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**ON THE ETYMOLOGY OF THE OLD BULGARIAN LEXEME СЫНЪ AND MIDDLE
BULGARIAN LEXEME КОУЛА**

Abstract: The present article addresses the etymology of the Old Bulgarian **сынъ** (*synъ*) ‘tower’, ‘stronghold’ and the Middle Bulgarian **коула** (*kula*) ‘tower’. Two different attempts at etymologizing **сынъ** (*synъ*) based on Turkic origins have been critically considered and refuted because of phonetic and semantic discrepancies. The word perhaps derives from the absolute state of the Aramaic **hson* ‘tower’, ‘fortress’. The possible mediation of another language in the borrowing process has been discussed, too.

The other word, **коула** (*kula*) ‘tower’, is used in all Balkan languages. The popular hypothesis of Turkish mediation in the borrowing of the Arabic *qalla* ‘peak’ has been challenged because the word was found in Byzantine and Middle Bulgarian records centuries before the first inscription of the Turkish *kule* in 1360. Moreover, unlike Byzantine Greek and Middle Bulgarian records of *kula* ‘tower’, the Turkish word was initially used in the sense of ‘peak’. Two possible hypotheses of a direct penetration of the word from Arabic into the Balkan languages have been suggested.

Keywords: Old Slavonic (Bulgarian); Byzantine Greek; Turkic languages; Semitic languages; tower; fortress; loanwords

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