



Stages of The Study of Amir Temur's Life and State-Building Activities in German Historiography From The 15th to The 19th Centuries

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Abstract

This article examines German historians from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries who wrote about Amir Temur, and the (often competing) ideas of state-building they derived from his life. While German scholars had begun addressing the topic as early as the 1980s, a comprehensive account of the evolution of their interest in the subject over the decades had yet to be done. Through historical comparison and an examination of seminal scholarship, it uncovers the primary social, political, and intellectual forces which helped to shape German perceptions of Temur. The results illustrate four distinct levels of interest. This early phase was substantially shaped by accounts of eyewitnesses like Hans Schiltberger. In time the expansion of humanism with the advent of enlightened monarchs promoted a more nuanced awareness of Temur's rule. His life and work were of renewed interest in the nineteenth century, with Romanticism and the expansion of Oriental studies. Eventually, as Germany progressed towards unification, historians analysed Temurian state-making in more detail. In this view German interpretations of Eastern figures tend to mirror their own internal dialogues on power, identity and historical commemoration, deepening our appreciation of how cultures see each other across time.

Keywords: Amir Temur, Battle of Ankara, Humanism, Age of Enlightenment, Frederick II, Romanticism, Historiographical Schools, Oriental Studies.

1. Introduction

Researchers from around the world have been focused on the life of Amir Temur and the state-building heritage he left. These accomplishments in politics, military strategy and administration cemented him as one of the greatest leaders of the Middle Ages. Although a number of countries have written more comprehensively about Temur's significance on the world stage, the first German historians started writing about his personality and administrative model as far back as the fifteenth century. Some of their interpretations reflected the changing intellectual climate of Europe, including humanism, Enlightenment thought, Romanticism and the rise of Oriental studies [1]. These changes enabled Germanists to reframe discussion of Temur from a solely military context to other things like leadership, state building and cultural transfer.

While individual works revealed the place of Temur in German historiography, the changing interest throughout the centuries is still underexplored. The specific nature of historical perception and political context, or how both influence scholarship and cross-cultural understanding have yet to be systematically examined [2]. To date, scholarship on German writers in Uzbekistan has focused on single contributions, without analysing how socio-economic and political transformations in Germany influenced representations of Temur. This research literature fills in the gaps by reviewing all of the

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major historical writings, comparing and contrasting scholarly traditions of each era, and illustrating how larger intellectual trends influenced interpretations of Temur as a person and ruler [3].

The research utilizes a historical-analytical approach, focusing on text comparison, historiographical assessment and contextual analysis. In this way, it seeks to outline the phases of German academic interest, the changes of thematic attention and the elements that promoted the close engagement with Temur's legacy. It is expected this analysis will demonstrate a visible connection between the evolution of both the political and cultural life of Germany and the shifts in German perception of Temur. Results demonstrate how the interest in Temur evolved from mere curiosity to a more complex understanding of his governing style and administrative vision [4]. This has significant ramifications for the academic study of cross-cultural historical memory, in that, in the case of Hitler, it shows that, in addition to facts, the interpretations are influenced not only by the historical actors, but also by the challenges, needs and intellectual atmosphere of the society in which they are analyzed.

2. Research Method

Through a historical-analytical methodology, this study follows the transformation of German historians' views on life and state-building of Amir Temur from the 15th to 19th centuries. The research is primarily based on close reading of primary sources including memoirs, early chronicles, translation of Temur's laws and works authored by major German humanists, Enlightenment thinkers, Romantic writers and orientalist [5]. These texts were set against early historiographical studies from the later nineteenth century in order to examine how interpretation had changed in the over three decades since their composition. Earlier chapters present the wider politics, society and thinking of the period in Germany as each interest in Temur drew on the unfolding of, for instance, humanism, rational despotism, Romantic philosophy and Oriental studies. Through a synthesis of textual comparison and contextual reading, the study traces the development of scholarly sentiment towards Temur and assesses the variables that catalyzed more thorough examinations of his rule and statecraft [6]. This enables us to emphasize recurring themes, continuity and change in emphasis, and ultimately provides a rationale for the varying significance that Temur held for German historiography over the centuries.

3. Result

Uzbekistan is situated in the middle of the East, which have been a transit point between two parts of the world, or between the West and the East. Not only in trade and economic cooperation, but also in political and cultural relations, this territory has served as a key link. The ancient Greeks and Romans saw the east as a land of much mystery [7]. At the same time, Greek and Roman historians quoted some information about the states of Central Asia, their socio-economic, cultural life.

Since the Arab Caliphate has become interesting for Christian countries. This was because it housed Jerusalem, a supposed holy place for Christians. Those who had come to pray in Jerusalem and other sacred sites in Palestine would leave their written accounts. Partial letters, which one could read naturally. Well before the days of the Crusades, the pilgrims who went on these journeys to Jerusalem were one of the earliest sources of information about the East for Europeans. Through the Crusades, Europeans learned more about the Middle East and other Eastern lands [8].

As the Mongols advanced from the east toward Europe in the 13th century, Europeans were forced by circumstances to make contact with them. This is proven by the reality that the Christian world actually sent multiple missions of diplomacy at the Mongols. Trade between the West and the East grew strong in the 12th–14th centuries, and the southern German cities of Augsburg, Ulm and Nuremberg played an active role in these trade relations. By the middle of the 14th century the Ottoman Empire had consolidated its presence in Asia Minor and was beginning to menace Southeastern Europe. Consequently, almost all ties of the West with the countries of the East were cut off. Shortly thereafter, the Ottoman Turks threatened the lands of the German Empire. Sigismund, then King of Hungary, and shortly after the King of the Holy Roman Empire attempted to rally Europeans for a common war against the Turks. A massive engagement occurred on 25 September 1396, with the Europeans suffering a catastrophic defeat at the hands of the Ottoman Turks. Hans Schiltberger; the German knight also took part in this battle. Bayezid Yıldırım (1396–1402) captured him, and he remained in Yıldırım's court. Hans Schiltberger was captured after the battle of Ankara in 1402 between Amir Temur and Bayezid Yıldırım. Schiltberger was with Amir Temur and the Timurids from 1402–1412 [9]. He returned to Germany in the year of 1427, writing memoirs of his experiences. During Temur's times the news about Amir Temur

could come to Germany through the Italian commerce. The German public gained deeper and wider knowledge on Amir Temur from Hans Schiltberger's memoirs [10].

In the second half of the 15th century, humanistic ideas became widely spread in Germany. Italian humanists played a significant role in the dissemination of these ideas in Germany. German humanists, placing the individual at the center of historical study, began to pay great attention to the history of prominent historical figures as a key factor in the development of the state and society. The main purpose of German humanists in studying historical personalities was not only to gain personal life experience, but also to strengthen the state, ensure national unity, and enhance the role of rulers.

One of the humanist historians in Germany who wrote about Amir Temur was Hartmann Schedel. In 1493, he authored the work *"Liber Chronicarum: Book of Chronicles and Historical Events from the Creation of the World to the Present Day."* In this work, Schedel discusses Amir Temur's origin, personal qualities, military campaigns, and ruling capabilities [11].

From the early 16th century, the Holy Roman Empire began to emerge as a powerful state in Europe. Germany was seen as a potential shield against the Ottoman Turks in defending Europe. The emperors of Germany also sought to bring the Near Eastern territories under German influence. In most European countries, the Ottoman Turks were perceived as an invincible force. To counter this perception, the German emperors initiated various propaganda efforts among the population. One of the tools of this propaganda was the theater. On German stages, plays began to depict Amir Temur, as well as Amir Temur and Bayezid Yıldırım. Through the figure of Amir Temur, the idea that the Turks could be defeated was instilled among the people. As a result, interest in studying the personality of Amir Temur significantly increased.

In the first half of the 17th century, the event known as the "Thirty Years' War," interpreted as a national tragedy that shook Germany, took place. As a result of this war, scientific and scholarly activities in Germany came to a halt. Gradually, absolute monarchies began to form in Germany. The second half of the 17th century through the 18th century in German history is referred to as the "Era of Absolutism of the German Principalities." Princes who were establishing absolute monarchies in their territories began to act as patrons of science. This process was particularly evident in the regions of Bavaria, Saxony, and Prussia. German universities, especially Leipzig and Göttingen, began to pay special attention to the study of history.

In particular, King Frederick II of Prussia protected the sciences as never before; he even authored several books of his own. It is worth mentioning that next to Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar, Amir Timur was also among the objects of his interest [12]. This interest was also documented, as *The Laws of Timur (Temur Tuzuklari)* was translated into German in 1781 during his reign. The Göttingen School of History [13].

Romanticism became the leading current in the evolution of science in Germany from the first decades of the 19th century. The past, in fact, was brought to life by the Romantic. This intellectual current inspired new attention to history, recognition of past traditions of historical study, and prepared the way for the emergence of Romantic historiography and archaeology. Romantics aspired to perform exegesis on past cultures and civilizations, and devised novel methods for approaching them. This spurred on new ways of doing historical research. More specifically, Romanticism contributed significantly to the development of Oriental studies. Even this period of representatives opened new doors for the history of the East and underwrote, in graduated secularization, the empirical historical basis for the historical-critical enlightenment of later generations. Johann Wolfgang Goethe who is one of the most brilliant poets of German Romanticism also wrote about the personality of Amir Temur in his book *West-East Divan*.

Among German Orientalists, Joseph Hammer von Purgstall in his research on Eastern history addressed the life of Amir Temur, his state-building activities, and military campaigns. It can be observed that he corrected some of the inaccurate information circulating in Europe regarding Amir Temur's history by referring to historical sources [14].

In 1845, the *German Oriental Society* was established in Germany. In 1847, the *Journal of the German Oriental Society* began publication. This development provided a new impetus for the study of Eastern history in Germany.

In 1848, the revolution that took place in Germany highlighted the necessity of reforming German society. Although the revolution ended in failure, there was a recognized need to establish a just society and to create a unified state that would consolidate the German nation. To achieve national unification, historians began to study the history of various states in depth, with particular attention to Eastern history. The study of Islamic history, Persian history, and the history of the Ottoman Turks reached a new level during this period. Extensive research was conducted at German historiographical schools in Berlin, Göttingen, Leipzig, and Heidelberg. Prominent German historians of this era, such as Georg Weber and

Friedrich Schlosser, emphasized in their works that Amir Temur was not only a great military leader but also a capable statesman [15][16]. The German Orientalist Gustav Weil conducted a number of research studies on Amir Temur in his works on Islamic history.

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

In conclusion, it can be noted that the study of Amir Temur's life and state-building activities in German historiography from the 15th to the 19th centuries occurred in four main stages. The first stage (15th century – first half of the 17th century) is characterized by the emergence of historical interest in Europe following Amir Temur's victory at the Battle of Ankara. The second stage (second half of the 17th century – 18th century) is marked by increased attention to Amir Temur in Germany, following the rise of the political ideas of the "enlightened monarchs." The third stage (first half of the 19th century) encompasses a period in which Romantic ideas in Western European literature and art led to heightened interest in Amir Temur's military genius and leadership skills. The fourth stage (second half of the 19th century) is explained by a deeper study of Amir Temur's experience in establishing a centralized state and his activities as a statesman, during the period of intensified political unification in Germany.

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