

ON THE AREA OF THE INITIAL RESETTLEMENT OF THE PROTOBOLGARS AND
ON THE ORIGIN OF THEIR NAME BASED ON HISTORICAL AND LINGUISTIC
DATA

(Summary)

The paper aims at defining the area where the Protobulgarians first settled in the Northern Caucasus including the two areas of the Transcaucasus region adjacent to the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. In the first centuries A.D., one of their subgroups, known by the name of 'ziχ/zyχ/džik', settled here near the coast. From here the (Proto)Bulgarians reached other areas between the Black Sea and the Balkan mountains. This may have happened even before the invasion of the Huns (compare the Vulgares in the Chronicle of 345 and other ethnonymic variants from the same period). The Bulgarians whose name goes back to an original form 'balqar', 'inhabitant of the mountains', are mentioned towards the end of the 2nd century B.C. as living "in the area of the high Caucasian mountains". Later, a Protobulgarian community separated from the Prototurkic one and part of it, the Chony, whose name goes back to Prototurkic *qon (cf. the autonym of the Qumyks) was known in the middle of the 1st century A.D. in the North-Eastern and Central Caucasus. The Chony migrating here are mentioned as (h)onogur-es /(h)on(n)ogundur-es in the 6th – 7th century in the North-Eastern Caucasus (along the river Kuban') and then under the leadership of Asparukh in the Balkans. In his argument the author assumes that the Turks originally lived in the Southern, South-Eastern (following Puchkov and Miller) and South-Western area around the Caspian Sea after having separated from the Altai (linguistic) community, thus following the proposal of I. L. Kyzlasov who places the origins of the Turkic peoples in the Western Asian region. According to his opinion this area can be seen as the starting point for further movements of the Prototurks through the areas around the Caspian Sea indicated above towards the Eastern and other regions where they are found now and where they lived in the past.

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