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IBN ARABSHAH: THE UNACKNOWLEDGED DEBT OF CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE'S *TAMBURLAINE*

By

Ahlam Maijan Alruwaili

A THESIS

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IBN ARABSHAH: THE UNACKNOWLEDGED DEBT OF CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE'S *TAMBURLAINE*

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University of Nebraska, 2011

Adviser: Stephen Buhler

This thesis suggests strong relations between Marlowe's *Tamburlaine I &II* and Ibn Arabshah's 1436 account of Tamerlane's Life *('Ajaib al-maqdur fi nawa'ib Timur: The Wonders of Destiny Concerning the Calamities Wrought by Tamerlane*), clarifies controversial issues, and explains previously baffling allusions editors have pondered long. In general, the thesis enriches our understanding of Marlowe's wide ranging sources, implies a critique of western-biased source scholarship, and opens possibilities to re-evaluate eastern contributions to the Renaissance in general. The first chapter highlights some well-recognized events in the play and in historical sources (the caging of Bayazid and ill-treatment of his wife, the trampling of children-virgins under the hooves of cavalry), and some obscure and never before identified incidents in historical records (gold underwater and the Christians of Georgia). The second chapter treats the "scene of death" in Marlowe's play and in Ibn Arabshah's account; the third addresses the importance of astrology, especially stellar and planet-ary conjunctions in both works. The fourth proposes a source for Zenocrate stronger than any of those advanced so far.

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Abbreviations and **Editions**

In citing the editions of Ibn Arabshah's work, I have used the following abbreviations (the full bibliographical data appear in **Works Cited** under Sanders, Ibn Arabshah, and Ibn Khaldun):

S for Sanders' English translation: *Tamerlane, or Timur the Great Amir*.

H for the edition of Ahmed Fayez al-Hamsi: *'Ajaib al-maqdur fi nawa'ib Timur*.

Z for the edition of Suhail Zakkar: *'Ajaib al-maqdur fi nawa'ib Timur*.

K for the edition of Suhail Zakkar of Ibn Khaldun's *al-Ta'rif*.

I have mostly depended on the excellent English translation of Sanders, but when I disagreed with it, I bracketed my emendations or translated the text myself from the Arabic editions.

For Christopher Marlowe's *Tamburlaine I & II*, I have used Irving Ribner's edition and consulted Ellis-Fermor's and Cunningham's.

IBN ARABSHAH:

THE UNACKNOLWEDGED DEBT OF MARLOWE'S *TAMBURLAINE*

INTRODUCTION

Since the 1980s the discipline of English literary criticism has witnessed sweeping renovations and changes; the field of Renaissance studies in particular has adapted well, expanding its temporal and spatial boundaries as well as its methodological tools; thanks to New Historicism, no aspect of the early modern period is left without careful probing, be it a quotidian insignificant event or complex political and economic relations with other nations and groups. With such open boundaries, the old interest in Islam and the East has attracted many young scholars who have traced a wide range of works, travels, and travelers.[1] In literature, long before New Historicist concerted efforts, literary critics have noted the fluid and energetic west-east relations in the Renaissance. Almost a century ago, literary critic Louis Wann arrested this interest by tracing 47 plays dealing with the orient over a period stretching from 1579 to 1642. Recent attempts depicted the same active picture in politics, religion, culture, and printing (Toomer, Burman, and Hamilton). This energetic intervention is a truer picture of what the Renaissance, in England at least, had experienced at all levels, and is a close reflection of the active staging of the orient on the English stage.

Marlowe's *Tamburlaine I & II* is a crowning achievement of that environment, bringing together the clashing cultures of the occident and the orient. As a history of an Eastern leader, the play would logically have bridged Eastern and Western sources; but while western sources show in abundance in its source-hunting scholarship, few,

[1] See particularly the works of Renaissance literary scholars Nabil Matar, Daniel J Vitkus, Orhan Burian, Jonathan Burton, and Matthew Dimmock.

if any, eastern sources are to be found in Marlovian source studies.[2] The paucity of references to Ibn Arabshah's work, *'Ajaib al-maqdur fi nawa'ib Timur: The Wonders of Destiny Concerning the Calamities Wrought by Tamerlane,* is a prime example of this obvious bias: only two literary scholars have articulated possible relations between Ibn Arabshah's work and the play.[3] Ellis-Fermor is highly problematic; in her edition of *Tamburlaine*, she betrays an anti-Eastern bias in her few notes on Ibn Arabshah and furthermore, having kept him at the bottom of the page after every other western source, she accuses him of having led historians and critics astray, particularly on the caging of Bayazid.

The text of Ibn Arabshah has been available to Europeans in Arabic since 1636 (the Leiden Arabist Jacob Golius bought it in the 1620s), in French since 1658 (translated by Pierre Vattier) and in English since 1936 (translated by J. H. Sanders). In terms of influence, these editions seem to offer nothing on the two parts of *Tamburlaine*; after all, Marlowe wrote the play some seven years (1586-1588) prior to his death in 1593. Moreover, its difficult Arabic style and vocabulary (written in a rhymed classical Arabic prose) may have led others to avail themselves of its general impact without entrapping themselves in its meticulous details, dense language, and intense emotional involvement. Though these facts can validate its neglect, a closer examination leads to an explanation of bias rather than these two more practical reasons. First, time does not seem to matter for critics when discussing western

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[2] One cannot cite all those critics and historians concerned with the sources of *Tamburlaine*. Thomas and Tydeman edited and translated a handy anthology of the well-recognized and possible sources; Brooke-Tucker, Seaton, and Ellis-Fermor point to specific sources for particular textual allusions. Spence, Izard and Dick advance well-argued opinions on specific western sources (Mexia, Knolles history, Whetstone, Fortescue, Gruget, among others). McChesney, McJannet, Voegelin, and Moin provide enough information on eastern sources that include helpful facts on Timur and Ibn Arabshah or some thematic cultural background such as astrology and planetary conjunctions (Moin).

[3] Howard Miller, "Tamburlaine: Migration and Translation in Marlowe's Arabic Sources." In *Travel and Translation in the Early Modern Period*. Ed. Carmine Di Biase (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2006), pp. 255-266; and Una M Ellis-Fermor in her edition of Marlowe's play.

sources; many have privileged Knolles's 1603 history, for example. Second, a more difficult language had not stopped scholars from tackling more difficult texts (i.e., the Quran). Other than bias nothing explains centuries of neglect; add to this neglect the few fascinating similarities scholars often note between the two works but at the same time attribute them to alternate source possibilities, and one cannot discount Euro-centrism.

The close similarities between Ibn Arabshah's and Marlowe's accounts of the life of Timur/Tamburlaine were first asserted by historians, anthropologists and, strangely enough, physicians, when addressing the physical features of Timur himself. In 1941, the remains of Timur were exhumed and pathologically studied; relying on those findings P. Froggatt (M.D.) asserted in 1962: "The discredited Alhacen, the bitter Arabshah and the imaginative Marlowe are nearest to the truth" (p. 333). Scholars had previously noted that description but, unlike Froggatt, had (and have) been unwilling to directly associate Ibn Arabshah with the Elizabethan playwright. Major General Sir Frederic J Goldsmid, for example, wondered back in 1885:

> Where Marlowe obtained his information I cannot pretend to say; the outline of this description might be from Sharifu'd-din, while the colours are the poet's own; but something in it recalls another and less hackneyed source. Incidental mention has been made of a Latin memoir of Tamerlane by Perondinus, printed in the year 1600. (377)

Ignoring Ibn Arabshah, Goldsmid reaches for other possible sources, such as Perondinus' account of Timur. Although, like Ibn Arabshah's work, this one was published seven years after Marlowe's death, and some two decades after the first part of the play, for Goldsmid, Perondinus should count as a possible source for the description. This "outline" of Tamerlane is not fully identical to Marlowe's and Ibn Arabshah's,

but differences between preferred historical source accounts and Marlowe's imaginative work are often explained away as a choice the poet makes.

Of all sources, Ibn Arabshah and his life of Timur should have enjoyed better reception. He is a recognized scholar and historian, was witness at the age of eleven of Timur's siege and ransacking of Damascus, part of the group of captives Timur took to Samarqand when he left, and lived in Timur's capital till it experienced turmoil years after the death of Timur. Ibn Arabshah also spent a decade working for the Ottoman Sultan Mehmet I (Bayazid's son) before returning to Syria in 1422 and moving on later to Cairo where he died in 1450 (see McChesney). With these credentials he should be high on the list of primary sources for Timur's life. As such, he is a prime candidate as a major source for Marlowe's description of Tamburlaine and the play in general. In fact, his account bears strong, wide-ranging similarities to the two parts of *Tamburlaine*. Some events, details, well-known historical episodes along with other previously obscure and unrecognized allusions correlate closely in both works. My thesis will highlight some of these. The first chapter addresses the controversy of Bayazid's cage, the ill-treatment of his wife, the fate of the petitioning children-virgins, and two obscure and previously undocumented allusions in the play. In the second I examine the "scene of death" in the two works and in the third the importance of stellar and planetary conjunctions. My fourth chapter proposes a source for Zenocrate stronger than any of those so far advanced by critics. In these main four chapters, textual, thematic and structural similarities will be emphasized.

Hopefully, my thesis will clarify some ambiguities critics and editors of the play have puzzled over, and will lead to a rethinking of possible venues of contact between eastern and western cultures. The many similarities and strange coincidences the two works share strongly suggest that not only Ibn Arabshah is a possible source,

but also call for a revaluation of eastern sources in Marlowe, and in the works of Western authors in the period in general.

CHAPTER ONE

The Controversy of Bayazid's Cage

In the historical account and in Marlowe's *Tamburlaine I*, Tamburlaine/Timur met in battle the Turkish Sultan Bayazid I. In both Tamburlaine won, caged the Sultan and enslaved his family. Scholars draw on various sources that confirm or negate the veracity of this episode; most sources cite Perondinus, and any appeal to the work of Ibn Arabshah is usually discredited on grounds of his "bitter" hostility or his being "misunderstood." He is generally added to the common phenomenon in the Renaissance of spreading unreliable information and fantastic details. For historians, only myth, fabrication, popular culture, a creative imagination, and Ibn Arabshah affirm the caging of Bayazid.

Recently, Timur historian Beatrice Manz set apart two traditions of "Turco-Mongolian" histories: the official credited "court histories" and the popular unofficial circulating tales, often disseminated by Timur and his close circles. For Manz, these unofficial tales in particular appealed to the imagination of European Renaissance literary writers, like Marlowe, who saw in Timur "a symbol of the power of will," attracting "more literary than scholarly" attention. Timur "was prominent in literature as the conqueror of extraordinary might, who drove a chariot drawn by defeated kings and dragged the Ottoman Sultan Beyezit around in a cage." According to Manz, such

dubious "stories … seem to be Western fabrication" originating in "the informal sources close to Temur," and included his "youth and personality," and "his rise from a low position," constituting a "standard Renaissance story" to which "the contemporary Arab historian Ibn Arabshah" contributed (11-12). Puzzling, however, is the transmission of this fabrication: "It is not entirely clear how this information traveled west" nor were the other possible sources "widely circulated before the seventeenth century" (12). Much earlier *Tamburlaine*'s editor John Bakeless voiced this very same perplexity: "Marlowe seems to have had access, in some unexplained way, to a group of facts about the historical Timur contained in Oriental works, none of which were translated during his lifetime" (205).

To heighten the controversy, blame often accompanied this puzzlement. Ellis-Fermor is an illustrative example. For her, not only is Byzantine historian Phrantzes "responsible for" the cage episode, a "story which laid so fast a hold upon the imagination of the European historians," but also betrays a cultural and practical ignorance. Ellis-Fermor continues her note: "the growth of this episode in the later versions is a striking example of the effect of ignorance of Tartar life upon the growth of the Timur saga. Nothing was more natural than that a prisoner (who had already tried to escape) should be confined … in some kind of a litter." Nor is this the only case of ignorance. "It is even suggested," she justifies, "that Phrantzes has misunderstood the Turkish word 'Kafes' (which may mean a litter or a cage) and has set on foot an entirely mythological episode" (24, *n*1). Unlike the Austrian orientalist Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall to whom Ellis-Fermor refers, she leaves out the alleged contribution of Ibn Arabshah to this misconception. Hammer-Purgstall's statement reads: "It is this word *Kafes* which has given rise to the belief, supported by a misunderstood passage in Ibn 'Arabshah that Bayazid was shut up in an iron cage" (Houtsma 685).

Clearly, this controversy has been a battle ground among historians and literary critics. For the majority, the "cage" episode is a western "fabrication," a figment of Renaissance writers' imagination fed by a mistranslation and the ignorance of cultural or practical demands of confinement. It is part of unofficial history and popular tales, and Phrantzes was the first to perpetuate this error. However, I would argue that Phrantzes cannot be the origin of this assumed "error"; Ibn Arabshah is instead the most likely source. Phrantzes started his history at the earliest, in the 1460s, more than two decades after Ibn Arabshah's having finished his manuscript (1436) and at least a decade after Ibn Arabshah's death (1450) (H 15, 24). He worked as secretary for Manual II Palaiologos (Byzantine emperor 1391-1425) at roughly the same time that Ibn Arabshah was secretary to the Ottoman Sultan Mehmet I. Common historical knowledge has it that Manuel II maintained strong friendly relations with Mehmet I (1402–1421), a time span that covers the period (1411-1421) during which the two secretaries worked at the two friendly courts. At this period, Ibn Arabshah had just returned from Samarqand, the capital of Timur. It is likely the two young secretaries had some form of contact, providing Phrantzes with direct access to the older author and possibly his developing manuscript account; yet even if such contact did not exist, still Ibn Arabshah wrote before Phrantzes, making his the original instance of the "cage" episode.

More important, perhaps, is that in events and details, both Ibn Arabshah and Marlowe agree. The cage episode takes place after a battle, and is followed by looting and mistreatment. In the play, Damascus is conquered and looted; in history it is Angora and Boursa. As is well-known, Tamburlaine meets Bayazid in battle; almost inevitably he wins and holds Bayazid and his wife captive. Marlowe's Act Three thus closes with Tamburlaine's order: "Come, bind them both, and one lead in the Turk;/

The Turkess let my love's maid lead away" (1.III.iii. 266-267). At the opening of Act Four, scene two Bayazid appears "in his cage, and his wife (Zabina) following him." Here, Bayazid becomes the footstool of Tamburlaine who debasingly demands: "Bring out my footstool" (1.IV.ii.1). The stage direction reads: "They take Bayazeth out of the cage." Over three Acts in the play, Bayazid is continually brought out of and returned into the cage. Demeaned and hopeless (he is denied even the possibility of ransom), Bayazid finds no way out but death. Thus, he will seek: "the stony dart of senseless cold/ Pierce through the center of my withered heart,/ And make a passage for my loathed life! (1.V.ii.239-241); he then dashes his head against the cage's bars and dies.

Ibn Arabshah too ties together the cage and Bayazid's death, though the manner of death is not certain. In this account, "the Sultan, the blessed warrior and martyr, Ildarm Aba Yazid, was translated to the mercy of Allah the Glorious; he had been shut in an iron cage at the camp of Timur" (S 197). Marlowe has Bayazid demeaned, mocked, and frequently brought out of and returned into the cage; Ibn Arabshah too states that Timur "ordered [Bayazid] to be brought to him *every day*, and received him with kind and cheerful speech and marks of pity, then derided and mocked him" (S 188; emphasis mine). And if Bayazid was caged by Tamburlaine after the fight, he is also (in the historical source) caged after losing the battle of Angora. Here, he "was taken and bound with fetters like a bird in a cage" (S 184). Nor are looting and plunder missing. Just as Tamburlaine ransacks Damascus, Timur after the battle of Angora "descended on the place [Bursa], like an inevitable destiny, seizing whatever came to his hands of the whole resources of Ibn Othman, wives, riches, treasures, followers, and slaves" (S 187). With these and other details in mind, one thing is certain: both

Ibn Arabshah and Christopher Marlowe agree that Bayazid was confined in a cage rather than a litter.

Detractors of the episode ground their argument on notions of linguistic mis-translation and consequently cultural misunderstanding. Recently, literary scholar Howard Miller takes issue with the claim of literary historian Samuel Chew that "the inaccuracy of the iron cage story" has been perpetuated since its introduction in 1534 by Pope Pius II. Chew, like others, sees the inaccuracy originating in a mistranslation of the Turkish word *Kafes* which "may mean a litter or a cage" (262-63). Grounding his defense on Ibn Arabshah's linguistic abilities in Turkish, Persian and Arabic, Miller notes that he was "a skilled translator" who "translated Arabic classics into Turkish for the library of the Sultan Muhammad I." Ibn Arabshah would not therefore "have mistaken *litter* for *cage*" (263). Miller is not only correct in his description of Ibn Arabshah's linguistic skills, he has understated them.[4] Students and biographers of Ibn Arabshah described him as "singular in his abilities in writing poetry in the three languages of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish" (H 23, 24). In a later section we will see him in action, advancing his own verses in competition with well recognized and memorable poetic lines.

A further linguistic point must be made here, however. "*Kafes*" is *not* a Turkish word but Arabic, and Ibn Arabshah was writing in Arabic, not in Turkish; nor was he translating from another language. The ill-treatment both Bayazid and members of his family received in the account affirms the humiliation Timur sought to inflict. As a subject of Bayazid's, sharing with him the same Islamic faith, and believing he died a martyr, Ibn Arabshah would have been the happier had the confinement been in a

[4] Ibn Arabshah worked for ten years at the court of the said Sultan as a "correspondence writer," and earned the title of the "king of Persian, Turkish, and Arabic languages," translated for the Sultan from the original Persian to Turkish the book of *Kitab Jami' al-Hikayat wa Lami' al-Riwayat* (A Collection of Stories and a Luster of Narratives [McChesney translation, p. 228]), and in Turkish poetic verses the book of *Tafsir Abi al-Layth al-Samarqandi* (The Interpretation of abi al-Layth of Samarqand).

litter. However, Miller's rushed defense (only one sentence, less than four lines long) comes after a disappointing statement. Before advancing his one sentence defense, Miller writes: "This tidbit, *supplied in passing* by Ibn Arabshah, and unknown in most of the usual eastern sources, would appear to be the earliest mention of the Sultan's confinement in a cage" (263, emphasis mine). Here again, one should emphasize that Ibn Arabshah did not supply it "in passing"; he refers to it at least three times of which one is a telling comparison (S 184, S 197). In short, Ibn Arabshah was not translating, and his use of the Arabic term is not only not casual, it is emphasized through repetition. The missing part of Miller's own quotation should dispel all appeals to mistranslation: Bayazid "had been shut in an iron cage at the camp of Timur […] *as Caesar did with Shapur* and he had intended to take the Sultan with him to Transoxiana" (197; emphasis mine). This comparison confirms Bayazid's confinement in a cage by noting its similarity to what Caesar did to Shapur. The reference, however, needs clarification to appreciate the tight confinement. While in his translation Sanders glosses "Caesar" (Maximian),[5] he remains as silent on "Shapur," as do *all* Arab editors of the Arabic manuscript. Ibn Arabshah says Shapur was caged by a certain "Caesar" and was taken around with the Roman Emperor.

Strangely enough, although it fairly clears up the debate on whether a tight confinement of a "cage" or a generous and respectful reception of a "litter" is the correct understanding of Ibn Arabshah's meaning here, only two western sources mention Shapur and this Caesar (Valerian I). In these two instances, moreover, they turn Ibn Arabshah's comparison around.[6] Arabic sources, on the other hand, are far more forthcoming about this episode. The famous historian Ibn al-Atheer relates that

[5] It is not clear who Maximian is; it seems to be the title of Valerian I. Shapur had a better end than Bayazid; he was able to escape.

[6] See Thomas and Tydeman, 133 and 136; even here, the case is confusing. They say Shapur caged Caesar; Ibn Arabshah alludes to Shapur being caged first.

the Persian king Shapur, under cover, went over to the *Rum* (Roman territories) during the campaign of Emperor Valerian I. Going as a beggar to a banquet thrown by the Emperor, Shapur was recognized, arrested and imprisoned inside a "skin of a bull," and was dragged along with the Emperor in his marches through the Persian territories. As the Romans besieged the Castle of Gendisapur, the guards were distracted long enough that some other Persian captives were able to pour some "nearby oil" on the bull's skin in which Shapur was tightly held. The skin became flaccid enough for him to slip away, join his besieged people and lead a winning battle against Valerian I who fell captive and was finally "caged" (134).

This fantastic tale dispels any doubt about Ibn Arabshah's meaning; the comparison affirms the tight confinement. Furthermore, Ibn Arabshah's other uses of the term *Kafes* also clearly refer to a *cage* rather than a litter (S 184). It is telling that Ibn Arabshah's third usage of *Kafes* introduces the comparison with the sewn bull's skin (S 197). The negative sense of *Kafes*, however, is better emphasized by the governors of *Haleb* (Aleppo) as Timur approached the town. They argued whether to fortify the town and remain inside or to meet Timur outside; the winning argument was to meet him outside because he is stranger in a foreign land and can be fully encircled; he is thus "a bird in a cage [*Kafes*] and a spoil taken in hunting" (S 121). As no one would define being sewn inside a bull's skin as anything other than a tight and humiliating form of confinement, and birds are not usually kept in litters, the reference to some form of small, dehumanizing imprisonment is unambiguous.

Obviously, Ibn Arabshah means a "cage"; whether historically the case is true is another question, and I will not address it here. The important point is that both Marlowe and Ibn Arabshah have used "cage." In fact, the sustained use of the term and its Arabic origin cast doubt on any claims to linguistic mistranslation or to

ignorance of cultural and practical demands of confinement. At least in relation to Marlowe's play, Phrantzes cannot be blamed as the source of the so-called misconception of the infamous "*Kafes*." After all, Ibn Arabshah had finished his account decades before Phrantzes started writing his history. Nor are the similarities between Marlowe's play and Ibn Arabshah's limited to this caging episode. Along with it we have in both works the wife and family of Bayazid whose ill-treatment reveals not only strong parallels but also detailed similarities in humiliation and debasement. The following section substantiates these points.

Zabina, the Servant Cupbearer

Critics often claim that Marlowe invented Zabina and Zenocrate. Although of this opinion, Howard Miller alone has referred to Ibn Arabshah's account the abuse the Turkish Empress suffered. His argument appeals to the historical correspondence between Bayazid and Timur where the Turkish Sultan challenged Timur to battle using "*triple divorce*" as the oath one must fulfill if he were to back away.[7] According to Ibn Arabshah, early in 1401, Timur demanded that Bayazid hand over certain officials. In response, Bayazid sent him this challenge:

> I know that this will rouse you to invade our countries: but if you should not come, may your wives be condemned to triple divorce, but if I flee from you, when you invade my countries and decline to fight with you, then may my wives be utterly condemned to that triple divorce. (S 173)

Miller believes that in the play, Zabina's serving position would be a form of revenge for such a challenge. As to whether she is a pure invention, historian Edward Gibbon

[7] Only Chalcocondylas (142-43), in Thomans and Hydeman, mentions this case but his explanation is unbelievably erroneous. In Islam, a man can pronounce divorce once or twice, and still can take back his wife. Triple divorce, on the other hand, means their wedlock is broken for ever.

points out that: “On the arrival of the haram from Boursa, Timour restored the queen Despina and her daughter to their father and husband…” (p. 20), then addresses all evidence available on the “cage,” including Ibn Arabshah’s (20-24).

Miller himself gets entangled in the case of the cage and allocates only half a page to the wife in both works, leaving out therefore many details in the play that correspond to Ibn Arabshah’s historical record. In this record to which Miller duly refers, Timur one day threw a great feast to which he brought the shackled Bayazid, treating him extremely nicely till the Sultan felt comfortable. Then Timur ordered wine for the crowd; to his mortifying horror, Bayazid realized that “the cupbearers were his consorts and that all of them were his wives and concubines” (S 188). For Miller, this horrifying treatment is Timur’s revenge for the almost two-year old correspondence between the two leaders, which the play does not highlight. Miller is half right; the play does not refer to the letters but *does* highlight the banquet and serving position of Zabina.

In Marlowe’s play, right after having overcome Bayazid, Tamburlaine immediately orders a feast: “Come, bring them in [Bayazid and Zabina], and for this happy conquest/ Triumph, and solemnize a martial feast” (1.III.iii. 272-273). The ill-treatment is already anticipated in the exchange between Zabina and Zenocrate while the two leaders fight. Each of these women has been promising the other how she will be treated in case her man wins. The details of what service Zabina will do is exactly what we find in Ibn Arabshah’s report and what Miller actually quotes. Ibn Arabshah relates that Timur one day called in Bayazid who came “with trembling heart and hampered with his fetters,” but was calmed down and nicely treated till he felt comfortable (S 188). Just as he is often brought in (to a banquet) and mocked in the play, here too Bayazid is similarly brought and mocked, except this time the surprise is

horrifying. As Ibn Arabshah has it, Timur "one day held a public banquet" and brought in "Ibn Othman." Having eased Bayazid's fears and sadness, Timur "ordered circles of merrymaking" and wine to be served. As Bayazid recognized his family members as cupbearers, the world

> seemed black to him and he thought the likeness of the agonies of death sweet and his breast was torn and his heart burned, his distress increased, his liver was crushed, groans came from the bottom of his heart and his sighs were re-doubled, his wound broke out again and his sore was newly inflamed, and the butcher of calamity scattered salt on the wound of his affliction (S 188).

Miller refers to this incident without attending to the similarities it bears to *Tamburlaine*. Yet, to examine the details in the play we find that prior to the "martial feast," Zenocrate has already stated that Zabina and her maid "shall be employed/ To dress the common soldier's meat and drink" (1.III.iii 184-175). In fact, this serving role of Zabina will keep coming up until she dies. Before the capture of Bayazid, Zenocrate swears that Zabina will serve as a maid to Anippe, her woman-attendant, who will demote Zabina to yet a more inferior service. Since Zenocrate and her maid "will scorn" to have Zabina and her maid "come near ourselves," Anippe suggests that these Turkish women will "do the work my chambermaid disdains" (1.III.iii.186-188).

This same idea is repeated in act IV. In response to Zabina's protest over using Bayazid as a mounting block, Tamburlaine, Zenocrate and Anippe emphasize her en-slavement (1.IV.ii. 68-71). The exchange is sustained long enough across the relevant acts. Here, Anippe does not fail to admonish slave Zabina: "Let these be warning for you then, my slave,/ How you abuse the person of the king;/ Or else I swear to have you whipped stark naked" (1.IV.ii.72-74). All these abuses take place in the presence

of Bayazid himself, who in his turn is ordered again into the cage. The content and length of the exchanges are surely meant to carry across the fact of enslavement which Ibn Arabshah repeatedly records.

In fact, at the siege of Damascus Tamburlaine will throw another banquet of food and wine to which Bayazid is invited. “Let us freely banquet and carouse,” Tamburlaine says, “full bowls of wine unto the god of war,/… And now, Bayazeth, hast thou any stomach?” (1.IV.iv. 5-6, 10). In response Bayazid would rather “feed upon thy blood-raw heart.” Here, Tamburlaine would remind us that Zabina is serving: “Nay, thine own is easier to come by. Pluck that, and ‘twill serve thee and thy wife” (11-13). Later, with Zenocrate he would enjoy the memory of that high scene: “How now, Zenocrate, doth not the Turk and his wife make a goodly show at a banquet” (1. IV. iv.55-57)? As Zenocrate concurs, the comment of Theridamas provides an ironic echo of the entertainment Ibn Arabshah had recorded: “Methinks ‘tis a great deal better than a consort of music” (1.IV.iv.59).

Earlier, Tamburlaine had usurped everything from Bayazid: “Thy names and titles and thy dignities/ Are fled from Bayazeth and remain with me” (1.IV.ii 79-80). Having caged the Sultan again, Tamburlaine reemphasizes the slavery of Zabina: “And thou, his wife, shalt feed him with the scraps/ My servitors shalt bring thee from my board” (1.IV.ii. 87-88). This serving role of Zabina is confirmed in Tamburlaine’s promise that no one but her will serve her husband (1. IV.ii.89-90). It is prophetic of Tamburlaine, as he leaves to fight Bayazid, to have said: “The field is ours, the Turk, his wife, and all” (1.III.iii. 163). This fact is the result of what he has said sixty lines earlier: “I speak it, and my words are oracles” (1.III.iii. 102). In both Ibn Arabshah’s account and in Marlowe’s play, the Turkish Empress ends up “dress[ing] the common soldier’s meat and drink.”

Ibn Arabshah recorded the enslavement of Bayazid and his family; the banquet to which Bayazid was brought was detailed in all seriousness, and Bayazid's horror was duly registered. In both works, the emotionally endowed staging and details of the incident further enhance the similarities. Marlowe not only marshaled the fine details but also arrested the emotional response Ibn Arabshah meant to create, particularly the horrifying feelings engendered in the Turkish family and the audience. All western sources, though referring to the "cage," lacked such details we find in both works.

Virgins under Hooves

Western sources likewise betray similar limitations on other famous incidents they record. A case in point is the memorable incident where the cavalry overrun the "petitioning children." Although duly noted by most western sources,[8] these accounts of the event also lack the staging and emotional endowment one finds in Ibn Arabshah's account and in Marlowe's play. No other source names that city except Ibn Arabshah and Marlowe (Ispahan and Damascus, respectively), and the similarities between the two cities are striking. The parallel details and emotions both works provide are remarkable.

Marlowe's choice of Damascus is surely a technical, plot related necessity. Still, historical Damascus had a similar fate (including horror-stricken children singing prayers at night for a victorious end). According to Ibn Arabshah, when Timur conquered and occupied Ispahan, its governor devised with his people a plan to kill at night all the soldiers of Timur they could. Discovering in the morning what happened

[8] In Thomas and Hydeman, the following note the incident: Mexia in Thomas Fortescue's translation, p. 88; George Whestone's *The English Mirror*, pp. 91, 95; Perondinus, p. 116; Andreas Cambinus, p. 130. However in all, the reference is made to "men, women and children" or "boys and girls."

to his soldiers, Timur raged and decided to let loose his army to pillage and kill every one: child, woman, the old, the disabled, the noble, and the demented. One citizen sought the help of one of Timur's leaders to save the rest of these people. This leader advised:

> "Collect some infants on the hills, that he [Timur] may be a little softened by the sight—as by chance may happen." And following this counsel they placed in his path a company of children. (S 46)

Passing by with this leader, Timur asked "Who are those poor, abandoned creatures?" In Arabic Timur's question is "What are those thrown away wretches" (In Marlowe, the question is "What, are the turtles frayed out of their nests?" [1.V.ii. 1]) In Ibn Arabshah, the mediating leader answers:

> "They are innocent babes and a company needing pity and inviolable; death has snatched away their parents and the wrath of our lord and Amir [Timur] has fallen on high and low, but now they beseech pity through your royal mercy and their weakness, pray you because of their worthlessness, feebleness, bereavement, poverty and distress to pity their worthlessness and spare the remnant." (S 46)

The language (form and content) of this intervention and the description with which Ibn Arabshah introduced this dialogue, are remarkably present in the speech of the First Virgin (1.V.ii. 11-42). The reaction of Timur and Tamburlaine to this petition is also the same. Without a word, Timur "urged his horse into them, as though he had not seen them, and likewise with his troops and army, until he came upon all without exception, he gave them up to the horses' hooves and ground them beneath the horses' feet" (S 46).

In Marlowe's *Tamburlaine I*, the Governor too, like the mediating leader, hopes the young virgins' "Will melt his fury into some remorse,/ And use us like a loving conqueror" (V.i. 22-23). In content and language, the governor's justification for devising this episode echoes the citizen's suing for the mediation of Timur's leader who, like the governor, came up with the children's possibility. In Ibn Arabshah, the people realized they were doomed to death and any entreaty, help or ransom "would gain nothing for them" (S 45). The description of the massacre that followed led "one of the wise men" to "implore one of the chief Amirs and said: 'Spare, I pray, the remainder and show pity on the wretched multitude" (S 45). Here, the Amir suggested the children's plan.

In the play, the Governor echoes the report of the citizens and reaches the same conclusion: "Still doth this man, or rather god of war,/ Batter our walls and beat our turrets down." Resistance here will be as futile as Ibn Arabshah described it. The Governor realizes that they are hopeless, helpless and "desperate of our threat'ned lives" (1.V.i.1-4); Tamburlaine threatens the "city with a general spoil" (10), and no "common rites and arms" will warrant "our safeties" if we entrust ourselves "to his clemency" (11-12); the conclusion is obvious: Tamburlaine "Will never be dispensed with till our deaths" (17). At this point, like the wise citizen's attempt to save the rest, the governor finds nothing but a glimpse of hope in the petitioning "virgins."

As those innocent virgins plead their case, they follow the same divisions of the argument Timur's Amir advanced in responding to Timur's question about the children. If the leader pointed to the children: "Behold, my lord, with the eye of pity, as God beholds him, who needs pity" (S 46), the First Virgin cites as many titles of Tamburlaine as she is able to remember, emphasizes his relation to God, and pleads for pity: "Pity our plights! O, pity poor Damascus!/ Pity old age, within whose silver

hairs/ Honor and reverence evermore have reigned" (1.V.ii. 11-19). In introducing this scene, Ibn Arabshah did write "nor did he pity the aged for his age, or the infant for his infancy, or honour the learned for his learning… or the noble for his blood, or the eminent for his dignity" (S 45). The rest of her speech will touch on similar issues: "Oh, then, for these, and such as we ourselves,/ For us, for infants, for all our bloods/ Pity, O pity, Sacred emperor" (1.V.ii. 33-36). Despite this pleading, Tamburlaine will uphold his habit; however, he would not put them to the sword. Death is now "seated on my horsemen's spears," and Techelles will surely have his "horsemen" show "the virgins Death" (1.V.ii. 51, 66).

Although the famous tents, attributed to other sources, appear in this scene, and most western sources point to the cruelty of Timur's act, still the strong similarities in language, content, and details one finds in the Arabic account lend stronger weight to Ibn Arabshah. Nor is the "children" episode the only place where Ibn Arabshah makes his account felt. Better and more pertinent details on never before pointed out incidents are similarly present at other places in the play and in Ibn Arabshah's account. I will single out two of these; both are of singular nature and both are recorded in both works.

Gold under Water and Christians of Georgia Pardoned

At one point, Ibn Arabshah marveled at how lucky and smart Timur himself and his soldiers were, noting that they were as strangely knowledgeable and lucky as the Tartars who occupied Damascus a hundred years earlier. He then records a story of a wealthy merchant and his wife who, before they fled the invasion of the city, hid their

gold and silver in a cauldron of beans in a place the merchant dug under his pond. After burying their wealth, he restored the pond to its earlier structure and refilled it with water. As they were about to leave, his wife said she forgot two earrings and he should find them a secret place; "he took them and put them [on a nice beam of wood supporting a chamber's ceiling]; then mounting their beasts and leaving [home] they fled (S 319).

As expected, some Tartar soldiers "occupied that house and began to drink and eat, passing the time in jest; but one day … a mouse gnawed one of the earrings, from which a pearl rolled and fell on the [floor] and they all hastened towards it one against the other, running as if they strove for the 'earrings of Miriam'"[9] The pearl rolled faster than the soldiers, and it went through the conduit that fed the pond, and thus "removing from the face of the earth the curtain of its inner part, they found [all] the wealth as it was in the jar and took it and the pearl." They further "sought the rest of the earrings," and divided all "among them" (S 319).

A few pages later, Ibn Arabshah described the actions of the soldiers when Timur, this time, conquered Damascus. "They entered the house of one of the magnates … which was full of precious" stones, provisions, and rarities (S 323ff). They then held the owner, "bound him and visited him with various torments and tortures and binding his feet strongly, they suspended him and extracted precious things," and of these they collected the best, along with the best food and drinks. And "when one of them became hot with wickedness or pride and grew foolish with his drunkenness, he seized that wretched one, who had been afflicted with vehement torture, and gave him [salty] water to drink and the dust of chalk and ashes to taste" (S 323).

[9] "Earrings of Marieh": a proverb for something most expensive (it is said to refer to the earrings Mariyah, only daughter of Abdul Malik , the Umayyad Caliph, had on her wedding).

These two stories seem to echo closely Act Five, scene one of *Tamburlaine II*. The governor here refuses to submit and when he was captured, Tamburlaine orders that he be tied, suspended, tormented and shot at. Most interesting, however, is the place where the governor's gold is hid. Not only is it an enormous amount but, of all places, it has to be placed under water "in Limnasphaltis' lake/ There lies more gold than Babylon is worth" "Under a hollow bank … against the western gate of Babylon" (2.V. i.115-116, 121-122). The description of the wealth of the merchant and the precious things extracted from the man's palace and torment to which he is put in Damascus closely echo the governor's case. It goes without saying that hiding gold under a pond or a lake is strange enough. Stranger still is that Marlowe and Ibn Arabshah will not only write on the life of Tamburlaine/Timur but also of all places will agree on the same hiding place of gold!

The other incident is even more closely shared by Marlowe and Ibn Arabshah. Early in the same scene, the Citizen has urged this very wealthy governor to surrender, even if it was the last day on which Timur spares no one (2.V.i.30). His reasoning not only enraged the governor but has puzzled critics and editors. The Citizen says: "Yet are there Christians of Georgia here,/ Whose state he ever pitied and relieved,/ Will get his pardon, if your grace would send" (2.V.i. 31-33). I found no explanation of these lines in the various editions of Marlowe's play. The sources in Thomas and Tydeman provide nothing on Georgia or *Karj*. The gloss Cunningham footnotes is: "a return to the concept of Tamburlaine as the scourge of the Christian God: *cf*. 3.3.44.*n*" (298). Ellis-Fermor alludes to a possible discrepancy: "the historical Tamburlaine was, of course, peculiarly merciless to Christians; it was the faithful followers of Islam who sometimes obtained mercy from him." Here, it is not clear whether Muslims obtain "mercy" for themselves or for Christians and those of Georgia in

particular. However, she then advances what she considers a better explanation: "it is difficult to say what allusion gave Marlowe this idea, but it bears the marks of a piece of more or less *irrelevant* information set down here because it happened to come back to the memory" (261, notes on lines 31-32; my emphasis).

Unlike other sources Ibn Arabshah not only refers to Georgia and Georgians in many places, but allocates three full chapters to Timur's assaults on and conquests of the Georgian forts, fortified caves and lands (S 202-210). Still, these do not explain the meaning of Marlowe's lines. But if we consider the lines' context along one particular incident recorded in Ibn Arabshah, their meaning becomes more than a reminder of the "Christian God" or a vague memory of "irrelevant information."

Ibn Arabshah details Timur's repeated assaults on different parts of Georgia/ *Karj* (a small kingdom whose people worship the *Mesyieh* [Jesus]); these include sieges and extraordinary efforts Timur exerts, often with little success. At length, the Georgians realized the futility of their struggle and sought to surrender to Timur if clemency were granted. Therefore, those Christians "sought the aid of Sheikh Ibrahim, Governor of Shirwan, to whose will they committed themselves, hoping, though of a different religion, that he would be Imam of their assembly and appointed him pleader in this cause" (S 208). He in turn pleaded their case eloquently "And Timur consented to his request and sought from him a great sum of wealth, to be paid either from their resources or his." Sheikh Ibrahim, of his own money, deposited the sum in Timur's "treasury" and the Christians of Georgia were saved; Timur himself left the area (S 209-210).

In the governor's scene, the Citizen's allusion of the Christians of Georgia seems to refer to this exceptional incident. In the play, the time is already the third day on which Tamburlaine pardons no one; however, the case of the Georgians serves as

precedence and there Timur accepted ransom. The Citizen seems to be saying that just like the Christians of Georgia, we can negotiate a deal. Only this context and precedence can justify the bizarre allusion and meaning of these lines.

As I have tried to show, Ibn Arabshah's life of Timur seems relevant to Marlowe's play in details, famously recognized events, and previously obscure allusions and incidents. These should serve as ground for my next chapter in which I will draw on the similarities in Tamburlaine-Timur's death scene.

CHAPTER TWO

The Scene of Death

"Marlowe had exhausted his historical sources" in *Tamburlaine I*, wrote the Elizabethan and Jacobean drama scholar Clifford Leech, "and seems to have had to look hard for fresh matter." For the character Olympia, says Leech, Marlowe "conflated stories from *Orlando Furioso* and Belleforest's *Cosmographia* to produce the story of Olympia" (38). We will see a better conflation in another section; now it is proper to see if Marlowe's search turned any "fresh matter." The most likely place to find this "fresh matter" is the death scene which is, Miller says, "without precedent in Marlowe's sources" yet "could well have been lifted from Arabshah's life of Timur" (260).

Tamburlaine's death at the end of part two (5.3) has received much scholarly attention; its thematic motif received its strongest statement in the study of Susan Richards. "Tamburlaine, as Christopher Marlowe conceived him," she says, is "a

death-dealing man" who "attained the ultimate power in terms of human life—the power of giving death, which is the essential power of the warrior-emperor, the cause and result of his position" (375). As ultimate as this power is, Tamburlaine himself becomes, at the end, a receiver of death. Richards aptly identifies the ultimate role of this ultimate power; at Tamburlaine's moment "Death is revealed … as a kind of Mephistophilis to Tamburlaine's Faustus—the servant who gives unlimited power only to become the master," and thus Tamburlaine "finally recognizes [it] as his ruler" (377). Similarly, Peter LePage concludes: "Tamburlaine […] is only human and dies a victim of his striving against divinity" (607). Although both critics offer nothing on sources, their conclusion is important in light of what Miller has to say about the death of both Marlowe's Tamburlaine and Ibn Arabshah's Timur.

Of their similarities on the issue of death, Miller notes that both die "still thinking, not of what they had conquered, but of what they would leave unconquered"; in Ibn Arabshah's history, Timur died while on the road to conquer China, and Miller refers (without citing) to Marlowe's Part II (5.3.124-125, 151) where Tamburlaine calls for a map to see what remains for his sons to conquer. Again, although "Timur does not openly lament what he has left unconquered," still "there is no doubt in the mind of the reader that he is still driven by a lust for conquest" (261). Nor are these the only similarities; for Miller, "another interesting congruency between Tamburlaine and the historical Timur, is revealed in their attitudes towards their impending deaths" (261). Here Miller cites Marlowe's twelve lines on the issue (2.5.3. 42-53) followed by Sanders's translation of Ibn Arabshah's that Timur too "ceased not to oppose fate and wage war with fortune and obstinately resist the grace of God Almighty, wherefore he could not but endure the greater punishments for wickedness" (261; S 232).

To be sure, Miller made his point quite well. However, the similarities exceed the revolt against death and one's trust in the reader's "mind." Miller has in fact left out many interesting connections that enhance the congruence between the two death scenes. Many other fine details merge with two important points that bring closer the two works. These are his demand for the "map" and the reactions death triggered among Timur's followers.

In the play, all friends and companions of Marlowe's Tamburlaine and he himself become apprehensively restless. Marlowe opens the scene of death (2.V.iii) with Tamburlaine's three loyal friends tearfully concerned over and conscious of his death; his physicians are also as alarmed as he himself is. Here, Theridamas, Techelles, and Usumcasane are all in tears; death is proving Tamburlaine "to be a man" (l. 44) and is afflicting his "soul" (l. 47), rendering him too powerless to even "stand" (l. 51); and his physicians are doing their best to relieve his pain (ll. 78-79). Death becomes an essential part of the scene, a character cunningly charging and retreating as chances offer themselves on the life of Tamburlaine. In these continuous attempts and unrelenting persistence, death exemplifies the relentless battles Tamburlaine has fought throughout the two parts. In fact, Tamburlaine's "lust for conquest" is now not only against death, but here against enemies as well. In this scene, Tamburlaine seems surrounded by death, his faithful agent in his previous battles. Now, not only is death turning against its master, but is also joining other enemies. In this final battle Tamburlaine has to face both death and Callapine, who reappears, taking advantage of Tamburlaine's "absence in the field" (ll. 102-4).

These details here could indeed be lifted from Ibn Arabshah, and Miller would have done well had he substantiated further his statement of indebtedness. As Timur embarks on the road to China, the bitter cold becomes the bitter enemy of his army;

the weather's assaults are similar to those of death in the case of Tamburlaine. Interestingly, Ibn Arabshah takes this episode as introductory to Timur's actual death while attempting to conquer the *unconquered* parts of the world. Here, Timur launches "his plan of going to the ends of the earth and seeking its coasts and borders that he might despoil kingdoms and countries" and orders his armies "to take the equipment for four years or more and prepare for the march" (S 225-226).

What happens during this march is nothing but a continuous assault of death first on his army and then on Timur himself. The armies of "winter" held fast, and swept over ground, plantations, insects, soldiers, and every living organism. "Winter dealt damage to him, breaking on him from the flanks with every wind kindled and raging against his army with all winds blowing aslant, most violent, and smote the shoot of the army with its cold, intense and so more lasting" (S 227). One ought to remember that death has served well both Tamburlaine and Timur. Here, the personification of winter as death with its continuous assault on Timur and his army ought also to remind us not only of the ultimate end of humans (LePage) but also of the servant turning against the master (Richards). Just as is the case in the play, Timur pushed ahead trying to outpace this formidable enemy only to realize the futility of the attempt. If Tamburlaine in the play is eloquent against death but finally submits to its ultimate decree, Timur too reaches the same conclusion. In both works, moreover, Timur and Tamburlaine engage death in threatening exchange. In Ibn Arabshah, death called out to Timur:

> "[do slow your pace a bit ye ill-omened; do linger a while ye] fierce tyrant; How long shall hearts be burned by your fire and breasts consumed by your heat and ardour? If you are one of the [two] infernal spirits [breaths], I am the other; we are both [the lords/Shaykhs twain in] destroying countries and

> [peoples]; you should take therefore an ill omen for yourself from [our] conjunction [similar to the portends] of two unfavorable planets…Nor by Allah! will I use pretence with you [offer you favor]; therefore mark my warning and by Allah, [O Shaykh], the heat of piled coals shall not defend you from the frost of death nor shall fire blazing in the brazier."(S 227-228)

In the account of Ibn Arabshah, Timur suffered unbearable pain; his physicians were unable to relieve him. His hope to appease the pain by drinking "distilled arrack" only exacerbates the pain in a similar way to those who at the throes of death "shall be made to drink boiling water which rend their bowels." Thus the arrack "injured his bowels and heart [Arabic: *liver*], whereby the structure of his body tottered and his supporters grew weak" (S 232). As his condition worsens, Timur "summoned doctors and expounded his sickness to them, who in that cold treated him by putting ice on his belly and chest." At his moment of death he realized that "neither wealth nor children availed him naught" (S 232).

His family and companions are as tearful as they are in Marlowe's play: "One should have beheld his wives and close companions clung to his side howling out loudly, and (one should have beheld) his aides and soldiers as the falsehood they had been promoting is lost" (my translation, Z 222/H 393; *cf.* S 232). His false immortality and divinity are as emphasized and negated as they are in the play. Here, not only his followers are shocked by this falsehood but are perpetuating the myth. They "held him as leader and patron beside God and gloried in this and were greatly proud"; they were drawn "so far that if he claimed either the rank of prophet or divinity, they put faith in him." This faith remained strong even after his death. Thus they still "sent votive offerings and offered *korban* [sacrificial offerings] at his tomb and went so far

in attributing to him a share of divinity that he was believed to observe and know everything" (S 322).

In spite of the attentive interest in Marlow's death scene and of these obvious similarities, no one other than Miller has ever referred to Ibn Arabshah. Stranger still, of all the anthologized sources of Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* (Thomas and Hydeman) none has anything on Timur/Tamburlaine's death. Ibn Arabshah's account is not even included in this anthology of sources, although it includes translated excerpts from Greek, Latin, French, Spanish and English. Nor are these similarities limited to the issue of death. Others, absent from other sources, are present in this scene. Of these the "map" is perhaps the most obvious. If Tamburlaine in the play called for a map before his death, Timur too during his life-time had twice demanded a detailed map; and the third time, right before his death, Ibn Arabshah reminds us of the first time he asked for one. The maps in these two cases cover the western and eastern limits of the world. Having met the famous Arab historian and scholar Ibn Khaldun during the siege of Damascus, and having asked for him by name, Timur demanded that Ibn Khaldun describe the northwestern African countries and parts of Spain. As Ibn Arabshah reports, Timur "sought that [Ibn Khaldun] describe to him the countries and kingdoms of the west and clearly set forth to him their position, extent, cities, roads, tribes and peoples, as his [Timur's] custom and habit led him" (S 297). In his own *Al-Ta'rif*, Ibn Khaldun relates that Timur asked him to "put down in writing for me all the lands of the *Maghrib*, its remotest and closest parts, its mountains, its rivers, its villages, and all boundaries, as clearly as if I were viewing them. 'At your pleasure, it will be done,'" Ibn Khaldun replied. He met the demand with a "concise brief" in twelve medium size booklets (K 192-193; my translation; for Fischel's translation, see Levi and Sela 171-175).

Just as he demanded a clear description from Ibn Khaldun, Timur had previously asked for another of Allahdad. This time, the demand concerns the East and its meticulously detailed instructions render the result a visual map that leaves *nothing* obscure (down to "a mouthful of wormwood and southern wood") between China and Samarqand (S 196). Drawing the visual map to the minutest detail (S 197), Allahdad sent it to Timur. Later, just before his death Timur would refer to this very map, entertaining "the conquest of the kingdoms of the East" since "he had ordered, as said above, that Allahdad should describe for him the situations of those countries" (S 224).

Yet it is not only the map and the issue of death that bring the two scenes closer. Specific details and events are striking at times. Elsewhere Ibn Arabshah, highlights similar details of Tamburlaine's condition in this scene of death, down to his insistence on participating in battle against Callapine even if it is only a show. The details of Marlowe's death scene seem to conflate several instances that one can find in different places in Ibn Arabshah's account.

In the play (2.V.iii), as Tamburlaine in pain struggles with death, Callapine appears in the battle field. Tamburlaine, too weak to take part, believes that: "My looks shall make them fly" (l. 107), "In spite of death, I will go and show my face" (l. 114). This sudden energy follows his acknowledged weakness in his battle with death: "Ah, friends, what shall I do? I cannot stand./ Come carry me to war against the gods,/ That thus envy the health of Tamburlaine" (ll. 31-33). It takes him thirty lines to accept the facts. Here, he is unwilling to sit still, and to Techelles's hope that the pain "cannot last," Tamburlaine only resigns himself to the reality of his death: "Not last, Techelles? No, for I shall die" (ll. 65-66). His physicians would therefore ask him "to drink this potion,/ Which will abate the fury of your fit" (ll. 78-79). His sickness, the

physician would say, is incurable; his "soul" is deficient in "those organs by which it moves" (ll. 95-96), yet it is his stars (the critical day) that will help "comfort my vital parts,/ And live, in spite of death, above a day" (ll. 100-101). This higher power will therefore help him "but a while pursue the field" (l. 117) and come to the realization that "I perceive my martial strength is spent./ In vain I strive and rail against those powers" (ll. 119-120). With this final realization, Tamburlaine admits his helplessness and accepts "a higher throne" than "this disdainful earth" (ll. 121-122).

Incurably sick physically and spiritually, Tamburlaine at this point calls for the map to trace back his previous conquests and identify unconquered territories. Now, where could Marlowe have found such details and themes? The previous quotations from Ibn Arabshah bear enough similarities on the physical and spiritual dimensions of Timur's struggle with death. However, another incident seems more pertinent. Ibn Arabshah records yet another episode, interestingly on sickness and helplessness, complete with a battle of similar details. The episode was intimated to Ibn Arabshah by one Maulana Mahmud Hafiz Almuharaq, a close companion of Timur on one of his journeys. Here we find Timur, like Tamburlaine carried by two men, showing his face in the battle, issuing orders, and struggling in vain against divine powers. To Ibn Arabshah, Maulana Mahmud says that he was, with two other men, serving Timur as he besieged "when his armies encamped to besiege a certain fort and he has pitched his tent in a higher place, from which he could watch the battle and was enjoying this spectacle." Then Timur fell sick and was too weak to move. Thus to issue orders he would ask his companions "*Carry me to the door of the tent*. Then those *two men supported* him with their arms and *held him in the door of the tent*." Having sent the two men with orders to his fighting army, Timur, alone with Mahmud, will admit:

> O Maulana Mahmud! behold the weakness of my body and feebleness of my strength; I have no hand to grasp or foot to run; if men should cast me away, I perish and should they abandon me and my condition, I cannot help myself or do good or ill for myself or obtain any good or avoid harm; therefore think how God Almighty *has subjected men to me and made easy for me the opening of closed gates of kingdoms and filled both horizons with fear of me and caused my terror to fly through east and west and subjected to me kings and mighty despots and humbled before me Khosrus and Caesar*s. (S 316-317)

Many are the similarities this episode bears to Marlowe's death scene. In the play, death attacks Tamburlaine while on his way to conquer the rest of the world; as he suffers he asks two men to help him stand; and when Callapine attacks, Tamburlaine has to come out of his tent and "show" his face. Again, in the play Tamburlaine resigns himself to the fact of death, and here Timur too admits his weakness as a human being and resigns himself to the will of supernatural powers. In this episode, like Tamburlaine, Timur interestingly has only three people to help him. In Marlowe's, Tamburlaine has Theridamas, Techelles, Usumcasane, and the first physician. Only later we meet his family (his sons, who are as worried as the family was in the historical event). All these particulars are present in this narrative of Ibn Arabshah.

The main motifs (death, physical and spiritual weakness, final resignation) and the details of these quotations show that the death scene of Tamburlaine could have its genesis in Ibn Arabshah. After all, he died away from home, and in Ibn Arabshah's account only his grandson Khalil Sultan with two other close friends were actually with him, and they tried to hide the fact of his death. Moreover, the episode and details allude to other characteristics, especially the importance of the supernatural forces and stars that overlook and support his actions.

In the scene of death, the reference to being “the terror of the world” (l. 45) needs no comment; one finds this theme in every other line in the play and in Ibn Arabshah (and all other sources). His and others’ repeated appeal to his stars, however, is more pertinent since both the play and Ibn Arabshah begin and end with the importance of the planets. One needs only look at the opening speech of Theridamas at the very beginning of this death scene to appreciate the importance of the similarities (ll. 1-27). In Ibn Arabshah, however, the tumults in heaven and on earth at his birth are as emphasized and detailed as they are throughout the play and in this particular scene of death. Here, planets and stars (Jove [Jupiter] and Apollo [the Sun] in particular) are called upon until Tamburlaine decides to choose the heavenly throne. With such heavenly oriented final choice, Tamburlaine seems to be following the choice of his birth stars whose importance of which will be the focus of the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

Stars and Planet Conjunctions

The similarities between Ibn Arabshah's Timur and Marlowe's Tamburlaine are most accentuated in the roles the stars had played in their lives. For both, planets motivate actions and justify successes. And Ibn Arabshah and Ibn Khaldun make much of the importance of Timur's nativity and his Lordship of the Absolute Conjunction.[10] In both works, the stars and their distinct constellations structurally and thematically map out the itinerary of Timur's (Tamburlaine's) life and motivate his early claims to power even if at the time these sounded ludicrous. Moreover, both works show similarities in the main events, "wicked" activities, social status, personal characteristics, and strategies. These parallels, again, follow the same chronology.

I

Having cited the various records on Timur's lineage, Ibn Arabshah goes into Timur's thieving, recruitment of followers, and raids on many parts within the borders of Persia. In one adventure, Timur was wounded, caught and condemned to death, but fortune saved his life in the form of the intervention of Giyath al-Din,[11] the idiot son of the Sultan of Herat. To show his typical ingratitude, when he recovered under the care of his benefactor, Timur left and started raiding all rulers in the area, including

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[10] This complex astrological constellation of the higher "fiery" planets (Saturn, Jupiter and the Sun, a trigon/triplicity in the four phases [seasons] of twelve [monthly] houses) meant one's singular distinction and luck in all aspects of life; it also implied drastic universal change. More details later. However, for an elaborate treatment of this term and its significance, see Moin, particularly pp. 8-17. Each occurs every 20 years. The whole process takes 960 years; i.e, 20X12= 240 years, multiplied by the 4 phases.

[11] Malik Ghiyath al-Din Bir Ali ruled Herat, in what is now Afghanistan (1370-1381), and was executed by Timur in 1389.

his savior who became Sultan after the death of his father. He had scored many successes, attracted followers, occupied seats of government, and wrote rulers to submit, follow, or share power with him (S 3-7).

Early on, in the vast and thriving kingdom of Sultan Husain, Timur was active raiding whatever parts he had a chance to; developing friendly relations with the Mongols that threatened the Sultan; and befriending subjects of the Sultan, especially the two brothers of Balkshan. Like Mycetes, Sultan Husain had to clash with this rising threat. He therefore led a sizable campaign against Timur but lost. A small power, Ibn Arabshah comments, could defeat a superior one; "a gnat wounds the eye of the lion" and in chess "the king is checkmated by a wretched pawn" (S 9). To be sure, Tamburlaine too articulated similar ideas about himself, and as early: "Jove sometimes masked in a shepherd weed" (1.I.ii. 198).

The events leading to Timur's conflict with Sultan Husain are similar to those that led to Mycetes's campaign against Tamburlaine. Timur and his "evil" pledge-bound friends were openly voicing their ambitions for taking all power, and were stirring "hither and thither the flood of this treachery without shame or secrecy" (S 5). Sultan Husain, like Mycetes, had to respond; and he did as early as Mycetes to Tamburlaine. Well aware of Timur's ambitions and rebellion, the Sultan

> wished to outstrip his treachery in its beginning and to keep the world quiet from his villainy and protect his subjects and territories from Timur's wickedness and havoc, and did according to the words of the poet: The apex of a height will not be safe from injury unless its sides are drenched in blood. (S 5)

Mycetes, as wise as the poet of Ibn Arabshah's (he even has his own poet [1.II.ii. 46-53]), similarly voices parallel complaints. Meander will "Declare the cause of [his] conceived grief"; Tamburlaine "That, like a fox in midst of harvest time,/ Doth prey

upon my flocks and passengers,/ And, as I hear, doth mean to pull my plumes./ Therefore, 'tis good and meet for to be wise (1.I.i. 29-34).

Apart from the irony in his "wisdom," the lines detail the very same argument of Husain, who sent a campaign to rid the world of this evil. Victorious over Husain's army and having the Mongols on his side, Timur defeated and invaded the Sultan's territories, crowned himself ruler of Seistan (Persia), subdued all other governors, and pursued Sultan Husain to the town of Bulakh. In all those activities, Timur relied on his lucky stars, cunning strategies, and violation of treaties. An ideal illustration of the many violations and seizing of chances is his relation to Ghiyath al-Din. In details, it is a replica of Timur's relation to Sultan Husain. Though he saved Timur's life and saw in him "a most sage and valuable servant," Timur would seize the moment when Giyath al-Din's representative at Seistan rebelled. Entrusted to suppress him, "Timur sought the opportunity … and the Sultan trusted him and granted his wish and gave him a military force." Having succeeded in his mission, Timur not only exhausted the resources of that country but took the troops that followed him, and "began an open revolt" (S 7). Like Mycetes when Tamburlaine persuaded his thousand horsemen, Giyath al-Din personally led a campaign against Timur who with his followers miraculously escaped. Later, of course, Timur would write to Giyath al-Din ordering him to submit; when he refused, Timur raided and captured him, promising not to shed a drop of his blood, yet Timur "slew him in prison with hunger and thirst" (S 20-21, 23). In Ibn Arabshah's account, Giyath al-Din was the perfect image of Mycetes's absurdity and idiocy.

Any of the relations Timur had with Husain or Giyath al-Din can serve as a source for the opening of Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*. Cosroe's complaint in the opening scene is pertinent; it is prompted by the state of "Unhappy Persia" and voiced in refer-

ence to Tamburlaine's activities in these lands. Like the historical figures in Ibn Arabshah, Cosroe grieves: "Now Turks and Tartars shake their swords at thee,/ Meaning to mangle thy provinces" (1.I. i.16-17). Similarly, the conspiracy of Cosroe against his brother corresponds to Ali Shir's conspiracy with Timur against his king Sultan Husain. We ought to remember that Cosroe promised to share power with Tamburlaine by appointing him leader of the Persian army, and Timur agreed to share power with Ali Shir. Timur's later wresting of all provinces from all those with whom he entered into agreements of sharing or serving is similar to the further dethroning of Cosroe and usurpation of the crown.[12] The details we find in the play echo closely those we find in Ibn Arabshah's account.

Mycetes's stupidity, silliness in planning to keep his crown safe, and ludicrous exchange with Tamburlaine cannot have a better source than Timur's relation to Giyath al-Din. Just as Cosroe would be critical of Mycetes's "brain," Giyath al-Din's father had to say of "his unwise son": "Nothing proceeds from you to show that you are acting aright and to reflect a fortunate disposition and destiny" (S 6). Cosroe too will comment on the nativity of his ill-starred brother. Better still is Giyath al-Din's plan to defend his crown and capital against Timur's invasion.[13] Here, his wisdom led him to assemble his followers and their

> beasts around Herat and … dug around the gardens a ditch, which surrounded the wretched cowards and weaklings; but he shut himself in the fortress, thinking that in this way he would be inaccessible because of the weakness of his

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[12]Perondinus noted the general lines of the conspiracy (Thomas and Hydeman 98-100), but made no reference to the King's characteristics, especially his stupidity. He also referred the details of Timur's youth to a nameless contemporary writer.

[13] Ghiyath al-Din's inability to evaluate the power of Timur is sheer stupidity: before writing to Ghiyath al-Din (who had first hand knowledge of Timur and his power), Timur at this time had subdued many territories of more powerful kings and enslaved stronger princes; thoughtful princes surrendered or sought refuge away from Timur's reach. Instead, Ghiyath al-Din appealed to the favors he earlier did Timur, forgetting his first-hand experience of Timur's ingratitude and treachery.

> counsel and the stupidity and folly, by which his mind and the condition of his state was overthrown and confounded. (S 20)

Imprisoned and crowded (people and animals) in such a narrow space, they had to surrender quickly because they "exchanged open spaces for confinement" (S 21). In fact, Timur had to do nothing at all but to encamp around the town. At this point, we know that Giyath al-Din had saved Timur's life; Timur's good turn, therefore, is the seizure of his savior's crown. It is thus an ideal case of ingratitude, a well-known trait of Timur. In the play, Cosroe pointedly calls Tamburlaine: "That grievous image of ingratitude" (1.II.vi. 30).

II

Within this similar outline we find other pertinent parallels: Timur's lineage, social status, actions against rulers, recruitment of followers, and personal characteristics. These are supernaturally controlled and predestined by his stars at birth. Like Marlowe, therefore, Ibn Arabshah too not only begins his account of Timur with raids and rapines, but allocates lots of space to his dreams and prophecies of ruling and high hopes.

In both works, Timur early in life would mention to his friends that he was promised kingdoms and was after power; he would thereafter ruin all the region's sultans and take their places. His friends would anecdotally disseminate these follies and take them as occasions for joking. Without power, resources, property and troops, Timur still "used to tell them he aimed at royal rank and would attack the kings of this world with fatal onset." His friends "jested together about these professions, most counting him a lunatic and imbecile" and made "him the object of laughter and ridicule" (S 2). In Marlowe's play, Tamburlaine himself will allude to these jokes and ridicules as he

convinces Theridamas to join his group without doubting Tamburlaine's high claims to success (1.I.ii.63; 67; 201-203; see next section).

Of all such tales, however, the most important is the one emphasized by Ibn Arabshah and Ibn Khaldun (the famous Arab historian who met Timur during the siege of Damascus), and is closely reflected in the speeches and acts of the play's protagonist and characters. This is the asserted relation of Timur's birth to "Stars, the Trigon or Absolute Conjunction" and his assured coming greatness. In Ibn Arabshah's report, at one point Timur revealed to his most trusted peers the prophetic dream of his grandmother. Whether or not Ibn Arabshah is Marlowe's source, the play openly alludes to this very prophecy. Skilled in augury and divination, Timur's grandmother

> "saw in sleep a vision, which she expounded as foreshadowing to her one among her sons and grandsons, who would conquer territories and bring men into subjection and be Lord of the Stars [*Sahib Qiran*] and master of the Kings of *Time*. And I am that man and now the fit time is at hand and has come near. Pledge yourselves therefore to be my back, arms, flank and hands and never to desert me." They assented and promised to aid him whenever summoned and swore that they would be with him in prosperity and adversity and never against him. (S 4-5)[14]

This dream not only sums up what will become of Timur in due time, but also details the main historical activities of Timur at this early stage; here "he sought men like and equal to himself … and collected Satanic companions" (S 2). His friends, no longer joking and laughing, have pledged themselves to the support of his ambitions.

The play emphasizes these very details as early as the historical account. The Persian king Mycetes, just as Husain did, complains of the unlawful activities of

[14] "*Time*" is my emendation of Sanders's "the age" which implies a limited period, but the sense here is one of limitlessness.

Tamburlaine, and Meander asserts Tamburlaine's high hopes which originate in "dreaming prophecies": Tamburlaine is "Hoping, misled by dreaming prophecies,/To reign in Asia, and with Barbarous arms/ To make himself the monarch of the East. (1.I.i 41-43). These "misled dreaming prophecies," however, motivated Timur's actions and prompted Sultan Husain's campaign just as Mycetes is now leading his army against Tamburlaine. It is worth noting also that Tamburlaine becomes king after having defeated Mycetes and Cosroe. In Ibn Arabshah's account, "Timur killed the said Sultan Hussein… and was raised to royal rank from that moment" (S 6).

These connections do not exhaust the parallels between the two texts; another crucial point is the pledge. It occupied almost all of Act One, scene two and remained sustained throughout the act. Usumcasane voices the pledge in his anticipation of assured fortune: "And making thee and me, Techelles, kings,/ That even *to death will follow* Tamburlaine" (1.I.ii 58-9, all emphases mine). The new recruit Theridamas too states: "I yield myself, my men, and horse to thee,/ To be partaker of thy good and ill,/ *As long as life maintains* Theridamas" (1.I.ii. 228-230). Tamburlaine himself earlier sets the idea in motion; others may look down on our force and "measure our deserts so mean" (1.I.ii.63), "until with their eyes they view us emperors" (1. I.ii. 67). Later, he repeats the same argument to convince Theridamas: "join me now in this my mean estate—/ I call it mean because, being yet obscure,/ The nations far removed admire me not" (1.I.ii.201-203), but later every one will know, and Theridamas will enjoy power (1.I.ii.208). This recalls Ibn Arabshah's account that his friends earlier laughed and joked about such claims. The rest of his final welcoming speech to Theridamas is nothing but a reiteration of the oath and promises of heaven's help. Echoing the language of Timur's grandmother, Usumcasane convinces Theridamas by advancing what Tamburlaine has been promised at birth: "kingdoms at the least we all expect,/

Besides the honor in assured conquests,/ Where kings shall crouch unto our conquering swords" (1.I.ii. 117-119). In Marlowe's play, Meander first voices Timur's birth prophecy, and other characters will confirm its fulfillment. Tamburlaine, however, has first to emphasize it to Zenocrate: she more important "Than the possession of the *Persian crown*,/ Which gracious *stars* hath promised at my birth" (1.I.ii. 89-91).[15]

The fulfillment of the prophecy is similarly detailed in both works. Like those of Tamburlaine's, Timur's lucky stars brought him all his successes, particularly his friendly relation with Ali Shir, the representative in Samarqand of the Persian ruler. In fact, the cordial reception Tamburlaine accorded Theridamas is reminiscent of his reception of Ali Shir. Having agreed to divide the territories between the two, they exchanged mutual respects. Timur showed him "every kind of honour" (S 12), "kept him in the chief position" and sought his "advice" (S 13). Just before receiving Ali Shir, Ibn Arabshah had Timur engage the army of Husain in a battle from which Timur narrowly escaped and won by an extraordinarily lucky trick (S 11-12). Only providential interference could have saved him and his followers.[16] At this point, Ali Shir appeared just as Theridamas appeared suddenly while Tamburlaine was winning Zenocrate and her company. Unlike Theridamas but like Cosroe, however, Ali Shir would later incur the wrath of Timur and lose his life (S 15). Similarly, Theridamas is honored, persuaded to join and share power, and promised a leading position and brighter future. Here too Tamburlaine appeals again to what is promised him and what he aspires to as recorded in Ibn Arabshah: a "sure and grounded argument/ That I shall be the monarch of the East" (1.I.ii.183-184).[17]

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[15] This line draws our attention to his intent even before he decides to break his agreement with Cosroe.
[16] Ibn Arabshah had to write: "When the eyes of safety guard thee, sleep; and every kind of horror will be security itself; and chase the griffin with security's aid and it will be like a net: lead [with it Gemini] for it will be in place of a halter" (S 11; trans. modified).
[17]The reception serves also other functions: Tamburlaine's cunning, power of persuasion, ability to judge character (physiognomy).

In both works, Timur first establishes his firm association with the stars then acts accordingly. As the first act unfolds, Cosroe is crowned over the territories where Timur runs wild and wins (1.I.i. 161ff). Thus, Tamburlaine and his three leaders will later divide the territories among themselves. Since the crown of Persia is promised him at birth, he now can: "attain it with a wondrous ease" (1.II.v 76-77), and will "first assay/ To get the Persian kingdom to" himself and, as promised, will reward his companions with "Parthia," "Scythia and Media" (1.II.v. 80-83). In retrospect one can appreciate the ironic turn of fortune in urging Cosroe to take the crown of Persia: "Then haste, Cosroe, to be king alone,/ That I with these my friends and all my men/ May triumph in our long expected *fate*" (1.II.iii 42-44). Their "fate," even prior to this moment, is to seize the power of all kings and Sultans. If Cosroe laments the "fickle brain" of his brother, he himself is not any wiser. Aware of Tamburlaine's lucky stars, Cosroe should have paid careful attention to the words of Tamburlaine: "so mistake you not a whit, my lord,"

> For *fates* and *oracles* [of] heaven have *sworn*
>
> To *royalize* the deeds of Tamburlaine
>
> And make them blessed that share in his attempts. (6-9)

The fulfillment of the prophecy is noted by all characters, and its fine points can be substantiated from the well detailed accounts Ibn Arabshah provides. In the play, rather than the thieving shepherd, Tamburlaine becomes the "valiant," "the man of fame," whose forehead betrays "his fortune" exposing "figures of renown and miracle." His physical features are no less pointed.[18] For Cosroe, Tamburlaine is "a wondrous man/ Nature doth strive with Fortune and his *stars*/ To make him *famous in accomplished worth*,/ And well his merits show him to be made/ His *fortune's* master

[18] For Timur's physical description see Goldsmid, Froggatt, Miller, and Ellis-Fermor.

and the *king of men*" (1. II.i. 32-36). While echoing the language of the grandmother's dream, this evaluation is an exact rephrasing of Tamburlaine's earlier appeal to the protection of the stars. To convince Theridamas, he says: "I hold the Fates bound fast in iron chains,/ And with my hand turn Fortune's wheel about,/ And sooner shall the sun fall from his sphere/ Then Tamburlaine be slain or overcome" (1.I.ii.171-176).

The truth of this appeal is recognized by minor characters as well. Ortygius says "In joining with the man ordained by heaven/ To further every action to the best" (1.II.i. 52-53), and Ceneus wonders: if as a shepherd Tamburlaine fought all, "What will he do supported by a king"! (1.II.i. 57) — indeed; he will surely take the crown for himself as he did many times in the play and in Ibn Arabshah's account.

Other similarities between the two works can be found in other activities and in the reactions to Timur/Tamburlaine's nature. Cosroe, for example, ends scene one of Act Two wondering about his brother, the witless king, "Who now is marching near to Parthia… To seek revenge on me and Tamburlaine" (1.II.i. 65-67). In the account of Ibn Arabshah we have the "marches" of Husain and Ghiyath al-Din (S 7-15). On this "march," Meander comments on the Tartar thieves "That lie in ambush, waiting for a prey" (1.II. ii. 16-17). In Ibn Arabshah's account, "the Moguls rose in the East against Sultan Hussein, who equipped an army against them," lost "and put to flight"; and Timur that "demon also sent an envoy to them … and they assented to his petition and followed his wishes" (S 10).

The stars and fortune sprinkle the pages of both works; their importance in the play is as strong as in the Arabic sources, and Marlowe emphasizes their magnitude in the same way Ibn Arabshah and Ibn Khaldun do. Owing to the influence of his stars Tamburlaine, like Timur, becomes a puzzle in actions and in creation. Having seen in Act One how heaven and fortune promised success to Tamburlaine and his associates,

in Act Two the reactions focus on Tamburlaine's nature. Cosroe wonders at "this devilish shepherd" who dares "the force of angry Jupiter" (1.II.iv.1-4). In response, Meander only adds to the bafflement.

> Some powers divine, or else infernal, mixed
> Their angry seeds at his *conception*,
> For he was *never sprung of human race*,
> Since with the spirit of his fearful pride,
> He dares so doubtlessly resolve to rule,
> And by profession be ambitious. (1.II.vi. 9-14)

Ortygius's next comments (ll. 15-23) will also emphasize Tamburlaine's mixed nature that at the hands of "god, fiend, spirit of the earth, or monster" had been "turned to a manly shape," and wonders at "what *star* or state" controls him; he therefore calls for concerted effort to fight him "whether from earth, or hell, or heaven he grow." Later, both Theridamas and Cosroe will advance similar comments. For the former, Tamburlaine "is gross and like massy earth/ That moves not upward, nor by princely deeds/ Doth mean to soar above the highest sort" (1.II.vii. 31-33). For Cosroe, Tamburlaine is "The strangest man that ever nature made" (1.II. vii.40). To be sure, in the account of Ibn Arabshah, Timur has a similarly baffling origin and nature (S 1).

III

How to explain all this concentration on starts, confused nature, and disparate accounts in both Marlowe and Ibn Arabshah? Was this the exceptional inspiration of a Marlovian vigorous imagination, a certain source(s), or simply a lucky star (no pun intended)? If a source, what source has as many stars as Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*? I cannot help but assume it is a source and, most likely, it is Ibn Arabshah's.

The importance of stars materializes in Timur's nativity and his consequent title of *Sahib Qiran* (Lord of the Fortunate Conjunction) on which Marlowe's Tamburlaine often capitalizes in the play. This title implies a mystic supernatural religious and political significance. Relating to heavenly influence, planetary conjunctions determine, at birth, one's fortunes or misfortunes in reference to the constellations of higher (powerful) or lower (weaker) stars. In Arabic sources, "powerful planets" refer to those higher than the Sun (Saturn and Jupiter, Timur/Tamburlaine's conjunction) and "weaker" to those below it. As Moin has recently shown, the favorable conjunction often signifies a dramatic change such as an end of an era and the beginning of a new one. If the conjunction is most powerful (i.e., Saturn and Jupiter), the change is significant, perpetual and millennial (lasting 960 years). The duration, characteristics, and intricate phases of a grand conjunction are well summed up in Moin's study.[19]

Timur and Tamburlaine certainly assume these characteristics and historians have always recognized the importance of his *Qiran* title. In astrology's parlance, when not delimited by specified stars, *Qiran* means the higher conjunction.[20] Like Timur's grandmother in the report of Ibn Arabshah, most historians refer to "Sahib Qiran" without explanation (Manz 4, 6). Thus, Manz refers to Tamburlaine but has nothing on his nativity or that of Timur. Moin explores the importance of the conjunction for politicizing and legitimating Timur's rights to leadership and supremacy, yet

[19] A Saturn-Jupiter conjunction takes place about every 20 years; a series will occur in the signs of one triplicity [the year is divided into 4 triplicities, each of which becomes a particular horoscope; see also note 10 above] for about 240 years, that is twelve conjunctions; and they will have passed through the four triplicities and begin the cycle again after about 960 years. Then they shift from one triplicity to another, they indicate events on the order of dynastic changes. The completion of a cycle of 960 years, which is mixed up with various millennial theories, causes revolutionary events such as the appearance of a major prophet. The ordinary course of politics is dependent on the horoscopes of the vernal equinoxes of the years in which the minor conjunctions within a triplicity take place (qtd. in Moin 16; *n*35).

[20] Al-Khawarzmi, whose works on conjunctions was among the first to be translated into Latin, states: "*Qiran*: conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn, unless the particular planets specified" (44).

offers nothing on *Tamburlaine*. No historian has paid as careful attention to the "fortunate conjunction" as does Ibn Arabshah, Ibn Khaldun, or Marlowe.

Ibn Arabshah opens his life of Timur with the commotion in heaven and on earth at the moment of Timur's birth; and his birth receives as disparate explanations as those we encounter in the play. His grandmother's prophecy emphasizes the conjunction, and Ibn Arabshah accords the moment of his birth the importance of the stars. At the night of his birth, they said:

> something like a helmet appeared, seemed to flutter in the air, then fell into the middle of the plain and finally was scattered over the ground; thence also live [embers] flew about like glowing [sparks] and collected so that they filled the [uninhabited and the populated lands]: they also say that when that evil man saw the light, his palms were full of freshly shed blood. (S 1)

Hindsight helped to reinterpret this commotion at the moment of his nocturnal birth as a predetermined great future. In Ibn Arabshah (as in Marlowe's play) Timur capitalized much on this grand conjunction birth.

Timur's nature received as confused and mystical interpretations as we find in *Tamburlaine*; people were as confused as the characters in the play. No one can tell whether he were human or monster; diviners, augurs, and soothsayers were as baffled. Some said Timur "would be a guardsman; others that he would grow up a brigand, while others said a bloodthirsty butcher, others finally that he would be an executioner, these opinions contended with each other, until events decided the issue" (S 1). Ibn Arabshah then traces all his possible genealogies: a shepherd, a shoemaker, son of a noble chieftain, and even a relative to "Jenghizkhan through females, snares of Satan" (S 4). It is, however, the fortunate "conjunction" that matters most. His grandmother's dream appears right here, outshining all other noble relations.

His lordship of the "conjunction," stressed throughout, receives its full exposition in his meeting with Ibn Khaldun during the siege of Damascus. Appropriately, Ibn Arabshah saves it for the Chapter on "The Wonderful Gifts of Timur and his Nature and Character." Before Ibn Khaldun met Timur, Ibn Arabshah cites Timur's titles: "the unconquered lord of the seven climes and ruler by land and sea and conqueror of kings and Sultans" (S 296). In literal translation, Timur was hailed as "Lord of the *Conjunction* of the Seven Provinces," "The Hero of Water and Clay" (seas and lands); and of course the "Conqueror of Kings and Sultans" (Z 278). Meeting Timur, Ibn Khaldun opened his address with the importance of the *conjunction*. Interestingly, Sanders drops those three lines where Ibn Khaldun says "you have been the one on the tongue of every man of god [*Weli*], pointed out on all astronomical *Ziejs* [tables of planets], the offspring of Ali the Caliph, the Lord of the Absolute Conjunction, who will appear at the end of Time" (Z 279; my translation). Timur was "marvelously pleased" (S 297).

Ibn Khaldun's own narrative in his *Al-Ta'rif* is more elaborate on this issue. He said that Timur was much anticipated even in the remote lands of the Maghrib; that Ibn Khaldun "had heard many predictions"; and that "astrologers who used to discuss the conjunction of the two superior planets were awaiting the tenth conjunction in the trigon, which was expected to occur" in 766 (1364). This news of Timur was on "every tongue": scholars of theology (Muslims, Christians, and Jews), Mosque Imams, physicians, Sufis, common people and kings and Sultans. In fact, Ibn Khaldun had written to all possible experts on the stars including "Ibn Zarzar, the Jewish physician and astrologer of Ibn Alfonso, King of the Franks" (Pedro the Cruel, d. 1369; see Moin 11). Ibn Kaldun's teacher, "the authority on metaphysics," told him "This

event is approaching, and if you live, you will surely *witness it* [Arabic: "*see him*"] (Fischel in Levi and Sela, 173; K 193; see also Moin 11).

This interest in the "conjunction" has its parallel importance in the play and for its hero. Act 4, scene 3 (30-55) is nothing but a full embodiment of what has been pointed out so far. Tamburlaine states "Now clear the triple region of the air,/ And let the Majesty of Heaven behold/ Their scourge and terror tread on emperors" (ll. 30-32). He then will relate all his history as the stars have ordained at his birth:

> Smile, stars that reign'd at my *nativity*,
> And dim the brightness of their neighbour lamps;
> Disdain to borrow light of Cynthia!
> For I, the chiefest lamp of all the earth,
> First rising in the east with mild aspect,
> But fixed now in the meridian line,
> Will send up fire to your turning spheres,
> And cause the sun to borrow light of you. (33-40)

Born a "shining" star that will dim the light of every other (including Bayazid), Tamburlaine will emphasize the difficult passage he has to forge. Recalling Ibn Arabshah's description of the night of Timur's birth and the vision of his grandmother, Tamburlaine describes his action against the "Turk": "My sword struck fire from his coat of steel"

> As when a fiery exhalation,
> Wrapt in the bowels of a freezing cloud,
> Fighting for passage, make[s] the welkin crack,
> *And casts a flash of lightning to the earth*:
> But, ere I march to wealthy Persia,

Or leave Damascus and th' Egyptian fields,

……

So shall our swords, our lances, and our shot

Fill all the air with fiery meteors;

Then, when the *sky shall wax as red as blood*,

It shall be said I made it red myself,

To make me think of naught but blood and war (43-55)

Apart from echoing Ibn Arabshah's language, the speech emphasizes the importance of his stars. Others too recognize Tamburlaine's stars as better than those of others. Cosroe, for example, comments on those of Mycetes, "a man/ At whose birthday Cynthia with Saturn joined" denying "his fickle brain" the influence of "Jove, the sun, and Mercury" (1.I.i. 14-15).) Mycetes therefore lacks power and wisdom.

One, moreover, can hear the language of Ibn Arabshah and Ibn Khaldun to Timur in Tamburlaine's description of himself to Callapine and Almeda. The stars at his birth elevated his social status. He is "The shepherd's issue"

at whose birth

Heaven did afford a gracious aspect,

And join'd those stars that shall be opposite

Even till the dissolution of the world,

And never meant to make a conqueror

So famous as is mighty Tamburlaine (2.III.v.70-75)

In fact, Tamburlaine's nativity permeates the two parts, invoked in the same terms at Zenocrate's death and similarly emphasized immediately before the moment of Tamburlaine's. In these places, Tamburlaine's invocation of his stars draws on the very language that we have seen in the historical accounts. At Zenocrate's death, he says:

"Over my zenith hang a blazing star,/ That may endure till heaven be dissolved,/ Fed with the fresh supply of earthly dregs/ Threatening a *dearth* and famine to this land" (2.III.i. 6-9). The language echoes the letter Timur sent Shah Shujah, the Sultan of Shiraz and Persian Iraq; in it Timur demands his submission, "if not, know that three things [inhere in my coming]: devastation, *barrenness*, and pestilence" (S 27). These are the three things Tamburlaine wants to prove to all at the town where Zenocrate died. Right before the famine line, he says: "So, burn the turrets of this cursed town,/ And kindle heaps of exhalations/ That, being fiery meteors, may presage/ Death and destruction to th' inhabitants!" (2. III.i. 1-5). Similar star-invocations are the main points in the lamentations of Timur's friends in the death scene in part two.

In the account of Ibn Arabshah, Timur is almost on every page the lord of the lucky conjunction; in Marlowe's play he is similarly endowed with that power, and all characters recognize him as that very lord. Moreover, in both works Tamburlaine and Timur share similar early lives, activities, ambitions, and glories. Nor are these the only parallels one can draw. In the next chapter I address the more difficult issue of Zenocrate.

CHAPTER FOUR

Zenocrate and Shadi Mulk

For scholars of Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*, Zenocrate is perhaps the only character that raises no controversy nor suffers neglect. Unlike others, she receives enough critical attention and remains safe in her supposed source, Marlowe's imagination. Even when a source other than the author's creativity is advanced, it is often thematic or only allegorical. At times, the arguments and sources take interesting turns. Cunningham, for example, grants that she is Marlowe's invention and seizes on the poetics of her name (20). More recently, one critic believes that "Zenocrate is Marlowe's main addition to Tamburlaine's history" (Martin 23), Whitfield points to how little "we know … about her aside from the effect she has on Tamburlaine" (87). Having no verifiable source, Zenocrate is "invented" to serve thematic and functional roles. In addition to balancing the cruelty of Tamburlaine, she is an "audience surrogate" (Whitney 44), "expressing the fantasy that my prisoner will grow to love me" (52). Much earlier Columbia University professor Ashley Horace Thorndike saw in her invention a contrast between Tamburlaine's cruelty and love (91). Miller, on the other hand, cuts right to the point: Zenocrate "seems to be a complete invention of Marlowe's" (262). Others have sifted through history and theology to find parallels between Zenocrate and the Biblical Esther: each is beautiful, foreign captive, and grows into a lover and wife (Cornelius 63). Like Cunningham, William L. Godshalk, a Renaissance scholar, turned to her name ("derived from Xenocrates of Chalcedon," the "emblem of the virtuous man"), assuming that "Marlowe named his Zenocrate

after the philosopher who believed that the virtuous man was pure in thought as well as deed" (108).

Ibn Arabshah's life of Timur presents a much closer and better source figure than any proposed in these arguments. In outline and in details alike it bears striking similarities and parallels. After Timur's death Ibn Arabshah records the story of Khalil Sultan (a favorite grandson of Timur) and his beloved wife Shadi Mulk, previously the wife of Saifu ad-Din. In its intensity and misfortune this eventful love story, for a westerner, can only be matched by that of Romeo and Juliet. Structurally and thematically, the story would serve Marlowe best as a source for his portrayal of Tamburlaine and Zenocrate's love. In fact, both in verbal echoes and in the details of events, the two accounts bear strong similarities. I will here highlight the main points the two love stories share.

In the two parts of Marlowe's play Zenocrate and Tamburlaine's "love" regularly eclipses all other motifs. It is with her that he first appears at the beginning of the first part, and literally with her he ends the second part and the play as a whole. Although at her first appearance Zenocrate is held captive, her importance is asserted in strong terms; she "is more worth to Tamburlaine/ Than the possession of the Persian crown" (1.I.ii. 90-91), and will be offered all he owns: lands, followers, opulent living, and even his "martial prizes, with five hundred men" (1.I.ii. 102-103). To top it all, Tamburlaine in person will finally add him-"self to fair Zenocrate" (1.I.ii. 105).

And as early as this first meeting, this "lover" will assert his genuine feelings; thus to Techelles's mocking comment "What now? In love?" his response is poignant: "Techelles, women must be flattered./ But this *is she with whom I am in love*" (1.I.ii. 106-108). Later events only confirm the solemn sincerity of these early claims. At the moment of his death, Tamburlaine has fulfilled his promise; he does offer himself "to

fair Zenocrate." The chronological sequence and main points of their relation are as important as the sincerity of their "love." They meet early in Tamburlaine's life while he is still active in fights and rapines to crown himself king of Persia and have a state of his own; she is already betrothed to the king of Arabia; they exchange strong feelings; she has a serving male attendant (who will be driven to commit suicide); she eventually dies, and he will be *maddened* by the loss, and when he himself dies he is interred with her in the same "hearse."

These high points correspond closely to those we find in Ibn Arabshah's report on the love relation between Shadi Mulk and Khalil Sultan who, under lucky stars, inherited power after the death of Timur. And since that very moment, Khalil Sultan had been engaged in quelling revolts and dodging attempts at his life and his newly acquired power, and Ibn Arabshah detailed those events over some forty pages (241-282). Interestingly, in these trouble-ridden times and in the midst of his territory conquering, Shadi Mulk suddenly appears on the scene just as Zenocrate arrives in the middle of conspiracies, turmoil and preparations for war. And like that of Zenocrate, the entrance of Shadi Mulk is couched in intense emotional love: "Khalil Sultan had espoused Shadi Mulk, wife of Amir Saifuddin, and the power of his love of her conquered him and like a prisoner he bowed to her nod, so that his eye was fixed upon her and his love of her grew stronger" (S 282).

In these words Ibn Arabshah introduced Shadi Mulk; prior to this moment we have heard nothing about her at all. Nor do these words carry the full intensity of the affection. Ibn Arabshah cites relevant lines from poetry that better visualize their closeness; still not satisfied, he himself will at times arrest their union in a line of his composition. To stress their passionate relation, he first cites other poets: "I embrace her; and my soul still burns with love for her" and they physically and spiritually are

"united" (S 282). Ibn Arabshah advances interesting comments; Khalil Sultan's love continued till it "maddened him and beguiled his heart," controlled his reason, tied his affections, and "inhabited" his senses.

In this intense relationship Khalil Sultan had ordered a single loose garment which they wore together, and thus they were united to the point where "he spoke with her tongue and she with his," and their state embodies the meaning of the poetic line: "[The one I love has become me, and I the *one* I love];/We are two spirits in one body" (S 282). Unsatisfied, Ibn Arabshah composes a better line to depict their union: "Truly they possess one spirit, which God [breathed] into two bodies" (S 282). We may note that this fixing his "eye upon her" and their closeness ought to remind us of Tamburlaine's reaction at the announcement of Theridamas's force. If this formidable power should provide Zenocrate with any hope of escape, she has to reconsider: "Soft ye, my lords and sweet Zenocrate,/ You *must be forced* from *me* ere you go" (1.I.ii. 119-120).

Further similarities are present. Both Zenocrate and Shadi Mulk had earlier relationships to men other than their current lovers. Zenocrate was betrothed to King of Arabia and Shadi Mulk wedded to Saif al-Din. Interestingly, both men died before their respective women married their new lovers. In addition, both had their own male attendants who met similar fates: Agydas committed suicide and "Baba Tarmis" drowned himself. Those attendants, again, ended their lives for the same reasons: Agydas for the striking fear of torture and Tarmis for the torments he experienced. Both women espoused high ranking leaders; Zenocrate married the monarch of the East, and Shadi Mulk married the inheritor of Timur's kingdom. Finally, within their new high status both women attempted to influence public and private affairs. Zenocrate sued for the life of her father and Damascus, commented on the cruelty inflicted

on Bayazid and his wife, and later in part two openly demanded that Tamburlaine abandon wars and save himself unscathed. His responses (mostly sharp denials) are crucial and relate to the differences between the two stories.

With these similarities, however, there are significant differences that Marlowe seems to have managed well to serve the play. These relate to the events Khalil Sultan and Shadi Mulk experienced. When Shadi Mulk acquired her new high status and powerful position, her servant too enjoyed similar power and, like her, started meddling in all domestic and public matters. In time, nothing in the state will be done without his orders. Even the two powerful men (Allahdad and Argunshah) suffered the "greatest affliction and trouble" (S 283). They had to conspire against the servant and his mistress, and they succeeded to the point that Khalil Sultan was deposed, hunted, and forced to flee and hide. Shah Rukh (Timur's son) had to come from Herat and punish Shadi Mulk, imprison Tarmis, and kill those who caused troubles to Khalil Sultan (S 283-289). Tarmis's and Shadi Mulk's interference in all matters led to their miseries and tragic ends. Tarmis, for example, having been subjected to all sorts of torment, one day tricked his guards to lead him close to a "tank wide and deep"; when they loosened their grip, he "suddenly hurled himself into the water and was drowned" (S 290).

Of course, Tamburlaine and Zenocrate have experienced none of these events. Khalil Sultan, however, literally lost the crown of Samarqand for the sake of his love, a loss that echoes Tamburlaine's statement that he would rather lose the crown of Persia (promised him at birth) than lose Zenocrate. Zenocrate, like Shadi Mulk, seeks a full union (body and soul) with Tamburlaine. As Agydas inquires after the reasons that trouble her, the answer fits well into Ibn Arabshah's narrative; "Yet, since, a farther passion feeds my thoughts/ With ceaseless and disconsolate conceit,/ Which

dyes my looks so lifeless as they are" (1.III.ii. 13-15). If she loses Tamburlaine she dies: "And might, if my extremes had full events,/ Make me the ghastly counterfeit of death" (16-17). Her "extremes" (the violent passions) are indeed in full control, and point to the perfect union she seeks:

> Ah, life and soul, still however in his breast,
>
> And leave my body senseless as the earth,
>
> Or else unite you to his life and soul,
>
> That I may live and die with Tamburlaine (1.III.ii. 21-24)

These extremes, fits, troubles and unrest have alarmed Agydas (1.III.ii 1-3); his worry about her well-being and waning state only lead him to lose his life; interestingly, she never mentions him again. Evidently she is preoccupied entertaining the better prospect: "And higher would I rear my estimate," "If I were matched with Tamburlaine" (1.III.ii. 53, 55). Like Shadi Mulk, she has achieved that high honor.

As with Khalil Sultan and Shadi Mulk, Tamburlaine himself is as captivated by Zenocrate's love. His soliloquy (1.V.ii.72-128) in content and vocabulary is a close image of what Ibn Arabshah provides on the relation between his lovers. Zenocrate here is beautiful and divine; in fact "Fair is too foul an epithet for thee"; her "shining face" is "Where Beauty, mother to the Muses, sits,/ And comments volumes with her ivory pen," and she provides all planets with "light." Of Khalil Sultan, Ibn Arabshah writes "the power of his love of her conquered him and like a prisoner he bowed to her nod" (S 282). The translation of Sanders is somewhat liberal; literally the sentence reads: "The Sultan [i.e., the *power*] of her love possessed him; in it he was like a captive, and towards her he inclined with all his senses" (Z 266, my translation). Tamburlaine too will admit his captivity and defeat. Zenocrate's

> … sorrows lay more siege unto my soul

Than all my army to Damascus walls;

And neither Persians' sovereign nor the Turk

Troubled my senses with conceit of foil

So much by much as doth Zenocrate. (1.V.ii. 92-96)

While Tamburlaine here admits his love-stricken state and his being conquered by Zenocrate's love, he later in the soliloquy highlights the theme Ibn Arabshah sees as Khalil Sultan's damning error, and which Tamburlaine eventually avoids (more on this later).

In his fifty-some line soliloquy (1.V.ii. 72-127), Tamburlaine addresses the conquering power of love and beauty in its relation to how it seems to overcome his fierce nature and status. In the description of the effect of beauty on humans and on inspiring the most beautiful poems, Tamburlaine seems to be describing the state of Khalil Sultan when he was separated from his lover (S 293). These similarities appear as the result of loss both pairs of lovers experienced.

However, unlike Tamburlaine and Zenocrate, Khalil Sultan and Shadi Mulk had to undergo dangerous and demeaning treatments. Shah Rukh publicly humiliated Shadi Mulk and took Khalil Sultan to rule Andakan in Turkstan. There, he kept writing, in Persian, lines about his beloved surpassing the love verses of the famous Arab poet Ibn Zeidun (S 293). Tamburlaine's comments on poems and beauty would serve as the theoretical framework for "poetry-inspiring" love. "What is beauty, saith my sufferings, then?" asks Tamburlaine. The answer exceeds thoughts and words (1. V. ii.97-108), because "One thought, one grace, one wonder, at the least,/ Which into words no virtue can digest" (109-110). These thoughts on beauty and love are the sentiments Khalil Sultan has let loose in his exile. Whereas to his intense feelings Tamburlaine finds a reining power in his "sex" and "discipline of arms and chivalry,"

Khalil Sultan has given his a free rein. Unable to endure separation, he finally abdicated his rule and sought his uncle who seemed to receive him kindly, enthroned him ruler of Rai and brought him his queen Shadi Mulk. There, he ruled "only for a little […] for his uncle inserted poison in his drink" and Khalil Sultan died and was buried in the City of Rai (S 293-294).

In her turn, having learned of her lover's death Shadi Mulk could not bear to live. If the loss of Tamburlaine would "Make [Zenocrate] the ghastly counterfeit of death," the loss of Khalil Sultan will be Shadi Mulk's actual death. As she first echoes Zenocrate's line, Shadi Mulk laments: "I will not taste your loss, nor after you will live." Burning in the desire for her lover, she then "groaned and lamented, then recited and sang":

> "Thou wert the blackness of my eye, and then the pupil tearfully lamented you
> "To death whoever lived behind; it's you for whom I cared to live" (Z 276, my translation)

This intense sentiment echoes the passionate feelings of Tamburlaine and Zenocrate, and the final resting place of Shadi Mulk and Khalil Sultan heightens the similarities between the pairs of lovers. Most important, perhaps, is the reaction the loss triggers in the relationships of both pairs. Shadi Mulk placed a dagger in the middle of her chest (*labbatiha*) and "pushed (the weight of her body) against it with all her strength that it came out through her back" (Z 276; *cf.* S 294) and thus she and Khalil Sultan "were buried in one tomb" (S 294).

Of high significance here is the similarity between Shadi Mulk's reaction to the death of her lover and that of Tamburlaine to the death of Zenocrate. Clearly, Marlowe's lovers share the same commitment. Thus, as Tamburlaine wishes "That this my life be as short to me/ As are the days of sweet Zenocrate" (2.II. iv.36-37),

Zenocrate will not enjoy any happiness at all if ever she suspects she in any way will harm Tamburlaine. Such a prospect will even ruin her "future happiness" and "would break my wretched breast,/ And fury would confound my present rest" (2.II.iv.64-65). Like Khalil Sultan when separated from his Shadi Mulk, Tamburlaine after the death of Zenocrate will say:

> Behold me here, divine Zenocrate,
> Raving, impatient, desperate, and mad,
> Breaking my steeled lance…
> And, if thou pitiest Tamburlaine the Great,
> Come down from heaven, and live with me again! (2.II.iv.111-117)

These lines, along with the whole scene, could have been Khalil Sultan's or Shadi Mulk's. Strong as these and other similarities are, differences also contribute to this love theme and relation. These need reiteration and justification.

In Marlowe's play Zenocrate, not Tamburlaine, dies first. Nor does Tamburlaine experience exile, hiding, and the miseries which Khalil Sultan and Shadi Mulk suffered. Most of these differences need no justification, however. Timur as a source for Tamburlaine and as Lord of Conjunction cannot undergo such a fate. Practically, he cannot die before Zenocrate if a second part of the play is to materialize. And to emphasize the theme of love, Marlowe seems to have conflated the characters and details for practical and technical reasons. Since no one can bring in every character one finds in Timur's life or in the account of Ibn Arabshah, a conflation of sources becomes a necessity if one wishes to emphasize the intensity of love and its wise balance in relation to public and policy matters. This divided point on "love" is certainly important in both works and must be emphasized. In the play and in Ibn Arabshah's account, it receives equal weight. For Ibn Arabshah, it relates to character,

disposition, and public and private domains. In short, it marks the difference between a “Timur” and a “Khalil Sultan.” In the play, Tamburlaine combines both Timur and Khalil Sultan. In managing the theme of love, their differences are indexed in their reactions to the favors for which their respective women sue. Marlowe accords these reactions various crucial moments; Ibn Arabshah is quite open in denouncing Khalil Sultan’s responses.

Like Ibn Arabshah, Marlowe emphasizes the intensity of Tamburlaine’s love, but he also shows the proper reaction a certain character/type will take. The relation of Zenocrate-Tamburlaine emphasizes one marked difference: her interventions are resolutely denied. The justification of this behavior inheres in these denials as opposed to the full submission of Khalil Sultan to the wishes of his wife. At the very end, Tamburlaine is dying, crowning his son, and giving him a final commanding advice. This advice has to be set within the full context of Zenocrate’s love. He has kept her dead body with him till his death and, right here, he orders her hearse to be brought so they will finally reunite. He has promised this much at her death bed (2.II. v.133-134). Here, he issues his orders: “Now fetch the hearse of fair Zenocrate,/ Let it be placed by this my fatal chair/ And serve as parcel of my funeral” (2.V.iii.210-212).

This commitment and devotion remind us of his early promise to offer himself to “fair Zenocrate” and of the intensity of the love he bears for his wife throughout the play. The lines’ seeming nobility relegates to the background the advice with which he has just commanded his son, the new king. However, only nine lines earlier he has issued a much stronger command:

> Let not thy *love* exceed thine honor, son,
> Nor bar thy mind that magnanimity
> That nobly must admit necessity (2.V.iii.199-201)

The cutting irony is immediate; having just advanced this advice Tamburlaine issues the order to bring in the hearse of Zenocrate. The discrepancy sends us back to the moments of Zenocrate's suing for her town and father, and her desire that he abandon the wars and unscathed remain with her.

In these instances, Tamburlaine is no Khalil Sultan who would follow all his wife's suggestions. As Ibn Arabshah has it, Khalil Sultan

> wrought nothing except in accord with her opinion and in governing the realm sought light only from her counsel and let himself be guided by her judgment and made his will subject to her will and this was the height of folly and madness, for how could he be [successful], who suffers his wife to rule him! (S 282-283)

Ibn Arabshah's last words are a close approximation of the Islamic dictum "No nation led by a woman will succeed." Sanders has "happy" for my "successful" which would do if it were not for the long history of the dictum. Ibn Arabshah had in mind public interests and government rather than domestic and family matters. Sultan Khalil is a crowned King who was not wise enough. Against this very background we should read Tamburlaine's rejections of Zenocrate's interventions in matters of policy or wars (at the end of his love soliloquy Tamburlaine touches on those matters).

A cursory survey of these moments reveals the wide difference between Khalil Sultan and Tamburlaine. Despite the great love that binds the two, Tamburlaine makes sure Zenocrate has no say on matters of policy and war decisions, not even when the issue involves their children. Yet, like Shadi Mulk, she too does attempt (but to no avail) to influence matters. As Tamburlaine prepares to sack Damascus, her birth place, she intervenes: "Yet would you have some pity for my sake,/ Because it is my country's and my father's" (1.IV.ii. 123-124). Though she grounds the petition on

her "sake," Tamburlaine's answer is sharp: "Not for the world, Zenocrate, if I have sworn" (1.IV.ii. 125). Later she would couch in "love" her plea for Damascus:

> If any love remain in you, my lord,
>
> Or if my love unto your majesty
>
> May merit favor at your highness' hands
>
> Then raise your siege from fair Damascus' walls,
>
> And with my father take a friendly truce. (1.IV.iv. 66-70)

Still, even love would not do, and the adamant rejection is his inflexible response (1. IV.iv.71-82). His conclusion is even more pointed: "And wouldst thou have me buy thy father's love/ With such a loss? Tell me, Zenocrate" (1.IV.iv.81-82). This priceless loss is the sacking of Damascus to confute geographers who "make triple region in the world," and it is "Here at Damascus will I make the point/ That shall begin the perpendicular" (1.IV.iv.79-80). His only concession to her love is no concession at all: "If with their lives they will be pleased to yield,/ Or may be forced to make me emperor;/ For Egypt and Arabia must be mine" (1.IV.iv.87-89). For Tamburlaine, this is a generous offer, yet it is not for which she has sued.

"Sweet" Tamburlaine would not even listen to his now crowned wife, "bright Zenocrate, the world's eye" (2.I.iv.1). Here, she attempts to persuade him to leave the martial life: "*Sweet* Tamburlaine, when wilt thou leave these arms/ And save thy sacred person from scathe/ And dangerous chances of the wrathful wars" (2.I.iv.9-12)? His "sweet" answer is ready: "When heaven shall cease to move on both the poles" and the ground touches "the horned moon/ And not before my *sweet* Zenocrate" (2.I.iv. 13, 14-15). The answer is then as sweet as both lovers. It is already set at the height of his intense love when he years earlier contemplated beauty, poetry, and love in part one. At that place, his love should not influence his public and policy

decisions; it is improper for his "sex," "discipline of arms and chivalry," "nature," and his name's "terror" to be influenced by beauty and love; he has to subdue both (1.V.ii. 111-120). One has to forge a balance between personal and public functions. Love should not exceed honor.

Between the intensity of his love for his wife and the rejections with which he rewards her intervention lies the difference between Khalil Sultan-Shadi Mulk relation and that of Tamburlaine-Zenocrate. Though Tamburlaine followed the love relation faithfully, he avoided the dangers and culturally held "stupidities" to which love may lead a world conqueror. And the parallel events and details of the two love stories ought to be enough to consider Ibn Arabshah's account as a reasonable source for Marlowe's Zenocrate.

CHAPTER FIVE

Marlowe and Ibn Arabshah

In these four chapters I have highlighted various similarities between Christopher Marlowe's *Tamburlaine I & II* and Ibn Arabshah's account of the life of Timur. The similarities (always attributed to sources other than Ibn Arabshah) covered historically famous incidents such as Timur's rise from his modest social status, caging of Bayazid, trampling to death of the petitioning children, and his physical description. To these major events long recognized by historians and literary critics, I have added other similarities never noted before and, at certain places in the play, baffling to editors and literary critics. Examples of these include fantastic incidents found only in

the two works: gold under water, the Christians of Georgia, the ill-treatment of the Turkish Sultan's family, and the burial of the romantic lovers in one tomb. Throughout the chapters I have also highlighted other previously unrecognized instances such as the absurdities of the play's Mycetes and Ibn Arabshah's Ghiyath al-Din, the strikingly similar details one finds in the death scenes in both works, and the remarkably parallel lines and details of the two love stories. Moreover, I have demonstrated that the correlations of the two works exceed simple general outlines to present themselves at the thematic, structural, and emotional levels. These are best illustrated in the death scenes, the importance of Stars and Planet Conjunctions, and the romantic relationships of Zenocrate/Tamburlaine and Shadi Mulk/Khalil Sultan. This last parallel, I have suggested, provides a plausible answer to the long sought source for Marlowe's Zenocrate.

With all these and other similarities between the two works, two questions come to mind: why has Ibn Arabshah's account suffered long centuries of neglect[21] by literary critics and source-oriented scholarship of Marlowe's play? And how did Marlowe have access to the material one finds in Ibn Arabshah's account? I have no answer to the first, but can assert that the neglect continues. When attending to the major parallels we find in Ibn Arabshah's account and in the play, historian and critics still refer them to other sources (especially Knolles's history of the Turk and the interpretation of Du Bec's Alhacen).

To answer the second, it is perhaps appropriate to wade through the possibilities other critics have so far advanced. Here, it has to be stated at the outset that no one has yet proved a direct or indirect relation between Ibn Arabshah's account and Marlowe in general and his *Tamburlaine* in particular. Critics, instead, have pointed

[21] It became available to the west in Vattier's French translation in 1658, and has been accessible in English since 1936.

out many other possible sources. Howard Miller alone has articulated strong similarities between the two. Few historians and one literary scholar have alluded to the three famous instances where Ibn Arabshah *agrees* with other western and translated eastern sources; these are the cruel fate of the virgins of Damascus, the infamous cage of Bayazid, and the physical features of Tamburlaine. On these and other similarities, Ibn Arabshah's work receives no credit. Instead, historians and literary critics often marvel over how and where Marlowe could have found these and similar instances. They fully agree on one fact: eastern and western sources that, at certain points, seem to inform the play were not available to Marlowe during his life.

Of those critics and historians, no one yet has outdone the conclusion of Goldsmid on the play's possible sources: "Marlowe wrote his 'Tamburlaine' before Golius was born, but may have had some foreknowledge of the existence of the original work which that eminent scholar translated," i.e. Ibn Arabshah's *Timur* (381). Very recently Manz, though voicing the same point, is not as generous in her speculation. The sources for such close similarities in the work of Marlowe and in the work of others cannot be a written manuscript; most likely, these have had their origin in traveling tell-tales and word of mouth: "It is not entirely clear how this information traveled west…. As European emissaries traveled to the court of Temur and Temur's to the courts of Europe, stories may well have spread by word of mouth" (12). Miller himself opts finally for the "word of mouth" theory, having first highlighted Hugh G. Dick's argument and then summarized the two-possibility argument Godshalk advanced in 1974.

Before attending to Miller's plausible thesis, I should say a word about the obvious shortcomings of the arguments of both Dick and Godshalk. Dick believes that Marlowe needed no other source than Richard Knolles's 1603 *Generall Historie of*

the Turkes. To prove his point, he maps out an intricate web of personal relations suggesting that Marlowe could have known Knolles or had access to his work, and thus could have read the material prior to its publication. Although the argument admittedly rests on a "fair presumption," Dick's vehement conclusion renders Knolles's history all that Marlowe needed:

> there is a fair presumption that the poet may have had access to the one history which had all the qualities pitiably lacking in all the sources as far claimed: superb amplitude of detail, extraordinary narrative and dramatic vigor, and an epic sweep of style and conception. (165)[22]

The argument is well presented, and many scholars seem to credit it, yet it remains speculative. Dick has not proven that Marlowe did read Knolles's manuscript before its publication, nor has he proven that Knolles did write the part on Tamerlane and his relation to the Turks before 1586. These remain possibilities not facts.

Godshalk suggests that either Marlowe consulted the same material to which du Bec had access, or Marlowe read du Bec's prior to writing *Tamburlaine II* and probably after writing Part One (174). However, even the excerpts Goldsmid quoted from du Bec render him suspicious as a source. His description of Tamburlaine, among other things, bears no resemblance to the play's protagonist or to Timur. And Du Bec asserts that Timur spoke Arabic when both Ibn Arabshah and Ibn Khaldun confirmed his ignorance of the language and his dependence on a translator to communicate with Ibn Khaldun. Most important of all, serious historians discredited du Bec and his said interpreter Alhacen. Even when his account bears certain similarities

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[22] This very description could have been said of Ibn Arabshah's account of Timur's life. Sir William Jones had already said as much. In relation to Jones, Welsford pointed to the poetics of: "Arabshah's Life of Tamerlane, a work which is mentioned with high approbation by Sir William Jones, in more than one passage, as one of the noblest productions of the Arabian historians. … [Arabs] have, indeed, elegant histories which are adorned with all the graces of poetry. In these histories we meet with images whose features are bold and prominent, striking expressions, beautiful descriptions, and sentiments terminated by words of a similar sound." (314)

to other sources, his story remains suspect. McJannet notes the dubious nature of his account, but at one point writes "Arabshah indirectly supports the authenticity of Jean du Bec's" version. Other than alluding to the cage incident, she presents no details for this statement. McJannet nevertheless does say "The influence of Arabshah in England is probably slight" (404).

In the absence, so far, of a material document or source that relates Marlowe's play to the details one finds in the account of Ibn Arabshah, the "word of mouth" theory remains the only plausible direction. Miller's thesis adopts this theory and advances strong possibilities for how and where Marlowe might have heard certain accounts of Timur's life. As early as 1549, the regulations of Cambridge University demanded that "Master of Arts" students learn Hebrew, and Marlowe could have studied this language, and thus had access to "the stories of the east" through *personal* contacts with his instructors in Hebrew. At that time many Jews were fleeing Spanish persecutions and seeking university positions in England. Miller names two in particular (Phillip Ferdinand and Franciscus Raphelengius) and leaves the possibility open for other individuals or venues. Since the influence of those he names falls within the scope of personal contacts and "word of mouth," it is impossible to (dis)prove. The suggestion, however, opens a number of possibilities.

Both Muslims and Jews were persecuted and both had to flee Spain; the two groups enjoyed tolerant and friendly relations. And in their ordeal, they became even closer. That they exchanged ideas and stories, among other things, is a fact. In North Africa, Jews had had their own well-known quarters and been very active in trade and politics (see Ungerer). In the wake of the Spanish exodus some Jews held influential positions in the Ottoman courts, where Ibn Arabshah worked few decades earlier. Among many others, an ideal example would be Joseph Nassi (a named source for

Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*) who also had a constant relation with the courts of Europe. His cousins were physicians in the court of the Ottoman Sultan.

Of all places, the Ottoman courts would have had an early copy or oral report of Ibn Arabshah's account. The reasons for such possession are fairly strong: the account is critical of Timur's wars and actions and would be thus much appreciated by the Ottomans; Ibn Arabshah himself had worked for Mehmet I, son of Bayazid; he also had been part of the intellectual milieu there; the Ottoman Sultans and court elites would have heard of and sought the account. Again, the most likely places to have access easily to Ibn Arabshah's written or oral account (Damascus, Jerusalem, and Cairo) were Ottoman territories; even Fez, the north African flourishing cultural center of the time, was strongly tied to the Ottoman empire. Golius himself in the 1620s brought the manuscript from Morocco. And to these and to the 1454 Ottoman capital Constantinople, western travelers, diplomats, and church missionaries were frequent visitors.

Many are the possibilities that Marlowe had heard these stories. Learned men had frequented those areas where Ibn Arabshah had lived, and the list of those interested in the Arab world and language is illimitable. One may single out Giordano Bruno (with his interest in astrology and world governance); Marlowe certainly knew him, having alluded to his name in his *Faustus*, and both worked as diplomatic (and secret) agents under one director (see Dailey). Such westerners were constant travelers to Constantinople, Jerusalem, Cairo and other eastern cultural and trade centers that, in all likelihood, had available the manuscript and/or its oral contents.

The other enhancing possibility is the era's western compulsion for learning Arabic and sacred missions of translating the Quran so that Christians could peacefully convert all Muslims. The efforts of Juan de Segovia and Nicholas de Cusa,

among many others, are only a few examples of this wide-spread interest. The inauguration of Roman Catholic colleges for Maronite Christian students from Arabic-speaking backgrounds and the extensive attention to Arabic and Hebrew, presented the need for texts and teachers of Arabic. Hamilton, Toomer, Burman and Mann have traced and detailed the impact of these diverse interests. Marlowe himself, prior to writing the play, traveled to European places known for their interest in Arabic; at times he was mysteriously absent from his university for extended periods (once for half term; a second for seven weeks), presumably on secret missions to Europe (Dailey 155). Park Honan confirms that in 1584-1585, Marlowe was absent from Cambridge for thirty-two and a half weeks; he was in France and the Lowlands (147).

Within this widely diversified scope, Ibn Arabshah's manuscript will have served as an ideal historical account and a text for teaching and learning Arabic. Sir William Jones, commenting admiringly first on the work of Golius and his teacher Erpenius, then on those seeking the mastery of Arabic, would write:

> the palm of glory in this branck of literature is due to *Golius*, whose works are equally profound and elegant; so perspicuous in method, that they may always be consulted without fatigue, and read without languor, yet so abundant in matter, that any man who shall begin with his noble edition of the Grammar compiled by his master *Erpenius*, and proceed with the help of his incomparable dictionary to study his *History* of *Taimur* by *Ibni Arabshah*, and shall make himself complete master of that sublime work, will understand the learned Arabic better than the deepest scholar at *Constantinople* or at *Mecca*." (4-5)

Whatever the case might have been, certain facts stand out: the detailed similarities and emotional impact between Marlowe's play and Ibn Arabshah's *'Aja'ib almaqdur fi Nawa'ib Timur* are strong and many; some of these appear only in the two works

(as far as I can assert at this time). I have diversified my examples to cover famous, well-known cases and obscure and previously unrecognized incidents and allusions. With these, I cannot help but assume that Marlowe had a highly authentic source for Ibn Arabshah's account, be that source a skilled interpreter, translated manuscript, or Jewish professor conversant in Arabic who had access to the account.

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