Shattering Empires

The break-up of the Ottoman empire and the disintegration of the Russian empire were watershed events in modern history. The unraveling of these empires was both cause and consequence of World War I and resulted in the deaths of millions. It irrevocably changed the landscape of the Middle East and Eurasia and reverberates to this day in conflicts throughout the Caucasus and Middle East. *Shattering Empires* draws on extensive research in the Ottoman and Russian archives to tell the story of the rivalry and collapse of two great empires. Overturning accounts that portray their clash as one of conflicting nationalisms, this pioneering study argues that geopolitical competition and the emergence of a new global interstate order provide the key to understanding the course of history in the Ottoman–Russian borderlands in the twentieth century. It will appeal to anyone interested in Middle Eastern, Russian, and Eurasian history, international relations, ethnic conflict, and World War I.

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Shattering Empires

The Clash and Collapse of the Ottoman and Russian Empires, 1908–1918

Michael A. Reynolds
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Note on transliteration and usage

The transliteration of names and places from multiple non-Latin alphabet sources presents numerous irresolvable difficulties. This is particularly true when one is dealing with imperial sources, wherein the language of a document is often unrelated to the native tongue of the subject mentioned therein, thereby raising the real problem of how best to render that subject’s name. Names from Ottoman documents are transliterated into their modern Turkish equivalent. English spellings have been retained for Turkish words that already enjoy standard English spellings, such as pasha. Names cited in Russian documents generally are transliterated according to a modified Library of Congress system. Exceptions include well-known figures such as Trotsky (Trotskii) and Yudenich (Iudenich) and prominent place names, such as Yerevan (Erevan). The final Russian soft sign is dropped for place names such as Sevastopol (Sevastopol’) and Aleksandropol (Aleksandropol’). Similarly, dzh is dropped for the more straightforward j in names of Arabic origin and place names: hence, Najmuddin and Ajaria, not Nadzhmuddin and Adzharia.

Because Ottoman as well as Russian sources use the term Transcaucasus (Mavera-yı Kafkasya and Zakavkaz’e), I have chosen to retain it instead of “South Caucasus,” a term that has recently come into more popular use.

As a general, but not inviolable, rule, personal names are rendered in the language of the empire with which they were more closely associated, whether by choice or circumstance. Place names are, again generally, selected according to imperial affiliation prior to 1914, and spelled accordingly: Sarikamış, Elisavetpol, and Batumi rather than Sarıkamış, Gence/Güncə, or Batum. No claims are made with regard to a subject’s ethnicity, identity, or presumed political loyalty, or to a territory’s proper affiliation. The sole intent is to make the personal and place names accessible to English-speakers.

The reader unfamiliar with Ottoman and Turkish history should be aware that family names were not adopted until 1934. When pertinent, the family name is placed in parentheses upon first mention of an
Note on transliteration and usage

individual, e.g., Halil Bey (Menteşe). The words bey, efendi, and pasha are honorific titles, not last names.

For those readers unfamiliar with Turkish spelling and pronunciation, the following simplified guide may be of use:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C, ș</td>
<td>“j” as in “jam”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ç, ç</td>
<td>“ch” as in “chest”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G, ğ</td>
<td>a soft “g” that generally elongates the preceding vowel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>İ, ĵ</td>
<td>a hard “i,” something between “i” in “will” and “u” in radium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J, ğ</td>
<td>similar to the “s” in “treasure”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ö, ö</td>
<td>same as the German “ö” or the French “eu” as in “seul”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ş, ş</td>
<td>“sh” as in “should”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ü, ü</td>
<td>same as the German “ü” or the French “u” as in “lune”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In citations of primary source documents I include two dates. The first is the date found on the document and the second, in brackets, is the conversion to the Gregorian calendar in the form of day, month, and year. The Ottoman empire used three calendars. The dates herein are from the Rumi calendar, which was used for civil matters. The Rumi calendar measured solar years beginning from the Hijra and was based on the Julian calendar, which lags thirteen days behind the Gregorian calendar. Hence the Rumi calendar was 584 years and thirteen days behind the Gregorian calendar. In March 1917 the Ottomans eliminated the thirteen-day difference between the Rumi and the Gregorian calendars. Because the Ottoman system for numbering months began not with January but with March, I have written out the names of Ottoman months. Russia used the Julian calendar until 1918 when it switched to the Gregorian. The Transcaucasus made the switch later. For the sake of consistency, I have provided a converted Gregorian date in numerical form, month.day.year, for citations from Ottoman, Russian, and Transcaucasian sources.
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The advice, assistance, and encouragement of a large number of people made it possible for me to write this book. First are my parents. My father, while he was still alive, instilled in me at a young age the importance of discipline and education. My mother encouraged my sense of adventure and love of travel. Weekend road trips with my Uncle John sparked my interest in history. Karl Crawford impressed upon me the need to study foreign cultures in general and fostered my interest in Russia in particular. My fascination with the Caucasus began in the world of sport and with the treasured friendship of Avset Asadullaevich Avsetov. He and Suren Petrosovich Bogdasarov will always exemplify the best of the Caucasus to me. Radin Fataliev befriended me when we trained together and remains a trusted confidant and master travel logistician. Şükrü Hanoğlu introduced me to Ottoman history and has been an invaluable guide, colleague, and friend ever since. Stephen Kotkin was an exemplary teacher and has been a consistent source of sound counsel.

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The pursuit of scholarship yields unique rewards and demands considerable sacrifice. Yet whereas the rewards are limited mainly to the scholar, the sacrifices are borne disproportionately by those nearby. More than anyone, my beloved wife Olga has had to bear those sacrifices. The love and mirth of my daughters Éva and Yana sustained me through the trying process of writing this book, and to them I dedicate it.
# Abbreviations

## OTTOMAN ARCHIVAL SOURCES

**ATASE**  Genelkurmay Askeri Tarih ve Stratejik Etüt Başkanlığı Arşivi

Unless otherwise noted, all citations are from the First World War Collection (Birinci Dünya Harbi Koleksiyonu).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BDH</td>
<td>Birinci Dünya Harbi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BHK</td>
<td>Balkan Harbi Koleksiyonu</td>
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**BOA**  Başkani̇lık Osmanlı Arşivi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BEO</td>
<td>Bab-ı Âli Evrak Odası</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DH.İD</td>
<td>Dahiliye Nezareti İdari Kısım</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DH.İ.UM</td>
<td>Dahiliye Nezareti İdâre-i Umumiye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DH.KMS</td>
<td>Dahiliye Nezareti Kalem-i Mahsûs Müdûriyeti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DH.MUI</td>
<td>Dahiliye Nezareti Muhaberat-ı Umumiye İdaresi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DH.ŞFR</td>
<td>Dahiliye Nezareti Şifre Kalemı</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DH.SYS</td>
<td>Dahiliye Nezareti Sıyasi Kısım</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR.HMŞ.İSO</td>
<td>Hariciye Nezareti Hükuk Müşavirliği İstişare Odası</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MV</td>
<td>Meclis-i Vükelâ Mazbataları</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

K.  Klasör
D.  Dosya
S.  Sıra
F.  Fihrist
B.  Belge

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List of abbreviations

RUSSIAN ARCHIVAL SOURCES

AVPRI  ARKHIV VNESHNEI POLITIKI ROSSIISKOI IMPERII
GARF  GOSUDARSTVENNYI ARKHIV ROSSIISKII FEDERATSIII
RGVA  ROSSIISKII GOSUDARSTVENNYI VOENNYI ARKHIV
RGVIA ROSSIISKII GOSUDARSTVENNYI VOENNO-ISTORICHESKII ARKHIV

f.  fond
o.  opis'
d.  delo
l., ll. (pl.) list', listy (pl.)

GERMAN ARCHIVAL SOURCES

PA-AA  POLITISCHES ARCHIV DES AUSWÄRTIGES AMTES
1. Dismemberment of the Ottoman empire, 1878–1913
4. Borders in the Caucasus, 1918
5. The Turkish Republic and the Soviet Union, 1923