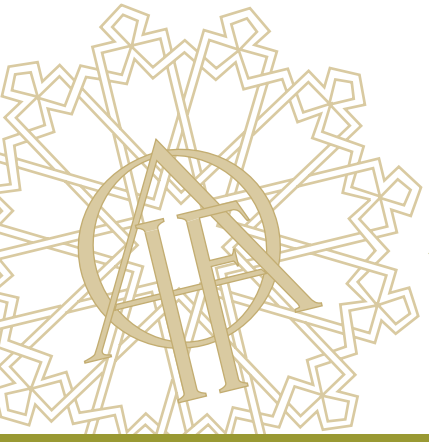
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István Vasary

On the Periphery of the Islamic World : Diplomatic Correspondence of the Nogays with the Russians

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ISTVÁN VÁSÁRY

On the Periphery of the Islamic World

Diplomatic Correspondence of the Nogays with the Russians

Though the Nogay *ulus* (appanage), one of the successor states of the Golden Horde, was widely acknowledged as a separate Tatar political entity only in the second half of the 15th century, its formation began much earlier. The core of this Turco-Mongol confederation was the Mangit tribe which by the end of the 14th century became one of the most significant ethnic and military component of the Golden Horde under the leadership of Edigü, famous military commander and chief of that tribe. The tribes subjected to Edigü and his successors' jurisdiction, occupied a vast territory between the Yayik (Ural) and Lower Volga river, their centre being the capital city of Saraychik on the Yayik. In the 15th-16th centuries the Nogay Horde was a significant Tatar state comprising various Turco-Mongolian tribes which later took an active part in the formation of numerous modern Turkic peoples, including the Kazaks, the Karakalpaks, the Bashkirs and the Kazan and Crimean Tatars. The widest extension of the Nogay Horde was in the first half of the 16th century, when its historical role was at its zenith, and they actively participated in the wars of Muscovy, the Kazan and the Crimean Khanates.[1]

From the middle of the 13th century onward, when the Russian principalities were subjugated by the Tatars and forced to pay tribute to their new overlords, the Russians have had direct diplomatic contact with the Tatar state of the Golden Horde. Dispatching and receiving envoys became daily routine of the princes, later the grand princes of Moscow who acquired all the necessary diplomatic skills through their daily dealings with the Tatars of the Horde.

1. For a short overview of the Nogays, see Vásáry, "Noghay"; for a detailed monograph, see Trepavlov, *Istoriia*.

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By Grand Prince Ivan III's time (1462-1505) the Muscovite state was fully equipped with all the tricks and techniques of steppe diplomacy.[2] The beginnings of written diplomatic documentation and the roots of the institutional foundation of the diplomatic affairs, also go back to the reign of Ivan III.[3] First, the *Kazennyi dvor* and its chief, the *kaznachei* were in charge of diplomatic affairs, but in 1549 a separate state organ, the *Posol'skii Prikaz,* one of the best-founded institutions of the Muscovite state came into being and took over their duty. With its enormous written material, the documents of the *Posol'skii Prikaz*, now preserved in the *Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Drevnikh Aktov* (henceforth *RGADA*), constitute the basic source material for the foreign policy and diplomacy of Muscovy. Questions of diplomacy were also dealt with in the *Boiarskaia Duma*, the *Kazna* and the *Dvorets*. The chief administrators of the *Posol'skii Prikaz* were the secretary-scribes (*d'iaki* and *pod'iachie*), the seal-keepers (*pechatniki*), the bailiffs (*pristavy*), and the interpreters and translators (*tolmachi* and *perevodchiki*). The significance of this vast material concerning the foreign policy and diplomacy of the Muscovite state was recognised by Russian historians and excellent works were written on the theme. Suffice it to mention Belokurov's monograph on the *Posol'skii Prikaz*,[4] and Savva's directory of the clerks of the same institution in the 16th century.[5] In the pre-revolutionary decades several volumes of documents were published that treated the diplomatic material with different countries. One of the early pioneering enterprises was N.I. Novikov's undertaking to publish the Nogay material (*nogaiskie dela*) in five volumes, in the series 'Continuation of the Old Russian Library'.[6] Later, most text editions were published in the excellent series of the *Sbornik Imperatorskogo Russkogo istoricheskogo obshchestva* (*SIRIO*). The edition of Turkish, Crimean Tatar and Nogay materials was especially relevant and significant in this respect.[7] After the revolution of 1917, for decades this topic was rather neglected, and it was only 25 years ago, in 1979, that research into and publication of the so-called *posol'skie knigi* began anew, within the framework of cooperation between the Institute of History of the USSR (from 1992: Institute of Russian History) at the Academy of Sciences of the USSR (from 1992: Russian Academy of Sciences) and the State Archives (*TsGADA*, since 1992: *RGADA*).

The quantity of the *posol'skie knigi* and the documentary material of the foreign policy in general is in direct proportion with the significance of a state or polity for the Muscovite state. We can trace the number of the envoys' books from different contemporary catalogues (*opisi* in Russian), thus in the 15th century the following volumes of the *posol'skie knigi* concerning the Tatar states were to be found: Nogay Horde (1 book), Crimean Khanate (2 books); the correspondence with the Kazan Khanate is missing because later this material of the archives was burnt down. By 1549, when the famous *d'iak* I.M. Viskovatyi became head of the *Posol'skii Prikaz*, the number of envoys' books considerably increased in the *Tsarskii Arkhiv* where all state documents were preserved: Turkey (1 book), Nogay Horde (3 books),

2. Keenan, "Muscovy and Kazan", p. 548-558.
3. Croskey, *Muscovite Diplomatic Practice*.
4. Belokurov, *O Posol'skom prikaze*.
5. Savva, *D'iaki i pod'iachie*.
6. *PDRV*, Parts 7-11, St Petersburg, 1791-1801.
7. *Pamiatniki diplomaticheskikh snoshenii* (*SIRIO* 41, 91).

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Crimean Khanate (9 books). By 1605 the increase of the material is even more susceptible: Turkey (3 books), Nogay Horde (10 books), Crimean Khanate (21 books).[8] The quantity of envoys' books displays a clear-cut picture of Muscovy's changing foreign relations before 1613, the date of the enthronement of the new Romanov dynasty. If one considers that in the first half of the 16th century the contacts with the Kazan and Astrakhan Khanates were vitally important in Russia's foreign policy, it is rather strange that Kazan and Astrakhan are missing from this impressive list of Oriental foreign partners. But everything becomes obvious if we know that contrary to appearance Muscovy in fact conducted intensive correspondence with these Tatar states. After the Russian capture of Kazan (1552) and Astrakhan (1555) the diplomatic material concerning these two khanates was allocated in the newly found *Prikaz Kazanskogo dvortsa*, which became the central organ in the Russian administration of the two conquered khanates. After the conquest of the Siberian Khanate, the administration of Siberian matters was also attached to this *prikaz*, but later in 1637 a separate organisation, the *Sibirskii Prikaz* took over the administration of Siberia.[9] But alas, the early material of the *Prikaz Kazanskogo dvortsa* dating before 1626, was demolished by fire, so the written records of the Kazan and Astrakhan envoys' books all perished. Only some traces of these contacts can be found in the Crimean Tatar and Nogay diplomatic material.

The *Posol'skie knigi* constitute only a part of the precious diplomatic materials of Muscovy. In the archives a lot more has been preserved since all materials of a Russian diplomatic mission, be it outgoing (*ot"ezdy*) or incoming (*priezdy*), were preserved separately in the so-called *stolbtsy* (columns). This material comprises all diplomatic correspondence, diplomas, texts of treaties, envoys' instructions (*nakazy*), memoranda (*pamjat'*), accounts (*stateinye spiski*), translations to and from different languages, etc. This composite material was then edited in the form of *posol'skie knigi*, but later, especially in the 17th century most of them remained in the form of *stolbets*. Now, basing on the combined evidence of the *posol'skie knigi* and the material preserved in *stolbtsy*, it seems instructive to have a look at the date of the first documents of the relevant material in question. The written contacts with the Crimea began in 1474, with the Nogay Horde in 1489, and with Turkey in 1496. It becomes evident that at the beginning of the 17th century, on the eve of the great anarchy (*smuta*), Russia had ever intensifying contacts with a wide range of countries in the Orient. Between 1500 and 1600, in one hundred years Muscovite Russia conquered three Tatar khanates (Kazan, Astrakhan and Siberia) thereby opening the gates of Siberia toward the East and keeping the lower Volga region under her firm control. But while Russian expansion to the East in Siberia was rather smooth, since no states of Russia's dimension could halt Russia's imperial drive, in the southern steppe zone the Nogays and especially the Crimean Tatars were still virulent and manipulated by the Ottoman power, they often hindered the Russian plans.

8. For a description of the characteristics of the envoys' books prior to 1605, see Rogozhin, *Posol'skie knigi Rossii*, p. 181-183.

9. *Putevoditel'* I, p. 220, 227-228.

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The diplomatic correspondence of the Tatar states, among them the Nogays, with the Muscovite state, constitutes a real treasure for historical research. Especially for the functioning of Tatar chancelleries, and the diplomatic practice of the Tatar states the Russian source material is of primary importance since most of the original Tatar documents perished in the historical vicissitudes. This time I will call attention to the Nogay diplomatic practice and correspondence with the Russians as reflected in the material of the *RGADA*.

As mentioned above, the Nogay material can be found in fond 127 (*Nogaiskie dela*) of the *RGADA*. There are 10 envoy books in the timespan 1489-1582,[10] but after that date the next, eleventh volume of the Nogay envoy books was compiled in 1642, so for sixty years only the registers on columns (*stolbtsy*) have come down to us. The envoy books, all written in Russian, are the end products of a deliberate editing work of the secretaries of the *Posol'skii prikaz*, and they contain no original documents since after the completion of an envoy book the material used for its compilation was annihilated. Consequently, they are secondary, though very precious historical sources. On the other hand, the *stolbtsy* (registers written on oblong pieces of paper) are primary sources that preserved all the original registers and documents, among others the Tatar diplomas and notes.

Moscow's first registered contact with the Nogay Horde dates from September 1489 (6998) when Prince Khovanskii, governor-general (*namestnik*) of Murom reports to Grand Prince Ivan Vasil'evich (Ivan III) of Moscow on the arrival of three Nogay envoys with a delegation of 22 people: Čumġur (*Chiumgur*) arrived from Ibrāhīm (*Ivak*), Adik from Mūṣā *murza* and Tuvač (*Tuvach'*) from Yamġurčï (*Iamgurchei*) *murza*.[11] The texts of the documents are given in their Russian translations done by the Tatar translators of the *Posol'skii prikaz*, with the introductory words: *Ivakova tsareva gramota*, *Musina myrzina gramota*, etc.[12] Then the Russian sovereign's responses (*otvety*) are given that were orally transmitted to the Nogay envoys through the representatives of the Grand Prince, and a Russian delegation was designated, the envoy of which was to hand over the sovereign's written responses to the Nogay bey and the *murza*-s. The Nogay and Russian envoys went back together to the Nogays, and after the presentation of the documents and the official meetings, one round of the diplomatic exchange was over. On the basis of the envoy books and the columns, one can gain a relatively complete picture of the history of Nogay-Russian diplomatic exchange, with the names of envoys, the tasks and results of the missions and a detailed list of diplomatic correspondence can also be reconstructed. Though Russian researchers, among them, B.-A.B. Kochekaev in his treatise on the history of the Russo-Nogay contacts, and especially V.V. Trepavlov in his basic monograph on Nogay history,[13] heavily drew on and utilised the material of the *Posol'skii prikaz*,

10. *RGADA*, f. 127, op. 1, d. 1-10 (vol. 1: 1489-1509; vol. 2: 1533-1538; vol. 3: 1548-1550; vol. 4: 1551-1556; vol. 5: 1557-1561; vol. 6: 1561-1564; vol. 7: 1564-1566; vol. 8: 1577-1579; vol. 9: 1579-1581; vol. 10: 1581-1582). – For a description of the contents of these books, see Rogozhin, *Posol'skie knigi Rossii*, p. 143-147.

11. Lukichev, Rogozhin (ed.), *Posol'skaia kniga 1489-1508*, p. 17.

12. Lukichev, Rogozhin (ed.), *Posol'skaia kniga 1489-1508*, p. 18.

13. Kochekaev, *Nogaisko-russkie otnosheniia*; Trepavlov, *Istoriia*.

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a systematic and minute compilation of a year-to-year chronicle and the prosopography of the Nogay-Russian diplomatic contacts, that would form the historic skeleton of any further research into the Nogays, cannot be evaded.

I would like to demonstrate on one single example what I mean by a systematic compilation. Let us take again the first year of the Nogay-Russian contacts as our starting point.[14] The Nogay delegation arrived to Murom in September 1489 and were received at the court in Moscow, in November. In August 1490 the next turn of Nogay envoys appeared in Moscow. The Nogays generally came to Moscow toward August-September, and after a one to three months' stay they were sent back to their mandators (the Nogay bey, the *murza*-s and the princes, or a member of their families) together with the Russian envoys, amongst whom one can frequently see Tatars in Russian service. The next delegation arrived again toward the end of next summer. The first Nogay delegation in 1489 brought *five* diplomas (*gramoty*) with them issued by different persons but all addressed to the Grand Prince Ivan III. The Tatar originals were translated into Russian, and the translations were later incorporated into the *Posol'skie knigi* (*a се с тех грамот списки*). The diplomas were issued by Ibrāhīm (*Ibak/Breim tsar'*), Shibanid sovereign of the Siberian *yurt* who nine years before (1480) crushed Akhmad Khan of the Golden Horde, three Nogay *murza*-s, Mūṣā (*Musa*), Yamġurčï (*Iamgurchei*) and Talač (*Talach*), and Yamġurčï's wife, Saltānïm (*Saltanym*). Each Tatar diploma was brought and handed over by different persons, mandatories of the Tatar principals. They were titled envoys (*posol*) if sent by Tatar sovereigns, and *dobryi chelovek* or *sluga* if sent by *murza*-s or other mandators. In the present case Prince Čumġur, Adik, Prince Tuvač, Belezh and El'iakshei were the mandatories. In addition, as a rule the names of the Tatar scribes who compiled the diplomas are mentioned at the end of the documents. Thus, Ibrāhīm employed Qul-derviš baḫšï (*Kulderbysh bakshei*), Mūṣā's scribe was Molla Muḥammad baḫšï (*molna Magamet bakshei*), and Yamġurčï's scribe was Molla Abūbakr baḫšï (*molna Abekir bakshei*). By this time, most of the scribes (*baḫšï*) who originally were experts of the Uighur literacy in the Golden Horde,[15] were recruited, as can be seen from their titles, from the learned Muslim mollas. Sometimes, interpreters (*tolmachi*) were also attached to the delegations, thus in the file under discussion Mūṣā sent his servant Seydek (*Seitiak*) in this capacity. In addition, five members of the Tatar delegation (*Alkazyi*, *Begish*, *Utesh'*, *Chet* and *Kaisym Segit*) are mentioned by name, and the Russian official in charge of the provision of the Nogay delegation was *pod'iachii* Iushko Andreev. So, the number of persons occuring in this single act, encompassing only a few pages in the *Posol'skie knigi*, amounts altogether to *twenty-one*. Some of these persons regularly occur in the envoys' books and also in other contemporary sources, some of them are mentioned only once, in connection with a registered event. For any essential progress in historical research, it would be a task of pivotal importance to compile a Nogay-Tatar prosopography based

14. The texts of the *Posol'skie knigi* relating to this year can be found in Lukichev, Rogozhin (ed.), *Posol'skaia kniga 1489-1508*, p. 17-20; Kel'dasov *et al.*, *Posol'skie knigi 1489-1549 gg.*, p. 18-21.

15. For the survival of Uighur literacy, see Vásáry, "Bemerkungen zum uigurischen Schrifttum".

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primarily on the Russian *Posol'skie knigi*, with the inclusion of all other relevant sources. Till that time our research will not surpass the level of *ad hoc* investigations lacking the necessary support of primary sources.

Similarly, the compilation and edition of the documents of the Nogay-Russian diplomatic correspondence would serve as the basis for any further, diplomatic and stylistic, analysis of these documents. For the compilation of this corpus of Nogay-Russian correspondence one must be aware how the exchange of letters was performed in the Nogay and Russian chancelleries respectively. Let us begin with the Nogay party: the letters of the Nogay bey were written in the capital, Saraychik while the various *murza*-s prepared their letters in their temporary stays during their nomadisations. All Nogay documents were written by the Tatar secretaries termed *baḫšï* or *abïz* (*ḥāfïẓ*),[16] with Arabic letters in the Eastern Turkic (Turkī) literary idiom heavily imbued with the Kipchak idiom spoken by the Nogays. These original Tatar diplomas, having been handed over in the Russian court, were immediately translated into Russian by the Tatar secretaries in the *Kazennyi dvor*, from 1549 onward in the *Posol'skii prikaz*. The Russians had centuries-old experiences in handling Tatar texts, since they had, after all, regular correspondence with the khans of the Golden Horde for almost 250 years. These Tatar secretaries, who were obviously bilingual and mastered both languages (Tatar and Russian) perfectly, used a peculiar Russian language in translating the Tatar originals. They created a special chancellery language which was based on a verbatim Russian translation of the Tatar texts, full of loan translations (*calques*).[17] Sometimes these Russian chancellery translations are baffling and may seem incorrect and obscure, moreover unintelligible to modern readers, but they are painstakingly precise in following their Tatar originals. So if one knows the original Tatar phrase the Russian translation or calque becomes at once intelligible.[18] E.g. the Russian translations *слово то стоит* or *слово наше то*[19] are renderings of Tatar forms such as *söz olkim* and *sözümüz ol turur*.

Once the envoy books had been compiled, the Tatar originals of the documents were not preserved any longer. The sad consequence of this habit can clearly be seen in the documents of the *RGADA*: from the first hundred years of Nogay-Russian contacts (1489-1586) only the Russian translations have come down to us, no piece of an original Nogay document was preserved. It is only among the *stolbtsy* that occasionally original Tatar documents crop up. These Nogay-Tatar documents of the 16th-17th centuries have been untackled by previous scholarship, practically none of them are published.[20] I had the opportunity to look through

16. For these terms, see Vásáry, *Az Arany Horda kancelláriája*, p. 33-36.

17. For the Russian chancellery language of the 17th century, see recently Kortava, *Moskovskii prikaznyi jazyk*.

18. For some of he Tatars calques in Russian, see Golden, "Turkic calques"; among threm he treats two terms from the Tataro-Mongol era (p. 108-111), namely *pomy numu* 'to take [*lit*. to drink] an oath' from Turkic *ant ič-* and *челом бити* 'to beat with the forehead' from Turkic *baš ur-* 'to hit the head', both meaning 'to apply, petition'.

19. *RGADA*, f. 127, op. 1, posol'skaia kniga 1489-1508, ff. 17r,v; 29r,v (Kel'dasov *et al.*, *Posol'skie knigi 1489-1549 gg*, p. 33, 34, 45, 46).

20. Only three documents were mentioned and partly published by the late Kazan Tatar scholar, Mustafa Nogman whose works remained largely

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the Nogay material of *RGADA* (*Nogaiskie dela*: fond 127, opis' 1) on several occasions and selected more than forty documents and notes for publication. Most documents are written in Turkic, but there are a few also in Persian, all of them supplied with a contemporary Russian translation. I plan the edition of this archival material which will obviously shed new light on the functioning of Nogay chancelleries.

In sum, the list of the Nogay-Russian diplomatic correspondence will consist of Tatar and Russian documents, from the time span of hundred-and-seventy years (1489-1659). In fortunate cases both the Tatar documents and their contemporary Russian translations are there, but for the most part only the Russian translations have come down to us. But even in the latter case, the sense of the original Tatar diplomas can fully be established on the basis of the bilingual documents. For the demonstration of what has been said so far let me present a hitherto unpublished short Nogay document and its contemporary Russian translation. It is a very short account of two Nogay *murza*-s, Jan-Muḥammad and Mamay sent to their fellow, Uraq *murza*, in 1626. It contains nothing else but a short report on their welfare and satisfaction with the Russian tsar's protective care. It runs as follows[21]:

1. *Yıraq yerdin yaqın könül birlä Jan-Muḥammad mırza*
2. *Mamay mırzadın köpdin köp duʿā sälām.*
3. *Uraq mırzaġa söz olkim: Ulu pādšāh*
4. *yaḫšılıġıdın, kenazlar yaḫšı-*
5. *lıġıdın ḫalqımız ilimiz, qaračılarımız*
6. *esän amanmız, böläk sälām*
7. *yebärürmiz, könlümiz ḫošdur.*

Its Russian translation is the following[22]:

Перевод з грамоты ногайского Янмаметь мурзы, пишет к брату своему к Урак мурзе.

Из дального места ближнею мыслью от Янмаметь мурзы да от Мамаи мурзы ото многа много с молитвою поклон. Урак мурзе слово то есть. По государевской милости и по княжей доброте наши люди и улусы и карачеи в добром здоровье, с челобитьем поминки к тебе пришлем.

unnoticed even in Russian scholarship. First, he published a Tatar letter of the Moscow boyars from 1613 in which they inform Ishterek bey and the Nogay *murza*-s about the election of the new Tsar Mikhail Fedorovich Romanov (Nogman,"Mäskäü boiarlary"; Nogman, *Kul"iazma süzleklär*, p. 14-15). Later, Nogmanov partly published two Nogay documents: a letter from Ali *murza*, son of Uraq from 1629 and a letter of the Nogay *murza*-s from 1632 to the voyvode and princes of Astrakhan (only the photograph and transcription in Arabic letters) (Nogman, *Iske tatar jazuy ürnäkläre*, p. 204-205, 206-207).

21. *RGADA*, f. 127, op. 1, 1626, No. 1, f. 104.

22. *RGADA*, f. 127, op. 1, 1626, No. 1, f. 105.

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The English translation of the Turkic text is as follows:

(1-2) From a remote land with a near [= warm] heart, Jan-Muhammad *murza* and Mamay *murza* send their prayers and regards. (3) To Uraq *murza* their report is as follows: (4) Because of the benevolence of the Great Sovereign and the Princes, (5) our people and our illustrious chiefs (6) are in good health and peace, [and] we are sending (7) our presents and regards [to you], with our hearts satisfied.

This short document may present the character and style of these documents. They are simple, straitforward in their wording, but full of stereotyped forms, rendered literally by the Russian translations. Let me refer to some of these phrases: *yıraq yerdin yaqın köṅül birlä* 'from a remote land with a near [= warm] heart' translated into Russian as 'из дального места ближнею мыслью', is a well-known stylistic locution in Tatar diplomas, it also occurs as 'из дальние земли ближнею мыслью'.[23] Similarly, the phrase 'тяжёлый поклон с лёгким поминком' frequently occurs in the diplomas,[24] it is the translation of Turkic *aġır sälām yiṅil böläk birlä* 'heavy greetings with light presents'. The latter Turkic phrase occurs, e.g. in Aḥmad Khan's letter sent to the Ottoman Sultan Meḥmed the Conqueror in 1477.[25] Another typical Tatar phrase, expressing a contact of inferiority-superiority, was *Pādšāhnıṅ uzun qolunıṅ üstindä bolġan idük, özimiz qul bolġan idük* 'we were under the long arms of the Sovereign [i.e. under the jurisdiction of the Tsar] and were his servants', its Russian translation was 'под государевою долгою рукою были и мы сами холопи были'.[26]

In think the publication of the above short Nogay document and the presentation of three Tatar stereotyped phrases with their contemporary Russian translations could render palpable the problems one may come accross in studying these documents. The edition of these Nogay-Tatar diplomas, together with their contemporary Russian translations, accompanied by a thorough philological and historical analysis will certainly provide basic material for a new understanding of the chancellery of the Nogay Hordes, a hitherto neglected and less-known chapter of the post-Golden Horde period in the 16th-17th centuries.

23. E.g. in *RGADA*, f. 127, op. 1, posol'skaia kniga 1533-1538, f. 182v (Kel'dasov *et al.*, *Posol'skie knigi 1489-1549 gg*, p. 205).
24. E.g. in *RGADA*, f. 127, op. 1, posol'skaia kniga 1489-1508, ff. 3rv (Kel'dasov et al., *Posol'skie knigi 1489-1549 gg*, p. 20).
25. Kurat, *Yarlık ve bitikler*, p. 49, line 15.
26. *RGADA*, f. 127, op. 1, 1629, No. 1, f. 321, lines 2-3.

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Abbreviations

d.: delo
op.: opis'
f.: fond
PDRV: *Prodolzhenie Drevnei Rossiiskoi Vivliofiki*. Spb.
RGADA: *Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv drevnikh aktov*. Moscow; prior to 1992 its name was *Tsentral'nyi Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv drevnikh aktov (TsGADA)*
SIRIO: *Sbornik Imperatorskogo Russkogo istoricheskogo obshchestva*.
TsGADA see *RGADA*

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