

The Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC)

cordially invites you to a lecture by

Dr Ulfat Abdurasulov

Vienna

“To make it serviceable for the purposes of politics and history”: On diplomatic archives, record-keeping, and knowledge about Central Asia in modern Russia

The Moscow Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs played an important role in the history of Russian archival practices. “A grandfather of the Russian archives,” as one nineteenth century archival functionary put it, it was the first repository in Russia to be officially labelled as an ‘archive’. It was generally regarded by the contemporaries as a repository of the most ancient and valuable documentary collections, including the paperwork of the *Posol’skii prikaz* – the 17th century institution, where all diplomatic correspondence was handled and where relevant information was centralized, produced, and preserved. In the first part of the presentation, I shall offer a closer look at the practices of record-keeping and document preservation at the diplomatic archive in Moscow. More specifically, I shall explore how the diplomatic records of the pre-Petrine *Posol’skii prikaz* were classified, inventoried, and retrieved over the course of the long 18th century.

In the second part I shall focus on the roles diplomatic knowledge used to play in the process of knowledge production and, more precisely, on how an earlier political expertise, assembled in the corpora of diplomatic records could be drawn upon as resources for political decision-making over time. A close examination of the attempts by Russian ruling circles to make use of these materials as a source of strategic knowledge on Central Asia – whether for the purposes of diplomatic engagement, the organization of military campaigns, or the publication of selected extracts from diplomatic texts – reveals the erratic character of this process, freighted as it was by complex human relationships and a volatile mixture of interests.

Thursday, 25 February 2021, 06:00 pm (CET)

Zoom-Meeting