

The Study Of The Succession System Of The Bukhara Emirate In The Research Of Anke Von Kuegelgen (A Historiographical Analysis)

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Abstract: The objective of this study is to analyze the system of succession in the Emirate of Bukhara based on Anke von Kuegelgen's monograph on the legitimation of the Manghit dynasty. The research focuses on identifying the process of selecting an heir, preparing him for rule, and the role of institutions such as the ataliqs and provincial governorships in this process. The primary methodology involves source-based analysis and a systematic approach. It examines Anke von Kuegelgen's work, *The Legitimation of the Central Asian Manghit Dynasty in the Works of Their Historians (18th–19th centuries)*, as the main source, synthesizing its scattered information on succession. The analysis reveals that the Emirate of Bukhara lacked a formally codified (*de jure*) order of succession. The transfer of power was, in practice (*de facto*), a politico-meritocratic selection process. The study proposes evaluating succession in the Emirate of Bukhara not merely as chaotic struggle or traditional inheritance, but as a complex set of informal political practices that emerged in response to the legitimation problem arising from the Manghit dynasty's non-Chinggisid origins.

Keywords: Emirate of Bukhara, Manghit dynasty, succession, heir apparent, ataliq, Anke von Kuegelgen, legitimation, political power, administrative governance, Uzbek tribes.

Introduction: The rise of a new dynasty – the Manghits – to power in the political arena of Transoxiana in the mid-18th century marked a significant turning point for the region. According to a centuries-old tradition, the right to rule in the states that emerged on the territory of the Chagatai Ulus was considered exclusive to the descendants of Chinggis Khan. The Manghits, however, were outside this tradition and were compelled to develop new and complex legitimation strategies to justify their rule. This process was deeply analyzed by the German Orientalist Anke von Kuegelgen in her fundamental study, *The Legitimation of the Central Asian Manghit Dynasty in the Works of Their Historians (18th–19th centuries)* through the works of Manghit court historians [1, p. 2]. Kuegelgen's main focus is on the ideological foundations – Islamic, Chinggisid, and moral – through which the rulers justified their authority.

Anke von Kuegelgen identifies six main principles of ruler legitimation in her work: divine legitimation, genealogical legitimation, legitimation by election,

legitimation by emulating a model, legitimation by superiority of force, and legitimation by upholding norms [2, p. 19]. Through a meticulous study of court chronicles, the author reveals which of these principles were emphasized during the reign of each Manghit ruler. Her research is an essential source for understanding the ideological and political views of the Manghit period. In Soviet historiography, the Manghit era was primarily assessed as a period of socio-economic decline, and power struggles were studied from the perspective of class conflicts. Western scholars, in turn, often focused on the region's geopolitical situation within the context of the «Great Game». Kuegelgen's work, in contrast, is distinguished by its focus on the internal, ideological foundations of power. Her work, based on sources from the Manghit period, also contains valuable information about the socio-political status of various social groups, including Uzbek tribes, the ulama, Tajiks, and other ethnic groups [1, p. 27].

Although Kuegelgen's research is directly devoted to

the issue of legitimation, the practical aspects of succession are not systematically synthesized within it. The work shows how the legitimacy of rulers was justified, but the process by which princes came to power – that is, the succession process itself, its mechanisms, participants, and informal rules – is not examined as a separate object of study. Information is scattered throughout different parts of the work. For instance, the text mentions phenomena that directly influenced the succession process, such as the position of the ataliq, the appointment of princes as governors of provinces, and the rebellions of tribal chiefs [1, p. 23], but they are not analyzed as a unified system. This indicates the existence of a gap in our understanding of the practices of power transition from one generation to the next in the Emirate of Bukhara.

The main objective of this article is to reconstruct the practical aspects of the succession system during the Manghit dynasty in the Emirate of Bukhara by synthesizing the information presented in Anke von Kuegelgen's monograph. To achieve this, the following objectives have been set: first, to determine, based on Kuegelgen's work, whether formal rules for selecting the heir apparent existed in the Emirate of Bukhara. Second, to analyze the role of the ataliq institution in preparing the heir apparent for rule. Third, to evaluate the significance of the princes' activities as provincial governors in the struggle for succession. Fourth, to demonstrate the role of the main political forces – the Uzbek tribal aristocracy and the ulama – in the succession process.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The methodological basis of this study is historical-systematic analysis. As Anke von Kuegelgen's fundamental work was chosen as the object of research, the primary method consists of a deep study of this source and the systematization of data related to the topic. Kuegelgen herself belongs to the German school of historiography, and her approach is based on analyzing historical texts (chronicles) not merely as sources of facts, but as narratives serving specific political goals. In her work, she studies not historical reality itself, but its «reflection» in historical sources. She examines sources written in Persian (Tajik) about the rulers of the Manghit dynasty and provides a detailed analysis of the legitimation strategies of the first four rulers of the emirate [3, p. 6].

Our research, however, treats Kuegelgen's analytical work itself as a form of literature, extracting facts and observations related to succession practices from her arguments on legitimation. That is, we analyze not the historical sources that Kuegelgen studied, but Kuegelgen's conclusions about those sources. This

approach allows us to reconstruct a general picture of the succession system based on high-level scholarly analysis, without directly referring to the primary historical sources. In the process of analysis, the information provided by Kuegelgen regarding the relationships between different social groups – Uzbek tribes, the ulama, court officials – is considered as factors influencing the succession process.

RESULTS

Anke von Kuegelgen's research demonstrates that during the Manghit dynasty, there were no formal, codified norms that strictly regulated succession, such as the principle of primogeniture (the throne passing to the eldest son). The primary reason for this was related to the dynasty's own origins. As the Manghits were not of Chinggisid descent, they could not justify their power by relying on the Yasa laws or the Chinggisid tradition, as previous dynasties had [1, p. 2]. The first Manghit rulers presented themselves as ataliqs acting on behalf of Chinggisid khans, and only in 1756 did Muhammad Rahimbiy officially declare himself khan [4, p. 36]. This situation also created ambiguity regarding the issue of succession. If the right to rule was not strictly tied to divine or hereditary tradition, then each new ruler had to re-prove the legitimacy of his power through personal virtues, political strength, and the support of influential groups.

Consequently, it became a natural occurrence for a power struggle to begin among the sons of a ruler after his death. This struggle was not merely a military conflict but a complex political process. The sources analyzed by Kuegelgen reflect that the princely contenders for the throne attempted to gather supporters, weaken their rivals, and demonstrate their fitness for rule in various ways. Thus, the succession system was determined not by pre-established rules, but by the actual balance of power in the political arena.

Kuegelgen's work provides important information about the position of the ataliq. Traditionally, an ataliq was appointed as a tutor and guardian to a young prince. However, during the Manghit period, the functions of this position expanded significantly, and the ataliq became not just a mentor but a key political figure who secured the prince's political future. The ataliq held a specific authority within the central administration of the emirate, was considered a pillar of support for the rulers, and was a dignitary who commanded their respect [5, p. 29]. The founder of the Manghit dynasty, Muhammad Rahimbiy himself, had effectively used the position of ataliq to seize power [1, p. 22].

For a prince aspiring to be the heir, obtaining the

patronage of an influential ataliq was a crucial matter. The ataliq was usually the chief of one of the most powerful Uzbek clans. He supported the prince with his military power and the help of his kinsmen, protected him from other claimants, and negotiated with political factions at court. Furthermore, the ataliq taught the young prince the secrets of statecraft, military affairs, and diplomacy. Thus, the ataliq institution became one of the central links in the succession process, serving as a unique «bridge» for the prince's entry into the political arena. Without the support of an ataliq, a prince's chances of ascending the throne were very low.

The information presented in Kuegelgen's work shows that Manghit rulers widely practiced the appointment of their young sons as governors of the country's major provinces (e.g., Qarshi, Samarkand) [1, p. 27]. This appointment was not merely an honorary title but a serious test and a school of experience for the future ruler.

As a provincial governor, a prince had to perform several important tasks: first, to govern the province effectively, demonstrating his administrative abilities, addressing the population's grievances, and establishing justice. This would show his capacity to rule the state as a future sovereign. Second, each province had its own military force. The prince was required to keep this army in a state of combat readiness, suppress rebellions, and defend the province from external attacks. This provided him with the opportunity to build a personal military force. Third, by establishing good relations with local nobles, clan chiefs, and the ulama in the province, the prince created his own social base of support. His influence in the province became a significant factor in the political struggle in the capital.

Thus, the provincial governorship not only gave the prince administrative experience but also created the opportunity to accumulate the personal resources necessary for the struggle for the throne (military force, financial means, political supporters). After the death of the central ruler, the prince with the strongest administrative, military, and political resources had a high probability of ascending the throne.

The transfer of power to an heir did not depend solely on the prince's personal actions. This process was significantly influenced by the two main political forces in the Emirate of Bukhara: the nobility of the Uzbek clans and the community of the ulama. In Kuegelgen's analysis, the political standing of these two groups is particularly emphasized. The Uzbek clans (Manghit, Kenagas, Saroy, Qipchaq, etc.) were considered the main military force of the emirate [1, p. 27]. Each major

clan had its own military leader (biy, bek) and army, which could be both a support and a threat to the central government. A prince aspiring to the throne had to win the support of the most influential clan chiefs. This support was often secured through the mediation of an ataliq or by promising future privileges and positions.

The second important group was the ulama – that is, the religious leaders, sayyids, and khojas. They held great moral authority in society and played a decisive role in ensuring the ruler's legitimation. When a new ruler ascended the throne, the ulama had to have the khutba (sermon) recited in his name and declare his rule compliant with Sharia law. Especially at a time when the emphasis on Islamic legitimation was growing, starting from the reign of Amir Haydar, obtaining the consent of the ulama was crucial. Therefore, princes sought to patronize the ulama, allocate waqf properties to madrasas, and present themselves as protectors of the faith. Thus, a successful succession was the result of a prince's ability to unite the military power of the Uzbek clan chiefs and the moral authority of the ulama.

DISCUSSION

The results obtained from the analysis of Anke von Kuegelgen's work significantly expand our understanding of the succession process in the Emirate of Bukhara. To assess this process as mere chaotic struggle would be a simplification. On the contrary, it was a complex political contest with its own informal rules. The main criterion of this selection was the prince's «worthiness», which consisted of several components: administrative competence, military capability, and the ability to form political alliances.

These results are directly linked to Kuegelgen's main conclusions about legitimation. Since the Manghits could not rely on hereditary tradition, they were forced to justify their rule through «effectiveness». That is, they had to present themselves as just rulers, defenders of Islam, and effective administrators of the state. The transformation of succession into a politico-meritocratic selection is precisely the result of this need for legitimation. The ascent of the most «worthy» – that is, the strongest, smartest, and most capable prince – to the throne would strengthen the dynasty's stability and its legitimation.

The practical significance of this research is that it demonstrates the importance of understanding the process of power transition in centralized states like the Emirate of Bukhara not only within the framework of formal laws but also through informal political structures and practices. Informal institutions such as the ataliq system, provincial governorships, and

alliances with influential groups had a stronger impact than formal laws.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, synthesizing the information from Anke von Kuegelgen's research on Manghit legitimation allows us to draw the following conclusions about the succession process in the Emirate of Bukhara. First, the Manghit dynasty lacked a strict, formally established order of succession. This is explained by the fact that the dynasty was outside the Chinggisid tradition and was constantly forced to prove the legitimacy of its rule. Second, the transfer of power took the form of a *de facto* politico-meritocratic selection. In this selection, the prince's personal potential and his ability to mobilize political resources were of decisive importance. Third, three informal but crucial practices played a central role in the succession process: a) the political mediation and patronage of the *ataliq*; b) the demonstration of administrative and military potential as a provincial governor; and c) the formation of political alliances with the main political forces – the Uzbek clan nobility and the *ulama*. Fourth, this informal system was a unique response to the legitimation crisis of the Manghit dynasty and served to maintain dynastic stability by ensuring the ascent of the most capable claimant to the throne. This study shows the importance of analyzing not only official historical narratives but also the informal political practices and balance of power behind them when studying power relations in the Emirate of Bukhara. Future research in this direction will contribute to a deeper understanding of the internal mechanisms of statehood during the Manghit period.

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