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**FOR THE RUSSIANIST IN ISTANBUL
AND THE OTTOMANIST IN RUSSIA:
A GUIDE TO THE ARCHIVES OF EURASIA**

The histories of the Ottoman Empire and Russia (not to mention Turkey and the USSR) are not only deeply entwined within one another, they also run parallel in many ways. During the Middle Ages, both Moscow and the Ottomans expanded to rule over ethnically and religiously diverse populations, and their respective methods of expansion and rule provide numerous points of contrast and comparison between the two states. Efforts to modernize focused the attention of state officials in both empires, and in the nineteenth century both Russia and the Ottoman Empire undertook reforms which would have a tremendous impact upon the two states, and which often provoked responses from their respective subjects which assumed a national or religious character. In the early twentieth century, meanwhile, constitutional revolutions in both empires preceded noisy periods of mass politics and, eventually, increasing authoritarianism. At the conclusion of the imperial era, the First World War would mark the eleventh time the Ottoman and Russian armies went into combat against one another since the mid-seventeenth century.

Despite numerous parallels and connections between Russian and Ottoman history, there has traditionally been relatively little cross-fertilization in the historiography of the two empires. For much of the twentieth century, scholars working in the fields of Russian and Ottoman history tended to pay relatively little attention to one another, preferring instead to either situ-

ate their work within a regional context or else in direct comparison with Europe. Russianists were generally not encouraged to receive academic training in, for example, the study of Muslim communities, nor were they afforded many opportunities to learn the languages of Russia's Muslim populations. Ottomanists were similarly trained to either look to Europe or else to neighboring countries in the Middle East, rather than to Russia and Eurasia.¹

In the final years of the twentieth century, this scholarly landscape began to change in some important ways. In the 1980s and early 1990s, a series of "nationalities studies" focusing mainly upon Muslim communities of the Russian Empire and Soviet Union was published by the Hoover Institute at Stanford. While the Hoover Institute studies often reflected a rather narrow interest in the theme of (mainly) Muslim "national" awakening in the face of "Russian" rule, these works nevertheless raised the profile of the scholarly study of Islam and Muslim communities in Russia.² Most of these studies did not carry over into a discussion of the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, but nevertheless sought to introduce a Muslim component to our understanding of imperial Russia and the USSR which helped to open up the possibility of further exploration between Russia and the Ottoman Empire via the Muslim populations of Russia.

Following the breakup of the Soviet Union, scholarly boundaries between Russian and Ottoman history were blurred even further. In many ways this development was a consequence of the emergence of a new generation of scholars exploring questions pertaining to Islam and Muslim communities

¹ There were, nevertheless, some important exceptions to these generalizations. Many scholars interested in pan-Turkism and the origins of Turkish nationalism discussed events taking place among Muslim communities in Russia in some depth. Prior to the 1980s, Alexandre Bennigsen almost single-handedly kept alive the tradition of European Orientalist interest in Russia and the Soviet Union. Also see Serge Zenkovsky. *Panturkism and Islam in Russia*. Cambridge, 1960; Jacob Landau. *Pan-Turkism: from Irredentism to Cooperation*. Bloomington, 1995; François Georgeon. *Aux origines du nationalisme turc: Yusuf Akçura 1876-1935*. Paris, 1980.

² See, for example, Alan W. Fisher. *The Crimean Tatars*. Stanford, Calif., 1978; Azade-Ayşe Rorlich. *The Volga Tatars: A Profile in National Resilience*. Stanford, CA, 1986; Martha Brill Olcott. *The Kazakhs*. Stanford, CA, 1987; Edward Allworth. *The Modern Uzbeks: From the Fourteenth Century to the Present: a Cultural History*. Stanford, CA, 1990; Audrey Altstadt. *The Azerbaijani Turks*. Stanford, CA, 1992; Two other books that adopt a similar approach to the question of "national" identity and "Russian" rule are: Tadeusz Swietochowski. *Russian Azerbaijan 1905-1920: The Shaping of National Identity in a Muslim Community*. New York, 1985 and Hakan Kırımlı. *National Movements and National Identity among the Crimean Tatars, 1905-1916*. Leiden, 1996.

in the Russian Empire. On the one hand, numerous Russianist scholars have examined issues pertaining to the administration of Islam in Russia, often working in regional archives of the former USSR to explore tsarist policymaking towards Muslims.³ On the other hand, a smaller group of scholars with a background in Islamic or regional studies has looked more closely at Muslim communities in the Russian Empire and USSR more from the perspective of Islamic history, using manuscripts and other documents produced within Muslim communities in Russia in conjunction with Russian-language secondary literature.⁴ Meanwhile, a number of scholars working primarily on Ottoman and Turkish history have begun looking more closely at Russia, exploring transimperial themes like modernist Islam and the uses of pan-Islamic and pan-Turkic discourses, as well as parallel

³ Many of these studies were influenced or inspired by Andreas Kappeler's: *The Russian Empire: A Multiethnic History*. Harlow, 2001. See Paul Werth. *At the Margins of Orthodoxy: Mission, Governance, and Confessional Politics in Russia's Volga-Kama Region, 1827- 1905*. Ithaca, 2002; Daniel Brower. *Turkestan and the Fate of the Russian Empire*. London, 2003; Firouzeh Mostashari. *On the Religious Frontier: Tsarist Russian and Islam in the Caucasus*. New York, 2006; Robert D. Crews. *For Prophet and Tsar: Islam and Empire in Russia and Central Asia*. Cambridge and London, 2006; *Ibid.* *Empire and the Confessional State: Islam and Religious Politics in Nineteenth- Century Russia // American Historical Review*. 2003. Vol. 108. No. 1. Pp. 50-83; Jeff Sahadeo. *Russian Colonial Society in Tashkent, 1865-1923*. Bloomington and Indianapolis, 2007; Kelly Ann O'Neill. *Between Subversion and Submission: The Integration of the Crimean Khanate into the Russian Empire, 1783-1853 / Ph.D. Dissertation; Harvard University, 2006*. Recent works on state policies towards Muslims in the Soviet era include: Douglas Northrop. *Veiled Empire: Gender & Power in Stalinist Central Asia*. Ithaca, 2004; Shoshana Keller. *To Moscow, not Mecca: the Soviet Campaign against Islam in Central Asia, 1917-1941*. Westport, CT, 2001; Adrienne Edgar. *Tribal Nation: the Making of Soviet Turkmenistan*. Princeton, 2004.

⁴ See, for example, the numerous valuable studies produced by scholars such as Devin Deweese, Allen Frank, Michael Kemper, and Stéphane Dudoignon, including: Devin Deweese. *Islamization and Native Religion in the Golden Horde: Baba Tükles and Conversion to Islam in Historical and Epic Tradition*. University Park, PA, 1994; Allen J. Frank. *Muslim Religious Institutions in Imperial Russia: the Islamic World of Novouzensk District and the Kazakh Inner Horde, 1780-1910*. Leiden, 2001; *Idem.* *Tatar Islamic Texts*. Hyattsville, MD, 2008; Stéphane A. Dudoignon. *Qu'est-ce que la 'qadîmiya'? Eléments pour une sociologie du traditionalisme musulman, en Islam de Russie et en Transoxiane (au tournant des XIXe et XIXe siècles) // Stéphane A. Dudoignon, Dämîr Is'hakov, and Râfik Mõhâmâtshin (Eds.). L'Islam de Russie: Conscience communautaire et autonomie politique chez les Tatars de la Volga et de l'Oural depuis le XVIIIe siècle*. Paris, 1997. Pp. 207-225; Michael Kemper. *Sufis und Gelehrte in Tatarien und Baschkirien, 1789-1889: Der islamische Diskurs unter russischer Herrschaft*. Berlin, 1998.

developments such as the employment of symbols by the late imperial Russian and Ottoman states.⁵

Today, the scholarly infrastructure for studying Russian-Ottoman dynamics is still weak, but is nevertheless gaining ground. It is now more common to find Russianist graduate students studying modern Turkish and even Ottoman Turkish, and universities such as Columbia and Harvard have devoted major initiatives to looking more closely at the question of how the scholarly communities of Russian and Ottoman studies can be brought more closely together.⁶ While most of the focus of these efforts has revolved around the obvious nexus of Muslim-Turkic communities in the two empires, numerous other points of convergence also exist and are starting to be investigated by a growing community of scholars. A number of Russianist and Ottomanist scholars have begun to look more closely at cross-cultural relations in the Russian Empire and cross-border connections between Russia and the Ottoman Empire.⁷ In some cases, this increased level of communication

⁵ Selim Deringil. *The Ottoman Empire and Russian Muslims: Brothers or Rivals?* // *Central Asian Survey*. 1994. Vol. 13. No. 3. Pp. 409-416. Also see Idem. *The Well-Protected Domain: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909*. New York, 1998; Kemal Karpat. *The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State*. New York, 2001; İsmail Türkoğlu. *Rusya Türkleri Arasındaki yenileşme Hareketinin öncülerinden Rızaeddin Fahreddin (1858-1936)*. Istanbul, 2000; Sibiryalı meşhur Seyyah Abdürreşid İbrahim. Ankara, 1997; İbrahim Maraş. *Türk Dünyasında Dini Yenileşme, 1850-1917*. Istanbul, 2002; Ada Holly Shissler. *Between Two Empires: Ahmet Agaoglu and the New Turkey*. London, 2003. Also see Sarah Abrevaya Stein. *Making Jews Modern: the Yiddish and Ladino Press in the Russian and Ottoman Empires*. Bloomington, 2004. Older works include: Masami Arai. *Turkish Nationalism in the Young Turk Era*. Leiden; New York, 1991; Nâdir Devlet. *İsmail Bey Gaspıralı, 1851-1914*. Ankara, 1988.

⁶ During the 2007-2008 academic year, Mark Mazower, Eileen Kane, Sean Pollock and I organized a series of lectures, workshops, and conferences pertaining to Islam, Russia, and the Ottoman Empire. This was undertaken through the Harriman Institute at Columbia University and was entitled "Empire, Conquest and Faith: the Russian and Ottoman Interaction, 1650-1920." A list of our activities can be found at <http://russia-islam.harrimaninstitute.org/events.html>. In the Fall of 2008, meanwhile, Harvard announced the launch of its Project on Islam in Eurasia (<http://islam-eurasia.fas.harvard.edu/>).

⁷ Michael Reynolds. *The Ottoman-Russian Struggle for Eastern Anatolia and the Caucasus, 1908-1918: Identity, Ideology and the Geopolitics of World Order* / Ph.D. Dissertation; Princeton University, 2003; Daniel Brower and Edward Lazzerini (Eds.). *Russia's Orient: Imperial Borderlands and Peoples, 1700-1917*. Bloomington, 1997. My own work has also looked closely at Russian-Ottoman connections. James H. Meyer. *Turkic Worlds: Community Representation and Collective Identity in the Russian and Ottoman Empires* / Ph.D. Dissertation; Brown University, 2007; Idem. *Immigration, Return, and the Politics*

between the two fields has also led to the production of works drawing upon both Russian-language and Turkic-languages sources.⁸

The purpose of this guide is to help push this process of cross-fertilization along even further. In particular, I hope to assist individuals who have had some language training outside their “home” field of Russian or Ottoman/Turkic studies and who are interested in translating this training into research at archives and libraries. Specifically, this essay aims to help Russianist historians lacking in Ottomanist training who nevertheless are interested in attempting to conduct research in Istanbul, as well as assist scholars with Turkic, Arabic, or Persian language skills who are interested in researching in the former Soviet Union. While there is no substitute for sound language and paleography training, there are nevertheless documents preserved in the Ottoman archives which are accessible to individuals who cannot read Ottoman Turkish, and within the archives of the former USSR there is a wealth of Turkic, Arabic, and Persian language material that is of potential value

of Citizenship: Russian Muslims in the Ottoman Empire // *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. 2007. Vol. 39. Pp. 15-32. Also see the work of the graduate students who took part in my 2008 workshop, “Russia and the Ottoman Empire: Transregional and Comparative Approaches” (<http://www.harrimaninstitute.org/MEDIA/01138.pdf>).

⁸ Adeb Khalid’s work on Central Asia is one of the rare examples of a scholar ably using both tsarist archival sources and materials emerging from within Muslim communities (as opposed to, for example, petitions written by Muslims seeking favors or intervention from state officials). See Adeb Khalid. *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia*. Berkeley, 1998; also see Idem. *Pan-Islamism in Practice: The Rhetoric of Muslim Unity and its Uses* // Elisabeth Özdalga (Ed.). *Late Ottoman Society: The Intellectual Legacy*. London, 2005; also see Michael Khodarkovsky. *Russia’s Steppe Frontier: the Making of a Colonial Empire, 1500-1800*. Bloomington, IN, 2004; Michael Reynolds employs an impressive array of both Russian and Ottoman state archival sources in his investigation of Russian and Ottoman military strategy during the First World War: *The Ottoman-Russian Struggle for Eastern Anatolia and the Caucasus, 1908-1918: Identity, Ideology and the Geopolitics of World Order* / Ph.D. Dissertation; Princeton University, 2003. Eileen Kane’s study of Ottoman-Russian relations pertaining to the Holy Land is based mainly upon Russian archival sources, but also includes a sampling of materials from the Ottoman Başbakanlık archive. Eileen Kane. *Pilgrims, Holy Places, and the Multi-Confessional Empire: Russian Policy toward the Ottoman Empire under Tsar Nicholas I, 1825-1855* / Ph.D. Dissertation; Princeton University, 2005, while Robert D. Crews has used a combination of modern Turkish secondary literature and bilingual or translated documents like İsmail Gasprinskii’s *Tercüman/Perevodchik* and Muslim petitions to state officials in his work. My own research draws upon both Russian and Ottoman state archival sources as well as manuscript materials emerging from within Russian Muslim communities: Meyer. *Turkic Worlds*; Idem. *Immigration, Return, and the Politics of Citizenship*.

to individuals with a background in Middle Eastern and Islamic studies. My observations will be drawn primarily from my own research (which focuses primarily on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries) and are therefore not intended to provide a representative sample of the full spectrum of sources available. However, I hope that this information will at least prove helpful in pointing researchers in the right direction with regard to how they might plan a research stay in Istanbul or the former USSR. The first section, which concerns researching in Istanbul, is directed mainly towards an audience of Russianists, while the sections devoted to researching in the former USSR are directed mainly towards non-Russianists with a background in Ottoman, Turkic, or Islamic studies.

My own experience in Russian and Ottoman studies began with a seven-year period (1992-1999) spent residing in Istanbul prior to graduate school. During these years I learned modern Turkish and began my study of Russian. While pursuing a master's degree at Princeton's Department of Near Eastern Studies (1999-2001) I began studying Ottoman Turkish and took classes in intermediate and advanced Russian. At Brown, where I did my Ph.D. in Middle Eastern and Russian History, I took three years of Arabic while studying Ottoman paleography alongside my advisor, Engin Akarlı.⁹ During the course of my graduate studies I spent a total of thirty-six months in Turkey and the former USSR. This time was spent undertaking language and paleography training as well as researching in archives and libraries in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kazan, Ufa, Simferopol, Baku, and Istanbul. Currently I am spending the 2008-2009 academic year in Russia and Turkey, where I am conducting yet another round of research.

The types of documents that I looked at varied according to archive. At RGIA¹⁰ in St. Petersburg, most of the documents I read pertained to tsarist policies towards Muslims in Russia and correspondence between tsarist officials in St. Petersburg and the provinces. In Moscow I worked at AVPRI,¹¹ where I researched reports written by tsarist consular and embassy officials based in the Ottoman Empire. In Kazan, Ufa, Simferopol, and Baku

⁹ Almost all of the materials in the Ottoman archives are handwritten, and there are several different types of handwriting which can be found. For the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, most documents are written in rika, which is what I studied with my advisor at Brown.

¹⁰ The Russian State Historical Archive (*Rossiskii gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii arkhiv*).

¹¹ The Archive of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire (*Arkhiv vneshnei politiki Rossiskoi imperii*).

(which form the basis of my discussion on archives in the former USSR in this guide), I worked with both Russian-language materials (mainly state archival documents and periodical sources), as well as printed and handwritten materials produced from within Muslim communities, including almanacs, village histories, personal papers and correspondence, and periodical sources. In Istanbul, my research in the Ottoman Başbakanlık archive gave me access to a wide variety of materials relating to Russians (and especially Russian Muslims) in the Ottoman Empire, Russian-Ottoman relations, and Ottoman reports relating to Russia and Muslim communities in the tsarist empire. In Istanbul I also worked with Ottoman periodical sources in Istanbul's well-appointed research libraries and in the family archive of Ali Bey Hüseyinzade. Hopefully, my discussion of these research experiences will prove to be useful to individuals planning to work in some of these locations.

***A Russianist in Istanbul:
the Başbakanlık Archives and Other Resources***

How useful the Ottoman archives are to you obviously has a lot to do with how well you can read Ottoman Turkish. Even for Ottomanists who have studied Ottoman (and usually Arabic) language and paleography for years, working in the Ottoman archives can be an extremely challenging and frustrating experience. For a Russianist with nothing more than a couple of years of modern Turkish and a familiarity with the Arabic script, reading Ottoman archival documents is not a realistic short-term goal.¹² If, however, someone has received some Arabic-script paleographic training – preferably using photocopies from the archives themselves – there is an abundance of material that will be of use to you. Moreover, even for those scholars unable to read Ottoman at all, there are documents written in French which could be of benefit to your research.

BEFORE YOU GO

One of the nicest things about working in the Ottoman archives is the abundance of data available online. The website of the General Directorate

¹² The Harvard Ottoman Summer School on Cunda Island in Turkey is one place where people can improve their Ottoman reading skills, although students at Cunda do not get many opportunities to read their own documents. Researchers who already possess some Ottoman reading skills might try to find a private tutor among the Ottoman history graduate students at Istanbul University.

of the Turkish Archive (www.devletarsivleri.gov.tr) provides information on both the Prime Ministry Archive and the Republican Archive (*Cumhuriyet Arşivi*).¹³ This page is written only in Turkish, but other pages on the site have both Turkish and English versions. For example, click on “Katalog Tarama” [Catalogue Search] on the left hand side of the page, and a window pops up which asks for a username and password. You will notice that this page can be read in both Turkish and English. You must register for the site, but registration is an uncomplicated process. Simply fill out the form, choose a user name and password, and within a few hours you should be able to use the site. Once you have your username and password, you will be able to search the online catalogues of the archive.¹⁴

It is important to keep in mind that the online catalogues represent only a tiny percentage of the archive’s actual holdings. However, new listings are frequently added to the online catalogue, so its potential as a useful preparation for working in the archive is continuously increasing.¹⁵ This catalogue is searchable by keyword, and allows the user to search in multiple catalogues simultaneously. When I first started working in the archives in 2004, I found around thirty documents, or *vesikas*, via this catalogue. Several of these documents ended up being quite helpful in my work, and several others nevertheless pointed me in the right direction with respect to the types of catalogues I needed to be working with. In any case, it was nice to be able to order some documents the first day in the archive, even if the internet catalogue represents only the proverbial tip of the iceberg as far as the archive’s holdings are concerned.

¹³ For all intents and purposes, there is basically only one state archive that most researchers working on late Ottoman history would consult. There are reportedly collections of archival material stored elsewhere in the country, but to my knowledge there are no local archives open to researchers. According to Engin Akarlı, the Turkish novelist Kemal Tahir made special arrangements with archive officials in Çorum in the 1940s and based some of his novels on this research. Engin Akarlı, *The Problems of External Pressures, Power Struggles, and Budgetary Deficits in Ottoman Politics under Abdülhamid II (1876-1909): Origins and Solutions* / Ph.D. Dissertation; Princeton University, 1976. P. 270. For researchers interested in military history, there is also the archive of the Military History and Strategic Studies (*Askeri Tarih ve Stratejik Etüdları Bakanlığı*), which Michael Reynolds has notably worked in.

¹⁴ This username and password are different from the ones you will be assigned for use with the computer catalogues inside the archives, which I describe below.

¹⁵ Indeed, when I first used the archive in 2004, my keyword search for “Akçura” turned up only seven or eight results relating to the Tatar activist Yusuf Akçura. Four years later, the same search resulted in twenty-five hits, and several of the new results have led me to documents whose existence I had previously been unaware of.

The archive's website also advertises publications of interest to researchers. On the main page of the archive (www.devletarsivleri.gov.tr), click on "Yayınlar" [publications] on the right-hand side of the menu bar at the top of the page. This opens a page which lists the titles and prices of the archive's publications (more than seventy, at last count). These publications can be of great use to scholars, particularly those not proficient in Ottoman. Many of these books are of first-rate quality, with excellent photo reproductions of original documents printed alongside Latin-script transliterations of their texts. Examples of publications relating to Russia and Muslim communities in Russia include *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Kazan* [Kazan in the Ottoman Documents], *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Kırım Savaşı* [The Crimean War in the Ottoman Documents], several compilations on Russian-Armenian relations during and after World War I, and numerous other volumes. Most of these publications can be found at the bookstore located inside the archive, where they sell at very reasonable prices. In the same bookstore it is also possible to purchase the catalogue guide to the archive. Written in Turkish, the archive guide is called *Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi Rehberi* (2nd edition, Istanbul: Başbakanlık Basımevi, 2000). As I discuss below, this guidebook is very useful and anyone planning on conducting research in the Başbakanlık should make a point of studying it prior to arriving in Istanbul. English-language discussions of Ottoman holdings exist, but they are much older than the guidebook and should be used in addition to the guidebook, rather than in place of it.¹⁶

GAINING ACCESS AND GETTING STARTED

Gaining access to the Ottoman archives is a relatively straightforward process. As is the case with Russia, it is a good idea to have a letter from your institution or sponsoring organization explaining (preferably in Turkish) your affiliation and the topic of your research, including its chronological parameters. When you arrive at the archive the first day, you will most likely be ushered into a room on the first floor, where you will be asked in greater detail about the types of documents that interest you (here, again, it helps to have looked at the online catalogue prior to this conversation). You do not need a special visa or study permit to research in the archive; a regular tourist visa is sufficient. In years past it was necessary to have a special research

¹⁶ Stanford J. Shaw. *Ottoman Archival Materials for the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries: The Archives of Istanbul* // *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. 1975. Vol. 6. No. 1. Pp. 94-114. Also see the appendix in Engin Akarlı. *The Problems of External Pressures, Power Struggles, and Budgetary Deficits in Ottoman Politics*. Pp. 270-282.

permit to work in libraries in Turkey, but now it is possible to do this with a tourist visa as well, provided the library director gives you permission.¹⁷

Some scholars have encountered difficulty ordering certain documents because these were not considered by the archive staff to fall within the stated research topic. When I worked in the archive I chose a fairly broad research topic (“Russian-Ottoman relations and Russian “Turks” in the Ottoman Empire, 1860-1914”) and encountered no difficulties from the archive staff, even when I occasionally ordered *vesikas* that did not obviously fit within this topic. It sometimes seems treatment of scholars depends on their command of Turkish. As is the case in Russia, it obviously helps to demonstrate respect toward archival staff and seriousness of purpose, so it might be a good idea to establish a solid work routine in the archive before pestering the archive staff with numerous requests for help.

Once given permission to work in the archive, the researcher is led to the reading room. In the summer, it can get very crowded, but nevertheless compares well in most respects to reading rooms in the former USSR. Getting in and out of the archive is easier than in most archives I have worked at in Russia, and the neighborhood surrounding the Başbakanlık (which is located in the tourist-packed neighborhood of Sultanahmet) contains numerous restaurants and cafes, so the research life in Istanbul is generally a pleasant one. Several staff members work in the archive’s reading room, and some of these individuals are highly-educated experts who can read Ottoman Turkish better than most of the researchers ordering documents. Often there are notices posted on the bulletin boards in the corridors outside the reading room advertising consultation services relating to the reading of Ottoman documents.

Laptop computers and dictionaries are permitted in the reading room. Photocopying is easy and inexpensive, but taking your own photographs is prohibited. In order to have photocopies made, you need to fill out a form available in the reading room. During the winter, photocopies are usually available by the next day in a room on the floor below. In the summer, the process can take longer. As of 2008, the price per photocopy was approximately ten cents per page. Copies of some types of documents are also available for purchase on CD-Rom.

¹⁷ Not everybody working in libraries in Turkey seems to know this. More than once I have had to talk my way past a library employee who insisted that I needed a letter from Ankara in order to work there. However, explaining that the rules have changed and that the library director now has the authority to grant research permission is not a complicated process, and the library directors are well informed about the new regulations.

WHERE TO LOOK

The Ottoman archives are enormous, and it is impossible to discuss all of the places where documents pertaining to Russia might be hidden. Moreover, the classification system of the Ottoman archives is quite different from that of Russia and other post-Soviet states. While many of the holdings in the Ottoman archive are organized by ministry, Ottoman documents can also be arranged in other ways, such as according to document type or their original physical location. For instance, many of the most important documents from the Hamidian era (1878-1908) are located in the Yıldız collection, a name which refers to Yıldız Palace, the favorite residence of Abdülhamid II. The Yıldız collection contains a great cross-section of documents produced by a variety of different ministries and officials in relation to “important matters such as administrative, economic, financial, military, and foreign affairs,”¹⁸ so just about any kind of document from the Hamidian could conceivably be located here.

Documents in the Yıldız collection, moreover, are also sometimes classified by document type (rather than topic), such as official reports presented to the Palace by the Grand Vizirate (*Sadâret Resmî Ma’rûzâtı*) or private reports presented to the Sultan by the Grand Vizirate (*Sadâret Hususî Ma’rûzâtı*). Once again, there is little indication regarding what topics might be addressed within these documents, so you have to simply dig in and see what you find. In this respect, the Yıldız collection is hardly an isolated case, and so in many cases one’s initial experiences in the Ottoman archives can be a little dispiriting and confusing. There is a reason why Ottomanist graduate students often spend one or two years in the Ottoman archives during the course of their dissertation research.

There are, however, some short cuts which can be taken. For a Russianist planning to read documents in Ottoman Turkish, the most efficient way to begin would be to look first through the computer catalogues located at the front of the Başbakanlık reading room. These are different from the Internet catalogues discussed above, and hold a database containing far more materials than those which can be accessed online. Like the online catalogues, however, the computer catalogues located inside the reading room can be keyword searched.¹⁹ While the computer catalogues in the reading room contain many more references than the internet catalogues, the computer

¹⁸ Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi Rehberi. 2nd ed. Istanbul, 2000. P. 233.

¹⁹ When you are given permission to work in the archives, you will also be assigned a username and password for these computers, which in most cases will be ready within a day or so.

catalogues in the reading room likewise only represent a small portion of documents available to researchers. For documents from the nineteenth and early twentieth century, this percentage is higher but still not close to being complete.

After the internet and non-internet computer catalogues, a third good place to look for scholars interested in Russia would be the catalogues of the Foreign Ministry (*Hariciye Nezareti*). The Foreign Ministry catalogues are themselves divided into numerous subsections, which are described in some detail in the archive guidebook.²⁰ Of particular interest to Russianists who possess no Ottoman reading skills would be the *Hukuk Müşavirliği Odası Belgeleri*, the *Hukuk Kısmı Belgeleri*, and the *Mütenevvia Kısmı Belgeleri*, all of which contain many documents written in French.²¹ Documents in the *Hukuk Müşavirliği Odası Belgeleri* (Documents from the Office of Legal Advisers) relate to matters pertaining to international law,²² while those in the *Hukuk Kısmı Belgeleri* (Legal Division Documents) contain reports written by Ottoman diplomatic officials stationed abroad and correspondence between Ottoman Foreign Ministry officials and foreign diplomats based in the Ottoman Empire.²³ Documents in the *Mütenevvia Kısmı Belgeleri* (Documents of Various Divisions) contain an assortment of materials including correspondence between Ottoman and foreign officials, the awarding of ranks and awards, the appointment of Ottoman officials to positions in the Foreign Ministry, and the arrival of foreign ambassadors to the Ottoman Empire.²⁴ These book catalogues (as well as other such catalogues in the *Başbakanlık*) contain alphabetical indexes in the back, which makes it relatively easy to find all of the materials relating to “Rusya” at one go. As is the case with *opisi* in the archives in the former USSR, the catalogues provide a one-sentence explanation (in modern Turkish) of documents followed by their classification code, which is then used for the ordering of materials.

Scholars who are able to read printed Ottoman Turkish but who cannot read the handwritten scripts of the archives might also wish to avail themselves of the newspaper holdings in some of the major libraries in the city. One of the best places to work is the Beyazıt Devlet Kütüphanesi [the

²⁰ Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi Rehberi. Pp. 385-393.

²¹ Indeed, even correspondence between Ottoman officials is often in both French and Ottoman.

²² Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi Rehberi. Pp. 388-389.

²³ Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi Rehberi. Pp. 390-391.

²⁴ Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi Rehberi. Pp. 391-393.

Beyazit state library] which is located close to the archive and just around the corner of Istanbul University. The Beyazit Devlet Kütüphanesi holds a great collection of journals and newspapers in Ottoman Turkish. Photography is forbidden, but relatively inexpensive (about ten cents per page) scanning services are available. Another library to work in is the Atatürk Kitaplığı [the Atatürk Library]. While the holdings of the Atatürk Kitaplığı are considerably less than those of the Beyazit Devlet Kütüphanesi, the Atatürk Kitaplığı does have some advantages. Firstly, it is located just behind the Atatürk Kültür Merkezi on Taksim Square, which may be a more convenient location for some people. Secondly, the work environment in the Atatürk Kitaplığı is more relaxed than that of the Beyazit library. Although the Atatürk library does not have as many journals as the Beyazit library, it does possess fairly good holdings of most of the major newspapers and journals from the Hamidian and Unionist (1908-1918) eras and photography there is allowed.

Researching in Istanbul is not for everybody, and what you can do obviously depends upon your level of Turkish and Ottoman. Even for scholars who have had no Ottoman training, however, there are still possibilities for benefiting from the French-language sources among the records of the Foreign Ministry. Moreover, for scholars who can read printed or written Ottoman, the opportunities for research are quite vast. In addition to the archive and libraries discussed above, there are also a number of other resources available to foreign researchers. The library of Boğaziçi (or “Bosphorus”) University is quite good, and it is possible to purchase a temporary membership to the library in order to gain access to its impressive English-language and Turkish-language holdings. Istanbul University also has a good collection of Turkish-language secondary literature, and their library is located close to the archive and the Beyazit state library. Finally, a number of research centers also exist in Istanbul, which can provide exceptional assistance with regard to a variety of issues ranging from short-term accommodation to the holding of academic lectures and symposia. The American Research Institute in Turkey (<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/ARIT/>) can provide accommodation to foreigners researching in Istanbul from a period of several days to several months, and also boasts an excellent library on topics relating to Ottoman and Byzantine history. The Netherlands Institute (<http://www.nit-istanbul.org/>) also provides short-term accommodation and houses occasional workshops and talks, while the Orient-Institut (www.oidmg.org/istanbul/welcome_en.html) possesses a good library of secondary literature.

An Ottomanist in Russia:

Turkic, Arabic, and Persian Research Sources in the Former USSR

Working in the archives of the former USSR can be a daunting experience. Compared to working in Istanbul, gaining permission to work in Russia can seem complicated and overly bureaucratic, while the conditions inside archives and libraries can often seem less than welcoming. Nevertheless, there is a wealth of materials that would be of interest to scholars working on Ottoman and Turkish history in particular, as well as for anyone possessing a reading knowledge of Turkish, Arabic, or Persian who would be interested in working on Muslim communities in these regions.

Unlike Turkey, where the archival sources for the Ottoman Empire are concentrated in Istanbul, regional archives play an important role in the study of the Russian Empire. This section of my article is therefore divided by city. For archives located in Russia and the Ukraine, it is recommended that researchers consult the ArchoBiblioBase (<http://www.iisg.nl/~abb/>), which provides contact information for archives of the former USSR as well as information on the names and availability of catalogue guidebooks. Since this information can change quickly and some archives have multiple catalogues, I have not included the names of archive publications in this section of my guide and instead refer interested readers to the ArchoBiblioBase.

ST. PETERSBURG AND MOSCOW

The Russian State Historical Archive (RGIA) is the only archive where I have worked in St. Petersburg. While this archive is of enormous use to Russianist scholars, there is relatively little there that I have seen which would be of particular use to scholars interested in Ottoman or Turkic studies. Moreover, the archive has been closed since 2004, and when it will open is still unclear. Most of the materials that I have found in this archive pertaining to events taking place in the regions can also be found in the regional archives described below. RGIA is a very good place, however, for gaining an understanding of how state officials in St. Petersburg viewed Islam and Muslim communities in Russia.²⁵

The Russian National Library in St. Petersburg also has enormous holdings of Turkic-language periodicals and books. When I was researching in St. Petersburg in 2004, Turkic-language periodical sources from the imperial period were located in the library's Fontanka branch. However, they could

²⁵ Especially Fond 821, Ministerstvo vnutrennykh del: departament dukhovnykh del inostrannykh ispovedanii.

only be ordered in the library's New Building, which is located close to the metro station Park Pobedy. Turkic-language books can be both ordered and read in the New Building.²⁶

Two other sites of interest in St. Petersburg and Moscow are the Institute of Eastern Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg, and the Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire in Moscow. I have never worked in the Institute of Eastern Manuscripts,²⁷ but the holdings of this institute are well-known to Orientalists across Russia. I have worked in the Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire, where reports written by Russian consular and embassy officials stationed in the Ottoman Empire (written in Russian only) might be of interest to students of Ottoman-Russian relations.

KAZAN

Kazan is the city where I have spent the most time conducting research in Russia, and its holdings are substantial. One of the most impressive locations for documents written in Ottoman Turkish, Tatar, Arabic, and Persian is the Rare Books and Manuscripts Room of the Lobachevsky Library of Kazan State University. Researching here requires the purchase of a temporary library membership, which can be acquired at the main building of the university library. As always, it is helpful to have a letter from your home institution stating your academic affiliation and the nature of your research project. Most of the documents that I have worked on in this room have been Tatar-language handwritten documents like village histories, letters, almanacs, and personal papers from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Sometimes, documents classified as "Tatar" are actually more similar to Ottoman Turkish, something which is also the case with the Tatar newspapers from the late imperial era which are likewise read in this room.

The Arabic-language holdings of the Rare Book room are enormous, and include a wide array of documents pertaining to Islamic religious commentary. While scholars with a background in Islamic studies like Michael Kemper, Allen Frank, and Stéphane Dudoignon have made famous use of these materials in their research, much remains to be explored in the holdings of this gem of a library. When I was researching in this room from 2003 to 2007, I and other researchers were allowed uninhibited use of digital cameras. Reports from researchers I met in Kazan in the summer of 2008, however,

²⁶ Information about the National Library can be found at <http://www.nlr.ru/eng/nlr/location.htm>.

²⁷ www.orientalstudies.ru.

indicate that the reading room is now cracking down on this policy, although permission to use a digital camera is still apparently possible if one appeals directly to the Lobachevsky Library director. In addition to the documents held in the Rare Book and Manuscript room, the general collection of the Lobachevsky Library includes an impressive collection of Tatar-language books from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

The National Archive of the Republic of Tatarstan (NART), located just up the street from the university library, also contains a rich collection of holdings. As this is the state archive of Russian imperial administration, most of the documents here are in Russian. Among these holdings, there are numerous materials that would be of interest to scholars of late imperial Ottoman history interested (as I am) in the Turkist (or ‘pan-Turkist’) movement and Russian-Ottoman relations. NART also contains some sources written in Arabic-script Tatar and Ottoman Turkish, most of which are located in the archive’s personal record groups [*fondy*]. Gaining entry to NART can be tricky for foreigners unless one has an affiliation with Kazan State University, although exceptions are made in some cases.²⁸ Whereas in previous years NART was quite liberal in allowing researchers to work with a digital camera, today all photocopies and photographs must be ordered through the archive staff. As of the Summer of 2008, both photographs and photocopies cost approximately one dollar (thirty rubles) apiece, and therefore are not a practical option for most researchers.

A few other places which might be of interest to the Turkic-language reading researcher in Kazan would include the Rare Book and Manuscript Room of the National Library on Karl Marx Street; the Ibrahimov Institute of Language, Literature and History of the Tatarstan Academy of Sciences; and the library of the Russian Academy of Sciences. The National Library’s manuscript collection is not terribly impressive, but is worth paying a visit to if one is already in town, while the National Library also has a small collection of Turkic-language newspapers from the late imperial period. In general, however, this collection – which is not located in the main branch of the library, but in a separate branch on Karl Marx Street – should not be a high priority. The Ibrahimov Institute, on the other hand, has an impressive collection of materials related to Tatar literary history, including the personal papers of a number of well-known Tatar writers. Located on Kremlevskii Street not far from NART, the Ibrahimov Institute has also published a Tatar-

²⁸ Affiliation with Kazan State University can be made through the university’s international office. The office’s website is www.ksu.ru/eng/umc/index.php?id=2.

language guide to its holdings.²⁹ Finally, the Russian Academy of Sciences, located just off Kremlevskii Street, also has holdings of Turkic-language newspapers and books from the late imperial and early Soviet periods. Most of the materials in this library can be found elsewhere in the city, and gaining permission to work here can be difficult without an Academy-related sponsor. However, there are some holdings in this library – such as the journal *Maglumat*, which was the official press organ of the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly – which are difficult to find elsewhere in Kazan.

UFA

A fifteen-hour bus trip down the road from Kazan is Ufa, capital of Bashkortostan. Ufa is perhaps most famous for having housed the center of Muslim administration in European Russia and Siberia, the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly. Though there is relatively little in Ufa for researchers working specifically on Ottoman or Turkish history, Ufa has much to offer scholars working on topics relating to Islam in the Russian Empire.

The Central State Historical Archive of the Republic of Bashkortostan (TsGIA RB) houses an impressive collection of state archival materials relating to the region's administration. The *fonds* from this archive that I have the most experience working with is that of the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly (I-295). This *fond* contains mostly Russian-language materials, but many of these documents are written in both Russian and Tatar, and would thus present a number of opportunities for a scholar with Turkic-language reading abilities interested in studying Russia's Muslims.³⁰ The rest of the archive's *fonds* also contain an enormous amount of material on the region's Muslims, written in Russian by bureaucrats working in tsarist administration. On both of my visits to this archive I have found the staff very helpful, and on both occasions I was able to easily obtain permission to take digital photographs without charge.³¹

²⁹ M. I. Äkhmätdžhanov. *Miraskhanä: fond häm kolleksiialär kürsätkече*. Kazan, 2005.

³⁰ Turkic-language materials in this archive are in most cases petitions written by Muslims to government officials, usually in relations to the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly. Almost all of these have been translated into Russian, although the quality of these translations can vary considerably. Scholars relying upon Russian translations of these materials do so at their own risk.

³¹ As is the case with other archives in the former USSR, I would recommend working in the archive for several days before making a request to use a digital camera. In Ufa, Simferopol, and Baku there do not appear to be clear rules relating to who can and cannot use a camera, so I think it is best to demonstrate one's seriousness prior to asking if it is possible to take pictures.

Ufa also contains some other research locations which could be useful to scholars proficient in Tatar, Ottoman and Arabic, most notably the archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences. This archive, which is not very well catalogued, contains a number of *fonds* relating to Muslims in the region, particularly within the context of the community activist movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The personal *fond* of Rizaeddin Fahreddin³² is also located in this archive, and has a very useful (though as yet unpublished) catalogue organized by Ramil Bulgakov, a Turkologist who works in the History Institute at the Academy.

Another resource for scholars in Ufa is the National Library of Bashkortostan, located inside Lenin Park. This library has a small but interesting collection of Turkic-language books, located in the Rare Book and Manuscript room. This collection would be of value to researchers working on the regional history of Muslim communities in the late imperial and early Soviet periods, about which it has a number of hard-to-find titles. The National Library also has a small collection of manuscript documents written in Arabic-script Tatar, Bashkir, and Turkish. There are no published catalogues for these materials, but card catalogues are available in the library.

BAKU

Baku is another city with an interesting collection of Turkic-language materials that would be of interest to scholars of both the Ottoman Empire and Muslim communities in the Russian Caucasus. The Azerbaijan State History Archives (ADTA) is the main archive in Baku. As is the case with the National Archive of the Republic of Tatarstan in Kazan, most of the materials in the ADTA are in Russian and were written by tsarist officials. For scholars with a reading knowledge of Turkish and Persian who are interested in working on Muslim communities in the southern Caucasus, the ADTA houses a large collection of documents relating to the activities of the Sunni and Shiite spiritual assemblies of the Caucasus. While many of the materials in the *fonds* of the Müfti, the Sheyh ul-Islam, and the Sunni and Shiite assemblies³³ contain Russian-language summaries of cases, in most cases the full description of cases is written only in Persian or Turkish.

³² Rizaeddin Fahreddin (1859-1936) was an important community activist figure during the late imperial period who later became the second müfti of the Soviet Union.

³³ In the Caucasus there were two Muslim spiritual assemblies, one for Sunni Muslims and the other for Shiite Muslims. The Sunni assembly was headed by the müfti, while the Shiite assembly was headed by the Sheyh ul-Islam.

Located in the same building as the Azerbaijan State History Archives are the archives of the Republic of Azerbaijan, which contain materials relating to the first Azerbaijani Republic (1918-1920). I worked only for a few days in this archive, but in my limited time there I did see a number of Arabic-script materials that were not translated into Russian. The documents I worked with were parliamentary papers, including speeches, written in Azeri Turkish. There is also a good archive of the literary history of Azerbaijan in this building, which has *fonds* on Azerbaijani writers from the nineteenth and twentieth century, including some personal papers and manuscripts in handwritten Azeri. Meanwhile, the large Manuscript Institute at 8 Istiglaliyyat contains an excellent collection of the personal papers of many of these figures, and is an absolute must-see for anyone able to read handwritten Persian and Azeri Turkish who is interested in studying the literary history of the region in the late imperial era.³⁴

There are a number of locations for reading Turkic-language newspapers in Baku, including the library of the Central State Archives of Azerbaijan (in the same building as the two archives discussed above), the Akhundov Library, and the library of the Academy of Sciences. At the Academy of Sciences, there is also an interesting collection of books written in Ottoman Turkish. While the presence of these three libraries hardly justifies making a research trip to Baku on its own, if one is already in Baku these places are worth visiting.

SIMFEROPOL

Sadly, there is not nearly as much material relating to the Muslim history of the Crimea as one might expect. Following the expulsion of Muslims from the Crimea during the Second World War, most traces of Muslim culture in the region were erased and new studies of the Crimean Tatar and other Muslim populations of the region were produced far less than they were in places like Kazan, Ufa, and Azerbaijan. Even in the State Archives of the Autonomous Republic of the Crimea (GAARK), which was badly damaged during the Russian Civil War, many documents pertaining to the history of the region are missing. The *fond* for the Tavridian Muslim Spiritual Assembly is missing entirely from 1879 to 1909, although there are documents pertaining to the assembly in other *fonds* in the archive.³⁵ The documents of

³⁴ More information on the Manuscript Institute can be found at http://azer.com/aiweb/categories/magazine/82_folder/82_articles/82_manuscripts.html.

³⁵ In the *fond* of the governor's office, for example, there is quite a bit of correspondence between the governor and the Tavridian Müfti, all of it written in Russian.

GAARK contain much information on Ottoman Muslim subjects residing in the Crimea, many of whom were Crimean Tatars who had immigrated to the Ottoman Empire, only to return to the Crimea as Ottoman subjects.³⁶

The two best libraries in Simferopol are the Regional Studies Library and the Gasprinskii Library. The Regional Studies Library contains a very good collection of mostly Russian-language works on the history of the Crimea, with much information on the Crimean Muslims. The Gasprinskii Library, meanwhile, contains the most extensive collection of Turkic-language materials in the region, but it is quite meager compared to collections in Kazan, Baku, or St. Petersburg. This collection contains a decent collection of books, many of them from Turkey, relating to the history of Crimean Tatars. While the Gasprinskii does not have a particularly important collection of documents, the library does act as a kind of unofficial cultural center for Crimean Tatars, and is a good place to visit for anyone interested in the Tatars to find a Crimean Tatar language teacher.

Parting Shots

Maybe one day it will be less rare for Russianist scholars to have advanced skills in reading Turkic languages, Persian, and Arabic, and for Ottomanists to read Russian. Until that day comes, however, there are ways in which historians of the two empires can access materials in both Turkey and the former Soviet Union and develop projects which can help bring the historiography of the two empires more closely together. While studying in the Ottoman archives without a working knowledge of Ottoman – or working in the Russian archives without being able to read Russian – is hardly an ideal way of conducting research, I hope that this guide will nevertheless prove helpful in assisting researchers in gaining an introduction to researching on the other side of the Ottoman-Russian frontier.

SUMMARY

Джеймс Мейер констатирует, что, несмотря на множественные пересечения истории Российской и Османской империй, русисты и оттоманисты представляют два изолированных друг от друга исследовательских сообщества. Настоящая статья построена как руководство

³⁶ On this, see my article: Immigration, Return, and the Politics of Citizenship.

для русистов, желающих привлечь архивные материалы из хранилищ современной Турции и оттоманистов, нуждающихся в материалах из мусульманских коллекций на территории бывшего СССР. Обзор основан на непосредственном исследовательском опыте Мейера, который включает работу в османских архивах в Стамбуле (Başbakanlık Arşivi), архивах и рукописных отделах библиотек Петербурга, Казани, Баку, Уфы и Симферополя. Помимо анализа собственно тематики архивных коллекций, в статье содержатся практические рекомендации относительно условий работы в том или ином архиве, справочной литературы и пр. В заключении автор выражает надежду, что в будущем русисты будут обладать достаточным знанием тюркских языков, персидского и арабского, а специалисты по Османской империи – знанием русского, что позволит пересекать искусственные архивные и дискурсивные границы.