

## THE TIMURID EMPIRE THROUGH WESTERN EYES: HISTORICAL STUDIES FROM FRANCE, ENGLAND, AND AMERICA

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**Annotation.** This article provides a comprehensive historiographical analysis of Emir Timur and the Timurid Empire, as viewed through the lens of Western historians. It meticulously examines the contributions of French, English and American historians to the study of Timur, highlighting how perspectives on his legacy have evolved over time. The analysis commences with an overview of Timur's significance in global history, proceeding to scrutinize the works of prominent French historians such as Barthélemy d'Herbelot, Joseph de Guignes, Louis-Mathieu Langlès, Rene Grousset, Jean-Paul Roux, and Lucien Kehren. It subsequently addresses the contributions of English historiography, featuring the works of Christopher Marlowe, Edward Gibbon, Hilda Hookham, and Justin Marozzi. The final section explores American academic contributions, focusing on the research of Beatrice Forbes Manz, John Woods, Eva Maria Subtelny, and Lisa Golombek. The article concludes by synthesizing the diverse array of interpretations regarding Timur's legacy, ranging from depictions of him as a formidable conqueror to those of a just and strategic ruler, thereby reflecting the complexity and sustained scholarly interest in his historical impact.

**Key words.** Timur, Timurid Empire, Western historiography, French, English and American historians.

**Introduction.** The Timurid Empire, which holds an important place in Turkish and world history, and especially the figure of Emir Timur, has always

attracted significant interest from researchers and has been the subject of numerous scientific studies. Many works have been published by Western historians as well. The history of the Timurid state in the West dates back quite a long time. Topics such as Emir Timur's personality, the centralized state system he established, his diplomatic relations, and his military campaigns have attracted and continue to attract many historians' interest. French historians in particular have been at the forefront of these studies.

**French Historiography.** One of the first historians in French historiography to conduct research on Timur was Barthélemy d'Herbelot (d. 1695). In his work titled "Bibliothèque orientale ou dictionnaire universel contenant tout ce qui regarde la connoissance des peuples de l'Orient" (The Eastern Library), he mentions Emir Timur while discussing the history of Eastern countries. The author extensively discusses the wars between Emir Timur and Tokhtamysh within the scope of their relations.

French Orientalist and Turkologist Joseph de Guignes, in volumes IV and V of his five-volume work "Histoire générale des Huns, des Turcs, des Mongols et des autres Tartares occidentaux" (General History of the Huns, Turks, Mongols, and other Western Tartars), addresses the period of Emir Timur and the Timurids. He portrays Timur as a nomadic barbarian responsible for the destruction of many countries.

Among the important works in French historiography on the history of Emir Timur is Louis-Mathieu Langlès' book "Life of Timur". This book garnered significant interest after its publication and was translated into Russian in the 19th century. Langlès notes that Timur was always engaged in state affairs and planning campaigns even while the people and the army celebrated the victory in Samarkand after the campaign against Tokhtamysh. He writes that Timur, as a just ruler, always tried to be informed about the activities of the governors and the condition of the people, listened to the complaints of the oppressed, and

ensured justice, mentioning that thieves were executed. He describes Timur as a ruler who knew that the primary duty of a ruler was to protect the people from invasions, robbery, and oppression by those in power. The author examines nearly all of Timur's political activities and provides a comprehensive study of his life.

In the 20th century, works by French Orientalists such as Rene Grousset's "The Empire of the Steppes: Attila, Genghis Khan, and Timur" and Jean-Paul Roux's "Tamerlane" have an important place in the development of Timurid studies. Particularly, Jean-Paul Roux in his studies mentions that Timur had both positive and negative activities and that in recent times he has been depicted more with his good sides. Roux writes that in terms of how to approach Timur, he should be placed in the same rank as some of the greatest rulers in world history, such as Darius, Alexander, Julius Caesar, Genghis Khan, and Napoleon Bonaparte, and should be seen as one of the greatest commanders in history.

Another French historian, Lucien Kehren, also thoroughly investigates the history of Timur in his work "Tamerlan, l'Empire du Seigneur de fer" (Emir Timur's Empire). He examines many topics related to Timur's political activities, the economy, and the culture of the Timurid state. Kehren's study also covers the throne struggles among Timur's successors and their reigns after Timur's death. An important section of the work is dedicated to Timur's relations with European countries. However, a notable point in Kehren's research is his somewhat biased approach. Kehren refers to Timur as the "great emir" and writes about his exceptional memory, bravery, and justice with praise.

**English Historiography.** the Timurid state. Christopher Marlowe wrote his work "Tamburlaine the Great" about Timur as early as the 16th century. Although the work contains many controversial and unrealistic details, it is significant in showing the great interest in Timur in England. Marlowe's work continued to be performed on theater stages in Europe without losing its popularity even

centuries after its publication. Influenced by his work, a portrait of Timur as a cruel, merciless barbarian who conquered the world with his sword was formed in the West.

The famous English historian and author of "The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," Edward Gibbon (1737-1794), included the Timurid period in his research. The 7th volume of his work provides information about the Timurid period. Gibbon writes about Timur's campaigns and the power struggles after his death. Gibbon describes Timur as the "Mongol Emperor" and sometimes as "Tatar"; he provides information about the relations between the two great states of the period, the Ottoman and the Timurid states, and the Battle of Ankara. Focusing particularly on Timur's attitude towards Bayezid after the battle, Gibbon tries to prove that Bayezid was put in an iron cage.

Another researcher, Hilda Hookham, made a more academic contribution with her work "Tamburlaine the Conqueror." By comparing primary sources of the Timurid period and studying subsequent works, she produced a significant work. Hookham states that although the Timurid period did not attract much interest among Europeans, it holds an important place in history and that Timur should be ranked alongside great rulers like Attila, Alexander, and Genghis Khan.

In recent years, journalist, traveler, and historian Justin Marozzi has conducted research on Emir Timur, examining the routes Timur traveled and visiting many of the cities he campaigned. As a result of his investigations, he produced the work "Tamerlane: Sword of Islam, Conqueror of the World." One of the most notable aspects of his work is the maps he created of the states existing in Central Asia during the Timurid period and the routes of Timur's campaigns. His observations on how the approaches to the Timurid period changed during the Soviet era and after the establishment of the independent Republic of Uzbekistan are also noteworthy.

**American Contributions.** Interest in the Timurid period is also evident among historians in the United States. The works of Beatrice Forbes Manz on Timur and the Timurid period are particularly noteworthy. Her works such as "The Rise and Rule of Tamerlane: Power, Politics, and Religion in Timurid Iran" analyze the governance and policies of the Timurid state in detail and are considered significant contributions to the field. Manz provides extensive information about the administrative mechanisms of the state, the policies implemented by the rulers, the struggles for dominance among the tribes forming the Timurid state, Timur's efforts to unite and govern these tribes, and offers important insights into Timur's policies and the governance system of the Timurid state.

The research of John Woods, a professor at the University of Chicago, holds an important place in studies on the Timurid period. Woods has conducted research on the history of Turkey, Iran, and Central Asia from the 13th to the 18th centuries. His works, such as "The Timurid Dynasty," "Timur's Genealogy," and "The Rise of Timurid Historiography," address various issues of the Timurid period.

Hungarian traveler and Turkologist Arminius Vambery should also be placed in an important position in early Timurid studies as he conducted research during his travels in Central Asia and collected information about Timur. His work "Geschichte Bochara" (History of Bukhara) contains a significant section dedicated to the history of Emir Timur and the Timurids, discussing the political history of the Timurid state. A notable aspect of his research is his rejection of the notion that Timur's lineage traced back to the Mongols, arguing instead that he was a Turkic ruler. At that time, such an approach was not common among many historians. The Timurids were mostly accepted as a Mongol-Turkic dynasty.

In recent years, Eva Maria Subtelny, a professor at the University of Toronto and an expert in Iranian studies, has conducted significant research on the culture of the Timurid period. Her works, such as "Timurids in Transition: Turko-Persian

Politics and Acculturation in Medieval Iran," "The Timurid Legacy: A Reaffirmation and a Reassessment," and "Socioeconomic Bases of Cultural Patronage Under the Later Timurids," have enriched cultural research on the Timurid period. Subtelny provides important information about the economy, agricultural and commercial activities, the internal and external politics implemented by the rulers to govern the state, and the cultural heritage of the Timurids.

Lisa Golombek from the University of Toronto is renowned for her studies on Timurid period art. Her works, such as "The Timurid Architecture of Iran and Turan" and "Tamerlane's Tableware: A New Approach to the Chinoiserie Ceramics of Fifteenth-Sixteenth Century Iran," make significant contributions to the field of art history with her research on Timurid period architecture, painting, ceramics, and other art forms.

**Conclusion.** The approaches to the Timurid period by Western historians vary. For example, historians like Roux describe Timur as a fearsome "executioner" who destroyed countries, while historians like Lucien Kehren refer to him as the "great emir." Researchers such as Beatrice Forbes Manz, Hilda Hookham, and Harold Lamb are considered to have a more objective approach to the Timurid period. In conclusion, Western historiography on the Timurid period presents a rich and diverse array of perspectives, offering a nuanced understanding of Emir Timur's legacy, ranging from depictions of a fearsome conqueror to those of a just and strategic ruler

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