

CHAPTER 41

Bulgarian curiosities, records and funny-and-serious claims

Mostly in a telegraphic style, here the essential curiosities, records and claims – serious or not – recited by just about any Bulgarian are listed, for your consideration (and fun):

- Bulgaria is the oldest state in Europe existing under the same name, with the same people, and – partially – the same territory. Officially its statehood is internationally recognized through signing a peace treaty with Byzantium, in AD 679. Other documents suggest at least some 50 years of earlier recognition – khan Kubrat’s state, for example, has been acknowledged by Byzantine sources as of AD 632.

- Bulgaria holds also the record as chronologically being the first state in Europe existing under the same name and on the same territory, which has adopted Christianity as the official faith. It is number two in the world, after Armenia, which is an Asian country.

- “The only state, which borders with itself from all sides.” Refers to the claims of large patches of land that are today territorial parts of each and every one of its neighbors. As demonstrated herein, the current state of Bulgaria encompasses less than half of the territory originally populated with ethnic Bulgarians. The Republic of Makedonia, or FYROM, which is the originally donated to Serbia part of the majority Bulgarian-populated ancient province of Macedonia, represents about half of the external territories, and the remainder is divided between all the neighbors.

- Bulgaria stopped the first Muslim invasion of Europe, by defeating Arab Caliphate’s troops that besieged Constantinople in AD 717. Khan Tervel was awarded the title “caesar” for his success in repelling the Saracens’ armies in their bid to conquer Byzantium and afterwards march into continental Europe. Along went territorial concessions: 1) reconfirming the jurisdiction over the region of Zagore – a fertile patch of land in North-Eastern Trakia – legally ceded to Bulgaria as a tangible reward for the great favor Tervel did to the then Emperor Justinian II in AD 705, and 2) adding extensions to that further east and southwest.

- VMORO – the Bulgarian organization that

Photo 41.1 X-ray photograph of residual fragment of Kaloyan’s tinsel-decorated mantle

