

BUKHARA AND KAZAN*

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INTRODUCTION

The history entitled *Mustafād al-Akhhbār fī Ahwāl Qazān wa Bulghār* (Collection of Information on Kazan and Bulghār)¹ by Shihāb al-Dīn Merjānī (1818- 89), a renowned theologian and historian of the Volga Tatars, is held in high regard as the first national history of the Volga Tatars who referred to themselves as Bulghār or Muslim.² But this work is not merely a history of the Tatar Muslims of the Kazan region. It also describes the history of Bukhara and other parts of Mā warā' al-nahr (the oasis areas beyond the Amu River called by the Arabs who conquered the southern part of Central Asia since the end of the seventh century) and includes a wealth of references to the cultural and historical links between the Kazan region and Bukhara. For example, the biographies of mullas from the Kazan region included in the vol. 2 show that many of the mullas who were active in the Kazan region from the late eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries studied in Bukhara, and they thus give a clear indication of the great influence that the Islamic culture of Bukhara had on this region.

When relating the history of his homeland “the land of the Bulghārs” (*bilād-i Bulghār*), Merjānī was unable to leave Mā warā' al-nahr outside his historical field

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¹ Shihāb al-Dīn Merjānī, *Mustafād al-Akhhbār fī Ahwāl Qazān wa Bulghār*, I-II (Kazan, 1885-1900; hereafter: *Mustafād*). It was through the good offices of the late Mahmud Tahir that I was able to access this work and the work cited in note 6. I wish to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to him. Recently this important work was reprinted in Turkey: Şehabeddin Mercanî, *Müstefad'ül-Ahbar fī Ahval-i Kazan ve Bulgar*, 1-2, *Kazan, 1897-1900, tıpkıbasım* (Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü, 1997). Since the perestroika period new researches regarding Merjānī have appeared in Tatarstan. For example see: *Мерджани: ученый, мыслитель, просветитель* (Казань, 1990).

² A. Battal-Taymas, *Kazan Türkleri*, 2nd ed. (Ankara, 1966), p.130; A.N. Kurat, “Kazan Türklerinin ‘Medeni Uyanış’ Devri (1917 yılına kadar),” *Ankara Üniversitesi DTCF Dergisi*, 24: 3/4 (1966), p. 105; *Татары Среднего Поволжья и Приуралья* (Москва, 1967), сс. 24-25.

of vision. By the same token, when reconstructing the modern history of Mā warā' al-nahr, one cannot ignore the role played by the Volga Tatars. An example of this can be seen in the fact that from the late nineteenth century onwards their national reformist movement exerted enormous influence on the national awakening of Muslims in Mā warā' al-nahr (Turkistan).³ Clarifying these historical connections between the Kazan region and Mā warā' al-nahr will be an indispensable task for reconstructing the historical space of Central Asia as distinct from the regional notion of "Central Asia" (Средняя Азия / Туркестан) established by Tsarist Russia, that is, by outsiders.

The aim of this paper, written from the above perspective, is to examine one aspect of the history of relations between Bukhara and the Kazan region, namely, the flow of students from the Kazan region to Bukhara in the late eighteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries.⁴ As basic source material, I have used Merjānī's above-mentioned work, a biography of Merjānī (who was himself a student in Bukhara),⁵ several works by Bukharan historians,⁶ and contemporary travel accounts,⁷ but I would like to mention at the outset that some studies by Tatar researchers⁸ have been especially helpful.

Before proceeding to the main topic with which we are here concerned, I wish to touch briefly on the biographies of the mullas of the Kazan region, which constitute a basic source for this article. Merjānī first gives separate sections on

³ В. В. Бартольд, Кавказ, Туркестан, Волга, *Сочинения*, том 2, часть 1 (Москва, 1963), с. 796; Komatsu Hisao, "Bukhara and Istanbul: A Consideration about the Background of the *Munāzara*," Stéphane A. Dudoignon and Komatsu Hisao eds., *Islam in Politics in Russia and Central Asia: Early Eighteenth to Late Twentieth Centuries* (London-New York-Bahrain: Kegan Paul, 2001), pp. 167-180.

⁴ Historical relations between Bukhara and Kazan in early modern period scarcely have been studied. For example, H. Ziyaev, *XVIII Āsrda Ortā Asiya vā Urāl Buylāri* (Tashkent, 1973) investigates in detail the development of diplomatic and economic relations between Bukhara and Russia through Orenburg, using exclusively Russian sources. However the author pays no attention to dynamic changes in economic and cultural relations between Bukhara and Kazan in this period. I am grateful to Dr. Stéphane A. Dudoignon who kindly provided me this rare book.

⁵ Sheher Sheref. "Merjānī'ning terjume-i hāli," *Merjānī (Shihāb al-Dīn al-Merjānī Hazretlerining velādetine yuz il tulu (1233-1333) muniāsebetiyle neshir ituldi)*, published by Sālih bin Thābit 'Ubeydullin (Kazan, 1918), pp. 2-193 (hereafter: *Merjānī*). Recently this book was republished in contemporary Tatar language: *Шуһабетдин Мәржәни* (Казан: Әлэт "Рухият" нәшрият, 1998).

⁶ Ch. Schefer, *Histoire de l'Asie centrale par Mir Abdoul Kerim Boukhary* (Paris, 1876; rep. Amsterdam, 1970); В.В. Григорьев, *О некоторых событиях в Бухаре, Коканде и Кашигаре: Записки Мирзы Шамсу Бухары* (Казань, 1861); Мирза 'Абдал'азим Сами, *Та'рих-и салатин-и мангитийа (история мангитских государей)*, Издание текста, предисловие, перевод и примечания Л. М. Епифановой (Москва, 1962); [Ахмад Дониш], *Трактат Ахмада Дониша "История мангитской династии"*, Перевод, предисловие и примечания И.А. Наджафовой (Душанбе, 1967).

⁷ *Travels in Central Asia by Meer Izzut-Oollah in the Years 1812-13*, Translated by Captain Henderson (Calcutta, 1872); Е. К. Мейендорф, *Путешествие из Оренбурга в Бухару* (Москва, 1975).

⁸ Battal-Taymas, *Kazan Türkleri*; Kurat, Kurat, "Kazan Türklerinin 'Medeni Uyanış' Devri," pp. 95-194; Т. Давлетшин, *Советский Татарстан: Теория и практика ленинской национальной политики* (London, 1974).

each of the fourteen mosques within the city of Kazan and the mosques of thirteen large villages (*qarya*) scattered throughout the Kazan region, and after having described the history of the villages and mosques, he gives the biographies of successive imams who served at these mosques. The total number of imams mentioned is 187, fifty of whom studied in Bukhara. Next, Merjānī gives the biographies of eighty-seven mullas who were not affiliated to these mosques, dealing with them roughly in the chronological order of the years in which they died. They include mullas from the Kazan region who were active chiefly in other lands and died in places such as Istanbul, Bukhara and Cairo, as well as mullas who came to the Kazan region from India, Iraq and Mā warā' al-nahr. Among these mullas too there were more than thirty who studied in Bukhara or held the post of imam or mudarris (teacher at a religious school, madrasa). The people mentioned in these biographies of mullas all died roughly between 1790 and 1880. Therefore, not only do these biographies represent a valuable contemporary source of material on the social history of the Volga Tatars in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but they may also be considered to provide an adequate basis for our following inquiry.

I

According to Merjānī, the first person from the Kazan region to have gone to study in Mā warā' al-nahr after the Kazan region came under Russian rule in the mid-sixteenth century was Mullā Yūnus, who became the first imam of the village of Ūr. Since he is thought to have been born in the 1630s, the history of the practice of going to study in Bukhara goes back as far as the second half of the seventeenth century.⁹ However the case of Yūnus was no more than an isolated instance. Since it was in the late eighteenth century that one finds the beginnings of a flow of students to Bukhara, his case could be described as a distinct movement. In order to understand the background to the start of this flow of students, let us briefly review Tatar society at this time.

During their first two centuries of Russian rule the Tatar Muslims were subjected to harsh ethnic and religious oppression. Symbolic of this repression was the destruction of 418 of the 536 mosques in Kazan Province by the order of the Senate in the years 1744 to 1755.¹⁰ As a result of the influx of Russian immigrants, the Tatars became a minority in their own land, and the vigorous missionary activities of the Russian Orthodox Church threatened the unity of the Tatar Muslims by producing a not insignificant number of Tatar Orthodox Christians (кряшены). It goes without saying that under these conditions the cultural development of the Tatar Muslims was severely impeded.¹¹

⁹ On Yūnus, see *Mustafād*, II, p. 187.

¹⁰ В. В. Бартольд, История изучения Востока в Европе и России, *Сочинения*, том 9 (Москва, 1977), с. 410

¹¹ Н.Н. Фирсов, *Прошлое Татарии* (Казань, 1926), сс. 28-29; Г. Ибрагимов, *Татары в*

But from the late 1760s the empress Catherine (Екатерина) II (r. 1762-96), in consideration of the policies of the Ottoman empire, which had a great amount of Orthodox population in her own land as well as an intense interest in the position of Muslims within Russia, and with a view to furthering the social stability of Russia's eastern frontier and the growth of trade with the East, undertook a series of reforms to relax the hitherto repressive policies towards the Tatar Muslims.¹² These reforms included relative freedom of religion, permission to settle in and around Kazan city, and permission to build mosques, and in 1789 an official agency called the Muslim Spiritual Assembly (Магометанское духовное собрание) was established. Catherine's policy of tolerance did not necessarily signify equality between Muslims and Russians, but there can be no doubt that it had enormous significance in enabling the Tatar Muslims to break free from two centuries of besiegement.¹³

Meanwhile, Tatar merchants, whose commercial activities within Russia had been curtailed under Russian rule, had, with the help of their cultural affinity with the Turkic Muslims of Central Asia, extended their trading sphere to the Kazakh Steppe and *Mā warā' al-nahr*, which were closed to Russian traders, and once they were granted substantial freedom of movement in the late eighteenth century by the Russian government as it encouraged the growth of trade with the East, these Tatar merchants challenged the position which the merchants of *Mā warā' al-nahr* had until then occupied in Russia's trade with the East and simultaneously came to form the most vibrant social stratum in Tatar society.¹⁴ It was probably also these Tatar merchants who acted as a link between the Kazan region and Bukhara in the late eighteenth century. In the early nineteenth century there existed in Kazan a group of merchants specializing in goods from Bukhara called *бухар юртучи*,¹⁵ and at about the same time the *Nughāy Saray* in Bukhara, a regular lodging place for Tatar merchants from the Kazan region (who were often called *Nughāy* in

революции 1905 года (Казань, 1926), сс. 7-9; А. Исхаки, *Идель-Урал* (Paris, 1933), сс. 21-22; A. N. Kurat, "Rus Hâkimiyeti altında İdil-Ural Ülkesi," *Ankara Üniversitesi DTCF Dergisi*, 23/3-4 (1965), pp. 121-122; В. В. Бартольд, Турция, ислам и христианство, *Сочинения*, том 6 (Москва, 1966), с. 429

¹² Ибрагимов, *Татары*, с. 9; Л. Климович, *Ислам в Царской России: Очерки* (Москва, 1936), сс. 20-21.

¹³ Kurat, "Rus Hâkimiyeti altında," pp. 123-125; Давлетшин, *Советский Татарстан*, сс. 22-24.

¹⁴ П. И. Небольсин, *Очерки торговли России с Средней Азией, Записки Императорского Русского Географического Общества*, книжка 10, С. Петербург, 1855, сс. 20, 34; S. A. Zenkovsky, "A Century of Tatar Revival," *American Slavic and East European Review*, 12/ 3 (1953), pp. 305-306. S. Levi discusses extensively on the development of eighteenth-century caravan trade connecting India, Russia and Central Asia in his paper "India, Russian and the Eighteenth-Century Transformation of the Central Asian Caravan Trade," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 42/4 (1999), pp.519-548. However Tatar merchants' role in the eighteenth-century Central Asian caravan trade is not dealt with sufficiently. This subject should be analyzed from a viewpoint with Central Eurasian scale.

¹⁵ *История Татарии в материалах и документах* (Москва, 1937), с. 304.

Bukhara), would also seem to have been thriving.¹⁶

Thus, by the late eighteenth century the Tatar Muslims had been liberated, at least relatively speaking, from the ethnic and religious oppression of the past, and through the simultaneous creation of an affluent merchant class they were on the cusp of an national and economic revival. The construction dates of the mosques listed by Merjānī are found to be concentrated in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, with the majority of their builders and patrons being merchants,¹⁷ and these facts can be readily explained in terms of the social changes outlined above. Next, on the basis of Merjānī's biographies of mullas I wish to sketch a picture of those who went to study in Bukhara and consider the nature of the flow of students from the Kazan region to Bukhara.

Many of the students were from the families of village imams, and they set out for Bukhara after having completed some elementary study (*mabādī 'ulūm*) in their own village or in the village of some suitable teacher. That the source of the flow of students lay not in a city like Kazan, but rather in villages scattered throughout the Kazan region, can be explained by the fact that up until the mid-eighteenth century the mosques and *maktab* (Islamic primary schools) of the Kazan Tatars had managed to survive in rural villages which had escaped Russian persecution and the cultural traditions of the Tatar Muslims had, in other words, been more strongly preserved in rural districts than in urban areas,¹⁸ but at the same time this also merits attention as an illustration of the fact that there existed a broad-based and strong desire for higher learning and Islamic culture at the village level. Merjānī, who was himself the son of a village imam, describes his frame of mind before departing to study in Bukhara in the following terms:

I had grown tired of village life. I was driven by a strong desire to go to Bukhara, quietly apply myself to study while attending the lectures of great mullas and study the writings of masters found in numerous libraries.¹⁹

These feelings would no doubt have been shared by many other students as well.

Students en route from the Kazan region to Bukhara were often looked after by Tatar merchants who traveled back and forth along the caravan routes.²⁰ The main route from Russian territory to Bukhara had traditionally led down the Volga,

¹⁶ *Travels in Central Asia*, pp. 63, 68; A. Z. V. Togan, *Bugünkü Türkili (Türkistan) ve Yakın Tarihi* (Istanbul. 1942-47), p. 220. The historical building of the Nughāy Saray has survived to the present time in the central part of old Bukhara.

¹⁷ The numbers of mosques built or rebuilt in this period are as follows: in 1770s, 4; in 1780s, 2; in 1790s, 7; in the first decade of the 19th century, 5; in 1810s, 3; and thereafter 5. Among these twenty-six mosques, fifteen were clearly built by merchants.

¹⁸ *Татары Среднего Поволжья*, с. 376: Давлетшин, *Советский Татарстан*, сс. 18-19.

¹⁹ *Merjānī*, p. 27.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

across the Caspian Sea, then to Khiva on the lower reaches of the Amu Darya (Oxus), and from there to Bukhara, but by the end of the eighteenth century two further routes had been added. One led from Orenburg or Troitsk to Bukhara via Tashkent, with a branch route going directly to Bukhara from the lower reaches of the Syr Darya without passing through Tashkent. A second route started from Semipalatinsk or Petropavlovsk in Western Siberia and crossed the Kazakh Steppe to reach Tashkent.²¹ The route that was the most frequented by students from Kazan would probably have been the second route starting from Orenburg (especially the Tatar settlement of Qarghālī (Сейтовский посад) built on its outskirts in 1744)²² and Troitsk, where Tatar merchants had important commercial bases.

Merjānī too left his home in 1838 for Troitsk and then traveled by camel with caravans to Bukhara, and his journey is said to have taken about seven months. The reason that the journey to Bukhara took so long was that not only did he spend several months in Troitsk waiting for a suitable caravan bound for Bukhara, but the traders with whom he traveled often engaged in business activities as they passed through areas inhabited by Kazakhs.²³ This example could be said to illustrate vividly the extent to which students headed for Bukhara had to rely on Tatar merchants during their journey. But this long journey was by no means a simple travel for the students. As is evident from the fact that Merjānī sold goods he had bought in Troitsk either en route or after his arrival in Bukhara in order to meet his traveling expenses and his living expenses in Bukhara,²⁴ this journey also represented part of the students' economic activities.

If one takes into account this close relationship between students and merchants, it is to be surmised that the examples of Mullā Bāymurād (d. 1848), who not only won renown as a mudarris returned from Bukhara, but also engaged in extensive trading activities, and Mullā 'Abd al-Khāliq (d. 1844), who initially went to Bukhara on business and later revisited it for the purpose of study,²⁵ were not at all unusual.

II

In this section, let us review conditions in Bukhara at the time when it was accepting these students from the Kazan region from the late eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries, as well as considering some of the students' activities in Bukhara.

²¹ *История народов Узбекистана*, том 2 (Ташкент, 1947), с. 212; Zenkovsky, "A Century of Tatar Revival," p.306. For the details, see Небольсин, *Очерки торговли России с Средней Азией*.

²² On Qarghālī, see *История Татарии*, с. 242; Бартольд, *История изучения Востока*, с. 410; Давлетшин, *Советский Татарстан*, с. 23.

²³ *Merjānī*, pp. 30, 32.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

²⁵ *Mustafād*, II. pp. 102-103, 176-177. For a similar example, see also pp. 231-232.

From the seventeenth century to the mid-eighteenth century and later the khanate of Bukhara was plagued by divisions and strife among the Uzbek tribes as well as by the invasion of Nādir Shāh's forces in the 1740s, and the Jānid dynasty (1599-1753) ruled in name only. But the *amīrs* of the new Manghīt dynasty (1756-1920) consistently promoted policies aimed at the centralization of power, and as internal unification advanced, political and social stability returned to the country, now the Amirate.²⁶ This stability stimulated the growth of commercial relations with surrounding regions, and especially from the late eighteenth century onwards trade with Russia grew markedly. The dramatic expansion in commercial relations between "Central Asia" and Russia was such that the total volume of imports and exports in 1780-90 was more than five times that in the 1770s, and in 1792 the value of exports from "Central Asia" to Russia reached 1,400,000 roubles, while the value of imports was 1,130,000 roubles. Thereafter the volume of trade steadily increased, and the volume of exports from Bukhara to Russia in the same period (1801), consisting chiefly of cotton yarn and leather, was worth about 700,000 roubles, while the volume of imports, mainly gold coins and woolen cloth, measured about 500,000 roubles, indicating that trade with Russia was flourishing.²⁷ It was during this period that the capital Bukhara and other cities in the Amirate such as Qarshī and Shahr-i Sabz saw remarkable growth, with Bukhara having a population of about 15,000 households, or 70,000 people. Furthermore, whereas in 1795 Bukhara had had ten two-storey caravansarais, in 1848 there were thirty-eight caravansarais provided for the use of traders who gathered from all directions.²⁸

As is well-known, Bukhara had from early times been a center of Islamic learning in the eastern Islamic world, and, having on its outskirts the holy mausoleum of Bahā' al-Dīn Naqshband (1317-89), founder of the Naqshbandiyya order, Bukhara had even under Uzbek rule attracted large numbers of pilgrims from all parts of Central Asia and had rigorously preserved its traditions as a religious city.²⁹ But if, as we saw earlier, Bukhara was blessed with political and social stability and experienced economic growth from the late eighteenth century onwards, then it is to be surmised that there would also have occurred some sort of change in Bukhara's character as a religious city.

Worth noting in this regard is the fact that the Bukharan historians of the nineteenth century are almost unanimous in describing the first two *amīrs* of the Manghīt dynasty Shāh Murād (r. 1785-1800) and Haydar (r. 1800-26) as devout Muslim rulers. For instance, 'Abd al-Karīm Bukhārī portrays the rule of Shāh Murād in the following terms:

²⁶ *История Узбекской ССР*, том 2 (Ташкент, 1968), с. 649 и след..

²⁷ Там же, сс. 630- 631.

²⁸ Там же, сс. 625- 626. On trade with Russia and the growth of cities, see also Saguchi Tōru, *Roshia to Ajia Sōgen* [Russia and the Asian Steppes] (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1966), pp. 249 ff. (in Japanese)

²⁹ For a relatively recent reference in this regard, see H. Algar. "The Naqshbandī Order: A Preliminary Survey of Its History and Significance," *Studia Islamica*, 44 (1977), p. 136.

The *sharī'a* pervaded everywhere, and Bukhara enjoyed prosperity and became a wellspring of scholars.... The amīr conversed morning and evening with ulama and learned men, and all his actions accorded with the *sharī'a*.³⁰

Similar accounts of Shāh Murād are also given by other historians,³¹ and even when considered in light of comments by Russian Orientalists and O. A. Sukhareva (who studied the waqf documents of Bukhara), their accounts would seem to be highly reliable. It is doubtless that Amīr Shāh Murād himself acquired a good grounding in the Islamic learning as well as being deeply devoted to Sufism, among others the teachings of Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya order introduced from India,³² and that he also set about establishing a religious superintendent (*ra'īs al-sharī'a*) to enforce the observance of Islamic law, reissuing waqf documents in order to restore the waqf property that had been devastated during the period of disorder in the eighteenth century, repairing madrasas and mosques, and protecting the mullas.³³

Amīr Haydar, who succeeded Shāh Murād, the “reviver” of Bukhara as a religious city, had inscribed on his coins the title “Amīr al-Mu'minīn” (Leader of the Faithful), used by the ‘Abbassid caliphs,³⁴ and he himself, in his capacity as a mudarris, is said to have “given lectures on a daily basis and had as many as five hundred disciples in each subject.”³⁵ Haydar, who was known for his wide circle of acquaintances among the mullas also had contact with students from the Kazan region, and Merjānī's father Mullā Bahā' al-Dīn (1786-1856) was given a room in a new madrasa in Bukhara through the good offices of Haydar, who had been the builder's guardian (*vasī*).³⁶

The fact that these two amīrs, together with their successor Nasr Allāh (r.

³⁰ Schefer, *Histoire de l'Asie centrale*, pp. 144-145 (text, p. 63).

³¹ Сами, *Та'рих-и салатин-и мангитийа*, ff. 61b, 62b (русский перевод, сс. 50-51, 52: *Трактат Ахмада Дониша*, с. 32).

³² For the details of the spread of the Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya order in Bukhara see: B. Babadžanov, “On the History of the Naqshbandiyya Mužaddidiyya in Central Māwarā'annahr in the Late 18th and Early 19th Centuries,” M. Kemper, A. von Kügelgen, and D. Yermakov eds., *Muslim Culture in Russia and Central Asia from the 18th to the Early 20th Centuries* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1996), pp. 385-413; Анке фон Кюгельген, Расцвет Накшбандийа Мужаддийа в Средней Трансоксании с XVIII –до начала XIX вв.: опыт детективного расследования, *Суфизм в Центральной Азии (зарубежные исследования), Сборник статей памяти Фритца Майера (1912-1998)* (Санкт-Петербург, 2001), сс. 275-330.

³³ А. А. Семенов, Надпись на могильной плите бухарского эмира Шах Мурад Ма'сума 1200-1215/1785-1800 гг., *Эпиграфика Востока*, 1 (1953), сс. 41-42; Григорьев, *О некоторых совытиях*, с. 46; О. А. Сухарева, *Квартальная община позднефеодального города Бухары, в связи с историей кварталов* (Москва, 1976), с. 314.

³⁴ *Travels in Central Asia*, p. 67; Р. Бурнашева, Монеты Бухарского ханства при Мангытах (середина XVIII – начало XX вв.), *Эпиграфика Востока*, 18 (1967), сс. 118, 125-127.

³⁵ Schefer, op. cit., p. 169 (text, p. 76). For a similar comment, see Григорьев, *О некоторых совытиях*, с. 6 (текст, с. 8)

³⁶ *Mustafād*, I. p.186; II. p.131. This Tursunjān madrasa is said to have been the fourth-ranking madrasa in Bukhara. See Сухарева, *Квартальная община*, с. 180.

1827-60), all aspired to the strict application of the *sharī'a* and were also ardent followers of Sufism³⁷ cannot help drawing one's attention to the relations between the state and religion under the Manghīt dynasty, but this is an issue that goes far beyond the scope of the present article.³⁸ Let it suffice to say that during the period when there was a continuous flow of students from the Kazan region to Bukhara, its character as a religious city was being vigorously enhanced. According to Barthold, "the observance of religious ordinances was much more harshly enforced by Murād and particularly by his successor Haydar than had been the case for example, in the XVIth century by 'Ubaid Allāh. "Noble Bukhārā" (*Bukhārā-i sharīf*) was more and more to attain the glory of a city of Islam and of the Sharīat."³⁹

In the beginning of the nineteenth century, Bukhara had about eighty madrasas with from forty to as many as three hundred cells (*hujras*), and those studying at these schools are said to have exceeded ten thousand in number.⁴⁰ They came from far-flung regions, including the Volga basin, East Turkistan, and Northwest India,⁴¹ and according to E. K. Meyendorf, who entered Bukhara in 1820 as a member of a Russian diplomatic mission, there were in Bukhara approximately three thousand Tatars of Russian nationality, about three hundred of whom are reported to have been "engaged in religious research."⁴² Not all of these can be considered to have been students from the Kazan region, but it is nonetheless a significant figure. The number of Kazan Tatars who studied in Bukhara would probably have been by no means small, even though they may not all have left their names in the collected biographies of mullas by Merjānī.

The length of the students' sojourn in Bukhara naturally varied, and while some returned home after a few years, others remained in Bukhara for the rest of their lives. During this time, they studied theology, law, logic, and Koranic recitation under the guidance of "outstanding scholars" (*'ālim-i zabardast*) of Bukhara, as well as Arabic, Persian, and Sufism. From their biographies it is possible to identify a number of Bukharan ulama who were the common teachers of mullas from the Kazan region. Representative of these was Īshān Niyāz Qulī Turkmānī (d.1821), under whom many people from the Kazan region studied.⁴³ He was one of the few ulama who recognized the freedom of *ijtihād* (legislative acts in

³⁷Сами, *Та'рих-и салатин-и мангитийа*, f. 64b (русский перевод, с. 55); *Travels in Central Asia*, p.66; А. А. Семенов, Бухарский шейх Баха-уд-дин (По персидской рукописи), *Восточный сборник в честь А. Н. Веселовского* (Москва, 1914), с. 203; В. А. Гордлевский, Бахауддин Накшбанд бухарский (К вопросу о наслонениях в исламе), *Избранные сочинения*, том 3 (Москва, 1962), с. 372; Сухарева, *Квартальная община*, с. 211.

³⁸As to this subject see: Анке фон Кюгельген, *Легитимация среднеазиатской династии мангитов в произведениях их историков (XVIII – XIX вв.)*, Алматы: Дайкпресс, 2004.

³⁹V. V. Barthold, "Bukhārā," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, the First Edition.

⁴⁰*Travels in Central Asia*, p. 63; Мейендорф, *Путешествие*, с. 152.

⁴¹П. П. Иванов, *Очерки по истории Средней Азии* (Москва, 1958), сс. 120, 218.

⁴²Мейендорф, *Путешествие*, с. 97.

⁴³*Mustafād*, II, pp. 101, 108, 168, 176, 177, 253, 254, 255, 258.

the Islamic law) already at the start of the nineteenth century,⁴⁴ and he was, as is indicated by his title *īshān*, a leading Sufi. It is also interesting to note that Amīr Haydar attended his funeral and offered his condolences to this “second amīr of Bukhara.”⁴⁵ The reputation of Bukharan ulama like him would have reached the Kazan region through students and merchants, thereby increasing the flow of students even more.

But the scholarship of Bukhara was not necessarily of content and standard that satisfied the students from the Kazan region. Meyendorff points out that the scholarship of Bukhara was by and large deeply ingrained with formalism and authoritarianism.⁴⁶ The first person to publicly criticize this system of learning found in Bukhara was none other than a student from the Kazan region named Mullā Abū al-Nasr Qūrsāwī (1771-1812). During two periods of study in Bukhara, he discovered “aberrations from the path of the truth and the Fathers (*salaf*) in the faith of the people of Bukhara and in their understanding of the law,”⁴⁷ and he challenged the traditional authority of Bukhara by making public his own views in the course of a vehement debate with the mullas of Bukhara.⁴⁸ His action deserved the death sentence in Bukhara, but the ideas of Qūrsāwī, a pioneer of Islamic reformist thought among the Tatar Muslims, were preserved among some mullas in the Kazan region.⁴⁹ Merjānī himself awakened to the justness of Qūrsāwī’s views in the mid-1840s while studying “the books of the Fathers” in Samarkand,⁵⁰ and the main principles of the reforms which he advocated in later years were a break with “scholastic” learning and a return to the original texts, namely, the Koran and the *hadīth* (the tradition of the Prophet).⁵¹

Among the students from the Kazan region, there were some who took up the official duties of a scholar. For instance, Mullā Fakhr al-Dīn (d.1844) won renown after having studied the recitation of the Koran and took up the post of imam at a mosque in Bukhara, but at the same time he served as a mudarris in charge of the education of a large number of disciples (*shāgird*), including Amīr Haydar. Mullā ‘Abd al-Sattār (d.1830), on the other hand, took up the post of religious superintendant (*muhtasib*) in a village near Bukhara as well as serving as secretary to a judge (*qādī*). In addition, Mullā Husayn (d.1851), who had mastered Persian in Bukhara, is said to have translated into Persian letters from the Ottoman sultan

⁴⁴ Togan, *Bugünkü Türkili*, p. 540.

⁴⁵ *Merjānī*, p. 33.

⁴⁶ Мейендорф, *Пумееествое*, с. 150.

⁴⁷ *Mustafād*, II, p. 168.

⁴⁸ On Qūrsāwī, see *Mustafād*, II, pp. 168-175; *Merjānī*, pp. 57-58; Kurat, “Kazan Türklerinin ‘Medeni Uyanış’ Devri,” pp. 101-102.

⁴⁹ *Mustafād*, II, pp. 160, 222, 242, 252, 254, 256, 258, 265, 279.

⁵⁰ *Merjānī*, p. 57.

⁵¹ А. Аршаруни и Х. Габидуллин, *Очерки панисламизма и пантюркизма в России* (Москва, 1931), с. 10. It should also be noted that Merjānī was the first person to introduce the theories of Ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328) to the Muslims of Russia. See В. В. Бартольд, *Ислам, Сочинения*, том 6 (Москва, 1966) с. 133.

Abdülmeçid (r. 1839-61) addressed to Amīr Nasr Allāh.⁵² Among the students who came to study in Bukhara, there were many who remained there, and the fact that these “foreign” mullas from the Kazan region were able to find considerable openings for themselves within the social stratum of mullas who formed a hierarchy under the umbrella of state power,⁵³ could be said to exemplify one aspect of Bukhara as a religious city.

Lastly, I wish to touch briefly on the relationship between the students and Sufism. Sufism in the Kazan region had its origins in Bukhara, as is indicated by V. A. Gordlevskiy when he writes that “for the Tatars ‘noble’ Bukhara was always [until the second half of the nineteenth century] the source of the orthodox teachings of Islam, and it was from there that there was a continuous stream of *īshāns*, who were the upholders of Sufism.”⁵⁴ With regard to this current of Sufism from Bukhara to the Kazan region, Merjānī gives a number of concrete examples in his biographies of mullas.

When one retraces the movements of the mullas who can be considered to have had some sort of links with Sufism, one finds that many of them went to Bukhara or passed through Bukhara to Qarshī or Shahr-i Sabz within the Amirate or further afield to Kabul and India, where they became disciples of famous *īshāns* and received certificates and “strange books,” whereafter they returned to the Kazan region.⁵⁵ In particular, Mullā ‘Alī (d.1874) from the village of Tūntār and Mullā Habīb Allāh Īshān (1762-1816) were celebrated imams who after their return from Bukhara to the Kazan region were also active as *īshāns*. The former travelled as far as Delhi and Lahore, and was, according to A. Ishaki, the founder of the Naqshbandiyya order among the Tatar Muslims.⁵⁶ Merājnī judged him to be “the most outstanding *īshān* in the Kazan region.”⁵⁷ The latter, who established a “special lodge” (*makhsūs khānqāh*) and had a large number of disciples (*murīd*), had tremendous influence among the Mīshār, a Finnic people living along the Volga who had been converted to Islam by the Tatars, and his Mīshār disciples are said to have been not averse to even kissing his footprints.⁵⁸ There can be no doubt that people going to study in Bukhara were forging links between the Kazan region and Bukhara with respect to Sufism too.

⁵² The above examples are found in *Merjānī*, II, p. 26-27, 94, 266, 268. For further similar examples, see *ibid.*, pp. 147, 203, 232-233, 252, 273.

⁵³ On the mullas of Bukhara, see O. A. Сухарева, *Бухара XIX - начало XX в. : Позднефеодальный город и его население* (Москва, 1966), сс. 287-305.

⁵⁴ Гордлевский, Бахауддин Накшбанд, с. 382.

⁵⁵ *Mustafād*, II, pp. 39, 80, 184, 200, 221, 221-222, 234-235, 253-254, 255, 259, 269-272, 274.

⁵⁶ Исхаки, *Идель-Урал*, с. 29.

⁵⁷ On ‘Alī, see *Mustafād*, II, p. 203.

⁵⁸ On Habīb Allāh, see *Mustafād*, II, pp. 190-192. An example of the Islamization by the Tatars of neighbouring peoples is the collective conversion of about sixty members of the Finnic Udmurt (Ūr) by a mulla on his return from Bukhara; see *Mustafād*, II, p. 160.

III

Many of those who returned to the Kazan region after having completed their studies in Bukhara obtained positions as an imam or mudarris, but as is evident from the fact that Merjānī almost invariably mentions together the three posts of imam, *khatīb* (preacher) and mudarris when recording a person's installation as imam, it was usual in the Kazan region at this time for an imam to serve also as mudarris. In this section I wish to consider from the twin aspects of imam and mudarris the position and role in Tatar Muslim society of people who had studied in Bukhara.

In eighteenth-century Tatar society the imam was usually appointed by the will of the locals and villagers.⁵⁹ But one of the principal duties of the Muslim Spiritual Assembly established in 1789 under the jurisdiction of the Russian Ministry of the Interior was the screening (*imtihān*) of prospective imams. The appointment of imams came to be controlled from above.⁶⁰ It may have been as a result of such control that an imam in Kazan was detained on suspicion of an act of contempt towards Russia and left his post even though no wrongdoing was recognized.⁶¹ But it is also possible to find in Merjānī's biographies of imams instances showing that the former tradition of appointing an imam by the will of the people was still very much alive in the nineteenth century. That is to say, in order to have appointed a person of their choice as imam, locals and villagers would often prepare an "agreement" (*ittifāq nāme*) which they submitted to the Assembly. In view of the fact that its existence was sometimes of sufficient import to take the place of the Assembly's own screening and also played at times a decisive role in the dismissal of an imam, this "agreement" would appear to have had considerable force.⁶² In addition to being appointed in this fashion by the local residents who used the mosque, the imam would sometimes take up his post at the invitation of the mosque's builder or patron, who was often, as noted earlier, a merchant.⁶³ It could be said, in other words, that while the imam was subject to control by the Muslim Spiritual Assembly, basically he performed his duties with the consent of local society. When the social position of the imam is understood in this manner, behind the widespread occupation of imamships in the Kazan region for more than half a century by people who had studied in Bukhara, it is not impossible to detect, the strength of the Tatar Muslim's sense of respect for and affinity with the Islamic culture of Bukhara that these people personified.

Among the mudarris who had studied in Bukhara, there were many who were judged to have "gathered many disciples and made a name for themselves." Let us

⁵⁹ Давлетшин, *Советский Татарстан*, с. 19.

⁶⁰ On the Muslim Spiritual Assembly, see Kurat, "Rus Hâkimiyeti altında," pp. 123-125.

⁶¹ *Mustafād*, II, p. 118.

⁶² *Mustafād*, II, pp. 89, 92, 115, 116, 191.

⁶³ *Mustafād*, II, pp. 184, 186, 190-191.

now consider the actual activities of such mudarris with reference to the village of Tāshkichū.

Tāshkichū is located about seventy kilometres from Kazan, and it was founded by people who moved here from neighbouring villages in the first half of the eighteenth century. Initially the village had a wooden mosque, but as the village prospered, there emerged a desire for a stone-built mosque, and in 1817 a new mosque was built with money provided by a well-known merchant. The first four imams each set up a madrasa, although it is not clear whether there was a separate building for the madrasa during this time. The fourth imam (d. 1820) went to study in Qarghālī, while his son studied in Bukhara. But it is said that upon his return to the village, the latter committed one misdeed after another and then left the village after converting to Christianity.

The first mulla who had studied in Bukhara to be installed as imam of this village was the fifth imam, Mullā Shams al-Dīn (d. 1833). A village elder (*aqsaqāl*) and man of means by the name of Bāyazīd Bay built for him a madrasa so magnificent as to be “unprecedented in this region,” the interior of which consisted entirely of private rooms for the students. After having “gathered many students and, enveloped in an aura of fame, given lectures,” Shams al-Dīn eventually set out on a pilgrimage. In Cairo he gained the acquaintance of Ibrāhīm Pasha (1789-1848) and took up the post of teacher of Persian at the university (Dār al-Funūn), and he eventually died in Cairo. The sixth imam was Merjānī’s father Bahā’ al-Dīn, who had been recognized already during his period of study in Bukhara as having the degree of scholar and had received a robe of honour (*khil’āt*) from Amīr Haydar. Bahā’ al-Dīn served as imam and mudarris for forty years, and his madrasa produced many men of talent, including Merjānī.⁶⁴

The programme followed at Bahā’ al-Dīn’s madrasa was the Bukhara system, which was in wide use in the Kazan region at this time, consisting of law, theology, logic, and the principles of law (*usūl-i fiqh*), and it excluded subjects such as Koranic commentaries, the *hadīth*, rhetoric, the life of Muhammad, and history. The students attended the school for ten to fifteen years, and during this time they read between five and ten books with the help of commentaries and so completed the madrasa’s curriculum.⁶⁵ This programme was widely adopted at madrasas in the Kazan region up until the early twentieth century,⁶⁶ and even in the madrasa run by Merjānī himself, who had called for the removal of books of “useless and scholastic content” from the madrasas, changes to the programme of the Bukhara system remained only partial.⁶⁷

A. N. Kurat points out that from the late eighteenth century onwards madrasa

⁶⁴ The above description is based on *Mustafād*, II, pp. 122-133.

⁶⁵ *Merjānī*, p. 19.

⁶⁶ Kurat, “Kazan Türklerinin ‘Medeni Uyanış’ Devri,” p. 97.

⁶⁷ *Merjānī*, pp. 106-107. See also *История Татарии*, с. 356; Аршаруни и Габидуллин, *Очерки панисламизма*, с. 10.

following the Bukhara system were opened one after another by mullas who had returned from Bukhara, and he calls this “the great madrasa period” (*büyük medreseler devri*).⁶⁸ The madrasa in the village of Tāshkichū could be considered to epitomize this “great madrasa period,” and if it was indeed one of the madrasa which acquired renown in the Kazan region in the mid-nineteenth century,⁶⁹ then this would have no doubt been largely due to the efforts of its two mudarris who had returned from Bukhara, namely, Shams al-Dīn and Bahā al-Dīn. The mudarris who had studied in Bukhara could be said to have educated the generation responsible for the cultural revival of the Tatar Muslims in the madrasas and mosques constructed and expanded by the burgeoning Tatar merchants. Since the end of the nineteenth century with the emergence of madrasas following the “new system” (*usūl-i jadīd*) characterized by the introduction of education in the vernacular and secular subjects, the Bukhara-system madrasas came to lose their positive meaning.⁷⁰ But if one recalls that even after the reforms of Catherine II Tatar Muslim society continued to be subjected to the pressures of religious conversion and assimilation,⁷¹ then the historical role of the Bukhara-system madrasas⁷² deserves to be reappraised.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

As should be evident from the above observations, Tatar mullas who studied in Bukhara, working as imam and mudarris, contributed to the rebirth of Islamic learning in the Kazan region that suffered Russian rule since the middle of the sixteenth century. As a lot of biographies show, the flow of Tatar students from the Volga-Ural region to Bukhara was of such a scale and content that it could be described as a cultural movement. These mullas, with the support of the newly-risen Tatar merchants who linked Russia and Central Asia, gave vitality and cohesion to Muslim communities in the Kazan region. This revival of Islamic learning was to pave the way to the reformist movement, Jadidism, developed by Tatar intellectuals since the end of the nineteenth century.

As to this point, V. V. Barthold writes in 1926 as follows:

Up to the nineteenth century the cultural life of the Volga Muslims was more closely related with Turkistan than with the Caucasus. In the first half of the nineteenth century, partly even later, the life of Volga Muslims remained under the effect of centers of Islamic learning such as Bukhara. Since the latter

⁶⁸ Kurat, “Kazan Türklerinin ‘Medeni Uyanış’ Devri,” pp. 96-97. See also *Татары Среднего Поволжья и Приуралья*, сс. 379-380.

⁶⁹ Kurat, “Kazan Türklerinin ‘Medeni Uyanış’ Devri,” p. 97.

⁷⁰ For a concise explanation, see A. Bennigsen and Ch. Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Islam in the Soviet Union* (London, 1967), pp. 39-40.

⁷¹ Давлетшин, *Советский Татарстан*, сс. 33-34.

⁷² Battal-Taymas, *Kazan Türkleri*, p. 115.

half of the nineteenth century, however, as received Russian and European culture, the Volga Muslims increasingly took the role of enlightening their fellow Muslims in Turkistan.⁷³

Barthold described accurately the historical dynamism in cultural relations between the Volga-Ural region and Turkistan, however he tends to stress the effects of Russian and European culture. We should not miss the significance of the reformist movement of the Volga Tatars itself as well as the legacy of Islamic learning inherited from Noble Bukhara. Its intellectual authority seems to have lasted much longer than generally accepted.

⁷³ В. В. Бартольд, Кавказ, Туркестан, Волга, с. 796.