

Foreword

Religion and language are at the core of culture and often form the basis of ethnic identity. Within the Slavic world, two linguistic-cultural areas are well known: *Slavia Orthodoxa*, which is based primarily on Eastern Orthodoxy and the Church Slavonic literary tradition, and *Slavia Latina*, also known as *Slavia Romana*, where Catholicism has predominated, and Latin was used as a literary language. With some regional variation, these two cultural spheres were eroded after the Reformation in Europe and the rise of national consciousness in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when Church Slavonic and Latin lost the functions they had had in medieval times.

Anton Budilovič's classical work *Obščeslavjanskij jazyk v rjadu drugix obščix jazykov drevnej i novoj Evropy I-II* (1892), especially its second volume, is often considered to be one of the first typological researches connecting language and religious-cultural spheres in the Slavic world, but it was only in the latter half of the 20th century that this research acquired a formal, theoretical foundation and gained terminological currency within Slavic studies. The works of scholars, such as Riccardo Picchio and Nikita Tolstoj, made a significant contribution towards this development. However, these scholars did not seem to develop the idea of Islamic linguocultural (micro)area as a separate linguocultural area comparable to *Slavia Latina* and *Slavia Orthodoxa*.

Taking this fact into account, this collection of articles focuses on the Islamic linguocultural area in some parts of the East and South Slavic world, which can be viewed as a cultural sphere in its own right. This area represents an important Slavic religious-cultural area which I tentatively call *Slavia Islamica*.

The *Slavia Islamica*, that is, Belarusian-Tatar linguocultural area and a part of South Slavic areas such as Bosnian, share some features with both *Slavia Orthodoxa* and *Slavia Latina*, such as the use of a literary language quite different from local vernaculars; In this case, Arabic is sacred, and the Arabic script is accepted for the native languages. However, it differs from the two areas in that it is not a continuous, contemporaneous cultural area, and since there are regional differences in the Islamization, emigration and cultural development processes, it can-

not rightly be called a unified cultural entity, making it essentially distinct from both *Slavia Orthodoxa* and *Slavia Latina*. On the other hand, taking a part of the South Slavic region as an example, when thinking about the role of Bosnian linguistic culture in relation to that of Muslims in the surrounding areas (such as Sandžak and Kosovo), in the course of gaining and developing their Bosniak identity, one could say that it should be considered as a cultural area where the Bosnian translation of Qur'an in this language is used for those who do not know Arabic, has a certain authority.

This collection of articles describes the various linguistic and non-linguistic characteristics of Islamic cultural elements within the Slavic world, and it concentrates on drawing out what is particular to individual areas and what are the more general characteristics.

Even though this collection of articles may not meet the original aim of providing a comprehensive and comparative survey of *Slavic Islamica*, I believe that those who read through it carefully will gain an understanding of the characteristics of individual phenomena, and gain an understanding of the above cultural sphere.

As the main editor of this collection, I was kindly assisted by invited editor Professor Robert D. Greenberg. Dr. Greenberg is a prominent expert in South Slavic languages, as well as one of the pioneers in the research of the South Slavic Islamic world as a linguocultural area. His introduction to this collection of articles states clearly its position within Slavic language research, and also draws attention to the tasks for future researchers.

Additionally, it is my pleasant duty to express my gratitude to Maria Hristova, Mika Osuga and Sim Yee Chiang who helped in carrying this work to completion.

It must also be mentioned that the editorial process for this collection of articles faced several difficulties, including financial ones. Publication was delayed, and if there are some portions that went to print before sufficient deliberation, I must bear full responsibility.

Motoki Nomachi, Editor