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## BOOK REVIEWS

*Ivano Luckevičiaus kitabas: Lietuvos Totorių kultūros paminklas / Lietuvių kalbos institutas. Vilnius, 2009. 800 pp.*

**Shirin Akiner. *Religious Language of a Belarusian Tatar Kitab: A Cultural Monument of Islam in Europe*. Wiesbaden: Steiner, 2009. XXVII, 457 pp.+ 1 CD-ROM. (Mediterranean Language and Culture Monograph Series. Vol. 11).**

In the review of “Alfurkan Tatarski” by P. Suter published in *Manuscripta Orientalia* XI/2 I mentioned new publications that had to do with Kitabistics and that were made public after 1986. Since then two catalogues of manuscripts were published: “The Catalogue of Arabic Alphabet Manuscripts of Lithuanian Tatars”, compiled by G. Miškinienė, S. Namavičiūtė and J. Pokrovskaja (Vilnius, 2005) and “Belarusian Tatar Manuscripts of the end of the 17th up to the beginning of the 20th centuries from the collection of the Yakub Kolas Central Science Library of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus”, compiled by I. Gančarova, A. Citavjec and M. Tarelka (Minsk, 2003). This last work contains 14 manuscripts altogether and is of interest primarily on account of the note for the majority of them — “purchased in the second-hand bookshop No. 2 of Minsk”, thus it implies the purchase of private collections. Let me also add the following research — “Old Manuscripts of Belarusian Tatars” by V. Nesciarovich (Vitebsk, 2003). This book is not mentioned in any of the reviewed publications; however, it deserves our attention and it does not contain data, roaming from one profile research to another. Apart from a quite interesting research of phraseologies it contains transcriptions of fragments from “The Hasianeovich Kitab”.

“The I. Luckevič Kitab” from the Manuscript Department of the Library of the Academy of Sciences of Lithuania (F21–814) was published as commemoration of the thousandth anniversary of Lithuania; only 300 copies were printed and they were accessible nearly in commercial circulation only. Its publisher was the same indefatigable G. Miškinienė with the participation of her co-authors of the mentioned catalogues of manuscripts. This publication can be rightly called exemplary and, alas, it is a very uncommon model of approaching arabographic text in a Slavonic or Romanic language: apart from research and reference material the book reproduces the facsimile of

the manuscript with parallel Cyrillic transliteration and translation into Russian and Lithuanian languages. In this field of science the given publication is evidently the only instance of exemplary publication, where all three necessary elements — original, transliteration and translation — are present under one cover. All the material forestalling the given publication is duplicated in Russian and Lithuanian languages.

The foreword explains the choice of this particular *kitāb* and the necessity for not only transliteration but for translation also as a means of “criterion of the degree of understanding texts... and one of the means of linguistic interpretation of text”. However, the author reduces the difficulties in understanding the original to “archaicity of vocabulary and sentence structure”, whereas it is not about archaicity as it is about the fact that Belarusian-Polish texts are not original, but merely a translation, presumably from Ottoman. According to the conventional method of translation of those days they reproduce the grammatical structure of the language, from which it was translated (right up to tracing in the case of canonical texts), instead of that language, into which it is translated. In this connection they do not give any reliable notion of colloquial language of Polish-Lithuanian Tatars of that epoch. Nevertheless, as the publisher puts it, the search for Arabic-Turkic sources is in the lap of the future. It would be interesting to analyze vocabulary and check whether arabographic texts in another Slavonic language — Bosnian were used?

Then we have the section “Of the manuscript of I. Luckevič, the tasks and problems concerning its introduction into scientific circulation”. Although this manuscript is well known, the Arabic and Turkic texts that are a part of it are transliterated (with Roman alphabet) for the first time, and lacunas are supplied with the help of the *kitāb* of A. Koricki, which is textually matching and is from the same library (F3–391). The next section is titled: “Palaeographic description of the manuscript”. The copyist remains unknown, but it is clear that the whole text is written with one and the same hand. The watermarks allow this manuscript to be dated to the first half of the 18th century.

Further, there is the section titled “The peculiarities of the structure and content of the manuscript”. The publisher suggests that chaotic structure typical for *kitābs* may