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Europeans as Foreigners. Relations Between the West and Timur's Chagatai Empire at the Turn of the 14th and 15th Centuries: A Contribution to Studies on the Role Played by Embajada a Tamorlán in Contacts Between christianitas latina and the Mongols

Europejczycy jako obcy. Relacje pomiędzy Zachodem a czagataidzkim imperium Tamerlana na przełomie XIV i XV w. – przyczynek do badań nad znaczeniem *Embajada a Tamorlán* w relacjach pomiędzy *christianitas latina* a Mongołami

SUMMARY

The aim the article is not to provide a holistic view of the relations between the world of the Latin civilisation, *christianitas latina*, and the world of the Mongols and their heritage in Central and Eastern Asia. The author's intention is to describe the relations between representatives of Western Europe and Timur's Chagatai empire from the period preceding a diplomatic mission of Castilian envoys to Samarkand, which played a very important role in historical and cultural studies of this period. In 1403, Henry III, King of Castile and Léon (1390–1406), sent a group of envoys led by *hidalgo* Ruy González de Clavijo, the Dominican friar Alonso Páez de Santa María, and the King's guard, Gómez de Salazar, on a diplomatic mission to Timur (also known as Tamerlane) in Samarkand. The envoys travelled through the Mediterranean Sea, Rhodes, Constantinople, Trebizond, Erzincan, Erzurum, Tabriz, and next through Sultania and Tehran, before they finally arrived in Samarkand. The account of their mission, which ended in 1406, was written in a form of a narrative entitled *Embajada a Tamorlán* and is the oldest Castilian book of travels.

Keywords: Mongols; Europeans; Timur; *Embajada a Tamorlán*

INTRODUCTION

The aim the article is not to provide a holistic view of the relations between the world of the Latin civilisation, *christianitas latina*[1], and the world of the Mongols and their heritage in Central and Eastern Asia. It is too broad an area, and it has been sufficiently analysed in general historiography[2]. The author's intention is to describe the relations between representatives of Western Europe and Timur's Chagatai empire from the period preceding a diplomatic mission of Castilian envoys to Samarkand, which played a very important role in historical and cultural studies of this period. Using it as the background, I would like to draw conclusions regarding the role Timur's contacts with the Western world played in politics. Due to space limit, I will omit the relations between the Latin civilisation and the Mongols before Timur came to power, which include the missions of André of Longjumeau, Ascelin of Cremona, Giovanni da Piandel Carpine, William of Rubruck, the Polo family, John of Montecorvino, Odoric of Pordenone, John of Marignolli as well as frequent mutual contacts between Western European rulers and Ilkhanid rulers from Persia, which provided the West with important information about the Mongols.

The Castilian chronicle *Embajada a Tamorlán* is one of the most valuable accounts of Timur's Chagatai empire written by the representatives of the Latin civilization. In 1403, Henry III, King of Castile and Léon (1390–1406), sent a group of envoys led by *hidalgo* Ruy González de Clavijo, the Dominican friar Alonso Páez de Santa María, and the King's guard, Gómez de Salazar,on a diplomatic mission to Timur (also known as Tamerlane) in Samarkand[3]. They met this legendary ruler in 1404, during his preparations for the invasion of China[4]. The account of their mission, which ended in 1406, was written in a form of a narrative entitled *Embajada a Tamorlán* and is the oldest Castilian book of travels. It was

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[1] In my considerations I refer to Feliks Koneczny's concept; the Latin civilization was his construct.

[2] It is enough to look at the works by: Igor de Rachewiltz, Gian Andri Bezzola, Axel Klopprogge, Antii Ruotsala, Jean Richard and Felicitas Schmieder. Polish sources worth mentioning include the ones written by Jerzy Strzelczyk and Mikołaj Olszewski; Polish analyses of encounters between the Latin civilization and the Mongol world focus mostly on the mission of Benedict of Poland from Wrocław.

[3] Unfortunately, we do not possess the complete list of the members of the embassy, which numbered 14 or 15 people. Another participant of the mission was probably the gentleman-poet Alonso Fernández de Mesa, whose participation in the journey may be deduced from the testimony of another 15th-century Andalusian traveller, Pero Tafur (cf. *Travels and Adventures 1435–1439*, ed. M. Letts, London 1926, p. 135).

[4] J.-P. Rubiés, *Late Medieval Ambassadors and the Practice of Cross-Cultural Encounters 1250–1450*, [in:] *The 'Book' of Travels: Genre, Ethnology, and Pilgrimage, 1250–1700*, ed. P. Brummett, Leiden–Boston 2009, p. *37*.

published in the 16th century as one of the elements strengthening the image of the Spanish empire of Philip II of Spain (1556–1598)[5]. The envoys – the names of only three of them are known today – travelled through the Mediterranean Sea, Rhodes, Constantinople, Trebizond, Erzincan, Erzurum, Tabriz, and next through Sultania and Tehran, before they finally arrived in Samarkand and were brought before Timur[6].

The account of the Castilian mission in which Clavijo participated is a valuable source of knowledge regarding Timur's reign and his contacts with the representatives of the Latin culture (alongside the accounts of diplomatic activity of John, Archbishop of Sultania[7] and Johann Schiltberger[8]), who had been captured by Timur and kept at his court. *Embajada a Tamorlán* offers a vivid and fascinating description of customs, court life, politics and social culture in the capital of the Timurid Empire and at Timur's court. The narrative focuses on everyday life of the court, where ceremony played a central role in such areas as processions of royal ladies, mounds of cooked meat, performing elephants, fabric architecture, or a portable mosque. The detailed nature of the descriptions is so important for art historians nowadays that they treat this narrative as one of the main sources of knowledge of art from the times of Timur's reign[9].

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[5] The classic contemporary edition of this narrative is the one edited by Francisco López Estrada: Ruy González de Clavijo, *Embajada a Tamorlán*, estudio y edición de un manuscrito del siglo XV por Francisco López Estrada, Madrid 1943 (new edition: Madrid 1999).

[6] Among numerous sources referring to the second diplomatic mission (the first one will be discussed later in the article) sent by Henry III to Timur, it is worth recommending Francisco López Estrada's brilliant research paper as a perfect introduction to the topic. Cf. F. López Estrada, *Ruy González de Clavijo. La embajada a Tamorlán. Relato del viaje hasta Samarcanda y regreso (1403–1406)*, "Arbor" 2005, Vol. 180, No. 711–712, pp. 515–535.

[7] John Archbishop of Sultania was sent as Timur's envoy on diplomatic missions to rulers in Western and Central Europe. Undoubtedly, the best analysis of his life and work is given in Anthony Luttrell's work *Timur's Dominican Envoy*, [in:] *Studies in Ottoman History in Honour of Professor V.L. Menage*, eds. C. Heywood, C. Imber, Istanbul 1994, pp. 209–229. The most important facts from his life and a reference section can be found in Ł. Burkiewicz, *Rola arcybiskupa Jana z Sultanii w stosunkach dyplomatycznych pomiędzy Mongołami a Europą Zachodnią na przełomie XIV i XV w.*, „Prace Historyczne Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego" 2017, t. 144, nr 1, pp. 25–42.

[8] Johann Schiltberger was a German nobleman taken prisoner first by Bayezid at the Battle of Nicopolis (1396), and later by Timur at the Battle of Ankara (1402). He ended up as a slave of Timur's sons. There are numerous editions of his narrative, the first was published around 1460, and the leading edition was published in the 19th century by K.F. Neumann, *Reisen des Johannes Schiltberger aus München in Europa, Asia und Afrika von 1394 bis 1427*, München–Berlin 1859 (reprinted: Amsterdam 1976). The English edition, published by Hakluyt Society, was translated by B. Telfer and commented on by P. Bruun: Johann Schiltberger, *The Bondage and Travels of Johann Schiltberger*, London 1879 (reprinted: London 2013).

[9] D.J. Roxburgh, *Ruy González de Clavijo's narrative of courtly life and ceremony in Timur's Samarqand, 1404*, [in:] *The 'Book' of Travels…*, pp. 113–152.

THE MONGOL EMPIRE AND ITS HERITAGE

The presence of the Mongols outside Asia in the 13th century was noticed by the whole contemporary world[10]. The Mongols, frequently yet erroneously called the Tatars in the West, were seen in almost all countries in Asia and Europe and several in Africa[11]. From the very beginning, Europeans considered the Mongols a threat for the Christian world, and this opinion was confirmed in 1241 and 1242 by the raids in which they ravaged the lands belonging to Poland, Moravia and Hungary[12].

In the next years, the empire created by Genghis Khan faced a crisis leading to its division into smaller states, including the Chagatai Khanate, the Golden Horde, the areas ruled by the Yuan dynasty in China, and the Ilkhanate in Persia. The Christians established and maintained special relations with them, bearing in mind a potential alliance against the Mamluks[13].

In the middle of the 13th century, diplomatic missions of the Franciscans and the Dominicans in Asia led to intensification of contacts between Western Europe and the Mongols[14]. The ones sent by Pope Innocent IV (1243–1254) as a response

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[10] The contacts between Europeans and the Mongols in the Middle Ages – primarily in their political dimension – are relatively well-researched. The most extensive work devoted to the development of these relations is Peter Jackson's monograph *The Mongols and the West, 1221–1410* (Harlow 2005); including an exhaustive reference section devoted to the contacts between Western Europe and the Mongols (pp. 372–415). An invaluable work in Polish historiography is the one edited by Jerzy Strzelczyk – *Spotkanie dwóch światów. Stolica Apostolska a świat mongolski w połowie XIII wieku. Relacje powstałe w związku z misją Jana di Piano Carpiniego do Mongołów* (Poznań 1993), with an extensive reference section (pp. 315–333).

[11] Polish studies regarding the medieval Mongols benefited greatly from the contribution made by Stanisław Kałużyński. His numerous works are written in Polish, so I recommend only one of them here: S. Kałużyński, *Dawni Mongołowie*, Warszawa 1983, p. 11.

[12] P. Jackson, *op. cit.*, pp. 58–86.

[13] To learn more about the plans of the alliance between the Mongols and the Franks against the Mamluks, cf. *ibidem*, pp. 165–195.

[14] Much has been written on missionary activity of the Franciscans and the Dominicans in the 13th and 14th centuries. The standard edition of the Latin texts is a collection published by Anastasius van den Wyngaert in *Sinica Franciscana*, Vol. 1: *Itinera et relationes Fratrum Minorum saeculi XIII et XIV*, Quarachi 1929. Diplomatic and missionary journeys to the Mongol areas are discussed in Paul Pelliot, *Les Mongols et la Papauté*, « Revue de l'Orient Chretien » 1922–1923, Vol. 23, pp. 3–30; idem, *Les Mongols et la Papauté*, « Revue de l'Orient Chretien » 1924, Vol. 24, pp. 225–335; idem, *Les Mongols et la Papauté*, « Revue de l'Orient Chretien » 1931–1932, Vol. 28, pp. 3–84; J. Richard, *La Papauté et les Missions d'Orient au Moyen Age (XIIIe–XVe siècles)*, Rome 1977. The Hakluyt Society also published several important works containing source texts translated into English. Cf. H. Yule, *Cathay and the Way Thither: Being a Collection of Medieval Notices of China*, 2 vols., London 1866. Among other numerous works one should also mention the one written by Arthur C. Moula, *Christians in China before 1550*, London 1930, which contains English-language translations of many important source texts. The reference literature is mentioned in Marshall W. Baldwin's article, *Missions to the East in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*, [in:] *A History of the Crusades*, ed. K.M. Setton, Vol. 5: *The Impact of the Crusades on the Near East*, eds. N.P. Zacour, H.W. Hazard, Madison 1985, pp. 452–454, the footnotes on these pages are not numbered.

to the sudden appearance of the Mongols are commonly known[15]. In spring 1245, he sent at least four missions: two were run by the Dominicans: Ascelin of Lombardy (1245–1248)[16] and André of Longjumeau (1245–1247)[17], who reached Persia under the Mongol rule, and two were run by the Franciscans: Lawrence of Portugal, about whom we have no further information, and John of Plano Carpini (1245–1247), accompanied by a Polish monk Benedict[18]. They were the first Pope's envoys to reach Syra Orda near Karakorum, a place where Mongol military leaders resided, and they witnessed the moment in which Güjuk was elected the Great Khan[19]. Several years later, André of Longjumeau (1249–1251), and later William of Rubruck (1253–1254), were sent to Asia again as envoys of King Louis IX of France[20]. The travels of the Polo family contributed greatly to discovering Asia. Brothers Niccolò and Matteo (1253–1268), who were later joined by Matteo's son, Marco (1271–1295), travelled to Khanbaliq (Beijing), the capital of the Mongol Empire since 1264, where in 1307 an archdiocese was erected and the Franciscan missionaries, including John of Montecorvino, Odoric of Pordenone, and John of Marignolli, played an important role in exploring and evangelizing this area[21]. The situation in China changed in 1368 when the Yuan dynasty was overthrown and replaced by the new Ming dynasty, no longer interested in maintaining amicable relations with Europe; moreover, at that time Christians' persecution began there[22]. At the same time, missionary activity found fertile ground in Persia. As a result of tolerant religious policy of the Mongol Ilkhans in this country, numerous Franciscan and Dominican missionaries visited their lands and some of them even settled in Tabriz[23]. On 1 April

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[15] *Ibidem*, p. 471.

[16] P. Pelliot, *Les Mongols et la Papauté*, « Revue de l'Orient Chretien » 1924, Vol. 24, pp. 225–235.

[17] *Ibidem*; idem, *Les Mongols et la Papauté*, « Revue de l'Orient Chretien » 1931–1932, Vol. 28, pp. 3–84.

[18] Benedict of Poland became the subject of interest for many researchers, but most of their works has been published in Polish. Cf. A. Zwiercan, *Benedykt Polak*, [in:] *Encyklopedia katolicka*, red. F. Gryglewicz, R. Łukaszyk, Z. Sułowski, t. 2, Lublin 1985, col. 231–232; A.F. Grabski, *Nowe świadectwo o Benedykcie Polaku i najeździe Tatarów w 1241 r.*, „Sobótka"1968, t. 23, pp. 1–13.

[19] The literature on the expedition of Jan of Pian del Carpine is so large that it is impossible to detail it here. Cf. reference work P. Pelliot, *Les Mongols et la Papauté*, « Revue de l'Orient Chretien » 1922–1923, Vol. 23, pp. 3–30.

[20] M.W. Baldwin, *op. cit.*, pp. 475–480.

[21] The sources for the China missions, cf. A. van den Wyngaert, *Jean de Mont Corvin, O.F.M., premier évêque de Khanbaliq (1247–1328)*, Lille 1924; J. Richard, *Essor et déclin de l'église catholique de Chine au XIVe siècle*, « Bulletin de la Société des missions étrangères de Paris » 1960, ser. 2, n° 134, pp. 285–295.

[22] P. Jackson, *op. cit.*, pp. 87–112.

[23] Bishoprics in Mongol lands are discussed in Conrad Eubel, *Die während des 14. Jahrhunderst im Missionsgebiet der Dominikaner und Franziskaner errichteten Bisthümer*, [in:] *Festschrift zum elfhundertjährigen Jubiliäum des Deutschen Campo Santo in Rom*, Hrsg. S. Ehses, Freiburg 1897, pp. 171–194.

1318, Pope John XXII founded Archbishopric in Sultania, the city where the Persian rulers spent summers, and appointed the Dominican Francis of Perugia its first Archbishop; he set off to his Persian destination on 1 May[24]. Between 1320 and 1329, bishoprics were founded in Tabriz, Tbilisi and Maragheh[25]. In 1350, a bishopric was established in Nakhchivan, which, after the fall of Sultania in the 15th century, took over its former title of Archbishopric, maintaining it till 1745[26]. It should be noted here that the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries was an especially profitable period for the missionary activity. It was the reign of Shah Abbas the Great (1587–1629), whose tolerant religious policy brought to Persia more Dominicans and Franciscans than before and also Carmelites, Augustinians and Jesuits[27].

TIMUR'S FIRST CONTACTS WITH THE WEST

The areas ruled by the Chagatai Khanate underwent a great transformation in the second part of the 14th century. Timur, the son of a minor noble of Barlas, a Mongolian tribe, initiated the process of joining, subordinating and conquering new areas, and, as a result, created one of the largest countries in history[28]. Timur was not a descendant of Genghis Khan and never accepted the title of Khan, although he ruled over a vast territory[29]. This brilliant albeit cruel ruler initiated

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[24] R. Loenertz, *Les Missions Dominicainesen Orient et la Société des Frères Pérégrinants*, « Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum » 1933, Vol. 3, p. 12; idem, *LesMissions Dominicainesen Orient au XlVe siècle et la Société des Frères Pérégrinants pour le Christ*, « Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum » 1932, Vol. 2, pp. 36–37.

[25] Idem, *La Societé des Frères Pérégrinants*, Rome 1937, pp. 152–172; idem, *Les Missions Dominicainesen Orient et la Société des Frères…*, p. 30; idem, *Les Missions Dominicainesen Orient au XlVe siècle et la Société…*, p. 40.

[26] L. Lockhart, *European Contacts with Persia, 1350–1736*, [in:] *The Cambridge History of Iran*, Vol. 6: *The Timurid and Safavid Periods*, eds. P. Jackson, L. Lockhart, Cambridge 1986, p. 374. To read about the tolerant policy in the Mongol Empire, cf. J.P. Roux, *La tolérance religieuse dans les Empires turco-mongols*, « Revue de l'histoire des religions » 1986, Vol. 203, n° 2, pp. 131–168.

[27] L. Lockhart, *op. cit.*, p. 374.

[28] Timur's rule was analysed in numerous papers and monographs, and the most significant of them are the ones written by an American historian Beatrice Forbes Manz (*The Rise and Rule of Tamerlan*, Cambridge 1989; *Power, Politics and Religion in Timurid Iran*, Cambridge–New York 2007) and already mentioned Peter Jackson. Marian Małowist is a renown Polish expert in this issue (M. Małowist, *Tamerlan i jego czasy*, Warszawa 1985).

[29] B.F. Manz, *The Rise and…*, p. 21; eadem, *Mongol History Rewritten and Relived*, "Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée" 1999, Vol. 89–90, pp. 137–140; eadem, *The Ulus Chaghatay before and after Temür's Rise to Power. The Transformation from Tribal Confederation to Army of Conquest*, "*Central Asiatic Journal" 1983, Vol.* 27, No. 1–2, p. 79; J.E. Woods, *Timur Genealogy*, [in:] *Intellectual Studies on Islam: Essays Written in Honor of Martin B. Dickson*, eds. M.M. Mazzaoui, V.B. Moreen, Salt Lake City 1990, pp. 85–125; D. Morgan, *The Empire of Tamerlane. An Unsuccessful Re-run of the Mongol State?*, [in:] *The Medieval State. Essays in Honour of James Campbell*, eds. J.R. Maddicott, D.M. Palliser, London 2000, p. 237.

a new era in the relations between Western Christianity and the Mongol world, and his attitude to the West in the early 15th century was amicable[30]. After defeating Tokhtamysh, the khan of the Golden Horde, in the 1390s and the Mamluks in 1401, Timur turned his attention to the Ottoman Turks, who were his only rivals in Minor Asia at that time[31]. The perspective of a war with the Ottomans motivated Timur to establish friendly relations with Europe[32]. A person who helped him achieve this goal was John, the Dominican Archbishop of Sultania in Persia, who was sent by Timur and his son Miran Shah on diplomatic missions to the Byzantine Emperor, King of England, Venice, Genoa, King of France, and King of Aragon[33]. The original letter written in Persian by Timur to King of France, and its Latin translation, probably made by Archbishop John, are preserved till today[34]. Henry III of Castile and Léon was also interested in maintaining contacts with Timur after the news of Timur's conquests arrived both in Aragon and Castile[35].

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[30] The first scholar who drew attention to the diplomacy between Timur and the West was the 19th-century French orientalist Silvestr de Sacy. Cf. S. de Sacy, *Mémoire sur une correspondance inédite de Tamerlan avec Charles VI*, « Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres » 1822, Vol. 6, pp. 470–522. Some contemporary scholars have made brief mention of the existence of cordial relations. Cf. J.W. Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus (1391–1425): A Study in Late Byzantine Statesmanship*, New Brunswick 1969, pp. 504–509; M.-M. Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, *La campagne de Timuren Anatolie (1402)*, Bucarest 1942 (reprinted: London 1977); D.M. Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium, 1261–1453*, Cambridge 1993, pp. 313–316; D. Sinor, *The Mongols and Western Europe*, [in:] *A History of the Crusades*, ed. K.M. Setton, Vol. 3: *The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, ed. H.W. Hazard, Madison 1975, pp. 513–544. Unfortunately, most scholars of the Ottoman Empire, or even of Timur himself, are totally silent on the matter. Cf. K.M. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant*, Vol. 1, Philadelphia 1976, p. 376. What is interesting, B.F. Manz, already mentioned above, whose book on Timur's method of governance (*The Rise and…*) is a seminal work on the topic, barely mentions his relations with the West. Several works devoted to Timur's relations with the Western world written recently include: A. Knobler, *The Rise of Tīmūr and Western Diplomatic Response, 1390–1405*, "Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society" 1995, Vol. 5, No. 3, pp. 341–349; idem, *Mythology and Diplomacy in the Age of Exploration*, Leiden–Boston 2017, ch. 2, pp. 9–29; and in a wider context D. Sinor, *The Mongols in the West*, "Journal of Asian History", Vol. 33, No. 1, pp. 1–44.

[31] H.R. Roemer, *Timur in Iran*, [in:] *The Cambridge History…*, p. 72; M.-M. Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, *op. cit.*, pp. 41–52.

[32] M. Małowist, *op. cit.*, pp. 66–70, 73–74.

[33] B.F. Manz, *The Rise and…*, p. 343; J. Delaville Le Roulx, *Rapports de Tamerlan avec les chrétiens*, [in:] *La France en Orient au XVIe siècle*, éd. J. Delaville Le Roulx, Vol. 1, Paris 1885, pp. 389–396; M.-M. Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, *op. cit.*, pp. 19–29.

[34] *Histoire générale et raisonnée de la diplomatiefrançaise: ou de la politique de la France, depuis la fondation de la monarchie, jusqu'à la fin du règne de Louis XVI; avec des tables chronologiques de tous les traitésconclus par la France*, par M. de Flassan, Vol. 1, Paris 1811, pp. 188–190; H. Moranvillé, *Mémoire sur Tamerlan et sa Cour par un Dominicain, en 1403*, Paris 1894, pp. 433–464; M.-M. Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, *op. cit.*, pp. 19–29, 92; J. Delaville Le Roulx, *La France en Orient an XIVe siècle. Expéditions du Maréchal Boucicaut*, Vol. 2, Paris 1886, pp. 389–391.

[35] The Kingdom of Aragon had consuls in Damascus and Alexandria. It is known that Antonio Ametller, who had served as Aragonese consul in Damascus (1390–1396) and in Alexandria (1398–1402) sent news of the invasion of Syria to Valencia. Cf. A. López de Meneses, *Los consul-*

Both at the turn of the 14th and 15th centuries and today, certain mythology that accumulated around Timur shaped the opinion of his relations with Western countries representing *christianitas latina*. On the one hand, Timur, who conquered vast territories and created one of the largest empires in the history of mankind, was considered an excellent strategist[36]. On the other hand, his cruelty petrified not only his contemporaries, but is bloodcurdling also today[37].

Timur's relations with the Latin world were correct and, in Adam Knobler's opinion, even cordial. The expansion and territorial growth of his Chagatai empire meant that Christians living in the conquered areas became his subjects[38]. The development of the relations between Timur's diplomacy and the Latin civilisation can be summarised in the following way. The first information about Timur might have reached Europe in the middle of the 1380s, after his attack on Christian Georgia in 1386–1387, when the news of this new political power might have spread westwards. However, the first archival materials mentioning Timur can be found in the documents of the Senate of the Republic of Venice from 1394, which discuss intensifying hostility between the Mongolian conqueror and Sultan Bayezid, thus encouraging Emperor Manuel II to take action against the Ottomans[39]. At the same time, the Venetians became increasingly concerned about the emergence of previously unknown Mongolian forces in the East, which in 1395 plundered the Venetian estates in Tana and thus threatened their trading position in the Black Sea basin[40]. They immediately asked Tokhtamysh, khan of the Golden Horde, for protection against Timur. However, at this point Tokhtamysh could not do much – defeated by Timur, he escaped to Lithuania, while the capital of his state Saray was burnt down and destroyed[41]. Additionally, in September 1396, the Latin world was shaken by the defeat of the Hungarian, Burgundian, French and German forces at Nicopolis. The importance of this defeat made Western European rulers aware that the main and most important threat to Europe is not Timur, but the Ottoman Turks[42].

Alarmed, Byzantine emperor Manuel II Palaeologus sent his ambassadors to France asking for help against the Turks; these issues are extensively described

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dados catalanes de Alejandria y Damasco en el reinado de Pedro el Ceremonioso, "Estudios de la Edad Media de la Corona de Aragon" 1956, Vol. 6, p. 114; A. Rubió i Lluch, *Diplomatari de l'Orient català (1301–1409): colleció de documents per a la història de l'expedició catalana a Orient i dels ducats d'Atenes i Neopàtria, pròleg de M.T. Ferrer i Mallol, Barcelona 1947 (reprinted: Barcelona 2001), No. 668.*

36 B.F. Manz, *The Rise and…*, p. 1.

37 A. Knobler, *The Rise of Tīmūr…*, p. 341; M. Małowist, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

38 A. Luttrell, *Timur's Dominican…*, p. 209.

39 *Ibidem*, pp. 341–342; P. Jackson, *op. cit.*, p. 290.

40 *Ibidem*.

41 *Ibidem*; E. Ashtor, *Levant Trade in the Later Middle Ages*, New York 1983, pp. 112–113.

42 A. Knobler, *The Rise of Tīmūr…*, p. 341.

in literature[43]. At this moment, a Dominican Sandro, who returned from the West with one of the missions sent to Manuel II[44], appeared on the historical horizon. He arrived at Timur's court before 1398 and for the next seven years served as one of his most important envoys[45], together with other Dominicans. Timur's empire was growing rapidly, and his territories were inhabited by Christians of both European and Asian origin, who spoke Western and Eastern languages, and thus were ideal candidates for diplomatic missions sent by him to European rulers[46]. Consequently, in the 1390s, members of Dominican and Franciscan missions to Persia reached Timur's court, and served as his and his son's European ambassadors. At the same time, Timur moved west and in March 1401 conquered Damascus ruled by the Mamluks[47]. The news of the collapse of this important Syrian city must have reached the West quickly; it was probably spread by numerous Latin merchants in the region[48]. It can be said that since then diplomatic exchange between Latin countries and Byzantium, on the one hand, and Timur, on the other, had intensified greatly[49].

The first Timur's envoys, as evidenced by the source materials, were sent to Emperor Manuel II of Byzantium and his nephew, Regent John VII, and to the Genoa merchants of Pera. They arrived in Pera on 19 August 1401 on board a Genoese ship[50], and their aim was to pass a request, or rather a warning, to the Byzantines and the Genoese not to form an alliance with the Turks, who were soon to be attacked by Timur[51]. In response, John VII promised Timur the tribute he had paid to the Turks if he defeated Bayezid[52]. Timur must have liked this answer because the following year, on 15 May 1402, he sent John VII a friendly letter[53].

In the meantime, on 28 July 1402, Timur's troops crushed Bayezid's army near Ankara, and the sultan himself became Timur's prisoner. Three days later, Timur and his son, Miran Shah, sent letters to Latin rulers in which they offered alliance and trade cooperation[54]. The responses were enthusiastic: the kings of France and England called Timur *amico nostro*[55]. Contemporary Western Euro-

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43 J.W. Barker, *op. cit.*, on Latin-Byzantine relations, see pp. 154–169.

44 S. de Sacy, *op. cit.*, p. 514.

45 A. Knobler, *The Rise of Tīmūr…*, p. 342.

46 A. Luttrell, *Timur's Dominican…*, p. 209.

47 P. Jackson, *op. cit.*, p. 291.

48 E. Ashtor, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

49 A. Knobler, *The Rise of Tīmūr…*, p. 343.

50 D.M. Nicol, *op. cit.*, p. 314.

51 J.W. Barker, *op. cit.*, pp. 504–508; A. Luttrell, *Timur's Dominican…*, p. 213.

52 D.M. Nicol, *op. cit.*, pp. 314–315; M. Dąbrowska, *Jan VII Paleolog*, [in:] *Encyklopedia kultury bizantyńskiej*, red. O. Jurewicz, Warszawa 2002, p. 236.

53 M.-M. Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, *op. cit.*, pp. 123–124.

54 S. de Sacy, *op. cit.*, pp. 473–474, 478–480.

55 A. Knobler, *The Rise of Tīmūr…*, p. 343.

pean chroniclers enthusiastically described Timur's victory and its positive consequences for Christian Europe[56].

Timur's most famous envoy, who informed the West about Bayezid's defeat at Ankara, was a Dominican named John, the eighth Archbishop of Sultania[57]. He is one of the most mysterious figures in the arena of relations between the Mongols and Western Europe at the turn of the 14th and 15th centuries; the aura of mystery that accompanies him is intensified by numerous errors in studies devoted to establishing his identity. In view of the fact that I addressed the issue of Archbishop John's diplomatic missions in one of my recent articles, I will focus here only on the conclusions regarding his diplomatic activity[58]. Firstly, the Archbishop enjoyed an exceptional status at Timur's court; the Chagatai leader called him his "special friend"; unfortunately, we do not know how he got in Timur's good graces and won his appreciation[59]. As a result, he was also able to carry out his own plans for increasing the presence of Latin culture in Central Asia, as will be described below. Secondly, John of Sultania tried to change the negative perception of Timur in the West[60].

At this point I would like to mention the reception of Timur's victory in other parts of Europe. In August 1402, Timur's envoys reached the capital of the Byzantine Empire and Pera in Genoa and informed their rulers of his victory over Bayezid. They also warned regent John VII of the approach of the survivors of the Ottoman army and asked him to stop them from entering Europe[61]. The next Timur's missions arrived in Pera in January 1403 and at the end of the summer of the same year[62]. Over time, however, John VII began to question Timur's intentions and at the beginning of 1403 he planned to close the Dardanelles Strait to prevent the Mongol invasion. Both he and Manuel II, who was still in the West at that time, feared that Constantinople would be the next target of the Chagatai army[63]. This opinion was shared by Jean II Le Maingre, called Boucicaut, Marshal of France and

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[56] *Ibidem*, p. 344.

[57] Several papers described the figure of Archbishop John, although most of them repeated the same erroneous information. Luttrell's article (*Timur's Dominican…*, pp. 209–229) corrects most of them. The most recent work: J. Šilc, *Nadškof iz Perzije podeli v Celju odpustek šmarnogorskim božjepotnikom. Listina nadškofa Janeza iz Sultanije, spisana v Celju leta 1411*, "Zgodovina za vse" 2006, št. 2, pp. 5–16.

[58] Ł. Burkiewicz, *Rola arcybiskupa Jana…*, pp. 25–42.

[59] Dietrich von Nyem, *De scismate libri tres*, Hrsg. G. Erler, Bd. 3, Leipzig 1890, pp. 305–306.

[60] Cf. Latin and Persian texts in S. de Sacy, *op. cit.*, pp. 473–473, 478–479.

[61] M.-M. Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, *op. cit.*, pp. 135–137; J.W. Barker, *op. cit.*, pp. 217–218; P. Jackson, *op. cit.*, p. 289. On hearing about the Mongols victory over Bayezid, Pera's inhabitants were so happy that they raised Timur's flags over the city. However, Felictias Schmieder believes it to be contemporary chroniclers' fabrication; see F. Schmieder, *Europa und die Fremden. Die Mongolenim Urteil des Abendlandes vom 13. bis in das 15. Jahrhundert*, Sigmaringen 1994, p. 185 footnote 588.

[62] N. Iorga, *Notes et extraits pour servir à l'histoires de croisades au XVe siècle*, Paris 1899, pp. 81, 83–84.

[63] P. Jackson, *op. cit.*, p. 290.

the Governor of Genoa, who saw Timur as a threat[64]. In January or February 1403, John VII, the Venetians, the Genoese and the Hospitallers signed a peace treaty with Bayezid's son, *Süleyman Çelebi,* who controlled the Ottoman possessions in Europe, as a counterbalance to Timur's growing power in the region[65].

DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS SENT TO TIMUR BY KING HENRY III

In this historical context, at the beginning of 1403, King Henry III of Castile sent his envoys to Timur. It was the second mission sent by the ruler of Castile to the ruler of the Chagatai[66].

The first embassy left the Kingdom of Castile at Easter in 1402, and was led by Payo Gómez de Sotomayor and Hernán Sánchez de Palazuelos[67]. The envoys met Timur in Ankara following his victory over the Ottoman ruler Bayezid I and returned to Henry III, accompanied by one Muslim medical, carrying a letter[68] and gifts, which included two Christian women liberated from Bayezid's harem[69]. This was one of Timur's several contacts with European envoys[70].

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[64] J. Delaville Le Roulx, *La France en Orient…*, p. 403 ff.; Ł. Burkiewicz, *Cypryjska wyprawa marszałka Boucicaut (1403)*, [in:] *Polonia – Italia – Mediterraneum. Studia ofiarowane Pani Profesor Danucie Quirini-Popławskiej*, red. Ł. Burkiewicz, P. Wróbel, W. Mruk, R. Hryszko, Kraków 2018, pp. 297–312; an extensive reference section *ibidem*.

[65] D.M. Nicol, *op. cit.*, p. 319; M. Dąbrowska, *Bizantyński poseł w Paryżu w 1408 r.*, „Przegląd Nauk Historycznych" 2014, nr 2, p. 122; G. Ostrogorski, *Dzieje Bizancjum*, Warszawa 2012, p. 511; M. Małowist, *op. cit.*, p. 76; M. Dąbrowska, *Jan VII…*, pp. 236–237. For a detailed analysis of the Treaty, see G.T. Dennis, *The Byzantine-Turkish treaty of 1403*, "Orientalia Chrystiana Periodica" 1967, Vol. 33, pp. 72–88.

[66] King Henry III's foreign policy was described in C. Montojo Jiménez, *La diplomacia castellana bajo Enrique III: studio preliminar de la embajada de Ruy González de Clavijo a la corte de Tamerlán*, Madrid 2004.

[67] Payo Gómez de Sotomayor belonged to one of the most powerful Galician noble families. He was Marshal of the Kingdom of Castile, a member of Equites Bindae order established by King Alfonso XI, and senior of Rianxo, Sant Tomé, Lantañoo, Villamayor, Postomarcos and numerous other places. Hernán Sánchez de Palazuelos is an obscure character, although Francisco López Estrada described him as an important courtier at Henry III's court. Cf. J. de Contreras y López de Ayala Loyoza, *Doña Angelina de Grecia: ensayo biográfico, por Juan de Contreras; con una carta prólogo del Excelentísimo Conde de Cedillo, de la Real Academia de la Historia*, Segovia 1913, pp. 9–10; L. Lockhart, *op. cit.*, p. 375; S. de Sacy, *op. cit.*, pp. 501–502; F. López Estrada, *Ruy González de Clavijo…*, p. 518.

[68] Ruy González de Clavijo, *op. cit.*, pp. LII–LIV. This letter must have resembled the one sent to the monarchs of France and England. Cf. A. Knobler, *Mythology and Diplomacy…*, p. 27.

[69] The details regarding Sotomayor and Palazuelos's embassy are described at the beginning of *Embajada a Tamorlán* chronicle. Cf. Ruy González de Clavijo, *op. cit.*, pp. 78–79. For more about two Christian women (princesses) liberated from Bayezid's harem, cf. Ł. Burkiewicz, *Two Christian princesses offered as Timur's present for King Henry III of Castile. The analysis of the introduction to Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo's narrative (1403–1406)*, „Perspektywy Kultury" 2015, nr 13, pp. 159–178.

[70] Timur's envoys, already mentioned Dominican John, Archbishop of Sultania and his companion Francis, also a Dominican, visited Kings of France, England, Aragon and the Republic of

The reasons why King Henry III sent his first diplomatic mission to the East are not clear. It is possible that the news of Timur's growing power spurred the King of Castile to send his envoys to him. Most probably he simply wanted to satisfy his curiosity regarding the Orient aroused by Timur's Dominican envoys. The Catalans from the Levant informed Henry III of Timur's conquests, including the destruction of Damascus in 1401, which was at that time governed by the Mamluks[71]. According to the author of *Embajada a Tamorlán*, the envoys' task was to discover how numerous the armies of two most powerful rulers (*por saber la pujanza que en el mundo avia el dicho*) in the East – Timur and Bayezid (Tamurbec y Turco Ildrin) – were[72]. Moreover, a relatively long period of stability, both internal and external, allowed the Castilian ruler the luxury of tackling foreign policy and diplomacy to such an extent[73]. In the international arena Henry III aimed not only at establishing diplomatic contacts with as many European countries as it was possible, but also with Asia and Africa[74]. Moreover, he considered an alliance with the Mongol ruler a reasonable response to the threats posed by the Emirate of Granada[75].

What is known about the envoys sent on Henry III's second diplomatic mission to Timur?

There were probably fourteen or fifteen of them. We know the names of only three: Ruy González de Clavijo, the Dominican friar Alonso Páez de Santa María, and the King's guard, Gómez de Salazar[76].

Ruy González de Clavijo, believed to be the author of the chronicle[77], is the best known among them. His life is not sufficiently documented[78]. He was a courtier at the royal court and a diplomat; he was most probably born in the second half of the 14th century. Clavijo came from one of the most influential

Venice and Genoa. What is interesting, after Timur died, Archbishop John, who did not know about his death, acted as his envoy in Malbork, at the court of the Grand Master of the Teutonic Knights Ulrich von Jungingen; his stay in Malbork is reported in *Das Marienburger Tresslerbuch der Jahre 1399–1409*, Hrsg. E. Joachim, Königsberg 1896, p. 417. Timur's diplomatic contacts with Western Europe are described in P. Jackson, *op. cit.*, pp. 235–255.

[71] F. Schmieder, *op. cit.*, pp. 182–183; E. Ashtor, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

[72] Cf. F. López Estrada, *Ruy González de Clavijo…*, p. 518.

[73] T. Miłkowski, P. Machcewicz, *Historia Hiszpanii*, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków 1998, p. 114.

[74] F. López Estrada, *Ruy González de Clavijo…*, p. 516; C. Montojo Jiménez, *op. cit.*, pp. 125–134; M.A.O. Brun, *Historia de la Diplomacia Española*, Vol. 1, Madrid 1990, pp. 229–245.

[75] M. Tuñón de Lara, J. Valdeón Baruque, A. Domínquez Ortiz, *Historia Hiszpanii*, Kraków 1999, p. 151; J. de Contreras y López de Ayala Loyoza, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

[76] Ruy González de Clavijo, *op. cit.*, pp. 29–32.

[77] Contrary to popular belief ascribing Embassy to Tamerlane to Ruy González de Clavijo, in my opinion, the chronicle was written by one of his companions, the Dominican Alonso Páez de Santa María, see forthcoming Ł. Burkiewicz, *Życie codzienne w podróży na przykładzie Ambasady do Tamerlana (1403–1406). Z badań nad relacjami międzykulturowymi*, Kraków 2019.

[78] For Clavijo's references, cf. R. Ezquerra Abadía, *Ruy González de Clavijo, viajero de Asia Central*, Madrid 1974; F. López Estrada, *Introducción*, [in:] Ruy González de Clavijo, *op. cit.*, p. 9 ff.

noble families in Madrid and already as a child stayed at Henry III's court. Unfortunately, no details connected with his life before the diplomatic mission to Timur are known; however, the fact that he was sent on such an important mission proves that the King trusted him[79]. Clavijo witnessed signing Henry III's will in 1406, and later he served his son and successor Juan II (1406–1454) in the same capacity. He died in 1412 and was buried in a chapel he commissioned in 1406 at the monastery of San Francisco of Madrid[80].

Embajada a Tamorlán is a primary source of knowledge of the second diplomatic mission sent by Henry III to Timur[81]. The chronicle contains information on the attitude of the elites ruling in the Timurid Empire to the representatives of Western Europe, which can be compared with their attitude to the representatives of other nations, also foreign in Timur's land. The authorship of the chronicle is traditionally attributed to Ruy González de Clavijo, one of two main envoys on the diplomatic mission to Timur (alongside Dominican Alonso Páez de Santa María), about whom we can read in the narrative published by Gonzalo Argote de Molina in 1582. However, it cannot be claimed for sure that he was its author. The narration in the chronicle always refers to Clavijo and the other envoys in the third person, which does not allow for unambiguous identification of its author; for the first time it is used in the description of the moment when they were leaving Castile: "[…] comencé á escribir desde el día que los Embajadores llegaron al puerto de Santa María cerca de Cádiz" ("[…] I started writing when the envoys landed in Port of Saint Mary near Cádiz")[82]. If we assume that the author of the chronicle was not Clavijo but another member of the mission, it might have been either the Dominican friar Alonso Páez de Santa María or the poet Alonso Fernández de Mesa, hinted at by an Andalusian traveller Pero Tafur. The knight Gómez de Salazar, the King's guard, is a rather unlikely author of the chronicle[83].

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[79] B.F. Manz, M.L. Dunaway, *Clavijo, Ruy González de*, [in:] *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, ed. E. Yarshater, Vol. 5, fasc. 7, London–Boston 1992, pp. 692–693.

[80] D.J. Roxburgh, *op. cit.*, pp. 118–119.

[81] Out of four manuscripts of *Embajada a Tamorlán* in existence today three are in Castile and are kept in the National Library in Madrid (two of them) (Biblioteca Nacional de España) and in the Royal Library in Madrid (one, incomplete) (Real Biblioteca del Palacio Real de Madrid). The fourth manuscript, kept in the British Museum in London, is in Aragonese, and, according to Francisco López Estrada, an expert in the area and a publisher of *Embajada a Tamorlán* chronicle, is the most complete. Cf. F. López Estrada, *Sobre el ms. de la Embajada a Tamorlán del British Museum*, "Archivo de Filología Aragonesa" 1956–1957, No. 8–9, pp. 121–126; idem, *Ruy González de Clavijo…*, p. 519. Manuscripts from Madrid were used as the basis for source editions in 16th and 17th centuries. The first one was published with a short introduction in 1582 and was edited by an Andalusian writer, historian and bibliophile Gonzalo Argote de Molina (1548–1596). The second was prepared for publication in 1782 by a renowned printer from Madrid Antonio de Sancha (1720–1790).

[82] Cf. Ruy González de Clavijo, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

[83] Cf. F. López Estrada, *Introducción*, pp. 37–38.

EUROPEANS AS FOREIGNERS IN THE MONGOL WORLD[84]

Although at the turn of the 14th and the 15th centuries Europeans did not travel to Central Asia as frequently as in the previous centuries (in the middle of the 13th century, thanks to the Franciscans' and Dominicans' missions in Asia, the contacts between Western Europeans and the Mongols were relatively intensive), some contacts between the Mongol world and Western Europe were maintained. Even these rare visits allowed both the Mongol elites and Europeans to gain valuable experience connected with "local" and "foreign", which might be of interest to academics interested in culture studies. In the Mongol culture and tradition envoys were treated in a special way.

Foreign diplomats and objects they brought were subjected to a magical purifying procedure[85]. Even if European envoys managed to reach the court, they were not always received by the khan. Before meeting the ruler, they were interrogated by a chancellor, who required detailed information on the aim of their diplomatic mission. Sometimes they were later allowed to meet the khan's wives or mothers, but not always the ruler himself[86].

In the Mongol culture an envoy was inviolable[87]. It was forbidden to hurt him, and killing or imprisoning him triggered the khan's immediate response. The Mongols respected envoys and expected the same from their neighbours[88]. Pope Innocent IV and other church dignitaries heard about the Mongols' attitude towards envoys for the first time from Peter, a mysterious Archbishop of Russia, during the First Council of Lyon in 1245[89].

Timur's similar attitude to envoys and merchants might have been motivated by several factors.

Firstly, Timur wanted to make Samarkand, the capital of his country, the centre of learning, culture, arts, crafts and trade, and that is why he treated visitors from neighbouring countries with great honours[90]. Christians, mostly Eastern Catholic, lived in Samarkand; Clavijo listed Nestorian, Jacobite, Armenian and Greek Christians in this city[91]. Timur posed as an open ruler, hence his contacts with the Europeans. During their stay at Timur's court, the Castilians were sta-

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[84] For the embassy's logistics, see U. Lindgren, *The Problems of Being a Foreigner: Ruy González de Clavijo's Journey to Samarkand*, "Clio Medica" 1980, Vol. 14, No. 3/4, pp. 225–234.

[85] S. Kałużyński, *op. cit.*, pp. 101–102.

[86] See D. De Nicola, *Women in Mongol Iran: The Khatuns, 1206–1335*, Edinburgh 2017.

[87] S. Kałużyński, *op. cit.*, p. 250.

[88] *Ibidem*.

[89] G.A. Bezzola, *Die Mongolen in abendländischer Sicht (1220–1270). Ein Beitrag zur Frage der Völkerbegegnungen*, Bern–München 1974, pp. 113–118.

[90] D.J. Roxburgh, *op. cit.*, pp. 113–117.

[91] Ruy González de Clavijo, *op. cit.*, passim.

tioned at one place and were intermittently invited to join Timur and his retinue in various orchards located outside and around the walled city of Samarkand[92].

However, such treatment did not apply to visitors from other countries. According to *Embajada a Tamorlán*, Timur's welcoming reception of the Castilian delegation contrasted with his disdain shown to the envoys of the "Lord of Cathay", the Chinese ruler[93]. When Timur saw the Castilians seated below the Chinese ambassador, he sent orders that they should sit above him saying that those who came from the King of Castile and León, his son and friend, were not to sit below the envoy of a thief and scoundrel who was Timur's enemy[94]. Clavijo tells us that the Emperor of Cathay was called Chuyscan which means "Nine Empires". The Zagatays called him Tangus which means "Pig Emperor"[95].

When the Castilian envoys were near Samarkand, they accompanied Timur during his administrative decision-making activities. They were received with the greatest honour, and their impressions, which was probably the Chagatai ruler's intention, were to be passed on to the West in the form of descriptions. The author of *Embajada a Tamorlán* describes in great detail Timur's gardens surrounding the capital, which, for the creator of the Chagatai empire, were a symbol of his power and the nomadic way of life combined.

Secondly, at the turn of the 14th and 15th centuries, Timur turned his attention to the Ottoman Turks, and, standing at the gates of Europe, was looking for allies in the forthcoming war with the Ottoman sultan. The introduction of *Embajada a Tamorlán* mentioned Timurs' victory over Bayezid at the Battle of Ankara[96].

Thirdly, the representatives of Roman Catholic Europe were also a valuable tool in Timur's policy, as they served as his envoys in the West. Little is known about John, Archbishop of Sultania, but his figure is important from the perspective of Timur's approach to the Latins. Undoubtedly, John of Sultania enjoyed an exceptional position at Timur's court and was called the Mongol ruler's "special friend"[97]. He was an initiator of the diplomatic missions to the European rulers, which began in 1402, as he planned to evangelize the Chagatai Khanate with the support from the West. He hoped that during his mission he would manage to recruit volunteers to support his missionary activities in the East. Trade and colonies established by Western merchants along the trade routes in the East were a pretext and a natural incentive for missionary activities, and that is why they were discussed in correspondence between Timur and the European rulers. However, the outcome of John's mission was not significant – he obtained

[92] D.J. Roxburgh, *op. cit.*, p. 136.
[93] Ruy González de Clavijo, *op. cit.*, p. 162.
[94] *Ibidem*.
[95] *Ibidem*.
[96] F. López Estrada, *Introducción*, p. 9 ff.
[97] Dietrich von Nyem, *op. cit.*, pp. 305–306.

only superficial results and did not manage to change the negative perception of Timur in Europe.

On the other hand, Timur's relations with various Latin Aegean powers, e.g. the Hospitallers at Rhodes, were complicated and intense[98]. In December 1402, their garrison in Smyrna was besieged by Timur's army and, after two weeks of strong resistance, the city was captured. Its inhabitants were killed and Smyrna was destroyed[99].

CONCLUSIONS

It should be mentioned that the initial enthusiasm for Timur's presence at the eastern borderlands of Europe with time turned into fear. One of the European rulers who were rather sceptical of Timur was King of Aragon Martin I, who was connected with the Mongol world through Catalan merchants living in Alexandria and Damascus[100]. It is suspected that when Martin, who had been supporting Byzantium for several years, learnt that one of Bayezid's sons was seen at Timur's camp, he started spreading false rumours about the Mongols' and Ottomans' political cooperation aimed at conquering *christianitas latina*[101]. The conquest of Smyrna – interestingly, the news of the siege of this fortress controlled by Hospitallers reached Aragon earlier than the news of the Battle of Ankara[102] – prompted Martin to write a letter to the Avignon Pope Benedict XIII (1394–1417), dated 5 March 1403, in which he appealed for the collection of funds for the crusade against Timur[103]. Additionally, in his letter sent to Emperor Manuel II on 27 June 1403, Martin was not particularly enthusiastic about Bayezid's defeat[104]; he did express his joy at this event, but he also compared Timur to the defeated Ottoman sultan: "an infidel as him"[105]. This attitude influenced the letter that the King of Aragon sent to Timur and Miran Shah on 1 April 1404[106]. The letter was indeed friendly, but attributed the victory over Bayezid to God's intervention and not to Timur's intentions, thus warning him against evil intentions towards Christians[107]. At that time, in his letter

[98] A. Knobler, *The Rise of Tīmūr…*, p. 347.

[99] [99] J. *Delaville Le Roulx, Les hospitaliers à Rhodes jusqu'à la mort de Philibert de Naillac (1310–1421), Paris 1913, pp. 284–286.*

[100] A. Rubió i Lluch, *op. cit.*, letter No. 668, pp. 692–693.

[101] P. Jackson, *op. cit.*, p. 291.

[102] J. Delaville le Roulx, *Les hospitaliers à Rhodes…*, pp. 284–285; A. Knobler, *The Rise of Tīmūr…*, p. 346.

[103] A. Rubió i Lluch, *op. cit.*, letter No. 672, p. 695.

[104] *Ibidem*, letter No. 677, p. 699. See also: S. Cirac Estopañán, *Bizancio y España. La Unión, Manuel II Paleólogo y sus recuerdos en España*, Barcelona 1952, pp. 56–57.

[105] A. Knobler, *The Rise of Tīmūr…*, p. 346; P. Jackson, *op. cit.*, p. 291.

[106] A. Rubió i Lluch, *op. cit.*, letter No. 679, pp. 700–701, letter No. 680, p. 701.

[107] A. Rubió i Lluch, *op. cit.*, letter No. 679, pp. 700–701; F. Schmieder, *op. cit.*, p. 182.

King Henry III of Castile, Martin I called Timur *malvado* ("evil", "wicked"), which demonstrated the level of trust, or rather its lack, in the Chagatai ruler[108].

The Republics of Venice and Genoa kept their watchful eye on Timur's next steps. Admittedly, Timur's victory over the Ottoman sultan secured the interests of both Republics, but, on the other hand, destructive activities of his troops threatened their commercial interests. Shortly after Timur's victory at Ankara, the Venetians voted in favour of closing the Dardanelles Strait to prevent Turkish troops' escape to Europe[109]. However, as it turned out, these plans were never carried out – despite the fact that similar support was offered to Timur by the Genoese from Pera – the Genoese ships helped the fleeing Ottoman troops to get out of Asia[110]. At the same time, the Genoese from Chios, faced with the Ottoman threat to their island and shipping in the region, considered potential alliance with Timur, which was, understandably, opposed by Grand Master of the Knights Hospitaller from Rhodes[111].

Timur died at the beginning of 1405. His contacts with the West did not differ much from those undertaken by earlier Mongolian Illhans from Persia. However, they coincided with two events extremely important for Europe: first, they took place immediately after the defeat of the Crusaders at Nicopolis; and second, they brought news of the destruction of the Ottoman army and the capture of Sultan Bayezid, the very person who crushed the Hungarian and Western European armies at Nicopolis. According to Adam Knobler, Timur's enthusiastic reception resulted from this particular moment in history; however, fear and horror he instilled should not be forgotten[112].

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[108] A. Knobler, *The Rise of Tīmūr…*, p. 346.

[109] M.-M. Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, *op. cit.*, pp. 125–128.

[110] A. Knobler, *The Rise of Tīmūr…*, p. 347. The Genoses were not the only ones who did not keep their promise to close the straits for the Turks; the Venetians also helped the Turks, e.g. by offering them hospitality in the island of Samos; see J.W. Barker, *op. cit.*, pp. 217–218; P. Jackson, *op. cit.*, p. 290.

[111] A. Luttrell, *The Hospitallers at Rhodes: 1306–1421*, [in:] *A History of the Crusades*, ed. K.M. Setton, Vol. 3, p. 308.

[112] A. Knobler, *The Rise of Tīmūr…*, p. 349.

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STRESZCZENIE

Celem niniejszego opracowania nie jest przedstawienie całościowego spojrzenia na relacje pomiędzy światem cywilizacji łacińskiej, *christianitas latina*, a światem Mongołów oraz ich dziedzictwa w Azji Środkowej i Wschodniej, lecz opisanie kontaktów przedstawicieli świata zachodnioeuropejskiego z imperium Czagataidów, stworzonego przez Tamerlana, które miały miejsce w przededniu bardzo ważnej dla studiów historycznych i kulturowych wyprawy kastylijskich posłów do Samarkandy. W latach 1403–1406 *hidalgo* Ruy González de Clavijo, poseł króla Kastylii oraz Léonu Henryka III (1390–1406), w imieniu swojego władcy odbył misję dyplomatyczną na dwór Tamerlana w Samarkandzie. Relacja z tej podróży – *Embajada a Tamorlán*, będąca najstarszą kastylijską narracją z podróży, została wydana w XVI w. jako jeden z elementów budujących wizerunek imperium hiszpańskiego Filipa II Habsburga. W kontekście panowania Tamerlana – znanego zarówno z okrucieństwa, jak i niesłychanych sukcesów w podboju olbrzymich obszarów Azji Środkowej, Iranu, Iraku i Zakaukazia – na baczną uwagę zasługują nieliczne świadectwa Europejczyków, którzy dotarli na tereny podbite przez tego władcę i trafili na jego dwór. Przykładem takiego świadectwa jest *Embajada a Tamorlán*, którego autor, będąc gościem Tamerlana, miał swobodny dostęp do życia codziennego mieszkańców imperium i samego władcy, dzięki czemu pozostawił bardzo dokładny opis timurydzkiego państwa. Jego relacja zawiera niezwykle barwny i interesujący przegląd zwyczajów oraz kultury dworskiej, politycznej i społecznej w stolicy państwa Tamerlana i na jego dworze.

Słowa kluczowe: Mongołowie; Europejczycy; Timur; *Embajada a Tamorlán*