


In the shadow of Tīmūr: Revisiting the battle of Ankara with Muşlıh Al-Dīn Al-Lārī

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Abstract: The Battle of Ankara in 1402 between Tīmūr and Sulṭān Yıldırım Bāyezīd I occupy an important place in the history of the Ottoman Empire and marks the beginning of the Ottoman Interregnum or Fetret Devri. The decentralization and subsequent collapse of the centralized Ottoman state is largely attributed to this battle. This paper examines the narrative of the Battle of Ankara by the sixteenth-century scholar Muşlıh al-Dīn al-Lārī, a Safavid immigrant who settled in the Ottoman Empire. A unique perspective on the battle is provided by Lārī's universal history, *Mir'āt al-Advār wa-Mirqāt al-Akhhbār*, written in Persian which he presented to the Ottoman Sulṭān Selīm II on his enthronement. This paper argues that despite the work being dedicated to an Ottoman sultan, Lārī's account legitimizes Tīmūr and his campaign against the Ottomans by presenting Tīmūr's actions in a favorable light.

Keywords: Tīmūr, Yıldırım Bāyezīd, *Mir'āt al-Advār wa-Mirqāt al-Akhhbār*, Ottoman Interregnum, Universal History

Tīmūr'un gölgesinde: Muşlıh Al-Dīn Al-Lārī ile Ankara Savaşı'nın yeniden değerlendirilmesi

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Öz: Ankara Savaşı (1402), Tīmūr ile Sultan Yıldırım Bāyezīd I arasında gerçekleşmiş ve Osmanlı İmparatorluğu tarihindeki önemli olaylardan biri olarak Fetret Devri'nin başlangıcını işaret eder. Merkezi Osmanlı devletinin sarsılması ve ardından gelen çöküş büyük ölçüde bu savaşa atfedilmektedir. Bu makale, Safavid kökenli bir göçmen olan ve Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'na yerleşen 16. yüzyıl 'âlimi Muşlıhuddīn el-Lārī'nin Ankara Savaşı anlatısını incelemektedir. Lārī'nin, Osmanlı Sultanı II. Selīm'in tahta çıkışı münasebetiyle sunmuş olduğu, Farsça kaleme aldığı evrensel tarih eseri *Mir'âtü'l-Edvâr ve Mirqātü'l-Akhhbâr*, savaşa ilgili farklı bir bakış açısı sunmaktadır. Bu makalede, eserin bir Osmanlı sultanına ithaf edilmesine rağmen, Lārī'nin anlatısının Tīmūr'u ve onun Osmanlılara karşı düzenlediği seferi meşrulaştırdığı ve böylelikle Tīmūr'un eylemlerini olumlu bir şekilde sunduğu öne sürülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Tīmūr, Yıldırım Bāyezīd, *Mir'âtü'l-Edvâr ve Mirqātü'l-Akhhbâr*, Fetret Devri, Evrensel Tarih

Introduction

The 1402 battle of Ankara between Tīmūr (d. 807/1405) and Sulṭān Yıldırım Bāyezīd I (d. 805/1403) hold a significant place in Ottoman history, marking the beginning of the Ottoman Interregnum, more commonly referred to as the *Fetret Devri* in Ottoman historiography. The Battle of Ankara is widely regarded as a turning point that caused the decentralization of the Ottoman Empire, ultimately leading to the collapse of its centralized state. Tīmūr's military campaign caused widespread devastation in Anatolia, particularly in the eastern regions, and brought about significant changes in the political landscape. There were immediate repercussions throughout the region from the Ottoman defeat at Ankara. Bāyezīd's imperial ambitions, which had caused concern among various factions, were abruptly ended by Tīmūr's capture (Kastritsis, 2007, p. 5). After the Battle of Ankara, Tīmūr restored the former emirs of Germiyan, Saruhan, Aydın and Mentеше to their former territories. He also restored the Karamanid dynasty, limiting Ottoman control in Anatolia to a narrow strip of land stretching from Amasya in the east to Bursa and the Sea of Marmara in the west (Imber, 2002, p. 17). Halil İnalçık has noted that the struggle for the throne among the descendants of Bāyezīd I, which began after the Battle of Ankara, continued until the culmination of the conquest of Constantinople (Inalcik, 1954, p. 106).

With all this importance in the course of Ottoman history, it has received relatively less attention in Ottoman chronicles compared to other key battles. Contemporary monographs dedicated to this battle are rare and predominantly focus on military aspects. Among the earliest comprehensive works is "*Ankara Meydan Muharebesi*" (The Battle of Ankara) by Nafiz Orhan and Rahmi Egemen, published in 1995 (Rahmi & Nafiz, 1995). This seminal work is structured into four chapters, each meticulously examining the political, geographic, and military dimensions of the battle, as well as the planning of the campaign and its aftermath. A more recent and comprehensive study is Halil Çetin's "*Ankara Savaşı ve Tīmūr'un Anadolu Seferi*" (The Battle of Ankara and Tīmūr's Anatolian Campaign), which not only revisits previous approaches but also incorporates additional historical narratives, providing a more nuanced understanding of the battle (Çetin, 2012). In addition to monographs, the Battle of Ankara has been the subject of numerous research articles.

Feridun Emecen, in "*İhtirasın Gölgesinde Bir Sultan: Yıldırım Bāyezīd*" (A Sultan in the Shadow of Passion: Bāyezīd The Thunderbolt), depicts Bāyezīd as being driven by his ambitions, which ultimately precipitated the battle (Emecen, 2014). Mustafa Daş, in "*Bizans Kaynaklarında Tīmūr İmajı*" (The Image of Tīmūr in Byzantine Sources)¹, analyzes the battle through the lens of Byzantine sources, offering a distinct perspective (M. Daş, 2005). Abdurrahman Daş, in "*Ankara Savaşı*

¹ The Battle of Ankara as depicted in Byzantine sources is a subject of broader interest, exploring Tīmūr's interactions with Europe following the battle, along with the manner in which these sources portray the conflict. Such studies delve into the impact of the Battle of Ankara on Ottoman-Byzantine relations. One notable article for further investigation is "Ankara Savaşı'nın Osmanlı-Bizans İlişkilerine Etkisi" by Nilgün Elam, spanning pages 159 to 189.

Öncesi Tīmūr İle Yıldırım Bāyezīd'in Mektuplaşmaları" (The Correspondence Between Tīmūr And Yıldırım Bāyezīd Before The Battle Of Ankara), explores the exchange of letters between Tīmūr and Bāyezīd before the battle, providing valuable contextual insights (A. Daş, 2004). Furthermore, Amir Timur Rafie's article *علل سیاسی بروز نبرد انقره* (The Political Causes of the Battle of Ankara) on the political motivations for the Battle of Ankara suggests that neighboring principalities sought Tīmūr's protection due to Bāyezīd's aggressive policies, drawing from Tīmūrid sources (Rafie, 2006). Scholars like D. Kastritsis, in "*The Battle of Ankara and Its Consequences*," highlight the regional implications of the battle, emphasizing how Bāyezīd's capture by Tīmūr abruptly ended his imperial ambitions and reshaped the geopolitical landscape (Kastritsis, 2007). Additionally, Rulia Tang, in "*Multi-Agent Simulation of the Battle of Ankara, 1402*," discusses the persistent tensions between Bāyezīd and Tīmūr, driven by their expansionist policies and conflicts with vassal states (Tang, 2017).

Abdurrahman Daş's scholarly article *Ankara Savaşı Öncesi Tīmūr İle Yıldırım Bāyezīd'in Mektuplaşmaları*" (The Correspondence Between Tīmūr And Yıldırım Bāyezīd Before the Battle of Ankara) deals with the *Mükātābāt-ı Sulṭāniye* attributed to Hoca Sādeddīn, where he examines a new compilation of letters contained in this collection. Daş claims that these letters show variations from those found in *Münşeāt's-Selātīn*, suggesting a divergence in content. Despite these discrepancies, however, Daş questions the authenticity of the letters in *Münşeāt's-Selātīn* that refer to interactions between Bāyezīd and Tīmūr, as they lack corroboration in contemporary chronicles. Şamil Yüksel, another scholar, approaches the Battle of Ankara from a different angle, focusing on Arabic sources. He analyses the accounts of Ibn 'Arabshāh, al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442), and al-'Aīnī (d. 855/1451), claiming that these sources², predominantly historians at the Timurid court, offer a perspective that is biased in favour of Tīmūr. (Yüksel, 2010, p. 210).

The absence of a single comprehensive monograph that integrates all Ottoman and Tīmūrid chronicles concerning the Battle of Ankara underscores a significant gap in existing scholarship. Such a work would offer a comprehensive perspective by incorporating diverse viewpoints, acknowledging the inherent disparities between Ottoman and Tīmūrid sources.³ While this paper does not claim to encompass all Ottoman-Tīmūrid viewpoints, it does strive to amalgamate

² The records of Hāfız-i Abrū, a direct witness of the Battle of Ankara who was present alongside Tīmūr, are significant. These records are included in the doctoral dissertation titled *Army and Military Organization in the Timurids (1370–1447)*, prepared by Muhammed Emin Koçak. For further details, see *Army and Military Organization in the Timurids (1370–1447)*, Muhammed Emin Koçak, Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University, 2024.

³ In addition to major research works, a significant publication was produced in 2012 in the form of the "1402 Ankara Battle International Congress", which served as a platform for the dissemination of articles related to the Battle of Ankara. This congress facilitated the presentation of different perspectives and analyses on the subject, which were subsequently compiled in a book of proceedings. This source provides valuable insights into various aspects of the battle and serves as a resource for further study. Additional information can be found in Alkan, M. N. (ed.). (2014). *1402 Ankara Savaşı Uluslararası Kongresi: (Yıldırım-Tīmūr): Ankara, 9-12 Ekim 2012: bildiri kitabı. Türk Tarih Kurumu.* Another study on the Battle of Ankara can be found in the edited volume titled *Türk'ün Türk'le Savaşı; Asya'dan Anadolu'ya Türkler Arasındaki İktidar Mücadelesi*, published in 2023 and edited by Mesut Karakulak and Murat Özkan. The second volume of *Savaşın Sultanları*, published in 2018 and authored by Feridun M. Emecen and Erhan Afyuncu, is also an important modern source on the Battle of Ankara.

both perspectives through the lens of Muşliḡ al-Dīn al-Lārī's Tīmūrid-influenced account within an Ottoman context. I will focus on examining how Lārī perpetuates the heroic image of Tīmūr, despite having written about an event concerning the Ottomans in the region where he lived. In order to gain a deeper understanding, this study centers on Lārī's narrative of the battle, examining it in detail while drawing selective comparisons with the accounts of Ottoman historians, particularly Hoca Sādeddin Efendi's *Tacū't-Tevārīkh*. By doing so, this paper serves as a precursor to further research that aims to undertake a comparative analysis of Tīmūrid and Ottoman perspectives on the Battle of Ankara, thereby contributing to a more nuanced understanding of this pivotal historical event.

Lārī's Verdict: Tīmūr's Defiant Stand Against Conflict

Lārī's account of the Battle of Ankara goes beyond simply reviewing what happened in 1402; it is comprehensive and detailed. There are two main reasons for the extensive detailing of the Battle of Ankara. First, Lārī's deep interest in the history of Timurid, especially the personality of Tīmūr, is evident in his meticulous account, which covers various aspects. On the other hand, the richness of the sources available to Lārī plays a decisive role. He had greater access to Timurid sources compared to other references, which allows him to provide a more detailed narrative, especially regarding the Timurids. Lārī's intellectual background, rooted in Persianate traditions, shaped his focus on Persian culture and the political dynamics of the Safavid, Timurid, and Ottoman empires. Despite Ottoman patronage, he maintained a pro-Timurid stance, influenced by his admiration for Tīmūr's contributions to Persian culture. This led him to rely on Timurid sources and critique Ottoman policies.

To better understand the context, it is essential to have a thorough understanding of the scholar in question. Muşliḡ Al-Dīn Al-Lārī (d. 979/1572) can be characterized as a peripatetic historian, a scholar who travelled extensively and resided in the territories of what are now recognized as the "Three Gunpowder Empires": the Mughal, Safavid and Ottoman Empires (Quinn, 2021, p. 198). Lārī mentions that a significant number of Sunnī scholars, including himself, chose to emigrate from the Safavid territories because of Shāh Ṭahmāsp I's harsh and unwavering rule in religious matters (Lārī, 2018, p. 901). From there Lārī moved to the Mughal court. Throughout his tenure at Humāyūn's palace, Lārī assumed the role of tutor to the Mughal emperor (Atāyi, 2017, p. 609). According to Baki Tezcan's account, after Humāyūn died in 1556, Lārī appeared in Aleppo and then went to Mecca in 1557 (Tezcan, 2016, p. 616). According to Ali b. Bālī (d.992/1584) in his account, Lārī went on a journey from one city to another and from one town to another. Finally, he arrived in Istanbul (Manq, 2018, p. 318). Lārī wrote universal history, *Mir'atū'l-advār ve Mirkātū'l-Ahbār* (The Mirror of Epochs and the Stairways of Historical Reports) (Lārī, 2012, p. 54). This work is a comprehensive history which is divided into ten chapters. It begins with the time of the Prophet Adam and continues through various historical periods. It ends with the author's own era, which corresponds to the reign of the Ottoman Sulṭān Selīm II, who ascended the throne in 974/1566 (Me'ani, 1984, p. 677). However in the preface to *Tacū't-Tevarih*, Hoca Sādeddin criticized Lārī, claiming that there was a

perceived inadequacy in Lārī's understanding of Ottoman historical events (Hoca Sadeddin Efendi, 1979, p. 245). However, Hoca Sādeddin does not provide a direct evaluation of Lārī's account of the Battle of Ankara.

If we have a look at Lārī's account of the battle the opening lines of narrative indicate that Tīmūr continued his conquests without any apparent violation. However, it was the Ottoman Sulṭān, Bāyezīd I, who had a desire for Tīmūr's humiliation. Ultimately, it leads to chaos for the Ottomans. Nevertheless, according to Lārī's account, when Tīmūr became aware of Bāyezīd I's intentions, he decided to address the situation by sending a letter to the Ottoman Sulṭān.

The letter from Tīmūr to Bāyezīd reads:

Praise and Glory be to the Highest on this propitious day; the sovereigns of the realm and the populace rest within the purview of our dominion, and the insignia of authority adorn the courtiers of our palace and the denizens of our threshold. The vastness of the terrestrial globe and the boundless plains of our realm have been brought under the rule of our esteemed vassals and our steadfast followers by the incomparable benevolence and guidance of the Highest. The monarchs and potentates of Turan and Iran wear the emblem of our loyalty in their ears and the symbol of our obedience on their shoulders. The rulers of the neighboring lands and those who dare to oppose us are compelled by the inexorable decree to dutifully and willingly obey the imperative edict. It has been reported that you are mainly involved in the conflict with the Franks (non-Muslims) and that you are directing all your efforts towards the extermination of the Christians, the infamous and the nameless. Finally, the focus of attention in this region has not shifted from potential capability to actual action. Our innermost sentiments fervently wished that the passage of these esteemed troops should not be followed by grief and remorse for the Muslim population, and derision and scorn for the infidels. The advice now given is to remain steadfast in the path of your forefathers and ancestors, and to take the ḥadīth "Leave the Turks until the time when they leave you"⁴ as an instructive maxim, so as not to bring discord and disaster upon yourselves.

As-Salamu Alaykum (And peace be upon you) (Lārī, 2018, pp. 794–795)⁵.

Before the Battle of Ankara, a series of four letters were exchanged between Tīmūr and Bāyezīd. Feridun Aḥmed Bey (d. 991/1583) meticulously compiled these letters in his work entitled *Münşeātü's-Selātīn* (The Correspondence of the

⁴ Tīmūr concludes his letter with a ḥadīth: "Leave the Turks until they leave you", advising Bāyezīd to refrain from conflict with the Turks, implicitly referring to himself and the Timurid Empire, until they had distanced themselves. This advice serves as a clear directive to Bāyezīd to avoid any confrontation with Tīmūr and his forces. Tīmūr's reference to the Timurids as Turks, as opposed to Ottomans, further underlines the distinction between the two entities addressed in the letter. The letter concludes with a stark reminder to Bāyezīd of the potentially disastrous consequences for the Ottomans should they engage in battle with the Tīmūr.

⁵ Tīmūr's letter to Bāyezīd is a remarkable example of medieval diplomacy. It begins with gratitude to God and asserts Tīmūr's divinely ordained rule over important territories, including holy sites such as Mecca and Medina. Tīmūr warns Bāyezīd against actions that might harm Muslims and advises him to avoid conflict with the Timurids, referring to a ḥadīth for caution. Lārī's account highlights Tīmūr's reluctance to engage in unnecessary conflicts, while emphasizing his military prowess and strategic expertise.

Sultāns). In particular, these four letters do not seem to include the letter referred to by Lārī.⁶ Ibn ‘Arabshāh provides contextual information about these letters within his source, but like other chroniclers he does not present the full text of the letters, a feat later accomplished by Feridun Ahmed Bey. In addition to *Münşeāt's-Selātīn*, Abdurahman Daş postulates the existence of letters exchanged between Tīmūr and Bāyezīd, compiled in the *Münşeāt ve Mükātābāt-ı Sultāniye*, attributed to Hoca Sādeddin.

All these letters have been translated into Turkish. Daş claims that the letters documented in *Mükātābāt-ı Sultāniye* are different from those taken from Feridun Ahmed Bey's *Münşeātü's-Selātīn* (A. Daş, 2004, p. 104). All the letters in these two compilations are taken from passages in Ibn ‘Arabshāh's *Acâ'ibü'l-Mağdûr*, I claim that the speeches and texts recorded by Ibn ‘Arabshāh were later transformed into letters by later historians. Among these historians, Lārī assimilated the accounts of Ibn ‘Arabshāh as well as other Timurid chroniclers such as Sharaf al-Dīn Yazdī and Hāfiz-i Abrū, who recorded the dialogues exchanged between Tīmūr and Bāyezīd. Lārī then reorganized the conversations and writings mentioned in these texts into a unified letter format in his work.

Lārī writes that on receiving the letter, Bāyezīd expressed his eagerness for this moment and revealed his long-held desire to meet Tīmūr in battle and defeat him (Lārī, 2018, p. 795). He urged Sultān Aḥmad Jalāyer (d. 813/1410), who led the Jalāyerīd kingdom, and Ḳarā-Yūsuf (d. 823/1420) of Ḳarā-Ḳoyunlu to join him in confronting Tīmūr. In the meantime, according to Lārī, Tīmūr was preoccupied with the conquest of Shām (Syria). So, he states, whereas Tīmūr did not intend to start a conflict, Bāyezīd was actively planning against him and gathering forces for a possible battle. However, Colin Imber argues that Tīmūr's strategy encompassed both political and military dimensions, with a particular focus on exploiting the precarious loyalties of Bāyezīd's Anatolian subjects. Imber suggests that this tactic provided Tīmūr with a pretext for starting the war (Imber, 2002, p. 16).

Lārī writes that while en route to Karabakh, Tīmūr received a delegation from Bāyezīd who presented a letter expressing gratitude. Tīmūr remarked that he had no intention of advancing into Bāyezīd's territory, given his continuous engagements against non-believers. However, he demanded that Bāyezīd should either hand over Karā-Yūsuf to him or have him put to death. Lārī explains that Tīmūr sought out Ḳarā-Yūsuf because he believed that Ḳarā-Yūsuf was harming the Islamic community and deserved to be beheaded. Sharaf al-Dīn‘Alī Yazdī's (d. 858/1454) account is in line with Lārī's. Yazdī claims that Tīmūr's primary motivation was related to Ḳarā-Yūsuf (Yazdi, n.d., p. 760). Nevertheless, Hoca Sādeddin writes that when Tīmūr demanded that Karā-Yūsuf be handed over to him or face beheading, Bāyezīd replied, "*For the guest who descends to this place, the sword is not unsheathed, and those who seek refuge in this corner of wishes remain untouched*". Tīmūr informed Bāyezīd's envoy that he intended to spend the winter in Karabakh and to move to Rūm in the spring. He warned that war would

⁶ It is crucial to acknowledge that the authenticity of the letters exchanged by both sides before the war remains disputed. Furthermore, there are varying opinions on the scholarly significance of Feridun Ahmed Bey's work.

be inevitable if Bāyezīd didn't respond favorably (Hoca Sadeddin Efendi, 1979, p. 251).⁷

However, Lārī reports that, Tīmūr hesitated to begin a war against Bāyezīd. Tīmūr's troops were also exhausted from recent campaigns and conquests, and thus were not at their best for a fresh attack. However, Najm al-Dīn, a court astronomer working for Tīmūr, predicted that Tīmūr would emerge victorious if he continued the war, as his fortunes were rising while his enemy (Bāyezīd) was in a weakened state (Lārī, 2018, p. 805). Hoca Sādeddin claims in his narrative that the statesmen at Tīmūr's court believed that engaging in battle against Bāyezīd would lead to disaster. Moreover, they believed that it was inadvisable for Tīmūr to confront a ruler who was actively engaged in fighting infidels and who was consistently committed to *jihād* for the advancement of Islam (Hoca Sadeddin Efendi, 1979, p. 256).

However, Lārī maintains that Tīmūr consistently avoided engaging in warfare and was ready to avoid it under any circumstances. For example, Lārī notes in his narrative that Tīmūr never had the intention to go to war and upon learning of Karā-Yūsuf's departure from Bāyezīd's court, Tīmūr expressed a desire to resolve the conflict, end the campaign without recourse to war. Tīmūr then sent a letter to Bāyezīd, urging him to surrender ̇Karā-Yūsuf and also requested the surrender of the fortress of Komach (*Kemah Kalesi*) (Lārī, 2018, p. 805). According to Lārī, Tīmūr aimed to join forces with Bāyezīd in a joint effort against the infidels. However, he notes that Bāyezīd did not respond to Tīmūr's demands. The absence of obedience from Bāyezīd prompted Tīmūr to pursue the battle. In another instance highlighted by Lārī, as Tīmūr advanced towards Sivas with his forces, he once again sent a letter to Bāyezīd. The letter proposed that if Bāyezīd agreed to send one of his sons to join Tīmūr's forces, they would treat him with the same respect as their own offspring. Tīmūr assured them that in this way, the Rūm region would always be safe from their side (Lārī, 2018, p. 806).

By taking Tīmūr's demands and his call for Bāyezīd's submission as customary, Lārī obviously regards Tīmūr as superior to Bāyezīd. Tīmūr's demands clearly imply that he wants Bāyezīd and the Ottomans to become his vassals. Although Lārī refrains from explicitly stating whether Tīmūr's demands were justified or not, he also refrains from questioning them, suggesting implicit acceptance. Clearly Lārī believed Tīmūr to be superior to Bāyezīd, implying the necessity for Bāyezīd to comply with Tīmūr's demands. Lārī wants to show that Tīmūr was actively trying to find ways to avoid confronting. By this time, however, Tīmūr was in receipt of news that Bāyezīd was already in Tokat with his troops. So, he had to go for the battle.

After the battle, Lārī's defense of Tīmūr takes on a complex dimension. According to his account, Sulṭān Maḥmūd Chaghatay tried to reconcile Bāyezīd and

⁷ It is clear that Tīmūr's demands over the course of the battle went beyond the single instance mentioned. As noted above and reiterated in the letter, Tīmūr persistently escalated his demands on Bāyezīd, eventually presenting terms that Bāyezīd could not under any circumstances accept. Furthermore, Tīmūr was convinced that he deserved to be recognised by Bāyezīd as a world conqueror and as the *Amir al-Umarā'* of the Muslims, in order to underline his supremacy over other Muslim rulers, especially Bāyezīd.

Tīmūr and bring about peace. Lārī claims that Tīmūr expressed his willingness to reconcile with the Ottomans when Sultān Maḥmūd urged Tīmūr to make peace with Bāyezīd. Lārī argues that Tīmūr stated that he did not want to fight Bāyezīd, however Bāyezīd provoked Tīmūr to fight, and if Bāyezīd had acceded to Tīmūr's demands, the conflict in Ankara could have been avoided. Lārī emphasizes that Tīmūr was reluctant to start the conflict and that Bāyezīd was the provoker. In line with Lārī's defense, Tīmūr stated that he wanted to show Bāyezīd the respect and honor due to an emperor.

Tīmūr is said to have promised to treat Bāyezīd and his family with great respect, also stating that Bāyezīd might not have shown the same kindness if the battle had gone the other way (Lārī, 2018, p. 808). It is in this context that Lārī relates the confession of Bāyezīd, suggesting that Bāyezīd admitted the mistake of facing Tīmūr in battle. Bāyezīd is said to have expressed regret, accepting that he should have accepted Tīmūr's demands and avoided engaging him in battle, according to Lārī's narrative. However, according to Ottoman sources when Tīmūr demanded that Bāyezīd recognize him as his sovereign, Bāyezīd refused to do so (Neşri, 1949, p. 344). Hoca Sādeddin claims that Tīmūr's demands were sufficiently burdensome for Bāyezīd to consider accepting them. Furthermore, he claims that Tīmūr's persistent insistence on these demands gives the impression that he intended to cause trouble and distress for the Ottoman side (Hoca Sadeddin Efendi, 1979, p. 253).

At the end of his description of the Battle of Ankara, Lārī once again expresses his support for Tīmūr. He reports that when Tīmūr heard that Bāyezīd had died on the 13th of Sha'ban 805 (8 March 1403), he became deeply upset. According to Lārī, Tīmūr offered his condolences to Bāyezīd's family and expressed his desire to return all of Bāyezīd's territories⁸, stating that he had no intention of dividing Bāyezīd's territories into separate principalities (Lārī, 2018, p. 811).

Lārī's argument seems to lack any substantial basis and displays a degree of naivety that makes it unreliable. It is obvious that Tīmūr harbored ambitions of supreme conquest, seeking to subjugate all existing rulers. An integral part of his goal was the acquisition of Anatolia and the subjugation of the Ottoman Empire. This assertion is supported by other Timurid sources, such as Ibn 'Arabshāh, who explicitly attests to Tīmūr's intentions to enter into conflict with the Ottomans. Tīmūr corresponded with Bāyezīd, the Sultān of Anatolia, known for his brave defense of Islam. Tīmūr communicated his ambitions for Anatolia in a direct manner, using Aḥmad Jalāyer and Karā-Yūsuf as pretexts to conceal his true intentions (İbn Arabşah, 1977, p. 308).

Thus, according to Ibn 'Arabshāh, Tīmūr's alleged demand for Karā-Yūsuf and Aḥmad Jalāyer was merely a facade to conceal his true motive of Ottoman conquest.

⁸ Ottoman historians accuse Tīmūr of deliberately decentralizing the Ottoman Empire by dividing the lands into principalities, thus dismantling the established system of central government. Lārī, in his *Mir'atü'l-advār*, responds to this accusation by claiming that Tīmūr did not intend to accomplish such a thing. Although Lārī does not refer directly to Ottoman sources in his narrative, it is clear that he was aware of the ongoing debates among Ottoman intellectuals on this issue.

Tīmūrid sources portray Tīmūr as the epitome of bravery, the ultimate ruler and champion of Islam, without attempting to exonerate him from any accusations. Similarly, Tīmūr is presented as a heroic figure in *Mir'atü'l-advār*. He is portrayed as a powerful, skillful and pious ruler. Understandably, Lārī may have felt compelled to defend Tīmūr, anticipating that his writings would be reviewed by an Ottoman Sulṭān. As a result, he sought to protect Tīmūr's reputation by suggesting that Tīmūr had never intended to invade Ottoman territory and that his demands were merely superficial, designed to make it easier to refuse to fight. However, the credibility of such an argument is questionable at best.

Conclusion

Lārī's admiration for Tīmūr is evident throughout his narrative. His perspective is particularly pronounced when he delves into the details of the Battle of Ankara. In particular, Lārī staunchly defends Tīmūr and portrays him as his hero. There are numerous passages in Lārī's narrative that stand out as clear indications of his support for Tīmūr and his activities. First and foremost, Lārī's narrative repeatedly claims that Tīmūr had no intention of entering into a clash with Bāyezīd. He consistently sought to avoid such a conflict. In light of Tīmūr's ability as a highly skilled military leader, he was undoubtedly aware of the challenges and financial burdens associated with the large-scale mobilization of an army from a distant area. There is no doubt that such a strategic decision would not have been an unthinking one. On the other hand, Lārī gives the impression that Tīmūr's demands were relatively insignificant, characterizing them as easily achievable by Bāyezīd.

Lārī's adoption of a distinctly Timurid perspective in recounting the Battle of Ankara within a universal history intended for presentation to an Ottoman Sulṭān raises intriguing questions about his motivations and possible concerns. One might wonder whether he was concerned about provoking the anger of the Ottoman ruler and his courtiers. Alternatively, one could speculate whether Lārī genuinely perceived the Timurid perspective as the most reliable and accurate narrative of the event, outweighing the Ottoman view. The primary explanation for these unanswered questions lies in the sources available to Lārī. His reliance on Timurid chronicles and related materials inherently predisposed him to present a Timurid-centric perspective of the Battle of Ankara.⁹

It can be argued that he simply conveyed what was available to him without significant hesitation. However, one might ask whether he had any reservations about the potential impact of his narrative choices. It is conceivable that Lārī remained convinced that Ottoman scholars and courtiers, including those at the court of the new Ottoman Sulṭān Selīm II, would be interested in examining his

⁹ In his universal history, Lārī provides a comprehensive list of 36 sources that he consulted in the preparation of his work. These include Mīrkhvānd's (d. 903/1498) *Rawzat aṣ-ṣafā'* and Sharaf al-Dīn 'Alī Yazdī's (d. 858/1454) *It is notable that the Ṣafarnāma and Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū's (d. 833/1430) Majma' al-Ta'rīkh* stand out as histories written with a focus on the Timurids. These sources not only encompass earlier dynasties but also place particular emphasis on the Timurids and their historical legacy. It is therefore plausible to suggest that Lārī used these sources to write his narration of the Battle of Ankara.

account of Ottoman history. He probably assumed that they would refrain from challenging his credibility as a historian or questioning his accuracy of Islamic and early histories.

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