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## Dear Readers

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Artykuł został opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego. Artykuł jest umieszczony w kolekcji cyfrowej [bazhum.muzhp.pl](http://bazhum.muzhp.pl), gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych.

Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.

## ***Dear Readers***

The 142<sup>nd</sup> issue of the *Nurt* is dedicated to Tatars. Their origins is difficult to establish. They are descendants of Mongols, native to the Volga region. The etymology of the name "Tatar" is still unclear. Published sources mention more than 70 ethnic Tatar groups, who speak many different Turkic dialects. The one thing that has been common to them all since the 13th century is religion: Islam.

There are Kazan Tatars, Crimean Tatars, Siberian Tatars, and... Polish Tatars. Sienkiewicz created the stereotype of Tatar as an "aggressor, enslaving pretty girls" (A. Miśkiewicz). Everyone knows the adventures of Asia Tuhay-Bey, leader of the Lipka troops under Wołodyjowski. By the way, is it not true that the author of the *Trilogy* himself was a Lithuanian Tatar, and that his family's coat-of-arms was Oszyk-Łabędź (Swan)?

Polish Tatars are the descendants of the refugees from the Golden Hord, who originally settled in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the 14th century. Surrounded by Christian culture, they maintained their religion, traditions and customs, as can be seen in the extant chamaily (Tatar prayer books). Translation of the Koran into a Slavic language in the 16th century, in the form of Tatar tafsir, provides evidence for their progressing inculturation.

Polish Tatars declared Poland their homeland. Their contribution to the Polish military tradition and culture was great. There were about 6,000 Tatars in Poland and 1,000 in Lithuania during the Second Polish Republic. After the Second World War most Tatar settlements found themselves incorporated into the USSR. Today, there are about 4,000 Tatar descendants in Poland. Their communes in Bohoniki and Kruszyniany, established before the war, are still active. After the war, new communes were organised in Białystok, Gorzów Wielkopolski and Gdańsk.

Tatars have lived in predominantly Christian environments for six hundred years. And yet they have managed to preserve the religion of Muhammad, even though they have added to it many Christian beliefs and ceremonies. The most important feasts of the Polish Tatars are *Ramadan Bajram* (Feast of Fast-Breaking) and *Kurban Bajram* (Sacrifice Feast).

In 1925, on the initiative of the Muslim Association in Warsaw, the Muslim Religious Association in Poland was established.

Enjoy your reading!

*Adam Michatek SVD*