

From the Khan's Oven

*Studies on the History of Central Asian Religions in
Honor of Devin DeWeese*

Edited by

Eren Tasar
Allen J. Frank
Jeff Eden



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Sufi Saint or Salafī Reformer?

Alī Tūntārī in Fakhreddīnov's Tatar Lineage of Kalām Critique

Michael Kemper

As Devin DeWeese argues, historians in the West as well as in Turkey, Russia and Central Asia have all been focussing too much on the representatives of Jadidism, the Muslim cultural reform movement of the late imperial and early Soviet eras.¹ The fame of the Jadids, enhanced by their massive publication practices, overshadowed the “traditional” Sufis and scholars of *kalām* who stood in the tradition of the age-old Islamic manuscript culture of the region. When Jadidism became widespread, in the 1880s to early 1900s, these Sufis and *kalām* experts were lumped together under the label of “Qadimism”, and seen by many Jadids as obstructing national progress and enlightenment. While many historians have written about the origins, writings, views and activities of the Jadids, few academics have been interested in the heritage of “Qadimism”.²

One specific problem in this context is that historians used to retrieve information about those “Qadims” mainly from the writings of the Jadids or of authors associated with the trajectory of Jadidism. In particular the encompassing biographical dictionaries produced by Islamic historians from the Volga-Urals such as Shihābaddīn al-Marjānī (1818–1889), Muḥammad Murād al-Ramzī al-Manzilawī (d. 1934), and Rizā’addīn b. Fakhraddīn (Rizaeddin Fakhreddin, 1858–1936) offer a wealth of information on “traditional” scholarship of the pre-Jadid era. These biographical works are readily available, appear to have a systematic coverage, and make the conscious claim to be objective. What we, however, often forget when we turn to these biographical works is that their compilers maintained specific positions in the Islamic dis-

1 Devin DeWeese, “It Was a Dark and Stagnant Night (‘til the Jadids Brought the Light): Clichés, Biases, and False Dichotomies in the Intellectual History of Central Asia”, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 59.1–2 (2016), 37–92.

2 Stéphane A. Dudoignon, “Djadidisme, mirasisme, islamisme”, *Cahiers du Monde Russe* 37:1–2 (1996), 13–40; idem, “Qu’ est-ce que la ‘qadīmiya’? Éléments pour une sociologie du traditionalisme musulman, en Islam de Russie et en Transoxiane (au tournant des xix^e et xx^e siècles),” *L’Islam de Russie: Conscience communautaire et autonomie politique chez les Tatars de la Volga et de l’Oural, depuis le xviii^e siècle*, ed. by Stéphane A. Dudoignon, Dāmir Is’haqov and Rāfyq Mōhāmmātshīn (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 1997), 207–225.

course of their time, and that they were critical of other positions. Furthermore, in one way or another they all contributed to the huge field that we still subsume under the (mis-)nomen of Jadidism (or were, in the case of Marjānī, later incorporated into the dominant Jadid trajectory). Devin DeWeese has become so frustrated with the dominance of the Jadid paradigm that he suggested we should “take a vacation from Jadid studies” (or stop Jadidology once and for all). I take the liberty to nuance Devin’s position, since I believe we cannot afford to simply ignore the Jādids and their works; rather, I suggest we take a closer look at how categories such as “Jadidism”, “Qadimism”, and “Salafism” have been constructed. This includes a study of how the biographers dealt with their sources, with a keen eye for techniques of selection, representation, interpretation, and perhaps manipulation.

The present paper analyzes the biographical practice of the most prolific of the three above-mentioned biographers, Rizaeddin Fakhreddinov. When skimming through Fakhreddinov’s many biographical works on scholars from the Volga-Urals one gets the impression that Fakhreddinov simply brought together all biographical information he could find, indiscriminately covering any scholar of the past centuries whose memory survived. In the present chapter, however, I suggest that Fakhreddinov carefully selected what and whom he wanted to present, and in what form and with what kind of value statement. I argue that his presentation of the history of Islamic discourse in the Volga-Urals was framed by his singling out of historical personalities who, he found, shared his own vision of Islam; and I contend that this exercise also entailed the suppression of information that he must have had at his disposal. The overall goal of this exercise was to construct a regional/national lineage of Salafī-minded Islamic scholarship that was critical of *kalām* (speculative theology) and Sufism. I investigate these issues with the example of Fakhreddinov’s biography of ‘Alī b. Sayfallāh al-Tūntārī (d. 1291 / 1874), a Sufi master and *kalām* specialist from the village of Tūntār in Malmyzh district (Viatka province; today Republic of Tatarstan, Russian Federation).

Fakhreddinov included Tūntārī’s biography in the third volume of his Tatar-language *Āthār*, which he finalized for print in 1910. The publication did not materialize, apparently because the imperial censors rejected his manuscript, and soon after his apartment was searched by the police. Also in the subsequent years he was not able to publish the whole third volume of *Āthār*; however, some materials from the manuscript went into Fakhreddinov’s articles for *Shūrā*, the Tatar-language journal that he edited in Orenburg. In 1917 Fakhreddinov returned to the Muftiate in Ufa, first as *qāzī* and then, from 1921 onwards, in the function of muftī. While he had very limited access to printing all through the Soviet years, Fakhreddinov continued to add materials to

his manuscript. As a result, the surviving manuscript not only covers scholars whose death fell into the years 1874 to 1910 (that is, the original version) but also contains Fakhreddinov's notes on the fate of later Islamic scholars (albeit in a less systematic and encompassing fashion) who died in the years up to shortly before 1936, when Fakhreddinov passed away.

My analysis is based on what is seemingly the original manuscript, in Arabic-script Tatar, preserved in the collection of the Institute of History, Language and Literature of the Ufa Scientific Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences in Ufa (Bashkortostan).³ This autograph I compared with the 2010 Kazan edition of *Āthār* III, in Tatar Cyrillic script.⁴ I also compared the manuscript text with the biography of Tüntārī that Fakhreddinov published in *Shūrā*, in two issues of 1913.⁵ This published biography lacks all the documents that Fakhreddinov included in his Tüntārī biography in *Āthār* III, and therefore offers a more streamlined image of the shaykh.

‘Alī b. Sayfallāh al-Tüntārī is a hard nut to crack, in particular because he did not produce any coherent works that could inform us about his views. Contemporary scholarship has been taking little notice of him.⁶ It seems that in his time he was above all famous as a Sufi shaykh, and even as a saint who produced miracles. It is reported that the saint made his horse carriage fly over a bridge that had been washed away. In another legend, armed Orthodox missionaries arrived in his village to force the Muslim population into accepting Christianity, but then the shaykh's power made their weapons fall out of their hands. Finally, the shaykh was reported to heal people from diseases also after he himself had passed away.⁷ Already Ḥusayn b. Amīrkhān (Amirkhanov, d. 1893), in

3 Riżā'addīn b. Fakhreddīn, *Āthār* III, ms Nauchnyi arkhiv UNTS RAN, Fakhreddinov fond, manuscript 112-S. See Ramil' M. Bulgakov, *Kratkii obzor tiurkskikh rukopisei Riżaeddina bin Fakhreddina i ego islamovedcheskikh rabot sovetskogo perioda, khroniashchikhsia v nauchnom arkhive UNTS RAN*, unpublished document, Ufa.

4 Riżaeddin Fākhreddin, *Asar. Öchenche häm dürtenche tomnar*. Chief editor M.A. Usmanov (Kazan: Rukhiyat nāshriyāte, 2010). Unfortunately, this edition at times omits materials that Fakhreddinov included in his manuscript, and is not always exact, especially when it comes to Islamic terms and book titles.

5 Riżā'addīn b. Fakhreddīn, “Alī Īshān”, *Shūrā* 1913, no. 20, 609–611; no. 21, 641–644.

6 The only entry on ‘Alī Tüntārī that I could find in one of the recent encyclopedias of Islam in Russia is Aidar Khabutdinov, “Alī b. Saifulla b. Saifulla [sic, with the incorrect doubling] b. Gabderrashid b. Utegian at-Tiunteri (ok. 1794–1874)”, in *Islam v Tatarstane: Entsiklopedicheskiĭ slovar'*, vol. 7 of the series *Islam v Rossiiskoi Federatsii*, chief ed. D.V. Mukhetdinov (Moscow: Medina, 2017), 24. This short entry only mentions the names of Tüntārī's teachers and his disciples (as they are given by Marjānī and Fakhreddinov), without offering any context and without an attempt at characterizing him and his role in the Islamic discourse of the time.

7 See R.Sh. Zaripov, *Gali Ishan, Ishmi Ishan häm Tüntär mädräsäse* (Kazan: Iman 2002), 8.

the biographical section of his *Tavārikh-i bulghāriyya* (published in Kazan in 1883), described ‘Alī b. Sayfallāh al-Tūntārī as a saint (*valī*), and as a teacher of “the rational and traditional sciences” (*al-ma‘qūl val-manqūl*) – which is a standard expression for a conventional scholar of the classical Islamic curriculum. Amirkhanov emphasizes that ‘Alī Tūntārī helped people to find their way to Islam, and that he did a lot to clear the *sharī‘a* of unlawful innovations. However, Amirkhanov did not go into any detail.⁸ Roughly around the same time ‘Alī Chuqūrī (d. 1889) wrote a panegyric on ‘Alī Tūntārī, and included it in his collection of *marthiyas*, *Sham‘ al-żiyā‘*. Here again, the image of the shaykh is that of a traditional Sufi master with an interest in *ḥadīth*.⁹

Also Fakhreddinov, in 1910, depicted ‘Alī Tūntārī as an influential teacher, and as an active participant (if not an important node) in the Naqshbandiyya mujaddidiyya and khālidiyya Sufi networks that linked the Volga-Urals with the Ottoman Empire, the North Caucasus, Central Asia, Afghanistan, India, and Medina. ‘Alī Tūntārī was a prominent personality not only in his native village of Tūntār but also in Kazan, where he consorted with the local and regional Muslim trade elite.

But Fakhreddinov did not portray ‘Alī Tūntārī as a miracle-making saint or as a classical theologian of the mainstream traditions; to the contrary, in Fakhreddinov’s account Tūntārī stands before us as a proponent of *işlāḥ* (“reform” of “repair”) who called for the return to true Islam and the rejection of speculative theology. As will be shown below, Fakhreddinov even elevated Tūntārī to the level of ‘Abdannaşir al-Qūrşāvi (d. 1812) and Shihābaddīn al-Marjānī (d. 1889), the two famous Tatar scholars whom Fakhreddinov and many others admired as the founding fathers of a Salafī-minded critique of the Sunnī legal schools, and thus as the major proponents of critical thinking in Islamic law (up to the call for *ijtihād*) among the Volga-Ural Muslims. Similarly, Qūrşāvi and Marjānī gained fame as fierce critics of the speculative theology of the predominant Mātūrīdī and Ash‘arī schools.¹⁰ To see a Sufi master (whom some revered as a saint) join the ranks of Salafī-minded “reformists” is surprising, and calls for an explanation. Why did Fakhreddinov – himself no friend of Sufism and *kalām*¹¹ –

8 Khusain Amirkhanov, *Tavārikh-i Bulghariyya (Bulgarskie khroniki)*, translated by Azat M. Akhunov (Moscow: Mardzhani, 2010), 72–74 (translation), LI–LIII (facsimile).

9 ‘Alī Chuqūrī, *Sham‘ al-żiyā‘ fi tazkirat qawm ahl al-żiyā‘* (Kazan: Viacheslav, 1883), 5.

10 Nathan Spannaus, *Preserving Islamic Tradition: Abū Naşr Qūrşāvi and the Beginnings of Modern Reformism* (Oxford, 2019).

11 Stéphane A. Dudoignon, “Echoes to al-Manār among the Muslims of the Russian Empire: a Preliminary Research Note on Rizā al-Dīn Fakhr al-Dīn and the Şūrā (1908–1918)”, in *Intellectuals in the Modern Islamic World: Transmission, Transformation, Communication*, ed.

suggest such a re-interpretation, and which techniques did he employ to make his view plausible?

Below I will review the various materials on Tūntārī that Fakhreddinov collected for publication, paying special attention to the question which information came down to him in written form (including via the same Shihābaddīn al-Marjānī) and which he received in the form of oral reports (e.g. from Tūntārī's family members and disciples). I will then go into detail with one central element in Fakhreddinov's biography of Tūntārī, namely a certain "conversion narrative" meant to explain Tūntārī's turn away from *kalām* towards Quran and Sunna; I suggest that this conversion episode enabled Fakhreddinov to integrate Tūntārī into his regional Tatar Salafī lineage. I will shed light on the ambiguities that remained visible in Fakhreddinov's account on Tūntārī, arguing that these tensions were responsible for the fact that Fakhreddinov's elevation of Tūntārī into the Tatar Salafī Pantheon did not last.

1 Marjānī's Esteem of Tūntārī

Shihābaddīn al-Marjānī was a model for Fakhreddinov not only as a jurist and theologian but also as a historian and biographer. When Fakhreddinov produced his *Āthār* he could rely on Marjānī's Tatar-language collection of Muslim biographies from the Volga-Urals, *Mustafād al-akhbār*. The second volume of this work (Kazan 1885) contains what appears to be the first systematic biography of 'Alī Tūntārī. Before analyzing Fakhreddinov's collection of materials on Tūntārī it is therefore useful to review the information that Fakhreddinov obtained from his famous predecessor.¹²

Marjānī offered a basic account of Tūntārī's life, including the names of his masters and disciples. Presenting Tūntārī as a teacher (*mudarris*) and shaykh of regional fame, Marjānī also formulated a first value statement on Tūntārī, in which he qualified him as "the most educated and the most virtuous of all *īshāns* in our country, the clearest in his expression and a great example to follow." We know that Marjānī was highly critical of *kalām* and also no friend of Sufism, and this formulation can be seen as his polite way of saying that Tūntārī was influential but not one of the big scholars to emulate. Marjānī furthermore drew attention to 'Alī Tūntārī's wealth that he demonstrated in the splendour of

by Hisao Komatsu, Yasushi Kosugi and Stéphane A. Dudoignon (New York and London: Routledge, 2006), 85–116.

12 Shihābaddīn al-Marjānī, *Mustafād al-akhbār fī aḥwāl Qazān va-Bulghār*, vol. II (Kazan, 1885), 203–204.

his house and of his clothing, as well as by keeping race horses and maintaining a rich library. Marjānī furthermore indicated that “despite the sharp rumours among the population” ‘Alī Tūntārī cared not only for the scholars and the rich – meaning that he belonged to the Muslim trading elite of his time – but also for other people. Yet Marjānī’s judgment remains ambiguous at best: “When he spoke he was either excessively boastful or, to the contrary, he exaggerated in the display of humbleness, and debased himself”. This is not particularly flattering.

Marjānī was always interested in the standpoints that scholars maintained in the most prominent Islamic legal disputes of the time, in particular the question of the night prayer (*‘ishā’*) in northern Russia.¹³ According to Marjānī, Tūntārī held the opinion that the night prayer was mandatory also for Muslims living in the northern regions where in the “white nights” of summertime there is no complete darkness (against the view of other scholars who argued that if there is no night then there should be no night prayer, for the night prayer is conditional upon the arrival of complete darkness). A second legal opinion that Marjānī reported from Tūntārī is that Muslims must not eat meat slaughtered by non-Muslims (that is, by Orthodox Christians/Russians or animists) – something we would today classify as a “*ḥalāl* issue” but with political overtones. In both cases Tūntārī’s views coincided with Marjānī’s own judgments. Here it should be noted that in his legal and theological works, Marjānī used to emphasize that his own judgment in these legal questions was the product of his *ijtihād*, that is, of his ability to examine the original sources of Islam, the Quran and the Sunna of the Prophet, in order to derive from them a solution for a question at hand (instead of merely performing *taqlīd*, that is, of following one of the available opinions that other scholars of the Ḥanafī legal school formulated before him). As Tūntārī’s opinions in these legal issues were identical to Marjānī’s, one would expect that Marjānī might have considered Tūntārī a man capable of *ijtihād*. But Marjānī does not link Tūntārī to *ijtihād*, does not even mention the term; nor does he imply that Tūntārī might have developed a critique of *kalām*.

Marjānī kept his biographical entry on ‘Alī Tūntārī short, to less than one page in *Mustafād al-akhbār* (and “hidden” among others in the list of the successive teachers at the Tūntār madrasa). Obviously, it did not occur to Marjānī to depict Tūntārī as a person comparable in praiseworthy scholarship to Qūr-

13 Michael Kemper, “Imperial Russia as Dar al-Islam? Nineteenth-Century Debates on Ijtihad and Taqlid among the Volga Tatars,” special issue: *Islamic Law and Society: A Global Perspective*, guest editor Sabrina Joseph, *Encounters: An International Journal for the Study of Culture and Society* 6 (Fall 2015), 95–124.

ṣāwī or to himself. Let me add that among the materials that Fakhreddinov reproduced in his biography of Tūntārī there is a letter by which Marjānī invited Tūntārī to his wedding, in Kazan in Rabīʿ 1 of 1290 (April/May 1873, a year before the old *īshān* passed away).¹⁴ By including this invitation, Fakhreddinov seems to indicate that already Marjānī held Tūntārī in high esteem, and that the two were acquainted with each other. But there is no evidence of regular contact between Marjānī and Tūntārī.

Another biography of Tūntārī that Fakhreddinov must have known was that published by the above-mentioned Muḥammad Murād al-Ramzī, a Naqshbandi historian who was very familiar with all Sufis of the area. Ramzī's biography of Tūntārī (comprising less than one page in his 1908 Arabic-language *Talfīq al-akhbār*) praises 'Alī Tūntārī in conventional terms as a shaykh. Ramzī mentioned Tūntārī's study years with scholars at home and in Bukhara, his travels to India in the service of a Naqshbandiyya shaykh, his fame as a teacher back home in Tūntār, and also that his disciple and son-in-law Shamsaddīn b. Raḥmatallāh took over 'Alī Tūntārī's *madrasa* after the latter's death. Ramzī knew Tūntārī personally, for he mentioned that he once had the honor to visit the shaykh in his house.¹⁵ In this light it is noteworthy that again, there is no mention of Tūntārī's positive or negative relation to *kalām*, or of his engagement in legal studies, the elements that Fakhreddinov would emphasize two years later in 1910.

2 Fakhreddinov's Materials on al-Tūntārī

In contrast to his predecessors Marjānī, Amirkhanov and Ramzī, Fakhreddinov gave Tūntārī a very prominent place in his book: Tūntārī's biography is placed at the very beginning of *Āthār* III, before all others, and it is fairly elaborate and long, comprising thirty pages in the manuscript.¹⁶ In this long entry, Fakhreddinov reproduced a wealth of documents and reports related to Tūntārī's life, habits, opinions, values, and social networks.¹⁷ This information he divided into

14 Riżā'addīn b. Fakhreddīn, *Āthār* III, 15a.

15 Muḥammad Murād al-Ramzī [al-Manzilawī], *Talfīq al-akhbār wa-talqīh al-āthār fī waqā'ir Qazān wa-Bulghār wa-mulūk al-Tatār* (Orenburg, 1908), vol. II, 477.

16 Riżā'addīn b. Fakhreddīn, *Āthār* III, fols 3ab–9ab, 10a, 11ab–15ab, 15cd, 16ab, 17a; in the printed edition of 2010 it covers pages 16–42.

17 On Fakhreddinov's compilation practices see Liliia F. Baibulatova, "Asar" Riży Fakhreddina: istochnikovaia osnova i znachenie svoda (Kazan: Tatarskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 2006).

twenty thematic sections, each with an own header (to which I here add running numbers):

- (1) an introductory paragraph with general information on Tüntārī, including his full name as ‘Alī b. Sayfallāh b. ‘Abdarrashīd b. Ūtagān b. Yār-Muḥammad b. Qūtlūgh-Muḥammad b. Muḥsin al-Tüntārī, as well as the years of his birth and death and the places that he visited (fol. 3a);
- (2) Tüntārī’s genealogy, linking Tüntārī’s family tree to the elite of the defunct Kazan Khanate and, indirectly, to the Kasimov Khanate (3a);
- (3) his youth and education, including his spiritual crisis (3a–4a);
- (4) a list of his masters, emphasizing that he studied from well-known *kalām* and legal scholars of the Volga region (Tājaddīn al-Ishtirākī, Muḥammadraḥīm al-Āshīṭī al-Machkaravī, ‘Abdallāh b. Yaḥyā al-Chirtūshī) and from Bukhara (‘Aṭā’allāh b. Yūsuf al-Bukhārī, Fakhraddīn b. Ibrāhīm b. Khūjāsh al-Qazānī).¹⁸ Fakhreddinov also remarks that Tüntārī attached himself to two respected Sufi masters of Indian origin, with whom he travelled to India (4a). These *shaykhs*¹⁹ can be identified as Faḥl Aḥmad Ma’šūmī Ḥaḏrat Jīo Ṣāḥīb Pishāvārī (d. 1231/1816) and the latter’s son and disciple, Faḥl Miyān Ghulām Qādir (d. 1271/1855 in Bukhara). As Waleed Ziad demonstrated in a recent publication, these travelling Sufi masters linked Peshawar, Qandahar and Kabul with Bukhara and the Volga region, with trade routes playing a central role in their networks.²⁰
- (5) a list of Tüntārī’s disciples, mentioning 13 persons by name (4a);
- (6) Tüntārī’s family (concentrating, in fact, on his wife ‘Izz al-Nisā and the important role she played in Tüntārī’s life, through her financial, practical and moral support) (4ab);
- (7) “his thoughts on the madrasas and their teaching principles”, containing, after Fakhreddinov’s brief critique of the traditional madrasa system, a first anecdote to the point that ‘Alī Tüntārī was against *kalām* and urged his students to work towards the “improvement/reform” (*iṣlāḥ*) of the morality of Muslim families, and of “the people” as a whole (4b–5b);²¹

18 On these personalities see Michael Kemper, *Sufis und Gelehrte in Tatarien und Baschkirien, 1789–1889. Der islamische Diskurs unter russischer Herrschaft* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1998), ss.vv.

19 Fakhreddinov renders their names as Abū ‘Abdallāh Ṣāḥībzade ‘Abdalqādir b. Niyāz Aḥmad b. Safar Aḥmad and Miyān Faḥl Qādir.

20 See Waleed Ziad, “Ḥaḏrat Jīo Ṣāḥīb: How Durrānī Peshawar Helped Revive Bukhara’s Sanctity”, in *Sufism in Central Asia: New Perspectives on Sufi Traditions, 15th–21st Centuries*, ed. by Devin DeWeese and Jo-Ann Gross (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 119–161, here: 124–125; 154.

21 For a brief reference to this section see Danielle Ross, “Islamic Education for All: Technological Change, Popular Literacy and the Transformation of the Volga-Ural Madrasa,

- (8) a section on ‘Alī Tūntārī’s teaching and educational activities, consisting of a first-person sermon by Tūntārī on labor ethics and, again, his call for the improvement of morals (here: *tahzīb al-akhlāq*) (5b–6a);
- (9) a section on the books that Tūntārī’s owned, indicating that Tūntārī’s library mostly comprised works of Islamic law and legal theory, *tafsīr* and *ḥadīth*, morality and medicine, mathematics and “*ḥikma*” (here referring to works about exemplary historical personalities, such as from the time of Muḥammad). This section also reproduces colophons of 17 manuscripts from Tūntārī’s library that Tūntārī had copied with his own hand. Among these are works by various Arab, Ottoman and South Asian authors, on *kalām*/theology, logic, Sufism (e.g. Sirhindī’s *Maktūbāt*, Ghazālī’s *al-Munqiz min al-ḡalāl*), *ḥadīth*, biography of the Prophet Muḥammad (represented by al-Wāqidi), and poetry on the prophet (Birgevi’s *takhmīs* on the *Qaṣīdat al-Burda*). Fakhreddinov noted that the colophon of one manuscript from Tūntārī’s library (a *kalām* commentary, authored by a certain Ḥanafī, on ‘Azūzaddīn ‘Ījī’s *al-Risāla al-‘azūziyya*) was produced by Tūntārī “in the year 1233, or 1808 according to the Christian calendar” (6ab). This indicates that by 1808 Tūntārī was most probably still a madrasa student who copied works of *kalām* under the guidance of his teacher.
- (10) a section on Tūntārī’s own writings. As Fakhreddinov could not find any books authored by Tūntārī, this section only reproduces lengthy glosses (all in Arabic) that Tūntārī apparently left in the margins of books written by others. Among these are Tūntārī’s comments on ‘Alī al-Qārī’s statements on monistic Sufism and on the faith of the Prophet’s parents (would they go to Hell because they died before their son received God’s revelation?), with long quotes from Aḥmad Sirhindī’s *Maktūbāt* interspersed (7a–8b);
- (11) two letters by ‘Alī Tūntārī, one (in Arabic, not mentioning the addressee) consisting of a brief note on the succession of authority in the Emirate of Bukhara after the death of Amīr Ḥaydar (in 1826), the other (in Persian) being a convoluted expression of respect to an unnamed addressee (9ab);²²
- (12) a section on Tūntārī’s personal qualities (including how he looked like, and emphasizing his care and clemency for others) (9b);

1650s–1910s”, in *Sharī‘a in the Russian Empire: The Reach and Limits of Islamic Law in Central Eurasia, 1550–1917*, ed. by Paolo Sartori and Danielle Ross (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020), 38–80, here: 47.

22 The second letter is left out in the Kazan edition.

- (13) Tüntārī's method (*maslak*) in Islamic creed and practice, highlighting his following of the Quran and Sunna, and claiming that Tüntārī did not bind himself to any one of the four Sunni legal schools. This section also mentions Tüntārī's reverence for the Sufi/ethical writings of al-Ghazālī, Ibn 'Arabī, al-Sha'rānī and Abū l-Barakāt al-Suhrawārdī (9b and 11a);
- (14) his life and how he behaved towards others, explaining that he was a man of considerable means who used to spend his money on charitable acts (11a);
- (15) other information on him, including a number of episodes – some reproducing his witty responses in conversations with Kazan merchants²³ – as well as the text of a collective oath of the people of Tüntār to follow the *sharī'a* (11a–12b; this document is reproduced below, in the appendix to the present chapter);
- (16) his spiritual genealogy in the Naqshbandiyya-mujaddidiyya brotherhood (linking Tüntārī via the above-mentioned Sāhibzāde 'Abdalqādir and five other links to Aḥmad Sirhindī [d. 1624], the namesake of the Mujaddidiyya brotherhood) (12b);
- (17) nine letters that prominent contemporaries sent him, and that reflect Tüntārī's interregional networks:
- a) a letter by a certain Ḥasan al-Dīn Tüntārī writing from Bukhara and asking 'Alī Tüntārī to arrange the transfer of an inheritance from the Volga area to a student in Bukhara (9 Şafar 1251) (13ab);
 - b) a short *ijāza* (in Persian) signed and sent by Tüntārī's direct shaykh Miyān Ghulām Qādir Ma'şūmī (not dated, and lacking the usual *sil-sila*) (14a);
 - c) a letter by 'Abdalḥakīm b. Muḥammad (praising 'Alī Tüntārī) (1251) (14a);
 - d) two letters from Baghdad, one by a certain 'Alī Ashraf Shaykh al-Islām Baghdādī (1252) and another by 'Abdalbāqī al-Baghdādī al-Naqshbandī (1258), both urging Tüntārī to donate money to a certain Baghdadi descendant of the Prophet Muḥammad who lost his fortune while trading (fol. 14ab); as Fakhreddinov convincingly argues in a commentary at the end of this section (fol. 15b), these letters from Baghdad appear to be a forgery, and a scheme by unknown persons to get access to Tüntārī's wealth under religious pretexts;

23 One of these jokes is as follows: "Once Ibrāhīm Bay Yūnusuf (Iunusov) said in Kazan: 'Ḥāzrāt, we have grown old, will you not make a *du'ā* prayer (for me):' 'Correct', said the shaykh, 'you have grown old, but when you were a child you were already growing old.'"

- e) a letter by Muḥammad Aṣghar b. Īshniyāz from Troitsk, reporting that his Sufi master, the famous Zaynallāh Rasūlī (Rasulev, d. 1917) was denounced by his enemies, interrogated at the Muftiate, then imprisoned in Zlatoust and eventually sentenced to exile in Vologda, in Russia's north;²⁴ on his way into exile Rasūlī would soon arrive in Kazan, and Tūntārī is requested to organize support for Rasūlī in that city (dated "23 February 1873") (15ab);
- f) a letter by Salimgirāy Tevkelev, Mufti of the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Administration in Ufa, solemnly announcing that he sent Tūntārī a medal/decoration, and another one to his deputy Shamsaddīn b. Raḥmatallāh (1869) (15b);
- g) a letter by Maḥmūd Afandī al-Dāghistānī [al-Almālī, d. 1877], the namesake of the Daghestani Naqshbandiyya khālidiyya-maḥmūdiyya brotherhood, indicating that the writer has been exiled to Astrakhan but is writing from Kazan (Jumada II 1290) (15b);²⁵
- h) a letter by Shihābaddīn al-Marjānī, inviting Tūntārī to his wedding (Rabī' I 1290) (15a).
- (18) testimonies of contemporaries, consisting of Marjānī's positive quote on Tūntārī's qualities as an *īshān* that I reproduced above, without however mentioning Marjānī's less flattering statements (16a);
- (19) a section on Tūntārī's morals, emphasizing that he was humble, patient, and just, and that he cared for his students, the poor and the weak (16a);
- (20) as a post-scriptum (*ilāvā*, fol. 16ab) Fakhreddinov adds a report that he received from 'Alī Tūntārī's grandson, Muḥammadnajīb Tūntārī [Shamsutdinov, 1862–1930, the son of 'Alī Tūntārī's disciple, Shamsaddīn b. Raḥmatallāh al-Mazār-Āstī al-Tūntārī, and the shaykh's daughter, 'Afifa]. Muḥammadnajīb reports that he visited one of 'Alī Tūntārī's oldest disciples, a certain 'Abdallāh who worked as imam in the village of Zavod (near Tūntār), and interviewed him about the qualities of his former master. Asked about 'Alī Tūntārī's methods, the former disciple emphasized that 'Alī Tūntārī was a prominent teacher of *tafsīr* and *ḥadīth*, and that he considered logic and *kalām* to be "dangerous".

24 Cf. Marsil' N. Farkshatov, "Delo" sheikh Zeinully Rasuleva: vlast' i sufizm v poreformennoi Bashkirii. *Sbornik dokumentov* (Ufa: Akademiia nauk Bashkortostana / Bashkirskii gosudarstvennyi universitet, 2009).

25 On this person see Al'frid K. Bustanov, "Sufizm bez granits: pis'ma dagestanskogo sheikha Makhmuda al-Almali v Chistopol'", in *Istoricheskie sud'by narodov Povolzh'ia i Priural'ia. Sbornik statei*, vol. 5, chief ed. Il'dus Zagidullin (Kazan, 2015), 51–66.

3 Reshaping the Image of ‘Alī Tūntārī

This mix of written and oral sources produces a certain ambiguity and tension. In general the written sources testify to ‘Alī Tūntārī’s popularity as an expert in *kalām* and in Sufism, that is, in directions of scholarship that Fakhreddinov himself saw as deviations from the true pursuit of Islamic inquiry. In contrast, most of the sections based on oral information point out that Tūntārī was a true follower of what Fakhreddinov regarded as the fundamentals of Islam: the Quran and the Sunna of the Prophet, with *tafsīr* and *ḥadīth* studies as the key disciplines to investigate them; these oral reports emphasized that Tūntārī rejected *kalām* and its philosophical speculations. Noteworthy is also that Fakhreddinov offered absolutely no indication that ‘Alī Tūntārī might have been regarded as a miracle-producing saint. Fakhreddinov’s overall attitude towards the shaykh is one of utmost respect, in particular, because Tūntārī placed Quran and Sunna higher than *kalām*, and defended the *sharī’a* and Islamic morality.

In terms of methodology, Fakhreddinov used to provide short introductions to the individual documents, and once in a while a brief commentary (e.g. on one occasion – in the context of ‘Alī al-Qārī’s dogmatic positions – Fakhreddinov permits himself to oppose Tūntārī’s claim that Muslims who denounce extreme Sufis are by necessity heretics),²⁶

When reproducing written documents Fakhreddinov meticulously noted dates, places and sources; this source criticism he however rarely applied to oral information. Oral accounts were obviously key in all sections where Tūntārī’s direct speech is quoted, including sections 6 (where Fakhreddinov reproduced Tūntārī’s praise for his wife ‘Izz al-Nisā), 7 (where Tūntārī admonishes his deputy, Shamsaddīn b. Raḥmatallāh, to not go deeper into the study of *kalām*), and 8 (where Tūntārī gives a sermon on the necessity of physical labor also for imams). Similarly, also sections 12–15 (on his qualities, method, and actions) mention no written sources. We may assume that Fakhreddinov received oral information about Tūntārī from the latter’s disciples (including via the above-mentioned Shamsaddīn b. Raḥmatallāh [d. 1293]²⁷). While Fakhreddinov was

²⁶ The context is Tūntārī’s argument, in one of his glosses and via Sirhindī, that Muslims who denounce Sufis such as Ibn ‘Arabī are heretics. Here Fakhreddinov adds a note, saying that only God can classify people as heretics. While formulated as a cautioning remark against Tūntārī’s argument, Fakhreddinov’s Murjī’ite position can also be seen as supporting Tūntārī’s defense of Sufism, since from it follows that also the Sufis should not be called heretics. Riżā’addīn b. Fakhraddīn, *Āthār* III, 8b.

²⁷ Ramzī reports that this Shamsaddīn b. Raḥmatallāh al-Mazār Āstī took over ‘Alī Tūntārī’s

very critical with regard to documents (to give an example, he dismissed as forgery the two letters that Tüntārī received from Baghdad), Fakhreddinov did not discuss the possibility that his oral informants might not be reliable; by mixing oral narratives with written documents, he took it for granted that his sources were trustworthy, and that his own reproduction of their oral accounts (often in the form of Tüntārī's direct speech) was correct.

To support his interpretation of Tüntārī as a Salafi-minded scholar, Fakhreddinov emphasizes that Tüntārī's study of *kalām* led him into a spiritual or intellectual crisis, through which he became familiar with the true approach to Islam:

After having well understood the method of the people of the *kalām*, 'Alī Īshān [Tüntārī] saw that he had not studied anything else, and he said to himself [in Persian:]

Arab man, I am afraid that you won't reach the Ka'ba

Because the way that you are travelling is leading to Turkestan!

Reciting this verse, he realized that he was unhappy with his situation, and he fell into deep anxiety (*iztirāb*). He could not find consolation and ultimately left his home and travelled to Bukhara. After having spent fourteen years in Bukhara he returned to this country (*māmlākūt*). In Bukhara, he continued the usual lessons, but at the same time he also studied the works of the *salaf* and the methods (*māslāklāre*) of the true preservers of Islam (*huffāz-i islām*). At the end he began to follow Sufism. He gave a Sufi oath of allegiance (*bay'at*) to Ṣāhibzāde Abū 'Abdallāh 'Abdalqādir and also to Miyān Faḏl Qādir, and frequented their conversations (*soḥbat*) and conventions (*mājlis*).²⁸

This paragraph raises questions. We understand that Tüntārī experienced a spiritual crisis²⁹ because he understood the futility of *kalām*, and it is for this reason that he travelled to Bukhara; but in Bukhara he continued "the usual classes" (obviously, of *kalām*!). True, according to Fakhreddinov it was

madrassa after the latter's death, but that he himself died soon after in 1293 [1876/77] in Istanbul, on his return from the *hajj*. By that time, he had married 'Alī Tüntārī's daughter, and they had a son, Muhammadnajīb al-Tüntārī. When Ramzī composed his work (published in 1908) this Muhammadnajīb held the position of imam and teacher in Tüntār and managed the grandfather's fortune.

28 Rizā'addīn b. Fakhraddīn, *Āthār* III, 3b–4a.

29 In the 1913 edition of 'Alī Tüntārī's biography Fakhreddinov even calls the shaykh's change of mind a "rational revolution" (*'aqli inqilāb*)! See Rizā'addīn b. Fakhraddīn, "Alī Īshān," *Shūrā* 1913, no. 20, p. 610.

in Bukhara that Tüntārī also discovered the works of the *salaf* for himself (meaning, we must assume, works of *tafsīr* and *ḥadīth*), but this statement is brief, vague and not linked to a concrete teacher or to a specific learning curve in Bukhara. And ultimately, Fakhreddinov concedes that Tüntārī's Bukharan period resulted in his embrace of Sufism. At another point,³⁰ Fakhreddinov even mentioned that in Bukhara, Tüntārī wandered about like a Qalandarī dervish, and that he consorted with Shī'īs (whom, we should remember, Orthodox Sunnis and in particular Salafis tend to regard as unbelievers).³¹ The impression one gets is that if 'Alī Tüntārī indeed experienced a crisis, this led him first to a particular radical Sufi lifestyle, and then into the company of the above-mentioned Indian Mujaddidiyya Sufi masters (who were perhaps more "sober" and moderate in their Sufi practices than the wild "Qalandarīs"). Under their guidance Tüntārī then travelled further south, to Afghanistan and India, from where he eventually brought home many of the precious books on medicine and mathematics that Fakhreddinov listed in the section of Tüntārī's library.

This turn to Sufism (and not to Salafism) is alluded to by other elements in Fakhreddinov's text: at several occasions, Tüntārī is presented as an ardent reader of al-Ghazālī's books, including his Orthodox ethical compendium *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn* but also *al-Munqiz min al-ḥalāl*, in which Ghazālī famously described his own disappointment with intellectual pursuits – that is, speculative theology, logic and philosophy – and his turn towards Sufi ethics. From these hints, we may indeed conclude that Tüntārī's spiritual crisis brought him to Sufism.

When did this crisis/change take place? Fakhreddinov reported that Tüntārī remained in Bukhara for 14 years, and he dated his return to Tüntār with the year 1246/1831 (Marjānī gave a similar date, 1245). Accordingly, the crisis that made Tüntārī leave for Bukhara must have hit him around the year 1232 (ca. 1817). At that time Tüntārī was probably in his twenties. After his return from Bukhara, Tüntārī would teach in Tüntār for more than four decades. This makes it plausible that Tüntārī gained true prominence as a specialist of *kalām* only *after* his return from Bukhara, when he already operated as an experienced and far-travelled scholar equipped with the "Bukharan prestige" (to use an expression coined by Allen J. Frank).³² If this is the case, then Tüntārī's move away from *kalām*, and towards Quran and Sunna studies, must have taken place

30 Rizā'addīn b. Fakhraddīn, *Āthār* III, 11a.

31 Rizā'addīn b. Fakhraddīn, *Āthār* III, 11a.

32 Allen J. Frank, *Bukhara and the Muslims of Russia: Sufism, Education and the Paradox of Islamic Prestige* (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

much later in his long life (if at all). Fakhreddinov's attempt to link Tüntārī's discovery of Salafī approaches to his studies in Bukhara remains unconvincing – all the more since Bukhara was seen as a stronghold of *kalām*, not of *ḥadīth* and *tafsīr*.

4 Tüntārī's Sufism

Fakhreddinov also had to deal with the circumstance that Tüntārī's great fame rested on his activities as an *īshān*. By the early 20th century, the public discussion of "ishanism" in the Muslim discourse and press was characterized by assertions that the *īshāns* amassed wealth by selling blessings and talismans, thereby exploiting an uneducated Muslim population. How then to produce a positive image of Tüntārī if he was one of the most prominent Sufi masters, and perhaps a Muslim faith healer?

Fakhreddinov's first strategy was to downplay Tüntārī's engagement in Sufi rituals:

Although he had the position of a shaykh, and although he did educate Sufi disciples (*mōrīds*), he did not busy himself with the *khaṭm-i khwaḡja-gān* [i.e., the central Naqshbandiyya litany and the practice of its recitation]. His *mājlis* conventions were calm, and the people who entered his conventions found relaxation there. He had a good hand for medicine (*tibb*), and he treated many diseases according to the rules of medicine (*tibb qā'idase berlā*).

This description of how Tüntārī conducted the Sufi ritual in his *mājlis* is meant to emphasize that the shaykh rejected the ecstatic *zīkr jahr* ("vocal *zīkr*"), which has often been characterized as leading people into a trance. We are thus to believe that Tüntārī maintained the "orthodox" *zīkr khaṭī* ("silent *zīkr*"), in which the participants meditate without uttering the name of Allah, and without any chanting, dancing, or musical instruments. Fakhreddinov even ascribed a "relaxing" impact to Tüntārī's way of conducting this ritual, as if the purpose of Tüntārī's *zīkr* was what we would today call mindfulness. Similarly, Fakhreddinov's emphasis on "books of medicine" in his section on Tüntārī's library must be seen as an attempt to present him as a well-read doctor, not as a practitioner of faith healing.

Still, Fakhreddinov could not deny that 'Alī Tüntārī was a man of considerable means (as already mentioned by Marjānī, who alluded to Tüntārī's habit of displaying his wealth). According to Fakhreddinov, Tüntārī indeed owned

cows as well as fifty horses, some of which he kept as race horses, seemingly his hobby. But Fakhreddinov insisted that Tüntārī's property was rightfully acquired:

[Tüntārī] was on the path of perfect piety and did not accept the *ṣadaqa* gifts that people are obliged to give. Rather, he made a living by his own hands and conducted trade operations, working through his representatives (sg. *vākīl*), and he was also busy in agriculture. The money that he gained by these means, and that he did not need for himself, he used to give to the poor, and in particular to his poor students, in addition to other charitable acts that he performed.³³

This makes Tüntārī an entrepreneur, although one who “did not show any lust for the wealth of the rich”, and did not accumulate money for his family or his successors.³⁴

From this reasoning, Fakhreddinov explains what can be called Tüntārī's labor ethics for imams. According to the biographer, the shaykh used to admonish his students not to depend on the charity of their mosque community but to earn money by hard labor, next to their work as imams:

To exert a profession with this goal [of making a living by earning money through labor] is a duty according to the *sharī'a* of Islam. Do not just take care of the education of the people [but carry out a profession to make a living]. If there is nothing [to eat] then take the plough into your hands!³⁵

This hands-on approach is accompanied by Tüntārī's realization that an education in speculative theology does nothing to improve the morals of the students, and that *kalām* does not prepare them for their future jobs as imams in the Muslim communities.³⁶ Here and in many other instances Fakhreddinov made Tüntārī speak in the first person, obviously in order to convey the authenticity but also the urgency of the message; and in all of these cases, Fakhreddinov did not reveal from whom he heard Tüntārī's words. As the content is congruent with Fakhreddinov's own moralist stance, it is not far-fetched to assume that Fakhreddinov put his own words into the mouth of the shaykh (who, by the time of writing, had already been dead for more than 35 years).

33 Riżā'addīn b. Fakhraddīn, *Āthār* III, 11a.

34 Riżā'addīn b. Fakhraddīn, *Āthār* III, 11a.

35 Riżā'addīn b. Fakhraddīn, *Āthār* III, 5b.

36 Riżā'addīn b. Fakhraddīn, *Āthār* III, 5a.

At times Fakhreddinov's practice of speaking through Tüntārī assumes humoristic features. Again, without revealing his source, Fakhreddinov tells us that on his way to Bukhara, Tüntārī made a stop in Samarqand, where he visited a *madrasa*. In one of the *hujras* – the student cells on the madrasa compound – he saw that a senior student was sitting in front of two famous books of medieval *kalām*, works best known under their popular titles *Mullā Jalāl* (“The book of Mullā Jalāladdīn”) and *Hikmat al-‘ayn* (“Wisdom of the Core”).³⁷ Tüntārī had studied these works at home, with his own masters. Fakhreddinov describes in dialogical form how Tüntārī provokes the unnamed student:

The shaykh [i.e., ‘Alī Tüntārī]: I see you have *Mullā Żalāl* [“Mulla the Error”] and *Hittat al-‘ayn* [“Insult of the Eye”] in front of you. I thought that in the land of Islam there are no such books.³⁸ My hope has been shattered.

The student: What are you saying? These are blessed books that belong to the curriculum of higher studies! Is it just to give them such names?

The shaykh: If something is part of the higher studies curriculum then this in itself does not yet mean it is part of religious studies. These books are from the heritage of the Greeks, they have nothing or little to do with the religion of Islam. The study of the religion of Islam comprises Arabic studies (*‘ulūm ‘arabiyya*), Islamic law (*fiqh*) and the creed (*‘aqā‘id*) according to the way of the *salaf*, as well as *tafsīr* and *ḥadīth*.³⁹

What we find here is Fakhreddinov giving us a concise definition of what he regarded as a Salafī curriculum. The dialogical form introduced here – a device that he used repeatedly in *Āthār* III – is a lively and powerful fashion to convey the message that Tüntārī abhorred *kalām*, and that he turned to Salafī views even *before* he went to Bukhara. Such literary devices remind us of the fact that Fakhreddinov was also an experienced writer of Tatar novels, beginning with his *Sälīmā* (1889) and *Āsmā* (1903).

In one case Fakhreddinov did mention the source of an oral report, and the reason may be that he obtained that information from someone else already in written form. This is a letter by Muḥammadnadjīb Tüntārī reporting about an

37 *Mullā Jalāl* is Jalāladdīn al-Dawwānī's (d. 1427) commentary on ‘Azūzaddīn ‘Ījī's (d. 1355) *al-‘Aqā‘id al-‘azūżiyya*; the *Hikmat al-‘ayn* was authored by Najmaddīn al-Kātībī (d. after 1276).

38 A formulation implying that Russia is not counted as part of Dār al-Islām.

39 Riżā‘addīn b. Fakhraddīn, *Āthār* III, 5ab.

interview that Muḥammadnajīb had taken from a certain ‘Abdallāh b. Ibrāhīm, one of Tūntārī’s last living disciples. This former disciple did what Marjānī had failed to do, namely to bring Tūntārī into relation with *ijtihād*. This informant claimed that Tūntārī rejected *kalām* and that he also operated independently from the existing legal schools (*mazhab*, pl. *mazāhib*) of Sunni Islam:

The shaykh did not love when people declare themselves bound to one specific *mazhab*. True, if that is a person’s inclination, then it is allowed to follow the *mazhab* of a given *mujtahid* [that is, the medieval founder of one of the existing four Sunni legal schools, including the Ḥanafī school that dominated among Russia’s Tatars and Bashkirs]. However, people who have the ability to do so will take [the right solution to the issues that they struggle with] directly from the Book and the Sunna, said the shaykh.⁴⁰

Building on the various reports about Tūntārī’s rejection of *kalām* and his independence in Islamic law, Fakhreddinov came to the following conclusion:

[Tūntārī’s] practice of Islam and his creed (*‘aqīda*) were in accordance with the Quran and the Sunna, and they were point for point identical to the creed and practice of Abū l-Naṣr al-Qūrṣāvī and Shihābaddīn al-Marjānī, that is, of the three or four people of this type that we have had in this country (*māmlākāt*).⁴¹

This must have been a bold conclusion for a contemporary reader. By elevating ‘Alī Tūntārī to the level of Qūrṣāvī and Marjānī, Fakhreddinov declared Tūntārī to be a model for his contemporaries. This was possible by disregarding, downplaying or circumventing Tūntārī’s pursuit of *kalām* and of Sufism, and by emphasizing Tūntārī’s ethics. Fakhreddinov created another hero for the Tatar Muslims, a model to emulate.

⁴⁰ Riżā’addīn b. Fakhraddīn, *Āthār* III, 16b.

⁴¹ Riżā’addīn b. Fakhraddīn, *Āthār* III, 11a.

5 Conclusion: Fakhreddinov and Tüntārī

Was ‘Alī Tüntārī then a devoted scholar of *kalām*, a miracle-making Sufi saint, or a Salafī-minded religious reformer who pioneered the way back to the Quran and the Sunna? This question might have been pointless for Tüntārī himself because it presupposes categorical differences that were formulated after his death. What we can conclude is that it was Fakhreddinov, in 1910, who for the first time introduced Tüntārī as a Salafī-minded critic of *kalām* and radically downsized Tüntārī’s image as a Sufi. Fakhreddinov’s sources for these claims were all oral; the written materials that he selected for publication provide no evidence for his interpretation.

One is tempted to speculate that the new evaluation of Tüntārī’s biography reflected a new development in the oral memory of Tüntārī as it was circulating three decades after his death in 1874. In the early 1900s, ‘Alī Tüntārī’s successor as leader of the Tuntar madrasa was Īshmuḥammad b. Dīnmuḥammad al-Tüntārī (Īshmī Īshān, d. 1919), a person who in Tatar Muslim and in Soviet atheist writings came to define the image of the ultra-reactionary religious fanatic; reportedly, Īshmuḥammad b. Dīnmuḥammad denounced Jadids to the Tsarist authorities in order to not let authority over the Muslim community slip into their hands.⁴² In the village of Tüntār, Īshmī Īshān’s major target of attacks was ‘Alī Tüntārī’s grandson Muḥammadnajīb b. Sayfallāh al-Tüntārī, a devoted Jadid who reportedly operated a second mosque and school in the village. Above we encountered this Muḥammadnajīb as the person who interviewed al-Tüntārī’s last disciple and sent the report to Fakhreddinov. As Muḥammadnajīb tells us in his history of the village of Tüntār, he suffered tremendously from Īshmī Īshān’s denunciations (*donos*, ‘*arīza*’); according to Muḥammadnajīb, Īshmī Īshān also denounced Fakhreddinov, ‘Alīmjan Bārūdī and the Būbī brothers to the authorities, thereby provoking house searches, temporary arrests (including Muḥammadnajīb’s, as he reported) and the closure of Jadid schools (such as that of the Būbīs).⁴³ Perhaps the dispute was also

42 Zarif Mozaffari, *Ishannar-dārvişlär* (Kazan: Tatizdat, 1931), 73–74. On Īshmī Īshān see also Danielle Ross, “The Age of the ‘Socialist-Wahhabi-Nationalist Revolutionary’: the Fusion of Islamic Fundamentalism and Socialism in Tatar Nationalist Thought, 1898–1917”, *Genealogy* 58.3 (2019), 1–18.

43 Mökhämmätñäjp Tüntäri, “Mökhämmätñäjp khäzrät yazması”, ed. by Räfkhät Zaripov, *Ekho vekov/Gasirlar awazı* 1–2 (2003), 45–59, here: 53–56. This village history includes a biography of ‘Alī Tüntārī (largely following Fakhreddinov’s account to which Muḥammadnajīb had himself contributed!) and ends with Muḥammadnajīb’s autobiography. A prolific Jadid writer and educator, Muḥammadnajīb al-Tüntārī perished in a Bolshevik prison in 1930, one year after he wrote the village history. For the original text see Muḥammad-

about the material heritage of ‘Alī Tūntārī, including his house, his wealth, and the mosque and madrasa buildings.⁴⁴

In this light it is logical to assume that the Jadid Muḥammadnajib wanted to lay a full claim on the memory of his grandfather: with the help of former disciples like the above-mentioned ‘Abdallāh he shaped a new image of ‘Alī Tūntārī, to demonstrate that the current holder of the madrasa, Īshmī Īshān, has nothing in common with his famous predecessor. This new image would shift the emphasis from Sufism and *kalām* to Jadid entrepreneurial work ethics, Salafī views, and an appreciation of the secular sciences such as medicine. This would distinguish ‘Alī Tūntārī’s broad horizon from the alleged narrow-mindedness of Īshmī Īshān. This new image would make a perfect fit with Fakhreddinov’s own agenda.⁴⁵

In fact, Fakhreddinov’s biography of ‘Alī Tūntārī reveals a lot about Fakhreddinov himself. The Tatar lineage of Salafī thought into which Fakhreddinov integrated Tūntārī started with Qūrṣāvī (d. 1813), culminated in the work of Marjānī (d. 1889), and was then continued by Fakhreddinov’s mentor ‘Ālimjān al-Bārūdī (d. 1921). At many points in *Āthār* 111 Fakhreddinov wrote about his own relationship to Bārūdī; with these narratives, Fakhreddinov placed himself into this line of Salafī thought among the Volga-Ural Muslims.⁴⁶

Salafīs are convinced that present society needs to be healed by eliminating all man-made additions to religion, and by returning to Quran and Sunna. In Fakhreddinov’s biography of ‘Alī Tūntārī, this healing is presented in the form of a conversion narrative: reportedly, a spiritual crisis made Tūntārī realize that *kalām* is a waste of time. This narrative reminds us of the experiences of Qūrṣāvī, whose rejection of *kalām* brought him into severe conflicts with the most prominent scholars in Bukhara and the Volga-Urals, but also of Marjānī, who during his studies in Bukhara “discovered” the story of Qūrṣāvī for himself, and became the major defender of the latter’s critique of *kalām* and *taqlīd*.⁴⁷ Also in

najib Tūntārī, [*Tūntār tārīkhī*] *Istorīa derevni Tiunter*, Tatar-language manuscript, Kazan Federal University, Lobachevskii Library, ms. 828 t. My thanks go to Danielle Ross for providing me with a copy of this manuscript.

44 Ramzī claims (around 1908) that Muḥammadnajib Tūntārī managed his grandfather’s fortune (*Talfīq* 11, 477–478).

45 Fakhreddinov wrote a very bitter biography of Īshmī Īshān; Rizā’addīn b. Fakhreddīn, *Āthār* 111, 296–298.

46 Michael Kemper, “Interlocking Autobiographies: Dialogical Techniques in Fakhreddinov’s *Āthār* 111”, forthcoming.

47 Michael Kemper, “Entre Boukhara et la Moyenne Volga: ‘Abd an-Nasir al-Qursawi (1776–1812) en conflit avec les oulémas traditionalistes”, *Cahiers du Monde russe* 37. 1–2 (1996), 41–52.

this regard, Fakhreddinov integrated Tüntārī into an existing interpretational framework, one that presupposes a personal conversion to explain the crossing from the “wrong” to the “correct” camp within Islam.

Fakhreddinov's *Āthār* contains more biographies of scholars whose Salafi-mindedness the compiler emphasizes; one case in point is Ṣalāḥaddīn b. Ishāq b. Sa'īd al-Lāzī al-Qazānī (d. 1292/1875), one of 'Ālimjān Bārūdī's professors. In his biography on this Ṣalāḥaddīn, Fakhreddinov included a long biographical essay produced by Bārūdī in which Bārūdī depicted Ṣalāḥaddīn as entertaining the same views as Marjānī. In his comments Fakhreddinov then struggled with the circumstance that Ṣalāḥaddīn and Marjānī were in conflict with each other, seemingly because of Marjānī's temperament.⁴⁸

Obviously, Fakhreddinov's agenda was not just to preserve the information that he obtained on the deceased scholars of his region; his goal was to demonstrate that regional scholarship emancipated itself from the Bukharan traditions, in particular from *kalām* and Sufism. This critique of speculative theology and *taqlīd* that Fakhreddinov detected in (or read into) the heritage of Alī Tüntārī would eventually fill the temporal gap between Qūrṣāwī, at the beginning of the 19th century, and Marjānī, in its second half. By claiming personalities like 'Alī Tüntārī whose most productive period fell into the mid-nineteenth century, Fakhreddinov not only “Salafized” the Tatar past but also disputed the historical anchors of his contemporary Islamic opponents such as Īshmuḥammad b. Dīnmuḥammad al-Tüntārī. This is how the saint 'Alī Tüntārī could briefly make it into the top group of the Qūrṣāwīs and Marjānīs; the fact that there were no books from Tüntārī's own pen, and that the oral reports about him were conflicting, allowed for such a re-interpretation. This construction of a regional line of Salafī thought comprised the selection of suitable personalities, but also of concrete documents and oral reports on these personalities; materials that did not fit the purpose of the compiler (here, obviously, reports about Tüntārī's miracles) were suppressed.

6 An Appendix on Beer

Among Fakhreddinov's materials related to the biography of Tüntārī is a document pertaining to the genre of communal agreements (Arab. *ittifāq*). So far this genre has been described from pre-colonial and colonial Daghestan in the North Caucasus, where certain villages and village confederations concluded

⁴⁸ Riżā'addīn b. Fakhraddīn, *Āthār* III, 36a–38b.

ittifāq agreements on a whole range of issues, including the fixation of fines and compensation payments resulting from actions such as theft, injury and murder, but also regulations about communal pastures, water and defense.⁴⁹ Some *ittifāqs* from Daghestan formulated the decision of a community to no longer follow customary law (*‘ādāt*) but to accept the norms of the *sharī‘a*, either wholesale or in certain parts of it (such as marriage/divorce and inheritance regulations).⁵⁰

One of the documents that Fakhreddinov reproduced in his biography of ‘Alī Tüntārī is an *ittifāq* of the community of Tüntār from April 1845. Like in the Daghestani cases, also here the *ittifāq* lays down the village community’s decision to follow the regulations of Islam, and to abandon any activities that contradict Islamic law. While ‘Alī Tüntārī’s name does not appear in this document, Fakhreddinov insisted that this agreement was concluded exactly under Tüntārī’s leadership, and on his initiative:

It was through his good intentions, and with God’s guidance, that ‘Alī Tüntārī invested much energy (*ijtihād*), explained many arguments, and achieved that many polytheists (*majūsi*) accepted Islam, thereby joining the Muslim neighborhoods [of their villages]. The influence of the shaykh made the elders (*aqsaqals*) of Tüntār agree upon the following oath (*mu‘āhida*), and to write it down and hand it over to the shaykh:

In the year 1845, on 27 April, we, the great and the small of the community of the village of Tüntār, came to an agreement (*ittifāq*) and expressed our wish for the following statement [or order, *iqrār*] and oath (*‘ahd*). Those of us who can write set their signatures, and those who cannot write set their *tamghā* stamps. [This oath is on the following issue:] From now on none of us will drink beer (*sīrā*) or any other intoxicating drink, nor will we produce it or ask others to produce it. For ourselves and for others we forbid all actions that are against the *sharī‘a*. We will not stay away from the communal prayers in the mornings and in the evenings unless there are strong necessities to do so. We will not let our family members [*ahl-i avlād*, here referring to women and children] go out to

49 Vladimir Bobrovnikov, “*Ittifaq* Agreements in *Daghestan* in the Eighteenth-Nineteenth Centuries,” *Manuscripta Orientalia* 8.4 (2002), 20–27; Michael Kemper, “Communal Agreements (*ittifāqāt*) and *‘ādāt*-Books from Daghestani Villages and Confederacies (18th–19th Centuries),” *Der Islam* 81 (2004), 115–151.

50 “Soglashenie zhitelei tomural’skoi volosti kasatel’no ustanovleniia shariata v sfere nasledstvennogo prava (1122/1710g.),” in: *Khrestomatiia po istorii prava i gosudarstva Dagestana v XVIII–XIX vv.*, chast’ 1, ed. by Timur M. Aitberov (Makhachkala: Dagestanskii Gosudarstvennyi Universitet/Fond Shamilia, 1999), 12.

places that the *sharī'a* does not order us to go to. Concerning religious and worldly affairs we will not oppose the agreements that were constituted for the welfare (*ṣalāḥ*) of the community (*jamā'at*). If, in the time from now on, we commit acts against the *sharī'a*, or if one of us drinks beer, misses the prayer or does other detestable acts, then we see it as necessary to punish them (by *ta'zīr*) according to the *sharī'a*. Agreeing upon this we set our signatures.⁵¹

In Fakhreddinov's manuscript this text is followed by a list of 29 names of local imams and other male Muslims who signed the agreement, among which 'Alī Tūntārī's is not to be found; we are supposed to assume that this text was handed over to him, to be stored in his house. In Fakhreddinov's collection of materials, this document is meant to bolster the image of 'Alī Tūntārī as a relentless striver for the implementation of Islamic law and morality, and to demonstrate his influence among the population. It is interesting to note that the last part of the text implies that the village had several agreements of this kind.

Fakhreddinov commented the text with the words: "This oath reminds one of the oath of the Arabs of Mecca that became famous under the name *ḥilf al-fuzūl*";⁵² with this comparison Fakhreddinov associated the village agreement with the historical alliance for the regulation of justice ("The League of the Virtuous") that was concluded with the participation of the prophet Muḥammad; thereby he again places Tūntārī's actions in direct relation to Islam's early years.

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51 Riżā'addīn b. Fakhraddīn, *Āthār* III, 11b–12a.

52 Riżā'addīn b. Fakhraddīn, *Āthār* III, 12b.

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