



# Languages of Description of the Ethno Cultural Discourse of the Russian Empire by Academic, Missionary and Soviet Orientalists Late 19<sup>th</sup> - early 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries

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### Opinion

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## Opinion

Since the time of Peter I, Russian oriental studies have been recognized as one of the world's strongest national schools. But ethno cultural discourse in the Russian political space needed to have a comprehensive language to describe the Russian Empire, in which the confessional structure of the population played a significant role. The situation was especially difficult in the Turkic linguistic community, most of them professing Islam. Contrary to the dominant secular optics, oriental science believed that religion, which for thousands of years dominated a significant part of civilized humanity, cannot be approached as a nonsense person concocted by deceivers. To clarify the scientific approach to self-understanding of ethno cultural communities in the imperial continuum, conceptual reflection was important.

Let us note the striving for theoreticalness, for greater consistency, structure, ideally for a theoretical model for describing the ethno cultural structure of Russia, for streamlining the available material. Scientists have already operated with the problems and categories of several sciences at the same time. The super idea was to find new cognitive parallels and develop new cognitive mechanisms.

They saw the solution of problems, especially regarding the Turkic-Islamic community. But they did not reach a high level of specialization and instrumentalization.

At the end of the 19th century, modernity complicated social conditions and circumstances, when heterogeneous facts and a number of concepts "migrated" from one professional community to others, changing their meaning and acquiring new functions. Orientalists, involved in theoretical discussions, hastily mastered, on the one hand, the interconnection of peoples, their languages, revealed the course of standardization of the resources of cultures, and on the other hand, they reacted to the growth of cultural differentiation associated with ethnic phenomenology. Positivism could not cope with the problems of the modern East; Marxism, which was becoming fashionable, was not interested in it. Oriental theorists continued to deepen the study of religious issues. In fact, they overcame the framework of cultural determinism, which presupposed the existence of relatively closed civilizational systems that subordinate modern politics and economics to their influence.

