
FOREIGN SOURCES AND AUTHORS ABOUT ARMENIA AND ARMENIANS

NARRATIVE OF THE EMBASSY OF RUY GONZALEZ DE CLAVIJO TO THE COURT OF TIMOUR

Narrative of the Embassy of Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo to the court of Timour, at Samarcand, A.D.1403-1406. Translated, for the first time, with notes, a preface, and an introductory life of Timour beg, by Clements R.Markham, F.R.G.S., London: Printed for the Hakluyt Society, M.DCCC.LIX.

Ruy González de Clavijo (died 2 April 1412) was a Spanish (Castilian) statesman and writer. In 1403-1405 Clavijo was the ambassador of Henry III of Castile to the court of Timur, founder and ruler of the Timurid Empire. A diary of the journey based on detailed notes kept while traveling, was later published in Spanish in 1582 (*Embajada a Tamorlán*) and in English in 1859 (*Narrative of the Embassy of Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo to the Court of Timour at Samarcand AD 1403-1406*).

The passage extracted from the narrative of his journey from Spain to Samarkand describes the route of his journey from Trebizond to the east, the territory which Clavijo names as Armenia (Chapter IV, pp.6-85).

CHAPTER IV. TREBIZOND and the JOURNEY THROUH ARMENIA

On Saturday, the 12th of April, the Emperor of Trebizond sent for the ambassadors, and when they arrived at his palace, they found him in a saloon, which was in an upper story; and he received them very well. After they had spoken with him, they returned to their lodging. With the emperor was his son, who was about twenty-five years of age; and the emperor was tall and handsome. The emperor and his son were dressed in imperial robes. They wore, on their heads, tall hats surmounted by golden cords, on the top of which were cranes' feathers; and the hats were bound with the skins of martens. They call the emperor Germanoli,¹ and his son Quelex;² and they call the son emperor as well as the father, because it is the custom to call the eldest legitimate son emperor, although his father may be alive; and the Greek name for emperor, is Basileus. This emperor pays tribute to Timour Beg, and to other Turks, who are his neighbours. He is married to a relation of the Emperor of Constantinople, and his son is married to the daughter of a knight of Constantinople, and has two little daughters.³

¹ Manuel II.

² Alexis.

³ The empire of Trebizond was founded by the Comneni, when they fled from the cruelty of Isaac Angelus, at Constantinople, in 1186. Alexis Comnenus assumed the title of Emperor of Trebizond. His descendants retained the title, and ruled over this small territory, until David Comnenus was deposed by Mohammed II in 1461. The Emperor of Trebizond, at the time when Clavijo passed through the city, was Manuel II, who paid tribute to Timour. He died in 1412, and was succeeded by his son Alexis IV.

On Sunday afternoon, the ambassadors being in their lodging, two knights came to see them, the most honored and confidential of the emperor's household. The first was named Horchi, which means the page who bears the bow before the emperor; and the other Protovestati, which means the same as treasurer. The latter was very intimate with the emperor, who did nothing in the empire against his advice, and they say that he was of base lineage, the son of a baker. They also say that the young emperor, seeing that his father made so much of this knight, and that he took no notice of the nobles of the empire, was enraged, and rose against his father, saying that he must dismiss this man. He made war, and besieged the city for three months, being assisted by the greatest men of the empire; but afterwards they came to an agreement, through Horchi, who was a friend of the young emperor, and of the others who had risen; nevertheless there afterwards succeeded dishonour, trouble, and injury to the said emperor, through his friendship for this cavalier.

The city of Trebizond is built near the sea, and its wall rises up over some rocks, and on the highest part there is a very strong castle, which has another wall round it. A small river passes by the castle, and dashes over the rocks, and on this side the city is very strong, but on the other side it is on open ground. Outside the city walls there are suburbs, and the most beautiful part is a street near the sea, which is in one of these suburbs, where they sell all the things required in the city. On the shore there are two castles, with strong walls and towers, one belonging to the Venetians and the other to the Genoese, and they hold them with the consent of the emperor.

Outside the city, there are many churches and monasteries. In this city the Armenians have a church and a bishop, and they consecrate the body of God in the same way as the Catholics; but the priest, when he dresses, does not put the stole with the cross on his breast, and when he reads the gospel, he turns his face to the people. When they consecrate, they do not put water in the chalice. They confess, and fast during Lent, and eat meat on Saturdays, and at Easter. During Lent their fast consists in not eating fish, nor oil, nor suet; and the common people eat fish, but do not drink wine. From Easter to Pentecost they eat meat every day, as well on Fridays as on other days in the week. They say that Jesus Christ was baptized on the day he was born, and they have other errors in their faith, but they are very religious, and hear mass very devoutly.

The Greeks are also a very devout people, but they have several errors in the articles of their faith. In the first place they consecrate bread which contains leaven; and make it in this way - they take a loaf, about the size of a man's hand, and in the middle they make an impression, with certain letters, the size of a *dobla*,⁴ which they consecrate. The priest who says mass, wears an ornament before him; and when he has consecrated the bread, he puts it on his head, in a white cloth, and, singing, goes forth to the people, who all put their faces to the ground, crying, and smiting their bosoms, and saying they are not worthy to see it. The priest then returns to the altar,

⁴An old Spanish coin.

and consumes the impression which is in the middle of the bread. When mass is said, he takes the remainder of the bread, breaks it, as if it was consecrated, and gives it to the people. When the priests officiate at mass, they do not have either books or bells in the churches (except in St. Sophia, at Constantinople). The clergy are married, but they do not marry more than once, and with a virgin. When their wives die, they do not marry again, but remain widowers, and they are very unhappy for the rest of their lives. They only say mass twice a week, on Saturdays and Wednesdays; and when they have to say mass, they remain in the church all the week, and do not go out, or to their houses. They have six fasts in the year, in which they do not drink wine, nor eat fish which has blood, nor oil; and the clergy do not go to their houses, during these fasts; which occur as follows: - the first is from 1st of August to St. Mary's day in the middle of August; the second, from St. Catherine's day to the Nativity; the third is the forty days of Lent, which we also keep; the fourth is for twenty-four days, in honour of the twelve Apostles; the fifth is for fifteen days, in honour of a saint, whom they call Saint Demetrius; and throughout the year, they do not eat meat, neither on Wednesdays nor on Fridays; but they eat meat on Saturdays. They keep Wednesdays very strictly, and would rather eat meat on Fridays, than on Wednesdays: for they do eat meat on the following four Fridays in the year, namely, the Friday before Christmas day, the Friday in Carnival week, the Friday after Easter, and the Friday before Pentecost. They err in their doctrine of baptism, and in other things; and when any one dies, who has done evil in this life, and is a great sinner, they dress him in cloths, and change his name, that the devil may not know him. They hold these, and other erroneous opinions, yet they are very devout, and say long prayers.

The Greeks are armed with bows and swords, and other arms like the Turks, and they have cavalry.

The ambassadors were in this city of Trebizond from the Friday on which they arrived, being the 11th of April, until Saturday the 26th of the same month; preparing harness for their horses, and other things necessary for a journey by land. On Sunday, the 7th of April, the ambassadors set out accompanied by a guard which was provided for them, by order of the emperor, to guide them through his territory. On the same day they slept near a river called Pexic, in a ruined church. The road led over high hills, which were inhabited, and covered with corn, and mills; and many streams flowed from these hills.

On Monday they left this halting place, and the guard which the emperor had given them turned back, and said that they could not go any further, for fear of the enemies of the emperor; but the ambassadors went on their way. At the hour of vespers they came to a castle belonging to the emperor, called Pilomazuca, built on a very high rock. The entrance to it is by steps; and there were a few houses in the face of the rock. The road, on this day, was very good for travelling, and led through very beautiful mountains; but they found that a great piece of rock had fallen, which blocked up the road, and a river,

so that the ambassadors could not pass without trouble; and on that day they did not travel far, and encamped in the open plain.

On Tuesday they travelled on a very bad road, over very high mountains, covered with snow, and traversed by many streams; and at night they encamped near a castle called Sigana, which is on the top of a high rock, the only entrance to which was by a wooden bridge, leading from a rock to the gate of the castle. The owner of the castle was a Greek knight, named Quirileo Arbosita.

On Wednesday they came to a castle, on a high rock near the road, called Cadaca, on one side of which there was a river, and on the other a precipice, and the road led through a very narrow pass, between the river and the foot of the castle rock, so that only one man could pass at a time. A few men in the castle might defend this pass against an army, and in all this country there is no other pass. Men came forth from the castle, and demanded a toll from the ambassadors, for their effects. This castle always contains thieves and bad men; and the lord of it is also a thief; and this road is not used, except when many merchants travel together, and give a great present to the lord of this land, and to his men. Three leagues beyond this castle there was a tower, on the top of a high rock, in a narrow pass; and at the hour of vespers they approached a castle, on a high hill, called Dorile, which looked very beautiful, and the road came close to it. The ambassadors understood that the lord of the country lived in that castle, so they sent an interpreter to let him know who they were; and when they approached the foot of the castle, a man on horseback came out to them, and said that the lord of the castle desired that they should stop, and they put their luggage in a church close by. The man then told them that it was the custom for those who travelled on that road, to pay a certain duty to the lord of the castle, and that they were expected to do so. He said that his master had people in the mountains, who were making war on the Turks; and that he lived by the dues taken from travellers who used that road, and by the spoils taken from his enemies. When the ambassadors wished to visit the lord of the castle, to show him such courtesy as he might desire, his men would not consent, and said that they should not go to him, but that next morning he would come to them.

On Thursday, the 1st of May, Cabasica, the lord of the castle, came to the place where the ambassadors were encamped, with thirty men on horseback, armed with bows and arrows. They all got off their horses, and sat down, and Cabasica made the ambassadors sit down near him, and said to them that his country was barren and craggy, as they might see, that he was always at war with the Turks, who were his neighbours, that he and his people had nothing to live upon, except what was given them by those who passed that way, and what they robbed from their neighbours. He, therefore, desired that they would help him, with some clothing and money.

The ambassadors replied that they were not merchants, but ambassadors, whom their lord the king of Spain had sent to the lord Timour Beg, and that they had nothing but what they were taking to the said Timour; and the ambassador from Timour Beg said that he knew well that the emperor of Trebizond was lord of that land, and that he

was a vassal of Timour Beg; adding that the things they had with them belonged to Timour, and that they ought to be allowed to pass safely through that land. They of the castle replied that what he had said was true, but that they had nothing to live on, except what they had already described, and that, at all events, they must give them what they demanded. The ambassadors, seeing their determination, produced a piece of scarlet, and a silver cup; and Timour Beg's ambassador gave a scarlet cloth made in Florence, and a piece of fine linen but they were not satisfied with all this, and asked for more.

Notwithstanding all the courteous speeches that were made to them, they cared nothing for them, but continued to insist upon being given what they demanded, and declared that words were worth nothing. The ambassadors therefore bought a piece of camlet from a merchant who was with them, and gave it to the people of the castle. At last they were satisfied, and the lord of the castle said that the ambassadors should be guarded on their road, as far as the land of Arsinga, which then belonged to Timour Beg.

The ambassadors desired to depart at once, but they could not. They, however, hired horses to carry them as far as the land of Arsinga, and men to guard them. On Friday they set out, accompanied by ten men on horseback, and at the hour of mass they came to a castle, on the top of a high rock, which also belonged to Cabasica, where they found men in the road, who took a toll from them. At noon they came to a valley where they were told that there was a castle belonging to the Turks of a lineage called Chapenies, who were at war with Cabasica, and that in the valley there was a guard, which waited for passengers. At the hour of vespers they came to a town of Arsinga, called Alangogaza, and Cabasica's ten men took leave of them.

On this day the road was very mountainous; and in this town there was a Turkish cavalier, who held the place for the lord of Arsinga. He received the ambassadors very well, and gave them good lodging and food, and everything they required; and they learned from this cavalier that Timour Beg had departed from Carabaqui,⁵ where he had wintered, and had gone to the land of Sultanieh.

On Saturday, the 8rd of May, they set out again, and reached a town where they were treated well, and given food and fresh horses; and at night they came to another town, where they were given plenty of food and horses, and everything they required. The custom of the country was that, at each town where they arrived, small carpets were brought from each house, for them to sit upon, and afterwards they placed a piece of printed leather in front, on which they had their meals. The bread of these towns was very bad, and was made in this way: - they knead a little flour, and make very thin cakes, which they put on a pan, over the fire, and when they are hot, they take them out; and this is the bread which they bring on these pieces of leather. They also bring out plenty of meat, and milk, and cream, and eggs, and honey. This is the best food they have, and they bring it from each house; and if the ambassadors had to remain,

⁵Karabagh.

the people brought them plenty of meat, and all that they required. When the ambassadors came to any place, an officer went on before, and the ambassador from Timour Beg ordered food, and horses, and men for them; and if they did not come, the people received such a number of blows with sticks and whips, that it was quite wonderful. Thus the people of these towns were so severely punished that they fled, when they saw a Zagatay coming. A Zagatay is a man⁶ in the host of Timour Beg, of noble lineage.

In these towns, some Armenian Christians resided. On Sunday, the 4th of May, they arrived at the city of Arsinga,⁷ at the hour of vespers; and the road they had traversed that day was very rugged, and passed over high ridges of mountains; and near the city they found much snow in the road. Many people came out from the city, to receive and to see the ambassadors, and they were conducted to the lodgings which had been prepared for them. That night the lord of the city sent them boiled and dressed meat, and much fruit, and bread, and wine.

Next day the lord of the city sent them a certain sum of money, to maintain them while they were there; and at noon he sent horses to convey them to visit him, and men to guard them, to a plain outside the city. They found him seated in a saloon, under the shade of a silken canopy, supported by two poles, with cords to draw it out, and there were many people with him. When the ambassadors arrived, some cavaliers came forward to receive them; and when they came to the lord, he rose up, and gave them his hand, making them sit down near him, and treating them very well. He was dressed in a robe of blue silk, embroidered with gold, and he had a tall hat on his head, with precious stones in it, and on the top of the hat he had a crest of gold, from which descended two tresses of red hair, reaching to the shoulders, and this hair, thus worn, is the device of Timour Beg. The lord seemed about forty years of age, and he was a well made man, with a black beard.

After he had asked the ambassadors concerning the state of the king our lord, the first honour he did them was to take a silver cup full of wine, and give it, with his own hands, to the ambassadors, to drink, and afterwards to all their followers. He who thus drinks, must take the cup in both hands, it being disrespectful to take it in one; for they say that a man ought to take a cup in one hand, from his equal, and not from a lord; and when he has taken the cup from the hand of his lord, he raises it, and walks a little backwards, and does not turn his back to the lord. When he has drunk, he raises his finger in the air three times; and it is the custom to drink all that is in the cup. After he had given them to drink, with his own hand, they brought some mules, on which were wooden boxes, containing plenty of copper pots for cooking, and many chopping knives, of hard iron, and a hundred small iron porringers; and all the utensils were round and deep, like a trooper's head piece.

⁶ The Zagatays took their name from the son of Zengis Khan; just as the Uzbegs derived their name from another famous descendant of the great Mongol conqueror.

⁷ Erzingan.

They then put meat into these pots, and pickled mutton, and balls of forced meat into the porringers, with rice and other victuals; and over each pot and each porringer they placed a thin cake. Before the lord and the ambassadors they placed a silken cloth, on the ground; and on it they placed the pots and porringers of meat; and everyone began to eat.

Each person had his knife to cut, and his wooden spoon to eat with. But a man cut up the food, before the lord, and two cavaliers sat and ate with him; and when they had to eat the rice, and other dishes, they ate out of one porringer, with one spoon; when one had done with it, the other took it up, and so they went on eating.

While they were at this meal, a Turkish boy, about seven years old, arrived with about ten mounted attendants; and the lord received him, and made him sit down by his side. This boy was a nephew of Espandiar, the lord of Sinopoli, who was a great lord in Turkey; and he came from Timour Beg, with an order to Espandiar, to give the half of his land to this boy, because he was the son of his sister. Presently two other cavaliers arrived, who came from Timour Beg, and they were natives of this city of Arsinga. They said that Timour Beg had detained them for some time, but that now he had released them, and the reason he had imprisoned them was this: -

Zaratan, a great noble, was lord of this city of Arsinga, and of its land, which is a great territory; and when he died, he did not leave children by his wife, who was daughter of the emperor of Trebizond. Some time before he died, he declared that he who is now lord of Arsinga was his son, but when he died, they did not wish to receive this man as lord. A cavalier, who was the son of a sister of Zaratan, named Xevali, seized the land, saying that Zaratan died without children, and that he ought to inherit, as his nephew; and the two cavaliers who arrived at the meal, assisted him. When Timour Beg conquered the Turk, he came to this city, and seized the said Xevali, and the two cavaliers, making him, who is now in possession, and whom Zaratan had said was his son, lord of Arsinga. Timour Beg had now released these two cavaliers, but had taken Xevali to Samarcand.

The reason why Timour Beg and the Turk made war upon each other, was owing to Zaratan, the lord of this land, as will be related to you presently; it was a beautiful reason.

When they had finished eating, the ambassadors returned to their lodging, and the lord remained with his cavaliers; and at night the lord sent the ambassadors many things, such as pots of boiled meat, with the cooks who dressed it, and attendants to serve it up: and he gave them money for their expenses, as much as they required.

On Wednesday, after dinner, he sent for the ambassadors, and they went to him, and found him at his lodging. He was in a porch, before a fountain, with many cavaliers, attendants, and also buffoons, who were performing before him. As the ambassadors entered, he bowed to them, and made them sit near him, and gave them many pieces of sugar. He said that he and the knight who did not drink wine (which was Ruy Gonzalez) should that day be drinking companions, and they brought a great crystal

vase, full of water with sugar. He drank first, and then gave it to Ruy Gonzalez, with his own hand, but they gave wine to all the others. Afterwards they brought much meat, and rice, and various other dishes, and they ate in the same way as they did the day before. When the meat was eaten, they brought porringers of honey, and peaches cut in vinegar, and grapes, and capers; and they ate very dirtily. All this time the wine did not stop, and when this had lasted some time, they brought a cup, which the lord took, and gave it to certain of his knights, who drank all the wine, so that none was left, for this is their unseemly custom. These cavaliers then took the great cup, and gave it to each other, to drink, until most of them were drunk; but on that day the lord did not drink wine, to keep company with Ruy Gonzalez, and the lord's name was Pitalibet. At night the ambassadors returned to their lodging.

This city of Arsinga was built on a plain, near a river which is called Euphrates,⁸ which is one of the rivers that come from Paradise. This plain is entirely surrounded by very high mountains, and on the top of the highest of these mountains there is much snow. There are many towns, and fruit gardens in the plain, which is covered with corn fields and vineyards, and very beautiful gardens. The city was not very large, and the walls and towers which surrounded it, were built of stone. It was built by the Armenians, and the sign of the cross is cut on many parts of the walls. The houses all have terraces, and the people walk along the terraces, as if they were streets. The city is very populous, and contains many fine streets, and it is very rich, and has much trade, and many beautiful mosques and temples. It is inhabited by many christians, Greeks, and Armenians. They say that when Timour Beg took and destroyed a Turkish city called Sabastria,⁹ that the Turk came against this city of Arsinga, and entered it; but when Timour Beg conquered the Turk, he came to this city, and took it for himself.

While Timour Beg was at Arsinga, the Moors of the city quarrelled with the christians who were there, saying that Zaratan, their lord, allowed them to have churches which were better than the mosques; and Timour Beg sent for Zaratan, and told him what the Moors had said. Zaratan answered that he allowed the christians to be in the land, that he might take advantage of their industry. Timour Beg then sent for a Greek priest who lived there, and when he came before him, he, on account of the great hatred he had for the people of Constantinople, and for the Genoese of the city of Pera, ordered him to apostatize; and, because the priest did not wish to do so, Timour Beg commanded all the christians in the city to be put to death.

Zaratan interceded with Timour Beg, for them, and ransomed them for nine thousand *esperas*, each *espera* being worth half a silver rial; but Timour Beg caused all the churches of the christians to be destroyed, and he took a castle of that city, called Camag, and gave it to one of his Zagatays. He did this because the castle was very strong, and guarded all that country. From this city much merchandize goes to Syria, and to Turkey.

⁸The Kara-sou, or Western Euphrates.

⁹ Sebaste or Sivas.

The reasons why the Turk and Timour Beg came to know of each other, and why Timour Beg came to Turkey, to fight the Turk Bayazid, are as follows: - This cavalier Zaratan, lord of this city of Arsinga, held a territory which bordered on the dominions of the Turk. The Turk, being desirous of possessing the land of this Zaratan, and especially the castle of Camag, sent to demand tribute from him, and that he should give up the said castle of Camag. Zaratan replied that he would pay tribute, but that he would not give up the castle; and the Turk declared that if he did not, he should be deprived of all his land.

Zaratan, having heard of the great power of Timour Beg, and that he was then waging war in Persia, sent an embassy to him, with presents and letters, beseeching him to defend him from the Turk, and protesting that he was ready to obey him. Timour Beg, therefore, sent his ambassador to the Turk, with letters, in which he declared that Zaratan was his subject, and that the Turk must not molest him, threatening, if he did, to do as much for him.

The Turk, never having heard of Timour Beg, until that time, and believing that there was no man in the world equal to himself, got into such a passion that it was quite wonderful, and sent back letters to Timour Beg, in which he said that he was astonished that there could be a man so mad and insolent as to write such great folly; that he would do what he chose against Zaratan, and against every other man in the whole universe. He further promised to come and seek for Timour Beg, and that he could not escape from falling into his hands. He also swore that he would disgrace him, by dishonoring his principal wife.

Timour Beg, being possessed of great confidence, determined to show his power, and marched from the beautiful plains of Carabaque,¹⁰ in Persia, where he had wintered that year, with a great army, straight to the city of Arsinga. Thence he advanced into the land of Turkey, and besieged the city of Sabastria.¹¹ The people of Sabastria sent to the Turk, their lord, for help; and when he heard that Timour Beg was in his territory, he got into a great passion, and collected a force, which he sent against him, under his eldest son Muzulman Chalabi. The force consisted of two hundred thousand cavalry, and he intended to follow himself, with a larger army; but before the Turks could arrive, Timour had entered the city; and he did so in this manner: he fought the besieged very fiercely, so that at last they came to speak with him, and he agreed that certain men of the city should come to him; that he would cause no blood to be shed; and that they should give him a certain quantity of gold and silver.

When Timour Beg had received the tribute which he demanded, he said that he desired to tell those of the city certain things, which were much to their advantage; and that, for this purpose, the chief men should come to him. These, trusting in the safe conduct he had given them, came to him; and Timour Beg, as soon as he had got them outside the city, caused great holes to be made; and said to them that he had certainly

¹⁰Karabagh.

¹¹Sebaste or Sivas.

promised not to shed their blood; but that he would stifle them in those holes; and he ordered his troops to enter the city. He buried all who had come out to him, alive, and ordered the city to be pillaged, pulled down, and destroyed.

When this was done, he marched away, and on the day that he departed the son of the Turk arrived, with his two hundred thousand cavalry; and when he found that the city of Sabastia was destroyed, and Timour Beg gone, he waited there for his father; and Timour Beg marched straight to the land of the Sultan of Babylon.

Before he arrived there, he met with a race, called the white Tartars, who always wander over the plains; and he fought and conquered them, and took their lord prisoner; and took away as many as fifty thousand men and women with him.

He then marched to Damascus; against the people of which city he was much enraged, because they did not pay tribute; and he imprisoned their ambassadors, and entered their city, and destroyed it. All those who understood any art, he took with him to the city of Samarcand, together with the white Tartars, and the people of Sabastia, amongst whom were many Armenian Christians.

After this, he returned to the land of Persia; and passed the summer in a land called Alara, in Upper Armenia.

Meanwhile the Turk marched to the city of Arsinga; and, on account of the rage and fury which he felt against Zaratan, because he had been the cause of this insult, he attacked the city and entered it by force, capturing the wife of Zaratan. But he ordered her to be released, and that no harm should be done to the city. He then returned to his own land. They say that he thus displayed very little courage, in not destroying that city, as Timour Beg had destroyed the city of Sabastia.

After these two lords had returned to their own territories, they sent ambassadors to each other; but they were unable to come to any reconciliation.

At this time the emperor of the great city of Constantinople, and the Genoese of Pera sent to Timour Beg, to say that if he was going to make war upon the Turk, they would be able to assist him with troops and galleys; and it should be in this way: that they would arm certain galleys, in a short time, to prevent the Turks who were in Greece, from passing back into Turkey; and they also offered to assist him with a certain quantity of money.

When the Turk would not come to any terms with the city of Constantinople, or with Timour Beg, they each began to collect their forces; but Timour Beg, who could do this with great rapidity, because he was astute and sagacious in war, marched quickly from Persia into Turkey, by the same road as he had taken before, passing through the cities of Arsinga and Sabastia. When the Turk knew that Timour Beg was in his territory, he marched, with his army, to a strong castle called Angora. As soon as Timour Beg heard of this sagacious movement of the Turk, he left the road by which he was marching, and led his army over a high mountain. When the Turk, therefore, found that Timour Beg had left the road, he thought that he had fled, and marched after him as fast as he could.

Timour Beg, after marching through the mountains for eight days, returned to the plain, and came to the castle of Angora, where the Turk had left all his baggage, and he pillaged it. When the Turk heard this, he came back as fast as he could, and when he arrived, his men were tired.

Timour Beg had made this movement, to throw his enemy into disorder; and they fought, and the Turk was taken prisoner. But the Emperor of Constantinople, and the Genoese of Pera, instead of doing what they had promised, allowed the Turks to pass from Greece into Turkey; and when they were defeated, they assisted them to escape; and this bad faith made Timour Beg very furious against the Christians.

The name of this Turk, who was conquered by Timour Beg, was Ilderim Bayazid, which means "lightning." The name of his father was Amurath, a very good knight, who was killed by a christian count, called Lazaro, on the field of battle, by two thrusts in his breast, which came out at his back. Afterwards this Ilderim Bayazid avenged the death of his father, by killing Count Lazaro in battle, with his own hand. The son of this Lazaro marched with Bayazid, and he now lives with Muzulman Chalabi, the son of this Ilderim Bayazid.

I have written this, that it may be understood whom they call Murate; because all the lords of Turkey are known by the name of Murate. Also Timour Beg is the proper name of that lord, and not Tamerlane, as we call him; for Timour Beg is as much as to say, in his language, the same as the lord of iron; because Beg means lord, and Timour is iron. Tamerlane, on the contrary, is an insulting name; and means lame, because he became lame on the left side, and was wounded in the two small fingers of the right hand, from blows which were given him when he was stealing some sheep one night, as will be more fully related to you presently.

The ambassadors were in this city of Arsinga until Thursday, the 15th day of May, when they departed. The road that day led over high mountains, without vegetation, and the snow fell, so that it was very cold. They passed the night in a town called Xabega, which had a small castle, and a river flowed near it; and they passed many cornfields and villages that day.

On Saturday they passed the night in a town called Pagarrix, which had a lofty castle on the top of a rock; and in this town there were two wards, one inhabited by Armenians, and the other by Turks; and they said that it was a year since Timour Beg passed through it, when he ordered the churches of the Armenians to be pulled down; and the Armenians gave three thousand *asperas*, each *aspera* being half a rial, to ransom their churches; but he ordered the money to be taken, and the churches to be destroyed also.

On Sunday, the day of Pentecost, they set out, and reached a town, where there was a castle on the top of a rock, which belonged to Arsinga.

On Monday they passed the night in the open air; and the road they travelled over that day passed over high mountains, without vegetation, from which many streams descended; but there was much pasture, both above and below; and this land belonged

to the Turcomans, who wander as far as this, and they are a nation of Moors, allied to the Turks. On Tuesday they departed, and travelled over a plain, with much pasture, and plenty of water.

At noon they came to a town called Aseron,¹² which belonged to Timour Beg. It was in a plain, and was surrounded by a strong stone wall with towers, and it is very large. It also had a castle, but it is not very populous. In it there is a handsome church, for this city used to belong to the christians of Armenia, and many Armenians lived in it. Formerly it was the largest and the richest city in all this country. The lord of the city was a Turcoman named Subail.

On Thursday, the 22nd of May, they departed from this place, and passed the night in a town called Patir Juan, in the territory of a very strong city called Auniqui; and the lord of this land was a Zagatay knight, named Toladay-beque.

On Friday they arrived at a town called Ischu, and they remained there until Sunday. In this town there were many Armenians.

On Sunday they slept in a town called Delularquente, which means "the town of the mad men;" and the town was inhabited by Moorish hermits, called Caxixes; and many people came to them on pilgrimage, and they healed many diseases. Among them there was a chief whom they treat with great respect, and say that he is a saint, and that when Timour Beg passed by, he went to visit this Caxic. These hermits received many alms from the people, and their chief was lord of the town. Those who desire to be thought religious, shave their beards, and their heads, and take off their clothes, and go through the streets in heat and cold, dressed in the most tattered clothes they can find. They go about singing, day and night, with timbrels. On the top of the gate of their hermitage there was a pennon of black woollen threads, with a moon figured above them; and at the foot of the pennon were fixed many horns of deer, goats, and rams; and this is the custom of these Caxixes, to have these horns on the tops of their houses, and they carry them in their hands, when they walk in the streets.

On Monday, the 6th of May, the ambassadors departed, and passed the night in a plain, near a great river called Corras,¹³ which traverses the whole of Armenia; and the road passed over snowy mountains, whence descended many streams.

On Tuesday they passed the night in a town called Naujua; and the road, on that day, was along the banks of this river, being very rugged, and dangerous to pass. In this place there was a Caxic for governor, who received the ambassadors very well; and there were many Armenians.

On Wednesday they passed the night in a town, which had a high castle on the top of a rock; which rock was of salt, and any one may take this salt, who wants it.

¹² Erzeroum.

¹³ Kur, or Cyrus.

**THE CITY OF CALMARIN¹⁴, WHICH WAS THE FIRST IN THE WORLD,
AFTER THE FLOOD.**

On Thursday, the 29th of May, at noon, they reached a great city called Calmarin, and from it, distant about six leagues, they saw the great mountain on which the ark of Noah rested, after the flood. This city was in a plain, and on one side flowed the great river called Corras;¹⁵ and on the other there was a very deep and rocky valley, as broad as the flight of an arrow; and it encircled the city, until it united with the river. The valley and river made the city very strong, so that it could only be attacked where the river commenced; but at this place there was a very strong castle, with great towers, and it had two gates, one in front of the other. This city of Calmarin was the first city that was built in the world, after the flood, and it was built by the lineage of Noah. The people of the city said that, eight years ago, Tetani, Emperor of Tartary, besieged the city, and that they fought day and night for two days, and on the third there was a parley. They gave up the city, on condition that neither he, nor his people should enter it, but that the citizens should pay to him a certain annual tribute; with which the emperor was satisfied, but he demanded that half the people of the city should be given up to him, to go with him to the land of Jugania,¹⁶ where he was going to make war on the king Sorso. When the citizens had given up these men, the emperor attacked the city, entered it by force, pillaged and burnt it, making breaches in the walls, and killing many people.

The greater part of the inhabitants were Armenians; but the land of Armenia has been taken from the Christians by the Moors, as I will relate to you, presently. In this city there are very great edifices; and throughout all this country, they gave the ambassadors and their people lodging, and food, and horses; for all the land belonged to Timour Beg.

On Friday they departed, and passed the night at a castle, which was on the top of a rock, and belonged to a widow lady, who paid tribute to Timour Beg for this castle, as well as for other land which she held. In this castle there used to be robbers, and men who came out to plunder travellers on the road. Timour Beg marched against this castle, entered it by force, and killed the lord of it, who was the husband of this lady; and he ordered that malefactors should never be allowed to assemble in it again: and, that they might not be able to defend themselves, he caused the doors to be taken away, and ordered that they should never be replaced. He then gave it to this lady. The castle was, therefore, without doors, and was called Egida. This castle was at the foot of the lofty mountain of the ark of Noah; and all these mountain ranges, after leaving the land of Trebizond, were without woods. The lady received the ambassadors very well, and gave them all they required.

¹⁴ Etchmiazin ?

¹⁵ Kur, or Cyrus.

¹⁶ Georgia.

On Saturday, the 18th of May, the road led along the foot of the mountain of the ark of Noah. It was very high, and the summit was covered with snow, and it was without woods; but there was much herbage upon it, and many streams. Near the road there were many edifices, and foundations of houses, of stone; and great quantities of rye was growing, as if it had been sown by man, but it was useless, and did not come to grain; and there was also plenty of water cresses.

At the foot of this mountain they came to the ruins of a town long since deserted, which was a league in length; and the people of the country said that it was the first town that was built in the world, after the flood, and that it was founded by Noah and his sons.

After leaving these ruins, they came to a great plain, in which there were many streams of water, and trees, and rose gardens, and fountains. The mountain had a very sharp peak, which was covered with snow, and they say that the snow never leaves this peak all the year round, either in winter or summer, and this is on account of its great height. On this day the ambassadors took their siesta by a beautiful fountain, near a stone arch; and while they were there, the clouds moved away, and the peak of the mountain appeared, but they suddenly returned, and the people said that it was very seldom visible.

Next to this mountain, there was another, which also had a sharp peak, but not so high as the first, and between these two peaks there is one like a saddle, and they were all very high, and their summits were all covered with snow.

This night they slept at a castle called Vasisit-calaside, which was on the top of a high rock, and was wonderfully strong. On another rock there was a large town, joined to the castle by a great wall, with towers; and from this wall, a flight of steps led to the castle gate. The rock was very high, and within the castle, there was a spring of water. This castle was besieged by Timour Beg; and the lord of it agreed to pay tribute, on condition that the troops should not enter it.

On Sunday, the first of June, at the hour of vespers, they came to a castle called Maca, belonging to a catholic christian named Noradin, and the people who lived in it were catholic christians, though they were by birth and language Armenians, and they also knew the Tartar and Persian tongues. In this place there was a monastery of Dominican friars. The castle was in a valley, at the foot of a very high rock, and there was a village on a hill above, and on the top of the hill there was a wall of stone and mortar, with towers, and against the wall there were houses. There was also another wall with towers, and the entrance to it was by a great tower, built to guard it, along steps cut in the rock. Near the second wall there were houses cut in the rock, and in the centre were some towers and houses, where the lord lived, and here all the people in the village kept their provisions. The rock was very high, and rose above the walls and houses; and from the rock, an overhanging part stretches out, which covers the castle, walls, and houses, like the heaven that is above them; so that when it rains, the water does not fall upon the castle, for the rock covers it; and thus the castle cannot either be

attacked from the land, or from the sky. Inside the castle a spring rises up, which supplies all the people, and irrigates many fruit gardens. At the foot of this castle there is a beautiful valley, full of vineyards, and corn fields, through which a river flows.

Timour Beg besieged this castle, and could not take it; but he negotiated with the lord of it, that he should supply him with twenty mounted soldiers, when he called for them. Soon afterwards Timour Beg marched away, with his army; and the lord of the castle sent his son, who was about twenty years old, with three richly caparisoned horses, as presents to Timour Beg, who received them; and the lord's son asked him not to damage the lands belonging to the castle.

Timour replied that the lord of the castle had so fine a son that he must accompany him, and he took him, and afterwards ordered him to live with his grandson, Omar Meerza, who was governor of Persia, and of that land. He still lives with him, and marches in his army; and that governor made the son of this lord turn Moor, by force, and named him Sorgart-mix, and made him one of his guards; but, though he became a Moor by force, he is not one willingly, or by his acts.

The ambassadors were well received by the lord of this castle, and he was much comforted by their being christians, and was very hospitable; and told them that it was about fifteen days since Janza Meerza, the nephew and favourite of Timour Beg, sent to him to say that he wished to use the castle as a deposit for his treasure; and he answered that he could not admit it. The ambassadors remained during the day on which they arrived, and afterwards they saw the son of the lord of the castle, who was in the host of the ruler of Persia, and spoke with him. The lord of the castle also had another son, smaller than this, and he told the ambassadors that that son was learned, and a good grammarian; and that when God willed that they should return, he should go with them to the lord their king, that he might be recommended to the pope, to be made bishop of that land. It is very wonderful that this castle should hold out, amidst so many Moors, with a garrison of christians, and of Armenians turned catholics, which is a very great service to God.

On Monday, the end of June, they departed, and slept in the open air, as they could not reach any village; and on that day they were shown a castle, on the left hand side of the road, called Alinga, which was on a high mountain, and surrounded by a wall with towers; within which there were many vineyards, and fruit gardens, and corn fields, and streams, and pastures for sheep, and on the highest part of the mountain there was, a castle. When Timour Beg conquered the Sultan of Persia, who was called Sultan Ahmed, he besieged this castle of Alinga for three years, and Ahmed fled from it, and went to the Sultan of Babylonia, where he is now.

On Tuesday they slept in a plain, where there were about a hundred tents of Zagatays, who were wandering over that land with their flocks.

On Wednesday they passed the night near some other tents of Zagatays, and in these tents they gave meat and horses to the ambassadors, in the same way as they did in the towns and villages. The road by which they had passed went over hills, in

which there was plenty of water and herbage, and there were many of these Zagatays, who belonged to the host in the city of Khoi.

On Thursday, the 5th of June, at noon, they arrived at a city which is called Khoi, and is situated in a plain, and is surrounded by many fruit gardens and corn fields, and near the city there are plains of very great extent, through which, and through the city, flow many streams of water. The city is surrounded by a brick wall, with towers and barbicans. At the city of Khoi the land of upper Armenia ends, and the land of Persia commences.