



KOKAND PRINCESS MAHLAR AYIM: STATESWOMAN, BUILDER, POETESS

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ABSTRACT

Not only the beauty, but also the intelligence and courage of Turkic women have been the subject of admiration since ancient times. In the Turkic states, these aspects were given special attention in the education of women belonging to the ruling family. The article examines the activities of Mahlar Ayim, the wife of the Kokand ruler Amir Umar Khan, as a stateswoman, her titles indicating her royalty, her contribution to the development of science, literature, culture, art, urban planning, as well as patronage in Kokand Khanate. Also, the paper gives an information about the poems she wrote as a bilingual Uzbek poetess, the manuscripts of her diwans in Uzbek and Persian, as well as the line of Uzbek poetesses she founded. On the example of Mahlar Ayim-Nadira, the activities of princesses in the Turkic state will be analyzed.

KEYWORDS

Kokand Literary Environment, Amir Umar Khan, Hakim Ayim, Princess, Nadira, Kamila, Maknuna, Uwaysi, Diwan, Poetess, Manuscript.

INTRODUCTION

One of the features of the literature of the ancient Turkic period is the creation of the image of a Turkic princess, which became the basis for a number of works of world literature [1]. In fact, not only the beauty of Turkic women, but also their intelligence, courage and intelligence have been the subject of admiration since ancient times. First of all, let us dwell on some terms denoting the status of a woman who

has belonged to the ruling family since ancient times. In the Turkic state, the term Khatun was added to the name of the ruler's wife. Literally it means "queen". Since the time of Ashina, this epithet has been applied to all women belonging to the ruling family [13].

In the case of Timurid princesses, if their origins were related to the Sayyids or Mongol khans, the honorary



title Khanum, and if they were descendants of beys, Begim were attached to their names. In the Kokand Khanate, the honorary titles Ayim and Poshsha were attached to the names of princesses and the descendants of Sayyids. If a woman was the wife of a ruler, she sometimes had called Begum, Beg Ayim, the mother of the ruler is called Hakim Ayim.

The present paper deals with the rise of Mahlar Ayim, descendant of Babur, to the rank of Kokand Hakim Ayim, her contribution to public administration and urban planning, the creation of a line of Uzbek poetesses, and her literary heritage.

Main Part

Mahlar Ayim (1792–1842), wife of Amir Umar Khan (1787–1822; reign 1810–1822, Khan of Kokand Khanate), is actually the daughter of Umar Khan's uncle Rahman Qulu Biy, a descendant of Timur, governor of the Andijan region [23: 9]. Ayim was attached to her name because she was noble. She gained fame among the people under the names Khanum Ayim, Hakim Ayim, Nadira Begim, Nadira-Dawran.

Kokand prince Umar Khan loved his uncle's daughter Mahlar Ayim very much for her beauty, grace, intelligence, and extraordinary poetic resourcefulness. This love was supported by his mother Ming Ayim and brother, Khan of Kokand Alim Khan, and makes his niece his bride [23: 13]. Since Mahlar Ayim, who was a descendant of the Sayyids, became the daughter-in-law of the ruling family, the title Khanum was attached to her name. Since Alim Khan appointed Umar Khan as governor of Margilan, Mahlar Ayim became Margilan's daughter-in-law and the title Begum was attached to her name.

In 1810, Umar Khan sat on the throne of the Kokand Khanate. During his reign, urban planning, the art of literature, crafts, and irrigation developed. By that

time, Nadira Begim, with her beauty, intelligence and understanding, has become the beloved princess not only of the heart of Amir Umar Khan, but also of the people of the Kokand Khanate. The great love between Umar Khan and the princess became a legend among the people [23: 96]. However, in 1822, Amir Umar Khan died suddenly. His 12–14-year-old son Muhammad Ali Khan (1806–1842; reigned 1822–1842) became Khan. From this period, Mahlar Ayim assumed the status of Hakim Ayim, since her son became ruler. Having become a kind of regent, she helps her son in governing the khanate [19: 150]. Mahlar Ayim strives to continue what was started by the Sultan of her heart and the ruler of her country, Umar Khan. Because Mahlar Ayim ruled the country with justice, intelligence and insight, the princes, sages and people called her Bilqis of the rulers of that time, that is, the righteous ruler of the country of Saba in the country of Yemen, who later became the very smart wife of Suleiman, who was praised and blessed [23: 24; 6].

Mahlar Ayim carried out very active work on city improvement and architecture in the Khanate. She built alleys and gardens, a market, a stall, a bathhouse, a hotel, an orphanage, and a caravanserai. She built the Mahlar Ayim madrasah in the old district of Haydarbek in Kokand, the Khanim/Chalpak madrasah and recitation house in the Degrezlik district [21: 128; 16: ff. 142a, 143ab–144ab; 5: 181, 629–630; 12], renovated the tomb and mausoleum of the Shahmastbiy/Chamasbiy from rulers of the Ming clan, built a mosque next to it [21: 128], and established many endowments for their financial support.

According to local data, the “Dahma-i Shahan”, located in the Great Cemetery of Kokand, which is the burial place of the Kokand khans, was originally without any decoration, surrounded by a circle, according to Norbotabiy's will. Construction began by order of Amir Umar Khan. However, when its foundation was



completed, the khan himself died. According to the works of Kokand historians Mirza Qalandar Mushrif's "Shahnoma-i Nusratpayam" and Avaz Muhammad Attar's "Tuhfat at-Tawarikh-i Khan", the construction of the monuments "Dahma-i Shahan" and the cemetery of the khan's mother "Dahma-i Modar-i Khan" was completed in 1240 (1824–1825) on the initiative of Mahlar Ayim and the order of her son Muhammad Ali Khan [16: ff. 142a, 143a–144b; 3: 124ab; 162ab]. The Madrasa-i Khanim and recitation house, which include several rooms, was built next to the cemetery.

All cells of the madrasah were filled with carpets, necessary equipment and household items. Funds received from fertile lands and gardens, caravanserais, stalls, and markets were dedicated to this complex. Historical, scientific and literary books with the seal "Waqf for the sake of Allah" were donated to the library of the madrasah. In addition to payments, students were provided with food and clothing. In addition, specially paid readers read a certain part of the Koran every day and dedicated it to the soul of the late Amir Umar Khan [16: 142a, 143ab–144ab; 3: 124ab; 162ab; 14; 5: 181, 629–630]. Most of the readers were blind people. Bread called "chalpak" baked during various religious ceremonies was distributed to these poor people as charity. Later, this tradition became a custom, so the Madrasa-i Khanim also began to be called "Chalpak" [7: 14]. Some parts of Dahma, Madrasa-i Khanim/Chalpak have been preserved from these monuments.

According to information provided by Mahlar Ayim's contemporary Hatif, "after the death of Umar Khan, this pearl of the predecessor of chastity considered it ungrateful to spend her days in sorrow and grief. She called into her service scientists, scholars, calligraphers, artists from Fergana, Tashkent, Khujand, Andijan and other cities" [23: 20].

She also built a library, gathered talented scribes, artists and skilled bookbinders, provided them with large salaries and ordered them to decorate and rewrite books.

Molla Kochak, who gained fame in the field of copying the Koran, was commissioned to copy Koran, and the poet and scribe Muhammad Sharif Dabir was commissioned to copy Fizuli's Diwan in gilded form, Nawai's selected Diwans and the Zafarnama. Even madrasa student Khaji Muhammad of Samarkand was as skilled in calligraphy as the Mirali of his time, so the Khanim Ayim gave him a gold pen and a silver pencil case, promoted him to the position of "Golden Pen" and ordered him to copy diwans. All of them were given beautiful clothes and gold coins every week. Indeed, some manuscripts copied during this period are now kept in the collections of the Biruni Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan [2; 8; 9]. She also took great care of poets, scientists, artists and artisans, supported them both financially and morally, earned the praise of the people and was named Nadira-i Dawran.

Unfortunately, the Bukhara Emir Nasrullah (1826–1860), who invaded the Kokand Khanate for various reasons in May 1842, brutally executed Muhammad Ali Khan, the Khan of Kokand, the princes, their mother Mahlar Ayim and other women [18: 182–184, 188–189, 192, 660–661; 15: 94].

According to local data, Nadira Begim and several women belonging to the khan's family were buried in Dahma-i Modari Khan. However, according to the Tarikhcha-i Turoni (History of Turan) by Muhammad Umar Umidi (1835–1905) and Polatjon Qayumov's (1885–1964) Hoqand tarikhi va uning adabiyoti (The History of Kokand and its Literature), Mahlar Ayim was not buried in the women's hall that belonged to the khan's family, rather, in Dahma-i Shahan [17: 1, 64; 21: 128–130].



The spiritual and cultural merits of the poetess, who was respected by the people under the names Mahlar Ayim, Nadira Begim, Khanim Ayim, Hakim Ayim, were taken into account, and in 1967 a monument dedicated to her memory was erected by the architect R. Ahmedov. It is located outside Dahma-i Shahan, more precisely, on its southeastern side, and is made of white marble in the shape of an arch [4: 58].

While erecting a monument in memory of the poetess, some tombstones from the Modari Khan vault were moved and placed next to the monument to Nadira Begim. The length of the tombstone on the north-eastern side of the monument is 164 cm, width – 26 cm, height – 33.5 cm. Between its patterns on the northern and southern sides, a 6-line Persian historical chronogram written in Nastalik script is placed in 3 lines.

Let's dwell here on the features of the tarikh-chronogram genre. Tarikh-chronogram is a poetic method that reflects events and its time in the classical literature of the East. "Tarikh" is an Arabic word meaning "chronology of reality." "Chrono" in chronogram means time, "Gram" means record, note. This method is used to express certain dates through combinations of letters in words. Words and phrases related to the date of event are called "modda-i tarikh", and the sum of the Arabic letters, abjad numbers that make up it, that is, jumal, indicates the date of event. Usually, through phrases such as "bahri tarikh goft" ([regardless of event] the story tells), "ahli khirat goft" (said people of reason), "batarikh nido omad" (call from history) the essence of what is tarikh is revealed, that is a word that should be considered and refers to the sentence. There are 2 different methods of tarikh-chronogram:

1. Tarikhi tamm is the date of the open chronicle. In this case, the sum of the Arabic letters and abjad

numbers involved in the story indicates the date of the event.

2. Tarikhi ta'miya is the date of the hidden chronicle. It uses word games, like a riddle, and the meaning of a letter or word, expressed through signs, is either added to the sum of the material tarikh abjad in meaning (in science this is called "idkhal" (insertion)) or removed (it is called "ikhraj" (extraction)).

Now let's pay attention to the text of the tombstone in front of the monument to Nadira Begim. It contains the following Persian poem:

دریغ از انتقال فخر از هر باره شاهی
نمود آهنگ شهر لامکان از کشور فانی
بهیشتی منزلت دریای عصمت لجه همت
ظهر مغفرت ممنون فیض فضل ربانی
بتاریخ بنایش از سر خنت ندا آمد
نشان خاک پاک زبده ازواج سلطانی

Alas, the one who was part of the pride of the kingdom has passed away.

(She) went from a transitional country (world) to a city without a place.

Paradise of virtue, river of innocence, source of grace,

(Her sins) are forgiven, she is satisfied with divine grace.

To the history of the building (this monument), a cry was heard from heaven:

"A sign of the purity of the Sultan's wives."



In the last line of the poem, “ba-ta’rikh...nido omad” (a cry was heard from heaven) through the words and phrases “Nishoni hoki poki zubdayi azwaji sultaniy” (“A sign of the purity of the Sultan’s wives.”) is understood as history as a whole. The Arabic letters of line are equal to 1241 if one calculates the abjad:

401=50+1+300+50 – نشان

621=20+1+600 – خاک

23=20+1+2 – پاک

18=5+4+2+7 – زبده

18=3+1+6+7+1 – ازواج

160=10+50+1+9+30+60 – سلطانی

سلطانی ازواج زبده پاک خاک نشان =
401+621+23+18+18+160=1241

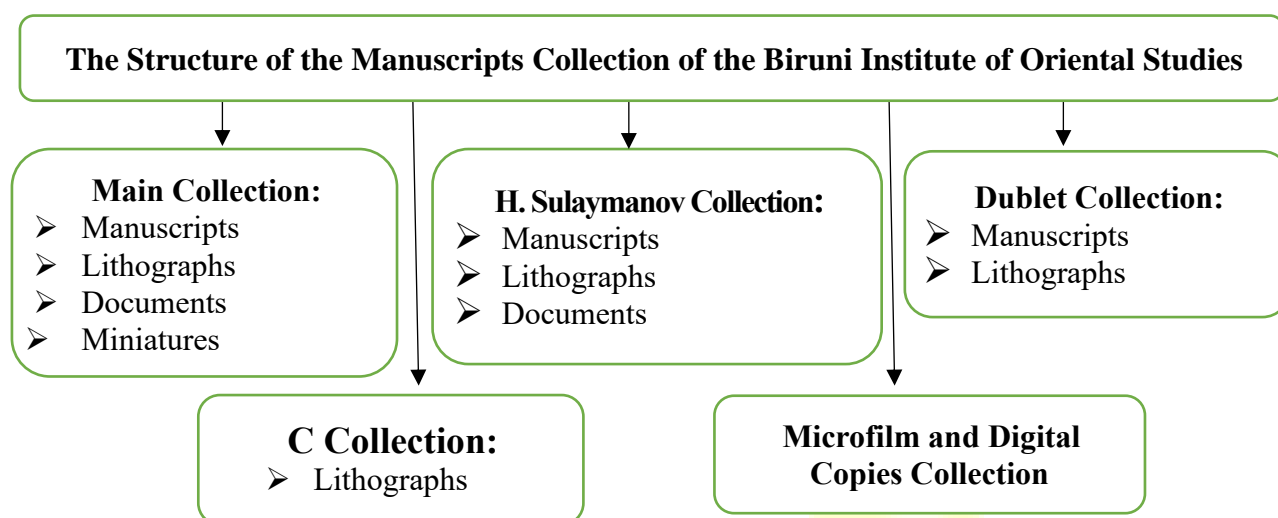
If from the sum of the date we subtract the sum of the letter j – “silence” in the sentence “از سر خنت ندا آمد” – “a cry was heard from heaven” in the last verse – 3, then the poetess died in 1238/1822. From the content of the poem it is known that this tombstone was prepared for the death of the beloved wife of one of the Kokand khans. Considering that Amir Umar Khan began the construction of Dahma-i Modari Khan together with Dahma-i Shahan, and he himself died on 13 Rabi al-Akhar 1238 / 30 December 1822, and considering that his beloved wife Mahlar Ayim was still alive on these dates, this is the tomb, which was originally located in the room of Modari Khan, the mother of Amir Umar Khan. It can be assumed that this tombstone was erected for Fakhrunnisa, i.e. Ming Ayim’s grave.

It should be noted that during the reign of Husayn Baykara (1438–1506; reigned 1469–1506), the foundations of Herat’s literary environment were laid.

Poets associated with the Khorasan school wrote in Turkic, and the works of poets from the Mawarunnahr region in Persian further advanced the writing poems at the same time in two languages. The literary atmosphere of Kokand was created during the time of Umar Khan [10: 406–413; 22]. Umar Khan’s patronage of literature, art and science, who created a collection of poems in Uzbek and Persian under the pseudonym Amiri, became popular, and artists from Khorezm, Afghanistan, Kashgaria and other regions began to come to the Khanate to continue their work in Kokand.

Behind every strong man there is a strong woman. In fact, if Amir Umar Khan collected his poems in both languages and compiled one diwan, then Mahlar Ayim, the great poetess under the pseudonyms of Nadira, Kamila and Maknuna, collected poems in Uzbek and Persian and compiled a diwan in both languages [20: 35; 23: 28; 11: 489–491].

Professor M. Kadirova, who studied the life and work of Uzbek poetesses, especially Mahlar Ayim, and used her literary heritage for scientific use, identified the sources of the poems written by the poetess under the pseudonyms Nadira, Kamila, Maknuna in diwans and ghazals, collections and bayazes. However, over the past period, the names of the foundations mentioned in the scientist’s study have changed or merged with another organizations. In particular, since 1968, the Literary Museum of the Pushkin Institute of Language and Literature in the USSR has operated as the State Literary Museum named after Alisher Navoi. The activities of the Institute of Manuscripts named after Kh. Sulaimonov, created on the basis of this museum in 1978, were discontinued in 1998, and its collections was included in the fund of the Biruni Institute of Oriental Studies. Currently, the Biruni Institute of Oriental Studies has the following Collections:



Based on the above information, we can say that the sources of the literary heritage of the Kokand princess Mahlar Ayim are preserved in the following collections:

The Sources of the Literary Heritage of Mahlar Ayim

№	Name of the work	Place	Language	Folio
1.	Diwan of Nadira	Biruni Institute of Oriental Studies. Main Collection, № 4182.	Uzbek-Persian	ff. 52
2.	Diwan of Nadira	Biruni Institute of Oriental Studies. Hamid Sulaymanov Collection, № 313.	Uzbek-Persian	ff. 182
3.	Diwan of Maknuna	Biruni Institute of Oriental Studies. Main Collection, № 7766.	Persian	ff. 132
4.	Diwan of Maknuna	Biruni Institute of Oriental Studies. Main Collection, № 2090.	Persian	ff. 23
5.	Bayaz	Biruni Institute of Oriental Studies. Main Collection, № 660.	Persian	ff. 23

According to M. Kadirova, 19 ghazals of the poetess under the pseudonym Kamila are in the collection of manuscripts of Fazli's poems in the archives of the Museum of History of Uzbekistan, and photocopies of some of her ghazals are held under number 921 in the collection of the Museum of Literature [23: 28–30].

However, we have not been able to identify those copies.

It should be noted that both Amir Umar Khan and Mahlar Ayim creatively continued and developed the traditions of Uzbek classical literature. The Uzbek and Persian poems of this wonderful couple entered bayaz



genre and became famous among the people, and some of them were even turned into songs and performed with love. Mahlar Ayim's Uzbek poems, especially under the pseudonym Nadira, were read at many poetry gatherings and caused poetry to take a place in the minds and affections of the people of Kokand. Since the people recognized their Hakim Ayim by his poems under the pseudonym Nadira, they gave her the attributes of a Begum and began to call her Nadira Begim.

While Amir Umar Khan organized poetry evenings among poets and encouraged talented poets among them, Mahlar Ayim founded a network of Uzbek poetesses in the inner palace. She, in collaboration with the poet Jahan Atin Uwaisi, held wonderful meetings and organized special training in the science of poetry [24: 7–8].

CONCLUSION

To summarize, despite the fact that Mahlar Ayim went through several regime crises and separations with dignity and safety, she remained a woman worthy of her status. Therefore, although in 1967 a monument was erected to the beloved poetess of the Uzbek people, Mahlar Ayim-Nadira Begim, she had already immortalized her name with her wonderful deeds.

If we look at the history of other regions and the statehood of Great Turan, then although there are queens who belong to the people of poetry, we have not yet met queens who created divans from Turkic poetry and taught Uzbek poetesses. As for the history of literature, the literary environment created under the auspices of the rulers enriched our classical literature, and the legacy of the line of Uzbek poetesses founded by Nadira Begim adorned the pages of the history of literature.

In fact, based on the information found so far, Mahlar Ayim is the queen who founded a line of Uzbek poetesses for the first time in the history of Uzbek classical literature, and one of the first poetesses to write diwan in Uzbek and Persian.

After the death of Amir Umar Khan, although his young son Muhammad Ali Khan was appointed Khan of Kokand, he tried to govern the state based on the criteria of justice, ensure the well-being of the people, continued the good deeds begun by Amir Umar Khan, supported scholars, literature, art and crafts. Patronage of their works and fundamental activities is recognized by many modern historians and writers.

Indeed, if we look at the history of Uzbek statehood, Uzbek literature, the Uzbek people and religion, we can see that in the case of Mahlar Ayim, a unique Uzbek woman was active in various spheres of life as a beloved wife, a loving woman, mother, poetess and statesman, without leaving the sphere of Sharia. We will also witness the fact that with her knowledge she left a cultural heritage for future generations, accomplished wonderful deeds worthy of both worlds, and it is not for nothing that people called him "Nadira-i Dawran" and "Bilqis-i Zaman".

Of course, these attributes reflect the image of a virtuous, strong-willed, creative and courageous Uzbek woman.

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