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Tatar Diaspora in Modern Eurasia: Connection, Interaction, Transformation

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Chapter 8

Where Did Gasprinskii's Jadid Teaching Method Come from? Exchange and Competition between Bakhchesaray, Istanbul and the Caucasus

Ozan Karabulak and Michael Kemper

Introduction

In January 1884, the Crimean Tatar journalist and Muslim cultural reformer Ismail Gasprinskii published a brief report about the success of an experimental school that he had set up in his native Crimea. This report became a foundational text of *usul-i jadid* ("new method") schooling among Russia's Turkic Muslims:

> From Bakhchesaray: A year ago we opened a small school (*mekteb*) for children. In this school the activities proceeded according to a system (*nizam*): children studied four to five hours per day, and the teaching was according to the new methods (*usul-i jedid üzere*). We ourselves produced an *elifba* [i.e., a coursebook for learning the alphabet], and next to reading and writing we wanted to teach the Islamic creed (*'ilm-i hal*), mathematics, dictation (*imla*) and furthermore geography, a brief summary of history and the Russian language. With our own means and those of our friends we arranged a classroom, hired a teacher (*khoja* [T. *hoca*]) for the classroom, and arranged a salary for the teacher. . . . But we could not find any children to teach!
>
> The local people had never heard of the new methods, and had never seen how they work; accordingly, they had no respect for the school. Some ignoramuses said, "We do not need a new-method school!" "Religion is not taught in this school!" and so forth; such words made us very perplexed. Eventually we found nine children from among our friends, and we began to work. . . . After exactly six months we invited the people [of Bakhchesaray], and in their presence we organized an exam of the children. [. . .] People saw the progress the pupils had made, and became astonished and positive. The next day they gave 30 children to the new-method school, and they paid the

> teacher one ruble per child and per month. [. . .] With God's help we will bring the lesson material of that book together and publish it under the title *Khoja-i sibyan* [Gasprinskii 1884a: 6].[1]

It is the primer that Gasprinskii announced in this report, his *Khoja-i sibyan* ("The Boys' Teacher"), that we want to shed new light on in the present chapter. In the last decade of the nineteenth century, Muslim teachers in the Russian Empire began to employ this booklet to teach according to the "phonetic" method. Over two decades the primer saw at least 27 editions,[2] in addition to a series of follow-ups.[3] Together with his famous *Terjuman/Perevodchik* newspaper, *Khoja-i sibyan* made Gasprinskii the famous founding father of Jadidism. What exactly was the teaching method Gasprinskii proposed, what were his methodological innovations? How did his method of teaching relate to other primers of his time? Given that the Jadid teaching method stands at the basis of the whole phenomenon of "Jadidism" one would like to know more about its genealogy.

It is often taken for granted that Gasprinskii's teaching method has Ottoman roots. Scholars have argued that it goes back to the well-known reform pedagogue Selim Sabit (1829–1919), whose Ottoman primer of the time, *Elifba-i 'osmani* ("The Ottoman alphabet"), equally saw many editions and remakes [Temizyürek 1999: 134; cf. Ekinci 2013: 36; Akpınar 2017: 29; Alçiçek 2022: 307]. The assumption that Gasprinskii's pedagogical thought goes back to Ottoman models has however been challenged by the Ukrainian renowned specialist on Gasprinskii Viktor Yu. Gankevich (d. 2014),[4] who argued that Gasprinskii employed the method of a Russian pedagogue. This person was Aleksei O. Cherniaevskii (1840–1894), head of the Muslim (Azerbaijani) section of the Transcaucasian Teachers' Seminary in the Georgian town of Gori. Cherniaevskii produced his own primer, *Vatan dili* ("Native language"), in the Azerbaijani language; this booklet appeared in print for

[1] Gasprinskii described his first new-method teaching experience also in later publications, at some places adding that teaching had begun already in November/December 1882 [Gasprinskii 1887a: 29–30; 1907a: 1; 1908: 1; 1911: 194]. See also Bayburtlu [1909: 1–2].

[2] A second edition appeared in 1890, and a third one in 1892; a seventh edition, with changes and additions, came out in 1898, and a tenth in 1902. The twenty-seventh from 1910 is the last one we could identify [Gasprinskii 1910], although Gasprinskii announced another print of the primer in 1912 (see *'Alem-i sibyan* [1912], published as an appendix to *Terjuman* no. 20 of May 11, 1912).

[3] A direct follow-up was the textbook *Qira'at-i Türki. Khoja-i sibyandan son oqulan risaledir* (Bakhchesaray, 1894) ("Turkish reading, to be studied after *Khoja-i sibyan*"). Eventually *Khoja-i sibyan* gave rise to four parallel series on Turkish reading and useful knowledge that progressed in "parts" (*jüz'*). The original *Khoja-i sibyan* was already divided into two "parts," and a third "part" of *Khoja-i sibyan* (*üchünjü jüz'*) appeared in 1910.

[4] Of particular note is Gankevich's study of Gasprinskii's time as head of the Bakhchesaray town administration (1879–1884); see Gankevich [2011].

the first time in 1882, that is, several years before Gasprinskii's *Khoja-i sibyan* [Gankevich 2000: 25]. Yet to date no in-depth analysis has been conducted to establish how the three primers, from Bakhchesaray, Istanbul and Gori, might relate to each other, and where exactly Gasprinskii took his models from.

The present chapter wants to fill this gap by offering a comparative investigation: what are the characteristic features of Gasprinskii's *Khoja-i sibyan*, and which of its features can be found back in the Ottoman *Elifba-i 'osmani* or in Cherniaevskii's *Vatan dili*? Did Gasprinskii borrow from one of them, or from both? Does a comparison allow us to better comprehend Gasprinskii's specific contribution to the development of new method schooling among the Turkic-speaking Muslims of Russia? Our methodological analysis will be supported and contextualized by information that Gasprinskii published in his newspaper, *Terjuman*, about the implementation of the new method in Muslim schools of the Crimea and the Caucasus.

Gasprinskii's links with intellectuals in the Ottoman Empire, the Volga-Urals and Central Asia have been at the center of much scholarship; historians have studied the spread of "Jadid" thought in the Russian Empire, the responses that it provoked, and the Muslim identities it transformed, with most attention going to the turbulent years after 1905.[5] The view of Gasprinskii as a "transimperial Muslim" between the Russian and the Ottoman Empires, and as a "Pan-Turkist," makes it quite natural to assume that he adopted ideas from the Ottoman Empire, including Muslim journalism in a simplified Turkish language but also his educational projects.

By contrast, Gasprinskii's relations to the South Caucasus have not been subject to much inquiry yet; rather than asking whether the Caucasus was an inspiration for Gasprinskii, existing scholarship tends to present the Muslims of the South Caucasus above all as recipients of Gasprinskii's innovations [Özkaya 2014: 135–169; Seitmemetova 2022: 576–593].

But to search for Caucasian influences on Gasprinskii's Crimean Tatar Jadidism is not far-fetched; Gasprinskii's attention for developments in the Caucasus is

[5] James H. Meyer studied "transimperial" relations of prominent Muslim intellectuals from Russia (including Gasprinskii but also Muslims from the South Caucasus and the Volga-Urals) but did not discuss educational methods and their origins, focusing instead on expressions of identity and political and economic strategies in the early 20th century [Meyer 2014]. Mustafa Tuna, concentrating on the Volga-Urals, pays attention to the question where Gasprinskii found his methods but leaves the question open [Tuna 2015: 162–163]. Danielle Ross, in her study of educational change and social history in the Volga-Urals, analyzes Gasprinskii's impact in the Volga-Urals but not the origins of his method [Ross 2020]. Gasprinskii's impact on Muslims in Central Asia are most comprehensively studied in a series of works by Zaynabidin Abdirashidov; focusing on educational methods he does discuss the origins of Gasprinskii's method in European and Russian pedagogical thought broadly [Abdirashidov 2011: 174–184].

reflected in many of his early *Terjuman* articles. Already in the very first *Terjuman* issue of April 10 1883 Gasprinskii explained that the emergence of Muslim journalism in Russia—and thus of *Terjuman*—goes back to two Azerbaijani-Turkish newspapers, namely Hasan Zardabi's *Ekinji* ("The Ploughman," published in Baku in 1875–1877) and *Ziya'* (or *Ziya'-i qafqaziyye*, "Light of the Caucasus," 1879–1884) produced by Sa'id Unsizade (1845–1905) first in Tbilisi and then in Shemakhi [Gasprinskii 1883a].[6] It was in *Ziya'* that Gasprinskii, in 1879, published his very first Turkish-language newspaper contribution;[7] and Gasprinskii used the Unsizade's publishing house for printing some of his own first newspaper attempts that preceded the emergence of *Terjuman*, in particular *Tonguch* (published on May 8, 1881) and *Shafaq* (of August 9, 1881).[8] And when he eventually established *Terjuman* as a full-blown newspaper in April 1883, Gasprinskii regularly used *Ziya'*, as well as Russian newspapers from the Caucasus, as a major source of information for his own articles, engaging with their contributors in an attempt to stimulate public debate.[9] It would therefore not be off the mark to claim that Muslims from the South Caucasus greatly facilitated Gasprinskii's ambitions, demonstrating the avenues available to Muslim journalism within the framework of the Russian Empire.

How interested Gasprinskii was in the Caucasus can also be gleaned from his detailed coverage of a monthlong trip that brought him in 1886 to Batumi, Tbilisi, Ganja, Shemakhi and Baku, and that had the goal of promoting his newspaper among the regional elites. In Tbilisi he attended a literary meeting that was frequented by Russian and Muslim notables and also some Muslim women [Gasprinskii 1886a].[10] In Baku Gasprinskii met with the Shi'i Shaykh al-Islam and the Sunni Mufti of the South Caucasus [Gasprinskii 1886b, 1886c, 1886d; Akhund Mirza Hasan Tahirov 1886].

The person who accompanied Gasprinskii on this trip of 1886 was Sefer-'Ali Bek Velibekov (Velibeyov, 1856–1902), an Azerbaijani intellectual of petty noble background. The two knew each other at least since 1884, when Velibekov started publishing in *Terjuman* as the newspaper's "correspondent from Shusha."[11] For Gasprinskii, this young man was not only an important door opener but also a direct

[6] Gasprinskii's special respect for Zardabi is reflected in his obituaries [Gasprinskii 1907b; 1907c].

[7] In November 1879 Gasprinskii ("Ismail Mirza from the city Duma of Bakhchesaray") published a letter of support for Unsizade's *Ziya'* (Tbilisi); see Gasprinskii [2017: 30].

[8] On these precursors to *Terjuman* see Gankevich and Akpınar [2008: 8–46]; Gasprinskii [2017: 50–64].

[9] E.g. Gasprinskii [1883d, 1884b]; *Perevodchik-Terjuman* [1883a, 1883b].

[10] See also the longer version of this story in Kavkaz [1886] and *Perevodchik-Terjuman* [1886].

[11] See Gasprinskii's later reflections on their trip in Gasprinskii [1893b]. For Velibekov's contributions to the newspaper see Velibekov [1884]; cf. Velibekov [1896].

link to new method schooling in the region. Velibekov had been one of the first Muslim graduates of the Transcaucasian Teachers' Seminary in Gori,[12] where the above-mentioned Russian pedagogue Cherniaevskii employed his Azerbaijani-language new method primer *Vatan dili* (1882) to educate schoolteachers; after graduation Velibekov was employed at the same seminary as a teacher. As we will see below, Gasprinskii repeatedly reported about Cherniaevskii and his primer but also about Velibekov's own efforts at setting up new method teaching at Muslim schools, including in his native Shusha. In 1890 Velibekov visited Gasprinskii in Bakhchesaray,[13] and three years later Gasprinskii made a second trip to the South Caucasus.[14] It is from this perspective of exchange with the Caucasus that we propose a new look at Gasprinskii's *Khoja-i sibyan*.

Our analysis proceeds as follows. In the first section we discuss the complicated emergence of Gasprinskii's *Khoja-i sibyan*, and we trace Gasprinskii's own references to Cherniaevskii's 1882 *Vatan dili* over the course of the 1880s. We argue that Gasprinkii's primer did not appear in print in 1884, as most scholars have assumed, but five years later. We then turn to the major linguistic and didactic problems that an author faced when designing a textbook that was meant to simplify the teaching of reading and writing in Turkish while using the Arabic alphabet. This methodological section identifies the major features that we compare in the subsequent sections.

The comparative part of this chapter starts with the analysis of the method employed in Selim Sabit's *Elifba-i 'osmani*, the most popular Ottoman primer of the time. This Ottoman primer was printed in various forms since the 1870s; we focus on the version of the mid-1880s that Gasprinskii might have used when writing his *Khoja-i sibyan*. We then offer a similar methodological analysis of *Vatan dili*, the 1882 primer produced by Cherniaevskii from the Teachers' Seminary in Gori where also Velibekov was employed. Next to their primers both Selim Sabit and Cherniaevskii also produced separate pedagogical manuals that instructed educators about how they should implement the new-method teaching; we also look at these works to establish whether they might have served as models for Gasprinskii.

In the light of our analysis of the Ottoman and the Caucasus primers and their manuals we then return to Gasprinskii's *Khoja-i sibyan* to identify Gasprinskii's choices and approaches, and to compare them systematically to the methods em-

[12] The *Zakavkazskaia uchitel'skaia seminariia* existed from 1876 to 1917. Next to its Armenian, Georgian and Russian branches it also had a "Tatar" (Azerbaijani) section; many of its Muslim graduates would later become prominent writers and politicians.

[13] On this visit Velibekov was accompanied by Firidun Bey Köcherli (1863–1920), equally a graduate of the Teachers' Seminary in Gori (and later Velibekov's colleague as a teacher at that school); see Köcherli [1914]. Köcherli later gained prominence as a writer and literary critic.

[14] From Baku Gasprinskii traveled on to Central Asia; see Lazzerini [1984].

ployed in the primers from Istanbul and Gori. This juxtaposition allows us to conclude that the method employed in Gasprinskii's textbook reveals more similarities with Cherniaevskii's *Vatan dili* than with the Ottoman *Elifba*, especially when it comes to the crucial question of how to familiarize children quickly and easily with the alphabet. Our comparison also allows us to identify where Gasprinskii introduced innovations, and to link the specifics of his approach to the particular audiences he addressed.

1. Competition: Gasprinskii's *Khoja-i sibyan* and Cherniaevskii's *Vatan dili*

For identifying possible influences, it is important to establish a chronology. However, there is some confusion in the research literature as to when exactly *Khoja-i sibyan* appeared as a printed book. Historians often took Gasprinskii's "success report" of 1884 (as translated at the start of this chapter) as evidence that *Khoja-i sibyan* was first published in 1884 [Lazzerini 1973: 296; Kırımlı 2001: 16; Özkaya 2007: 2; Abdirashidov 2011: 92; Türkyılmaz 2013: 86; Gankevich 2000: 26; Tuna 2015: 163]. However, none of these scholars seems to have actually inspected a copy from 1884. In fact, Gasprinskii's formulations from 1884 indicate that at that point in time his "Elifba" was still a loose collection of handwritten teaching materials that would still have to be "brought together" and published under the title of *Khoja-i sibyan*.

The actual production of the print version seems to have taken several more years. In his *Terjuman/Perevodchik* of May 30, 1887 Gasprinskii announced once more that he planned to publish his *Khoja-i sibyan*. As this should be a booklet for all Muslims of Russia he asked his readers for financial contributions [Gasprinskii 1887a: 29–30]. The printing saw further delays because, as he wrote, the letter sets that he ordered from a company in Kazan did not arrive in time [Gasprinskii 1887b, 1888a, 1888b, 1889b].

The earliest printed copy of *Khoja-i sibyan* that we could identify in electronic libraries indicates that imperial censorship gave permission for its publication on November 8, 1888 (Figure 1). A news article in *Terjuman/Perevodchik* 10 days later reports that the primer was in the process of being printed [Gasprinskii 1888e: 75], and from two later announcements we learn that the booklet eventually appeared in February/March 1889 [Gasprinskii 1889a, 1889b].[15] This first print of *Khoja-i sibyan* is already more than a booklet for just learning the alphabet: it also contains alternating sections with basic knowledge of geography, counting, history, and Islamic creed, in addition to Turkish texts for reading as well as sections about

[15] Sal'yankova and Galiullina [2014: 49] even indicate the year 1890, however without discussing the chronology problem.

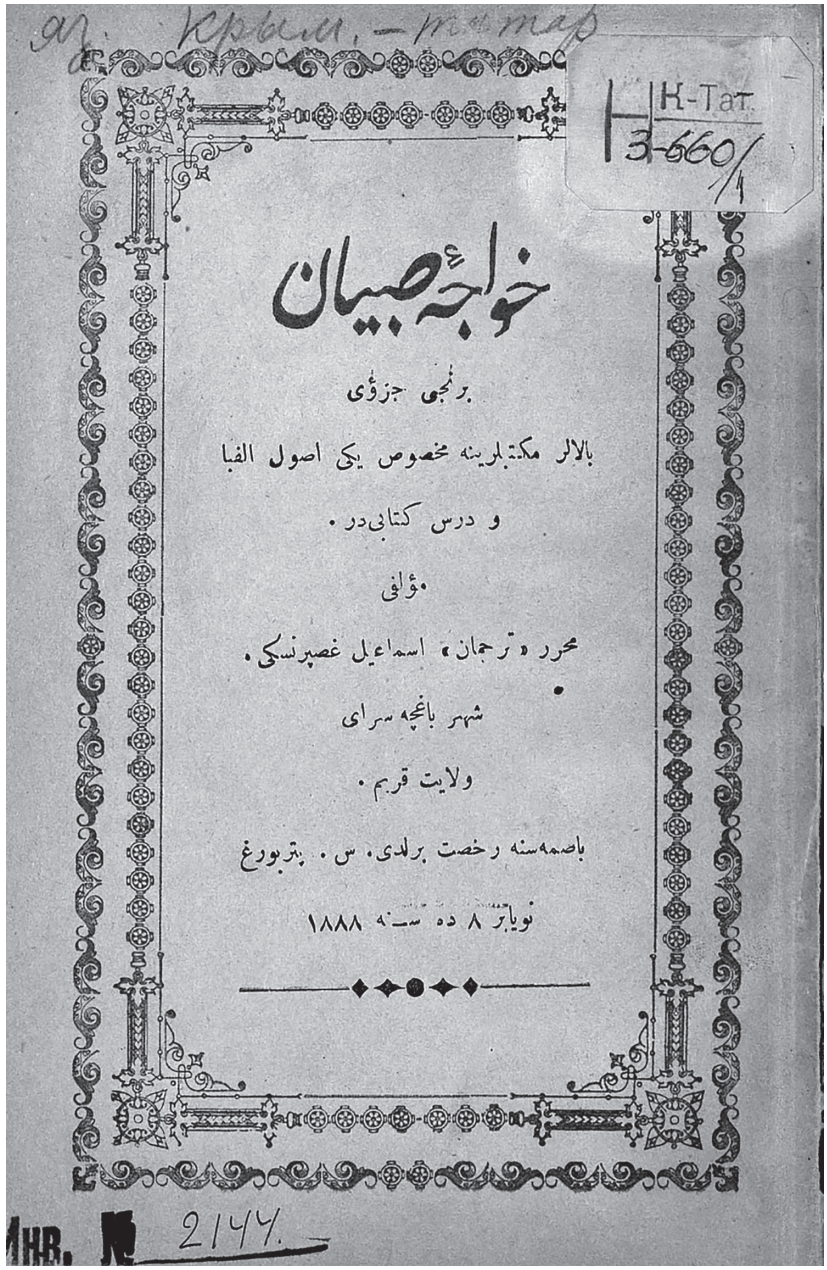


Figure 1. Ismail Gasprinskii, *Khoja-i sibyan. Birinji jüz'. Balalar mekteblerine makhsus yeni usul-i elifba ve ders kitabïdïr*, first edition (Bakhchesaray: "Terjuman," 1889 [with censorship permission dated November 1888]).

Turkish/Tatar grammar and some Arabic Suras from the Qur'an. While it does not contain the Russian lessons that Gasprinskii might have envisaged initially, this first *Khoja-i sibyan* of 1889 recommends itself as an encompassing tool for teaching not one but various subjects at first-grade level, in line with Gasprinskii's newspaper report of January 1884 that we reproduced at the start of this chapter.

Gasprinskii reflected on the need to produce a primer long before he started his teaching experiment. Already in a contribution to the Russian newspaper *Tavrida*, in 1880, he emphasized the need for a good primer in the Crimean Tatar language [Tatarin 1880].[16] The first time Gasprinskii mentioned the above-mentioned Cherniaevskii from the Teachers' Seminary in Gori was on April 10, 1883: on the front page of the very first issue of *Terjuman* Gasprinskii thanked Cherniaevskii for his support of *Terjuman* [Gasprinskii 1883b: 1].[17] We do not know how exactly Cherniaevskii facilitated the emergence of *Terjuman*, but the placing on the front page of *Terjuman*'s inaugural issue suggests Gasprinskii already had a strong interest in Cherniaevskii's teaching methods, and wanted to establish relations with him.

Cherniaevskii's primer was called *Vatan dili* ("Native language"), and came out in Tbilisi in 1882.[18] Gasprinskii briefly reviewed *Vatan dili* in *Terjuman* in 1883, acknowledging its pioneer character and pedagogical value, and praising the author [Gasprinskii 1883c: 1]. Gasprinskii lauded *Vatan dili*'s gradual approach, noting that *Vatan dili* was designed to transmit reading and writing skills in the native (Azeri/Turkish) language within six months; on top of that pupils would also learn to read some Arabic texts. Importantly, Gasprinskii characterized Cherniaevskii's method in *Vatan dili* as "the phonetic method" (*usul-i savti*), and as "the new method" (*usul-i jedid*)—the same vocabulary that he came to use for his own project.[19] Gasprinskii mentioned that Cherniaevskii also produced a separate book of instruc-

[16] In this article, the author "Tatarin" (by all probability: Ismail Gasprinskii) praised a book called "Children's Friend" ([R.] *Drug detei*) by the Crimean Tatar Abdurakhman Chelebi Krym-Khovadzhi; apparently published in 1870, this book contained 60 fables, proverbs and poems translated from the Russian, in addition to a compilation of Crimean Tatar folk songs, proverbs and fairy tales.

[17] In the same context Gasprinskii also extended his thanks to Ilia Il'ich Kazas (1832–1912), inspector of the Tatar Teacher School in Simferopol, and at that time still chief editor of the *Tavrida* newspaper in which Gasprinskii used to publish. A Jewish Karaim from the Crimea, Kazas later served as *Terjuman*'s official censor. Reportedly, he was also engaged in educational reform, and produced one or two Russian language primers for Tatar children; see Kazas [1874]. On Kazas' support for Gasprinskii see Gankevich [1999b] (the downloadable version of this article is Gankevich's Russian text, entitled "Il'ia Kazas i voprosy prosveshcheniia tiurkskikh narodov Kryma na rubezhe XIX–XX vekov," with a different pagination: 83–97).

[18] A second volume for advanced pupils appeared six years later, co-authored by Cherniaevskii and Velibekov [Cherniaevskii and Velibekov 1315/1897–1898].

[19] Cherniaevskii himself used the terms "new basis" (*taze qa'ide*) and "phonetic method" (*usul-i savti*) for his method [Cherniaevskii 1882: 4, 26].

tions for "fathers and teachers" that could be purchased together with the *Vatan dili* primer from the same Kashkül printing house in Tbilisi.

In subsequent years Gasprinskii regularly commented very positively upon the publication of new editions or extensions of *Vatan dili*, again acknowledging that this primer was "the first" of its kind [*Perevodchik-Terjuman* 1884; Gasprinskii 1888c, 1888d, 1894b; Tiflisli 1888].[20] Cherniaevskii read these reviews, and in March 1891 he sent a letter to *Terjuman* [Cherniaevskii 1891: 1]. In that letter Cherniaevskii objected to one *Terjuman* announcement [Gasprinskii 1891: 1] in which Gasprinskii had implied that *Vatan dili* had two authors, namely Cherniaevskii as well as the latter's disciple, Sefer-'Ali Velibekov. Velibekov was, as we remember, Gasprinskii's correspondent in the South Caucasus and his guide on his first Caucasus trip in 1886. Cherniaevskii insisted that *Vatan dili*'s first edition of 1882 was completely his own work, and only for the second part, published in 1888, he did invite his disciple Velibekov to help him out during sickness. Equally wrong, so Cherniaevskii, was Gasprinskii's claim and that Velibekov had been the first to actually *apply* the new method, in a school in Shusha hosted at the palace of a local Muslim princess (reportedly, in 1883);[21] in reality, the first to apply the phonetic method was Cherniaevskii himself, in 1880 in a model class of his Teachers' Seminary. While the tone of this letter was rather impolite, Gasprinskii duly published it in *Terjuman*, and humbly apologized for formulations that could have been misread.[22] What this exchange seems to reveal is a growing competition between Cherniaevskii, on the one hand, and Velibekov and Gasprinskii, on the other, over "who came first" and "who copied from whom."

Meanwhile Gasprinskii used *Terjuman* to promote his own primer, in particular by reporting about requests for copies of his *Khoja-i sibyan* that came from various parts of the Russian Empire [*Perevodchik-Terjuman* 1891, 1892a, 1892b (Turkish part), 1893a, 1893b; Gasprinskii 1893a]. Cherniaevskii's *Vatan dili*, in contrast, was mentioned by Gasprinskii only one more time, and only in the context of the South Caucasus [Gasprinskii 1895a: 28]. *Terjuman* readers, we must assume, identified the new method as Gasprinskii's initiative [*Perevodchik-Terjuman* 1897: 118–119], and as originating from Bakhchesaray [*Perevodchik-Terjuman* 1903: 27]. Even from the South Caucasus came reports about the successful implementa-

[20] Gasprinskii also reproduced parts of a letter from Muslim students of the Gori Teachers' Seminary—perhaps including Velibekov?—that praised *Terjuman*; see Gasprinskii [1883e].

[21] Gasprinskii's claim that Velibekov had been the first to apply the new method (and to use Cherniaevskii's primer) in Shusha seems to go back to a report by Velibekov himself, published in *Terjuman* a few years earlier [*Perevodchik-Terjuman* 1887].

[22] In his letter to *Terjuman* Cherniaevskii also asserted that Velibekov was not the only student of his Teacher's Seminary who participated in setting up of the model class in the palace of Shusha, adding that his *Vatan dili* was in use at many schools in the South Caucasus.

tion of Gasprinskii's *Khoja-i sibyan* [Gasprinskii 1895b: 39; 'Umar Nu'man 1895: 78–79].

This promotion strategy is also visible in *Khoja-i sibyan* itself, where Gasprinskii was silent about *Vatan dili*. Instead of mentioning Cherniaevskii, Gasprinskii pointed to Ottoman models as his source of inspiration. As he wrote in the preface to his primer, in Istanbul there were already schools operating along the "new methods" that yielded quick successes: children at the age of six or seven need just five months to attain reading and writing skills, in addition to basic knowledge of mathematics and even some Arabic reading competence. Gasprinskii did not say which course materials he saw in use in Istanbul schools, but he emphasized that the schools in question were run under the auspices of the Ottoman ministry of education [Gasprinskii 1889c: 1].[23] We may therefore assume he thought of schools using the *Elifba* first published by Selim Sabit (1829–1919), the reform pedagogue who held various positions in the Istanbul city administration and Ottoman ministries. Selim Sabit's primer, *Risale-yi elifba'iyye*, was first published in 1863 and saw many reprints; it was later produced under the title of *Elifba-i 'osmani* [Temizyürek 1999; Öztürk 2009: 429–430].

In the Ottoman Empire, school reform thus came from above [Fortna 2002]. In this context it is important to note that in the early 1880s, Gasprinskii clearly hoped to obtain financial support for his school projects from the Russian central and regional governments: in his contributions to the Russian newspaper *Tavrida*, but also in his Russian-language essay *Russkoe musul'manstvo* of 1881 he made proposals for Muslim school projects and suggested that public funds be used to finance the new method education.[24] It was only when state money was not forthcoming that Gasprinskii was forced to set up his educational reform project by private means, as indicated in the quote at the start of this chapter. Still, also in later years when many *mekteb*s had already embraced the new method teaching he continued to hope that the state would eventually support these schools [Gasprinskii 1899: 137].

2. Methodologies: Teaching Turkish in the Arabic Alphabet

For identifying the methodologies that Gasprinskii, Cherniaevskii and Selim Sabit

[23] Also in *Terjuman* Gasprinskii emphasized that the "under the Sultan, a friend of education" (i.e. 'Abdülhamid II), many schools for boys and girls were opened, and that they made huge progress; see Gasprinskii [1884c].

[24] See Tatarin (probably Ismail Gasprinskii) [1880], proposing that a certain military tax be used for school reform, and that the *zemstvo*s be motivated to contribute as well. In *Russkoe musul'manstvo* Gasprinskii asked the central government for financial support for a system that would be established in various parts of the Russian Empire. See Kemper [2019].

developed in their primers we first have to put ourselves into the shoes of a pedagogue who wants to teach a Turkic language with the help of an alphabet that was made for a Semitic language, namely Arabic. One major problem is that Arabic letters appear in up to four different graphic forms, depending on whether a given letter stands at the beginning of the word (thus unconnected to a preceding letter but possibly to one that follows), between letters (and thus linked to both, or to one of them), at its end (possibly linked to a preceding letter but ending without a link), or in isolation. Pupils thus have to recognize that three or four different graphemes belong to the same letter, and they have to memorize which letters have connections and to which sides, and how the letters then change. In practice this learning process is facilitated by certain features that reappear in all three or four letter variations (such as the number of dots, and whether these are above or below the line; or characteristic shapes of the letters); but for a beginner this is still quite a challenge.

Another issue for learners is linked to the circumstance that the classical Arabic has only three vowels ([a]/[i]/[u]). These could be expressed either in the form of "full" letters (*alif* [ā]; *ya'* [ī/y]; *waw* [ū/w]) that in Arabic function as radicals (like consonants), and that are always written. A second way to represent vocalization was with the help of "extra" diacritic signs, in the form of simple vocal markers in a characteristic position either above or below the consonant that would obtain the vocalization. In Arabic but also in Turkish/Tatar literary texts, these diacritics were usually not written; their most characteristic application was in writing the Qur'an, where they helped maintain a consensus about the correct pronunciation (and thus the meaning) of the sacred text. The "Arabic" logic of vowels means that Turkish/Tatar texts written in the Arabic alphabet lacked an instrument for expressing several Turkish/Tatar vowels, in particular [e] (in Tatar: [ä]), [ı] ([ï]), [ü], and [ö]. While in Arabic texts the educated reader can grasp the intended vocalization on the basis of the particular structure of a given word, the reader of a Turkish/Tatar text in Arabic script would sometimes have to guess exactly which vocalization was intended; the Arabic letter *waw* could in Turkic texts express [v], [u], [ü], [o], or [ö], for example.

These considerations are significant for the design of a primer to teach basic reading and writing skills to children. Does a textbook author first want to introduce the whole Arabic alphabet systematically, that is, with three or four variants per letter, each in isolation from other letters? This would put the emphasis on the blind stamping of abstract forms without practicing the actual writing of letters in conjunction. Or does an author first want to introduce only a few letters, and these already in conjunction, allowing the student to see how they are linked (and not just teaching that a certain letter has linking options)? This might improve understanding but delays the acquisition of an overview of all letters, and the capacity to read Arabic words. In that context, could the teacher perhaps first focus on letters that

are frequently used in Turkic words, and postpone the acquisition of those letters that appear primarily in Arabic/Persian loanwords? This would reduce the number of letters that the pupil has to learn at the start of the school career but it would impede the ability to read the Qur'an and Arabic prayers, and could be framed as a denigration of Islam. Finally, how to deal with the lack of vowels—should the beginners be left to their imagination when confronted with a consonantal skeleton, or should the author of the course book introduce additional devices to mark the specific Turkic vowels? Such additions would bring clarity but make the graphic forms much more complicated.

The solutions that our authors chose to tackle these and a few other practical problems can guide our comparison of the three primers.

3. Selim Sabit's *Elifba-i 'osmani*

Selim Sabit's *Risale-i elifba'iyye* first appeared in 1870, and then saw various editions under the title of *Elifba-i 'osmani*. The earliest version at our disposal is from the year 1303/ *hijri* 1885–1886, and is marked as the "fifth edition."[25] Gasprinskii might have been familiar with this particular edition when writing his *Khoja-i sibyan* in the 1880s.

The guiding principle of *Elifba-i 'osmani* is that reading should be taught not by stamping isolated letters but by training them in syllables, which would be the basis for full words and sentences. Selim Sabit decided to start with the shortest possible syllables—which is one vocalized consonant. Accordingly, his teaching method begins with the vocalization of all letters of the alphabet (Figure 2).

In order to eliminate the deficiencies of the Arabic alphabet for expressing Turkish vowels the author suggests an innovation: he introduces additional signs. In the introduction to his primer Selim Sabit introduced additional graphemes that would modify the Arabic [*waw*/ū] so that its differing values, [o], [ö], and [ü], can already be seen in the script and must no longer be gathered from the context: a *waw* with a slight upwards comma on its tail [ۄ] stands for [o] (like in *top*, "ball"), a *waw* with a comma under its tail means [ö] (like in *chörchöp*, "sticks and straws"), and a *waw* with a circumflex above [ۆ] is to be pronounced as [ü] [Selim Sabit 1303/1885–1886: 2–5].[26] Curiously, however, these "extra" vocals are not applied

[25] *Elifba-i 'osmani. Sibyan mekteblerine makhsusdur. Beshinji tab'* (Istanbul 1303/1885–1886), 66 pages. The year 1303 is given on the inner cover. The front cover of our copy bears the year 1301, which must be according to the Ottoman Rumi calendar that was used for official publications. For the sake of simplicity we use the *hijri* dating (1303, used on the inner cover) in our referencing.

[26] Compare the reformed Arabic alphabet of Modern Uyghur, which contains similar extra signs to mark whether a *waw* is to be pronounced as [u], [o], [ü], [ö], or [v].

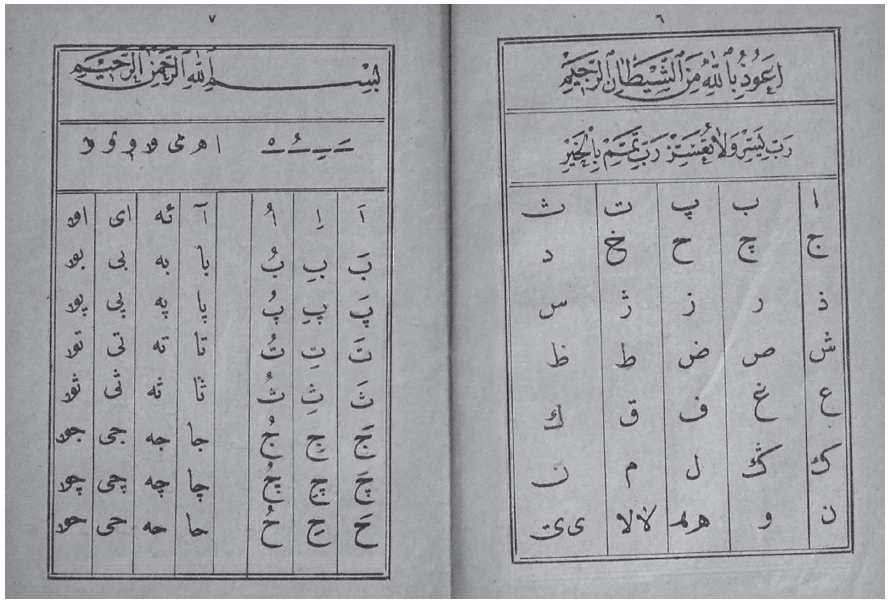


Figure 2. *Elifba-i 'osmani* of 1303/1885–1886, first lesson: systematic vocalization presented in all-encompassing charts. Note the special diacritics above the [*waw*] in the column to the left.

in the practical exercises that follow upon Selim Sabit's introduction; they remain a suggestion, or an option that the teacher might employ or not. Introducing full vocalization would do more harm than good.[27]

The actual exercises of the 1885–1886 *Elifba-i 'osmani* are not arranged into individual lessons; rather, we find thematic sections of various lengths. As the exercises are not accompanied by pedagogical instructions, teachers are not told how to organize the study material in the form of school hours.

In *Elifba-i 'osmani*, the teaching of the alphabet begins with charts that display the whole Arabic alphabet at once, plus the originally Persian letters [p], [ch], [zh]. Instead of starting with a few letters, the beginners are immediately confronted with all letters, including those that are less frequent in Turkish texts. The dominant manner of presentation is paradigmatic charts. Each letter comes with four vocalization options. This vocalization is presented in both of the two "Arabic" vocalization methods, first with the help of the Arabic diacritics (the *harakat*, expressing [a], [i], or [u] plus *sukun*, "silence") and then with the three Arabic long

[27] A Kazan-Tatar version of the *Elifba-i 'osmani*, published by a certain Shihabaddin b. 'Abdal'aziz in 1894, reproduces Selim Sabit's discussion of the importance of vocalization but already drops his presentation of "new" graphemes; see Selim Sabit Efendi [1894: 2–4].

vowels (*alif* [ā], *ya'* [ī/y] and *waw* [ū/w]); added is the final *ha'* [h] for marking a Turkish [-e] ending. By introducing letters in their vocalized forms the primer follows the "syllable method," that is, the strategy of teaching letters not in their isolation, or with their misleading Arabic names (*alif* for [a], *jim* for [j] etc.), but through their actual phonetic values with the help of a vocal attached, and not only in the isolated visual form but already connected to a following long vowel. Still, the material is presented in a mechanical sequence of isolated syllables, of the type "ta—ti—tu," without considering the eventual meanings of these syllables. Syllables producing intelligible words do appear only randomly in the 14 introductory charts [Selim Sabit 1303/1885–1886: 6–19]. This is quite a dry and difficult program for a beginning learner.

After these charts comes a very swift transition from syllables to words, presented in the form of thematic word clusters ("body parts," "place," "sky," "time," "belief") [Selim Sabit 1303/1885–1886: 20–24]. Here we also find first sentences (such as "the tide goes and the sand remains," p. 21). This is followed by a section with moral norms, in the form of five "duties" (the duty to belief in the Creator, to honor the parents, to respect the teacher, to serve the homeland, and to be upright towards other members of society) [Selim Sabit 1303/1885–1886: 24–27]. These sections already contain complex syntactical constructions.

From page 28 onwards the primer is organized in the format of questions and answers, combining the practice of reading with the acquisition of some factual knowledge. After a section on the measuring of time (e.g. "How many months make a year?") and the days and months comes a cluster of geographical information, for example characterizing the inhabitants of Europe as gifted in artisanship and white in color, the Asians as intelligent and white, and the Africans as black and savage, plus other cultural and racial stereotypes. There is some connection to Ottoman realities: we learn that Istanbul is in Europe while Üsküdar is in Asia. Also given is how many million inhabitants of the Earth are Muslim, Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, or Zoroastrian [Selim Sabit 1303/1885–1886: 31–32]. This "text part" ends with a section on necessities of life, like eating and clothing [Selim Sabit 1303/1885–1886: 29–30]. There is no section on numbers/counting/mathematics.

The last sections of the book [Selim Sabit 1303/1885–1886: 36–46] are devoted to more phenomena that appear only in the Arabic language (nunation and agglutination, again with the help of charts), geared towards the correct pronunciation of a few Arabic prayers that appear at the close of the book.

To sum up, this Ottoman primer of the mid-1880s works in the first place with charts of vocalized letter combinations; they comprise more than half of the exercise volume (22 out of 41 pages). The principle of learning by syllables is clear, but how the teacher should translate the material into lively exercises is not explained; and new graphemes for Turkish vowels are announced but not implemented and practiced. Furthermore, there is no systematical presentation of how a given

letter changes its forms when it is linked to the preceding or following letter; the various "linking changes" of individual letters must be grasped from syllables appearing in different charts. The alphabet is explained without employing intelligible words that could support the memory and recognition process. This makes the transition to the actual reading sections very sharp. Characteristic is here the Q&A format, which mentions elements of real life but also basic knowledge about the world at large. Interestingly, there is a significant Arabic/Islamic part in the end of the book but no catechism that would summarize the basic dogmas of Islam.

Selim Sabit also accompanied his *Elifba-i 'osmani* with a guide for teachers, entitled *Rehnuma-i mu'allimin* [Selim Sabit undated (1883–1884)].[28] Concentrating on the technical aspects of how a modern school should look like,[29] this work might have influenced Gasprinskii's ideas about setting up a school. Still, the *Rehnuma-i mu'allimin* gives only limited advice as to how the teacher should implement the practical exercises of *Elifba-i 'osmani* in the classroom, and some of its recommendations contradict the logics of the primer. In particular, the *Rehnuma* advises that teachers should first introduce and train only three to five letters before moving on to the next five [Selim Sabit 1303/1885–1886: 10]; and it also suggests there should be exercises training the meaning of the particular dots [Selim Sabit undated (1883–1884): 11]. As seen above, these recommendations are not implemented in the teaching material offered by the same author's *Elifba-i 'osmani*; we must therefore assume that teachers were expected to create additional exercises for beginners in parallel to what is offered in the *Elifba-i 'osmani*. Similarly, Selim Sabit's *Rehnuma* does recommend that teachers employ syllables that already convey a recognizable meaning [Selim Sabit undated (1883–1884): 26]—which is however not followed up upon in the same author's *Elifba-i 'osmani*.[30]

[28] The version of Sabit's *Rehnuma* that we have is undated. Some authors refer its publication to the year 1299, which must then be according to the Ottoman Rumi calendar; if this is accurate then this corresponds to the year 1883/1884.

[29] For instance, the *Rehnuma* [Selim Sabit undated (1883–1884): 7–11] explains the optimal division of pupil generations over four classes, and the amount and duration of classes; the first class should have a maximum of two hours teaching per day, with each school hour comprising 30–45 minutes. It also gives a list of course subjects: the first year should offer *elifba*, Qur'an, morality, mathematics, and writing; later classes would add catechism, calligraphy, Qur'an recitation, history of the prophets, and in the fourth grade also geography, Ottoman history, and Turkish grammar.

[30] Later versions of *Elifba-i 'osmani* would partially make up for these deficits: a version from 1900/1901, for instance, offers exercises for training the graphic differences of letters in smaller letter groups, gives systematic overviews of how individual letters are connected, and displays more syllables that already convey meaning. Still, also the 1901 edition struggles with the transition from mechanical overviews (in charts) to actual words. See Selim Sabit Efendi [1900 (31 pages)]. Note that this is already a fifth edition, meaning we have a parallel history of at least two different *Elifba-i 'osmani*s over several editions.

4. Cherniaevskii's *Vatan dili*

Reportedly, Cherniaevskii's *Vatan dili* saw seven editions; the oldest edition available to us is the fourth edition of 1315/1897–1898, which says it is a reprint of the previous one without changes (Figure 3) [Cherniaevskii 1315/1897–1898].[31] A 2018 study by the Azerbaijani Oriental philologist Vüqar Qaradağlı shows that the various editions of *Vatan dili* all adhere to the same design and largely offer the same exercise material [Cherniaevskii 2018].[32]

The first part of *Vatan dili* centers on training basic reading and writing skills; this is the part that helps us most for comparing Cherniaevskii's teaching method with that of the Ottoman *Elifba* and Gasprinskii's *Khoja-i sibyan*. The second part of *Vatan dili* then trains the acquired reading skills with the help of 35 witty narratives based on well-known fables;[33] in fact, characteristic for *Vatan dili* is that it combines reformist *elifba* instruction with the entertaining genre of animal conversations that ultimately go back to Aesopian and Oriental sources. As Vüqar Qaradağlı has shown, Cherniaevskii took these fables from Russian literature, in particular from Konstantin Ushinskii's (d. January 1871) schoolbooks but also from collections by Ivan Krylov and Lev Tolstoi; other elements that Cherniaevskii included go back to Muslim literature, including the famous Sa'di but also Azerbaijani poets and translators of his time, in particular Hasan-'Aliaghakhan Qaradaghi (Karadagskii, 1848–1929).[34] Further pedagogical elements used throughout *Vatan dili* are proverbs (*atalar sözleri*) and funny riddles (sg. *tapmacha*). This all stands in marked opposition to the Ottoman primer discussed above.

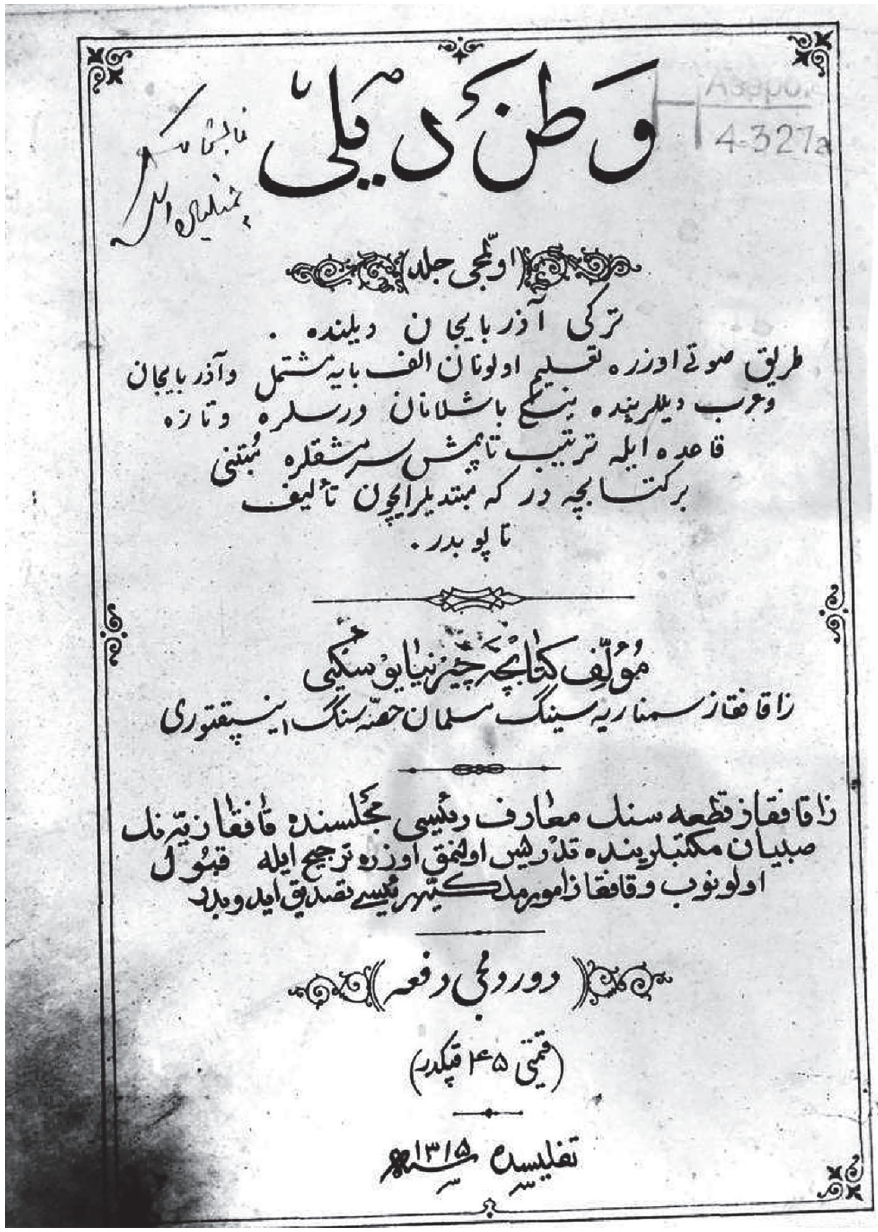
In the two first parts of the book Cherniaevskii uses a moderate *nasta'liq* writing style, that is, the script commonly used in Iran and the South Caucasus. The third (and last) part of the book (pp. 54–67) introduces the *naskh* style which was typically applied for Arabic and Qur'an printing; next to three more fables this part also offers Qur'anic texts (the *Fatiha* as well as parts of *al-Ikhlas* and six other Suras, plus the Thrown Verse, *Ayat al-Kursi*). The book closes with three prayers, including one that school beginners could use to ask God for success, plus one for graduates. Astoundingly, these Arabic prayers are accompanied by Azerbaijani translations, implying that also when murmuring prayers, children should under-

[31] This "fourth edition" is also identical to the "fifth edition" printed in 1319/1901–1902.

[32] Qaradağlı's publication contains a *Vatan dili* reprint of 1328/1910, as well as a reprint of the second volume of *Vatan dili* that Cherniaevskii co-authored with Sefer-'Ali Velibekov. This second book should not concern us here as it was meant for the second-year class.

[33] A first small narration ("The Lame and the Blind," obviously borrowed from a Russian school book by Ushinskii) appears already on page 22.

[34] Later editions of *Vatan dili* offered more texts by Azerbaijani poets and writers, which would replace some of the fables.



وطن دیلی

(اولمجی جلد)

ترکی آذربایجان دیلنده .
طریق صوتی اوزره تعلیم اولونان الف بایه مشتمل وآذربایجان
وعرب دیللرینده بنگ باشلانان ورسلره وتازه
قاعده ایله ترتیب تاپمش سرمشقلره مبتنی
برکتابچه در که مبتدیلر ایچون تألیف
تاپوبدر .

مؤلف کتابچه چیرنیایوسکی
زاقافقاز سمناریه سینگ مسلمان حصه سنگ اینسپقتوری

زاقافقاز قطعه سنک معارف رئیسی مجلسنده قافقازیه نک
صبیان مکتبلرینده تدریس اولنمق اوزره ترجیح ایله قبول
اولونوب وقافقاز امور ملکیه رئیسی تصدیق ایدوبدر

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Figure 3. Cherniaevskii, *Vatan dili. Evellimji jild*, fourth edition (Tiflis, 1315/1897–1898).

stand what they say.

In terms of how to introduce children to the Arabic alphabet Cherniaevskii's method differs strongly from the Ottoman *Elifba*: instead of first offering paradigmatic charts and systematic overviews of letters with all Arabic vocalizations, Cherniaevskii starts directly with a few easy letter combinations that form recognizable words in Turkic (Figure 4). In fact, he starts with only two letters, [a] and [l], and immediately links them to form the Turkish/Azeri word *el* ("hand") [Cherniaevskii 1315/1897–1898: 5]; and in later editions the graphic form of the word would be accompanied by the drawing of a hand [Cherniaevskii 2018: 4]. The two letters of *el* are then playfully reorganized into other syllables: *āl—alā—lāl—al*. These variations already introduce the pupil to some connectivity options of a given letter; and we can assume that with the help of explanations by the teacher, the pupil understands what is characteristic for a given letter irrespective of whether it is connected or not. The same first exercise also introduces the letter [b], allowing the pupil to already recognize the combinations *bal* (Turkish "honey"), *āb* (Persian "water"), *bāb* (Arabic "door"), *baba* (Turkish "father"), *bala* (Tatar "child") and *āl* (Turkish "take!").[35] The third example of the same page introduces the letter [t] (allowing for the construction of *at*, "horse"), followed by further "readable" (though not always plainly recognizable) letter combinations involving all letters introduced on this very first page. With each new learning experience comes a repetition of the preceding letters; the exercises thus clearly build upon each other, leading to a syntagmatic ("connected") learning strategy instead of the paradigmatic presentation of parallel isolated forms in the *Elifba-i 'osmani*. In fact, Cherniaevskii claimed that it was him, not Selim Sabit, who introduced the "phonetic method": in his 1891 letter to *Terjuman* he argued that the Ottoman *Elifba* did not employ a syllabic method at all, but that it was still *bukvoslogatel'nyi*, "writing letters in isolation," or spelling [Cherniaevskii 1891: 19]. As seen above, this was indeed the case in the first parts of *Elifba-i 'osmani*, where dry letter rows were drilled. The "phonetic" system, arguably, came with Cherniaevskii's early introduction of meaningful syllables and words.

The subsequent exercise of *Vatan dili* introduces the letter [d], offering examples like *adab*/*edeb* ("morality/literature"). *En passant* the pupils are already made familiar with the Arabic diacritics/*harakat*. Cherniaevskii employs them not systematically but only here and there, to clarify a word that might be read in various ways; this makes the graphic forms less complicated than they appear in the Ottoman primers, where sometimes every single syllable has a vocal sign. Again, Cherniaevskii does not aim at systematic coverage of all possible connections—like in the *Elifba*, where students faced complete charts—but goes for selection and sim-

[35] Later editions would accompany the word "honey" by the drawing of a beehive, for example.

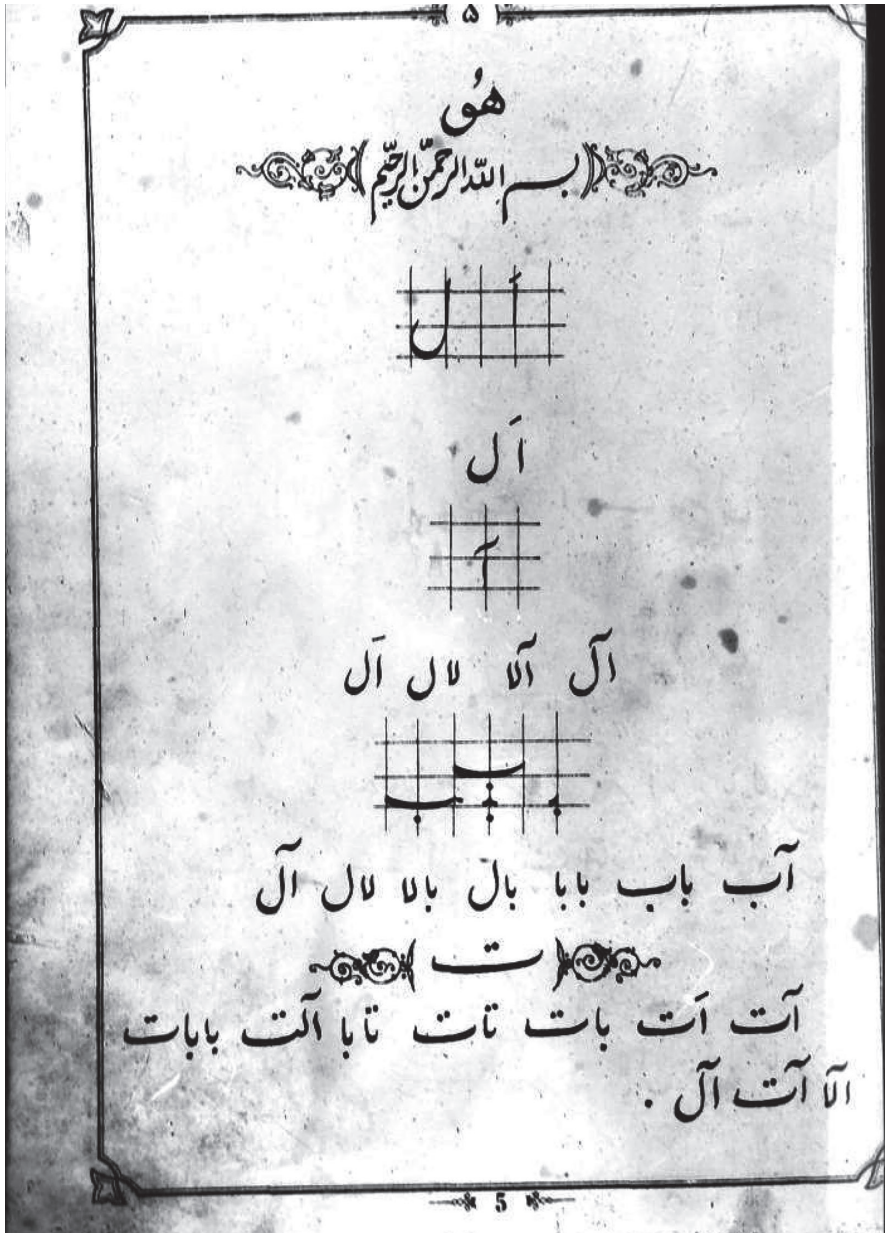


Figure 4. Cherniaevskii, *Vatan dili* (1315/1897–1898): the first lesson begins with a few selected letters (here: [a], [l], [b], [t]) in combinations producing meaningful syllables.

plicity.

With this method, the second page of exercises (page 6 in the book) already contains short proverbs, like *Lal dil biledir* ("A silent tongue knows best"). The next few pages introduce the letters [z] (enabling the construction of brief sentences like *biraz bal al*, "take a bit of honey"), [n], [p] (with *bazardan arpa al*, "buy barley on the market"), and some other letters. Obviously, the aim is to present reading/speaking opportunities as early as possible, in order to provide applications. Importantly, letters that appear primarily in Arabic or Persian loanwords were delegated to the last place: students would learn the emphatic letters *ṣad*, *ḍal*, *ṭa'* and *ẓa'* (but also *'ayn*, *ghayn*, *dhal*, *tha'* and the Persian *zhe*) only after having internalized the letters that are more necessary for writing in Turkish [Cherniaevskii 1315/1897–1898: 22–27; Türkyılmaz 2013, 199].

Obviously, Cherniaevskii's goal was to make things as easy as possible, to allow for quick and gradual acquisition of reading skills, and also to stimulate the students to reflect on what they read, in order to facilitate understanding and memorizing processes. This was also the strategy employed by the Russian pedagogue Konstantin Ushinskii, whose schoolbook *Rodnoe slovo* was in many respects the model that Cherniaevskii followed.[36] Already the title of Cherniaevskii's primer, *Vatan dili* ("Native Language"), reflects its proximity to Ushinskii's *Rodnoe slovo* ("Native Word"), and so does the strong use of fables as exercise material.[37] Ushinskii not only stimulated a quick progression towards the reading and writing of complete words, he also understood that pupils would first have to be introduced to the physical activity of writing; his schoolbook therefore first trained drawing. Cherniaevskii followed this approach in *Vatan dili*, offering a few pages of model drawings (from abstract geometrical forms over images of household items to random letters forms) before the teaching of letters and their meanings [Cherniaevskii 1315/1897–1898: 1–4].[38] By copying these drawings, pupils would learn how to hold their pen. Interesting to note is also that Ushinskii's *Rodnoe slovo* introduced the child to different letter types/writing styles from early on: Cherniaevskii's *Vatan dili* adopted this feature by introducing two styles of calligraphy, the Arabic *naskh* and the Persian *nasta'liq*.

Cherniaevskii's primer thus impresses by its pedagogical refinement. It was certainly not easy to translate the model of a Russian primer into a first exercise

[36] We are using here Ushinskii [1872].

[37] Cherniaevskii emphasized his indebtedness to Ushinskii's work in his introduction to the second volume of *Vatan dili*; see Cherniaevskii and Velibekov [1315/1897–1898: 1–3] (reprinted in Vüqar Qaradağlı's *Vətən dili*, 172–553).

[38] Noteworthy is that *Vatan dili* follows Ushinskii's *Rodnoe slovo* also by introducing each new letter against a lined background, thereby showing where the letter's movements must be placed when the student practices writing; the other primers reviewed here lack this device.

book for the Turkish language of the South Caucasus written in Arabic letters, all the while keeping instruction as simple as possible. While his primer does not contain any instructions for teachers, Cherniaevskii also published a separate guide for teachers ("*mu'allimler ichin*"). This booklet clearly addressed the limited circle of professionals: it is composed in an elevated variant of Azeri Turkish, with lots of complex Persian constructions and Arabic loanwords. In his teachers' manual, Cherniaevskii reflected on modern pedagogics, and praised Russia's policy to grant native language education to the non-Russian minorities [Cherniaevskii 1882]. In all of this we see Cherniaevskii's professional background as a pedagogue, his significant experience as a teacher—and also his cooperation with contributors from the Muslim elite of the region.

How did Gasprinskii's *Khoja-i sibyan* then relate to the two models that he had at his disposal?

5. Gasprinskii's *Khoja-i sibyan*

Different from both the Ottoman primer and Cherniaevskii's *Vatan dili* is that Gasprinskii put the pedagogical instructions for teachers right into the primer: instead of delegating the guidance for educators to a parallel publication, like Selim Sabit and Cherniaevskii did, Gasprinskii included a significant amount of explanatory text into his *Khoja-i sibyan*. In that light *Khoja-i sibyan* is not just an exercise book, like *Elifba-i 'osmani* and *Vatan dili*, but also Gasprinskii's first manual for teachers.[39] This combination of exercise book and guideline for teachers reflects the great mission of *Khoja-i sibyan*: it was meant as the holistic fundament for a new educational system that should start with the primary school.[40] He presented 15 principles of the new phonetic method and explained how teachers should use this primer [Gasprinskii 1889c: 2–4].[41] In his introduction Gasprinskii even gave in-

[39] Gasprinskii would later publish an own guidebook for teachers, *Rehber-i mu'allimin* (1896). For an analysis of this work see Türkyılmaz [2013: 103–122].

[40] For a description of Gasprinskii's teaching in *Khoja-i sibyan* see Türkyılmaz [2013: 88–102].

[41] Gasprinskii's practical instructions encompass the following points: *Khoja-i sibyan* is meant to be used in classes for boys and girls aged six or seven. The children would be taught one to two hours per day in reading and writing, plus a recommended 30 minutes of counting and calculating. The teaching of reading and writing should start right from the first class meetings. In the beginning it does not matter whether the pupils develop a beautiful handwriting; the focus is on understanding. In class, the teacher is supposed to write the individual letters and their combinations on the board, and the students copy them. As a given lesson unit of *Khoja-i sibyan* contains only a limited number of examples, the teachers are encouraged to produce similar syllables or word forms (or mathematics exercises) on their own. If the class consists of one to three pupils then the teacher can accomplish one lesson per day;

structions to school directors, informing them how separate classes should be organized [Gasprinskii 1889c: 4–5].[42]

But *Khoja-i sibyan* could also be used at home: as Gasprinskii emphasized, "with this *elifba* primer every mother can teach her son or daughter" [Gasprinskii 1889c: 2]. It is clear that this formulation does not refer to the imam's wife who might be teaching the parish's girls, while her husband was running the *mekteb* for boys (as was usual among the Volga Tatars, for instance); rather, with this primer Gasprinskii stimulated homeschooling. As long as not many Jadid schools were available this appears to be a logical step. In that sense, *Khoja-i sibyan* was an instrument not just for spreading literacy but also for expanding the scope of who is able to teach—ultimately a democratization of the school system, in the absence of state support. Gasprinskii's instructions therefore consistently address "the schoolteacher and the mother (*valide*)" [Gasprinskii 1889c: 2].

Another distinction between the three primers lies in their different target audiences. While Selim Sabit wrote his Ottoman primer for use at state schools in the Ottoman Empire, and Cherniaevskii his *Vatan dili* for schools specifically in the South Caucasus, Gasprinskii made it clear that his *Khoja-i sibyan* is meant for Muslims of the Crimea but also the Volga-Urals and the Caucasus. This huge ambition raises the question which language to use. Gasprinskii recognized differences between the Turkic languages spoken in the Crimea, Kazan, and among the Turks of Daghestan, for instance, but he consciously played them down; as he suggested, if pupils do not understand a given word used in the primer then the educator would have to explain this unknown word by its local equivalent [Gasprinskii 1889c: 3]. Obviously, Gasprinskii's use of a simplified Turkish language as it was spoken in

if the teacher has a class of 30 students then one lesson might take three days, to make sure that all students understand the subject. Teachers must read the instructions carefully to be able to implement the lesson material. Some words are spelled as they are spoken, e.g. by adding vocals that may be absent in the common orthography; this is because the focus is on understanding (correct orthography and calligraphy would be subject of a second part of *Khoja-i sibyan*). Goal of the exercises is not the rote learning of texts but the automatization of reading/writings skills. Some lessons contain questions and answers. As the method is to make things as easy as possible, the presentation of individual letters starts with the letters most common in the Turkish language; Arabic letters that are not used in Turkish words are taught later. Pupils write their exercises into a booklet (*defter*); the goal is not to learn the texts by heart.

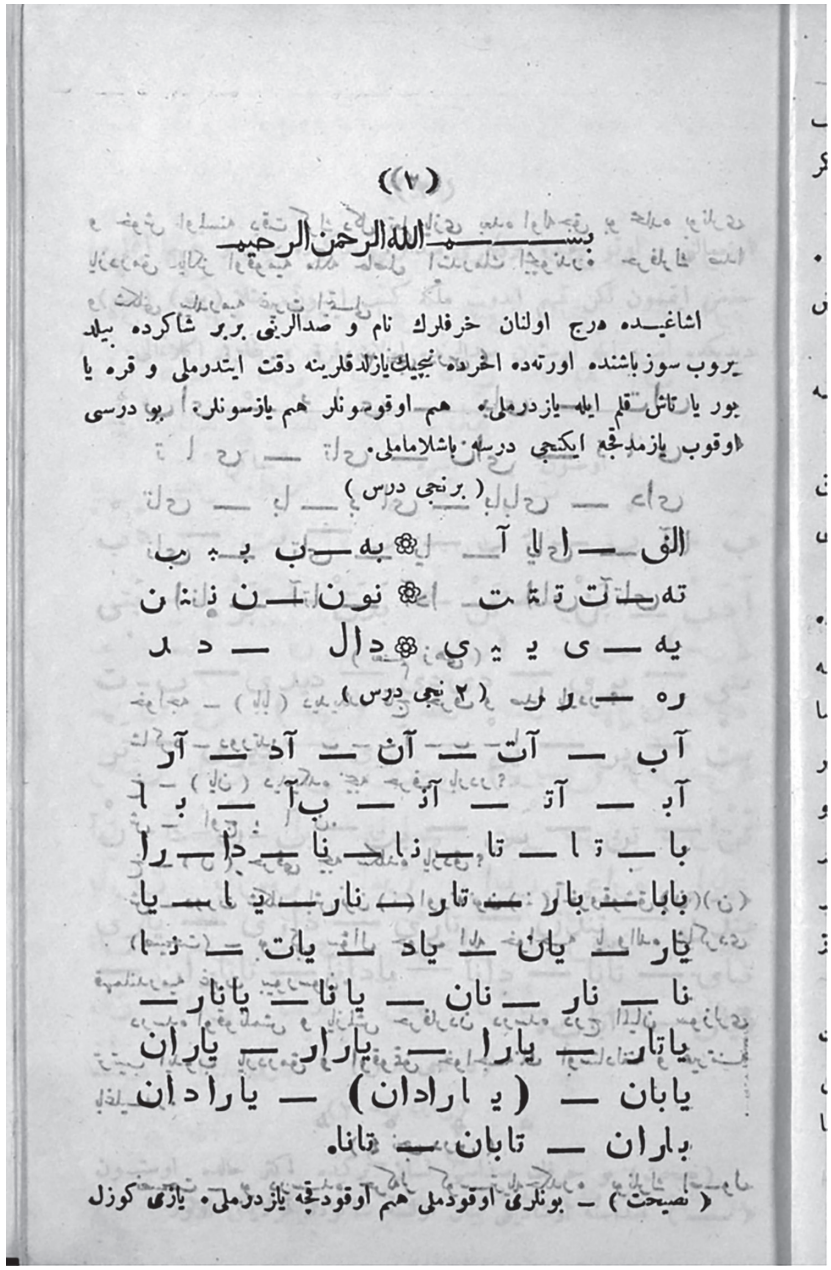
[42] Gasprinskii recommends that there should be only two intake moments, in the beginnings of the summer and the winter; this would allow the teacher to synchronize the teaching, instead of having 30 students who all follow their individual learning trajectories. A class of 20 to 30 children should be divided into three or four groups that the teacher can engage with in parallel (while one group is reading, the other is writing, and so forth). Class-building, so Gasprinskii, also allows pupils to learn from each other. Teaching would also entail dictation from memory. If the newmethods are applied properly, so Gasprinskii, then four to five hours are enough for engaging with a group of 30 children.

Istanbul demanded quite some adaptability from both teachers and pupils in the various Muslim communities of Russia. Also in this respect his *Khoja-i sibyan* was an experiment.

Finally, Gasprinskii's *Khoja-i sibyan* stands out from the other primers by the fact that next to teaching reading and writings skills and offering Turkish reading texts, this primer also contained beginners' lessons of Arabic, mathematics, Islamic creed, geography and history as well as calligraphy. As seen above, already in the context of his first experimental class of 1883–1884 Gasprinskii talked about materials not only for teaching literacy but also covering history, geography, mathematics, as well as Islam (and even the Russian language, which did not eventually become a part of *Khoja-i sibyan*). True, also the other primers included some historical and geographical information, but Gasprinskii's *Khoja-i sibyan* marked geography, history and mathematics as disciplines in their own right, so that his primer would also function as the basis for the specialized course books that he indeed published later. This innovation reflects the circumstance that for Gasprinskii, the new-method teaching of reading and writing was just the prerequisite for a broader new teaching program based on "modern" sciences that the traditional school simply ignored. Gasprinskii insisted that new-method schooling was a sheer necessity in the struggle of survival between advanced and backwards civilizations [Gasprinskii 1889c: 1].

Another difference to *Elifba-i 'osmani* and *Vatan dili* is that *Khoja-i sibyan* is already organized in individual "lessons" (sg. *ders*), implying that progression comes in clearly defined steps. The method that Gasprinskii employs is not the paradigmatic approach of Selim Sabit who first introduced all letters in systematic charts showing all vocalized forms; rather, Gasprinskii follows the syntagmatic method of Cherniaevskii who at first introduced just a few letters but these already in changing conjunctions.

And *Khoja-i sibyan* proceeds at an even quicker pace than *Vatan dili*. The first page (designed as lessons 1 and 2; Figure 5) already introduces seven letters ([a], [b], [t], [n], [y], [d], [r]—in all positions (linked/unlinked) [Gasprinskii 1889c: 1]. We must assume that Gasprinskii selected these particular letters for the start because they share graphic similarities (e.g. the basic line and dots, and being connectable to both sides, for [a], [b], [t] and [n]; and a lack of connectivity to the left, for the others). This is a fairly sophisticated approach. On the same page these letters are already employed to produce individual syllables, and even first Turkish words like *nar* ("pomegranate") and *nan* ("bread"), and word series with slight letter variations such as *yatar* ("she/he/it is lying [on the floor]"), *yaban* ("foreign"), and *baran* ("goat"). In the pedagogical instructions that accompany these exercises teachers are encouraged to come up with more words for dictation, and to pay attention to the correct sound and form of a given letter—and not to the beauty of the pupils' handwriting.



(۲)

بسم الله الرحمن الرحیم

اشاغیده درج اولنان خرفلرك نام و صدالرینی بربر شاکرده بیلد
یروب سوز باشنده اورته‌ده اخرده نیچیك یازلدقلرینه دقت ایتدرملی و قره یا
بور یا تاش قلم ایله یازدرملی. هم اوقوسونلر هم یازسونلر. بو درسی
اوقوب یازمدقجه ایکنجی درسه باشلاماملی.

(برنجی درس)

الف — ا ا آ ❀ به — ب ب ب ب
ته — ت ت ت ت ❀ نون — ن ن ن ن
یه — ی ی ی ی ❀ دال — د د
ره — ر ر (۲ نجی درس)
آب — آت — آن — آد — آر
آب — آت — آن — بآ — با
با — تا — تا — نا — نا — دا — را
بابا — بار — تار — نار — یا — یا
یار — یان — یاد — یات — نا
نا — نار — نان — یانا — یانار —
یاتار — یارا — یارار — یاران
یابان — (یارادان) — یارادان
باران — تابان — تانا.

(نصیحت) — بونلری اوقودملی هم اوقودقجه یازدرملی. یازی کوزل

Figure 5. Gasprinskii, *Khoja-i sibyan* (1889), p. 1: lesson one (upper center of this page) introduces eight letters; lesson two (lower half of the page) presents these letters in combinations that produce meaningful syllables.

Lesson 3 does not introduce new letters but offers more constellations among the letters learned in the previous exercises. Here Gasprinskii introduces a new feature: he formulates model questions that he wants the teacher to pose ("Teacher: How many letters and sounds are there when you speak the word *baba* ["father"]?"), and also gives the correct response ("Pupil: This is four: b—a—b—a"). With *Khoja-i sibyan*, teachers are educated while teaching.

Lesson 4 introduces the *harakat* that mark the short vowels in Arabic; unlike the Ottoman primer but similar to *Vatan dili*, these diacritics are not presented in an encompassing and systematic overview with nonsensical minimum syllables but in applied forms (like *edeb*, *ben*, *ten*, *beden*, *dedi*, *benden*). Lesson 5 introduces the Arabic letter [h], which, as the annotation tells us, should be explained as also performing the function of an [-e] in Turkish word endings [Gasprinskii 1889c: 3–4]. The sequence of words that this exercise offers shows gradual mutations (*e.g. dere—bere—nere; bab—babe—dab—dabe*)—obviously a simple way to train paradigmatic changes in a syntagmatic context. Lessons 6 and 7 introduce the Arabic letters [s] and [w/u/v], respectively. When one and the same syllable can have different meanings Gasprinskii adds an explanation in brackets: "*būr* ([from] *burmaq* ["to twist"])—*būr* (a sort of soil ["wasteland"])" [Gasprinskii 1889c: 5].[43] Neither of the other two primers shows such explanation of homonyms.

Gasprinskii's *Khoja-i sibyan* offers the first full clauses (of the type "my father is a rich man," "the camel has four legs and a tail") at a very early point, in lesson 9 (page six of the exercise part). This quick pace of progression is comparable to that of Cherniaevskii's *Vatan dili*. The lessons now get longer, with more text. Lesson 10 trains [l] and [m], and provides examples that betray Gasprinskii's ambition to place this booklet into an all-Russian context ("The Russian people, the Tatar people, the Qazaq people, the Sart people, the German [*Nimse*] people, the Armenian people, the Jewish people, the Mordvin people, the Qalmuq people live in Russia") [Gasprinskii 1889c: 9]. Another lesson makes simple sentences by stating that the Bashkirs are "good," the Kyrgyz-Kazakhs are "great," the Kazakhs are "strong,"[44] the Dagestanis are "heroic," the Circassians are "lion-hearted," the Siberians are "diligent," and the Sarts are good in trading; and a bit more modestly, the Crimean Tatars are lauded as good in horticulture [Gasprinskii 1889c: 17]. Obviously, Gasprinskii links the acquisition of literacy with the broader goal of acquainting the pupils with the fact that Russia hosts various Muslim peoples—they learn about each other through this primer. Here the problem is that some Muslim

[43] *Burmaq* means "to twist or screw," while *būr* is "wasteland."

[44] Gasprinskii's formulation implies that he understood the term "Kyrgyz-Kazakhs" (Qirghiz-Qazaq) as referring to the modern Kyrgyz, as distinct from the modern Kazakhs that he called "Qazaq." This would be a curious inversion of the Russian terminology of the time; in the Russian literature of the 19th and 20th centuries, it was the modern Kazakhs that were referred to as *Kyrgyz-Kaisaky*, as distinct from the Kyrgyz of modern Kyrgyzstan.

peoples of Russia belong to the Oghuz branch of the Turkic languages and others to the Qipchaq branch, with significant differences in lexicon and grammar. Gasprinskii played with these differences by introducing Qipchaq (Tatar) forms with the parallel Oghuz (Turkish) variant given in brackets: *Babam meni* (*beni*) *urdu men* (*ben*) *anama bardïm* (*vardïm*) ("my father hit me and I went to my mother") (lesson 11). Such examples seem to indicate that the differences between the various Turkic languages of Russia are very small. At other occasions the Turkish form *günesh* ("sun") is accompanied by its Tatar equivalent *qoyash* [Gasprinskii 1889c: 18], or *dilim* ("my language") stands next to its Tatar equivalent *tilim* [Gasprinskii 1889c: 16]. More significant differences between Turkish and Tatar are introduced in lesson 19, with alternations *baqïp*/*qarap* ("having seen"), *choq*/*küp* ("many"), *olmuyor*/*bulmay*, and *alïnmïsh*/*alïnghan*. All of these features are not found in other primers, and must be interpreted as Gasprinskii's very conscious strategy to make pupils aware of the proximity of the spoken Turkic languages in European Russia, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. Still, the "Western" Turkish that dominates Gasprinskii's written language must have sounded "foreign" to many Turkic-speaking communities in the Russian Empire [Sal'iankova and Galiullina 2014: 47].

Similar to Cherniaevskii, Gasprinskii introduces the emphatic letters and the letter [th] as the last letters to be learned [Gasprinskii 1889c: 25], thereby marking them as less important for Turkish reading/writing acquisition. Gasprinskii places them directly into a "Reading and Learning Arabic" section which also introduces the Arabic *tanwin* forms (like in *khasatan*), plus specific rules like the agglutination (as in *ash-shams*) [Gasprinskii 1889c: 30]. Also the originally Persian *izafet* construction is explained here, and explained through its Turkish equivalent, the possessive construction (*Qïrïm müftüsü—müfti-i Qïrïm*, "the Mufti of Crimea") [Gasprinskii 1889c: 27]. The words to be read are religious terminology, Arabic titles and names as well as items that appear in the Qur'an. In a note for teachers Gasprinskii emphasizes that also in this section, the teacher must stick to the order of the exercises, from easy forms to the more complicated [Gasprinskii 1889c: 6]—obviously to not fall back into the traditional schooling that directly confronted the children with whole Qur'an chapters. Gasprinskii here applies his philosophy of simplification and gradual development also to the teaching of the Arabic language. Importantly, in his instructions for teachers Gasprinskii also reflects on the value of the Arabic language, explaining that it is "the language of our religion" but also a language of science [Gasprinskii 1889c: 32]. Many of the Arabic model sentences that Gasprinskii introduces here—such as sayings of the Prophet, or the testament of one of the *sahaba* [Gasprinskii 1889c: 33–34]—defend the value of learning for men and women. The Arabic section culminates in four short parts from the Qur'an, including the *Fatiha* [Gasprinskii 1889c: 34–35]. Other than Cherniaevskii, Gasprinskii does not offer Turkish translations of the Arabic texts.

The first part (*jüz'*) of Gasprinskii's *Khoja-i sibyan* ends with a short section

that introduces the Arabic numbers as well as simple examples of addition, subtraction, and multiplication; while this section is very brief (and thus relying on the teachers to develop similar exercises while teaching), Gasprinskii does make the effort to introduce the exercises in a "living" Muslim context, as for instance in "I had 15 kopecks, and I gave three kopecks for charity (*sadaqa*). How many kopecks are left?" [Gasprinskii 1889c: 38]. Also here the approach is gradual, and designed to make pupils understand why these operations are useful.

The second part (*ikinji jüz'*) of *Khoja-i sibyan* ([Gasprinskii 1889c: 39–56]) is no longer designed as one consecutive line of lessons but offers alternating clusters of school subjects: Arabic/Qur'an reading (pages 39; 46; 55), Turkish readings (39–40; 46–47; 56), mathematical exercises (40; 47–49), *'ilm-i hal* (presenting elements of the Islamic creed in the form of questions and answers; 41; 49–50), and sections discussing features of the Turkish language/Turkic languages ("The peoples who speak [Turkish] are called 'Turk'" 41; 50–51) [Gasprinskii 1889c: 41]; there are also sections on geography that teach the terminology needed for describing the immediate homeland, again with Oghuz and Qipchak variants (like *qarya* and *awïl* for "village"; 43–44; 51–53). This all-Turkic approach is also prominent in the historical cluster of the primer's second part,[45] which includes a section on the "Old Turks" that praises the mythical founding father Oghuz Khan; as the text explains, at times "some perfect heroes appear; they unite all Turks in one state, then conduct campaigns and bring the surrounding peoples and countries under their rule." Gasprinskii immediately links this narrative to his plea for modernization: "but the Turks [of Oghuz Khan's time] were nomadic and had no knowledge of handicraft and trade, and they lacked direction (*istiqametsiz olduqlarïndan*); therefore, their state was quickly destroyed" [Gasprinskii 1889c: 54].

Comparative Conclusions

Gasprinskii must have known the *Elifba-i 'osmani* from his stays in the Ottoman Empire, and in his foreword to *Khoja-i sibyan* he emphasizes the success of new method teaching particularly in Istanbul. However, this particular reference to Istanbul might have been a conscious maneuver to deflect from other influences.

Our comparative analysis has demonstrated that in terms of applied methodology, Gasprinskii's *Khoja-i sibyan* had more in common with Cherniaevskii's *Vatan dili* than with Selim Sabit's *Elifba-i 'osmani*. The method of Gasprinskii's primer is above all indebted to Cherniaevskii's adaptation of Ushinskii's Russian

[45] A preceding historical section (44–45) only mentions different sorts of historical sources, explains the start of the Islamic and Christian telling of years, and offers the standard European division of time into antiquity, middle ages and the modern period.

pedagogics to the teaching of Azeri Turkish in the South Caucasus. Gasprinskii's own notes about Cherniaevskii's work in various issues of *Terjuman* supports this argument, even if Gasprinskii later deemphasized Cherniaevskii's role.

Characteristic for both *Khoja-i sibyan* and *Vatan dili* (but missing in the Ottoman primer) is the consequential syntagmatic approach of starting with just a few letters that are presented in creative syllable connections right from the start. Both refrained from using the all-encompassing but bulky paradigmatic charts that are so typical for the *Elifba-i 'osmani*.

Where the *Elifba-i 'osmani* relied heavily on random vocalization of consonants by *harakat* for making these individual letters "pronounceable," Gasprinskii and Cherniaevskii put several letters together to form syllables that already convey meaning. And conversely, these two authors also trained the reverse process of breaking up syllables and words into its constituent letters, i.e. spelling [Cherniaevskii 1882: 16; Gasprinskii 1889c: 10]. This was quite a progress compared to the Ottoman primer.

Other than *Elifba-i 'osmani*, both *Khoja-i sibyan* and *Vatan dili* insist on a gradual introduction of letter groups, and defer the "Arabic-only" letters to a later point; this strategy reduces the complexity of the Arabic alphabet for beginners and still allows for a maximum range of Turkish words to be exercised in class meetings. These features are clearly designed to give pupils a quick entry gate into reading and writing, and they foster an active understanding of what is read. In addition, both primers introduce several letter types/writing styles, thereby allowing the pupil to engage with different genres of various geographical provenances. These similarities, alongside Gasprinskii's praise for Cherniaevskii in *Terjuman*, allow us to conclude that in *Khoja-i sibyan* (1889), Gasprinskii clearly followed the method that Cherniaevskii had elaborated for his *Vatan dili* (1882).

There are also differences, and Gasprinskii's *Khoja-i sibyan* is certainly no copy of Cherniaevskii's *Vatan dili*. Cherniaevskii stood in a Russian tradition of primers, and made heavy use of fables as follow-up readings for young beginners who just internalized the alphabet; these fables he translated from Russian literature. We know that Gasprinskii recognized the value of fables for educational purposes; already in 1880 he praised a book of fables that 'Abdurrahman Chelebi Krymkhodzhaev, head of the Tatar class of the Simferopol' Gymnasium (that Gasprinskii had himself attended) had translated from the Russian [Tatarin (probably Ismail Gasprinskii) 1880]. Also, Gasprinskii would later make use of fables in schoolbooks he designed for higher classes.[46] In his *Khoja-i sibyan* for beginners, however, he did not make talking animals a prominent feature—perhaps because

[46] E.g. in *Qira'at-i Türki* [Gasprinskii 1894a] and in *Rehber-i mu'allimin* [Gasprinskii 1896].

this would make his borrowing from Russian school books too obvious.[47]

And there were also many innovations in Gasprinskii's primer. After the alphabet part Gasprinskii supplied texts that would introduce the pupils to basic concepts of mathematics, geography and history—subjects which were absent from Cherniaevskii's *Vatan dili*, and that were not systematically arranged in the *Elifba-i 'osmani*. This feature reveals that Gasprinskii designed *Khoja-i sibyan* as more than just a tool for learning how to read and write; it was to be the springboard for a whole new school system, to be followed up by more specialized textbooks and pedagogical instructions that Gasprinskii indeed published in the course of subsequent years. Importantly, Gasprinskii's *Khoja-i sibyan* also offered practical instruction for educators—information that both Cherniaevskii and Selim Sabit would publish in separate guide books for teachers. And for Gasprinskii, the acquisition of this new knowledge would not only take place in school; *Khoja-i sibyan* was designed as easy enough for home schooling, as we can see from the instances where Gasprinskii addresses "the teacher or the mother" (*ana*/*valide*). The education of school teachers and parents by means of *Khoja-i sibyan* was facilitated by the simple language that Gasprinskii developed in his instructions—in contrast to for instance Cherniaevskii's more academic manual for teachers which, due to its difficult language and theoretical content, was quite useless for non-professionals and for readers not familiar with Azeri.

And there are of course many elements that Cherniaevskii and Gasprinskii's primers have in common with that by Selim Sabit. All three authors recommend that teachers write the letters on the blackboard, to be copied by the students, and that they mention the Arabic "names" of the letters but emphasize the actual sounds represented by the respective graphemes. All three emphasize the need to teach not only reading but also writing in the native language; and they all relegate the reading of Arabic texts—which in traditional *mekteb*s stood at the beginning of the learning process—to a later point. As the actual exercise material is limited in scope, teachers would have to creatively produce more words and combinations for the students to read and copy. This was the core of the "vocal" method. For Selim Sabit, however, the writing starts only after the acquisition of the complete alphabet, whereas Gasprinskii's primer stimulates writing right from the beginning—even if that means that here and there a word's conventional orthography must be simplified [Gasprinskii 1889c: 3]. The physical aspect of writing is most prominently reflected upon in Cherniaevskii's work, where drawing is trained before the actual instruction of the alphabet. While we know that also Gasprinskii recognized the value of visuals for the learning process [Gasprinskii 1898: 165], drawings are

[47] For one fable, however, "The Man and the Bear," see Gasprinskii [1889c: 46–47]. The same fable of Russian provenance (originally *Muzhik i medved'*) also appears in Cherniaevskii [1315/1897–1898: 75].

absent from his *Khoja-i sibyan*—most probably because Gasprinskii did not yet have imperial permission to print drawings.[48]

The huge challenge that Jadid teaching would pose to traditional schooling is most clearly addressed by Gasprinskii and Cherniaevskii, in particular by their promise that with the help of their primers, children would obtain full reading and writing proficiency within 50 days (Cherniaeveskii) or even within 40 days (Gasprinskii) [Cherniaevskii 1882: 26].[49] Success stories (like the one reported by Gasprinskii in 1884, discussed at the start of our chapter) would of course depend on the proper management of the class and on its size. While for Selim Sabit, one teacher cannot reasonably cope with more than 50 pupils, Cherniaevskii mentions a maximum of 60 to 70 students; Gasprinskii, in contrast, speaks of 20 to 30 children [Selim Sabit undated (1883–1884): 8; Cherniaevskii 1882: 6; Gasprinskii 1889c: 4]. In practice, they might have meant the same: both Gasprinskii and Selim Sabit explicitly recommend that a classroom be divided into groups (or sections, *shu'be*s) according to pupils' levels, allowing the teacher to supervise smaller groups doing different things at the same time (e.g. one group reading, the other writing, the third repeating their catechism) [Selim Sabit undated (1883–1884): 9; Gasprinskii 1889c: 5, 7–8]. Here again teachers were expected to make their own decisions on how to implement the Jadid framework. In terms of class duration for beginners Selim Sabit recommends two lessons of 30–45 minutes each, plus a break. Similarly, Gasprinskii recommends that a teacher attend to each class (or section) for at least 60 to 90 minutes per day, with a break of 30 minutes. As learning could also take place in the absence of the teacher (with order among the pupils maintained by a designated peer leader), a school day would last around four and a half hours, over six days a week [Selim Sabit undated (1883–1884): 9; Gasprinskii 1889c: 5–7]. This was much more than what was offered in a traditional school, where teachers had very irregular times of presence. The heavy teaching load reflects Gasprinskii's thought that the school is not just a place to learn but also a social institution that shapes the new generation in terms of national and religious identities. This is particularly true for Muslim minorities in a colonial context.

Overall, *Khoja-i sibyan* reveals many features that make it a typical product of Ismail Gasprinskii. One of these is its broad target audience. Unlike Cherniaevskii, who addressed Muslim schools specifically of the South Caucasus, Gasprinskii claimed that his schoolbook was made for Turkic-speaking communities all over the Russian Empire. While writing in a simplified Turkish/Ottoman

[48] Also his newspaper *Terjuman* lacked images until 1890, when he announced that a special permission was secured; see Gasprinskii [1890]. Before that Gasprinskii even published a geographical work, *Jihannama* (Bakhchesaray, 1889), without any drawings or maps.

[49] Gasprinskii implies that on average, one lesson of *Khoja-i sibyan* should take two or three days; accordingly, the first 18 lessons in which new letters are introduced would require some 40 days. See Gasprinskii [1889c: 2].

language, Gasprinskii did pay attention to the varieties of the Turkic languages in the Russian Empire, by integrating some Oghuz/Qipchaq word pairs and by providing model sentences that mention the various Turkic peoples not only of Crimea but also the Volga-Urals, the Caucasus and even Central Asia. These elements of course reflect his idea of a Turkic unity in Russia, divided politically from the Turks in the Ottoman Empire but brought closer to them by training the Turkish language. Of course, there are also mercantile interests at work, for such references highlight Gasprinskii's ambition to sell his product in all of these regions. And in fact, *Khoja-i sibyan* became Gasprinskii's most widespread trademark next to his pioneering newspaper, *Terjuman/Perevodchik*, which equally addressed Muslims in all parts of the Russian Empire. In fact, we must assume that those who read *Terjuman* also knew *Khoja-i sibyan* and facilitated its use in local schools. Eventually *Khoja-i sibyan* became the prototype of a whole family of coursebooks produced, printed and sold by Gasprinskii, on various class levels; and his textbooks influenced other authors who would write the primers that eventually replaced Gasprinskii's. Like his long-lived newspaper shaped Muslim journalism in Russia, also his schoolbook production line facilitated the standardization of the new curriculum and the Jadid educational system as a whole; and it also had a huge impact on the language used in Muslim pedagogical literature. In comparison, neither Selim Sabit nor Cherniaevskii had the propaganda power of a large newspaper and printing house behind them, nor did they have followers spread over such wide geographies.

Our conclusion that the Azeri-Turkish primer of a Russian pedagogue from the South Caucasus at least facilitated Gasprinskii's Crimean Tatar *usul-i jadid* schooling fits into a broader pattern of Gasprinskii's interest in the South Caucasus, as discussed at the start of our paper where we argued that Azerbaijani journalism stood at the cradle of Gasprinskii's *Terjuman*. Of course, the methodological similarities between *Vatan dili* and *Khoja-i sibyan* are no hard evidence for direct borrowing; and there were European models that all three authors were familiar with. Still, the task of creating a new-method primer for teaching Turkish in the Arabic alphabet in a Russian imperial context is so complex and specific that it makes sense to look at the direct models that were available to Gasprinskii in the 1880s. And in this context the curious cooperation between the Russian pedagogue Cherniaevskii and his Azeri co-worker Velibekov—who became Gasprinskii's correspondent and guide—clearly stands out as the best directly available model to draw from.

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