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Languages of the Peoples of the East in I. E. Zabelin's Paleography Course at the Konstantinovsky Land Surveying Institute, Second half of the 19th century

Abstract

In this article, the author explores the role of languages in the paleography course taught by the eminent Russian historian I. E. Zabelin (1820–1908) in his original course on paleography (Cyrillic, Latin, and Oriental scripts) for students at the Konstantinovsky Land Surveying Institute. The author's methodology for teaching Oriental paleography and the humanistic message of Russian higher education pedagogy are established. Fostering an interest in the cultures of both Western and Eastern peoples, tolerance, and mutual understanding have always been its distinctive features. This was evident in the choice of topics and methods for teaching historical disciplines. I. E. Zabelin is known to the Russian academic community as a historian of pre-Petrine Russia, particularly Moscow, and the author of remarkable archaeological discoveries in the Northern Black Sea region. His personality and work have been extensively studied, but this is the first time that the paleography course and the role of Oriental languages within it have been examined. The study's material includes I. E. Zabelin's preparatory handwritten notes, drafts of his addresses to the leadership of the Konstantinovsky Land Surveying Institute, and typographic visual aids prepared by the scholar. Furthermore, the scholar's manuscripts characterizing I. E. Zabelin as an educator, which are housed in the Department of Written Sources at the State Historical Museum in Moscow, were used. It has been established that I. E. Zabelin compiled his own teaching materials from disparate foreign sources to introduce students to Eastern languages. A century before turning to nomadic sign systems, he introduced his students to their tamga-like symbols and employed a visual aid that was cutting-edge for contemporary pedagogy. It has been suggested that, lacking a formal historical education, I. E. Zabelin consulted with leading scholars in Moscow and St. Petersburg and independently created visual aids. It has been established that he introduced his students to examples of Chinese and Egyptian hieroglyphs, cuneiform, Kufic script, the Arabic alphabet,

and Sanskrit and Hindi scripts. I. E. Zabelin's commitment to teaching the paleography of Eastern languages demonstrates his commitment to introducing students to the latest scientific advances. Archival materials paint the reader a picture of a conscientious, talented, and creative teacher and innovator. I. E. Zabelin's students applied the knowledge they acquired in their practical work.

Keywords

I. E. Zabelin, Russian antiquities, history of Russia, oriental paleography, Scythology, history of pedagogy, tamga-like signs, Kufic script, cuneiform, Sanskrit, Hindi, Arabic script, Cyrillic, Latin, oriental scripts, Konstantinovsky Land Surveying Institute.

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