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**Imitation of Timurids and Pseudo-Legitimation: On the origins of
a manuscript anthology of poems dedicated to the Kokand ruler
Muhammad Ali Khan (1822–1842)**

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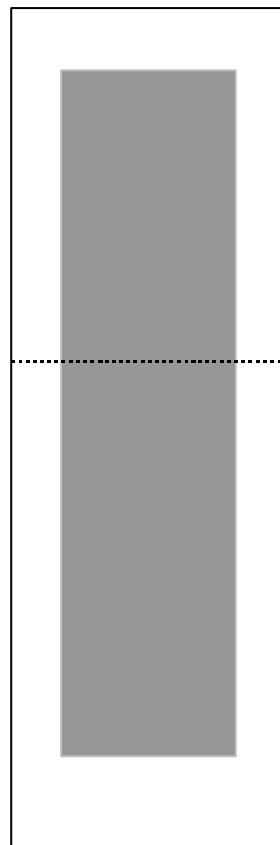
Imitation of Timurids and pseudo-legitimization: On the origin of a manuscript anthology of poems dedicated to the Kokand ruler Muḥammad ‘Alī Khān (1822-42)

Introduction

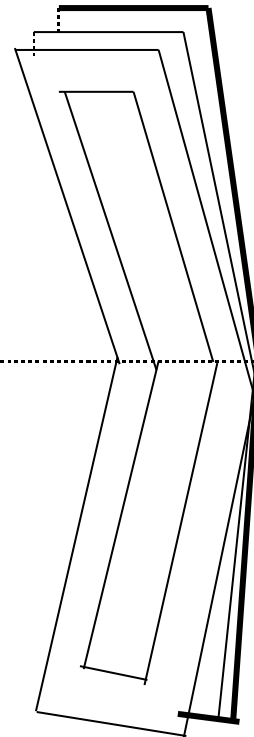
Can an anthology of poems give information on the legitimation of power? At first glance, this is an abstract question. Yet there are instances where a given source, in this case ms Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BNF) Supplément Persan 1446, copied in shawwāl 1251/February 1836, an anthology of poems, by its contents can be shown to have served politics more than culture.

In spring 2003, when I came to Paris from Tashkent, I began studying the *bayāz* manuscripts in Persian and Turki kept at the BNF. 12 out of 26 *bayāz* manuscripts in the Paris collection come from Central Asia. It was the quoted small ms Supplément Persan 1446 that attracted my attention. This ms is manufactured in high quality, with a gilded frame around the text, and an uncommon format: the text is arranged vertically, not more than 8 lines to a page, and it consists of four pieces of poetry. The outward aspect of the ms can be shown like this [figure 1]:

A) Front view



B) Opened view



The contents are the following four pieces of poetry:

fol. 1b-2a	Muḥammad ‘Alī Khān: two ghazals
2b-3a	[Dabīr]: ghazal
3b-4a	Jāmī: qaṣīda-yi mu‘ammā

The small ms under study appears at the end to be a product of the efforts undertaken in the Kokand khanate to base and express legitimacy of the rulers of that state (dates 1710-1876). The existing remarks on the ms in the catalogue compiled by E. Blochet¹ present a number of inaccuracies, and they did not provoke any special interest in that manuscript. At first glance, even the contents of the four poems in one place did not provide any particular information – they were just four poems, no more. But a detailed study of the contents of this copy and in particular of its essence, that is, the four poems, generated ever more questions. The description of the manuscript in the catalogues did not always correspond to what was visible in the copy itself. And the study of the composition of the copy brought about more questions than answers. And at the end, these questions sent me on an investigation which at times even resembled a detective investigation.

In order to find answers to the questions the copy raised, and in order to put right the inaccuracies in its catalogue descriptions, I concentrated on the context of ms Supplément Persan 1446. The results of the study were quite surprising. It became clear that the copy was a unicum, an autograph by the author of one of the poems, made for the ruler of Kokand Muḥammad ‘Alī Khān (1822-42), and that it was intended as a means of politics and ideology, part of a legitimising effort. This was exactly this purpose the manuscript was produced for. In order to back this idea, I started looking around in more anthologies of poems from the Kokand context and the beginning of the 19th century. In this process, I came across one particular anthology, made some time before SP 1446, to be precise, in 1821, that is, 15 years earlier. This anthology is called *Majmū‘a-yi shā‘irān* and was compiled under the well-known khan of Kokand, amīr ‘Umar Khān (1810-22), who was also a poet, the father of Muḥammad ‘Alī Khān.² His reign in Kokand is characterised by a blossoming of poetical production, and the anthology *Majmū‘a-yi shā‘irān* is part of this process. This compilation likewise was intended to serve a legitimisation policy, in the same way I hope to show SP 1446 was.

The legend “Altūn bīshīk” and the cultural policy in literary circles under ‘Umar Khān

‘Umar Khān succeeded well in organising an imitation of the Timurids and a cult of his own person in this anthology of poems, *Majmū‘a-yi shā‘irān* which was as I mentioned above compiled in 1821. It is quite voluminous: one copy of the book runs into 698 pages and has 1184 items in various forms of poetry.

In the 1810s in Kokand, the centre of the Khanate, a literary milieu began to take shape. This period, there was a creative upsurge in all branches of social and cultural life. The khan himself wrote poetry

¹ E. Blochet: Catalogue des manuscrits persans de la Bibliothèque Nationale. Tome III. Paris 1928. MS Supp. Persan 1446 is no. 2010.

² This collection is available in manuscript only. The following manuscripts are on record in Tashkent, Institut of Oriental Studies: IVRUz-1 1153; 2371; 4569; 5735; 7510.

under the *nom de plume* (*takhalluṣ*) Amīrī, and he also put together his own *dīwān* of poems. At his court, he united a literary circle of poets, more than 70 names are on record. They all devoted themselves to poetical writings which served the overall purpose to heighten ‘Umar Khān’s prestige as a poet and a ruler.

The khanate of Kokand was founded in 1710 and lasted until its downfall during the Russian colonial advance in 1876. ‘Umar Khān himself came to the throne as a result of a coup d’état, a plot in which his brother ‘Ālim Khān was killed; after ‘Umar Khān, his son Muḥammad ‘Alī Khān (also known as Madalī Khān) ascended the throne.

The Kokand khans and their quest for genealogical ties to the Timurids as a means for legitimising their rule

The khanate of Kokand was based on the Uzbek dynasty Ming. These khans founded their claim to power and superiority on a legend called Āltūn bīshīk (“The golden cradle”). Apparently, this legend was invented and put into circulation by the khans themselves, and it played an outstanding role in their legitimisation policy.

During the 19th century, all rulers in Khiva and Kokand wanted to set up genealogical ties to Amīr Timūr and Chingis Khān³. It is interesting to note that however they wanted to establish their genealogical ties to either the Chingisids or the Timurids, their ideal and their object of emulation always was the last period of Timurid rule, the reign of Ḥusain Baiqarā (1469-1506). Let me remark that, in clear distinction from this strategy, in contemporary Uzbekistan since its independence in 1991 it was Amīr Timūr’s reign itself which was erected as an ideal. But the rulers of Kokand strove to show their superiority more in the cultural domain, by emulating a period which was a century later, the reign of Ḥusain Baiqarā. In so doing, they concentrated on two poets and their surrounding circles in particular, ‘Abdarrahmān Jāmī (1414-92) and ‘Alīshīr Navāī (1441-1501), and in this process they had to create their own particular line of argumentation and legitimisation.

The legend Āltūn bīshīk or how the pseudo-legitimation was constructed

Between the khanate of Kokand and the Timurids there is a time gap of more than two centuries. In such a situation, the easiest way to come closer to the Timurids was to build up a legendary argument. The khans of Kokand linked their genealogy to Ṣāhīraddīn Bābur (1483-1530)⁴ by the legend Āltūn bīshīk. According to this legend, a male child of Bābur’s was left behind when Bābur had to leave, hotly pursued by his enemies. This boy was called Āltūn bīshīk, and according to the transmitted versions, he lived from 1512 to 1545. In some narrative sources he is even presented as a historical person. According to the legend, the *bīshīk* (the Central Asian cradle) with the baby was found, and

³ In Timūr’s time, it was clear that Timūr himself was not descended from Chingis Khan, and it is open to question when such a genealogical link was established.

⁴ Bābur was a Timurid prince in the line of Mīrānshāh b. Timūr and was a great-great-grandson of Timūr, whereas Ḥusain Baiqarā descended from Umar Shaikh b. Timūr. See John Woods: *The Timurid Dynasty*. Bloomington (Indiana) 1990 (Papers on Inner Asia ; 14).

this baby was the ancestor of the khans of Kokand. The legend is extant in several versions in manuscript sources of Kokand historiography of the 19th century.

When the Timurid Ṣāhīraddīn Bābur (ruled from 1494-1530) fled from the Shaybanid Uzbeks (the Shaybanid dynasty ruled from 1500-99) he was able just to take with him his son, two wives, the treasury and a small number of followers. This was in 918/1512. At this moment, when the small group fled from Samarkand, one of his wives was in the final stages of her pregnancy, and when the party came to the Ferghana valley and reached that very desert which at that moment stretched from Khujand to Kanibadam, she felt that her labours set in and at that very place, on the road, gave birth to a son.

The dangers surrounding the fleeing party on their way and the necessity to move on as quickly as possible forced them to leave the new-born baby behind to the mercy of destiny, and to continue their flight. And they left the baby in a golden cradle, the Āltūn bīshīk. This cradle gave the baby boy his name.

Later on, when Bābur who had left behind his son on the road, continued his flight, some tribal chiefs (of the Ming) happened to ride by the place where Āltūn bīshīk was born. When they saw the crying baby who was wrapped in costly clothes and surrounded by divers precious objects, they guessed that this was the child of some powerful nobleman. They decided to raise the boy together and to use the gifts found together with the new-born for that purpose. The infant then was attributed to an *aul* of the Ming tribe, and the direct responsibility for the boy was then conferred to some of the most respected members of the *aul* who together gave him the name of Āltūn bīshīk.

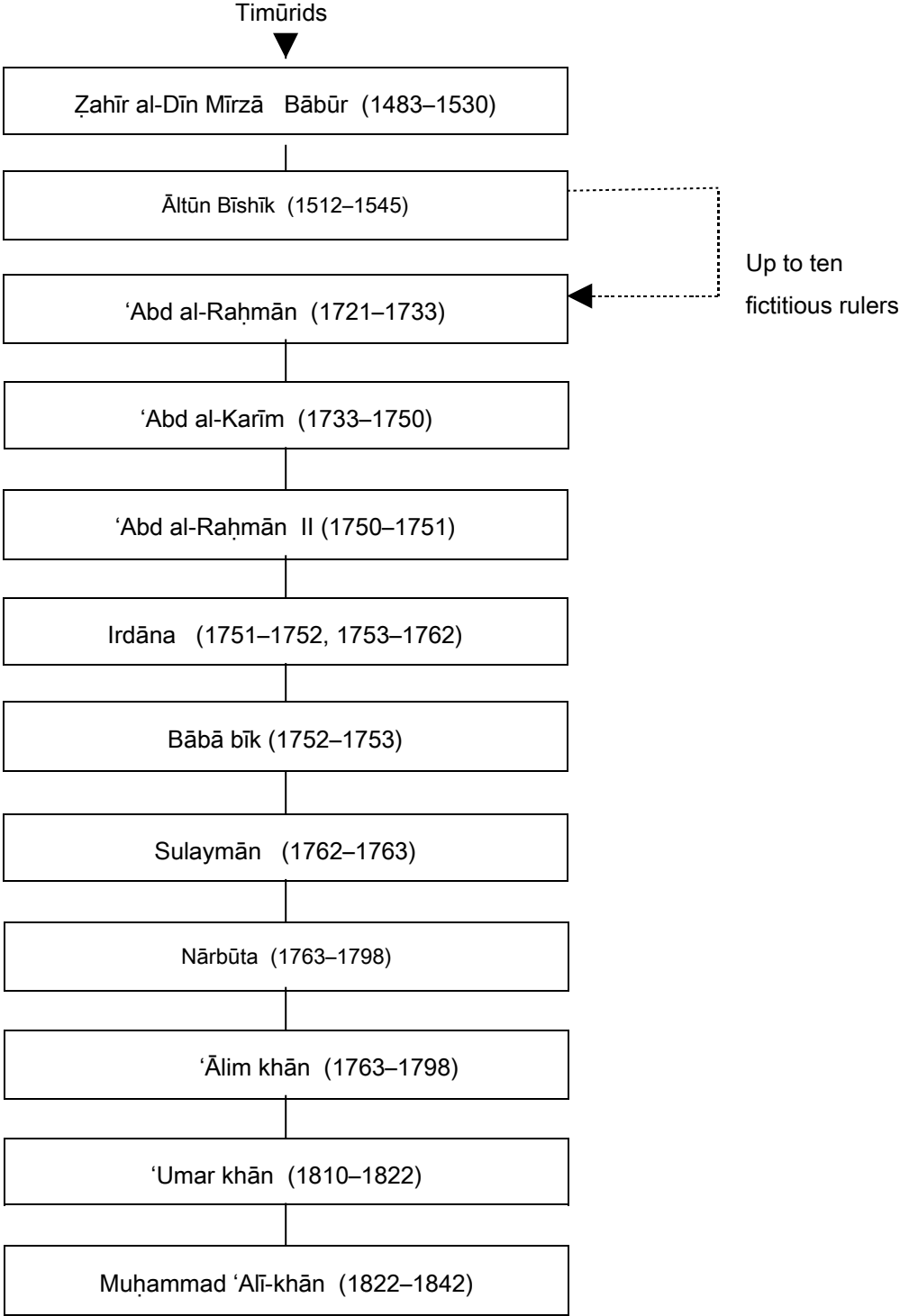
It is reported that later on, Bābur, who had established his rule in India, sent men to look for his son he once had left behind in Ferghana. When the messengers finally found Āltūn bīshīk and identified him by the signal objects already known to the reader, and when at this moment the clans who were raising the boy realised that their ward was a direct descendant of Amīr Tīmūr, they harshly refused Bābur's request that the child be returned to him. They thought that they would themselves need a descendant of the great Amīr Tīmūr who later on would help them to establish in Ferghana an independent state of their own. Bābur's envoys returned to India, told him about what they had seen and heard, and comforted their ruler as much as they could by saying that his son was growing up under the guardianship and protection of the people itself and that he gave hopes of taking over in the future a high position in society.

After getting married Āltūn bīshīk took up residence in Akhsi where he lived the rest of his life, highly respected by the people and earning the rank of *bij*. According to tradition, Āltūn bīshīk died in 952/1545. His son Tangri-yār became the ruler of Ferghana, but his title was *bij* rather than *khan*. This was the title all his descendants carried down to 'Ālim Khān included.

Basing themselves on this legend, the khans of Kokand were to strive in everything to imitate the Timurid period, and in particular its cultural apex, the reign of Ḥusain Bāiqarā. In his preface (*dībācha*) to his *dīwān*, 'Umar Khān wrote that his genealogy went back to Tīmūr via Bābur. His wife, the poetess Nādīra bigim (1792-1842) who wrote under the *takhalluṣ* "Nādīra" asserted in her poems that she is herself descended from Amīr Tīmūr via Bābur. Let us, however, draw attention to the fact that 'Umar Khān nowhere makes any reference to the Āltūn bīshīk complex, neither the person nor the story.

Later the historian 'Ibrat (1862-1937) indicated that from the time when Āltūn bīshīk was found to the first ruler of Kokand, Shāhrukh (1709-21) 200 years had passed, and that 10 rulers had sat on the throne between 1512 and 1709. But the narrative sources are silent in this respect, so that we have to conclude that these 10 rulers were fictitious.

In the following genealogical table of the khans of Kokand we can see how these rulers are linked to Āltūn bīshīk [figure 2]:



Thus, between the Timurids and the khans of Kokand there is a gap of 200 years, and the Āltūn bīshīk legend evidently was to fill out this gap. According to Anke v. Kügelgen, legitimation often is based on six different principles. One of these is “legitimation by orientation towards a model for emulation / imitation”.⁵ This is what the Timurids were, “a model for emulation and imitation”. And this “legitimation by orientation towards a model for emulation and imitation” evidently is decisive to understand the essence of the Āltūn bīshīk legend. As T. Bejsembiev has claimed, the Āltūn bīshīk legend turned into a generally accepted idea which became a central structural element in the ruling ideology.⁶ This idea dominated the thinking of the population of Ferghana and informed their actions. According to this idea, the highest power belonged to the descendants of Chingis Khan. The establishment of the khans of Kokand, their dynasty and their rule in Ferghana meant, according to this legend, the re-establishment of the “legitimate” descendants of Chingis Khan and Amīr Timūr on a territory which had been part of their empire. It is essential to keep in mind that the Āltūn bīshīk legend originated in a nomad milieu – the Ming tribe in the Ferghana Valley, and that for a long time the Kirghiz were ruled by the Kokand khanate which therefore was closely linked to the nomad world and its values.

The beginning of the politicisation and the imitation of the period of Ḥusain Bāiqarā by the literary circles

In ‘Umar Khān’s reign, a literary milieu formed in Kokand. As we have mentioned earlier, he himself wrote poetry. Still in the 19th century, when A. Vámbéry (1832-1913) visited Central Asia, he mentioned ‘Umar Khān among the celebrated poets of his period. At the beginning of the 20th century, this period even was called the period of the Literature of the Āltūn bīshīk. There were reasons for this: while ‘Ālim Khān took on the title of khan for better legitimation, from ‘Umar Khān on, the Āltūn bīshīk legend had been elaborated and more and more forcefully consolidated in writing.

Majmū‘a-yi shā‘irān: principles of compilation and structures of the work

Majmū‘a-yi shā‘irān is one of the well-known anthologies of poems from the 19th century. All poets from his circle participated in this attempt at creating a cult of ‘Umar Khān as a poet and a ruler, some even came from other regions, such as the Bukharan khanate. However, female writers from the Kokand literary circles were not included in the anthology, not even ‘Umar Khān’s wife Nādira bigim.

Majmū‘a-yi shā‘irān includes an introduction/preface, and three main parts:

- 1 Qaṣīda-poems addressed to ‘Umar Khān
- 2 Poems imitating verses by ‘Umar Khān (“answering” them)
- 3 Various poems by poets from the Kokand literary circles of the beginning of the 19th century.

⁵ Kügelgen, Anke von: Die Legitimierung der mittelasiatischen Mangitendynastie in den Werken ihrer Historiker. Würzburg 2002 (Beiruter Texte und Studien ; 86), p. 47.

⁶ Bejsembiev, T.: “Legenda o proisxozhdenii kokandskix xanov kak istochnik po istorii ideologii v Srednei Azii. Po materialam sochinenii kokandskoi istoriografii.” – In: Kazaxstan, Sredniaia i Tsentral’naia Aziia v XVI-XVIII vv. Alma-Ata 1983, 94-105.

Introduction. In it, and in versified form, we find short biographical information on the poets who participated in the anthology. Further, a *mukhammas* piece by the Shaikh al-Islām Shākir Khwāja is quoted. This is in Arabic and based on a *ghazal* by the first caliph Abū Bakr.

First part. Qaṣīda-poems addressed to ‘Umar Khān. This part includes 79 *qaṣīda* poems praising ‘Umar Khān, written by 24 poets in all. But some texts are repeated.

Second part. Poems “answering” to poems by ‘Umar Khān. This part is compiled alphabetically by rhyme letter (last letter of the rhyming part of the verse) as is usual in compiling *dīwān* collections or *rawādif al-ash‘ār*. In the introduction, it is asserted that in this part, the poets wrote “answering” or imitating verses (*pairaw* or *naẓīra*) on texts by ‘Umar Khān.

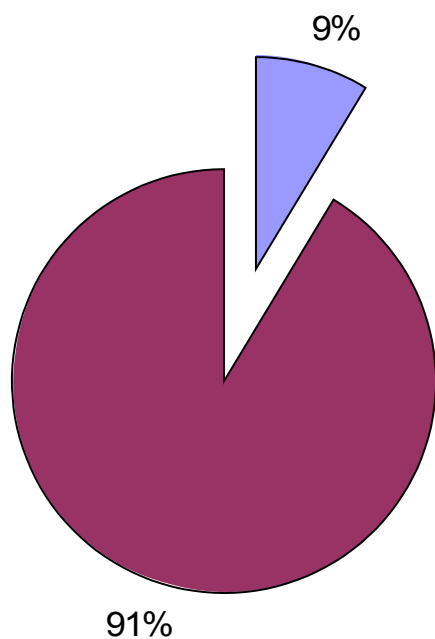
[figure 3]

No	<i>ghazal</i> Rhyming letter	<i>ghazal</i> ‘Umar- khān	<i>ghazal</i> „answer“ imitation	Alto- gether	<i>Radīf</i> ⁷ words frequently used
1.	ا	2	37	39	–
2.	ب	1	22	23	« <i>imshab</i> » – 21
3.	ت	1	22	23	« <i>angusht</i> » – 16
4.	ث	2	3	5	« <i>bā’ith</i> » – 5
5.	ج	1	7	8	« <i>tādj</i> » – 8
6.	ح	1	5	6	–
7.	خ	1	8	9	« <i>talkh</i> » – 3
8.	د	1	17	18	« <i>rūd</i> » – 7
9.	ذ	1	7	8	« <i>kāghaz</i> » – 8
10.	ر	1	31	32	« <i>ustīndadūr</i> » – 6
11.	ز	1	12	13	« <i>hanūz</i> » – 3
12.	س	1	6	7	–
13.	ش	2	13	15	« <i>itmīsh</i> » – 4
14.	ص	1	4	5	« <i>murakhkhaṣ</i> » – 5
15.	ض	1	2	3	–
16.	ط	1	5	6	« <i>khatt</i> » – 5
17.	ظ	1	5	6	« <i>hazz</i> » – 6
18.	ع	1	8	9	« <i>sham’</i> » – 9

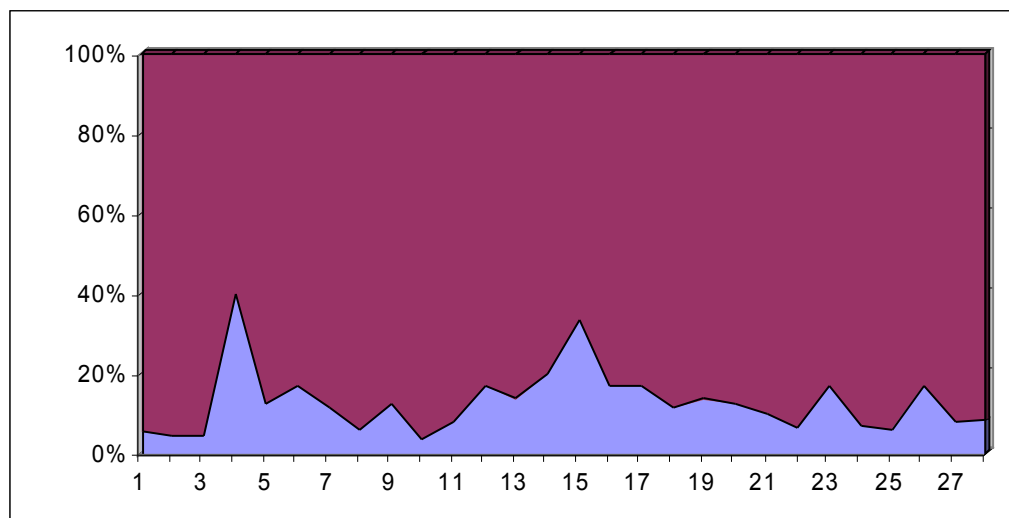
⁷ A *radīf* is a repeated word or group of words rhyming at the end of the line (see art. “Radīf” in the Encyclopedia of Islam, Second edition – R. Deny). This part of the table shows poems written in the same *radīfs* from “Madjmū’a-yi shā’irān” and its number.

19.	غ	2	13	15	« <i>tarāgh</i> » – 14
20.	ف	1	7	8	« <i>yak ʔaraf</i> » – 8
21.	ق	1	9	10	« <i>uyanmak</i> » – 10
22.	ك	1	15	16	« <i>korūng</i> » – 16
23.	ل	1	5	6	« <i>qīl</i> » – 6
24.	م	1	14	15	« <i>angushtam</i> » – 13
25.	ن	3	47	50	« <i>chashm-i man</i> » – 18, « <i>āmad burūn</i> » – 18, « <i>olsūn</i> » – 12
26.	و	1	5	6	« <i>bū</i> » – 6
27.	ه	2	24	26	« <i>ustīna</i> » – 17, « <i>ichra</i> » – 7
28.	ى	4	45	49	« <i>tūtī</i> » – 23, « <i>al-qamarī</i> » – 8, « <i>bīrī</i> » – 11, « <i>dondīrdī</i> » – 5
total		38	398	436	Poems with the same <i>radīfs</i> – 298

This part of the collection includes 436 ghazals. Out of these, 38 or 9% were written by ‘Umar Khān, the other 398 or 91% are “answers” to his texts [figure 4].



We are now converting the data from this diagram into another diagram, taking the percentage as a basis. The part in lighter grey corresponds to the verses by ‘Umar Khān himself, and the darker to those “answering” his texts. Horizontally, the rhyming letters are shown, and vertically, the percentage of ‘Umar Khān’s or “answering” poems for every single rhyming letter [figure 5].



As can be seen from both figures, the quantity of “answering” poems is significantly higher than those of the “original” ones. This is very natural and must have been what ‘Umar Khān wanted: the more “answers”, the higher his prestige as a poet.

Third part. Various poems from the Kokand literary circles in the beginning of the 19th century. This part includes 114 poems from various poetical genres.

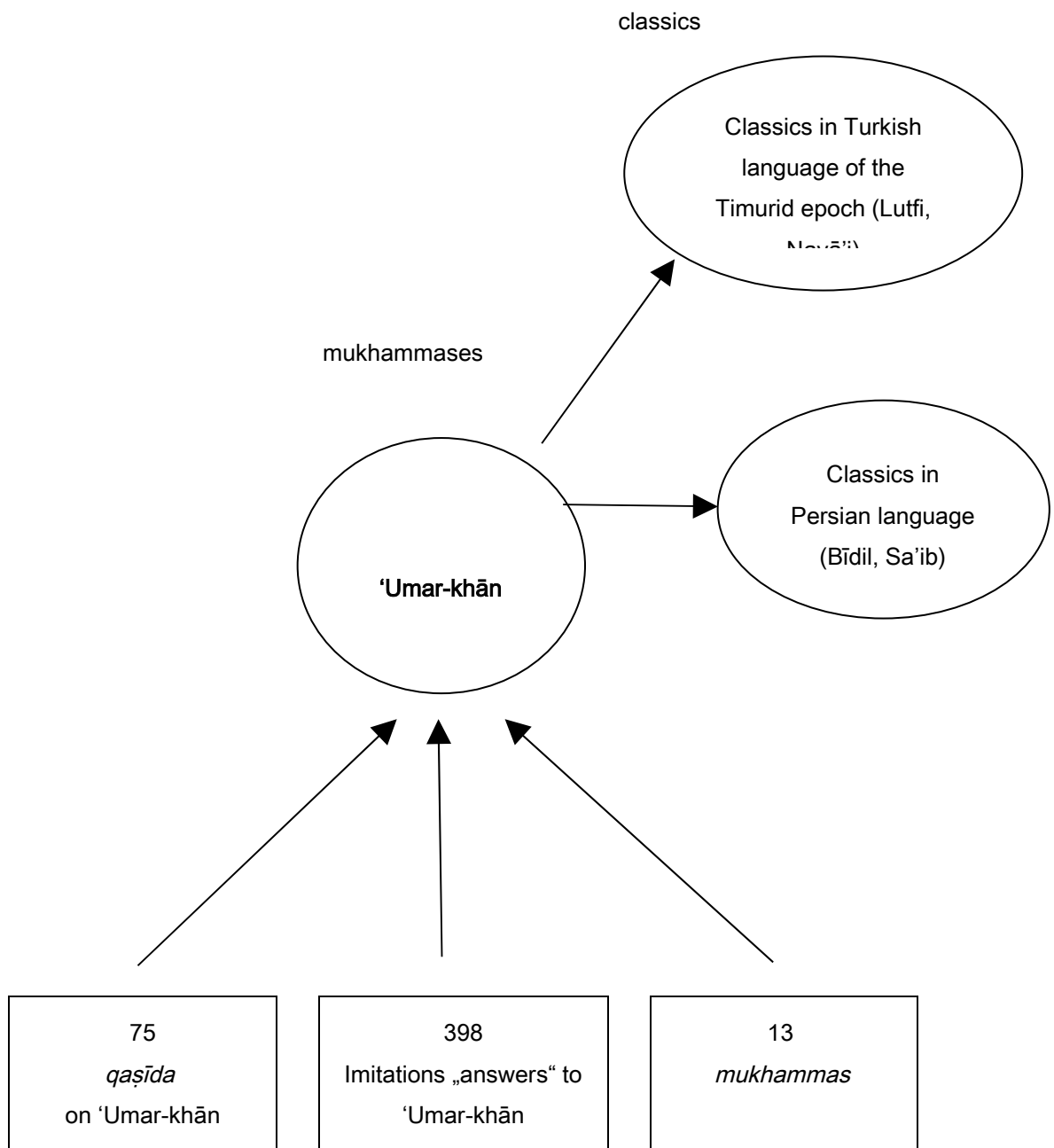
If we are counting all praises, imitations and “answering” pieces linked to ‘Umar Khān and his poetry throughout the *Majmū‘a-yi shā‘irān*, we get the following picture [figure 6]:

Part	Genres	Number of poems- Praises and imitations (“answers”)	Poems in total (including the poems by ‘Umar-khān and non-praising poems)
I.	<i>Qaṣīda</i>	75	79
II.	<i>ghazal</i>	398	436
III.	<i>Mukhammas</i>	13	114
Total		486	629

Thus, in the anthology *Majmū‘a-yi shā‘irān*, 486 texts out of a total of 629, that is, ca. 77% have a direct link to ‘Umar Khān – as imitations (“answers”) of his poems or as praise for him. The remaining 23% are on freer subjects, but are written by the same poets from the literary circle around ‘Umar Khān.

It is interesting to note that in the anthology, 486 poems are linked to the cult of ‘Umar Khān. And only four poets, as he himself recognises (by means of his *mukhammas* pieces) are stronger than he

himself: two classics from the Timurid period writing in Turki, i.e. Luṭfī and Nawāī and two other classics writing in Persian, Bīdil (1644-1721) and Ṣā'ib (1601-1677) [figure 7]:



Even if in the *Majmū'a-yi shā'irān*, 'Umar Khān claimed for himself the position of a classic of his period, still the classical poets of the Timurid period remained on their elevated position, higher than he.

Idealisation of the period and cult of 'Umar Khān on the background of the imitation of the later Timurids

All the foregoing remarks and observations lead to the conclusion that the structure of the *Majmū‘a-yi shā‘irān* and its purpose were one and the same: to compare the reign of ‘Umar Khān to the reign of Ḥusain Bāiḡarā. This is no isolated case. Even after the downfall of the Timurids, in the Safavid period (1501-1736), Ḥusain Bāiḡarā and his period were the ideal. One of the court poets at ‘Umar Khān’s court, Sulṭān-khān tūra Adā (d. 1250/1834-5) even elevated ‘Umar Khān above the position reserved for Ḥusain Bāiḡarā in one of his ghazals written in Chaghatai Turki and included in the *Majmū‘a-yi shā‘irān*:

کر نوایی دین ادا سوزینی اوتکارسا نی تانک
شه عمر افضل مو یا سلطان حسین بایقرا

“If Adā’s words (verses) are excelling over Nawā‘ī, what is astounding in that?

Since who is higher – shah ‘Umar or sultan Ḥusain Bāiḡarā?”⁸

Adā is posing as the celebrated poet ‘Alīshīr Nawā‘ī, who worked at Ḥusain Bāiḡarā’s court. In this way, he is trying to elevate both himself and his patron, employing the literary form called *fakhriyya* [“praise of oneself and one’s patron, boasting”, *translator’s note*].

We must keep in mind that this method, the tradition of imitation and emulation, is deeply rooted in the mentality of oriental peoples. In Uzbekistan, some writers and journalists who, after the independence of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 1991, tried to strengthen the national self-identification of the Uzbek people, had recourse to the Āltūn bīshīk legend. For instance, in an article that came out in a journal for the general reader in 1995, “Are the khans of Kokand descendants of Bābur?”, the authors attempted at any price to answer in the affirmative. On the basis of a narrative, but later compilatory source, the *Tārīkh-i Turkistān* by ‘Ālim khwāja, which was written at the beginning of the 20th century, they strove to prove that the Āltūn bīshīk legend is based on fact. According to their version, it had been necessary to keep secret all information about the left-behind son of Bābur, above all from the enemies of Bābur and his descendants, the Shaybanids, and therefore this information remained hidden for 200 years. This opinion is also presented by the authors of the preface to the edition of the quoted source, the *Tārīkh-i Turkistān*. Neither the first nor the second team, however, adduced sufficient evidence for their version, if even from one of the remaining ca. 40 narrative sources of Kokand historiography. This, evidently, was not their primary goal. Attempts of this sort which do not have solid historical ground beneath them clearly show that even now, there are people who think that there was some person called Āltūn bīshīk and that the stories about him are basically true; among the Uzbek intelligentsia, there still are attempts at enhancing one’s genealogical ties to the Timurids. Idealising the Timurids had brought about such a work as the *Majmū‘a-yi shā‘irān*, and still, this idealisation is going on to a certain extent in popular consciousness, even if under changed forms.

Muḥammad ‘Alī Khān and the bayāz dedicated to him

⁸ See ms IVRUz-1 7510, 121b.

Muḥammad ‘Alī Khān did not follow his parents’ style in poetry. As we could observe, in distinction from his father, poetry was no goal in itself for him. He wrote poetry in order to express his spiritual passion. In this respect, the poetical world of Fuḍūlī was close to him. When he ascended the throne in 1822, he was 15 years old. Apparently, he had started writing poetry during the last years of his father’s reign. This was provoked by yet another reason, his love to Khānpāshshā, a girl from his father’s harem, which contributed even more to make him an unworthy son. On this point, the sources present different and sometimes contradictory evidence. According to the sources, Muḥammad ‘Alī Khān fell in love with this girl when still very young, and Khānpāshshā had come to ‘Umar Khān’s harem also in very tender years, and ‘Umar Khān died without having married her. After ‘Umar Khān had died and Muḥammad ‘Alī Khān sat on the throne, he married Khānpāshshā, and they had three children.

All this however led to a tragic outcome, since this love story served as a pretext for the invasion of the Kokand khanate by the Bukharan amīr Naṣrallāh (1826-60). On May 6, 1842 he took Kokand, and as a result, in the first place, Muḥammad ‘Alī Khān was executed, after him his three children and his wife Khānpāshshā, his younger brother Muḥammad Amīn and his mother, the poetess Nādīra. According to another version, Khānpāshshā was taken away to Bukhara. It was love for a girl who had not been his father’s wife which led to such a tragedy. The Kokand khanate was annexed to Bukhara, hundreds of nobles, craftsmen, women and girls were taken prisoner and abducted to Bukhara. In 1843, however, the Bukharan army left Kokand, and later on, the Kokand khanate again seceded from Bukhara.

The manuscript SP 1446 contains verses dedicated to the ruler of the Kokand khanate, Muḥammad ‘Alī Khān. As we have mentioned at the very beginning of this paper, there are four poems in it, two ghazals written in Chaghatai by Muḥammad ‘Alī Khān himself (1b-2a), a *qaṣīda-mu‘ammā* written in Persian in praise of that ruler (2b-3b) by the poet and clerk (*dabīr*) at the court of Kokand, Muḥammad Sharīf Dabīr (see below on him and on our attribution of this piece to him), and finally, a *qaṣīda-mu‘ammā* in Persian written by the classic ‘Abdarrahmān Jāmī in praise of Ḥusain Bāiqarā.

Political and cultural context of the copy

Thus, SP 1446 consists of three parts.

- 1 Two ghazals by Muḥammad ‘Alī Khān
- 2 Qaṣīda-mu‘ammā [by Dabīr]
- 3 Qaṣīda-mu‘ammā by Jāmī.

The formatting of the copy, that is, the vertical arrangement of the texts, in all probability made for a certain grandeur and luxuriance. At the same time it must be said that such an arrangement which makes it necessary to open the manuscript vertically is not traditional in Central Asia.

Moreover, the quoted *qaṣīda-mu‘ammā* by Jāmī shows that in Muḥammad Alī’s time, literati continued to liken themselves to their forebears from the Timurid period as in the *Majmū‘a-yi shā‘irān*. The Kokand copy proves this by its contents and by its choice of poems.

In SP 1446, the real basis for such an imitation and emulation of the Ḥusain Bāiqarā period is Jāmī.

But it is not by chance that Dabīr turned to Jāmī as a model, in so doing, he had a purpose in mind. I

mentioned in the first part of this study how the poet Sulṭān-Khān tūra Adā in one of his ghazals (in Chaghatai) likened ‘Umar Khān to Ḥusain Bāiqarā, that is, he thought of himself as no less a poet than ‘Alīshīr Nawāī who served at Ḥusain Bāiqarā’s court and was close to him. The poet Faḍlī in turn, also in the *Majmū‘a-yi shā‘irān*, compared himself to Niẓāmī (1141-1209), Jāmī and Nawāī, but this was only a general comparison. In our case, in the Kokand copy, there is another point, and this is linked to the fact that Sulṭān Khān tūra Adā before Dabīr likened himself to ‘Alīshīr Nawāī and ‘Umar Khān to Ḥusain Bāiqarā. Sulṭān Khān tūra Adā wrote his ghazal in praise of his ruler in Chaghatai, and in SP 1446, Dabīr, the author of the first *qasīda-mu‘ammā*, was obliged to distinguish himself from Adā, and therefore he wrote his *qasīda* in Persian. Thus, if he, in this copy, continues the tradition of writing *qasīda-mu‘ammā* like Jāmī, this means that he was out to gain for himself a status that was comparable to the one Jāmī had had at Ḥusain Bāiqarā’s court. This makes for a parallel structure [figure 10]: The drawn-out lines with arrows stand for real relationships between poets and rulers, the punctuated lines stand for imitation and emulation, that is, indirect relationships.

That is, Dabīr aimed at showing that under Muḥammad ‘Alī Khān times were quite as under Ḥusain Bāiqarā, and that under his rule, quite as under his father’s, the Kokand khanate was comparable to Ḥusain Bāiqarā’s epoch. The only difference is that he was emulating Jāmī and likening himself to that poet as he is showing in his “answer”, *naẓīra* to the *qasīda-mu‘ammā*. Quite like Adā who in his Chaghatai ghazal wanted to be like Nawāī, Dabīr elected Jāmī as his authority, and accordingly, he writes his “answer” to that classic of Persian literature in Persian.

Conclusion

The enquiry into the foundations of how SP 1446 was put together showed that these foundations are linked to the attempts of the khans of Kokand to enhance their legitimacy. The main basis of these claims to legitimate rule were seen in the Āltūn bīshīk legend which apparently was entirely fabricated, since much in it is unfounded and unreal. Starting from that, the khans of Kokand needed another, stronger line of argument which could for instance be expressed through their cultural level. In this context, ‘Umar Khān wrote poetry and came to be one of the celebrated poets of his time. Later on, anthologies of poems (*bayāz*) were compiled. In the end, what was put forward was not a genealogy which would have to be founded on the chronology of rulers and dynasties, but a collection which would show the cultural level of the ruling dynasty. Thus, emulating their cultural model, the Timurids, the khans of Kokand tried to base their legitimacy on a higher, the intellectual and cultural level. Such collections are extant in the *Majmū‘a-yi shā‘irān* which was compiled in 1821 under ‘Umar Khān, and the unique manuscript SP 1446 which was copied in 1836 under Muḥammad ‘Alī Khān. The first one is an anthology of 70 poets from ‘Umar Khān’s circle, served to establish his cult as a poet and a ruler. This cult, in turn, was founded on the imitation and emulation of the Timurid period, when the rulers also wrote poetry. In particular, Ḥusain Bāiqarā excelled in this way; under him, the arts flowered, and in particular poetry. The most talented representatives of this period are Jāmī and Nawāī. ‘Umar Khān was determined to liken himself to Ḥusain Bāiqarā, and the poets of his circle therefore were to be like Jāmī and Nawāī.

One of the 70 poets participating in the *Majmū'a-yi shā'irān*, Mīrzā Sharīf Dabīr, continued this tradition after 'Umar Khān had died. 15 years after the compilation of the *Majmū'a-yi shā'irān*, in 1836, he put together and himself copied a little collection of poetry for Muḥammad 'Alī Khān – SP 1446. This collection consists of no more than four pieces, but like the first one, however in another form, was to serve the imitation and emulation of the later Timurids. This is also shown by the fact that Dabīr included verses by Muḥammad 'Alī Khān himself and a praise of that ruler in form of a *qaṣīda*, and that this poem is followed by a *qaṣīda* by Jāmī in praise of Ḥusain Bāiqarā. Dabīr composed his poem as an "answer" to Jāmī's, and therefore he also wanted to create an imitation of the Timurids, in the style of the preceding reign of 'Umar Khān. That is, he too wanted to liken Muḥammad 'Alī Khān to Ḥusain Bāiqarā, albeit in another form. However, how his verses influenced the ruler and love-stricken poet Muḥammad 'Alī Khān we do not know. For him, the values of his parents' period already played a lesser, sometimes only a formal role.

Of course, the two collections which were the basis of this study, the *Majmū'a-yi shā'irān* and SP 1446, are not identical in type and follow different principles of compilation. But they differ only in the tactics of organising the imitation process. The strategy of imitation, on the other hand, is common to both of them, and this imitation is their basic aim. They once more confirm the existing views in scholarly literature, according to which the rulers of Kokand tried to link their genealogy to the Timurids. Accordingly, they likened themselves and their period to the Timurids, to the later Timurids, to be precise, and more particularly to the period of Ḥusain Bāiqarā.

On the basis of our investigation, one can conclude that in Central Asia, through the structural arrangement of a manuscript, a book or an anthology of poems (*bayāz*), a strategy of legitimation could be pursued. Even if the legitimation of the rulers of Kokand rather was a pseudo-legitimation, it still was based on imitation and emulation and expresses itself in its cultural version through verses, a book, on the level of the poetical text. If we consider moreover that poetry in Central Asia for a long time (14-19 centuries) was the most actual form of art, it becomes clear why it was precisely poetry which was put to the task for political purposes. It was easier to promote legitimation as well as state politics in general through the actual form of art among the intellectuals, that is, through poetry. In order to achieve this, the rulers themselves wrote poetry or, as was the case in the Kokand khanate in the beginning of the 19th century, created literary circles. Poetry was to serve the cult of the ruler, and by the same token, state politics, the great legitimation politics of the rulers of Kokand.

(Translation from the Russian and notes: Jürgen Paul. Layout: Isabel Förster)