

# EMBASSY TO TAMERLANE

1403–1406

*CLAVIJO*



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The Broadway Travellers

## CHAPTER XII

### SAMARQAND

THUS it was that on Monday the 8th of September we ambassadors left that garden, the place where we had been lodged, and were carried in to the city of Samarqand after crossing the plain. This on all hands is occupied by private gardens and houses between which are streets and squares where goods of all kinds were on sale. By the hour of tierce [nine in the morning] we were come to a great orchard, with a palace therein, where Timur was in residence, and this, as will be understood, lay some distance without the city. As soon as we had arrived they caused us to alight at a certain house that was built outside the palace, and here two of the lords of the court came forward to us saying that we were to give up into their hands such gifts or offerings as we were bringing for presentation to his Highness, seeing that they would arrange and dispose these objects suitably, having them borne by the hands of attendants who would later bring them in and lay them before Timur. As soon as we had given up our gifts into their hands these lords departed: but not before they had likewise said the same to the ambassador of the Sultan of Egypt who was with us, and he too therefore now gave up into their hands the present he had brought.

As soon as our offerings had thus been despatched, other attendants took charge of us holding each ambassador under his arm-pit, and led us forward entering the orchard by a wide and very high gateway, most beautifully ornamented with tile-work in gold and blue. Before this gateway were stationed the imperial door-keepers on guard armed with maces, so that none improperly might dare approach near the gate, although without there had now assembled a very great crowd of folk to see us. On entering what first we noticed was six great elephants, each bearing on its back a small castle of wood-work carrying two standards: and in these castles were their attendants who made the elephants play tricks for our entertainment as we passed by. And thus we went forward and soon came to the men charged with our offerings and gifts which same they were displaying very suitably and bearing aloft in their arms. We ambassadors now passed on standing in front of the bearers of our gifts, and they here made us wait a while, sending on messengers to report that we had come. Then to meet each of us there came forward two of those lords who were in attendance, and they took us as aforesaid under the arms thus to lead us in. Of our company was that Tartar envoy whom Timur had sent [from Angora] to the King of Castile [and who had been our companion throughout our journey hither], but at his present appearance his friends laughed much for he was dressed by us in the manner and fashion of a gentleman of Spain. Thus they brought us all forward till we came to where a certain great lord of the court, a very old man, was seated on a raised dais, he being indeed a nephew of Timur, the son of his sister, and we all made him our obeisances.

Then passing on we came before another dais where we found seated several young princes, the grandsons of his Highness, to whom we likewise paid our respects, and at

this point they demanded of us the Letter which we were bringing from our lord the King of Spain to Timur, which being passed over one of these princes received it in his hands who they said was [Khalíl Sultan] the son of Prince Mírán Sháh, the eldest son of Timur [whom we had seen at Sultáníyah]. Those young princes, who were three in number, now got up and forthwith carried away our Letter, bearing it to his Highness and we were told to follow after them. Then coming to the presence beyond, we found Timur and he was seated under what might be called a portal, which same was before the entrance of a most beautiful palace that appeared in the background. He was sitting on the ground, but upon a raised dais before which there was a fountain that threw up a column of water into the air backwards, and in the basin of the fountain there were floating red apples. His Highness had taken his place on what appeared to be small mattresses stuffed thick and covered with embroidered silk cloth, and he was leaning on his elbow against some round cushions that were heaped up behind him. He was dressed in a cloak of plain silk without any embroidery, and he wore on his head a tall white hat on the crown of which was displayed a balas ruby, the same being further ornamented with pearls and precious stones. As soon as we came in sight of his Highness we made him our reverence, bowing and putting the right knee to the ground and crossing our arms over the breast. Then we advanced a step and again bowed, and a third time we did the same, but this occasion kneeling on the ground and remaining in that posture. Then Timur gave command that we should rise to come nearer before him, and the Various lords who up to this point had been holding us under the arms now left us for they dared not advance any nearer to his Highness.

There were three nobles here whom we especially noticed standing in Timur's presence in waiting on him, for these were his Highness' chief chamberlains, and their names, as we found later, were Sháh Melik Mirza, Burunday Mirza and Núr-ad-Dín Mirza. These three now came forward, and taking each of us ambassadors by the arm advanced with us to come to stand immediately before the place where Timur sat, and here again they made us kneel. His Highness however commanded us to arise and stand close up to him that he might the better see us, for his sight was no longer good, indeed, he was so infirm and old that his eyelids were falling over his eyes and he could barely raise them to see.<sup>1</sup> We remark that his Highness never gave us his hand to kiss, for that is not their custom, no one with them should kiss the hand of any great lord which to do would here be deemed unseemly. Timur now enquired of us for the health of the King our Master saying: "How is it with my son your King? How goes it with him? Is his health good?" We suitably answered and then proceeded to set out the message of our embassy at length, his Highness listening carefully to all that we had to say. When we had finished Timur turned and proceeded to converse with certain of the great lords who were seated on the ground at his feet: as they afterwards told one of these personages here present was the son of Toktamish the late Khan of Tartary, while another was the descendant of that [Chagatay] Khan who had formerly ruled over the province of Samarqand, while others were princes of the blood or grandees all of the family of his Highness.

Turning to them therefore Timur said: "See now these Ambassadors whom my son the King of Spain has sent to me. He indeed is the greatest of all the kings of the Franks who reign in that farther quarter of the earth where his people are a great and famous nation. I will send back a message of good will to my son this King of Spain. Indeed it had been

enough that he should have sent me his Ambassadors with a Letter merely and no offerings or gifts. It suffices me to know that he is well in health and state, and no gift from him do I ever require.” That Letter which our lord the King of Castile had sent by our hands, was at this moment being held up before the eyes of his Highness by the prince one of his grandsons, and [Fray Alfonso] our Master in Theology coming forward with his dragoman forthwith craved permission to have it read, seeing that he was in the position exactly to make known to his Highness the words of his son the King of Spain and he submitted therefore that when his Highness pleased he, Fray Alfonso, might be allowed himself to read the Letter to him. Timur on this took the Letter from the hand of his grandson, but after opening it said that only later he would indeed have it read to him, on which the Master replied that he was at the orders of his Highness. Timur then made it known to us that he intended to send for the Master presently, when at leisure he would receive him in private audience, and then not only the Letter should be read, but all that we ambassadors desired to say should be heard and answered. After this they made us again stand up, and then took us back to be seated on a low dais that was set at the right hand of where Timur was enthroned.

Those lords now conducting us began by placing us in a seat below that of one who it appeared was the ambassador of Chays Khán, the emperor of Cathay. Now this ambassador had lately come to Timur to demand of him the tribute, said to be due to his master, and which Timur year by year had formerly paid. His Highness at this moment noticed that we, the Spanish ambassadors, were being given a seat below that of this envoy from the Chinese Emperor, whereupon he sent word ordering that we should be put above, and that other envoy below. Then no sooner had we been thus seated than one of those lords came forward, as from Timur, and addressing that envoy from Cathay publicly proclaimed that his Highness had sent him to inform this Chinaman that the ambassadors of the King of Spain, the good friend of Timur and his son, must indeed take place above him who was the envoy of a robber and a bad man the enemy of Timur, and that he his envoy must sit below us: and if only God were willing, he Timur would before long see to and dispose matters so that never again would any Chinaman dare come with such an embassy as this man had brought. Thus it came about that later at all times during the feasts and festivities to which his Highness invited us, he always gave command that we should have the upper place. Further on the present occasion, no sooner had his Highness thus disposed as to how we were to be seated, than he ordered our dragoman to interpret and explain to us the injunction given in our behalf. This Emperor of China, as we have said, is called Chays Khán, a title which signifies Emperor of Nine Empires, but the Tartars call him Tanguz, a name given in mockery, for this with them is as who would say the Pig Emperor. He is however the Emperor ruling an immense realm, and of old Timur had been forced to pay him tribute: though now as we learnt he is no longer willing, and will pay nothing to that Emperor.<sup>2</sup>

To return however to what was going forward; no sooner had we thus all been duly seated, namely together with us Spaniards also diverse envoys come from many other countries, with the grandees otherwise present, than the attendants began to bring up viands for the feast. These consisted of a quantity of mutton, roast, boiled and in stews, also horse-meat roasted. What they thus brought before us was laid out severally on very large circular dishes of leather, such as we in Spain call Guadameci [or Cordovan leather],<sup>3</sup> and these had handles whereby the attendants could move them from place to

place. Thus when Timur had called for any particular dish, that leather dish would be dragged along the ground to him, for the attendants could not lift them, such was the quantity of meat with which each was charged. When therefore it had been carefully slipped along the ground and brought near his Highness, namely to within some twenty paces, the carvers would come to cut up the viands. These men would kneel down before the great dishes, and all wore aprons for that business with leather sleeves upon their forearms to keep themselves clean of the grease, and thus bestowed they set to work to carve. The slices of meat were next placed in large trencherlike basins, these some of gold and some of silver, while others were of vitrified earthenware, or else of what is known as porcelain, and these last are much esteemed and of very high price.

The joint that is most in favour with the Tartars is the croup of the horse, with the saddle-meat attached but the leg disjoined off, and with portions of the same the servers would fill some ten or those gold and silver bowls or trenchers, in which too they would put pieces of mutton, also of the saddle and buttock, with the ham removed. On these trenchers too they placed knots of the horse-tripe in balls of the size of a fist, with a sheep's head all of a piece. Thus were many trenchers filled, and these then were laid in rows one beside the other, when the cooks bearing bowls of broth appeared, into which salt having been thrown to melt, the broth was poured over each trencher to serve as sauce to the meat. Lastly they took thin cakes of their bread, which doubled fourfold they placed one on each of those charged trenchers.

When all this had been done some of the privileged courtiers of his Highness, with certain other great nobles present, took up those trenchers, two men to each or even three, for one man could never have lifted a charged trencher, placing each in order before Timur and before us the foreign ambassadors and the princes who were present. Then his Highness graciously sent to us of the Spanish embassy two trenchers from those already set before him, thus to show us special honour. Now all these viands in their several dishes were not removed when the second course was brought in to be served, for the remainder of the first course, according to their custom, was merely set on one side to be carried home to our lodgings for later consumption. Indeed should this not be duly done it were a very great mark of disrespect to any guest; and the amount of meat that was placed before us was a wonder to behold. Further the custom, as aforesaid, is that no sooner had any dish been served to us and done with than it was passed back to our servants to be carried away by them: and so ample was this store thus provided for our later consumption that had our servants cared to carry it all home it might have lasted us for the space of at least half a year. As soon as these boiled and roast meats had been eaten they next brought in stews of mutton, and balls of forced meat with many side dishes of diverse sorts. Following we were served with a quantity of fruit, such as melons and peaches and grapes; and with the same they now brought in, for us to drink from, many bowls and goblets of gold and silver that contained mares' milk sweetened with sugar, an excellent beverage that they have custom to use during the summer season.

When thus we had all partaken and were satisfied, they began the display of our presents which as has been already explained were arranged so as to be carried in turn before Timur by his servants. Now these were the gifts we had brought him from our lord the King of Castile, also there were those gifts which the Sultan of Egypt had sent. At last following on these came three hundred horses that went past before Timur the same having been presented to him that day by one of his nobles. When all this was done we

ambassadors were duly taken in charge by the attendants and so brought back to our lodgings. A certain lord was now appointed to be our guardian and guide, who should see to us and provide all that was necessary to our well-being: and he was as we learnt the Chief Doorkeeper or his Highness. He now made arrangements for us Spaniards and for the Egyptian ambassador and they brought us to a house standing in a well watered orchard that lay near by that garden and palace where Timur being in residence had lately received us. Now at the last moment just before we had taken our leave of him his Highness had caused to be brought out and once again displayed those presents which our lord the King had sent him, and which he had lately received and accepted manifesting his great pleasure therein. Of these same presents some pieces of the scarlet cloth he now caused to be cut and divided up among his wives, giving the greater portion to his wife in chief, the Lady who is called the Khanum, who was at that time in residence with him at the palace. But the gifts that the ambassador of the Sultan of Egypt had brought him that day, these he caused to be set aside as also certain other presentations made to him, all being for the moment given back for safe keeping to his servants, to have charge of them for the space of three days, when he would send for them. Such indeed is his usual custom, namely to accept no gift that had not been lying awaiting his pleasure three days under inspection.<sup>4</sup>

The garden with the palace therein where Timur thus granted us our first audience is known by the name of Dilkushá [“Heartsease”], and in the orchard round and about there were pitched many tents the walls of which were of silk stuff or the like. In this garden his Highness remained for some days after we had seen him, namely till the following Friday, when he left moving to another garden where was also a very sumptuous palace, which at the moment was not yet completed but was then still being built, and which is known as the Bágh-i-Chinár [“the Plane Tree Garden”].<sup>5</sup> On the following Monday which was the 15th of September Timur left that palace of the Plane Tree Garden going on to yet another, a place of great beauty, where before its entrance gate was a high portal very finely built of brick ornamented with tiles wrought variously in gold and blue. On this Monday he ordered a great feast to be made to which all three of us ambassadors were invited, together with a numerous company, men and women, of those who were his Highness’s relatives: besides others. The garden where this festival took place is very large and it is planted with many fruit-bearing trees with others that are to give shade, and throughout are led avenues and raised paths that are bordered by palings along which the guests might pass on their way. Throughout the garden many tents had been pitched with pavilions of coloured tapestries for shade, and the silk hangings were of diverse patterns, some being quaintly embroidered and others plain in design.

In the centre of this garden there was built a very fine palace the ground plan of which was a cross. The interior was all most richly furnished with hangings on the walls, and within there was a chamber with three arched alcoves<sup>6</sup> which were sleeping places each with a raised dais, the walls and flooring being of coloured tiles. Entering this chamber the largest of the three alcoves was the one facing you, and here stood a screen made of silver and gilt: this being of the height of a man, and broad as to measure three outstretched arms. In front of this screen was a bed composed of small mattresses some covered with kincob [gold brocade] some with silk stuff worked with gold thread, one mattress being placed above the other on the floor; and this was his Highness’s couch. The walls here about were all hidden being covered by silk hangings of a rose coloured

stuff, that was ornamented with spangles of silver plate gilt, each spangle set with an emerald or pearl or other precious stone. Above these wall hangings were strips of silk dependant, and of the width each of a palm across, these coming down to join the hangings below, and ornamented not unlike these last. To the same were attached many coloured silk tassels, and in the draught that blew these waved about here and there after a very pleasant fashion to see. At the entrance of this the chief alcove we are describing, there was a fine archway that was closed by a hanging, made after the same fashion as the rest, and this curtain was fixed from a cross pole like the wood of a lance. From this curtain or hanging depended silken cords with great tassels coming down to the ground. The two remaining alcoves were adorned with hangings after a fashion similar to the one just described, and everywhere the floor was covered with carpets and reed mattings.

In the centre of the palace before the doorway to the alcoves were placed two tables made of gold, standing each on four legs, and the table top and the legs were all made in one piece of metal. The top of each of these tables might measure five palms in length, the breadth being three palms across. On the one table were set seven golden flasks, and two of them were ornamented outside with great pearls and emeralds and turquoises, set in the metal, while at the mouth there was a balas ruby. Beside these seven flasks there were standing six cups of gold circular in shape, and one of them had set within the rim a very big round pearl of fine orient, while at the centre point of the cup was encrusted a balas ruby of beautiful colour that measured across two finger breadths. Now as regards this feast, which by order of his Highness had been thus prepared, we ambassadors had been duly invited to attend, but when they came to find us at the lodgings where we now were established our dragoman not being there present we delayed for a time awaiting his return. Thus it was that when we did arrive at the palace his Highness had already dined, and he sent us word to say that when next we were bidden to a feast we were to come forthwith and not delay for the absence of any dragoman. On this occasion only would he overlook our not coming in time, for, as his Highness asserted, he had arranged that feast especially for us, and to display to us his court and his palace. Timur indeed on this occasion was very wroth with those lords who were in attendance because we ambassadors had thus arrived too late for the feast, the dragoman not being ready to hand; and further the lords in waiting at the court that day not having seen to it that he, the dragoman, was sent for and fetched in time.

These lords therefore at a later hour sent for our poor dragoman, to whom they spoke thus in their anger: "How now is it by this delay that his Highness is wroth with us and so much annoyed? Why were you not ready in attendance on the Frank Ambassadors? The fault is that you were absent, and to chastise you for the same we now order your nose to be pierced and a cord put through by which you shall be led about the camp, a warning to all!" No sooner was this said than several men seized him, and one holding him by the nose, they were about to pierce it through; but that lord of the court who had in the interval come for us and brought us very late to the presence of his Highness, now intervened, beseeching the others to show mercy and forgive the default of that dragoman. This at length they agreed to, and so that time he escaped from the penalty that was about to have befallen him. Timur after this sent a message to us at our lodgings that since by mischance we had missed being present at his feast, he none the less wished us to be partakers therein and make merry, wherefore he would send us five sheep and two great jars of wine. At this feast there had been present, we were told, a great concourse of

lords, and chiefs and all the courtiers personally in attendance on Timur, with many others, and by our absence we had missed seeing that palace with its private rooms and the great orchard where indeed the revival had been arranged. But many of our people were taken over the precincts later and were admitted to the palace, being allowed to view the whole of its magnificence with the gardens.

On the Monday following which was the 22nd of September Timur leaving his palace of Dilkushá went over to another, which like the first stood in a great orchard. This orchard was surrounded by a high wall, four square enclosing it, and at each of the four corners was a very lofty round tower, and the enclosing wall going from tower to tower was very high built, and as strong as the work of the tower. This orchard in its centre had a great palace, built on the plan of a cross, and a very large water-tank had been dug before it. This palace with its large garden was much the finest of any that we had visited hitherto, and in the ornamentation of its buildings in the gold and blue tile work far the most sumptuous. All these palaces with their surrounding gardens, as will be understood, are situated outside the actual city of Samarqand, and this last palace that we have just mentioned was known by the name of the Bágh-i-Naw [“The New Garden”]. In this garden Timur now ordered another feaft to be prepared to which we ambassadors were forthwith bidden, together with a great concourse of other guests: and here by order of his Highness wine was to be served abundantly and all should drink, since indeed it was to be partaken of by Timur himself on the present occasion. As we were now informed none would dare ever to drink wine either publicly or in private unless by the especial order and licence of Timur.

It is the custom with the Tartars to drink their wine before eating, and they are wont to partake of it then so copiously and quaffing it at such frequent intervals that the men soon get very drunk. No feast we were told is considered a real festival unless the guests have drunk themselves sot. The attendants who serve them with drink kneel before the guests, and as soon as one cup of wine has been emptied another is presented. The whole of the service is to keep on giving cup after cup of wine to the guests: when one server is weary another taking his place and what he has to see to is to fill and give. And you are not to think that one server can serve many guests, for he can at most serve two for keeping them duly supplied. To any who freely should not thus drink, he would be told that it must be held a despite he thus offers to his highness Timur who is honouring him by his invitation. And the custom yet further is for the cups all to be presented brim full, and none may be returned except empty of all the wine. If any should remain the cup is not received back, but must be taken again and the wine drunk to the dregs. They drink the cupful in one or may be in two draughts, saying in the latter case it is to the good health or his Highness. But he by whom the wine is freely quaffed, will say “By the head of his Highness” and then the whole must be swallowed at a draught with not a drop to be left in the bottom of the cup. The man who drinks very freely and can swallow the most wine is by them called a Bahádur, which is a title and means one who is a valiant drinker. Further he who refuses to drink must be made to drink, and this whether he will or no.

On the day of which we are now speaking Timur had sent to us one of his lords in waiting who brought us as a gift from his Highness a great jar of wine, and the message was that he would have us drink some of this before coming to him, in order that when we should attend his presence we might be right merry. Hence thus we went to him, and he ordered us to be seated, this being after the fashion that has already been described,

and thereupon beginning to drink we sat so for a long space of time. Then the viands were brought in, namely roast horse-flesh and boiled mutton, and stews cooked in diverse fashions with the rice thereto prepared in several ways as is their custom. When the feast was ended one of the lords in waiting came forward with a silver bowl in his hand full of small pieces of silver money such as is their current coin, namely Tangas,<sup>7</sup> and of this money he proceeded to throw handfuls over us ambassadors as also over the other guests present, and after he had done this enough for custom, he gathered up all the rest of the coins that remained in the bowl and threw them into the skirt of the cloaks that we ambassadors were wearing, this being a gift to us. Then Timur presented us each with a robe of honour in kincob [gold brocade], when getting up in acknowledgement three times we bowed then kneeling before him as is their custom. On dismissal he told us that the next day we were to come to him again and dine.

On the morrow which was the 23rd of September we heard that Timur had gone over to another palace and garden, which lay adjacent to the one spoken of called Dilkushá, and here again he made a great feast to which more especially were invited many of the chiefs of the army, from stations of the Horde encamped in the neighbourhood of the capital. As mentioned to this festival we had been invited. Both the garden and palace here were very fine, and Timur appeared to be in excellent humour, drinking much wine and making all those of his guests present do the same. There was further an abundance of meat to eat, both of horse-flesh and of mutton as is ever their custom. When the feasting was over his Highness gave command that each of us ambassadors should be presented with a robe of kincob [gold brocade] and we then were allowed to retire going back to our lodging which was situated not far from this palace where Timur had been feasting. At all these banquets the crowd of guests was so great that, as we arrived and would have approached the place where his Highness was seated, it was always quite impossible to make our way forward unless the guards who had been sent to fetch us would force a passage for us to pass. Further the dust round and about was blown up so thick that our faces and clothing became all of one colour and covered by it. These various orchards and palaces above mentioned belonging to his Highness stand close up to the city of Samarqand, while stretching beyond lies the great plain with open fields through which the river [Zarafshán] flows, being diverted into many water-courses.

In the plain here Timur recently had ordered tents to be pitched for his accommodation, and where his wives might come, for he had commanded the assembling of the great Horde, which hitherto and till now had been out in camp in the pastures beyond the orchard lands round and about the city. The whole of the Horde was now to come in, each clan taking up its appointed place: and we now saw them here, pitching the tents, their women folk accompanying them. This was done in order that all [these Chagatays] might have their share in the festivities which were going forward for the celebration of certain royal marriages now about to be declared. From their custom as soon as the camp of his Highness thus had been pitched all these folk of the Horde exactly knew where each clan had its place. From the greatest to the humblest each man knew his allotted position, and took it up, without confusion in most orderly fashion. Thus in the course of the next three or four days we saw near twenty thousand tents pitched in regular streets to encircle the royal camp, and daily more clans came in from the outlying districts. Throughout the Horde thus encamped we saw the butchers and cooks who passed to and fro selling their roast and boiled meats, while others purveyed

barley and fruit, while bakers with their ovens alight were kneading the dough and making bread for sale. Thus every craft and art needful for supply was to be found dispersed throughout the camp, and each trade was in its appointed street of the great Horde. And more than this was to be found fully prepared; for there were baths and bathers established in the camp, who pitching their tents had built wooden cabins adjacent each with its iron bath that is supplied with hot water, heated in the caldrons which, with all the furniture necessary to their craft, they have there. Thus all was duly ordered and each man knew his place to go to beforehand.

As regards our lodgement Timur as already mentioned had ordered a house in a garden to be prepared for our use, this same standing at no great distance from his encampment, and being situate in one of those orchards that belong to him. On Monday the 29th of September however Timur returned from camp to the city of Samarqand, coming into residence in certain houses, standing near the town gate, which originally he had caused to be built for the accommodation of the mother of his chief wife the Khanum, who, namely her mother, was recently dead and had been buried in the chapel attached to this building. The palace here was very richly furnished and had many separate apartments, though in Samarqand here as a rule they build their houses and the palaces with no great number of separate chambers. However, there were many in this palace, but some not yet finished building, the masons still working at them daily with artificers to complete their decoration. On the day of his coming in Timur now ordered another feast to be prepared, to which same he sent us Spaniards an invitation to be present, and this feast was to celebrate the reception of certain ambassadors who had recently arrived from a land that lay on the borders of Cathay, and which country formerly indeed had been accounted a part of the Chinese Empire.

These ambassadors whom we were taken to see were dressed in a peculiar fashion; for their chief appeared in what might be called a tabard of skins, worn with the fur outside, but the skins of which it was made appeared all very old and tattered. On his head he had a little hat attached by a cord to his breast, and this hat was so much too small in size that with difficulty could he push his head into it, and thus save it from slipping off. All his fellow envoys were dressed in furs, some wearing the fur outside and some with it inside, but to judge by their clothes all might have been taken for so many blacksmiths who had just left serving the forge. They had brought as a present to Timur many marten skins the same to be made up into pelisses, together with sable and white fox skins: and besides these they had brought some falcons as rare gifts. The men were all Christians, after the manner of those of Cathay. As to their mission they had come to beseech Timur to grant and send them for their lord and governor a grandson of that prince Toktamish who has already been mentioned by us, who formerly was the Khan of Tartary, but who now was residing in the camp of the Horde. When we came to his Highness that day we had found Timur engaged in playing at chess, with certain persons who were Sayyids, for it is thus that they call those who by descent are of the family of the Prophet Mahomet; and the gifts which these ambassadors from the Cathay border lands had brought him Timur refused as yet to accept, though they were being now displayed to him and he had examined them narrowly.

On Thursday the 2nd of October his Highness sent commanding us to betake ourselves to a certain garden, where lived that lord to whose charge we were, as before mentioned, consigned and who was the Chief Doorkeeper. On arrival this lord informed us that

Timur being perfectly well aware how it was our custom, as with all Franks, daily to drink wine, his Highness yet had none the less noticed that we did not willingly ever do so in his presence when it was offered to us after the Tartar fashion. For that reason, as our present host, the Grand Doorkeeper, informed us, it was that his Highness had arranged for us now to be brought to this garden where dinner was about to be served to us and wine provided, that thus we might eat and drink at our ease and as much as accorded to our inclination. We found that for this purpose ten sheep and a horse had been sent by order of Timur to supply the banquet with meat, also a full charge of wine, and on this fare we then dined very sumptuously. At the conclusion of the feast, they presented each of us ambassadors with a robe of kincob [gold embroidery] and a shirt to match, also a hat: further we each received a horse for our riding, all these being the gifts presented to us by order of the Lord Timur.