

1911 Encyclopædia Britannica, Volume 6 — Clavijo, Ruy Gonzalez de



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CLAVIJO, RUY GONZALEZ DE (d. 1412), Spanish traveller of the 15th century, whose narrative is the first important one of its kind contributed to Spanish literature, was a native of Madrid, and belonged to a family of some antiquity and position. On the return of the ambassadors Pelayo de Sotomayor and Hernan Sanchez de Palazuelos from the court of Timur, Henry III. of Castille determined to send another embassy to the new lord of Western Asia, and for this purpose he selected Clavijo, Gomez de Salazar (who died on the outward journey), and a master of theology named Fray Alonzo Paez de Santa Maria. They sailed from St Mary Port near Cadiz on the 22nd of May 1403, touched at the Balearic Isles, Gaeta and Rhodes, spent some time at Constantinople, sailed along the southern coast of the Black Sea to Trebizond, and proceeded inland by Erzerum, the Ararat region, Tabriz, Sultanieh, Teheran and Meshed, to Samarkand, where they were well received by the conqueror. Their return was at last accomplished, in part after Timur's death, and with countless difficulties and dangers, and they landed in Spain on the 1st of March 1406. Clavijo proceeded at once to the court, at that time in Alcala de Henares, and served as chamberlain till the king's death (in the spring of 1406–1407); he then returned to Madrid, and lived there in opulence till his own death on the 2nd of April 1412. He was buried in the chapel of the monastery of St Francis, which he had rebuilt at great expense.

There are two leading MSS. of Clavijo's narrative—(a) London, British Museum, Additional MSS., 16,613 fols. 1, n.–125, v.; (b) Madrid, National Library, 9218; and two old editions of the original Spanish—(1) by Gonçalo Argote de Molina (Seville, 1582), (2) by Antonio de Sancha (Madrid, 1782), both having the misleading titles, apparently invented by Molina, of *Historia del gran Tamorlan*, and *Vida y hazañas del gran Tamorlan* (the latter at the beginning of the text itself); a better sub-title is added, viz. *Itinerario y enarracion del viage y relacion de la embaxada que Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo le hizo*. Both editors, and especially Sancha, supply general explanatory dissertations. The Spanish text has also been published, with a Russian translation, in vol. xxviii. (pp. 1-455) of the *Publications of the Russian Imperial Academy of Sciences (Section of Russian Language, &c.)*, edited by I. I. Sreznevski (1881). An English version, by Sir Clements Markham, was issued by the Hakluyt Society in 1859 (*Narrative of the Embassy of R . . . G . . . de Clavijo to the Court of Timour*). The identification of a great number of the places mentioned by Clavijo is a matter of considerable difficulty, and has given rise to some discussion (see Khanikof's list in *Geographical Magazine* (1874), and Sreznevski's *Annotated Index* in the Russian edition of 1881). A short account of Clavijo's life is given by Alvarez y Baena in the *Hijos de Madrid*, vol. ix. See also C. R. Beazley, *Dawn of Modern Geography*, iii. 332-56.

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