



Religious Language of a Belarusian Tatar Kitab

By Shirin Akiner

Harrassowitz Verlag Jun 2009, 2009. Taschenbuch. Book Condition: Neu. 241x172x27 mm. Neuware - Tatars from the Golden Horde settled in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the 15th-16th centuries. By descent they were Turco-Mongols, by religion Muslim. Within a few generations they lost their native language(s) and spoke only Belarusian and Polish. In order to record and hand on the essentials of their faith they translated essential religious works into Belarusian Polish. These languages were normally written in the Latin and Cyrillic alphabets - 'Christian' scripts and so unsuitable for Islamic texts. The Tatars therefore devised their own system of orthography, using Arabic letters to convey the phonology of the Slav languages. They also created a religious vocabulary that was suited to the expression of Islamic ideas. For general ethical concepts they drew on Belarusian and Polish, but for terms relating to Islamic doctrine and practice they used Arabic loanwords, 'Slavicising' them morphologically and phonetically. This linguistic fusion represents a remarkable cultural monument of Islam in Europe. The first part of the present work traces the six-hundred year history of the Tatars in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania - a territory now divided between Belarus, Lithuania and Poland. It draws...



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