any case have weighed increasingly with the old man. From different quarters came the gratifying but portentous news of the departure of old enemies, to face the ultimate Tribunal. That year—1399, Year of the Hare—the transience of princes had been particularly evident: Khizr-khoja oghlan, king of the Moghuls, had paid tribute to the Angel Izrail; the Khan left four sons and dissensions in his kingdom. From further east had come the news of the death of the Tonguz Khan (“Pig King”), Emperor of China, of the Ming dynasty, which had replaced the line of Chingiz-khan. The death of this idolatrous emperor had also been followed by disorders.

From the north came similar news: Qutluq-oghlan, one of the feckless Qipchaq princes—who had fought alongside Timur against Tokhtamish and had then forgotten his obligations—had departed to the mercy of Allah. This news was combined with gratifying information about the unsettled state of Qipchaq affairs, and the sedition that enfeebled the Golden Horde.

The angel of death had also spread his wings to the west. In 1399 Barquq of Egypt had been gathered up. His son Faraj had been acclaimed sultan at the age of ten, but he had little credit or authority. Egypt and Syria were in turmoil; factions disputed; Damascus was the centre of repeated insurgence.

Provision against dynastic strife seemed adequate, however, in the realm of the Conqueror. The depraved Miranshah and devout Shahrukh had been superseded by the congenial grandson Muhammad-Sultan. For several years this prince had been generally accepted as the heir-elect. He was now serving as the ruler of Mawarannahr, viceroy of the emperor.

He commanded wide support, especially in the army camps. His merits were acknowledged even by Ibn Arabshah: Khan-zada, he said, “a brilliant beauty,” had borne to Jahangir the prince Muhammad-Sultan, who was a “manifest prodigy in his noble nature and vigour. And when Timur saw in his nature signs of singular good fortune and that in the excellence of his talents he surpassed the rest of his sons and grandsons, he disregarded all of them and turned his mind to this one and appointed him his heir . . . ”

After dealing with Miranshah, Timur spent the winter of 1399-1400 at his favourite pastures in the Qarabagh, where he had been joined by the imperial household. Domestic attachments did not prevent him from pursuing a mission of vengeance against the Georgians, who, in support of the revolt against Miranshah, had entered Azarbayjan, defeated Tatar forces, relieved the fortress of Alanjiq, and released Prince Tahir (son of Sultan Ahmad of Baghdad) who had been holding out there. The Georgians were not only to be defeated, but destroyed utterly.

Along the routes of the Tatar advance the forests were cleared. Snow fell for twenty days, but the Tatars pressed on. Everything in their path was destroyed; towns and villages were demolished; the churches, where the Georgians worshipped in a manner unpleasing to Allah, were razed to the ground; crops were pillaged, gardens and trees were uprooted. The vineyards were distributed amongst the warriors who had to tear out the vines by the roots: for it was well known that wine was vital to the infidels of Georgia; the men and women, even the children, were so accustomed to this sinful beverage that their bodies were washed in it after death, and they asked to be interred with it, so as to be sustained in their future life. The snow-filled valleys were tinged ruby and garnet with the blood of the slain. But the winter was unusually severe and the invaders too suffered heavily in this, the fourth campaign waged against the stubborn mountain folk. The Tatar mounts were reduced to eating the bark of trees, and the expedition returned to the imperial camp and the warmer grasslands of the east. There they joined in the celebrations over the birth of a son to Khali!-Sultan—a great-grandson to the Lame Conqueror.

The festivities in the Qarabagh were superb, mainly at the expense of Timur's ally, the King of Shirvan. So many horses and sheep were killed that the court cooks were insufficient, and the tuvajis distributed the carcasses amongst the troops for roasting. The gifts to the Conqueror included handsome boys, girls, tissues, belts of gold, finely wrought arms, and six thousand mounts of great value.

With the return of spring (1400) came the return of hostilities. Timur's

qurultay declared for a further campaign against Georgia. Tahir, son of Sultan Ahmad of Baghdad, was receiving sanctuary with the Georgians. Demands were sent for the prince to be given up to Timur. King Giorgi VII of Georgia sent a decisive refusal, and a fifth invasion was launched by the Tatars. The Georgian infidels resorted to dark gorges in the mountains and fell upon the Tatars from their hiding-places in caverns in the cliff-sides. Timur smoked them out from their retreats, lowering archers in specially woven baskets over the cliff-face until the level of the caverns was reached. Then the Tatars rained arrows into them. If resistance continued, fire-arrows with combustible oil were discharged into the caves. Tiflis, the mountain capital, famous for its hot springs, was taken once more, and occupied by crack troops from Khorasan. Mosques and minarets stood where churches had been, and instead of bells, the muezzin called the faithful to prayer. Many citadels fell also to the Tatars, many feudal lords made their submission. Those who accepted Islam received quarter; those who refused were beheaded.

But King Giorgi evaded capture. He sent Tahir south to seek refuge with the Ottoman Bayazid (to whom the father Sultan Ahmad also fled), while Giorgi himself crossed into the western Caucasus. From there he reopened negotiations with Timur. He agreed to send troops for the Conqueror's army, to pay a heavy tribute, and to protect the Muslims.

NOTE

¹ Daulatshah: *Memoirs of the Poets*, ed. E. G. Browne.

² Ibn Arabshah: *Tamerlane*.

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THE LAST CRUSADE

WHEN Timur had marched west on his Seven Year Campaign in autumn 1399, one of his objects had been to force Egypt to her knees, and to bring under his own command the treasure and trade of this powerful state which had long been the main pillar of Islam.

But by the following summer, 1400, Year of the Dragon, another challenge had presented itself, not from an ancient empire but from the upstart Bayazid, ruler of the Ottoman Turks. The issues involved not merely another Muslim state, another Turkic despot; this time Christendom too trembled, with both hope and fear. It trembled with the fear of inroads into Europe by the Ottoman Turk; and with the hope of securing a Tatar ally against the Turkish enemy.

It had been about noon on Christmas Day, some four years earlier (1396), that Sir James de Helly had ridden post-haste into Paris seeking out the French King; booted and spurred as he was, in the clothes in which he had long ridden, he broke the news that the mighty crusade raised by the princes and popes of Christendom had gone down on the field of Nicopolis, by the lower Danube, and with it the chivalry of France, Burgundy, Hungary, and a dozen other kingdoms.¹

The Christian defeat had come at the hands of the Ottoman Turks, an Islamic people who had been threatening the Byzantine empire for three-quarters of a century. These people, one of the branch of Turks that came to Asia Minor via Central Asia, were related to the Seljuks, whom they had displaced. By the fourteenth century, Turkish emirs ruled over the ten provinces of Anatolia (Rum). One of the emirates in Western Anatolia, whose chief was Othman (Osman or Ottoman), had considerable success in the struggle against Byzantium which then still had a foothold in Asia Minor. In 1326, these Ottomans seized Brusa, in the north-west of the peninsular, and made it their capital. They extended their domination over the neighbouring Turkish emirate of Qarasi, and having firmly established themselves, resumed their attack against Byzantium.

The Byzantine empire had never recovered from the blow struck by the Fourth Crusade, at the beginning of the thirteenth century, when Constantinople had been sacked and occupied by the Latin forces dominated by Venice. After the Greek Palaeologus dynasty recovered their empire from the Latins (A.D. 1261), its strength was still further sapped by

feudal intrigue and struggles. In the fourteenth century the eastern empire had to face aggressive neighbours in Europe as well as civil war at home—a civil war in which both sides used Turkish mercenaries from Anatolia. Byzantium was therefore in no position to offer effective resistance to the Ottoman Turks in the second half of the century when they carried their attack on to the European mainland. In fact, the Byzantine emperor John V Palaeologus (1341-91) acknowledged himself vassal of the Turkish sultan, Murad.

The Turks captured Adrianople (Edirne) and established there a European capital. In 1389, they overcame at Kossovo (Serbia) the stubborn resistance put up by the Serbs and other Slav people, who became Turkish vassals. However, in this battle the victorious Ottoman (Othman) sultan, Murad, was killed by a Serbian patriot. Murad's son Bayazid, called Yilderim the Thunderbolt, became master of Asia Minor and much of the Balkans, after murdering the brother who had fought along with him at Kossovo. A year later the Byzantine emperor, completely surrounded, was left with little more than the capital Constantinople, which was already being invested by Bayazid. In 1390, Bayazid followed up the Kossovo victory by taking to wife a Serbian princess and returning to Asia Minor. He made rapid advance against five other emirates to the south—Kermiyan, Tekkeh, Sarukhan, Aydin, and Mentasha—all of which were annexed in a single campaign. Hamid had already fallen to him as part of a marriage dower. By 1393, the two central emirates of Qizil Ahmidh and Qaraman were added to his dominions. The dispossessed princes turned eastwards for help, towards Timur. Bayazid crossed over from Asia, and the Bulgarians suffered the same fate as the Serbs (1393).

The days of Byzantium were numbered; Constantinople was encircled and all Christendom menaced. Sigismund, King of Hungary, sent an appeal to western Christendom for aid. Bayazid had seized one of the Hungarian vassal states on the Danube, and was threatening his whole kingdom. The moment was not very favourable. The Great Schism, with one Pope in Rome and another in Avignon, continued to drain the vitality of the Latin Church. The Hundred Years' War between England and France had been suspended by a truce, but could at any time be resumed. Waves of pestilence claimed victims from amongst those that the feudal conflicts spared. Richard II of England was barely in control of the factious barons. "Affairs carried on in England, daily growing from bad to worse," commented Froissart. Charles VI of France was intermittently out of control of his own faculties. But both Catholic Pope and Anti-Pope, Boniface IX of Rome and Benedict XIII of Avignon, recommended a

crusade, and the appeals met a vigorous response from France and Burgundy; a more modest response came from England. The Hungarian envoys sent to the west secured promises of help with transport from the merchant princes of Venice, substantial forces from Philip, Duke of Burgundy, and a contingent from England; Charles VI was suffering from one of his relapses of frenzy, but the French nobility promised strong support. An army of ten thousand set out from Dijon across Germany, commanded by John, Count of Nevers; he was the son of the Duke of Burgundy, keen but unqualified, aged twenty-four. Six thousand Germans joined them, and another thousand English under King Richard's half-brother, the Earl of Huntingdon.² At Buda they joined up with King Sigismund, whose forces have been estimated at sixty thousand. Ten thousand had come from Wallachia and some thirteen thousand adventurers had assembled variously from Poland, Bohemia, Italy, and Spain: in all some hundred thousand Christians, a force larger than that which had taken the field against the infidel in any earlier crusade. So confident were they in their strength, that they boasted that if the sky should fall, they could uphold it on their lances.³

Bayazid Yilderim, the Thunderbolt, was laying siege to Constantinople when news reached him of the crusade assembling in Hungary. The siege was suspended and the Ottoman sultan marched north with an army probably exceeding slightly in numbers that of the knights of the Cross. The Crusaders had reached Nicopolis, the main Ottoman stronghold on the Danube, and being without any machines for siege warfare, they settled down outside the walls hoping to starve the city into surrender. The time was occupied with festivities and orgies which did not slacken for fifteen days. Then the Turkish vanguard appeared.

The knights of the West disputed amongst themselves and with the Hungarians for the honour of the first attack upon the infidel. Sigismund urged the French to hold themselves ready for decisive action while the Hungarians, who already had a taste of Turkish methods, made the first contact. But "three centuries of experience had taught the Western knights nothing"⁴. Having slaughtered the Turks captured during their advance, the French knights charged forward on the morning of September 26th, 1396, to open the battle with cries of "For God and St. Denis", "For God and St. George". The Turkish irregular cavalry was scattered. Dismounting before a barricade of stakes, the knights fought on foot uphill, scattering the Turkish infantry behind the stakes. Then, exhausted and in heavy armour, they met the main Ottoman forces over the summit, the forty thousand Sipahis, a standing army of mounted soldiers. The Knights of the Cross were cut to pieces. The contingents on the wings of

Sigismund's army took flight when they saw riderless horses streaming back to them, but the king and his Hungarians advanced in support of the westerners. They were too late. The army was scattered and Sigismund took flight.⁵

Meanwhile Manuel Palaeologus, Byzantine emperor, beleaguered in his capital, had also appealed to the west. He would have preferred to make his pleas in person, but was dissuaded by the lords of Venice who held substantial concessions in Constantinople. These merchant princes had their feet in both camps: while anxious to protect their colonists in the eastern capital and the position at the entrance to the Black Sea, they were also concerned to maintain the guarantees they had received from the Sultan Bayazid, that the privileges enjoyed by Venetian subjects in Asia Minor under former rulers would be respected. In view of the preparations of King Sigismund, however, the Venetians had agreed to equip a fleet for a maritime diversion while the crusading armies attacked along the valley of the Danube. Manuel had also formed, it seems, an alliance with the Genoese of the Aegean and the Knights of Rhodes, and vessels from Rhodes and Lesbos rallied to the fleet already put under sail by the Venetians. But while they were operating their diversion and sailing through the Bosphorus, the rout of the crusading armies had taken place. One of the galleys arrived in the Black Sea in time to receive on board the fugitive Hungarian king Sigismund. He was taken back through the straits of the Hellespont, past the jeering Turks on the mainland. He reached home by way of the Aegean and the Adriatic.

After the victory, Bayazid Yilderim reviewed the battlefield. When he saw the number of his own losses, he was incensed, and ordered the prisoners to be killed, sparing only those for whom a good ransom could be expected. "Many excellent knights and squires of France and other nations were now brought forth in their shirts one after another before Bayazid, who eyed them a little as they were led on, and as he made a signal they were instantly cut to pieces" by men waiting for them with drawn swords.⁶

Amongst those spared were the young Count de Nevers, son of the Duke of Burgundy, Lord Boucicaut, Marshal of France, and Philip Count of Artois, Constable of France. Sir James de Helly was also spared and chosen to take the news to the west and to arrange for the ransoms. The Christian princes were redeemed for a sum of two hundred thousand gold florins, paid in the main by the Duke of Burgundy and King Sigismund. The money was advanced by the magnates of Venice and Genoa and their banking houses on the islands and mainland of the Levant.

The reimbursement was met by taxation imposed on the peoples of Christendom. But not all the prisoners survived the captivity. Philip Count of Artois died and was buried at a monastery in Constantinople. Clavijo, the Castilian ambassador, visited the tomb on his outward journey to Samarqand.

Another of the Christian survivors was a fifteen-year-old squire from Bavaria, Johannes Schiltberger. His lord had been killed at Nicopolis, but he was taken captive. When the order came for the execution of the prisoners, "I was one of three bound with the same cord, and was taken by him who captured us . . . each was ordered to kill his own prisoners, and for those that did not wish to do so the king appointed others in their place. Then they took my companions and cut off their heads, and when it came to my turn, the king's son saw me and ordered that I should be left alive, and I was taken with other boys, because none under twenty years of age were killed."⁷

The pursuing Turks chased the remnants of the crusading army as far as Styria, and for a time, in 1397, the Turks occupied Athens. They did not then proceed further into Europe, although "in the pride of victory Bayazid threatened that he would besiege Buda, that he would subdue the adjacent countries of Germany and Italy; and that he would feed his horse with a bushel of oats on the altar of St. Peter at Rome. His progress was checked by a long and painful fit of the gout."⁸

Gout or no, Bayazid the Thunderbolt turned his attention east once more to the siege of Constantinople. The Byzantine position seemed hopeless. Emperor Manuel, anticipating the time when he would be forced out of his capital, offered the city to the Venetians. The Venetians found it discreet to refuse, in view of the concessions they held in the territories of the Ottoman Sultan. They took the precaution, however, of sending four galleys to protect their colonists. The Genoese, who had a strong base in Pera (Galata, a suburb of Constantinople on the east bank of the Golden Horn), did likewise. Manuel's envoys were again appealing to western Christendom, and visiting the courts of Europe, but this time, although the danger from the infidel was so much greater, the response was negligible. Only the King of France, who had become suzerain of Genoa (1396-1409), and was therefore under an obligation to the Genoese colony at Pera, despatched Marshal Boucicaut, one of the survivors of Nicopolis, with a force of a thousand or so men. They skirmished around Constantinople, but received no food or pay. Finding little opportunity for pillage, they sailed back west again. The Emperor Manuel of Byzantium went with them (December 1399).

Thus it was that, at the end of the fourteenth century, the western courts

received a distinguished visitor. Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus had come to plead the cause of Greek Christianity in person. His wretched appearance little became the heir of the Caesars, so the Duke of Milan fitted him out in a manner more in keeping with his position. Pope Boniface of Rome was prevailed upon to preach the cause of a Holy War, but was not in fact much interested in the fate of the Eastern Church. Manuel came over to England, where he was handsomely entertained for two months in London by Henry IV, who had just usurped the throne and disposed of his cousin Richard; that was all. From France, Manuel received hospitality for two years; but no aid.

It was in the east that prospects seemed brightest. Bayazid the Thunderbolt had already crossed Timur's path. This Turk had been recognized as Sultan of Rum by Timur's enemy, Barquq of Egypt. But Bayazid had not been content with carving for himself dominions on the periphery of Islam, and from the impoverished kingdoms of Europe. Even before Nicopolis he had advanced east across Anatolia towards Armenia and the provinces owing allegiance to Timur. Bayazid had extended his dominion over the Qaraman province, then over Qaysariyah, Tuqat, and Sivas. At the beginning of the fifteenth century he threatened Armenia and Timur's ally, Prince Taharten, who was responsible for the defence of the western marches.

The dispossessed Seljuk and Turkish emirs, dethroned by Bayazid, fled to the court of Timur, hoping one day to be restored to their kingdoms through the might of the Conqueror. They were given every encouragement in this belief.

If Timur harboured at his court the dispossessed princes of Rum, Bayazid had already flouted Timur's authority by giving sanctuary and support to Timur's inveterate enemies: Sultan Ahmad Jalayir of Baghdad; his son Tahir who had recently had refuge in Georgia; and the Black Sheep Turkoman chief Qara Yusuf. During the Three Years' Campaign, in 1387, Timur had attacked the main strongholds of the Black Sheep Turkomans in Armenia, but the Turkoman tribes had re-emerged from the mountain gorges after his departure. When Timur drove them out once more in the Five Years' Campaign, they made common cause with Sultan Ahmad Jalayir who had been driven from Baghdad (1393). Together with the Egyptian forces, they had helped to re-establish him. Sultan Ahmad maintained himself in Baghdad despite the defection of some of his generals and the threats of Prince Miranshah, whom Timur had installed as ruler of the Hulagid kingdom. While receiving Egyptian protection, Ahmad had been in touch with the Ottoman Sultan Bayazid, requesting support against Timur. Bayazid had replied favourably to

Ahmad, saying that on account of Timur's advances from the east, he himself had already concluded a treaty with the Byzantine emperor and had directed his attention to Asia Minor. He, Bayazid, had advanced to Tuqat with a view to halting the hordes of Timur. Bayazid had replied in similar terms to a communication from Shah Mansur, complaining of the depredations of Timur. The Ottoman sultan said he was prepared to raise the siege of Constantinople to put a stop to Timur.⁹

Timur, closely informed on these matters, and encouraged by the former rulers of Asia Minor, did not remain silent. A brisk correspondence was undertaken between Tatar and Turk. Timur demanded that Bayazid give no support to Qara Yusuf or to Sultan Ahmad, and told him to stop his aggressions. Only the fact that Bayazid was conducting a war against the infidel (Christian Europe) had prevented Timur from punishing him as he deserved, for he feared that conflict between them would cause joy to the unbeliever and chagrin to the Muslims. Bayazid was warned not to put his ambitious foot outside the limits of his power. He was only an ant, and should not attempt war with an elephant. A little princeling like Bayazid should not try to draw swords with the Conqueror. Bayazid's blustering would achieve nothing; everyone knew that the Turk had no sense. "O ravening dog named Timur", began Bayazid's reply, and dared him to advance.

At this period the Lame Conqueror was being solicited in very different terms by the west. In the days of the Mongol Il-khans, the Christians had hoped to gain an ally in the Mongol conquerors of Persia for their crusades against Egypt, the champion of Islam. Three Catholic sees had been created; one for work amongst the Golden Horde, one for China, and a third see had been created (1318), based on Sultaniya, for work in the Hulagid empire. The Christian hopes had not been realized: the west was too divided against itself to take advantage of the offers made by the Il-khan. Conversions, moreover, were few, for by that time the Il-khans themselves had adopted the Muslim faith. Once again, at the end of the fourteenth century, it seemed to Christendom that a possible ally had emerged from the east who might fight in their stead against the infidel Ottoman Turks. Certain dispositions were made.

In 1398 the Bishop of Nakhchivan (Azarbayjan) was appointed, by order of Pope Boniface IX, "Archbishop of the East and Ethiopia", the see based on Sultaniya in Timur's territories. This bishop, a Dominican friar, became Archbishop John II of Sultaniya. The personal identity of this John is somewhat in doubt. One source declares that he was a certain John Greenlaw, a Franciscan, appointed to the See by Pope Boniface in October 1400.¹⁰ Another source suggests that he was French. However,

contemporary testimony supports those ecclesiastical texts which affirm that John II was a Dominican, and one Latin chronicle calls him an Italian.¹¹ The first Archbishop appointed to this see had been an Italian Dominican, and the archbishop John's subsequent relations with Venice and Genoa, as well as with the French court, make feasible the supposition that he was Italian.

At all events, the fifteenth century opened with new missions going east charged with messages of goodwill, and raising the question of war against the common enemy Bayazid. The missions were addressed to an old chess-playing Tatar with a splendid record of Christian slaughter in Saray and Tana and the mountains of Georgia.

Before leaving Constantinople, Manuel had come to terms with his nephew John and had appointed him regent of the capital during his absence. John, too, had turned to the Eastern Conqueror for help. Through the intermediary of the Dominican fathers Francis and Sandron (Alexander), and the Christian emperor Manuel of Trebizond, both Regent John and the governor of Pera had described their distress; they urged Timur to enter the field against the Turk. They declared themselves ready to become vassals of Timur, transferring to him the tribute formerly paid to Bayazid. They promised him aid against the enemy in the form of men and galleys. They would, they vowed, be capable of preventing Turkish troops from the European mainland from reaching Asia Minor and providing Bayazid with reinforcements.

At the same time, John found it prudent to conduct additional negotiations, on the one hand with Bayazid himself, bargaining for concessions should John accept Turkish suzerainty; and on the other, with the French king, for the sale of the Byzantine throne in return for an annuity and a safe castle in France.¹²

As it happened, Timur did not need much encouragement either from Christian quarters, or from the dethroned Anatolian emirs at his court, to take the field against the Ottoman Turk. While the Tatar expeditions had been exterminating the rebels of Georgia in the winter 1399-1400, Bayazid had ordered his son Prince Sulayman to conduct an expedition into Armenia, profiting from the base of Sivas which he had seized some years previously. Prince Taharten, Timur's ally, was forced to change his allegiance, and important centres in the upper Euphrates valley like Malatiah and Kamakh were to be seized. Taharten resisted the surrender of Kamakh, but the city fell to the Turks. Prince Tarharten may have been indifferent as to whether he paid his tribute to Tatar or to Turk, but when his treasure and his harem were seized by the Ottomans, he took his plaint to Timur.

By summer (1400), despite the rigours of the Georgian campaign, Timur was ready. Old Queen Saray-Mulk and the dispensable members of his household had been despatched to Sultaniya. Riding rapidly westward at the head of his hordes, he was joined by Prince Taharten and the troops of Erzerum and Arzinjan.

Bayazid, "the Turk with no sense", was still on the European mainland, far to the west. The Tatar forces drove rapidly towards Sivas, which was one of the important strongholds of the Anatolian marches, and a merchant centre for Syria, Mesopotamia, and Anatolia. It was surrounded by strong walls of stone, not earth, as well as a water-filled moat.

The Turkish forces under Prince Sulayman, despite some successful skirmishing, thought it prudent to withdraw and to secure reinforcements from Brusa, as the Tatar hordes were reported to be in great strength. The defence of Sivas was left in the hands of the governor Mustafa. The garrison, including four thousand Sipahi cavalry, prepared for stubborn resistance. The siege began early in August 1400. Timur ordered platforms to be erected around the walls, from which flame- and stone-throwing machines could penetrate the city. Battering rams were set up, and sapping operations began to undermine those ramparts where there was no moat. Eight thousand prisoners laboured in support of the Tatar sappers. After three weeks of mining and burning, breaches appeared in the walls, towers collapsed, and the city elders came out to Timur to plead for quarter. Quarter was conceded to the Muslims, conditional upon a ransom. Armenians and other Christians were to be taken captive. The greater part of the Sipahi cavalry that had offered vigorous resistance were Armenians. Timur ordered that they were to be divided amongst the tumans of his army and buried alive in pits that were dug for this purpose. Timur fulfilled his promise, so they said, that no blood should be spilt. Some four thousand Armenian Sipahis perished this way.

Subsequent western and Armenian accounts gave horrible details of the treatment of Christians by Timur, "the dragon whose breath was mortal." With their heads tied between their thighs by rope, Christians were tossed into the moats. Lepers were strangled. Thomas of Metsope, the Armenian, wrote that children were gathered in the plain of Sivas and trampled to death under the hoofs of the cavalry. Schiltberger recorded that Sivas yielded up no fewer than nine thousand virgins among the captives.

The Turkish reinforcements, under Prince Sulayman, arrived too late. The city was in ruins, the Tatars departed. The line of frontier posts giving access to Anatolia now succumbed to Timur, and Malatiah opened its gates to him. Timur had seized command of the Anatolian

approaches and at the same time he had driven a wedge between the two Islamic powers, Ottoman and Egyptian. His advance was closing the corridor between the two empires so rapidly that Sultan Ahmad Jalayir took flight once more from Baghdad with Qara Yusuf, the Black Sheep Turkoman. Fearing that their line of retreat would soon be completely cut, they took refuge in Anatolia with the Ottoman Turks. The wives of Qara Yusuf, and a daughter and sister of Sultan Ahmad, fell into Timur's hands. The princes eluded him still. Qara Osman, Emir of Amid and son of a dethroned prince of Sivas, was made governor of Malatiah and responsible for the frontier posts facing southern Rum.

These were preliminary skirmishes only, however, with the Ottoman Turk. Timur himself remarked that he had intended only to twist Sultan Bayazid's ears.¹³ The main enemy, Egypt, was still to be tackled.

NOTES

¹ J. Froissart: *Chronicles of England, France and Spain*.

² S. Runciman: *History of the Crusades*.

³ A. S. Atiya: *Crusade of Nicopolis*, 1934.

⁴ S. Runciman: *A History of the Crusades*.

⁵ A. S. Atiya: *Crusade of Nicopolis*, 1934.

⁶ J. Froissart: *Chronicles*.

⁷ Schiltberger: *Bondage*.

⁸ Gibbon: *Decline and Fall*.

⁹ Firidun Bey: *Munsha'at* (state papers), 1574, and E. G. Browne: *Literary History of Persia*, Vol. III.

¹⁰ *Annales Minorum*, pub. Rome, 1734, and H. Ellis: *Original Letters*.

¹¹ *Chronographia regnum Francorum*, 1403.

¹² G. Ostrogorsky: *History of the Byzantine State*.

¹³ Ibn Taghri Birdi: *History of Egypt*.

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SYRIA AND THE MAMLUKS: THE FALL OF DAMASCUS

1400 (Year of the Dragon)—1401 (Year of the Snake)

ALTHOUGH Timur's choice of targets seemed to lie between the Ottoman Turk and the Mamluk Sultan of Egypt, he had already determined to attack the latter. The Egyptian empire, stretching from the Nile through Syria to Asia Minor, controlled the trade and artisan depots of Cairo and Damascus, the main centres of commerce with India, the pilgrim route to Mecca and Medina, and the Moslem shrines in Jerusalem. Egypt was the greatest of the Muslim powers. Since the time of Sultan Salah-al-din (Saladin) in the twelfth century, she had led the struggle of Islam against the Crusaders of the West. Salah-al-din had driven the Franks almost completely from the Syrian provinces, and had united these with Egypt.

The Mamluks, "the possessed", were slaves originally purchased to form the bodyguard of the sultans. They came in the main from the Qipchaq steppes, and formed a large part of the trade between the Volga regions and the Levant. These nomads, such skilled archers, so fleet on horseback, were trained into formidable troops. Set free by the ruling sultan, they developed into a military oligarchy and constituted the chief support of the sultan's rule. Eventually they replaced the dynasty of Salah-al-din (Ayyubids) with sultans from their own ranks. Each sultan was supported by a trusted corps of Mamluks whom he himself had purchased, trained, liberated, and showered with privileges.

Towards the end of the thirteenth century, the outstanding Mamluk, Sultan Baybars (a Qipchaq Turk by origin), and his successors drove the Crusaders finally from Syria. It was Sultan Baybars and the Mamluk army which had been able to halt the advance of the Mongols westward towards Syria and the Mediterranean seaboard. The Mongols, in fact, met their first serious defeat in 1260 at the hands of the Mamluks, and the Il-khan empire was contained along the east bank of the Euphrates. Hulagu the Il-khan was away at the time disputing the Azarbayjan provinces with the Golden Horde; and it became the policy of the Mamluks to encourage friction between the two Mongol empires. Important embassies were exchanged between Baybars and Berke Khan of the Horde.

Egypt dominated the trade with India and drew from it vast revenues.

The gifts sent to impress the Golden Horde bore witness to the wealth of the Mamluk Sultans. On one occasion Baybars included amongst his gifts: Arab race-horses and Nubian camels; black slaves, and kitchen slaves; Egyptian donkeys; an elephant; a giraffe; vessels from China, vestments from Alexandria, Venetian fabrics, and other tissues from the Levant; prayer mats and cushions; fur rugs; figured swords, canes with gold knobs, lanterns, torches, mechanical objects in cases, saddles from Khwarazm, harnesses encrusted with gold and silver, cases of arrows, pikes and javelins, constructions for launching cannon-balls, and flame-throwing machines. The Mamluks continued to be masters of the Red Sea despite the Genoese efforts to displace them.

Sultan Baybars had received in Cairo a kinsman of the Caliph who had been killed when Baghdad had fallen to the Hulagids, and from that time on a puppet Caliph in Cairo legitimized the domination of the Mamluks. The rule of a number of capable sultans was succeeded in the thirteen-forties by a series of dynastic quarrels which, however, were limited mainly to the Mamluk oligarchy.

In 1382, Barquq, a Circassian slave, became Mamluk Sultan of Egypt and Syria. It was to Barquq that Sultan Ahmad had first fled. It was Barquq who had not only rejected the offers of commercial relations made by Timur, but had murdered one and imprisoned another of Timur's envoys. When Timur learned that Barquq had passed from this perishable world, he knew also that the rivalries weakening the court in Cairo would be his hidden allies in the enemy ranks.

The ten-year-old Faraj had needed help to establish himself as Sultan of Egypt. He appealed to the Ottoman ruler Bayazid, and was sent a small expeditionary force which included the young Bavarian Schiltberger, one of the prisoners from Nicopolis. "One of his (Faraj's) dependants went to war with him for the kingdom . . . so he (Bayazid) sent twenty thousand men to help him, in which expedition I was also. Thus (Faraj) expelled his rival, and became a powerful king . . . Afterwards we again returned to our Lord Bayazid." Bayazid recompensed himself for this help by seizing the north Syrian frontier station of Malatiah, only to lose it immediately to Timur.

From Malatiah, commanding the approaches to Syria and to Asia Minor, Timur sent Faraj a letter: The Sultan your father committed many crimes against us, murdered our ambassadors, imprisoned Atilmish one of our officers. Now your father is facing the Divine Tribunal. It is not surprising that a Circassian slave, without a drop of royal blood in his veins, should behave thus. There was nothing of the king in him. You are advised to take better care of yourself and the life of your subjects. Strike

money in our name and have us mentioned in the Friday sermon. Send back Atilmish our envoy, or suffer the consequences to Syria and perhaps also to Egypt. If you do not, you will be responsible for the blood of the Muslims. The ambassador bearing this missive was seized by Sudun, viceroy of Damascus, and cut in half at the waist.

A short time after the report of the fall of Sivas had reached the Egyptian sultan in Cairo, came ambassadors from Bayazid. He pressed strongly for an alliance between Egypt and himself, to combat the tyrant Timur the Lame, so that Islam and the Muslims might no longer be troubled by him.

This proposal was turned down by the emirs of Faraj, on the grounds that Bayazid himself had profited from the death of Barquq to seize the town of Malatiyah. "He is no friend of ours, let him defend his own land. We will defend ours and our subjects."

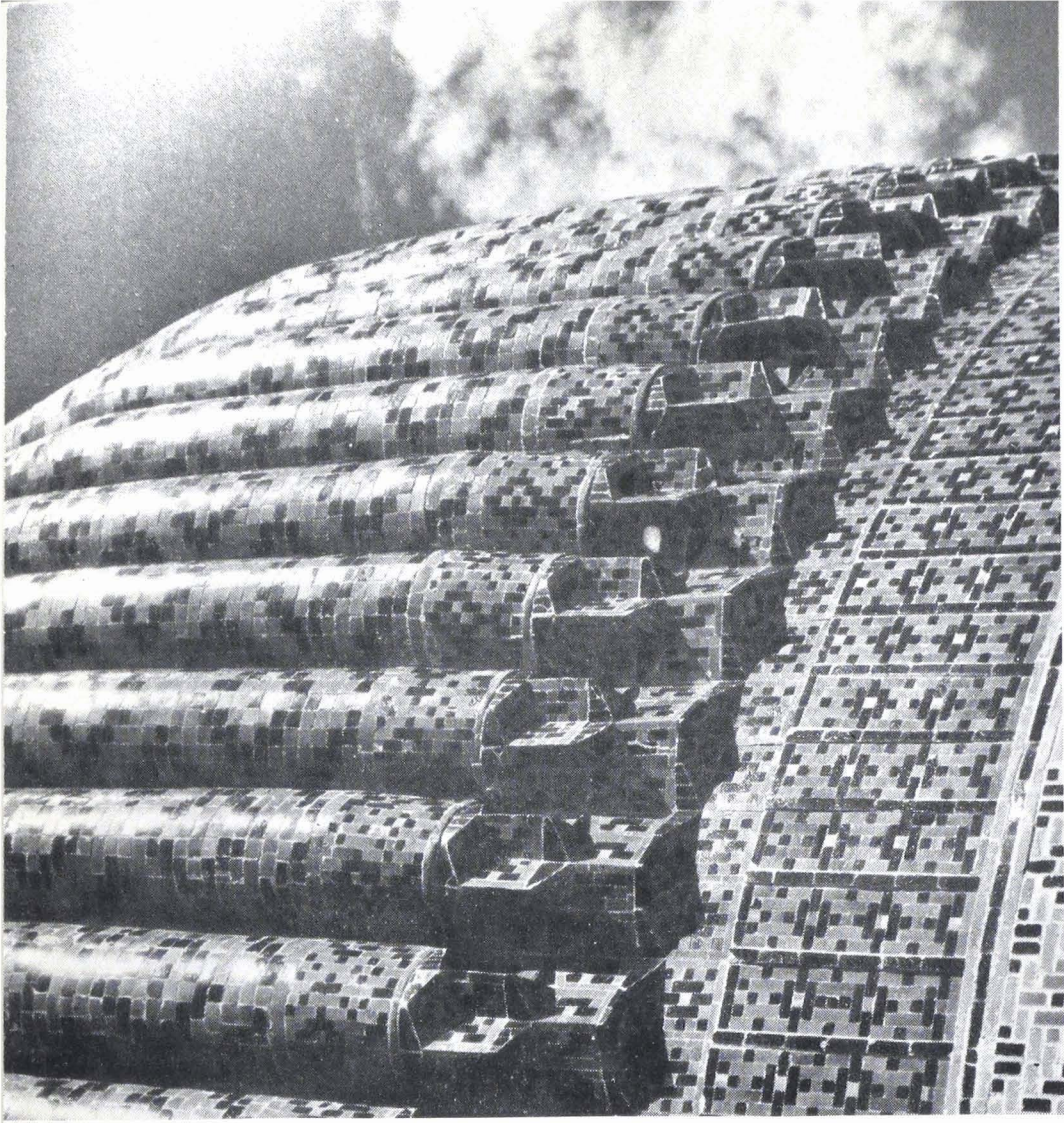
Timur turned the direction of his attack against Syria. According to the court chronicles, his emirs were not keen. Many of the troops had enjoyed little rest since the Indian campaign. They had marched from Delhi to Asia Minor practically within the year; there had since been campaigning in the hard terrain of Georgia, against the Turkish strongholds of Sivas, and Malatiyah, and elsewhere. The calibre of the Mamluk warrior, and the quality of the swords tempered by the craftsmen of Damascus, were well known. Their cities were rich, substantially built and well prepared for siege; the surrounding country was populous and able to supply levies of troops and provisions. Timur answered that victory depended on the will of God and not on the quantity of the equipment, or the number of soldiers. He counted also on the rivalries that weakened the court of Cairo. The army was made ready.

The first fortress to fall was Bahasna, reputed to be impregnable. During the siege operations, one of the huge stones discharged by the defenders landed by the tent of the Conqueror and rolled inside. Timur's siege machines were then trained on the place from which the rock had been discharged, and no quarter was given until the walls of the citadel were destroyed.

Aleppo, to the south, was directly menaced. The governor of the city on the one hand appealed to Sultan Faraj for help; and on the other mobilized the forces of Syria to meet the invader. Aleppo was the trade centre second only in importance to Damascus, sometimes called "little India" because of the quantity of valuable Indian produce available in its bazaars. The Syrian emirs assembled their troops from Hama and Homs, from Antioch and Baalbek, Acre and Tripoli; from Jerusalem and Gaza, —Syrian and tribesmen, infantry and horsemen. The troops were well

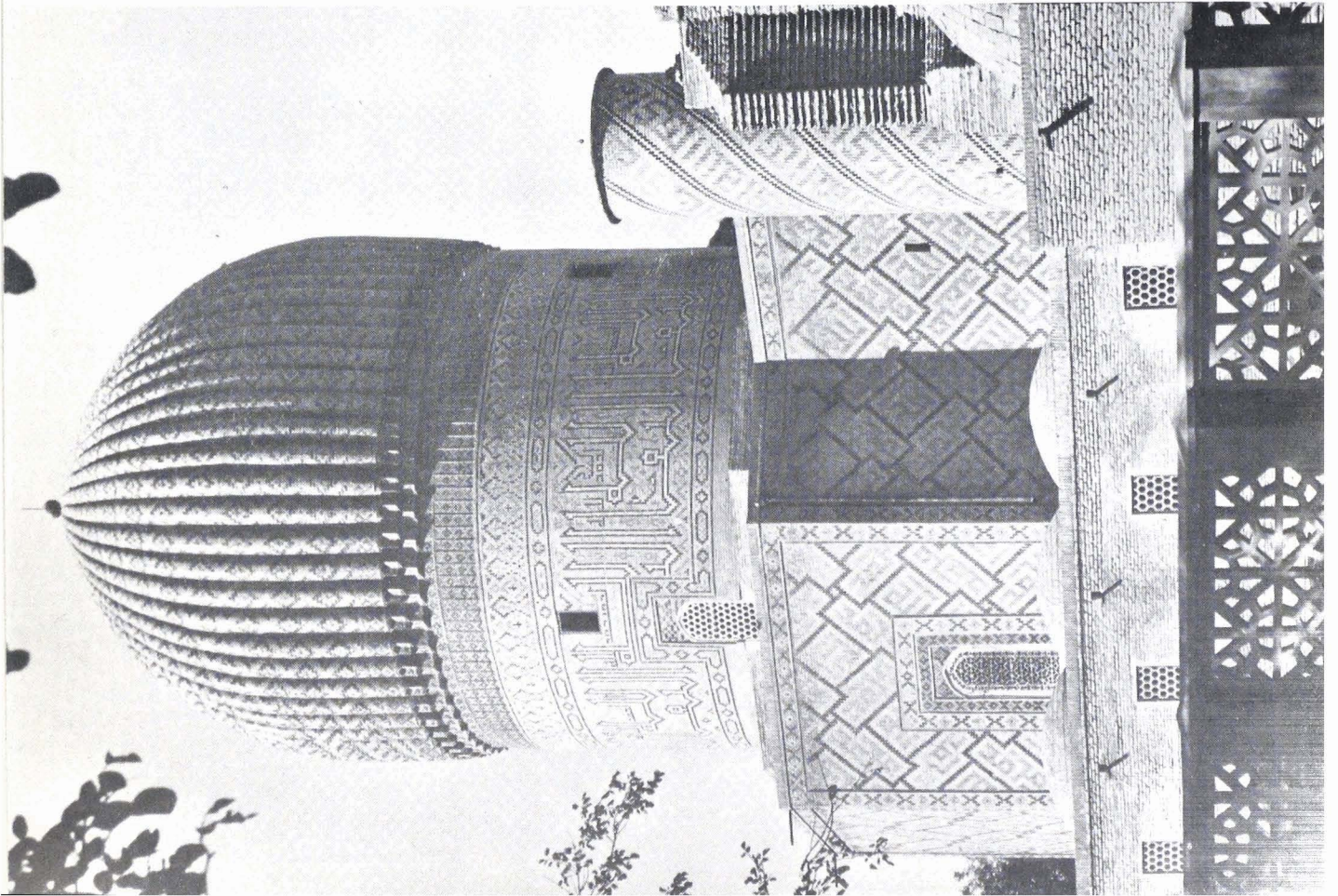


Attack on mountain strongholds. From a manuscript of the Zafar-nama of Sharaf



Detail from the cupola.

The Gur-Emir Mausoleum, Samarqand, built by Timur for his grandson and heir-elect, Muhammad-Sultan. It contains the tombs of Timur, the Shaykh Baraka, Muhammad-Sultan, Shahrukh and Ulugh-beg.



mounted and finely equipped. Governors of the different provinces and chiefs of the army gathered at Aleppo to hold their council of war. They mingled "feeble speech with weighty, and noble counsel with base". Damurdash, Governor of Aleppo, later reputed to be in the service of the Conqueror, counselled conciliation. "A number of Aleppans tell me now that Damurdash did write to Tamerlane and held back from the battle; God knows whether this was so or not."¹ It was also believed that it was Timur's crafty design to encourage dissension among the enemy. Others counselled a strong defence of the city while a combined attack of Timur's enemies—Arabs, Kurds, Turkomans—was mounted to take the Tatar in the rear. "Our cities are not built with mud or brick, but solid and impenetrable rock. Our bows are from Damascus, our lances from Arabia, our shields made in Aleppo. We have on the registers of this realm sixty thousand villages: we need but one or two from each village to supply us with a whole army. These Tatars have lodging of cord and canvas . . ." ²

Timur drove south by forced marches, making six or seven leagues a day. Then he advanced slowly, making only half a league daily, digging trenches round the army at each encampment and taking extreme precautions.

On the first day after Timur's arrival before Aleppo with his army there were indecisive skirmishes with the Syrians. On the next day the Tatars sent out another skirmishing party but failed to draw the enemy. The Syrians concluded that these tactics, following the cautious advance, were dictated by weakness. They abandoned their decision to sustain a siege within the walls of the city, opened the gates, and assembled their army on the plain, with the unmounted people of Aleppo in front. The next day the Tatar hordes were also ranged for battle, the Right Wing under the command of the Conqueror's sons Miranshah and Shahrukh, supported by Emir Sulayman and other emirs. Abu-Bakr, son of Miranshah, led their advance guard. Sultan Mahmud-Khan, supported by Emir Jahan Shah, was in command of the Left, the advance guard being commanded by Sultan-Husayn, Timur's grandson. Timur commanded the centre. The war elephants, spoils of the Indian campaign, were set in front, brilliantly caparisoned, their turrets filled with archers and flame-throwers. A tuman of the finest cavalry was waiting in reserve for the pursuit of the enemy at the first sign of flight. Timur did not wish to repeat the weaknesses of the past, when his enemies were defeated but escaped capture.

The armies of "Islam and the Sultan (of Egypt)" were also drawn up in perfect order: equipment complete, excellent mounts, straight spears, and

splendid banners. And nothing was wanting to those stalwart soldiers but a particle of divine help.³

Both sides raised their cry to heaven: "Allah Akbar"—God is Almighty. Great drums and trumpets sounded the signal for combat to be joined (November, 1400).

In the course of the battle one young Syrian showed such valour "as will perhaps be recalled until judgement day". He continued fighting, despite the fact that his head alone had received over thirty sabre and other strokes, and his body bore many other wounds. He fell amongst the slain, but was later recovered by the Tatars and carried before Timur. The Conqueror " marvelled extremely at his bravery and endurance, and, it is said, ordered that he be given medical treatment".⁴

The necessary particle of divine help was withheld from the Syrians. Their lines broke before the war elephants and the Tatar troops, who went over them like a razor over hair, and ran like locusts over a green crop. Damurdash and the other army chiefs took flight into the city. Their armies, seeing the example of the leaders, dispersed. Some took the road to Damascus, and many were killed in their flight. Others turned towards the open gate of the city and tried to re-enter.

According to the eye-witness account of Nizam al-din, the Syrians in their flight hurled themselves upon the gate with one rush, crowding and trampling each other down, until the gateway was blocked and none could enter. A "countless number", who were on foot, perished under the horses' hoofs, "for the citizens had gone out from the city to fight Timur the lame, even the women and boys". To escape the sabres of the Tatars the Syrians threw themselves into the surrounding moat, one on top of the other. The moat was soon heaped high with men and horses. The Tatars ran through three or four men at a time with their pikes. The pile of dead reached to the top of the wall, and the living made their way over the wall into the city by the ramp of the dead. Here, a horse was lying on a man. There, a man across a horse, covered in blood and mud. One was pierced with an arrow, another had his head split open. A mail-clad figure trailed behind him a head smashed with a mace. A warrior had fallen headless, dagger still in hand. Aleppo stank with corpses.

The foreign slaves in the city broke down the Antioch Gate and streamed out, making for Damascus and the south. The Syrian emirs, led by Damurdash, surrendered the city; Damurdash was well received. After a brief resistance the citadel also surrendered. With it Timur gained the storehouse, the treasury containing the wealth amassed by several generations of rulers, and the deposits of rich citizens placed there for

safe keeping. Sudun, the viceroy, was made prisoner. The city was made open for three days of pillage.

Then, says the Syrian account of Ibn Taghri Birdi, whose father was one of the chief officers of Faraj, "they committed the shameful deeds to which they were accustomed: virgins were violated without concealment; gentlewomen were outraged without any restraint or modesty; a Tatar would seize a woman and ravage her in the great mosque or one of the smaller mosques in sight of the vast multitude of his companions and the people of the city; her father and brother and husband would see her plight and be unable to defend her because of their lack of means to do so and because they were distracted by tortures and torments which they themselves were suffering; the Tatar would then leave the woman and another go to her, her body still uncovered." According to Mignanelli the Jewish population gathered in the synagogue were slaughtered and their maidens defiled. Minarets of skulls were built, as a warning to others. Taghri Birdi said that the heads of twenty thousand Muslims were built into mounds ten cubits high and twenty in circumference, with the heads protruding outwards.

The Syrian camp had also been seized, with the pavilion of the governor, the tents, furnishings, arms, and a quantity of fine mounts. The Tatar troops took their share of the spoils. Timur stored the main part of his spoils and the heavy goods of the baggage train in the citadel, and selected eight emirs to guard it. The Sahib Qiran himself stayed in the citadel for two days, and, it is said, enjoyed the view.

He summoned to him the Muslim leaders, as was his habit, and tormented them with provocative theological discussion, especially concerning the Sunni and Shi-a sectarian controversies. Timur accused the people of Aleppo and Damascus of following the false Sunni doctrine, which greatly confused the divines who believed that Timur was a Sunni supporter. "And the Muslims were in perplexity and their heads were being cut off . . ." ⁵ To the question: "Who is the martyr who will go to Paradise, the Muslims fallen in the service of Timur, or in the defence of Aleppo?", one qadi gave the judicious reply: "He who fights that the Word of God be supreme is a martyr." The answer pleased Timur; when the qadis asked him to spare the people of Aleppo, he "granted safety to all, and swore to them to that effect, so that some received merciful treatment in comparison with others." ⁶

The eye-witness of the assault on Aleppo was Maulana Nizam al-din, who came from Sham, a suburb of Tabriz. This venerable writer had been in Baghdad at the time of the Tatar attack on that city in 1393, and had been one of the first to go out to pay homage to the Conqueror.

The Maulana was passing through Aleppo in 1400, but had been arrested by the Syrians, who no doubt suspected him of complicity with the enemy. From the roof of a house facing the citadel gate, he watched the assault on the city and on the fortress. Afterwards he was taken and presented to Timur, who received with cordiality the scholar who had a reputation as a writer of most elegant Persian. The following year Nizam al-din Shami was summoned by the Conqueror to his winter quarters in the Qarabagh, and was asked to write a history of Timur's victories.

According to Mignanelli the Syrian emirs were brought for questioning. Timur humiliated them by comparing these Mamluks, slaves, with his own emirs of the blood royal. He set them menial tasks, carrying wheat, flour, straw, and other goods for the army: "Do this, you peasants! you are good for nothing else!"

Timur remained at Aleppo a month, and then left the city "empty of every human being, reduced to ruins; the muezzin's call and the prayer services were no longer heard. There was nought there but a desert waste darkened by fire, a lonely solitude where only the owl and the vulture took refuge."⁷

At Damascus further south, refugees from Aleppo arrived "in wretched state and foul semblance", giving warning of the approaching peril. To many of the citizens the Tatar army seemed like the nightmare advance of hordes pouring from the jungles of hell: there were men of Turan, warriors of Iran, leopards of Turkestan, tigers of Balkhshan, hawks of Dasht and Khata, Mongol vultures, Jat eagles, vipers of Khojand, basilisks of Andakan, reptiles of Khwarazm, wild beasts of Jurjan, eagles of Zaghanian and hounds of Hisar Shadman, horsemen of Fars, lions of Khorasan, and hyenas of Ghildu, lions of Mazandaran, wild beasts of the mountains, crocodiles of Rystamdar and Talqan, vipers of the tribe of Ghuzz and Kerman, wolves of Isfahan, wolves of Raiff and Ghazni and Hamadan, elephants of Hindustan and Sind and Multan, rams of the province of Lur, bulls of the high mountains of Ghor, scorpions of Shahrison and serpents of Askar Makram and Jandisabur. To these were added hyena-cubs of slaves and whelps of Turkomans and rabble and followers and ravening dogs of base Arabs, and gnats of Persians, and crowds of idolators and profane Magi . . . in a word, he was a false prophet, and with him Gog and Magog and barren rushing winds. . . .

Thus Arabshah, who was a boy of twelve when the hordes of Timur attacked his native city Damascus, remembered the Tatar armies.

The city of Hama, on Timur's road south, hastened to submit and the keys of the treasury were handed over. Several weeks were spent in the environs, resting the troops and erecting agreeable lodgings for the court

and a fine council chamber for the Divan. Again the emirs would have preferred to delay the campaign, pointing out the winter pastures that were available on the maritime flanks of Mount Lebanon. But Timur argued that it was necessary to strike the enemy before he had time to recover.

The armies continued south. Homs surrendered, and brought its ransom. Baalbek surrendered, and in addition to collecting the harvest of fruits, especially cherries, vegetable and other goods that this city provided, the Tatars had time to admire the terraces and walls cut from immense stones, for which the city was famed. From here the Tatar horsemen were sent to the Mediterranean coast to ravage Sidon and Beirut.

It was mid-winter, and the air of Baalbek was cold, so Timur continued the march at the beginning of the new year (1401). On the way he visited the holy shrine of Noah. Then he moved south again, to Damascus.

Damascus was the first city of Syria. It was two or three days' ride from the Mediterranean, and received caravans from Baghdad and the Persian Gulf, and from the Khorasan highway. It received pilgrims en route for Mecca. The craftsmen in tempered steel, glassware, silk and other textiles, were renowned. Damascus had been the capital of the Caliphs during the first century of Islam, before the transfer to Baghdad. The Omayyad Cathedral Mosque, with its splendid lead dome and minarets, was reputed to be the finest in Islam—according to Ibn Battuta, “matchless and unequalled”.

In Cairo the reports of the fall of Aleppo had not been credited; the bearer of the news had been arrested. Two emirs set out from Cairo, however, on dromedaries to investigate the report. Only after long delays did Faraj decide to offer resistance. He came north with his army to Gaza. The Governor of Damascus proposed to strengthen the fortifications of the city, leaving the main army with the sultan in Gaza, so that there would be two striking forces against Timur. The Mamluk emirs rejected this council, however, and the army moved north to camp outside Damascus.

The councils of the Syrians and Egyptians were still discordant. “Some said ‘Fly from the evil which cannot be overcome’, and arranged their affairs and fled. Others said, ‘The Governors of Aleppo were few and lacked prudence.’ Some besides nursed treachery; lost their heads; but the armies of Egypt are large and excellently equipped. And the affairs of men remained in discord, confusion, division, conflict and altercation. Some betook themselves to the Holy Land, some to Egypt; others clung

to the edges of inaccessible rocks; others fortified themselves in hidden and distant places . . .”⁸

Ibn Taghri Birdi undertook to organize the affairs of the Damascenes. He said they were well armed and provisioned, and determined to fight Timur “until they should all perish”. His offer and his advice were both rejected. Offers of help by sea came also from the rulers of Cyprus and Famagusta. No attention was paid to them. All the energies of the court were consumed by their rivalries.

However, the city was fortified, catapults were mounted on the citadel, and naphtha-throwers on the city walls. The councils received by Faraj were not entirely without issue. An assassin in the garb of a darvish, with two young assistants, was sent into the Tatar camp and managed to gain access to the imperial tents. There they drew suspicion on themselves and when searched, were found to have poisoned daggers concealed in their boots. The false monk was killed with his own dagger. The assistants had ears and noses lopped off and were then sent back to the Mamluk sultan. The governor and army chiefs taken prisoners at Aleppo were executed in reprisal.

Timur came within striking distance of Damascus and camped, erecting ramparts as high as a man round the troops. Another messenger with peace offers went from Timur to Faraj: Deliver our governor Atilmish. Declare your submission by having my name in the Friday prayers. Strike money in my name. Then will I spare you. Otherwise ruin faces your subjects and your empire. You know that it is only jealousy and ambition which inspire you to take up the sword against me. This noise and fuss of yours is not so much to acquire wealth as to gain honour and renown. After all, half a loaf of bread suffices to nourish a man. There are two roads, peace or war. Make your choice.

The Mamluk emirs believed, many of them, that Timur’s offer was sincere. They counselled acceptance of the overtures, not because of their military weakness, but because of the weaknesses caused by their own factions.

This time the envoys were received by Faraj with ceremony, and a display of fireworks and greek-fire was arranged to make a suitable impression on them. The answer they brought back was conciliatory: we greet you with respect and submission; we have decided to send Atilmish back to your court; this will be done in five days . . .

After ten days Timur ordered an inspection of the army. Then he began to withdraw to the east where there was fine grassland. The people of Damascus, in joy and relief, interpreted this as a sign of weakness, and an appropriate moment to take the enemy by the rear. The gates were

opened and Syrian detachments, supported by citizens, some armed with maces, some with daggers, some simply with sticks and stones, came out to attack the Tatar rearguard. The countryside was filled with infantry and cavalry. The confidence of the Damascenes was all the more inflated because of the desertion to them of one of the Conqueror's grandsons. The prince in question was Sultan-Husayn, a man "compounded of courage, levity and folly".⁹ Following a debauch he was inspired by seditious elements to enter Damascus in the service of the Syrians. A parade was arranged for him through the city robed as a "tadjik", and with his pigtail cut off. Confidence had mounted higher still when the citizens looked beyond the city walls and saw the splendid cavalry and assembled forces of Egypt and Syria camped outside, making the plains tremble with their movement and glitter. At night the fires glowed as far as the horizon. The army of Faraj had come fresh from Cairo. The Tatar hordes were known to be tired. A number of successful skirmishes against them had been reported; a thousand of Timur's horsemen had been put to flight near Mount Hermon; more than three thousand were reported killed by Turkomans. Deserters were beginning to come over to the Mamluks.

When the Damascene sortie was reported to Timur, he reversed his army; he went on to a prominence, as was his custom, and knelt in prayer. Then he put on his armour, ordered the great drums to be beaten, and the cry to go up. The Syrians were thrown back upon the city, suffering (said the court historian) horrible carnage, pieces of bodies, limbs, and banners scattering the blood-soaked plain.

The Tatar army was then drawn up for the attack on Damascus. It ranged in an arc round the city, north, east, and south, threatening the Cairo road. They say the light of Tatar camp-fires stretched for a hundred and fifty miles.¹⁰ Timur received a missive from Faraj: yesterday's affair—the sortie—it said, was a popular rising. We had nothing to do with it. We shall carry out our promises and in spite of everything hope to obtain pardon.

The Tatar armies camped the night. Rumours of discord in the Mamluk forces were circulating ever more strongly. Timur's spies, with whom Damascus was riddled, kept him well informed.¹⁰

Next morning the citizens of Damascus saw that the plains that had been filled with the armies of Egypt, were empty. Faraj had gone. News of sedition in Cairo had caused the impromptu departure of some of his emirs the night before. Faraj had followed in pursuit. These emirs "made excuses which could not be accepted either in this world or the next". Their departure, followed by that of Faraj, was decisive. The Egyptian

army broke up, trying to escape in different groups: "He who saves his life saves everything."¹¹

At daybreak Timur was up directing the assault. A detachment was sent after Sultan Faraj. The fleeing Mamluks had discarded pack-mules, camels, and equipment in an effort to save their lives. Only if their mounts were swift did they elude the pursuing Tatars. Faraj escaped "with the speed of a swift serpent", but many of his entourage were taken and, according to Arabshah, trampled beneath the feet of the elephants. Tribesmen in the region made the most of the occasion, plundering and killing the wretched Mamluk stragglers. "The Egyptians were an army without a general and a general without an army."¹¹

When the Damascenes found themselves deserted, they closed the city gates, proclaimed a Holy War, and mounted guard on the walls. The city was still rich in supplies and food, and most strongly fortified. The valiant resistance they offered the Tatar forces indicated the possibility of a long struggle.

Timur sent a messenger offering peace terms. The city elders, most of them, counselled acceptance. They made a careful choice of their dignitaries and selected Maulana Ibn Muffih to carry their plea for quarter to the Conqueror. The Maulana was lowered over the city wall and went to Timur.

Ibn Muffih came back full of praise for Timur, for his piety and his sincerity; the Maulana was beguiled, said Ibn Taghri Birdi, by the Conqueror's artful speech. Delegations of elders were received in the Tatar camp, and negotiations were completed for the surrender and ransom of the city. Emirs were appointed to control the collection of the ransom, and all gates were closed except one, outside of which were set up the offices of the court receivers. On the following Friday the Khutba was read in the Cathedral Mosque in the names of the august emperor Timur, of Mahmud, the nominal Chaghatay khan, and of Muhammad-Sultan, the heir-elect.

Public edicts announced the protection of the population from assault, and Tatars who started to plunder were by order crucified in the public squares. The young Arabshah noted that they were crucified in the silk bazaar, where the vegetable market begins. These measures were reassuring to the people of Damascus.

Although the city had surrendered, the governor of the fortress determined to resist. Tatars who came within range were attacked with arrows, stones, and greek-fire. Timur despatched the Right Wing of the army under Miranshah and Shahrukh to winter quarters in the south, to rest the troops and to secure good grazing for the horses. The remainder

was directed to reduce the fortress. The work was divided between the emirs. Besides the work of mining and sapping the walls, battering rams, mangonels, naphtha-guns, and other machines, some sixty in all, were set up. From a wooden tower built opposite, the Tatars hurled naphtha upon the citadel. The walls were heated with fires and then cooled rapidly with vinegar; the rocks then split under the hammer blows. The garrison continued to resist. On one occasion, when the citadel tower had been mined, the wall collapsed, and some of Timur's troops from Khorasan and Sistan were crushed. The defenders filled the breaches.

Resistance continued for a month. Then the governor delivered up the keys. He was beheaded. They say that fewer than forty people conducted the defence of the citadel. The garrison was enslaved. They were Mamluk warriors—Turks or Circassians, or Ethiopians; a few were from Zanzibar: young men in the main, with little military training. Timur moved from his palace in the suburbs of the city to the splendid house of one of the Syrian magnates.

The Conqueror seized the immense treasure contained in the citadel, as well as the granary, with corn collected as tribute for the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. Sharaf al-din relates, no doubt to emphasize the piety of the Conqueror, that Timur bought up the grain and that the sum realized was despatched via Jerusalem to the two sacred cities. A tuvaji who had been caught pilfering and selling the corn, was flogged front and behind.

Meanwhile, the city qadis had agreed with Timur to a ransom of one million dinars. When this had been collected, Timur insisted that the sum agreed had in fact been ten thousand tumans, in other words, ten million dinars—a ransom which he is more likely to have expected from a wealthy city like Damascus. While this sum was being levied from the citizens, all normal business ceased, except for the sales of goods to meet the levy. The Damascene qadis themselves resorted to force and beat up fellow-citizens to exact the maximum contributions. The ten million were collected. Timur again claimed that the correct sum had not been received: the Tatar accounting showed that only three million had been paid. To cover the outstanding amounts, he demanded the entire wealth of all merchants and prominent men who had fled from the city; he laid claim to all the horses, mules, asses, and camels of the city; and to all the arms and weapons. The confiscation was carried out by Timur's emirs who divided the different quarters of the city between them. Timur "sold Damascus to its people three times over" (al-Aini).

New coin was minted in the name of the Conqueror, both in gold and silver, and distributed amongst the troops. Then, making excuse that the

Syrians had strayed from the proper Shi-a faith on to a false path, the city of Damascus was thrown open to the troops for general pillage. The real motive, if motive be sought, was more likely to have been Timur's concern to satisfy his troops after a hard campaign, and to avenge the stubborn resistance of the citadel. The people of Damascus suffered "afflictions beyond description: they were subjected to all sorts of tortures; they were bastinadoed, crushed in presses, scorched in flames, and suspended head down; their nostrils were stopped with rags full of fine dust which they inhaled each time they took a breath so that they almost died. When near to death, a man would be given a respite to recover, then the tortures of all kinds would be repeated . . ."12 Dogs scavenged amongst the corpses.

The Tatars amassed so much in the way of slaves and merchandise from Damascus that the loot of earlier campaigns was abandoned in favour of the valuables that now came their way. Even so, the camels, mules, and pack-horses, collected from Georgia to Asia Minor, were insufficient to carry the burden. Unwanted goods were jettisoned into the narrow streets and were set on fire.

The upper storeys of many of the buildings were of wood, and readily kindled. Within a short time, the city was blazing. Ibn Khaldun relates that the fire spread until it reached the great Cathedral Mosque. The court historians add that Timur sent Shah Malik to try to save the mosque, but nothing could be done. The dome was of wood, with a lead covering. As the flames rose, the lead melted, and then the walls collapsed. The Syrians believed that the action was deliberate. Ibn Taghri-birdi, the Syrian historian, wrote later that the fire was started on Timur's orders. The Bavarian Schiltberger, picking up the camp gossip of other prisoners a year or so later, related that a bishop came to Timur and begged mercy for himself and his priests. "Timur ordered that he should go with his priests into the Temple (meaning the Great Mosque); so the priests took their wives, their children and many others, into the Temple for protection until there were thirty thousand, young and old. Now Timur gave orders that when the temple was full, the people inside should be shut up in it. This was done. Then wood was placed round the temple, and he ordered it to be ignited, and they all perished in the Temple." (Schiltberger's figures are always grandiose.) The extraordinary thing was that the one minaret made of wood and plastered over was left standing; the others, of stone, were burnt out. Friend and foe drew their own superstitious conclusions from this phenomenon.

The craftsmen of the city had been rounded up to be drafted off to Samarqand: skilled weavers and tailors, gem-cutters, carpenters, makers

of head-coverings, farriers, glassworkers, armourers, falconers—the scholars, skilled labourers, and artisans of every kind were taken. They were divided amongst the army chiefs who were to return with them to the imperial city. The Venetian consul Paolo Zana had succeeded in escaping from Damascus with his compatriots, taking with them what they could, before the Conqueror arrived. Zana took refuge on Cyprus, but returned to his post after Timur's departure. Some who visited the city afterwards remarked on the speed of the recovery, but during the interregnum Damascus lost trade which she was slow to recover, as well as her leadership in damascening. Halfway through the fifteenth century Stephen von Gumpfenberg visited the city with companion pilgrims. He wanted to buy Damascus silks, but was told that the tissues there came from Venice: Timur had taken away all the master silk-workers.¹³ The sack of Damascus was the heaviest blow that the city ever suffered.¹⁴

One of the eminent scholars who were associated with the negotiations for the surrender of Damascus was the historian Ibn Khaldun. This dignitary, sometime Malakite Qadi of Cairo, had accompanied—reluctantly—the Mamluk court and army to Damascus, and was staying in one of the Madrasas inside the city when the Egyptian army departed. Ibn Khaldun was one of those who counselled surrender to the Tatar Conqueror, although his role in the proceeding is somewhat ambiguous. Subsequent Arab historians like Arabshah remembered Ibn Khaldun as a leader of the delegation who was fearless before Timur and ended by outwitting him. The elders, including Khaldun, were admitted to Timur's presence, "and they stood before him, and remained standing, trembling and afraid until he mercifully bade them sit and be of good courage." The Conqueror noted that the dress of Ibn Khaldun was different from that of the others: he wore a light, elegantly shaped turban and a robe "long, like himself, with a narrow border, like the beginning of a dark night".¹⁵ (Ibn Khaldun came originally from Tunis and retained his Moorish clothing.)

They folded up the carpet of speech and unfolded the rug of feasting. Heaps of boiled meat were brought and set before them. Some of the elders abstained from eating "through zeal for restraint". Others had lost their appetite through the uncertainty of the future, and were too distracted to eat. But others "ate with outstretched hand and were not slow in appetite." One of the hearty eaters was the historian, who ate "like one who if he lives will be praised by his people, but if he dies, will come to Allah with a full belly."¹⁵

Ibn Khaldun's account in his autobiography, written no doubt to conceal as much as it revealed,¹⁶ gives a different version; this states that

for over a month there was regular contact between historian and Conqueror, and implies considerable mutual confidence.

In this account Khaldun dissociates himself from the Egyptian Sultanate, making clear that he was not in office at the time of the conflict with Timur, nor had he accompanied the sultan's court in any official capacity. He also dissociated himself from the Damascene delegation which negotiated the surrender with Timur, emphasizing that his visit to Timur was independent of, and separate from, their visits. He relates that Timur was aware of his presence in Damascus and enquired about him of the original delegation which came to negotiate with him. The historian feared, even to the extent of his life, the faction in Damascus that distrusted Timur's pledges and opposed surrender. He therefore rose one dawn, was lowered down outside the city wall, and made his way to the safety of the Tatar camp. He was received by the Conqueror:¹⁷ "As I entered the audience tent to him he was reclining on his elbow while platters of food were passing before him which he was sending one after the other to groups of Mongols sitting in circles in front of his tent.

"Upon entering, I spoke first, saying, 'Peace be upon you', and I made a gesture of humility. Thereupon he raised his head and stretched out his hand to me, which I kissed. He made a sign to me to sit down, I did so just where I was, and he summoned from his retinue one of the erudite Hanafite jurists of Khwarazm, Abd al-Jabbar ibn al Numar, whom he bade sit there also to serve as interpreter between us."

Timur questioned him in detail about North Africa, the Maghrib: "He (Timur) said, 'I am not satisfied. I desire that you write for me the whole country of the Maghrib—its distant as well as its nearby parts, its mountains and its rivers, its villages and its cities—in such a manner that I might seem actually to see it.'

"Then he gave the signal to his servants to bring from his tent some of the kind of food they call 'rishta' and which they were most expert in preparing. Some dishes of it were brought in, and he made a sign that they should be set before me. I arose, took them, and drank, and liked it, and this impressed him favourably."

A discussion on history followed in which Timur challenged Ibn Khaldun about his over-reliance on the views of the early-tenth-century historian al-Tabari. The discussion, seasoned with compliments on the part of Ibn Khaldun, seemed pleasing to both. "The news was brought to him (Timur) that the gate of the city had been opened and that the judges had gone out to fulfil their surrender for which, so they thought, he had generously granted them amnesty.

"Then he was carried away from before us, because of the trouble with

his knee, and was placed upon his horse; grasping the reins, he sat upright in his saddle while the bands played around him and the air shook with them; he rode towards Damascus and was left at the tomb of Manjak, near the Jabiya Gate.

“There he sat in audience, and the judges and notables of the city entered to him, and I entered among them. He then gave signal to them that they should depart, and to Shah Malik, his viceroys, that he should give them robes of honour, in their official positions, but to me he signalled to be seated, so I took a position in front of him.

“He then summoned the emirs of his government who were in charge of building matters; they brought in the foreman of construction, the engineers, and discussed together whether by leading off the water which flows round in the moat of the citadel they could by this operation discover its ingress. They discussed this for a long time in his council, then left. I too left for my home inside the city . . .”

Shut up at home, Ibn Khaldun spent several days writing an account of the Maghrib as requested, and presented it—“the equivalent of about twelve quires of half format”—to Timur, who ordered his secretary to have it translated into “Mongolian”, (probably Turkish). It would seem from this that Ibn Khaldun performed important services for the Tatar Conqueror with a good deal less reluctance than is indicated by the accounts of Arabshah.

Khaldun’s conscience was not affronted by his services to two masters. He explains with care how he came to present gifts to Timur, having been advised to do so by a friend, “for it is a fixed custom on meeting their rulers”—a custom of which Khaldun could not previously have been in ignorance. “I therefore chose from the book market an exceedingly beautiful Qoran copy, a beautiful prayer rug, a copy of the famous poem al-Burda by al-Busiri, in praise of the Prophet—may Allah bless him and grant him peace; and four boxes of the excellent Cairo sweetmeats. I took these gifts and entered to him.”

Timur was in a reception hall, with some “Chaghatay lords” beside him. Khaldun was seated to the right. “After having sat there for a little while, I moved over in front of him and pointed to the presents which were in my servant’s hands. I set them down, and he turned towards me. Then I opened the Qoran, and when he saw it he hurriedly arose and put it on his head. Then I presented the Burda to him; he asked me about it and about its author, and I told him all I knew about it. I next gave him the prayer rug, which he took and kissed. Then I put in front of him the boxes of sweets and took a bit of them, according to the custom of courtesy, and he distributed the sweetmeats in the box among those

present at his council. He accepted all this and indicated that he was pleased with it."

Then Khaldun proceeded, he said, with the utmost diplomacy, to negotiate a safe conduct for his friends, "these Qoran teachers, officials and administrators, who were among those left behind by the Sultan of Egypt". As a result of his intervention, Khaldun, according to his own version, caused Timur to instruct his secretary to "write an order to this effect for them".

"I thanked him and blessed him, and went out with the secretary until the letter of security had been written and Shah Malik had affixed to it the Sultan's seal. I then departed to my dwelling."

According to his own account, Khaldun stayed in or near Timur's camp thirty-five days, being received in audience morning and evening. Towards the end of this time, Timur asked him if he had a mule. (Archbishop John, the Catholic envoy, remarked on Timur's liking for mules.) In fact the qadis of Egypt were mounted on mules when they assumed office, and Khaldun had a fine grey one. He offered to present it to Timur.

Several accounts exist of the means by which Khaldun secured his return to Cairo. According to Arabshah, he gained permission to return to collect his library and family, promising to rejoin the court of Timur. He never did. It pleased this former Arab captive, who also became an historian, to relate the success of the ruse of an Arab colleague, at the expense of the Conqueror. But in his autobiography, Khaldun says that he offered to accompany Timur wherever he wished: "My desire is only to serve you, for you have granted me refuge and protection . . ." Timur replied: "No, you will return to your family and to your people."

Thus Khaldun went via Safad to the coast where he secured a passage on a ship going to Gaza, and on which were returning home the envoys sent by Faraj to Bayazid, with the latter's reply.

Towards the end of this section of his autobiography, Khaldun relates the somewhat curious fact that after his arrival in Cairo an envoy, bringing a letter from Timur to Faraj, brought with him also the price of the coveted mule for Ibn Khaldun, which the sultan permitted him to receive.

When Faraj arrived in Cairo after the flight of his enemies, the city was in commotion at the news of the abandonment of Damascus; men almost lost their minds; everyone thought that the sultan had been defeated by Timur, who was in hot pursuit. The citizens began to sell all they possessed and prepared to flee. The price of animals rose several times higher than normal.

The letter from Timur to the sultan, which repeated the demand for

Atilmish, received a speedy response. The captive was to be released and sent back to the Conqueror with a substantial escort. Meanwhile a levy was made in Egypt to furnish troops and resources to renew the struggle against the Tatars. Every one able to travel was to be enlisted, or required to provide a substitute or contribute half his crops for the year; from the owners of produce brought for sale in ships a levy was also raised.

The adjacent provinces of Syria and Egypt were seized with fright, and in the cities as well as in Cairo, many people, especially the wealthy, prepared for flight. Timur did not continue south. His laden troops returned north, ravaging those areas not already reduced. Large flocks and herds were seized from Turkoman tribes who were forced to flee into the Arabian desert. The troops wearied of collecting them all and many were left behind. There was a glut of meat, and a sheep could be bought in the market for one dinar.

One Tatar detachment had been told off to subdue Antioch, a city surrounded by swamps. This was achieved and the city pillaged. In command of the detachment was Sultan-Husayn, the grandson who had defected to the Damascenes. He had been captured during the defeat of the sortie and punished with a flogging, according to the methods prescribed by the yasa of Chingiz-khan. This punishment, it is said, did not affect him so much as the reproaches of his fellows. He had not been admitted to the presence of the Conqueror, nor had he the temerity to seek audience. After the success of the Antioch expedition, the grandson was restored to favour.

About this time Timur was again afflicted with boils and a serious inflammation of the back. He was very ill indeed, and messengers were sent to summon back the princes and emirs, especially Miranshah and Shahrukh, who had been hunting and pillaging along the coastal districts as far as Acre. It was perhaps in connection with this sickness that Timur was said to have demanded a load of white onions, although they were not to be found anywhere in Syria. Arabshah tells the story of a commercial magnate and governor of Safad (a city to the east of Acre), who decided to protect his life and his fortune and that of his friends, as well as he could, by placating the Conqueror in every way. He sent gifts in quantities and supplied Timur's every demand. Somehow or other he managed to secure not one but three loads of white onions.

The Conqueror recovered.

Timur collected his treasure and heavy goods from Aleppo. An imperial message was sent to Muhammad-Sultan, grandson and heir-designate, who had been left to govern Samarqand; he was to join the emperor and to receive the crown of Hulagu—the dominions which had

formerly been bestowed upon his depraved uncle Miranshah. Prince Muhammad-Sultan was to bring with him from Mawarannahr, moreover, the detachments of fresh troops which had been assembled and equipped there since the Emperor's departure. Another message summoned the imperial household to join their master, who was going north to the pastures of Qarabagh.

Timur had left Damascus in the middle of March, 1401. The fears of southern Syria and of Egypt were allayed. The Tatar hordes had unexpectedly turned north and east, instead of south and west. They were believed to be on their way home.

The considerations which weighed most heavily with the old Tatar when he decided to return to the north can only be surmised. The rumour spread by Timur's enemies (and repeated by Archbishop John of Sultaniya) of prophecies that the Conqueror would sicken and die in Cairo, were not likely to influence the old Conqueror, who was himself in league with the angels. Certainly a move north was much urged by the emirs of the court, whose hordes were fatigued after the two seasons' operations which had followed hard upon the Indian campaign. The needs of the troops, and the attractions of the congenial pastures of the "Black Garden" of the Caucasus, evidently weighed more heavily with the Conqueror than the prospect of the conquest of Cairo at the height of summer. Also, Timur evidently counted upon the factions in Faraj's court working in his own rather than the Egyptian interest.

Timur had already achieved a notable victory. An alliance between the two great Muslim powers, Mamluk and Ottoman, might have destroyed Timur's plans. When such an alliance had been strategically possible, it had been rejected through the antagonisms and the foolishness of the Cairo court. Now the possibility no longer existed. Timur had driven a wedge between the two; he had crippled the Mamluks and left the Ottomans exposed for the entire length of their eastern marches.

Sultan Faraj on his own was no menace. It was otherwise, however, with Bayazid the Thunderbolt; he was the only enemy of substance who remained on the western confines of Timur's empire. Bayazid now harboured Sultan Ahmad of Baghdad and Qara Yusuf, the Black Sheep prince, at his court. When they fled again from Baghdad they had not surrendered the city to the Tatars. A governor had been left with a garrison and orders to hold out, no matter the cost.

After Timur's attack on Sivas, Bayazid had returned to Rum and had reassembled his forces at Brusa, but too late to be of assistance to his son, Prince Sulayman. The siege of Constantinople had been suspended, and Bayazid prepared for a decisive encounter with the lame Tatar.

Encouraged by the councils of Sultan Ahmad and Qara Yusuf, and especially by the preoccupation of the Tatar hordes in Syria, Bayazid sent an expedition against Tarharten, whom he blamed for the fall of Sivas. A detachment of Tatars put the Turkish troops to rout, however, in the province of Sivas, and Bayazid, who knew that the rest of the Tatar hordes were now returning north, preferred to delay the encounter. Diplomatic activity was resumed with the Tatar court; Prince Taharten was used as an intermediary: his family were hostages of Bayazid in Brusa, and their return was promised on condition of successful negotiations.

Timur, too, was interested in negotiations, but not only with Bayazid. He was conducting diplomatic activities with Bayazid's rear, with the Christian powers of Europe. That he intended to use the winter in the Qarabagh primarily for preparations against Bayazid, can be little doubted. The fresh troops summoned from Samarqand, under Prince Muhammad-Sultan, indicated that a telling blow was intended against some enemy. These forces could have remained in Mawarannahr in readiness for the campaign against China, for which purpose they may well have been primarily intended.

Meanwhile the hunting and pleasurable activities which Timur and his troops were enjoying in upper Mesopotamia, en route for the eastern Caucasus, had to be interrupted to deal with the obstinacy of the governor left by Sultan Ahmad to defend Baghdad. Timur had sent a force of twenty thousand to regain the city, but with no result. So the old Tatar himself turned south with an advance guard of picked troops, to be followed by the main army which was redirected from its march to Tabriz and the Qarabagh.

It was the height of summer (1401). The air was unbreathable and the heat mortal. Siege operations took place in the broiling sun. Baghdad was no longer Dar es Salam, the Abode of Peace, said the chronicler, but the city of hell and discord. Soldiers in armour roasted. It was so hot that birds dropped dead from the air. But the citizens repaired their defences like madmen, filling every breach as soon as it was made. In spite of the distress, heat and hunger, the city held out for nearly six weeks. Then a general assault was ordered by Timur at a most unlikely time—at the heat of noon, when the defensive positions were unmanned and the defenders were only represented along the walls of the city by their helmets propped on batons.

There was no likelihood of mercy or quarter. Too many Tatars had been lost in this struggle. When the city was overrun the dead were so numerous that the tuvajis in charge of records, could not count them. The governor managed to escape with his daughter and some of the

treasure; he was followed along the river and killed. The treasure in the governor's baggage train was seized, and report had it that a boat filled with precious objects was recovered from the bed of the Euphrates. One item was a tree of pure gold, decorated with precious stones of many colours—a tree which may have been the one described by Clavijo in the pavilion of the Empress Saray-Mulk-khanum in Samarqand.

Each soldier was ordered to bring in a Baghdad head (according to Arabshah, two heads each). The market of retribution became so brisk, said Sharaf al-din, that the broker of death sold at one price the old man of eighty and the child of eight. The heads of the slaughtered were piled up in towers—a hundred and twenty of them. The owl and the crow made nests in the ruins . . . then Timur marched to make winter quarters at Qarabagh . . . and he came there at evening, like a hovering hawk exploring the surrounding border, and especially the realms of Rum. . . .¹⁸

Timur's left flank was secure from serious attack either by the Mamluk sultan, through Syria, or through the great river-valleys of Mesopotamia.

Meanwhile the treasure and the trains of captives from Syria were on their way back to Samarqand. In their company was the young Arab from Damascus. He describes the journey of the convoys in his history: "And now the winter was ending and the spring adorning herself . . . and the bride of the meadows was putting on her golden ornament . . . and birds among the flowers, hundreds of bulbuls and thousands of nightingales were charming the ear: and the pity of Allah was renewing the earth's fertility after it had seemed dead.

"And that company continued its journey day and night, not like the pilgrims of Mecca, who daily complete the day's journey and rest . . ."

But while the spring flowers opened out in Khorasan, there came to Syria, after Timur's departure, another plague, the locusts.

NOTES

¹ Ibn Taghri Birdi: *History of Egypt*.
tr. W. Popper.

² Ibn Arabshah: *Tamburlane*.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibn Taghri Birdi.

⁵ Ibn Arabshah: *Tamburlane*.

⁶ Ibn Taghri Birdi.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibn Arabshah.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Mignanelli: *Vita Tamerlani*.

¹¹ Ibn Taghri Birdi.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ G. le Strange: *Palestine Under the Moslems*, 1890.

¹⁴ P. K. Hitti: *History of Syria*.

¹⁵ Ibn Arabshah.

¹⁶ Muhsin Mahdi: *Ibn Khaldun*.

¹⁷ *Ibn Khaldun and Tamburlaine*: tr. Fischel.

¹⁸ Ibn Arabshah.

BAYAZID THE TURK: THE BATTLE OF ANGORA

1402 (Year of the Horse)

DURING the campaign along the Anatolian marches and in Syria (1400-1), diplomatic exchanges had continued between Timur and the Franks¹ of the west. The envoys of John, Regent of Constantinople, had been cordially received and despatched home via Trebizond with counter-demands, with advice against negotiating with Bayazid, and gifts. These envoys arrived towards the end of August 1401, and may well have been the Dominican monks Francis and Alexander, mentioned in the subsequent correspondence of Archbishop John of Sultaniya, who was also to become one of the envoys between Timur and the west.

The Greek Christian emperor Manuel III of Trebizond, feeling the Ottoman threat more pressing than the Tatar, had already hastened to declare his submission to Timur and to send him tribute. His was a Greek Christian kingdom, for after the fourth crusade a Byzantine prince had established an independent kingdom in Trebizond to escape the Latin rule of Constantinople. The port had considerable importance. Under the Il-khans the commerce of Trebizond had increased, as it served as an outlet for Tabriz. The Genoese had a strong colony there.

Timur's embassy sent to Pera carried more messages and gifts. The Conqueror demanded that twenty galleys be placed at his disposal by his vassal Manuel III of Trebizond, with similar fleets from Constantinople and Pera. The Venetians attempted to form a league with Chios and Rhodes against the Turks, but, preferring the advantages of diplomacy and concessions, continued to negotiate with both sides.

Nor had intercourse between the Thunderbolt and the Conqueror flagged. After the capture of Sivas Timur had taunted his adversary with his lack of success; but he said he was prepared to come to terms with him, because it was bad for dissensions to appear between Muslims. Such dissensions could provide the Frankish infidels with opportunities for aggression. Subsequent letters from Timur referred to his capture of Baghdad, and demanded the surrender of Sultan Ahmad and Qara Yusuf, who had taken refuge with Bayazid. In particular he demanded that Qara Yusuf be given up, dead or alive, for this Black Sheep Turkoman bandit had been pillaging the caravans of pilgrims en route for Mecca. Bayazid was much at fault in protecting such an enemy of the Faith. If

Qara Yusuf were delivered up, Timur could see his way to providing help for the Turks in the war against the Christians.

Timur took up his winter quarters (1401-2) in the high plains of the Qarabagh, where he had been joined by the empresses from Sultaniya and from Samarqand. Emir Allahhad, amongst others, was on his way back to Mawarannahr with trains of captives and instructions to develop the eastern regions of the kingdom and advance bases for the operations against China.

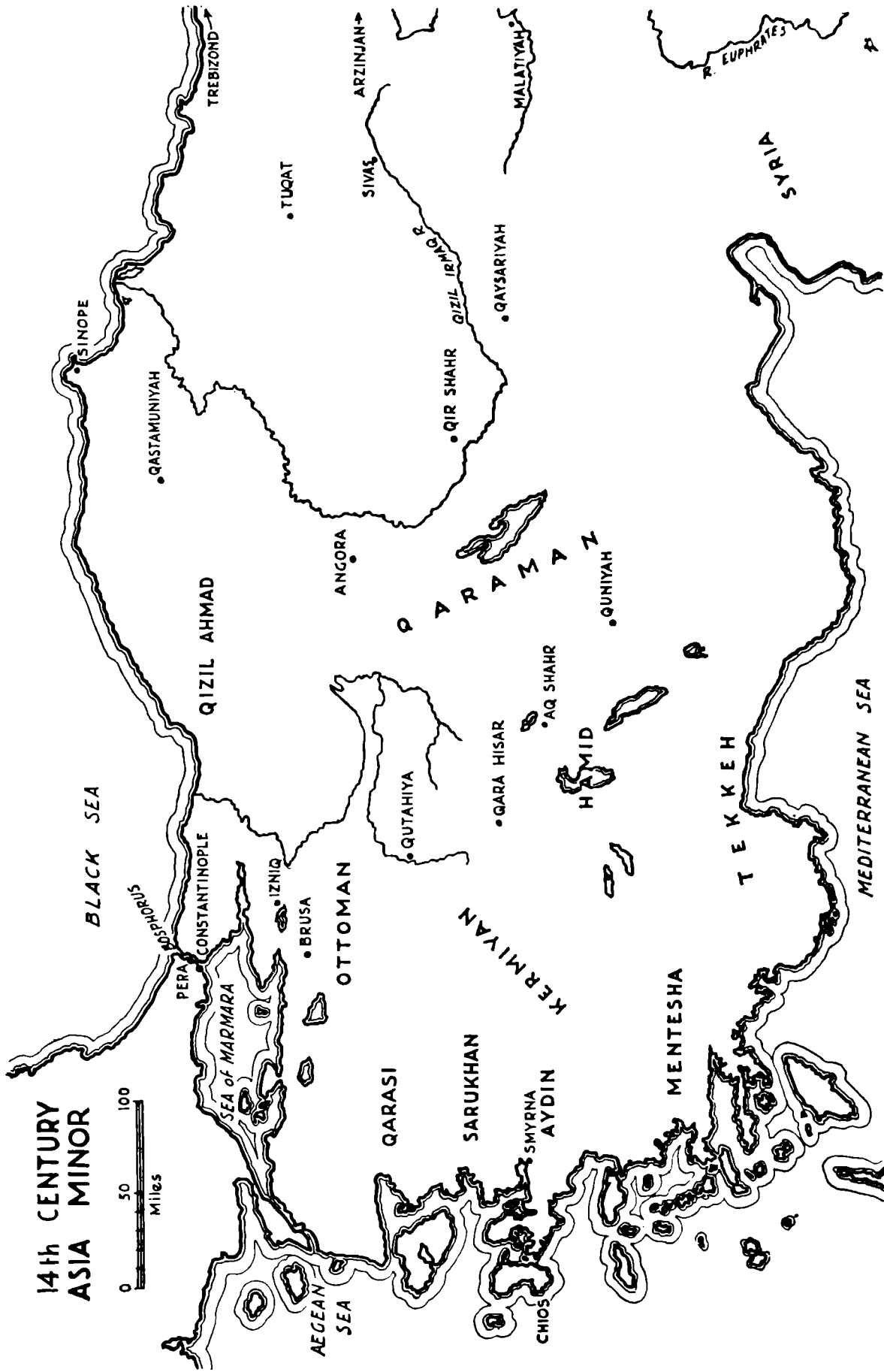
While based in the Qarabagh, it seemed as if Timur might be considering operations against the remnants of the Golden Horde; they were showing signs of activity on the north of the Caucasus. The rumour of a northern expedition had only to be bruited, however, for emissaries to arrive from the Qipchaqs reaffirming their submission. Instead, Timur resumed operations in Georgia, where rebel fortresses continued to flout his authority and whence, despite King Giorgi's negotiations, troops and tribute still failed to materialize.

To the Qarabagh came envoys confirming the aid to be given to Timur by the fleets of Constantinople and Pera. A Genoese representative, Julien Maiocho, brought further encouragement. To Qarabagh also came the emissaries of Bayazid, bearing a reply in rather more conciliatory terms than before. Nevertheless, he maintained that Ottoman traditions of hospitality prevented him from surrendering Sultan Ahmad and Qara Yusuf; he also demanded the restitution of Sivas. The Turkish envoys were treated with impressive hospitality; festivals and a royal hunt were laid on for their benefit. Timur still offered to negotiate with Bayazid, on condition that Qara Yusuf be handed over. But by that time Prince Muhammad-Sultan was on his way from Samarqand to receive the crown of Hulagu—and to bring reinforcements for the imperial armies. It seems as if Timur were already committed.

Timur delayed replying to John, Regent of Constantinople, until he had heard again from Bayazid. Then he sent a letter, dated May 15th, 1402, the Latin translation of which was preserved in the archives of Venice.² The letter refers to the earlier visit of the Friar Francis and also to Isaac, the bearer of the letter, and to Alexander (Sandron). It accepted the offer of tribute, and threatened to deal with Bayazid unless the latter made good the losses he had caused to the Byzantine emperor. It ended with a clear demand for twenty galleys to be equipped and brought by the ruler of Constantinople to Trebizond.

Some time during this period, too, the envoy of the Catholic west, Archbishop John of Sultaniya, arrived at Timur's court, with proposals from Charles VI of France. John hoped to stimulate commercial relations

14th CENTURY ASIA MINOR



between the Tatars and Christendom and, perhaps in consequence, to re-establish Catholic influence in the empire of the Conqueror.

Timur's determination to launch a full-scale campaign against Bayazid Yilderim was not at first shared by his emirs. Their hordes had had three years of hard campaigning, and it was well known that the troops of Bayazid were of great strength, fresh, and excellently equipped. So distasteful was their opinion likely to be to the Emperor that they selected with care the spokesman who was to convey their reluctance to him. This shaykh pointed out to the Lord of the Fortunate Conjunction that the stars did not seem to favour such an operation. Timur in reply made much of the fact that he was the visible instrument selected by God to punish tyrants. Bayazid the Turk had disgraced Islam by his marriage with a Christian (the Serbian princess Olivera); he gave refuge, moreover, to the enemies of Allah. Having influence over the destinies of men, if not over the stars, Timur summoned one of his leading astrologers to explain the conjunction of the planets and the conclusions that could be drawn from them. The maulana explained that the state of Timur was, according to his interpretation of the planets, in the highest ascendancy, and the state of the enemy in the feeblest; that a comet would come from the east . . . in fact, that Anatolia would be conquered.

For his part, Bayazid retained the wives and children of Taharten as hostages, and assembled the troops from the European mainland and from all the provinces of Rum. Contrary to their assurances, the Prince-Regent of Constantinople and the Genoese of Pera took no steps to prevent the withdrawal of the Ottoman troops from Europe. They were only too pleased to see them go.

The Tatar hordes were also on the move. By February 1402, the empresses had been sent back to Sultaniya. Muhammad-Sultan, arriving in advance of the reinforcements from Mawarannahr, had taken a detachment to attack the rocky fortress of Kamakh, overlooking the western Euphrates, which Bayazid had seized from Taharten. Kamakh was an earthly paradise, said the chronicles. In the spring the little birds fell from the heights so fat that the people of the town collected them and preserved them in jars. The water supply of the citadel was diverted. A night attack by the Tatars was beaten off and they suffered severe casualties. At the end of a week's siege, the stronghold surrendered, and was restored to Prince Taharten.

Timur awaited the envoys of Bayazid for some time at Avnik; then he moved rapidly westward and assembled his forces in the plain of Sivas. Here the Turkish embassy met him bearing the reply from their master; they had probably calculated on travelling much further east before

coming up with him. The reply was "gruff", according to Ibn Taghri Birdi. According to Ibn Arabshah, it was as provocative as it could be. Besides demanding that Timur should appear before Bayazid, there were added words of insult to Timur's wives, saying they would be "thrice divorced" (a serious disgrace to the harem, in the Moslem view).

"And as soon as Timur read this reply, he was excited and said: 'The son of Othman is mad, for he is prolix and sealed the purpose of his letter with the mention of women.' For among them the mention of women is a crime and a grave offence, so much so that they do not even pronounce the word woman, saying . . . 'a veiled one', or 'a mistress of the bed', or something of that sort."

Timur held a review of his forces, in front of the envoys. Together, they surveyed the troops, rank by rank: the tumans, hazaras, khoshuns—the corps of ten thousands, thousands and hundreds, led by a score of princes from near and far Asia: from Shirvan and Sistan, Gilan and Badakhshan, Armenia, Persia, Khorasan, Hindustan and Mawarannahr. Each army chief and captain presented his forces and swore fidelity to the Emperor. The great majority of the detachments were mounted troops, sufficiently if not lavishly equipped. It was an army of mounted archers, supplemented by infantry who played a subsidiary role.

Alongside the veterans of the Campaign of Seven Years, who had set out with Timur in 1399-40, were the reinforcements just brought out from Samarqand by Muhammad-Sultan. They were his special pride. Magnificently dressed and furnished, each detachment had ensigns and equipment in its own colours: crimson banners were matched with crimson saddle-cloths, shields, quivers, belts and bucklers. Then there were detachments in yellow, white, purple, and other colours. Some companies had been fitted with coats of mail, others with armour-plate. The captive artisans in Samarqand had not been kept in idleness. Archbishop John, the Catholic envoy, had also evidently arrived at Timur's camp at least by Sivas, if not some time before. The letter he bore addressed to Charles VI of France bears the address "Given near Sivas".

The Ottoman envoys were sent back to their master: their gifts had been rejected.

Sultan Bayazid, having suspended the siege of Constantinople at a moment when the city was ready to capitulate, assembled all available forces in Anatolia. His negotiations of the previous autumn with Venetians, Genoese and with Byzantium, aimed especially at securing shipping reinforcements, had failed to yield results, mainly through the counter-diplomacy of Timur. In an attempt to secure his rear, Bayazid stationed nine of his own galleys and ships at Gallipoli and another twenty vessels at

various ports on the Aegean coast. Bayazid did not underestimate the strength of the forces opposed to him. He gathered at Brusa not only his Turkish troops from the mainland of Europe, including the forces investing Constantinople and the Gallipoli garrison, but Serbian and other Balkan troops from his Christian vassals. Detachments of Qipchaq Tatars had been brought to Rum via Moldavia; other Turks and Tatar levies had been raised from the eastern marches of Rum. Bayazid had also requested reinforcements from the young Sultan of Egypt. But the latter lacked reliable troops himself, and did not feel inclined to help the Turk, whose advances east had led him to seize the Syrian border post of Malatiah.

Summer was advancing, and news reached Bayazid that Timur's forces were preparing to drive into Anatolia through the defiles and valleys around Tuqat, to the north-west of Sivas. Here was watered and forested country. (The barren lands stretching throughout these regions today have been attributed to the appetite of goats, over twenty million of which strip the grass, pound the soil to dust, and munch the trees out of existence.) Bayazid moved with all speed east to prevent a deeper penetration by the enemy. The season was advancing and the crops were ripe for gathering. It was a bad time to fight a defensive war on one's own territory. The present and forthcoming harvest was at stake. From the conflicting councils of his emirs, Bayazid rejected the advice to await Timur at the well-watered camping grounds by Angora. Instead, he left there a garrison with some of his reserve troops, and continued east to cut off Timur's advance. At the same time he ordered local troops to occupy Tuqat. Bayazid pushed on to wooded terrain which gave cover to his army, composed largely of infantry. In this area, too, Bayazid expected help from the Black Sheep Turkoman tribes.

Timur was informed by scouts of the Ottoman movements. He made a rapid departure from Sivas, but instead of taking the route to Tuqat, he struck south-west, keeping to the left bank of the Qizil Irmaq (Halys) River, which sweeps in a wide semi-circle towards Angora. Additional information regarding the routes was provided by the Anatolian emirs who had taken refuge at Timur's court, and who were hoping, with a Tatar victory, to receive back the territories which Bayazid had seized from them.

We can, said Timur to his emirs, take one of two courses. We can rest our troops and horses, waiting for the enemy to seek us out. Or we can advance into enemy territory, ravage it, pillage on all sides, and make him follow at top speed. We are mainly cavalry. The enemy is mainly on foot. The latter course will be followed.

After six days of forced marches, the Tatar hordes arrived at Qaysariyah

without meeting any opposition from Turkish forces. They camped for four days, refreshing the horses and gathering in the local grain harvest. Scouting parties and companies were sent forward in the direction of Angora to prepare sites and dig wells where water was scarce. All encampments were protected by palisades and ditches, and precautions were taken against surprise attack. Another four days' ride brought the Tatar army to Qir shahr. Here for the first time contact was made with Turkish skirmishing parties, and a bloody encounter took place between a reconnaissance party under Shah Malik and the Ottomans. The Tatars nevertheless found opportunity for a further period of refreshment and pillage. Then three more days of forced marches brought them to the strongly fortified city of Angora.

The hordes of Timur settled down on the camping grounds to the east and north-east of Angora recently vacated by Bayazid on his advance towards Tuqat. Here was ample water and congenial pasturage. The governor of Angora, with the garrison left by Bayazid, prepared to resist to the last. Timur gave orders for immediate siege operations against the city, which commanded the approaches to Brusa and Constantinople, and lay at the crossroads of the routes from Syria and Armenia. The city's water supply was diverted. The draining of the moat and the mining of the walls began. The rest of Timur's hordes were sent to water their droves on the grasslands to the south and west of Angora.

Tatar attackers were already scaling one of the walls of the citadel when the signal was received from headquarters to withdraw. Bayazid and his forces had doubled back from Sivas along their own tracks, and by a series of forced marches, were within striking distance. Hastily summoned, the Tatar hordes on the pasture lands rejoined the imperial camp.

Bayazid's troops, however, with a high proportion of infantry, were in no condition for immediate battle, although several of the Ottoman emirs believed this to be the best plan. They would thus have attacked Timur from the rear, while his forces were dispersed. The opportunity was lost. The forced marches had told very seriously on the large detachments of infantry, but they had no opportunity to refresh themselves and recover. First choice of sites had gone to the Tatars, who were also in command of the watering places. The only supply of water for the Ottoman army was a spring which had been fouled on Timur's instructions. The Tatar army, said Arabshah, reached Angora refreshed with the products of a well-tilled country, shady springs, and choice fruits, and they ceased not to delight in crops and pastures and udders. The Ottoman army arrived, however, "perishing with distress and murdered by thirst".

Timur stopped the siege work against Angora, and the Tatar host assembled on the plain of Chibukabad, defending themselves with ditches, palisades, and stakes. The right wing of the Tatar army was under the orders of Prince Miranshah and Emir Shaykh Nur al-din, with the advance guard commanded by Abu-Bakr and Emir Jahan Shah. The Left was commanded by Shahrukh and Khalil-Sultan, supported by Emir Sulayman-Shah; with Sultan-Husayn, Timur's grandson, now restored to favour, in charge of the advance guard. The main army with their hordes led by many nobles of Hither and Central Asia, was commanded by Prince Muhammad-Sultan, heir-elect, in front of whom was raised an imperial baton—the chestnut horsetail standard surmounted by the golden Crescent. Timur, Lord of the Fortunate Conjunction, supported by other princes of the blood—Pir-Muhammad Omar-Shaykh, Iskandar, and numerous emirs—took command of the forty companies of reserves. In the front ranks of the army were once more the trophies of India, the war elephants, magnificent and terrible.

The victors of Nicopolis, despite their forced marches, also presented an imposing force. They included some twenty thousand Serbian cavalry, clad in armour, said the Tatars, from head to foot; the Janissaries—the beginnings of a regular infantry trained from captive slaves, many of them Christian by origin; the mounted soldiers called Sipahis, and the irregular horse and footsoldiers, Turks and Tatars, drawn from the provinces of Asia Minor.

Both sides were equipped for the use of greek-fire. The numbers at the disposal of each army have been variously estimated. Many Greek and Latin writers, whose imagination was later inflamed by the magnitude of the victory, mention Tatar forces of the order of six to eight hundred thousand. Poor Schiltberger's amazed eye-witness recollection led him to record a Tatar host of one million four hundred thousand. The size of the Ottoman army has also been variously estimated, from twenty thousand, to half a million. In fact, taking into account the size of Bayazid's army at Nicopolis—in the region of a hundred thousand—and the additional levies raised against Timur from the provinces of Anatolia as well as from the Balkans, Bayazid's forces may well have approached two hundred thousand. A force of Tatars of similar strength probably opposed him, for Timur's hordes had received considerable reinforcements from Mawarannahr. The battle reserves under the Sahib Qiran are mentioned as amounting to forty khosun (a khosun could be anything from fifty to a hundred or more soldiers), and elsewhere as numbering thirty thousand. With reserves of this order, a total force approaching some two hundred thousand would not have been

improbable on the Tatar side. Battle, when it was joined on Friday, July 28th, 1402, was one of the greatest of those times.

The sources are also contradictory about the date of the battle. It used to be considered that the date given in many Muslim texts, July 20th, was the correct one. However, the evidence in favour of the later date, which is given by Arabshah (who however calls the day incorrectly a Wednesday) and others, is very precise. Archbishop John, in his *Mémoire* written in Paris not so very long afterwards, states the date of the battle—Friday, July 28th. This is corroborated by the Venetian Gerardo Segredo, who was in Brusa the day that Muhammad-Sultan arrived with his troops—August 3rd. Muhammad-Sultan took five days, riding hard, to reach Brusa, if we are to believe the court chronicles. He was despatched soon after the battle. If he left Angora the following dawn, the probable date of the battle was July 28th.

The Ottoman forces assembled opposite the Tatars in the plain of Chibukabad, a valley to the north-east of Angora, where once the Roman general Pompey defeated Mithradates.³ The right wing of Anatolian troops was commanded by Bayazid's Christian brother-in-law and vassal, Lazarovic of Serbia, with reinforcements of Serbs, equipped with flame-throwers. The left wing, under the orders of Sulayman Chelebi, son of Bayazid, consisted of Macedon troops backed by mounted Turks from Asia Minor. The Janissaries, some five thousand strong, formed the centre, under the command of Bayazid Yilderim himself, and his three sons Musa, Isa, and Mustafa. These were supported by contingents of Sipahi cavalry. The cavalry reserves were under the command of Bayazid's other son Mehmed Chelebi.

The night of July 27th, the eve of the battle, was spent in prayer.

Next morning, as was his custom before battle, Timur dismounted and offered up a public prayer for victory. It was about ten o'clock. Then the trumpets, drums, and cymbals gave the signal to attack. On the Ottoman side, the Serbian cavalry, the Sipahis, and the Janissaries fought doggedly. In fact, the Tatar left could not withstand the Serbian pressure and began to retreat, followed by the attacking Serbs. Bayazid, fearing they would be encircled, ordered the Serbs back into position. Meanwhile, units of the Ottoman forces, made up of Tatar cavalry, changed the direction of their attack, and threw themselves on the forces of Sulayman Chelebi from the rear. They had been in secret communication with Timur, who had appealed to their tribal loyalties. Timur's agents had not been idle in the preceding months. They had circulated amongst the Tatar auxiliaries, and amongst the levies raised from the provinces of Anatolia. The latter were discontented on account

of the taxes imposed on them by their new master Bayazid, and on account of negligence in the administration, lack of pay, and the forced marches. On the other hand, Timur's generosity to his troops in the matter of plunder was well known. Many of these Turkish contingents, recognizing their former masters in the opposing ranks, came over to the Tatar side—contingents from Sarukhan, Aydin, Mentasha, and Kermiyan—some fifteen, according to one source. Others say that this was the greater part of Bayazid's forces.

Heavy fighting continued on the Tatar left, and Muhammad-Sultan threw in his reserves against the Serbs, whose fighting qualities aroused the admiration of Timur. Prince Sulayman Chelebi, unable to beat off the frontal attacks and the attacks from the rear by the deserters, judged the battle lost. He took flight with the Macedon troops and some of the emirs of Bayazid's court. On the Ottoman right, Lazarovic and his Serbs fought on tenaciously, until, seeing that little hope remained, they too withdrew towards Brusa, covering Sulayman's retreat. Isa and Musa Chelebi were taken prisoner. Their brother Mustafa Chelebi disappeared amongst the avalanche of fleeing troops. Only Bayazid and his Janisaries, and the reserves under the tenacious Mehmed Chelebi, remained.

Bayazid Yilderim held out till nightfall. Then, with the three hundred warriors remaining by his side, he decided on flight. Mahmud-Khan, the Chaghatay sultan, was sent in pursuit. The Ottoman's horse was shot under him. Bayazid the Thunderbolt was made captive, and taken, bound, to Timur, who received the fallen sultan with marks of respect. Amongst the other prisoners was Johannes Schiltberger, the Bavarian, who was to remain many years in bondage to Timur and his sons. Princess Olivera, Christian wife of Bayazid, was also taken captive.

Ibn Taghri Birdi, summing up the battle, said that Bayazid had marched on with the expectation of meeting Timur outside of Sivas, to repulse him and prevent his entry into Asia Minor. But Timur took another road, "marching through untravelled country, and encamped in a wide, fertile district. Before Ibn Othman was aware of it, he had been robbed of his land, and in consternation turned back; he and his men had become so weary that their strength was gone and their horses were worn out too. He camped now in a waterless region, and his soldiers were near to perishing. As they approached each other for battle, the first disaster that alighted upon Bayazid was that the Tatars in their entirety betrayed him; since they constituted his main force, his army was much reduced.

"His son Sulayman then followed them and left his father, to return to Brusa with the remainder of his army." Bayazid held his ground with about five thousand horsemen, when surrounded by Timur's forces.

Bayazid delivered a terrific attack with sword and battle-axe and continued fighting till nightfall. Most of Bayazid's men had died of thirst.

The annihilator of the Christian West had been destroyed by an infidel from Central Asia.

Yaqub, the governor of Angora, was forced to submit, and the officers of Timur's court began the collection of the ransom, the blood money. Prince Muhammad-Sultan with emirs Shaykh Nur al-din and Jahan-Shah, and thirty thousand horse, set off in pursuit of the fleeing remnants of the Ottoman forces. In particular they sought Sulayman Chelebi, son of Bayazid, who had seen how the battle was going and had escaped, taking the road west to Brusa, the capital. After five days' hard riding Muhammad-Sultan came up to Brusa, but Sulayman Chelebi had reached the city before him and had made off with what he could of his father's treasure. Emir Shaykh Nur al-din took possession of the fortress and that part of the treasure abandoned by the Ottoman prince—a fantastic booty gathered from Byzantium, Christendom, and Asia Minor. When the imperial treasury had been satisfied, then the city was thrown open to the soldiery for pillage. There was loot in abundance; Brusa was the main halt for the caravans that traversed Asia Minor diagonally from Tabriz, as well as being the Asian centre of the Ottoman empire. It had two main bazaars, famed for their silks, gems, pearls, raw cotton, and soap. From Brusa were taken the splendid bronze gates adorned with the figures of St. Peter and St. Paul; the design was finished in enamel with a delicate pattern of inlaid gold and azure. These gates were presented to the old empress, Saray-Mulk-khanum, and made a most imposing entrance to her pavilions in camp near Samarqand. It is also said that a Byzantine library, which had fallen into Bayazid's hands, passed to the Tatars.

Prince Abu-Bakr raced to Nicaea on the road to the coast; but Sulayman Chelebi managed to embark with some of his followers and to escape across the Sea of Marmara on a Genoese galley. His wife and household fell into Tatar hands. Other Turkish fugitives, emerging from the woods, flung off their clothes and attempted to swim across. The Ottomans controlled the straits at the western end of the Sea of Marmara, but the eastern end was guarded by the vessels of Constantinople and Pera, and by Venetian galleys. Far from helping to annihilate the fleeing Turks cornered by the Bosphorus, the Christians of Constantinople and Pera sent boats to transport them, at a price, from the Asiatic to the European side. According to the report sent back to Venice by Gerardo Segredo, the Venetian galleys stood guard for several days, refusing to allow any one to pass. But seeing that the Genoese were

refusing to obey orders, and were ferrying people across, the Venetians began to do likewise. But, said Segredo, the Venetians only carried across Christians. Other vessels, including Greek, Cretan, and Catalans, joined in this enterprise and provided their services on the payment of extortionate fees. It was on account of this treachery, said Clavijo, that Timur thereafter treated the Christian folk throughout his dominions with severity.

The escape of the Turks was not necessarily assured by the purchase of a passage. The Genoese, it was alleged, kept some of the fugitives as slaves; other unwanted passengers were stripped and, once out of sight of land, were cast overboard. The people of Constantinople also took advantage of the situation: "then the Franks swiftly rushing up with shameless outrage plunged in the blood of the Muslims and seized their women and goods, for Ibn Othman (Bayazid) while he was besieging the city had afflicted it and destroyed its country houses and laid waste its plains."⁴

Tatar detachments continued meanwhile to the Hellespont, to the Aegean, and to the southern shores of Asia Minor, amassing plunder with a ruthlessness described with a similar lack of restraint by Arabshah. Shaykh Nur al-din had separated the gold and gems from the treasure at Brusa and had sent it under heavy guard to Timur. The rest of the treasure was loaded on mules and camels and conducted, together with members of Bayazid's household, slaves, dancers, instrumentalists, and singers, to the imperial camp. Prince Abu-Bakr, with Timur's permission, took to wife the eldest daughter of Bayazid. Prince Khalil-Sultan was sent back to Samarqand.

Timur himself went by six easy stages to Qutahiyah, where a month was spent enjoying the victory celebrations. Taking council with his ministers, Timur allocated winter pastures, provinces, and towns to the chiefs of his army, and they departed with their hordes to their winter quarters.

By the end of the year Timur had pushed on to the shores of the Aegean to besiege the Christian stronghold of Smyrna. This port had been won back from the Turks in 1344 by the Knights of St. John (who held Rhodes during the fourteenth century), with Venetian and Cypriot support. Smyrna thus became the last independent Christian stronghold in Rum, a sanctuary for Christians and a challenge to the Turks, on the western limits of Asia. The Ottoman emperor Murad had failed to reduce it, and his son Bayazid was reputed to have besieged it for seven years without success. The challenge was irresistible to Timur. His campaign would be crowned by a truly holy war against the infidel.

He sent envoys demanding the submission of the Knights Hospitallers; they refused, strengthened by their confidence in the help they would receive from the Admiral of the Knights in Rhodes, from the princes of Europe, and in their practically invulnerable position on a rocky promontory jutting out into the sea.

Anxious to avoid a long siege, Timur summoned his armies from their winter quarters. In December, 1402, he invested the Christian city with the enthusiasm of a Ghazi. (Facing Smyrna, across the Aegean islands, was the homeland from which another conqueror, Alexander, had set out seventeen centuries before, to conquer Asia.)

The task was, as usual, divided between the different emirs and army chiefs, each vying with the other. On the water side Emir Shah Malik drove piles into the sea and erected a scaffolding for planks which formed a roadway, wide enough for the troops to manoeuvre as if on land. By land and by sea, Christian Smyrna was isolated. Siege machines were built, great wheeled structures which were rolled into the ditch close to the ramparts, supporting two hundred men at a time. From there ladders emerged for climbing the walls. Mounds were also piled up, and from their summits arrows with greek-fire were shot into the centre of the town. Masses of beams and timber were set alight by the base of the fortification to weaken the structure. After two weeks a general assault was declared, but the resistance was as determined as the attack. Both sides seemed indefatigable. Timur directed operations personally. There were heavy rains at the time and it seemed as if the city were about to be submerged in a second deluge. Eventually the walls, in which breaches had been made by the sappers, gave, and the Tatars poured through, sabre in hand. The operation against infidel Smyrna set the seal of a holy war on the whole campaign, and the soldiers cut down everyone they found in the city, collecting the heads of Christians as tokens of their righteous victory.

The defence was collapsing, when ships with reinforcements for the Knights Hospitallers appeared on the horizon. As they approached, Timur ordered the heads of victims be cast on board the vessels. The throwers of greek-fire carried out this order; Christian heads were launched as ammunition and landed on board the ships. The Knights recognized their fellows and withdrew to safer waters. (Arabshah, who described with passion the ordeal of Islamic Anatolia at the hands of the Tatars, paid little attention to the capture of Smyrna from the Christian Knights.)

The last outpost of the Crusaders in Hither Asia fell to the Tatar Hordes. Where Bayazid had failed, Timur had succeeded. The Tatar Conqueror

had proved to the world of Islam that he was the supreme Ghazi, the greatest Warrior of the Faith.

After the defeat of the Sultan Bayazid at Angora, the emirates seized by him were restored. Seven dethroned princes who had taken refuge with Timur were reinstated in their territories as his vassals. Amongst them was Emir Muhammad, Prince of Qaraman, who was released from the prison where he had been cast by Bayazid. Prince Isfandiar of Sinope and Qastamuniyah came to render his submission to the Conqueror.

The fall of Smyrna was followed by the submission of the Genoese lords of the island of Chios, a station on the sea-route to the Levant used by pilgrims and merchants. The ruler of the island of Lesbos added his submission.

Together with the victory despatches that had been sent out to the furthest corners of the empire, summonses had gone off to the Regent of Constantinople and to Pera. They were required to render their submission and to pay their tribute. An embassy came back with alacrity in September, on behalf of Constantinople and Pera, joined also by an embassy from the Venetians. The names of two of the envoys have survived in correspondence: Barthelemy Rosso and Janot Lomellino. Constantinople, the last relic of Byzantium, offered submission, and agreed to pay an annual tribute. The envoys bore gifts of precious stones and gold florins. They requested for their part further help against the Ottoman Turks, and a treaty was arranged.

There was little love lost between the Genoese colony at Pera and the Byzantine rulers of Constantinople. According to the captain of one Genoese galley, Regent John was a lazy type, staying in bed all day; under him the city was sadly misgoverned. Nevertheless, the Genoese joined in the submission and the standard of Timur the Tatar Conqueror flew from the Pera heights over the Golden Horn.

Ambassadors were sent to find Sulayman Chelebi, who had escaped to Europe, and the other sons of Bayazid; they were offered the remnants of their father's dominions on condition of their submission. Sulayman Chelebi was commanded either to present himself at the court of Timur, or to send his tribute, otherwise the Tatar army would cross the water to seek him out. With very little delay Timur's court was joined by the return envoys of Sulayman Chelebi accompanied by the Grand Qadi of the Ottoman empire who had served under Bayazid; they brought quantities of gifts, including horses and gold florins. Sulayman was prepared to accept the European provinces in fief: Since our father Bayazid, said the message from Sulayman Chelebi, has been treated honourably

by you, we have no fear for ourselves, and await only the moment when we can demonstrate our respect and risk our life in your service. Sulayman Chelebi was confirmed as governor of the Turkish provinces in Europe, and was sent yarliqs, a crown, and a robe of honour. Adrianople became his capital.

The original patrimony of the Ottomans, in the north-west of the Anatolian peninsular, with the capital of Brusa, was awarded to Isa Chelebi, in fief. Mehmed Chelebi continued resistance in the north-east of the peninsular, north of Sivas, but he too sent an envoy to Timur. It was not long before a shaykh arrived at Timur's court, on behalf of Ottoman emirs who had escaped, to negotiate a ransom for Bayazid Yilderim. Timur the Lame said that he would agree to the release of the Ottoman Sultan on payment of nine thousand golden florins. The shaykh departed to raise the sum. The sons of Bayazid were deliberately set at each other's throats. Years of strife followed between them in which they disputed their father's diminished patrimony.

Timur also received at this time the two ambassadors Paya de Sotomayor and Hernan Sanchez, who had been sent by Henry III of Castile and Leon to discover the strength of the Ottoman and Tatar Emperors. Timur knew something of Christian Spain and the Islamic kingdom of Granada from Ibn Khaldun, amongst others. He entertained the ambassadors well and sent them back to Europe accompanied by his own envoy Hajji Muhammad, doubtless on a similar mission of enquiry. With them he sent a friendly letter, gifts, and two Christian women who had been captured with the harem of Bayazid, whom, said Clavijo, "Timur now sent back for safe keeping". Hajji Muhammad, Timur's envoy, went to Spain, and set out again the following year (May, 1403) for Timur's court. He was accompanied by a second Spanish embassy, consisting of Fray Alfonso Paez de Santa Maria, a master of theology, Gomez de Salazar, one of the Royal Guards, and Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo, Chamberlain to His Highness Don Henry of Castile and Leon. Gomez de Salazar could not support the rigours of the journey and died at Nishapur on the way out.

To Charles VI of France returned the energetic Archbishop John II of Sultaniya. He had followed the Tatar court through Asia Minor to Angora. The archbishop was probably more impressed with the importance of his own mission than was Timur. While the neutrality or help of the western kings was desirable in times of conflict with Bayazid, little in fact could be expected from these penurious European princes, divided amongst themselves, feeble warriors—in fact, tajiks. Archbishop John, unlike the Spanish envoys, departed empty-handed as he had come,

so far as gifts were concerned. He was of little consequence, according to Tatar standards.

The archbishop himself claimed much for his mission: he was at the Tatar court together with the friars Francis and Alexander; through their representations to Timur the treatment of Christians by the Tatars was considerably mollified. "He does not harm Christians—especially Latins (Catholics)—and receives them well; merchants in particular are allowed to go about their business and worship as if they were in Christian-dom." It is, however, not at all certain that the archbishop and his friends received a personal audience with Timur and spoke with him, although it is possible that they were admitted on one occasion or another to Timur's presence. Most, if not all, of the information given later by the archbishop could have been gathered by a general attendance at court and by contact with the Chaghatay emirs. He made many well-founded observations, but in some details the archbishop was inaccurate or ill-informed. For example, he reported that Timur's lameness was in the left arm and leg, instead of in the right. He reported that the deposed prince Miranshah (by whom the archbishop may have been received), was a man of all the Christian graces, was beloved throughout the court of his father, and would certainly become the ruler after the death of Timur.⁵

However, Friar John brought with him at least one letter from Timur's court and another from Prince Miranshah. The letter from Timur, preserved in the French archives, was written in Persian on a long narrow piece of paper, with but fourteen lines of writing.⁶ Timur's names form the first line, those of the French king appear in the margin of the second line. The letter is entirely without decoration, except for the name of the French king, which was written first in red and then retraced in golden ink. It said that the preacher monk Francis had delivered the royal letters and reported on the greatness of the French king, and his victories over the common enemy. Monk John of Sultaniya was now being sent back and would relate everything that had happened. It asked that merchants should be exchanged between the two countries and be received with honour and respect. The world would be the better for their commerce. With cursory greetings, the letter was dated August 1st, 1402. Sylvestre de Sacy, who edited the letter, commented that even the meanest of princes would not write a letter thus unadorned, in such an abrupt and faulty style. However, on the last line of the letter is stamped Timur's seal, and on the back, at the bottom of the paper, another seal, somewhat smaller. The three circles in the form of a triangle can be made out, and the two words in Persian, not in themselves legible, could be "Rasti-Rusti", Timur's device, "Truth is Safety".

Together with this there is in the archives a very free Latin "translation", probably by Archbishop John, which adds "Given near Sivas" to the date August 1st, 1402. The order for the letter was evidently given to one of Timur's secretaries (by the Conqueror himself or an emir) when the camp was still at Sivas, but it was not carried out until after the battle of Angora (July 28th). In the "translation", which is embellished with more courtesies to the King of France than are contained in the original, and which is more flattering to John himself, "Archbishop of all the Orient", there is mentioned the great victory over Bayazid, a point which does not appear in the original. In fact the Latin differs so greatly from the Persian text that it may have been based on another letter altogether.³ However, there must have been very few who could challenge the accuracy of John's version.

A Latin "translation" of another letter exists in the French archives, from Prince Miranshah. It is similar in content to the translation of Timur's letter, records the victory over Bayazid, and urges full facilities for merchants; it mentions, however, that Archbishop John of all the Orient had earlier given service by acting as envoy to Genoa and to Venice. Similar letters, from Timur and from Miranshah, were received by King Henry IV of England—for the answers to them have been preserved.⁷ It seems likely that there was only one original of the letter of Miranshah, which was addressed in general to the "sovereigns and republics of the Franks". The archbishop used his own discretion as to the Latin form which was conveyed in each individual case.

Archbishop John made an impression in Paris in May 1403. John's credentials from Timur, it was bruited, were written in golden ink. In the chapel of the royal lodge, in the presence of the king, and the dukes of Berry, Orleans, Bourbon, Brittany, and many other personages, he gave a discourse on his journey, Timur's victory over the common enemy Bayazid, the subsequent release by the Tatar of the Turk's Christian captives. He emphasized the advantages of encouraging commerce with the empire of the Conqueror. The archbishop also composed a *Mémoire*, which was circulated amongst the French court, about the achievements and life of Timur.⁸

The Christian archbishop made no mention of Smyrna. The following year, still with the object of encouraging commercial activity with the east, the archbishop composed in Latin a guide for merchant caravans: *Libellus de Notitia Orbis*.⁹

Charles sent a letter of felicitation to Timur on his victory, welcoming the proposal that merchants should travel and conduct their affairs without hindrance, and thanking the Conqueror for the kindnesses shown

to Christians. This reply, in Latin, is dated July 15th, 1403, and appears likewise to be the work of Friar John.

Henry IV of England, who had only recently seized his throne, was anxious for recognition by other potentates. He addressed a letter of congratulation to the victor of Angora, and welcomed the offer made through the Archbishop John for the interchange of merchants between their lands. Another cordial letter from Henry IV to Miranshah thanked him for the security afforded to Christian merchants, both as regards their own persons and their dealings. This letter, too, by its style and content, seems to have been inspired or composed by Archbishop John.

An imperial despatch of no uncertain origin or authority had been sent to Sultan Faraj in Egypt: By the grace of Allah, said this despatch from Timur, the empire of Anatolia has been reduced to submission. We order you to return Atilmish to our court, to have money struck in our name, and to include our name in the Khutba. If, inspired by your evil genius, you dare to delay, we shall not hesitate to appear before Cairo, at the head of our victorious army, on our return from the land of the Ottomans. The ambassador who carried this communication also bore the news of Timur's victory to Syria, with orders for public rejoicing.

Malik al-Nasir Faraj, Sultan of Egypt and Syria, found it prudent to render his submission. Atilmish was released and sent back, with ambassadors who brought a humble missive. Faraj regretted the errors of his father and himself, and consented to send tribute annually. The august titles of Timur were read in the Friday prayer, and money was minted in his name. The ambassadors came with quantities of coin in gold and silver, gems, belts, materials of Alexandria, sabres of Cairo, fine horses, and other gifts. Sultan Ahmad Jalayir, who had fled south from Rum, as well as Qara Yusuf, prince of the Black Sheep Turkoman, were held in custody by Faraj, awaiting Timur's instructions.

One great blow had destroyed the Ottoman Turk and had brought the Sultan of Egypt to his knees. The last two great empires of Islam had submitted to the Sahib Qiran, Lord of the Fortunate Conjunction. The emperor Manuel Palaeologus, summoned by Timur, hurried back from the west to his throne in Constantinople. The Byzantine capital, and Christendom, were saved from the Turks for another half-century.

Relief amongst the other princes of the Balkans, however, quickly turned to fear. They were panic-stricken at the thought of a Tatar landing on European soil. Rumours of the Lame Conqueror's plans to overrun Europe and Africa spread on both sides of the Mediterranean. Sulayman Chelebi, seeking some security, offered Gallipoli, together with a fleet, to

the Byzantine emperor in exchange for a peace treaty. But the emperor dared not accept.

Nor were the Catholic princes rid of the Turkish threat. The Ottoman capital was moved from Brusa in Asia Minor to Adrianople in Europe; the Balkans became the principal field of operations of the Ottoman Turks and the basis for the drive against Central Europe which was to continue for three centuries.

For his part, Timur was content to leave the defence of the western marches of Islam in the hands of Sulayman Chelebi; this prince would be well occupied in dealing with any threats from the Christian west, in which Timur had no interest. "For the mediaeval Muslim from Andalusia to Persia, Christian Europe was still an outer darkness of barbarism and unbelief, from which the sunlit world of Islam had little to fear and less to learn."¹⁰

As for the Mamluks of Egypt, nothing was to be gained from their further humiliation. In the season following the battle of Angora and the submission of Faraj, the Nile flooded. The harvests failed. Deaths from hunger were numerous amongst the poor. There was famine in Egypt. Famine was followed by plague.

Timur's troops, levied for a seven years' campaign, had all western Asia from Samarqand to the islands of the Aegean at their feet, in fewer than five years. From the waters of the Aegean, Timur turned back across Asia to launch the holy war against China, twice as far away again.

NOTES

¹ The Tatars gave the name "Franks" to Europeans in general.

² Marino Sanudo: *Vitae Ducum Venetorum, 1421-1439*, in L. A. Muratori: *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*.

³ I. Umnyakov: *Little-known French Sources About Timur*, 1958.

⁴ Ibn Arabshah: *Tamerlane*.

⁵ Silvestre de Sacy: *Mémoire sur une Correspondance Inédite de Tamerlan avec Charles VI*, 1822.

⁶ M. Qazvini: *Review and Facsimile of Letter to Charles VI*, Bombay, 1928.

⁷ H. Ellis: *Original Letters Illustrative of English History*, 1846.

⁸ *Mémoire sur Tamerlan et Sa Cour*, pub. H. Moranvillé, 1894.

⁹ *Libellus de Notitia Orbis*, tr. in part by A. Kern, 1938.

¹⁰ B. Lewis: "Muslim Discovery of Europe", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 1957.

THE CELESTIAL EMPIRE

THE twenty centuries of civilization in China that had preceded the Chingizid conquest had also been centuries of intermittent alliance or conflict with nomadic tribes. These tribes disputed with the peoples of China the control of substantial northern territories. The efficacy of the Great Wall, originally constructed in the third century B.C., when China was first united, depended on the strength and policy of the dynasty in power. By the first century B.C., the Wall, with its series of watch towers, protective fortresses, and garrison stations, stretched from the Yellow Sea to the Tarim Basin.¹

The peasant armies raised by the first emperor were said to have been numbered in half-millions, and the labour gangs employed on the Great Wall and on trunk roads, in hundreds of thousands. Tradition also says that a million men died in building the Wall. Some rulers found it more profitable to treat with the nomad chiefs than to repulse their attacks. Embassies from the northern hordes were royally received by them. In return for pastoral products the nomads were presented with thousands of bolts of silk and other gifts of value. In Chinese annals the products brought by the envoys of nomad princes, or foreign rulers in general, were referred to as "tribute", although these came frequently from rulers who in no way regarded themselves as vassals of the Chinese.

In the twelfth century A.D. the Sung dynasty (which in its early days had bought peace from the tribes of the north-east, the Khitay, at a heavy price), succumbed to the attacks of the Golden Tatars, known as the Kin. The Kin Tatars established themselves in the north of the empire with Peking as their capital, while the Sung were driven to the south. This was the situation when the hordes of Chingiz began the invasion of China in 1211. By this time the power of the Kin Tatars was much reduced, and the Mongols drove quickly to the Great Wall, seizing Peking in 1215. The palaces of the former rulers were set on fire during the battle, and blazed for a month. When Chingiz died in 1227, the whole area north of the Huang Ho (Yellow River) had been captured. Ogedey succeeded his father as Great Khan, and continued the attack on the Kin south of the Huang Ho. With the aid of the southern Sung he defeated them and ended Kin rule. The southern Sung had hoped to regain the territories they had lost to the Golden Tatars, but they were disappointed. The Mongols remained south of the river, and the governorship of these

provinces fell to Khubilay, brother of the Great Khan Monke. Hulagu, another brother, set off on the campaign against western Asia; Monke and Khubilay turned their attacks against the southern Sung. On the death of Monke during the campaign, Khubilay succeeded to the title of Great Khan—not, however, without opposition from a fourth brother. Khubilay resumed the conquest of the Sung empire. Resistance was stubborn, and it was not until 1279 that the Mongols encircled the last Sung base.

For the first time, the whole of China had fallen to the nomad invader. Having established himself as the ruler of China and Mongolia, Khubilay abandoned the nomadic life and settled. He moved the imperial residence from Qaraqorum, and established his capital at Peking, which was renamed Tatu—Great Capital. The city was more widely known, however, as Khanbaliq, the City of the Khan. He adopted the dynastic title of Yuan, and of the four empires conquered by the seed of Chingiz, his was the greatest. Unlike the houses of Juchi (Golden Horde), of Hulagu (in Persia and Iraq), and of Chaghatay (Central Asia), neither Khubilay nor his descendants adopted the faith of Islam.

By the second half of the thirteenth century the whole of Asia had become a Mongol highway. The Mongol khans were interested in the products of commerce, and were attached to no religious dogma; along the continental and maritime routes, therefore, missions and merchants from the Catholic west, as well as from the lands of Islam, flowed into China. The result of the first missionary efforts of Christendom was not promising. Carpini (1245-47) brought back a reply to the Pope from the Great Khan Guyuk, the original of which is in the Vatican archives, dated 1246. In the letter Guyuk pointed out to the Pope that, from the rising of the sun to its setting, all lands had been made subject to the Mongol Great Khan. How could this have been done except by the will of God? The Pope was therefore ordered to come at the head of the princes of Europe to do homage to the khan. "If you do not observe God's command, and disobey Our command, We shall know you as Our enemy."²

After this unpromising beginning the missionary and diplomatic efforts of Christendom were rewarded by the establishment of Catholic sees at Khanbaliq and at Zayton, the southern port, which lasted as long as the power of the Yuan. The merchants of Genoa and of Venice tried to take advantage of the opening of the Levant to establish themselves along the continental and sea routes. The Genoese attempt to operate a fleet in the Indian Ocean failed, and their overland bases did not extend beyond the Volga, although the *Merchant's Handbook* of Pegolotti shows how keen the interest was in commercial links with China. Elsewhere in Europe,

reports such as Marco Polo's of the wealth and civilization of China were received as fables and soon forgotten.

The main advantages of the tolerant religious policy of the Mongols were reaped by the Muslims. Since the eighth century A.D., Muslim traders had established links with China and numbers had settled there. The routes leading to China were described in the ninth century by the Arab geographer Ibn Khurdadhbih; he gave accounts of the sea route as well as the transcontinental stages via Khorasan and Mawarannahr. Under the Mongols the Muslim communities in China increased in substance and authority, especially in the interior of the country, in those provinces served by the Silk Road. The steppe nomads were not competent to administer the Chinese economy, and, unwilling to rely only on Chinese ministers, they utilized the services of administrators, financiers, and merchants from abroad, the majority of them Muslims, and many from the regions of Central Asia. Commercial opportunities were not neglected and a numerous Muslim population settled in the north-west province of Kansu, where the transcontinental caravans assembled. Muslims became the merchant bankers of China during the Mongol period. When Ibn Battuta visited China in the thirteen-forties as envoy of the Sultan of Delhi, he found that in every Chinese city there was a quarter for Muslims, with mosques for the Friday services and other religious purposes. The Muslims were "honoured and respected".

But while the Mongol noble and Muslim banker prospered, Chinese peasants and craftsmen bore the burden of labour and taxation. Most artisans were employed by the nobles, the army, or the government in the "official" workshops, and were issued with provisions barely sufficient to sustain them. Peasants paid land taxes, poll taxes, and household taxes; they paid in silver, silk, and grain, and their horses were seized for the army. The impoverished borrowed, and the Mongol lords and Muslim bankers lent readily at extortionate rates. When debtors failed to pay, their livestock, wives, and children were confiscated. Fiefs were seized on a grand scale and given to nobles and officials. The Mongols were slow to appreciate the importance of agriculture, and irrigation work and measures against flooding were neglected. In the north the Mongol nobles converted the hundreds of thousands of acres of cultivated land into pasture. Famine, followed by epidemic, was frequent.

Civil unrest occurred from the beginning of the Yuan dynasty. One of Khubilay's ministers reported to him that in the ten years since the southern provinces had submitted to the throne, attempts to put down rebellions there had never been entirely successful. Marco Polo, in the midst of his description of the splendours of Khanbaliq, paused to

mention the rebellious disposition of the inhabitants. He described a revolt against a Muslim minister whose numerous acts of injustice and "flagrant wickedness" against Chinese families had become unendurable. The Yuan dynasty degenerated, and in the fourteenth century its representatives were not merely quarrelsome and debauched, but incapable. Discontent found expression in secret societies like the Buddhist White Lotus Sect, and in peasant movements like the Red Turbans, who staged a rising in 1351 along the lower reaches of the Yangtse. Revolt against the Mongols became general. A peasant leader arose, "a man of grotesque appearance but great ability",³ who proved a most able soldier. He captured Nanking, eliminated rivals, and destroyed the main Mongol forces in the south. In 1368 this peasant general, Chu Yuan-chang, was proclaimed emperor in Nanking (which he made his capital), and in the same year led an expedition north to capture Peking (Khanbaliq). The Mongol emperor fled and took refuge in Mongolia. In the ten years that followed the Chinese destroyed the remnants of Mongol strength in China. An expedition into Mongolia destroyed Qaraqorum in 1380. The city was never rebuilt.

The new emperor took the reign title of Hung-Wu, and founded the Ming dynasty. Having expelled the Mongol rulers and their agents, Hung-Wu restored the Chinese administrative code and Chinese administrators. Considerable success attended the measures for the rehabilitation of agriculture and the reclamation of idle land for arable farming.

Emperor Hung-Wu was anxious to secure recognition by foreign powers, to restore former allegiances to China, and to strengthen the channels of communication which had declined through the disorders in the Mongol empires around the middle of the fourteenth century. He sent many envoys with imperial manifestoes to invite rulers of neighbouring and distant countries to send embassies.

"Since the Sung dynasty had lost the throne and Heaven had cut off their sacrifice, the Yuan dynasty had risen from the desert to enter and rule over China for more than a hundred years, when Heaven, wearied of their misgovernment and debauchery, thought also fit to turn their fate to ruin, and the affairs of China were in a state of disorder for eighteen years. But when the nation began to arouse itself, We, a simple peasant of Huai-yu, conceived the patriotic idea to save the people, and it pleased the Creator to grant that Our civil and military officers effected their passage eastward to the left side of the River . . . We have established peace in the empire and restored the old boundaries of our Middle Land. We were selected by Our people to occupy the imperial throne of China . . . We have sent officers to all the foreign kingdoms with the manifesto . . .

Although We are not equal in Our wisdom to our ancient rulers whose virtue was recognized all over the universe, We cannot but let the world know Our intention to maintain peace within the four seas. It is on this ground alone that We have issued this manifesto . . .” The annals of the Ming dynasty, the “Ming Shi”, where the manifesto is recorded, add that the ambassadors were provided with presents of silk for transmission to the country concerned, which thereafter sent an embassy with “tribute”.⁴

There is little doubt that in the 1370s Timur, the newly established prince of Mawarannahr, received envoys with a similar manifesto. The Ming annals remark that Mawarannahr was a country which had always had intercourse with China. (Since the times of the Han, each dynasty had its own history, which successors compiled from the contemporary court records.) Troubled times did not seem to affect trade relations, for caravans came from the east despite Timur’s periodic raids into Moghulistan. In fact the caravan trade between Central Asia and China obtained a new stimulus; detailed accounts of routes and distances appear in the court histories of the Timurids.

The communications of the Ming emperor demanded recognition and “tribute”, and the Chinese records note several occasions when embassies arrived from Timur’s court with “tribute”. In 1387 a Muslim envoy, Maulana Hafiz, arrived from Mawarannahr offering fifteen horses and two camels, after which, says the Ming Shi, horses and camels came every year. In 1392 lengths of velvet, swords and armour were also sent from Samarqand. For his part the Chinese emperor sent presents of precious stones and Chinese banknotes. This was the period during which Timur’s main preoccupation was with the destruction of Tokhtamish, Khan of the Golden Horde.

It seems, however, that the merchant caravans from Samarqand were already suspect in China. In 1388, during a Chinese expedition against the Mongols, several hundred Muslim merchants from Samarqand fell into the hands of the Ming commander and were taken prisoner. Emperor Hung-Wu ordered that they be sent back to Mawarannahr. This incident did not stop the traffic, for at the same time as Timur’s envoys were delivering their velvets and arms in 1392, more merchants from Mawarannahr arrived in Kansu with horses for sale. On orders from the Ming emperor the horses were driven to his capital. At the same time the governor of Kansu received urgent orders to expel the Muslim merchants, who had become very numerous in that province in the times of the Yuan. Over twelve hundred, according to the Chinese records, set out for Samarqand, joining Timur’s embassy on its return journey. Fearful

reports began to circulate regarding the oppression of Muslims in China.

Official missions and merchant caravans were among the usual means of gathering intelligence, and those despatched from Mawarannahr had a diversity of assignments. In 1404, envoys and a caravan, some eight hundred camels strong, arrived in Samarqand from China. Timur proceeded to obtain from "certain men who had travelled from Khanbaliq with those ambassadors, as from those who had come in charge of the caravan of camels, exact information concerning the many strange peculiarities in the country over which the (Ming) emperor was lord, with details of the great wealth and number of the Chinese people. In particular one Tatar merchant who had been allowed to stay in Khanbaliq six months described it as twenty time larger than Tabriz." This man also reported that the emperor, when he left his realm with his hosts to make war, was so strong that he could leave four hundred thousand horsemen and numerous foot regiments behind to guard his realm . . . "many were the wonderful facts told about Khanbaliq and the country of China . . ." ⁵

However, in the early thirteen-nineties, Timur had still not destroyed his main enemy Tokhtamish, and a letter sent by the Sahib Qiran to Emperor Hung-Wu, which was received in 1394, was full of gracious goodwill. It was accompanied by a gift or "tribute" of two hundred horses. "The splendour of your reign," wrote Timur to Hung-Wu, "is bright like the heavenly mirror, and lights up the kingdoms, the adjoining as well as the far . . . Your Majesty has graciously allowed the merchants of distant countries to come to China to carry on trade. Foreign envoys have had a chance of admiring the wealth of your cities and the strength of your power . . . Owing to your solicitude there have been established post-stations to facilitate the intercourse of foreigners with China, and all the nations of distant countries are allowed to profit by this convenience. . . ." ⁶ The style of this letter, with its many compliments in similar vein, pleased the Ming emperor, and Timur's envoys on their return were accompanied by a Chinese embassy led by An Chi tao, a man of some distinction. They travelled by the route north of the Tien-shan through Semirechye, Land of the Seven Rivers.

By the time the envoys were received, the situation had changed. Tokhtamish had been destroyed during the Five-Year Campaign. Timur and the Tatar hordes had returned to Mawarannahr in 1396 after their victories in Persia, Iraq and the Qipchaq steppes. Timur was not only embellishing his capital with his booty but making dispositions for future campaigns. In 1397, he was in camp in the eastern marches of the kingdom near Tashkent. Probably with dynastic, and certainly with strategic;

considerations in mind, he was awaiting the arrival from Moghulistan of a princess of the Chaghatay blood-royal, daughter of the Moghul khan Khizr-khoja. The marriage feast sparkled with a lavish display of wealth. The new queen, Tukul-khanum, was raised to the position in the imperial household of "Kichik Khanum"—Lesser Lady, second only to Saray-Mulk-khanum, the old empress.

The marriage celebrations were accompanied by other strategic activities. The grandson and heir, Muhammad-Sultan, was appointed to the governorship of the eastern regions of Mawarannahr, with orders to push the frontier posts further into Moghulistan. Border areas were to be pacified, outposts and forward bases established, in preparation for operations whose direction appeared to lie along the northern route to China through Semirechye. This route, with the relatively good steppe on the northern slopes of the Celestial Mountains, and daily grazing in season for mounts, was the only one of the three variants capable of supporting a vast army. The crossing over the Sir-Darya at Banakath (destroyed by Chingiz-khan) was restored, and several fortresses were built. One such fortress was established on the Ashpara river, between the Sir-Darya and the Issik-kul Lake, and another further east by the lake itself. The prince was given distinguished support in this work, that of the emirs Hajji Sayf al-din, Berdi-bek, Husayni Khudaydad, and Shams al-din, together with a force of forty thousand troops. These bases were strongly equipped and were subsequently manned by levies from Iraq, Azarbayjan, and India; and by horsemen from Fars and Khorasan. A tuman of Chaghatay troops stiffened these forces.

Orders were given for the restoration of agriculture, which had fallen into decay in those regions during the disorders earlier in the century, and as a direct result of the Moghul hostility to agriculture and to settled populations. Provisions additional to pasturage were needed by the armies en route, and Khizr-khoja, khan of the Moghuls, had been approached to help with supplies.

Timur was engaged in these preparations, and in the marriage celebrations with the Moghul princess, in 1398. He had been at his headquarters near Tashkent, when ambassador An of China arrived. An and his gifts were suitably received, but the embassy was not allowed to return home. Instead, the Sahib Qiran boasted of his power, and by way of impressing the envoys sent them under escort on a tour of his dominions. They visited Tabriz, Isfahan, Shiraz, Herat, and other cities. When they returned to Samarqand they had been absent from home six years. The envoy An, unable to agree to propositions put to him by Timur, was still detained. (An Chi tao eventually returned home after an absence of twelve

years. He wrote a number of poems *On Curious Things Seen on a Journey to the West*, which were published in the early seventeenth century.)

This unfriendly act against the Ming was not an isolated incident in the period when Timur and Khizr-khoja had come to terms. In 1397 the Ming emperor wrote to Khizr-khoja complaining of the detention of an envoy in Moghulistan: "Since the time I ascended the throne, my officers at the frontier have never thrown obstacles in the way of foreign merchants who come to traffic with China, and I have given orders that the foreigners might be treated kindly by my people. Thus the foreign merchants realize great benefits, and there is no trouble at the frontier. Our flowery land is a great power, and we show kindness to your country. Why then has the envoy I sent you some years ago in order to establish friendly terms been retained? Last year I ordered all the Muslim merchants from Bishbaliq (in Moghulistan) who had come to China to be retained until my envoy should be released. However, I allowed them to carry on trade in our country. Subsequently, when they complained of their having left their families at home, I let them return home. Now I send again an envoy to you that you may know my benevolence. Do not shut up the way to our frontier, and do not give rise to war . . ." According to the Ming Shi the envoy in question, who had come on his mission without gifts, was released and sent home.

In 1398, it had appeared that the idolaters of India were in more urgent need of punishment than those of China. Disorders enfeebled the Delhi sultanate and Prince Pir-Muhammad, son of Jahangir and ruler of the Afghan empire which included Ghazni, Kunduz, Kabul, and Qandahar, was already putting the Punjab city of Multan to siege.

As the imperial court of Timur moved south across the Hindu Kush it had been followed by envoys from Qipchaq princes and by Mongol pretenders to the throne of China. It had also been followed by dispossessed Yuan nobles who disputed amongst themselves their original patrimony. One such Mongol fugitive, Khan Oljay-Temur, received sanctuary at Timur's court. Another Mongol prince, Tayzi-oghlan, who joined the court in Kabul on the way to India, was with Timur in Samarqand in 1404 and set out east with him in 1405.

The Indian campaign had not been of long duration. When Timur came back in 1399, he turned his back on the east for a second time, and went instead to settle accounts with Miranshah, his son, with the Sultan of Egypt, and with the Ottoman sultan Bayazid. The old man had left Muhammad-Sultan for a time in charge of Samarqand, while another grandson, Iskandar son of Omar-Shaykh, ruled in Farghana. This was the occasion when Iskandar brought disgrace on himself, forestalling the

heir-elect by leading an expedition into Moghulistan. Using the forces of Ashpara and Farghana, he had penetrated the Tarim basin, subduing the oases of Kashghar, Aqsu, and Khotan. Commercial activities were flourishing along this route, and the city dignitaries of Aqsu were able to ransom their lives through the mediation of the rich Chinese merchants in the town.

At the end of 1399, when Timur had reached the grazing grounds of the Qarabagh in the eastern Caucasus, he received the not unwelcome news that the Tonguz Khan—the “Pig” Emperor of China, as he is termed in the court chronicles—had passed to the judgement of Allah, after a long reign professing idolatry and persecuting the Muslims. The reports mentioned the massacre of “a hundred thousand” of the faithful, and the elimination of Islam from China. It was also reported that the Ming succession was in dispute, that the country was in revolt, and that there was confusion in the Chinese empire.

Emperor Hung-Wu, founder of the Ming dynasty, had died in 1399, leaving the Celestial Empire to his sixteen-year-old grandson. The old Ming emperor, in anticipation of trouble from his surviving sons, had dismissed them to the government of various provinces throughout China. His fourth son, nevertheless, had risen in revolt and was successfully combating the forces of the heir.

Meanwhile Timur continued his operations against Georgia. He continued, too, the negotiations with the rulers of Syria and Egypt, with the Ottoman Bayazid, with Byzantium and the Catholic West, and with the lesser princes of the Levant. He could afford to allow conditions to deteriorate in China. But immediately after the victory over Bayazid at Angora (1402), Khalil-Sultan, the prince who had distinguished himself in the India campaign, had been despatched back to Mawarannahr to take command of the eastern marches, the frontier region.

By the end of 1402, Timur had sanctified the western campaign by the destruction of the infidel Christian stronghold at Smyrna. From the beginning of 1403, and from the shores of the Aegean, he contemplated expunging the rest of his sins by crossing the Asian continent to bring judgement upon the idolaters of China, the Celestial Empire whose wealth had for two thousand years been a challenge to her nomad neighbours. In the eighth century A.D. the Orkhon inscriptions had spoken of “the Chinese people who have in abundance gold, silver, millet and silk . . . and have at their disposal enervating riches, they have drawn the far-dwelling peoples nearer to them . . . ”⁷

Now the heads of the Tatar horses were turned east, en route for the plunder which would exceed everything acquired by Timur and his

hordes on previous expeditions. For China in the early fifteenth century was the richest country on earth.

Along with the baggage trains of loot and captives from Asia Minor were sent the levies to garrison the eastern outposts and to provide forces for the next operations. Among them were tribes of Black Sheep Turkomans, some thirty or forty thousand tents (households) strong. These had been tributary to Bayazid, but had been a frequent thorn in his flesh. Many had resisted Timur in the important Sivas region, which commanded the approaches in the east to Armenia and Azarbayjan, in the south to Syria, and Iraq, and in the west to Asia Minor. These tribes were now being transferred to Moghulistan to re-people that country and to serve the needs of the China campaign. Timur had promised to lead them back to the lands of their ancestors, but, in case the horde was not sufficiently attracted by this promise, measures had been taken to prevent their escape, measures including, according to Arabshah, the confiscation of their weapons. This did not prevent the flight of numbers of Black Sheep Turkomans when the convoys were in transit. A revolt also took place when they were passing along the mountainous route of Mazandaran, south of the Caspian. Clavijo, who followed along the same route, saw towers erected from the skulls of the slain Black Sheep tribesmen. The towers were built "in layers, a layer of skulls being set alternately above the layer of clay bricks". Local people told him that frequently flames, as of burning lamps, could be seen on the top of these towers of Tatar skulls. This was a recognized method by which spirits manifested their presence.

Emir Allahdad, in charge of one of these convoys, was sent east to the marches of Ashpara with orders to make an exact survey of the terrain. This emir was required to explain to Timur "the situation of those realms and show the nature of the way through them and the paths and explain to him the nature of their cities and their villages, valleys and mountains, castles and forts, the nearer parts and the remote, the deserts and hills, landmarks and towers, waters and rivers, tribes and families, passes and broad roads, places marked and those without signs of the way, dwelling places and houses for travellers . . . explaining the distances between all the stages and the manner of the journey between all the dwelling places," as far as China. The account was to be plainly written but full, including also the traces of former places, and things which had disappeared, "even to a mouthful of wormwood".

Timur received this account, "bound and reduced to a square shape, showing everything according to his command, to right and left, villages and mountains, sky and earth", while he was still making his way back through Asia Minor.

NOTES

- ¹ A. Stein: *Innermost Asia*, 1925.
- ² C. Dawson: *The Mongol Mission*, 1955.
- ³ J. Needham: *Science and Civilisation in China*, 1954.
- ⁴ F. Hirth: *China and the Roman Orient*, 1885. The manifesto in question was addressed in 1371 to the western land of Fulin, identified by Hirth as Syria.
- ⁵ Clavijo: *Embassy*.
- ⁶ E. Bretschneider: *Mediaeval Researches from Eastern Asiatic Sources*, 1888.
- ⁷ E. D. Ross: "The Orkhon Inscriptions", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 1928-30.

THE ANGEL IZRAIL

THE Conqueror was half-way across Asia Minor early in 1403 when he received the news that his illustrious captive, Sultan Bayazid Yilderim, the Thunderbolt, was sick. The best court doctors were sent to treat him.

Bayazid Yilderim had been brought before Timur after his capture at the battle of Angora by the nominal Chaghatay khan Sultan Mahmud. The lame Emperor reproached his captive, and told him that he was the cause of his own misfortunes: "The whole world knows what would have happened to me and to my army had matters turned out otherwise: had God favoured you with victory. In spite of this, however, I will not ill-treat you or your men." One tradition holds that Timur smiled when the captive came before him. The Ottoman sultan said that it was ill to mock at one whom God had afflicted. "I smile," replied Timur, "that God should have given the dominion of the world to a blind man like you and a lame man like me."

Bayazid had been reunited with his son Musa, who had also been taken captive. Both were placed in charge of one of the emirs of the Barlas clan. A month of victory celebrations had been spent in the agreeable plain of Qutahiyah, where the air was good, fruits abundant, and the town equipped with pleasure palaces and fountains. The treasure captured thus far had been distributed to the army. Feasting had been enjoyed according to Mongol custom, with normal restraints abandoned. Beautiful prisoners had served the dishes and winecups. Bayazid had been brought into the banqueting so that after the bitterness of his anger he could now taste the sweetness of friendship, according to the court chronicles. He had received a robe of honour, a sceptre, and a crown, the usual patents of office. These overtures may well have stung the prisoner, as if the salt of humiliation were being pressed into his wounds, instead of balm. But there are few grounds for accepting the version of Arabshah that Timur held a public banquet and ordered Bayazid to attend, so that "as soon as the cloud of veils were scattered from the radiance of the cupbearers . . . Ibn Othman (Bayazid) saw that the cupbearers were his consorts and that all of them were his wives and concubines; then all the world seemed black to him . . ." This version adds that Timur ordered the sultan to be brought every day to him to be mocked.

After an attempted escape, Bayazid was kept in chains at night and during the day travelled in a litter surrounded by a grille. This fact,

together with the rhymed prose of Arabshah which said that "the son of Othman fell into a hunter's snare, and became confined like a bird in a cage", gave rise to the later stories that Bayazid was transported in an iron cage as if he were an animal.

From this developed other stories: for instance, that the captured princes were harnessed to the Conqueror's chariot and forced to draw him along—a version favoured by Marlowe:

Holla, ye pamper'd jades of Asia!
What, can ye draw but twenty miles a-day,
And have so proud a chariot at your heels,
And such a coachman as great Tamburlaine?

Bayazid, according to this type of tradition, served as a footstool for the Conqueror. In reality Timur, however, had nothing to gain by failing to treat his prisoner with care and dignity. Amongst other things, both captor and captive were awaiting the return of the shaykh from Bayazid's fugitive emirs; the former anticipating nine thousand gold florins; the latter, perhaps, his freedom. But the shaykh had so far failed to arrive with the Sultan's ransom.

It was while travelling, closely guarded, with the royal baggage train, that Bayazid had fallen sick. He was attended by Timur's own physician, but medical aid failed. Early in March, 1403, "the blessed warrior and martyr, Bayazid Yilderim, was translated to the mercy of Allah the Glorious". His death was attributed by different writers to different causes. Some say he died of gout, others of apoplexy, or gnawed by chagrin, grieving in fetters, or weakened by debauchery; some believe that an attack of quinsy fatally aggravated the asthma from which the Sultan suffered. Many Ottoman sources prefer suicide, whether by poison, or by dashing out his own brains against the bars of his cage. This was also Marlowe's account. In the play, Bayazid's devoted wife Zabina did likewise:

What do mine eyes behold? my husband dead!
His skull all riven in twain! his brains dash'd out,
The brains of Bajazeth, my lord and sovereign!
O Bajazeth! O Turk! O emperor! . . .
. . . . Hell, death, Tamburlaine,
Hell!—Make ready my coach, my chair, my jewels.—I
come, I come, I come!

*(She runs against the cage and brains herself.)*¹

Timur ordered that Bayazid should be buried, with all honours, in the royal Ottoman mausoleum at Brusa.

So far the angel of death had spread his wings with a certain partiality over the camps of the enemy. Many of Timur's opponents, actual or potential, had been gathered up: Qutluq-oghlan, the feckless Qipchaq prince who had succeeded in establishing himself over the emasculated Golden Horde; the Mamluk sultan Barquq of Egypt and Syria; Khizr-khoja, Khan of the Moghuls and father of Timur's "Lesser Queen"; Emperor Hung-Wu of China; and now Sultan Bayazid.

The shadow of the wings had also begun to fall across the Tatar camps. Venerable emirs and comrades in arms of long standing were gone. Emir Sayf al-din had died before the battle of Angora on the way out from Samarqand with Muhammad-Sultan. After the battle of Angora, in the autumn of 1402, Sultan Mahmud, the captor of Bayazid, fine soldier and nominal Chaghatay khan, had fallen sick and died. He had succeeded his father Suyurghatmish as khan in 1388, and his name accompanied that of Timur on the coins and in the Friday prayers. Timur did not instal another Chaghatay khan.

Then, in the spring following Angora, hot on the heels of the news of Bayazid's death, came dire tidings from the camp of Muhammad-Sultan, who was on his way with his troops to join up with the main army. The imperial heir, son of Jahangir and Khan-zada, had been stricken. Muhammad-Sultan, hope of the old Emir, lay dangerously sick. Timur ordered that the body of Bayazid be conveyed with all ceremony to Brusa, then left the baggage train at Aq Shahr to go to the prince. En route he learned that a Turkoman tribe in the area was giving trouble, and ordered troops to the attack; the Turkomans were driven off and their families captured. Another messenger arrived; the prince's condition had deteriorated. Timur pushed ahead and reached the side of his grandson. Muhammad-Sultan was already bereft of speech; he was sinking fast. He was carried in a litter for three days to the camping grounds of Qara Hisar. By the end of the month he too had been translated to the mercy of Allah.

The heir was dead. Not only the court but the army went into mourning. A state procession, with emirs and an escort of horse, accompanied the bier to Avnik, in Armenia, on the road home. Those of the royal household who had spent the winter of 1402-3 in Sultaniya, including the empress, Saray-Mulk-khanum, and Khan-zada, mother of the prince, were summoned to Avnik. The old Emperor pushed eastwards, while his troops hunted out the Turkomans who were still resisting from caves and underground lairs. He was making haste to reach Avnik before the queens arrived. He reached Erzerum, where some of the royal children had come to meet him. At the sight of the children, especially of two of

Muhammad-Sultan's three young sons (aged seven, four, and three), the old man could not keep back his tears.

When Princess Khan-zada was told the news she fell senseless. On recovering she tore her clothes, her hair, and her own cheeks.

The funeral feast was held in Avnik and the lords of Asia assembled for the ceremony. The great drum of the departed prince was sounded for the last time. At the rolling of the beats the entire court, wives, emirs, princes, sages, and soldiers of the imperial army, let forth a wail of lamentation. Then the drum, according to Mongol tradition, was broken in pieces, so that it could not be sounded again in honour of any other prince.

The old man's grief did not modify his progress east nor abate the energy with which he pursued his designs. Three sons of Omar-Shaykh received kingdoms in fief: Pir-Muhammad, who had been earlier condemned for malingering, was restored to grace and received Shiraz once more. His brother Rustam received Isfahan, and Iskandar the impetuous, also restored to favour, received Hamadan. On Abu-Bakr, son of Miranshah, who was "a mighty warrior" according to Thomas of Metsope, was conferred the kingdom of Iraq. The prince was despatched with a considerable force to exterminate bandits and disturbers of the peace. He was ordered to rebuild Baghdad so that it would become again one of the great centres of Islam from which annual pilgrim caravans would leave for Mecca. The first "disturbers of the peace" that had to be repulsed were Sultan Ahmad Jalayir and Qara Yusuf Turkoman, who had returned again to the area when Timur was overrunning Asia Minor. Tahir, the son of Sultan Ahmad, sometime protégé of the King of Georgia, was now disputing with his father the possession of Baghdad. The forces of father and son faced each other across the Tigris. Ahmad sent to Qara Yusuf for aid, crossed the river, and scattered Tahir's forces. The son, trying to escape, was drowned.

Ahmad hurried back to Baghdad to find Qara Yusuf in possession of the ruins. Sultan Ahmad saved his life by hiding, and escaped on an ox, taking refuge in Syria. He, who on his first flight to Cairo had been greeted by singing girls, by courtiers perfumed with saffron; who had walked upon silk cloths and had been showered with gold and silver coins, was now held in custody by Faraj, who awaited the instructions of Timur.

Qara Yusuf then faced the troops of Abu-Bakr supported by Rustam of Isfahan. Together the brothers defeated the Turkoman, capturing his horde and his household. Persian sources state that Qara Yusuf was caught

with but a thousand horsemen at his back, but nevertheless managed to hold out a day and a night against the thirty thousand horsemen of Abu-Bakr and Rustam.² The *Zafar-nama* reverses the odds, saying that the young princes with three thousand horse put to flight ten to fifteen thousand of the Black Sheep Turkoman tribes. However, Qara Yusuf "Joseph-like directed his steps to Egypt", where Sultan Ahmad had already received sanctuary. When the Egyptian sultan Faraj made his submission to Timur, he placed Ahmad and Qara Yusuf in a fortress in two towers facing each other. It is said that the prisoners exchanged visits and composed their differences. A son was born to the Turkoman during this period, and Ahmad adopted him and made him his heir. They agreed that when they recovered their freedom they would never again quarrel; the northern provinces, Azarbayjan with Tabriz, would fall to Qara Yusuf, while Mesopotamia with Baghdad would be Sultan Ahmad's portion. (In fact, Qara Yusuf subsequently seized Baghdad, Tabriz, and Sultan Ahmad, and strangled him.³) Abu-Bakr established himself in Baghdad.

From Avnik, the imperial standard swung north-east and reappeared suddenly before the Georgians. Giorgi VII had not fulfilled the terms of the agreement made previously with Timur. While potentates from territories great and small were bringing their tribute and congratulations on the victory of Angora, Giorgi had not despatched the promised troops, nor had he put in an appearance at Timur's court as commanded. Tatar detachments were sent off for what was, in fact, the sixth campaign in the rugged mountains and sheer gulleys of the Georgian Caucasus. The grain was harvested from the lower slopes and the Tatars returned heavy with booty. But resistance continued from the heart of the mountains, where the garrisons of many citadels felt themselves secure. One such was the fortress of Kurtin, well armed and well provisioned. The place was full of pigs and sheep; the cisterns were full of water, and the cellars of wine. Kurtin was inaccessible, except by rope and ladder.

Timur in person directed operations against this stronghold. Platforms of stone and wood were erected on the mountain side facing the fortress, from which battering rams and stone-throwing machines could operate. Here the old man himself encamped. Meanwhile, one of the Tatar mountaineers had found a way through the heart of the rocks giving access to the fortress interior. By means of rope and silk ladders attached to a tree which grew through the rocks at the top, a force of fifty scaled up into the fort while the defenders slept. At dawn the Tatar drums roared, the long trumpets blared, the fortress gates were beaten open by stones launched from the platforms, and the stronghold succumbed to the

attack from inside and out. The operation had taken nine days. The Georgian chief, and his men, were beheaded; the wife of the chief was sent as a gift to Timur's ally, the prince of Darband. The Khorasan troops who had made the first breach were well rewarded, receiving coin from the treasury, robes of honour, belts, horses, mules, tents, girls, camels, and villages and gardens in their own country.

Resistance continued elsewhere in the highlands, and King Giorgi did not arrive at Timur's court. Time was pressing, and the Emperor had other targets in view. What he could not achieve in Georgia by force of arms he achieved by connivance. King Giorgi received a letter sent to him by eminent Georgians who had fallen into Timur's hands. They advised the king to submit, warning him that further resistance would mean the extermination of all the Armenian subjects of the king, subjects who in their southern valleys were more accessible to the wrath of Timur than the Georgian highlanders. Giorgi offered to come to terms. After a show of reluctance, Timur allowed himself to be persuaded by his emirs and by Shaykh Ibrahim Shirvan, prince of Darband, who had interceded on behalf of Giorgi. In autumn 1403, a treaty was arranged.

The Georgian envoys arrived bearing thousands of gold coins struck in the name of Timur, droves of horses, valuable fabrics, gold, silver, and crystal vessels, and a remarkable ruby of eighteen grammes weight. The king was still not with them. Another victory feast was held by the Tatars. Timur withdrew from Tiflis, destroying the remaining churches and monasteries, and leaving in his wake the shells of some seven hundred desolate villages.

The Qarabagh pastures in the eastern Caucasus were Timur's favourite winter quarters. The winter of 1403-4 was, however, cold and wet, and very trying for the hordes. Timur saw there the ruins of the ancient aqueducts and he set the troops to work to rebuild the town of Baylaqan. This had been devastated by the Chingizids in the thirteenth century and besieged by Timur at the end of the fourteenth, so that it was then inhabited only by screech-owls and scorpions. On the Emperor's orders, villages, squares, and gardens were restored, bazaars, pleasure houses, caravanserais and baths installed, the walls and moat rebuilt. Twenty miles of canal were dug to supply the new town with water from the river Aras, with gardens and vineyards planted out along the banks. The canal was known as the Barlasi, after the tribe of the Sahib Qiran.

The southern provinces of Persia had been conferred upon sons of Omar-Shaykh. The northern provinces were still without a prince of

the imperial house. When Timur had summoned Muhammad-Sultan from Samarqand with fresh troops, before the battle of Angora, it had been his intention to confer on his heir the crown of Hulagu which, until his disgrace, had been enjoyed by Miranshah. Clavijo reported that the crown of Hulagu had been offered to Abu-Bakr, Miranshah's eldest son, on the death of Muhammad-Sultan, but that Abu-Bakr had been unwilling to accept out of respect for his father. The emperor had therefore divided the fief; he had bestowed Baghdad and Iraq on Abu-Bakr, while the north, including Tabriz and Sultaniya, went to Prince Omar, Miranshah's second son. Prince Omar was summoned from Samarqand to a qurultay held for his installation, which took place before Timur left the Qarabagh early in 1404.

The Emperor's old adviser and friend, Shaykh Baraka, came out from Samarqand, bringing his condolences on the death of Muhammad-Sultan. The shaykh came not a moment too soon; he saw Timur for the last time, and then he too was gathered up. One more of Timur's companions throughout his victories and advancement had preceded him to the grave.

When March came round again, the anniversary of Sultan Muhammad's death, the Emperor prepared a commemorative feast. The body of the prince had been moved from Avnik and was on its way to Samarqand.

Before leaving Qarabagh the old man also found time for a Tatar hunt of great magnificence. There were numbers of greyhounds, European mastiffs, and leopards, in support of the Tatar huntsmen. The hounds had cloths of embroidered silks, the leopards collars and chains of gold decorated with precious stones. After three days and nights the immense circle was closed, and the kill took place. They slaughtered tigers and stags, gazelles, and different kinds of deer.

At the end of Ramadan, Maulana Nizam al-din Shami conducted the prayer ceremonies and preached the Khutba. He had finished the chronicle that he had been ordered to write, and he presented his work to the Conqueror. The original work was not called *Zafar-nama*, Book of Victory. This title was given at Timur's suggestion, and appears on the copy made for Prince Omar.

The government of all the lands from the Qarabagh to Trebizond was bestowed on Prince Khalil-Sultan, and in spring 1404 Year of the Ape, the imperial army took the road to Samarqand.

NOTES

¹ C. Marlowe: *Tamburlaine the Great*.

² *Tarikh-i Qutb-shahi*: tr. Minorsky, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, Part I, 1955.

³ *Thomas of Metsopo on the Timurid-Turkman Wars*, tr. Minorsky, Lahore, 1955.

THE ROAD TO SAMARQAND

TIMUR had sent his envoy Hajji Muhammad to Spain after the battle of Angora, with two Christian ladies, and gifts for Henry III of Castile. Henry responded by sending an embassy, of which Clavijo was party, to the court of Timur. The embassy left Spain in May, 1403, in the company of Hajji Muhammad, hoping to reach Timur while he was still in Asia Minor. The party was shipwrecked in the Black Sea on the way from Constantinople to Trebizond. They reached the Turkish shore, and made their way back to Constantinople, where they stayed the winter of 1403-4. During their enforced sojourn in Constantinople and Pera, the envoys visited the monastery where the bones of Philip of Artois were laid to rest; taken prisoner by Bayazid at Nicopolis, he had died in 1397. In spring the envoys set out again, expecting to catch up with the Conqueror in the Qarabagh.

The party from Spain was accosted by robber chiefs in the mountains behind Trebizond, but after Arzinjan travelling conditions were much improved. Clavijo noted that Chaghatay garrisons were guarding the route, for many caravans from Syria came that way. At Tabriz, with its teeming bazaars, fine squares, bath-houses, fountains, and iced water for the thirsty traveller, the Spanish party were joined by an imposing embassy on its way from Cairo to Timur's court. Amongst many other rare gifts, Sultan Faraj was sending a collection of ostriches, and a giraffe, which, like his camel confrères, was no doubt footing it to Samarqand. At Tabriz, the envoys learned that Timur was already on his way to the capital, and they had no recourse but to follow.

When they reached Sultaniya the envoys were summoned to an audience with Prince Miranshah. They were received in a tent set up in a palace orchard. Stories of Miranshah's excesses had reach the ambassadors, but Clavijo makes no mention of anything unusual in their reception. He found the Prince to be a man of advanced age, being about forty years old, big and fat, suffering much from gout.

The two parties of envoys, Egyptian and Castilian, followed the main caravan trail along the Elburz foothills south of the Caspian, into Khorasan. They had the benefit of the imperial post stations and relays, but in spite of the fact that Timur spent time on punitive expeditions into the mountain strongholds of Mazandaran along the route, the envoys were unable to catch up with the imperial camp. On the contrary,

messengers kept arriving from Timur, urging the envoys to make greater haste. The going was too hard for one of the Spanish party, Gomez; he succumbed to fever and died at Nishapur, the city of the celebrated turquoise mines.

The others pushed on by forced marches, led by Tatar escorts: even so they lost their way and nearly perished in the Qara Qum desert. After the desert they came upon ever greater numbers of nomad hordes; then they reached the Amu-Darya near Balkh. The river was in spate, with strong currents from the waters of the melting snows. The Conqueror still preceded them, although he had gone via Herat. In the Khorasan capital he had dispensed justice to those officials who had made use of Timur's absence for their own advantage. Of those brought to account, two were hanged. Others were exiled to Ashpara and Sabran, on the eastern borders of Mawarannahr. New controllers were appointed in Herat. In about a month they succeeded in retrieving two million dinars for the imperial treasury.

The envoys crossed into the imperial, the protected, realm of Mawarannahr, where all could enter, but none leave. The language changed from Persian to Chaghatay-Turkic. They travelled the royal highway from Tirmidh, city of the shaykhs, through the Iron Gates (the cleft in the mountains called Darband), to the valley of the Barlas clan and Shahrisabz, the Green City, birthplace of the Emperor. Here they saw the workmen still enlarging and embellishing Aq-Saray, Timur's White Palace. From Shahrisabz the envoys were hurried on to the outskirts of Samarqand. They arrived at the end of August, 1404, and for a week awaited the pleasure of the Emperor.

The Spaniards were accommodated in a suburban garden before they received the summons to an audience with the emperor. They were taken to Dilkusha, the Garden of Heart's Ease. Inside, six elephants were performing tricks. The envoys passed a great emir, an old man, seated on a dais. They were taken further and were received by three princes, grandsons of the Sahib Qiran, one of whom was Khalil-Sultan. These princes took charge of the letter the envoys bore from King Henry of Castile. They were then conducted to the presence of the Emperor, who was seated in front of a portal opening on to a palace. Timur rested on a low dais before which a fountain played. In the basin floated red apples. Princes of the blood and other great lords were seated on the ground at his feet.

"His Highness had taken his place on what appeared to be small mattresses stuffed thick and covered with embroidered silk cloth, and he was leaning on his elbow against some round cushions heaped up

behind him. He was dressed in a cloak of plain silk without any embroidery and he wore on his head a tall white hat, on the crown of which was displayed a balas ruby, the same being ornamented with pearls and precious stones. As soon as we came in sight of His Highness we made our reverence, bowing and putting the right knee to the ground and crossing our arms over the breast. Then we advanced a step and again bowed, and the third time we did the same, but on this occasion kneeling on the ground and remaining in that posture. Then Timur gave the command that we should rise and come nearer before him, and the various lords, who up to this point had been holding us under the arms, now left us, for they dared not advance any nearer to His Highness." The envoys were then taken by Emirs Shah Malik, Burunduq, and Shaykh Nur al-din nearer to the dais where Timur sat, and again they knelt. Timur again commanded that they should be brought closer, for, said Clavijo, "his sight was no longer good, indeed, he was so infirm and old that his eyelids were falling over his eyes and he could barely raise them to see".

The envoys were not offered his hand to kiss. The emperor asked after "my son your king". ("Son" was a mode of address used for vassals.) The royal grandsons held up for Timur the letter sent by the King of Castile, and Fray Alfonso asked permission to read it. The old Emperor said he would have it read to him later. The envoys were taken back and seated on a dais to the right of the Emperor.

Timur then noticed that the Spaniards were being seated in a position lower than that of a Chinese envoy. A chamberlain came forward to say that the places must be reversed, and that the envoys of Timur's friend, the King of Spain, must have precedence over the man who was the envoy of Tonguz, the Pig Emperor of China, "a robber and a bad man, the enemy of Timur, and if only God were willing he, Timur, would before long see to and dispose of matters so that never again would any Chinaman dare come with such an embassy as this man had brought."

The Spanish envoys had entered in the company of Hajji Muhammad, Timur's ambassador to Spain. When the party had been shipwrecked in the Black Sea, there was grave danger of landing on a strip of coast controlled by Ottoman Turks. This would have been fatal for the Tatar, and so he had changed his Chaghatay clothes for those of a Spanish grandee. For some reason he wore this apparel at the reception, causing, said Clavijo, much laughter among his friends.

The reception was followed by a banquet, and after the feasting came the review of presents, both from the Castilian king and the Sultan Faraj. The court chronicles mention the giraffe and the nine African

ostriches which, amongst other rich presents, had been sent by Faraj of Egypt. They also commented on tapestries embroidered with portraits brought by the Castilians, which were much admired. After these gifts had been displayed, a drove of three hundred horses was reviewed, the gift of one of the nobles of the court.

Throughout his progress to Samarqand the old Emperor had gathered information, heard complaints, exterminated rebels, received tribute, called local dignitaries to account, sat in summary judgement, meted out punishment and favours. He had accused the ulama, the Muslim divines who accompanied him, of failing in their duty; they had not kept him informed of the abuses occurring in his dominions. Noble transgressors had been hanged, lesser folk decapitated. (The former was considered the more honourable way of dying.) When Timur reached the Protected City the same processes ensued, coupled with mobilization of troops, reorganization, and construction works. These continued at an exceptional pace despite the almost daily public receptions and feasting, and despite the age of the Emperor—nearly seventy—who was everywhere in evidence playing chess with his divines between affairs of state. He changed his abode as was customary every few days, going from one garden, palace, or public building to another. The Dilkusha (Heart's Ease) Garden, where he received Clavijo, the Garden of the Plane Tree, the New Garden, the Garden Model of the World, the Paradise Garden, and the Northern Garden, are described, amongst others, in the records of this time, as residences of the Emperor. Full opportunities were given to foreign envoys to see the splendour of these places; they were, in fact, taken on visits and invited to state banquets with this end in view. Some gardens were still being laid out or improved. In particular, a palace was being built in the Northern Garden, with porcelain mosaics and many fountains, by craftsmen made captive in Syria and Persia. A royal feast was held in celebration of its completion, and to this, as usual, a host of foreign envoys were invited, including the Castilians. It seems that by then they were not held in high esteem, for the court chronicles, mentioning that the ambassadors from Europe were invited, observe that even chaff finds its way to the sea. Perhaps Hajji Muhammad had reported on the poverty of the Christian kingdoms. Perhaps the gifts, despite their quality, had failed to impress. Perhaps the boorish behaviour of these infidels, tajiks, had aroused contempt. For one thing, Clavijo was an abstainer, and refused the wine-cups at the official feasts. Then, again, his party had even arrived too late for one of the celebrations because they could not find their interpreter.

While staying in the "Paradise Garden", the Emperor was taken ill; but his indisposition quickly passed. Sometimes Timur lodged in the city, especially when he was supervising construction. Soon after his arrival he went to his citadel, the Gok Saray (Blue Palace), and inspected the work of the arsenal. Three thousand suits of plate armour were brought before him, the work of the captive artisans during his absence. This armour was composed of overlapping discs stitched on to a backing of red canvas. Clavijo considered them well wrought, but the plates, he thought, were rather thin, and they did not know how to temper the steel properly. A large number of helmets with matching suits of armour were also displayed; the helmets were round and high, some turning back to a point, with a front piece coming down to guard the face and nose. Many suits of armour were distributed forthwith to nobles of the court.

A wide new thoroughfare was being driven through the city to provide more adequate facilities for the merchants. The bazaar was to be equipped with chaikhanas, caravanserais, storehouses, fountains, booths, and a covered arcade. The existing workshops, booths, and accommodation were pulled down over the heads of the occupiers to make way for the new thoroughfare. The work pressed on with non-stop night and day shifts of labourers until the snows of autumn.

Muhammad-Sultan, the deceased grandson, had, while he was in charge of Samarqand during the early years of the last campaign, constructed a fine Madrasa. Timur went to visit it on his return. It was on a site adjacent to this college that Timur commanded the construction of the Mausoleum which was to be the resting place of the prince. Houses on the site were pulled down, and a temple with an exquisite fluted dome in turquoise, gold, and alabaster arose; it was surrounded by freshly planted gardens. Timur found the first edifice too low and ordered the whole structure to be raised. The old man stayed in the Muhammad-Sultan Madrasa opposite while work was proceeding. Pir-Muhammad Jahangir (half-brother to Muhammad-Sultan, and ruler of the Afghan regions), was now the heir-elect.

The Emperor's most ambitious monument in Samarqand had also proved a disappointment to him. During his brief stay in the capital after his return from India, he had ordered the construction of a splendid Cathedral Mosque. Master craftsmen from Basrah and Baghdad, stonemasons from Azarbayjan, Fars, and Hindustan, and crystal workers from Damascus, laboured together with artisans of Samarqand. Blocks of marble were brought from Azarbayjan. Captive labourers and chains of elephants toiled to construct one of the greatest mosques in Islam.

Mosaics of single-colour tiles and painted glazed tiles decorated the exterior. Cufic designs, quotations from the Qoran, round the base of the dome, were so huge they could be read miles away. Inner walls were painted with frescoes. Craftsmen in bronze produced special candlesticks and oil-lamps; weavers made the hangings and silk carpets. The great gates were made from a blend of seven metals.

Begun in 1399, the mosque was nearly completed when the old man returned. It faced the Madrasa of the Empress, Saray-Mulk-khanum, and Timur saw at once that the portal of the mosque was no more imposing than that of the Madrasa opposite. Impressive portals were a dominant feature of palaces and mosques of this region, giving on to vast courtyards and open assembly places.

Timur gave immediate orders for the portal to be pulled down, and new foundations dug. To expedite the work, Timur announced that he himself would supervise the erection of the pier on one side, while two emirs of his court were given the responsibility of the other, in competition with him. Workmen dug pits to lay the new foundations, and Timur was brought in a litter every morning to the site, where he stayed the best part of the day urging on the work. Food was brought to him there, and he ordered portions of meat to be thrown down to the workmen "as one would cast bones to dogs in a pit", even throwing meat down himself. Thus he urged on their labour. When the work went to his special satisfaction, coins were thrown to the builders. Here, too, work proceeded day and night until November snows. The mosque arose "the noblest of all we had seen in the city of Samarqand", in the judgement of Clavijo.

Arabshah reported, with gusto, that the mosque was too hastily constructed: it began to crumble as soon as it was finished. The faithful were reluctant to worship there, for fear of stones falling from the roof. The Mosque of the Conqueror was damned; it had been built by plunder and exploitation. Timur

built a Mosque out of rapine . . .

Like one who keeps orphans by harlotry . . .

A popular tradition about the mosque holds that it was built by "Bibi-khanum", Timur's favourite wife and "the king of China's daughter", as a surprise for the Emperor, who was away in India. Before the mosque was finished, a messenger arrived to say that Timur was on his way back. Bibi-khanum went herself to ask the architect to hurry up so that the mosque could be complete for the Emperor's arrival. But the architect, in love with the queen, was more anxious to prolong the work than to

end it. However, this he promised to do in time, if Bibi-khanum would reward him with a kiss . . . She replied that all women were the same; only the clothes were different; and she offered him any other woman from the harem. Bringing a dish of coloured eggs, she said, "Break any one; whatever the colour and shape, they are all the same inside." The young architect then brought two cups, identical. Into one he poured water, into the other, vodka. He said, "The colour and shape are the same, but not the contents. There are some women who are cold, like water. Others burn and set the veins on fire, like vodka." Bibi-khanum, unable to deny his logic, agreed to the bargain. The mosque was completed and the young man came to claim his reward. The queen covered her cheek with her hand, but the kiss was so ardent that it burnt right through. When Timur came he saw the mosque, and the imprint of the kiss on the cheek of his queen. He ordered the execution of the architect, but he, having been forewarned, disappeared into heaven.

The shell of the Great Mosque, hastily built as it was, survived the ravages of earthquakes (especially that of 1897) and invasion. At the end of the nineteenth century the mosque was used as a cotton market and as stabling yards by officers of the Czar. A section of the dome remains, indicating a diameter of twenty metres and a height of over thirty-six. The rugged skeleton of the portal still stands, thirty-three metres high. It is known as the Bibi-khanum Mosque—Mosque of the Mother Queen—and Clavijo believed the mother of Saray-Mulk-khanum to be buried there. The famous gates were melted and coined into money at the beginning of the nineteenth century by the avaricious Emir of Bukhara.

The two emirs responsible for the inadequate portal were hanged by the neck in Kani-gil (according to Arabshah, one was bound and dragged along the ground on his face till he was torn to pieces). The new portal was more satisfactory; the court historians likened it to the arch of the Milky Way. As for the cupola, the dome of heaven was its only rival.

THE CELEBRATIONS OF KANI-GIL

By 1403, the young Ming heir to the Celestial Empire had been defeated by his uncle, who seized the capital Nanking and established himself as Emperor Yung-Lo. The Chinese envoy An and his party had still not returned from Mawarannahr. The new Ming emperor sent another ambassador to Timur demanding the release of An, the traditional "tribute", and other measures of recognition. The envoy was in Samarqand when Clavijo arrived; it was no doubt he who was humiliated in front of the Spaniards and placed in the lowest position in the Emperor's audience hall. The Pig Emperor of China demanded tribute? Timur, Sahib Qiran, would bring it himself! The envoys, and the great caravan that had recently come in from China, were detained.

The necessary dispositions had been made; only formalities remained. Imperial orders were issued for the mighty qurultay which would bless the operation and show all Asia and Europe what manner of Conqueror was coming to claim the greatest of all prizes—for the booty of China would exceed everything that had been secured from previous conquests. The qurultay would also demonstrate to the Tatars themselves that their power under Timur was immeasurable, more than sufficient for the task they were to undertake. The occasion would be marked by even greater festivities than normally attended such Councils of War, and it would be combined with marriage ceremonies for five of the Emperor's grandsons. Their ages ranged from nine to seventeen.

The qurultay was held in the plain of Kani-gil, the "Rose Mine", a short distance from Samarqand; these were the meadows where, a century and a half previously almost to the day, the governor of Central Asia, Masud Yalavach, had set up pavilions of gold to welcome Chingiz' grandson, Hulaga, en route for the conquest of Persia.¹ On that occasion, too, the celebrations had lasted a month. Normally this valley was a place where "the air was more fragrant than musk, the water sweeter than sugar, as though it were a part of the gardens of Paradise for abundance and pleasantness of delights",² but Clavijo found the place excessively dusty, because of the vast concourse of people. However, both neutral Castilian and hostile Arab corroborate the official records of the magnitude of the occasion. All the hordes of privileged Chaghatays were moving in to Kani-gil from the remoter pastures, each clan taking up its appointed place, and pitching its tents, accompanied by their womenfolk. According

to custom, as soon as the pavilions of the Emperor had been set up, all knew their allotted position in relation to those central enclosures, and "each man took it up, without confusion, in the most orderly fashion". In the course of three or four days, at the end of September, 1404 (Year of the Ape), Clavijo saw nearly twenty thousand tents pitched in regular streets which encircled the royal pavilions; more clans were coming in daily from outlying districts. Every art and craft needful to the nomads was dispersed through the camp, each trade in its appointed street—copper- and iron-smiths, saddlers and wainwrights, potters and cobblers, fruit-sellers and grain merchants; there was the silk row, and the row of the garment-makers. Vendors of roast and boiled meats and the highly seasoned Afghan viands passed to and fro through the bazaars of the camp as of the city. Bakers, with ovens alight, were kneading dough and baking bread for sale. In the wash-booths cauldrons were heating the water for baths.

Clavijo reckoned eventually that the Horde surrounding the imperial enclosure numbered some fifty thousand tents, while beyond the limits of the hordes in the further meadows were many other tents, with their orchard gardens, well watered with the streams of the Zarafshan.

The Emperor, the queens and the royal princes each had enclosures where their ensemble of pavilions, splendidly adorned, were erected. Some had borders interwoven with gold and decorated inside and out with the finest feathers; others were of different coloured silk with designs and flower decorations. Some pavilions were of silk trimmed with pearls; others with gems of many kinds set in gold brocade curtains dazzled the eye, said Arabshah. "In the midst also they set roofs of silver and stars to ascend and doors for their houses and couches on which they might recline; painted leaves and tent curtains broidered with gold; and in them fans of cloth of fine texture for coolness, and other contrivances . . . They also showed rare treasures . . . among them a curtain of cloth taken from the treasury of Sultan Bayazid, decorated with various pictures and inscriptions . . . And they set in front of his tents, at the distance which a horse covers in one gallop, a royal tent in which might assemble attendants and courtiers; and this stood high and its fence reached the sky, furnished with about forty columns and pillars."³ The chamberlains who erected it climbed about the structure like apes or devils.

Clavijo gave a more detailed account of the Audience Pavilion, large and high, four-square in shape. He calculated that each side measured a hundred paces from angle to angle. The walls outside, of silk material in white, black, and yellow bands, were surrounded by low galleries like porticos, also supported by pillars. Each corner was topped by a burnished copper globe bearing a crescent. The roof was circular to form a

dome, borne by twelve columns in blue, gold, and other colours, each as thick as a man. The dome rose to a square-shaped turret set in what seemed to be battlements, made of silk. A gangway led from ground level to turret, in case any part were disarranged by wind. A windlass the size of a cartwheel had been used to hoist up the structure, with shackles of cord to ease the strain. Crimson ropes held it in position. From a distance, said the envoy, the pavilion appeared to be a castle, a wonder to behold, and magnificent beyond description.

Red tapestries and brocades lined the inner walls. Canopies draped from the dome formed archways. In the four corners were designs of eagles, with folded wings. Inside was a dais, covered with carpets and cushions, where Timur gave audience, with another dais, lower, to the left.

Encircling this pavilion and a number of other royal tents and awnings and Timur's travelling mosque, was a wall of patterned silks, about as high as a man on horseback could reach, and some three hundred paces across. A portico, topped by a tower with battlements, gave access to this enclosure. The entire enclosure was set up in a week. Clavijo counted eleven such different enclosures for the royal household. Not all tents within them were supported by columns and poles. Many were of the steppe kibitka pattern, constructed of canes which kept the high canvas walls of the tents taut and erect. These also were decorated with silks, crimson tapestry, shag velvet, with bands of different colours, and lavishly set with gems. Some of the imperial tents, by order of Timur, were lined inside and out with skins of ermine and squirrel; these furs kept out the heats of summer and contained the warmth in winter.

At banquets, and on sightseeing visits, the envoys were able to inspect a number of the enclosures. That of the empress Saray-Mulk-khanum was approached through the double doors of Brusa taken with Bayazid's treasure. Evidently of Byzantine origin, they were covered with plates of silver-gilt, ornamented with blue enamel, and inset with gold. On one side was the image of St. Peter, the other, St. Paul, each with a book in his hands. The doors were lofty enough for a mounted Chaghatay to pass through. Clavijo noticed, amongst other remarkable furnishings in the pavilion of the old queen, a golden tree in the form of an oak, about as tall as a man. The trunk and roots sprang from a golden dish. It had golden leaves, and fruits of balas rubies, emeralds, turquoises, sapphires, common rubies, and great pearls. Many-coloured little birds of gold enamel perched on the branches; some were just alighting, some pecking at the rare fruit, others were spreading their wings to fly. This golden tree may have come with the treasures of Baghdad.

The crowds were so great at these banquets that the guards had to force

passages for the guests. Clavijo complained of the dust, which was blown up so thick that clothing and faces were covered by it, becoming "all of one colour". Every day saw its receptions and banquets. The chamberlains and court officials moved about, on superb steeds, the silver staff of office in hand. At intervals outside the pavilions were wine jars, huge vases, which Clavijo thought could contain sixty gallons each, beyond which no one except guests could approach. Outside the enclosures lay those who had trespassed beyond, and had been struck down by the guards with arrows or maces.

Guests would be seated in the pavilions according to protocol. Drinking took place before eating. The Tatars were wont to partake so copiously that they soon got very drunk. No feast, Clavijo was told, was considered a real festival unless the guests had drunk themselves sot. Cups were presented to the guests, brim-full, and had to be drained to the dregs. It was insulting to the host to do otherwise. The cups were drained in one or two draughts, and no one servant could keep up with the requirements of more than two guests. The man who drank most freely was called a *bahadur*, a hero.

Princesses as well as princes gave banquets. A feast was arranged by Khan-zada, "forty, fair of complexion and fat"; she had recovered, it seems, from her bereavement. The procedure here was no different. Singers of ballads and instrumentalists performed while attendants, relatives of the princess, came forward to serve her and other royal ladies with wine-cups. Attendants brought goblets on platters, and, kneeling thrice, presented them to the lords. A lord, taking a cup surrounded by a napkin so that his hand should not touch it, would kneel, and offer it to the ladies. Then the lord retired, always facing the dais, and returned shortly with another cup full to the brim. "Now you must understand," said Clavijo, "that this was not carried through and done with in a brief space"; it went on for a long time, and the guests were expected to drink on the same scale. The wine-cups were sometimes interspersed with drinks of kumiss. The old empress, Saray-Mulk, who was present at this feast, noticed that Clavijo was not drinking. "The Great Khanum commanded that we ambassadors should come forward, when with her own hand she offered us the wine-cup and persisted in the attempt to make me, Ruy Gonzalez (Clavijo), drink of the same, but I would not, though scarcely could she be brought to believe that I never did drink wine. Now when this drinking of theirs had gone on for some considerable time, many of the men present sitting before the princess were beginning to show signs of being in their cups, and some indeed were already dead drunk. This state, forsooth, they deem a sign of manliness."

Then after the drinking the feasting began. Pyramids of roasted horse-meat and mutton were brought in on great leathern platters which were dragged along the ground, being too heavy to lift. Carvers with aprons and protective sleeves sliced the meat and put the slices into dishes—golden, silver, or porcelain. The joint most favoured by the Tatars was the rump of horse with the saddle meat attached. The servers also put into the dishes balls of horse-tripe the size of a fist, and whole sheeps' heads. Broth was poured over the lot. These secondary dishes needed several attendants to lift them, and they were placed first before the Emperor or the host of the occasion and then before the guests. As a special honour, dishes set before the Emperor were passed on to guests; the Spanish envoys received this honour on the occasion of their first reception by Timur at the Dilkusha Garden. What was left over in the trenchers was taken away by the guests for their later enjoyment. It was impolite to leave the food behind. These main dishes were followed by others, mainly stews, with force-meat balls and other side dishes. Then came quantities of fruit, melons, peaches, grapes, and others, with which kumiss was served—an excellent beverage, when taken in the summer season, thought Clavijo.

After the feasting, gifts were presented, in sets of nine, wherever possible, to the Emperor or host. Some of these would be distributed at once amongst the guests. No gifts were accepted by the Emperor until carefully examined, and the diplomatic aspects considered.

Such eating and drinking as this might take place at normal festivals. However, in Kani-gil special displays had been arranged for the court and for the public. Pavilions had been set up for popular entertainment, with music, wrestling, clowns, tight-rope walkers, and masquerades. The craftsmen and traders of Samarqand, "those who sold stuffs and those who sold jewels, hucksters and merchants, with the cooks, butchers, bakers, tailors, and shoemakers", had been ordered to the camp to contribute to the festival. Together with the flute-players and drums, and the vendors of nuts and fruits, came the craftsmen with their displays. The linen-weavers constructed a mounted horseman, complete with sword, bow, and the rest of his equipment, entirely from linen. Cotton-weavers made a tower of cotton topped with a stork, all "with a whiteness of body exceeding the houris of Paradise"; this tower was high enough to serve as a landmark for travellers. In the masquerades, goats with golden horns chased each other and turned out to be pretty girls; some sported with wings as fays, some as sheep, some as elephants. Skinners and tanners dressed up as lions and leopards, tigers, foxes, hyaenas. The weavers had made a camel of canes and painted cloth, which walked. Inside sat a

weaver, who could pull aside a curtain and be displayed at his craft. The saddlers had constructed two camel litters of the usual kind, except that these were open to disclose beautiful occupants posing for the crowd. Mat-makers and reed-plaiters had woven huge Cufic inscriptions from the Qoran in straw. Likewise the goldsmiths and ironworkers, the armourers and bow-makers and others set up their booths and displays, decorated with flowers and garlands, gold, and gems, especially balas and red rubies, pearls, rock crystal, corals, and agate. In each of a hundred enclosures there were decorated kiosks, where miniature gardens were filled with nuts and fruits—pistachios and almonds, pears and apples, peaches, pomegranates, melons, grapes, filling the air with fragrance. In special enclosures performances were given by musicians, clowns, acrobats, and tight-rope walkers. Shrill flutes and drums sounded through the plain of Kani-gil, no longer just a mine of roses but a store of unlimited treasures.

Invited to the celebrations of Kani-gil were princes and emissaries from Asia and beyond—from China, Mongolia, and India; from Muscovy and the Qipchaqs, Syria and Egypt, from Spain, Rum, and Byzantium, from Kabul and Mazandaran, Khorasan, Fars, and Baghdad. With them came caravans of gifts and tribute. The great emirs of the realm had been summoned, together with the chiefs of tumans and thousands, and all the elders of the Barlas clan in whatever capacity they served. Most of the Emperor's progeny were there, in addition to the grandsons whose nuptials were to be celebrated. By this time, Timur had a family of thirty-four princes and sixteen princesses of the second and third generations, in addition to two surviving sons and a daughter. Many of these were in Kani-gil. The most important arrival was that of grandson Pir-Muhammad Jahangir from Ghazni, ruler of the Afghan provinces, who came laden with treasure and who showered his grandsire with gold and precious gems. Together they lamented the death of Pir's half-brother Muhammad-Sultan. Pir-Muhammad was now heir-designate.

In honour of the marriages, a grandiose wedding feast was prepared. The guests were received in the imperial pavilion, and the celebrations, we are informed, were the last word in magnificence. Princes of the blood and others of distinction were seated according to rank, in the Court of a Dozen Columns, which was furnished with gold brocades and silk carpets from Persia. The arrival of the royal ladies impressed Clavijo as much as the entertainments which preceded the banquet. The Great Lady, Empress Saray-Mulk, who had been with Timur since he defeated her first husband, Emir Husayn of Balkh, approached from her enclosure. She wore a full red silk gown with a train; this gown

was high at the throat, with no waist, and openings, not sleeves, for the arms. Fifteen attendants supported the train. The Empress's face was covered with a white cosmetic which the ladies used as a protection against sun and wind, but it made her face appear to Clavijo as if she were wearing a paper mask. This was, in fact, a fashionable adornment. She also wore a thin white veil. Her headdress resembled the crest of a helmet. The crest was very high at the back, of red material that fell to her shoulders. It was ornamented with pearls, balas rubies, and turquoises, with a border of gold thread. Round the crest was a garland of gold encrusted with stones, and at the top three huge rubies from which rose a long white plume, whose sprays came down to the eyes of the queen. The plume itself was braced with gold wire and the summit mounted with a knot of white feathers, also garnished with pearls and gems. Two attendants were employed in keeping this headdress steady after the empress had taken her place on a low dais behind Timur. Beneath this fascinating headgear it was, however, still possible to see that the empress wore her hair loose down to her shoulders; it was very black. This also was the fashion; many women dyed their hair to keep its colour. As she came from her enclosure, Saray-Mulk was preceded by eunuchs, and followed by numerous ladies of her suite. A white silk domed parasol was carried above her head.

The Kichik Khanum came next, also clad in a scarlet robe, with similar headdress, jewels, and attendants. A third queen appeared with the same ceremony, each sitting a little lower than the former, until nine princesses had entered, eight, according to Clavijo, being the old man's own wives, the ninth the wife of a grandson. The envoy also believed that the eighth wife was one whom Timur had just married. When all the ladies had entered, the drinking began, three hundred huge jars standing ready for the occasion; they were filled with strong spirits and liqueurs. The craftsmen of Samarqand could make jars the size of a man, in which water or wine kept cool, however hot the weather. Attendants stirred the kumiss hung in leather sacks from tripods. Chamberlains on horseback, caparisoned with gold and gems, controlled the proceedings.

The performance opened with gymnasts, followed by games and sports to the accompaniment of minstrels. The long trumpets blared, and then the elephants were put through their paces. These beasts, which Clavijo saw for the first time in his life when he came to Samarqand, he described as having no grace of form; it was as though each were a "great sack that had been stuffed out full". The keepers sat astride the animals, which had sumptuous trappings, and controlled them with their goads.

The elephants were made to race against horses, and amongst other tricks, pursued folk in the assembled crowd. The gifts from the Sultan of Egypt were paraded, including the ostriches and the giraffe, footing it once more after the three-thousand-mile trek from Cairo.

When the surfeit of drinking indicated that the time had come for feasting, a succession of carts and camels carrying panniers brought in meat which was tipped in heaps on the ground. Wood from many distant forests provided the fires sufficient to cook the thousands of carcasses. Horses had been roasted whole for the occasion; other delicacies were camel humps and fat-tailed sheep. After the roasts followed the stews; then the sweetmeats—pancakes, sugared bread, pastes ground from nuts and dried fruits. Guests were served by the most charming girls of the harem. Baskets overflowed with their burden of fruits. In addition to the provisions for the court banquet, there were urns of wine and provisions for the Chaghatays and the citizens of the Protected City, throughout the plain of Kani-gil.

The marriage rites had been conducted according to Muslim law by the chief qadi of Samarqand, but once these ceremonies were completed, celebrations continued according to Mongol tradition. Trains of camels and mules with golden bells, decked in satin, bore the multitude of gifts presented to the newly-wed couples in public procession for the admiration of the populace. The young people were adorned in robes of honour and regalia, and nine times they were undressed and re-robed, according to custom, in different apparel. At each change they knelt and gold coins, pearls, and rubies were poured over them—and left on the ground for the benefit of the attendants. Then the couples were conducted to the nuptial chambers—over which the chroniclers have drawn the curtain of modesty.

Night had fallen, and the camp of Kani-gil and Samarqand itself were filled with the light of lanterns and torches; beacons lit the plain from one end to the other, and the hubbub of festivities reached to the borders of the desert.

For the Emperor had sent forth an edict lifting the ban on all pleasures. The criers announced permission for unlimited rejoicing, the suspension of all normal restraints. “No conflicts were to be permitted, the rich were not to oppress the poor, nor the strong the feeble; debts were to be cancelled; every pleasure sanctioned, no questions to be asked, no reprimands given.” Licence was general and universal.

Then, said Arabshah, “every suitor hastened to his desire and every lover met his beloved, without anyone harassing another or superior dealing proudly with inferior, whether in the army or among citizens . . .

nor was the sword drawn except the sword of contemplation; nor the spear brandished, except the lances of love that bent by embrace . . .

Seeing this garden, a fakir
Would shun its fragrance; not for long
Could he preserve his virtue here.
Come fellow drinker, hand to me
(This moment grief will not allow)
The cup of pleasure, which will free
From all misfortune; wine and thou . . .

“There was security, tranquillity, leisure and comfort; grain was cheap, necessities satisfied; evenness of fortune; justice of the Sultan, health of body, fair weather, ceasing of enmity, attainment of desire, and the company of the beloved . . .”

After indulging these amiable memories in his chronicle, the Arab recollected his Muslim duty, and he continued:

“He (Timur) ate and drank things forbidden and permitted them, and under him those foul and base things had free course . . . And he remained in this condition amid zithers, harps, lyres, organs, and pipes; amid dancers, singers, and things wonderful and rare, and the Tempter urged him . . . everything succeeded according to desire, and wishes were satisfied, until pleasure and bounding joy made him light and agile, and he linked his arm with another’s and stretched out his hand to one who rose before him and they helped each other with arms joined. And when he was in the midst of dancing, he tottered amongst them, because of his age and lameness.”

NOTES

¹ See p. 97.

² Ibn Arabshah: *Tamerlane*.

³ Ibn Arabshah: *Tamerlane*.

WINTER: YEAR OF THE APE

(1404-1405)

AFTER the pleasures of Kani-gil, the old man resumed the cares of state; further licence was forbidden.

At the formal council of war, the princes of the blood and emirs vowed their loyal devotion to the Sahib Qiran and promised to be martyrs, if necessary, in the holy war against the Ming emperor, the oppressor of Islam. If the mighty armies of the Conqueror had been the instruments of crimes in the past, here was the occasion to purify themselves, to acquire merit in the eyes of Allah by pulling down the temples of idols in the empire of China. This pious work would help atone for the excesses of the past, when much blood of the Faithful had been spilt. Moreover, since the beginning of the reign of Timur, China had been ruled by usurpers. The world could not be ruled by several sovereigns; there would certainly be conflict between them. There would be neither confidence nor tranquillity in the towns, where brigands were masters, nor safety along the routes to China, which were infested with robbers.

It was already October (1404). Timur went into Samarqand for the feast of dedication for the mausoleum raised in honour of his grandson, Muhammad-Sultan. The building had been increased in height and was now complete. It was notable for its elegance of design rather than its ornament. From an octagonal base rose a fluted tower, flanked on either side of the main entrance by two slender minarets. The interior was decorated with light green marble and alabaster, the exterior with simple mosaic of azure and turquoise. Within the specially fine wooden doors, carved with stars and crescents, and with inlays of bone and pearl, lay the body of the cherished Muhammad-Sultan. Later the old man was to rest by his side.

The mausoleum (the Gur-Emir), survives, except for the minarets which collapsed in 1903. The rest is in a perfect state of restoration. Until 1905 an inscription on it read: "This is the tomb of the Sultan of the World, Timur Gurgan". The inscription was plundered and later sold in Constantinople to a Berlin museum. Diplomatic intervention and reimbursement secured the return of the inscription to Russia.

The tomb of Timur, over which hangs the tugh—his horse-tail crest

—is covered by a slab of nephrite—very dark, blue-green jade. This was brought from Moghulistan, on the way back from Yulduz, by Timur's grandson Ulugh-beg. The Conqueror himself had tried unsuccessfully to remove to Samarqand the magnificent jade, the largest slab known, when he was campaigning in this region. In the eighteenth century the jade was taken to Mashhad in Persia by order of Nadir Shah, whose forces had captured Samarqand. It was later replaced. At some stage the stone was cracked across the middle.

The opening of the Tombs in summer, 1941, by the Soviet Archaeological Commission revealed the remains of Timur, a skeleton with right arm and leg deformed, and other details mentioned earlier. From a model of the skull, the portrait of Timur was reconstructed.

Clavijo and his party were invited to the dedication. It was the last formal reception they were to attend. They were presented to Timur, and received from the Emir Shah Malik robes of honour and other presents, including a wallet containing one thousand five hundred silver tangas. Clavijo received no return missive for King Henry of Castile, and no formal audience of dismissal, although he was told he would be summoned for one on the following day. Instead, his embassy was hustled, with little ceremony and despite protest, out of Mawarannahr. Timur was lying mortally ill, they were told. In their own interests they should make haste to leave before the news of the Emperor's death should be made public. It was otherwise with the embassy of Sultan Faraj of Egypt, which received the treatment due to the envoys of a powerful Islamic state. Faraj now held in custody Sultan Ahmad Jalayir of Baghdad and Qara Yusuf, the Black Sheep Turkoman chief. The envoys bore back to Egypt, together with impressive gifts, a letter from Timur some seventy cubits long by three wide (approximately forty yards by one and a half), of exquisite calligraphy and sentiment, demanding the person of Sultan Ahmad, gagged and bound, and the head of Qara Yusuf.

As on other occasions, the Emperor bestowed upon princes of the blood realms that had still to be subdued. Two sons of Shahrukh, both ten years old, received Moghulistan up to the frontiers of China, between them; Ulugh-beg, a favourite grandson, received Semirechye, the northern provinces, and Ibrahim-Sultan the southern—the Tarim oases. These princes were to accompany the old man on the campaign. Ulugh-beg maintained an interest in China throughout his life. He sent envoys on official, friendly missions to China, and embellished Samarqand with the works of Chinese artists. His palace, decorated with Chinese mosaics and frescoes, was, however, subsequently destroyed in one of the Uzbek raids. Other princes were appointed to commands in the army: Sultan-

Husayn to the command of the Left Wing, and Khalil-Sultan to the Right. Prince Pir-Muhammad Jahangir, half-brother of the deceased Muhammad-Sultan, was despatched to his kingdom of Ghazni, and took the road to Qandahar.

Tuvajis had already made a census of the troops, and checked their strength, tuman by tuman, and their equipment. Some two hundred thousand troops were assembled. The Moghul historian Mirza Haydar Dughlat later claimed that the army numbered eight hundred thousand, with provender for seven years.¹ There were the troops of Mawarannahr and the crack Chaghatay hordes; troops from Khorasan and Mazandaran; troops from Sistan and Afghanistan; the Black Sheep hordes displaced from Asia Minor, and others, exiled troops from Azarbayjan, Persia, and Iraq. As Moghulistan, the country between Mawarannahr and China, was thinly populated and poorly cultivated, the Emperor had already sent emirs to the frontier regions to extend the area of cultivation. Emir Allahdad had been instructed to establish a fortress some ten days' march beyond Ashpara, in order to subdue the local tribesmen and provide a base for the outgoing and returning hordes. Later, he had been ordered to concentrate on the husbanding of provisions, and the tilling of the soil, for which anyone who had experience in it was to be mobilized. "Every man should give his whole care to sowing the fields and if anyone were compelled by necessity, he should rather omit his regular prayers than tillage."² Accordingly, "they strove to increase the produce of their cattle and their crops, and laboured to recall to life what was dead, and they did not rest from that care, until summer had folded up its carpet."

The chiefs in charge of the tens, hundreds, thousands, and tumans had to be exactly informed as to the condition of their troops. No one was to be delayed on the march through lack of vital provisions or arms. Each horse-soldier was to have supplies sufficient for ten, both in regard to equipment, and to provisions. Trains of wagons bore supplementary loads of grain; this was to be sown at intervals on the outward journey, so that it could be harvested for sustenance on the return. Each man, in addition to other supplies, had to take two milch-cows, and ten milch-goats;¹ when they could no longer supply milk, their carcasses would supply meat. Thousands of she-camels had also been assembled, to the same end. Drove of horses came in from the provinces to reinforce the supply of mounts. More wagon trains assembled with arms and munitions, others with provender. The imperial treasury came under special guard. Timur's own baggage train numbered five hundred waggons.

When the imperial standard unfurled for the invasion of China, and the Emperor with his hordes set out a week after the departure of the

Spanish envoys, it seems that Clavijo still believed the lame Conqueror to be lying at death's door. Instead, Mawarannahr shook with the rumble of waggons and horses, camels and elephants, foot- and horse-soldiers, trumpets and bells, all moving eastwards.

In China, where the envoy An was still awaited, intelligence had been received that Timur's forces were moving towards China; they intended to pass through Moghulistan, north of the Tien-shan. The Ming emperor ordered the commander-in-chief of Kansu to make ready for war.

Winter set in with unusual severity; first with rains, then high wind, excessive cold, and snow. Timur reached Aqsulat, west of the Sir-Darya, and stayed most of December. From here he sent Khalil to Tashkent with the Right Wing; the Left, under Sultan-Husayn, was sent to Yasi. Final instructions were given to those governors and officers appointed to take charge in Mawarannahr during the Emperor's absence.

Certain domestic questions were settled, including that of Khalil-Sultan. This grandson, for whose military talent the old man had high regard, was then twenty years old. He was the son of Princess Khan-zada by her second husband Miranshah, and one of the half-brothers, therefore, of the late heir. From Asia Minor he had been sent to the eastern frontiers to prepare for the Chinese campaign, although he had come back to Samarqand for the return of the Emperor and the qurultay. Clavijo, who saw him on more than one occasion, described him as "a young man about twenty-two years of age, fair-skinned and fat like his father (Miranshah) whom he resembled in face." Now that her eldest-born was dead, Khan-zada cherished every hope that her favoured Khalil might be heir-elect.

He was a gracious young man—even by the standards of Arabshah—popular with the army, a young man who "did not debase the beauty of his mouth by falsehood or lying". He was liberal, and his soldiers devoted themselves to guarding him and his life from the accidents of fortune. The devotion of his soldiers could not prevent Khalil from becoming victim to a common accident of fortune, that of falling in love. Unhappily his beloved was a woman of low rank, Shadi-Mulk, one of the concubines from the harem of Shaykh Sayf al-din. This passion so distracted the prince that he married the girl, while Timur was away in the west.

One of Khalil's other wives, a princess of royal blood, pregnant, and jealous, reported the affair to the Emperor on his return to Samarqand. Timur ordered that the girl be arrested, but Khalil hid her. This irritated the old man, and a search was ordered. Shadi-Mulk was discovered, and would have been put to death but for the intercession of Pir-Muhammad Jahangir. The sentence was deferred. When the old Emperor arrived at

Aqsulat, he heard that Khalil still had the girl with him. Once more Shadi-Mulk was seized. This time it was the empress Saray-Mulk, who had brought up Khalil as her ward, who interceded on his behalf. The old lady was so moved by the prince's despair that she gained the support of the great emirs Nur al-din and Shah Malik. On her behalf they informed the Sahib Qiran, Lord of the Fortunate Conjunction, that Shadi-Mulk was with child by Khalil. Her life was spared. She was placed in the custody of one of the queens until the confinement, after which she was to be given into the care of eunuchs. Khalil was ordered to proceed with his troops to Tashkent.

The Emperor wished to pass the desolate regions as early as possible in the season, and could brook no delays for the four-thousand mile enterprise he had undertaken. Despite the bitter weather he left Aqsulat before the end of December and pushed on to the Sir-Darya with the main body of the army. The cold increased every day. Ears and noses were lost through frost-bite, then hands and feet. Men and horses succumbed. The cold continued. One black cloud covered the entire sky, and one blanket of snow the earth. Every day the old man received information as to conditions of water and supplies, and the route. He pushed on. That year, between December and February, all fords on both Amu- and Sir-Darya rivers were icebound, and troops could pass over the ice where they wished. They had to dig two or three cubits through the ice to reach water. Past the river, the troops pushed forward. The old man wanted to outpace the winter.

When a man breathed, said Arabshah, his breath congealed on his beard and moustache; when he spat, a stone of ice hit the ground. "The wind blew on the breath of man, it quenched his spirit and froze him on his horse and also the camels, until it destroyed all softer constitutions . . . Therefore many perished in his army, noble and base alike, and the winter destroyed great and small amongst them . . . Yet Timur cared not for the dying and grieved not for those that had perished." The old man himself in his well-protected litter, suffered much from the cold.

They reached Otrar, nearly two hundred and fifty miles from Samargand, in the middle of January. This was a station for caravans coming from China by the Seven Rivers (Semirechiye) route. Timur, together with his princes and emirs, lodged in the palace of Emir Berdi-bek, governor of Otrar. The sky, from horizon to horizon, was still dark with snow. The steppe, which in early spring would flush with tulips, was imprisoned in ice. Scouts were sent out to examine the condition of the routes. They reported them to be snow-bound to the depth of two spears, and impassable.

Shortly after the encampment of the court and army in Otrar, envoys arrived from Tokhtamish, erstwhile khan of the Golden Horde, first protégé, then rival, of the Sahib Qiran. Since his defeat and the conflict within the Horde, he had been a wanderer across the Qipchaq steppes. Timur arranged an imposing reception for the envoys, ensuring that the many princes of Asia, including Tayzi-oghlan, the Mongol prince, were in attendance. From Tokhtamish came the message: "I have suffered the punishment I deserve for my ingratitude. My faithlessness has led me to my present sorry position, where my only resource is the hope I have of your pardon . . . If I am forgiven, then my head will never move from the yoke of submission, nor my foot from the path of obedience."

The envoys were given the reply that, when the Emperor returned from China, he would, with the help of God, restore the Juchi ulus to the hands of Tokhtamish . . .

Despite the efforts made to protect the Sahib Qiran from the cold, the old man could not get warm. Fires were lit in the Otrar palace. Indeed, the corner of one of the upper stories caught fire on the day of Timur's arrival. The fire was soon extinguished, but the incident seemed inauspicious to many of the lords of the court. They had been suffering from the hazards of the weather, and several had recently complained of bad dreams. They appealed to Timur to relax the taboos and declare a celebration. This the Emperor did.

For three days the feasting and drinking continued. Timur ordered more and more wine, with hot drugs and spices, to warm himself. From wines he passed to spirits. But he touched no food. He became sick of an inflammation in his stomach and bowels. Those around him said that the malady was but the after-effect of heavy drinking, to which he was not accustomed. He continued drinking, but this only increased the torment. His doctors treated him by applying ice to his head and belly. The most skilful of the court physicians, Maulana Fadl of Tabriz, was with him, but neither he, nor others, for all their remedies, could control the malady. The sickness increased, and produced other ills.

The old Emperor, stricken and enfeebled, said, "I tried the pleasures of drunkenness; but the pleasures of the world are nothing compared with its afflictions. He who ends up in the power of these afflictions, ends under the power of fire."³ The chronicler says that Timur in his fever believed that he could hear the houris of Paradise telling him to make penance before the Almighty. He continued to ask about the condition of the troops, and the disposition of the army, but at last the Emperor understood that the malady was stronger than the remedies.

At one point, unable to speak, he raised two fingers, signifying by his

glance that he wanted the emirs around him to interpret his meaning.⁴ Some said that the action meant that there were only two means by which the Sahib Qiran could recover his health . . . then the old man, his voice restored again, said: no, after two days he would not be among them . . . Timur asked the doctors to tell him frankly the whole truth about his condition. The doctors replied that, relying on the kindness of God, they hoped that the net of the Creator would be spared him and them for many years; but according to the rules of medical science, it would occur as the emperor had indicated.⁵

Timur declared his will and testament: I see my spirit is about to leave my body. Do not lament my death, I beg you, because that in no way helps. Death has never been held at bay through tears. Instead of tearing your clothes and lamenting, pray God to pardon me: say Allah Akbar and recite the Qoran, to give comfort to my spirit. Just as I gave good laws and order to the realms of Iran and Turan, so that the great dare not oppress the poor, so I hope that God will pardon my sins, which are many . . .

I declare and desire that Pir-Muhammad, son of Jahangir, should be my heir and world-inheritor, the legitimate successor to the empire. He must hold under his power the throne of Samarqand with all sovereignty and independence, he must administer the empire, the army, and the countries under my jurisdiction.

I order you to obey him and to serve him, to sacrifice your lives to maintain his complete authority, so that the world will not fall into disorder, and the work of so many years of my life be lost . . . If you keep unity, no one will dare oppose you, or place the least obstacle in carrying out my last wishes . . .

The Emperor ordered all emirs and lords of the court and commanders of the army to come and vow in his presence with a solemn oath to carry out his commands. He sent an order to all absent emirs and chiefs to take the same oath. The emirs asked if orders should be sent to Tashkent, to summon Khalil and the lords with him, but the old man said that time pressed, the absent ones would not arrive in time; he would have to wait until the Day of Judgement to see them again . . . The ladies and princes in the ante-chamber, hearing his words, began to wail.

Timur turned to the princes with him and repeated: Remember what I have said about the repose of the people. Be firm and courageous. Keep your sword in hand with valour. I have purged the realm of Iran and Turan of enemies and disturbers of the peace, given them justice and well-being. If you carry out my testament, the crown and the realm will remain in your hands. If disunity occurs, enemies will start wars; it will

be difficult to reduce them, there will be irreparable damage to state and religion . . .

After this the sickness redoubled. The maulanās were reading from the Qoran at the end of the chamber. Night had fallen. The evening prayer was read, and Timur pronounced several times: “La Illaha illa Allah”—“There is no God but God.”

He was seized with a great hiccough. Arabshah wrote that the old man “coughed like a camel that is strangled, his colour was nigh quenched and his cheeks foamed like a camel dragged backwards with the rein; and if one saw the angels that tormented him, they showed the joy with which they threaten the wicked, to lay waste their houses and utterly destroy the whole memory of them . . .

“The hand of Death gave him the cup to drink . . .

“ . . . Then they brought garments of hair from Hell and drew forth his soul like a spit from a soaked fleece and he was carried to the cursing and punishment of God, remaining in torment and God’s infernal punishment.”

But the court chronicler wrote that Timur entered Paradise, giving up his soul to the angel Izrail, who called to him, “O hopeful spirit, return to your Lord with resignation. We are of God, and we return to Him.”

This happened on the night of February 18th, 1405, Year of the Ape, in the plains of Otrar beyond the Sir-Darya.

Schiltberger, the Bavarian captive, told this tale of the winter events: Be it known that, after he (Timur) was buried, the priests that belong to that temple, heard him howl every night during a whole year. His friends gave generous alms, that he should cease his howlings. But this was of no use. They went to his (Timur’s) son and begged that he would set free the prisoners taken by his father in other countries, and especially those that were in his capital, where they had to work.

The pious Shahrukh also heard his father howl from his grave.⁶ So he let the prisoners go. And as soon as they were free, Timur the Lame did not howl any more.

NOTES

¹ Dughlat: *Tarikh-i Rashidi*.

² Ibn Arabshah: *Tamerlane*

³ Musavi: *Tarikh-i Khayrat*.

⁴ Hafiz-i Abru: *Zubdat al Tavarikh*.

⁵ Zimin: *Details of the Death of Timur*.

⁶ Thomas of Metsope.

APPENDIX A

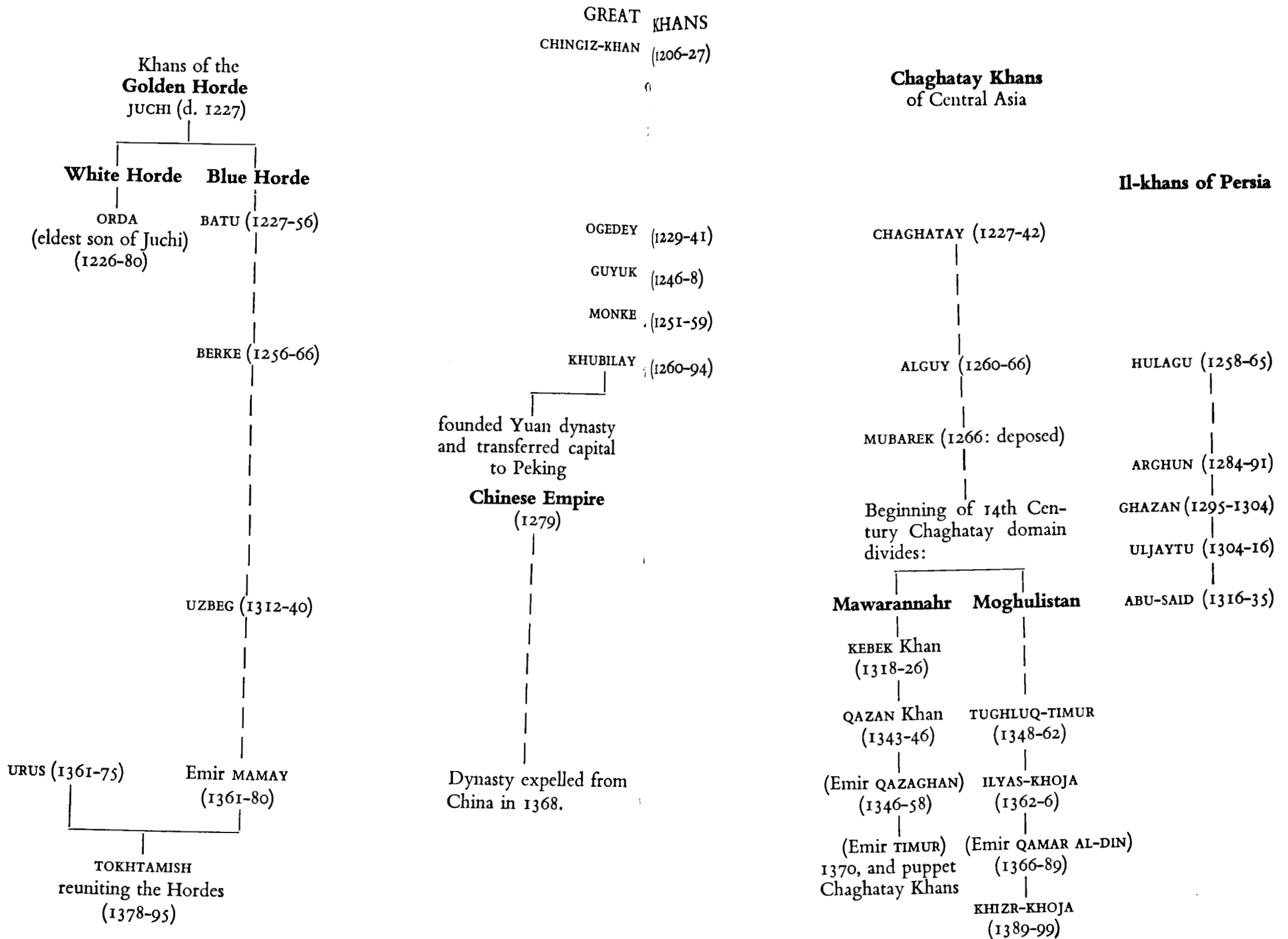
CHRONOLOGICAL SURVEY UP TO THE 14TH CENTURY

B.C.	
7th Century	Powerful state around Amu-Darya delta (Khwarazm). Growth of Zoroastranism.
6th Century	Central Asia conquered as far as the Sir-Darya by Persians.
4th Century 334-27	Alexander the Great overthrows Persian empire of Darius III; overcomes resistance of Spitamenes and seizes Maracanda (Samarqand). Alexander conquers Central Asia as far as Sir-Darya.
3rd Century	Till mid-century, rule of Alexandrian general Seleucus and his successors. After mid-century, independent Graeco-Bactrian kingdom established. Unification of the Chinese empire.
221-06	Chin dynasty of China. Great Wall built. Conflict between China and Hsiung-nu (Huns).
2nd Century	Han dynasty in China (Western Han 206 B.C.—A.D. 24; Eastern Han, A.D. 25—A.D. 220).
209-173	Hsiung-nu extend their dominions under Baghdur, and drive Yueh-chih Mongols into Central Asia.
138	Han emperor Wu Ti sends Chang Chien to Central Asia to seek alliance with Yueh-chih against the Hsiung-nu.
102	Chinese expedition subdues Farghana. Greatly developed contacts between Central Asia, China, and Mediterranean. Roman demand for silk.
1st Century A.D.	Development of Silk Road.
1st Century	Rise of Kushan empire in Central Asia and northern India. Spread of Buddhism from India to Central Asia and to China.
3rd Century	Sasanid dynasty in Persia.
4th Century	Constantinople founded.
5th Century 399-414	Fa-Hsien, Buddhist monk, travels from China to Central Asia and India.
435-54	Central Asia overrun by White Huns; Huns continue into Europe and under Attila in mid-century set up state on the Danube.
6th Century	Central Asia conquered by Turks from Mongolia. Turkic empire extended from frontiers of China to Persian and Byzantine borders.

- Development of transcontinental trade and Central Asian commercial influence.
- 7th Century
618-907
629-45
- Tang Dynasty in China.
Journey of Buddhist pilgrim Hsuan-tsang from China through Central Asia to India.
Turkic empire divided into eastern and western empires; semi-independent local state in Central Asia owes allegiance either to Turks or Chinese.
- 622
- Hegira. Muhammad's flight from Mecca to Medina.
Beginning of Muslim era.
- 8th Century
751
- Arab invasion of Central Asia.
Chinese defeated in Talas valley by Arabs.
- 9th Century
10th Century
- Mawarannahr an Islamic province.
Samanid state in Central Asia. Mawarannahr becomes centre of commercial, artisan, and cultural development.
- 960-1279
11th Century
- Sung dynasty in China.
Samanid dominions conquered by Qara-khanids from east (nomadic Islamic Turks).
Ghaznavid state established in southern regions of Mawarannahr and Khorasan.
Seljuk Turks establish their dominion over Persia and Mesopotamia, and become Sultans of Islam.
- 1095
12th Century
- Beginning of Crusades against Seljuks.
Qara-Khitay (non-Muslim nomads) conquer Central Asia.
Rise of Khwarazm empire; Khwarazmshah defeats Seljuks and conquers Khorasan and Persia.
- 13th Century
1200-20
- Muhammad shah of Khwarazm: defeats Qara-Khitay and drives them beyond Sir-Darya.
- 1206
- Chingiz-khan proclaimed Qaghan of the Mongols.
- 1219-23
- Campaign of Chingiz and sons in Central Asia.
- 1221-3
- Journey of Taoist monk Chang-Chun to Central Asia.
- 1227
- Death of Chingiz-khan and son Juchi.
- 1227-42
- Chaghatay Khan of Central Asia.
- 1227-56
- Batu Khan of the Golden Horde.
- 1229-41
- Ogedey the Great Khan; Mawarannahr governed for Chingizids by Mahmud Yalavach and his son Masud until 1289.
- 1238
- Revolt in Bukhara against Mongols.
- 1236-41
- Mongol expedition under Batu into eastern Europe as far as Hungary.
- 1246-8
- Guyuk the Great Khan.
- 1245-7
- Journey of Friar Carpini.
- 1251-9
- Monke the Great Khan; Batu claims authority over Chaghatay dominions.

1253-5	Journey of Friar Rubruck.
1256-9	Hulagu's campaign in Persia.
1256-66	Berke Khan of the Golden Horde; New Saray founded.
1260-94	Khubilay the Great Khan.
1260-6	Alghuy restores domination of Chaghatays in Central Asia.
1269	Qurultay in Talas valley condemns tendency of princes to settle in towns, and reinforces the nomad traditions of the Chaghatays in Central Asia.
1279	Khubilay establishes Yuan dynasty in China.
1295-1304	Ghazan Khan, Il-khan of Persia.
1312-40	Uzbeq Khan of the Golden Horde.
1318-30	Journey of Friar Odoric.
1318-26	Kebek Khan of Mawarannahr.
1325-54	Travels of Ibn Battuta.
1347-58	Emir Qazaghan ruler of Mawarannahr.
1348-62	Tughluq-Timur Khan of Moghulistan.

MONGOL EMPIRES 13TH AND 14TH CENTURIES



FOURTEENTH CENTURY DYNASTIES

<i>Western Europe</i>	<i>Byzantium</i>	<i>Asia Minor</i>	<i>Egypt</i>	<i>Persia</i>	<i>Golden Horde</i>	<i>Mawarannahr</i>	<i>Moghulistan</i>	<i>India</i>	<i>China</i>
(1336-1453) Hundred Years War (Fr. and England)	Palaeologus dynasty: John V (1341-91:)	Ten Emirates replace Seljuks. Ottoman Emirate becomes dominant	Mamluk Sultans	Abu Said, last of Il-Khans (1316-35) dynasty of Hulagu	Chingizid dynasty of Batu Uzbek Khan (1312-40)	Chingizid dynasty of Chaghatay Kebek Khan (1318-26) Khan Qazan (1343-6)		Sultans of Delhi Tughluq Dynasty Muhammad II (1324-51)	Chingizid dynasty of Yuan (founded by Khubilay)
Great Schism: (1378-1417) Pope Boniface IX of Rome (1389-1404) and Anti-Pope Benedict XIII of Avignon (1394-1409) France: Charles VI (1380-1422)		Murad I (1360-1389)		Jalayirs (Tabriz & Baghdad) Sultan Ahmad (1382-1410)	Emir Mamay (1361-80)		Tughluq-Timur (1348-62)		
		B. KOSSOVO (1389)	Sultan Barquq (1382-1399)	Qara-qoyunlu (Black Sheep Turkomans) Qara Yusuf (1388-1420)	Urus Khan of White Horde (1361-75)	Emir Qazaghan assassinated (1358)	Ilyas-khoja (1362-6)	Firuz III (1351-88)	1368 Yuan Emperor defeated. Ming dynasty:
England: Richard II (1377-99) Henry IV (1399-1413)	Manuel II (1391-1425)	Bayazid I (1389-1402)	Sultan Faraj (1399-1412)	Muzaffaris Zayn al-Abadin (1384-7) Shah Mansur (1387-93)	B. KULIKOVO (1380) B. KALKA		Emir Qamar al-din (1366-89)	Mahmud (1388-inter-regnum-1412)	Hung-Wu (1368-98) Yung-Lo (1403-25)
		B. NICOPOLIS (1396)		Sarbadars of Khorasan Ali Muayyad (1364-81)	Tokhtamish Khan of reunited Golden & White Hordes (1378-1395)	TIMUR (1370-1405)	Khizr-khoja (1389-99)		
				Karts of Herat Ghiyath al-din Pir Ali (1370-89)					

APPENDIX D

CHRONOLOGICAL SURVEY OF TIMUR'S LIFE

- 1336 Birth of Timur near Shahrisabz, Qashka-Darya valley.
- 1346 Khan Qazan deposed by Emir Qazaghan.
- 1358 Emir Qazaghan assassinated.
Tughluq-Timur, Khan of Moghulistan, invades Mawarannahr.
- 1360 Timur enters service of Tughluq-Timur.
Tughluq-Timur appoints his own son, Ilyas-khoja, Governor of Mawarannahr.
Timur breaks with Khan of Moghulistan; joins Emir Husayn of Balkh.
- 1362 Timur and Husayn fugitives in desert.
Ilyas-khoja succeeds his father as Khan of Moghulistan.
Timur marries Husayn's sister Uljay-Turkan-agma.
Timur lamed.
Timur and Husayn attack and defeat Ilyas-khoja, drive him from Mawarannahr.
- 1365 Ilyas-khoja attacks Mawarannahr. Battle of the Mire.
Timur and Husayn defeated and take flight.
Samarqand successfully defended by Sarbadars. Defeat and withdrawal of Ilyas-khoja.
- 1366 Timur and Husayn seize Sarbadar leaders and take over Samarqand.
Four years of conflict between Timur and Husayn.
Ilyas-khoja assassinated in Moghulistan. His rival, Qamar al-din, becomes Moghul ruler.
Death of Timur's wife Uljay-Turkan-agma.
- 1368 Yuan (Mongol) dynasty overthrown in China. Ming dynasty established.
- 1370 Timur defeats Husayn at Balkh. Husayn assassinated.
Timur enthroned by qurultay at Balkh.
Timur marries Husayn's widow, Saray-Mulk-khanum, daughter of Khan Qazan.
- 1372 Timur mounts expedition against Sufis of Khwarazm. Kat seized; Sufis come to terms; they promise Chingizid princess Khan-zada as wife for Timur's son Jahangir.
Princess does not arrive.
- 1373 Timur starts on second expedition against Khwarazm. Princess arrives.
- 1374 Marriage between Jahangir and Khan-zada, granddaughter of Uzbek Khan.
Expedition against Jats of Moghulistan postponed on account of hard winter.
- 1375 Expedition renewed against Moghulistan; Qamar al-din put to flight, his camp and harem captured.
Timur marries Dilshad-agma, daughter of Qamar al-din.

- Returns to Samarqand.
 Birth of son, Muhammad-Sultan, to Jahangir and Khan-zada.
 Death of Jahangir, eldest son of Timur.
 Khan-zada becomes wife of Timur's younger son Miranshah.
- 1376 Timur disperses Jalayir tribe, which has risen in revolt.
 Timur supports Tokhtamish, fugitive prince from White Horde.
 Tokhtamish is defeated by his rivals;
- 1377 is re-equipped by Timur and again defeated.
- 1378 Tokhtamish again re-equipped. Succeeds in establishing himself as Khan of the White Horde.
- 1379 Second expedition against Sufis of Khwarazm.
 Urganch captured; scholars and artisans sent to Shahrisabz.
 Kart prince of Herat summoned to pay homage to Timur.
- 1380 Battle of Kulikovo: Emir Mamay of Golden Horde defeated by Muscovite Prince Dmitri Donskoy.
 Battle of Kalka: Mamay defeated by Tokhtamish, who becomes Khan of re-united Golden Horde (Golden and White).
 Miranshah proclaimed ruler of Khorasan.
- 1381 Expedition into Khorasan; Kart Prince and capital, Herat, submit to Timur without resistance. City's treasure seized.
 Timur returns to Samarqand; winters near Bukhara.
- 1382 Expedition against Mazandaran; Caspian provinces submit to Timur.
 Timur winters near Samarqand.
- 1383 Expedition against Moghulistan; Qamar al-din still evades capture.
 Revolt in Khorasan.
 Expedition into Khorasan; Isfizar destroyed; captives cemented alive into towers.
- 1384 Sistan ravaged; Zaranj, the capital, captured and destroyed; Qandahar taken by assault.
 Sultan Ahmad Jalayir of Azarbayjan takes flight and Timur seizes Sultaniya.
 Timur returns to Samarqand.
 By mid-'eighties, Timur holds Mawarannahr, Khorasan, Afghanistan, Sistan, and Mazandaran as far as Sultaniya.
- 1385 Tokhtamish, Khan of the Golden Horde, plunders Tabriz.
- 1386 Three Years' Campaign against Persia (Hulagid dominions).
 Tabriz taken; rulers of provinces submit.
 First expedition against Georgia. Tiflis taken by storm.
 Winter: forces of Tokhtamish skirmishing in Darband region.
- 1387 Timur campaigns against Black Sheep Turkomans, allies of Sultan Ahmad Jalayir.
 Armenian strongholds seized by Timur.
 Campaign against Muzaffari princes in south-west Persia.
 Isfahan put to sword after uprising of citizens.
 Fars submits to Timur.

- Shiraz submits.
 Muzaffari princes become Timur's vassals.
 Tokhtamish, supported by Sufis of Khwarazm, attacks Mawarannahr, defeats Timur's son Omar-Shaykh, besieges Bukhara, pillages oases, sets Chaghatay palace in Qashka-Darya valley on fire.
 Timur returns to Mawarannahr; Tokhtamish retires beyond Sir-Darya.
- 1388 Punitive expedition against Khwarazm. Urganch razed to ground.
 Tokhtamish again attacks Mawarannahr from north-east, and retires.
- 1389 Khizr-khoja (son of Tughluq-Timur) ousts Qamar al-din and is proclaimed Khan of Moghulistan.
 Timur launches expedition against Moghulistan; Khizr-khoja defeated and put to flight. Timur celebrates victory at Yulduz in Tien-shan.
 Qamar al-din attempts to reinstate himself.
 Revolt in Khorasan put down by Miranshah. Kart dynasty destroyed.
- 1390 Expedition against Qamar al-din, who flees beyond the Irtish, and disappears three years later.
 Khizr-khoja makes peace with Timur.
 Winter: Timur and his hordes near Tashkent.
- 1391 January: Timur advances north through Hunger Steppe and Sari-Su valley.
 Tokhtamish sought in the Qipchaq steppes.
 Timur crosses Tobol River; turns westward; crosses Ural river.
 Mid-June: makes contact with Tokhtamish and Golden Horde.
 Battle of Kunduzcha. Defeat and flight of Tokhtamish.
 Victory celebrations by Timur's forces along Volga.
 Winters near Tashkent.
- 1392 Timur returns to Samarqand.
 May: departure on Five Years' Campaign in the west.
 Punitive expeditions against Mazandaran; and against the Kurds in Persia.
- 1393 Second campaign against Georgia.
 Muzaffari prince Shah Mansur defeated after considerable resistance.
 Shiraz occupied for second time.
 Baghdad (abandoned by Sultan Ahmad Jalayir) submits to Timur.
 Fortress of Takrit taken after stern resistance.
 Basrah, near Persian Gulf, submits.
 Death of Timur's eldest surviving son Omar-Shaykh.
 Timur's troops in poor condition through winter rains.
 Withdrawal from investiture of Mardin.
 Sultan Barquq of Egypt and Syria gives sanctuary to Sultan Ahmad Jalayir, rejects Timur's overtures, and executes envoys.
- 1394 Spring: Timur renews attack on Mardin.
 Alliance between Barquq of Egypt and Tokhtamish of Golden Horde.
 Barquq assembles forces against Timur and moves north to Damascus.
 Sultan Ahmad reinstated in Baghdad.

- Timur moves north to Armenia; expeditions against Black Sheep Turkomans.
 Barquq moves north to Aleppo.
 Timur moves to winter quarters.
 November: Barquq, convinced that Timur is on way home, withdraws to Cairo.
 Tokhtamish skirmishing in Caucasus.
- 1395 April: Battle of Terek. Timur destroys forces of Tokhtamish, Golden Horde irreparably weakened.
 Timur's hordes ravage Volga regions; destroys Tana, Astrakhan, and Saray.
 August: Timur's forces reach Yeletz by the Don; return south.
 Hard winter; troops in poor shape.
- 1396 Spring: attacks on Georgia.
 Summer: Return to Samarqand. Population exempted from taxation for three years.
 Construction of palaces and gardens, and embellishment of Samarqand.
 Battle of Nicopolis: Ottoman Sultan Bayazid destroys Christian forces.
- 1397 Timur near Tashkent awaiting Moghul bride, daughter of Khizr-khoja, and preparing eastern campaign.
 Autumn: Pir-Muhammad Jahangir sent south to Punjab.
- 1398 Spring: Timur returns from Sir-Darya to Samarqand.
 March: Timur and army move south across Hindu Kush. Reach Kabul.
 Archbishop John appointed to See of Sultaniya.
 October: Multan falls after siege of six months.
 December: Defeat and sack of Delhi.
- 1399 Timur returns home along northern foothills.
 May: Timur reaches Samarqand. Construction begins on Cathedral Mosque.
 Death of Sultan Barquq of Egypt.
 October: Seven Years' Campaign in the west.
 Miranshah deposed.
 Sultan Ahmad Jalayir flees to Ottoman Sultan Bayazid.
 News of death of Ming emperor of China.
 Timur winters in Qarabagh. Campaign of extermination against Georgians.
- 1400 Summer: Sivas seized from Ottoman forces.
 October: Aleppo (Syria) falls.
- 1401 January: Damascus falls and is gutted.
 March: Timur returns north.
 Summer: Baghdad (defended by a governor) stormed and gutted.
 Winter quarters in Qarabagh.
 Negotiations with Byzantine, and other western powers.

- 1402 February: Timur's hordes move west.
Reinforcements arrive from Samarqand under heir-elect Muhammad-Sultan.
Sivas—review of Tatar forces.
July: Battle of Angora: rout of Ottoman forces, capture of Sultan Bayazid.
December: Smyrna (stronghold of Knights of St. John) stormed and sacked.
- 1403 Return eastwards through Anatolia.
March: death of Bayazid in captivity; and of heir-elect Muhammad-Sultan.
Abu-Bakr (son of Miranshah) recaptures Baghdad from Black Sheep Turkomans.
Autumn: Hostilities against Georgia; terms eventually arranged.
Winter: Qarabagh.
- 1404 Spring: return via Mazandaran to Samarqand.
August: Arrival in Samarqand; arrival also of Spanish embassy of Clavijo.
More construction work in Samarqand.
September: Qurultay in Kani-gil.
October: Dedication of mausoleum in Samarqand to Muhammad-Sultan.
Departure for campaign against China.
Khalil-Sultan's love problem.
- 1405 Mid-January: Arrival at Otrar.
February 18th: Death of Timur.

GLOSSARY

Amir (Emir)	ruler; prince.	Khoshun	unit of command in the Mongol armies, nominally a hundred.
Aq	white.		
Atabeg	tutor; guardian of princes.	Khutba	Friday sermon in the Mosque; mention in the Khutba was one of the recognized marks of sovereignty in Islam.
Bagh	garden.		
Bahadur	hero; knight.		
Bey (Beg)	noble; baron.		
Cadi (Qadi)	judge proficient in Islamic Law—the Shariat.	Kibitka	round felt nomad tent supported by laths; a household.
Caliph	deputy; title of successors of Muhammad and head of Islamic community.		
Chaikhana	tea-house.	Madrasa	school or college for Muslim learning.
Chelebi	prince of the Ottoman dynasty.	Maghrib	countries of North Africa west of Egypt.
Dagh	mountain.	Malik	prince; king; "possessor".
Darband	pass.	Mamluk	slave; one "possessed".
Darugha	governor.	Maulana	Master; title of respect.
Darvish	religious ascetic.	Mawarannahr	Land Beyond the River (Transoxiana): i.e. that region of Central Asia between the Amu-Darya (Oxus) and the Sir-Darya (Jaxartes).
Darya	sea or river.		
Divan	state administrative council.		
Elchi	official messenger.	Mirza	Prince.
Emir (<i>see</i> Amir)		Mogol	(<i>in this text</i>) dynasty established by Timur's descendant Babur in India.
Gurgan	son-in-law (i.e. related to the royal house of Chingiz).	Moghul	(<i>in this text</i>) nomads of Moghulistan (Jats).
Ghazi	warrior for the faith of Islam.	Muezzin	man who summons the faithful to prayer.
Hazara	unit of command in the Mongol armies, nominally a thousand.	Muslim (Moslem, Muhammadan)	one who accepts the faith of Islam.
Il-khan	Mongol rulers of Persia of the line of Hulagu.	Nokods	companies of guards.
Imam	Muslim spiritual leader.	Noyon	noble, lord.
Jat (Jete)	nomad of Moghulistan; originally term of contempt.	Oghlan	prince of the house of Juchi, of the Golden Horde.
Khan	king; prince.	Ordu	Imperial camp; army; collection of tribes. The word has passed into Europe as "horde".
Kharaj	tribute; land-tax as opposed to poll-tax.		

Qadi (see Cadi)		Sultan	Emperor; supreme ruler.
Qaghan	Great Khan: Khan of Khans.	Sunni	follower of the dominant sect in Islam, usually regarded as orthodox.
Qara	black.		
Qipchaq	nomads of Turkic stock roaming between the Aral Sea and the Dnieper; term later applied generally to nomads of the Golden Horde.	Tajik	inhabitants of Central Asia, of Iranian origin, settled peoples; term of contempt when used by nomads.
Qizil	red.	Tarkhan	privileged order.
Qurultay	Mongol council of princes called for election of new Qaqaan or deciding a military campaign.	Tugh	horse-tail standard or pennant, sign of distinction in Mongol army.
Sahib Qiran	Lord of the Fortunate Conjunction (of planets).	Tuman	unit of the Mongol army, nominally ten thousand; a sum of money of that order; an area supplying those effectives for the army.
Saray	palace; seat of government.	Tuvaji	aides-de-camp; high officers of state bearing imperial commands.
Sayyid	master; descendant of Muhammad by line of Husayn.		
Shah	king.	ulama	collective term for Muslim dignitaries.
Shariat	The Way; the holy law of Islam.	ulus	domain, tribal area.
Sharif	noble.		
Shi-i	followers of the Shi-a sect, one of the major sects of Islam, advocating the claims of Ali, son-in-law of the Prophet.	yam yarliq yurt	posting-station. charters; official orders. tent; household.

SOURCES

TIMUR'S court included scholars and secretaries who accompanied him everywhere. The secretaries wrote either in Persian, or in Chaghatay Turkic, using the Uyghur script. They kept records of Timur's campaigns and the events of his reign. The records were passed to scholars who wrote them up in literary form. These accounts were read to Timur and revised until they satisfied him.

The Uyghur Turkic accounts were rendered into a verse chronicle which does not seem to have survived in its original form. It appears, however, at second-hand in the work of historians who made use of the chronicle.

Two of the original Persian works have survived. One is the diary of the Indian campaign by Ghiyath al-din Ali. He either accompanied the expedition, or wrote the diary very shortly afterwards from the accounts of one who did. The work is in the style then generally considered elegant; heavily charged with verses and pious allusions. This style, however, did not please Timur.

The second account is that of Nizam al-din Shami. Nizam was a scholar from Tabriz who was in Baghdad in 1393 when the city submitted to Timur. He was amongst the first to pay homage to the Conqueror. He was in Aleppo during the Syrian campaign, and the following year (1401) was summoned to Timur and asked to write a history of his reign. In the preface Nizam stated that Timur directed him to revise and put into proper form the records of his secretaries; he was particularly instructed to avoid an ornate style which could be understood by only one in a hundred. Nizam used the Persian but not the Uyghur records. He completed his work and presented it to the Conqueror in the spring of 1404, before the court returned to Samarqand. Timur ordered another copy to be made for his grandson Omar, whom he had appointed governor of Tabriz, and gave the work the title of *Zafar-nama*—Book of Victory.

The section on the Indian campaign in the *Zafar-nama* of Nizam corresponds closely to the diary of Ghiyath al-din Ali, except that some literary flourishes have been suppressed. It may be assumed that in general Nizam's history follows equally closely the text of the records from which he was working.

After Timur's death the interregnum under Khalil-Sultan was ended by the domination of the devout Shahrukh. At his court, and those of his sons, scholars continued to receive high patronage. One of these scholars was Sharaf al-din Ali, from Yazd in southern Persia. Ibrahim-Sultan, son of Shahrukh and prince of Fars, collected together all the records of his grandfather's reign, adding to them many eye-witness accounts. These materials, which included the Uyghur chronicle, were handed to Sharaf to be composed in literary form. The result was regarded as a very model of literary and historical composition. In spite of its poetic exuberance and the exaggeration of Timur's muslim piety, the work is the most useful and comprehensive of the court histories. It was completed in 1425, and, like the work of Nizam, entitled *Zafar-nama*.

A number of copies were made. One of the copies made in 1467 was later illustrated by the miniaturist Bihzad. (Sharaf himself was subsequently implicated

in a plot against Shahrukh, but his life was saved by the intervention of Ulugh-beg, who invited him to Samarqand.) The translation made of this work by Petis de la Croix, in the reign of Louis XIV, cut out the poetry; it suffers from inaccuracies.

These histories are supplemented by a number of other works by Timurid court historians, many composed shortly after the Conqueror's death, such as Musavi's *Tarikh-i Khayrat*, the Chronicle of Good Things.

Hafiz-i Abru, for example, was a scholar at Timur's court during the last years of his reign. He accompanied Timur on campaigns, and was a close associate of the Conqueror, joining him in games of chess. Hafiz became the court historian of Shahrukh in Herat and wrote the *Zubdat al-tavarikh*, the Cream of Chronicles (1423-4). This was a world history, composed in simple style, one section of which related to Timur.

Later Abd-al Razzak of Samarqand, also of Shahrukh's court, wrote a history entitled the *Matla'us Sadayn*, the Dawn of the Two Auspicious Planets, which gives the history of Mawarannahr and Persia from the birth of the last Persian Il-Khan Abu Said to the death of Timur's great-grandson, also named Abu Said. This history was based to a considerable extent on the work of Hafiz-i Abru. In 1444 Abd-al Razzak was sent on a mission to India, an unhappy experience of which he also left a record. He died in 1482.

In the second half of the fifteenth century, existing works were used by Mirkhond (also at Herat) to compose a world history entitled the *Raudat al-Safa*, the Garden of Purity. Volume six dealt with Timur and his successors. The work was abridged and completed by his grandson Khwandamir.

Other surviving records, from court sources, of aspects of Timur's reign included the Chronicle of Muin al-din Natanzi, written in the first part of the fifteenth century. Muin al-din served at the court of Iskandar, son of Omar-Shaykh, and the bias is therefore in the direction of this branch of the Timurids. He wrote a general history, with a chapter on Timur, very early in the fifteenth century, and appears to have had access, as had Hafiz-i Abru, to Turkic sources additional to those used by Sharaf al-din Yazdi. Many important records have yet to be published.

All these works were of an official or semi-official character, and all include, to a greater or lesser degree, flattery of the patrons. Similarly tendentious are the histories of hostile scholars, especially from the countries overrun in the Syrian and Turkish campaigns. Their records, however, corroborate the works of the court historians, the differences between them being of attitude and detail, but not of essence.

The most important hostile source is that of Ibn Arabshah, who was taken captive as a boy in Damascus and carried off to Samarqand. He later studied and travelled widely, and became for a time secretary to the Ottoman Sultan Muhammad I. He died in Cairo in 1450. His history, in rhyming Arabic prose, is rich in evidence, especially relating to the latter part of Timur's life and events following the Conqueror's death. Despite its bitterness, Arabshah's work contains much sober commentary.

The account of the extraordinary adventures of Schiltberger of Bavaria have also survived. He started out as a squire going on a crusade. He was captured when his knight was killed at Nicopolis, and became slave to the Ottoman Sultan Bayazid. Schiltberger was included in a detachment sent in support of Sultan Faraj in Cairo. After his return and the defeat of Bayazid at Angora, Schiltberger became captive to Timur, survived the Conqueror, and lived to serve the Conqueror's son and grandsons, to make his escape, and return to Bavaria. His story, probably recorded for him, is a mixture of distorted recollections and camp gossip; a subjective but important narrative, from a point of view exactly opposite to that of the court historians.

The Castilian envoy Ruy Gonzales Clavijo left the most important neutral account of Timur's court and the stories he heard about the campaigns. His embassy followed the victorious Tatar hordes from Asia Minor to Samarqand. Clavijo was in the Protected City for the victory celebrations, and was there on the eve of the departure of the Hordes for new conquests in China. Clavijo described many events also known to us from the official histories and from Arabshah.

Ibn Khaldun, the Arab historian and philosopher, gave an account of his meetings with Timur in Damascus in 1401, in the closing chapters of his autobiography. Khaldun is cautiously non-committal about the reasons for Timur's confidence in him.

Archbishop John of Sultaniya was in attendance at Timur's court in 1492 and probably earlier, and to him we owe the *Mémoire* that was circulated to the court of Charles VI in Paris. Archbishop John hoped to encourage trade with the Tatars and no doubt converts to Christianity in consequence.

A number of records of particular events in Timur's reign have yet to be published. Many need to be made more widely available in translation.

There are many works of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century origin on other subjects which give important background or supplementary information. There are, for example, the history by Juvayni of the Chingiz and Hulagid campaigns; Rashid al-din's Mongol History; the Secret History of the Mongols; the accounts of the journeys of such travellers as Carpini, Rubruck, and Oderic, of Marco Polo and Ibn Battuta. The *Nuzhat al Qulub* (Heart's Delight) of Mustawfi of Qazvin gives an account of Mawarannahr, Persia, and Mesopotamia at the time of Timur's birth. Timur's descendant, Babur, in his memoirs describes Mawarannahr less than a century after the Conqueror's death. A cousin of Babur's, Muhammad Haydar Dughlat, wrote a history of Moghulistan, the *Tarikh-i Rashidi*, which also included material on Timur's campaigns.

The so-called autobiography of Timur, partly translated as the *Memoirs and Institutes* of Timur, is generally regarded as spurious, and has not been included in the Bibliography.

The autobiography was "discovered" in the library of a governor of Yaman by Mir Abu Talib Husaini. He presented a "translation", which was very similar in the historical sections to the *Zafar-nama* of Sharaf, to the Mogol emperor Shah Jahan in 1637. Some of the reasons for doubting the authenticity of this "work" are as follows: no such record was known to Nizam, Sharaf, or to any immediate

descendants of Timur. Timur was illiterate, and the nature of nomadic court life made it highly unlikely that such an autobiography, dictated to others, should remain unknown to his immediate court circle. The "autobiography", moreover, gives additional details of Timur's earlier life which, if known, would certainly have appeared in the other court histories. Among the items is one recording Timur's employment, when he was nearing twenty years of age, of a celebrated riding-master to improve his own horsemanship! It is difficult to follow the reasoning behind the statement of a learned orientalist that "Timur's Memoirs (*Malfuzat*) and Institutes (*Tuzukat*) are works the authenticity of which is not universally accepted. Still they are of considerable value and of great interest as showing his ideals and personality."¹ If the "autobiography" were found to be authentic, then its value would be immense. If it is not, then it is valueless as a source for a study of Timur.

Those works using the "autobiography" as one of their main sources are not included in the Bibliography.

¹ P. Sykes: *History of Persia*, vol. ii, Chap. LIX.

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TIMUR'S MAIN CAMPAIGNS

- CAMPAIGNS AGAINST KHWARAZM AND MOGHULISTAN
- ⇒ CAMPAIGNS IN KHORASAN, SISTAN, AND MAZANDARAN 1381-4
- ⇒⇒ CAMPAIGNS IN AZARBAYJAN AND PERSIA, 1386-8; (THE THREE YEARS' CAMPAIGN)
- CAMPAIGN AGAINST TOKHTAMISH OF THE GOLDEN HORDE 1391-2
- - - FIVE-YEAR CAMPAIGN IN THE WEST, AND DEFEAT OF TOKHTAMISH OF THE GOLDEN HORDE, 1392-6
- ////// INDIAN CAMPAIGN 1398-9.
- ==⇒ SEVEN YEARS' CAMPAIGN IN THE WEST, STARTING FROM THE QARABACH IN 1400

