



Валери Стоянов

# VALERISTICA POLYHISTORICA



2

Институт за исторически изследвания при БАН

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**ВАЛЕРИСТИКА ПОЛИХИСТОРИКА - 2**

Избрани приноси към гранични области на историята



Valery Stojanow

**VALERISTICA POLYHISTORICA - 2**

Selected Contributions to Border Studies of History  
Ausgewählte Beiträge zu Grenzforschungen der Geschichte

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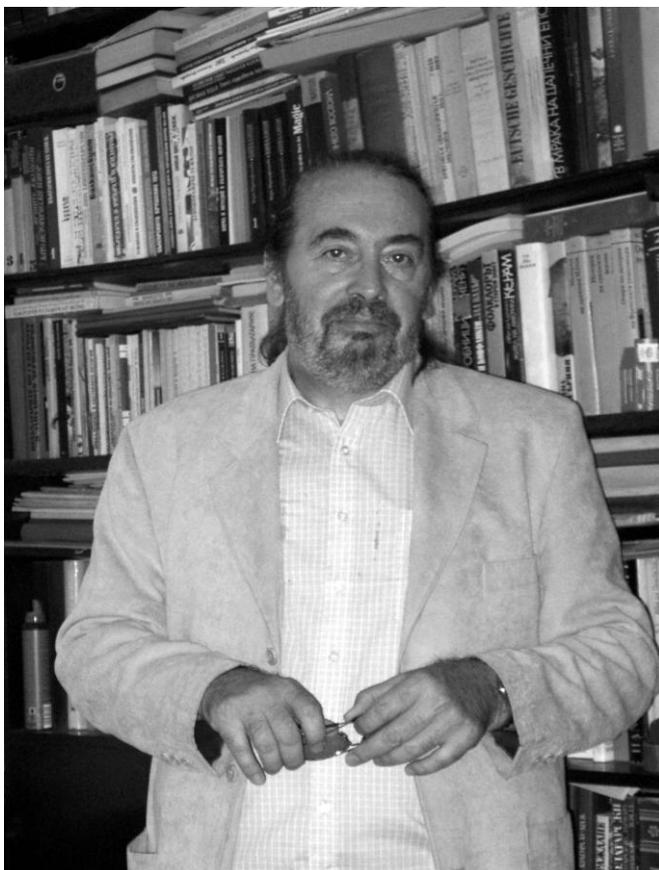
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София, 2011**

*На Люси и Астра  
с обич и благодарност*



*Valery Stojanow*

## **Genesis and Development of the “Turkish Question” in Bulgaria**

*Bulgarian Historical Review*, 26, 1998, No. 1-2, 7-29

The “Turkish problem” in Bulgaria as a whole has different aspects. Several groups of scientific questions arise in outlining the parameters of essence:

***1. About the character of the Turkish minority, its formation and peculiarities.*** For reason easy to explain the Bulgarian authorities for many years avoided the use of the term “minority”. The Turkish ethnic group was officially defined as “population of Turkish origin”, “population of unclarified (respectively ‘obscured’) national awareness”, “population of Turkish ethnic self-awareness”, “Turkish-speaking (even ‘Turkic-speaking’) Bulgarians”, etc., but not as a minority at all. With the fall of the totalitarian regime in usage came the concept “ethnic Turks”. It expressed the obvious rejection of the minority policy pursued so far. This term, however, gave priority to the aspect of the origin characterizing this population as ethnic, but not national, minority. No doubt, with respect to their language and religion the Bulgarian Turks have always constituted a minority group. But do things stand the same way in a nationality respect? The question is theoretical and stems from the different meaning and possibilities of a closer or wider interpretation of the term ‘nation’. To what extent did in Bulgaria after the Liberation the Turks consider themselves a separate nation in the European sense of this concept? And whether the feeling of a Turkish national (not only ethnic) identity did not penetrate among them solely with the development of the Kemalist national revolution in the Turkey?

## ***2. The origin of the Turkish population in Bulgaria.***

This is an extremely complex question which cannot be given a simple answer. Indubitably a not small (but not clearly defined) part of today's Bulgarian Turks are the descendants of a local Balkan population that was Islamized once. The five centuries of Ottoman domination created sufficient prerequisites for voluntary or compulsory, individual or group passing in the bosom of Islam. Moreover, the descendants of the "newly converted" gradually lost the features of their former ethnic belonging, and after a few generations hardly different from the real Turks-Mohammedans. The processes of Islamization in the Balkans should not, however, be absolutized. A not quite small (and yet difficult to discern) part of the Bulgarian Turks are descendants of the Anatolian Turkish colonists who settled in the country after its occupation. The attempts to associate them solely with the representatives of the Ottoman administration of the military apparatus and more prosperous strata of the intelligentsia, who emigrated round the time of the Liberation, do not stand objective criticism. In the genesis of the Bulgarian Turks a third probable stratus represent the mediaeval Turkic-speaking population founded here whose Oghuz-Kipchak characteristics transpire in the dialectal particularities of the local Turkish vernaculars. And finally, in the mass of the present Turkish population are hidden also many other descendants of Turkicized Tatars, Circassians, Albanians, Gypsies, Wallachians and representatives of various other ethnoses, individually fused into the Turkish ethnic massif.

***3. The attitude to the Turkish minority and its position in the country.*** Here is included the group of questions referring to the status of the Turkish minority, its size, demographic and migration processes, emigrations, economic, cultural and political position, and also the attitude of the authorities to this national group. In this case a special place is occupied by the questions of the use of the mother tongue and the exercise of religious rights, the condition of education, the development of

the Turkish press, the Turkish participation in the administration, the opportunities for setting up one's own socio-political organization, etc.

**4. *The specificity of the “Turkish problem” in Bulgaria.*** In examining the question of the Moslem population in the country emerge some peculiarities which make difficult the literal copying of any foreign models in solving the minorities' problem. Here are some considerations:

a) One cannot ignore the fact that part of the Moslems in this country are of Bulgarian descent. What should be the approach to them then? Should the emergence of Bulgarian self-awareness in their midst, irrespective of the confessional differences, be encouraged, or should things be left to follow their natural course? In the first case we stand the risk to be accused of assimilatory leanings, and in the second – we alone to allow the cutting of this population from its Bulgarian national root.

b) In a cultural and religious respect in this instance it is the question of two religions which have opposed each other for centuries, something not known in new Europe where the struggle for consolidation of the reformed church did not violate the traditional continuity of the fundamental spiritual values of the Western Christian world. The confessional minorities there did not differ essentially from the population belonging to the prevalent religion in the particular country. This cannot, however, be said about the Mohammedanism of the European Southeast.

c) The formation of the Moslem minorities in the Balkans occurred in the course of the disruption of the Ottoman Empire and the emergence of new national states – a process similar to the events in Eastern Central Europe after the First World War. This made possible the drawing of parallels and tempted the politicians to offer general prescriptions for sol-

ving the minority's question. It is true that at the end of the Habsburg Monarchy on the territory of former Austria-Hungary emerged new formations the state frontiers of which not always coincided with the ethnic ones, and Germany's defeat in the war left large masses of German population under alien political domination. Such was the situation also in the Balkans where after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire hundreds of thousands of Turks changed their socio-political status.<sup>1</sup> Here, however, existed specific differences which did not fit in with the general theoretical model. Whereas the German minorities as carriers of relatively higher culture not seldom were in better economic positions than the local population around them, with the emigration of the Ottoman intelligentsia and the representatives of the more prosperous strata, the Balkan Turks who remained were in their majority petty, semi-literate peasants and artisans, strongly attached to the traditional Moslem values and the mentality that accompanied them. On the other hand, never after the First World War was an Austria, for instance, in a state to threaten its neighbors or to claim protection of some "Austrian minority". Different was the question with the Republic of Turkey which both as a successor of the Ottoman Empire and as the only Islamic power in Europe felt morally obliged to see to the fate of the Balkan Moslems, a position which corresponded also to the ambitions of certain circles to turn the country again into a regional "superpower".

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<sup>1</sup> In the Russian Empire the process that dismembered Ottoman Turkey and Austria-Hungary into many national states artificially stopped through the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. The "perestroika" that began in the USSR dangerously brought the country close to those starting position at the end of the First World War in which then involved also the other "Eastern" empires. After the falling away of the countries of the "outer" socialist belt and the cutting off of the periphery of the former Soviet Union, the further development of the process could lead to the disintegration of Russia itself, and this in the present state of the armaments could have tragic consequences for the entire contemporary world.

d) Again in view of the minorities question certain Western specialists see (guided, I should like to believe, by humane motives) its lasting solution in ensuring collective minorities rights and cultural and even political autonomy. As a purely theoretical model irrespective of the existing realities, this probably is also the most equitable outcome. Perhaps within the framework of the united Europe it could be realized someday. Then the absence of frontier, customs, economic and cultural barriers would make pointless in a more distant future also the very content of today's national states which in their turn would split into separate, integrated with each other and with the other European world, regions: Lombardy, Transylvania, Bavaria, Saxony, Ireland, Wales... In the present state of affairs, however, such ideas are hardly realistic and "healthy" for the European Southeast. In the case of the Turkish minority this would only lead to an artificial dismembering of the Bulgarian State before the existence of reliable protective mechanisms integrating the Balkans and also Turkey into a united Europe.

e) From here we arrive also at the close link of the problem with the different aspects of the "minority's question" not only for Bulgaria but also for the Republic of Turkey, and this determines also the attitude of the political forces in the countries towards the Bulgarian Turks and Moslems.

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Of all the enumerated aspects the longest hitherto discussed has been that of the origin of this population. When decades ago began the last stage of the course towards integration of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria, initiated after the April Plenum, the basic argument in Party propaganda was associated with its possible Bulgarian origin. The idea was not new. It has always been known that an undefined part of the Bulgarian Turks is descendants of Islamized and Turkicized local population. Already during the 19th century the last governor of the

Danubian Vilayet, Mithad Paşa, admitted that among the Bulgarians there were over one million Moslems who had not come from Asia Minor but were “descendants of Bulgarians converted to the Islam during the conquest and the following years”.<sup>2</sup> Later the question of the Bulgarian descent of part of that population was again raised on different occasions, without playing, however, a decisive role in defining the minority’s policy. Only after the Agreement on the Joining of Families of 1968 and the additional protocol to it of 1977 whereby some 130 000 people emigrated to Turkey, began the launching of the thesis that no more inhabitants of an actual Turkish origin had remained in this country. This definitely opened the road for the forced building up of the “united socialist nation”. In the mid-80s it was already claimed that not only some portion but all Turks in our lands were of Bulgarian ethnic origin. “They are bone of the bone and flesh of the flesh of the Bulgarian people”, concluded the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party. “Bulgaria does not incorporate in its territories foreign lands; in the Bulgarian people do not enter parts of other peoples and nations”. By such words the authorities tried to deny the existence of any foreign national groups in the country and mostly of the Turkish ethno-religious community which in the bilateral agreement was nowhere defined as “national minority”. In this way were sought, also additional arguments for “proving” the genuine origin of the Turkish-speaking Moslems.

Essential changes took place in the official minority’s policy after the collapse of the “revival process”. But even today the view exists that about 90 per cent of the Bulgarian Turks stem from the country’s native population. From this

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<sup>2</sup> **Mithat Pacha.** La Turquie: Son passé, son oeuvre, son avenir. – *Revue scientifique de la France et de l’étranger*, № 49, 8 juin 1879, p. 1152.

arises one of the fundamental problems. Is at all possible to establish the concrete origin of every Turkish family so as to draw such generalizations? What gives us grounds to believe that all local inhabitants "Turkicized" during the Ottoman period were Bulgarian speaking Christians? Within the boundaries of mediaeval Bulgaria lived also other ethnic groups: Greeks, Armenians, Jews, Wallachians, Turkic-speaking groups. They, as well as the communities confessionally differing from the Bulgarian Orthodoxy were to the same degree even if not more exposed to assimilation pressure. Besides that, individual earlier attempts for the penetration of the Islam are not excluded – not only as a result of the contacts with the Golden Horde and the Nogay Khanate or as a result of the pretended Seljuk settlement in Dobrudža, but far before that – in the pre-Christian period.<sup>3</sup> In this respect the links between Danubian and Volga Bulgaria have been insufficiently studied and little is known about the fate of the Moslem prisoners of war in Byzantium, groups of who might have been used as workforce in the mines, in territories incorporated in the present Bulgarian lands including. Thus the question of the ethnic origin of the Turkish-speaking Moslems in Bulgaria is complicated still further. To a considerable extent it is connected also with the Turkic presence in the Balkans in a historical plan and the Bulgarian-Turkic relations through the centuries.

Immediately follow a few terminological specifications concerning the concepts "**Turkish**" and "**Turkic**" which are in scientific circulation for the differentiation of the Turkish language and people proper from their related linguistic and national groups. This division is not known in all languages.

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<sup>3</sup> The "impious" books received from the Saracens mentioned in the answers of Pope Nicolaus I to the questions of the Bulgarians probably had their circle of readers. Cf. for this an unpretentiously entitled and slightly neglected article by **Н. Мавродинов**. Исторически бележки. – *ИБАИ*, 12, 1938 (София, 1939), p. 376-382 and more specially on p. 380-382, where other conjectures are also set forth.

Whereas in English, for instance, a distinction is made between “Turkish” and “Turkic”, in German only the form “türkisch” exists, in French –“turque” or “turd” and only from context or by additional means one can understand about what is the question. The differentiation is absent in the Turkish language as well. Here the word “türk” is used in the two meanings, and this gives rise to doubts, speculations and accusations of Panturkism which are not always completely groundless, especially when “patriotically” inspired Turkish intellectuals take possession of the entire Bulgarian history. But if the Turkish colleagues resort to their own ethnonym in denoting the Turkic peoples of Central and Middle Asia, we should not reproach them a priori of Greater Turkish nationalism.<sup>4</sup> It is true that

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<sup>4</sup> Often in popular Bulgarian publications in referring to Turkish materials the word “türk” is arbitrarily translated as “Turk, Turkish” and not in its broader sense, irrespective of the context of the particular source. In the book of **П. Гоцева**. *През Босфора към възродителния процес*. София, 1994, for instance, on the cover is depicted a map of the location of the contemporary Turkic peoples. The original headline, however, “Türklerin Yaşadıkları Sahalar” is deliberately translated as “Regions in which ‘Turks’ Live”. The explanatory text – a combination of quotations from two Turkish monographs (cf. there p. 9) may give a shock to anyone: “‘The Turkish world’ spread from the Balkans to the Pacific Ocean and from the Arctic Ocean to Tibet, with an area of 12 million square km and 200 million ‘Turks’”. Is it necessary to plunge in the depths of semantics to establish that the term “Türk dünyası” (Turkic world, the world of the Turkic people), like many other similar expressions (cf. Iranian world, the world of the ancient Hellenes, of the Egyptians, etc.) puts the accent on the general cultural and not concrete ethnic aspect and should not be translated as “Turkish”? The combinations “Serbian, Polish, Bulgarian and other worlds” are simply devoid of meaning but the more general concept “Slav world” is filled with definite content.

The same refers to the terms “türklük” and “türkçülük”, associated with the idea of Panturkism. P. Gočeva nowhere offers their explanation but gives the Turkish headline of the book of the Hungarian Turkologist and linguist László Rásony “Tarihte Türklük” again as “The Turkish World in History” (p. 12) instead of the more difficult to translate but far more adequate “The Turkicdom in History” by analogy with “Slavdom”, “Deutschtum” or “Bulgarriandom”... The authoress points out that after the proclamation of the Re-

most Turkic-speaking people have adopted in the course of time separate names – Tatars, Kazakhs, Kirghizians, Uzbeks, etc. In the opinion of the learned world, however, they have always been “Turks” (respectively “Turko-Tatars”) and this term has consolidated also in their midst as a rallying concept for the members of the Turkic ethno-linguistic community.

Here should be noted also the form “**türküt**” used in the scientific literature in connection with the earliest stage of Turkic political history, for example when it is the question of the

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public of Turkey “for speculative political considerations” was adopted the same term “Turk” to denote a Turkic person and a Turk (p. 8). However she nowhere demonstrates that this in fact occurred for a speculative purpose, and not simply because in the language is absent another suitable word and the Turks themselves are compelled to use additional specifications, for instance Türkiye Türkleri (Turkish Turks, Turks from Turkey), Balkan Türkleri (Balkan Turks) but Altay Türkleri (Altaic Turkic peoples), Doğu Sibirya Türkleri (East Siberian Turkic peoples), etc.

Turkish nationalism and the striving for influence among the other Turkic peoples are real facts, and P. Gočeva well reports some of their manifestations. The young Turkish nation – like the Greek, Romanian, Albanian and other ones – is also subjected to the all-Balkan syndrome to seek links with the most distant in time peoples and epochs. Not only Bulgarian historiography but also the Turkish one seeks the predecessors of their people in the Huns of yore, attached most generally to the Turkic-Altaic ethnolinguistic community. The Turks, therefore, flatter themselves speaking in a historical context about 16 big “Turkic” empires (cf. p. 17-18). It is not clear, however, why the authress has been embarrassed by the finding that the “Gökturkish (understand Gökturkic – author's note), alphabet is the first Turkish (i.e. Turkic – author's note) one” and has deemed it necessary to underline the passage specially (p. 18)? Was it her wish in this way to “prove” the absurdity of the claim, was she shocked by it or simply did not know that the ancient Turkic (Orkhon-Yenisey) “runic” script was actually the first script adapted to the Turkic phonetics, used during the Türk[üt] Khaganate, i.e. during the age of the “Gök-“ or “Kök-” Turkic people as they called themselves?

Naturally we are unable to understand how precisely the ordinary Turks accept the use of the word “türk” in the different cases. This does not, however, give us the right to exchange in translation its meanings as an argument in defending one or other thesis.

Türk[üt] Khaganate. It is connected with the first written information about the Turkic people in the Chinese dynastic chronicles and refers to events during the 6<sup>th</sup> c. A.D. It was precisely then that the Chinese sources for the first time mentioned the tribe T'u-küe – a name pointing to the early mediaeval form \*Türküt – stemming probably from the blending of the ethnonym Türk with the Mongolian suffix for the plural -<sup>o</sup>t (i.e. “türk-üt = “Turk-s”).<sup>5</sup> Another term, “**Turān**” – emerged on Persian soil as a geographic (and in a certain sense ethnonymic)<sup>6</sup> denomination of the territories inhabited by Turkic-speaking peoples, of Middle Asia, situated north of the Iranian

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<sup>5</sup> Towards the middle of the century the nomad state of the Jüan-Jüans was disturbed by internal strife. The civil war intensified the centrifugal tendencies and many tribes sought their independence. With the help of one of them, T'u-küe, the Jüan-Jüans succeeded in putting things under control (circa 546). When their Khagan refused to fulfill his promise and marry his daughter to the prince of T'u-küe as a prize for the support rendered, the latter revolted and in alliance with the Tobgach (Chinese *T'o-pa*) in 551/552 inflicted a crushing defeat on his suzerain. The khan committed suicide and T'u-küe headed the new tribal alliance and soon became omnipotent rulers of the eastern part of Central Asia. Thus on the historical stage emerged the first Turkic State headed by Bumyn Kagan which began to expand swiftly. It established contacts with Sassanid Iran (in 557 the two allied empires attacked the Hephthalites in Bactria) and a little later, in 568 – with Byzantium as well.

<sup>6</sup> The term is seen also in the early Ottoman documents, for example in the “elqāb” (address, inscription), quoted by Boris Nedkov, from a firman of Mohammed II the Conqueror, addressed finally also to the “yerlerine Tūrān ādamları”, i.e. to “the Turanian people locally” (or “the Turanians locally”). This could testify a national belonging already felt by the Ottoman Turks as early as the 15<sup>th</sup> c. if there were not some doubts as to the regularity of the example itself (see: **В. Стоянов. Дипломатика на средновековните извори. Владетелски документи.** София, 1991, p. 193, note 204). In his translation the prominent Bulgarian Osmanist has omitted (accidentally?) the word in question, preferring the more noncommittal “people locally” (cf. **Б. Недков. Османотурска дипломатика и палеография.** Т. 1. София, 1966, с. 134-135).

cultural circle.<sup>7</sup> Hence in the older literature one comes across the concept “Turanian” as a synonymous name of the non-Turkish Turkic tribes and peoples of the central part of the vast Eurasian steppe.

It is hardly necessary to explain that the more comprehensive term “**Altaic**” is also of a conditional character and is used in science to denote the larger community of the related Turkic, Mongolian and Tungus-Manchurian ethno-linguistic groups whose genesis and starting point of resettlement should be sought around the “Red Mountains” (Al-tay). Together with the “Uralic” (i.e. Finno-Ugric and Samoyedic) languages and peoples they formed the much more extensive “*Ural-Altai*” family, and in more distant antiquity – probably an “*Ural-Altai-Dravidian*” community, displaying certain links with the Indo-European languages in the West, with Japanese and Korean in the East and in more distant respect, relations with certain

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<sup>7</sup> In this name one can see an earlier form “*tur*” preceding the real Turkic ethnonym, combined with the Iranian suffix for the plural *-ān* (i.e. “Tur-ān” – “Tur-s”?). The Hungarian name of the Turkic people, “Török”, whereby the second component *-ök* would correspond to the ancient Uralic-Altai suffix for the Plural *-ok* (compare the Hungarian *Kun* – *Kunok* “Cumans”; *Magyar* – *Magyarok* “Magyars”, etc.) directs one to such a “pre-Turkic” form of the ethnonym, *t<sup>o</sup>r*, from which with the addition of the plural suffix *-ok* comes the form *t<sup>o</sup>rk* (Tork, Turk, Turkic). Cf. V. Stojanow. Die Struktur und Bedeutung des bulgarischen Ethnonyms im Lichte einer Evolutionstheorie. – *Etudes balkaniques*, 1987, N 2, p. 65-87. As name of the country of the nomads in the steppe zone around Syr-Darya, the name “Turan” was fixed already in the Avesta. Later it passed into the Middle Persian “Book of Kings” (Khvātay nāmak – circa 630), and then in the Firdausi’s Šāhnāme (10<sup>th</sup> c.). From the time of the Parthians (c. 250 B.C. – c. 224 A.D.) *Turān* symbolized the forces of Darkness and was in incessant opposition with *Iran*. But whereas in the past the main enemies of Iranian civilization from the Northeast were the “Asian Huns” – Hiung-nu (later the Jüan-Jüans too) among whom probably there were “Proto-Turkic” tribal elements and groups of absorbed local population (Assai, Sakai, Tokharians), with the appearance of the Turkic people in 552 the name *Turān* in the Persian tradition began to be associated exclusively with them.

Palaeo-Asian and North-American languages, and hypothetically – also with the Sumerian and separate ancient languages of the Mesopotamian cultural circle.<sup>8</sup> In the sense, although at first glance equivalent, the terms “Turko-Bulgarians” and

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<sup>8</sup> We do not know when this community was formed. According to some conjunctures, the original home of the so-called **Nostratic languages** (i.e. Hamito-Semitic, Indo-European, Uralic-Altaiic, Dravidian, Eskimo-Aleut, etc.), unlike that of the other big group of the “**Sino-Caucasian languages**”, i.e. Sino-Tibetan, North Caucasian, Yeniseyan, etc., existed in Hither Asia since the Paleolithic. With the improvement of the climate and the ensuing migrations the tribes of that time spread ever farther, interrupting their mutual contacts. In any case already in the Neolithic (8000-3000 B.C.) the Proto-Dravidian peoples inhabited the lands south of Hindu Kush and the Himalayas – along the Indus River across the territory of modern Pakistan, NE Afghanistan and NW India. Precisely here, in Baluchistan, Sind and Punjab have been discovered the traces of the most ancient Indian civilization which created the culture of Mohandjo-Daro and Harappa. The Uralic-Altaiic community probably was formed northwest of the Dravidian – somewhere along the border between Europe and Asia. Far before the fourth millennium B.C. it split into two, the Proto-Uralic peoples remaining in the forest and forest-and-steppe areas of Eastern Europe – from the Urals to the Baltic Sea, and the Proto-Altaiic consolidated east of them – between the Urals, Tien Shan, Hindu Kush and Altai mountains. More than 4000 years B.C. from the Proto-Ural community broke away the carriers of the later Samoyed languages, settling east of the Urals. Approximately at the same time to Southern Mesopotamia came the Sumerians whom the various hypotheses associate with the Dravidian, Caucasian, Uralic-Altaiic and even the Proto-Indo-European peoples. The great expansion of the Indo-Europeans began with the Aryan migration to the East (circa 2300 – circa 1800 B.C.) brought about additional shifts. The ancient Finno-Ugrians were pushed still more to the North and reached the White and Barents-Seas, part of the Samoyeds sealed in the direction of the Yenisei, the Dravidians retreated towards Southern India, while the Proto-Altaiic people settled down in the area of Altai, the lake of Baykal, Mongolia and Northern China. Here passed the ethnolinguistic transformations as a result of which the Altaiic community divided into the Turkic, Mongolian and Tungus-Manchurian, and probably that separate or intermediary (between Proto-Turkic and Proto-Mongolian) language group to which usually are attached the Hunnic and “Bulgar” peoples.

“Hunno-Bulgarians” possess different semantic contents in the scientific literature. Whereas in the first case is emphasized the belonging of the [Proto]Bulgarians and their language to the Turkic languages and peoples, in the second the Bulgarians are set aside as something more different, to a certain extent separate from the Turkic complex of the Altaic etno-linguistic community.

If it is necessary to outline briefly the stages of the Turkic penetration, the Bulgarian-Turkic interrelations and cultural contacts passed through several stages, comparable to the principal periods in the history of the Bulgarian people:

1. *Pagan period* – up to and a little after the Conversion (864) by which Bulgaria left “barbarity” and joined Christian civilization;

2. *Byzantine-Bulgarian period* – covering the rule of the Rhomaioi and the time of the Tărnovo Kingdom – it was then that Bulgaria adopted elements of the Byzantine cultural model;

3. *Ottoman period* – from the late 14<sup>th</sup> and early 15<sup>th</sup> c. when the country was incorporated for a long period in the Moslem Ottoman State and considerable ethnocultural transformations took place as a result.

The three periods contained Turkic influences differing in their character and reflected separate stages in the evolution of the Bulgarian nation. At the end of each of them the Bulgarians were no longer what they had been up to then. They had absorbed new ethnic elements and vice versa – they had been deprived of their own groups and parts in favor of other peoples. In the 9<sup>th</sup> c. for example neither Bulgarians nor Slavs were any longer the same as during their ethnogenesis or at their setting in the Balkans. Later in the lands beyond the Danube the two ethnoses were gradually dissolved into the sea of the Turkic-speaking nomads, among the Hungarians and the

forming future Romanian nationality. Changes took place in the Slav-Bulgarian people formed on the territory of the Second Kingdom, particularly after the settlement of Pechenegs, Uzes and Cumans, the displacement of Wallachian groups of population, the growth of the Serbian political and ethnic influence in the West and the permanent “Greek” impact from the South. At the end of this period about the time of the Ottoman invasion in the Balkans appeared also the Gypsies – the first reliable information about them in the Aegean area dates from the 14<sup>th</sup> c. The centuries that followed were a time of major changes in the ethnic and cultural scene of the Bulgarian lands. Immediately before the Liberation here according to certain pieces of information already one-third of the entire population were Moslems – Turks, Tatars, Circassians, Bulgarian Mohammedans, Gypsy Mohammedans, etc. The composition of the Christian population was not homogeneous and even the Bulgarian nation that had already formed, after five centuries of development, must have differed considerably from that during the Middle Ages, in the same way as the language it spoke had changed. One hundred years later the ethnic composition of the Bulgarians continued to change. In it entered groups of the Gagauz, Gypsy and Turkish population; processes were observed of orientation of Bulgarian Moslems to the Turkish ethnoreligious community and of Bulgarian Christians in the Southwest to the still building itself “Macedonian” nation. This shows that the formation of peoples and nations should not be considered as some single act in time but rather as an *evolutionary process in the course of which permanently are reached qualitatively new conditions*. During all that time the Turkic influences were continuously present in the Bulgarian lands, although with different intensity.

The first period, covering the epoch of the Danubian Khanate, proceeded with a marked hegemony of the Bulgarians. Here they imposed also the traditions of ruling, adopted from Huns, Avars and Türk[üt]s which defined the appearance

of the new state – its structure, military-administrative organization, the specific terminology connected with them, etc. From that time have been preserved a number of specific expressions, personal and family names, titles, individual words, etc., which to a large extent make it possible to attribute the Proto-Bulgarian language to the Turkic family of the Altaic linguistic community, whereas other elements link it with the Iranian languages.

The end of this period was not clearly expressed since also after the Conversion some pagan beliefs survived, the Bulgarians in everyday life continued to speak their own language, the men of letters used Bulgarian technical terms,<sup>9</sup> and the state organization continued to carry the inherited traditional features. The imposition of Christianity as state religion contributed to the ideological cohesion of population. A still more decisive role, however, played the adoption of the Cyrillic alphabet and the Slav language in church service and hence in the affairs of the state. If to that time the interaction between Bulgarians and Slavs in the cultural and communal life in some places had led to their partial mixing,<sup>10</sup> with the transformation of Slavonic into the official church, literary and administrative language the process of the consolidation of the new (Slav)Bulgarian nationality was accelerated. Definite credit for this should go to the Byzantine domination which not long afterwards followed the reforms in Bulgarian society. It leveled the differences bet-

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. the marginal note of Tudor Doks of 907 where the year of the conversion is indicated as “ЄТХ БЄХТИ”.

<sup>10</sup> By attracting Slav notables to the state hierarchy and hence – their “Bulgarianization” (cf. “ЧРЬГОУБЫЛІА МОСТИЧЬ” – if from the name one could at all judge the ethnic origin of the “internal boil”, by mixed marriages leading to the gradual “Slavonicizing” of the Bulgarians, and also thanks to the living together in some common settlements about which we have information from the archaeological and anthropological results from the study of burials during the Early Middle Ages.

ween Bulgarians and Slavs, turning the two ethnoses into subjects on an equal level.

Christianization altered the face of the Bulgarian State. Accepted among the rulers of the civilized Christian world, the khan, now a prince, with proselytizing zeal fought against the old traditions, delivering a blow from the inside to the “Bulgarian national spirit”. Abandoning the residence of Pliska and moving the capital to Preslav symbolized the irrevocable split with paganism – an extreme but probably necessary for its time expression of the country's spiritual “modernization”. The act, however, obviously was not restricted only to the symbolic thrusting the spear into the “copper threshing floor of the Proto-Bulgarians” but was accompanied by additional measures for obliterating the traces of the past, particularly after the failed mutiny of part of the Bulgarian nobility. It is possible that precisely then were destroyed some writings in the “pagan” runic script – those “lines and cuts” reported by the Černorizec Hrabr (‘Monk Valiant’).<sup>11</sup> Together with this in the 10<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Notwithstanding the prevailing view that the “*Name List of the Bulgarian Khans*” was drawn up originally in Greek, and afterwards translated into Slav Bulgarian, one can presume the existence once of its earlier “runic” original, prepared on “soft” writing material (wood, bone?) and destroyed later together with other “pagan” texts. To this direct us not only the traces of a similar practice among Avars and Turkic people, but also the laconic formal style of the text which considering the possibilities of the runic script could safely be put on a few small planks. Food for thought give also the non-Slavonic (Altaic?) elements in the writing. Why have they remained unchanged? Because the compiler (respectively the translator) of the text did not know their meaning as is usually accepted? If this is so, why then instead of the expected Greek *Sigor* (cf. σιγορ ελεμ) we find in the Name List the form *Šegor*, ШЕГОРЪ, reflecting far more correctly the Bulgarian phonetic peculiarities (cf. the Bulgarian *uapan* with the Turkish *sazan* i. e. “carp”; the Bulgarian *uavap* with the Turkish *saz* i. e. “sedge”; the [Proto]Bulgarian *uezop* – Turkish *siğır* i. e. “caw”). Obviously the author was familiar both with the meaning of the words and with their true pronunciation. He regarded them as generally known terms the explanation of which

c. the Bulgarian language must have been restricted only to everyday use – for communication between persons and in the families of the Christianized Bulgarian population.

Numerous questions are raised not only by the end but also by the beginning of this period. Here it is not the question only of the “general Slav-Turkic” contacts up to the 5<sup>th</sup> c. according to a subdivision,<sup>12</sup> or the possible formation of the Slavs also under Uralic- Altaic influence.<sup>13</sup> To a very higher degree things rest on the ethnic origin of the Bulgarians themselves. Extremely little, even practically nothing is known about the core of them that was the original carrier of the ethnonym (respectively its basic semantic part).<sup>14</sup> Putting the Bulgarians on the same footing with the early Turkic people is due to a number of traditional causes finding motivation in the Bulgarian language remnants, the public system and the mili-

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was not necessary. This directs one to the un preserved Old Bulgarian original of the three copies, drawn up probably in the 9<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> c. when the old calendar system had not yet been forgotten. Hardly was the original text of the Name List been prepared during Simeon’s time as some researches suppose. In such case it would not end with Umar, omitting such rulers as Krum, Omurtag and even Boris. Or it might be that in translating the hypothetical Greek original the anonymous man of letters phonetically corrected the record in its part that deals with the Altaic glosses? This could also be possible, without leaving the framework of a conjecture. Because against the “Greek hypothesis” speak also some other peculiarities of the text, for example the way of rendering possessive relationship (cf. “РОДЪ ѼМОУ, ЛѢТЬ ѼМОУ”) which to a much higher degree corresponds to the Turkic and Altaic model than to Indo-European morphology.

<sup>12</sup> See **Е. Боев**. За българо-тюрскитеезикови връзки. – *Известия на Института по български език*, 16, 1963, с. 177-183.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. **Pl. Tzvetkov**. *A History of the Balkans. A Regional Overview from a Bulgarian Perspective*. Vol. 1. San Francisco, 1993, p. 10-56.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. in **V. Stojanow**. Op.cit. (see here in note 7); **Idem**. Die Entwicklung des Bulgaren-Elhnonyms. Grundlagen einer Hypothese. – In: *Proceedings of the 32<sup>nd</sup> International Congress for Asian and North African Studies (Hamburg, 26<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> August 1986)*. Stuttgart, 1992, p. 618-619 (= *ZIMG, Supplementa*, 9).

tary-political organization, in the traces from the way of life, culture and religious world outlook which to one or other extent are comparable to the general Eurasian steppe model and consequently easy to be assimilated by other (non Altaic) ethnoses.

From all these signs perhaps the language pieces of information provide the greatest justification for attaching the Bulgarians to the “Turko-Altaic” peoples. In their overwhelming part, however, they are personal and family names, titles and specific terms among which there are quite many non-Turkic elements. Besides that they are written in a way which not always precisely reflects the phonetic particularities in the pronunciation.

Mediaeval Europe nowhere defined the Bulgarians as Turkic people. Only in the 10<sup>th</sup> c. some Moslem authors mentioned that the Bulgarian language was similar to the Khazar (al-Istahrī, Ibn Hawqal) or that it represented a mixture of Turkic and Khazar (al-Bīrūnī). They referred, however, to the idiom of the Volga Bulgarian if not even only to the inhabitants of the capital Bulḡār. It is in this sense that we should interpret also the latter claim of M. Kašḡarī that the language of Bulḡār, Suvār and [of] Pācānāg in the proximity of the Rhomaioi was Turkic.<sup>15</sup> The chronological sequence of the reports tempts us

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<sup>15</sup> See **C. Brockelmann**. Mahmud al-Kašḡari über die Sprachen und die Stämme der Türken im XI. Jahrh. – *Körösi Csóma Archivum*, 1, 1921-1925, p. 26-40. Placing Bulgarians along Suvars strictly localized their place in the Volga-Kama region. In this case “the Rhomaic neighbourhood” refers to the Pechenegs – from them in an eastern direction begins the listing of the Turkic peoples, among whom the Bulgarians are not mentioned. According to one view, the great Turkic lexicographer could hardly have had direct impressions of the language of the Volga Bulgarians and when he speaks about them he referred rather to the inhabitants of the capital Bulḡār where at his time lived also other – Finnish and Turkic ethnoses (above all Kipchaks and Oghuzes). Cf. **O. Pritsak**. Kašḡarīs Angaben über die Sprache der Bolgaren. – *ZDMC*, 109 (N.F. 34), 1954, p. 92-116.

to assume that in them might be reflected the gradual Turkicization of the Volga Bulgarian language (Khazar-like – Khazar-Turkic – Turkic). In any case it obviously represented a later stage in the development of the [Proto]Bulgarian, in which already appeared Oghuz and Qipchaq elements. In it are discovered different dialects<sup>16</sup>, and with the acceptance of Islam the Volga Bulgarian fell additionally under the influence of the Islamic-Turkish literary language formed in Central Asia. This should be taken into account in drawing linguistic parallels between the two basic Bulgarian groups and especially when it is the question of the language of the Bulgarians prior to the disintegration of Kubrat's State and even in earlier times.<sup>17</sup>

The preserved source material from Danubian Bulgaria does not make possible more precise conclusions. Generally accepted is the view that as a whole the [Proto]Bulgarian belonged to the Turkic community. Had it been such by origin

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<sup>16</sup> Of the tribes Bulgār (Bulkār), Esgel (Eskel, Eškel) and Bersūlā, as some eastern authors defined them, e. g. al-Gardizi in the mid-11<sup>th</sup> c. (see **A. P. Martinez.** Gardizi's Two Chapters on the Turks. – *AEMAE*, 2, 1982, p. 109-217). Cf. also the parallel use of the forms Ğaušir and Ğaušiz for denoting a local river-name near the city of Bulgār during the time of Ibn Fadlan (10<sup>th</sup> c.) and also the variant writing of the numeral "seven" (with ğ- and y-) in epigraphic monuments of 1311 (after **С. Димитров.** Първобългарският надпис от Преслав. – *Исторически преглед*, 1991, № 1, с. 5-20 with the sources indicated there).

<sup>17</sup> In connection with the language of the Volga Bulgarians arise certain questions which have not yet been sufficiently clarified. What stage of development did it reflect? To what extent was it a product of its own internal language development and was not due to "Turkicization" of a kind, the fruit of external influences and ethnic intermingling in the region? After the Mongolian-Tatar invasion, and probably already at the time of the Cumans, the language of the Volga Bulgarian began to assume characteristic Kipchak features to develop later to "Kazan-Tatar". Was the preceding "Oghuzaiion" an inevitable stage or was it caused rather by the absorption of "Oghuz" elements among the Volga-Bulgarian people? And finally: were there similar tendencies of development in the language of the Danubian Bulgaria's and to what were they possibly due?

or in this case it is the question of an “Altaic” language intermixed with Turkic elements? The large number of personal names and titles do not provide a sufficiently reliable basis on which to build accurate inferences. Such lexemes are “movable” and could easily be adopted even by alien peoples.<sup>18</sup> Similar is the position also with the military and calendar terminology. The names of the weapons, months and numerals point to a language close to the Chuvash, but showing many specific features, e.g. in the use of the Parthian word σίμωρ, samōr (‘mouse’ – cf. **ГОМОР**) or in forming ordinal numbers by the suffix -<sup>o</sup>m, i. e. a typically Iranian grammatical peculiarity in the otherwise regarded as “Turkic” language of the [Proto]Bulgarians. Although the non-Slavonic glosses from the Name List are interpreted through Chuvash and Volga-Bulgarian

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<sup>18</sup> Compare, for example the [Proto]Bulgarian title *kavkhan* (καυχανος, χαπχανος, χαπάνος), comparable not only with the Avar *capanus*, the ancient Turkic *qapan*, but also with the Old Korean *kūpkan* and the Old Chinese \**kiap kân* (Cf. **S. Rosén**. Korean Contribution to the Etymology of the Word XAN ~ XAΓAN. – *Asiatische Studien*, 34, Bern 1980, 147-159). In this connection interesting is also the all-Turkic designation of “God” and “heaven” – *tengri, tāngri, tenri, tanri*..., leading to an original form \**tangri* (Bulgarian *tangra*, Yakut *tangara*) which in all probability was not of a Turkic origin. The absence of vocal harmony in it and the unusual sound combination *-ngr-* direct one to a “pre-Turkic” state of the language. Probably in this case it is the question of an older borrowing in the Altaic languages, in so far as the Sumerian *dengir* means “a star” and a divinity-demiurge with a similar name (*Tangaroa, Tagaroa*) is well known in Polynesia as well. Here it has probably penetrated from the Melanesian cultural area, perhaps by anthropomorphizing the local totem-hawk *Tagaro*. It would be interesting to compare the eagle and the falcon in many Eastern peoples as symbols of the sun and the heavenly god (as an attribute of *Tangra* with the Proto-Bulgarians included) with the name of the hawk *Tagaro* which through a two-stage phonetic transition “r” > “l” and “l” > “n”, inherent in some Asian languages, came close to the Turkic and [Proto]Bulgarian word for a “falcon” – cf. **ТЪГАНЪ** (*tugan, togan*) on an Old Bulgarian inscription with the image of a bird in a rock church near Murfatlar (Northern Dobrudža).

comparisons, in all likelihood they reflected forms closer to the original “Hunno-Bulgarian” language than to its later variants. Whether it could be determined as “Turkic” depends not in the ultimate analysis also on the meaning put in the term itself. Here are some considerations:

1. Formally taken, the Turks people appeared much later and farther to the East, at a time when the Bulgarians were already known in Europe. The earliest reports about T‘u-küe refer to the 6<sup>th</sup> c., whereas the first reliable mentions of Bulgarians date from the 4<sup>th</sup>–5<sup>th</sup> c., i. e. at least one century earlier.

2. The Turkic languages from their very beginning belonged to the so-called **Z**-languages (also Šaz-languages), at variance with the group of the Bulgarian which could be defined as **R**- (or Lir-) languages. This differentiation is connected with characteristic phonetic features of the two groups owing to which in related words, to the all-Turkic consonants “z” and “s” in Bulgarian corresponded “r” and “l”. All this specificity points to an earlier stage in the development of the Altaic community. It may be assumed that linguistically the Bulgarians were either “pre-Turkic” or a product of some intermixture that had taken place before the formation of the ancient Turkic language. Its oldest monuments date from the 6<sup>th</sup>–7<sup>th</sup> c. and it is therefore difficult to determine its earlier states and possible predecessors. In the Chinese annals are recorded words, names and titles from the language of the “Eastern Huns” which, however, to the same degree contain Old Turkic and Mongolian elements. The same is valid for the language of the Tabgach (T‘o-pa, T‘o-ba) who ruled North China between 436 and 557. Therefore some scholars are perhaps justified to conclude that because so far no earlier forms of the Turkic language are

known than those of the “Old-Turkic”, its predecessors should not be denoted as “Turkic”.<sup>19</sup>

3. The feature of the [Proto]Bulgarian linguistic relicts and the specificity of the Chuvash language have given grounds for the Chuvash and [Proto]Bulgarian to be differentiated into an independent group of the Turkic language family. Since the transition “r” > “z” was probably completed up to the formation of the Turkic languages, it would be more correct the [Proto]Bulgarian R-language to be conditionally referred to a transitional group between the Proto-Turkic (Z-) and Proto-Mongolian (R-) languages<sup>20</sup>, or to be considered as the one subdivision of the probable intermediary “Bulgaro-Turkic”, respectively “Hunnish” R-group, the second branch of which should have been represented by the Proto-Turkic Z-language.<sup>21</sup> Anyway some authors are inclined to set aside in the Altaic family an independent “Hunnish” R-group<sup>22</sup> which corresponds now much better to the place of the Bulgarians in the all-Altaic ethnolinguistic complex.

4. The modern Chuvash language, regarded as the descendant of the [Proto]Bulgarian, is attached with good reason to the Turkic language family. It shows, however, such peculiarities as strongly distinguish it from the other Turkic languages. In it are discovered traces of strong Finno-Ugric influences and an additional unknown substrate. As if in its earliest form the language had developed at the border between the

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<sup>19</sup> See: **A. von Gabain**. *Alturkische Grammatik*. Wiesbaden, 1974, p. 2 (= *Porta Linguarum Orientalium*, Neue Serie – XV).

<sup>20</sup> See: **K. H. Menges**. Classification of the Turkic Languages. – In: *Philologiae Turcicae Fundamenta*, I, Wiesbaden, 1959, p. 6.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. **N. Poppe**. Die tschuwassische Sprache in ihrem Verhältnis zu den Türkisprachen. – *Körösi Csoma Archivum*, II, 1926-1932, pp. 65-83 (pp. 79-81 in particular).

<sup>22</sup> For instance: **K. H. Menges**. *The Turkic Languages and Peoples. An Introduction to Turkic Studies*. Wiesbaden 1968, pp. 56-57 etc. (= *Ural-Altaische Bibliothek*, Bd. XV).

Turkic (Proto-Turkic) and other groups of languages (Mongolian, Uralic, Hunnish?). On the other hand, the very ethnonym *Ṭāvaš* leads to the name Suvar ~ Sabir, born once by an independent ethnic group, although related to the ancient Bulgarian people.<sup>23</sup>

5. The major differences between the “Bulgarian-Chuvash” and other Turkic groups which are suitable more for separate linguistic complex than for parallel branches of the same linguistic family, definitely distinguished the Bulgarians in the 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> c. from the other Turkic peoples. This justifies the use of the term “Huno-Bulgarians” – their European contemporaries also accepted them as such. The Hunnish language, and hence the ethnic origin of the Huns have so far remained unclarified. Hiung-nu, for instance, were defined as Mongolians, Turks, Finns, Kettes or Iraninas, as a mixture of Turks and Mongolians, of Tunguses and Mongolians, of Turks, Mongolians, Tunguses and Finns, etc. The Western Huns in whose stale entered Germans, Alans, Slavs and some steppe tribes, have also been identified with different peoples – with Mongolians, Finns, Slavs, Bulgarians, Turks, Caucasians, etc. This confusion and the lack of sufficiently certain data confirming the correctness of one or other hypothesis, leads some scholars to the conclusion that the language of the Huns did not belong to any language family known at present but should rather be con-

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<sup>23</sup> The Sabirs belonged to the *Hsien-pi* of Proto-Mongolian origin. According to the Chinese sources, a branch of their ruling dynasty once called itself *T'o-pa* (see: **O. Pritsak**. From the Säbir to the Hungarians. – In: *Hungaro-Turcica, Studies in Honor of Julius Németh*. Budapest, 1976, pp. 17-30 and especially p. 28). At the same time *T'o-pa*, *To-ba* were the Altaic tribe who in the first centuries A. D. played an important role in North China. The same name is met in names styled by today's Tuvin, Karagas and other North Altaic Turkic people (*toba*, *tofa*, *tufa*, *tuva*) whose idioms contain some specific features characteristic also of the Chuvash language.

sidered as an unknown extinct language (or linguistic group), similar to the Sumerian and Ugaritic.<sup>24</sup>

6. To a large extent this is valid also for the [Proto]Bulgarians in their earlier ethnogenesis. At that time they could hardly be regarded as “Turks”. It is not excluded that their differentiation to have been due to the fusion of Altaic (“Hunnish”) and non-Altaic (Indo-European Iranian speaking + Uralic) groups. This explains also the evolution of their ethnonym ( $B^{\circ}l + g + -^{\circ}r$ ;  $B^{\circ}l + g + -^{\circ}n$ )<sup>25</sup> which could only obtain other

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<sup>24</sup> See the thorough research of **G. Doerfer**. Zur Sprache der Hunnen. – *CAJ*, 17, 1973, p. 1-50.

<sup>25</sup> The analysis of the Bulgarian name points to the stem  $*b^{\circ}l$ , produced by the fusion of the root morpheme  $b^{\circ}$  (also  $m^{\circ}$ ,  $p^{\circ}$ ,  $f^{\circ}$ ), carrier of the basic meaning of “being, existence”, with the affixal morpheme  $-l/-n$ , as a result of which was formed a new irresolvable stem. The proto-form  $*b^{\circ}l$  (with phonetic variants *bar, bal, ban; pal, pan; mar, maz, maž, man*, etc.) is an ancient Eurasian lexeme, present in an enormous number of geographic and ethnic names which along with its other semantics possesses the basic meaning of “a being, person, man”. By adding to it a suffix pluralis, e.g.  $-k/-g$ ,  $-t/-d$ , etc. emerges a plural stem indicating a number of men, a group of persons, people. In the process of the development of the language such lexemes may assume a new contents and from denoting a certain divisible multitude turn into the name of an indivisible aggregate. The formants used as a rule lose their cumulative character and blend with the stem which allows later to them to be added other plural indicators. The word, new as regards contents, is now regarded not as a collective name of a group of men (persons) but as a quite different stem in the singular (clan, tribe). Such forms represent the earliest self-determination of every ethnos and correspond to its original (self) appellation. Here we should probably place also the predecessor of the real Bulgarian ethnonym – Bulg, Bolk, Balh ( $*b^{\circ}lk$ ). It is possible, however, that this whole process may be repeated on a higher structural level and once turned into a semantically new unit (“persons” > “people”), the word may again receive a plural indicator (e.g.  $-^{\circ}r$ ,  $-^{\circ}n$ , etc.) forming a broader collective name (“clan(s)” – “tribe, people”), uniting the notion of the separate clans into a whole concept. In this way probably emerged also the new plural denomination of all related and alien in descent tribes, making up the [Proto]Bulgarian ethnic community. As a collective name this form received also the meaning of a Bulgarian ethnonym: *Bulgar*,

meanings at a later stage.<sup>26</sup> Where and when the mixture occurred remains a puzzle for the time being. We should probably look for it somewhere in the contact zone between Iran and Turan, perhaps in the Caucasus or rather around Balkh, Bukhara and Samarkand – in the former Bactrain-Sogdian territory of Central Asian Mesopotamia,<sup>27</sup> i. e. Tokharistan and the State of the “White Huns” (the Hephthalites).<sup>28</sup>

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*Balkar, Burgar, Burġan*, etc. For more details see: **V. Stojanow**. Op.cit.; **Idem**. Die Entwicklung.

<sup>26</sup> Including that of “phosatisi”. On this question see the dissertation of **Хр. Тодоров-Бемберски**. *Етнимимът българи – история и същност*. София, 1993.

<sup>27</sup> The basin of the Oxus (Amu Darya) and Jaxartes (Syr Darya). In Achaemenid Iran (6<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> c. B.C.) Bactria encompassed Pamir with the northern slopes of Hindu Kush and spread along the upper and middle reaches of Amu Darya, bordering in the north on Sogdia, in the north-west on Horesm and on the west on the land of the Parthians. After the campaigns of Alexander the Great in the course of which in 320 B.C. he reached Syr-Darya (for some details see **J. A. Boyle**. *Alexander and the Turks*. – In: *Tractata Altaica. Denis Sinor... dedicata*. Wiesbaden, 1976, pp. 107-117), Sogdia and Bactria were incorporated in the new “world” empire and later formed the “Greco-Bactrian State”, the capital of which Bactra (Balh) along the ancient “silk” road rose as a prominent Hellenistic cultural centre. Outside the conquests remained Horesm or Xwarizm (i. e. xvar-zem, “Land of the Sun”). That legendary land of Avesta where Ahura-Mazdah “revealed” himself to Zaratustra. Now its indigenous population fell fully encircled by Sakai and Massagetai. Later, when in 129 B.C. the Tokharians occupied Sogdo-Bactria, some groups of Sakai (or Sarmatians) migrated to the West (See **G. Vernadsky**. *Sur l’origine des Alains*. – *Byzantion*, 16, 1944, 81-86). Hardly in Horesm should one look for the ancient motherland of the Croats as supposes **G. Vernadsky**, *The Origin of the Name Rus*. – *SOF*, 15, 1956, p. 167-179, interpreting their ethnonym as “sun-peoples” from the Iranian xvarva, “sun-like” and the plural suffix -at. It is true that among the Croats were preserved some steppe traditions, names and titles owing to which their origin is connected not only with the Slavs but also with the Irano-Sarmatian and Turkic peoples. They also knew the story of the five brothers known to us from the legend of Kubrat and his sons, here Chrobatos (compare Kubrat – Κοῦβρατος, Κοβρατος, Κροβατος) was one of the founders of the Croatian state. This hints at early Bulgarian-Croatian con-

7. Precisely in this area emerged the so-called “runic” script, adopted from a special form of the Aramaic, close to the ancient Sogdian script. Originally it was designed for a language of the [Proto]Bulgarian or “Hunnish” type in which the sound “z” and “š” were absent. Only later the script was modified in view of the Turkic phonetic system and signs appeared for sounds contrasting in their front-back sound correlation. Thus with the aid of ideograms and diacritical marks, added to the available forms, were made new symbols, from the “runes” r<sup>1</sup> ( Ч ) and l<sup>1</sup> ( Y ) emerged graphemes for “z” ( Чh ) and “š” ( Y̆ , Ẏ , Ÿ , Ỷ etc.).<sup>29</sup>

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tacts prior to the settling of the two peoples in the Balkans. More likely it is, however, that they were established within the framework of the Avar Kaganate than far to the east in Central Asia. (For the Croatian ethnogenesis see: **W. Poh1**. *Die Awaren. Ein Steppeinvolk in Mitteleuropa 567-822 n. Chr.* München, 1988, pp.261 -268).

<sup>28</sup> In this area – round Hindu Kush and Pamir, has of late looked for the original motherland of the Bulgarians also Petar Dobrev who set forth an interesting thesis in a series of publications orientated regrettably more to the general public than to the serious scientific world. See: **П. Добрев**. *Прабългарите. Произход, език, култура. Нов прочит*. София, 1991; **Idem**. *Каменната книга на прабългарите*. София, 1992; **Idem**. *Необясненото и необикновеното в ранната българска история. Книга за всеки българин*. София, 1993; **Idem**. *Светът на прабългарите. Прародина. Преселение, военно дело, писменост и календар, религия и обичаи, държавност*. София, 1994; **Idem**. *Преоткриването на прабългарския календар*. София, 1994; **Idem**. *Езикът на Аспаруховите и Куберови българи. Речник и граматика*. София, 1995; **Idem**. *История на българската държавност*. София, 1995; **Idem**. *Inschriften und Alphabet der Urbulgaren*. Sofia, 1995; **Idem**. *Българи, тюрки, славяни*. София, 1996; **Idem**. *Universum Protobulgariaum*. New York, 1996; **Idem**. *По следите на една научна сензация. Сказанието на Атиловите хуни*. София, 1997; **Idem**. *Царственик на българското достояние*. София, 1998; etc.

<sup>29</sup> See: **A. Róna-Tas**. On the Development and Origin of the East Turkic “Runic” Script. – *АОН*, 41, 1987, 7-14; **H.-W.Haussig**. Der historische Hintergrund der Runenfunde in Osteuropa und Zentralasien. – In: *Runen, Tamgas und Graffiti aus Asien und Osteuropa*. Wiesbaden, 1985, pp. 81 - 132. (= *Veröffentlichungen der Societas Uralo-Altica*, Bd. 19).

8. The prolonged life of the Bulgarians in the Iranian-Altaic nomadic environment and their joining the state structure of Huns, Avars and Türk[üt]s, contributed to the formation of those features of their way of life, language and culture by which they were referred to the Turkic ethno-linguistic community. In the stage preceding the foundation of Kubrat's State, the Bulgarians constituted part of the Türk[üt] Khaganate.<sup>30</sup> At its separation which followed the dynastic struggles between Dulu and Nušibi,<sup>31</sup> other Turkic elements also joined the new tribal alliance. It is naive to think that the national composition of Greater Bulgaria was homogeneous. In all likelihood the Bulgarian groups migrating to the Southwest also contained different ethnic elements. This explains the character

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<sup>30</sup> Cf. it synthesized in the dissertation of **Хр. Димитров**. *България и номадите до началото на X век*. София, 1986, pp.83-95.

<sup>31</sup> Tu-lu and Nu-ši-pi were the principal groupings in the alliance of the "Ten Tribes (Arrows)" or On Oq, mentioned by the Chinese sources in 635. Each separate tribe in them led a life of its own and obeyed its own leader – 5 č'o (čor) with Tu-lu and 5 k'i-kin (tegin?) with Nu-ši-pi. Sometimes the tribes united under the leadership of a common supreme khan who was elected chiefly from the group of Tu-lu. For details see **M. Adamovič**. *Die alten Oghuzen. – Materialia Turcica*, 7-8, 1981-1982 (Bochum 1983), 26-49 (= *Byzantino-Altaica. Festschrift für H. W. Haussig zum 65. Geburtstag*). Usually On Oq from the Chinese sources are connected with the known in the West onoguroi (*on-ogur*, in this case -<sup>o</sup>r is a suffix for the plural), one of the basic [Proto]Bulgarian tribes. Here to Tu-lu corresponds the Bulgarian dynastic clan Dulo, while Nu-ši-pi are referred to the name known in Iran and the North Black Sea coast Ermi which is also encountered as a clan name among the Bulgarians (Ermi, Ερμηαρης). In the Avaro-Persian campaign against Constantinople in 662 the Bulgarian unit was headed by someone named Ερμιτςις. The name of another leader of this tribal grouping – Άσκηλ, coincides with the designation of the Volga Bulgarian Askel, Eskel, (Esegeli). It is possible for pre-Turkic groups of Ermi to have been incorporated in the Hunnish tribe Hermi-khion. Cf. also Khion with Khionitae, whose leader Grumbates (from the Iranian \*Grum-bat = Krum-pat, i.e. King Krum?) rode in front of the Persian troops on the left side of Shah Shapur II (see **H. W. Haussig**. *Einige Bemerkungen zu der Arbeit von J. Werner über den Schatz von Malaja Pereščepina. – MT*, 10, 1984 (Bochum, 1985), 1-30).

of the linguistic relicts, some of which are easily identified as “Turkic” whereas for other ones this link is more remote.

Hence with certain reservations the conclusion may be drawn that although the Bulgarians reached the Danube as a “Turkic” a more probably as a Turkicized people, their initial origin was most likely “non-Turkic” (mixed) or at least “pre-Turkic”. This, admittedly, was of no importance for the period that followed. In the Balkans the Bulgarians were representatives of that huge family of Eastern peoples that science conditionally determines as “Turkic” or “Turko-Altai”. The question is to what a degree their language followed the general evolution of the Turkic linguistic family and in what direction it continued to develop: up to a point in parallel with the Volga Bulgarian and to another under the impact of the local Slavonic and Greek languages. Were there some beginnings of Oghuzation as in the language of the Bulgarians along the Volga and whether possibly they were due to general tendencies or rather to presence of related Oghuzian superstratum?

There is something more. The thesis of the “assimilation” should be given new meaning at least in view of its terminus ante quem. Up to the Christianization the Bulgarians were the predominant element in their state. Even if there existed a certain ethnic mixture, it would not produce such strong impact on their language and culture. Rather the other way: Bulgarian words and terms entered the language of the local Slavs, including those across the Danube. Perhaps here rests the cause for their difficult identification: they should be sought also among the (Slavonic and other) dialectal words in those areas outside the country which once were a Bulgarian habitation. The Slavonic language began to displace the Bulgarian only after its raising to the status of a liturgical written language.<sup>32</sup> Even

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<sup>32</sup> Had Byzantium stimulated the creation of letters on a Bulgarian (not Slavonic) basis for church-administrative and literary application, now perhaps

then Bulgarian continued to live as a means of communication in the everyday life of its carriers<sup>33</sup>, i. e. groups of Bulgarian population (particularly the ordinary members of society) must have retained for a longer period of time their ethnic specificity although they were exposed to the grooving Slav and Byzantine influence. In all probability their language must have fully disappeared (or had been transformed) only after the 12<sup>th</sup> c., i. e. during the next stage of Bulgarian-Turkic relations.

The restoration of Byzantine domination of the lands along the Lower Danube was followed by considerable changes in the administrative, political and cultural sphere. Integrated within the boundaries of the Empire, Bulgaria more easily accepted the Byzantine cultural model. Later its rulers would style themselves as “tsars” (i.e. caesars, emperors) of Bulgarians and Greeks”, would dress in Byzantine fashion, and the capital of Tǎrnovo<sup>34</sup> would receive the name “Great” and be called Tsarevec on the analogy of Tsarigrad-Constantinople. The Byzantine period, however, had also another essential side: it was from then that dated the first settlements of new groups of mediaeval Turkic people who most often established themselves where in the past had been “Turkic-Bulgarian” population. This led to three interconnected processes:

1. “Returkization” of part of the Bulgarians, i. e. revival and renovation of their Turkic Altaic language and in this senses its additional “Turkization”, in so far in it was a stratified

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we would have looked for the traces of the Southern Slavs of that time in our lands.

<sup>33</sup> The unresearched history of the Rhomas offers a parallel. In six centuries since the 14<sup>th</sup> c. their language has not disappeared although during that time the Gypsies have been subjected to a great variety of cultural influence.

<sup>34</sup> With probable Turkic-Altaic etymology in the sense of “ruler’s residence”, “Knjaževo” (from trin, tīrīn ~ tudun. i. e. “prince”).

Oghuzian (later Qipchaq) superstratum which changed its basic characteristics.

2. Fusion of the newly arrived Turkic people with parts of the Bulgarian population found there into new Turkic-speaking ethnographic Bulgarian groups.

3. “Bulgarianization” of some of them, i. e. their joining the new (Slav)Bulgarian nationality as local ethnographic variants of the Slav-speaking Bulgarian population.

The second stage of Bulgarian-Turkic relations contains some obscurities and raises questions the answers to which are still challenged. For instance:

1. To whom belonged the “stone ‘babas’” at the village of Endže near Shumen? If judged by their style of costume and hair dress, they should be referred rather to the Cuman religious sculpture than to the remains of the [Proto]Bulgarian culture.

2. How should be interpreted the qualification of Kaloian (1197-1207) as a ruler of Bulgarians and Wallachians? Is in this case a question of a Wallachian population or rather of some Turkic nomads? In the mediaeval documents of the 13<sup>th</sup> c. the concepts “Wallach”, “Wallachian” no longer denoted without fail ethnic origin, but also a social one connected with the principal occupation, it was used also in the sense of “nomad” and “shepherd”.<sup>35</sup> Abu’l-Feda speaks of “Turko-Wallachians” in the territory of modern Romania; V. Rubriqus, who visited the court of the Great Mongolian Khan in 1253, mentions the people Illac or Blac in proximity with the Bashkirs. Later R. Bacon claims that the Blaci living in the country of the Bul-

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<sup>35</sup> In Northern Albania, for instance, are reported “Wallachian” families and individuals called Kuman, Komani, Komanic. See: **I. Schütz**. Les contacts médiévaux albano-comans reflétés par l’onomastique de Kosovo. – *AOH*, 40, 1986, p. 293-300.

garian King Asen originated from the former Blacia (“Blaci de Blacia majore”), next to “Magna Hungaria” by the Urals. Numerous Eastern sources report a Turkic people Blaq or Bulaq (> Ulaq), subjected once to the Qipchaqs. In the above case, therefore, by the name “Wallachians” should perhaps be meant rather the Cumans who played an important role in the history of the Bulgarian lands during the Second Kingdom.<sup>36</sup> Here still before the rejection of Byzantine rule began to be formed a new Bulgarian-Cuman aristocracy. Such was the origin of the first Asens and of practically all following dynasties (Terters, Šišmans and also of the Balik clan in Dobrudža). It is a different question that they always considered themselves Bulgarians and acted as such irrespective of their mixed descent.

3. What was the language of the Cumans in Bulgaria? As a rule the Cuman language belonged to the Qipchaq group of Turkic languages. The Cumans themselves were defined by the Moslem authors as Qipčaq. Qifčaq, and the “Polovcians land” as Dešt-i Qipčaq. “Codex Cumanicus”, drawn up in the early 14<sup>th</sup> c., contains more linguistic information. It reflects, however, a later condition of the language that certain authors are inclined to accept as “Proto-Tatar”. Since during their movement towards the Balkans the Cuman absorbed a number of Oghuzian elements, in the language of the westernmost Cuman tribes must have occurred certain changes while in the East in the “Qipchaq steppe” it had retained in a purer kind its Qipchaq characteristics, Oghuzation must have affected those Cuman

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<sup>36</sup> See: **Хр. Тодоров-Бемберски**. Някои факти и съображения относно едно погрешно тълкуване на Асеновата титла „цар на българи и власи”. – *Български език*, 1989, № 3, 222-224; **L. Rásonyi**. Bulaqs and Oguzs in Medieval Transylvania. – *АОН*, 33, 1979, 120-151, who believed, however, that already in the 9<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> c. a symbiosis existed between B[u]laq and Bulgar in the Bulgarian lands in the middle reaches of the Danube (Cf. “Gelou, dux Blacorum” with whom fought the Magyars who were settling here).

groups who settled in Hungary and Bulgaria amidst the Pecheneg and Uzian elements.

4. Particularly problematic is the question of the localization of the late-nomadic settlements, the determination of the Pecheueg-Cuman diaspora in Bulgaria and the identification of the descendants of the mediaeval Turkic people among the present population of the country. It is known that in the 40s of the 11<sup>th</sup> c. two Pecheneg “lines” (some 20 000 people) separated from their compatriots and after having been baptized in the Danube found sanctuary on Byzantine territory in Dobrudža. This act involved Byzantium in war with the Pechenegs – two years later the nomads invaded the Empire. They were repulsed, and the prisoners – settled in the area around Niš, Sofia and Skopje. From here nearly 15 000 Pechenegs were mobilized in Asia Minor but they returned to Bulgaria – to the region “*Sto mogili*” (One Hundred Hills) near Devnia where they rejected the domination of the Rhomaioi and preserved their independence for three decades (1060-1090). The Byzantines were compelled to fight incessantly with them so as to reimpose their rule. After in 1083 huge Pecheneg masses had migrated with their families to the south, devastating Thrace, the Emperor Alexius Comnenos at long last with Cuman help succeeded in dealing with the nomad danger. In the battle at Enos near the mouth of the Maritsa river (1091) the Pechenegs were crushed, most of them taken prisoner (women and children included) – slaughtered and the rest – settled in the Măglen (Moglen) area, Southern Macedonia.

Thus Pechenegs were settled on imperial land in Western Bulgaria and on the right bank of the Lower Danube – in the northeastern areas of the Danube of the country and in Dobrudža. Here possibly should we look for their traces – as a population now with a settled way of life, having accepted from their neighbours the general Bulgarian features of living and having probably been transformed in the course of time

into a separate ethnographic group. It will be more difficult to establish the dispersion of Uzes and especially of Cumans, the settlements of which, after Bulgaria broke away from imperial rule, were naturally not known to the Byzantine authors. Different was the question with the Anatolian Seljuk Turks – Anna Comnena mentions a corpus of Τουρκοι inhabiting Akhrida (the valley of the Arda river in the Rhodopes, today’s Kurdžali area), whose descendants, if they had survived to the 14<sup>th</sup> c., might have been absorbed by the Ottomans. Various sources report “Turkish” allies of certain Bulgarian kings. To these “Turkic” people or “Turkomen” belonged also the “Turkopouli” (“Turkish children”) and probably the so called “Vardariots” along Salonika, but individual authors look for their Magyar descent.<sup>37</sup> As regards the Uzes and Cumans, their localization could be helped by archaeological information from the late nomadic burials, insofar as certain difference existed in laying the bodies – with the head to the East (with the Cumans) and to the West (with the ‘Torks’ and the Pechenegs).<sup>38</sup> Still more important, however, are the toponymic and other linguistic pieces of information (personal names and lexemes, preserved in Old Bulgarian written monuments of the pre-Ottoman period and in the modern Bulgarian dialects), as well as the reports about some events in the history of the Kingdom of Tărnovo. It all indicates that the Cumans spread far and wide in the Bulgarian lands – in Macedonia, in the Sofia and Tărnovo regions, around Vratsa, Vidin and Kotel along the Vit River, in the Silisra area and elsewhere. Bigger groups of Uzes and Cumans probably settled down in North-East Bulgaria – where before them had settled a Pecheneg population, and still earlier had lived the [Proto]Bulgarians. This inevitably led to new ethno-cultural layers among the already “Bulgarianizing”

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<sup>37</sup> **N. Oikonomides.** Vardariotes – W.l.nd.r – V.n.nd.r: Hongrois installés dans la vallée du Vardar en 934. – *SOF*, 32, 1973, 1-8.

<sup>38</sup> See: **С. А. Плетнева.** Половецкие каменные изваяния. – *Археология СССР. Свод археологических источников.* Е 4-2, Москва, 1974, с.72.

genuine Turkic population, but in places revived the Turkic language, especially in areas where the Slav influence was not so strong.

In most cases the permanent impact of the Slav-speaking milieu contributed to turning the newly arrived people into differentiated groups of Bulgarian population. Such were perhaps the *Shoppes* around Sofia about whom already C. Jireček wrote that in their female type they possessed “Turanoid” features. Later they were associated with the Pecheneg tribe Τζοπου (\*Copen, Čopen, Čopan) that during the reign of Constantine Porphyrogenitus was in the lands beyond the Dnieper,<sup>39</sup> while in the last decade individual authors prefer to refer them to the [Proto]Bulgarians of the age of Krum. To their special features should be added also the specificity of the Shoppe’s folklore, its characteristic Eastern tonality and the unusual vocal structures which have no known analogue.

Another ethnographic group about which it may be surmised to be of Pecheneg origin are the *Kapantsi* of the Razgrad district who probably in the past absorbed certain Cuman elements. Individual researchers also look for their [Proto]Bulgarian origin. According to Constantine Porphyrogenitus. however, in the mid-10<sup>th</sup> c. along the Danube was situated the Pecheneg tribe Χοπού (\*Qapan) and precisely to it perhaps belonged those Pechenegs who had first settled in Bulgaria. The

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<sup>39</sup> See : **В. Добруский**. Няколко историческо-археологически бележки. – *СбНУНК*, 3, 1980, 41-44 (I. Крепостта Батил над Бояна); **Ю. Трифонов**. По произхода на името „шопъ”. – *СпБАН*, 22, кл. ИФФО, 12, 1922, 122-158, who however, is of a different opinion. In the popular etymology “šop, šopi” < “sop, sopi” some connection is observed, in so far as the forms “sopa” and “šop” and the personal names Čapa, Dzopa, etc. are connected with the Iranian čop, čub (club), contained in the words čoban ~ čuban, čupan, župan, špan, ispan ... and denoting simultaneously “shepherd”, a nobleman’s title and a proper name, similar to the Pecheneg Τζοπου. In the Old Bulgarian language “džop” and “čop” denoted a war club, a kind of mace, and the mace was a weapon characteristic of the Pechenegs.

Kapantsi are regarded as “Old” Bulgarian population, but in them there are elements betraying mixed Turkic influences. In their speech, for instance, exists a prototic “i” in words beginning with two consonants of which the first – “s” or “z” (“is-rám” instead “sram” e. i. “shame”, “isčupen” instead of “sčupen” e. i. “broken”, etc.). Since this particularity is recorded in written monuments of the 12<sup>th</sup> c., in this case it cannot be the question of (Ottoman)Turkish influence. A Turkish peculiarity is probably the presence of repeated words whereby the initial consonant of the second is replaced by the consonant “m” (“pă-dar-mădar” i. e. “field-keeper”, “knishki-mnishki” i. e. “booklets”, etc.). Turkic is perhaps the naming of the northerly wind as “black” in so far as the black corresponds to the North in the Turkic color symbolism. Food for thought give also certain peculiarities of everyday culture. The hairdress of bachelors used to be a long forelock and was worn open, without a cap. The head was shaven round the forelock and in the event of a long hair it was braided. Up to the Liberation the male Kapan “hoses” remained in cut and colour the Shoppe tight homespun breeches (“benevreci”). In the embroidery of the women’s “shirts” was applied a particular crossed stitch called “Cuman”. Their specific ornamental motif is the “cockerels” which have no analogue elsewhere, whereas the characteristic embroidery of the sleeves, the so-called “kapane” (from where some authors derived the self-name of the Kapantsi) is encountered also among the *Shikovtsi* – also an “Old” Bulgarian population whose name has not been clarified.<sup>40</sup> Once the Kapantsi carried milk on clay jugs with two ears through which the vessel was tied to the packsaddle – a typically nomadic and in particular Pecheneg practice. Specific was also the Kapan “suvrena” pillow the meaning of which word is explained through the Chuvash. Peculiar are also the old tombstones containing anthropomorphic features, facing the East. Interesting are also the

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<sup>40</sup> Could it have some connection with “Siki”, “Sikuli” and “Es[e]geli”?

similarities in the women's hairdress and decoration between Kapantsi and *Hărtsoi* – yet another “Old” Bulgarian population of possible non-Slav origin. A number of other characteristic features also exist whereby the Kapantsi are distinguished from the other Bulgarian people.<sup>41</sup>

The *Gagaouzes* in Dobrudža and on the Black Sea coast occupy a special place. Their Orthodox Christian religion and maternal language close to the Bulgarian Turkish dialects puzzled scholars already in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. To this is added the explicit self-determination of the Gagaouzes as “Old Bulgarians” and the “Karamanli” religious literature spread among them (Greek script, “Turkish” language). The problem of the “Gagaouzes”, therefore, has attracted several generations of researchers without solving in full the question of their origin. The Gagaouz idiom has been defined as a Balkan-Turkish dialect or as an independent language that emerged in the New Turkic epoch (15<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> c.). The Gagaouzes themselves, owing to their Bulgarian self-awareness, way of life and culture may be regarded as Bulgarian *ethnographic* group speaking a non-Slavonic language. To the extent the language is the main sign of the “national”, however, they are accepted also as an *ethnic* group with a traditional Balkan culture. In the final analysis we should probably define them as a late Turkic-speaking group, the process of whose formation as an ethnos began once in the Bulgarian ethnic territory, but was interrupted at a particular stage of development.

The differentiation of the Gagaouzes in Bulgaria, where their ancestors adopted Christianity, explains their Bulgarian self-awareness and the presence of a common-Bulgarian way of life and culture. The preservation of their language, transformed into a speech close to the Balkan Turkish dialects was

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<sup>41</sup> See about them: *Капанци. Бит и култура на старото българско население в Североизточна България. Етнографски и езикови проучвания*. София, 1985.

probably determined by the weakening of the Slavonic influence. It is not excluded, that already during Byzantine domination attempts had been made to a return to the Greek liturgy particularly in the North-Eastern areas of the country inhabited once by [Proto]Bulgarians. With the establishment of new groups of Turkic population the Greek religious terminology must have consolidated in the “Turkic-speaking” Bulgarian milieu. Precisely here during the Middle Ages the Patriarchate of Constantinople for long kept its positions through the Bishopric of Varna which served also the coast of the accession of Varna to the Kingdom of Tărnovo (1201) and the restoration of the Bulgarian Patriarchate (1235). This perhaps explains the adoption of Greek as official language in the affairs of the Despotate of Dobrudža in the 14<sup>th</sup> c. and the use of Greek religious terms among the later Turkic-speaking Gagaouzes.<sup>42</sup> No doubt here a definite role was played by the so-called “Karamanli” literature, but it emerged in a region of Asia Minor where there also were Bulgarian-Cuman elements,<sup>43</sup> and it is possible that the Karamanlis were in point of fact heirs to the Cumans settled once in Byzantium. We could then ask whether the Gagaouzes were not ultimately a “product” of the strivings of Constantinople to incorporate spiritually the non-Slavonic-speaking (Bulgarian) Christians?

The Gagaouz “problem” suggests that in the mediaeval Bulgarian nationality together with the prevailing Slavonic-speaking part existed also Turkic-speaking Christian Bulgarians. Their fate under Ottoman rule is unclear. Probably those of them who retained their Christian faith formed the phenomenon “Gagaouzes” or were additionally Slavicized – even in

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<sup>42</sup> See for them more details in the recently defended dissertation of **И. Градешлиев**. *Гагаузите от Добруджанското причерноморие. Християнство и народен календар*. София, 1993, 253 с.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. **И. Татарлъ**. Към въпроса за българските племена и държавни образувания в Мала Азия през XI-XV в. – In: *България 1300. Институции и държавна традиция*. Т. II. София, 1982, с. 385-396.

the 16<sup>th</sup> c. in the Ottoman registers still figured Bulgarians with Turkic personal names (Balika, Dogan, Dušman, Kuman, Kävkan, Nogoj, Parmak, Uzgur, Čoban, etc.).<sup>44</sup> Others, however, as the result of the processes of Islamization, joined the Ottoman people. It seems that in their majority they were descendants of the Uzoi (Guzoi, Oghuzoi, Torks). Ethnolinguistically they were closest to the Ottoman Turks (also Oghuzoi), and besides, once they confronted both the Pechenegs and the Cumans who to a much higher degree held close contacts with the Bulgarians. In this fashion may be explained also the name Uz eyāleti (Uz eyalet, Uz province), given in the 17<sup>th</sup> c. by Evliya Çelebi to the Northeastern Bulgarian areas the Turkish population of which due to its specificity and language he defined as “çitaks”. Some Turkish authors (e.g. M. F. Köprülü) also speak about the Uz origin of the Deiliorman Turks.

Among the other Turkic-speaking elements there were also some who were incorporated in the Turkish nationality and this is not at all surprising. Parts of the Bulgarians who had accepted Christianity far before the Cumans and Pechenegs later turned to the Islam. This was much easier for the descendants of the nomads whose language and origin connected them more to the new masters than to the Slav-Bulgarian mass. Nor should the fact be underestimated that practically everywhere where one can speak of Islamization or turning Turk, there are actually traces also of the pre-Ottoman Turks. The problem is that the Turkish population in this country has not been adequately studied so as to determine, its ethnographic groups and by comparison with materials from Turkey to draw a distinction between the “Anatolian” and “Balkan” variants.

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<sup>44</sup> See: **В. Стоянов**. Наблюдения върху османотурските документални извори за „специалните” категории население в земите под османска власт. – *Исторически преглед*, 1983, № 3, 58-70.

The Ottoman domination played a decisive role not only in further shaping the Bulgarian nationality but also in creating the Turko-Islamic massif that rested at the foundation of the “Turkish minority”. With the Ottoman invasion in point of fact ended the migration of the peoples. In the West it ended already in the 10<sup>th</sup> c. with the Magyar “Landnahme”, whereas in Eastern Europe it continued until the coming of the Turks in the 14<sup>th</sup> c. This predetermined the great lag of the Balkan peoples from the all-European development which was additionally deepened by their isolation during the Ottoman period. For the Bulgarians this meant a nearly nine-centuries long “distancing” from the West-European traditions that had meanwhile been established.

For centuries the Balkans absorbed the consecutive waves of peoples, becoming the last refuge for ethnoses that were yet to be civilized. If once Byzantium had exercised a creative influence, attracting to its values also the “barbarians” North of Constantinople, with the appearance of the Ottoman Turks things became complicated. As carriers and retranslators of spiritual values which if not alien were at least in confrontation with the Christian world outlook of the local population, the Ottomans tolerated an elitist culture, differing considerably from the one found here. Owing to the decisive role of religion in the life of medieval society, the adepts of the new civilization could exist only as Moslems. The bulk of the population that had remained loyal to the Christian values was doomed to play a subordinate role, without chances of prosperity. The very fact that Bulgaria for long remained an internal Ottoman zone not bordering on the European world, contributed to the still stronger isolation of the Bulgarians from the general European development and to subjecting them to a much higher degree to the influence of the Ottoman way of life. The absence of a strong umbilical cord with the spiritual centers of Europe pushed them far to the traditional popular culture. They preserved its specificity (even revived elements of the pre-Christian

period) and “clung” to it because of the absence of some other elitist culture of their own. All that held back the Bulgarian development to a more primitive level owing to which the Liberation found the country as an ethnocultural reserve of a sort. No wonder that the Bulgarian folklore today makes such an impression on Europe – in the ultimate analysis it transmits the particular features of an early medieval music which has since long disappeared in the modern civilized world.

The Ottoman period was also the time of considerable ethnodemographic changes. With the occupation of the country the new Turkish national element established itself in it. It consisted not only of military units and administration, representatives of the religious cult and the intelligentsia but also of nomadic groups of shepherds and peasant population who here found their new motherland. A more careful study should be made of the network of settlement in Bulgaria during the 15<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> c. and compare it with that of the preceding period so that the settlements may possibly be differentiated also in an ethnic respect. Then more clearly will appear probably: (a) the Bulgarian settlements which have preserved their old names in the original, in translation or in Turkicized phonetic variant; (b) the Bulgarian settlements with absolutely new Turkish names; (c) the settlements of possible Ottoman origin about which information from the preceding centuries is lacking. In connection with the colonization it is necessary to localize more precisely the additional Moslem settlements (of Tatars, Circassians and Albanians), and also to make a thorough study of the question of the Alians (Alevits), i. e. to what an extent they were the product of Bektaşi propaganda or partly also of the settling of Shiites in the Balkan region.

The time of Ottoman domination is associated also with the spread of Islam in the country – a process which has always been tolerated and encouraged by the ruling circles. It is true that by this the State lost some revenue (e.g. from the *ciziye*

tax) but consolidated its positions in the Christian provinces and enlarged its military potential, restoring its losses in men. In this sense the successes of the Ottoman penetration in Central Europe were due not in the last place also to those fresh forces that were sucked all the time from the subjected Balkan peoples. Individual or en masse, “voluntary” or “compulsory”, the Islamization went on throughout the Ottoman period. It can only be supposed that in the compulsory Islamization the population to a large extent retained the features of its old way of life and culture (cf. the Pomaks – the Bulgarian Mohammedans), whereas the voluntary conversion to the Islam led to a quicker conscious Turkicization owing to the natural striving of the “newly converted” to become equal in everything with the hereditary Mohammedans. Should now claims be raised towards the descendants of those former Bulgarians who once themselves wished to become part of the ruling Ottoman people?

Forcibly Islamized or not, descendants of local Balkan population or immigrants from Anatolia, the Moslems in Bulgaria formed a large chiefly Turkish-speaking community that after the Liberation lost its privileged status and turned into a minority group – part of the complex “Ottoman heritage”. It is now difficult to establish with certainty its concrete origin. In a historical respect now are discovered different layers which further complicate the question. Among the Turkish minority there are descendants of:

1. Turkish settlers from Asia Minor who to the same degree originated from the Ottoman beylik and from the other Anatolian principalities established after the disintegration of the Rum Seljuk Sultanate. However, even then composition was hardly homogeneous – the invaders included Moslem and Islamized elements differing in their origin.

2. Turkish groups formed as a result of the Islamization of the local population: (a) Islamized and Turkicized Slavonic-

speaking Bulgarians; (b) Islamized and Turkicized Turkic-speaking Bulgarians; (c) Islamized and Turkicized other non-Bulgarian-speaking Christians.

3. Turks descending from Turkicized: (a) Turkic-speaking Moslems (Tatars and others), found here or settled later in the Bulgarian lands, as well as from (b) non-Turkic-speaking Moslems (Arabs, Persians, Albanians, Circassias, Gypsies and Pomaks) who gradually joined the Ottoman-Turkish nationality.

All this shows how difficult it is to grant some priority to the “colonization” or “Islamization” thesis about the origin of the Turkish minority. In the final analysis of what importance is the ethnic origin of a person who today professes the Islam and defines himself traditionally as a “Turk”? With a policy which respects his human (not only in the narrow sense – minority) rights, the proving of his Bulgarian origin would only contribute to his feeling still more attached to his own motherland. Otherwise any return to the past would repel him from it. Even if his ancestors had been Turkish colonists, he today is the descendant of a population that has for centuries lived on Bulgarian soil. Again the national policy is the one that would awaken patriotic feelings or conversely – nihilistic moods among that since long Balkan population.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Proceeding from the specificity of the “Turkish problem” one should not forget that owing to the force of the historical circumstances today the Bulgarian Turks may be regarded as much “autochthonous” as the other inhabitants of the country. Here it is not a question of the ethnic origin. The possibility part of them to be the descendants of Islamized Bulgarians does not justify assimilation nor is it justified by references to precedents in the old Turkish history. The length of Ottoman domination in itself is sufficient ground for accepting today’s Bulgarian Turks as local population.