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Tamburlaine in Hindustan

In the paper, I will consider two transnational journeys of Timur-E-Lang/Tamburlaine to India: first, the historical Timur's original conquest of Tughlaq Hindustan in 1398; and then his more figurative return to Mughal Hindustan two centuries later in the imaginations of two early seventeenth-century English travelers, King James I's ambassador to the Mughal court, Sir Thomas Roe, and the eccentric global perambulator Thomas Coryate. Both men brought with them (different) memories of Christopher Marlowe's stage-Tamburlaine, made famous in the late 1580s and early 1590s thanks to the inimitable histrionic excess of Edward Alleyn. Whereas Roe used Tamburlaine as a negative figure for a despotic theatricalism with which he associated Timur-E-Lang's Mughal descendants, Coryate regarded Tamburlaine altogether more positively, as the prototype of a rhetorically versatile global wanderer. From Roe's and Coryate's divergent imaginings of Tamburlaine, then, we can tease out two very different templates for Western understandings of trans-cultural contact and globalization.