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## Literature of the Polish Tatars

The literature of Polish Tatars reflects their complicated history. A specific trait of the Polish-Lithuanian-Belarusian Tatar population is their use of Arabic script for the notation of their Slavic language as early as the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Originally Mongol, but Turkic speakers, they gave up their native language while retaining the Turko-Arabic script which they adapted to the language of the people to whom they paid allegiance. They lived, however, in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and thus they had the choice of at least three languages: Polish, Lithuanian and Belarusian. Lithuanian was not used, so they used either Polish or Belarusian. The languages belong to different groups of Slavic family: Polish is a West Slavic language (together with Czech and Sorbian), while Belarusian is an East Slavic language belonging to the same group as Russian and Ukrainian. Polish Tatars lived on the borderline between Polish, Russian, Belarusian and Ukrainian language spheres, and their speech was influenced by these languages, which led to a number of sociolinguistic phenomena, such as diglossia and pluriglossia, or, perhaps, bilingualism and multilingualism.

The situation was further complicated by Arabic script. Since the system of notation of the language in Arabic is far from perfect, sometimes it is difficult to establish with all certainty which language is used in the given source. It could be either Polish in its eastern variety, Belarusian, a mixture of both or perhaps yet another vernacular that formed in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth).<sup>1</sup> Recent studies, and especially the works of P. Suter (2004) and A. Danylenko (2006a, 2006b, 2011) shed additional light on the linguistic character of the literary output of Polish-Lithuanian Tatars. It is posited that two different languages – complementarily distributed with regard to specific genres – were used by them. So on the one hand, Lithuanian Tatars used Polish primarily in confessional writings, viz., in the so-called *tefsirs*, i.e. Qur'an copies written in Arabic with an interlinear translation in the spoken eastern form of Polish. The other language was the so-called *rus'kyj jazyk*, commonly identified with Middle Belarusian, or Polissian,<sup>2</sup> which arose in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The Lithuanian Tatars themselves sometimes identified

<sup>1</sup> It was called *prostaja mova*, see: Danylenko (2006a).

<sup>2</sup> The term introduced by A. Danylenko denoting a common language based on Belarusian and Ukrainian vernaculars. Danylenko stresses that "one can legitimately assume that the Lithuanian Tatar 'rus'k'ij jezik' tended to demonstrate in that time a solid configuration of Polissian features" (Danylenko 2006a: 93).

their language as Rus'ian. Thus, the compiler of a Lithuanian Tatar *kitab* of 1631 wrote: *ja xōdīna s'ujū knihū is fars'ijskōhō i s tureckōhō jazika na rus'k'ij jezik perelōzil* ('I, Xodyna, translated this book from the Persian and Turkish languages into the Rus'ian language').<sup>3</sup> The language was the vernacular of the local population and not much can be said of it. Fortunately, the literature of the Tatars preserved it in its initiatory phase. It was used by the Tatars in a number of texts, first and foremost in the *kitab*s. Thus, Polish-Lithuanian-Belarusian Tatars contributed to the recording of the developing Polissian vernacular in the Grand Duchy. The language later evolved into Belarusian and Ukrainian, while the official language of the Duchy became Polish.

The use of Slavonic languages by Tatars in the Polish-Lithuanian Duchy is attested at least from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, although it cannot be excluded that it was used earlier, just after the Tatar population settled in Poland at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

### Classical manuscript literature

The literature of the Tatars is predominantly of religious character. It is preserved mainly in the manuscript form. Only recently there have been attempts to reconstruct this literary output, i.e. to transliterate them from Arabic script into the reconstructed original language form.<sup>4</sup> The process of reconstructing the language(s) only began and it might prove fruitful for the history of the Polish language, and especially for the vernacular Belarusian/Polissian. The works of S. Akiner, A.K. Antonowicz, A. Drozd and Cz. Łapicz are the first step towards their assessment. There is yet another feature of these languages worth further research: borrowings from a number of languages of the Islamic world, first of all Ottoman Turkish, Persian and Arabic, although residues of Mongol also are to be found (Drozd in Drozd, Dziekan, Majda 2000: 17–21). Since the language of the Muslim liturgy is Arabic, the texts are bilingual: Arabic is frequently supported by Polish and/or Polissian translation.

The literature is, in most cases, anonymous. Characteristic are numerous legends and stories of various origin: Mongol, Islamic and Christian. One example of Mongol/Persian account is the story of Baghdad Khatun, originating in historical and partly legendary account of a beautiful Mongol princess called Baghdad Khatun (executed in 1335) notorious for plotting against her husbands – first Hasan Buzurg, and then twice against her second husband Abu Sa'id, the Ilkhanid ruler. Shortly after Abu Sa'id married her niece and elevated her to the rank of principal wife (in 1333–34), Baghdad was accused of poisoning him in and was beaten to death in her bath.<sup>5</sup>

The Tatar version has all the traits of a legendary story with the plot left out. Hasan Buzurg is presented as a entrepreneurial man from the Jala'irid tribe who divorced Baghdad Khatun in 1325 on the demand of the Ilkhanid ruler Abu Sa'id. Baghdad married Abu Sa'id and gained a high position in the court of Abu Sa'id. For

<sup>3</sup> Antonovich (1968: 125), cf. Danylenko (2006a: 92), quoting Miškinienė (2001: 101).

<sup>4</sup> Among the most promising attempts one should count Shirin Akiner's (2009).

<sup>5</sup> A detailed presentation of Bagdad Khatun's life based on sources is to be found in Nilgün Dalkesen's PhD dissertation (2007: 179–197).

this favor, Hasan Buzurg was bequeathed large lands, and after Abu Sa'īd's death he founded his own empire in Anatolia. The legend must have reached the Tatars through Ottoman sources, and since the princess was of Mongol stock the story became popular.

Peculiar and characteristic of the Tatar literature is the story of Kontej (also referred to in a diminutive form as Kontuś), a poor shepherd and a servant to a rich Tatar gentry man called Łowczycki. Łowczycki's daughter committed a grave sin, since she converted to Catholicism. To expiate this sin, Łowczycki decided to perform pilgrimage to Mecca. In Mecca, it turned out that he ran out of money and could not return home. Desperate, he went to a *shaykh* and asked for advice and help. The *shaykh* told him to seek help with a man who was praying in the mosque. In this man Łowczycki recognized his servant Kontej, who promised to transfer him to Lithuania in a miraculous way. However, Kontej asked him not to reveal his secret to anyone. Back at home Łowczycki started to revere his servant in an unusual way which made his wife wondering why he does it. She to began nag and implore him, so eventually Łowczycki told her the story. A few days later Kontej died. Since that time the Tatars began to revere Kontej as a saint (*ewlija*; Kryczyński 1938: 267–269; 2000: 232–235). Its sources go back to the Muslim Middle Ages, already Ibn Battuta is said to quote the legend.

Typical Islamic legends include e.g. the story of Alexander the Great, the tale of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus, King Solomon's ring. Usually they were recorded in *kitab*s and *chamails*.

The influence of the Christian – Catholic and Orthodox – environment on the Tatar religious literature is preponderant. It was only natural that Christian tradition was, on the whole, acceptable to Muslims, which usually was not the case as far as Christian attitude toward Muslims was concerned. The religious writings contain excerpts originating directly from the Holy Scriptures. These were based mainly on the Polish Arian translation of the Bible by Szymon Budny, the so-called *Biblia nieświeska* from 1572, used until late 19<sup>th</sup> century. One of the lengthiest Biblical motifs is *Historia "mirska" o stworzeniu świata* (a history of the creation of the world) based on the Pentateuch, Qur'an and *Qisas al-anbiya'* as well as Old Polish sources.<sup>6</sup>

The religious literature prevails. Of course, religious texts are mostly based on the vast theological, religious and canonical literature of Islam: Arabic and especially Turkish. Usually these are translations or free renderings of various Muslim texts such as the Qur'an (usually appearing in *tefsirs* and *kitab*s), *Qisas al-anbiya'* but also different prayers (*dua*, *munajat* etc.) and invocations (*ziker* i.e. *dhikr*).

### **Kitabs**

The word *kitab* derives from the Arabic *kitab*, which means a book in general. The Polish Tatars use this word to define a special type of religious literary anthologies,

<sup>6</sup> The complicated reconstruction of his text is presented by A. Drozd (1996b: 95–134).

usually untitled, containing Muslim legends, ritual prescriptions, stories and moral precepts, apocrypha and other narratives, but also texts in Arabic (and rarely in Turkish) such as fragments from the Qur'an, prayers. *Kitabs* are by far the most important type of religious literature of the Polish Tatars because of their essential role in the Tatar religious life and the wealth of information contained in them. There is a large variety of *kitabs*. They are written in Arabic script, contain a lot of Arabic texts, usually prayers or quotations from the Qur'an, but the main body of text is written in the Polissian language. Most of the *kitabs* still remain in manuscript form, and only some have been studied and edited.

The number of extant and known *kitabs* does not exceed the number of 30. A. Drozd (Drozd, Dziekan, Majda 2000: 50–54) enumerates 24 of them. The oldest one, from 1631, is lost; it is known only from scanty descriptions. A number of studies devoted to *kitabs* by authors such as S. Akiner (1973, 1978, 2009), A.K. Antonowicz (1968), A. Drozd, M.M. Dziekan, H. Jankowski, Cz. Łapicz (1986, 1991) and others.

One of the first descriptions of a Tatar *kitab* now lost was prepared by Jakub Szynekiewicz. It appeared in the first volume of *Rocznik Tatarski* (1935: 188–194). The *kitab* once kept in the Kruszyniany mosque was dated in the colophon to 1792. The *kitab* begins with the genealogy of Muslim prophets and Muslim dynasties. It is followed by a religious part presented in a typical anthological form without any visible logic of arrangement. So at the beginning there is an exhortation on the importance of the 36<sup>th</sup> sura of the Qur'an, the *Ya' Sin* sura. Then comes a homily of 'Ali, a story of the prophet Ibrahim, a presentation of God's names, names of the Prophet Muhammad, and account of Abu Jahl's attempt to murder the prophet.

The most recent publication of such a relic by Shirin Akiner appeared in 2009. It is a comprehensive study of a *kitab* from the British Library (OR 13020) of 125 pages, dated 1831, by an unknown author. Akiner classifies the Belarusian Islamic language as a jargon that was used by the Tatar community, supplementing the Belarusian standard language of the time (2009: 357) with Polish interferences on phonological and lexical levels. This is what Danylenko refers to as Polissian. The text was partially transcribed. There are three main themes in the *kitab*:

- religious (fragments of the Qur'an, prayer, Islamic doctrinal interpretation, the creation of the world);
- ritual (funeral rituals, Ramadan);
- pastoral (a didactic story, a conversation between prophet and God, sermons).

The Milkamanowicz *kitab* of 1781 is one of the largest: it counts 556 pages. It was analyzed by Czesław Łapicz. The text consists of the following parts:

- Invocation and the *shahada*,
- The third revelation to prophet Muhammad,
- *Ziker*,
- Religious admonishments and a list of the Muslim prophets – dogmas and rituals of Islam,
- Ritual purity,
- Gods attributes,
- Types of prayers,

- Creation of the world,
- The ideal Muslim,
- Reward and punishment,
- Interpretation of the Qur'anic *ayats*,
- Meaning of prayers and good deeds,
- Meaning of fasting (*sawm*),
- hymns to God and the importance of the *Ya' Sin* sura,
- Names and epithets of God,
- A story of two students of Jesus,
- The martyrdom of Agabus,
- Ocean of human deeds,
- The Last Day,
- Creation of day and night.

One of the last *kitab*s published in Poland was the Bajraszewski *kitab* in 1982. Peculiarly, it was written in Latin alphabet, and the author used typewriter to copy it.

### ***Tefsirs***

The word *tafsir* means in Arabic a commentary to the Qur'an. However, Polish Tatars use the word *tefsir* or *tepsir* to define texts of the Qur'an in Arabic with inter-linear translation into Polish. It seems that the word *tefsir* was understood as translation (Polish *tłumaczenie* means interpretation, and this is what the Arabic word *tafsir* means, as well as translation). *Tefsirs* are voluminous, usually around 500 pages, since they contain the complete text of the Qur'an and its Polish, and partially also Turkish translation (the former written with Arabic characters). The translation is literal, sprinkled with additional commentaries and explanations. The first *tefsirs* appeared either at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> or the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The exact number of extant *tefsirs* is unknown, probably no more than twenty have been preserved (Drozd, Dziekan, Majda 2000: 13).

The earliest remaining *tefsir* comes from the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, now in private collection (Drozd, Dziekan, Majda 2000: 48). It is not yet a typical Tatar *tefsir*, since it contains only the Arabic text of the Holy Book with its translation into Ottoman Turkish. It cannot be excluded that it was the prototype for the later *tefsirs* with Polish translation. Another old copy of a *tefsir* with Polish text is dated 1069 A.H., i.e. 1658–1659 A.D. and is kept in the Belarusian Academy of Sciences in Minsk (Drozd, Dziekan, Majda 2000: 13; Titowiec 2004: 231–236).

### ***Chamails***

*Chamail* derives from the Arabic plural *khama'il*, meaning something which is carried about, just like an amulet. It was a typical tradition of the Tatar Muslims to carry amulets called *hramotkas* and *nuskas*. In Tatar tradition *chamails* are, however,

something else: they designate prayer books containing not only *hramotkas* and *nuskas*, but also a number of other texts: essential prayers in Arabic and usually a collection of divinatory texts (*fał*), including interpretations of dreams. Additionally, there are instructions on how to perform prayers, and a description of Muslim dogmas and practices. They seem to be a sort of *silva rerum*, containing all necessary and interesting information for a Muslim. It should be noted that Ottoman Turkish *dua kitaby* were the prototypes of the Tatar *chamails* (Szynkiewicz 1935: 141; Drozd 1993: 49). Their *silva rerum*-like character is confirmed by the way they were collected. Warsaw University library has an Ottoman Turkish *dua kitaby*, previously thought to be a *chamail*, as stated in 1870 by the librarian Józef Przyborowski: it contains a number of prayers and spells as well as an interesting tale about a thief (*harami*) in the commentary of the thief's prayer (Majda 1994: 17–19).

From the point of view of their contents *chamails* may be divided into:

- personal, containing personal notes and information, a sort of family book;
- *moliński* (*matniński*) *chamail* – i.e. a *chamail* belonging to a *mołła* (*mulla*) or used by him;
- *faldżejski chamail* – serving the diviners called *faldżejs*;
- *chamails* used by *siufkaczs* (shamans, quacks).

Usually, the *chamails* contained as many texts as possible with preponderance of certain types of texts. Hence sometimes the difference between *chamails* and *kitab*s becomes blurred, since both may contain similar, or even the same texts. Such is the case, according to A. Drozd, of a *moliński chamail* from the Orda village from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Drozd 1993: 50).

*Chamails* were copied by Muslim Tatars who knew the Arabic script. Sometimes they were composed throughout the lifetime of its author-copyist. Such is the case of the Aleksandrowicz *chamail* and the unfinished *chamail* of Lut Muchla (Konopacki 2009).

An exemplary case is the Sobolewski *chamail* described by A. Drozd (1993: 48–62). The history of this *chamail* is typical for this sort of Tatar religious literature. The main text was written or copied by Alej Bajraszewski, a *siufkacz*, between 1904 and 1914 in the Orda village. After Bajraszewski's death it was passed down to Kozakiewicz family. Józef Kozakiewicz supplemented the original 78 folios of the *chamail* with additional prayers. So at present, the *chamail* contains 100 folios. After his death in the 1980s, it was inherited by Romuald Sobolewski, who lived in Poland.

The method used by the author is typical for this kind of literature: the Arabic text is provided with *szerch* (Arab. *sharkh*) i.e. an interpretation in what seems to be a typical Polissian vernacular. According to A. Drozd, the text is in 60% Arabic, in 31% in Polissian (which he calls Polish-Belarusian) and in 9% Ottoman Turkish (Drozd 1993).

This *chamail* contains usually the so-called *jasienie*, i.e. occasions – usually 40 – in which the *Ya' Sin* sura is to be recited. Only few fragments (pages 186–188) contain typical magical text for the *faldży*.

Another one is the *chamail* of Aleksandrowicz, which was described in detail by Marek M. Dziekan (1997: 27–35). It is a manuscript bequeathed to the Arabic and

Islamic Department of the University of Warsaw by Barbara Hirszt, a descendant of Stanisław Szachno-Romanowicz, who bought it in 1928 in Klecko from the daughter of A. Aleksandrowicz. The dates appearing in the manuscript are between 1876 and 1923.

It is a typical “family-book”, i.e. it was expanded by a number of persons. The language, according to M.M. Dziekan and S. Szachno-Romanowicz, is Polish with only a few Polissian (or Belarusian) texts. It starts with two pages of incantations against all kinds of illnesses, followed by a page of notes on domestic affairs from the year 1881, prayers in different languages, description of the days of the month and then an exposition of where the soul is present in the human body during the month. Interpretation of dreams is repeated a few times. A large part is devoted to *planetny dualar*, the text of which was edited by S. Szachno-Romanowicz.<sup>7</sup> *Planetny dualars* define all sorts of magic actions against *jinnns* and *fierejs* – evil ghosts working against humans and inflicting grave illnesses upon them. The planets define here the signs of Zodiac. The majority of texts is, however, untypical for a *chamail*, since they are of magical character, such as interpretation of dreams and horoscopes.

In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Tatars began to write *chamails* in Polish; often they were typewritten. There are at least such *chamails* dated 1971, 1979, and 1986. Tatars who copied *chamails* was the Białystok imam Lut Muchla (d. 1979), who left an unfinished *chamail* described by Maciej Musa Konopacki (2009: 42–48). His aim was to prepare a *chamail* containing as many texts as possible.

### *Tedźwids*

*Tajwid* in Arabic means the art of reciting the Qur’an. The Qur’an was assiduously copied in the Tatar community, and copies of the Qur’an are among the most popular manuscript books in Tatar collections. The first printed translation of the Qur’an prepared for the Tatars was prepared in 1830 by D. Chlewiński and I. Domeyko. It could not be printed due to the political turmoil of that time. It was published only in 1858, however, Jan Tarak Murza Buczacki was named as the translator.

*Tedźwids* were rare as independent books, usually they were Ottoman Turkish texts with interlinear Polish or Polissian translation. Still, the rules of *tajwid* were incorporated into *tefsirs* or texts of the Qur’an.

The tradition of *tedźwids* is continued to these days. In 1929 appeared the *Practical manual of reading Arabic*,<sup>8</sup> and in 1935 *Tadžwīd. How to read the Qur’an* by Jakub Szynekiewicz was published (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1995). The most recent *tedźwid* is a book containing Arabic transcription of selected suras from the Qur’an prepared by Islam Musa Czachorowski, *Al Fatiha i 13 sur świętego Koranu* (‘Al Fatiha and 13 suras of the Holy Qur’an’, 2010). As it is for all *tedźwids*, it teaches the Tatar Muslims how to

<sup>7</sup> His version was reedited by Marek M. Dziekan (see Szachno-Romanowicz 1997: 7–26).

<sup>8</sup> *Praktyczny podręcznik czytania po arabsku* (the author was probably Ali Smajkiewicz). Vilnius 1929.

correctly read and pronounce the text of the Qur'an. A professional Orientalist Professor Marek M. Dziekan was consulted in the preparation of the text.

### Polemical literature

In the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century a Polish author writing under the pseudonym of Piotr Czyżewski/Czyżowski published an anti-Tatar pamphlet titled *Alfurkan tatarski* (1616), reedited in 1640 and 1643 (Suter 2004). The longish title of the book itself bears testimony to the books' contents. The Tatars are said to be "neither nobles, landed gentry nor dukes, they are slaves of this state". Czyżewski calls them unbelievers and enemies of the holy cross. Their military campaigns are defined as abuses and criminal acts.<sup>9</sup> Estreicher quotes another Czyżewski – Matias (pseudonym?), who wrote a pamphlet against the Qur'an: *Alkoran To iest, Zakon abo wiara zabobonney y obłądliwey Sekty Machometañskiej* ('Alkoran, that is the rules or the faith of the superstitious and insane Mohammedan sect').<sup>10</sup> These are, however, rare examples of attacks against the Islam and Polish Tatars in Polish literature.

These assaults were condemned by Tatars themselves in *Apologia Tatarów* (1630) written by a certain Azulewicz. Unfortunately, the print did not survive to our times.

### Modern Tatar literature in Polish

Modern Tatar literature in Polish started to appear in the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Again the starting point of the literary output was the religion of Islam. During the period of the Filomat circle in Vilnius, a Polish Tatar, Józef Sobolewski, published the *Presentation of the Mohammedan Faith* ('Wykład wiary mahometañskiej czyli islamskiej z części Koranu i przykazań proroka chadisiem zwanych...', Vilnius 1830), based on Tatar *kitab*s.

As Poland regained its independence, large groups of Tatar Muslim population lived on its eastern borderlands. Soon they organized themselves: the year 1925 saw the establishment of The Muslim Religious Union (Muzułmański Związek Religijny). Cultural and literary life flourished. In 1932 the first volume of the journal *Rocznik*

<sup>9</sup> Original title page: *Alfurkan Tatarski prawdziwy na czterdzieści części rozdzielony ktory zámyka w sobie początki Tatarskie y przygnanie ich do Wielkiego Xięstwa Litewskiego przy tém iż w Wielkiem Xięstwie Lit. Tatarowie nie są szlachtą ani ziemiáninami ani Kniaziami, tylko Koziańcami Skurodubami y niewolnikami tego państwa. Do tego sposób życia, obyczajow, spraw wyprawy ná żołnięską, postępkow y zbrodni Tatarskich. Nadto pokazuje się droga do pohámowania y uskromienia ich od tak znacznych excessow. Aby narod nasz Chrześciański od tych bezbożnikow, iako nieprzyaciół Krzyża świętego, dalszych krzywd i obelżenia rozboiow, naizdow y stácyi wyciągania nie ponosił. Alfurkan ten Tatarom zgodny do czytania, ale też y do upamiętania, y poprawienia. Teraz nowo przez Piotra Czyżewskiego (ktoremu Assan Alejewicz Tatarzyn z Wáki Oycá zabił) zebrány y do druku Tatarom wszystkim gwoli nadány w roku 1616. Abyśz łacniey zrozumiał, co wtey książce iest, odwróć kartę tę, obaczysz.*

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.estreicher.uj.edu.pl>, no. 27907.



*Tatarski* ('The Tatar Annual') was published. It was "a scientific, literary and social journal devoted to the history, culture and life of the Tatars in Poland" and it was published under the auspices of the Central Council of the Cultural and Educational Union of Tatars in the Republic of Poland. Leon Kryczyński was its first editor-in-chief, and the editorial board consisted of: Konstanty Achmatowicz, Dawid Janowicz-Czaiński, Olgierd Najman Mirza Kryczyński and Sulejman Murza Murzicz. The title page was also in Turkish and French. Only three volumes of the journal appeared. The 3<sup>rd</sup> and last volume was published in 1938 and contained a monograph of Stanisław Kryczyński *Tatarzy litewscy. Próba monografii historyczno-etnograficznej* ('The Lithuanian Tatars. A historical and ethnographical monographic essay').

After the World War II it was continued as *Rocznik Tatarów Polskich* ('The Annual of Polish Tatars'). The revived version was founded in 1993 by Selim Chazbijewicz and Ali Miśkiewicz under the auspices of the Union of the Polish Tatars (Związek Tatarów Polskich), later: the Union of the Tatars in the Polish Republic.

Another journal was the monthly *Życie Tatarskie* ('Tatar Life') which was published from January 1934 to August 1939 by the Cultural and Educational Union of the Tatars (Związek Kulturalno-Oświatowy Tatarów) in Vilnius. The editor-in-chief was Stefan Tuhan Baranowski. The aim of the monthly was to create an opportunity for the Polish Tatars to voice their opinion in their own press. It presented the contemporary life of the Muslim society in Poland, the life in the Muslim world, often in the form of articles and features from various Muslim, and especially Arab, countries. The journal was an occasion for the Tatars to present their political views. Of course, religious articles also appeared. The literary part, which contained original literature (Dżingis chan – a novel in episodes by S.T. Baranowski) of the Tatars and translations, was quite interesting. One of the actions undertaken by the publishers was the participation in the erection of the Warsaw mosque – a plan which never materialized due to the outbreak of the World War II.<sup>11</sup>

The World War II divided the Tatar communities between Poland and Soviet Union republics – Belorussia and Lithuania. Many of them were displaced and resettled into different regions of Poland. Under the strict antireligious policy of the Soviet Union and the Polish moderately harsh policy in this dimension the Tatar cultural life ceased to exist. Only after the rebirth of the MZR cultural and literary life began to flourish.

The Union (MZR) publishes the quarterly *Przegląd Tatarski, Muzułmanie Rzeczypospolitej, Pamięć i Trwanie* ('Memory and Survival') which is a social and cultural annual published in Białystok. The main aim of the journal is to present the history of Polish Tatars. "Memory", say the editors, pertains to the past which never should be forgotten, and "Survival" is a link to our present times, to the reality we live in. It covers a variety of subjects, from reporting actual events in the Tatar life to discussing cultural aspects covered in longer features.

*Świat islamu* ('The Word of Islam') is also a cultural and social journal devoted to the Muslim faith, Muslim practices (prayer, pilgrimage, *Laylat al-qadr*, fasting), but

<sup>11</sup> A detailed description of the monthly is presented by Mielczarek (1993: 109–116).

also to the history of Islam in Poland as well as to distinguished Muslims in the Polish social, political and cultural life. The editor in chief of *Świat islamu* is Józef Konopacki. *Życie Muzułmańskie* was in a way a continuation of such interwar journals as *Życie Tatarskie* and *Przegląd Islamski*. It was published between 1985 and 1991, and was a religious as well as a cultural journal.

In 1993 the publication of *As-Salam*, a Muslim social and cultural journal, was initiated. Until 2011, 23 issues have been published. The journal is linked at present to the Institute for the Study of Islam, related to the Muslim League in the Republic of Poland. In 2010 the same institute published the first number of *Al-Haya* (most probably meaning Life (*al-hayat*) and not Shame (*al-haya*)), a Muslim magazine for women.

In the post-war period the Tatar community remained fully integrated with the Polish society. The Tatars commenced their literary activity, mainly as poets. Two poets: Selim Chazbijewicz and Islam Musa Czachorowski achieved recognition in Polish literature.

Selim Chazbijewicz (b. 1955), a scholar and university professor, is the author of a number of poetical works in Polish: *Wejście w baśń* ('Entering a Tale', Olsztyn 1978), *Czarodziejski róg chłopca* ('The Youth's Magic Horn', 1980), *Sen od jabłek ciężki* ('A Dream Heavy with Apples', 1981), *Krym i Wilno* ('Crimea and Vilnius', 1990), *Mistyka tatarskich kresów* ('The Mysticism of Tatar Borderlands', 1990), *Poezja Wschodu i Zachodu* ('Poetry of East and West', 1992), *Rubai'jjat albo czterowiersze* ('*Ruba'iyyat* or Quatrains', 1997), *Hymn do Sofii* ('Hymn to Sofia', 2005).<sup>12</sup> The poems predominantly relate to Islamic motifs, cf. poems: *Dzieci muzułmanie* ('Muslim children'), *Dziękuję Allahowi* ('I thank Allah'), *Komu siedzę czynisz* ('To whom you make the *sajda*'), *Młodzi muzułmanie* ('Young Muslims'), *Modlitwa przedwieczorna* ('Early Evening Prayer'), *Muzułmański portal* ('Muslim web-portal'), *Nasza religia* ('Our religion').

Islam Musa Czachorowicz (Musa Caxarxan, b. 1953) from Wrocław is a renowned poet writing to Polish literary journals, such as *Odra*, *Poezja*, *Kultura*, *Odgłosy*, *Kultura Dolnośląska*, *Lietuvos totoriai* as well as Muslim periodicals such as: *Rocznik Tatarów Polskich*, *As-Salam* and *Życie Tatarskie*. His literary work consist of several volumes of poetry: *Nie-łagodna* ('An Un-Meek One'), *Ile trwam* ('How long I last'), *Chłodny listopad* ('Cool November'), *Dotknij mnie* ('Touch me'), *W życiu na niby*, ('In fantasy life'), *Samotność* ('Solitude'), *Na zawsze – Hawsceɟa* ('Forever'), *Rubajaty stepowe* ('*Ruba'iyyats* from the steppe', 2009), *Poza horyzontem* ('Behind the horizon', 2010).

In 2010, Islam Musa Czachorowicz prepared the first anthology of Tatar poetry: *Tatarskie wierszowanie* ('Tatar verses'). It contains over one hundred poems by twenty poets and among them: Selim Chazbijewicz, Anna Kajtochowa, Iza Melika Czechowska, Tamara Jabłońska, Józef Mucharski, Zenaida Póltórzycka. The older generation is represented by the late Dawid Daniel Miśkiewicz, Roman Popławski and

<sup>12</sup> Selim Chazbijewicz, [http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selim\\_Chazbijewicz](http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selim_Chazbijewicz) (accessed: 29.07.2011).

Stefan Radkiewicz. The young generation of poets includes: Michał Mucharem Adamowicz, Ramazan Osman Jakubowski, Elwira Szehidewicz and Katarzyna Ziółkowska.

The activity of Polish Tatars had an important influence on the emergence and development of Polish Middle Eastern studies. They were the inspiration for the Filomat circle in Vilnius in early 19<sup>th</sup> century, and later inspired an essential part of the work of eminent Polish researchers of the Middle East, such as Piotr Borawski, Andrzej Drozd (1993, 1994a, 1994b, 1994c, 1994d, 1995a, 1995b, 1995c, 1996a, 1996b, 1997a, 1997b, 2004), Aleksander Dubiński (1981, 1986), Marek M. Dziekan (1997), Henryk Jankowski (1995), Tadeusz Majda and many others.

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