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The Huns and the Hungarians

OMELJAN PRITSAK
1919*-2006†

**REPORT FROM THE
MEMORIAL CONFERENCE
IN SÜHBAATAR,
MONGOLIA**

**THE HUNNO-
BULGARIAN LANGUAGE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
CONTINUITY BETWEEN THE
XIONGNU AND THE HUNS**

**PARALLELS
BETWEEN MONGOLIAN
HEROIC EPICS
AND HUNGARIAN
HERO FOLK TALES AND FOLK
POETRY**

**VAJDA AND BOILA
– ON AN ANCIENT
HUNGARIAN TITLE**

Other topics

**INTRODUCTION TO
THE ROCK ART OF
KAZAKHSTAN**

**BURYAT AUTONOMY:
HISTORY AND MODERNITY**



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Omeljan Pritsak **7 April 1919* – 29 May 2006†**

Tymish Holowinsky
Executive Director at HURI, Harvard University

Born on 7 April 1919 in Luka, Sambir region, Ukraine, Omeljan Pritsak completed his secondary education in Ternopil. His higher education, with a concentration in Ukrainian and also, increasingly over time, Turkic history and philology, took place at the University of Lviv, the Academy of Sciences of Ukraine in Kyiv, and the Universities of Berlin and Göttingen, from which he received his doctorate in 1948.



Omeljan Pritsak, Mykhailo Hrushevsky Professor of Ukrainian History, Emeritus, and co-founder and long-time director of the Ukrainian Research Institute.

A professor of Turkology at the University of Hamburg, Pritsak was invited to Harvard University in 1960 and the University of Washington in 1961. He permanently joined the Harvard faculty as professor of linguistics and Turkology in 1964.

From early in his career, Pritsak became an internationally recognized scholar in historical and comparative Turkic and Altaic linguistics, and a leading authority on the history and culture of the Eurasian Steppe. At Harvard University, Pritsak resumed his early study of Ukrainian history and turned increasingly to the research and analysis of the Ukrainian past in context, drawing on his impressive linguistic talents in Central and East Asian languages to flesh out that history with material previously underrepresented or unknown.

In 1967, Pritsak proposed the creation of a firm foundation for the development of Ukrainian studies in the West through the establishment of three endowed chairs (history, literature, philology) and a research institute at Harvard University. This project was accomplished thanks to the efforts of the Ukrainian Studies Fund which raised the necessary funds within the Ukrainian diaspora community. The Ukrainian Research Institute came into being in 1973 with Pritsak as its first director. In 1975, he was given the Hrushevsky Chair in Ukrainian history. In 1977, Pritsak helped to launch the journal *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*. He was instrumental in the organization of a weekly seminar series, building up the Ukrainian library collections, and in developing new series of publications that made primary texts, facsimile editions, and translations of important works of the Ukrainian past available to scholars worldwide.

Through his inspired teaching and energetic example, Pritsak helped to train and influence many generations of students, who have gone on to fill important academic positions in the United States, Canada, Europe, and Asia. A scholar of enormous erudition, Pritsak produced a bibliography of over 500 entries.

When he retired in 1989, Pritsak became increasingly involved in the revival of academic studies in Ukraine itself. He was elected the first foreign member of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences. He revived the Institute of Oriental Studies in Kyiv, introducing new programs in that

field and many other neglected areas of historical scholarship on the university level.

Omeljan Pritsak is survived by his wife Larysa Hvozdk Pritsak, his daughter Irene Pritsak by his late first wife Nina Moldenhauer Pritsak, and two grandchildren Lailina Eberhard and Michael Wissoff.

Omeljan Pritsak Armagani - A Tribute to Omeljan Pritsak has been published in 2007. The

volume published by Prof. Dr. Mehmet Alpargu and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Yücel Öztürk among the publications of Sakarya University Press has consisted of a detailed introduction and 33 articles. While this publication that brings together a lot of historians from home and abroad fulfils gratitude of Turkish historians for their colleagues from abroad, it clarifies the reader on the main subjects of Turkish, Ukrainian and the others.

“Khunnu History and Culture” Report from the Memorial Conference in Sühbaatar, Mongolia

on the 80th anniversary of Colonel Kozlov's discovery
of the royal graves of the Huns at Noyon Uul
May 14-17, 2005

*Miklós Érdy
New York*

The following is a report from the Memorial Conference “Khunnu History and Culture” in Sühbaatar, Mongolia, on the 80th anniversary of Colonel P.M. Kozlov's discovery of the royal Hunnic graves at Noyon Uul, May 14-17, 2005.

200 graves of the Hunnic royalty and nobility were discovered and excavated in three valleys of the Noyon Uul Mountain by P.M. Kozlov and his team. The graves are situated in the Selenge province of northern Mongolia. The local government and the Institute of History at the Mongolian Academy of Sciences were the joint hosts of the conference. All meals, internal travel and accomodations of the participants were covered by the hosts except the travel to the capital, Ulan Baatar. From the United States a good itinerary was New York City–Seoul (South Korea)–Ulan Baatar. From Ulan Baatar—where it was wise to spend a few days to see the city and its unique museums—an eight hour bus or train ride took one to the northern city of Sühbaatar, the site of the conference. The trip on the Academy's bus with the refreshing stops every two hours, with cheeses, red wine and vodka in the sunny, cool grassland made the 300 km trip a real pleasure.

The topics of the conference encompassed Hunnic history, culture and archaeological research. It extended to the Hunnic political system, economics and their contribution to nomadic culture as the organizers outlined the scope of the

conference. The conference included site visits to the area of the Noyon Uul burial sites where the excavations began, to Chinggis Khan's spring in the grassland, and a fantastically beautiful view of the winding, historic Selenga River just after its confluence with the Orkhon River. To reach the Noyon Uul burial sites our bus and cars had to get off the main road, continue along dirt road a few kilometers through the grassland to reach the cemetery in a beautiful birch forest. The last kilometer was on foot, since the cars started sliding in the slippery terrain. The kurgan sites resembled large bomb craters, by now covered with soil and sparse vegetation. Smaller craters occurred along with the large ones, the latter being of about 20-25 meters in diameter. To the present, 200 graves have been excavated, but we were told that 300 more unopened graves lay in the distance.

The official languages of the conference were Russian, Mongolian and English. This provided a narrow crossection for the English speakers. The presentations began with Alexeeva's (Russia) slide presentation. She reviewed the preceeding events and history of the P.M. Kozlov expedition, using tabulations. The excavation work was begun in 1924. It was directed by the Russian colonel P.M. Kozlov, although he did not participate in the excavations continuously. In his absence the work had been carried out and directed by A. Kondratyev.

I wish to give a brief summary of a few papers, following their sequence in the program.

D. Erdenebaatar, archaeologist from Mongolia and organizer of the Conference, spoke about his participation in the excavations at Golmod which were directed by a French team. The grave of a very high-ranking Hunnic male was discovered at this site.

S. Miniaev (History of Materials Science Institute, St. Petersburg, Russia) talked about the lyre-shaped belt buckles found in Xiongnu burials especially in Noyon Uul and showed their analogies by chemical analysis of finds from the area of Tajikistan.

Batsaikhan (Mongolia), professor of history at Ulan Baatar University, talked about foreigners among the Xiongnu people, more specifically about a close connection between the Xiongnu and the Wusun. The anthropological data were interpreted as a Wusun migration having taken place into Xiongnu territory. (I just note here that the Wusun was an archenemy of the Xiongnu and were defeated several times. At such occasions a large number of Wusun warriors was always incorporated into the Xiongnu army.)

B. Dashibalov (Buryatia) examined customs that might point toward a Mongolian origin of the Xiongnu. Mounds with log chambers versus coffins in ground graves, a nomadic vs. settled way of life, iron agrarian tools, ceramics, and folklore were mentioned.

Borbála Obrusánszky (Hungary) examined three old Hungarian ranks. Historical and linguistic data pointed to ancient Xiongnu corresponding ranks in Inner Asia (given in italics): vajda=boila, bán=wang, gyula=yuli.

One paper by M. Santaro (Mongolia) dealt with the morin khuur, a two-stringed horse-headed violin, which was developed in the Central Asian grasslands a few thousand years ago. It is the father of all string instruments. By Kubilai Kahn's time it became a court instrument.

Ursula Brosseder (Germany) made observations on Xiongnu social structure by observing pottery in female graves. Pottery at Ivolginsk was traceable to the Minusinsk Basin, pointing to small-scale migrations. Another observation was that especially richly furnished graves of the Xiongnu elite can be dated to a narrow time span of the first half of the 1st c. BC. She referred to these graves as "ostentatious graves".

Miklós Érdy's paper (USA) is mentioned last, although this presentation was placed second in the program after the Kozlov recollections. Érdy dealt with eight archaeological connections between the Xiongnu and the Huns, a theory which is supported by four written sources (a Sogdian letter, the Wei shu, Wei lueh and Hou Han shu). These establish a historical continuity between the Huns and the Xiongnu. The paper was positively received by the group of Xiongnu researchers, whose comments revealed an inherent knowledge of the author's previous publications.

Among the excursions of the conference there was a trip to the museum in Altanbulag, in the vicinity of Sühbaatar. It had a modest archaeological collection, although a very well-preserved full-horse burial from a Turkish grave was shown. The museum preserved some memories of the communist past. Statues of Lenin and Mongolia's communist heroes Sühbaatar and Choibalsan still stand.

Nevertheless, Chinggis Khan is the prime hero of the country. The spring from which he drank, and which we visited in the grassland, had been commemorated with a giant stone stela, placed there in 1990.



Chinggis Khan beer

Watching the endless green grassland, the greening mountains, the last pristine area on Earth, Mongolia was a memorable, worthwhile experience to visit especially for Xiongnu researchers. The centers of all great nomadic empires of our world were here.

The Hunno-Bulgarian Language

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department of Slavic languages.

Latest publications:

"Pictures and Bulgarian Cyrillic Inscriptions in a Greek 11th Century Manuscript". Totomanova A-M., Slavova T. (eds.): *Njast ucenik nad ucitelem svoim. Sbornik v cest na prof. dfn Ivan Dobrev, clen-korespondent na BAN i uhitel.* Universitetsko izdatelstvo Sv. Kliment Oxridski: Sofia, 385-399.

"Ezikovijat stroj na starobulgarskija ezik spored dannite ot analiza na prabulgarskite zaemki v nego (fonetika, vokalna sistema)". *Slavistichni izsledvanija. Sbornik, posveten na XII mezdunaroden kongres na slavistite*, (7), Universitetsko izdatelstvo Sv. Kl. Oxridski: Sofia, 29-40.

"On Deciphering Mediaeval Runic Scripts from the Balkans". *Kulturnite textove na minaloto. Nositeli, simboli i idei. Znatsi, textove, nositeli. Kniga 3. Materiali ot Jubilejnata mezdunarodna konferencija v chest na 60-godishninata na prof. d.i.n. Kazimir Popkonstantinov*, Veliko Tarnovo, 29-31 oktombri 2003. Sofia, pp. 128-139.

"Observations on Bulgarian Clan Names in the 7th-9th centuries." *Civitas divino-humana. In honorem annorum LX Georgi Bakalov.* Centur za izsledvanija na bulgarite Tangra Tannakra IK: Sofia, 2004, 551-561.

Languages extinct without written documentation confront the researcher with the fundamental difficulty that their data are far from comprehensive (isolated words and simple collocations outnumber phrases, if such are at all attested) and are far from unequivocal (written data preserved in the script of foreign languages inevitably reflect phonological modifications). This circumstance severely restricts the scope of any study beyond the lexicon; equally seriously does it impair the individuation of languages which reflect a stage of development prior to the far-reaching processes of divergence that formed the attested languages of the same family.

In the case of Hunno-Bulgarian¹, an additional complication is formed by the sweeping migration of the nomadic communities of Huns and Bulgars from East to West, which brought them to a succession of lands and neighbours, of cultural and linguistic contacts and influences: China, India, Bactria, Sogdia, Byzantium and Rome.

The foremost task of the study of such languages remains the collection and analysis of their reflexes in the various languages with which they came in contact, the compilation of comprehensive thesauri, which, in turn, will also be of great value to the study of the early stages of development of the contacting languages.

This article is part of my study which aims to collect the data of Hunno-Bulgarian (HB) in its loans to Slavonic (Sl). It both identifies the loanwords and analyses the mechanisms of their adaptation to Sl in order to gain a clear view of their HB prototypes. A complementary source of data are the inscriptions of the First Bulgarian empire, most of them being in Greek, some in HB in Greek letters, made before the advent of Sl writing. Auxiliary data for the identification of some HB loans in Sl are taken from the reflexes of HB in Byzantine Greek (Moravcsik 1958) and Hungarian (Gombocs 1912); from HB reflexes in Sl dialects; from the toponymy of the Balkan and Apennine peninsulas, as well as from Chuvash, the modern continuant of one of its branches.

Destined to form part of a future thesaurus of HB, it is also destined to serve research into the history of the Altaic languages, which may well preserve earlier linguistic data than those preserved in (Runic) Old Turkic Orkhon-Yenisei inscriptions alone. The etymologies it proposes can be confirmed or corrected only within the framework of a complete investigation of HB phonology and grammar on the basis of all preserved reflexes of this language. At the same time, it is destined to provide a contribution to the study of the Sl language (what does it refer to?), demonstrating that the loans in question are true constituents of its lexical system in spite of their foreign origin.

¹ The term Hunno-Bulgarian belongs to Pritsak (1982: 435, 448-449), who has examined the relations between the language of Bulgars and Huns most closely.

A qualification is required of the terms Hunno-Bulgarian and Slavonic. They pertain to languages of entirely different origin.



According to Veselin Beševliev, *Părvobălgarski nadpisi*. Sofia: Izdatelstvo na BAN, 1979.
Inscription on stone from Dluzhko, North East Bulgaria, 8th c.
Alphabet: Greek
Language: Hunno-Bulgarian
Content: list of armaments
Between the Greek letters there are runic symbols.

The first is proper to a Central Asiatic people moving across the Danube into present-day Bulgaria in the second half of the 7th cent., relatives of whose migration to the West survived at the confluence of the Volga and Kama (speaking Volga-Bulgarian, but extinct in the 16th c.) and in the present-day Republic of Chuvashia within the Russian Federation (speaking Chuvash).

The second is proper to texts of Slavic peoples written in the 9th – 20th cent., chiefly in the South and East of the European territory they inhabit; the language is extinct, save in ecclesiastical use, and whether it was ever spoken beyond composing or reciting those texts, remains open to question.

What unites both languages, except for their coexistence and interaction in South-Eastern Europe in the 7th-11th cent., is the fundamental problem which they pose to the researcher: Can an analysis reach the level of the language proper, or does it reach no further than to the level of a separate dialect or idiolect? For both languages

bear testimony of a far-reaching lack of homogeneity².

Reconstructing the Features of Hunno-Bulgarian on the Basis of Its Loans to Slavonic

The linguistic individuation of HB still awaits its unequivocal establishment, notwithstanding the scholarship accumulated on the origin of many words. This fact forms the stimulus for a detailed review of the extant scholarship in an attempt to shed fresh light on the basic question – the descent of HB as a language.

The methods to be applied to the study of the HB language cannot be identical to those applied either to a modern language, or an extinct language document in writings: they have to take into account the specific conditions under which the HB language was formed, maintained and developed in the course of migration over great distances, and take for granted that it is documented, save for scarce relicts (chiefly) place-names on the trail and a few formal inscriptions (mostly lists), almost exclusively in foreign writings.

The HB emerge out of the processes of forming multi-tribal conglomerates on the Northern and Western to South-Western borders of China in the 3rd-5th c. BC. The emergence of such paxes (to use the term given to the multiethnic and multilingual nomadic empires by Omeljan Pritsak (1982: 416)), such as those of the Huns and the Avars, like the Great Migration of Peoples as a whole, depends on the leadership of charismatic clans. Within such paxes, the exchange of information required the use of a *lingua franca* (Pritsak 1982: 385), chiefly for organising military actions.

This entailed that military functions and titles, weapons and other equipment, as well as basic temporal and local orientations are primary elements in the intertribal interlect, which was, of course, based on the usage among the leading clan and was, consequently, modified whenever a different clan rose to power. As in the course of time, measured in generations, the conglomerate turned into an ever closer-knit community, the information exchange inevitably led to widespread linguistic interaction, if only to cope with the designation of the new realia encountered in forays and migration. So the lexical component of

² On the multiethnic and multicultural components of HB, cf. Protič (1926-27), Vasilev (1937), Beševliev (1968, 1974), Vážarova (1968, 1971, 1976, 1977) and Rašev (1978). On those of Sl Bulgarian, save for the certainty that the texts of the period 863-885 were not written in the cultural and dialect area of present-day Bulgaria, cf. Veder (1999).

the language of such paxes must be assumed to retain the traces not only of such interaction, but also of the conditions under which it took place.

HB certainly bears ample marks of linguistic interaction. The analysis of the loan-words in SI shows the presence of direct influences of various language-families: Turkic, Mongolian, Chinese and Iranian. But then SI, too, by the very presence of a relatively solid layer of borrowings from HB, testifies to its being prone to such interaction. These facts should serve as a warning not to insist on identifying the language with the ethnic origin of its users.

The specific features of the HB linguistic data outlined above severely handicap the investigator. In order to shed light on the origins of HB, the analysis may not be restricted to the origin of separate words and disregard their relation to the lexicon as a whole; yet only careful and detailed etymological analysis of each separate word can shed light on its individual pedigree. The solution lies in a competitive analysis of the genetic and formal features of the separate loan-words and the interpretation of their phonetics, morphology and semantics within the framework of the system discernible at those levels.

Such a bipolar approach forms the only basis upon which to make decisions as to the presence of intralingual (dialectal?) variation versus foreign features, i.e. to distinguish different ways of adapting words of various origins within HB itself, and thereby to gain information on the phonetic and even grammatical features of that language. To a certain extent, of course, the phonetic features are obscured by the foreign script, the morphological by the transition to a foreign language structure, and the semantic by the transition to a new cultural environment. This fact only heightens the need for a comprehensive evaluation of the data of the separate words and a separation of the general from the incidental in their features.

Hunnic and Proto-Bulgarian³

Although this study concentrates on the HB reflexes in SI, the identification of the linguistic

³ The Bulgarian tribes are known as one of the Hunnic tribes, Οὐννικά ἔθνη (Zlatarski 1918-1927 I, 1: 21) before the founding of Great Bulgaria,

Ἡ Μεγάλη Παλαία Βουλγαρία on the Kuban river in the late 6th c. In the late 7th c. they founded the First Bulgarian Empire on the Danube River. As the term Bulgarian is reserved for the modern Slavic language, the term Proto-Bulgarian is customarily used to designate the language of the Bulgar tribes. This presents an inconvenience, as a proto-language is a theoretical construct, whereas here we are dealing with a language documented in use. I shall use the term only incidentally, abbreviating in as pBg.

facts requires clarification of the origin of HB and its position among the Altaic languages⁴. The study of languages extinct without written documentation⁵ has traditionally been tied to that of the racial history of the people. The present study consciously leaves aside the question of the racial (palaeoanthropological) identity of the Huns and Proto-Bulgarians⁶, the more so as the racial history of the Eurasian steppes still is mainly based on written sources (Maenchen-Helfen 1973: 360). As a point of departure may serve the hypothesis, well argued and supported by the sources, that Huns and Bulgars, while Mongoloid in origin, have Europoid traces⁷, and thus, like all other peoples of the Eurasian steppes, "Huns were likewise racially mixed" (Maenchen-Helfen 1973: 364, 366).

From the linguistic point of view it is important to note that Huns and Proto-Bulgarians spoke the same language, different from all other "barbarian" languages⁸. This Altaic language, of course, contains loans from other languages, including Iranian, most of them proper names⁹ and so-called cultural terms. However, the names of clans or tribes, the words for different family relations, the calendar terms and the numerals are HB.

The Huns were precursors of the Turkic peoples both in the historic and cultural respect, but not in the linguistic one. When Turkic tribes appeared at the borders of the Chinese empire in the 6th c., the Huns and Proto-Bulgarians were no longer there (Pulleyblank 1963: 239-265). In the

⁴ HB was until recently termed Turkic, which is incorrect (cf. Maenchen-Helfen 1973: 441). Altaic seems to be a more appropriate term (Golab 1992: 392-393).

⁵ The Huns had an own script. Attila's chancellery employed Roman scribes. The Proto-Bulgarians on the Balkans left inscriptions in runes, most often isolated, rarely concatenated (Granberg 2005). Like Attila, they subsequently made use also of foreign scripts, first Greek, later, for political reasons, Slavonic.

⁶ The reasons for this decision are: a) the lack of a direct link between race and language, and b) the absurdity of a term like Great race, which has meaning only in a theory of racial origins, but not in racial variety. The palaeoanthropological evidence of Huns and Bulgars is brought together by Maenchen-Helfen (1973: 359-375).

⁷ One of the branches of the Huns, Chieh, might be Europoid in origin. According to Pulleyblank (1963: 247-248), they are Tocharian. The exact time of their joining the Hsiung-nu confederacy is not known, but it is not later than the 4th c., when the sources already make mention of the presence of Indo-Europeans within the Hsiung-nu confederacy.

⁸ Cf. the analysis of the Greek and Latin sources for HB in Maenchen-Helfen (1973: 378-443).

⁹ They are of Iranian and Greek origin, or at least Iranicized (not earlier than 6th c.) or Germanicized names (Maenchen-Helfen 1973: 442).

linguistic respect, it is important to note that Turkic does contain HB loans, but that these were received through Chinese intermediary, e.g. Hunnic *ch'eng-li* 'sky, heaven' was borrowed from Chinese as *tängri* in Turkic (Pulleyblank 1963: 240). This fact should not be disregarded in interpreting the HB data, especially since direct parallels are extant between Hunnic and Proto-Bulgarian (Pritsak 1995: 31) and both languages exhibit non-Turkic and even some non-Altaic features.

Altaic has no initial consonant clusters, while HB does:

χλωσβρην *qloubrin* 'hoop'¹⁰,

ТВНРЕМЗ *tvirim* 'ninth'.

Other phonological features oppose HB not so much directly to Altaic, but rather to Turkic and Mongolian: unlike Mongolian, HB has no initial dental or velar spirants, a feature also encountered in Turkic. Yet unlike Turkic, it has initial voiced *b-*: βαγατουρ *bagatur* 'a title', βοηλα *boyla* 'a title', βηρη *biri* 'southern, right', and both unvoiced *-p-* and voiced *-b-* in the middle of the word:

ΚΟΥΠΖ ΚΥΠΕ *köp* 'much, together, in full',

САΠΟГЗ *sapag* 'shoe',

ΚΑΘΕΟΥΚΖ *qolbuq* 'kap' and

χλωσβρην *qloubrin* 'hoop'.

Unlike Turkic, HB has initial *n-*, which is also encountered in Mongolian: Νεγυν *Negün* 'proper name', Νεβουλ *Nebul* 'proper name'.

HB, in sum, has no consistent set of features that unite it with either Turkic or Mongolian. Neither can it be related to Sino-Tibetan languages, for it obviously has no monosyllabic word structure.

The following features, common for Hunnic and Proto-Bulgarian come to light in the analysis of the HB loans in Slavonic:

1) both lose medial *-r-* in certain positions:

ΚΟΒΖΥΕΓΖ *qowučag* 'blister, box'.

2) both exhibit rhotacism and lambdacisms:

ΚΟΥΡΗΛΖ, ΚΟΥΡΕΛΑΚΖ, *köril*, *köräluq*
'prototype'.

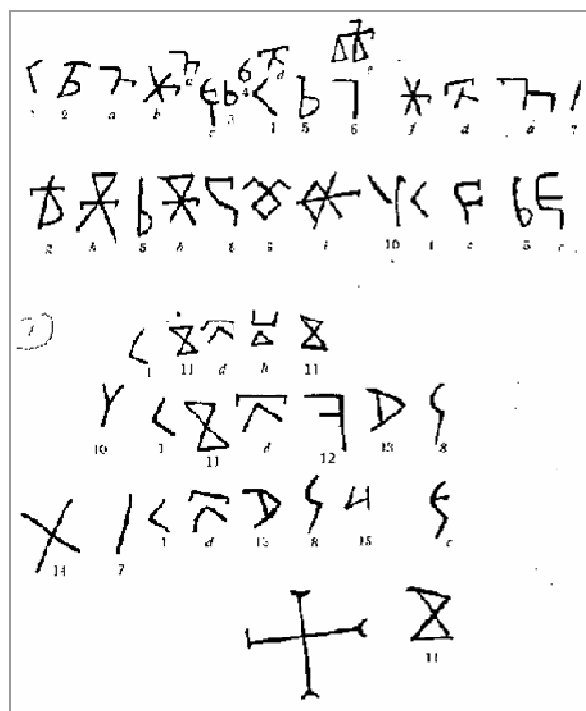
3) both exhibit metathesis of vowel with *l/r*:

ΕΣΤΡΥΓΗΝ *ästrugin* 'helmet'.

4) both have a prothetic *v-*:

ΒΕΨΕΜΙΖ *väčim* 'third'

Similar parallels between Hunnic and Proto-Bulgarian are extant in other fundamental features on other levels of the language. Both languages have identical suffixes and the lexicon of Hunnic and Proto-Bulgarian shows common roots, too (Pritsak 1982: 443-457). The facts reviewed above justify the application to the language in question of the term Hunno-Bulgarian.



Veselin Beševliev, "Etničeskata prinadležnost na runnite nadpisi pri Murfatlar". In: *Vekove 4*, 1976, pp. 12-22.

Runic inscriptions on stone from the cave church in Murfatlar, South East Rumania, 10th c.

¹⁰). All these examples, with references as to the sources they have been extracted from, are to be found in my forthcoming book *Hunno-Bulgarian as preserved in Slavonic*.

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Archaeological Continuity between the Xiongnu and the Huns

Eight Connections Supported by Written Sources

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New York*



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In 1990 and 1999 Miklós Érdy was invited twice to present his research results on Xiongnu archaeology by Harvard University's Inner Asia Committee. Frequent participant in international conferences (Presentations since 2002: Hermitage, St. Petersburg, Griaznov Memorial Conference, P.I.A.C. 45th meeting in Budapest. ICANAS in Moscow 2004. MONGOLIA, Noion uul Memorial Conference 2005).

Miklós Érdy has written numerous papers in the field of Xiongnu/Hun archaeology published in China, Hungary, Italy, Korea, Romania, Russia, Turkey, USA and Mongolia.

Abstract

New results are presented to help resolve a still existing scholarly controversy regarding the historical continuity between the Xiongnu of the Far East and the Huns in Central Europe. Demonstrating the presence of the Xiongnu in Central Asia and especially in Western Siberia is critical. Therefore I shall present:

1. A Xiongnu kurgan cemetery at Sidorovka on the Irtysh River, showing 10 groups of archaeological objects typical in Xiongnu graves.
2. Archaeological finds in the River Ili-Lake Balkhash area which are in agreement with the accounts of the Hou Han Shu.

A summary of the three most firmly established archaeological links will follow, together with maps of the finds throughout Central Eurasia. The three groups of finds are:

3. The bronze cauldrons with their characteristic handles
4. The Hunnic female gold diadems.
5. The partial (and symbolic) horse burials and their three usual grave structures.

Additional links between the Xiongnu and Huns are provided by:

6. The gradually increasing ornamentation of the cauldron's handle design, clearly traceable across Central Eurasia.
7. The distribution map of openwork belt buckle finds concentrating west of the Yenisei.
8. Map of petroglyphs depicting Hunnic-type cauldrons.

These eight archaeological links are supported by four ancient sources including the Wei Lueh, the Wei Shu, the Hou Han Shu, and a Sogdian letter found in a Chinese desert outpost.

The gradually increasing number of archaeological links and their agreement with Sogdian and Chinese written source material leaves me no alternative but to firmly accept the Xiongnu-Hun historical continuity throughout Eurasia.

The results will be presented to help resolve a still existing scholarly controversy regarding the historical continuity between the Xiongnu of the Far East and the Huns in Central Europe. Therefore a demonstration of the presence of the Xiongnu in Western Siberia and the middle of Asia is critical.

Some American and Russian scholars still oppose such historical continuity. In 1999 I heard a Russian scholar in New York stating that, while there are some archaeological finds on the west side of the Yenisei, he said, the Xiongnu did not occupy that land, it was merely under their influence. That is why I concentrated my research there.

Previous publications of this author (Érly 2001 and 2002), like this paper, present numerous facts and quote written sources

pointing to the historical continuity between the Xiongnu and the Huns. To preserve the stepwise approach I maintain the nomenclature of the sources. The people in the east, in the Chinese vicinity, will be referred to as Xiongnu, while for those living more to the west and in Europe I shall use the western term Huns. But the two names have been found to be interchangeable, also in contemporary written sources. As the first of the eight links I will discuss:

A Xiongnu kurgan cemetery near the River Irtysh at Sidorovka

The site is located on the eastern side of the river. Matiushchenko and Tataurova's (1997) book describes 5 kurgans with 19 individual burials. They did not attempt to analyze the ethnic affiliation of the cemetery.

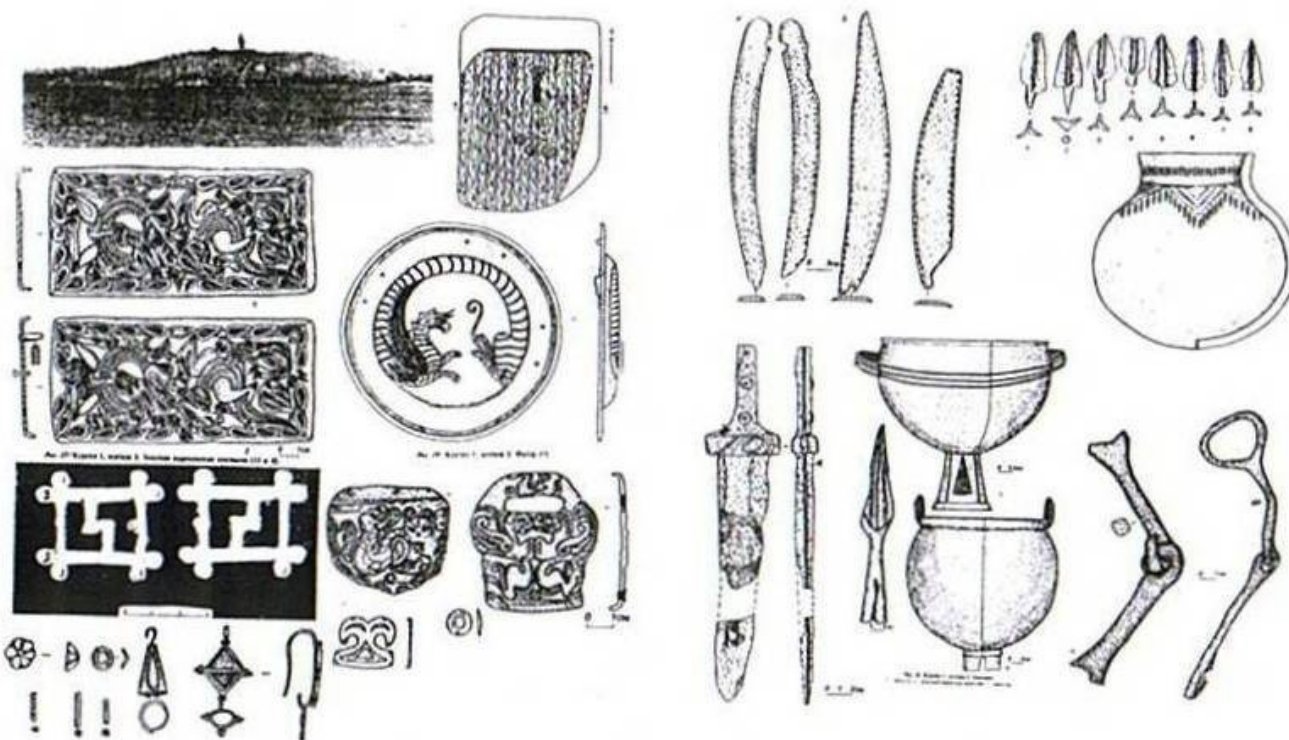


Figure 1. Xiongnu kurgan cemetery at Sidorovka near the Irtysh River. Ornaments, weapons, and other objects. (Selected from Matiushchenko and Tataurova 1997).

In Fig. 1 I show ten groups of typical Xiongnu objects excavated at Sidorovka, identifying the cemetery as Hunnic. All objects in Figure 1 have numerous parallels in the Far Eastern Xiongnu lands.

1. To the right of a view of Kurgan 1, a large wooden casket is shown from under Kurgan 2, grave 1. All kurgans have wooden caskets, 13 could be counted in the grave drawings.

Among the weapons and other objects we see:

2. Eight three-bladed arrowheads from Kurgan 1, and there is one more in Kurgan 4.
3. Bone plates and end plates of reflex bows in several graves.
4. Short sword and spear tips.
5. Several iron bits indicating symbolic horse burials were found in Kurgans 1 and 3.
6. There were three bronze cauldrons in the cemetery, two with openwork stands from Kurgan

1, grave 2 (shown) and one with missing corroded bottom and stand from Kurgan 5. Openwork stands occur only in Xiongnu designs, never in Scythian or Sarmatian cauldrons. The origin of the open stands most likely lies in the Ordos Steppe where many such cauldrons have been found.

Among the ornaments from Kurgan 1, grave 2 we see numerous gold plaques, such as:

7. Two gold falerae showing griffins with twisted bodies (one shown).
8. Other gold plaques, one with opposing griffins and another showing a tiger attacking a cervid.
9. Two gold step-like ornaments, exclusively of Xiongnu design.
10. Finally, the most important objects are a pair of gold belt buckles with turquoise inlay and

Xiongnu iconography. Each of them depicts two tigers biting into a wolf-headed Xiongnu dragon. The buckles are framed by a series of drop-shaped forms, which is a frequently used characteristic Xiongnu design.

The rich gold finds indicate that the highest ranked man of the ancient community was buried in Kurgan 1 grave 2. The eight three-bladed arrowheads next to his right femur also point to that. I would note here that in the large Hunnic cemetery at Kokel (Western Tuva) the highest ranked male was buried with only six three-bladed arrowheads. There were no gold objects in that grave.

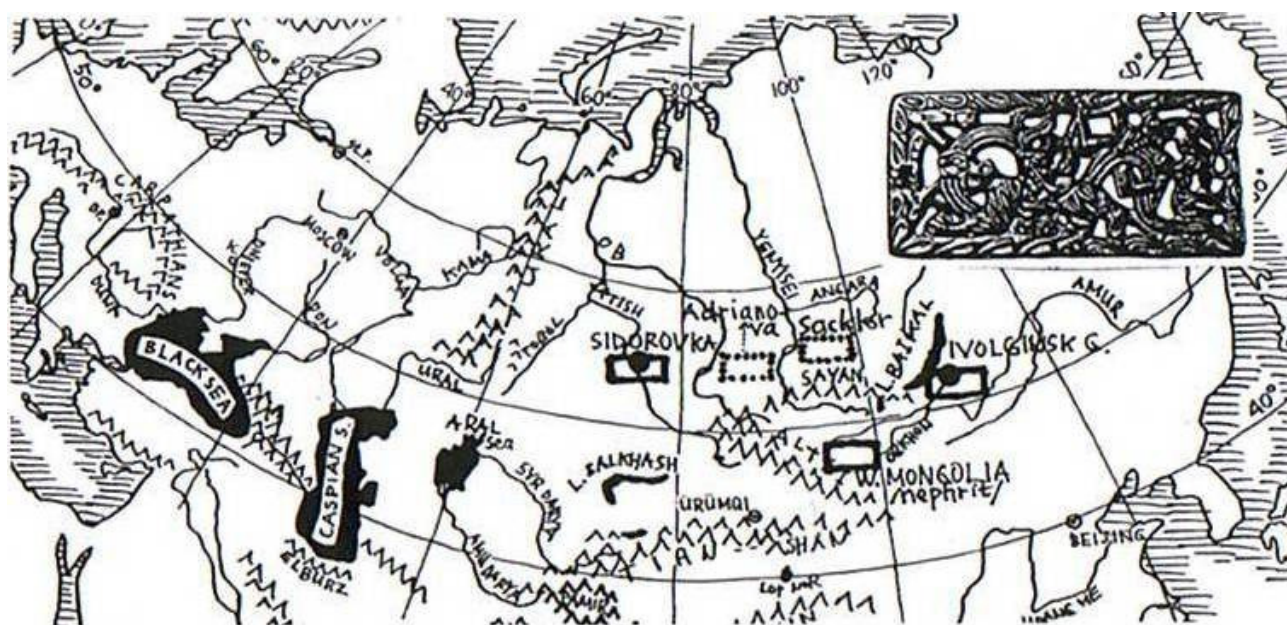


Figure 2. Five areas of finds with Xiongnu dragon design on the belt buckles in Central Asia. (Map by Érdy).

There are five such lupine-headed dragon designs known from Central Asia. The sites of these finds are shown in Figure 2. The one at Sidorovka is made of gold.

Three of the finds are made of bronze. One pair excavated at Ivolginsk is now kept in the Hermitage. There is one piece of unknown origin in the A. M. Sackler Collection. But the buckle has arsenic content, indicating that it originates from Southern Siberia. The third bronze find, a fragment, is in the Adrianova Collection in the Hermitage, most probably a Siberian find.

The fifth piece which is made from nephrite is an exquisite and rare find. This dark jade piece belongs to the Hotung Collection and is of unknown origin. It is an openwork piece of dark gray-green color. Such dark jades are mined only in Western Mongolia, an ancient territory of the Xiongnu. The mines are located in Bayanhongor, Hövsgöl and Dzavhan aymags. The National

Museum in Ulan Baatar has one dark jade piece of similar color. E. Bunker's (1997:274, 88) work and K. Linduff's (1997) treatise discuss this exquisite nephrite belt buckle design and report on the bronze and gold objects, too.

These five designs are very similar, although not identical. Newly acquired information (Dashibalov and Lbova 2002) reveals another such dragon belt plaque fragment, but of a more coarse design made of gilt bronze from Sharagol, excavated by A.I. Konovalov. And a very unique dragon design pitches two identical dragons against one another, made of bronze with borders similar to the previous one, found in a bronze cauldron by S. Miniaev at Derestuy (Dashibalov and Lbova 2002).

What these multiple parallels show me is that typical Xiongnu objects and the iconography can be found not only in ancient Xiongnu territories, but also far to the west at Sidorovka on the Irtysh

River. So if we raise the question, who may have carried the ten groups of Xiongnu objects and the

burial types to the Irtysh, the answer must be: the Xiongnu themselves.

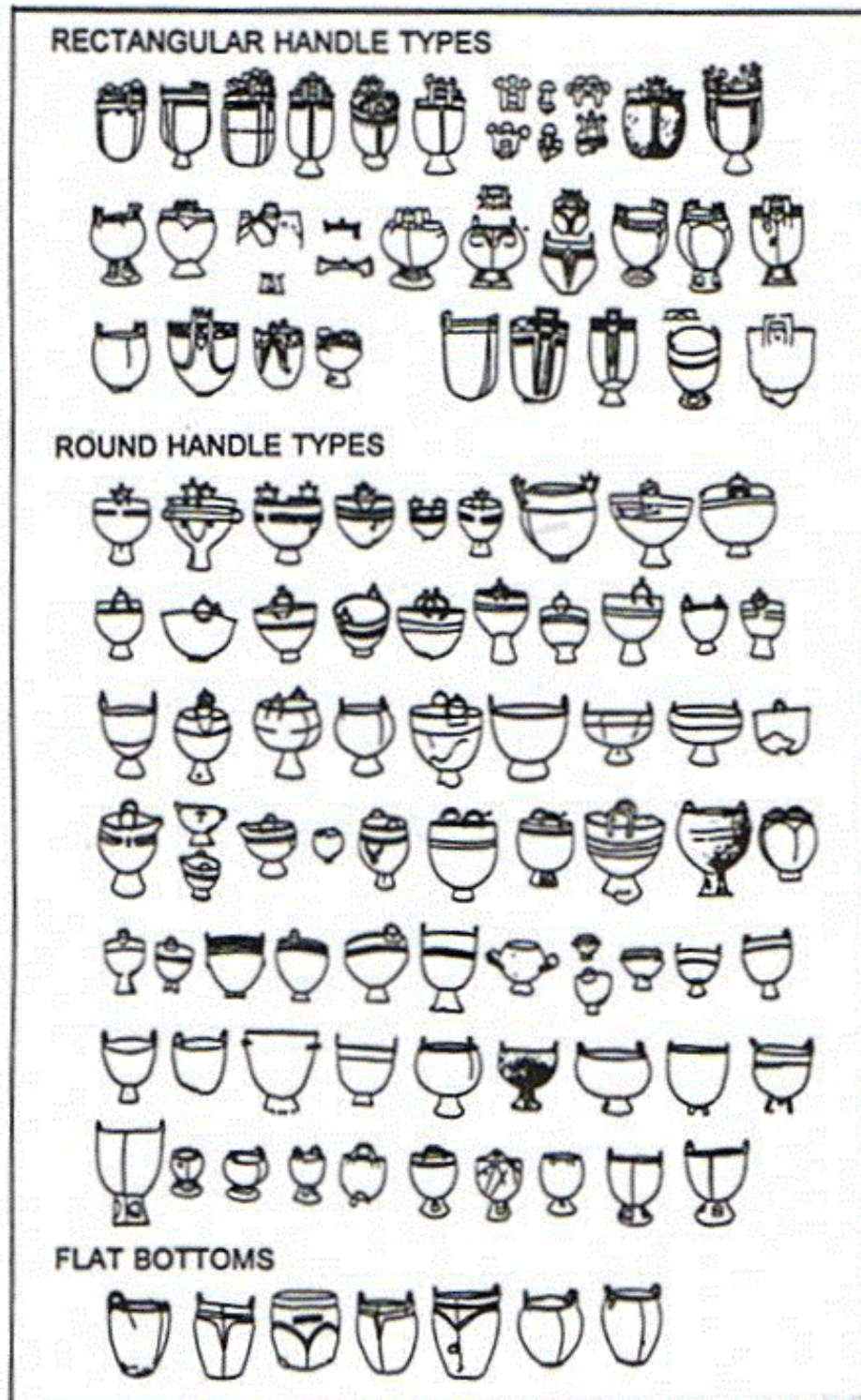


Figure 3. Xiongnu/Hunnic type bronze cauldrons from the Danube to the Huang He. (Drawings by Érdy).

A direct connection between the written account of the Hou Han shu and Xiongnu archaeological finds

The historical background: The Northern Xiongnu had suffered several defeats since 85 AD due to severe adverse conditions in the 70-s: epidemics, locusts, very severe winters, and famine.

In 91 AD four nomadic adversaries allied with the Chinese attacked the weakened Northern Xiongnu from four directions (North: Dingling, East: Xianbei, West: Wusun, South: Southern Xiongnu). To avoid destruction the Xiongnu and their Xanyu pulled out and left their homeland. The Hou Han shu describes how they fled to the West (Parker 1892-1893). The Hou Han shu is the first of four written sources I shall discuss.

The area mentioned as West was the Ili River - Lake Balkhas area, today's Semirechye, from where the Xiongnu reoccupied the Western Region, i.e. the whole Tarim Basin, from the Chinese and possessed it from 107 to 123 AD. This victory and reoccupation required great strength, so to achieve that they must have had a powerful

base in the Balkhash-Ili area. If we look at our three archaeological maps, focusing on the Ili-Balkhas area we can see archaeological finds on each map as follows:

1. A bronze cauldron was found by the mouth of the Künes River valley (site 4.7 in Figure 4) which is a tributary of the Ili.
2. Two gold Hunnic diadems from Chuluk Tau and Kanattas (sites 3.1 and 3.2 in Figure 6).
3. Two partial horse burials are at Kanattas and Kara Agach. A Xiongnu queen is buried at the latter (sites 3.8 and 3.9 in Figure 8).

So in conclusion, the Hou Han Shu indicates that the Northern Xiongnu went to the west, which was the Ili region. Indeed, in this very area we find their archaeological remains. These finds, however, are clearly analogous -without any substantial differences- with the many finds west of them reaching the centre of Europe.

Three major archaeological links between east and west will be discussed now together with their maps as referred to just above.

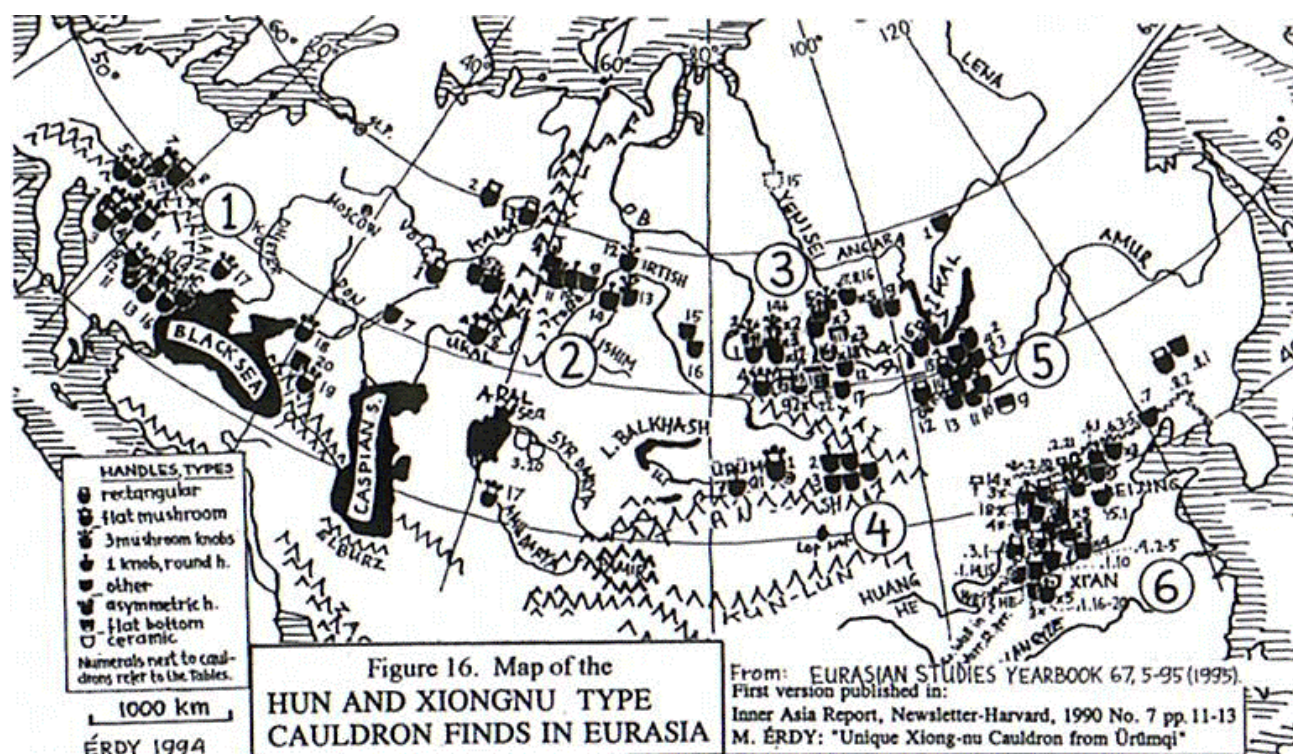


Figure 4. Map of the Hun and Xiongnu type cauldron finds in Eurasia. (Map by Érdy).

Hunnic type bronze cauldrons

Drawings to the scale of Hunnic type or Xiongnu type bronze cauldrons of Eurasia are shown in Figure 3 in bird's eye view. Originally, they were presented in 36 tables with details of 185 cauldrons (Érdy 1995).

Since such cauldrons also occur in petroglyphs on the western side of the Yenisei river, the carved scenes allow us to see the ways of their utilization.

The scenes show that they are used in

1. ceremonial, shamanistic cookings
2. ordinary everyday cooking and
3. may be put into the graves at funerals where ceramic copies might also be used.

The distribution of the cauldrons throughout Eurasia is shown in Figure 4. See Érdy (1995) for a more detailed discussion of these. The cauldron

finds cluster in six areas. The numbering according to the six areas is followed in other maps, too. The cauldron finds not only arch through Central Eurasia, they also mark the passages through the Ural Mountains (Yekaterinburg gap and Ural River valley) where the Huns entered Europe (370 AD).



Figure 5. Funerary diadems of Hunnic females.
(After Zsazetskaia 1994, Bóna 1993 and Tian-Guo 1986).

Gold diadems

The next group of finds mapped is the gold and gilt diadems of Hunnic noble women from the Yellow River to the Danube valley, arranged in Figure 5. They are encrusted with gems mostly of red color (almandine, garnet, carneol). For occasional color variation mother-of-pearl or green glass are also used. The earliest gold

diadem, also with beautiful mother-of-pearl pieces, dated to the 2nd cent. B.C., is from the Ordos region and was excavated at Xigoupan. I know of 20 such finds in Eurasia. Their design is highly ethnospecific. No other ethnic group had similar diadems. The distribution map of the gold diadems can be seen in Figure 6.

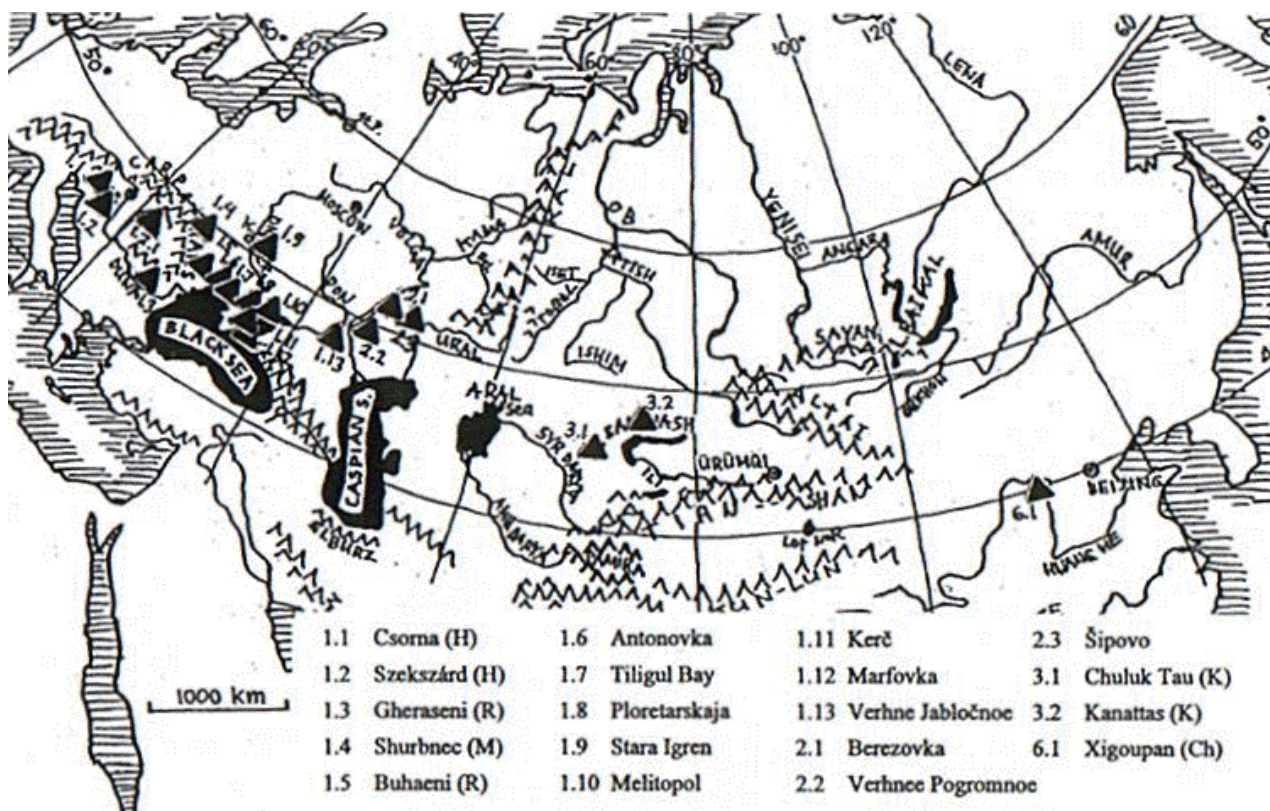


Figure 6. Distribution map of Hun/Xiongnu funerary diadems in Eurasia. (Map by Érdy).

Hunnic horse burials

The presence of the horse cult

Another archaeological link of major importance comprises the partial horse burials of the Xiongnu that can be found from the Danube valley to the Yellow River.

1. The skull and the four lower legs of the horse are found in the burial. Later, in the 2nd cent. AD the hide of a horse may also be seen in the grave. The horse is expected to come to life in the afterlife, since the *shadow-soul* or *iz* (a Hungarian term) resides in the head.

2. Figure 7.1 shows a special arrangement. It is a symbolic horse burial, in which the horse was not sacrificed and only horse gear was present, most importantly the bit. Since the bit is used in the mouth of the horse, the bit represents the head. Therefore the horse can come to life to serve his master in the afterlife even if only the bit is placed into the grave. Such symbolic horse burials may occur in any of the grave structures. The grave

drawings from the Pontic Steppes were selected from Zsazetskaia (1994).

3. Finally, a Hunnic grave may occur without any sign of horse cult.

The underground structures of the graves

In addition to the horse burials, we see three types of underground grave structures (Figure 7) which can also be followed from the Danube to the Yellow River. It is the underground grave structure and the presence of the horse cult that form the basis of my evaluation in this study.

Figure 7.2 shows a simple rectangular *pit grave* containing a horse skull and hooves.

Figure 7.3 shows a grave with an inner *shelf*, usually for the remains of the horse. The shelf can be found along the side or behind the head (side shelf, head shelf).

Figure 7.4 shows a grave with a *side chamber* (Hungarian: *padmaly*) which is carved in at the bottom of the wall of the grave. The dead body was

placed into the chamber which was closed off with wooden planks or stone slabs. The body is thus protected from the earth and lumps of soil when the grave is refilled. All three types of underground structures contained partial horse burials in Figure 7.

When examining the map in Figure 8 one will notice that in the Mongolian, Buryatian territories no shelf structures have been reported, at least not until =1998 when my map was constructed, however with one exception: Such a head-shelf arrangement was in fact reported by Konovalov at Ilmovaia Pad' in 1976. (Site 5.4 in Figure 8). The

shelf for the animal remains was not raised, but at the same level as the body of the deceased. Recently, however, Batsayhan (2003. Chapt. on Funerary Customs) referred to 37 Hunnic graves at Burhan Tolgoy by the Eg river (Arhangai) where - as I understand it - the wall on the righthand side of the deceased was formed lengthwise like a step to accomodate sacrificial animal remains, among them 12 horses' heads and lower legs. Other sacrificial animals beside the horse were mainly meant to provide food for the deceased in the afterlife.

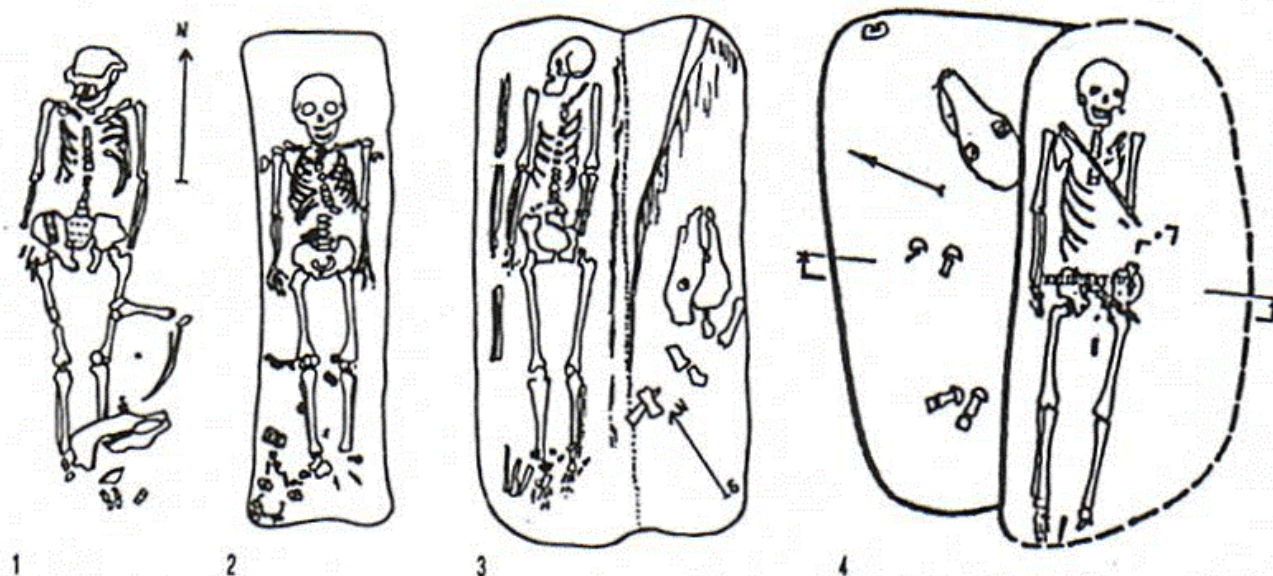


Figure 7. Hunnic partial horse burials and grave structures in Eastern Europe. (Selected from Zasetskaia 1994, p. 17-18, Fig. 3). Symbolic horse burial: 1 – pit grave, female, Pokrovsk.. Partial horse burials: 2 – pit grave, female, Verkhnee Pogromnoe, 3 – with shelf, female, Leninsk, 4 – with side chamber, male, Kubey.

Above the ground arrangements of the graves

The above of the ground arrangements of Hunnic graves can be three kinds. **1.** The burials can be demarcated by piles and circular or square line-ups of stones and rocks, the arrangement then being referred to as *kereksur*. **2.** The grave can lie under an earthen mound. **3.** Thirdly, a Hunnic grave can be unmarked.

Orientation of the graves

I paid attention mainly to graves connected with the horse cult. Graves without that cult, however, were found to be similar in orientation.

ORDOS, NORTH CHINA. The very early graves of proto-huns (*shanrong*, *rong*) and early Huns between the 8-5th cent. BC in the Ordos and the neighboring Sui Yuan (Hohhot) area tend to have the head oriented to the East (E). Such cemeteries are found at

Yuhuangmiao, *shanrong*, 8-5th cent. BC to E (475 graves)

Guoxianyaozi 7-5th cent. to NE (northeast)

Maoqinggou 6-3rd cent. BC, to E, E-NE

Taohongbala 5th cent. BC to NE

Yanglang, *rong*, 5th c. and 3rd cent. BC both to E.

Cemeteries around the 2nd cent. BC in the same area are changing to the N (north)

Daodunzi 2nd cent. BC to N (numerous graves)

Xigoupan 2nd cent. BC to N (nine graves)

The graves from the northern territories are most frequently oriented toward the north. Nevertheless, there are exceptions.

MONGOLIA. Noyon uul (the simple tombs) many to N. Golmod 26 graves to N. Darhan 6 graves to N. Tevsh uul many to N. Naimaa tolgoi many to N. Sul tolgoi to N-NE. Tahilt valley to N. Exceptions: Duulga uul to NW and three graves (without horse cult present) to SE as reported by Erdelyi and Cevendorzh (1989). Batcengel to E.

(in kurgan). In a recent excavation in Naimaia tolgoi a male and a female in one grave to S (Batsaihan 2003) (without horse cult).

BURIATIA. Ilmovaia pad 60 gaves to N. Derestuy 100 graves to N. Cheremuhovaia pad' 80 graves to N. Ivolga gorodishche 216 graves to N.

YENISEI area. Tepsey, Minusinsk to N. Aymirliq, Tuva to N, another grave to NW. Kokel, Tuva to NW. The large cemetery at Kokel has 381 graves (475 skeletons). Two-thirds of the graves are oriented to NW, a quarter of them to SW, some to the W and some to the N and a few to the NE. The highest ranking man's head is toward NW with six three-bladed arrowheads and a Hunnic clay copy of cauldron.

VOLGA valley, PONTIC STEPPE. The archaeological reports available often fail to mention the orientation of the dead in the grave. Pokrovsk is oriented to the N at Leninsk the head is to the NE. At Kubey by the Dnester the head is to the E.

CARPATHIAN BASIN. The reports available often do not mention the orientation. At

Budapest-Zuglo the head was oriented to the NW in a partial horse burial.

Consequently, we see that in the early centuries before the 2nd cent. BC the head position was oriented mostly to the E. In the following centuries it changed to the N, and remained fairly stable throughout Eurasia to Central Europe, but there have always been a number of exceptions.

Graves and tombs of Hun royalty and nobility

The graves of royalty and Hun nobility vary. They can be ten or more meters deep, there can be a large earthen mound above them. Many furnishings and garments may occur in the graves, sometimes even the funerary carriage, too. A chamber constructed from logs would usually house a wooden coffin. Such tombs are known from Noyon uul or the Tahilt Basin in Hovd aymak, and other locations. In this study I do not deal with such special tombs.

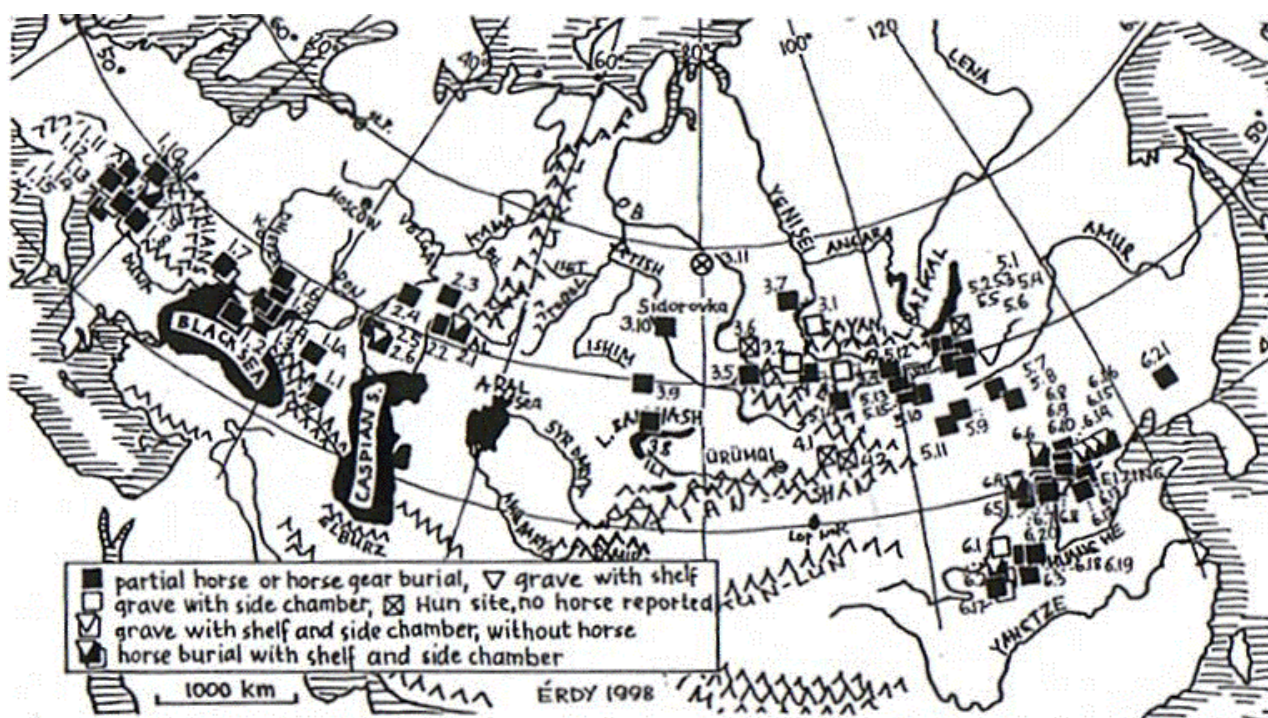


Figure 8. Map of the Hun, Xiongnu and Northern Barbarian partial (and symbolic) horse burials and grave structures in Eurasia. (8th c. B.C. to 5th c. A.D.) Map by Érdy.

The archaeological map of the location of the horse burials can be seen in Figure 8. This and the previous two maps (cauldrons, diadems) supplement each other, but basically they carry the same information. It should be noted that the map of the horse burials not only shows the archaeological sites, but also the inner,

underground structure of the graves (Figure 8). The legend will guide the reader. The three basic underground arrangements of the Huns can be found throughout Central Eurasia all the way to the Yellow River area. The numbered geographic locations of the finds are given in the Appendix to Érdy (1997 and 2001) while maintaining the six

regions established by the clustering of the bronze cauldrons throughout Central Eurasia.

The lastmentioned three archaeological maps discussed above provide three strong archaeological links indicating historical continuity between the Xiongnu of the Far East and the Huns of Central Europe.

An Overview of the Written Sources

In addition to the *Hou Han shu* referring to the Ili - Balhas region discussed above, our historical conclusions based on the archaeological maps are substantiated by two Chinese written sources and one Sogdian one.

The *Wei shu* of the Topa Wei (4-6th cent.) mentions that Su-t'e (Sogdiana) was called Yen-ts'ai in ancient times. And the Xiong-nu defeated and killed the Yen-ts'ai king and occupied his country.

The other source, the *Wei Lueh* (Ts'ao Wei period in 3rd cent.), says that the Yen-T'sai was also called *Alan-liao*, *A-lan*, or *A-lan-na*. This means that the *Xiongnu* defeated the Alans and occupied their land at the gates of Europe (analysed by Hirth 1901)

On the other hand, the second out of eight *Sogdian letters* (discovered by Sir Aurel Stein and discussed by Henning 1948 and Humbach 1985) speaks about *Huns* who occupied the Chinese capital Luoyang in 311 AD. This was achieved by the Southern Xiongnu under the son of the Great Shanyu Liu Yuen. So the two names Xiongnu and Hun are applied to the same people, once in the western and once in the eastern end of Asia.

A Parallel to the Hunnic Horse Burials

If we survey the funerary customs of the peoples of the steppes, we find that the *Scythians* and the *Avars* buried the complete horse. When I examined publications of hundreds of *Sarmatian* graves by the Don and Kuban rivers, there was no sign of horse cult in those large cemeteries. Not even horse gear was present even in rich graves. Bálint (1969, 1971) surveyed the steppe peoples and reported that the specific partial horse burials does not occur with Inner Asian *Turks* and cannot be found in *Khazar*, *Tölös* or *Barsil* graves. The *Alans* and *Danube Bulgars* were likely to put meat on bones in the graves for food, and only rarely buried a whole horse.

However, two to four centuries after the Huns retreated eastward from Europe, many partial horse burials occur again in Eastern and Central Europe in a form similar to the Hunnic burials. These burials are characteristic of the Magyars (Hungarians) whose 8th cent. (and earlier) graves in the Ural mountains occur in historic Hungary by the end of the 9th cent. Both the partial (I) and the symbolic horse burials (II), and in addition,

the three underground grave structures (III) the *pit grave*, the *shelf* and the *side chamber* are also present in the Hungarian graves. Even a fourth parallel is present in both Hun (Sidorovka) and early Magyar (in valleys of the Ural) funerary customs. It is the use of a small (10-14 cm), wide-mouthed, round-bottomed clay vessel placed by the head (IV). The details and their maps are presented in Érdy (1997 and 2001). Even if we cannot yet clearly detect the historical process by which these parallels came about, we wanted to register the archaeological evidence.

Finally, I shall briefly show three additional archaeological links.

Progression of the Cauldron Handle Design

As we observed the finds from east to west, I noticed that the most characteristic part of the cauldron, the handle, in our case the square handle, has a progressive sophistication, an enrichment of the design. Figure 9 shows this progression.

The upper row shows three *flat handles* (1-3 Ordos and neighboring Sui Yuan).

Twin arches with points are the next development (4-Gansu).

A pointed decoration on the rim is added to the twin arches (5-Jilin).

One knob occurs on a stem between the points (7-Transbaikalia).

Three knobs on stems are between the pointed rim decorations (8-Altai).

Five knobs on stems are visible (9- Ural River at Kizil Adir).

Five mushroom shapes take the place of the five knobs. They stand *separated* from each other (11-Caucasus, 10-Ürümqi).

The five flat mushrooms *touch each other* (12-Kapos Valley, Hungary)

Six mushrooms touch one another (13-Törtel, Hungary).

Two mushrooms are on the rim, not one on both sides of each handle

(14-Várpalota, Hungary).

The numerals following the archaeological sites in Figure 9 refer to the tables in Érdy (1995) discussing the details of each find. In Figure 9 we see a gradual progression of handle design from Ordos to Central Europe as a function of geographic locations spreading westward. Such a gradual change in this bronze art could not occur haphazardly but would develop only within a single coherent ethnic culture.

The dates of the vessels are tied to the Huns being present in that particular area. Their migration took place through Asia between A.D. 91 and 370 at which time they reached Europe and

defeated the Alans. Prior to their migration to the west the dates of the early vessels reach back into

the Warring States period, thus encompassing the stretch of a millenium.

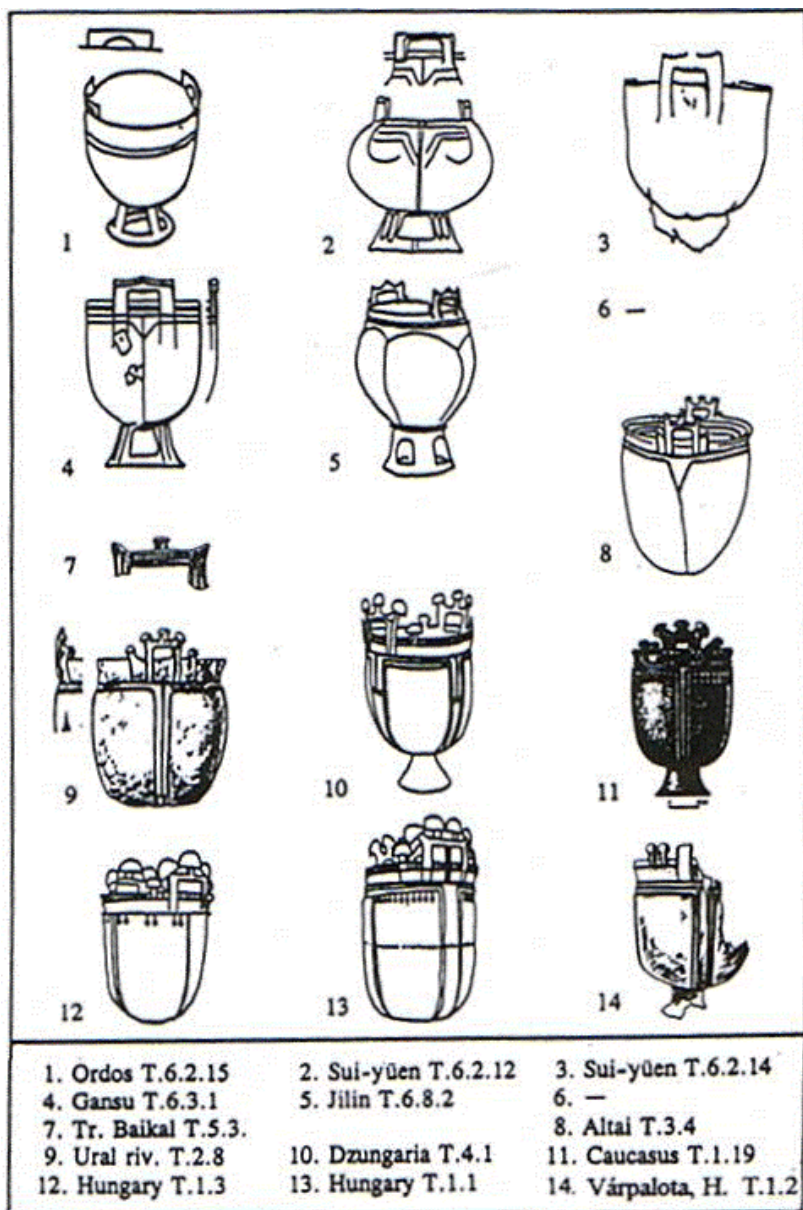


Figure 9. Progression of the cauldron handle design. (Arrangement by Érdy).

Hunnic Type Cauldrons on Petroglyphs

In 1996, I published a paper in which I reevaluated the petroglyphs or rock engravings in the Middle Yenisei Basin (the Abakan steppe on the left and the Minusinsk region on the right

side). Petroglyphs with Xiongnu type cauldrons are found only on the western side. Figure 10 is a summarizing tabulation of the petroglyphs (Érdy 1996), concentrating only on their important details.

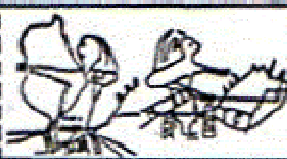
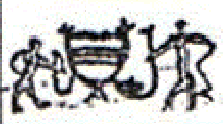





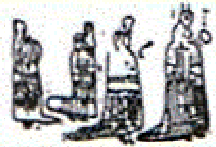




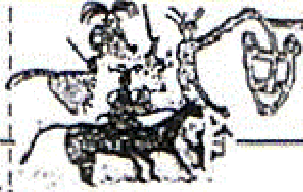
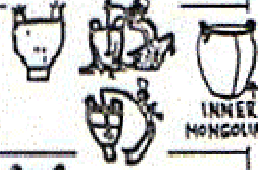


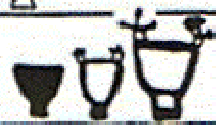


PETROGLYPH LOCATION	ROBED FIGURES w. HEADDRESS	ATTIRE OF WARRIORS		CAULDRONS
		TROUSERS	HEADGEAR	
SULYEK area Petroglyphs				
PODKAMEN Gravestone I				
PODKAMEN Gravestone II				
ARGOA MTN. Large Petr.				
ARGOA MTN. Small Petr.				
KIZIL KAYA Petroglyph				
IUS Petroglyph		man stirring cauldron in knee length trousers		
BOL'SHAIA Boiarsk. Pisan.				
MALAIA (Lesser) Boiarsk. Pisan.				

Figure 10. Summarizing tabulation of the petroglyphs with Hunnic type cauldrons west of the Yenisei. (Arrangement by Érdy).

Maenchen-Helfen (1951) wrote in a paper that the human figures in these rock carvings are Manichaeans priests. The Russian scholar Klyashtorniy (1959) argued that the human figures are rather Nestorian priests. This would mean that the rock carvings were made between the 7th to 10th centuries A.D., by the time Nestorianism reached this area.

Neither scholar, however, paid attention to the fact that the robed human figures are accompanied by carvings of Hunnic cauldrons as shown in Figure 10. Only relevant details of the

petroglyphs are presented here; their full renderings being available in Érdy (1996). Even in the reduced size of this summarizing illustration, the large petroglyph in the Argoa mountains (fourth row) depicts *bird masks being worn* and shows *trains of the robes* which represent the bird's tails. In another petroglyph at Kizil Kaya (sixth row) we see a robed figure standing in the middle of an elaborate scene with eight men, horses and nine cauldrons as shown in the full petroglyph. Two of the men are warriors with weapons, while the others are stirring something

in five of the cauldrons. The robed figure in Figure 10 also has a bird mask and holds up his hand on which we can count 6 fingers, a sign of the shaman profession, so we have to conclude that this is a shaman ceremonial scene. By the same account, the robed human figures with masks in the other petroglyphs in Figure 10 would also be likely to represent Hunnic shamans (Podkamen II and Argoa mountain, large).

On the western side of the Yenisei I found 47 engravings of cauldrons and - most importantly- each engraving has a bronze analog which was

excavated from the ground in the surrounding Yenisei Basin.

Consequently, I had to conclude that the engravings depicted Hunnic cauldrons and the robed human figures are Hunnic bird shamans, involved in shaman activities. From other sources it is known that there were "*lebed shamans*", i.e. *swan shamans*, active in the Abakan steppes as illustrated by Hoppál (1994:30, 52), and Holmberg (1927:plate 61).

I also drew a map of these petroglyphs represented by unfilled squares as shown in Figure 11.A.

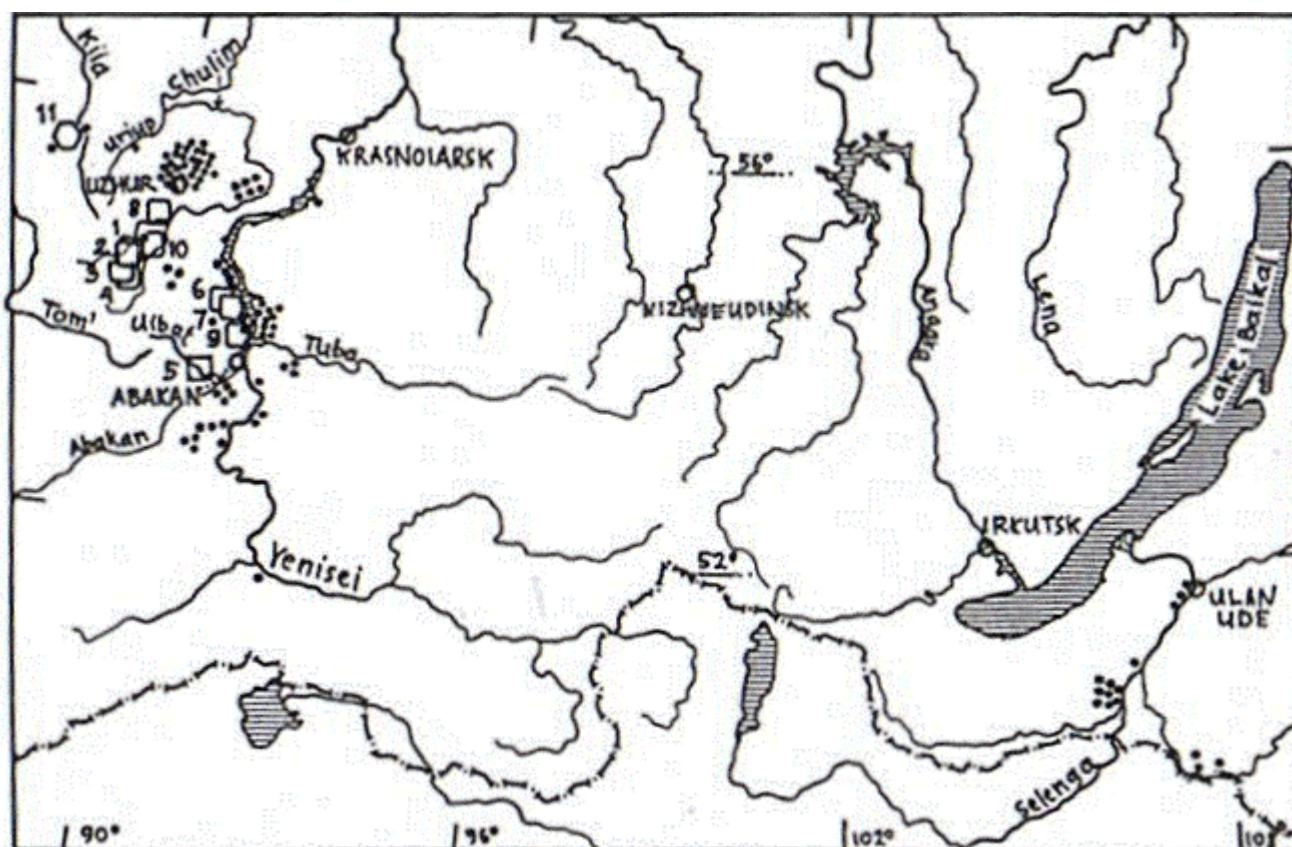


Figure 11A. Locations of the petroglyphs from the Hun Era (Unfilled squares by M. Érdy).
Sites: 1 and 2 Podkamen, 3 and 4 Argoa Mountain, 5 Kizil Kaya, 6 Lesser (Malaia) Boiar Petroglyph, 7 Great (Bol'shaia) Boiar Petroglyph, 8 Sulyek, 9 Oglakhty Petr

The Xiongnu belt buckles between Lake Baikal and the River Irtysh

In this section I utilized and selected material from the Russian Marianna Devlet's (1980) substantial paper. Figure 12 shows typical Xiongnu belt buckles occurring all over Central Asia with Xiongnu iconography and geometric animal style design. In 1980 Devlet did not establish an ethnic name for the population that had worn these belt buckles. Since then, Bunker's

(1997) work and K. Linduff's (1997) treatise, dealing with widespread comparisons of Central Asian bronze art, made it obvious that the belt buckles must have belonged to the Xiongnu. Figure 11 is Devlet's map, but only the dots representing the belt buckles, are her work. At the present we should concentrate only on these dots. The squares represent petroglyphs, their overlaid map to be discussed in the next section.

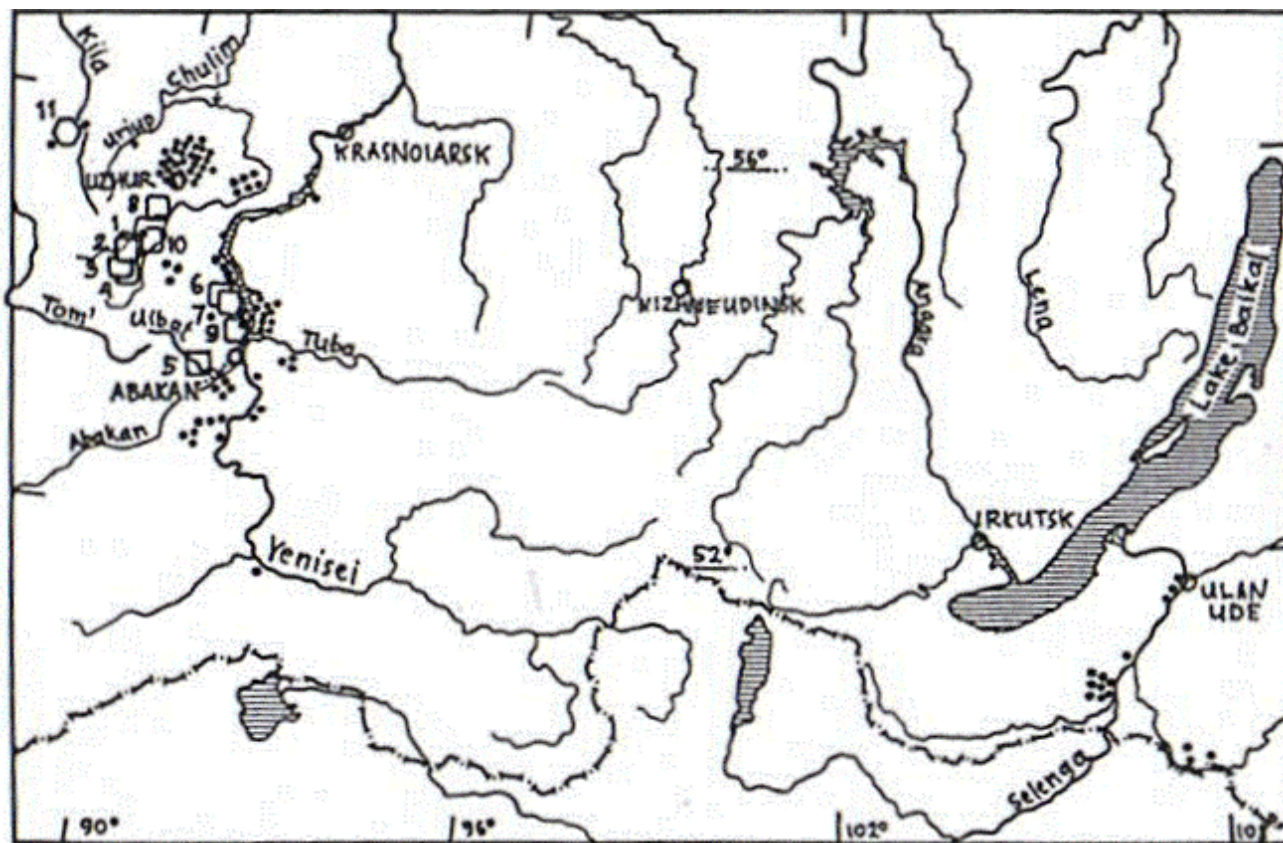


Figure 11B. Distribution map of Hunnic belt buckles in Siberia (Black dots after Devlet 1980).

No one doubts that the Xiongnu were present on the eastern bank of the Yenisei. They occupied that area in the 3rd cent. B.C. under Modun shanyu. If we count the finds on Devlet's map, there are 16 belt buckles on the eastern bank of the Yenisei in addition to other archaeological finds (not on the map). On the western bank and its vicinity there are 62 belt buckles. A very rich find, the Kosogol treasure with 30 belt buckles, was found together in a cauldron. At present this treasure is in the Krasnoyarsk museum. If we count Kosogol as only one find we still have 33 finds in the western vicinity of the Yenisei, whereas there are only 16 finds from its eastern bank.

This high frequency of belt buckle finds, more than double the number on the western bank, would not permit us to assume that this territory was not in the possession of the Huns, while there are many additional archaeological objects and cemeteries (Kokel, Sidorovka) west of the Yenisei indicating the presence of the Huns.

If we let Devlet's map of the bronze belt buckles overlap with the map of the petroglyphs we can see the combined results of their

distribution as shown in Figure 11. When analyzing these results we have to conclude that there is an excellent fit of the overlap of two independently achieved sets of data. This only reinforces the correctness of our conclusion, that the many archaeological finds indicate that the Huns lived and stayed long on the western side of the large river.

Encouraged by these complex results, and taking in datable archaeological finds and datable historical events, I constructed the map in Figure 13. The arrows are tagged by the dates and depict the likely movements of the Xiongnu across Central Asia to the west.

In summation: I presented cauldrons, gold diadems, horse burials and written sources plus five additional archaeological linkages, all demonstrating a historical continuity between the Xiongnu and the Huns. It would be hard to imagine a set of so far unknown data that could cancel this multifaceted agreement between archaeology and the written sources. Therefore I have no alternative but firmly to accept the Xiongnu—Hunnic historical continuity.



Figure 12. Xiongnu bronze belt buckle types and swan, funerary ornaments used between the Selenga River and the area west of the Yenisei. (Source material M. A. Devlet 1980).

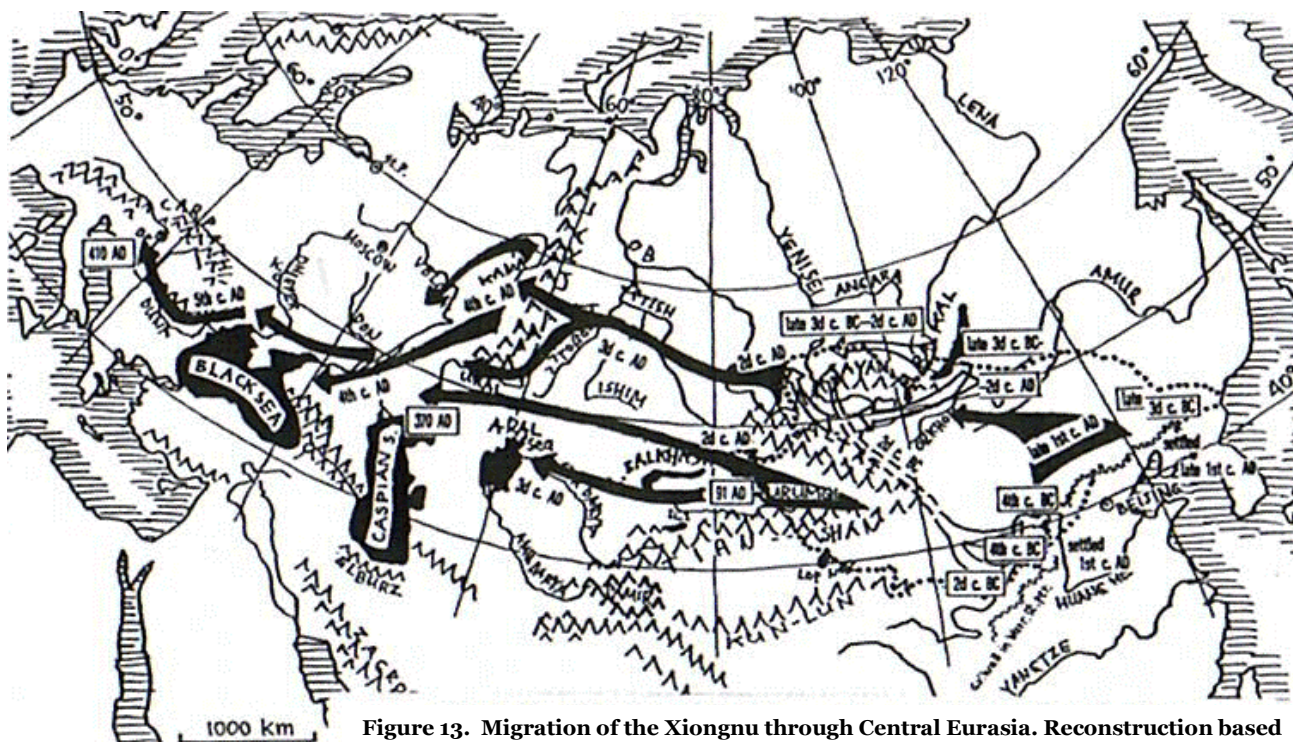


Figure 13. Migration of the Xiongnu through Central Eurasia. Reconstruction based on dates of archaeological finds and written sources. (Map by Érdy).

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Contextual and Constructional parallels between Mongolian Heroic Epics and Hungarian Hero Folk Tales and Folk Poetry

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Biography:

Izabella Horváth is MA in linguistics, BA in anthropology and BA in art history. She does fieldwork in China in folklore and anthropology of the northern grassland peoples (Mongols, Turks, Evenki, etc.). She has published 2 books and more than 30 articles on comparative ethnography and anthropology. Frequent presenter at CESS and other international conferences.

Introduction

The present study has grown out of a previous avenue of research of the type of Hungarian folk tale called the Son of White Horse. I published these results in both Hungarian (Horváth 1994) and English (Horváth 1995). In these papers I demonstrated the parallel story construction which exists among the Hungarian, Turkic and Mongolian hero folk tales, called the "Son of White Horse", and suggested that this type of story reflects the shamanic journey as well as the unique shamanic function and characteristics of a hero king within the world view of Turkic, Mongolian, and Hungarian peoples.

During my fieldwork in China (1992-1997) I was able to collect variants of this folk tale in Inner Mongolia Arguya Banner from Evenki informants, and in the Yunnan province from a Tibetan informant (unpublished MS, collected by I. Horváth, 1995).

This folk story still exists among the peoples mentioned, and the Hungarian scholar János Berze Nagy already suggested (1957;1967) that we can assume that the story looks back upon a long, shared, oral tradition among Hungarian and Altaic language-speaking peoples. Until the present, only negligible comparative work has been done on oral literature of the Hungarian and Inner Asian grassland, whereas numerous scholars for well over 60 years have called attention to this need, among them Gabor Luko (1942), László Lőrincz (1969; 1975;1981) and Géza Képes (1982). Vargyas has written extensively on particulars of the remnants of heroic epics in Hungarian folk poetry (Vargyas 1961, 1963, 1966, 1976, 1977, 1980).

Among the Chinese colleagues are the Yugur folklorist at the Central Minority University in

Beijing, Zhong Jingwen (1988) and the Mongol comparative folklorist at the Research Institute of Chinese Minority Literature at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Renjin Dorji (1990). Professor Lang Ying, a Turkologist from the Music Institute of the Conservatory of China, Beijing, concur with the view that a great many parallels exist in the heroic Yugur[1] folktales, Mongol epic poems, and Hungarian heroic folk tales. We discussed these extensively during my fieldwork in China in 1994, and after my lectures[2].

The present study is an attempt to give an overview of the parallels that exist regarding patterns of complete hero story types in a number of Mongolian heroic epics and Hungarian heroic folktales. The study deviates in approach from that of the traditional inventorying single isolated and unrelated motifs that may occur globally in a variety of stories (Aarne-Thompson, 1995).

While particular folk tale motifs can be found across the globe in the tales of various cultures, we propose the assumption, based on available literary and ethnographic data, that similarities of particular sequences of events and patterns, as the story unfolds and as its parts relate to each other, are more accurate indicators of how these folktales are related to each other and where their origins may be. Parallels of motif sequences found among cultures that may be presently geographically distant from each other—such as Hungarians and Mongolians—suggest distant, past cultural relationships and the sharing of a specific cultural sphere, reflecting cultural values and beliefs.

The present study can be divided into two distinct sections :

I. Content: story construction

- A. Story types, based on a sequence of events
- B. Characters and their specific qualities and attributes

II. Form

- A. Poetic construction
 - 1. *Continuous free-verse*
 - 2. *Line-initial alliteration*
 - 3. *Parallelism*
- B. Prose construction
 - 1. *Hyperbole*
 - 2. *Formulaic expressions*

I. CONTENT: STORY CONSTRUCTION

A. Story types based on sequence of events

The established categories used in this study follow those recognized by Laszlo Lőrincz (1981), a scholar of Mongolian and Turkic epics. He follows the conventional story motif categorization set up by folklorists (Aarne-Thompson 1995). Lőrincz recognizes five types of Mongolian epic story. Of these five types, four have parallels in Hungarian heroic folktales.

TYPE 1.

The hero goes on a quest to find a wife

This is the simplest type of Mongolian epic. The hero hears of or reads in his book of magic that far away there is a beautiful maiden destined to be his wife. Despite objections from his parents, he goes on the quest of winning the girl. After hard battles for fulfilling almost impossible conditions, he wins her. He returns with his bride to his own lands and lives with her happily until his old age. Another variation of this popular type is that the hero wins a wife in a battle with his enemy. After vanquishing the enemy, he takes possession of all his lands and riches, and marries the daughter of the khan.

The Mongolian epic of Geser Khan (Saraa 2003) has a number of sections where heroes again and again go on quest of a wife. This motif occurs in a number of Hungarian folk stories. One such folktale is called *Csinosomdrága* (meaning My-Handsome-Darling, which is the hero's name) and *Fanyuvo Vasgyuro és Hegyhengergető* (Tree-Puller, Iron-Kneader and Mountain-Roller) (Illyés 1972; 195-203).

TYPE 2

The hero goes on quest for riches

The Mongol hero gets wind of a distant hero whose possessions are so vast that he does not know what to do with them. Our hero decides to go on the quest of taking the possessions of this man. The heroes and their armies do battle, and

he who wins takes all the possessions of the other. In another variant, the hero is instigated to defend his own possessions from an aggressor hero and, as a result, when he vanquishes the aggressor, he takes possession of all the other's riches.

The Mongolian *Dzhangar Khan*, a Kalmuk epic, belongs to this category. Among the Hungarian folk tales the one titled *Szepmezoszarnya* (The Handsome-Wing-of-the-Grassland,) 1972), also belongs to the quest for riches category. The Hungarian hero often decides to "go to try his luck in the world", ending up rich and important, often as a king.

TYPE 3

The hero goes on quest for both wife and riches

This is a combination of the above two variants. The difference is that the events tend to be more detailed. There are varieties as to who attacks whom and detailed descriptions of the quest for a wife. The Mongolian: *Rinchen Bator*, a Buryat epic (Lőrincz 1981), and the Hungarian folktale entitled *The Prince Who Quests for a Wife* (Illyés 1972) are examples of this type.

TYPE 4.

The hero goes on quest of kidnapped wife

The hero goes on a hunt or goes out to count his horses and herds, sometimes engaging an enemy in battle on his way. When he returns home, however, he discovers that his goods and wife have been abducted. The kidnapper is mostly a supernatural creature, such as a *mangas* (Mongolian word for a monster), or a dragon. The hero is sitting and crying over his bad luck when he finds a letter or another message, secretly written by his wife, as to what steps he should take to save her. Sometimes the wife tries to dissuade him from the quest of finding her, saying that the enemy is dangerous. She tells him how to get magic weapons and where to find and destroy the receptacle of the spirit of the enemy, located outside of his body. Then the hero, following the instructions, starts upon the quest of liberation, riding upon his magic horse. After hard battle, he finally succeeds in defeating the enemy, brings home his wife and the wealth of the enemy as well, living happily into old age.

The Mongolian epic of *Harhohul Baatir* (Lőrincz 1980) is an example of this type. It is significant that Genghis Khan's father also had to get his wife back from the enemy who had kidnapped her, as it is recounted in the *Secret History of Mongols* (Cleaves 1982).

The Hungarian folktale *Az Égigérő Fa* (The Tree that Reaches the Sky) and *Vitéz János és Hollófernyiges* (The Hero John and

Hollófernyiges the Monster) (Illyes 1974; 430-453) run parallel in content and sequence to this type of Mongolian epic.

B. The Story Characters and their specific qualities and attributes

Both Mongolian epics and Hungarian folktale actors show similar, often the same characteristics and qualities.

1. Hero (main character)

His birth is unusual (born of an old mother who conceives miraculously by eating some plant. In the case of Son of White Horse (Arany: 1979), he is born of an animal (horse, sheep). He can speak at birth and very quickly grows into adulthood. He has superhuman strength and valor even as a child, and often superhuman knowledge. He has magic powers, and can change into animal shape, and with the aid of his lover or horse, is able to resurrect from dead if killed. He follows his destiny to do great deeds. He is kind, generous, just, benevolent, but rootless to the enemy. The destruction of an evil enemy brings rewards: a beautiful wife, the wealth of the enemy, or the kingdom of a grateful king whose daughter was rescued by the hero. In such a case, the hero often becomes the new king and rules justly for a long time.

The title "hero" or "valiant" is often a part of the name of the hero or the title of the story both in Mongolian and Hungarian. In the story he is often referred to by this term. The Mongolian epic called Rinchen Baatir means Rinchen the Hero. In the epic Geser he is repeatedly called Geser Baatir.

Similarly, in the Hungarian folk stories *Rózsa Vitéz* means Rose the Hero; *Vitéz János* means John the Hero. The 13th century legends of the popular Hungarian king and Christian saint from the royal house of Árpád, King László, even today is referred to as "Bátor László", meaning László the Hero in Pázmány Péter Elektronikus Könyvtár (<http://www.katolikus.hu/szentek/0627-92.html>. 2005-9-16). Toldi, a Hungarian epic poem written in the 16th century (Ilosvay 1574), and reworked into a trilogy by János Arany (Arany 1964) in the middle of the 19th century, speaks of a hero of superhuman strength and his quest for honor and justice in the face of treachery and abuse.

2. The magic horse (táltos ló in Hungarian)

The importance of the shamanic horse cannot be overemphasized in the Mongolian and Hungarian stories. This animal is the hero's main and constant companion and helper on his quest. Indeed all the heroes have a special close relationship with their horse. It often saves the

hero's life, it is loyal to him and even resurrects him from the dead. The horses have supernatural powers. A *taltos* can fly as swiftly as thought; it can talk and knows of coming events ahead of time. It can change into other animals or objects. The hero must earn him with service from his evil enemy who keeps the animal imprisoned. At first it is a scrawny colt, but when earned and fed with unusual fodder (ambers, or the best oats), changes into a handsome mount with shiny trappings. It has 4-6 legs and is destined to belong to the hero and nobody else.

In these stories the horses often have names (even if the princess or the enemy does not). Mongolian epic heroes and all Hungarian folktale heroes have such a horse. The important role of the magic horse (*táltos ló*) is clearly evident, and can be said to look back on a long tradition, in the widespread legend of King László, the popular king saint of the Hungarian royal house of Árpád. His *taltos* horse was called Szög (a light brown color of the horse). It could fly, talk, accompanied him to battle, and saved his life many times (Képes Krónika, 1984; 239-242).

3. Lover or wife of the hero

The following are characteristics of the wife, lover, or the woman the hero quests for. She is very beautiful, kind, destined to be hero's wife; she often knows her destiny and has magic powers, such as the ability to be able to change herself, as well as the hero, into various animals or objects. She is the most important helper of the hero—besides the *taltos* horse—on his quest. In some versions she is the prisoner or is kidnapped by the hero's enemy. She is a princess, a fairy queen, or another supernatural being. Among her other magic powers is her ability to bring the hero back from the dead to help him find her in the enemy's territory.

The woman destined to be the wife of the hero in the epic of Geser Khan have these qualities. Among the Hungarian folk tales, the heroines of the following stories have the same qualities: Árgyílus Királyfi és Tünder Ilona (Prince Árgyílus and The Fairy Ilona) (1943), Világszép Erzsébet (Elizabeth the Beautiful) (1971) Égigérő Fa (The Tree that Reaches the Sky) (1948 45-51); *Vitéz János és Hollófernyiges* (Hero John and Hollófernyiges the Monster) (1972: 430-153). *Rózsa Vitéz* (1972: 226-229).

4. The enemies

In both the Mongolian epics and the Hungarian heroic folktales the enemies share similar characteristics. They are ugly witches, anthropomorphic dragons, monsters, or even rival kings. They all possess magic powers. They all want what they want, regardless of the

consequences and live to destroy the hero. These enemies can also cause suffering or danger to the society. For example, they often steal the sun or the wind, causing starvation and chaos in a kingdom as vengeance because their requests were initially denied. Such enemy does not listen to reason, and has to be destroyed to end the trouble and suffering of innocent people.

A male enemy may also kidnap the hero's wife and force her to be his wife. He can change into an animal or an object at will, and sometimes his strength is located outside his body. If the hero finds where the enemy's strength lies, the enemy is automatically destroyed. The hero must first wrestle and then fight an enemy until death, which is the end and at the same time the resolution of the story, ending the hero's quest. The destruction of evil brings rewards: a beautiful wife, the wealth and kingdom of the enemy, or the kingdom of a grateful king whose daughter was rescued by the hero. In such a case, the hero often becomes the new king.

In the Mongolian epic, Geser's many enemies are evil spirits who try to destroy him in a continuous feud. They cause draught, swallowing the sun and the moon.

The Hungarian folk story Szélkötő Kalamona (Kalamona the Monster who Ties up the Wind (1972:516-531) is a monster who steals the wind because the king refuses to give him his only daughter in marriage, so no rain clouds can form, resulting in terrible drought and suffering for the kingdom (1972:516-531).

In both Geser's stories and the Hungarian folk tales some female enemies, often the mother of the major enemy, have the unusual feature of long noses made of iron or brass (MNL-EK :2005-9-11).

5. The hero's companions and helpers

The hero's helpers can be animals or people.

a. Animal helpers: Animals become helpers to the hero through the magic objects they had previously given to the hero for future use, as reward for his good deeds toward the animals. By using these objects, the animals are evoked in

time of trouble to help the hero. Animal helpers can be from water (fish, turtle), land (fox, dog) or air (duck, eagle, lark). Some animals may be imaginary, such as the griffin or big bird who helps Son of White Horse escape from the underworld.

b. Human helpers: An old man or woman act as helpers by giving direction, advice, knowledge, shelter and food, or magic objects to the hero.

c. Companions: Competitive companions or older siblings either start out together on a quest or become sworn brothers to the hero by having been beaten in wrestling matches. As the story develops, they become traitors, or secondary enemies or obstacles, to the quest because they become rivals for the same quest.

The Geser Mongolian epic teems with such characters, and their parallels can be found in the Hungarian folk tales *Égigérő Fa* (The Tree That Reaches the Sky)(1948 45-51), *Fehérlófia* (Son of White Horse) (Arany 1959); *Vitéz János és Hollóferynyiges* (1948 45-51) and numerous other hero tales. In the introduction of his two volume folktale index to Hungarian folktales, Berze Nagy János already determined in 1957 that Son of White Horse has Siberian and Turkic parallels and is one of the most archaic Hungarian folktales.

II. FORM

A. Poetic construction

Géza Képes and László Lőrincz both mention that Hungarian and Mongolian (and Turkic) poetic construction use line-initial rhyme (alliteration) as a poetic and aesthetic device. However, they pay no further attention to it in their work and bring no Hungarian examples. Lőrincz identifies four constructional features in the heroic Mongolian epic poetry. Below are a few examples of the many that exist in Hungarian of all five types of construction: 1. Continuous free verse, 2. Line-initial rhyme (alliteration), 3. Parallelism, and 4. Hyperbole. A fifth, 5. Formula expressions, are another very important feature.



Wrestling at the Naadam Festival which was held at Karakorum in Mongolia in the summer of 2005.
A bout in progress. © Daniel Waugh

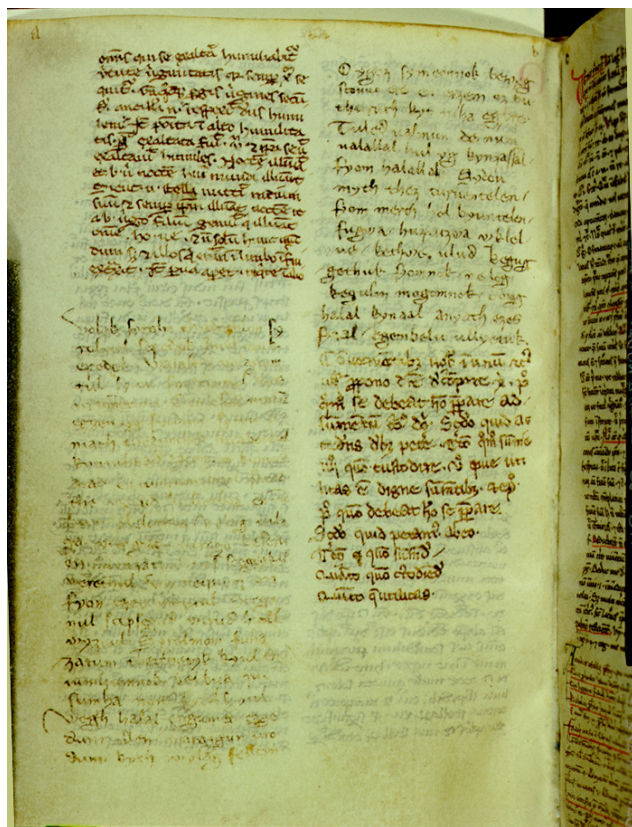
1. Continuous free-verse (no stanza break) characterizes the Mongolian epics, such as can be seen in the epic of Geser. This form can be found in Hungarian prayers, one composed as early as the 14th century. It is called *Ó-magyar Mária siralóm* (Ancient Hungarian Lament of Mary (for the dead Christ)). Although the subject is now Christian and only of 50 lines, the verse has many features of non-Christian origin (which will be discussed further below), among them the free verse form:

Volek siralom tudotlon
Sirolom sepedik
Buol oszuk, epedek.
valsz viagumtuul-
Zsidu, fiodumtuul,
Ezes urumemtuul.
O, en ezes urodum
Eggyen igy fiadum,
Sirou anyat tekuncsed,
Buabeul kinyuhad!
Szemem kunyuel arad,
En junhum buol farad.
Te verud hullottya
En junhum olelottya.

Valag, vilaga,
Viragnak virage!

Keseruen kinzatul,
Vos szegekket veretul.
Oh, neked en fiom,
Ezes meezul!
Szegenyul szepsegud,
Virud hioll vizeu.
Sirolmom, fuhaszatum-
Tertetik kkiul
En junhumnok bel bua,
Ki sumha nim kiul.
Vegy halal engumet
Eggyedum illyen,
Maraggyun urodum,
Kit vilag fellyen
O igoz Simeonnok
Bezzeg szovo ere;
En erzem ez buturut,
Kit hiha egire.
Tuuled valnum,
De num vallalal,
Hul igy kinzassal,
Fiom, halallal.
Zsidu, mit tesz,

Turventelen,
Fiom mert hol
Biuntelen.
Fugva, husztuzva,
Uklelve, ketve
Ulud.



The Old Hungarian Poem "Laments of Mary" (Ómagyar Máriásiralom), digitalized by the Széchenyi National Library.

2. Line-initial alliteration

Line initial alliteration is another feature shared by both Mongolian and Hungarian poetic traditions. The verses found in the Mongolian chronicle, the Secret History of the Mongols (Cleaves 1982), composed in the 13th century, clearly demonstrate the line initial alliteration:

Qurban alda beyetu
Quanajin bobo idesitu
Qurban quabqur quayaq emuscu
Qurban huqa jutgu'ulju ayisu je
Qortu gu'un-i
Qotola-yi jalgi'asu ... (Cleaves, 1982)

On example of this type of alliteration in Hungarian is found in several places in the above given free verse of the 14th century Lament of Mary:

Kegyuggyetunk fiomnok,
Ne legy kegyulom mogomnok,
Ovogy halál kinaal,
Anyat ezes fiaal
Egybelu ullyetuk! (Taxner-Toth, 1986)

Vilag vilaga
Viragnak viraga!
Keseruen kinzatol
Vasszegekkel veretel
...
Szegenyul szépeged

Hungarian ballads also exhibit this form.

Mert a nap hosege eri,
Meg kell arcomnak hervadni,
Mert az a bubanat eri.

(Bujdosóének (Song of the Exile))

Lattam en halottat, de ilyet sohase,
Kinek az o laba felszokoleg alljon,
Kinek az o karja oleloleg alljon!
Kinek a o szája csokololag alljon!

(Ballad of Ilona Gorog; Kállos:1971: 421-428))

Dunanak feneke; kpporsom feneke...
Dunanak ket szele; kprposem ket szele...
Dunanak habhai; az en szomfodelem...
Dunakak halai: koporso szigei...
Dunai halacsak: az en siratoim...
Az egi madarak: az en enekloim....

(Három szép lány (Ballad of Three Beauties); Kállos:1971)

3. Parallelism

a. Repeated thoughts and ideas in two consecutive lines is a type of parallelism exhibited in both Mongolian epics and Hungarian folksong lyrics and poetry.

In the Mongolian epic, Geser Saraa (2003) Geser Epic at:

<http://www.buryatmongol.com/geser.html>*, such parallelism abound.

Here are a few examples:

They pulled up a golden table set with delicious food,
They pulled up a silver table set with beautiful food,
...

Two great tenger talked about old and new things,
Two great gods told each other stories.

*This site gives a good translation of the Mongolian epic. The bibliography at the end of this paper also lists references in the original Mongolian or in Chinese translation.

*Two great tenger,
Two great gods,*

*They split apart a dried-up tree with their
cursing,
They bent and broke a living tree with their
arguing.*

(Saara (2003) Geser--Halaa 1, part 1 pg 11-14[3])

This parallelism is found in the following Hungarian folksongs:

*Vesse fel pololszela belso szobadat,
Dutse fel lpokolszel elso pohar borod!*

*May the wind from hell disarrange your rooms,
May the winds from hell upset your first glass of
wine!*

(from the ballad of Nagy Bihar Albertne;
Ortutay;1979:223-224))

*Fejinel kezdjete, talpig tekerjete,
A sok ingyen gyolcsot fejire kossetek.
Fejenek kezdjete, talpig szurkozsatok,
Talpanal kezdjete, vegig megguyjtsatok.*

*Start from the head and wrap her until her heels
Tie all the free linen upon her head!
Start from her head and tar her until her heels,
Start from her heels and set all of her on fire!*

(The Ballad of Barcsay or the Unfaithful Wife;
Ortutay;1979: 141-142)

b. Another kind of parallelism is called analogous parallelism, which is the repetition of same words with maybe only one word altered. The epic of Geser has many such lines:

*On the ninth day they talked about important
things,
On the tenth day they talked about more
important things.*

(Saraa:2003;Geser-Halaa 1, part 1 pb 12)

..and two other lines from Renchin Batir epic:

*For three months they rode upwards,
For three months they rode downwards.
(Lőrincz :1981)*

Two Hungarian ballads exemplify analogous parallel forms :

*Ide is eljonnek csudahalott latni,
A tied is eljo, szep Gorog Ilona,
A tied is eljo, Szep Gorog Ilona.*

*They will all come to see the wondrous corpse,
Yours will come too, beautiful Gorod Ilona,
Yours will come too, beautiful Gorog Ilona.
(From the Ballad of Gorog Ilona; Kallos;1971)*

*Met latjak buntelen vagyok
Mert latjak buntelen vagyok.*

*Because they will see that I am guiltless,
Because they will see that I am guiltless.*

(From the folksong Song of a Captive;
Miklos;1972;Vol. I.)

B. Prose construction

1. Hyperbole

Hyperbole is the exaggeration of numbers, events, accomplishments in the epics and folk stories. Both Mongolian epics and Hungarian poetry and some old prayers abound in such exaggerations.

*Then he put on his head a mink hat as big as a
haystack
He then girded on a sword eight eels long and
eight ells wide.*

...
*Han Hormasta took out a pipe as big as his
forearm*

...
*Smoking a pile of tobacco as big as a moose's
ear.*

...
*His empty body flew away from the force of the
kick,
Landing on the far side of three mountain ranges.*

...
*Having done that, they (3 sons of Sargal Noyon
Khan) became worse and worse,
They were eating one steer a day.
(Saraa (2003) Geser--Halaa 2 (part 1. p. 11)*

In archaic Hungarian folk prayers such hyperbole exists as well.

*Majd meglátja szent fiat,
terdig verbe,
Konyokig konnybe.*

*She sees her holy son
Up to his knees in blood*

*Up to his elbows in tears.
Nazareti Jezus kokoporsoba ki van teritve
Hetvenhet mely sebei kinyiladozva*

*Jesus of Nazareth is laid out in a stone casket,
With seventy-seven deep open wounds.*

*(a Szuzmaria) Szentseges szent fiat
Karjan hordozza
Ejfelto! ejfelre
Hajnalrol hajnalra*

*(the Blessed Virgin), her Holier than Holy son,
She carries in her arms
From midnight to midnight,
From dawn to dawn.*

(Erdélyi: 1976)



There are apparently no age or weight groups; so you can find very big guys wrestling small ones, and old ones wrestling young ones. © Daniel Waugh

There are exaggerations in Hungarian folktales as well. For example, in the Son of White Horse folk story, the hero smashes a dragon enemy into the ground so hard, he sinks in up to his knees, elbows, shoulders, etc.

2. Formulaic concepts and expressions

Specific formulas and patterns of expressing exist in the Mongolian epics and Hungarian hero stories of which a number will be mentioned below. These formulas appear again and again. In this short study, I shall list only a few such formulas.

a. If the hero marries the daughter of a khan, he will get half the khan's treasure and kingdom as dowry. This concept is always mentioned when the hero is told of a beautiful princess who is to be his wife or who is to be married to the hero who can win her through the fulfillment of difficult tasks. The khan says, "I will give you my daughter and half of my kingdom if you can fulfill or succeed at (...killing the enemy, a dragon, or fulfill a number of impossible task.)"

In the Mongolian epic, Geser Nyuhata Nyurgai and Temeen Jargalan received their dowry:

Half of the subjects of Temeen Ulaan's kingdom
... Half of the gold of Temeen Ulaan's treasure.

(Saraa;2003)

Hungarian; all hero tales (*Égigérő fa*=The Tree that Reaches the Sky):

...The king proclaimed that he who can bring an apple of that tree, he will give him his daughter and half his kingdom after his death.

(Elek:1968;45-51)

It is significant to note that Priskos, the Byzantine chronicler, wrote that Attila, the king of the Huns, was promised Honoria the sister of the Roman Emperor and with her he demanded half of the Roman Empire (Gordon:1993). This demonstrates that according to the Central Asian Grassland cultures, to which both the Mongols and Hungarian belonged at one time, the dowry due to a hero upon his marriage to the daughter of another ruler included extensive territories, or at least, the hero had legitimate claims to such territories in the Grassland tradition.

b. Both Hungarian and Mongolian heroes engage in wrestling matches with a contender or the enemy. This requires that they grab each other by the belt or around the knees and the winner bring down the enemy by smashing him into the ground. This final act is expressed clearly and repeatedly in these words after each match.

The Mongolian epic Geser:

*..Zasa Mergen Baatar.... grabbed and shook the body of Aagaan Hasar,
Throwing him down to earth,
Where he became stuck in the ground...*

(Saraa:2002)

The Hungarian folktale, Son of The White Horse:

*...He smashed the dragon into the ground so hard he got stuck in it
up to his waist (or knees or neck)*

(Arany:1979)

a. The specific, detailed description of the heroine who is destined to be the wife of a hero
The description of her features is given in very similar detail in both the Mongolian epics and Hungarian folktales. Often she is likened to the sun, the moon, or the stars.

The Mongolian epic Geser describes the girl who

*... was beautiful...as one of the stars of the heavens,
Like the full moon*

(Saraa:2003)

The Hungarian hero tale, The Ugly Prince and the Beautiful Princess describes her in similar terms:

*..Szep volt mint egen a csillag...
(She was as beautiful as a star of the heavens)*

(Elek:1968)

d. When the hero goes on his quest looking for the enemy, he meets an old woman or man into whose house he enters politely and with deference.

In the Mongolian epic Geser:

*He stepped over the silver threshold with grace
...
He opened the pearly door beautifully
He gave his greeting to the lord Segeen Sebdeg Tenger
He wished health to his wife Sesen Uugen*

(Saraa:2003)

The Hungarian hero story, *Égigérő fa* says this:

*... Night fell as he reached the house. He saw an old woman there
in the door of the kitchen...Janos approached and greeted her
politely: May God give you good evening, my dear Grandmother...*

(Elek:1968)

e. The helper asks the hero why he has traveled so far away from his home.

In the Mongolian epic, Geser:

What are you doing in such a far away place?

(Saraa:2003)

The Hungarian hero story *Szélkötő Kalamona*:

*Mit csinatsz itt ahol a madar sem jár?
(What are you doing here, where
Not even a bird flies?)*

(Illyés;1972:516-531)

f. The hero throws an object over his shoulder as he is fleeing his evil enemy. This object, usually a comb, becomes a dense forest and prevents the enemy from pursuing the hero.

The Mongolian hero story "The Gold and Silver Ankle Bones":

...When the old woman (demon) was very close, the little boy (hero) threw his comb before her of which grew an immense, thick forest ...

(Saraa;2003)

g. The hero asks a female helper to find out what object contains the soul of the enemy. IF the hero can destroy this object, he can destroy his enemy.

The Mongolian epic Geser:

Geser asked where the demon's strength lay. She told him it was in his big toe.

(Saraa;2003)

In the Hungarian hero story Székkötő Kalamona, the hero asks one of the captive princesses:

"In what does he keep His strength?" She answers, "I will tell you: in the drawstring of his breeches.

(Illyés;1972:516-531)

Conclusion

The specific contextual and structural parallels which exist between Mongolian and Hungarian folk stories, epics, poetry and folksong lyrics, as well as in prayers and incantations, are so detailed that they strongly suggest a shared value system regarding the artistic expression in the two cultures, reflecting a previously common social, economic and religious worldview, specific to equestrian grassland societies. In the oral tradition of both cultures the stories glorify a herdsman hero of superhuman character with shamanic attributes, whose benevolence is a basic requirement for being a leader of his people. Indeed his existence is vitally important to those whose leader (khan or king) he is destined to be. The hero is the protector of the society, stands up for justice and helps the weak, using his powers for positive ends. The shamanic characteristics of the heroes and the antiheroes, as well as many of the story characters are the same in both Hungarian and Mongolian stories.

Some of the elements of the folk stories and epics mentioned above may occur in some

Western European tales (Luthi;1976). However, the story sequences, constructional details and the many formulas, of which only a few are mentioned in this paper, are so closely paralleled, consistent, and numerous in both Hungarian and Mongolian literature, that the claim of mere accidental resemblance or independent invention would not be adequate as explanation. In the case of Hungarian folktales, the parallels exhibited with the Mongolian epic poems discussed above would by default exclude western European borrowing. These strong parallels in Hungarian and Mongolian oral literature suggest the possible conclusion that quite far back in time, these peoples shared the nomadic Asian grassland cultural sphere.

The shamanic attributes of Mongol heroes are well documented. Dioszegi's extensive work and research in shamanism in Mongolia and Hungary showed that this belief was very much alive in Hungary until recently (Dioszegi; 1998). Moreover, research by Béla Bartók (1921, 1985) and Yaxiong Du (1982, 1985; 1998) regarding the specific structural parallels between the oldest strata of Hungarian, Mongolian, and Turkic folk music and lyrics further support the notion of a shared cultural tradition traceable to the Xiongnu, the Asian Huns (Du;1981).

However, research into the origins of Hungarian folktale heroes and their connection to shamanism has thus far not been extensive. This paper endeavors to briefly introduce similarities between the two oral literary traditions and demonstrate that the results of comparative research done by Dioszegi in the 1950's between Hungarian and Mongolian (and Turkic) shamanic practices, and the work of Vargyas can be extended to deepen the knowledge of the origin of certain segments of Hungarian oral tradition putting it in the context of the Central Asian grassland societies.

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Vajda and Boila

On an Ancient Hungarian Title

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Biography

Borbála Obrusánszky is Ph.D, historian and orientalist from the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Inst. of Ethnography Shamanism Archive. She does fieldwork in Mongolia and Northern China among Mongolian peoples. Areas of interest: Ancient history and social organisation of the Inner Asian nomadic peoples; the history of Southern Hun and its capital, Tongwancheng (White City); ancient woman cults among the Mongolians. She has good connection with the Mongolian State University, the Mongolian Academy of Sciences, and with Inner Mongolian scholars. She began to get connected with the Hun researchers from the Shaanxi Normal University. She has published 20 articles and one monograph on comparative history.

The title *vajda* (spelled *vaida* in English) was the most important ancient Hungarian title. The earliest record of it can be found in Constantinus Porphyrogenitus's work *De Administrando Imperio* (10th c. AD) where the Hungarian leaders are called *boebodos*: "They name their territory after their boebod Levedia, where the leader's name is Levedi, and the title of the other leaders is boebodos."

According to this record, the title *boebod* would indicate a leading rank below the prince, used among the Hungarian tribe leaders before the blood-alliance conclusion in Etelköz. The leader of the boebod was the first boebod, or the 'proto-boebod', who governed the others.

According to the common viewpoint among Hungarian scholars, the boebod can be compared with the title *vajda*, which was a very significant rank during Hungarian medieval history.

For several centuries to follow, we have no written sources about who the *vajda* was, or what his task was. Foreign sources and the Hungarian chronicles do not mention the title until after the year 1173, after the written culture had spread over the Hungarian Kingdom and Transsylvania. We know from these documents that *vajda* was the definitive leader of Transsylvania who governed that territory for hundred years. The

meaning of the word has remained obscure among scholars. Let's examine this question now!

Etymologies of vajda

Hungarian linguists and historians have not examined the word *vajda* thoroughly. According to the Hungarian Etymological Dictionary, it originated from the Slavic word *vojvoda*, meaning 'commander'. A survey of scholarly research on *vajda* reveals that linguists in general have not cared about its origin.

I looked at various Hungarian linguistic publications to find out why they hold it as a Slavic word. In 1862, Joseph Budenz, a linguist from the Netherlands, published a review of a book by the Slovene scholar Franz von Miklosich who compared the similar Hungarian and Slavic words, although without any proper scholarly analysis. The following explanation is given: "The word *vajda* is similar to the New-Slavic Vojvodina territory". Budenz did not investigate the details of this etymological proposal, and scholars have regarded it as a scholarly result until the present day.

Some Hungarian scholars, such as János Melich, did not look for another solution, but insisted on maintaining the *vajda-vojvoda* connection. Because of the lack of a good alternative etymology, Melich wrote that *vajda* is

a Slavic word, a translation of the ancient German word *heri-zogo* 'commander'. He also explained that the ancient *vojvoda* form developed into *vojvoda* or *vojavoda*, and he thought that *vojvoda* had developed into *vajda* by haplology.

Ivan Janits, a historian from the beginning of the XXth century, also investigated the history of the title. He gave the following explanation: „Hungarian *vajda* developed from Slavic *vojevoda*. The meaning is: 'commander'. It is hard to say from which Slavic language it has been borrowed since the word is found in all Slavic languages, even in Church Slavonic Slavic”.

The author although used an illicit scholarly method, referring to a false source. He referred to a source as a ancient-Slavic source, but when I checked the reference, I found that is not a Slavic source, but Constantinus Porphyrogenitus's Greek work. He was not able to cite any Slavic source that could strengthen his view.

The origin of the title *vajda* remained obscure. According to Jozsef Erdődi it comes from Romanian *voda* 'commander'. But we know from historical data that the Romanian state organisation borrowed elements from both nomads and the Hungarian state, and it is a fact that the Moldovan *vajdas* were appointed by the Hungarian kings as vassals.

The word *vajda* does not appear in the ancient Slavic languages, so the Hungarians probably did not borrow it from Slavic. The famous Hungarian linguist and turkologist Gyula Németh has stated that it originates from the Turkic world. In his point of view, “the *vajdas* in Transsylvania in the Xth century were of Bulgarian-Turkic origin and culture.” He has been backed up by the Hungarian historian Gyula Kristó who says that, according to the archaeological findings, *vajda* was a Danubian-Bulgarian title. All this seems to indicate that the *vajda* has no direct connection with the Slavic *vojvoda*, and we must search for its origins elsewhere.

On the traces of the historical sources

From brand-new historical and orientalist research we know that, among the people who lived in the belt of the South Russian steppes, the most significant state organizers were the Eurasian horse-breeding nomadic tribes who inhabited that territory from the early periods, if we include the Scythes and Sarmatian times. These tribes came under the rule of the Hunnic empire in the IVth century and became the remnants of this empire. One of these tribes, a powerful one, were the *Onogur* tribe-alliance, which ruled the above-mentioned territory until the VIIth century. The Hungarians had close connections with the *Onogur* and also with the Khazars, and they used similar titles. That is the

reason why the Hungarian titles reflected Hunnic and Turkic traditions. Most Hungarian historians accepted the point of view that the nomadic elements were important in the Hungarian state organisation. According to Gyula Kristó: “The Hungarian nomadic state joined that historical development – if we do not mention the ancient preliminaries – which begins with the Khazar Khagante, and followed with the Uighurs, Kirgiz and others’.

Summarising the views mentioned above, we may claim that the word *vajda* is not an original Slavic title, but is likely to stem from the Nomadic steppe civilisations, having appeared only in tribes that inhabited areas where the nomadic tribes had previously lived.

We may find a title among Eurasian nomadic tribes which both functionally and formally display similarity with the title *vajda*: *boila* or *buila*. According to Clauson's dictionary, this title existed among the Proto-Bulgarians. The origin of this word reaches back to the Hun period.

We find *boila* in Turkic inscriptions as well as in the Nagyszentmiklós inscriptions. It is also found as *pei-lo* in Chinese sources. According to these records, the first *pei-lo* was Kula, who defeated the Turkic khagan and established the Uighur empire. As I mentioned above, the title *boila* is seen in the Tonyukuk's inscription the following way: “I would like to be Eteris khagan with the wise Tonyukuk, the *boila* бага tarkhan on my side”.

We have no knowledge about the first appearance of that title since written culture was not an elementary part of the Nomadic state, as was the case in the early European kingdoms. According to the sources, *boila* was the second highest rank after the khagan, and he was probably the leader of the eastern wing.

There is an *icraki boila* in the Yenisey inscription from the Uighur period. According to the Danish linguist Vilhelm Thomsen, he was the inner official of the court.

Archaeologists have discovered a two-line Turkic runic inscription in the Hövsgöl country, Rinchenlumb county, Oryuk rock, where the second line reads: “*Turkic boila tarkhan*”. There is also an inscription in the Bulgan country, Saikhan county, which has in the second line “*Boilo kutluk*”.

Furthermore, we find the title *boila* in the runic inscriptions of the Carpathian basin. The most significant one is from Nagyszentmiklós, where the third cup bears a runic writing. The turkologist András Róna-Tas has stated that „In the third line can be found the title or name *Buyla*. The fourth letter of the first word seems to be joined. That title can be found in the Ancient Turkic language as *boila*. From that we can follow

its development in the Danubian Bulgarian language as *buyla* - *büle-pile*".

Petăr Dobrev, a Bulgarian scholar, recorded a title *bilo*, which according to his point of view is a military rank. Bulgarian linguists do not connect it with *boila*.

Although in the Khazar Khaganate the second rank after the Khazarian Khagan was the *beg*, not the *boila*, I found a geographical name - *al-Baida* - a city situated in the empire.



The castle Vajdahumyad in present-day Romania belonged to János Hunyadi, the official *vajda* of Transsylvania 1441-1446. © DSCA and Thomas Nøhr

As we can see from the above-mentioned sources, the title *boila* can be observed in Bulgarian and Turkic inscriptions. András Róna-Tas refers to that word as existing among the Danubian Bulgarians, and his statement is supported by the Bulgarian inscription from the Middle Ages, the earliest one from Omurtag khan's reign (814-831). At that time, Tukos was the *boila*; later, from Simeon tsar's reign (893-927) and Peter tsar's reign (927-969) we have records mentioning that Mostic was the *boila*.

According to the Danubian Hambarli inscription, the title *etzirgou boilas* indicated the

second-highest rank after the Khan. The highest military rank of the proto-Bulgarians was the leader of the right or left side. It was filled by the khan's brother. This is proved by the inscriptions from Phillipi and Preslav, where the *boila* was under the khans. According to Besevliev's point of view, the *boila* not only held a military rank, but his duty was that of a diplomat, because in some cases the *boila* led the foreign envoys.

We also find the form *Boila* as a personal name. The *Boila*'s family held a significant position in the tsar's court, and the family name *Boila* can be observed in the sources until the XVth century.

According to Dobrev, the upper leaders of the Bulgars were six *boilas*, the most important advisors of the khan. Dobrev stresses that seven people, including the khan, constituted the government of the state. This structure is very similar to that of the early Hungarians, where six leading tribesmen, or *boebodos* and the proto-*boebod*, which numbered seven men, formed the blood-alliance in Etelköz in the IXth century.

The word *vajda* can be compared with the word *boila*, because the initial sounds represented by the letters *b-* and *v-* go back a common antecedent *w-*, and the word-internal sounds represented by *-l-* and *-d-* reflect an original interdental voiced spirant *-ð-*. The title can be found in Mongolian languages too, in the two variants *boila* and *boida*. These appearances prove Clauson's statement that inside an Altaic word, *-l-* and *-d-* can be interchangeable.

As Róna-Tas has stated, it is likely that both *boila* and *vajda* joined word, where the root of the word can be „*boj*” or „*woj*”. According to the linguist Katalin Czeglédi, the *boj*-part may be compared with Hungarian *fej* 'head', so that the meaning of the original of *vajda* would be 'boss'; the element *-l-* might represent the ancient derivational suffix *-ta/-te*, *-da/-de*.

The tasks of the *vajda*

As we have been able to observe from the sources that comes down to us, the title *vajda* played an important role in the eastern part of the Hungarian principality, which corresponds to the eastern wing of the nomadic state. As we saw above, the *boila* in the Bulgarian state just governed the eastern wing.

There are only scarce sources attested about the formation of the title *vajda*. According to the Cronicle Csiki Transsylvania was formerly governed by the *rabonban*, then followed by the *gyula*. Although some Hungarian scholars do not accept it as an authentic source, in the title *rabonban* we find another ancient Hungarian rank, *ban*. Due to lack of reliable sources, we cannot be sure what the connections may be

between the vajda and the gyula, but we can observe that the former appears immediately after the fall of the latter.

Transsylvanian roots

The vajda was the representative of the king in the Hungarian Kingdom in Transsylvania. He had jurisdictional, military, and governal authorities. It is known from XIIIth century sources that prince Bela inherited the territory from his father, Andrew II. Later sources tell us that the vajda was appointed by the king. He ruled over seven Transsylvanian countries.

Also historians have discussed the origins of *vajda*. Gyula Kristó has stated that the title was established at the time of King Istvan Saint (1000-1038). According to János Makkay, the rank Gyula was replaced by the vajda at the beginning of the Hungarian Kingdom in the XIth century.

Ivan Janits thinks that the rank of vajda appeared from the Bela III's reign (1172-1196), because that period is mentioned in written sources. According to the Hungarian historian György Györffy the above 'countries' were dukedoms during Istvan Saint's reign, while only one region, Transsylvania, had a vajda. The Transsylvanian government's 'princes' already had the vajda title from 1111, but Latin sources from that time do not mention the Hungarian name. From 1200, it was written as *woyauoda*. The Hungarian "Illustrated Chronicle" (*Képes Krónika*) from the XIVth century records that, after the fall of the Transsylvanian gyula, István the province remained an autonomous province, and he installed his relative Zoltán as the governor.



Illustration of the seven chieftains from the *Képes Krónika*.

According to György Györffy, Zoltán was the first *vajda* in Transsylvania, but there is no document proving that he actually used that title. It would be an interesting parallel if both a vajda and the Bulgarian boila were among István's relatives.



Miniature of King István Saint from *Képes Krónika*.

There is another important piece of information in the *Képes Kronika*: it mentions a powerful man, Vata from Bekes country. Bekes was the eastern part of the Hungarian Kindom. Vata's territory is very close to the territory where the *Boila zsupan* (from the Nagyszentmiklós finding) lived. And according to *Gesta Hungarorum* ("The deeds of the Hungarians"), an early Hungarian history written by an unknown author, one of the seven Cuman leader's name was *Vajta*.

György Györffy published data concerning one etymology, but nobody investigated whether it was correct or not. He stated that the Hungarian Béla name is not Slavic origin, but originated from the title boila. He based his proposal on a Bulgarian name *Büla*, the member of the royal family. He writes: „The name bilja in the Bulgarian inscription is similar to the Bulgarian-Turkic *ichirgü boila* 'inner boila', so it is likely that the Hungarian Béla name originated from the Turkic boila”.

According to Katalin Czeglédi's view, the form *büla* does not refer directly to the name Béla or boila, so it needs a thorough linguistics research.

Györffy has furthermore stated that Ajtony, a powerful tribesman from the Xth century, was the descendant of Boila zsupan, who had the treasury of Nagyszentmiklos Györffy's states, and that the early Bulgarian title boila lived on in Transsylvania, which formed part of the Bulgarian Empire until the Xth century. Relying on archaeological documentation, Gyula Kristó has put forward similar thoughts.

We find *vajda* as a title in Hungarian sources from the XIIth century. Earlier, in the years 1177 and 1183, he was “Ispan of Fehérvár”. The title appears as *wajoda* in 1193, then *voioda* in 1200. It appeared again in 1200 and 1201 as “Ispan of Fehérvár”, and, since then, the Hungarian governal system used *vajda* only.

The largest part of Transsylvania came under vajda government in 1263 when the titles vajda and „Ispan of Szolnok” were unified. In the Middle Ages until the Habsburg’s rule, the vajda was the the military and governmental leader who got his authority from the king directly.

Summary

The origin of the Hungarian title *vajda* has remained opaque despite several attempts to link it to the Slavic title *vojvoda*. In this paper, an alternative etymology is suggested. It is argued that *vajda* is an ancient nomadic title, identical to the rank *boila* found in Turkic and Nagyszentmiklós inscriptions as well as Chinese and other written sources. It was transferred to the Hungarian language when the Hungarians came to inhabit areas previously held by the nomads.

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According to the sources, the first known by name vajda was Leustachius who served under Béla III.

From the XIIIth century onwards, *Vajda* appears as a name. Between 1222-1234 we do not find the rank vajda in royal diplomas, but they were among the young king’s list. Ivan Janits thinks that the vajda was among the prince’s officials.

The Habsburgs put an end to the title vajda in the XVIIIth century, when they conquered Transsylvania. The title thereby disappeared as an official rank, but it lives on in the Hungarian language as personal and geographic names.

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Statue of the anonymous author of *Gesta Hungarorum*, the Hungarian chronicle which mentions *Vajta* as the name of one of the seven Cuman leaders. The statue stands next to the *Vajdahunyad* castle in Budapest City Park (not to be confused with the *Vajdahunyad* castle in Transsylvania illustrated above). The Hungarian ruler at the time when *Gesta Hungarorum* appeared was king Béla III whose name, according to the Hungarian historian György Györffy, may be related to the nomadic title *Boila* and thereby, according to the author of this paper, ultimately to *Vajda* as well.

An Introduction to the Rock Art of Kazakhstan

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Introduction

Across the Silk Route that traverses Central Asia there are rock art images painted or carved into natural stone surfaces found within regions of exposed bedrock. Within the Republic of Kazakhstan there are numerous rock art sites known to archaeologists and new discoveries are made all the time. The rock art images of Kazakhstan are predominately *petroglyphs* – images engraved into the surfaces of natural rock – which date to various periods over the past four millennia. The precise dating of petroglyphs, however, still eludes archaeologists. There are rare cases of petroglyphs in archaeo-stratigraphic contexts, but for the most part the rock art images are dated stylistically by comparisons to known archaeological examples. The petroglyphs are found in various situations ranging from large concentrations covering several hillsides to small discrete pockets in exposed rock outcroppings. These images are executed by either direct percussion with another rock or carved with a tool to achieve fine contours. The images are cut out of exposed sandstone bedrock (metagreywacke) which is common across Central Asia. It naturally patinates to dark shades of brown and the images are visibly white when they are freshly carved.

The earliest historical accounts of rock art are derived from comments made by Western explorers and travellers in the 18th century as they visited regions which are now the northern and eastern parts of Kazakhstan. In the 19th century the steppe and desert regions occupied by the Kazakh hordes were divided into the Russian provinces of Turgai, Akmolinsk and Semipalatinsk in northern Kazakhstan, while the south became the General-governorship of Turkestan that included the province of Semirech'e. The political and economic expansion of Russia brought travellers, scientists and officials who investigated these regions and occasionally searched for archaeological monuments and rock art. Some belonged to emerging scientific organisations such as the West Siberian Branch of the Russian

Geographic Society or the Turkestan Club of Enthusiasts of Archaeology.

One 19th-century scholar that requires a special mention is Chokan Valikhanov (Kaz. Shoqan Walihanuli, 1837–1865). He was the first Kazakh ethnographer, geographer, linguist, folklorist and historian. Like all intellectuals of the time, Valikhanov was interested in traces of antiquity and he made a sketch of a scene of Buddhas (*thangka*) carved into the rock at Tamgaly-Tash that was created during the Zhungar occupation of southern Kazakhstan in the early 18th century.

Overall, the exploration for rock art in Central Asia was a recognised minor pursuit in archaeological research up to the end of the 19th century. After the beginning of the 20th century rock art research had become more systematic and a standard component of archaeological research in the Soviet Union and its pursuit continues into the post-Soviet times. These activities have generated a large corpus of documentation about the petroglyphs of Kazakhstan, as well as other Central Asian countries, which have yet to be fully disseminated in the West. International research began to emerge in Kazakhstan in the 1960s with the visit of the Hungarian scholar M. Ksica to the important rock art site of Tamgaly (Ksica 1964, 1969). International collaboration increased after the collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990s and rock art researchers from countries such as France, Poland and England have cooperated with Kazakhstani colleagues in furthering our knowledge about the images (e.g., Francfort *et al.* 1995, Rozwadowski 2003, Lymer 2004a).

Traditionally, the study of rock art involves an art-historical approach that considers the formal characteristics of an artwork (style), technique, sources, artistic schools, influences and survivals, as well as making value judgements about artistic qualities. Furthermore, petroglyphs are frequently described as being “outdoor galleries of art” which gives the misleading impression that the images

are merely pictures that hang within the static confines of the salon. The very fact that the petroglyphs are carved in cliff sides indicates there are more factors at work other than merely the act of aesthetic appreciation. Moreover, ethnographers and anthropologists have observed that other societies do not talk about art, design and meaning in ways that a Westerner would like (Geertz 1993: 97). Instead, art is related to in terms of how it is used, its ownership, when it is performed, etc. From ethnographic studies from around the world there has emerged the “anthropology of art”: the study of the social context of visual culture and its importance to

people’s daily lives, such as being used in the construction and negotiation of identities. By approaching rock art through the nuanced lens of the anthropology of art the images become part and parcel of dynamic social processes, while building upon the foundations of the traditional art-historical approach. Therefore, rock art becomes important to understanding how people conceive and shape their world around them. Through the following case studies I shall consider these dynamic aspects of rock art imagery as well as providing a brief introduction to a selection of petroglyphs from the Republic of Kazakhstan (figure 1).



Figure 1 Map of Kazakhstan with referred to rock art sites

SPECIAL PLACES

To begin with Tamgaly is the most famous petroglyph site in Kazakhstan, and it has received much scholarly attention since its archaeological discovery in 1957 (e.g., Maksimova 1958; Ksica 1966, 1969; Maksimova et al. 1985; Francfort *et al.* 1995; Rogozhinskii 2001; Rozwadowski 2003; etc.). The Tamgaly valley is found along the northern edge of the Anrakhai mountains which is about 170–180 km northwest from the city of Almaty. Numerous petroglyphs were carved into the exposed sandstone bedrock along a winding main valley. The majority of the petroglyphs are located in an area “enclosed” by Andronovo cemeteries (Middle to Late Bronze Age, c. 1400–

1000 BCE) placed at either end of the valley. It is also worth noting that the Andronovo archaeological culture broadly extends from the Urals down into southern Kazakhstan and consists of pastoral communities that buried their dead in stone slab boxes.

Tamgaly’s Bronze Age petroglyphs have been the most extensively cited because of evocative images labelled as “solar-headed” gods – anthropomorphic figures with large round heads emitting “rays” (figure 2) or possessing a “halo” of dots. The most famous scene from Tamgaly is of two large anthropomorphic figures with “halos” accompanied by tiny human figures that are perhaps dancing below them (figure 3).



Figure 2 Tamgaly scene with a bull

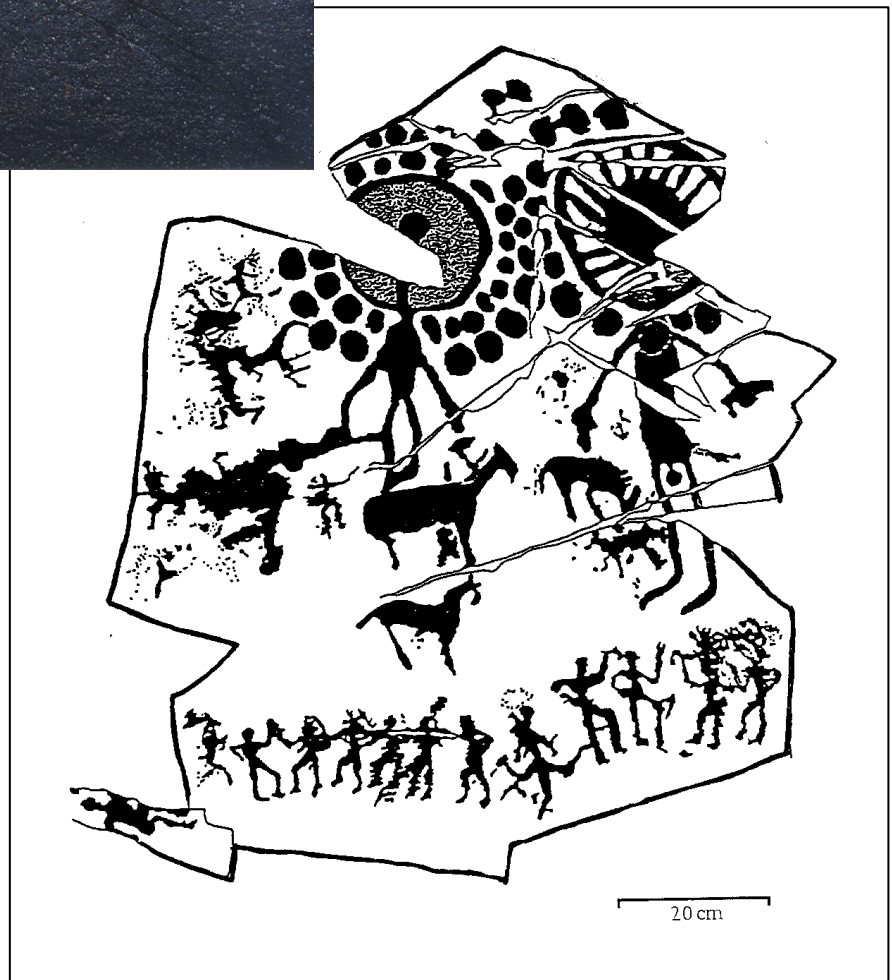


Figure 3 The famous “solar-god” scene at Tamgaly

Solarism, however, is a problematic Western concept that casts the peoples of the past as primitives whose only religion was the worship of the sun. As we know from ethnographic studies, the phenomenon of religion is diverse and complex. These Tamgaly anthropomorphic images with heads “radiating energies” are strongly suggestive of being graphic representations of powerful visions intimately related to the personal experiences of individuals and embedded in the realities and perceptions of past societies

(Rozwadowski 2002). Furthermore, the location of the petroglyphs in selected parts of the valley provides other clues towards their significance. In particular, the famous scene (figure 4) is situated on a natural ledge high on a hillside with a commanding view of the valley below. This coupled with the fact of the proximity of the adjacent Andronovo cemeteries gives strength to the argument that the overall area was a large sacred site of importance to the Bronze Age communities within the vicinity.



Figure 4 Dancing shamanic figure at Bayan Zhurek

Another important site with “dancing” figures dating to the Bronze Age is found at the Bayan Zhurek mountain range, southeastern Kazakhstan, near the Zhungarian Alatau mountains that borders China. On a lower ridge in

the southern end there is carved a figure with a unique, elaborate headdress (figure 4). A second figure is found at the summit of the pinnacle of the highest peak above the previous figure (figure 5).



Figure 5 Shamanic figure from the top of Bayan Zhurek

Moving northward there is another important Bronze Age petroglyph site of Terekty Aulie near Zhezkazgan, Central Kazakhstan. It is a unique site in Kazakhstan as the petroglyphs were carved in granite, which is not the best of materials to work with. Nearby there are burials belonging to the Begazy-Dandybai culture, a regional variation of the Andronovo in Central Kazakhstan. Importantly, the petroglyphs of Terekty Aulie provide a different view of Bronze Age communities from that of Tamgaly and demonstrate diversity within these societies. In

particular, there are no so-called 'solar-gods' like Tamgaly and the depiction of humans is rare at Terekty Aulie. The Terekty Aulie petroglyphs, however, are predominately composed of horses (figure 6).

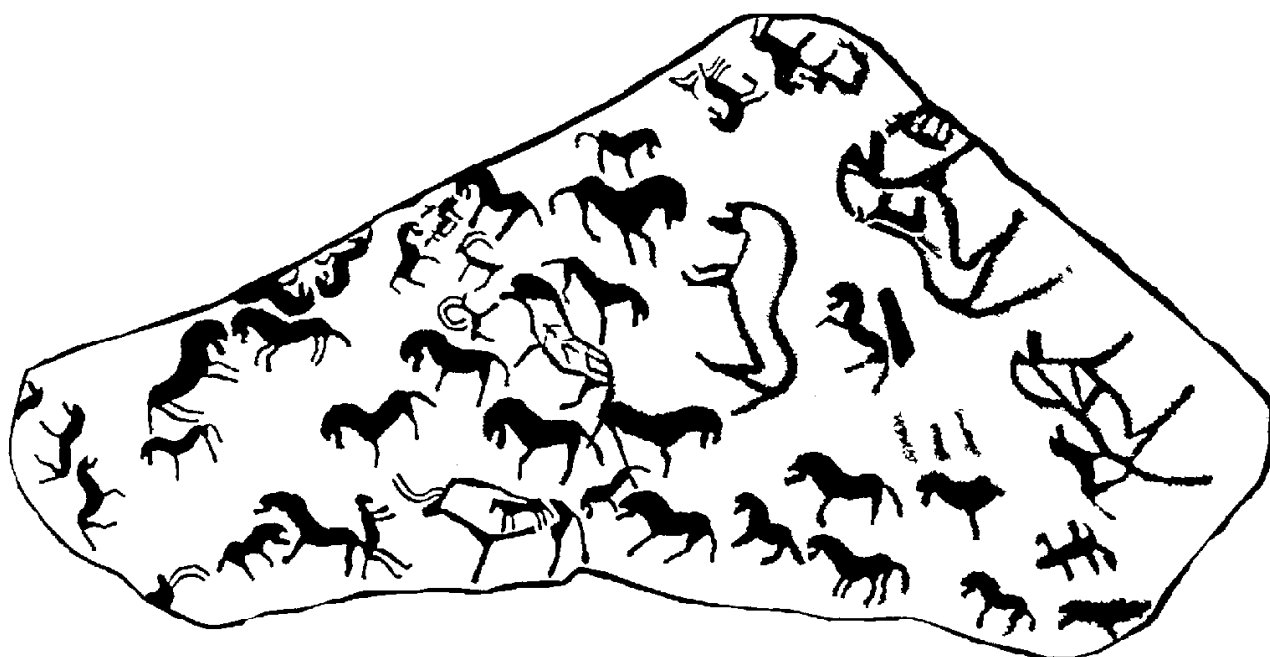


Figure 6 Horses on a slab below the Muslim shrine at Terekty Aulie

The horses have heads and manes that stylistically similar to later Bronze Age dagger hilts decorated with equine heads found across Kazakhstan and the southern Urals (Samashev & Zhumabekova 1996). The great density of the horse petroglyphs at Terekty Aulie, however, undoubtedly emphasises their role as images of power to the ancient communities. As we know the horse is economically and religiously important to many peoples of Inner Asia. In particular, shamans ride the horse to the otherworld and horse sacrifices are important offerings to the gods, as seen among the Altaian peoples in recent historical times (e.g., Radloff 1884).

Overall, when considering Tamgaly, Bayan Zhurek and Terekty Aulie it is important to note that the location of many of the petroglyphs at these sites involves their placement in discrete or special places along the hillsides. Some petroglyph scene locations, like that of the Bayan Zhurek dancing figure (figure 5), indicate that one had to possess knowledge of where to go to find these images. This knowledge was probably held by particular individuals or sub-groups in society and they would have wielded socio-political authority from

this exclusivity. There could have also been access restrictions to these areas where only certain members of the society were allowed to visit the images due their social status. This is in contrast to the idea that Central Asian rock art sites are “art galleries” which imply they are intended to be open access for all (Lymer 2004b: 16). These restrictions could have been upheld, most likely, by community rules and custom, and only certain persons would have been allowed to visit particular places, such as lineage elders or other persons with special abilities, like shamans. Therefore, the petroglyphs of Tamgaly, Bayan Zhurek and Terekty Aulie were the tangible realities of past societies that actively played a part in ongoing social, religious and political processes.

THANGKAS

Moving on to historical times, let us turn to the petroglyph scene of the Buddhist thangka originally discovered by Valikhanov in the 19th century. In the centre of the scene is the depiction of Avalokiteshvara, the famous bodhisattva of compassion, who is flanked on both sides by two other bodhisattvas (figure 7).



Figure 7 The Tamgaly-Tash thangka

The practice of making thangkas in Tibetan art usually involves colourful visual representations of deities and mandalas. They are used as guides in meditation for they are sacred images of the universe that are manifestations of insights or compassions embodied by Buddhist deities (Peacock 2003: 42–43). The dynamic role of thangkas can be seen in the New Year ceremony conducted by the monks of Langmusi monastery in Amdo, eastern Tibet, where a gigantic cloth banner of the Buddha is placed on a hillside. The creation of the cloth thangka and its display are how the Buddhist monks generate “good karma”, while pilgrims and ordinary people gather at the foot of the thangka to earn karma for themselves by witnessing the ceremony and supporting the Lamaist community (ibid. 95). Thus, it can be argued that the placement of the petroglyph thangka at Tamgaly-Tash would have had a similar social and religious significance.

The Tamgaly-Tash Buddhist rock carving was made during the time of the Zhungarian Empire (1635–1758) which was founded by western Mongol groups. The Zhungars conquered the lands of eastern Kazakhstan stretching from the Ili River to the Syr Darya River and expanded south into the Tien Shan mountain regions. The Kazakhs

and Kyrgyz were greatly affected by the ensuing skirmishes and resulted in the Kazakhs seeking alliances with the Russians. The Zhungar empire came to an end from its defeat by Manchu (Qing) China in 1758. Moreover, the Western Mongols were recently converted to the Gelugpa (dGe-lugs-pa) school of Tibetan Buddhism – the Yellow Hat sect – in the 17th century, and as the Zhungars expanded their territories they brought Buddhism with them. Thus, it was a significant act to carve at Tamgaly-Tash a thangka that depicted Avalokiteshvara, as he is an *idam* (*yi dam*, Tibetan), a Buddhist tutelary protector spirit. It should also be noted that only a lama was able to invoke an idam and convey its wishes to ordinary people (Humphrey 1983: 426). Therefore, the creation of the thangka at Tamgaly-Tash was part of the process of converting the landscape of the Kazakhs into the Buddhist landscape of the Zhungars.

The Tamgaly-Tash thangka is also accompanied by numerous carvings in the vicinity of the famous Buddhist mantra “om mani padme hum”. It is the most common mantra in Tibet as it is directly associated with Avalokiteshvara. It is found everywhere in Tibet from being carved on small rocks and stones to enormous letters on the sides

of mountains. In general, this mantra can be employed for many purposes, such as purifying the place of ritual, invoking a deity, making blessings, etc (Peacock 2003: 101–2). Thus, what is fascinating is that there is also an inscription of the mantra at the Bronze Age rock art site of Tamgaly on a cliff face along a hillside not too far away from the famous scene noted above (figure 3). This strongly suggests that the invocation was carved to purify and, perhaps, neutralise the ancient petroglyphs of Tamgaly. The power of older non-lamist ways was contested as these mantra inscriptions represent the conversion force of Lamaism that negotiated the role of Buddhism during the time of the Zhungarian empire.

SITES OF PILGRIMAGE

Moving forward to more recent times, Kazakh Muslims have recognised some petroglyph sites as sacred sites of pilgrimage. In Central Asian folk Islamic tradition there are special places, mazars (a shrine or local sacred site), connected to living legends about the saints and believed to possess *baraka*, spiritual power. At such places *ziyarat*, the visit to sainted places, is conducted by Muslim pilgrims.

The petroglyph site of Tamgaly is a local place of pilgrimage and visited during Ramadan by Kazakh pilgrims who tie prayer rags to the bushes around the vicinity. Tied rags at Tamgaly were first noted in 1957 when archaeologists had first discovered the rock art (Maksimova 1958: 110) and demonstrates that the Kazakhs have acknowledged the rock art and the *baraka* of this place for quite some time prior to its archaeological discovery. What is fascinating about Tamgaly, however, is that there is no saint shrine nor local Kazakh cemetery but the locals speak of an unidentified, mysterious saint who was laid to rest within the vicinity.

The petroglyph site of Terekty Aulie is an important destination of *ziyarat* pilgrimage within the Zhezkazgan area as local Kazakhs come to pray at the shrine (figure 8) erected directly above a scene of petroglyphs (figure 6) and pay homage to the sacred tombs of a 19th-century Kazakh cemetery beside the shrine hill (Lymer 2004). The shrine itself is a rock covered with many layers of prayer rags. Moreover, local Kazakhs also come to experience the healing properties of Terekty Aulie as it is reputed to cure colds, barrenness, nerve

disorders, and other illnesses. Similarly, other Central Asian peoples, such as the Kyrgyz, Tajiks, Turkmens and Uzbeks, make journeys to saint shrines for the healing powers attributed to such places.



Figure 8 The Muslim shrine at Terekty Aulie

Local legends tell of how Terekty Aulie was a place visited by the famous wandering prophet Ali. In a few locations around the hills there are human footprints and horse hoof shapes (figure 9)

carved into the natural rock that are considered to be a testimony of Ali's visit accompanied by his faithful horse Duldul. Ali was the prophet Muhammad's cousin and became his son-in-law by marrying the prophet's daughter, Fatima. Originally al-Duldul was the alternative name of Mohammed's mule, al-Shahba, however, across Central Asia the legend of Ali and Mohammed's mule transformed into Ali and his faithful horse Duldul.

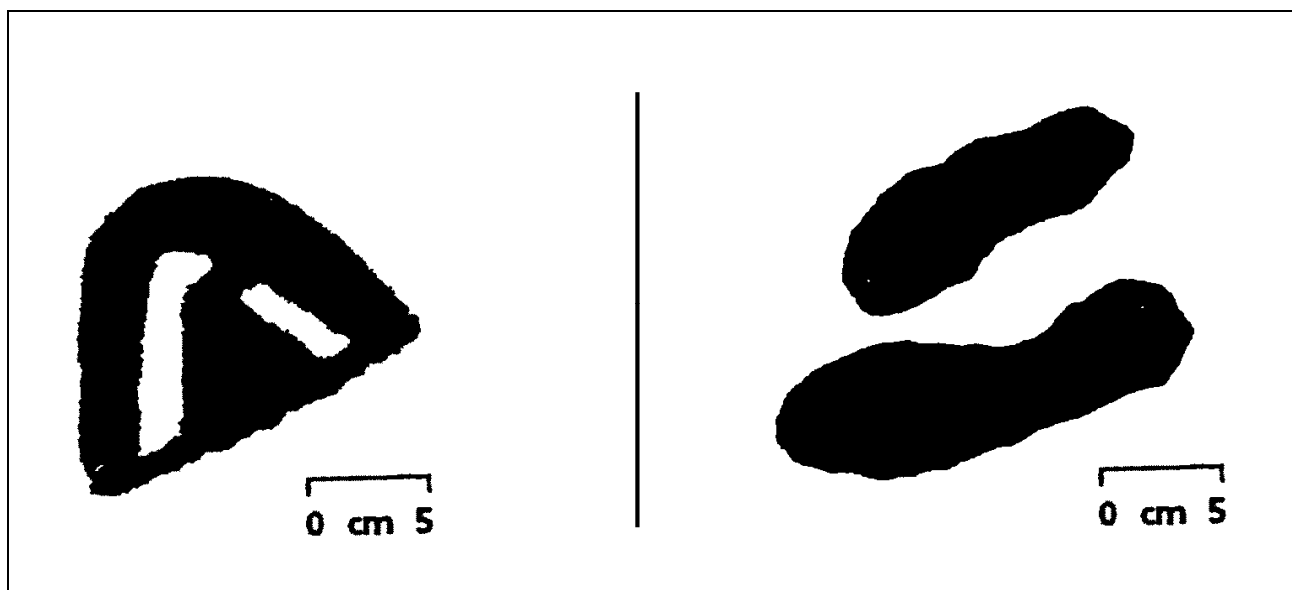


Figure 9 Footprints and horse hooves at Terekty Aulie

The phenomena of Muslim saints and other legendary figures leaving impressions in stone are widespread across greater Central Asia and extend as far as India to the south and the Caucasus to the west. In Turkmenistan, which borders Kazakhstan on the east, there is the Hazret Ali shrine that is the focus of Islamic saint pilgrimages (Tyson 1997: 28). At the shrine there are also impressions in the rock believed by the Turkmen pilgrims to be derived from Ali's hands and the hooves of his horse Duldul. Another example is found at the medieval Masat-ata necropolis in western Kazakhstan. Here there are footprints and horse hooves left by a local Kazakh hero, Masat-ata, and his horse. The legend states that after Masat-ata was killed by his enemies, he got up and ran with his horse to heaven. Thus, the stone impressions of human footprints and horse hooves are a testimony of Masat-ata's translation to heaven.

CONCLUSION

As we have seen above, the images at rock sites are not merely art galleries on display in the 'great outdoors' but are embedded within the ways people interacted with the world around them. The petroglyphs were part and parcel of in ongoing social, religious and political processes, and participated in the transformation of spaces by individuals from past societies. Rock art and other forms of visual culture are not marginal to social processes but integral to them; the petroglyphs are not merely pictorial residues from past societies but played an active role in the communities that interacted with them. Even today some of these place are still engaged with on

many levels as local people imbue the places with myth, legend and lore. Moreover, all these dynamic aspects of human interaction are important to our further understandings of the role of rock art imagery in Kazakhstan and Central Asia. This becomes more apparent with the site of Tamgaly being designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The implications are far reaching, as the petroglyph sites of Kazakhstan have become a great cultural repository requiring not only understanding, but also protection and management. Approaches to conservation, site management and tourism must be balanced by fostering social awareness to the dynamic aspects of rock art sites. It is hoped that future management will seek a balance that addresses the spectrum of activities be it visits from scientists and the general public to the ziyarats of pilgrims.

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Buryat Autonomy

History and Modernity

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Young Buryat girls in traditional costumes dancing on Baikal Day in Ulan-Ude.

© Amogolonova, Batomunkuyev, Varnavski

Summary

The article concerns contemporary problems of Buryat autonomy. It discusses the understanding of autonomy in the Soviet sense with reference to the case of the Republic of Buryatia, highlighting the diverse range of factors that are characteristic of present-day Buryat sovereignty. The authors argue that contemporary political processes in the Republic continue to be very contradictory, since the very idea of a sovereign state within the Russian state has not yet been sufficiently interrogated in both political and scientific discourses, meaning that the concept remains ambiguous, with a wide range of possible interpretations.



General information on the Republic of Buryatia

The Republic of Buryatia is a subject of the Russian Federation. It is situated in the southeast of Siberia on the territory of Zabaikalia (Transbaikalia). The territory of the Republic is 351,3 thousand km². The Republic's ethnic composition is mixed, with Russians forming the majority (about 70%). Buryats make up about 25% of the population.

The indigenous Evenks are a minority and occupy the most extreme north of the Republic.

The remaining ethnic groups comprise less than 5% of the population. As of 2003, the Republic's total population was 9,724,000. In addition to the Republic of Buryatia, where the Buryats are the titular nationality, they also have special political-administrative districts in other subjects of the Russian Federation, i.e. the Ust-Orda Buryat National District in the Irkutsk region and the Aga Buryat National District in the Chita region, both districts being the separate subjects of the Federation. In addition, Buryats are a national minority in Mongolia and Inner Mongolia (China). The total number of Buryats in Russia is about 440 thousand, more than half of which (about 250 thousand) live in the Republic of Buryatia.

Under the USSR, the territorial limits of the Buryat ethnoses were fixed within the framework of the Buryat-Mongol Autonomous Republic (BMASSR) (1923-37) and was confirmed in the Republic's Constitution, adopted on August 11, 1937. Article 15 of the Constitution stated that the boundaries of the Republic can be changed only with the agreement of Republic. However, on September 26 of the same year, in violation of the Constitution of the BMASSR, the USSR Supreme Soviet approved the creation of the Irkutsk and Chita regions, which included territories inhabited by Buryats that had been designated national districts. Some Buryat villages came to be under direct management of the regions. Another important event was the decision of the Supreme Soviet in 1958 to rename the Buryat-Mongol ASSR simply the Buryat ASSR. Both decisions, the 1937 on division of the Republic and the 1958 renaming, became motives for political mobilization during perestroika and the post-Soviet period.

In 1990 the Republic acquired new official status as a *sovereign state* within the Russian Federation. This was confirmed in the Republic's Constitution in 1994. The head of the Republic is the President, legislative power is vested in the People's Khural (Parliament). However, this new official status did not bring about any significant changes in comparison to the previous period. Whilst fortunately there are no open interethnic conflicts, the situation is far from ideal. The Republic is one of Russia's socio-economically depressed regions, with numerous social and economic problems. The population is in steep decline, losing thousands of people annually due to high mortality rates and high rates of out-migration. Newcomers are few and cannot compensate for the demographic losses (e.g., in 2002, 3500 people left the Republic, while there were only 2,000 immigrants).

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THE SOVIET PERIOD. The Buryat-Mongol Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic was officially founded on August 1, 1923. This significant event was preceded by opposition between Buryat nationalists (Elbek Rinchino, Tsyben Zhamtsarano and Mikhail Bogdanov) and communists (Maria Sakhyanova and Mikhei Yerbanov), in connection with the struggle for control over the process of institutionalizing

Buryat autonomy, with both sides espousing their own programme of nation-state building.

The Buryat intellectuals who headed the nationalist (national-democratic) movement between 1917-1922 defended the idea of connecting *ethnicity* with *statehood*. Acting on the principle of primordialism, they conceptualized and tried to realize the idea of a political ethno-nation.

The planned autonomy had to contain sufficient rights in the economic and political spheres, and simultaneously had to be based on purely ethnic organizational principles; it was assumed that autonomy would unite an exclusively ethnic Buryat population thus realizing the principle of self-determination and simultaneously preserving of ethnoses and its culture. This ethnic identity, which was based on cultural identity, thus acted as a sufficient basis for claims to statehood. Indeed, nationalist-minded intellectuals tried to *consolidate the entire*

Buryat ethnos within the limits of uniform and politically institutionalized territories. This project was most fully developed during the formation of the Buryat-Mongol autonomous region (BMAR) of the Far-East Republic (DVR).¹¹ The Buryat Bolsheviks, operating on ideas of class internationalism and economic determinism, actively opposed the realization of nationalist plans.¹² They had begun to carry out their own project of nation-state building through the formation of the Buryat-Mongol Autonomous region of RSFSR,¹³ and later continued and completed it by uniting two autonomous regions (The Buryat-Mongol Autonomous region of the Far-East Republic and Buryat-Mongol Autonomous region of the RSFSR) and creating the Buryat-Mongol ASSR. Accordingly, the creation of an autonomous republic was interpreted by them within the context of the general political ideology, which was carried out by communist leaders who “were guided, first of all, by class interests and were under the influence of an Utopian theory of ‘world revolution’” (Yelayev, 2000: 158). The Bolsheviks considered national autonomy as a way to increase the popularity of Communistic ideology and values among the Buryats:

...Before us, the group of Buryat-communists (Bolsheviks), [stated Maria Sakhyanova,] is a

¹¹ Proclaimed in April, 1921, the BMAR of DVR included only the Buryat population, but was not territorially integral. However, nationalists considered the formation of an autonomous region to be the initial stage of nation-state building, which would be completed with the creation of a united independent Buryat territory.

¹² The Buryat Bolsheviks headed by Maria Sakhyanova, for some time considered that national autonomy was not necessary for Buryats, since they “as a productive-consuming unit, involved in the general economic life of Russia by exchange”, were “territorially and economically closely connected with other nations that possess high culture. This theory daily loses a layer of original national veneer” (National movement, 1994: 121). Besides “... there are still other facts promoting fast assimilation, [considered M. Sakhyanova,] this is their small numbers, territorial mixture, the absence of national culture which detains to some extent leveling of nationalities” [ibid.]. However, later, under pressure from the Center (mainly in connection with the acceptance on October 14, 1920 by the Central Committee RKP(b) of the decree on the necessity of creating national autonomies for peoples of the east, in the first instance the Buryats and Kalmyks), the Buryat Bolsheviks diametrically changed their position on this question and began active work on the foundation of autonomy.

¹³ The decree on the formation of the Buryat-Mongol Autonomous Region of RSFSR was issued in January, 1922.

matter of great importance, the matter of struggling not only for the power of the Soviets, but also for the Third International, for the workers’ victory is possible only on a global scale, not contained within national frameworks. We, communists, are the revolutionary workers’ party without distinguishing between nationalities, we do not see the nation as a value to be preserved (National movement, 1994: 122).



Conforming to their principles, the Buryat Bolsheviks created ethnically mixed administrative institutions. In contrast to their opponents, who supported the creation of Buryat administrative bodies distinct from other nationalities, they considered it necessary “to form mixed district and provincial Soviets made up of workers, peasants and Buryat deputies” (National movement, 1994: 128). According to Maria Sakhyanova, the Buryat communists “opposed nationalist ideas using the Marxist-Leninist ideas of proletarian internationalism, of class solidarity and of the unity of the Buryat working masses with Russian workers and peasants in the struggle for Soviet power” (Sakhyanova, 1957: 33).

By the end of 1923 the Buryats had acquired, at last, state autonomy. The Bolsheviks had managed to master the Buryat nationalist movement and to realize their concept of autonomy building, as a result of which the newly-formed Republic began to represent not

ethnopolitical community (what the nationalists wanted), but a *territorial-political* community. To all intents and purposes, the Buryat-Mongol autonomy represented an integral territory (except for the Alarski *aimak* in the west and the Aginski *aimak* in the east which were separated from the main territory of the Republic), that had been achieved “by including the Russian population interspersed among Buryat *ulus* into Buryat *aimaks*...” (Sanzhiyev, 1971: 96). The Buryat population of the Republic was thus 56.3%, and the Russian population 43.7% (Shulunov, 1972: 400; Sanzhiyev, 1971: 96).

Two further details must also be noted: firstly, the Buryat-Mongol Republic was from the very beginning a polyethnic entity, and, secondly, it was an hierarchical unit that was entirely administratively subordinate to the political center. In the general Soviet context this meant that the Bolsheviks, according to Martin, undertook “positive actions for the creation of Soviet international nations (nations in form, but not in content) which in the long term would accept the model of the unitarian centralized Soviet state” (Martin, 2002: 81).

Despite this, the official Buryat authorities regarded the creation of the BM ASSR as the “formal and actual completion of the Buryat people’s aspirations to national self-determination” (Bartanova, 1964: 86). This position was echoed by the leader of the Buryat communists, Mikhei Yerbanov: “The creation of the Buryat Republic is the concrete realization of the basic demands of the Buryat-Mongolian people, in the fields of both political and economic independence” (Yerbanov, 1925: 5). However, the autonomy created in administrative, economic and political attitudes did not realize those claims which underlay the primordial nationalist project. The Bolsheviks regarded an autonomous republic, first of all, as *a channel for the integration* of Buryats in the Soviet social system, which, in turn, was constructed within a context of the revolutionary Marxist-Leninist paradigm. As Martin notes in connection to this fact, “...the Party was able to introduce national movements for limitation of primordial bourgeois nationalism towards Soviet international nationalism” (Martin, 2002: 76).

This tendency was showed particularly clearly after the repressions of 1937, during which the autonomous republic was separated into three separate administrative units, and its intellectual ruling elite was completely destroyed. In the following years, although the meaning of autonomy was formalized, its status did not differ in any way from the status of other territorial-administrative units of the country. The political specificity of Buryat national autonomy was

reduced in essence to the entirely symbolical maintenance of proportional representation of Buryats in the Republic’s administrative bodies. As for ethnocultural development, the Soviet powers asserted that it was necessary to leave behind all that, from the point of view of official ideology, was the dark heritage of the past and build a new “progressive” culture. The construction of Buryat socialist commonality was supposed to be carried out by developing and cultivating “‘true peoples’ democratic’ elements of traditional culture. It was based on the development of a ‘national in form and socialist in contents culture, reflecting the *advanced traditions and ideals of the people* [emphasis authors’ own], the best features of its ‘national character’ and ‘mentality’” (Sanzhiyev, 1974: 87). The basis of this new commonality was proletarian culture, which was “a continuity of that democratic and socialist culture which was created and developed *by workers and the exploited masses, and by representatives of an advanced, progressive culture of society*” (Modogoyev, 1967: 44). The construction of such a basis was supposed to be carried out through “the revision of all past cultural heritage, with selection being carried out via the proletarian sieve” (Khabayev, 1930: 23). As active workers in the process of national-cultural construction noted, as a result of such work “we would receive a truly valuable and necessary cultural heritage of the past”, that would allow “to plan ways and find methods for the further development of culture on an socialist basis, *promoting the construction of socialism*” (ibid: 22)



The unconflicted presence of official ethnicity that had to symbolize the final resolution of the national question in the USSR was localized in those segments of Soviet society that were strictly

controlled by the authorities and where it had to carry out the function of “the national form” for unified country-wide cultural socialist content. Andrei Sinyavski wrote about this with a distinct tone of sarcasm:

...by the phrase ‘national form’ are meant and permitted some, and an extremely limited number of ethnographic details. Similarly, the word “form” has in mind national costume and musical and dance accompaniment. As a result, all this national diversity is merely encapsulated in dance and song ensembles ..., which come to Moscow and of course demonstrate their loyalty to Communism and express their thanks to the Party and the government for their national independence, [whilst all national specificity] is reduced to merely decorative functions and the ability to pronounce in any language one and the same Moscow-approved socialist slogans.” (Sinyavsky, 2001:340).

Although in the communist programme of nation-building the idea of creating separate and independent “nations” was emphasized, its basic manifestation nevertheless consisted of endowing these nations with “socialist maintenance”, even at the cost of “national specificity” which could lead to reprisals. Whilst not daring to completely refute the nationalist image of the world, in which context society was necessarily divided on an ethnocultural basis, the Communists made as much effort as possible to endow the nations that were being constructed by them equally with the whole complex of norms and values of Soviet socialist society. Looking more widely, the ethos of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia had been imbued with the cosmopolitan idea of a worldwide fraternity of workers from the very beginning and was present to some degree in Communist discourses throughout the Soviet Union’s existence. In 1983 the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU emphasized: “Our ultimate goal is obvious. This is, to use Lenin’s words, ‘not only the rapprochement of the nations, but also their merger’” (Andropov, 1983: 117).

At the same time it is impossible to deny that the communist regime actively used ethnicity as a principle for the structure of territorial-administrative units within the state and in this sense applied much effort and material to the development of the Soviet ethnonations. A great deal of material, scientific and propaganda resources have been invested in the institutionalisation and sponsoring of cultural variety in the USSR. In the country a nomenclature of peoples was developed – the socialist nations and nationalities – that ranged

from union republics up to autonomous regions according to their ethnopolitical status. The majority of modern experts agree that “the Soviet state, inspite of its declared international, class nature, conducted the ethnicisation of politics and even of the internal administrative structure” (Tishkov, 2003: 523). Indeed, the ruling party could act according to ethnonational principles in politics and in the state-administrative system as it had founded an effective retaliatory system and rigid administrative structure. The pursuit of such a national policy by the communists can be explained not by their sincere aspiration to facilitate the true flowering and liberation of peoples, but rather by their solid understanding that “the national consciousness is an inevitable historical phase through which all people must pass on the way to internationalism” (Martin, 2002: 61). According to Stalin, the Bolsheviks undertook the actions directed for “the maximal development of national culture so that it would finally exhaust itself and then be succeeded by the basis for the organization of an international socialist culture” (Stalin, 1939: 211). Moreover, the ethnonational stage of development had relatively positive connotations as it corresponded with the process of modernization: “...The strengthening of national status began to be associated with historical progress. Thus the formation of nations was perceived as an inevitable and positive stage in the modernization of the Soviet Union” (Martin, 2002: 62). A further important reason that pushed communists towards the experience of ethnic federalism was also desire to show to the world community the ideal of the national-state system in the Soviet Union. They allowed “concessions to federalism in order to create the Empire, a new, internationalist, and therefore strong, empire. These concessions in no way threatened unity, indeed on the contrary, they strengthened it and simultaneously transformed the Soviet Union into a some sort of *ideal model of the future communist world order*... It was required that this prototype was so fine, so free from national disagreements, that all world would strive for such harmony” (Sinyavsky, 2001: 338-339).

As a result the concept of national statehood at a level of ethnoterritorial autonomies was affirmed in the USSR, and the problem of “nation-building” became a tool in the ideological arsenal of ethnically designated instate formations above which, however, the universal political-ideological and personnel control on the side of the ruling party was maintained. As Tishkov comments, “...the Soviet state went so far in experiments with ethnicity, that it has lowered the extremely important metaphor of the nation from the state-wide level to the level of ethnic commonality”

(Tishkov, 2003: 523). This fact was especially important since this significant element of identity policy was replaced “with propaganda about all-Soviet patriotism, and later with the concept of the Soviet people as ‘a new historical commonality of people’” (ibid.). By spreading these ideogems, the communists began to act as *state nationalists* on the same scale as the USSR and aspired to carry out their nationalist project, which was classed as internationalism according to the freakish logics of “Marxist-Leninist dialectics”. It is possible to prove that behind the facade of Soviet federalism and ethnonational variety a tendency to unification and unitarism could be traced clearly enough. Furthermore, autonomy in the form of national statehood was a tool for transition from ethnocultural heterogeneity to sociopolitical homogeneity.

To conclude discussing the Soviet period of Buryat autonomy it is worth emphasizing its fundamental features. During the Soviet period the notion of autonomy was formalized, i.e. its status did not differ in any way from the status of other territorial-administrative units in the country, although autonomous republics had their own constitutions and corresponding management personnel. The actual political specificity of Buryat national autonomy was reduced to a symbolical maintenance of proportional representation of Buryats in the Republic’s administrative bodies. The attributes of autonomy were more distinct in the cultural sphere – national newspapers, theatre, literature, mass media, and schools with teaching in the Buryat language. Even so, these spheres were also regulated in many respects, in the first instance to prevent the politicisation of Buryat ethnicity (or any other). However, it was an excessive safety measure as the overwhelming majority of Buryats was loyally adjusted to the Soviet regime. Moreover, this loyalty gained more absolute characteristics in the course of the gradual increase of economic level, the growth of well-being of the population of the Republic, with the spread of mass culture and the simultaneous liberalization of the regime. No excesses on the part of the authorities that touched Buryat national feelings caused any consolidated expression of protest. The characterisation of the pre-Perestroika state of the communist regime in the USSR as “stagnant” entirely and completely reflects the destiny of Buryat autonomy.

In concluding our characterization of Buryat autonomy in the Soviet Union, we would say, that any autonomy, as it is commonly accepted in the world experience, grows from political will, consciousnesses and actions of the supposed collective subject of this autonomy. If these factors have for any reason been lost, a victim of this loss

will be the destiny of autonomy. For Buryats, Soviet autonomy did not in any way become the institutionalisation of significant political intentions, a symbol and mechanism of collective will, and the Buryats did not become an autonomous actor.

THE POST-SOVIET PERIOD: FROM AUTONOMY TO SOVEREIGNTY.

During the post-Soviet period the meaning of Buryat autonomy has abruptly changed, and a new stage in the struggle for national autonomy has begun. With the declaration of sovereignty in 1990, the situation has again, as at the beginning of the founding of the Soviet Union, taken on a fateful character connected with the solving of all problems connected with territories, economic development, with preservation of ethnic culture and language and so forth. In the former Soviet republics, including Buryatia, these processes began to be associated exclusively with political domination and the establishment of ethnic regimes. However in many respects the realization of these plans hindered by the demographic situation in Buryat Republic: as we previously mentioned, Buryats made up about 25% of the whole population while Russians comprised about 70%. With such an imbalance, it was impossible to achieve any political or legislative decision towards the ethnicization of the autonomous republic by democratic means. These circumstances have led to attempts to achieve some ethnopolitical advantages or privileges resulting from the titular status of the Buryat people. Among Buryat political leaders and intellectuals the status of the Buryat people began to be defined as “state-creating” (“the subject of state sovereignty”), “native”, “titular” (at the second All-Buryat Congress in 1996). During public discussions (including the Congress of Peoples of the Republic of Buryatia in 1997) it was discovered that none of these concepts possesses sufficient conceptual clarity to allow the ethnopolitical claims of Buryats to be recognized by all the inhabitants of the Republic as legitimate.

The term “native people” is a term of international law (the Declaration of the United Nations on the rights of natives and the ILO Convention № 169). It implies the interests of peoples who are the descendants of the inhabitants of a given geographical area when it was being conquered or colonized, before modern frontiers were established, and who live according to a traditional way of life and culture. On the wave of a revivalist movement for traditional culture, for a certain period the leaders of the Buryat movement cited articles of ILO Convention № 169, believing that the Buryats fell under the

Convention's terms and regardless of the fact that this Convention has not been ratified by Russia. Taking into consideration the fact that the granting to a group the status of native people provides a huge quantity of rights, among which are the right to own land, protection of environment, preservation and control over use of natural resources, and so on, it becomes clear why Russia could not sign such a treaty during that complex period of its history. The very idea of "native people" was officially understood in a completely different sense from that in the international law. In the Concept of Nationalities Policy of the Russian Federation it is stated that all ethnic communities that formed on the territory of Russia are native peoples. At the above-mentioned Congress of the Peoples of the Republic of Buryatia (1997), the President of the Republic, L.V. Potapov, emphasized this in his report and also gave the following comment:

"In [the Concept] is the idea that they [ethnic communities] are all equally involved in the process of state formation. ... The Buryat people are the titular nation, whose name the republic bears. ... It is clear that these names and titles do not give the people any extra rights. They entrust them with greater responsibility for the fate of the republic, for its consolidation and development. *The aim of our nationalities policy is the preservation and renaissance of the ancient people of our land – the Evenks* (Potapov, 1997).

Thus, at the local republic level it has been defined who is implied by the Declaration of the United Nations and ILO Convention, even without any official recognition of these documents. It is curious that all these debates on the status of the Buryats ignored the Constitution of Buryatia, which was accepted in 1994.

Another important conclusion which can be drawn from President L.V. Potapov's report is that the local authorities do not recognize ethnic social-political parties as their partners in the implementation of nationalities policy. In particular, this matter concerns the Congress of Buryat People (CBP), which as an organization tries above all to problematize ethno-political aims and tasks. The political activity of this organization can hardly be defined as effective, but its political destiny, as well as the destiny of the autonomy, reflects the political mood of the Buryat population – at least within the limits of the Republic of Buryatia. The theoretical part of its programme is unfortunately eclectic and unrealistic. For example, the programme paper of the CBP President, E.M. Yegorov, states that: "The Congress' activities are guided by the Constitutions of the Republic of Buryatia and of

the Russian Federation, the UN ILO Convention No. 169 "On indigenous peoples" and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Yegorov, 1996)", despite the fact that these constitutions are not compatible with the UN Convention "On indigenous peoples" and therefore it is not possible to pursue any political activity directed at "cooperation with the legislative and executive bodies of the Republic of Buryatia (ibid.)". And this is how E.M. Yegorov sees some of the purposes and tasks of his organization:

The basic aims of the Congress' activities include the restoration of the ethnocultural and everyday spheres of life, which require daily nourishment, the Congress' intellectual centre should act as a receptacle for the nation's traditional culture, revive its symbols, its achievements in science, philosophy, ethics, ethnic teaching – everything that is part of the nation's gene pool... The Congress should thoroughly and systematically undertake the organization of research, publications and educational programmes on the revival of Buddhism. (Ibid.)

It is clear that such aims and tasks imply rather significant resources, and it is equally obvious that this small organization is not in any state to meet the demands of such tasks; one can see obvious overestimating of its financial and enterprise capabilities. But this does not reduce the dubious nature of some of the items in the programme. For example, the author asserts that "the education system and Department of Culture both in the Buryat Republic and in other subjects of the Republic should, with the assistance of the Congress' specialists, revise their standards and ideas of what education and culture mean" (ibid.). Such an inadequate view of political realities in a modern society cannot but depress even those who sympathise with this organisation.

At the same time, having achieved the legal recognition of the Buryat language as the second state language, the idea of bilingualism as an obligatory requirement for those who wished to hold official posts, in the first instance the presidency was suggested. However, in this case those in favour of ethnicising the Republic did not achieve their aim; such a project was too blatantly discriminatory towards the Russian-speaking majority.

Arguably, until this point, the most actual achievement from a legal perspective was the consideration of the issue of restoring the Buryat Republic's borders to those that existed in 1937 in the Russian Federation State Duma. According to an active Russian Federation law on the rehabilitation of repressed peoples,

“a people is considered to have been repressed if a policy of slander or genocide was carried out in relation to national or other affiliation at the state level, and was accompanied by the violation of national-state formations or the alteration of national territorial borders. ... The rehabilitation of repressed peoples means the acknowledgement and implementation of their right to the restoration of territorial integrity that existed until the implementation of the anti-constitutional policy..., and to the restoration of national-state formations that existed prior to their abolition”



However, all attempts by workers from CBP to initiate official consideration of the given case were fruitless. Subsequently, because of the political sensitivity of problems connected with territorial claims between the subjects of the Russian Federation, the question of the territorial restoration of the Republic disappeared completely from the political agenda, even though the overwhelming majority of Buryat politicians and intellectuals see the division of the Republic's territory as the root cause of all other problems, from language and spiritual problems up to social and economic ones.

In 1992 a treaty with the Federal Center was signed which defined the Republic's powers as a subject of the Russian Federation. The practice of signing such treaties with all republics of the Federation is standard, but the terms of the treaties vary. First of all, there were distinctions concerning the precise balance of power between the two parties. The results of signing the treaty on the differentiation of powers proved that the Center had no intention of tolerating further moves towards sovereignty on the part of the Federation's subjects, nor to make any serious concessions in this sphere. Thus, unsupported by any significant political and economic resources, the declaration of sovereignty has resulted in the same political situation as in the case of Soviet autonomy. The relatively weak economic potential

of the Republic did not permit its leaders to seriously petition for a change in the relative balance of power in this political/legal dialogue. Furthermore, the political intentions of other sections of the Republic's population regarding autonomy in the post-Soviet period have been overshadowed by the need for survival or desire to improve one's personal position.

In relation to these circumstances, it is necessary to note that despite the acknowledgedly illusory nature of national sovereignty, the movement for a Buryat national/cultural revival during Perestroika in the USSR has not abated, but merely accepts this or that form depending on the political climate in Russia. The development of the Buryat national idea that has been developed for the last twenty years contains several interdependent cultural and political aspects. This is why it is carried out, “on several levels: national, regional and geopolitical” (Zhukovskaya, 2000: 13). For this reason the movement itself has a non-uniform character that means it simultaneously exists within the limits of both explicit and implicit contexts.

Stroganova describes these contexts as the official and informal projects of national-cultural revival (Stroganova, 2001). Both of these projects are closely interrelated owing to the interlacing of the symbolic and empirical senses that define the borders of *ethnic* (ethnic differentiation) through the maintenance of even an ephemeral state sovereignty, which materially and symbolically qualitatively marks the new status of the Buryat people through the legitimization of ethnicity¹⁴.

¹⁴ During the Soviets the autonomous status of the Buryat Republic gave the elite good opportunities in getting higher educations and in occupying principal ranks in local administration on any level. Still none of this seemed to be enough because in general the resources were in the hands of the Center. In this respect the autonomous status was rather a fiction because the decisions were taken in Moscow and just approved by local elites that eventually had no right of voice in the questions concerning major economic, political and cultural problems. Any autonomous republic was just a territorial part of the Union Republic, in this case the Russian Federation. The commonness ‘Soviet people’ was prior to ethnic characteristics and any attempt to put ethnic interest before state interest was estimated as violation of ‘socialist internationalism’. The growing autonomy up to the level of the union republics of Gorbachev and the notorious sovereignty given by Yeltsin, have enabled elites to hope for essentially new status of a sovereign republic and ethnos. The political romanticism of the epoch of Perestroika is characterized by formation of new symbolics reflecting attaining of political independence in decision-making (material sphere) and simultaneously attaining of qualitatively new status of the Buryat people as a titular nation in its own state

This national/cultural revival in its ideological context meant the guided formation of the Buryat national idea using nationalist (in neutral sense) discourse, capable of unifying within itself solutions to problems of re-ethnicisation and the management of this “mobilized” ethnicity. It inevitably leads to the rise of a new elite through the creation of political parties and movements and, especially, in their programmes (including implied, as well as explicitly stated goals) and activities. The most significant public and political organizations are the National-cultural society “Geser”, which was followed in 1990 by the Buryat-Mongol People's Party (BMPP), the Movement for National Uniting “Negedel” (1992) and Congress of Buryat People (1996). Although their declared aims differ to some extent, they are united by the aspiration to include the ethnic factor in politics. Thus, MNU “Negedel” is aimed at “revival of national forms, traditions, language, and culture [and] the re-examination of historical events in different periods of the history of the Buryat people” (Kryanev, 1999: 153), and uses these factors “in the struggle against opponents” (ibid.), whilst the Congress of Buryat People “politicizes ethnic problems through the formation of the national consciousness of the Buryat people.” (ibid.: 137).

The same purpose of cultural revival through political mechanisms is served by policy statements about returning to Buryatia the name *Buryat-Mongolia* and the reuniting of Buryatia with the Buryat national districts. Zhukovskaya believes that public organizations and parties reflect “the need of the people to solve their problems using their own capabilities” (Zhukovskaya, 1993). In other words, the creation of such organisations has been a result of sociopolitical changes that caused the formation of a new social order, the latter of which was unacceptable for the community insofar as it did not reflect their concerns and interests.

The validity of this argument for why ethnicity has been politicised is especially obvious when we look at the materials of the All-Buryat Congresses. The necessity to revive and develop national culture is a constant leitmotif in the discussion of

(symbolical sphere). The latter implied that ethnicity has got the legitimate form. While speaking about the projects This is rather some speculative ideas about revival which could be filled with different even mutually contradictory contents depending on the aims of different groups. Illusory unity of the ethnos just on the background of “blood and soil” that became the basis for unprecedented ethnic mobilization, simultaneously gave good chance to the elites to strengthen their positions in new conditions.

Buryat problems, especially the preservation of the Buryat language. However, the methods and mechanisms used to achieve this are invariably seen in the preservation of statehood as a condition and guarantee of ethnocultural identification. Thus, the discourse of national revival identifies cultural and political issues. For example, the All-Buryat Association for the Development of Culture (ABADC), which was created at the “First All-Buryat Congress on the consolidation and spiritual revival of the nation” in February 1991 with the purpose of solving the problems of cultural revival, played a significant role in proposing the discussion of questions about Buryat national-cultural autonomy at the Third All-Buryat Congress (2002). This association was also one of initiators of the Fourth Extraordinary All-Buryat Congress (Ust-Orda, 2003), which was held exclusively to protest against the proposed unification of the Irkutsk region with the Ust-Orda Buryat autonomous district.



It is also necessary to consider that attempts to develop the Buryat national idea, capable of uniting and presenting as an indissoluble whole the concepts concerning the basic institutional characteristics – statehood, territory, religion, and ethnic language – are not only a continuation and consequence of a discourse of national revival voiced by figures at the start of the twentieth century, but are also to no lesser extent a part of the modern sociopolitical situation in Russia, where there has always been an ethnic and interethnic component and the problem of cultural coexistence. The modern situation does not promote the resolution of this problem, partly because the process of modernization in our country at the present stage (and earlier) has taken on relatively specific forms, which in a large number of cases can be seen as the opposite of the primary substance of modernization - i.e. *instead of developing a contemporary interpretation,*

more historical and traditional interpretations dominate. This situation has been caused by the activation of ethnically-based perceptions of the world in the public consciousness, a process facilitated by a powerful stream of “released” information about peoples’ history and traditional culture. Whilst not being a uniform or universal phenomenon at the individual level, it nonetheless coincides with the ideological discourses created by ethnic leaders, and is considerably dependent on it. Increasing one’s knowledge of history, language and customs serves to assist the construction of ethnic identification, while ideology that attempts to create a political interethnic opposition in the public consciousness serves as a medium of political ethno-differentiation, with an initially inherent destructive tendency. Bringing questions of culture-building into the sphere of current policy inevitably leads to attempts “to solve problems from an ethnocentric position without troubling oneself over the interests of the other peoples of the Republic” (ibid.). This does not promote the growth of trust between different ethnonational groups, hence retarding the formation of civil consciousness and commonality.



The modern Buryat sociocultural revival can be divided into three stages: firstly, a “burst of ethnicity” (1986-1995), then a period of “ethnopolitical stabilization” (1996-2001), and since 2002, as a period characterised by the slogan “patria en danger” (Meaning?? “Fatherland in danger”). This present stage can be seen as a synthesis of the ethnic mobilization seen in the first period with the scientific discourse of the second period that was the result of a noticeable increase in the number of humanitarian scholars. Thus during these years in Buryatia the active growth of political (ruling) and scientific (cultural) elites was observed.

Since Vladimir Putin came to power, even the declarative sovereignty of ethnopolitical subjects

of the Federation has become questionable. In the case of the Buryat movement for preservation of statehood, the previous irredentist propaganda concerning all-Mongolian unity (which was understood both as political association and as the restoration of the historical socio-cultural space) has been superseded by the ideas of preserving the status of the Buryat Republic and the Buryat national districts as independent subjects of the Russian Federation and the restoration of the 1923 – 27 borders. In light of this, secession is increasingly seen in the context of concerns over existing politico-territorial borders within Russia – a tendency that is not reflected in much of the scientific discourse on the issue. Furthermore, it should be noted that Moscow’s position in particular involves an agenda of “inter-Russian” changes to borders

The principles of contemporary Russia’s federal structure have been inherited from the Soviet period and are seen by many politicians and citizens as an anachronism that hinders the implementation of democratic principles in society (although we are of the opinion that such principles are in any case relatively ephemeral). Therefore from the very beginning of post-Soviet Russia’s existence the rationale for a federal structure has been questioned, generating something like a debate between supporters of a unitary and federative state. On the one hand, one of the most authoritative supporters of the idea of ethnic statehood, R. Abdulatipov, asserts that the federation is “a means of everyday state organization for the Russian people, which has for centuries forged a path for itself through the barriers of unitary strivings” (Abdulatipov, 1995: 6). On the other hand, those against a federative system have been vocal in defending their position: “We need neither confederation nor federation” (Solzhenitsyn, 1995: 3) or “[we should] quickly and decisively ‘close down’ autonomous republics and other national-territorial formations by decree, immediately reinstate the system of *gubernii* headed by governors and forget about this federation as about a nightmarish dream” (Zhirinovskiy, 1994: 4). Though this debate was mainly of a publicistic nature, it undoubtedly reflected certain tendencies in political practice which began to take on clearer lines only over the last few years. By now it has become obvious that the idea of re-drawing the political-administrative map of the Russian Federation is inevitable and that the “strengthening of vertical authority” presents ethno-national subjects of the Federation with insoluble problems. It is clear that according to the present policy on the reorganisation of the country’s political system ethno-territorial borders

will be kept only in the case of subjects that meet the criterion of economic feasibility.

In this case, will it be possible to avoid a new “burst of ethnicity”, which will be caused not by the euphoria of democracy but by real or illusory fears of discrimination on the basis of nationality, and which is likely to be of an aggressive nature for this very reason? It is possible to assume that in this case the strengthening of *the image of the enemy*, which plays a central role in ethnic mobilization, is inevitable. In this sense the titular nationality faces to a rather limited choice, and the “new” image of “the other”, whatever it may be (for example, de-ethnicisation, russification, unitarization, Europeanization or other threats emanating from a hostile “other”) can lead to looking for the enemy in one’s immediate surroundings, which presents a real possibility of destroying interethnic stability.

Unfortunately, in contemporary Russia minority peoples have good cause for fear and concerns: skinheads and other fascist elements have made it dangerous for people of “non-Slavic nationality” to stay in larger cities. Moreover, law enforcement bodies often behave in a way that creates the impression that the presence of visitors in cities such as Moscow is undesirable.¹⁵ Although this attitude on a basic level extends to all non-Muscovites, it is especially pertinent to non-Russians who feel as though they are being told to “stay at home”. Levels of anxiety have also been fuelled by provocation by the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, which advertised itself before elections to the State Duma with the slogan “We are for Russians!” on billboards. Party leader V. Zhirinovskiy is perceived not only as the leader of “the party of one person” but also as one of leading politicians in Russia, and consequently personifies the threat coming from Moscow in relation to non-Russians. The mood of anxiety is reflected in particular in the following letter published in the newspaper “Youth of Buryatia”:

Moscow was the city of my youth, I went to one of the institutes there. It was an unforgettable time: theatres, museums, excursions, time spent with

friends. And even after graduation, it was always in Moscow that we met up with our former course mates. *But now this city has become off limits for me.* And, I think, not only for me, but for all non-Muscovites, especially those living far from the capital. Firstly, because it is extremely expensive to travel to Moscow. And secondly, how to deal with the need for registration, without which, according to many of the city’s guests, the law enforcement agencies can find fault with anyone. The fact that at every turn identification is demanded we hear and see on the radio and television. Acquaintances recount that more than once they’ve been witness to, or actually been involved in, incidents when *people of non-Slavic appearance have almost been carted off to militia stations.*

Despite the fact that many people nevertheless still go to Moscow to study and work, I wouldn’t consider simply going to visit, even though I would very much like to meet with my friends and see how beautiful Moscow has become.

It turns out that, *whilst living in our own native country, we are not native for Moscow.* Realising this is very hurtful. True, my friends try to persuade me it isn’t so. But even so, I won’t risk it, better to invite them to Buryatia. We welcome everyone with pleasure. (Vasilyeva, 2005: 16).

On the given example we have an opportunity to see once again both things: that Moscow symbolically represents the whole of Russia (i.e. not Buryatia), and the Russian identity is seen as limited, and that the binary opposition of “there” versus “here” becomes more active along with allusions to ethnic moral superiority on the part of the author of the letter – “We welcome everyone with pleasure”.

The concept of integrating Russia’s regions on the basis of economic regionalisation could be considered a rational alternative to present situation if it were based on properly- and thoroughly-considered tactics concerning the ethnic and ethnopolitical context of such large-scale transformations. However, on the contrary, one gets the impression that this aspect has not been considered at all, and that the whole programme is a next new social experiment in a country with a rich history of such experiments over the last century. Moreover, although the stages of integration are more or less defined (at least until the end of 2008), even now it is unclear what the status of Republics inside of new subjects will be. Naturally, many people are anxious to know the answer to this question. However, speaking on November 9, 2004 on local TV (the TV channel “Arig Us”) the President, L. Potapov, expressed his views extremely ambiguously in

¹⁵ The Public Opinion Fund has published on its website a report “Strangers in a strange country” (Fund, 2004) that presents the results of sociological research in large cities of Russia concerning the attitudes of the population towards other ethnicities. The results show, that a significant proportion of Muscovites relate negatively to “strangers” for different reasons, ranging from accusing them of organizing criminal gangs to the assumption that “others” live better. Although Caucasians [i.e. from the Caucasus] and Central Asians are most frequently mentioned as undesirable “strangers”, it is easy to understand that such attitudes extend to all non-Europeans.

answer to a question concerning his attitude towards the integration of subjects of the Federation. The essence of his answer consisted in supporting the idea of creating a “Pribaikalian” (region around Lake Baikal) region, having noted incidentally that he does not like the word *governance* (bringing discussion to the level of semantics is a characteristic feature of this ideological discourse, where words substitute sense and estimation of an action). The President justified his point of view on the rationale that a region comprising of Irkutsk and Chita regions, the Republic of Buryatia and two Buryat districts would operate with huge resources and a population of 6 million people that would essentially accelerate economic growth. At the same time, Potapov expressed the opinion that Buryatia should keep its republic status and should be represented in bodies of regional authority as an independent subject. This is also how it was, Potapov recalled, in the USSR when Buryatia was, first, an autonomous republic, secondly, part of the RSFSR and thirdly, part of the Soviet Union.

Thus the President of the Republic has described the future position of the Republic: economic and political inconsistency with at best illusory self-management. It is easy to draw the conclusion from this interpretation of the integration of the Russian Federation’s subjects, the Republic will maintain the status quo with transfer financing¹⁶ not from the state budget but from the region’s budget. Thus the status of the Republic will be only a formality, but will nevertheless enable a bureaucratic elite to hold on to their posts and privileges. The future of the Republic’s major cultural gains was not specified. Undoubtedly the behaviour of the political/official elite and scientific-intellectual and cultural elites will alter, with the former beginning to adapt to new conditions in which the ethnonational factor is no longer so important for the preservation of prestigious positions, whilst the latter elites will be the only stronghold of ethno-ideology, which may come under the umbrella of ethno-regional

¹⁶ As any subject of the Russian Federation Buryat fiscal authorities gather taxes in the Republic and send them to the Center. The Center in its turn, having gathered taxes all over the country, distributes money in different spheres and in particular, send them back to the regions/subjects. As is known, the Russian regions are rather unevenly developed: some regions donate more than receive, others, on the contrary, survive thanks to subsidies. In particular, Buryatia is one of the most depressive regions of Russia and consequently transfer financing from the Center often surpasses the taxes from the Republic to the Center. There is an expression: subsidiary region, i.e. the region/subject that exists mainly thanks to such transfer financing.

nationalist propaganda and will begin to develop in one of several possible ways: either as a largely cultural, rather than political, phenomenon, or as a stimulus for ethno-nationalist displays, or in both directions simultaneously.

As a trial step in the direction of reconsidering the political administrative map regarding the Buryat subjects of the Russian Federation, the authorities of the Irkutsk region suggested a merger of the Ust-Orda Buryat Autonomous District (UOBAD) with the region. It is suspected, however, that this suggestion may be more motivated by the personal ambitions of the regional head, rather than out of concern for the interests of the state and population. A round table meeting of activists from the UOBAD on December 23, 2002, discussed attitudes towards holding a referendum on this question, and indicated quite clearly in what sphere the activities of ethno-ideologists will now be concentrated: the constantly invoked image of an “enemy” (one of the main devices in any nationalist or political rhetoric) was given concrete form, and the successful actions of this enemy are portrayed as the equivalent to an *ethnic apocalypse*. This point of view was strongly expressed with particular reference to encroachments on Buryat statehood in the text of an appeal to the Representative of the Russian President in the Siberian Federal District, L. Drachevski:

By trying to eliminate a constitutionally recognised subject of the Russian Federation, you are violating the state's Constitution, its fundamental basic principle – the equality and rights of peoples. Why have you never met with the ABADC, with the Congress of the Buryat People, with Buryat scholars, in order to at least formally ask their opinion about the self-castration and destruction of the UOBAD? What do you want? We can guess, of course, since your behaviour has consistently shown ideological motivation: you stubbornly continue to ignore the task of solving the most complicated Buryat problems, instead moving in the opposite direction – the assimilation of Asians, the abolition of their subjects¹⁷, their right to independence and freedom... Do you want to revive the Buryat people, consolidate their rights, their subjects, effectively solve their complex ethnic problems of national self-consciousness and acquisition of rights, or do you want to abolish this nation by parts, starting with the UOBAD? ... Delaying the question about the

¹⁷ “Subject” here means political parts/areas of the Federation, i.e., the Republic of Buryatia and two Buryat autonomous districts.

formation of *gubernii* and the removal of the Buryats' right to autonomies any further is painful, and radicalises public opinion, intensifying the search for alternative methods to halt this project, which is demeaning for the Buryat people. (Round Table, 2002.)

Though the authors of the Appeal do not specify what these "alternative methods" will be (for example, appealing to Russia's leaders, to the world community or something else) nevertheless, it is indicated that "radicalized public opinion" will not permit further infringements on the rights of the Buryat people. Similarly, one of the most active Buryat nationalists, V.A. Khamutayev, also made an emotionally-charged declaration:

Under a unified authoritarian and highly centralised system of governors there are representatives of the "great and powerful" and non-natives who have neither kith nor kin. Buryat scholars talk unceasingly about consistently working to strengthen our three national-state formations as unique guarantors of the preservation of our inherent national qualities, since mention of us as a nation will disappear with the abolition of the Republic's status. And then we will cease to exist as the great Buryat-Mongol nation. We will be Russians, citizens, but of what sort and respectability? This is the tendency, the wish, the chauvenist ideology, ... – *to integrate the three subjects of one ethnic group into one* [emphasis authors' own]. Restore their rights, compensate them for losses in the unprecedented repressions. ... Or at the very least do not interfere, do not touch them, leave them as they are, as Buryat autonomies, since at least in them national life, the essence of the Mongol-Asian ethnos, is somehow preserved. The status of an independent subject provides the right to control one's own land, natural resources, sacred *barisa*, *tailgany*, one has the right to one's own legislation – in other words the right to creative ethno-national development in accordance to one's own impressions, mind and traditions for oneself and for future generations. The whole *oblast* will be proud of their close proximity to the Buryats. (Khamutayev, 2002).

Speaking metaphorically, new wood is being thrown onto the fire of irredentism that burned fiercely at the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s. If this ill thought out plan of regional integration begins to be implemented, it is not unreasonable to expect that due to a complete lack of consideration for the ethnic factor, the final "product" may appear unexpectedly politically heterogeneous. "One question is obviously important and has not as yet been investigated.

This is the formation of the new spatial borders of state formations after disintegration of the USSR. ... the Soviet space will continue to exist for a long time in the mentality of many former Soviet citizens" (Tishkov, 2003: 302). Buryat statehood (both 1923-1937 and post-1937 borders) promoted education about Russian/Soviet identity and its primary position in the hierarchy of identities. Revision of the ethno-political status of the Russian Federation's national subjects is causing the activation of horizontal-territorial identities, i.e. it will mobilize *ethnic* identity (though many non-Buryats, living in the Buryat subjects, also view plans to merge subjects of the Federation negatively). Although it has not become (and seems unlikely to become) a dominant issue, it is nevertheless capable of causing a certain outburst of emotion. As G.V. Istomin, the speaker of the Legislative Assembly of the Irkutsk oblast said, "the process of unification is not forgotten, ... and therefore in the next two or three years Irkutsk oblast and the UOBAD will be united. The mechanisms have already been written into new federal legislation" (Ugai zam, 2005: 9). He also "did not exclude the possibility that the unification will not only concern Irkutsk oblast and the UOBAD, but that the Chita oblast, the Aga Buryat Autonomous District and Buryatia would also be included in the process" (ibid.).

Responses to the planned reorganization have included D. Tsybikdorzhiev's article and a letter signed by the country's youth, one of which is addressed to the President of the Russian Federation, and the other to all citizens of the country (published in the same newspaper issue). In these, in an alternative to the planned changes, are suggestions concerning "opportunities for the unification of three subjects – the Ust-Orda and Aga Buryat Districts and the Republic of Buryatia, and also the Olkhon region of Irkutsk oblast [Olkhon is an island in Lake Baikal inhabited by both Buryats and Russians] - into one subject of the Russian Federation" (ibid.). The offer or requirement to restore to the Buryat Autonomy its 1923 - 27 borders is based on the moral right "to restore justice that had been so total violated and once and for all put behind us the heritage of the epoch of lawlessness and terror" (ibid.). It was, incidentally, precisely during this repressive period that the Buryats gained statehood. The restoration of territorial integrity is presented by whomever undertakes it as a process of rehabilitation, but nevertheless has a reverse side as well in the form of secession, which is "always a serious redistribution of both resources and power, which is inevitably accompanied by harm of some sort for a significant proportion of people" (Tishkov, 2003: 344). In light of this, obviously at

present it is not possible to propose any course of action for the reorganisation of the Federation that would consider the interests of the state, the subject areas in their present forms, and the populations of these subject areas.

An original reflection on the problem of reorganizing the Federation's subjects in connection with the revival of Buryat traditions is expressed by the journalist O. Sanzhyna. Since her thoughts presents an interesting interlacing of various plots, and the conclusions she draws are also interesting, it is worth citing it in full:

On the eve of *Sagaalan* [New Year according to the lunar calendar] I had a conversation with an uncle of mine who had come from the countryside about how people in the village were preparing to celebrate this holiday. Being a straight-talking and slightly coarse character, he replied that for the majority of villagers holidays and work days blended together into a monotonous grey and gloomy existence – the majority of workers have no work days, but also no particular pleasure from celebratory idleness. But the old men, in anticipation of the holiday, prayed that their unwilling dependents – their sons and grandsons – wouldn't be poisoned whilst drinking *katanka* [bootleg vodka]. After the long drawn-out January holidays, a not insignificant number of people could entertain audiences with tales of how they recovered, having celebrated the New Year by drinking window cleaner to a state of utter stupification... The local men can't find the money for a bottle of real vodka. And the idea of trade in the countryside is a relative term; the basic customer is a pensioner, who receives his miserly sum from the state regularly once a month and then immediately hands over the whole lot to creditors, to whom the entire family is in debt to. And so it goes on along this well-worn road, along which it is hard to travel but to which there is no alternative... Of course, during *Salaagan* all people from the same village meet in the Datsan [Buddhist temple], where the majority of them will pray and hope for a miracle to resurrect the Buryat villages, and that during the White Month it will be possible to celebrate this holiday in a suitable abundance and satiety. But until then... For some families meat and milk is already a luxury – and this is amongst Buryats, who have raised animals for centuries and who were always both economically and politically self-sufficient. *But we should remain cheerful whilst there is still reason, since this is still an officially recognised holiday that has not fallen to the task of "strengthening the system of vertical power"* [emphasis by the authors]. The same cannot be said, judging by appearances, about the autonomy of the Baikal Buryats. The past year has shown us

this problem – the deprivation of the Ust-Orda district of the rights of an independent subject of the Federation. One is left to hope that in the forthcoming year we will possess sufficient will to actively express our opinions regarding this question. Let everyone pause to think about both his own fate, and that of his people. When celebrating *Sagaalgan*, we should not forget the terrible threat to this holiday – on the one hand, the fact that it is losing its celebratory significance for the direct descendents of the people who made this holiday a central event in the life cycle of their nomadic existence. And on the other hand, it has become almost the only symbol of ghostly national independence in a situation when everything else has been reduced to the level of tired gray provincialism. Nevertheless... Nevertheless, I hope that *Sagaalan* will remain a bright holiday, that young people learn and continue the correct celebratory traditions, that at least during the days of the White Month this small people will feel themselves to be a complete whole that must become strong. (Sanzhyna, 2005: 10)

As we can see the note refers to the same problems that are actively discussed in the Buryat ideological discourse on a more everyday level. Referring to specific instances in a newspaper clearly illustrates the subjective reasoning used in ethno-ideology: the revival of a traditional holiday is portrayed as "almost the only" marker of ethnicity even when for the overwhelming majority of people this holiday, and any other element of traditional culture, no longer bears any meaning or historical significance. In the absence of a expressed, concrete, clear and achievable purpose for society and individuals, the celebrating of New Year according to the lunar calendar symbolizes a narrowing of the ethnic continuum to the bounds of the White Month, outside of which there is only the chaos of timelessness and ruins. The latter idea appears in references to the holiday being cancelled as an official holiday. The journalist shows the tense atmosphere and fears of inevitable future changes (perceived as an ethnic apocalypse), whilst simultaneously tacitly acknowledging that the Republic is not in a state to solve the problems independently. It is also a worthy description of the life and problems of rural areas. Her narrative implies that only a miracle can revive the Buryat village and moreover that the author thinks that ethnic culture is being reproduced in traditional, i.e. rural, society. Rituals, holidays and other elements of tradition that are revived "from above" are a panacea, not capable of stopping the process of destruction. Simultaneously the article signifies that the ethnopolitical discourse already has some concrete form, albeit weakly expressed

and only in the form of a newspaper commentary. Even so, representatives of the most respected part of the population, Buddhist clerics, have already added their voices to it. In particular, the prominent teacher of Buddhist philosophy, Geshe Jampa Tinlei, who has numerous followers in the Republic noted that: "the integration [of Russian regions] will destroy the spiritual development of Buryatia. The disappearance of Buryatia's unique everyday culture will be a tragedy not only for Russia but for the rest of the world as well. Before making any decision the government should consider not only material aspects but also the spiritual life of the people" (Geshe Jampa Tinlei, 2005). The given examples show that resources of ethnicity are still considerable and that ideology that exploits such resources in the interests of elites, can also define the future development path of the large Eastern-Siberian region.

METHODOLOGY

The investigation uses a constructivist methodology. Continuing the scientific tradition of scholars as Benedict Anderson, Pierre Bourdieu, Ernst Gellner, Eric Hobsbaum, Fredrik Barth and G. Komaroff among others, the authors apply the methodological concepts developed in their works to an analysis of the Buryat material. Applied to the social circumstances of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first centuries, this approach facilitates the comprehension of phenomena such as ethnicity and nationalism, and permits the logics and motives of actors operating in the sociopolitical space to be more fully considered. The basic emphasis in our research is on studying *ethnicity* in the context of discursive political and sociocultural practices. Therefore the textual analysis of normative legislative documents, along with other documents of political and publicist character, plays an important role. Moreover, we use the methodological principle of historicism, according to which any historical phenomenon should to be considered within the context and circumstances of its creation and development.

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