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Names of Moon Houses in Libro della Luna by Alfonso X el Sabio and their translation from Arabic into Polish

The article includes the translation from Arabic of 28 Moon Houses’ names and their identification with Fix Stars. It is the basis to analyzing texts which concern ways of preparing and working the talismans based on the 28 Moon Houses, included in the Libro della Luna, the third part of the Astronomia – a thirteenth-century manuscript, connected to Alfons X el Sabio, king of Castile.

The Moon Houses are the set of 28 Fix Stars which make the way of the Moon during the following 27 or 28 nights. This system probably comes from Sumero-Babilon tradition and it was known in China, India and the Arab world in the last centuries before Christ. From there it passed to Latin Europe.

Each house has its own name, which came from Arab tradition. They are distortions of Arabic words. Mostly they mean the names of the stars or characterizes parts of constellations. The manuscript gives a few variants of names, according to the doctrines of different scholars (of Plinius the Older, Kankah, the Indians and Hermez). Each house is identified with one or a few Fix Stars situated in the neighborhood and is also connected with specific zodiacal grades and planets. These relationships determine their power and characteristics. They also tell one about making the talismans attributed to them and how they work.

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Islamic components in the art of Lithuanian-Polish-Belarusian Tatars

1. Introduction

The first wave of Lithuanian-Polish-Belarusian Tatars was brought to the Great Duchy of Lithuania at the end of the 14th century, a hundred years after Islam had been embraced by Khan Berke (1257-1266), and some fifty years after the further strengthening of Islam by Khan Özbek (1313-1341). Whether this early Islam in the Golden Horde was deep or not, Islamic influences in the local art were present at the outset of this state, and the contacts with Islamic traders and craftsmen in this part of the world had started much earlier. Despite the relatively rapid assimilation of Tatars in Lithuania and Poland, the ties with Islam in Turkey and other Turkic areas were never completely broken, and a weakening faith was enforced by repeated waves of new immigrants and the Islamic scholars who came with them. Over time, with cultural and linguistic assimilation, the religion, its liturgy, rites and art have become an essential distinctive feature of this ethnic group. As with many local people in the pre-modern time whose self-identification reflected religion and not ethnicity, Lithuanian-Polish-Belarusian Tatars distinguished themselves as Muslims from the Orthodox and Catholic majority.

At the same time, Lithuanian-Polish-Belarusian Tatars absorbed many elements of local cultures, including those, which may be ascribed to Christian art. Many elements of the Islamic art of Lithuanian-Polish-Belarusian Tatars are now irreversibly lost. The last and most destructive blow was delivered after 1917 and 1945 by the Soviet communist regime. Firstly, many mosques, which were centres of congregations with sacred
objects and artefacts stored in them, were demolished. Secondly, the Soviet regime nationalised private estates and completely destroyed the houses of Tatar noblemen, aristocracy and high-ranking military service-
men with all the collections and documents owned by rich Tatar families.

At present, the Islamic culture of Lithuanian-Polish-Belarusian Tatars can be studied as preserved in written documents, religious manuscripts, gravestone inscriptions, pictures (so-called muhīr) architecture, Tatar arms and armour provide little evidence. Christian components are defined here as typical Christian features in the objects and artefacts of a specifically Islamic character.

2. Written documents

Written documents preserved in state archives and libraries are among the oldest objects pertaining to the Lithuanian-Polish-Belarusian Tatars, for some of them date to the 13th century. Many of them are legal documents with Lithuanian-Polish-Belarusian Tatar signatures and attestation formulas in Turkish and Turkish-Tatar, written in Arabic letters. One document of this type, kept in the collection of the Polish National Library in Warsaw, call number IV. 8783, k. 96 of 1626 is particularly relevant to this study, for the signature under the text imitates the Ottoman signatures in the divān writing. This document is the only known Lithuanian-Polish-Belarusian Tatar example of the calligraphic writing of a signature (photo 1). The writing is illegible. The first word resembles the Tur. word bən 'I', known from other documents, another word may be an Islamic name such as the Ar. Muḥammad or Muṣṭafā, and the only clearly legible word is Allāh, probably part of a composite personal name, such as Allāhberdi or the like (Jankowski, forthcoming).

3. Religious manuscripts

Religious manuscripts include such types of Lithuanian-Polish-Belarusian Tatar literature as tawāṣuṣ, tefās, kitāb, hānūm as well as sufras and copies of the Qur’an, produced in the forms of handwritten, bound books and booklets. Beyond them there are plates hanging on the walls of mosques and strips or slips of paper with Arabic, Arabic-Turkic and Arabic-Turkic-Slavic formulas and prayers called dahāwars, hramot-
kas and maskas (Szynkiewicz 1935 138-139; Krejkęski 1938: 289-290, 303-305; Drozd 2000a: 12). The oldest manuscripts go back to the 16th century. The art of copying has existed up to when it was replaced by modern technologies such as printing, photocopying and scanning. A good selection of all types of manuscripts, with the oldest and most representative ones, was presented in the excellent publication by Drozd, Dziekan and Majda (2000).

Most manuscripts contain no decorative elements, but many of them try at least to imitate calligraphy, and are distinguished by some characteristic features of writing. As is well known, the art of writing and calligraphy occupies a special position in Islamic art. Some Lithuanian-Polish-Belarusian Tatar scriptes were genuine masters of writing. Therefore, their products can be recognized as pieces of calligraphy. One such scribe was Mustafa Szahiedewicz, active in the 19th century. There are three large kitabs copied by him known to us (one in photo 2). Mustafa Szahiedewicz also influenced some later scribes.

The scribes imitated the general features of oriental manuscripts. Therefore, many Lithuanian-Polish-Belarusian Tatar manuscripts look like their oriental prototypes. For example, some words and phrases are distinguished by red ink, some by strokes drawn above words, in red as well. Interlinear translation is arranged in diagonal lines (see photo 3).

Sometimes the first page of a manuscript or pages with new chapters were decorated with drawings, frames and vignettes, e.g. photo 48-50 and 59-74 in Drozd, Dziekan and Majda (2000). The text of the last page of a chapter in Mirkamawicz’s Kitāb copied before 1782 is enclosed in a triangle characteristic of Islamic manuscripts (Jankowski, Łapicic 2000, front page).

Much less frequent are illustrations to a text. Wherever they appear, they are mostly geometrical figures, Islamic symbols such as the star and crescent, Dī ṣ al-Faṣqār sword, motives of plants (leaves, branches etc.), minarets, domes and other fragments of mosques. Similar ornaments, although rare, appear on leather book covers. Special signs, seals, figures,
letter combinations and modifications are visible on talismans, amulets and manuscripts containing magic formulas, astrological calculations and onomancy (e.g. photo 4).

4. Pictures

Lithuanian-Polish-Belarusian Tatars decorate their houses and mosques with pictures of a religious character, called muhirs (from Tur. mühir, Ar. mahr ‘seal’). Muhirs are painted, drawn, embroidered, mostly framed; they contain calligraphic quotations from the Qur’an and other Islamic books. There is a good selection of pictures of this type in Drozd, Dziekan and Majda (2000, photographs 118-177).

The pictures can be subdivided into a few types. Drozd (2000b: 40-42) has distinguished three types of muhirs: inscriptional, iconic, inscription-iconic and those with Muhammad’s seal.

The inscriptions are diversified. Some are short phrases composed of no more than two words, some longer formulas and complete prayers, all designed calligraphically. It is obvious that Lithuanian-Polish-Belarusian Tatars ‘borrowed’ the practice of decorating private houses and mosques from the major Islamic centres they were in contact with, i.e. the Crimea, Turkey (often via the Crimea) and Kazan. Turkish, Crimean Tatar and Volga Tatar pictures were purchased and copied at home. An example of a Turkish muhir from the now non-existing mosque in Dowbuciszk (Br. Dobuciku, now part of Sinki, Belarus) is seen in photo 5. It contains a well-known Ar. formula tawakkaltu ‘alā Allāh ‘I trust in God’ and a date AH 1344 (AD 1928). For comparison, we present a similar formula in a picture from the Crimea (photo 6).

Another example of similar pictures is a contemporary Lithuanian-Polish-Belarusian Tatar muhir with the formulas a’ūdha bi-Allah... and basmalo from the house of worship in Widze (Br. Vidzé, Belarus), and a drawing by Şefqua Memetova from the Crimea with a’tūdha bi-Allah... and the Qur’anic verse Ayat al-Kurs (Q 2: 255), photographs 7 and 8.

5. Gravestone inscriptions

Tatar cemeteries, especially in Lithuania, are very old. The oldest datable gravestone inscription was discovered by Andrzej Drozd in the cemetery Drozdowska Zaiči in Sorok Tatars, the old Lithuanian-Polish-Belarusian Tatar settlement Kyrk, now Keturiškės imst Totoriškės, Lithuania. It dates from 1035/1626 (Drozd, Dziekan and Majda 1999: 35). Further inscriptions, undated, but commemorating historically known personages

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who lived in the 17th century, were discovered by this author and Andrzej Drozd in Režiai and Bazoriai, also in Lithuania. Beside the documents deposited in archives, it is gravestone inscriptions, due to the solidity of material they were engraved on, that have best preserved epigraphic features.

The oldest gravestones are more or less elaborated steles, either bare or with short inscriptions, consisting of the year of death and the initials of the name and the surname of a deceased person. Naturally stone steles are universal in many cultures, but it is worth comparing typical Lithuanian-Polish-Belarusian Tatar steles with Christian ones known in Belarus, either Orthodox or Catholic, e.g. photographs 73, 76, 80, 82 and 84 in Ramanjuk (2000). As an illustration, we present a stele from Ramanjuk (2000: photo 73), photo 10 and Haniu Jakubow ska’s gravestone (d. 1855) from the Lithuanian-Polish-Belarusian Tatar cemetery in Mir (Belarus, photo 11).

Also the placing of dates carved on Lithuanian-Polish-Belarusian Tatar gravestones was modeled on the local pattern, see the commemorating stones in Potapowicz (Br. Patapovič, Belarus) in photo 12: “R: 1683”, i.e. ‘Y’Year: 1683’, with a similar date arrangement on Amina Aleksandra’s (Wycz’s) stone (eastern stone) ‘Y’Year: 1824’ (photo 13).

6. Elements of architecture

In general, Lithuanian-Polish-Belarusian Tatar houses do not differ from the houses of the local Christian population. Even if they had placed some Islamic symbols on them, there is no evidence of it. Only one element of this type was spotted on a traditional wooden house in Režiai, Lithuania. This is a pinnacle on the roof of Dzianajwicz’s house, with a crescent open to the upside at the top (photo 9). As was said above, the crescent and the star is a common Islamic symbol of Lithuanian-Polish-Belarusian Tatars, but in manuscripts and gravestones it appears only in the 19th century. At present it is also put on cemetery gates, the gates of private houses and other places.

From many mosques only nine, and one in ruins (currently renovated), have survived, two in Poland, one in Lithuania and three in Belarus. In the past, Lithuanian-Polish-Belarusian Tatars built mosques of wood. The Lithuanian-Polish-Belarusian Tatar mosques do not resemble

4 The graves in a Lithuanian-Polish-Belarusian Tatar cemetery were arranged in rows running from the north to the south, the individual graves being dug from the west to the east, the face of a buried person directed to the east.

5 In addition to a few new mosques and buildings adapted for service.

6 Mosques built of brick appear in the 20th century.
oriental mosques very much. Naturally, every mosque must have some specific features to be an Islamic house of worship. This is the mihrāb ‘prayer niche’, minbar ‘pulpit’, and a separate place for women. The minarets were not detached towers, but spires or small domes on steeples of various length.

One of the oldest datable elements of the interior is the pulpit in the mosque of Reizai, constructed in 1686 (Drozd, Dziekan, Majda 2000: 37), and although repeatedly renovated, it has preserved the original inscription in Arabic writing and paintings. This pulpit is an interesting example of the correlation of domestic culture and Islamic art. At first, the paintings seem purely local, but a more careful glance reveals tulips, i.e. blooms rather unknown at that time in Lithuania, and the ornament of alms, also a characteristic Oriental detail (photo 14).

7. National clothing

Our knowledge of Lithuanian-Polish-Belarusian Tatar habits and everyday life, including dress is very limited. Perhaps the study of old manuscripts will shed some light on unknown aspects of life. For example, Miekamanovicz’s Kitab prescribes that a Muslim woman should wear underwear trousers (Jankowski, Łapić 2000: 203). Although we do not know if they had really put on ones, there is some information that women’s dresses considerably differed from those worn by the local women. In the 19th century, they were said to wear short gowns with spotted orange and yellow designs and large sleeves, large headscarves, shoes with pointed, red tips and large earrings (Kryczyński 1938: 165). As for men in the past, the researchers stress that Lithuanian-Polish-Belarusian Tatars looked like Polish noblemen, for the latter adopted typical Oriental items of dress, and therefore it was very easy for the Tatar men to integrate into Polish noble society.

8. Conclusion

It is a well-recognised fact that the local styles in architecture and ornaments have been used for mosques and artefacts throughout the Islamic world, especially at places lying far away from Islamic centres. For instance, the famous Niujie Mosque in Beijing does not resemble an Islamic mosque when viewed from the outside at all, which is also true of some Lithuanian-Polish-Belarusian Tatar traditional mosques. Further examples can be delivered by simple rural mosques in Africa or a pagoda-like minaret of the Kampung Keling Mosque in Melaka, Malaysia. As the old pulpit in the mosque of Reizai, discussed above, so the beautifully elaborated pulpit in the Tranquerah Mosque in Malaysia reveals the local manner for woodwork and decoration, with only slight shades of typical Islamic features.

To conclude, we can say that Lithuanian-Polish-Belarusian Tatars adopted many local patterns and architectural details to their arts employed even for specific Islamic purposes, cult and liturgy. It is especially true of those details, which were consistent with the Islamic doctrine and tradition. As was said, aside from the period of the communist regime in Belarus and Lithuania, and to a lesser extent in Poland in 1939-1989, Lithuanian-Polish-Belarusian Tatars always kept in touch with their Oriental partners in faith. However, the selection of Islamic patterns in art was restricted by assimilation and local workmen who carried out the artefacts ordered, although there were also native Tatar artisans.

We can observe the process of change in technology and fashion on gravestones, which is probably the best, continuously evidenced testimony of Lithuanian-Polish-Belarusian Tatar art, spanning the period of 17th-18th centuries, from simple, then carefully elaborated stone to iron, marble and concrete plates as present in Christian cemeteries. As far as current Islamic handicraft is concerned, the local production is being fully replaced by the import of Islamic devotional objects from Islamic countries.

ABBREVIATIONS

| Ar. | Arabic |
| Br. | Belarusian |
| Tur. | Turkish |

REFERENCES


7 Some kinds of job, as calligraphy and the copying of manuscripts, could only be carried out by native Lithuanian-Polish-Belarusian Tatars. It is also certain that Tatars did at least part of construction job at mosques.
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Photo 1: Document attributed to Abraham Kulizinovitch, written by the scribe A. Texanovskij in 1626 (Polish National Library, Warsaw, catalogue number IV. 8783, k. 9b).
Photo 2: *Kitab* copied in 1837 by Mustafa Szahidewicz in Słonim (Drozd, Dziekan, Majda 2000, photo 36); p. 378 displays the beginning of a *zikr* in Turk. *Dertlûnumî a[y]bîbu* [Ey, Tebrîmî ŋabîbu...] he healer of sufferers! Oh the beloved by God*, with a parallel Polish translation *'Pan Bóg kazdej rzeczy jest mocnym lekarzem | Muhammad prorok sluga i przyjacielem boskim'.

Photo 3: *Hamail* of the Lithuanian-Polish-Belarusian Tatar congregation of Sorok Tatar (Keturiadsdešimn Totorin) from the 1st half of the 19th century, kept in the mosque. On the right-hand page, a characteristic beginning of a new portion of text in Belarusian is seen: [2] ... Bâb na mahilû [3] rûki pâlažqvâ pet 'Chapter. Put your hand on a grave and recite', and an Ar. prayer beginning with [4] Bism Allâh ar-rañmân ar-rahîm [5] Allâhumma inni as'âluka... ' [4] In the name of God, Merciful and Compassionate [5] My God, I am entreating to You...' On the left-hand page, there is a table with the Muslim lunar calendar, preceded on the right hand page by the following text in Belarusian: [8] to jest liâba tureckajn ['[8] this is Turkish calculation', with the assignment of the calendar letters to weekdays, e.g. *alif* - čwariek, *hâ* - panałyek 'Alîñ - Thursday, Ha - Monday' etc.
Photo 4: Loose page with Chapter 112 of the Qur'an and the Ar. formula *hawqala* with numbers and magic letter combination. In a private collection, Taušiūnai (Lithuania).

Photo 5: Turkish *mukir* from the non-existing mosque in Dowbuciszki, Br. Doubički, Belarus, owned by Mr. Aleksander Radkiewicz. The wooden frame is of local construction.
Photo 6: Crimean Tatar picture with the same formula as in photo 5, now in Bakhchisarai, presented to the Crimean Tatar School of Traditional Crafts by Mr. Ayder Asanov. In addition to the central formula, there is basmala above it, the names of four archangels Gibrā’il, Mīkā’il, ‘Aarā’il and Isrā’il in the corners, as well as the formula Allāhumma, yā nūr (or nūrī) at the bottom.

Photo 7: Crimean Tatar picture with the formula a’ūdu bi-Allāh min al-ṣayṭān ar-rāhīm, basmala, and Ayat al-Kursi, verse 255 of Chapter 2 of the Qur’an, drawn by Şefiqa Memetova in the Crimea.
**Photo 8:** Lithuanian-Polish-Belarusian *muhir* with the formulas as in photo 7, in the house of worship in Widze, Br. Vidzy, Belarus.

**Photo 9:** Pinnacle on the roof of Dzianajewicz's house in Reižiai, Lithuania.
Photo 10: A stele with a double armed cross (Ramanjuk 2000, photo 73).

Photo 11: Hanifa Jakubowska's gravestone of 1855, Tatar cemetery in Mir, Belarus.
Photo 12: Commemoration stones from Potapowicze, Br. Patapavičy, near Luchowicze, Br. Ljažavičy, Belarus.

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Powiązania scytyjsko-irlandzkie w traktacie Edmund Spensera


Powyższy traktat Spenser zaczął pisać w ostatnich latach swojego życia, w Londynie. Jak pisze Shasta Turner:

Spenser napisał *A View of the Present State of Ireland* (1598) by zaproponować i od razu usprawni podstawić ostre politykę kolonialną kontroli Anglii wobec Irlandii. Jednak, mimo że *A View* popiera angielski kolonializm, luźnią dowody na to, że traktat ten nie spotkał się z przychylnością oceną dworu Królowej Elżbiety: wydany został w 1633 roku, prawie 40 lat po złożeniu go do publikacji. Nawet Sir James Ware, jego wydawca, zauważał, że zdecydowanie sobie, by niektóre ustawy napisane były z większym

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1 Przetłumaczone z podstawy udostępnionej wersji elektronicznej: http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/%7Erbear/veue1.html.