ISLAM IN RUSSIAN RELIGIOUS STUDIES FROM 'COMPLETELY ALIEN' TO 'OUR SPIRITUAL TRADITION'

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Abstract

The article presents the formation history of terms 'Islam' and 'Muslims' in the Russian culture and the perspective of religious studies from the viewpoints of: 1) reality observers and 2) observers of reality observers. The history of these terms is tracked on the basis of the Russian National Corpus database and a number of representative sources. The differentiation of approaches to the description of Islam in the Russian confessional, diplomatic and religious studies literature is shown. Late 20th century changes in the modern Russian Federation led to the discussion of describing Islam as 'a spiritual tradition of the peoples of the Russian Federation'.

1. Introduction

Islam and Pax Islamica have been described for more than 1000 years in Russian literature by *reality observers* belonging mainly to various historical forms of the Tsargrad Greek faith tradition called *Pravoslavie* (Православие, Orthodoxy), which placed Ancient Rus in the global cultural community of *Pax Christiana* nations. We will consider Islam and Pravoslavie from the viewpoint of religious study, i.e. as *observers of reality observers*, although, strictly speaking, this viewpoint developed only in the 20th century when the term *religiovedenie* (религиоведение, religious studies) was used for the first time by the world famous writer L.N. Tolstoy in 1908 [1]. However, in the broad sense of outside observation of Islam and Muslims, it can be considered that the elements of broad understanding of religious studies have been present in literature since the 12th century.

From these viewpoints, Pravoslavie is understood as one of the currents of Christianity [2]. The vast family of Christian currents from the position of religious study belongs to the even broader category of Abrahamic religions, which includes Judaism and Islam along with Christianity [3]. According to

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some scholars, these traditions uniting communities of several billions of people can be traced back to the cosmopolitan ideals of the so-called *Wisdom literature* (Wisdom books) of the Ancient East. It is here that the first urban centres of the world civilization appeared and the texts were written symbolically representing universal moral values based on the idea of justice defining the meaning of human life [4]. Cultural memory of these ideals and values described by Jan Assmann, as exemplified in Egypt, is present in the Russian folklore, literary, diplomatic, theological, philosophical and scientific texts, where several models of their description as: *own*, *strange* and *completely alien* can be found [5].

Our analysis will be based on the data of the electronic linguistic resource Russian National Corpus (hereinafter RNC) created by the philologists of the Russian Academy of Science and covering more than 600 million words from the texts of the 11-21 centuries [http://www.ruscorpora.ru/]. RNC has been developing in the Russian sector of the Internet since 2004; it allows to identify the characteristics of word usage of the terms *Islam* (ислам) and *Muslims* (мусульманин) in relation to the terms *Pravoslavie* and *Pravoslavnyi* (православный, Orthodox) in the course of 1000 years. Detailed analysis of these terms usage allows to trace the main stages of coexistence of the two Abrahamic tradition communities (Islam and Christianity) on the territory of the modern Russian Federation.

In the past 25 years, about 90% of citizens of the country freely identified themselves as Orthodox or Muslim. Only one generation of followers received legal protection of the current Constitution (1993). All these years, the issue of religious extremism was discussed in mass media. Therefore, it is important to address the prospects of forming tolerant religiosity among the followers of the main Abrahamic traditions, which would allow maintaining and preserving the norms of harmonious and respectful coexistence between them.

2. Linguistic aspects of grasping 'foreign'

Modern and familiar terms *Orthodoxy*, *Islam*, *Orthodox* and *Muslims* in linguistic context are words (lexical units) that originated in certain historical contexts and now denote two of Russia's most influential religious communities. These lexical units are semiotically characterized by certain denotations (meanings referring to objective social reality) and connotations (meanings referring to communicative reality), with the latter divided into positive, negative and neutral.

The domestic culture recorded its interest to Islam in the first chronicles *Skazanie ob ispytanii ver* (Сказание об испытании вер, 1110-1118) speaking about '*bolgar v[e]ry Bokhmiche*' (болъгар в[е]ры Бохъмиче) i.e. *bulgars of Muslim faith* - residents of Volgian Bulgaria (neighbouring state to Kievan Rus, now part of the territory of Tatarstan republic in Russia) [*The Tale of Bygone Years*, http://www.pushkinskijdom.ru/Default.aspx?tabid=4869]. The RNC database allows to closely track the changes of the terms *Islam* and *Muslim* in the history of the national culture in correlation with *Pravoslavie* (Orthodoxy,

Christians, Orthodox Christians, etc.) and acquires various, even non-conventional, descriptions, qualifications, explanations and interpretations. The RNC search of these lexical units produces the following results (as of 23.06.2020): Islam - 414 documents, term fixed since 1718; Orthodoxy - 933, since 1709; Muslim - 203, since 1789; Orthodox Christian - 997, since 1716.

Thus, these lexical units became widely known only in the 18th and 19th centuries whereas earlier the whole range of other lexical units was used: *basurmans* (басурмане, etc.), *Tatars, Turks, Ishmailites, Hagarites*, etc. The lexical unit *Islam* is absent in the *Dictionary of Russian Language of XI-XVII centuries*, but the lexical unit *Muslim* is there since 1596, along with the lexical units *musulmanit'* (мусульманить, to convert to Islam, since 1615), *musulmanskogo zakona ludi* (мусульманского закона люди, people of Muslim law) (1643), etc. [6].

One can see at least three dominant trends in the descriptions of Islam in the Russian literature. Firstly, texts about Muslims often abound in such epithets as *cursed*, *wicked*, *godless*, etc.; these demonstrate the labelling of 'completely alien'. For example, the *Ustav* of prince Yaroslav the Wise (about 978-1054) contained the prohibition to marry and to take food from the *infidels* (безбожные бесермене, *besermenin*). This approach saw the deviant phenomenon of 'зловѣрия' (heresy) in Islam and Muslims, rooted in the first theological descriptions of military clashes of Byzantine Christians with the followers of Muhammad. In this context, Mansour ibn Sarjunat-Taglibi (منصوربنسرجونالتغلبي), better known as John of Damascus (يوحناالدمشقي, Ἰωάννης ὁ Δαμασκηνός, Iohannes Damascenus, circa 675-754) in his treatise *Concerning Heresies* (*Περ αἱρέσεων ἐν συντομία κατόν, ὅθεν ἤρξαντο κα πόθεν γέγοναν*; *Concerning a hundred heresies in short. Where they started and from what they derived*, *De haeresibus*), was one of the first to qualify Islam as the *heresy of the Ishmaelites' false prophet* [//http://www.odinblago.ru/damaskin_tvorenia1/5#2].

Secondly, in the Russian diplomatic and political texts starting from the 12[th] century, Muslims and especially their rulers could be respectfully called *brothers*, followers of *v[e]ry Bokhmiche* (в[е]ры Бохъмиче) and *the law of Muhammad* (Закон Мухаммеда, Lex Mahumeti, Lex Mahumet), *Turkish law* (Турецкий Закон), *Saracen law* (Сарацинский Закон, Lex Sarracenorum). Thus they were placed on a par with the followers of the *law of Christ* (Закон Христианский, Lex Christi, Lex Christianorum, Lex Evangelium) and *the law of Moses* (Закон Моисея, Lex Moysi, Lex Ebraicum, Lex Iudaeorum). This showed recognition of the high status of their tradition. Although viewed as rather specific and different tradition, Islam was not qualified as totally foreign. It was seen as a manifestation of the highest validity, considered from broad and non-denominational viewpoints as a local (just as Christianity) form of the universal *Law of God* (Закон Божий, Lex Dei), which prescribes the universal norms of *the human law* (Закон Человеческий, Lex Humana) to everyone. This rhetoric remained in the 18[th]century and later. One of the many examples of this is the *Manifesto…to the peoples of Caucasus and Persia,* published by Peter the Great, where the Orthodox Emperor, calling for help of God (Божію

споспѣшествующею милостію), addressed the Islamic ruler as *our old faithful friend* (Его Величества, Всепресвѣтлѣйшаго, Великомощнаго, Благополучнѣйшаго и Грознаго, стараго Нашего вѣрнаго пріятеля Шаха) [*The Manifesto of Peter I to the peoples of the Caucasus and Persia of 15 (26) July 1722*, //http://velikolepnyj.ru/forum/threads/1053/].

Thirdly, we can notice the *broad method of religious studies*, different from the diplomatic way, because it is not found in the political elites' correspondence, but rather in the personal descriptions of some travels. For example, in *The Journey beyond Three Seas of the Merchant Afanasiy Nikitin in 1468-1474*, when speaking about the local people the author states that "the faith of Muhammad is suitable for them". Being a philosopher and a religious scholar he also notes that "God knows the right faith, and the right faith is to know the one God and call his name in every place" [7]. The practical experience of some pilgrims seeing holy places of the East from the inside often proved that the attitude of Muslims toward them sometimes could be better than the attitude of the *Latins*, followers of Ecclesia Catholica Romana, i.e. representatives of common Christian faith [8]. Therefore, historically Islam and Muslims were viewed by the Russian authors as: (1) hostile adherents of different faith, (2) important partners for cooperation, or (3) a subject for unbiased study.

3. Formation of the terms Islam and Muslim

As stated above, the search of word *Islam* in the RNC system shows 414 documents recorded since 1718; the entire 18th century shows only 3 documents. All of them are not the names of this Abrahamic religion, but only personal names of people (tolmach by the name of Islam, 1718; Gesperskiy warrior Islam Barataevich, 1795) or the name of the city (Исламбул, Islambul, holy great city, Istanbul, 1789). There are some derived case forms of this lexical unit in the RNC system (of Islam, to Islam, about Islam, by Islam) starting from 1795 (*The Tale of Artobaz Khirazovich - The Strong, Mighty Hero*, 1795). In the 19th century, the lexical unit *Islam* was found in 25 documents (7%); in the 20th century, the lexical unit *Islam* was found in 137 documents (33%); 249 documents (60%) including the lexical unit *Islam* refer to the current century.

The first usage of the lexical unit *Islam* for the description of religion appears in the middle of the 19th century (RNC: "some Mordva confessed Islam", D.I. Ilovaysky, *History of Ryazan Principality*, 1858). The texts of that period described Islam with the following lexical units: *religion of Mohamed* (религия Мохамеда, 1869), *magometanstvo* (магометанство, 1844), *basurmanstvo* (басурманство, 1838), whereas earlier texts have the following lexical units: *Muhammad's faith* (Мухаммадова вера,1474, *The Journey beyond Three Seas of Afanasiy Nikitin*), *the faith Bokhmiche* (вера Бохъмиче) (1118, *The Tale of Bygone Years*), *stratsinskaya faith* (страциньская вера) (1106, *Vita et peregrinatio Danielis, Russicae terrae hegumenis*), etc.

Surviving chronicles from the period of the Moscow Principality's power in the Golden Horde (from 14th to 17th centuries) often describe Islam as *false faith* (лжеверие, evil faith, heresy, etc.); the followers were called *wicked* (безбожнии, вканьнии, проклятии, поганъ, etc.), *Ishmaelites*, *Moabites, Hagarites, Bassurmans, Saratsiny, Turks, Tartars*, etc. (измалтянѣ, Моавитяне, агаряне, басурмане, сарацины, турки, татары), as opposed to the *true believers (правоверные и православные христиане, Orthodox Christians)*.

As stated above, the lexical unit *Muslim* is found in 203 documents since 1789 (RNC). Only 3 documents were found for the whole 18th century, two of which are *true Muslim*. 30 documents (14%) were found in the 19th century. 84 documents (42%) refer to the 20th century, and 86 documents (43%) were created in the current century. The lexical unit *basurmans* (бусурман, бесерменин, бусульман, бусульменин, etc.) was preferred up to the 18th century. According to the *Dictionary of Russian Language of XI-XVII centuries* this unit was fixed since 1594 and denoted both the category of strictly *Muslims* and the collective category of infidels as a whole that included Muslims along with non-Orthodox Christians [9]. *Basurmans* were opposed to *Christians* and *Orthodox*, while the latter lexical unit began to spread in the Russian language in the same 16th century, which was called Reformation in Europe (1517-1648). It was the rule of Ivan the Terrible (1530-1584), who conquered the Kazan khanate and made millions of Muslims subjects of the Russian Tsar. It gradually became the marker, denoting not just one of the regional traditions of the Christian Church, but the *radiant piety of Moscow* as a new geopolitical centre of power [10]. In the end of the 18th century a respectful term *subjects of Mohammedan law* (Закон Мухаммеда) appears (Catherine the Great, 1783); although up to the 20th century there were some polemical publications against Mohammedan corruption. In the 19th century, the universities of Saint Petersburg (1819, Department of Persian language) and Kazan (1828, Department of Turk-Tatar language) introduce distancing of missionary (anti-Muslim) and academic (Arab studies, Oriental studies, Middle Eastern studies, Islamic studies, Religious studies, etc.) approaches to the study of the Muslims of Russia and Eastern countries as a phenomenon of global culture

The lexical unit *Basurmans* remains in the texts of the 19th century (called the *century of magazines*, *century of writers* and *century of nationalism)*. It still referred to Christians who did not belong to the Moscow *radiant piety* (Greek-Russian Orthodoxy as Russian faith, Pravoslavie, Православие). This reflects the turn to the confrontation with Europe in the policy of Nicholas I. In this context, one can find literary works describing *nasty nemchin, basurman, Latin* (поганый немчин, басурман, латынщик), in whose defence it was said that he is not a sorcerer or basurman-tartar, but a Christian, just like Russians, but only of a non-Russian faith (RNC, I. Lazhechnikov (1838), *Basurman*).This was a sharp contrast with the semantics of the Holy Alliance (La Sainte-Alliance, Heilige Allianz, 14/26.09.1815) signed just two decades earlier by the Orthodox Emperor Alexander I of Russia, Catholic Emperor Francis I of Austria, and

Lutheran King Frederick William III of Prussia "in the name of the most Holy and Undivided Trinity", where Emperor of Austria, King of Prussia and Emperor of Russia were called "bonded by of real and unbreakable brotherhood", "fellow countrymen" and "members of the one Christian nation" in contrast with both Islamic Ottoman Empire and Napoleon's *godless republicanism* [11].

In the 20th century, after a short *Golden age* of tolerance (1905) and religious freedom (1917), the government switched to the policy of *militant atheism* and all religions were qualified as *religious superstitions*, *opium for the masses* and *hindrance for social development*, *bound to die off soon*. The attitude of respect to Muslims re-emerged in post-Soviet Russia only in the end of the 20th century; Islam was recognized as part of the rich religious culture of the peoples of Russia. Starting from 2012, the subject *Fundamentals of Islamic culture* began to be taught in a number of schools of the country in the framework of the *Fundamentals of religious cultures and secular ethics* and the *Fundamentals of spiritual and moral culture of the peoples of Russia*. At the same time, the word *basurman* (басурманин) remained in the modern Russian language, but it changed significantly. It denotes: (1) swear word (obsolete) to describe any *strangers*, *aliens* in cultural and moral way, usually *foreigners*; (2) jokingly refers to a *playful, mischievous, naughty child* (ведешь себя как басурманин, behave like basurman) [S Ragasova, A.A. Khusnutdinov, *On the use of Words Busurman, Mohammedan and Muslim in Modern Russian Speech*, 225, 229, https://docplayer.ru/74382962-Ob-ispolzovanii-slov-basurman-magom etanin-i-musulmanin-v-sovremennoy-russkoy-rechi.html]. According to the data of RNC, the word *basurman* today became a marginal word in everyday communication and was replaced by a more wide-spread, tolerant, scientific and correct term *Muslim*, accepted also by the representatives of this tradition. Consequently, throughout history, Islam and Muslims were marked by Russian authors as: (1) hostile basurmans (Mohammedan corruption); (2) important partners (subjects of Mohammedan law) in the state formation; or (3) subjects for unbiased study of the global culture phenomenon in the universities of Saint Petersburg, Kazan, and other educational centres.

4. Interpretations of Islam from the viewpoint of religious studies

A religious studies approach allows to define two typologically different levels of Islam description in Russian sources. First is the level of *reality observers* expressed in the terms of *first-order languages* (L1) or *languages of confessional description*, in which in the Russian context one can historically define, first of all, the most common *language of Christian (Orthodox) description* (L1Ch), where Islam could be interpreted in the range from extremely understated *heresy* to extremely elevated *faith* and *law*. Secondly, there is the *language of Muslim description* (L1M) representing the Russian minority. Here the followers of Muhammad present themselves as adherents of the *seal of the prophets* (Quran 33:40), i.e. as the followers of the truest

monotheism of Abraham and as *people of the book* tolerant to other religions and traditions (اهلالكتاب).

These L1 are based on the so called *confessional essentialism*, which reduces the features of Christians and Muslims to essentially different communities perceived as internally homogeneous. This often leads to mass media labels like *Russian means Orthodox* and *Tatar means Muslim*, etc. Ethnic characteristics here are equated with the confessional ones as a normative ideal of *righteous living* leading to *true salvation*. These connotations are linked with historically formed denotations, i.e. social and political events, conflicts or amicable relations between Muslims and Christians.

Along with the two forms of L1 of *reality observers* in Russia, there are several descriptions in terms of *second order languages* (L2) used by the *observers of reality observers* as *supra-confessional descriptions, where* the languages of *diplomacy, philosophy, pilgrims*, *law*, or *Science* can be identified. They all strive for impartiality, objectivity and justice of their interpretations.

At the level of the special L2 modern religious study, that does not divide religions into true and false, Russian representatives of Pravoslavie (Orthodoxy) and Islam are acknowledged as citizens possessing the right to freedom of conscience and the ability to freely choose their identity as affiliation to the traditions of global communities that have been formed in the local contexts of certain place and time for thousands of years. Pravoslavie in the modern Russian Federation, represented by the Russian Orthodox Church (Patriarchate of Moscow) and dozens of less influential autonomous communities (some of which are registered by the Ministry of Justice and independent religious communities) trace themselves to the legacy of the Great church of Christ (ἡ Μεγάλη τοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἐκκλησία) formed in Constantinople (330-1453).

Today the Cyrillic lexical unit *Pravoslavie* means a community of such *jurisdictions* that claim themselves belonging to this category but often conflict between themselves both in the whole world and in Russia. Like, for example, the relationships between the Patriarchate of Moscow and Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople (Οικουμενικό Πατριαρχείο Κωνσταντινουπόλεως) or the metropolitan see of Russian Orthodox Old-Rite Church. The lexical unit *Pravoslavie* in the popular Wikipedia is represented in 51 national versions translated as ὀρθοδοξία, Orthodoxia, Orthodoxy, Orthodoxie, Артадоксія, Правоверје, ортодоксија, etc. At the same time, in the modern Russian language the words *Pravoslavie* and *Orthodoxy* have different meanings, since the former is linked with the tradition of the Patriarchate of Moscow and similar communities, and the latter with the phenomena of various forms of conservatism, for example, when speaking of orthodox Marxism or orthodox Judaism having no connection to the Patriarchate of Moscow.

For the purposes of religious study, *Pravoslavie* is a form of Christianity that is referred to the general category of world religions from the end of the 19th century alongside Buddhism and Islam; from the middle of the 20th century, Christianity and Islam alongside with Judaism are also classified as a special group - Abrahamic religions. Historically, the tradition of neutral and respectful

attitude to Islam as to *faith* (вѣра) exists from the ancient written monuments of the 12ᵗʰ century (The Tale of Bygone Years/Повѣсть врємѧнныхъ лѣтъ, Life and travels of hegumen Daniel from the Russian land/Житие и хождение игумена Даниила из Русской земли). This attitude remains later, when in the 16ᵗʰ century Islam could be viewed as a manifestation of universal *right faith*; it was acknowledged, that it is not local authorities, but God himself can elect and save all those who profess the true *right faith* (Afanasiy Nikitin, 1474). The surviving from the 15ᵗʰ century evidence of Ivan Peresvetov (1549), a contemporary of Ivan the Terrible, while describing the *first Turkish king Sultan Mohammed* claims that "though he wasn't an Orthodox king, he arranged what God wanted: in his kingdom he introduced great wisdom and justice as great truth", which brought "God heartfelt joy". He concludes that "God doesn't love faith, but truth", while noting that it was the refusal of the *great truth* that destroyed Orthodox Constantinople captured by the Turks [*The Big Petition to Ivan the Terrible*, http://xn--e1aaejmenocxq.xn--p1ai/node/13627].

Such a broad approach to understanding the relationships of the Church *faith* and political *truth* becomes widespread in the context of Guttenberg revolution (1450-1455), fall of Constantinople (1453) and Reformation era (1517-1648), which permanently transformed the former understanding of the norm. This formed the collective understanding of religions in the spirit of the principle *Cujus region, ejus religio* (Pax Augustana, Augsburger Religionsfrieden, 1555). The Cyrillic lexical unit *Pravoslavie* becomes historically fixed in the Russian language to emphatically mark the *radiant piety of Moscow* as a unique right worship of God, as distinct from the representatives of *different faith*. The latter also included the Christian population of the Russian cities resisting this new centre of *Роусьскаѧ землѧ* (Русская земля, Russian land) of the Riurikid dynasty. For example, when Ivan the III's march to Novgorod (1471) in Moscow chronicles was presented as the war of *Pravoslavie* (true Christianity) against infidels [*The Moscow Tale of the Campaign of Ivan III against Novgorod*, //http://lib.pushkinskijdom.ru/Default.aspx?tabid=5065]. As a result, loyalty to the Moscow court (Russian tsardom, Moscovia, Russia) becomes the political criterion of *pravoslavie* as opposed to *basurmans*. This opposition remains later, for example, in the poem *Borodino* by M.V. Lermontov (1837), where the author used the word *basurmans* to describe the Napoleonic French.

This also explains the noticeable increase of number of texts speaking about Islam in the 15ᵗʰ century princes [12]. During this period, *Moscovia* stops being a part of *Pax Tatarica*, where the elites converted to Islam (1251, 1313) while maintaining the laws of tolerant Yassa of Genghis Khan, which protected the rights of the *Greek faith* followers Metropolitan of Kiev and all Rus (who in 1325 moved their cathedra to Moscow from Vladimir, where it was earlier moved in 1299 after the destruction of Kiev by the Mongol armies (1240)).

The texts of the 15ᵗʰ-17ᵗʰ centuries begin to establish the special semantics of the lexical unit Pravoslavie, reflecting the conflict between the Russian elites - some of which were close to the tsar trying to establish *caesaropapism* (full

authority of the prince) and others who were close to the metropolitan trying to preserve the independence of the Church from the prince's or the tsar's court. This was the age of Church and state confrontation on the issues of Church possessions and the Church's place in its relationships with the grand princes [13]. The word *Pravoslavie* traced back to the epithet *pravoslavnyi*, i.e. corresponding to the *triune theology of the Ecumenical Councils* (11th century) and the *laws of the Greek faith*, begins to connote the concepts of *Moscow - the third Rome* (1523-1524) and the exclusive *loyalty to the Moscow prince* (the right faith of the prince's court). The latter becomes close to the Ecclesia Catholica Romana, the tradition that since the first two ecumenical Councils and Augustine (Aurelius Augustinus Hipponensis, 354-430) was recognized by the elites of the Empire as the only *true religion* (De Vera Religione, 390), approved by the Codex Theodosianus (438) and Codex Iustiniani (529) in the global *Pax Christiana*. The Imperial bureaucracy of that era expressed its worldview in the form of the *universal theological faith (Pravoslavie (Orthodoxy))* (L1Ch), for which all other forms of worldview acted as criminal *heresy* (αἵρεσις). This lead to the above mentioned qualification of Islam in the theological treatises of John of Damascus and his followers.

The attempts to establish Orthodox Christianity in the Empire and persecution of all *heretics* resulted in military geopolitical defeats and mass exodus from *Pax Christiana* to *Pax Islamica*, which was tolerant to all *people of Scripture* [14]. The Emperor Justinian's principle (Μέγας Ιουστινιανός, 483-565) of *one country, one law, one faith* lost to the model of multi-confessional empires of the followers of the prophet Muhammad and later to tolerant Yassa code of the greatest state of Genghis Khan.

In the 15th century, the new *second-order languages* or *supra-confessional descriptions* (L2) of reality receive state recognition and spread in philosophical and scientific treatises, created by the global and non-confessional *Republic of Letters* (Respublica literaria, République des Lettres, 1417). Their distancing from theological texts (L1) begins after the Peace Treaty of Westphalia (1648); they are now viewed as the manifestation of unilateral confessionalism only. In this period, Philosophy and Science strive to gain the highest status of institutions searching for the universal truth as such, common for the representatives of any local *confessions* as citizens of enlightened states of the European civilization. Special languages of *observers of reality observers* (L2) form in Theology, Philosophy, Mathematics, Physics, History and other *sciences*. The words *religion, faith, church, and law* collectively denote similar social phenomena, first of all the *dominant religions*, including Pravoslavie (Orthodoxy) and Islam.

The image of *alien* is reinterpreted in this context. For example, the recorded Ustav of Prince Yaroslav the Wise (circa 978-1054) prohibited to marry or to take food from the 'infidels' (*zhidovin* or *besermenin* - i.e. people from Volgian Bulgaria and Khazar Tsardom neighbouring kingdoms with Kievan Rus). The lexical unit *besermenin*, as noted above, encompassed not only Muslims, but all non-Orthodox believers at large. From the new viewpoint

of *observers of reality observers*, it was no longer the description of some unchanging *essence*, but the political construct separating *own people* from *strangers* in various historic periods. In this context the search for a new model of Russian identity begins within the concepts of *New Jerusalem* (1479) and *Third Rome* (1524); independent Moscow Patriarchate is established (1589). Conflicts over the *Union of Brest* (1596) aggravate the opposition of the *Latins* (Ecclesia Catholica Romana) and the Moscow *Pravoslavie*, especially in the *Time of troubles* (1598-1613), when during three years in Moscow the elite ruled on behalf of *Vladislav Zhigimontovich* (Władysław IV Waza, 1610-1613) and there was a prospect of including *Muscovy* in *Rzeczpospolita* (1569-1795).

In 1613, the Romanov dynasty begins to rule the *Tsardom of Russia* ('Russia', 'Ῥωσία'), emphasizing the *Pravoslavie* of Moscow piety. In this context the tolerant Peace of Westphalia was signed in Europe in 1648, and a year later the Sobornoye Ulozheniye (Council Code, 1649) was accepted in Russia. It was the first legal document in Russian history beginning with nine articles against *blasphemers and Church rebels* as opposed to *Pravoslavnye, Christians* and the *Church of God*. The document demanded to *reprove, execute, burn down* the former [*Sobornoye Ulozheniye*, http://www.hrono.info/dokum/ 1600dok/1649_01.php]. An even stricter attempt to assert monoconfessionalism of the population were the *Twelve Articles of Princess Sophia* (1685) against all *schismatics*, who "cause temptation and rebellion among Christians with their nasty words and do it persistently; for this heresy they are to be tortured three times… if they do not obey - they are to be burned and the ashes scattered." [https://filesclub.net/5484625/]

The available examples of other semantics of *observers of reality observers* can be found in the global empire of Genghisids, where the norms of *Yassa* protected the *laws of faith* of all peoples included in the state, as well as in Spain, where the *kings of three religions* (Islam, Judaism and Christianity) ruled for several centuries. They were preceded by the policy of the emperors of Imperium Romanum (Βασιλεία Ῥωμαίων), where the religion of all peoples was respected - their *religio* and traditions of ancestors (*Mos maiorum, Mores maiorum*). This allowed almost a thousand years of ideal human *communal life* in Urbs Roma as in the *Eternal City* and in the *republic* (res publica, the common cause), where the *liturgy* practices (liturgia, λειτουργία, ministration, common cause) united all in *Pax Deorum* (God's agreement with the ultimate foundations of life) [15].

Philosophic religious study in the modern Russia is based on the broad perspective of the description of Islam and Pravoslavie (Orthodoxy) as equal religions resurgung after 70 years of mandatory atheism. According to Jan Assmann, one can analyse *collective memory*, where *communicative* (oral stories, eyewitness reports) and *cultural* (book stories, festival rules) forms [5]. Another scholar, Benedict Anderson, offered a valid description of the history of mankind as the development of *imagined communities*, because all societies are always mobilized by *imagination*; at the same time, it was noted that "the great merit of traditional religious worldviews ... was their concern with man-in-space,

man as a generic being and the fragility of human life" [16]. It is also necessary to note the works of Niklas Luhmann, who offered to use the term *religion* in extremely broad meaning as *supervision of unknown*, which includes the whole range of appropriate symbolic forms helping to protect the above *fragility* from invasions of the *unknow*n (mysterious, unclear, incomprehensible, and so on) [17].

Such tendencies are present in Russia since the 19th century among the *reading public* belonging to the Greek-Russian confession that under the influence of philosophy of Romanticism manifested interest in Islam, Buddhism, shamanism, mythology, folk tales, magic, archaic and traditional cultures, fascination with the "exotic, amazing and unusual", reflecting the "desire for self-knowledge through Another" [18].

On this foundation, modern Russian religious studies was formed in the 20th century. Since the *post-Soviet* period it allows to see *own, different* or *completely alien* not as eternal *essences*, but as coexisting social structures that appear and transform directly dependent both from themselves and from one another. The term *Islam* and *Muslims* in modern Russian culture, according to the *New Russian Encyclopaedia,* denotes one of the two most representative religious traditions among citizens of the modern Russian Federation and its followers [19]. A similar definition can be found in the professional religious publication - *Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Religious Studies* [20]. The article in the *Encyclopaedia of Religions* is similar [21]. Thus, only in the last 25 years we can talk about the approval of the new and very historically young norms of modern Russian social life; the whole generation of Russian citizens considering this natural and appropriate has grown and matured. In this context a number of sociological projects appeared that explore the modern features of the Orthodox and Islamic identity [22].

5. Conclusions

The terms *Islam* and *Muslims* in the Russian literature were established as uniform labels of the followers of the law of Mohammed since the 19th century.

Academic approach differentiates the positions of: (1) reality observers (confessional, theological and 'popular' interpretations) and (2) observers of reality observers (concepts of Philosophy and various studies, including religious studies).

Historic attitude to Islam and Muslims in the Russian literature had two associate approaches - diplomatic (foreign) and ethno-confessional (domestic).

Foreign (diplomatic) approach was characterized by the development of universal terminology used in international correspondence, where Islam was acknowledged as *faith* and Muslims as subjects of their ruler, called *brother*, *friend*, etc., united by their faithfulness to the Absolute Ruler neutrally called *God*, *Almighty*, *Eternal*, etc. instead of the denominational *Allah* and *Trinity*.

Domestic approach defined two perspective views. The first was the effort to identify by means of total Christianization of all *faithless basurmans*. The second was connected with the conquest of new territories inhabited by millions of *foreigners and people of other faiths* who became citizens of the state. This view required their solidarization policy by means of supporting their engagement and distinctive life (autopoeisis) as *Russian citizens following the law of Mohammed*.

The 20th century began as a short *golden age of religious freedom* (1905-1918) followed by the *Pax Sovietica* period, when the construction of the new identity started - the community of soviet people, atheists and architects of communism, where all types of confessions (religious superstitions) were to die away.

Post-soviet period is characterized by a significant revival of *collective memory* by the regional elites trying to restore the traditions of *Pax Christiana, Pax Islamica*, and *Pax Buddhica* in Russia, where since 2012 schools have offered disciplines introducing these influential traditions and connecting the culture of the present both with the past and with the universal moral values.

Acknowledgement

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