

The Portrait of Amir Timur in the Biographical Work of Justin Marozzi *Tamerlane: Sword of Islam, Conqueror of the World*

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Shahrizoda Sayidova. THE PORTRAIT OF AMIR TIMUR IN THE BIOGRAPHICAL WORK OF JUSTIN MAROZZI TAMERLANE: SWORD OF ISLAM, CONQUEROR OF THE WORLD

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Abstract. This paper discusses portraying of Amir Temur in Justin Marozzi’s book *Tamerlane: Sword of Islam, Conqueror of the World*. In this paper, our analyses aim to assist readers or researchers interested in understanding the character of Amir Temur, as portrayed by Justin Marozzi in his book. In this article, both qualitative and analytical methods were employed to analyze the portrayal of Amir Temur. This book is a detailed biography of the historical figure Tamerlane (Timur), who was a prominent Central Asian conqueror in the late 14th century. The book details Tamerlane’s military strategies and campaigns, highlighting his tactical genius and the vast territories he conquered, including parts of Persia, India, and Russia. Marozzi discusses Tamerlane’s influence on the regions he ruled, including his contributions to art and architecture, and how his legacy shaped subsequent empires. The book is written in an engaging narrative style, making it accessible to both general readers and those with a keen interest in history. Marozzi combines academic rigor with storytelling to bring Tamerlane’s life to life. Tamerlane’s selection as a main hero in literature stems from his multifaceted character, historical significance, and the rich thematic possibilities his life presents for exploration in various narrative forms. *Tamerlane: Sword of Islam, Conqueror of the World* offers a comprehensive and nuanced portrait of one of history’s most fascinating figures, making it a valuable resource for anyone interested in medieval history, military strategy, or the cultural history of Central Asia

Keywords: historical figure – Amir Temur, comprehensive portrayal, cultural contributions, military strategy, multifaceted character, historical context.

Шахризода Саидова. ПОРТРЕТЪТ НА АМИР ТИМУР В БИОГРАФИЧНАТА ТВОРБА НА ДЖЪСТИН МАРОЦИ „ТАМЕРЛАН: МЕЧЪТ НА ИСЛЯМА, ЗАВОЕВАТЕЛЯТ НА СВЕТА“.

Резюме. Тази статия обсъжда изобразяването на Амир Тимур в книгата на Джъстин Марози „Тамерлан: мечът на исляма, завоевателят на света“. В статията нашите анализи имат за цел да помогнат на читатели или изследователи, които се интересуват от разбирането на характера на Амир Тимур, както е представен от Джъстин Марози в книгата му. В тази статия бяха използвани както качествени, така и аналитични методи за проучване на образа на Амир Тимур. Тази книга е подробна биография на историческата фигура Тамерлан (Тимур), който е бил виден средноазиатски завоевател в края на XIV в. Книгата описва в детайли военните стратегии и кампании на Тамерлан, подчертавайки неговия тактически гений и огромните територии, които е завладял, наред с части от Персия, Индия и Русия. Марози обсъжда влиянието на Тамерлан върху регионите, които управлява, включително неговия принос към изкуството и архитектурата и как наследството му оформя следващите империи. Книгата е написана в увлекателен наративен стил, което я прави достъпна както за обикновените читатели, така и за тези с голям интерес към историята. Марози съчетава академична строгост с разказване на истории, за да вдъхне живот на живота на Тамерлан. Изборът на Тамерлан като главен герой в литературата произтича от неговия многостранен характер, историческо значение и богатите тематични възможности, които животът му предоставя за изследване в различни наративни форми. „Тамерлан: мечът на исляма, завоевателят на света“ предлага изчерпателен и нюансиран портрет на една от най-завладяващите фигури в историята, което го прави ценен ресурс за всеки, който се интересува от средновековна история, военна стратегия или културна история на Централна Азия.

Ключови думи: историческа личност – Амир Тимур, цялостно изобразяване, културен принос, военна стратегия, многостранен характер, исторически контекст.

Research/Научно изследване

Introduction

In the world literature, many studies have been done about the life and work of great historical figures, their activities, the rich spiritual heritage they left to the future generations, and their contributions to the development of science. It is natural that a historical figure like Amir Timur, who is known to the whole world for his power and military strategy, should be the focus of attention of artistic publicists, artists, writers, poets, playwrights, artists, sculptors, musicians, pedagogues and others. The personality of Amir Timur has been studied by many researchers of the world, and his actions and activities have been analyzed and interpreted in different ways. Even today, there are many researchers who study his activity more deeply and conduct research.

As we know a biographical novel is a work of fiction that is based on the life of a real person. The author uses historical facts and events to create a story that imagines the inner thoughts, emotions, and experiences of the individual. Justin Marozzi is a biography travel writer and journalist. He travelled in Central Asia and explored history of this place. He wrote about historical events and biography of well-known historical people of Central Asia. He learns the life and legacy of the Central Asian historical figure – Amir Timur. The novel explores Tamerlane's rise to power, his military campaigns, and his enduring impact on the regions he conquered. This book includes the events from Amir Timur's birth to his death (that is from 1336 to 1405). Justin Marozzi's this work provides a detailed and engaging account of Tamerlane's life, drawing from historical sources and narratives to present a vivid portrayal of this enigmatic figure.

This article may be useful for readers who want to learn about prominent people of Central Asia and search information about them. Through this biography, readers gain insight into the complex character of Tamerlane and the far-reaching consequences of his conquests. It also examines the impact of his rule on the regions he conquered and the lasting legacy he left behind. Through detailed research and historical accounts, the book offers a comprehensive portrayal of Tamerlane as a formidable leader and his influence on Central Asia and beyond. This book serves as a valuable resource for anyone interested in the history of Central Asia, military conquests, or the enduring impact of great rulers throughout history. This paper can serve as a book recommendation and analysis of a writer's approach to the character for the readers. Furthermore, in the following context we try to analyze the image of Amir Timur from the eyes of a historian and scientist of Western literature and history.

Literature review

Amir Timur has been studied by Western historians through various lenses, including military strategy, cultural impact, and his role in the history of Central Asia. Tamerlane was a formidable figure in history, and literature often seeks to capture the essence of influential leaders. His military conquests and the vast empire he built make him a compelling subject for exploration. Many literary works use Tamerlane's story to convey moral or ethical lessons about power and ambition. The analysis of Tamerlane's accomplishments and the Timurid era has significantly gained from contributions made by scholars, historians, and authors from various nations. Prominent English authors include Beatrice Forbes Manz, Roy Stier, Justin Marozzi, Harold Lamb, Hilda Hookham, among others. The theme of great figures of the East in Western literature has been studied in the studies of F. Sulaymonov, N. Komilov, Sh. Karimov, H. Karomatov, M. Kholbekov, B. Ermatov, A. Tursunov, F. Jurakulov, H. Boltaboyev, U. Muhibova, M. Yakubov, etc. They analyzed Justin Marozzi's work named *Tamerlane: Sword of islam, conqueror of the world* as part of their research, expressed their opinions, and published their own articles on the subject.

Methods and materials

In the current article qualitative and analytical approaches were used in order to interpret the image of Amir Timur in the work of Justin Marozzi *The Sword of Islam, the Conqueror of the World*. The topic at present has been mainly researched using discourse analysis method, which involve detailed analysis of an image in context of historical documentary narrative, taking into account the author's views on the hero during historical events. Through this article, it is possible to further study the character of the historical figure Amir Timur and analyze enough information about his activities, policies, his military strategy and the empire he created in the eyes of the Justin Marozzi.

Discussion and results

In this paper our analyses can help readers or researchers who want to learn the character of Amir Timur, how Justin Marozzi described him in his book "Tamerlane: sword of islam, conqueror of the world". Now let's take a look at why Amir Timur was chosen as a main hero for writing a biographical, historical novel. Amir Timur has been the subject of various novels and works of literature, particularly in Central Asia and the wider Islamic world. Additionally, Tamerlane has appeared as a character in historical fiction and novels set in the medieval period.

Authors have often used Timur as a backdrop for stories of adventure, intrigue, and political maneuvering. The era in which he lived provide fertile ground for storytelling. In Central Asian and Persian literature, Tamerlane has also been a prominent figure in epic poems and historical narratives. These works often emphasize his military prowess, his role as a patron of the arts, and his impact on the cultural and political landscape of the region. Tamerlane's complex and often controversial legacy has made him a compelling figure for authors exploring themes of power, conquest, and the intersection of history and myth in their literary works.

The image of Sahibkiran is interpreted differently in the prose of English literature of the 20th century. Some writers write in a hostile spirit towards him, while others, on the contrary, focus on his positive aspects. In addition, some authors try to be objective and choose a middle way. In English literature, you can find works about Amir Timur, both negative and positive terms. By this time, you can find more prose works about Amir Timur than dramas. There are many works about Sahibkiran in different languages of the world: chronicles, historical novels, documentaries, scientific works, and scientific fictions (Nasrullojeva, 2024: 2)

English writers such as Hilda Hookham, Beatrice Forbes Manz, Roy Stier, Harold Lamb and Justin Marozzi have written their own documentary scientific works about Amir Timur, describing his life and activities.

Justin Marozzi, an English historian, journalist and travel writer was born in 1970. He graduated with a degree in history from Cambridge University in 1993,

received a degree in broadcast journalism from Cardiff University, and a diploma in international relations from the University of Pennsylvania, and was awarded a "Thouron" scholarship. His work dedicated to Amir Timur, titled "Tamerlane: Sword of Islam, Conqueror of the World", was written in 2004 and consists of 449 pages. According to Wikipedia, this book is a highly regarded biographical work about the Mongol conqueror Timur, and "The Sunday Telegraph" listed it as a "Book of the Year". "Booklist" described this book as "[A] fine performance of evoking the past and present of one of history's most lurid empire builders."

The book begins with a list of illustrations, maps, Timur's genealogical tree, acknowledgments, and notes on spelling and terminology. The main body of the book is divided into 12 chapters, covering the period from Amir Timur's birth to his death. Additionally, the appendices include a chronology of Timur's family and a timeline of 14th-century events in Europe. As quoted by the publisher, "Publishers Weekly" described the book as "An exceptional account of the emperor's life."

Justin Marozzi has studied Amir Timur, tracing the paths Timur took and exploring numerous cities where he waged his campaigns. As a result of his research, he authored the book "Tamerlane." One of the most remarkable features of his work is the maps he created depicting the various states in Central Asia during the Timurid era along with the routes of Timur's military campaigns. His insights into how perceptions of the Timurid era shifted during the Soviet period and following the creation of the independent Republic of Uzbekistan are also significant. This book is not a historical novel, it is considered a documentary travel book.

Justin Marozzi titled his book as *Tamerlane: Sword of Islam, conqueror of the world because* it reflects the central theme of the book, which is the life and conquests of Tamerlane who established the Timurid Empire in the 14th century. Amir Timur was a devout Muslim and saw himself as a leader of Islam, using his military prowess to spread the faith and establish a powerful Islamic empire. The title "Sword of Islam" symbolizes Tamerlane's role as a warrior and defender of the faith, highlighting his military campaigns and his efforts to unite and strengthen the Muslim world under his rule.

By choosing this title, Marozzi aims to capture the essence of Tamerlane's life and legacy, emphasizing his religious motivations and the significant impact he had on the Islamic world during his time. In this biography work, the author explores the complex and multifaceted character of Amir Timur, shedding light on his military achievements, cultural contributions, and lasting impact on the world.

Justin Marozzi considers that the most controversial of sources relating to Timur's life are the supposedly Ibn Arabshah's *Tamerlane or Timur the Great Amir*. This work by Ibn Arabshah was written in a spirit of hostility towards Timur, and Marozzi was influenced by this work, and the author cited many quotes from Ibn Arabshah's work and analyzed them.

What makes this work different from other English writers who have written about Timur is that Justin Marozzi's work is both scientific and travelogue. He not

only presents historical facts, but also describes the current appearance of the country where Timur lived during his travels, the monuments built by Timur, historical monuments reflecting the Timurid era, and the cultural heritage left by Timur, as well as information he obtained through interviews during his travels.

The book *Tamerlane, Sword of islam, conqueror of the world* includes the following:

- List of Illustrations;
- List of maps;
- Timur’s Family Tree;
- Acknowledgements;
- A note on spelling and terminology (names of places and people).

In the first chapter of the book named *Beginnings on the steppe: 1336–1370*, Justin Marozzi describes Tamerlane as follows:

– “Lord of the Fortunate Conjunctions (of the Planets, a reference to the auspicious position of the stars at his birth); Conqueror of the World; Emperor of the Age; Unconquered Lord of the Seven Climes. But one name suited him above all others; Timur, Scourge of God” (Marozzi, 2004: 2).

One of the key aspects of Marozzi’s portrayal of Amir Timur is his emphasis on the conqueror’s military prowess. Throughout the book, Marozzi vividly describes the epic battles and conquests that defined Amir Timur’s reign, highlighting his strategic genius and relentless pursuit of power. From his early campaigns in Central Asia to his conquests in Persia, India, and beyond, Marozzi paints a vivid picture of a formidable warrior who left a lasting mark on the history of the region. In addition to his military achievements, Marozzi also explores the cultural and intellectual legacy of Amir Timur. He describes the conqueror’s patronage of the arts and sciences, his promotion of trade and commerce, and his efforts to create a flourishing cultural center in Samarkand. Marozzi highlights how Amir Timur’s reign was marked by a vibrant exchange of ideas and innovations, leading to a period of cultural renaissance in Central Asia.

Furthermore, Marozzi offers a nuanced and balanced portrayal of Amir Timur as a ruler, highlighting both his ruthless tactics and his efforts to promote stability and prosperity in his empire. He delves into the complexities of Amir Timur’s character, portraying him as a complex and enigmatic figure who wielded power with a mix of brutality and sophistication. Through his detailed research and engaging narrative style, Marozzi brings to life the contradictions and complexities of this legendary conqueror.

One of the most striking aspects of Marozzi’s portrayal of Tamerlane is his ability to humanize this larger-than-life figure. While Tamerlane is often remembered for his military prowess and ruthless conquests, Marozzi goes beyond the stereotypes to reveal the man behind the legend. He explores Tamerlane’s personal motivations, his relationships with his contemporaries, and the cultural and political

context in which he operated. This approach allows readers to gain a deeper understanding of Tamerlane as a multifaceted individual rather than a one-dimensional historical person (Эрматов, 2017:184).

Moreover, Marozzi provides valuable insights into Tamerlane's impact on the Islamic world and beyond. By examining Tamerlane's religious beliefs, his treatment of conquered territories, and his interactions with other rulers, Marozzi offers a nuanced perspective on the complex intersection of religion, politics, and power during Tamerlane's era. This exploration sheds light on Tamerlane's enduring legacy and his lasting influence on the regions he conquered.

In addition to his meticulous attention to historical detail, Marozzi's writing style is engaging and accessible, making *Tamerlane: Sword of Islam, Conqueror of the World* a compelling read for both scholars and general readers. Through vivid descriptions and evocative storytelling, Marozzi brings Tamerlane's world to life, immersing readers in the tumultuous events and larger-than-life personalities of the time. The author explains Tamerlane's entering to the world history with the following definition:

“Whatever the harbingers of greatness, however tough his childhood, Timur vaulted out of obscurity, and into the official histories, in 1360 with a move which exemplified his flair for timing. It was characteristically astute and audacious” (Marozzi, 2004: 29).

In the “Acknowledgements” section of the book, J. Marozzi mentions the names of several Uzbek scholars who helped him to find a lot of information about Amir Timur during his travels around Uzbekistan and thanked them. The book cannot be called a historical novel, it is more like a scientific work and a travelogue. Because the author, while covering the life and activities of Amir Timur, also described his impressions from his travels between the cities where he lived and was born. It is difficult to call this work a work written in the spirit of goodwill towards Sahibkiran. Because it is noticeable that the author relied on literature written in a spirit of hostility towards Sahibkiran as his main references.

Marozzi also excels in his examination of the historical context in which Tamerlane operated. He explores the complex interplay between religion, politics, and power during Tamerlane's era, highlighting how these factors influenced his decisions and shaped the regions he conquered. Analysis of the author provides valuable insights into the dynamics of power in the medieval Islamic world, shedding light on Tamerlane's lasting impact on the regions he ruled. The book is meticulously researched, drawing on a wide range of primary and secondary sources, which adds to its credibility and scholarly value.

At the ending part of the book the author writes these sentences about Tamerlane and his empire:

“In the West Timur has been all but forgotten. Those who know his name perhaps remember the fire and brimstone of Marlowe’s play about a tyrant who styled himself “The Scourge and Wrath of God/The only fear and terror of the world”. But to all but a few, the greatest Islamic empire-builder in history, the man who joined Alexander the Great and Gengiz Khan in the trio of the world’s greatest conquerors, remains little more than that: a name. The city he had built so brilliantly and decorated so lovingly, once the envy of the world, lies in a neglected southern outpost of the old Soviet empire” (Marozzi, 2004: 413).

The passage suggests that Timur is not well-remembered in Western history, contrasting his prominence in other parts of the world, particularly in Islamic history. This highlights a broader theme of how certain historical figures are celebrated or overlooked depending on cultural perspectives. The mention of Christopher Marlowe’s play *Tamburlaine the Great* indicates that while Timur may be recognized in a literary context, this recognition is tied to a dramatic portrayal of tyranny rather than a nuanced understanding of his achievements. The phrase “fire and brimstone” evokes a sense of fear and violence associated with his rule, which may overshadow his contributions. The passage positions Timur alongside other renowned conquerors like Alexander the Great and Genghis Khan, suggesting that he was one of the most significant empire-builders in history. This comparison serves to elevate his status and remind readers of his historical importance. These sentences convey a sense of lament for Timur’s forgotten legacy in the West, urging readers to recognize and appreciate the complexity and significance of his contributions to history. It invites reflection on how history is remembered and who gets to be celebrated or forgotten.

Information the author wants to convey to the reader about Amir Timur is as follows:

- Chronology of Timur’s life
- Map of the territories conquered by Timur
- Photographs of buildings and miniatures associated with Timur, collected by the author during his travel
- Quotes from previous historical books dedicated to Timur’s life and activity.
- Folktales about Sahibkiran
- Analysis of the impact of Timur’s invasions on socio-political processes

Conclusion

The study of historical figures enriches our understanding of history and its relevance to contemporary life, fostering a deeper appreciation for the complexities of human experience. Analyzing the actions and decisions of historical figures can provide valuable lessons about leadership, ethics, and human behavior. Their suc-

cesses and failures can inform contemporary decision-making. I can say the book *Tamerlane: Sword of Islam, Conqueror of the World* is a compelling and nuanced analysis of one of history's most enigmatic figures.

Our analysis of this book will help to reveal understanding of Tamerlane's role in history, his personality, and his military prowess. But it is difficult to say that this book tells the true historical truth about Timur, because the book was written under the influence of literature written in a spirit of hostility towards Timur. Unlike other works about Timur, this book is enriched with a lot of data analysis and attempts to reveal the image of Timur through quotes from several authors.

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