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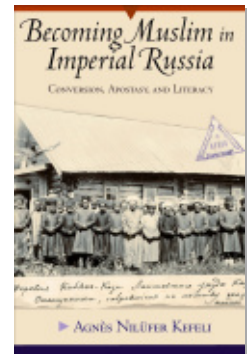
### 3. Tailors, Sufis, and Abistays: Agents of Change

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## Tailors, Sufis, and Abistays

### *Agents of Change*

Throughout the nineteenth century, the Christian-Muslim divide in the Tatar countryside was far from being absolute. From one apostasy to another, the confessional map changed depending on the work of local missionaries of Islam, the level of commitment of each community, and the way the apostasy movement was repressed. Although Russian missionaries often held that Kräshens were despised and ignored by their Muslim brethren, the frontier between Islam and Christianity was continuously defined and redefined at the microlevel, often at the expense of Christianity. Places where Kräshens met Muslim Tatars and kinship networks constituted potential sites of further Islamic acculturation. Shaykhs, mullahs, traders, craftsmen, exiles punished for their violation of Russian laws on religion, Sufi itinerant preachers, and women, who were the carriers and “readers” of marvelous stories of Islamic redemption and individual empowerment, played a decisive role in turning various ethnic groups to Islam, creating the contexts for Islamization and strengthening people’s attachment to their newly adopted faith. Those networks spread over twelve different districts, initially escaping the eyes of Russian bureaucrats who vainly sought to stop the spread of Islam by isolating apostate families from their original communities, but later preoccupying members of the Orthodox Church, who wished to further the process of adhesion to Christianity through increasing spiritual development.

A closer study of Kräshen apostasies as a process of identity formation, and not simply as an essentialist return to Islam, showed that the apostasy movement was more than a peasant revolt urging the imperial state to reconsider its religious policies and boundaries. The apostasies were also the product of a global Sufi movement, major economic developments within the Tatar community, and the underground work of female local missionaries who spread and consolidated Islamic knowledge in their clandestine schools. Trade, Sufi, and gender networks were all strongly interconnected and became vectors of myths and symbols—weaving the cultural and religious fabric of apostatizing villages. Only through the transmission of a different but still familiar set of myths was the famous Russian missionary Nikolai Il'minskii capable of challenging and transforming these knowledge networks to the benefit of Orthodoxy.

### **Economic Networks**

The apostasy movement among the *starokreshchenye* was the outcome of important economic developments in the Tatar communities of Buinsk, Laishevo, Mamadysh,

Kazan, and Malmyzh districts. Although missionary accounts tended to attribute apostasy to pecuniary motives, trade networks actually played a critical role in introducing and maintaining Islamic beliefs among the baptized Tatars. Indeed, the direct role of Tatar merchants in the nineteenth-century apostasy movements remains unclear. Missionaries argued that Tatar merchants helped apostates financially by giving them credit, but there is no direct proof of such generosity. Apostate Kräshens, however, considered it important to spread rumors about their gaining the support of Tatar merchants. In 1866, a representative of the apostates of Buinsk district (who included merchants) declared that upon his return from St. Petersburg, the famous Tatar merchant Yunusov had congratulated and covered him with presents. At the bazaar, he triumphantly displayed them—a robe (*khalat*) and morocco leather boots—as proof of the Tatar community's support.<sup>1</sup>

The Yunusov family was indeed an important symbol of success for the apostate community. The merchant 'Abd al-Kärim 'Abd ar-Räshid Yunusov (d. 1859) was the owner of a leather and soap factory in Kazan and was responsible for building a stone mosque in 1841 in Bogatyë Saby, a village where prominent Tatar theologians taught and supported the apostate cause well into the 1880s.<sup>2</sup> While in sixteenth-century Bengal Islam was associated with deforestation and agriculture, Islamic expansion in eighteenth-century Mamadysh, Laishevo, and Kazan districts was linked directly with the development of wool, cotton, and leather industries. Already in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, the region of Bogatyë Saby, which roughly included the apostate villages of Elyshevo, Kibiak-Kozi, Staraiä Ikshurma, and Ianasal, became known as an important center for wool storage and treatment. The preparation of sheepskin and wool threads constituted an important industry of this region, which could also boast of being a major manufacturer of clothing and footwear. In the beginning of the nineteenth century, cotton arrived in Mamadysh district from Central Asia and India, thanks to the Tatar merchants in Orenburg and Kargala whose ancestors originated from Bogatyë Saby. While Kräshen and Tatar women in Mamadysh and Laishevo regions sewed underwear and casual everyday clothes at home, men specialized in the making of upper clothes (*tulup*), hats, gloves, and felt or leather boots—first fulfilling local demands, and then leaving for Viatka, Perm', Simbirsk, Ufa, Orenburg, and Samara provinces or Kasimov district to sell their wares.<sup>3</sup>

As a result of the textile boom in the Bogatyë Saby and Satysh areas, many came from other provinces to find work, which prompted another trader, Khaji Nasıybullin, the owner of a felt boot workshop, to finance the construction of a madrasa in Satysh village at the end of the eighteenth century. In the middle of the nineteenth century, the madrasa of Satysh comprised three buildings and was known for its high quality of teaching. Its imam taught not only girls and boys from neighboring Tatar villages, but also Kräshen children from the baptized villages of Nikiforova and Elyshevo. Because

1. Report of the governor of Simbirsk province in *Materialy po istorii Tatarii vtoroi poloviny 19-go veka*, 272–273; petitions of Kräshen merchants living in the city of Buinsk in *ibid.*, 244–245, 265, 271, 273.

2. Khasanov, *Formirovanie*, 298–299; Mashanov's report in Nikiforova (1881) in NART, f. 967, op. 1, d. 8, l. 5 ob.

3. Richard Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier, 1204–1760* (Berkeley, 1993), 305–315; Mashanov, *Religiozno-nravstvennoe sostoianie*, 54; Men'shikov. "Achinskii prikhod" 448; Chicherina, *U privolzhskikh inorodtsev*, 152–153; NART, f. 2, op. 2, d. 12788, l. 73.

Satysh and Bogatyë Saby offered work in their factories, *starokreshchenye* villages took advantage of these new opportunities and accumulated a certain amount of wealth. Thus, successful apostates in Nikiforova and Staraiä Ikshurma offered lavish gifts of flour, grain, and beautiful clothes to neighboring Tatar mullahs. In the 1850s, an Elyshevite apostate was rich enough to participate in the financing of the mosque and school of Savrushî, where children from the baptized villages of Elyshevo, Nikiforova, and Tri Sosny occasionally took lessons. Other entrepreneurial tailors of Elyshevo opened their own shops in Kazan, Chistopol', or in the Orenburg province, coordinating apostasy efforts or avoiding police questioning back home, in their native villages. In the 1870s, a Kräshen, who had a female relative in Elyshevo, owned an important weaving factory in Bogatyë Saby and stopped the erection of an iron cross in Elyshevo.<sup>4</sup>

Because of the low yield of the fields in the region of Bogatyë Saby (to this day the land there is stony and hilly), many of the Kräshen peasants left their homes during fall and winter months to earn an income elsewhere. They returned to their families for the spring planting and summer harvest. The duration of their travels varied from two to seven months, but as a general rule, these peasants worked as seasonal laborers from October to March. In the Buinsk, Kazan, Mamadysh, and Laishevo districts, a majority worked as tailors, but some entered the service of important Tatar entrepreneurs such as the Rämiev brothers, who owned gold mines in the Orenburg region.<sup>5</sup>

By the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century, all males in Elyshevo and Kibiak-Kozi were involved in tailoring. They traveled in pairs, master and apprentice. The apprentice was a boy old enough to work (between the ages of nine and fourteen), whose presence was not necessary at home. The mullah of Kibiak-Kozi in 2000, whose grandfather and father were tailors before the 1917 Revolution, learned to sew at home; first, his father, who always started his work with *Bismillah*, made him stitch buttons. Once he became more capable, the young boy sewed linings of garments in winter clothes and then cut the cloth himself. Apart from certain minor differences, clothes that Kräshen men wore were the same as those of the Muslim Tatars: the *kazakin* (a very long robe with sleeves worn by men as an undergarment), the *tun* (fur coat), and *bishmät* (sheepskin coat) were of a similar cut. It took very little time for Kräshen tailors to familiarize themselves with the more ample and longer shirts of the Tatar men and to make the *käläpüsh*, or Muslim skullcap. Later in the first decades of the twentieth century, tailors used Singer sewing machines and loaded them on a small cart to travel.<sup>6</sup>

Master and apprentice traveled sometimes by horse but more often by foot. Paid at piece rate—not by the hour—they remained at their employer's home until they had filled the orders. As the elderly villagers of Ianyli told me, the rich prepared the

4. NART, f. 967, op. 1, d. 8, ll. 4 ob., 6; Il'minskii, ed., *Kazanskaia tsentral'naia*, 71, 74, 75; Men'shikov, "Achinskii prikhod," 448; Näjmiev and Khujin, *Yashä, Saba-Yort*, 171.

5. "Otpadeniia iz pravoslaviia," 356; "Bälki, shaghÿr' bulmas ta idem," in *Aq chäkchäk atar ide: Khäsän Tufan turında istäleklär* (Kazan, 1989), 4.

6. *Istoriko-statisticheskoe opisanie tserkvei i prikhodov Kazanskoi eparkhii*, 108; RGIA, f. 821, op. 8, ed. khr. 763, l. 5; Näbiulla khäzrät Khämîdulla, interview by author, 11 July 2000, Bol'shie Kibiak-Kozi; Iu. G. Mukhametshin, *Tatary-kriasheny. Istoriko-etnograficheskoe issledovanie material'noi kul'tury—seredina XIX–nachalo XX vekov* (Moscow, 1977), 103–107; *Tatary Srednego Povolzh'ia i Priural'ia*, 118–126.

cloth before the tailors arrived. On average, the master and the apprentice earned about five rubles per month or fifteen to twenty-five rubles during the period from October to March. This was the average price of a cow or a horse. The orientalist Mikhail Mashanov's figures were even more generous. According to his calculations, the Islamized Kräshen tailors of Shemutbashi, Mamadysh district, a village inclined toward Orthodoxy, earned between fifty and eighty rubles per person, and did not pay for their food, which allowed each of them to save twenty more rubles. If they had stayed in the village during the winter, they would have earned five times less. A large family could count on three or four salaries to increase its income.<sup>7</sup>

The Kräshen tailors of the Kazan area naturally sought customers among the Muslim Tatars of Kazan, Simbirsk, Astrakhan, Orenburg provinces and the Bashkirs of Ufa province. In the town of Buinsk, the home of staunch Islamized Kräshen merchants, an important market and leather industries attracted apostate tailors from Achi parish in Mamadysh district. And the Islamized Nagaibak Kräshens of the Orenburg province went as far as Tashkent to do business. They were hired by mullahs, shaykhs, and even the mufti himself, the official leader of the entire Muslim community in the Russian Empire.<sup>8</sup> To gain access to both Tatar and Bashkir markets, tailors left their hometowns already having donned the Muslim skullcap they kept safely all summer in the family chest, shaved their heads, and removed the belts from their clothing. Once hired, they conformed to the rules of their host family or workshop: they performed their ritual prayers (*namaz*) five times a day, observed the fast during the month of Ramadan, and attended the mosque. During 'Id al-Fitr (the festival of breaking the fast), which occurs at the conclusion of Ramadan, the Kräshen tailors working in the suburbs of Kazan dressed in their best clothes to go to the mosque while their wives prepared the feast. At work, the adult and apprentice immersed themselves in stories and legends about the Prophet. The child went to the *maktab* to ensure that he could earn his living in the future. It was with the intent of teaching his fellow villagers' sons literacy that an Islamized tailor of Nizhnii Aziak, Kazan district, offered to take them as apprentices.<sup>9</sup>

Because of their extra earnings, Kräshen tailors formed the wealthiest strata in the village and their success constituted a proof of Islam's truth and a sign of their religious devoutness. If they earned enough, they could open their own shops in the main cities of the Middle Volga and hire other covillagers. If necessary, they could lend enough money for signing the petition, and their shops provided lodging for those apostates who needed a translator for their legal documents.<sup>10</sup>

The Kräshen villages of Mamadysh and Laishevo districts affected by the mass apostasy of 1865 were located in those areas with a high proportion of tailors. Starting

7. *Materialy dlia sravnitel'noi otsenki zemel'nykh ugodii v uezdakh Kazanskoii gubernii*, vol. 6: *Uezd Mamadyshskii* (Kazan, 1888), 61; Mukhametshin, *Tatary-kriasheny*, 54; Mashanov, "Zametka," *IKE*, no. 3 (1 February 1875): 91–92.

8. Il'minskii, ed., *Kazanskaia tsentral'naia*, 131; *Pis'ma N. I. Il'minskogo k ober-prokuroru*, 57; Men'shikov, "Achinskii prikhod," 448; P. Lebedinskii, "Buinsk," in *Simbirskii sbornik*, vol. 2 (Simbirsk, 1870), 124–126, 139.

9. NART, f. 4, op. 98, d. 34, l. 159; "O shkole dlia pervonachal'nogo obucheniia detei kreshchenykh," in *Kazanskaia tsentral'naia*, ed. Il'minskii, 92; Chicherina, *U privolzhskikh inorodtsev*, 152–153.

10. Malov, "Ocherk," 18, pt. 1 (1872): 399.

at the end of the eighteenth century, Krāshens of Elyshevo and Saltygan Kliuch left for the cities of Kazan and Chistopol', or Menzelinsk district. In the same area, villagers of Savrushii started tailoring later, in the 1840s, and, coincidentally, apostatized later under the influence of Elyshevite relatives, in 1879. In the *volost'* of Elyshevo, sixteen of twenty-one villages had seasonal laborers among their populations. In some villages, itinerant laborers comprised half the inhabitants. In general, the greater the proportion of itinerant tailors, the greater the Islamization of a given village. In Niki-forova, a village slightly touched by the apostasy movement in the 1860s and 1880s, the peasants enjoyed a higher yield, and because of the proximity of dense forests, involved themselves in woodwork. Unlike the villagers of Elyshevo *volost'*, only a very few left the village. Significantly, the peasants of Kibiak-Kozi *volost'*, with the largest number (1,122) of seasonal tailors in Laishevo district, proved to be more obstinate in their apostasy than their neighbors; unlike nearby Elyshevo village, Kibiak-Kozi refused to rescind its petition to be recognized as Muslim, even when the governor came with his troops in June 1866. The only family in Kibiak-Kozi who refused to apostatize well into the 1890s was headed by a miller who worked among Russians.<sup>11</sup>



3.1: The only family in Kibiak-Kozi that did not apostatize. RGIA, f. 821, op. 4, d. 72, photograph no. 7. No date. Photograph courtesy of RGIA.

11. *Istoriko-statisticheskoe opisaniie tserkvei i prikhodov Kazanskoi eparkhii*, 108, 161, 164, 268; *Materialy dlia sravnitel'noi*, 6: 61; 7: 119; Il'minskii, ed., *Kazanskaia tsentral'naia*, 275; Khasanov, *Formirovanie*, 225; NART, f. 2, op. 2, d. 5136, ll. 8 ob.-9.

Overall, the villages in Mamadysh and Laishevo districts that did not show strong signs of Islamic influence until the Revolution were those whose land was relatively richer, with a more diversified economy, including apiculture, forestry, pottery, or joinery. Villages in areas often dominated by Russians, animistic, or Christian Finno-Ugric or Chuvash peoples also tended to resist Islamization. In Kovali, the Krāshens never left the land and remained Christian.<sup>12</sup> If the land decreased its yield, suffered savage deforestation or drought, villagers turned to seasonal work that could potentially expose them to the Tatar textile and leather market, unless they opted to work in areas predominantly populated by Udmurts or Maris who shared their beliefs in the *kirāmāt* spirits, and were also baptized. Thus, Verkhnie Meretiaki in Laishevo district, whose land was no richer than in Elyshevo and whose men worked as tailors to complement their earning, never apostatized. Unlike the Elyshevites, the villagers worked among the nonbaptized Chuvash of Chistopol' district who shared their cosmology. They also found work in Russian factories and coal mines, as did the Krāshens of Verkhniaia Serda and Chura.<sup>13</sup>

Because Russians lived nearby, the villages of Selengush, Panovka, Serda, Kazyli, Meretiaki, Karabaian, and Iantsovary in Laishevo district were less exposed to Islamic influence and embraced Il'minskii's school enthusiastically. However, they were not totally immune to Islam's influence. In the 1890s, three well-to-do families in Iantsovary and another one in Kazyli were strongly Islamized. They covered their icons and crosses with towels, and even shared marital links with the apostate village of Kibiak-Kozi. Only when Christian schooling took firmer root did these villages stop sharing brides.<sup>14</sup>

Missionaries often blamed the Krāshens' attraction to Islam on their mobility. The Kazan Theological Academy professor Ivan Pokrovskii (1865–1941) suggested opening libraries in Krāshen villages with books on agriculture and apiculture in their native language to keep men from leaving the village and turn them into successful farmers. Indeed, at the beginning of the twentieth century, one pood (approximately sixteen kilograms) of honey was sold for six rubles and fifty kopecks, and could match the thirty to sixty rubles tailors earned during fall and spring in Muslim land, if produced at a reasonable quantity. Not just a food product, honey could also serve to make candles for worship at home or at church.<sup>15</sup>

Krāshens of Mamadysh, Chistopol', and Laishevo districts who remained faithful to Christianity made furniture, window frames, beehives, threshers, and wheels. They also prepared charcoal that could be sold at local markets and to middle men. The Krāshen village of Pestretsy (Peträch), Mamadysh district, had its ceramics, parquets, dishes, and pots exhibited in Kazan during the 1912 all-Russian fair. Aware of the connection between tailors and Islamization, the Brotherhood of St. Gurii tried to create economic alternatives that might keep Christian Tatars in the Orthodox faith.

12. "Kratkie svedeniia o religioznom sostoianii inorodtsev Kazanskoï eparkhii," *IKE*, nos. 27–28 (15–22 July 1911): 832.

13. *Istoriko-statisticheskoe opisanie tserkvei i prikhodov Kazanskoï eparkhii*, 364; G.P. "Skromnye torzhestva v prikhode sela Meretiak, Laishevskogo uezda," *IKE*, no. 23 (1 December 1901): 1083. Interviews by author of elderly Krāshen people in Saryi Karabaian (May 1996), Chura (12 May 2008), and Urias'bash (14 May 2008); Nikolai Petrov (Krāshen from Verkhniaia Serda), April 2008, National Archive of the Republic of Tatarstan, Kazan.



3.2: Krāshens standing in front of their church in Iantsovary, Laishevo District. RGIA, f. 821, op. 4, d. 72, photograph no. 2. No date. Photograph courtesy of RGIA.

Concerned by the increasing number of apostates in Apazovo, Kazan district, missionaries opened a carpentry-turnery school in 1907 to keep the boys from tailoring with their fathers. In the same spirit, the Brotherhood school of Staraiā Ikshurma started a cobbler workshop and the school of Subash (Gorokhovie Pole, Mamadysh district) opened a workshop manufacturing wheels and sleigh runners, but all in vain.<sup>16</sup>

Marital links provide further evidence of interconnection between the spread and consolidation of Islam in baptized villages and the growth of textile and leather activity in the Laishevo, Mamadysh, and Kazan districts. Marriage alliances connected Elyshevo and Kibiak-Kozi with other major centers of the textile and leather industry in the northern part of the district of Mamadysh and Kazan district. According to the Chura parish priest in northern Mamadysh district, the *starokreshchenye* of Otary showed no sign of Islamization until the 1860s. Unlike the *starokreshchenye* of Shemordan who lived among Muslims, they resided in a predominantly Russian area. There was no mosque close by, and they neither shaved their heads nor observed Ramadan. Before the 1860s, they had even asked for the opening of a parish school.

14. NART, f. 4, op. 131, d. 34, ll. 1–1 ob.; Chicherina, *U privolzhskikh inorodtsev*, prilozhenie no. 1, pp. 7, 10; Nikolai Petrov, interview by author, National Archive of the Republic of Tatarstan, Kazan, April 2008.

15. *Istoriko-statisticheskoe opisanie tserkvei i prikhodov Kazanskoi eparkhii*, XXVIII; Mukhametshin, *Tatary-Kriasheny*, 51.

16. Mukhametshin, *Tatary-Kriasheny*, 50–55; Pavel and Mikhail Apushev, *Pitrāch—bezneng tughan jir* (Kazan, 2000), 6–7; *Istoriko-statisticheskoe opisanie tserkvei i prikhodov Kazanskogo uezda*, 72.



But in 1872, fifty families apostatized under the leadership of the underground mullah Kiril Vasil'ev, who was later exiled to Siberia. Clerics discovered that the men of Otary worked in the nearby lamb and sheepskin factories located in Tatar villages of Shemordan and Tarlau, and also as tailors in Tatar and Udmurt villages, also “affected” by Islam. Otary’s daughters-in-law came from nearby Shemordan but also from the more distant villages of Verkhniaia Oshtorma and Ianyli near Kukmor, east of Shemordan, a city founded in the second quarter of the eighteenth century and an important center for wool industry in the second half of the nineteenth century. Other daughters-in-law originated from more distant villages, such as Kibiak-Kozi and Elyshevo, whose economic development was closely connected to Satysh and Bogatyë Saby. The area covered by the kinship-economic network of Otary was impressive, roughly 2,500 square kilometers, and was sandwiched between two important centers of wool and leather industries, Bogatyë Saby and Shemordan.<sup>17</sup>

Seven Tatar factories in Shemordan and Tarlau (with a combined work force of 1,400–2,800 persons) attracted some Russians, but mostly Muslim Tatars, Kräshens, apostates, and animistic Udmurts. Kasimov merchants, who found it easier to process Siberian and Central Asian sheepskins from Shemordan than from Riazan', were partly responsible for opening these factories. Missionaries and clerics in the second half of the nineteenth century blamed the Musaev, Davletkil'deev, Maksiutov, and Kostrov families, whose yearly revenue ranged from 18,000 to 50,000 rubles, for hiring Kräshen tailors and turning them Muslim. A number of Kräshens worked with Tatars in the tailors' guild (*artel'*), sewing hats and fur coats, and currying lambskin. While in close contact with Tatars, those Kräshens participated in Muslim daily rituals, and mullahs visited their workshop. Together they shared meals which, to the clerics' indignation, included horse meat. The Kräshen missionary Timofeev bitterly noted that, while Orthodox Russians and Kräshens had to stand respectfully before their clerics, mullahs simply sat, ate, and shared their faith in a language accessible to all, which to his view, greatly favored the spread of Islam.<sup>18</sup>

The Sufi scholar and poet 'Abd ar-Rähim Utiz Imäni insisted that all steps in sheepskin tanning and leather manufacturing be placed in Muslims' hands, perhaps to better integrate the baptized Tatars and animists into the Islamic domain. His position was extreme and not shared by all Hanafi jurists in Central Asia, who allowed Muslims to buy skins tanned by Christians. There was even a joke transmitted by Märjani that illustrated Utiz Imäni's intransigence: anyone who possessed anything that looked like a cross faced his disapproval; even a window transom did not escape his wrath. Such an uncompromising position, shared by some in the Middle Volga, meant that Kräshens who wished to access or benefit from the Muslim market had to live exclusively by Muslim rules. This position could have accelerated the Kräshens'

17. NART, f. 4, op. 98, d. 9, ll. 44–45; f. 4, op. 98, d. 23, l. 156; f. 4, op. 138, d. 12, l. 1 ob. *Topograficheskaia karta: "Respublika Tatarstan," masshtab 1:200 000, 2000* (2nd ed.), 14–15; *Tatary*, ed. Urazmanova and Cheshko, 188; Valentin Berkutov, *Nyr'inskaia starina v oblike Kukmorskogo regiona (liudi, sobytiia, fakty)* (Kazan, 2003), 11.

18. NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 9736, l. 7; f. 4, op. 98, d. 9, ll. 44–73; f. 4, op. 101, d. 11, ll. 114–119 ob.; f. 10, op. 2, d. 1383, l. 126; Vasilii V. Doronkin, “Kasimovskaia protivomusul'manskaia missiia,” *PB* 6, no. 16, bk. 2 (August 1899): 370–73; N. A. Khalikov, *Khoziaistvo tatar Povolzh'ia i Urala* (Kazan, 1995), 179–180; Farida Sharifullina, *Kasimovskie Tatary: Istoriko-etnograficheskoe issledovanie traditsionnoi narodnoi kul'tury sere diny XIX–nachala XX vekov* (Riazan, 2004), 36.

involvement in Tatar economy and their acculturation in the first part of the nineteenth century.<sup>19</sup>

But not all Krāshens involved themselves in the Tatar market. Others in Shemordan preferred to work in Russian Orthodox *artel'* where icons were displayed prominently. Such a preference indicates that associating Christianity among the Krāshens solely with agriculture and Islam with manufacture and economic development is misleading. In general, Soviet and Tatar historiographies have viewed Krāshen society as essentially fixed in time, rural, rather poor, and strongly egalitarian. This image stemmed from the Christian missionaries themselves, who feared that the Tatar market, and in some way the Russian market, would lure their flock away. They hoped to protect them from both Islam and the growing religious indifference of the Russian bourgeoisie.<sup>20</sup>

In the eighteenth century, baptized Tatars living along the road of Arsk were involved in Krāshen mining industries.<sup>21</sup> They worked in the copper foundries of the Inozemtsevs, a famous entrepreneurial Krāshen family who also owned distilleries. Their foundries were located near Kukmor, north of Mamadysh district on Taishevka River, and in Ishteriakovo, Menzelinsk district, Orenburg province, fifteen versts (about sixteen kilometers) from the Nagaibak fortress where baptized Tatars served as Cossacks. For strategic reasons, Muslim Tatars were forbidden to open such factories but converts to Christianity could, and they hired their coreligionists; thus in 1751, Semen Inozemtsev, and then his brother Petr, used free baptized labor to dig and transport copper on the Ik, Kama, and Viatka Rivers from Ishteriakovo to near Kukmor. In Malaia Chura, an old convert village originally founded by Chuvash, Maris, or Udmurts in the Kukmor region, the copper tranches are still visible; the villagers used to dig copper, melt it, and make dishes and other indispensable tools well into the nineteenth century.<sup>22</sup>

The elderly of Elyshevo still remember that there were two copper mines in their village at the foot of their hills along the spring. The street-long village located at

19. "Traktat o vydelke kozh (Risala-i dibaga)," in *Antologïia tatarskoi bogoslovskoi mysli: Gabdrakhim Utyz-Imiani al-Bulgari* (Kazan, 2007), 79–89; Shikhab ad-Din Mardzhani, *Wafiat al-aslaf va takhiiat al-akhlaf* (Podrobnoe o predshestvennikakh i privetstvie potomkam), trans. from Arabic by A. N. Iuzeev (Kazan, 1999), 84.

20. Nikolai Vorob'ev, *Kriasheny i Tatory: Nekotorye dannye po sravnitel'noi kharakteristike byta* (Kazan, 1929), 6; Geraci, *Window on the East*, 127–129.

21. The baptized villages on the Arsk road comprised Abdi, Aivan, Apazovo, Ianasal, Verkhniĭ Aziak, Bol'shie Kibiak-Kozi, Verkhniĭ Kitiak, Verkhniaia Ura, Verkhniaia Chura, Durga, Kyrbash, Mamsia, Nizhniĭ Aziak, Nizhniĭ Otari, Nizhniaia Ura, Nizhniĭ Urias', Novoe Churilino, Nurma, Oshtorma-Ium'ia, Panovaia Gora, Staryi Aivan, Staroe Grishkino, Chura, Ianyli, and others. Many of these villages are listed in the seventeenth-century cadastres of Kazan district and have a history of apostasy. *Pistsovaia kniga Kazanskogo uezda 1602–1603* (Kazan, 1979), 123–131.

22. Khasanov, *Formirovanie*, 33–34, 49, 51, 302; Pavel Liubomirov, *Ocherki po istorii metallurgicheskoi i metalloobrabatvayushchei promyshlennosti v Rossii (XVII, XVIII i nach. XIX vv.)* (Leningrad, 1937), 108, 122–124; *Istoriia Tatarii v dokumentakh i materialakh*, 230–233; Rychkov, *Topografiia Orenburgskoi gubernii*, 269–270; Nikolai Pavlenko, *Razvitie metallurgicheskoi promyshlennosti Rossii v pervoi polovine XVIII veka: Promyshlennaia politika i upravlenie* (Moscow, 1953), 453; idem, *Istoriia metallurgii v Rossii XVIII veka: Zavody i zavodovladel'tsy* (Moscow, 1962), 282–284, 422–426; Iskhakov, "Etnodemograficheskoe razvitie Nagaibakov," 7, 5, 9 (Nagaibak Krāshens and Krāshens from Apazovo on the Arsk road shared kinship ancestry); "Keche Chura," unpublished memoirs collected by the head of the after-school Krāshen program of Chura High School, Galina Azina, n.d.

the bottom of impressive hills indeed exhibited all the necessary conditions for the proper working of copper mines or foundries: it had water, minerals, and forests (now depleted). Malov, who was quick to determine the Krāshens' source of income, failed to mention the mines in his 1866 diary. It is likely that the mines produced very little and that their decline coincided with the steady development of textile and leather industry in the Bogatyē Saby region during the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Usually, copper mines or foundries were fragile, and textile-related jobs brought a higher and more reliable supplementary income. Although one village tradition recalled the forced baptism of the Elyshevites in the Mesha River (which implied that they had always been Muslim), another mentioned that the village was formed by migrant baptized individuals (including Udmurts). These individuals could initially have been attracted by the presence of copper in their hills: the very first baptized settlement was close to the river and the hills. Coincidentally, until the twentieth century, the tailors of Elyshevo traveled to the village of Toygilde (Tuykilde) in Menzelinsk district, which was famous for its copper mines. Well into the Soviet period, Krāshens left their villages temporarily to work in the mines of Donbas and the copper mines of Perm' and Viatka provinces. This was the case of Krāshens in the villages of Chura and Verkhniaia Serda, still strongly Christian today.<sup>23</sup>

Trade routes undoubtedly played a central role in the extension of the apostasy-conversion movement. They provided the necessary tools of resistance for the forcefully displaced baptized Tatars or those who wished to avoid arrest. Itinerant tailors who led the mass apostasies were able to draw on their knowledge of the area to survive economically. Some apostates exiled in 1837 did not report to their new parish priests until 1846. Others, such as the apostate Krāshens of Spassk district who were exiled in 1843, 1849, and 1856, never did. Still others only remained for a short period at their place of exile before they, too, disappeared. They neither worked the land allotted to them nor used the communal fodder. The baptized Tatar Ivanov family, who had been exiled from Almurzina, Tetiushi district, to Bol'shaia Taiaba village, appeared in Taiaba only to pay their communal taxes and renew their internal passports. Exiled apostates preferred to support themselves by tailoring in Muslim villages or by marrying their children to those who had not been deported from their native villages, and in this way kept kinship links with their former communities. Finally, after their representatives were exiled to Siberia, tailors from Elyshevo and Kibiak-Kozi continued to urge Krāshens of Menzelinsk district, among whom they resided and worked, to apostatize.<sup>24</sup>

Apostate tailors, exiled or not, came back to their village at spring and summer agrarian festivals. These festivities offered them valuable economic and communal support, and represented another conduit for the spread of Islamic knowledge.

23. *Istoriko-statisticheskoe opisanie tserkvei i prikhodov Kazanskoi eparkhii*, 104, 364; interviews by author of elderly people in Elyshevo and Chura, May 2008; Khasanov, *Formirovanie*, 33–34; Tahir Kārimov, "Tuykilde awāli," *Miras* no. 3 (1994): 141.

24. NART, f. 1, op. 2, d. 1372, ll. 1–2 ob.; f. 1, op. 2, d. 399, ll. 13 ob.-14; Malov, "Prikhody starokreshchenykh," 17, no. 8 (1865): 479; and 18, no. 10 (1865): 286–89; RGIA, f. 821, op. 8, d. 763, l. 300.

25. *Jiyyūn qīṣṣasī* (1881) in Nikolai Katanov, *Materialy k izucheniiu kazansko-tatarskogo narechiia*, pt. 1 (Kazan, 1898), 82–92. Some mullahs sent petitions to the governor of Kazan and the Ministry of Interior to stop the *jiyyūns*, NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 6030, ll. 1–6 ob.; NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 7233, ll. 1–3; Raufa Urazmanova, *Obriady i prazdniki tatar Povolzh'ia i Urala (Godovoi tsikl XIX–nach. XX vv.)* (Kazan, 2001), 9, 73–74.

Nineteenth-century Russian missionaries suspected that these festivals played an essential role in the Islamization of Krāshens. However, Soviet historians and even present-day Tatar folklorists have minimized their religious importance and interpreted them as pagan relics. Nineteenth-century mullahs, who decried their hybridity, alcohol, and dubious trade practices, petitioned to the local Russian authorities to ban them. Still, agrarian festivities constituted a very important religious network for the apostates, who besides doing business gathered as a community to share news about the development of their cause, inquire about the possibilities of joining Islam openly, gain community support, find appropriate matches for their children, and openly declare their religious identity. Before the beginning of the festivities, mullahs, despite their criticisms, often agreed to visit homes with their wives and read the Qur'an.<sup>25</sup>

In the village of Elyshevo, the spring festival of the plow, called *Sabantuy* by Muslim Tatars and *Sörän* by Krāshens, signaled the beginning of their 1866 apostasy. Other than the *Sabantuy*, the villagers of Elyshevo also celebrated the *jīyīn* summer festival, which began at the end of May or the beginning of June and lasted from four to seven weeks. These agrarian festivals were occasions for relatives to meet, merchants to sell their goods, bards to sing epic poems, displaced apostates to exchange news and connect with other coreligionists, tailors to display their riches and run their business, and young Tatars and Islamized Krāshens to choose an appropriate spouse. The summer festival linked Elyshevo to a wider network of support. Beginning on a Friday, summer *jīyīn* festivals, unlike spring festivals, moved between villages that belonged to an established kinship network; each village hosted the fair for three or four days. The apostate village of Elyshevo belonged to the *jīyīn* of Mamalai, a very small Muslim village, which included other Tatar villages, Satysh, Balandysh, and Kazanchi Bigenevoo (Qazanchi Bigänäy). All three played a part in the Islamization history of Elyshevo and provided comfort for the mind and body: the butcher of Balandysh provided *halal* (canonically lawful) meat for the Elyshevites, and the wife of its mullah educated some of the children; the mullahs, *abīstays*, and students of the famous Satysh madrasa also taught; and in the 1880s, the road to Kazanchi Bigenevoo led the Elyshevites to visit its famous Sufi shaykh when they fell sick.<sup>26</sup>

According to the Soviet ethnologist Nikolai Vorob'ev, the *jīyīns* originally corresponded to the territorial divisions of the tenth-century Volga Bolghar state. The village at the center of the *jīyīn* network often, but not always, contained the oldest cemeteries and other monuments; and some of these villages were often the focus of local pilgrimages. Most interestingly, they came to serve as a point of contact between Islamized Krāshens and the Tatars.<sup>27</sup> From 1839 through 1849, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Holy Synod, not realizing that the Russian village of

26. Epic of Elyshevo in Malov, "Ocherk," 18, pt. 1 (1872): 403; Zahidullin, "Jilish awılı mäkr'uhları," 46, no. 9 (1995): 113; information gathered by author in Qazanchi Bigänäy and Elyshevo, May 2000; Malov, "Ocherk," 17, pt. 3 (1871): 408 and 18, pt. 1 (1872): 241; Yakhya Abdullin, "Milli bāyrāmebez," in *Millät yazmishi: Uylanular* (Kazan, 1999), 75–84; Firdäus Gharipova, *Rukhi bashqalabiz: Māshhūr tatar awılları* (Kazan, 2005), 32.

27. *Otchet o deiatel'nosti Bratstva Sv. Guriia za dvadtsat' vtoroi bratskii god s 4-go oktiabria 1888 g. po 4-oe oktiabria 1889 goda* (Kazan, 1889), 34; *Tatary Srednego Povolzh'ia i Priural'ia*, 202.

Blagoveshchenskoe (known as Omar among the Tatars) was a *jiiyin* center, exiled some of the apostate leaders there. Instead of being isolated from Muslims, these apostates found themselves at the center of an important kinship and economic network of the Muslim Tatars. Thus the time of the fair, St. John's Day (*Ivanov den'*), coincided with the time of the *jiiyin* festival (*Omar jiiyini*) and every Sunday during the winter season the Russian village hosted a market. Tatars visited the fair, and the displaced apostates found the contact they needed to conduct basic Muslim rituals. Because Omar had no Muslim cemetery, apostates turned to the mullah of Urazbaktino, a village located on the same river as Blagoveshchenskoe. Urazbaktino belonged to the Omar *jiiyin* network and also dated from the times of the Khans. Its mullah Mōhāmmād Shārif b. Sāyf ad-Din, knowingly or unknowingly defying the law, buried their dead in the village cemetery. A generation later, during the apostate movement of 1865–1870, Muslim Tatars and apostates used the same strategic position of the fair to help spread news of the apostasy of the Chistopol' *novokreshchenye* among the *starokreshchenye* of Mamadysh district, who for the first time officially began to renounce their Christianity.<sup>28</sup>

The Krāshens of Staraia Ikshurma, which was part of another *jiiyin* network that involved both Krāshen and Tatar villages, also gradually moved toward Islam despite the presence of Russians (who constituted more than half of the population), the opening of a Brotherhood school in 1867–1868, the construction of a separate building for the school in 1874, and the consecration of a church in 1891 with mixed liturgies in Tatar and Russian. Its market attracted neighboring Muslim Tatars who stayed overnight in Krāshen houses. The visitors included the mullahs of Bogatyē Saby, who were well known for their knowledge of Islamic sciences, and apostates from Elyshevo village. As for the Russian residents, they usually avoided the market, which they contemptuously labeled “pagan” because it sold horse meat. However, the presence of Russian sectarian Molokan laborers in Staraia Ikshurma further complicated the picture for Eastern Orthodox missionaries: the iconoclastic Molokans told Krāshens that worshiping man-made icons was a sin, which only confirmed apostate Tatars in the veracity of Islam.<sup>29</sup>

Similar to the *jiiyin* of Staraia Ikshurma was that of Ianyli in the Kukmor region. Like Staraia Ikshurma, Ianyli was a mixed village of Krāshens and apostates involved in tailoring whose weekly fair attracted both Tatars and Krāshens from neighboring villages. Its *jiiyin* included the villages of Tarlau, Shemordan, Kainsar, Porshur, Malaia Chura, all involved in leather and textile industries and all responsible for the Islamization of surrounding Krāshens and Udmurts. The market of Ianyli, which attracted Tatars from three important economic and scholarly centers—Maskara, Tiunter, and

28. Malov, “Prikhody starokreshchenykh,” no. 12 (1865): 464–66, 482–483, 487–488, 491; idem, “Ocherk,” 18, pt. 1 (1872): 239; *Kazanskaia guberniia. Spisok naseleennykh mest po svedeniim 1859 goda* (SPb., 1866); Urazmanova, *Obriady i prazdniki tatar*, 163; NART, f. 2, op. 1, d. 1954, ll. 1–2.

29. *Otchet o deiatel'nosti Bratstva Sv. Guriia za semnadtsatyi bratskii god*, 13–14; “Iz zhizni kreshchenykh inorodtsev Kazanskogo kraia,” 31; “Zakladka tserkvi,” no. 15 (1 August 1891): 468–470; N. N., “Osviashchenie khrama v sele Staroi Ikshurme,” *IKE*, no. 22 (15 November 1891): 678–685; Urazmanova, *Obriady i prazdniki tatar*, 160.

Bogatye Saby—was so well known to the Russian missionaries for selling Muslim religious literature and artifacts that it prompted them to distribute Christian books in Tatar language, icons, and crosses at no cost to the baptized of the same village in the 1890s.<sup>30</sup>

Potentially, any village or town market could serve as a link between the Kräshen apostates and the Muslims, and as a conduit for the spread of Islamic literature and artifacts. Sokol'ie Gory, Mamadysh district, which had become the new home of deported apostates from Spassk district, constituted an important transitory passage on the Kama River. Its pontoon bridge allowed Tatars from Orenburg to go to Kazan district. They stayed overnight in the apostates' homes or eating houses as they did in Staraia Ikshurma or Apazovo. In 1839, the minister of state domains, and in 1866, the governor of Simbirsk recommended deporting apostates to more remote areas than to neighboring Russian villages in Kazan province.<sup>31</sup>

### Religious Sufi Networks

The apostasy movement in Kazan province was more than the outcome of important economic developments in the Tatar communities of Laishevo, Mamadysh, Kazan, and Malmyzh districts; it was also the product of a powerful Sufi reform movement beyond the borders of Imperial Russia. Aside from economic networks, sacred networks and their guardians played a significant role in the spread of Islam. As Sufi books suggested, Sufi spiritual leaders or shaykhs (also called *ishans*), living or dead, were potent figures who could change the natural order. Besides having a tremendous impact on the imagination of the Tatar and non-Muslim indigenous peoples of the Middle Volga, some of the community Sufi leaders were powerful businessmen located in major textile centers. No less than Russian missionaries, however, Tatar modernists were very critical of the shaykhs and itinerant Sufis whom they called “dervishes.” They ridiculed their use of talismans and antiquated methods of healing, called them parasites and charlatans, blamed them for neglecting basic Islamic rituals, and considered them to be obstacles in the way of economic progress. However, those same shaykhs were involved in textile and leather industries, actively proselytized among the baptized and nonbaptized Turkic and Finno-Ugric peoples of the Kazan and Viatka provinces, and played an active role in the orchestration of the apostasy movement.<sup>32</sup>

30. *Otchet o deiatel'nosti Bratstva Sv. Guriia za dvadtsat' sed'moi bratskii god s 4 oktiabريا 1893 goda po 4 oktiabريا 1894 goda* (Kazan, 1894), 55–56; Urazmanova, *Obriady i prazdniki tatar*, 162; interviews of elderly people in Ianyli by author, May 2008.

31. Malov, “Prikhody starokreshchenykh,” no. 10 (1865): 287; idem (Iapei Babai), “O kreshchenykh tatarakh,” no. 20 (15 October 1891): 633–635; NART, f. 2, op. 1, d. 1907, l. 80 ob.; *Materialy po istorii Tatarii vtoroi poloviny 19-go veka*, 269.

32. Otdel rukopisei Kazanskoi nauchnoi biblioteki im. Lobachevskogo, f. 7, ed. khr. 1, ll. 191–195; “Möritlär qaberstaninnan ber awaz” and “Maqtanishu” (1906), in *Ghabdulla Tuqay*, t. 1 (Kazan, 1955), 21, 57–58; “Dinne ashap betera yazghan ishan wa mullalar khaqinda” (1906), in Näjip Dumawi, *Tormish säkhifäläre* (Kazan, 1985), 48–49; Thierry Zarcone, “Un aspect de la polémique autour du soufisme dans le monde tatar, au début du XXe siècle: Mysticisme et confrèrisme chez Müsä Djärallah Bigi,” in *L'Islam de Russie*, 227–236.

Sufi *ishans* were quite popular among the Muslim Tatars, the Kräshens, the Chuvash, and the Maris for their thaumaturgical gifts. Two Tatar workers asked a young Kräshen teacher, trained in Il'minskii's school, whether Christian priests had the power to read peoples' thoughts and heal the sick as their local saint did. The teacher answered that in Christianity, saints were not physically alive, but could be recognized as saints after their death. This answer did not satisfy the two Muslims, for whom the powers of the shaykhs were proof that Islam was the true faith. Many communities indeed recognized the *ishans'* healing powers. Near the villages of Elyshevo and Kibiak-Kozi, the shaykh of Kazanchi Bigeneevo, Mamadysh district, Wäli Ähmäd (1848–1919), had a thorough knowledge of medicinal herbs and owned a hospital that attracted neighboring Kräshens and Udmurts.<sup>33</sup> In the district of Buinsk, Simbirsk province, Islamized and Christian Chuvash brought children suffering from epilepsy and rickets to local mullahs who prayed over them. And in Menzelsinsk district, the Tatar *ishan* of Bogady village even attracted Maris from Elabuga and Sarapul' in Viatka province, Birsik and Belebei in Ufa province, at the expense of local Mari and Chuvash sorcerers who enjoyed good reputations. During his meeting with a patient, witnesses reported, the Tatar *ishan* stressed the superiority of his prayers. Whereas local sorcerers' magic formulas were effective only once, his own prayers, drawn from the Qur'an, had a universal character and a continuous effect against evil spirits. The *ishan's* discourse echoed the language of newly converted Maris who presented their conversion to Islam as a liberation from evil spirits: "When you become a Muslim, the *kirämät* does not touch you anymore."<sup>34</sup>

The Islamic discourse on the spirits had a certain impact on native traditions, without necessarily displacing them. Under the influence of Muslim Bashkirs, Tep-tiars, and Mishars, Kräshen sorcerers in Belebei district added *Bismillah* to their own formulas to enhance their efficacy. As in other animist cultures, the *ishan's* popularity could be attributed to the power of literacy in a predominantly illiterate or semiliterate environment. Kazan typographies furnished mullahs or any Muslim with books of exorcism and interpretation of dreams, composed of short chapters of the Qur'an that could be either copied or cut into the form of talismans. Itinerant mullahs and students sold these brochures and other types of religious literature in the countryside. This trade constituted another channel by which Islamic literacy gained publicity in the Kräshen milieu.<sup>35</sup>

Russian sources indicated that in Spassk district literate itinerant beggars helped Islamized "baptized" Tatars get married or bury their dead the Islamic way. These beggars were itinerant Sufis who played an important part in the spread of rumors

33. Interview by author of elderly people in Qazanchi Bigänäy, May 2000; NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 9603, l. 117; Otdel rukopisei Instituta iazyka, literatury i istorii Akademii nauk Tatarstana, f. 56, op. 1, ed. khr. 3, ll. 83 ob.-84; Idiyä Sälimova, "Bigänäy ishanı turında riwayätlär," *Saba Tangnarı*, no. 84 (3 August 1995): 2; no. 86 (8 August 1995): 2; Näjmiev and Khujin, *Yashä, Saba-Yort*, 29–34.

34. K. Prokop'ev, "Vliianie tatar-musul'man na chuvash," *PB* 1, no. 7, bk. 1 (April 1906): 319; similar cases could be observed among the Kräshens, see NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 3272, l. 46 ob.; Nikolai Katanov, "Narodnye sposoby lecheniia u bashkir i kreshchenykh tatar Belebeevskogo uезда Ufimskoi gubernii," *IOAIE* 16, no. 1 (1900): 1–14; Eruslanov, "Magometanskaia propaganda," no. 16 (1895): 385.

35. Katanov, "Narodnye sposoby lecheniia," 1–14; Malov, "Pravoslavnaia protivomusul'manskaia," 14, pt. 2, no. 7 (1868): 246–249, 250–253.

preceding the apostasies. They chanted the Qur'an and *munajat* and explained God's word in a language accessible to all. Similar to the world-renouncing *Qalandars* (Sufi vagabonds) of the Ottoman Empire in their scandalous dress and ascetic practices, these mysterious Sufis, whose identities and sociological background remain obscure, preached among Krāshens, Chuvash, and Maris. They reminded their audiences of the end of times, vividly described pious deeds and future rewards in paradise, and claimed that any subject in Russia could freely choose Islam. In 1901, one of them walked barefoot in freezing weather through the Chuvash villages in Buguruslan district. In their speech, they liked to draw metaphors from local cultures. Thus, a Tatar wanderer among the Chuvash of Samara province quoted their favorite dishes as future treats in their afterlife. To the clergy's dismay, Krāshens, animist Maris, and baptized Chuvash highly respected those wanderers for their clairvoyance and offered them presents. Some of them, however, did not live on alms alone, but also sold little household articles, such as scissors.<sup>36</sup>

Besides those itinerant Sufis, important heads of Qur'anic schools were shaykhs who let Krāshens approach them and attend their teaching. Although there is no direct evidence of Sufi initiation (*bay'at*, "oath" pledged to a Sufi master) among the Krāshens, Mari converts to Islam did undergo an initiation that had Sufi characteristics. New male converts had to fast thirty days and pray five times prior to a special ceremony at the mosque. Dressed in white and barefoot, they swore fidelity to their new faith and promised to educate their children as Muslims. The women's ceremony took place in the mullah's house or in a private home. Submission to God's rule, purity, and austerity, as suggested by the clothing, were important features of Sufism.<sup>37</sup>

If no direct evidence of a Sufi initiation can be found among the Krāshens, they nevertheless had strong connections with Sufism. Among the books confiscated by the police in the mixed Krāshen and Chuvash village of Azbaba, Sviiazhsk district, was a manuscript describing the rules of Sufi orders—which revealed a local interest in Sufism. On the road to Elyshevo, near Tokhtamyshovo, a priest witnessed funerals accompanied with prayers and "chants," which might suggest that the baptized attendees chanted Sufi litanies (*zīkr*). Even if there is no direct nineteenth-century witness that apostate tailors performed Sufi methods of concentration and prayer during their long hours of work, indirect oral evidence suggests that they did. The descendants of Elyshevite tailors still remember that, while sewing, their grandparents sang *munajat*, which involved the repetition of simple Qur'anic verses, and in particular the repetition of *La Ilaha illallah* (There is no God but Allah), the first part of the *shahada* or profession of faith, which was also a central component of Sufi litanies. Sufi shaykhs also hired baptized tailors, who while working could learn from the shaykh and also identify themselves, physically and mentally, with the prophet-tailor Enoch and the

36. NART, f. 2, op. 2, d. 4960, l. 4; f. 4, op. 99, d. 20, l. 6 ob.; Antonii Ivanov, "Otstupnicheskoe dvizhenie ... Derevnia Alekseevka," 151; idem, "Otstupnicheskoe dvizhenie kreshchenykh i nekreshchenykh chuvash Samarskoi gubernii v magometanstvo," *PB* 16, no. 14, bk. 2 (July 1908): 253; idem, "Tsarstvo islama," 108–109; Bagin, "Ob otpadenii," 227; Eruslanov, "Magometanskaia propaganda," no. 16 (1895): 389; "Izvelechenie iz otcheta eparkhial'nogo inorodcheskogo missionera o sostoianii inorodcheskoi missii v Viatskoi eparkhii za 1909," *Viatskie eparkhial'nye vedomosti*, no. 22 (2 June 1911): 464; Ahmet Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends: Dervish Groups in the Islamic Later Middle Period, 1200–1550* (Salt Lake City, 1994).

37. Eruslanov, "Magometanskaia propaganda," no. 18 (1895): 88.



eponymous founder of the Naqshbandi order, Muhammad Baha' ad-Din Naqshband. In Rabghuzi's tales of the prophets, Enoch recited prayers every time he made a stitch with his needle and, in Yalchighol's work, Shaykh Naqshband, whose name meant "one who casts patterns upon cloth" (*naqsh*, design; *band*, affixing), won the right to reign over the six layers of hell thanks to his art as a tailor and method of recollection. In Central Asia, makers of Muslim hats often belonged to Sufi brotherhoods.<sup>38</sup>

What can be firmly documented is the Kräshen tailors' and their progeny's access to the teaching of Tatar Naqshbandi shaykhs who scrupulously followed the sharia, lived a modest life, and who, in most cases, had the financial ability to help the needy. From the names of these shaykhs, among them 'Abd ar-Rähim al-Utüz Imäni, it can be inferred that the apostasy movement was the product of a global Sufi reform movement, which dated back to the Indian shaykhs Ahmad Sirhindi and Wali Allah. The Mujaddidiyya branch of Naqshbandism started in the Mughal Empire with Ahmad Sirhindi, whose disciples recognized him as the *mujaddid*, or renewer of the second millennium. Well-known for criticizing the Mughal Emperor Akbar (r. 1556–1605) for his syncretism, Sirhindi helped synthesize earlier trends in Central Asian Sufis' perception of their mission in the world. According to Sirhindi, Sufis did more than teach the path and perform a mediatory function between humanity and the divine; they had the responsibility to transform the world, to make it closer to the pristine community of the Prophet. Concretely, this meant that a Sufi could call political leaders to account, remind them to enforce Islamic duties, even deprive them of power if their rule did not conform to the sharia. These ideas were not fundamentally new since the Central Asian Naqshbandi Khoja Nasr ad-Din 'Ubaydullah Ahrar (d. 1490), critical of asceticism, had earlier claimed that the best way to protect the Islamic community from the arbitrariness of rulers was for Sufis to advise them. (Muslim and baptized Tatars knew of Ahrar and visited his tomb that they believed to be in the village of Verkhniäia Nikitkina or Tubilghitaw in Tatar, a village famous for leading the 1860s apostasy movement.)<sup>39</sup> Sirhindi's successor, Shah Wali Allah, drew new emphasis on the Prophet's sociopolitical role. In the same way the Prophet established a new society after his ascent to heaven, Sufis too had to return to the world, look after its proper civic and economic management, and expand the realm of God. Transplanted into the Russian imperial and Kräshen contexts, Sirhindi and Wali Allah's approach to the world offered hopes of possible restoration of God's will through communal and political reform.<sup>40</sup>

38. NART, f. 10, op. 1, d. 1863, ll. 4–4 ob. (Azbaba); f. 4, op. 101, d. 16, l. 17 (Tokhtamyshovo); Al-Rabghuzi, *Stories*, vol. 2: 50; Yalchighol, *Risälä*, 240; Buehler, *Sufi Heirs of the Prophet*, 55; G. Khämüdüllina, interview by author, 9 May 2008, Elyshevo; Khösnüllin, *Mönäjätlär*, 76–81.

39. According to Husam ad-Din al-Bolghari, the author of *Tawärikh-i Bolghäriyya*, it was the tomb of the Central Asian Naqshbandi shaykh Khoja Ahrar (d. 1490). But as noted by Märjani, his tomb was in Samarkand, where his madrasa was located. Märjani, *Mustafäd*, 1: 214; Frank, *Islamic Historiography*, 75.

40. On Sirhindi, see Muhammad Abdul Haq Ansari, *Sufism and Shari'ah: A Study of Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi's Effort to Reform Sufism* (Leicester, 1986); Buehler, *Sufi Heirs of the Prophet*, 60–61; Jo-Ann Gross, "Multiple Roles and Perceptions of a Sufi Shaikh: Symbolic Statements of Political and Religious Authority," in *Naqshbandis: Cheminement et situation actuelle d'un ordre mystique musulman. Historical Developments and Present Situation of a Muslim Mystical Order. Actes de la Table ronde de Sèvres, 2–4 mai 1985*, ed. Marc Gaborieau, Alexandre Popovic and Thierry Zarcone (Istanbul and Paris, 1990), 109–121; Annemarie Schimmel, *And Muhammad Is His Messenger: The Veneration of the Prophet in Islamic Piety* (Chapel Hill, NC and London, 1985), 220–222.

The situation in India and Russia in the eighteenth century presented many similarities. Just as Mughal power was slowly disintegrating, threatened on all sides by Sikhs, Hindus, and Christians, the Tatars had lost their sovereignty long ago and remembered the destruction of their mosques by the infamous Kazan archbishop Luka Konashevich. Subcontinental Mujaddidi teachings of political involvement found fertile ground in the Volga region through Afghanistan and Central Asia. By the end of the eighteenth century, a suborder of the Mujaddidiyya, the Khalidiyya, named after its Kurdish founder Mawlana Khalid Baghdadi (d. 1827), also reached the Volga region through Dagestan and the Ottoman Empire. This new lineage firmly held that the sharia was the guarantor of independence from foreign encroachment and was fundamentally hostile to the British rule.<sup>41</sup> Once transplanted to Russia, the Mujaddidiyya and Khalidiyya lineages came to offer new hopes of possible restoration, even expansion, of God's realm under non-Muslim domination. Two teachers—one in Kabul, the other in Bukhara—introduced Tatar students to the Mujaddidiyya in the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century: Fayd Khan al-Kabuli and Niyaz Quli at-Turkmani.<sup>42</sup> Little is known about Fayd Khan al-Kabuli's teachings, except that he trained about fifteen disciples from the Volga-Urals region.<sup>43</sup> More is known about the Bukharian shaykh Niyaz Quli. Faithful to the teachings of Central Asian Sufi Ahrar, Shaykh Niyaz Quli invited Sufis to maintain contact with rulers, even the most oppressive ones, as a way to guard the purity of Islam and alleviate people's sufferings. Mujaddidi shaykhs in Bukhara also served as mediators between political leaders and people, personally relaying people's petitions to the emir. In the context of Russia, Mujaddidi shaykhs did not have the opportunity to instruct the czar, a non-Muslim, in the ways of the sharia, but they could play a role as mediators between the czar and the community, in order to protect it against abuse.<sup>44</sup>

Besides Utiz Imāni who was an avid reader and copyist of Sirhindi's work, a number of Mujaddidi shaykhs were involved in the spread of Islam among the Krāshens, baptized and animist Udmurts, Chuvash, and Maris: Shaykhs Ni'mātullah al-Ālmāti (1771–1852) in Chistopol' district, Ni'mātullah b. Biktimur al-Istārlibashi (1773–1844) in Ufa province, and 'Ali Sāyfullah (1794–1874/75) of Tiunter village in Malmyzh district, Viatka province.<sup>45</sup> All three were students of Shaykh Mōhāmmād Rāhim b.

41. In the Caucasus, Khalidi Naqshbandis led hostilities against Russia's invasion and in Istanbul, the Khalidi shaykh Ahmad Ziyauddin Gümüshanevi (1813–1893), who was responsible for introducing many Tatars and Bashkirs to the Khalidi path, enlisted with his students in the Russo-Turkish war of 1877. See Hamid Algar, "Political aspects of Naqshbandi history," in *Naqshbandis: Cheminements et situation actuelle*, 136–138, 144; idem, "Zaynullah Rasulev: The Last Great Naqshbandi Shaykh of the Volga-Urals Region," in *Muslims in Central Asia: Expressions of Identity and Change*, ed. Jo-Ann Gross (Durham and London, 1992), 117–118.

42. Kemper, *Sufis und Gelehrte*, 90–91; Frank, *Muslim Religious Institutions*, 152–153.

43. Michael Kemper, "Entre Boukhara et la Moyenne-Volga: Abd an-Nasir al-Qursawi (1776–1812) en conflit avec les oulemas traditionalistes," *Cahiers du Monde russe* 37, no. 1–2 (January–June 1996): 42; Anke von Kügelgen "Die Entfaltung der Naqshbandiyya muğaddidiyya im mittleren Transoxanien vom 18. bis zum Beginn des 19. Jahrhunderts: Ein Stück Detektivarbeit," in *Muslim Culture in Russia and Central Asia*, vol. 2, 142.

44. Baxtiyor M. Babadžanov, "On the History of the Naqshbandiyya Muğaddidiyya in Central Māwarā'annahr in the late 18th and early 19th centuries," in *Muslim Culture in Russia and Central Asia from the 18th to the early 20th centuries*, vol. 1, ed. Michael Kemper, Anke von Kügelgen, Dmitriy Yermakov (Berlin, 1996), 390–408.

45. Mārjāni, *Mustafād*, 2: 161–163, 203–204, 254–255; on Utiz Imāni, see Kemper, *Sufis und Gelehrte*, 177–178.

Yusuf al-Ashiti (d. 1816/17) in the village of Maskara in Viatka province. The village's history exemplified Naqshbandi ideals of religious sobriety and worldly action. Very early on, its merchant and religious elite had defied Russian law and taught the Sufi path in non-Tatar milieu.<sup>46</sup> 'Abdullah Utyamışev, the rich owner of the Maskara leather factory (he came from a noble family that refused to convert to Christianity during the reign of Peter the Great), was responsible for building a two-story brick mosque in 1791, despite the presence of a Russian factory in nearby Kukmor and the opposition of the Russian clergy. His son Musa (d. 1835), both scholar and merchant, built a wooden mosque for sixty newly converted animist Udmurts in 1800. The support of local Tatar and Udmurt merchants undoubtedly facilitated Musa's work. As a former student of Maskara and Bukhara, Musa had also distinguished himself for supporting the candidacy of imams of Udmurt origin and debating the superiority of Islam over Christianity with Russian Orthodox priests, even writing books on the subject.<sup>47</sup>

The madrasa of Maskara trained many students who, after leaving for Bukhara, Kabul, or India, became active missionaries in Turkic and Finno-Ugric milieus. Upon his return from Bukhara in 1829–1830, Shaykh 'Ali Säyfullah, a famous horse rider, emulated the merchant-scholars of Maskara in his village of Tiunter and proselytized among nonbaptized Chuvash, Udmurts, Maris, and baptized Tatars. Ignoring the law prohibiting converting “pagans” to Islam, Shaykh 'Ali asked for the permission of the Spiritual Assembly of Orenburg and the Ministry of State Domains to register nonbaptized Chuvash and Udmurts as Muslims in 1848–1849, but his efforts failed. Russian authorities arrested him and forced him to sign a form stipulating that he would never again petition for the inclusion of nonbaptized into the mosque registries. As for the Udmurts and Chuvash, they received twenty lashes and were sentenced to jail. Despite his arrest, the shaykh, assisted by his wife, an imam's daughter and *abïstay* who knew Farsi and Arabic, continued proselytizing among Christians and animists. Because Shaykh 'Ali owned a mill in Balandysh village, Mamadysh district, he occasionally visited Balandysh and Staraiä Ikshurma, the center of an important fair, and spoke to the old converts of Elyshevo, Staraiä Ikshurma, and Tokhtamyshvevo. The literate fifty-year-old Yaghfär Wälitov (Efrem Kirilov) of Udmurt origin, an *ishan* who was one of the leaders of the 1866 apostasy movement in Elyshevo, may have been connected to his chain of Sufi initiation (*silsila*).<sup>48</sup> Shaykh 'Ali's school indeed taught *starokreshchenye* of Elyshevo, Mamadysh district, Apazovo, Kazan district, and even Timofeev's native village, Nikiforova, along with baptized Chuvash, Udmurts, and

46. All information about Maskara (Mächkärä) is taken from Märjäni, *Mustafäd*, 2: 156–160. On Shaykh Möhämäd Rähim Akhun al-Ashiti and his students, see Fäkhre ad-Dïn, *Äsär*, vol. 1, pt. 3, no. 114 (1903): 142.

47. Khasanov, *Formirovanie*, 296; S. Kh. Alishev, “Sotsial'naia evoliutsiia sluzhilykh tatar vo vtoroi polovine XVI–XVIII vekov,” in *Issledovaniia po istorii krest'ianstva Tatarii dooktiabr'skogo perioda* (Kazan, 1984), 67; “Mökhämädjan bine äI-Khösäyen bine Ghabderrakhman” (biographical entry, 1900), in Rizaeddin Fäkhreddin, *Asar*, vol. 1 (Kazan, 2006), 98; Märjäni, *Mustafäd*, 2: 184–185, 159–160.

48. See biography of Shaykh 'Ali in the history of Tiunter by a supporter of the jadid method Möhämäd Näjip Tüntäri (1863–1930) in “Mökhämätinäjip khäzrät yazması,” *Ghasirlar awazi (Ekho vekov)*, nos. 1–2 (2003): 51–52; *Istoriia Tatarii v dokumentakh i materialakh*, 349–350; NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 226, l. 1; f. 4, op. 101, d. 16, ll. 1–2; f. 13, op. 1, d. 1003, l. 32; Malov, “Ocherk,” 18, pt. 1 (1872): 403–404 (epic of Elyshevo in Tatar).

Maris, who found work in Tiunter's leather factories and tailor shops. The shaykh's incredible wealth also allowed him to serve food to the needy every day of the week and hire Krāshen tailors, the main agents of Islamization in Mamadysh, Laishevo, and Kazan districts. Even after his death in 1874, the school of Tiunter continued to attract Krāshen students from the Mamadysh district villages of Elyshevo and Ianyli, who then studied with his successors.<sup>49</sup> Another former student of Maskara and Mōhāmmād Rāhim al-Ashiti was Shaykh Ni'mātullah b. Biktimur, who taught in the famous madrasa of Sterlibashevo in Bashkir land in the beginning of the nineteenth century. The madrasa, founded in the 1720s and also known for introducing Russian into its curriculum before the Russian state required it in 1869, was a major center of Sufi activity among baptized Chuvash and Kazakhs. Russian sources indicate that the *ishans* of Sterlibashevo, among them the sons of Ni'mātullah, Haris (d. 1870) and Harras (d. 1871) who liked to perform the *zikr* in market places, continued attracting and teaching many baptized Chuvash underground up to the 1880s and 1890s.<sup>50</sup>

Finally, another graduate from Maskara, Shaykh Ni'mātullah al-Ālmāti and his family, played a central role in the apostasy movements of the 1850 and 1860s. The main actors of the petition movement of 1856–1866 were connected to his *silsila*. The Tatar muezzin 'Abd al-Latif Alkin (1817?–after 1867) from the village of Chechkab, district of Sviiazhsk, the famous bigamist baptized leader Samigulov from Verkhniaia Nikitkina who had written petitions since 1856, and 'Aynullah, a Tatar *volost'* scribe in Tetiushi district who had composed petitions for the baptized at the Hay Market of Kazan, were all disciples of Shaykh Ni'mātullah al-Ālmāti. This Sufi dynasty was of Mishar Tatar descent. Their ancestors came originally from the village of Shonguty, an important market place in the district of Tetiushi district, where Krāshens of thirty villages gathered around Samigulov to collect signatures and money.<sup>51</sup> Shaykh Ni'mātullah's father, 'Ubāydu'llah b. Jā'fār (1751–1822/23), taught at Kurmanaevo (Kizlāw), a village on the Cheremshan River, and was responsible for initiating a number of disciples to the Mujaddidiyya after studying in Kargala with Wālid b. Mōhāmmād al-Āmin, a disciple of Fayd Khan al-Kabuli and also teacher of the poet Utiz Imāni, who was greatly concerned about the Krāshen question. 'Ubāydu'llah wrote a book in Turkic on Sufism and as a result of his proselytism, the Krāshens of Kurmanaevo, which was also the home of Muslim Tatars and Chuvash, apostatized in the 1850s.<sup>52</sup> His older son Ni'mātullah (d. 1852), who studied first with his father in Kurmanaevo, then in Kargala and Baghdad, taught in Al'met'evo and encouraged his students, male and female, to spread literacy among Krāshens. Baptized Tatars of

49. NART, f. 1, op. 16, d. 661, l. 12; f. 4, op. 98, d. 34, ll. 22 ob.-23; Mashanov's report of his trip to Nikiforova in 1881, NART, f. 967, op. 1, d. 8, l. 12; Otdel rukopisei Kazanskoi nauchnoi biblioteki im. Lobachevskogo, f. 7, ed. khr. 1, ll. 189/3, 190; Iapei Babai, "O kreshchenykh tatar," no. 18 (15 September 1891): 604; Mārjāni, *Mustafād*, 2: 159–160, 184–185, 203–204.

50. Mārjāni, *Mustafād*, 2: 254–255; NART, f. 93, op. 1, d. 128 v, ll. 27–28; on the history of Sterlibashevo, see Zāki Zāynullin, "Esterlebash Mādrāsäse," in *Mādräsälärdä kitap kishtäse* (Kazan, 1992), 175–185 and Farkhshatov, *Narodnoe obrazovanie*, 59; Gennadii Makarov, *Därwishlärneng sökhbätändä* (*Bäyetlär häm mönäjätlär*) (Kazan, 2011), 23–24.

51. Mārjāni, *Mustafād*, 2: 228; Samigulov in Shonguty, NART, f. 4, op. 134, d. 16, l. 15 ob.

52. NART, f. 4, op. 72, d. 72, ll. 52–57, 176, 178–178 ob.; Fākhr ad-Din, *Āsār*, vol. 1, pt. 3, no. 126 (1903): 159–160.

Chistopol' district, impressed by his ability to interpret people's dreams and healing powers, visited him often and brought him alms, which partly supported his schools in Al'met'evo. Ni'mätullah's proselytism was so successful that, starting in 1828, the Kräshens of nearby villages refused to let the priests marry them and baptize their children, opposing the police when it intervened. But other neighboring mullahs, who preferred the status quo, called him a "heretic" and denounced him to church authorities. Shaykh Ni'mätullah ignored their slander and as he grew older he chose the shaykh of Perevo (Paraw), 'Abd al-Jäbbar b. Jä'fär b. 'Abd al-Ghafur (1784–1864) as his successor and made him promise to continue his teaching of *adab*, formal rules of the Sufi life, and law among those he called "poor unfortunate Kräshens."<sup>53</sup>

Shaykh Ni'mätullah died in 1852 but his sons, 'Ata'ullah, Khäyrollah, and Sön'atullah, in Al' met'evo and his successor, Shaykh 'Abd al-Jäbbar, in Perevo continued to proselytize among Kräshens. In December 1865, before the beginning of the Ramadan, 'Ata'ullah visited Saltyganovo village, Sviiazhsk district, and gathered all Kräshens for prayer. Accompanied by his wife, brothers, two sons, and the mullahs of Berlibash and Burunduk in Sviiazhsk district, he traveled in five or six carriages through Tatar and Kräshen villages, in the districts of Sviiazhsk, Tetiushi, Buinsk, Cheboksary, and Tsvil'sk. The passage of 'Ata'ullah's family in the southern districts of Kazan province coincided with the geographic extension of the apostasy movement, and the migration of a number of Kräshens and Tatars to Turkey and Bukhara. His father's most faithful *murid*, the Kräshen petitioner of Verkhniaia Nikitkina Samigulov from Chistopol' district, was spotted in Tetiushi district, as well as in Lai-shevo (Kibiak-Kozi) and Kazan districts (Shepsheik and Bol'shie Sulabashi), which helped extend the apostasy movement to *starokreshchenye* villages for the first time.<sup>54</sup>

Among Shaykh Ni'mätullah's students was another fascinating *ishan*, Alkin, from the village of Chechkab in the district of Sviiazhsk, who at the age of thirty, accompanied by his wife, called Tatars and Kräshens to leave Russia for Istanbul. If Tatars did not migrate to Ottoman lands, they would be forcibly baptized. Alkin encouraged Kräshens to embrace Islam by claiming that the Ottoman sultan had already promised to support the Kräshens. Soon the sultan would rid Kazan of the infidels. If Kräshens persevered in their rebellion, the czar—under the pressure of the sultan-caliph—would promulgate a law favorable to their official conversion to Islam. Alkin traveled frequently between Al'met'evo village and the residence of Shaykh 'Abd al-Jäbbar, in Samara Province, who carried the spiritual Sufi lineage (*silsila*) of Shaykh Ni'mätullah, three years after his death. Malov suspected that the *ishan* of Samara personally visited Kräshens in the Sviiazhsk and Tetiushi districts. Besides urging Kräshens to apostatize, Alkin also collected money for petitions in Sviiazhsk province. He had a close disciple, an apostate Kräshen of Chechkab village, Shärafı, who accompanied him everywhere and visited 'Ata'ullah. Their travels, usually of

53. Märjäni, *Mustafäd*, 2: 228–229; Fäkhre ad-Din, *Äsar*, vol. 2, pt. 13, no. 384 (1907): 399; NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 230, ll. 84–85 ob., 87; "Izvlacheniiia iz otcheta bakalavra Kazanskoi dukhovnoi akademii N. I. Il'minskogo o poezdke po tatarskim seleniiam (August–September 1849)," in *Khristianskoe prosveshchenie*, 109; Malov, *Prikhody starokreshchenykh i novokreshchenykh tatar v Kazanskoi eparkhii*, 49.

54. NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 228, l. 72; f. 1, op. 2, d. 2111, ll. 1–49; f. 1, op. 3, d. 230, l. 85 ob.; Otdel rukopisei Kazanskoi nauchnoi biblioteki im. Lobachevskogo, f. 7, ed. Khr. 1, ll. 187–188; RGIA, f. 821, op. 8, ed. Khr. 763, ll. 4, 73.

three or four months, led them to Buinsk district, where Alkin had connections with Tatar merchants, and even to the district of Saratov.<sup>55</sup>

Alkin's subversive actions began in the mid-1850s, the period between the death of Shaykh Ni'mätullah and the time Samigulov started writing petitions for his native village. Denunciations from an unsympathetic mullah of Tetiushi district claimed that Alkin and his supporters proselytized among the animist Chuvash and Kräshens of Simbirsk and Kazan provinces, performed *zīkr* outside the mosque, circumcised children, gave new converts Muslim names, visited sacred shrines near the Russian village of Biliarsk, and distributed "holy water" from their spring.<sup>56</sup>

Founded in the tenth century, Biliarsk was the site of the largest city of the former Bolghar kingdom and a symbolic place for both Muslim Tatars and the Kräshen followers of Shaykh Ni'mätullah and his son 'Ata'ullah. Residents of Samigulov's village believed that the commander-in-chief of a virgin princess, who ruled the ancient city of Tubilghitaw nearby, was buried at the Khojas' mountain (*Khojalar tawi*) in the Tatar cemetery situated north of Biliarsk. An oral tradition claimed that, after Ivan the Terrible took his city, the commander-in-chief was forcibly baptized with his army but refused to give up his faith, attached himself to a famous teacher, and soon became known for his divine insight. Although destroyed by the Mongols in 1236, Biliarsk, like Samigulov's village, also bore the scars of Russian conquest. The new invaders, who found the place empty in the seventeenth century, built a village near the ruins of the ancient town of the Bolghars. Because no other stones could be found nearby, they laid the foundation of their church with stones from the sacred ruins of the mosque and minaret.<sup>57</sup>

When Alkin and his followers, employing *Mahdist* rhetoric, preached in Kräshen villages, the story of the princess's commander-chief repeated itself. The Russian police had separated sixteen children from their apostate parents in Sluzhilaia Maina, Chistopol' district, and placed them in foster care in Biliarsk to be baptized and raised in the Christian faith. Desperate children fled to rejoin their parents, but tearful mothers brought them back to their Russian foster families. As predicted in *Ākhīr Zamān Kitābi* and Rabghuzi's *Stories of the Prophets*, people believed that the

55. Il'minskii, ed., *Kazanskaia tsentral'naia*, 303–305 (vice-governor Rozov's report); *Materialy po istorii Tatarii vtoroi poloviny 19-go veka*, 245; Malov, "Nyneshnee religioznoe polozhenie," *PO* 7 (1866): 118–119; Otdel rukopisei Kazanskoi nauchnoi biblioteki im. Lobachevskogo, f. 7, ed. khr. 1, ll. 182/1 ob., 183; NART, f. 1, op. 2, d. 2111, l. 45 ob.; f. 1, op. 3, d. 227, ll. 86–87; f. 1, op. 3, d. 228, ll. 22, 25–25 ob., 36–36 ob., 54 ob., 50–51 ob., 53–55; and f. 1, op. 3, d. 1823, ll. 74–77; Märjāni, *Mustafād*, 2: 228–229.

56. Crews, *For Prophet and Tsar*, 134–140.

57. According to the Kräshen Il'ia Sofiiskii who reported the story, the commander-in-chief's name was Khoja Nasreddin, some sort of holy fool known for his eccentric behavior. It seems unlikely that the Khoja of Tubilghitaw could be the famous Sufi of Konya whose stories still entertain people in the Turkic world. It was possible that Sofiiskii confused Khoja Nasreddin with the Central Asian Naqshbandi Khoja Nasr ad-Din 'Ubaydullah Ahrar who according to local historiographies was believed to be buried near Tubilghitaw (although buried in Samarkand). Sofiiskii, however, clearly understood that the famous commander-in-chief was buried near Biliarsk. Sufi Tatar shrine catalogues and Russian geographers, Petr Rychkov (1712–1777) and Sergei Shpilevskii (1833–1907) though, did not mention Khoja Nasreddin, but three other saints: Khoja Asghar, known as Ma'lum Khoja, 'Abdullah Khoja, known as Chubar, and Shaykh Muhammad b. Bayterak Baghanawi. All three lived well before the conquest of Kazan by the Russians. Sofiiskii, "O kiremetiakh kreshchenykh iz derevni Tavel'," 73–75; Shpilevskii, *Drevnie goroda*, 61–64, 349–356; Frank, *Islamic Historiography*, 76.

first signs of the eschaton had come. As the last hour approached, said the books, legitimate wives would be “forbidden” (*haram*) to their husbands. Children of Muslims would be made bastards and prisoners. Thus, Russian police separated couples who had not been married in church and children of apostates were forced to bear their mothers’ maiden names. The landscape around Biliarsk, however, held the promise of deliverance. Its ruins, sacred tombs, and holy spring—a legend said that a Muslim saint drank its water and bathed in it—offered strength, blessings, and promises of a brighter future. The saints of the Khojas’ mount, as in popular Sufi stories, were not dead, but listened to their petitioners’ requests. Soon, thanks to their intercession and blessings, the Mahdi would come and Islamic order would be reestablished.<sup>58</sup>

The Muslim Spiritual Assembly of Orenburg in Ufa, when notified about Alkin’s activities, saw nothing wrong or deviant with his teachings and visits to the shrines. Followers of the Mujaddidiyya led an exemplary moral life and conformed to the requirements of the sharia; they performed the silent *zikr* in circle, joining hands and invoking the *tawba* (repentance), the first station of the Sufi path. Because Alkin’s whereabouts disturbed communal peace, the Assembly decided to strip Alkin from his position of muezzin, but did not have him prosecuted. In other words, Alkin was free to wander until 1866, when finally, concerned by the size of the apostasy, the Ministry of the Interior intervened and sent him to Siberia.<sup>59</sup>

Thus, the schools of Maskara, Kurmanaev (Kizlāw), Al’met’ev, and Tiunter trained many students and mullahs who did not necessarily carry the *silsila*, but taught in areas where Krāshens lived. Biktashi, whose book *Fāzā’il ash-Shühūr* molded the children’s representations of the afterlife and their religious duties, was a graduate of Maskara. Another student of both Shaykh ‘Ubāydu’llah in Kurmanaev and ‘Abdu’llah b. Yahya al-Chirtushi in Maskara, Jarullah b. Bikmöhämmäd b. Biktimer (1784–1869), who was the mullah of Satysh near Elyshevo, let Krāshen children study in his madrasa, a very important school built in the eighteenth century to respond to the needs of migrant families. Jarullah impressed his students by his clarity, and Malov suspected that the epic of Elyshevo was the work of his students, although there is no reason to doubt that villagers themselves or their literate children could have composed it themselves.<sup>60</sup>

Every time the petition movement failed, Naqshbandi shaykh activity renewed. Around 1867, the disciple of Shaykh Ni‘mätu’llah, ‘Ismätu’llah b. Ähmäd encouraged the baptized villagers of Azbaba, Sviiazhsk district, to return to Islam after they had been forced by the police to remain Christian. Another *ishan* from the district of Buinsk, Simbirsk province, visited the village of Nogaev, Karsun district, and reminded *novokreshchenye* apostates not to succumb to Russian pressure. Passionately, he insisted on the superiority of Islam over Christianity, claiming that the resurrection of Jesus was a Christian lie and reminding people that the Qur’an was not a man-made creation as missionaries contended it, but the Word of God. Finally, to counteract the effect of Tatar translations of the Bible, a literate Muslim affirmed in

58. NART, f. 1, op. 2, d. 119, ll. 12, 14–15, 18; Al-Rabghūzī, *Stories*, vol. 2: 769; Malov, *Akhyr zaman kitaby*, 3; Ghosman, “Zur khislār,” 6; NART, f. 2, op. 2, d. 3454, l. 3; Shpilevskii, *Drevnie goroda*, 63.

59. Crews, *For Prophet and Tsar*, 134–141; NART, f. 1 op. 3, d. 228, l. 65; f. 1, op. 3, d. 230, ll. 86–87.

60. Fākhr ad-Dīn, *Āsār*, vol. 2, pt. 14, no. 425 (1908): 488–489.

Elyshevo and other surrounding villages that Il'minskii's translation of the Gospels spoke of the Central Asian Sufi figure Khoja Baha' ad-Din Naqshband, the eponymous founder of the Naqshbandiyya.<sup>61</sup>

### Kinship Networks

Besides tailors and shaykhs, other powerful agents of Islamization were women of Tatar and Kräshen origin. As demonstrated earlier, there was a positive vision of women in popular oral and written Tatar traditions. In these books, women united with the divine, encouraged and reproached the prophets in their roles as mothers, became dervishes, performed miracles, set proper rules for behavior, and even took up arms to defend the faith. The wife of one of the 1867 representatives of Saltyganovo, Sviiazhsk district, embodied this attitude, begging her imprisoned husband to stay firm in his faith. "Please do not cover us with shame," she wrote in hasty Arabic script on a small piece of paper, "If you give up, everyone will say that you are Russian and spit on you. If you choose to be Russian, then what is the point of living on this earth? If they send you to Siberia, I will go with you. Say that you are married." Just as the wives of the nineteenth-century Decembrists left for Siberia with their husbands, the wives of apostates were fully committed to their cause. Without their active support, the apostasy movement was likely to fail. Family, sacred, and educational networks led by women were essential to the spread and consolidation of Islam on the frontier.<sup>62</sup>

#### *Tatar Women as Holders and Transmitters of Islamic Knowledge*

Contrary to what Russian missionaries often implied, peasant women did not have a shallower, more superstitious understanding of their faith. Because missionaries had a bookish, rationalized idea of Islam, they tended to oppose "low" and "high" Islam. "Low" Islam referred to popular Sufi books in Tatar and superstitious beliefs in amulets, charms, and evil spirits. "High" Islam was the Islam taught in the madrasas of the Middle East or Central Asia, in Arabic or Persian. In their approach to women, missionaries often associated the female worldview with "low" Islam. However, contrary to what missionaries believed, the borders between high and popular Islam were often blurred. Learned men in Algeria, Anatolia, India, or the Balkans used folk tales as media for popular instruction of Islam, since Arabic was not accessible to the average peasant.<sup>63</sup> Women did not defend or explain their faith differently. In discussing Islam, they referred to images that were drawn from Sufi books and tales that echoed their pre-Islamic belief in spirits. After reading a passage of *Bāqirghān Kitābi* (The Book of Baqirghan, an anthology of Sufi poetry) about the necessity of saying *Bismillah* before meals, a Tatar woman from Artyk, in Mamadysh district, explained that if one failed to say *Bismillah*, the *pāri* (evil spirits) would steal the food. If a woman left her child in the field without saying *Bismillah*, the *pāri* would likewise steal the child and replace

61. NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 228, l. 130; Otdel rukopisei Kazanskoi nauchnoi biblioteki im. Lobachevskogo, f. 7, ed. khr. 1, l. 188; Malov, *Missionerstvo sredi mukhammedan*, 417; idem, "Ocherk," 18, pt. 1 (1872): 69.

62. NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 228, ll. 111–112.

63. Matveev, "Dva dnia," no. 1 (1902): 21–24; and no. 7 (1902): 304–307; Schimmel, *As through a Veil*, 137; Fanny Colonna, *Savants paysans: Éléments d'histoire sociale sur l'Algérie rurale* (Algiers, 1987).



him with one of their monstrous offspring. The *päri* among the Tatars, Kräshens, and other peoples of the Middle Volga were known for living in abandoned houses or baths. For this woman, any action was incomplete without praising God, and such incomplete actions attracted the *päri* who chose to live in empty places. Tatar tales, as well, contained numerous stories in which the hero got rid of the *päri* by saying *Bismillah*.<sup>64</sup> For the Orthodox missionary who recorded the woman's comments, this was proof that Tatar females did not know their religion and that Islam was no more than a sophisticated written form of paganism or polytheism. But in fact, this woman gave a clear metaphoric explanation of the text she read. Like the Sufis in the Middle Volga, India, and Anatolia who spread the word by using images from daily life, this woman from Artyk resorted to imagery taken directly from Tatar folk culture. As in the Qur'an, she believed that the spirits could be domesticated rather than annihilated, and served a unique God. Even students of the madrasas used the same device to demonstrate the power of Muslim prayers against evil spirits. This kind of discourse had a powerful impact on the non-Islamized *starokreshchenye* in Mamadysh district, and on other peoples like the Maris in Ufa province or the Chuvash and Udmurt in Kazan province. It often constituted the first step in their Islamization.<sup>65</sup>

Female schooling was the next important step in establishing popular Sufi knowledge. In *Näshihät aṣ-Ṣālihīn*, learning about the Islamic faith was a religious obligation for both men and women. According to the turkologist, physician, and former rector of the University of Kazan, Karl Fuks (1776–1846), it was rare to find a girl who did not know how to read and write. Girls studied with an *abīstay*, a female teacher, until the age of ten or received private lessons. Parents did not hesitate to send their daughters to a nearby village if there was no school in their village, or if a neighboring *abīstay* was better known for her ability to teach. Thus, a coachman from the Kräshen village of Elyshevo sent his daughter to the Tatar *abīstay* of Balandysh (a village situated at two versts from Elyshevo).<sup>66</sup>

Very often small children of both sexes studied side by side before the mullah took over the boys' education. The elementary program for girls and boys was not fundamentally different; they read and recited the same Sufi poetry that they had heard in their early childhood when women gathered on Fridays, or when they cooked meals. It was a common belief among peasants that girls had no need for higher learning; writing was also considered superfluous. However, in the 1840s, Fuks met an *abīstay* who taught her students to write popular songs. Biographies of early jadid women show that mullahs' and also merchants' daughters had access to higher learning. Mullahs' daughters, like the poetess 'Alimätelbänat Biktimeriya (1876–1906), studied under their father, and merchants' daughters took private lessons. The poetess 'Azizä Sämitova (1862–1929), a merchant's daughter, kept a diary, learned Arabic and Persian, and read classical oriental poetry. Fuks again noticed that mullahs' children, boys and girls, could read the Qur'an and understand as much as their father. Since a

64. Il'minskii, ed., *Kazanskaia tsentral'naia*, 57; *Bäqirghän kitäbi*, 13; Maksimov, "Ostatki drevnikh," no. 20 (15 October 1876): 610–614; Akhmet'ianov, *Obshchaia leksika*, 40; A. N. Nasyrov and P. A. Poliakov, *Skazki Kazanskikh tatar i sopostavlenie ikh so skazkami drugikh narodov* (Kazan, 1900), 91.

65. Koblov, "Mifologiya Kazanskikh tatar," 407.

66. *Näshihät aṣ-Ṣālihīn*, 29; Karl Fuks, *Kazanskie tatory v statisticheskom i etnograficheskom otnosheniiakh* (Kazan, [1844] 1991), 49; Malov, "Ocherk," 17, pt. 3 (1871): 407.

mullah's daughters were likely to marry a mullah and become an *abıstay*, their thirst for knowledge was encouraged.<sup>67</sup>

According to statistics of the Ministry of State Domains and the Spiritual Assembly, almost as many girls as boys studied in Qur'anic schools. In 1860, in Kazan province, 682 mosques had established 483 Qur'anic schools, which were training 16,326 boys and 13,946 girls. Police statistics in 1875–1876 painted an even better picture of the extent of schooling among girls by giving the number of women involved in their teaching. They indicated that there was no large gap between the number of *abıstays* and mullahs, *abıstays* being either the wife of a mullah or muezzin, or simply a dedicated literate woman. In Laishevo district, seventy-eight mullahs and sixty *abıstays* taught 2,021 boys and 1,063 girls; but Mamadysh district was even more impressive, with 136 mullahs and 119 *abıstays* teaching 3,808 boys and 3,080 girls. Missionaries, who worried about the role women played in the spread of Islam, often pointed out that the number of schools for Tatar girls was much higher than for Russian girls. The 1902 official statistics of the Viatka province confirmed their worries; while there was only one school for every 50.2 Russian girls, Tatars had one for every 19.9 Muslim girls. Worse, these statistics underestimated the number of Muslim schools because they did not include clandestine schools among Kräshen apostates or Islamized Chuvash, Udmurts, or Maris; private courses for girls that could not be inspected; or the schools attached to Tatar factories.<sup>68</sup>

In discussions reported by missionaries, women in an average peasant family often appeared to be more knowledgeable about Islam than their husbands, probably because they had the advantage of having had the same teacher for a longer time during the year. Their education was not interrupted by seasonal work. Among Islamized Kräshen women, many could read even when their husbands were illiterate. The Kräshen women in the village of Verkhnie Mashliaki in Mamadysh district strictly observed Islamic rites, despite their husbands' indifference.<sup>69</sup>

The prolonged absence of male traders from their community forced women (both literate and nonliterate) to assume an important role in the transmission of Islamic knowledge, in addition to being managerial, communal, and economic heads of the family. In the village of Elyshevo, an old, illiterate, blind female of Kräshen origin imparted the basics of the Islamic faith to the local children. Mothers taught their children to sing and read Sufi books before going to the *maktab*. A Tatar craftsman of peasant origin from Kargala, near Orenburg, wrote in his memoirs that his mother, and not his father who was busy trading, made him recite *Sharā'it al-Īmān* when he was five years old. His mother also made him copy the alphabet. At the traditional *maktab*, writing was taught long after reading, sometimes after three or four years of schooling. Partly thanks to his mother, the boy was able to compose and sell talismans containing Qur'anic verses. Women's involvement in their children's education

67. Fuks, *Kazanskie tatary*, 38, 132; *Ömet yoldızları: XIX yüz akhırı häm XX yüz bashı tatar khatin-qız yazuchıları äsärläre* (Kazan, 1988), 18, 40.

68. RGIA, f. 383, op. 24, ed. khr. 37141, ll. 1, 2 ob.; RGIA, f. 821, op. 8, ed. khr. 1093, l. 1; and NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 3538, ll. 14–15, 33–35; M. Reshetnikov, "O nuzhdakh pravoslavnoi missii sredi magometan Viatskoi gubernii," *Viatskie eparkhial'nye vedomosti* no. 20 (16 October 1905): 1100.

69. Mashanov, "Zametka," no. 2 (15 January 1875): 47.

was such that in non-Muslim areas where Islamized mothers had the choice between Russian missionary schools and clandestine *maktabs*, they had enough authority to keep their husband from giving their children to Russian missionaries.<sup>70</sup>

Finally, women's role was not confined to the house. Some were true missionaries of Islam and proselytized outside their village limits. A Tatar woman from Meteski visited the Kräshen houses of Ianasal village regularly in the 1870s and read the Qur'an to the village residents. Two Tatar women from Alichtarkhan village taught *starokreshchenye* in Aziak village, Kazan district: twenty boys and twenty-three girls attended their lessons. The learned Tatar women of Artyk were also known for visiting the Kräshen village of Nikiforova, Mamadysh district.<sup>71</sup> Missionary accounts claimed that Tatar women promised paradise to Kräshens who repeated the *shahada* several times every day. Nothing else could be asked of them because they were believed to be simple-minded. (Among Tatars, Kräshens had the reputation of being illiterate and ignorant of the Russian faith.) This type of proselytism reflected the experience of *zikir*, the recollection of God, used by many Sufi orders. It also reflected the idea dear to Sufi mystics that knowledge from God could be immediate, and not acquired through books and formal education.<sup>72</sup> Furthermore, women in Mamadysh and Laishevo districts with small businesses had contacts with other women of different faith and proselytized as well. Some sold sugar, tea, or candies in local markets, which offered vast opportunities of communication. Tatar women of Satysh made and sold beautiful dishes and the entire female population of Nyrty embroidered towels, which served as decorative objects, alms for the dead, gifts for the saints, and awards for the victors in various Kräshen or Muslim sport competitions at agrarian celebrations. Frequent economic exchanges in the villages of Vladimirova or Staraiia Ikshurma, Mamadysh district, between Kräshens and Tatars of both sexes, favored the spread of Islamic conceptions of life among *starokreshchenye* who were attached to their animistic beliefs.<sup>73</sup>

Women who kept sacred shrines enjoyed great authority in their village and beyond. In Chally (Täbärde Challiäsi), the female heirs of Idris Khalifa (1645–1710), student of the Naqshbandi Shaykh Hidayatullah of Turkestan, took care of his sacred shrine. After his death, the saint's female descendants inherited his healing powers—Kräshens told missionaries that miraculous berries grew under the shaykh's house, and that the shaykh died when one of his patients broke his pledge of silence and revealed their existence. The shaykh's female descendants continued attracting many Kräshens who brought them offerings consisting of sheep, goose, chickens, butter, eggs, and clothing until the beginning of the twentieth century, even after Il'minskii

70. Malov, "Ocherk," 17, pt. 3 (1871): 243; Iapei Babai, "O kreshchenykh tatarakh," no. 18 (1891): 563–564; "Ghabdräkhim Ghabdrakhman ughli," ll. 1, 16; Il'minskii, ed., *Kazanskaia tsentral'naia*, 81.

71. NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 2812, l. 78 ob.; f. 1, op. 3, d. 3272, ll. 11 ob., 41; letter of Kräshen teacher of Aziak village in Tatar, NART, f. 968, op. 1, d. 175, ll. 1–2 ob.; Malov, *Missionerstvo sredi mukhammedan*, 237.

72. Ibn al-'Arabi connected the bipartite profession of faith with the Divine breathing (Schimmel, *As through a Veil*, 59, 139); Il'minskii, ed., *Kazanskaia tsentral'naia*, 39.

73. Il'minskii, ed., *Kazanskaia tsentral'naia*, 146; Firdäus Gharipova, *Awillar häm qalalar tarihinan*, vol. 2 (Kazan, 2003), 297; Urazmanova and Cheshko, eds., *Tatary*, 190, 206; David L. Ransel, "Infant-Care Cultures in the Russian Empire," in *Russia's Women: Accommodation, Resistance, Transformation*, ed. Barbara Evans Clements, Barbara Alpern Engel, and Christine D. Worobec (Berkeley, 1991), 124.

introduced Christian schooling in their milieu. These women saints visited Tatar and Krāshen houses outside Chally, read them the Qur'an, and spread the word. Thus in the 1870s, the orientalist Mikhail Mashanov personally spotted one of them at eight versts from Chally, in the Krāshen village of Tomasov-Pochinok, a village in Mamadysh district still strongly attached to its ancestral beliefs but already exposed to Islamic literacy (three Krāshens could read and write in Arabic script and used their skills for trade). To Mashanov, the woman appeared quite witty and dangerous.<sup>74</sup>

*Mechanisms of Transmission on the Frontier*

**Exogamy** The importance of women in the carrying of Islamic knowledge inside the family and in the community appears even greater in the light of the apostasy movements. Although endogamy was favored in the Middle East and Turkey, Krāshens like Tatars and Bosnian Muslims who lived in a Christian-dominated environment, practiced exogamy.<sup>75</sup> The bride rarely remained in her home village, and so constituted an element of exchange between two communities. This practice had two possible consequences: either it strengthened the integrity of the Krāshen community as a separate Tatar Christian group or, in the case of families already somewhat inclined to Islam, it contributed to further internalization of Islam. If a community were small and had limited choice of brides in surrounding villages, this deficiency could lead its members to join the apostasy movement. If their petition were approved, they could marry their children officially to Muslims, and if not, they could still have access to underground kinship networks that connected apostate villages with one another. When the neighboring mullah refused to be implicated in the baptized Tatars' lives and the weather permitted it, exogamy allowed villages to instead call their wives' mullahs secretly to their house for marriages and funerals.<sup>76</sup>

Parents in Krāshen families had the right to choose their offspring's spouse. Theoretically, both father and mother had equal responsibility for this choice, though, in practice, the mother usually had the last word. The parents considered the potential spouse's village of origin, the family, and the degree of Islamization of the village that would receive the bride. On this point, the prospective groom's village often proved to be more important than his family. In 1866, the underground mullah Ivanov in Elyshevo thought about marrying one of his daughters to one of the sons of Arkhipov of Savrushy village. This family had not definitively accepted Islam and showed signs of being influenced by the proselytism of Orthodox missionaries. Meanwhile, Ivanov did not cancel the plans for the wedding until the village of Savrushy decided to remain officially Christian.<sup>77</sup>

74. Odigitrievskii, "Kreshchenye tatory," no. 3 (Feb. 1894): 110–111; Mashanov, "Zametka," *IKE*, no. 4 (15 Feb. 1875): 113–115; Mashanov, *Religiozno-nravstvennoe sostoianie*, 57. The village of Chally in Laishevo district was also called Kazaklary or Kazinskii Chelny in prerevolutionary sources; present-day Koziakovo-Chelny. "Otchet bakalavra Kazanskoi dukhovnoi akademii N. I. Il'minskogo (August–September 1848)," in *Khristianskoe prosveshchenie*, 85.

75. Carol Delaney, *The Seed and the Soil: Gender and Cosmology in Turkish Village Society* (Berkeley, 1991), 100; Tone Brंगा, *Being Muslim the Bosnian Way: Identity and Community in a Central Bosnian Village* (Princeton, NJ, 1995), 143.

76. NART, f. 2, op. 2, d. 4284, ll. 13–15; f. 4, op. 94, d. 22, l. 57 ob.

77. Malov, "Ocherk," 18, pt. 1 (1872): 126; Il'minskii, ed., *Kazanskaia tsentral'naia*, 132.

At the same time, in Nikiforova, a village that became strongly attached to Christianity in the 1870s, lived a well-to-do Islamized Kräshen, named Gavriil, whose father, Semen, was outwardly Christian, but continued to observe “pagan” (animist) rituals. Gavriil’s mother, on the contrary, favored the Tatars. When the time came to marry their son Gavriil, Semen proposed a young lady of Nikiforova, but the mother opposed this because she felt that the village was too Christian. She ultimately convinced her husband to choose a girl from Elyshevo, where the families were more Islamized. The children born of this marriage were raised by their illiterate mother in the Islamic faith with the agreement of their father, even though he had attended the Russian parish schools. The mullah of Satysh village taught the boys, and an Islamized Kräshen of Staraiia Ishkurma taught the daughter. Later, one of the boys was married to a Kräshen of Staraiia Ishkurma who had studied with Biksutana (Evfimiia Ivanova), a Kräshen *abistay* of Tri Sosny, and with the *abistay* of Savrushii village. Thanks to these two women, the young bride was able to read and recite her prayers.<sup>78</sup>

Semen’s family was Islamized in only two or three generations. Similar cases could be observed in the village of Verkhnie Mashliaki, Mamadysh district, where husbands showed less inclination to Islam but their wives, who came from Tri Sosny (where Biksutana taught), faithfully observed Islamic rituals. As the persons responsible for the physical and spiritual well-being of their children, mothers had to consider prospective daughters-in-law very carefully. Wanting to approach the Qur’anic ideal as closely as possible, they chose a daughter-in-law whose Muslim culture was superior to their own. Often, an illiterate mother-in-law would choose a daughter-in-law trained in the Muslim sciences.<sup>79</sup>

Summer *jïyïn* festivals allowed Muslim Tatars to find the right spouse for their children. A greater degree of gender integration in the games permitted the young to get acquainted, which greatly upset conservative mullahs. Although Russian witnesses emphasized that men and women did not mix in the games (boys simply exhibited their physical strengths while girls in their best attire watched them from afar), imams complained that girls and boys hurried to the woods afterward and sang, danced, held hands, and kissed without elders’ supervision. If matchmakers came from neighboring villages, the girls hurried to meet them and expressed their wishes or, worse, gave their consent without consulting their parents.<sup>80</sup>

To help their children find suitable mates, the Islamized Kräshens constituted their own *jïyïn*. By converting to Christianity, the Kräshens’ ancestors had excluded themselves from the Muslim *jïyïn* traditional kinship networks. This did not keep them from participating in the traditional Muslim *jïyïns* and their games, but they could not marry their daughters to Muslim boys. On 18 June 1865, the Kräshen villagers of Elyshevo celebrated the *jïyïn* along with their Muslim neighbors. According to one witness, the Elyshevites had begun to celebrate the *jïyïn* fifty years earlier, which corresponded approximately to the apogee of the development of textile and leather industries in the Mamadysh, Laishevo, and Malmyzh districts at the end of

78. Il'minskii, ed., *Kazanskaia tsentral'naia*, 70–72.

79. Mashanov, “Zametka,” *IKE*, no. 2 (15 Feb. 1875): 47.

80. *Jïyün qışşası*, 82–92; Fuks, *Kazanskie tatory*, 47, 49, and Rittikh, *Materialy dlia etnografii Rossii*, 35–36.

the eighteenth century. To find brides, though, Elyshevites had to turn to another kinship network of purely Krāshen lineage, which the *jīyīn* of Kibiak-Kozi, another apostate village of *starokreshchenye*, provided.<sup>81</sup>

In the 1870s, the *jīyīn* of Kibiak-Kozi in Laishevo district involved a very large territory of apostate villages across several parishes and even districts: Elyshevo, Kanissar and Sabanchino in Nyr'ia parish, Verkhnie Otary in Novoe Churilino parish in Mamadysh district, Kibech' (Kibāsh) in the parish village of Verkhniaia Serda, Ianasal in the parish of Venetino in Laishevo district, and Khaivani and Nurma in Kazan district. This list was far from being complete. Verkhnie Otary village, in turn, had marital connections with the villages of Shemordan in Nyr'ia parish, Verkhniaia Oshtorma in Oshtorma parish, and Ianyli in Chura parish, Mamadysh district—all connected by textile and leather industries. Marital links in the *jīyīn* of Kibiak-Kozi, Elyshevo, and Verkhnie Otary corresponded to trade routes. To reach the market of Arsk, the inhabitants of Kibiak-Kozi had to cross Ianasal. Tailors who dominated the work force in this area used to sew in villages such as Nurma village in Kazan district. They also worked in the fourteen lambskin and sheepskin factories of Shemordan, which made hats and sleeves and belonged to Kasimov Tatar merchants.<sup>82</sup>

Besides being located on the same Arsk trade route, many of these villages shared a common Udmurt history, indicating that Islamized Udmurts may have played a role in their Islamization. The most literate and committed villagers to the apostate cause in Elyshevo were of Udmurt lineage; and local traditions reported that Udmurts originally founded the ethnically and religiously mixed villages of Ianyli, Porshur, Chura, and Oshtorma, which were the sites of intense competition between Islam and Orthodoxy well into the twentieth century. Although Tatar-speaking, the villagers shared kinship terms with their Udmurt neighbors. In addition, the famous Utyamīshev Tatar merchant family of Maskara known for supporting education in Udmurt milieu connected some of these villages together: 'Abdullah Utyamīshev had opened a potassium factory in Kibiak-Kozi in 1795 and his descendants supported a madrasa in Bol'shaia Nurma in the 1870s.<sup>83</sup>

Apostate kinship networks were far from being fixed. Their mapping changed overtime depending on the villages' decision to remain officially Islamic. A wedding could be called off if a village had decided to rejoin the church. When Il'minskii's school took root in many Krāshen villages, previous kinship networks ceased to exist. After Verkhniaia Serda village opted for Christianity and Kibiak-Kozi for Islam, there was no more exchange of brides between the two communities. Most interestingly, after Elyshevo was officially recognized as Muslim and during the Soviet period, the apostate *jīyīn* network remained active. The inhabitants of Elyshevo married within

81. Il'minskii, ed., *Kazanskaia tsentral'naia*, 152–54.

82. Yakhya Abdullin, interview by author, 30 May 2000, Kazan. His grandfather, Biktimer, apostatized in 1864 at the age of eighteen; NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 3538, ll. 16–16 ob.; f. 1, op. 3, d. 1818, l. 4; f. 1, op. 3, d. 3538, ll. 16–16 ob.; f. 1, op. 3, d. 12201, l. 6 ob.; f. 4, op. 98, d. 9, ll. 44 ob.-45, 222; f. 4, op. 98, d. 23, l. 156; f. 4, op. 101, d. 11, ll. 17, 28; and f. 4, op. 138, d. 12, l. 1 ob.; on bride prices, NART, f. 2, op. 4, d. 574, l. 1 ob.

83. Iskhakov, *Etnograficheskie gruppy tatar*, 124; Baiazitova, *Govory Tatar-Kriashen*, 18, 28–29; Khasanov, *Formirovanie*, 50, 94; Il'dus Zagidullin, "Makhallia v promyshlennykh poseleniakh v evropeiskoi chasti Rossii i Sibiri (XIX–nachalo XX v.)," in *Tatarskie musul'manskie prikhody v Rossiiskoi imperii: Materialy Vserossiiskoi nauchno-prakticheskoi konferentsii g. Kazan', 27–28 sentiabria 2005 g.* (Kazan, 2006), 70.

their former “apostate” network and did not wed girls or boys to neighboring Tatar villagers, who regarded them as different Muslims still scarred by their “forced baptism in the Mesha River.” The Elyshevites themselves like to emphasize their differences, claiming that elements of paganism such as the custom of drinking beer have survived in their midst.<sup>84</sup>

Not unlike the sacred places of the Middle Volga, agrarian festivals constituted open spaces of interaction between different ethnic groups. Russians, Kräshens, Udmurts, and Maris gathered to watch the games. If festivals did not automatically lead to Islamization, they did help generate and consolidate communal ties between separate apostate and Tatar communities. During that special time, married women returned to their native villages and met with their families while newly wedded brides departed from their native villages to their husbands’ villages. Kräshen and Muslim Tatars of different areas met and exchanged news about the progress of the apostasies. In 1890, such festivities marked a new wave of apostasies in the villages of Karaduvan, Aziak, and Apazovo in Kazan district.<sup>85</sup>

Various activities helped to strengthen not only the Muslim faith of those who were already officially Muslim, but also of those who were inclined to Islam yet not fully committed to change their religious affiliation. Merchants sold their wares, and blind bards sang epics (*bäyet*). Other Tatars sold Sufi books such as *Bädäwäm Kitābi* or *Qışş-a-yi Yūsuf*. All marriage negotiations strengthened the links between deported apostates and the rest of the apostate community in an unexpected way. Thanks to the *jīyins*, exiled families could marry their daughters within their original community, making the consequences of their exile obsolete, or they could wed their sons to apostates of other villages, which considerably broadened the apostate network.

Fathers, while away on seasonal work, often discussed possible marital alliances with coworkers from other villages. Mixed Kräshen-Tatar monogamous and sometimes polygamous marriages rarely occurred, but did happen. If caught, husbands declared to the police that their “wives” were domestic servants. Most often such mixed marriages happened among exiled apostates and *novokreshchenye* living as a minority in Tatar villages, especially in Sviiazhsk and Spassk districts and, to a lesser degree, among the *starokreshchenye* villages of Mamadysh and Laishevo districts. As a general rule, a “baptized girl” married a Muslim Tatar and left her parents’ home. Such marital alliance was possible according to the Qur’an (5:5); however, Tatar theologians of the eighteenth century and first half of the nineteenth century wondered whether Eastern Orthodoxy’s iconodulism did not prevent its members from being part of the “People of the Book.” If from a Tatar theological position, there was no consensus on the validity of such marriages, from the Russian state’s point of view there was no doubt that these marriages were invalid. When caught, baptized parents simply said that their daughter had eloped.<sup>86</sup>

84. NART, f. 13, op. 1, d. 1003; Nikolai Petrov (from Verkhniaia Serda), interview by author, April 2008, National Archive of the Republic of Tatarstan, Kazan; interviews by author of elderly people in Elyshevo, May 2008.

85. Iapei Babai, “O Kreshchenykh tatarakh,” no. 19 (1 October 1891): 600.

86. Interviews by author of elderly people, May 2008, in Ianyli; NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 2812, ll. 49 ob.-50, 54; f. 2, op. 1, d. 347, ll. 8, 10, 13; f. 4, op. 72, d. 12, ll. 325–335; and f. 4, op. 133, d. 7, l. 30 ob.; Kemper, *Sufis und Gelehrte*, 286–290.

Beside Muslim Tatar festivals, Christian festivals also helped consolidate kinship and neighborly ties between baptized communities of different religious inclinations. A villager from Elyshevo claimed that fifty years before their first apostasy in 1866, Elyshevites did not celebrate Muslim festivals. There is indeed oral and written evidence that apostates in this area celebrated Christian festivals, but that they, far from serving the cause of Orthodoxy, worked more toward the consolidation of Islam. When the apostates of Kibiak-Kozi learned of Elyshevo's official return to Orthodoxy, they refused to visit their relatives on the Kazan Mother of God icon's feast day (22 October) as they used to do in the past. Orthodox devotional pamphlets claimed that the icon, found by a nine-year-old girl in the Kazan kremlin after Ivan IV conquered the city, had protected the faithful from the false teachings of the Prophet Muhammad; ironically, apostates of Kibiak-Kozi used the icon's feast day as a way to rebuke those who did not remain faithful to the Prophet.<sup>87</sup>

Another festival, little known to the Kazan Tatars of the nineteenth century—Russian missionaries and ethnographers referred to this festival only in the Kräshen context—but very popular among Kräshens, Udmurts, Chuvash, Maris, and Mishar Tatars, also served to consolidate kinship and religious ties in Mamadysh, Kazan, and Laishevo districts. Unlike their Kazan Tatar neighbors, Kräshens of Elyshevo, Ianyli, Apazovo, and Bol'shie Savrushii celebrated Nardughan, a pre-Christian festival that fell between Christmas and the Epiphany on the Christian calendar. Called the devil's wedding (*shäytan tuyi*) by its critics, Nardughan welcomed the new year and helped the young from various Kräshen villages to get acquainted. It consisted of various games deemed unorthodox by both priests and mullahs. First, boys borrowed their mothers' summer clothes and, dressed up like girls, visited houses to approach girls, especially those who came from other villages as guests. Next, boys and girls gathered in a place rented for the occasion to sing songs, play games, and read the future with little adult supervision. Because boys and girls rarely mixed in Kräshen villages, except for special religious celebrations, and girls stayed indoors during the cold months, the Nardughan festival, which temporarily relaxed the established gendered hierarchy, gave them the unique opportunity to get to know each other. Even after joining Islam officially in 1907, Elyshevo continued celebrating Nardughan well into the 1950s—many of the brides of Elyshevo still originate from proximate prerevolutionary “apostate” villages—while surrounding Tatar villages celebrated the “Russian” New Year more soberly by baking special treats (Kazan Tatars had their New Year celebration, called Näwruz, in March). Conversely, in areas where Il'minskii's school took root, Nardughan served to strengthen bonds between Orthodox Christians and communities still imbedded in their animistic culture.<sup>88</sup>

87. Malov, “Ocherk,” 18, pt. 1 (1872): 389; Vera Shevzov, *Russian Orthodoxy on the Eve of Revolution* (Oxford, 2004), 245.

88. Interviews by author of elderly people in Elyshevo and Ianyli, May 2008; R. Daulei, *Sviatki u kreshchenykh tatar Mamadyshskogo i Laishevskogo uezdov Kazanskoi gubernii* (Kazan, 1903), 1–8; Diakon Iakov Emel'ianov, “Nardughan,” in *Stikhi na kreshcheno-tatarskom iazyke* (Kazan, 1879), 17–20; Urazmanova, *Obriady i prazdniki tatar*, 99–108; idem, “Osobennosti traditsionnykh narodnykh prazdnikov tatar Srednego Povolzh'ia (K voprosu etnicheskogo raionirovanna kul'tury),” *Etnokul'turnoe raionirovanie tatar Srednego Povolzh'ia* (Kazan, 1991), 91–93; Iskhakova-Vamba, *Tatarskoe narodnoe*, 16–20; Flera Bayazitova, *Tatar khalqinġng bäyräm häm könküresh yolaları* (Kazan, 1995), 57–64.



**The Emergence of an Underground Female Class of Teachers** Exogamy facilitated the emergence of a new class of pedagogues who were exclusively Kräshen and, for the most part, women. The education of children occurred in two stages. In the first stage, mothers or grandmothers taught children the basic Muslim prayers at home. In the second, better educated women opened underground *maktabs*. In 1871, the police learned about the existence of two such schools in the villages of Ianasal, Laishevo district, and Tokhtamyshevo, Mamadysh district.<sup>89</sup>

Information about these female teachers is scarce. However, one of them stands out: Biksutana or Evfimiia Ivanova. A sixty-year-old *abistay*, she was originally from Elyshevo and had married a Kräshen of Tri Sosny, Mamadysh district. Her grandfather, a rich baptized Tatar, had founded numerous mosques in the area and notably that of Savrushy. In August 1864, she was teaching two boys and fifteen girls for free in her husband's village, and accepted only occasional presents for her labor from her students' parents. Biksutana herself had studied with the *abistay* of Ziuri village in the Mamadysh district, and after educating her eldest daughter, she sent her to the *abistay* of Savrushy village to continue her studies. Later, this daughter married a Kräshen of Staraia Ikshurma, where she taught the children of her village. In this way, Biksutana established a dynasty of remarkable female pedagogues.<sup>90</sup>

The Tatar practice of exogamy encouraged the expansion of Islam over an ever greater territory. Biksutana understood the role she played in the spreading of her faith. She explained to Timofeev that according to the Qur'an, everyone would become Muslim before the end of the world. The mass conversions of the Kräshen confirmed her apocalyptic hopes. Biksutana herself was deeply religious. She regularly visited the mosque in Savrushy, especially during Ramadan. Her life was an example of Muslim piety to the Kräshens in Tri Sosny village. Her reputation as a teacher of Islam was such that Kräshens called her *Biksultan* (a real queen), a title of respect and affection.<sup>91</sup>

Biksutana also understood the threat that Il'minskii's schooling posed to the spread of Islam among the Kräshens. Il'minskii had introduced a phonetic method of reading Tatar texts in the Cyrillic alphabet that competed dangerously with the traditional method of imparting literacy in the *maktabs*. Thanks to this new approach, Il'minskii's students were able to read unfamiliar Tatar texts more quickly, while students from the *maktabs* first named each letter, without sounding them out. When Il'minskii opened the school for Christian Tatars in Kazan in the fall of 1864, Biksutana spread rumors against the school, partly because some of her students had been influenced by Timofeev's teaching. Biksutana's activism was such that the state and the church made an example of her. In 1864, the vice-governor Rozov confiscated the Qur'an that a Tatar from Tatarskie Savrushy had given her, and when she died, the local priest buried her in the Christian cemetery.<sup>92</sup>

Female teachers such as Biksutana helped their covillagers understand the importance of establishing permanent schools. In Elyshevo, for example, a woman from a

89. NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 2812, ll. 78–78 ob., 82 ob., 83 ob., 85.

90. Il'minskii, *Kazanskaia tsentral'naia*, 74–75.

91. *Istoriko-statisticheskoe opisanie tserkvei i prikhodov Kazanskoi eparkhii*, 34.

92. Il'minskii, ed., *Kazanskaia tsentral'naia*, 79, 88; *Istoriko-statisticheskoe opisanie tserkvei i prikhodov Kazanskoi eparkhii*, 34.

Kräshen village Tiamti, Laishevo district, taught children from 1860 to 1864. She was replaced by the itinerant *shakird* Muhi ad-Din; and when he left Elyshevo, another woman, Matrena Ivanova, took his place as the local educator. To avoid unnecessary attention children came to their teachers at various times alone or in groups of two and used the *säke*, large seats along the walls that could serve as a place to eat or relax, as desks. If surprised by the priest or the police, they said that they came as guests. Significantly, these underground schools attracted girls from both neighboring villages and nonapostate parents, which helped speed up the Islamization of a given village or area.<sup>93</sup>

In general, when missionaries looked for female students for their newly opened schools, they encountered greater resistance than when they tried to educate boys. Boys needed to learn Russian to transact business, but girls did not. A girl was supposed to stay in the village unit, her parents' or her husband's, and be in charge of her children's religious education. Islam sufficed. Besides, sewing and other feminine crafts were being taught in girls' *maktabs*. In Ianasal, parents, under the influence of apostate neighbors, took their daughters away from the Christian school, but boys continued to attend as the knowledge of Russian could be handy while trading outside the village.<sup>94</sup>

#### *Women's Role in the Apostasy Movement*

The place that women occupied during marriage negotiations helped to facilitate the flow of rumors from one village to another. The leaders of apostasies were often related by marriage; father-in-law and son-in-law stood side by side. Rumors spread by women were crucial before, during, and after the rebellion. Avdot'ia Fedorova in the village of Kibiak-Kozi, Laishevo district, was arrested because of her involvement in spreading rumors about a law supposedly allowing Kräshens to become officially Muslim. Women also gathered information about the development of the apostasies in the neighboring villages through family ties (this could involve several villages). One woman in Elyshevo brought fresh news about the apostasy movement from her parents, who lived in Kibiak-Kozi. While visiting relatives in Elyshevo, another woman of Savrushu learned about the arrival of an Orthodox missionary and she immediately reported the news to her fellow villagers. This information was carefully debated in homes and during elders' meetings. Finally, to secure the support of all women in the village—there is evidence that some in Elyshevo still held firm to their icons—apostate women spread rumors that Russians would force them to wear Russian clothes—the *sarafan* (a sleeveless dress) and the *kokoshnik* (a headdress with a crest and a decorated hard base)—if they did not sign the petition.<sup>95</sup>

After the arrival of the Russian authorities, women came forward in villages where the decision to apostatize was not yet unanimous, swearing to the investigators that

93. RGIA, f. 821, op. 8, ed. khr. 763, l. 289 ob.; NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 3272, l. 22 ob.; Il'minskii, ed., *Kazanskaia tsentral'naia*, 153; Priest D. Grigor'ev, "Neskol'ko slov o prichinakh uspešnogo rasprostraneniia magometanstva sredi inorodtsev-iazychnikov," *PB* 1, no. 2 (January 1905): 88; Mashanov's report in 1881, NART f. 967, op. 1, d. 8, l. 6 ob.

94. NART, f. 4, op. 98, d. 23, l. 156; Malov, "Ocherk," 17, pt. 3 (1871): 243; Fuks, *Kazanskie tatarsy*, 132; Speranskii, *Kazanskie tatarsy*, 30.

95. RGIA, f. 821, op. 8, d. 763, l. 2 ob.-3; Malov, "Ocherk," 17, pt. 3 (1871): 242, and 18, pt. 1 (1872): 66; NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 231, ll. 137 ob.-138.

their husbands had never participated in the apostasy movement and knew nothing about Islam. If their husbands had already gone on seasonal work, they refused to say where they were. When the priest came to visit, women pretended that they were alone at home, and refused to allow a male to cross the threshold. They also used other methods to avoid the authorities. In the village street, some women kept silent and refused any contact with missionaries. When priests came to preach to the villagers about the superiority of Christianity over Islam, they refused to go to the meeting, despite the priests' exhortations. Only widows or *soldatki* (wives of soldiers gone to the army) came, but as the representatives of their family unit. One of them climbed on the large seat along the walls (*säke*) of the house where the meeting was held and showed to the missionaries that there was only one way to pray. As she prostrated and recited the Islamic prayer on a higher ground, the baptized elders who were angered by the missionaries calmed down and remained silent.<sup>96</sup>

When missionaries dared to pass the threshold of apostate houses, women hid behind the curtain dividing the house into women's and men's quarters, and came out only if the missionary showed them the Qur'an or other Muslim books. If the missionary started reading the Gospel of Matthew in Tatar, they hid again. In other instances, women gathered around the missionary to get more information about the investigation going on in the village. They also asked him to read some specific texts in the Bible that would answer some of the questions they asked themselves about Islam (not about Christianity). Those texts referred to the story of Joseph, so popular in the Tatar villages. Since the biblical account almost completely ignored Zulaykha (known only as Potiphar's wife in Genesis), Tatars and Islamized Kräshens concluded that Christians had indeed falsified the Word of Allah, as the Qur'an claimed. On the other hand, Jesus's miracles and Mary's miraculous pregnancy reconfirmed what Kräshens had heard from Tatars. Enthusiastic missionaries did not always detect that apostate Kräshens were interested in their readings not because they suddenly felt moved by the Gospel, but because of possible connections with what they knew about the Qur'an. Kräshens who owned Muslim books even asked the missionaries to translate some of the more difficult Arabic words.<sup>97</sup>

A woman's role was not confined to the gathering of information about police investigations or knowledge about Islam. When necessary, women actively defended their Islamic identity. They sent new petitions to have their husbands freed, using their Muslim names and explaining the main tenets of their faith. They wrote their own petitions to the government to be recognized as Muslim. One of them, approved by the Senate in 1807, served as a legal precedent for the Kräshens who apostatized en masse in 1827.<sup>98</sup>

Even after the arrival of the police or the missionaries, women did not stop proselytizing. In 1872, a married couple in the village of Elyshevo went door to door,

96. NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 3048, l. 28; and f. 4, op. 101, d. 11, l. 86.

97. Malov, "Ocherk," 18, pt. 1 (1872): 125; idem, "Prikhody starokreshchenykh," no. 12 (1865): 502; Iapei Babai, "O kreshchenykh tatar," no. 18 (15 September 1891): 560.

98. NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 227, ll. 53–54; f. 1, op. 3, d. 222, l. 70; f. 1, op. 3, d. 3697, l. 45; and RGIA, f. 821, op. 8, d. 763, l. 208 (petition of Samigulov's first wife in September 1869); Malov, "Pravoslavnaia protivomusul'manskaia," no. 10 (1869): 151–154; Mozharovskii, "Izlozhenie," 125–126; PSZ 16, no. 12126: 704–707.

urging people to convert to Islam. The wife stood on the bridge leading to the newly built church, and dissuaded women from going to services. As a result, women ceased to attend the newly created Orthodox Tatar liturgy. Another courageous woman, known as Bibei (Evfimiia Efremova), taught Tatar, Kräshen, and apostate children in Bol'shie Savrushii for more than fifteen years after her husband was exiled to Siberia in 1874—strongly interfering with the work of the Brotherhood school.<sup>99</sup>

### *Women and Death Rituals*

Besides disseminating Islamic knowledge underground, apostate women played an important (but not exclusive) role in the conduct of religious rites. In Verkhniaia Nikitkina, Chistopol' province, women circumcised boys; and in Elyshevo village, Mamadysh district, they conducted funerary wakes or congregational prayers for the benefit of the dead (*pominki* in Russian, *puminky* in Kräshen, *ta'ziya* in Arabic, *iskä alu* in popular Tatar) during which they called for God's mercy on the deceased. Because the practice of reading prayers for the dead developed outside Medina in the eighth century, nineteenth-century Tatar reformist theologians and the earlier Naqshbandi Sufi Utiz Imäni, faithful to the eighth-century legal scholar Abu Hanifa's opinion, considered the wakes as suspicious innovations. However, the practice of reading prayers for the dead grew in the cities of the expanding Islamic empire, and in the context of Imperial Russia, served to maintain Tatar and apostate communal cohesiveness.<sup>100</sup>

Death constituted a special event in the history of the apostasies. This was the time when apostates affirmed or reaffirmed their attachment to Islam. The village of Shep-sheik, Kazan district, in 1866, announced their official decision to apostatize by sharing with the police and the priest their intention to bury a certain Akulina Pavlova the Islamic way. But when the police arrived to take the already decomposed body to the Christian cemetery of Alaty, three women—the body's washers who were guarding the deceased—threw themselves onto the boards that covered her temporary burial site, and the men got into a fistfight. In baptized as well as Tatar villages, it was customary not to leave the deceased alone, partly because the soul might resent it and become hostile, partly because it needed the intercessory prayers of the living in the period between the death and resurrection. The three women were later imprisoned, but their intervention managed to buy time for Akulina Pavlova, whose body was later secretly buried in a Muslim cemetery.<sup>101</sup>

When Russians inquired about who conducted the last funerary rites, apostates usually gave the names of neighboring dead mullahs, their wives' village mullahs, or indicated that they conducted the funerals themselves at home with the help of fellow baptized villagers who could recite the *Yä Sin*, the thirty-sixth chapter of the Qur'an about the resurrection of the dead. Only in the period from 1890 to 1905 did

99. RGIA, f. 821, op. 8, d. 763, l. 299 ob.; and NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 3272, ll. 20–21 ob.; *Otchet o deiatel'nosti Bratstva Sv. Guriia za dvadtsat' tretii bratskii god s 4-go oktiabria 1889 g. po 4-e oktiabria 1890 goda* (Kazan, 1890), prilozhenie k *IKE*, 1890 goda, nos. 22–24: 42.

100. Halevi, *Muhammad's Grave*, 28; *Ghabderäkhim Utiz Imäni äI-Bolghari*, 89–90; Aydar Iuzeev, *Filosofskaiia mysl' tatarskogo naroda* (Kazan, 2007), 65.

101. Police report in *Materialy po istorii Tatarii vtoroi poloviny 19-go veka*, 236; NART, f. 13, op. 1, d. 938, ll. 48–52, 70, 92–93

the apostates begin to occasionally mention a living mullah. During this period, local authorities, overwhelmed by the large numbers of petitions to apostatize, considered granting an amnesty for the apostates; but these good intentions came to nothing.

Besides complicating the villagers' access to a mullah, the baptized status of apostate villages occasionally interfered with the conduct of funerary rites. If the Russian state law demanded bodies to be buried within three days for the police to determine the cause of death, the Islamic law required the bodies to be buried as soon as possible, within a day, to preserve the body's state of purity. In Muslim villages, the police usually hesitated to enforce the law, but in Russian and baptized villages, if the cause of death was not determined before burial, the body could be unearthed and submitted to autopsy. The result was that baptized Mishar Tatars of Nizhnii Novgorod province, who were strongly attached to Islam, called the priest for the last sacrament to avoid the autopsy; that is, in their view, the desecration of the deceased's body.<sup>102</sup>

But after sending the petition, apostates had the unique opportunity to publicly direct their funeral rites. In 1866, four people died in Elyshevo and their unofficial mullah buried them the Islamic way. The men opened a new cemetery on a hill named Shitsu and helped dig the tombs. Today, except for one *chardughan* (fence), there are no tomb markers left on the hill overhanging the village's only street, still unpaved, named after Lenin. By its form, the hill reminds an observer of the many other sacred *qurghans* that dot the region. When the army came to crush the apostasy movement, the site became known as *izgelär zirati* (the Saints' cemetery), a name usually given to places where martyrs of the faith or Sufi saints are buried. At the time of the collectivization, silos were built on that sacred site.<sup>103</sup>

As noted by Malov, who visited the village in 1866, the baptized of Elyshevo did not hire a grave digger, as did the Russians, but invited the whole male community, even those who did not approve of the apostasy, to dig the tombs. According to Islam, men receive *sawab* (religious merit that will be counted in the afterlife) for praying at the cemetery. Women, as in Tatar villages, did not attend the ceremony but prayed at home to increase the deceased's merits in God's eyes. In *Fäzä'il ash-Shühür*, Biktashi warned women not to visit cemeteries, lest they be cursed; if they visited a cemetery and died on the same day, they would be damned forever. Usually, in Tatar villages, while the men attended the deceased at the cemetery, elderly women and the mullah's wife gathered at home in one room and mediated for the dead, asking for God's forgiveness. Together they recited the *tahlil* (*La Ilaha illallah*, "There is no God but Allah"), the first part of the *shahada*, with the rosary (*tasbeih*) in hand and lamented that the deceased wept while being washed, that she cried while being taken away from her home.<sup>104</sup>

Malov reported that women in Elyshevo conducted wakes for the dead. Men and women in Elyshevo still conduct such wakes separately on the third (*öchese*), seventh (*jidese*), fortieth (*qirighi*), fifty-first (*ille ber köne*) days, and on the first anniversary

102. *Materialy po istorii Tatarii vtoroi poloviny 19-go veka*, 259; Mashanov, *Religiozno-nravstvennoe sostoianie*, 27.

103. NART, f. 13, op. 1, d. 1003, ll. 12 ob., 25; Malov, "Ocherk," 17, pt. 3 (1871): 410; Shäriullina, "Uris-kiafer kilgänder Yilish awili ilenä," 67; Zahidullin, "Jilish awili mäkruhlari," 48–49, nos. 11–12 (1995): 147.

104. Malov, "Ocherk," 17, pt. 3 (1871): 409, and 18, pt. 1 (1872): 246; *Fäzä'il*, 32; Sh. S. "Tatary-Musul'mane. Smert' i pokhorony," 118.

of the death (*yilī*), despite imams' condemnation of this ritual. In 1866, the women of Elyshevo invited friends and relatives, cooking pancakes (*qoymaq*) and curd tart (*durchmaq*). They also prepared beer.<sup>105</sup> Like their Tatar neighbors, the women of Elyshevo started the wake with *Bismillah*, prayed the *tahlil*, chanted passages in turn from the Qur'an, and performed *baghishlaw* (dedication) in Tatar. *Baghishlaw* is a very special time during the wakes when participants offer prayers mainly in Tatar for the Prophet Muhammad, the local Sufi saints, the deceased, any dead and surviving relatives, neighbors, and guests, giving their names and kinship ties, asking for God's mercy and forgiveness. At the wake I attended in Kazan in 1996, the oldest woman initiated the chanting, then the youngest women continued, and occasionally, at the recitation of the *tahlil*, their voices joined in unison. At times, a woman would stand up and collect alms (*sadaqa*) in the name of the dead. All these actions were understood as merit or God's recompense (*sawab*) for the dead and meant to ease the deceased's suffering in the grave. After *baghishlaw* and the *sadaqa*, there was another special time devoted to the recitation of the *munajat*.<sup>106</sup> In Ufa province, the Mari missionary Eruslanov noted that Maris heard Muslim tales of the origin of the world, the Prophets and famous Sufi saints, the Mahdi, the terrible fate of unbelievers, and God's mercy at judgment day through the monotonous singing of Tatar and Bashkir *munajat* at marriages, funerals, and wakes. After reciting *munajat*, villagers shared important news. Such was the case in Elyshevo when women discussed whether to send their children to Il'minskii's school in Kazan, expressing their fear that if their sons left they would be drafted.<sup>107</sup>

There is no doubt that through the wakes, the women of Elyshevo who came originally from neighboring Kräshen villages gained considerable intercessory power. By earning merit for the deceased and their families, they played an important role in strengthening communal ties not only between the dead and the living, but also between the living of both their native and adopted villages. The wakes of Elyshevo did not exclude female neighbors whose husbands had not signed the petition, leaving the door open to further integration into the community of the Prophet. Domna, the wife of Kondratii Filippov in Elyshevo known for his unconditional commitment to Christianity, attended the wakes. Such inclusiveness opened the way for further

105. Malov, "Ocherk," 18, pt. 1 (1872): 73. Prayers for the dead developed in the eighth century outside Medina. Halevi, *Muhammad's Grave*, 28. Wakes are performed in former Ottoman- or Turkic-speaking territories such as Bosnia, Albania, Turkey, and Central Asia, and also in Indonesia. But in Saudi Arabia, where Wahhabis in the eighteenth century opposed the giving of alms or the recitation of prayers on behalf of a person already dead, they are condemned because they constitute an attempt to interfere with God's judgment. Bringa, *Being Muslim the Bosnian Way*, 188, 248, n. 20; Eleanor Abdella Doumato, *Getting God's Ear: Women, Islam, and Healing in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf* (New York, 2000), 91. For wakes among the Tatars, see Rittikh, *Materialy dlia etnografii Rossii*, 31; Speranskii, *Kazanskie tatory*, 27; Fäkh'r ad-Din, *Jäwämi'*, 160–166 (hadith no. 104); R. G. Mukhamedova, *Tatary-Mishari* (Moscow, 1972), 185; Raufa Urzmanova, *Sovremennye obriady tatarskogo naroda: Istoriko-etnograficheskoe issledovanie* (Kazan, 1984), 120; Raziya abistay Zakirova, *Ärwakhlari bizni shatlandiriyq! Ille berenche könendä ütkärelüche täghziyä mäjlise* (Kazan, 2002). The wakes are currently the target of mullahs' attacks in Tatarstan. See, for instance, Nurulla Muflikhun Arislanı, *Jännät häm jähännäm yulları* (Chistopol, 2000), 81.

106. "At Färidä's place," recording by author, 13 May 1996; Urzmanova, "Semeinye obychai i obriady," in *Tatary*, 368.

107. Eruslanov, "Magometanskaia propaganda," no. 12 (1895): 181–184; Malov, "Ocherk," 17, pt. 3 (1871): 406.

consolidation of the apostate movement and expansion of the Islamic space, despite the physical presence of the Russian police and the Russian missionary. As a result of such discussions, Domna hesitated for a long time before sending her son to Kazan, who later became a priest.<sup>108</sup>

Although non-apostate Kräshens' wakes included both genders, apostate female wakes excluded men. For this reason, Christian missionaries did not have easy access to the women's world. Malov planned to read the Bible in vernacular Tatar when he unintentionally stepped into one of the women's wakes. He promptly realized that he was out of place and left; the husband, he noted, was gone and women arrived steadily one after the other. Lack of direct evidence makes the reconstitution of such gatherings in apostate villages very difficult. However, the most intriguing aspect of the "wakes" in Elyshevo as recorded in Malov's diary, was that one of them lasted over two or three weeks and the starting date was the first of October, which in this case, coincided with the Christian celebration of the Feast of Pokrov (*Pukraw* in Tatar), or the Protection of Our Most Holy Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary. This feast celebrated the apparition of the Mother of God to St. Andrew in tenth-century Constantinople. St. Andrew saw Mary descend, kneel down, and pray, asking her son to intercede for all Christians in the world and, as a form of protection, spread her veil over the people attending the church where she appeared. Women in Elyshevo also celebrated Pokrov. Besides praying at the deceased's house, which was the rule for the wakes, they took turns for further parties. Thus, Malov learned that the wife of a prominent apostate performed the Muslim wakes and simultaneously celebrated the day of Pokrov. At first glance, such combination of commemoration and festival seems strange. The woman from Kibiak-Kozi, a leading center of the apostasy movement, lived in a fully furnished Islamized house without icons and with a curtain separating the women's quarters from other rooms. She was literate and refused to hear Malov read the Gospel to her in Tatar, pretending to be sick. It is doubtful that the woman had gone to church for the night vigil: the church was far and women in villages strongly inclined to Islam never went to church or the chapel except to get officially married. Only men visited the church annually to perform their legal obligation to confess and take communion, for if they did not fulfill the rites, they could not get their *bilet* or authorization to travel and work outside their village. It is also possible that those who informed Malov about the wakes wanted to appease his curiosity or suspicions by associating the Muslim wakes with the celebration of Pokrov. After all, many in the village viewed him as a spy or regarded him as a man who could help them to escape possible deportation to Siberia.<sup>109</sup>

The celebration of Pokrov, however, was not a cover up. Pokrov was an important day in the Eastern Orthodox religious calendar, commemorating the Intercession of Mary, which Russians, Kräshens, and even Muslim Tatars (especially Mishar Tatars) celebrated in Mamadysh, Menzelinsk, Elabuga, Karsun, and Tetiushi districts. During Pokrov Tatar families invited each other and went to the market, which on that

108. Malov, "Ocherk," 18, pt. 1 (1872): 125; 18, pt. 2 (1872): 47.

109. Gavrilov, "Pogrebal'nye obychai," 255; Malov, "Ocherk," 18, pt. 1 (1872): 73–74, 128; Il'minskii, ed., *Kazanskaia tsentral'naia*, 153; NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 3272, l. 28; Urazmanova, "Semeinye obychai i obriady," in *Tatary*, 369.



3.3: Krāshens from Nikiforova, Mamadysh district. S. Chicherina, *U privolzhskikh inorodtsev. Putevye zametki* (SPb., 1905), unnumbered page.

particular day (1 October) took place in the Russian village (*selo*). Thus in Mamadysh district, not far away from Elyshevo, the Tatar villages of Ishkeevo, Sartyk, and Krāshen Nikiforova celebrated Pokrov (*Pukraw jiyīni*) with the Russians of Taveli. Pokrov, for all ethnic groups, signaled the preparation for winter-time supplies. Such was the case for the retired soldier Kondratii Filippov and his second wife, a native from Nikiforova, who had remained faithful to the church during the apostasy of 1866 and took Malov to the fair of Taveli.<sup>110</sup> Krāshen villages leaning more toward Christianity than Islam but still attached to their indigenous beliefs remembered their dead on the days of major Christian festivals, before Easter in spring, and before Pokrov in fall. At Pokrov, families in Nikiforova village had a special meal consisting of pancakes, eggs, wine, and beer at home and at the cemetery. People sprinkled food and liquid on the graves to keep the deceased happy. Krāshens also remembered their dead ancestors weekly at home, on Thursdays, adding an extra plate at the table and pillows around the table, as well as opening the door for the deceased to enter.<sup>111</sup>

110. Malov, "Ocherk," 17, pt. 3 (1871): 408; Otdel rukopisei Kazanskoi nauchnoi biblioteki im. Lobachevskogo, f. 7, ed. khr. 1, l. 151 (Malov noted that Mishars in Drakino, Karsun district, celebrated Pokrov in the company of Russians); Urazmanova, *Obriady i prazdniki tatar*, 95.

111. *Istoriko-statisticheskoe opisanie tserkvei i prikhodov Kazanskoi eparkhii*, 323; Gavrilov, "Pogrebal'nye obychai," 257; Il'minskii, ed., *Kazanskaia tsentral'naia*, 22; Urazmanova, "Semeinye obychai i obriady," in *Tatary*, 369.



As was the case of Tatar festivals, Russian festivals like Pokrov could also serve as meeting places for different ethnic and religious groups, and therefore become venues of either Christianization or Islamization. Vera Shevzov's work on Marian festivals shows that stories about Mary and her icons involved Russian and non-Russian actors. They had multiple functions, either to set boundaries between Russians and the "Other," or unite Russians with the "Other." Thus, icons of Mary saved Russians from the Muslim Tatar yoke, or resulted in the conversion of non-Russians, as was the case for a group of Bashkirs who, blinded by her image, recovered their vision only after converting. According to church tradition, miracles surrounding Mary's icon of Kazan in 1571 convinced Tatars and Chuvash to convert to Christianity. In other cases, Tatars recognized the power of Mary's icons but did not convert: a Crimean Tatar khan would pray to her image before going to battle. Obviously, these stories came from a Russian perspective and were meant to reaffirm Christianity's superiority. However, despite their iconoclasm, Muslim Tatars regarded icons as Russian gods who could potentially bring harm if ill treated. Thus, in the village of Uluiaz, Kazan district, Tatars remembered that a drunk fellow villager stole an icon of Mary on the day of Pokrov from the chapel of a nearby Russian village and threw it away, cursing it. His parents commanded him to find the icon and place it back where it belonged, which he did; nonetheless, he got sick for a week, was drafted, and died, leaving no descendants. If Marian stories cannot tell us much about the sentiment of Tatars or apostates toward Mary and festivals linked with her, they could at least speak to a Kräshen audience, still wondering about its real place in the multireligious landscape of Mamadysh district. Mary could be a powerful, edifying figure for all peoples, no matter what their language or ethnic background was. Thus, in the dry summer of 1900, the *starokreshchenye* of Biletlibash, district of Mamadysh, strongly believed that their prayers to Mary's icon had stopped a fire from engulfing their entire village.<sup>112</sup>

Although it is difficult to define the meaning of Pokrov in Elyshevo, one thing was sure. The women's gathering did not take place on a Thursday as in other Kräshen villages but on a Friday, on the day when Muslims believe that the doors of hell are locked. Nevertheless, the celebration of Mary's intercession for the faithful fitted well with the intercessory purpose of the Muslim Tatar wakes. Sufi poets ranked Mary as one of the best women of Islam. She was the only female name cited in the Qur'an, and a hadith claimed that she would be the first to enter paradise. In Tatar *munajat*, Mary appeared as an intercessory figure for the faithful, along with other important female figures—Eve, Asiya (Moses's adoptive mother), Sara (Abraham's wife), Haygar (Abraham's concubine, mother of Ismail), Halima (Muhammad's wet nurse), Khadija (the Prophet's first wife), Aisha (the Prophet's younger wife), and Fatima (the Prophet's daughter). Besides the *munajat* composed by women, there was also an important Sufi work devoted to Mary and Jesus that Tatar children knew by heart and whirling dervishes sung in Central Asia as part of their *zikh* ceremonies; its popular

112. Shevzov, *Russian Orthodoxy*, 243–244; S. M. P., "Polozhenie inorodtsev v Volzhsko-Kamskom krae i prosvetitel'naia sistema N. I. Il'minskogo," in *Nikolai Ivanovich Il'minskii: Sbornik statei po povodu 25-letiiia so dnia konchiny ego* († 27 dek. 1891 g.) (Kazan, 1916), 6; Malov, *Missionerstvo sredi mukhammedan*, 96–97; *Istoriko-statisticheskoe opisanie tserkvei i prikhodov Kazanskoi eparkhii*, 364.

name was *The Book of Mary* by Sulayman Baqirghani. Its eight- to eleven-syllable meter, similar to Yasawi's poems and borrowed from folk Turkic poetry, praised Jesus and his mother as wandering ascetics, and was sung at various religious celebrations. Despite its antiquity, the book could speak to the broken heart of many Elyshevites when forced to bury their dead the Christian way.<sup>113</sup>

The reciters of *The Book of Mary* could fully identify with the characters' encounter with death and their struggle to obey God's law in an environment hostile to the spread of the true faith. The story goes that both mother and son, sensing that death was near for one of them, retreated to a mountain top. They built a cell to pray and fast. One day while Jesus was searching for food to break the fast, 'Azra'il, the angel of death, appeared to Mary and took her soul away. Upon his return, Jesus fell in complete despair and took the road to find proper burial. But to his deepest sorrow, the children of Israel refused to give him the piece of cloth he needed for the shroud. "Your mother should remain in the same state she died (that is, in a state of pollution, without proper ablution and burial)," they yelled. Others shouted that no one should come close to the deceased. Mary's soul did not deserve the community's intercession.<sup>114</sup> This refusal to offer proper Islamic burial was well too familiar to apostate Krāshens who, legally, could not bury their dead in Muslim cemeteries. If caught, they could be submitted to corporal punishment. When forced to bury their dead the Christian way, apostates deported from Spassk district to Mamadysh district bitterly complained that local Russian authorities had their dead buried in the garments they wore at the time of death and on the bed they laid in, without proper washing and shrouding. If necessary, church and government authorities did not hesitate to dig out the bodies of apostates buried the Islamic way and have them reburied in Christian cemeteries, but not without meeting resistance.<sup>115</sup> Thus apostates of Urmaeva, Tsvil'sk district, in 1867 kept the police from digging out the bodies of a woman and a young boy by yelling: "It is better for us to go to Siberia than let you bury our dead in the Christian rite."<sup>116</sup>

But the poem provided further comfort for the reciters of the wakes. When Jesus returned to his mother, he saw houris, beautiful eternal maidens, descend from paradise. Away from his gaze, they washed his mother, wrapped her in a burial shroud (*kafn*), and buried her. Then, 70,000 angels led by Gabriel came to pray at her tomb. Such a story could only speak to the apostates of Elyshevo and other villages. That houris provided proper ablutions and clothing brought definite comfort to those in the apostate community who had relatives entombed in coffins. The dead of Elyshevo could also receive the visit of the houris and angels for the washing and shrouding of their body, because they had died at a time when the community was under

113. Halevi, *Muhammad's Grave*, 226; Schimmel, *My Soul Is a Woman*, 22, 55; Khösnullin, *Mönäjätlär*, 50 (on Fatima); Sadekova, *Ideologija islama*, 45–46; *Häzrät-i Märyäm*, 1–8; Matveev, "Mukhammedanskii rasskaz," 34.

114. *Häzrät-i Märyäm*, 7; Matveev, "Mukhammedanskii rasskaz," 28–29.

115. NART, f. 2, op. 1, d. 493, l. 2; Malov, *Prikhody starokreshchenykh i novokreshchenykh tatar v Kazanskoi eparkhii*, 45; Radik Iskhakov, "Metody bor'by samoderzhavno-tserkovnoi vlasti protiv dvizheniia kreshchenykh tatar za vozvrashchenie v Islam 1800–1870 gg. (na materiale Kazanskoi gubernii)," in *Tatarskie musul'manskie prikhody v Rossiiskoi imperii*, 295.

116. NART, f. 1, op. 3, d. 1252, ll. 1–1 ob.

nonbelievers' siege. Significantly, the story of Mary's burial in Rabghuzi's *Stories of the Prophets*, also known to the Krāshens exposed to Islam, did not mention the Jews' refusal to provide proper funerals for Mary. Rabghuzi's emphasis was more on the mourning of an orphan and life after death. Jesus saw his mother in a dream, dressed in a celestial garment, surrounded by houris. Then Jesus went to the city and found women to wash his mother's body. In Baqirghani's *Book of Mary*, there was no dream, but reality. Jesus actually saw the houris wash and shroud his mother. Although Baqirghani lived in the twelfth century, it is curious to note that Rabghuzi did not mention this other version of the story. Usually Rabghuzi liked to provide his readers with several possible plots. It is likely, as Alessio Bombaci has suggested, that the Baqirghani's poems were recast at the end of the seventeenth century under stronger Naqshbandi influence, in the context of Russian farther expansion into Turkic territory. Nevertheless the Baqirghani's version of *The Book of Mary* was more popular in the Middle Volga than Rabghuzi's account: partly because it was in verse while Rabghuzi's text was in prose, partly because *The Book of Mary* was shorter and spoke more vividly to the Volga Tatars and the apostates who lived under non-Muslim rule.<sup>117</sup>

Despite the important role that wakes played in the apostate villages' commitment to Islam, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Muslim scholars questioned their orthodoxy. The Sufi Utiz Imāni and the scholar Nasiri attacked the consumption of beer, arguing on the basis of other schools of law, that all types of alcohol were prohibited in Islam, not just fermented drinks from grapes or dates as all of them could cause intoxication. The theologian and judge Fākhṛ ad-Dīn classified as innovations (*bid'a*) the intercession of Prophet Muhammad and saints on Judgment Day, the repetition of the *tahlil* or *shahada* with the rosary, the visits to the cemetery on the first, seventh, fortieth-day and year anniversary of death, and the giving of alms to those who read prayers for the dead.<sup>118</sup>

The wakes, however, and the important (but not exclusive) role women played in them allowed apostates to defy police intrusion in their lives and connect with the grace of God. They constituted special occasions for them to retell the stories of their faith, become mediators between the living and the dead, their village and the community of the Prophet, and strengthen their community's commitment to Islam in the face of Russian presence on their ground. In the same way that the catalogue of Sufi graves in local historiographical manuscripts delineated a sacred territory that included Krāshen villages on ancient Bolghar land, the *baghishlaw* or dedication prayers contested orally the imperial grid of religious identity and connected the living and the dead apostates to the Prophet and the saints, whose tombs dotted the Volga-Kama landscape.

The study of Islamization networks in the nineteenth century among the natives of the Middle Volga shows that the conversion to Islam was not the result of an articulated

117. Al-Rabghūzī, *Stories*, vol. 2: 489; *Hāzrāt-i Māryām*, 7; Bombaci, *Histoire*, 88–89.

118. "Risala-i irshadiyya (Nastavitel'nyi traktat)," in *Antologiya tatarskoi bogoslovskoi mysli: Gabdrakhim Utiz-Imiani al-Bulgari*, 173–174; Nikolai Katanov, "Povolzhskie tatarsy v ikh proizvedeniiax i v zhizni. Obzor literaturnoi deiatel'nosti tatar za XIX vek," in "Povolzh'e": *Khudozhestvenno-literaturnoe izdanie*, ed. B. Rozova-Tsvetkova, vol. 1 (Nizhnii Novgorod, 1903), 10; Fākhṛ ad-Dīn, *Jāwāmi'*, 160–166 (hadith no. 104).

and systematic missionary work. The fascination for Islam was supported by literary images of sainthood contained in books or sung in the form of spiritual songs, and by legends surrounding shrines of ancient and contemporary saints. The bearers of those stories were not solely Sufis, but common peasants or merchants—male and female. Sufism was a commonly shared culture that permeated children's upbringing, village communal life, and traditional Qur'anic education. Some Naqshbandi shaykhs of the Mujaddidi lineage did proselytize among the Krāshens, but most often the believers of indigenous origin, the apostates themselves, carried the message of Muhammad to their brethren.

Consequently, Russian missionaries were unable to prosecute Islamic propagandists efficiently. Tailors were indigenous proselytizers of Islam. They constituted the wealthiest strata of the village and its intellectual elite. Women's elaborate communication network was also responsible for the continuous expansion of the apostate movement. Contrary to the claims of the jadids, the traditional woman's world was not limited to the house. First, thanks to the Tatars and Krāshens' practice of exogamy, the wife served as a link between her native village and that of her husband. Often, information and rumors about the apostasies spread from village to village because of these links. Second, mothers-in-law generally chose Islamized Krāshens as the only suitable wives for their sons. They helped to organize the *jīyins*, local festivals that encouraged the contact between the Krāshens and their Muslim Tatar neighbors. Those *jīyins* constituted the common denominator between economic, sacred, and kinship networks. In Tatar villages, the center of the *jīyin* where festivities started was often the site of a market and of a local pilgrimage. Among Krāshens attracted to Islam, the *jīyins* emerged to allow marriages between Islamized families that could not officially marry Tatars. Finally, women served as indigenous *abıstays*, or teachers in clandestine Qur'anic schools.

At the turn of the twentieth century, modernist Tatars used the same female networks observed in the Krāshen apostate villages to spread their revolutionary ideas about schooling in the countryside. After having been exposed to jadid schooling, literate women taught in their husbands' villages. *Jīyins* as well as other popular festivals of the agrarian calendar became places where jadid literature was sold and where money was collected for the building of new schools.<sup>119</sup>

Sufism, with its charismatic and supernatural qualities, also provided women with opportunities for religious action. It offered the framework that Muslim women used to understand their world and act in it. By validating the woman's role as a seeker of God, guardian of the faith, and teacher in works such as *Qışsa-yi Yūsuf*, it gave women a vocabulary of images, metaphors, and behaviors. They used these images for the mystical and ritual instruction of the common people, and to prepare the young believer for formal theological training in the madrasas. Also, due to the separation of the sexes, the woman's world was closed to the male-dominated Russian authorities. Among the apostate Krāshens, the police could not easily check on female teachers' clandestine schools. This gave women greater freedom to teach and proselytize. Thus, Sufism, the Tatar kinship structure, and even the separation of the sexes created

119. *Mir islama* 2, vol. 6 (1913): 408–411.

opportunities for women to change their world for the better. In the end, though, it was the individual women who actively exploited these opportunities to hasten the victory of Islam and (as they saw it) the triumph of a just order.

Finally, the relentless effort of the Russian Orthodox Church hierarchy to control and limit thaumaturgical and charismatic religion inside the ranks of its own flock left the network of holy places in the hands of the Tatar mystical leaders. By 1850, the Orthodox Church had developed an effective bureaucracy that looked with suspicion at contemporary miracles. “Official” Islam had no comparable bureaucracy. The Spiritual Assembly of Orenburg had no such ability to check the activity of itinerant village mullahs. Only sporadically did police receive letters of denunciation against Sufi leaders from official mullahs who disagreed with local shaykhs’ activities. Thus, Orthodox missionaries did not invest in thaumaturgical networks, at least not until a friend and supporter of Il'minskii's schooling Antonii Amfiteatrov Iakov (1815–1879) became archbishop of Kazan and Sviiazhsk. But mullahs, largely independent of any centralized authority, thought it normal and necessary to maintain and develop holy sites. This led to the partial Islamization or continuing Islamic monopolization of the sacred geography of the Kräshen and Finno-Ugric country.<sup>120</sup>

Only in the second half of the nineteenth century did Russian missionaries and statesmen seek to meet the challenge of popular networks of Islam in the Volga-Kama region. For the first time, they used modern tools of education, in particular functional literacy in the native vernacular, to educate Kräshens; but most important, they tapped into Christianity's thaumaturgy and martyrology to challenge Sufi literary metaphors and models of action. The ancient city of Bolghar, which attracted so many pilgrims for being the place of their original conversion to Islam, became for Kräshens who had chosen not to apostatize, the site of their original conversion to Christianity—the site where St. Avraamii, a Christian Turkic Bolghar, met martyrdom in the hands of his Muslim captors, well before the conquest of Kazan.

120. Gregory L. Freeze, *The Parish Clergy in Nineteenth-Century Russia: Crisis, Reform, Counter-Reform* (Princeton, 1983); idem, “The Rechristianization of Russia: The Church and Popular Religion, 1750–1850,” *Studia Slavica Finlandensia* 7 (1990): 101–136; Shevzov, *Russian Orthodoxy*.