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Note from the Editor in Chief

We are pleased to invite all scholars to publish their research papers on History and related fields, written impartially and analyzing the historical past without political bias.

Reconstructing the Past: Journal of Historical Studies aims to foster the recovery of historical past without fear or favor, based not only on the historical methods and methodology, but also on an interdisciplinary approach.

Our purpose is to provide a forum for scientific research free from political overtones.

Kind regards,

Professor Huseyn Baghirov

Founder of the Western Caspian University

TRACES OF THE LATE HUNS OF EUROPE: HISTORICAL SOURCES AND LEGENDS

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Abstract: The history of the Huns has always been of great interest to European researchers. Regarding their history, many questions are yet to be answered, e.g. what happened to the Huns in various parts of Europe after Attila's death.

In some parts of the East and the West European continent many local legends on the Huns still exist today, which indicates that this unique horsemen people of the eastern steppes left a deep mark.¹ We find a particularly vivid tradition among the Seklers living in the eastern part of the Carpathian Basin.² Scientific research is still skeptical about the survival and influence of the Huns however, recent years' scientific publications have somewhat colored the previous picture of the Huns.³ The publication on the Huns is so extensive that it is impossible to present it in one study. Since the 19th century, numerous studies have dealt with the possible language of the Huns. Russian researchers began to excavate Asian Hun tombs at the very beginning of the 20th century. In the second half of the 20th century, dozens of Hun cities and cemeteries were discovered in the territory of the former Soviet Union. Sergey Botalov wrote a summary monograph on them. In this work, he analyzed the archaeological findings of the European and Asian Huns. Gmirya and Gadjiyev have written significant publications on the history and archaeological findings of the Caucasian Huns. One of the most thorough summaries of the history of the European Huns is Maenchen-Helfen's work published in 1973. In recent decades, the studies of Heather and the Korean Kim have significantly reassessed the view on the Huns. In 2008, a study: *The Heritage of the Huns* was published in which foreign and Hungarian researchers presented their findings on the European and Asian Huns. In this study, in addition to archaeology and history, linguistics and culture were also presented. An international Hun conference was organized in 2005 in Sukhbaatar, Mongolia, in 2007 in Speyer, and in 2011 in Ulaanbaatar, and since then similar scientific forums have taken place in many countries.

In my present study, my intention is to track down where Hun communities led by Attila's relatives or sons remained and how they played a significant role in late ancient history. Studying the ancient written records, I attempt to reveal the probable historical process. I compare some ancient Greek and Roman records with European Hun folklore

¹ There are dozens of legends related to the Huns and Attila in Western Europe: Germany, France and Switzerland. Michel Bakocs and Szilvia Sztruhar collected them. Their book is being published in 2025.

² The Sekler-Hungarian folklore texts mentioned the descendants of the Huns in Europe. The Seklers regard Attila's youngest son Chaba their king.

³ Niles, Ferrari, Heather, Kim, etc.

tradition. Unfortunately, most of the publications were pro-Goths or Romans, and they did not pay enough attention to the remnants of the Huns. Recently, many new publications have appeared, which emphasize the significant historical role of the Huns in the second half of the 5th century as well. I have studied these new approaches and the new results of archaeology. Archaeological findings of typical Hun objects can be found throughout Europe.

Keywords: Huns, Attila, Battle of the Nedao, Attila's descents, Archaeogenetic studies

Introduction

Let me summarize briefly the history of the European Huns. It is known from the historical chronology that the Huns started their European campaign in 375. They were able to occupy the majority of the Eastern European plain and reached the Lower-Danube a year after. Then they conquered the Carpathian basin as well. The Goths were fleeing the invading Huns in 375. They found refuge in the Balkans, and then came into conflict with the Romans. Finally, the Goths defeated the Roman troops at the Battle of Adrianople in 378. Due to the invasions and expansion of the Eastern peoples, the Roman Empire split into an eastern and a western part in 395. During the first half of the 5th century, the Huns occupied more and more territories from the Eastern and Western Roman Empire. The heyday of the Hun Empire was during the reign of Attila (434-453). The great king died suddenly in 453, which brought disorder and instability to the region. There was no one who was able to keep the Hun Empire united so it disintegrated into small principalities. Soon after, the Western Roman Empire also ceased to exist. It was shattered by Attila's campaign in Italy in 452, looted by the Vandals in 455 followed by fierce internal political struggles for power. Simultaneously with the decline of statehood, the number of surviving historical chronicles also decreased drastically. We have only fragmentary sources from this period. In the 470s, Odoacer attacked Italy, dethroned the last Roman emperor, and established an independent kingdom. After the collapse of the great Hun Empire in Europe, the Eastern Roman Empire remained the only strong political power in the region. Mostly Goths and Gepids have been employed as border guards to protect the former parts of the old Roman Empire from the Huns and other steppe horsemen. They were strong enough to gain independence but their kingdom did not last long. Attila's sons made several attempts to restore the Hun empire, which failed. They were only able to rule certain parts of the territory of the former empire.

Battle of Nedao and the disintegration of the Hun Empire

After the European campaign of the Huns, the Western Roman Empire began to decline. It lost its sovereignty, because Hun troops were stationed on its territory and the Romans have become taxpayers to the Huns. [Obrusanszky (2016): 92] More and more

¹ Findings of Hun cauldrons and artificially distorted skulls throughout Europe show the migration route of the Huns from Inner Asia to Europe. These show us that they lived in small and large communities.

foreign peoples, mostly Goths, settled in the territory of the former empire, who over time established an independent government and wanted to separate from the Romans. From time to time, the Romans were able to defeat separatist efforts with the help of the Huns.¹ The Western Roman Empire slowly fell to pieces, and at the same time, writing culture also declined, so only a few memories were left from the late history of the Huns. That is why this era is called the dark ages. Only a very few historical documents have survived in late transcripts, especially in the Eastern part of the Empire which is called Byzantium where the ancient records were preserved, and parts of these were used in later chronicles.

One of the most important historical sources of this historical period is Jordanes's *Getica*, i.e. the history of the Goths, who used much information from the lost works of Priscus of Panium and Cassiodorus. Unfortunately, the historical sources provide fragmentary information only about the events of the second half of the 5th century, and it was focused only to the Goths. There are also some late historical records from the Merovingian period (6-8th century) that mentioned tribes and people in the territory of the easternmost part of the former Roman Empire, e.g. Transdanubia (it is today's Hungary). Peter Kiraly discovered that the sources recorded Huns there.² In the first half of the 6th century, Procopius,³ historian of Emperor Justinianus, also mentioned the Huns in the Caucasus and the Balkan region. The Byzantine author was well acquainted with the political environment of Europe, and he frequently mentioned the Huns as the Emperor's main allied force. Some additional Byzantine sources such as Agathias, Theophylact Simocatta, etc, have also mentioned European Huns. The medieval chronicles, written in the Hungarian royal court are especially valuable in this respect. A chapter in these chronicles: "The History of the Huns" preserved lots of valuable information on Attila's Huns. However, historians did not use the data of these chronicles in their works. It is confirmed, that some stories came from an ancient heroic epic, which were sung even in the 14th century by the special singers, the *regős*.⁴ From the description of Priscus of Panium, we know that such singers existed in Attila's court and sang epics or songs about the great deeds of the Huns.⁵

¹ The Roman general Aetius was always successful in his campaigns if Huns troops helped him.

² Király 2006. 146-147. *Auctuarium Neuburgense*. 477. Western Huns, who call them as Hungarians (Hungarus).

³ His main books: Persian wars, Gothic wars. The book of Secret History also mentioned some valuable information on the Huns.

⁴ These events were recorded in the Hungarian royal court from the second half of the 11th century. Authors added new information from time to time, but the old, so-called Hun history was left untouched. That is why the Hungarian chronicle details are extremely important in the research of the late Huns, which were written in the Middle Ages, but the stories were previously passed down from father to son through the mouths of *regős* (singer/bards). Such singers already lived in Attila's court. Rhetor Priscus of Panium, who was a guest at the Hun court, mentioned them. Anonymus also mentions singers in his chronicle (*Gesta Hungarorum*).

⁵ "As evening came, pine torches were lit up, and two barbarians, advancing in front of Attila, sang songs which they had composed, chanting his victories and his virtues in war. Those at the feast listened to the singers. Some took delight in some of the verses, some of which reminded them of wars, some excited their souls, while others, who were weakened and whose spirits were compelled to rest, gave way to tears." Fragment of Priscus of Panium. Bóna 1993. 70. There is a lot of information about the *Regös* in medieval official documents, which serves as proof that during the *Árpád* era they sang songs about the ancient

Both Jordanes and the Hungarian chronicles wrote that Attila died suddenly after the Italian campaign. The Hungarian royal chronicles and the *Tarikhi Üngürüs*¹ recorded that King Attila died in Sicambria, which was his own winter residence. The sources noticed that he was buried next to some great Hun leaders, such as Bela, Kadocha, Keve and others. [*Chronicum Pictum* (1986): 17]. The *Chronicum Pictum* informs us that even the enemies of the Huns did not know whether to cry or rejoice at the news of his death. They hesitated, they were afraid of his countless sons, who came up with a whole nation. They believed that after the death of the father, one of his sons would rule. But Detre of Verona² and the other Gothic princes were cunning, since during his reign King Attila sat on their necks, they divided the unified Hun community into parties. All sources say that a competition began amongst the sons of Attila as who would inherit the throne of the great king. Jordanes reported that right after Attila's funeral, dispute arose among the heirs over who should succeed the throne. The young men were fueled by the desire to rule Attila's Empire, and everyone believed in his own ability and power, therefore they divided and destroyed the great empire. The kingdom declined without a powerful successor.³ Presumably, Attila did not leave a will, where he would have named his heir. The rightful heir was probably Attila's youngest son, Hernac. When Priscus of Panium visited the court of King Attila around 449, he recorded what he heard there. According to it, the whip of God loved Hernac (Hungarian: Prince Chaba) the most among his sons, because it was prophesied that he would revive his lost state. So, it is possible that the great king wanted him to be his heir. However, Jordanes gravitated towards the Goths, claiming that Attila loved Ellák the most.⁴ However, Ellac did not sit close to Attila in the banquet that Priscus participated, just two sons, Dengizikhh and Hernac were close to him. Ellac was not able to unite the tribes of the Hun Empire. He had no chance for ruling the post-Hun Empire, because he died in the battle at Nedao. [*Jordanes: Getica* 262] The other son of the great Hun king was Aladar, whose name was only recorded in Hungarian sources. The Hungarian chronicle confused him with Ellac, and he was said to be the son of Krimhilda. [*Chronicum Pictum* (1986): 17]. The *Tarikhi Üngürüs* was informed that he was the appointed leader of Transylvania. His name appears in Transylvanian folklore and even in court documents, which I present below. So, it is not clear whether Ellac can be identified with Aladar, or that they were two separate persons. Ancient sources also mentioned Dengizikh, who took over the administration of the eastern wing after the

historical deeds. Anonymus called them inoculators. Later, even in the middle of the 14th century, we hear that when the regös, who served in the court, retired, they were settled in Regtelek (today: one district of Budapest.) Szabó, 1881.

¹ The Hungarian chronicles from the royal court, the *Chronicum Pictum* or Kezai's *Gesta Hungarorum*, also recorded that. *Tarikhi Üngürüs* is a 16th-century Ottoman Turkish chronicle preserving the history of the Hungarians. Its author Mahmud Tercüman translated it from a Latin chronicle found after the siege of Székesfehérvár (Hungary) in 1543.

² The *Chronicum Pictum* preserved his name as the leader of the Goths.

³ "After they had fulfilled these rites, a contest for his realm arose among Attila's successors -given that minds of young men are fuelled by an ambition for power-, and while everyone mindlessly strove to rule, together they all destroyed his empire." *Jordanes: Getica* 259.

⁴ *Jordanes: Getica* 262. "In this battle Ellac, the eldest son of Attila fell, whom his father is said to have loved so much more than all the rest. He preferred him to all his other children in his kingdom. But fortune did not consent to his father's wish."

death of Bleda, Attila's brother. He launched several campaigns to reclaim his father's inheritance.

According to Jordanes the main problem was that Attila's sons wanted to divide the tribes among themselves.¹ However, the Gepid Alarik (elsewhere: Ardarik) was outraged by this. He rebelled against Attila's sons and encouraged other Gothic tribes to oppose Attila's sons. On the other hand, the Hungarian chronicles wrote that the unity of the empire was broken by the Gothic princes, because they wanted to raise their own candidate to the throne against Prince Chaba (Hernac in Latin sources). The Hungarian source does not say anything about the division of people by the Huns.²

It is believed that other tribes could have rebelled against their former masters and acquired certain territories. Jordanes, just like the ancient Hungarian chronicles, identified the division of the Huns as the biggest problem, which led to the disintegration of the Hun empire. He explained the situation as follows: "Division is such a dangerous thing, that they crumbled when divided, who were formidable when united."³ The literature about this period also drew attention to the fact that at that time there could have been a disagreement not only between the Huns and the Goths/Gepids, but also between the Gepids and the Goths. Jordanes mentioned that Alarik (Ardarik), the lord of the Gepids, revolted the peoples living under the Huns. It is more likely that the dominant Goths rebelled against Attila's sons, rather than the small, insignificant Gepids, whose role was insignificant. All historical sources, including the Hungarian chronicles, reported on a long, bloody conflict that caused enormous losses on both sides. The conflict was because of the Huns and Goths could not arrange the arguments peacefully, and they were not able to elect a joint ruler to inherit Attila's empire. They tried to decide who the next leader of the empire would be on the battlefield. Jordanes called it the battle of Nedao, but the Hungarian chronicles named it the Battle of Krimhilda. The historical sources do not match where the battle took place: according to the Hungarian tradition, it was near the Hun capital, Sicambria on the bank of Danube. It is conceivable that Krimhilda's battle at Sicambria, described by the Hungarian chronicles, could have been one of these clashes. [Chronicum Pictum (1986): 17]. It is possible that a battle took place near the capital of the Hun Empire, but the decisive battle could have taken place in the south. We can understand that the fate of the Huns of the Carpathian Basin was not sealed in a single battle, but rather in a few clashes, which means that several battles and

¹ The sons of Attila, due to the libertinism of his lust, practically amounted to a nation, demanded that the tribes be divided among themselves equally, and that the people be apportioned to them like household slaves. Jordanes: *Getica* 259

² But Detre of Verona and the German princes were cunning, since during his reign King Attila sat on their necks, they split the united Hun community into parties. Some wanted to make Chaba king after Attila. Chaba was King Attila's son by the daughter of the Greek emperor Honorius. Others wanted Aladar to be the heir, who was fathered by the German princess Krimhilda. The more intelligent part of the Huns was attracted to Csaba, while other Huns, to Aladar. Both began to rule. When each wanted to get the better of the other, the cunning Detre, who at that time was in Sicambria with Aladar, set up such a hard and strong contest between the two kings that the Danube continuously flowed with German blood for fifteen days. In those days the Huns carried out such a massacre that if the Germans did not hide it because of their hatred, they would have to admit that from Sicambria to Potentiana neither men nor foolish beasts could drink clean water from the Danube.

³ L. 15 notes.

even a civil war broke out after Attila's death. Several researchers considered the possibility that the fate of the Hun Empire was not decided in a single battle at Nedao, but that there had been battles between the Huns and the Goths before that. Jordanes mentioned the location of the battle near the river Nedao but did not name the exact place. Maybe they had their Gothic names at the time, which were then forgotten.

He summarized the result of the battle as: "mutually destroyed each other" somewhere in Pannonia. Recent research has placed the great battle between the Goths and the Huns in Southern Pannonia, near the banks of the Sava River. According to Wolfram, the battle took place either in 454 or 455. The Austrian researcher placed the battle in the vicinity of the Sava. Bugarski-Ivanisevic also believes that the battle took place in the south. They identified its place on the banks of the Nadela River, between today's Belgrade and Szendrő, in the territory of today's Serbia. The Gracian, Croatian historian also located the battle of Nedao in Southern-Pannonia or Pannonia Secunda. Due to these new results, it is likely that after 453, the Goths could not occupy today's Transdanubia in Hungary totally, but they held the region between the Sava and Drava rivers and placed their residence there. At that time, it was considered the most valuable area, because it connected the Eastern and Western Roman Empires, and the main trade and military routes passed through here. The Hun-Gothic battles after 453 could be in Pannonia Secunda, and we can see that the Ostrogoths also fought for the acquisition of the Balkans in the second half of the 5th century. We find out from Jordanes' description, that the Goths' and Gepids' goal was not the possession of the whole Hun empire, but only the acquisition of certain territories that had long been the property of the Romans, and they wanted to receive an annual income from the Eastern Roman Empire for protecting these territories (provinces of Pannonia Secunda and Savia).

The historical sources and the scholars agreed that the Huns lost the battle, and the Hun Empire disintegrated. The territories in Western Europe, and certain areas of the Carpathian Basin were lost and they came under foreign rule. Jordanes recorded that Attila's sons retreated to the stable eastern wing of the Huns, around the Black Sea. Based on contemporary descriptions, it is probable that small principalities and kingdoms were formed instead of the great Hun Empire. Since the regional role of the Huns decreased and they did not launch attacks toward the Roman Empire, we have no information on them during the second half of the 5th century. If we carefully study the historical sources, it turns out that although the Goths won the great battle of Nedao, they were unable to create a strong, central power and did not manage to get the desired territory, the whole Pannonia Secunda and beyond. They ruled some Pannonian areas between 454-473, and in the meantime, they tried to occupy the southern provinces in the Balkans. According to Wolfram, the unified Ostrogothic kingdom in Pannonia existed in 456/457-473. [Wolfram (1988): 261]

John Niles described this period as the following: "During the "warring states" period that followed that unanticipated event, numerous warlords and statesmen strove with one another for power, with the result that a new tier of leaders eventually gained authority in much of Europe and Central Asia." [Niles (2022): 392]. Wolfram also had the same idea, as he wrote "The Pannonian history of Ostrogoths deals with princes and wars." [Wolfram (1988): 266]. After the collapse of the Hun Empire, the Lower-Danube region became diverse. At the same time small politically fragmented principalities were

created, but they did not achieve stability and maturity at all. The territory they ruled was a fraction of the former Hun state. The victory of the Goths did not bring peace to the Lower-Danube area. They could not pacify the region. Even after the Hunnic-Gothic war, the steppe peoples, such as the Huns and the Sarmatians, continued to disturb the Ostrogoth borders. Not only the Huns, but also the Goths changed their place of residence, which means the movement or migration of people affected not only one people, but almost all the peoples of the former Hun Empire. Because of permanent attacks toward the Goths, probably they were looking for a new place or residence and moved southward in 473. After a decade, some of them finally moved to Italy, and some moved to the Eastern Empire and settled down there. The *Chronicum Pictum* wrote about that situation, mentioning that there was no ruler or king in Pannonia for ten years after Attila's death. Another reason for the migration of the Goths was that the income of the armed elite that came from the Eastern Roman Empire was uncertain. Emperor Marcianus was revoked by Leo I in 457. After long battles they received only 300 pounds a year, a fraction of what the Huns were being paid from the 440s onwards (2,100 pound a year).¹

The Goths could not form and operate such an advanced political organization as the Huns did. We can notice that after the fall of the Hun Empire, a very diverse and at the same time politically fragmented picture unfolds in the Danube region. The newly created political groups were not stable and mature at all. The incomes of the armed elite from the former Empire - which existed during the Attila's era - have significantly decreased or even dried up. There was no longer a political organization that could manage these ethnically diverse groups with a unified will for a common goal (against the Eastern Roman Empire). Due to the decrease in income, the gun-toting leading stratum turned against each other, and in many cases the kings or war leaders could no longer maintain their former prestige. Both the Eastern and the Western Roman Empire were able to absorb the military communities left without power into their forces and use them for their own campaigns. It is very difficult to identify the location of the Goths in Pannonia from the fragmentary information and contradictory historical sources. We cannot speak of a pure ethnic block, but an ethnically mixed population living in the territory of the former Hun Empire and also in the Eastern Roman Empire. Jordanes mentions only a few place names that the Goths owned, among them Palso (Balaton) is clear. The identification of the others is problematic.² So, it seems that the Goths and Gepids mainly sought to acquire the southern territories of the former Hun Empire and established their headquarters there after the Battle of Nedao. Then an additional question arises as to who lived in the other former territories, for example in the territory of today's Hungary, Transdanubia, or near the old Hun centers (summer and winter

¹ Wolfram 1988. 262. He mentioned the Gothic yearly payment from the Eastern Roman Empire (only 300 pounds a year). Compared to this they received a huge annuity from Attila. From 443 the first peace of Anatolius, 2,100 pounds a year was received plus 12 solidus for each prisoners. Bóna 1993. 55.

² Jordanes: *Getica* 268. "Let us now return to the tribe with which we started, namely the Ostrogoths, who were dwelling in Pannonia under their king Valamir and his brothers Theudemir and Widimer. Although their territories were separate, yet their plans were one. For Valamir dwelt between the rivers Scarniunga (modern Jarčina, Serbia) and Aqua Nigra (modern Karašica, Croatia), Theudemir near Lake Pelso (Lake Balaton in western Hungary) and Widimer between them both."

accommodation). On the other hand, the Huns haven't disappeared from the Carpathian Basin in two decades. Scientific research did not provide an answer to what might have happened to the Huns during the two decades of Gothic rule, or who might have lived in the above areas afterwards. They probably did not write about the possible remaining of the Huns because, based on Jordanes, they believed that all the Huns could have left the territory of the former empire. This question can be answered based on a thorough inspection of the archaeological findings and archaeogenetic studies.

Recently, some investigations took place. The archaeogenetic study of the Balkans in the Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages revealed that the region was quite ethnically mixed. The remains of the Bronze Age population, peoples from Anatolia and North Africa who settled in the Roman period, peoples from the Eastern Mediterranean region, North and East European inhabitants (Goths, Sarmatians) and steppe peoples from the Pontus-Caspian region lived there. One of the important findings of the genetic study examining the population of the Balkan Peninsula is that there was a mixed population in the region, and no ethnically unified Goth or Gepid community can be identified. [Olalde et al. (2023), *Cell* 186, 548]

As Jordanes recorded, Attila's sons left the Carpathian basin with their fellows, and retreated to the eastern provinces ruled by the Huns. However, one of Attila's son was killed in battle: "Attila's eldest son, Ellac by name, is killed in this battle...after he was killed, his other brothers went to the Pontus Sea, where, as we have described, the Goths used to live." [Jordanes: *Getica* 263]. Jordanes also notes: "Attila's son, Hernac also chose a place for himself and his people on the edge of Lesser Scythia.¹ His relatives Emnetzur and Ultzindur occupied Utus, Hiscus and Almus in coastal Dacia,² and many of the Huns emerged everywhere. Many of them migrated to the Roman Empire, from whom the Sacromontis and Fossatis [Jordanes: *Getica* 266] are still named." [Jordanes: *Getica* 266] The *Chronicum Pictum*, compiled in the Hungarian royal court, has preserved similar data for us: "So the defeated Chaba (Hungarian name for Hernac) and his sixty brothers (the sons of Attila) who opposed him along with – according to tradition- fifteen thousand Huns fled to his grandfather, Honorius. The Greek Emperor Honorius wanted to settle Chaba in Greece, but he did not stay, but returned to Scythia, because the residence of their ancestors was there. Chaba stayed in Greece (Eastern-Roman Empire) for thirteen years, and due to the dangerous and difficult journeys, it took another year for him to return to the land of Scythia." [Chronicon Pictum (1986): 20]. However, the two historical sources did not write that the Huns left their old homeland en masse, we only have data on the migration of the royal lines and their own escorts. Lacking contemporary historical sources, nobody knows how many Huns stayed in the Carpathian basin and on the territory of the former Hun Empire. Procopius wrote in connection with the siege of Rome 535, that Hun soldiers also served there, mentioning some of them did not come from the Ister River, but far from the coast. Unfortunately, he does not provide any additional information about this group, but at least we learn that Huns continued to

¹ In the ancient Greek-Roman period two Lesser Scythia existed. One is situated on the western shore of the Caspian-sea (now: Dagestan, Russia), the other is situated on the western bank of the Black Sea (now: Dobrudja, Romania-Bulgaria).

² Now: Northern-Bulgaria.

rule Lesser Scythia, living in organized form in other areas as well. They could even live in the Carpathian Basin or in Moldavia, which was not occupied by foreign powers. These lands were ruled by steppe people from ancient times to the Middle Ages. Greek Latin works however did not write much about them, because the region was out of their interest.

Elsewhere, we can read that Hun communities, who lived in Illyricum, were settled down near the town of *Castra Martis*. They were probably given nobility for military merits. The names of three people were specifically mentioned: "...Bliwila, Duke of Pentapolis and his brother Froila and also Bessa patrician to this day." [Jordanes: *Getica* 265]. From the short list, we can realize, that many Huns went to the neighboring provinces from the former Hun Empire. Some became independent, such as Lesser Scythia and Illyricum, others found their place in the Byzantine Empire and gained high military rank. In the next chapters below, I have collected the traces of Attila's sons in Eastern and Southern Europe, and the stories based on Eastern Roman sources, and local folklore texts.

Land of Dengizikh

Based on Jordanes' description, Attila's descendants did not give up getting back their own former territories and tried to regain their father's empire. As I mentioned above, Jordanes did not write that all of the Huns left the ancient imperial center en masse but we only know that the sons of Attila and their escorts left for a safe place, in Lesser Scythia, which can be identified with today's South-Dagestan, and Northern-Azerbaijan. The coastal parts of this area later are referred to as the "Land of the Huns" by Caucasian sources,¹ and existed until the beginning of the 8th century. We can find in the local historical sources, that Derbent named as Gate of the Huns.

The other Lesser Scythia was the region of the Danube Delta, the western coast of the Black Sea, which was controlled by the Scythian peoples for centuries. Perhaps the later was the residence of Dengizikh, who was Attila's son, who inherited Bleda (Hungarian Buda) territory from River Tisa to River Don. According to Jordanes, he led a campaign into Southern Pannonia, where the Ostrogoth rulers lived. The first attack was directed against Valamir. He probably lived in the easternmost region, so he was attacked by the Huns first. Jordanes said about this: "Now it happened that the sons of Attila, regarding the Goths as deserters from their rule, came against them as though recuperating their fugitive slaves and attacked Valamir alone, when his brothers didn't know about it. He sustained their attack, though he had but few supporters. After exhausting them in a long fight, he utterly overwhelmed them that hardly any enemy remained. The remnant fled to the parts of Scythia bordered by the waters of the river Danaber (Dnieper), which the Huns call in their own tongue the "War." [Jordanes: *Getica* 269]

According to researchers, the first campaign took place around 456-457, around two years after the Battle of Nedao. From the Lower Danube, it was not so difficult to reach Pannonia Secunda, or seat of Valamir. Because this Hun campaign was not successful,

¹ Some examples: Khorenatsi, Agathangelos, Elishe. (Gmyrya 1995.)

Dengizikh attacked the Goths again in order to get his father's land back. The second campaign was directed against one of the Southern Pannonian cities, Bassianae.¹ It happened around 467/468. Jordanes mentioned: "When Dengizikh, king of the Huns, a son of Attila, learned this, he gathered to him the few who still seemed to have remained under his sway, namely, the Ultinzures, and Angisciri, the Bittugures and the Bardores. Coming to Bassianae, a city of Pannonia, he beleaguered it and began to plunder its territory. Then the Goths right away abandoned the expedition they had planned against the Sadagares, turned upon the Huns and drove them so ingloriously from their own land that those who remained have been in dread of the arms of the Goths from that time even down to the present day." [Jordanes: *Getica*, 273] The name of the city can be an important aspect regarding the location of the Ostrogoths and the main location of the conflict. It was situated in the eastern part of former Pannonia Secunda, near to Sirmium, which was the center of the province. Despite of the lost battles, the Huns did not disappear suddenly from the territory of the former Hun Empire. It seems that even after the defeats, Dengizikh did not give up recovering the former Hun territories. As Priscus noted he and his brother Hernac sent emissaries to Constantinople to sign a peace treaty and gain a marketplace for themselves on the Lower-Danube.

They wanted to make peace in around 465-466, provided that a marketplace be established at the Danube where "according to the ancient custom" Romans and Huns could exchange "what they needed."²

The request was rejected by the Romans. It seems that blackmailing with trade rights was one of the tools used not only by the Chinese Han Dynasty, but also by the Romans against the steppe peoples. They wanted to tie certain peoples to themselves with the right to open markets or by granting commercial advantages, for example for some friendly Huns and Goths who had settled in the region and had good relations with the Byzantines. The newcomer steppe tribes and even Dengizikh did not receive this support. Refusal of trade rights and benefits was a sensitive topic for the Huns, because the craftsmen and the herders of the former Hun empire produced similar products and there was competition between them to get them to the Roman market. [Obrusanszky (2021): 38-39]

Dengizikh attacked Thrace, plundered the cities and villages. When the Eastern Romans wanted to negotiate with him, he refused to meet the Roman commander of Thrace. He sent his envoy directly to the Eastern Roman Emperor Leo I. However, the Emperor replied to Dengizikh that if he personally came to him and accepted obedience, he would rethink the commercial rights. The Huns wanted to get revenge of the Eastern Romans. In the winter 466/467, the Huns crossed the frozen Danube and looted the province of Dacia on the Lower-Danube, then captured Serdica (today: Sofia) with an unexpected maneuver. Hormidac [Wolfram (1988): 266] and his Huns occupied the city. The Roman general Anthemius, who stationed in the area, besieged the city, and wished to starve the Huns. The Huns finally decided to leave the city and face the Eastern

¹ Jordanes: *Getica* 272. It was an important ancient Roman town in Pannonia Secunda. It is located near present-day Donji Petrovci, a village in the Ruma municipality (Vojvodina, Serbia). Bassianae was the second largest town in Syrmia, after Sirmium.

² Helfen 1973. 166. According to Priscos of Panium's fragment.

Romans in an open battle. Hun horsemen were fighting on both sides. The Romans i.e. Anthemius won the battle. Hormidac eventually sued for peace. Walter Pohl assumed that the Hun troops attacked the Goths at the Danube Limes. Dengizikh's Huns probably occupied more and more territories in the Danube Delta, in the years of 468–69. Vaczy thinks, that Dengizikh wanted to settle down there.¹

Undetermined Hun-Gothic divisions also threatened Thracia and the Roman territories in the Balkans. In the summer of 468 the imperial government issued new decrees against the use of “buccellarii, Isaurians, and armed slaves.” This would mean that there had been a considerable rise in the number of barbarians – and among them especially Goths and Huns-who sought their fortune in the Roman Empire.” [Wolfram (1988): 266]. One year later, in 469 a new battle took place between the Romans and Huns. Dengizikh, who personally led the troop was captured and beheaded. Marcellinus Comes briefly recorded: “The head of Dinzic, son of Attila, king of the Huns, was brought to Constantinople.” [Helfen (1973): 168]. After that, there was peace in the border areas for a short time. Many historians associate the final disappearance of the European Huns from this date. [Jordanes: *Getica*, 301]. It is true that Attila's son died in 469, but Dengizikh's territories haven't been occupied by either the Byzantines or the Goths. It is likely that it remained under Hun control, and it was ruled by one of Dengizikh's sons or relatives from Attila's clan. The Huns did not disappear from the historical sources at all. They just retreated from the borderland for a short period and did not attack the Eastern Roman Empire. We have information on them from the 6th century, when the Huns attacked Thracia and Constantinople again. They could arrive from Lesser Scythia or the former kingdom of Dengizikh.

District of Mundo

According to Jordanes, some groups of Huns also lived in the Balkans, the valley of the Morava River. They were united by one of Attila's sons, Mundo. Jordanes and later Byzantine sources mentioned him. Mundo's figure and origin have already generated many discussions among researchers dealing with the period, since we only have very sparse data about his life. Due to the diversity of his career, some scholars thought of the possibility that there were two Mundos: a robber leader who appeared near Sirmium around 505, who was descended from Attila, and a general who was *magister militum* of Illyrcum during Justinian's time. [Kiss P. (2014): 102]. Szádeczky-Kardoss made Mundo's family tree. According to that he could have been Attila's grandson. His grandmother's name is unknown. His father was Giesmos, his mother was Thraphstila. Mundo's son is Mauricius and his grandson is Thiudimund. [Szádeczky-Kardoss (1975): 166]. We have scarce documents about his deeds. Firstly, Jordanes recorded that: “...Now he sent the count of Pitza, chosen from among the chief men of his kingdom, to hold the city of Sirmium. He obtained it by driving out its king, Thrasaric, son of Thraustila, and holding his mother captive. From thence he came with two thousand infantry and five hundred horse to assist Mundo against Sabinian, the military

¹He crosses the frozen Danube in a chariot, meaning the entire people, women and children, follow his army. Accordingly, he does not come to raid, but to conquer, to gain a new homeland.

commander of Illyricum, who was then preparing to fight Mundo near a city called Margoplanum, which lies between the Danube and the Margus rivers, and thus defeated the army of Illyricum. For this Mundo, who came from Attila's clan, fled to the tribe of the Gepids, and wandered beyond the Danube in desolate places where no one tilled the soil. He gathered around him many outlaws, villains, and robbers from all sides, and occupied the tower called Herta, which stood on the bank of the Danube. He empowered himself to rob his neighbors and made himself king over vagabonds. Pitzia caught up with him when he was desperate to surrender. He rescued him from the hands of Sabinian, and made him a grateful subject of his king, Theodoric." [Jordanes: *Getica*, 301]. The story tells that Mundo stayed somewhere between the Danube and Morava (Margus) rivers. According to Theophanes' chronicle, his father's name was Giesmos. It is emphasized that the father held the dignity of "rex", i.e. he was considered a prince, or high-ranked leader among his people. According to the historical sources, after the death of his father, he went to live with his maternal uncle, Regas, who was the king of Sirmium. Based on historical sources, it seems that he may have been an important local ruler, because when Theoderich, King of Rome, heard of him, he sent an ambassador to persuade him to join his alliance. [Wolfram (1988): 322]

Both Jordanes and Theophanes recorded, that Mundo and his people joined the Ostrogothic king Theodoric the Great (471-526), who gained great power in the Balkans and turned against his former allies, the Gepids. At that time, the Ostrogoths were already in a hostile relationship with the Gepids, due to territorial claims as both wanted to expand toward the Balkans. When the Ostrogoths gradually marched into Italy from the mid470s, the Gepids occupied the vacant parts of the Balkans, and resided in Sirmium. After that Theodoric unsuccessfully reclaimed his old possessions. He sent an army to the Sava to expel the Gepids out of there. Mundo probably recognized an opportunity and turned it to his own advantage: he offered his help to Theodoric and swore fealty to the Ostrogoth ruler. Such theory arose that Theodoric owed his success in Italy to Mundo's activity and campaign.¹ In 504, Theodoric the Great's general, Pitzia (Pitzamus), expelled the Gepid king Trasarik from Sirmium, who had inherited the power from his father, Trapstila. The following year, in 505, Pitzia of Sirmium sent two thousand infantry corps. Mundo sent to him five hundred horsemen. [Jordanes: *Getica*, 31]. According to the historical sources, he stayed in the fortress of Herta on the Danube and raided the neighboring lands as the leader of the so-called Scamaras. [Jordanes: *Getica*, 300]. Regarding Mundo's historical role, the Hungarian scholar Attila Kiss summarized the following: "It is conceivable that Theoderic's key to success was Mundo, a leader of half-Gepid-half-Hun origin. It is claimed by several scholars referring to the information of Malalas and Theophanes, because both sources mention that Mundo went to Italy to tempt Theoderich in 487." [Attila Kiss (2014)]. Based on the remaining descriptions, it seems likely that the lands acquired by Mundo at the beginning of the 6th century can be in the region of the confluence of the Danube and Morava, which legally belonged to Byzantium. The identification of Mundo's center, Herta's tower ("turris Herta"), is problematic, because there is no mention of a fortress elsewhere in the late antique sources. Diculescu explained the name Herta as a place name of Germanic origin, found

¹ Pohl 19180. 291.

in Old Saxon "hërta" and in Old Norse in the form "hjarta", meaning: "centre", "palace". [Diculescu (1922): 114–115]

There is no information in the literature as to where Mundo's headquarters could have been, nor is the position of Herta's tower known. Maybe Herta is a special place name used by Goths only, but it is possible, that it had a Roman settlement before. [Prostko-Prostynski (1994): 230–231]. I agree with this theory, because of the location of the tower. The city was one of the important fortresses of antiquity, where the Huns and the Romans concluded the famous peace of Margum in 435. It is situated at the confluence of the Danube and Morava rivers. This place was an important crossing point on the Danube, in the Roman period. Around 449 a delegation led by Priscus of Panium also crossed the river there. According to the description, the Herta tower could be north of the Danube-Morava mouth, perhaps near the ancient city of Margum/Viminacium. Nearby at Kevevára (Kovin) was also a fortress called Castra Constantia, which was later referred to as Contra Margum, suggesting that it is located opposite the Roman city. The mouth of the Danube and the Morava offered an excellent opportunity for Mundo's attempt to become independent. The area was practically located at the junction of the borders of three powers - Byzantium, the Gepids and the Ostrogoths. Sarmatians and remnant of Huns might have been living nearby. The acquisition of the Danube-Morava area was made easier by the fact that no major Byzantine forces had been stationed in the otherwise neglected border region since the Huns.

Returning to Mundo's historical role, in the first half of the 6th century, he got a new ally: the Eastern Roman Emperor Justinianus I. With the help of Heruls, Mundo went to Constantinople with an escort to negotiate with the ruler. Mundo had been staying in Constantinople just at that time when the uprising of the circus parties broke out in 532, which went down in history as the "Nika revolt". The rebels, with weapons stolen from the armories, became masters of the city and already elected their own emperor. Then General Belisarius undertook to put down the rebellion. He needed determined people to put down the rebellion, so he took Mundo and his son, whom he nominated as the head of the cavalry. So, Attila's successor then changed his Asian name to a Latin one: Mundus, and his son took the name Mauricius. When war broke out between the Byzantines and the Goths in 533, Belisarius chose him as one of his lieutenants. The recklessness of the Hun general knew no bounds, he defeated the Ostrogoths and occupied Dalmatia. However, the Goths wanted to regain Salona,¹ which was a strategic point in the region. When news of the approach of the Goths spread, Mundo sent his son Mauricius with troops to keep an eye on them. However, the young man disobeyed the order and attacked the enemy, cutting through their ranks. The Goths surrounded him and slaughtered everyone, including Mauricius. When Mundo learned of this, he and his soldiers attacked the Goths and defeated them. However, one of the Goths recognized Mundo on the battlefield and stabbed him with his sword.² The event may have taken place in 536.

Odoacer, German or Hun?

¹ Near modern Split (Croatia).

² Procopius The Gothic War Book I. 5. He called Mundo as Mundus.

It was a title of a study has been published by Robert L. Reynolds; Robert S. Lopez in 1946. Unfortunately, nobody paid an attention to this for a long time.

In most publications, Odoaker's father, Edicon, was mentioned as king of the Sciri, suggesting that he was of Germanic origin. (We note that the exact ethnic affiliation of the Sciri is not known.) However, Priscus of Panium, who knew Attila's confidant well, wrote that he was of Hun origin: "Orestes is just servant and scribe of Attila, but Edicon as an excellent warrior in wars and a Hun, so he stands far above Orestes." [Priskos (2014): 11]

The authors stated that Odoacer was Hun by birth, and he belonged to the royal line of the Huns. In recent years, researchers have also dealt with the origin of Edikon and Odoaker. Patrick Amory explains that "Odoacer is called a Scirian, a Rugian, a Goth or a Thuringian in sources; his father is called a Hun, his mother a Scirian. Odoacer's father Edeco was associated first with the Huns under Attila, and then with a group called Sciri, an ethnographic name that appears intermittently in fifth-century sources. [Amory (1997): 282]. Erik Jensen thought that Odoacer was born to a Gothic mother and that his father Edeco was a Hun. [Jensen (2018): 16]

In order to discover the possible origin of Odoacer, let's start the investigation with the most authentic Roman source, the report of Priscus of Panium, who himself visited the capital of the Hun Empire and met Attila. We must emphasize that, he learned quite a lot about Hun internal politics and relations, by negotiating with local authorities. Odoacer's title is mentioned in the sources as follows: "Odoacer, genere Rogus, Thorcilingorum, Scirorum, Herolum turbas munitus." [Jordanes Getica 242; Jordanes Rom. 44; L. Reynolds-Lopez (1946): 44] or "Odowacar, Torcilingorum rex, habens secum Sciros, Herulos." Reynold-Lopez stated that Torcilingi was a clan name, which meant Toghrul or Toghril or falcon, which is a very popular name in the steppe region (Seljuk Turks had a ruler, whose name was Toghrul, the Mongolian Kereit ruler's name was Tooril, etc.). Not only the above-mentioned authors, but Cesare Balbo was the first, who thought that the name Torcilingi was from the Turks (or steppe tribes). The author, Reynold-Lopez mentioned another important information about Odoacer's origin and family relationship i.e. that he might belong to the royal clan of the Huns. "Genere Rogus" has a meaning: Rogus clan. It may refer to Rugas/Rua, king of Huns, before Attila. If we put this two information together, it could mean that the name of the Hunnic royal clan was Toghrul. Exactly the same information can be found in the Hungarian historical chronicles, they called the royal clan of the Hungarians (Árpád) as de genere Turul, who also derived themselves from Attila.¹ According to the rhetorician Priscus, Edicon, who was of Hun origin, was the king of the Sciris. That's why later in the literature he began to refer to him as Germanic by origin, although it was very common for conquered people to be ruled by a different nationality. Attila was also the king of the Germans, even though he was not a German. Let us return to the story of Odoacer and his family. So, his father is Edicon, Attila's confidant and statesman, who participated in the 451 Battle of Catalaunum. After Attila's death, he stayed in Pannonia for a while. Niles mentioned that he became king of the Danubian Scirians in the aftermath of Attila's

¹ Kézai: Gesta Hungarorum. Appendix 1. Chapter 1. 1.

death. He participated in the great battle against the Ostrogoths in 468, at the Boilo-river, where he lost his life. Edica's sons then fled that region. Odoacer's older brother was named 'Hunulf,' (shortened form of 'Hun-wulf') first became commander-in-chief of Illyria, then joined Odoacer in Ravenna and became his right-hand man. [Niles (2022): 394]. Odoacer eventually moved to Italy around 470, and gained control over much of it. After the overthrow of the Western emperor Julius Nepos by the Roman general Orestes (475), he elected his son as the Emperor of the Western Roman Empire and named Romulus Augustulus. Odoacer led revolt against Orestes in 476, he proclaimed himself king by his troops, and five days later Orestes was captured and executed in Placentia (now Piacenza), Italy. Odoacer then deposed and exiled Orestes' young son, the emperor Romulus Augustulus. Odoacer's aim was to keep the administration of Italy in his own hands while recognizing the overlordship of the Eastern emperor. Zeno granted him the rank of patrician, but Odoacer styled himself "King." His rule in Italy was threatened by the Eastern Romans and the Ostrogoths. The Eastern Roman Emperor Zeno did not want to lose the valuable province, that's why he appointed Theodoric as a king of Italy and sent him there to protect his interest from the "barbarian tribes". Theodoric invaded Italy in 489 and by August 490 he had captured almost the entire peninsula, forcing Odoacer to take refuge in Ravenna. The city surrendered on March 5, 493. After that Theodoric invited Odoacer to a banquet and there he killed him. Theodoric exiled Odoacer's son Thela to Gaul, but when he attempted to return to Italy Theodoric had him killed. With the death of Odoaker, we hear no more about the Torcilingi family in the historical chronicles, their name is preserved in a few family names in the Balkans.

The Sekler Tradition About the Huns

It is clear from Jordanes' description that significant Hun groups of people could survive and remained in the vast area north of the Lower-Danube, especially in Wallachia (today: Romania) and north of it. Unfortunately, there are only few contemporary descriptions about the areas north of the Danube, such as Wallachia or Transylvania regions because it was out of interest for Eastern Roman Empire. As Jordanes wrote, Huns appeared everywhere after the collapse of the great empire, some of them sought a new homeland in the Eastern Roman territory. The text only mentioned the migration towards the south and the former Roman territories, the early medieval sources did not mention how many Huns left for the north. However, we can find an extremely interesting tradition in Transylvania (former Hungarian Kingdom, today: Romania). Hernac's relatives Emnetzur and Ultzindur -mentioned by Jordanes - occupied Utus, Hiscus and Almus in coastal Dacia.¹ A Hungarian traveler and scholar Balázs Orbán wrote about them the followings: "Vargyas is one of our most beautiful villages. In the lower half, there is the beautiful courtyard originally occupied by the Dániel family. The upright and enthusiastic patriot Dániel Gábor lives there, chief royal officer of Udvarhelyszék. The Dániel family is one of the famous primordial families from which many famous people originates. Columbán Ferenc Apaffi's² adviser, his family lineage

¹ Now: Northern-Bulgaria. Jordanes: *Getica* 266.

² He was Prince of Transylvania.

goes all the way back to the era of the collapse of the Hun Empire, when 3,000 Seklers from the final battlefield settled in the eastern part of Transylvania under the leadership of Elmedzar and Uzindur. The mentioned leaders bore the title of Bayan or ban (whence the rabonban). Their direct successor was Póka (hence Pókafalva and Póka family in Póka, Galambfalva), followed in 565 by the enormously powerful Colon, whose name combined with his official title became Colonban, who was the forerunner of the Columbans of Olasztelek. This was done by Orbó (seat of Orba) in 631, and again by Ugron (ancestor of the Ugron family). This is followed by Ders (the village of that name), Kebe (the village of Kebeled), Bebők and finally Uzon (the village of Uzon), who led the Hungarians that came with Tuhutum to Des in 743." [Orbán 1982. I. *XLVII. Vargyas*]. Not only the Sekler scholar from the 19th century, but a 6th century Byzantine chronicler, Agathias also mentioned the Ultizur Huns. He wrote that the Ultizur and Burgundian Huns were still well known at the time of Emperor Leo, but today we don't know them anymore, they probably either perished or migrated to the end of the world.¹ So, perhaps Sekler tradition can confirm Agathias' assumption that some Hun tribes migrated elsewhere, to a place that was outside the Byzantine sphere of interest. After the Romans withdrew their troops from Transylvania (the old province of Dacia) in around 270, the area was no longer of interest to the Romans, which means that they did not report on the peoples who lived there and the events that happened there. So, they did not harass the former Roman territories with their incursions, and the sources did not write more about them.

There is other information about some Huns, which has been preserved by ancient Hungarian chronicles.² It is said that 3000 people escaped from the Battle of Krimhilda, who then migrated into Transylvania as their new homeland. From that time, they were called as Seklers instead of Huns. [Chronicum Pictum (1986): 19]. The Sekler Chronicle of Csiki also states the same, in which it is said that Alpine Dacia was occupied by the most valiant people, the Seklers, after the disintegration of Attila's Empire. Both sources claimed that Attila's son Aladar had retreated to Transylvania and brought the Huns under his control. Aladar is known not only by the above works, but also by Sekler people near the village of Dobó in Seklerland, Transylvania. They had an interesting case. In the beginning of the 19th century, the Vargyas family wanted to acquire the territories of the free Seklers, but the villagers did not give it to them, and went to court. On 14 January 1807, the Dobó villagers testified under oath in front of the court that they received their territories from Aladar, the son of Attila, who arrived in the area with his remaining armies in 445. [Benkő (2018): 84; Fehér (2014): 531]. It was recorded in a protocol. Based on Sekler legal custom, the Dobó people were the original occupants of the area, so the Vargyas family had no right to take it. So, there are several independent sources

¹ "But their stay was destined to be a brief one, and at the end of it they vanished without leaving any trace of themselves. This fact is illustrated by the case of the Ultizurs and the Burugundi who were well-known right up to the time of the Emperor Leo and were considered a force to be reckoned with, but whom we in our day and age neither know nor, I imagine, are likely to, since they have either perished or migrated to the ends of the earth." Agathias Book 5. 11.4.

² All Hungarian chronicles from the 13-15th centuries recorded the same stories. (Chronicum Pictum, Kezai's Gesta Hungarorum, Thuroczi's chronicle, etc.)

confirming that a part of the Huns retreated to Transylvania and lived there during the Avar period.

Archbishop Antal Verancsics of Esztergom wrote the following in the 16th century: "No one doubts that the Seklers are of Hun origin. The story of their origin is as follows: we find in the Hungarian chronicles that King Attila, as he lived more than 125 years,¹ left behind more than 60 children, of whom two stood out, Chaba and Aladar; both of them were considered mature for their age, similar to their father in spiritual virtues and strictness, and superior to the others, and they rightly decided that one of them would succeed his father in the kingdom... Their morals are not completely unpolished, but the Scythian crudeness can still be seen in them and in almost all their habits. They differed from the Hungarians in their laws and way of life, except for religion. Even their language is not quite the same, for they speak like the ancients. Instead of letters, they carve square marks on sticks and the line is led from right to left, like the Jews, Egyptians, and Turks. One or two of these signs, with the addition of a few points, mean more than the number of types would suggest. It is common knowledge among the residents there that the Huns used these signs." [Verancsics (1944) Liber III. 138-142]

The easternmost Hungarians, or Seklers had their own chronicles, e.g. Sekler Chronicle of Chiki. It is said that the Huns continued to live in Seklerland and their name of the leader was Rabonban, who lived in the castle of Attila's brother, Buda: "The residence of Rabonban was Budvár, which old Rabonban Buda Nabu Fileim had built before Attila's empire fell... " [Csiki Sekler Chronicle, 25]. The ruins of this fortress still stands in Szekelyudvarhely (today: Odorheiu Secuiesc), moreover interesting stories are still told about Attila and Buda by locals, as well as they keep Budvar fortress as their own sacred center. According to some chronicles report, Seklers waited for Árpád's arrival, received them in Ruthenia, made an alliance with them. Not only the Sekler tradition, but almost all Hungarian historical sources from the Middle Ages mentioned that the Seklers went to receive the incoming army of Árpád on the eastern border of the Carpathians and made an alliance with them.²

In the chronicle of *Gesta Hungarorum*, Seklers fought not only in the western ends, but also in other areas of Transylvania for establishing the new Hungarian kingdom! The *Chronicum Pictum* also provided an important data. It says that since the Seklers fought on the side of Prince Árpád to conquer Pannonia, for this then they received land in the Pannonia.³

The consciousness of their Hun origin is still very strong among the Sekler people. Nowadays dozens of legends mention Huns, Attila's youngest son, King Chaba, or Attila's wife, Queen Réka. Those legends had been collecting since the 19th centuries. Recently ethnographer Zoltán Magyar collected many historical tales from living Transylvanian people and from old publications in Hungarian journals. [Magyar (2011)]. It says that the Hunyad castle was built by the Huns (today: Bánffyhunyad) and local

¹ He confused names of Ethie and Etele (Attila), two kings of Huns, that's why he calculated 125 years. Ethie was Attila's great-grandfather.

² *Chronicum Pictum* 27. Kézai: *Gesta Hungarorum* Book I. Chapter III. 6. etc.

³ The reason the Sekler got land is an ancient custom of nomadic people: the blood contract. Anonymus compiled the points of the mid-meal agreement, it includes the provision of joint distribution of the common prey.

folklore mentioned that the Huns crossed the Királyhágó (King's pass), which is situated in between Nagyvárad and Kolozsvár (today: Oradea and Cluj)¹ and they established the castle there. There are also several legends about the Huns in Erdővidék. In the border of the village Vargyas, we can find the symbolic grave of Queen Réka, who was the main wife of King Attila. According to a local legend, she had died there in a terrible accident. [L. Obrusanszky (2016): 112-113]. They could have also settled in the nearby settlements like Bibarcfalva, Erdőfüle and Nagybacon. But the Seklers who lived in Bereck near the Ojtozi Gorge also said that they were descendants of the Huns. After Frigyes Pesty's² description of the Hungarian cities and settlement of the Carpathian basin, Balázs Orbán traveled through Seklerland and summarized the data collected about the region in six volumes, including local legends about the Huns. The great Sekler scholar mentioned, among other things, the names of Attila's road and Attila's well at Bodzaforduló, [Orbán 168. IV] where the Huns are said to have moved into the Carpathians. In addition, he immortalized many sayings related to the Huns.

Conclusion

From the list above, we can see that there are so many memories of the Huns left in the local people's memory, which cannot be classified as fiction. Nobody had a doubt about the tradition of the Hungarians and the Seklers until the second half of the 19th century, when the Habsburgs began to attack the ancient history of Hungarians to divide them from the oriental world, mainly from the neighboring Ottomans, who assisted the Hungarians. The 19th-century German historian Robert Roesler also questioned the authenticity of the Hungarian Hunnic tradition, and instead came up with a completely new theory in which he emphasized the historical role of the Goths and tried to minimize the role of the Huns. Roesler's followers, such as Pál Hunfalvy, declared that after Attila's death the Huns had all but disappeared from the Carpathian Basin and Eastern Europe, with not a trace of them remaining. In his work "Ethnography of Hungary", published in 1876, Hunfalvy explained the Hunnic tradition that it had been written by German missionaries for Hungarians. However, there is no evidence for that, because the stories in the Hungarian chronicles are not found in any German historical chronicles or legends. Regarding the origin of the Seklers, Hunfalvy claimed that they were late immigrants, who worked as border guards in Transylvania. [Hunfalvy (1876)]. Even his contemporaries objected to Hunfalvy's views, especially the Sekler origin Jakab Elek and Orbán Balázs, who presented some evidence for the real tradition of the Hungarians. József Thúry, renowned Historian-Turkologist argued for the authenticity of the Hungarian national tradition and refuted Hunfalvy's theses in detail. Significant Hungarian orientalists of the second half of the 19th century expressed their opposition to Hunfalvy's position. The studies of Gábor Bálint, Géza Nagy, and Bernát Munkácsi attempted to give Hun research a new direction and prove Hun-Hungarian relations with historical and linguistic data. In the journal edited by Munkácsi, Keleti Szemle, excellent foreign studies were published that provided new data on the Huns, such as Fridrich

¹ It was the main road of the former Hungarian Kingdom.

² Pesty

Hirth's study entitled *Attila's Family Tree*, or the Japanese linguist Shiratori Kuragichi's treatise on the Hunnic language and dignified names. From the beginning of the 20th century, the research of such distinguished researchers as Thomsen, Marquart, Bury, etc. put the culture and history of the peoples of Eastern and Central Europe and the Caucasus in a completely new light, in which the Huns were also mentioned.

In recent decades, excavations have been carried out in the territory of present-day Romania, and archaeologists have also excavated findings related to the Huns in present-day Seklerland. It is clear, that Hun artifacts and even traces of settlements have been found around present-day Seklerland, which prove that Huns lived in the area. [Harhoiu (1997)]. Since the area is extremely isolated due to the high mountains, it is possible that Hun communities could have lived there for hundreds of years. There is countless evidence of the Szekler connection with the East, the Huns. Such is the ethnographic evidence, such as the symbolic rebirth, the use of the scarf, the tradition of looking at the sun, the cult of the Sun and the Moon, We must mention the folklore tradition, where we can find outstanding parallels with Inner Asia (divination from 41 stones, lead casting, etc.), [Obrusanszky (2023), Obrusanszky (2024)] but research into legal customs also proves that the Seklers are connected to the Huns and their descendants in many ways.

In 2024, several studies suggested the Hun origin of the Seklers. Hakan Aydemir, based on Chinese sources, proved that the earliest settlement area of the ancestors of the Seklers was in the northern part of today's Mongolia. [Aydemir (2023)]. Archaeogenetics began to be interested in the origin of Seklers. A study from 2023 presented 115 whole mitogenomes and 92 Y-chromosomal Short Tandem Repeat (STR) and Single Nucleotide Polymorphism (SNP) profiles from a Hungarian ethnic group, the Seklers (in Romanian: Secuii, in German: Sekler), living in southeast Transylvania (Romania). Phylogenetic analyses confirmed the presumed eastern origin of certain maternal (A, C, D) and paternal (Q, R1a) lineages, and, in some cases, they could also be linked to ancient DNA data from the Migration Period (5th–9th centuries AD) and Hungarian Conquest Period (10th century AD) populations. [Borbely (2023)]

Karl O. Högström's publication as Huns in Scandinavia revealed the migration of the Huns northward via Poland.

Attila's Huns left an indelible mark on Europe. In addition to the above-mentioned documents, he is one of the main characters in northern Germanic epics. The Huns enriched Europe with many new elements. In my short summary above, I presented only a few important documents that proved the survival of the Huns in the central regions of Europe. Although the great Hun empire was divided into parts, their regional political role remained, and they were still considered an important factor in the European region. Their memory has survived to this day among the Hungarians of the Carpathian Basin, who consider themselves descendants of the Huns. I believe that new research results will soon prove that Attila's people made a real historical impact on the continent and on the people's way of life.

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ADAT AMONG EURASIAN NOMADS

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Abstract: The Kipchaks, also known as Polovtsians in the Slavic chronicles, were notable not only for their nomadic lifestyle but also for their customs, beliefs, and related taboos. These customs, or adats, were the root cause of many of the Kipchaks' cruel acts. This research focuses specifically on the Kipchaks' adats, prohibitions, and the consequences of violating these rules. Violations related to power dynamics, such as treason and insubordination, or personal matters, like homosexuality and adultery, were punishable by death. Similarly, breaching magical prohibitions could also result in the death penalty. In contrast, theft was considered a less serious offense, with penalties typically limited to fines. The existence of the custom of baranta/barimta was not solely due to a lack of ability to enforce rights. Rather, barimta represented a forceful means of restoring violated rights.

Keywords: *Kipchaks, prohibitions, responsibility, death penalty, fine, adat, barimta*

INTRODUCTION

The scrutiny on the specific prohibitions, so-called adats, among the Kipchaks, their cultural significance, and how they were enforced can assist to gain a deeper understanding of the Eurasian nomads of Middle Ages. This research aims to analyze all existing taboos among the Kipchaks, clarify the role of religion in shaping nomadic consciousness, and highlight the significance of baranta/barimta in the legal practices of Eurasian steppe nomads. To reconstruct the Kipchaks' prohibitions, evidence from other nomadic cultures will be considered, employing a comparative method to analyze practices among earlier and later Eurasian steppe nomads.

One of the most intriguing aspects of Kipchak history is the study of the prohibitions within their society and the associated penalties. This topic remains under-researched due to a lack of written sources. B. Kumekov briefly touched on Kipchak law and punishments in one of his works, particularly focusing on their customary legal characteristics [Кумеков (2006)]. Sadri Maqsudi, a Turkish researcher of Tatar origin, examined Turkic law more broadly, primarily in the context of Muslim Turkic states and the Uighurs [Садри Максуди (2002)]. However, he also addressed prohibitions among nomadic Turks. A. Yurchenko's research includes specific fragments dedicated to magical prohibitions, which were linked to Turkic paganism, everyday superstitions, and prejudices. Nevertheless, these prohibitions have not been studied comprehensively [Юрченко (2002); Юрченко (2012)]. This research aims to analyze all existing taboos among the Kipchaks, clarify the role of religion in shaping nomadic consciousness, and highlight the significance of baranta/barimta in the legal practices of Eurasian steppe

nomads. To reconstruct the Kipchaks' prohibitions, evidence from other nomadic cultures will be considered, employing a comparative method to analyze practices among earlier and later Eurasian steppe nomads.

THE MAIN PART OF THE ARTICLE

Like other Turks, the Kipchaks adhered to specific moral and social norms, primarily guided by customary law. Among the highlanders of the North Caucasus, this law was known as *adat*, borrowing from Arabic, while the Turks called it *töre*. Among the Mongols, these legal and social norms were codified in the "Jasaq" of Genghis Khan. For the Kipchaks, these norms existed orally and represented customary law. Beybars stated that the Turkic Yasa was superior to the Mongolian one, considering the Turkic *töre* to be above the Mongolian *Jasaq*. The saying among the Turks that "the state may perish, but the *töre* remains" underscores the persistence of customary law even in the absence of an imperial or quasi-imperial confederation. B. Kumekov supports the idea that the Kipchaks had social and legal norms similar to those of the Mongols, which is plausible since Mongolian written law was rooted in the customary law of Mongolian nomads [Кумеков (2006): 477].

Some chroniclers of the time attempted to negatively portray the Kipchaks, often attributing sexual immorality to them. It is important to note that conceptions of sexuality differed significantly among Christians, Muslims, and pagans. Byzantine Emperor Alexius Comnenus wrote to the Flemish count Robert, mentioning that Pechenegs and Turks converted churches into stables and committed acts of sexual violence during invasions. However, Roger of Hungary, in his description of the migration of Kipchaks to Hungary in 1239, made no mention of such incidents, stating only that the Kipchaks abducted Hungarian women, a practice reciprocated by the Hungarians, who abducted Kipchak women as well [Василевский (1908); Рогерий (2012): 19].

The Bashkirs fashioned phallic symbols out of wood and wore them as amulets, justifying their belief in being born from the union of a man and a woman. Ibn Fadlan reported incidents of sodomy among the nomads. However, this was likely an isolated case, as homosexuality was harshly punished among the Turks. In one account, a Khwarazmian man seduced the son of a Turk, but when the father caught them, the Khwarazmian man was spared after paying a ransom, while homosexuality remained strictly condemned and was often punishable by death [Ибн Фадлан (1939)].

The nomadic dwelling (yurt) was divided into a right (female) and left (male) side. Similarly, among the Turks, buildings were divided into male and female sections. The male section was called *ak ey*, where the head of the family resided. In the yurts of Turkic nomads, such as the Nogais, Bashkirs, and Kazakhs, a man could hang his quiver only on his side and enter through the male-designated entrance. The female section, called *kara ey*, was where the mistress of the house lived. Roles and duties were clearly divided between men and women. In addition to his legal wife, a Kipchak man could also engage in sexual relations with a concubine or slave. Polygamy was common among the nomads, with a man having as many wives as he could afford. Homosexuality, considered unnatural, was condemned and punishable by death [Вайнштейн (1991): 78-79].

Giovanni de Plano Carpini noted the chastity of women in nomadic society. Adultery was severely punished for both men and women. Similar customs existed among the Volga Bulgars, as recorded by Ibn Fadlan, who mentioned that they also punished adultery. According to Sadri Masqudi, instances of adultery were rare among the Turks, as they adhered strictly to established moral codes [Ибн Фадлан (1939); Садри Максуди (2002): 274-275].

In addition to prohibitions related to the intimate sphere, the nomads were also governed by restrictions aimed at avoiding the wrath of higher powers. One such prohibition was stepping on the threshold of a yurt, as it was believed that a good spirit protecting the family resided beneath it. Foreigners were often warned against this action. If someone intentionally stepped on the yurt's threshold, they were sentenced to death, as it was thought that such an act would invoke the anger of Heaven and cause lightning to strike the yurt. If the action was accidental, such as when someone was intoxicated, no punishment was imposed. It was also forbidden to walk against the wind inside the yurt or to spill urine on fire or water, as these actions violated the nomads' hygienic beliefs and their reverence for sacred elements like fire and water. Among the Altai peoples, fire was considered a purifier. Spilling urine on water could invoke the wrath of the deity *Iduk-Yer Sub* (Sacred Earth-Water). However, nomads were most fearful of offending *Tengri* (the Sky God), a fear recorded in the chronicle of Movses Kaghanatvatsi [Юрченко (2012): 126, 130-132, 138-139; Вайнштейн (1991): 80].

Chokan Valikhanov noted that the first spring lightning was held in high regard by the Kazakhs, as it symbolized purification for both people and animals. The Chinese chronicle *Wei-shu* recorded that the Gaoju (a Turkic tribe) revered thunder. Among the Altai peoples, lightning was considered heavenly fire, while the spot where lightning struck was seen as impure. Ibn Fadlan reported that among the Volga Bulgars, if lightning struck a yurt, neither the dead person nor their belongings were touched. The site of the lightning strike was considered unclean, and people would circle it on horseback to perform a purification ritual. Similar customs were recorded among the Mongols by Plano Carpini and C. de Bridia [Юрченко (2002): 312-314, 317-318].

It was forbidden to bathe in natural bodies of water during the summer, as the Mongols believed that this could lead to magical harm. During a Mamluk embassy to the Middle Volga region, the envoy was advised by locals not to iron his clothes in public. The people washed their clothes in secret, often using snow instead of water. Ibn Fadlan made an interesting observation during his stay with the Oghuz Turks: the Arab envoys were forbidden from performing ritual ablutions because the Oghuz viewed such actions as potentially harmful magic. As a result, the Arabs conducted their ablutions in secret, at night, when no one could see them. Among the nomads, it was also forbidden to wash one's hands before eating. According to sources describing the Mongols, Jurchens, and Oghuz, simple nomads did not change their clothes until they fell apart. Spilling milk inside the yurt was also forbidden, as it was believed that this could summon lightning as divine retribution. Sitting on a whip was also prohibited, as the whip was believed to have magical powers. Among the Turks and Mongols, the whip could be used to strike the wind in hopes of calming it or to chase away evil spirits and resurrect the dead. Shamans used the whip during healing rituals. Breaking bones was also forbidden, as bones were believed to be connected with the essence of life [Хуббутдинова (2009):

193; Юрченко (2012): 121-123, 126-128, 135-138; Ибн Фадлан (1939); Юрченко (2002): 310-313].

Kidnapping, particularly of women, was often viewed as a serious offense, as it threatened the social fabric and the alliances between tribes. The consequences for such acts would typically depend on various factors, including the circumstances of the kidnapping, the status of the individuals involved, and the customs of the specific tribe. So, kidnapping women was also most likely punishable. Kidnapping could lead to feuds or retaliatory actions from the victim's family or tribe, affecting a perpetrator's reputation. Unfortunately, specific examples related to the Kipchaks are unavailable. However, there is an interesting account concerning the Mongols before they had codified law. The *Secret History of the Mongols* mentions that the Merkits attacked Temüjin's camp and kidnapped his wife, Börte-Fujin. In response, the future leader of all Mongols, along with his allies, Kerait leader Wang Khan and his blood brother Jamukha, launched a campaign of retribution. The abduction of women could lead to intertribal and inter-clan conflicts [Сокровенное сказание (2002): 29-40].

The theft of livestock could also trigger acts of revenge. Livestock was marked with a *tamga* (brand), which identified its owner. If a thief was caught with stolen animals, they were required to compensate the victim with ten times the amount of the stolen livestock. If the thief did not own any livestock, they had to give one of their children as a slave. If they had no children, they themselves would become a slave. The custom of livestock theft was typical among nomads, even though it was prohibited. In cases of theft, the perpetrator had to pay restitution amounting to tenfold the stolen goods (known as the *kun* fine). If the culprits refused to pay the *kun*, the council of *biys* (tribal judges) could authorize the victim to recover their losses by force, which was known among the Kazakhs as *barimta* (from the Chagatai word *baranta*, meaning a raid to recover stolen property). Among the Kipchaks, the equivalent might have been the *bek* court. The aristocracy held power and had the authority to make legal decisions. Disputes were resolved by a council of aristocrats [Кумеков (2006): 477; Хуббутдинова (2009): 134-137; Федотова (2006): 134-137; Ибрагимов (2012): 118-122].

In addition, *barimta* allowed for the recovery of property and women. Crimes against individuals were also punishable by fines, a practice that closely resembled the laws of early medieval Germanic tribes. For example, in the *Secret History of the Mongols*, the Merkit tribe considered themselves justified in kidnapping Börte-Fujin because Temüjin's father, Yesugei-Baghatur, had previously abducted Hoelun, who became Temüjin's mother and Yesugei's wife. It's worth noting that there were different kinds of abductions. If a man kidnapped his bride-to-be, he might only face a fine. However, if a man abducted someone else's bride, or one who had already been promised to another, this was an insult to the entire clan of the bride, and *barimta* could be used to recover the woman. The matter could be settled with a *kalym* (a form of compensation), which usually involved the payment of goods. Interestingly, the abduction of women was not considered extraordinary among the Kazakhs, and it's likely that the same attitude existed among the Kipchaks. Evidence suggests that during their migration into Hungary, the Kipchaks abducted Hungarian women in response to the Hungarians abducting Kipchak women. They could also abduct Hungarian women without provocation. Michael Choniates wrote about the Scythians (i.e., Kipchaks) paying ransom for women.

The custom of *barimta* also existed among the Caucasian highlanders, likely borrowed from the Turks. Among the highlanders, it was called *ishkil*, where a creditor could forcibly take a debtor's property if they failed to pay. Similar legal customs existed even among Indo-European peoples, such as the Irish. Thus, *barimta* can be seen as a legalized form of violent recovery of violated rights. *Baranta* was a common phenomenon among the Muslim Turkic peoples of Central Asia, originating before their conversion to Islam. F. Nazarov referred to *baranta* as a nighttime cattle raid. *Barimta* was viewed as a crime by the sedentary neighbors of the nomads [Сокровенное сказание (2002): 29-31; Федотова (2006): 134-137; Ибрагимов (2012): 118-122; Исмаилов (2010): 139-150; Хониат Михаил (2009); Стасевич (2009): 96-97; Ларина, Наумова (2010): 3-20; Рогерий (2012): 19; Назаров (1968); Бобровников (2010): 78-79; Martin (1995): 32-34; Martin (2001)].

Blood vengeance was a significant social practice among the Kipchaks, acting as a means of upholding family honor and tribal loyalty. When a member of a tribe was wronged or killed, it became the duty of the family and clan to retaliate against the perpetrators, often leading to cycles of violence that could persist for generations. Both al-Nuwayri and Ibn Khaldun recalled a long-standing feud between the Toksoba tribes. It was recorded that Kotyan's son, Mangush, was hunting and was killed by Ak-Kubul from the Toksoba tribe, likely outside his tribe's territory. This incident sparked a war, prompting the Toksoba to seek help from the Mongols [Тизенгаузен (1884): 541]. In general, murder in Kipchak society was punishable by death. According to Michael Choniates, no harm could be done to someone who had been pardoned by a tribal leader. Pardoned individuals were given an arrow as a symbol of protection, akin to the *paiza* used by the Mongols. The arrow held significant meaning for the Turks, much like the Mongolian *paiza*. For instance, the kagan of the Western Turkic Khaganate gave each of the ten tribal leaders of the Dulu and Nushibi tribes an arrow as a symbol of delegated power. The Turks who controlled the ten tribes were referred to as the "Ten Arrows Turks." In Kipchak society, harming a person holding the khan's arrow was dangerous, as it indicated a failure to observe proper subordination. A Byzantine Orthodox cleric once commented that the Kipchaks adhered more strictly to the teachings of the Gospel than Christians. The enforcement of customary law was driven by fear of retribution. Disobeying the khan's will was considered rebellion or treason, punishable by death. The khan's authority was seen as divinely granted, and any act of rebellion was viewed as a violation of *Tengri's* will. Subordination in society was thus tied to heavenly order. Abductions, cattle raids, and blood feuds between clans or tribes were common occurrences and were not regarded as unusual. The Kipchak tribes were in a state of perpetual warfare, and only imperial authority, such as that of the khans of the Jochi Ulus, could ensure relative order in the Desht-i Kipchak [Назаров (1968); Хониат Михаил (2009); Гумилев (2002): 238; Кумеков (2006): 477; Aliyeva (2006): 97]. It is not without good reason that they developed their own art of besieging fortress cities, settlements, and military garrisons. [Pylypchuk (2024): 49-59]

In understanding the Kipchaks and their customs, it's crucial to recognize the interplay between honor, revenge, and social stability, which profoundly shaped their interactions both within their societies and with neighboring groups. However, some sources suggest that nomads often broke promises they made. Anna Comnena reported

that the Romans took hostages to ensure that the conditions of agreements were upheld before the Battle of Levounion. Theophylact of Bulgaria noted that earlier nomads, such as the Pechenegs, were prone to breaking agreements. However, they were not the only ones to suffer the consequences of broken treaties. On one occasion, the Pechenegs and Kipchaks agreed to a joint campaign against the Romans. The Kipchaks agreed to participate for a share of the spoils. However, the Kipchaks arrived late to the battlefield, forcing the Pechenegs to fight the Romans alone. After the Pechenegs won the battle, the Kipchaks arrived and demanded their share of the loot. The Pechenegs refused, arguing that the Kipchaks had not fought in the battle. This disagreement led to a war, which ultimately resulted in the defeat of the Pechenegs. The nomads often disregarded legal norms, relying on their strength to back their actions. As a result, long-lasting feuds and wars were commonplace among the Turkic nomads [Хониат Михаил (2009); Анна Комнина (1965)].

Magical rituals played a crucial role in preventing nomads from violating oaths. Sacrificial animals, usually dogs or horses, were often involved in these ceremonies. Deals were typically made orally and sealed with an oath. Nomads swore that they would meet the same fate as the sacrificial animals if they broke their word. Such oaths among the Kipchaks were reported by Jean de Joinville and Rabbi Petachia. Similar oaths were observed among the Yakuts and Yenisei Kyrgyz during the Russian colonization of Siberia [Хониат Михаил (2009); Анна Комнина (1965); Golden (1997): 96; Садри Максуди (2002): 281-282]. The choice of animal for sacrifice held significant meaning; for instance, dogs were often seen as loyal companions and guardians, symbolizing fidelity and trustworthiness. Horses, on the other hand, represented strength and status, establishing a connection to the warrior culture of many nomadic societies. The act of offering these animals was seen not only as a form of appeasement to the supernatural but also as a demonstration of commitment to the community and its shared values.

In addition to the rituals themselves, the memory of these sacred acts played a vital role in the collective consciousness of the nomadic people. Tales and legends surrounding the consequences of breaking oaths, often featuring supernatural retribution, contributed to a culture where honoring one's word was paramount. This emphasis on oaths and rituals not only helped maintain order within the tribe but also served to enhance their reputation in dealings with neighboring groups, establishing a strong foundation for trade and alliances.

CONCLUSION

Thus, we have arrived at the following conclusions:

Legal norms existed in nomadic societies in the form of customary law. The Kipchaks, like the Pechenegs, pagan Volga Bulgars, and Oghuz Turks, did not have a written legal system. Agreements and prohibitions existed orally, and punishments varied depending on the violation of social norms. Death was the penalty for violations involving insubordination and treason. Homosexuality and adultery were also punishable by death. Magical prohibitions were seen as particularly serious, as nomads believed that violations could invoke the wrath of *Tengri* (Heaven), such as lightning striking a yurt. This was perceived as divine punishment for breaking established norms.

Crimes involving property or the abduction of brides were typically punished by fines. If the fine was not paid, the victim had the right to restore the violated right by force (a custom known as *baranta/barimta*). This method of resolving disputes was not exclusive to the Turks; violent restitution of rights was a universal practice among many societies. However, peaceful resolutions, such as compensation in the form of property, were also possible. The aristocracy had the authority to enforce and deliver legal judgments. At the same time, the custom of *baranta/barimta* was a frequent cause of clashes between nomadic groups. Nomads, confident in their strength, often ignored prohibitions. They could only be restrained by the power of a strong leader or the fear of divine punishment. Research into the prohibitions among the Kipchaks is highly promising, as this area remains underexplored and has the potential to fill gaps in the social history of Eurasian nomads. Studying the legal aspects of these issues will also shed light on the worldview and perception of the Kipchaks.

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IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF THE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE USA

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Abstract: The strategic partnership between Israel and the United States is a cornerstone of both nations' foreign policies, deeply rooted in shared values, democratic principles, and mutual interests. This alliance spans political, military, and economic domains, with security cooperation being a primary pillar. The U.S. provides Israel with substantial military aid, ensuring the latter maintains its qualitative military edge (QME) in a region marked by volatility. This support is critical for Israel's defense against external threats, especially from hostile neighboring countries and non-state actors like Hezbollah and Hamas.

Economically, the U.S. and Israel engage in robust trade relations, bolstered by the U.S.-Israel Free Trade Agreement, the first such agreement signed by the United States. This agreement has fostered the exchange of technology, research, and innovation, particularly in defense, cybersecurity, and healthcare sectors.

Politically, the partnership is strengthened by bipartisan support in the U.S. Congress, despite occasional disagreements over specific policies, such as settlement expansions or approaches to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The two countries collaborate closely on counterterrorism, intelligence sharing, and strategic initiatives in the Middle East, such as curbing Iran's nuclear ambitions.

This partnership also reflects the broader geopolitical landscape, where Israel serves as a key U.S. ally in a region of strategic importance. Overall, the U.S.-Israel relationship is multifaceted, emphasizing security, economic cooperation, and political alignment, which together form a durable alliance in global diplomacy.

Keywords: *US, Israel, Strategic partnership, Counterterrorism, Qualitative military edge (QME), Geopolitical alignment.*

INTRODUCTION

Henry Kissinger writes in his famous work *Diplomacy*: "As if by a law of nature, every century a country emerges with the power, desire, and moral aspiration to shape the international system according to its values." [Henry Kissinger (1994): 525]

In the 20th century, no country had as strong or diverse an influence on international relations as the United States. America's involvement in the Middle East was driven by a policy of containment, aimed at resisting Soviet expansionism globally, and a doctrine of collective security, which encouraged the formation of NATO-like alliances to counter existing or potential threats.

US-Israel relations are of particular significance to modern world history and politics. Israel has achieved many of its greatest economic and defense successes with direct support from the United States. For decades, the close relationship between the US and Israel has been rooted in shared democratic values, religious connections, security interests, and collaboration on various economic, scientific, and military issues.

THE MAIN PART OF THE ARTICLE

After World War II, there was a widespread sense of moral guilt and responsibility for the 6 million Jews who perished during the Holocaust. This sentiment significantly bolstered international support for the creation of the State of Israel. On November 29, 1947, the UN General Assembly passed Resolution 181 (II), which called for the partition of Palestine into two states—one Jewish and one Arab—in the former British mandate territory. The partition plan was supported by both the USA and the USSR, as well as countries from Eastern and Western Europe. [Inga Zabakhidze (2023): 44]

The State of Israel was proclaimed on May 14, 1948, at 6:01 p.m. Washington recognized the new state "de facto" just 10 minutes later, at 6:11 p.m. This unprecedented speed is easily explained by Washington's view of Israel as a strategic asset for strengthening its influence in the region. The Soviet Union followed with "de jure" recognition on May 17. [Inga Zabakhidze (2023): 49-50]

The Arab states vehemently opposed the creation of a sovereign State of Israel and its recognition as the homeland of the Jewish people. Arab resistance led to four major wars—in 1948, 1956, 1967, and 1973. In each conflict, Israel's military superiority, largely supported by American aid, was evident. [Henry Kissinger (1994): 529-530]

Meanwhile, economic relations between Saudi Arabia and the United States quickly overshadowed political interaction. Diplomatic ties were officially established in 1939. In the Middle East, U.S. policy was heavily driven by oil interests. The rapid expansion of Saudi oil production made U.S. oil companies key lobbyists for closer political ties between the two nations.

In February 1943, President Franklin D. Roosevelt was informed that Saudi Arabia had the largest oil reserves in the world. Just one week later, he declared that the kingdom was vital to U.S. defense capabilities and extended the Lend-Lease Act to Saudi Arabia. While Saudi Arabia maintained official neutrality during World War II, in practice it maintained friendly relations with the Allies.

In the fall of 1943, at the invitation of President Roosevelt, Saudi Princes Faisal and Khaled—future rulers of Saudi Arabia—paid an official visit to the United States. During their visit (Roosevelt was in constant contact with Ibn Saud), it was decided to establish an American military base in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. This base, opened in 1946, became the first U.S. military infrastructure in the Middle East. During their stay, the princes toured the New York Stock Exchange, major industrial centers, Hollywood, Princeton University, and a naval base. Following their U.S. visit, they traveled to the United Kingdom, where they were hosted by King George VI, and met General Charles de Gaulle in Algeria. The insights gained from these meetings reinforced the Saudi royal family's belief that the United States was the most powerful nation, dominant in shaping the postwar world order. [Henry Kissinger (2021): 192-205]

The strategic relationship between the United States and Saudi Arabia was formalized in February 1945. On February 14, 1945, after the Yalta Conference, President Roosevelt met King Ibn Saud aboard the USS Quincy in Egypt. In 1951, a defense cooperation agreement was signed, enabling the export of American military equipment to Saudi Arabia and the training of Saudi forces. To pay for military imports and services, Saudi Arabia opened an irrevocable letter of credit with a U.S. bank, facilitating advance payments to the U.S. Treasury. [Robert O. Freedman (2012): 25]

In 1948, U.S. President Harry Truman officially recognized Israel as a sovereign state, acknowledging its provisional government under David Ben-Gurion. In the years that followed, Israel not only strengthened its status as one of the world's most advanced nations but also deepened its relationship with the United States, which significantly influenced Israel's foreign policy, political behavior, and internal affairs.

It is crucial to highlight Israel's key role in U.S. foreign policy. Despite its small size, Israel boasts one of the strongest economies in the region and a culturally homogeneous, prosperous society. It has developed advanced nuclear capabilities and has been the largest annual recipient of U.S. foreign aid since 1976, enjoying a uniquely privileged status compared to other aid recipients. The strong Jewish lobby in the United States has long influenced U.S. foreign policy toward Israel, contributing to the consistent pro-Israel stance of successive American administrations.

U.S.-Israel relations have experienced both highs and lows over the years. Successive U.S. administrations have taken different approaches to key issues, including Israel's nuclear arsenal and the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The transition from the Obama administration (Democrat) to the Trump administration (Republican) had a significant impact on the partnership between the two countries, particularly in terms of policy direction and diplomatic tone.

During World War II, the Holocaust revealed that Europe could not protect its Jewish populations, positioning the United States as a final refuge for many Jews. Today, the U.S. is home to the largest Jewish population outside of Israel.

After the establishment of Israel in 1948, U.S. concerns about Israeli security took a back seat during the presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower in the 1950s (1953-1961). His relationship with Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion was notably cool, and U.S.-Israeli relations were strained during the 1956 Suez Crisis. However, after the 1958 Iraqi revolution, Washington began to see Israel's stability and democratic values as strategic assets in a volatile Middle East. [Robert O. Freedman (2012): 232]

Under President Eisenhower, the "Eisenhower Doctrine" was adopted, aiming to protect the Middle East from Soviet influence, especially in countries dependent on the region's energy resources. However, the administration's overtly anti-communist foreign policy fueled anti-American sentiment in the Arab world. This led Washington to eventually revise its strategy, culminating in the adoption of the Nixon Doctrine, which pursued a relatively softer approach to Middle Eastern policy.

It wasn't until the presidency of John F. Kennedy (1961-1963) that the U.S. began selling arms to Israel, marking a new phase in their relationship. Notably, the U.S. provided Israel with HAWK anti-aircraft missiles, enabling the country to better counter the Soviet-backed Egyptian forces. [Robert O. Freedman (2012): 150]

A new phase in U.S.-Israel relations began during Richard Nixon's presidency (1969-1974). In September 1970, during the 1973 Yom Kippur War, a substantial supply of American weapons helped Israel repel attacks by Egypt and Syria, allowing it to go on the offensive. After the war, U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's "shuttle diplomacy" led to a peaceful coexistence between Israel and Egypt.

During Jimmy Carter's presidency (1977-1981), a significant shift occurred in U.S.-Israel relations. Egyptian President Anwar Sadat surprised the world by visiting Israel and meeting Prime Minister Menachem Begin, a bold step that even caught the U.S. off guard. Sadat's realignment into an anti-Soviet orbit was driven by Egypt's national interest and paved the way for intense diplomatic efforts. This culminated in the 1978 Camp David Accords, hosted by Carter, and the subsequent 1979 Israel-Egypt peace treaty. As a result, Egypt was expelled from the Arab League, and Sadat faced condemnation, ultimately leading to his assassination. However, his courageous act inspired others who sought peace with Israel. Notably, Israel and Syria had signed a disengagement agreement in 1974.

U.S.-Israel relations further strengthened during Ronald Reagan's presidency (1981-1989). In November 1988, under U.S. pressure, Yasser Arafat, leader of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), accepted UN Security Council Resolution 242, renounced terrorism, and recognized Israel. [Robert O. Freedman (2012): 38]

However, relations cooled during George H. W. Bush's presidency (1989-1993). U.S. Secretary of State James Baker and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir clashed over Israeli settlement construction in the West Bank. Bush withheld loan guarantees needed to resettle Soviet Jews in Israel until the settlement activity was halted. Tensions remained high, even after Yitzhak Rabin became Israel's prime minister in 1992.

Despite these challenges, during the Persian Gulf War, U.S. troops were deployed to protect Israel. With continued American support, Israel solidified its status as an untouchable regional power.

On September 13, 1993, the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) signed the Oslo Accords in Washington, D.C., following secret negotiations. In recognition of their efforts toward peace, Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

In July-August 2000, President Bill Clinton facilitated a meeting between the two parties at Camp David, hoping to achieve a breakthrough before the end of his term. However, the summit did not yield positive results. It wasn't until 2002 that the Palestinian Authority expressed agreement with Clinton's proposed plan. [Bruce Jentleson (2015): 551-556]

For many years following Israel's independence in 1948, U.S. military and economic aid to Israel was minimal. This changed significantly in the early 1970s, particularly after the signing of the Camp David Peace Accords in 1979. Since the 1980s, U.S. aid to Israel has averaged approximately \$3 billion per year.

After the signing of the U.S.-Israel Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in 1985, trade became the central feature of U.S.-Israel economic relations, replacing aid. For instance, in 1985, Israel's \$2.7 billion in exports to the U.S. accounted for nearly three-quarters of the \$3.7 billion it received in economic and military aid. Since World War II, Israel has been the largest cumulative recipient of U.S. foreign aid. While Israel was the leading

annual recipient from 1976 to 2004, Iraq took that title in 2005. Since 1985, U.S. aid to Israel has stabilized at about \$3 billion per year, with total U.S. aid reaching 20 percent of Israel's GDP in 1979. [Robert O. Freedman (2012): 135]

Since Israel's independence, there have been four phases of increased U.S. aid, both to Israel and the region. From 1948 to 1967, aid was relatively small, but it increased significantly during the following periods: 1967-1972, 1973-1974, 1980-1981, and 1984-1985. Since then, the level of assistance has remained stable.

During the 1970s, the U.S. Congress sought to bolster Israel's military and economy through foreign aid. In 1970, Israel received \$30 million, which rose to \$545 million in 1971. The first U.S. military grant to Israel was awarded in 1974, coinciding with French President Charles de Gaulle's refusal to supply military equipment to Israel as a protest against its actions during the Six-Day War. [Robert O. Freedman (2012): 16]

One reason for the increase in aid in the early 1970s was Israel's compliance with U.S. requests to withdraw its troops from occupied territories following the Yom Kippur War. American influence was crucial; without it, Israel might not have agreed to such withdrawals.

The fourth and final increase in U.S. aid to Israel occurred in 1984-1985, primarily aimed at economic recovery. Israel was facing a severe economic crisis, with inflation exceeding 400 percent and significant national debts. In response, Prime Minister Shimon Peres implemented an economic stabilization plan in 1985, in collaboration with the Histadrut (trade unions) and the industrial association. Additionally, this increase was driven by Israel's military needs to maintain parity with neighboring Arab countries, which were receiving Soviet arms.

In August 2007, the Bush administration announced a \$6 billion increase in military aid over the next decade, with annual increments of \$150 million. By 2009, Israel received nearly \$2.8 billion, and in 2010, the amount rose to almost \$3.8 billion. In 2011, it received \$3.2 billion, and the U.S. government requested an additional \$205 million to continue developing the Iron Dome, a short- and intermediate-range missile defense system designed to intercept threats from groups like Hezbollah and Hamas. The Iron Dome, jointly developed by Israel's Rafael Advanced Defense Systems and the American company Raytheon, successfully intercepted more than 2,700 of the approximately 3,000 rockets fired from the Gaza Strip by May 10, 2021. [Bruce Jentleson (2015): 552]

Israel enjoys several special privileges from the U.S. government. For example, it is allowed to allocate 26 percent of its aid for the purchase of Israeli-made military equipment—a benefit not granted to any other U.S. aid recipient. This has significantly contributed to the development of Israel's defense industry. Some experts argue that the substantial annual U.S. aid encourages private and semi-private Israeli defense companies to focus more on exports, as a large portion of Israel's military purchases is spent on American equipment. As a result, Israel has emerged as a global leader in arms sales, ranking among the top ten largest arms exporters in the world.

Another significant advantage pertains to weapon purchases. Typically, countries seeking to buy weapons from the U.S. must go through the Department of Defense. However, Israel can bypass this process and negotiate directly with American companies. Additionally, while the minimum purchase price for other countries is \$100,000, Israel is permitted to buy weapons at lower prices.

From the analysis of U.S. foreign policy toward Israel, it is evident that the Trump administration aimed to distance itself from the approaches of President Obama and previous administrations. This often led to unpredictable actions and, at times, a disregard for international law. [Bruce Jentleson (2015): 566-567]

The sudden announcement to move the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem marked a significant political maneuver, one that President Obama had cautioned against, believing it would provoke not only the Palestinians but also the broader Muslim world. Ignoring Obama's warnings and critical voices within his own administration, President Trump took a radically different approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, reversing decades of established policy that had not even entertained the idea of relocating the embassy. In a move that would have been unthinkable under Obama, Trump made this controversial decision in less than a year.

Equally significant was the Iran nuclear deal, which Obama viewed as a positive diplomatic achievement. Trump not only opposed the agreement but also threatened to withdraw from it immediately unless reforms were implemented. He disregarded the concerns of U.S. European allies, who had also signed the deal in hopes of fostering peace with Iran. Trump urged these allies to find ways to modify the agreement, which he deemed "inadequate" and "beneficial only to Iran." With this stance, he aimed to dismantle one of Obama's notable international diplomatic successes. Although both leaders recognized the threat posed by Iran's nuclear program, their strategies for addressing it were markedly different.

The two-state solution, a long-standing policy embraced by successive U.S. administrations, faced changes under Trump. Traditionally, both Republican and Democratic presidents had supported this framework as the "only way" to achieve peace, urging Israel and Palestine to negotiate a mutually agreeable resolution. However, upon taking office, Trump indicated that the U.S. would no longer commit to this solution, believing it wiser to explore alternative approaches that might prove more effective.

On September 20, 2023, President Joseph Biden Jr. met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in New York. They discussed bilateral, regional, and global issues, with Biden congratulating Netanyahu and the people of Israel on the Jewish New Year. The President reaffirmed the strong bond between the two nations, rooted in shared democratic values and the U.S.'s steadfast commitment to Israel's security. During their meeting, both leaders reiterated their resolve to ensure that Iran never acquires nuclear weapons. They also explored prospects for a more integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Middle East, including efforts to deepen and expand normalization of relations with regional countries.

The two leaders welcomed the historic announcement made at the G20 regarding the development of the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC), which involves the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Israel. They discussed how this initiative could benefit the entire region, highlighting real investment opportunities and new forms of cooperation between continents.

In light of the ongoing tension and violence in the West Bank, President Biden emphasized the urgent need for immediate measures to improve security and economic conditions, as well as to preserve the viability of both states for a just and lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians. To this end, he called on all parties to honor their

commitments made earlier this year in Aqaba, Jordan, and Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, which included refraining from further unilateral actions. Biden and Netanyahu, along with their teams, agreed to consult with regional partners to initiate meaningful talks in the Aqaba/Sharm format as soon as possible. The President also expressed concern about potential fundamental changes to Israel's democratic system that could occur without broad consensus. [Michael V. Shterenshis, (2019): 55]

On October, 2023, the renewed conflict and Israeli bombardment from the Gaza Strip significantly altered the political landscape in the Middle East. This situation continues to evolve and requires thorough analysis, though there is hope that lasting peace can eventually be achieved in the region.

CONCLUSION

The United States, a dominant global power in the 20th century, played a crucial role in shaping the Middle East through its policy of containment and collective security. The strong and enduring U.S.-Israel alliance, rooted in shared values and strategic interests, has been a key factor in both countries' foreign policies and regional dynamics.

The U.S. played a significant role in the creation of the State of Israel and the establishment of strong diplomatic and military ties with both Israel and Saudi Arabia. These relationships were driven by a combination of strategic, economic, and ideological factors. The U.S.-Israeli alliance, rooted in shared democratic values and security interests, has been a cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East. The U.S.-Saudi relationship, initially driven by oil interests, evolved into a strategic partnership based on mutual security concerns. Both alliances have had a profound impact on the geopolitical landscape of the region.

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CONFRONTATION OF CUMANS WITH GEORGIA AND SHIRVAN DURING THE REIGN OF GIORGI IV LASHA

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Abstract: Relations between Georgia and Cumans did not cease after the death of David Aghmashenebeli. The Cumans came to Georgia both to settle and for military service. The relations between Georgia and the Cumans were not always peaceful, there were certain conflicts between them. Arab historian Ibn al-Athir and Armenian historians, Kirakos Gandzaketsi and Vardan Areveltsi, wrote about specific confrontation.

Ibn al-Athir was a contemporary author, hence his accounts are more extensive and more reliable. Despite the little information of the Armenian historical sources, they pay attention to some important details.

According to Ibn al-Athir, Cumans, persecuted by the Mongols, came to the Derbent and captured one of the fortresses of *shirvanshah* by deception. Cumans plundered the territories of Shirvan. Also, they pillaged Cabala and went to Ganja. The Cumans told *emir* of Ganja that they do not act together with the Georgians and demand settlements in their territory. The ruler of Azerbaijan, suzerain of Ganja, agreed to their request. After that they marched against Georgia. At first, they had a victory, but later the Georgians defeated Cumans.

According to Kirakos Gandzaketsi, the Cumans demanded settlement from the king of Georgia, Giorgi IV Lasha, but the king refused their request. This primary source also accounts about the military campaign of *atabag* Ivane against the Cumans. Vardan Areveltsi dates this event to 671 of the Armenian era.

Based on the presented primary sources, we can date the confrontation between the Cumans and the Georgians to 1222-1223. They were defeated by the Mongols and needed a shelter. They asked to settle in Georgia, this may have happened before the raid of Cabala. The reasons for the rejection of Cuman request could be that there were already enough Cumans in Georgia, and they no longer needed an additional force.

Keywords: Cumans, Georgia, Shirvan, Ganja, 13th century, Conflicts

INTRODUCTION

The relationship between the Georgians and the Cumans lasted for several centuries. The Cumans were mostly allies of the Georgians in both small and large-scale battles. The relations between Georgia and the Cumans were not always peaceful. Indeed, there were instances of conflicts between them. One such conflict occurred during the

reign of Giorgi IV Lasha. The Cuman campaign to Derbent and Shirvan and subsequently against Georgia should have taken place in 1222-1223. The appearance of Mongols in the political scene had a significant impact on the course of events. Arab and Armenian historians have provided invaluable insight into the confrontation between the Georgians and the Cumans. The information preserved in these accounts allows us to study not only the reasons and results of the particular campaign of Cumans but also the relations between the Georgians and the Cumans, and the settlement of the Cumans in Georgia. The presented materials supplement the information available in Georgian historical sources and allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of the military-political situation in the region.

THE MAIN PART OF THE ARTICLE

Relations between Cumans and Georgians began during the reign of David Aghmashenebeli and even after his death Georgian kings continued to have relations with them. They came to Georgia both to settle and for military service. The policy of the Georgian kings towards the Cumans was different. David IV Aghmashenebeli, Giorgi III, Tamar, Giorgi IV Lasha and Rusudan encouraged the relations with Cumans. Cumans were not seen during the reign of Demetre I. Relations with the Cumans were accompanied by certain difficulties. There were confrontations between Georgians and Cumans. One such conflict occurred during the reign of Giorgi IV Lasha. We want to discuss the reasons for this conflict, as well as the policy of the king of Georgia. We would also like to determine the nature of relations with Cumans and their significance in the military and political arenas of the country.

There is a paucity of historical sources pertaining to the conflicts between the Cumans and Georgians, which occurred in 1222-1223. Georgian historical sources do not mention anything about this issue at all. The Arab historian Ibn al-Athir provided a rather extensive report [Silagadze (1987): 67-68], and the Armenian historian Kirakos Gandzaketsi described this event relatively briefly [Kirakos Gandzaketsi (1986): 168-170] and the report of Armenian historian Vardan Areveltsi is very scarce [Vardan Areveltsi (2002): 75]. Beniamin Silagadze considers that all three historians should describe the same event [Silagadze (1987): 72]. There is also another Armenian historian Mxitar Ayrivanetsi, who made a brief mention of this event. He described the Cuman campaign in just one sentence. Furthermore, the accounts of Abd al-Latif al-Baghdadi [Japharidze (2012): 233-246] and Rashid ad-Din [Rashid al-Din (1952): 228-229] are also taken into consideration. Rashid ad-Din did not mention Cumans campaign in Shirvan and Georgia but he described the political situation of that period. In his account, he noted the Mongols' invasion in the land of the Cumans and their battle against the Cumans. Regarding the Mongols' invasion in the land of the Cumans, we should also consider the information provided by Russian historical sources.

Before we evaluate the event, we need to know what each author writes. Ibn al-Athir is a contemporary of the event described in his report and his reports can be regarded as a reliable source. Because he described contemporary events, his reports are extensive.

When the Mongols conquered the territories of Qipchaqs, most of the Qipchaqs went to Derbent-Shirvan and came to the country of Rashid, “The Tatars occupied our kingdom and took away our property. That is why we have to come to settle in your country. You will be our sultan, and we will be your mamelukes, and we will conquer countries for you. [Silagadze (1987): 75]. Then Ibn al-athir talks about how the Qipchaqs were able to sneak into Derbent and capture the city. After they took the city, the Qipchaqs marched towards Cabala, which was the vassal of Georgia. The ruler of Cabala began to negotiate with them to pass the time until the help of the Georgians appeared. But the Qipchaqs first raided Cabala and then marched towards Ganja. There they spoke to Qushkhara, the owner of the Ganja [Silagadze (1987): 77]. Attention is drawn to their appeal to the governor of Ganja, in which they explain why they raided the *Shirvanshah* fortress first and then Cabala, to make sure that they are not acting together with Georgians, say: “If we wanted to fight together with Georgians, then we would not have come through the longest, most difficult and exhausting of Shirvan-Derbent road, but we would have entered their country, as we entered before” [Silagadze (1987): 77]. Uzbek, the ruler of Adarbadagan, allowed them to settle. Qipchaqs marched against the Georgians and won. Another ruler of Qipchaqs marched against the Georgians and took the booty, but the Georgians ambushed and defeated them. The Qipchaqs asked Uzbek for an army to march against the Georgians, but the Uzbek refused, and the Qipchaqs began to capture Muslims, but in the end, Uzbek won and the Qipchaqs moved to the country of Leks in the direction of Shirvan, where they were defeated and captured by Georgians, Muslims, Leks and others [Silagadze (1987): 78].

Now let's see how Armenian historian Kirakos Gandzaketsi described the same event, he noted: “Subsequently, after some time had passed, another force of Huns, called Qipchaqs (Xbch'ax) came through the land of the Georgians to King Lasha and the hazarapet Iwane. The Qipchaqs wanted Lasha and Iwane to give them a place to live and in return, they would serve the Georgians loyally. However, the Georgians did not agree to accept them. So the Qipchaqs arose and went to the residents of the city of Gandzak where they were received joyfully, since the people there had been placed into great straits by the Georgian army which ruined their lands and enslaved man and beast” [Kirakos Gandzaketsi (1986): 169]. “The Qipchaqs were given the right to settle there and organize a campaign against the Georgians with the help of the population of Gandza. Then Iwane mustered troops and arrogantly went against them. When the two groups clashed, the barbarians calmly emerged from their lairs and put to the sword the wearied and God-forsaken Georgian army” [Kirakos Gandzaketsi 170]. Then the author talks about the horrors caused by the Qipchaqs' campaign. “But after some days had passed, the great hazarapet Iwane once again mustered troops and went to wreak vengeance on those who had destroyed his troops. He attacked them at an unexpected moment and put the barbarians to the sword. He captured their booty and enslaved their children, taking both to his land” [Kirakos Gandzaketsi (1986): 170].

Armenian historian Vardan Areveltsi provides relatively brief information. “In 671, (1222) an army of Huns, who were called Qipchaqs, came to Ganja and joined them. When our army marched against them with self-confidence and recklessness, they were defeated, turned back by running, many were killed by the sword, and some were captured. For this, our army took revenge a year later, when they killed a large part of the

Qipchaqs during their attack on the country of Vardanashat [Vardan Areveltsi (2002): 75].

Mkhitar Ayrivantsi described this event in just one sentence. He notes: [in 1221] The Qipchaqs struck at Lasha in Gandzak [Bedrosian (2018): 77].

The Arab historian Abd al-Latif al-Baghdadi talks about the same event: “The Turks appeared from the edge of the sky, which did not happen normally. All of them came from the side of Tbilisi and were among those who escaped the swords of Tatars” [Japharidze (2012): 241]. Abd al-Latif al-Baghdadi dates this event to 618 A.H. [Japharidze (2012): 241]. Abd al-Latif al-Baghdadi, like Ibn al-Athir, was a contemporary of the described events and his report on both the Cumans’ campaign and Mongol invasions is reliable.

Persian historian Rashid ad-Din also described the confrontation of Mongols with the Ossetians and Cumans. He mostly repeated the reports of Ibn al-Athir and similarly described this event but Ibn al-Athir’s reports are more extensive and detailed. Rashid ad-Din mentioned the Mongols’ campaign in Georgia and then Derbent. After they raided and plundered the city of Shemakha, they passed Derbent and fought against Ossetians and Cumans but neither of them was victorious. Then the Mongols tricked the Cumans, gained their help and with the help of the Cumans they defeated the Ossetians. After that, the Mongols defeated the Cumans too and took away everything from them. Cumans fled to Russian principalities and then the Mongols defeated the united army of Cumans and Russian Princes [Rashid al-Din (1952): 228-229]. He was not a contemporary author of these events. He should have used the other chroniclers’ reports while writing his account. Therefore, his reports about these events are almost the same. However, his reports are important, because they do not disagree with the information of the other chroniclers. This makes the descriptions of this event by other Authors more believable.

Based on the presented historical sources we should discuss several issues. One of the issues is the reason for the Cumans’ campaign in Transcaucasia and what was their purpose.

The appearance of the Mongols in the political arena led to the migration of the Cumans to Transcaucasia. Ibn al-Athir considered the Mongols’ attack on the Cumans as a reason for the Cumans’ march to Derbent-Shirvan, “The Tatars occupied our kingdom and took away our property. That is why we have to come to settle in your country” [Silagadze (1987): 75]. Both Georgia and foreign historical sources mention the campaign of Mongols against the Cumans. According to Ibn al-Athir, the Mongols arrived in Tabriz at the end of 1220, the ruler of Adarbadagan, Uzbek, surrendered to them without a fight and paid tribute. After that, the Mongols went to Georgia. Georgians confronted them and had a battle but were defeated [Ibn al-Athir (2016): 214]. After that, two more confrontations took place between Georgians and Mongols, the Mongols, despite the victory, did not stay and left. We read about it in the Hundred Years Chronicle: “They went by the road of Daruband, and because neither the *Shirvanshah* nor the Darubandians could resist them they passed the Darubandi Gates, entered in Qivchaqia and engaged the local population in battle; And the Qivchaqs fought in many places with them but the Tatars defeated them everywhere” [The Hundred Years Chronicle (2014): 321]. It seems that, like the Georgians, the Cumans did not submit to the Mongols without a fight. Ibn al-Athir mentions the following about the same event:

The Mongol advanced to Derbent-Shirvan, raided the city of Shemakha and plundered it, and then crossed the Derbent gate, defeated the Leks and marched against the Ossetians. The Ossetians, who already had information about the Mongols, got ready and called the Cumans for help and fought the Mongols together so that neither side was victorious. The Mongols Tricked the Cumans and with their help, they defeated the Ossetians, and then the Cumans themselves [Ibn al-Athir (2016): 222]. The same note about these events is mentioned in the account of Rashid ad-Din, which is presented above. The Arab historian Abd al-Latif al-Baghdadi also describes this event: They crossed the Derbent, ran over the Cumans and Ossetians and killed them with a sword [Japharidze (2012): 238]. It is true that Abd al-Latif al-Baghdadi briefly describes the defeat of the Ossetians and Cumans by the Mongols, but this brief account confirms the information of the Georgian source and Ibn Al-Athir. The defeat of the Cumans by the Mongols is also mentioned in the Novgorod Chronicle, “the Mongols defeated Yas, Obez, Kasog and Polovcian people” [Michel, Forbes (1914): 64]. In Russian chronicles, the Cumans are referred to as Polovcian. The Russian source dates this event to 1224. It is clear from the text that this conflict between the Cumans and Mongols took place before the battle of Kalka because only after mentioning the defeat of the Cumans by the Mongols, the discussion between Cuman prince Kotian and Russian chief Mstislav is described. This discussion is about the alliance against the Mongols, to which Mstislav agreed. He realized the need to fight together against the common enemy [Michel, Forbes (1914): 65]. Moreover, the Novgorod Chronicle mentions the defeat of Obez by the Mongols, and Georgia is referred to by this name in Russian sources. In the Hypathian Codex, Georgia is also mentioned with the same name [Perfecky (1973): 17]. In the Hypathian codex, there is a brief description of Mongols’ invasion in the land of Cumans this event is dated to 1223. Then the chronicler mentioned the battle of Kalka and his description of this battle is more extensive and detailed [Perfecky (1973): 28-30]. This event is described in another Russian historical source which is the Nikonian chronicle. According to this chronicle, the defeat of the Cumans by the Mongols is dated to 1225 and the event is described similarly [Zenkovsky (1982): 285-288]. This source is a compilation. It was made in the 16th century and used ancient manuscripts. For describing this event the chronicler used the Hypathian codex and the Novgorod Chronicle. Although, the Nikonian chronicle did not take into account the dating of this event according to these manuscripts.

The main reason for the defeat was that the Cumans were greedy for booty and the goods promised by the Mongols, and did not see the danger in an alliance with the Mongols. This is mentioned by Ibn al-Athir and Rashid ad-Din also repeated it in his account. “We will bring you whatever money and clothing you want,” said the Mongols according to Ibn al-Athir. [Ibn al-Athir (2016): 222]. Rashid ad-Din mentioned the same: “We will give you whatever gold and clothing you want” [Rashid ad-Din (1998): 260]. This is a characteristic nature of the Cumans, they plundered the territories of Russian principalities. The main purpose of these campaigns was robbery of the population. All kinds of things they took from them had great importance for the Cumans. Therefore, it is not surprising that they believed in the Mongols and made peace with them. According to these authors after the first defeat by the Mongols, instead of unifying their forces, they scattered away. They believed in peace and did not expect an attack by the Mongols [Ibn al-Athir (2016): 222; Rashid ad-Din (1998): 260]. Thus, another reason for the defeat was

that they were not a united force, they acted as separate groups. According to Ibn al-Athir, Ossetians and Cumans knew about the Mongols. The Chronicler did not mention specific notes about what kind of information would have had Ossetians and Cumans. That was enough for them to make an alliance with the Ossetians and fight together against the Mongols. The relationship between Ossetians and Cumans was not peaceful. The confrontation between those people is mentioned in David's chronicler [c̄xorebay mep̄et-mep̄isa daviṭisi (2008): 319-320]. It was not an easy task to unite the Cumans and Ossetians, before the appearance of the enemy [Tsintsadze (1960): 130]. When the Mongols went to the land of the Cumans, the alliance between Ossetians and Cumans had already been made. We should also take into account that the initiators of this alliance were Ossetians according to Ibn al-Athir [Ibn al-Athir (216): 222]. They were more prepared than Georgia and had enough information to make a necessary alliance with the former enemy. Maybe they were not fond of the Cumans, but their military power was necessary against the Mongols. Although, the Cumans' military campaign was a great problem for Ossetians, but was not as disastrous as the Mongols' invasion would have been. So it seems that both Ossetians and Cumans considered the Mongols a dangerous opponent at first and made the alliance with Ossetians. Unfortunately, the Cumans did not maintain this policy towards the Mongols to the end. We think, that the Cumans should be more cautious with them. The result of their ill-advised policy was more disastrous. Part of them fled to the Russian principalities and the other part found their refuge in Georgia.

Therefore, the reason for the Cumans' campaign in Transcaucasia was their defeat by the Mongols. During the fight against the Mongols, they suffered a lot. One of the Cuman chiefs Kotian asked the Russian chief Mstislav for help in the fight against the Mongols and another part of the Cumans started looking for a new place for settlement. According to Kirakos Gandzaketsi, they asked the king of Georgia Giorgi IV Lasha for a place a residence. [Bedrosian (1986): 168]. According to Ibn al-Athir's report, the Cumans denied their desire to settle in Georgia. We think that the Cumans would have tried to seek refuge in Georgia, this is directly indicated by Kirakos Gandzaketsi and according to Ibn al-Athir's report, the Cumans admitted that they knew the short and easy way to reach Georgia, which they usually used before. Since they received a refusal from the king of Georgia, then they turned to the ruler of Ganja with the same request. The purpose of the Cumans is clear. They are looking for a new safe place to settle, as they realize the superiority of the Mongols and try to escape them. As for the raiding and plundering of the Derbent-Shirvan and Cabala, it must have been caused by the difficult economic situation of the Cumans, they would have lost a considerable part of their property in the confrontation with the Mongols. "The Tatars occupied our kingdom and took away our property", said the Cumans according to Ibn al-Athir. Raiding and plundering the cities and other populated areas were one of the main sources of income for the Cumans.

Besides the reasons for the campaign of Cumans against Shirvan and Georgia, we should pay attention to the date of this event. Ibn al-Athir dates this event to 619 with the Muslim era (Silagadze, 75), which corresponds to 1222 [Silagadze (1987):75]. Vardan Areveltsi dates this event 671 with the Armenian era, which also corresponds to 1222 [Vardan Areveltsi (2002): 160]. As for the reports of Kirakos Gandzaketsi, the author

places the appearance of Cumans after the campaign of Jebe and Subudai, i.e. 1220-1222. [Kirakos Gandzaketsi (1986): 168-169]. Mxitar Ayrivantsi dates this event to 670 with Armenian era, which corresponds to 1221 [Mxitar Ayrivantsi (2018): 77]. The Hypathian Codex dated the Mongols' campaign against the Cumans to 1223 [Perfecky (1973): 28]. The Novgorod Chronicle considers the defeat of Georgians and Cumans by the Mongols as the event of 1224 [Michel, Forbes (1914): 63-64]. According to Nikonian Chronicle this event is dated to 1225 [Zenkovsky (1982): 285]. We have to look at the political map of that period. At the beginning of the 1220s, the Mongols appeared both in Transcaucasia and in the territory where the Cumans lived. Before that, the Cumans lived more or less peacefully, were in the service of different countries or organized violent raids against Russian Principalities. Georgian, Armenian and Arabic historical sources mention that the Mongols marched into the territory of Cumans after they left Georgia. The Mongols defeated the Ossetians first with the help of the Cumans and then the Cumans themselves. The last confrontation between the Mongols and the Georgians was supposed to happen in 1222, and during this period the Cumans, harassed by the Mongols, were looking for a new refuge. The year 1222 is a real date, because Kirakos Gandzaketsi mentions the king of Georgia Giorgi IV Lasha, he is no longer alive in 1223. Historian Gocha Japharidze determined the date of Giorgi IV Lasha's death, he considered that this happened on January 18, 1223 [Japharidze (2012): 225-232]. At the same time, Vardan mentions that "our army took revenge a year later" [Vardan Areveltsi (2002): 160], which probably refers to the campaign of *atabag* Ivane. Kirakos Gandzaketsi also talks about the second campaign of *atabag* Ivane, "But after some days had passed, the great hazarapet Iwane once again mustered troops and went to wreak vengeance on those who had destroyed his troops [Kirakos Gandzaketsi (1986): 170]. It is completely inappropriate to date this event to 1224 or 1225. The Hypathian Codex correctly dated the battle of Kalka to 1223 but the appearance of the Mongols in the land of the Cumans must have occurred earlier. Most historical sources date this event to 1222. Robert Bedrosian considers the dating of the Cuman campaign in 1222-1223 [Bedrosian (1997): 256]. Historians Gvanca Abdaladze and Revaz Kiknadze consider that this event happened in 1222 [Abdaladze (2005): 123-124; Kiknadze (1979): 537]. Mzia Buniatov also considered that the Cumans' invasion in Shirvan took place in 1222 [Buniatov (1978): 118-119]. It seems that they do not take into account the information of Vardan Areveltsi about the revengeful campaign of *atabag* Ivane, which took place one year after the Cumans attack. We consider that the Mongols defeated the Cumans in 1222 and looking for refuge the Cumans went to Shirvan and then asked Georgians for the places to settle. In our opinion, Cumans' campaign against Shirvan and Georgia should have ended in 1223.

Several other important issues can be distinguished. Only Kirakos Gandzaketsi writes that the Cumans asked to be in service of Georgians. Despite the Ibn al-Athir's extensive information, such a fact is not recorded there. Among three sources, only Ibn al-Athir and Kirakos Gandzaketsi mentioned Ivane *Atabag*, while Vardan Areveltsi did not mention the Georgian army and their commander at all. When should the Cumans ask to come to Georgia for service and have a residential area? Did this happen before they started attacking Cabala? The ruler of Cabala negotiates with the Cumans to buy time and calls on Georgians for help. Maybe the Cumans did the same and asked for the service

from the king of Georgians, but because they were refused, then they raided Cabala and headed for Ganja. Another moment should be taken into account, when the Cumans tell Uzbek that if they wanted to fight together with Georgians, then they would not come through the difficult Shirvan-Derbent road, but the way they used to come to Georgia [Silagadze (1987): 77]. This report confirms that the Cumans did not cease their relations with Georgia after the death of David Aghmashenebeli. The Cumans continued to be in service of the Georgian kings. The Chronicle Giorgi Lasha and his time when describing the reign of Giorgi III mentioned: “And his order many thousands of Ossetians and Qivchaqs came to support him, and the house of Shirvan did the same” [The Chronicle Giorgi Lasha (2014): 202]. The Cumans are in service of Georgians during the reign of Tamar. Tamar’s historian in his account “istoriani da azmani šaravandedtani” mentions the Cumans: “At that time, Savalat, the brother of Sevinj the king of Qipchaqs, was here to serve” and “when they came from Tbilisi, they met Ossetians and New Qipchaqs” [istoriani da azmani šaravandedtani (2008): 435; 436]. In this regard, the situation should not have changed during the reign of Giorgi IV. These reports testify to the existence of active relations between Georgians and Cumans. Therefore, we think that the Cumans should have asked to settle in Georgia because they had a long relationship with Georgians since the reign of David IV. This was the common practice for the Cumans to come to Georgia for settlement and to be in military service of Georgian Kings. Thus, we think that the note of Kirakos Gandzaketsi about the desire of the Cumans to settle in Georgia is true.

If the Cumans are in the service of Georgia, why does Giorgi IV Lasha refuse to accept them? In regarding to this issue, P. B. Golden suggests that the Georgians, perhaps no longer certain they could properly contain such a force or already having a surfeit of Cumans in service. [Golden (1984): 85]. We can assume that at that time there were already a lot of Cumans in Georgia and they did not want a new group of them to come. The presence of the Cumans in Georgia in this period is indicated by the report of Juvaini, according to which there were the Cumans in the Georgian army in the battle of Bolnisi in 1228 during the reign of Rusudan. Juveini also mentions the amount of Cumans: “twenty thousand chosen warriors” [Kiknadze (1974): 35-36]. The number may be exaggerated but their amount would not be very few. We think that these Cumans should have been in Georgia even during the reign of Giorgi IV Lasha.

If the Cumans wanted to settle in Georgia indeed, why did not they use the way they used before? Beniamin Silagadze mentions that the Mongols defeated Ossetians with the help of Cumans and then the Cumans themselves [Silagadze (1987): 67]. It would be difficult for the already defeated and exiled Cumans to pass through the territory of Ossetians, and the Ossetians, despite being defeated by them, would most likely not pass the Cumans going to Georgia. Therefore, they chose the Shirvan-Derbent road, where they first tried to capture the *Shirvanshah* fortress and after they were refused by Georgians, they headed towards Ganja and began attacking the Georgians.

The Cumans received a refusal from the Georgians to settle in Georgia and be in service of the Georgian king. However, the ruler of Ganja, Qushkhara, who was the vassal of Adarbadagan according to Ibn al-Athir, agreed to give territories to the Cumans for settlement. The ruler of Adarbadagan, *atabeg* Uzbek was not against the settlement of the Cumans near Ganja. What could have caused Uzbek’s consent to the settlement of the

Cumans near Ganja? We should pay attention to the relations between Georgia and Adarbadagan during the reign of Giorgi IV Lasha. The matter of discussion between them is the ownership of Ganja. Giorgi IV marched against Ganja at the beginning of his reign. The reason for the campaign was the ceasing of tribute by the *atabag* of Ganja. Ganja was recaptured again but in 1215 Ganja was already in possession of Ildegizians [Abdaladze (2005): 123]. When describing the events of 1217-1218, Ibn al-Athir refers to Uzbek as the “lord of Azerbaijan and Aran”. The same situation was in 1221 [Ibn al-Athir (2016): 172; 230]. The battle for the Ganja was prevented by the appearance of the Mongols, which was followed by the Cuman campaign first against Shirvan, they raided Derbent and Cabala, which was a vassal of Georgia and then attacked Georgia as well. The *atabag* of Ganja and Uzbek the ruler of Adarbadagan had considered the Cumans as the allies against the Georgians. They would have known the Character of Cumans, for the Cumans it was a common occurrence to organize raids and pillage the population. The fact that Qushkhara was familiar with the customs of the Cumans is evidenced by the report of Ibn al-Athir, according to which Qushkhara demanded hostages from the Cumans in exchange for the assistance provided to them [Silagadze (1987): 78]. As it seems, the *atabag* of Ganja did not fully trust Cumans. Such an attitude towards the Cumans is not unknown and is confirmed by other historical sources. According to Anna Comnena the Byzantine emperor Alexios komnenos gave gifts to the Cumans and due to their treacherous nature, demanded to give hostages and swear an oath [Comnena (2000): 142]. Kirakos Gandzaketsi mentions the following: “So the Qipchaqs arose and went to the residents of the city of Gandzak where they were received joyfully since the people there had been placed into great straits by the Georgian army which ruined their lands and enslaved man and beast. The people of Gandzak gave the Qipchaqs a place to dwell within the confines of the city and aided them with food and drink so that with their help they might resist the kingdom of the Georgians” [Kirakos Gandzaketsi (1986): 168]. The purpose of the *atabag* of Ganja is clear, with the help of Cumans he should try to stop the Georgians’ attempts to seize Ganja again and turn them into tributaries. Uzbek, the ruler of Adarbadagan, even asked khwarazmshah Mohamad for help [Abdaladze (2005): 122-123]. After the departure of the Mongols, Giorgi IV began to restore and strengthen his weakened positions in the region. Ibn al-Athir talks about the campaign of Giorgi IV Lasha against the city of Baylakan in October-November 1222 [Ibn al-athir (2016): 240]. Gvantsa Abdaladze considers that the raid against Baylakan was carried out by Georgians in February 1222 [Abdaladze (2005): 124]. Regardless of whether the Georgian campaign against Baylakan took place before the appearance of the Cumans or after their arrival, the policy of the Georgian royal court was clear, Giorgi IV was still trying to restore his influence in his tributary and vassal states and subjugating Aran was one of the necessary factor. Therefore, the appearance of Cumans was an opportunity for the *atabag* of Ganja to acquire a new military force and an ally.

The position of Uzbek during the Mongol invasion and towards Aran is interesting too. Giorgi IV Lasha, while creating an anti-Mongol coalition, also called *atabeg* Uzbek for help. According to Ibn al-Athir, Uzbek agreed but when the time came to fulfill the promise and bring out the army to help the Georgians, he did not fulfill the promise [Ibn al-Athir (2016): 214]. Uzbek surrendered to the Mongols who appeared in Tabriz without a fight and paid tribute [Ibn al-Athir (2016): 214]. He did not help Qushkhara, the ruler of

Aran, during the campaign of Georgians against Baylacan [Ibn al-Athir (2016): 240] Ibn al-Athir negatively characterized *atabeg* Uzbek, according to historian, Uzbek was constantly drinking and never sober, he also refers to him as idle *emir*, whenever he heard of any alarm he would take flight in panic. He was the least capable of defending the lands from any enemy who made them the object of his attack [Ibn al-Athir (2016): 214; 220]. Gvantsa Abdaladze considers Uzbek an incompetent ruler based on Ibn al-Athir's report [Abdaladze (2005):119]. Historian Gocha Japharidze also considers the same [Japharidze (2012): 239]. In the current situation, the ruler of Adarbadagan had to take more active actions to protect his territories and vassal states. That is why Qushkhara wanted to use the help of Cumans to protect Ganja from Georgians because he most likely would not have hoped to receive real help from Uzbek.

CONCLUSION

Thus, the confrontation between the Georgians and Cumans should have taken place in 1222-1223. This campaign of Cumans was caused by the Mongol invasion, and the Cumans, who were defeated by the Mongols, were looking for help and refuge. They came to Transcaucasia and asked Georgians for settlement. First of all, they put their hope in Georgia, they came to Georgia to settle even before, therefore, it is not surprising that they chose Georgia for dwelling. However, after the refusal of the Georgians, they addressed the ruler of Ganja with the same request. This time, the Cumans carried out a raid against Georgia, which must be due to their difficult economic situation, they lost their property in the battle with the Mongols. The raids of the Cumans support the policy of the ruler of Ganja and the Cumans appear as their allies to protect Ganja from the Georgians. The refusal of the Georgians to settle the Cumans in Georgia must be due to the large number of the Cumans living in Georgia and therefore, the Georgian royal court no longer wanted to accept the new group within their realm.

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**ARCHEOLOGICAL MONUMENTS WITH KUFIC INSCRIPTIONS FOUND
IN GEORGIA (THE 8th-11th CENTURIES)****Evgeni Tchanishvili**

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Abstract: From the first appearance of Arab armies in the mid-7th century the progressive installation of political control over the Georgian lands was started by the Umayyad Caliphate. After the formation of the Emirate of Tbilisi in the early Abbasid period, the city grew into a center of trade between the Islamic world and Europe. Tbilisi functioned as a key Arab outpost and a buffer province facing the Byzantine Empire and Khazar dominions.

During the Umayyad and Abbasid Periods in Georgia Islamic administration was established with its law, art, currency and also the Arabic (Kufic) script, which was the main language of the Caliphate.

During the reign of Caliph abd al-Malik, Arabs began to expand the Islamic domains. From the beginning of VIII century Arabs had a continuous struggle for Transcaucasia with the Khazars who acted either independently or together with the Byzantines. During that period the commander Jarah, who was sent after the Khazars defeat, entered Kartli and renewed the “Certificate of Protection”¹. He burdened local population with taxes.

Around 730 two factors led to a change in Umayyad policy towards Georgia. First in that year the Khazars managed to invade Northwest Iran and went all the way to Mosul before being defeated. The tributary buffer states of the Caucasus had not been able to prevent that invasion. Furthermore local Christian rulers, such as Guaram III of Iberia still kept contact with Byzantium and hoped for its intervention. The Empire however was weak and Arab raids could reach Constantinople making Byzantines less of a menace than the Khazars. In 732 – 733 Caliph Hisham Ibn al-Malik (724-743) appointed

¹ A document issued by Arab military commander Habib bin Maslama in 654 or in 655, which determined the relationship between the Arab Caliphate and the population of Kartli. The Arabs gave the “Certificate of Protection” to the willingly subjugated population. Stephanoz Erismtavari (Head of the country), who marched to conquer Kartli welcomed the ambassador with a gift and promises him obedience. The Arabs entered Tbilisi, Habib bin Maslama counted the received gifts in the calculation of the future tribute and gave the country a “Certificate of Protection”. After that the population assumed by the “Certificate”. In 724-725 the Arab military commander Jarah marched in Kartli, who renewed the “Certificate of Protection” with some changes and additions. The population was also charged with a local payment – Kharaa. The “Certificate of Protection” has not reached us in material form. Its text is preserved in the writings of Arab historians Tabari, Baladzuri and Yakut.

Marwan Ibn Muhammad governor of Armenia and Azerbaijan with the task of waging war against the Khazars and subduing Georgia.

The campaign that followed was devastating for Georgia. Marwan did not only invade Kartli as his predecessors had done, but also led his armies after the retreating Georgian princes into the western half of the country from Samtskhe to Abkhazia where they were eventually stopped.

After the final conquering of Kartli, the Arabs put their governors – Amirs at the head of the country. The residence of Amir was in Tbilisi. Amir was a military, the rulers of the country and the supreme judge.

Amir had a large staff of Arab officials: Shurta (chief of police), Muhtasib (observance of religious and household rules, market surveillance and public welfare) etc. In the 8th century the Muslim population increased in Tbilisi which created its own mosques in the city. And the state of Amir was maintained by the local population.

The arrival of the Abbasids in the country was reflected accordingly. They increased the tax both on their own Muslims and non Muslims in the conquered territory. The tribute of the Arabs was imposed on all layers of the population, although it was most acutely reflected in the lower layer. Georgians had no respite from the Khazars either. In 764 they invaded Transcaucasia from through Derbent and conquered Kartli.

From 833 the emirate regained power over Georgian lands, imposing its authority over many princes and forcing the Bagrationi to pay tribute. Emboldened by those successes the emirs stopped recognizing the higher authority of the Caliphate. In 853 Caliph Al-Mutawakkil (847-861) sent the Turkish general Bugha al-Kabir with an army against the Caucasian rebels. The Abbasid army sacked and burned Tbilisi and executed the emir¹. Many Georgian nobles were captured during the invasion. The decision the Abbasids took of not rebuilding the city extensively would considerably weaken their economic and cultural influence in Georgia and allowed the Bagrationi to become the major power in the country facilitating its further unification.

After the 853 expedition the Arab rule over Georgia was never again as strong. The emirate of Tbilisi had not been abolished but the Caliphs would not allow its power to grow again. Another vassal of the Caliphate Yusuf Ibn Abi'l – Saj, emir of Azerbaijan led in 914 the last Arab attempt to restore their domination over the Caucasus. The Sajid invasion of Georgia as it is known was however a failure although it devastated Georgian lands and allowed the Bagratids to restore the alliance with Byzantium, which they had earlier neglected in favour of Caliphs.

From that moment the Arabs stopped playing a significant role in the history of Georgia and the progressive unification of the country under the Bagrationi proceeded without any interference on their part. Only Tbilisi and its surrounding was still ruled by an emir whose relations with the Caliphate were now tenuous at best.

During the 11th century, the wealthy citizens of the city gained much power as a council of elders and kept the emirate alive mostly as a way to avoid taxation from the Georgian kings. The Georgian king Barat IV (1027-1072) took the city three times (in 1046, in 1049 and in 1062), but could not keep it under his rule. By the 1060s the Great

¹ Ishaq b. Isma'il b. shuab al-Tiflisi also known as Sahak in Georgian sources was the emir of Tbilisi between 833 and 853.

Seljuk Empire, led by Alp Arslan (1063-1072) a Turk lad replaced the Arabs as the main Muslim menace facing Georgia. The Seljuks appointed a new emir in Tbilisi but after his death in 1080 the city was again ruled by its local elders. In 1121 David IV the Builder (1089-1125) king of Georgia defeated the Seljuks at the battle of Didgori¹. Allowing him to enter Tbilisi next year and putting an end to almost 500 years of Arab presence in Georgia. Tbilisi lost its autonomy and became the royal capital, but its inhabitants long remained predominantly Muslim.

Our goal is to describe those archeological artifacts with Kufic inscriptions that people used in their daily life. Also, some important conclusions can be drawn from those artifacts and writings. The establishment of the Arab administration in the territory of Eastern Georgia led to the establishment of a new trade system, which implied the introduction of a new currency and new trade weight standards.

Also, active trade included such items for daily use as jewelry, writing materials, items for commercial purpose... many of them have Arabic inscriptions, the study of which provides us with additional historical and economic information about daily life during Arab rule in Georgia.

Keywords: Umayyads, Abbasids, Tbilisi, Caucasus, Dirham, Kufic inscriptions, Trade

INTRODUCTION

The Arab conquest of Georgia affected on all aspects of the whole region's life. The new archeological discoveries and findings made in the last two decades provide us additional information about the daily life of the people who lived there. Along with the establishment of the Arab administration, the official administrative language and accordingly the Arabic-Kufic scripts were gradually established in the conquered territories.

The mentioned historical events first of all made affects on one of the most important areas of the staleness – the economy. The Arab tax system was temporary established, the Arab coinage system came into circulation and later Tbilisi Mint began striking Arab dirhams to satisfy the local economy and market requirements. [Dundua (2018): 182-85]

In the first half of the VIII century, the final establishment of Arab governance in Caucasus [Janashia (1936):30] and the migration of the Arab population into the Region had a great impact on the cultural and social life of local population. Arabic style daily items such as jewelry slowly came into use, as well as other daily using items (Amulets, Plates for decoration...) on which inscriptions are already found in Kufic script.

In our letter, we would like to describe the above mentioned Kufic artefacts, which we divide into four main categories. Those are – Epigraphy; Numismatic materials; Jewelry; Other objects with Kufic scripts.

¹ The battle of Didgori was the culmination of the entire Georgian – Seljuk wars and to Georgians reconquest of Tbilisi in 1122. Soon after that David IV the Builder moved the capital from Kutaisi to Tbilisi. The victory at Didgori inaugurated the medieval Georgian Golden Age.

Epigraphy

Early Kufic monumental epigraphic monuments found on the territory of Georgia are very few. Only a few archeological monuments have been discovered. One of the notable of that was discovered in recent years is Tbilisi city wall stone. (Fig.1)

In 2012 during the rehabilitation works it was discovered parts of Tbilisi city wall fortification and an elongated rectangular sand stone with Kufic scripts into the wall. That monument of Kufic epigraphy is one of the earliest in the region of Caucasus.

The first scientific article was published by Dr. shebl Ebaid and Dr. Al-Arabi Emara. They read the inscription as follows: [Ebaid; Emara (2015):272]

- 1- And (his palace?), (his fortress), his garrison, his locality and its borders
- 2- It was written by Salaam bin (Hauan?) month
- 3- Sha'aban, year one hundred and seventy seven

The authors mentioned that the importance of the inscription is determined by the fact of being the oldest monumental inscription in the entire eastern world and the date is 177 AH / 793 AD. [Ebaid; Emara (2015): 273]

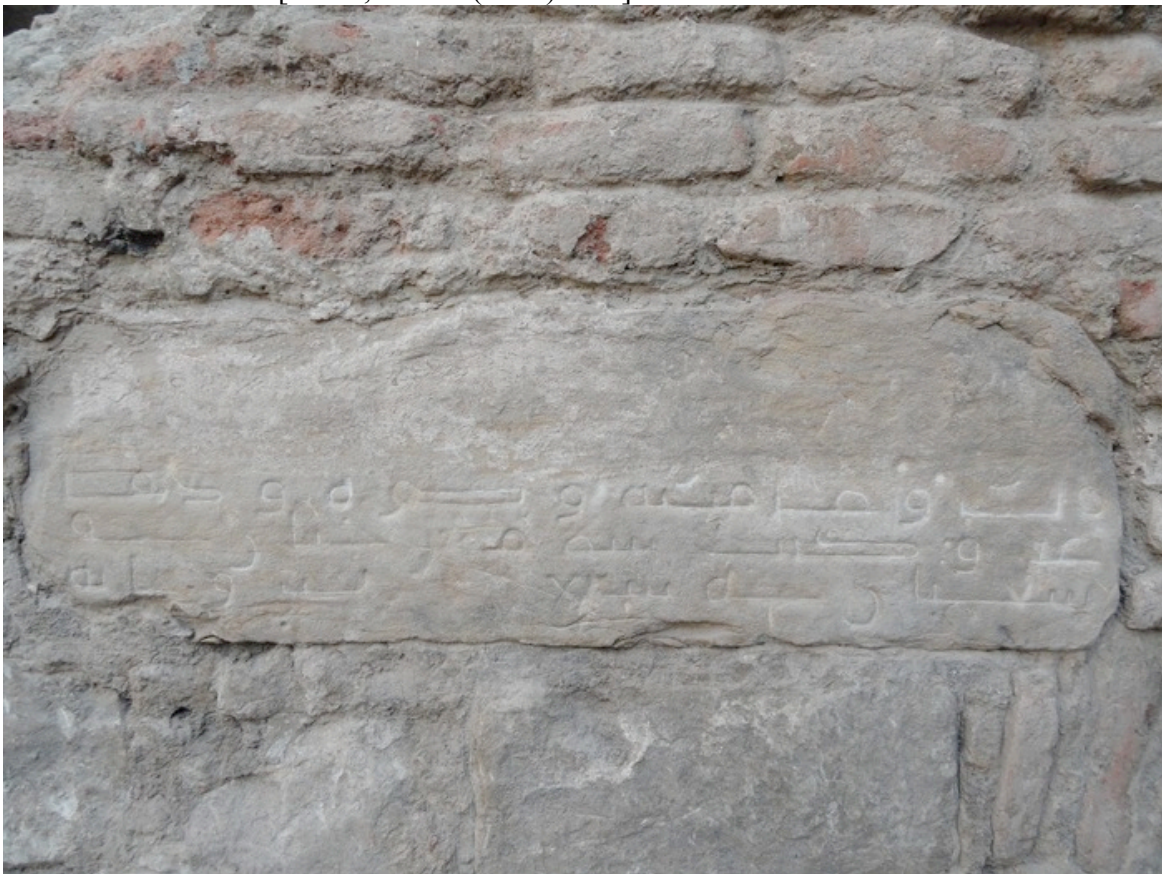


Fig.1

After the above-mentioned article was published, Georgian scholars researched the inscription once again and after a close visual inspection¹, they proposed the newly reading of the inscription: [Paghava, Dzelaze, Topuridze (2022)]

- 1- His [garrison ???] and his victory and his protector
- 2- And wrote Salam ibn Hayyan/habban/habbab in
- 3- Sha'ban year seven and forty and one-hundred

Scholars concluded that, discovery of the sha'ban AH 147 Arabic inscription from Tiflis confirms one more time the continuous Arab military and administrative presence in Tiflis before the 770s. The Arab presence in Tiflis in October 764 (sha'ban, 147 AH), along with other discoveries demonstrates yet one more time that the Arab administration was established in Georgia earlier than in the 770s. The emergence of the Arab administrative institutions like mint and marking the roads with mile stones (perhaps indicating the functioning of the Caliphal postal service), as well as ordering the lapidary inscriptions, demonstrates clearly enough that the Tiflis Emirate, as an administrative unit of the Caliphate, was established already by the early 8th century. [Paghava, Dzelaze, Topuridze (2022)]

Numismatic materials

Silver dirhams of the Umayyad period minted in Tbilisi mint are the best examples of the permanent establishment of the Arab administration. The first such Umayyad dirham belongs to the year 85 AH (704/05 AD). (Fig. 2) [Dundua (2018):182-85]



Fig.2

The largest number of coins issued at the Tbilisi Mint was recorded during the Abbasid period. First as Tbilisi emirate under the jurisdiction of the Caliphate and later as an independent political state.

¹ Dr. Shebl Ebaid and Dr. Al-Arabi Emara guided only by the photographic materials.

Among the coins minted in the Tiflis mint during the Umayyad era, the Fels minted in the name of Marwan bin Muhammad¹ occupies a special place of that historical period. (Fig.3)



Fig.3

Marwan bin Muhammad's coin is Umayyad period fels. That coin is kept in the Islamic Numismatic Research Center of the University of Tubingen. It was first published and described in Georgia by I. Paghava [Chanishvili 2018, 138-146].

Marwan bin Muhammad's coin is Umayyad period fels.

Obverse: لا اله There is no God

الا الله But Allah Alone

بسم الله ضرب هذا الفلز بتفليس

In the name of God, that Fels struck in Tiflis

Reverse: محمد Muhammad

رسول is the messenger

الله of Allah

هذا الفلز مما امر به الامير مروان بن محمد

That Fels is what Amir Marwan bin

Muhammad ordered.

There is no information about the date of the coin. Most probably it was struck near the years of 735-744. Marwan conquered Georgia in 735 and became caliph in 744.

Among the coins issued during the Abbasid period, the one with the most historical importance is an Arabic gold dinar that appeared in April 2017 in Morton and Eden Ltd auction (Auction N 85, 26 April 2017, Lot 40). It belongs to the date of 248 AH (862/63) in the name of the Caliph Al-Musta'in Billah (248-251 / 862-866). (Fig.4) [Paghava (2016-2017): 374]

¹ At that time he was not yet the Caliph.



Fig.4

Minting of a gold coin by the Tbilisi Mint emphasizes not only the importance of Tbilisi as a large urban city in the region, but in our opinion it also indicates that at that time in the city of Tbilisi there probably existed an administrative office similar to “Muhtasib” office.

The Muhtasib was a supervisor of bazaars and trade, the inspector of public places and behavior in towns in the medieval Islamic countries. The duties of the Muhtasib also included the regulation of weights, money and prices. Of course, in the case of the emission of gold coins, the city administration should take care of the quality control of the money in order to avoid the falsification of coins or reducing their nominal weight which may subsequently lead to the collapse of the local market.

A coin minted in the name of Bagrat the Third, the first king of unified Georgia, is a good example of the synthesis of Kufic and Georgian (Mtavruli) scripts (Fig.4). Bagrat III son of Gurgen (980-1008) and grandson of Bagrat II was adopted by David III Kurapalati. By the patronage of David III he became the king of Kartli and after king of Abkhazia.

After the death of Bagrat II the head of Bagrationi dynasty became Gurgen, with the royal title - King of the Kings, but the rule of David and Bagrat III extends over most of the territory of Georgia.

David III Kurapalati died in 1001, after that deid Gurgen in 1008 and as a result, Bagrat III inherited the Kingdoms of Abkhazia and Kartli. The coins of Bagrat III are extremely rare and it is officially known as only one specie.¹

¹ Another new the second example of that specie was discovered several years ago, today it is preserved in private collection in Georgia, but its provenance is unknown for me.



Fig.4

Silver, Half Drama, weight:1.78 gr. [online catalogue of Georgian Numismatics]

Ob.: Central Arabic legend in three lines -

There is no god

لا اله الا

But Allah alone

الله وحده

He has no associate

لا شريك له

Around: Distorted Arabic legend

Rv.: Central Arabic legend –

Muhammad

محمد

Is the messenger

رسول

Of Allah

الله

Around Georgian Asomtavruli legend in abbreviation – Christ, exalt Bagrat, King of the Abkhazians.

In 975 Bagrat became king in Shida Kartli (east Georgia). In 978 he is also king of the Abkhazians (west Georgia). Bagrat left his mother, Gurandukgt in Kartli and himself moved to west Georgia. But when the king decided to return back, the local nobles tried to resist him. Bagrat III restored his rights in Kartli. It happened in 980, perhaps in the same year he issued his coin at his residence in Kartli - Uplistsikhe¹. If Bagrat struck the coin later, then he had to have the titles like Kuropalates², king of the Kartvelians, Ranians and Kakhetians³. The synthesis of the type⁴ and legal attests to political unity with Bagrat III as a king.

Jewelery

¹ An ancient rock-hewn town in eastern Georgia. Identified as one of the oldest urban settlements in Georgia. Strategically located in the heartland of ancient kingdom of Kartli.

² Was a Byzantine court title, one of the highest from the time of Emperor Justinian I to the Komnenian period in the 12th century.

³ Rani and Kakheti are very eastern provinces of Georgia.

⁴ Arabic dirhem, popular in east Georgia.

Jewelry would probably be one of the first products that the Arab economy would spread on the territory of Georgia. In our article we will describe only the rings.

Islamic rings with Kufic inscriptions could be divided into two categories. First are the rings which also contained the function of the seal and the second, the basic ordinary rings only with Kufic inscriptions. Those rings carry historical significance and symbolism pertinent to the Islamic faith. They served as a mark of legitimization for state documents, they assumed an educational role with engraving of religious texts and acted as talismans carrying protective inscriptions. Islamic rings are not just accessories they serve as a constant reminder of spiritual commitment.

The type of seal that we would like to describe is the most common style of sealing ring which could be found in Georgia. It is a bronze ring, on top of the seal a horizontal line divides two identical words - "wealth". (Fig.6)



Fig.6

Another type of the non-sealing rings are also very common in Georgia. As we mentioned above, very often those rings are with engraving of religious texts. Below we are giving the description one of the examples. (Fig.7)



Fig.7

It is a silver ring with religious inscription – "Lillah", For Allah.

Other objects with Kufic scripts

We would like to describe several objects with Kufic scripts, which could not be separated into other groups. However, the mentioned items played an important role in daily life. Very often they contained religious texts or may be owner's name. The object is very damaged and we could not determine its exact size. Only a few separate words is readable, however based on that few information, it is possible to say, that plate contained religious inscriptions. (Fig. 8)



Fig. 8

Another object we would like to describe is a lead seal. (Fig. 9) Those objects are small leaden discs that were crimped onto bags or bales of goods or were attached to textiles. Those seals first of all indicate the existence of trade routes between the regions. On the territory of Georgia, finding such seals with Kufic scripts are rare, but there are some species found in eastern Georgia and now they are kept in private collections.



محمد الله امير
المومنين الناين
انيا حار
مليه

Fig. 9

CONCLUSION

Due to its location, the Caucasus region historically resented an important trade hub. The region has not lost its importance even under the Arab administration rule. In Georgia the best example is the big number of Arabic Kufic coins minted in Tbilisi¹. In addition to numismatic materials, we have an equally large number of Jewelry products, especially the rings with Kufic scripts.

In contrary to numismatic materials and rings we have less species of epigraphic and other metal objects with Kufic scripts. Unfortunately all the above-mentioned categories of artifacts found in the territory of Georgia is researching only as separate independent scientific field. And in many cases during the research they are not historically connected. Today there is no research where all the archaeological monuments made with Kufic scripts found in the territory of Georgia will be analyzed in one scientific work. We hope that this article will make a small contribution in researching that scientific field.

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