THESIS

COMPARISON AND CONTRAST OF THE HISTORICAL
FAMOUSNESS AND FAMOUSNESS THROUGHOUT
THEMURALS

Thesis Approved

By

METER M. BOKOSHRANA PROGRAM: M.D.

Paul Smith, J. Major Adviser

Richard Harrington, J. Dean

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THE COMPARISON AND CONTRAST OF THE HISTORICAL
TAMERLANE AND MARLOWE'S DRAMATIC
TAMBURLAINE

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The title of this research is "The Comparison and Contrast of the Historical Tamerlane and Marlowe's Dramatic Tamburlaine." The thesis problem involved in this study is, "How did Christopher Marlowe create the tragic hero in his drama? How did he raise Tamburlaine from the world of historical reality to the universal realm of artistic reality?"

In this research, it is important to know something about the influences which colored living in 1500 to 1600 England, and also something about the life of Christopher Marlowe, "a serious student of Renaissance freethinking," and "Shakespeare's greatest predecessor in English drama."

The English Renaissance was a period of rapid change. This Renaissance came to England around the time of Henry VII and in the next century spread its influence over all aspects of culture—scholarship, literature, science, art, architecture, and music.

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1 R. H. Perkinson, "Christopher Marlowe," Thought, XXIII (June, 1948), 343.

It has been generally felt that Marlowe's play, Tamburlaine, was an expression, more vivid and typical than any other, of the energy and vitality which marks the Renaissance. The representative man of this epoch is Tamburlaine.  

Henry VIII was the cause of the greatest social and religious unrest. Elizabeth, Henry VIII's daughter, promulgated her father's policies and became the champion of European Protestantism. Although religious intolerance was acute, Queen Elizabeth so steered her course that her administration left the English Church upon a firm foundation.

Politically England was undergoing an even greater change. The power of great noblemen was gradually passing away, and conditions were forming themselves for the transfer of this power to commoners.

Among the Queen's favorites were men whose families were of no importance. It was an age of self-made men.

Another political change was the policy of balance of power in world affairs. Spain and France, England's great rivals, both had just and considerable claims upon the English throne. These relationships were further complicated by England's becoming Protestant and by her

3 Hallett Smith, "Tamburlaine and the Renaissance," Philological Quarterly, XIII (June, 1942), 333.

rivalry for colonial possessions in the New World. England knew that she could never withstand a combined attack of her rivals. Therefore, to play one against the other was of supreme importance in English diplomacy, which Queen Elizabeth shrewdly applied.

This rebirth was more than a revival of interest in classical antiquity; it was an intangible but universal spirit of freedom, of novelty, of living,

_"a thirst for seeking out what was new and stimulating either in geographical realms or in those of art and thought. It was, in brief, the dawn of the modern world."_

And Eleanor Clark says that into the vortex of this period were finally drawn most of the major issues of European politics—the strangling wars between Catholics and Protestants, the rise of the Dutch Republic, the execution of Mary Stuart and the revenge of the Holy League, the struggle between England and Spain for naval supremacy, the conflicting policies of expansion, and the absorbing riddle of the English succession.

Into this spirit of Renaissance, Christopher Marlowe was born. He had behind him not a critical movement like the German but the glare of Smithfield fires and the ghostly procession of noble figures dealt with by the headsman on Tower Hill, terrible religious and political battles, and the

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Christopher Marlowe, "the radiant one," and "the Muses' darling," was born in Canterbury, February, 1564. He was the eldest son, among seven children, of a shoemaker and a clergymen's daughter. On January 14, 1579, when he was fourteen, Marlowe entered the King's School, in his native city, where the boys acted plays in Latin. At the age of sixteen, he was ready for the university, and in 1580 he went to Corpus Christi, Cambridge. There he enjoyed a scholarship provided by Archbishop Parker, and there he received his B.A. degree in 1584, and his M.A. degree in 1587. Marlowe studied six and one-half years at Cambridge. Besides Calvinism, all forms of free and national thought were in the air at Cambridge, and the literatures of Rome, France, and Italy were eagerly studied.

Marlowe hated conformity with all the passion of his free-ranging intellect and he felt an actual sense of suffocation under the services of tight religious rules the average Englishmen took for granted.

Shortly after graduating from Cambridge, Marlowe became a member of the Earl of Nottingham's Company of players. He was also the most brilliant member of the University Wits, and the earliest first-rate artist to write plays. He wrote

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plays of magnificent power and vitality.

The debt of English drama to Marlowe is twofold. He took the stiff blank verse of Gorboduc and molded it into a "mighty line," that possessed sweep, power, and variety. He also, helped to rescue Elizabethan tragedy from the formal control of the Senecan tradition and gave it a grandeur and dignity that it had not possessed.

Marlowe, in a very short-lived writing career, has left us the greatest dramatic production of English literature to Shakespeare. In four plays, Tamburlaine the Great, Doctor Faustus, The Jew of Malta, and Edward II, Marlowe had shown English drama that the secret of greatness in tragedy does not lie in its "blood bath," but in the tragic fault in character and in the elements of inner conflict and its interplay with external circumstance. His themes revolve around one great personality engaged in a mighty struggle to attain a goal, but not quite succeeding because of a tragic fault of character.

Marlowe's great significances for the Elizabethan literary art; Shakespeare absorbed it. It has drama are that he was a poet who cast his lot with the theatre, and that he created on the stage energetic and individualistic characters who are true children of the Renaissance.

In Tamburlaine this figure is a conqueror with an "undeviating pursuit of a vision," who personifies and voices the boundless aspiration of the Renaissance. In Doctor

Faustus, he is the idealist in pride of life seeking knowledge infinite and selling his soul to attain his aspirations and the lusts of the flesh. The Jew of Malta depicts a consummate crafty, self-centered, intriguing villain who at last overreaches himself. Edward II transforms the old loose-jointed chronicle play into a tragedy of character.

In the Theatre and Rose buildings, the Elizabethan public saw during the years 1587-1593 a series of plays that differed in quality from every earlier product. The groundlings were stirred by this young poet with tragedies of ambition and passion that flamed to the skies. No playwright had hitherto invoked the world, the flesh, and the devil so magnificently, or had employed such vigorous yet cadenced verse in his incantations. Marlowe's verse was lambent.

In style, Marlowe brought the blank verse line to a point of being a powerful vehicle with which to treat an elevated theme with seriousness and conviction. With it he reaches the thundering heights of oratory and murmurs the sweet nothings of young love equally well.

Marlowe's "mighty line" is the chief creation of English literary art; Shakespeare absorbed it. It has become the life-blood of our literature; Marlowe's place is at the heart of English poetry, and his pulses still thrill in our verse.

His plots are tightly integrated and his mechanical structure and stage devices are blended in to achieve

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whatever effect the situation calls for with both unity
and precision.

What makes Marlowe one of the most extraordinary
young men that ever went down from a university is that
before he took his Master's degree, he had already
written the first part of *Tamburlaine*, had trans­
formed the nature of English dramatic verse, and
had provided the public stage with the passion and
poetry it was in need of. 12

The first matinee of *Tamburlaine* was an epoch-mak­
ing day.

The character of the Scourge of God, as portrayed by
the great actor Edward Alleyn, himself a man of co­
lossal size and great histrionic ability, fairly dazz­
zled the Elizabethans. In Elizabethan times the play
was the thing. Mouthed in sonorous Elizabethan fash­
ion, this new and magnificent blank verse must have
charmed and electrified the Elizabethans like marvel­
ous music.13

Henderson, in speaking of the magnificence of the
play, states that

*Tamburlaine* remains an extended masque. The color­
range of the imagery is as elemental as the emotions
themselves—blood-red, gold, crystal, silver, milk­
white, fire and ice, built up into successive pyra­
mids of fluctering rhetoric, which rise continually
immortal like phoenixes from their own ashes.

Levin compares *Tamburlaine* to a Shakespearean

12F. P. Wilson, *Marlowe and the Early Shakespeare*

13William L. Phelps, *Christopher Marlowe* (New York:

14Philip Henderson, *And Morning in His Eyes* (New
This drama is built up on rivalries like a tournament, where each new contender is more formidable than the last. The unseasoned challenger, by defeating the champion, acquires his standing and must defend it against all comers, just as in the first part of Shakespeare's Henry IV.\(^\text{15}\)

The judgment of Mr. Boas may be taken as typical of the kind of criticism of Tamburlaine generally offered:

But Marlowe's instinct is to sympathize with ambition and no avenging ghosts dog the footsteps of the Scythian conqueror. He simply continues his wild career till the weapons of war fall from his nerveless hands, and, when he lies dead, his eldest son recites over his bier an epitaph suited to a pattern of every virtue.\(^\text{16}\)

Marlowe's amazing success provoked a host of imitators; echoes of his "mighty line" reverberate through early English drama; repetitions, imitations, and parodies of his characteristic images and phrases meet one at every turn.

Marlowe's work and his personality have stirred the imaginations of many men.

Charles Lamb wrote: "The death-scene of Marlowe's king moves pity and terror beyond any scene, ancient or modern, with which I am acquainted." To Lowell in America it was: "With him I grew acquainted during the impres-sible and receptive period of my youth. He was the first man of genius I had ever really known, and he naturally bewitched me." To Shakespeare he was the only poet

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\(^\text{16}\) Frederick S. Boas, Shakespeare and His Predecessors (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1904), p. 45.
of his time worthy to be quoted.\(^17\)

Marlowe has become very prominent in the last centuries.

In 1891 a memorial was erected to Marlowe's memory at Canterbury, where Henry Irving unveiled a monument in the Butter Market designed by that genteel Victorian sculptor Onslow Ford to represent the chief characters of the plays. In 1921 it was moved to the Dane John, and unveiled on this new site in 1928 by Hugh Walpole, also an old King's schoolboy. In 1919 an unknown admirer put up a brass plate in St. Nicholas, Deptford, "To the Immortal Memory of Christopher Marlowe, M.A., the Founder of Grandiloquent Blank Verse."\(^18\)

Marlowe's _Tamburlaine_ is a sobering comment on our age, if not on Marlowe's tragedy, because its recent revival has been greeted as peculiarly meaningful and appropriate.

The massing of armies, the breaking of treaties, the cult of despots, the regimentation of satellites, the clashing extremes of East and West—hyperbole seems powerless to exaggerate the commonplaces of our daily news. Marlowe seems comparatively innocent, a boyish scholar indulging his spellbound fancy in heroics, making destruction a basis for creation.\(^19\)

Briefly, Marlowe is the individualist of the Renaissance expressing himself in the words of Richard Crookback:

> I have no brother; I am like no brother,
> And this word love which greybeards call divine


Be resident in men like one another,
And not in me— I am myself alone. 20

In Chapter II, the research will be to see how
Tamerlane the Great stands out from the pages of history.
The primary reference will be Lamb's Tamerlane. 21

In Chapter III, there will be a detailed study of
Marlowe's dramatic Tamburlaine. The main sources will be
the various recent authorities, and all quotations for the
world. It will be shown how the young playwright dared to
claim admiration for the most blood-thirsty of men, to
make of him a sort of demigod.

Authorities note that Marlowe's imagination was
inflamed by the story of the career of this unmatched ad
adventurer who from a mere shepherd became the most powerful
man in all the world.

What were Alexander and Caesar beside the conqueror of
Persia and Muscovy who laid Hindustan and Syria waste,
vanquished the Ottomans, and died at last as he was
flinging himself upon China at the head of two hundred
thousand warriors? What cruelty did not seem mildness
beside his, who strangled a hundred thousand captives
before the walls of Delhi, and set up before Bagdad an
obelisk built of ninety thousand severed heads? 22

All this was so grandiose that Marlowe was dazzled.

20 Thomas Marc Parrott and Robert Hamilton Ball, A
Short View of Elizabethan Drama (New York: Charles Scrib
ner's Sons, 1943), p. 79.
21 Harold Lamb, Tamerlane (Garden City: Garden City
22 Emile Legouis and Louis Cazamian, A History of
English Literature (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1927),
p. 414.
The man capable of so prodigious a destiny, of such unbridled contempt for human life, seemed to him a superior being, a superman to whom the petty rules of morality did not apply.

In Chapter III, there will be a detailed study of Marlowe's dramatic Tamburlaine. The main sources will be the various recent authorities, and all quotations for the plays of Tamburlaine will be cited from Tamburlaine the Great by Ellis-Fermor.23

In this chapter it will be seen how the vision of the real Tamerlane helped to create the 1588 character. The striking characteristics, such as ambition, pride, cruelty, love, and religion, will be emphasized. It will be noted how Marlowe raised Tamburlaine from the world of reality to the universal realm of artistic reality by transfiguring him, not by omitting or weakening any of his atrocities, but by exalting them.

In Chapter III, there will be an analysis of the two characters, regarding their likenesses and differences. Likewise, that Marlowe took the skeleton from the alleged sources and built his hero through his own inventions. The researches of Miss Seaton and others have shown that Marlowe read voraciously, both in books and maps, to

prepare himself for his work and built up his play de­
liberately from a memory of wide-flung sources. He
picked up a feather or two with which to plume the
wings of his inventions.24

Miss Seaton says that while Marlowe was in France,
he probably became acquainted with books, such as the life
of Tamerlane in Les Fleurs des Hystoires de la Terre d'Ori-
ent by Hayton. She continues:

Here already is a Tamerlane, not only heroic, but ro­
manic and chivalric—a conqueror who is benign as
well as cruel, the instrument of the deity. He is
kind towards Christians, has heavenly visions, honors
women. He loves fine velvets and silks, and when he
captures Bagdad he finds at the bottom of the river
Euphrates a ship filled with the royal treasure of
Persia, also in a garden a tree of gold all of which
he sends to beautify Samarkand. Perhaps, Marlowe
read this flattering portrait of the great Tamerlane.25

Miss Spence remarks that Marlowe's sources for Tam­
burlaine were potent, chiefly because the facts that were
reported were few and well known.

Although Europe had been astonished by the conquests of
Timur, there was no adequate account of his life until
1595 by Jean du Bec, and this was a very brief account,
which Marlowe never saw. Therefore, scantiness of in­
formation forced Marlowe not only to use every scrap of
material but to invent and elaborate.26

Therefore, it can readily be seen that Marlowe was
a supreme master of "nature's rarest alchemy" through which

24Wilson, p. 21.

25Ethel Seaton, "Fresh Sources for Marlowe," The Re­
view of English Studies, V (October, 1929), 399.

26Leslie Spence, "The Influence of Marlowe's Sources
on Tamburlaine," Modern Philology, XXIV (June, 1926), 18.
he transfigured all the clumsy and heavily burdened historical material at his disposal into visions which reach beyond this earth.

The Conclusion will solve the proposed problem of the research through the alleged sources. Such questions as the following will be considered: Is this drama a subtle commentary on Elizabethan world activity? Is Tamburlaine a commentary on human life? Does the search and research to find the truth about Tamerlane the Great form an artistic whole to frame the great contents in human nature—life, religion, love, suffering, and death?

The historians of Asia speak of him as Amir Timur Gurigan—Lord Timur the Splendid—and only as Timur-i-lang in the way of vituperation. Those who lived with him at the court present him as a demon, a matchless hero, merciless slayer, a master trickster, and a very devil of malignity. The churchmen of Islam called him a pagan barbarian, but he styled himself, “I, Timur, servant of God.”

Tamerlane was born in 1333 at Kesh, better known as Shahr-i-Sabz, “the Green City,” situated fifty miles south of Samarkand. He belonged to the race of western Tartars, the Barlas tribe.

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CHAPTER II

THE HISTORICAL TAMERLANE

Tamerlane was a real character in history, whose actual achievements sound like a wild romance.

He was an Asiatic Napoleon of the fourteenth century. He established himself in Samarkand and extended his rule by terror and desolation over an enormous stretch of territory, extending from the Chinese Wall to the Mediterranean Sea, and from Siberia to the Ganges.1 Timur, which means iron, was the real name of this world-known conqueror. Timur alone was his name until he was lamed by the arrow of a warring tribe. Since then he was called Timur-i-lang, Timur the lame, from which the European Tamburlaine comes.

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His boyhood was spent in an atmosphere of strife and feud, which prepared him for the storms and stress of his later career. He received the training usually given to the son and heir of a chief; learned to ride the most spirited steeds, to bend the bow, to hurl the javelin and how to order an army on the battlefield, according to the single principles of Oriental strategy.3

Tamerlane's father, Taragai, who was the head of the clan and an expounder of the law of Islam, resigned his chieftainship and entered a monastery. Tamerlane's mother, who died while the boy was very young, was lineally descended from the famous Genghis Khan.

Taragai appointed his brother, Hadji Barlas, as guardian of Tamerlane. Barlas had no interest in the boy so Tamerlane was left to his own devices. Tamerlane's associates were a few bandit companions, his falcons, and his dogs.

Tamerlane possessed the prominent Herculean traits. He was tall, endowed with a powerful body—fine physique, wide-shouldered, long-limbed, and powerful fingers. Noticeable was his massive head, encircled with thick amber curls, his high forehead, and full dark eyes. He had a pale complexion and a deep, penetrating voice.

Tamerlane and his followers grew up among horses. With their bows, they hunted quail and foxes, and kept their

trophies in a castle of their own among rocks. Here they played at siege, with Tamerlane as leader in this game of mimic war. He left desolation and burning; unchecked by obstacles. Like Hercules, Tamerlane was born with a natural gift of leadership—physical energy, ambition, dominance, seriousness, recklessness, and self-confidence. Gregoso describes Tamerlane as a Scythian shepherd who gathered together his fellow-shepherds, making them swear to follow him as their leader wherever he went. They accepted this as a jest, but he, turning jest to earnest, set forth upon a career of kingship.

Tamerlane was a favorite of the Bahatars, the men among the Tartars, who had won a name for valor. These fierce warriors went to battle as if to a feast, and Tamerlane took his place among them as if by right he belonged there. For this, his father scolded him but the lad answered, "A Man's Path is Only One," a motto he imbibed from the raiders.

Tamerlane possessed the Machiavellian characteristics of valor, passion, and ambition for conquest. From the pages of Perondinus, the figure of Tamerlane emerges as insatiable, irresistible, ruthless, destructive, but instinct with power. It is an unforgettable picture of the conqueror, thirsting with sovereignty and power.
love of arms, pushing north to the uttermost confines of ice and snow, and south to the sweltering plains of Babylon, where he left desolation and burning; unchecked by obstacles, untouched by pity, led by fortunate stars, and confident in their leading.

Tamerlane's ambition for conquest began to materialize, and his career began to be established early in youth. From a leader of a few teenage followers he made himself captain of five hundred men.

He forced the lads to swear to him loyalty, obeying him as king, where, or when, it should please him in any matter to command them. After this oath, he charged each of them forthwith, to sell their troops and cattle, leaving this servile and base trade of life, seeking to serve in war, with him as captain. This they did, assembling to the full number of five hundred.5

Tamerlane's father often spoke to him about the great leader and conqueror, Genghis Khan, who had made the Barlas Clan so powerful. Genghis Khan, at his death, had divided his enormous conquests among his four sons. Chagatai received the empire which included Samarkand. However, the descendants of Chagatai went to the mountains, and left the government to Kazgan, the "King Maker." This gave Hadji Barlas, who was suspicious, impetuous, gloomy, and

reckless, the right of leadership over the Barlas Clan. Under him the conditions of the Clan went from bad to worse, and this irked and hurt Tamerlane.

Kazgan, the King Maker of Sali Sarai, who had heard about the great exploits of Tamerlane, sent for the youth. Having divided his small property, Tamerlane immediately set out for the court of Kazgan. He took his best horses and a boy, Abdullah.

Arriving at the court, Tamerlane joined a camp of two thousand Tartars of lords, youths, and warriors. After a few adventures, Kazgan praised the youthful leader, and rewarded him with his own bow case. For his unselfish service, Amir Kazgan appointed Tamerlane, Ming-bashi, colonel of a regiment of a thousand.

While the King Maker was out hunting, he was killed by arrows. Tamerlane tracked down the two murderers, killed them, then returned to the Green City to see how the struggle for Kazgan's overlordship of Samarkand would terminate. Barlas and Jalair, sons of Kazgan, revoked their claims for Samarkand when they heard that Tugluk, the great Khan of the North, had appeared. At Samarkand Tamerlane, youthful and undisturbed, greeted Tugluk, not as an enemy, but as a friend. After participating in a magnificent banquet, and receiving extravagant gifts, the powerful rival left Samarkand peaceably.
Tamerlane acted impulsively and promptly. He took with him a cavalcade of his own followers in court dress and his remaining wealth. He marched beyond Samarkand, where he arrived at the encampment of Khan, Tugluk. Tamerlane dismounted in front of the half circle of Jat nobles, turned to the Khan, and courteously said, "O, Father my Khan, Lord of the Ordu, I am Tamerlane, chieftain of the Barlas Clan and of the Green City."

The Khan was struck by Tamerlane's fearlessness, the richness of his silver inlaid mail, and the magnificent gifts which were offered him. That day Tamerlane made many friends in the camp of Tugluk. A clamor arose that this youth should be their leader. The Khan withdrew to his country. He had appointed Tamerlane, "Commander of Ten thousand." Besides he gave him a written authority and a seal, a dignity held by the fathers in the old regime of the Mongols.

Tamerlane had saved his valley and its cities from devastation, and he was now the head of his own clan. His ambition to restore the empire of Genghis Khan began to be realized. Aljai upon a charger and led her away to his own pavilion. Diplomacy and shrewdness never wavered in the young leader. Barlas and Jalair, jealous of Tamerlane, joined

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their forces and invited Tamerlane to their pavilion. Arriving, Tamerlane scented treachery. He pretended to have a bloody nose, went through the compartments until he met his men. They mounted their horses and quietly drove off.

The quarreling for the overlordship of Samarkand continued. Tugluk came back, appointed his son, Ilias, and a Jat general Bikijuk, rulers. Tugluk ordered Tamerlane to be killed, but the youthful leader, tired of wrangling and heartsick over the ruin of his beloved country, mounted his horse, took his followers, and went to the desert.

Shortly after Tamerlane joined Kazgan's court the Amir gave Tamerlane a wife, one of his granddaughters. Her name was Aljai Khatun Agha, a member of the powerful Jalair Clan. The chronicle says that she was fifteen and that her beauty was like the young moon and her body was as graceful as the young cypress. She came from the North.

The wedding took place amid great jubilation. The agreement was read by the Amirs before the Mohammedan judges. The feasting continued long into the morning. Then Tamerlane lifted Aljai upon a charger and led her away to his own pavilion. That night she heard the harsh thunder of the drums.

Aljai did not live long, but while she did, no other woman shared her place at Tamerlane's side. Only four years
Tamerlane enjoyed life with Aljai. He made a beautiful home for her in the Green City. Aljai bore him a son, Jahangir, the "World Gripper."

When Tamerlane left for the desert, he took Aljai and sixty followers with him. There they met Amir Hussayn, Aljai's brother, who also was a fugitive. They landed at Khiva, where they were pursued by several hundred horsemen. But Tamerlane killed the governor and the assailants scattering within sight of the walls, he scattered his men over the countryside, ordered them to ride in all directions. They were captured by a Persian chieftain, Ali Beg, who threw Tamerlane and Aljai into a cowshed, where they stayed for sixty days. Fortunately, the brother of Ali Beg, a Persian chieftain, ordered that the captives be released.

After helping the Sijistan lord to quell a civil rebellion, Tamerlane again turned his attention to Samarkand.

Tamerlane appointed Mouava and Amir Musa to stay at camp with five hundred men. With the rest he marched to Samarkand to attack Bikijuk. When he arrived on the enemy's ground, Tamerlane ordered fires to be made on three sides of the hostile camps. The frightened Northerners took to flight but Tamerlane charged into their lines. He captured Bikijuk, and two other Jat generals. After banqueting with them, he set them free.
Tamerlane possessed the outstanding qualities of a Fortunatus—trickery, daring spirit, confidence, impulsiveness, and conceit.

His remarkable adventures brought out all his latent powers; his sagacity, his clearness of perception, his promptitude of decision, his fertility of resource. He possessed many of the qualities of greatness, such as foresight, patience, tenacity of purpose, wealth of resource, and immense vigor both of mind and body.7

Tamerlane took his city, Samarkand, by a trick. Coming within sight of the walls, he scattered his men over the countryside, ordered them to ride in all directions. They used large branches from trees, and a prodigious dust arose. The enemy thought that there was a strong column of forces after them, so retreated. The Green City was spared a siege. The chronicler remarked, "The Lord Tamerlane always fortunate in war, in this year, defeated an army by fire, and captured a city by dust."

The young victor never delayed nor drew back before overwhelming obstacles; he followed his inclinations, and made use of every opportunity which fortune offered him. Ilias, the overlord of Samarkand, came with a disciplined, veteran array, mounted on the best horses of Asia, well-officered and well-armed, against Tamerlane's squadrons of leather-clad horsemen.

Tamerlane was hopeful but then it rained. The horses

7Adams, p. 134.
chilled and weakened, and splashed around in the flooded
lowlands. Faced by evident disaster, Tamerlane ordered
the drums to sound, and recklessly plunged forward upon the
sea of mud. He arrived at Samarkand and found that it was
provisioned for a siege, that Hussayn, his only ally, had
deserted him, and that his wife, Aljai, was dead and al­
ready buried.

The Jats evacuated Samarkand but now the quarrel
between Hussayn, grandson of the King Maker, and Tamerlane
began for the overlordship. Through these dark days of
struggle, Tamerlane moved like a disembodied spirit of war.
His cold recklessness and his utter disregard for his own
safety were unbelievable.

Tamerlane’s ambition increased as he marched toward
Karshi, a well-fortified city. With only 450 men against
4,000, he inspired his warriors with, "Think ye, if we were
masters of Karshi!" Instead of marching directly towards
Karshi, he deceived the enemy and marched the opposite di­
rection and pitched his camp at Herat. Musa, the Jat of­
 officer, holding Karshi, retreated.

While the enemy feasted, Tamerlane arrived at the
city, and with two men scouted Karshi. Alone he scaled the
wall and from its top ordered his men. Karshi was captured
while Musa and his men lay intoxicated. With this victory,
Tamerlane’s pride and cruelty increased.
In the uncertain years of strife, everyone, friend and enemy, turned their eyes towards Tamerlane, the superman. His personal daring stirred their admiration, his escapades, and triumphs became their gossip, his courage was their attraction. Hussayn's men joined him, and even the great Mongol, Mangali Boga, who had been Tamerlane's worst enemy, became a great leader in the Conqueror's forces. The council selected Tamerlane. He was sent for and a great army was collected. The Palavali was with him. A great battle was fought. Hussayn's soldiers were put to flight. The Palavali was killed. Tamerlane pressed on so hurriedly that only thirteen warriors were with him when he arrived at the enemy's destination. Nevertheless, the enemy was captured. And the victor proudly announced:

This is a time of dancing for warriors. The dancing ground is the field of battle, the music is the battle shout and the whining of steel, and the wine poured out is the blood of your enemies.8

That the greatness of Tamerlane increased was evident. At the end of six years, the majority of the Tartar lords had sworn allegiance to him. Now he was warlord.

8Lamb, p. 88.
leader of a host. Musa's forces, the Jalairs, who were very numerous, all joined him. Hussayn was captured and slain, but Samarkand was still without an overlord.

Since the death of Hussayn, the fox-like Tamerlane lingered at Balkh. He knew that according to Genghis Khan, the Tartar chieftains, at the council at Balkh, would choose an overlord for Samarkand.

The council selected Tamerlane. He was sent for and a great ceremony took place. The princes and elders, placing their hands on the Bible, swore allegiance to the new Amir of Samarkand. To his vassals, he gave all that he possessed—blooded horses, robes, weapons, and rich saddles. To their pavilions, he sent trays of food and fruit.

Immediately the Amir appointed his new ministers, officers, and members of his council. He announced that he would have no favorites, that he intended to keep the reins in the stupendous earthwork upon which the city in his own hands, that he would listen to advice but that it would never overrule him, that he would be swift to strike back at any opposition. Even before the council left Balkh, his actions proved his words. Hussayn's adherents were attacked, chained or beheaded, their buildings burned so that nothing remained of their strongholds.

Tamerlane became the most renowned conqueror of his generation. By 1369 he had crushed all opposition from native princes and had assumed the throne at Herat, Encyclopedia Britannica, 1958 edition.
The rise in Tamerlane's cruelty was displayed when yearly expeditions were launched against the Northern Jats, with orders to use steel and fire unsparingly. An officer who deserted was caught, deprived of his weapons, bound upon the pack saddle of an ass, face to tail, and was paraded in this manner through the streets of Samarkand.

Tamerlane requested that Khan Zade, the beautiful daughter of the powerful Sulfi of Kharesm, be given as wife to his eldest son, Jahangir. Yussuf Sulfi refused. However, Tamerlane was spared an attack because Sulfi died, and his daughter became Jahangir's bride.

Tamerlane's victories increased his lust for glory and conquest rapidly. Herat, the largest and most beautiful city known, was his next ambition.

That which distinguished Herat from all other oriental cities is the stupendous earthwork upon which the city was built. It was a true metropolis nine thousand paces in circuit, housing a quarter million souls. There were several hundred colleges and three thousand bath houses, and nearly ten thousand shops.

Since Ghiath ad-Din, the young Malik of Herat, refused the invitation to the council of Tamerlane, Tamerlane besieged the metropolis of Herat, captured it, and added the

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great city to his growing dominion. This victory made the conqueror secure in regard to domestic affairs. He was now the master of the powers that might have threatened him.

He set up his own rule under the title Sahib Karan, "The Emperor of the Age." He moved his court from the Green City to Samarkand, the central point of his possessions, which stretched five hundred miles every direction.

Tamerlane, the leader, with the instinct of a conqueror, was only thirty-four when "in 1369 he conquered Balkh, and made Samarkand the seat of his empire." He moved his court from the Green City to Samarkand, the central point of his possessions, which stretched five hundred miles every direction.

Tamerlane's greed for conquest led him to the North where the powerful Golden Horde, under the most noted overlord Toktamish, ruled. Until 1480 their jurisdiction extended over Eastern Russia and Western and Central Asia. Several times Toktamish attacked Tamerlane but neither side was victorious.

One day, unexpectedly, Tamerlane ordered his troops to be ready to march to the land of the Golden Horde. The troops were reviewed, the kettledrum sounded, and the army was on its dangerous way. Tamerlane pushed over the sands so rapidly that even his men could not keep up with him.

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Those who lagged behind were ordered to fill their shoes with sand and hang about their necks, and then were obliged to walk afoot the rest of the march.

The Tartars marched for eighteen weeks and covered 18,000 miles. They reached the North and laid siege to Urganj, the headquarters. The great city was captured, the inhabitants slain, the walls mined, the palaces and hospitals burned, the site left in smoking ruin, filled with charred bodies.

Tamerlane gave his men no time for rest. He turned on Toktamish. While Toktamish was retreating, Tamerlane smashed into the enemy's flank.

At last, on June 18, Tamerlane overtook him at Kandwicha in the country of the Bulgars. For three days the battle lasted, and finally the powerful Toktamish, the leader of the unconquered Kipchaps, was completely routed. With this capture the great horned standard of the Golden Horde fell. 13

The chronicler says, "Ghastly was the fate of mighty Sarai on the Volga." The barbarous conqueror drove the inhabitants out to perish in the mid-winter cold and made a flaming torch of their buildings.

Astrakhan, another strong fortress, on the Volga River, was Tamerlane's next attack. In revenge for the burning of Bokhara Palace, he put the entire garrison to death

and cast the governor under the ice of the river.

Next Tamerlane turned towards Russia. The Russians, trusting in the Mother of God, took the ancient statue of the Blessed Virgin in procession to Moscow between the lines of kneeling people who cried out as it passed: "Mother of God, Save Russia!" Tamerlane turned the opposite direction, and the Russians attributed their deliverance to Mary, their Patroness.

The warlike Georgians were Tamerlane's next victims. He had to move down upon the gorges and forested walls that had proved an invulnerable bulwark to all other armies. Tamerlane ordered a road to be cut through the impregnable mountain. The summit was reached and the Georgians surrendered.

Two other sieges in this locality which exhibited Tamerlane's cruelty are Kalat and Takrit, both built on solid rock. At Kalat assault failed but an epidemic broke out and the brave defenders had to desert the town. Takrit, whose avenues up the rock were stoned in and cemented, decided not to yield to the Tartars.

The Tartar drums rolled and the attack began. Seventy-two thousand men began to labor at the rock with steel bars and sledges. They excavated by relays, keeping at the task day and night. Then the props under the walls were soaked in oil and buttressed with piles of brush and set
on fire, and the wall collapsed. After seventeen days, impregnable Takrit fell to the Tartars. Hassan, the leader, was bound hand and foot and killed, and all the warriors were put to death.

With these victories, Tamerlane became more ambitious and cruel. Now he was master of the North, of the Aral and Caspian Seas, of the mountain region of Persia and the Caucasus. For twenty-two hundred miles the great Khorassan Road ran through his lands.

Tamerlane started out on his far-flung invasions of the South. Persia, the Iran of today, was the paradise of wealth, and this was Tamerlane's newest ambition. At Isfahan, a terrible slaughter lasted all day, with seventy thousand people as victims whose heads were made into towers along the main avenues.

About 1400, a Turkish conqueror, Timur-i-lang (Tamerlane) brought together the central Asia and Persian fragments, and trounced the Golden Horde founded by Batu the son of Juchi.14

However, the unconquered leaders--Mamluk, the Sultan of Egypt, master of Syria, Damascus, and Jerusalem; Ahmed Jaliar, the sultan of Bagdad; and Kara Yussuf, head of the Turkoman--joined in an alliance against the "bloody tyrant." Bagdad was Tamerlane's next point of attack. The

conqueror rode eighty-one miles over the plain, without
dismounting, into the suburbs of Bagdad. Hearing that Bag-
dad would not surrender, Tamerlane with standards raised,
bands playing, and with one hundred thousand warriors be-
sieged this key city of the Tigris. The chronicler says:

Bagdad, called Dar Essalam, the Abode of Peace, might
better have been called in that day the palace of
havoc and hell. Faraj, its commander, fleeing in a
boat, was killed by arrows from the bank, and his body
dragged ashore. A hundred and twenty columns were
built of severed heads, and ninety thousand human be-
ings perished.¹⁵

Bayazid, surnamed the Thunder, Emperor of the Turks,
was lord of Constantinople in all but name. His lands ex-
tended up to the city walls. This great Turkish conqueror
was again on his way to molest the Christians. But when
Tamerlane unexpectedly appeared from the East, he suspended
the Christian siege and hastened to Asia Minor to meet the
Tartar conqueror.

Learning that Bayazid’s main camp was at Angora,
Tamerlane hastened there.

They met each with the other upon the confines of Ar-
menia, where both of them, ordering as became good
Captains their people, began in the break of day, the
most cruel, and most terrible battle that ever was
heard of, considering the number on both parts, their
experience, and policy with the valiant courage, and
prowess of their captains. This, they continued in
fight even almost until night, with merciless slaugh-
ter on both sides, the victory yet doubtful, until,
in the end the Turks—two hundred thousand—were

¹⁵Lamb, Tamerlane, p. 209.
And Bayazid was captured, bound, and escorted to Tamerlane's camp.

Historians say that after one of the most dramatic and vigorous sieges in history, Tamerlane took Constantinople on May 29, 1453, where the last Byzantine emperor perished bravely in the fight. The collapse of this empire which had ruled for 1100 years shocked and alarmed the Christian World.

According to Lamb, who used the Oriental authorities, Bayazid was treated courteously. Tamerlane ordered that his bonds should be taken off, and that he be seated by his side within the pavilion. But Fortescue says that Bayazid was put into an iron cage and was treated like a dog.

The fable of the iron cage is scarcely worth recalling to mind; but had there been a shadow of truth in it, Schiltberger would not have failed to notice the circumstance of the powerful monarch, whom he had served so long in the capacity of a personal attendant in the quality of runner. Most authorities record that Bayazid was forced to

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the customary banquet. He was ordered to put on his imperial regalia, and his own women, among them his favorite wife Despina, stripped of their garments, were forced to wait on the conqueror. Bayazid sat motionless until his own singing girls were made to sing the love songs of the Turks, and then his massive body shook with agony, and he rose and two Tartar officers led him out. Bayazid, the Thunder, died a few months after his capture.

Tamerlane's next move was India. He set out from Kabul with ninety-two squadrons, each of a thousand horsemen. Fire and sword marked his victorious advance—town after town was captured and razed to the ground, until, at length, he arrived in front of Delhi. Tugluk and the king of Delhi were well-prepared to resist him, but through stratagem Tamerlane covered the ground with corpses to the very gates of Delhi.

Some 15,000 Tartars poured in almost at the same time. Plunder and violence took place; then the passions of an infuriated soldiery broke loose, and an indiscriminate massacre took place of men, women, of old and young; the streets were soon rendered impassable by heaps of dead bodies; every house reeked with blood, and for five days Delhi, in the hands of the merciless invaders, was one vast saturnalia of lust, rape, and murder.19

Although Tamerlane was sixty-nine years old, his lust for conquest never ceased. He now planned to break

19 Adams, p. 106.
through the great wall which guarded Cathay and, there­fore, overcome the last power in the world that could op­pose him. But before he began this adventure, he ordered a world-wide feasting.

So to Samarkand came ambassadors from twenty king­doms. And according to Clavijo, they feasted at Samarkand, the Utopia—an encampment, a city, and a garden in one; that city seemed to be visited by genii.²⁰

After weeks of feasting, the carnival without any warning was ended, and everyone was dismissed.

Suddenly Tamerlane summoned his princes and amirs and said, "We have conquered all of Asia except Cathay, and thither you shall march with me." Although there was a blizzard on its way, Tamerlane disregarded the pleas of his warriors, plunged into a world of snow, with streams ice-coated, and roads heavy with drifts. Many men and horses died but the aged conqueror pushed ahead to Otrar, where the other divisions were to meet him.

Having reached Otrar, the Tartars were to camp there until spring, and then march to Cathay. However, Tamerlane became ill with a fever, and his physician said that it was the day appointed and that there was no help. The chronicle has left us a glimpse of the great warrior's

²⁰Clements R. Markham, Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo Emb­assy (London: Hakluyt Society, 1859), p. 239.
Outside the entrance of Tamerlane's chamber, in the snow, stood amirs, officers, and bearded imams. Lying outstretched on his cushions, his lined face gray, in the white mass of his hair, Tamerlane gave his final directions to the high amirs. "Keep your swords valiantly in hand. Keep agreement among ye for in disorder there is ruin. Do not turn aside from the march to Cathay. Do not rend your garments and run to and fro like madmen because I have left you. That will breed disorder."21

With charcoal braziers burning near his head, and his voice a mere whisper, he summoned his amirs, Nur ad-Din and Shah Malik to his side, and continued:

"I appoint Pir Muhammad, the son of Jahangir as my successor. He must reside at Samarkand and have in his hands absolute authority over the army and civil affairs. I command you to devote your lives to him, and support him. He must rule the distant provinces of the world as well as Samarkand, and unless you obey him utterly, there will be conflict."22

And the iron spirit of the conqueror that cleaved its way through life accepted the end of life without protest. And Whetstone reports simply that

in the end this great personage, without disgrace of fortune, after sundry great victories, by the course of nature died, and left behind him four sons.23

That Tamerlane's warriors respected and honored their leader was shown when

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21Lamb, Tamerlane, p. 250.
22Ibid., p. 251.
23T. C. Izard, "The Principal Source for Marlowe's Tamburlaine," Modern Language Notes, LVIII (June, 1943), 411.
his body was embalmed, laid in an ebony coffin and sent to Samarkand where it was buried in the sumptuous tomb called "Gur Amir."24

Historians relate that Tamerlane practiced no religion. However, it is self-evident that he played the role of the Scourge of God. By origin Tamerlane was a Mohammedan, but he never practiced his faith. He never accepted an Islamic surname for himself, nor for his sons. Neither did he follow the Mohammedan customs of shaving his head, of wearing a turban, and of never drinking wine.

His neighbors often called him a heretic and pagan. The leaders of Islam looked upon him as a pagan, a barbarian, and an enemy to be dreaded. He signed himself as, "I, Tamerlane, servant of God," and not as "Monarch of Islam," as was the rule.

Tamerlane had no preference for religions. He tried to establish friendly relations with the Christian princes of Europe and this, too, was against the Turks' religion. He paid no attention to the holy cities—Meshed, Mecca, and Jerusalem—where pilgrimages were made. He could have earned for himself the title of "Ghazi, Conqueror for Faith," but he did not do so.

Tamerlane was not prejudiced against religion because he had colonies of Jews, Nestorians, Christians,

Malakites, and other sects in Samarkand. All these had their own church there. Once he appointed a Christian Bishop as his envoy. His only religion was bound up in the motto of his youth, "A man's path is only one"—that of struggle, victory, and the glory of possession.

Although indirectly, Tamerlane often performed the role of the Scourge of God, historians give only one account in connection with a certain merchant of Genoa, who protested against Tamerlane's cruel treatment of the virgins of an unnamed besieged city who had come on the third day to ask mercy. As Fortescue tells the story,

Tamerlane answered in most furious wrath and ire, his face red and fiery, his eyes all flaming with burning sparkles, as it were blazing out on every side. "Thou supposest me to be a man, but thou too much abuses me, for none other am I, but the wrath and vengeance of God, and ruin of the world." 25

Marnau, a twentieth century writer, speaks of Tamerlane as the Scythian shepherd, Timur the Great, by his rare and wonderful conquests, became the mightiest ruler of the East and earned himself through his incredible tyranny the name of Scourge of the Lord. 26

Tamerlane possessed the true characteristics of the Scourge of God—covetousness, ambition, fury, tyranny, pride, and


cruelty. He continued his way of rising power and mounting conquest, even to his death.

That Tamerlane was a warrior-scholar and an educator was best seen in his almost superhuman conquests, his perfect organization, his world-wide communication, and his mania for building. He achieved all that is possible for a human being to imagine.

His positive achievements were encouragement of art, literature, and science and the construction of vast public works.27

In military conquests, Tamerlane overcame the armies of more than half the world—Northern India, Asia Minor, and Africa. Among the greatest and fiercest battles that were ever fought were at Bagdad, Damascus, Takrit, Angora, and Delhi. Some of the strongest and bravest leaders that Tamerlane overcame were Barlas, Hussayn, Toktamish, Bayazid, and Tugluk. Tamerlane had marched from one end of the arc of his enemies to the other, and in fourteen months he had fought two major battles, and many smaller engagements, and had taken by assault a dozen fortified cities.

Samarkand, a "Rome of Asia," and the dream of Tamerlane, was the peak of his building ability. Clavijo says that this capital equals in its color and beauty Marco Polo's accounts of every necessary office was founded. The Khorassan Road, which branched in every direction was twenty-two hundred miles long, and ran through all of Tamerlane's lands. By this road he became master of a trade metropolis of more than a million souls.

perfection, especially Samarkand, the capital. But it was
his military genius which won for the barbarian conqueror
untold victories. Fortescue lays special stress on the or-
derliness, splendor, and amity of Tamerlane's camp.

In his army was never found mutiny. He was wise, lib-
eral, and rewarded every soldier with his desert.
There is no remembrance of a greater army than this.
His government and order was such that his camp seemed
a goodly city, wherein every necessary office was
found.26

Tamerlane's skill in establishing communication was
unsurpassable. The Khorassan Road, which branched in every
known direction was twenty-two hundred miles long and ran
when he captured Bayazid, he took the entire Byzantine Li-
through all of Tamerlane's lands. By this road he became
master of a trade metropolis of more than a million souls,
where the north-and-south trade crossed the magnificent
Khorassan Route. Merchants from all the lands known poured
into Samarkand. The Spanish envoy Clavijo says:

In truth it would scarcely be believed unless it were
seen--this great Khorassan Road. Tamerlane's service
of information was complete, and probably swifter
than anything of the kind until the days of rail-
roads.29

Samarkand, a "Rome of Asia," and the dream of Tamer-
lane, was the peak of his building ability. Clavijo says
that this capital equals in its color and beauty Marco

26F. P. Wilson, Marlowe and the Early Shakespeare
29Guy Le Strange, Clavijo—Embassy to Tamerlane
(New York: Harper and Brothers, 1928), p. 239.
Polo's earlier pictures of the Court of Kublai, and that it is one of the greatest, the fairest and the most magnificent of cities. Samarkand was known as the "Blue City" because blue was the favorite color of Tamerlane. Tamerlane did not copy art but his was the finest expression of Tartar sculpture. He liked simplicity in design, massiveness, and picturesque colors. He loved foliage and running water, and he always built beautiful gardens. because the swelling dome of his fancy has become the motive.

To Samarkand Tamerlane carried off a whole city. When he captured Bayazid, he took the entire Byzantine Library and transported it to his capital. To Samarkand he also brought the scholars and filigree workers of Bagdad, the Ming artists of China, the white marble of Tabriz, the glazed tiles of Herat, and the clear jade of Khotan. In his city, he set up libraries, academies of philosophy and science, observatories, menageries, and aviaries.

"This Timur, the Prince of Destruction,"30 tore Tamerlane's empire died with him. For fifty years Tamerlane ruled and no man was able to take up the reins down cities, and rebuilt them in the manner he wished. Examples of his architecture are the magnificent King's Church in India, the White Palace, and Palace of Heart's Delight, both in Samarkand. Tamerlane had the skill of

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Persian gardeners, Chinese, Indian, and Persian painters
to take care of his buildings.

Although Tamerlane's education was mostly from experience, nevertheless, the chronicle says that he could
read and write, and that often he would have books read
to him, especially at night. At all times he had two secretaries accompanying him, and he had a special historian,
Nizam-i-Shams. Tamerlane, the barbarian, will long be remembered because the swelling dome of his fancy has become
the motif of Russian design, and is the crown of the Taj Mahal, which was built by his grandchildren.

Purchas relates many of the glories and graces of
Timur as they appeared to an Arab writer:

He had a lofty mind and he was well instructed in the
Arabian learning, and exercised himself much therein;
and at such time as they thought him to be either in
the Bathes—wherein they are very curious in that
Country, being their chiefest delicacies—he was in the
contemplation and study of heavenly things.31

Tamerlane's empire died with him. For fifty years
Tamerlane ruled and no man was able to take up the reins
which he let loose.

Tamerlane's empire fell apart immediately after his
death. It had never had any real organization and
had been always the creation of one man. Civil wars
among his descendants and local rebellions, caused
the complete breakup of the empire which relapsed

31Sir J. A. Hammerton, Outline of Great Books (New
into a number of small contentious states.\textsuperscript{32} The amirs held council and tried to fulfill the wishes of their dead Emperor but no one listened to them. The sons and grandsons fought for the supremacy, disregarding the appointment of Tamerlane's grandson, Pir Muhammad. The people acknowledged Khalil, grandson of Tamerlane, as their Emperor. But the youthful Khalil, intoxicated with the wealth under his hands, and dominated by a beautiful Persian, soon plunged Samarkand into a mad carnival.

Pir Muhammad arrived from India, and civil war broke out. He was victorious and was ready to be instated as Emperor when Shah Rukh, Tamerlane's son, captured Samarkand. He appointed his son, Ulugh Beg, Emperor. Shah Rukh and his son were men of peace and an era of splendor began; but Samarkand was isolated. That Tamerlane was an important figure is noted by historians, authors, and others, both ancient and modern. He has influenced dramatists, poets, and other literary circles.

Poe has made Tamerlane a Byronic hero, "A diadem'd outlaw" who has isolated himself by abandoning love for ambition. The artist who paints the subject in George Eliot's Middlemarch has a post-Darwinian explanation: "I take Tamburlaine in his chariot for the tremendous course of the world's physical history lashing on the harnessed dynasties. From that distance, Timur may have seemed more credible as a force of nature than as a historical figure. Yet Arnold Toynbee has more lately vouched for the credibility of Marlowe's portraiture and has instanced Timur's accomplishment as a "Supreme example of the suicidalness of Militarism."33

Today in Russia the youth have Timur as an example.

The Timur Movement is an organization of youngsters who do everything in their power to make themselves useful to their country and their compatriots.34

Adams, the historian, says that the story of Timur or Tamerlane the Great had a strong attraction for our forefathers, and was put on the stage in Elizabeth's reign by the powerful genius of Christopher Marlowe. "I remember that, in my young days, Timur the Tartar was a favorite character on the transpontine stage, and also in the sheets of figures which boys bought for painting and tinselling, and adapting for performances in their miniature theatres."35

Nicholas Rowe wrote a play "Tamerlane" for the British Theatre.36

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34 Eve Curie, Journey Among Warriors (Garden City: Doubleday, Doran and Company, 1943), p. 149.
35 Adams, p. 90.
Christopher Marlowe has become famous and will live forever because of his contributions to Elizabethan drama, and especially to Elizabethan tragedy.

By his production of Tamburlaine, he definitely inaugurated the earlier of the two great ages of British Drama. Never before had first-rate genius been devoted to the making of an English play.\(^1\)

When Shakespeare came to London, a few years later, he found a highly imaginative drama, bold and passionate, and couched in a ringing blank verse, in possession of the boards.

As in life, so in his work. Marlowe was an angry, violent angel who had come to alter things. He gave his contemporaries a shock-treatment of which they stood in great need.\(^2\)

Marlowe takes his theme from the past, but swings it straight into the main current of the Renaissance. Tamburlaine personifies and voices the period’s aspiration. In Tamburlaine I, Marlowe’s great contribution is his crediting the brutal conqueror with the "undeviating pursuit of a vision." In Tamburlaine II, the Scythian hero, although

\(^1\) Hazelton Spencer, Elizabethan Plays (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1933), p. 4.

somewhat shaken by the loss of Zenocrate, and the cowardice of one of his sons, continues to drive emperors and kings before his unconquerable sword until he is himself conquered by death.

Tamburlaine is a "hero" play in which a Scythian shepherd rises by sheer barbaric power of personality to become a conqueror of kingdoms. His crude but cunning and clever cruel nature is fired by an ever-growing ambition as he achieves success after success. Marlowe's rhetorical lines resound as he drives his remorseless and savage nature higher and higher up the ladder of power and fame. Marlowe endows his hero, Tamburlaine the Great, with the gifts of Seneca's Hercules, Machiavelli's Prince, Pontani's Fortunatus, Castiglione's Courtier, Pearce's Educator, and with what Battenhouse calls "the Scourge of God."

Regarding Seneca's Hercules, the two heroes might pass for identical twins in character, personality, career, achievements, death, and moral significance. Theridamas compares Tamburlaine's lineaments to Hercules when he says that his fiery eyes are fixed upon the earth as if he devised some stratagem or as if he meant to pierce Avernas' darksome vaults. Tamburlaine's breadth of shoulders is said to be such as might bear Old Atlas' burden, an allusion to one of the labors of Hercules.

As Tamburlaine drives the captive kings in his

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chariot he makes a grand comparison of himself with Hercules and the popular drama of Shakespeare.

The headstrong jades of Thrace, Alcides tam'd, That King Aegeus fed with human flesh, And made so wanton that they knew their strengths, Were not subdued with valor more divine Than you by this unconquered arm of mine.  

Tamburlaine's career conforms with that of Hercules. Both call themselves Scourges of God, and both challenge death. Tamburlaine cries out:  

See, where my slave, the ugly monster death, Shaking and quivering, pale and wan for fear, Stands aiming at me with his murdering dart, Who flies away at every glance I give, And, when I look away, comes stealing on: Villain, away, and hie thee to the field!  

And Hercules wails:  

0 pest, whate'er thou art that lurkest in my vitals, come forth! And why dost thou attack me with a hidden smart?  

In the moral significance, it has been observed that in one respect the Elizabethans did not follow Seneca. Marlowe grounds his drama in history.  

But he [Marlowe] embellishes history by the aid of Seneca. He uses Seneca so to highlight historical tragedy that it becomes morality drama. The spectacle astounds, but in order to interpret. Marlowe is aware that history if it is to take on meaning must be penetrated by the supernatural. Tamburlaine

\[4^{1}\] Tamburlaine, IV, iii, 12-16.  
\[5^{1}\] Tamburlaine, V, ii, 67-72.  
is an important mid-link between the academic drama of the Senecans and the popular drama of Shakespeare. Marlowe's Tamburlaine is a portrait of Niccolo Machiavelli's hero in The Prince. In this book, the author stresses virtù, a hypnotism, which drives the hero to madness, and then overpowers him in his sanity. The theory states that any means, no matter how unscrupulous or unlawful, should be used to uphold the supremacy of government. It is the doctrine of expediency in its most objective heartless form. It means playing leaders against one another, or enemies or allies against one another; it includes seeking help when needed, forgetting it when the occasion has passed; it permits bloody deeds, treachery, bribery, but at the same time demands high personal courage.

Marlowe was the first Elizabethan dramatist to use the new Machiavellian type of tyrant, represented in Tamburlaine, who is a hero inspired with a pagan religion; he is an anti-Christ. His most extravagant actions have a preternatural vitality. He is dynamic in a manner impossible for Spenser's vices of Seneca's puppet orators. Marlowe modifies his Machiavellian hero according to the modern ideal that glorifies cruelty and passion.

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7 Allan H. Gilbert, "Seneca and the Criticism of Elizabethan Tragedy," Philological Quarterly, XIII (June, 1934), 373.
9 Battenhouse, p. 216.
It is Marlowe's genius that makes his popular conception of Machiavelli, as a devil of worldly irreligiousness, preside over villainous intrigue in drama and replace the Senecan ghost. With the magnanimous personality of the Prince, Tamburlaine's rise, though rapid and wonderful, accords with the natural laws of Machiavellian success.

One can lose the crown only if an unusual power advances and the Prince has made himself hated by his behavior; that the seizure of the throne, however much infamy may attend it, is nothing unnatural; that overthrow comes when one calls for help from a powerful friend; that Fortune offers merely the opportunity for success, but success itself comes to the man who has the personality to command his supporters at all times.

The prologue heralds Tamburlaine's personality by assuring the audience that they shall hear the Scythian Tamburlaine who will threaten the world with high astounding terms, and who will scourge kingdoms with his conquering lute command, never seeking their counsel but always dictating their actions. His typical mood is boastful of command.


Mycetes, the weak Persian king, is threatened from without by the Turks. Within, he has aroused mistrust by his tyrannical show of power. He dispatches his best general Theridamas to suppress Tamburlaine. The general is bewitched by the Scythian's "strong enchantments" and joins his followers.

Cosroe entrusts himself to the Scythian. Tamburlaine accepts Cosroe's alliance, and grasps the opportunity for conquest. He is much impressed by the pomp which attends King Cosroe and says, "Techelles, is it not passing brave to be a king?" Right then he decides to have "the sweet fruition of an earthly crown."

True to his aspiring character, Tamburlaine bases his right to betray his ally Cosroe, and supersede him as King of Persia, on the example of Jove, who was moved by "the thirst of reign and sweetness of a crown," which made him thrust his doting father from his chair.12

Tamburlaine immediately puts his ambitious thoughts into execution and Cosroe is killed and the Scythian chief is made King of Persia.

Over his inferiors, Tamburlaine assumes a most absolute command, never seeking their counsel but always dictating their actions. His typical mood is boastful defiance. This "fiery thirster after sovereignty" knows none of the scruples, doubts, compromises, and cautions which necessarily appear in any man grown to full maturity in a world of men. At best his impersonation of Satan faithfully reflects that glorified exterior which only success can make apparent.
full maturity in a world of men. At best his impersonation of Satan faithfully reflects that glorified exterior which belongs naturally to an Asiatic tyrant.13

Since the Prince must act the part of the lion and fox, so Tamburlaine readily does. He employs the means of flattery, promises, display of deeds, such as entertainments, and spectacle.

Allied in Marlowe's vision with the quest for power and the quest for knowledge is the quest for beauty, personalized for Tamburlaine in Zenocrate, the captive daughter of the Sultan of Egypt, and the betrothed of the King of Arabia.

Experiencing tender emotions for the first time, the rough bandit clumsily makes love to the proud beauty. At first she disdains him and then he employs flattery and promises. He says,

You are "lovelier than the love of Jove," "fairer than whitest snow"; and you shall be drawn "with milk-white harts upon an ivory sled."14

Seeing that Zenocrate still continues to disregard him, Tamburlaine assures her that although he is shepherd-born, nevertheless, he is a lord in brave deeds. As a proof he discards his shepherd's "weeds" and assumes a warrior's

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uniform. Then he boldly announces that Zenocrate shall be kept captive until he demonstrates to her that he can be a Lord and Emperor.

To gain more renown, Tamburlaine entertains with feasts and spectacular entertainments. During the siege of Damascus, and always when his warriors return from successful campaigns, he orders luxurious banquets. While feasting, he carries on spectacular jests with his humbled adversaries—the crown-loving Mycetes, the encaged Turk, and the chariot-drawing kings. That Tamburlaine is conceited, proud, and cruel is indicated when he arrogantly boasts:

The ages that shall talk of Tamburlaine,
Even from this day to Plato’s wondrous year,
Shall talk how I have handled Bajazet. 15

Elsewhere he brags that he means to be renowned as never Emperors ever were, and he looks forward to the day when his name and honor shall be spread as far as Boreas claps his brazen wings. Fox-like Tamburlaine by his soaring words wins Theridamas, spellbinds Zenocrate, inspirits his whole army and completely fascinates the reader of the drama. 16

Tamburlaine is a Fortunatus. Pontanio’s theory of fortune develops the notion of a new type of fortunate man

16Battenhouse, p. 224.
and links his fortunes with the tenets of astrology. The keynote of his concept of the Fortunati is that nature begets certain men who are fortunate and others who are not.

Fortuna, to Machiavelli, was used to signify the totality of uncontrolled forces, to wipe them out entirely, if possible. So, fortune presents the occasion of a man's success, but success comes only to that man who has the personality to use the opportunity.

In ancient, medieval, and Elizabethan times, the power of chance was personified under the name of Fortuna. Pictured symbolically, she sometimes has two faces, the one beautiful and the other ugly; her change in mood is read in her smile or frown. Often she is blind or more often blindfolded, to show that she has no regard for merit. Sultan and his advisers plan strategy, count their fortune. Her fickleness is further symbolized by her most familiar attribute, the wheel, which may have two different meanings. First, there may be a vague, indefinite connection between it and the objects bestowed by Fortune—wealth, accident, and the like—which it controls. As it turns, man's fortune changes; just how the change is brought about we are not informed, merely, "Fortune turns her wheel." Secondly, we learn that men are themselves attached to the wheel; they are revolved with it, and so their estates change.

That Marlowe was steeped in this lore of Fortunatus is seen in his plays. "Fortune" is mentioned at least

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twenty-nine times and her "wheel" appears several times.

Although the reason for Fortune's caprice is unknown, however, the man whom she favors is always confident, never delays nor draws back before overwhelming difficulties, acts impulsively, violates all dictates of reason, yet never fails. Such a man is a Fortunatus upon whom Fortune never fails to smile.

Tamburlaine is such a man, a Fortunatus, for whenever he appears on the scene, he is confident, impetuous, and impulsive. He is never virtuous; in all that he does he follows his impulses in complete scorn of advice and admonition.19

Examples of Tamburlaine's faith in fortune are countless. His seizure of Zenocrate is an act of impulse, and his dealings with Theridamas, pure intuition. While the Sultan and his advisers plan strategy, count their forces, see victory ahead, Tamburlaine plans nothing, but attacks, and crushes them. Bragging to Bajazet, he compares himself to Julius Caesar, a Fortunatus of history.

His conquests are effortless—the series of opponents are only a row of nine-pins to be toppled over. There is no interest attached to them, except as necessary material upon which Tamburlaine can demonstrate his power.20

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On his deathbed, Tamburlaine boasts that he has never been wounded in battle, and he realizes fully his league with fortune when he says that sooner shall the sun fall from his sphere than Tamburlaine be slain or overcome. The young poet Marlowe erects a hero who has all the possible effrontery of self-confident youth, and he makes him brave Fortune, throw humility to the dogs, and prosper. Tamburlaine himself never lets us rest from hearing that he is a Fortunatus.

In Elizabethan thinking, the stars, too, played an important part, not only the military training which fortifies his invincible virtue, but also the physical courage and with fortune were considered accountable for man's destiny. The stars... through obeying God's changeless order, are responsible for the vagaries of fortune in the realms below the moon.

And Tamburlaine is never forgetful of the stars that govern his league with fortune. He says that "will" and "shall" best fitteth Tamburlaine, whose smiling stars give him assured hope of martial triumph when he meets his foes.

There is no doubt—for direct and intangible evidence support the view—that Marlowe thought in terms of the Fortunatus thesis when he took Tamburlaine from the pages of history and breathed into him the breath of life.

Tamburlaine is a Courtier. Marlowe's Tamburlaine has been acclaimed by nearly all critics as a culture symbol.

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21Farnham, p. 370.
23Allen, p. 194.
of the Renaissance. This portrait is found in Castiglione's *The Courtier*. Tamburlaine, the Scythian Shepherd, was neither "That Atheist Tamburlan" as he was called by the sixteenth-century playwright Robert Greene, nor "a bloody and useless Brute" as he was designated by the twentieth-century biographer and critic, John Bakeless. Rather, he was Marlowe's conception of the soldier-poet or scholar-warrior in the mold of the Italian courtier described by Castiglione.24

Tamburlaine, who fulfills the ideal of the courtier, possesses, not only the military training which fortifies him with invincible virtù, but also the physical courtly traits, and the princely intellectual attributes of a gentleman.

Castiglione's emphasis upon perfection of figure is symbolic of the Christian Platonism of the Italian Renaissance: that God worked through nature to achieve harmonious perfection between the mind and body of man. Marlowe's Tamburlaine dramas fully present the ideal set forth at Urbino that "very seldom doth an ill soule dwell in a beautiful bodie."25

Central to Tamburlaine's creed is his conviction of his virtù. Having overthrown Mycetes, rightful but impotent king of Persia, and Bajazet, the mighty Turk, Tamburlaine distributes crowns among his loyal generals in justification of their virtù.

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24T. M. Pearce, "Tamburlaine's 'Discipline to His Three Sonnes,'" *Modern Language Notes*, XV (March, 1924), 18.

Tamburlaine is the incarnation of the spirit of virtú— the spirit of Marlowe, and the spirit of the Elizabethan age. He revels in the intoxication of boundless power. His swelling confidence hypnotizes his friends, and paralyses his enemies. His most bitter foes feel the resistless fascination of the man. Some of the best things said about him are uttered by his antagonists.  

The greatest perfection of the courtier-ruler is recognized in the role of the lover. The code which Tamburlaine observes as a lover is consistent in the two plays, and in all respect he comporteth himself in accord with views expressed by Rambou in The Courtier. Love is defined as nature's pride and richest furniture! and Tamburlaine's own utterances are pitched in a similar key, when he speaks of himself as one who means to be a terror to the world, measuring the limits of his empery, by east and west, as Phoebus does his course.

Besides the physical courtly traits, the Prince must possess intellectual attributes. He must be literate, know music, drawing, painting, sculpture, and poetry. Notable in Tamburlaine the soldier-poet is his obsession with poetry. "What is beauty saith my sufferings then," he cries, when his lords have left him under orders to put the citizens of Damascus to the sword.

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27 Tamburlaine, II, 1, 31-36.
Music was not absent from Tamburlaine's court for when his queen is ill he refers to music as a harmony which God "tunes to our souls" and as Zenocrate dies, she calls for music to ease her suffering.

The greatest perfection of the courtier-ruler is recognized in the role of the lover. The code which Tamburlaine observes as a lover is consistent in the two plays, and in all respects he comports himself in accord with views expressed by Bembo in The Courtier. Love is defined as nothing else but a certaine coveting to enjoy beautie: and for so much as coveting longeth for nothing, but for things known, it is requisite that knowledge goe evermore before coveting, which of his owne nature willeth the good, but of himselfe is blind, and knoweth it not. Therefore hath nature so ordained that to every vertue of knowledge there is annexed a vertue of longing. And because in our soule there be three manner waies to know, namely, by sense, reason, and understanding: of sense there ariseth appetite or longing, which is common to us with brute beastes: of reason ariseth election or choice, which is proper to man: of understanding, by the which man may be partner with Angels, ariseth will.

From the moment Tamburlaine first beholds Zenocrate, he addresses her in ideal terms. He praises her beauty, and promises her riches. Finally, he tells her that her person is more worth to him than even the Persian crown.

Zenocrate is ravished with Tamburlaine's favors.
When reproved by Agydas, she says that Tamburlaine is "princely" and that his words are "sweeter than the Muses' song." Even by the deathbed of Zenocrate, Tamburlaine appears as the poet-lover and even when his hands are red with blood, phrases of pure gold flow ever and again from his lips. That Tamburlaine loved color imagery representative of personal beauty and love is seen when Marlowe devises special techniques to underline his purpose of describing transcendent human beauty. In so doing he utilizes the well-worn figure of the lady dispelling the gloom that encircles her or, her lover; he does so simply but sonorously. In such vein does Tamburlaine praise Zenocrate. To Tamburlaine Zenocrate is the symbol of beauty and compassion who turns him into a lover when he might have been merely a conqueror; it is Zenocrate who sets up a conflict between honor and love in a mind otherwise undivided and single; it is Zenocrate who exerts from this all-conquering conqueror an admission of defeat.

Pearce, who has portrayed the character of Tamburlaine in terms of the Italian model, the perfect courtier, refers especially to the passage in Tamburlaine, where Menaphon describes his way before the lord shall have the victor and lance.

29Boas, p. 99.
31Henderson, p. 90.
the figure of the Scythian, recalls not a Mongol chieftain but Michelangelo's sculptured figure of David. No one in Renaissance literature would applaud Bembo's tribute to "beautiful armies" in more fitting terms than Tamburlaine.32

Tamburlaine is an Educator. He teaches his sons by word, example, and action. He emphasizes discipline, which makes leaders, and he shows his disgust for "youths too dainty for the wars."

When the second play opens, some fifteen years have passed. The chieftain is now father to three sons who appear in the fourth scene of the first act. They enter in the company of their mother, along with drums and trumpeters. Tamburlaine greets his wife ceremoniously as an empress, "the world's faire eie," and enthrones her between her sons who "shall be Emperors" and "Commanders of a world."33

While Zenocrate watches, Tamburlaine exhorts his sons in the discipline which makes a leader. He expresses his contempt for the dainty accomplishments of court, such as the music of the lute, the blandishments of love-making, and the caperings of the dance.

He applauds Celebinus for "trotting the ring and tilting the glove," when he says:

Well done, my boy! Thou shalt have shield and lance

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Armour of proof, horse, helm and curtle-axe.34

And when Amyras protests that he, too, is warlike, the Educator proudly replies:

Be thou the scourge and terror to the world, Or else you are not sons of Tamburlaine.35

But when Calyphas replies that he does not choose to follow arms and prefers to stay with his mother, the angry father vociferates:

Bastardly boy, sprung from some coward’s loins, And not the issue of great Tamburlaine.36

And Tamburlaine continues to give the boys a further lesson in soldiering by cutting his own arm and says:

A wound is nothing, be it ne'er so deep; Blood is the god of war’s rich livery.37

Tamburlaine teaches his boys by examples of war, revenge, death, and cruelty. They are made to listen while the generals report their world-wide conquests, scaling walls, besieging forts, undermining towns, and making the best military formation and fortifications.

These appearances occur in separate scenes to the end of the act, and are meant to be exemplary to Tamburlaine’s sons of the courage and resourcefulness of

34II Tamburlaine, I, iv, 43-44.
35Ibid., I, iv, 60-61.
36Ibid., I, iv, 69-70.
37Ibid., III, ii, 115-16.
the men who serve their father. When Tamburlaine meets with his sons after the funeral of Zenocrates, he urges the youths to "leave off" their mourning and "list to him, that mean to teach them the rudiments of war."

I'll have you learn to sleep upon the ground,
March in your armour through watery fens,
Sustain the scorching heat and freezing cold,
Hunger and thirst, right adjuncts of the war.

Tamburlaine continues to instruct his sons in the discipline of his way of life by immediate examples. He makes them watch the battles, the captive kings harnessed for his chariot, and the killing of their own brother. Tamburlaine's technique of fortification, as well as points of strategy, are in strict accord with the countless military treatises of Marlowe's day.

In Tamburlaine, by repeated hints, touches, and more elaborate references to armies and tactics distributed everywhere through the action, he keeps us always cognizant of these things, and offers our imagination three-dimensional scenes busy with the movements and sounds of war.

Tamburlaine urges the boys to cruelty when he gives Amyras a couch which is driven by the captive kings, and he

38 T. M. Pearce, "Tamburlaine's 'Discipline to His Three Sonnes,'" Modern Language Notes, XV (March, 1924), 20. Tamburlaine is meant to put metal into the soul as.

39 Tamburlaine, III, ii, 55-58.

inspires Celebinus to taunt the captives. And even at death, he has the sons march out to meet his last earthly enemy, Callapine.

Even in the last scene when Tamburlaine fights his enemy, death, he still demonstrates his philosophy of life. The sons are made to accompany him. The conqueror calls for a map that he may see how much of the world he has left for his boys to conquer.

Tamburlaine's religion is materialistic. The principal goal of Tamburlaine is to conquer the world. He calls for a map that he may see how much of the world he has left for his sons to conquer. The boys peer over his shoulder while he traces projects left incomplete—one of them the joining of the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, another the conquest of America, a third the exploration of Antarctica.

Tamburlaine's last exhortation is to Amyras as he enthrones him as successor in the roles of Scourge of God and Emperor of the World. He tells him that he should be a Scourge and control those slaves who guide his chariot. In Tamburlaine's belief it is not even true to say that his flesh is about to perish, for his sons are his flesh. His spirits will survive on earth in his flesh—his sons will continue his career of conquest—and he himself will pass to a higher existence.\(^41\)

Pearce has proved that Tamburlaine played a great role in the education of his sons, and in

Elizabethan religion may be stated in terms of the fire-breathing philosophy of the soldier-poet, Tamburlaine is meant to put metal into the soul as

\(^{41}\)I. Duthie, "The Dramatic Structure of Marlowe's Tamburlaine the Great," *English Studies*, New Series I (1948), 120.
well as into the body, to join the two in a neoplatonic perfection of ideal strength and beauty.\(^4^2\)

Tamburlaine's religion revolves around two conceptions uttered by Tamburlaine himself. The earlier and more significant one is that "a law of nature commands him and all other men to seek regal power." The later is that in his conquests he is "acting as the Scourge of God."

Tamburlaine's religion is Naturalism. The principles are that man is a part of the universal spirit; that he is a part of the nature of God; that there is a personal God who does not intervene in the material concerns of men.

The dominant note of the drama as far as religion is concerned is Tamburlaine's strength and self-dependence. He uses the idea of a Divine Power to enhance himself, since he alternately considers himself a scourge divinely appointed to devastate the earth and utters threats against the Deity. In neither case does he show the humility before God which is at the root of all genuine religion. Tamburlaine conceives of God as a compelling force, a potential or actual enemy, not as a source and object of love. Tamburlaine is aloof from man as well as from God. His quest of terrestrial power is only incidentally an entry into the affairs of the world; in its essence it is a lofty and remote aspiration, pitched in ideal regions.\(^4^3\)

Elizabethan religion may be defined in terms of

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conduct rather than of creed. The Queen's religion being the "true religion," it meant that sedition was "atheism." Therefore, to the Elizabethans the term atheism was, by a sort of Platonic dichotomy, simply the opposite of the "true religion." So for Marlowe and a few other free-thinkers, this Renaissance religion meant a complete repeal.

That Tamburlaine was not an atheist, that he believed in religions, and that he followed his own philosophy of religion is emphasized in the plays of Tamburlaine. Tamburlaine's religion begins with the article of faith—"The thirst of reign and sweetness of a crown." His motive-force of life is the will to power unrestrained by morality. To him, "nature herself teaches us to have aspiring minds," for the very elements composing man's body are at war, and the soul itself is pure energy ranging the heavens for the knowledge and the comprehension which are another kind of power.

Tamburlaine's ambition is, at first, the crown of Persia, for "a God is not so glorious as a king," but it keeps on growing and as it develops, so his defiance of religion does also. Tamburlaine is, not unnaturally, chiefly interested in the military prowess of the Deity, wherever or whatever he might be. Obviously he believed in a god of some sort, otherwise there would be no point in calling
himself, the Scourge of God.\textsuperscript{44} The death of Zenocrate is Tamburlaine's first defeat at the hands of a Power, which he cannot control. He begins to realize that death is not his servant, as he believed. Though he claims to be the equal of the gods, he now discovers that though he can take life he can neither give nor prolong it. Finally, he is struck by the thought that he too may be mortal. Now God seems to him "a god of force, valiant, proud, ambitious, who by creating man in his own mould has given him a being which must fulfill itself by perpetual contest."\textsuperscript{45}

When Zenocrate dies Tamburlaine defies the unseen power. He commands Techelles to wound the earth, to capture the fatal sisters, to break the frame of heaven, and to shatter all the starry firmament.

Tamburlaine refers to religion when he lances his own arm to demonstrate how trivial a thing is a wound and invites his sons to wash in his blood. Thus they partake of the ancient blood covenant of many primitive religions which, in its Mithraic form, was popular in the Roman army. Tamburlaine mentions religion when he stabs his son. He threatens Jove with greater enmity for giving him such a

\textsuperscript{44}Henderson, p. 96.  
\textsuperscript{45}Kocher, Christopher Marlowe, p. 84.
son "than he that darted mountains at thy head." Also, when he enters in his coach drawn by conquered kings, he storms at Jove and Mohammed. His thundering continues to mount in a blazing crescendo while he plans the rebuilding of Samarkand.

If Tamburlaine were asked what God he follows, he could hardly give that God a name. It is his own genius, the genius of tyranny, destruction, and slaughter. Tamburlaine sees himself riding like Jupiter in triumph through the streets in a chariot gilt with fire, as emperor of the threefold world, while all the gods stand gazing at his pomp. After the capture of Babylon he dares Mohammed to come down from heaven and avenge the slaughter of the faithful, and he burns the Koran. Soon after he begins to sicken and, concluding that his sickness has been sent by some god to torment him, he prepares to levy war against heaven.

In his delirium, Tamburlaine tells Techelles to go up to the court of Jove and to command him to send Apollo down to cure his sickness; "or I'll fetch him down myself."

Death wins every trick against Tamburlaine's bid for the power to spare or slay, and in the final scene of the play he answers the challenge with which Tamburlaine ends the preceding blasphemy scene—"Sickness

or death can never conquer me.”

But hearing the doctor’s verdict, Tamburlaine begins to realize that death is his victor and like Shakespeare’s heroes, Tamburlaine grows great in the moment of self-discovery. With his last breath he sums up the fatal contradiction of his career in a magnificent line, worthy of Zenocrate’s lover: “For Tamburlaine, the Scourge of God must die.”

The second phase of Tamburlaine’s religion is that he is the Scourge sent by God to chastise mankind. He delights in his title, his function, and his conquests as being the Scourge of God.

The origin of the Scourge of God has its beginning in the Old Testament, in the prophecy of Isaiah. There Assyria is described as the rod of God’s anger raised against the sins of Israel. From a reading of various Renaissance writers we gather the theory that God punishes the wicked in two ways: internally, by sending maladies of the mind and perturbations of the passions; externally, by permitting the ravages of tyrants, who are made to serve God as His scourges.

This notion that God permits evil agents to rage for a time to punish other evil men was voiced by the Renaissance


48 Ibid., p. 64.

49 Roy Battenhouse, “Tamburlaine, the ‘Scourge of God,’” Publication of Modern Language Association, LVI (June, 1941), 337.
writers because they wanted to make it clear that retributive justice was not confined to an afterworld.

Scourge of God is a concept employed in accounting for historical calamities such as wars and tyrannies, which are interpreted as social punishments inflicted under God's providence by wicked men whom God later destroys. Tamburlaine prides himself in being the Scourge of God as he refers to this title countless numbers of times. When he drives his chariot, he invites one to "see the figure of his dignity" and, after comparing himself to the god who drives the horses of the sun, he proclaims himself to be "the scourge of highest Jove."

And again when he orders the Koran and the other "superstitious books" to be burned, he announces:

There is a God, full of revenging wrath,
From whom the thunder and the lightning breaks,
Whose Scourge I am, and him will I obey.51

Tamburlaine fulfills the design of a Scourge of God. Until heaven decides to conquer the Scourge, he continues on his way of rising pride and mounting conquest, cruelty, and terror.

To summarize Tamburlaine's religion, Gardner adds:

If one sees in Tamburlaine, as Marlowe meant, the embodiment of brute force, without reason and without conscience, he ceases to be a blusterer, and becomes, indeed, as he asserts himself, a Scourge of God.52

50Ibid., p. 340.
51II Tamburlaine, V, i, 182-84.
A Scourge contains certain traits of character. Giovius gives the following: fury, cruelty, ambition, tyranny, magnanimity, and invincibility. Marlowe's Tamburlaine possesses all of them.

Relying on his audience's belief that Tamburlaine was God's instrument in punishing the heathen, Marlowe is permitted to make him as grandiloquent and courageous as he wishes. His excesses may all be forgiven on the score of his mission to the world.53

In striking contrast to Tamburlaine's pride and arrogance is his final obedience to a supreme Force:

And, till by vision or by speech I hear
Immortal Jove say "Cease, my Tamburlaine,"
I will persist a terror to the world.54

In his dying words, "For Tamburlaine, the Scourge of God, must die," the mighty Tamburlaine, the Scourge of God, admits that he, like all men, must die. But "so far as this conqueror of kingdoms and Scourge of God knows any tragedy, it is only the tragedy of his impotence before the universal fact of death."55

To summarize Tamburlaine's religion, Gardner adds:

Man's desires and aspirations may be limitless, but their fulfillment is limited by forces outside the

54II Tamburlaine, IV, i, 199-201.
control of the will. There are certain facts, of
which death is the most obvious, which no aspiration
and no force of soul can conquer. There is a sort of
stubbornness in the stuff of experience, which frus­
trates and resists the human will. The world is not
the plaything of the ambitious mind.56

Tamburlaine's temperament indicates certain chol­
eric characteristics; produces specific passions, causes
a typical malady, and brings on an appropriate death.
Two articles by Carroll Camden—"Tamburlaine: The Choleric
Man," and "Marlowe and Elizabethan Psychology"—point out
that Marlowe was well acquainted with Renaissance philoso­
phy regarding humors.

Elizabethan popular philosophy is based upon a fatal­
istic doctrine. Man is what he is by the grace of God.
This accounts for the general belief in the science of
astrology and physiognomy. In the same way the pre­
dominance of any one humor in an individual accounts
for the whole make-up of his body, as well as the rul­
ing passion of his mind.57

Tamburlaine realizes this philosophy when he ex­
plains the motive for his ambition and boldness. He says
that nature framed us of four elements, which war within
our breasts for regiment, and teaches us all to have as­
piring minds.

Marlowe is the first Elizabethan dramatist to show

56 Helen Gardner, "The Second Part of 'Tamburlaine
the Great,'" Modern Language Review, XXVII (January, 1942),
19.

57 Carroll Camden, "Tamburlaine: The Choleric Man,"
Modern Language Notes, XLIV (November, 1929), 430.
an interest in, and a knowledge of the construction of the human body. The body is made up of four humors: yellow bile, black bile, blood, and phlegm, which come respectively from the elements of fire, earth, air and water. These humors are continually at odds with each other over the supremacy of the body. Health is nothing but a temperance of the complexions, and illness occurs when one humor gains the ascendancy.  

Tamburlaine exemplifies this theory when he condemns Jove for sending him a son who had been created from "the scum and tartar of the elements." Again, Tamburlaine displays his choleric qualities—dryness, heat, and anger—when he likens himself to a fiery meteor and to Phaeton. Tamburlaine’s color also serves to mark him a choleric type. His pale complexion, symbol of anger, is portrayed when Menaphon describes him as "pale of complexion, wrought in him with passion." And Agydas exclaims that his face "casts a pale complexion on his cheeks."

Tamburlaine’s fiery eyes, often referred to in the plays, show a Renaissance’s passion of anger. And examples of Tamburlaine’s pride are legion. He says that he will burn city after city until he hears immortal Jove say to him, "Cease, my Tamburlaine."

When he has ravished one of the conquered towns, he erects a pillar and has the following inscription placed on it:  

58 Carroll Camden, "Marlowe and Elizabethan Psychology," Philology Quarterly, VIII (June, 1929), 69.
This town, being burnt by Tamburlaine the Great, Forbids the world to build it up again.\(^59\)

Other choleric traits of Tamburlaine are rage, revenge, and fury. These are seen at the death of Zenocrate when he raves like a maniac, at the approach of his own death when he storms heaven, and on his deathbed when he thinks of more battles.

Red is the favorite color of the choleric man.

Tamburlaine fits these descriptions for "he delights in red, crimson, scarlet, vermilion, gold; and the substances of amber, ivory, crystal, blood, fire, flame, bright, and dark."\(^61\)

There are many versions regarding Tamburlaine's malady or "distemper." The new version, which Parr suggests, is a feverish nature. It was held that man's body contains vital moisture, humism, and natural heat, calor that Tamburlaine's inordinate and innate passions, and incidentally his stars, precipitate his death; and also that the malady can be determined by the medical diagnosis of the physician.\(^52\)

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\(^{59}\) Tamburlaine, IV, i, 199-200.


diagnosis of the physician.\textsuperscript{62}

Marlowe presents Tamburlaine as a gigantic and energetic man, lusting for military dominion, believing in his own destiny, and he links his reiterated invincibility with the impelling power of the stars, and finally he decides that the only appropriate conqueror of Tamburlaine should be Tamburlaine himself. "Accordingly, his hero, the wrathful Scythian dies, from a malignant 'distemper,' which might be brought on as a result of his fiery temperament."\textsuperscript{63}

Tamburlaine dies of a malady eminently befitting a conqueror—fire in his blood, caused by his unrestrained passions, and his stars. Tamburlaine's malady shows that his dominating characteristic is his inordinate passion—the passion of ambition, hatred, wrath, and revenge—from which the Elizabethan readily perceived that devastating results may be wrought upon the body.\textsuperscript{64}

According to medical diagnosis, Tamburlaine's malady is of a febril nature. It was held that man's body contains vital moisture, humidum, and natural heat, calor,

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{63}Leslie Spence, "Tamburlaine and Marlowe," \textit{Publications of the Modern Language Association}, XLII (September, 1927), 621.
  \item \textsuperscript{64}Johnstone Parr, "Tamburlaine's Malady," \textit{Publications of the Modern Language Association}, LIX (September, 1944), 696.
\end{itemize}
in certain proportions, and if these proportions are not
distributed, life decays.

Therefore, Tamburlaine, because of his intense pas­sion, had an excess of febril heat in his body, and, as a result, a depletion of moisture. His physician says:

Your veins are full of accidental heat,
Whereby the moisture of your blood is dried:
The humidum and calor, which some hold
Is not a parcel of the elements,
But of a substance more divine and pure,
Is almost clean extinguished and spent; which,
Being the cause of life, imports your death.65

The more Tamburlaine's passion is enraged the more malignant his bodily condition becomes, and the result is disastrous.

Tamburlaine is an admirable portrait of a man in his own humor and Marlowe has done full justice to the physiological and psychological authorities in his de­piction of him.66

The Elizabethans also believed that a man's stars guided his destiny. In diagnosing Tamburlaine's sickness, his physician tells him that this day is critical and dan­gerous for him. Parr says that to an Elizabethan audience the statement, "This day is critical," was as intelligible as an appendectomy would be to a modern audience.

According to medieval astrological theory, the tempera­ment of a man was determined by the relation of the

65II Tamburlaine, V, iii, 84-90.

stars at the moment of his birth. The aspect of heaven [the positions of the stars] was more favorable at Tamburlaine's birth than it would ever be again, stars coming into conjunction then that would, for the rest of time, be in opposition.67

Regarding the combination of the stars, certain days are favorable for certain diseases. Marlowe left entirely to his audience's imagination the specific planets which were woefully aspected when the accidental febril heat dried up Tamburlaine's blood, parched his veins, and so debilitated his humidum and calor that he was speedily dispatched.68

Marlowe definitely links Tamburlaine's invincibility with the impelling power of the stars. Tamburlaine himself, who has boasted so often about the stars that reigned at his nativity, must bow now to their inexorable law. Parr says that possibly the same celestial force which made Tamburlaine's career heaven-ordained at last deals to him a kind of retributive justice in that the celestial bodily ingredients refuse to function properly.

Although death conquers the conqueror, still Tamburlaine promises himself a double immortality—in the next world, and through his sons in this world. Fire was the element in which Tamburlaine lived, and now


Earth hath spent the pride of all her fruit,  
And heaven consum'd his choicest living fire!  
Let earth and heaven his timeless death deplore,  
For both their worths will equal him no more.  

Regarding his double immortality, Tamburlaine accepts with Stoic fatalism the fact of death, but at the same time invests his sons "with their legacy—his Scourge, his crown, his spirit, and his Machiavellian wisdom."  

Boas, commenting on the fury of Tamburlaine, thinks that the conqueror becomes more and more the primitive barbarian and that due to his misdirected desire, earthly glory, he is deluded by the vain delusion of ruling and conquering; that he is no longer a true figure of tragic grandeur. But in their fate there is nothing akin to Tamburlaine's cumulative enormities or his frenzied defiance of mortal limitations. His career closes at the last merely because all that live must die, and he looks forward to its continuation by his sons.  

But Pearce, pondering on the magnificence of the mighty conqueror, avers that Tamburlaine the Great, Who from a Scythian Shepherd, by his rare and wonderful conquests, became a most puissant and mighty Monarch; and who for his tyranny and terror in war, was termed, the Scourge of God, dies.  

Doran and Duthie imply the tragic end of Tamburlaine.  

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69 II Tamburlaine, V, i, 250-53.
70 Battenhouse, Marlowe's Tamburlaine, p. 258.
71 Boas, Christopher Marlowe, p. 100.
72 T. M. Pearce, "Tamburlaine's 'Discipline to His Three Sonnes,'" Modern Language Quarterly, XV (March, 1924), 18.
because "his choleric temperament, with its trappings, has brought on death which has won this initial bout" and the "death which levels him."

All authorities agree on one common factor, the chief passion of Tamburlaine—his unbounded ambition for world-power.

Battenhouse says that the tragic flaw in Tamburlaine goes deep, for he is a victim of three ills—immoderation, misdirection, and delusion. Tamburlaine's immoderation is due to his misdirected desire, earthly glory. He is deluded by the "sweet fruition of an earthly crown." Not controlling his desires, he plunges headlong into Ambition, surmounting all other passions. Ambition furthermore, takes away a man's concern for his life; it causes him to contemn religion; and it offers violence even to the laws of nature, for it causes the murder of parents, children, and brothers.73

The characteristics—valor, magnanimity, and eloquence—are a spur to Tamburlaine's misdirected desire, especially his lust of conquest, the crown, and his worship of beauty, Zenocrate.

The most violent aspects of the lust for power are suggested by the numerous images representative of fury, violence, wrath and the desire for vengeance, the aftermaths of tragic disappointment. Most of these are couched in bloody and fiery language. Wrath and courage are kindled in the hearts of several characters.

73Battenhouse, Marlowe's Tamburlaine, p. 231.
Tamburlaine constantly refers to crowns, which emphasizes his lust for rule. The crown was often used on the Elizabethan stage as a symbol of power and rule, also as a synonym for "power" or "kingdom."

Tamburlaine's theme song is, "A god is not so glorious as a king." He jests about the ease with which he can procure the Persian crown. When Cosroe berates him for being bloody, barbarous, and insatiate, Tamburlaine voices the rhapsody on the crown, which ends with "the sweet fruition of an earthly crown."

When Cosroe is dying, he curses Tamburlaine, but the conqueror mockingly replies that not all the curses which the furies breathe will make him leave so rich a prize as the crown. He places the crown upon his head, and boasts that he will continue to wear it, even though Mars and all earthly rulers conspire against him.

Tamburlaine's worship of beauty is prominent in Zenocrate. She signifies beauty which "sits in her face." In a crucial soliloquy Tamburlaine declares that a warrior must admit beauty as an influence upon him. This love, a mad worship, causes him to threaten heaven and to burn Larissa.

His Zenocrate is a beauty like Homer's Helen; she is beautiful, sentimental, inconstant, and vain, for her...
character is raised wholly on a naturalistic morality. But she has, superbly, the grace of pagan loveliness.75

Tamburlaine's delusion is asserted when he manifests that his fury is divine. He says that it is Jove's spirit, which lives in him, and that makes him "valiant, proud, and ambitious."

His enemies think differently. The Governor of Babylon calls him "vile monster," and the Sultan of Egypt thinks him "a devil." Ortygius says that he might be a "god or Fiend," or "a monster turned to a manly shape."

Tamburlaine's career may be divided into four rising stations in life—shepherd, leader, king, and emperor. With each new step, he, too, advances in his ambition, which increases his pride, and intensifies his brutal cruelty.

The first time one meets the Scythian shepherd is as the play opens, the weakling King of Persia is dispatching his general Theridamas, to suppress the rough bandit, who prides himself in robbing the merchants of Persépolis, and doing uncivil outrages.76

Next he is seen en route on another brigandage, during which he captures Zenocrates, who disdains his offers. Emboldened by her beauty, he spectacularly discards

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75 Battenhouse, Marlowe's Tamburlaine, p. 233.
his shepherd's "weeds" for the garb of a warrior. He ex- 
alts in his conquest and cruelly pronounces her a captive. 

Dressed as a warrior and provided with a motive, 
he becomes a leader. Displaying heroic and crafty action 
he cracks Theridamas' loyalty and wins him as a follower. 

Encouraged by this victory, 
Tamburlaine readily agrees to serve Cosroe and make 
him Emperor of Asia; he defeats in battle a small 
force which the cowardly Mycetes has raised against 
him; and, as a reward, he accepts from Cosroe the 
title of "Regent of Persia and General Leftenant of 
the Armies."  

But the new Regent of Persia's ambition is greatly 
increased as he sees the pomp attending King Cosroe and he 
too longs for a crown. The thirst of reign is so great 
that Tamburlaine communicates it to his followers, and all 
march against Cosroe. Cosroe is defeated and Tamburlaine 
takes the crown and puts it on his own head. 

Now Tamburlaine is king, and with his rise mounts 
his pride and cruelty. His unbounded ambition succeeds in 
everything. Even Zenocrate confesses her love for him when 
Agydas warns her against him. Infuriated by Agydas, Tambur-
laine sends him a sword. 

Tamburlaine's greed for conquest keeps rising. He 
rejects the terms of Bajazet, the mighty Turkish Emperor. 

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77Karl J. Holzknecht, Outlines of Tudor and Stuart 
Plays (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1947), p. 79.
Bajazet is conquered. He and his wife Zabina are accorded the most inhuman treatment.

Finally Tamburlaine is a conqueror. The Sultan of Egypt, Zenocrate's father, joins with the King of Arabia, lover of Zenocrate, to oppose the conqueror's armies.

While using his color device to terrify the city of Damascus, Tamburlaine banquets with his men. He makes sport of Bajazet by using him as a footstool, taunts him, and throws him food as to a beast.

When Damascus can hold out no longer, the citizens send out a deputation of four young girls to plead for mercy, but Tamburlaine, unmoved, orders his cavalry to charge them and to hoist their slaughtered bodies up on Damascus' walls. All the rest of the inhabitants are slaughtered. Arabia dies in Zenocrate's arms, but her father is spared. And Zenocrate becomes the conqueror's Queen.

That Tamburlaine is built upon a cumulative plan is seen when Tamburlaine's enemies appear as in a Mummer's play one down, t'other come on. Marlowe, however, shows a growing skill in interweaving the episodes; the Sultan begins to move before Bajazet is quite finished with, so that there is not a gap between the two campaigns. Also the enemies become progressively nobler; Mycetes is a fool and Tamburlaine attacks him merely for wealth; Cosroe and Bajazet are soldiers and it is a greater triumph to overcome them; the Sultan and Arabia are fighting for the person of Zenocrate.78

78 Bradbrook, p. 142.
The bloody conquests of Tamburlaine continue in the second part. The personality of Tamburlaine, combined with the crowded action and barbaric splendor of his battles and triumphs, provided a memorable experience to which no summary can do justice. The deeper note is also sounded by the second part of the tragedy which recounts Tamburlaine's disappointments, sorrows, and end.79

One of Tamburlaine's sons proves such a coward that the father kills him. Tamburlaine loses his beloved wife, and although he remains undefeated by man, "death cuts off the progress of his pomp."

Further barbarity occurs when Tamburlaine burns the town of Larissa, when he captures the kings of Natolia, Trebizon, Soria, and Jerusalem, when he orders the Governor of Babylon to be hanged in chains from the walls, when he sentences all the citizens of Babylon to be drowned, and finally when he orders all copies of the Koran to be burned. Then the mighty conqueror suddenly becomes ill.

In this summary, one can see a picture of the bloody conquests of mighty Tamburlaine:

Tamburlaine, the Scythian conqueror and the Scourge of God, whose wrath is death; that whips down cities and controlleth crowns; the monster that hath drunk a sea of blood, and yet gapes still for more to quench his thirst, he is a man greater than Mahomet; that treadeth Fortune underneath his feet; him on whom Death and

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the Fatal Sisters wait, and over whose zenith fame hovereth, sounding of her golden trump. Nor was he made Arch-monarch of the world, crown'd and invested by the hand of Jove, for deeds of bounty or nobility.

In the background of the historical Tamerlane and the dramatic Tamburlaine, there is a great contrast, and also a notable comparison. Today everyone knows that Tamerlane was the son of a chief. According to Tamerlane's own account, which is confirmed by independent testimony, Timur (that is, "Iron") was the son of the chief of a Tartar tribe, and lineally descended on his mother's side from the famous Genghis Khan.

However, the sixteenth century European historians make Timur a low-born shepherd or soldier.

Marlowe accepts for his drama the tradition of Timur's lowly shepherd's origin.

The fact receives attention both on the title page of the drama and internally in the dialogue. On one occasion the Sultan of Egypt contemptuously calls Tamburlaine a "Peasant," and on another occasion Oranes calls him to his face "Shepherd's issue, base-borne Tamburlaine."

Timur does not glory in his low birth but Marlowe's Tamburlaine does. He says, "I am a lord and yet a shepherd by parentage," and "Jove sometimes masked in shepherd's weeds."

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CHAPTER IV
THE COMPARISON AND CONTRAST

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shepherd by parentage," and "Jove sometimes masked in shep­
herd's weeds."

1W. H. Davenport Adams, Warriors of the Crescent

2Roy W. Battenhouse, Marlowe's Tamburlaine
It is characteristic of Marlowe's power of transmitting his material that the disguise by Jove in his less reputable adventures should here be paralleled to the low birth which disguises the divine spark of genius in Tamburlaine.3

Regarding the physical characteristics both Tamerlane and Tamburlaine possess the Herculean traits in most instances.

This Tamerlane was powerful in body, a fine physique, wide-shouldered, long-limbed. His head was large and splendidly poised—a high forehead and full dark eyes that moved slowly and looked directly at a man. He had the broad cheek bones and wide sensitive mouth of his race. He was a youth of few words, with a deep and penetrating voice. He was lame in his right leg, and had two fingers missing in the right hand.4

Marlowe makes his Tamburlaine much more dignified and magnificent. Menaphon describes him as very tall, stately and strong, poise indicating a well-balanced mind. His eyes flood his countenance with kingly perception powers. Pale, because of his passionate ambitious desires for "sovereignty"; his high "wrinkled brow" betrays his age, but it is smooth which gives him a general appearance of youthful strength. His amber curl-knotted hair gives dignity, grace, and bright aspect. His long muscular arms, sinewy fingers denote successful enterprises. In every part, he is proportioned like the man who should subdue the world.5

There is a great contrast in the family life of the two Tamburlaines. Historians relate much about the


5Ellis-Fermor, pp. 92-93.
father of Tamerlane, Taragai, head of the clan, who relinquished his lordship rights in order to enter a monastery. He entrusted his only son, Tamerlane, to Hadji Barlas, his brother. Marlowe says nothing about the parentage of his Tamburlaine.

The immediate families of the two heroes are unlike in many ways. Kazan, the King Maker of Sali Sarai and overlord of Samarkand, heard of the bandit Tamerlane and invited the youth to his court. Meanwhile the dramatic Tamburlaine becomes popular with the kings of Persia, Mycetes and Cosroe, because of his great brigandage exploits.

Kazan gave Tamerlane a wife, who was one of his granddaughters. Her name was Aljai Khatun Agha, and she belonged to the powerful Jalair Clan. She came from the North, escorted by her kinsmen. The chronicle says that "she was about fifteen years old, and that her beauty was like 'the young moon' and her body was as graceful as the 'young cypress.'"6

The wedding took place amid great celebration. Much is said about the duration, the ceremonies, and the pomp. Immediately after the celebration, Aljai was led to the war camp.

6Lamb, p. 36.
The figure of Zenocrate, Tamburlaine's only wife, is Marlowe's own addition and the story of her relations with Tamburlaine is skillfully interwoven with that of his rising career, serving both to indicate the passage of time and to give variety.

Marlowe makes the wife of Tamburlaine, the daughter of the Sultan of Egypt, and the betrothed of Alcidamas, the King of Arabia. She is not given to Tamburlaine, but she is captured by him. She disdains the promises of her captor, but he continues with a magnificent speech of flattery.

Zenocrate, lovelier than the Love of Jove,
Brighter than is the silver Rhodope,
Fairer than whitest snow of Scythian hills,
Thy person is more worth to Tamburlaine,
Than the possession of the Persian Crown. 7

Tamburlaine does not force Zenocrate to marry him, but he tells her to wait until he proves to her that he can be Lord and Emperor. However, he orders her to his camp.

Marlowe says nothing about the marriage. He summarizes this occasion in one simple line, "We will our rites of marriage solemnize." The wedding takes place after the great victory at Damascus, while the wedding of Aljai took place before a great battle.

The historical Tamerlane had eight other wives

7Battenhouse, p. 246.
besides his favorite Aljai. Aljai bore him a son, Jahn­
gir, "The World Gripper." He had four other sons by his
other wives. at the court of the Persian king, Mycetes, and
Marlowe's Tamburlaine cherished only one wife,
Zenocrate. They had three sons--Calyphas, Amyras, and
Celebinus.

Both Tamburlaines possessed the chief Machiavel­
lian traits. Tamerlane was known for his ferocious and
overflowing energy. He hated foolery and jesting. In a

Both conquerors portray the Fortunatus. While his-
crisis he remained quiet and thoughtful. He was a breeder

torsion do not stress the fortunes of Tamerlane, Marlowe
of action.

emphasizes this phase in his hero.

Tamburlaine is almost the opposite of Tamerlane.
He possesses magnanimity in speech and action. He hates
came barriers. He crossed the hailing Arabian Desert and
weakness and deceit. In a crisis, he acts impulsively

Tamerlane was always confident and readily over­
captured the greatest conqueror, Kayazid. Parnham, Parnham,
and promptly. He plans diplomatically.

Historians give evidence of the robbery, crafti­
ness, and tyranny by which Tamerlane achieved his phenome­
nal rise. Fortescue reported that the bandit

turn accordingly.

Tamerlane is upheld, sustained and carried to tri­

began by corrupting his young followers into highway
robbers, at first only five hundred of them. The
Persian king sent forth a captain with a thousand
horsemen to seize Tamerlane, but instead the Scythian
won the troop to his troops. He took part in the
civil war of Persia. He plundered both the Persian
king and the king's brother. He deposed both of them
and became King and Lord of Persia.

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8 Thomas Fortescue, The Foreste, as quoted in Tam­
burlaine the Great; ed. U. M. Ellis-Fermor (London:
Marlowe follows these details accordingly. As the play opens, the fame of Tamburlaine's brigandage is being bruited about the court of the Persian king, Mycetes, and Theridamas is dispatched to seize "that sturdie Scythian thief." When Tamburlaine himself enters on the stage, his soldiers are "laden with treasure."

He has five hundred men and many "golden wedges." With these he confronts and wins over the thousand horsemen of Theridamas. Then he joins Cosroe and overthrows Mycetes.

Both conquerors portray the Fortunatus. While historians do not stress the fortunes of Tamerlane, Marlowe emphasizes this phase in his hero.

Tamerlane was always confident and readily overcame barriers. He crossed the boiling Arabian Desert and captured the greatest conqueror, Bayazid. Fermor, Farnham, Perondinus, Fulgosius, and Bugati speak of Tamerlane's fortune accordingly:

In nearly every scene Marlowe indicates that Tamburlaine is a Fortunatus. He is ever confident and always

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9 Battenhouse, p. 136.

wins his point.

Zenocrate begs him to stop fighting but he tells her that he will be victorious and reminds her that the stars have given him the crown of Persia. He tells Cosroe that he should trust in "Tamburlaine's approved fortunes." He informs his captains that the stars have already granted them the victory in battles yet unfought. Countlessly Tamburlaine refers to the theme of Fortune.

To a certain extent, authorities imply the qualifications of a Courtier in Tamerlane. His military experience, which fortified him with invincible virtù, was prominent.

But Marlowe makes his Tamburlaine contain all the qualifications of the ideal courtier, ethical, intellectual, and military. Tamburlaine's perfection of figure expresses the ideal, "that very seldom doth an ill soul dwell in a beautiful body." But Marlowe makes his Tamburlaine contain all the qualifications of the ideal courtier, ethical, intellectual, and military. Tamburlaine's perfection of figure expresses the ideal, "that very seldom doth an ill soul dwell in a beautiful body."
with those who obeyed him, and his intense cruelty to those who spurned him were well-known. His love of sculpture was unsurpassable.

Marlowe magnifies the courtliness of Tamburlaine. He is the soldier poet and a cultured gentleman. He loves poetry, music, and art. He treasures Zenocrate to such an extent that she is the only one who can influence him in his way of life. Tamburlaine usually had his wife and sons with him.

Tamburlaine loves flashy, meaningful colors, especially red, and high sounding names. He is generous to those who help him in his glorification. Pearce summarizes him as "not a Mongol chieftain but Michaelangelo's sculptured figure of David."  

Both Tamerlane and Tamburlaine are considered Educators but in a different capacity. As warrior-scholar and educator, Tamerlane was known best in his superhuman conquests, his perfect organization, his world-wide communication, and his mania for architecture.

Perfect organization was displayed throughout Tamerlane's whole empire, which was a detailed masterpiece of perfection, especially Samarkand, the capital. Everyone praised the military genius of this Tartar. Fortescue

commented on the orderliness, splendor, and amity of his camp.

Tamerlane's skill in establishing communication was unsurpassable. Clavijo said that "this great Khor-rassan Road, Tamerlane's service of information was complete and swifter than anything of the kind until the days of railroads." Outrived in the training of the fine arts, such as Outstanding was Tamerlane's talent for building.

His art was original, simple, massive, colorful, and magnificent. Although Tamerlane's education was largely from epitaph in three languages—Arabic, Hebrew, and Greek; experience and intuition, the chronicle stated that often he would have books read to him at night.

In portraying Tamburlaine as a warrior-scholar and educator, Marlowe merely implies the organization of his hero's organization of his empire, particularly Samarkand. He does not stress the military genius but the orderliness of Tamburlaine's camp is, no doubt, in Marlowe's picture. The ability of Tamburlaine's communication and transportation is merely implied.

Different is the role of educator between the two Tamburlaines. Nothing is recorded about the education of Tamerlane's sons, while Marlowe devotes practically the

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whole second play to Tamburlaine the educator. Here, the educator continuously teaches his sons by word, example, and action. He instructs them in the methods of war, gives them examples of his generals, and makes them participate in the actual battles.

Although Tamburlaine's education is mostly from experience, he is versed in the training of the fine arts, such as poetry, music, and literature. His sons indicate a well-rounded education.

Calyphas is able to read the inscription on Zenocrate's epitaph in three languages—Arabic, Hebrew, and Greek; Amyras explains the heraldry on her mausoleum, which demands a knowledge of Latin; and Tamburlaine intends to have the mausoleum for himself and his wife written in many languages as he has conquered kingdoms. And Celebinus presents a tablet registering the virtues and perfections of his mother. Tamburlaine put "metal into the soul as well as into the body."

Regarding the religion of both conquerors, in name they are the same but in their philosophy of life they differ. Both were styled "Mohammedans" but only in name.

Tamerlane did not observe the customs of his religion.

He had double the number of wives as allowed by the Moslem law. He signed himself, "I, Tamerlane, servant of God," and not as "monarch of Islam" as was

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15T. M. Pearce, "Tamburlaine's Discipline to His Three Sonnes," Modern Language Notes, XV (March, 1924), 25.
Tamerlane tolerated all religions. He had many religious denominations in Samarkand. The concept of the "Scourge of God" is recorded only once, and that was in connection with the story of a certain merchant of Genoa. While the religion of Marlowe's Tamburlaine centers around two concepts, which Tamburlaine himself utters. First, that "a law of nature commands him to seek regal power," and that "he is acting as the Scourge of God." Marlowe does not use the episode of the Genoan merchant. Instead, he uses the "Scourge" declaration with frequency throughout the two plays. Tamburlaine often calls one's attention to his title, and he dies announcing that "Tamburlaine, the Scourge of God must die."

Tamburlaine is well-acquainted with various religions. However, pagan in his outlook and living, he embodies, ethically speaking, "all the ideals described in Christian teaching." In brief, Marlowe adapts the historical view of Mexia, but makes Tamburlaine a man magnificently endowed with abilities and ambitions, a conqueror whose cruelties were ordered from heaven. Both Tamburlaines possessed choleric tempers. They both displayed the physical traits of the personality qualities of the choler character. Humors indicate him to be ambitious, fiery, daring, moody, solitary, and a breeder of action.

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16 Guy Le Strange, Clavijo—Embassy to Tamerlane (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1928), p. 239.
With abilities and ambitions, a conqueror whose cruelties were ordered from heaven. But Tamerlane's cruel acts were considered evil and were not considered as just punishments.

Both Tamburlaines possessed choleric temperaments. They both displayed the physical traits, the personality qualities, and the chief passions of the choleric man. But the two heroes exhibited a different type of choleric malady.

Historians do not specify the temperament of Tamerlane but judging from his biography, he was a mixture of the melancholy and choleric. Humors indicate him to be ambitious, fiery, daring, moody, solitary, and a "breeder of action."

According to Perondinus, Tamerlane possessed the choleric traits. He was insatiable, ruthless, destructive, and thirsting for sovereignty and love of arms.

The Arab, Persian, and Syrian historians, Clavijo and Schiltberger record that Tamerlane was a strange mixture of Oriental profusion and subtlety with barbarian crudity.19

Tamerlane, while on his last campaign, that of Cathay, suddenly became ill with a fever, a choleric omen, but he was not distempered. He called for the servants of

the Church, and died peacefully on February 19, 1409, at
the age of seventy.

Marlowe pictures his Tamburlaine a strong typical
choleric personality, and he refers to it many times in
his plays. Countless commentaries have been made on Tam-
burlaine's choleric temperament, which dominates his life
and career.

Tamburlaine possesses choleric features, which
show paleness of complexion and fieriness of eyes. His
choleric humor contains anger, fury, revenge, heat, and
dryness. His chief passions are ambition, pride, and cru-
elty. He is described as defying his enemy in exultant
terms, in battle of Constantinople with Bajazet, Mar-
lowe says that if a man is naturally choleric, the stars may greatly
influence him. Such a man may forget that reason
should rule the passions, and prompted by stellar in-
fluence, may give way to them, just as Tamburlaine
did. 20

Tillyard pictures a portrait of Tamburlaine when
he says that Tamburlaine is surrounded with trophies of conquest,
and begs, "Give me a map," which is uttered in the
fire of his physical distress, epitomizing his

That death is an unwelcome severance from Tambur-
laine's warring and his conquering is expressed in this
characterization:

20E. M. W. Tillyard, The Elizabethan World Pic-
And Ribner views Tamburlaine as a pagan when he quotes:

"For Tamburlaine, the Scourge of God must die; identify him as an angry, uncompromising world-conqueror, who dies as he had lived a pagan."

To both Tamburlaines belong the cardinal passions of unbounded ambition for world power and conquest, headed by pride. Most authors enumerate the capture and treatment of the Turk Bajazet, and the slaughter of the virgins as the most barbarous atrocities.

According to history, the battle of Tamerlane with the Turk Bayazid at Angora occupied an important part. Bayazid is described as defying his enemy in exultant terms, but able and prepared to make good his defiance.

This battle of Constantinople with Bajazet, Marlowe makes very short. In the play Bajazet offers Tamburlaine a truce but that is rejected. After the short fight, Bajazet is bound in chains.

According to Oriental reports, Bayazid was treated courteously by Tamerlane. His bonds were taken off, a search was made for his sons. However, he was forced to wear his imperial regalia, and his wife, Despina, stripped

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21Ethel Seaton, "Fresh Sources for Marlowe," The Review of English Studies, V (October, 1929), 146.

of her garments, was made to wait on the conqueror.

The story that Tamerlane confined Bayazid in an iron cage, and carried him as a living trophy on all his marches, is now discredited by historians; and explained by others as referring to a Byzantine litter, enclosed with bars, such as was generally used for the conveyance of state prisoners. In Marlowe's drama both Bajazet and his wife, Zabina, are captured and bound in chains. During the celebration, Tamburlaine accords Bajazet and Zabina inhuman treatment. Zabina, although not stripped of her garments, is made to wait on the conqueror.

Tamburlaine leads Bajazet about in an iron cage, uses him as a footstool to mount his throne, brings him in at banquets to taunt him unmercifully, and alternately starves him or throws him food as to a beast.

Regarding the death of the historical Bayazid and his wife, there are different versions. However, the most authentic seemed to be that Bayazid, with his strength sapped by debauchery and ordeal of battle, and his pride broken, died a few months after his capture.

Marlowe's Bajazet and his wife dash their brains out against the cage. Both this suicide and the footstool episode are Marlowe's own inventions.

Concerning the cruelty of the three tents, there

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are both similarities and divergencies between the historical and dramatic versions. The European versions relate that it was Tamerlane's custom, on the first day of his siege of a city to raise a white tent, in sign that if the citizens yielded they should have their goods, lives, and liberty; the second day a red tent, signifying that by yielding then they might save the lives of all but their chief men; and on the third day a black tent, promising death to all and the burning of the city. Fortescue transforms the "tents" into "ensigns." And the city, which rashly delayed submission until too late and then sent emissaries to beg for mercy, was unnamed. Arabshah, Schiltberger, and Chalcondylas agree in describing some such massacre either at Ispahan or at Sebastia. "At Ispahan Tamerlane had seven thousand children trampled to death." None of the versions available make the emissaries virgins only. Whetstone records that when citizens who had at first refused his offer of compassion sent to him their wives and children clothed all in white, having olive branches in their hands, Tamerlane in place of compassion caused his squadrons of horsemen to tread them under their feet and not to leave a mother's child alive and afterwards he levelled the city with the ground.

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25 Battenhouse, p. 250.
27 T. C. Izard, "Principal Source for Marlowe's Tamburlaine," Modern Language Notes, LVIII (June, 1943), 413.
In Tamburlaine it was Marlowe's own idea to connect the episode of the tents with the siege of Damascus.

Desiring clemency for their city, bearing a gilded wreath as a token of their hope of obtaining it, and defying the ominous message of the black tents, the "sun-bright" virgins advance toward Tamburlaine, now "all in black." Marlowe uses four virgins, who carry "gilded wreaths." These signs of victory, the gilded wreaths, here symbolical of victory to be resigned to Tamburlaine, are substituted by Marlowe for the olive branches, which in the historical records conveyed the desire of peace.

Marlowe has added the details of Tamburlaine's "plume" and "furniture." Furniture refers to Tamburlaine's tent, accoutrements, and dress.

Historians record only the rise of Tamerlane, while Marlowe emphasizes both the rise and fall of his hero. The historical Tamerlane really achieved all that is possible for a person to imagine. In military conquests, he overcame the armies of more than half the world—Northern India, Asia Minor, and Persia. He was victorious in some of the most terrible battles, as Aleppo, Angora, Damascus, Sebastia, and Takrit. Among the strongest leaders,
whom he conquered, were Barlas, Bayazid, Hussayn, and Tok-tamish. Tamerlane's rise began with rival leaders and Mongolian tribes in the neighborhood of Samarkand. Subduing them, he made Samarkand his headquarters, and from then he advanced upon his far-flung encounters. Chronicles relate that in fourteen months he had fought two major battles and countless other encounters, and had taken by assault a dozen fortified cities.

He was successful in everything that he undertook except the permanence of his Empire. For fifty years Tamerlane was sole ruler of his vast Empire. But when he died his Empire died with him. No successor was able to take up the reins which he let loose.

The Amirs, who had held council for the purpose of carrying out the Emperor's orders, were not listened to. The sons and grandsons fought for the leadership, and finally, civil war broke out and Tamerlane's great Empire vanished.

Tamburlaine's rise to power ascends as rapidly as Marlowe's play progresses. In the first act Tamburlaine overcomes Mycetes. Then he captivates Theridamas and persuades him to join his forces. In the second act Cosroe sees the wisdom of enlisting Tamburlaine's aid against Mycetes. Conquering Mycetes, Tamburlaine immediately
puts his ambitious thoughts into execution, and soon Cos¬
roe is killed and the Scythian chief becomes King of
Persia.

In the third act, Bajazet tries to arrange a truce
but the ambitious Tamburlaine spurns the offer. A battle
takes place and Bajazet is defeated. Act four gives one
a vivid and terrible picture of Tamburlaine's insatiable
ambition as he plans to attack Damascus.

In Act five, four virgins are sent out of Damas­
cus to plead for mercy but Tamburlaine rejects their pleas
and orders his horsemen to trample them to death. The
king of Arabia is killed but Zenocrate's father is spared
on condition that he gives Zenocrate to Tamburlaine as
wife.

Zenocrate has difficulty in reconciling Tamburlaine's
cruelty with his love for her, but prays that Moham¬
med may not hold against him the hero's disregard of
the rights of others. Then Tamburlaine marries Ze¬
nocrate. This marks a change from warfare to peace­
ful living. It stops the action in the mid-career
of Tamburlaine and his followers.29

The end of Part I of Tamburlaine shows the height of Tam¬
burlaine's rise to power and success.

In the second play of Tamburlaine, the bloody con¬
quests of Tamburlaine continue but clouds of defeat seem

29William Alvah Francis, "Plot—Structure in Mar­
lowe's Plays" (unpublished Master's thesis, Department of
English, University of Texas, August 1922), p. 29.
to overshadow him. In the first act, the first shadow which influences Tamburlaine is that he has a coward son. In the second act, Zenocrate becomes ill and dies. This is tragic for the strong conqueror.

In the third act, Callapine, son of Bajazet, challenges Tamburlaine at Aleppo. In the next act, Tamburlaine shows the height of his cruelty. He kills his son, and has captive kings hitched to his chariot. These he beats unmercifully as they drag him to Babylon.

The last act shows the raving Tamburlaine in his downfall. He continues his cruelty as he captures Babylon, orders the remaining citizens to be drowned, and then burns the city. Then he causes all copies of the Koran to be burned. Suddenly he feels ill.

The last adventure for the insatiable Tamburlaine is when King Callapine avenges his father, Bajazet. The opposing armies are about to clash when a fever, not a sword, falls the mighty Tamburlaine. He rages at his helpless physicians and orders them to bring even God from heaven to rid him of the malady, but the Scourge of God must die like any other earthly thing.

Then bending over Zenocrate's coffin, the great conqueror dies when "death cuts off the progress of his pomp and murderous fate throws all his triumphs down."

\[\text{Sources:}\]

Marlowe has invented many episodes in his Tamburlaine in order to make his hero more imposing and magnificent. Among these, Miss Spence lists the following:

Tamburlaine discards his shepherd weeds for full armor and a curtal axe; the captured treasure which dazzled Theridamas; the naked dagger which Agydas accepted; the conspicuous use of crowns which Marlowe has used at least fifteen times.32

Battenhouse lists the following:

The introduction of Zenocrate, her captivity, her influence upon Tamburlaine, her death, the carrying of her ashes in a hearse, the burning of Larissa in her honor; Tamburlaine's death and malady; and the slaying of Tamburlaine's son, Calyphas.33

Ellis-Fermor continues with these:

The chariot scene and the introduction of the whip; the so-called blasphemy scene when Tamburlaine becomes "distempered" and burns the Koran, and the story of Olympia and Theridamas.34

And Spence ends by quoting, "It is obvious that Marlowe emphasized the spiritual."35

Among the historical accounts which Marlowe omitted from his plays of Tamburlaine are the following: the

32Leslie Spence, "The Influence of Marlowe's Sources on Tamburlaine," Modern Philology, XXIV (June, 1926), 181.

33Battenhouse, p. 51.


lameness of Tamerlane; the military engines which the barbarian used in his campaigns; Tamerlane's mad march through the Arabian Desert; the story of the Merchant of Genoa; the episode which relates Bayazid murdering his brother; the account of the huge and countless pyramids which Tamerlane had constructed from thousands of human skulls; the preservation of libraries, mosques, and hospitals.

this era, the Renaissance.

He was in love with life and equally in love with the world in which he lived it. He loved beauty and learning. A learned "scholler" of Cambridge University, he was also the most popular playwright of the hour. He

Marlowe's character appears to us today to have been on the same high level as his mind and his drama.

Marlowe's personal life is a record of ideals equal to his superior intellect. He was highly popular with his fellow dramatists and a small intimate circle of friends. Much of the scandalous libel of the times against his name has been disproved by scholars of recent times.

Marlowe was not actually the atheist that we suppose him to be. Since Tamburlaine really has the patterned dramatic design, which I am contending that it has, it is impossible that Marlowe was a rationalist intelligence blasting its destructive way through all that was held in reverential awe by its


CONCLUSION

It has been seen that Marlowe, the greatest dramatist next to Shakespeare, was born during the Age of Elizabeth, which was predominantly one of change and expansion in all phases of life. Marlowe was a man of this era, the Renaissance.

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contemporaries and ruthlessly desecrating the Holy of Holies.3

It was on account of Marlowe that drama became the most developed literary form of England's Renaissance and the one genre that was most broadly popular, giving the most powerful and spontaneous expression to the multi-sided aspects of a newly discovered existence.

Marlowe transformed the vanishing miracle cycle into majestic historical pageantry and infused the moribund morality with a passion and poetry such as the stage had not known for over a thousand years.4

Marlowe possessed a supreme quality which enabled him at once to lift drama into the sphere of high literature. Never before had the stage known this dash, this vehemence, animating a whole play, this rapid march as to victory, by which drama inspires the conviction that thus to move is to be alive.

There flames up for the first time, the soul of the partially barbarous but peculiarly brilliant English spirit as awakened by the social and intellectual urges of the sixteenth century.

The whole story of the Renaissance humanism is told in the four tragedies of Marlowe. The heroes are self-portraits of Renaissance Humanism.5

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Marlowe's first play, Tamburlaine, is an important play because it was epoch-making in the development of English drama. The novelty, the music of the verse, the acting and thunderous declamation of Alleyn, the greatest actor of the day, took the town by storm. But Tamburlaine worked a revolution in English dramatic art. It revolutionized English dramatic poetry by substituting for the monotonous couplet, blank verse.

The irrepressible conflict between the rules of both the classicists and the freedom of the romanticists was permanently settled by Tamburlaine. The course of English drama, the greatest part of the greatest period, of the greatest literature of the world, was determined more by Tamburlaine than by any other single cause.

And it may have been at the newly opened Rose a few months later that Shakespeare saw Edward Alleyn, now the leading actor of the Admiral's company, play Tamburlaine. If so, it was a revelation, and decision in his choice of a career. It was also a revolution for on that afternoon, as Alleyn declaimed the poetry of Marlowe, the modern English drama was born.

Christopher Marlowe created his tragic hero, Tamburlaine, in his plays Tamburlaine by raising Tamerlane from the world of historical reality to the universal and glorious conquerors of classical story, illuminated

6 Agnes Stover, "Two Elizabethan Dramatists," Catholic World, LXXV (August, 1902), 609.
realm of artistic reality by giving to the theatre a drama of realistic life, with one grand, consistent, unforgettable, meaningful character.

Among the many authorities, not one is positive regarding the sources Marlowe used for his Tamburlaine, but all agree that he vitalized the bare bones of supposed fact in his source, created most of his characters, correlated characters and situations, and amplified events. Such critics as Swinburne and Tucker Brooke have long recognized Marlowe's harmony of intellect and imagination, which makes him stand out, by his thirst for exactitude and scientific detail and the power to clothe again the skeleton transmitted by records with spirit and reality.

Using the bare matter of the story, Marlowe takes Timur, uses its aspirations and its dreams, shuts his eyes to the gloom and desolation, and converts an individual brought so close to the spectator that it hides the background.

To glorify his Tamburlaine, Marlowe gives a picture softened by analogy with the stories of irresistible and glorious conquerors of classical story, illuminated with beauty so that the destruction recedes into sunset mists. Tamburlaine is not only a symbol of the Renaissance, but a portrait of universal man, especially our
own twentieth century.

It is self-evident that Tamburlaine is a commen-
tary on Elizabethan worldly activities. Even more than
that, it is a replica of real life, religiously, socially,
politically, and morally. One author remarks:

Marlowe fashioned Tamburlaine so that he crystall-
ized, not only an age, but a personality as well. Tam-
burlaine can be any ambitious man in any century, in any
nationality. Tamburlaine, as other dictators, realizes

We hear in his plays of Tamburlaine the great voice
of Elizabethan England; he represents its overweening
pride, the enthusiasm of discovery and conquest, the
shout of success, the sky-piercing ambition which
dared God out of heaven, the limitless aspiration of
passion and of intellect, and the inflexible power
of an abnormally developed will. In the twentieth
century, whether for good or for evil, we are much
closer to the Elizabethans in temperament than any
of the generations that stand between.

Marlowe is a writer whom we can perfectly under-
stand. As a deeply thoughtful writer of today has said,

It is by their will that we recognize the Elizabethans,
by the will that drove them over the seas of passion,
as well as over the seas that ebb and flow with the
salt tides. It is by their thoughts, so much higher
than their emotions, that we know the men of the
eighteenth century; and by their quick sensibility
to the sting of life, the men of the nineteenth. For
from a sensitive correspondence with environment our
race has passed into another stage; it is marked now
by a passionate desire for the mastery of life—a de-
sire spiritualized in the highest lives, materialized
in the lowest, so to mould environment that the lives
to come may be shaped to our will. It is this which
accounts for the curious likeness in our today with
that of the Elizabethans; their spirit was the un-
tamed will, but our will moves in other paths than

Marlowe fashioned Tamburlaine so that he crystallized, not only an age, but a personality as well. Tamburlaine can be any ambitious man in any century, in any nationality. Tamburlaine, as other dictators, realizes that he is not only a superman, a Scourge of God, but a human person also. That he, too, experiences disappointments, sorrows, and an end.

In Tamburlaine, one sees more than the downfall of a superman, for Marlowe did not show merely the downfall of a superman. He placed the point of attack so that we see the protagonist in a state of prosperity. We watch him succeed in his undertakings because of his all-powerful passion for power, and then behold his downfall because of this same passion.

The Elizabethan passion for power and glory found its fulfillment in the Scythian conqueror who rises from a shepherd and highwayman to a dozen thrones, all won by dint of courage and unflagging confidence. He is a poet who expresses himself in action. By his magnificent deeds and language he wins Theridamas and Zenocrate.

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Tamburlaine's ambition for glory wins for him success after success. With each rise, he becomes prouder and more domineering. As he increases in pride, so, too, his brutal cruelty advances. However, the personality of the superman, combined with the crowded action and barbaric splendor of his battles and triumphs, changes when Marlowe adds the elements of compassion.

Especially in the second play, Tamburlaine personifies humanity. He meets disappointments, sorrows, and sees the vanity of earthly glory. The cowardice of his son and the death of his wife overwhelm him with sorrow and despair. Like the rest of mankind, he finally realizes that he is not self-sufficient and must rely on a Power superior to his own.

Directly Marlowe did not moralize in his Tamburlaine, but the moral element of the Scourge of God certainly runs through the drama. Surely, many Elizabethans who left the theatre took with them the lesson, "What doth it profit a man if he gains the whole world and suffers the loss of his soul."  

That Marlowe's Tamburlaine and Marlowe himself are deeply appreciated has been proved in many and various ways. Many scholarships on Marlowe's Tamburlaine have been accomplished. Many authors and poets have imitated

Mark 36:37.
That Marlowe was important to the world's greatest dramatist is shown by the Marlovian influence exerted in these Shakespearean plays:

*Merchant of Venice*, *Henry VI*, *Richard II*, *Richard III*, *Taming of a Shrew*, *Titus Andronicus*, *Julius Caesar*. There are faint traces of Marlowe in *Romeo and Juliet*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Henry IV*, *As You Like It*, *Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *King Lear*, *Hamlet*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *King John*, *Sonnets*, *Lucrece*, *Venus and Adonis*.12 Plays of *Tamburlaine*, even here in America, have been produced. Many commentators have voiced their opinions on *Tamburlaine* in learned journals. "Some of Marlowe's plays have been broadcast, as Tyrone Guthrie's production of *Tamburlaine* at the Old Vic."13

The records show that there was an acting version of *Tamburlaine* prepared for the Yale University Dramatic Association in 1919, the plain text edited by W. A. Neilson in 1924, and the selected scenes edited by A. A. Cock (Black's English Literature Series) in 1927.14

"That Marlowe fired the drama as he found it with new life by the very vigor of his stagecraft is found in Christopher Marlowe's plays" (unpublished Master's thesis, Department of English, University of Pittsburgh, 1931), pp. 15.15


Timour the Tartar, a play, an adaptation of Marlowe's 
Tamburlaine by G. Lewis, was acted three times on 
July 12, 17, and October 25, 1822, at the Richmond 
Theatre, Virginia.16

Marlowe's greatest contribution to the literary 
world, and the strongest influence in the dramatic field, 
is his "mighty line."

The real herald of the English drama, the first great 
name in its annals, was Christopher Marlowe, whose 
soaring genius, cut off by an early death, commands 
the attention of the world. Tamburlaine the Great 
is alive with real drama, and its style is instinct 
with poetic feeling. In the evolution of English 
blank verse this play, moreover, marks a cardinal 
point. His "mighty line" is an accomplished fact 
which had permanent influence on the development of 
this verse form.17

Dramatists say that the theatre has never known 
anything like Marlowe's blank verse.

The verse of Tamburlaine is the beginning of the Mar-
lovian beat that shortly will rise into such freedom 
and such music as the theatre has never known--the 
melodic measure without equal in English blank verse. 
He has but begun to bring up, from the rich mines of 
his mind, the treasures heaped there.18

15Robert M. Montgomery, "A Study of Setting in 
Christopher Marlowe's plays" (unpublished Master's thesis, 
Department of English, University of Pittsburgh, 1931), 
p. 15.

16Sheldon Cheney, The Theatre (New York: Longmans, 

17Hoyt H. Hudson, "The Herald of English Drama: 
Christopher Marlowe," The Popular Educator, II (May, 1938), 
865.

18Charles Norman, "Marlowe's London," Theatre Arts 
Monthly, XXIII (January, 1939), 298.
That contemporary interest in Marlowe is so considerab le is voiced in many ways. The most important predecessor of Shakespeare, nay, the only true genius among them, is Christopher Mar lowe. Had there been no Shakespeare after him, here would have been ample reason for calling Elizabethan theatre glorious in four plays composed before Mar lowe was killed.\(^{19}\)

Another interest in Marlowe is that he exemplifies, in his interpretation of the tragedy of the sixteenth century, much that we can feel paralleled in the tragedy of our own time. Mar lowe's period, which like our own, seen by Professor Bronowski as "The Face of Violence," saw savage political activity on behalf of two irreconcilable beliefs. The struggle threw up its martyrs, its valiant soldiers, its disreputable camp followers. This is a world we can only too well understand.\(^{20}\)

It has been said that Marlowe is not the "morning star" but the "sunrise." Therefore, had there been no Marlowe, no one can tell what the Elizabethan stage would have been; but it probably would not have been what it is, the chief glory of English literature and the wonder of the whole world.\(^{21}\)

Shakespeare, in his *As You Like It*, gives credit to and lauds the genius of Marlowe.

Without him would Shakespeare have been Shakespeare?

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\(^{20}\)Pennethorne Hughes, "The Vogue for Marlowe," *The Month*, VIII (September, 1952), 142.\(^{952}\), p. 182.

Not a profitable question perhaps—not so profitable as the great poet's regard for this unhappy, storm-tossed, and possibly beloved young genius, implied in his tender allusion: "Dead shepherd, now I find thy saw of might."22

Most interesting are the terms of praise, which, by his services, the poet earned from Archbishop Whitgift, Lord Burghley, Lord Hunsdon, and the other great officers of England. These men knew him as discreet and useful.

To praise a man as a faithful and effective secret agent is to throw little more light on his moral nature than to damn him for a free-thinker.23


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