

The Kokand Bayoz School And Its Distinctive Traditions

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Received: 19 August 2025 **Accepted:** 17 September 2025 **Published:** 31 October 2025

ABSTRACT

After the bayoz entered Central Asia as a literary source, the demand for it gradually increased. Unlike other collections of a similar nature, bayozes gained rapid popularity because they represented a “bouquet” of poets’ creative works, and from the 19th century onward, they became increasingly widespread. As literary culture developed, schools of bayoz compilation emerged within each khanate. While these schools preserved the general characteristics typical of bayozes, each began to acquire distinctive features specific to its own tradition—features that became important markers distinguishing one school from another. This tendency became especially evident in the second half of the 19th century. Up to that period, the bayozes compiled in the three khanates had been almost identical in structure, but gradually they began to differ in composition, artistic ornamentation, and even in thematic and conceptual substance. Alongside the creation of traditional bayozes, new types also appeared—developments that demand serious scholarly attention to the study of bayoz schools.

Keywords: Bayoz, source, manuscript, lithographic print, bayoz tradition, collection, poet, literary environment.

INTRODUCTION

The history of Uzbek literature possesses a long and rich cultural heritage, having produced numerous thinkers and scholars. Our ancestors, who flourished on the land of Turan, achieved remarkable accomplishments through knowledge and enlightenment. With the arrival of Islam in these ancient regions, the religion, culture, and way of life of the population entered a new stage of development. As people embraced the new faith, they became closely acquainted with the Arabic language, Islamic history, and culture, which led to great achievements in both scientific and literary fields. The tradition of referring to the Qur’an and Hadith became an established rule in all literary works, while new literary genres, artistic devices, and the science of aruz (prosody) were mastered. Among such innovations, the emergence of bayozes became a distinctive phenomenon in the history of classical literature.

Today, the discovery of numerous bayoz manuscripts necessitates a deeper study of the samples of our classical literature and an examination of how the literary life within

the khanates was interconnected with the socio-political circumstances of the time. “As reflected in the sources of our literary heritage from the past, regardless of their artistic level, they all share a single ideological foundation — the promotion of a sound faith. In the history of our literature, both well-known and lesser-known writers, regardless of their talent, wielded the pen in pursuit of this goal. Consequently, alongside works of great artistic value, there also emerged creations of moderate or even lower quality.” From this perspective, every writer who contributed to the history of literature — regardless of their mastery in poetry or prose — must be studied and their legacy preserved and conveyed to future generations.

Although the Kokand Khanate was established later than the Bukhara and Khiva khanates, it quickly secured its place in the economic, political, social, and cultural spheres. Despite the periodic political instability that occurred within the territories encompassing Fergana, Namangan, Andijan, Tashkent, Khujand, Kyrgyzstan, and southern Kazakhstan, science, literature, and art flourished,

leading to the formation of a distinctive literary school. Due to the growing attention toward poetry, the literary environment—particularly the bayoz tradition—began to flourish. As A. Qayumov noted, “By the first half of the 17th century, the Kokand literary milieu had already begun to take shape... At that time, poets were divided into two groups. The first group served in the khan’s court and composed panegyrics in his praise—for example, Mirza Ma’sum Kosoniy—while others wrote poems opposing the tyranny of certain rulers.” If the official establishment of the Kokand Khanate took place in 1709, this leads to the conclusion that the literary environment had begun to take shape even before the formation of the khanate itself.

Even after the establishment of the khanate, nearly all of its rulers showed exceptional favor toward poets. In particular, “During the reigns of Olimkhan (1801–1811), Umar Khan (1811–1822), and Muhammad Ali Khan (1822–1842) in Kokand, numerous poets gathered around the royal court, and literary activity flourished considerably. This development also led to the firm establishment of two opposing currents within the field of literature” . In particular, during the reign of Amir Umar Khan, who ruled in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, science, literature, and art reached new heights of development. According to literary scholars, “the emergence, growth, and consolidation of the Kokand literary environment into a unified cultural sphere are closely associated with the name of Amir Umar Khan of Kokand.”

Information about the political processes and literary environment of the Kokand Khanate can be found in several works, such as Fazliy’s *Majmuayi Shoiron* (“Collection of Poets”), Qori Rahmatullo Bukhari’s *Tuhfat al-Ahbab fi Tazkirat al-As’hab* (“The Gift of Friends in the Memoirs of Companions”), Hakimkhan Tura’s *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh* (“Selected Chronicles”), Mirza Olim Huqandi and Mir Mirzarahim Toshkandi’s *Ansab al-Salatin wa Tawarikh Khawaqin* (“Genealogy of Sultans and Chronicles of Khans”), Mushrif Isfaraghi’s *Shohnomayi Nusrat Payom* (“The Epic of the Message of Victory”), as well as P. Qayumov’s *The History and Literature of Kokand*. These tazkiras contain valuable details about the political situation in the khanate, the poets who lived there, and aspects of their creative work and personal lives. Within this cultural setting, many distinguished figures such as Umar Khan, Muhammad Ali, Ado, Qori, Fazliy, Khaziniy, Nodir, and Gulkhani emerged. This, in turn, led to the flourishing of poetry and literature. Literary

gatherings were organized with the participation of poets like Muqimiy, Furqat, Zavqiy, Muhayyir, Nisbatiy, and Usmonkhoja Zoriy, where poetic recitations and discussions were held. “The writers of this period took an active part in social life, creating lyrical and socially themed works that made significant contributions to the literature of their time. The literary life of this era was marked by the increased activity of writers, innovations in artistic thinking, and the emergence of new themes and ideas in literature” . The literary activity of the period was not limited to poets within the Kokand Khanate alone but also developed vigorously through interactions with neighboring khanates. As a result of this collaboration, poets maintained close communication, drew creative inspiration from one another, and exchanged artistic experience. The bayozes compiled in the Kokand Khanate stand out for their diversity of genres and the richness and variety of their poetic content, distinguishing them considerably from those of other khanates. The vibrant literary environment that flourished there not only influenced the Kokand Khanate itself but also extended its impact to the Bukhara and Khiva khanates, demonstrating the active role of Kokand poets in interliterary relations. An examination of the bayozes compiled within the Kokand literary milieu shows that they included the works of poets from Bukhara—and to a lesser extent, from Khiva. In particular, poets associated with the Bukhara literary environment, such as Mushfiqiy, Roqim, Shavkat, Hotif, Oxund Bukhari, Nosir Bukhari, Yusuf, and Majnun, appear frequently in these anthologies, while representatives of the Khiva Khanate, including Feruz, Sultan Said, Hisrav, Khayoliy, and Sa’diy Khorazmiy, are featured less prominently than their Bukharan counterparts.

The literary ties between the Kokand Khanate and the poets of Bukhara were remarkably strong, as nearly every bayoz contains works by representatives of the Bukharan literary school. Such enduring connections between the two khanates were the result of long-standing cultural cooperation. In addition to the reasons mentioned in the previous chapter, several other factors can be highlighted.

First of all, some Bukharan poets distinguished themselves by their exceptional talent, quick wit, sensitivity to the subtleties of poetry, and ability to perceive and express in verse the delicate beauty of nature—something few others could capture. Naturally, the fame of such poets spread rapidly beyond borders and regions, delighting admirers wherever their works reached.

One such poet frequently found in the Kokand bayozes is Shavkati Bukhari, who, through his rare talent, captured the hearts of Kokand's literary enthusiasts. Sources state that the poet composed exquisite verses in Persian-Tajik, while no mention is made of his having written in Turkic. For this reason, only his Persian-Tajik ghazals appear in the bayozes.

Shavkati Bukhari's creative legacy shows that he achieved fame not only among the Central Asian khanates but also across India and Iran, contributing to the strengthening of cultural and literary relations between nations. Muhammad Is'haqbek, who wrote under the pen name Shavkati Bukhari in the second half of the 17th century, was in fact the son of a Bukharan khan. After his father's death and the transfer of the throne to his cousins, he left Bukhara for Iran.

Endowed with refined taste and a deep understanding of the subtleties of poetry, he was highly esteemed by Muhammad Saiddin Khan, the governor of Isfahan, and consequently spent part of his life in various parts of Iran. He first traveled to Marv, then to Mashhad, where he visited the tomb of Imam Ali Musa Riza. From there, he went to Isfahan, where he gained the respect of the city's ruler, Muhammad Saiddin Khan. After spending some time there, he journeyed to India and was received with honor by Muhammad Ali Gavhar Shah. Following several years of travel, he returned to Isfahan, where he passed away in 1695.

Shavkat's high standing among the rulers of Iran was due not to his lineage or noble descent, but to his intellect, talent, and profound grasp of the intricacies of poetry. Although this Uzbek poet has been scarcely studied within Uzbek literary scholarship, he has been thoroughly researched in Persian-Tajik literary studies. Scholars recognize that he wrote in the Sabk-i Hind (Indian style) and have confirmed the existence of his *divan* (collected works). A poem by Shavkat can be found in manuscript bayoz No. 2809, which was likely compiled in Bukhara toward the end of the 19th century. In this bayoz, along with the works of Hafez and Bedil, samples of poetry by Bukharan poets are also presented. The manuscript is richly decorated from beginning to end with floral patterns and pasted ornaments (*nakleykas*), meticulously executed in red, black, and ink tones. The book has been well preserved, and almost all the poems are written in Persian-Tajik. This demonstrates that beautiful poetry transcends the boundaries of time and place, finding its place within

the literature of different lands.

Secondly, literary connections between the two khanates developed further as poets traveled from one region to another for study, work, travel, trade, or livelihood. For example, Sultan Khoja Ahroriy of Samarkand—descended from Khwaja Ahror—and known by his pen name Ado, served at the court of Amir Umar Khan, where he attained the title *Malik al-Shuara* ("King of Poets"). Ado was one of Umar Khan's closest courtiers, and his works frequently appear alongside the Amir's in bayozes. This order of presentation was not accidental: scribes intentionally arranged the bayoz so that the poets' proximity to the ruler was reflected in the sequence of their works. Such internal hierarchy is especially evident in bayozes containing poems by the ruler and his close companions, though not in all compilations. After Umar Khan's death, Ado returned to Bukhara, where he was appointed *Shaykh al-Islam* in Samarkand and later died there. Thus, Ado—a representative of the Bukhara Khanate—contributed significantly to the development of Kokand's literary environment, directly strengthening literary ties between the two khanates.

Many poets born in Bukhara later moved to the Kokand Khanate for various reasons, enriching the literature of both regions. For instance, the poet Komil, born in Bukhara in the mid-19th century, studied there and later moved to Kokand to learn papermaking, where he worked and wrote. Similarly, the Bukharan-born scholar and *qori* Toliy, well-versed in Qur'anic studies and formerly a *mudarris* (teacher), moved to Margilan for unknown reasons and lived there. These examples show that Bukharan poets who contributed to the literary environment of their homeland continued to do so in Kokand, leaving their mark in the bayozes compiled there.

In general, many poets migrated from Bukhara to Kokand and played an important role in the growth and flourishing of the literary environments of both khanates. Although the Kokand Khanate possessed a rich literary heritage of its own, its well-established literary exchanges with other khanates—particularly Bukhara and Khiva—greatly fostered its cultural development, especially in the tradition of bayoz compilation. Consequently, bayozes compiled in Kokand often feature the works of poets from Khiva and Bukhara as well.

In the collection of the Abu Rayhan Beruni Institute of Manuscripts, the bayozes compiled within the Kokand

literary milieu constitute the majority, thanks largely to the scholarly efforts of H. Sulaymon. Examination of the bayozes preserved in the institute reveals that those compiled in various regions of the Kokand Khanate can be classified geographically as follows:

1. Bayozes compiled in Kokand;
2. Bayozes compiled in Namangan;
3. Bayozes compiled in Fergana;
4. Bayozes compiled in Tashkent;
5. Bayozes compiled in Uzen.

The poets living in the khanate often met to exchange creative ideas and share their literary experiences. “Among the most renowned poets of the valley, one was Muhyi, honored with the title Toji Shoiron (‘Crown of Poets’), and the other, undoubtedly, was Ziyovuddin Haziniy, respectfully called Haziniy Tura. Said Akmal Khan from Piskent, Qazi Khojajonkhoja Roji from Margilan, Nodim and Ibrat from Namangan, Abdurazzoq Bimiy from Andijan, Toshkhoja Asiriyy from Khujand, Yusuf Saryomiy from Sayram, and Karimbek Kamiy from Tashkent regularly participated in the literary gatherings held in Kokand”. This, in turn, spurred the flourishing of the literary environment in Kokand during the second half of the 19th and the early 20th centuries, leading to the creation of bayozes that were diverse in both genre and theme. As O. Juraboyev noted, “Bayozes were mainly copied during the most turbulent and transitional period in our history — the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century.” Considering this, it becomes clear that even during times of extreme political instability, when the very existence of the khanates was under threat, literature did not come to a halt. Instead, poets remained united around a shared purpose and common ideals.

Through the study of bayozes, previously unknown poets are discovered within the world of literature; new samples of work by familiar poets come to light; hidden aspects of certain authors are revealed; and their personalities—both as individuals and as poets—emerge in greater clarity.

“In the creative school introduced into scholarly use under the title The Kokand Literary Environment—a powerful and distinctive intellectual movement—dozens of highly talented figures such as Pisandiy, Tamkin, Qoriy, Nisbatiy,

Muhayyir, Yoriy, Zavqiy, Muhsiniy, Mawlawi Yo‘ldosh, Nusrat, Nayyiriy, Shaydoiy, Umidiy-Havoyiy, Roiq, and Sinandiy produced their works. Yet, from this vast circle, only a few—Muqimiy, Furqat, and Zavqiy—were selectively singled out, often for tendentious purposes. A small portion of their writings was used as a foundation to present them to the public as ‘representatives of Uzbek democratic-enlightenment literature,’ while only that limited part of their works was republished, and the remainder was deliberately kept hidden from readers”. In particular, the works of Furqat imbued with ideas of enlightenment were kept under constant surveillance to prevent their dissemination and to ensure they did not “corrupt the minds” of the people. Analyzing the issue of “ideological editing” in literary texts through the example of Furqat’s work, N. Jabborov emphasizes:

“In studying Furqat’s writings, it is essential to keep in mind the problem of ‘ideological editing’ noted by D. S. Likhachev. Indeed, some of the poet’s works were given entirely opposite meanings, and in certain cases, they were subjected to a process of ‘ideological purification,’ resulting in their misinterpretation.” This observation justly highlights the distortion and censorship that affected Furqat’s legacy.

The bayozes compiled across the khanates share many common features, providing valuable insight into the bayoz tradition of the 19th–20th centuries. However, the internal structure unique to the Kokand bayozes reveals the distinct nature and characteristics of this literary phenomenon as it developed in that region. Such analysis begins, first and foremost, with an examination of linguistic features.

It is well known that at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, within the literary environment of the Kokand Khanate, Turkic, Persian-Tajik, and, to a much lesser extent, Arabic were in use. Nevertheless, in the bayozes, the Persian-Tajik language held a dominant position compared to Turkic and Arabic. This is evidenced by the fact that the hamd and na‘t sections, as well as more than half of the lyrical poems, were composed in that language. Alongside their lyrical works in Persian-Tajik, poets also wrote in both languages simultaneously using the shiru-shakar (“milk and sugar”) style, demonstrating their equal affection and mastery of the two tongues.

Secondly, the bookmaking traditions distinctive to the

Kokand Khanate serve as an external hallmark setting its manuscripts apart from those of other khanates. The colors chosen for book covers, the shapes and placement of imprints, and the design elements all represent features unique to Kokand's art of book production. Bookbinders often preferred green for covers, though brown and saffron (mustard) shades were also used on stiff paper. Floral and circular (turonj) motifs were typically painted in dark red or golden tones—an indication that Kokand's bookmaking school possessed its own artistic direction and maintained stylistic continuity. One of the defining traits of this region's manuscripts is the minimal use of decorative embellishment on the text pages, suggesting that the bayozes compiled there were characterized more by restraint and simplicity than by lavish ornamentation.

Thirdly, the fact that the compiler of the bayozes mentions Amir Umar Khan with particular reverence and respect shows that addressing the ruler with utmost honor had become an established tradition. Such expressions of deference toward the sovereign are scarcely found in the bayozes of other khanates. For example, when presenting the lyrical legacy of Amir Umar Khan—who was not only the ruler of the land but also a leading figure among scholars and men of letters—his name is often accompanied by laudatory epithets. In various bayozes, the ruler who wrote under the pen names Amir and Amiri is referred to as “Amir Umar Khan, may his abode be paradise” (Amir Umarxon jannatmakon) or “Amir Khan, the Amir of Fergana, may his abode be paradise” (Amirxon amiri Farg'ona jannatmakon). This attests to the fact that in the Kokand Khanate, showing profound reverence and courtesy toward the khans and amirs had become a customary practice.

Fourthly, the bayozes began to evolve in form. The inclusion and growing popularity of prose became one of the most important characteristics of bayoz compilation during this period. In the bayozes of the khanate, prose gradually became an integral component. These prose sections cover a variety of subjects and can be categorized as religious, philosophical, romantic, historical, or humorous in nature. The addition of such prose passages is especially frequent in bayozes compiled for madrasa students, containing texts related to various branches of knowledge. At the same time, bayozes prepared for poetry enthusiasts also frequently include prose elements such as religious and historical reports, legends and stories, prayers, anecdotes, tales, petitions, letters, and other similar forms of writing.

Fifthly, transformations are also observed in the thematic content of the bayozes. In particular, the economic, political, and cultural influence of foreign powers led to the introduction of new ideas, reforms, and political developments, which began to find reflection in these compilations. Lyrical poems depicting the construction of factories and plants, the introduction of railways, and the influence of new cultural, linguistic, and educational trends started to appear within the bayozes.

For instance, it has been rightly noted that “Poet Muqimiy, on the one hand, continued the finest traditions of our classical literature, while on the other, he brought into literature the social changes taking place as a result of the Russian conquest” . This statement about Muqimiy is equally applicable to other enlightenment-oriented poets of his time.

Sixthly, the muammo genre—revived after the Timurid period—became widely practiced in the Kokand Khanate. For this reason, almost every bayoz compiled in the khanate contains examples of poetic riddles belonging to this art form.

Seventhly, in the development of the Kokand bayoz tradition, the role of women poets increased, demonstrating that women held a recognized and active place within the literary environment of the khanate.

Overall, an examination of the bayoz tradition in Kokand reveals that, despite being the youngest of the Central Asian khanates, literature—and particularly bayoz compilation—experienced remarkable growth by the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In terms of nurturing both male and female poets, the Kokand literary milieu far surpassed that of other khanates. The diversity of genres and the richness of themes in its bayozes likewise testify to this creative vitality.

The art of muammo, which had flourished during the Timurid era, blossomed once again in the Kokand Khanate; the inclusion of epic-spirited tales (jangnama), as well as pieces of folk oral literature and religious-historical texts, became characteristic features of the period's bayoz tradition. By this time, Kokand bayozchilik (the art of bayoz compilation) had fully matured, forming a distinct school that differed in several ways from those of other regions.

Undoubtedly, Amir Umar Khan played a pivotal role in the

formation and advancement of this literary environment. The literary movement he initiated continued to thrive even after his death.

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