

Editor's Preface

Perhaps no aspect of India's history provokes more discussion and disagreement than the evaluation of Islam's role in the Subcontinent. Muslim presence and rule in India was established firmly in the thirteenth century and nourished for the next five hundred years. The advent of Islam did not destroy the ancient civilization of India, yet the mutual influences of Hindu and Muslim societies and their traditions were inevitable during the period of these eight centuries of their co-existence. This cohabitation has resulted in creating a unique feature - the Muslim culture of the Indian Subcontinent.

Such an exceptional, complex and in many aspects syncretic culture calls for separate treatment in the immense area of Indological studies. Hence the appearance of a number of publications devoted solely to various aspects of this subject. However, in Poland it has never been treated as a separate issue. The present volume would be the first publication dedicated exclusively to this phenomenon.

The idea of the presented publication is to depict Islamic cultural traditions and influences, understood as an integral part of the civilisation of the Indian Subcontinent. The main issues discussed in this volume refer to the widely understood cultural environment of South Asian Muslims, including their language, literature, history, and cultural traditions. The range of subjects has intentionally not been limited, as the aim of the editor was to show the multitude and variety of aspects of the Muslim presence in the Indian Subcontinent's milieu.

Fourteen articles collected in the volume, written by invited specialists in different fields, cover a large scope of themes. A tribute paid to a poet by another poet opens the volume like an invocation to an unknown power. Then come articles which are the result of academic research. They vary from the ones referring to a

particular area of interest and study - such as linguistics, literature or history - to those more interdisciplinary in their character.

Roman transliteration used in the volume follows the standard of Sanskrit/Hindi transliteration for Devanagari and the standard Arabic transliteration with some necessary modifications for Persian/Urdu scripts. The systems attempt to be exact, so that the reader should be able to reconstruct the original spelling of transliterated words.

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Having the privilege to be the editor of this volume, I would like to express my deep gratitude to all the Authors, who kindly agreed to contribute their texts, as well as to Professor Anna Krasnowolska, who reviewed the book for publication.

Agnieszka Kuczkiewicz-Fraś