The Ancient Bulgarians – Who Were They? A New Look at the Old Question

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The author offers a new perspective on the fundamental question of the Bulgarian ethnogenesis. Bulgarians and Khazars came from East Turkestan, a region of Turpan-Urumqi-Hami; and their earliest traceable origin is Tocharian. Living in the Sarmatian environment, they gradually acquired Iranian languages. In the I century AD they had already moved in the Caucasus and came in the academic focus of historical analysts (Movses Khorenatsi).
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1. The migration of Vund's Bulgarians in Armenia

In the modern historical science, the idea that the Ancient Bulgarians, or Proto-Bulgarians originated from Proto-Turkic (*Ogurs*) tribes has been widely acknowledged. They appeared in Eastern Europe with the Huns of Attila. Hungarian scholars (Wilhelm Tomaschek, Armin Vambery, Gyula Nemeth, etc.) firmly linked the other name used to refer to the Bulgarian tribes, namely *Unogundurs* with the name of the *Unogur* people and thus with the *Huns,* of course.

That was how the equation *Unogundurs* = *Unogurs* was forged, later to become the basis of the theory that the language the Proto-Bulgarians spoke was the *Ogurs language*, from which the ancient Hungarians borrowed about 500 words because they lived in two neighboring regions, in close proximity to one another. The only heir of this *Bulgarian-Ogurs* language which has survived to present day is the Chuvash language, commonly acknowledged as the heir of the language of the Volga Bulgarians.

In his *History of Armenia*, written in the 5th century AD, Movses Khorenatsi wrote that some Bulgarians, led by their chief leader named Vund, settled in

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Armenia during the reign of the first representative of the Arsacid dynasty on the Armenian throne, namely the mythical ruler called Valarshak (Vaghaeshak).

According to Khorenatsi, Valarshak lived in the 2nd century BC. The actual wording of the written record of this event in the Armenian language is as follows: Վղընդուր Բուղկարայ Վղրայ (*Vghəndur Bughkaray Vnday*). Due to the fact that in modern Armenian the letter ղ is pronounced */gh/*, the transcription of */vghundurs/* became widely accepted by scholars. This leads to the conclusion that */vghundurs/* is a direct Armenian analogue of the well-established term of */unugurs/* or */unogurs/*.

The historical dating of the time when Vund appeared, proposed by Moses Khorenatsi "during the reign of the first ruler of the Arsacid dynasty on the Armenian throne" was found to be an anachronism but the event was associated with the appearance of the *Unogurs* in the steppes north of the Caucasus, which occurred later than 460 AD.

Analyzing the text, the Bulgarian expert in Armenian language and Armenian palaeography, Associate Professor Petar Goliyski came to a very important conclusion: The transcription of */vghundur/* is incorrect because in the 5th century AD, the letter ղ was pronounces as */lh/* but not */gh/*. That phonetic transition took place much later the development of the Armenian language, not before the X, XI century AD. Therefore, the expression: Վղընդուր Բուղկարայ Վղրայ should be read as /Vlhəndur Bulhkaray Vnday/. This can be clearly evidenced in the Armenian word for *Bulgarians,* "Բուղկարայ": the letter ղ represents the sound */l/* or */lh/* because otherwise there would be an awkward and senseless accumulation of two consonants ղ - */gh/* and կ - */kh/*. In the modern spelling of the word *Bulgarians* "Բուլղար", there is a change related to the phonetic transition, so the letter լ */lyun/* represents the sound "*l*" and ղ */lhad/* has already started to represent the */gh/* sound.

The Bulgarian ethnonym is mentioned in *History of the Country of Aluank* by Movses Kalankatuatsi, as the name of a people and the name of a district located in the region of ancient day Armenia – Բուլխար */Bulkhar/*, written with an լ - */l/* and a խ */he/*. Due to these different stages of spelling development, as well as the phonetic changes that occurred in the X and XI centuries AD, P. Goliyski believes that the most ancient written form of the ethnonym for "*Bulgarian*" was Բուղկար /*Bulkar*/, while a later one was Բուլխար /*Bulkhar*/, and the latest, written with the letters լ */lyun/* and ղ */lhad/* (pronounced as */gh/* today) is Բուլղար /*Bulghar*/.[1]

P. Goliyski notices another important feature. In later transcripts of the Armenian geography book entitled *Ashharatsuits* information about four other Bulgarian tribes was included. The name of the second one, Ողխնտոր Բլկար *Olkhntor-Blkar-aliens* (*Olhkhntor-Blkar*) contains a synonymous form of the name used by Movses Khorenatsi, i.e. Վղընդուր (*Vlhəndur*). The explanation suggested by Kerope Patkanyan (the translator of *Ashkharatsuits* into Russian), was

[1] GOLIYSKI 2006, 39, 41, 434-435, 451-452, 462-463.

that according to modern transcription, */oġhkhntor/* should be pronounced as a variant of */woghkhntor* or *uoghkhntor/*, which is the corresponding Bulgarian name of *Unogundurs* (Οὐννογουνδουροι, Ουνογουνδουροι). Patkanyan logically connected them with the Bulgarians, mentioned by Movses Khorenatsi, because at that time they were the tribes that had newly appeared in Armenia and were, therefore, logically defined as "*aliens*".

However, according to P. Goliyski, the pronunciation of */woghkhntor/; /uoghkhntor/* is incorrect, as there is a meaningless accumulation of consonants */gh/; /kh/*. This clearly shows that the letter ղ here again stands for the sound */lh/*, i.e. should be read */olhkhntor/; /ulhkhntor/*. When at the beginning of the word, the letter Ո */o/* or */wo/; /uo/* started to be pronounced as */o/* only in the late X century AD and first appeared in a text dating back to 1007 AD, as before that it was pronounced */wo/; /u/*". So, we find justification in the record of Movses Khorenatsi. Later anonymous authors used the name of */wolhkhntor/* or */uolhkhntor/*, which is close enough to */vlhəndur/*.[2]

The logical explanation that can be given is that */(u)olkhntor/*, or in Western Armenian */(u)olkhndor/* is another form of the first mention of the Bulgarians by Movses Khorenatsi as */Vlhəndur/* Վղընդուր Բուղկարայ Վղըայ (Vlhəndur Bulhkaray Vnday) or "the */Vləndurs/* of the Bulgarian Vund". The author of this passage in *Ashgaratsuits* had in mind exactly the Bulgarians of the ruler Vund who moved to Armenia, and therefore added the explanation of "aliens / migrants". So, there can be no question of any "*vhunduri*" / "*unogunduri*" / "*unoguri*".

Movses Khorenatsi describes Vund's appearance in Armenia as follows: "He (King Valarshak) summoned the wild tribes who had settled to live in the northern plain and at the foot of the great Caucasus Mountains, in the valleys, in the long and deep mountain gorges stretching to the southern slopes of the mountain and the wide opening to the plain, and then urged them to abandon their custom of occupying in robbery and kidnapping, to accept to obey his royal law, and to start paying taxes. On his next visit, he appointed chief leaders and commanders to establish and keep the state order. He sent them smart men and supervisors. After establishing order to the inhabitants of the western regions (of his kingdom), he descended to the green meadows near *Shar* (Sirakena) district, which the ancient people called "the deforested" (barren, devoid of forests) or *Upper Basean*, which the new settlers, the *Vləndurs*[3] of the "*Bulkar*" *Vund* (the */vləndures/* of the Bulgarian Vund) later occupied, and which began to be called Vanand, named after him. To this day, the villages there bear names derived from the names of his **brothers** and descendants".[4] The historic *Vanad* region was located around the modern-day city of Kars, situated in northeastern Turkey.

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2 GOLIYSKI 2006, 39-40, 52.

3 I must point out that in the 1990 edition of Movses Khorenatsi's History, in Russian, the word "*vləndur*" is now correctly transcribed.

4 KHORENATSI 1990, 61

Another Armenian author, Stepanos Orbelyan, visited the *gavar* (district) *of Balk* Բաղկ in *Syunik* region of Armenia. In the thirteenth century AD, it was divided into two "gavars" (districts) *Balk* and *Kashunik*. There was a village of *Vanand* in Kashunik. There was also the village of *Vanand* in the neighboring gavar of *Golhtn* (Gohtn) Գողթն. To this day, in the Nakhichevan region (Ordubad region), which was part of the *Syunik* Armenian principality, there has been a small river, a tributary of the river Araks named *Vanand-chay*, as well as two villages *Vanandli* and *Vanand*! It is obvious that the names of "*Balk*" and "*Vanand*" have been passed down together. Today, the village of *Vanand* also exists in modern-day Armenia near the old capital city of *Armavir*, 5km away from the current border with Turkey. Once again, this proves that the spread of the toponyms "*Balk*" and "*Vanand*" in Historical Armenia has always been linked together! Among modern Armenians the name of *Vanand* is also known as a personal name. There is no doubt that the word *Balk* Բաղկ is directly related to "*Bulgarians*".

Movses Horenatsi goes on to say: "In the days of King Arsaces there were great riots in the great Caucasus Mountains chain, in the *land of the Bulgarians*. Many of them split apart and moved to our country, settling for a long time at the foot of *Kohl* (*Kolg*, the modern form of which is *Kogh*, a piece of land adjacent to *Vanand*), where there is fertile and bread bearing land. Two of the sons of Bagarat,[5] forced by the king to worship idols (Armenian pagan gods), died bravely by the sword because of their fathers' faith. I would have no reservations calling them followers of Ananias and Eleazar.[6] The rest agreed on the following: not to keep the Sabbath but to go hunting and to fight in wars on that day, as well as not to circumcise their children… Arsaces (Valarshak's son) ordered that women of the Naharars (aristocratic) clans would not be given to them unless they had given up circumcision. They acquiesced to these terms, but did not agree to worship idols. This is how the story of Mar Aba Qatina finishes".[7]

In the light of the above, it is clear that those events took place before the adoption of Christianity in Armenia, around 301 AD. From what has been said, the presence of strong pagan traditions can be seen, which shows that the event took place long before the mass spread of this religion.

Identical information, supporting this evidence can be found in the so-called *Cambridge Document*, which is an excerpt from a letter from the khazar Khagan Joseph to Hasday ibn Shafrut, an Andalusian jew: "Armenia, and (our) fathers fled from them (the Armenians) because they could not bear the yoke of the idolaters, and (the people of Khazaria) accepted them because the people of Khazaria were, in the beginning, without the Torah (law), and at that time (Jews in Armenia) were without the Torah and without letters too. They became related to the inhabitants of this country by marriage, and mingled with the Gentiles,

5 These are Jews living in Armenia.

6 These are the Jews who refused to worship the Babylonian idols during their "Babylonian rule."

7 KHORENATSI 1990, 69.

learned their customs, and always went to war together. And that was how they became one people. But they firmly preserved only the custom of circumcision, and only a part of them kept the Sabbath."[8]

The Khazar kagan related his family with the Jews who were persecuted in Armenia and who settled with the Khazars, and explicitly emphasized that the migration took place at the time when the Armenians were pagans and idolaters. Armenian authors point out that those, in particular, were the Jews who settled in the land of the Bulgarians. Therefore, it seems that in this era, *Khazars* and *Bulgarians* were considered one people, one community? The era in question certainly goes back to the time before the Christianization of Armenia in the early IV century AD.

Movses Khorenatsi clearly indicates the chronological framework! The Bulgarians came to Armenia during the reign of the first Arsacid on the Armenian throne, while during his son's reign, there was unrest in the "land of the Bulgarians in the gorges of the Caucasus", so more Bulgarians came to Armenia. The other important piece of information is that Movses Khorenatsi took this information from Mar Aba Qatina.

When did that mythical first ruler of the Arsacid dynasty, Valarshak Դաղարշակ (Valharshak, the modern spelling being Vagharshak) reign? Movses Khorenatsi himself clearly says that the information about Valarshak and his son Arsaces, or the message about Vund was taken from the "Mar Aba Qatina's account". After that he begins his own account of Armenian history with Artaxias I, presenting him as the son of Arsaces.

Thus, the two dynasties – Artaxiad (Artashesian) and Arsacid (Arshakuni), came to be presented as one – the Arsacid dynasty, which explains the historical merger of the personality and the deeds of the real restorer of the Armenian Empire in the Hellenistic period - Artaxias I the Great, with the collective image of Valarshak.

This idea is also shared by other Armenian authors. According to Bishop Sebeos, in *History of the Reign of Emperor Heraclius*: Arsaces Jr. (brother of Arsaces of the Parthian Empire) came to the throne of Armenia, in the city of Mrtsuini (Mtsurin) with his brother Valarshak, whom he appointed King of Armenia. He (Valarshak) reigned for 42 years; after him Arsaces reigned for 13 years, succeeded by Artaxias - 25 years. According to Vardan Areveltsi: Valarshak reined for 22 years and was inherited by his son Arsaces, who reigned for 26 years. He was succeeded by his brother Artaxias, who died in a military campaign. According to Mkhitar Airivanetsi, the order of rulers and the number of years they reigned is as follows: Valarshak - 22 years; Arsaces, his brother - 23 years and Artaxias I - 25 years.

Thus the "literary figure of Valarshak" corresponds to the real king Tiridates (Trdat) I the Brave, placed on the Armenian throne, by his brother - king of the Parthia Vologases (Valarsh/ ak) I (51 - 78 AD). The name Valarshak is the Armenian transcription of the Parthian name of Vologases. He is not

[8] KOKOVTSOV 1932, 113-114, and GOLB – PRITSAK 1997, part 2.

chronologically the first of the Arsacid dynasty on the throne, but he was the first great ruler to permanently establish the dynasty on the Armenian throne. In short, the events surrounding the arrival of Vund happened at the very beginning of the I c., probably very close to the time of the establishment of the Arsacid dynasty in Armenia.

To narrow down the range of probabilities, a few more pieces of evidence need to be presented. Sextus Julius Frontin in his work entitled *Strategicon* (War Strategies) Book. 2, describes the campaign of Gnaeus Domitius Corbulo (7-67 AD), military general in Emperor Nero's army, against the Armenian ruler Tiridates I the Brave, brother of Vologases / Valarashak, in 59 AD. In this source he mentions the name of Vanad / Vund: «5. Gnaeus Domitius Corbulo besieged Tigranakert, which was situated close to modern-day Diyarbakir in Turkish Kurdistan, where there was an old road from the time of Achaemenid Persia, known as *The Royal Way of Darius,*[9] but it was clear that the Armenians were prepared for a stubborn resistance to the siege. And then he (Domitius Corbulo) executed *Vadandus* (the exact transcription obviously should be *Vanad*), one of the captivated megistans,[10] and catapulted his head with a ballista in the enemy's fortress. The head fell amidst the meeting the barbarians (the Armanians and their allies) were holding. When they saw the severed head, they took that for a bad omen and being thus that scared they were quick to surrender" (Frontin, 1996: Book 2, Ch. 7).[11]

(*Domitius Corbulo, cum Tigranocertam obsideret et Armenii pertinaciter viderentur toleraturi obsidionem, in Vadandum ex megistanis, quos ceperat, animadvertit caputque eius ballista excussum intra munimenta hostium misit. Id forte decidit in medium concilium, quod cum maxime habebant barbari; ad cuius conspectum velut ostento consternati ad deditionem festinaverunt.*).[12]

A. G. Bokshtanin translated the name as *Vanad*, but according to Camilla Trever, it should have been translated as *Vanand*.[13]

In fact, *Vanad* is the correct transcription, which it can be evidenced by the similar Sarmatian name of *Vanadasp,* which means "horse-tamer; possessing (many) horses", (vanad + asp): Βανάδασπος, the name of the king of the Yaziges, (Dion Cassius, 71, 16, 1): Old Iranian for **vanat-aspa* "horse tamer", from *vanat* "victor/conqueror".[14]

In his *Chronicles*, Publius Cornelius Tacitus mentions the same case, but without mentioning the name of the executed prisoner: "Passing through the land of the Tauranits,[15] Corbulo escaped an unexpected danger. An armed barbarian of

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9 HARATINYAN 2016, 11.

10 Parthian title, ruler of the allied people. The very title μεγιστάνοι is of Greek origin, but was borrowed and used in the Parthia, from where it spread to Armenia.

11 FRONTIN 1996, vol. 2, 104.

12 BENNETT 1925, book 2, Ch. 7.

13 BOKSHTANIN vol. 2, 1966, 194, note 250 under the line, and TREVER 1953, 213.

14 JUSTI 1895, 347.

15 Residents of the Taurus Mountains, the Diyarbakir region is located near the southeastern Taurus.

a noble family was captured near his tent. After being tortured, he admitted that he was sent to kill him and also betrayed his accomplices. After that envoys from the (besieged) Tigranakert were sent to announce that they would open the city gates. In order to appease him, the citizens of Tigranakert sent Corbulo a golden wreath. He benevolently accepted the gift and ordered not to inflict any harm on the inhabitants of the city. But when the Romans marched on the city, they found the gates closed. So, Corbulo beheaded the noble prisoner and catapulted his head with a ballista to threaten the inhabitants of the city".[16]

The two sources complement each other, Sextus Frontin reports the name of the executed barbarian *megistan* (*Vanad*), while Tacitus describes the circumstances in which he was captured - a mission to eliminate Corbulo.

The war with the Romans lasted for 10 years. In 63 AD the Tiridates regained the throne and the Parthians managed to impose their will with the Randee Peace Treaty. The peace treaty achieved with Rome, legitimized the Parthian dynasty on the Armenian throne, but formally the country became a vassal state of Rome. In fact, its policy was entirely tied to the Parthian Empire.[17]

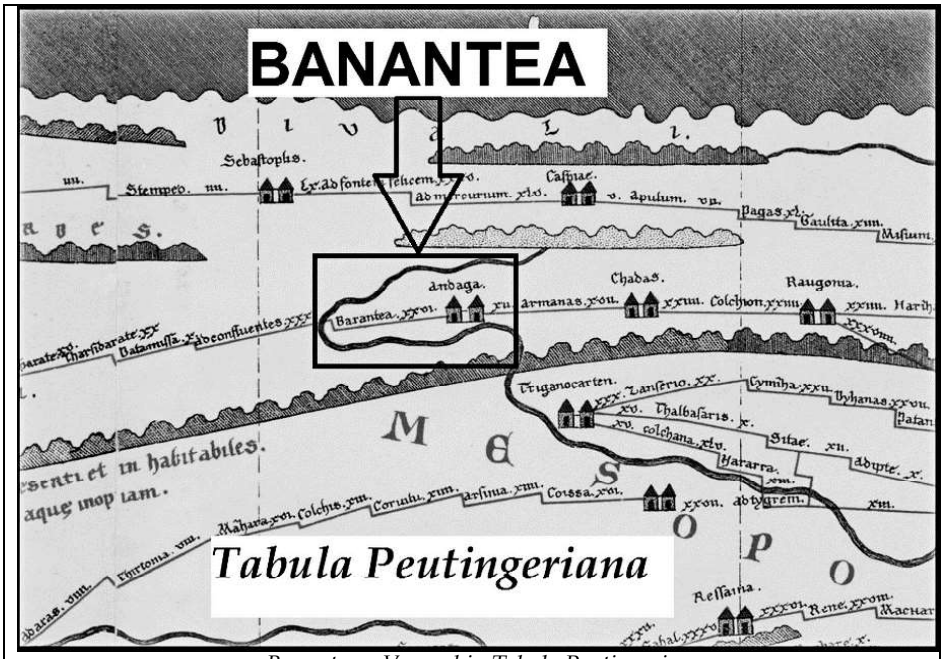
If it is assumed that the Bulgarians of *Vund* came to Armenia shortly before those events, then it is logical that *Vanad* (*Vund*), being an ally of Armenia, ruled his people until his death in 59 AD.

The etymology of the name *Vund* is also interesting. It sounded more like *Vənd*, because it is also found in modern Bulgarian, such as the personal names *Vəndo / Vəndyo*, but nowadays the form has remained in use almost only as the surname of *Vəndev*.[18] In all Indo-Iranian languages, the root **vant- / *vand-* and **vanat- / *vanad-* means „to desire, strive, rule", **vantar* – „winner". In Ossetian *wændon* – „brave, daring".[19]

Vanitar or *Wandar* (*Wānitār / Wāndār*) is the hero of the *Avesta,* son of Iraj (the first king of Iran). The name means "Conqueror of Darkness" or "Conqueror of Evil".[20] In Zoroastrian astrology, *Vanant* is the name of a star created by Ahura Mazda, who is one of the "guardians of eternity" and the time it took to orbit the vault of the heavens was 72 years. The name *Vanant* means "victorious". It is identified with the star Fomalhout (from the Arabic of *fum al-ḥūt* – „mouth of a whale"), the brightest star of the Southern Fish constellation. It is a southern constellation, one of the 48 constellations described by Ptolemy in antiquity, and one of the 88 modern constellations used by the International Astronomical Union.

Another interesting fact is the existence of the toponym *Vanand* in *Tabula Peutingeria*. *Vanand* appears in the text as the name of the settlement of *Barantea*, which Ya. A. Manandyan read as */Banantea/* with the explanation that it corresponded to the ancient Armenian of */Vanand/* or the genitive case of *Vanandeay*.[21]

16 TACITUS 2003, 341, and DEBEVOISE 2008, 162.
17 MELIKASHVILI – LORDKIPANIDZE 1989, 202.
18 The letter „ə" corresponds to the Cyrillic letter „ъ".
19 ABAEV vol. 4 1989, 85-86.
20 JUSTI 1895, 347.
21 MANANDYAN 1939, 81.



Banantea – Vanand in Tabula Peutingeria

The main source of *Tabula Peutingeria* was the Roman road map of the Roman politician and consul Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa (63 BC - 12 AD). Subsequently, it was expanded and supplemented with new texts to take the form it is known today. It was completed by Castorius around 425 AD.[22]

The name of *Banantea* was obviously not known to Ptolemy, but around 425 AD was already approved for inclusion in the map. This shows that it was introduced after the second half of the II century AD and the death of Ptolemy in 160 AD and was in use to the end of the III century AD.

The next very important question that needs to be clarified is when the main source of information used by Movses Khorenatsi lived: "he old man Mar Aba Qatina". He was also mentioned by Sebeos (VII century AD) as *the philosopher Marab from Mtsurin*, which shows that he lived or came from the town of *Mtsurin*. Sebeos (*History of Armenia*) reports that he had personally read the book entitled *The Philosopher of Mtsurin Marab*, which shows that it was preserved at least until the 7th century AD. Without going into too much detail into the disputes about the life or the existence of that person, it is obvious that he lived at the time when Mtsurin was an active and habited city.

The city of Mtsurin (Mtsurn Մծուրն / Mtsurk Մծուրք) originated on the site of an old Assyrian settlement or locality, as its name means "*border*" from the

22 PODOSINOV 2016, 938-955.

Assyrian of *msur*, the Hebrew of *mecer*, the Akkadian of *mişru* and the Sumerian of *maš* – all meaning „border; limit or boundary".[23]

In the II century AD, Mtsurin suffered an earthquake, but it was rebuilt, extended and expanded by the Armenian ruler Sanatruk (88-110 AD) and it was also declared capital city. In the IV century AD it was already destroyed by the Persians during the campaign of Shah Shapur II in 363 AD. Apparently Sanatruk's palace was in Mtsurin, and Mar Aba Qatina lived in the period when Mtsurin was an inhabited city and the capital of Armenia.

Faustus Buzand wrote that it was Sanatruk who built Mtsurin: "… on the banks of the Euphrates River, in a valley covered with dense forests,… at the confluence point of the two rivers, there was a city built a long time ago, in an area called Mtsurk."[24] Mtsurin was located in the Taron region, on the upper reaches of the Euphrates River. In other words, it was the time of the reign of Sanatruk and his son Valarshak I. It is known that in 217 AD the region of Taron was conquered by the Sassanids, and remained within the borders of Persia, until the end of their state in 637 AD. Therefore, Mar Aba Qatina lived in the period 110 - 217 AD.

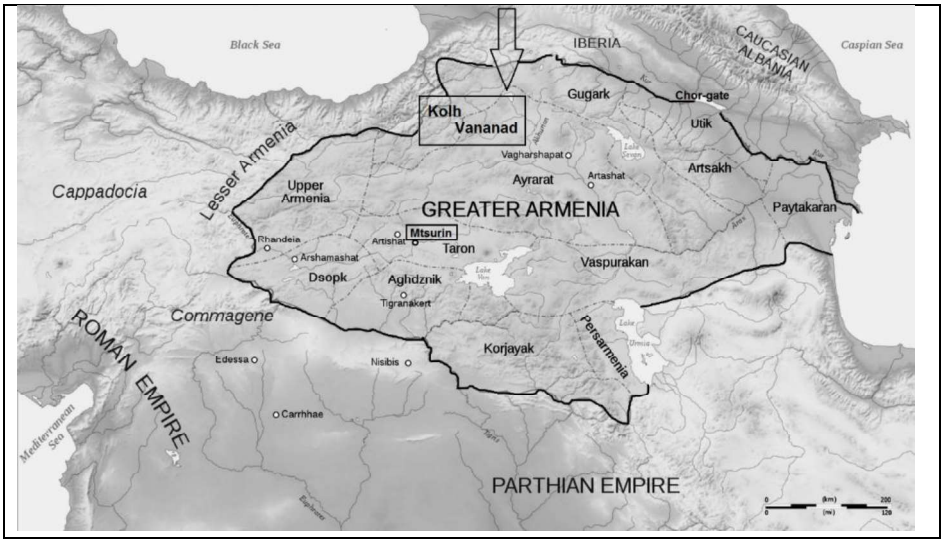
Almost nothing is known about Sanatruk's reign. Dion Cassius (book LXIII) mentions a certain Sanatruk and his son Vologases (Valarshak), who fought in Armenia against the Roman army of Emperor Trajan in 116 AD. According to John Malalas, (Chronicle, Book 11) that Sanatruk was son of Meherdat, one of the sons of the Parthian king Vologes I (51-78 AD), i.e. brother of Tiridates I the Brave, which therefore means that Sanatruk was nephew of Tiridates I. Sanatruk was in fact defeated and was killed while fleeing the battlefield. According to Movses Khorenatsi though, Sanatruk was killed by accident while hunting, shot by a stray arrow. Apparently, here the all-too-widespread substitution of historical facts had taken place regarding the circumstances around his death: killed by an arrow during a retreat from the battlefield had been replaced by an accident while hunting. John Malala gives similar information, but referring to Sanatruk's father, Mehrdat. As about Sanatruk himself, the author wrote that he was killed while retreating from the battlefield, after a battle with the Romans.

Apparently, Malalas had used a different source, unknown to Movses Khorenatsi. Malalas claims that he had used Arrian for reference (which by all probability refers to the lost work of *Parthica,* which described the war between Emperor Trajan and the Parthians).[25] Sanatruk's son, Valarshak I (117-144 AD), continued the struggle against the Roman Empire and Emperor Trajan ceded part of Armenia to him. After Emperor Trajan's death in 117 AD, the new emperor Hadrian officially recognized Valarshak as king of Armenia.

[23] PODOLSKY 1992, 723.

[24] BUZAND 1953, 90.

[25] MALALAS 1986, Book 11, Trajan.



The Armenian scholar Artsruni Sahakyan believes that the name of the mythical Valarshak (whose kingdom was joined by the Bulgarians of Vund) was the result of a historical reasoning applied by Khorenatsi himself. Valarshak I, assigned Mar Aba Qatina the task to study the past history of Armenian kings. So Mar Aba Qatina included his name in the book that ensue but which has not survived to modern times. Khorenatsi logically assumed that Valarshak was the first representative of the Arsacid dynasty on the Armenian throne, because of which he was interested in the rulers of this country before him. Following the historical reasoning, the name Valarshak was acknowledged as the first ruler of the Arsacid dynasty, but the actions of earlier rulers intertwined and came to be attributed to his name. This explains the intertwining of the names of the real Valarshak I and the legendary Valarshak, the founder of the dynasty of the Armenian Arsacids, that was later reinforced and confirmed by Movses Khorenatsi.

Movses Khorenatsi provides the following record concerning Mar Aba Qatina: „... King Valarshak found a somebody Syrian named Mar Aba Qatina - a diligent man who could read the Chaldean and the Greek letter, and sent him to his brother Arsaces the Great with worthy gifts [and a request] to open the royal archives to him ... [Mar Aba Qatina], studied all the books, and found one in Greek ... That book, which contained the true history of the ancient ancestors, was translated by order of Alexander (the Great) from the Chaldean language into Greek ... From that book, Mar Aba Qatina only used the authentic history of our people and brought it to King Valarshak ... written in Greek and Syriac. The glorious, honourable and brave archer, Valarshak, eloquent and bright, was given the book and, after reading it, placed it in a prominent place in the palace to be kept with great care, as one of his most valuable treasures. And then he ordered part of it to be carved on a stone stela (a stone slab)".

The logical conclusion reached by the Armenian scholar Artsruni Sahakyan was that Mar Aba Katina, also known as Marab the Mtsurin philosopher lived in Mtsurin, the capital of Armenia in the II century AD. He was a secretary, a scribe, or a man of letters, closely affiliated to Valarshak I (117-144 AD). Sahakyan believed that the nickname "*Qatina*" was derived from the Syrian word *qatipa,* meaning „a scribe".[26]

S. S. Malkhasyants believes that the Syrian word "*qatina*" means "wise" and thus corresponds to the meaning of the term "philosopher".[27]

In Assyrian (ancient Syrian) *qattinu, qatin* means "profession, occupation, status, position in society", the word is derived from the Proto-Semitic, Akkadian *qâtu* "hand", and *Qatinu* is a personal name meaning "skillful, experienced", or as Sebeos calls it. "Marab the Mtsurin Philosopher", in a broader sense - "a sage, a wise man, a clever, knowledgeable person". Thus, his name clearly confirms his Syrian origin.[28] Jovanes Drahsanakertzi also states that Mar Aba Qatina was a Syrian who could read and write in the Chaldean (Babylonian) and the Greek language. So, without going into more detail, related to some anachronisms in the exposition of Movses Khorenatsi, about the Assyrian archive in Nineveh, we can say that the Syrian *Mar Aba Qatina* was a venerable, respected scientist in Valarshak I's court, which was in Mtsurin. Under his successor Valarshak II (186–198 AD / or 180–200 AD), the capital was moved to Valarshapat, built in the region of the village of Vardges, after the Romans withdrew from there.[29] So, the chronological circle around the time *Mar Aba Katina* lived seems to be narrowing down, so we can conclude it was at the time when Mtsurin was the capital city of Armenia, or during the reign of Sanatruk and even more specifically, during the reign of his son Valarshak I, i.e. at the end of the I century and first half of the II century AD. This indirectly confirms the hypothesis that Vund's migration took place a little earlier, during or shortly before Tiridates (Trdat) I took the throne. In other words it was at the time of the short-term reign of the first Armenian rulers of the Arsacid dynasty: Vonnones, Arsaces, Orodes, when there were, in fact, great disasters for Armenia. It became a battlefield, in the war waged by Rome in alliance with Iberia (Georgia) against the Parthian Empire, triggered by the attempts of the Parthian king Artabanus III to put one of his sons on the Armenian throne.

Another Armenian author Vardan Areveltsi clearly mentions the name of *Bulgarians* in reference to events dating back to the II century AD in his book entitled *Universal History*: "In the days of King Valarsh, the *Bulghar* and the *Khazir* peoples, led by their king, a certain *Vnasep Surhap*, reached the Kura River and settled there in a large camp. Valarsh (Valarshak II) attacked them, defeated

[26] SAHAKYAN 2011, 195-206.
[27] SEMENOV 2011, 73.
[28] Assyrian Dictionary vol. 13, 1982, 172-173.
[29] GOLIYSKI 2013, 94-101.

them and pursued them away, to the mountain pass of Chor (the Alazani Valley), but an arrow shot him and he died after twenty years of reign.[30]

Movses Khorenatsi gives similar information, but instead of "*Bulghars*" he uses the name of "*Basils*" (*barsils*): "… In his days, when the multitudes of northerners, that is, the *Khazars* and the *Basils*, appeared through the Chor Gate, led by their leader, a certain *Vnasep Surhap*."[31]

Stepanos Taronetsi also writes about "*Khazirs* and *Basilis*",[32] and Ukhtanes - about *Khazars* and *Barshegs*, ie. barsils (with the letter ղ /lhad/),while in the French translation of Brosset the names appear as "Khazars et Barseghs / Barselhs".[33]

The conclusion that can be drawn is that during the period in question, *Bulgarians* and *Barsils* were a people living together with the *Khazars*.

The name *Vanasep Suhrap* - can be viewed as a combination of *Ven / Vun* + *sep,* the Avestan form being *spit* and the Persian *sapēt, safēd,* all meaning "bright", while the second part of the name *Suhrab* is entirely Iranian by origin, recognizable as the name of the mythical hero of the Persian poem of *Shahnameh*, *Suhrab*, son on *Rustam*, which is derived from the Pahlavi word *suxr,* meaning "reddish". Also, *Suhrāb* or *Suhrāb*, translates as "ruby, glitter" from the Persian word *sorkhabē*, which means "bright red". According to Gadlo,[34] the name should be spelled as *Gushnasp Suhrab*, and *Gushnaps* is the modern Persian form of the Middle Persian and Pahlavi form *Wēšnāsp*. In available Armenian sources, F. Justi had encountered the name as *Wšnāp* and *Wnasp*, but not in reference to the Khazars-Barsils (Bulgarian) ruler, but to other people.[35] The name *Gushanps* is associated with the "sacred fire" of the Zoroastrians. *Adur Gushnaps* was one of the three major sacred temples of fire in the Sasanian state, situated on the territory of Atropatene, modern day Azerbaijan.

2. What is the meaning of the name "Unogundurs"

Particularly interesting information is reported by Michael of Syria. He was a Syrian Jacobite patriarch. He was born in Melitene[36] (1126–1199 AD). He wrote a *Chronicle* book, in which he provided the most curious information about the origin of the Bulgarians. In his book he tells a story of three brothers who set out from the depths of Asia (the Imeon Mountain)… "When they reached the Roman frontiers, one of the brothers, named Bulgaryus ܒܘܠܓܪܝܘܣ, took 10,000 men

30 VARDAN 1861, 20-21.
31 KHORENATSI 1990, 114-115.
32 STEPANOS 1864, 35.
33 BRUSSET 1870, 245.
34 GADLO 1979, 61.
35 JUSTI 1895, 354-355.
36 Today Malatya is a large city in the Eastern Anatolia region of Turkey and the capital of Malatya Province.

and separated from his brothers. He crossed the river Tanios (Don) and the river Danube and asked (Emperor) Maurice (582-602 AD) for land where to live and be an ally of the Romans. He (Emperor Maurice) gave him Upper and Lower Moesia and Dacia, superb lands, which had been ravaged by the Avars, during the reign of Anastasius, and they settled there to defend the Romans. These Scythians came to be called Bulgarians (Bulgāryē) ܒܘܠܓܪܝܐ by the Romans".[37]

The Avar invasion took place 65 years after the reign of Emperor Anastasius I, therefore the name Anastasius mentioned by Michael of Syria in the text cannot refer to him but to a different figure, a military leader of the same name, who lived in the time of Emperor Maurice's rule.

Discussions about this account of the Syrian patriarch are well-known in the historical literature, so I will not dwell on them any further.

When comparing this source with the Armenian sources, it becomes clear that the migration in question took place long before the rule of Emperor Mauritius, or at the end of the I century BC - I century AD. Michael of Syrian seems to have interweaved the legend of the migration of the Bulgarians and the Khazars, with later events that took place during the reign of Emperor Maurice.

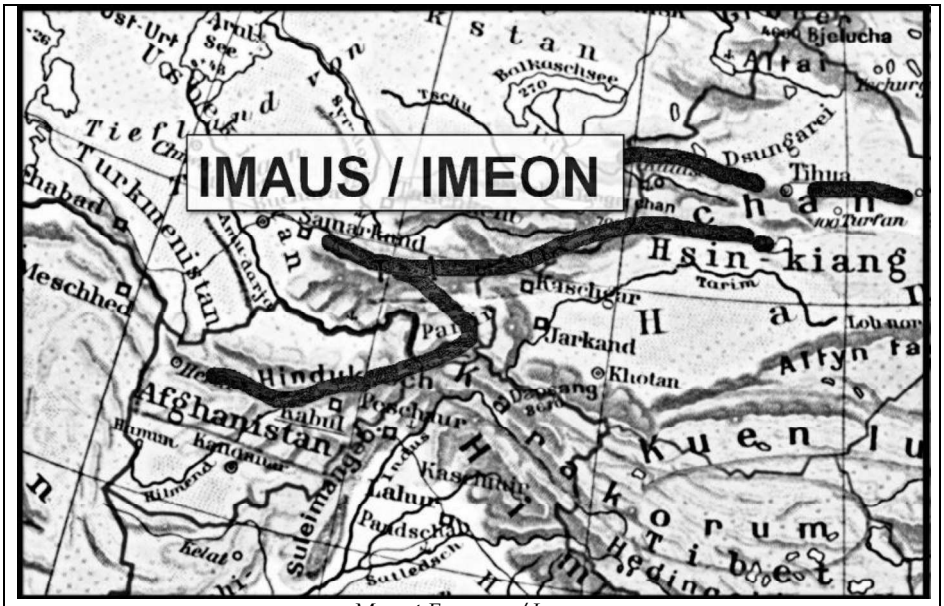
That was the participation of a division of 20,000 Bulgarian and Armenian warriors in aid of the overthrown Persian Shah Khosrow II Parviz, in his war with the usurper Bahram Chubin, who were led by that very military leader of Anastasius, in 591 AD.[38]

The *Imeon Mountains* is actually Ptolemy's *Imaus* Mountain range, which separates *Inner* from *Outer Scythia* and coincides with the mountain range formed by the Tien Shan, Pamir, Hindu Kush Mountains and the ridges that are the watershed between the Amu Darya and Syr Darya rivers. Therefore, "*behind the gorges of Imeon*" should mean that they came from the *Outer Scythia*, as defined by Ptolemy, or "*Scythia behind Imaus*", i.e. the region of modern-day Xinjiang.

So, what kind of migration wave was there in that period from that part of Asia to the west? The only major and noted by both Greco-Roman and Chinese authors is the emergence of the *Sakas*, *Tocharians* and *Asians*, respectively, among the Chinese *Sāi*塞, *Wusun*烏孫 and *Yuezhi*月氏and the defeat of Greco-Bactria, in the middle of the II century BC.

[37] PIBI vol. 1 2002, 24.

[38] CHABOT vol. 2 1901, 372.



Mount Emmaus / Imeon

It is logical that the nuclei of the *Bulgarians* and *Khazars* were parts of those tribes. Thus, there is no way they could be *Türks*, as the ethnegenesis of the *Türks* had not yet begun. And most likely they were *Tocharians*, because at that time, such was the population on both sides of the Tien Shan Mountains, in the Tarim Basin and in the Gansu region.

And hereby, an indirect proof, comes from the expression written by Movses Khorenatsi: Վղընդուր Բուղկարայ Վղըայ or *Vlhəndur Bulhkaray Vnday*. The literal translation is "*the vləndurs of the Bulgarian Vund*" but the attempts to equate the word "*vləndurs*" with "*unogundurs*" (Οὐννογουνδουροι, Ουνογουνδουροι), turn out to be as apt an idea as the equasion of *unogundurs* = *unogurs*. It is known from other sources that the Bulgarians were called *VNNTR*, "*Venenters*", which is closer to "*Unogurndurs*", but very different from "*Vləndurs*" as well.

In his letter to the Andalusian Jew Hasday ibn Shafrut, written in 951-952 AD, the Khazar ruler Joseph wrote: "They (the Bulgarians) were defeated (in their old lands), and they (the Khazars) pursued them until they crossed the great river Danube. To this day, they (the Bulgarians, or *vnntr*) live near Kushtantinya (Constantinople), since the Khazars conquered their country.[39]

The Bulgarian ethnonym, appearing in the form of *V.n.n.d.r.*, is also found in the Arab geographical tradition. In *Hudud Al Alam* it was mentioned as *V.n.n.d.r* and *N.nd.r*, for example: "East of the Magyars there is a mountains, south of which is the territory occupied by the *V.n.n.d.r.* people (Danube Bulgaria), who are Christians, and the west and north of them is the territory of the Russians".[40]

[39] PIBI vol. 1 2002, 24.

[40] ZAKHODER vol. 2 1967, 58.

The Transylvanian Carpathians are the first border between the Magyars (Hungary) and the First Bulgarian State, after the latter migrated to Pannonia and Transylvania at the end of the IX century AD.

As early as in 1875 Garkavi explained the name of *V.n.n.t.r,* on the basis of the writing system of the Khazar Kagan, as a name referring to the Bulgarians, corresponding to the Byzantine Οὐννογουνδουροι, Ουνογουνδουροι (*unnogundurs, onogundurs*), but this happened before the discovery of the well-known Arabic text *Hudud Al Alam*. Marquartt also connected the Arabic script of (*n.n.d.r*) with Bulgarians. The Hungarians also use the name *nándor*[41] to denote the Bulgarian ethnos.[42]

The form used by Movses Khorenatsi "*Vləndur*" is very interesting. Above all, however, a historian must precisely adhere to historical sources.

To explain the difference between Vlandur and Vnandur (Venenter), Assoc. Prof. P. Goliyski suggested that there must have been a wrong transcription of the name, from the Syrian source or from the text of Mar Aba Qatina, made by the Armenian historian, since in the Syrian alphabet "estrangelo", „lamed“ ܠ (l) and “nun” ܢ, ܢ, ܢ (n) are very similar in shape and can easily be confused by a foreign copyist, especially if it refers to a foreign (non-Syrian and non-Armenian) name.[43] However, there are other variants of the Syrian script, where ܠ “lamed” and ܢ ܢ “nun” are distinctly different.

It should be noted that the Armenian written tradition dates back to the very beginning of the V century AD, when Bishop Mesrob Mashtots, who resided in Edessa for a period, created the Armenian alphabet there, in the period 402-406 AD, by order of the Armenian ruler of Persian Armenia, Vramshapuh (389-417AD). Mar Aba Qatina (Marab of Mtsurin) lived two centuries before Mesrob, and was a Syrian. It is not known what language and what script he used to write his *History* but it is certain that both Movses Khorenatsi and Sebeos could read it without difficulty. Artsruni Sahakyan believes it was written in Ancient Greek.[44]

However, any hypothesis based on accusing the ancient author of having made a mistake in his work would rather speak of a weakness in modern interpretations, so other explanations should be sought for the emergence of the

41 Nowadays *Nandor* is a popular given name in Hungary and Romania. It used to be popular among the Bulgarians too in the form *Nandro*, but today it has been preserved only as a surname - *Nandrov*. The Hungarian name of Belgrade (now the capital of Serbia) in the Middle Ages was *Nándorfehérvár* (or *Bolgárfehérvár*) – „Bulgarian White City“, and later the Hungarian name was adopted by medieval cartographers as *Alba Denander*, abbreviated to *Drinago*, used in the map known as “portolan chart”, and *Zenderin* in maps dating back to XVI - XVII century AD. The city belonged to territory of medieval Serbia only for about 20 years, under the rule of Stefan Lazarevich!

42 GOLIYSKI 2006, 49.

43 GOLIYSKI 2004, 41.

44 SAHAKYAN 2014, 46.

inconvenient fact, since there is no way that "*vləndur*" can easily be transformed into "*vnəndur / vnntr*"!

We can assume that Movses Khorenatsi or Mar Aba Katina, "the sage, philosopher of Mtsurin," transcribed the word quite correctly. The word we have is "*vlandur*", which is not a mistaken spelling of "*vnəndur*", so consequently there is nothing in common between "*vləndur*" and "*venenetrs*" - "*unogundurs*" - and these are two absolutely different words.

The meaning of "*vləndur*" can be explained perfectly well by the ancient Indo-European languages, spoken in the far East, known as Tocharian languages. In the Tocharian B language "*walo, ylai*" and in the Tocharian A language "*wlām*", the Proto-Tocharian form being /**w*ˈəlan/ (*uˈəlan*) all mean „ruler, king"; later form in the Tocharian B language "*lant*" – „ruler"; *lantuññe, lantuñña, lantuññana* – „ruler's"; Tocharian B "*lantuñe*", Tocharian A "*lāntune* "– „ruler's, dignity".[45]

If we draw a parallel with other languages we will find out similar words: the Celtic word "*walna*" means „to rule", "*walo*" – „a king/a prince, a chief", "*walatro, wolnamon* "– „a ruler" in Latin "*ualeo*" – „strong", in Gothic *waldan* – „a ruler".[46]

So the Proto-Taharic word for „a ruler" was *"*wˈəlan*" (*uˈəlan*), respectively * "*wˈəlan-tär* (*uˈəlan-tär*)" meant "to rule" (the mediopassive form of the word). Based on that analysis, *Vlhəndur Bulhkaray Vnday*, can be considered as direct translation of a Tocharian expression meaning "*Vund who rules the Bulgarians*" or "*the Bulgarians who are ruled by Vund*". Whereas, the two noun forms *unogundurs / vnəndurs* and *vləndurs* are two completely different words.

The Tocharian language also explains the name *vnundurs / onogundurs*. Unexpectedly, the earliest source of the name "*(v)ungundurs / (v)ungunturs*" was discovered in the Chinese dynastic history of the Western Han dynasty (206 BC - 9 AD). or "Han-shu", in connection with the fate of the so-called. "*Xiao Yueshì*" 小月氏, the part of the *Yuezhi* people (*Tocharian - Arsians*) who remained in their homeland of Gansu and succumbed to *Xiongnu*.

The Tocharians were a large group of Indo-European, non-Indo-Iranian tribes that between the 3rd and 2nd millennium BC migrated from Eastern Europe, probably through the Balkans (or the Caucasus, it is not clear), Asia Minor and the Iranian plateau, to Central Asia, modern Xinjiang, the Tarim region, western Mongolia and the Gansu corridor, to the Ordos plateau (modern northern China).

Their migration preceded the Indo-Iranian resettlement by one millennium. The Tocharians created their own steppe empire, which lasted until the rise of the Xiongnu tribes in the III century BC. Xiongnu then inflicted several serious defeats on the Tocharians-Arsians in Gansu, the first two being under the military command of Shanyu Maotun, and the last and most severe under his successor Laoshan in 166-165 BC.

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45 ADAMS 1999, 581-582, 544-545, and LUBOTSKY 1990

46 MATASOVIĆ 2009, 402, 427.

After this catastrophic defeat, the Arsians / Yuezhi people moved west - to their "Great Exit" to the valley of the Ili River and left their lands around the Yellow River in Hexi河西[47] and Gansu forever.[48]

The Yuezhi reached Fergana and Central Asia, initially settled north of the Sir Darya River (where Strabo referred to them as Taharoi), and later conquered the eastern half of Greco-Bactria. The Chinese called them "Da Yueshi / Yuezhi" 大月氏, i.e. "Great Yuezhi", and the conquered East Bactria is called *Daxia* 大夏, which is the Chinese transcription of *Tochara*. They gave rise to the Kushan state.

Despite that, a smaller number of them remained in the Gansu Corridor "between Dunhuang and Qilang Shan (Eastern Tien Shan)" in their old homeland. They chose to succumb to the enemy and former vassals of Xiongnu, instead of the uncertain migration to the west.

In *Han Shu*, Ch. 94b, it is reported that the ruler of the "Little Yuezhi" (Xiǎo Yuezhì), a vassal of the shanyu, whose territory possessions was situated in the area of the town of Zhāngyē 张掖 (modern Gansu Province), was called *Wenou-towang* (89 BC) *wēn ǒu tú wáng* 溫偶駼王. (*Han Shu*, ch. 94b)

On this issue, the famous Russian sinologist, A. Malyavkin wrote: "The title *Wen-wang* 溫王 or *Wēn ǒu tú wáng* 溫偶駼王 is mentioned in most Chinese sources, but there is no detailed information about it. It can be assumed that it was used to refer to a tribal name that existed among the Yuezhi people.[49]

The pronunciation of this combination of charasters is very interesting. In the Han era, the pronunciation of 溫 偶 駼 was */ʰwānnɣwātú; ʰwənnɣəwthwâj; ʰonnɣəwthwâj/* (Starostin); in the Eastern (Earlier) Han dynasty it was */ʰuənnɣoᵇ-duos; ʰuənnɣoᵇtʰuas/* (Schüssler), and in ancient Chinaese it was */*ʰunnʏotʰer/*; in medieval Chinese - */ʰwonnˢuwˣda/* (Buxter-Sagar). The last charaster /wáng/ 王 means „ruler, king".[50]

According to Wiktionary's summary of pronunciation reconstruction, in early medieval Chinese it was */ʰuon-ⁿguʰ-thwāj/*.

The French Sinologist François Thierry reconstructed the Han pronunciation by comparing it with modern pronunciations in South Chinese dialects: Cantonese */vûn-ngau-tou/* and Mindong */ung-ngó-tou/*; in Vietnamese */ôn-ngậu-dư, ôn-ngậu-thoái/*; in Japanese */on-gu-da, un-gō-ta/*, and in Korean */on-u-tan/*.

The combination "*outu*" */ǒutú/* 偶駼 */nɣwātu, nɣoᵇdu, nˢuwˣda/* is not a word. The two characters as an expression mean "a pair, a pair of low (wild) horses" (駼, 騊 - low horse */taotu/*, a type of "pony horse"; in Baxter's explanation 騪 */tuó/* means "a wild horse", as the pronunciation in ancient Chinese was */ther/*). So, Nikolai Bichurin's translation as „a watchman, a guard, king of the border", and the one suggested by Vasily Taskin - "a military camp", even comparing it with

[47] Hexi 河西 - Lands west of the great bend of the Yellow River at the Ordos Plateau.
[48] DORNEICH 2008, 12.
[49] MALYAVKIN 1989, 197, 257.
[50] STAROSTIN, Chch; SCHUESSLER 2007, 514, 407, 504, BAXTER – SAGART 2014, 56, 21, 26.

the Türkic word "*ordu*"[51] meaning "a horde, an army", do not seem to be appropriate.[52]

It is interesting that, 騄 menaing "a wild horse", is actually a borrowing from the Proto-Mongol word "aduγu" – "a horse", or the Proto-Turkic "ătV", the Turkic "at" – "a horse", the Proto-Turkic word "adgïr" or the modern Turkish "aygïr" – "a stallion", which shows that the transferring of the final "*-r*" in a foreign word is very likely to have happened.

The title of "*Wenoutowang*" occurs in different spelling and transcription variants: */wenyudi/* 溫禺鞮 and */wenyudu/* 溫禺犢.[53] The difference is in the last characters鞮 and 犢, as 鞮 was pronounced /tei/ in the Han era and 犢 - /duk/ in the Han era (Wiktionary).

In this case, I think it is much more appropriate to consider the whole expression of "*wēnǒutú*" as a Chinese transliteration of a foreign non-Chinese name, of Tocharian origin, as Malyavkin believes - it was used "*as a tribal family name in the Yuezhi people.*"

Accordingly, the reconstruction of the pronunciation in the Han era is very close to *„oungudur / onguntur"* or *Unogundurs*.

The Hungarian author Catalin Chornai transcribes 溫禺鞮 as */uən-ngiu-tieg; uən-ngiu-tiei/* and interprets it as *„ongdurti"*, a hypothetical Xiōngnú (Proto-Türkic) title of "a right king". In Turkic languages "*ong*" means "right / western".[54] Without commenting on the correctness of the interpretation, her transcription also supports mine.

Thus, it becomes clear that the ruling clan or tribe of the Yuezhi Tocharians was called *ongunturs / ungundurs*.

For example, the Chinese character Wen 溫, which means "kind, tender, warm" turns out to be an old Tocharian loanword, from the Tocharian A "*wañi*", Tocharian B "*wīna*" – "pleasure, pleasant", Tocharian B *wināññentär* – "joyful, happy", a derivative of pre-Indo-European *"*wēn(h$_x$)iyo*" – "nice, beautiful, reliable", in Avestan "*vanaiti*" means "glorious, victorious", in Sanskrit "*vánati*" – "to like, to rejoice, victorious, exultant, triumphant", "*vanas*" – "love", in Old English "*wine*" meant "friend" and in Old Norwegian "*vänn*" meant "reliable, beautiful".

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51 The Türkic word "*ordu*" means "a military detachment, retinue of the ruler, a camp of the ruler", in Uighur Ordukänt, Ordubalik - " a city of honour, a capital city". Translated from ancient Türkic and Mongolian "*ordu, horde*", from Kalmyk "*ordó*" mean "a yard, a camp, a bivouac", in Mongolian "*ordon*" means "a palace", in Manchurian "*ordo*" means "a tent". (Ramstedt) It has been suggested that it is a matter of borrowing from another language. (Scherbak). Cf. STAROSTIN – DYBO – MUDRAK 2003, 1162-1163. The source in question is Tocharian A "*wartsi*", Tocharian B "*wertsiya*", Proto-Tocharian *"*wertsiya*" – „retinue of the ruler, a close circle, an assembly, a council". Duglas Adams connects it with the pre-Indo-European "*wordhyena*", which means „a mass, a group, a crowd of people". Cf. ADAMS 1999, 610.

52 GABUEV 1999, 94-97.

53 MILLER 2014, 10.

54 CHORNAI 2013, 347-348.

Derivatives of the same Indo-European root, mentioned in the etymological dictionary of Douglas Adams, are the Tocharian B "*wäntare*" standing for "action"; "*wäntreśśe*" - "strong aspiration"; "*weñenta*" - "praising", in Tocharian A and B *"*weñ*" means "to speak, to praise". He believes that the initial, oldest form is the Proto-Tocharian word *"*weoñduru*", which respectively transformed the Sanskrit word "*vandāru*", meaning "praise"; into the Proto-Indo-European *"*wŋdr̥wo*" and the Proto-Tocharian "**weonʰdoru*" meaning "glory, praise".[55]

If we compare the meaning of the Trocharian word "*wināññentär*" with "*vnntr*"or "*venevter/vnəndur*", the similarity is obvious: "bearers of happiness, of divine predestination. The primary denotation of that name is "glorious; praised; strong", i.e. "good; reliable, etc." Wināññentär/Uināññentär - "the glorious; the people chosen by God; the ruling people".

The sign *ñ* stands for the nasal sound */n/*" or */nγ/; /ng/*, which indicates that the form "*unogundurs*" is as close as possible to the original source, while the inscription in Aramaic alphabet "*vnntr*" רתננו (*venenter, nandor*) does not convey indication for the nasal sound */nh; ng/*.

Obviously, the added explanation of "*rulers*" gradually became a common name used for the whole community, similarly to other such cases like "*the royal Scythians, the royal Sakas*".

Apparently the *Unogundurs* came directly from the ruling fraction, and were part of the Tocharian community, who came to be noticed by the Armenians in the Western Caucasus at the beginning of the 1st century AD, which coincided with the migration of the *Yuezhi Arsians* to Central Asia (mid-second century BC or 165 BC).

3. Where did the Bulgarians and the Khazars come from?

In the science of history, in linguistics and in onomastics (the science that studies proper names), there are several ways of naming tribes and nationalities or for tribes and nationalities naming themselves:

1. Choosing a name, which in many cases means "people; humans; human being; a community or free people": (Deutsch means "people", Franks - "free").

2. A name based on characteristic geographical features - after the name of a mountains, a river, etc. (English - "inhabitants of the outer border land")

3. After names of characteristic skills or crafts (Saxons - "knife makers", Swabians - "swimmers")

4. After particular positive qualities (there hardly any people who would or had named themselves bringing their humiliating qualities or shortcomings to the fore, like "mongrels; half-bloods; a bunch of people; rascals; scoundrels; slaves or slobs for example)

According to Tomaschek, Vambery and Nemeth, "*Bulgarians*" comes from the Türkic words *bulgamak*, *bulgha, bulγa* – "people of mixed origin, cross-breeds,

[55] ADAMS 1999, 601-602, 592-593.

mongrels", or according to Vambery and Nemeth's later etymological claims – "rebels, troublemakers, renegades". I fact, this has been the commonly accepted by historians etymological origin of the name to this day.

However, this explanation of the origin of the name is quite conjunctural and the result of an accidental phonological overlapping of the Bulgarian self-chosen name with the Türkic word. I would not like to deliberate any further on disputes on the origin and the meaning of the Bulgarian ethnonym, since they have already been vastly presented in historical literature, but I will only present my own opinion instead. It turns out that the name *Bulgarians / Bulkars* can find its quite logical etymological explanation in the Tocharian languages. In the Bulgarian historical literature, a similar idea has been expressed by Assoc. Prof. P. Goliyski (2003), who also draws attention to the Hittite word "*parkuš*", the Tocharian A, B word "*pälk*" both meaning "bright; made of/full of fire; burning; shining; clear; bright".[56]

In Chinese sources different Proto-Tocharian tribes with whom the ancient Chinese kingdoms had territorial conflicts in the northwest, were referred to by the common name of *Běi-dí* 北狄 (北- *northern*), and白 狄(白- *white*), or *Běi-dí* 北狄 "*northern barbarians*"/ 白 狄 "*white barbarians*", and Chi赤 ''*fire*'' (*red; scarlet*) Di 狄, or *Chi di* 赤 狄, which means "*fiery barbarians*". Di 狄, as well as the similar character氐 mean "*barbarians, nomads, enemy*".

As for the second half of the Bulgarian name (*-gar / -kar*), the Proto-Tocharian word *"*ghara / *khara*" (γαρα) must be considered. It means "a group of people, a class of people, a caste"; in Tocharian A "*kär*", and in Trocharian B "*kare*"; in Proto-Tocharian *"*käre*" mean " possessing a high ran; a rank; noble; belonging to the upper class; a caste, a group of people" while "*kār*" means "to collect; to gather together".[57]

Thus, the exact meaning of the name "*pälk-khara*" or "*pälk-ghara*" is "*fiery people*", just like the Chinese *Chi di*赤狄. Explanation of the variant of the Bulgarian name provided by Michael the Syrian can also be found in the Tocharian languages: "*pugurs*", which comes from the Tocharian A "*por*", Tocharian B "*pūwar*" and the Proto-Tocharian "*puwār*, all meaning "fire". The form in Tocharian A is closer to the Hittite word "*pahhur*" – "fire". Accordingly, in Proto-Tocharian there was probably a form in the Accusative case *"*puhōr*" or *"*p^euhōr*", meaning "fiery".[58]

During the Han Dynasty there were several Tocharian tribes living in the easternmost parts of the Tien Shan, in the northern slopes of the Barkultag and along the Karluktag ridges, the largest of which was called *Chēshī* 車師, and the next largest were *Pulei* 蒲類 and *Beilu* 卑陸.

The transcription of these names coincides with the names Khazars and Bulgarians. In various Chinese sources, *Cheshi* 車師 occurs in several forms of writing:

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56 GOLIYSKI 2003, 396-398, and ADAMS 1999, 377-378.

57 ADAMS 1999, 143, 153.

58 ADAMS 1999, 392-393.

1. *Chēshī* 車師, reconstruction of the ancient Chinese form and of the language spoken during the Han dynasty: */ka-srij, ka-şjéj; kaşéj/* (Starostin), */kĭo-şri/* (Wiktionary) or */kasri, kasi, kashi; kashiri/*. Given the fact that the Chinese character師 when in the form *shī* 獅 was used to transcribe the Iranian word "*šēr*", meaning "a lion". The initial form of the word, the name those people had given themselves was "*kashiers / kasiers*" (the ancient ancestors of the later *Khazars*). According to Thierry's method, the equivalents in similar languages were the following: in Cantonese "*geoi-si*", in the Southern Chinese Minnan, and Xiang dialects "*ki-sr; cia-si*", in Vietnamese "*xa-sư*", in Korean "*geo-so*," and in Japanese "*ko-shi*".

2. *Jùsōu* 巨蒐 and Qúsōu 渠搜, are earlier forms of spelling of the same name. They are mentioned as names of Western "rong" or "barbarian" tribes:[59] (Jiusouzhi 巨蒐氏 - the Jiuisu tribe) - in *The Journey of Mu, the Son of Heaven* and Qusou 渠搜 - in the *Yugong* chapter of *Shang Shu* (Taishan, 2010a). The reconstruction of the pronunciation of the first variant is */gá-sōu/* (Starostin), */gĭo^{X}-şri̯ə̯u/* (Wiktionary), and of the second one: */ga-sru, ga-şiew/* (Starostin); */gĭo-srju* (Wiktionary), or */gasri, gasiri/* or */gasirs/* respectively.

3. *Gūshī* 姑師, based on phonological reconstruction of word used during the Han Dynasty was pronounced: */kās-srij, kālı-şjéj; kālı-şé/j* (Starostin) or */kuo-şri/* (Wiktionary), i.e. "*kasirs, kosirs*".

This analysis shows that the main tribe in this group was called the *Kasirs*, which directly corresponds to the ethnonym of *Khazars / Kozars*.

Ptolemy (II century AD), provides information about the city of *Cassia*, modern-day Kashgar, which was located near Khotan and Mount *Cassia*, as he calls the mountain spurs of the Middle and Eastern Tien Shan Mountains. These toponyms show that in ancient times the *Kasi / Kasiri* people lived in the territory spreading from Kashgar to Turfan, Urumqi and Hami; around the Tien Shan Mountains, the eastern parts of which Ptolemy also called *Cassia Mountains*. Pliny also mentions that there were *the Kasirs* people who lived in the easternmost regions of Scythia, which confirms that the phonological reconstructions are correct. The name the *Kuchi* people or the inhabitants of the Tocharian town of *Kuça* used to refer to themselves was *kuśiñña*, or *kucañña*. They used the name of *Kuśi,* or *Kuca* for both their capital city and the state. The corresponding name in the *Chēshī* language is similar - */kasi, kasir/*.

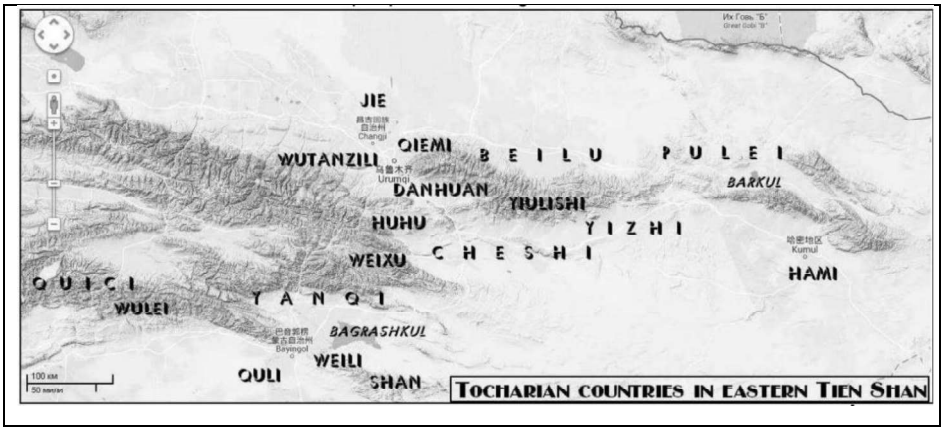
So, what is the meaning of the toponyms *Kucha* and *Cheshi*? The Tocharian languages provides the answer again. In the Tocharian language, */kutsi, kuśi/* means "white, pure, world", in Tocharian A */kāsu/* means "beautiful", in Tocharian B */kaswo/* is "red, bright". They are all derived from the Indo-European root of **/k'weit; *kwit/*, which has the meaning of "white, bright".[60] In Celtic languages, the ancient form of **/kassarā/*; in Old Irish */casar/*; in Welsh */kesseir/* and */ceser/* in Cornish all have the meaning of "thunderbolt; lightning".[61] In the Iron Ossetian language */kādz, kāc/* means "a stork" (a white bird); */kasara/* in Khovar; */kāso/* in

[59] TAISHAN 2010a.

[60] ADAMS 1999, 49-50, 156, 181, 186.

[61] MATASOVIĆ 2009, 193.

Nepali mean "white, shiny" (used to describe metals); in Kashmiri */gāsh, gōsh/* means "bright, shiny"; in Pali */kasiṇa/* means "white, sacred" (used in a religious text); in pre-Indo-Iranian **/kasira/* is found to convey the meaning of "white, pure". In the Scythian language **/krau-kasi/* meant "white, sparkling snow" (according to Pliny) and the equvallent form of */kasi/* meant "white, bright".[62] This also corresponds to the meaning of the Chinese */Bei Di/*, standing for "*the White Di*".



Today, thanks to the phonological analysis of the Chinese characters used to write the name *Yuè-zhī* 月氏, it has become clear that in ancient times it was pronounced as */Rouzhi; Ruzhi/* and was used to transcribe the name */Arsi; Arshi/* (*Arsians / Arshians*), used by those people to refer to themselves. In other words, this is an irrefutable proof that the equation *Yuezhi* = *Arsians* = *Tocharians* is correct. It turns out that the initial correct spelling of the name was 月氏 */ Ròu-zhī/*, which is as close to the self-chosen name of those people as possible. Over time, the character 月 meaning "meat, flesh" evolved into the modern spelling form of 肉, while the obsolete 月 began to be confused with a similar character, which has quite a different pronunciation and meaning, i.e the character 月 */Yuè/*, meaning "the moon". The mistake was purely mechanical and absolutely accidental, but it went into the historical literature and has remained there to present day.[63] The name "*Arsi*" is a derivative of the Indo-European root **arg'-/ (*e) *h2erg-ën*, meaning "white, bright, shiny". In the Tocharian languages this root is represented by the Tocharian A word */ārki, ārśi/*, the Tocharian B form */ark, arkwi/* - "white, bright", and the Proto-Tocharian form of **/ārkw(ä)i/*, also meaning "white".[64]

The self-chosen name of the Yuezhi people was "*Arshi, Arsi, Arghi*", and they exactly were the people Herodotus (V century BC) meant when he drew reference to the people of the *Argippaeans* or *Argippaei* (Ἀργιππαῖοι) who inhabited

62 VITCHAK 1992, DDSA.
63 DORNEICH 2009: Preface.
64 ADAMS 1999, 31-32.

the extreme northeastern part of the known world. It is not difficult to recognize in this name, apparently a slightly distorted Greek version, the Tocharian */ārki ype; ārśi ype/* - "a white country", "white people" or also the "*White Di*", found in Chinese sources.

The noun *"*arse* (*ārśe*)" changed into *ārśe* in Tocharian B, or the language of Kucha, and then into "*ārś* (*arsh*)" in Tocharian A or the language of Agni (Karashar), and in fact the language of the ruling Yuezhi community in Gansu. The plural Genitive case form of *"*ārśe*", is "*ārśäśi*", where the */ä/* sound is a palatal, muffled vowel. Thus, the Tocharian A name of "*ārśi ype*" translates as "a white country". The palatal pronunciation explains why the Chinese had omitted it in the transliteration of the ethnonym as */Ruzhi/* or */Rushi/*, which on the other hand is very similar to the Indian "*Rishika*" - one of the hostile non-Indian tribes included in the *Mahabharata*, which George Rawlinson claims were typically thought to be the same tribes as with "*the Tukharas*", i.e. the Tocharians. Similarly, in Tocharian B "*ruk, rukā*", means "bright, shining", which does not exclude the initial existence in the Tocharian language, or a later, but very ancient borrowing from Iranian of the root *"*rauk*", meaning "shine; glitter; brightness", as well as the use of this word as a synonym of "*ārśi*".[65]

Obviously the name the Yuezhi people used for themselves – *Arsi, Arshi, Rushi* has been preserved in an ethnic group of Pamir Tajiks, who live in the Upper Badakhshan region of Tajikistan, the *Rushans*. It is believed that the name Rushan, Rushans, or "*Ruhen, Ruhni, Ruhyonen*", according to their folk etymology meant "bright, white, shiny", and thy are the descendants of the ancient Rushi, Arsi or Tocharians who conquered Greco-Bactria.

It can be seen that the native speakers of Tocharian B or West Tocharian inhabited the lands located on the southern and northern slopes of the Tien Shan Mountains. They may have been politically dependent on the *Arsians* (Yuezhi), or they may have been their related neighbors.

During the relocation of the *Arsians*, a large group remained in the region of Agni (Karashar) and thus caused that linguistic unity to break apart. In the westernmost regions of Kashgar and the southern Khotan, Tumshuk, East Saka tribes mixed up with the Tocharian population, creating the two related East Iranian languages, *Khotan-Saka* and *Tumshuk-Saka*.

With reference to Chinese records, it becomes clear that the *Kasirs / Khazars* lived north of Turpan, between Karashar, Urumqi and Hami, in the easternmost spurs of the Tien Shan Mountains, in the era preceding the rise and the expansion of Xiongnu.

During the Western Han dynasty (late III - late I century BC), several tribes inhabited that territory and formed a federation.

The most important of those was the Chēshi 車師 tribe or "the Kasirs". The next most important people has gone into historical records in several different ways: Pulu 蒲陸 (as recorded in *Han Shu*, or *History of the Western Han Dynasty*) and as Pulei 蒲類 and Beilu 卑陸, (in *Hou Han Shu*, or *History of the Eastern Han*

[65] ADAMS 1999, 537.

Dynasty). Accordingly, the phonological reconstructions of the pronunciation in the different time periods are the following:

a). According to Sergey Starostin (Starostin, Chch):

1. Pulei 類 類 - during the Han dynasty was pronounced as */pá-rwəś/* (*paru`sh*).

2. An older version in *Han Shu* - Pulu 陸 陸 – was pronounced as */pá-rəuk/* (*par`uk*) during the Western Han dynasty.

3. Beilu 卑 陸 - during the Han dynasty was pronounced as */pe-rəuk/* (*per`uk*).

b). Acccording to Axel Schuessler:

1. Pulei 類 類 - during the Eastern Han dynasty was */ba-luis/*.

2. Pulu 陸 陸 – during the Eastern Han dynasty was */ba-liuk/*.

3. Beilu 卑 陸 – during the East Han dynasty was */pie-liuk/*.

c). According to Baxter-Sagart:

1. Pulei 蒲 類 - in medieval Chinese was pronounced as */bu-lwij/*^{H}.

2. Pulu 蒲 陸 – in medieval Chinese was */bu-ljuwk/*.

3. Beilu 卑 陸 – in medieval Chinese was */pjie-ljuwk/*.

d). According to Thierry's method:

1. Pulei 蒲 類, */bok-leoi/* in Cantonese, */bù-loại/* in Vietnamese, */bu-rui/* in Japanese and */po-ryu/* in Korean.

2. Pulu 蒲 陸, */bok-luk/* in Cantonese, */bù-lục/* in Vietnamese, */bu-roku/* in Japanese and */po-rjuk/* in Korean.

3. Beilu 卑 陸, */bei-luk/* in Cantonese, */bấy-lục/* in Vietnamese, */pi-rjuk/* in Korean and */hi-roku/* in Japanese.

e). And finally, according to the summarized data from the "Wictionary" related to phonological reconstruction of the pronunciation of Chinese characters:

1. Púlu 蒲 陸, in early medieval Chinese was */buo-lǐuk/*.

2. Púlèi 蒲 類, in early medieval Chinese was */buo-luih/*.

3. Bēilu 卑 陸, in early medieval Chinese was */piē-lǐuk/*.

It is clear that all three ancient names mentioned in *Han Shu* and *Hou Han Shu* refer to the same ethnonym, to the same people */park/, /bark/; */palk/, /balk/*, which is certainly very similar to *Burg, Purk / Bulg, Pulk*. What is more, it did not disappeared without a trace, but has been preserved in the name of the two great lakes in that region, *Bagrash-Kul* and *Barkul*.

In addition to these names, Khotan-saka documents state that the ancient city of (kaṃtha) Phalayākä was located about 10 km north of Turfan, at the foot of the Tien Shan Mountains (Bogdoshan ridge), (Line 23: … *yirrūṃcịnä kaṃtha cạmaiḍä baḍaikä nāṃa kaṃtha, argīñvā bisā kaṃtha, ermvā bisā kaṃtha, phalayākä kaṃtha, tturpạnä kaṃtha, bapạnä kaṃtha*) (Titus, Part No. 100)

This directly confirms the above-mentioned phonological reconstructions of the Chinese character incriptions. Respectively, the cities are *Yirrūṃcịnä kaṃtha* - Urumqi, *Cạmaiḍä baḍaikä* - Kumul-balik, i.e. Hami, *Argīñvā kaṃtha* - Karashar, in this case *Arsi* (Yuezhi), *Ermvā kaṃtha* - *Erma* corresponds to the village of

Gǔchéng 古城,[66] located 160 km north of Turfan, where there was a Buddhist monastery according to the *Tibetan Annals of Hotan*, *Tturpąnä kaṃtha* - Turfan, *Bapąnä kaṃtha* - a village with the Chinese name of *Uban* 無 半 */wú-bàn/*, which during the Tang dynasty was pronounced as */miu-puan/*[H], the village was located between Turfan and Karashar.[67]

In Uighur documents, the Khotan city name of *Phalayākä* was transliterated as *Bīlayuq*. The Chinese later called the place *Shüīpang*. In the early Middle Ages there was a Nestorian Christian monastery there and in 1905 the German traveller Albert von Le Coq discovered parts of various Christian texts written in Sogdian, Syrian, ancient Uighur and Pahlavi in the remains of that monastery. Most of these manuscripts date back from the ninth to the tenth centuries.[68]

In other words, there is clear evidence that a name that sounds like */Bulg/*, */Pulk/*, was present in that area, and earlier Chinese sources from the Han dynasty, quite understandably from a phonological point of view used it as */Pulei/* and */Beilu/*! Despite the fact that during the Han dynasty *Pulei* was situated much further east from *Phalayākä*, compared to where it was during the Tang dynasty, namely in the area of Lake Barkul, we can assume that it is not a matter of accidental coincidence of toponyms but the whole area from Turfan to Barkul was called *Pulk / Bulk*, and that the name was related to a people of the same name who inhabited that territory.

Hou Han Shu provides interesting information about them. The kingdom of Pulei was said to be inhabited by nomadic pastoralists who raised mostly good breeds of horses, camels, sheep and other domestic animals. Agriculture was not well-developed but they grew wheat. They were skilled in fighting, they made good bows, they were very good warriors and nomadic pastoralists. The same information referred to the other tribes in the region. And they all had fair hair, i.e. they belonged to the European (Caucasian) race.[69]

Hou Han Shu reads that Pulei was originally a large kingdom (near Lake Barkul), but when the "Western Regions" were conquered by Xiongnu, Pulei's king insulted Shanyu. Enraged, Shanyu attacked Pulei and relocated more than

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[66] Literally translated Gǔchéng 古城, means "an ancient city". Bailey assumes that "Erma" derives from the Khotan-saka word "*perma*", meaning "fertile", i.e. "fertile field". Today Gucheng does not exist, the Qitai County is situated on the same territory. During the Tang dynasty, Gucheng was an important staging post on the Silk Road, and during the Han dynasty, Gucheng was called Hòuchéng後城, a fortress in the Cheshi 車師. I think that it would be more appropriate to look for etymological links in the Tocharian languages. In Tocharian A *"yärm"*, in Tocharian B "*yarm"*and in Proto-Tocharian *"*yärm"* all mean "measure; dimension" and such is the way it is interpreted in later Tocharian texts, but Hilmarson believes that the initial meaning was "standing, rising", equivalent to the Proto-Germanic word *"*ermena*", meaning "large". Cf. ADAMS 1999, 485.

[67] BAILEY 1951, 14-15, BAILEY 1985, 18-19, CHAVANNES 1903, 6-7, LISHUANG 2018, 164, paragraph 216 below the line.

[68] SIMS-WILLIAMS 1989.

[69] HILL 2003, 23.

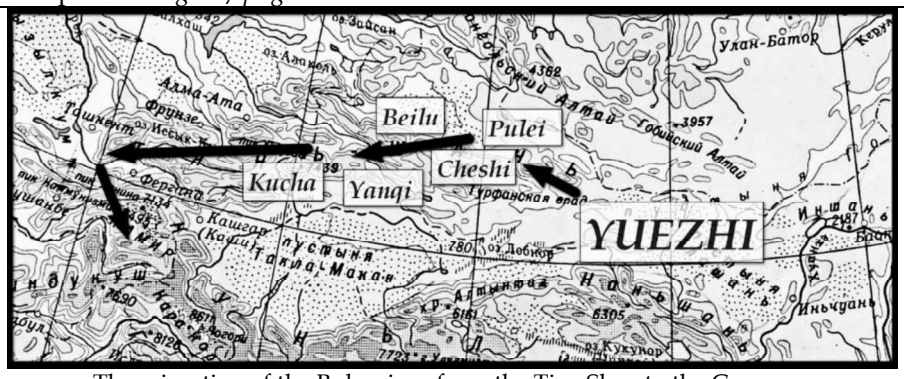
6,000 people from the kingdom. The place where they were sent in exile was called Avu 阿惡,[70] and it was located on the right (or western) outskirts of Xiongnu. That was why that kingdom was called Avu. To the south, at a distance of 90 days on horseback, lived the people of the Rear Cheshi. It was said that (some) of the poor, unfortunate people fled to the mountain valleys, where they settled and established a kingdom (Pulei).[71] The scale of those forced migrations was probably much larger than the data included in Chinese source.

After the Western Han Empire imposed their control over these areas, it divided the Pulei dominion into two parts, *Front Pulei* or *Western Pulei* - with modern Urumqi being the centre of that part, and *Rear Pulei* or *Eastern Pilei* - with the shores of Lake Barkul being in the centre of that part. Similarly, the other territorial possessions were also divided into front or western and rear or eastern. *Front Beilu* was located near the modern Fukang district of Xinjiang, and *Rear Beilu* was located in the Panqulei Valley番渠類.

In the III century AD, the two estates of Beilu and Pulei were annexed to the Rear Cheshi. The Cheshi themselves existed until 487 AD, when they were conquered by the Proto-Uighurs (Gaoche) 高車, and the Kasirs (Khazars) emigrated to the neighboring kingdom of Agni (Karashar).

Comparing what is known from Chinese sources with data from Armenian and Syrian sources, an interesting coincidence emerges:

The *Bulgarians* and the *Khazars* came from Mount Imeon, respectively the *Balk / Bulg / Pulk* (*Pulei / Bielu*) people or *Bulgarians* and *Pugurs* were part of the *Kasi / Kasirs* (*Cheshi-Kucha*) community that lived around Tian Shan Mountains – the main mountain range of *Imeon Mountains*, and *Khazirig* was the older brother. *Kasi / Kasirs* were respectively the larger community, while *Balk* (*Bulgarians*) were only part of it. In Syrian sources we have clear evidence that the name Bulgarians was equal to *burgars / pugurs*.



The migration of the Bulgarians from the Tien Shan to the Caucasus

[70] 阿 惡:, /ʰā-ɑk/ during the Han dynasty: phonologically may have been used to transliterate the Ket name of the Yenisei River - "*Huk*", but it is also very likely to have meant "a bad hill" given the lexical meaning of the Chinese characters and the context - a place of exile.

[71] HILL 2003, 23, see explanatory notes.

In 165 BC, the majority of the *Arsian - Tocharian* people left Gansu and, led by the ruling *Ungunduri clan*, crossed the Turfan Depression and moved along the northern slopes of the Tien Shan Mountains, to the west.

That massive migration passed through the lands of the *Kasiri* (Cheshi) and *Bulgi / Puguri* (*Pulei / Beilu*) peoples, or *Khazars* and *Bulgars*, and caused many of the locals to merge with the migration wave and leave with them.

Thus, by the end of the I century BC, *Bulgars* (*Pugurs*) and *Khazars* had already emerged in the Caucasus. And then, during the first half of the I century AD, Vund with his Bulgarians moved to Armenia. When the Western Han Empire subjugated the East Tien Shan region (II – I centuries BC), they found an almost depopulated area, and the *Cheshi, Pulei* and *Beilu* were only small settlements with several thousand inhabitants each.

That migration has also been evidenced by historical sources. A Chinese text, found in Dunhuang region states that the kingdom of *Yanqi* (*Agni*), located between Turfan and Kucha, was founded by the Yuezhi.[72] In *Xitian Lujin* or *Western Way* (Dunhuang document S. 383) it is said that *Yanqi* (Karashar) were also called *Yuezhi*. More precisely, in *Xitian Lujing* (the Dunhuang document, p. 383, from the beginning of the Song Dynasty (960-1127 AD) it is written that "It only takes a day to get to Gaochang 高昌 on the west (Gaochang is Chinese military colony established during the Han Empire, near modern-day Turfan). Also, after a journey of 1000 li 里 (about 500 km) you arrive in the state of Yuezhi 月氏. Another 1000 li from there is the state of the Kùchē庫車, also called Guīzī 龜茲".

Here *Yuezhi*月氏 certainly means *Yanqi* 焉耆 or Karashar, not the kingdom of the Kushans in Central Asia, which is much further away, and along a line from the east to the west it is situated after *Kucha* 庫車, not before it.[73]

The Sogdian document *Nāf-nāmak* provides confirmation of the information from the Chinese source, stating that the population of the Yanqi (Karashar) was called *'rkcyk*, i.e. Yuezhi 月氏 = *'rkcyk* (*Arsi, Arshi or Rushi*).

Thus, it is already clear that during their migration to the northwest, part of the Arsians remained in the area of the Eastern Tien Shan Mountains, near Lake Bagrashkul (Bosten-hu) and gave rise to the state of *Agni* or *Yanqi* (Karashar). This is also proven by toponymy. For example, in the Sogdian source *Nāf-nāmak* or *Book of the Nations*, the name */tγw'r'k/* refers to the people living in the region of the Oks (Amu Darya) river, apparently residents of Tocharistan or the lands of the Kushan state. Whereas the name */'rkcyk/*, is used for the people living immediately beyond Kashgar, Khotan and Kucha, i.e. the inhabitants of Karashar or Yanqi (in Chinese sources), who were speakers of the Tocharian language A (arsi kantwo). *Naf-namak* was written around 800 AD in Turfan. Now it is preserved and kept in Berlin.[74] In Khotan-saka sources, the name of Karashar appears as *Argīña*, whereas in Manichean Middle Persian texts it is *Ark*.[75]

[72] PAPILLON 2004.
[73] TAISHAN 2010b.
[74] HENNING 1938, 545.
[75] HENNING 1938, 593.

So, the way the *Bulgars* and *Khazars* passed, from the mountain gorges beyond Mount Imeon to the Caucasus was much longer and more complex than it was thought to be among historical scientists of XIX and early XX centuries. This has been my own hypothesis, which I tried to present to the readers as briefly as possible, in a concise form, unbiasedly analyzing available sources.

I would like to note that yet another similar idea can be found in the Bulgarian historical literature, and in the historical literature in general. The first amateur historian, Dimitar Susalov – a lawyer by profession, came to the conclusion that the ancestors of the ancient Bulgarians lived between *Bagrashkul* and *Barkul*, after getting acquainted with the work of the Dutch sinologist De Groot *Die Hunnen der vorchristlichen Zait* (*The Huns of Pre-Christian Times*), and presented his idea in his book *The Road to Bulgaria*, published in 1936. He directly interpreted the name of *Barkul* to convey the meaning of "Bulgarian Lake" and the *Barkultag* mountains (the easternmost ridge of the Tien Shan Mountains) running south of it - as "Bulgarian Mountains".[76]

Yet, under the strong influence of the theory of the Hunnic origin of the Bulgarians, widely accepted in the historic science of that time, and due to the scarcity of information about the ancient history of that region, he came to the wrong conclusion that that population was located between *Bagrashkul* and *Barkul*, as their initial origin was believed to be Hunnic, i.e. part of the Xiongnu tribes, so he connected them with Attila's Huns, who later appeared in Europe. Today, though, the direct connection between Xiongnu and the Huns of Attila has been seriously challenged!

In other words, D. Susalov laid the foundations of the Tocharian theory of the origin of the Bulgarian ethnonym, without realizing that it was a completely different people, who had nothing in common with Xiongnu: on the contrary, they were directly affected by the expansion of Xiongnu!

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[76] SUSALOV 2000, 234-235.

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