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THE GOLDEN TREASURE OF THE BULGARIAN KHANS  
FROM ATTILA TO SIMEON  
(*s y n o p s i s*)

WE TAKE BACK A PRICELESS BULGARIAN TREASURE  
WITH GOLDEN JUGS FROM KHAN KUBRAT,  
KHAN ASPARUKH'S GOLDEN DINNER DISH  
AND TSAR BORIS I'S GOLDEN CHRISTENING CUPS



*At long last,  
after a number of fruitless attempts  
of prominent Bulgarian and foreign scholars  
a unique proto-Bulgarian inscription  
has been spelt out and translated*

Translated by: Vladimir Marinov

The Golden treasure of the Bulgarian khans from Attila to Simeon the Great is better known by the name of The Golden Treasure of Nagy Szent-Miklós, because it was found on 3.07.1799 in the small Hungarian town of Nagy Szent-Miklós populated mainly with Hungarians, Bulgarians and Roumanians, and located very near the left, south bank of the river Maros, Roumanian Mureş, being within the boundaries of the Austrian Empire at that time; after the end of World War I and presently being of the name of Sînnicolaul Mare as the centre of a region in which a lot of Bulgarians live and located within the boundaries of Roumania, more specifically in the central-northern part of the south-western administrative and geographic area of Banat.

The golden treasure was transferred to Vienna immediately after its discovery, where it has been kept and shown to visitors to the museum of the History of Art at first with the inscription of **THE NAGYSZENTMIKLOS HUNGARIAN GOLDEN TREASURE** (Late Avar period – early Magyar period, 9th c. AD), and later on with the inscription of **Greek and Roman Antiquities-Time of the Great Migration-HOARD OF GOLD FROM NAGYSZENTMIKLÓS** (Early Middle Ages, 8th-9th centuries AD; ...late Avar-Hungarian-Bulgarian cultural area).

A not very successful copy of the Treasure with a very poor display is in our National History Museum, too.

The Treasure itself consists of 23 vessels of different shapes and sizes manufactured out of a very high standard of gold, mostly 21 and 22 carat - 7 large jugs, 1 dish, 4 basin-like shallow cups or small bowls with a clasp for hanging, 4 cups, 3 zoomorphic bowls, but more likely cups or goblets, 2 paters, i.e. flat-shallow ladles, 1 golden horn for drinking, 1 soup bowl, with an overall weight of 9,926, i.e. almost 10 kg.



There are three kinds of inscriptions on the vessels of the Treasure - Greek, proto-Bulgarian using Greek characters and runic proto-Bulgarian, while various very beautiful representations of people and animals are engraved on their walls and bottoms; they are united in scenes and plots; plant and geometric ornaments or motifs are interwoven around them; the ornaments are classic Greek, Byzantine, Scythian or Sassanido-Persian with deeper roots and basis in the Ahemenidian from the VI century B.C. and the Assyrian art of the VIII century B.C.





Amidst all this, The Triumphant Prince or The Horseman from the East from jug 2 stands out and, because of this, it is extremely interesting; the Austrians even organized a national arts exhibition in 1996 by this title. This horseman is in a heavy chain-mail and helmet which are basically Sassanidian and with rather peculiar facial features; specialists anthropologists define him as a Turanoidian in-between mixed type of European-like and Mongol-like features which arises around the beginning of the first century A.D. on the boundary of Asia and Europe; it is characteristic of the Turks, but especially of the Bulgarians - Onogur and the Bulgarians of the Volga region, as well as of the Hungarians of the late IXth and the late Xth century. The horseman is holding tight by the hair and dragging a half-walking, half-running man with his hands tied behind his back and with clearly visible European facial features; he is also in a chain-mail, but Roman by the look and production of it; a severed human head is hanging from the rear end of his saddle; the head also has European facial features which are quite like the individual facial features of the captive.

After a more detailed acquaintance with the Treasure, art experts, historians, linguists, culture experts and others convey their impressions of it in only superior terms, such as 'a notable treasure', a golden treasure belonging to one of the richest archaeological finds', 'the most marvellous heritage', 'an inimitable golden treasure', 'the renowned treasure of Nagy Szent-Miklós', 'the magnificent find', also 'the striking find', 'the richest collection of metal art works', 'the world famous collection of goldware', 'one of the most remarkable finds of the early European Middle Ages', 'the famous treasure on which the most famous works with fantastic images have been engraved' and many more.



Of the Bulgarian scientists, the world renowned linguist Academician Prof. Stefan Mladenov, the art critic Prof. Nikola Mavrodinov and the historian and art critic Prof. Stefan Vaklinov carefully studied the Treasure, but the first more serious attempt for a scientific research and description of the Golden Treasure of Nagy Szent-Miklós is from 1885 of the Austrian Prof. Hampel, while its fullest and most detailed description with a referenced description of most of the theses and hypotheses promoted until then was made by two Hungarian scientists whose treatise was first published in Hungarian in 1977 and then, in 1984, also in English.

Ever since the first attempts for a scientific analysis of the Treasure every scholar without exception on mediaeval European history, archaeology, linguistics, epigraphy, culture studies, arts studies and what have you felt obliged to take a stand and to offer his/her viewpoint or opinion on the multitude of issues existing or arising all the time in connection with it, so that only the scientific literature upon the Treasure is already immense.

As a result, the golden treasure of Nagy Szent-Miklós is the only treasure in the world about which so many hypotheses, opinions and viewpoints have been suggested according to which in terms of origin and nationality it is simultaneously:

-Bactrian, Sassanidian, Iranian-of the Huns, Turanian, North Pontian, Byzantine, West Huns, Avarian, Avaro-Bulgarian, or it belonged to the first great and famous on European soil Bulgarian Avitohol, better known to all late ancient and mediaeval Europe under his of Gothic origin name Attila;

-Bulgarian belonging to Khan Asparukh having been stolen from his tomb and buried in the ground in 896 during a Magyar invasion in the area of Banat or only Bulgarian belonging to the Bulgarian khans; Bulgarian belonging to a proto-Bulgarian boil for the western part of the country, as well as proto-Bulgarian belonging to a ruler from that age; it is because of this that it is usually called A proto-Bulgarian Ruler's Treasure;

-Hungarian belonging to a Bulgarian layer in the Hungarian ethnos and culture; the result of western conquest of the Bulgarians, of the Huns-Bulgarian with Aitony the most likely last owner; Bolgar or Pecheneg, Hazar-Hungarian, Pecheneg, Koumanian, Pecheneg-Koumanian or Pecheneg-Kupchag; Turkic, Turkic-Pecheneg, Kupchag-Pecheneg; Hungarian, Avar-Hungarian, Avar, Hungarian with the Magyar prince Aitony whose predecessor was Boila from the Greek language inscription;

-Roumanian with the Arad Roumanians as the owner or some prince of a rural community or some bishop.

Besides that, the Treasure is dated in the middle of the Vth century, the end of the VIIth century, VIII-IXth centuries, around the time of the khans Krum and Omurtag, i.e. the first quarter of the IXth century, the second half of the IXth century and, to be more precise, the last third of the century, the end of the IXth-the middle of the Xth century, also in the IXth century, then in the Xth century, also before 889 but also in the XI-XII centuries.

From a third viewpoint, the Treasure was manufactured by the Bulgarian people in present-day Northern Bulgaria who had gone the way from east to west and had just adopted Christianity, and, more specifically, by Bulgarian goldsmiths; the vessels in their entirety were from the treasure of a monastery and were acquired either from goldsmith's workshops in Vidin or from endowments of ready-made vessels manufactured a long time before that in a number of other places; it was the product of a Bactrian, Sassanido-Persian and Byzantine art school; the eastern shapes are a consequence of the resumption of trade between East and West in the second half of the first millennium; the vessels are the works of different workshops and artisans; it was manufactured by the Hazar tribe of the Cabars who headed the Magyar migration in the west and were skilled with silver and gold; it was manufactured by the Pechenegs with part of the Sassanidian vessels being manufactured in Lavedia, while the Byzantine part was manufactured after 889 once again by them in Lavedia and Southern Hungary; it was manufactured by late Avars on Hungarian territory, etc.

Finally, the treasure was buried in the ground in 896 at the time of a Magyar invasion in Banat; also towards the end of the IXth century when the Hungarians invaded the plains of the middle Danube; it was buried at the end of the IXth century at the time of the Magyars' settlement in the middle reaches of the Danube; but also by the Magyar tribal prince Aitony before his violent death in 1008 or 1018, etc.

The most successful and convincing translation of the Greek language inscription on two of the golden cups was made by Bulgarian Academician Prof. Stefan Mladenov and, partly edited stylistically by us, it reads *Jesus Christ, reassure this servant of Yours, setting him free of his sin.*

Definitely successful and convincing is the spelling out of the proto-Bulgarian runic inscription on the part of the Turkish professor Talat Tekin and according to him it reads *Asparukh's drinking*

*cup* which translation we, Professor Ivan Dobrev, having in mind the specific morphological structure of the proto-Bulgarian language and the longtime existing already specific Bulgarian traditional practice of one-type inscribing of similar vessels, we correct and specify to ***The cup from which Asparukh to drink.***

Still, as yet the proto-Bulgarian inscription No. 21 in Greek characters, also called Buila's Inscription, excites the most publicity in scientific circles for the present; it is above all the largest, fullest, correct as to its formal content and even exquisitely beautiful, specific and (for the time being) the only known coherent text in the language of Asparukh's Bulgarians, or, in a nutshell, this inscription, as well as the Treasure itself, is unique.

The inscription is executed with Greek capital letters along the periphery of a richly decorated with an open-work interlaced design golden disk, complementarily mounted on the bottom of a shallow semispherical golden cup in the shape of an oval basin with a diameter of 12 cm, weight 212 g and a handle for hanging it on a belt, and in the place where the Inscription begins and ends there is a cross having equal arms and with a widening at the ends:

† **ΒΟΥΗΛΑ·ΖΟΑΠΑΝ·ΤΕΣΗ·ΔΥΓΕΤΟΙΓΗ·**  
**ΒΟΥΤΑΟΥΛ·ΖΩΑΠΑΝ·ΤΑΓΡΟΓΗ·ΗΤΖΙΓΗ·ΤΑΙΧΗ †**

† **Βουηλα·ζοαπαν·τεση·δυγετοιγη·Βουταουλ·ζωαπαν·ταγρογη·ητζιγη·ταιχη†**

**Buila žoāpan tešji dugetojgi Butaul žoāpan tagrogi ičigi täjši**

Great names of world linguistics try the spelling out and translation of Inscription No. 21 like the having spelt out the Orhono-Enissey Runic Inscriptions – Danish professor Wilhelm Tomsen, according to whom it says *Jupan Boila completed the bowl, (this) bowl for drinking, which jupan Butaul adapted for hanging*; Bulgarian Academician Prof. Stefan Mladenov – *Boila zoapan engraved the struggle, Butaul zoapan engraved the inner cross*; the Hungarian Academician Prof. Gula Nemet – *The bowl of Buila which he gave them to cast in a mould [and here it is now] the bowl for drinking of Butaul Tchaban who ordered them to make a handle [for it]*; Karakatchai-Balkar Professor Sjuleiman Baitchorov – *The bowl of Boila Zopan, it was manufactured by Botaul and it is a cup for drinking for Zopan's relatives*; the prominent American orientalist of Ukrainian descent Prof. Omeljan Pritsak and the Turkish Professor Talat Tekin – *Tchoban Buila filled the basin, Tchoban Butaul attached it (to the tomb) (=hung it). This is a basin for drinks.*

All these not quite logical and unconvincingly imprecise translations are, according to us, the end result of the inadequate qualifications and competence of their authors in the field of historical Turkic lexicology and grammar in principle and historical lexicology and grammar of proto-Bulgarian in particular, the knowledge of and taking into account of which allow us, Prof. Ivan Dobrev to make, give reasons for and prove the translation of Inscription No. 21 as ***The cup for which jupan Buila ordered after coating it, to inscribe, and from jupan Butaul to drink for his health***, which is undoubtedly not only the most precise and convincing, but also a most beautiful translation of the Inscription.

Since Inscription No. 21 and the runic inscriptions on the Treasure are doubtlessly proto-Bulgarian, the Treasure is itself proto-Bulgarian in terms of its origin and belonging, but on the basis of the fact that the proto-Bulgarians, as an ethno-linguistic community are the founders and creators of the

Bulgarian state, and also together with the south-eastern Slavs they are one, but the leading and main basic part, having laid the beginnings and foundations of the Bulgarian nationality, then the Golden Treasure of Nagy Szent-Miklós most certainly and obligatorily is Bulgarian in terms of its origin and belonging.

After the already made in our recently published monograph *The Golden Treasure of the Bulgarian Khans from Attila to Simeon. Sofia, 2005*, utmostly detailed and profound and versatile comprehensive specifically-empirical analysis and synthesis of the multitude of historical and linguistic, epigraph and paleograph, ethnograph and folklore, anthropological, art critic and other facts and data and with the help of the herein formulated and developed principles and techniques within the framework of a built-up by us *Overall Theory of the Golden Treasure of Nagy Szent-Miklós* which theory is at the basis of the whole monograph, we arrive at the following one and only, unambiguous and categorical, most clear and certain summing up conclusion, viz.:

*The Golden Treasure of Nagy Szent-Miklós is Bulgarian in terms of origin and belonging; it was collected, kept and guarded in the dining-room and treasury of the Bulgarian khans and tsars ever since their migration across the Caucasus; it was exhibited and kept last in the throne-room of the king's palace built and lived in first by Tsar Simeon the Great after the transfer of the Bulgarian capital-city from Pliska to Preslav in 893; it was taken out of here in 971 during the siege and seizure of the capital of Great Preslav by the Byzantine army which was immediately before the falling of Eastern Bulgaria under Byzantine rule; it was kept in Bulgaria-Beyond- the Danube by the Bulgarian jupans princes Gilyad, Butaul and Akhtum; it was buried in 1008 by the proto-Bulgarian hamlet with the later name of Nagy Szent-Miklós during the continuing seizure of the beyond-the-Danube Bulgarian lands by the Magyars and more specifically during their cruel outrage upon the Bulgarian nationality and statehood in the area of Prince Akhtum jupan where it was found in 1799.*

Specifically and especially, some of the golden jugs with classical Greek and Sassanido-Persion plots and motifs were presented as a gift for the aid given him by Emperor Irakliy to Khan Kubrat after their joint military campaign in Persia in 628 when both the temple in Shiza and the king's residence Dastakerd were seized.

Khan Asparukh's name is on it so that there can be no doubt that it was him who ate from it but there are some crosses on it made later on and in addition which means that it was used for eating by Tsar Boris the Baptist, while the two golden jugs with the aforementioned inscription in Greek were used obviously and undoubtedly at the time of his and his family's baptism, most probably in the beginning of the autumn of 865.

Jug No. 2 was manufactured by a Bulgarian goldsmith in Pliska upon the order of a high Bulgarian dignitary and was presented to Khan Omurtag in honour of his victorious war against the Franks and the Panonian Slavs around 826-827 when Bulgarian troops sailed down the Drava, attacked the Franks' holdings between the Drava and the Sava and seized Sirmia from the Franks at the price of a prolonged war; they attacked Moravia located on the western bank along the Garam coast and defeated the Slavs in Upper Panonia with fire and sword, drove their princes away and appointed Bulgarian rulers in their place from amongst the high dignitaries in the capital city or from the interior of the country; Khan Omurtag himself is engraved on one of the sides of the jug at the moment of his most brilliant triumph and celebration alongside the protectress, most probably of his clan, the Bulgarian goddess Umai.

Golden cup No. 21 with the Inscription of Buila was additionally placed with the other vessels of the Treasure by its last keeper and guardian jupan Prince Akhtum, son of jupan Prince Butaul who in the name of and within the boundaries of the First Bulgarian Kingdom ruled and owned the part of its lands located across the Danube and lying between the Danube in the south, the Tissa in the west, the Maros in the north and the Olt in the east, and who received the golden cup as a gift, most probably around 975, by his neighbour and good friend, again the Bulgarian jupan Prince Buila, who at the same time ruled and owned a vast area in Sedmigrad region with the town of Bolgarfehervar, i.e. 'Bulgarian White Town'.

Actually, ever since the time of Khan Krum (803-814) and Khan Omurtag (814-831) the north-western border of the First Bulgarian Kingdom ran to the west of the town of Srem, today the Serbian town of Sremska Mitrovitsa, along the Sava, turned at a right angle in the north under the great bend of the Danube in the east, came out and ran up the Danube a little to the west from Budapest, before its great bend in the south, and after that in a direct line it went north upstream the Khron until it reached the Carpathian Mountains.

The northern border of the territories of Bulgaria across the Danube ran along the ridge of the Carpathian range which makes a wide arc from west to south-east; it left it somewhere around the present-day Ukrainian town of Borislav and continued along upperstream Dnestr; it ran downstream until the great bend a little after the town of Kamenets-Podolsk; it changed direction to the north-east and reached the Dnepr to the north of the town of Kremenchug; it ran downstream and came out at the northernmost point of the Black Sea - the Bay of Kherson, to the east of the present-day town of Odessa.

The golden treasure of the Bulgarian khans from Attila to Simeon the Great is characterized with a specific precisely defined, very important and central place and significance in the cultural and historical heritage of the Bulgarian people and mankind as a whole, because in reality and in fact, after the gold of the Egyptian Pharaohs it represents and is actually the first richest and most beautiful of all the golden treasures in the world on the basis of its exceptionality and uniqueness as a combination of high artistic qualities with richness of material which, as a whole, sets it apart from not only the other old Bulgarian goldsmith works, but also all other goldsmith works in the world.

The Vulchetrun and the Panagyurishte Golden Treasures come immediately after the Golden Treasure of Nagy Szent-Miklós in terms of variety, beauty and riches, but they, even though having been found in Bulgarian lands, were manufactured by an Asia Minor people for the first and the Greeks for the second one, because of which they cannot be considered and recognized as Bulgarian in terms of origin and belonging; also, that ancient and exotic beauty and magnificence which our, truly Bulgarian golden treasure possesses is lacking in them.

Also, the world famous, but randomly and chaotically made up collections of golden objects in the Russian Hermitage, known mostly as the Scythian gold, are still and sufficiently far from being real and completed golden treasures.

The Pereshchepina Treasure is not a real and completed golden treasure, either, which however, in terms of the golden jugs and cups in it is possibly the nearest one in terms of composition, historical period and ethnic belonging; the comparison of the two treasures shows that in the selection of each one of the vessels for the Golden Treasure of Nagy Szent-Miklós it was the Bulgarian khans and tsars that showed an extremely high artistic sense and criterion, and out of a certainly larger



possession of golden vessels which they obviously and undoubtedly disposed of, they selected and took out only the most beautiful and representative ones; from which, however, the conclusion leaps out that it was Tsar Simeon himself who made that selection or, to be even more precise, he personally completed it, when he had to add to and bring to an end the decoration of his new palace.

The great cultural and historical value and worth of the treasure evolves also from the fact that its vessels were collected and used by the proto-Bulgarian rulers personally, amongst which the forefather of the Bulgarians Khan Kubrat and the founder of the Bulgarian state in the Balkans Khan Asparukh; the first Christian Bulgarian ruler Prince Boris was baptized with two of the bowls; the role and importance of himself both as a statesman and as a person, as well as his epoch-making deed not only for Bulgarian history, but also for the whole world history will always remain great and unsurpassed.

And last but not least, the great cultural and historical value and worth of the Treasure is determined and confirmed by the unique proto-Bulgarian inscriptions on it, because such inscriptions have not been discovered in another place up to now; and even if they are discovered in future, they will hardly be upon exactly the same 'bearers' on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the proto-Bulgarian inscriptions on the Treasure introduce and reveal the lexical and grammatical structure of not one isolated and restricted proto-Bulgarian dialect, but of all, without exception, late ancient and early mediaeval Bulgarian languages and dialects; which scientific issue, per se, is extremely important and significant not so much and only for the Bulgarian, but also for the whole world linguistics and historiography.

Only one of the multitude of confirmations and proofs about the important and central fact and the great significance of The Golden Treasure of the Bulgarian khans from Attila to Simeon the Great in the cultural and historical heritage of the Bulgarian people and of humanity as a whole is also the not accidental fact that in the organized and personally led by eminent American archaeologists two-day tour of the greatest European museums in Berlin, Vienna and Torino with the aim of acquainting themselves with their collections of Egyptian, classical and near-east art, they only spared two days for the historic sights of Vienna, and immediately upon disembarking from the aeroplane they passed in a hurry through Old Vienna, a famous cathedral, the Natural History museum with the notorious Venus of Villendorf and they arrived at the fabulous Kunsthistorisches Museum. Among its treasures are the 18th-dynasty sculpture of Thutmosis III, *The Gold of Nagyszentmiklos* and the Gemma Augustea cameo.

So, in a legendary and fairy-tale museum, at least in the second position from the beginning in terms of place and importance in universal cultural history, a lonely and abandoned, anonymous and unknown, but more precisely under a foreign exterior and a foreign name, robbed and spurned and unseemly shamed lies *The Gold of the Bulgarian Khans and Tsars*, and that undoubtedly means of all Bulgarians until now and in the future, dead, living and not yet born, of all Bulgarians for ever and ever!

That is why, and precisely because of all this, the following conclusions can now be safely accepted as sufficiently well substantiated and proven, in view of which the following specific recommendation is made:

***1. At long last, after repeatedly-unsuccessful attempts of most eminent Bulgarian and foreign scientists, the unique and one of a kind proto-Bulgarian inscription of Buila has been spelt out and translated convincingly and successfully.***

*2. The extremely beautiful and valuable, found in 1799 in the small town of Nagy Szent-Miklós, and nowadays world famous golden treasure can only be Bulgarian in terms of origin and belonging.*

*3. We are taking back a priceless Bulgarian treasure with golden jugs from Khan Kubrat, the golden dish for eating from of Khan Asparukh and the golden baptizing bowls of Tsar Boris I.*

*4. In the long run, and despite all, not only has an end been put, once and for all, to the more than 200-year-old mystery in a definite and categorical and entirely with no appeal way, but also to the as long lasting both in the Bulgarian and in world science very unfair and incorrect speculations, even falsifications on the occasion of a Bulgarian relic.*

*5. The corresponding Bulgarian authorities of all levels must take active measures and steps at once for the truest, the only suitable and matching inscription of **The Golden Treasure of the Bulgarian Kings from Attila to Simeon the Great** to be put over this Bulgarian relic alongside with the translations of the Greek, the proto-Bulgarian written in Greek characters and the runic inscriptions, as well as, obligatorily, with the aforeprinted short explanatory note about the century-long and dramatic history and destiny of the undoubtedly **Bulgarian Golden Treasure of Nagy Szent-Miklós**.*