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Translated by Charles Stewart
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The Mulfuzat Timury,
or, Autobiographical Memoirs of the Moghul Emperor Timur

The Mughal emperor Timur (1336–1405), known also as Tamerlane, conquered large parts of central Asia in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. He was renowned for being an exceptionally good military strategist, but also for being a ruthless conqueror. His purported autobiography was not published in English until 1830, when it was translated by the orientalist Charles Stewart (1764–1837) from a Persian version of the Chagatai original. This reissue offers an insight into Timur’s motives and the detail of his strategy. The book begins with a statement of the principles that he ruled by, along with an account of certain events which led him to believe he was receiving divine aid. The narrative then becomes chronological and covers the period of his life up to 1375, when Timur was in his forties.

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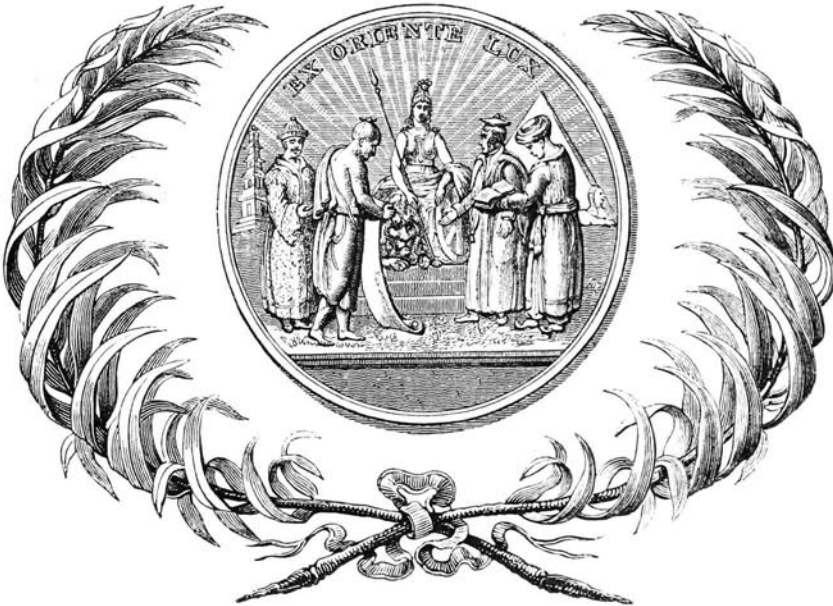
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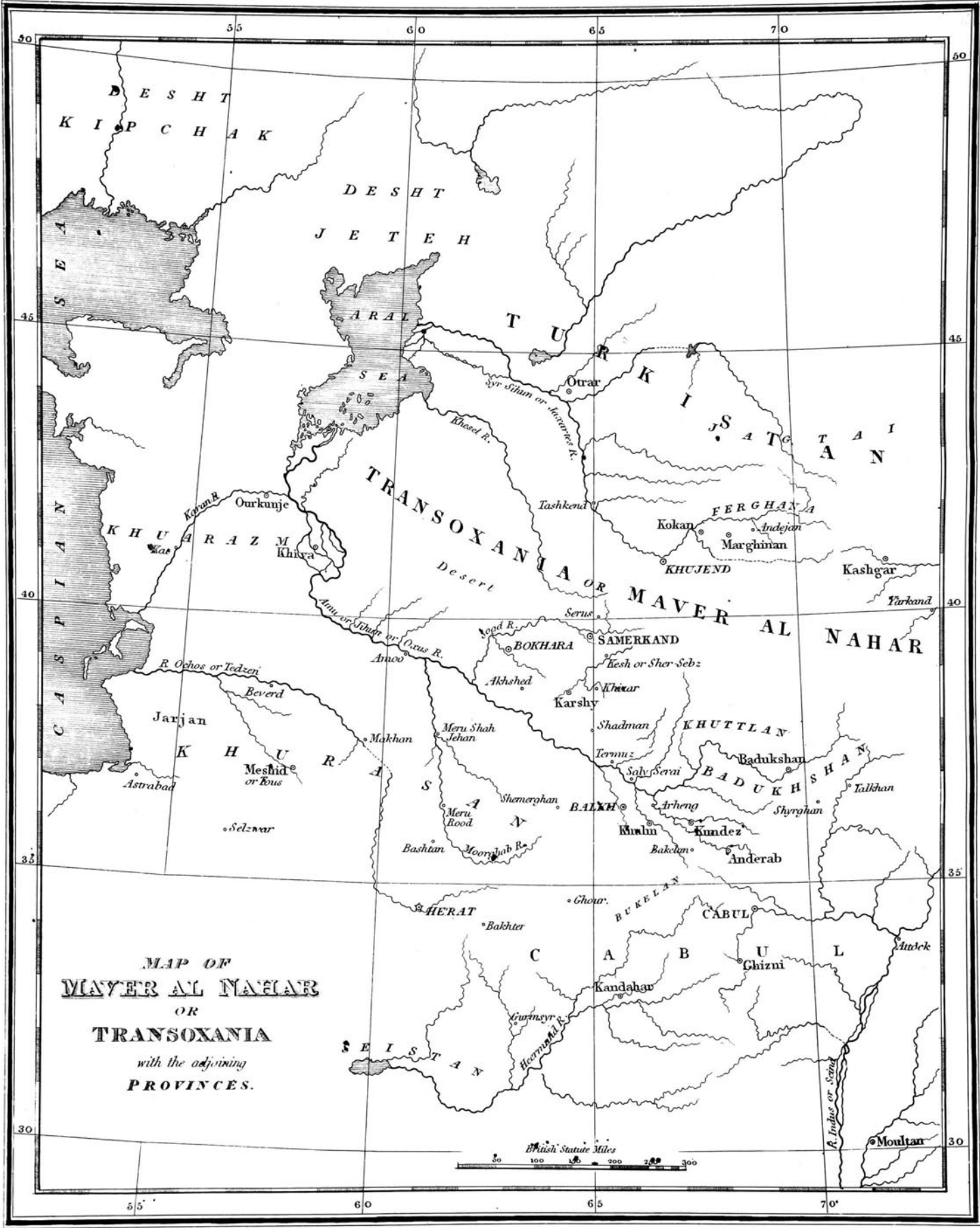
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GEORGE THE FOURTH.



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MULFUZĀT TIMŪRY,

OR

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIRS

OF THE

MOGHUL EMPEROR TIMŪR,

WRITTEN IN THE

JAGTAY TŪRKY LANGUAGE,

TURNED INTO PERSIAN BY

ABU TALIB HUSSYNY,

AND

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH BY

MAJOR CHARLES STEWART,

LATE PROFESSOR OF ORIENTAL LANGUAGES

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LONDON : PRINTED BY W. NICOL, CLEVELAND ROW,
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TO

COLONEL DAVY,

TRACEY PARK, SOMERSETSHIRE.

DEAR SIR,

As the Public are indebted to your late Father not only for his able Translation of the Institutes of the Emperor Timūr, but also for his having with much perseverance procured and first brought to Europe an authentic copy of the Memoirs of that Monarch, I have much pleasure in dedicating to you my Translation of those Memoirs, in hopes of assisting in some degree to transmit to posterity so meritorious a name.

I have the honour to be,
Dear Sir,
your obedient humble servant,

CHARLES STEWART.

Bath, May, 1830.

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P R E F A C E.

THE fame of Timūr, erroneously called Tamerlane, although long known to some persons in Europe, was more generally communicated to the Public in the year 1722, by the labours of the indefatigable Orientalist, Petis de la Croix, who translated from the Persian language the History of that Monarch, denominated *Zuffer Namēh*, or *Book of Victory*, by Sherif Addyn Aly of Yezd.

In the year 1723, the French edition was turned into English by Mr. John Darby, who dedicated his work to His Royal Highness Frederic Prince of Wales, but these histories commence only with the twenty-fifth year of Timūr's age. Iben Arab Shāh's Arabic History of Timūr, called the *Ajaib al Mukhlukāt*, *Wonders of the Creation*, was translated into Latin by Golius in 1636, and again by Manger in 1767 and 1772, but, being more of a coarse satire on that Prince than his real history, it is little worthy of credit, and has consequently fallen into disrepute.

In the year 1783, Professor White of Oxford, published a Persian Edition of the *Institutes* of Timūr, with an English translation by Major William Davy of the Honourable East India Company's Service,* which was deservedly much admired, and as it was the cause of producing the Translation of the following Memoirs, I shall take the liberty hereafter of subjoining a portion of its Preface.

In the year 1787, the late Professor Langlés of Paris, published a French translation of the *Institutes*, under the title of

“ Instituts Politiques et Militaires de Tamerlane proprement appelé
“ Timour, écrits par lui-même en Mogol, et traduits en François sur
“ la version Persane d'Abou Taleb al Hosseini, avec la Vie de ce
“ Conquerant, &c. &c.”

William Erskine, Esq. in his Preface to the Memoirs of Baber, pub-

* See Note at the end of the Preface.

lished in 1826, (in praise of which work too much cannot be said) informs us, that he had seen at Bombay, a complete Persian translation of the Autographic Memoirs of Timour, the original of which had been found in the library of Jaafer Pashā of Yemen, and that it appears by Astley's Collection of Voyages, that a person of that name was Pashā of Yemen in 1610. This is of importance, as it nearly fixes the date of the Persian Translation, which is confirmed by the dedication of the work to the Emperor Shāh Jehan of Hindūstan.

Having thus premised, I proceed to give a description of the Manuscript brought from India by Major Davy, which I have undertaken to translate: it is an Octavo volume, written in the common Persian hand, and as it has never been bound, was probably copied for that gentleman in Calcutta, it is enclosed in an old cover, on which is written in Major Davy's hand; "This Manuscript, which is a fragment of Timūr's, is very valuable, therefore preserve it with care. N. B. It is to be put in the little black writing box."

The Manuscript contains four hundred and fifty-seven pages; after the Persian Translator's Preface, it commences with the *Institutes*, which nearly agree with the printed edition; these are succeeded by the Designs and Enterprizes of the printed copy, after which follows the Book of *Omens*, mentioned in the 8th page of Dr. White's Preface, and which I might probably also have omitted in my translation, did I not fear the reproach of having left part of my work undone.*

The History commences at the 188th page, with the birth of Timūr, A. H. 736, (A. D. 1336,) and is continued in the form of annals till A. H. 777, being the forty-first year of his age, omitting the last thirty years of his life.

It is written in a careless manner, occasionally obscure, with much tautology, and some repetitions, but without any break in the detail, except at the commencement of a new year, evidently evincing that the art of book-making has not been employed to set it off, and that it is a

* Monsieur Langlés says in the sixth page of his Preface; "ces superstitions sont, pour le philosophe, des renseignemens certains sur les mœurs et sur l'esprit des hommes. J'engage donc M. M. Davy et White à faire cette restitution, si ce n'est pas à l'érudition, du moins à la Philosophie."

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translation from some language less polished than the Persian.* I have however found it requisite to divide the Translation into Books and Chapters.

In comparing Major Davy's Translation with Petis de la Croix's, I have found so much discrepancy between their spelling of Oriental names, that one can hardly suppose the same persons, or places are meant, I have therefore ventured to make an innovation in Anglo-Oriental orthography, by making use of such of our letters as agree with the Persian Alphabet.

The *exact* pronunciation of a proper name is of little consequence to the European reader, while the Oriental student will be thus enabled to transpose it into the Persian character; some of the names of places have been so long settled, that I have not interfered with them, but take this opportunity of stating that *Kund* or *Kend*, in the Tūrky language, signifies a town, and therefore forms the termination of the names of many cities; Turān, called by the Greeks, Transoxiana, and by the Arabs, Maveralneher, should properly be spelled Ma-verā-al-neher: *that which is beyond the river*. Khurasān being the Eastern province of Persia, was called the Region of the Sun.

We are very much indebted to the French Literati for information on Oriental subjects, but they have led us into a very false orthography by their partiality for the letter C, which does not exist in the Persian language, and their alteration of several important letters.

Almost all Arabic names have meanings, and are derived from a root of three letters, thus from H. M. D. *praise*, is derived Muhammed, *the greatly praised*, consequently the writing of it Mahomet, as is frequently done, destroys the etymology; Amr, signifies *command*, whence Amyr, *Commander*, which should always be written with the first letter of the alphabet, although frequently written *Emir* and *Umeer*; Amyr al Mumenyn, *Commander of the Faithful*, must be in the recollection of every person who has read the Arabian Nights' Entertainments.

* The Tūrky language differs as much from the modern Turkish, as the Saxon does from the English.

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Some of the French authors write,
Dragoman for Terjūmān, an Interpreter ;
Chagān for Khakān, an Emperor ;
Chacan for Shegun, an Omen ;

whilst the letters j, y, t and d are constantly interchanged.

The Persian short vowel called *Zubber*, is sounded in Persia as short a, in Turkey as short e, in India as short u, and causes a difference in the pronunciation of the natives of these countries ; but as the letter E has six sounds in French, and at least three in English, the variation is not greater than is to be found in the dialects of England, Scotland, and Ireland.

I am aware that it is impossible to fix the pronunciation of any language, but as it is desirable that Translators should observe an uniform system, and the mode suggested by Sir William Jones having failed of success, I venture to propose a more simple one, which will save most of the diacritical points, so troublesome both to the writer and to the reader ; viz. that of using such of our consonants as agree with those of the Persian Alphabet.

With respect to the vowels,
let the short e represent the Persian vowel Zebber.
short i, ' - - - , Zere.
short u, - - - , Pysh.

Let our ā, ū, and y, represent the corresponding long vowels, alif, vau, and ye, this latter to be generally sounded ee, or as the French i of *Dire, Lire*, &c.

Our slender *a* in *Slave*, &c. does not exist in Persian, and the only word in which the open *o* occurs, is in *Koh*, a mountain, therefore probably a misnomer. In Arabic it is formed by the letters *Ain* or *Alif* with the vowel Pysh, as عُمْرُ *age* ; أُمَرَاءُ *nobles*. The Arabic K may be sometimes used for C, but as it adds to the number of letters, without an adequate advantage, I think it better omitted.

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Note, referred to at page 1. Mr. William Davy went out to India as a Cadet, about the year 1767, and having early applied himself to the study of the Persian language, was selected by Sir Robert Barker, Commander-in-Chief of Bengal, to be his Secretary and Persian Interpreter; in this situation he was in constant habits of associating and transacting business with many of the principal natives, and even with the Great Moghul, or Emperor of Delhy; after a residence of twelve years, he returned to England. When the late Lord Macartney was appointed to the government of Madras, he requested Major Davy to accompany him; they sailed in 1781, but on their arrival found the whole of the Carnatic overrun by the armies of Hyder Aly, and the Major seeing there was no field then open for his abilities, proceeded to Calcutta, and was immediately taken into the family of the Governor General, Warren Hastings, where he employed himself in the duties of his office, the pursuit of his studies, and collecting information.

In the year 1784, he again embarked for England, but died on his passage home; his books and papers were however carefully transmitted to his executors, and by them made over to his son, now Colonel Davy of Tracey Park, near Bath, in whose library, the MS. of which I have undertaken the translation, remained unexamined till last year, when in consequence of my report of it to the Royal Asiatic Society, it was recommended to the Oriental Translation Committee. The following extract of a letter respecting the authenticity of the Institutes, was written by Major Davy, previous to his return to India, and was published with the Preface to that work.

Extract of a Letter from the late Major Davy, to the late Doctor White, Laudian Professor of Arabic in the University of Oxford, dated October 24, 1779.

“ The History of Timour, written by himself, carries with it the strongest proofs that he wrote for posterity only; and that he could not, in prudence, or in policy, make his work public during his life: for it contains not only the same accurate detail of the facts and occurrences of his reign, as are found in other authors, but it goes much further. He gives you that which he only had the power to give, the secret springs and motives which influenced his conduct in the various political and military transactions of his life, the arts by which he governed, as well as the power by which he conquered. He acknowledges his weaknesses, honestly owns his errors, describes the difficulties in which he was occasionally involved by those errors, and the policy by which he surmounted and overcame those difficulties. In a word, it is a compleat Index to his head and his heart; and though, take it all in all, it

redounds to the honour of both the one and the other, yet it was a work by no means calculated for the perusal of his enemies, or even his subjects during his life ; since it would have enabled those who chose it, to combat him with his own weapons, or, in other words, to have turned his arts and his policy against himself. Hence it is reasonable to suppose, that the work in question was entirely unknown during his life ; and its subsequent temporary obscurity may, I think, be plausibly accounted for, by the probability of one copy only existing at the time of his death, by the uncertainty into whose hands that copy fell, and by the divisions which followed in his family after the death of Shaahroch.

“ Abu Taulib ul Husseini, in the Dedication of his Translation to Sultaun ul Audil, says, that in the library of Jafir, Haukim of Yemmun, he met with a manuscript in the Turki or Mogul language, which, on inspection, proved to be the History of Timour, written by himself ; containing an account of his life and actions from the seventh to the seventy-fourth year of his age, &c. &c. He then proceeds to give the Translation of the said History, in which are included the Institutes.

“ It may appear remarkable that the Translator should say so little, or in fact nothing, to prove the authenticity of the valuable work, which he was about to translate. It has an extraordinary appearance, I allow ; but, I think, the following inferences only can be drawn from it : either that he thought the work itself contained sufficient proofs of its own authenticity, or that at the period when he translated it, it was so well known, as not to admit of doubt, or dispute. For my part, I think his inattention to this point is a very strong, if not the strongest possible proof, that the History and Institutes of Timour are genuine.

“ An European critic may say, that this same Abu Taulib might have wrote the work himself in the Persian language, and have imposed it upon the world as a Translation from the Royal Mogul author. This I take to be impossible. Authors in the East neither sold their works to booksellers, nor published by subscription, nor depended for support on the applause, the generosity, or the credulity of the public : they were patronized by Princes, who rewarded their labours in proportion to the value of their works. And therefore, if Abu Taulib had been capable

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of writing such a work, he never would have been guilty of so dangerous and foolish an artifice, which could tend only to diminish both his fame and his profit. The applause and the reward due to the Translator of an excellent work, must, whatever his merit, be inferior to those which are due to the author of such a work ; if therefore he had been master of abilities to write the *Life and Institutes of Timour*, as there written, he would have spoke in the third person instead of the first (no other alteration being necessary,) and have stood forth as the author of the first and best History of the Life of Timour, that ever was wrote ; for which he must have obtained both applause and profit tenfold. The same mode of reasoning will hold good to prove that the *Turki* copy could not be wrote by any *Mogul* author, but him to whom it is ascribed, Timour himself.

“ The noble simplicity of diction, the plain and unadorned egotism that runs through the whole of the *Institutes and History of Timour*, are peculiarities which mark their originality and their antiquity also. The Orientals, for some centuries past, have adopted a very different mode of writing ; the best of their historical works are filled with poetical and hyperbolical flowers and flourishes, which are so numerous, and occur so frequently, that many a *folio* volume, weeded and pruned of these superfluities, would be reduced to a very moderate *octavo*.

“ The only work bearing the least resemblance to the *Life and Institutes of Timour*, which has fallen under my observation, is the *History (or Commentaries) of Sultaun Babour*, written by himself.* Babour was descended from Timour in the fifth degree ; he was the son of Omer, the son of Abu Saeed, the son of Mahummud, the son of Meraun Shaah, the son of Timour. About eighty years elapsed between the death of Timour and the birth of Babour. Babour in the twelfth year of his age, and the 899th year of the Hejra, sat upon the throne of his father, in the kingdom of Furgauneh. The earlier part of his life very much resembled that of his great predecessor, Timour : and his abilities in the field and in the cabinet, his fortitude in distress, his activity and courage when

* See *Memoirs of Baber*, published by William Erskine, Esq. in 1826, the Preface, Introduction, and Notes to which, contain a vast deal of information, and the whole of the work is highly creditable to the learned author.

surrounded with difficulties and danger, and the glory and success with which his enterprizes were finally crowned, make the resemblance between these two Princes still more striking. Like Timour, Babour wrote an accurate History of his own Life and Actions in the *Turki* language; which though by no means equal to the admirable composition of his renowned ancestor, is a work of infinite merit. Yet this history, great as the Royal Author was, remained in obscurity till the middle of the reign of his grandson Acbur, when it was translated into the Persian language by one of his Omrahs, Khaun a Khaunaun. It is more difficult to account for the temporary obscurity of this valuable work, than for that of Timour's; for at the death of Babour it must have fallen into the hands of his son Humaioon, and on his death, into those of Acbur. Yet till the middle of his reign it remained unknown and untranslated: and if Acbur had, in the early part of his life, been driven from his throne, if divisions had taken place in his family, and his posterity had been scattered abroad, this valuable manuscript might have fallen into private hands, and have remained unknown for a century longer; possibly, have been totally lost. No critic, either Oriental or European, pretends to dispute the authenticity of Babour's History; and, as far as I have been able to discover, the learned of the East consider the Institutes and History of Timour as equally genuine.

“ I was acquainted with several great and learned men in India, both natives and Persians: on perusing the works of Timour, I was led to make the same enquiry which you have made, whether they were, or were not authentic? The answers I received were always in the affirmative, and attended with some tokens and expressions of surprize, that I should, or could, doubt their being genuine. Shaah Aulum, the present Mogul, has a beautiful copy of the History and Institutes of Timour; which he holds in such esteem, and of which he is so exceedingly careful, that though he granted me the use of any other book in his possession, this he positively excepted by name, as a work so rare and valuable, that he could not trust it to the care of any person whatever.*

“ Upon the whole, if the learned of the East, for several generations,

* Times are since altered, and I have now lying before me two authentic transcripts of the Emperor's copy, an account of which will be hereafter given; CHARLES STEWART.

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have been induced to give implicit credit to the Institutes and History of Timour, which is certainly the case, I do not see how Europeans can, with any degree of propriety, doubt their authenticity. The Oriental critics have the very best materials on which to form their opinions; our small stock of knowledge in the language, and still smaller stock of Asiatic Historians, render us very incompetent judges of the point in question. There are a great number of Oriental Manuscripts in the libraries of the learned; but I am convinced, that there are still many, very many, which never have found, and possibly never will find, their way into Europe; and therefore, though no *historical* evidence can be produced to prove the authenticity of the works of Timour, yet no one can pretend to say, that such *historical* proofs do not exist. The learned of the East must be the best judges whether they do, or do not merit their belief and veneration; and they have thought proper to bestow upon them both the one and the other. It is much to be regretted, that the Life of Timour, written by himself, is not to be found in Europe: if that, and the Institutes could be translated and published together, such is the accuracy of the narrative, such the importance of the matter, and such the lights that they would mutually reflect on each other, that it would, I conceive, be impossible for any one to read them, without acquiescing in their authenticity from the *internal* evidence alone.*

Yours, most assuredly,
WILLIAM DAVY.”

* See also Dr. White’s Preface to the Institutes, page 6.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE extensive region, formerly called Scythia, and now generally denominated Tartary, has been inhabited from a very early period by Nomade nations, who wandered with their flocks and herds from one part of the continent to another, frequently migrating from the shores of the Eastern Ocean, to the midst of Europe, where they were known by the appellation of Goths or Getes, Vandals, Huns, Turks, Tartars, &c.* These nations were subdivided into various tribes and hordes, consisting of from five thousand to seventy thousand families, who took their names from some celebrated chieftain, and were subject to their respective leaders under the title of Khāns (Kings); but when a number of these nations were united under one leader, he assumed the title of Khākān, (Emperor).†

In the tenth century, a person named Tumenāh Khān, whose descent has been traced by the Oriental historians from Noah, commanded a horde of Moghuls then dwelling to the north-west of China, this person had twin sons, Kubel Khān and Kajuly Behader, whom he prevailed on to sign an agreement, that the dignity of *Khān* should continue in the posterity of the former, and that of *Sepah Salar*, Commander-in-Chief, in the descendants of the latter.

From the first of these sons was descended, in the fourth degree, Zingis, called by the Persians, Jengyz Khān, born A. D. 1154, and from the second in the eighth degree, the hero of the following Memoirs, who was born in the district of Kesh, province of Maveralnaher, A. D. 1336.

* An ample detail of all these nations will be found in Gibbon's History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.

† See printed copy of the Institutes of Timūr, pages 131 and 285: Gibbon following the French orthography, calls him Chagan.

Jengyz or Zingis died in A. D. 1227, having divided his vast dominions between his four sons, called Jūjy or Tūchy, Jagtay, Auktay, and Tūly; to the first of these was assigned the extensive kingdom of Kip-chāk or Great Tartary; to the second, Tūrkeštān and Maveralnaher, (Transoxiana); to the third, Mughulistān and Northern China; to the fourth, Persia, and that part of India, west of the river Indus. Their descendants reigned over these countries till the time of Timūr, who subdued them all; but as neither Jengyz or Timūr assumed the title of *Khākān*, (Emperor) there probably existed a more ancient and honourable family than either of them.* An ancestor of Timūr, named Kerachār Nuyān, was married to a daughter of Jagtay Khān, second son of Zingis, by which means the two families became doubly connected; in consequence of which, Timūr bore the title of *Gūrgān*, son-in-law of the Khān; it also signifies a great Prince. The continuation of the family history will be given by himself.

P. S. I fear that the number of proper names which occur in this work will tire my readers, but such is the style of Oriental history; the reason assigned for it is, that it may serve as a record of the actions of each chief, and should the author omit any persons, he might be called to account by the heirs. Mirza Abu Talib, who wrote his *Travels through Europe*, in 1803, apologized to his countrymen for the number of *barbarous* names he was obliged to relate to them, so that the complaint is mutual.

* Since writing the above, I have been informed by one of our best Chinese scholars, that the Mandarins of that country are called *Kwans*, but that the title of Jengyz was *Ching-sze Kho-han*.