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SO DESPICABLE A VESSEL: REPRESENTATIONS OF TAMERLANE IN PRINTED BOOKS OF THE SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES

Of all the great warriors who swept across Central Asia and the Middle East in the medieval period, Tamerlane¹ is arguably the one who had the most enduring impact on the culture of Renaissance and early modern Europe. The achievements of Tamerlane seem to have both fascinated and horrified European audiences and, from the middle of the fifteenth century to the early nineteenth, he appears in numerous histories and biographical encyclopedias, as well as in plays by the likes of Marlowe, Racine, and Rowe; operas by Vivaldi, Scarlatti, and Handel; and even a ballet.² In addition, representations of Tamerlane are to be found in paintings, tapestries, prints, and drawings.³ That this fearsome ruler was invoked as a kind of “bogeyman” is indicated by a passage in an essay of Michel de Montaigne (d. 1592), *Of Repentance*:

The value of the soul consists not in flying high, but in an orderly pace. Its grandeur is exercised not in greatness, but in mediocrity. As those who judge and touch us inwardly make little account of the brilliance of our public acts, and see that these are only thin streams and jets of water spurting from a bottom otherwise muddy and thick; so likewise those who judge of us by this brave outward appearance draw similar conclusions about our inner constitution, and cannot associate common faculties, just like their own, with these other faculties that astonish them and are so far beyond their scope. So we give demons wild shapes. And who does not give Tamerlane raised eyebrows, open nostrils, a dreadful face, and immense size, like the size of the imaginary picture of him we have formed from the renown of his name?⁴

Montaigne’s comments suggest that there existed a popular notion of the physical characteristics of the Asian conqueror, but his brief notes do not allow us to reconstruct exactly how Tamerlane was represented in the visual and dramatic arts of Renaissance and early modern Europe. In this article I will focus on the ways

in which Tamerlane was depicted in printed books of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Although not an exhaustive survey of the available printed material, the present selection provides a representative sample of the images found in the historical treatises, biographical dictionaries, plays, and accounts written by travelers to the Middle East and Central Asia. While these woodcut “portraits” of Tamerlane vary considerably in their quality of execution, they are important because, with the possible exception of the public performance of plays, it was through the medium of printed books that visual representations of Tamerlane were most widely circulated among the literate society of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe. This level of circulation may be contrasted with the much smaller audiences that would have seen paintings or tapestries in private houses and palaces.

The article argues that this group of printed representations provides important evidence for the prevalent beliefs concerning the ethnicity and character of Tamerlane. Much of this information is communicated to the viewer by means of costume, facial features, and facial hair, and the article seeks to identify the potential sources for these details. The images are designed to complement texts, but, in most cases, they do not function as direct illustrations of specific passages of writing. Significantly, those sixteenth- and seventeenth-century books that contain illustrations of Tamerlane do not tend to provide written descriptions of the physical appearance of the man. Indeed, few European authors from the fifteenth century to the end of the seventeenth furnish their audience with anything but the briefest information on this issue, preferring instead to focus upon the presentation of Tamerlane’s life and accomplishments. What does appear in these texts, however, is a discussion of his origins and an assessment of the ways in which

his deeds—both good and bad—reflected the essential qualities of his character. In the last section of the article, the representations of Tamerlane are considered in the context of physiognomic treatises and Renaissance and early modern scholarship on the history and peoples of Asia.

TAMERLANE AND EARLY EUROPEAN SCHOLARSHIP

The biography of Tamerlane can be briefly sketched out. He was born into the Barlas clan in the region of Samarqand in the 1320s or 1330s. The clan formed part of the *ulus* Chaghatay, a confederation formed around the family of the second son of Chinggis (Genghis) Khan (d. 1227) that occupied an extensive but loosely defined area east of the Oxus River. The Barlas claimed descent from an important amir during the reign of the great thirteenth-century conqueror Chinggis but had no royal ancestry. Allegiance to the Chinggisid legacy remained a central component of Tamerlane's political identity, and even at the zenith of his power he scrupulously avoided using the Mongol title of khan (i.e., ruler).⁵ Tamerlane first came to prominence in the 1360s, possessing a following of powerful figures in both the Barlas clan and other tribal groups of the *ulus* Chaghatay. Having established his overall command of the *ulus* Chaghatay by 1379, Tamerlane set out on a series of campaigns of conquest that took him beyond his native Transoxiana to the areas southeast of Lake Balkash, west into Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Anatolia, north into the lands around the Aral sea, northwest into Khwarazm and the lands of the Golden Horde, and south into Afghanistan and northern India. His last major victory was over the forces of Ottoman sultan Bayazid I near Ankara, in July 1402. The sultan himself was taken captive and, while there is little consensus in the historical sources concerning his treatment by Tamerlane, it is known that Bayazid died a few months later, in 1403. This victory had the effects of delaying the growth of Ottoman power and ensuring the survival of the Byzantine Empire for a few more decades. In the autumn of 1404 Tamerlane mounted his campaign against Ming China, but he died early in 1405 with this last task uncompleted.⁶

Though he adopts a stance largely hostile to his subject, the historian Ibn 'Arabshah (d. 1450) provides a relatively generous and detailed account of Tamerlane's physical appearance. His description of Tamer-

lane has been found to correlate well with the characteristics of one of the skeletons exhumed in 1941 from Gur-i Amir in Samarqand.⁷ Ibn 'Arabshah states that Tamerlane was tall, with a strong build and a fair complexion, and was lame on his right side. The author also draws attention to the radiance of his eyes, as well as his powerful voice, long beard, and thick fingers.⁸ While those who met him said that Tamerlane did not enjoy any form of frivolity, he was apparently noted for loving intellectual debate and chess-playing. All sources concur that he was possessed of a profound intellect and that, though illiterate, he employed scholars fluent in Arabic, Persian, and Turkic to instruct him in the sciences and Islamic history. Tamerlane's religious beliefs remain the subject of scholarly debate, though it would appear that his sympathies were with Sunni Islam. He also seems to have been influenced by the Naqshbandi Sufi order. He kept Sufi *shaykhs* and religious scholars in his entourage, and remained a major patron of religious architecture throughout his career.⁹

From the time of the first contacts, Europeans took the garbled and inaccurate reports they possessed of the man and his life and reshaped them to fit existing stereotypes of Oriental kingship (many of which were associated with specific historical figures of the distant past). For instance, reports of Tamerlane's first military victory over the forces of Ottoman sultan Bayazid, at Sivas in August 1400, reached London in February of the following year. According to the merchants who carried the story to England, the Turkish sultan had been killed and the victorious Asian king had, with 60,000 of his people, accepted Christianity.¹⁰ This curious revival of the legend of Prester John,¹¹ the mythical Christian king beyond the borders of the Islamic world, also brings to mind the numerous thirteenth- and early-fourteenth-century European accounts of the apparent conversion of the Mongol khans to Christianity. The belief that a powerful Asian Christian ruler might aid in the eradication of Muslim rule in the Holy Land had prompted a flurry of diplomatic activity between Europe and the Mongol khanates.¹² In a similar manner, information about Tamerlane made its way to the courts of Europe as the result of diplomatic missions sent east in the decade before the great conqueror's death in 1405. Charles VI of France had sent Dominican emissaries to Tamerlane in 1396, while Ruy Gonzalez di Clavijo, the representative of Henry III of Castille, arrived in the imperial capital Samarqand in 1403–4.¹³ For all its value to modern histori-

ans, Clavijo's account of his meeting with Tamerlane enjoyed a relatively limited readership in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe.¹⁴

It is worth asking, therefore, how an informed European reader of the sixteenth or early seventeenth century would have gained an understanding of the biographical details of Tamerlane. Modern scholarship on the historical Timur makes use of primary written sources, particularly in Persian and Arabic, but these did not become available to European writers before the second quarter of the seventeenth century;¹⁵ the first translated editions of the key historical sources, Ibn 'Arabshah and Sharaf al-Din Yazdi (d. 1454), were not published in Europe until 1636 and 1722, respectively.¹⁶ Accounts of Tamerlane, and particularly of his dealings with the Ottoman sultan Bayazid I, also appear in the works of Turkish chroniclers.¹⁷ A handful of sixteenth-century European scholars exploited such sources directly,¹⁸ but for the remainder information from the Turkish histories was mediated through the works of Byzantine authors,¹⁹ most importantly Laonikos Chalkokondyles (d. ca. 1490). His history was printed in a Latin translation by Conrad Clauser in 1556,²⁰ but it is possible that the émigré Greek Theodore Spandounes (Spandugino) consulted the original Greek text in manuscript form before this date. The history of Doukas (d. 1462) remained in manuscript form until it was edited by I. Bullialdus in Paris in 1649.²¹ It is not known whether George Phrantzes' (or Sphrantzes, d. 1477) history was read by any Italian, German, French, or English authors of the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.²²

There are also important accounts left by Europeans who had direct experience of the Middle East and Central Asia in the early fifteenth century.²³ For instance, Johannes Schiltberger (d. after 1427) was held as a captive by Tamerlane's army between 1402 and 1405, and this episode forms part of his travel account, which was first published in Ulm in ca. 1473.²⁴ The audience for Schiltberger's writings remained restricted to readers of German and, as far as I have been able to ascertain, is not cited by historians working in Italy, France, and England. Other potential sources of information were also neglected.²⁵

Two writers with first-hand knowledge of the Ottoman Empire did influence the development of European historical writing. Giovanni Angiolello had served from 1470 as a slave of Mehmed II and then in the Ottoman army. He escaped in 1481 and later composed his *Historia turchesca*, which deals with events

from 1300 to 1514. This text remained in manuscript form until the twentieth century but was probably consulted by several scholars in early-sixteenth-century Italy.²⁶ Niccolò Sagundino (d. 1463 or 1464) had been captured by the Turks in Thessalonika in 1430 and held captive for thirteen months. In 1456 he composed the *Liber de familia Autumanorum id est Turchorum* (also known as *De origine et gestis Turcarum liber*) for Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini (Pope Pius II, d. 1464).²⁷ Although this work was not printed until 1551, Piccolomini used the manuscript in the composition of his influential *Asiae Europaeque elegantissima descriptio* (first published in 1509).²⁸

The main elements of the biography of Tamerlane were codified in Italy in the first half of the sixteenth century. By the middle of the century authors in other parts of Europe made their own contributions, either as new compositions or as translations of the Italian histories. This European "biography" of Tamerlane has very little to do with records of events found in the Middle Eastern or even Greek sources, and Italian, French, German, and English historians also made limited use of the first-hand accounts provided by countrymen who actually spent time in the Middle East or Central Asia from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century.²⁹ Instead, these authors relied upon a small body of shared information, freely borrowing one another's ornamentations to the basic narrative. In addition to Piccolomini's text, they also utilized brief accounts of Tamerlane provided in other Italian sources.³⁰ Seen from the perspective of the modern scholar of Central Asian history, these often-fanciful works have almost no merit, but they are of much greater importance for the understanding of how Tamerlane was perceived and the ways in which he was given visual form in plays, paintings, tapestries, drawings, and printed books.

The sixteenth-century literature on Tamerlane has been reviewed in greater detail elsewhere,³¹ but some of the main points can be summarized here. Perhaps the most important of the early printed histories is that of Andrea Cambini (d. 1527), *Della origine de Turchi*, published in Florence in 1529,³² for it brought together almost all the elements of the European biography and influenced the development of most later works. Cambini takes details from Palmieri and Piccolomini but adds several more that are his own invention. His account forms the basis of descriptions of the life of Tamerlane written by such authors as Pierre de la Primaudaye (d. 1542), Pedro Mexía (d. ca. 1552), Caelius

Curio (d. 1567), Christopher Richier (fl. sixteenth century), and Petrus Perondini (fl. sixteenth century).³³ Although the bishop and historian Paolo Giovio (d. 1552) is known to have made use of a wide range of oral testimony and written sources in the composition of his writings on Turkish history and the biographies of Ottoman sultans,³⁴ he relied for his treatment of Tamerlane upon the Italian histories of Cambini and his predecessors and provides little that is novel. The mid-sixteenth century also saw the publication (or republication in revised form) of older works by Sagundino and Spandugino. Later authors who make use of the traditional account of the life of Tamerlane include André Thevet (d. 1590), Philip Lonicer (d. 1599), Jean Boissard (d. 1602), Jean du Bec (d. 1610), and Richard Knolles (d. 1610).³⁵

What emerged from these works was a vision of Tamerlane that continued to have a pervasive influence even after the publication of more reliable historical works in Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and Greek. The “European-version” Tamerlane was a Scythian or Tartar,³⁶ born of poor parents, who spent the early part of his career as a shepherd (or sometimes as a sheep rustler or soldier). Through his courage, energy, military genius, and sheer force of personality, he was able to assemble an army that set out on a series of military conquests. While he was able to instill a rigid sense of discipline within his army, his campaigns were marked by acts of barbarous cruelty, including the slaughter of unarmed women and children. His most famous victory, over the Ottoman army, led to the capture of Bayazid I. The sultan was kept in chains (some accounts claim these were made of gold) within an iron cage, and was forced to feed like a dog on scraps under the table. Many accounts claim that Tamerlane used Bayazid as a block when he mounted his horse. Tamerlane was able to use slaves and the riches from his conquests to construct the magnificent city of Samarqand. In his later life he became accustomed to luxury and debauchery and, on his death, his empire fell into ruin.

REPRESENTATIONS IN PRINTED BOOKS

“Portraits”

The first group of images can be classified under the general category of portraits, in that their focus is the appearance of Tamerlane without any attempt to introduce a narrative component. Of course, none of

the images can be considered to be a portrait in the sense that it offers a realistic likeness of the person it purports to represent (not least because all such images were composed well over a century after his death and in parts of the world geographically distant from Central Asia). In only one case—that of Paolo Giovio’s image—is there even the possibility that the “portrait” was based on a prototype believed to have been made in the presence of Tamerlane himself. Thus the value of the portraits resides less in the likenesses they provide than in what they reveal about the attitudes of the people who commissioned and composed them. In this sense the images of Tamerlane are a visual projection of European beliefs concerning his ethnicity and the ways in which details of his physical appearance (particularly his face) expressed his character. These “portraits” were created to perform different functions in the books discussed below, and it is evident that there is considerable variation in the amount of research and creative thought put into them. For this reason, they are not discussed in chronological order; rather, the least significant (from the works of Marlowe, Schedel, and Rouillé) are dispensed with first, and the others are analyzed according to thematic categories.

In the two parts of *Tamburlaine the Great*,³⁷ Christopher Marlowe (d. 1593) presents a compelling psychological portrait of a man who rose from humble origins as a “Scythian shepherd” to become the great conqueror of Asia. In a conversation between Cosroe and Menaphon, the latter even provides a brief account of the ruler’s physical appearance, noting his height, sinewy strength, pale complexion, and lofty brows about which “hangs a knot of amber hair wrapped in curls, as fierce Achilles’ was.” Most important of all are his eyes, which Menaphon describes thus:

...’Twixt his manly pitch
A pearl more worth than all the world is placed,
Wherein by curious sovereignty of art
Are fixed his piercing instruments of sight,
Whose fiery circles bear encompassèd
A heaven of heavenly bodies in their spheres
That guides his steps and actions to the throne
Where honour sits invested royally.³⁸

The piercing, even fiery, eyes are a feature of printed portraits and written descriptions of Tamerlane from the mid- and late sixteenth century that are discussed later.³⁹ Given the richness of Marlowe’s text, it is somewhat surprising that the early editions of the play did not attract much illustration. This was probably largely

Tamburlaine, the great.



Fig. 1. Plate from the 1593 edition of Christopher Marlowe, *Tamburlaine the Great*. (After Scolar Press Facsimile edition, 1973)

a matter of cost, as plays of this sort were issued in relatively cheap *octavo* editions unlike the more luxurious large-format volumes made for authors such as Paolo Giovio and André Thevet (see below). An engraved portrait, identified in the legend as “Tamburlaine, the great,” is to be found facing the first page of the second part of Marlowe’s play in the first and second editions (London, 1590 and 1593).⁴⁰ His appearance is that of an English nobleman, though perhaps his high brow and fair complexion lend him a certain similarity to Marlowe’s account of the physical characteristics of his Tamburlaine (fig. 1). There is little reason to devote serious attention to this image, however, because the engraved plate had already been used on the title page of a pamphlet published in London in 1587 and entitled *A Short Admonition or Warning, upon the Detest-*

able Treason wherewith Sir William Stanley and Rowland Yorke have Betraied and Delivered Monie to the Spaniards.⁴¹ Richard Jones was the printer of this pamphlet and both editions of *Tamburlaine*, and it is probable that he arranged for the insertion of the old portrait in its new location. This is not the first time Tamerlane had been represented as a European knight: another armored figure, identified as Tamerlane, “great Tartar king over Parthia,” appears a century earlier in Hartmann Schedel’s world history (fig. 2).⁴²

The *Promptuarium iconum*, published by Guillaume Rouillé in Lyons in 1553, is a biographical encyclopedia best known today as the earliest printed work to contain a complete set of portraits of the Ottoman sultans.⁴³ Representatives of the Mamluk and Safavid dynasties are notably absent, but Rouillé did choose



Fig. 2. Tamerlane. From Hartmann Schedel, *Liber chronicarum*, 1493. (After Taschen facsimile edition, 2001)

to include the figure of Tamerlane (fig. 3), the presence of which is explained by its placement on the same page as the portrait of the fourth sultan, Bayazid I.⁴⁴ The rather haggard Ottoman sultan is depicted in profile, while the more energetic figure of Tamerlane appears in three-quarter view and identified as TAM-BEBL (presumably the second *B* should be read as *R*). The portrait of Bayazid—like those of the remainder of his dynasty—displays some level of concern for costume and headgear appropriate to a Turkish ruler, but it is difficult to detect any such scruples in the representation of his Central Asian counterpart. Although the second half of the abbreviated inscription running around the head makes some reference to his ethnicity in the words TAR IMP (i.e., “emperor of the Tartars”), and the accompanying text notes his origins in the Scythian regions and his dominion over the regions of Parthia and Soghdia, everything about the face, hairstyle, and clothing appears to be Western European in character.

There is an obvious disparity in the treatment of the two emperors, one a Western gentleman and the other clearly signaled as a Muslim. The circumstances of production of the *Promptuarium* suggest an explanation. The book was a vast undertaking, containing 828 portraits ranging from Adam and Eve to current-day figures. For some of these the publisher, Rouillé, expediently plagiarized other historical and biographical works. The similarity between the portraits of the Ottoman sultans in the *Promptuarium* and the *Sommario et alboro delli principi Othomani* (engraved by Nicolò Nelli with captions by Francesco Sansovino, and published in Venice in 1567) has led scholars to propose that the two works drew on a common source, presumably located in Venice. An alternative hypothesis places the original date of the publication of the *Sommario* prior to 1553.⁴⁵ Rouillé’s Venetian connections probably allowed him access to images of the Ottoman rulers, but his decision to include Tamerlane evidently presented a problem. It seems likely that, in the absence of a suitable prototype, Rouillé either borrowed from an unidentified work or commissioned the production of a generic middle-aged male figure.

Of greater interest than the previous examples is the portrait of Tamerlane that appears in the biographical encyclopedia entitled *Elogia virorum bellica virtute illustrium*, compiled by the Italian bishop and scholar Paolo Giovio (d. 1552). An unillustrated version appeared in Florence in 1551, and more than two decades passed before the publisher, Peter Perna, produced a fully illustrated version of Giovio’s text, with woodcuts by Swiss artist Tobias Stimmer (d. 1584).⁴⁶ The portrait of Tamerlane, “emperor of the Scythians,” is placed at the beginning of the chapter dealing with his life and achievements in Book II of the 1575 *Elogia* (fig. 4). Giovio provides a brief account of his subject’s physical qualities, including his stern countenance, threatening eyes, and vigorous, muscular frame.⁴⁷ Aspects of this written description can be correlated with the woodcut depiction. Stimmer’s Tamerlane is an imposing middle-aged man depicted within a landscape setting. His knotted brow is accentuated by prominent eyebrows and wrinkles of skin at the top of his nose, which is notable for its broad bridge and large nostrils. He has extravagant moustaches and a trimmed beard that leaves his cheeks and the upper part of his chin exposed. On his head he sports a tall felt hat with a fur brim and what may be a series of large pearls set into a diadem. The ornate inhabited frame surround-



Fig. 3. Bayazid (left) and Tamerlane (right). From Guillaume Rouillé, *Promptuarium iconum* (Lyons, 1553), 190. The Bodleian Library, Oxford: 3 Delta 188. (Reproduced by permission of the Bodleian Library)

ing his image is one of a small repertoire of similar devices used repeatedly through the book.⁴⁸

Paolo Giovio is a significant figure in European Orientalist scholarship of the sixteenth century, but he seems to have garnered greater acclaim in his own time for another activity—assembling a collection of more than 400 portraits of literary and military figures from the past, each painting provided with a label on which Giovio wrote a summary of the person's character and achievements.⁴⁹ His wide-ranging interests were reflected in this portrait collection, which included figures as diverse as Attila the Hun, the Safavid shah Tahmasp, and the Turkoman ruler Uzun Hasan. Housed at his residence in Rome and his villa in Como, the collection was widely admired: during his lifetime, arrangements were made for the paintings to be copied for Cosimo de' Medici, while in the decades after Giovio's death further sets were commissioned by Archduke Ferdinand II von Tyrol, Isabella Gonzaga, and others.⁵⁰

The portrait of Tamerlane in the 1575 *Elogia* was based on a painting in the Giovio portrait collection; during a visit to the Giovio family's palazzo between

1557 and 1560, Lorenz Schrader (d. 1606) reports having seen paintings of Tamerlane and Hannibal.⁵¹ Stimmer made his preparatory drawings during a visit to Giovio's residence on Lake Como sometime between 1570 and 1572. The original painting of Tamerlane from the Giovio collection does not survive, but a copy probably made for Cosimo de' Medici by Cristofano dell'Altissimo (d. 1605) exists in the Galleria degli Uffizi in Florence.⁵² Assuming that the Uffizi painting is a faithful copy of Giovio's original, then it is evident that Stimmer introduced a number of innovations, including minor adjustments to the pose, outfit, weapons, and format, and the exaggeration of some of the facial features to create a more dramatic effect (although some of this may be attributed to the more schematic mode of representation required by the woodcut). More significant, however, is the inclusion of a rocky landscape with ruined buildings. Landscape backgrounds are not a common feature of the portraits in the 1575 edition of the *Elogia*, and it is worth examining what it adds to the portrait of Tamerlane.

In a general sense, this scene of sterility and destruc-

portrait lay in the belief, shared by Giovio and his contemporaries, that it was derived ultimately from an image made in the presence of that individual. The wide range of sources from which these likenesses came, including coins, medals, paintings, and drawings, naturally placed significant constraints on those entrusted with the task of producing oil paintings. The challenges of obtaining reliable images of non-European figures were also considerable, and Giovio went to great lengths to obtain the likenesses of the Muslims who appeared in his portrait collection. For instance, an image believed to represent Saladin was obtained from Donado de Lezze, a Venetian stationed in Cyprus. In addition, Giovio managed to locate a number of depictions of the Ottoman sultans.⁵⁶

The visual sources used in the Giovio portraits of Tamerlane are unknown, though it is possible that he may have been able to obtain examples of fifteenth- or sixteenth-century Persian miniature paintings. There are some intriguing similarities with representations of Tamerlane in Timurid manuscript painting: a Shirazi manuscript of Yazdi's *Zafarnāma* (*Book of Conquests*) made for Ibrahim Sultan in 839 (1436), for example, contains numerous images of Tamerlane that consistently depict the conqueror with moustaches extending beyond his upper lip and a relatively short-cropped beard that does not cover his cheeks.⁵⁷ The illustration of the feast following the conquest of Dehli in this manuscript (fig. 5) provides further parallels in the shape of the headgear, the close-fitting jacket, and the orientation of the head. A *Zafarnāma* manuscript dated 872 (1467–68) also gives Tamerlane a similar pattern of facial hair,⁵⁸ while paintings made for later Timurid rulers invite similar comparisons.

A portrait of Tamerlane appears in a second sixteenth-century biographical dictionary, André Thevet's *Les vrais portraits et vies des hommes illustres Grecz, Latins, et Payens* (Paris, 1584).⁵⁹ Chapter 138 of Book VIII is devoted to "Tamerlan, empereur des Tartares," a man Thevet describes as not only the most powerful prince of the Orient but also "le plus grand brigand et detestable vilain."⁶⁰ The chapter begins with a half-length portrait (fig. 6). Although it lacks an ornate frame, its significant parallels with the representation of Tamerlane in the 1575 edition of the *Elogia* suggest that Thevet instructed his artist to use that portrait as the principal model for his own print. The transformation of the hat into one made entirely of fur may reflect the influence of costume depiction in broadly contemporary publications; for example, a similar tall



Fig. 5. Feast after the conquest of Dehli. Painting from a manuscript of the *Zafarnāma* of Sharaf al-Din Yazdi, dated 839 (1436). (Reproduced by permission of the Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University Art Museums, 1960.198)

fur hat is worn by a Russian Tartar soldier in an illustration of costumes in Abraham de Bruyn's *Omnium pene Europae, Asiae, Africae atque Americae gentium habitus* (Antwerp, 1581).⁶¹ The face of Tamerlane in *Les vrais portraits* nevertheless differs from the Stimmer image in that the nose is more elongated and without the prominent nostrils, while the beard is longer and fuller. The *Elogia* portrait conveys a sense of menace through the facial expression and tilt of the head, but Thevet's Tamerlane threatens through explicit gesture, by drawing his sword from its sheath. The rather short



Fig. 6. Tamerlane. From André Thevet, *Les vrais portraits et vies des hommes illustres Grecz, Latins, et Payens* (Paris, 1584), fol. 630r. (Reproduced by permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library)



Fig. 7. Tamerlane. From André Thevet, *Prosopographia or, Some Select Pourtraitures and Lives of Ancient and Modern Illustrious Personages* (Cambridge, 1676), 56. (Reproduced by permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library)

arms and diminutive hands of this image suggest it is the work of a less skilled artist.

An abridged version of Thevet's dictionary was translated into English by George Gerbier under the title *Prosopographia or, Some Select Pourtraitures and Lives of Ancient and Modern Illustrious Personages*, the first edition printed in London in 1667 and another in Cambridge in 1676. Both versions of the text include a section devoted to the life of "Tamberlain." There is an obvious reliance upon the model provided by the French edition of 1584, though the end result in the 1676 edition (fig. 7) lacks the sense of contained energy in the original woodcut. A more skillful adaptation of the Tamerlane in *Les vrais portraits* can be found in the 1662 Paris edition of Blaise de Vigenère's translation of the history of Laonikos Chalkokondyles, *L'histoire de la décadence de l'empire grec et établissement de celui des Turcs par Chalcocondile Athenien* (fig. 8).⁶²

The basic pose of this portrait follows the one in *Les vrais portraits*—albeit, in reverse—though the cruder modeling lends this image a less naturalistic quality than the Thevet portrait.

A striking feature of the 1662 portrait is the addition of the sun and moon on either side of Tamerlane's head. While the Byzantine accounts of the life of Tamerlane include references to one cosmic event—the appearance of a comet that illuminated the night sky⁶³—the sun and moon in the background of this portrait have no direct relevance to the text of Chalkokondyles. This celestial pairing is found in medieval and Renaissance art, most commonly in association with representations of the Apocalypse.⁶⁴ Most significant in the present context are the sets of woodcut illustrations made for the book of Revelation by Northern European artists including Albrecht Dürer (in 1498), Hans Burgkmair (1523), Sebald Beham



Fig. 8. Tamerlane. From Chalkokondyles, *L'histoire de la décadence de l'empire grec et établissement de celui des Turcs par Chalcocondile Athenien* (Paris, 1662), 52. The Bodleian Library, Oxford: T.4.11 Jur. (Reproduced by permission of the Bodleian Library)

(1539), Matthias Gerung (1544–48), and Gerhard van Groeningen (ca. 1565–71). The conjunction of the sun and moon appears in representations of the breaking of the Sixth Seal (Revelation 6:12–13) and, less frequently, the sounding of the trumpet by the Fourth Angel (Revelation 8:12).⁶⁵ Though the precise significance of the motifs in the 1662 portrait is not entirely clear, it seems likely that the widespread understanding of Tamerlane as a “scourge of God” and as one of the “people of Magog,” or Massagetae (see below), made the apocalyptic imagery appropriate to this image.

An equestrian portrait appears in Philip Lonicer’s *Chronicon Turcicorum* (Frankfurt, 1578). Identified in the caption as “Tamerlanes Scytha” (fig. 9), it is perhaps the most ambitious of the portrait images, showing the ruler mounted on a sinuous horse within a shallow landscape space. Sitting in a high-fronted saddle, the ruler is made more impressive by his preternatural scale in relation to his mount. Although the concept of the equestrian portrait was well established in Europe by the last quarter of the sixteenth century, Lonicer’s Tamerlane is not a typical example of the genre, in that his weaponry includes a bow and arrows (the standard accessories of a Turco-Mongolian warrior). His clothing and headgear suggest that the designer of the woodcut in the Lonicer image may have employed diverse sources, including representa-



Fig. 9. Equestrian portrait of Tamerlane. From Philip Lonicer, *Chronicon Turcicorum* (Frankfurt, 1578), fol. 14v. The Bodleian Library, Oxford: H.5.2 Art. (Reproduced by permission of the Bodleian Library)

tions of Russian Tartar soldiers⁶⁶ and equestrian portraits of the Ottoman sultan Süleyman I. A number of printed images of the sultan exist from the mid-sixteenth century, but perhaps the most relevant are the one from the 1575 edition of Giovio's *Elogia*⁶⁷ and the set of seven woodcuts, printed by Pieter Coecke van Aelst in 1553, depicting an imperial parade in Constantinople.⁶⁸ Between the Coecke van Aelst and the Lonicer prints there are important points of similarity: Each shows the large turban wrapped around a tall cap (the Ottoman *tāj*), though Tamerlane's turban is ornamented by a series of straps.⁶⁹ The faces are not identical, but both include the hawkish profile, long moustaches, and clean-shaven chin (whereas Süleyman is often seen with a full beard in other printed images from the 1550s and 1560s). The most striking difference is in the pose and attitude of the two figures. Where Süleyman is depicted in stately procession, Tamerlane and his mount are full of dynamism, as if standing on the edge of the battlefield.⁷⁰

Narrative images

The images that appear in an edition of Het'um's *Sensuyent les fleurs des hystoires de la terre d'orient* (Paris, ca. 1530) are among the earliest printed representations associated with Tamerlane.⁷¹ *Les fleurs* has a curious history, having been dictated by Het'um, also known as Hayton and Heythoum (d. ca. 1311), to Nicole Falcon de Toul in Poitiers in August 1307.⁷² In its original form Het'um's work was probably divided into four parts—the first concerned with the geography and peoples of Asia, the second with the history of the Middle East from ancient times to the development of the Arab and Turkish polities, the third with the history of the Mongols (concentrating on their relations with the kingdom of Armenia), and the fourth with a proposal for a new Crusade to capture the Holy Land, involving the collaboration of the Mongols and the Armenians. Het'um cannot, of course, have been responsible for the fifth part of the work, dealing with the life of Tamerlane, that appears in the printed edition of ca. 1530.⁷³

Of relevance to the present discussion are two small woodcuts in part five of the ca. 1530 edition (figs. 10 and 11), the first illustrating a monarch supervising building work (sig. Qii r), and the second with a monarch in an outdoor setting standing in judgment in front of three men (sig. Rii v). It should be noted at the outset that both woodcuts also occur elsewhere

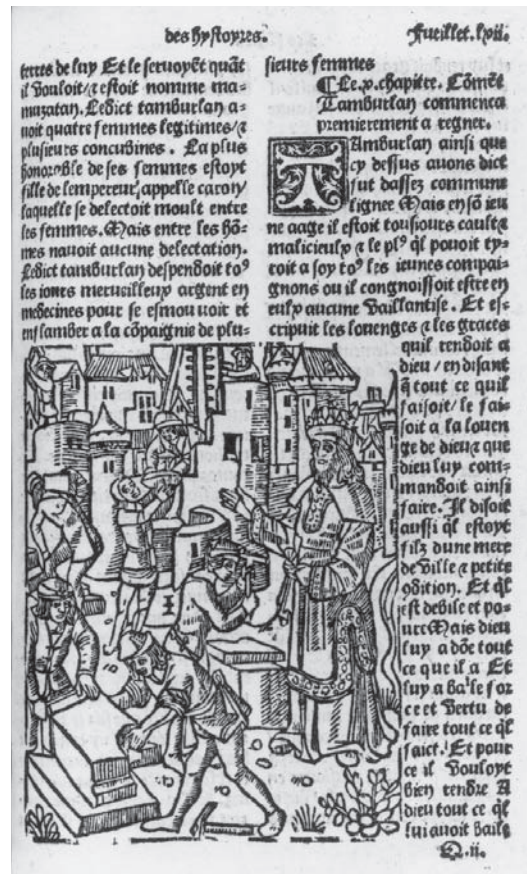


Fig. 10. Ruler supervising building work. From Het'um, *Sensuyent les fleurs des hystoires de la terre d'orient* (Paris, ca. 1530), sig. Qii r. The Bodleian Library, Oxford: Douce HH 226 (1). (Reproduced by permission of the Bodleian Library)

in the book; in other words, these images were not designed specifically for inclusion in part five of *Les fleurs*, and the monarch seen in the woodcuts cannot be considered an attempt to represent the figure of Tamerlane himself.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the illustrations occur in the chapters dealing with the Mongols (in part three of the text) and with Tamerlane.⁷⁵ It can therefore be assumed that the compilers of the text wanted these images to complement the issues dealt with in those parts of the text, and to function as a means for readers to visualize peoples of Central Asian origin.

The woodcut of the monarch standing in judgment (fig. 11) is the less assured of the two images. The dress and hairstyles of the figures are consistent with the fashions of early-sixteenth-century Europe, while

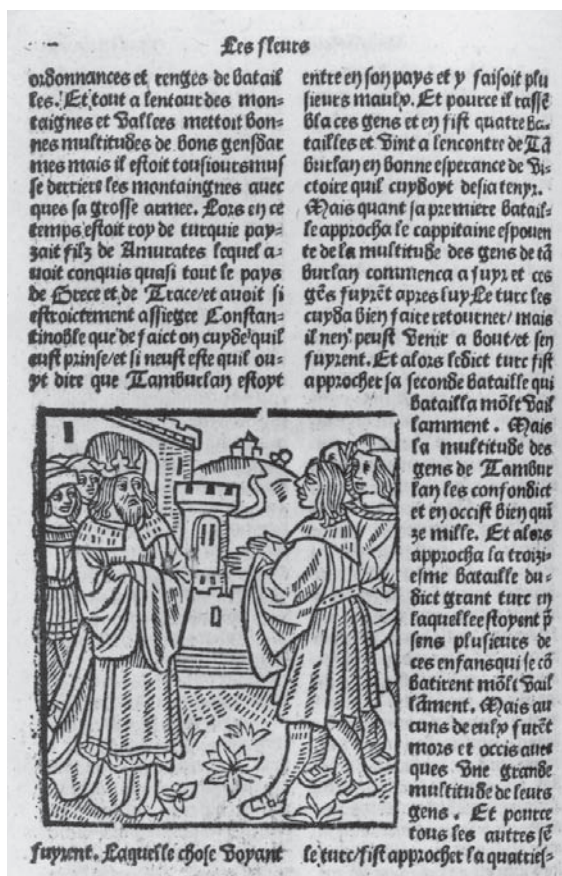


Fig. 11. Ruler presiding in judgment. From Het'um, *Sensuyent les fleurs des hystoires de la terre d'orient* (Paris, ca. 1530), sig. Rii v. The Bodleian Library, Oxford: Douce HH 226 (1). (Reproduced by permission of the Bodleian Library)

the full beard of the king and the shape of his crown only confirm his European origin. The other woodcut (fig. 10) certainly contains numerous European features, including the style of the architecture and the costumes of the workmen, but the ruler is given some unusual details in his overall appearance. He is bearded but lacks a moustache, and most of his facial hair seems to grow below his chin. His headgear is not the conventional crown but rather what seems to be a combination of a turban (or perhaps a raised cap) and a diadem,⁷⁶ while his topcoat is tied by a cord or sash that hangs down on his right side. Another significant feature is the “pearled” border running around his cuffs and the hem of his topcoat. These clothing features are also found in an illustration from the edition of Johannes Schiltberger’s travel journal, *Ein wun-*

debarliche vnd kurtzweilige History, published in Frankfurt in ca. 1549 (fig. 12). It may be that the details in these woodcuts function as a form of visual shorthand to locate the scene in a non-European setting.

This first image of Tamerlane in the ca. 1549 edition of Schiltberger’s travels (fig. 12) is set in the vicinity of a fortified structure. The central scene comprises a young woman kneeling within a fire and being beaten by two men wielding cudgels. The diabolic nature of this incident is emphasized by the darkened sky above and the presence of two demons. The malevolent quality of the image is further intensified by the diagonal shading that partially covers the faces of Tamerlane and other two figures. The second image (fig. 13) represents Tamerlane being entertained at court. The ruler rises slightly from his chair and gestures toward a group of three musicians seated on a camel and a diminutive elephant. The faces of the musicians appear rather bestial, though it is difficult to ascertain whether this detail is meant to have any significance.

Neither of these woodcuts is a direct illustration of the accompanying text, but both may be interpreted as representing European notions of the Oriental tyrant. One depicts a scene of barbarous cruelty, while the other attempts to give a sense of the opulent lifestyle enjoyed by Asian rulers. Manuscript painting of the fifteenth century contains comparable images. For instance, the image of an Oriental king witnessing a man being burnt at the stake appears in the account of Marco Polo in the *Livre des merveilles* of Jean Duc de Berry (painted by the Boucicault Master). The same manuscript also contains other rather fanciful images, such as “Baptism of Zagatai in the Church of the Baptism at Samarkand” and “Feasting in the court of the Great Khan.”⁷⁷ Another image of Oriental entertainments is to be found in a late-fourteenth-century manuscript in the British Library entitled, *Tractatus de septem vitiiis*.⁷⁸ The painting, depicting the sin of gluttony, has an identifiably Mongol ruler presiding over the festivities in his court. Unlike the paintings by the Boucicault Master or the woodcuts in the edition of Schiltberger’s travels, the paintings in the British Library manuscript reveal their artist’s clear awareness of how a Central Asian ruler should look. One of the ca. 1549 woodcuts (fig. 12) is probably making a generalized reference to the account of the capture of Isfahan, and to associated stories about the siege of Damascus. Schiltberger writes that the conquest of Isfahan was accompanied by the mas-



Fig. 12. Tamerlane witnessing a scene of brutality. From Johannes Schiltberger, *Ein wunderbarliche vnnnd kurtzweilige History* (Frankfurt, ca. 1549), sig. Gii v. The Bodleian Library, Oxford: Vet.D1 e.67. (Reproduced by permission of the Bodleian Library)

sacre of the children of the city. The act seen in the woodcut may refer to the story found in many other sources that Tamerlane ordered the murder of the virgins and children sent by the people of Damascus to plead for clemency.⁷⁹ Demons are sometimes also found in representations of Ottoman sultans in printed books of the sixteenth century.⁸⁰

Philip Lonicer's *Chronicon Turcicorum* contains a second image of Tamerlane (fig. 14) on the page prior to the equestrian portrait. This composition is more crowded than its companion, depicting the central figure of the Central Asian ruler accompanied by attendants to either side and a kneeling figure by his feet. Tamerlane's facial features in this woodcut include a hooked nose and a beard that covers his chin and the sides of his jaw. The apparel of the standing attendants can be divided into two categories: the first group wears turbans with feathers arranged at the top, while the second group sports tall caps with ornamental bands around the rims. The kneeling figure wears a different turban, reminiscent of that worn by Bayazid I in Rouillé's *Promptuarium* (fig. 3) and Sansovino's *Sommario*.⁸¹

This woodcut represents one of the humiliations that European historians believed had been meted out to the Ottoman sultan Bayazid I following his capture after the battle of Ankara in 1402: that he was employed as a mounting block whenever Tamerlane climbed onto his horse. (Lonicer also includes an illustration of Bayazid confined within a cage, on fol. 12v.) I will address the numerous representations of the humiliations of Bayazid in a future article, but here I want to focus on the representation of Tamerlane and his entourage. Again, it is apparent that much of the influence for the costumes and facial types comes from European representations of Ottoman imperial ceremony. The flap of material seen on the cap of the soldier at the right in the Lonicer woodcut also appears on Janissaries' caps in the Coecke van Aelst woodcut of 1553. Even closer associations may be drawn with Domenico de'Franceschi's 1563 woodcut representation of Sultan Süleyman riding to Friday prayer.⁸² In this case, the Janissaries wear two types of tall cap (*börk*)—one with the flap of material and the other without—and turbans wrapped around a high-crowned cap, or *tāj*. The principal difference between



Fig. 13. Tamerlane feasting. From Johannes Schiltberger, *Ein wunderbarliche vnnnd kurtzweilege History* (Frankfurt, ca. 1549), sig. Giii v. The Bodleian Library, Oxford: Vet.D1 e.67. (Reproduced by permission of the Bodleian Library)

the types of headgear found in the 1563 woodcut and those in Lonicer's image is in the added feathers. The practice of attaching feathers onto fur or felt caps is associated with Mongol, Timurid, and Turkman royal processions,⁸³ though comparison might also be made with attached features on top of the helmet-crown in the famous profile portrait of Sultan Süleyman.⁸⁴ Attendants at Ottoman imperial ceremonies were also provided with ornamental feathers, which can be seen in Ottoman miniatures and European drawings of parade helmets.

The differences in Tamerlane's clothing in the two images in Lonicer's *Chronicum Turcicorum* can be partially explained by the functions—military versus ceremonial—the ruler is performing. It is strange, however, that his facial features—straight nose or hooked, clean shaven around chin and jaw or fully bearded—should also be different in the two woodcuts. It would appear that the chief source of inspiration for the second representation came from European images of the Ottomans. The Domenico de'Franceschi woodcut provides a model of a sultan, with a full beard and moustaches, riding in an imperial procession—an

image that also includes similarly patterned textiles. Comparable profile images of the bearded Süleyman are likewise found in Sansovino's *Sommario* and in a woodcut produced by Matteo Pagan in ca. 1550.⁸⁵

ETHNICITY AND CHARACTER IN TEXT AND IMAGE

Reviewing the portraits of Tamerlane in European books of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries reveals that there was little consensus about his physical appearance or even his ethnicity. There is little to indicate that the creators of most of the representations discussed in this article thought very deeply about the actual appearance of the historical Tamerlane. Schedel, Rouillé, and the printer Richard Jones opted to represent the great conqueror as a European gentleman. The illustrators of Het'um's *Les fleurs* adopted different approaches, creating one image of "Tamerlane" as a European monarch and the other with a few Orientalized attributes in his apparel and face. The two woodcuts in Schiltberger's travels make use of established



Fig. 14. Tamerlane and Bayazid. From Philip Lonicer, *Chronicon Turcicorum* (Frankfurt, 1578), fol. 14r. The Bodleian Library, Oxford: H.5.2 Art. (Reproduced by permission of the Bodleian Library)

conventions in the depiction of eastern rulers drawn from earlier manuscript illustrations, while Lonicer's *Chronicon Turcicorum* employs visual devices seen in the representations of the Ottoman sultan Süleyman I, adding some details of costume and weaponry to suggest the origins of Tamerlane among the warriors of the Russian and Central Asian steppes.

The portraits found in the works of Giovio and Thevet provide more fertile ground for further study. Their biographical publications included portraits of Safavid shahs and Ottoman, Mamluk, and Ayyubid sultans. It is evident, however, that both authors instructed their artists to distinguish Tamerlane from these Muslim rulers by means of his facial features, hair, and costume. One reason for this distinction is that the historians of the sixteenth century seem to have been unaware of the fact that Tamerlane himself was a Muslim.⁸⁶ Thus there was little reason to assume that this “heathen” ruler would have adopted the manners and customs of the Muslim sultans further west. Indeed, the details of his dress appear to be a means to signal that Tamerlane's origins were in the steppes of

Asia. His padded jacket and pointed cap with its fur brim both appear in representations of Turco-Mongolian peoples in paintings of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.⁸⁷ One of the most striking European images of a “Tartar” is the drawing of an archer made by Pisanello (d. 1455) as a preparatory sketch for his fresco of St. George and the Princess of Trebizond in the Pelligrini chapel of the Church of Sta. Anastasia in Verona.⁸⁸ This work was clearly based on first-hand observation and correlates well with the description of the appearance of Mongol men given by John of Piano Carpini in the thirteenth century. He writes:

...in appearance the Tartars are quite different from all other men, for they are broader than other people between the eyes and across the cheekbones. Their cheeks are rather prominent above their jaws; they have a fat small nose, their eyes are little and their eyelids raised above their eyebrows...Hardly any of them grow beards, although they have some hair on the upper lip and chin and this they do not trim.⁸⁹

Mongols are occasionally identified in printed books

by their facial types and clothing. One example is Johannes von Thurocz's *Chronica Hungarorum* (Brünn [Brno], 1488), in which the broad, flat faces of the horsemen, and the pointed hats that several of them wear, contrast with the faces and apparel of the Hungarian villagers.⁹⁰ To some extent, the Giovio/Stimmer portrait bears similarities to John of Plano Carpini's description, as well as the visual representations of "Tartars" found in European paintings of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The eyes are set wide apart, the nose is broad (particularly around the nostrils) and the beard appears relatively thin.⁹¹ As noted above, some of these characteristics can also be found in Persian miniature paintings of Tamerlane and other members of the Timurid dynasty. That said, the large eyes and overall proportions of the face in the Giovio/Stimmer image (and the painting on which it was based) seem more European in character. Thevet's Tamerlane does not look at all Mongol, even though the author describes the man as "empereur des Tartares." Despite the efforts made by the Timurids to associate themselves with the Chinggisid dynasty, it is striking that most European historians failed to make any link between Tamerlane and the rulers of the earlier Mongol polities in Asia. Indeed, the lives of Chinggis, Möngke, Qubilai, and the other great Mongol khans are entirely absent in many of the European discourses on Asian history written in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Thevet and Jean du Bec are unusual among their contemporaries in suggesting that Tamerlane was of the bloodline of the Mongol conquerors of the thirteenth century.⁹²

The confusion over Tamerlane's origins is apparent in the terminology employed by European authors. Many describe him as a "Scythian," and others—such as Piccolomini, Cambini, Richier, and Jean du Bec—note that he was born in a region called Parthia. The use of these anachronistic terms suggests a desire to distinguish Tamerlane from the earlier Mongol emperors, but the designation "Scythian" had also developed a distinct set of meanings in the intellectual culture of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Italy.⁹³ The term has an ancient pedigree, appearing in the writings of Herodotus and Thucydides. The second-century CE geographer Ptolemy suggests that the savagery of the Scythians was a product of their harsh, cold environment, and this climatic interpretation of human nature is followed by many other writers of antiquity and the Renaissance.⁹⁴ For Italian writers of the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the most important

figure of antiquity to have emerged from the shadowy region of Scythia was the fearsome fifth-century conqueror, Attila the Hun.

Predictably, most of the coverage of Attila and his conquests in Europe is profoundly negative in character.⁹⁵ His tyrannical rule and indiscriminate pillage earn him the title in many sources of "scourge of God" (*flagellum Dei*) or "terror of the world," while in the *Divine Comedy* Dante (d. 1321) places him in the seventh circle of Hell.⁹⁶ Piccolomini claims that the Huns had been brought forth from the union of women and demons,⁹⁷ and this concept is given a startling visual manifestation in the profile portrait in Giovio's 1575 *Elogia* (fig. 15).⁹⁸ Comparable images of Attila as a satyr are known earlier in the sixteenth century.⁹⁹ In the same period, however, scholars in Hungary were giving Attila a more positive image; the commonly held belief that the Hungarians were the descendants of the ancient Huns can be traced to the eleventh century.¹⁰⁰ This reinvention of Attila ranged from praise of his military skill to the implausible claim that, following a vision of Christ, he turned his energies to fighting heretics.¹⁰¹ Such an elevation also occurs in the panegyric poetry written by Giovanni Marliani to celebrate the marriage of Bianca Maria Sforza to the Hungarian Johannes Corvinus in 1487.¹⁰²

Just as Renaissance authors occasionally described the Ottoman Turks as descendants of the ancient Trojans,¹⁰³ so the description of Tamerlane as a Scythian placed him into a cultural context that would help explain his character and actions. The "Scythian" Huns and Tamerlane were at times also equated with the Massagetae, or "people of Magog" (Ezekiel 38:1–23).¹⁰⁴ Like Attila, that earlier product of Scythia, Tamerlane was both praised for his military and organizational skills and reviled for his spectacular cruelty and godlessness. Events in their respective European biographies exhibit certain correspondences, and these are picked up in the writings of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.¹⁰⁵ Tamerlane's slaughter of the innocents of Damascus finds a parallel in Attila's notorious killing of St. Ursula and her ten thousand virgins.¹⁰⁶ Both conquerors employed strategies of destruction and indiscriminate massacre following the siege of cities. One might even associate Tamerlane's supposed veneration for the Byzantine Empire with Attila's retreat from Rome without sacking the city, due, according to Marliani, to his respect for Pope Leo.¹⁰⁷ Most importantly, both Attila and Tamer-



Fig. 15. Attila the Hun. From Paolo Giovio, *Elogia virorum bellica virtute illustrium* (Basel, 1575), 10. The Bodleian Library, Oxford: F.5.2 (1). (Reproduced by permission of the Bodleian Library)

lane were believed to function as “scourges of God,” the instruments of divine will sent to test the faithful and to punish both individual and collective sins.¹⁰⁸ This theme is well developed in the literature about Tamerlane and forms part of the explanation for his rapid ascent from his supposedly humble origins.¹⁰⁹ It may be that the staring eyes, a common feature of the Giovio and Thevet portraits, are meant to function as

a visual reference. The exaggerated irises and pupils seen in the Thevet portrait bring to mind Marlowe’s description of Tamerlane and, more pertinently, the oft-quoted episode of the Genoese merchant who questioned Tamerlane about his cruelty toward the inhabitants of Damascus. According to the account given by Fortescue in *The Foreste* (London, 1571), the ruler

...answered in most furious wrath and ire, his face red and fry, his eyes flaming with burning sparckles, as if blasing out on euerie side. "Thou supposest me to be a man, but thou do much abusethe me, for none other am I, but the wrathe and vengeance of God, and ruine of the Worlde."¹¹⁰

This quote seems to have particular relevance for the apocalyptic imagery seen in the sky behind Tamerlane in the 1662 edition of *Chalkokondyles*. We have already seen how Montaigne used the reports of Tamerlane to construct for himself a demonic form of the conqueror;¹¹¹ presumably, the Thevet and Chalkokondyles portraits would have satisfied Montaigne's mental image. Other visual inspiration could have been drawn from the works of historians and dramatists: writers such as Cambini, Giovio, and Mexía provided vivid descriptions of the combination of human characteristics that formed the man, and also compared him with other famous military figures. For instance, Cambini remarks, "Those that have seen Tamerlano living, have said that he resembled much, both in face and manners, Anibal of Carthage, according to the opinion of diverse ancient writers."¹¹² In his oration of 1487, Marliani also compares Hannibal to Attila the Hun.¹¹³ In this sense, the resultant visual images act as exemplars of the martial virtues and barbarous cruelty rather than as an accurate record of a specific ethnic type.¹¹⁴

Paolo Giovio Lomazzo (d. 1600), a follower of Leonardo, takes this idea further by suggesting that specific historical figures embody certain emotional states. The author writes that the faces of cruel men never possess "gratious mildnesse of countenance." His list of those who were "most famous for crueltie" includes figures such as Cyrus, Herod, Medea, Attila, Barbarossa, Selim I, and Tamerlane.¹¹⁵ Concerning the qualities of "roughnesse," Lamazzo opines that this personality trait leads a man to slow and graceless movement, perversity, and obstinacy. He notes that these characteristics were shared by the Tartars, Scythians, Goths, Vandals, and Lombards (the Lombards originating, according to the author, in the deserts of Scythia). Lomazzo regards these tribes as "void of pittie, or respect of humane or diuine affaires." He concludes that they were

rude men, bare-legged, fierce, without military arte, without furniture of warre, or horses, of sauage behaiour, with warlike countenances, dreadfull &c. as they write of *Tamberlane* that cruell *Tartarian*, of the *Lestrigones* whome *Ariosto* describeth, and of *Polyphemus*.¹¹⁶

These ideas are also found in a later physiognomic text by John Evelyn (d. 1706) that concerns the characters of famous men. The author remarks of Sultan Süleyman I that he had, "all the Signs of Haughtiness and Cruelty; such repugnant Strokes, and Figures there are Ingraven in the Countenance."¹¹⁷ In an earlier passage Evelyn lists other tyrants, including Nero, Bayazid I, Tamerlane, and Charles, Duke of Burgundy, whose faces reflected their evil characters. His comments about specific facial features are of relevance to the portraits of Tamerlane in Giovio and Thevet. Of nostrils, he writes, "if wide, Generous, Bold, and sometimes Pertinacious and Cruel." The wrinkles of the forehead also attract his attention, and he notes, "if curv'd and bending, of Wrath and Displeasure. If rising Arch-Wise, Pride and Disdain."¹¹⁸

Comparable observations are made in general physiognomic texts of the seventeenth century. For instance, Marin Cureau de la Chambre (d. 1669) argues that it is possible to find evidence of courage in a man by comparing his features with those of a lion. He remarks that lions have "large mouths, a harsh and thick hair, the forehead full of folds and contractions between the eyebrows, the extremities large and tough, the flesh hard and muscular, the voice big and resounding."¹¹⁹ The reference to folds and contractions on the forehead and between the brows is particularly noticeable in the Giovio/Stimmer portrait. La Chambre also observes that, among other physical qualities, the brave man possesses "openness of nostrills and greatness, or wideness, of mouth."¹²⁰ Similar themes can be found in later physiognomic treatises.¹²¹ Clearly, caution should be exercised in associating these works with images produced much earlier, but they perhaps give some clue as to how the faces in biographical encyclopedias were designed to be read by their audiences.

CONCLUSION

Demetrius Cantemir (d. 1723) provides an interesting account of Tamerlane commissioning a portrait from a Persian prisoner. According to Cantemir,

The Painter, observing that Prince to be lame in his right thigh and blind of his left eye, drew him with this right leg bent or inclining, his left eye shut and a bow apply'd to the other, as if he had been shooting at game. *Temurleng* admiring the ingenuity of the Painter pardon'd him and set him at liberty.¹²²

While Cantemir was certainly better informed than most European historians of the sixteenth century about the origins and life of Tamerlane, his account of the portrait should not be viewed uncritically. Tamerlane was lame in his right leg and had arrow wounds in his right arm, but there is no evidence that he was blind in his left eye. Cantemir's description of the portrait is not mirrored in surviving Timurid and Mughal paintings of Tamerlane, but it makes sense in the context of conventions employed in Renaissance portraiture to conceal facial wounds and deformities.¹²³ This example illustrates the central problem in the interpretation of the "portraits" reviewed in this article. With the possible exception of the Giovio/Stimmer woodcut, these representations tell us very little about how sixteenth- and seventeenth-century European artists reacted to the visual cultures of Iran or Central Asia. Unlike the appearance in Europe of "Tartar" imagery in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, or the portraits of Ottoman sultans produced from the sixteenth century onward, the representations of Tamerlane possess only the faintest connection to Eastern prototypes. Neither do they make use of such written descriptions or visual representations of "Tartars" as existed in Europe at this time.¹²⁴ That Giovio may have owned a Persian (or perhaps Turkish) painting he believed was a depiction of Tamerlane is less significant than the function of the Giovio/Stimmer image, and of those occurring in other books and visual media, in relation to the textual examination of the Central Asian conqueror.

The uncertainty over the ethnicity and religious affiliation of Tamerlane is a product of both the limited sources of information and the selective approach to sources employed by European scholars from the mid-fifteenth century. For instance, Piccolomini's influential vision of Asian history and geography drew significant inspiration from authors like Strabo and Ptolemy, and, like many who came after him, Piccolomini tended to favor the interpretations of antique authorities over the observations of those late medieval travelers who possessed first-hand experience of the Middle East and Central Asia. In addition, sixteenth-century scholars seeking out data on the life of Tamerlane in Chalkokondyles, or the works of other Greek historians, would have discovered an Asia of the imagination, where recognizable ethnic or tribal groupings of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries—Arabs, Turks, Armenians, Persians, Circassians, Chaghatay, and so on—coexisted with peoples of an ancient or mythic

past, such as the Massagetae, Scythians, Hyrcanes, and Cadusians. In this context, it becomes easier to understand the common failure to apprehend the connection, admittedly somewhat complex, between Tamerlane and the great Mongol conquerors of the thirteenth century. (By contrast, the genealogical links were both understood and celebrated by Mughal rulers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries).¹²⁵ European historians were more comfortable comparing Tamerlane with such figures from the classical past as Cyrus, Darius, Alexander, Hannibal, and, most importantly, Attila the Hun.

The considerable scholarly and artistic interest in Tamerlane in the period up to the end of the seventeenth century also needs to be understood in the wider context of the evolving relations between Europe and the Ottoman Empire. It is instructive to compare the description of Tamerlane in Edward Gibbon's *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (London, 1776–78) with those found in the works of earlier historians.¹²⁶ The greater accuracy of Gibbon's account stems not only from the access he enjoyed to translated editions of Ibn 'Arabshah, Sharaf al-Din Yazdi, and others, but also from his critical stance regarding his sources.¹²⁷ In this latter respect, Gibbon has much more in common with modern historians than with those working in the previous two centuries. Another important factor contributing to Gibbon's handling of the subject is historical. The Ottoman threat to Europe diminished significantly in the decades following the failed siege of Vienna in 1683, and by Gibbon's time it was possible to view earlier events in Islamic history in a relatively dispassionate manner. By contrast, earlier treatments of Tamerlane were composed in the shadow of Turkish expansion. Aside from first-hand accounts written by the likes of Clavijo, de Mignanelli, and Schiltberger, the earliest attempts to place Tamerlane into the political history of Asia occurred in the mid-fifteenth century. This scholarly enterprise only increased in intensity during the following century. While Piccolomini was writing in the aftermath of the fall of Constantinople in 1453, later scholars such as Cambini and Giovio must have been acutely aware that the fall of Belgrade and the island of Rhodes in 1521 and 1522 and the siege of Vienna in 1529 did not represent the limit of Ottoman imperial aspirations in Europe.

It can be seen, therefore, that the study of Tamerlane represented more than scholarly whim or a simple fascination with Asiatic exoticism. European schol-

ars were searching for ways to understand and combat the rise of Turkish power. The battle of Ankara in 1402 offered a rare example of a victory over the Ottoman Empire, and a comforting vision of divine punishment meted out to a Muslim ruler by a godless barbarian. Tamerlane's role as a "scourge of God" lent some logic to the fact that, according to the prevalent European view, he suffered no setback during his military career. European readers could reassure themselves that on his death this scourge was cast into the fire of damnation.

Some authors sought out figures who had opposed the Turks and compared their relative merits. For instance, an anonymous text, *The Conduct and Character of Nicholas Serini* (London, 1664) discusses Tamerlane, George Scanderbeg, and Nicholas Serini, stating, "the first an heathen born to punish Infidelity; the second a Papist born to vindicate Christianity; the third a Protestant, born as some think to reform the world." Of Tamerlane the author continues, "we must needs confess that it is scarcely possible, lesse credible, that so despicable a vessel should contain so great a stocke of admirable actions, and thence a branch should have sprung, which did subvert the Turkish monarchy, and several other potentates."¹²⁸

Tamerlane develops a complex personality in European literature,¹²⁹ and this personality is shaped to meet different requirements. In one of his earliest manifestations in Europe, he is depicted as a pagan converted to Christianity. The reference to the medieval legend of Prester John is clear, but by the second half of the fifteenth century a new theme is developed. The recasting of Tamerlane as a Scythian is a means to locate him within an antique tradition of barbarian conquerors. It is striking, however, that there are relatively few illustrations of Tamerlane in the considerable body of printed books of the period, although the costs of book production may provide some explanation for this. The woodcut illustrations discussed in this article consist of portraits and a narrow range of narrative scenes. Many of the potential narrative themes go unexplored in the woodcuts. Certainly, concepts such as "scourge of God" are not easily transferred into visual form, though some artists convey at least a sense of menace in their portraits. It is the text, however, that carries the main burden of informing and entertaining; images can be jettisoned, leaving the reader's imagination to fill the space. From the latter part of the seventeenth century the European approach to Tamerlane divides into two branches. On one hand, scholars begin to assemble

an increasingly accurate reconstruction of the origins and life of the historical Temür, using the testimony of primary European sources and translations of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish chronicles.¹³⁰ On the other hand, the Tamerlane of Western imagination lives on in increasingly fanciful form in plays, operas, ballets, and popular expressions.¹³¹ Faint echoes of this mighty empire builder are even to be found in Victorian Christmas pantomime.¹³²

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NOTES

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1. "Tamerlane" is used throughout this article, though European sources of the fifteenth to seventeenth century employ a wide range of variant spellings. This European name derives from the Persian, Timur-i Lang (Timur the Lame), referring to the lameness on his right side. His Turkic name is more correctly rendered as Aqsaq Temür. See Beatrice F. Manz, *The Rise and Rule of Tamerlane* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 1. For Central Asian personal and place names I have generally adopted the spellings employed by Manz.
2. For a discussion of this cultural phenomenon, and the details of the different types of dramatic performance, see David Bevington, "Timur and the Ambivalent Vision of Heroism," *Asian Art* 2, 2 (Spring 1989): 6–9; Walter Denny, "Images of Turks in the European Imagination," in Walter Denny et al., *Court and Conquest: Ottoman Origins and the Design for Handel's Tamerlano at the Glimmerglass Opera* (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Museum, 1999), 3–18 (esp. 6–9). I would like to thank Walter Denny for sending me a copy of his publication. For the ballet, see Henry R. Bishop, *Tamerlane et Bajazet, the New Grand Heroic Ballet as Performed at the King's Theatre, Haymarket with the Most Enthusiastic Applause* (London, 1806).
3. For the paintings by Andrea Celesti in the Neues Palais in Potsdam, see Anton Maria Mucchi and C. Della Croce, *Il Pittore Andrea Celesti* (Milan: "Silvana" Editoriale d'Arte, 1954), 86, fig. 29. For one of the paintings in Schloss Eggenberg, Graz, by either Carl Franz Caspar or Andreas Raemblmayer, see Denny, "Images of Turks," 6, fig. 6. For tapestries, see E. Neumann, "Tamerlan und Bajazet: Eine Antwerpener Tapissereien-Series des 17. Jahrhunderts," in Jozef Duverger,

- Miscellanea Jozef Duverger*, 2 vols. (Ledenberg: Gent, 1968), vol. 2, 819–35. A drawing by Rembrandt of Tamerlane with companions is illustrated in Rudolf Wittkower, *Selected Lectures of Rudolf Wittkower: The Impact of Non-European Civilization on the Art of the West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 214, figs. 11–29. For further references, see Andor Pigler, *Barockthemen: Eine Auswahl von Verzeichnissen zur Ikonographie des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts*, 3 vols. (Budapest, 1974), vol. 2, 447.
4. The translation is from *The Complete Essays of Montaigne*, trans. Donald Frame (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1958), 614–15 (for the complete essay, see bk. 3, chap. 2, 610–21). For the original text, see Michel de Montaigne, *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Albert Thibaudet and Maurice Rat (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1962), 787.
 5. He did, however, employ the grandiose but largely symbolic title *Sāhib Qiyān*, or “Lord of the Fortunate Conjunction.”
 6. For the career of Tamerlane, see Manz, *Rise and Rule*; Hilda Hookham, *Tamburlaine the Conqueror* (London: Hodder and Staughton, 1964).
 7. A facial reconstruction was also done. See Mikhail Gerasimov, *The Face Finder*, trans. Alan H. Brodrick (London: Hutchinson, 1971), 131–38 and pl. following 112. Also see David Morgan, *The Mongols* (Oxford: Blackwell’s, 1986), 200.
 8. For a translation of this passage, see Hookham, *Tamburlaine*, 83–84. The complete text is available in Ahmad Ibn ‘Arabshāh, *Tamerlane: Or, Timur, the Great Amir*, trans. John H. Sanders (London: Luzac, 1936, repr. Lahore, 1976), 295–96.
 9. J. Michael Rogers, trans., “V. V. Bartol’d’s Article *O Pogrebenii Timura* (‘The Burial of Timur’),” *Iran* 12 (1974): 84–86; Manz, *Rise and Rule*, 18–19.
 10. This event occurred during the visit to London of the Byzantine emperor Manuel II. For discussion of these events, see Donald Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium, 1261–1453*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 313–15.
 11. For Prester John, see C. Beckingham, *The Achievements of Prester John: An Inaugural Lecture Delivered on 17 May 1966* (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1966); Robert Silverday, *The Realm of Prester John* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1972); I. de Rachewiltz, *Prester John and Europe’s Discovery of East Asia* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1972).
 12. The two best-known accounts are those of John of Piano Carpini and William of Rubruck. For the former, see Christopher Dawson, ed., *The Mongol Mission: Narratives and Letters of the Franciscan Missionaries in Mongolia and China in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (London and New York: Sheed and Ward, 1955); for the latter, see William of Rubruck (Willem van Ruysbroeck), *The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck: His Journey to the Court of the Great Khan Möngke, 1253–1255*, trans. Peter Jackson with notes by David Morgan, Hakluyt Society 2nd ser., no. 173 (London, 1990).
 13. Nicol, *Last Centuries of Byzantium*, 314. The Byzantine emperor John VII and possibly also Manuel II made diplomatic contact with Tamerlane. For Clavijo’s embassy, see *Narrative of the Spanish Embassy to the Court of Timur at Samarkand in the Years 1403–1406*, trans. Guy Le Strange (London: Routledge, 1928).
 14. This text was first published in Spanish in Madrid in 1582. I have been unable to locate evidence that any of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century historians discussed in this section consulted Clavijo. The text was again published in Madrid in 1782, under the title *Historia del Gran Tamerlan*; this edition contains an introduction by Gonzalo Argote de Molina as well as additional sections taken from the writings of Pedro Mexía and Paolo Gioivo.
 15. Jean du Bec’s claim, made on the title page of his *Histoire du grand empereur Tamerlanes* (Rouen, 1590), that his writings were “tirée des monuments antiques des Arabes,” has been widely rejected. It is intriguing, however, that he makes some comments concerning the origins of Tamerlane that are not found in the works of other historians of this period. It has also been suggested that Het’um, *Sensuyent les fleurs des hystoires de la terre dorient* (probably first printed between ca. 1501 and 1510; I have used an edition in the Bodleian Library printed in Paris in ca. 1530) may have made use of non-European (or perhaps Byzantine Greek) sources. See Una Ellis-Fermor’s introduction to Christopher Marlowe, *Tamburlaine the Great in Two Parts* (London: Methuen, 1930), 17–18, 27; Ethel Seaton, “Fresh Sources for Marlowe,” *The Review of English Studies* 5, 20 (Oct. 1929): 399–401. Both authors, however, were unaware that Het’um’s original text contained only four parts. Het’um, who died about 1311, cannot have written the section dealing with Tamerlane (part 5). Beatrice Manz (“Tamerlane’s Career and Its Uses,” *Journal of World History* 13, 1 [2002], 12, n. 26) notes that part 5 is the work of the Dominican Jean of Sultaniyya, who returned from the court of Tamerlane to France in 1403, though it is evident that the text of the 1530 edition of *Les fleurs*, at least, contains interpolations by other authors. For instance, one passage cites Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini (available in a printed edition in Paris in 1509): “Le Pape Pie Second qui estoyt bien pres de ce temps la dit en ses hystoires que Tamburlan fyst enchainet ledict turc de chayne dor; et le faisoit menger soubz la table avecques les chiens. Et toutes les foyz quil vouloit monter a cheval il falloit que ledict turc se mist la terre sur les piedz et sur les mains: et quil suy dedist [?] le dos pour mettre le pied dessus pour avoir advantage pour monter sur sondit cheval.” See Het’um, *Les fleurs*, fol. R iii r.
 16. Ahmad b. Muhammad Ibn ‘Arabshāh, *Kitāb ‘ajā’ib al-maqdūr fī akhbār Timūr = Ahmedis Arabsiadae: Vitae et rerum gestarum Timuri, qui vulgo Tamerlaini dicitur, historia*, ed. Jacobus Golius (Leiden, 1636). Pierre Vattier’s French translation appeared under the title, *L’histoire du grand Tamerlan* (Paris: Remy Soubret, 1658). Sharaf al-Din Yazdi’s *Zafarnāma* was translated by François Pétis de la Croix as *Histoire de Timour Bec, connu sous le nom du Grand Tamerlan* (Paris, 1722). An English translation appeared the following year. The fascinating account of the meeting between Ibn Khaldun and Tamerlane was not brought to wide attention prior to the twentieth century. See Walter Fischel, ed. and trans., *Ibn Khaldun and Tamerlane* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1952).
 17. For instance, Mehmed Neshri (d. ca. 1520), Tursun Beg (d.

- 1499), and Ibn Kemal (d. 1534). For these historians, see Franz Babinger, *Die Geschichtsschreiber der Osmanen und ihre Werke* (Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1927). A translation from the work of the sixteenth-century Turkish scholar Mustafa b. Hasan Jannabi, entitled *De Gestis Timurlenki*, was published in Vienna in 1680, too late to have had any impact on the European historians surveyed in this article.
18. Johannes Leunclavius (d. 1593) is known to have made direct use of works in Turkish, translated for him by Joanne Gaudier, for his history, *Annales sultanorum othmanidarum* (Frankfurt, 1588). See Ellis-Fermor, *Tamburlaine the Great*, 34. Leunclavius also produced a Latin translation of Chalkokondyles, entitled *Laonici Chalcocondylae Atheniensis historium libri decem: Historiarum de origine ac rebus gestis Turcorum* (Paris, 1650). Theodore Spandounes claims to have consulted “*annali di Turchi*” in the composition of his study of the origins of the Turkish sultans first published in a partial edition in Lucca in 1509; for a discussion of the early editions of his work and his sources, see introductory notes in Theodore Spandounes, *On the Origins of the Ottoman Emperors*, trans. Donald Nicol (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), esp. xix–xxv.
 19. For a general review of the later Byzantine historians and their attitudes to the Turks, see Sir Steven Runciman, “Byzantine Historians and the Ottoman Turks,” in *Historians of the Middle East*, ed. Bernard Lewis and Peter Holt (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), 271–76.
 20. *Laonici Chalcocondylae Atheniensis, de origine et rebus gestis Turcorum libri decem* (Basel, 1556).
 21. For a modern translation, see Doukas, *Decline and Fall of Byzantium to the Ottoman Turks*, trans. Harry Magoulias (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1975). Doukas (xvi, 12, 95–96) claims that Bayazid was held in iron chains and manacles following a failed escape attempt.
 22. Phrantzes has been credited as the first author to record the fallacious story that Tamerlane had Bayazid imprisoned in an iron cage. See Louis Wann, “The Oriental in Elizabethan Drama,” *Modern Philology* 12 (1915): 176–77; Ellis-Fermor, *Tamburlaine the Great*, 24, n. 1; Samuel Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose: Islam and England during the Renaissance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1937), 469–70. It has been suggested that this legend has its origins in a misunderstanding of the Turkish word *kafes* (Ottoman: *qafes*, deriving from the Arabic *qafas*), which can mean either “litter” or “cage.” See Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall, *Geschichte des osmanischen Reiches*, 4 vols. (Pest: C. A. Hartleben, 1827), vol. 1: 317–23, esp. 319–320. As noted by Von Hammer, *kafes/qafes* can also refer to the ritual seclusion placed around an Ottoman sultan or amir. My thanks to Ruba Kana’an for confirming this information. For a modern translation, see *The Fall of the Byzantine Empire: A Chronicle by George Sphrantzes, 1401–77*, trans. Marios Philippides (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1980). It should be noted that this edition contains no mention of the imprisonment of Bayazid in an iron cage. The iron cage only appears as an interpolation in Makarios Melissenos’s sixteenth-century redaction of Phrantzes. I am grateful to Theodora Antonopoulou for confirming this observation.
 23. Some accounts did not surface before the twentieth century. For instance, see Walter Fischel, “A New Latin Source on Tamerlane’s Conquest of Damascus (1400/1401): B. de Mignanelli’s *Vita Tamerlani*, 1416,” *Oriens* 9 (1956): 201–32.
 24. For a study of the early editions of Schiltberger, see *The Bondage and Travels of Johann Schiltberger, a Native of Bavaria, in Europe, Asia, and Africa, 1396–1427*, trans. John Buchan Telfer, Hakluyt Society, no. 58 (London: Hakluyt Society, 1879), x–xiv.
 25. Marshal Boucicaud, governor of Genoa until 1409, gathered oral reports of the events in the Ottoman Empire, but his writings were not published until much later. His account of the defeat of Bayazid contains no mention that the sultan was humiliated by Tamerlane. See *Histoire du Maréchal Boucicaud*, ed. Guillaume de Voys (La Haye, 1711), 107–9. A later work that may reflect a knowledge of earlier Turkish sources is Constantine of Ostrovica (d. 1563), *Historia neb Kronyka Turecka od Michala Konstantina z Ostrovicze* (Litomyšl, 1565). Constantine had been captured by the Ottomans and served in their army. For an English translation, see Konstantin Mikhailović (Constantine of Ostrovica), *Memoirs of a Janissary*, trans. Benjamin Stolz with historical notes by Svat Soucek, Michigan Slavic Translations 3 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1975; see introductory notes for details of other early publications on Turkish history by George of Hungary and Felix Ragusinus).
 26. Paolo Giovio seems to have gained information from Angiolello (either through personal acquaintance or through the mediation of Donado da Lezze). See Vernon Parry, “Renaissance Historical Literature in Relation to the Near and Middle East (with Special Reference to Paolo Giovio),” in Lewis and Holt, eds., *Historians of the Middle East*, 285. For Donado da Lezze’s edition of Angiolello’s text, see *Historia turchesa, 1300–1514* (Bucharest, 1909).
 27. Sagundino’s text was first published in Venice in 1551. See Nicol’s introduction in Spandounes, *Origins*, xxi.
 28. *Cosmographia Pii Papae in Asiae et Europae eleganti descriptione* (Paris: Geoffroy Tory and Henri Estienne, 1509). Other editions appeared in the sixteenth century. I have consulted the version of this text found in Pope Pius II, *Opera extant omnia* (Basel 1571). See particularly, 359–62, 382–84, 395. For the use of Sagundino’s work by Piccolomini, see Nicol’s notes in Spandounes, *Origins*, xix–xxi. The observations of the merchant Niccolò de’Conti (as recorded in Poggio Bracciolini’s, *De varietate fortunae*, 1447) were also used by Piccolomini in his writings on Asia. For a detailed discussion of Piccolomini’s sources and methodology, see Margaret Meserve, “From Samarkand to Scythia: Reinventions of Asia in Renaissance Geography and Political Thought,” in *Pius II, ‘el più expeditivo pontifice’: Selected Studies on Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini (1405–1464)*, ed. Zweder von Martels and Arjo Vanderjagt (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2003), 13–39.
 29. For instance, European readers could acquaint themselves with accounts of Mongol culture written by John of Piano Carpini, Het’um, and Marco Polo because they had been incorporated into Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum historiale*. See Juliet Vale, *Edward III and Chivalry: Chivalric Society and Its Context, 1270–1350* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1982), 72. The *Speculum historiale* was printed in the late fifteenth

- century (for instance, Strasbourg, 1478), and further editions were printed in the sixteenth century.
30. For instance, the continuation by Matteo Palmieri (d. 1475) of the *Chronicon* of Eusebius and the life of Pope Boniface IX by Bartolommeo Sacchi (d. 1481). Other potential sources included Andrea Biglia's writings on Mongol history in his study of Eastern Christendom (1432); Francesco Filelfo's oration before the Council of Mantua in 1459; Flavio Biondo's oration to Alfonso of Aragon in 1453. See Ellis-Fermor, *Tamburlaine the Great*, 26–27; Meserve, "Samarkand to Scythia," 31–34. For an English translation of Bartolommeo Sacchi, see Paul Rychaut, *Lives of the Popes from the Time of Our Saviour Jesus Christ to the Reign of Sixtus IV* (London, 1685); for Tamerlane, see esp. 335.
 31. Most of this work has concentrated on the sources employed by Marlowe in *Tamburlaine the Great*. This research is brought together in Ellis-Fermor, *Tamburlaine the Great*, 17–50. It should be noted that Ellis-Fermor fails to grasp the significance of the fact that Piccolomini's text predates Cambini's in both the date of composition and the first printing. The comments on Het'um should also be revised in the light of recent research: see my notes 15 and 72–73.
 32. I have consulted the English translation by John Shute of Andrea Cambini, *Two Very Notable Commentaries, the One of the Originall of the Turks and the House of Ottomanno... and thother of the Warre of the Turcks against George Scanderbeg* (London, 1562, repr. Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1970).
 33. The editions of these authors I have consulted are: Pierre de la Primaudaye, *The French Academie wherein is Discoursed the Institution of Maners*, trans. T. B. (London, 1589); Pedro Mexía, *Diverse leçons* (Paris, 1572). Mexía was also translated by Thomas Fortescue, *The Foreste or Collection of Histories, No Lesse Profitable, then Pleasant and Necessary* (London, 1571); Caelius Curio, *A Notable History of the Saracens*, trans. Thomas Newton (London, 1575, repr. Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1977); Christophe Richier, *De rebus Turcaru ad Franciscanum galorum Christianiss*, 4 vols. (Paris, 1540), see bk. 3; Petrus Perondini, *Magni Tamerlanis Scytharum imperatoris vita* (Florence, 1553).
 34. For an evaluation of Giovio's historical method and his publications on Islamic history, see Parry, "Renaissance Historical Literature," 281–89. For an English translation of Giovio, see *A Short Treatise upon the Turkes Chronicles*, trans. Peter Ashton (London, 1546).
 35. The editions I have consulted are: André Thevet, *Les vrais portraits et vies des hommes illustres Grecz, Latins, et Payens* (Paris, 1584); Jean Boissard, *Vitae et icones sultanorum Turcicorum* (Frankfurt, 1596); Philip Lonicer, *Chronicon Turcicorum* (Frankfurt, 1578); Jean du Bec, *Histoire du grand empereur Tamerlanes* (Rouen, 1590); Richard Knolles, *The General History of the Turkes, from the First Beginning of That Nation to the Rising of the Ottoman Familie* (5th ed., London, 1638). It should be noted, however, that these authors do not slavishly follow earlier accounts and that they include novel details, some based on research or acuity and others simply invented.
 36. To some extent, these terms are synonymous in the literature of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The significance of the Scythian designation is discussed in greater detail later in the article.
 37. The full title of the 1590 edition is *Tamburlaine the Great, Who, from a Scythian Shepherd, by His Rare and Wonderful Conquests Became a Most Puissant and Mighty Monarch, and for His Tyranny and Terror Was Termed the Scourge of God*.
 38. Pt. 1, scene 2, act 1, ll. 11–18 (the previous quote comes from ll. 23–24). The edition used is Christopher Marlowe, *Tamburlaine, Parts I and II; Doctor Faustus, A- and B-Texts; The Jew of Malta; Edward II*, ed. David Bevington and Eric Rasmussen (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).
 39. That the earliest productions of the play by the Lord Admiral's Men also found means to emphasize the incandescent qualities of the central character is suggested in the references made to a coat edged with copper lace and breeches of crimson velvet. See Philip Henslowe, *Henslowe Papers: Being Documents Supplementary to Henslowe's Diary*, ed. Walter Greg (London: A. H. Bullen, 1907), 119–20. For a discussion of color symbolism in the stagings of *Tamburlaine*, see Marie Channing Linthicum, *Costume in the Drama of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1936), 26; William Armstrong, *Marlowe's Tamburlaine: The Images and the Stage* (Hull: Hull University Press, 1966), 16.
 40. The 1593 edition is available in a modern facsimile edition: see *Tamburlaine the Great: A Scholar Press Facsimile*, introduction by Roma Gill (Menston and London: Scholar Press, 1973).
 41. Fredson Bowers, ed., *The Complete Works of Christopher Marlowe*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), vol. 1, 73, n. 2.
 42. Hartmann Schedel, *Liber chronicarum*. Reprinted in facsimile as *Chronicle of the World: The Complete and Annotated Nuremberg Chronicle of 1493*, with introduction by Stephan Füssel (Cologne and London: Taschen, 2001), fol. ccxxxvii r.
 43. *Promptuarium iconum insigniorum a seculo hominum subiectis eorum vitis, per compendium ex probatissimis autoribus desumptis* (Lyons, 1551), 190. The work was reprinted in the same city in 1581. Rouillé's depiction of the Ottoman sultans is discussed in greater detail by Julian Raby in the exhibition catalogue *The Sultan's Portrait: Picturing the House of Osman* (Istanbul: İşbank, 2000), 138–41.
 44. In the short text beneath the images, Rouillé quotes Paolo Giovio to the effect that Bayazid was placed in golden chains within an iron cage.
 45. These arguments are summarized by Raby in *Sultan's Portrait*, 140.
 46. *Elogia virorum bellica virtute illustrium* (Basel, 1575, repr. 1596). See also the discussion of the 1575 edition by Raby in *Sultan's Portrait*, 141–50.
 47. Giovio, *Elogia*, 102.
 48. For instance, the same frame surrounds the portraits of Ataxerxes, Emperor Frederick I, Carmagnola, Gattamelata, and Cardinal Ascanius Sforza.
 49. For a detailed study of Giovio's portrait collection, see Linda Klinger, "The Portrait Collection of Paolo Giovio," 2 vols. (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1991). See also idem, "Images of Identity: Italian Portrait Collections of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries," in *The Image, the Individual: Portraits in the Renaissance*, ed. Nicholas Mann and Luke Syson (London: British Museum, 1998), 67–79; Linda Klinger and Julian Raby, "Barbarossa and Sinan: A Portrait of Two

- Ottoman Corsairs from the Collection of Paolo Giovio," in *Venezia e l'Oriente Vicino: Atti del primo congresso internazionale sull'Arte Islamica 9–12.XII 1986*, ed. Ernst Grube (Venice: L'Altra Riva, 1989), 47–59.
50. Klinger, "Portrait Collection," vol. 1, 79; Raby in *Sultan's Portrait*, 143–44.
 51. Klinger, "Portrait Collection," vol. 1, 73.
 52. My comments are based on the study of a reproduction of this painting in the photographic archives of the Warburg Institute, University of London. Another image of Tamerlane, dating between 1579 and 1580, is recorded in the collection of Archduke Ferdinand in Schloss Ambras. See Friedrich Kenner, "Die Porträtsammlung des Erzherzogs Ferdinand von Tirol," *Jahrbuch der kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses*, vol. 19, no. 1 (1898), 143–44; Donald Lach, *Asia in the Making of Europe*, 3 vols. (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1965–93), vol. 2: *A Century of Wonder* (1970), 26, n. 121; Klinger, "Portrait Collection," vol. 1, 79.
 53. The version of this print in the British Museum is reproduced in Max Geisberg, *The German Single-Leaf Woodcut, 1500–1550*, 4 vols., rev. and ed. Walter Strauss (Munich, 1923–30, repr. New York: Hacker Art Books, 1974), vol. 4, 1202–5 (G1251–53).
 54. Illustrated in Ethan Kavalier, *Pieter Bruegel: Parables of Order and Enterprise* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 173, fig. 88. The three tents could be a reference to the story, found in numerous sixteenth-century histories, that during the sieges of cities Tamerlane was in the habit of pitching tents of different colors—white, red, and black—as messages to the defenders. See Cambini, *Two Commentaries*, fol. 5r. This theme is also picked up in Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*. For a discussion of the symbolic dimensions of the colored tents, see Channing Linthicum, *Shakespeare and His Contemporaries*, 26; Roy Battenhouse, *Marlowe's Tamburlaine: A Study in Renaissance Moral Philosophy* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1941), 137.
 55. For instance, a comparable image of the sultan in a cage on wheels is to be found in Sebastian Münster, *Cosmographiae universalis* (1628, repr. in 4 vols., Lindau: Antiqua Verlag, 1984), vol. 2, woodcut on 1457. He is also depicted in the same way in one of the paintings from Schloss Eggenberg (ca. 1672): See Denny, "Images of Turks," 6, fig. 6.
 56. See Klinger and Raby, "Barbarossa," n. 32; Raby in *Sultan's Portrait*, 145–46.
 57. Illustrated in David Roxburgh, ed., *Turks: A Journey of a Thousand Years, 600–1600* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2005), nos. 168–71. See also no. 148.
 58. For instance, see fols. 82b–83a: "Timur granting an audience in Balkh on the occasion of his accession to power in April 1370." Illustrated in Thomas Lentz and Glenn Lowry, *Timur and the Princely Vision: Persian Art and Culture in the Fifteenth Century* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989), 264–65 (cat. 147).
 59. This text has been reprinted in facsimile, ed. Reuben Cholakian (New York: Demlar, 1973).
 60. Thevet, *Les vrais portraits*, fol. 630v.
 61. Illustrated in Kavalier, *Pieter Bruegel*, 173, fig. 89.
 62. This illustration does not appear in Blaise de Vigenère's translation printed in Paris in 1584. Curiously, the written description of Tamerlane (not part of Chalkokondyles' original text) found on the page facing the illustration in the 1662 edition does not correlate closely with the illustration: "Sa stature estoit moyenne, les espauls un peu estroites, la jambe belle, les yeux pleins de majesté, de sorte qu'à peine en pouuoit-on supporter le regard: mais par modestie, il s'abstenoit de regarder celuy qui parloit à luy. La reste du visage estoit affable, et bien proportionné. Il n'avoit gueres du poil au menton, et aussi peu de moustache, portoit les cheveux long et crespus, dequels il faisoit grande conte (à cause qu'il se disoit estre de la race de Samson) joint qu'il estoient fort beaux et d'une couleur brune, et tirant sur le violet." See Laonikos Chalkokondyles, *L'histoire de la décadence de l'empire grec et établissement de celuy des Turcs par Chalcocondile Athenien*, trans. B. de Vigenère, in *Histoire des Turcs*, 2 vols. (Paris: Augustin Courbé, 1662), vol. 1, 53.
 63. According to Doukas, *Fall of Byzantium*, vol. 16, pt. 3, 91–92, the comet, a portent of evil, remained visible in the sky from the spring to the autumn of that year.
 64. The paired sun and moon also appear in some other scenes. For instance, woodcuts by Dürer of the Lamentation of Christ, the Crucifixion, and Christ showing his disciples the heavens also include them. See Willi Kurth, *The Complete Woodcuts of Albrecht Dürer*, trans. Silvia Welsh (New York: Arden, 1936), pls. 87, 88, 154. Other examples include prints by Hans Schäufflein (Christ on the Cross with the Virgin and St. John, ca. 1516) and Michael Ostendorfer (Lamentation, 1548). See Geisberg, *Single-Leaf Woodcut*, vol. 3, 920–21, 955 (G. 964–65, G. 1044).
 65. For illustrations of these two themes, see Kurth, *Complete Woodcuts*, pl. 110; Walter Strauss, *The German Single-Leaf Woodcut, 1550–1600*, 4 vols. (New York: Arden, 1936), vol. 1, 275; Frances Carey, ed., *The Apocalypse and the Shape of Things to Come* (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1999), cat. nos. 10, 33, 57, 58, 86; Paul Huber, *Apokalypse: Bildzyklen zur Johannes-Offenbarung in Trier, auf dem Athos und Caillaud d'Angers* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1989), 65, 77, and fig. 133. My thanks to Gülrü Necipoğlu for bringing the apocalyptic iconography of the sun and moon to my attention.
 66. For instance, the arrangement of the bow case and quiver attached to the belt is also seen in a representation of a Tartar soldier from an engraving showing Russian costumes in Abraham de Bruyn's 1581 publication, *Omnium pene...* (see above). Note also similarities in the facial hair (large moustaches and clean-shaven chin) and the form of the topcoat. Illustrated in Kavalier, *Pieter Bruegel*, 173, fig. 89.
 67. Raby in *Sultan's Portrait*, fig. 28k.
 68. *Sultan's Portrait*, cat. no. 20, and comments by Jürg Meyer zur Capellen and Serpil Bağcı in the same volume, 102–103. See also Gülrü Necipoğlu, "Süleyman the Magnificent and the Representation of Power in the Context of Ottoman-Hapsburg-Papal Rivalry," *Art Bulletin* 71, 3 (1989): 401–27 (esp. 418–19, fig. 28). Another possible comparison is with the Rouillé/Sansovino portrait of Mehmed I: see Raby in *Sultan's Portrait*, figs. 27j, 34g.
 69. For the employment of Ottoman headgear in European paintings and graphic arts, see Julian Raby, *Venice, Dürer and the Oriental Mode* (London: Islamic Art Publications, 1982), 21–34.
 70. The active quality of this portrait may be compared to the

- more schematic representation of mounted warriors in Abraham Ortelius's 1570 map of Russia and Moscovie. See Kavalier, *Pieter Breugel*, 173, fig. 88.
71. An earlier image of Tamerlane can be found in Schedel's *Liber chronicarum* of 1493 (see n. 42, above). Editions of Schiltberger's travels from ca. 1478 onward contain woodcut illustrations, but these volumes are all extremely scarce. The only one of this early series I have consulted was printed in ca. 1549. For details, see Buchan Telfer in Schiltberger, *Bondage and Travels*, x–xi.
 72. The text was composed at the request of Pope Clement V. It was subsequently translated into Latin by Falcon de Toul and into Spanish by an anonymous scholar. The true identity of the author—sometimes known as Het'um, prince of Korikos—has yet to be resolved, though his detailed knowledge of events in the kingdom of Cilician Armenia in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries indicates that he was an important member of the Armenian royal family. The text, in Latin and French versions, proved popular around Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and was printed in numerous editions. Strangely, it was not until the nineteenth century that an Armenian translation of *Les fleurs* was published. For the history and authorship of *Les fleurs*, see David Bundy, "Het'um's *La Flor des estoires de la Terre d'Orient*: A Study in Medieval Armenian Historiography and Propaganda," *Revue des études arméniennes* 20 (1986–87): 223–35; Robert Thomson, *A Bibliography of Classical Armenian Literature to 1500* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1995), 139.
 73. On the probable authorship of part 5, see my comments in note 15. Not all early printed editions of Het'um's history contain the fifth part. For instance, it is not included in Richard Pynson's English translation of the French text. See Hetoum, *A Lytell Cronycle: Richard Pynson's Translation (c. 1520) of La Fleur des Histoires de la Terre d'Orient (c. 1307)*, ed. Glenn Burger (Toronto and London: Toronto University Press, 1988).
 74. Stylistic differences in the modeling of the draperies and the treatment of the faces, architecture, and vegetation suggest that different craftsmen completed the two plates.
 75. The illustration on sig. Qii r (pt. 5, between chaps. 9 and 10) appears in pt. 3, chap. 25 (concerned with battles between Tartars and Saracens) in the ca. 1530 edition. The illustration on sig. Rii v (pt. 5, chap. 15) appears in pt. 3, in a chapter about "Mango Caan" (i.e., Möngke Khan).
 76. A similar feature is seen later in the painting of Tamerlane in the collection of Paolo Giovio, and the engraving of it by Tobias Stimmer in the 1575 edition of Giogio's *Elogia*.
 77. Cod. 2810 in the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris. For the illustrations, see Marco Polo, *Il Libro di Marco Polo detto milione: Nella versione trecentesca dell'ottimo*, ed. Sergio Solmi (Torino: Einaudi, 1954), pls. opposite 51, 106; Millard Meiss, *French Painting in the Time of Jean de Berry: The Boucicaut Master* (London: Phaidon, 1968), pls. 82, 83.
 78. This illustration is reproduced in Robert Irwin, "Islam and the Crusades, 1096–1699," in *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Crusades*, ed. Jonathan Riley-Smith (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 253. The author notes that the painter must have had access to a Persian miniature.
 79. For Schiltberger's account of the siege of Isfahan, see *Bondage and Travels*, chap. 18, 27–28. For one of the numerous versions of the slaughter of the virgins of Damascus, see Cambini, *Two Commentaries*, fols. 4v–5r.
 80. For instance, see the frontispiece of a book published in Venice (n.d.) entitled *Lamento et ultima disperatione di Selim Gran Turco*. In this case, however, the demon appears to be tempting the sultan to commit suicide. See Nebahat Avcioglu, "Ahmed I and the Allegories of Tyranny in the Frontispiece to George Sandy's *Relation of a Journey*," *Muqarnas* 18 (2001): 207–8, fig. 8.
 81. Raby in *Sultan's Portrait*, figs. 27d, 34d.
 82. *Sultan's Portrait*, cat. no. 21 and comments by Meyer zur Capellen and Bağci, 103.
 83. For instance, see Linda Komaroff and Stefano Carboni, eds., *The Legacy of Genghis Khan: Courtly Art and Culture in Western Asia, 1256–1353* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), figs. 35, 39, 68, 84, 220, 222, 261.
 84. Necipoğlu, "Süleyman the Magnificent," figs. 1–4, 10, 17, 22, 25. Some comparison may be made between the cap of the right-hand soldier and the headgear worn by Osman Gazi in the 1575 *Elogia*. See Raby in *Sultan's Portrait*, fig. 28a.
 85. Meyer zur Capellen and Bağci in *Sultan's Portrait*, 100–102, fig. 22.
 86. For instance, see comments in Giovio, *Elogia*, 104. Cambini claims that Tamerlane had driven the "Saracens" from his native Parthia; see *Two Commentaries*, fol. 3r. Marlowe even has his Tamburlaine order the burning of "...the Turkish Alcaron and all the heaps of superstitious books/ Found in the temple of that Mahomet" (*Tamburlaine the Great*, pt. 2, act 5, scene 1, ll. 171–73). See also comments in Chew, *Crescent and the Rose*, 472.
 87. For the appearance of "Tartars" in Italian painting, see Leonardo Olschki, "Asiatic Exoticism in Italian painting of the Early Renaissance," *Art Bulletin* 26 (1944): 95–108. That the idea of a "Tartar" facial type was well established in Europe in the fourteenth century is indicated by the example of a procession organized by William Montague before a royal tournament in Cheapside, London in 1331; the crowds were entertained by the sight of sixteen men dressed in "Tartar clothes" and fur hats and with their faces covered by masks in the likenesses of Tartars. See Vale, *Edward III*, 62, 70, 72. For the impact of the Mongols on European culture, see Felicitas Schmieder, *Europa und die Fremden: Die Mongolen im Urteil des Abenlandes vom 13. bis in das 15. Jahrhundert*, Beiträge zur Geschichte und Quellenkunde des Mittelalters, vol. 16 (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1994).
 88. Illustrated in George F. Hill, *Drawings of Pisanello* (New York: Dover Publications 1965), pl. 15, no. 18. For the painting, see Paolo Marini, *Pisanello* (Milan: Electa, 1996), figs. 156, 175. Olschki, "Asiatic Exoticism," 104–6, notes that Turco-Mongolian slaves were relatively common in fifteenth-century Italy, and male slaves were often employed as archers. Pisanello also represented the Byzantine emperor John VIII Palaeologus in a pointed Tartar-style hat in his famous portrait medal. Julian Raby notes that this became part of the standard depiction of despotic rule. See Raby, *Oriental Mode*, 2, nn. 4, 5.
 89. John of Piano Carpini, *Historia Mongalorum*, in Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, 6–7. The armies of the Mongol khans often con-

- tained peoples of many regions and ethnicities, but the commanding officers were all of Turco-Mongol descent. The accurate observations of John of Piano Carpini would have allowed European armies to target these most important soldiers on the battlefield. I am grateful to Ian Higgins for this observation.
90. See Horst Kunze, *Geschichte der Buchillustration in Deutschland: Das 15. Jahrhundert*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Insel-Verlag, 1975), vol. 1, 244. Note, however, that in the equivalent illustration (on 245) in the edition printed in Augsburg in the same year, the Mongol soldiers are given a distinctly Turkish appearance.
 91. For observations on the interpretation of facial hair in Renaissance portraiture, see Will Fisher, "The Renaissance Beard: Masculinity in Early Modern England," *Renaissance Quarterly* 54, 1 (2001): 155–87.
 92. Thevet, *Les vrais pourtraits*, fol. 630v; Jean du Bec, *Histoire*, 8–9. Jean du Bec also mentions that his ancestors came from the land of Sachetay (i.e., the *ulus* Chaghatay). See also comments of the fifteenth-century humanist Andrea Biglia, discussed in Meserve, "Samarkand to Scythia," 31–32.
 93. The use of classical sources on Asia by Renaissance scholars is discussed in detail in Meserve, "Samarkand to Scythia." See also John Larner, *Marco Polo and the Discovery of the World* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), 133–50.
 94. Denis Sinor, "The Inner Asian Warriors," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 101 (1981): 133–34. Sinor notes that Ptolemy employs the word "Scythian" to refer to all northern peoples. Ptolemy's *Geography* was translated into Latin in 1408: see Olschki, "Asiatic Exoticism," 96.
 95. For a detailed discussion, see Marianna Birnbaum, "Attila's Renaissance in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries," in *Attila: The Man and His Image*, eds. Franz Bäuml and Marianna Birnbaum (Budapest: Corvina Books, 1993): 82–96.
 96. Dante, *Inferno*, canto XII, l. 134. For a review of this material, see Anthony D'Elia, "Genealogy and the Limits of Panegyric: Turks and Huns in Fifteenth-Century Epithalamia," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 34, 4 (2003): 973–91.
 97. Piccolomini, *Cosmographia vel de mondo universo historiarum*. Cited in D'Elia, "Genealogy," 981. Such claims may be found in earlier sources such as Jordanes (*Origins and Deeds of the Getae*, itself based on the lost *Gothic History* of Cassiodorus). Jordanes claims that unclean spirits "bestowed their embraces on the sorceresses and begot this savage race." Another important account of the Huns is given by Ammianus Marcellinus. See J. Otto Maenchen-Helfen, *The World of the Huns: Studies in Their History and Culture*, ed. Max Knight (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1973), 5, 9–17.
 98. For the illustration, see Giovio, *Elogia*, 10. Part of the text reads, "Haec facies inhumano luridoque pallor, ac esseri oris monstroso ductu, et torua oculorum nictatione terribilis, immanem hunnorum Regis Athile saeuitem spirat."
 99. See the examples of a medal commemorating the destruction of Aquileia and a medallion in the facade of the Charterhouse on Pavia, in Bäuml and Birnbaum, *Attila*, figs. 24, 53. For a devil sporting similar horns, see the Temptation of Christ in the Desert panel from the altarpiece painted for Queen Isabella in ca. 1496–1504 by Michael Sittow, illustrated in Jay Levenson, ed., *Circa 1492: Art in the Age of Exploration* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1991), 162–64, cat. 43.
 100. Birnbaum, "Attila's Renaissance," 82; D'Elia, "Genealogy," 980, n. 37.
 101. By comparison, in 1459 Francesco Filelfo claimed that Christ had sent Tamerlane and his armies to rescue the Byzantine Empire: see Meserve, "Samarkand to Scythia," 33.
 102. D'Elia, "Genealogy," 977–82.
 103. Terence Spencer, "Turks and Trojans in the Renaissance," *Modern Language Review* 47 (1952): 330–33; D'Elia, "Genealogy," 982–91. On other occasions the Turks might be traced back to the Scythians: see Meserve, "Samarkand to Scythia," 25, 28–30.
 104. Maenchen-Helfen, *World of the Huns*, 2–5. The author notes that the Huns were demonized in Latin sources of the fifth and sixth centuries, often being associated with the Massagetae, and the Goths with the "people of Gog." Flavius Josephus in the first century CE makes a link between Magog and the Scythians (while Jerome is perhaps the first to suggest that the Scythians discussed by Herodotus were to be identified with the Huns). For further translations of primary Latin sources on the Huns, see C. D. Gordon, *The Age of Attila: Fifth-Century Byzantium and the Barbarians* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1960), chap. 3, 57–111. Chalkokondyles makes an association between Tamerlane and the Massagetae, though his account stops short of stating that this was the conqueror's ethnicity: see Nicolaos Nicoloudis, ed. and trans., *Laonikos Chalkokondyles: A Translation and Commentary of the "Demonstration of Histories" (Books I–III)* (Athens: Historical Publications St. D. Basilopoulis, 1996), 264 (Greek), 265 (English). For Filelfo's use of the title, "Thomyris the Massagete" to describe Tamerlane, see Meserve, "Samarkand to Scythia," 33 (perhaps a confusion with Tomyris, queen of the Massagetae in the time of the Persian king Cyrus, as discussed by Herodotus). For a different view on the relationship of Tamerlane with the Massagetae, see Thevet, *Les vrais pourtraits*, fol. 631r.
 105. Perhaps the most explicit comparison between Tamerlane and Attila can be found in Loys Le Roy, *De la vicissitude ou variété des choses en l'univers, et concurrences des armes et des lettres par les premières et plus illustrés nations du monde* (Paris, 1575), fols. 108v–109r. See also Hallett Smith, "Tamburlaine and the Renaissance," in *Elizabethan Studies and Other Essays in Honor of George F. Reynolds*, vol. 2, no. 4 (Boulder, 1945), 126–31.
 106. *The Golden Legend*, cited in D'Elia, "Genealogy," 980.
 107. For Tamerlane and the Byzantine Empire, see Meserve, "Samarkand to Scythia," 33–34; Spandounes, *Origins*, 23–24; Demetrius Cantemir (Kantemir), *The History of the Growth and Decay of the Othman Empire*, 2 pts., trans. Nicholas Tindall (London, 1734), pt. 1, *Containing the Growth of the Othman Empire, from the Reign of Othman the Founder, to the Reign of Mahomet IV, That Is, from the Year 1300, to the Siege of Vienna, in 1683*, 53, n. 18. For Attila and Pope Leo, see D'Elia, "Genealogy," 981. Marliani's claim can also be found in the works of late antique authors such as Priscus of Panium. The relevant section of Priscus's account is translated in Gordon, *Age of Attila*, 108.
 108. For a discussion of the concept in relation to the Ottomans, see Kenneth Setton, "Lutheranism and the Turkish Peril," *Bal-*

- kan Studies 3 (1962): 133–68. For Tamerlane as a “scourge of God,” see Battenhouse, *Renaissance Moral Philosophy*, passim.
109. For others, the rise was attributed to his character. For instance, see George Whetstone, *The English Myrror* (London, 1586, repr. Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1973), 97. He remarks, “Tamburlaine being a poore labourer, or in best degree a meane souldiour, descended from the Parthians: notwithstanding the povertye of his parents: even from infancy he had a reaching and an imaginative mind, the strength and comelinese of his body, aunswered the haughtiness of his heart.”
 110. Fortescue, *The Foreste*, 70.
 111. A comparison may be drawn with Piccolomini’s diabolic description of Mehmed II in *Oratio Aeneae de Constantinopolitana clade et bello contra Turcos congregando*. He writes that Mehmed, “with his terrifying face, black eyes, terrible voice, [and] wicked nods commands murders, demands the slaughter of now one and now another, and washes his hands in the blood of Christians. He defiles and pollutes everything.” (Translation from D’Elia, “Genealogy,” 988–89.)
 112. Cambini, *Two Commentaries*, fol. 5v. See also Thevet, *Les vrais pourtraits*, fol. 630v. Tamerlane is also compared to Alexander the Great by Fortescue in *The Foreste* (presumably following Mexia): see Battenhouse, *Renaissance Moral Philosophy*, 165. Cited in D’Elia, “Genealogy,” 980.
 114. On Tamerlane as the embodiment of military prowess, self-discipline, industry, and liberality, see Battenhouse, *Renaissance Moral Philosophy*, 139–43. For a discussion of Marlowe’s use of Machiavellian notions of *virtù* in *Tamburlaine the Great*, see 208–10. See also the discussion of the complex iconography of tyranny in printed books of this period in Avcioglu, “Ahmed I.”
 115. I am citing from the English translation of Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo, *Trattato dell’arte de la pittura, scultura, et architettura*, bks. 1–5, entitled *A Tracte Containing the Artes of Curious Paintinge* (Oxford, 1598; repr. in facsimile (Amsterdam and New York: Da Capo Press, 1969), bk. 2, chap. 9, 35. For a recent discussion of Leonardo’s interest in physiognomy and grotesque facial types, see Linda Wolk-Simon in Andrea Bayer, ed., *Painters of Reality: The Legacy of Leonardo and Caravaggio in Lombardy* (New Haven and London: Metropolitan Museum and Yale University Press, 2004), 92–99.
 116. Lomazzo, *Curious Paintinge*, bk. 2, chap. 9, 37.
 117. John Evelyn, *Numismata: A Discourse of Medals Ancient and Modern* (London: Benjamin Tooke, 1697), 306. (This and the following quotes appear in chap. 9: “A Digression Concerning Physiognomy,” 292–342.) For his comments on Tartars and Scythians, see 311–14.
 118. Evelyn, *Numismata*, 296, 297, 305.
 119. La Chambre, *The Art of How to Know Men* (London, 1665), 20. Cited in Peter Harrison, “Reading the Passions: The Fall, the Passions, and Dominion over Nature,” in *The Soft Underbelly of Reason: The Passions in the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Stephan Gaukroger (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 57. In writing of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, animals are commonly associated with specific passions. While lions are linked to courage, tigers and domestic cats are often believed to embody cruelty. A follower of Jacob Boehme notes that the Tartars are like cats and dogs because they remain blind for five days after birth. See Harrison, “Reading the Passions,” 55.
 120. La Chambre, *How to Know Men*, 23, cited in Harrison, “Reading the Passions,” 60.
 121. For instance, Lavater observes that foreheads with knots, protuberances, and angles denote qualities including vigor, harshness, oppression, and perseverance. His comments on the nose also bring to mind aspects of the Giovo and Thevet portraits. He writes, “Wherever I have seen a nose with a broad back, whether arched or rectilinear, I have found it [to] appertain to an extraordinary man.” See Johann Caspar Lavater, *Physiognomy, or the Corresponding Analogy between the Conformation of the Features and the Ruling Passions of the Mind*, trans. Samuel Shaw (London, 1800), 51, 61.
 122. This passage is quoted according to the English translation. See Cantemir, *Growth and Decay* (London, 1734), 53, n. 17.
 123. For instance, Piero della Francesca’s profile portrait of the one-eyed Federigo da Montefeltro (1465).
 124. Though note the similarities of costume between some of the Tamerlane portraits and the images of Russian Tartar soldiers: see, for instance, Kavalier, *Pieter Breugel*, 173, fig. 89.
 125. The Mughals traced themselves to Tamerlane and then as far back as Alan Go’a, the ancestress of the Mongol imperial family. See Irfan Habib, “Timur in the Political Tradition and Historiography of Mughal India,” in *L’heritage timouride Iran–Asie Centrale–Inde, XV–XVIII siècles*, ed. Maria Szuppe, *Cahiers d’Asie Centrale* 3–4 (1997): 297–312; Manz, “Tamerlane’s Career,” 12–14.
 126. His discussion of Tamerlane appears in chap. 45 (331–77) of vol. 6. For Gibbon’s approach to Mongol history, see David Morgan, “Edward Gibbon and the East,” *Iran* 33 (1995): 85–92.
 127. For instance, note his rejection of the legend about Bayazid and the iron cage (he also remarks that Voltaire was sceptical about this), and his comment that Eastern sources should not be read uncritically because they often flatter their subjects. See Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, vol. 6, 352–54.
 128. C. O., *The Conduct and Character of Count Nicholas Serini, Protestant Generalissimo of the Auxiliaries in Hungary, the Most Prudent and Resolved Champion of Christendom* (London, 1664). The latter quote is, in fact, a free translation from Thevet, *Les vrais pourtraits*, fol. 630r. The phrase “so despicable a vessel” does not appear in the French edition of Thevet, though it is introduced into the English translations (*Prosopographia*) of 1667 and 1676.
 129. An interesting comparison can be drawn with the representation of the Safavid shah Isma’il in European literature. See Palmira Brummett, “The Myth of Shah Ismail Safavi: Political Rhetoric and ‘Divine’ Kingship,” in John Tolan, ed., *Medieval Christian Perceptions of Islam: A Book of Essays* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1996), 331–59.
 130. Though the modern historical assessment of his life and achievements might well be colored by nationalistic or other cultural concerns. On the treatment of Tamerlane by Soviet historians and in post-Soviet Uzbekistan, see Manz, “Tamerlane’s Career,” 15–24.
 131. Vassilios Baboulas has related to me that the epithet “Tamerlanos” was still being used in rural Boeotia (Greece) into the mid-twentieth century to describe men of physical ugliness and criminal character.
 132. For instance, A. Henry, *Timour the Tartar, or Harlequin and the Beautiful Princess of Mingrelia, and Fair Circassian: A Christmas Piece, of Nonsense* (Middlesborough, 1865).