

## MUSLIM RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS IN IMPERIAL RUSSIA

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# MUSLIM RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS IN IMPERIAL RUSSIA

*The Islamic World of Novouzensk District and the  
Kazakh Inner Horde, 1780-1910*

BY

ALLEN J. FRANK



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## PREFACE

Work on this book began in Kazan in September of 1994, when Devin DeWeese, with whom I was traveling on a project to visit and document Muslim shrines in the Volga-Ural region, came upon the title *Tawārīkh-i Ālī Ātā* in the card catalog of Kazan University's Islamic manuscript collection. Hoping it could be a hagiographical source, Professor DeWeese ordered the manuscript, and brought it to my attention. Following a brief scan of the unusually large work, it soon became clear to us that the work was actually a major regional history. Mirkasym Usmanov and Javdat Minullin kindly arranged to make a microfiche copy of the manuscript for us, which Professor DeWeese brought back to the Central Asian Archives of the Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies at Indiana University.

After returning to Takoma Park, I was able to examine the microfiche copy more carefully, and came to the realization that this work was that rare source that was voluminous, but at the same time, in which every sentence seemed to contain citable information. Moreover, the manuscript turned out to have never been cited in any published work. It was that rarest of sources that seemed to perfectly meet one historian's tastes, interests, and intuition so fully that it seems could have been written expressly for him.

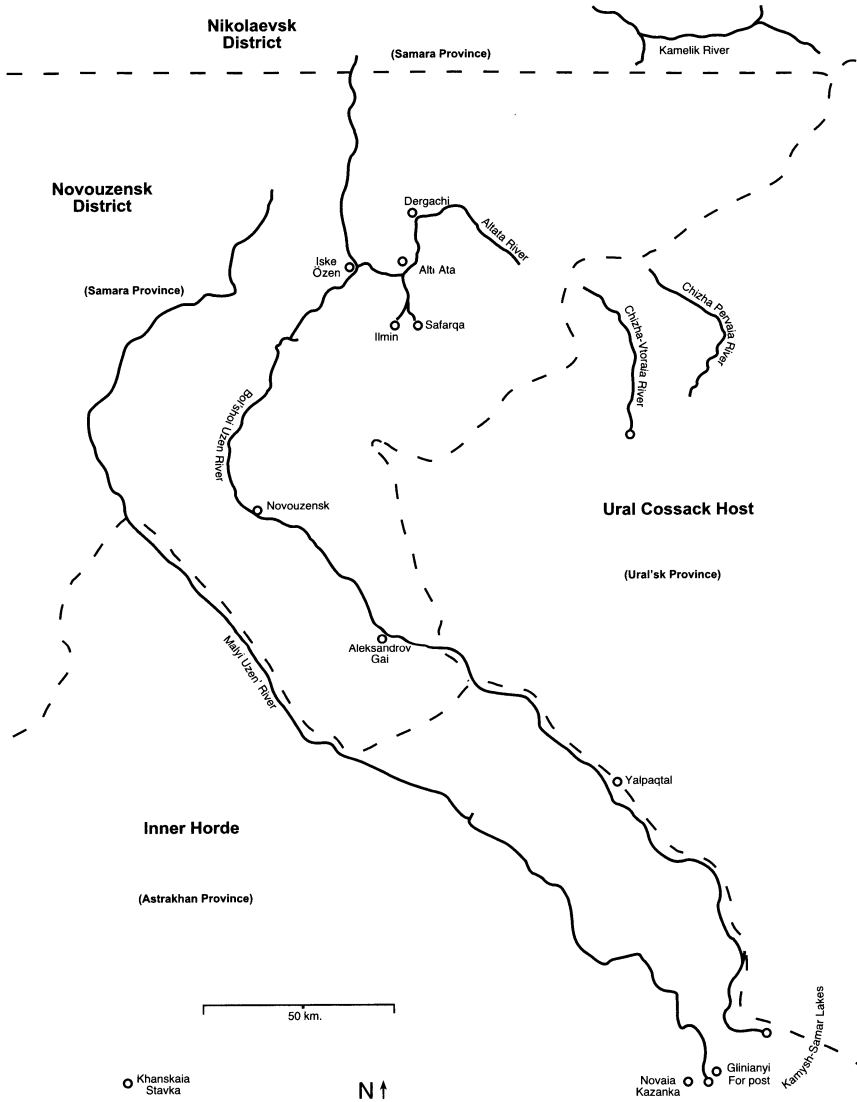
A number of friends have helped shape the writing in this book in different ways. My teacher Devin DeWeese not only brought the manuscript to my attention, but he also has helped shape my understanding of Inner Asian Islam over the years. Virginia Martin, Christian Noack, Willard Sunderland, Dilyara Usmanova, and Paul Werth were of tremendous help in obtaining copies of essential published sources in the libraries of Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kazan, and Almaty.

I am quite indebted to Michael Kemper, who patiently read several drafts, and who provided invaluable helpful suggestions both in editing my translations and in the overall writing and direction of the book. In addition, his theories on "Islamic Discourse" in the Volga-Ural region underlie much of my approach in the book. As always, I am especially grateful to my wife Faye-Ann for her support and patience.

Naturally, I owe the greatest debt of gratitude to the chief author of the *Tawārīkh-i Ālī Ātā*, Muḥammad-Fātiḥ b. Ayyūb al-Ilmīnī and to his son, Muḥammad. Ultimately, this is their book, as it is a study of their community based on their record. And it is high time that people listened to them.

Allen Frank  
Takoma Park





**Nikolaevsk District**

(Samara Province)

Kametlik River

**Novouzensk District**

(Samara Province)

Dergachi

Alata River

Iske Ozen

Altı Ata

Ilimin

Safarqa

Bol'shaya Uzen River

Novouzensk

Chircha, Paryga River

Chircha, Jortala River

**Ural Cossack Host**

(Ural'sk Province)

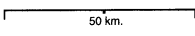
Aleksandrov Gai

Mal'yi Uzen River

Yalpaqtal

**Inner Horde**

(Astrakhan Province)



○ Khanskaia Slavka

N ↑

○ Novaia Kazanka

○ Gliniani For post

Kametsh-Samar Lakes

## INTRODUCTION

The century and a half, from 1767 to 1917, was a period of rapid and sustained growth for the Muslim institutions of Inner Russia and Siberia, a vast region encompassing the Middle and Lower Volga Valleys, the southern Urals, western Siberia, and the northern reaches of the Kazakh steppe. This region's Muslim population was Turkic-speaking. Although their modern descendants mainly divide themselves between the Tatar, Bashkir and Kazakh "nations," during the imperial period these communities divided themselves not along "ethnic" lines, but rather chiefly along corporate, tribal, and above all, religious lines. The rapid growth in the region's Islamic institutions, namely mosques, *madradas* and *maktabs*, and the *'ulamā*, was the result of a constellation of circumstances, including the formal recognition of Islamic institutions by the Imperial Russian government during the reign of Empress Catherine II, and the growth of a dynamic Muslim commercial, and later industrial, bourgeoisie. While the importance of the imperial authorities, and imperial laws, in bringing about the blossoming of Muslim institutions was undeniable, the imperial role was perhaps most prominent in framing in general terms the Muslims' own specifically Islamic view of their community and its institutions. These sorts of discussions, touching upon social, religious, and political issues affecting the Muslim communities at large, have been termed "Islamic Discourse." The German scholar Michael Kemper has explored and described the Volga-Ural region's "Islamic Discourse" from the end of the eighteenth century, with the establishment of the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly, down to the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> In Kemper's monograph the term "Islamic Discourse" has a restricted meaning. Kemper bases the definition of the term on the works of Reinhard Schulze, and in this context it implies the debates and discussions of social, political and religious issues expressed through traditional Islamic literary genres and institutions, such as Sufism and Sufi treatises, theology, law, and historiography. Kemper uses the term "Islamic" in

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Kemper, *Sufis und Gelehrte in Tatarien und Baschkirien, 1789–1889: Der islamische Diskurs unter russischer Herrschaft*, (Berlin, 1998).

a stricter, more useful sense, signifying the cultural idiom of Islamic culture as a whole, to which the Volga-Ural *‘ulamā* were trained in, and consciously made reference to. In this context, “Islamic” is not simply a synonym for Muslim, rather it is a reference to a shared body of traditions and canons and genres common to the Islamic world as a whole.

Kemper’s study demonstrates well the intellectual autonomy of these Muslim scholars, whose debates took place within a firmly Islamic context, and who relied on a common Islamic frame of reference and canon to hone and transmit their ideas, and to challenge and critique their colleagues. This autonomy, which modernist scholars mistakenly characterize as “isolation,” has perhaps contributed substantially to the neglect among twentieth-century scholars of Islamic ideas in the intellectual history of Volga-Ural Muslims.

The foundation of Islamic discourse, and of these communities’ very identity as Muslims, was local Islamic institutions. In imperial Russia virtually none of these institutions were funded by the state, either at the imperial, provincial, or even local level. Rather, Muslim religious institutions were virtually always funded by private funds, usually at the village level, and by the congregations themselves. All but the smallest and poorest villages had their own mosque, or multiple mosques, their own schools, and their own *‘alims*. In this sense, these institutions were universal features of Islamic life in Imperial Russia. The following figures testify to the breadth of Islamic institutions in Russia at that time. According to published official statistics, in 1883 the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly, the main imperial oversight establishment for the Muslims of Inner Russia and Siberia, had 4,093 mosques, 7,341 *‘alims*, and 2.14 million Muslims under its authority.<sup>2</sup>

Scholars have tended to take these local institutions for granted, in part because these institutions were so universal, they were understood to be “standard equipment” for any Muslim society. Since their existence was something that could be assumed without explicit statement, many studies have treated these institutions in the most general terms. However, for the communities in question, which were overwhelmingly rural and economically hard-pressed under the best conditions, the institutions were never taken for granted. For these

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<sup>2</sup> *Al’favitnye spiski armiano-grigoriānskikh tserkvei i magometānskikh mechetei v imperii*, (Moscow, 1883).

communities, the dividends that these mosques, schools, and *‘ulamā* afforded was nothing less than Islamic status; in effect, it was these institutions that made them Muslims, especially in the conditions of Imperial Russia, where Muslim communities were often scattered among larger non-Muslim populations, and where simple profession of Islam, as in the case of the “Baptized Tatars” did not necessarily grant a community official Islamic status in the eyes of the state.<sup>3</sup>

The aim of this study is to explore both the material and human aspects of these institutions at the village level and, in broader terms, to gauge their significance to the Muslim communities that supported them and discover what patterns emerge from the sources. The scope of available sources for Islamic institutions in imperial Russia are only beginning to be uncovered. These include, to be sure, Russian archival sources, and since the collapse of the Soviet Union, within the republics of Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, increasing numbers of studies of local history, in which the authors touch upon local Islamic institutions. However, the richest and most detailed sources are without doubt local histories produced within these Muslim communities themselves before 1917.

This study is based primarily on a single manuscript history, the *Tawārīkh-i Āltī Ātā*, written in 1910 by Muḥammad-Fātiḥ b. Ayyūb al-Īlmīnī and assisted by his son Muḥammad, both *imāms* in the village of Ilmin (officially Verkhazevka), a Tatar village in Osinov Gai township (*volost’*), in Samara province’s Novouzensk district (*uezd*). The author’s prime focus is the four Tatar villages of Osinov Gai township, of which there were four large villages comprising in 1910 nineteen mosques. However, al-Īlmīnī does not limit his inquiry to Osinov Gai township; rather, he takes as the geographic limits of his history the valleys of the region’s largest rivers, the parallel-flowing Mal’yi Uzen’ and Bol’shoi Uzen’, from their headwaters in the Obshchii Syrt uplands to their mouths in the Kamysh-Samar Lakes located in the Kazakh steppe. As a result, the history discusses not only the

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<sup>3</sup> Baptized Tatars were the descendants of Muslims who were converted to Orthodox Christianity in the first half of the eighteenth century, and who were officially Christian, but in effect were crypto-Muslims throughout the nineteenth century, and until 1905, when the Russian state lifted laws forbidding apostasy; on this group, cf. Paul W. Werth, “The Limits of Ascription: Baptized Tatars and the Revision of ‘Apostasy,’ 1840’s–1905,” *The Russian Review* 59 (2000), 1–19; cf. also Paul W. Werth, *Subjects for Empire: Orthodox Mission and Imperial Governance in the Volga-Kama Region*, Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Michigan, 1996.

Islamic institutions of Osinov Gai township, but also includes the other Muslim communities along these rivers, located in the trading centers of Novouzensk and Aleksandrov Gai in Novouzensk district, in the lands of the Ural Cossack Host, and in the Talovka and Kamysh-Samar districts of the Kazakh Inner Horde.

We are fortunate that the *Tawārīkh-i Āltī Ātā* has come down to us, not only because it is in its own right one of the finest examples of the region's Islamic historiography, but because al-Īlmīnī conceived of it as an *exhaustive* history, both in its geographic and chronological limits. Novouzensk district was located deep in the steppe and was colonized rather late. The first two Muslim villages in Osinov Gai township were founded in 1780 and 1800 respectively, and the last two were both founded in 1841. As a result, the roughly 110-year history of Islamic culture in this district was largely within the mnemonic reach of the elder al-Īlmīnī (born ca. 1843) and his elders who served as his sources. Thus, the author is able to furnish us with for the most part detailed accounts of each of the district's nineteen mosques and *maḥallas*, and detailed biographical sketches of over 65 local *imāms* and 35 *mu'adhdhins*. As we shall subsequently see, the *Tawārīkh-i Āltī Ātā* provides us with an understanding of the functioning and role of Islamic institutions in a number of nearby villages in a manner unparalleled in other sources. It allows us to see how mosques and *madrasas* were built, how money was raised for their construction, how *imāms* and *mu'adhdhins* were chosen, dismissed and occasionally disgraced, what their origins were and how they were connected to their congregations, how they were supported, what roles they played in the community, and what the community expected of them. It lets us see how education was administered and funded, and above all it reveals to us the small, but nevertheless crucial, details of the humble, yet vital and vibrant, local Islamic institutions that had developed at the village level over several centuries of Russian rule. In addition, the authors' scrutiny goes beyond their own communities to the various Muslim communities on the steppe, the Kazakhs, Bashkirs, and Muslim Cossacks, and the interactions between these related, yet exclusive Muslim communities.

Nevertheless, while this study will focus on the institutions of Novouzensk district and the Kazakh Inner Horde, these regions will be examined within the broader imperial context, comparing al-Īlmīnī's information with other published studies to provide us with a clearer picture of the various aspects of Russia's Islamic institutions.

A BIBLIOGRAPHIC ESSAY ON MUSLIM RELIGIOUS  
LIFE IN THE VOLGA-URAL REGION

A major reason for the general lack of attention in most previous studies given to Islamic institutions has been the prominence of modernist and nationalist ideas in underpinning previous approaches to the history of Volga-Ural Muslims. In Soviet and nationalist works, as well as in the works of Western specialists who have accepted the Soviet and nationalist interpretations uncritically, the dominant theme has been how Russia's Muslims "modernized" their societies by adopting forms of discourse adapted from western models (i.e. ethnic nationalism, national identity, class consciousness) and adopting western institutions (i.e. European-style education, secular political leaders, etc.). These processes are commonly referred to by the generic term "reformism" and by the cliché "national awakening."

Whether stated by these historians or not, the other side of the coin involves the discarding of equivalent traditional modes of discourse and institutions, which for Volga-Ural Muslims were Islamic. Thus, for scholars whose conceptual framework for these communities is so firmly rooted in Eurocentric modernist values and convictions, their assumption has been that by the beginning of the twentieth century, Islamic institutions and Islamic discourse, which they were ill-equipped or unwilling to understand, had become "reactionary" or "backward." In this context, the main theme was how these institutions had become irrelevant, or even harmful, to Muslim society, and how the modernist ideas displaced them. According to such a conception of history, the old institutions quietly disappeared, and as a result, required no further comment. However, whatever forms the internal debate within Volga-Ural Muslim society may have taken, ultimately it was not decided internally. The decisive event was the victory of the Bolsheviks in the Russian Civil War. To say that the Bolsheviks were committed to secularization is an understatement, and the Bolshevik leadership, together with Tatar Bolsheviks such as Mirsaid Sultangaliev, were committed to turning Volga-Ural Muslims into Tatar and Bashkir *nations* and were bent on uprooting the Islamic institutions that had developed in the imperial Russian period.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> An obvious example of this is the anti-religious treatise by the Tatar Communist Mirsaid Sultangaliev instructing communists how to conduct anti-religious propaganda among Volga-Ural Muslim peasants; cf. Alexandre Bennigsen, *Les mouvements*

Although the exigencies of the Civil War and the economic problems of the 1920's delayed the Soviet assault on Russia's Islamic institutions, the onset of collectivization and cultural revolution resulted in a full-scale assault on the institutions. Not only were thousands of mosques closed, but all Islamic education was banned, all *madrasas* were closed, tens of thousands of Islamic books and manuscripts were burned. Most decisively, perhaps thirty thousand members of the *'ulamā* were executed or exiled to labor camps in Siberia.<sup>5</sup> By the late 1930's this dynamic Islamic culture had for all intents and purposes ceased to exist, as had the jadids and most of the Tatar Bolsheviks such as Sultangaliev, who found themselves victims of the very policies they had applied to their ethnic kinsmen.<sup>6</sup>

Nationalist, not to mention Soviet, historians, have been uniformly silent about the fate of the *'ulamā* under the Soviets, although they have consistently drawn their readers' attention to the repression of modernists and nationalist figures, with special emphasis on Tatar communists such as Sultangaliev.<sup>7</sup> The reason for this silence, calculated or not, in all likelihood is that the assumption among both nationalist and Soviet historians has been that by 1917 the Islamic institutions and the *'ulamā* of the Volga-Ural region had simply withered away before the progressive and peaceful advance of modernism and nationalism on the one hand, or proletarian class consciousness on the other. This unspoken assumption has been a useful one in that it has freed these historians from addressing the question of how widely nationalist and modernist ideas actually were accepted among Volga-Ural Muslims before 1917.<sup>8</sup> Since the *'ulamā* in Russia had

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*nationaux chez les musulmans de Russie: le 'Sultangalievisme' au Tatarstan*, (Paris, 1960), 106–107.

<sup>5</sup> A relatively complete account of the shutting down of mosques in Chuvashia has been published by L. Braslavskii; cf. L. Iu. Braslavskii, *Islam v Chuvashii*, (Cheboksary, 1997), 109–145.

<sup>6</sup> A. A. Alov and N. G. Vladimirov, *Islam v Rossii*, (Moscow, 1996), 60–62.

<sup>7</sup> To be sure, since the collapse of the Soviet Union some discussions of the elimination of the *'ulamā* have occasionally appeared in scholarly, and especially in popular works in Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, although it remains to be the topic of a systematic historical inquiry.

<sup>8</sup> In both Soviet and nationalist treatments the opponents of jadidism are generically referred to as “qadimists”. Qadimists are typically treated as reactionary supporters of tsarism, and the understanding is that without the support of the tsarist system, “qadimism” in 1917 simply went the way of the Romanov dynasty and the rest of the tsarist system; for a more informed treatment of the jadidist-qadimist polemic cf. Stéphane Dudoignon, “Qu'est-ce que la 'Qadimiya'?” *Eléments de soci-*

ceased to exist, and both exiled nationalists and Soviet Tatar historians held the historiographic field and spoke in the same modernist idiom, the absence of the *‘ulamā* was understood as a result of the impersonal actions of peaceful historical forces, when in fact the elimination of the *‘ulamā* was anything but impersonal, let alone peaceful.

It is an unfortunate fact that the historiographic corpus of Muslim religious life in Imperial Russia, that is, the studies of Russia’s Muslim institutions, had until quite recently been the exclusive bailiwick of Soviet and nationalist authors whose own separate, yet fundamentally similar, agendas have been to minimize the role of these Islamic institutions and inflate the supposed presence of class consciousness and national identity in Volga Ural Muslim society. It should be noted that Western historians, even those claiming credit as “anti-Soviets” and advertising their sympathies for Islam have accepted most uncritically both the Soviet and the nationalist conceptions of the role of Islamic institutions in imperial Russia. Let us examine then the major Soviet and nationalist currents in the historiography of Muslim religious life in imperial Russia.

### SOVIET STUDIES

The first generation of Soviet historians who addressed Muslim religious life were themselves often at least partially educated in village *madrasas*, the traditional Muslim institutions of higher learning. Among such figures, the works of Dzhamaliutdin Validov are particularly important, since he leaves us a somewhat extended, albeit biased, discussion of traditional (pre-jadidist) education.<sup>9</sup> The most prominent Tatar historian of this period, Gaziz Gubaidullin, the first Tatar Marxist historian, devoted particular attention to the class and ethnic history of the Tatars, but attention to religious life and Islamic institutions are noticeably absent from his narratives.<sup>10</sup> For these early

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ologie du traditionalisme musulman en Islam de Russie et en Transoxiane,” *L’Islam de Russie: Conscience communautaire et autonomie politique chez les Tatars de la Volga et de l’Oural depuis le XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Stéphane Dudoignon et al. eds., (Paris, 1997), 207–225.

<sup>9</sup> Dzhamaliutdin Validov. *Ocherki istorii obrazovannosti i literatury tatar (do revoliutsii 1917 g.)*, (Moscow and Petrograd, 1923).

<sup>10</sup> A. Gubaidullin, “Iz proshlogo tatar”, *Materialy po istorii Tatarstana II*, (Kazan, 1925), 71–111; cf. also G. Gobäydullin, *Tarikhii säkhifälär achilganda* (Kazan, 1989) and his *Istoriia tatar* (Moscow, 1994). Gubaidullin’s chronologies, narrative structure,

Soviet historians, as well as for all subsequent Soviet Tatar and Bashkir historians, Islam became identified as simply an “ideology”, that is, an intellectual system used by the ruling class to maintain its class privileges and hegemony over the working class. As such, any manifestation of religious discourse could be reduced to “really” being political or class discourse in a “religious disguise”.

In Soviet times the study of imperial Russia’s Muslim religious institutions themselves were specifically entrusted to specialists in Scientific Atheism, who were primarily concerned with revealing the “true” class nature of religion, or depicting religious behavior on the part of the working class as false consciousness or plain ignorance. Hostility and contempt for the religious heritage of the Tatars and Bashkirs were not only unconcealed by these scholars, but were *de rigueur*, and the dismissal of religion as a legitimate historical category was the centerpiece of their methodology. Nevertheless, the works of these anti-religious scholars sometimes contain important source material on numerous aspects of Muslim religious life in imperial Russia. For example, Zarif Mözaffari’s monograph on Sufism, published in 1931, is perhaps the most important published source since 1917 on the Sufis of the Volga-Ural region and the Kazakh steppe in late imperial Russia<sup>11</sup> and N. Matorin’s small monograph on religion in the Middle Volga region is a particularly useful source on Muslim hagiolatry.<sup>12</sup> Among the major works of a synthetic nature are Liutsian Klimovich’s study of Islam in imperial Russia as a whole, including the Volga-Ural region. Klimovich devotes special attention, based on Russian archival sources, to the major Muslim institutions in imperial Russia, including the muftiate and the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly.<sup>13</sup> Following the Second World War, Volga Ural Islam and its institutions were largely ignored by Soviet scholars until the era of Mikhail Gorbachev. Nevertheless one of the main anti-religious studies of Islamic institutions in the Volga-Ural region dates from the late 1970’s. This work, by Z. Ishmukhametov, is the only monograph to systematically examine the role of Islamic insti-

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and general conclusions form the foundations of the historical narrative in several Western works, especially those of Rorlich and Bennigsen.

<sup>11</sup> Zarif Mözaffari, *Ishannar-Därvishlär*, (Kazan, 1931).

<sup>12</sup> N. Matorin, *Religiia u narodov Volzhsko-Kamskogo kraia prezhe i teper’*, (Moscow, 1929).

<sup>13</sup> Liutsian Klimovich, *Islam v tsarskoi Rossii*, (Moscow, 1936).

tutions in the development of Muslim society in the Volga-Ural region during the imperial period.<sup>14</sup>

Following the Second World War Tatar and Bashkir historiography fell into line with the “Friendship of Peoples” policy of history writing that was prevailing in the Soviet Union at that time. The premise of this historiography was that throughout history the working classes of the various peoples inhabiting the territory of the present-day USSR were involved in a partnership, or “friendship” with the working class of the Russian people.<sup>15</sup> This partnership manifested itself through a mutual commitment to class struggle and to defending the future territory of the USSR from foreign invaders. In these works, discussions of religious institutions are entirely lacking. Rather, these are essentially impersonal histories, emphasizing ethnic formation and class struggle. From this time Soviet Tatar historians began to contort their works to conform to this new historiographic line, and the result was that historical inquiry began to shift away from the Golden Horde, the erstwhile ethnic and political crucible of the Tatar nation in the works of Gubaidullin, which now became identified as a reactionary, feudal robber state of foreign conquerors, against which the Russians and numerous junior members of the Soviet family of nations struggled. It was at this time, in the late 1940’s, that Soviet Tatar historiography began to move into two different areas: the history of the pre-Mongol Volga Bulgarians and historical ethnography. This Soviet “Bulgharist” historiography for the most part was limited to secular aspects of the cultural, political, and ethnic history of the medieval Volga Bulgarians.<sup>16</sup>

In the realm of ethnography Soviet Tatar and Bashkir scholars sought to portray their respective nations’ folk cultures as purely national phenomena, in which Islam was again considered a fleeting and superficial “ideology.” In the limited space accorded to discussions of religious activities or religious life in ethnographies of the

<sup>14</sup> Z. A. Ishmukhametov, *Sotsial’naia rol’ i evoliutsiia Islama v Tatarii*, (Kazan, 1979).

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Lowell Tillet. *The Great Friendship: Soviet Historians on the Non-Russian Nationalities*, (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1969).

<sup>16</sup> Among the chief works of Soviet and post-Soviet “Neo-Bulgharism” cf. Abrar Karimullin, *Tatary: etnos i etnonim*, (Kazan, 1988) and A. Kh. Khalikov, *Kto my - bulgary ili tatary? Kem bez—bolgarlarmi, tatarlarmi?* (Kazan, 1992). For discussions of Soviet “Neo-Bulgharism” and its historiography cf. Allen J. Frank, *Islamic Historiography and ‘Bulghar’ Identity among the Tatars and Bashkirs of Russia*, (Leiden, 1998), 178–196, and Victor A. Shnirelman, *Who gets the Past?: Competition for Ancestors among Non-Russian intellectuals in Russia*, (Washington D.C., 1996).

Tatars and Bashkirs, and especially of the Kazakhs, discussions of religious life were restricted to brief accounts of “folk beliefs”. In these accounts virtually all religious phenomena, such as for example the ancestor cult, demonology, pilgrimage, and especially agricultural calendar festivals, shamanism and virtually every other aspect of human activity that may have had religious significance to a Muslim, and may have been expressed in Islamic terms, were instead defined as “pre-Islamic.” Whatever Islamic elements may have existed among these manifestation of popular religious consciousness were simply dismissed as a surface layer of Islamic “ideology” upon a phenomenon that was “really” pre-Islamic, and national. In these ethnographic depictions the religious life of imperial Russia’s Muslim villagers was reduced to a childish world of belief in spirits, hobgoblins, and leprechauns, without any reference to the Islamic institutions and ideals that formed the core of these communities’ identities. These ethnographers all but ignored the presence and fundamental role of Islamic institutions at the village level, which included mosques, *madrasas*, *imāms*, *mu’adhdhins*, hagiolatry, and Arabic, Turkic and Persian Islamic literature.

Just as Soviet ethnographic works reduced the religious traditions of rural Muslims to a jumbled potpourri of irrational “pre-Islamic” beliefs the intellectual history of Volga-Ural Muslims was similarly reduced to a dualistic struggle between the progressive proponents of secularism and enlightenment on one side, and the reactionary clerical supporters of Islamic scholasticism on the other. As a result, all Islamic scholars were placed in one of these two categories. If a literary or intellectual figure from the region was to receive any sort of appreciation, it was the “progressive” elements in his work, especially any evidence of “secularism”, and best of all, anti-clericalism. This characterization was especially evident in treatments of Muslim education and in literary history in general. Although this approach was certainly the result of official Soviet directives concerning history writing by Tatar and Bashkir scholars, it also satisfied the need for Tatar and Bashkir intellectuals define the “national” histories of their respective peoples. In this scheme the fundamental historical phenomenon was the nation which while it “really” existed since ancient times, only achieved the awareness of being a nation as a result of an “awakening.” National awakening could only be achieved by challenging the Islamic “ideology” which retarded the growth of national self-awareness. Islamic ideology was to be replaced by the

new progressive and “real” ideology of Tatar (or Bashkir) national identity. This approach was developed rather intensely in the last two decades of the Soviet Union’s existence.<sup>17</sup> Although it has been largely (but not entirely) stripped of much of its Marxist-Leninist and “Friendship of Peoples” elements, this evaluation of Islam and Tatar national identity has not only survived the fall of the Soviet Union, but has flourished in post-Soviet Russia, especially among Tatar intellectuals.

While the idea of secularism dominated Soviet Tatar and Bashkir historiography concerning Islam in the Volga-Ural region, it was above all the Volga-Ural region’s orientalists who continued the study of Islamic culture in the Volga-Ural, despite the constraints of official Soviet historiographic principles. This work was primarily in the literary field, and involved the collection and study of the region’s Islamic manuscripts, its historiography, genealogical traditions, and epigraphy. The most fundamental work of this era was the collection of Islamic manuscripts from the region’s Muslim communities. The collection of Islamic manuscripts had already been begun in the 1920’s by Sayet Vakhidi; but the business of collecting these manuscripts only started up again in the early 1960’s in Kazan and Ufa. This “archeographic” work resulted in the collection of thousands of Turkic, Arabic, and Persian manuscripts, a truly impressive body of sources that has only begun to be utilized by scholars.<sup>18</sup> Of special prominence are the works of the Kazan historian Mirkasym Usmanov, who managed to publish numerous monographs and studies on topics that had been on ideologically unstable ground. Much of his work was based on manuscript materials, and included fundamental studies of Tatar historiography.<sup>19</sup> Other important works have addressed

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<sup>17</sup> Typical of these sorts of works are Ia. Abdullin, *Tatarskaia prosvetitel'skaia mysl'*, (Kazan, 1976), M. Iusupov, *Shigabutdin Merdzhani kak istorik*, (Kazan, 1981), A. I. Kharisov, *Literaturnoe nasledie bashkirskogo naroda*, (Ufa, 1973); for a discussion of these sorts of sources cf. Kemper, *Sufis und Gelehrte*, 12–14.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. *Iuzhnoural'skii arkhograficheskii sbornik I–II*, (Ufa, 1972–1973); M. A. Gosmanov, *Qauriy qalâm ézennân* 2nd ed. (Kazan, 1994), M. A. Usmanov “Zur Geschichte der tatarischen Handschriften,” *Muslim Culture in Russia and Central Asia from the 18th to the Early 20th Centuries* [vol. 1], Michael Kemper, Anke von Kügelgen and Dmitriy Yermakov (eds.), (Berlin, 1996), 49–68; M. A. Usmanov, *Itogi i perspektivy arkhograficheskikh rabot v Kazanskom universitete*, (Kazan, 1990).

<sup>19</sup> M. A. Usmanov, “Istochniki knigi Sh. Mardzhani ‘Mustafad al-akhbar fi akhvali Kazan va Bulgar’ ch. 1, Kazan, 1885,” *Ocherki istorii Povolzh'ia i Priural'ia* (Kazan, 1969), 144–154; *Tatarskie istoricheskie istochniki XVII–XVIII vv.*, (Kazan, 1972); M. A.

the history of local genealogical traditions, as well as local historiography.<sup>20</sup> Although the works of these Tatar and Bashkir orientalists display many of the nationalist ideas characteristic of Soviet Tatar and Bashkir historiography in general, they have nonetheless produced numerous pioneering studies that contributed substantially to a better understanding of Muslim religious life in imperial Russia, and have brought to light many important sources that would otherwise have remained in obscurity.

### NATIONALIST HISTORIANS

Nationalist Tatar and Bashkir historiography emerged already during the late Imperial period, as romantic nationalism began to make inroads among Muslim intellectuals in the Volga-Ural region.<sup>21</sup> However, it developed most fully in the 1920's and 30's among opponents of the Soviet regime who had managed to flee abroad during the Civil War, and who settled in Turkey and Germany. These historians adhered to primarily a nationalist conception of the region's history and much of their history had a anti-communist and at times anti-Russian direction. These historians were primarily concerned with national history, which they conceived of as political history and in terms of their political conclusions these historians differed markedly from their Soviet counterparts. Nevertheless, in terms of their underlying conceptions of Tatar and Bashkir history, both groups of historians were firmly devoted to a national conception of Tatar and Bashkir history, and both shared the same suspicion of the Islamic heritage of the Tatars and Bashkirs. Among nationalist historians, we have seen that these ideas were already current in late

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Usmanov, (ed.) *Vozzvaniia i perepiska vozhakov Pugachevskogo dvizheniia v Povolzh'e i Priural'e*, (Kazan, 1988); *Zhalovannye akty Dzhuchieva ulusa XIV-XVI vv.*, (Kazan, 1979).

<sup>20</sup> Cf. R. Shaikhiev, *Tatarskaia narodno-kraevedcheskaia literatura XIX-XX vv.* (Kazan, 1990), Marsel' Akhmetzianov, *Tatarskie shedzhere*, (Kazan, 1991), R. G. Kuzeev, *Bashkirskie shezhere* (Ufa, 1960), I. G. Galiautdinov, *Tarikh Nama-i Bulgar Tadzhetidina Ialsygulova*, (Ufa, 1990).

<sup>21</sup> Among such works published in the later imperial period the most notable are Aḥmad Zakī Valīdī, *Türk Tātār Tārīkhī*, (Kazan, 1912), the abridged third edition of 1917 was reprinted as *Qışqacha Türek-Tatar Tarikhī*, (Kazan, 1992); Hādī Atlāsī, *Sībīr tārīkhī* (Kazan, 1912), Hādī Atlāsī, *Qazān khānlighī*, (Kazan, 1914), reprinted as *Seber tarikhī*; *Söyembikä*, *Qazan khanlighī*, (Kazan, 1993); 'Abdallāh Baṭṭāl, *Tātār Tārīkhī*, (Kazan, 1912).

imperial Russia, but became further developed in Kemalist Turkey in the 1920's and 1930's.<sup>22</sup>

The history of the Muslims peoples of the Volga-Ural region attracted the interest of a number of Western historians beginning in the late 1950's. Among these historians included Serge Zenkovsky, but Alexandre Bennigsen and Chantal Lemercier-Quelquejay were especially prominent.<sup>23</sup> They focused on "national movements" and strongly adhered to nationalist and modernist approaches evident in the works of both the early Soviet authors, especially Validov and Gubaidullin, as well as to the nationalist conceptions of the émigré historians in Turkey. These Western historians relied exclusively on published secondary sources and there is very little attention given to the region's Islamic institutions and Muslim religious life, except for those figures determined to be "enlighteners" or "secularists", and who sought to define Volga-Ural Muslim society in national terms. Indeed, one of Bennigsen's first monographs lionizes the Tatar Communist Mirsaid Sultangaliev, a fierce opponent of Islam in Tatar society, and an anti-religious activist, as a national hero.

Until recently most Western scholars dealing with Volga-Ural Muslims have remained fixated on religious modernism (jadidism) as basically the sole topic of inquiry for Volga-Ural Muslim society in the imperial period. A. Rorlich's national history of the Tatars is essentially a history of jadidism and of its role in creating a modern national consciousness among the Tatars. In her account, again based almost entirely on secondary sources, the narrative follows the "modernization" and Europeanization of the Tatar nation. Although recently more nuanced treatments of jadidism in the Volga-Ural region have begun to appear, the overwhelming focus of inquiry in

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<sup>22</sup> Among the most prominent of these works are 'Abdallāh Baṭṭāl-Tāymās, *Qāzān Türkleri—tārīkhī ve siyāsī görüshler*, (Istanbul, 1924); the second edition work was re-issued in Turkish in 1966 as Abdullah Battal-Taymas, *Kazan Türkleri* (Ankara, 1966), and a Tatar edition was published in 1996 as Gabelbari Battal, *Qazan törkiläre*, (Kazan, 1996); Ahmet Zeki Velidi Togan, *Bugünkü Türkili (Türkistan) ve Yakın Tarikhi*, (Istanbul, 1981); Aiaz Iskhaki, *Idel-Ural*, (Paris, 1933); this work was reprinted in Kazan in 1993.

<sup>23</sup> Bennigsen, *Les mouvements nationaux chez les musulmans de Russie*, Serge A. Zenkovsky, *Pan Turkism and Islam in Russia*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1967); Chantal Quelquejay, "Le 'Vaisime' à Kazan: contribution à l'étude des confréries musulmanes chez les tatars de la Volga," *Die Welt des Islams* N.S. VI (1-2), 1959, 91-112; for a critical discussion of this sort of historiography cf. Yuri Bregel, *Notes on the History of Central Asia*, (Papers on Inner Asia No. 28), (Bloomington, Indiana, 1996).

the West had until quite recently been focused on religious modernism.<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, some more critical and better informed treatments of jadidism, and Islamic modernism in general in the Volga-Ural region, have begun to emerge among Western historians. In this category, the works of the French scholar Stéphane Dudoignon, and of the German historian Christian Noack deserve special mention.<sup>25</sup>

### POST-SOVIET STUDIES

The collapse of the Soviet system and of its ideological restraints on scholarship did not result in a fundamental reevaluation among Tatar and Bashkir scholars of the role of Islam or Islamic institution in their national histories. Indeed, Tatar historians embraced secularism and national history more firmly than ever. Part and parcel of this emphasis on the national aspect has led post-Soviet Tatar historians to view jadidism and Islamic modernism as manifestations of the Tatar national genius.<sup>26</sup> Although the fundamental nationalist and secular conceptions of Tatar and Bashkir history now current in Russia are not about to be challenged, at least locally, a number of scholars have made important contributions to our understanding of Muslim religious institutions in imperial Russia, especially at the local level. The Bashkir scholar Danil' Azamatov has published a number of works on the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly,<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> A. Rorlich's study of the "Volga" Tatars is essentially a hagiography of jadidist figures, in which the national conception of Tatar history is fully and uncritically embraced; cf. A. Rorlich, *The Volga Tatars: a Profile in National Resilience*, (Stanford, California, 1986).

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Stéphane Dudoignon, "Qu'est-ce que la 'Qadimiya'?" Stéphane Dudoignon, "Djadidisme, Mirasisme, Islamisme," *Cahiers du Monde Russe* XXXVII (1-2), 1996, 13-40; Christian Noack, "Les musulmans de la région Volga-Oural au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle. L'arrière-plan social et culturel du mouvement d'émancipation," *L'Islam de Russie*, 89-114; Christian Noack, *Muslimischer Nationalismus im Russischen Reich. Nationsbildung und Nationalbewegung bei Tataren und Baschkiren, 1860-1917* (Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte des östlichen Europas, Band 56). (Stuttgart, 2000).

<sup>26</sup> A recent example of this idea is D. M. Iskhakov, *Fenomen dzhadidizma: vvedenie k sotsiokul'turnomu osmysleniiu*, (Kazan, 1997).

<sup>27</sup> Danil' D. Azamatov, "Russian Administration and Islam in Bashkiria (18th-19th centuries)," *Muslim Culture in Russia and Central Asia from the 18th to the Early 20th Centuries* [vol. 1] 91-112; Danil' D. Azamatov, "The Muftis of the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly in the 18th and 19th centuries: the Struggle for Power in Russia's Muslim Institution," *Muslim Culture in Russia and Central Asia from the 18th to the Early 20th Centuries. Vol. 2: Inter-Regional and Inter-Ethnic Relations* Anke von Kügelgen, Michael

Marsel' Akhmetzianov had published an important collections of Tatar genealogical treatises,<sup>28</sup> the Bashkir historian Marsil' Farkhshatov published a monograph treating in detail Islamic education in the Southern Ural region,<sup>29</sup> using Russian archival materials, the Kazan historians Ravil' Khairutdinov and Radik Salikhov have published numerous works on mosques and on other Muslim institutions in Kazan province.<sup>30</sup> In addition a number of works addressing local Muslim traditions and institutions such areas as Arsk district in Tatarstan, Chuvashia, and Nizhnii Novgorod and Perm' provinces have also appeared.<sup>31</sup> And this brief list is by no means exhaustive.

In the West a number of recent studies, based on locally-produced Islamic manuscript material, have emerged to challenge the Soviet and especially nationalist depictions of Islamic cultural life in the Volga Ural region during the imperial period. As we have noted, the German scholar Michael Kemper has explored and described the region's "Islamic Discourse" from the end of the eighteenth century, with the establishment of the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly, down to the end of the nineteenth century. In addition to Kemper's important study, I have examined the role of the region's historiographic and hagiological traditions in creating a regional Islamic identity based on sacred history and geography that emerged during the late eighteenth century, and was closely linked to the emergence of imperial Russia's Muslim institutions, as well as to Islamic and Inner Asian conception of community.

For different reasons, previous studies of Islamic religious life in imperial Russia have favored a broad geographical approach examining the subject either on the imperial level, or on the basis on the ethnic-republican polities created during the Soviet era, which bore little relation to the boundaries that most Muslims perceived during

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Kemper, Allen J. Frank eds., (Berlin, 1998), 355–384; D. D. Azamatov, *Orenburgskoe magometanskoe dukhovnoe sobranie v kontse XVIII–XIX vv.*, (Ufa, 1999).

<sup>28</sup> Marsel' Akhmetzianov, *Tatar shäjäraläre*, (Kazan, 1995).

<sup>29</sup> M. N. Farkhshatov, *Narodnoe obrazovanie v Bashkirii v poreformennyi period, 60–90e gody XIX v.* (Moscow, 1994).

<sup>30</sup> Radik Salikhov and Ramil Khayrutdinov. *Tatar khalqining tarikhii häm määdäni häykälläre (XVIII gasir akhiri—XX gasir bashi)*, (Kazan, 1995); R. R. Salikhov, R. R. Khayrutdinov, and K. M. Nizamutdinov eds., *Ocherki istorii Vysokogorskogo raiona respubliki Tatarstan*, (Kazan, 1999).

<sup>31</sup> Ämir Fatıykhov, *Gäyne ile*, (Barda, 1995); Kamil Nizametdinov and İlshat Khäliullin (eds.) *Archa töbäge tarikhii—Istoriia Arskogo kraia* (Kazan, 1996); U. Iu. Idrisov et al., *Iz istorii Nizhegorodskikh musul'manskikh obshchin v XIX—30-kh godakh XX veka*, (Nizhnii Novgorod, 1997); L. Iu. Braslavskii, *Islam v Chuvasii*, (Cheboksary, 1997).

the imperial period. Local studies, on the other hand, while welcome have lacked a comparative approach. The present study will concentrate its attention on the Muslim communities inhabiting a single river valley straddling the modern-day border between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Kazakhstan, while at the same time keeping the discussion within a comparative framework encompassing the Islamic institutions of Russia proper and Siberia during the imperial period. Our attention is drawn to this river valley, specifically the valley of the Bol'shoi Uzen' River, thanks to the efforts of two *imāms* from the region, Muḥammad-Fātiḥ al-Īlmīnī and his son Muḥammad, who in 1910 completed an extensive narrative history of this valley. This source, entitled *Tawārīkh-i Ālī Āiā*, was written in Arabic-script Turki and forms the basis of the present study.

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE *TAWĀRĪKH-I ĀLTĪ ĀTĀ*

#### 1. ISLAMIC HISTORIOGRAPHY IN THE VOLGA-URAL REGION

In the course of their 350 years as Russian subjects the Muslims of the Volga-Ural region and Siberia developed extensive oral and especially written historiographical traditions. The main source for this study, a Turkic manuscript entitled the *Tawārīkh-i Āltī Ātā* (the Chronicles of the Altata Valley) represents one of the final works from this tradition before the liquidation of the Islamic clerisy (*‘ulamā*), and the historiography they produced. Although native Islamic historiography is known to have existed in the Volga-Ural region before the Russian conquest of the Kazan khanate in 1552, no works from this period have come down to us, and the entire surviving historiographical corpus is one that developed under Russian rule. Generally speaking, Muslim narrative historiography of the Volga-Ural region and Siberia from before the 1917 Revolution can be divided into four general categories: 1) Chingisid court histories, 2) “Bulgharist” sacred historiography, 3) Tatar nationalist historiography and 4) local historiography. The first category consists of “Chingisid” histories, that is, histories compiled under the patronage of Chingisids who ruled the Russian-dominated puppet khanate of Kasimov. These works include the *Jāmi‘ at-Tawārīkh* by Qādir ‘Alī Bek Jālāyirī (1602) and the *Daftar-i Chingīz Nāma* by an anonymous compiler (c. 1680). The former work has come down to us in only three copies, and was partially commissioned by tsar Boris Godunov, while the latter work is essentially a more transitional work, and exists in around 40 manuscript copies.<sup>1</sup>

The next major genre, “Bulgharist” sacred historiography, emerged

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<sup>1</sup> On this Chingisid court historiography see: M. A. Usmanov, *Tatarskie istoricheskie istochniki XVII-XVIII vv.*, (Kazan, 1972), 9–133; Abdülkadir İnan, “Destan-i Çengiz Han kitabı hakkında,” *Azerbaycan Yurt Bilgisi* III/28 (1934), 9–14, 131–135; Frank, *Islamic Historiography*, 12–20; Kemper, *Sufis und Gelehrte in Tatarien und Baschkirien*, 316–319; DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion*, 382–392.

at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This historiography developed as a response to the growing integration of the Volga-Ural *‘ulamā* into the Russian state system with the creation of the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly in 1789, that effectively united on a juridical and administrative basis the Muslim communities of the Volga-Ural region and Siberia. “Imagining” the Volga-Ural Muslim community in sacred terms is what characterized these histories. The primary unifying event is the mythical conversion of the Bulgars by three Companions (*ṣahābas*) of the prophet Muḥammad. As a result the “Bulghar” (i.e. Volga-Ural Muslim) community was imagined both in salvific terms, as a community created by its acceptance of Islam at the direct behest of the Prophet Muḥammad. The compilers also imagined the community in geographic terms, since both similar conversion narratives describing the miraculous conversions of the Bulgars, and extensive catalogues of Muslim saints and Sufis buried throughout the Volga-Ural region, and especially in the city of Bulghar, the site of the conversion near the confluence of the Volga and Kama Rivers, are prominent features in these narratives.<sup>2</sup> Among Russia’s Muslims, this sort of sacred historiography was not restricted to the Volga-Ural region. Similar sorts of narratives also emerged in Siberia and Kazakhstan in the late nineteenth century. The Siberian histories did not focus on Bulghar or on the conversion of the Bulgars, but rather transmitted local Islamization legends concerning the conquest of Western Siberia in 1394 by 366 followers of the Central Asian Sufi figure Bahā’addīn Naqshband. Like the Bulgharist histories, these Siberian works conceive of the Siberian Muslim community in salvific terms and likewise “imagine” the community in terms of its inhabiting a sacred territory. This sort of conception is illustrated by extensive shrine catalogues listing the tombs of some of these martyred followers of Bahā’addīn Naqshband.<sup>3</sup> The use of local oral historical traditions further characterizes these histories, which may help explain their enormous popularity among Muslims in the nineteenth century. The most influential of the Bulgharist histories was without question the *Tawārīkh-i Bulghārīya* of

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<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of “Bulgharist” historiography cf. Frank, *Islamic Historiography*, passim.

<sup>3</sup> For publications and Russian translations of these texts cf. N. F. Katanov, “O religioznykh voynakh uchenikov sheikha Bagaiddin protiv inorodtsev Zapadnoi Sibiri,” *Uchenye zapiski Kazanskogo Universiteta* (1903), 133–158.

Ḥusāmaddīn al-Bulghārī, which survives in over sixty manuscript copies and four printed editions, but also generated four separate commentaries. The *Tawārikh-i Bulghārīya* came to influence Tatar and Bashkir oral traditions, as well as influencing debates in the late nineteenth century surrounding regional and national identities among Volga-Ural Muslims.<sup>4</sup> Versions of the Bulghar conversion narrative, adapted to local events and groups, were also recorded in Perm<sup>3</sup> province and in Eastern Kazakhstan.<sup>5</sup>

The third major category of Muslim historiography in the Volga-Ural region is Tatar nationalist historiography. Turco-Tatar nationalism began to develop among Russia's Turkic Muslim intellectuals at the end of the nineteenth century, but especially gained prominence after the 1905 revolution. In the Volga-Ural region, these Tatar nationalist historians rejected the Islamic salvific dimension of the Bulgharist histories, together with Bulghar identity, and they narrated the history of the Tatar nation (rather than the Muslim community) in ethnic and political terms. These historians did not consider a religious act, such as the conversion to Islam of their ancestors, as amounting to the inception of their nation. Rather, they looked to a political act, namely the Mongol conquests of the thirteenth century, and the creation of the Golden Horde. For these historians, the Golden Horde was essentially a Turkic state, and they considered the "Tatars", that is, the constituent nomadic population of the Golden Horde, as the political and ethnic ancestors of the modern Tatar nation. In other words, the modern Tatar nation was the direct inheritors of the political legacy of the Golden Horde.<sup>6</sup>

The origins of Tatar national identity and nationalist historiography are still subjects of scholarly debate. Tatar modernist, as well as Soviet, post-Soviet, and some Western historians, have consistently identified the theologian and historian Shihābaddīn al-Marjānī (1818–1889) to be the founder of Tatar "national" historiography, and even to be the founder of a modern Tatar national identity.<sup>7</sup> This is

<sup>4</sup> On this work cf. Frank, *Islamic Historiography*, 47–91; Michael Kemper, *Sufis und Gelehrte in Tatarien und Baschkirien*, 324–358; Usmanov, *Tatarskie istoricheskie istochniki*, 134–158.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Qurbān'alī Khālīdī Āyagūzī, *Tawārikh-i khamsa-yi sharqī*, (Kazan, 1910), 176–180.

<sup>6</sup> On the emergence of nationalist historiography among the Tatars cf. Christian Noack, *Muslimischer Nationalismus im russischen Reich*, (Stuttgart, 2000), 466–473.

<sup>7</sup> Uli Schamiloglu, "The Formation of a Tatar Historical Consciousness: Sihabāddin

because in one of Marjānī's historical works, the *Mustafād al-akhbār fī aḥwālī Qazān wa Bulghār*, Marjānī included the Golden Horde in his narrative as a part of the history of Volga-Ural Muslims. Marjānī's beatification by modern scholars as the founder of this school of nationalist "Tatar" historiography is based on a doubtful perception of Marjānī as a modernist and proto-nationalist, rather than on an analysis of the corpus of his writings, most of which was in Arabic, and which was more focused on theology than historiography. As the German scholar Michael Kemper has convincingly argued, Marjānī was more of a compiler of sources than a critical historian, and rather than being the founder of a modern national Tatar identity, Marjānī was more of a traditional Muslim reformer who looked to Islamic society of the seventh century, rather than to nineteenth century Europe, as the ideal model for Volga-Ural Islamic society to emulate.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, Marjānī did become a symbol for local Tatar nationalists who sought to supply a native origin to European-inspired nationalist ideas that were in actuality foreign to the vast majority of Volga-Ural Muslims, ideas that originated not among local Muslim theologians, but among West European intellectuals. In any case, by 1917 there had appeared in printed form a whole series of "national histories" of the Tatars that focused their attention primarily on the political history of the region, and especially on the Golden Horde and its Chingisid successor states.<sup>9</sup> Unlike the earlier Chingisid and

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Mārcani and the Image of the Golden Horde," *Central Asian Survey* IX/2 (1990), 39–49; cf. also Rorlich, *The Volga Tatars*; M. Kh. Iusupov, *Shigabutdin Mardzhanī kak istorik*, (Kazan, 1981), *passim*.

<sup>8</sup> On Marjānī cf. Kemper, *Sufis und Gelehrte in Tatarien und Baschkirien*, 429–465; Michael Kemper, Šihābaddīn al-Marjānī als Religionsgelehrter," *Muslim Culture in Russia and Central Asia from the 18th to the Early 20th Centuries* [vol. 1], 129–166; on Marjānī's legacy for Tatar nationalists cf. Noack, *Muslimischer Nationalismus*, 136–144, 477–480.

<sup>9</sup> The rise of "Tatarist" historiography remains to be synthesized in a historical study. Its works were printed from 1900 to 1923 and include Qāsim b. Mullā Jamāl ad-Dīn Bīkqūlof, *Tātār khānlārī*, (Kazan, 1911); 'Abdullah Baṭṭāl, *Tātār Tārīkhī*, (Kazan, 1912). Ridā'addīn Fakhraddīn ūghlī wrote a series of biographic sketches of Chingisid dynasts in his journal *Shūrā*, cf. Rizaetdin Fākhretdin, *Altın urda khannari/Khany Zolotoi Ordı*, (Kazan, 1996); Aḥmad Zakī Valīdī, *Türk Tātār Tārīkhī*, (Kazan, 1912), the abridged third edition of 1917 was reprinted as *Qışqacha Törek-Tatar Tarihi*, (Kazan, 1992); Hādī Aṭlāsī, *Sibīr tārīkhī* (Kazan, 1912), Hādī Aṭlāsī, *Qazān khānlighī*, (Kazan, 1914), reprinted as *Seber tarihi, Söyembikä, Qazan khanlığı*, (Kazan, 1993); 'Azīz Gubaidullin, *Tātār tārīkhī*, (1st. ed., Moscow, 1920; 2nd ed. Kazan; 1923, 3rd ed. Kazan, 1924); the second edition was reprinted in: Gaziz Gōbāydullin, *Tarihi sākhijālār achilganda*, (Kazan, 1989), 65–195; the third edition

Bulgharist histories, these works relied primarily on European-inspired critical methodology and especially on published Russian sources.

The fourth major category of native Muslim historical works is local historiography. It is the most heterogeneous of all, as well as the most enduring, having been in existence since the sixteenth century, and continues to be written down to the present day. These histories typically address the history of a specific region or community. Local narrative histories comprise a number of overlapping genres, such as the genealogy (*shajara*),<sup>10</sup> chronicle (*wāqī'a nāmasī*),<sup>11</sup> and village history (*āwil tarīkhī*). To varying degrees each of these three genres is incorporated into Bulgharist sacred historiography as well as into Tatarist nationalist historiography. Yet while both genealogies and chronicles contain elements of narrative, they are fundamentally limited to enumerations of ancestors for the former, and a chronological listing of event for the latter.

#### *Village histories*

The most sophisticated and extensive genre within the category of local historiography is the so-called village history. As its name implies, this genre has primarily a local focus, usually dealing with an individual village, or more rarely, with a group of villages. This genre is of substantial importance in understanding the general features, as well as important details, of Muslim village life in imperial Russia since the genre was both widespread, and comprises dozens of separate works covering Muslim communities in villages and cities throughout the Volga-Ural region and Siberia. Despite their great importance to our understanding of Muslim life in imperial Russia, these histories, especially as individual works, but also collectively, remain very little studied.

Among the reasons for the neglect of this important genre, it

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was published in Russian translation as G. Gaziz, *Istoriia tatar*, (Moscow, 1994); cf. also his *Türkmä, tätärmä*, (Kazan, 1918).

<sup>10</sup> On *shajaras* cf. R. G. Kuzeev, *Bashkirskie shezhere*, (Ufa, 1960); Usmanov, *Tatarskie istoricheskie istochniki*, 167–195; M. Akhmetzianov, “Obshchinnye shedzhere,” *Istochnikovedenie i istoriia türkskikh iazykov*, (Kazan, 1978), 45–50; *Bashkirskie shezhere*, (Ufa, 1985); Marsel' Akhmetzianov, *Tatarskie shedzhere*, (Kazan, 1991); Marsel' Akhmetzianov, *Tatar shäjäräläre*, (Kazan, 1995).

<sup>11</sup> On this genre cf. V. Kh. Khakov, “O tatarskikh letopisiakh i ikh iazyke,” *Struktura i istoriia tatarskogo iazyka*, (Kazan, 1982), 100–109.

should be noted that since the emergence of Tatarist nationalist historiography at the beginning of the twentieth century, most historians have sought to focus on Tatar or Bashkir history, that is, on broad themes addressing historical topics concerning Tatars and Bashkirs as a whole, rather than on local themes. In the Soviet understanding local history is often categorized as *kraevedenie*, a term difficult to render into English, but that signifies “local-lore”, “local-history”, or “regional studies”. *Kraevedenie* is usually associated with amateur historians, and is on a lower scholarly rung than the “scientific” and more general themes of the “professional” historians affiliated with institutes. Furthermore the concept of writing “micro-histories”, that is examining local institutions, events, or bodies of sources to empirically draw conclusions that can shed light on a larger problem or area, is for all intents and purposes alien to historians in Tatarstan and Bashkortostan today.

This is not to suggest that Tatar and Bashkir scholars have ignored such a widespread and important genre as the village history. However only two historians, Mirkasym Usmanov and Rafael’ Shaikhiev, have devoted any sustained attention to this genre. Although in his numerous monographs Usmanov has not made local historiography his primary focus, in a major study of the Islamic manuscript tradition in the Volga-Ural region and Siberia, he does discuss the village history genre in a degree of detail.<sup>12</sup> Shaikhiev’s monograph, devoted exclusively to Tatar local historiography, marks the first, and only, attempt to systematize and describe the phenomenon of the Tatar village history.<sup>13</sup> In addition to simply bringing this important Turkic historical literature to the attention of scholars, he identifies dozens of individual works, both publications and manuscripts, and among the latter he cites many works in private collections.<sup>14</sup> For the most part Shaikhiev discusses only “Tatar” materials, and unfortunately does not adequately discuss the very rich collections located in Ufa. Shaikhiev’s monograph is actually quite slim, and one of the larger chapters is a reprint of an article on Siberian village histories that he co-authored with Mirkasym Usmanov and published in Novosibirsk in 1979.<sup>15</sup> Shaikhiev’s approach to village histories is typical of much

<sup>12</sup> Gosmanov, *Qauriy qalām ezennän*, 328–340.

<sup>13</sup> Shaikhiev, *Tatarskaia narodno-kraevedcheskaia literatura*.

<sup>14</sup> Unfortunately, at least a few inventory numbers of manuscripts in archives in Kazan are incorrect.

<sup>15</sup> M. A. Usmanov and R. A. Shaikhiev, “Obraztsy tatarskikh narodno-kraeved-

Tatar Soviet scholarship. Briefly put, Shaikhiev seeks to demonstrate that this historiography was secular, or rather marked a shift in Tatar historiography away from religious conceptions and a religious outlook. Furthermore, as secular historiography, Tatar village histories were in fact the Tatar equivalent of *kraevedenie*, that is the study of local history and local lore.

In identifying the development of *kraevedenie* among Tatars, Shaikhiev argues that the emergence of this historiography signifies the transition at the local level from feudal historiography, as characterized by the Chingisid and “Bulgharist” works mentioned above, together with the more widespread genealogies and chronicles, to a more modern “scientific” historiography. Furthermore he sees the emergence of this *kraevedenie* as evidence for the development of national identity among the Tatars in the nineteenth century, and on the whole depicts the emergence of local historiography as an essentially European cultural phenomenon. He maintains a nationalist and Soviet approach by depicting this historiography as evidence for both the emergence of Tatar nationalist identity, as well as for the “Friendship of Peoples,” with Tatar village historians becoming aware of “progressive” approaches to history-writing through the mediation of “advanced” Russian and Ukrainian local and amateur historians. He identifies the existence of a generic *kraevedenie* for the imperial Russian period not only among Russians, Ukrainians, and Tatars, but also among Estonians, and Central Asians. However, Shaikhiev’s attempt to link all local historiography among the peoples of the Russian empire as part of a single and linked historiographic movement is problematic. For example, Daghestani local histories cannot be considered linked in any way to European *kraevedenie*, since in this region local histories were being compiled in Arabic long before the region’s conquest by the Russians. The few Turkic Daghestani histories appear to have been translated from Arabic originals, or were written rather late, under the influence of Turkic historiography from the Volga-Ural region itself.<sup>16</sup> In Central Asia, a vast region which for centuries

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cheskikh sochinenii po istorii zapadnoi i iuzhnoi Sibiri,” *Sibirskaiia arkhografīa i istochnikovedenie*, (Novosibirsk, 1979), 85–103.

<sup>16</sup> For Russian translations and discussions of Daghestani Islamic historiography cf. A. R. Shikhsaidov et al. *Dagestanskīe istoricheskie istochniki*, (Moscow, 1993); G. M.-R. Orazayev, “Novye pis’mennye materialy na tiurkskikh iazykakh, obnaruzhennye v 1979–1985 gg. (k istoricheskomu i filologicheskomu istochnikovedeniiu Dagestana),” *Izuchenie istorii i kul’tury Dagestana: arkhograficheskii aspekt* (Makhachkala, 1988), 22–43.

stood very much at the center of scholarship in the Islamic world, there is no evidence that the type of local history produced in the Volga-Ural region, let alone European inspired *kraevedenie*, ever existed.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, the emergence of local historiography among culturally and spatially divergent populations appears to have been rather common in imperial Russia, and does not appear to have been caused by an over-arching “progressive” European development such as *kraevedenie*. Rather it appears to have been contingent on local traditions and conditions. A clear example of this are the Mongolian-language “chronicles” that became quite popular among the Buryats of Eastern Siberia at the end of the nineteenth century. These chronicles have been well researched by Soviet scholars, who sought to contrast “reactionary” Buryat Tibetan-language Buddhist monastic historiography with “democratic” vernacular Buryat works. These Buryat chronicles do share many features with Tatar and Bashkir village histories, in terms of their content and focus, but nevertheless emerged from different antecedents.<sup>18</sup>

Despite Shaikhiev’s association of Tatar local histories with European *kraevedenie*, it is evident from an examination of Tatar historiography that the genre of the village history was as much driven by local factors and traditions, as the works of Daghestani or Buryat local historiography.<sup>19</sup> No scholar has attempted to trace the influence of Islamic historiography as a whole on Tatar village histories, but there is no evidence to suggest that Tatar and Bashkir village histories were a local adaptation of any specifically Islamic historiographic genre. As we shall see, it appears instead that in the Volga-Ural region both the genre of local histories as a whole, as well as the major sub-genres, emerged as a response to the requirements of these Muslim communities living under Russian rule, and thus should be

<sup>17</sup> Indeed, Shaikhiev fails to cite a source for his statement.

<sup>18</sup> A number of these Buryat chronicles have been published in Russian translation and in printed Mongolian texts; for general discussion cf. G. N. Rumiantsev, *Barguzinskie letopisi*, (Ulan-Udé, 1956); Ts. B. Tsydendambaev, “Neizvestnye buriatskie khroniki,” *Materialy po istorii i filologii Tsentral’noi Azii*, vyp. 4, (*Trudy buriatskogo instituta obshchestvennykh nauk*, vyp. 12), (Ulan-Udé, 1970), 101–106; Ts. B. Tsydendambaev, *Buriatskie istoricheskie khroniki i rodoslovnye*, (Ulan-Udé, 1972).

<sup>19</sup> To be sure Tatar local histories in the tradition of *kraevedenie* have been compiled, but appeared only in the post-Soviet era. Cf. Fatiykhov, *Gäyne ile*, concerning the history of the Tatars and Bashkirs of Barda *raion* in Perm’ province, and *Archa töbäge tarikhii* (Kazan, 1996), a collection of materials on the history of the Arsk region in Tatarstan.

considered very much an indigenous development emerging out of the region's Islamic discourse.

In the Volga-Ural region village histories appear to have developed in three broad directions, each one closely linked to the genres from which they originated. The first type of the village history are the genealogical treatises, which are closely linked to the *shajara* genre. As their appellation suggests, they are primarily concerned with the genealogical history of a given village, and occasionally include a narrative introduction detailing the founding of the village or the chief ancestors of the village's inhabitants.<sup>20</sup> As a rule these histories tend to be rather short.

The second genre are the chronicle-histories, which organize their narrative by year, and recount individual calendar years and significant events. For the most part these chronicle-histories provide Julian or Gregorian dates, and only occasionally include Hijri dates. The origins of this genre go back to at least the seventeenth century, as one chronicle forms a chapter of the *Daftar-i Chingīz Nāma*, and later became known generically as a *wāqī'a nāmasī*. According to Shaikhiev, this genre received a new impetus in 1829 when the village *'ulamā* became responsible for recording births, deaths, divorces and other events in registers termed *metricheskie knigi* in Russian, or *metrik daftar* in Turkic sources. As a result, village *imāms* were obligated to register such events on an annual basis, and the more historically-oriented *imāms* began to record other events effecting the community as a whole. This genre remains to be studied in any degree, but the practice of compiling village chronicles continued after 1917, and despite the elimination of the *'ulamā* in the 1930's, it flourished throughout the Soviet period.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Many copies of such histories, certainly based on older accounts, were made in Soviet times, and have come down to us in modified Arabic script or in Cyrillic script; cf. *Iskī Ūrgā Aghār Tārikhī* of 'Aynullah 'Ubaydullīn (Kazan University 256T), and *Qarabay awīlī babalarī hām tarikhī* (Kazan University 2493T). The merging of genealogies into village histories was especially common among the Bashkirs, where genealogies were in effect documents defining and identifying communities with special legal privileges; cf. A. Fattakhutdinova, "Bashkirskie shezhere (kratkoie arkhograficheskoe opisanie)," *Bashkirskie shezhere*, (Ufa, 1985), 88–128.

<sup>21</sup> Many works of this genre continued to be written in the Soviet era, as late as the 1960's. Prominent manuscript works of this sort include the *Bārāzā tarikhī*, written in 1937 (Kazan University 3256T); the *Vanshi Kolkhozi Tōdholewi*, a history of the formation of a collective farm, written 1947, (Ufa, Academy of Sciences 121 aé-1); the *Ablay awīlī tarikhī* of Ghümār Bayazit-ulī, written in 1966 (Ufa, Academy of Sciences 120 aé-1). Numerous other Soviet-era manuscript histories, are located

The third major genre of village history, which comprises the most voluminous and extensive works, are “sacred” village histories, that is, village histories with a primarily religious focus that addresses the history of local Islamic institutions, such as mosques, *madrasas*, the *‘ulamā*, Sufis, and Muslim saints and shrines. Before discussing this genre in more detail, it bears mentioning that the lines dividing these three genres, the “sacred” histories, chronicles, and genealogies, are anything but impermeable. Some “chronicle histories” contain extensive genealogical information, such as the *Bārāzā tarikhi*, while “sacred histories” occasionally include complete chronicles. For example, the *Tawārīkh-i Bulghārīya* of Ḥusayn Amīrkhān ūghlī (1883) contains a complete *wāqī‘a nāmasī* embedded within the larger narrative. Those genealogies that trace their ancestry to a specific Muslim saint also retain a “sacred” element. Examples of such “sacred” genealogies include the *Qırghız shäjäräse* of the village of Tashli in southeastern Tatarstan, in which the founding ancestor is the famous Muslim saint Qorqut Ata, whose tomb along the Syr Darya River in Central Asia was a major pilgrimage site.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless the basis of distinction between these three genres remains what specific feature constitutes the author’s or compiler’s primary emphasis. Finally, it should be noted that a few isolated histories do not fit neatly into any of the above three categories. A particularly unique case are the materials from Western Siberia, where the narrative village histories, like many of the Bashkir genealogies, seem to have been intended to document the special status of a given Siberian community as being a native “*yasak*” community, and to distinguish such a Muslim community from other Muslims whose ancestors migrated to Siberia from the Volga-Ural region. This distinction was important to the Siberian Muslims since, as *iasashnye liudi*, they were thereby immune from the poll-tax and from military conscription; in this sense the function of these Siberian histories is similar to that of the Bashkir genealogies. But even among these Siberian materials a strong element of sacred identity is discernible.<sup>23</sup>

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in the manuscript collections of Ufa and Kazan, but virtually none have been catalogued or described. Some of these manuscripts are major monuments of historiography, filling multiple volumes, and constitute rare examples of “independent” Soviet-era peasant history-writing.

<sup>22</sup> Äkhmätjanov, *Tatar shäjäräläre*, 48–49.

<sup>23</sup> A good example of this sort of work is the *Aşlı naslı Şälä awılñing*, a history of the village of Sala in Western Siberia, which chronicles the village’s founding by

The origins of religious, or “sacred” village histories are difficult to establish with certainty. Marjānī mentions two local histories that were said to have been written in the eighteenth century, but copies of these works have not come down to us, so their content cannot be categorized.<sup>24</sup> There is reason to suspect that the “sacred” village history was inspired to some degree by the more widespread regional genre of sacred “Bulgharist” historiography that emerged at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It is perhaps emblematic of the connection with Bulgharist historiography that the earliest example of a religious village history is found embedded in the *Tawārikh-i Bulghārīya*, by Ḥusayn Amīrkhān ūghlī (1883), a work that is structured as an extended commentary on the popular and influential *Tawārikh-i Bulghārīya* of Ḥusāmaddīn Bulghārī. Within his commentary Amīrkhān ūghlī includes a history of the mosques and ‘ulamā of Kazan’s Yāngā Bistā (in Russian sources Novaia Tatarskaia Sloboda) entitled *Bayān al-‘ulamā ma‘alim al-mazīat fī khuṣūṣ al-Qazān ma‘ manāqibihim*.<sup>25</sup> Subsequently published village histories adhered closely to chronicling religious institutions. For example, Riḍā’addīn Fakhraddīn ūghlī’s 1897 history of the settlement of Qarghalī (Seitovskii Posad) near the town on Orenburg, lists sequentially the individual mosques in that settlement and their *imāms*, and contains very little sustained narrative.<sup>26</sup> By contrast, Muḥammad-Shākīr Tukaev’s *Tārikh-i Istarībāsh* (1899) traces the history of that village’s famous *madrasa* and the influential Tukaev Sufi dynasty that was based there.<sup>27</sup> One of the most interesting and unique local histories is the *Tārikh-i Astarkhān* of Jahānshāh an-Nīzhghārūtī al-Ḥājījarkhānī (1907), which while addressing the significance of the 1905 Revolution for Muslims and the significance of educational reform, also lists Astrakhan’s most prominent mosques and *imāms*. But the work is especially important as one of the most voluminous examples of the sacred genre, including a detailed biographical dictionary of Astrakhan’s major Sufis, a shrine catalog for Astrakhan province, and a treatise on the importance

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Bukharans, and the history of its relationship with the Russian state; cf. Usmanov and Shaikhev, “Obraztsy,” 90–94; for a description of the manuscript cf. L. V. Dmitrieva and S. N. Muratov, *Opisanie tiurkskikh rukopisei instituta vostokovedeniia II*, (Leningrad, 1975), #16, 41–42.

<sup>24</sup> Frank, *Islamic Historiography*, 20.

<sup>25</sup> Ḥusayn Amīrkhān ūghlī, *Tawārikh-i Bulghārīya*, (Kazan, 1883), 73–88.

<sup>26</sup> Riḍā’addīn Fakhraddīn ūghlī, *Sa’id*, (Kazan, 1897).

<sup>27</sup> Muḥammad-Shākīr Ṭūqāyef, *Tārikh-i Isterībāsh*, (Kazan, 1899).

of hagiolatry for Russia's Muslims.<sup>28</sup> Some religious histories focus on a specific *madrasa*, such as the *Īskī Qiyishqī Tārīkhī* of Muṭahhar b. Mullā Mīr Ḥaydar, published in Orenburg in 1911,<sup>29</sup> or the *Qışqacha Īzh-Būbī Madrasasī Tarīkhī* of 'Abdallāh Būbī, compiled between 1913 and 1920. Even this work, which addresses the history of *jadidist* education in Vyatka province and in Chinese Turkestan, is still essentially a history of the religious institutions of the village of Izh-Bubi, including a history of its *imāms* and *mu'adhdhins*.<sup>30</sup>

For the most part Tatar village histories remained rather limited in scope in the nineteenth century, consisting of a few manuscript folios or less than twenty printed pages. However by the twentieth century we can see the scale and ambitiousness of the histories grow considerably, and these larger works, which are for all intents and purposes unexamined, are without question some of our best and most important sources for Muslim religious life in imperial Russia. Among the larger works is the *Qışqacha Īzh-Būbī Madrasasī Tarīkhī*. Similarly, the *Tārīkh-i Astarkhān* of Jahānshāh an-Nīzhghārūtī represents a considerable expansion from earlier works in terms of both volume and scope. Among unpublished (and uncatalogued) manuscript works two histories stand out as being especially substantial. These include the *Bārābā-Ṭūbil Tārīkhī* of Aḥmadjān 'Izzatullīn (1860–1933), a history of the Baraba and Tobol'sk Tatars written during the First World War, which survives as a unique manuscript;<sup>31</sup> and the *Yanga Tinchäle wä anıng tarikhī*, a history of the village of Yanga Tinchäle, located in southwestern Tatarstan, and written by Qasıym Bikkulov (1868–1937) in 1926. This major work exists in at least five manuscript copies.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Jahānshāh b. 'Abdaljabbār an-Nīzhghārūtī al-Ḥājījtarkhānī, *Tārīkh-i Astarkhān*, (Astrakhan, 1907).

<sup>29</sup> Muṭahhar b. Mullā Mīr Ḥaydar, *Īskī Qiyishqī Tārīkhī*, (Orenburg, 1911).

<sup>30</sup> This history has been published in two editions in Cyrillic-script Tatar; cf. Raif Mārđanov and Söläyman Rakhimov (eds.) *Bubi mädräsäse tarikhī: jiyintiğ*, (Kazan, 1991); Raif Mārđanov, Ramil Mıngnullin and Söläyman Rakhimov (eds.) *Bertugan bubiyılar häm Izh-Bubiy mädräsäse*, (Kazan, 1999); for a description of the manuscript cf. Al'bert Fätkhī, *N. I. Lobachevskii isemenääge Fänni Kıtapkhänä qulyazmalarıning tasvirlaması* X/2 (Kazan, 1962), 11–12.

<sup>31</sup> This work is housed in Kazan University Library, inv. cat. no. 3413T; for a description cf. Usmanov and Shaikhiev, "Obraztsy," 94–102; Gosmanov, *Qauriy qalām ezennän*, 332–334.

<sup>32</sup> This work is uncatalogued, but M. Usmanov and R. Shaikhiev describe it in detail; cf. Shaikhiev, *Tatarskaia narodno-kraevedcheskaia literatura*, 79–90; Gosmanov, *Qauriy qalām ezennän*, 334–340.

However two additional works stand out as the largest, most detailed, and most sophisticated histories in this genre. The first of these is the *Tawārīkh-i Āltī Ātā*, which will be discussed below, and the second is the *Tārīkh-i Barāngawī* of Aḥmad b. Ḥāfiẓallāh al-Barāngawī, compiled around 1912. The work has come down to us in three manuscript copies, all autographs.<sup>33</sup> One manuscript appears to have been a final version, and according to Marsel' Akhmetzianov, was intended to go to press, but never did as a result of the First World War and the Bolshevik Revolution.<sup>34</sup> The work is essentially a history of the mosques, *madrāsas*, and 'ulamā in the village of Paran'ga, formerly located in Urzhum district of Viatka province, and today a *raion* center in the Mari Republic. Although Shaikhiev makes some mention of this monumental work, he only deals with it in a cursory fashion. The work remains essentially neglected by scholars.

## 2. THE TAWĀRĪKH-I ĀLTĪ ĀTĀ

The *Tawārīkh-i Āltī Ātā* was committed to paper in 1909 and 1910 by Muḥammad-Fātiḥ b. Ayyūb al-Īlmīnī and by his son Muḥammad, both of whom were jointly *imāms* in the Tatar village of Ilmin (officially Verkhavevka) located in Osinov Gai township (*volost'*), which is itself located in Samara Province's Novouzensk district. The work is an autograph, apparently of the younger al-Īlmīnī, and has come down to us as a unique manuscript. This uncatalogued manuscript is not listed among Rafael' Shaikhiev's rather extensive bibliography of Tatar village histories, nor does it appear to have been cited, or its mere existence acknowledged, by any other scholar.<sup>35</sup> This neglect

<sup>33</sup> All three copies of the work are located in the Tatarstan Academy of Sciences manuscript collection, 39/34, 39/567, 39/581. Of these, 39/34 is the complete version. The latter manuscript comprises 233 folios. The author wishes to thank Marsel' Akhmetzianov for his help in locating the work, and for providing information on the *Tārīkh-i Barāngawī*.

<sup>34</sup> Personal communication to the author, Kazan, October 15th, 1996.

<sup>35</sup> The work was first discussed by the author in 1998; cf. Allen J. Frank, "Islam and Ethnic Relations in the Kazakh Inner Horde: Muslim Cossacks, Tatar Merchants and Kazakh Nomads in a Turkic Manuscript, 1870–1910," *Muslim Culture in Russia and Central Asia from the 18th to the Early 20th Centuries. Vol. 2: Inter-Regional and Inter-Ethnic Relations* Anke von Kügelgen, Michael Kemper, Allen J. Frank, eds., (Berlin, 1998), 211–242; a text edition and translation of the first third of the history, devoted

is unfortunate since it is both one of the most outstanding achievements of Tatar Islamic historiography, and an important Tatar literary work in its own right.

*The manuscript*

The *Tawārīkh-i Āltī Ātā* constitutes the first part of a larger manuscript book, and comprises of 109 folios. The main text of the *Tawārīkh-i Āltī Ātā* is written in the same hand, probably that of Muḥammad b. Muḥammad-Fātiḥ al-Īlmīnī. The main text was copied in 1908 or 1909 and supplemental marginal notes were added in 1909 and 1910. It is clearly a final draft. The language of the work is Volga-Ural Turki, with occasional Arabic and Persian verse and prose passages embedded within the larger text. Although numerous passages are in colloquial Tatar, especially reported speech, the writing style is nevertheless the elevated idiom of an educated *‘ālim*. The language of the text is also interesting for the presence of numerous Russian loanwords, as well as the occasional Bashkir and Kazakh dialectal terms.

The *Tawārīkh-i Āltī Ātā* has a separate pagination provided by the copyist, with both sides of each folio consecutively numbered. Following the history there is also a series of miscellaneous works and draft sheets of other works written and copied by Muḥammad b. Muḥammad-Fātiḥ al-Īlmīnī, as well as a few draft folios written by another hand, which are also separately paginated.

The entire manuscript consists of 142 folios, with 109 devoted to the *Tawārīkh-i Āltī Ātā*. The work addresses the religious history of the Muslim communities along the Altata and Bol’shoi Uzen’ Rivers, and as a result, a significant portion of the work’s focus is geographic, defining the Muslim community in geographic terms and including extensive geographic and ethnographic details concerning the Muslim and non-Muslim populations living along these rivers. Although the bulk of the work deals with Muslim communities in Novouzensk district, specifically with the all-Muslim Osinov Gai township, it also

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to the history of the village of Altī Ata proper, is forthcoming, cf. Allen J. Frank, “A Chronicle of Islamic Communities on the Imperial Russian Steppe Frontier: The ‘Tawārīx-i Āltī Ātā’ of Muḥammad-Fatīḥ al-Īlmīnī,” in: *Muslim Culture in Russia and Central Asia vol. 3: Arabic, Persian and Turkic Manuscripts (15th–20th Centuries)* edited by Anke von Kügelgen, Aširbek Muminov, Michael Kemper, (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, forthcoming).

includes extensive discussions of Muslim communities in territories adjoining Novouzensk district, specifically those on the territory of the Ural Cossack Host and in the Kazakh Inner Horde. The Muslim communities in the latter jurisdictions were not located along the Bol'shoi Uzen' River, but rather along the Chizha Pervaia and Chizha Vtoraia Rivers, along the Malyi Uzen', and around the Kamysh-Samar Lakes, into which the Uzen' Rivers empty.

The structure of the work is rather regular, and generally begins with a geographic introduction to a specific village, then each *maḥalla*, mosque, with its *imāms* and *mu'adhdhins*, are treated separately and in sequence (according to Russian custom, mosques in a village were distinguished by number). The work begins with a general introduction to the region, including an ethnographic account of the Bashkir and Cossack communities along the Chizha Rivers, as well as a detailed description of the Altata Valley up to the village of Altī Ata (folios 1b–9b). The remaining folios (9b–28a) discuss in sequence the five mosques of Altī Ata (Altata). The discussion of the village of Safarqa (Pendel'ka Novaia) and its three mosques occupy folios 28a–39b. The discussion of Ilmin (Verkhazevka) occupies folios 40a–81b. Much of this section (folios 44b–64b) is actually an insertion into the section of the Second Mosque, of which Muḥammad-Fātiḥ and his son Muḥammad were the *imāms*. Here the authors inserted numerous treatises, verse works, and correspondence; that is, much of the Arabic and Turkic literary legacy of the *imāms* of Ilmin's Second Mosque. The chapter on the mosques of Iske Özen (Osinov Gai) occupies folios 82a–94a. The remaining parts of the book deal with Muslim communities outside of Osinov Gai township. Folios 94b–102a trace the Bol'shoi Uzen' River from Iske Özen to the district seat of Novouzensk (Churtānlī), folios 102a–104b discuss the trading settlement of Aleksandrov Gai (Ālmālī), in Novouzensk district on the border with the Kazakh Inner Horde, and the final section (folios 104b–109b) addresses the Muslim communities in the settlements of Glinianyi Forpost and Slomikhinskaia Stanitsa (Yālpāqtāl), in the Ural Cossack Host, and Novaia Kazanka (Yāngā Qazānqa) in the Kazakh Inner Horde. There is a brief conclusion and a colophon on folio 109b.

The additional works included in the manuscript are of an eclectic nature and consist primarily of prose works written by Muḥammad b. Muḥammad-Fātiḥ. These works are mainly written in Turki, but some are in Arabic as well, and contain much useful information

on religious life in Novouzensk district. The largest of these works appears on folios 111b–128a. This curious work is structured as Muḥammad b. Muḥammad-Fātiḥ’s examination for the position of *imām*, which he took in Ufa in 1906, but in all likelihood, this work was not his examination; rather the work seems to be an elaborated literary text. The questions and answers are heavily weighted toward *kalām* (Islamic dogma), and almost nothing appears in the “examination” concerning the more prosaic issues of Islamic law concerning marriages and inheritance, as well as the requirements concerning feasts, fasts, and other rituals which would have constituted most of the future *imām*’s work. Toward the end of the work al-Īlmīnī even critiques the Tatar press for its attacks on the Mufti and the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly, and he seems to have left space for future questions and answers. But despite the work’s somewhat misleading heading, it provides many helpful insights into the intellectual world of the village *imām*. The next work occupies folios 129b–136a, and includes mixed Turkic and Arabic texts written by Muḥammad al-Īlmīnī concerning a meeting (*majlis*) of ‘*alims*’ he attended in 1900 in the town of Talovka, and he relates stories and debates that took place there, as well as descriptions of other discussions of his military service in Poland in 1905 and 1906. The final folios (136b–142b) include brief Arabic treatises on the Qur’ān and a Turki treatise on Şūfī Allāh-Yār.

### Sources

Muḥammad-Fātiḥ al-Īlmīnī explains his reasons for writing his history and his sources in the following manner:

Now, nobody wrote anything down concerning the situation of those ancestors who lived perhaps more than a hundred years before us, how their situation was when they came here and how it changed later on. It upset me that they did not leave this in a work for those coming after us. Although there are good scholars also in our time, not one of them took over this task, but they are silent just as their predecessors. Therefore I, the humble and faulty, who has seen some lands with his own eyes and heard about some lands from old men and remembered this, thought it to be a good idea to take up the pencil and to write down as much as I know. So I began to write.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Tawārīkh-i Āltī Āta (henceforth TAA) fol. 2a.

The sections on the four Muslim villages Osinov Gai township appear to have been written by the elder al-Īlmīnī, since it is in these sections that we have the oldest information. In contrast, the sections on Aleksandrov Gai, the Kazakh Inner Horde, and the Ural Cossack Host appear to have been written in large part by al-Īlmīnī's sons, Muḥammad and perhaps Aḥmad-Şafā. Muḥammad al-Īlmīnī earned a living traveling in the Kazakh Inner Horde and teaching Kazakh and Cossack children before being inducted into the Russian army around 1903, and therefore appears to have been an eyewitness to much of what he described.<sup>37</sup> His younger brother, Aḥmad-Şafā, served in Aleksandrov Gai as an *imām*, and there can be little doubt that he was the source for the religious history of that community. However, al-Īlmīnī occasionally cites his sources as well. For example in the same Aleksandrov Gai the narrator cites extensively an elderly merchant named 'Alī Aşghar Ghāzīkāshef, who came to the region in 1841. Other important sources that the narrator cites are the *imām* of Altī Ata's Fifth Mosque, Ḥasan b. Muḥyiddīn and other local figures. Al-Īlmīnī cites no documentary material in his history, and as we have seen above, the total lack of such material is part of what prompted him to compile the history. Curiously, he includes very little genealogical material in the work, and includes virtually none about himself, except for the name of his father, Ayyūb.

Whom al-Īlmīnī intended as the audience for his work is unclear. The copy that has come down to us does not appear to have been intended for publication, since it is bound with numerous unrelated works. Whether the work was intended for public circulation is also unclear. The work is at times critical of some local religious figures, and elsewhere the work is critical of Russians and Russian attitudes toward Muslims. Yet there is a disclaimer in the manuscript's introduction yielding to those who may disagree with the work, but only if their information is more knowledgeable than the compiler's.<sup>38</sup> In any case, there is no reason to doubt that the *Tawārikh-i Āltī Ātā* is the first Islamic history of this region, and is based almost entirely on oral sources.

<sup>37</sup> KU 124T-III, fol. 129a.

<sup>38</sup> TAA fol. 2a.

*The author*

Although the work was apparently copied by Muḥammad b. Muḥammad-Fātiḥ al-Īlmīnī, it appears that the primary author was the elder al-Īlmīnī, because in the colophon he is explicitly named as the author, in a four-verse poem.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, on several occasions the narrator identifies himself as an eyewitness to events and people from the middle of the nineteenth century. Since the elder al-Īlmīnī was born in 1843, it can only be a reference to himself. For example, the narrator notes that during his own childhood a mosque known as the “White Mosque” was still standing, and later he relates that this same mosque was torn down in around 1851.<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless, the manuscript was in all likelihood copied by Muḥammad-Fātiḥ’s son, Muḥammad, who served with his father as co-*imām* (*sharīk*) of Ilmin’s Second Mosque after 1907, since a large portion of the work consists of the younger al-Īlmīnī’s verses, letters, and treatises.

The elder al-Īlmīnī provides relatively little information about himself in the work. As the narrator he occasionally writes as the first person, but when he describes his activities as an *imām*, he writes only in the third person. Muḥammad-Fātiḥ b. Ayyūb al-Īlmīnī was born around 1843 in the village of Altı Ata’s First *maḥalla*, the eldest son of a certain Ayyūb, concerning whom nothing is related.<sup>41</sup> His principal teacher was Kamāladdīn Isfandiyār ūghlī, the *imām* of Altı Ata’s First Mosque. He appears to have earned some renown as a teacher, and first taught in Altı Ata’s First *maḥalla* for three years. Following this, it appears he gave instruction for nine years in the same village’s Second *maḥalla*. At this time, we are told, he gave instruction in the *madrasa* in winter, and was in the service of wealthy villagers in the summer. Thus, he earned his living entirely by giving lessons. In 1883 he was appointed at age forty to become the *imām* of Ilmin’s Second Mosque. His formal appointment was on May 26th, 1883, and he passed the examination to become *imām* in Ufa on July 22nd, 1883.<sup>42</sup>

Writing about himself, Muḥammad-Fātiḥ remarks, “He had no

<sup>39</sup> TAA fol. 109b.

<sup>40</sup> TAA fol. 15b.

<sup>41</sup> TAA fol. 19ab.

<sup>42</sup> TAA fols. 43a, 78a.

glory connected with the great lands of Kazan and Bukhara. Nevertheless, in the affairs of the mosque and *madrasa* he exerted himself to the best of his ability.”<sup>43</sup> Elsewhere, he is less apologetic about his skills, writing that “although his knowledge of sciences were few, in keenness of intellect, eloquence of tongue and in reciting the Qur’ān there were none among his equals, and he was also skilled in writing.”<sup>44</sup> In any case, it is clear that he was a reasonably well educated ‘*ālim*, and very conscientious in seeing to the education of his community.

We know considerably more about Muḥammad-Fātiḥ’s son, Muḥammad. In the main narrative of the *Tawārikh-i Āltī Ātā* the following is revealed concerning Muḥammad:

Now, when he [Muḥammad-Fātiḥ] had held the position [of *imām*] for twenty five years, the people requested in 1907 that his second son, known as Mullā Muḥammad, not go to Bukhara or to Kazan because he was no worse than the Bukharans or Kazanis. He had served three years of military service and had returned. He then became a *mudarris* and *imām* [jointly with his father], and he held this office in rectitude, and the community built another *madrasa* directly across [from the first one] and there were two *madrasas*.<sup>45</sup>

Most of what Muḥammad writes about himself appears among the letters and correspondence included within the *Tawārikh-i Āltī Ātā*, as well as in the miscellaneous materials included at the end of the manuscript. The earliest information we have on Muḥammad concerns his participation in a *majlis* of ‘*ulamā* convened in 1900 in the summer encampment of a wealthy Kazakh named Īdilbāy Ṭūrghānof from the Talovka *chast’* of the Kazakh Inner Horde. At this time Muḥammad was employed teaching the family of this Īdilbāy.<sup>46</sup> Before being inducted into the Russian Army in 1903, Muḥammad studied under a number of prominent figures in Novouzensk district. His chief teachers (*ustādh*) were both Sufis, ‘Aṭā’allāh aṣ-Ṣafarqawī, the *imām* of Safarqa’s First Mosque, and a Daghestani, Ilyās Āfāndī al-Tsudaqārī who had been exiled to Novouzensk district in the 1890’s. This Ilyās Āfāndī had been a *murīd* of ‘Abdarrahmān ath-Thughūrī

<sup>43</sup> TAA fol. 78b.

<sup>44</sup> TAA fol. 43a.

<sup>45</sup> TAA fol. 64b.

<sup>46</sup> Kazan Univ. 124T-III, fol. 129a.

(Sogratlinskii), who himself was an important Daghestani poet who associated with Shamil and wrote numerous Sufi works.<sup>47</sup> Muḥammad was apparently quite skilled in the Arabic language, since most of his correspondence with Aṭāʾallāh aṣ-Ṣafarqawī consists of Arabic prose and verses. Much of the correspondence that Muḥammad included in his manuscript dates from his time serving in the Russian Army. As we have seen, he was inducted in 1903 and was discharged in 1906. While in the army he served in Poland in the towns of Kovno and Kobryn in Grodno province. He was attached to the Seventh Company of the 194th Mstislav Reserve Infantry regiment, and apparently saw some action suppressing Polish rebels during the disturbances of 1905 and 1906.<sup>48</sup>

In its structure and content, the *Tawārīkh-i Ālṭī Ātā* differs little from other Tatar and Bashkir religious village histories of the time. Written by village *imāms*, and based on local traditions and oral sources, these histories focused on the religious institutions of their communities, the *imāms*, *madrāsas*, and mosques. The *Tawārīkh-i Ālṭī Ātā* diverges from these histories primarily in its scale and scope, discussing in detail the four large Muslim villages in Osinov Gai township, as well as ten other Muslim communities in eastern Novouzensk district, within the Ural Cossack Host, and in the Kazakh Inner Horde. In all al-Īmīnī discusses nineteen mosques in Novouzensk district, as well as five other mosques in the Kazakh and Ural Cossack lands. He provides biographical information of over sixty *imāms* and about forty *muʾadhdhīns* who were active in Novouzensk district from about 1800 to 1910. Thus, in terms of geographic and chronological scale the *Tawārīkh-i Ālṭī Ātā* is among the most complete and detailed sources on Muslim religious life in any single district of Imperial Russia.

<sup>47</sup> TAA fols. 53b, 54b–55a, 60a–61b; one of Ilyās' prose works on Sufism was published in Kazan in 1904, while he resided in Novouzensk district; cf. Ilyās ad-Dāghistānī at-Tsudaqārī, *Sullam al-Murīd*, (Kazan, 1904).

<sup>48</sup> TAA fol. 45a, 58a.

## CHAPTER TWO

### GEOGRAPHY AND ECONOMIC LIFE

#### 1. SACRED GEOGRAPHY

One of the characteristics of “sacred” historiography among Volga-Ural Muslims was a conception of the community’s territory as itself being sacred, as well as the geographic location of the community within this sacred territory. In Bulgharist historiography the central focus of the narratives is the account of the conversion of the Bulgars in the city of Bulghar, and many of the earliest and most influential works of Bulgharist historiography are primarily shrine catalogs detailing the region’s sacred geography, and connecting many far-flung Muslim communities with the sacred inception of the Bulghar Muslim community. Similarly, in Siberian Islamization narratives we see the identification of many of that vast region’s Muslim villages with the tombs of prominent Muslim saints.<sup>1</sup> Visible and tangible landmarks, that is, rivers and Muslim shrines, and not arbitrary and invisible administrative boundaries, were what defined this sacred territory for the audiences of these narratives. In both the Bulgharist and Siberian shrine catalogs the locations of the saints’ tombs are not simply equated with specific villages, but rather are placed within the region’s network of major rivers and tributaries. In fact, in many shrine catalogs villages are not even mentioned, but only rivers. In the earlier examples of this sort of sacred geography, dating from the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Russian administrative boundaries were ignored, and the landmarks that mattered were both sacred and physical. In other words, it was sacred landmarks that made the territory Muslim, and it was the physical landmarks, especially rivers, with which Muslim readers could most readily orient themselves.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Katanov, “O religioznykh voynakh,” *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of these Bulgharist shrine catalogs cf. Allen J. Frank, “Islamic Shrine Catalogues and Communal Geography in the Volga-Ural Region: 1788–1917,” *Journal of Islamic Studies* VII (2), 1996, 265–286.

This sort of sacred geography was not only expressed in the major works of Muslim historiography that established a region-wide sacred geography for the Volga-Ural region and Siberia. Similar conceptions of sacred geography could be equally applied to local conditions. A shrine catalog that existed among the Gäyne Bashkirs and Perm' Tatars in Perm' Province illustrates this tendency well. This document, which was titled *Izgelär isemlege* ("List of Saints"), mentions the seven saints (*jide gaziz*) whose tombs defined the territory of the Gäyne Muslims along the Tol' River in Perm' Province.<sup>3</sup> Similar shrine catalogs existed for the cities of Kazan and Astrakhan as well.<sup>4</sup> In histories devoted to a single village, the emphasis on a wider sacred geography is naturally weaker. However, in the *Tawārīkh-i Āltī Ātā*, which as we have seen covers more far more than a single village, and far more than a single Muslim community, the geographic element so characteristic of Bulgharist and Siberian sacred historiography is very prominent.

Muḥammad-Fātiḥ al-Īlmīnī called his history the *Tawārīkh-i Āltī Ātā*, a reference to the Altata River, and he chronicles the Muslim villages along that river, as well as those along the Bol'shoi Uzen'. The Bol'shoi Uzen's headwaters began far to the north, in the Obshchii Syrt Plateau in Nikolaevsk district; nevertheless, at the point where the Bol'shoi Uzen' and Altata Rivers converge, that is, the village of Iske Özen, the flow of the Altata is indeed the larger of the two, and current hydronyms notwithstanding, al-Īlmīnī is correct in depicting the upper Bol'shoi Uzen' as a tributary of the Altata. Al-Īlmīnī's narrative thread quite literally follows the rivers of this part of the steppe, and he names the villages and identifies the various ethnic groups living along each river. His narrative begins at the headwaters of the Altata (Āltī Ātā), and follows its course to its juncture with the Bol'shoi Uzen' (Ūzīn). He also traces the Chizha Rivers (Chāji), from their headwaters near the beginning of the Altata, to the marshes in the steppe, on the territory of the Ural Cossacks, where their flow simply ceases. From the juncture of the Bol'shoi Uzen' and the Altata he follows the course of that river,

<sup>3</sup> Fatīykhov, *Gäyne ile*, 33–34.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Khatm-i khwāja wa du'ā-yi khatim*, [review by N. Katanov] *Deiatel'* 1898 (5), 263–264. This book was recently published in modern Tatar translation as *Khātem khuja häm dogä i khātem*, (Kazan, 1996); cf. also Frank, "Islamic Shrine Catalogs," 284–285; for a shrine catalog of Astrakhan province cf. Jahānshāh an-Nīzhghārūtī, *Tārīkh-i Astarkhān*, 46–47.

through a number of large Russian villages to the district seat of Novouzensk. He continues to trace the river to the large village of Aleksandrov Gai, located at the extreme eastern border of Novouzensk district. Near Aleksandrov Gai the river constitutes the border between the Ural Cossack Host and the Kazakh Inner Horde, to the Kamysh-Samar Lakes, into which the river empties. To a lesser degree he also discusses the Malyi Uzen' River (Şārī Ūzīn), which for most of its course parallels the Bol'shoi Uzen' to the south and west, and also empties into the Kamysh-Samar Lakes. For most of the nineteenth century the Malyi Uzen' was the defacto border between the Ural Cossacks and the Kazakhs. Like the Bulgharist historians who wrote before him, al-Īlmīnī was concerned with demonstrating to his readers that the river valleys he was describing, while only partially settled by Muslims, were nevertheless sacred Muslim territory. Very early in his history al-Īlmīnī discusses the various theories for the origin for the name Āltī Ātā, which in Tatar means simply "the six fathers":

First, the reason for its name: according to the accounts of old men, six devotees maintained an inn not very far from the headwaters of this Altata River. Others explain it by saying there were reportedly six *atamans* [Cossack leaders]. But we intend to acknowledge the tradition concerning the six devotees as being true. This is because when the village of Altī Ata first came [into being] there was supposedly a stone mosque on the top of a well known mountain. Specifically, Āsān Afandī, my grandfather's brother, when he was passing by, visited this mosque and reportedly went into it. It seems he reported that there was a Qur'ān on the shelf of the mosque as well as a note, and he reported that there were graves around it. [Āsān Afandī said] "But when the village of Dergachi came to the mosque, and when they intended to build themselves a church, they intended to lay a stone foundation under their church. Although some pointed to this mosque, they had not enough courage to take it. But they made a petition to the Bashkirs living along the Chizha River. In the village of Yol Qutli there was a Bashkir officer known as Ūrus Ibrāhīm; they accepted that this Ibrāhīm ask the Russians. They gave the permission to destroy the mosque and take [the stones]. Thereafter, the people of Dergachi destroyed this mosque and put the stones underneath the church."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> TAA fols. 2b–3a. According to a Soviet source, there were numerous legendary and semi-legendary accounts of the origin of the name Altata. One of these relates that the village was founded at the end of the eighteenth century by six horsemen (in Tatar one of the words for horseman is *atli*); cf. V. I. Gortsev, *Saratovskaia oblast' v geograficheskikh nazvaniakh*, (Saratov, 1984), 19.

In comparing the validity of the two legends, al-Īlmīnī quite consciously chooses the one that gives sacred meaning to the valley. He relates that the source of the Altata river is near a mosque, and in a very tangible sense the mosque, together with the tombs of the six devotees, that is, the “six fathers,” sacralize the river from its very beginnings, rendering the territory religiously meaningful to Muslims. The power of this affiliation is expressed in unambiguous symbolic terms when he relates how the Christians of Dergachi were unable to damage the mosque until they were permitted to do so by a local Muslim.

Attributing sacred communal significance to such a territory was especially important for Tatar peasants in this part of the steppe. To be sure, Muslims were the first to settle the Altata-Bol’shoi Uzen’ Valley after the departure of the Kalmyks in the 1770’s from the area. Yet the Muslim colonization of the region occurred relatively late. Tatar peasants settled the confluence of these two rivers in 1780, while Bashkirs, Kazakhs, and Muslim Ural Cossacks began wintering along the lower Bol’shoi Uzen’ Valley and near the Kamysh-Samar Lakes in the first decade of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, non-Muslims, especially Russian, Ukrainian, and German colonists, soon outnumbered the Muslims. Thus, it became important for Muslims to stake a religious and emotional claim on the territories. Al-Īlmīnī himself does not appear to have been aware that before his ancestors arrived, the land was inhabited by neither Muslims nor Christians, but by Kalmyks, as he tells us that originally the territory belonged to the Kazakhs.<sup>6</sup> In any case, the presence of a mosque near the headwaters of the Altata River provided sufficient evidence that the land had once belonged to Muslims.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> TAA fol. 8a.

<sup>7</sup> In all likelihood the structure al-Īlmīnī identified as a mosque was actually a mausoleum built by Muslim nomads during the period of the Golden Horde or of the Noghay Horde. These mausolea were frequently called “mosques” (*mechetki*) by Russian and Tatar colonists. Many mausolea were built near springs, and for this reason numerous streams in the steppe region bear the name “mechetka”. (this was in fact the name of the village which was renamed Nikolaevsk in the 1830’s, upon being designated a district seat). In areas with larger Muslim communities, and especially in Bashkiria and on the Kazakh steppe, these mausolea became important shrines and pilgrimage sites; for architectural descriptions of two such mausolea in Bashkiria cf. B. Kalimullin, *Arkhitekturnye pamiatniki Bashkiriï I* (Ufa, 1956); for more general discussions cf. N. A. Mazhitov, “Késhéné,” *Islam na territorii byvshei Rossiiskoi imperii: éntstiklopedicheskii slovar’ I* (Moscow, 1998), 63; Gennadii Garustovich,

## 2. JURISDICTIONS

While the main features in al-Īlmīnī's geographic descriptions were primarily religious, he was certainly aware of official jurisdictional boundaries. The Altata-Bol'shoi Uzen' Rivers crossed through the districts of Nikolaevsk and Novouzensk in Samara province and the lands of the Ural Cossacks and the Kazakhs of the Inner Horde, and he is careful to inform the reader when a river leaves one jurisdiction and enters another, and what jurisdiction a specific village was located in. In one sense, Russian administrative boundaries did not affect the region's sacred geography, yet these administrative boundaries had a different sort of meaning for Muslims, defining the territories of the region's exclusive and separate Muslim communities, Ural Cossacks, Kazakhs, Bashkirs, and Tatar peasants.

The jurisdictions covered in the *Tawārīkh-i Āltāi Ātā* came into existence relatively late. In 1780 these formerly Kalmyk lands were integrated in Saratov province (*Saratovskoe namestnichestvo*). Large scale colonization of the steppe region by state peasants began at around this time, and continued into the 1850's. In 1835 the trans-Volga steppe lands in Saratov province were further divided into two districts (*okrug*), each of which extended from the eastern bank of the Volga to the pasture lands of the Ural Cossacks. The northern district was called Nikolaevsk district, and the district seat, Sloboda Mechetka, was renamed Nikolaevsk. This district was bordered to the north by Samara province, to the east by the Ural Cossacks, to the west by the Volga River, and to the south by Novouzensk district. The Bol'shoi Irgiz River and its many tributaries flowed through the center of the district and emptied into the Volga. In the same year the southern district was established as Novouzensk district. Here the town of Churtanla, a trading center on the Bol'shoi Uzen' River, was made the district seat and renamed Novouzensk. Novouzensk district was bordered to the north by Nikolaevsk district, to the west by the Volga River, to the southwest by Astrakhan province, and to the southeast by the Ural Cossacks. The district had no navigable waterways, with the notable exception of the Volga River. The main rivers in the eastern parts of the district were the

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"Mavzolei v Chishmakh," *Sozvezdie kuraia: dukhovnoe nasledie Bashkortostana, Pamiatniki otechestva* 38 (2-1997), 29-31.

Bol'shoi Uzen' and Malyi Uzen' Rivers, and the Eruslan and Torgun Rivers in the southern and western parts of the district. Villages were grouped into townships called "*volosts*". The four villages central to al-Īlmīnī's narrative were grouped together into Osinov Gai township, named after its oldest village. In 1850 Novouzensk and Nikolaevsk districts were separated from Saratov province and joined to Samara province, and these districts remained in this province until the early 1920's, when they were joined to Saratov *oblast'*. Today most of what had been Novouzensk district finds itself divided between the Russian Federation's Saratov and Volgograd *oblasts*.

A portion of the lands of the Ural Cossack Host, located within Ural'sk province, also comes under al-Īlmīnī's scrutiny. The Ural Cossack Host was established in 1591, and included extensive pasture lands along the Ural river, as far as the southern reaches of the Ural Mountains. However Cossacks only took control of the lands along the lower Bol'shoi Uzen' in the first decade of the nineteenth century, when these steppe lands were divided between the Kazakh Inner Horde and the Ural Cossacks. Officially the Bol'shoi Uzen was to be the boundary between these two communities of nomads, but the Cossacks unilaterally made the lower Malyi Uzen' the defacto border, thereby taking control of the region's richest wintering and fishing grounds. This Cossack action provoked a fifty-year territorial dispute with the Kazakhs, which was eventually settled in 1873 by the imperial authorities in the Kazakhs' favor.<sup>8</sup> In any case, in the first decade of the nineteenth century two Cossack lines were soon established in this newly seized territory, the *Chizhinskaia distantsiia*, along the Chizha Rivers, and the *Vnutrenniaia distantsiia*, along Malyi Uzen' River. In addition, after 1832 the Bashkir lands of the *Bashkirkoe otdelenie* along the Chizha Rivers and in Nikolaevsk district formally became Ural Cossack lands after these Bashkirs were detached from the Bashkir-Mishar Cossack Host and attached to the Ural Cossack Host. However in 1866, when the Bashkir-Mishar Cossack host was formally disbanded, these Bashkirs lost their Cossack status, and their lands were attached to Nikolaevsk district. The lands comprising the *Chizhinskaia distantsiia* and *Vnutrenniaia distantsiia* remained

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<sup>8</sup> For a discussion of this dispute cf. Allen J. Frank, "Islam and Ethnic Relations in the Kazakh Inner Horde," 211–242; cf. also Khodzha Mukhammed-Salikh Babadzhanov, "Spor ural'skikh kazakov s kirgizami Vnutrennei ordy," in: *Sochineniia*, (Almaty, 1996), 98–109.

Cossack lands until 1920, when the Soviet government abolished Cossack status throughout Russia, and transferred these lands to the jurisdiction of the Kirgiz [Kazakh] ASSR. Today these lands are no longer in Russia, but instead form part of the Western Kazakhstan district of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The lands of the Kazakh Inner Horde were only occupied by Kazakhs in 1801 when the Russian authorities allowed Kazakhs under Bükäy Khan to migrate from east of the Ural River and to permanently establish themselves on lands abandoned by the Kalmyks in 1771. Throughout much of the nineteenth century ownership of substantial parts of this Kazakh territory was disputed between the Kazakhs and Ural Cossacks; but in general terms the territory of the Inner Horde was bounded in the north by the Bol'shoi Uzen' River, in the northwest by Novouzensk district, along the Torgun River, in the west by Astrakhan province and the Volga River, in the south by the Caspian Sea, and in the east by the Ural River settlements of the Ural Cossacks. During the nineteenth century the lands of the Inner Horde were a semi-autonomous part of Astrakhan province, however during the Soviet period the lands of the Inner Horde were made part of Kazakhstan, and today this region is divided between the Kazakh provinces of Atyrau (formerly Gur'ev) and Western Kazakhstan.

### 3. THE PHYSICAL SETTING

The Altata-Bol'shoi Uzen' Valley, as well as the other regions discussed in the *Tawārīkh-i Ālī Ātā*, were located in steppe region, or as Russian sources from the first half of the nineteenth century, termed the area, the "wild steppe" (*dikaia step*). The basin of the Altata, and Bol'shoi and Malyi Uzen' rivers in fact contained rather varied topographical and soil conditions, as well as flora and fauna. These natural variations of course influenced the economies and cultures of the region's human communities.

Al-Īlmīnī, as we have stated, had a keen sense of geography, and he describes in the detail the general topographical features of this large area. He tells us that Novouzensk district and the northern reaches of the Inner Horde consisted of a grade that descended gently toward the south. The region's watersheds, the Sinie Gory, or Blue Mountains, formed the dividing line between Samara and Ural'sk

provinces (the latter corresponded in large measure to the territories of the Ural Cossacks), and were locally the most prominent part of the Obshchii Syrt Plateau [Ōbshchī Šārt], that marked the southern extent of the Ural Mountains. To the north of the Obshchii Syrt the Bol'shoi Irgiz River [Īrghīz], with its tributary the Chelekli River flow to the Volga.<sup>9</sup> The headwaters of the westward flowing Altata River, as well as the headwaters of the southward flowing Chizha Rivers originated in springs in the Sinie Gory, while the headwaters of the Bol'shoi Uzen' are located in Nikolaevsk district, in the Obshchii Syrt.<sup>10</sup> As we have seen, the Bol'shoi Uzen' meets its larger tributary the Altata and continues to flow southward, past the district seat of Novouzensk and the trading outpost of Aleksandrov Gai, into the territory of the Kazakh Inner Horde. The river continues deep into Kazakh territory, where its flow eventually ceases among a number of swamps, lakes and reed beds, known collectively as the Kamysh-Samar Lakes. A parallel-flowing stream, the Malyi Uzen', also empties into the same lakes, near the Cossack village of Glinianskii Forpost, and after its abandonment in 1873, the Tatar and Kazakh settlement of Novaia Kazanka.

The entire region broadly falls under the climatic and vegetational category of semi-arid steppe. In the eastern half of Novouzensk district, and in the northern lands of the Inner Horde there was virtually no timber. What trees there were mainly grew along river banks, and there was nothing that could be considered forest.<sup>11</sup> Al-Īlmīnī, however, notes that there were stands of osier and willow near the village of Iske Ōzen.<sup>12</sup> The territory was mainly quite flat, and most of the ground consisted of grasslands. The richest soil was located in the Obshchii Syrt, especially in Nikolaevsk district, and the soil grew steadily thinner as one went south. The grasslands in northeastern Novouzensk district consisted of thick feather-grass, but along the Chizha Rivers there was little soil, but rather exposed rock and sand. There were also rich bottom lands along the rivers.<sup>13</sup> The steppe of the Inner Horde was especially inhospitable. Along the

<sup>9</sup> TAA fols. 3a, 82a.

<sup>10</sup> TAA fol. 82a.

<sup>11</sup> A. Leopol'dov, "Vzgliad na Novouzenskii okrug Saratovskoi gubernii," *Zhurnal ministerstva gosudarstvennykh imushchestv*, 1844, v. 13, l. 12, 32.

<sup>12</sup> TAA fol. 86a.

<sup>13</sup> Leopol'dov, "Vzgliad na Novouzenskii okrug", 30.

Bol'shoi and Malyi Uzen' Rivers and around the Kamysh-Samar lakes there were salt flats, and large areas of gravel and sand. However within the Inner Horde the banks of the Uzen' Rivers and the Kamysh-Samar lakes, as well as the marshes into which the Chizha Rivers emptied, contained large wetlands with extensive reed beds. There were some grasslands as well watered by these rivers near the end of their flow.<sup>14</sup> Aleksei Kharuzin, a Russian traveler who visited this part of the Inner Horde in the 1880's left the following description of the Kamysh-Samar Lakes:

Two small rivers [*rechki*], the Malyi and Bol'shoi Uzen', flow into the lakes, along with the Mukhor. The water in the lakes is lightly saline, so the inhabitants use well water. If the spring runoff into the Uzen' Rivers is great, then the salinity of the lakes diminishes, but if it is small, then the salinity increases. The banks of the lakes, and often the lakes themselves, are covered by thick and tall reeds; birds are numerous here—ducks, geese, sandpipers, pelicans, flamingos, and various birds of prey. When water is abundant here, hay-mowing is good, and the likes of which is unknown in other parts of the Inner Horde.<sup>15</sup>

As Kharuzin noted, the region also had some rather unique fauna as well, and al-Īlmīnī is aware of certain species which had originally lived in the area but which no longer did. For example, he notes that when the first Muslim colonists reached settled the village of Altı Ata around 1800 “there were many fields, the land was broad. Wild goats ran and there were wild horses called *ṭārḩān*.”<sup>16</sup> Concerning the Bashkir village of Birqazan, which was located near the Chizha Rivers he includes the following marginal note:

What we called *birqāzān* [pelican] is the name of a sort of a water bird. It is quite a bit larger than a goose, and its beak is about 3 spans long. It waddles like a goose and has a pouch of skin that is yellow. The bird's color is bluish-white. The old people call it *bābā qūsh*. The Bashkirs call it *birqāzān*. At the time when the Bashkirs were there, those birds would build their homes in the swamp and bear their young.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> TAA fols. 5a, 30a.

<sup>15</sup> Aleksei Kharuzin, *Stepnye ocherki (kirgizskaia Vnutrenniaia orda): Stranichki iz zapisnoi knigi*, (Moscow, 1888), 135–136.

<sup>16</sup> TAA fol. 8a. By the 1840's these species were probably no longer present in Novouzensk district, since Andrei Leopol'dov makes no mention of them in his list of wildlife native to that region; cf. Leopol'dov, “Vzgliad na Novouzenskii okrug,” 32.

<sup>17</sup> TAA fol. 5a.

Elsewhere al-Īlmīnī notes the increase in population in the region has resulted in a loss of much natural vegetation and a general decline in the quality of water.<sup>18</sup>

In addition to noting the influence of human settlement on the natural environment, al-Īlmīnī is also devoted to noting the human presence, both in terms of toponyms, and in identifying the region's various ethnic groups and their locations. The ethnographic characteristics of the region and ethnic relations will be discussed in detail in the following chapter, but a discussion of toponyms here may be useful within the larger context of the region's geography. We have already seen above how al-Īlmīnī interprets the etymology of the name Altī Ata to fit a Muslim sacred conception of the region's geography. But he also provides a number of other etymologies that lack the same sort of sacred significance, such as the etymology of the Bashkir village of Birqazan mentioned above. Concerning the origin of the name of his own village, Ilmin, al-Īlmīnī writes the following:

The first [settlers] to come to Ilmin came in 1841. When they arrived all that there was were many deep lakes and rivers. They say the lakes were four or five *sazhens* long. Since the bodies of water were not flowing, but only lakes, Ilmin [i.e. Ilmen'] in the Russian language has the meaning of "lakes." And in accordance with the Russian expression they gave it [that] name. Since then everyone who has come has called it thus. Officially it is Verkhazevka because the last name on the documents that were in force was Vargāzōf, and [the authorities] applied his name to it. The word *vargiz* in the Mordvin language means "wolf." But since Russians cannot say most things correctly, they call this Verkhazevka. This is the reason for its name.<sup>19</sup>

Elsewhere, when discussing the Russian and Ukrainian settlements along the Altata River he notes the names of the landowners after whom they were named.<sup>20</sup> Generally al-Īlmīnī is careful to inform the reader of both the Muslim name for a settlement and its "official"

<sup>18</sup> TAA fol. 8b.

<sup>19</sup> TAA fol. 40a. It would appear from this account the at least the site of Ilmin had been settled by Mordvins, and presumably Russians before the arrival of Muslim colonists in 1841. This was the case with Iske Ōzen, which had initially been settled by Russian fugitives before the arrival of Muslim colonists in 1780. The fate of these earlier non-Muslim settlers is not mentioned by the author.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. TAA fol. 6ab.

name. For example, the Muslim name of the city of Novouzensk was Chūrtānī, Aleksandrov Gai was called Ālmālī, the Cossack settlement of Slomokhinskaia Stanitsa was Yālpāqṭāl, the village of Pendel'ka-Novaia was Şafarqa, and the Kazakh town of Novaia Kazanka was Yāngī Qazānqa. Similarly he provides us with the Muslim and "official" names of the region's rivers; for example, the Muslim name for the Bol'shoi Uzen' is simply the Ūzīn, the Malyi Uzen' is the Şārī Ūzīn and the Chizha is the Chājī.

Thus, in a sense al-Īlmīnī presents us with what can be considered a Muslim geography of this region of Russia. Although the region straddles four jurisdictions and three provinces, he nevertheless understands it as a single region unified by the Altata-Bol'shoi Uzen' River. Beyond the conception of the region's sacred geography the physical setting itself has its own Muslim geography, characterized by the Muslim communities themselves and by their specifically Muslim toponyms.

#### 4. ECONOMIC LIFE

As al-Īlmīnī notes in his introduction the region's economic life was completely dependent upon the peculiarities of the natural setting. The Altata-Bol'shoi Uzen' Valley was first and foremost an agricultural region, producing mainly wheat and livestock for export to the internal Russian market and by the second half of the nineteenth century to the world market as well. Since the existence of the Muslim communities that al-Īlmīnī describes were almost entirely dependent on agricultural production, it should come as no surprise that he devotes substantial attention to the economic activities of these Muslim communities, especially since he understood economic life and religious life to be closely linked.

Economic life in the Altata-Bol'shoi Uzen' Valley comprised three major activities: agriculture, animal husbandry, and commerce. All three activities were central features in the economic life of these Muslim communities, although some activities were more strongly represented in some communities than in others. By the end of the nineteenth century small-scale industrial production was beginning to develop in Novouzensk district, especially in the settlement of Dergachi, located on a major transcontinental railroad line, and in the town

of Novouzensk. Al-Īlmīnī himself notes the presence of two sawmills and an ironworking shop in Dergachi.<sup>21</sup> In Novouzensk, the area's largest town, industrial establishments were even more limited. At the end of the nineteenth century the largest establishments included a brick factory, a tannery, and a liquor distillery, as well as several windmills. The largest single enterprise was a single steam-powered, and later oil-powered, flour mill that employed thirty workers.<sup>22</sup>

The most important economic activity in Novouzensk and Nikolaevsk districts was without question wheat cultivation and the vast majority of the Muslims in Novouzensk district were peasants who grew this crop. Wheat cultivation dominated agriculture south of the Irgiz river, and was most intensive in the western and northern parts of the district, where soil conditions were most favorable.<sup>23</sup> In the southern and eastern reaches of the district cultivation was limited to river valleys. In fact, the villages of Osinov Gai township, located as they were in very well watered locations, appear to have marked the eastern limit of profitable commercial grain cultivation. Already during the first half of the nineteenth century the region's serfs and state peasants produced large surpluses of the crop, and Novouzensk district was reputed to produce the best wheat and flour in Russia, which was exported through the Volga ports of Ekaterinshtadt and Balakovo, in Nikolaevsk district.<sup>24</sup> Railroads became the most significant factor in expanding the grain trade, and toward the end of the nineteenth century the wheat growers of Novouzensk district, and to a lesser extent of Nikolaevsk district, became major suppliers to the world grain market. For example, in the five year period between 1857 and 1862 the Pokrovskaiia Sloboda market near the town of Novouzensk turned over about three million poods of wheat.<sup>25</sup> In 1910 however, after the construction of a railroad to that town, the same market turned over 20.6 million poods of grain, mainly wheat.<sup>26</sup> Other important markets for Novouzensk wheat were in the Volga River port of Balakovo, and the city of Ural'sk.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>21</sup> TAA fol. 7b.

<sup>22</sup> V. E. Svistunov, *Gorod Novouzensk*, (Saratov, 1983), 13.

<sup>23</sup> Leopol'dov, "Vzgliad na Novouzenskii okrug," 30; P. S. Kabytov and L. V. Khramov *Samarskaia letopis': ocherki istorii Samarskogo kraia s drevneishikh vremen do nachala XX veka* II, (Samara, 1993), 175.

<sup>24</sup> Leopol'dov, "Vzgliad na Novouzenskii okrug," 34.

<sup>25</sup> Svistunov, *Gorod Novouzensk*, 10.

<sup>26</sup> Kabytov and Khramov, *Samarskaia letopis'* II, 123.

<sup>27</sup> Kabytov and Khramov, *Samarskaia letopis'* II, 100.

Large-scale wheat cultivation made Novouzensk district one of the wealthiest agricultural regions in all of Russia. The Novouzensk *zemstvo* was one of the wealthiest in all of the empire,<sup>28</sup> and by the end of the nineteenth century it was precisely in this district that some economists perceived the emergence of capitalist modes of production and property-holding in Russian agriculture. This process attracted the attention of V. I. Lenin, who in 1899 highlighted land-holding patterns in Novouzensk district to demonstrate that parts of rural Russia were indeed developing commercial farming.<sup>29</sup> Commercial farming was also well developed in Nikolaevsk district as well. However, the shift in these steppe regions from communal land holding to private farms was most evident among Russian, German, and Ukrainian peasants. Muslim peasants, and especially Bashkirs, tended to be more conservative and were less willing on the whole to break up their communes.<sup>30</sup> Following the 1905–1907 Revolution the peasants of Novouzensk district on the whole welcomed the Stolypin reforms, the “Wager on the Strong”, and in fact the reforms had some of their highest rates of success in this district. Between 1907 and 1916, 86.4 percent of peasants in Novouzensk district abandoned their communes for private land holdings, whereas the average for Samara province as a whole was only 30.9 percent, and the second-highest rate, in Nikolaevsk district, was 32.1 percent. The lowest rate, 4.7 percent was in Bugul’ma district, which had a very high proportion of Muslim peasants.<sup>31</sup> In any case, all of the notables mentioned by al-Īlmīnī in the four Muslims villages in Osinov Gai township were major landholders who sowed their lands with wheat and who presumably sold it at the markets of Novouzensk, Balakovo, and Ural’sk. While peasant communes may have continued to survive in Osinov Gai township during the twentieth century, it is evident that wealthy

<sup>28</sup> Svistunov, *Gorod Novouzensk*, 10.

<sup>29</sup> V. I. Lenin, *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*, (Moscow, 1967), 86–94, 260–265. Lenin limits his discussion to land-holding patterns among Russian, and to a lesser extent, German farmers, and makes no mention of patterns among Muslim peasants.

<sup>30</sup> Kabytov and Khramov, *Samarskaia letopis’* II, 100. One possible reason for this sort of conservatism is that Muslim communities tended to organize themselves more along kinship lines; this was especially true of the Bashkirs, who held large amounts of land communally.

<sup>31</sup> Kabytov and Khramov, *Samarskaia letopis’* II, 100, 102; the high number for Novouzensk district suggests that probably some Muslim peasants in that district may have also abandoned their communes.

Muslims privately owned substantial amounts of lands, and as we shall see it was these people who were the financial pillars of the region's Muslim institutions.

In terms of commercial production, Novouzensk district's agriculture could fairly be termed a wheat monoculture, and already in 1844 Andrei Leopoldov remarked upon the fact that cereal crops other than wheat were commercially marginal and were grown mainly for domestic use, although Leopoldov does note that watermelon cultivation in the southern part of the district was especially important.<sup>32</sup> However the region's peasants grew a wide variety of crops, if only for their own use. Rye was consumed by some Muslim peasants as a cheaper alternative to wheat.<sup>33</sup> The Bashkirs along the Chizha Rivers grew rice and melons as well as cherries.<sup>34</sup> Russians near Dergachi would grow cabbages and potatoes along the Kamyshleika River, a tributary of the Altata.<sup>35</sup> Notables near the village of Safarqa owned a number of profitable gardens and orchards.<sup>36</sup> Similar large-scale fruit and vegetable gardens existed in the villages of Ilmin and Iske Özen and along the upper reaches of the Bol'shoi Uzen', having been established by Russians there.<sup>37</sup> Many of these gardens were apparently money-making operations in their own right, supplying local demand. Al-Īlmīnī notes on several occasions that wealthy notables, both Russian and Muslim, owned these gardens, which were quite profitable. This sort of intensive gardening relied on irrigation, and al-Īlmīnī notes the many reservoirs (*būmā*) built both by the colonists, and later by the local *zemstvo*.<sup>38</sup> The lands near these reservoirs were especially valuable.

Large-scale cereal agriculture emerged in Novouzensk district as a result of the area's peasant colonization during the nineteenth century. However, the most enduring economic activity was animal husbandry, which had been the traditional occupation of the pastoral nomads before the arrival of the peasant colonists, and which remained the dominant economic activity in substantially large parts of region

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<sup>32</sup> Leopoldov, "Vzgliad na Novouzenskii okrug," 34.

<sup>33</sup> TAA fol. 39a.

<sup>34</sup> TAA fol. 5a.

<sup>35</sup> TAA fol. 7b.

<sup>36</sup> TAA fols. 29b, 30b.

<sup>37</sup> TAA fols. 73a, 82a, 85b.

<sup>38</sup> TAA fols. 8b, 28b–29b.

that were simply not suitable for crops. In the eastern parts of Novouzensk district, the restriction of agriculture to river valleys left large parts of steppe available as grazing lands. To the east of the town of Novouzensk, where limited rainfall and poor soil conditions precluded profitable cereal crops, the steppe lands and river valleys were employed as summer and winter pastures respectively by pastoral nomads, that is by Kazakhs, Bashkirs, and Ural Cossacks. Within Novouzensk district rich pasture lands were found along the Eruslan and Torgun Rivers, and the Torgun valley was used as a wintering ground for a number of Kazakh clans.<sup>39</sup> However the richest pasture lands were located outside of Novouzensk district. Some of these pastures were found along the Chizha Rivers, but by far the richest and most extensive were along the Bol'shoi and Malyi Uzen' Rivers, in the swamps and reed beds located between them, as well as around the Kamysh-Samar Lakes.<sup>40</sup> Where the flow of the Chizha, Bol'shoi, and Malyi Uzen' Rivers ended there were large reed beds that provided generous winter fodder and shelter for the herds, as well as numerous hayfields, whose hay the nomads would mow and store. Concerning the Kamysh-Samar Lakes, Kharuzin writes:

The abundance of grass [along these lakes] has attracted a large number of nomadic Kazakhs here—here and there their winter dwellings and yurts are visible, one of each together. The Kazakhs here are incomparably wealthy.<sup>41</sup>

Five sorts of livestock formed the foundation of stockbreeding in the Altata-Bol'shoi Uzen' Valley. These were horses, sheep, cattle, goats, and camels. Camels were especially numerous in the region, and per head were the most valuable. Russian, Ukrainian, and Muslim peasants, especially in southern and eastern Novouzensk district used camels extensively as beasts of burden, and naturally they were very common among the Kazakh and Cossack pastoral nomads.<sup>42</sup>

In Osinov Gai township horses were primarily used as draft animals, however some notables also maintained large herds of livestock,

<sup>39</sup> Ia. V. Khanykov, "Ocherk Vnutrennei kirgizskoi ordy v 1841 godu," *Zapiski Russkago geograficheskago obshchestva* 1847, 34–37; V. V. Vostrov and M. S. Mukanov, *Rodoplemennoi sostav i rasselenie kazakhov (konets XIX-nachalo XX v.)*, (Alma-Ata, 1968), 245.

<sup>40</sup> M. Ivanin "Vnutrenniaia ili Bukeevskaia kirgizskaia orda," *Epokha* 1864 (12), 22–23.

<sup>41</sup> Kharuzin, *Stepnyie ocherki*, 136.

<sup>42</sup> Kabytov and Khramov, *Samarskaia letopis'* I, 173.

presumably for commercial use. For example Ḥubbī Mullā, the first *imām* of Altı Ata's Third Mosque owned 120 horses, and was reckoned to be very wealthy.<sup>43</sup> The Bashkir *imām* of Safarqa's First Mosque, Mullā 'Aṭā'allāh Ālṭinbāy ūghlī came to that village with as many as forty horses, and was likewise reputed to be wealthy.<sup>44</sup> The *imām* of Iske Özen's Third Mosque, Ḥusnaddīn 'Abdalwahhāb ūghlī, was also thought to be wealthy with "120 oxen, 20 head of horses and perhaps more camels".<sup>45</sup> Two notables in the village of Safarqa, known as the Twin Ḥājjis reportedly owned three hundred horses each together with three to four hundred rams each and ten or fifteen plow oxen each.<sup>46</sup>

As we have seen, among the Kazakhs, Bashkirs, and Ural Cossacks, pastoral nomadism was the primary economic activity. Among the Bashkirs, those inhabiting the Chizha Valley were almost exclusively stockbreeders, although they did grow some crops. Some of these Bashkirs had considerable wealth. Al-Īlmīnī tells us that among these a wealthy person would own a thousand horses, and a moderately wealthy person—five hundred. Many of these Bashkirs would own three hundred horses, as well as cattle, sheep, and goats.<sup>47</sup>

Similarly, the Kazakhs of the Inner Horde were almost exclusively stockbreeders. Although the Russian authorities had tried to introduce a degree of agricultural production among the Kazakhs in the hopes of sedentarizing them, it appears that the lower Bol'shoi and Malyi Uzen Valleys, not to mention the open steppe itself, was poorly suited to crop agriculture, and was most productive as pasture land. Al-Īlmīnī calculated wealth among Kazakhs exclusively in terms of livestock. One wealthy Kazakh was a certain Īshānghūlī Prāvītel, who resided on the Malyi Uzen' near the town of Talovka. This local ruler "owned two hundred or more horses, around five hundred sheep, and in all thousands of animals, including camels." Another wealthy Kazakh was Shibāgīr Bābā'allāh who owned nearly a hundred horses, fifteen camels, over a hundred sheep, "and twelve sons."<sup>48</sup>

The economy of the Ural Cossacks was sharply differentiated

<sup>43</sup> TAA fol. 18a.

<sup>44</sup> TAA fol. 31b.

<sup>45</sup> TAA fol. 88a.

<sup>46</sup> TAA fols. 30b–31a.

<sup>47</sup> TAA fol. 5ab.

<sup>48</sup> TAA fol. 104b.

between the northern and southern regions of the Host's territory. In the south, especially along the lower Ural River and the Caspian coast, the main economic activity was fishing. In the north, which includes the area described by al-Īlmīnī, semi-nomadic stockbreeding predominated.<sup>49</sup> Eighteenth century observers of the Ural Cossacks note that both Muslims and Russians retained especially large herds of camels. Muslim and Kalmyk Ural Cossacks would nomadize in felt tents in summer, and live in wooden houses in winter.<sup>50</sup> In al-Īlmīnī's account, the wealth of the richest and most powerful Ural Cossacks in Yalpaqтал, both Russian and Muslim, is measured in terms of livestock. For example, the leader of the Muslim Cossacks of Yalpaqтал, one Khūjāntāy Bābā, is said to have owned four thousand horses, two thousand camels, two thousand cattle, and around ten thousand sheep. The wealth of this Cossack leader even attracted the attention of the Russian official and orientalist V. V. Grigor'ev, who stayed in the village of Glinianskii Forpost in the 1850's and marveled at Khūjāntāy's generosity, as well as his wealth.<sup>51</sup> The wealthiest of the Russian Cossacks was a certain Pyotr Iakovich Ovchinnikov, who reportedly owned four thousand horses, three thousand camels, cattle and goats, and some fifty thousand sheep. In the case of Khūjāntāy Bābā, it seems that his wealth consisted exclusively of livestock, since al-Īlmīnī tells us that he lost his entire wealth during the famine years of 1889 and 1890.<sup>52</sup> The son of Khūjāntāy Bābā, 'Aṭā'allāh, who was the *imām* of Yalpaqтал's mosque, owned on the scale of a hundred horses, and around a hundred camels and cattle.<sup>53</sup>

Despite the overall prosperity of the local economy, based on wheat cultivation and stockbreeding, on the individual level drought and other problems meant fortunes could be lost as quickly as they were gained. We have seen that this was the case with the Cossack leader Khūjāntāy Bābā, and elsewhere in reference to Osinov Gai township, al-Īlmīnī alludes to this circumstance in proverbial terms:

<sup>49</sup> F. V. Mamonov (ed.), *Istoriia kazachestva Urala* (Orenburg-Cheliabinsk, 1992). 124–125.

<sup>50</sup> Damir Iskhakov, *Étnograficheskie gruppy tatar Volgo-Ural'skogo regiona* (Kazan, 1993), 57.

<sup>51</sup> N. Veselovskii, *Vasilii Vasil'evich Grigor'ev po ego pis'mam i trudam*, (St. Petersburg, 1887), 115–116.

<sup>52</sup> TAA fols. 106b, 108a.

<sup>53</sup> TAA fol. 107b.

In those years, even though their wealth declined because of the infertility of the crops, the Twin Ḥajjīs together with Kamāladdīn and Aḥmad-Jān, the sons of Sayfaddīn nevertheless were not among those who weakened. But the sons of Shamsaddīn did weaken considerably. However, as they say, “There are not many old rich on the land,” and the only buildings from that time that are standing are the first mills, but there is little cash or livestock [from that time]. The Twin Ḥajjīs died, Shamsaddīn’s property was sold, and they say the proceeds were not sufficient to pay his debts.<sup>54</sup>

Commerce in this part of the steppe region was of various sorts and scales, and was the primary occupation of numerous Muslims. Muslim merchant colonies will be discussed in detail in the following chapter, but at this point it would be useful to note what role commerce played in the region’s economy as a whole. The main articles of trade of course were wheat and livestock. As we have seen the centers of the wheat trade were the Volga port towns and the Pokrovskaiia Sloboda market in the town of Novouzensk. At least a portion of this trade was in the hands of Muslims. After the construction of a railway in 1895 connecting Novouzensk, and Aleksandrov Gai to the Russian rail system, this commerce grew substantially. Another type of trade was the livestock trade with the Kazakhs. This trade was centered in Novouzensk and Aleksandrov Gai, but also much activity took place in the Kazakh Inner Horde itself, in the towns of Khanskaia Stavka and Novaia Kazanka, as well as in the Ural Cossack Host, that is, in the village of Glinianskii Forpost, and later in Yalpaqтал. In this trade the Kazakhs exchanged livestock, meat, hides, wool, and felt for wheat, as well as manufactured goods. Although much of this trade was in the hands of merchants, especially Muslim ones, in Glinianskii Forpost and Yalpaqтал much was in the hands of Cossacks.<sup>55</sup>

Other economic activities that was of local importance were salt collection and fishing. Salt collection in the salt lakes and salt flats along the Malyi and Bol’shoi Uzen’ Rivers were carried out by Cossacks, and after the Inner Horde gained control of these areas after 1873, by Kazakhs.<sup>56</sup> Commercial fishing in these lakes and

<sup>54</sup> TAA fol. 31a.

<sup>55</sup> This trade was already active in the 1830’s; cf. A. I. Levshin, *Opisanie kirgiz-kazach’ikh ili kirgiz-kaisatskikh ord i stepei*, (Almaty, 1996) [1st edition 1832], 394–397.

<sup>56</sup> Frank, “Islam and Ethnic Relations,” 230–231.

swamps had similarly been monopolized by the Cossacks, and then became Kazakh monopolies. The rivers and ponds of Osinov Gai township were reportedly rich in fish as well, but the catch taken from those waters was primarily for household consumption.

#### SUMMARY

In geographic and economic terms eastern Novouzensk district and the adjoining parts of the Inner Horde and the Ural Cossack Host shared numerous features with the Volga-Ural region as a whole, but also differed in several important ways. To begin with, Muslims had come to the Altata-Bol'shoi Uzen' Valley mainly in the nineteenth century as State Peasant colonists, and the region had, at least for the preceding two centuries, been populated not by Muslims, but by Kalmyk Buddhists, and by Russian and Ukrainian fugitives, religious dissenters, and itinerant trader-adventurers. In contrast, the Muslim presence in the Middle Volga region existed beyond the historical memory of most communities there, and indeed widely circulated legends and broadly accepted by these Muslims placed the presence of Muslim communities there to the time of the Prophet Muḥammad himself. Economically Novouzensk district differed not only from the Muslim territories of the Volga-Ural region, but from nearly all of rural Russia, by the rapid development of large scale commercial wheat production, that not only enriched local elites, but also by the second decade of the twentieth century was substantially changing the systems of land holding and social relationships in the region. How these economic developments affected the somewhat more conservative Muslims peasantry is unclear, but there is no question that it had to have affected the local Muslim commercial and land holding elite. Furthermore, much of the Bol'shoi Uzen' Valley, as well as the Chizha Valley, lay entirely outside of the agricultural zone, and in these areas Bashkir, Kazakh, and Cossack nomadic and semi-nomadic stockbreeding completely dominated the economy, whereas in the Volga-Ural region this sort of extensive pastoral nomadism was marginal, and limited to small communities in Bashkiria and southern Astrakhan province.

Nevertheless, the similarities seem to outweigh the differences. In geographic terms Muslims sought to establish a sacred geography confirming the territory's Muslim quality. In the Volga-Ural region

as a whole this was expressed in the popularity of shrine catalogs, whether for the regions as a whole, or for specific area, like the city of Kazan or the Tol' Valley in Perm' province. As with the shrine catalogs, the authors of the *Tawārikh-i Āltī Ātā* determined the territory in sacred and physical terms, identifying the major rivers, and the important fact that the source of the Altata River was located near an ancient "mosque" and that its name derived from local religious figures. Similarities are also evident in the economic lives of the Muslim communities. In Novouzensk district, as in the Volga-Ural region, the economy of Muslim communities was dominated by cereal agriculture, although stockbreeding was an important supplemental activity. The peasant economy was linked to the larger Russian market in agricultural commodities. Similarly, wealthy merchants connected with the internal Russian market, as well as with the Kazakh trade, were fairly well represented in Novouzensk district.

## CHAPTER THREE

### ETHNOGRAPHY

The focus of al-Īlmīnī's history are the Muslim communities inhabiting the Altata, Bol'shoi and Malyi Uzen', and Chizha valleys. It is common for today's historians to refer to these pre-revolutionary Muslim communities by the current "national" designations of their descendants, such as "Volga Tatars," Bashkirs, and Kazakhs. However, as we shall see, al-Īlmīnī uses a different ethnic taxonomy when dealing with Muslims. This taxonomy merits our attention because it provides a more informed depiction of how Muslim communities simultaneously were united by a common religious identity as Muslims, while at the same time divided themselves on the basis of communal and corporate identities reinforced by centuries of Russian policies that rendered these communities exclusive on the basis of corporate privileges and obligations. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the fundamental divisions between the various Muslim communities of Novouzensk district, the Ural Cossack Host, and Kazakh Inner Horde, were not "national," but corporate and tribal divisions. The Tatar, Bashkir, and to a lesser extent, Kazakh, nations that emerged after 1917 must in large measure be recognized as Soviet creations that were themselves based on the exclusive pre-Revolutionary tribal and corporate communities. Beyond issues of ethnic nomenclature, the *Tawārīkh-i Āltāi Ātā* is in its own right an important ethnographic source for a region that has been poorly studied by Tatar and Bashkir ethnographers, as a result of its late settlement, and its distance from the more densely populated (and better studied) areas of Tatar and Bashkir settlement. Not only is the manuscript important as a native source on the Muslim colonization of Novouzensk district, but it is one of the few sources on the isolated and little-known Bashkir communities of the Chizha region, as well as on the Muslim Cossacks of the Ural Cossack Host. Al-Īlmīnī was keenly aware of the ethnic diversity in the Altata and Bol'shoi Uzen' Valleys. His extensive information on the economic pursuits of these communities, as well as the general ethnic picture he provides, constitutes important source material in its own right, but also provides a

complex and rich backdrop to the religious history of a region that is simultaneously part of imperial Russia and part of Islamic Inner Asia.

Briefly speaking then, al-Īlmīnī broadly divides the region's Muslim population into two groups. The first consists of Muslims that had come to the region as part of the general colonization movement. In other words, the Muslim peasants of Osinov Gai township, and the "Kazani" merchants among the Kazakhs, Cossacks, and in Novouzensk and Aleksandrov Gai. The second group consists of "local" Muslims (*yirtī musulmānlār*), namely the semi-nomadic Bashkirs, Kazakhs, and Muslim Cossacks.

### 1. THE ALTĪ ATA MUSLIMS

#### *The Muslim population in Novouzensk district*

Al-Īlmīnī's narrative is centered around the four Muslim villages in Novouzensk district's Osinov Gai township. These villages are Iske Özen (Osinov Gai), Altı Ata (Altata), Imin (Verkhazovka), and Safarqa (Pendel'ka-Novaia). In addition to these four villages, there were a number of other Muslim settlements in Novouzensk district. Two of these, one in the town of Novouzensk proper, and the other in the village of Aleksandrov Gai, are discussed in the *Tawārīkh-i Āltī Ātā*. However, there were three other settlements located in the southwestern reaches of that vast jurisdiction that al-Īlmīnī does not mention. The first was the village of Latoshinka, a Tatar village founded at the end of the eighteenth century by colonists from a number of villages in Saratov province's Kuznetsk district.<sup>1</sup> This was a rather large village with one mosque and 872 inhabitants in 1883.<sup>2</sup> The other Muslim village, called Latyshevka, was not a Tatar, or even Turkic village at all. This village, was settled in 1859 by highlanders from the North Caucasus who had been exiled there by Alexander II. This village was located along the Eruslan River, in a region of heavy Ukrainian settlement, and had a population of 349 in 1883.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> L. Sh. Arslanov and V. M. Viktorin, "Astrakhanskies tatory," *Materialy po istorii tatarskogo naroda*, (Kazan, 1995), 351. Today this village is located in Stavropol' raion of Astrakhan oblast'.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Al'favitnye spiski*.

<sup>3</sup> Kabytov and Khramkov (eds.) *Samarskaia letopis'* I, 167–168.

Finally, there was a permanent Kazakh settlement along the Torgun River called the farmstead (*khutor*) of Akhmat-Girai Chingiz-Khan, a Kazakh Chingisid prince of the Inner Horde. This settlement reportedly numbered 340 in 1883. Thus, we can determine that with the exception of the village of Latyshevka, the Muslim population of Novouzensk district was exclusively Turkic, and overwhelmingly “Tatar,” that is, non-Bashkir Muslims of the Volga-Ural region.

Regarding Muslim population statistics for Novouzensk district, the earliest figure we have is from the census of 1833. For that year there were reportedly 2,636 “Tatars” on the territory that would become Novouzensk district. In 1844, Andrei Leopoldov reported the presence of 2,639 Muslims, together with 38,203 Orthodox Christians in the district. In 1844 the Muslim population would still have been almost exclusively “Tatar.” By 1857 the number of “Tatars” had grown to 6,632, including 94 in the town of Novouzensk. In 1883 the Ministry of the Interior reported the populations of the villages as follows: Iske Özen—2,017, Altı Ata—2,406, Ilmin—2,426, Safarqa—1,770, Latoshinka—872, Latyshevka—349, the farmstead of Prince Akhmat-Girai Chingiz-Khan—340. On the basis of these figures we can determine that there were 10,180 Muslims in the district, including 8,619 (85 percent) in the four villages of Osinov Gai township, and 1,561 (15 percent) in the remaining villages. However, these figures only account for villages with official mosques, and exclude the small Muslim populations of Novouzensk and Aleksandrov Gai, as well as the larger nomadic Kazakh communities. Finally, according to the census of 1897 there were reportedly 13,008 “Tatars” in Novouzensk district, including 213 in the town of Novouzensk.<sup>4</sup>

#### *The Mishars of Saratov and Penza Provinces*

The lands that came to constitute Osinov Gai township were mainly colonized by Muslims from the provinces of Saratov and Penza on the right bank of the Volga River. Throughout the imperial Russian era the Muslims of Novouzensk province maintained close ties with these “home” communities. The Muslims inhabiting these provinces, as well as areas in Tambov, Nizhnii Novgorod, and Simbirsk provinces,

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<sup>4</sup> *Al'favitnye spiski*; D. M. Iskhakov, *Istoricheskaia demografiia tatarskogo naroda (XVIII–nachalo XX vv.)*, (Kazan, 1993), 68, 75; Leopoldov, “Vzgliad na Novouzenskii okrug,” 34.

are known in ethnographic literature as Mishars. Russian sources refer to them variously as *Meshcheriaki* or simply as Tatars, but in terms of their ethnic and political history the Mishars of the right bank of the Volga differed from the so-called Kazan Tatars, with whom they shared a common religion and language, as well as, in Russian sources, the common ethnonym of “Tatar.”<sup>5</sup>

A defining feature of the history of these Mishar communities is their long association with the Muscovite, and later Russian, state. The ancestors of the Mishars were Turkic Muslims who had settled in what was to become Nizhnii Novgorod province. The lands inhabited by these Mishars’ ancestors were disputed between local Chingisid rulers and the Russian princes of Nizhnii Novgorod. In 1392 Tokhtamysh, the khan of the Golden Horde, ceded these lands to the Russian princes, and as a result these Muslims came under Russian rule.<sup>6</sup> These Mishars lived in scattered, but densely settled areas and provided military service and protected the frontier from the raids of Noghays and other nomads beyond the pale of Russian political control. In exchange for their military and other services to the Russian state these Mishars received the rank of “Service Tatars”, and retained noble status and a degree of internal self-government. With the growth of Muscovite power in the early sixteenth century, Mishar princes, who called themselves “*mirzas*,” and are known in Russian documents as *murzy*, began to receive lands from the Muscovite princes. For example, in 1509 the Grand Prince Vasiliï III granted Mordvin lands to the Mishar prince Akchura. This process continued during the sixteenth century, into the reign of Ivan IV.<sup>7</sup> Mishar “Service Tatars” regularly contributed troops to the Muscovite army, and Mishar soldiers participated in Ivan IV’s conquest of Kazan in 1552.<sup>8</sup> In relative terms the Mishar peasantry held a privileged position during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. They either held the status of *iasashnie liudi*, that is, they paid the communal *iasak* tax

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<sup>5</sup> Most discussions of the Mishars focus on communities west of the Volga River; cf. R. G. Mukhamedova, *Tatary-mishari*, (Moscow, 1972); E. A. Malov, *Svedeniia o mishariakh*, (Kazan, 1885); G. N. Akhmarov, “O iazyke i narodnosti misharei,” IOAIE XIX/2 (1903), 91–160 (recently reprinted in Gaintedin Akhmarov, *Izbrannye trudy*, (Kazan, 1998), 129–173); A. M. Orlov, *Meshchera, meshcheriaki, mishare*, (Kazan, 1992).

<sup>6</sup> M. Z. Khafizov, *Nizhegorodskie tatary*, (Nizhnii Novgorod, 1998), 13.

<sup>7</sup> Khafizov, *Nizhegorodskie tatary*, 14; S. Kh. Alishiev, “Sotsial’naia èvoliutsiia sluzhilykh tatar vo vtoroi polovine XVI–XVIII vekov,” *Issledovaniia po istorii krest’ianstva Tatarii dooktiabr’skogo perioda*, (Kazan, 1984), 56–57.

<sup>8</sup> Alishiev, “Sotsial’naia èvoliutsiia,” 56.

directly to Moscow, rather than a land tax, or they provided military or other service obligations.<sup>9</sup>

As Russian power on the steppe expanded and the frontier advanced, Mishar settlements advanced with it. Many of the Mishar settlements in Penza province date from the first half of the seventeenth century, and by 1680 Mishars were beginning to settle Saratov province west of the Volga River. The earliest of these settlements were in the Uza River valley, and include Pendel'ka, Isekeevo, and Ust'-Uza, as well as other settlements in Kuznetsk district.<sup>10</sup> The settlement of Khvalynsk and Kuznetsk districts in Saratov province intensified during the first half of the eighteenth century. In 1704 Service Tatars founded the major settlement of Zimnitsa and were granted lands in the environs. Between 1718 and 1746 seven new Mishar settlements were founded in Perovsk and Kuznetsk districts, and eleven in Khvalynsk district.<sup>11</sup> It was during the reign of Peter I that the Mishar nobility, collectively known as *mirzas*, had their noble status repealed, and the former Service Tatars were transformed into State Peasants. However, not all Mishar peasants became State Peasants and those communities east of the Volga River, primarily in Bashkiria and along the Kazakh steppe, were assigned to various Cossack Hosts and enjoyed Cossack status.<sup>12</sup> The tradition of selecting Mishars as Cossacks continued into the middle of the nineteenth century, when in 1851 Mishars from Saratov province were settled on the Kazakh steppe in Siberia and attached to the Siberian Cossack Host.<sup>13</sup>

#### *The Muslim Colonization of the Trans-Volga Steppe (1780–1841)*

The four Muslim villages of Osinov Gai township were settled in a series of waves between 1780 and 1841 by Mishar state peasants

<sup>9</sup> U. Iu. Idrisov, S. B. Seniutkin, O. N. Seniutkina, and Iu. N. Guseva, *Iz istorii Nizhegorodskikh musul'manskikh obshchin v XIX–30-kh godakh XX veka*, (Nizhnii Novgorod, 1997), 6.

<sup>10</sup> Mukhamedova, *Tatary-mishari*, 24.

<sup>11</sup> Mukhamedova, *Tatary-mishari*, 24–25.

<sup>12</sup> On the Mishars in Bashkiria cf. N. I. Vorob'ev, G. M. Khisamutdinov, G. V. Iusupov, "Istoriko-étnograficheskie issledovaniia naseleniia severo-zapadnykh raionov Bashkiriï," *Sovetskaia étnografiia* 1962 (2), 124–130.

<sup>13</sup> S. M. Andreev, "Kazaki-musul'mane v Sibirskom kazach'em voiske (vtoraia polovina XIX—nachalo XX vekov)," *Islam, obshchestvo i kul'tura: Materialy mezhdunarodnoi nauchnoi konferentsii 'Islamskaia tsivilizatsiia v preddverii XXI veka (k 600-letiiu islama v Sibiri')*, (Omsk, 1994), 5.

primarily from Kuznetsk and Khvalynsk districts of Saratov province, and from Penza Province. They called this treeless and mainly empty steppe “*yāngī qir*, meaning literally “new steppe” or “new field.” This wave of Mishar settlement into the Trans-Volga lands that were to become Novouzensk district were in fact part of a larger movement of massive Russian, Ukrainian, and German colonization. In the twenty years between 1835 and 1855, about 100,000 peasants migrated to Novouzensk and Nikolaevsk districts.<sup>14</sup> As for the role of Muslim peasants in this movement, we have seen that Mishars colonized the Cis-Volga regions of Saratov province for the most part already in the first half of the eighteenth century, and the colonization of the Trans-Volga steppe lands was the continuation of a long trend of Mishar settlement to the southeast. Consequently, the settlement of the Altı Ata villages was part of an older trend. Although the Altı Ata area was one of the last areas settled by Mishar colonists, Mishar peasant settlement extended well to the south, along both banks of the Volga River down to Astrakhan and the Caspian Sea. The colonization of the Astrakhan region by Mishars was especially pronounced, but east of the Volga also included, besides Novouzensk district, Nikolaevsk district as well.<sup>15</sup> In the latter district there was only one large village, Eliuzan’-Novaia, whose settlers came from the village of Iske Äläzän in Saratov province, according to one source, or from Penza province according to another.<sup>16</sup>

The first settlement in the region was the village of Iske Özen, which al-İlmīnī dates during the eighteenth century, but which Russian documents date more precisely to 1780.<sup>17</sup> While al-İlmīnī is probably correct that this was the first village in the area, it does appear that the site of Iske Özen, located at the confluence of the Bol’shoi Uzen’ and Altata Rivers, was already settled, or had been prior to the arrival of the Muslim colonists. During the eighteenth century the Irgiz and Uzen’ River Valleys became refuges for fugitives from the western bank of the Volga, and the site of Iske Özen was reportedly one of their settlements as early as 1763.<sup>18</sup> In any case, al-İlmīnī

<sup>14</sup> Liaskovskii, “Materialy dlia statisticheskago opisaniia,” 49.

<sup>15</sup> Arslanov and Viktorin, “Astrakhanskie tatarı,” 351.

<sup>16</sup> Iskhakov, *Etnograficheskie gruppy*, 112; Gortsev, *Saratovskaia oblast’*, 76–77.

<sup>17</sup> TAA fol. 82b; Iskhakov, *Etnograficheskie gruppy*, 112.

<sup>18</sup> A. A. Geraklitov, *Istoriia Saratovskogo kraia v XVI–XVIII vv.*, (Saratov, 1923), 336–337.

states that upon the arrival of the Muslim colonists the area was deserted, and he tells us that most of the colonists who founded Iske Özen came from the village of Mästāq (Mostiak) in Khvalynsk district, but that others came from Țirūyev (Truevskie Vershiny) in Kuznetsk district as well as from Kīqīn (Kikino) in Penza Province and Iske Ālāzān (Eliuzan') in Kuznetsk district.<sup>19</sup>

The next Muslim settlement to emerge was the village of Altī Ata, which was formed some twenty years later, around 1800, according to al-Īlmīnī.<sup>20</sup> Russian documents state that the village was settled by about 2,000 Muslim colonists.<sup>21</sup> These colonists also came from Saratov and Penza provinces. Some came from Āṭlāsh (Atlashevo) and Vyazovī (Viazovyi Gai) in Khvalynsk district, others from Rīshītīn (Reshetino) in Penza Province.<sup>22</sup>

The last two Muslim villages that came to form Osinov Gai township, Safarqa and Ilmin were both founded in 1841.<sup>23</sup> Safarqa was founded by migrants from a number of villages. Al-Īlmīnī notes that most migrants came from Pendel'ka in Kuznetsk district, while others came from Țrūyev, Iske Ālāzān, and Bigi (Bigievo).<sup>24</sup> Some migrants also came from east of the Volga, from a Muslim village called Watlān that al-Īlmīnī places in Nikolaevsk district in the Obshchii Syrt, at the headwaters of the Bol'shoi Uzen' River. This village was abandoned at some point after 1841 and its population became absorbed with that of Safarqa.<sup>25</sup> The village of Ilmin was primarily founded by migrants from two villages west of the Volga, 'Ayn Būrā,<sup>26</sup> and Iske Ālāzān. However, as with the site of Iske Özen, the site of Ilmin had evidently been occupied by a Mordvin or Russian settlement.

With respect to ethnonyms, al-Īlmīnī generally refers to his own community as Muslims (*musulmānlar*). That is, he calls the four villages in Novouzensk district Muslim villages (*musulmān āwillārī*) and its inhabitants "Muslim people" (*musulmān khalqī*). At times, he also refers to these inhabitants of the Altī Ata Valley as the "Altī Ata

<sup>19</sup> TAA fols. 82b–83a.

<sup>20</sup> TAA fol. 8a.

<sup>21</sup> Iskhakov, *Etnograficheskie gruppy*, 112.

<sup>22</sup> TAA fols. 8a, 18a, 21b.

<sup>23</sup> TAA fols. 31a, 40a.

<sup>24</sup> TAA fol. 31a.

<sup>25</sup> TAA fol. 33a.

<sup>26</sup> I have been unable to determine the official name of this village.

people” (*ālḡī āta khalqī* or *ālḡī-ātālār*). The Muslim communities of Penza and Saratov provinces are exclusively called “Muslim.” Nowhere in the work does al-Īlmīnī refer to these communities, or his own, as “Mishars,” which is a customary designation for these Muslims in both Russian sources and in some Turkic sources from the Volga-Ural region.

*The internal structure of the Altı Ata villages*

The villages of Osinov Gai township inherited their internal structure from their “home” villages west of the Volga River. This structure was based on separate, but at times overlapping, religious and geographic divisions known respectively as the *maḥalla* and the *och*.

The fundamental geographic unit at the village level in the Altı Ata villages was the *och*. Literally this word translates as “end.” In Saratov Province west of the Volga River the *och* was a characteristic element in Muslim villages. Most of these villages were laid out in a radial fashion, with two or more streets all intersecting at the center of the village. Each street constituted a separate *och*, and typically each *och* was populated by the members of one or more extended families. For example, in the village of Penziatka in Penza province, there were four streets and four *oches* respectively named Simay *ochi*, Akhun *ochi*, Täre Qaraq *ochi*, and Tahir *ochi*. The Simay *och* was settled by two “clans”, the Zänäk *khalqī* and the Soltan *khalqī*, while the Akhun *ochi* was populated by the Akhun *khalqī*.<sup>27</sup> In the somewhat larger village of Ust’ Uza, also in Penza province, the structure was similar, but somewhat more complex. This village was divided into different sections. Some of these sections had apparently originally been *oches*, such as Ayu *ochi* (the Bear *och*), Tübängich (i.e. Tübänge *och*, or, the lower *och*), and Yugharich (i.e. Yugharī *och*, or the upper *och*). However a number of sections of the village were also called *awıl* (village), or simply possessed a single name.<sup>28</sup> Evidence for the northern districts of Samara province suggest that the *och* was a kinship unit as well. Muslims who inhabited the same *och* in these areas considered themselves related, and marriages within the

<sup>27</sup> Mukhamedova, *Tatary-mishari*, 60.

<sup>28</sup> É. Tenishev, “Iazyk tatar sela Ust’-Uza,” *Tatarica*, (Helsinki, 1987), 307–308.

same *och* were forbidden.<sup>29</sup> Among other Muslim communities in Russia in some villages the *oches* corresponded to ethnic or corporate divisions. For example in the village of Intsiss in western Siberia there were three *oches*. One was settled by indigenous Siberian Tatars, who as native Siberians were exempt from the poll tax and conscription, another was settled by Kazan Tatar migrants and their descendants, and the third was populated by Mishars and their descendants. Unlike the native Siberians, the latter two groups were not exempt from the poll tax and conscription.<sup>30</sup>

In the main the Altı Ata villages retained this basic structure of being divided in *oches*, but here it is less likely that a given *och* was necessarily populated by those tracing their descent from a common ancestor, as was the case in the village of Penziatka, or that all of the members of the *och* regarded themselves as being related. Rather, since each village in Osinov Gai township was settled by colonists from different villages, the *oches* in all likelihood were more mixed. In these villages the *oches* were usually named for their geographic location or for the village from which its first settlers came from.

The village of Altı Ata had three *oches*, the Upper, Middle, and Āltınbāy *oches*. Among these, al-Īlmīnī writes that most of the Middle Och's population originated from the village of Atlash (Atlashevo) in Saratov Province's Khvalynsk district.<sup>31</sup> As for the Altınbay Och, we are told that originally it contained only about forty mud-brick houses.<sup>32</sup> Šafarqa, a smaller village, apparently had only two *oches*. The Lower Och, which was the first to be settled, and the Upper Och, which was called the Pīlūnkī ōchī (i.e. Pendel'ka Och), presumably settled by migrants from the village of Tatarskaia Pendel'ka in Saratov province. This *och* was located at the head of a ravine along the Šafarqa Tārmāghī River.<sup>33</sup> The village of Ilmin apparently had three *oches*, the Lower Och, Upper Och, and the Big Och,

<sup>29</sup> T. Vedernikova, *Ėtnografii i prazdnichnaia kul'tura narodov Samarskogo kraia*, (Samara, 1991), 57.

<sup>30</sup> S. N. Korusenko, "Sovremennii etniceskii sostav i nekotorye aspekty etniceskoi istorii tatarskogo naseleniia Muromtsevskogo raiona Omskoi oblasti (po dannym genealogii), *Ėtnografo-arkheologicheskie komplekсы: problemy kul'tury i soisiuma I* (Novosibirsk, 1996), 185.

<sup>31</sup> TAA fol. 18a.

<sup>32</sup> TAA fol. 25a.

<sup>33</sup> TAA fols. 31a, 33a.

also called the Second Och.<sup>34</sup> For the village of Iske Özen al-Īlmīnī only mentions one *och*, although there were probably at least two, if not more. This was called both the Lower Och, and the Tiruyev Och, presumably because it was settled by migrants from Truevskie Vershiny.<sup>35</sup>

### *The maḥalla*

At the local level the basic unit of religious organization in the Volga-Ural region was the *maḥalla*. Typically a *maḥalla* was a community of Muslims that supported a single mosque and the mosque's *imām*, and as such should also be understood as a civil institution, since the *imām* had both religious and civil duties as the spiritual head of *maḥalla*. During the imperial period a *maḥalla* was supposed to contain between two hundred and three hundred male heads of households. In practice the number varied widely, with some *maḥallas* having from as few as fifty residents (male and female) to as many as a thousand. The *maḥalla* was inextricably linked with its mosque, so a village with more than one mosque would contain a corresponding number of *maḥallas*. If a number of small villages shared a single mosque, then all of those villages together would form a single *maḥalla*. The origins of this institution in the Volga-Ural region is unclear. It is possible that the institution of the *maḥalla* has deep roots in the Volga-Ural region, but it is clear that it emerged as an administrative unit following the establishment of the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly in 1788, which, in order to keep track of the *ʿulamā*, officially registered *imāms* and *muʾadhdhins* to specific *maḥallas*/mosques.

In larger villages, with more than one *maḥalla*, its significance for the local inhabitants varied. In some villages *maḥallas* did not only mark administrative boundaries, but ethnic or corporate communal boundaries as well. For example, in the village of Psäy (the official names appears as Psevo or Pesevo), in Vyatka province's Elabuga district, near the Kama River, there were two *maḥallas* that divided the village along corporate lines. The First *maḥalla* was composed of Bashkir Teptiars, while the Second *maḥalla* was made up of Tatar state peasants. Although they lived in the same village, the commu-

<sup>34</sup> TAA fols. 40b, 67b, 69a.

<sup>35</sup> TAA fol. 89a.

nities nevertheless formed separate townships.<sup>36</sup> In the nearby village of Mächkärä (Maskara), in Vyatka Province, the two *maḥallas* comprising that village were divided along ethnic lines, with the older *maḥalla* for Tatars and the newer one established expressly for Udmurt converts to Islam.<sup>37</sup>

Since Muslim communities in the Volga-Ural region tended to be rather homogenous, at least on the local level, the division of a village into *maḥallas* along ethnic or corporate lines was relatively rare. Indeed, villages containing diverse, and very separate, Muslim communities, were more likely to be united into a single *maḥalla* with a single mosque, than they were to be divided into separate *maḥallas*. For example, in Perm' province's Krasnoufimsk district, the villages of Rakhmangulovo and Srednii Bugalysh contained exclusive communities of Kungur Tatars, Teptiars, and Bashkirs. Not only did these communities live in the separate *oches*, but they even maintained three separate cemeteries, which in the Inner Asian context constitutes a clear indicator of exclusive communal affiliation. Nevertheless in both villages these Muslims shared a common mosque.<sup>38</sup> The Muslim Ural Cossacks in the village of Yalpaqtal shared their *maḥalla* with Tatar merchants and Kazakh nomads. This characteristic then begs the question of how larger ethnically homogenous villages divided themselves into *maḥallas*. Published sources provide virtually no answers to this question for the Volga-Ural region as a whole, but the *Tawārīkh-i Āltī Ātā* furnishes much information on how *maḥallas* in Novouzensk district were formed by the first colonists, how new *maḥallas* were subsequently created, and on the populations of certain *maḥallas*.

For the most part *maḥallas* in Novouzensk district had more or less definite boundaries. In Āltī Ātā *maḥallas* corresponded to some degree with the borders of an *och*. There were two *maḥallas* each in the Upper and Middle *oches* and a single *maḥalla* in the Āltınbay *och*.<sup>39</sup> The Fourth *maḥalla* in Iske Özen similarly corresponded to a separate *och*, and was simply called the Trūyev *ochī*, even though it was formally a *maḥalla*.<sup>40</sup> Similarly, the Second *maḥalla* in the village

<sup>36</sup> Khayrutdinov and Salikhov, *Tatar khalqıñıñ*, 180.

<sup>37</sup> Khayrutdinov and Salikhov, *Tatar khalqıñıñ*, 170–171.

<sup>38</sup> Iu. G. Mukhametshin, "Materialy po istorii dereven' Permskikh tatar," *Permskie tatory*, (Kazan, 1983), 159–160.

<sup>39</sup> TAA fol. 18a.

<sup>40</sup> TAA fol. 89a.

of Safarqa also formed a geographic unit. Al-Īlmīnī notes that this *maḥalla* was divided by a stream, and the people on one side of the stream later came to form the Third *maḥalla*, dividing themselves off from the Second *maḥalla*.<sup>41</sup> The presence of a stream dividing an existing *maḥalla* and resulting in the creation of a new one is also evident in the settlement of Qarghalī, in Orenburg province. Here, following a severe fire in 1882 that destroyed the old *maḥalla*, a number of residents of founded the new Ninth *maḥalla* on the opposite bank of a stream.<sup>42</sup> In some cases a *maḥalla* was more than simply just a religious administrative unit, but enjoyed a degree of loyalty and a sense of affiliation on the part of its members. Al-Īlmīnī writes the following about the First *maḥalla* in Ilmin, of which he himself was *imām*:

The people of the Fifth *maḥalla* were split off from the First *maḥalla*. Already during the period in the old country [village] of ‘Ayn Būrā they considered themselves to be the people of two *maḥallas*, one became the Ḥamīd Ḥaḍrat *maḥalla* and the other became the Yahūdā Mullā *maḥalla*. Already in ‘Ayn Būrā there was a coolness between the two *imāms*.<sup>43</sup>

Out of the eighteen *maḥallas* that existed in Osinov Gai township in 1910, eleven were founded by the colonists upon their arrival. In the case of the First *maḥalla* of Ilmin mentioned above, it was only formally divided after 1841, and appears to have corresponded to an existing *maḥalla* in the home village of ‘Ayn Būrā. The reasons for the creation of a new *maḥalla* varied. In Altı Ata the Second *maḥalla* was created as a result of a dispute between two notables over where to place the mosque in the First *maḥalla*. The decision to split the single *maḥalla* into two arose as a compromise that would satisfy both notables.<sup>44</sup> It was most common however for new *maḥallas* to be created as a result of the efforts of either a single notable or a group of notables who sought to build and finance a new mosque and sponsor the appointment of an *imām*. Whatever the motives of these notables, it is clear from both evidence for both Novouzensk district, and for Nizhnii Novgorod province, that notables were often willing to devote large sums of money and considerable effort to see

<sup>41</sup> TAA fol. 35a.

<sup>42</sup> Riḍā’addīn Fakhraddīn ūghlī, *Sa’id*, 31.

<sup>43</sup> TAA fol. 77b.

<sup>44</sup> TAA fol. 11b.

their aims come to fruition and it is quite clear that a notable who succeeded in creating a new *maḥalla* earned prestige in so doing.<sup>45</sup>

In Novouzensk district, as we have seen, the Second *maḥalla* of Safarqa was divided by a stream, and the *maḥalla* was split into two with this stream as the boundary. This action was carried out by three wealthy brothers, Ḥabīballāh, Raḥmatallāh, and Ramaḍān, the sons of Zubayr. In al-Īlmīnī's words "They petitioned the government, gained the approval of the village, bribed the hypocrites, and obtained a *prigovor* (that is, a document of investiture for an imām signed by at least two thirds of the male heads of household in a *maḥalla*)."<sup>46</sup> In the village of Iske Özen the Fifth *maḥalla* was created out of the first as a result of animosity between the *imām* there, Muṭī'allāh, and a wealthy notable named 'Ilājaddīn. With time, and with great effort, 'Ilājaddīn succeeded in bringing about the creation of the Fifth *maḥalla*.

The creation of a new *maḥalla* generally implied the division of an existing one, as well as a construction of a new mosque. As a result, such an action required official approval from the provincial authorities in Samara. Apparently the official procedure was part of the overall procedure of building a new mosque (see Chapter Five), but the creation of a new *maḥalla* required separate official permission as well. This separate procedure is alluded to in the discussion of the creation of the Fourth *maḥalla* of Iske Özen, which was broken off from the Third through the efforts of Būrān Mullā, the *imām* of that village's First Mosque. According to what Būrān Mullā himself told al-Īlmīnī:

When I expressed my intention, he [the bureaucrat] rejected it, and said officially he won't break up [the existing *maḥalla*], there aren't enough people. I said, "I myself am the *imām* of the First Mosque. My *maḥalla* has only 57 households. It is satisfactory. The Second *maḥalla*, of which my son-in-law is *imām*, has 48 households. It is enough for him; but in the Third *maḥalla* there are 400 souls, and I am asking to divide this." When I had made this request, he said, "Do you have a document." I presented a document from the two of us with the *starosta's* seal. He stalled me, saying, "Now perhaps our case will become a case." But then he proclaimed to me, "When you come to me, come without a turban and not accompanied by others." That

<sup>45</sup> Idrisov et al., *Iz istorii*, 38.

<sup>46</sup> TAA fol. 35a.

was because at that time it was proper to wear turbans in large cities and in courts. I stayed in Samara a few days, the case was completed, I got permission to build the mosque and returned.<sup>47</sup>

The preceding passage also provides some idea of the relative size of a *maḥalla*, which evidently varied somewhat. In this respect, the Altı Ata villages did not differ substantially from other *maḥallas* in the Volga-Ural region, which also varied widely in size from less than a hundred members to up to a thousand.

## 2. OTHER ETHNIC GROUPS

### *Muslim merchant colonies*

In addition to the four major Tatar villages of Osinov Gai township, al-Īlmīnī describes in some detail a number of Tatar trading settlements in Novouzensk district, the Kazakh Inner Horde, and the Ural Cossack Host. These settlements differed ethnically somewhat from the four villages as the Muslims making up these communities came mainly from different regions, especially from Kazan province. While al-Īlmīnī mainly refers to his own community as “Muslims,” when he discusses Volga Tatar communities as a whole, that is, Volga-Ural Muslims distinct from Kazakhs or Bashkirs, he uses a number of different terms. Other “Tatar” groups are referred to by their place of origin, especially Kazan Tatars, who are called “Kazan people” (*qazān khalqī*) “Kazan Noghays” (*qazān nūghāylarī*) or “Kazan Tatars” (*qazān tātarlarī*). When speaking about “Volga Tatar” communities as a whole, including both Mishars and Kazan Tatars, al-Īlmīnī uses the term “Noghay-Tatar people” (*nūghāy-tātar khalqī*). He only uses this term to distinguish these Volga Tatars from Kazakhs, both of which are Muslim groups. It is possible that the very use of the term *nūghāy* to denote Volga Tatars was originally a Kazakh and Central Asian usage that came to be broadly accepted by local Volga Tatars, and was adopted as a self-designation within a Kazakh context.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>47</sup> TAA fol. 89ab.

<sup>48</sup> Volga Tatars are also referred to as “Nūghāy” in a Tatar history of Astrakhan. In this case, the author only refers to Volga Tatars as such in his discussion of the Kazakhs; cf. Jahānshāh an-Nizhghārūtī, *Tārīkh-i Astarkhān*, 26–27; Kazakhs and Uyghurs in Chinese Turkestan also applied this term to Tatar settlers from Russia,

Tatar merchant colonies were a constantly growing presence in the urban life of imperial Russia over the course of the nineteenth century, and by 1900 large and prosperous Tatar merchant colonies were found throughout the empire, from Helsinki to Irkutsk, as well as outside of it, particularly in China's Xinjiang province.<sup>49</sup> Tatars were especially numerous in Central Asia, but the origins, and foundation of the Tatars' commercial expansion remained the Kazakh steppe, and trade with the Kazakh nomads. In the second half of the eighteenth, and especially in the nineteenth century, Russia's trade with the Kazakh nomads became crucial to the economy of the steppe frontier.<sup>50</sup> The main commodities in this trade were animals and animal products, supplied by the nomads, and grain and manufactured goods provided by Russian, as well as Tatar, merchants. This trade was accelerated by the extension of railroads into the steppe regions in the late nineteenth century. By the middle of nineteenth century large Volga Tatar trading colonies had emerged all along the Kazakh steppe frontier, in the cities of Astrakhan, Ural'sk, Troitsk, Orenburg, Cheliabinsk, Semipalatinsk, Petropavlovsk, and Omsk, to name some of the larger centers. Some of these colonies became substantially important centers of Muslim culture in their own right, especially Seitovskii Posad, a Muslim settlement outside of Orenburg founded in the eighteenth century, as well as Orenburg proper and Troitsk. While these cities were important centers for

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cf. Mirkasim A. Usmanov, "Tatar Settlers in Western China (Second half of the 19th century to the first half of the 20th century)," *Muslim Culture in Russia and Central Asia from the 18th to the Early 20th Centuries. Vol. 2: Inter-Regional and Inter-Ethnic Relations* Anke von Kügelgen, Michael Kemper, Allen J. Frank eds., (Berlin, 1998), 244 n. 7. This name was also widely accepted among the Tatars of eastern Kazakhstan as a self-designation, and numerous legends circulated among them explaining the origin of the name "nüghāy" and its relation to their community; cf. Qurbān'ālī Khālidī, *Tawārīkh-i khamsa-yi sharqi*, (Kazan, 1910), 173-180.

<sup>49</sup> On the Tatar merchantry in the larger Russian context cf. Alfred J. Rieber, *Merchants and Entrepreneurs in Imperial Russia*, (Chapel Hill, 1982), 70-73; M. A. Usmanov, "Tatarskoe kupechestvo v torgovle Rossii s vostochnymi stranami cherez Astrakhan' i Orenburg," *Russian Review*, XIX/1-4 (1992), 505-513; on Tatar merchants in Xinjiang in particular cf. Usmanov, "Tatar Settlers," 243-248; Mirkasim Gosmanov, *Yabilmagan kitap*, (Kazan, 1996), passim.

<sup>50</sup> For a discussion of Kazakh-Russian trade in general cf. N. G. Apollova, *Ekonomicheskie i politicheskie svyazi Kazakhstana s Rossiei* (Moscow, 1960), 215-334; for the role of Tatars and Bashkirs in this trade cf. D. I. Dulatova and G. S. Sultangalieva, "Iz istorii ékonomicheskikh vzaimootnoshenii kazakhov s narodami Srednego Povolzh'ia i Priural'ia," *Izvestiia Akademii Nauk KazSSR, Seriya Obshchestvennykh Nauk* 1989 (3), 43-50.

the Central Asian trade, much trade was also conducted with the Kazakh nomads.<sup>51</sup>

In addition to the major centers mentioned above, there was a substantial amount of trade in smaller markets along the frontier of the vast Kazakh steppe, both along the line of Cossack settlements and in smaller towns further in on the Russian and Kazakh sides of the frontier. Tatar merchant colonies were located on both sides of the frontier, as well as in Cossack settlements. Al-Īlmīnī mentions two Tatar merchant settlements in Novouzensk district, namely the towns of Novouzensk and Aleksandrov Gai, as well as two Cossack settlements with Tatar merchant colonies, Glinianskii Forpost and Slomikhinskaia Stanitsa (Yālpāqtāl), and finally a Tatar merchant settlement in the Inner Horde, Novaia Kazanka (Yāngī Qazānqa). Another major settlement of Tatar merchants in the Inner Horde was Talovka, whose population of 650 in 1895 included 200 Tatar merchants and their dependents;<sup>52</sup> but the largest settlement was Khanskaia Stavka (Khān Qal'a), the administrative seat of the Inner Horde. Al-Īlmīnī does not mention this town in his narrative, but it supported a large community of Tatar merchants, and throughout the nineteenth century the presence of these merchants attracted the attention of visitors to the town.<sup>53</sup> Unlike the Altī Ata Muslims, who were settled by the state in Novouzensk district as peasant colonists, who came from a few specific villages west of the Volga River, and who as a result were more or less ethnically homogeneous, the Muslim merchants in the area came to the region independently and from throughout the Volga-Ural region.

Although Novouzensk had a Muslim community, it was primarily a Russian settlement, and was one of the oldest settlements in the entire district. It was initially founded around 1760 as a village at the confluence of the Bol'shoi Uzen' and Chertanla Rivers, and took the name Chertanla. In 1787 Catherine II had built a fort called Krepost' Uzen' twenty *verstas* upriver from Chertanla.<sup>54</sup> Al-Īlmīnī tells us the following about this site:

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Levshin, *Opisanie*, 388–399.

<sup>52</sup> Spasskii, *Potrebnost' pravoslavnoi missii*, 12.

<sup>53</sup> Kharuzin, *Stepnye ocherki*, 21–22; Khanykov, "Ocherk sostoianiiia," 38.

<sup>54</sup> Svistunov, *Gorod Novouzensk*, 6; Gortsev, *Saratovskaia oblast'*, 64.

Ten *chāqrūms*<sup>55</sup> below [Orlov Gai] there is Qīrīpōs [Krepost' Uzen']. There is a large Russian village here. It dates from ancient times and because there was a large fortress [*qrīpōs*] there the Russian call it Qīrībīyāsnōy [Krepostnoi]. Initially they sent people here when the tsar had made it a place of exile, and they had them build a fortress. Now it is abandoned.<sup>56</sup>

In 1835, when the imperial authorities formally made Novouzensk district a part of Saratov Province, they declared Chertanla the district center and renamed it Novouzensk,<sup>57</sup> although among Muslims the town retained its original name, Churtanlī.<sup>58</sup>

According to al-Īlmīnī the origins of the Muslim community in Novouzensk were relatively recent, as the Muslim *maḥalla* only came into being in the 1870's, although in 1857 there were already reportedly 94 Muslims in the town.<sup>59</sup> In any case, the first Muslim leader in the town, we are told, was not a merchant, but a member of the gentry, a certain Ḥamīd Mirzā Yīnīkeyef [Enikeev] from the village of Mirzalar in Saratov Province's Kuznetsk district. Ḥamīd Mirza was a member of the *Zemskaiia Uprava*, and one of his sons, who was accepted into the Cadet Corps in St. Petersburg, became a Russian officer and served in Tashkent, in Central Asia.<sup>60</sup> The city attracted Muslim merchants who sold grain to the Kazakhs, and we are told that most of these merchants came from the villages of Bigi (Bigevo) and Qulchura (Kuncherevo) in Saratov province, while others came from Kazan province or from Ural'sk.<sup>61</sup> Some of these merchants became rather wealthy, and al-Īlmīnī mentions a merchant from Kazan named Muṣṭafā Amīrkhānof who donated a thousand rubles for the construction of the mosque in Novouzensk.<sup>62</sup> By 1897 the Muslim population had increased to 213, and had organized itself into a formal *maḥalla* with a mosque.<sup>63</sup> Nevertheless, the city of

<sup>55</sup> The *chāqrūm* was a Muslim equivalent to the Russian *versta*, which was equal to 1.06 kilometers.

<sup>56</sup> TAA fols. 94b–95a.

<sup>57</sup> Andrei Leopold'dov, *Statisticheskoe opisaniie Saratovskoi gubernii* II, (St. Petersburg, 1839), 114–115.

<sup>58</sup> TAA fol. 95a.

<sup>59</sup> Iskhakov, *Istoricheskaiia demografiia*, 75.

<sup>60</sup> TAA fol. 95ab.

<sup>61</sup> TAA fols. 96a, 99b.

<sup>62</sup> TAA fol. 100a.

<sup>63</sup> Iskhakov, *Istoricheskaiia demografiia*, 75.

Novouzensk in the same year had an overall population of 13,475, more than the total number of Tatar Muslims for the entire district, and as a result the Muslims were a rather small, if prosperous, minority of only 1.5 percent within the town.<sup>64</sup>

Another trading center with a substantial Tatar merchant colony was the large village of Aleksandrov Gai. This village was one of the earliest settlements in the area, reportedly founded at the end of the seventeenth century by Ukrainian itinerant traders known as *chumaki*.<sup>65</sup> This was an ethnically mixed settlement, with a substantial population not only of Tatars, but of Russians and Kazakhs as well. The Muslim name for this village was Almalī. The town was located about fifty *verstas* southeast of Novouzensk, on the Bol'shoi Uzen' River, near the border between Samara Province and the Kazakh Inner Horde. The village became a railhead in 1895 when a narrow-gauge railroad was built to Aleksandrov Gai from Novouzensk.<sup>66</sup> Apparently Muslims dominated the trade with the Kazakhs rather early here. One of al-Īlmīnī's sources for history of Aleksandrov Gai was a local Tatar merchant named 'Alī 'Asghar Ghāzīkāshof, who related the following information to al-Īlmīnī:

"I came in the year 1841. But I myself came later than some others." However, [al-Īlmīnī continues] at that time the most prominent came from Kazan province, and they were Muḥammad-Shāh, Aḥmad-Şafā', Işhāq, and Sayyid Baṭṭāl. They were held in high esteem among the people. The rest looked up to them. In terms of wealth they were also superior to the rest. In terms of wisdom they handled matters well and managed things. Commerce took place with the Kazakhs there, and because at that time the Kazakhs were uncivilized, it was very amenable for commerce. As for the Russians, they were in second place it seems, and [the Muslims] became strong. Because each of the rich ones were in the wheat trade in Balakovo (Balakovo is a city around a hundred and fifty *chāqrūms* from this place) the Russians could not easily make this trip, and business was predominantly in the hands of Muslims. And these Muslims came without a single kopeck and in a short time they became the owners of wealth and the proprietors of capital. News about them spread to others. [Some] began to come from Saratov Province and after a number of people gathered, they acquired wealth.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Svistunov, *Gorod Novouzensk*, 8.

<sup>65</sup> Gortsev, *Saratovskaia oblast'*, 18.

<sup>66</sup> Svistunov, *Gorod Novouzensk*, 10.

<sup>67</sup> TAA fol. 102ab.

Al-Īlmīnī tells us that the Muslim community in Aleksandrov Gai amounted to about 200 households, with the majority consisting of Tatars [*Nūghāy-Tātār khalqī*].<sup>68</sup> Concerning the wealthier members of the merchant community al-Īlmīnī writes the following:

Among these [the rich and powerful], the most well known are: the wealthy and youthful of appearance ‘Alī Asghar Ghāzikāshof from the village of ‘Umar Khōja in Kazan province. His wealth amounts into the ten thousands; the second is ‘Aynallāh Sayfaddīn ūghlī Āqchūrīn from the village of Qulchūra (Kuncherevo) in Saratov Province’s Kuznetsk district. These latter [two] were the first to come to Aleksandrov Gai. The third is ‘Alī’allāh Tuḥfatallāh ūghlī from the village of Ālurmīsh from Kazan Province’s Kazan district. The fourth is Šābir-Jān Āqchūrīn from Murzālār in Saratov Province’s Kuznetsk district. The fifth is Nādirshāh Bātirshāh ūghlī from the village of Tūbān Ātī (Nizhnie Aty) in Kazan Province’s Tetiushi district. All of them are great merchants and their wealth is in the thousands [of rubles]. Besides these others also live well in proportion to their means. ‘Umar Ḥabīballāh ūghlī also has a sum of money. According to the old man [‘Alī Asghar] he is very prosperous.<sup>69</sup>

Tatar merchant colonies were also present in Ural Cossack settlements located between the Kazakh Inner Horde and Novouzensk district, as well as in the Kazakh Inner Horde proper. The first of these settlements that al-Īlmīnī mentions is Glinianskii Forpost, located on the steppe near where the Malyi Uzen’ empties into the Kamysh-Samar Lakes. The village was founded by Ural Cossacks around 1813 on land that was disputed by the Kazakhs, and it remained under defacto Cossack control until 1873 when the imperial authorities ruled in favor of the Kazakh claim and forced the Cossacks to abandon their settlement.<sup>70</sup> As al-Īlmīnī himself notes, the settlement was advantageously situated for trade with the Kazakhs, as it was located near both their winter and summer pastures, and astride the main road between Ural’sk and Khanskaia Stavka, the commercial and administrative center of the Inner Horde. Aleksei Levshin notes that already in 1828 Glinianskii Forpost was an important commercial center for Kazakh-Russian trade.<sup>71</sup> Al-Īlmīnī notes that,

<sup>68</sup> TAA fol. 103b.

<sup>69</sup> TAA fol. 103b.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. Frank, “Islam and Ethnic Relations,” *passim*.

<sup>71</sup> Levshin, *Opisanie kirgiz-kazach’ikh ili kirgiz-kaisatskikh ord*, 395; Khanykov, “Ocherk sostoianiia,” 39, 58.

“Because it was a good place for commerce, other Muslims, especially Muslims from Kazan province, gathered there and cultivated the place well.”<sup>72</sup> By the 1820’s the largest single community in Glinianskii Forpost were Tatar merchants.<sup>73</sup>

However, in 1873 the local Ural Cossacks, many of whom were themselves Muslims, were expelled from this place, and they built a new village on the left bank of the Bol’shoi Uzen’ River called Slomikhinskaia Stanitsa, or Yālpāqṭāl in Muslim sources. Al-Īlmīnī relates that in this settlement as well there was a substantial community of Tatar merchants, primarily from Kazan and Simbirsk provinces. Although he tells us little about this group, he nevertheless notes that they have attained a high degree of prosperity and renown.<sup>74</sup>

The largest Tatar merchant colony that al-Īlmīnī discusses is that of Novaia Kazanka (Yāngī Qazānqa), located on the territory of the Inner Horde. This settlement was founded in 1873, after the Tatar merchants of Glinianskii Forpost abandoned that settlement following the expulsion of the Ural Cossacks from that village, and built their own village two *verstas* away, on the other bank of the Malyi Uzen’ River, and was the largest permanent settlement in the Inner Horde after the administrative center of Khanskaia Stavka.<sup>75</sup> A source from 1895 estimates its population to consist of 500 Tatars, 400 Kazakhs, and 31 Russians.<sup>76</sup> Aleksei Kharuzin, who visited the village in 1887, noted that the majority of the Tatars there were originally from Kazan province and describes the village as consisting of only two or three clear and straight intersecting streets, and low flat-roofed houses stuccoed with clay.<sup>77</sup>

Al-Īlmīnī describes Novaia Kazanka as a large mixed Kazan Tatar and Kazakh village with a number of schools and courts, as well as a church and a mosque, although he notes that Kazakhs comprised the majority of the population.<sup>78</sup> Concerning the Tatar merchants, he mentions two by name:

<sup>72</sup> TAA fol. 105a.

<sup>73</sup> Ivanov, *Dzhanger khan*, 202.

<sup>74</sup> TAA fol. 107a.

<sup>75</sup> Kharuzin, *Stepnye ocherki*, 51.

<sup>76</sup> Spasskii, *Potrebnost’ pravoslavnoi missii*, 12.

<sup>77</sup> Kharuzin, *Stepnye ocherki*, 134–135.

<sup>78</sup> TAA fol. 105b.

Some merchants deal in manufactured goods, others in flour and others in hay, and what is in demand. The best known of these merchants is Dawlat 'Alī Bāyazītōf; much of his business is in fine wheat flour [*krupchatka*] and he has four stores filled with flour. The second is Jamāladdīn, called Qāra Jamālī. He also has a well known store and it brings much profit. He sends forty camels to the [Caspian] Sea and [his employees] go and catch fish. They return to Russia and it is very profitable. He is a wonderful person to guests in his home. We were guests at his home for three days and he gave a great feast.<sup>79</sup>

It is evident from al-Īlmīnī's account that permanent Tatar trading colonies were located throughout the region, in Novouzensk, Aleksandrov Gai, Yalpaqta, in the Cossack settlement of Glinianskii Forpost, and after its abandonment in 1873, in Novaia Kazanka. In terms of origins, these merchants came from throughout the Volga-Ural region, but the largest number came from Kazan province. The earliest merchant settlements in Novouzensk district date from already before 1841, in Aleksandrov Gai, and in the Ural Cossack Host and the Inner Horde, from as early as the 1820's, if not earlier. These communities were a constant presence on the steppe frontier, and gradually grew and spread down to the beginning of the twentieth century.

### *Native Muslims*

Al-Īlmīnī refers to a number of Muslim communities along the Bol'shoi Uzen' and Chizha Rivers as "Native Muslims" (*yirli musulmānlār*), evidently assuming that these communities inhabited the region before the arrival of the Muslim colonists to the Altata Valley. In cultural terms these communities differed substantially from the Tatar state peasants, as they were by and large not agriculturists, but primarily survived from nomadic or semi-nomadic stockbreeding. These "native" Muslims included for the most part Bashkirs, and Muslim Ural Cossacks, but also Kazakhs, and another small group called Astrakhan Qaraqalpaqs. However, with the exception of the Chizha Bashkirs, whose ancestors may have settled the Chizha Valley toward the end of the eighteenth century, in actuality all of these "native" communities came to their respective regions in the

<sup>79</sup> TAA fol. 106a.

first decade of the nineteenth century, after the founding of the villages of Iske Özen and Altı Ata.

### *Bashkirs*

The Muslim community with which the Altı Ata Muslims were in closest contact were Bashkirs who already inhabited the region when the first Mishar colonists arrived in the late eighteenth century. Throughout the text al-Īlmīnī refers to Bashkirs as *bāshqōrdlār*. Although Muslim, these Bashkirs differed substantially both culturally and in terms of their official status from the state peasants of Osinov Gai township. As Bashkirs, these communities retained a tribal and clan social structure and for much of the nineteenth century formally enjoyed Cossack status, which afforded them a degree of self-government and exemption from taxation or military conscription. Rather, Bashkirs were enrolled within their own Bashkir-Mishar Cossack Host, which was a formal Cossack Host. Furthermore, either as Cossacks or non-Cossacks, Bashkir communities throughout Russia enjoyed special communal land-owning privileges as *votchinniki*; that is, in they retained communal ownership of ancestral lands, as well as certain fiscal and other privileges.<sup>80</sup>

The Bashkirs with whom the Altı Ata Muslims were in closest contact were *votchinniki* who lived along the headwaters of the Irgiz, Kamelik, and Karalyk Rivers, in what would become Nikolaevsk district of Samara Province, as well as in lands further to the southeast, in lands bordering those of the Ural Cossack Host and the Kazakh Inner Horde. These Bashkirs formed the Ninth Canton of the Bashkir-Mishar Cossack Host until 1832, when the entire canton was attached to the Ural Cossack Host, after which these Bashkirs formed an independent part of the Ural Cossack Host called the *Bashkirscoe Otdelenie*. As part of the Ural Cossack Host the lands of these Bashkirs were divided into three parts, called *iurts* in Russian. The First and Second Yurts corresponded respectively to the northern and southern territories of the Irgiz, Kamelik and Karalyk Rivers, and the Third *iurt* corresponded to the Chizha River Valleys. Each

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<sup>80</sup> For a discussion of “Bashkir” as a legal status cf. Paul W. Werth “Tsarist Categories, Orthodox Intervention and Islamic Conversion in a Pagan Udmurt Village, 1870’s–1890’s,” *Muslim Culture in Russia and Central Asia from the 18th to the Early 20th Centuries*. Vol. 2, 395–399.

*iurt* was administered by a Bashkir *nachal'nik* [chief] who was selected from among the officers of the Ural Cossack Host, as well as a Cossack *upravliaiushchii* [administrator].<sup>81</sup> These Bashkirs remained part of the Ural Cossack Host until 1866, when the Bashkir-Mishar Cossack Host was disbanded, together with the *Bashkirskoe Otdelenie* as an administrative structure.<sup>82</sup> Strictly speaking these Bashkirs did not enjoy complete Ural Cossack status because their service obligations were considerably lighter than those of other Ural Cossacks. According to I. Zheleznov, seventy to a hundred Bashkirs were obligated to perform labor service in the city of Ural'sk in summer every summer. As a result each Bashkir could perform only once every fourth or fifth year. The only other duty was picket duty. For this the Bashkirs would maintain pickets at three or four points on the borders of their *Otdelenie*, where five to ten people would live all year round and perform postal and transportation service.<sup>83</sup> In any case, it is clear that these Bashkirs, even when they enjoyed formal Cossack status, never adopted a Ural Cossack identity, and the Ural Cossacks themselves perceived them as a separate community as well.<sup>84</sup> After 1866 the Bashkir lands of the former *Bashkirskoe Otdelenie* were attached to Nikolaevsk district. Although these Bashkirs were Muslims, their official communal status as Cossacks, their tribal social structure, and their semi-nomadic pastoral economy made the Bashkirs of the Ninth Canton an exclusive community, and as a result, a separate one from both the Ural Cossacks and the state peasants of Osinov Gai township.

How early the Bashkirs came to these areas remains unclear and it can only be ascertained with certainty that Bashkirs communities were present along the upper Irgiz in the latter half of the eighteenth century, after the departure of the Kalmyks in 1771. The only evidence we have for earlier settlements, dating back to the sixteenth century, are Bashkir petitions and legends recorded in the nineteenth

<sup>81</sup> For a detailed discussion of the administrative structure of the *Bashkirskoe Otdelenie* within the Ural Cossack Host cf. I. I. Zheleznov, *Ural'tsy: Ocherki byta Ural'skikh kazakov* I, (Moscow, 1888), 243–247.

<sup>82</sup> According to Nebol'sin, in 1850 the *Bashkirskoe Otdelenie* consisted of 5,127 Bashkirs, with 27 villages and 764 tents (*kibitiki*), cf. Pavel Nebol'sin, "Neskol'ko zamechaniĭ ob Ural'skikh kazakakh," *Vestnik imperatorskogo geograficheskogo obshchestva* 1854 (12), 213.

<sup>83</sup> Zheleznov, *Ural'tsy* I, 228–229.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. "Zapiski Saratovskogo kuptsa Ia. P. Zharkova o kirgizakh," *Biblioteka dlia chteniia* CXIV (8), October 3rd 1852, 130.

century, and connected with Bashkir legal claims to these lands, in which the Bashkirs make the argument that these lands were theirs by ancient right.<sup>85</sup> Nevertheless, the Bashkirs' legends deserve at least a hearing. I. Zheleznov, a Russian Ural Cossack who served for a period of time in the *Bashkirskoe Otdelenie*, recorded the following legend in the 1850's. The Bashkir settlement of the Upper Irgiz region coincided with the Russian founding of Ufa in the sixteenth century. At that time, the colonization of Bashkiriya by non-Bashkirs was making it difficult for the native Bashkirs to pay their fur tribute to the tsar. As a result of the colonization, game was becoming scarce, and the Bashkirs were forced to move to new hunting grounds. It was in this way that the first Bashkirs came to the upper Irgiz region. At this time the region was heavily forested, rich in game, and uninhabited.<sup>86</sup> The Bashkir migration to this area was gradual, and continued through the eighteenth century. With time the game in this area began to get scarce, and groups of Bashkirs moved further south, into the valleys of the Chizha Rivers, and later as far south as the Kamysh-Samar Lakes on the frontier between the lands of the Ural Cossacks and the Kazakh Inner Horde.<sup>87</sup> Other local Bashkir accounts name Russian policies of Christianization, or the suppression of Bashkir rebellions as the causes for subsequent waves of migration.<sup>88</sup>

The Bashkirs residing near Novouzensk district lived in three major groups, straddling the boundaries between what were to become Novouzensk and Nikolaevsk districts of Samara Province and Ural'sk *oblast'*. The first group lived between the Malyi Uzen' and Bol'shoi Uzen' Rivers, near their mouths around the Kamysh-Samar Lakes. This poorly documented group is discussed by Zheleznov, who writes that they "invaded" the lands of the Ural Cossack Host in the 1820's, when they first began penetrating the marshlands in this area. These Bashkirs built winter shelters and constructed mosques, and used the reed beds to pasture their livestock in winter. However, they were

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<sup>85</sup> R. G. Kuzeev, *Proiskhozhdenie bashkirskogo naroda*, (Moscow, 1974), 437. Kuzeev places the migration of the Bashkirs to the Chizha, Irgiz, and Kamelik Valleys to the seventeenth and eighteenth century. However, he also notes that the Bashkirs believed their distant ancestors to have originally come from these regions, and as a result they called the region Olostan.

<sup>86</sup> Zheleznov, *Ural'tsy*, I, 224–226.

<sup>87</sup> Zheleznov, *Ural'tsy*, I, 226–227.

<sup>88</sup> Kuzeev, *Proiskhozhdenie*, 156–157.

soon expelled from these lands by armed force on the initiative of D. M. Borodin, the *ataman* of the Ural Cossack Host.<sup>89</sup> Although it is possible that the Bashkirs had reached this area earlier, perhaps even before the first decade of the nineteenth century, when the Ural Cossacks settled in the Kamysh-Samar region, the rest of Zheleznov's account is confirmed in Bashkir accounts recorded by Rail' Kuzeev. Kuzeev relates the following historical account appended to a Bashkir tribal genealogy by a certain Akhmet Iarmukhametov, who copied it in the 1920's from an earlier copy. According to this account, during the second half of the nineteenth century these Bashkirs, members of the Bishäy clan of the Üsergän tribe, nomadized in Saratov province along the Sïdhay River,<sup>90</sup> where they had a village called Novouzian (according to the Russian spelling). These Bashkirs were expelled from the area by wealthy Cossack landowners, who bribed the Bashkirs' *mullā* into giving them a title to the lands. Later, at the beginning of the nineteenth century these Bashkirs were forced to move further north, to the Kamelik Valley in Nikolaevsk district.<sup>91</sup>

It is evident from Russian documents that some Bashkirs remained between the Mal'yi Uzen' and Bol'shoi Uzen' Rivers as late as 1823, and contested rival claims on the part of both Ural Cossacks and Kazakhs to these lands. The Bashkir historian A. N. Usmanov writes that in that year a conflict between the Ural Cossacks and Bashkirs inhabiting the Uzen' interfluvium was heard in Buzuluk district court. At the same time, a Bashkir officer named Altynbai Khudaishukurov petitioned the emperor Aleksandr I to grant these lands to the Bashkirs.<sup>92</sup> In both cases, the Bashkirs claimed these lands to have already been settled by their ancestors. An oblique reference to Bashkir claims to the Uzen' lands appears in a decree of the Imperial Senate from 1828 when it ruled in favor of the Kazakhs, declaring void all Bashkir and Cossack claims to the lands between the Uzen Rivers.<sup>93</sup> In any case, no mention is made of this community in the

<sup>89</sup> Zheleznov, *Ural'tsy* I, 227.

<sup>90</sup> The Russian spelling is given as "Sydai", but "Sïdhäy" is possibly a Bashkir form for "Chizha."

<sup>91</sup> Kuzeev, *Bashkirskie shezhere*, 201–202. In this account the expulsion of the Bashkirs is dated to the late eighteenth century, which is certainly too early a date for the events described, since the earliest date that the Ural Cossacks settled the area was 1809.

<sup>92</sup> A. N. Usmanov, *Prisoedinenie Bashkirii k Russkomu gosudarstvu*, (Ufa, 1960), 56–57.

<sup>93</sup> Ivanov, *Dzhanger khan*, 183–184.

*Tawārīkh-i Āltī Ātā*, and the presence of these Bashkirs likely faded from the memory of the Altī Ata Muslims by the end of the nineteenth century.

The second group of Bashkirs were the so-called Chizha Bashkirs, who lived along the Chizha Rivers in Ural'sk province. Like the Uzen' Bashkirs discussed above, the lands of these Bashkirs were also seized by the Ural Cossacks, albeit later in the nineteenth century, and they too were forced to migrate to the Karalyk river in Nikolaevsk district.<sup>94</sup> As part of the *Bashkīrskoe Otdelenie* the Chizha Bashkirs formed the Third *iurt*. According to Pavel Nebol'sin, in 1850 the Third *iurt* consisted of twelve villages and 295 yurts, or roughly 2,000 inhabitants.<sup>95</sup> Al-Īlmīnī and his sources were well aware of this community, and the *Tawārīkh-i Āltī Ātā* is an important ethnographic source in its own right on what had been after 1830 the southernmost of all Bashkir settlements. According to the *Tawārīkh-i Āltī Ātā* these Chizha Bashkirs were primarily occupied with stockbreeding, and to a lesser degree with agriculture. Al-Īlmīnī identifies the seven villages of these Bashkirs: the first of these was called Bāshqōrdlarnīng Bāsh tāghī (elsewhere he writes it as Bāshqōrdnīng Bāsh tāghī), located at the site of the confluence of the Ṭāshlī Āyir and Kīyūk Ūlgān streams, both tributaries of the Chizha Vtoraia. There were reportedly three Bashkir villages further down the Chizha Vtoraia below the site of the Cossack village of Ermolichev, Yālmamat, Bāyrāmghul, and Birqazān. These villages, we are told, were made entirely out of reeds and in Birqazān, even the mosque was made of reeds. The *imām* of this mosque was a certain 'Alī'allāh and the *mu'adhdhin* was named Qūtlī Aḥmad. Al-Īlmīnī tells us that there were other villages along this river as well, that in all these communities numbered only around a thousand people, and all of them were built from thatch and reeds. These Bashkirs were partly engaged in agriculture, sowing rice and melons in the mountains, and even having cherry orchards. He adds that a wealthy Bashkir would own a thousand horses, a moderately wealthy one, 500, and that there were many people who owned three hundred horses, as well as cattle, sheep, and goats. To the east of this river was the Chizha Pervaia. He tells us that there was another Bashkir village named Āpāndī by

<sup>94</sup> Kuzeev, *Proiskhozhdenie*, 161–162.

<sup>95</sup> Nebol'sin, "Neskol'ko zamechanii," 213.

some, and Yōl Qūtli by others, at the site of the current Cossack village of Podtiazhki. To the east of this village was another village called Tāshbūlāt, which, we are told, was the wealthiest of all the Bashkir villages. The easternmost settlement of the Chizha Bashkirs was Jāyiqbāy. Among all the villages Jāyiqbāy and Birqazān were the largest.<sup>96</sup> Al-Īlmīnī's ethnographic information is confirmed by Zheleznov, who writes that the lands of the Third *iurt* were best suited for stockbreeding because they had numerous small rivers, reed beds, and marshes. Furthermore he notes that the Chizha Bashkirs were rather prosperous as stock breeders.<sup>97</sup>

Concerning the expulsion of these Bashkirs from their lands, numerous sources note that they were driven off by the Ural Cossacks, who came to settle the Bashkirs' lands. Al-Īlmīnī writes that the pretext of the Cossacks' actions was to put an end to Bashkir cattle raiding, although there can be little doubt that the Cossacks also coveted the Bashkirs' fields and orchards as well.<sup>98</sup> In any case, R. Kuzeev has noted that the Cossack action had a degree of official support as well, and as al-Īlmīnī notes, these Bashkirs were settled in the Karalyk Valley, in the region where the Uzen' Bashkirs were settled.<sup>99</sup> Indeed, writing in the 1850's, before the expulsion of the Chizha Bashkirs, Zheleznov devotes substantial space in his narrative to the issue of Bashkir practice of stealing horses from the Ural Cossacks.

The third area of Bashkir settlement was in Nikolaevsk district, along the Irgiz, Kamelik, and Karalyk Rivers, and until 1866 these areas formed the First and Second *iurts* of the *Bashkirskoe Otdelenie*. As we have seen, the communities along the Karalyk River were established by Chizha and Uzen' Bashkirs expelled from their ancestral lands by Ural Cossacks. The Bashkirs along the Irgiz and Kamelik Rivers however were never expelled from their lands, and distinguished themselves from the Chizha and Uzen' emigrants by that fact. Bashkirs made up the largest share of the Muslim community in Nikolaevsk district, having in 1883 at least eight villages with eight

<sup>96</sup> TAA fols. 3b, 4b–6a.

<sup>97</sup> Zheleznov, *Ural'tsy* I, 243.

<sup>98</sup> TAA fols. 4b, 6a.

<sup>99</sup> Kuzeev, *Proiskhozhdenie*, 161–162. Kuzeev notes that the Bashkir villages along the Chizha Rivers remained populated until 1911, but al-Īlmīnī states that by 1910 there were no longer any Bashkirs there.

mosques, and at least 6,875 inhabitants.<sup>100</sup> Indeed, a number of *imāms* and *mu'adhdhins* in Novouzensk district came from these Bashkir communities along the Kamelik River. The Bashkirs along the Irgiz and Kamelik Rivers considered themselves the oldest Bashkir communities, and referred to themselves as *ithkelär* (the old ones), and as the other Bashkirs as *yangılar* (the new ones), and referred to the migrants from the Chizha Rivers as *sädhälär* (*sädhä* being the Bashkir pronunciation of Chizha).<sup>101</sup>

Over the course of the nineteenth century the Irgiz, Kamelik, and Karalyk Bashkirs gradually made the transition from a semi-nomadic existence as pastoral nomads to grain cultivators. Initially the Bashkirs simply leased their surplus lands to Russian peasants in return for what often amounted to ridiculously low *obrok* [quitrent] payments and sometimes the peasants simply took possession of this property, depriving the Bashkirs of some of their best lands. This illegal practice was stopped in 1841 on the initiative of the *starshina* of the Ural Cossack Host, E. M. Matveev, who became alarmed at the loss to peasants of what was technically Cossack land, and at the impoverishment of the seemingly naive Bashkirs. Matveev made certain that these leased lands remained in the possession of the Bashkirs, and that the Bashkirs received a fairer share of the harvest guaranteed to them in the *obrok* agreement.<sup>102</sup> In any case, the northern region was the most prosperous of all the Bashkir regions, and while many Bashkirs by the middle of the nineteenth century were agriculturists, many still retained a semi-nomadic lifestyle, nomadizing in felt tents in the summertime.<sup>103</sup> Even down to recent times these Bashkirs have retained historical traditions to the effect that their ancestors were originally pastoral nomads who leased their land to Russian merchants, but that with time they turned to agriculture, cultivating crops of wheat, rye, barley, and millet.<sup>104</sup>

<sup>100</sup> According to the *Al'favitnye spiski* these villages included Dengisbaev, Kuzebaev, Kuzembaev, Maksutov, Muratshin, Urazaev, Ütekaev, and Khasanov. Al-İlmîni mentions yet another Bashkir village along the Kamelik, Būrjān, which reportedly had a mosque in 1906, if not earlier. This was the native village of 'Aṭā'allāh Altınbāy ūghlī aṣ-Şafarqawī, the *imām* of Safarqa's First Mosque.

<sup>101</sup> Kuzev, *Proiskhozhdenie*, 162.

<sup>102</sup> Zheleznov, *Ural'tsy* I, 230.

<sup>103</sup> Zheleznov, *Ural'tsy* I, 244.

<sup>104</sup> N. Kh. Mäqsütova, *Bashqort höyläshärenän ümäktär*, (Ufa, 1988), 77–78.

*Muslim Cossacks*

The western border of Novouzensk district was separated from the lands of the Kazakh Inner Horde by a string of Cossack settlements, originally intended to control the movement of the Kazakh nomads and to form a buffer between the Kazakhs and the more sedentarized communities in the Russian provinces of the lower Volga. One line extended from the city of Ural'sk down the Ural River to the Caspian Sea. This line had in fact been established already in 1591, when the Ural Cossack Host was first founded.<sup>105</sup> By 1819, nine years after the migration of the Inner Horde into Russian territory, the Ural Cossack leadership established a new Cossack line to the west of the land granted the Kazakhs. This line extended roughly from Ural'sk to the Chizha Pervaia River, and from there to the village of Glinianskii Forpost on the lower Bol'shoi Uzen' River. The latter two settlements are discussed in the *Tawārīkh-i Āltī Ātā*.

It is evident from both the *Tawārīkh-i Āltī Ātā* and Russian sources that Muslims in the Ural Cossack Host formed a community quite separate from those of its Muslim neighbors. The Russian merchant Ia. Zharkov, visiting the Ural Cossack Host in the first half of the nineteenth century, related that "Tatars," that is, Muslims, were one of the constituent groups, together with Russians and Kalmyks, making up the actual Ural Cossack people (*narod Ural'tsev*).<sup>106</sup> Al-Īlmīnī refers to the Ural Cossacks as *ūrālāṣqī qāzāqlār* or "Ural people" (*ūrāl khalqī*), and Cossacks in general as *qāzāqlār*. Muslim Cossacks were simply referred to as *musulmān qāzāqlārī*, and fall into the category of the *ūrāl khalqī*. Al-Īlmīnī also recorded how tensions between Tatar merchants and Muslim Cossacks erupted in the early 1870's in the Ural Cossack Host.<sup>107</sup>

The multi-ethnic and multi-confessional nature of the Cossack Hosts is generally discussed in treatments of the earliest appearance of Cossack communities in the Ukraine and on the South Russian steppe. However such diversity is less widely discussed in accounts

<sup>105</sup> At that time, and until 1774, the Ural River and the Cossack Host were called Yayik. After the Pugachev rebellion, which began among the Ural Cossacks, Catherine II formally changed the name of their river and their community.

<sup>106</sup> "Zapiski Saratovskogo kuptsa Ia. P. Zharkova," 130. Zharkov distinguishes the Bashkirs as being part of the Ural Cossack Host, but not forming part of the Ural Cossack *people*.

<sup>107</sup> Frank, "Islam and Ethnic Relations," *passim*.

of the late Imperial period. At this time the Cossack became in many respects a symbol of the Russian state, and became associated with the symbols of Russian nationalist ideology, such as Slaviness (or more narrowly Russianness), and Orthodoxy, and more extreme expressions like anti-semitism and other forms of intolerance toward ethnic and religious minorities. With such a conception of Cossacks in the late imperial period in view, the fact that Cossack Hosts included communities of Kalmyk Buddhists and Turkic Muslims (among others), is commonly overlooked. For example, among these non-Slavic communities, Kalmyks, were to be found in especially large numbers in the Don Cossack Host, and they for a time constituted their own Stavropol Cossack Host. Kalmyk Cossacks could also be found to a lesser degree among the Astrakhan, Terek, and Ural Cossacks.<sup>108</sup>

Muslim communities played an especially important role in the formation of the Orenburg and Ural Cossack Hosts, which were the first Cossack lines formed along the western regions of the Russo-Kazakh borderlands. Nowhere was the presence of Muslims more pronounced than in the Orenburg Cossack Host. With the creation of Orenburg Province in the 1740's, entire communities of Bashkirs, Service Tatars, Muslim Teptiars, and Mishars (in Russian—*Meshcheriaki*) were settled in Orenburg Province along the Kazakh border.<sup>109</sup> One historian has estimated that in the 1820's and 30's Muslims constituted up to seventy percent of the entire Orenburg Cossack Host.<sup>110</sup> By the beginning of the twentieth century the number of Muslims in among the Orenburg Cossacks had declined, yet according to official accounts still made up 7.4 percent of the overall number.<sup>111</sup> The number was possibly even higher, since after 1905 a large proportion of the Nagaibaks, Orthodox Turkic Cossacks, had become Muslims.<sup>112</sup> Smaller Muslim communities entered into the composi-

<sup>108</sup> In fact, al-Īlmīnī mentions two Kalmyk communities among the Ural Cossacks. On the Kalmyk Cossacks in general cf. K. P. Shovunov, *Kalmyki v sostave Rossiiskogo kazachestva* (Elista, 1992); see also Mamonov (ed.) *Istoriia kazachestva Urala*, 60–62.

<sup>109</sup> Mamonov (ed.) *Istoriia kazachestva Urala* 74–75; for a discussion the ethnic history of these Muslim Orenburg Cossacks cf. Z. R. Sadykova, *Govory Orenburgskikh tatar* (Kazan, 1985), 4–15; Iskhakov, *Etnograficheskie gruppy*, 54–56.

<sup>110</sup> Mamonov (ed.) *Istoriia kazachestva Urala*, 76.

<sup>111</sup> A. P. Abramovskii and V. S. Kobzov, *Orenburgskoe kazach'e voisko: istoriia i sovremenost'* (Cheliabinsk, 1993), 23–24.

<sup>112</sup> D. Iskhakov, "Etnodemograficheskoe razvitie nagaibakov do pervoi chetverti XX v." *Nagaibaki: Kompleksnoe issledovanie gruppy kreshchenykh tatar-kazakov* (Kazan, 1995), 10.

tion of the Siberian Cossack Host as well. Muslim Cossacks formed a very small proportion of the overall Siberian Cossack Host, amounting to 1,279 individuals in 1905, or just under one percent of the total.<sup>113</sup> The Muslim Siberian Cossacks were divided into two groups. The first, founded by colonists from the Middle Volga region, was located in a string of settlements around the cities of Pavlodar and Petropavlovsk. They were centered in the villages of Imantavskaia Stanitsa, Tatarskaia Stanitsa, and Stanovaia, and had migrated to the region only in 1851, primarily from Saratov province. Each village formed part of a separate regiment, and in terms of privileges and obligations differed in no way from the non-Muslim fellow-Cossacks.<sup>114</sup> The other community was located further to the west, in Tiumen' district, and until 1869 formed part of the Tobol'sk Cossack Regiment. These were native Siberian Muslims who were descendants of seventeenth-century "Service Tatars" who had managed to retain their Cossack status. In 1908 there was a total of 846 Muslims with Cossack status in this community.<sup>115</sup>

The Ural Cossack Host, with which the Altı Ata Muslims were primarily in contact, was also ethnically diverse, although Muslims formed a smaller proportion of the Host as a whole than among the Orenburg Cossacks. Of course, a large majority of Ural Cossacks were Russians, but within this group there were also a number of Muslim, as well as Kalmyk communities. Muslim Ural Cossacks are known to have been active in the Pugachev uprising, although it remains unclear what proportion of the Host they constituted in the eighteenth century.<sup>116</sup> In the 1850's the overall number of Muslims in the Ural Cossack Host was 3,578, or 6.8 percent of the total.<sup>117</sup> This number excludes Bashkirs, who as we have seen formed their own *Bashkirskoe Otdelenie*. However, in the 1870's the proportion of Muslim Cossacks seems to have declined somewhat to 5.5 percent.<sup>118</sup> In the 1850's Muslim Cossacks were located throughout the Ural Cossack Host. The largest number were located in the north of the Host's lands, that is, in the environs of the city of Ural'sk (1,502

<sup>113</sup> Andreev, "Kazaki-musul'mane," 5.

<sup>114</sup> Andreev, "Kazaki-musul'mane," 5-6.

<sup>115</sup> F. T. Valeev, *Sibirskie tatary*, (Kazan, 1992), 50.

<sup>116</sup> Cf. Vakhit Imamov, *Säyet Batır—Tatarlar Pugachev yavında* (Naberezhnye Chelny, 1994), 187-188, 191-195.

<sup>117</sup> Nebol'sin, "Neskol'ko zamechaniı", 213.

<sup>118</sup> Iskhakov, *Etnograficheskie gruppy*, 56.

Muslims or 11.3 percent) and in the area of Iletskaia Stanitsa (1,376 Muslims or 13.4 percent), however, the largest proportion was located along the Malyi Uzen River and along the Chizha Rivers, the areas which are included in al-Īlmīnī's narrative. The Cossack settlements along the Malyi Uzen' River were known as the *Vnutrenniaia Ural'skaia Liniia* (the Inner Ural Line). Here there were 329 Muslims (27 percent of the total) and 381 Kalmyk Buddhists (32 percent), with Russian Cossacks forming an actual minority. The only significant Muslim settlement along the Inner Ural Line appears to have been Glinianskii Forpost, which Damir Iskhakov notes is included in a list of Muslim settlements of the Ural Cossack Host dating from the 1830's, and this list includes none of the other Cossack settlements along the Malyi Uzen' River. The region along the Chizha Rivers was called the *Chizhinskaia Distsantsiia*, and here there were 103 Muslims (11.5 percent) and 99 Kalmyk Buddhists (11 percent). Here the only settlement with a Muslim population appears to have been Forpost Chizhinskii Pervyi.<sup>119</sup> Following the shift of the Inner Ural Line from the Malyi Uzen' to the Bol'shoi Uzen' River in 1873, there were at least two settlements inhabited by Muslim Cossacks. The first was Yalpaqtal (Slomikhinskaia Stanitsa), which al-Īlmīnī discusses in detail, and the other was Borodinskii Post, located down river from Yalpaqtal. According to A. Kharuzin, Borodinskii Post was primarily Russian, but had "two or three" families of Tatars.<sup>120</sup>

While most Muslim Cossacks were concentrated in the areas discussed above, it bears mentioning that much smaller communities were scattered throughout the territory of the Ural Cossack Host. For example, along the Ural River in the *Verkhniaia Distsantsiia* there were only ten Muslims out of 5,427 Cossacks, in the *Sredniaia Distsantsiia* there were 55 Muslims of 11,586 Cossacks, in the *Nizhniaia Distsantsiia* there were 55 Muslims out of 4,977 Cossacks, and in the town of Gur'ev there were 27 Muslims out of 1,816 Cossacks.<sup>121</sup> Nebol'sin notes that of all the non-Russians, the Russian Ural Cossacks

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<sup>119</sup> Nebol'sin, "Neskol'ko zamechanii," 212–213; Iskhakov, *Etnograficheskie gruppy*, 58; evidently the *Chizhinskaia distantsiia* was seized by the Cossacks from the Chizha Bashkirs, who were forced into Nikolaevsk district. This expulsion took place in the 1870's, presumably after the Cossacks were made to give up their settlements along the Malyi Uzen' to the Kazakhs.

<sup>120</sup> Kharuzin, *Stepnye ocherki*, 146.

<sup>121</sup> Nebol'sin, "Neskol'ko zamechanii," 211–212.

enjoyed the closest relations with the Tatar Muslim Cossacks,<sup>122</sup> and I. Zheleznov notes that while some Muslim Cossacks lived separately in their own communities, many others lived within larger Russian communities.<sup>123</sup>

The Muslim Ural Cossacks distinguished themselves from neighboring Muslim groups primarily by their status as Cossacks; but there is also evidence that the Muslim Ural Cossack differed from the Volga Tatars and Kazakhs ethnically as well. According to Ural Cossack historical legends recorded in 1721, the ancestors of the Muslim Ural Cossacks came from the Crimea and the Kuban—that is, they were Noghays.<sup>124</sup> The Kundrov Tatars, who lived in the Astrakhan region and had constituted part of the Ural Cossack Host, were themselves the direct descendants of Noghays who had inhabited the former Astrakhan Khanate, and retained a semi-nomadic lifestyle until well into the nineteenth century. Other Muslim Ural Cossacks traced their ancestry to Kazakhs.<sup>125</sup> Nevertheless, Damir Iskhakov has argued that the largest proportion of their ancestors came from the Middle Volga region.<sup>126</sup> Iskhakov's conclusion presumably applies to the largest Muslim Ural Cossack communities around the city of Ural'sk, and in Iletskaia Stanitsa, whose ancestors had indeed come from the Middle Volga region, but the Muslim Cossack communities further to the south may have included a larger proportion of local steppe nomads among their ancestors. Al-Īlmīnī discusses four Ural Cossack settlements: Podtiazhki, a Russian settlement; Kalmyki, a Kalmyk settlement; Pervyi Chizhinskii Forpost, a Muslim settlement; and Glinianskii Forpost, and Yalpaqtal, (Slomikhinskaia Stanitsa) predominantly Muslim settlements with a congregation of Russian Cossacks.

Al-Īlmīnī only discusses one Muslim Cossack community in any detail, specifically the community in Glinianskii Forpost that was resettled in 1873 to Yalpaqtal and located in the *Vnutrenniaia Ural'skaia*

<sup>122</sup> Nebol'sin, "Neskol'ko zamechaniĭ," 201. In a review of Nebol'sin's article, the Ural Cossack author I. I. Zheleznov disputes Nebol'sin's claim, and much else that Nebol'sin writes. However, as a result of Zheleznov's strong anti-Muslim feelings his critique should be treated skeptically; cf. Zheleznov, *Ural'tsy* II, 343.

<sup>123</sup> Zheleznov, *Ural'tsy* II, 412.

<sup>124</sup> At that time the Ural Cossacks were still known as Yaik Cossacks.

<sup>125</sup> Iskhakov, *Etnograficheskie gruppy*, 57.

<sup>126</sup> Iskhakov, *Etnograficheskie gruppy*, 57–58. This view is especially apparent for the Orenburg Cossack Host; cf. Sadykova, *Govory Orenburgskikh tatar*, 13.

*Linia*. The Cossack community in both of these settlements included both Muslims and Russians, and the Cossacks shared these villages with Tatar merchants and Kazakhs as well. Al-Īlmīnī names a certain Khūjāntāy Bābā as the leader of the Muslim Cossacks in both of these settlements. This figure was apparently rather wealthy, owning over a thousand head of livestock, and he is also credited with building the large stone mosque in Yalpaqtal after the Cossacks were expelled by the authorities from Glinianskii Forpost.<sup>127</sup> This Muslim Cossack leader is also mentioned in a Russian source. The Russian orientalist and administrator V. V. Grigor'ev was sent to Glinianskii Forpost in 1852 to conduct a survey of the Inner Horde. He identifies the village as inhabited by Kazakhs and Muslim Cossacks (*kazaki iz tatar*), and praises the generosity of a wealthy Cossack named “Kuzhentai” (i.e. Khūjāntāy) whom he names as his “benefactor” for his open-handedness in hosting him and his staff. Al-Īlmīnī was not the only observer to marvel at this Cossack leader’s wealth, since Grigor'ev himself notes that his wealth in livestock was so great that on an average day it would consume 138 ricks of hay.<sup>128</sup>

### *Kazakhs*

Kazakhs came to the region in 1801, when the Russian authorities allowed Bükāy Khan to migrate with Kazakh nomads into Russian territory west of the Ural River.<sup>129</sup> Al-Īlmīnī refers to Kazakhs throughout his narrative as *qirgīz*.<sup>130</sup> The latter usage appears to be borrowed from the Russian term *kirgiz*, which was used in Russian sources into the 1920's to refer to the Kazakhs. While the Kazakhs' self-designation was, and is, *qazaq*, the Russians sought to distinguish the Kazakhs from the Cossacks (*kazaki*). Since the first decade of the

<sup>127</sup> TAA fol. 106b.

<sup>128</sup> N. I. Veselovskii, *Vasilii Vasil'evich Grigor'ev po ego pis'mam i trudam*, (St. Petersburg, 1887), 115–116.

<sup>129</sup> The number of Kazakhs who migrated with Bükāy Khan in 1801 is unclear. A. Alektorov, discussing discrepancies in the sources, estimates the number of nomads to have been about 50,000; cf. A. Alektorov, “Ocherki Vnutrennei kirgizskoi ordy,” *Izvestiia Orenburgskogo Otdeleniia Imperatorskago Russkago Geograficheskago Obschestva*, 1893 (1), 35–36.

<sup>130</sup> The term *qirgīz* or *qirghīz* to refer to Kazakhs was already evident in Volga-Ural Turkic historiography at the beginning of the nineteenth century; cf. the *Tawārīkh-i Bulghārīya* of Ḥusāmaddīn Bulghārī (c. 1820's) and the *Tārīkh Nāma-yi Bulghār* of Tājaddīn Yālchighul ūghlī (1805).

nineteenth century substantial numbers of Kazakhs nomadized along the Malyi and Bol'shoi Uzen Rivers, and had established semi-permanent settlements on the territory of Novouzensk district. The Kazakhs of the Inner Horde remained by and large pastoral nomads during the nineteenth and early twentieth century. The pasture lands between the Bol'shoi and Malyi Uzen' Rivers and around the Kamysh-Samar Lakes were among the best in the Inner Horde, and attracted a substantial portion of the Inner Horde's population. Roughly between a half and a third of the Kazakhs in the Inner Horde spent winters within semi-permanent settlements of log or mud-brick cabins in Novouzensk district, the Ural Cossack territories, and on the territory of the Inner Horde.<sup>131</sup> They spent the summer living in yurts and nomadizing with their herds. The pastures and reed beds of the Malyi and Bol'shoi Uzen' Valleys, and especially the Kamysh-Samar Lakes into which these rivers empty, were one of the most important wintering grounds for the Kazakh nomads of the Inner Horde and one third of the entire Inner Horde wintered in these areas.<sup>132</sup> In 1897 the total Kazakh population of the Inner Horde was estimated at around 207,000, and if only a third of these Kazakhs wintered in Novouzensk district and along the Malyi Uzen' and Bol'shoi Uzen Rivers, then they would have nevertheless outnumbered all the area's other Muslims combined.<sup>133</sup>

The Kazakhs of the Inner Horde had formed part of the Kazakh Junior Horde, which had a different tribal structure from that of the Middle or Senior Hordes. In the nineteenth century the Junior Horde was divided into three groupings of clans, namely the Bayuli, Ālimuli, and Zhetiru (lit. "the seven clans").<sup>134</sup> The large majority of Kazakhs in the Inner Horde belonged to the Bayuli grouping. Numerous clans nomadized and wintered around the Malyi and Uzen' Rivers. Some clans, such as parts of the Berish, Alash, Masqar, and Baybaqtī clans wintered in the Kamysh-Samar area, while others, such as the Tana clan summered around the Uzen' Rivers. A number of smaller clans

<sup>131</sup> Khanykov, "Ocherk sostoianniia," 34–37; Vostrov and Mukanov, *Rodoplemennoi sostav*, 242–246.

<sup>132</sup> A. Evreinov, "Vnutrenniaia ili Bukeevskaia kirgiz-kazach'ia orda," *Sovremennik* 1851 (9), 60.

<sup>133</sup> N. E. Bekmakhanova, *Mnogonatsional'noe naselenie Kazakhstana i Kirgizii v epokhu kapitalizma* (Moscow, 1986), 133–134.

<sup>134</sup> On the clan structure of the Junior Horde cf. Khanykov, "Ocherk sostoianniia," 34–37; Vostrov and Mukanov, *Rodoplemennoi sostav*, 81–108.

within the Zhetiru grouping, such as the Tabīn, Tama and Kerderi both wintered and summered in close proximity to the Uzen' Rivers and the Kamysh-Samar Lakes.<sup>135</sup> Many Kazakhs also resided for at least part of the year outside of the borders of the Inner Horde, and especially in Novouzensk district. One Kazakh clan, the Noghay clan, summered exclusively in Novouzensk district, and during the first half of the nineteenth century, natural disasters and political problems within the Inner Horde resulted in the migrations of large numbers of Kazakhs into Novouzensk district, once in 1827, and again in 1832–33, although in both cases the Kazakhs eventually returned to their customary wintering grounds.<sup>136</sup> The main summer pastures in Novouzensk district lay along the Torgun, Gor'kaia, and Panikha Rivers, areas beyond the gaze of al-Īlmīnī. The Torgun River formed part of the border between Novouzensk district and the Inner Horde, and Jahāngīr Khan himself established his summer encampment on the Novouzensk side of the Torgun River, where he built a wooden hall and a mosque, and it was also at this encampment that Jahāngīr died in 1845.<sup>137</sup>

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries there were substantial semi-permanent Kazakh communities in Novouzensk district as well. According to Russian census data for the 1870's there were 750 Kazakhs inhabiting Novouzensk district, and in 1897 there were 6,700 Kazakhs there.<sup>138</sup> Because of a chronic shortage of pasture lands in the Inner Horde, many Kazakhs would lease pasture from colonists and Cossacks in neighboring Samara Province (including in Novouzensk district) or would work as hired laborers, and especially as shepherds, for Russian and German colonists.<sup>139</sup> Al-Īlmīnī mentions a Kazakh settlement in the town of Aleksandrov Gai. Among the border districts of Samara province with a Kazakh population, by the end of the nineteenth century Novouzensk had

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<sup>135</sup> Khanykov, "Ocherk sostoianiia," 34–37; Vostrov and Mukanov, *Rodoplemennoi sostav*, 245.

<sup>136</sup> Khanykov, "Ocherk sostoianiia," 48, 51.

<sup>137</sup> Evreinov, "Vnutrenniia," 64; Kabytov and Khramov (eds.) *Samarskaia letopis'* I, 173; for an account of the oral traditions concerning Kazakh clans in this area cf. G. A. Iskalieva, "Rodovye predaniia kazakhov (na materialakh s. Narimanovo Pitserskogo raiona)" *Kraevedcheskie chteniia IV–VI* (Saratov, 1994) 171–173.

<sup>138</sup> Liaskovskii, "Materialy dlia statisticheskago opisaniia," 89.

<sup>139</sup> M. V. Bulychev, "Kazakhi Nizhnego Povolzh'ia v pervoi polovine XIX veka," *Kraevedcheskie chteniia IV–VI* (Saratov, 1994), 172–173.

the highest proportion of Kazakhs, nearly 19.4 percent, engaged in tilling the soil, thus it appears reasonable to conclude that a substantial portion of the Kazakh population was permanently established in Novouzensk district.<sup>140</sup>

### *Astrakhan Qaraqalpaqs*

Finally, a fourth group of “native” Muslims that resided in Novouzensk district and Ural’sk *oblast’* were the so-called “Astrakhan Qaraqalpaqs”, who should not be confused with the Central Asian Qaraqalpaqs (in Russian sources Karakalpaks) who reside around the Aral Sea. The ethnic history of this small and somewhat scattered group is complex, and not completely clear, but is a good illustration of the flexibility of identities and associations among the Turkic peoples of Inner Asia. By their origin, the “Astrakhan Qaraqalpaqs” are the descendants of Kazan Tatars and Mishars, and they divide themselves accordingly between “Kazan Qaraqalpaqs” and “Mishar Qaraqalpaqs.” The Kazan Qaraqalpaqs are descended from Kazan Tatars who fled Russian service in the eighteenth century and began nomadizing with the Kazakhs of the Junior Horde. In 1801 some of these “Qaraqalpaqs” migrated across the Ural River with Bukay Khan and became part of the Inner Horde. Because they were the descendants of Muslims who had fled Russian service, upon crossing the Ural River they identified themselves to the Russians as Central Asian Qaraqalpaqs who had been subjects of the khan of Khiva. In 1827 the new ruler of the Inner Horde, Jahāngīr Khan, expelled the “Kazan Qaraqalpaqs” and invited in their stead Mishars who had migrated to the Inner Horde from the village of Liatoshinka (presumably in Penza province). These “Mishar Qaraqalpaqs” left the Inner Horde in the 1840’s and joined the Kazan Qaraqalpaqs who had settled in the Astrakhan region. However some Kazan Qaraqalpaqs had also settled in Novouzensk district and in Ural’sk *oblast’*. In Novouzensk district they were, and still are, located in Aleksandrov Gai and in the Kazakh village of Narimanovo.<sup>141</sup> Although Tatar ethnographers today categorize the Astrakhan Qaraqalpaqs as merely a sub-group of the Tatar nation, albeit one with a colorful past, the Qaraqalpaqs evidently considered themselves a separate people, as they appear as

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<sup>140</sup> N. V. Alekseenko, *Naselenie dorevoliutsionnogo Kazakhstana*, (Alma-Ata, 1981), 49.

<sup>141</sup> Iskalieva, “Rodovye predaniia kazakhov,” 221.

such in the 1926 Soviet census. Even today members of the same family can register themselves as Tatars, Qaraqalpaqs, Kazakhs, or even Bashkirs, and linguistically they are fully fluent in both Tatar and Kazakh.<sup>142</sup> Thus, Kazan and Mishar “Qaraqalpaqs” were one of the Muslim groups located in and around Novouzensk district during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and al-Īlmīnī mentions one of these Qaraqalpaqs, Sharafaddīn Ḥusayn ūghlī who served in Ilmin’s First *maḥalla* as a teacher.<sup>143</sup>

### *Non-Muslims*

The vast majority of the population of Novouzensk district was composed on non-Muslims. These included primarily Russians, but there were also substantial colonies of Ukrainians, and Germans, and nearer Osinov Gai township there were smaller communities of Kalmyks and Mordvins. Al-Īlmīnī refers to non-Muslims as a whole as “infidels” (*kuffār, kāfirlār*). In terms of specific groups he refers to the Russians as *Ūrūṣ khālqī*, and by Russian he means Russian Orthodox, since he considers Russian sectarians to be separate from Russians; thus the Molokans are called *mālāqānlar*. Germans are referred to as *nīmīch*, Ukrainians as *khākhūl*, Mordvins as *mūqshī*, and Kalmyks as *qālmāq*.

The Russian and Ukrainian settlers came to the valleys of the Malyi and Bol’shoi Uzen’ Rivers in two major waves. The first group consisted of Old Believers, military deserters and runaway serfs who came to the Trans-Volga steppe beginning in the late seventeenth century to settle in an area beyond the control of the Russian state. This period lasted through to the second half of the eighteenth century. Although the main area of settlement was to the north of Novouzensk district, primarily along the Irgiz River, where the Old Believers established a number of settlements and monasteries, some

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<sup>142</sup> L. Sh. Arslanov and V. M. Litvinov, “Astrakhanskie tatarı: istoriia i etnicheskii sostav naseleniia Astrakhanskoi oblasti,” *Materialy po istorii tatarskogo naroda*, (Kazan, 1993), 352–353. There was yet another group of “Kazan Qaraqalpaqs” who remained nomadizing with the Kazakhs and became a Kazakh clan (*ru*) in their own right, called “Qalpaq.” Strictly speaking this was not a Kazakh clan, since its clan genealogy was not connected to one of the three Kazakh *zhuzes*. Despite their ancestral origins as Kazan Tatars, Kazakh oral tradition identifies them as having originally been Qaraqalpaqs; cf. Saydaqqozha Zhūsipulı, “Zhüzge kirmeytin qazaq ruları,” in: *Qazaq shezhiresi*, (Almaty, 1994), 106.

<sup>143</sup> TAA fol. 40b.

of the earliest settlements in Novouzensk district date from this period. As we have seen, the site of Iske Özen, which Russians called Osinov Gai, was already settled by Russian fugitives in the 1760's, and other settlements, such as Orlov Gai, were reportedly first settled by Molokans and members of other Christian sects, although later it became an exile settlement for Polish rebels who fought the Russians in 1863 and for monks from the Solovetskii Islands.<sup>144</sup> Similarly the large settlement of Novorepnoe was founded late in the eighteenth century.<sup>145</sup> Perhaps one of the earliest of these settlements was Aleksandrov Gai, which was reportedly settled as early as the 1680's by Ukrainian merchant-adventurers.<sup>146</sup> Whatever the permanence or impermanence of these settlements, they were in all likelihood rather small when Muslim colonists began to settle Osinov Gai township in the 1780's. Al-Īlmīnī mentions some communities that appear to date from this earlier period. He notes the presence of Molokans in the town of Orlov Gai, noting that they have their own church there as well. He also mentions the village of Krepost' Uzen, upstream from Novouzensk. This was the site of a fortress that was built in 1787 on the order of Catherine II.<sup>147</sup>

The second large wave of Russian and Ukrainian settlement occurred between 1820 and 1850. This wave of colonization consisted of serfs, whom landowners settled in Novouzensk district at the request of the imperial government.<sup>148</sup> Liaskovskii writes that between 1835 and 1855 over 20,000 state peasant families settled in Nikolaevsk and Novouzensk district both with government authorization and without it, totaling about 100,000 people, the vast majority of which were Russians and Ukrainians.<sup>149</sup> Al-Īlmīnī is much more knowledgeable about this latter wave of settlement, and lists their villages along the Altata and Bol'shoi Uzen' Rivers. He mentions those villages settled by serfs (*qullar*) and notes that they were freed and remained in their villages. For the most part he gives the etymologies of the village names, such as the village of Ginirāl (today the village of Modin), that was founded by a General's serfs.<sup>150</sup> He

<sup>144</sup> Gortsev, *Saratovskaia oblast'*, 81–82.

<sup>145</sup> Gortsev, *Saratovskaia oblast'*, 77.

<sup>146</sup> Gortsev, *Saratovskaia oblast'*, 18.

<sup>147</sup> TAA fol. 94b; Gortsev, *Saratovskaia oblast'*, 64.

<sup>148</sup> Kabytov and Khramov (eds.) *Samarskaia letopis'* I, 165.

<sup>149</sup> Liaskovskii, "Materialy dlia statisticheskago opisaniia," 49.

<sup>150</sup> TAA fol. 6a

also mentions a series of villages in Natal'ino township settled by serfs, including Ābrīsqīn (Natal'ino), Rāslyayqa (Novorosliaevka) and Āprāqsīn (Apraksin), the latter being a Ukrainian village.<sup>151</sup> Along the Churtanla River, between the villages of Ilmin (Verkhazevka) and the town of Novouzensk al-Īlmīnī mentions two Ukrainian villages that were founded in this period, Kievka and Olonovka. Al-Īlmīnī tells us that the inhabitants of Kievka originally came from Kiev province (hence its name), while the inhabitants of Olonovka came from Volyn province.<sup>152</sup> Other large Russian settlements along the Bol'shoi Uzen' included Novorepnoe (Rīpin), which al-Īlmīnī tells us contained over ten thousand inhabitants, Kirilovka (Qūrīlovqa), and Novouzensk.<sup>153</sup> Although serfs were especially numerous along the Altata and Bol'shoi Uzen' Rivers, in Novouzensk district as a whole, much of the land in Novouzensk district belonged to the State or the Crown and Russian peasants in this district came primarily from Tambov, Saratov, Kursk, Riazan', and Tula provinces.<sup>154</sup> While al-Īlmīnī mentions some Ukrainian settlements in his vicinity, most Ukrainian peasants were located in the western portions of Novouzensk district, primarily along the Volga and Eruslan' Rivers.<sup>155</sup>

The town of Dergachi, located on the Saratov-Ural'sk railroad, is described as a multi-ethnic settlement, comprising Russians, as well as Ukrainians, Germans, and Mordvins, each in their own section (*och*). The village was founded in the first half of the nineteenth century by Ukrainian peasants from Khar'kov province.<sup>156</sup> The largest concentrations of Germans in Novouzensk district were located well to the west, primarily along the Volga River. These communities had first settled the region during the reign of Catherine II. Nevertheless, settlers from Germany were arriving as late as 1853, when one group from the Danzig region in Prussia settled in the district. In 1921 the western regions of Novouzensk district formed part of the Volga German Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, until its dissolution in 1941, when its German inhabitants were deported to Central Asia and Siberia. In pre-Soviet times these Germans were

<sup>151</sup> TAA fols. 6b–7a.

<sup>152</sup> TAA fol. 95a.

<sup>153</sup> TAA fol. 94b.

<sup>154</sup> Kabytov and Khramov (eds.) *Samarskaia letopis'* I, 167.

<sup>155</sup> Kabytov and Khramov (eds.) *Samarskaia letopis'* I, 171.

<sup>156</sup> Gortsev, *Saratovskaia obst'*, 42.

primarily engaged in the cultivation of wheat and Maryland tobacco.<sup>157</sup> As for the eastern region of Novouzensk district, al-Īlmīnī only mentions Germans in the town of Dergachi and in an unnamed village along the Altata River.<sup>158</sup>

The author of the manuscript also mentions a few scattered Kalmyk communities that constituted part of the Ural Cossack Host, and were settled between Novouzensk district and the Kazakh Inner Horde. Finally, a Russian missionary source also mentions the presence of baptized Muslims in Novouzensk district. E. Malov mentions a total of seven baptized Muslims in this district in 1867, and he notes that they came from among Kalmyk Muslims.<sup>159</sup> Malov may be making reference to Kalmyks living in the southern portions of the district, or they may be converts from among Kalmyks in the Ural Cossack host; but in any case, al-Īlmīnī makes no mentions of Muslim Tatars who became converts to Christianity.

#### CONCLUSION

In ethnographic terms the region comprising the Altata, Bol'shoi Uzen', and Chizha Valleys shares many features with the Volga-Ural region as a whole. In Novouzensk district the Muslims of Osinov Gai township formed compact agricultural settlements within a numerically much larger Slavic population. In Novouzensk district, as in the Volga-Ural region as a whole, Tatar peasants constituted the vast majority of the Muslim population, although there were also substantial Muslim merchant colonies within the larger Russian towns. The Muslim population of the Volga-Ural region was composed of various communities, diverse in ethnic and economic terms, and in terms of corporate status. Similarly, the Muslims of Osinov Gai township, who had been State Peasants lived in contact with Bashkir *votchinniki* and erstwhile Cossacks, with Ural Cossacks, both Muslim and Russian, and with Kazakh nomads. The diversity that characterized the ethnic map of the Altata and Bol'shoi Uzen' Valleys

<sup>157</sup> Liaskovskii, "Materialy dlia statisticheskago opisaniia," 81–82.

<sup>158</sup> TAA fols. 6b–7a.

<sup>159</sup> E. A. Malov, *Missionerstvo sredi mukhammedan i kreshchenykh tatar*, (Kazan, 1892), 434–435.

allows us to better understand ethnic processes and ethnic relations between Muslims, and to appreciate the ethnic and corporate complexities “on the ground” when looking at communities that too often modern historians anachronistically categorize with *post facto* national labels.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RELIGIOUS FIGURES

#### INTRODUCTION

The village clerisy (*‘ulamā*) in the Volga-Ural region must be recognized as one of the defining features of this Muslim society, and part of what actually made it Muslim. During the imperial period the Volga-Ural *‘ulamā* was primarily a rural institution centered in the villages and small cities where the vast majority of Russia’s Volga-Ural Muslims resided. The activities of the village clergy, and its role in the daily life of Volga-Ural Muslims, remain to be systematically studied, either at the local level, or for the region as a whole. Historians examining the intellectual and cultural life of Volga-Ural Muslims in the nineteenth century have discussed the activities and ideas of individual members of the *‘ulamā*, and the reception of these ideas among Muslim scholars in general. However, very few have examined the rank-and-file village *‘ulamā* as an institution, or its role within the communities they served. Tatar and Bashkir nationalist historians have consistently kept discussions of the village *‘ulamā* from their studies, examining instead “national” institutions and “great men” more fitting to their task of drafting a national mythology. Naturally, Soviet works addressing the *‘ulamā* in the Volga-Ural region have been dominated to a large degree by Marxist-Leninist class analysis, whereby the actions and functions of this group are thought to be determined by their class origins and interests and by their “official” position within the tsarist ruling apparatus. Whatever shortcomings exist in their approach, Soviet scholars nevertheless deserve recognition as the only historians to have addressed this group in any remotely systematic manner.<sup>1</sup> Together with their methodological debt to Soviet historical theory, these studies reveal a strong Russian

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<sup>1</sup> Ishmukhametov, *Sotsial’naia rol’*, 32–42. Klimovich, *Islam v tsarskoi Rossii*, 24–89, 120–142; cf. also R. A. Shaikhiev, “Rol’ musul’manskogo dukhovenstva v zhizni tatarskogo obshchestva v XVII–XIX vekakh,” *Dukhovenstvo i politicheskaia zhizn’ na Blizhnem i Srednem Vostoke v period feodalizma*, (Moscow, 1985), 186–190.

imprint, out of which the *‘ulamā* are depicted as simply a Muslim counterpart to the Russian Orthodox clergy, and the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly as the equivalent of the Russian Orthodox Church. Just as the pre-Revolutionary Russian Orthodox Church appears in Soviet histories as a tool of the state and a foe of the working class, these Soviet studies similarly depict the Volga-Ural *‘ulamā* as class enemies of the Muslim peasantry and proletariat, as *kulaks* or “feudal lords”, and as agents of tsarist repression because of their civil duties in the community, and as supporters of the tsarist system of class repression.

In addition to the ideological symmetry of such an analysis within the context of Soviet “Friendship of Peoples” historical theory that was *de rigueur* during much of the Soviet era, this parallelism was also partly attributable to the reliance of Soviet scholars on Russian archival sources. Within the bureaucratic structure of imperial Russia, administrators and bureaucrats understood the Muslim “clergy” and Orthodox clergy as basically equivalent administratively, and hence structurally. At the beginning of the nineteenth century Russian administrators in Nizhnii Novgorod province were referring to *imāms* using the Russian word for “priest” (*sviashchennik*).<sup>2</sup> By the middle of the nineteenth century Russian officials were generally referring to *imāms* by the vague term *mullā* (to be discussed below), but even the Muslim officials of the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly were equating the definitions of Islamic religious titles and positions with Russian Orthodox ones, presumably to avoid confusion in their dealings with Russian bureaucrats in other agencies.<sup>3</sup>

Within the context of Russian officialdom, of which the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly was a part too, the equation of Muslim terms and titles with those of the official religion should not be surprising. Nevertheless the organization of the *‘ulamā* within the Russian state differed in some fundamental ways from that of the Russian Orthodox Church. These differences in part reflected essential differences distinguishing Islam from Russian Orthodox Christianity as religious systems. At the same time, bureaucratic convergences notwithstanding, the Russian Orthodox clergy and the *‘ulamā* did not share the same legal status. Simply put, the Russian Orthodox clergy was part of a religious hierarchy which constituted its own separate estate

<sup>2</sup> Idrisov et al., *Iz istorii*, 16.

<sup>3</sup> Idrisov et al., *Iz istorii*, 28.

(*soslovie*, plural *sosloviia*) in the Russian empire. In contrast, the *‘ulamā* was something quite different. Generally speaking, it was an institution common to all Muslim societies; while difficult to define, it can be said that, unlike the Orthodox clergy, it was neither an estate nor a hierarchy, and strictly speaking cannot rightly be termed a “clergy,” insofar as that term usually refers to a Christian institution. In terms of the specifically Russian legal context, unlike the Russian Orthodox clergy, the *‘ulamā* did not constitute a formally separate estate, and throughout the imperial period their status was ambiguous and fluctuating. In a Russian law from the beginning of the nineteenth century detailing the privileges and obligations of the *‘ulamā*, members of this group retained membership in their original *soslovie*, and were obligated to bear the tax burden of their respective *sosloviia*. At the same time, all *‘alims* and their children, regardless of *soslovie* status, were immune from corporal punishment, a fundamental indicator of privileged status.<sup>4</sup> Some *‘alims* enjoyed more specific privileges. Muftis, *ākhūnds* and *imāms* appointed before 1836 were exempt from military conscription. However, in Orenburg province an *‘alim’s* privileges depended upon his community’s corporate status. For example, in 1798 *imāms* in the Bashkir-Mishar Cossack Host were declared exempt from garrison duty on the borders. In 1837 these *imāms* were further exempt from paying cash or in-kind taxes. Teptiar *imāms*, that is, those belonging to the Teptiar *soslovie*, were not granted exemption from taxation, or equal status with Bashkir-Mishar Cossack *imāms* until 1863.<sup>5</sup>

The *ākhūnds*, *imāms*, and *mudarrises* of the Volga-Ural region were essentially part of a congregational structure in which the members of the congregation (*maḥalla*) directly selected their religious leaders, who were quite often from the very communities that they served. These congregations were autonomous for all practical purposes in the administration of their religious institutions. The Muslim establishment, decentralized as it was, possessed no property to speak of; rather the properties that supported the Muslim religious establishment, known as *waqfs*, where they did exist, were under the control of the individual communities themselves. However, these communities were not completely autonomous, and the appointment of religious

<sup>4</sup> *Zakony Rossiiskoi imperii o bashkirakh*, 360.

<sup>5</sup> D. D. Azamatov, *Orenburgskoe magometanskoe dukhovnoe sobranie v kontse XVIII–XIX vv.*, (Ufa, 1999), 104–105.

figures, as well as education and the construction of mosques was subject to the approval of the provincial authorities, and on the imperial level, of the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly.

### 1. THE ORENBURG MUSLIM SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY

A feature that distinguished the *‘ulamā* of Russia proper from other Muslim communities in the Islamic world was that after 1788 the religious affairs of these Muslim communities were regulated by a state controlled administrative apparatus staffed by Muslim clergy. There were two such organizations, which had jurisdiction over the Muslim communities of European Russia, and Siberia. The smaller of these organizations was the Tauride Muslim Spiritual Assembly, based in the Crimea. This organization had jurisdiction over the Muslim communities in the Crimea, the steppe regions north of the Black Sea, and in the former territories of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The other organization was the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly, headquartered in the city of Ufa.<sup>6</sup> This organization had jurisdiction over the Volga-Ural region, and Siberia. For much of the nineteenth century it also had jurisdiction over the northern Kazakh steppe, including the Kazakh Inner Horde. During almost its entire existence the *‘ulamā* of Novouzensk district was formally subordinate to this organization. The Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly was created in 1788 by order of Empress Catherine II. This organization was headed by a mufti, who was in fact an appointee of the Russian authorities. In principle he was supposed to be elected by representatives of the Muslim population, but in practice the Russian authorities were never to cede the power of selecting the mufti to the Muslims.<sup>7</sup> The Spiritual Assembly had a number of

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<sup>6</sup> For a general discussion of the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly cf. Kemper, *Sufis und Gelehrte*, 17–79; cf. also D. D. Azamatov, *Orenburgskoe magometanskoe dukhovnoe sobranie v kontse XVIII–XIX vv.*, (Ufa, 1999); for a discussion of the Assembly within the larger context of the imperial Russian state and society cf. Charles Robert Steinwedel, *Invisible Threads of Empire: State, Religion and Ethnicity in Tsarist Bashkiria, 1773–1917*, Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Columbia University, 1999.

<sup>7</sup> On the politics surrounding appointment of muftis cf. Danil’ D. Azamatov, “The Muftis of the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly in the 18th and 19th Centuries: the Struggle for Power in Russia’s Muslim Institution,” *Muslim Culture in Russia and Central Asia from the 18th to the Early 20th Centuries. Vol. 2: Inter-Regional and Inter-Ethnic Relations* Anke von Kügelgen, Michael Kemper, Allen J. Frank eds., (Berlin, 1998),

functions. The first was the administration of Islamic law in Russia. Muslim communities were allowed to apply Islamic law in matters of marriage and divorce, inheritance, burial, and in the administration of specifically religious affairs. The Spiritual Assembly, through a council of *qādīs* nominally headed by the Mufti, functioned as a sort of Muslim Supreme court, which ruled on specific cases and issued *fatwās*. The Spiritual Assembly also regulated the village *‘ulamā*. Specifically, an *imām* or *mu’adhdhin* nominated by a *maḥalla* needed to have his nomination approved by both the provincial authorities and the Spiritual Assembly.<sup>8</sup> Moreover the candidate had to travel to Ufa to pass an examination which tested his knowledge of Islamic sciences. Upon passing the examination the *imām* or *mu’adhdhin* was granted an *ukaz* (license), and became known as an *ukaznyi imām* or *ukaznyi mu’adhdhin*.<sup>9</sup> Beginning in 1828 the Spiritual Assembly also oversaw the compilation by village *imāms* of the *metricheskaia kniga* (*mītrīka daftarī*), that is, the register of deaths and legitimate births in a community which also functioned as a tax roll.<sup>10</sup> Mosques and *madrasas* however were beyond the direct authority of the Spiritual Assembly, and were regulated by provincial civil authorities. In this area, the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly functioned as a consultative body to the provincial authorities, and its directives primarily had the force of recommendations to the provincial authorities.<sup>11</sup>

Throughout its existence in the imperial period the legitimacy of the Spiritual Assembly’s authority was not universally accepted by the Volga-Ural *‘ulamā* and this debate was one of the central features of the Volga-Ural *‘ulamā*’s Islamic discourse in the late eighteenth

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355–384. On Russian legislation and attempts to reform the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly cf. Dilara Usmanova, “L’Assemblée Spirituelle musulmane au début du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle: les projets de réforme face au pouvoir politique russe,” *L’Islam de Russie: Conscience communautaire et autonomie politique chez les Tatars de la Volga et de l’Oural depuis le XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Stéphane Dudoignon et al. eds., (Paris, 1997), 175–191.

<sup>8</sup> At its inception the Spiritual Assembly had claimed the exclusive right to confirm *imāms* and *mu’adhdhins*, but already by 1791 the Ufa provincial authorities were able to confirm its right to regulate the process of confirmation of these figures; cf. Azamatov, *Orenburgskoe magometanskoe dukhovnoe upravlenie*, 89.

<sup>9</sup> *Ukaz* and *ukaznyi* are the nominal and adjectival forms respectively of the Russian word for “decree”. In Turkic texts the Russian forms are commonly used, appearing as “*ūqāz/ūkāz* and *ūqāzñi/ūkāzñi*.” The equivalent Turkic terms are “*man-shūr*” and “*manshūrli*.” In the *Tawārīkh-i Ālī Ātā*, and in other Turkic texts, the Russian and Turkic forms are used interchangeably.

<sup>10</sup> For a text of the law introducing the *metricheskie knigi* cf. *Zakony Rossiiskoi imperii o bashkiriakh*, 363–365.

<sup>11</sup> Idrisov et al., *Iz istorii*, 23.

and nineteenth centuries.<sup>12</sup> The anti-Mufti position was established and most strongly defended in the works of ‘Abdarraḥīm al-Ūtīz-Īmānī (1756–1834), and anti-Mufti activity was carried out by a group of ‘*ālīms* known as the *ābīzes*.<sup>13</sup> In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the most prominent anti-mufti movement was the Vaisov brotherhood, first led by Bahā’addīn Vaisov, and later by his son ‘Inānaddīn, who after 1906 gradually took the movement in a more radicalized direction, culminating in the Vaysi-Bolshevik alliance in 1917.<sup>14</sup>

The significance of anti-Mufti thought and activity among the Volga-Ural ‘*ulamā* is difficult to gauge with certainty since such currents were suppressed both by the Muslim supporters of the Mufti and by the Russian authorities. Nevertheless, there can be little doubt that the authority of the mufti and of the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly was recognized by the ‘*ulamā* as a whole. Michael Kemper has ably described the writings and activities of pietist ‘*ālīms* in the Volga-Ural region who not only sanctioned the authority of the mufti and of the Russian state, but who defined themselves and their communities in connection with these institutions.<sup>15</sup> The broad popularity of “Bulgharist” historiography and “Bulghar” regional identity provides further evidence that Volga-Ural Muslims not only accepted the founding and functions of the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly but that they judged it to have religious validity.<sup>16</sup>

This acceptance of the Spiritual Assembly’s authority by the village ‘*ulamā* is quite evident in al-Īlmīnī’s history. Throughout his work al-Īlmīnī refers to the Spiritual Assembly using its Russian title, *Ūrīnbūrgh Dūkhūwnūy Šūbranya*, rather than by its official Islamic names, *Ūrīnbūrgh Dīnī Mahkamasī* or *Ūrīnbūrgh Dīnī Nazāratī*, suggesting that al-Īlmīnī viewed the Spiritual Assembly as part of the official Russian apparatus, which it certainly was. Nevertheless, it is clear from his narrative that al-Īlmīnī accepted the legitimacy of the Spiritual Assembly since he is quite forthright in noting the importance for

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Kemper, *Sufis und Gelehrte*, passim.

<sup>13</sup> On Ūtīz-Īmānī cf. especially Kemper, *Sufis und Gelehrte*, 172–212; on the anti-mufti movement among the ‘*ulamā* cf. M. V. Gainutdinov, “Razvītie obnovenchenskikh idei v tatarskoi obshchestvennoi mysli,” *Problema preemstvennosti v tatarskoi obshchestvennoi mysli*, (Kazan, 1985), 41–42.

<sup>14</sup> Kemper, *Sufis und Gelehrte*, 393–429; Frank, *Islamic Historiography*, 172–178.

<sup>15</sup> Kemper, *Sufis und Gelehrte*, 50–66, 368–392.

<sup>16</sup> Frank, *Islamic Historiography*, 35–46; Frank, “Islamic Shrine Catalogs,” passim.

*imāms* and *mu'adhdhins* in holding an *ukaz*. While al-Īlmīnī's emphasis on the legitimacy of the *ukaz* can be seen as his acceptance of the reality of Russian administrative dominance, and his support for the legitimacy of the Spiritual Assembly, when he does mention the mufti in his history, he unambiguously depicts him as a figure bearing spiritual authority. Another work located in the manuscript expresses support for the legitimacy of the mufti more forthrightly. This work follows the *Tawārīkh-i Āltī Ātā* which purports to be Muḥammad b. Muḥammad-Fātiḥ al-Īlmīnī's examination for the post of *imām*. While it is unlikely that the section was the exam he actually took, since it deals more with issues of theology, and is rather informal in certain sections, it seems to be a literary work in its own right. Toward the end of this "examination", which is written in a question-and-answer format, Muḥammad b. Muḥammad-Fātiḥ criticizes Tatar newspapers that questioned the right of the tsar to appoint the mufti, and also dismisses *ukaz* calls that muftis and other figures be appointed for fixed terms, noting that nowhere in Islamic sources are muftis and *qāḏīs* appointed for specific terms. Thus, while Muḥammad b. Muḥammad Fātiḥ defends the right of the tsar to appoint the mufti, he does so using specifically Muslim arguments.<sup>17</sup>

For the most part, the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly affected the *ʿulamā* of Novouzensk district to the degree that *imāms* and *mu'adhdhins* selected by the communities would travel to Ufa to take their exams. However while the Spiritual Assembly was created in 1788, al-Īlmīnī writes that when Muslim colonists first came to the area, between 1780 and 1800 they had no official (*manshūrli*) *imāms*; rather, the community "would elect as *imām* a person from among them who could read and write and would give the sermons and preach."<sup>18</sup> At what point *imāms* began to be confirmed to their position by the Spiritual Assembly is unclear. The earliest date we have for an *imām* traveling to Ufa to take an examination is 1840, when ʿAbdalkarīm Temīrbūlāṭ ūghlī was confirmed as *imām* of Altī Ata's First Mosque.<sup>19</sup> However al-Īlmīnī tells us the first *imām* (i.e. an *imām* recognized by the Russian state with an *ukaz*) was elected in 1817. In one case it appears the official acceptance of an *imām* also involved a two-step process, involving first going to Ufa, and then going to Samara to

<sup>17</sup> Kazan Univ. 124T-II, fol. 127b.

<sup>18</sup> TAA fol. 8a.

<sup>19</sup> TAA fol. 12a.

receive confirmation from the civil authorities. This was the case in Ilmin's Third *maḥalla*, when 'Ubaydallāh Temīrbūlāt ūghlī was nominated *imām* under rather contentious circumstances. In another case, when 'Abdaṣṣamād Burhānaddīn ūghlī was nominated to become *imām* of Iske Özen's Fifth Mosque, we are told that he was examined not by the Spiritual Assembly in Ufa, but by the provincial authorities in Samara, who then issued an *ukaz* naming him *imām* and *khaṭīb* and *mudarris*.<sup>20</sup> All of the *mu'adhdhins* apparently traveled to Ufa to take their examinations and receive their *ukazes*.

The Novouzensk Muslims would on occasion appeal to the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly to resolve disputes. Al-Īlmīnī mentions one case of a notable named 'Abdaljalīl Sayfalmulūk ūghlī. After his death, some relatives living in Ilmin challenged the will and sent it to the Spiritual Assembly in Ufa for arbitration. The Spiritual Assembly ruled that the late 'Abdaljalīl's will was not in conformity with the *sharī'a*, and ordered it redivided. However, because 'Abdaljalīl had drawn up a civil will (*zāvīshchenīya*) and had it notarized, his will remained in legal force, and the property was divided up according to his civil will.<sup>21</sup> Thus, it appears that in Muslim communities, *sharī'a* was used as the basis for inheritance, but had to yield before a notarized civil will.<sup>22</sup> In another case Muslims in Ilmin's Third *maḥalla* appealed to the Spiritual Assembly in a dispute whereby the local bailiff (*ispravnik*) had ordered their mosque closed because it had been built without having obtained the necessary permit. After some time had passed, two notables traveled to Ufa and settled the matter, after which they were granted authorization to use the mosque, and were also issued a register (*mītrīka daftarī*).<sup>23</sup>

## 2. TITLES AND POSITIONS

### *Imām, mullā and ābīz*

It is likely that the term *imām*, while well known as a religious title in all Muslim societies, and certainly familiar to Volga-Ural Muslims

<sup>20</sup> TAA fols. 73b, 92b–93a.

<sup>21</sup> TAA fol. 42b.

<sup>22</sup> For a discussion of the role of the *ulamā* in administering Islamic inheritance law among the Bashkirs cf. N. V. Bikbulatov and F. F. Fatykhova, *Semeinyi byt bashkir XIX–XX vv.* (Moscow, 1991), 149–161.

<sup>23</sup> TAA fol. 70a.

before 1788, only acquired its formal titular sense after 1788. In earlier (mainly Russian) sources from the seventeenth and eighteenth century, we see the term *ābiž* used as the equivalent of the nineteenth century *imām*. The etymology of the term is disputed,<sup>24</sup> but it already appears in seventeenth century sources. We see the term *ābiž* used as an equivalent to *imām* in Stenka Razin's appeal to the 'ulamā of Kazan in 1670, where he addresses the "chief *ābižes* who maintain the mosques" (*abyzom nachalnym kotorye mechet' derzhat*).<sup>25</sup> The term also appears in the Remezov chronicle, compiled in Siberia around 1700, in which the author relates how in the sixteenth century Kuchum, the Tatar khan of Siberia, went to Kazan and returned with "Chuvashes, *ābižes* and Russian prisoners."<sup>26</sup> The term is mentioned by the Academician G. Miller in 1734 as being equivalent to the later term of *imām*. He notes that among the Muslims of the Tobol'sk region the *ābiž* was the equivalent of a "simple priest."<sup>27</sup> It also appears as a title in Russian ecclesiastical legislation in the eighteenth century.<sup>28</sup> The term was widely used in the eighteenth century, especially in Bashkiria, and it bears mentioning that the opponents of the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly's legitimacy were collectively known as the *ābižes*.<sup>29</sup> If indeed these figures were the traditional equivalent of an *imām*, then it stands to reason they would have been directly threatened by the new licensing requirements of the Spiritual Assembly. In any case, this term is nowhere to be found in the *Tawārīkh-i Ālī Ātā*. The term nevertheless continued to appear in

<sup>24</sup> The origins and etymology of this term are unclear. In Turkic texts from the Volga-Ural region it has the meaning of "scholar" or "learned person" and is spelled *ābiž*, *ābiš*, or *ābiž*. The latter spelling suggests it may be derived from the Arabic term *ḥāfiž*, "one who has committed the Qur'an to memory," as L. Budagov has noted; cf. Lazar Budagov, *Sravnitel'nyi slovar' turetsko-tatarskikh narechii*, I, (St. Petersburg, 1869), 4. In Kazakh, as well as in a series of South Siberian Turkic languages, including Altay, Shor, and Teleut, where it appears as *abis*, the term signifies "Russian priest," and W. Radloff theorizes that it may be derived from the Turkic form *ababīs*, "our father"; cf. V. V. Radlov, *Opyt slovaria tiurkskikh narechii* I, (St. Petersburg, 1893), 629–630. The latter etymology is cited in a Soviet ethnography on the Volga Tatars, as evidence of the "popular" and Turkic origin of the word, dismissing the Arabic etymology as clerical and reactionary; cf. *Tatary Povolzh'ia i Priural'ia*, (Moscow, 1967), 210–211.

<sup>25</sup> *Istoriia Tatarii v materialakh i dokumentakh*, (Moscow, 1937), 379.

<sup>26</sup> *Sibirskie letopisi*, (St. Petersburg, 1907), 319–320.

<sup>27</sup> Elert, *Sibir' XVIII veka*, 76.

<sup>28</sup> *Polnoe Sobranie Postanovlenii i rasporiashchenii po vedomstvu Pravoslavnago ispovedaniia Rossiiskoi imperii vol. III 1746–1752*, (St. Petersburg, 1912), 490.

<sup>29</sup> Gainetdinov, "Razvitie obnovencheskikh idei," 41–42.

Russian sources in the nineteenth century as an equivalent to *imām*, although it remains unclear whether the appearance of this term in Russian sources reflected the actual usage of the local Muslim population. For example, the term appears as late as 1861 in a Russian ethnographic account of the Siberian Tatars in describing the activities of their *imāms*.<sup>30</sup>

The most commonly used term in accounts of the Volga-Ural *‘ulamā* is *mullā*. The term is used indiscriminately by Russian and Western authors, with little indication as to why one Muslim was called a *mullā* and another was not. This tendency is especially evident in accounts of Tatar religious figures among the Kazakhs, where we commonly read about “Tatar *mullās*”. Islamic sources tend to be more specific, distinguishing between Sufis, *mu‘allims*, and *imāms*. To be sure, the term *mullā* appears in petitions to Catherine II’s Legislative Commission as a clear equivalent to *imām*,<sup>31</sup> but in Russian sources it seems to be used as a catch-all term for any Muslim with a degree of religious authority. The term *mullā* clearly had a religious sense, and was obviously in widespread use among both Muslims and non-Muslims in the Volga-Ural region. For example, the term *molla* was widely used by “unbaptized” Maris and Udmurts, especially those in Bashkiria, to refer to their own pagan priests.<sup>32</sup> Nineteenth century Russian official documents, especially those dealing with the administration of the *‘ulamā*, use the term *mullā* exclusively. However, the term was apparently a source of confusion among Russian officials, since in 1891 the Department of Religious Affairs for Foreign Creeds issued a document for local officials clarifying the significance of the term *mullā*. According to the document *mullas* were all religious figures (*dukhovnye litsa*) who were not members of the higher clergy (i.e. not muftis or *qāḍīs*) and not members of the lower clergy (*mu’adhdhins*). Thus by process of elimination, the term *mullā* was at least officially an exact equivalent for *imām*.<sup>33</sup>

In Muslim sources, including in the *Tawārīkh-i Āltī Ātā*, the term

<sup>30</sup> Iushkov, *Sibirskie tatory*, 36.

<sup>31</sup> S. F. Tashkin, *Inorodtsy Povolzhsko-Priural’ksogo kraia i Sibiri po materialam Ekaterinskoi zakonodatel’noi kommissii I*, (Orenburg, 1921), 230.

<sup>32</sup> H. Paasonen, “Beiträge zur Kenntnis der Religion und des Cultus der Tscheremissen,” *Keleti Szemle* II (1901), 32; N. I. Isanbaev, *Marisko-tiurkskie iazykovye kontakty, chast’ vtoraiia*, (Ioshkar-Ola, 1994), 102–103; Sándor Csúcsa, *Die tatarischen Lehnwörter des Wotjakischen*, (Budapest, 1990), 242.

<sup>33</sup> Idrisov et al., *Iz istorii*, 17.

*mullā* is very broadly used as an honorific given to learned members of the community. Virtually every *imām*, many *mu'adhdhins*, and even some learned notables all bear the title *mullā*. Thus, among Muslims the conference of the term did not necessarily imply that the bearer was a member of the *‘ulamā* or had any sort of official religious status. Another honorific that was used more restrictedly was the term *dāmullā*. The term was restricted to the most erudite and exemplary teachers. In the *Tawārīkh-i Ālī Ātā* bearers of this title included both renowned teachers in such centers of Islamic learning as Kazan, Qarghalī, and Yalpaqtal, as well as a few notable teachers in Novouzensk district. Such teachers included Muḥammad Ibrāhīm ūghlī, *imām* of Safarqa’s Second Mosque, ‘Abdalkarīm Ḥaḍrat, teacher and *imām* in Iske Özen’s Third *maḥalla*, and ‘Aṭā’allāh Ālṭinbāy ūghlī, a prominent Sufi and *imām* in Safarqa’s First *maḥalla*.

### *Ākhūnds*

At the district (*uezd*) level the highest figure in the Russian empire’s Muslim religious hierarchy was the *ākhūnd* (or *ākhūn*), although the significance of this title changed over time. In the Volga-Ural region the term was in use as early as the seventeenth century. One of the most prominent *‘alims* from this period was Yūnus Ākhūn b. Īwānāy al-Kāchāwī (b. 1636).<sup>34</sup> In the eighteenth century the term was used to refer to specialists in the administration of the *sharī‘a*. It was *ākhūnds* who in the 1730’s were the first Muslim religious figures to be regulated by the Russian authorities in Ufa, setting the precedent for the more ambitious projects to regulate the *‘ulamā* in the 1780’s.<sup>35</sup> The importance of the title *ākhūnd* in Siberia was clearly stated by the academician G. Miller. Describing the Tatar village of Shul’gina in 1734, he notes that this village was the home of the current *ākhūnd*, who was the most respected member of the clergy in Tobol’sk district. The *ākhūnd* had oversight over all of the *abīzes*, whom Miller identifies as “simple priests.” He also notes that the *ākhūnd* in this village wielded a degree of civil authority in the village as well.<sup>36</sup> The significance of the title *ākhūnd* began to change following the

<sup>34</sup> Marjānī, *Mustafād al-akhbār* II, 186–188.

<sup>35</sup> Frank, *Islamic Historiography*, 26–28.

<sup>36</sup> A. Kh. Elert (ed.) *Sibir’ XVIII veka v putevykh opisaniiaakh G. F. Millera* Istoriiia Sibiri. Pervoistochniki VI (Novosibirsk, 1996), 76.

founding of the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly. In the initial statutes of the Spiritual Assembly, drafted in 1789, there were to be two *ākhūnds* per district (*uezd*) with a substantial Muslim population.<sup>37</sup> Technically the mosques and *imāms* of a given district were subordinate to the district *ākhūnd*(s).<sup>38</sup> A document from the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly from 1855 describes the title as simple an equivalent of the Russian Orthodox title “*blagochinnyi*”, who in the Orthodox hierarchy was a rural priest to whom a number of parishes were subordinate.<sup>39</sup> During the second half of the nineteenth century the position gradually lost much of its authority and if, during the eighteenth century, the *ākhūnd* wielded influence in the administration of Islamic law, within the structure of the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly the position of *ākhūnd* appears to have eventually been stripped of much of its autonomy. By the second half of the nineteenth century *ākhūnds* served as essentially a liaison for the Spiritual Assembly by disseminating official decrees to the local *imāms*. In fact by 1909 the scholar Riḍāʿaddīn Fakhraddīn ūghlī was expressing doubt whether the title of *ākhūnd* had any official significance at all.<sup>40</sup>

Given their apparent *pro forma* authority, it is not surprising that al-Īlmīnī makes only passing notice of local *ākhūnds*. Nevertheless, all the *ākhūnds* he mentions were simultaneously *imāms* of a given *maḥalla*. He mentions three *ākhūnds* who resided in the area. The first was a Aḥmad-Farīd Ākhūnd ash-Shirvānī, whom al-Īlmīnī identifies as Farīd Mullā, the *ākhūnd* for the Ural Cossack communities bordering the Kazakh Inner Horde.<sup>41</sup> The other two *ākhūnds* were located in Novouzensk district. The first was ‘Abdaljalīl ‘Abdalkarīm ūghlī, who was the first *imām* in Safarqa’s First *maḥalla*. ‘Abdaljalīl Ākhūnd came

<sup>37</sup> *Materialy po istorii Bashkirskoi ASSR V*, (Moscow, 1960), 566; cf. also Azamatov, *Orenburgskoe magometanskoe dukhovnoe sobranie*, 92–93; concerning *ākhūnds* in Siberia, in the middle of the nineteenth century Iushkov writes that the *ākhūnd* was elected by the local population and confirmed by the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly. Furthermore, he writes that the *ākhūnd* was required to be able to understand Arabic and Persian and interpret the Qurʾān; cf. Iushkov, *Sibirskie tatary*, 35–36.

<sup>38</sup> Azamatov, “Russian Administration and Islam in Bashkiriya,” 103–104.

<sup>39</sup> Idrisov et al., *Iz istorii*, 28.

<sup>40</sup> Kemper, *Sufis und Gelehrte*, 41; for a discussion concerning bureaucratic debates within the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly cf. Azamatov, *Orenburgskoe magometanskoe dukhovnoe sobranie*, 93–96.

<sup>41</sup> TAA fol. 4a; this figure resided in the Ural Cossack village of Forpost Chizhinskii Pervyi; cf. Farit Iakhin, *Tatarskaia literatura periodicheskoi pechati Ural’ska (1905–1907 gg.)* (Kazan, 1992), 11.

to Safarqa in 1841 with the first colonists as their *imām*, and only subsequently became *ākhūnd*.<sup>42</sup> Another *ākhūnd* in the district was ‘Umar Ākhūnd, the first *imām* of Iske Özen’s Second Mosque, which suggests that he was active at the beginning of the nineteenth century, or perhaps even in the late eighteenth century. Al-Īlmīnī’s tells us that ‘Umar Ākhūnd maintained a rather well-known *madrasa*, and that he used to conceal his *shāgirds* who were draft evaders from the Russian authorities, suggesting that at that time not all *ākhūnds* were the ciphers of the Russian authorities.<sup>43</sup> Curiously, the *ākhūnds* that al-Īlmīnī mentions for Novouzensk district were active in the first half of the nineteenth century, if not earlier. We are not told who the *ākhūnds* for Novouzensk district were in the latter half of the nineteenth century, or for that matter in the twentieth century. Al-Īlmīnī’s silence on the matter suggests that by the second half of the nineteenth century the title *ākhūnd* had indeed become debased to such a degree that it had lost any significance, even for a supporter of the Spiritual Assembly like al-Īlmīnī.

The pillar of the community’s Islamic establishment, and the religious leader of the community was the *imām*. As we have seen, the post of *imām* was in a formal sense a position officially recognized by the Russian authorities after the creation of the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly in 1788. The Russian missionary Ia. Koblov has left us with what is certainly one of the most sober and clear descriptions of the role of the *imām* in imperial Russian Muslim society. Koblov’s work, which he bases on his observations of Muslim communities in Kazan province, is remarkable for the respect it reveals toward the authority of the *imām* within the community. He describes the *imām* as differing little from the members of his congregation. Unlike the Russian clergy, the *imām* was elected by his community, had no estate or other corporate privileges to distinguish him from other villagers, and for the most part his clothing and his house did not differ markedly from those of the other villagers.<sup>44</sup> Similarly, Koblov makes an important observation in terms of education: the *imām* studied in the same schools and the same texts as his congregation did. This means that the *imām* and the congregation shared the same general knowledge and education, the key difference being one of

<sup>42</sup> TAA fol. 31a.

<sup>43</sup> TAA fol. 86b.

<sup>44</sup> Ia. Koblov, *O magometanskikh mullakh: religiozno-bytovoï ocherk*, (Kazan, 1907), 8.

degree, that is, that the *imām* had a deeper knowledge of the same texts, traditions, and ideas.<sup>45</sup> Thus, the *imām* and his congregation shared a common religious idiom, which Koblov describes as “a commonality of interests, convictions, and outlook that united the *mulla* [i.e., *imām*] and the congregation.” In this important respect, the relationship between the *imām* and the congregation that supported him, and that he served, was very much an equal relationship between Muslims. This implied that the standards the *imām* enforced were standards for all Muslims to follow, including the *imām* himself. The community was entitled to remove an *imām* who failed to meet these standards personally or professionally; that communities occasionally did so was not only evident in Koblov’s discussion of Kazan province, but, as we shall see, in Novouzensk district as well.

In strictly occupational terms, the primary obligation of the *imām* was to be present at the mosque for the five daily prayers. In addition, the *imām* was responsible for giving names to newborns, and performing the appropriate prayers and rituals, performing weddings, and giving the wedding sermon, and performing burials. *Imāms* were expected to teach the congregation’s children, and were also expected to determine the fasts and lead the celebrations of *‘Īd al-Aḍḥa* and *‘Īd al-Fiṭr*.<sup>46</sup> The *imām* also had certain civic duties that the Russian authorities required of him. This was to perform weddings and collect the wedding tax, perform birth rituals, divorces and funerals, administer Islamic inheritance law, and keep a record of births, deaths, marriages, divorces, and inheritance in official registers that he was obligated to submit to the state. However he also had a broader role in enforcing Islamic norms and rules in the society, and was in large part responsible for enforcing an Islamic code of public conduct in the community. This responsibility especially involved punishing at least the flagrant use of alcohol and tobacco, and in this he was certainly supported by the community.<sup>47</sup> Indeed, Koblov especially credits the moral authority of the *imām* for the discipline that was evident in Muslim communities at that time.<sup>48</sup> The *imām* was a role model for the community, and consequently the community closely monitored his behavior and actions, expecting him

<sup>45</sup> Koblov, *O magometanskikh mullakh*, 8–9.

<sup>46</sup> Koblov, *O magometanskikh mullakh*, 7.

<sup>47</sup> Koblov, *O magometanskikh mullakh*, 9–10.

<sup>48</sup> Koblov, *O magometanskikh mullakh*, 9.

to adhere to the norms and rules he enforced.<sup>49</sup> Koblov was clearly impressed by the general dignity and bearing of *imāms*. In addition to noting the neatness and cleanliness of *imāms* in public, he writes:

He [the *imām*] is always suffused with the teaching of Islam, and is always serious and imposing. All of this is evident even in his external motions and his comportment. In conversation the *mullā* is not garrulous or hurried, and sudden movements or loud laughter are foreign. First he attentively hears out the person he is speaking with, and then with the awareness of his own worth, rather than simply talking, he solemnly states [*izrekat'*] his answer.<sup>50</sup>

Given their dignified and learned bearing, it is not surprising that villagers frequently appealed to *imāms* to mediate family and other disputes, and that the decisions of the *imāms* were generally respected.<sup>51</sup>

### 3. IMĀMS IN NOVOUZENSK DISTRICT

In their biographical dictionaries Marjānī, Fakhraddīn ūghlī, and Ramzī focused only on the most prominent and influential *‘ālims* in the Volga-Ural region, and given the scale of these biographers' works, such an approach was unavoidable. Moreover these historians also sought to publicize the high degree of learning and erudition of the Volga-Ural *‘ulamā*, as well as to document some of the major issues of the region's "Islamic discourse" in the nineteenth century. Al-Īlmīnī however limits his focus to a single district and while he too seeks to make known the high level of erudition and Islamic learning of his district's *‘ulamā*, another of his goals is to provide an exhaustive history of the district's religious figures. As a result, al-Īlmīnī's account of Novouzensk district's *‘ulamā* is by no means an idealized one, and he presents us with a highly informative series of profiles of individual *imāms* in which he discusses their origins and education, the process of their selection, and in a few cases, of their dismissal as well, their duties and activities, and their relations with the community at large. The *Tawārīkh-i Āltī Ātā* provides us with what is certainly the most complete picture available of the life of the main pillar of the Volga-Ural *‘ulamā*, the village *imām*.

<sup>49</sup> Koblov, *O magometanskikh mullakh*, 12.

<sup>50</sup> Koblov, *O magometanskikh mullakh*, 13.

<sup>51</sup> Koblov, *O magometanskikh mullakh*, 11.

Al-Īlmīnī provides considerable information on 59 *imāms* who were active in Novouzensk district between around 1800 and 1910. He discusses an additional six *imāms* who administered neighboring jurisdictions in Nikolaevsk district, Ural'sk province, Saratov province, and in the Kazakh Inner Horde. Al-Īlmīnī based his account on oral sources and personal reminiscences, and his data for the *imāms* of Novouzensk district is probably not completely exhaustive. Nevertheless, there is no reason to doubt that the authors exhausted his sources and that his account of the *imāms* of Novouzensk district is fairly complete, especially for the latter part of the nineteenth century. In any case, his account is certainly the most detailed survey of village *imāms* in any district of imperial Russia known up to now. The only comparable published work is Riḍā'addīn Fakhraddīn ūghlī's history of Qarghalī (Seitovskii Posad), where he lists the eighty *imāms* who administered that settlements nine mosques between 1741 and 1897. However, Fakhraddīn ūghlī's discussion of those *imāms* consists of essentially an annotated list.<sup>52</sup> The *Tawārīkh-i Āltī Ātā* provides a wealth of information on the origins and training of these *imāms*, as well as the details of their selection, activities and their general relations with the community. But perhaps the most enjoyable aspect of reading al-Īlmīnī's account of his fellow *imāms* is his skill and attention in depicting their personalities and their very human qualities and failings.

Typically one *imām* served a single *maḥalla* and it seems that only those *imāms* who administered a *maḥalla* with a mosque were formally registered with the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly and the provincial authorities as an *ukaznyi mulla*. Nevertheless Muslim communities that lacked mosques were also served by *imāms* who would hold Friday prayers and administer the feasts in private homes. This was the case in the town of Novouzensk from about 1840 until a mosque was built there in 1895, as well as in the merchant settlement of Aleksandrov Gai. The latter settlement had a series of four *imāms* between 1841 and 1910, including Aḥmad-Şafā Muḥammad-Fātiḥ ūghlī, but no mosque.<sup>53</sup> In Novouzensk the first leader of the congregation was Ḥamīd Mirzā Yīnīkeyef (Enikeev), a member of the Muslim gentry and of the *Žemskaja Uprava*, who also “would administer the spiritual

<sup>52</sup> Fakhraddīn ūghlī, *Sa'īd*, passim.

<sup>53</sup> TAA fols. 102b–103b.

matters of the Muslims in the city.”<sup>54</sup> However al-Īlmīnī notes that the merchants who made up the Muslim population were heedless in religious affairs and that in effect there was no *imām* until the arrival of Iḥsān Mullā, a merchant from the village of Musa in Saratov province’s Kuznetsk district.<sup>55</sup>

In *maḥallas* with mosques it was not uncommon for there to be two *imāms*, with the second *imām* being termed a *sharīk* (partner). This was the case in three *maḥallas* in Novouzensk district, the First and Second in Ilmin, and the First in Iske Özen. Often the *sharīk* was the junior *imām*, but nonetheless he too possessed an *ukaz*, and was formally constituted as one of the *maḥalla*’s *imāms*. Usually the *imām* or the congregation would name the *imām*’s son as his *sharīk*, as was the case in Ilmin where Mullā Maḥmūd served as *sharīk* to his father Abū Bakr Ibrāhīm ūghlī, and succeeded him as *imām* in that *maḥalla*.<sup>56</sup> In Ilmin’s First *maḥalla* Muḥammad served as *sharīk* to his father Muḥammad-Fāṭiḥ, reportedly by request of the *maḥalla*.<sup>57</sup> In Iske Özen’s First *maḥalla* however, the *imām*, a certain ‘Abdaljalīl, nicknamed Būrān Mullā (i.e., stormy Mullā) was often in rather sharp opposition to his *sharīks*:

This *maḥalla*’s Mullā ‘Aynaddīn ‘Abdalghafūr ūghlī was known as Qūtūqū Mullāsī, and he was the *sharīk* to the above-mentioned [Būrān Mullā]. This Mullā ‘Aynaddīn was good tempered and had a mellifluous voice, and while reciting the Qur’ān he made a rhythmic sound like the playing of music. But the stormy one and the agreeable one were not able to coexist. They would hold counsels, and fights and altercations would take place. The musical *imām* remained, and although [at first] they would harmoniously carry out the Friday prayers together, with time they carried out the Friday prayers in different places. The tyrannical were on Mullā Būrān’s side, and the devout were on Mullā ‘Aynaddīn’s side. They remained silent, and the tyrannical ones remained silent, and they had nothing to do with one another. Therefore, Mullā Būrān’s activities were accepted.<sup>58</sup>

After the death of this ‘Aynaddīn Mullā Būrān Mullā was able to choose his own *sharīk*:

<sup>54</sup> TAA fol. 95b.

<sup>55</sup> TAA fol. 96b.

<sup>56</sup> TAA fols. 67a, 68b.

<sup>57</sup> TAA fol. 43b.

<sup>58</sup> TAA fol. 83a.

Finally, with the death of Mullā ‘Aynaddīn, Būrān Mullā remained alone, and Būrān Mullā was still youthful. However, let there be thanks, his sole daughter reached maturity and because when he had studied under the *ḥaḍrat* in Zimmicha and had become his son-in-law, he would often go to Zimmicha, and he would also get along well with the *shāgirds*. At that time a *shāgird* from Āltī Ātā named Ḥusnaddīn Mawlūd ūghlī gave his heart to him, and he planned to give his daughter to him [Ḥusnaddīn] and declared him his *sharīk*. This one did not refuse, and accepted. He brought this *shāgird*, gave him his daughter, and got a *prigovor* of partnership, and he received a license.<sup>59</sup>

With time this Ḥusnaddīn died, and this time the *maḥalla* chose the *sharīk*:

While he was alone, his raging continued, and while he was bad within the community, he had his good side too. Old Būrān would not accept advice and had disputes. At that time ‘Azīzallāh was without a position. The community consulted and said “Come, let’s make ‘Azīzallāh *sharīk*. Let Būrān rage.” They met and placed the matter before ‘Umar Ḥājīī. He too saw reason, because ‘Azīzallāh Mullā was ‘Umar Ḥājīī’s son-in-law. After this he received a *prigovor* and went to work. Būrān Mullā placed himself in opposition, and responded with a complaint, and [the matter] was drawn out for several years.<sup>60</sup>

In time however, the two *imāms* were able to reach a compromise, and in 1910 were jointly administering the congregation.

#### *The training and education of imāms*

The *imāms* in Novouzensk were for the most part selected from within their communities. Out of the fifty-nine, twenty-six were actually from one of the villages of Novouzensk district. In addition, sixteen were from either neighboring regions, such as Nikolaevsk district, or from the “home” villages of Penza and Saratov provinces. The latter figure includes *imāms* who came to the region together with the original colonists. Eight *imāms* came from altogether different provinces, including four from Kazan province, two from Ufa province, and one each from Ural’sk and Astrakhan provinces. In addition to these, there were six *imāms* whose place of origin is unknown or not provided. In ethnic terms, forty-three *imāms*, a large majority, were from

<sup>59</sup> TAA fol. 83ab.

<sup>60</sup> TAA fol. 85a.

Mishar areas. Four *imāms* were apparently Kazan Tatars, and two were Bashkirs.<sup>61</sup>

*Imāms* were the most educated members of the community, and to a degree an *imām's* authority and reputation depended on his education. The vast majority of Novouzensk district's *imāms* were educated in the Volga-Ural region. Only three *imāms* were reportedly educated outside of the Volga-Ural region. Two of these, 'Abdaṣṣamād Burhānaddīn ūghlī, *imām* of Iske Özen's Fourth Mosque, and 'Alī Ḥamīdallāh ūghlī Tōqtārof, *imām* of Iske Özen's Fifth Mosque, both studied in Bukhara, with the latter one spending fourteen years there, from 1880–1894. Certainly the most well traveled 'ālīm from Novouzensk district was Muḥyiddīn Ḥājji Ḥasan ūghlī, who was *imām* to Altī Ata's First *maḥalla* from around 1817 until 1848. Muḥyiddīn studied in a number of well known *madrasas* in Orenburg and Qishqar<sup>62</sup> at the end of the eighteenth century and he subsequently studied in Syria, Egypt and Istanbul.<sup>63</sup>

Every *imām* received at least some training in the Volga-Ural region, and most of them were educated somewhere outside of the Novouzensk region. Scholars from Novouzensk district studied in many of the best-known centers of Islamic education in imperial Russia. The single most popular *madrasa* for Novouzensk district's *imāms* was that of 'Abdannaṣīr b. 'Abdassalām az-Zīmnichawī, who lived in the village of Zimnichä (Zimnitsa) in Saratov province's Khvalynsk district. Four *imāms* reportedly studied with him, including Khalīl Muḥyiddīn ūghlī, who succeeded his father as *imām* of Altī Ata's Fifth Mosque in 1848. As we have seen above, one of these *shāgirds*, 'Abdaljalīl 'Abdalkarīm ūghlī, but known as Būrān Mullā, even married the half-sister of 'Abdannaṣīr, thereby becoming his brother-in-law. Another *imām*, 'Abdarrashīd Aḥmad-Ṣafā ūghlī of Ilmin's Fourth Mosque, studied under an unnamed *khatīfa* of 'Abdannaṣīr az-Zīmnichawī in

<sup>61</sup> Idrisov et al. provide some biographical data on fifteen *imāms* who held positions in southern Nizhnii Novgorod province between 1900 and 1916. Of these it appears that most were local, although one was a Bashkir, and thus had come to the region from elsewhere; cf. Idrisov et al. *Iz istorii*, 72–73.

<sup>62</sup> This figure was also known as 'Abdalfayḍ Ḥadrat, who was active in the second half of the eighteenth century in the village of Qishqar, where he was buried; cf. Amirkhān ūghlī, *Tawārīkh-i bulghāriya*, 55.

<sup>63</sup> Idrisov et al. found that most of the *imāms* in their sample from Nizhnii Novgorod province were educated in the local *madrasas* in the southern part of that province, however two of these *imāms* were educated in Kazan; cf. Idrisov et al. *Iz istorii*, 72–73.

the same village.<sup>64</sup> Published sources provide little information on ‘Abdannaṣīr b. ‘Abdassalām az-Zīmnichawī. Riḍā’addīn Fakhraddīn ūghlī lists him among the *shāgirds* of ‘Abbās b. ‘Abdarrāfi‘ b. Yūnus, who died in 1838 and resided in the village of Musa in Saratov province’s Khvalynsk district.<sup>65</sup> ‘Abdannaṣīr’s dates can only be approximated, but since Khalīl Muḥyiddīn ūghlī returned from his studies before 1848, we can conclude that ‘Abdannaṣīr was active already during the first half of the nineteenth century.

The single most popular destination for the future *imāms* of Novouzensk district was the city of Kazan, where twelve *imāms* reportedly studied. Already during the first half of the nineteenth century the *imām* of Ilmin’s Second Mosque, ‘Abdalḥakīm Bāybīk ūghlī studied in that city with Dāmullā Muḥammad-Karīm (d. 1865/66),<sup>66</sup> after having studied in Saratov province with ‘Abbās b. ‘Abdarrāfi‘ in the village of Musa (Moseevka) and ‘Abbās’ student ‘Abdannaṣīr b. ‘Abdassalām az-Zīmnichawī. Later in the second half of the nineteenth century two other *imāms*, Ni‘matallāh Muḥammad-Siddīq ūghlī of Altī Ata’s First Mosque, and ‘Ubaydallāh Temīrbūlāṭ ūghlī of Ilmin’s Third Mosque studied under Šilāhaddīn b. Iṣḥāq (b. 1842/43), who served as *imām* in the Sixth Mosque in Kazan’s Yānga Bistā district (Novaia Tatarskaia Sloboda).<sup>67</sup> Other *imāms* studied in the same mosque in Yānga Bistā district under Ḥusnaddīn b. ‘Umar, who became *imām* there in 1837, as well as under a later *imām* ‘Abdalqayyūm.<sup>68</sup> One *imām*, Abū Bakr Ibrāhīm ūghlī, who resided in both Ilmin and Altī Ata, reportedly studied under Shihābaddīn Marjānī (1819–1889).<sup>69</sup>

Five *imāms* studied in the *madrasas* of Qarḡhalī and Orenburg. Already in the eighteenth century Muḥyiddīn was studying in Orenburg

<sup>64</sup> Al-Īlmīnī does mention another *mudarris* in Zimnicha named Jalīladdīn Ḥaḍrat, who taught Khalīl Muḥyiddīn ūghlī’s grandson, a certain Aḥmad Iṣḥāq ūghlī; perhaps this Jalīladdīn is the same *khalīfa* of Abdannaṣīr az-Zīmnichawī.

<sup>65</sup> Fakhraddīn ūghlī *Āthār* I (6), 191.

<sup>66</sup> On this figure cf. Fakhraddīn ūghlī, *Āthār* II (13), #397, 410–412. One of this better-known students was the Sufi poet Shamsaddīn Zakī; cf. also Amīrkhān ūghlī, *Tawārikh-i Bulghāriya*, 79.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Amīrkhān ūghlī, *Tawārikh-i Bulghāriya*, 80; Fakhraddīn ūghlī, *Āthār* II (13), 408.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Amīrkhān ūghlī, *Tawārikh-i Bulghāriya*, 77; Muḥammad Murād ar-Ramzī, *Talfīq al-akḥbār wa-talqīh al-āthār fī waqā’i‘ Qazān wa-Bulghār wa-mulūk at-Tatār* II, (Orenburg, 1908), 482.

<sup>69</sup> TAA fol. 41b.

and Qarghalī with a number of well known figures, including Walīdīn b. Ḥasan al-Baghdādī (Ḥājī Baghdādī) (1755/56–1831/32), the *imām* of Qarghalī's Eighth Mosque.<sup>70</sup> By the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries Qarghalī again became a popular destination. Two *imāms* studied in Qarghalī under Ishāq b. Maḥmūd al-Qārgḥālī, an *imām* and *mudarris* in Qarghalī's First Mosque, who died around 1890. This figure was especially renowned for training many *imāms*.<sup>71</sup> The *madrasa* of Khayrallāh Makhdūm b. 'Abdarrāḥmān (Gabdrakhmanov) (1866–1915), under whom three *imāms* from Novouzensk district studied, was especially popular. Khayrallāh followed Ishāq al-Qārgḥālī as *imām* of Qarghalī's first Mosque around 1893. He had studied under the teachers Fātiḥ b. 'Aynaddīn and Mukhliṣallāh b. Maqṣūd al-Machkarawī, and was reputed to be one of the most erudite of all teachers in Qarghalī. Riḍā'addīn Fakhraddīn ūghlī also relates that Khayrallāh was an important source for his own history of Qarghalī.<sup>72</sup>

In addition to these fairly well known locations, the *imāms* of Novouzensk district studied in a number of places in the Volga-Ural region, including Penza, Bigi (Bigevo), and Tatarskaia Pendel'ka in Saratov province, Sterlibashevo, Urbaghar, in Kazan province's Chistopol' district.<sup>73</sup>

Most *imāms* received at least part of their training in Novouzensk district, especially in the villages of Iske Özen and Safarqa where the *madrasas* and teachers were rather renowned, at least locally. Yet only three *imāms* are said to have been entirely educated in Novouzensk district, including both of the authors of the *Tawārīkh-i Āltī Ātā*, Muḥammad-Fātiḥ al-Īlmīnī and his son Muḥammad. Muḥammad was educated by his father and Muḥammad-Fātiḥ himself was trained in Altī Ata with Kamāladdīn Isfandiyār ūghlī, the *imām* of the First Mosque, who himself studied in Iske Urga Aghar in Kazan province's Chistopol' district under a certain Fakhraddīn. However, another of Muḥammad-Fātiḥ's sons, Aḥmad-Ṣafā, who served as *imām* in Aleksandrov Gai, studied in Qarghalī with Ishāq b. Maḥmūd. The

<sup>70</sup> On this influential figure cf. Fakhraddīn ūghlī, *Āthār* I (6), 272–275; Fakhraddīn ūghlī, *Sa'īd*, 30.

<sup>71</sup> Fakhraddīn ūghlī, *Sa'īd*, 18.

<sup>72</sup> Farkhshatov, *Narodnoe obrazovanie v Bashkiriī*, 61; Fakhraddīn ūghlī, *Sa'īd*, 18.

<sup>73</sup> This is presumably a reference to Iske Urga Aghar. I have been unable to determine the Russian name for this village.

other *imām* was ‘Abdal‘azīz Qūrmāy ūghlī of Ilmin’s Third Mosque. He reportedly served twenty years as *imām* and studied in Iske Ōzen in ‘Abdalkarīm’s prominent *madrasa*. Indeed, it is plausible that one of al-Īlmīnī’s motives for having written the history was to demonstrate to readers that Novouzensk district could on its own produce very well-educated and conscientious *imāms*, which his manuscript certainly demonstrates.

### *Selection and licenses*

The selection of an *imām* typically involved the entire community. Already before the creation of the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly *imāms* were elected by their communities and this arrangement remained in effect throughout the imperial period.<sup>74</sup> The selection of an *imām* in both the Orenburg and Tauride Muslim Spiritual Assemblies included two separate processes.<sup>75</sup> The first was the selection of an individual by the community and the second was the ratification of that selection by the province’s civil authorities and then by the religious authorities in Ufa. Let us first examine the official aspects of *imām* selection in imperial Russia.

To obtain official approval for its *imām* from the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly and from the provincial authorities, the community was required to file a petition along with a *prigovor* (that is, a “confirmation”) attesting to the choice of the *imām*. A *prigovor* was a document signed by more than two-thirds of the male heads of households of a *maḥalla* confirming a collective decision of the *maḥalla*. The *prigovor* was signed by these heads of households in the presence of the township *starshina* and the village *starosta* (headman). The *prigovor* was attached to a form written in both Russian and Tatar on which the petition was written. The form affirmed the following: 1) the number of male heads of households according to the latest census, 2) that the *maḥalla* had a single mosque, 3) the religious figures associated with the

<sup>74</sup> N. Firsov, *Inorodcheskoe naselenie prezhiago Kazanskago tsarstva v Novoi Rossii do 1762 goda*, (Kazan, 1869), 176.

<sup>75</sup> For a discussion of *imām* selection among Polish-Lithuanian Muslims, who were under the authority of the Tauride Muslim Spiritual Assembly, cf. Tamara Bairauskaitė, “Politische Integration und religiöse Eigenständigkeit der litauischen Tataren in 19. Jahrhundert,” *Muslim Culture in Russia and Central Asia from the 18th to the Early 20th Centuries. Vol. 2: Inter-Regional and Inter-Ethnic Relations* Anke von Kügelgen, Michael Kemper, Allen J. Frank (eds.), (Berlin, 1998), 320–325.

mosque, e.g. *imāms*, *mu'adhdhins* and *khaṭībs*, 4) the reason for the vacancy of the position of *imām*, 5) the number of heads of households eligible to vote, 6) the number of heads of households who signed the *prigovor*, i.e. at least two-thirds of the total, 7) the name of the person they have selected, 8) that the congregation can afford to support its mosque and its religious figures. Furthermore the form had to assert that he was literate, that he had no outstanding debts, tax liabilities, or fines, and that the candidate was of sound moral character and conduct. In addition to the *prigovor*, the *starosta* and headman, and the township scribe had to sign the petition.<sup>76</sup> Idrisov et al. describe the same procedure for the Muslim communities of Nizhnii Novgorod province. However these authors note that the confirmation process was the responsibility of the provincial authorities, and that the approval from the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly was actually the preliminary part of the process. In addition to the *prigovor* mentioned above, the prospective *imām* also needed an attestation from the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly that the candidate possessed sufficient knowledge of the Islamic religion to fulfill his duties, although this attestation alone did not give the candidate the right to fulfill his duties until he obtained approval from the civil authorities. The last requirement, which only emerged late in the nineteenth century, was that the candidate pass an examination demonstrating a sufficient knowledge of the Russian language. However, the latter examination was simple and often was strictly *pro forma*.<sup>77</sup> The procedure in Nizhnii Novgorod province closely matches the procedure that al-Īlmīnī describes in Novouzensk district; al-Īlmīnī relates that on several occasions that a prospective *imām* was required to go first to Ufa, and then to the city Samara, where he would officially receive his *ukaz*. Al-Īlmīnī makes no mention of a Russian examination for *imāms*, and it appears that at least in Samara province (a province with one of the largest Muslim populations in the Volga-Ural region), the exam was largely a *pro forma* affair.

<sup>76</sup> A copy of the Russian version of such a petition, filed by a Bashkir community in 1877, is included in the appendices of Muḥammad-Salīm Umetbaev's history of the Spiritual assembly; cf. his *Din-i muḥammadiyaning Ūrinbūrḥskī dūkhāvnūy şubrānya mahkamasining yūzyıllıq bayrāmı ham ol qarında bōlghān amirlarning atchōt yūzından*, (Orenburg, 1912), 67–68; a facsimile of the Tatar text of a *prigovor* from 1821 for the village of Kar'evo in Perm' province was recently published; cf. Nājip Nākkash and Fāyzelkhak İslayev, "Mulla saylaw tamgalari," *Gasirlar avazi/Ekho vekov*, 1/2 1998, 108–113.

<sup>77</sup> Idrisov et al. *Iz istorii*, 53; Koblov, *O magometanskikh mullakh*, 5.

For Muslim Cossacks the appointment of an *imām* could be somewhat more complex. A recent article based on Russian archival sources by the Omsk scholar S. M. Andreev, provides some details describing how two communities of Muslim Siberian Cossacks near the city of Petropavlovsk selected their *imām* in the 1850's. In 1852 the Siberian Cossack settlement of Stanovskaia Stanitsa petitioned the commander of the Fourth Siberian Cossack Regiment, to which they were registered, to grant them permission to elect the Cossack Abdulvalit Siniukaev (according to the Russian spelling) to be their "mulla" (that is, *imām*) to their mosque and they asked that he be exempt from military service. The commander supported the petition and forwarded it to the Cossack Host's administration, noting that even though this community was small, they did have a need for an *imām*. The settlement of Imantavskaia, which was registered to the First Regiment, filed a similar petition the same year.

The Cossack authorities deferred a decision to the Department of Military Settlements (*Departament Voennykh Poselenii*), which passed a general law to address the issue of the selection of *imāms* for Muslim Siberian Cossack communities, since a similar request for selecting an *imām* had also been made by Muslim Cossacks in the Tobol'sk region. The new law appears to have been based on the general statutes concerning the selection of *imāms* for Russia's Muslims as a whole, while addressing the peculiarities of the Cossack administration. In this law, which was promulgated in March of 1853, Cossack and non-Cossack Muslims in a settlement with not less than 200 male residents could nominate individuals for the post of *imām*. The election had to take place before the regimental administration, and the residents had to present a "confirmation" (*prigovor*) signed by two-thirds of the settlements Muslim male population. The *prigovor* had to be confirmed by the Governor of Western Siberia, or if the nominee was a Cossack, by the commander of the Detached Cossack Corps (*Otdel'nyi Sibirskii Korpus*). In addition, the candidate had to also be confirmed by Orenburg Spiritual Assembly as being qualified to serve as *imām*. However, the law also explicitly stated its apprehension of the fanaticism of *imāms*, especially in frontier areas with large Muslim populations, such as the Kazakh steppe, and they sought to deny these rather small and far-flung communities their *imāms* and mosques by registering them to already existing *mahallas*, such as those in Petropavlovsk. Yet despite this law, in 1856 the Cossacks of Imantavskaia were allowed to select an *imām*, and they selected

the Cossack M. Zaitov. In May of the following year he passed the examination before the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly, and was finally confirmed.<sup>78</sup>

In the vast majority of cases where the Russian bureaucracy examined *imāms* for rural communities, it appears that these were rather routine matters, at least in bureaucratic terms. However in some instances either the civil authorities, as in the Siberian situation discussed above, or the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly, would take an active interest in a case. One such case is that of the city of Nizhnii Novgorod's "Fair Mosque", which was founded in 1817, at the same time the Fair was founded. The mosque was attended by many wealthy merchants from Russia, Central Asia, Turkey, Iran, and the Caucasus who were doing business in the city. Unlike small village mosques, the leadership of this mosque were placed in a position of empire-wide economic and political influence. Before 1855 the personnel for the mosque had been primarily from Kazan province. Until that time the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly was more attentive to the requests of merchants from outside the region, and in 1847 a petition of 108 merchants to the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly to appoint a certain Gizzetulla Abdulvakhitov Devlekamov [sic] of Kasimov. As *co-imām* they requested Baimurat Mukhariamov Adamov<sup>79</sup> of Kazan and as *mu'adhdhin* they requested a certain Kamaletdin Shamsutdinov from a village in Kazan province. All these figures had attended the Fair and had impressed the petitioners by fulfilling the positions of *imām* and *mu'adhdhin*. Upon receiving the request, the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly also informed the Military Governor of Nizhnii Novgorod, Major General Prince Mikhail Aleksandrovich Urusov. Thanking Devlekamov for his services, the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly nevertheless did not approve of his candidacy. Instead in 1848 they sent their own candidates, Khisamutdin Abdulkarimov of Sterlitamak district in Ufa province, and Iskander Makliutov<sup>80</sup> of Kasimov, and in effect overruled the request of the *maḥalla*, except

<sup>78</sup> Andreev, "Kazaki-musul'mane," 6-7.

<sup>79</sup> This is a reference to Bāymurād b. Muḥarram al-Mangārī al-Qazānī (d. 1849), who served as *imām* in Kazan's Iske Tash Mosque; cf. Marjānī, *Mustafād al-akhbār* II, 102-103.

<sup>80</sup> This is apparently a reference to Iskandar b. Maqṣūd al-Kirmānī. The biographical sources, however, make no mention of his having been *imām* in Nizhnii Novgorod. According to Shihābaddīn Marjānī, Iskandar served as *imām* in the Siberian city of Petropavlovsk; cf. Marjānī, *Mustafād al-akhbār* II, 272.

that they did approve of Kamaletdin Shamsutdinov as *mu'adhdhin*, but they also sent Khabibulla Abdullin of Kazan province and Iunus Kantemir of Sterlitamak district as additional *mu'adhdhins*. Writing to the Governor of Nizhnii Novgorod, the Mufti 'Abdalwāhid b. Sulaymān (Suleimanov) stressed his choices were trustworthy and well-behaved, but added that the main purpose of sending them there was for their prayers for the health and well-being of the Imperial Family, in other words, because of their loyalty. After 1855 the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly no longer approved *imāms* for the Fair Mosque from outside the province, presumably as a result of the pressure of other Muslims who sought to limit the influence of the Kazanis. The Kazani *'ulamā* in Nizhnii Novgorod were strongly opposed to the new arrangement, and wanted to return to the old system of having the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly appoint the *imām* itself, presumably because local Muslims were more numerous than the Kazanis they would be able to elect one of their own. The Orenburg Spiritual Assembly appealed to the Ministry of Internal Affairs on the issue, but the Ministry ruled against the Kazanis. In all likelihood the Kazan *'ulamā*, having a truly imperial influence and presence, did not want to relinquish their control over either the influential Fair Mosque, or its congregation of foreign Muslims with their wealth and foreign contacts. At the same time, Idrisov et al. argue that the imperial authorities probably did not want to grant religious leadership over Muslims to the Kazan *'ulamā*, or even to the Middle Volga region, since the religious centers for Muslims were Ufa and Orenburg.<sup>81</sup>

While the published sources, limited as they are, reveal rather clearly the specifics of gaining official recognition, they tell us little about how a *maḥalla* would select its *imāms*, and what criteria were used, besides the attestations addressing the candidate's moral qualifications, what connection *imāms* had to the community before being selected, and what would happen when a *maḥalla* was divided over who should become *imām*. Knowledge of such details are crucial for understanding Muslim religious life in the Volga-Ural region, and we are fortunate that the *Tawārīkh-i Ālīi Ātā* contains such details in great abundance.

Although in principle an *imām* had to be elected by two-thirds of the community, in reality the election was rarely competitive. Typically,

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<sup>81</sup> Idrisov et al. *Iz istorii*, 24–27.

several names may have been brought up in discussions, but only after the community had reached a decision would it begin to compile a *prigovor*. Judging from the data for Novouzensk district, it was very rare for there to be simultaneously two candidates for an imamship. With respect to Kazan province, Ia. Koblov notes that at the beginning of the twentieth century there were a shortage of posts for *madrassa* graduates seeking to serve as *imāms*. Many young scholars would go to villages where a vacancy had appeared to solicit an appointment from the congregation. These figures would feast the villagers, spending substantial amounts of money.<sup>82</sup> Typically, in Novouzensk district, *imāms* succeeded one another according to two basic, and occasionally overlapping, patterns. The first pattern was the hereditary succession, where an *imām* would be succeeded by a relative, usually by a son, but occasionally by a grandson, son-in-law, or by a more distant relative. The second pattern, and the more common of the two, was characterized by an *imām* being nominated by a wealthy notable. In some cases the *imām* would be related to the notable, being most commonly a son or a son-in-law, but just as often there was no kinship relation between the notable and the *imām* being nominated.

The pattern of hereditary succession was fairly common throughout the Volga-Ural region, and, as in Novouzensk district, depended both on the character of the individual *maḥalla* and the prestige and authority of the *imām*'s family. A noteworthy example includes Qarghalī's Second Mosque, where four of the six *imāms* following Ūzbāk b. Subḥānqul (d. 1820/21) included two of his sons, one grandson, and one great-grandson.<sup>83</sup> In Kazan's Sixth Mosque we see primarily two families holding the position of *imām* over the nineteenth century. An early *imām*, the prominent Sufi and scholar Faḍlallāh b. Sayfaddīn, who served as *imām* from 1792 until 1815, was succeeded by another *imām*, Amīrkhān b. 'Abdalmannān aṭ-Ṭālqīshī, who held the position from 1815 until his death in 1828. In that year Amīrkhān was succeeded by Faḍlallāh's son Muḥammad-Wafā, who held the position briefly. He was followed by one of Amīrkhān's students, Šibghatallāh al-Qarghālī. In 1848 Šibghatallāh was succeeded by Amīrkhān's son Ḥusayn (1815/16–1893), who was to become a

<sup>82</sup> Koblov, *O magometanskikh mullakh*, 6.

<sup>83</sup> Fakhraddīn ūghlī, *Sa'īd*, 19–20.

prominent historian, and in 1875 Ḥusayn retired, and his son Zārīf succeeded him.<sup>84</sup>

In Novouzensk district the hereditary pattern of succession was consistently maintained in a number of *maḥallas*, notably in all five of Altī Ata's *maḥallas*, and in Safarqa's Second *maḥalla*. Why the succession of *imāms* was so consistently hereditary in Altī Ata is unclear, but it appears to have resulted in the *ʿulamā*, and particularly the *imāms*, having greater influence than in neighboring villages. It is perhaps noteworthy that Muḥammad-Fāṭiḥ al-Īlmīnī, whose history is of course a history of *imāms*, mosques, and *madrasas*, was himself from the village of Altī Ata and was educated by its *imāms*.

In speaking of hereditary *imām* succession, it should not be assumed that such an arrangement was based on any specific legal precedent, right, or even tradition. Rather, it appears to have resulted from a constellation of circumstances, and was perhaps most attributable to the moral and religious stature of the *imām* and his family, the familiarity of the community with these individuals, and the relationship of the *imām* to the local notables. In fact, only in two *maḥallas* did the succession from father to son remain unbroken. The first was in Altī Ata's Second *maḥalla* where the first *imām*, Ayyūb ʿUmar ūghlī, was succeeded by his son Ibrāhīm, who was still *imām* in 1910.<sup>85</sup> In the same village's Fourth *maḥalla* the first *imām* was ʿAbdalwalī. This figure, we are told, consulted first with his other sons about whom to select as his successor, and they agreed on his son Wildān. Mullā Wildān in turn was succeeded by his son Yaʿqūb, who received his *ukaz* in 1909, but in his case it was the *maḥalla* who selected him, rather than his father.<sup>86</sup>

In the other cases, the succession of *imāms* did not exclusively pass from father to son, but nevertheless remained within the same family. In Altī Ata's Third *maḥalla* the original *imām* was a certain Ḥubbī Mullā who was succeeded by his two sons, first the elder son Ḥusnaddīn, and then the younger one Naṣraddīn, who became *imām* in 1866 or 1867. After Naṣraddīn's death, the *maḥalla* chose his son,

<sup>84</sup> Ḥusayn Amīrkhān ūghlī, *Tawārīkh-i Bulghārīya*, 74–76; cf. also Kemper, *Sufis und Gelehrte*, 56–57; cf. also Ravil Āmirkhan, "Qazanli Amirkhanlar," *Qazan utlari* 1997 (10), 137–155.

<sup>85</sup> TAA fol. 16b.

<sup>86</sup> TAA fols. 22b–23a.

Sharafaddīn, who was still *imām* in 1910.<sup>87</sup> In Safarqa's Second *maḥalla* a local notable named Qudur Bābā was able to appoint his own son Ibrāhīm as *imām* after splitting off the *maḥalla* from a larger one. After Ibrāhīm retired from his position to follow the Sufi path, he was able to have his son Muḥammad selected to be his successor. After the death of Muḥammad the *maḥalla* selected a certain Mullā Yūsuf Kamāladdīn ūghlī, who on his mother's side was related to the former *imām*.<sup>88</sup>

In Altī Ata's First *maḥalla* the position of *imām* was shared between two related families. The first *imām* was a figure named Dīnūsh Mullā, who was from that generation of *imāms* from the early nineteenth century who were not confirmed by either the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly or the provincial authorities. After the death of Dīnūsh Mullā the *maḥalla* chose Isfandiyār, who had just lost his position as *imām* in the village of Qulatqī on the right bank of the Volga in Saratov province. Isfandiyār accepted and after he died in 1835 he was succeeded by his son Kamāladdīn (who was Muḥammad-Fātiḥ al-Īlmīnī's teacher). After Kamāladdīn Isfandiyār ūghlī died in 1881 the *maḥalla* debated who to choose as their next *imām*:

So, [Kamāladdīn] left no male child, only daughters remained and one daughter was married to Mullā Ni'matallāh, the son of the Muḥammad-Şiddīq who was noted in the section on Dīnūsh Mullā. Once, on an odd-numbered day, after the Friday prayers, the *mu'adhdhin* said to the assembly in the [Friday-] sermon, "Oh people, now our Ḥaḍrat has died. May God the Exalted give joy to his soul. Now we are in need of an *imām*. There are *shāgirds* who studied in the village. Whoever it may be we have to make one (of them) our *imām*." After he spoke, the assembly was quiet for a time, and then an elder named Mawlūd Sayyid-Ja'far ūghlī [said], "Look, Ishmurād's son studied and returned." While he said he seemed a good *shāgird*, nobody answered. Although all in all my age was still young at that time, and I was still a boy living with his father, I opened my mouth as if there were few [persons] in the land that had the same authority that I had, [and exclaimed]: "Hey *maḥalla*, I also have something to tell. Look, Mullā Ni'matallāh the son-in-law of the Ḥaḍrat [Isfandiyār], was born and raised in this *maḥalla*, and his disposition and qualities are known to all of you. If he stays with us, it will not be necessary to take someone from there for that position You know he is the great-grandson

<sup>87</sup> TAA fols. 18ab, 20a.

<sup>88</sup> TAA fol. 33ab.

of Old Dīnūsh Mullā” After I had spoken they said, God bless you, it is good. We are all agreed to this.” At that time they left the mosque and gathered next to it, and the scribe took paper and pencil and noted down the names of those who had given their agreement.<sup>89</sup>

Thus, the new *imām* was both the son-in-law of the late Kamāladdīn and, since his mother was the granddaughter of Dīnūsh Mullā, he was also this figure’s great-grandson. By choosing Ni‘matallāh Muḥammad-Şiddīq ūghlī, a figure whose qualities were well known to the *maḥalla*, they also were able to select an *imām* who was related both to the original *imām* and the two generations of *imāms* who followed him.

In another case we have an example of a *maḥalla* deliberately choosing an *imām* who was not a descendant or a relative of preceding *imāms*. In Altı Ata’s Fifth *maḥalla* the first *imām* was Ḥājjī Muḥyiddīn Ḥasan ūghlī, who became *imām* around 1817. He was succeeded in 1848 by his son Khalīl. Khalīl remained *imām* until his death in 1909. Al-İlmīnī writes that he had designated his grandson Aḥmad Ishāq ūghlī to be his successor. When he first wrote his history it appears al-İlmīnī fully expected Aḥmad to succeed his grandfather, but without further elaboration he noted in a supplement added in 1909 or 1910 that the *maḥalla* had instead chosen an *imām* from Ilmin’s Second *maḥalla*, Abū Bakr İbrāhīm ūghlī.<sup>90</sup>

Although in principle the *maḥalla* had the authority to choose the *imām*, in practice the most common manner for a person to become *imām* was through the support of a local notable. On the basis of the available sources we can only speculate how the local notables could influence the rank-and-file members of the *maḥalla*, but it should not be hard to imagine that a combination of wealth, prestige, and authority enabled notables to gain support for their plans and desires. Al-İlmīnī mentions two other villages outside of the district where local notables were able to convince the *maḥalla* to select their own sons as *imāms*. The first case was in the Cossack village of Yalpaqta where the wealthiest Muslim Cossack, a certain Khūjāntāy Bābā who had the mosque built, was also able to have his own son, ‘Aṭā’allāh, named *imām*. In the village of Qulatqī (Staraiia Kulatka), a local headman (*glava*) there, named Mīrzā Ayyūb Sulṭānof, first made Isfāndiyār the village’s *imām*. Later, he sought to replace Isfāndiyār with his own son:

<sup>89</sup> TAA fol. 13ab.

<sup>90</sup> TAA fols. 26b, 28a.

At that time the son of this Ghlāvā Āfāndī, Ḥabībballāh Āfāndī, took learning from this same Isfandiyār. Later he studied in a number of large places such as Kazan, and he returned. Ayyūb Mīrzā sought to appoint his own son [as *imām* of Qulatqī]. One time he invited the people of the *maḥalla* to a feast and requested a *prigovor* from the *maḥalla* for his son. The congregation respected the Chief's suggestion and they all were in agreement. They gave the *prigovor* and intended to establish him as *imām* and were sure in this affair.<sup>91</sup>

In the town of Novouzensk we can see a similar example of a notable replacing an existing *imām* with a relative. In this case a wealthy notable from Ural'sk named 'Aynallāh Ḥājjī was able to convince the *maḥalla* to elect his brother-in-law Kamāladdīn Jamāladdīn ūghlī:

Meanwhile one of the *bāys* from Jāyīq [Ural'sk], the well known *bāy* 'Aynallāh Ḥājjī, spoke among the people of Novouzensk while he was at a feast in Novouzensk. Because it was an old community he noted that progress was evident from all sides. "It would be fine if there were a mosque." When what he had said sank in, this 'Aynallāh Ḥājjī said "If you agree to my estimation, I will build the mosque, when a separation [of the *maḥalla*] with a *prigovor* and a permit is acquired and when a time for building is determined." After he had spoken, Iḥsān Mullā [the acting *imām*] asked the community, and the community agreed and they began gathering a *prigovor* [for the mosque]. The Ḥājjī said "By this agreement I shall build the mosque and you will accept my son-in-law Mullā Kamāladdīn and make him *imām*." Having mentioned the *imām*, the community wondered "Do we hesitate or is it not [indeed] very good? What should we do?" Ḥājjī Āfāndī comforted them, saying "Do not worry about appointing the *imām*," and they put the *prigovor* in effect.<sup>92</sup>

Thus, we can see that although the *maḥalla* already had an *imām*, Iḥsān Mullā, they nevertheless decided to take up 'Aynallāh Ḥājjī on his offer; and while Iḥsān Mullā was active in building the mosque, in the end they made him leave the town and brought in 'Aynallāh Ḥājjī's brother-in-law.<sup>93</sup>

In a number of *maḥallas* the selection of *imāms* was for all intents and purposes dominated by certain notables.<sup>94</sup> This was especially true for *maḥallas* that had been separated off and created as a result

<sup>91</sup> TAA fol. 10a.

<sup>92</sup> TAA fols. 99b–100a.

<sup>93</sup> TAA fol. 101a.

<sup>94</sup> This characteristic is also documented for Nizhnii Novgorod province, and was often the subject of complaints and petitions there; cf. Idrisov et al., *Iz istorii*, 53–55.

of the initiative and expenditures of these notables. This was the case in Ilmin's Fifth *maḥalla*, which, under the leadership of the notable Sākmān Bābā, broke off of the First *maḥalla* whose *imām* was Muḥammad-Fātiḥ al-Īlmīnī. This Sākmān Bābā convinced the members of the *maḥalla* to select a certain 'Alī Tōqtārōf to be *imām*, saying that the latter's connections with wealthy merchants would make it easy for the congregation to build the mosque.<sup>95</sup> In Iske Özen one of the wealthy notables was 'Ilājaddīn Miftāḥaddīn Ḥājī ūghlī, who took a leading role in creating that village's Fifth *maḥalla*. It appears that since 'Ilājaddīn shouldered the entire financial burden for building the mosque, there was no opposition when he selected as *imām* 'Abdassamād Burhānaddīn ūghlī of Kazan, who had been the teacher of 'Ilājaddīn's son. Later this 'Abdassamād would marry 'Ilājaddīn's daughter.<sup>96</sup>

The most detailed account of the role of a notable in the selection of the *imām* appears in the section on Ilmin's Third *maḥalla*. Here two notables played an active role in raising up *imāms* whom they liked and deposing *imāms* with whom they were dissatisfied. The first of these two notables was a certain Khūdāybirdī Zūrbāsh, the *mu'adhdhin* to Ilmin's Third Mosque, who came into conflict with the *imām* 'Abdal'azīz Shāhī Aḥmad ūghlī:

Then, Mullā 'Abdal'azīz *imām* appointed as *mu'adhdhin* this congregation's Muḥammad-Jān 'Abdarrafī ūghlī. He was an intelligent and capable person. But let us not conceal the calamities. Muḥammad-Jān did not become the *mu'adhdhin*. An older person named Khūdāybirdī Tōqtārōf came from 'Ayn Būrā. They called him Zūrbāsh [lit. "Big Head"]. This person received the authorization to the Third Congregation. He had a degree of training and he was a very proud, envious and malfeasant person. Every day he would quarrel and argue with Mullā 'Abdal'azīz. One time Mullā 'Abdal'azīz reproached Zūrbāsh behind his back, calling him 'Izāzil and Iblīs [i.e. Satan].<sup>97</sup>

With time the conflict grew worse, and soon Zūrbāsh was able to force 'Abdal'azīz from his duties as *imām*, and together with a *khālfā* named Dāwūd he began to perform the prayers at the 'Īd holidays in place of the *imām*:

<sup>95</sup> TAA fol. 78b.

<sup>96</sup> TAA fols. 92b–93a.

<sup>97</sup> TAA fol. 70ab.

But this Zūrbāsh persevered in his initial obstinacy and at every meeting and gathering he vexed Mullā ‘Abdal‘azīz, and every day he disputed and slandered him behind his back. Many people repeated what he had said. He made Mullā ‘Abdal‘azīz disappear from sight and he intended to take his place. Once, during a holiday, Dāwūd Mullā and Zūrbāsh went out to read for the holiday. The following song was sung concerning these eloquent people:

Khūdāybirdī and Dāwud performed  
And the people gave permission  
They conducted this holiday  
Our Mullā stayed away and agreed to this

So, at this point, the congregation convened and they made this congregation’s Mullā Muḥammad-Jān ‘Abdarrafi‘ ūghlī the *mu’adhdhin*.<sup>98</sup>

After his dismissal from his post as *mu’adhdhin*, and the circulation of such satiric verse concerning him, Zūrbāsh sought to replace ‘Abdal‘azīz:

But Zūrbāsh persevered in his obstinacy. He still intended to remove Mullā ‘Abdal‘azīz and replace him with another *mullā*. He had heard that there was someone who had studied in the village of Musa in Saratov Province’s Khvalynsk district, and in Kazan’s Yāngā Bistā under Ḥusnaddīn [b. ‘Umar]. He was reportedly learned and as smart as a lawyer. He was known as Bāqī Mullā Shāh-i Mardān ūghlī. His kinsmen made this evident and at every assembly they said this, and gave praise and applause. But other people had information that corresponded to the truth. They said “Khūdāybirdī Āghā, we heard that this person is an extremely unprospering drinker of wine.” And although they would respond to Zūrbāsh, he would persevere in his own version, saying that that story was a lie.<sup>99</sup>

As a result of his efforts, and the support of his kinsmen, Zūrbāsh was able to obtain a *prigovor* for Bāqī Mullā, and the notables angled to be able to engage their daughters in marriage to the new *imām*:

Now, they gave a *prigovor* to Bāqī Mullā and sent word to the village of Musa. In particular, at that time Pūtā Bābāy had a very beautiful daughter named Fāṭima. He intended to give her in marriage and become the Mullā’s father-in-law. Time passed, and one day Bāqī Mullā arrived. By sight he looked to be about sixty-seven years old. He was of average height, open-faced and broad-shouldered. He had dark brown hair and whiskers like those of tsar Aleksandr Nikolaevich

<sup>98</sup> TAA fol. 71a.

<sup>99</sup> TAA fol. 71ab.

[Aleksandr II]. He was of the following sort: he was a dissembler and a hypocrite, but also a witty and eloquent person. At that time they had gathered two hundred rubles and went to Ufa for the examination. Every rich man went to the examination with the hope of giving his daughter in marriage. Soon news came from Samara.<sup>100</sup> [Bāqī Mullā reported] “I lost my money in the hotel room.” Mullā Muḥammad-Jān told the people “I told you first. You didn’t accept it. You’ll see. If you tell those who are interested where the people’s money went there will be friendship on that side and the matter will come to trial.” Zūrbāsh and Sāliḥ and the other tyrants all dissembled; they paid out still more money.<sup>101</sup>

Eventually, Pūtā Bābāy was to be disappointed when Bāqī Mullā chose the daughter of another notable:

Finally, one evening, during a council at the house of Ālmāy Qūrmāy ūghlī, the village notables gathered. . . . This Ālmāy had a lovely wife named Sāliḥa. He also had a very unpleasant daughter named Ḥakīma. At this assembly he offered his daughter [in marriage] to the Mullā. The Mullā considered the assistance of the community, even though he was in love with the daughter of Pūtā. He didn’t see them both in the same way. While he was silent, and remaining in thought, Sāliḥa brought out her daughters ornaments [*āṣmālār* i.e. Mishar women’s chest ornaments made of coins]. It was about one hundred rubles of silver coins. “If you accept her with these, they will stay [with you]” [she said]. After she had said this he thought it over and said “God will decide whether I will choose the daughter of Pūtā or not.” Then, saying “Praise God, it is his sustenance that urges into marriage,” he accepted, and at that gathering committed to the wedding, and he took his gifts and left.<sup>102</sup>

With time Bāqī Mullā still had not received his *ukaz*, and after a while, al-Īlmīnī tells us that “things reached a nadir and they permitted tobacco and the drinking of wine and spirits began to dominate.” Pūtā Bābāy and several other notables who had become tired of Bāqī Mullā’s fecklessness gathered and decided to void Bāqī’s *prigovor* and find a new *imām*. He selected the son of a notable from Qushum.<sup>103</sup> This young man, named ‘Ubaydallāh Temīrbūlāt ūghlī,

<sup>100</sup> Apparently the confirmation of Bāqī Mullā as *imām* involved additional business in the provincial capital of Samara.

<sup>101</sup> TAA fols. 71b–72a.

<sup>102</sup> TAA fol. 72a.

<sup>103</sup> In Russian, Kushumskii Poselok, in Ural’sk province, and the confluence of the Kushum and Ural Rivers.

was studying in Kazan when Pūtā Bābā gave him the *prigovor*. The events of leading to the replacement of the old *imām* were as follows:

However, some of Bāqī Mullā's supporters, such as Šāliḥ, were not part of the *prigovor*, and when it needed to be made official, [Bāqī Mullā's opponents] acted on the matter. They sent the *shāgird* 'Ubaydallāh Temīrbūlāt ūghlī to Ufa, and he took the exam. While he was waiting for the *ukaz*, Mullā Bāqī roused himself and filed a petition saying "Pūtā's *prigovor* is false," and he made such a case. However, even though Bāqī Mullā had wisdom, he had no money, while Pūtā had both wisdom and money. Therefore [Pūtā] sent some money to 'Ubaydallāh; he sent it to Samara, saying "As long as your *ukaz* doesn't come, don't leave Samara," he commanded. "If the money doesn't come, I will send a copy," he ordered. Mullā 'Ubaydallāh himself said "I stayed in Samara thirty-two days. I sent off the *ukaz* [to Pūtā] and boarded a steamship and went home. Bāqī Mullā got off the steamship and raced to Samara. I did not know him and he did not know me," he said. "But since the case was closed, he was unable to do anything and he returned". Also, I heard Pūtā Bābāy say, "By the time I received Mullā 'Ubaydallāh's *ukaz*, I had spent 750 rubles."<sup>104</sup>

#### *Relations with the community*

Al-Īlmīnī's account of the conflicts surrounding the *imāms* and notables in Ilmīn's Third *maḥalla* illustrates well some of the typical details of the *imāms'* relationship with the community. Many, if not most, *imāms* were of local origin, and consequently had deep kinship roots and other connections to the communities they served. *Imāms* from outside the region often established roots in the communities as well, usually as a result of marriages with the daughters of local notables. Moreover we have just seen the important role local notables played in selecting *imāms*. But for all *imāms* their relationship with the community as a whole was crucial not only for maintaining their position, but for their livelihoods as well. As we have seen, at least in principle it was the duty of the *maḥalla* to provide for their *imām*, and in cases where the *maḥalla* as a whole became dissatisfied with their *imām* they could, and occasionally did, replace one *imām* with another.

Generally speaking *imāms* were very influential and prestigious figures in the community, and it was important for pious notables, or for any other members of the community, that their relationship

<sup>104</sup> TAA fols. 73b–74a.

with the *imām* be a good one. Discussing the Siberian *‘ulamā*, I. Iushkov noted that older members of this group were often greatly revered, and were often asked by secular officials, such as *starshinas* and *nachal’niks* to mediate disputes.<sup>105</sup> *Imāms* were occasionally the recipients of the notables’ largess, such as ‘Umar Ayyūb ūghlī, the *imām* of Altī Ata’s Second Mosque, who received gifts of grain from a certain ‘Abdannaṣr ūghlī, reportedly “a person of moderate wealth.”<sup>106</sup> In Safarqa, two brothers known as the Twin Ḥājjīs, Shamsaddīn and Sayfaddīn, the sons of ‘Abdarrahīm, would annually assemble the village’s *‘ulamā*, elders, and notables on their abundant lands and would have a banquet where they would drink kumiss and slaughter livestock.<sup>107</sup>

#### *Financial support of imāms*

*Imāms* in imperial Russia earned their livelihood in a number of ways. Ia. Koblov provides somewhat detailed information for the Volga-Ural region as a whole, which corresponds to some degree with the data we have for Novouzensk district. Koblov notes that the average annual income for a rural *imām* was between 200 and 700 rubles, although urban *imāms* could earn as much as 3,000 rubles a year. The reason for the disparity was partly that villagers often made offerings in-kind to their *imāms*, while urban Muslims made offerings in cash. Muslims typically paid *imāms* for services, but also made offerings on important holidays, as well as an annual tithe (*‘ushr*). The amounts naturally varied, but a rural *imām* could expect ten kopecks for performing the naming ceremony for a newborn (an urban *imām* could expect 50–60). Performing burial rites and funeral prayers for villagers would earn an *imām* 50–60 kopecks. Income received during holidays was more substantial. On the day of ‘Īd al-Fiṭr Muslims were obligated to give the *imām* twenty kopecks. Rural *imāms* would earn between 50 and 100 rubles, in addition to in-kind offerings, while in cities the amount was between 400 and 500 rubles. During Qurbān Bayrāmī a portion of the meat from the slaughtered animal was given to the *imām*, as well as the hide.<sup>108</sup>

<sup>105</sup> Iushkov, *Sibirskie tatary*, 36.

<sup>106</sup> TAA fol. 16a.

<sup>107</sup> TAA fol. 30b.

<sup>108</sup> This custom is also documented among the Bashkirs and Siberian Tatars; cf. Iushkov *Sibirskie tatary*, 49; Baishev, “Derevnia Ziianchurina,” 19.

The cash value of the hides could reach to between 80 and 100 rubles. The *imām* would also receive cash offering at this time, but in smaller measure than for ʿĪd al-Fiṭr.<sup>109</sup>

*Ushr* was a payment in kind collected from the autumn harvest, and could constitute a substantial part of the *imām's* income. Koblov notes that *ushr* was only collected in rural areas, and even then not uniformly. The offering was supposed to amount to a tenth of the harvest, but usually amounted to less than that. But he adds that in Kazan district the *ushr* was paid in grain, and could be substantial. When a parishioner died the *imām* customarily received a portion of his property. Typically the *imām* would receive the person's best suit of clothing, or from a wealthy person's estate, livestock.<sup>110</sup>

Other sources mention two taxes that an *imām* was entitled to receive. The first was *zakāt*, consisting of one fortieth of the household's income, and the other was *ushr*, which corresponded to a tenth of the grain harvest.<sup>111</sup> Al-Īlmīnī does not mention *zakāt*, and he only mentions *ushr* as being provided by wealthy notables for support of the *madrasa* and its instructor.<sup>112</sup> Al-Īlmīnī has relatively little to say about how *imāms* supported themselves materially. Presumably *imāms* from outside of the region were more dependent on their local benefactors than *imāms* with roots and family in the village. For example, when Abū Bakr Ibrāhīm ūghlī came to Ilmin from the town of Bigi in Saratov province and became the *imām* of the First mosque, he married ʿAlīma ʿAbdaljalīl qīzī, the daughter of a local notable. Concerning this notable's largesse we read:

Meanwhile, he married ʿAlīma, the daughter of ʿAbdaljalīl Sayfalmulūk ūghlī, the richest notable of the village. He [ʿAbdaljalīl] honored him and called him Mullā Son-in-Law, bought him land, and put a wooden house over it. Amongst the congregation they prepared building materials and in the necessary quantity everything else that was needed. They put up a wooden gate and nothing was lacking for the property or the house, and he blessed the house in an assembly, and forty sheep were gathered. In cash it would have been about a hundred rubles. [Also] one cow, and there was no end to the items.<sup>113</sup>

<sup>109</sup> Koblov, *O magometanskikh mullakh*, 14–16.

<sup>110</sup> Koblov, *O magometanskikh mullakh*, 16.

<sup>111</sup> M. I. Obukhov, *Mekteby Ufmskoi gubernii*, (Ufa, 1915), 7.

<sup>112</sup> Idrisov et al. state that one of the *imām's* duties was to collect these taxes; cf. *Iz istorii*, 53.

<sup>113</sup> TAA fol. 41b.

‘Ubaydallāh Temīrbūlāṭ ūghlī, the *imām* whom Pūtā Bābāy had brought from Qushum to replace Bāqī Shāh-i Mardān ūghlī in Ilmin’s Fourth *maḥalla* offered him his daughter Ḥalīma and became his chief benefactor:

... he [Pūtā Bābāy] gave his daughter Ḥalīma in marriage to ‘Ubaydallāh Mullā. Across from the mosque he moved a middle-aged person from the lot to a large property, and on that lot he built a wooden house. He built all the structures that were necessary, covered their roofs with boards, and built a gate. Ibrāhīm ‘Ubaydallāh ūghlī, the son-in-law of Pūtā Bābāy, says: “The first year Pūtā Bābāy had five *desiatinas* for the *mullā*, and he sowed wheat on it. The *mullā* didn’t spend a single kopeck. From the five *desiatinas* there were 100 sacks of wheat, or 800 poods, and in the end he stored it in a barn. The next year from seven *desiatinas* there were again 100 sacks of wheat, and again the Mullā didn’t spend a kopeck. It was with the help of the Bābā... Later, every year he received twenty or twenty-five sheep. It was at his [Pūtā’s] expense.<sup>114</sup>

Similarly, ‘Ilājaddīn Bābā, the founder of Iske Özen’s Fifth *maḥalla* married his daughter Karīma to ‘Abdaṣṣamād Burhānaddīn ūghlī, the *imām* he had brought from Kazan. He built for the couple a new house on a lot facing the mosque, and he even established a garden for him.<sup>115</sup>

Al-Īlmīnī gives little information on how *imāms* earned their keep beyond the largess of notables. He tells us that Naṣraddīn Mullā Ḥubbī ūghlī, the *imām* of Altī Ata’s Third Mosque owned a small mill and in summer derived income from that.<sup>116</sup> Other *imāms* grew quite wealthy from specialized skills and training, such as the *imāms* of Altī Ata’s Fifth Mosque, Muḥyiddīn Ḥasan ūghlī and his son Khalīl. These *imāms* were master healers (*sāhib-i nafas*), and Kazakhs, as well as Muslim Cossacks and even some Russians would seek them out. Russians would make offerings of fifty rubles or more to him, but his main wealth came from Kazakhs, who would bring felt, horses, or sheep, and some would even give an eighth of their property.<sup>117</sup> Khalīl amassed considerable wealth in this way. Al-Īlmīnī even mentions one *imām* who became a major landowner, owning a thousand *desiatinas* of land. This figure, the Sufi Maḥmūd ‘Ubaydallāh

<sup>114</sup> TAA fol. 74a.

<sup>115</sup> TAA fol. 93a.

<sup>116</sup> TAA fol. 18b.

<sup>117</sup> TAA fols. 26a, 27b.

ūghlī Akchurin reportedly acquired some of his lands by unethically exploiting the needs of the *maḥalla* during a drought.<sup>118</sup>

However, this sort of action on the part of an *imām* was not common, and in fact al-Īlmīnī condemns it strongly as an action unbecoming the dignity of an *imām*:

... the path of the people of distinction should be the path of decency. During years of drought like those, decency was the feeding the poor abundantly in such times. To take the morsel that was in the hands of the poor was not the path of decency. There are those in fact who mentioned this. In that case it is not generous.<sup>119</sup>

Koblov notes that it was common for *imāms* to supplement their income with other economic activities, including grain cultivation and trade.<sup>120</sup> As we have seen, some *imāms* in Novouzensk district owned substantial amounts of land, while others, such as Abū Bakr Ibrāhīm ūghlī of Ilmin's First Mosque were active merchants.<sup>121</sup>

### *Marriage Patterns*

The marriage patterns of *imāms* are certainly important evidence in helping us determine the place and prestige of the *imām* in village society. Marriages between *imāms* and the daughters of local notables were commonplace, and al-Īlmīnī makes mention of several such unions. As we saw above, the notables in Ilmin's Third *maḥalla* competed with one another to convince the *imām* Bāqī Mullā to accept their daughters in marriage and the *imām's* decision to pass over Pūtā Bābāy's daughter was certainly a cause in Pūtā Bābāy's actions in selecting a new *imām*. Indeed Pūtā was finally able to marry another of his daughters to the *imām* he had selected and had brought from Kazan. The notable Miftāḥaddīn 'Abdarrā'ūf ūghlī of Iske Özen married his daughter Sharīfa to the *imām* of Altī Ata's Fourth Mosque, Wildān 'Abdalwalī ūghlī.<sup>122</sup> 'Abdarrashīd Aḥmad Şafā ūghlī, the *imām* of Ilmin's Fourth Mosque, was married to the granddaughter of 'Abdaljalīl Bāy, one of Ilmin's most prominent notables.<sup>123</sup>

<sup>118</sup> TAA fol. 39ab.

<sup>119</sup> TAA fol. 39b.

<sup>120</sup> Koblov, *O magometanskikh mullakh*, 16–17.

<sup>121</sup> TAA fol. 42ab.

<sup>122</sup> TAA fol. 23a.

<sup>123</sup> TAA fol. 76a.

The *imām* of the city of Novouzensk, Kamāladdīn Jamāladdīn ūghlī, himself married into a family with a long history of marriage connections with *imāms*. As we saw above, he owed his position in large measure to the actions of his brother-in-law, ‘Aynaddīn Ḥājji, who was a wealthy merchant in the city of Ural’sk. There is strong evidence to suggest that ‘Aynaddīn’s father was Muḥammad‘arif b. Ḥājji Shāh-Walī, who appears in a genealogy as resident in Ural’sk and as having an unnamed daughter married to the *imām* in the city of Novouzensk. This genealogy, which traces the descendants of an eighteenth century *imām* in the village of Yortkül, in Kazan province, named Mullā Ja‘far b. Ya‘qūb, lists male descendants, who primarily became *imāms* and merchants, and female descendants, who quite frequently were married to *imāms* in other villages and provinces.<sup>124</sup>

In a number of *maḥallas* the marriage connections between *imāms* and the families of notables became rather complex, and involved successive generations. For example the *imām* of Ilmin’s Second Mosque, ‘Abdalḥakīm Baybīk ūghlī had two daughters, one named ‘Afifa and the other Farīda. He married Farīda to the *imām* of Altī Ata’s Second Mosque, Ibrāhīm Ayyūb ūghlī, and he married ‘Afifa to his successor as *imām* of Ilmin’s Second Mosque, ‘Uthmān Arslān ūghlī. ‘Uthmān suffered an untimely death, and concerning ‘Afifa we read the following:

However, after surviving Mullā ‘Uthmān, this ‘Afifa Khānīm married a well-known person from this congregation named Khōja Iḥsān ‘Abdar-rahmān ūghlī. Since he was someone who was good-natured and lavish with his bounty, before their deaths with all of their own wealth they displayed all of their fine upbringing, and nobody found fault with their deeds. Thus, their fated lives came to an end and both of their pure souls were received in a short time in the Garden of Paradise. ‘Afifa Khānīm was survived by two daughters from Mullā ‘Uthmān. One was named ‘Aynannawāl and the other was named Ḥāsiya. Dāmullā ‘Aṭā‘allāh Ḥaḍrat’s [the *imām* of Safarqa’s First Mosque’s] elder son, Mullā Hādī Āfāndī, married ‘Aynannawāl and they gave the second daughter to Mullā Sharafaddīn Mullā Naṣiraddīn ūghlī, the *imām* of the Third Mosque in Altī Ata.<sup>125</sup>

<sup>124</sup> This genealogy, called the Ūtāk shājārāse, was recently published by Marsel Akhmetzianov; cf. R. R. Salikhov, R. R. Khayrutdinov, and K. M. Nizamutdinov eds., *Ocherki istorii Vysokogorskogo raiona respublikii Tatarstan*, (Kazan, 1999), 98–101.

<sup>125</sup> TAA fol. 66a.

Another rather complicated network of marriages involving the daughter of a notable and a number of *imāms* is evident in the village of Iske Özen. A wealthy landowner named Ḥājjī ‘Umar Ḥasan ūghlī had a daughter named ‘Afifa (not to be confused with the ‘Afifa ‘Abdalḥakīm qīzī just mentioned above), whom ‘Umar married to Sirājaddīn Walīd ūghlī, the *imām* of that village’s Fourth Mosque, popularly known as Sarāy Mullā, and they had a daughter.<sup>126</sup> After Sarāy Mullā passed away ‘Afifa was still young, and eventually married an *imām* named ‘Azīzallāh Aḥmad Shāh ūghlī:

Originally Mullā ‘Azīzallāh came from among the Bashkirs. When he was a *shāgird* in Kazan he came to Ūzīn Ḥaḍrat<sup>127</sup> with the intention of studying Persian. He had a pleasant countenance and a joking voice, and in his time he was skilled in reciting the Qur’ān. During the summertime he would guard the gardens and no one would enter or pass through the gardens. ‘Umar Ḥājjī had a daughter named ‘Afifa, who had survived Sarāy Mullā and who was both young and beautiful. Sometimes she, together with other girls and women, would go to the garden. (But I do not say this in an accusatory manner.) The girl caught the *mullā*’s eye and the *mullā* caught the girl’s eye, and since they seemed a good match, ‘Umar Ḥājjī advised and gave this girl to the *shāgird*. When the *imām* of the Third *maḥalla*, Raḥmatallāh Mullā, died, he [‘Azīzallāh] became *imām* of the Third Mosque. And he lived thus for several years. However, his native land was the village of Zaypa near Isterlībāsh,<sup>128</sup> where his parents lived; and because they were pained and often complained, he forsook the mosque, went there, and they made him *imām*. ‘Umar Ḥājjī’s daughter didn’t go [with him].<sup>129</sup>

Eventually ‘Azīzallāh returned from Zaypa and was reinstated as *imām*, but died soon after. At this point the *imām* of the village’s Fourth *maḥalla* Muṭī‘allāh Ni‘matallāh ūghlī then married ‘Afifa and became a son-in-law to ‘Umar Ḥājjī.<sup>130</sup>

<sup>126</sup> TAA fols. 85a, 89b.

<sup>127</sup> This is a reference to ‘Abdalkarīm Ḥājjī Tīmerbūlat ūghlī, *imām* of Iske Özen’s Third Mosque, and one of the region’s most prominent *madrasa* instructors.

<sup>128</sup> Possibly the village of Zeipekulevo in Sterlitamak district, Ufa province; cf. F. S. Khisamutdinova, *Bashkirskaiia oikonimiia*, (Ufa, 1991), 157.

<sup>129</sup> TAA fol. 85ab.

<sup>130</sup> TAA 86b. Here al-Īlmīnī’s account is somewhat confused. He identifies Muṭī‘allah’s wife as “‘Azīzullah’s Zabība”, it is possible that he could be referring to ‘Azīzallah’s daughter; but because al-Īlmīnī notes that Muṭī‘allah married her after ‘Azīzallah’s death and that as a result Muṭī‘allah became ‘Umar Ḥājjī’s son-in-law makes it seem likely he is actually referring to ‘Afifa, and that “Zabība” appears here by mistake.

*Relations with the mahalla*

Although the *imām* was an influential and prestigious figure, the *Tawārīkh-i Āltī Ātā* makes it quite clear that relations between *imāms* and the *mahalla* were not always smooth. For Kazan province, Ia. Koblov notes that it was not uncommon for a community to remove its *imām* for violating community standards of behavior, and especially for drunkenness. He gives as an example a community in Tetiushi district that successfully petitioned the authorities to allow them to replace their intemperate *imām* with a temperate one.<sup>131</sup> In their disputes the *mahalla* or the *imām* would occasionally bring in the authorities and al-Īlmīnī mentions a number of cases where disputes resulted in the *mahalla* reprimanding, or even dismissing the *imām*, or in the *imām* resigning. One dispute that even involved the Governor of Samara province resulted in the resignation of the *imām*. This dispute, involving Abū Bakr Ibrāhīm ūghlī and the First *mahalla* of Ilmin, occurred as a result of Abū Bakr's neglect of his duties:

In the end Mullā Abū Bakr himself was neglectful regarding the mosque and the *madrassa* and he became a merchant. Two brothers from the Second *mahalla*, 'Abdallāh and Iḥsān, the sons of 'Abdarrahmān, had recently come into their wealth and at that time he arranged a partnership with them and went into business. He did not engage in communal prayers and every day during the month of Ramaḍān, during the afternoon and evening prayers, young men with walking horses would engage in selling Chinese cloth on the edge of the ice. He saw this and came with other good horses and on the edge of the ice fifty *tarantasses* and sleighs were assembled. The people of the congregation looked badly upon this and although they filed a complaint, nothing was done; but in the affair they had reached their limit. Finally, one time the Governor came for some reason. At that point two people from the congregation, Sa'daddīn Miftāḥaddīn ūghlī, Sākmān and Safar-'Alī Ramaḍān ūghlī, went to the Governor and revealed it to him, and after someone was sent to invite the Governor, he paid a visit. The above-mentioned father-in-law [of Abū Bakr], 'Abdaljalāl Bābā confirmed both of these people's statements to the Governor. However, the Governor delegated the case to his bailiff [*pristof*] and departed. The next day the bailiff arrived. When he carried out his investigation Mullā Abū Bakr apologized for his failure to educate the congregation, but he had nothing to say concerning the complaint of the elders that during the *namāz*, and especially during the evening prayer in the month of Ramaḍān that the people were awaiting that

<sup>131</sup> Koblov, *O magometanskikh mullakh*, 12.

he went out on the ice and traded in horses and cattle, and finally he remained obstinate, abandoned the congregation and set off on his own.<sup>132</sup>

The accusation that an *imām* was failing to perform his duties was apparently a serious one. Al-Īlmīnī related a case from the 1860's in Ilmin's Fifth *maḥalla* when the *khālfā* in the *madrasa*, Muḥammad-Jān Raḍīq ūghlī, and apparently some members of the *maḥalla* as well, began to accuse the *imām*, Jalāladdīn Yāhūda ūghlī, of failing to administer the communal prayers. This accusation was apparently one among others and as a result the *imām* took decisive action against Muḥammad-Jān:

The *mullā* [ʿAbdaljalīl] was no longer able to endure their [the congregation's] obstinacy and he filed a complaint with the bailiff. He [the bailiff] was summoned at an appointed time and he came. He received the most reputable elders of the village. They went to the *madrāsas*, performed the prayers, and directly returned, and he made a formal charge against Mullā Muḥammad-Jān. The elders thought it over, and they were annoyed by Mullā Jalāladdīn, but they were humbled and Muḥammad-Jān was given to judgment, and although he was spared a fine, he was beaten forty times.<sup>133</sup>

Thus, we can see that the *imām* Jalāladdīn prevailed, despite the misgivings of the elders in this case.

Problems with the same *maḥalla* also dogged a later successor of Jalāladdīn, ʿAlī Ḥamīdallāh Toqtarof. This ʿAlī was apparently very abusive of one of his wives, and his rather rash actions led the village elders to encourage his wife to press charges against him:

Later, he married a widow, the daughter of the wife of the *muʿadhdhin* of the Third Mosque, ʿAbdannaṣīr, and his [first wife] moved into her house. He built a house and a *madrasa* and made her suffer injury and oppression. He put this old woman in a basement room and would give her food and water through the room's window. He would not allow the old woman to leave and finally the old woman died. He married the daughter of a person named Hidāyatallāh Muḥammad-Jān from the First Congregation, and he remained in that old woman's house. The [first wife] who had been oppressed and outraged to an

<sup>132</sup> TAA fol. 42ab; elsewhere al-Īlmīnī writes that Abū Bakr was actually dismissed from his position, cf. TAA fol. 78a.

<sup>133</sup> TAA fol. 78a. Evidently, a *khālfā* did not enjoy the same legal status as a member of the Muslim "clergy," since officially registered *ākhūns*, *imāms* and *muʿadhdhins* were immune from corporal punishment.

extreme degree turned to neutral *imāms*, and it was mutually referred to an arbitrator. The *imāms* advised them both and made them reach an accord, and after that the old woman [i.e. the first wife] suffered beyond all bounds. In the course of her reproaches, the old woman mentioned the kindnesses she had done. “Mullā ‘Alī, I lived as your wife for 14 years, I gave your 14 year-old [son] a good upbringing. Is this the punishment I get for this good deed?” After she had asked this, even though Mullā ‘Alī was small, he said “Let this be your reward,” and he slapped her a few times and this old woman was knocked down. The elders rescued her and drove Mullā ‘Alī from there. His child, Muṭīʿallāh did not leave with him, but remained with his grandmother. The elders who had saved the old woman guided her and had her file a complaint. First it was tried at the township court, but when Mullā ‘Alī was not satisfied, it was investigated at the Pokrovsk district court [in Novouzensk]. The punishment was lessened, and he was ruled to be incarcerated for five days, and Mullā ‘Alī was banished from his home. He moved into the house of his father-in-law, who was the father of his young wife, and stayed there a while. Later he bought himself a house from the First *mahalla* and was allowed in that congregation. Later, with his father-in-law he recorded what had taken place, but it did not change anything.<sup>134</sup>

The Muslim community of Aleksandrov Gai, although it lacked a mosque, nevertheless had a series of *imāms*, some of whom experienced difficult relations with the community. One of these *imāms*, a certain Ḥasan from the village of Atlashevo in Saratov province’s Khvalynsk district, was apparently convicted of some crime and exiled to Petropavlovsk in Siberia. What this crime was al-Īlmīnī does not reveal; he only lets us know that Ḥasan somehow “led the people astray.”<sup>135</sup> Ḥasan’s successor, Fayḍ Raḥmān from Sterlibashevo, was apparently a competent enough *imām*, but he was unable to get along well with the community:

He [Fayḍ Raḥmān] was very courageous, and on a holiday during the sermon he heard a word emerge that was contrary to proper manners, and he could not endure it. They began an argument in the assembly and he lost patience with those arguing. He submitted petitions [*ʿarīdat*] regarding their dispute and said in a report that they [the congregation] had insulted the tsar and his family, and said that it merited being ruled on by a high tribunal. A police investigator [*zhāndārmsqī taftishchī*] came, asked questions and received answers, and he [the *imām*] facilitated the investigator’s task; and [the investigator]

<sup>134</sup> TAA fol. 79ab.

<sup>135</sup> TAA fol. 102b.

ruled to assemble the community and they were exonerated. However Fayḍ Raḥmān did not retain his former good favor, and to some degree he had disgusted people with the complaints.<sup>136</sup>

In addition to such disputes that resulted in various forms of official action, very frequently there were simply personality clashes between certain *imāms* and members of the *maḥalla*. One *imām*, ‘Abdarrashīd Aḥmad-Şafā ūghlī of Iłmin’s Fourth *maḥalla*, apparently had trouble getting along with the wealthy members of his *maḥalla*:

This person was extremely keen and knowledgeable, and was most intelligent. However, because among the people he was very proud, he was unable to deal with the *bāys*. This is because the *imāms* before him treated them with the consideration due their status. Perhaps this was hypocrisy. He was only around twenty-two years old. He became haughty and intended to burden the wealthy with humility. As for the wealthy, because he was truly haughty toward them, and because of his own rudeness, they were unable to judge him fairly. They could never visit with him.<sup>137</sup>

#### *Duties and activities*

As much as al-Īlmīnī tells us about the *imāms* of Novouzensk district, he tells us relatively little about their daily activities and duties. Of course, the basic duty of the *imām* was to conduct the daily prayers as Friday prayers at the mosque and the *khutba*, and as we have seen, failure to observe and lead the prayers was grounds for censure or even dismissal of the *imām*. The *imām* was also responsible foreseeing that the month of Ramaḍān was observed at the right time, and in the correct fashion and that the holiday feasts (*‘īd*) were properly observed. Al-Īlmīnī mentions one *imām*, again Abū Bakr Ibrāhīm ūghlī who had studied for an extended period in Bukhara, and after returning from there declared that the Friday Prayer was done incorrectly in Russia, and filed a suit to that effect.<sup>138</sup>

In addition, the *imām* was supposed to administer the *madrasa* and see to the teaching of children. This was a formal duty of the *imām*,

<sup>136</sup> TAA fol. 103a.

<sup>137</sup> TAA fol. 75b.

<sup>138</sup> TAA fol. 79b; unfortunately the manuscript provides no additional information on this controversy; for a discussion of the role of theological debates surrounding the issue of Friday prayers in the region’s Islamic discourse cf. Kemper, *Sufis und Gelehrte*, 294–299.

and as we saw, the *imām* Abū Bakr Ibrāhīm ūghlī was reprimanded for failure to do so.<sup>139</sup> Nevertheless, many *imāms* neglected the *madrāsas*, devolving their authority to *mu'adhdhins*, *khālfās*, or even leaving education to the initiative of the *maḥalla* (see the discussion of *madrāsas* below). Generally only the most dedicated *imāms* were conscientious teachers. Other duties included presiding over the various life-cycle rituals, such as giving names to children, performing marriages, and performing funeral services. That *imāms* carried out such duties is well established for the Volga-Ural region, and al-Īlmīnī lists “festivals, marriages, Friday prayers and Festival prayers,” among the duties of *imāms*.<sup>140</sup> I. Iushkov reports that in Siberia, *imāms* earned their livelihoods primarily by means of honoraria connected with these activities, and according to an old custom *imāms* were entitled to receive two percent of the bride price paid by the groom to the bride’s father.<sup>141</sup>

Another common duty carried out by *imāms* was medicine, even though this did not form part of their official duties. In Novouzensk district the most well-known healers were the *imāms* of Altī Ata’s Fifth *maḥalla*, Muḥyīddīn and his son Khalīl who were renowned in the Kazakh steppe and in parts of Siberia even. The father, Muḥyīddīn had reportedly learned the art of the *ṣāhib-i nafas* from a certain Shaykh ‘Abdannaṣr Āfāndī in Istanbul. Concerning this *imām* we read:

The significance of what we call *ṣāhib-i nafas* is that many sick people profit from their breath. People that are struck by spirits [*jīns*] are healed when he just looks into their faces. He lived a very long life. At no time were the sick turned away from his door. He worked for many years performing incantations for the afflicted who were in need, and he was very experienced in healing. All his life he performed incantations for the sick and especially the Kazakhs would give him a lot of presents. [. . .] Being more than a hundred years old, weakness finally came to his eyes, and in a state of blindness he would still perform incantations. He would cure all of the patients he performed incantations for.<sup>142</sup>

His son Khalīl succeeded him as both *imām* and master healer:

<sup>139</sup> TAA fols. 41b–42a.

<sup>140</sup> TAA fols. 76b, 80a.

<sup>141</sup> Iushkov, *Sibirskie tatary*, 36–37.

<sup>142</sup> TAA fols. 25b–26a.

So, after Mullā Muḥammad Khalīl Āfāndī succeeded his father [as *imām*], he also succeeded his father in treating the afflicted. Patients were cured and would return home. After his fame spread along the Sarī Özen [Malyi Uzen'] River, it also reached many places along the Jayıq [Ural] River and in Siberia. Ural and Siberian Cossacks would write and send the letters through the mail. He received as patients Russians and notables who were not cured by doctors, and he performed incantations and cured them. They increased their offerings. Some of them would make offerings of fifty rubles and even more. Others would send offerings. Kazakhs were satisfied with sending felt, some of them horses and some of them sheep, or even one eighth [of their property].<sup>143</sup>

Together with his official duties, al-Īlmīnī defines the true responsibility of the *imām* "commanding the good and prohibiting the evil". The *imām* was responsible for the overall spiritual well-being of the *maḥalla* as an Islamic community, and ultimately was judged on this criteria. Al-Īlmīnī discusses a number of *imāms* who "cleaned up" religiously permissive communities. The second *imām* of Imin's Second Mosque, 'Abdalḥakīm Bāybīk ūghlī is said to have "commanded the good and prohibited the evil to the common people."<sup>144</sup> Al-Īlmīnī continues:

Concerning religion, many wine drinkers repented and begged God's forgiveness, and in the mosque the five daily prayers were like Friday prayers and the Friday prayers were like 'Īd. He altogether eliminated the evil innovation [*bid'at*] called *sunnat ṭūyī* [i.e. the circumcision feast]<sup>145</sup> which had appeared about a hundred years before. They say the village of Imin was like Paradise.<sup>146</sup>

It was especially in merchant settlements of Novouzensk and Aleksandrov Gai where Muslims were a minority among Russians, that al-Īlmīnī describes the role of *imāms* as being crucial in retaining the Islamic character of the communities. Concerning Aleksandrov Gai during the first half of the nineteenth century al-Īlmīnī writes:

At that time religious affairs were done carelessly. They retained a condition whereby the communal prayers were discouraged. The deeds

<sup>143</sup> TAA fol. 27b.

<sup>144</sup> TAA fol. 65a.

<sup>145</sup> Here it is certain that al-Īlmīnī is condemning the excessive feasting that followed the ritual of circumcision, rather than the ritual and status of circumcision itself.

<sup>146</sup> TAA fol. 65ab.

rejected the obeying of [religious] matters and they were overtaken by wine-drinking and other calamities. It appears they persevered in these deeds for some time. But let there be thanks, in later years they kept these conditions to themselves, educated the children, and during the noble month of Ramaḍan, carried out the *tarāwīḥ* prayers communally, and set forth to the task. Among them there was an *imām*. The first to carry out these deeds was San‘atallāh Mullā. His ancestry was from Kazan Province. He himself was a master of piety, and in accordance with his abilities he defended the good and prohibited the evil. He showed patience with annoyances and gave thanks for kindnesses. At that time he began to give a pious appearance to the village of Alмали [i.e. Aleksandrov Gai].<sup>147</sup>

#### 4. MU’ADHDHINS

Without question, in scholarly literature the most neglected Islamic figure in the Volga-Ural has been the *mu’adhdhin*. D. Azamatov relates that *mu’adhdhins* had three main duties. These were 1) assembling the faithful for prayer, 2) summoning the *imām* for services, and 3) announcing the beginning of services.<sup>148</sup> These were the chief tasks of the *mu’adhdhin*, or as he was popularly called, the *ādhānchī*, but the fact that like the *imām*, the *mu’adhdhin* had to have an *ukaz* and had to pass an examination for his post in Ufa at the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly suggests that his duties may have involved more than the five daily calls to prayer; and indeed the *Tawārīkh-i Āltī Ātā* confirms this suggestion.

In all al-Īlmīnī identifies thirty *mu’adhdhins*. Unlike *imāms*, who frequently came to Novouzensk district from other provinces and other communities, *mu’adhdhins* were almost always from the same village where they served. There was only one exception to this rule, Raḥmatallāh ‘Abdalkhayr ūghlī, *mu’adhdhin* to Altī Ata’s Fifth *mahalla*, who had originally come from the village of Rishit (Reshetino) in Penza province’s Chembar district.<sup>149</sup> Furthermore, unlike an *imām*, who could serve a *mahalla* that lacked a mosque, *mu’adhdhins* were always affiliated with a specific mosque.

<sup>147</sup> TAA fol. 102b.

<sup>148</sup> Azamatov, *Orenburgskoe magometanskoe dukhovnoe upravlenie*, 89.

<sup>149</sup> TAA fol. 26b.

*Origins and selection*

In their origins *mu'adhdhins* were generally from the wealthier families of the community. Typical in this respect were Ibrāhīm Qudur ūghlī, who served as *mu'adhdhin* to Safarqa's First Mosque, and Jamāladdīn 'Abdalghafūr ūghlī, whose uncle, Sayfalmulūk was a wealthy notable who actually built the mosque in Ilmin's Fourth *maḥalla* where Jamāladdīn served. Similarly, a grandson of Jamāladdīn's father, 'Abdalghafūr, was himself *mu'adhdhin* to the same mosque.<sup>150</sup> Several other *mu'adhdhins* were the sons or brothers of *imāms*, or had married into wealthy families. However, al-Īlmīnī mentions at least one *mu'adhdhin* who was of more humble origins, namely 'Īsā 'Abdannaşır ūghlī, who in 1866 was appointed *mu'adhdhin* of Altı Ata's Second Mosque. Nevertheless, we are told that at the time of his appointment he possessed substantial wealth himself.<sup>151</sup> Another wealthy *mu'adhdhin* was 'Abdannaşır Sayfalmulūk ūghlī, who served Ilmin's Third Mosque.<sup>152</sup>

The procedure for selecting a *mu'adhdhin* appears to have been somewhat simpler than the selection of an *imām*. Nowhere does al-Īlmīnī mention a *prigovor* being issued for the appointment of a *mu'adhdhin*, although he does mention that a contract [*ittifāq kāghidhī*] was drawn up for the *mu'adhdhin* 'Abdannaşır Sayfalmulūk ūghlī.<sup>153</sup> Upon reception of the *maḥalla*'s agreement, the prospective *mu'adhdhin* would then have to travel to Ufa to pass the exam and receive his license [*ukaz*]. Since this journey represented a substantial expenditure of funds, it stands to reason that it was usually wealthier members of the community who became *mu'adhdhins*. While the office of *mu'adhdhin* was not formally hereditary, in a number of *maḥallas* the office passed from father to son. Curiously, it was only in Altı Ata, where as we have seen the office of *imām* was almost exclusively hereditary, that the office of *mu'adhdhin* likewise was hereditary. In that village's First, Third, and Fifth *maḥallas* the office of *imām* passed at least once from father to son. Such a hereditary transfer was evidently the exception rather than the rule, but there is evidence that it may have been the preferable, albeit not standard, form of succession.

<sup>150</sup> TAA fols. 33a, 76b.

<sup>151</sup> TAA fol. 16ab.

<sup>152</sup> TAA fol. 69a.

<sup>153</sup> TAA fol. 69a.

In Ilmin's Second *maḥalla* we are told that after the death of the first *mu'adhdhin*, 'Abdalghafūr, the *maḥalla* chose a successor from another *maḥalla* because 'Abdalghafūr had left no son.<sup>154</sup> The expectation of succeeding his father also appears in an account related to al-Īlmīnī by Khudāybirdī Nādīrshāh ūghlī, the old *mu'adhdhin* of Altī Ata's First Mosque<sup>155</sup>

Since the position of *mu'adhdhin* was a prestigious one, those members of the community with wealth, with wealthy or influential relatives, with an education, or with a combination of these three characteristics were often desirous of obtaining it. Al-Īlmīnī related a wonderfully illustrative account of how the *maḥalla* chose the *mu'adhdhin* for Altī Ata's Fourth Mosque:

Now, we have reached the death of Shāhī Mu'adhdhin [when] Mullā Wildān was *imām*. A *mu'adhdhin* was needed and there were two virtuous individuals in the *maḥalla*. One of them was Shāhī Āriq ūghlī and the other was Bīktūmur 'Abdaljalīl ūghlī Māhinūrof. Both of them wanted the post. Shāhī Bābā's age surpassed sixty years, while Bīktūmur was only thirty. The affairs of Mullā 'Abdalwalī's sons proceeded. At one point Ṣadīrḡāy Bābā and the other responsible elders convened an assembly in the evening and they decided that they intended to choose a *mu'adhdhin*. Both of those mentioned, together with their families, were summoned. Neither of them said anything and they came, placed a dish or a tray in front of each person and everyone received gifts without limit from both of them. They stood on a chair and in turn performed the *ādhān*. In performing the *ādhān* the old man Shāhī performed better than Bīktūmur. Nevertheless, those responsible intended to appoint Bīktūmur. 'Abdalwalī's brothers-in-law, Shamsaddīn and Sharafaddīn Ayyūb ūghlī from the village of Āṭlās were also at that assembly. They were merchants and they looked at Shāhī and joked "Shāhī, you have lost, it has been decided in favor of Bīktūmur. You have reached the bottom of your plate [of life] and Bīktūmur has more than half left!" In the end Bīktūmur was chosen. He carried out the work of *mu'adhdhin* for forty years. In 1908 his notebook of life was filled and his fine soul was resigned to God.<sup>156</sup>

However, in some cases a community would spare no expense to attract a specific *mu'adhdhin* whom they felt would benefit the community. One such *mu'adhdhin* was Hādī, the son of 'Atā'allāh Alṭīnbāy ūghlī the *imām* of Safarqa's First Mosque. Hādī had originally been

<sup>154</sup> TAA fol. 65b.

<sup>155</sup> TAA fol. 11a.

<sup>156</sup> TAA fol. 24ab.

made *mu'adhdhin* in Safarqa, in his father's *maḥalla*. He held that position fifteen years, and had even married the granddaughter of a wealthy local notable; nevertheless he was induced to leave Safarqa:

After the son of Safarqa's 'Aṭā'allāh, Mullā Hādī, had been *mu'adhdhin* for fifteen years, his heart stretched from this congregation to some degree. This is because the village of Būrjān, which was a Bashkir village and his father's home, located in the Nikolaevsk district at the headwaters of the Qaraliq River, this village invited him to be *mu'adhdhin* to them. They considered him to have dignity and much intelligence and these Bashkirs gave him fifty-three *desiatinas* of land at no cost and in perpetuity. He became very excited that he would be the owner of an additional fifty-three *desiatinas*, in addition to the two hundred he already owned. [At first] he stayed and kept his position here, but when he went to the Bashkir people, these Bashkirs were delighted and they built him a wooden house and gave it to him. After they finished his house and its lot, he moved there with his family. He received official authorization to move to that village and in 1908 he was granted his license.<sup>157</sup>

Since becoming a *mu'adhdhin* required passing an exam, it should not be surprising that before their appointment *mu'adhdhins* generally needed to acquire a degree of learning. It appears from consulting the *Tawārīkh-i Āltī Ātā* that few *mu'adhdhins* had, or needed, the degree of training that *imāms* required. Many *mu'adhdhins* were educated locally, though this need not imply that they were poorly educated. The *mu'adhdhin* of Altī Ata's Fourth Mosque, 'Ināyatallāh 'Ubaydallāh ūghlī Valītof studied under the *imām* Maḥmūd Āqchūrīn in Safarqa and was reportedly very skilled in Qur'ān recitation.<sup>158</sup> Ibrāhīm Qudur ūghlī of Safarqa's First Mosque studied in Iske Ōzen in the renowned *madrasa* of 'Abdalkarīm Timurbūlāṭ ūghlī.<sup>159</sup> Others were trained in renowned *madrasas* outside the district, such as Ḥusnaddīn 'Ubaydallāh ūghlī, of Ilmin's Second Mosque. He studied in Zimmicha, then in Qarghalī with Ishāq b. Maḥmūd.<sup>160</sup> Similarly, 'Abdalwahhāb

<sup>157</sup> TAA fol. 66ab; the practice of offering land to its religious figures appears to have been common among the Bashkirs of Nikolaevsk district; Azamatov cites a document he located in the archive of the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly relating how in 1881 the Bashkir villages of Kunakbaevo and Kuzebaevo granted their *imām* Iarmukhamad Galiev (according to the Russian spelling) 100 rubles and fifty *desiatinas* of land; Azamatov, *Orenburgskoe magometanskoe dukhovnoe upravlenie*, 107.

<sup>158</sup> TAA fol. 24b.

<sup>159</sup> TAA fol. 33a.

<sup>160</sup> TAA fol. 65b.

Dhū'l-Qarnayn ūghlī of Altı Ata's Third Mosque studied Sufism in Sterlibashevo under Īshān Ni'matallāh Bektimur ūghlī Isterlibāshī.<sup>161</sup> Shāh-Sultān Hājī Ni'matallāh Hājī ūghlī, *mu'adhdhīn* of Ilmin's Fourth Mosque, studied in Ilmin, and later in Bakhchisaray, in the Crimea, with Ismā'īl Bey Gasprinskii.<sup>162</sup> Nevertheless, some *mu'adhdhīns* had little or no formal training at all, such as Muḥammad-Ḥāfiẓ Ni'matallāh ūghlī in Safarqa's Third *maḥalla*. Yet despite his lack of learning we are told that he worked well with the *imām*, Maḥmūd.<sup>163</sup> Al-Īlmīnī describes the *mu'adhdhīn* of Ilmin's Second Mosque, 'Abdalghafūr, as "very quiet, ignorant, and pious." He then adds "He studied a commentary on the *Sura-yi Yā Sīn* and other short *suras* on the basis of a Turki commentary and learned them by heart."<sup>164</sup>

### *Duties and activities*

Beyond their primary function of performing the *ādhān*, *mu'adhdhīns* often played a very active role in the communities as religious leaders. It was most common to find *mu'adhdhīns* teaching in the *madrasa*, especially in *maḥallas* where the *imām*, for whatever reason, was not engaged in teaching. Some *mu'adhdhīns* were themselves learned and became skilled and effective teachers. For example, in Altı Ata's Fifth *maḥalla*, where the *imāms*, Muḥyiddīn and his son Khalīl were occupied as healers, the *madrasa* was entirely the responsibility of the *mu'adhdhīn* there, Raḥmatallāh 'Abdalkhayr ūghlī. Raḥmatallāh was especially skilled in Qur'ān recitation and "pure Turki", and many of his students became skilled in these subjects, but he also had a foundation in Persian and Arabic as well.<sup>165</sup> Another *mu'adhdhīn* who earned a reputation for his teaching was Ismā'īl Bey Gasprinskii's student, Shāh Sultān Ni'matallāh ūghlī, who taught the *uṣūl-i jadīd* in Ilmin until being expelled by the *imām*, 'Abdarrashīd Aḥmad-Şafā ūghlī.<sup>166</sup>

*Mu'adhdhīns* occasionally acted as deputy *imāms*, taking over the religious duties of the *imām* in case the latter had died or been forced

<sup>161</sup> TAA fol. 18ab.

<sup>162</sup> TAA fol. 76b.

<sup>163</sup> TAA fol. 39b.

<sup>164</sup> TAA fol. 65a.

<sup>165</sup> TAA fol. 26b.

<sup>166</sup> TAA fols. 76b–77a.

to leave. However the ability to take over an *imām*'s duties was only conferred to those *mu'adhdhins* who had this right specifically included in their licenses.<sup>167</sup> One such *mu'adhdhin* was Fakhraddīn Yahūdā ūghlī, who was popularly known as Āqsāq Ādhānchī. Upon the death of his brother, the *imām* Jalāladdīn, he administered Ilmin's First *maḥalla*, until the congregation became exasperated with his hostile behavior toward the *maḥalla* and they appointed an official *imām*.<sup>168</sup> Ibrāhīm Qudur ūghlī was serving as *mu'adhdhin* of Safarqa's First Mosque when his father, a wealthy notable, created the village's Second *maḥalla*, and Ibrāhīm served in his official capacity of *mu'adhdhin* as acting *imām* until formally becoming *imām* of the Second Mosque.<sup>169</sup> In Ilmin's Second *maḥalla*, after the death of the *imām* there the duties of the late *imām* were shared by the *mu'adhdhin* Ḥusnaddīn 'Ubaydallāh ūghlī and the *imām* from the Third Mosque, 'Ubaydallāh Temīrbūlāt ūghlī:

The affairs of the congregation were left to this Mullā Ḥusnaddīn *mu'adhdhin*. While the *mu'adhdhin* Ḥusnaddīn performed the business of religious services [*ibādat*], and he also showed patience in the task of carrying out business pertaining to the law, the *imām* of the Third Mosque, Mullā 'Ubaydallāh Temīrbūlāt ūghlī, carried out business what had to be recorded in the register [*daftar*].<sup>170</sup>

Other *mu'adhdhins* were active fund-raisers for mosque construction projects. Two *mu'adhdhins* in Altı Ata, Sha'bān 'Īsā ūghlī and Shāhaddīn Īshmurād ūghlī, of the Second and Third Mosques respectively, had wealthy relations in Safarqa, and as a result were instrumental in arranging the financing of their communities' mosque construction projects.<sup>171</sup>

## 5. SUFIS AND SUFISM

The origins of Sufism in the Volga-Ural region are obscure, and for all practical purposes unknown. Michael Kemper, who has produced

<sup>167</sup> Azamatov, *Orenburgskoe magometanskoe dukhovnoe upravlenie*, 89.

<sup>168</sup> TAA fol. 41ab.

<sup>169</sup> TAA fol. 33a.

<sup>170</sup> TAA fol. 66b; that is, the *metricheskaia kniga*, in which *imāms* were obligated to record the births, deaths, and marriages in the *maḥalla*.

<sup>171</sup> TAA fols. 17a, 20b–21a.

the most thorough examination of Sufism in the Volga-Ural region to date, has underscored the Central Asian roots of Sufism in the Volga-Ural region, and notes that before the end of the eighteenth century several figures identified as Yasavians can be identified both in the Middle Volga and Astrakhan regions. Here, at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Mujaddidī Naqshbandī *shaykhs* strongly reinvigorated the local Sufi brotherhoods. These local *shaykhs* were the *murīds* and *khalīfas* of two dominant figures, Niyāzqul at-Türkmānī (d. 1821), a powerful *shaykh* based in Bukhara,<sup>172</sup> and Fayḍ Khān al-Kābulī (d. 1802), a *shaykh* based in Kabul.<sup>173</sup> The disciples of these two *shaykhs* and their disciples came to dominate Sufism in the region throughout the nineteenth century. What existing lineages these Mujaddidī *shaykhs* displaced is difficult to determine. Non-Mujaddidī Naqshbandī lineages appear to have existed in the nineteenth century, but how long they survived is difficult to determine. Based on the local biographical sources, all of the major Sufis in the nineteenth century were affiliated with Mujaddidī lineages.

In addition to *silsilas* connected to Niyāzqulī at-Türkmānī and Fayḍ Khān al-Kābulī, by the end of the eighteenth century, the Naqshbandīya Khālidīya, another Mujaddidī order, began to make some headway in the Volga-Ural region as well, complementing the well-established Mujaddidī lineages rather than supplanting them. The adepts of this order were often from among the many scholars from the Volga-Ural who had studied in Daghestan, and who had studied among local Sufis.<sup>174</sup> The Khālidīya order was especially strongly represented in Daghestan, but by the latter half of the nineteenth century began to make its way to Russia through a Turkish *shaykh* based in Istanbul, named Ḍiyāʾaddīn Gümüşkhānāwī, whose most famous local follower was Zaynallāh Rasulev of Troitsk (1835–1917). Zaynallāh, certainly the most influential *shaykh* of the late

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<sup>172</sup> On this pivotal Bukharan figure cf. Kemper, *Sufis und Gelehrte*, 91; Bakhtiyor Babadzhanov, “On the History of the Naqshbandīya Mujaddidīya in Central Māwarāʾannahr in the Late 18th and Early 19th Centuries,” *Muslim Culture in Russia and Central Asia* [vol. 1], 398–399; Anke von Kügelgen, “Die Entfaltung der Naqshbandīya Muğaddidīya in mittleren Tansoxanien von 18. bis zum Beginn des 19. Jahrhunderts: Ein Stück Detektivarbeit,” *Muslim Culture in Russia and Central Asia*, vol. 2, 110–111, 131–136; for legendary Muslim accounts on the origin of Sufism in the Volga-Ural region cf. Frank, “Islamic Shrine Catalogs,” 273–274, and Frank, *Islamic Historiography*, 72–76.

<sup>173</sup> On this figure cf. Kemper, *Sufis und Gelehrte*, 92–93.

<sup>174</sup> On the early development of the Khālidīya order in the Volga-Ural region cf. Kemper, *Sufis und Gelehrte*, 88–89.

imperial period, was also a *khalīfa* of ‘Abdalḥakīm Chārdāqlī, a *khalīfa* of Sharafaddīn Isterlītāmāqī, who himself had studied under Niyāzqulī at-Türkmanī.<sup>175</sup>

Among the major Sufi figures and lineages in the Volga Ural region before 1917 we can count Walīd b. Muḥammad al-Amīn al-Qarghālī (d. 1802/03), who studied under Fayḍ Khān al-Kābulī. Walīd served as *imām* in Qarghālī’s Third Mosque, and trained a number of influential figures, including ‘Ubaydallāh b. Ja‘far al-Kizlāwī (d. 1822/23). ‘Ubaydallāh was the first of the so-called Kizlāw *ishāns*, an enduring dynasty based in the villages of Kizlāw, and later in Almat and Paraw.<sup>176</sup> Another influential *shaykh* was Ja‘far b. Šāliḥ al-Qūlatqī, known as Ja‘far ath-thānī (d. 1862). He also traced his lineage to Walīd b. Muḥammad al-Amīn al-Qarghālī, through his teacher, ‘Abdalkhāliq al-Bulghārī al-Bāllī Kūllī (d. 1862). Ja‘far ath-thānī al-Qūlatqī was established in the village of Qulatqī (Staraiia Kulatka), in Saratov province’s Khvalynsk district. His most famous student was certainly Bahā’addīn Vaisov, the founder of the Vaisov movement, but he had other followers, some of whom became especially well established in Astrakhan. His followers in the latter city include ‘Abdannaṣir b. Murād ‘Alī Shaykh (d. 1874), who reportedly taught the *Tarīqa-yi Naqshbandīya* there “for many years.” Another of his followers in Astrakhan was Najmaddīn b. Shaykh Aḥmad al-Bulghārī al-Bāltāyī (d. 1895), a saint (*sāhib-i karāmat*) and master healer (*sāhib-i nafas*), as well as his Najmaddīn’s own disciple, ‘Abdalḥādī b. Shaykh ‘Abdaljabbār b. ‘Abdalmannān al-Qazānī (d. 1905).<sup>177</sup> Another major and enduring Sufi center was the village of Sterlibashevo in Ufa province. The founder of this center was Ni‘matallāh b. Biktīmur al-Isterlībāshī (1773–1844), who studied in Bukhara under Niyāzqulī at-Türkmanī. He founded what was to become one of the most popular and influential madrasas in the Volga-Ural region. His sons Ḥārīth and Harrāth, studied in Bukhara under Niyāzqulī’s son, ‘Ubaydallāh.<sup>178</sup>

<sup>175</sup> Hamid Algar, “Shaykh Zaynullah Rasulev: the Last Great Naqshbandi Shaykh of the Volga-Urals Region,” *Muslims in Central Asia: Expressions of Identity and Change*, Jo-Ann Gross (ed.), Durham and London, 1992), 114.

<sup>176</sup> Cf. Kemper, *Sufis und Gelehrte*, 94–95; an uncatalogued untitled manuscript *sil-sila* of the Kizlāw *ishāns* is in the Ibragimov Institute of Literature, Language and History of the Tatarstan Academy of Sciences in Kazan, inv. no. 39–2097.

<sup>177</sup> Cf. Kemper, *Sufis und Gelehrte*, 95; on the followers of Ja‘far ath-thānī in Astrakhan cf. Jahānshāh an-Nīzhghārūī, *Tārīkh-i Astarkhān*, 42–43, 47.

<sup>178</sup> Tukaev, *Tārīkh-i Isterlībāsh*, 4.

Nearer to Novouzensk district there were a number of fairly well-known Sufi centers and *shaykhs*. On the right bank of the Volga, in Saratov province's Kuznetsk and Khvalynsk districts the best known centers were Qulatqı and Zimmicha. As we have seen *imāms* from Novouzensk district maintained close connections with both of these villages. During the late nineteenth century the Cossack village of Yalpaqтал also became a Sufi center of some repute, not only locally, but on a regional level as well. Kazakhs from the Inner Horde were especially well represented among the followers of the so-called Yalpaqтал *īshāns*, as well as among *murīds* in Zimmicha.<sup>179</sup>

Novouzensk district proper does not appear to have emerged as a center of Sufism, although a number of *imāms* either became Sufis upon retirement, or in some cases were licensed by the Sufi masters to teach and taught their own *murīds*. The village with the most active Sufis was Safarqa. Two active Sufis resided there, the *imāms*, 'Aṭā'allāh Ālṭınbāy ūghlī, of the First *maḥalla*, and Maḥmūd 'Ubaydallāh ūghlī Āqchūrīn of the Third *maḥalla*. 'Aṭā'allāh's father, Ālṭınbāy, lived in the Bashkir village of Būrjān on the Kamelik River in Nikolaevsk district, and reportedly earned a license [*idhn-i irshād*] from Kīzlāw Ḥaḍrat, presumably a reference to 'Ubaydallāh al-Kīzlāwī, who was mentioned above as the founder of the so-called Kīzlāw *īshāns*.<sup>180</sup> Ālṭınbāy's son 'Aṭā'allāh maintained a rather large mosque, but it is not clear whether he was initiated into a Sufi order by his father and taught or practiced Sufism while he was occupied as a teacher and *imām*. In any case, later in his life he did turn to Sufism:

In his later years he became a Sufi under Ismā'īl Qjirimī, and although he was a loyal *murīd* and was diligent, Ismā'īl's country was far away and his [Ismā'īl's] life was not sufficiently long, and so he was not able to fulfill his wishes. Later, he approached Zaynallāh Ḥaḍrat of Trūyskī [Troitsk], who, like Ismā'īl Qjirimī, was a *khalīfa* to the Gümüşkhānawī [*shaykh*] Aḥmad Diyā'addīn. He completed the path with this *ḥaḍrat* [Zaynallāh] and became his two-winged [*dhū'l-janāḥayn*] *khalīfa*.<sup>181</sup> He instructed *shāgirds* in the exoteric and esoteric, and he summoned his loyal *shāgirds* to the true path.<sup>182</sup>

<sup>179</sup> Sufism in Yalpaqтал will be described in detail in Chapter Eight.

<sup>180</sup> TAA fol. 31b.

<sup>181</sup> Literally this phrase means "possessor of two wings," implying expertise in both esoteric and exoteric sciences.

<sup>182</sup> TAA fol. 32a.

Thus, we can see that ‘Aṭā’allāh initially studied in the Crimea under another Khālidiya *shaykh*, Ismā‘īl Qīrimī, before training in Troitsk with the well known figure Shaykh Zaynallāh Rasulev. Maḥmūd Āqchūrīn did, however, finish his studies with Ismā‘īl Qīrimī, and was licensed [*murakkhas*] by him and, we are told, he devoted more attention to training his *murīds* than to the *madrasa*, and as a result incurred the displeasure of some of the wealthy in the *maḥalla*.<sup>183</sup>

A number of *imāms* in Novouzensk district became *murīds* to another Sufi, ‘Abdalmannān Bigī, who taught *murīds* in the village of Bigi, in Saratov Province’s Kuznetsk district. Little is known of this figure, and al-Īlmīnī provides no information on his *silsila*, although he does tell us that he spent some time in the town of Novouzensk.<sup>184</sup> ‘Abdalmannān does appear in a Soviet anti-religious monograph published in Kazan in 1931. In this work he is mentioned under the name Ghäpdelmān Ishan; we are told that he was active in the first decade of the twentieth century in the village of Bigi, that he was small in stature, but highly revered and reputed to be able to perform miracles. Unfortunately the work gives us no information as to his affiliation, beyond the fact that he was a Naqshbandī.<sup>185</sup> The *imām* of Safarqa’s Second Mosque, Ibrāhīm Qudur ūghlī, retired as *imām*, leaving the position to his son, and he went to study Sufism under this ‘Abdalmannān, and reportedly received this *shaykh*’s blessings [*fātiḥa*].<sup>186</sup> Similarly, in addition to being a successor of Ismā‘īl Qīrimī, Maḥmūd ‘Ubaydallāh ūghlī later in his life also became a close *murīd* to this ‘Abdalmannān.<sup>187</sup>

In addition to these figures who were licensed to train their own *murīds* within their lineage, there were a number of other Sufis in the region. The *mu’adhdhin* of Altū Ata’s Third Mosque, ‘Abdalwahhāb Dhū’l-Qarnayn ūghlī was a *murīd* of Ni‘matallāh b. Bīktimur al-Istārlībāshī.<sup>188</sup> Finally, al-Īlmīnī tells us that one of the *imāms* in Iske Özen, Ḥusnaddīn Mawlūd ūghlī, late in his life became a *murīd* to a certain ‘Inānaddīn Ḥaḍrat, perhaps a reference to ‘Inānaddīn

<sup>183</sup> TAA fols. 35b–36b.

<sup>184</sup> TAA fol. 99b.

<sup>185</sup> Zarif Mozaffari, *Ishannar-Dārvishlār*, (Kazan, 1931), 81–82.

<sup>186</sup> TAA fol. 33ab.

<sup>187</sup> TAA fols. 38b–39a.

<sup>188</sup> TAA fol. 18ab.

Vaisov (d. 1918), the son of Bahā'addīn Vaisov (d. 1889), who, as we saw, had been a follower of Ja'far ath-thānī in Qulataḡi.<sup>189</sup>

Al-Īlmīnī does not appear to have himself been a Sufi, although he did have rather close relations with a locally prominent Sufi, 'Aṭā'allāh Ālṭīnbāy ūghlī Ṣafarqawī. At the same time, he cannot be said to be hostile to Sufism, but rather finds faults only with those *imāms* who let Sufism interfere with their duties as *imāms*; at the same time he decries the suspicion and prejudices of the Russian authorities toward Sufis.<sup>190</sup> In fact, it appears that Maḥmūd's status as a Sufi was used by his opponents in the village to turn the Russian authorities against him, and at one point during a dispute with the authorities the Russians sent the secret police to keep Maḥmūd under surveillance as a result of their suspicion of Sufis.<sup>191</sup>

The Muslims of Novouzensk district and of the Kazakh Inner Horde became exposed to Sufis from other parts of the Islamic world by the exile of a number of Daghestani Sufis to their region "around 1890." Concerning the appearance of these *shaykhs* in Samara province al-Īlmīnī writes as follows:

... two *shaykhs* appeared from among the Cherkes [i.e. North Caucasus highlanders] in the region of Daghestan. They were *khalīfas* of the Cherkes 'Abdarrahman Thughūrī. One of them was Shaykh Muḥammad and the other was Shaykh Ilyās b. Maḥmūd.<sup>192</sup> Muḥammad Āfāndī had twelve thousand *murīds* and Ilyās Āfāndī had eight thousand. It seems in their own country they were renowned and complete masters. At that time, after the 'Īd of Ramaḡān, every one of their *murīds* would make a pilgrimage to congratulate their *shaykh*. . . . They would come and on one day there were three hundred *murīds*. Later, the Russian officials became astonished and made inquiries. Some Cherkes hypocrites informed them [the authorities] that their intentions could in no way be good. When they said they were conspiring to raise a rebellion [*būnt!*], right away a denunciation was given to the governor in Temir Khan-Shura. The Governor was an Armenian and since he was an enemy of the Cherkes, he had them seized and imprisoned and sent their cases to be prosecuted. These were some of the peo-

<sup>189</sup> TAA fol. 83b. Indeed, the Vayṣi brotherhood was active in regions of the Kazakh Inner Horde covered in al-Īlmīnī's history; cf. M. Sagīdullīn, "K istorii Vaisovskogo dvizheniia," *Ocherki po istorii mestnogo kraia*, (Kazan, 1930), 244.

<sup>190</sup> TAA fol. 38b.

<sup>191</sup> TAA fol. 38b.

<sup>192</sup> That is, Ilyās b. Maḥmūd at-Tsudaqārī, who became the teacher of Muḥammad b. Muḥammad-Fāṭiḡ al-Īlmīnī.

ple [prosecuted] who were known for learning and ascetic practice: first, Shaykh Muḥammad, second Shaykh Ilyās Āfāndī, third Dīwāna Muḥammad, fourth Uzūn Ḥājjī, fifth Sulayman Ḥājjī, sixth Rajablū, seventh Mūsā Ḥājjī, eighth ‘Abdallāh Ḥājjī, and there were others.<sup>193</sup>

The Sufi master of Ilyās b. Maḥmūd and Shaykh Muḥammad, ‘Abdarraḥman Thughūrī (d. 1882), is a fairly well established figure in Daghestani history. In Nadhīr ad-Durgilī’s Arabic-language biographical dictionary, *Nuzhat al-adhhān*, his full name appears as Shaykh al-Ḥājj ‘Abdarraḥman b. Aḥmad ath-Thughūrī. He received his *yāza* (license) from Muḥammad al-Yarāghī, a major figure in Daghestani Khālīdīya Sufism who died in 1838, and who initiated Shamil himself into his Sufi brotherhood.<sup>194</sup> ‘Abdarraḥman ath-Thughūrī was also a follower of the major figure in Daghestani Sufism Shaykh Jamāladdīn al-Ghāzīghumūqī (d. 1866), but is best known as a poet.<sup>195</sup>

The Russian authorities had sentenced these Daghestanis to exile in Siberia, but, al-Īlmīnī tells us, upon reaching Astrakhan they hired skilled lawyers who managed to have the place of exile changed from Siberia to Samara province, and it was the governor of the latter province who decided to establish them in Novouzensk district.<sup>196</sup> Ilyās b. Maḥmūd, together with several other Daghestanis eventually went with Muḥammad al-Īlmīnī to spend a year in the *madrasa* of ‘Aṭā’allāh aṣ-Ṣafarqawī in Safarqa, and both of these figures became Muḥammad al-Īlmīnī’s teachers.<sup>197</sup> Whether Ilyās taught Sufism in Safarqa is unclear, but as we have seen ‘Aṭā’allāh himself was a *murīd* to both Zaynallāh Rasulev of Troitsk and the Khālīdī *shaykh* Ismā‘īl Qīrīmī.

<sup>193</sup> TAA fol. 96b.

<sup>194</sup> On Muḥammad al-Yarāghī and his role in the Daghestani jihad movement cf. Michael Kemper, “Einige Notizen zur arabischsprachigen Literatur der *ḡihād*-Bewegung in Daghestan und Tschetschenien in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts,” *Muslim Culture in Russia and Central Asia from the 18th to the Early 19th Centuries* vol. 2, Anke von Kügelgen, Michael Kemper, and Allen Frank (eds.), (Berlin, 1998), 66–73.

<sup>195</sup> Amrī R. Shikhsaidov, “The Biographical Genre in Daghestani Arabic Literature: Naḍīr ad-Durgilī’s *Nuzhat al-adḥan fī tarāḡim* ‘ulamā’ Dāḡistān,” *Muslim Culture in Russia and Central Asia from the 18th to the Early 19th Centuries* vol. 2, Anke von Kügelgen, Michael Kemper, and Allen Frank (eds.), (Berlin, 1998), 59; on Muḥammad al-Yarāghī cf. 60.

<sup>196</sup> TAA fols. 96b–97a.

<sup>197</sup> TAA fol. 97a.

## CONCLUSION

In Novouzensk district, as in the Volga-Ural region as a whole, the *‘ulamā* formed the backbone of Muslim religious life. The region’s “Islamic Renaissance” owes much to the regulation and standardization of Islamic religious institutions under Catherine II, which led to the joint regulation of the *‘ulamā* under the auspices of both the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly and local provincial authorities. The central figure in the Volga-Ural region’s religious establishment was the *imām*, and specifically the village *imām*, since the overwhelming majority of Muslims, and the overwhelming number of mosques, served rural congregations. The *imām*’s activities included both civil and religious duties. As a civil functionary, jointly confirmed by the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly and the provincial authorities, the *imām*, after 1830, was required to compile the births, marriages, and deaths in his congregation and submit a copies of these documents to the provincial authorities and to the Spiritual Assembly in Orenburg. On the basis of his loyalty oath, the *imām* was also held at least partially responsible for the behavior of his congregation. However, it is clear from the *Tawārīkh-i Āltī Ātā* that the *imām* primarily viewed himself as a religious figure, and was primarily occupied with religious duties, and as the leader of the Islamic community. The *imām*’s chief religious duties included, naturally, performing the prayers, and enforcing Islamic religious standards within the community. The *imām* was also responsible for teaching children and, ideally, for instructing older students in a *madrasa*. These requirements have been already established in the published literature, and as a result, we have a fairly clear idea of the *imām*’s public requirements, and as a result, of his ideal behavior. The importance of the material for Novouzensk district is that here we have an almost exhaustive description of the actual relations between *imāms* and the communities they served, and studying such an account allows us to speak with authority about the standards and realities facing *imāms* in these communities.

In Novouzensk district *imāms* maintained very close ties with local wealthy notables. Nearly all *imāms* were themselves from wealthy families, or married into wealthy families. However the region’s economy, based on a wheat monoculture cash-crop, caused rapid social mobility, both up and down, and at least in Novouzensk district, there is no basis to speak of the *‘ulamā* as constituting any sort of

entrenched social class. Nor is there grounds to state, as Soviet scholars have done, that *imāms* were necessarily subordinate to the interests of the local Muslim elites. The material from Novouzensk district makes it clear that an *imām* could expect a fair degree of autonomy in how he managed his duties. While some *imāms* were clearly installed by notables, many others were chosen by the *maḥalla* at large, and for their religious qualities. Some *imāms* even came into sharp conflict with the wealthy in their *maḥallas*, or with the *maḥalla* at large. On the whole *imāms* were fairly independent figures, who clearly conceived of themselves as their communities' religious leaders, and as such possessed no small degree of prestige in their communities. While their level of education varied, it was on the whole fairly advanced. Relatively few *imāms* were *ḥājjīs*, nevertheless, many had studied in major regional Islamic centers such as Qarghalī and Kazan, and a number had even studied in Bukhara and Egypt, and as a result, were exposed to the larger Islamic world of which they were a part. Nevertheless, locally-trained *imāms*, such as the authors of the *Tawārīkh-i Āltī Ātā* themselves, could boast a high level of training and erudition too.

The *Tawārīkh-i Āltī Ātā* also gives us insights into the functions and selection of *mu'adhdhins*, whose study is badly neglected in the secondary literature. The level of education of these figures was somewhat lower than that of *imāms*. The post of *mu'adhdhin* was also a prestigious one, however, and often attracted notables. The primary duty of the *mu'adhdhin* was to perform the five daily calls to prayer (*ādhān*), however, many *mu'adhdhins* complemented the *imām* by performing duties the *imām* could not or would perform, and when an *imām* would die or otherwise leave his position, it was common for the *mu'adhdhin* to at least temporarily take of the *imām's* duties.

Novouzensk district was not a center of major Sufi activity in the Volga-Ural region. Nevertheless there were some locally prominent Sufis practicing in the village of Safarqa. The local Sufis were integrated into the region's major lineages. Older figures, such as the Bashkir *imām* Āltīnbāy from Nikolaevsk district, was a *murīd* of one of the Kizlāw *īshāns*, who traced their lineages back to the Naqshbandī Mujaddidī figure Fayḍ Khān al-Kabūlī. However the region's dominant lineage, at least by the end of the nineteenth century, was the Naqshbandī Khālidīya order. Local *imāms* became *murīds* of the Crimean Sufi Ismā'īl Qīrimī, a follower of the Istanbul master

Ḍiyā'addīn Gümüşkhānawī, while there was also the presence of a number of Daghestani Sufis in the region after 1890 who traced their lineages to the Khālidīya figure Muḥammad al-Yarāghī, who was a prominent figure in the Daghestani *jihād* movement of the nineteenth century.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### MOSQUES

#### 1. SOURCES

The focus of attention in the *Tawārīkh-i Āltī Ātā* is above all the mosques of Novouzensk district. The mosque was not only the most visible symbol of the community's Muslim status, but also evidence of its formal existence as a *mahalla*. As we have seen, the chapters discussing individual villages are divided headed by the name of a mosque, and much of the narrative is devoted to the various details concerning the building and maintenance of these mosques. The discussion of mosques in the *Tawārīkh-i Āltī Ātā* merits attention not simply as a case study of mosque construction and fundraising in the Russian empire's Muslim communities, but also because while mosques remained quite literally at the center of Muslim life in the Russian empire, historians have largely ignored the role of the mosque in the religious life of Volga-Ural Muslims.

Of course, the region's Islamic historians were well aware of the mosque's important role as a religious institution. The village histories published before 1917, as well as many more manuscript histories, very much focused on details concerning the establishment of local mosques. This interest in the histories of individual mosques is equally evident in the historical compendium *Mustafād al-akhbār fī ahwāli Qazān wa Bulghār* of Shihābaddīn Marjānī, who included in the second volume of this work fairly detailed histories of mosques in the city of Kazan, and in several prominent Muslim villages in Kazan province.

The most extensive general discussion of mosques in Russia proper remains the article of the anti-Muslim missionary, E. Malov.<sup>1</sup> Malov wrote this article to encourage the Russian authorities to enforce existing laws limiting mosque construction, arguing that mosques

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<sup>1</sup> E. Malov, "O tatarskikh mechetiakh v Rossii," *Pravoslavnyi sobesednik* 1867 (12), 285–320, 1868 (1), 3–45.

functioned as centers of anti-Russian activities on the part of Muslims, and encouraged the “Tatarization” of various non-Muslim nationalities in the Volga-Ural region and Siberia. Despite Malov’s agenda, which he does not hesitate to proclaim quite forthrightly in his study, his article remains the most complete survey of Russian administrative actions and legislation concerning mosques. In any case, as a synthesis of official Russian sources Malov’s discussion remains unsurpassed.

During the Soviet period the Communist Party’s broad assault on Islamic institutions as a whole discouraged the study of Russia’s mosques. At this time nearly all mosques were closed; in Kazan and Ufa almost all of the major mosques had their minarets torn down and were transformed into various sorts of secular public buildings.<sup>2</sup> In villages thousands of mosques were torn down, or otherwise defiled. Nevertheless, during the Soviet period neither the destruction of mosques, nor their scholarly neglect was total. In 1958 the Bashkir architectural historian B. Kalimullin published a small monograph examining a number of surviving mosques in Bashkiria, including two village mosques, and the Stone Mosque in Ufa. Kalimullin’s study is mainly concerned with mosque architecture, but he nevertheless includes some discussion of the social and communal aspects of mosque construction and of the mosque’s role in the community.<sup>3</sup>

Important as Kalimullin’s study is, it remains a historiographic anomaly, and it should come as no surprise that during the Soviet era virtually the only mosques that attracted the attention of scholars were medieval archeological monuments, especially the ruins of the thirteenth-century mosques at the site of Bulghar. In these studies, the mosques are not studied as sacred architecture *per se*, but merely as “architectural monuments” until nearly the eve of the Soviet Union’s collapse.<sup>4</sup> Such a study was the focus of two monographs published by the architectural historian Niiaz Khalitov, who addressed the architectural legacy of mosques in the city of Kazan.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> On the basis of materials for mosques in Chuvashia, located on the right bank of the Volga River, Soviet authorities left mosques untouched throughout the 1920’s, at which time several new mosques were actually built. Soviet authorities, however, began closing mosques around 1934, and by 1942 most of the mosques in Chuvashia had been shut down; cf. Braslavskii, *Islam v Chuvashii*, 68–70, 109–145.

<sup>3</sup> B. Kalimullin, *Arkhitekturye pamiatniki Bashkiriï III Kul’tovye sooruzheniia*, (Ufa, 1958).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. S. S. Aidarov and N. D. Aksenova, *Velikie Bulgary*, (Kazan, 1983), 20–26.

<sup>5</sup> N. Kh. Khalitov, *Pamiatniki arkhitektury Kazani XVIII–nachala XIX v.*, (Moscow, 1989); Niiaz Khalitov, *Arkhitektura mechetei Kazani*, (Kazan, 1991).

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union a number of works that contribute to our knowledge of mosques in imperial Russia have appeared. The most detailed discussion of mosque construction appears in the monograph on the Muslim communities of Nizhnii Novgorod province by Idrisov et al.<sup>6</sup> Another work, by the Tatar historians Radik Salikhov and Ramil Khairtdinov, discusses the “historical and cultural monuments of the Tatar people” in the imperial period, and includes a wide-ranging survey of the surviving structures in Tatarstan built by Muslims, including many mosques.<sup>7</sup> While much of the focus in this book is on the city of Kazan, the authors devote considerable attention to surviving village mosques as well. The authors did not intend their work to be a synthesis, but, like Marjānī did before them, they provide a wealth of detailed information of mosque construction and funding in various Muslim villages. L. Braslavskii’s study of Islam in Chuvashia provides an especially detailed and informative discussion of mosques in that region.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, a number of rather brief articles, also based on Russian archival sources, have been published concerning several individual mosques. These articles address the government-funded construction of mosques in the cities of Izhevsk, Omsk, and Petropavlovsk,<sup>9</sup> as well as locally funded mosques among Siberian Cossack Muslims.<sup>10</sup>

## 2. MOSQUES IN RUSSIA

### *Muslim communities in Russia before 1552*

The presence of mosques on the territories controlled by Russia predates even the conquest of the Kazan khanate in 1552 by nearly a

<sup>6</sup> Idrisov et al. *Iz istorii*, passim.

<sup>7</sup> Salikhov and Khayrutdinov, *Tatar khalqining*. Sections of this work concerning Arsk district were reprinted in Kamil Nizametdinov and Ilshat Khäliullin (eds.) *Archa töbäge tarikhī—Istoriī Arskogo kraia* (Kazan, 1996); for a more detailed study of a specific region of Tatarstan cf. Salikhov et al. *Ocherki istorii Vysokogorskogo raiona respublikī Tatarstan*.

<sup>8</sup> Braslavskii, *Islam v Chuvashii*, 42–58, 109–144.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Lebedeva, “O stroitel’stve mecheti v zapadnoi Sibiri (1760–1820-e gody)”, and L. I. Ogorodnikova, “Iz istorii stroitel’stva Omskoi mecheti,” in: *Islam, obshchestvo i kul’tura: Materialy mezhdunarodnoi nauchnoi konferentsii ‘Islamskaia tsivilizatsiia v preddverii XXI veka (k 600-letiiu islama v Sibiri)*, (Omsk, 1994), 97–100, 113–115; cf. also Irina Zaitseva, “Pervaia mechet’ g. Izhevsk,” *Gasirlar avazi—Ekho vekov*, 1996 (3/4), 240–243.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Andreev, “Kazaki-musul’mane.”

century. Communities of Muslims located west of the Volga came under Russian rule already in the fourteenth century if not sooner, and served as border troops and auxiliaries in the Russian armies. Before the conquest of Kazan there is no evidence that these Muslim communities experienced religious persecution from the Muscovite authorities, although it was very common for Tatars, especially the Tatar elite, to convert to Christianity and become Russian nobles.<sup>11</sup> In fact, a substantial number of Russian noble families are descended from such converts. What sort of Islamic establishment, if any, existed among these communities, is hard to gauge, since, in discussing these Muslims, the Russian sources from this era focus on political issues and the details of service to Russian princes. Nevertheless, there is no reason to doubt that mosques did exist in these sedentary Muslim communities before the Russian conquest of Kazan. Similarly, east of the Volga smaller Muslim communities in the Vyatka region, the so-called Karino Tatars, came under Russian rule around 1480 and entered Russian service.<sup>12</sup>

In contrast to these relatively small or scattered Muslim communities, we know considerably more about the Islamic establishment among the Kasimov Tatars. The Kasimov khanate was a puppet khanate formed by the Muscovites in the middle of the fifteenth century from Chingisid princes who had been losers in the dynastic struggles in Kazan. The Kasimov Chingisids played an important role in furnishing puppet khans whom Moscow occasionally managed to install on the throne in Kazan, and who played an active role in the dynastic struggles within the Kazan khanate. The Russian authorities sponsored and apparently encouraged some semblance of an Islamic religious establishment in Kasimov. Russia's oldest mosque was built in Kasimov in 1467,<sup>13</sup> and down to the seventeenth century, when the Russians abolished the khanate, Muscovite rulers patronized local Islamic historiography in the form of Chingisid dynastic and genealogical historiography. After the conquest of Kazan,

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<sup>11</sup> On Russian nobles descended from Muslims who counted the caliph Abu Bakr and the Muslim saint Baba Tükles among their ancestors cf. DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion*, 396–407; cf. also N. A. Baskakov, *Russkie familii türksogo proiskhozhdeniä*, (Moscow, 1979); A. Kh. Khalikov, *500 russkikh familii bulgar-tatarskogo proiskhozhdeniä—Bolgar-tatar chügışli 500 rus familiyase*, (Kazan, 1992).

<sup>12</sup> On the Karino Tatars cf. M. A. Usmanov, *Tatarskie istoricheskie istochniki XVII–XVIII vv.*, (Kazan, 1972), 181–187.

<sup>13</sup> Idrisov et al. *Iz istorii*, 9.

Muscovite rulers would showcase Kasimov and its religious establishment in diplomatic exchanges with Crimean and Ottoman rulers to refute charges that the persecution of Muslims was taking place in Russia.<sup>14</sup>

*Russian legislation concerning mosques 1552–1788*

In the period between the conquest of Kazan in 1552 and the coronation of Catherine II in 1762, official policy concerning mosques was haphazard and shifting. Russian administrators were often wary of Muslims and of their institutions, especially in the borderlands, and the ecclesiastical authorities saw the presence of Muslims as a threat to Christians, especially those living in proximity to Muslim communities. The Church and the State appreciated the significance of mosques as both as religious symbols and religious institutions, and sought to restrict their construction, or hasten their actual destruction. Nevertheless, as G. N. Aidarova has noted, the enduring myth that Ivan IV destroyed all the mosques in Kazan after conquering that city is unsubstantiated in the sources.<sup>15</sup> In any case, a number of the administrative principles concerning the regulation of mosques which became associated with the policies of Catherine II actually date from before her reign, and can be traced as far back as the reign of Ivan IV's son, Fedor (r. 1581–1598). On the basis of these administrative principles, virtually all decisions regulating mosques and other Islamic institutions were in the hands of the local military and civil authorities, usually at the provincial or regional level. In other words, the central authorities in Moscow, and later St. Petersburg, granted their governors and *voevodas* authority in these matters. This arrangement essentially excluded the Russian Orthodox Church from regulating mosques, and removed Muslim religious institutions from the authority of the Orthodox Church. Of course, in some periods, especially in the first half of the eighteenth century, when particularly aggressive and forceful missionary activity was supported by imperial legislation, some provincial leaders yielded to imperial and

<sup>14</sup> Malov, "O tatarskikh mechetiakh," 289–290.

<sup>15</sup> G. N. Aidarova, "Mecheti i tserkvi Srednego Povolzh'ia vtoroi poloviny XVI–XVII vekov: protivoborstvo i vzaimovliianiia," *Islamo-khristianskoe pogranič'e: itogi i perspektivy izučeniia*, (Kazan, 1994), 167.

ecclesiastical pressure, but other governors did not.<sup>16</sup> These principles of non-ecclesiastical and decentralized control over mosques were to remain in effect throughout this period, and were to endure down to 1917.

Following the conquest and annexation of the Kazan khanate, large and extensive Muslim communities came under Russian rule. While the Russian Orthodox Church and Ivan IV evidently conceived of the conquest of Kazan in Christian ideological terms, the transformation of the territory of the former Kazan khanate into a Christian one, cleansed of Muslims and Muslim features, appears only to have been planned for the city of Kazan proper. The earliest Russian legislation concerning mosques dates from the period immediately following the capture of Kazan and applied only to that city's mosques. Immediately after the capture of the city in October of 1552 Ivan IV ordered the city's mosques to be torn down, and all surviving Muslims were expelled from the city, yet before the end of the sixteenth century Muscovite missionaries were bemoaning the fact that both Russians and Muslims were ignoring this policy.<sup>17</sup> These Muslims were settled by Lake Kaban, and their settlement became known in Russian as the *Staraia Tatarskaia Sloboda*. Ivan IV also ordered that henceforth no mosques were to be built in Kazan. By the end of the sixteenth century several mosques had been erected in the Tatar Quarter; we know this because in 1593 the Metropolitan Germogen complained to tsar Fedor Ivanovich that the Tatars had built numerous mosques there in violation of the law decreed by the tsar's father. Evidently the construction of these mosques had been approved by the local Russian authorities, since tsar Fedor then complained to his own governor in Kazan for having allowed the mosques to be built, despite his father's decree.<sup>18</sup>

What this letter from the tsar to his governor makes clear is that already during the sixteenth century the prerogative of regulating mosque construction was retained not by the ecclesiastical authorities, but rather by the local secular authorities. Despite the ebb and flow of the Church's ability to influence religious policy toward Muslims, the civil and military authorities ultimately did not cede

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<sup>16</sup> Cf. Frank, *Islamic Historiography*, 28–33.

<sup>17</sup> Aidarova, "Mecheti i tserkvi," 168.

<sup>18</sup> Malov, "O tatarskikh mechetiakh," 290.

this authority, either to the Russian Orthodox Church or, after 1788, to the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly. The reasons for the unwillingness of the civil and military authorities to fully cede their authority to the Church in the regulation of mosques were in all likelihood at least partially connected to the desire to reduce the potential for religious conflict, especially in areas with large Muslim areas, and especially in frontier regions.

We have little information regarding legislation concerning mosques for the seventeenth century, although we do know that at this time in diplomatic exchanges the Ottomans and Crimean Tatars envoys expressed their displeasure at the Russian authorities, alleging that they were destroying mosques in the Middle Volga region.<sup>19</sup> It was in the eighteenth century that a serious attempt was made on the part of Church authorities to regulate and in effect control mosque construction throughout the Russian empire, which temporarily shifted the regulation of Islamic institutions away from the provincial authorities to the Church authorities. This attempt also coincided with the largest, and in many respects, one of the most successful, Christianization campaigns in the history of Russia. Beginning in 1740, with the formation of the *Kontora Novokreshchenykh Del*, headed by the Archbishop of Kazan, Luka Kanashevich, Orthodox missionaries baptized hundreds of thousands of "pagan" Finno-Ugrians and Chuvashes, and about seven thousand Muslims.<sup>20</sup>

Muslims were clearly targets of the missionaries, but for the most part rather than converting entire communities, as they did among the non-Muslims, they only were able to convert individuals and families within larger Muslim communities. However, another target of the missionaries was mosques, which they saw as an institutional threat to conversion. The legislation supporting this missionary activity also regulated mosque construction, and legalized mosque destruction. This legislation stipulated that existing mosques built without permits be torn down, that mosques serving communities of less than 200 adult males be torn down, as well as all mosques in communities

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<sup>19</sup> Malov, "O tatarskikh mechetiakh," 291–292.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Chantal Lemerrier-Quellejaye, "Les missions orthodoxes en pays musulmans de moyenne-et basse-Volga," *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique* VIII (1967), 369–403; A. N. Grigor'ev, "Khrisianizatsiia nerusskikh narodnostei kak odin iz metodov natsional'noi-kolonial'noi politiki tsarizma v Tatarii," *Materialy po istorii Tatarii* I, (Kazan, 1948), 226–283.

with Christian converts or Russian inhabitants.<sup>21</sup> This new policy, legislating large-scale destruction of mosques, was received and implemented differently in the three major regions of Muslim settlement in Russia, that is, in the Middle Volga region, in Bashkiria, and in Siberia.<sup>22</sup>

The legislation itself initially applied only to Kazan, Voronezh, Astrakhan, Nizhnii Novgorod, and Simbirsk provinces, and it was in the Middle Volga region that the missionaries had their greatest success in converting Muslims, although even here their success was certainly limited. Nevertheless, in Kazan province alone missionaries destroyed 418 mosques out of 536 from between 1740 and 1744.<sup>23</sup> A number of factors facilitated the activities of the missionaries in the Middle Volga region. To begin with, the *Kontora Novokreshchenykh Del* was based in the Middle Volga region, in the city of Sviiazhsk, and was headed by the Archbishop of Kazan. Perhaps more significantly, by the 1740's the region had a large proportion of Russians and was far removed from the more unstable and more Muslim steppe frontier.

At the same time a number of provincial governors sought to delay, or halt the law's implementation in their provinces. In the text of the law itself, we can see the acknowledgment of the desire of the governor of Astrakhan for a clarification, and hence a delay, of policy. The governor apparently wanted to find out if the law applied only to Tatar mosques, since he wanted to protect the mosques of other Muslims under his jurisdiction.<sup>24</sup> However, while this legislation applied to the entire empire, the imperial authorities nevertheless were willing to completely exempt some provinces from the laws.

In Bashkiria, the situation was considerably different from the Middle Volga region's. Bashkiria was very much at the heart of the steppe frontier, and the governor of the region, I. Kirillov, had managed to exclude the missionaries of the *Kontora Novokreshchenykh Del* from conducting missionary activity in his province, either among Muslims or among "pagans." Following the protests of the Ufa

<sup>21</sup> Malov, "O tatarskikh mechetiakh," 297–298.

<sup>22</sup> Although this policy applied to the Lower Volga, i.e., the Astrakhan region, little evidence has come to light describing how the policy was implemented there.

<sup>23</sup> Malov, "O tatarskikh mechetiakh," 297; PSPR 2 ser. 2 t. #662, June 22, 1744.

<sup>24</sup> Malov, "O tatarskikh mechetiakh," 299.

Provincial Chancery in 1744 against implementing a full scale assault against their province's Islamic institutions, the authorities in St. Petersburg passed legislation exempting Bashkiria from the campaign, prohibiting the destruction of mosques in that province.<sup>25</sup> Bashkiria was especially ill-suited to aggressive missionary activity for a number of reasons. First, the region was frequently beset by Bashkir rebellions. An especially severe one had occurred in 1735 and 1736, and had reemerged in 1740. While the rebels often sought to rally support by couching the conflict in religious terms (and this was especially the case in the 1740 rebellion), loyal Muslims were essential not only for keeping the peace in Bashkiria, but in administering and defending the region as well. For example, much of the local Cossack force, as well as the diplomatic corps, was composed of Muslims. Perhaps as many Bashkirs helped the Russians in suppressing the Bashkir rebellions as actually rebelled, and the loyal *'ulamā* was especially instrumental in furthering Russian goals in terms of Russian-Kazakh relations. As a result, the ability of Russia to control Bashkiria and influence the steppe nomads depended rather less on the ability to suppress Muslim rebellions than on the ability to convince enough Muslims in Bashkiria that they were part of a Russian-Muslim partnership, and that within this partnership, the Russian authorities would at least refrain from converting them to Christianity and destroying their mosques. It is no accident then that it was in Bashkiria, that is, in Orenburg and Ufa, that we see the first Russian attempts to regulate and license the *'ulamā* in the 1730's, culminating in the creation of the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly and the institution of the Muftiate sixty years later.<sup>26</sup> In any case, by successfully excluding missionaries from Bashkiria, the authorities were also able to avoid the destruction of mosques as there were virtually no converts to Christianity in Bashkiria's Muslim communities. Nevertheless, a series of imperial edicts directed the authorities in Bashkiria to limit new mosque construction, but supported the authorities' decision to treat the Bashkirs cautiously.

Siberia differed in several important ways from both the Middle Volga region and Bashkiria. In Siberia Muslim populations were essentially restricted to Tobol'sk province, and for the most part their

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<sup>25</sup> Frank, *Islamic Historiography*, 29–30.

<sup>26</sup> Frank, *Islamic Historiography*, 26–28.

settlements were located along that vast area's major rivers and lakes. As in Bashkiria, Muslims, especially "service" Tatars, played an important role in the administration of western Siberia, serving as interpreters, Cossacks, and couriers.<sup>27</sup> However Siberia was also home to the Siberian Bukharans, descendants of Central Asian merchants who had settled in Siberia in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and who had integrated to a degree with the Siberian Tatars. These Bukharans controlled the lucrative caravan trade between Siberia and Central Asia, which kept Siberia supplied with various luxury and food goods. To encourage this lucrative trade, the Russian authorities granted the Bukharans sweeping privileges, resulting in the transformation of the Siberian Bukharans into one of the single most privileged communities, Christian or otherwise, in the whole Russian empire. Encouraging the Central Asian trade, and collecting the tariffs it generated were two important tasks entrusted to the governors in Tobol'sk.<sup>28</sup>

At the same time, a number of factors strengthened the hand of the missionaries in Western Siberia. The baptism of Siberian natives had been an official priority for the imperial government since the beginning of the eighteenth century. A large scale conversion campaign had been begun in Western Siberia under Peter I, when communities of Ostyaks, Voguls, and Tura Tatar Muslims were more or less forcibly baptized. Local missionaries were especially quick to attribute resistance on the part of Ostyak or Vogul tribesmen to the handiwork of their partially imagined counterparts, described as "Muslim missionaries."<sup>29</sup> Tobol'sk was also the seat of an arch-diocese, headed by Sylvester, a militant and aggressive missionary who had already distinguished himself in effecting the baptisms of Tura Tatar communities in the 1720's. Under Sylvester, only about 250 Muslims were actually baptized, yet this was enough to destroy 75

<sup>27</sup> Cf. S. V. Bakhrushin, "Sibirskie sluzhilye tatory v XVII v.," *Istoricheskie zapiski* I (1937), 55–80.

<sup>28</sup> On the Siberian Bukharans cf. O. N. Vilkov, "Bukhartsy i ikh torgovlia v zapadnoi Sibiri v XVIII v.," *Torgovlia gorodov Sibiri kontsa XVI–nachala XX v.*, (Novosibirsk, 1987), 171–214; V. P. Shpaltakov, "Sredneaziatskie torgovye liudi v Sibiri v XVIII–XIX vv.," *Torgovlia gorodov Sibiri kontsa XVI–nachala XX v.*, (Novosibirsk, 1987), 215–224; Kh. Züaev, *Uzbeki v Sibiri*, (Tashkent, 1968).

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Grigorii Novitskii, *Kratkoe opisanie o narode ostiatskom*, (Novosibirsk, 1941), 76, 87–88; I. I. Ogryzko, *Khristianizatsiia narodov Tobol'skogo severa v XVIII v.* (Leningrad, 1941), 62–72; V. G. Kartsov, *Ocherk istorii narodov severo-zapadnoi Sibiri*, (Moscow, 1937), 71–72.

mosques in Tobol'sk district alone, and drive the Muslims out of the city of Tobol'sk proper. This mosque destruction was actively resisted by the officials in the Siberian Chancery, who protested the directives and baptisms to St. Petersburg, and who also delayed their implementation using various bureaucratic stratagems. The local Bukharan leadership similarly petitioned the authorities in St. Petersburg. Nevertheless, Sylvester managed to continue his activities, even forcing the conversion of several Bashkir communities under the jurisdiction of his arch-diocese, eliciting protests from the governor of Orenburg, I. I. Nepliev.<sup>30</sup>

We are fortunate that the German academician, G. F. Miller, passed through these Muslim regions of Tobol'sk district in 1740, and left us with an account of several mosques, before many of them were destroyed in the subsequent Christianization campaigns. During a journey up the Ob' and Irtysh Rivers, from Berezov to Tobol'sk he mentioned eight mosques that he saw in Muslim villages along the Irtysh River. In some cases, relatively small communities would maintain mosques, such as Verkhnie Susgunskie iurty (Kusgun aul in Miller's romanized version), which contained fourteen households, and the mosque in Chalchinskie iurty (Tschaltscha aul) was supported by a mere four households.<sup>31</sup> Some of the larger communities supporting a mosque consisted of as many as forty households, such as Shtamanskie iurty (Schtaman aul).<sup>32</sup> Miller also mentions a mixed Muslim and Russian village, Aremzanskie iurty (Arimdsjan aul), that maintained two mosques, on either side of the Irtysh River.<sup>33</sup> Since it was common for Siberian Muslims to maintain winter and summer villages on opposite sides of these major rivers, the existence of two mosques for a single community may have been relatively common.<sup>34</sup> In any case, it bears mentioning that according to the guidelines for mosque destruction of 1742, the presence of Russians in Aremzanskie iurty would have necessitated the destruction of those two mosques.

While most of the sources in the first half of the eighteenth century focused on their mosque destruction, there was some degree of

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<sup>30</sup> Malov, "O tatarskikh mechetiakh," 301–303.

<sup>31</sup> Elert (ed.) *Sibir' XVIII veka*, 280, 283.

<sup>32</sup> Elert (ed.) *Sibir' XVIII veka*, 280.

<sup>33</sup> Elert (ed.) *Sibir' XVIII veka*, 279.

<sup>34</sup> Elert (ed.) *Sibir' XVIII veka*, 75.

mosque construction in both the Middle Volga region and Bashkiria. We know that a stone mosque was built, apparently in the 1720's, in Kazan's Staraiia Tatarskaia Sloboda, although it seems to have been one of those torn down in the 1740's, since in a petition to St. Petersburg missionaries identified it as an illegally built mosque. The first mosque in Istärlibash (Sterlibashevo), in central Bashkiria, was build in 1722 by Tatar migrants, and its first *imām* was to become the father of the Muḥammad-Jān al-Ḥusayn, whom Catherine II appointed as the first Mufti in Orenburg.<sup>35</sup> Throughout the nineteenth century, and down to 1922, Istärlibash was to be one of the centers of Islamic education and Sufism in the Russian empire. In 1745, at the height of the mosque destruction program in the Middle Volga region, the Russian authorities established a Muslim merchant colony near Orenburg in the town of Qarghalı (Seitovskii Posad), and granted these Muslims the right to build a stone mosque. By the end of the eighteenth century Qarghalı was to become the main center for Islamic learning in the Russian empire.

The destruction of mosques in Siberia and the Middle Volga region eventually came to have an effect on Muslims in Bashkiria. Although an imperial decree spared mosques in this region from destruction, and effectively banned missionaries from converting local Muslims, as well as non-Muslims, the bonds between Muslim communities in these three areas naturally crossed internal Russian administrative boundaries, with the result that the *‘ulamā*, which united these communities as Muslim communities began to feel themselves under pressure. In such conditions, it should not be surprising that some Muslims reacted violently. In 1755 yet another major revolt broke out among the Muslims in Bashkiria. This short-lived rebellion is commonly categorized as a “Bashkir” rebellion, but its leader, Mullā Bāṭırshāh was a Mishar, a member of a community that formed a large part of the irregular Cossack force on the steppe frontier. Furthermore, Bāṭırshāh was one of the four Russian-appointed *ākhūnds* in Bashkiria, that is a high-ranking legal expert whom the Russians depended upon to administer Islamic law for its Muslim population in Bashkiria. By 1756 the rebellion had been suppressed, and Bāṭırshāh incarcerated in an imperial fortress near St. Petersburg. Nevertheless the rebellion seemed to have convinced the imperial authorities that a

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<sup>35</sup> Tūqāyef, *Tārīkh-i Istärlibāsh*, 4–5.

reevaluation and regulation of their policies toward Muslims throughout the empire was in order.<sup>36</sup>

In 1756 the imperial authorities passed new legislation allowing Muslim villages in the Middle Volga region with at least 200 or more male inhabitants to build mosques freely, regardless of whether a new mosque was being built or a destroyed mosque was being replaced. Although the new law stipulated that mosques could still not be built in communities with New Converts or Russians, it provided a legal mechanism allowing Muslim communities an avenue to build their mosques, if not a legal right to. From 1756 until the accession of Catherine II numerous Muslim communities began to take advantage of the new law and receive authorization from provincial administrators to build mosques.<sup>37</sup>

The accession of Catherine II to the imperial throne in 1762 was to permanently change the relationship between Russia's Muslim communities and the imperial authorities. One of Catherine's first acts concerning Muslims was to shut down the Office of New Converts' Affairs, and deprive it of legal status. However, relations with Muslims were to change dramatically in 1767. In that year Catherine II convened her Legislative Commission, in which many Muslim delegates participated. Religious concerns were of special importance to these delegates, and in their petitions occasional mention is made of mosques. Bashkir delegates were particularly apprehensive of religious persecution. The Bashkir delegates from Ufa province stated that they needed a mosque in every village, since they were obligated to pray five times a day. In addition, they made very specific requests concerning the *'ulamā*. The Bashkir delegates from Ufa and Iset provinces and the *yasaq* Tatars of Ufa province claimed that the *'ulamā* were not sufficiently numerous for their needs, and they requested that three, rather than two people be appointed for each mosque: one *mullā* (presumably the *imām*), one *azančî* (i.e. *mu'adhdhin*, the person who calls the faithful to prayer) and one *mujāwir* (caretaker) should be appointed to each mosque and be exempted from all service. According to Tashkin, the *'ulamā* in the trans-Kama

<sup>36</sup> Cf. A. P. Chuloshnikov, *Bashkirskoe vosstanie 1755 g.*, (Moscow – Leningrad, 1940); I. A. Giliarov, “Mulla Batyrsha i ego pis'mo imperatritse Elizavete Petrovne,” *Iz istorii Al'met'evskogo regiona* vyp.1, D. M. Iskhakov ed., (Al'met'evsk, 1999), 129–140.

<sup>37</sup> Malov, “O tatarskikh mechetiakh,” 318–320.

region were already exempt from some forms of service if they were affiliated with a mosque.<sup>38</sup>

Relations between Catherine II and the Volga-Ural *‘ulamā* continued to improve when in 1767, during a visit to Kazan, she permitted Muslims there to build a stone mosque. This mosque, which is one of the rare examples of an Italianate baroque mosque, is the oldest standing mosque in Kazan, and is today known as the “Marjānī Mosque” after its most famous *imām*.<sup>39</sup> This act seems to have initiated a wave of mosque construction, since after 1767 local authorities would not interfere with mosque construction, nor would they allow local Church authorities to interfere. The governor of Siberia allowed mosques to be built in this way, and in the cities of Kazan and Kasimov Muslims simply bypassed the Church authorities and obtained verbal permission from the administration to build their mosques.<sup>40</sup> In 1769 Catherine ordered her governor of Siberia, Chicherin, to build mosques for the Bukharans in Siberia, clearly an attempt to mend relations with that wealthy and privileged community.<sup>41</sup> In 1773 Catherine issued her “Toleration of All Faiths” edict. As Alan Fisher has noted, the purpose of the edict was mainly to institute a policy of toleration toward Islam; the most important result of this edict for the *‘ulamā* was that it allowed the virtually unimpeded construction of mosques, stipulating that Church authorities could not interfere in Muslim religious matters or in mosque construction.<sup>42</sup> Despite this edict, Church authorities could retain a degree of influence in allowing the construction of mosques; for example, when in 1805 the Mufti Muḥammad-Jān al-Ḥusayn himself petitioned A. Beklemishev, the governor-general of Moscow for permission to build a stone mosque in that city. This petition was rejected by Beklemishev on the urging of Platon, the Metropolitan of Moscow, on the grounds that the mosque could act as a “temptation” to Christians.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Tashkin, *Inorodtsy*, 230.

<sup>39</sup> Marjānī, *Mustafād al-akhbār* II, 12–13; Khalitov, *Arkhitektura mecheti Kazani*, 74–75; Salikhov and Khayrutdinov, *Tatar khalqining*, 66–67.

<sup>40</sup> Malov, “O tatarskikh mechetiakh,” 15–16.

<sup>41</sup> This legislation also banned ecclesiastical authorities from conducting missionary activity among Siberian Muslims; cf. PSPR 3 ser. 2 t. August 20, 1769. This legislation was reaffirmed in 1789; cf. PSPR 3 ser. 3 t. March 5, 1789.

<sup>42</sup> Alan Fisher, “Enlightened Despotism and Islam under Catherine II,” *Slavic Review* XXVII (1967), 545–546.

<sup>43</sup> Alov and Vladimirov, *Islam v Rossii*, 39–40. A mosque was finally built in Moscow in 1823.

As we have seen, throughout Russian history Muslims formed a crucial element in the imperial government's administration and diplomacy on the steppe frontier and Central Asia. This partnership remained in effect, braving the storms of the 1740's and 50's, but under Catherine II we see the Muslim religious elites officially inducted into the Russian administrative apparatus. Catherine's most consequential and long-lasting initiative was the creation of the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly in 1788. Headed by a mufti and a council of judges, this body was designed to regulate the *'ulamā* in the Volga-Ural region and Siberia, specifically *imāms*, *mu'adhdhins*, and *mudarisses*, and to oversee the administration of Islamic law, especially concerning inheritance and life-cycle rituals. Strictly speaking, the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly was not concerned with mosque construction; legally mosque construction remained an affair between provincial authorities and the local community, but every *imām* and *mu'adhdhin* was affiliated with a specific mosque and *maḥalla*.

During the reign of Catherine II the imperial authorities began to themselves organize and fund mosque construction. We have already seen that in 1767 Catherine authorized the governor of Siberia to build mosques for the local Bukharans; in 1782 a new, more ambitious program was funded to build a series of mosques along the Kazakh steppe frontier in Bashkiria and Western Siberia. For this plan Catherine appropriated 20,000 rubles. These mosques were built between 1783 and 1786 in the towns of Orenburg, Verkhneural'sk, Troitsk, and Petropavlovsk. These large stone mosques, staffed by *'ulamā* from the Kazan region, were built for two clear political purposes. The first was to encourage the Kazakh khans of the Junior and Middle Hordes to settle in closer proximity to Russia, where they could be more easily influenced politically. Secondly, Catherine and her advisors hoped to attract commercial activity to the towns where these mosques were located. The selection of the Menovoi Dvor (Central Market) as the site for the mosque in Orenburg was certainly deliberate, and in effect all of the towns where these mosques were built became important commercial centers in their own right for the steppe trade and for the caravan trade with Central Asia.<sup>44</sup> It bears mentioning that much of this trade remained in the

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<sup>44</sup> Cf. A. Dobrosmyslov, "Zaboty imperatritsy Ekateriny II o prosveshchenii kirgizov," *Trudy Orenburgskoi Uchenoi Arkhivnoi Komissii* IX (1902), 51-63.

hands of Russia's Muslim subjects throughout the nineteenth century. In addition to becoming commercial centers, these cities, especially Orenburg and Troitsk, also became important centers of Muslim learning, and remained so down to 1917.

*Mosque construction policies 1789–1917*

The system that emerged for regulating mosque construction in the eighteenth century remained in effect until 1917. In general terms, the bureaucratic procedure for building a mosque depended on whether the building was funded by the Russian state or by the local Muslim community. The funding of mosque construction by the state began under the reign of Catherine II, who, as we have seen, appropriated funds to build a number of mosques along the Kazakh steppe frontier, and also funded a mosque in Tobol'sk. However, state-funded mosque construction continued during the first half of the nineteenth century, and a number of recent studies allow us to examine three such mosques, built in the Siberian towns of Petropavlovsk, Omsk, and in the factory town of Izhevsk in Vyatka province. Interest in mosque construction and design reached the highest levels of authority in imperial Russia. In 1829 tsar Nicholas I himself approved a single design for all future mosques in the Russian Empire, and a number of mosques in the southern part of Nizhnii Novgorod province were built according to this plan.<sup>45</sup> Let us then examine the particulars of state-funded mosque construction projects in the cities of Petropavlovsk, Omsk, and Izhevsk.

As we have seen, Petropavlovsk was one of the towns singled out in 1782 for the construction of a mosque for the benefit of trade and relations with the Kazakhs. In that year Catherine appropriated 5,000 rubles for the construction of this mosque, but construction began only in 1792. The authorities commissioned the Russian architect V. I. Bazhenov to design the mosque. Bazhenov, who had studied architecture in Paris and had spent time in Italy as well, was also the author of the plans for the Kremlin Palace in Moscow. The large stone mosque that Bazhenov designed in Petropavlovsk was located, just as in Orenburg, by the town's commercial center. This

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<sup>45</sup> Idrisov et al. *Iz istorii*, 17. For facsimiles of this design cf. Zaitseva, "Pervaia mechet' g. Izhevskia", 240, and Idrisov et al. *Iz istorii*, 20.

mosque was struck by lightning and damaged in 1801, and was abandoned by the Muslim community. Subsequently they built three small wooden mosques, although the original mosque was rebuilt in the 1820's.<sup>46</sup> The mosque in Omsk was built somewhat later, in 1829. In 1824 Omsk became the capital of the governor-generalship of Western Siberia. After local Kazakh leaders requested that the governor general, P. M. Kantsevich build them a mosque, Kantsevich agreed and asked that the Kazakhs provide the funding for the construction. When the Kazakh nomads were unable to raise the necessary amount, Kantsevich made a request before Siberian Committee in St. Petersburg to fund the mosque. In his request he noted that as a result of the commerce the mosque would attract, the treasury could be fully reimbursed within two to three years. The Committee appropriated 59,439 rubles and 95 kopecks (an enormous sum, even by the standards of the most expensive mosques) in November of 1824. The money was to be supplied in installments over three years, beginning in 1826. Kantsevich vetoed the first design for the mosque, and ordered his Chief of Engineers, Colonel S. A. Bulygin, to redesign the mosque, and Bulygin's appointment was approved in July of 1826 by the Grand Prince Mikhail Pavlovich, the Inspector General of Engineers. Kantsevich likewise appointed Colonel S. B. Bronevskii, *nachal'nik* for Omsk *oblast'*, to determine a location for the mosque. However, the Host Chancery of the Siberian Cossack Host protested the original site, arguing that the Host was planning to build a church on the very same site. A second site was selected, but this site was opposed by the local Muslims, who felt that it was too far removed from where they resided. Finally, it was decided to build the mosque on the same square as where the Cossacks wanted their church, but on a different lot. Actual construction began in 1827, and was performed by a labor battalion of the Siberian Corps. When the original stockpile of building supplies ran out, a Lieutenant-Colonel was dispatched to Irkutsk with a company of troops to fetch more supplies. Final work was completed on the mosque in 1829.<sup>47</sup> The examples of the mosques in Petropavlovsk, and especially Omsk, are remarkable in that the entire process of their construction was for all intents and purposes initiated and

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<sup>46</sup> Lebedeva, "O stroitel'stve mechetei v zapadnoi Sibiri," 97-98.

<sup>47</sup> Lebedeva, "O stroitel'stve mechetei v zapadnoi Sibiri," 98-100; Ogorodnikova, "Iz istorii stroitel'stva Omskoi mecheti," 113-115.

carried out by the local civil, and especially military, authorities. The funds expended for their construction were quite substantial, although part of those funds were no doubt intended for the maintenance of the mosque and of its staff.

If financial interests led to the building of mosques in Petropavlovsk and Omsk, then in Izhevsk the authorities were encouraged to fund a mosque for different reasons. In the first half of the nineteenth century Izhevsk, or Izhevskii Zavod as it was then known, was one the Russian empire's most important armaments factories. By 1840 the city had a population of about 14,000, which included Russians, Germans, Jews, Udmurts, and about 500 Muslims. These Muslim factory workers first petitioned the administration of the armaments factory in 1839 to build them a mosque at government expense. The administration approved of the request and forwarded it to St. Petersburg, to the Inspector General of Arms Factories, a certain Shtaden. In his petition the factory commander noted that the Muslims in Izhevsk numbered 450, including 250 adult males (thereby meeting the number required to build a new mosque). According to him, the Muslims requested state funding because many of them were performing military service, because they were not wealthy, and because they were few in number. Furthermore, the petition noted, perhaps echoing the Muslims' petition to the administration, that the lack of a mosque was resulting in moral degradation in the community, and affecting the quality of their service to the state. For building the mosque, the commander requested 4,997 paper rubles and 69 kopecks, as well as an additional fifty rubles a year for the community's *ukaznyi mulla*, a certain Musa Mushkin.<sup>48</sup> The authorities in St. Petersburg approved the request and appropriated the money, and by 1846 the mosque, built of wood with a stone foundation, was completed. In this way the government funded a mosque for Muslim soldiers and factory workers in an armaments factory.

In a few cases the Russian government would not pay for the construction of a mosque, but would nevertheless pay for the mosque's upkeep. A case in point is Orenburg's Karavansarai Mosque. This mosque was built in 1846 entirely at the expense of local Muslims, although the Russian state provided the salaries of its *imām*, Gataulla

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<sup>48</sup> Zaitseva, "Pervaia mechet' g. Izhevsk," 241–242.

Altynguzhin (according to the Russian spelling) and its *mu'adhdhin*. The state paid for the repair, maintenance, and heating not only of this Karavansarai mosque, but of all of the stone mosques built by Catherine II.<sup>49</sup>

Of the thousands of mosques built in the Volga-Ural region and Siberia before 1917 only a very small number were built or otherwise subsidized by the Russian state. Although no figures are available, in all likelihood such government-funded mosques probably numbered less than 30 in all. Even in the city of St. Petersburg, with its large numbers of Muslims in the Imperial Guard, Navy, and other armed services, the authorities never funded a single mosque; rather, the capital's first official mosque was only built in 1909, substantially subsidized the Emir of Bukhara.<sup>50</sup> Thus, nearly all mosques, whether funded by wealthy merchants or by humble peasants, were built at the expense of their communities.

Throughout the nineteenth century the permits and licenses for building mosques were the responsibility of the provincial authorities, although in some communities, such as among the Siberian Cossacks, they required permission from both the imperial authorities administering the Kazakh steppe and from the administration of the Siberian Cossack Host.<sup>51</sup> However, in the vast majority of cases the Muslims had to obtain permission from the provincial authorities. In discussing mosque construction in Nizhnii Novgorod province, Idrisov et al. have determined that the procedure involved a number of stages. For the most part, the procedure for obtaining permission to build a mosque was essentially identical to the procedure for installing an *imām*. The first stage consisted of the Muslim community submitting their document, called a *prigovor*, announcing that they were intending to fund and build a mosque. This document had to be signed by at least two thirds of the community's male heads of households. Usually the community as a whole did not initiate the project, but rather it was a few prominent personalities who took upon themselves the formal and actual obligations and financial outlay. This was the case in a number of villages in Nizhnii Novgorod province's Sergach district, such as Pitsa, Gribanovo, Kliushishchi, and others.

<sup>49</sup> Azamatov, *Orenburgskoe magometanskoe dukhovnoe upravlenie*, 102–103.

<sup>50</sup> Alov and Vladimirov, *Islam v Rossii*, 41–42.

<sup>51</sup> Andreev, "Kazaki-musul'mane," 6–7.

The provincial authorities would then verify the *prigovor* to make sure that: 1) it was an original document, 2) that the signatures did in fact correspond to senior householders having the right to vote, that the number of signatures corresponded to two-thirds, and that there were at least 200 adult males in the *mahalla*, 3) that there was sufficient legal cause to build the mosque, 4) that the new mosque would not be a “temptation” to Christians and baptized Tatars, and 5) that the community had sufficient funds to both build a new mosque and adequately tend existing mosques.

A potential obstacle to the building of additional mosques was an insufficient number of parishioners to fill the new mosque. The basis of the law was legislation dating to 1744 that required there to be 200 male “revised souls” for a new mosque to be built. Similarly a lack of sufficient names on a *prigovor* was often sufficient grounds for rejection. Muslims were also expected to have a legitimate reason to want to build a new mosque. The most common reason cited in the petitions was a lack of space to hold all the worshippers in the existing mosque due to a growth in population, and distance (i.e. the parishioners could not hear the call to prayer). At the same time there is evidence that some provincial governors were not concerned with enforcing this particular point. D. Azamatov has shown that in 1851 out of the 1,663 mosques in Orenburg province, 730, or 43.9 percent, had less than 200 male heads of households in their congregation.<sup>52</sup>

With respect to the stipulation that sufficient funds be available, in fact the authorities were less interested in who actually paid or whether the money actually existed; rather, they primarily wanted to see a list with the names of those responsible for providing a sufficient amount of money.<sup>53</sup> There were cases of refusal to permit the construction of a mosque on financial grounds. In 1913 the community in the village of Asanovo, in Simbirsk province’s Buinsk district had been unable to obtain a permit to build a mosque. Among the reasons the authorities gave for their refusal was the congregation’s poverty. It was only in 1927 that they finally succeeded in building their mosque.<sup>54</sup>

Concerning the “temptation” of Christians and baptized Tatars,

<sup>52</sup> Azamatov, *Orenburgskoe magometanskoe dukhovnoe upravlenie*, 99.

<sup>53</sup> Idrisov et al. *Iz istorii*, 39–41.

<sup>54</sup> Braslavskii, *Islam v Chuvashii*, 111–112.

Muslims were legally free to practice their religion so long as it did not harm the Orthodox Church. Thus, in places where there were churches or Christian communities, Muslims were obligated to request an attestation from the local Orthodox clergy that their desire to build a mosque would not be harmful to the Orthodox Church. Idrisov et al. mention one such attestation in the Nizhnii Novgorod provincial archive. This document, written in 1902, is the attestation of Nazarii, the Bishop of Nizhnii Novgorod and Arzamas, allowing the Muslims of the village of Urga, Vasil'ev district, to build a mosque.<sup>55</sup> However there were occasions when ecclesiastical authorities would try to exercise its prerogatives to prevent the construction of a new mosque. For example, in 1904, after the Muslim community in the district center of Menzelinsk in Ufa province successfully petitioned the provincial authorities in Ufa to allow them to build a new mosque and create a new *mahalla*, the Archbishop of Ufa and Menzelinsk wrote to the governor of Ufa, I. N. Sokolovskii, urging him to withdraw his authorization to build the mosque or register a new *mahalla*. The Archbishop felt such a mosque would be a temptation to Tatar Christian converts, and expressed his opinion that there were not enough male Muslims to warrant creating a new mosque. The governor yielded to the Archbishop and withdrew his authorization, even though the number of Muslims was 250, exceeding the 200 male minimum required by the law. The Muslims of Menzelinsk appealed the governor's decision to the Senate in St. Petersburg, and in 1907 the Senate overturned the governor's action as unlawful. The Archbishop continued his opposition, but by then a new governor, A. S. Kliucharev, upheld the Senate's decision, and granted the Muslims authorization to build their mosque. The mosque was finally erected in 1910, six years after they had first received permission from the provincial authorities.<sup>56</sup> Even in Buinsk district (Simbirsk province), and Cheboksary and Tsivil'sk districts (Kazan province), where the Muslim population often lived in close proximity to, or in mixed settlements with Christians, refusal to allow a mosque on the grounds of potential "temptation" to local Christians was rare, but not unheard of. When the Simbirsk provincial authorities denied the petition of the village of Asanovo to build

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<sup>55</sup> Idrisov et al. *Iz istorii*, 39–41.

<sup>56</sup> Salikhov and Khayretdinov, *Tatar khalqining*, 227–228.

a mosque, one of the reasons was the presence of Chuvash Christians in the village. When the village of Tatarskoe Al'bus'-Siurbeevo, also in Buinsk district, petitioned for permission to build a mosque in 1898, its request was denied on the grounds of potential temptation to nearby Chuvash. The villagers finally received permission to build their mosque in 1918.<sup>57</sup>

Another matter that could complicate the verification of a request to build a mosque was the condition of existing mosques and the agreement of their *imāms* to building a new mosque. There were two major contradictions here: the number of parishioners (and consequently the amount of income that remained in the congregation) and the transfer of resources to another congregation. If the builder himself funded the mosque, then many complications were avoided, but often this situation exacerbated the problem within the community, and conflicts would take place between *imāms* over parishioners. For example, in the village of Kliuchishche two *mullās* came into conflict because one was supposedly attracting wealthy parishioners to his congregation. These sorts of conflicts were even further exacerbated when a wealthy mosque builder would seek to place his own relatives in the mosque.

Thus, the first stage was completed with the approval or denial for building the mosque. The next step was to obtain a building permit (*stroitel'nyi bilet*). At this point the two copies of the drawings were submitted to the Building Division of the Nizhnii Novgorod Provincial Administration (*Stroitel'noe otделение Nizhegorodskogo Gubernskogo Pravleniia*), who examined it and who, if they approved it, would issue a building permit. The only complication was the so-called “20 *Sazhens* law” which stipulated that no residential dwelling could be less than 20 *sazhens* from a new mosque. This stipulation was intended to limit damage in case of fire, and this law was often a stumbling block in the construction process. In cases when this was not observed, the construction could be demolished, and the builder fined, or even arrested if he could not pay.<sup>58</sup>

The procedure just described for Nizhnii Novgorod province appears to have been in effect throughout the Volga-Ural region and Siberia. This procedure is evident in discussions of mosque con-

<sup>57</sup> Braslavskii, *Islam v Chuvashii*, 112, 128–129.

<sup>58</sup> Idrisov et al. *Iz istorii*, 47.

struction in Kazan, Vyatka, and Ufa provinces,<sup>59</sup> and as we shall see, in Novouzensk district as well.

### 3. MOSQUES IN NOVOUZENSK DISTRICT

Al-Īlmīnī discusses in varying detail nineteen mosques in Novouzensk district, as well as a number of mosques in neighboring jurisdictions serving Kazakh, Ural Cossack, Bashkir, and Kazan Tatar communities. These nineteen include five each in the villages of Altī Ata, Ilmin, and Iske Özen, three in the village of Safarqa, and one in the town of Novouzensk. Outside of Novouzensk district al-Īlmīnī mentions two mosques in the Kazakh Inner Horde, in the villages of Novaia Kazanka and Talovka, as well as one on the territory the Ural Cossack Host, in the Cossack settlement of Yalpaqtal. In neighboring Ural'sk province he mentions a Cossack mosque in Chizha Pervaia and a Bashkir mosque in the village of Birqazan, which was abandoned after 1873. Thus, the work contains discussions of a total of 24 mosques. Al-Īlmīnī's thoroughness concerning the Altata and Bol'shoi Uzen' Valley notwithstanding, there appear to have been at least three other mosques in Novouzensk district that do not appear in his narrative. Novouzensk district was a very large district and these mosques were some distance from the areas al-Īlmīnī and his sources were familiar with. In a publication of the Ministry of Internal Affairs from 1883, which lists the mosques in Russia, the Crimea, and Poland, we find three additional mosques listed in Novouzensk district. The first of these was located in the village of Latoshkinka, which was located near the Volga River in the southwestern part of the district and, and we have seen, was a community of North Caucasus highlanders resettled there by the imperial authorities during the first half of the nineteenth century. Another small settlement was a village called Latyshevka. Finally, the third mosque was located in the farmstead of a certain Prince Akhmat-Girai Chingiz-Khan, undoubtedly a settlement owned, or formerly owned by a Kazakh Chingisid khan from the Inner Horde. Presumably

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<sup>59</sup> Cf. Salikhov and Khayretdinov, *Tatar khalqining*. passim; Braslavskii, *Islam v Chuvashii*, 45-48.

this settlement was located in the extreme southern part of the district, to the west of the Malyi Uzen' River.<sup>60</sup>

For the Novouzensk region, it is unclear when the first official mosque was built. The oldest Muslim communities, the Bashkirs, probably had their own mosques already before the arrival of Muslim colonists to the area. Muslim Ural Cossacks came to the area at some point between 1803 and 1813, but al-Īlmīnī gives no indication as to the history of their mosques in their original settlement of Glinianskii Forpost. The earliest published information on the number of mosques in Novouzensk district dates from 1844, when A. Leopoldov noted the presence of six mosques in Novouzensk district.<sup>61</sup> By 1858 the number of mosques for Novouzensk district had grown to twelve.<sup>62</sup> In the publication of the Ministry of Internal Affairs mentioned above, that lists by village the total number of mosques in European Russia and Siberia, we see seventeen mosques listed for Novouzensk district: five in the village of Altī Ata (Altata), four in Iske Özen (Osinov Gai), three in Ilmin (Verkhazevka) and two in Safarqa (Pendel'ka-Novaia), plus the three mosques mentioned above that do not appear in al-Īlmīnī's narrative. In addition, this publication also mentions the one mosque in the Cossack settlement of Yalpaqtal (Slomikhinskaia Stanitsa), in Ural'sk province.<sup>63</sup>

*The role and function of the mosque in the village*

Al-Īlmīnī organized his history as a sequential account of the mosques in Novouzensk district. His decision to focus on mosques and their respective *mahallas* reflect the position of the mosque itself in local Muslims' perceptions of their own community. As B. Kalimullin has noted in the case of Bashkir mosques, these buildings were significant both in their own right, and as symbols of Muslim status. He notes that a well-built and important mosque was a source of pride for the village's inhabitants and an especially beautiful or architecturally interesting mosque was often known well beyond the boundaries of the village. Erecting a mosque involved the entire community in

<sup>60</sup> *Al'favitnye spiski; Samarskaia letopis'* I, 167–168.

<sup>61</sup> Leopoldov. "Vzgliad na Novouzenskii okrug," 34.

<sup>62</sup> Werth, *Subjects for Empire*, 88.

<sup>63</sup> *Al'favitnye spiski*, 98, 136, 238, 256.

close participation from beginning to end.<sup>64</sup> The mosque was the primary and most conspicuous symbol of the community's status as Muslim, displaying to members of the community and outsiders, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, the presence of an active and committed community of Muslims. The importance of maintaining such a symbol was perhaps especially meaningful to the Muslims of Novouzensk district when we remember that they formed a minority, even at the local level.

Besides making such a categorical statement of affiliation to Islam, mosques were also important symbols bearing significant local meaning. For the most part mosques in the Russian empire were built entirely on the initiative and with the material support of the local Muslim community. Their construction and maintenance were entirely the responsibility of the local community, and all members of the community were expected to contribute. Furthermore, mosques were the largest public buildings in these communities, and as such necessitated the largest collective outlay of resources. The construction of a new mosque or the enlargement or renovation of an old one was a major undertaking for these communities, and the successful undertaking of such a project was the source of considerable local pride, and visibly demonstrated the commitment of the community to its Muslim status, and God's blessings given to the same community.<sup>65</sup> It is this more local significance of the mosque that attracts al-Īlmīnī's attention.

As we saw in Chapter One, the significance of the very physical presence of a mosque, even an abandoned one, becomes evident at the very beginning of his narrative, when al-Īlmīnī identifies the stone mausoleum at the headwaters of the Altata River, and thereby establishes the "Islamic" source of that river. But in addition to such abstract and symbolic significance, mosques served an important function as public buildings. They were often located in the center of the village or *maḥalla* and local Muslims would, when possible, come to the mosque for the five daily prayers, and the adult men of the village would naturally assemble at the mosque for the Friday prayers and the *imām's* sermon. It is possible that mosques were also used for assemblies, although when al-Īlmīnī does mention assemblies,

<sup>64</sup> Kalimullin, *Arkhitekturnye pamiatniki Bashkirii* III, 7.

<sup>65</sup> Kalimullin draws the same conclusion for Bashkiria; cf. Kalimullin, *Arkhitekturnye pamiatniki Bashkirii* III, 5, 7.

they are usually held in the house of a notable, who often hosts a feast in conjunction with the assembly. It also does not appear that mosques were used for teaching, at least in Novouzensk district, since separate buildings, either private homes or specially designated buildings, would be set aside expressly for the purpose of teaching children or *shāgirds*.

Curiously, al-Īlmīnī makes no distinction between the two major types of mosques that existed in Russia, namely the Friday mosque, known in Russian sources as “*sobornaia mechet*” and in Islamic sources as “*jāmi*” and the daily mosque, known in Russian sources as “*piatiremennaia mechet*.” Each village had a single Friday mosque, and worshippers from various *maḥallas* would come to that mosque on Fridays. The mosques of the other *maḥallas* were daily mosques, and in principle worshippers would attend those mosques five times a day, except for Friday prayers. In principle, the *imām* of a Friday mosque also held the title of *khaṭīb*, meaning that he had the right to perform the *khuṭba* on Fridays. Furthermore, whereas the construction of an ordinary mosque required 200 male heads of households, a Friday mosque required 300.<sup>66</sup> Nevertheless al-Īlmīnī does not distinguish a specific mosque as being a Friday mosque anywhere in his history, and it is possible that, at least in Novouzensk district, the distinction did not exist, or was sufficiently minor not to warrant notice.

Al-Īlmīnī discusses to a limited degree the earliest mosques in the region. However, since his accounts are based largely on oral and eyewitness accounts, the earliest period of settlement was to a large degree beyond the mnemonic reach of most of his informants. For example, we are told that the earliest mosque in Altū Ata’s Fourth *maḥalla* was a small wooden building lacking either a minaret or *mihṛāb*.<sup>67</sup> The earliest mosque in Safarqa, built in 1841, or soon after, was reportedly made of mud-bricks and had a roof made of stones.<sup>68</sup> Similarly, the earliest mosques in Imin, which was settled at the same time as Safarqa, were also made out of mud-bricks<sup>69</sup> and one of the first mosques in Iske Özen was reportedly made out of sod

<sup>66</sup> Azamatov, *Orenburgskoe magometanskoe dukhovnoe upravlenie*, 97.

<sup>67</sup> TAA fol. 21b; a *mihṛāb* is the conical niche or its representation located inside of a mosque and indicating the direction of Mecca.

<sup>68</sup> TAA fol. 31a.

<sup>69</sup> TAA fols. 41a, 65a, 69a.

(*chirām*).<sup>70</sup> These modest structures, made for the most part out of locally obtained material, probably did not require the kind of financial and labor outlays that the later mosques did, and which are described in much greater detail by al-Īlmīnī. Nevertheless it bears notice that mosques were built soon after the settlement of the region by these colonists, at a time of certain material hardship. Under such conditions, the appearance of any sort of mosque was certainly a testament to the community's commitment to its Muslim institutions.

*The decision to build a new mosque*

The construction of a new mosque, or the renovation or enlargement of an old one, was a major undertaking for the community, and was embarked upon when the old mosque could no longer effectively serve the community. The most immediate reason for the replacement of a mosque was when the original mosque burnt down or was otherwise damaged. Al-Īlmīnī only mentions one case when a mosque burnt down, in this case in the village of Iske Özen's Fourth *maḥalla*.<sup>71</sup> In the same village's Second *maḥalla* we are told how that mosque, popularly known as the Shāyib Mosque, was originally built at the edge of a ravine, but because the ground underneath it washed away, its *mīhrāb* was pulled out and "it was left as if there was air underneath it."<sup>72</sup> Such emergencies appear to have been rare since similar cases are not mentioned for the region's other villages. Most commonly a new mosque was built or an old one enlarged when it became too small to comfortably hold its worshippers. Lack of space or an aging mosque is cited as the reason for new construction in almost every *maḥalla* in Novouzensk district. Of course, in some cases, such as in the city of Novouzensk itself in 1895, a mosque was built by the community because there was none there previously to serve the community. New mosques were

<sup>70</sup> TAA fol. 89a.

<sup>71</sup> TAA fol. 90a; Idrisov et al. note that in Nizhnii Novgorod province it was common for mosques to burn down, especially those of poorer communities, cf. Idrisov et al., *Iz istorii*, 47; Ridā'addīn Fakhraddīn ūghlī reports that a number of mosques in Seitovskii Posad also burned down. The Third Mosque burned down twice, first in 1857/58, and again in 1885. The Fourth Mosque burned down in 1857, and the Fifth Mosque burned down in 1815; cf. Fakhraddīn ūghlī, *Sa'id*, 20, 23, 24–25.

<sup>72</sup> TAA fol. 87a.

also required when an entire *maḥalla* migrated. For example, drought caused the entire village of Altı Ata to migrate to a well-watered site by two nearby lakes, one named Aq Qosh and the other Ozin Kūl.<sup>73</sup> Similarly, the Muslim Cossacks of Yalpaqtal built their stone mosque there after being expelled from their original village of Glinianskii Forpost, which the Imperial authorities ruled in 1873 as being illegally located on Kazakh land. Another reason for the building of a new mosque was the creation of a new *maḥalla*. As we have seen in a previous chapter, the creation of a separate *maḥalla* could be the source for considerable prestige for the notable who was able to create his own *maḥalla*, and in many cases the pretext for petitioning to create it was the overcrowding of the mosque in the original *maḥalla*. In any case, the creation of a new *maḥalla* necessarily involved the creation of a new mosque.

The decision to build a new mosque was almost always a collective one made in a gathering of the community's notables, elders, religious leaders, and other important men. In the first half of the nineteenth century, when mosques were generally modest buildings made out of local materials, it occasionally happened that a wealthy notable would build a mosque on his own initiative. This occurred, for example, in the village of Safarqa, when two notables, known as the Twin Ḥājīīs, simply declared their desire to build at their own expense a mosque in the Second *maḥalla*.<sup>74</sup> Al-Īlmīnī seems to only mention those councils where the participants convened expressly to discuss mosque construction. Nevertheless he does mention one congregation in Aleksandrov Gai, where from 1901 until 1910 the *imām* there, his son Aḥmad-Şafā, was unsuccessful in convincing the local notables, for the most part wealthy merchants, to commit to building a mosque.<sup>75</sup>

At assemblies where the members of the *maḥalla* had decided to build a mosque, usually two major matters were discussed: 1) fundraising prospects and strategies, 2) the location of the mosque. The question of fundraising will be discussed in detail below, but it bears mentioning that the decision for the location of the mosque was at times a highly charged issue, and al-Īlmīnī's accounts of conflicts between local notables and religious figures provide some revealing

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<sup>73</sup> TAA fols. 12b–13a.

<sup>74</sup> TAA fol. 33a.

<sup>75</sup> TAA fol. 103ab.

examples of local politics in a Muslim village. Generally speaking, it was considered prestigious for notables to live next door to the mosque, or even better, to have the mosque adjoining their houses. For example, at some point before 1835, we are told, a conflict over the location for Altī Ata's First Mosque resulted in the division of the community into two *maḥallas*. Al-Īlmīnī writes:

Winter passed and summer came and it became necessary to build a mosque. After a wooden house was purchased discussion arose on the question which place to choose. Some would place it by Chūmārā Bābāy's, others in different places. There was much debate. However, in this congregation there was a renowned and wealthy person named Qārmīsh Bābāy. He put on a large feast and invited the Ḥaḍrat [Isfandiyār] and the village notables. There was a great debate in his house concerning this [matter]. After everyone said what he thought and explained his intention, the Ḥaḍrat said: "We also have a say in that matter." His word to the *maḥalla* was this: "When this *maḥalla* is large, it will be reasonable to be divided. Then how would it be to leave this mosque to one *maḥalla* and to put [the second mosque] in the middle of this [second] *maḥalla*? For the imam, there is in the city of Khvalynsk our friend Mullā Ayyūb 'Umar ūghlī. There is no one around here more educated and intelligent. If we summon him, he will come; if this is agreeable, how would it be if we did this?" After he spoke everyone agreed, and they left the meeting, and came to a decision. They appointed the site by Qārmīsh Bābāy's and built a mosque three *sazhens* wide and six or seven *sazhens* long.<sup>76</sup>

As for the second mosque, created as a result of this split, we are told that in council the members of the new *maḥalla* decided to build the mosque on a street adjoining the wall of the house of the *maḥalla*'s "chief and leader," a wealthy notable named Qūrmūqī Bābāy. We are also told that the structure of the mosque was decided at the council.<sup>77</sup>

Perhaps the most intense conflict over the location of a new mosque occurred in Ilmin's Second *maḥalla* between the *imām*, Mullā 'Uthmān, and a local notable, 'Abdaljalīl Bābā. The *imām* wanted to renovate and enlarge the mosque on its current site, while 'Abdaljalīl Bābā wanted to build a completely new mosque further from the center of the *maḥalla*:

<sup>76</sup> TAA fol. 11ab.

<sup>77</sup> TAA fol. 15b.

So, Mullā ‘Abdalḥakīm’s son-in-law, Mullā ‘Uthmān Āfāndī led the congregation in renovating the mosque. But Satan possessed the heart of the wealthy man ‘Abdaljalīl Sayfalmulūk ūghlī, and he displayed obstinacy. Because Mullā ‘Uthmān was young and somewhat haughty, he did not want to take ‘Abdaljalīl Bābā into consideration. According to the account of the late Mullā ‘Uthmān, ‘Abdaljalīl Bābā said, “Mullā, I am building a brand new mosque.”

Mullā ‘Uthmān: Congratulations, you speak well.

Bābā: Although I speak well, I am not building it on that site. I am building it on the site of the first clay mosque.

Mullā: That house is in the Big *och*.

Bābā: I will tell it in front of you.

Mullā: I go there on foot.

And the Bābā spoke, quarreling for some time, and would not yield in his stubbornness. He was resolved to put it on the site of the mud brick mosque, in a distant part of the *maḥalla*. As for the *maḥalla*, they looked at the Bābā’s deed and were displeased, and it led to a complaint. The mosque’s location was not in conformity with the law because the government would not permit the renovation of that which was [already] joined to houses.<sup>78</sup> The place Bābā had set up had a wide area, but it was at the far end of the congregation. It was half a *chāqrim* from the second *och*. There were no houses next to it. Some elders in the congregation did not consider it wise. They themselves purchased a number of houses at a very high price that were around the center of the congregation. They intended to move it there, and requested permission from the authorities. This Bābā and a few [of his] allies also requested permission from the authorities. In the end the Mullā’s side was victorious. After they had received permission from the government and after they intended to move the mosque to the center of the congregation . . .<sup>79</sup>

In this account we can see that the congregation was divided between those who wanted the mosque in the center of the village, and those, led by ‘Abdaljalīl Bābā, who wanted it farther away. It bears noting that both sides saw fit to petition the official authorities to position their mosques where they thought best, but it appears that the matter was decided by a number of elders, who purchased houses in the center of the congregation to enlarge the old mosque. Al-Īlmīnī mentions a similar case, in Ilmin’s Fourth *maḥalla* when the same ‘Abdaljalīl Bābā, after leaving the Second *maḥalla*, was able to create his own *maḥalla*. Apparently he sought this time to build the new mosque on Ilmin’s central square, but met resistance from a

<sup>78</sup> That it, it was not in compliance with the “20 *sazhens*” law.

<sup>79</sup> TAA fol. 67ab.

number of *mullās*. Both sides filed petitions, and, in al-Īlmīnī's words, "the matter was disputed back and forth," but after a few years the matter was settled in 'Abdaljalīl Bābā's favor, because, we are told, he had by then become very wealthy.<sup>80</sup>

In Iske Özen's Fifth *maḥalla* both the building of the mosque and the creation of the new *maḥalla* met resistance on the part of Mullā Muṭī'allāh Tīmurbūlātoḡ, *imām* of that village's Second Mosque, and an especially wealthy notable named Yūsuf Āfāndī 'Umar Ḥājjī ūghlī. The initiator of the creation of the Fifth *maḥalla* and its mosque was himself a wealthy notable by the name of 'Ilājaddīn Āfāndī. Yūsuf Āfāndī, we are told, sought to foil 'Ilājaddīn Āfāndī's plans because he wished to become Muṭī'allāh's successor as *imām*. When 'Ilājaddīn realized what was afoot, he made his plans public, and formally declared his intention to create a new *maḥalla* and a new mosque in Iske Özen:

'Ilājaddīn was of the opinion that with silence the matter would not stand. He divulged his secret and announced it to the people in the following way: "Oh people! If it is permitted here, I will build a mosque. I do not ask a single kopeck from any of you. But first give me the *prigovor* to the Fifth *maḥalla*, second, ask to build the Fifth Mosque and give the *prigovor*." After he made the announcement, the community agreed at once, and at that moment two or three people brought pen and paper, went out over the village to make a registration, and a gathering of those who lived there, and those from other *maḥallas* registered, and a *prigovor* was given, and this 'Ilāj Āfāndī put himself to work. Since the township administration was in Iske Özen, that same day the *starshina* participated, the *starosta* assembled the community, a *prigovor* was drawn up, the *starosta* and *starshina* bore witness, the township administration completed it, and the matter was sent to the [provincial] government.<sup>81</sup>

The passage above is of particular interest as it shows that after a list of those individuals wanting to form a new *maḥalla* was drawn up, it had to be approved by the local township leadership, the *starshina* and the *starosta*, who in this case appear to have approved it as a matter of course.

However, the *imām* of the Second Mosque, Muṭī'allāh, appears to have challenged the petition that was sent to the provincial authorities in Samara for the creation of a new *maḥalla*:

<sup>80</sup> TAA fols. 74b–75a.

<sup>81</sup> TAA fols. 90b–91a.

When the government investigated, concerning the intention to expand a brand new *maḥalla*, according to Article 1388 of the Law Code,<sup>82</sup> in ascribing the tradition by which “The initial mosque that will be left must be in a condition without any flaws,” and Mullā Muṭīʿallāh relied on this tradition when he declared, “My mosque is in need of repair in many places.” The government accepted this and found fault with ʿIlājaddīn Āfāndī’s request. Because of this article [they replied], “As long as the old mosque is in need of repair, we do not intend to authorize building a new mosque.” Now ʿIlājaddīn undertook to rebuilding the old mosque. Since it was located in a confined place, they [the government] would not give permission for its repair. Intending to gain profit from this affair, ʿUmar Ḥājjī’s son, Yūsuf Āfāndī, purchased the nearby lots and put them to his own use. His hope was for ʿIlājaddīn Āfāndī have to buy [them]. If ʿIlāj Āfāndī built a new mosque, they would not give permission with the old mosque in its present condition; if he repaired the old mosque, he would have to purchase the surrounding lots, and Yūsuf Āfāndī would make [him] leave them in his use.<sup>83</sup>

Thus, because of his familiarity with the Russian law code, Muṭīʿal-lāh was able to compel ʿIlājaddīn to pay for renovating the Second Mosque, because until he did so, the provincial authorities would not grant him permission to build the Fifth Mosque. ʿIlājaddīn’s position was further complicated by the fact that before this, Yūsuf Āfāndī had purchased all of the lots around the Second Mosque, which, according to the “Twenty *Sazhens* Law”, had to be purchased and cleared before renovation on the Second Mosque could begin. Furthermore, Yūsuf Āfāndī was in a position to set the price as high as he chose. However, his high-handed actions provoked a reaction on the part of the members of the would-be new *maḥalla*, as well as a number of village elders.

But now his actions began to effect the *maḥalla* and were stopped. Let there be thanks, the village elders, especially Faḍlallah Amīr ūghlī, and many other people, invited this Yūsuf Āfāndī by gathering the property owners. When they asked him, “Why did you buy them [the lots]?” Yūsuf Āfāndī [answered], “I bought them because I need them. Whose business is it?” And with his denials and attacks, the community became angry and almost censured Yūsuf Āfāndī. In the end each person

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<sup>82</sup> The statutes concerning the legal procedures concerning the Orenburg and Tauride Muslim Spiritual Assemblies were published in volume XI of *Spod zakonov Rossiiskoi imperii*. Portions of these laws were published *Zakony Rossiiskoi imperii o bashki-rakh*, 360–362.

<sup>83</sup> TAA fol. 91b.

argued his own case, and finally they began to write a disqualification [*otkaznyi prigovor*]<sup>84</sup> against Yūsuf Āfāndī. Yūsuf Āfāndī understood and laughing said, “People, be patient. Although I purchased those lots, I bought them saying they will be necessary for the mosque square. Right now I am using every one of those lots. I have given them all over to the mosque. Moreover, you will pay the [same] price that I myself paid.” Having said this, he backed off of his complaint, and they backed off of [their] antagonism . . . Yet this Yūsuf Āfāndī was the son of ‘Umar Ḥājji Hasan ūghlī, and was a notable whose wealth approached six hundred thousand. There probably wasn’t anyone, Russian or Muslim, in Novouzensk district who was richer. He did not fear their disqualification, and perhaps it was [out of] his own [sense of] justice that he withdrew from the argument. Now, Yūsuf Āfāndī put the argument to rest. ‘Ilājaddīn, who had purchased the lots that had been in the use of [Yūsuf Āfāndī] and his permanent property, opened up the square for the Second Mosque. He sold the lots that he had paid 120 rubles for, for 120 rubles and the matter of the square came to an end.<sup>85</sup>

After settling the problem with Yūsuf Āfāndī, ‘Ilājaddīn had to satisfy Muṭīʿallāh’s requirements. Al-Īlmīnī describes what happened in the following manner:

Now the matter of Muṭīʿallāh remained. The Mullā [Muṭīʿallāh] announced what things were needed for repairing the mosque. “First planking is necessary, second, painting is needed, [third], it is necessary to build a stove out of good brick, fourth, improving the windows is needed, fifth putting a fence around the mosque is required.” After he had announced this, and when the *starshina* looked at ‘Ilāj Āfāndī and said, “What shall be done?” ‘Ilāj Āfāndī took it upon himself to do all of this, and the *starshina* took ‘Ilāj Āfāndī’s signature, authorized his request, and sent it off. Later, [the *starshina*] returned and asked the Mullā, “Did he [‘Ilājaddīn] complete the business he took upon himself?” and [he answered], “The Mullā completed it and didn’t leave anything undone.” When he gave notice of this, permission was granted to ‘Ilāj Āfāndī to build the [Fifth] Mosque.<sup>86</sup>

Real estate concerns also appear to have effected the location of the mosque in the town of Novouzensk, when it was built, around 1895. In this case, the local Muslim community, headed by wealthy notables from Ural’sk, as well as by others originally from Kazan province, made a formal request before the local *Žemskaiia Uprava* to build their

<sup>84</sup> In the text: *ātqāznī prigovor*.

<sup>85</sup> TAA fols. 91a–92a.

<sup>86</sup> TAA fol. 92ab.

mosque at a site they chose which was quiet and across the Bol'shoi Uzen' River from the main settlement of Novouzensk. As it turns out, the mosque was only to be there temporarily, because the new railroad station was to be built in that area. Thus, the *Zemskaia Uprava* selected a new site, located on the outskirts of town, in a flood plain. The Muslims had to build their mosque there, which they did, even though the mosque was flooded every year, sometimes being under sixteen feet of water (the height of the mosque we are told was only twenty-four feet).<sup>87</sup> In all likelihood, the Novouzensk mosque remained in such an unfavorable location because, in Novouzensk, Muslims were a very small minority, and the municipal administration was dominated by Russians.

We saw in the case of Iske Özen's Second and Fifth Mosques how the *imām* Muṭī'allāh was able to use legal statutes to delay the construction of the Fifth Mosque, and at the same time have his own Second Mosque renovated at the expense of his rival, 'Ilājaddīn Āfāndī. In fact, building regulations, which appear to have been rather strictly enforced, at least concerning mosques, commonly hindered the construction or renovation of a mosque. In most cases, if the leadership in a *maḥalla* was wise, they would obtain the necessary permits before assembling the necessary construction materials.

In addition to the specific law governing mosques and the creation of new *maḥallas* mentioned above, we know that to comply with the "Twenty *Sazhens* Law" new mosques had to be free standing. As a result, a major part of the expense of renovating an old mosque was the purchase of adjoining structures, which had to be torn down or moved elsewhere. These buildings and lots were occasionally purchased or owned by one individual, as was the case with the wealthy notable Yūsuf Āfāndī in Iske Özen. Al-Īlmīnī writes that in enlarging the mosque in Altī Ata's Second *maḥalla* two hundred rubles were spent on enlarging the mosque's lot and buying the adjoining structures.<sup>88</sup> Occasionally money had to be spent to obtain special permission, or even to simply pay bribes to officials. In the course of enlarging and rebuilding Safarqa's Second Mosque, officials refused a permit to enlarge the mosque's original lot. Before they could purchase supplies and begin construction, the villagers were obliged to pay a special tax of 250 rubles to obtain special permis-

<sup>87</sup> TAA fol. 100ab.

<sup>88</sup> TAA fol. 17a.

sion to enlarge the lot.<sup>89</sup> In the same village's Third *maḥalla* three brothers, who were wealthy notables, in the course of creating a new *maḥalla* and building a new mosques, "petitioned the government and bribed the hypocrites, and obtained a *prigovor*". Whether the "hypocrites" were villagers or officials is not stated.<sup>90</sup>

In Ilmin's Third *maḥalla* an ambitious notable named Pūtā Bābāy built a wooden mosque on his own initiative before receiving official permission. Soon a local bailiff (*ispravnik*) came and padlocked the door of the mosque, forbidding the performance of the *namāz* in that mosque. The matter was complicated by the fact that at that time the Third *maḥalla* was not an officially constituted *maḥalla*, but rather had been functioning as a *defacto* one since about 1855, as it was separated from the rest of the village by a creek. The matter was finally resolved by a number of elders journeying to Ufa, to the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly, where authorization for the mosque was granted, and a *metricheskaia kniga* was granted to the *maḥalla*.<sup>91</sup>

#### *Fund-raising methods and waqfs*

After the congregation had selected a site for the new mosque and obtained the necessary permits, they usually proceeded to raise the funds to pay for the required materials and labor. Wealthy members of the community, often in partnership with the local *imām*, typically took the lead or the initiative in raising the funds for mosque construction. Contributing money for building a mosque was apparently considered a pious act, and doubtlessly raised the prestige of the largest contributors. Indeed, al-Īlmīnī is especially careful to record the names of those who contributed the most to numerous mosque-building projects, and the amount they contributed.

Unlike other parts of the Islamic world, and especially Central Asia, *waqf* endowments in the Volga-Ural region and Siberia were poorly developed. This poor development is attributable above all to the fact that Volga-Ural and Siberian Muslims were under Russian rule, and until 1887 *waqf* endowments in this region did not enjoy

<sup>89</sup> TAA fol. 34a.

<sup>90</sup> TAA fol. 35a.

<sup>91</sup> TAA fols. 69a–70a. This is the only case in the manuscript where a matter concerning a mosque is settled by the Spiritual Assembly in Ufa, rather than by provincial or local authorities.

the tax exempt status that were essential to the operation of these endowments in the Islamic world at large. In the nineteenth century three relatively large-scale waqfs were administered by the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly. These best documented of these was located in the town of Sterlitamak, in Ufa province and was founded in 1829 when a local merchant named ‘Abdalkhalīq b. ‘Abdalmajīd b. Ibrāhīm (1770–1856) gave over to the community one stone and brick mosque, one stone and brick *madrasa*, one wooden *madrasa* (made out of good pine), one stone and brick kitchen (*āshkhāna*) for the *shāgirds*, a well, and five stone and brick shops in the town’s market. In 1849 the same merchant donated 90 *desiatinas* of land to support the mosque and *madrāsas*.<sup>92</sup> In 1856 the *ākhūnd* of Sterlitamak district, Kamāladdīn b. Sharafaddīn was appointed the *waqf’s mutawalī* (trustee) and would send annual financial reports to the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly. The *waqf* however was not completely tax-exempt, and after protesting to the Russian authorities, full tax-exempt status from imperial, city, and appraisal taxes was finally granted in 1887. The profits from the shops and the lands ranged from 185 rubles a year to 640, which went toward maintaining and heating the mosque.<sup>93</sup>

Azamatov mentions two other *waqfs* that were administered by the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly. In 1830 the Kazan merchant Gubeidulla Iunusov (according to the Russian spelling) donated two stone shops to that city’s Bazaar (Fifth) Mosque. In 1841 a merchant named G. Altynin (again according to the Russian spelling) from the Siberian city of Tara purchased a 30,000 ruble bond from the imperial treasury, with the interest designated to support Tara’s mosque.<sup>94</sup> Marsil’ Farkhshatov notes that the *waqfs* that financed *madrāsas* in Ufa and Orenburg provinces appear to have been rather small.<sup>95</sup> More informal *waqfs* have also been documented among Tatar communities in Kazakhstan. In 1862 in the town of Ayaguz, in eastern Kazakhstan, a local notable named Şiddīq Bāy ‘Abdarrashīd ūghlī donated 7,000 rubles to various charitable causes, plus donated 1,000 rubles to establish a *waqf* to purchase books in Istanbul for the town’s *madrasa*.<sup>96</sup>

<sup>92</sup> Ridā’addīn Fakhraddīn ūghlī published the legal documents establishing the *waqf*; cf. Fakhraddīn ūghlī, *Āthār* 2:12, 300–308; the *waqf* is also mentioned by Azamatov, *Orenburgskoe magometanskoe dukhovnoe upravlenie*, 107–108.

<sup>93</sup> Azamatov, *Orenburgskoe magometanskoe dukhovnoe upravlenie*, 108.

<sup>94</sup> Azamatov, *Orenburgskoe magometanskoe dukhovnoe upravlenie*, 108–109.

<sup>95</sup> Farkhshatov, *Narodnoe obrazovanie*, 62.

<sup>96</sup> Qurbān’alī Khālīdī, *Tawārīkh-i khamsa-yi sharqī*, 410–411.

There do not appear to have been any permanent endowments for the mosque construction in Novouzensk district. Despite the apparent absence of formal *waqf* endowments in Novouzensk district, there does appear to have been a certain amount of commonly owned land set aside for at least defraying some of the costs of mosque construction and upkeep. The amount of land was usually between twenty-five and forty *desiatinas*, and would be leased for a certain period of time to raise money to build the mosque. Al-Īlmīnī makes no mention of these lands ever being permanently sold. For example, Altī Ata's First *maḥalla* reportedly had 28 *desiatinas* of land set aside for mosque upkeep, and the Second *maḥalla* had 25.<sup>97</sup> The First, Third, and Fifth *maḥallas* in Ilmin had forty *desiatinas* each for their mosques.<sup>98</sup> In the latter *maḥalla* this land was leased to a Russian from Orlov Gai, Petr Egorovich Mitin, for a year at a rate of three hundred rubles.<sup>99</sup> Thus, in Novouzensk district these lands evidently fulfilled the function of a *waqf*, but without its legal status. *Waqfs* of forty *desiatinas* of land also are documented in Ufa province, specifically in the Bashkir village of Nizhnie Usly in Sterlitamak district, where the income from these lands were dedicated to the village's mosque and *madrasa*.<sup>100</sup>

Since the question of the overall costs for building a mosque will be discussed separately below, suffice it to say here that the example of Ilmin's Fifth *maḥalla* shows quite clearly that even a relatively large endowment of forty *desiatinas* providing 300 rubles, represented a fraction of the overall costs needed to build a decent mosque. As a result other commonly-owned lands, and even occasionally private lands from the congregation had to be leased out as well. In Safarqa's Second *maḥalla* the elders decided to lease off a hundred *desiatinas* of private lands.<sup>101</sup> In Altī Ata's First *maḥalla* the farmers there leased off 200 *desiatinas* of their own lands, a significant sum.<sup>102</sup> In a rather poorly planned campaign to build the Fifth Mosque of Ilmin, the inhabitants there leased 200 *desiatinas* of common land, above and beyond the 40 *desiatinas* of public land earmarked for the mosque. When even these additional sacrifices were not sufficient to complete

<sup>97</sup> TAA fols. 14a, 17a.

<sup>98</sup> TAA fols. 43b, 74b, 81a.

<sup>99</sup> TAA fol. 81a.

<sup>100</sup> Farkhshatov, *Narodnoe obrazovanie v Bashkirii*, 62.

<sup>101</sup> TAA fol. 34b.

<sup>102</sup> TAA fol. 14a.

the mosque, they were obliged to lease out half a *desiatina* each of their private holdings. This sacrifice, al-Īlmīnī tells us, was only agreed to “after shouting and fighting every day.”<sup>103</sup>

In some cases a wealthy notable would pay the entire cost of building a mosque. This manner of funding appears to have been especially common during the first half of the nineteenth century, when mosques tended to be smaller and made out of locally obtained materials, but there were other instances when wooden mosques were funded by a single individual. For instance, in 1858 ‘Abdannaşir ‘Abdassalām ūghlī, an authoritative and wealthy member of Altı Ata’s Second *maḥalla*, built a wooden mosque, and after some time enlarged it as well.<sup>104</sup> Similarly, the *imām* of the same village’s Fourth *maḥalla* moved his mosque to Aq Qosh Lake and had it enlarged at his own expense.<sup>105</sup> The Second Mosque in Ilmin was initially built out of mud brick, but the *imām*, ‘Abdalḥakīm Bāybik ūghlī, tore down the original building and had built new wooden structure. Mullā ‘Abdaljalīl Bābā subsequently had a minaret added.<sup>106</sup> Notables built mosques in Iske Ōzen as well.<sup>107</sup> In one case, Mullā Maḥmūd ‘Ubaydallāh ūghlī Āqchūrīn, the *imām* of Safarqa’s Third *maḥalla*, traveled all the way to the village of Tatarskaia Pendel’ka in Saratov province’s Khvalynsk district and raised the money from wealthy notables there, demonstrating the strength of the ties between the descendants of the colonists on the steppe and the “old country” villages.<sup>108</sup>

Most commonly, a major investment was made by one or more wealthy members of the community, which encouraged the others to contribute. In Altı Ata’s Third *maḥalla* a notable from Safarqa was actually the first to make a major contribution to enlarge and rebuild an older mosque there. This notable, Ramaḍān Āfāndī, was the brother-in-law of that *maḥalla*’s *mu’adhdhin*, a certain Shāhaddīn Īshmurād Bābā ūghlī. Shāhaddīn asked his brother-in-law’s help in renovating the mosque and the latter promptly agreed, and gave him a hundred rubles on the spot. Later, Ramaḍān Āfāndī was not satisfied with this contribution, and proceeded to expand his contribution:

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<sup>103</sup> TAA fol. 81a.

<sup>104</sup> TAA fol. 15b.

<sup>105</sup> TAA fol. 23b.

<sup>106</sup> TAA fol. 67a.

<sup>107</sup> TAA fol. 90a.

<sup>108</sup> TAA fol. 35b.

One time, by the wisdom of God around the village of Iske Özen there was a very fine and big house called a *yātāb*. It was adorned with pine. When winter would arrive they would house prisoners in it. Now, this *yātāb* was among those things that was abandoned after they built the railroad. Whether it had been sold or not, it was at the disposal of Sergei Filipovich Guzev, a merchant in the village of Novorepino. Ramaḍān Āfāndī once went to Guzev's house [to meet with him] in a certain affair. In the course of their conversation he asked Guzev to sell this *yātāb*. Guzev said "I'll sell it," and Ramaḍān decided to buy it. He asked a certain price and Ramaḍān examined its worth and then said "I don't need it myself, instead I would give it to the mosque in Āltī Ātā." Guzev was pleased and he sold the building for just one hundred and fifty rubles. It would have cost seven hundred.<sup>109</sup>

After having disassembled this structure, the *maḥalla* reconvened to work out the final details of fundraising.

The congregation deliberated concerning the money needed for the builders and the remaining necessities. Whoever had money would give. Whoever had no money signed that he would give it as soon as summer came, during the working season, and gave the paper to Ramaḍān Āfāndī. He also committed himself not to stop giving money. The lowest ranking person, who owned nothing but a horse or a cow paid three rubles, the rest, five, ten or twenty rubles each. The congregation also made efforts for the things that would be brought from Balakovo, for the hardware and lumber and the rest of these materials, and fulfilling it all from their own supplies [and not with money from outside], they built the mosque in this way.<sup>110</sup>

In Altī Ata's Fourth *maḥalla* a number of wealthy people, rather than just one made large contributions. Here the fundraising was initiated by the *imām*, 'Abdalwalī Ḥaḍrat. In this case the *imām* challenged the wealthy to provide the capital to purchase the lumber, and the more humble members of the *maḥalla* saw to the dismantling of the old house and the building of the mosque:

It was felt that the little mosque was small and they hastened to enlarge it. Since this 'Abdalwalī Ḥaḍrat was wealthy he addressed the congregation in the mosque, saying, "The mosque is small, and we have multiplied, praise God. We even have good and wealthy persons among us. Now we have to enlarge the mosque! Here, I myself am giving a hundred rubles. May each of you now make an offering of as much

<sup>109</sup> TAA fols. 20b.

<sup>110</sup> TAA fol. 21a.

as he can.” Having said this, Īshmurād Mawlūd ūghlī gave a hundred rubles, Sayfaddīn Qūrmāy ūghlī who was called Ushnāy Bābā, a hundred rubles, Abū Zār Ābūshāy ūghlī, a hundred rubles, Subhānqul Īmānliqul ūghlī [called] Īmānay Subāyī a hundred rubles, and Sayfaddīn Bakr ūghlī fifty rubles. Others gave in accordance to what they could afford. They collected this money and purchased a house from the village of Qushum for 300 rubles. This house appeared to be very good. With the money of the wealthy people they bought a large amount of finished lumber.<sup>111</sup>

Similarly, in Novouzensk, where merchants dominated the Muslim community, funds were raised in essentially the same way, although at a larger scale. Al-Īlmīnī tells us that the largest contributor among the Novouzensk Muslims was a merchant named Muṣṭafā Amīrkhānof, who reportedly offered a thousand rubles.<sup>112</sup> In the villages however cash seems to have been in somewhat shorter supply. Here, as we have seen, the wealthy were not merchants as much as they were wheat producers and landowners. Thus, it sometimes happened that the wealthy would make an offering in kind. Thus, in Ilmin’s Second *maḥalla* the wealthy supporters of the mosque paid in varying fashions:

... first Bik-Muḥammad Sayfalmulūk ūghlī offered forty beams [*brūs*], Ramaḍān Sayfalmulūk ūghlī gave forty sacks of wheat, ‘Abdallāh and Īhsān gave three hundred rubles in cash, Khōja Bīkchantāy ūghlī gave eight sacks<sup>113</sup> of wheat, and the mighty Hājji and others have according to their means.<sup>114</sup>

In Altı Ata’s Second *maḥalla* one of the Twin Hājji from Safarqa, Sayfaddīn ‘Abdarrahmān ūghlī, offered a hundred rubles and a hundred *poods* of flour.<sup>115</sup> To build the First Mosque of Ilmin the same Ramaḍān Zubayr ūghlī supplied 25 wooden beams and 70 *poods* of roofing metal.<sup>116</sup>

Despite the generous help of wealthy and pious villagers, much of the burden fell on the shoulders of the villagers of more modest means. B. Kalimullin has noted that in Bashkiria it was the rule for the *maḥalla* as a whole to fund the mosque construction, and it was

<sup>111</sup> TAA fol. 22ab.

<sup>112</sup> TAA fol. 100a.

<sup>113</sup> A “sack” (*mīshāq*) was a standard weight containing 8 *poods*, or about 290 pounds; cf. TAA fol. 74a.

<sup>114</sup> TAA fols. 67b–68a.

<sup>115</sup> TAA fol. 17a.

<sup>116</sup> TAA fol. 43b.

only in rarer cases that merchants or notables funded a mosque's construction themselves.<sup>117</sup> The same appears to have been the case among the Muslim communities in Buinsk, Tsivil'sk, and Cheboksary districts. Braslavskii provides information on who funded the construction 29 mosques in these three districts. According to his data, out of the 29 mosques, three were funded by outside merchants, six by local benefactors, and twenty by the congregation as a whole.<sup>118</sup> In Novouzensk district, it appears that the burden was often shared between the wealthy and the poorer Muslims. In *maḥallas* lacking any wealthy members at all (there were two such *maḥallas* one each in the villages of Altī Ata and Safarqa) the entire burden fell on the shoulders of the more humble Muslims. For the most part fundraising from the community was more or less voluntary, although it is clear from all of the accounts that some level of contribution commensurate to a person's wealth was expected from every member of the community. It does appear that at least in principle the elders did have the authority to exact an obligatory contribution, that is, a levy, for the construction of a mosque. This levy was known as a *kharāj*, but al-Īlmīnī makes no mention of money ever being raised in this manner in the Altī Ata villages. However, he does tell us that the Muslim Cossacks in Yalpaqtal imposed a levy on their *maḥalla* to raise 200 rubles to enlarge their mosque to two stories.<sup>119</sup>

Just as wealthy members contributed what they could afford for the construction of the mosque, either in cash or in kind, the community's rank-and-file did the same thing. In *maḥallas* with few or no wealthy people, a person's contribution was determined according to their wealth. Thus, in Altī Ata's Third *maḥalla*, "the lowest ranking person, who owned a horse and a cow, would pay three rubles, the rest five, ten, or twenty rubles each".<sup>120</sup> Safarqa's Second *maḥalla* also lacked any wealthy members, and here we are told "the strong and the wealthy had a plow-ox or two, and there were no owners of more wealth. Nevertheless by leasing lands and with individual contributions, the *maḥalla* was able to purchase five hundred

<sup>117</sup> Kalimullin, *Arkhitekturnye pamiatniki Bashkiriī* III, 5.

<sup>118</sup> Braslavskii, *Islam v Chuwashii*, 47, 109–145.

<sup>119</sup> TAA fol. 107b; There is evidence that Muslim Cossacks raised money for building their mosques with levies. Riḍā'addīn Fakhraddīn ūghlī notes that after the Fourth Mosque in Seitovskii Posad burned down in 1857 it was rebuilt in part with a Cossack levy (*qāzāqning kharājātī*); cf. Riḍā'addīn Fakhraddīn ūghlī, *Sa'īd*, 23.

<sup>120</sup> TAA fol. 21a.

rubles worth of lumber from Russian merchants.<sup>121</sup> In Altı Ata's first *maḥalla*, "there was not a single rich person," and al-Īlmīnī notes that "most of them were people who owned one or two horses. A few of them were people who owned only a single plow ox."<sup>122</sup> In this *maḥalla* money, or more precisely, credit, was raised in a different manner. Here the lumber was purchased on credit by each individual member of the community pledging to pay for one or two beams. In this way the sixty beams needed were purchased, with each member of the congregation responsible for the number of beams he had pledged.<sup>123</sup> In the same *maḥalla*, during the construction of a subsequent mosque, the villagers not only leased their lands, but also their labor to a wealthy Russian from Saratov named Mordvinov at the rate of four rubles per person for a summer's work.<sup>124</sup> Some of the materials used to build Altı Ata's Second Mosque were also obtained on credit.<sup>125</sup>

The case of the construction of Ilmin's Fifth Mosque provides an example of how a poorly organized or poorly conceived mosque construction plan could cause harm to a community. In this *maḥalla* a new mosque was built soon after being separated off as the village's Fifth *maḥalla*. When it was time to replace the old mosque and build a new one, the congregation balked at the cost:

The congregation debated the building of a new mosque and the appointing of an *imām*. One out of every two criticized his support, asking "How many thousands will it cost?" Although they were refusing, this Sākmān [a wealthy notable] said "If you select Mullā 'Alī Āfāndī [Ḥamīdallāh ūghlī Tōqtārof], he will take upon himself the provisioning of that mosque because he has friends who are known for their influence everywhere. Every year he brings so many goods from Semipalatinsk that when you mention the mosque he will build it without saying a word." And with words like these he misled the people.<sup>126</sup>

After becoming *imām*, apparently with the understanding that he would be responsible for raising the money to build the mosque, but

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<sup>121</sup> TAA fol. 34a.

<sup>122</sup> TAA fol. 14b.

<sup>123</sup> TAA fol. 12b.

<sup>124</sup> TAA fol. 14ab.

<sup>125</sup> TAA fol. 17a.

<sup>126</sup> TAA fol. 78b.

also perhaps because of his reputation for having studied many years in Bukhara, the congregation one day told 'Alī to go and carry out his charge. They leased out forty *desiatinas* of land and gave the proceeds to their *imām* for his travel expenses.

He traveled to Orenburg and its region, and although he made supplications to every one of that city's wealthy men, the outcome was not favorable. At that time, in a hopeless state, he cultivated a sincere friendship with the well-known Aḥmad Bāy Ḥusaynof.<sup>127</sup> When he beseeched him, because he had a turban on his head and was a great Bukharan, he showed him great respect, and this rich man asked "Is there stone in your country?" When the *mullā* said that there was, he said "Well fine then, I will build you a stone mosque, but not this year. Instead I will build you a *madrasa*. But you yourself will collect the stone and the other materials," and he convinced him. "But at the Makar'evo Bazaar [in Nizhnii Novgorod] I will ask the merchants from your Ilmin. I will find out who will do it."<sup>128</sup>

However, when Aḥmad Bay appealed to the merchants from Ilmin at the Nizhnii Novgorod Fair, they refused to contribute, citing 'Alī's reputation for truculence.<sup>129</sup>

Despite 'Alī's failure to secure funding, in 1910 Ilmin's Fifth *maḥalla* was finally able to complete their mosque. Curiously, the money to build the mosque was supplied not by a Muslim, but by a wealthy Russian in Orlov Gai named Petr Egorovich Mitin. This Mitin leased the forty *desiatinas* of land from the *maḥalla* for 300 rubles, and also donated a structure. That winter they also borrowed 2,500 rubles from Mitin, agreeing to pay it back by September. Then, Mitin built them the mosque. However, they were unable to pay the full amount by September, and were forced to lease out 200 *desiatinas*. When this was still not enough, each member of the *maḥalla* had to lease half a *desiatina* per person.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> This is a reference to Aḥmad Bāy Khusainov (1837–1906) one of Orenburg's most wealthy merchants, and one of the most generous Muslim philanthropists of late imperial Russia, as well as the founder and financier of the Ḥusaynīya Madrasa in Orenburg. His biography was written by Riḍā'addīn Fakhreddīn ūghlī, and was published recently in Russian translation; cf. Rizaetdin ibn Fakhretudin, *Akhmed Bai*, M. F. Rakhimkulova trans. (Orenburg, 1991.)

<sup>128</sup> TAA fol. 80a.

<sup>129</sup> TAA fol. 80b.

<sup>130</sup> TAA fols. 80b–81a.

*Mosque construction and renovation*

In areas of more or less dense Muslim settlement in the Volga-Ural region there appear to have been carpenters who specialized in mosque construction and architecture. B. Kalimullin has noted that in rural settings the mosque builders were overwhelmingly local carpenters, and when he was conducting his research in Bashkiria in the 1950's, only the names of a few of these carpenters remained in the memories of the older residents. These include (according to the Russian spellings) Salikh Akzigitov of Kalmak, Ziianchura *raion*, Nizam Bagautdinov of Abzelil *raion*, Mindibai Mukhametkil'din of Abdrakhmanovo, Mechetli *raion*, Kiiam Davletshin of Staro-Khalilovo, Duvan *raion*, and Samat Iskandarov of Idel'baevo, Salavat *raion*. In addition to mosques, these carpenters built houses and headed carpenters' *artels* and had their own zones of influence. Kalimullin reports that in some cases Bashkir carpenters worked together with Tatar and Russian carpenters. Although it was only in rare cases that Russian carpenters would build mosques; at least one mosque in Bashkiria is known to have been built by Russian carpenters; this was the mosque in the village of Aibuliak, in Ianaul *raion*.<sup>131</sup> Kalimullin has rather more details on one specific carpenter-architect named Kalimulla Rakhmatullin (1835–1910) from the village of Staro-Tushkyrovo, Baltachi *raion*, Bashkiria. Rakhmatullin was descended from a line of carpenters, and was renowned also as a builder. He built a number of mosques in both Bashkiria and in nearby parts of Tatarstan, specifically in the villages of Gudbur and Tash-Elga (Ianaul *raion*), Kigazy (Aksinskii *raion*), Azeevo, and Tliakaevo (the latter two in Tatarstan). His mosques differed from those of other masters by the precision of their dimensions, and the finish of their forms. He was popularly recognized as an architectural innovator and he was credited with bringing the twin-minaret mosque to Bashkiria. In 1891 he designed the reconstruction of the mosque in his native village, and he was also credited with building two-minaret mosques in the village of Bogdan and elsewhere.<sup>132</sup>

Other locally famous builders of mosques are known to have lived in Kazan province. In the village of Yanga Kenär (Novyi Kiner) there was a family of three generations of carpenters and joiners who spe-

<sup>131</sup> Kalimullin, *Arkhitekturnye pamiatniki Bashkiriï* III, 6.

<sup>132</sup> Kalimullin, *Arkhitekturnye pamiatniki Bashkiriï* III, 19.

cialized in building mosques. The eldest, ‘Abdarrāfiq ‘Abdalghanī ūghlī ‘Abdal‘azīz ūghlī ‘Īsā ūghlī himself built 36 mosques, and his son Ḥusnaddīn (1843–1928) built 34.<sup>133</sup> Prominent builders also existed within the Tatar communities of eastern Kazakhstan. Qurbān‘alī Khālidī mentions a contractor (*pādrāshchīk*) named Muḥammad-Shāh who in 1850 built first mosque in Ayaguz, and thirty-eight years later, in 1888, built the Tatar Mosque just across the Chinese border in Chuguchak.<sup>134</sup>

Unlike these latter areas, there do not appear to have been professional mosque builders in Novouzensk district. Here the actual building of the mosque was done either using local labor or hired labor. Naturally, the labor of the congregation was necessary for building a mosque. The earliest mud-brick mosques, and certainly the sod mosque in Iske Özen were built by the villagers themselves. As for the wooden mosques, when a structure was purchased to supply lumber for the mosque it was the members of the *maḥalla* who would disassemble the building and haul it to their village.<sup>135</sup> It also appears that the villagers did much of the roofing, as well as the painting and building the stoves.<sup>136</sup>

Evidently the members of a *maḥalla* could not completely build a wooden mosque without hiring some skilled craftsmen. This was the case in Safarqa’s Second *maḥalla*, where they struggled to pay builders, and would have certainly used their own labor if that had been possible.<sup>137</sup> The risks of not hiring sufficiently skilled craftsmen made itself known in a number of cases. Ilmin’s Second Mosque had originally been made of mud bricks, but a new wooden one was built to replace the original one. The new mosque was built from an old government building (*pravlenie*) that the Muslims had bought and disassembled. Besides being made of old materials, it was rather cold and drafty in winter. A certain Farrāsh Āfāndī had a wood-burning stove built in the mosque, but apparently the chimney did not vent properly and the smoke would stay in the mosque. As a result, the members of the *maḥalla* decided to build a completely new mosque.<sup>138</sup>

<sup>133</sup> Nizametdinov and Khāliullin (eds.) *Archa tōbāge tarikhī*, 66 (Tatar text), 194 (Russian text).

<sup>134</sup> Qurbān‘alī Khālidī, *Tawārīkh-i khamsa-yi sharqī*, 409.

<sup>135</sup> TAA fols. 21a, 22b, 26b.

<sup>136</sup> TAA fol. 21a.

<sup>137</sup> TAA fol. 34ab.

<sup>138</sup> TAA fol. 67a.

In some cases, skilled craftsmen were hard to find, especially before the latter part of the nineteenth century, and as a result the workmanship in some mosques left something to be desired. In these situations, faulty construction had to be made good. This was apparently the case for the same Second Mosque of Ilmin:

At that time builders were skilled craftsmen, and therefore did not visit every place. The place for the *mu'adhdhin* was unattractive because the top of the minaret, and the part underneath, was lacking in workmanship, and also the far corners and its structure were not good. Mullā Ḥusnaddīn *mu'adhdhin* exerted himself and performed service and with the resources of 'Abdallāh Āghā and Iḥsān Āghā he somewhat shortened the minaret. He put steel between every window and attached them with thick metal screws, and put them up by various means. Now, Mullā Abū Bakr Ḥājjī conferred with the Āghās, who were his contemporaries, and they sided the upper part of the mosque with boards. They painted it yellow and made it of high quality.<sup>139</sup>

Concerning hired labor, al-Īlmīnī mentions on numerous occasions that carpenters (*bāltā ūstālārī*) and builders (*mī'mārlar*) were hired to help build a mosque.<sup>140</sup> He does not mention if they were from the local Muslim communities, or if they were hired from among the large Russian communities along the Bol'shoi Uzen' or in Dergachi. However, since there was virtually no naturally-growing timber in Novouzensk district, carpentry may have been in rather less demand than in other, more heavily-timbered regions of Russia, and therefore may have been a more specialized skill. In any case, we are told that the cost for hiring carpenters to help build Altī Ata's First Mosque was seventy rubles.<sup>141</sup>

Except for the older mosques made out of locally-obtained materials, virtually all the mosques in Novouzensk district were made out of wood. Novouzensk Muslims evidently considered wooden mosques to be more prestigious than those made of locally obtained materials, and all the more so since wooden mosques were the norm for village mosques throughout the Volga-Ural region. The timber was obtained in two ways. One especially common manner of obtaining timber was to purchase an existing structure and dismantle it. This arrangement presumably had the dual advantage of the wood being

<sup>139</sup> TAA fol. 68a.

<sup>140</sup> TAA fols. 14a, 21a, 34a, 92b.

<sup>141</sup> TAA fol. 14a.

pre-cut and also cheaper than fresh uncut beams [*brūš*]. Since lumber was not locally available, it was purchased from Russian lumber dealers, initially in the Volga port town of Balakovo, which was about 150 *verstas* from the Altī Ata villages.<sup>142</sup> Shipping lumber inland from the Volga apparently could more than double its price, and as a result, obtaining lumber before the construction of the railroad was a difficult matter.<sup>143</sup> Later it became much easier to simply purchase lumber in the railroad town of Dergachi, which, being only a few *verstas* away, was substantially closer.<sup>144</sup>

The amount of lumber needed to build a mosque naturally depended on its size, but we are told that sixty beams were brought from Balakovo to build Altī Ata's First Mosque.<sup>145</sup> Lumber appears to have been the single most costly element in constructing a mosque, but metal was also used for the roofing and at least seventy *poods* were needed to make the roof of Ilmin's First Mosque. Various other types of hardware were reportedly purchased from Balakovo, and in all likelihood from Dergachi as well.<sup>146</sup> Wooden structures that were to be disassembled ranged in price between 300 and 800 rubles,<sup>147</sup> although, as we saw, the Russian owner of an exceptionally large structure, learning it would be used for a mosque, sold it to his Muslim friend for 150 rubles, rather than for the 750 it could have fetched. As for new lumber, we are told that the congregation spent 500 rubles to purchase lumber from Dergachi to build Safarqa's Second Mosque.<sup>148</sup>

The costs for building a mosque naturally varied considerably, and depended on the *maḥalla's* ambition, the size of the mosque, and the materials used. For the purpose of comparison, in the 1780's Catherine II appropriated 20,000 rubles to build the four stone mosques along the borders of the Kazakh steppe.<sup>149</sup> Shihābaddīn Marjānī notes that

<sup>142</sup> TAA fols. 12b, 20b, 21a.

<sup>143</sup> B. Liaskovskii notes that in 1860 a pine or fir log in Balakovo cost from 60 kopecks to one ruble; the same log purchased in the town of Nikolaevsk, 80 *verstas* inland from Balakovo, cost an extra 75 kopecks, thereby doubling its price; cf. Liaskovskii, "Materialy dlia statisticheskago opisaniia," 50.

<sup>144</sup> TAA fols. 14a, 17a, 34ab.

<sup>145</sup> TAA fol. 12b.

<sup>146</sup> TAA fols. 21a, 43b.

<sup>147</sup> TAA fols. 22b–23a.

<sup>148</sup> TAA fol. 34a.

<sup>149</sup> Dobrosmyslov, "Zaboty imperatritsy Ekateriny," 53.

62 local people raised 5,000 rubles to build Kazan's First Mosque in 1768<sup>150</sup> and in the village of Tashkichü one merchant in 1875 spent 87 rubles to renovate a minaret.<sup>151</sup> According to the Kazan historians Salikhov and Khayrutdinov, in 1872 a new brick mosque in the village of Mächkärä (Vyatka province) was built at a cost of 7,000 rubles, and the Apanaev Mosque (Second Mosque) in Kazan was enlarged and renovated in the same year at a cost to the congregation of 5,000 rubles.<sup>152</sup> In a history of Astrakhan we are told that wealthy merchants from outside of that city helped raise ten thousand rubles to build a cathedral mosque in that city during the late nineteenth century.<sup>153</sup> However, in the sources cited above, little attention is given to the costs of building more modest village mosques, and these huge expenditures were certainly a source of ostentatious pride to the members of the *maḥalla*, and were therefore remembered and passed down; furthermore, the mosques mentioned above were all made of brick or stone, and in the cases of the Kazan mosques, local Muslims usually commissioned Russian or even Italian architects to design their mosques, which certainly must have added to the costs. Indeed, the *maḥalla* of Kazan's Apanaev Mosque was reportedly the wealthiest *maḥalla* in the city of Kazan, and perhaps one of the wealthiest in all of Russia.<sup>154</sup>

In conditions more similar to those of the villages in Novouzensk district, Idrisov et al. estimate that the average cost of a wooden village mosque in southern Nizhnii Novgorod province was about 1,500 rubles.<sup>155</sup> L. Braslavskii has averaged the cost of building a mosque in Tsvil'sk and Buinsk districts to 354 rubles and 50 kopecks. He notes that all of the mosques in these district were made of wood.<sup>156</sup> However, given the proximity of these districts to Nizhnii Novgorod province, Braslavskii's average appears improbably low.

In Novouzensk district the mosques were naturally more modest than in the more famous mosques in Kazan, Astrakhan, and even Mächkärä. The only complete figure that al-Īlmīnī gives us is for Ilmin's Fifth Mosque, where we are told that the cost of that mosque

<sup>150</sup> Marjānī, *Mustafād al-akhbār* II, 12.

<sup>151</sup> Marjānī, *Mustafād al-akhbār* II, 126–127.

<sup>152</sup> Salikhov and Khayrutdinov, *Tatar khalqiniñg*, 72–73, 172.

<sup>153</sup> Jahānshāh an-Nīzhghārūtī, *Tārīkh-i Astarkhān*, 16.

<sup>154</sup> Salikhov and Khayrutdinov, *Tatar khalqiniñg*, 73.

<sup>155</sup> Idrisov et al. *Iz istorii*, 38.

<sup>156</sup> Braslavskii, *Islam v Chuwashii*, 47.

was 2,500 rubles, which was loaned to the congregation by a wealthy Russian from the village of Orlov Gai.<sup>157</sup> The most expensive mosque that al-Īlmīnī makes note of is the mosque in the town Novouzensk, built around 1895. He writes that the merchants in this town raised seven or eight thousand rubles for their mosque.<sup>158</sup> However, because the Novouzensk mosque was a wooden mosque, and not a particularly large one, this figure seems rather high for simply covering the construction costs, and may have been capital for providing a foundation for the mosque's upkeep, especially since al-Īlmīnī notes that the Novouzensk mosque was flooded every year as a result of its being built on a flood-plain. More modest mosques naturally cost less. In addition, from al-Īlmīnī's data we can assemble an admittedly incomplete tally sheet of the various expenses that went into building a mosque:

lumber	500–800 rubles <sup>159</sup>
taxes and fees	250 rubles <sup>160</sup>
carpenters	70 rubles <sup>161</sup>
brick stove(s)	60 rubles <sup>162</sup>

The costs of upkeep, including routine repairs, heating and lighting, for a mosque naturally varied, but seem to have been around 400 rubles a year. Ilmin's Third Mosque had twenty-eight *desiatinas* of land devoted to maintaining the mosque; since this amount of land probably brought in less than a hundred rubles of income, it is not surprising that a wealthy notable from Ilmin determined that the land was not sufficient, and donated 400 rubles from his own pocket to the mosque's upkeep.<sup>163</sup> By means of comparison, we know that Kazan's Apanaev Mosque earned 400 rubles a year for its upkeep from the rent earned from a shop on its grounds and from the use of its storehouses.<sup>164</sup> In Aḥmad Bāy Khusainov's will, put into effect in 1906, we learn that he left a grant of 300 rubles a year for the upkeep of Orenburg's Sixth Mosque, as well as 120 rubles a year

<sup>157</sup> TAA fol. 81a.

<sup>158</sup> TAA fol. 100b.

<sup>159</sup> TAA fols. 22b–23a, 34b, 69b.

<sup>160</sup> TAA fol. 34b.

<sup>161</sup> TAA fol. 14a.

<sup>162</sup> TAA fol. 35b.

<sup>163</sup> TAA fol. 74b.

<sup>164</sup> Salikhov and Khayrutdinov, *Tatar khalqining*, 73.

to support that mosque's custodian.<sup>165</sup> For Nizhnii Novgorod province Idrisov et al. have estimated that the cost for than annual upkeep of a mosque was between 500 and 1,000 rubles a year.<sup>166</sup>

### *Architectural styles of mosques*

Rural mosque architecture in the Volga-Ural region as whole varied widely both over time and over space. The earliest descriptions we have of mosques date from the eighteenth century, where European travelers describe them as wooden houses lacking minarets and as externally indistinguishable from the villagers' houses. According to a nineteenth century Russian source, the mosque in the village of Saba, in Kazan province, dated from the period of the Kazan Khanate, before the Russian conquest.<sup>167</sup> One of the oldest standing village mosques known to exist in the region was located in the village of Staro-Tushkyrovo, in Bashkiria, and reportedly dates to the middle of the seventeenth century. Although it was rebuilt and renovated in 1891, according to B. Kalimullin the original dimensions remained essentially intact.<sup>168</sup> The survival of mosques from this early period is extremely rare however, and the large majority of village mosques date from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The typical village mosque was wooden with a minaret, surrounded by a small square, and located in the center of the village in a prominent spot. However, materials and designs varied widely, and depended on local conditions, and the wealth of a given community. As a result of the general lack of scholarly attention for Volga-Ural mosques, and especially village mosques, local variations in architectural styles remain to be determined. If eclecticism characterized the larger mosques in Kazan, Ufa, St. Petersburg, Orenburg and other major cities, then on the whole similarities, rather than differences characterize the architecture of the village mosque in the

<sup>165</sup> Fakhretdin, *Akhmed Bai*, 31, 38.

<sup>166</sup> Idrisov et al. *Iz istorii*, 38.

<sup>167</sup> Aidarova, "Mecheti i tserkvi," 170; claims of such antiquity should not be automatically taken at face value. During the eighteenth century, Muslim villages could save their mosque from destruction by "proving" it had been built before the Russian conquest. Russian legislators noted credulously in 1744 that most of the 118 mosques spared destruction in Kazan province dated from before 1552; cf. PSPR 2 ser. 2 t. June 22, 1744.

<sup>168</sup> Kalimullin, *Arkhitekturnye pamiatniki Bashkirii* III, 19.

Volga-Ural region; these mosques were characterized by their wooden construction, smallish size, and angular minarets. At the same time, certain architectural features became more common in some regions than in others. Later in the imperial period Russian religious architecture began to influence the designs of many mosques in Riazan' and Nizhnii Novgorod province, where local Muslims had been in closer and longer contact with Russians than elsewhere in the Volga-Ural region.<sup>169</sup> Octogon-shaped mosques, mimicking the shape of the Bashkir yurt, were encountered in Bashkiria. Kalimullin discusses one such mosque, located in the village of Novo-Muslimovo, that was built in 1854, replacing a similarly-shaped mosque that had burned down.<sup>170</sup> Furthermore, as we have seen above, the Bashkir builder-architect Kalimulla Rakhmatullin maintained his own style and architectural innovations, which were evident in a series of villages.

In terms of materials and structure, mosques in Novouzensk district varied considerably, but remained within the larger tradition of mosque design, and especially village mosque design, of the Volga-Ural region. However, the almost total lack of lumber on the steppe and the difficulties in transporting lumber during the first half of the nineteenth century forced Muslims to rely on local materials to build their mosques. In the Cossack communities bordering the Inner Horde and in the Inner Horde itself, mosques were built out of stone. The native Chizha Bashkirs, who were expelled from the region in the 1870's, used reeds as their primary building materials, and consequently the mosque in the village of Birqazan was also made of this material.<sup>171</sup> It appears that in Iske Özen the earliest mosque there was also made of reeds or sod, as were the earliest *madrasas*.<sup>172</sup>

Other early mosques in Novouzensk district were made of mud brick, and were small in size. Such mosques appeared in Safarqa and Imin, soon after their initial settlement in 1841.<sup>173</sup> These sorts of mosques were often white-washed, or sided with boards. In the case of Safarqa's initial First Mosque, it had a roof made from

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<sup>169</sup> For Illustrations and photographs of such mosques cf. Idrisov et al. *Iz istorii*, 49–52; Braslavskii, *Islam v Chuvashtii*, passim.

<sup>170</sup> Kalimullin, *Arkhitekturnye pamiatniki Bashkirii* III, 22–23.

<sup>171</sup> TAA fol. 5a.

<sup>172</sup> TAA fol. 89a.

<sup>173</sup> TAA fols. 15b, 31a, 40a, 65a, 69a, 80a.

stones.<sup>174</sup> These mud-brick mosques were apparently still in use early in the second half of the nineteenth century. In Altı Ata's First *maḥalla* the white-washed mud-brick mosque, known simply as Āq Masjid (lit. the White Mosque), was replaced by a wooden one in 1858. In Ilmin's First *maḥalla* the original mosque was only replaced in 1870.<sup>175</sup> While in Novouzensk district the villagers quickly replaced these primitive sorts of mosques with wooden ones, the Bashkirs of Nikolaevsk district retained the older styles until well into the second half of the nineteenth century, if not later. The Ural Cossack author I. Zheleznov, writing in the 1860's, noted that together with the nine mosques belonging to these Bashkirs there were two additional mosques made out of sod [*dern*] and mud brick [*vozdushnyi kirpich*], while the remaining mosques were made of wood.<sup>176</sup> Zheleznov further describes these Bashkir mosques as being simply log cabins with sod roofs.<sup>177</sup>

Despite the scarcity of building materials, the first wooden mosques appeared rather early in Novouzensk district. Already by 1835 Altı Ata's First *maḥalla* had built a wooden mosque.<sup>178</sup> As we have seen, early in the second half of the nineteenth century wooden mosques were replacing the older mud-brick ones, and by 1910 all nineteen mosques in Novouzensk district were built primarily out of wood. These wooden mosques almost always had metal roofs. Al-Īlmīnī tells us that the first mosque in the district to be built with a metal roof was in Ilmin's Second *maḥalla*. Unfortunately no date is given, but judging from this fact we can place the appearance of metal roofs to the second half of the nineteenth century.

For the construction of the more elaborate wooden mosques in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries it is likely that the drawings and designs of the mosque had to be done by specialists outside the community. We know that before building the mosque in Novouzensk, the local Muslim community sent their *de facto imām*, Iḥsān Mullā, to Samara to obtain an approved drawing (*faṣād*) of the mosque, as well as a permit from the authorities.<sup>179</sup> Similarly presenting and receiving the plans of the mosque was apparently

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<sup>174</sup> TAA fols. 15b, 31a.

<sup>175</sup> TAA fol. 41a.

<sup>176</sup> Zheleznov, *Ural'tsy* I, 246.

<sup>177</sup> Zheleznov, *Ural'tsy* I, 250.

<sup>178</sup> TAA fol. 12a.

<sup>179</sup> TAA fol. 100b.

part of the permit process in building Safarqa's Second Mosque.<sup>180</sup> As we have seen, in Nizhnii Novgorod province, after the community had received authorization for building from the provincial authorities, they had to submit an architectural plan to the Building Division of the Nizhnii Novgorod Provincial Administration (*Stroitel'noe otdelenie Nizhegorodskogo Gubernskogo Praveniia*), who examined it and who, if they approved it, would issue a building permit (*stroitel'nyi bilet*).<sup>181</sup>

### *Minarets and mihrābs*

The earliest mosques, whether made of mud brick or wood, were usually small and rather simple, often lacking either a minaret or a *mihrāb*<sup>182</sup> but by the second half of the nineteenth century all of Novouzensk district's mosques were built with both of these features, which were crucial features of the mosque. In discussing Altı Ata's Second Mosque, al-Īlmīnī notes that this mosque "had a new-style minaret, as well as a traditional minaret."<sup>183</sup> In this passage it is not clear whether the mosque had two minarets, or one style of minaret replaced the other. Nor is it clear what distinguished a "traditional" minaret from a "new style" one. Although a single minaret was the norm, some mosques had two minarets, and the First Mosque in Iske Őzen reportedly had three. Al-Īlmīnī tells us that one minaret was on the roof of the mosque, and two were on the sides by the doorway, on either side of the entrance hallway.<sup>184</sup> The highest minaret in the district was apparently that of Safarqa's Third Mosque, which was eleven *qārish* (spans) in height and reportedly richly adorned.<sup>185</sup>

### *Physical specifications (area, windows, floors, colors)*

One feature of al-Īlmīnī's history that is particularly prominent are his descriptions of the physical characteristics of the mosques, and

<sup>180</sup> TAA fol. 34a.

<sup>181</sup> Idrisov et al. *Iz istorii*, 47; for facsimiles of plans for four mosques submitted to the Nizhnii Novgorod provincial authorities cf. Idrisov et al. *Iz istorii*, 49–52; for drawing of other mosques cf. Salikhov and Khayretdinov, *Tatar khalqininq*, 100, 130, 201; Braslavskii, *Islam v Chuvashii*, 49, 51, 53, 55.

<sup>182</sup> TAA fols. 12b, 15b, 21b.

<sup>183</sup> TAA fol. 18a.

<sup>184</sup> TAA fol. 83a.

<sup>185</sup> TAA fol. 35b.

the details of their construction, including their dimensions, colors, and other distinguishing features. No two mosques in Novouzensk district were structurally the same, and they were differentiated by their color and their accessories. Furthermore the magnificence of a *mahalla's* mosque was not only a sign of God's blessings, but also a very real testament to the devotion of that *mahalla* to Islam, and to the generosity of its wealthy members. This being the case, al-Īlmīnī clearly wanted his readers to be aware of not only who had sacrificed and toiled to build a mosque, but also who had built the most beautiful mosques. And in so doing al-Īlmīnī does not hesitate to compare and note important details, such as which was the *mahalla* to have the tallest mosque or the first to have a metal roof.

Among the details al-Īlmīnī provides about the mosques built in his time are their dimensions. For example, Altī Ata's First Mosque, built at some point before 1835, was three *sazhens* wide and six or seven *sazhens* long, that is, about 6.4 by 14 meters.<sup>186</sup> Later, this mosque was replaced by a larger one reportedly four *sazhens* and one *arshin* by nine *sazhens* (9.23 meters by 19.17 meters).<sup>187</sup> Al-Īlmīnī describes the Second Mosque of Altī Ata, built by a *mahalla* lacking wealthy contributors, in the following terms:

[The mosque's] height was thirteen *arshins* and its length nine *sazhens*. It's height was such, that from the ground to the platform of the minaret 52 steps were taken and it had seven small windows on each side. The size of the large windows [of the mosque proper] was thirteen spans and each of them had two stories. Its minaret was in a different form and was assembled in a very beautiful manner. When there was a convention, it was [such a beautiful place] that no eyes had seen and no ears had heard [the likes of it]. They covered the outside of the structure with boards and painted them yellow and they painted the small windows white. They covered the roof with metal and painted it green, and when it was finished it pleased men's souls. My Lord—may he be praised and exalted—may look at it and let it persist for long.<sup>188</sup>

He describes Safarqa's Second Mosque, also built by a relatively poor *mahalla*, in similar terms:

<sup>186</sup> TAA fol. 11b.

<sup>187</sup> TAA fol. 14b.

<sup>188</sup> TAA fol. 17ab.

With the aid of God, they built the mosque that was four *sazhens* in width and eight *sazhens* long. It had five windows on each side and a door and a window on the north side. There are two doors that open onto two sides of the hallway. They covered the doors with expensive wooden moldings. They painted the roof red and the outside yellow, and they fenced it in.<sup>189</sup>

Another representative description is for Ilmin's Fourth Mosque:

Its length was nine *sazhens*, its height thirteen *arshins* and it had two stories. The lower story was made two-and-a-half *arshins* high, and they built a stove. There are six windows on either side of the upper story and one window on either side of the hallway. In all there are seven windows on each side. On the ground floor they made four windows on either side. They sided the top with boards and painted it dark brown. They covered the roof with metal and they painted it green. That side faded and since they have painted it blue. They made a window on top, on the southern end. . . . It was done in a fine quality.<sup>190</sup>

Another impressive mosque was built in Iske Özen's Fifth *maḥalla*:

Its width was four *sazhens* and one *arshin* on each side and its length was eight *sazhens*. It had six windows on two sides, and he [the carpenter] made the windows in very beautiful frames. They sided the upper part with boards and painted it dark blue. He covered the smooth clean roof with metal and painted it green. He put up a fence around it and painted it the color of the mosque. At the entrance they made twin doors out of thick wood and they painted a high quality wooden frame. On either side, against the door, for the minaret a broad basket was made out of metal above the door. Cast iron was put on either side and very attractive railings on the two stories. . . .<sup>191</sup>

Al-Īlmīnī's attention to the colors in which the mosques were painted is especially helpful to modern readers, if we remember that photographs of these mosques at the time when they could still be properly maintained by their communities, were only black-and-white, thereby failing to transmit what must have been a particularly striking feature of these buildings. Both in the nineteenth century, and even today, houses in Muslim, and especially Tatar villages in the Volga-Ural region were and are painted with striking colors and designs, and the mosques of al-Īlmīnī's time must have both blended

<sup>189</sup> TAA fol. 34b.

<sup>190</sup> TAA fol. 75ab.

<sup>191</sup> TAA fol. 92b.

in and stood out from such a colorful background. Al-Īlmīnī describes the mosques in Novouzensk districts as green, blue, yellow, dark brown, and white, noting that in most cases the metal roofs were painted green.

#### CONCLUSION

The *Tawārīkh-i Āltī Ātā* provides us with what is the fullest account known to date of the function, construction, and funding of mosques in imperial Russia. As in the Volga-Ural region as a whole, mosques in Novouzensk district were the primary public buildings in Muslim communities, and as such were both the religious and communal center of each *maḥalla*. The Muslim colonists built their mosques soon after their arrival to the region in the early nineteenth century. The building of a new mosque, or the renovation and enlargement of an existing one was a major undertaking that usually involved the entire *maḥalla*. Funding was usually carried out publicly and in an *ad hoc* manner. It was generally rare for a single notable to take upon himself the entire cost of building a mosque, and ideally all members of the *maḥalla* would make a contribution to the project, either in cash, in kind, or with labor or credit. It was also common for some *maḥallas* to have land set aside to support the construction and upkeep of a mosque. This land, typically amounting to between twenty and forty *desiatinas*, was usually leased out, although the proceeds from these lands usually amounted to a fraction of the projects' cost. Throughout the Volga-Ural region and Siberia it was the provincial authorities who regulated mosque construction. In Novouzensk district, for the most part the process of obtaining provincial permits was apparently routine. However opposition from a local *imām* or notable, or the need to fulfill the requirement of providing the mosque with an open lot would usually delay the project.

The earliest mosques in the treeless expanses of Novouzensk district were made from local materials, initially from sod, or from mud bricks. By the middle of the nineteenth century it was increasingly common for local mosques to be built out of wood, which was the traditional material for the construction of mosques in the Volga-Ural region as a whole. The villagers usually purchased their lumber in the Volga port city of Balakovo and transported it to their villages, or else purchased existing structures that they would disas-

semble and cannibalize. Most mosques were built with a single minaret, although the earliest and simplest mosques in the region had none. However some of the more elaborate mosques would have two, or even three minarets. The wooden mosques always had a metal roof, and the buildings were painted a variety of colors. The number of mosques in Novouzensk gradually increased throughout the nineteenth century, from 6 in 1844, 12 in 1858, 17 (including 14 in Osinov Gai township) in 1883, to 22 (including 18 in Osinov Gai township) in 1910. This growth was typical in the region as a whole; Idrisov et al. and L. Braslavskii have documented a similar rate of growth in Nizhnii Novgorod province and in Buinsk and Tsivil'sk districts over the course of the nineteenth century. Thus, the mosque, the most tangible and visible of the region's Muslim institutions, could fairly be said to have flourished in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and, on the basis of the sources examined, there is no evidence that the Russian authorities tried to limit their growth at the local level.

## CHAPTER SIX

### ISLAMIC EDUCATION

#### INTRODUCTION

The study and evaluation Islamic education in the Volga-Ural region of Russia has always been a highly charged issue. Religious modernists, Soviet reformers, and ethnic nationalists have tended to depict education among Volga-Ural Muslims as both the cause and cure of the problems of their respective nations. If we base our evaluation of Islamic education in the Volga-Ural region on published sources, then our understanding will be unduly influenced by the simple fact that the previous studies are based on varieties of a secular social ideal. The authors of these studies inevitably contrast the shortcomings of the “old, inadequate, and irrelevant standards” of Islamic education with the new and relevant methods and outcomes of the secular social and pedagogical principles in which the author has invested. Whether consciously expressed or not, this phenomenon is present in virtually all scholarship on Islamic education in the Volga-Ural region, albeit with a few recent exceptions. This united front of criticism has been based for the most part on data gleaned from the memoirs of modernists, as well as from Russian missionary sources, and in last place, from Russian archival sources; in any case, almost exclusively from sources that not only lack any sort of emotional or other investment in traditional Muslim schools, but whose respective agendas are furthered by discrediting, and ultimately eliminating them.

#### *Earlier treatments of traditional education*

Previous treatments of Islamic, or “traditional” education fall into three occasionally overlapping categories: 1) religious modernist, 2) Soviet reformist, and 3) ethnic nationalist. Although the ideological approaches within these three categories differ, they do share the common feature of presenting Islamic education as a polarized conflict between modernist, progressive, “western-oriented” jadidist educa-

tion, that appeared toward the end of the nineteenth century, at one of the poles, and “traditionalist,” scholasticist, obscurantist, reactionary, qadimist education at the other pole. In these studies, the “conflict” is depicted as the “eternal” conflict between reform and reaction. While a jadidist-qadimist polemic did emerge in the Tatar periodic press after 1905, these historians have moved its existence back in time, in some cases to the emergence of the jadidist movement in the 1880’s, and in other cases to the beginning of the nineteenth century, or even to the medieval period. Indeed, the French scholar Stéphane Dudoignon, the only scholar to have actually examined the nature of “qadimism”, determined that as an idea opposed to jadidism, it was articulated rather late, around 1910.<sup>1</sup> Broadly speaking, in determining the jadidists to be the sole bearers of pedagogical progress, and by arbitrarily labeling local educational institutions “traditional,” and by equating “traditional” Islamic education with the anachronistically perennial “qadimism,” they have *a priori* established that these institutions were incapable of internal evolution. Although the manuscript materials on “traditional” Islamic education are overwhelmingly abundant, this near-universal idea of jadidist-qadimist polarity has discouraged historians from broadly examining evidence to test these fundamental, and doubtful, assumptions. Only quite recently have scholars begun to question the validity of the jadidist-qadimist polarity. Recently the Tatar historian Suleiman Rakhimov has challenged the assumption of the “backwardness” of traditional Islamic education. Rakhimov argues that Islamic education in the Volga-Ural region was constantly evolving from the late eighteenth century to the early twentieth century, as Muslim society evolved.<sup>2</sup>

A characteristic feature of these studies of Islamic education is that they are based on a limited body of published sources. The proliferation of these studies has resulted in a large number of secondary and tertiary studies ultimately based on a small number of “primary” printed materials. One of these sources is an early Soviet work

<sup>1</sup> Stéphane Dudoignon, “Qu’est-ce que la ‘Qadîmiya’? Éléments de sociologie du traditionalisme musulman en Islam de Russie et en Transoxiane,” *L’Islam de Russie: Conscience communautaire et autonomie politique chez les Tatars de la Volga et de l’Oural depuis le XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, (Paris, 1997), 220–221.

<sup>2</sup> Suleiman Rakhimov, “Sotsial’no-pravovoi status tatarskikh uchebnykh zavedenii poslednoi chetverti XVIII—nach. XX vv.,” *Islam v tatarskom mire i sovremennost’*, (Kazan, 1997), 73–74.

published in Russian translation in 1923 by the Tatar reformer Dzhamaliutdin Validov.<sup>3</sup> Validov's account, evidently based on first-hand experience, describes well the organization and curriculum of the traditional *madrasa*, but is ultimately dismissive of its emphasis on "scholasticism," which he attributes to Bukharan influence. A more typically Soviet treatment can be found in the monograph of Z. A. Ishmukhametov, devoted to Islam's reactionary and retarding influence on Tatar culture. He depicts Tatar *madrasas* as serving only the moneyed classes, and faults them for teaching Arabic, rather than Russian or Tatar, literature and for studying the Qur'ān, and rejects the traditional curriculum and scholastic and "deadening."<sup>4</sup> Similar evaluations were published by Soviet Bashkir scholars.<sup>5</sup> This evaluation has endured among post-Soviet Tatar scholars, who, as a rule, have typically accorded significance to Islamic education only to the degree that it promoted the Tatar "national awakening" and secularization.<sup>6</sup>

Despite the polemical and tendentious features in Soviet scholarship on Islamic education in the Volga-Ural region, a number of Soviet studies went beyond summary condemnation, and treated the subject in a general descriptive manner. Typical in this respect is the study by the Tatar literary critic G. M. Khisamutdinov, which appeared in 1967.<sup>7</sup> During the later Soviet period the Tatar historian S. Alishev presented an examination of traditional Muslim education that sought to adhere to the accepted Soviet treatment, but at the same time present a more nuanced view that looked at the role of traditional *madrasa* in bringing about a "Tatar Enlightenment."<sup>8</sup> To avoid the problem of the putative "reactionary" role of Tatar *madrasas* in resisting modernism and nationalism during the nine-

<sup>3</sup> Dzhamaliutdin Validov. *Ocherk istorii obrazovannosti i literatury tatar (do revoliutsii 1917 g.)* (Moscow-Petrograd, 1923), 17–32.

<sup>4</sup> Ishmukhametov, *Sotsialnaia rol' i evoliutsiia Islama v Tatarii*, 124–128.

<sup>5</sup> For a typical treatment cf. A. I. Kharisov, *Literaturnoe nasledie bashkirskogo naroda (XVIII–XIX veka)*, (Ufa, 1973), 236–239.

<sup>6</sup> For example cf. Khafizov, *Nizhegorodskie tatory*, 33–34; cf. also D. M. Iskhakov, *Fenomen tatarskogo dzhadidizma: vvedenie k sotsiokul'turnomu osmysleniiu*, (Kazan, 1997), 25–27; R. U. Amirkhanov and R. F. Iagfarov, "Prosveshchenie," in: *Tatory: spravochnik*, R. M. Mukhametshin (ed.), (Kazan, 1993), 125–133.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *Tatory srednego Povolzh'ia*, 373–380.

<sup>8</sup> S. Kh. Alishev. "Obuchenie i obrazovanie tatarskikh krest'ian v XVIII v." *Razvitiie kul'tury Tatarii v dooktiabr'skii period*, (Kazan, 1988), 42–57; S. Kh. Alishev. "Iz istorii prosveshcheniia povolzhskikh tatar," *Krest'ianskoe khoziaistvo i kul'tura derevni Srednego Povolzh'ia*, (Ioshkar-Ola, 1990), 110–116.

teenth century, Alishev's studies claim to concentrate on the eighteenth century, yet many of the citations are from nineteenth-century sources. Nevertheless, Alishev's studies are useful for describing the *madrasa* networks that existed in the Middle Volga in the eighteenth century.

In Tatar nationalist historiography Islamic education is generally afforded little attention, except to introduce the advent of religious and education reform, that ushered in the Tatar "National Awakening." This view is evident in émigré writings,<sup>9</sup> but this Tatar nationalist view of traditional Muslims education is perhaps most clearly revealed in A. Rorlich's monograph on the Volga Tatars.

In recent times the Tatar nationalist approach to Islamic education has retained its appeal to numerous scholars. These scholars have found the jadidist-qadimist polarity convenient, and have presented it as one of the preconditions of Tatar national development. In such studies, where the real focus is on the cultural and pedagogical attainments of Tatar reformers or the Tatar nation, Islamic education, especially that which preceded modernist education, is simply depicted as decadent and obscurantist. As usual, these scholars and their reviewers consider such a depiction to be self evident, since in these studies evidence that would determine the qualities of Islamic education is completely dispensed with.<sup>10</sup>

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union studies of traditional *madrasas* in the Volga-Ural region have multiplied. While these studies show little evidence of a fundamental reevaluation of nationalist and Soviet-era precepts, a few authors have broadened their inquires to include *madrasas* that do not fit into the traditional "reformist" categories. In 1992 a collection of articles devoted specifically to *madrasas* was published in Kazan.<sup>11</sup> The fundamental theme of this collection remains the role of *madrasas* in ushering the Tatar enlightenment, which led to the emergence of a secular and modern Tatar nation. Nevertheless, three articles devoted to *madrasas* in Siberia and in the towns of Sterlibashevo and Qishqar, discuss institutions that were not exclusively

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Gaiaz Iskhaki, *Idel'-Ural*, (Kazan, 1991) [first ed. 1933], 36–37; T. Davletshin, *Sovetskii Tatarstan*, (London, 1974), 34–36.

<sup>10</sup> Typical in this respect is the article by Galina Yemelianova. Among Yemelianova's many inaccuracies, she writes that confessional education in the Volga-Ural region was only "legalized" in 1820, when in fact it had always been "legal;" cf. Yemelianova, "The National Identity of the Volga Tatars," 557–558; cf. also Kanhdere, *Reform within Islam*, 77–85.

<sup>11</sup> Röstäm Mähdiev (ed.) *Mädräsälärdä kitap kishtäse*, (Kazan, 1992).

connected with Islamic modernism or Tatar nationalism.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, a monograph devoted to the history of Orenburg's modernist Ḥusaynīya Madrasa was recently published in that city.<sup>13</sup>

Works examining Muslim educational institutions as a whole within specific areas of the Volga-Ural region have nevertheless been appearing in the last two decades. Research on *madrasas* has also been underway in Bashkortostan, albeit on a more local level, and with less need to make traditional Muslim education fit into a nationalist mold. A collection of articles by Ravil' Ütäbäy-Kärimi is devoted primarily to reformist *madrasas* in the southern Urals, but contains useful information of *madrasa* financing.<sup>14</sup> Particularly fruitful and detailed studies of traditional Muslim education are in a series of works by Marsil' Farkhshatov. These include articles devoted to the types of textbooks used in the *madrasas* of Bashkiria,<sup>15</sup> as well as to sources on *madrasas* and *maktabs* in the archive of the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly.<sup>16</sup> He has also published a monograph on education in general in Bashkiria, to which he devoted considerable space to Islamic education.<sup>17</sup> Farkhshatov's work is based especially on archival sources from the Muslim Spiritual Assembly, as well as on data taken from published Tatar biographical dictionaries produced at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In a more limited fashion, a brief article was recently published devoted to *madrasas* and *maktabs* in Samara Province's Bugul'ma district and in Ufa Province's Menzelinsk district, located in what is today southeastern Tatarstan.<sup>18</sup>

Despite the focus on modernist institutions, some Tatar scholars have examined local Islamic manuscript materials connected with the *madrasas* of the Volga-Ural region, and the literary legacy of the

<sup>12</sup> Cf. G. Lotfi, "Qishqar mädräse," 15–171; Z. Zäynullin, "Estärlebash mädräsäse," 175–185; F. Valeev, "Seber mädräsäse," 185–198.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Madina Rakhimkulova, *Medrese 'Khusainiia' v Orenburge*, 2nd edition, (Orenburg, 1997).

<sup>14</sup> Ravil' Ütäbäy-Kärimi, *Mäghrifätselek ädhähärenän*, (Ufa, 1991).

<sup>15</sup> M. N. Farkhshatov "Ob uchebnykh posobiakh mektebov i medrese Bashkirii do nachala XX v.," *Sotsial'nye i etnicheskie aspekty istorii Bashkirii*, (Ufa, 1988), 44–49.

<sup>16</sup> M. N. Farkhshatov. "Dokumenty Orenburgskogo Magometanskogo Sobraniia po istorii mektebov i medrese Bashkirii vtoroi poloviny XIX v.," *Maloizuchennye istochniki po istorii Bashkirii*, (Ufa, 1986), 34–43.

<sup>17</sup> Farkhshatov, *Narodnoe obrazovanie*.

<sup>18</sup> I. R. Gabdullin and R. R. Ibragimova, "Mektebe [sic] i medrese Bugul'minskogo i Menzelinskogo uezdov v kontse XIX—nachale XX vekov," *Iz istorii Al'met'evskogo regiona* vyp.1, D. M. Iskhakov ed., (Al'met'evsk, 1999), 174–179.

region's Islamic schools. For example, in 1984 Mirkasym Usmanov published a collection of essays on his experiences in collection, cataloguing, and studying locally produced Islamic manuscripts, which included a chapter on the manuscript genre of "shāgirds' notebooks" that is, notebooks kept by the students in the *madrasa*.<sup>19</sup>

### 1. THE COMMUNAL FOUNDATIONS OF MUSLIM EDUCATION

Observers of traditional Muslim education in the Volga-Ural region have tended to distinguish Muslim educational institutions between *maktabs* and *madrasas*. These institutions were almost always affiliated with a specific mosque, and by extension, with a specific *maḥalla*. The term *maktab* was used to refer to institutions catering to the primary education of children. Reading, writing, and the rudiments of religious instruction were usually taught in *maktabs*. *Madrasas*, on the other hand, represented the higher level of education, where young men, including future *imāms*, were trained. M. Baishev's description of Islamic education in the Bashkir village of Ziianchurina, in Orenburg province's Orsk district could equally be applied to the Volga-Ural region as a whole. He notes that every village had its own *maktab*, while there were only a few *madrasas* in the township as a whole, which comprised a number of villages. He notes that the purpose of the *maktabs* was to acquaint the pupils with the rules of Islamic life and the requirements and rituals of the Islamic religion. The *maktabs* were attended only by local children, while pupils from other villages would attend *madrasas*. The course of study in a *maktab* was at the most six or seven years. Upon completing his studies in a *maktab*, a pupil would typically be able to read certain parts of the Qur'ān and be able to read printed books in Turkish or Tatar.<sup>20</sup>

According to Baishev a student would begin his studies in a *madrasa* after completing his studies in a *maktab*. The course of study in a village *madrasa* typically lasted another five or six years, after which the students, known as *shāgirds*, would be able to read and write Turkic and Arabic fluently. Many would opt to continue their studies, and many became well acquainted with the Qur'ān, Arabic and

<sup>19</sup> Gosmanov, *Qauriy qalām ézenmān*, 95–155; Marsel' Akhmetzianov edited other examples of this genre in *Mādrāsālārdā kitap kishtāse*, 224–232.

<sup>20</sup> Baishev, "Derevnia Ziianchurina," 14.

Persian grammar, and Arabic and Persian books. On the whole, the emphasis in the *madrasa* was primarily on reading, and the attention devoted to writing depended on the student's interest.<sup>21</sup>

While it is evident that Muslim communities in the Volga-Ural region distinguished between these two levels of education, in some districts, all religious educational institutions, regardless of whether they instructed children or *shāgirds*, were referred to simply as *madrasas*. This appears to have been the case in Novouzensk district, as al-Īlmīnī calls all educational institutions affiliated with a mosque "*madrasas*," whether they catered to local children or older *shāgirds*. The same taxonomy appears to have been in effect in other districts as well. For example, L. Braslavskii reports that in Simbirsk Province's Buinsk district, local Muslims referred to all of their religious educational institutions as "*madrasas*," however this does not appear to have been so in the neighboring districts of Tsivil'sk and Cheboksary.<sup>22</sup> A possible explanation for the neglect of the term *maktab* in Novouzensk and Buinsk districts, and probably in other districts as well, may have been the occasional absence of clearly defined boundaries between primary and secondary education, at least at the village level. Farkhshatov has remarked that in the Volga-Ural region as a whole the distinction between *madrasas* and *maktabs* could be an indefinite one; for example, in wintertime a *madrasa* could also contain within itself a *maktab* in which the senior *shāgirds* would give instruction to children.<sup>23</sup>

### *Women and Islamic education*

Unlike mosques and the *‘ulamā*, two institutions where the formal participation of women was absent, women nevertheless often did play an active role in Islamic education. The *Tawārīkh-i Āltī Ātā* provides little information on the role of women in Islamic education within Novouzensk district, however we do know from sources addressing other regions that female Muslims acted both as instructors and pupils in *maktabs*. In their study of 44 rural *maḥallas* in a part of Kazan province's Kazan district, R. R. Salikhov and R. R. Khairutdinov included data from an official Russian survey of the

<sup>21</sup> Baishev, "Derevnia Ziianchurina," 15–16.

<sup>22</sup> Braslavskii, *Islam v Chuvashii*, 42.

<sup>23</sup> Farkhshatov, *Narodnoe obrazovanie*, 58.

Muslim schools among these villages. Salikhov and Khairutdinov's data, collected at the beginning of the twentieth century, apparently in 1903, identified active *maktabs* in virtually every *maḥalla*. In nearly every *maḥalla* girls were educated as well as boys. In some *maḥallas* there were more boys in the *maktab*, in others there were more girls than boys, but overall the proportion of boys and girls was roughly equal.<sup>24</sup> It is unclear whether Kazan district can be considered typical for the Volga-Ural region as a whole. However according to similar official Russian materials collected by L. Braslavskii, there was a far smaller proportion of girls receiving primary education in Tsvil'sk and Buinsk districts. Unfortunately Braslavskii provides no actual dates for the material he presents, and we can only place it between 1877 and 1908. Nevertheless, of the 43 *maḥallas* in those districts during the imperial Russian period, only thirteen are noted as having girls in the local *maktabs*. In these *maktabs*, the ratio of boys to girls was 2.3:1.<sup>25</sup> Generally speaking, it appears that boys and girls were taught separately. Boys were taught in the *maktab*, while girls were typically taught in the *imām's* house.<sup>26</sup>

For the most part, it was women who were responsible for providing instruction to girls. In many cases, it was the *imām's* wife who provided instruction to the girls in her *maḥalla*. These women were known by the term "*ostabikā*," which denoted both "teacher" and "*imām's* wife."<sup>27</sup> In Kazan district these women functioned as teachers in 11 out of 43 *maḥallas*. Typically, the *ostabikā* would instruct female pupils in her home. Dzhamaliutdin Validov has written that although these women typically were unable to write well, they were often very accomplished at reading. He notes that many of these women were even well versed in Arabic and Persian.<sup>28</sup> In any case, the practice of the *imām's* wife educating local girls appears to have been widespread, since the missionary Ia. Koblov remarked upon

<sup>24</sup> *Ocherki istorii Vysokogorskogo raiona*, 167–205; in five of the 44 *maktabs*, no mention is made of female pupils. However this fact does not allow us to conclude that there was no education for female Muslims in these specific villages.

<sup>25</sup> Braslavskii, *Islam v Chuvashii*, 109–145.

<sup>26</sup> Validov, *Ocherki istorii obrazovannosti*, 17.

<sup>27</sup> Validov notes that the word is derived from the Arabic word "*ustādhi*" (teacher, instructor) and the Turkic word "*bikā*" (lady, mistress); cf. Validov, *Ocherki istorii obrazovannosti*, 17.

<sup>28</sup> Validov, *Ocherki istorii obrazovannosti*, 17.

this very fact in a general discussion of Muslim education in the Middle Volga region.<sup>29</sup>

Another term for a female teacher was *abistay* (*ābiṣṭāy*).<sup>30</sup> In the *Tawārīkh-i Āltī Ātā*, we read how a female instructor in the town of Novouzensk, Āltūnbek Ābiṣṭāy, would give lessons to “girls and small children,” which suggests that small children were taught together. However, this is the only instance where al-Īlmīnī alludes to the separation of genders, or for that matter mentions the education of girls.<sup>31</sup> Agnès Kefeli has discussed the activities of these women within the crypto-Muslim “Baptized Tatars” communities of Kazan province in the middle of the nineteenth century. According to Kefeli, these women played an important role in bringing about mass conversions to Islam among these Baptized Tatar communities in the 1860’s. While ministering to their own officially non-Muslim communities, it is clear from Kefeli’s sources that the Baptized Tatar *abistays* were connected to a larger network of Muslim women teachers. Kefeli provides a brief biography of one of these women, a certain Biksultan. In 1864 this woman taught a class of two boys and fifteen girls in her *maktab* in the village of Öch Narat (Tri Sosny), in Kazan province’s Laishevo district. Biksultan herself studied in the village of Jöri (Ziuri), evidently under a Baptized Tatar *abistay*. Nevertheless, Biksultan sent her daughter to study under a Muslim *abistay* in the village of Savrushī. This daughter later married a Baptized Tatar, and moved to the village of Staraia Ukshurma, where she took up the instruction of children. Kefeli also shows that in the Baptized Tatar village of Yelish (Elyshevo), the teaching of local children in the 1860’s alternated between Baptized Tatar *abistays* and itinerant male Muslim teachers.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Koblov, *O magometanskikh mullakh*, 7.

<sup>30</sup> According to Budagov, this term is a contracted form of “*abzi tutay*,” meaning “aunt,” “older sister,” or “kinswoman.” However, Budagov also lists a religious sense, “wife of a religious figure,” or “teacher;” cf. Budagov, *Sravnitel’nyi slovar* I, 4.

<sup>31</sup> TAA fol. 96a.

<sup>32</sup> Agnès Kefeli, “Une note sur le rôle des femmes tatares converties au christianisme dans la réislamisation de la Moyenne-Volga au milieu du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle,” *L’Islam de Russie: Conscience communautaire et autonomie politique chez les Tatars de la Volga et de l’Oural depuis le XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Stéphane Dudoignon et al. eds., (Paris, 1997), 70–71.

*Maktabs, madrasas, and their function in the community*

*Maktabs* and *madrasas*, together with mosques and the ‘*ulamā*’, were fundamentally important parts of the community because they were part of what made the community Muslim. The study of Arabic and of the medieval classics of Islamic learning did not simply indulge the supposed taste of the ‘*ulamā*’ for the arcane, stultifying and socially irrelevant, as other modernists often depict traditional education. Rather, as Michael Kemper has demonstrated, this sort of knowledge formed the canon and the idiom through which the political, social and religious discourse—or Islamic Discourse, in Kemper’s words—of Volga-Ural Muslim communities was debated and discussed; without a background in this basic Islamic knowledge, Muslims, both men and women, would be unable to comprehend, let alone participate in, the internal debates going on within their own society. The missionary Ia. Koblov recognized the unifying aspect of Islamic education for Tatar villagers, when he noted that the *imām* and the congregation shared essentially the same education, and that the *imām* simply had a deeper knowledge of the same texts and ideas that the villagers had themselves studied in their *maktabs* and *madrasas*.<sup>33</sup>

*Madrasas* in these relatively immobile village communities also played a role in exposing villagers to the larger world around them. The *madrasas* of Novouzensk district seemed to cater to a primarily local clientele, but *shāgirds*, as well as instructors, would commonly come from Saratov, Penza and Kazan Provinces, as well as from among the Ural Cossacks, Kazakhs and Bashkirs. The *madrasas* of Novouzensk did not form a closed educational circuit, but were part of a much larger Islamic educational network that not only connected the Muslims of Novouzensk district to other Muslim communities in the Volga-Ural region and imperial Russia, but in broader terms to the education network of the Islamic world at large.

The *Tawārikh-i Ālī Ātā* can illuminate broader issue of the extent of the *madrasa* network in the Volga-Ural region as a whole. It is difficult to determine how many *madrasas* were active in Novouzensk district at any one time. This is because al-Īlmīnī based his history on oral sources and personal reminiscences, and as a result his chronologies are often vague. Nevertheless, among the twenty *mahallas* he discusses, he mentions eight, or forty percent, where for varying

<sup>33</sup> Koblov, *O magometanskikh mullakh*, 8.

periods of time, and for different reasons, the *madrassa* was abandoned or not convening, and in some cases where the children of a *maḥalla* were remaining illiterate. Indeed, in Iske Özen's Third *maḥalla*, he notes that after death of its *imām* 'Abdalkarīm, the instructor in the district's most illustrious *madrassa*, education eventually ceased even there.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, he mentions only four *madrassas* where instruction was maintained without interruption, and one of these four *madrassas* was his own. Thus, judging from the evidence for a relatively wealthy district like Novouzensk, we can determine that the assumption of a one-to-one ratio of *madrassas* and *maktabs* to mosques for the late nineteenth century, let alone the eighteenth century, considerably overestimates the ratio of educational establishments to mosques. In Novouzensk district, while the number of mosques never decreased, the number of *madrassas* fluctuated constantly, and, as we shall see, could depend on numerous external factors, such as rainfall in a given year, and the personalities of the instructors, to name two.

M. N. Farkhshatov has commented on the wide differences between estimates of the numbers of mosques in Ufa and Orenburg provinces, that were based on a supposed one-to-one ratio of mosques to *madrassas* and those made by government officials on other criteria. He also notes that the continued existence of a *madrassa* depended on a number of factors, such as the wealth of the community, the personalities of the instructors, and the presence of sponsors. Crop failure, or the death or absence of an instructor or a sponsor, could result in the closing of a *madrassa*, and the number of *madrassas* that remained in constant operation of the nineteenth century was small.<sup>35</sup> Another potential source of confusion for Russian census-takers may have been ambiguity in the local use of the overlapping terms *madrassa* and *maktab*. As we have seen for Novouzensk and Buinsk districts, local villagers referred to all Muslim education institutions as *madrassas*. For Nizhnii Novgorod province we have rather more definite statistics that clearly indicate the lack of equivalence between the number of mosques and the number of educational establishments. Idrisov et al. found that in 1878 there were 47 mosques in that province, but only 33 *maktabs* and *madrassas*, in which there were 1,500 pupils.<sup>36</sup> More specifically, Mansur Khafizov also notes that while every village was

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<sup>34</sup> TAA fol. 88b.

<sup>35</sup> Farkhshatov, *Narodnoe obrazovanie*, 57–58.

<sup>36</sup> Idrisov et al. *Iz istorii*, 66.

supposed to have a *maktab*, in Nizhnii Novgorod province proper there were no *madrasas*; rather, Muslims from this province would attend two *madrasas* in the nearby villages of Sobachii Ostrog and Krasnyi Ostrog, located in Simbirsk province's Kurmysh district, which bordered Nizhnii Novgorod province.<sup>37</sup> Thus, according to Khafizov the 47 mosques in Nizhnii Novgorod province supported around 33 *maktabs* and no *madrasas*. Similar ratios are apparent in the evidence from several other districts. In Salikhov and Khairutdinov's data for 44 *maḥallas* in Kazan district, maintaining 43 *maktabs*, at the beginning of the twentieth century, there appears to have been only two active *madrasas*, one in the village of Yurtish (Iurtysh), and the other in the village of Yamashirmä (Iamashurma). There had also been a rather renowned *madrasa* in the village of Mämdal, which had been active since the eighteenth century, but by the beginning of the twentieth century it had ceased to operate.<sup>38</sup> Among the 43 *maḥallas* in Tsivil'sk, Buinsk, and Cheboksary districts, there were only two *madrasas* at the beginning of the twentieth century, one in the village of Aqyeget (Akzegotovo), in Tsivil'sk district, and one in the town of Buinsk.<sup>39</sup> In Samara province's Bugul'ma district, a region of particularly dense Muslim settlement, the official numbers vary considerably, and confirm the need to examine this official documentation critically. Figures from 1894 mention 63 *maktabs* and 28 *madrasas* in the district. Another report from 1912–1913 list the improbably high figure of 351 *maktabs* and 28 *madrasas*. Given what we know about other districts, a police report from 1911 provides the most specific, and apparently accurate, account for this district. This report identified 158 *maktabs* and only eight *madrasas*. The eight *madrasas* were located in the villages of Timitiq (Tumutuk), Chalpi (Chalpy), Älmät (Al'met'ëvo), Taysughan (Taisuganovo), Tübän Chirshili (Nizhnie Chershili), Bayrak (Bairaki), Abdikeevo, and Urussu.<sup>40</sup>

To be sure, the Muslim educational establishment for Novouzensk primarily served local needs, and evidently were well suited to the tasks of educating children as well as *shāgirds*. Muḥammad-Fātiḥ al-Īlmīnī was himself both aware of and proud of the fact that he was

<sup>37</sup> Khafizov, *Nizhegorodskie tatory*, 28.

<sup>38</sup> *Ocherki istorii Vysokogorskogo raiona*, 188, 203–204.

<sup>39</sup> Braslavskii, *Islam v Chuvashii*, 110.

<sup>40</sup> Gabdullin and Ibragimova, "Mektebe i medrese Bugul'minskogo i Menzelinskogo uezdov," 174.

entirely a product of Novouzensk district's *madrasas*, and indeed roughly half of the district's *imāms* had local origins and local training. However, many *shāgirds* came originally from areas outside of the district, and many instructors not only were trained outside of the district, but originated from other regions as well. Some instructors were trained outside of the Volga-Ural region. The jadid instructor Shāh Şultān Āfāndī studied in the Crimea, in the town of Bakhchesaray with Ismā'īl Bey Gasprinskii.<sup>41</sup> The *imām* of Iske Ōzen's Fifth Mosque, 'Abdassamād Burhānaddīn ūghlī was originally from Kazan province's Tetiushi district and had studied in both Bukhara and Kazan.<sup>42</sup>

Some of the earliest instructors in Altı Ata were Bashkir *mullās* from the Chizha Valley, and one of the district's most prominent and learned *imāms* was 'Aṭā'allāh Ālṭīnbāy ūghlī aṣ-Şafarqawī, a Bashkir from the Kamelik valley in Nikolaevsk district. 'Aṭā'allāh studied Sufism in various places, including in the town of Troitsk under the well known Naqshbandī figure Zaynallāh Rasulev and in the Crimea under Ismā'īl Qīrīmī, a *khalīfa* of Aḥmad Dīyā'addīn Gümüşkhānawī. Numerous other instructors studied in such centers as Zimnicha (Zimnitsa) and Bigi (Bigievo), both in Saratov province, Yalpaqta, Qarghalı, Kazan, and Sterlibashevo.

Beyond the primary purpose of education, *madrasas* could serve the community in rather unexpected ways. Al-İlmīnī mentions two cases where instructors used their *madrasas* to conceal draft evaders from twenty-five year terms in the Russian Army and it appears that the concealment of draft evaders was not uncommon at that time. In his account of 'Abdalwālī Aḥmar ūghlī, the first *imām* of Altı Ata's Fourth Mosque, he describes the *imām*'s activities as a *shāgird*:

According to the accounts of his contemporaries, there was a time when there were many deserters. If *shāgirds* were to go to the military after studying, [only] a few would serve, but most would desert. The term of service was twenty-five years. Education was very difficult and took courage, and if there was a reward, they say there was none greater [than that]. The deserter would escape and as a result, wherever there were deserters, they were allowed in the existing *madrasas*. One or two were in [blank] Ḥaḍrat's *madrasa*.<sup>43</sup> Their things were in

<sup>41</sup> TAA fols. 76b–77a.

<sup>42</sup> TAA fol. 92b.

<sup>43</sup> Evidently al-İmīnī was unable to find out the name of 'Abdalwālī's instructor.

the *ḥaḍrat's* vestibule and at that moment an investigator came from the government; when he wanted to search the madrasa and other suspicious buildings, this Mullā 'Abdalwalī, a *shāgird*, sensed the situation and without telling anybody he took the deserters' things from the *ḥaḍrat's* vestibule and managed to hide them. After that the search took place, but they couldn't find anything and they departed. As for the *shāgird*-deserters, all of them fled. The investigator after not finding anything, also departed. Later this *ḥaḍrat* found out and performed many prayers for 'Abdalwalī. They say because of the prayer's great blessing 'Abdalwalī lived a good life . . .<sup>44</sup>

While the latter account took place outside of Novouzensk district, al-Īlmīnī relates a similar situation taking place in Iske Özen:

The first *imām* of this [the Second Mosque] mosque was reportedly 'Umar Ākhūnd. He was learned and generous in keeping with his time. He ran the *madrasa*. In his *madrasa* there were *shāgirds* who were fleeing conscription. When a bailiff or some other officer would come, he hid the *shāgirds* there, and they went to the opposite bank of the river. Because that bank was overgrown with willows they would flee there. There were not only willows, but osiers too, the thickness of a samovar, they say.<sup>45</sup>

If a village, or even a district, maintained a strong *madrasa*, this was often a source of prestige, and even fame for the community. Renown connected with a *madrasa* could be felt far beyond the boundaries of the district. Among the most famous *madrasas* in imperial Russia were those of Sterlibashevo, Qarghalī, and Kazan to name some of those mentioned in al-Īlmīnī's history. These were certainly among the best known and enduring Muslim educational institutions within Russia. However, the prestige of any given *madrasa* could be fleeting, and depended on a joint commitment between the instructors and the community. Within Novouzensk district the most famous *madrasa* was located in Iske Özen's Third *maḥalla*. The *imām* and *mudarris* for this congregation was 'Abdalkarīm Tīmurbūlāṭ ūghlī. He had briefly been an *imām* in Altī Ata, and al-Īlmīnī describes him as the most renowned scholar of Novouzensk district until his death in the early 1880's. This *madrasa* appears to have been rather large, reportedly attended by up to two hundred *shāgirds* who would come from as far away as Penza province. The *madrasa* trained many *imāms* who

<sup>44</sup> TAA fols. 21b–22a.

<sup>45</sup> TAA fol. 86ab.

served the villages of Novouzensk district, but it also trained *imāms* for the Cossack settlements of Glinianskii Forpost and YalpaqtaI.<sup>46</sup> However, the fame of a *madrassa* did not survive under ‘Abdalkarīm’s successor, his son Hidāyatallāh, who although he worked diligently, was unable to attract students, and the quality of education declined.<sup>47</sup>

*Financing and material support by the community*

Throughout the Volga-Ural region the system of Muslim primary and advanced education was funded and otherwise supported entirely by the local *maḥalla*, or by wealthy members of the community. This support usually consisted of cash or in-kind donations, since, as we have seen, educational *waqf* foundations were very rare in the Volga-Ural region, in sharp contrast to Central Asia, where *waqf* endowments for *madrassas* were far more common. In Novouzensk district, while there were cases when land was set aside to support mosque construction or maintenance, there is no evidence that this was the case for educational institutions. This absence of a durable financial foundation in the Volga-Ural region was perhaps an important reason for the transitory character of *madrassas* that al-Īlmīnī describes for Novouzensk district, and that was probably the case for all *madrassas* throughout the Volga-Ural region, except for the largest and most famous ones, especially those in larger cities.

Al-Īlmīnī lays out the division of responsibility for education quite succinctly: “In the same way that the manner of scholarship in a *madrassa* depends on the *imāms*, the education of the *shāgirds* depends on the wealthy.”<sup>48</sup> The wealthy members of the community, were not only responsible for the material support of the *shāgirds*, (that is, those who boarded at the *madrassa*; young children who lived in the *maḥalla* of course lived with their families) but they were also responsible for building and maintaining the *madrassa* buildings. At the same time, it appears that when possible, *shāgirds* were expected to contribute something for their education, since al-Īlmīnī writes of one *imām* who did not make financial demands of poor students studying in his *madrassa*, suggesting that at least something was expected from *shāgirds* who came from wealthier families.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>46</sup> TAA fols. 87b–88b.

<sup>47</sup> TAA fol. 88b.

<sup>48</sup> TAA fol. 16a.

<sup>49</sup> TAA fols. 13b–14a.

Ultimately, the wealth of the community, and the level of its support for education, depended on the crops. Al-Īlmīnī provides the example of ‘Abdalkarīm Tīmurbūlāṭ ūghlī when he was *imām* in Altī Ata in the 1840’s, demonstrating how natural disasters such as drought or crop failure, could ultimately result in the collapse of all education in a *maḥalla*:

At first, he paid much attention to the *madrasa* but then after some years prosperity left the land. Wealth declined day by day. He himself could not find the occasion to instruct. Sometimes he departed and migrated either to the Cossacks, or to the Bashkirs, or to Saratov province, and could only work as a junior teacher in [a] *madrasa*. Because there was no support from the *maḥalla*, he had to earn a living [by working elsewhere]. If the *madrasa* did not convene in a single year no attention was paid to teaching. In such conditions, most of the *maḥalla* was [not] able to learn to write. At first the *maḥalla* was wealthy. Later after some years its wealth declined and everyone remained in poverty.<sup>50</sup>

The primary education of children generally demanded few financial outlays on the part of the community, since classes were often held in winter, when neither the children’s nor the teachers’ labor was in high demand, and since the children lived in the *maḥalla* and were under their parents’ care, the level of financial support was minimal. Nevertheless, the parents of pupils in the *madrasa* were expected to provide kerosene and firewood the heat and light the building, and al-Īlmīnī determines that when one *maḥalla* failed to provide these things to their *madrasa* they were being negligent.<sup>51</sup> Data for Bugul’ma district reveals the contributions of parents more explicitly. In the 1890’s parents would normally pay 25 kopecks to one ruble as tuition. Every Thursday the children would bring a kopeck or two, or whatever their parents could afford.<sup>52</sup> In some cases, when both the *imām* and the *mu’adhdhin* were neglecting the *madrasa*, the residents of the *maḥalla* would take it upon themselves to hire and support and teacher for their children. We have the following example from Ilmin’s Third *maḥalla*:

However, [the *imām* ‘Abdal‘azīz] maintained no *madrasa*, nor did his *mu’adhdhin* look after the *madrasa*. On its own initiative and at its own

<sup>50</sup> TAA fol. 12a.

<sup>51</sup> TAA fol. 20a.

<sup>52</sup> Gabdullin and Ibragimova, “Mektebe i medrese Bugul’minskogo i Menzelinskogo uezdov,” 177.

expense, the community brought a *khālfā* and he taught the children. The majority chose someone from Altı Ata named Dāwūd Mullā, and since he was a person of poor means, they bore the provisioning of the *madrassa* and each child gave two *poods* of wheat; and their were other gratuities as well.<sup>53</sup>

If the financial responsibility for educating children rested partially on the shoulders of the community at large, educating the *shāgirds* rested primarily on the shoulders of the wealthy. Some *maḥallas* had no wealthy residents. However, poorer *maḥallas* were also capable of educating their children. For example, Altı Ata's First *maḥalla*, we are told, "did not have a single rich person. Most of them were people who owned one or two horses."<sup>54</sup> Nevertheless, the community was able to build "a two-story [*madrassa* building] out of wood. It was very beautiful and only in cities can such *madrassas* be found."<sup>55</sup> But such an achievement was certainly the exception to the rule.

Wealthy Muslims would contribute to *madrassas* in various ways. Wealthy wheat growers often contributed an in-kind tithe, called *ʿushr* and when the crop was bountiful it must have amounted to substantial wealth.<sup>56</sup> Al-Īlmīnī singles out for special mention two wealthy figures in Iske Özen:

There are two very wealthy people in this [Iske Özen's Second] *maḥalla*. The first is ʿUmar Ḥājī Ḥasan ūghlī and the other is ʿIlājaddīn Miftāḥaddīn ūghlī. They say he [ʿIlājaddīn] has more than a hundred thousand rubles. Because they were wheat growers, they would give an *ʿushr*. Those who came from other villages with requests were not deprived, and they would receive what they had asked for and go home.<sup>57</sup>

More common, however, appear to have been personal contributions made by wealthy Muslims for specific needs. For example, the village of Safarqa was blessed with a number of wealthy and open-handed individuals. One of these, named Ramaḍān Āfāndī Zubayr ūghlī, had build four separate *madrassa* buildings at his own expense in the First *maḥalla*; two for teaching children and two for teaching *shāgirds*.<sup>58</sup> In the Third *maḥalla* this same Ramaḍān Āfāndī gave his

<sup>53</sup> TAA fols. 70b–71a.

<sup>54</sup> TAA fol. 14b.

<sup>55</sup> TAA fols. 14b–15a.

<sup>56</sup> TAA fols. 16a, 86b.

<sup>57</sup> TAA fol. 86b.

<sup>58</sup> TAA fol. 32ab.

own two-story house, valued at 800 rubles, to be used as a *madrasa*.<sup>59</sup> Another wealthy villager, one of two wealthy brothers known as the Twin Ḥājjīs, Aḥmad-Jān Sayfaddīn ūghlī Ḥājjī, built a large two-story *madrasa* in the same *maḥalla*.<sup>60</sup> In the village of Ilmin a local magnate named Pūtā Bābāy at his own expense built a brick *madrasa*, and then later renovated and enlarged it to two stories.<sup>61</sup> The importance of wealthy contributors in maintaining a *madrasa*'s excellence becomes especially clear in the following passage describing the Third *maḥalla* in Iske Ōzen:

At that time in the *maḥalla* two brothers, the Ḥājjī sons, one Ḥabībālāh and the other Ni'matallāh, made great donations and presents. They say that they would give flour by the wagon-load, and bread two or three times more, meat by the *pood*, and butter to the *madrasa*. . . . These Ḥājjī sons passed away and such wealth did not remain among their descendants, nor did it not reach that of their fathers' [wealth]. But God gave wealth anew to generous people. Ḥusnaddīn 'Abdalwāhhāb ūghlī became the successor to the Ḥājjī sons, and he showed no abatement in supporting the mosque and the *madrasa*. As God increased [his wealth] from year to year, he in turn increased his offerings and although he was not initially a *hājjī*, [with time God] granted him the noble *hajj*, and he became a *hājjī*. He owned great wealth. Once, when I was a guest in the home of this gathering of divine ideals, I went out to his lot and his animals. One could see 120 oxen, 20 head of horses and perhaps even more camels. His buildings were filled with this kind of substantial wealth. Besides his total *'ushr*, he would give beyond his *'ushr* to those who came in need.<sup>62</sup>

Thus we can see that the financing and material support for higher Islamic education in Novouzensk district came primarily from the wealthy members of the community. We can only speculate as to the motives that led these wealthy Muslims to contribute not only to *madrasas*, but to the Islamic religious establishment in general. Naturally, in supporting Islamic education in their communities these prosperous notables acquired prestige. For his part al-Īlmīnī never directly comments on what motivated these sorts of donations; rather, he obviously assumes such beneficence to be the duty of a good Muslim blessed with wealth, and he describes the worthiness of such acts to be self evident.

<sup>59</sup> TAA fol. 35a.

<sup>60</sup> TAA fol. 32b.

<sup>61</sup> TAA fol. 74ab.

<sup>62</sup> TAA fols. 87b–88a.

It should be noted that beginning from the end of the nineteenth century, a degree of state funding was available for *madrasas* and *maktabs* which offered Russian classes. Madrasas could accept funding for their Russian classes from the Ministry of Education, or from the district *zemstvos*. However, Gabdullin and Ibragimova point out that by the end of the nineteenth century, not a single *madrasa* or *maktab* in Bugul'ma district had accepted state funding, perhaps because by doing so, the school became subordinate to the Ministry of Education. However, during the first decades of the twentieth century, when the reformist curriculum began growing in popularity, many new-method teachers began turning more frequently to the district *zemstvos* for funding.<sup>63</sup>

## 2. TEACHERS AND CURRICULA

### *The instructor: ideal and reality*

If the duty of the wealthy was to support the *shāgirds*, then the duty of the *imām* was to uphold the quality of education in the *madrasa*. In principle, among Volga-Ural Muslims the *imām* or *imāms* of a given *maḥalla* were supposed to maintain a *madrasa* that educated both small children and *shāgirds*.<sup>64</sup> As we have seen, the existence of a *madrasa* within a *maḥalla* was conditional on the existence of financial support from the community, and in times of chronic crop failure some *madrasas* in Novouzensk would simply shut down. But there were other reasons for the inactivity of a *madrasa*. One reason was the inability of a *madrasa* or its instructors to attract enough *shāgirds* to keep it viable. As we shall see below, this was the case for more than one modernist *madrasa* in the district. But the most common reason was inattention to the *madrasa* on the part of the *imām* himself. The *Tawārikh-i Ālī Ātā* makes it clear that for Novouzensk district in all but a very few cases every *maḥalla* had some sort of arrangement for education of small children. In many cases it was not the *imām* who educated the children, but perhaps the *mu'adhd-*

<sup>63</sup> Gabdullin and Ibragimova, "Mektebe i medrese Bugul'minskogo i Menzelinskogo uezdov," 177.

<sup>64</sup> Obukhov, *Mekteby Ufimskoi gubernii*, 7.

*hin*, or more commonly a junior instructor (*khālfā*), or a *shāgird*. Such a characterization applies more to the latter half of the nineteenth century; during the first half of the nineteenth century al-Īlmīnī writes that education was often simply left to “elders” (*qārtlar*).<sup>65</sup>

Yet it is equally apparent that smaller communities which lacked mosques also made provisions for educating children. This was true for the small Muslim trading communities in the towns of Novouzensk and Aleksandrov Gai. In Novouzensk, where a Muslim community only appeared in the 1870’s, and until a mosque was built in the 1890’s a woman named Āltūnbek Ābiṣṭāy would give lessons to young children and girls in her home.<sup>66</sup> In Aleksandrov Gai, where there was no mosque, the *imām* there, Aḥmad-Şafā Muḥammad-Fātiḥ ūghlī (the son of the work’s author) was teaching his community’s children after becoming *imām* in 1901.<sup>67</sup>

In *maḥallas* that possessed an established mosque, education was the responsibility of the *imām* or *imāms* affiliated with the mosque. In al-Īlmīnī’s narrative the ideal *imām* puts great effort into the teaching and training of both children and *shāgirds*, and sets himself to the task of education immediately upon become *imām*. It is clear that al-Īlmīnī himself tried to live up to this ideal, and apparently his sons, *imāms* in Ilmin and Aleksandrov Gai, tried to as well. Concerning himself, al-Īlmīnī relates that in his twenty-seven years as *imām* in Ilmin “there was not a single year without a *madrasa*.”<sup>68</sup> However, the ideal *imāms* in the narrative also run the best *madrasas* that bring the most fame to the district. These include, of course, the *imām* of Iske Özen’s Third Mosque, ‘Abdalkarīm Tīmurbūlaṭ ūghlī, but also other figures such as Maḥmūd ‘Ubaydallāh ūghlī of Safarqa’s Third Mosque,<sup>69</sup> Ni‘matallāh Muḥammad-Şiddīq ūghlī of Altı Ata’s First Mosque and ‘Aṭā’allāh Āltinbāy ūghlī, a Bashkir, and *imām* of Safarqa’s First mosque until his death in 1909. Concerning the latter figure we read:

He stayed in Safarqa and many of his *shāgirds* came with little. As soon as he arrived he began lessons, and over forty years he taught many *shāgirds*. He produced many *khalīfas* and they became *imāms* in

<sup>65</sup> TAA fol. 88a.

<sup>66</sup> TAA fol. 96a.

<sup>67</sup> TAA fol. 103a.

<sup>68</sup> TAA fol. 43a.

<sup>69</sup> TAA fol. 35a.

the environs and were occupied in giving lessons. He had thirty *shāgirds* who later ran their own mosques and *madrasas*. In his later years he became a Sufi under Ismā‘il Qirīmī.<sup>70</sup>

However, very few *imāms* in Novouzensk district were able or willing to live up to this ideal, and it should not be surprising that al-Īlmīnī gives such praise to the efforts of ‘Abdalkarīm Tīmurbulāt ūghlī and ‘Aṭā’allāh Ālṭinbāy ūghlī. In fact, even the most committed *imāms* were sometimes unable to maintain a *madrasa* in the face of various economic or personal hurdles. Al-Īlmīnī’s own teacher, Kamāladdīn Isfandiyār ūghlī, *imām* of Altī Ata’s First Mosque, was forced to abandon teaching in the face of a severe drought.<sup>71</sup> Some *imāms* withdrew from teaching for personal reasons. Concerning ‘Abdarrashīd Aḥmad-Şafā ūghlī the author writes:

At the beginning of his tenure the *mullā* [‘Abdarrashīd] was attentive in the affairs of the *madrasa*. To the *shāgirds* he explained the lessons well and in sequence. God is most wise. After he got married, he withdrew from the lessons and would not go to the *madrasa*. He would not give lessons to the students who had assembled. The congregation knew this, and although they intended to hire a *khālfā*, he would not allow it, and nobody asked why.<sup>72</sup>

Several other *imāms* began diligently enough, but with time their enthusiasm and energy waned, and eventually their *madrasas* closed; this was the case with the Sharafaddīn Mullā Naşiraddīn ūghlī, *imām* of Altī Ata’s Third Mosque and the founder of the district’s first modernist *madrasa*.<sup>73</sup>

Ia. Koblov has stated that while an *imām* was expected to see to the instruction of the community, it was not uncommon for the *imām* to delegate this duty to a junior figure, such as a *mu’adhdhin*.<sup>74</sup> This situation was also evident in Novouzensk district, where it appears to have been rather common for *imāms* to decline a direct role in education. In such cases education was usually undertaken by other members of the community. Such instructors were most often *khālfās*, that is, senior *shāgirds* who would earn part of their keep by teaching children. *Mu’adhdhins* were also commonly encountered as teach-

<sup>70</sup> TAA fols. 31b–32a.

<sup>71</sup> TAA fol. 12a.

<sup>72</sup> TAA fol. 76a.

<sup>73</sup> TAA fol. 20a.

<sup>74</sup> Koblov, *O magometanskikh mullakh*, 7.

ers. Finally, simply learned members of the community would teach children as well if an *imām*, *mu'adhdhin* or *khālfā* was unavailable. In some cases an *imām* would be simply too busy with the daily affairs of his office to instruct children. This was the case for the *imām* of Altī Ata's Fifth Mosque, Khalīl Muḥyiddīn ūghlī, who was especially occupied with his activity as a healer (*ṣāhib-i nafas*), which attracted many patients, not only locally, but from among the Kazakhs and Ural Cossacks as well. Teaching was taken over by the *mu'adhdhin*, Zaynallāh Aḥmadjān ūghlī, who not only taught children, but convened a *madrassa* with *shāgirds* as well. Al-Īlmīnī adds:

... the above-mentioned [Zaynallāh], in remaining *mu'adhdhin* to the congregation for about fifteen years, got along well with its *imām* Mullā Khalīl and paid attention to the business of the *madrassa*. Even if the number of adult *shāgirds* was not large, he convened the *madrassa* every year. Although he placed this year [1909] a *khālfā* inside the *madrassa*, he himself comes and spends time in the *madrassa* two or three times a day.<sup>75</sup>

Similarly, in Altī Ata's Second *maḥalla* two generations of *mu'adhdhins* maintained the *madrassa* there.<sup>76</sup> It was perhaps most common for an *imām* or a *mu'adhdhin* to see to the education of children with a *khālfā*. Unlike the *imām* or the *mu'adhdhin* the *khālfā* was occupied exclusively with teaching children, and derived his income primarily from that. As we have seen, a *khālfā* named Dāwūd Mullā was hired and paid in kind by the Third *maḥalla* of Ilmin when neither their teacher nor the *mu'adhdhin* were involving themselves with the education of children.<sup>77</sup> In Altī Ata's Third *maḥalla*, the *mu'adhdhin* Shāhaddīn Īshmurād ūghlī initially took the affairs of the *madrassa* upon himself, but later selected a *khālfā* to administer the *madrassa* for him. However, *khālfās* were occasionally subject to exploitation on the part of senior instructors, as the example of Altī Ata's Third Mosque demonstrates:

The poor *khālfā* saw to the provisioning of the *madrassa* on Fridays and as there was the custom to give offerings on Fridays, even if that was not much at all. On that day the *mu'adhdhin* would enter the *madrassa*, gather up the amount of offerings that were found, and leave. This

<sup>75</sup> TAA fol. 27a.

<sup>76</sup> TAA 16b–17a.

<sup>77</sup> TAA 70b–71a.

matter caused hardship to the *khālfā* because he also had a house and a family and there was [the matter of] their provisioning, and he bound his own livelihood to the *madrassa*. After that, for several years, because they couldn't find a *khālfā*, and only despicable persons appeared, the affairs of the *madrassa* remained abandoned.<sup>78</sup>

In other cases, *khālfās* were hired by the *maḥalla*, who not only paid them, but in some cases built them a *madrassa*. One such figure was a Qaraqalpaq named Sharafaddīn Ḥusayn ūghlī, but known as Sharaf Khālfā. This figure was a student and son-in-law to Iske Özen's prestigious *imām* 'Abdalkarīm. Al-Īlmīnī credits him with teaching the children reading, and a degree of writing, but adds that "he was neglectful in Qur'ān recitation and showed little fastidiousness." This *khālfā* also only taught children in winter, since in summer he engaged in "ordinary labor."<sup>79</sup> In at least one case, in Ilmin, the *imām* 'Abdarashīd, who was neglecting his *madrassa* nevertheless refused to allow his *maḥalla* to hire a *khālfā*, and even tried unsuccessfully to block his congregation from hiring one:

However, there was a *shāgird* from the village of Qushum named Kamāladdīn. Today he is the *imām* in the village of Qushum. Because this *shāgird* sought renown, he came with the idea of giving lessons properly and he passed the winter. But he did not give a single lesson and today the *madrassas* are vacant. However, in 1906, when a petition was filed to fill the *madrassa*, they hired [another] *khālfā* and a *madrassa* was convened.<sup>80</sup>

In lieu of more or less formally trained figures, such as *imāms*, *mu'adhdhins* or even *khālfā*, the community would turn to "lay figures." This appears to have been especially common during the first part of the nineteenth century. For example, after the death of Dīnūsh Mullā, Altī Ata's first known religious leader, Bashkir *mullās* were brought from some nearby villages in Ural'sk province. These *mullās*, we are told, "would give lessons to children in order to be fed."<sup>81</sup> Yet "lay figures" continued to teach children throughout that century; as we have seen, this was the case in the town of Novouzensk, where children and girls were taught by a woman named Ālṭūnbek Ābiṣṭāy,

<sup>78</sup> TAA fol. 19b.

<sup>79</sup> TAA fol. 40b.

<sup>80</sup> TAA fol. 76a.

<sup>81</sup> TAA fol. 9b.

who continued to teach even after the arrival of an *imām*.<sup>82</sup> In Altı Ata's Third *maḥalla*, two "informal" teachers gave lessons along with the local *mu'adhdhin*. The first of these was the *imām*'s brother, Naşıraddīn Ḥubbī ūghlī, who would earn money teaching the children of a few notables in winter, and would run a small mill in summer, thereby acquiring a degree of prosperity.<sup>83</sup> The other was a rather sadistic figure named Ni'matallāh Amīn ūghlī, whose classes it seems the author may have himself attended. According to al-İlmīnī he would abuse the children by striking and threatening them, and because his knowledge was without foundation the children gained no benefits from his classes.<sup>84</sup>

### *Curricula*

Al-İlmīnī provides few details about curricula in Novouzensk district's Islamic schools. Nevertheless, published sources suggest that at the primary, *maktab* level, the curriculum was fairly standardized, providing for a surprising degree of pedagogical cohesion which was the foundation of the Volga-Ural region's Islamic discourse.

Primary education could last up to seven or eight years. Initially children were taught the basics of reading, as the fundamentals of the Islamic faith, sometimes by the local *imām*, but more commonly by *khālfās*. Children usually began their studies with a book entitled *Imān Shārṭī* (Foundation of Faith), which instructed them in the essential rites and principles of the Islamic religion.<sup>85</sup> However, the main "textbook" for the pupils in *maktabs* was, naturally, the Qur'ān. According to Validov, in the first year, after the pupils had completed the *Imān Shārṭī*, they began reading the Qur'ān. Typically, they began with a single *sūra*, the *Yā Sīn*. In the second year, they would study the *Haft-i Yak*, which was one seventh of the Qur'ān. In their third and fourth years, they would go through the entire Qur'ān.<sup>86</sup> The main emphasis was on reading, and it appears that somewhat less attention was spent on writing, at least in the early years of primary education. However, in Novouzensk district, we are

<sup>82</sup> TAA fol. 96a.

<sup>83</sup> TAA fol. 18b.

<sup>84</sup> TAA fols. 18b–19a.

<sup>85</sup> Farkhshatov, "Ob uchebnykh posobiiakh mektebov i medrese," 13–14.

<sup>86</sup> Validov, *Ocherki istorii obrazovannosti*, 14–16.

informed that Mullā Naşiraddīn Ḥubbī ūghlī, who gave private lessons to the children of notables in his home in Altı Ata's Third *maḥalla*, concentrated on writing skills.<sup>87</sup> The Qaraqalpaq teacher in Ilmin's First *maḥalla*, Sharaf Khālfā, taught reading "and a degree or writing" to children, although al-Īlmīnī faults him for being neglectful of Qur'ān recitation (*qirā'at*), suggesting that it was appropriate to at least begin teaching this skill to children.<sup>88</sup> A *khālfā* in Ilmin's Fifth *maḥalla*, Muḥammad-Jān Raḍīq ūghlī, "taught the children the *sūras*, explained their meanings, and administered the prayers," thereby demonstrating that the study of the Qur'ān, even for children, involved more than mere rote memorization, as modernist critics have routinely charged.<sup>89</sup> Al-Īlmīnī clearly distinguished between good and bad teachers. Throughout the narrative he criticizes teachers who are poorly prepared and ineffective, and praises those who showed skill, dedication, and zeal. Concerning himself, he claims with pride that he was able to teach children literacy in just three years time.<sup>90</sup>

While the focus of *maktab* education was the Qur'ān, and the foundations of the Islamic religion, Turkic literature was also widely read. Some of these works were of Central Asian origin, but many were also produced in the Volga-Ural region, and constituted a regional canon. These Turkic books included the medieval verse works *Ākhīr Zamān Kitābī*, by the Central Asian author Sulaymān Bāqirghānī (d. 1186) and the *Qıssa-yi Yūsuf* of Qul 'Alī, written in the Volga-Ural region already before the Mongol conquest.<sup>91</sup> Turkic prose works included the Central Asian Sufi work *Thabāt al-Ājizīn of Şūfī Allāhyār* (d. 1723), and a commentary on the latter work, entitled *Risāla-yi 'Azīza* by the Bashkir author Tājaddīn Yālchīghul ūghlī (d. 1838).<sup>92</sup> Other locally produced Turkic works include the *Bādāvām Kitābī* and the prose tale *Kısākbāsh*, which circulated widely in the region's *maktabas*, and which, according to the Agnès Kefeli, played an important role in diffusing Islamic ideas and Islamic identity to Baptized Tatar communities reverting to Islam in the nineteenth century.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>87</sup> TAA fol. 18b.

<sup>88</sup> TAA fol. 40b.

<sup>89</sup> TAA fol. 78a.

<sup>90</sup> TAA fol. 19b.

<sup>91</sup> On the *Qıssa-yi Yūsuf* cf. *Tatar ädäbiyati tarikhı* I, (Kazan, 1984), 115–157.

<sup>92</sup> On these works cf. Kemper, *Sufis und Gelehrte in Tatarien und Baschkirien*, 98–115.

<sup>93</sup> Agnès Kefeli, "Constructing an Islamic Identity: the Case of Elyshevo Village in the Nineteenth Century," *Russia's Orient: Imperial Borderlands and Peoples, 1700–1917*,

The role of *maktabs* in fostering a regional Islam identity, grounded in the Volga-Ural region's "Islamic discourse," should not be discounted. Volga-Ural Muslims, throughout the nineteenth century, and well into the twentieth, identified themselves as "Bulghars" and regarded works such as *Qiṣṣa-yi Yūsuf*, *Bādāwām Kūtābī*, *Kisākbāsh*, and especially the *Tawārīkh-i Bulghārīya* of Ḥusāmaddīn b. Sharafaddīn al-Bulghārī as important links connecting them with their Bulghar ancestors.<sup>94</sup>

The focus of education was not narrowly religious, and in many villages *maktabs* were centers of local literary activity. According to Validov, instruction usually ended early on Thursdays, and the older pupils would spend that day copying books and writing poetry. The poetry was often inspired by folklore or other local themes.<sup>95</sup> The practice appears to have been very widespread, and Mirkasym Usmanov has discussed in some detail the rich poetic legacy of these "shāgirds' notebooks."<sup>96</sup>

### Madrasa *curricula*

What proportion of pupils advanced from a *maktāb* to a *madrasa* is difficult to determine, especially if we keep in mind that the two categories often overlapped. Nevertheless, published sources indicate that the *madrasa* curricula was distinguished chiefly by its propensity toward specialization. Typically, when a *shāgird* began in a *madrasa* he first began studying Arabic. Validov, who studied in a *madrasa* in Kazan province's Tetiushi district, has written that *shāgirds* began by studying a Persian work on etymology entitled *Sharḥ 'Abdallāh*, or *Bedān*. However, Farkhshatov identifies these as two separate works, the *Sharḥ 'Abdallāh* being a commentary on *Bedān* by 'Abdallāh b. al-Muḥammad, and mentions another common Arabic textbook to have been the *Kāfīya* of Jamāladdīn b. al-Ḥājib (1175–1249).<sup>97</sup> Michael Kemper, whose examination of manuscript holdings in Russia has

Daniel R. Brower and Edward J. Lazzerini, eds., (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1997), 276–277; on the *Kisākbāsh* cf. *Tatar ādābiyati tarikhi* I, 273–282.

<sup>94</sup> Gainetdin Akhmerov, *Izbrannye trudy*, (Kazan, 1998), 47–48; Frank, *Islamic Historiography*, 167 and passim; Kemper, *Sufis und Gelehrte*, 324–358.

<sup>95</sup> Validov, *Ocherk istorii obrazovannosti*, 14.

<sup>96</sup> Gosmanov, *Qauriy qalām ezennän*, 95–154.

<sup>97</sup> Validov, *Ocherk obrazovannosti*, 25; Farkhshatov, "Ob uchebnykh posobiakh," 46.

provided us with the most comprehensive discussion of the Volga-Ural region's *madrasa* texts, has identified a number of Arabic grammar textbooks commonly used in Volga-Ural *madrasas*. These include the *Kitāb al-Ummūdhaj* of Maḥmūd b. 'Umar az-Zamakhsharī (d. 1144), a commentary on this work by Muḥammad al-Ardabīlī (d. 1626), and the *Fawā'id Ḍiyā'īya* of 'Abdarraḥman Jāmī (d. 1492), which is itself a commentary on the *Kāfiyya* of Jamāladdīn b. al-Ḥājib. Another common *madrasa* textbook for Arabic grammar was the *al-'Awāmil al-Mi'a* of 'Abdalqāhir al-Jurjānī (d. 1078).<sup>98</sup>

The second level in the *madrasa*, began with the study of Arabic syntax, and then progressed to the study of logic and philosophy; this later stage was termed *'aqlīyat*. The fundamental texts for logic appears to have been the *Kitāb al-Īsāghūjī*, 'Umar al-Adharī's thirteenth century translation of the Greek work *Eisagoge* by Porphyrios (d. ca. 304 CE). *Madrasa* instructors also made use of a commentary on this work by Ḥusāmaddīn al-Kātī (d. 1359).<sup>99</sup> The use of the *Kitāb al-Īsāghūjī* appears to have been well established in the Volga-Ural region. Ḥusayn Amīrkhān ūghlī remarked in his history that an early eighteenth century *imām* in the village of Oli Saba named 'Abdalḥamīd Ḥāfiz b. Dīn-Muḥammad Ḥājji was renowned for his knowledge of the *Īsāghūjī* and another treatise on logic entitled the *Shamsīya*, concerning which he wrote a treatise.<sup>100</sup> Among philosophical works, Farkhshatov mentions the *Ḥikmat al-'Ayn*, by an anonymous author.<sup>101</sup>

The third, and most advanced level of study, was termed *naqlīyat*, and involved fields of dogma (*kalām*), and Islamic law (*fiqh*). One of the foundations for the study of *kalām* in the Volga-Ural region was the *Sharḥ al-'Aqā'id an-Nasafīya* of the great Persian theologian Sa'daddīn at-Taftazānī (d. 1390), which was itself a commentary on a work entitled *Aqīda* by 'Umar an-Nasafī (d. 1142). These works were highly popular in the *madrasas* of the Volga-Ural region, and also were fundamental texts in the highest levels of the region's Islamic discourse.<sup>102</sup> Other popular theological works used in the *madrasas* were the *Ithbāt*

<sup>98</sup> Kemper, *Sufis und Gelehrte*, 215; Farkhshatov identifies the *Fawā'id Ḍiyā'īya* by the title *Sharḥ-i Mullā*.

<sup>99</sup> Kemper, *Sufis und Gelehrte*, 217.

<sup>100</sup> Amirkhanov, *Tawārīkh-i Bulghārīya*, 41, 44–45.

<sup>101</sup> Farkhshatov, "Ob uchebnykh posobiakh," 46.

<sup>102</sup> Kemper, *Sufis und Gelehrte*, 216; Farkhshatov, "Ob uchebnykh posobiakh," 46; Validov, *Ocherk obrazovannosti*, 27.

*wājib al-wujūd* of Jalāladdīn ad-Dawānī (d. 1501), as well as his commentaries on the *‘Aqā’id* of ‘Aḍudaddīn al-Ījī (1355) and on Taftazānī’s *Tahdhib al-mantiq*.<sup>103</sup>

Kemper notes that the study of Islamic law was dominated by Ḥanafī texts of Central Asian origin. Among the most common *fiqh* texts were the *Mukhtaṣar* of Aḥmad al-Qudūrī (d. 1037), the *Hidāya* of Burhānaddīn al-Marghinānī (d. 1197), which was based on the former work, the *Wiqāya fī Masā’il al-Hidāya* of Burhānaddīn Ṣadr ash-Sharī‘a al-Awwal, the *Niqāya Mukhtaṣar al-Wiqāya* of Ṣadr ash-Sharī‘a ath-Thānī (d. 1346), and the major commentary by Shamsaddīn al-Qūhistānī (d. 1534) entitled *Ĵāmi‘ ar-Rumūz Sharḥ an-Niqāya*. Two other important works were the *Farā’id as-Sirājīya* of Sirājaddīn as-Sijāwandī (11th century) and ‘Abdalqādir al-Jurjānī’s (d. 1413) commentary on that work entitled *al-Farā’id ash-Sharīfīya*.<sup>104</sup> Kemper also notes that among the Qur’ān commentaries used in the region, the most popular was the *Tafsīr* of Qāḍī al-Bayḍāwī (d. 1286).<sup>105</sup>

In addition to these classical works, *shāgirds* and *mudarrises* in the Volga-Ural region had access to a large corpus of locally produced works in Arabic, Persian, and Turkic, and as Michael Kemper has demonstrated, over the course of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries these locally produced works covered all branches of the Islamic sciences, and constituted a spirited discourse which was to have far reaching effects for the Muslims of the Volga-Ural region.<sup>106</sup>

Concerning the education of more advanced *shāgirds* in Novouzensk district, al-Īlmīnī provides few details, although there is no evidence that the curricula in the *madrasas* of Novouzensk district differed substantially from those of the rest of the Volga-Ural region. But it is clear from the narrative that certain *imāms* had scholarly specializations to which some *shāgirds* were attracted. For example, ‘Azīzallāh Aḥmad-Shāh ūghlī, a Bashkir from Orenburg province who became *imām* in Iske Ōzen, was studying in Kazan when he came to ‘Abdalkarīm’s *madrasa* specifically to study Persian.<sup>107</sup> Another graduate of ‘Abdalkarīm’s *madrasa* was Ibrāhīm Qudur ūghlī. As we noted above, al-Īlmīnī praises this *imām* for maintaining a *madrasa* every

<sup>103</sup> Kemper, *Sufis und Gelehrte*, 216.

<sup>104</sup> Kemper, *Sufis und Gelehrte*, 215–216.

<sup>105</sup> Kemper, *Sufis und Gelehrte*, 216.

<sup>106</sup> These works are discussed in detail in Kemper’s *Sufis und Gelehrte*.

<sup>107</sup> TAA fol. 85a.

year for forty years, and he was especially skilled in the study of Arabic grammar.<sup>108</sup> There appear to have been several instructors with special skill in Qurʾān recitation, including al-Īlmīnī himself; another exemplary *imām* and teacher, Niʿmatallāh Ṣiddīq-Muḥammad ūghlī, of Altı Ata's First *mahalla*, was a specialist in lexicography (*ilm-i lughat*) who was trained in Kazan.<sup>109</sup>

Al-Īlmīnī's narrative makes it abundantly clear that not only did conscientious *imāms* devote energy to their own teaching methods and developing a traditional curriculum that would be most beneficial to students, but perhaps more telling, when alternatives to the traditional curriculum were available, the community showed relatively little interest in pursuing them.

### *Jadidism*

Among all aspects of Muslim religious life in the Volga-Ural region, no other topic has received as much attention as the local brand of educational reformism known as jadidism. Briefly speaking, jadidism, was an educational reform movement founded in the 1880's by the Crimean Tatar educator Ismāʿīl Bey Gasprinskii that sought to better integrate the Muslim of imperial Russia into the intellectual and ultimately political life of the Russian empire by means of modernizing Muslim education. This modernization implied first of all the instruction of the Russian language, as well as European languages, and including bringing into the *madrasa* curriculum "new" subjects as mathematics and geography. Of course, the jadidist movement was not monolithic, and the attitude of various jadid figures toward traditional Muslim education varied, but as jadid *madrasas* became more widespread in the first decades of the twentieth century, and jadidist ideas began to contribute to the rise of Turco-Tatar romantic nationalism, jadids began to emphasize more and more strongly the supposed inadequacies of traditional Muslim education.<sup>110</sup>

As a rule scholars have determined the "importance" of jadidism to be its role in creating the cultural, and later political foundation

<sup>108</sup> TAA fol. 33a.

<sup>109</sup> TAA fol. 13b.

<sup>110</sup> For a balanced and informed discussion of modernism, jadidism and their role in the Muslim national movement in the Volga-Ural region cf. Noack, *Muslimischer Nationalismus*, 135–178, 205–217.

of a Tatar national identity and movement. Explanations of the origins of jadidism constitute two partially overlapping currents, one cultural and the other economic. Most recently, one group of historians have primarily stressed the cultural causes of jadidism. Damir Iskhakov cites three major cultural forces that he believes precipitated the conditions for the emergence of jadidism. These include 1) the political dependence of Volga-Ural Muslims to Russia, and ensuing confrontation, resulting in a sharpened sense of national identity; 2) the existence of a fundamental "Turkic" substratum among the Tatars, independent of Islamic influences, and from which a tradition of freethinking emerged; 3) the emergence of a merchant-based well-traveled intellectual elite that was exposed to both Russo-European ideas.<sup>111</sup> Elsewhere, Iskhakov has equated jadidism as a manifestation of a Tatar national "High Culture," à la Ernst Gellner, which he also holds up as evidence of the emergence of a modern Tatar nation.<sup>112</sup>

However, most accounts of the origins of jadidism in imperial Russia, have relied of a basically Marxist framework, attributing its emergence to the development of a commercial and industrial bourgeoisie among especially Volga-Ural Muslims.<sup>113</sup> The Marxist approach was, of course, *de rigueur* for Tatar historians after 1917, and has sunk deep roots in post-Soviet Tatarstan, but it was also accepted by Western historians, most notably Alexandre Bennigsen, but also by A. Rorlich, Alan Fisher and others, who themselves primarily gleaned their theories on the origins of jadidism either directly from the works of early Tatar Marxist historians such as Gaziz Gubaidullin, or from later works based on earlier Marxist studies.<sup>114</sup> While the validity of this Marxist explanation for the origins of jadidism remain to be tested for Imperial Russia as a whole, if one were to undertake such a study, Novouzensk district would prove fertile ground. As we have seen, it was identified by V. I. Lenin himself as one of imperial Russia's districts that most clearly demonstrated the development of capitalism in Russia, and as a result, would be the perfect

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<sup>111</sup> Iskhakov, *Fenomen tatarskogo dzhadidizma*, 7–8; Ahmet Kanlıdere offers essentially the same approach; cf. Kanlıdere, *Reform within Islam*, 13–30.

<sup>112</sup> D. M. Iskhakov, *Problemy stanovleniia i transformatsii tatarskoi natsii*, (Kazan, 1997), 49–50.

<sup>113</sup> Cf. for example, Ishmukhametov, *Sotsial'naiia rol'*, 131–146.

<sup>114</sup> Frank, *Islamic Historiography*, 179.

environment for the emergence of Islamic modernism. In the absence of such a major study, here we will have to limit our inquiry to Novouzensk district itself.

There is no question that by 1905 the profile of jadidism had become conspicuous in many Muslim villages of the Volga-Ural region, and as a result, the authors do not fail to note its presence in Novouzensk district. As for their own feelings toward jadidism, they cannot be said to be hostile to it, and in fact they only mention one *imām* who resisted a jadidist *madrasa*. Nowhere do they either condemn or praise jadidist pedagogical principles, and the account is a straightforward relation of both the jadidist *madrāsas* that were founded in the district, and their fate. Typical in this respect is his account of the district's first jadidist *madrasa*, in Safarqa's First *maḥalla*:

At that time, a teaching called *uṣūl-i jadīd* [i.e. the jadidist method] appeared and it was decided to allow it. They sent *khālfās* to the Ḥusaynīya Madrasa<sup>115</sup> in Orenburg to find out about the basis of this new method and they returned. The wealthy were pleased by this dignified work and Aḥmad-Jān Sayfaddīn Ḥājji ūghlī built a large *madrasa*. Although it was built of mud bricks, its top two floors were sided with boards and on either side it has seventeen windows. Its height is eight *sazhens* and its width is four. But even though the *madrasa* was convened, it is evident that there is no demand for the *madrasa*. [Yet] the first [traditional] *madrāsas* gave lessons on a permanent basis.<sup>116</sup>

Similarly, al-Īlmīnī mentions another case of a jadidist *madrasa* in Altī Ata's Third *maḥalla* closing down due to both lack of support on the part of the community and lack of zeal on the part of the instructor:

... at that time the son of Naṣīraddīn Ḥaḍrat, Mullā Sharafaddīn, returned from his studies. His training was first in the village of Yalpaqṭal with Dāmullā 'Ubaydallāh Īshān Ḥaḍrat, later in Safarqa with Dāmullā Muḥammad Ḥaḍrat [Ibrāhīm ūghlī]. He was very knowledgeable in reciting the Qur'ān and they appointed Mullā Sharafaddīn Mullā Naṣīraddīn ūghlī to the place of his father. Because he was a young person of acute understanding, in his first action he had the old *madrasa* torn down and had a new *madrasa* built. He began teaching on the

<sup>115</sup> This was the prominent *jadidist madrasa* of Aḥmad Bāy Khusainov; cf. Madina Rakhimkulova, *Medrese 'Khusainiia' v Orenburge*, 2nd edition, (Orenburg, 1997); Farkhshatov, *Norodnoe obrazovanie*, 88–89; M. Rakhimkulova and L. Khāmidullin, "Khōsāyeniya mādrāsāse," *Mādrāsālārdā kitap kishṭāse*, (Kazan, 1992), 74–114.

<sup>116</sup> TAA fol. 32b.

basis of the *uṣūl-i jadīd*, and, even though he taught with great effort those three years, during these years he also wearied and became negligent in the affairs of the *madrasa*, and perhaps the years were bad. The people were [also] negligent in *madrasa* education and because of this, they were not providing the necessary things for the *madrasa*, like firewood and kerosene . . .<sup>117</sup>

And in one case al-Īlmīnī does mention the case of a jadidist *khālfā* whom the *imām* expels from the *madrasa*:

This Shāh Ṣultān Āfāndī was one of the first *shāgirds* of Mullā ‘Abdarrashīd. He acquired learning from Mullā ‘Abdarrashīd and became skilled in Qur’ān recitation. Later, he was in Bakhchesaray for many years under Ismā‘īl Āfāndī [Gasprinskii]. From him he received the foundation of the *uṣūl-i jadīd*. When he taught for two years on the basis of the *uṣūl-i jadīd* in ‘Abdarrashīd’s *madrasa*, ‘Abdarrashīd was not there and because he did not like the *madrasa*, he reached the point of banishing [the *shāgird*] from the *madrasa*. As a result, upon the invitation of the village of Qushum, he taught the *uṣūl-i jadīd* there.<sup>118</sup>

In addition to Islamic education, al-Īlmīnī only makes mention of one Muslim from Novouzensk district who studied in a Russian educational institution. The person in question was a certain Yūsuf Ḥamīd Mirzā ūghlī Yīnīkeyef (Enikeev). Ḥamīd Mirzā was apparently a nobleman from the village of Mirzalar in Saratov province, and was a member of *Zemskaiia Uprava* in Novouzensk, as well as administering the spiritual matters of the Muslim community in Novouzensk. He had two sons, Yūsuf and Shāyid Sulaymān. The latter succeeded his father in the *Zemskaiia Uprava*, and received a traditional education in one of Iske Ōzen’s *madrakas*, and al-Īlmīnī praises his erudition.<sup>119</sup> Concerning Yūsuf we read:

. . . Yūsuf made a petition, and his request to be taken into service was accepted and he was taken into the Cadets’ Corps [*yūnkirāsqī iṣlūzhhā*], and later it seems he became an officer. After marrying Shams-i Qāhir, the daughter of Raḥmatallāh of Altī Ata; he spent seven years in military service with his family, and after that he was sent to the Tashkent region he returned to visit Altī Ata. He spent a few days as a guest. Between them they had a son named Muḥammad Mubīn and a daughter. They spoke Russian and it was necessary to

<sup>117</sup> TAA fols. 19b–20a.

<sup>118</sup> TAA fols. 76b–77a.

<sup>119</sup> TAA fol. 95a.

speak Russian with their children, and because Russian clothing was alien [to the villagers], the villagers concluded that they had become Christians. There is no information about them later, when they went back to Tashkent.<sup>120</sup>

Clearly then, the Muslims of Novouzensk were not, in Rorlich's words, "oblivious to other educational opportunities." However al-Īlmīnī's brief account, describing events that took place in the 1870's, shows that Russian education, Russian clothing, and ignorance of the Tatar language implied Christianization, the most severe sort of alienation from the Muslim community, and underscores the fundamental significance of Islamic education for the Muslim community. The same ambivalence toward Russian education is evident in Baishev's discussion of the Bashkir community of Ziianchurina. This author notes that in a township with a Muslim population of around fifteen thousand, there were only twenty to thirty persons literate in Russian. He indicates that this low number was not due to a lack of schools (the township did have a Bashkir-Russian school), but resulted from Bashkir apathy toward Russian education. In fact, in 1894 the school had only 38 pupils, and of these eighteen, less than half, were actually Bashkirs; the remainder were local Mordvins or Russians. Baishev states simply that as a whole Bashkirs saw no use in their lives for a Russian education.<sup>121</sup>

To be sure, interest in Russian education, offering greater exposure to cultural and political life of the Russian empire as whole, was beginning to attract Muslim students by the beginning of the twentieth century, especially in the larger urban centers. However, the evidence for Novouzensk district suggests that this interest had not percolated down to the village level, where Russian education was viewed with suspicion, and was certainly not seen as an alternative to Islamic education. Even jadidism, which was essentially a nativized form of Russian education, was by no means fully embraced by the Muslim communities of Novouzensk district, and as late as 1910 was evidently faring badly in competing with the more traditional forms of Islamic education.

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<sup>120</sup> TAA fol. 95ab.

<sup>121</sup> Baishev, "Derevnia Ziianchurina," 14.

## 3. MADRASA CONSTRUCTION AND ARCHITECTURE

*Madrasas* in Novouzensk district were usually convened in one or more buildings designed for that purpose. In the first half of the nineteenth century, in lieu of a *madrasa* building or formal instructor, lessons for children would be held in private homes, but since *shāgirds* required some sort of lodging during their studies, the use of private houses was usually not an option for their education. Numerous Soviet and Tatar modernist historians have commented on the unhealthy and miserable condition of traditional *madrasa* buildings.<sup>122</sup>

The evidence for Novouzensk district contradicts this characterization, even though Islamic education there, as elsewhere in the Volga-Ural region, was contingent on a certain agricultural surplus that nature at times failed to provide. To be sure, the earliest *madrasa* buildings were certainly humble. In terms of building materials, there was considerable variety. For example, the first *madrasa* buildings in Iske Özen's Third and Fourth *maḥallas* were reportedly made from sod [*chīrāmdān madrasa ṣālūb*],<sup>123</sup> and the mosques of the Chizha Bashkirs in Ural'sk province were made of reeds. As we have noted, Novouzensk district had very little natural timber, and mud-brick or clay-and-wattle were a very widely used building materials.<sup>124</sup> In this respect, *madrasas* were made of essentially the same materials as mosques.

Often, buildings were purchased or offered to be converted into a *madrasa*. The first *madrasa* in Imin's Fifth *maḥalla* was a house that was thus converted. In Altı Ata, after a new mosque was built, the old mud-brick mosque was transformed into a *madrasa*.<sup>125</sup> However, toward the end of the nineteenth century the local Muslims began to construct more elaborate *madrasas*. There is no evidence to suggest that the improvement in the quality of *madrasa* architecture was a consequence of the rise of modernist ideas, as Rorlich and others

<sup>122</sup> The contrasting of of "clean" and "modern" *jadidist* schools with "filthy" and "primitive" traditional schools is a standard feature in studies of Islamic education in the Volga-Ural region; cf. Validov, *Ocherk istorii obrazovannosti*, 18; *Tatary Srednego Povolzh'ia*, 381; Alishev, "Obrazovanie i obuchenie," 48.

<sup>123</sup> TAA fols. 87b, 89a.

<sup>124</sup> Al-Īlmīnī refers to this material as *bālchīq*, and it is not clear whether this refers to mud-brick or clay-and-wattle, but both materials were commonly used in the lower Volga region.

<sup>125</sup> TAA fols. 77b.

have suggested. Rather, it was simply because as the local export-oriented economy in Novouzensk expanded, more money became available for Islamic education. For example, in Altı Ata's First *maḥalla* the original *madrasa* was built of clay and boards, but at the beginning of the twentieth century they built a two story wooden *madrasa*.<sup>126</sup> One wealthy notable in Safarqa, Ramaḍān Āfāndī, donated his own two-story house to serve as a *madrasa*. The downstairs was used for teaching the children, and the upstairs for the *shāgirds*.<sup>127</sup> Some *madrasas* contained a number of buildings, as in the case of Safarqa:

They also had built a wooden *madrasa* with a metal roof and they built two mud-brick *madrasas* and made wooden roofs for them. Ramaḍān Zubayr ūghlī erected a wooden schoolhouse [*dārskhāna*] there, sided it with boards and painted it [blank]. It's roof was made of metal and was painted green. He enlarged the ten windows around it and they gave lessons every year with all of those *madrasas* being filled.<sup>128</sup>

In some cases, an already substantial *madrasa* building could be renovated and enlarged considerably:

In keeping with [the *imām's*] integrity, the condition of the *madrasa* was also ordered. In these years the [brick] *madrasa* that Pūtā Bābāy built was renovated and the windows were enlarged. The six windows on either side and on both floors had a height of ten *qārīsh*. The hallway and doors on the north side and also one window on the doors were painted on the wooden moldings. The outside was yellow and the inside was light-blue or white. A stove was enlarged in an outer room, and an assembly place was built.<sup>129</sup>

At its height, 'Abdalkarīm Ḥaḍrat's renowned *madrasa* comprised three separate buildings where up to two hundred *shāgirds* studied.<sup>130</sup>

Some *madrasas* also had a number of out-buildings, including a kitchen for the *madrasa*. Al-Īlmīnī was especially impressed with the *madrasa* that was built in Īlmīnī's Fifth *maḥalla* by the notable Pūtā Bābāy:

Its building was of real brick, he [Pūtā Bābāy] had two stories built with a height of six *sazhens*, a width of four *sazhens*, and the roof and two stories were painted. On each side there were [blank] windows

<sup>126</sup> TAA fols. 14b–15a.

<sup>127</sup> TAA fol. 35a.

<sup>128</sup> TAA fol. 32ab.

<sup>129</sup> TAA fol. 74ab.

<sup>130</sup> TAA fol. 87b.

in all. There was a wooden gate and on either side of the gate there was a kitchen and inside it a place for ablutions [*tahāratkhāna*], and behind it a privy. For the *shāgirds* water and other things were prepared and heated, and there was a person designated as watchman.<sup>131</sup>

He also adds the detail that the *shāgirds* who drank tea paid a fee of ten kopecks to the person designated to keep the tea hot.<sup>132</sup>

Thus, we can see that while economic need may have forced children and *shāgirds* to live and study in less than desirable conditions, when finances permitted, the Muslims of Novouzensk district could build *madrasas* on an ambitious scale, and poor conditions were certainly not a necessary aspect of traditional Muslim education, as the works of modernists would lead us to think.

#### CONCLUSION

The *Tawārīkh-i Āltī Ātā* is a primary source and one of the most extensive and detailed first-hand accounts of Islamic education among Volga-Ural Muslims. The image of Islamic education that we are left with after consulting the *Tawārīkh-i Āltī Ātā* differs in many respects from previous treatments of Islamic education. As we have seen, these studies are characterized by their modernist or Soviet evaluations of traditional Islamic institutions, whereby Islamic education is portrayed as stultifying, useless, arcane, primitive, and ineffective. Rather than gathering and presenting evidence in a systematic manner, these authors have transformed Islamic education into a caricature with which to contrast “progressive” education, and they fail to explore what role these educational institutions may have played in Muslim villages. In concentrating on issues of pedagogy and curriculum, these authors have ignored crucial details of Islamic education, such as financing, staffing, and forms of community support for their *madrasas*.

The *Tawārīkh-i Āltī Ātā* provides a wealth of information on the sorts of details lacking in previous studies, and just as importantly, provides a fairly exhaustive survey of Muslim educational establishments within the Muslim communities of a single district. All educational

<sup>131</sup> TAA fol. 93a.

<sup>132</sup> TAA fol. 93b.

establishments in the Muslim settlements of Novouzensk district were religious schools. In the *Tawārīkh-i Āltī Ātā* the authors do not distinguish between *maktabs* and *madrasas*. Rather, they refer to all schools, whether primary or secondary, as *madrasas*. Ideally every *maḥalla* would have its own school, and the community would entrust the task of educating its children and youth to the *imām*, however, it was common for *imāms* to designate either the *mu'adhdhīn* or a *khālfā* (junior instructor) to take up this duty. Although the authors tell us little about the curriculum, it is evident that at the primary level it involved acquiring basic literacy in Arabic, and presumably Turkic, and in reading and reciting the Qur'ān. At more advanced levels, in the training of *shāgirds*, a number attained renown especially in Qur'ān recitation. It was primarily parents who financed primary education for their children, usually with in-kind contributions. For the more advanced education of *shāgirds*, many of whom came from different districts or provinces and who boarded at the *madrasa*, it was wealthy sponsors who undertook much of the funding, and the account makes it clear that this was expected of the wealthy.

Since Islamic education in Novouzensk was entirely funded from local sources, it is clear that funding was dependent on the overall economic condition of the community, and all establishments, whether primary or secondary, were vulnerable to crop failure or other calamities, as well as on the personalities and dedication of the educators themselves. As a result, many schools, even the largest and most renowned, were forced to close from time to time, and occasionally a *maḥalla* would be unable to educate its children. Nevertheless, on the whole *maḥallas* were able to educate their children, and the economic condition of the region was sufficiently strong to support a number of large *madrasas* that attracted *shāgirds* from throughout the Volga-Ural region and the Kazakh Inner Horde.

The first *madrasas* were established soon after the region's colonization. The earliest buildings were small and made of local materials, but by the end of the nineteenth century there were a number of large *madrasa* buildings, some having two stories and others made of brick and other expensive materials. The most famous *madrasa* was that of 'Abdalkarīm Timurbūlāṭ ūghlī, known as Ūzīn Ḥaḍrat in Iske Ōzen, which at its peak comprised numerous buildings and had up to 200 *shāgirds*. Two other important *madrasas* were located in the village of Safarqa, and were run by Muḥammad al-Īlmīnī's

teacher, the Bashkir Sufi and *imām* ‘Aṭā’allāh aṣ-Ṣafarqawī, and by Maḥmūd ‘Ubaydallāh ūghlī.

The *Tawārīkh-i Ālī Ātā* also depicts jadidism as marginal in comparison with the district’s traditional educational institutions. Two modernist jadidist *madrasas* funded by local merchants opened in Novouzensk district early in the twentieth century, but were both forced to close as a result of lack of interest and support on the part of the community, and the authors note that in the face of the failure of the jadidist *madrasas*, support for the traditional *madrasas* did not wane. It is evident that at least in Novouzensk district, traditional Islamic education was not in crisis and was not failing to meet the needs of Muslims. Clearly the vast majority of the district’s Muslims saw no need to turn away from traditional educational institutions in favor of modernist models.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### ISLAMIC RITUALS, BELIEFS, AND PILGRIMAGE

Islamic life in Novouzensk district of course involved more than mosques, *madrasas*, *imāms*, and *mu'adhdhins*, the most visible of Islamic institutions. It also involved a series of basic rituals and activities that were obligatory for every Muslim. At one level, these included the life-cycle rituals, that is, the ceremonies connected with a person's birth, marriage, and death. As a whole, al-Īlmīnī has little to say about life-cycle rituals in his history, except to note that they counted among the *imām's* duties.<sup>1</sup> However, the most fundamental rituals and acts were the *farḍ*, that is the "five pillars of faith," that include the profession of faith (*shahāda*), fasting during the month of Ramaḍān, the five daily prayers, the performance of the *ḥajj*, and the payment of *zakāt*. Al-Īlmīnī does not address these activities in any direct way, perhaps because he considered them so central to a Muslim community that they did not deserve any more attention than other human activity in general. Nevertheless, he does occasionally comment on the more public aspects of these activities, especially the *ḥajj*. In addition to these "pillars of faith" al-Īlmīnī discusses in varying degrees of detail special rituals, especially related to agriculture, as well as local manifestations of hagiolatry. Furthermore the *Tawārīkh-i Āltī Ātā* provides some concrete information on the connections of a rural Muslim community with other Muslim communities in the Russian empire and in the Islamic world in general.

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<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of specifically Islamic rites concerning the life-cycle rituals of the Muslim Tatars cf. Ia. Koblov, "Religioznye obriady tatar magometan," IOAIE XXIV/6 (1909), 521–564; on these rites in general there is a very extensive Soviet literature, that typically stresses the "pre-Islamic" characteristics of the rituals; cf. Mukhamedova, *Tatary-Mishari*, 154–177, 183–185; *Tatary Srednego Povolzh'ia*, 235–268, 347–350; N. V. Bikbulatov and F. F. Fatykhova, *Semeinyi byt bashkir XIX–XX vv.* (Moscow, 1991), passim; F. F. Fatykhova, "Narechenie imen u bashkir," *Issledovaniia po istoricheskoi etnografii Bashkirii*, (Ufa, 1984), 65–73; Jusupov, G. V. "Survivals of Totemism in the Ancestor Cult of the Kazan Tatars," *Popular Beliefs and Folklore Tradition in Siberia*, (Budapest, 1968), 193–204; cf. also G. N. Akhmarov, "Svadebnye obriady Kazanskikh tatar," IOAIE XXIII/1 (1907), 1–38; M. Pinegin, "Svadebnye obychai Kazanskikh tatar," IOAIE IX/1 (1891), 1–20.

## 1. PRAYERS AND FEASTS

For the Muslims of Novouzensk district, Muslim status involved a series of rituals that publicly demonstrated their status, and that formed the core of their religion and identity. It was the performance of these rituals that made the community Muslim, and it was the fundamental duty of the *imāms* such as Muḥammad-Fātiḥ al-Īlmīnī to make sure that at least a substantial part of the community observed these rituals. These rituals included feasts and communal prayers, but they also included occasionally “emergency” rituals, such as rain prayers. The importance of these rituals for these communities cannot be overemphasized, since they not only defined the community as Muslim through its actions, but also helped safeguard its existence both in communal terms and in economic terms.

Among the various religious obligations of Muslims, it is clear from the *Tawārīkh-i Āltī Ātā* that the five daily prayers had a special symbolic significance that reflected the religious and moral health of the community in question, and it is equally clear that while some *imāms* and communities were fastidious in carrying out this obligation, others were not. Al-Īlmīnī presents *imāms* who were staunch in their performance of the five daily prayers as ideal *imāms*. Similarly the *maḥallas* that were steadfast in carrying out this obligation are often depicted as being improved ethically by doing so.<sup>2</sup>

Generally speaking the five daily prayers were private prayers in the sense that while they may have been performed publicly, they were carried out in various places by individuals or by small groups of individuals, however, at least one *imām* in Aleksandrov Gai was able to even have the daily prayers performed communally.<sup>3</sup> Al-Īlmīnī devotes rather more attention to the various public communal prayers. Al-Īlmīnī illustrates the importance of these communal prayers in his discussion of the early history of the Muslim community in Aleksandrov Gai:

At that time religious affairs were done carelessly. They retained a condition whereby the communal prayers were discouraged. The deeds rejected the obeying of [religious] matters and they were overtaken by

<sup>2</sup> TAA fols. 14a, 65b, 69b, 74b, 76b, 103a.

<sup>3</sup> TAA fol. 103a; cf. also Koblov, *O magometanskikh mullakh*, 7.

wine-drinking and other calamities. It appears they persevered in these deeds for some time.<sup>4</sup>

Chief among these prayers were the Friday prayers which were led by the *imām* and that included a sermon. During Friday prayers the men of the *maḥalla* would assemble in the mosque, although al-Īlmīnī mentions one case in the village of Iske Özen's First *maḥalla* where the two rival *imāms* in a single *maḥalla* held separate Friday prayers, each being attended by the individual *imām's* supporters.<sup>5</sup> Friday prayers were also used as an opportunity for discussing various concerns of the *maḥalla*. For example following the death of the *imām* in Altı Ata's First *maḥalla*, the *mu'adhdhin* informed the assembled that the time had come to select a new *imām*.<sup>6</sup> Al-Īlmīnī also writes about how an argument during the Friday prayers in Aleksandrov Gai led to the *imām* denouncing his *maḥalla* to the authorities for having allegedly insulted the tsar.<sup>7</sup> The Friday prayer was itself not without some controversy. the *imām* of Ilmin's Fifth Mosque, who had studied fourteen years in Bukhara, upon returning declared that the Friday Prayers and the *Īd* prayers were performed incorrectly in Ilmin, filed a suit to that effect, and refused to lead the *maḥalla* in prayer. It appears that eventually he changed his views and began to lead the Friday prayers, but the memory of his earlier suit remained among some villagers, and eventually diminished his ability to raise money for building a mosque.<sup>8</sup> Another ritual associated with Friday prayers was visiting the village cemetery and reading prayers for the dead. The villagers considered it a rather pious act and they would do it after the communal Friday prayers.<sup>9</sup>

Evidently the most important religious festivals in Novouzensk district were *Qurbān Bayrāmī* (*Īd al-Adhā*) and the feast following Ramaḍān (*Īd al-Fitr*). The Bashkir author M. Baishev notes that it was specifically these two festivals that were the most important holidays for Volga-Ural Muslims.<sup>10</sup> The importance of these two festivals is well documented in pre-Soviet literature. In 1907 the missionary Ia. Koblov

<sup>4</sup> TAA fol. 102b.

<sup>5</sup> TAA fol. 83a.

<sup>6</sup> TAA fol. 13ab.

<sup>7</sup> TAA fol. 103a.

<sup>8</sup> TAA fols. 79b, 80b.

<sup>9</sup> TAA fols. 19a, 26a.

<sup>10</sup> Baishev, "Derevniia Ziianchurina," 16.

also commented on the prevalence of these two holidays in Kazan province, noting that it was precisely during these holidays when the community made the greatest offerings to the village *imāms*,<sup>11</sup> and in 1863 Nazarov made precisely the same observation concerning the Bashkirs.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, in Novouzensk district the most important communal prayers that the largest number of villagers attended were the *‘Īd* prayers, especially following Ramaḍān and *Qurbān Bayrāmī*. These prayers were usually followed by feasting and other festivities. Since it was the duty of an *imām* to see that these festivals were properly observed, al-Īlmīnī makes frequent mention of their celebration.<sup>13</sup> Al-Īlmīnī provides few details on the content of these celebrations, but regarding the Bashkirs in Orsk district of Orenburg province, Baishev notes that upon breaking the fast, the men would gather at the mosque for the communal prayer called the “Gaid Namaz” (i.e. *‘Īd namāzī*). Following the prayer the *imām* would give a sermon first in Arabic, then in Tatar, stressing the duty of Muslims to give to widows and orphans. The holiday would last several days, and Baishev notes that folk entertainments did not play a part in the celebrations, with the Bashkirs devoting themselves to hosting one another, and feasting.<sup>14</sup> However, some communities did engage in specific forms of entertainments. Folk dancing took place during Islamic holidays in some Bashkir communities in the Ural Mountains,<sup>15</sup> and we know from the *Tawārīkh-i Āltī Ātā* that celebrations for *Qurbān ‘Īd* among the Kazan Tatars of Novaia Kazanka in the Inner Horde involved wrestling matches, in which both Kazan Tatars and Muslim Ural Cossacks participated.<sup>16</sup> George Kennan described similar wrestling matches being staged between Kazakhs and Tatars in Semipalatinsk following “the Mohammedan lent.”<sup>17</sup> Al-Īlmīnī also mentions how Muslim prisoners in Novouzensk under a strict regimen (*iṣṭrūḡī pāryātqa*) were not allowed to pray or observe *‘Īd* following *Ramaḍān*.<sup>18</sup> Al-Īlmīnī also notes that during the month of Ramaḍān both Ural Cossacks and Kazakhs would fill the mosque in the village of Yalpaqal

<sup>11</sup> Koblov, *O magometanskikh mullakh*, 15–16.

<sup>12</sup> Nazarov, “Zametki bashkira,” 69.

<sup>13</sup> TAA fols. 10a, 13b, 21b, 65b, 70b, 79b, 80a, 103a, 105a.

<sup>14</sup> Baishev, “Derevniia Ziianchurina,” 16–17.

<sup>15</sup> L. I. Nagaeva, *Tantsy vostochnykh bashkir*, (Moscow, 1981), 20.

<sup>16</sup> TAA fol. 105a.

<sup>17</sup> George Kennan, *Siberia and the Exile System I*, (London, 1891), 163–167.

<sup>18</sup> TAA fol. 37a.

to capacity in performing *ītikāf* (extended religious seclusion and prayer).<sup>19</sup>

Of course, we know that Muslims in the Volga-Ural region also observed a whole series of festivals linked to the agricultural calendar.<sup>20</sup> Even though many of these festivals were Muslim to the extent that they were practiced by Muslims, and often were linked to hagiolatry, usually they were not formally sanctioned in Islamic tradition. As a result, they were at times denounced by some members of the *‘ulamā* as innovations (*bid‘at*),<sup>21</sup> and indeed al-Īlmīnī speaks with great admiration of ‘Abdalḥakīm Bāybīk ūghlī, the *imām* of Ilmin’s Second Mosque, who himself eliminated a festival deemed an innovation, called *sunnat tūyī*.<sup>22</sup> The festival is a reference to the large scale feasts to celebrate the circumcision (*sunnat*) of a boy. There can be no doubt that what was suppressed here was the lavish feasting and celebrating, rather than the actual act of circumcision, which is universal in the Islamic world, and a fundamental indicator of Muslim status. The *sunnat tūyī* is especially popular in Central Asia, where it is one of the largest and most festive celebrations among Muslims. It is rather less well documented in the Volga-Ural region, but it is reported to have existed in Bashkir communities before 1917.<sup>23</sup> If al-Īlmīnī is correct when he notes that it emerged locally in the eighteenth century, then it probably reached the right bank of the Volga from Central Asia.

### *Rain prayers*

Al-Īlmīnī makes no mention of agricultural festivals, presumably because in his view they were not strictly related to the Islamic status of the community, and indeed may have detracted from it. Nevertheless he does mention a number of agricultural rituals carried out in the area jointly by local *imāms* and visiting Daghestani

<sup>19</sup> TAA fol. 107b.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. F. S. Bayazitova, *Tatar khalqıñıñ bāyrām häm könküresh yolaları*, (Kazan, 1995); Rāufä Urazman, *Tatar khalqıñıñ yolaları häm bāyrāmñäre*, (Kazan, 1992); Nagaeva, *Tantsy vostochnykh bashkir*, 12–20; L. I. Nagaeva, “Vesenne-letnie prazdnestva i obriady bashkir,” *Issledovaniia po istoricheskoi etnografii Bashkirii*, (Ufa, 1984), 47–64.

<sup>21</sup> Tūqāyef, *Tārīkh-i İstārībāsh*, 7; Ia. A. Koblov, “Mifologija Kazanskikh tatar,” IOAIE XXVI/5 (1910), 457–458.

<sup>22</sup> TAA fol. 65ab.

<sup>23</sup> Bikbulatov and Fatykhova *Semeinyi byt bashkir*, 108–109.

Sufis who had been exiled to Samara province at the end of the nineteenth century. The first of these rituals was a rain prayer performed at the end of the nineteenth century, and probably around the time of the great drought and famine of 1898 that devastated the Volga-Ural region. In this account when drought threatened the rye crop, a Muslim community, apparently that of Ilmin, asked a Daghestani Sufi resident in the area, who had been exiled to Samara province by Russian authorities, to perform a rain prayer (*istisqā*) to save the crop. The account is of particular interest because al-Īlmīnī describes in some detail local rituals to conjure rain.

Rain prayers and other rain rituals are fairly well documented for Volga-Ural Muslims, partly since in the Soviet era they were seen as being “pre-Islamic”, and as such, an “authentic” and “national” manifestation bearing ethnographic import. The religious rituals of Volga-Ural Muslims, whether they had parallels in “pre-Islamic” times or not, were nevertheless seen by their practitioners as inherently Islamic by the very fact that they were carried out by Muslims. In particular, in many communities, agricultural festivals, and especially rain prayers, were closely linked to the cult of Muslim saints. The connection between Muslim saints on the one hand and rain and vegetation on the other, is well established for the Islamic world as a whole, as well as for Inner Asian and the Volga-Ural region. For example, near the Tatar village of Üzbägäräk in the Cheliabinsk region there is a mountain called Mähdi Tashī where a Muslim saint is said to be buried and local Muslims would come to this mountain to pray for rain.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, a Kazakh shrine, also in the Cheliabinsk region, believed to be the tomb of a female saint named Liali-Miazhnun (according to a Russian text), is marked by the presence of flowers and grass upon while the surrounding country is bare of vegetation.<sup>25</sup>

The tendency of Muslims to conceive of their rituals in Islamic terms, and especially those rituals connected with agriculture and rain, and thereby with the very existence of the community, is also quite evident in Novouzensk district. In fact, al-Īlmīnī refers to the rain prayer by its Arabic name, *istisqā*. Elsewhere in the Volga-Ural Region and in West Siberia, rain prayers, whether extemporaneous

<sup>24</sup> *Tatar khaliq ijati: rivayat'lar häm legendalar*, (Kazan, 1987), 260.

<sup>25</sup> I. Kastan'e, *Drevnosti Kügizskoi stepi i Orenburgskogo kraia*, Trudy Orenburgskoi arkhivnoi komissii XIII (Orenburg, 1911), 50–53.

or occurring at fixed times, were consciously replete with specifically Islamic elements. Most forms of rain prayers among Volga-Ural and Siberian Muslims contain Islamic elements that Muslims evidently considered central to the ritual itself. For example the *suqa botqa*, a rain prayer of the Siberian Tatars, was performed by a *mullā* who would determine when it was necessary, and then together with the congregation he would pray by the mosque and recite verses from the Qurʾān.<sup>26</sup> The Kasimov Tatars would practice a rain prayer known as *janggır bāyrāme* (lit. holy rain feast) that involved going to the cemetery and reciting verses from the Qurʾān.<sup>27</sup> Among the Permʼ Tatars the rain prayer is known as *janggır namazi* (rain *namāz*) and involves performing a *namāz*. Among the Muslims of Kuznetsk district in the Saratov region the prayer is known as *yanggır soraw* (rain request) and in this case a *namāz* is performed at a cemetery. Among the Kasimov Tatars the prayer is known as *nuyaz uyu* (performing the *namāz*), and it is performed at a Muslim saint’s tomb.<sup>28</sup> The rain prayer is also known among some communities as *telāk* (request, wish). Among the Mishars of the Melekes region there is a rain prayer known as *yanggır teläge*. Here Muslims go to the cemetery and perform two *rakʿa*. They also pray to a saint named Rakhimqul Ata, a patron saint (*tıtuchi*) of seas and rivers. Porridge for the festival is prepared at another shrine called *dürt qız ziyārite* (lit. the Four Maidens’ Cemetery). Among the Siberian Tatars the *telāk* rites include sacrificing sheep by the mosque and reading verses from the Qurʾān.<sup>29</sup> This is only a partial list of the quite varied forms of rain prayer among the Volga-Ural and Siberian Muslims, but it amply demonstrates that the participants conceived of them as very much Islamic rituals almost always involving Qurʾān recitation and frequently performed near sacred sites such as springs, cemeteries and saint’s tombs, or involving appeals to saints.

Islamic characteristics in Tatar rain prayers are evident, even in Tatar nationalist ethnographic literature devoted to the “national” characteristics of Tatar rituals. It is the Islamic elements that actually function as unifying factors in the rituals of Muslim communities from Riazan’ province in the west to Siberia in the east. With

<sup>26</sup> Bayazitova, *Tatar khalqınıñ bāyrām*, 21.

<sup>27</sup> Bayazitova, *Tatar khalqınıñ bāyrām*, 32.

<sup>28</sup> Bayazitova, *Tatar khalqınıñ bāyrām*, 32.

<sup>29</sup> Bayazitova, *Tatar khalqınıñ bāyrām*, 33.

this characteristic in view, there can be no question of al-Īlmīnī having simply placed an Islamic “veneer” over what are “really” “pre-Islamic rites,” as Soviet and nationalist ethnographers would describe this ritual, and there can be no doubt that his view of the rain prayer of the Novouzensk Muslims as fundamentally Islamic was shared by the “rank-and-file” participants.

As for the rain prayer in Novouzensk district, al-Īlmīnī tells us that during a drought the rye crop had just formed ears and was in danger of being lost. The community had initially performed a rain prayer but it was not successful. Al-Īlmīnī notes that this was because the ritual had not been carried out properly the first time. The prayer called for the collection of seventy thousand pebbles, and wagons were dispatched to a mountain called Bayāḍ Tāghī (lit. White Mountain) to collect the pebbles. However, they only brought back ten thousand pebbles and the prayer produced too little rain. There were a number of visiting Daghestani Sufis in the area and the community, apparently in Ilmin, begged one of these Daghestanis to perform a rain prayer and save the crop. This Daghestani agreed, and performed a rain prayer in Arabic, and before his prayer, seventy people made sure to gather a thousand pebbles each. Two days later, according to al-Īlmīnī, the wind started to rise and the community again assembled, prayed to the tombs of Muslim saints, and brought the stones to the edge of the river; but after all this, only a small amount of rain began to fall. Then the *imāms*, along with this Daghestani Sufi, went to a nearby reservoir called Sūngul būmāsi and read from the Qurʾān there. They placed their stones in the water and two hours later the rain began to fall. The Muslims then made two prostrations and performed the *shukrāna namāzī* (lit. the *namāz* of thanks) and returned to the village, and by the middle of the next day “the roads were filled with water”. Naturally al-Īlmīnī attributes the rain as the manifestation of God’s mercy on his creatures.<sup>30</sup>

The ritual described by al-Īlmīnī, in which the Daghestani Sufi took part, has certain parallels among other Muslim communities in Russia. For example, among the Muslims of the Kuznetsk region of Saratov province the rain prayer is also known as *telāk* and involves gathering forty stones and placing them in the water.<sup>31</sup> Among some Siberian Tatar communities the thanksgiving ceremony performed

<sup>30</sup> TAA fol. 98ab.

<sup>31</sup> Bayazitova, *Tatar khalqining bāyram*, 34.

after the advent of rains is known as *shökrana*, whereby the community sacrifices livestock and pray saying “Pir Allam, Pir Allam”.<sup>32</sup> As we have seen, both the gathering of stones (albeit on a huge scale) and the *shukrāna namāzī*, formed part of the rain prayer ceremony for the Altı Ata Muslims.

Al-İlmīnī also mentions another prayer performed by the Daghestani Sufi to deal with another agricultural problem. In this case the Daghestani was requested to perform a special prayer to drive off an infestation of rodents that were eating into the grain crop.

After this day, during a banquet at the home of a *bāy*, one of the *imāms* said to the [Daghestani] Āfāndī, “Haḍrat, in our country we have a species of rodent. For the sake of the wheat please give a blessing to drive them away. After he said this, [the Āfāndī] said “Where will we go?” “To a nearby place.” On that day, following afternoon worship, we went out to an appointed place a *chāqrūm* outside of the village. He performed the *namāz* there, and according to his own *ṭarīqa* it was performed from there and without beginning the prayer, we performed [the *namāz*] before evening. They said the *shahāda* [the profession of faith] ten times with a pleasant voice, and afterwards, as with the rain prayer, through [God] they asked for the mercy of God upon the *silsilas* of the great *shaykhs*. Then saying Jibrāil, Mikāil and Isrāfīl (peace be upon them), . . . they began the prayer like the latter rain prayer.<sup>33</sup>

After invoking the angels and the great Sufi *shaykhs* the ritual continued as follows:

He asked for the power of God requested by the Muslims, and during the prayer expressed endearments. “These creatures do not know You and do not worship You. But these faithful know You and worship You. Oh God it is begged by these faithful. I ask, leave Your creatures in their lands. Drive them to the deserts where people cannot live prosperously, or ordain some other sort of food. Now You Yourself commanded Your faithful creatures with [their] occupation, and they are occupied according to Your command. They sow wheat and these creatures eat their harvest, destroy them.”<sup>34</sup>

As for the outcome of the prayer, it was apparently not as clear-cut as that of the rain prayer:

<sup>32</sup> Bayazitova, *Tatar khalqining bāyrām*, 38.

<sup>33</sup> TAA fols. 98b–99a.

<sup>34</sup> TAA fol. 99a.

Since then a year has passed. Among the wheat where there were gophers [*sūṣliq*] who harmed wheat, and it [the wheat] was not touched. However this year, there are those who have complained.<sup>35</sup>

This is, apparently, the only account for the Volga-Ural of a special prayer to control rodents, and as a result there are no materials to which we can compare it. Moreover it is unclear whether this sort of prayer was commonly practiced in the community or whether it was an impromptu affair resulting from the presence of the Daghestani shaykhs. In any case we are told that it was structured essentially along the lines of the rain prayer. Like the rain prayer mentioned above, and rain prayers among Russia's Muslims in general, Islamic religious symbolism dominates. The prayer appealed the angels Jibrāil, Mikāil and Isrāfil, and asked for mercy not only on the community, but on the *silsilas* of the great Sufi *shaykhs*.

It should be instructive that for the Muslims of Novouzensk district, and for the Volga-Ural region and Siberia in general the rites and rituals that sought to secure harvests, and by extension the community, from the harmful effects of drought and rodents were done in a manner suffused and permeated with Islamic significance. Not only were these prayers led by Sufis, that is Daghestani Sufis unconnected to the community, as well as by the local religious leadership, but also included performance of *namāzes*, and appeals to Muslim saints, angels, and Sufi *silsilas*. Indeed the presence of Daghestani Sufis leading the prayers is perhaps the best evidence that these rain prayers can in no way be considered "pre-Islamic" since status is accorded to these figures strictly on the basis of their Islamic status as Sufis, rather than on the basis of a connection to the community.

Another aspect of Muslim religious life that deserves at least acknowledgment is the belief in spirits (*jinn*s). As we have seen, Soviet and nationalist ethnographers have determined many religious rituals that Muslims attached Islamic significance to as being pre-Islamic, or rather non-Islamic, thereby attempting to ethnographically de-Islamize what had been an Muslim society. First and foremost in nearly all studies of Tatar and Bashkir "folk religion" are discussions of spirits, that these ethnographers unflinchingly connect to ancient Turkic conceptions of the soul, or to spirits that exist or existed among non-Muslim or "shamanistic" Turkic peoples.<sup>36</sup> Out of a

<sup>35</sup> TAA fol. 99ab.

<sup>36</sup> The list of such works are very numerous cf. especially Mukhamedova, *Tatary-*

desire to de-Islamize these societies, these ethnographers have failed to acknowledge that because the Qur'ān itself confirms the existence of spirits (*jinn*s), and explains their qualities, there is no basis to deny an Islamic component to popular conceptions surrounding these beings and to classify them as "pre-Islamic." Secondly, these Soviet and nationalist ethnographers, in trying to establish a link between ancient Turkic "shamanistic" beliefs and modern "pre-Islamic" Tatar or Bashkir beliefs, have ignored the salient fact that these Muslims not only denied any such link, but that they actually conceived of *jinn*s in very clear Islamic terms. Al-Īlmīnī only mentions *jinn*s once, in describing the *ṣāhib-i nafas* and *imām* Muḥyiddīn Ḥasan ūghlī, who would heal those "struck by *jinn*s." It bears mentioning that Muḥyiddīn learned this art not from any local shamanic figure, but from *shaykhs* in Syria and Istanbul.<sup>37</sup> M. Baishev describes the tendency of Muslims to anchor their conceptions of spirits in Islamic concepts in very direct terms. He notes that the Bashkirs of Orsk district grounded their belief in spirits in Qur'ānic terms, and believed any Muslim who did not believe in the existence of spirits to be an apostate. In keeping with these Qur'ānic precepts, these Bashkirs divided spirits into two groups: those who were Muslims and those who were not. These spirits were responsible for bringing people illness, and as a result, illnesses were treated by *imāms* who would cast spells to exorcise the spirits (as we have seen, this was precisely what a *ṣāhib-i nafas* would do). These Bashkirs also believed that the Muslim spirits would pray in the mosque at night and that in large *madrasas*, for every 41 *shāgirds*, there was one spirit, whose identity was unknown to the other *shāgirds*.<sup>38</sup> There were also local learned figures who were reputed to be able to see these spirits, and Baishev discusses a legend according to which the instructor in a nearby *madrasa* was reported to have been a *jinn*.<sup>39</sup> These sorts of Islamic conceptions concerning

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*Mishari*, 182–183; *Tatary Srednego Povolzh'ia*, 344–347; F. T. Valeev, "O religioznykh predstavleniakh zapadno-sibirskikh tatar," *Priroda i chelovek v religioznykh predstavleniakh narodov Sibiri i Severa*, (Leningrad, 1976), 320–331; F. T. Valeev, *Sibirskie tatary*, (Kazan, 1993), 176–182; G. I. Eremin, "Doislamskie verovaniia 'Zabolotnykh tatar' zapadnoi Sibiri," *Voprosy Istorii SSSR* (Moscow, 1972) 409–439.

<sup>37</sup> TAA fol. 25ab.

<sup>38</sup> Baishev, "Derevnia Ziianchurina," 28–29.

<sup>39</sup> Baishev, "Derevnia Ziianchurina," 29–31; for a more general discussion cf. Rita Suleymanova, "Die Geisterwelt der Baschkiren," *Muslim Culture in Russia and Central Asia from the 18th to the Early 20th Centuries* Michael Kemper, Anke von Kügelgen, Dmitriy Yermakov eds., (Berlin, 1996), 5–35, esp. 33–34.

spirits was not restricted to Bashkirs, but are documented among Siberian Tatars as well. It bears mentioning that there was a well known *imām* and Sufi in the village of Shekā (Sheka), in Kazan province, named Yaḥyā b. Ṣafar b. Arslān al-Barazawī, but popularly known as Yaḥyā Īshān. He was reputed to have had the power to summon *jīns* at his will, and according to some local legends, he himself was a *jīn*.<sup>40</sup> In his discussion of Kazan Tatar folk beliefs, the Russian missionary Ia. Koblov confirms much of what Baishev describes for the Bashkirs. Koblov divides spirits into “traditional” Tatar spirits, including the *albasti*, *bichura* and others, and spirits that the ancestors of the Tatars accepted after becoming Muslims. However, he notes that the Kazan Tatars themselves categorized all spirits, including the *albasti* and *bichura*, as *jīns*. Such a categorization on the part of the Kazan Tatars suggests that whatever the historical origin of these spirits, these Muslims at some point subordinated existing concepts to a Qur’ānic understanding and explanation of these spirits.

## 2. ISLAMIC TAXATION

Islamic taxation was also an import religious ritual and duty. As state peasants, and after 1866 as “*revizskie dushi*”, the Novouzensk Muslims were subject to pay Russian land and poll taxes. In fact beyond supporting their mosques and *imāms* there is no evidence that Muslims were forced to pay any sort of specifically Islamic tax. As a result, the taxes deemed religiously obligatory in Islamic tradition, namely *zakāt* and *‘ushr*, were voluntary, at least in Russian legal terms. This was not the case for Muslims throughout the Russian empire. The Chingisid rulers of the Inner Horde received permission from the authorities in St. Petersburg to collect *zakāt* from their Kazakh subjects. This tax was reportedly a rather steep livestock tax, and will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

In Novouzensk district, when al-Īlmīnī does mention Islamic taxation, he only refers to instances when notables paid *zakāt* and *‘ushr*. For the Volga-Ural region as a whole it is unclear who would pay these specifically Islamic taxes, and whether these were purely voluntary charitable offerings, or whether they constituted an unofficial

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Marjānī, *Mustafād al-akhbār* II, 243–245; *Tatar khaliq ijati*, 257.

tax. Ia. Koblov has written the *‘ushr* (lit. one tenth) was an in-kind agricultural tax paid to the *imām* in fall after the grain harvest.<sup>41</sup> Ishmukhametov makes no mention of *zakāt*, but does mention *‘ushr* (*goshēr*) as a customary offering that members of the *maḥalla* would make to *imāms*.<sup>42</sup> Concerning Novouzensk district, al-Īlmīnī leaves us with the impression that wealthier members of the community would choose to pay these taxes. For example he writes that during Ramaḍān the wheat magnate ‘Ilājaddīn Āfāndī of Iske Özen would pay *zakāt* consisting of one eighth, presumably one eighth of his wheat harvest.<sup>43</sup> Al-Īlmīnī also mentions other wheat growers in the villages of Altī Ata and Iske Özen who would pay the *‘ushr*, that is, a tithe on their wheat crop.<sup>44</sup> It is unclear whether the *imām* was the recipient of these voluntary taxes, but al-Īlmīnī notes that a certain notable in Iske Özen would pay a supplementary *‘ushr*, “in addition to his total *‘ushr*”, to those who came in need. Thus, in this case *‘ushr* functioned as a sort of charity that was paid directly to the needy.<sup>45</sup> On the basis of what al-Īlmīnī tells us, Islamic taxes in Novouzensk district were paid by the wealthy, apparently as a sort of pious deed. Furthermore, while *imāms* may have been the recipients of some of this largesse (al-Īlmīnī is silent on that matter), some of what was termed *‘ushr* was in effect charity paid directly to the needy on the part of the wealthy.

### 3. PILGRIMAGE

Pilgrimage was a major aspect of Muslim religious life in the Volga-Ural region that has only begun to be examined, let alone appreciated.<sup>46</sup> Shrines and shrine catalogs were important elements in creating

<sup>41</sup> Koblov, *O magometanskikh mullakh*, 15.

<sup>42</sup> Ishmukhametov, *Sotsial'naiā rol'*, 40–41.

<sup>43</sup> TAA fol. 93b.

<sup>44</sup> TAA fols. 16a, 86b. Concerning Altī Ata al-Īlmīnī writes “At that time the wealthy wheat growers paid the *‘ushr* and at that time they carried out every deed well”, suggesting that the practice of giving *‘ushr* had subsequently changed; cf. TAA fol. 16a.

<sup>45</sup> TAA fol. 88a.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Frank, “Islamic Shrine Catalogues” passim; Frank, *Islamic Historiography* 67–76; an important source on hagiolatry in the Lower Volga region is Jahānshāh an-Nīzhghārūfī, *Tārīkh-i Astarkhān*, 45–51; cf. also Katanov “O religioznykh voynakh,” 133–146.

a sense of regional identity in imperial Russia. Shrines, primarily in the form of saints' tombs, were the chief landmarks in the sacred geography of these Muslims, and created a sacred geographic framework that carried religious meaning at a time when concepts such as national and ethnic identities, let alone Russian administrative boundaries, were of limited relevance to these Muslims.

Most of what is known concerning Islamic hagiolatry in the Volga-Ural region relates to the shrines east of the Volga River, and very little published material is available concerning shrines among the Mishars of Saratov and Penza Provinces, that is, in the areas from which the ancestors of the Novouzensk Muslims migrated. While the practice of hagiolatry among the right bank Mishars is documented in ethnographic literature, very little is known about actual saints and shrines among these communities.<sup>47</sup>

It is quite evident from his writing that al-Īlmīnī considered shrines and hagiolatry a component part of Muslim religious life, and that he understood saints as performing an important role in securing the well-being of the Muslim community. The information he supplies concerning hagiolatry becomes all the more interesting because it shows us that while the ancestors of the Altī Ata Muslims left their old villages, shrines, and saints' tombs, and colonized an empty country, it was not a country devoid of Islamic religious meaning. The "discovery" of Islamic shrines, and the resulting creation of Islamic landmarks and Islamic geography is perhaps most clearly articulated in shrine catalogs from Western Siberia, but it is also evident to some degree in the *Tawārīkh-i Āltī Ātā*. As we have seen, at the very beginning of his history al-Īlmīnī relates the story of the abandoned "mosque" and of the "six fathers" from whom the Altata River took its name. More significantly, we are told about how his grandfather's brother visited the site, and in "discovering" the shrine, he identified it as a former mosque and as the site of a Muslim cemetery. Strictly speaking the site does not appear to have become a place of pilgrimage, especially since the Russians of Dergachi defiled it by dismantling

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<sup>47</sup> Cf. Mukhamedova, *Tatary-mishari*, 185; the only shrine in Mishar territory that is fairly well documented is the tomb of Khoja Ḥasan in the village of Khozesanovo; cf. V. Magnitskii "Neskol'ko dannikh o mishariakh (meshchera, meshcheriaki) i seleniakh ikh v Kazanskoi i Simbirskoi guberniakh, IOAIE XIII (1896), 246; Damir Iskhakov, "Mol'keevskie kriasheny: problema formirovaniia i demograficheskoe razvitiie v XVIII-nachale XX vv." *Mol'keevskie kriasheny*, (Kazan, 1993), 22-23.

the mosque and using the stones to build the foundation of their church. Nevertheless the role of the site was essentially that of a shrine to the extent that it established an Islamic “claim” to the site, as well as the entire Altata River and valley.

As we have seen, al-Īlmīnī does in fact mention one local shrine, called Bayāḍ Ṭāw (White Mountain), under which “ancient saints” (*borōnghī awliyālār*) were reportedly buried; it was from this mountain that the pebbles used for the rain prayer were collected. Al-Īlmīnī does not provide us with further details about this shrine, but is likely a reference to a shrine in northern Astrakhan province mentioned in the shrine catalog located within Jahānshāh an-Nīzhghārūtī’s history of Astrakhan. According to Jahānshāh, there is a shrine in Astrakhan province called Bayāḍ Tübä (lit. White Hill) where a saint named Şārī Khōja Ḥaḍratī. and popularly known as Bayāḍ Bābā, is buried.<sup>48</sup> In all likelihood Bayāḍ Tübä and Bayāḍ Ṭāw are one and the same place.

Beyond local, or even regional pilgrimage, a number of Muslims in Novouzensk performed the *hajj*, the pilgrimage to Mecca, which was a conditional *fard* for all Muslims. Idrisov et al. note that the number of pilgrims to Mecca and Medina from the Volga-Ural region increased sharply at the end of the nineteenth century, as the general level of prosperity grew among the wealthier classes.<sup>49</sup> Al-Īlmīnī himself was not a *hajjī*, but he does mention eighteen local men who did perform the pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina, including four *imāms* and two *mu’adhdhins*. Each of the four villages had a few *hajjīs*. All of the *hajjīs* whom al-Īlmīnī mentions were wealthy members of the community. The first *hajjī* in the region appears to have been the *imām* of Altī Ata’s Fifth Mosque, Muḥyiddīn Ḥasan ūghlī, who went on the *hajj* at some point before 1817, and presumably during the first decade of the nineteenth century. Two other prominent *imāms* and Sufis in Safarqa, ‘Aṭā’allāh Ālṭīnbāy ūghlī of the First Mosque, and Maḥmūd ‘Ubaydallāh ūghlī of the Third Mosque performed the *hajj* in 1906.

Naturally, the title of *hajjī* was a prestigious one, demonstrating not only that the bearer was a man of means and substance, but also that he was pious and mindful of his religious obligations. Upon

<sup>48</sup> Jahānshāh an-Nīzhghārūtī, *Tārīkh-i Astarkhān*, 47.

<sup>49</sup> Idrisov et al. *Iz istorii*, 38.

returning to Novouzensk district, many *ḥājjīs* became major financial contributors to their *maḥallas* and to their villages as a whole. In Safarqa two brothers, Sayfaddīn Ḥājjī and Shamsaddīn, the sons of ‘Abdarrahmān, known as the Twin Ḥājjīs, became two of the most generous patrons in the region, and were conspicuous as supporters of mosques and *madrasas* both in Safarqa and in Ilmin. Similarly, two *ḥājjīs* were prominent in Iske Ōzen as mosque and *madrasa* builders, ‘Umar Ḥājjī Ḥasan ūghlī and ‘Ilājaddīn Ḥājjī Miftāḥaddīn Ḥājjī ūghlī and the mosque in the town of Novouzensk was itself a result of the initiative and partial financing of another *ḥājjī*, ‘Aynallāh Ḥājjī of Ural’sk. Another prominent *ḥājjī* was the Ural Cossack elder Khūjāntāy Bābā.

Although the *ḥājjī* was clearly an important, and in many ways defining moment in the life of a Muslim, al-Īlmīnī gives little information on how a person would prepare for the *ḥājjī*, and what public preparations, if any there were. Nevertheless he does give a rather interesting account of the preliminaries departure of a local notable named ‘Abdaljalīl Sayfalmulūk ūghlī from Ilmin’s Fourth *maḥalla* and his tensions with the local *imām*:

Meanwhile, the *bāy* ‘Abdaljalīl, the builder of the mosque, planned to go on the *ḥājjī*, and although he asked advice [from the *imām*, ‘Abdarrashīd Aḥmad-Şafā ūghlī], he was unable to get appropriate answers. When he invited [the *imām*] to his house, he would not come, and finally he became unfriendly. However, since the afore-mentioned had other plans, he was not diligent with him. So, the day of departing for the *ḥājjī* arrived. He invited the notables of the village to his house for a banquet, and although he had frequently invited the *imām*, he did not come, so this *bāy* assembled a group and went by cart to the *madrasa*. He entered with perfect humility and moderation, gave a greeting, and asked about [the *imām*’s] health. He wanted to receive the *imām*’s permission and blessing to go. But although the *imām* understood this, the *mullā* [i.e. the *imām*] was lying on his bed. He nodded to their greeting, only offered one hand, and returned to his bed. But the old man would not diminish himself before the more notable people. However, the matter is not in that. Later, the *bāy* left for his journey; he made the *ḥājjī* and performed the sacrifices. He showed great humility toward the surrounding ‘*ulamā*’ and *mujāwirs* [caretakers], and while returning, he passed away [while passing] the stage of Jeddah. May the mercy of God be upon him.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>50</sup> TAA fols. 75b–76a.

We can see from this account that it was apparently customary for the *imām* to give his blessing to those departing for the *hajj*, as well as for the pilgrim to give a banquet before his departure.

Beyond their reputation for generosity and piety, *hājjīs* also brought back with them first-hand knowledge of the central shrines of the Islamic world, and an idea of the scale and diversity of the Islamic world as a whole, of which the Novouzensk Muslims were a constituent part. The significance of the *hajj* becomes all the more significant for the Muslim of Novouzensk district when we remember very few of these Muslims ever traveled far from their native villages, including many of their most eminent religious figures, including Muḥammad-Fātiḥ al-Īlmīnī himself. Furthermore, *hājjīs* would customarily bring back sacred things from the Holy Cities. Concerning the *hajj* of ‘Ilājaddīn Āfāndī, a wealthy patron in Iske Özen, al-Īlmīnī writes:

He returned [in 1910] in health and well-being from the *hajj* and while this year, when bringing back [water from] the Noble *Zamzam* and other things was forbidden to his fellow *hājjīs*, it seems that this person brought all of it. Well, meeting [him] has not been ordained to this poor man. [i.e. although ‘Ilājaddīn has returned, al-Īlmīnī still has not had a chance to see him].<sup>51</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

The *Tawārīkh-i Ālī-i Ātā* is an important source in its own right on the occasional and periodic rituals of Islamic religious life in Novouzensk. To a significant degree, these rituals were such an integral part of a Muslim’s daily life, that it should come as no surprise that the authors devote little explicit attention to matters that to them were so fundamental to daily life. With respect to the daily prayers, it is clear that one of the duties of a good *imām* was to ensure that the community performed these prayers regularly, and that the performance of these prayers was a measurement of an *imām*’s effectiveness. Furthermore, it is evident from the narrative that in Novouzensk district, just as in the Volga-Ural region as a whole, the chief annual holidays were the Islamic festivals of *Īd al-Adḥā* and *Īd al-Fiṭr*, during which communal prayers were of central importance. Another important ritual was the *hajj*, that is, the

<sup>51</sup> TAA fol. 94a.

pilgrimage to Mecca, which for the most part was limited to the wealthiest members of the community, especially notables who funded mosque and *madrassa* construction, and a few *imāms*. *Hājjs* included both Muslims from Osinov Gai township, as well as at least one Ural Cossack notable.

The narrative also provides evidence that many other rituals typically categorized in ethnographic literature as “pre-Islamic” actually contained substantial Islamic meaning for the communities, both conceptually and ritually. Nowhere is this evidence clearer than in the descriptions of two rain prayers, referred to by the Arabic term *istisqā*. Although these rituals contained elements common in the weather magic rituals of other Inner Asian peoples, it is also evident that the authors, the Daghestani Sufis who performed one of the prayers in Arabic, and the other local participants performed these prayers without consciously referring to these pre-Islamic traditions, and instead basing them fully within a ritualistic and conceptual framework that was completely Islamic. The Islamic features underlying the conception and practice of rain prayers is equally evident in other Muslim communities throughout the Volga-Ural and in Siberia.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### ISLAMIC INSTITUTIONS IN THE KAZAKH INNER HORDE AND THE URAL COSSACK HOST

The previous chapters have focused primarily on the Muslim communities of Osinov Gai township in Novouzensk district. As we have seen, the Islamic institutions in these four villages were essentially local variants of similar institutions and institutional structures in the provinces of Russia's Volga-Ural region. The arid steppe lands to the east and southeast of Novouzensk district, that the authors include within the territory of the Bol'shoi Uzen' Valley, also supported a number of nomadic and semi-nomadic Muslim communities whose Islamic institutions differed markedly from those of Osinov Gai township. These differences were both historical and structural, and were most prominent during the first half of the nineteenth century, when the Islamic institutions of the Kazakh Inner Horde functioned independently (at least administratively) from the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly. Furthermore, on the steppe frontier, in the Kazakh Inner Horde, the Ural Cossack Host, and the frontier merchant settlements catering to the steppe trade, Islamic institutions and Islamic religious life in general, differed markedly from what has been discussed in the previous chapters. As we shall see, the *Tawārīkh-i Āltī Ātā* can be an instructive antidote to some clichés and assumptions that have typified much of the scholarship surrounding the religious life of the Kazakh nomads, and of the Tatar merchants in their midst.

#### 1. KAZAKH STEREOTYPES AND KAZAKH ISLAMIC TRADITIONS

The study of Islam among the Kazakhs, and among Inner Asian steppe nomads in general, has tended to be dominated by a number of fallacious stereotypes and assumptions that been especially tenacious in scholarly works, and especially in works by Western scholars. Islamic sources, such as the *Tawārīkh-i Āltī Ātā*, can be helpful in dispelling some of these stereotypes and clichés. We have noted above how a feature of Soviet ethnography concerning Tatars and

Bashkirs has been to categorize many aspects of religious life as being “pre-Islamic survivals,” revealing more genuine (and ethnographically interesting) national traits. Precisely the same stereotypes are visible in the works of both Soviet and Western scholars; however, where Soviet ethnographers generally admitted that the Tatars and Bashkirs, at least in pre-Soviet times, were Muslims, many scholars have maintained that Kazakhs, and other Muslim nomads, were not “really” Muslims. Simply put, the Kazakh nomads were at heart “noble savages,” unsullied by Muslim “fanaticism,” and that their animistic “state of nature” was only disrupted by the penetration of fanatical Tatar merchants and “wild” Central Asian Sufis bringing what amounted to a “foreign ideology” to the nomads.<sup>1</sup> In Russian sources, and especially in missionary sources from the nineteenth century, we begin to encounter the false charge that Catherine II was responsible for the “Islamization” and “fanaticization” of the Kazakhs when she embarked on a policy of converting the “animist” Kazakhs to Islam through the use of Tatar “*mullās*.” Already in 1902 the Orenburg historian A. Dobrosmyslov rejected this charge as baseless, and demonstrated that while Catherine facilitated the exposure of Kazakhs to the Islamic establishment of the Volga-Ural region, it was in large measure a response to Kazakh requests, and that the Kazakhs were certainly Muslims at that time.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless Western scholars have adhered to the missionary-inspired charge that Catherine converted the Kazakhs to Islam. For example, the anthropologist Elizabeth Bacon chastises Catherine II for holding a “mistaken assumption that the Kazak[h]s were Muslims,” and seeks to prove that in fact Kazakhs were not Muslims.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> According to this stereotype, the the Kazakhs’s true essence was shamanistic. This proposition is widely encountered in accounts Kazakh religious life, especially among some Russian-educated nineteenth century Kazakhs; cf. A. I. Levshin, *Opisanie kirguz-kazach’ikh ili kirguz-kaisatskikh ord i stepei*, (Almaty, 1996) [First ed., 1822], 313–320; Khodzha Mukhammed-Salikh Babadzhanov, *Sochineniia*, 64–84, (Almaty, 1996); Chokan Valikhanov, *Sobranie sochinenii v piati tomakh*, I, 208–215, IV, 48–75; this idea was especially embraced by missionaries as well; cf. N. Spasskii, *Potrebnost’ pravoslavnoii missii dlia Bukeevskoi ordy* (Moscow, 1895), passim; N. Il’minskii, *Vospominaniia ob I. A. Altynsarin*, (Kazan, 1891), 159–160; I. Altynsarin, *Izbrannye sochineniia*, (Alma-Ata, 1957), 315–327. This has found its way in some general Western studies as well; for example, Thomas G. Winner, *The Oral Art and Literature of the Kazakhs of Russian Central Asia*, (Durham, North Carolina, 1958), 9–13.

<sup>2</sup> A. Dobrosmyslov, “Zaboty imperatritsy Ekateriny II o prosveshchenii kirgizov,” *Trudy Orenburgskoi Uchenoi Arkhivnoi Komissii* IX (1902), 51–63.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Elizabeth Bacon, *Central Asians under Russian Rule* Ithaca, New York, 1968, 41–42.

Many Western scholars, drawing their conclusions exclusively from secondary and tertiary works, still adhere uncritically to the idea that Kazakhs only became Muslims under Russian rule. Martha Brill Olcott tells us that “the Kazakhs were not devout Muslims,” but in the very next sentence she writes “the Kazakhs were nomads and heathens.” Concerning Catherine II’s policy of encouraging Islamic education among the Kazakhs Olcott writes:

Since Christian missionaries clearly had not succeeded [in Christianizing the Kazakhs in the eighteenth century], it was hoped that Islam would serve as a civilizing force for the wild and unpredictable Kazakhs. Ironically, Islam had the opposite effect. By the middle of the nineteenth century it served as a new and more potent focus of anti-Russian sentiment.<sup>4</sup>

It is unclear what missionaries Olcott is referring to here, but the principle reason for their lack of success may have been that there were no Christian missionaries among the Kazakhs in the eighteenth century. Orthodox missions to the Kazakhs only emerged in the nineteenth century.

Hasan Paksoy’s “analysis” is in many ways more radical than Olcott’s. He determines the Islamization of the Kazakhs to have occurred at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Paksoy states the Kazakhs’ equestrian skill and consumption of kumiss to be evidence of their superficial grasp of Islam. Alexandre Bennigsen too has denied that the Kazakhs were Muslims, and Catherine Clay makes the same erroneous claim regarding the Bashkirs, categorizing them as “animists.”<sup>5</sup>

This stereotype has been strengthened by the unfortunate characteristic of Central Asian scholarship in the West whereby scholars like Paksoy, Olcott, and others base their research mainly on secondary literature, and recycle unsubstantiated clichés and arguments. When they do in fact consult primary sources (and invariably these are published primary sources), they cite them very selectively, and in some cases disingenuously. For example, in the article where he

<sup>4</sup> Olcott, *The Kazakhs*, 46–47.

<sup>5</sup> Martha Brill Olcott, *The Kazakhs* Stanford, California, 1987, xxi; H. B. Paksoy, “Nationality or Religion: Views of Central Asian Islam,” *American Association for Central Asian Research [AACAR] Bulletin* VIII, No. 2, Fall 1995, 4–5; Catherine B. Clay “Ethnography and Mission: Imperial Russia and Muslim Turkic Peoples on the Caspian Frontier in the 1850’s,” *Turkish Studies Association Bulletin* 18:2 (1994), 23; cf. also Bennigsen, *Les mouvements nationaux*, 29.

assures us that Kazakhs were not “really” Muslims at the end of the nineteenth century, Paksoy cites Wilhelm Radlov’s *Iz Sibiri*. However, he neglects to relate that within this same work Radlov actually reports extensively on Islam among the Kazakhs, and among other things, writes quite convincingly on the presence of Islamic themes in Kazakh oral epics, and the great importance of Islamic identity and Islamic rites to Kazakh nomads.<sup>6</sup>

There has however been some recent scholarship that has sought to examine on the basis of indigenous sources how Islam “mattered” among Kazakhs before 1917 and how they used Islamic images and Islamic concepts within their own community’s internal discourse. Substantial contributions in this area include Devin DeWeese’s monograph on Islamization among the steppe nomads and the position Islamization legends and the figures connected with them came to hold in the folklore of the steppe nomads, including the Kazakhs, as well as his work on sacred descent groups among the Kazakhs.<sup>7</sup> S. A. Asanova has devoted a recent article to printed Kazakh religious literature from the early twentieth century which addressed in strong Islamic terms Kazakh social and economic problems exacerbated by Russian policies. Asanova also addresses the Islamic elements central to the poetry of numerous popular Kazakh bards at that time.<sup>8</sup> Ashirbek Muminov has written a number of articles on such Islamic institutions among the Kazakhs as pilgrimage and sacred descent groups.<sup>9</sup> In addition, a number of useful monographs discussing Islamic institutions among the Kazakhs have also appeared.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> V. V. Radlov, *Iz Sibiri*, (Moscow, 1989), 302–304; the interesting topic of Islamic legends in Kazakh oral literature remains to be studied. N. Katanov reviewed many published version of these works in the Kazan journal *Deiatel’* in 1898 and 1899; for a bibliography of such published works cf. Ū. Subkhanberdina and D. S. Seyfullina, *Qazaq kitabınıng shezhiresi 1807–1917*, (Almaty, 1996).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion in the Golden Horde*; Devin DeWeese, “The Politics of Sacred Lineages in 19th-Century Central Asia: Descent Groups Linked to Khwaja Ahmad Yasavi in Shrine Documents and Geneological Charters,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 31 (1999), 507–530.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. S. A. Asanova, “Dukhovnaia kul’tura kazakhskogo naroda na rubezhe vekov (obzor religioznoi i khudozhestvennoi literatury),” *Kazakhstan v nachale XX veka: metodologiya, istoriografiia, istochnikovedenie*, (Almaty, 1993), 125–137.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Aširbek Muminov, “Veneration of Holy Sites of the Mid-Sirdar’ya Valley: Continuity and Transformation”, *Muslim Culture in Russia and Central Asia from the 18th to the Early 20th Centuries* [vol. 1], 355–367; cf. also his “Die Qožas—Arabischen Genealogien in Kasachstan,” *Muslim Culture in Russia and Central Asia from the 18th to the Early 20th Centuries*. Vol. 2, 193–210.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. R. M. Mustafina, *Predstaveniia, kul’ty, obriady u kazakhov*, (Almaty, 1992); V. N.

## 2. ISLAMIC INSTITUTIONS IN THE INNER HORDE

During the nineteenth century there were two sorts of Islamic institutions among the Kazakhs of the Inner Horde. The first type were the indigenous institutions which the Kazakhs brought with them in 1801 when they crossed to Ural River and migrated into Russian territory. The second type were institutions which the Kazakh leadership within the Inner Horde sponsored and developed after 1801.

In much of the literature on the Inner Horde authors have almost universally made statements to the effect that upon crossing the Ural River in 1801 the Kazakhs of the Inner Horde possessed virtually no Islamic institutions, that is, religious specialists such as *mullās*, or mosques. However, Kazakh nomadic society at this time was certainly an Islamic society, albeit of a very specific sort. An important feature of Kazakh religious life was the existence of “sacred” clans, which were lineal descent groups claiming descent from Muslim saints, or even from the Four Caliphs and the Prophet Muḥammad himself. These communities, known as *qozhas* (the Kazakh form of the Persian word *khwāja*), formed exclusive endogamous communities with an important and authoritative role as religious figures and mediators. Strictly speaking these *qozhas* were not Kazakhs, since their ancestry placed them outside of the genealogies of the Kazakh tribes and clans constituting the three Kazakh Hordes. Sacred communities distinguished from the larger Islamic community by virtue of their ancestry were not unique to the Kazakhs, but exist throughout Central Asia.<sup>11</sup>

Little has been published about the specific role of the *qozhas* in the Junior Horde or of their genealogies. Muminov identifies two separate groups of *qozhas* in the Junior Horde. The first was the Turikpen clan of the Seit-Qozha group. Ultimately these *qozhas* claimed *sayyid*

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Basilov and Dzh. Kh. Karmysheva *Islam u kazakhov* (Moscow, 1997); G. E. Taizhanova, *Kazakhi: Istoriko-etnograficheskoe issledovanie*, (Almaty, 1995), 227–268, and especially Qalmuqan Isabay and Sapar Bayzhan-Ata, *Qazhıgha barghan qazaqtar*, (Almaty, 1996).

<sup>11</sup> Sacred lineages are best documented for the Kazakhs and Turkmen; cf. Muminov, “Die Qożas—Arabische Genealogien in Kasachstan;” S. Demidov, *Turkmenские овлады* (Ashkhabad, 1978), V. Basilov, *Kul't svyatykh v islame*, (Moscow, 1970), V. Basilov, “O proiskhozhdenii Turkmen-ata,” *Domusul'manskie verovaniia i obriady v Srednei Azii*, (Moscow, 1975), 138–168; for discussions of such sacred lineages in the post-Soviet era cf. David Tyson, “Shrine Pilgrimage in Turkmenistan as a Means to Understand Islam among the Turkmen,” *Central Asia Monitor* 1997 (1), 15–32; Bruce Privratsky, “Turkistan: Muslim Landscapes and Kazak Ethnicity,” *Journal of Central Asian Studies* 2/1 (1997), 46–60.

status, that is, descent from the Prophet Muḥammad; but the Turikpen clan is also said to be descended from two Central Asian saints, Qozha Otrarliq and Qozha Ghijduvanliq.<sup>12</sup> While the Turikpen clan was primarily located in Khorezm, the so-called Kereit *qozhas* were more widespread within the Junior Horde. Muminov gives no information about this group's ancestry, but unlike other *qozha* communities, he notes that the clans of the Junior Horde would often nomadize with "their own" Kereit *qozhas*, and that these *qozhas* would identify themselves as "*qozhas* of such-and-such a Kazakh clan."<sup>13</sup>

As for the Inner Horde proper, in 1841 Khanykov estimated the total number of *qozhas* to be less than 200, and he noted that the *qozhas* "did not belong to any clan," unlike the Kereit *qozhas* described by A. Muminov,<sup>14</sup> and a Russian missionary source from 1895 identifies the Inner Horde's *qozhas* as *sayyids*.<sup>15</sup> M. Ivanin reported the number of *qozhas* to have been 178 in 1850.<sup>16</sup> *Qozhas* in the Inner Horde were also exempt from the official *zakāt* tax, or from other levies, and it is for this reason that Russian observers have identified the *qozhas* as part of the Kazakh "aristocracy".<sup>17</sup> However, according to Ivanin's census data from 1850, where he provides figures for the size of each tribe's herds, as well as those of the *qozhas* and Chingisids, the difference in wealth between the *qozhas* and the rank-and-file tribes was not extreme. The livestock per capita for *qozhas* and the two largest tribes in 1850 was as follows:

	<i>qozhas</i>	Berish	Baybaqtı
camels	5.5	3.1	1.1
horses	14.9	7.9	10.6
cattle	7.6	7.4	5.8
sheep	57.6	55.1	38.4
goats	10.3	9.0	3.8 <sup>18</sup>

A. Evreinov, a keen observer of religious life in the Inner Horde, relates that the *qozhas* claimed ancestry from a "Muslim jurist" (*zakonouchitel'*) and he identifies the *qozhas* as a sort of aristocracy, indicating

<sup>12</sup> Muminov, "Die Qožas—Arabische Genealogien in Kasachstan," 199–200.

<sup>13</sup> Muminov, "Die Qožas—Arabische Genealogien in Kasachstan," 200.

<sup>14</sup> Khanykov, "Ocherk sostoiianiia vnutrennei kirgizskoi ordy," 37.

<sup>15</sup> Spasskii, *Potrebnost' pravoslavnoi missii*, 3.

<sup>16</sup> M. Ivanin, "Vnutrenniaia ili Bukeevskaia kirgizskaia orda," *Epokha* 1864 (12), 10–11.

<sup>17</sup> Ivanov, *Dzhanger khan*, 141.

<sup>18</sup> Ivanin, "Vnutrenniaia ili Bukeevskaia Kirgizskaia Orda," 11.

that they ranked slightly below the Chingisid *sultans*. He notes that both *qozhas* and *sultans* were addressed by Kazakhs as “Allyiar” (i.e. *Allāhyār*) and that the *qozhas* were exempt from taxation.<sup>19</sup> Evreinov notes that in 1851 there were a total of 195 individuals with *qozha* status in the Inner Horde, divided into four separate descent groups (*potomstvo*). The largest of these groups were descended from a certain Khodzha-Zhdai, and consisted of 115 people divided into four “generations” (*koleno*). The Murza-khodzha descent group had 53 members and three “generations,” the Khodzha Farsi group had fifteen members, and the last group, descended from one Khan-khodzha, had 12 members in two “generations.”<sup>20</sup>

Although there is little explicit evidence regarding what sort of religious role *qozhas* may have had in the Inner Horde, we know that at least one *qozha* family figured prominently in the political life of this Kazakh polity. Members of the Babadzhanov family were prominent figures in the administration of the Inner Horde under Jahāngīr Khan and in the decades following his death. Karaul Babadzhanov represented the interests of Jahāngīr Khan in numerous matters during the first half of the nineteenth century, especially concerning land disputes. Indeed Karaul Babadzhanov used his privileged status to educate his sons in Russian educational establishments. The most well known member of this family was Muḥammad-Şāliḥ Babadzhanov, and it is in a sense ironic that this privileged *qozha* and *sayyid*, who served on the provisional ruling council (*vremennyi soviet*) after the abolition of Chingisid authority in the Inner Horde in 1848 was himself a vocal russophile. Like his contemporary Chokan Valikhanov, Muḥammad-Şāliḥ Babadzhanov was a strong advocate of the cultural and political, if not religious, russification of the Kazakhs,<sup>21</sup> and was an equally strong critic of Tatar religious and cultural influence among the Kazakhs.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, his hostility to the Inner Horde’s Islamic establishment may reflect the displacement of

<sup>19</sup> Evreinov, “Vnutrenniaia ili Bukeevskaia kirgiz-kazach’ia orda”, 65.

<sup>20</sup> Evreinov, “Vnutrenniaia ili Bukeevskaia kirgiz-kazach’ia orda”, 96.

<sup>21</sup> While there is no evidence that Muḥammad-Şāliḥ renounced his own Muslim faith, he did express support for an increased Russian Orthodox missionary presence in the Inner Horde; cf. Khodzha Mukhammed-Salikh Babadzhanov, *Sochineniia*, (Almaty, 1996), 71.

<sup>22</sup> On Muḥammad-Şāliḥ Babadzhanov cf. N. P. Ivlev “Vvedenie. Zabytyi etnograf iz Naryn-Peskov,” in: Khodzha Mukhammed-Salikh Babadzhanov, *Sochineniia*, (Almaty, 1996), 7–30.

*qozhas'* dominant religious position in the Inner Horde by a non-*sayyid* 'ulamā of Tatar and Kazakh origin. The role of the Babadzhanov family in the Inner Horde should not be viewed, however, as an anomaly among Muslim elites under Russian rule. It is in a sense quite similar to that of Inner Asian Bakrid and *sayyid* families from among the Tatars who, upon becoming Russian subjects in the medieval era, integrated themselves into the Russian nobility, joining their interests to those of the Russian state, but at the same time remaining firmly attached to their Islamic genealogies.<sup>23</sup>

In addition to the indigenous nomadic institution of *qozha* clans, there also existed a different sort of Islamic establishment that the khans of the Inner Horde actively supported. This other religious establishment consisted of such elements as *imāms*, mosques, and a legal infrastructure that was more easily recognized by Russian observers as being "Islamic." Initially this Islamic infrastructure was staffed in large measure by Volga Tatar 'alims. As we have seen, the influence of Volga Tatars in the commercial life of the Inner Horde was substantial, yet their influence also great in the religious lives of the Inner Horde's Kazakh population. Volga Tatars had been actively involved in the religious life of the Kazakh since the middle of the eighteenth century, but nowhere on the Kazakh steppe was the profile of Tatar religious figures higher than in the Inner Horde. During the second half of the eighteenth century and throughout the nineteenth century Tatars were present throughout the Kazakh steppe attached to the entourage of powerful Kazakhs as *mullās*, scribes, and intermediaries between the Kazakhs and the Russian authorities (often these *mullās* were also agents of the Russian authorities in Orenburg), and in the Inner Horde, their role was especially prominent.<sup>24</sup> Although the role of Volga Tatar figures in the religious life of the Kazakhs in the Inner Horde will be discussed in more detail below, it is worth noting that the issue of the Tatar presence in the Inner Horde was a cause of great alarm among many Russian

<sup>23</sup> On the Russian nobles and industrialists claiming descent from the caliph Abū Bakr and the Muslim saint Baba Tükles cf. DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion in the Golden Horde*, 396–407; cf. also Iskhakov, D. M. "Seidy v pozdnezolotoordynskikh tatarskikh gosudarstvakh," *Tatarica* 1 (1997), 42–95.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Allen Frank, "Tatarskie mully sredi kazakhov i kirgizov v XVIII–XIX vekakh" *Kul'tura, iskusstvo tatarskogo naroda: istoki, traditsii, vzaimosviazi Kazan'*, 1993 124–131.

administrators and missionaries,<sup>25</sup> as well as among the Russian-oriented members of the Inner Horde's Kazakh elite,<sup>26</sup> and indeed Russian apprehension toward Islam and Tatars among the Kazakhs is a major theme in virtually all Russian writing concerning the Inner Horde.

The creation of a Tatar-dominated Islamic religious establishment in the Inner Horde is most often attributed to Jahāngīr Khan, but it is clear that Jahāngīr's father, Būkāy Khan (d. 1815) had a strong attachment to Islam, and began introducing Islamic institutions to the Inner Horde soon after his migration across the Ural River in 1801.<sup>27</sup> Būkāy was the first Kazakh ruler to exact *zakāt* payments from his Kazakh subjects, as well as from Qaraqalpaqs under his rule.<sup>28</sup> Upon being elected khan in 1812 he swore his loyalty oath on a Qur'ān,<sup>29</sup> and his choice of his final resting place by the tomb of the Muslim saint Sayyid Bābā in the *Sayyidlār ziyāratī* cemetery in the village of Krasnyi Iar in Astrakhan province clearly demonstrates his status as an Islamic sovereign, and the transformation of his tomb into a Muslim shrine and place of pilgrimage suggests that to some degree Būkāy himself became subsequently identified among local Muslims as a pious figure possessing religious power.<sup>30</sup> Al-Īlmīnī notes that some semblance of a Tatar religious establishment was already in place during his reign. The first *imām* of Altı Ata's Fifth Mosque

<sup>25</sup> Spasskii, *Potrebnost' pravoslavnoi missii* passim; for official Russian reactions to the Tatar cultural influence on the Kazakhs cf. T. Tazhibaev, *Prosveshchenie i shkoly Kazakhstana vo vtoroi polovine XIX veka*, (Alma-Ata, 1962), 55–62.

<sup>26</sup> See for example Khadzhi Mukhammed-Salikh Babadzhanov, "Zametka kirgiza o kirgizakh," *Severnaia pchela* (4), January 5th, 1861, 13–16.

<sup>27</sup> The chronology for the khans of the Inner Horde in Olcott's *the Kazakhs*, is rather garbled, and bears mentioning if only because her work is so often cited in studies of Kazakh history. Olcott writes that "after 1817 the aging Bukei [sic] ruled jointly with Khan Jangir, who succeeded to sole rule after 1823." (p. 49). In fact, in 1817 Būkāy Khan was no longer aging, because had died two years earlier. Jahāngīr never ruled jointly with anyone, and Būkāy was succeeded by his brother Shighāy, who ceded the throne to Jahāngīr in 1825.

<sup>28</sup> Ivanov, *Dzhanger khan*, 130.

<sup>29</sup> Khanykov, "Ocherk sostoiianiia Vnutrennei kirgizskoi ordy," 46.

<sup>30</sup> Jahānshāh an-Nīzhghārūtī, *Tārīkh-i Astarkhān*, 47; indeed, as late as the 1990's Būkāy Khān's tomb has been a pilgrimage site for local Muslims, cf. V. M. Viktorin, "Muzhavirat i kul't sviatykh mest—aul'ia v Nizhnevolszhskom variante islama (tsivilizatsionnyi, formatsionnyi i etnicheskii podkhody k izucheniiu)," *Islam, obshchestvo i kul'tura: Materialy mezhdunarodnoi nauchnoi konferentsii 'Islamskaia tsivilizatsiia v preddveri XXI veka k 600-letiiu islama v Sibiri'*, (Omsk, 1994), 41.

was Muḥyiddīn Ḥājjī b. Ḥasan,<sup>31</sup> who served as *imām* among the Kazakhs at this early period. As we have seen, Mullā Muḥyiddīn Ḥājjī became *imām* in Altı Ata in 1817. Before becoming *imām* in Altı Ata, he had been *imām* to Bükāy Khan. Subsequently, he traveled to the Hijaz and went on the *hajj*. After a year or two he returned to live again among the Kazakhs, but then returned to the Hijaz, and then went and studied in Syria and Egypt, before settling in Istanbul for a period of time. He then returned after fifteen years to become *imām* to Jahāngīr Khan.<sup>32</sup> Until his death in 1848 Muḥyiddīn Ḥājjī was frequently visited by Kazakhs seeking his help as a healer.

Bükāy Khan's son, Jahāngīr Khan (r. 1824–1845) was especially active in creating an Islamic establishment in the Inner Horde, and one which had close ties to the Islamic establishment in the Volga-Ural region. It is evident that in creating his own Muslim religious administration for the Inner Horde he sought to mirror the structure of the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly, and also to promote Islamic institutions and Islamic consciousness among his Kazakhs. Evaluations of Jahāngīr's motives for creating this administration vary, and often reflect their authors' own interpretations of the role of Islam in Kazakh society. Most Russian authors in the imperial period perceived Islam, and especially the cultural influence of Tatars among the non-Russians, as threats to the security of the Russian state. For example the Russian missionary Spasskii saw the establishment of Islamic institutions by Jahāngīr as a way to bring Tatar influence onto the steppe by instilling "Muslim fanaticism" among the Kazakhs, distance them from Russia.<sup>33</sup> V. V. Grigor'ev, the chairman of the Orenburg Border Commission in the 1850's, charged Jahāngīr with making the Kazakh elite hostile to Christianity and [Russian] education. Jahāngīr allegedly used these Tatar *mullās* to spread hostility toward things Russian among the Kazakhs, and in effect alienated the Kazakhs from the Russian peasantry. Grigor'ev also alleged that Jahāngīr was benefiting personally by spreading Islam to the Kazakhs.

<sup>31</sup> His father later became *imām* in the village of Olı Mingār, and was buried there.

<sup>32</sup> TAA, fol. 24ab. Al-İlmīnī's chronology is based on the account of Muḥyiddīn's son, who succeeded his father as *imām* in Altı Ata; if he did in fact serve Jahāngīr Khan, he may have become *imām* in Altı Ata after 1817.

<sup>33</sup> Spasskii, *Potrebnost' pravoslavnoi missii*, 5.

Grigor'ev's charges were repeated in later works by Russian historians and travelers.<sup>34</sup> Similar arguments denouncing Jahāngīr and the Tatar *imāms* who served him reappear in Soviet Kazakh historiography. S. Z. Zimanov describes the khan's religious administration as "a body for ideological work" (*organ ideologicheskoi obrabotki*). For Zimanov Islam was nothing more than a system for facilitating the class oppression of the Kazakhs, a view that closely parallels those of L. Klimovich and Z. Ishmukhametov concerning the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly. Zimanov's depiction of the clergy as social parasites is completed by informing us that the greed of these *imāms* was so great that Jahāngīr himself was forced to limit their extractions from the Kazakhs.<sup>35</sup> Zimanov stresses the "Tatar" nature of the Inner Horde's Islamic establishment, implying that it was somehow foreign to the Kazakh nomads.

Jahāngīr's biographer, Ivan S. Ivanov, casts his motives in a more nuanced light. Concerning Jahāngīr's own piety and devotion to Islam, he cites the German traveler Goebel, who remarked that the khan would perform his prayers and other religious obligations in his house, despite the coming and going of visitors on official business.<sup>36</sup> In response to Jahāngīr's Islamophobic critics, Ivanov replies that in the establishment of a Muslim religious administration, and by summoning Tatar *imāms* and building a mosque in his capital, Jahāngīr was acting in conformity with the imperial policies of his time, which did indeed involve mosque construction in Kazakh areas, and the creation of the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly.<sup>37</sup>

Tatar and Kazakh Islamic sources are on the whole much more informed in their evaluations of Jahāngīr Khan. Riḍā'addīn Fakhraddīn ūghlī grants Jahāngīr a full entry in his multi-volume biographical dictionary and credits him with creating and developing the Islamic institutions of the Inner Horde.<sup>38</sup> However, elsewhere in his work Fakhraddīn ūghlī credits Jahāngīr's wife Fāṭima, who was the daughter of the first Orenburg Mufti, Muḥammad-Jān al-Ḥusayn, with being the motive force behind the creation of an Islamic establishment that so closely paralleled the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual

<sup>34</sup> Ivanov, *Dzhanger khan*, 64–66.

<sup>35</sup> Zimanov, *Rossia i Bukeevskoe khanstvo*, 124.

<sup>36</sup> Ivanov, *Dzhanger khan*, 60.

<sup>37</sup> Ivanov, *Dzhanger khan*, 63, 223–224.

<sup>38</sup> Fakhraddīn ūghlī, *Āthār* 2:10, 135–139.

Assembly. Fakhraddīn ūghlī describes Fāṭīma in especially glowing terms, crediting her for “civilizing” the Kazakhs of the Inner Horde.<sup>39</sup> Jahāngīr Khan was also celebrated in Kazakh and Tatar poetry as well. The Kazakh poet Baytuq Aqīn, who composed an elegy after Jahāngīr’s death in 1845, praised him for, among other things, taking care of orphans and widows and building golden palaces,<sup>40</sup> and in his lifetime, Jahāngīr was the subject of a panegyric by the Tatar Sufi poet Abū’l-Manīḥ al-Qarghālī (1782–1833).<sup>41</sup>

The religious administration established by Jahāngīr functioned at two levels, and was apparently modeled after the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly in Ufa. If Jahāngīr’s administration was a miniature version of the one in Ufa, it was also a more centralized one. When exactly Jahāngīr began the establishment of his religious administration is unclear, but probably it was in the early 1830’s, since he received permission from the Orenburg Border commission to build a mosque in Khanskaia Stavka in 1831. At the beginning of his reign there were only about 15 *mullās* for the entire Inner Horde, and Jahāngīr himself lacked his own *mullā*.<sup>42</sup> In fact, as al-Īlmīnī remarks concerning Muḥyiddīn Ḥasan ūghlī, these *imāms* among the Kazakhs were often there on a temporary basis, and the number of *imāms* among the Inner Horde Kazakhs must have fluctuated.

Initially Jahāngīr’s religious administration was staffed almost entirely with ‘*alims*’ from the Volga-Ural region. The head of this organization was the *ākhūnd* Jābir Ḥamād ūghlī, (Dzhabar Khamatov in Russian sources), an Orenburg Tatar, who lived at the Khan’s expense in Khanskaia Stavka.<sup>43</sup> Jābir Ḥamād ūghlī, who held the title of *ṭarkhān* (i.e. an official Russian title granting immunity from taxation), was the chief of the khan’s *sharī‘a* court, and was also responsible for examining candidates for the position of *imām*.<sup>44</sup> This *ākhūnd* served for more than twenty years, and was paid at the Inner Horde’s

<sup>39</sup> Fakhraddīn ūghlī, *Āthār* 1:4, 186; Ivanin also has praise for Fāṭīma, crediting her civilized upbringing with motivating Jahāngīr to sedentarize his people; cf. Ivanin, “Vnutrenniaia ili Bukeevskaia Kirgizskaia Orda,” 15.

<sup>40</sup> A. Zeki Velidī Togan, *Bugünkü Türkîli Türkistan ve Yakın Tarihi*, (Istanbul, 1981), 245.

<sup>41</sup> Kemper, *Sufis und Gelehrte in Tatarien und Baschkirien*, 138–139.

<sup>42</sup> Evreinov, “Vnutrenniaia ili Bukeevskaia kirgiz-kazach’ia orda,” 71.

<sup>43</sup> Fakhraddīn ūghlī, *Āthār* 2:10, 137–138; *Kazakhsko-russkie otnosheniia*, 234; Jābir is known to have been the author of at least one work, a genealogical and religious treatise published in Kazan in 1908 and entitled *Risāla-yi khānān*.

<sup>44</sup> Evreinov, “Vnutrenniaia ili Bukeevskaia kirgiz-kazach’ia orda,” 71; Zimanov, *Rossia i Bukeevskoe khanstvo*, 124.

expense. In addition to the cash he received from Jahāngīr, Jābir Ḥamād ūghlī also owned a farmstead to the north-west of Khanskaia Stavka.<sup>45</sup> He was also responsible for coordinating the administration of *imāms* assigned to the Kazakh clans. The *ākhūnd* was also charged with teaching young Kazakhs in Khanskaia Stavka, and with appointing them as *imāms* “on the request of good and honorable Kazakhs.”<sup>46</sup> How long Jābir Ḥamād ūghlī, functioned as *ākhūnd* in Khanskaia Stavka is unclear, but his name does appear among those of “Kazakhs” from the Inner Horde who left Russia for the *hajj* in 1862.<sup>47</sup>

Jahāngīr also expanded the Islamic establishment at the local level. For every sub-clan (*tā’ifa*, and in Russian, *otdelenie*) he appointed a *mullā*.<sup>48</sup> According to one estimate there were about 130 local *imāms* subordinate to the *ākhūnd*.<sup>49</sup> The duties and rights of the *mullā* were explicitly stated in an order (*prikaz* in Russian, and *firmān* in Tatar) drawn up by the khan and the *ākhūnd* and issued to each *imām*. This documented was divided into ten separate points outlining the *imām*’s duties.<sup>50</sup> In general terms the *imām* was responsible for a broad range of religious, educational, and civil matters. A translation of the document follows.

Open order of the exalted Jahāngīr Būkāy Khān ūghlī

To so-and-so of such-and-such a clan and such-and-such a sub-clan

On the recommendation of the good and honorable Kazakhs of (such-and-such), concerning your nomination by them to the position of *mullā*, I, having approved this request on the testimony of the *ākhūnd* (so-and-so) who serves before me, who has testified to your worthiness on the basis of having given you an examination, confirm you in this position and give you this open order, and upon the receipt of which, you are expected to treat the Kazakhs of the sub-clan according to the following rules:

<sup>45</sup> Evreinov, “Vnutrenniaia ili Bukeevskaia kirgiz-kazach’ia orda,” 63.

<sup>46</sup> Ivanov, *Dzhanger khan*, 60.

<sup>47</sup> Isabay and Bayzhan-Ata, *Qazhīgha barghan qazaqtar*, 121. In this source his name appears in the modern Kazakh spelling as Zābir Khammatov.

<sup>48</sup> This is the term used in both the Turkic and Russian documentation. The *mullā*’s duties clearly corresponded to those of *imām*.

<sup>49</sup> Zimanov, *Rossia i Bukeevskoe khanstvo*, 124.

<sup>50</sup> Riḍā’addīn Fakhraddīn ūghlī published one of these documents in the original Tatar in his biographical sketch of Jahāngīr Khan. It follows fairly closely in its particulars to a Russian version published by A. Evreinov; cf. Fakhraddīn ūghlī, *Āthār*, 2:10, 137–139; Evreinov, “Vnutrenniaia,” 72–73.

1) to build mosques and *madrāsas*, and if there are settled inhabitants in the community, to celebrate the weekly and annual holidays; to teach children, exhort the daily prayers to God as befits our religion and observe the Uraza (Ramaḍān) fast. On Fridays and the other annual holidays to give a sermon to the ordinary Kazakhs, the form of which will be especially provided to you by the *ākhūnd* constituted under me.

2) to explain all the rules of our religion to the simple and ignorant Kazakhs; to give appropriate names to newborns, to perform the *sunnat* (circumcision) on boys, to marry the betrothed, to bury the dead, observing for this all the necessary rituals.

3) to be present at the exchange of *kalym* during the marrying of sons or the marrying off of daughters, and to exhort the parents to announce in front of witnesses that “one gave and the other received”.

4) to forbid grooms to visit their brides before the wedding, in accordance with the former Kazakh customs.

5) upon the death of a husband, if the wife wishes to marry, to find out reliably whether she is pregnant; until the amount of time specified by our religion, not to marry her with anyone.

6) to not marry a widow without the consent of her father and mother.

7) to distribute the goods of the deceased to their relatives according to our law; if you cannot do this yourself, report to me and await a decision.

8) to impress upon and explain to wealthy Kazakhs that they pay *zakāt* from their moveable and immovable property.

9) to teach simple and ignorant Kazakhs not to commit violent acts upon one another, and to honor, respect and always be loyal to the Sovereign Emperor and his administration.

10) to make sure that the Kazakhs of this sub-clan do not carry out thievery and do not engage in illegal activities.

I have directed the clan leaders, *biys* and *starshinas* in this sub-clan to aid you in the carrying out of the above-mentioned duties, and you are annually obligated to report to me about your instructions.

The first *mullās* that Jahāngīr invited were Tatar *ukaznye* (*manshūrli*) *mullās* from the Volga-Ural region. However, under Jahāngīr the Muslim religious administration of the Inner Horde was independent of the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly, and as we have seen, the *ākhūnd* was authorized to himself appoint *mullās* to Kazakh communities.<sup>51</sup> The charge that Jahāngīr sought to flood the steppe with Tatar *mullās* and effectively “Tatarize” the Kazakhs is contradicted

<sup>51</sup> Zimanov, *Rossia i Bukeevskoe khanstvo*, 138–139; Babadzhanov, “Zametka kirgiza o kirgizakh,” 13–16; cf also Basilov and Karamysheva, *Islam u kazakhov*, 21.

by the evidence that from the beginning Jahāngīr sought to recruit *mullās* from among the Kazakhs' own communities as we have seen in his order to the *ākhūnd* to this effect. At first, many *mullās* were Tatars, but over the course of the nineteenth century the proportion of Kazakh *mullās* gradually increased.<sup>52</sup> In fact, the replacement of Tatar *mullās* by Kazakh ones appears to have been well underway even during Jahāngīr's lifetime. Aleksandr Tereshchenko, who visited Jahāngīr Khan in the 1840's notes that by 1845 the *imām* of the mosque in Khanskaia Stavka, as well as most of the clan *mullās* came from among the Kazakhs. He also indicated that Jahāngīr had achieved this not only by bringing Tatar *mullās* to the Inner Horde, but also by sending both Kazakh children and adults to Tatar *madrasas*, especially in Orenburg province and to the renowned *madrasas* of Sterlitamak and Ištārlibash, and even to Bukhara.<sup>53</sup> Indeed, the document published by Riḍā'addīn Fakhraddīn ūghlī names a Kazakh *mullā*, a certain Ūtūzbāy Tūrabāy ūghlī of the Tānā clan's Bassārī sub-clan, who was made *mullā* during Jahāngīr's lifetime. It is unclear how long the Islamic establishment created by Jahāngīr khān survived his death, but by 1883 it apparently ceased to exist as an independent organization. In that year a publication of the Ministry of Internal Affairs lists the mosques and *'ulamā* of the Inner Horde as being subordinate to the Muslim Spiritual Assembly in Orenburg.

Clearly, Jahāngīr conceived of himself as an Islamic sovereign, albeit one subordinate to Russia. As such, Jahāngīr considered it his duty to raise the Islamic consciousness of his people by offering them Islamic education, guidance in carrying out the chief rituals of their religion, and creating an infrastructure of mosques, *maktabs*, and Islamic law courts. Whether this infrastructure was staffed by Tatars or Kazakhs was immaterial from a strictly religious perspective, although it is clear that from the beginning Jahāngīr understood that staffing his religious establishment with as many Kazakhs as possible not only might bear political dividends, but would probably accelerate the introduction of Islamic customs and rites at the local level as well. The frequent accusations that Jahāngīr's Islamic establish-

<sup>52</sup> Ivanov, *Dzhanger khan*, 60, 224; Zimanov, *Rossia i Bukeyevskoe khanstvo*, 139.

<sup>53</sup> Aleksandr Tereshchenko, "Sledy Desht-Kipchaka i Vnutrenniaia kirgiz-kaisatskaia orda," *Moskvitianin* 1853 (22), 66; Fakhraddīn ūghlī, *Āthār* 1:4, 186; Babadzhanov, *Sochineniia*, 73–74.

ment fostered disloyalty toward Russia, or other anti-Russian feelings among the Kazakhs can be readily dismissed. These charges originated in the climate of emerging Russian nationalism and Islamophobia of the nineteenth century. In fact, Jahāngīr was strongly loyal to Imperial Russia, and, as we have seen, one of the tasks of his *mullās* was to encourage loyalty among the Kazakhs to himself and to the Russian sovereign.

Nevertheless, it appears equally evident that over the course of the nineteenth century Kazakh society in the Inner Horde was fundamentally transformed by Jahāngīr's policies of "Islamization." Numerous nineteenth-century Russian, and later Kazakh, commentators saw the adoption by the Kazakhs nomads of Islamic practices associated with Tatars as evidence of the "Tatarization" of the Kazakhs, and they concluded that the Kazakhs were in fact ceasing to be "Kazakhs" at all. Such a conclusion fails to take into account the internal Kazakh perspective. There can be no question that well before the Inner Horde came into existence, Kazakhs conceived of their society as Islamic, and for them, to be a Kazakh was also to be a Muslim. To be sure, the Kazakhs whom Jahāngīr had trained in the *madrasas* of Kazan, Orenburg, and Astrakhan sought to change their society upon returning to the Inner Horde, but from the internal perspective such a change was necessarily sanctioned by Kazakh society because it was after all at its core an Islamic society. If being a Kazakh implied being a Muslim, then being a better Muslim could not make the person, or the society, less Kazakh, and from this perspective the idea that an increased Islamic consciousness among the Kazakhs could imply "Tatarization", or some other form of cultural alienation, is doubtful.

### *Mosques*

The first mosque to be built among the Kazakh of the Inner Horde was built between 1815 and 1818 for Shīghāy Khān in his winter encampment at Naryn Peski by a Russian merchant named Alekseev.<sup>54</sup> Jahāngīr Khan had his own mosque built in his capital Khanskaia Stavka in 1835. This was probably the first permanent mosque in

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<sup>54</sup> In 1818 Shīghāy petitioned tsar Aleksandr I for to bestow a medal on this merchant for his generosity; cf. Taizhanova, *Kazakhi*, 233.

the Inner Horde. It was designed by Jahāngīr himself and situated in a park across from his private residence. I. S. Ivanov, who visited the mosque in 1886, describes it as having an elongated rectangular shape, and a terrace in the front that was supported by six Ionian-style columns with a minaret situated in the middle of the roof.<sup>55</sup> The first *imām* was a certain Gubaidulla Basharov and the *muʿadhdhin* was Tazhiddin Gubdudzhaliolov (both according to the Russian spellings), both of whom were Tatars from Kazan province.<sup>56</sup> Curiously enough, two Russian authors who visited the mosque in 1886, left rather divergent descriptions of the structure. Aleksei Kharuzin, who was an unabashed critic of the Islamic and Tatar presence in the Inner Horde, describes the neo-classical architecture as being bizarre and the condition of the mosque as dilapidated, with the minaret on the verge of collapsing.<sup>57</sup> Ivanov, who viewed Jahāngīr Khan's role in the Kazakh Inner Horde as a positive one, described the mosque as "not only the most beautiful building in Khanskaia Stavka, but [as] a beautiful building in its own right."<sup>58</sup>

By the end of the nineteenth century the number of official mosques in the Inner Horde had grown considerably. According to a Russian missionary account, in 1895 there were 99 "legal" [*ukaznye*] mosques on the lands of the Inner Horde.<sup>59</sup> In all likelihood, few of these were permanently staffed or attended, and most of these mosques were probably located in the semi-permanent winter encampments of the Kazakh, chiefly located along the Uzen Rivers and along the north Caspian coast. Al-Īlmīnī notes that in summer when Kazakhs were nomadizing with their herds they would not normally visit mosques.<sup>60</sup> Nevertheless some wealthier Kazakhs would occasionally designate one of their yurts as a mosque while they were out on the steppe.<sup>61</sup> According to official statistics from 1883, in that year there were a total of 47 mosques in the Inner Horde, including nine in the Kamysh-Samar district and six in the Talovka district, both of which bordered Novouzensk district.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Ivanov, *Dzhanger khan*, 63.

<sup>56</sup> Zimanov, *Rossia i Bukeevskoe khanstvo*, 124.

<sup>57</sup> Kharuzin, *Stepnye ocherki*, 22.

<sup>58</sup> Ivanov, *Dzhanger khan*, 63.

<sup>59</sup> Spasskii, *Potrebnost' pravoslavnoi missii*, 5.

<sup>60</sup> TAA fol. 107b.

<sup>61</sup> Spasskii, *Potrebnost' pravoslavnoi missii*, 6.

<sup>62</sup> *Al'favitnye spiski*, 326–327.

Al-Īlmīnī mentions three mosques in the Kazakh lands, one in Novaia Kazanka (Yāngī Qazānqa), and two in Talovka, together with one mosque in the Ural Cossack settlement of Yalpaqtal on the left bank of the Bol'shoi Uzen' River. Of these, al-Īlmīnī only provides details on the mosques in Novaia Kazanka and Yalpaqtal. In comparison with the mosques of the Altı Ata Valley, the mosques on the Kazakh steppe that are described were much larger. Furthermore, while the Altı Ata mosques were initially built out of mud brick, and later out of wood, both mosques on the Kazakh steppe were built out of stone. The mosque in Novaia Kazanka seems to have been especially large, with three floors, including an enlarged basement. The mosque in Yalpaqtal, similarly, was enlarged, with a basement being dug and furnished so the Muslim Cossacks would have a place to perform their prayers without being crowded out by Kazakhs. In Novaia Kazanka the *imām* was one Mullā 'Aṭā'allāh, a follower of Zaynallāh of Istarlibash. As al-Īlmīnī notes "his attention to the Kazakhs is great, and his business with the [Tatar] congregation is less so."<sup>63</sup> The *imām* of the mosque in Yalpaqtal was a Ural Cossack, also named 'Aṭā'allāh. This 'Aṭā'allāh was the son of Khūjāntāy Bābā, the wealthiest of the Muslim Cossacks, and the person who had the mosque built after moving from Glinianskii Forpost.<sup>64</sup> According to al-Īlmīnī, Ural Cossack *imāms* from Glinianskii Forpost, and later Yalpaqtal, were trained in Novouzensk district's most renowned *madrassa*, located in the village of Iske Özen's Third *maḥalla*.<sup>65</sup>

### *Islamic education*

Islamic education among the Kazakhs has been received very little treatment in published works. Unlike among the Tatars, where, Islamic education has been a major topic of focus and polemics, historians have paid little attention to Islamic education among the Kazakhs. In part, this neglect stems from the overall treatment of Islam and Islamic institutions of Kazakhs, where these historians deny, simply fail to recognize, or minimize that Kazakhs, or other nomads such as the Bashkirs or Kyrgyz, were in fact Muslims. This

<sup>63</sup> TAA fol. 106b.

<sup>64</sup> TAA fol. 107a.

<sup>65</sup> TAA fol. 88b.

same general characterization applies to accounts of the Inner Horde.

This scholarly neglect of Islamic education on the Kazakh steppe during the imperial Russian period is unfortunate, because the development and growth of Islamic educational institutions among the nomads under Russian rule was an unprecedented phenomenon in the history of Islamic Inner Asia, both in terms of scale and consequence. Furthermore, the rapid development of Islamic education among the steppe nomads in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is a process that few historians have fully recognized or understood, but one which is quite evident in the region's Islamic sources. In any case, it becomes clear that over the course of the nineteenth century, and until the establishment of the Soviet Union, *maktabs* and *madrasas* became very widespread among Kazakh, as well as Kyrgyz communities, where previously they had not existed in such numbers. This process was accelerated after the Russian conquest of Central Asia, when Tatar and Bashkir teachers became more common among the steppe nomad communities (the presence of these figures will be discussed in more detail below), but the sources express clearly that the growth of Islamic education among the steppe nomads resulted from the initiative and efforts of the nomads themselves. Indeed, there is no question that the absolute predominance of Muslim schools was the rule throughout the Kazakh steppe in the imperial period. The dominance of traditional Islamic education was not only in force in southern Kazakhstan and along the Syr Darya River, where Islamic education had very ancient roots,<sup>66</sup> but even along the northern reaches of the steppe in Western Siberia.<sup>67</sup> Although Kazakh parents apparently found the appeal of Islamic education to have been self-evident, Russian officials, and later Soviet historians, appear to have been genuinely puzzled as to why the Kazakhs would have sought to provide their children with Islamic education. However, writing in 1882, Ianovskii, the governor of Astrakhan, stated with certainty that the Kazakhs preferred to educate their children in the Muslim fashion because Islamic education was simply more useful for them. He remarked that upon graduating, a young person would

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<sup>66</sup> Tazhibaev, *Prosveshchenie i shkoly Kazakhstana*, 56–57; Mustafina, *Predstavleniia, kul'by, obriady u kazakhov*, 24–28.

<sup>67</sup> Tazhibaev, *Prosveshchenie i shkoly Kazakhstana*, 121, 255, 277. For example, Tazhibaev notes how in Western Siberia, in a region with over 400,000 Kazakhs, the only Russian-Kazakh school was located in Omsk and it had only 20 pupils.

be able to read the Qurʾān and would be able to read Tatar religious books. Also, contact with Tatars and their language was felt to be desirable because it was mainly with this group that the Kazakhs conducted trade. In Russian schools, not only was the Tatar language ignored, but so was the Kazakh language.<sup>68</sup>

As in the Volga-Ural region, official estimates for the number of Islamic schools among the steppe nomads vary widely, and on the whole cannot be treated as reliable indicators of the extent of Islamic education within these communities.<sup>69</sup> Nevertheless, even at the local level a substantial degree of education appears to have been available for nomads. Indeed, by the beginning of the twentieth century, *maktabs* were very widespread in Kazakh communities.<sup>70</sup> Among the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz nomads, these *maktabs* could be very informal. They were usually temporary, typically opening in September and closing in March. In each *aul* (nomadic encampment) there were typically several such schools with five to fifteen pupils in each. Sometimes literate Kazakhs would teach their own children and those of relatives and neighbors at no charge. Generally there was no fixed rate in these schools. Usually the teacher would be paid by his pupils' parents in kind, with livestock, clothing, foodstuffs, or gifts, and often the *mullā* was fed as well. Cash payment was rare, although in one community the pupils paid three to ten kopecks per week.<sup>71</sup> According to a Russian administrator in Perovsk district in 1867, the Kazakh *maktabs* were usually funded by a wealthy and prestigious nomad, who would hire a *mirza* (a literate native) to teach the children. The rate was usually a camel a year, or a horse for six months. The *mirza* would teach children from neighboring encampments as well, and especially the sponsor's relatives. The children of the latter would pay about 20 kopecks per month.<sup>72</sup> In some nomadic Kazakh districts the education of children was organized by local chiefs. The chiefs would appoint a teacher for his community, and would house him in one of his yurts. The teacher would instruct all of the encampment's children and would be paid from 40 to 60 rubles annually. The

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<sup>68</sup> Tazhibaev, *Prosveshchenie i shkoly Kazakhstana*, 122–123.

<sup>69</sup> Tazhibaev, *Prosveshchenie i shkoly Kazakhstana*, 55–58; D. Aitmambetov, *Dorevoliutsionnye shkoly Kirgizii*, (Frunze, 1961), 12.

<sup>70</sup> A. I. Sembaev and G. M. Khrapchenkov, *Ocherki istorii shkol v Kazakhstane (1901–1917 gg.)*, (Alma-Ata, 1972), 84.

<sup>71</sup> Tazhibaev, *Prosveshchenie i shkoly Kazakhstana*, 61.

<sup>72</sup> Tazhibaev, *Prosveshchenie i shkoly Kazakhstana*, 57.

money was typically collected by the members of the encampment.<sup>73</sup>

Among Kyrgyz nomads in the Semirech'e region informal *maktabs* are already documented in the 1830's. The Kyrgyz would convene *maktabs* in their yurts, or sometimes simply under trees. The instructors could be either Kyrgyz or Uzbeks, but after the Russian conquests, Tatars became increasingly common in the Kyrgyz encampments.<sup>74</sup> As in Novouzensk district, primary education were typically funded by the parents of the pupils. Usually a parent would pay in kind, with a sheep, a sack of flour, but the more students there were, the less parents had to pay. Teachers were also given gifts.<sup>75</sup> The Kyrgyz Soviet historian D. Aitmambetov provides a firsthand account of this sort of education recorded from a Kyrgyz named Moldogazy Taranchiev, who attended such a *maktab* in Przheval'sk district from 1907 until 1914. This *maktab* had 25–30 pupils in attendance, and consisted of two yurts. The pupils lived in one of them, and the second was the *ashkhana* (kitchen), where the *mullā* and the cook resided. For every session, which typically began in October or November, and ended in April, the parents would supply one sheep, one sack of flour, one brick of tea, firewood, and perhaps a gift of clothing to the *mullā*. The children were taught to learn to read the Qur'ān.<sup>76</sup>

*Madrasas* in the steppe regions tended to be established in permanent settlements. Furthermore, many young Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, and Bashkirs studied in *madrasas* in the Volga-Ural region, Western Siberia, and especially in Central Asia.<sup>77</sup> However, there were substantial *madrasas* within the Kazakh steppe as well, such as in Karkaralinsk and in the Semirech'e region, as well as along the Syr Darya River. Nevertheless, there were many *madrasas* in nomadic encampments that were simply convened in yurts.<sup>78</sup> Among the Bashkirs, perhaps as late as the early nineteenth century, *madrasa* instructors would nomadize in summer with their pupils. The Bashkir author Muḥammad-Salīm Umetbaev wrote in 1897 that at the time when the Bashkirs still nomadized, *mudarrises* would summer nomadizing with their students. Some of these nomadic *madrasas* could be rather

<sup>73</sup> A. K. Geins, *Sobranie literaturnykh trudov*, I (St. Petersburg, 1897), 257.

<sup>74</sup> Aitmambetov, *Dorevoliutsionnye shkoly v Kirgizii*, 10–11, 14–15.

<sup>75</sup> Aitmambetov, *Dorevoliutsionnye shkoly v Kirgizii*, 16.

<sup>76</sup> Aitmambetov, *Dorevoliutsionnye shkoly v Kirgizii*, 20.

<sup>77</sup> Tazhibaev, *Prosveshchenie i shkoly Kazakhstana*, 276; Aitmambetov, *Dorevoliutsionnye shkoly Kirgizii*, 12.

<sup>78</sup> Sembaev and Khrapchenkov, *Ocherki istorii*, 82.

large. He notes that his father's teacher, Ḥamād Ḥaḍrat, would spend the summer nomadizing along the Qārlāmān River with "hundreds" of his *shāgirds*.<sup>79</sup>

In the Inner Horde, Jahāngīr Khan actively supported the expansion of Islamic education among the Kazakh nomads. Education was a major task not only for the local *imāms* assigned to the nomadic Kazakh communities, but for the *ākhūnd* Jābir Ḥamād ūghlī as well. Until 1917 numerous Kazakhs from the Inner Horde went to study in various *madrasas* of the Volga-Ural region, both in the more distant centers of Kazan, Ufa, and Orenburg, and in the closer settlements of Astrakhan and Novouzensk district.<sup>80</sup> Kazakhs were especially numerous in the *madrasa* of Altī Ata's Second Mosque, as well as in the *madrasa* of the Cossack settlement of Yalpaqтал.<sup>81</sup> During the second half of the nineteenth century Islamic educational establishments dominated the Inner Horde's educational infrastructure. The availability of Islamic education in the Inner Horde was in part due to Jahāngīr's policies and its popularity was due to a genuine demand for Islamic education on the part of the Kazakhs themselves. The Soviet historian T. Tazhibaev estimates that in the Inner Horde in 1889 about 2,000 Kazakh children were enrolled in *maktabs* and *madrasa*, or about seven percent of all Kazakh children, while only one half of one percent (0.5%) of Kazakh children were enrolled in Russian-Kazakh schools.<sup>82</sup> It should be stated that Tazhibaev's estimate of Kazakh pupils in Muslim schools is in all likelihood low, since it is based on incomplete Russian data, while the data for the Russian-Kazakh schools is complete. Indeed, the Russian alarm at Tatar cultural hegemony notwithstanding, the proportion of Russian-Kazakh schools in the Inner Horde was apparently higher than anywhere else on the Kazakh steppe.

Among the Kazakh nomads and Muslim Cossacks the education of children was often undertaken by itinerant Bashkir and Tatar *mullās*.<sup>83</sup> In a discussion of Kazakh Islamic education the Astrakhan

<sup>79</sup> Muḥammad-Salīm Umetbaev, *Yādigār*, (Kazan, 1897), 108.

<sup>80</sup> Zimanov, *Rossiiā i Bukeevskoe khanstvo*, 138–139; Babadzhanov, "Zametka kirgiza o kirgizakh," 15.

<sup>81</sup> TAA, fol. 16a, 108a.

<sup>82</sup> Tazhibaev, *Prosveshchenie i shkoly Kazakhstanā*, 121.

<sup>83</sup> Al-Īlmīnī mentions numerous figures from Novouzensk district, such as his sons Muḥammad and Aḥmad-Ṣafā, who gave lessons to Kazakh nomads; cf. also Tazhibaev, "Shkoly Vnutrennei (Bukeevskoi) ordy," 129.

historian Jahānshāh an-Nizhghārūṭī has remarked that Kazakh parents were especially active in recruiting Tatar teachers to instruct their children in Islam,<sup>84</sup> rather than being preyed upon by the *mul-lās* as Russian missionaries and administrators have argued. The author of the *Tawārīkh-i Āltī Ātā* mentions several *imāms* and other scholars from these Tatar villages who would occasionally travel among the Kazakhs and Muslim Cossacks teaching their children. These include the *imām* of Altī Ata's Fifth Mosque, Muḥyiddīn Ḥasan ūghlī, who lived with the Kazakhs of the Inner Horde early in the nineteenth century, as well as both of Muḥammad-Fātiḥ al-Īlmīnī's sons, Muḥammad and Aḥmad-Şafā, at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Specifically, we know that in 1900 Muḥammad was nomadizing with a wealthy Kazakh named Īdīlbāy Ṭurghān of the Inner Horde.<sup>85</sup> In addition, *imāms* and other learned figures from Novouzensk district were occasionally engaged as itinerant instructors in Bashkir and Ural Cossack nomadic communities.<sup>86</sup>

Estimates of the number of *madrasas* and *maktabs* in the Inner Horde vary considerably for the second half of the nineteenth century. One estimate for 1872 reports there to have been 154 Muslims schools with 3,821 pupils. Another estimate (no year is given) reports 38 (official) or 56 (unofficial) *madrasas* and *maktabs* with 350 Kazakh pupils and 50 Tatar ones. A report from 1882 mentions 96 *madrasas* and *maktabs*. An estimate from 1891 reports 400 *madrasas* and *maktabs*. A newspaper report from 1899 estimates there to have been sixty *madrasas* and *maktabs* with 1,679 pupils.<sup>87</sup> It should be noted that the Russian bureaucrats and missionaries who made these reports often did so with the intention of impressing upon government circles the need to restrict Islamic education and reduce what they perceived as the "Tatarization" of the Kazakhs nomads, and therefore may have inflated their reports. Furthermore, as al-Īlmīnī makes abundantly clear in his discussion of Islamic education in Novouzensk district, *madrasas* and *maktabs* (al-Īlmīnī does not distinguish between the two, and uses only the term *madrasa*) opened and closed with high frequency, since their existence was dependent on both economic factors, such as sufficient rain for crops, as well as on human

<sup>84</sup> Jahānshāh an-Nizhghārūṭī, *Tārīkh-i Astarkhān*, 27.

<sup>85</sup> TAA fols. 25a, 103a.

<sup>86</sup> TAA fols. 12a, 16a.

<sup>87</sup> Tazhibaev, "Shkoly Vnutrennei (Bukeevskoi) ordy, 127; Spasskii, *Potrebnost' pravoslavnoi missii*, 5, 7.

factors, such the commitment of the local *imāms* to teaching and of the congregation to funding.

Al-Īlmīnī only mentions one *madrasa* on the territory of the Inner Horde; this is the *madrasa* in the town of Novaia Kazanka presided by the *imām* Mullā ‘Aṭā’allāh. He notes that while the *imām* neglected the Tatar members congregation in favor of the Kazakhs, he nevertheless maintained a “perfect *madrasa*.”<sup>88</sup> The Cossack village of Yalpaqтал also had a *madrasa* where most of the *shāgirds* were reportedly Kazakhs.<sup>89</sup>

### *Sufism*

On the whole, published sources tell us little about Sufism in the Inner Horde. Muḥammad-Sāliḥ Babadzhanov tells us that around 1849 a Kazakh Sufi named Aydzhar (according to the Russian spelling) was active in the Inner Horde. He was called “*ishan*” and had studied under a “famous” Tatar *mullā* in the village of Sterlitamak;<sup>90</sup> he goes on to say that Sterlitamak remained a popular destination for Kazakh students. Babadzhanov also writes how numerous Kazakhs went off to study in the “Islamic monastery” in Istārlibash.<sup>91</sup> Al-Īlmīnī’s inclusion of Yalpaqтал in his narrative is providential for our knowledge of Sufism in the Inner Horde because it was the center of a group of Sufis known collectively as the Yalpaqтал *Ishans*. As with many other aspects of Sufism in the Volga-Ural region and the Kazakh Steppe, the Yalpaqтал *Ishans* are poorly documented; however they are mentioned in a Soviet anti-religious monograph published in Kazan in 1931. Yalpaqтал was the center of these *īshāns*, but their followers were also to be found elsewhere in the Inner Horde, namely in the village of Talovka and in the capital of Khanskaia Stavka.<sup>92</sup> According to Mozaffari, the Yalpaqтал *Ishans* were Naqshbandis and the sons of one Khayralla Ghālkāyef of Qarghalī, the son of a certain Āmir *Ishan* Ghālkāyef of Sterlibashevo.<sup>93</sup> Mozaffari’s Khayrallāh

<sup>88</sup> TAA fol. 106b.

<sup>89</sup> TAA fol. 108a.

<sup>90</sup> Perhaps a reference to Sharafaddīn b. Zaynaddīn al-Istarlītāmāqī, a prominent Sufi based in Sterlitamak, who died in 1845, and who maintained a popular *khānaqāh*; cf. Amīrkhān ūghlī, *Tawārīkh-i Bulghārīya*, 45.

<sup>91</sup> Babadzhanov, “Zametka kirgiza o kirgizakh,” 14–15.

<sup>92</sup> Mozaffari, *Ishannar-Dārvishlār*, 95.

<sup>93</sup> Mozaffari, *Ishannar-Dārvishlār*, 72. Transcriptions of these names are based on the Latin-script Tatar of Mozaffari’s work.

Ghālkāyef is without question a reference to Khayrallāh b. Zaynallāh b. ‘Alīkāy, who appears in Riḍā’addīn Fakhraddīn ūghlī’s history of Qarghalī. Concerning Khayrallāh’s origins, Fakhraddīn ūghlī mentions a certain Zaynallāh as his father, and he notes further that he was not from Sterlibashevo, but was from the village of Arslan in Ufa district; in Qarghalī he was known as Khayrallāh al-Ārslānī. In 1886/87 he became the eighth *imām* of Qarghalī’s Seventh Mosque, and still held that position in 1897. Fakhraddīn ūghlī also notes that one of his students was ‘Aṭā’allāh b. Samī’allāh, the seventh *imām* of Qarghalī’s Sixth Mosque.<sup>94</sup> Fakhraddīn ūghlī makes no mention of Khayrallāh’s Sufi activities, let alone his affiliations. Furthermore, we have seen that Mullā ‘Aṭā’allāh, the *imām* of Novaia Kazanka’s mosque was a follower of a certain Zaynallāh of Istārlibash, and it is possible that this Zaynallāh of Istārlibash and Zaynallāh b. ‘Alīkāy are one and the same figure, since Mozaffārī notes that the Khayrallāh Ghālkāyef’s father came from Istārlibash.

Al-Īlmīnī mentions three specific Sufis in his discussion of the Russian-Kazakh borderlands. One of these is the ill-fated second *imām* of Aleksandrov Gai, Ḥasan, who was exiled to Siberia for unspecified offenses. This figure was a *shāgird* of one Yālpāqṭāl Ḥaḍrat, presumably one of the Yalpaqṭal Ishans mentioned by Mozaffārī. The other two Sufis mentioned by al-Īlmīnī, one in Novaia Kazanka, and the other in Yalpaqṭal, are connected to Zaynallāh Ḥaḍrat of Sterlibashevo. The first of these Sufis was Mullā ‘Aṭā’allāh, the *imām* of Novaia Kazanka. The second was one ‘Ubaydallāh of Yalpaqṭal, concerning whom al-Īlmīnī writes:

With the passing of time this Mullā ‘Aṭā’allāh’s<sup>95</sup> daughter reached maturity. The eldest son of Zaynallāh Ḥaḍrat of Sterlibashevo, Mullā ‘Ubaydallāh, studied in Noble Bukhara and when he returned the aforementioned ‘Aṭā’allāh gave his daughter to ‘Ubaydallāh Āfāndī. In short, both of them are living. [. . .] Now, concerning his *ṭariqat*, this ‘Ubaydallāh, is a *khalīfa* of [blank] Ḥaḍrat, and because in that country many of his *murīds* are Kazakhs, in making pilgrimages to see him they [Kazakhs] offer a horse or a camel, or fifty or a hundred rubles in cash; they give it as a pious offering and receive his blessing [*fātiḥa*]. Today he has around a hundred horses, and around a hundred camels and cattle. Since many of his *murīds* are Kazakhs, and

<sup>94</sup> Fakhraddīn ūghlī, *Sa’id*, 28–29.

<sup>95</sup> I.e. the *imām* in Yalpaqṭal, ‘Aṭā’allāh Khūjāntāy ūghlī.

because much of his attention is devoted to them, although at times he deals with the Ural Cossacks, out of envy they [the Cossacks] don't deal with him.<sup>96</sup>

It is unfortunate that al-Īlmīnī was unable to find out to whom 'Ubaydallāh was a *khalīfa*, since we lack any explicit evidence connecting 'Ubaydallāh with the Yalpaqṭal Ishans discussed by Mozaffari. But since Mozaffari writes that the Yalpaqṭal Ishans traced their origins to Sterlibashevo, then the fact that 'Ubaydallāh's father, Zaynallāh, was also from Istārlibash circumstantially suggests a connection.

Al-Īlmīnī also discusses a number of Daghestani Khālidīya Sufis who were exiled around 1890 to Samara province, and whom the governor of Samara settled in Novouzensk district. One of these was known as Shaykh Dīvāna Muḥammad, who, we are told, upon reaching Novouzensk, departed immediately and established himself among the Kazakhs, without even informing the authorities of his arrival.<sup>97</sup> Al-Īlmīnī refers to Daghestanis collectively as "*chārkās*", and it is tempting to connect this "Chārkās" Dīvāna Muḥammad with the so-called Chārkās Ishanī, a Sufi active among the Kazakhs of the Inner Horde during the first decade of the twentieth century. Mozaffari writes that the *murīds* of this Chārkās Ishanī were often in conflict with the *murīds* of the Yalpaqṭal *īshāns*.<sup>98</sup>

### *Islamic taxation*

Islamic taxation, that is, the collection of specific taxes sanctioned by the *sharī'a*, seems to have been a rather new development in Kazakh nomadic society at the beginning of the nineteenth century. According to Levshin, already in the second half of the eighteenth century Ablay Khan, ruler of the Middle Horde, had tried unsuccessfully to collect *zakāt* from his subjects<sup>99</sup> and in 1789 the governor of Orenburg, Baron Igelstrom, rejected a petition from a certain Kaip, a sultan of the Junior Horde, to be allowed to collect *zakāt* from the Kazakh nomads under his rule.<sup>100</sup> During the nineteenth century we know that the khans of Khiva collected *zakāt* from the

<sup>96</sup> TAA fol. 107ab.

<sup>97</sup> TAA fol. 97a.

<sup>98</sup> Mozaffari, *Ishannar-Dāruishlār*, 94–95.

<sup>99</sup> Levshin, *Opisanie*, 363.

<sup>100</sup> Ivanov, *Dzhanger khan*, 129.

nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples under their rule, primarily from Qaraqalpaqs, but also from Kazakhs as well. In the khanate of Khiva *zakāt* was a cash tax paid per head of livestock, and was usually paid on cattle and sheep. The actual tax was collected by tribal elders and was handed over to the khan's officials. There were different rates for livestock that was pastured exclusively on the territory of the khanate and for livestock pastured partially out on the Ust'-Iurt and Kyzyl Kum deserts.<sup>101</sup>

In the Inner Horde there is evidence that some form of *zakāt* was already being collected under Būkāy Khan. Ivanov cites an account that Qaraqalpaqs (that is, "Astrakhan Qaraqalpaqs") complained to a Russian traveler that they had to pay *zakāt* under both Būkāy Khan and Jahāngīr.<sup>102</sup> Under Jahāngīr, whose practices concerning Islamic taxation are reasonably well documented, the *zakāt* appears to have been partly religious and partly secular; that is, the taxes were used (allegedly) both to support the needy, as it was prescribed in the *sharī'a*, but also to fund Jahāngīr's administrative and even personal expenses.

Jahāngīr first requested that he be allowed to levy and collect *zakāt* in 1827, during the visit to the Inner Horde of the Russian senator Engel', as well as Gens, the chairman of the Orenburg Border Commission in 1829. It appears that by 1830 Jahāngīr had been granted the authority to collect the *zakāt*. However, it appears that Jahāngīr took an already existing tax and simply relabeled it *zakāt* since in 1825, before Jahāngīr had petitioned to be allowed to collect *zakāt*, Fuks noted that he was already collecting a tax of 40,000 head of sheep from his subjects, which Fuks considered to be evidence of light taxation. Ivanov notes that the one percent tax on livestock was already in effect during the reign of Jahāngīr Khan, and only subsequently became known as *zakāt*.<sup>103</sup>

Jahāngīr first initiated the *zakāt* as an in-kind tax on livestock. According to custom the rate was 2.5 percent of a Muslim's wealth. In his petition of 1829 to the Orenburg Border commission he set the rate at somewhat lower:

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<sup>101</sup> Iu. E. Bregel', *Dokumenty arkhiva Khivinskikh khanov po istorii i etnografii karakalpakov*, (Moscow, 1967), 39-41, 49.

<sup>102</sup> Ivanov, *Dzhanger khan*, 130.

<sup>103</sup> Ivanov, *Dzhanger khan*, 147.

40–100 sheep	1 sheep
up to 200	2 sheep
up to 300	3 sheep
5 camels	1 sheep
30 cattle	1 two-year old cow
40 cattle	1 three-year old cow <sup>104</sup>

In 1845, in a response to an inquiry on the part of the Orenburg Border Commission on taxation in the Inner Horde made after Jahāngīr's death, the administrator of the Horde, Sultan Adil, reported that the initial rate was as follows: one sheep out of every 40, one camel out of 30, one cow out of 30, one horse out of 100. Later the administration of the Inner Horde determined cash equivalents. A good horse was equivalent to one ruble, 50 kopecks per head of cattle, 15 kopecks per sheep, and one ruble per camel. However, Ivanov points out that the original cash rate was somewhat lower:

3–4 kopecks per sheep
2 kopecks per goat
15 kopecks per head of cattle
20 kopecks per horse
25–30 kopecks per camel

In principle every adult Muslim was required to pay *zakāt*, but Jahāngīr exempted five groups from the tax. These included 1) orphans younger than age 15, 2) *biys*, clan leaders, and elders (because of the services they provided in administration), 3) *sultans* and *gozhas* (because of their origins), 4) *imāms*, 5) *tiulenguts* (descendants of slaves manumitted by former khans), 6) *tarkhāns* and others granted tax exempt status by the khan.<sup>105</sup> However, some *tiulenguts* may not have been exempt, or may have lost their exemption, because they are listed as one of the “clans” paying *zakāt* in 1845.<sup>106</sup> According to Evreinov the administration of the Inner Horde calculated the tax on the basis of an annual livestock census submitted by the *starshinas* (elders) of each clan. A cash value was assigned to the herd on the results of the census, and the clan's liability was one percent of the total value of the herd, which could be paid in cash or in kind.<sup>107</sup> This was considerably less than the two and a half percent determined

<sup>104</sup> Ivanov, *Dzhanger khan*, 133.

<sup>105</sup> Ivanov, *Dzhanger khan*, 140–141.

<sup>106</sup> Ivanov, *Dzhanger khan*, 142.

<sup>107</sup> Ivanov, *Dzhanger khan*, 148–149.

by the *sharī'a*. However, because the systematic collection of the *zakāt* was relatively new in the Inner Horde, and the Kazakh nomads were not accustomed to taxation in any form, Jahāngīr had to be careful to minimize the possibilities of resistance among these nomads.<sup>108</sup> Indeed, the collection of *zakāt* was apparently an important grievance in the revolt of Isatay Taymanov in the 1830's.

Unlike the khans of Khiva, Jahāngīr did not make use of tax collectors to collect *zakāt*; rather the tax was brought to Khanskaia Stavka by elders or chiefs. However, in petitions some Kazakhs reported that they were obligated to deliver their *zakāt* to their *mul-lās*.<sup>109</sup> It was collected in spring after the migration from the winter pastures. The system for collection seems to have been rather imperfect, and it is certain that far less than one percent of the total value of the herd reached the khan's treasury, and in his report to the Orenburg Border Commission in 1845 Sultan Adil, the administrator of the Inner Horde, reported as much.<sup>110</sup> Since Jahāngīr depended on clan elders to report the size of their own clan's herds, even if their personal herds were exempt, it can be assumed that many *biys* and elders could have under-counted the herds of their kinsmen. Furthermore, not only were the clan leaders allowed to keep the amount of tax over what had been determined by the administration on the basis of the same clan leaders' livestock censuses, but it was common for Jahāngīr to claim less taxes than what the clan elders brought in, thereby allowing them to keep the difference. In some cases this could amount to as much as a thousand rubles.<sup>111</sup> Furthermore, as we have seen, nearly the entire elite of the Inner Horde, consisting of the clan leadership, sultans, *qozhas*, and religious figures were entirely exempt from the tax. Indeed, it was these individuals who often owned substantially large herds of livestock themselves.

Nevertheless, the *zakāt* tax was the main source of income to Jahāngīr khan and his administration. Despite Jahāngīr's attempts to predict income with livestock censuses, albeit imperfect ones, the nature of the Kazakhs' pastoral nomadic economy resulted in large fluctuations in the size of the herd as a result of natural conditions,

<sup>108</sup> Ivanov, *Dzhanger khan*, 144, 146–147.

<sup>109</sup> Ivanov, *Dzhanger khan*, 134, 139, 155.

<sup>110</sup> Ivanov, *Dzhanger khan*, 139.

<sup>111</sup> Ivanov, *Dzhanger khan*, 139.

and corresponding fluctuations in the amount of tax collected. Thus, in 1844 *zakāt* amounting to 328,830 paper rubles were collected, while in 1845, following a severe *jut* (ice storm), only 264,732 paper rubles in *zakāt* were collected.<sup>112</sup> The breakdown of *zakāt* collected per clan in 1845 was as follows:

Bersh	44,700
Nogai	33,150
Baibakty	31,500
Alacha	28,550
Cherkesh	21,250
Tana	15,000
Semirodtsy	13,860
Adai	11,600
Dzhappas	10,670
Kyzylkurt	9,100
Isyk	5,050
Isentemir	5,000
Maskar	3,900
Kita	3,000
Taz	2,000
Tiulengut	1,600
<hr/> Total	<hr/> 239,830 <sup>113</sup>

In a letter written in 1838 to Pokrovskii, the Military Governor of Orenburg, Jahāngīr described how the income from *zakāt* were spent, which at that time was still an in-kind tax. The income was used to cover a number of personal and administrative expenses incurred by the khan. According to Kazakh custom, the khan was obligated to feed, lodge, and entertain Kazakhs who came to him with petitions, as well as to receive clan leaders and give them gifts. As the Kazakh population grew, and conflicts among Kazakhs, and between Kazakhs and Russians, the number of petitioners increased, as did the expenses for khan when they were in Khanskaia Stavka. *Zakāt* was used to provide relief to the poor, and to help them reestablish their herds. The income was also used to maintain the chancery, as well as the mosque in Khanskaia Stavka and its servitors. Finally, the income was used for the benefit of the khan's personal expenses, his family, and his personal servants.<sup>114</sup>

<sup>112</sup> Ivanov, *Dzhanger khan*, 140.

<sup>113</sup> Ivanov, *Dzhanger khan*, 142.

<sup>114</sup> Ivanov, *Dzhanger khan*, 135–136, 146.

Soviet authors, like some nineteenth century Russian officials before them, viewed the collection of *zakāt* by Jahāngīr as simply a religious pretext for extracting wealth from the Kazakh nomads of the Inner Horde. To be sure, it cannot be denied that Jahāngīr did indeed extract wealth from his subjects and that his personal finances were enriched by this tax. We need not accept at face value the correspondence of Kazakh administrators with Russian officials that the Kazakhs paying the religious tax felt “cleansed” of their sins, although such a possibility cannot be completely ruled out either. At the same time, we have seen that Kazakh nomads, in their petitions to the Russian authorities criticizing the tax, would overstate the extent of their liability. Nevertheless the collection of *zakāt* clearly had religious and political significance in the Inner Horde, and its imposition on the Kazakhs by Jahāngīr needs to be understood within the larger context of his actions as a consciously Islamic ruler. Regardless of his motives, Jahāngīr clearly conceived of himself as an Islamic ruler, albeit one subordinate to the Russian tsar. He sought to introduce the *sharī‘a* as the basis of Kazakh civil law, to introduce a degree of formal Islamic education and literacy to a nomadic population that had been traditionally deficient in these areas, and he sought to create a native Kazakh *‘ulamā* that would in time be able to serve their own people. The success of his program becomes evident when we see in the late nineteenth century that Russian missionaries and officials had become alarmed at the “Tatarization” and “fanaticization” of the Kazakh nomads of the Inner Horde, which is how they interpreted the spread of Islamic institutions and education among the Kazakhs. Whether or not the *zakāt* tax was popular, it did serve to confirm Jahāngīr’s position as an Islamic ruler, since the ability to levy this tax was the prerogative of an Islamic ruler, even one subordinate to the Russian tsar. Part of it was used to fund Jahāngīr’s *sharī‘a* court, his mosque, and the training of *imāms*, and despite the petitions of some Kazakhs (to Russian administrators) that the rate was too high, there is no evidence that any Kazakh ever challenged Jahāngīr’s right to collect the tax, or their own duty to pay it.

While Jahāngīr is usually remembered by Russian commentators (and Western historians who rely on Russian sources) as the last Chingisid ruler in Inner Asia, Jahāngīr’s remarkable policies to create a Kazakh Islamic establishment and his desire to gain legitimacy and credibility as an *Islamic* ruler serves as evidence to show how

Chingisid charisma *per se* had lost its authority in Kazakh society by the early nineteenth century, and had been effectively replaced by Islamic credentials. This process had been underway throughout the course of the eighteenth century, and we can see that Jahāngīr's father had begun the policy of strengthening his Islamic credentials by introducing a form of *zakāt* and creating the foundation of an Islamic establishment. Perhaps most tellingly, he chose to be buried next to a Muslim saint, and his recognition as a Muslim saint and the transformation of his tomb into a pilgrimage site demonstrates that he was better remembered among Kazakhs for his Islamic qualities.<sup>115</sup>

### 3. ISLAMIC INSTITUTIONS AMONG THE URAL COSSACKS

As we have seen above, Muslim Ural Cossacks lived partially in their own separate communities, and at other times within larger Russian Cossack communities. Within these separate Muslim communities, Muslim Cossacks often maintained their own Muslim institutions, with their own *imāms*, *ākhūnds*, and mosques. The Islamic institutions of the Muslim Cossacks are for all intents and purposes undocumented in published sources,<sup>116</sup> and for this reason the *Tawārīkh-i Ālī Ātā* offers a unique insight, from an Islamic perspective, into the religious life of imperial Russia's Muslim Ural Cossacks.

In 1883 there were at least nine mosques on the territory of the Ural Cossack Host, including four in the city of Ural'sk. How many of these could be called Ural Cossack mosques is probably far lower, since in many *maḥallas* Ural Cossacks formed a minority of the Muslim population. For example, in the town of Gur'ev, on the Caspian Sea, there was a mosque in 1883 serving 608 Muslims, but in that part of the Ural Cossack Host there were only 27 Muslim Cossacks in 1850.<sup>117</sup> Nevertheless, in some areas Cossacks did form a majority of the Muslim population. For example, in the city of

<sup>115</sup> It is unclear whether the tomb of Jahāngīr khan, located near Khanskaia Stavka, became a pilgrimage site. Aleksei Kharuzin, who visited the tomb in 1887, described it as the most prominent tomb in the town's cemetery. He notes that it was made of wood and resembled a small chapel with a minaret. However, perhaps because his visit was so brief, he makes no mention of pilgrimage; cf. Kharuzin, *Stepnye ocherki*, 60–61.

<sup>116</sup> Cf. however, Andreev, "Kazaki-musul'mane."

<sup>117</sup> Nebol'sin, *Neskol'ko zamechanii*, 212.

Ural'sk, which had four mosques, Cossack Muslims formed slightly more than half of that city's Tatar population, which in 1883 was reported to be 991.<sup>118</sup> Other mosques, such as that of Iletskaia Stanitsa, were located in an area with a very high concentration of Muslim Cossacks, and in all likelihood nearly all of the *maḥallas* there consisted of Cossacks. The same can be said of Ozernoi Poselok (Forpost) which was originally settled by Muslim Cossacks.<sup>119</sup>

Al-Īlmīnī discusses the Islamic institutions of two Muslim Cossack settlements, in Slomikhinskaia Stanitsa (Yalpaqтал) and in the village of Forpost Chizhinskii Pervyi. The latter village was located in the *Chizhinskaia Distsantsiia* section of the Ural Cossack Host. In 1850 this section was comprised of 892 Cossacks, including 103 Muslims, and 99 Kalmyk Buddhists. Writing at the beginning of the twentieth century, al-Īlmīnī notes that there was a *maḥalla* of Muslim Ural Cossacks on the "Nūghāy Qārdōn", where they have a mosque. While he neglects to tell us the location of their mosque, he related that they had a "renowned" *imām* called Farīd Mullā who was granted the rank of *ākhūnd*.<sup>120</sup> The name of this *imām* certainly corresponds to Aḥmad-Farīd Ākhūnd ash-Shirvānī, who was a prominent Muslim literary figure in Ural'sk province at the beginning of the twentieth century. He was a regular contributor to the Tatar periodicals of the city of Ural'sk and was one of the sources on the religious figures of Ural'sk province in Riḍā'addīn Fakhraddīn ūghlī's biographical dictionary.<sup>121</sup>

We are given considerably more information on the Cossack Muslims in the settlement of Yalpaqтал, which the Ural Cossacks established on the left bank of the Bol'shoi Uzen' River after their expulsion from Glinianskii Forpost in 1873. It is fairly evident that in this settlement Cossacks probably formed a minority of the Muslim community as a whole. We know that in 1850 there were only 329

<sup>118</sup> E. I. Gerasimova, *Istoriia goroda Ural'ska v dorevoliutsionnyi period (1613–1917)*, Aftoreferat . . . kandidata istoricheskikh nauk, Akademiia nauk Kazakhskoi SSR, Institut istorii, arkheologii i etnografii, (Alma-Ata, 1965), 10.

<sup>119</sup> Nebol'sin, *Neskol'ko zamechaniĭ*, 211; Iosif Debu, *Topograficheskoe i statisticheskoe opisanie Orenburgskoi gubernii v nyneshnem eia sostoianii*, (Moscow, 1837), 185–186.

<sup>120</sup> TAA fols. 3b–4a; the village of Forpost Chizhinskii Pervyi does not appear among the mosques listed in *Al'favitnye spiski*, suggesting that the mosque was only founded after 1883; indeed the village was founded as a Cossack settlements only in the 1870's.

<sup>121</sup> Cf. Iakhin, *Tatarskaia literatura*, 11; Fakhraddīn ūghlī, *Āthār*, 2:11, 204.

Muslims in the seven settlements along the Malyi Uzen' River forming the *Vnutrenniaia Ural'skaia Linia*, while in 1883 there were 898 Muslims registered to the *maḥalla* of Yalpaqтал. Furthermore, in Glinianskii Forpost, and later in Yalpaqтал, there was a substantial community of Kazan Tatar merchants who were not Cossacks, as well as a semi-permanent Kazakh presence. In any case, al-Īlmīnī notes that the stone mosque in Yalpaqтал was built, presumably in the 1870's, by the leader of the Muslim Cossacks, Khūjāntāy Bābā, who later had his son 'Aṭā'allāh appointed as *imām*. Yet while Ural Cossacks built the mosque and staffed it, it is evident that they had to share the mosque with other Muslims. Al-Īlmīnī writes how during Ramaḍān the Cossacks would be almost crowded out of the mosque by the numerous Kazakh worshipers, and as a result had to exact a levy to enlarge the basement so that they would have their own place to pray.<sup>122</sup> In general though, al-Īlmīnī notes that the number and influence of the Muslim Cossacks in Yalpaqтал was in decline in his time and he relates how a local Sufi *shaykh* would devote most of his attention to Kazakhs, rather than to Cossacks.<sup>123</sup>

Because of their small numbers, Muslim Ural Cossacks do not appear to have developed their own educational institutions, at least in the areas described by al-Īlmīnī. Instead the Cossacks of the Malyi and Bol'shoi Uzen' Valleys received religious education and religious training from the teachers in Novouzensk district. We are told how the Cossack *imāms* of Glinianskii Forpost, and later of Yalpaqтал attended the *madrasa* of 'Abdalkarīm Temirbūlāṭ ūghlī in Iske Ōzen.<sup>124</sup> However, it seems to have been common for some teachers from Novouzensk district to give instruction to the Cossacks in their villages or in their nomadic encampments. In the middle of the nineteenth Kamāladdīn Isfandiyār ūghlī, who was to become *imām* of Altī Ata's First Mosque, traveled among the Ural Cossacks giving instruction.<sup>125</sup> At the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries al-Īlmīnī's own son, Aḥmad-Şafā, who was to become *imām* in Aleksandrov Gai, also traveled among the Ural Cossacks giving instruction.<sup>126</sup> Cossacks did not only come to Novouzensk district for

<sup>122</sup> TAA fols. 107b–108a.

<sup>123</sup> TAA fol. 107b.

<sup>124</sup> TAA fol. 88b.

<sup>125</sup> TAA fol. 12a.

<sup>126</sup> TAA fol. 103a.

religious instruction, but also to seek treatments from the region's most famous healers, Muḥyiddīn Ḥasan ūghlī and his son Khalīl. We are told that they were visited not only by Ural Cossacks, but even by Siberian Cossacks.<sup>127</sup>

#### 4. RELIGIOUS AND MORAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE BORDERLANDS

As in many other parts of his history, al-Īlmīnī's depictions of the frontier reverse many widely held clichés and stereotypes of the religiosity of the various Muslim groups on the frontier, namely the Volga Tatars and Kazakhs. Typically, the Kazakhs are depicted in many works as "areligious" or "shamanistic" who were somehow "converted" to Islam by intensely religious, or "fanatical" Tatar merchants. Yet in his account al-Īlmīnī begins by describing the emergence of Muslim communities in Novouzensk and Aleksandrov Gai. The first Muslims to settle there were Volga Tatar merchants, and al-Īlmīnī is quick to point out the immorality of the merchants before the arrival of *imāms* and other figures of spiritual authority. The types of immorality al-Īlmīnī denounces include wine drinking, failure to perform the obligatory prayers, and cheating the naive Kazakhs. Al-Īlmīnī is especially critical of the Muslim community in Aleksandrov Gai, of which his son, Aḥmad-Şafā was *imām*, and where the local notables refused to build a mosque, despite the entreaties of their *imām*. However, in both Novouzensk, and to a lesser degree, Aleksandrov Gai, the immoral behavior of the Muslims is gradually turned around and made good through the actions of conscientious Muslims. Al-Īlmīnī paints a similar picture of the Muslim community of Novouzensk, which he describes as a wide-open and permissive town until the appearance of several pious Muslims who gradually turn the Muslims of Novouzensk into a God-fearing community.<sup>128</sup>

In the case of Aleksandrov Gai, as al-Īlmīnī shows us, there was a succession of *imāms* there before the arrival of his son, Aḥmad-Şafā in 1901:

The first to carry out these deeds [i.e. the duties of an *imām*] was San'atallāh Mullā. His ancestry was from Kazan Province. He him-

<sup>127</sup> TAA fol. 27b.

<sup>128</sup> TAA fol. 96a.

self was a pious man, and in accordance with his abilities he commanded the good and prohibited the evil. He showed patience with annoyances and gave thanks for kindnesses. At that time he began to give a pious appearance to the village of [Aleksandrov Gai]. San'at Mullā completed his predestined life, and upon his death, Ḥasan, from among the *shāgirds* of the Yālpāqtāl Ḥaḍrat took his place as successor. Although perchance, he was from Ātlāsh, in Saratov Province's Khvalynsk district, they say he very much led [people] astray and journeyed to Siberia, and was sentenced to stay in the city of Petropavlovsk. Let it be just. After him a well known *shāgird* named Fayḍ Raḥmān arrived. He was from İstārlibash district [Ufa Province], and was educated in the same İstārlibash. He maintained diligence in religious affairs and he himself was brave and eloquent; because he had been in military service, he was familiar with the Russian tongue. This individual conducted the prayers communally five times a day. He celebrated the holidays [*ʿidlār*] and administered religious affairs. He was very courageous, and on a holiday during the admonition he heard a word emerge that was contrary to proper manners, and he could not endure it. They began an argument in the assembly and he [the *imām*] lost patience with those arguing. He [the *imām*] submitted complaints [*arīdai*] regarding their dispute and said in a report that [members of the congregation] had insulted the tsar and his family, and said that it merited being ruled on by a high tribunal. A police investigator [*zhāndārmisqī taftīshchī*] came, asked questions and received answers, and he [the *imām*] facilitated the investigator's task; and [the investigator] ruled to assemble the community and they were exonerated. However Fayḍ Raḥmān did not retain his former good favor, and to some degree he disgusted people with the complaints.<sup>129</sup>

This passage provides us with a rather colorful recounting of the *imāms* who preceded Aḥmad-Şafā in 1901, and illustrates well how the relations between an *imām* and the community could vary considerably. Subsequently, we are told that the elders of Aleksandrov Gai selected Aḥmad-Şafā to serve as *imām*, implying that Fayḍ Raḥmān was removed from his post as a result of the congregation's dissatisfaction with him.<sup>130</sup>

In the account, the good moral qualities of the Kazakh nomads stand in sharp contrast with the poor moral qualities of the Volga Tatar merchants in their midst. The Tatar merchants in Novouzensk did not always treat the Kazakhs fairly, a fact al-İlmīnī blames on a lack of Islamic consciousness among these merchants. He relates

<sup>129</sup> TAA fols. 102b–103a.

<sup>130</sup> TAA fol. 103a.

how the Tatar merchants would cheat the naive Kazakhs with various swindles, including offering them a “Muslim” *pood* of grain which weighed thirty pounds, but was the same prices as a full thirty six-pound “Russian” *pood*. As good, but naive, Muslims, the Kazakhs would choose the “Muslim” *pood*.<sup>131</sup> The majority of those attending the mosques of Novaia Kazanka and Yalpaqtal consisted of Kazakhs, and al-Īlmīnī makes note of how in Novaia Kazanka the Kazakhs would crowd into the mosque in such numbers that kneeling down to pray became impossible, and everyone had to remain standing.<sup>132</sup> Concerning the Kazakhs in the Yalpaqtal congregation, al-Īlmīnī writes the following:

Most of the Kazakhs come in for Friday prayers, but the rest of the time, since their houses and livestock are out on the steppe, they are out on the steppe. But during the Noble Month [Ramaḏān] they come to perform seclusionary retreats involving religious devotions [*ītikāf*]. Most of those who retire for *ītikāf* are Kazakhs, and they say there are nearly three hundred of them who come for the *ītikāf*. Since the Ural Cossacks were being pressed in by these Kazakhs, with the permission of [‘Aṭā’allāh] *ḥaḍrat* [the *imām* of the Yalpaqtal mosque], and out of their own purses, they dug underneath the mosque and made a fine addition, taking two hundred rubles as a levy, and nowadays they [the Muslim Cossacks] perform their *ītikāf* in the lower part of the mosque.<sup>133</sup>

Thus, it is clear that despite the special circumstances of being pastoral nomads, most of the Kazakhs nevertheless came in regularly for Friday prayers, and were especially diligent about performing the *ītikāf* during Ramaḏān. Al-Īlmīnī’s account seems to contradict a prejudice widely held among students of Kazakh history that supposes the Kazakhs were somehow “superficially” Muslim. Furthermore, al-Īlmīnī presents a more complex, and probably more accurate, depiction of religious life among Tatar merchants, who are represented as often lacking in sufficient Islamic, and consequently moral, consciousness, especially in dealing with the Kazakhs, whose own piety and Islamic consciousness is depicted as exemplary. Similarly, al-Īlmīnī’s depiction contrasts with the fallacious view commonly encountered in secondary literature, whereby Tatar merchants are credited with somehow “converting” the nomadic Kazakhs to Islam.

<sup>131</sup> TAA 95b–96a.

<sup>132</sup> TAA fol. 105a.

<sup>133</sup> TAA fol. 107b.

In contrasting the piety of the Kazakh nomads with that of the Tatar merchants, it is unlikely that the Tatar al-Īlmīnī is utilizing the age-old literary device of idealizing “noble savages” (here the Kazakhs) as a way of criticizing his own community. Rather, the frequency of the contrast and its intensity, as well as incidental illustrations of Kazakh piety, suggest that it reflects real differences, not just heightened contrasts used to make a point. In his history of Astrakhan Jahānshāh an-Nīzhghārūtī makes precisely the same point that al-Īlmīnī makes regarding Kazakh piety and devotion.<sup>134</sup>

Al-Īlmīnī’s contrast of the good Islamic moral qualities of the Kazakh nomads with the poor qualities of the merchants is instructive in another respect. Namely, it reverses the commonly encountered cliché that Tatar merchants somehow “Islamized” the Kazakh nomads. This idea is found in a number of works by Alexandre Bennigsen, who credits Tatar merchants with bringing Islam to the “yet half-pagan population of Bashkiria [!], western Siberia and the Kazakh steppe.”<sup>135</sup> While the role of Tatar merchants on the Kazakh steppe was certainly important politically, the idea of Tatar merchants as missionaries appears to be ultimately based on a legal fiction, which Russian administrators, and later missionaries and historians, took at face value. During the first half of the nineteenth century Russian administrators on the steppe frontier did in fact become alarmed at the pervasive presence of Tatar religious figures among the Kazakhs. As a result they passed a series of laws forbidding Tatar *mullās* from nomadizing with the Kazakhs.<sup>136</sup> Of course, they could not ban trade between Kazakhs and Tatars, which was of course very lucrative, so the Tatar *mullās* used trade as a loophole to continue teaching among the Kazakhs. Jahānshāh an-Nīzhghārūtī commented on this legal maneuver in the following manner:

Even though at first the Kazakhs were a savage and ignorant people, they ignored such talk from the [Russian] missionaries; they were afraid and they started teaching their children to read in the Islamic fashion and to study the faith. They began to invite Tatar [*nūghāy*] *shāgirds* from nearby cities. After the missionaries learned of this situation, the government hindered the coming of the Tatar *shāgirds* and teachers

<sup>134</sup> Jahānshāh an-Nīzhghārūtī, *Tārīkh-i Astarkhān*, 27–28.

<sup>135</sup> Alexandre Bennigsen and S. Enders Wimbush, *Muslims of the Soviet Empire: a Guide*, (Bloomington, Indiana and Indianapolis, 1986), 9.

<sup>136</sup> Basilov and Karmysheva, *Islam u kazakhov*, 23.

among the Kazakhs. Later the teachers would no longer come wearing turbans and robes or under the name of teachers, and instead they would come as merchants. And when they [the Russians] asked among the teachers “If you are merchants, where are your goods?” they would take glass from their pockets and show them. In this way the Kazakhs generally spread learning to their children.<sup>137</sup>

Thus, it appears to have been common for Tatar teachers to have circulated among the Kazakhs in the guise of merchants. Furthermore, al-Īlmīnī’s account shows that even when the Kazakhs were “uncultured”, they nevertheless had a strong attachment to Islam and a strong Islamic consciousness, which the unscrupulous Tatar merchants profited from to cheat the naive Kazakhs.

The religious consciousness of both the Muslim Cossacks and the Kazakhs was demonstrated by their attraction to Tatar religious healers in Novouzensk district. The most famous of these were Mullā Muḥyiddīn Ḥājjī and his son Mullā Khalīl, both *imāms* of Altı Ata’s Fifth Mosque, and both identified as *ṣāhib-i nafas* (lit. master of breath). According to al-Īlmīnī, a *ṣāhib-i nafas* was a person who healed people who were struck by *jinn*s just by looking in the patient’s face (*jinn ṣuqmiş kimsälär mujarrad yüzin kürmäkle şifalanurlar*).<sup>138</sup> Mullā Khalīl became quite wealthy as a *ṣāhib-i nafas*. Kazakhs would often make offerings in kind, and would sometimes offer one eighth of their property. Mullā Khalīl was also sought out by Ural Cossacks, Siberian Cossacks, and even by Russian notables.<sup>139</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Al-Īlmīnī’s account of Islam and ethnic relations between Muslim communities in the Inner Horde offers a look into how Muslim communities interacted on the Russian steppe frontier. On the one hand,

<sup>137</sup> Jahānshāh an-Nīzhghārūtī, *Tārīkh-i Astarkhān*, 27.

<sup>138</sup> TAA, fōl. 25b. People characterized as *ṣāhib-i nafas* were active in the Volga-Ural region in the nineteenth century, and their tombs often became shrines and pilgrimage sites; Husayn Amīrkhān ūghlī mentions two such figures, Safar b. Murād in the village of Talqış in the Chistopol’ district of Kazan province, and Ishmuḥammad b. Rastmuḥammad Bābā, a Sufi in the village of Māmdal in Kazan province; cf. Amīrkhān ūghlī, *Tawārīkh-i Bulghāriya*, 45, 55. While the ritual of the *ṣāhib-i nafas* bears certain similarities to Kazakh shamanic healing rituals, it bears mentioning that Muḥyiddīn was trained in this specialty by Sufis in Istanbul and Syria.

<sup>139</sup> TAA fol. 26a.

the Muslim communities were clearly divided along ethnic and corporate lines, with Volga Tatars, Muslim Cossacks, and Kazakh nomads forming three separate and essentially exclusive communities. These divisions are especially evident in the land conflict over the Uzen' Interfluve, which pitted Volga Tatars and Kazakhs against Ural Cossacks, both Russian and Muslim. In the case of the Cossacks and Kazakhs al-Īlmīnī's account demonstrates how both groups used Imperial Russian symbols or channels to bolster their positions; the Cossacks accused the Tatars of being pro-Turkish (hence anti-Russian), and the Kazakh leadership managed to expel the Cossacks from their lands through petitions filed with the Imperial authorities in St. Petersburg.<sup>140</sup>

At the same time, it was a common Islamic faith, including an infrastructure of mosques, *madrasas*, and Sufism that united in a very real sense these separate, and at times mutually hostile, communities. This Islamic infrastructure on the steppe frontier was certainly dominated, but was in no way monopolized, by Volga Tatars. Cossack and Tatar religious figures studied in each others' *madrasas*, and healers, Sufis, and teachers, whether they were Tatar, Cossack or even Daghestani, were patronized by Tatars, Cossacks and especially Kazakhs apparently without regard to ethnicity. In this regard al-Īlmīnī's history is especially helpful in countering the clichéd view of Kazakh nomads as "superficial" Muslims lacking a strong Islamic consciousness. While the latter view may reflect wishful thinking on the part of Western historians, or of Turkic nationalists, al-Īlmīnī shows us a quite different picture. In his depiction the Kazakh nomads display a very strong Islamic consciousness, to the point of allowing themselves to be swindled by unscrupulous Tatar merchants who exploit the Kazakhs' Islamic consciousness to their own advantage. Furthermore, al-Īlmīnī was by no means a modernist *imām*, and as a result accepted the Kazakhs' devotion to the region's Sufis and healers, and their generous offerings, as an acceptable and sanctioned expression of Islamic consciousness. But he also underscores the Kazakhs' piety when during *Ramaḍān* they would come into Yalpaqtal for constant prayer and fasting [*i'tikāf*] in such numbers that they would crowd the Cossack Muslims out of the mosque.

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<sup>140</sup> Cf. Frank "Islam and Ethnic Relations in the Kazakh Inner Horde."

## CONCLUSION

The religious institutions of the Volga-Ural region's rural Muslim communities were in a real sense their primary public institutions. Unlike local political institutions, which ultimately rested on non-Islamic foundations, religious institutions, irrespective of the Russian state's early support, and later non-interference, were fundamentally controlled by the local community. In this respect, these institutions, at least among rural Muslims, were autonomous in the fullest sense of the word. At the imperial level, the Russian authorities only very rarely interfered with these Muslim institutions, and at the provincial level, the regulation of Muslim religious institutions involved primarily bureaucratic procedures, which, if occasionally corrupt, nevertheless recognized the right of Muslim communities to administer their religious institutions. In this respect, we are bound to see the relationship between the Russian state and these Muslim communities a fundamentally cooperative, rather than confrontational. Previous treatments, especially in the West, describing the ebb and flow of a sort of *Kulturkampf* between Muslims and the Russian state, have been based primarily on Russian ecclesiastic and imperial-level sources (as well as later Tatar nationalist writings), and ignore that the bulk of the institutional relations between Muslims and the Russian state took place at the provincial and local level. The materials for Novouzensk district demonstrate that the relationship which existed between the provincial authorities and the local Muslim religious institutions was above all a cooperative one, in which each side mutually recognized and accepted specific prerogatives and responsibilities. This relationship was at least partially reflected in expressions of patriotism among Volga-Ural *'ulamā*, which while expressed in Islamic terms, nevertheless rooted in evaluations of this cooperative relationship.

One result of the autonomy of these institutions was that it isolated, or rather insulated, rural Muslims from the Russian institutions around them. The Muslim villages of Novouzensk district provide an excellent example of this sort of insulation. Here, Muslims formed a small minority in an overwhelmingly non-Muslim district, but not surprisingly, most public discourse in the Muslim communities took

place in a completely Islamic framework, to the exclusion of non-Muslims. To be sure, some Muslims maintained personal and business relations with Russians, but the self-sufficiency of the Muslims' religious institutions, especially their educational institutions, eliminated the need for rural Muslims to expose themselves to Russian institutions.

To say, as many scholars, and especially nationalist Tatar scholars, have, that the Muslims' isolation from "the outside world" (read: from European ideas), perpetuated the dominance of archaic, obsolete, and intellectually lifeless institutions, reveals a lack of appreciation of the genuinely dynamic and cosmopolitan nature of these institutions. Not only did these institutions exposing a largely immobile Muslim peasantry to the larger Islamic world around them, but Islamic discourse, rooted and learned in local religious educational institutions, and expressing and articulating the intellectual and social life of Muslims, was a dynamic bond that united both the local community, and transgressed the ethnic and administrative boundaries of the Russian empire as a whole, and beyond. If the materials for Novouzensk district teach us anything, it is that as late as 1910 Muslims were satisfied with how their religious institutions functioned and saw no reason to reform an established system that met their needs and functioned adequately well. While some *jadid* schools did open in the district, they all ultimately failed. This failure was attributable not to opposition by "reactionary" *imāms*, but rather to a lack of *demand* on the part of the villagers.

The Sufi and scholarly networks that included Novouzensk district allowed the villagers to grasp the breadth and variety of the Islamic world. There were scholars from Novouzensk who had studied in Russian centers of Islamic learning, such as Kazan, Qarghalı, and İstärlibash, in Central Asia, in the Crimea, in Egypt, in Syria, and in Turkey. Similarly, Daghestani scholars and Sufis also resided among the Novouzensk Muslims. Students from throughout the Volga-Ural region, including Bashkirs, Muslim Cossacks, and Kazakh nomads studied in the district's *madrasas*. The *ʿulamā* of Novouzensk district were certainly well educated, and helped expose villagers to the region's Islamic discourse, and to the general discourse of the Islamic world as a whole. Furthermore, the district's wealth ensured that a number of *ʿālims* and notables would perform the *ḥajj* from time to time, and would inform the villagers about the diversity, unity and vastness of the Islamic world.

Our study of imperial Russia's Muslim institutions shows us that these communities were above all part of the *Islamic* world; while they were Russian subjects, the central features of their own public life were their Islamic institutions, specifically their mosques, *madrastas*, and their *'ulamā*. Soviet and post-Soviet scholars have commonly claimed that the *'ulamā* was somehow separate from Muslim society as a whole, and its arguments and statements represent the articulation of a narrow class interest. However, the examination of the kinship and marriage ties of the *'ulamā* within Novouzensk district suggest that while the *'ulamā* was for the most part closely linked to the local commercial and land-owning elite, the community recognized and sometimes removed *'ālims* who placed their commercial interests before the interests of their community and some *'ālims* would occasionally come into conflict with local notables. More importantly, the support and administrative structure of local religious institutions, including fund-raising, and the collections of *prigovor* and other collective documents, necessitated the direct participation of the community as a whole in these institutions. The *'ulamā* were certainly the most educated members of society, but in no way could they administer mosques and *madrastas* without the support of the community as a whole.

Of course, the evidence from Novouzensk district, and from Nizhnii Novgorod province, makes it quite evident that the wealthiest members of society exerted the most control over the community's Islamic institutions, which they at times influenced, or even controlled. This influence was mainly financial and was expressed by financing a mosque, which allowed the patron to separate a *maḥalla*, or nominate an *imām*. In this respect, the question of how less-wealthy Muslim reacted to the domination of their local religious institutions by wealthy notables is an important one, since the *madrastas*, mosques and religious personnel in these communities were after all public institutions. Tensions between wealthy patrons seeking to appoint their own relatives as *imām*, and more humble Muslims are well documented in Nizhnii Novgorod province, and there are reportedly many petitions in the Nizhnii Novgorod provincial archive in which these Muslims denounce the high-handed actions of wealthy patrons, and who challenge the qualifications of *imāms* that the notables nominated.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Idrisov et al. *Iz istorii*, 55.

At the same time, the evidence for Novouzensk district offers many examples of members of a *maḥalla* ceding the right to nominate an *imām* to a notable in order to lessen their own financial obligations toward building a mosque. In any case, the tensions evident between Muslim villagers in administering their institutions provide wonderful insights into the political life of these communities, which even at the local level, was carried out in Islamic terms, as Islamic discourse. In Novouzensk district, we can see how individuals, by means of institutional Islamic discourse, sought to maximize their influence, and minimize the influence of their rivals. This sort of internal political maneuvering is most evident in issues of fundraising, marriage patterns, and debates regarding the appointment of *imāms* and *mu'adhdhins*.

In any case, we can say that not every *maḥalla* was dominated by the wealthy, and that in at least a few *maḥallas* there were no notables at all; moreover, there were relatively few cases of a notable funding the entire expenses for building a mosque and confirming an *imām*. It was certainly not unusual for the members of a *maḥalla*, including the poorer ones, to contribute to the building of a mosque of the support of an *imām* either in kind or with their cash or labor. In this sense these institutions were public in a very real sense, and there is no evidence that Muslim alienation with their local religious institutions as such existed, at least among rural Muslims.

The political aspect of Islamic institutional discourse is especially evident in the materials for the Kazakh Inner Horde. Kazakh nomadic society, while no less of an Islamic society than that of Volga-Ural Muslims, was structured rather differently. Among Kazakh nomads, at least at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Islamic knowledge was mainly disseminated orally, without the benefit of *madrasas* or literacy. Lacking a formal *ulamā* as such, Kazakh society contained *qozha* kinship groups, who, as descendants of the Prophet Muḥammad, and of Central Asian holy figures, in large measure fulfilled the function of the *ulamā* in a nomadic society. It was the khan of the Inner Horde, Jahāngīr, who undertook a full scale reform of the Inner Horde's Islamic institutions, legislating the creation of a typical *madrasa*-trained *ulamā*, and the foundation of *maktabs* at the local level for the Kazakh nomads. This organization, structured after the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly, into which it was integrated after Jahāngīr's death, was evidently accepted by the Kazakh nomads, whose piety was admiringly noted by more than one outside

Muslim observer. While this reformation of Kazakh Islamic institutions was explained to the nomads in Islamic terms, and was accepted by them, it also bore political dividends for Jahāngīr. The Islamic institutions he created helped him administer the Inner Horde more efficiently, but at the same time, it also eroded the authority of the *qozhas* in Kazakh society.

The *Tawārīkh-i Ālī Ātā* provides invaluable insights into the poorly documented Islamic institutions of the Ural Cossack Host and the Bashkir communities of the Chizha Valley and Nikolaevsk district. Shared Muslim status connected these nomadic communities with the Muslim peasants of Novouzensk district and a common Muslim identity was especially articulated by the *‘ulamā* serving these communities. Nevertheless, different corporate affiliations as Russian subjects simultaneously rendered these communities exclusive and separate, testifying to the complex interplay of communal, corporate, and religious identities among the Muslim communities of the imperial Russian steppe frontier.

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#### Abbreviations

- IOAIE *Izvestiia obshchestva arkhologii, istorii i étnografii pri Kazanskom Universitete.*
- PSPR *Pol'noe sobranie postanovlenii i rasporiasheniü po vedomstvu pravoslavnago ispovedeniia Rossiiskoi imperii,* (St. Petersburg, 1872–1912).

## GLOSSARY OF RELIGIOUS AND HISTORICAL TERMS

<i>abiṣṭāy</i>	female teacher for girls.
<i>ābiz</i>	in eighteenth century sources religious leaders functionally equivalent to <i>imāms</i> , but lacking official recognition.
<i>ādhān</i>	the call to prayer performed by a <i>mu'adhdhin</i> .
<i>ākhūnd</i>	also spelled <i>ākhūn</i> ; in the Volga-Ural region and Siberia before the nineteenth century it signifies a high-ranking legal expert; after the eighteenth century it became a rank of a district level legal expert, but gradually lost its former prestige and authority.
<i>ʿālim</i>	Islamic scholar and legal expert; singular form of <i>ʿulamā</i> .
<i>arshin</i>	Russian unit of distance equal to 0.71 meters.
<i>bāy</i>	wealthy member of a community; rich man.
<i>chāqīrūm</i>	Muslim equivalent of <i>versta</i> (a Russian unit of distance equal to 1.06 kilometers).
<i>desiatina</i>	Russian unit of area equivalent to 2.7 acres or 1.09 hectares.
<i>ḥaḍrat</i>	honorific used as a name or an epithet for particularly learned or esteemed scholars.
<i>ḥājjī</i>	Muslim who has performed the pilgrimage to Mecca.
<i>ʿīd</i>	Islamic holiday and related celebrations.
<i>imām</i>	formal religious head of a <i>maḥalla</i> possessing a mosque.
<i>īshān</i>	Sufi master; also used as an honorific for Sufi masters.
<i>ītikāf</i>	seclusionary retreat involving religious devotions performed during the month of Ramaḍān.
<i>khālfā</i>	junior instructor in a <i>madrasa</i> or <i>maktab</i> , often hired directly by the congregation.
<i>khalīfa</i>	disciple chosen by a Sufi master to act as his successor.
<i>khaṭīb</i>	<i>imām</i> formally licensed to perform the <i>khutbā</i> , the communal Friday sermon.
<i>khutbā</i>	the sermon performed on Fridays in a Friday Mosque by a <i>khaṭīb</i> .
<i>khutor</i>	farmstead (as distinct from a village).
<i>madrasa</i>	higher school for the instruction of the Islamic sciences; in Novouzensk district and in certain other districts, the term is used more broadly to signify any Islamic religious school, whether primary or advanced.
<i>maḥalla</i>	congregation of Muslims formally registered to and responsible for a single mosque headed by an <i>imām</i> .
<i>maktab</i>	primary school affiliated with a specific mosque and <i>maḥalla</i> ; see <i>madrasa</i> .
<i>manshūr</i>	Islamic form of <i>ukaz</i> ; also appears as adjectival form <i>manshūrī</i> .
<i>mīhrāb</i>	conical niche located inside of a mosque and indicating the direction of Mecca.
<i>mīnbar</i>	<i>imām</i> 's pulpit in a mosque.
<i>mu'adhdhin</i>	officially licensed individual affiliated with a mosque who is responsible for performing the daily <i>ādhān</i> prayers (calls to prayer).
<i>mudarris</i>	<i>imām</i> formally licensed as an instructor in a <i>madrasa</i> .
<i>muftī</i>	head of the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly after 1788, and head of the Muslim religious community of the Volga-Ural region and Siberia.

<i>mullā</i>	among Volga-Ural Muslims this term denoted an individual possessing a degree of religious authority and education; in Russian sources and among Kazakhs of the Inner Horde it was used as an equivalent of <i>imām</i> .
<i>murīd</i>	disciple of a Sufi master.
<i>nachal'nik</i>	elected or appointed head of a village or township.
<i>namāz</i>	prayer which Muslims are obligated to perform five times daily.
<i>ōch</i>	section of a village consisting of related families or, in Osinov Gai township, of migrants from specific villages and their descendants.
<i>ostabikā</i>	female teacher of girls; often the wife of an <i>imām</i> .
<i>prigovor</i>	attestation formally signed by at least two-thirds of male heads of households in the same <i>maḥalla</i> selecting an <i>imām</i> or <i>mu'adhdhīn</i> or for building a mosque.
<i>pristav</i>	bailiff of a district.
<i>qārīsh</i>	Muslim unit of distance equal to the distance between the thumb and index finger of an extended hand; span.
<i>ṣāhib-i karāmat</i>	lit. "master of miracles;" a Muslim saint.
<i>ṣāhib-i nafas</i>	lit. "master of breath;" a type of healer.
<i>sazhen'</i>	Russian unit of distance equal to 2.13 meters or three <i>arshīns</i> .
<i>shāgīrd</i>	male student studying in a <i>madrasa</i> .
<i>shajara</i>	genealogy.
<i>sharīk</i>	<i>imām</i> jointly administering a <i>maḥalla</i> in partnership with a second <i>imām</i> .
<i>shaykh</i>	Sufi master.
<i>silsila</i>	chain of Sufic initiation; in the Volga-Ural region the term could also signify a genealogy, especially for descendants of a holy ancestor.
<i>starosta</i>	civil title signifying an elected or appointed chief or headman of a village.
<i>starshina</i>	civil title signifying a township-level chief or headman.
<i>uezd</i>	district, a subdivision of a Russian province.
<i>ukaz</i>	formal license granted by both the provincial authorities and the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly to <i>ākhūnds</i> , <i>imāms</i> , and <i>mu'adhdhīns</i> who met the requirements for office; also used in the adjectival form <i>ukaznyi</i> .
<i>'ulamā</i>	collective term comprising <i>imāms</i> and <i>ākhūnds</i> ; plural form of <i>'ālim</i> ; legal experts.
<i>ūqāz</i>	Turkic form of <i>ukaz</i> .
<i>'ushr</i>	Islamic in-kind tax consisting of one tenth of a harvest or other wealth.
<i>versta</i>	Russian unit of distance equal to 1.06 kilometers.
<i>volost'</i>	township; a subdivision of an <i>uezd</i> .
<i>waqf</i>	pious endowment for the support of a specific religious institution; in the Volga-Ural region <i>waqīfs</i> usually consisted of real estate or capital.
<i>zakāt</i>	an obligatory annual Islamic tax equivalent to one fortieth of a Muslim's wealth.
<i>zemskaia uprava</i>	district-based administrative council in imperial Russia.

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