The Timurid Empire: an efficient public safety system of a great power (a comprehensive historical and legal analysis)

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ABSTRACT

This article is dedicated to a comprehensive study of the public safety system in the Timurid Empire. The analysis examines historical and legal aspects that allowed Timurid to create an effective and stable state governance system. Using historical and legal methods, the authors analyze key elements of the public safety system, including legal norms, administrative measures, and their implementation. The article's conclusions emphasize the significance of Timurid's historical experience for understanding the evolution of legal institutions and public safety management in contemporary contexts.

Relevance

The study of the public safety system in the Timurid Empire is relevant for several reasons. Firstly, it contributes to a deeper understanding of historical processes and mechanisms of state governance during the Middle Ages. Secondly, studying successful examples of public safety in the past can provide valuable lessons for modern states facing law and order challenges. Finally, the research topic holds importance for cultural-philosophical and historical-legal analysis, which helps identify the evolution of state governance systems, including legal norms and public safety institutions. This article is dedicated to a comprehensive analysis of the Timurid Empire's public safety system from historical and legal perspectives.

Methodology

The research goals are achieved through a comprehensive methodological approach, including historical, legal, and comparative analysis. The historical method examines the development of the public safety system in the context of political and social changes in the Timurid Empire. Legal analysis focuses on evaluating the effectiveness of legal mechanisms applied for ensuring public safety.

Keywords:	Amir Timur, Timurids, safety, public safety, legal system, historical analysis, state governance.

Introduction

The period of Amir Timur's rule, known globally as Timur-i-leng (Timur the Lame) or Tamerlane[1], holds a special place in world history. Researchers have long recognized the significance of numerous historical sources that

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[1] Kwanten, Luc. Imperial Nomads: A History of Central Asia, 500-1500. 1979. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. pp. 266-267.

serve as primary references for studying the history of Central Asia and the Middle East during the 14th-15th centuries, linked to Timur and his descendants. Amir Timur's main achievement was ending fragmentation and internal conflicts, uniting disparate territories, and creating a powerful centralized state. Timur established peace and order, ensuring security both within the state and in other regions.

The Timurid Empire achieved significant successes not only in the political and military spheres but also created an effective public safety system that ensured stability and prosperity over vast territories. This contributed to economic development, including the strengthening of agriculture, crafts, and trade, and to the growth of the population's well-being. Moreover, the stability in the state gave a powerful impetus to the flourishing of science and culture[2]. Timur established the rule of law by creating a solid legal foundation for state governance, which ensured social and political stability in his domains.

Historical sources indicate that Timur placed great importance on establishing order and legality in his territories. His reforms affected all aspects of state administration, from legal norms to socio-economic institutions. This article will examine the key elements of the Timurid public safety system, including legal foundations, administrative measures, and mechanisms for their implementation.

Geopolitical Influence and Security Necessity

The vast domains of the Timurids included various ethnic, religious, and cultural groups, complicating governance and maintenance of public order. Key cities and regions such as Samarkand, Herat, and Bukhara required special attention due to their strategic and economic significance[3]. Given constant threats from neighboring states and internal uprisings, establishing a reliable security system was vital for maintaining the empire's stability. The Timurid security system was characterized by multi-level and comprehensive measures, including military, administrative, legal, and social actions.

The Timurid Empire, which existed from the 14th to the 16th century, was one of the greatest powers of the medieval period, covering vast territories. Under its rule were significant regions and cities such as Persia, Mesopotamia, Central Asia including Samarkand and Bukhara, Khorasan, as well as extensive areas of the Indian subcontinent. The empire included the Caucasus Mountains to the west and the shores of the Caspian and Aral Seas to the north.

This vast state formation, founded by Timur (Tamerlane), required the development of a complex and effective public safety system capable of maintaining order and stability across such diverse and geographically distant lands. Given the multitude of ethnocultural and socio-economic characteristics of the various regions of the empire, the Timurid public safety system was distinguished by a high degree of adaptability and multi-level structuring, which allowed it to function effectively in different parts of the state.

Military Aspects

The foundation of security lay in a powerful army lashkar[4], " لشكر "[5], consisting of professional soldiers and " تومان " (tuman[6],

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[2] Yakubovsky, A. "Timur (An Attempt at a Brief Characterization)." Questions of History, 1946, No. 8-9, pp. 10-13.

[3] Barthold, W. Four Studies on the History of Central Asia. Leiden, 1956. pp. 5-15.

[4] Sharafuddin Ali Yazdi. Zafarnama. Tashkent: Shark Publishing, 1997, p. 6.

[5] Lashkar (Persian: لشكر, English: lashkar) means army or military force. Historically, it referred to a large military force, often several thousand soldiers. In modern contexts, the term "lashkar" can refer to military formations, armies, or military units, sometimes as a tactical division-level

force. Etymology: The word لشكر originates from Persian and shares roots with other Indo-European words related to war and the military.

[6] Tuman (Persian: تومان, English: toman, Old Turkic: tÿmän, Mongolian: түмэн, Uzbek: tuman, Tatar: төмән, Turkish: tümen) is the largest organizational tactical unit. Etymology: The word "tuman" has Mongolian origins and comes from the Mongolian word "түмэн" (tümen), meaning "ten thousand". A tuman was divided into thousands (mingans), which in turn were divided into hundreds (jaghuns), and further into tens (arbans). In the Middle Ages, this word denoted a large number, specifically

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tümens)[7] militia. Amir Timur, the empire's founder, was a brilliant military strategist and conqueror, with his army playing a crucial role in maintaining order over vast territories.

The Timurid army was known for its high combat capability and discipline. Timur implemented a strict system of training and managing troops, providing them with advanced weaponry and technology for the time[8]. The army was divided into clearly structured units based on the decimal system[9], each with its own specialization and tasks. Military engineers developed siege machines and strategies that allowed for the effective besieging and capturing of cities, ensuring a prompt response to threats.

Strict Discipline

Strict discipline was maintained in the army and among officials, which contributed to the effective execution of the orders of قاضى (qadi)[10] - judges and the maintenance of order. Tamerlane's Code prescribed severe punishments for violations of laws and orders[11], which helped maintain order among the military and civil servants and effectively address tasks related to ensuring state and public security.

Administrative Structure and Management

The empire was governed through an extensive system of officials responsible for tax collection, maintaining law and order[12], and organizing

public works[13]. The Timurids placed great emphasis on efficient administration, which was one of the key factors of stability. Administratively, the Timurid state was divided

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a military unit of 10,000 soldiers. Over time, the term spread to Persia and began to be used in financial contexts.

[7] History of Civilizations of Central Asia, vol. 4: The Age of Achievement, A.D. 750 to the End of the Fifteenth Century; Part I: The Historical, Social, and Economic Setting. 1998. Paris: UNESCO, 1998. pp. 228, 324.

[8] Muminov, I. The Role and Place of Amir Timur in the History of Central Asia. In the Light of Written Sources. Tashkent, 1968, p. 29.

[9] Yakubovsky, A. "Timur (An Attempt at a Brief Characterization)." Questions of History, 1946, No. 8-9, p. 68.

[10] Qadi (Arabic: قاضي, English: qadi) pertains to the judiciary and legal systems in Islamic countries: Meaning: A qadi is a judge in Islamic countries who adjudicates cases according to Sharia (Islamic law). Qadis are responsible for the fair resolution of both civil and criminal cases, and dispute settlements. They play a key role in the Islamic justice system by applying religious laws to resolve legal matters and conflicts. Etymology: The word قاضي originates from the

Arabic root ق-ض-ي (q-d-i), which is associated with concepts of "deciding," "judging," or "issuing a verdict." This root appears in words related to justice and adjudication, such as "قضاء" (qada) — "justice" or "court." Usage in various contexts: Historical: In Islamic states, qadis were appointed to manage courts and resolve legal issues locally. Known for their independence, they had to make decisions based on Sharia. Modern: In contemporary Islamic countries, qadis continue to perform judicial functions, especially in matters related to family law, inheritance, and religious obligations. In some countries, their roles may be integrated into the state judicial system.

[11] Muminov I. The Role and Place of Amir Timur in the History of Central Asia. In the Light of Written Sources. Tashkent, 1968, p. 22.

[12] The Codes of Timur. Tashkent: Fan Publishing, 1968, pp. 38-39.

[13] Muminov, I. The Role and Place of Amir Timur in the History of Central Asia. In the Light of Written Sources. Tashkent, 1968, pp. 22, 26, 27.

into uluses[14], vilayats[15] and tumans[16] (provinces and districts), and they were governed by hokims[17] (governors), naibs[18], and heads of districts (tumanboshi). Most of the hokims and naibs were emirs[19] and military commanders. Officials worked under the guidance of the وزير (wazir) (vizier)[20], the chief vizier who oversaw the execution of the ruler's decrees. Regular inspections and audits helped identify and eliminate instances of corruption

and abuse of power. The accountability and control system implemented by Amir Timur ensured effective governance at all levels of power.

Social Aspects

The empire had a social protection system for the needy, including orphans, widows, and the disabled. This system was funded by the (bayt al-mal)[21] - the state treasury. Social protection contributed to reducing crime and

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[14] Ulus is a term with historical significance, associated with administrative-territorial units in several Turkic and Mongolian states. It is also used to denote national communities or societies among Turkic peoples. Meaning: Historically, an ulus represented a specific administrative-territorial unit. The term was also used to describe societal and territorial formations among Turkic peoples, reflecting their cultural and social identity. Etymology: The word "ulus" derives from ancient Turkic "ulus," meaning "society," "community," or "people." Ula- means "to unite," and uluš refers to "union," "community," or "state." Often, it is compared with the root ül- ("to divide") and its derivatives: ülüš/üleš ("share"). The term reflects the idea of uniting people within a certain territory to form a stable socio-territorial entity.

[15] Vilayat (wilaya, vilayet, vilaya) is an administrative-territorial unit used in various countries and regions, especially in Muslim countries. It often refers to a province or region governed by a hakīm (hakim) or vali (wali-emir) appointed by the central government. A vilayat can also denote a group of areas unified for effective governance and administration. Etymology: The word "vilayat" originates from the Arabic "ولاية" (wilāyah), meaning "province," and connotes "authority," "administration," "region," or "province." This term was widely used in Islamic states to designate administrative-territorial units for ease of control and governance.

[16] Tuman in different contexts can have various meanings. In this context, it refers to an administrative-territorial unit. Meaning: Tuman is an administrative unit used in some countries to denote districts or regions. For example, in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, a tuman is an administrative-territorial unit akin to a district or region. Etymology: The word "tuman" has Turkic origins. Derived from Persian تومان (tumân), and ultimately from Mongolian "tuman," meaning "ten thousand." This word was adopted in various Turkic and Mongolian states to denote military units consisting of tens of warriors.

[17] Hakim (hakīm) is a term denoting an administrative leader or manager. In different countries and cultures, this term can have slight variations in meaning and pronunciation. A hakim is typically appointed by higher authorities to govern a specific territory. They can be heads of districts, regions, or provinces responsible for

administrative matters, maintaining order, and resolving local issues. Etymology: The term "hakim" originates from the Arabic "حاكم" (hākim), meaning "ruler" or "governor." This term is prevalent in many Arab and Islamic countries to denote administrative positions. In modern Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, hakims are the leaders of administrative units, akin to governors or mayors in other countries.

[18] Naib (na'ib) is a title or position that existed in Central Asian states, including the states of the Golden Horde and the Timurid Empire. The term generally signifies military and administrative leadership, commander, or administrative leader. A naib often held an important position in the state structure and could command military units or govern administrative divisions. Etymology: The term "naib" originates from the Arabic "نائب" (nā'ib), meaning "representative," "agent," or "deputy." In the Islamic world, this term was also used to denote individuals acting on behalf of a ruler. In the Timurid Empire, a naib could be appointed as a commander of the army or a leader of an administrative unit.

[19] Emir (amīr) – The word أمير (Arabic: أمير, English: emir) denotes a ruler, commander, or leader. In various Islamic countries and historical periods, emirs could be political leaders (rulers of territories, principalities, or states) or military commanders. In the modern context, the title "emir" is used in some countries to denote heads of state or high-ranking officials. Etymology: The word أمير originates from the Arabic root أ-م-ر (a-m-r), which is associated with the concept of "commander," "leader," "to order," or "to command." This root is also used in words related to governance and command, such as "أمر" (amr) — "order" or "command."

Usage in various contexts: Historical: In Islamic empires and caliphates, emirs could govern provinces, command armies, and perform important administrative functions. The title "emir" was used to denote various levels of authority and leadership. Modern: In some modern Islamic countries, "emir" denotes the head of state. The title may also be used to denote high-ranking officials or members of the ruling family.

[20] Rui Gonzalez de Clavijo. Diary of a Journey to Samarkand to the Court of Timur (1403-1406). Moscow, 1990, p. 121.

[21] Bayt al-mal – The word بيت المال (Arabic: بيت المال) pertains to finances and the management of public funds in

strengthening social stability by meeting the basic needs of the population and preventing social unrest. The Timurids also paid attention to education and healthcare, building schools, madrasas, and hospitals in major cities, ensuring the population's basic needs and preventing social unrest.

Amir Timur, managing the conquered territories, implemented a comprehensive approach to social protection and public safety. He respected the local elite and clergy, providing them with honors, pensions, and salaries, which contributed to social stability. Including the local nobility in his administrative structure strengthened trust and prevented conflicts. He pursued a policy of social protection[22] for vulnerable populations, including orphans and the poor, promoting public safety. Integrating the armies of conquered countries into his own reduced the risk of uprisings and increased overall security. This comprehensive approach created a stable and secure society, strengthening Amir Timur's power.

"In all matters concerning the people of any province, rulers were ordered to strictly adhere to justice. To eradicate poverty, I established shelters where the poor received sustenance"[23]. Particular attention is deserved by the arzbegi[24] system, which was responsible for receiving statements and complaints from citizens and soldiers, collecting information on state affairs, and informing the higher leadership.

Legal System and Fair Justice

The empire's legal system was based on شريعت (sharia) - Sharia and عرف (urf)[25] - customary law. Courts (محکمه, mahkamah)[26] considered various cases[27], from minor disputes to serious crimes. The courts were organized at different levels, ensuring access to justice for all segments of the population.

The Sheikh-ul-Islam[28] monitored the observance of Sharia rules by people of different social strata and their compliance with Muslim

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Islamic countries. The term is used to denote the treasury or state fund in Islamic countries, managing state finances, including the collection and distribution of taxes, revenues from conquests, zakat (obligatory almsgiving), and other sources of income. Etymology: The word بيت المال consists of two parts: "بيت" (bayt) meaning "house," and "مال" (mal) meaning "money" or "property." Collectively, it translates to "house of money" or "treasury."

[22] Muminov, I. The Role and Place of Amir Timur in the History of Central Asia. In the Light of Written Sources. Tashkent, 1968, p. 25.

[23] The Code of Timur (Tamerlane), ed. N. Ostroumov. Kazan: Imperial University Printing House, 1894, p. 71.

[24] Arzbegi - An official or an officer who reports to the supreme ruler about the complaints and petitions of the subjects, responsible for reviewing citizens' complaints. Historically, such positions existed in various Turkic states and khanates, where the arzbegi performed important administrative functions related to governance and justice. Etymology: The term "arzbegi" has ancient Turkic roots. It is composed of two words: "arz" and "begi." "Arz" originates from Persian - "ارز" (arż) meaning "petition" or "request." "Beg" also appears as "bek" and comes from the ancient Turkic "beg," meaning "leader" or "chief." Historically, this word was used to denote the title of noble persons or rulers.

[25] Urf (Arabic: عرف, English: 'urf): Has several meanings and plays an important role in the legal and cultural systems, especially in the Islamic world. Etymology: The word عرف comes from the Arabic root ف-ر-ع, associated with the concept of knowledge or recognition. The root is used in

many derivative words related to knowledge and understanding, for example, the word "ma'arif" (معارف) meaning "knowledge."

[26] Mahkamah – محکمه (Arabic: محکمه, Persian: محکمه, English: mahkama): Refers to the judiciary and justice system. Primarily, the word محکمه denotes a court or judicial institution where cases are heard and judicial decisions are made. This can include both criminal and civil courts. In some contexts, it can mean a court session or process taking place in a court. Etymology: Mahkamah comes from the Arabic root م-ك-ح, associated with the concept of "judging," "ruling," or "governing." This root is also used in words related to justice and governance, such as "حکم" (hukm) — "judgment" or "decision," and "حاکم" (hakim) — "judge" or "ruler." Usage in Various Contexts: Legal: In a legal context, محکمه is used to denote various types of courts, such as the Supreme Court, appellate courts, district courts, etc. Religious: In countries where sharia is in effect, محکمه can also refer to religious courts that adjudicate cases according to Islamic law.

[27] Rui Gonzalez de Clavijo. Diary of a Journey to Samarkand to the Court of Timur (1403-1406). Moscow, 1990, p. 142.

[28] Sheikh ul-Islam (Sheikh al-Islam): This is a high religious and legal title in the Muslim world, usually conferred on eminent scholars and jurists. The term is used in various Islamic countries and has its peculiarities in different traditions of historical Islamic legal schools. Role and Functions: Sheikh ul-Islam may perform various functions, including issuing religious rulings, guiding on religious practices, participating in lawmaking, and representing the Islamic perspective in various public spheres. Etymology: The

rituals and customs. Legal matters were handled by the state's chief judge (qazi al-quzzat)[29], also known as the judge of the ahdas. He considered civil cases.

Punishments were severe, serving as a deterrent to potential criminals. The Timurid laws[30], known as "Tuzuk-i-Timuri[31]" (Timur's Code)[32], prescribed strict punishments for violations, ensuring a high degree of law and order. The Timurids implemented an appeals system, allowing decisions of lower courts to be contested, guaranteeing fairness and transparency in judicial processes.

Justice was administered based on principles of fairness, which increased public trust in the authorities and reduced crime rates. The Timur's Code established clear norms for judicial proceedings, guaranteeing the rights of the accused and the fair consideration of cases. Courts operated based on transparent procedures and the accounting of witness testimonies, which strengthened public trust in the judicial system.

Effective Management and Thoughtful Policy
The Timurids adhered to principles of effective governance and thoughtful security policies, which allowed them to maintain order and stability in one of the largest empires of the

medieval period. The empire was highly centralized, enabling rapid response to any security threats. Decisions were made by emirs (Amir - the ruler), and the chief vizier (وزير, wazir) oversaw their execution. According to Tuzuk-i-Timuri, the ruler had absolute power, and the ديوان (Diwan) - the state council, served as the executive body. The centralization of power allowed for quick and effective resolution of security issues[33]. As a result of effective political management and the provision of public safety, the absence of social upheavals and uprisings contributed to economic growth, ensuring the stability and well-being of the empire[34].

During Timur's reign, significant attention was paid to the development of crafts, agriculture, livestock breeding, and trade as essential sources of the state's power. In this regard, the fact that Sharafuddin Ali Yazdi wrote in "Zafarnama" is valuable: Timur "freed the subjects of Maverannahr from taxes for three years," thereby alleviating the economic

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word consists of two parts: the Arabic word "شيخ" (shaykh) meaning "elder," "respected person," or "teacher." In Islamic tradition, it is a title given to elders, teachers, and spiritual leaders. The second part "ul-Islam" comes from Arabic "الإسلام" (al-Islam), meaning "Islam." Overall, "Sheikh ul-Islam" translates to "elder of Islam" or "teacher of Islam." This term is used to denote the highest religious leader or mufti who has significant influence on religious matters and the interpretation of Islamic law. Sheikh ul-Islam typically holds an important place in the religious and political life of the Muslim community.

[29] Qazi al-Quzzat: A term from Islamic jurisprudence denoting a judge appointed to resolve disputes on family and personal matters in the Muslim community. Such a judge must follow the principles of sharia in making decisions. Qazi al-Quzzat deals with disputes related to marital and family law, inheritance, and other personal and family matters. He may also have the authority to appoint guardians, approve marriage contracts, and resolve other legal issues according to Islamic law. Etymology: The term "qadi al-qudat" comes from the Arabic words "قاضي" (qadi), meaning "judge," and "القضاء" (al-qudat), meaning "judiciary" or "judicial system." Thus, "qadi al-qudat" can be translated as "judge of the judiciary."

[30] Muminov, I. The Role and Place of Amir Timur in the History of Central Asia. In the Light of Written Sources. Tashkent, 1968, p. 24.

[31] The Code of Timur (in Uzbek). Tashkent: Gafur Gulyam Publishing, 1991.

[32] Tuzuk-i-Timuri (تيموری توزوک): A collection of laws and memoirs of Timur (Tamerlane). The Tuzuk-i-Timuri, also known as the Code of Timur, is a historical document comprising the laws introduced or developed by Timur to govern his empire. The Code of Timur included norms and regulations governing various aspects of life in his empire. Etymology: "Tuzuk" or "tuzk" comes from the Persian "توزک" (tūzūk), meaning "charter," "law," or "regulation." This term was used to denote collections of laws or rules established by rulers or military leaders. "i" is a particle used to form izafet, which connects words and indicates possession. In this context, it translates as "belonging to" Timur.

[33] Rui Gonzalez de Clavijo. Diary of a Journey to Samarkand to the Court of Timur (1403-1406). Moscow, 1990, p. 94.

[34] History of Civilizations of Central Asia, vol. 4: The Age of Achievement, A.D. 750 to the End of the Fifteenth Century; Part I: The Historical, Social, and Economic Setting. Paris: UNESCO, 1998, p. 228.

situation of the dehqans (farmers) and craftsmen[35].

Preventive Measures

The Timurids paid great attention to preventive measures, such as patrolling cities and roads, monitoring suspicious individuals, and preventing crimes at an early stage. This function was performed by محتسب (muhtasib) - the enforcers of morality and order. According to Timur's Code, محتسب (muhtasib) had broad powers to oversee public safety, including conducting inspections and imposing fines for violations.

In cities and urban quarters, a system of officials responsible for public safety was established. Their duties included full responsibility for preventing theft in their assigned areas. A security system was organized on major roads to ensure safe travel. Strict punishments, up to the death penalty, were imposed for theft or robbery on trade routes[36]. Travelers and merchants had the right to request the protection of their belongings by this security, which was held accountable for any lost property[37].

Historical Lessons and Evolution of Management Models

Studying the public safety system in the Timurid Empire provides several important lessons for understanding historical governance models and their evolution in the context of public safety:

Multilevel Approach: An effective security system requires a comprehensive approach, including various measures at different levels.

Strong Central Authority: A centralized state can respond to security threats more quickly and effectively. The Timurids demonstrated that a high degree of centralized power allows for swift decision-making and control over the execution of decrees.

Strict Discipline: Discipline and order are essential factors for maintaining stability and reducing crime rates. Strict disciplinary measures in the army and among officials ensured high efficiency in executing orders and maintaining law and order.

Preventive Measures: Crime prevention is more effective than dealing with its consequences. Preventive measures, such as patrolling and monitoring, helped prevent crimes and maintain public order.

Fair Judicial Process: Fair justice strengthens the public's trust in authorities and helps reduce crime rates. Transparency and fairness in judicial procedures ensured a high degree of trust in the judicial system.

Conclusion

Studying the laws and regulations of Amir Timur allows for a deeper understanding of the system and principles of public safety in the Timurid Empire. These laws and regulations demonstrate that Timur was not only a brilliant conqueror but also a wise ruler concerned with the safety and well-being of his people.

The experience of the Timurid Empire highlights the importance of a comprehensive and multi-layered approach to ensuring public safety. An effective public safety system, including military, administrative, legal, and social measures, based on principles of centralization, discipline, preventive measures, and fair judicial processes, allowed the state to maintain stability and security against external and internal threats.

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[35] Muminov, I. The Role and Place of Amir Timur in the History of Central Asia. In the Light of Written Sources. Tashkent, 1968, p. 21.

[36] Sharafuddin Ali Yazdi. Zafarnama. Tashkent: Shark Publishing, 1997, p. 157.

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13. The Code of Timur (Tamerlane), ed. N. Ostroumov. Kazan: Imperial University Printing House, 1894, 71.

14. Rui Gonzalez de Clavijo. Diary of a Journey to Samarkand to the Court of Timur (1403-1406). Moscow, 1990, 142.

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