



THE FORMATION OF TIMURID STUDIES IN FRANCE IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

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Abstract

The article discusses the emergence of Timurid studies in 15th-century France, with a primary focus on the activities of Marshal II Boucicaut. The research examines the French marshal's work "The Deeds Accomplished by Marshal Boucicaut", analyzing the factors that contributed to the study of Amir Temur's life and state-building activities in Western Europe, particularly in France.

It also provides evidence of the historical events and circumstances that led to Amir Temur being referred to as the "savior of Europe" beginning from the 15th century.

Keywords: Rabban Bar Sauma, Amir Temur, Sultan Bayazid, Marshal II Boucicaut, Transoxiana, Ottoman Empire, Battle of Ankara.

I. INTRODUCTION

Central Asia has been a region of great importance in political, economic, and trade relations between the West and the East. Since the major cities of the Great Silk Road were located in this region, particularly within the territory of present-day Uzbekistan, European historians have paid considerable attention to the history of our homeland. First of all, historians of the ancient period recorded their views on the existing states in the region, their systems of governance, and the social, economic, and cultural life of the peoples from various perspectives [5; 4].

From the early Middle Ages onward, interest in the countries of the East steadily increased within European society. Beginning in the 8th century, the emergence of the system of primogeniture in Western Europe led to intensified tensions in



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the relations between lords and knights. The centuries-long struggle of knights to maintain a prosperous way of life played a significant role in the initiation of the Crusades in the 11th century. The Roman Catholic Church played a major role in preparing the Crusades, not only giving them an official religious character but also providing their ideological, spiritual, and material foundations [3: 329]. While the popes used this political process to further strengthen their authority, emperors and kings sought to establish independent systems of governance without being subordinate to the Catholic Church. As a result, by the 1240s, the deterioration of relations between Pope Innocent IV (1243–1254) and Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II (1243–1254) encouraged European rulers to seek allies in the countries of the East. In this regard, the Europeans chose the Mongols as potential partners. According to researcher Z. Saidboboyev, “The Roman popes and European Catholic kings hoped to use the Mongols to break the resistance of Muslim peoples in the Near East. At the same time, being aware that the Mongols were polytheists, they sought to convert them to Catholicism and hoped to establish a Christian state throughout the world” [7: 29-30]. For this reason, Pope Innocent IV and King Louis IX of France (1226–1270) sent diplomatic missions to the Mongols on four separate occasions in an effort to establish diplomatic relations with them [6: 16-17]. The Mongols’ plan to completely conquer the Abbasid Caliphate motivated them to seek an alliance with the King of France. For his part, Louis IX was also interested in such an agreement and, in 1249, sent a diplomatic mission led by André de Longjumeau to Karakorum [9]. The French king’s primary objective was to seize territories in the Near East with the assistance of the Mongols and, by converting them to Christianity, establish an absolute monarchy independent of the authority of the popes. Although the reign of Louis IX is regarded as a golden age in the history of medieval France, his defeats during the Seventh and Eighth Crusades were among the main reasons why these ambitions were never realized.

From the second half of the thirteenth century onward, the process by which French kings sought to free state administration from papal influence accelerated significantly. The Mongol conquest of the Abbasid Caliphate in 1258 played an important role in the development of relations between the two sides.



Overcoming Mamluk resistance in the Near East became the principal objective shared by representatives of both continents.

During the reign of King Philip IV of France (1285–1314), efforts to establish an absolute monarchy intensified within the framework of the Franco-Mongol* alliance. In this context of diplomatic relations, the visit of Rabban Bar Sauma, an envoy of the Mongol Empire, to Western Europe—particularly to France—in 1287–1288 had a notable impact on the political situation in the country. The envoy presented the king with gifts and a letter sent by Arghun Khan (1284–1291). In response, Philip IV instructed Rabban Bar Sauma to convey his desire to undertake a military campaign to Jerusalem in cooperation with the ruler of the Ilkhanate. However, although the plan for the two rulers to launch a joint campaign in the Near East was never realized, it did not have a negative impact on the French king's rule.

In France, Philip IV's efforts to build a centralized state led to conflicts with Pope Boniface VIII. Since the French Church was subordinate to the Pope, the dispute between the king and the papacy went beyond an internal matter. In 1296, Pope Boniface VIII prohibited secular authorities from taxing the clergy and forbade church officials from paying taxes without papal permission. In response, the king issued laws banning the export of gold, silver, precious stones, and food supplies to states under papal influence. The blocking of supplies to the Roman papacy, along with Philip IV's victories over the Pope at the Estates General assemblies of 1302 and 1308, contributed to the strengthening of monarchical rule in the country.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODS

In this study, the primary source examined is the work of Marshal Jean II Boucicaut. The research analyzes the views expressed by Marshal Boucicaut regarding the life and statecraft of Amir Temur. It also investigates the factors

* Note: The Franco-Mongol Alliance was a diplomatic and strategic partnership that existed between Western Europe and the Mongol Empire from the 1220s to the 1340s. The principal objective of this alliance was to cooperate in military campaigns against Muslim powers in the Near East. See: Encyclopedia of Mongolia and the Mongol Empire. Bloomington: Christopher P. Atwood, 2004, –P. 583.



that led the French marshal to describe and interpret Timur's activities, and on this basis, scientific conclusions are formulated.

In addition, a comparative-analytical method based on the principles of scientific rigor, objectivity, and historicity was applied in the analysis of scholarly opinions presented in the existing literature.

III.RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

By the end of the fourteenth century, the struggle between the papacy and European monarchs intensified in Western Europe. As a result of active intervention by representatives of the French monarchy, the Catholic Church experienced the "Western Schism"* from 1378 to 1417. This situation, in turn, created the need for bishops aspiring to the papal throne to seek allies in their struggle against rival antipopes.

As can be seen from the above analysis, the political, economic, and cultural relations between European states and Eastern countries have a long history. The development of diplomatic relations between the states of the two continents increasingly strengthened the need for both sides to study each other's achievements in state administration, socio-economic life, military technology, and culture. Diplomatic contacts that developed during the Mongol period naturally continued in the state of Amir Temur, which controlled large parts of the territories formerly ruled by the descendants of Chinggis Khan. Several factors, which will be discussed below, contributed to the high level of these relations.

By the end of the fourteenth century, the political situation in Western Europe had become increasingly tense. This was caused by the Hundred Years' War (1337–1453) between England and France, as well as the defeat of the united European forces by the Ottoman Turks at the Battle of Nicopolis in 1396. The westward expansion of Bayezid I and his severe pressure on the Byzantine Empire became a major concern for Western European rulers [2: 3-5]. Most importantly, Amir Temur was also aware of these political events.

* Note "Western Schism" – the division of the Catholic Church's governance that occurred between 1378 and 1417 as a result of rival papal claims by bishops residing in Rome and Avignon. See: Wipertus Rudt de Collenberg. Le royaume et l'Église de Chypre face au Grand Schisme (1378–1417) d'après les Registres des Archives du Vatican // Mélanges de l'école française de Rome. Moyen Âge, Temps modernes, vol. 94, no. 2, 1982, pp. 621–623.



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In the final years of the fourteenth century, the issue of the Ottomans became part of Amir Temur's foreign policy. After their defeat at the Battle of Nicopolis, Western Europeans were also compelled to closely monitor Amir Temur's activities in the Caucasus and the Near East. In Western Europe, the study of Timur's personality and system of governance became one of the most important items on the papal and royal foreign policy agenda. In particular, in France, the study of Amir Temur's activities began to develop into a separate field of research from the early fifteenth century. By order of King Charles VI, Marshal Jean II Le Maingre (Boucicaut) was appointed responsible for this matter. Despite his defeats in the Balkan campaigns of 1396 and 1399, the French marshal was later appointed governor of Genoa in 1401 by order of King Charles VI [8:48]. The marshal was also tasked with regulating trade issues in the Sea of Azov, Crimea, and Pera, as well as reporting events taking place in Asia to his king [10]. Marshal Jean II Boucicaut was among the first in France to study the activities of Amir Temur. In Chapter XXXVII of his work "The Deeds of Marshal Boucicaut," [1] he briefly discusses Timur's career, describing the hardships he faced before his campaign in Asia Minor, the situation in the Byzantine Empire, and the significance of the victory over Bayezid I [1: 162-165]. At first, Amir Temur is presented as the savior of Constantinople and described as the ruler of Movarounnahr who was sent by God to punish Sultan Bayezid [1: 162]. Then Marshal Boucicaut turns his attention to Amir Temur's bravery and notes that the ruler of Movarounnahr had only been deprived of fortune (due to his death); otherwise, he would have intended to defeat all of his rivals [1: 163]. In particular, Amir Temur's military skill is thoroughly analyzed by the French marshal, who gives it a high evaluation in his study. For example, it is noted that in the last thirty years of his life, Amir Temur spent most of his time on military campaigns, did not rest in any city, and instead constantly moved across the fields and steppes, achieving victories [1:163]. Amir Temur maintained strict discipline within his army and carried everything with him. With his remarkable forces, he was able to cross impassable rivers, and the diligence of his people is truly astonishing [1: 163].



IV.CONCLUSION

The first study in France to include the life and statecraft of Amir Temur was carried out by Marshal Jean II Boucicaut. The French marshal, who spent most of his career in military campaigns, participated in the Battle of Nicopolis in 1396 between the united European forces and the Ottoman Turks in the region of Bulgaria. During this battle, he was captured but later managed to escape from captivity and return to his homeland.

By the end of the fourteenth century, the growing threat of the Ottoman Turks in Europe also concerned the rulers of the continent, particularly King Charles VI of France. Therefore, in 1399, another military expedition was sent under the leadership of Marshal Boucicaut in an attempt to save Constantinople, which was under Ottoman siege. Although these confrontations did not result in a victory over Sultan Bayezid, sufficient resistance was put up against the Ottomans in the battles for the defense of the capital.

In 1401, King Charles VI of France appointed Marshal Boucicaut as governor of Genoa under his authority. The French marshal was entrusted not only with governing duties but also with the responsibility of informing his king about events occurring in Asia Minor and the Near East. For this reason, Marshal Boucicaut closely studied the activities of Amir Temur at the beginning of the fifteenth century.

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