

УДК 811

DOI 10.17223/22220836/17/2

László Marác

THE HUNS IN WESTERN CONSCIOUSNESS: IMAGES, STEREOTYPES AND CIVILIZATION

This paper argues that the negative stereotyping of the Huns in the Western consciousness has to do with the geopolitical framework of Eurasia as outlined in the work of the influential British geographer Mackinder. By laying the connection between the Eurasian space as the cradle of horse civilization and this geopolitical theory it will be easier to understand the drives for world power of equestrian people in the Eurasian space, like the Huns of Atilla and their negative stereotypes and images in the West.

Key words: Huns, negative stereotypes, Eurasian horse civilization, Mackinder-style geopolitics

In this paper, I will study the question of why the Western consciousness attributes negative images and stereotypes to the Huns. The argument will run as follows. Firstly, I will discuss the Western images and stereotypes of the Huns. It will be observed that, in the Western consciousness, there are only images and stereotypes with negative values of the Huns. As a result, these Western prejudices have strongly affected the scientific research of the Hungarian Chronicles. Because of the influence of the 19th century anti-Hungarian German school, these first Hungarian history books were qualified as «useless». Furthermore, I will search for an answer to the question of why Western stereotypes of the Huns are so negative. I will argue that the answer to this question is related to Western geopolitical traditions concerning Eurasia. The British geographer Halford John Mackinder was the first to formulate these Western geopolitical theories consciously, in his 1904 study, entitled: «The Geographical Pivot of History» [1]. In Mackinder's framework, Eastern Europe and Central Asia play a crucial role. This is precisely the area where, in the course of history, the so-called equestrians appeared, controlling this area. This framework is also very useful in order to understand the drives of the Huns. The military manoeuvres of Atilla, striving for world power, can be analysed insightfully in Mackinder's framework as well¹. Therefore, it is clear why Atilla, from the time of his appearance on the world stage until today, is represented in Western history books as the world's most notorious barbarian and an enemy of the West. It is even more striking that the first Hungarian history books, the medieval Hungarian Chronicles, associate the Hungarians with the Huns, and the Hungarian royal Árpád dynasty with Atilla, although these chronicles were written after the Hungarians had established a strong kingdom in the heart of Europe around 950 AD, which became integrated into the Western political system. Hungarian scholars tried to disconnect the tradition of the Hun ancestry from

¹ The name of 'Atilla' will be spelled throughout this paper as 'Atilla' and not as 'Attila'. It is my hypothesis that the name of 'Atilla' is related to 'Etíl', 'Itíl', and that it is of Turkic origin meaning 'big river'. 'Etíl' and so on is referring to the rivers of Eastern Europe and Central Asia, including Volga, Don, Dnjester, Dnjeper and Oxus. The Hungarian Chronicles have recorded this relation because 'Atilla' appears as 'Et(h)ele'. Furthermore, the Byzantine Chronicles link 'Atil-la' and the river name 'Etíl' as well. Finally, in the mythology of the Steppe peoples the name of the rulers is often related to the names of big rivers (compare Thúry, 1897).

the Hungarians in the second half of the nineteenth century in order to eliminate a Hun-Hungarian kinship. This had to do with the theory of the ancient Aryans that was developed in Germany. German Aryanism tried to incorporate the traditions of the equestrian culture of the Steppes. Hence, the ancient Hungarians were pushed out of the Steppes. Finally, I will argue that historiography has to free itself from settled Western stereotypes and prejudices concerning the equestrian peoples of the Steppes. From this, it follows, that the features and events of the equestrian civilization have to be studied anew. Only then will it be possible to understand the larger connections of history that have contributed to the political, societal and mental development in the Eurasian space. It is only by ridding ourselves of the stereotypes that we will be able to study insightfully the mental and physical factors of the equestrian civilization.

Western Stereotypes of the Huns

In the early Western sources, i.e. the Roman, Gothic and early Christian Chronicles about Atilla and the Huns, the anti-Hun stereotypes appear. These stereotypes feed the prejudices of later ages. Moreover, they provide "facts" for the work of historians of later centuries, like Edward Gibbon, the 18th century English historian committed to the West [2. P. 160]. These Western stereotypes of the Huns and Atilla do indeed depict the Huns and Atilla in a negative way. In the eyes of the West, Atilla and his Huns were the aggressors, the destroyers and barbarians. The King of the Huns, Atilla, is presented as the *Flagellum Dei*, i.e. the "Scourge of God". The Italian and French traditions about the Huns are completely negative. The German fairy-tale-like traditions, such as "Walther and Hildegrund" and the "Nibelungen"-song are somewhat milder. They present a more balanced view of Atilla, who is depicted in the German traditions as a more rational, moderate and forgiving king [3. P. 165].

The most important early Western source on the Huns originates from the Roman soldier, Ammianus Marcellinus (330–395 A.D.), who had, himself, probably never seen a Hun. The data related to the Huns appear in his great work on the Roman Empire, consisting of thirty-one volumes. However, only the last eighteen volumes have survived. Howarth (1998, 160) observes that Ammianus wrote with much antipathy about the Huns; moreover, he provided untrue and impossible data about these horsemen:

«Campaigning does, however, seem to have given Ammianus certain prejudices against barbarians, which emerged strikingly when he wrote about the Huns. One statement, for example, was manifestly untrue. This was his assertion that the Huns were not bound by any reverence for religion or superstition. There is no reason to suppose that Ammianus ever encountered a Hun, and his comments on their habits were clearly based on ill-informed rumour. Among these were that the Huns' clothes were made of the skins of field-mice and that, at birth, their children's faces were deeply scarred by irons. One comment by Ammianus on the life-style of the Huns was to be repeated by commentators through the ages. This was that "they are so hardy that they neither require fire nor well-flavoured food, but live on the roots of such herbs as they get in the fields, or on the half-raw flesh of any animal, which they merely warm rapidly by placing it between their own thighs

and the backs of their horses. In truth, placing raw meat below their saddles was a traditional method of protecting the backs of their horses from excessive rubbing».

By the way, Edward Gibbon, who was the first to elaborate the history of the Roman Empire with scientific means, considered Ammianus a great historian and gave credit to this work.

The other important ancient commentator, who mixed a lot of legends, rumours and false stories with historic facts, was the Gothic chronicler Jordanes (†552). In his book "The Origin and Deeds of the Goths" (551), he discussed the history of the Goths. According to Howarth (1998, 159), Jordanes, being of Gothic stock, was subjective towards the Huns. The Gothic writer, who considered himself before his conversion to Christianity an "unlearned man", tells us how the Huns came to the Crimea, where the Goths were living:

«Huns and Goths were reputed to have lived in close proximity for a long time without knowing of each other's existence. One day, a heifer belonging to the Huns was stung by a gadfly and rushed through marshy water towards the far shore. A herdsman followed the heifer and reported to the Huns what he had seen. "The hunters", Jordanes wrote, "followed" and crossed on foot the Maeotic swamp, which they supposed was as impassable as the sea¹. Presently the unknown land of Scythia exposed itself. Now, in my opinion, the evil spirits, from whom the Huns are descended, did this from envy of the Scythians. And the Huns, who had been widely ignorant that there was another land beyond Maeotia, were now filled with admiration of the Scythian land» [2. P. 159].

In the Western literature, St. Jerome's (347–420) opinion on the Huns is often quoted as well. St. Jerome, one of the Church Fathers, translated the Bible into Latin and, because of this, he is the patron saint of translators, librarians and encyclopaedists. He writes the following about the Huns:

«Speeding hither and thither on their nimble-footed horses, they were filling all the world with panic and bloodshed. They outstripped rumour in speed, and, when they came, they spared neither religion nor rank nor age, even for wailing children they had no pity.» He added, against all evidence, that «it was generally agreed that the goal of the invaders was Jerusalem» [2. P. 161].

As mentioned above Atilla is called *Flagellum Dei*, the «Scourge of God» in the Western traditions. It is unclear where this characterization stems from. The French historian and member of the Senate, Amadée Thierry (1797–1873), who extensively discussed the Huns and their traditions in four volumes, claimed that the origin of the myth must be located sometime between the fifth and the eighth century. Thierry, who intensively researched this issue, discovered that the myth surfaces in two variants arising in France and in Italy [3. P. II].

In the Gallic variant, Atilla and his army are on their way to the Catalaunian Fields in 452 AD. Two days before the battle against the Roman armies, the men of Atilla capture an old hermit, who is able to predict the future. Atilla clings to the fact that the hermit foretells him the future. The hermit tells Atilla the following words:

«You are the Scourge of God, tu es flagellum Dei but God breaks, if he wants, the means of his revenge. He will be convinced that you know that power does not originate from this world».

¹ The Hungarian reader immediately recognizes the core of the myth of the mythical stag in these lines.

Instead of being annoyed, the myth tells us, Atilla is proud to bear this epithet:

«Glorification from Hell took possession of him; he jumped up and shouted: «The stars are falling down, the world is shaking, I am the hammer that hits the world».

This image of Atilla has been cultivated further in Italy and France. It appears in all sorts of literary and theatrical performances [2. P. 168–169]. Hence, in Renaissance Venice, Atilla seems to be a rather well-known fictional character. For example, Giovanni-Maria Barbieri writes a long poem about Atilla, called “La Guerra d’Atilla, Flagello di Dio”, which appeared in some twenty editions between 1525 and 1632. Barbieri writes in another long poem, called «Libro d’Attilá» that Atilla, who was famous for persecuting Christians, was the son of a dog and the daughter of the Hungarian king. In the 17th century, Atilla was one of the favourite topics of the French dramatists. In 1647, in the Royal College of Rouen that was under the supervision of the Jesuits, the drama called «L’Épée fatale ou le fleau d’Atilla» (The Fatal Sword or the Scourge of Atilla) was performed on stage. This play was the model for a number of other plays about Atilla, depicting the king of the Huns as an anti-hero.

Stereotypical schemes like «Huns as barbarians» and «Atilla as the Scourge of God» belong to the Western tradition that originates from the Greeks. The Greeks were city-dwellers and stigmatized all the nomadic tribes that surrounded them as «barbarians». At first, the Greeks referred to the Persians, who tried to conquer Greece, as barbarians. Apart from the Persians, Herodotus, the Greek historian, also classified the nomadic Scythians in this category. Herodotus actually set up, with his description of the barbarian peoples, a kind of «anthropological model» that would be used in later ages in connection with these nomadic peoples. In the descriptions of the later ages, the word «barbarian», originally meaning «culturally inferior», «foreigner» and «a person who does not speak the Greek language», adopted the stigma of «warlike», «aggressive», «destructive» and «despotic». Beller (2007, 266–68) claims that the Western European nations applied the «barbarian» function, name and label to all the new waves of intruders who came from the North, East and Asia [4. P. 267]. This was true for the Huns as well. The antique use of the word «barbarian» was adopted by the Romans, who applied it to the Germanic tribes labelling them «uncivilized», «aggressive» and «drunken» barbarians. The negative version of the image of the barbarians was also adopted by the Italian Renaissance writers, who cherished the antique traditions in order to claim superiority. Compare, for example, the works of Barbieri, mentioned above. The Renaissance writers were succeeded by the Humanists, who discovered the cultural heritage of the European nations and took the first steps in the direction of a modern national identity. The promotion of one’s own national values almost automatically implies the devaluation of those of the neighbouring nations, and their assignment as enemies or barbarians. In this tradition, all the people that remained outside the borders of the traditional Western Greek-Roman Empire were branded as «barbarians» [4. P. 267].

In the age of Enlightenment, from the second half of the eighteenth century, Western intellectuals started to classify the «barbarian» peoples. The French encyclopaedists, like Voltaire, or French diplomats, like Baron De Tott and Charles de Peyssonnel, set up the classification of the «barbarian» world of Eastern Europe

and Central Asia. De Peyssonnel distinguished, for example, two types of barbarian invasions. One of them, he called «Barbares Orientaux». In fact, these were the Scythians, who were wandering from the East westwards. De Peyssonnel and other enlightened researchers also took into account the anthropological markers, when they classified the so-called barbarian peoples. In order to classify the Huns, De Peyssonnel mixed ancient sources with anthropological observations from the eighteenth century [5. P. 286]:

«The portraits that the poet and historian give us of these peoples infinitely resemble our Tartars of today, and especially the Nogais, who are extremely ugly and dirty, agile, indefatigable, always on horse...»

In Gibbon's work, we find all the stereotypes referring to the «barbarians». The Hun «hordes» are racially «ugly»; the Huns have no civilization; they do not know anything of sciences; they are unsuitable for arts; and they are like the Scythians that were stereotyped «barbarians» by the Greeks.

Gibbon discusses Atilla and the Huns in the 34th chapter of his book «The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire». He holds the view that the Huns were related to the Scythians. Hence, he places the Huns in the geographical space of Eastern Europe: «Their victorious hordes had spread from the Volga to the Danube» [5. P. 299]. Atilla was identified with racial markers and is associated with «barbarians» who live in the same age as Gibbon:

«The portrait of Atilla exhibits the genuine deformity of a modern Calmuck; a large head, a swarthy complexion, small deep-seated eyes, a flat nose, a few hairs in the place of a beard, broad shoulders, and a short square body, of nervous strength, though of a disproportioned form».

Note that the Enlightenment authors and early scientists establish an anthropological connection between the ancient Scythians, the Huns and their contemporary Calmucks. After accusing them of making human sacrifices, Gibbon accuses the Huns of having no civilization. According to Gibbon, the Scythian king was not even sensitive enough to employ Roman captives to introduce sciences and arts into the deserts of Scythia. Gibbon was, however, convinced of the fact that the barbarians could be cultivated and that their development could be stimulated but: «Atilla who built his residence between the Danube, the Theiss, and the Carpathian Hills, in the plains of Upper Hungary, always kept the simplicity of his Scythian ancestors». For Gibbon, just as for De Peyssonnel, the Scythians were an indispensable factor in the ethnographical identification of the Eastern European barbarians [5. P. 299].

The Hun Tradition of the Hungarian Chronicles

The most important medieval Hungarian Chronicles include (1) *Gesta Hungarorum* (The Deeds of the Hungarians), which was written by Anonymus at the end of the 12th century and in the beginning of the 13th century. Anonymus was the anonymous notary of Béla III, King of Hungary from the Árpád dynasty; (2) *Gesta Hunnorum et Hungarorum* (The Deeds of the Huns and the Hungarians) was written around 1281–1283 by Simon Kézai, the court priest of King László IV from the House of Árpád; (3) The Viennese Illuminated Chronicle that was compiled by Mark Kálti, the court notary of the Hungarian king from the House of Anjou, Louis I, the Great, in 1370; (4) *Chronica Hungarorum* (The Chronicle of the Hungarians)

that was written by János Thuróczy (1435?–1489?), the notary of the Lord Chief Justice of the Hungarian Kingdom (Thuróczy dedicated the second edition of the book to King Matthias Corvinus (1443–1490); and (5) *Tarih-i Üngürüs* (The History of the Hungarians), which is a Turkish-language chronicle written by Mahmud Terdzüman, the interpreter and notary of the Turkish Sultan, Sulejman I (1491–1566). The author, Mahmud Terdzüman, was a German nobleman from Passau, who fell into Turkish captivity after the Battle of Mohács in 1526. The *Tarih-i Üngürüs* was written on the basis of different Hungarian ancient chronicles that came into the hands of the Osmons at the siege of Székesfehérvár in 1543.

These chronicles are the most important Hungarian sources reflecting on the question of the Hun-Hungarian kinship. I consider the above chronicles to be the beginning of Hungarian historiography. The characteristics of these medieval chronicles are that (1) they support the Hun-Hungarian kinship, on the basis of the Hungarian tradition referring to the the Huns; (2) the genealogical tree of the kings of the House of Árpád is derived from the family tree of Atilla, the king of the Huns. From this it follows that the medieval Hungarian historians considered the Magyar Conquest of the Carpathian Basin as a kind of multiple, returning event. The conquests of the Carpathian Basin by related peoples preceded the Magyar Conquest. Hence, the Hungarian Chronicles suppose multiple Hun-Avar-Magyar conquests and continuity.

In the second half of the 19th century, Hungarian academic historiography denied the Hun tradition of the Hungarians. A complete «school» was set up in order to discredit the Hungarian Chronicles. If the Hungarian Chronicles do not have a real basis, the question arises: for what reason did the chroniclers support the Hun-Hungarian kinship? and for what reason should the House of Árpád be related to Atilla? Above I have argued extensively that the West considers Atilla, even today, the «Scourge of God». It can hardly be imagined that Hungarian chroniclers who occupied high positions in the medieval Hungarian kingdom, did their country, and the Hungarian king they served, such a bad service. These questions are not satisfactorily answered by those, who reject the first Hungarian history books as «useless». Furthermore, those, who reject the chronicles, treat the chroniclers with little respect, presuming that they fabricated their data and compiled the chronicles only on the basis of other completely unreliable sources. Anonymus, Kézai, Káti, Thuróczy and Terdzüman were high-ranking officials in the court of the Hungarian king or the Turkish sultan. Anonymus received his education at a Western European university, probably in Paris, where he learned how to compose a chronicle. It seems that those scholars, who wanted to prove, by any means, that the Hungarian Chronicles have no real basis or core, are not able to weigh these questions in a responsible way. They do not take into account that these first Hungarian historians were, after all, officials in the hierarchy of one of the strongest medieval states of Europe. If this is taken into account, the research questions are precisely the opposite. The data presented in the chronicles should have been exposed to a source critical examination and not rejected as false, *a priori*, as was done by the Hunfalvy school¹.

¹ The manipulations of scholars like Hunsdorfer (Hunfalvy) is discussed extensively in Marác (to appear) where it is argued at length that Hunsdorfer and his colleagues initiated three linguistic wars against the original sources and structures of the Hungarian language preparing the ground for an invented categorization

The school, which was briefly mentioned above, is linked to the name of Pál Hunfalvy (1810–1891). Hunfalvy belonged to the German minority of Upper Hungary and he Magyarized his original German name, Hunsdorfer. He learned the Hungarian language only as a youngster. Hunfalvy pressed for the hypothesis to relate the Hungarians to the supposed Finno-Ugric peoples, by any means. Methodologically, he was exclusively interested in linguistic affinities between Hungarian and the supposed Finno-Ugric languages. Neither Hunfalvy, nor any other of his followers, were able to present any convincing evidence apart from marginal linguistic affinities supporting this linguistic hypothesis and rejecting at the same time the hypothesis that Hungarian is a Central Asian language related to Turkic [6].

Hunfalvy's appearance on the stage coincides with the defeat of the Hungarian Revolution and Freedom Fight of 1848–1849, against the Habsburgs. In the middle of the 19th century, the career of this jurist suddenly started to rise in the field of humanities. In 1851, he became Chief Librarian of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. A position he kept until the end of his life. Apart from the fact that Hunfalvy was advocating the Finno-Ugric hypothesis, we are informed by Géza Gárdonyi (1863–1922), a famous novelist and contemporary of Hunfalvy, in the notes attached to his novel *A láthatatlan ember* (The invisible man), how Hunfalvy performed his duties in the Academic Library¹. According to Gárdonyi, the chief librarian suffered from pyromania [7. P. 315]. Hunfalvy was burning manuscripts in the Library, probably the ones that contradicted his Finno-Ugric hypothesis. There are many blank spots concerning Hunfalvy, who not only forcefully tried to «prove» the Finno-Ugric origin of the Hungarians but initiated a whole school in order to declare the Hungarian mythological tradition concerning Hungarian-Hun kinship non-existent. From the papers of the Turkologist József Thúry we are informed precisely when and why Hunfalvy rejected the Hungarian Chronicles [8, 9]. In 1864, Hunfalvy held the opinion that the Hungarian Chronicles were of great value but, in 1876, he suddenly changed his opinion:

«However, in the year 1876, in our country Pál Hunfalvy started a new direction concerning the judgement of the historical value of the Hungarian Chronicles and this judgement pronounced that the content of the Hungarian Chronicles is nothing more than a fairy-tale and, as such, these are completely «useless» concerning the ancient history of the Hungarians» [8. P. 275].

Thúry convincingly demonstrated that Hunfalvy did no more than slavishly copy the study of the Austro-German historian, Robert Roesler (1836–1874), called «*Römänische Studien*» that appeared in 1871 in Leipzig. Hunfalvy's opinion that the chronicle of Anonymus was «useless» originated directly from Roesler's study. In this work, he qualified the Anonymus chronicle «als unbrauchbar bei Seite gethan» [8. P. 276]. Hunfalvy did not waste any time and, exceeding Roesler, disqualified all the Hungarian Chronicles. He followed the instructions of his ex-

of Hungarian as a Finno-Ugric language. The analysis in this section completes the picture. Hunsdorfer also wanted to eradicate any tie of the Hungarian history with the Huns that reflects onto a Central Asian origin of the Hungarians and their language. Hence, the fourth war of Hunsdorfer and his supporters was directed against the Hungarian Chronicles.

¹ The plot of Gárdonyi's novel *A láthatatlan ember* (The invisible man) published in 1902 takes place in Atilla's summer camp on the territory of Hungary (see later on in this paper for a more extensive discussion). In order to write this novel Gárdonyi did a lot of work on the documentation of the Hun age in Central Europe.

ample to use only the Western, i.e. German sources, in the research of the ancient history of the Hungarians, because only those sources could be considered trustworthy. Roesler did not act by himself, though. He in turn followed the anti-Hungarian German school of the University of Göttingen, established by the German historian, August Ludwig von Schlözer (1735–1809) [10. XXV]. The establishment of this school of historiography is understood better in the framework of stereotypes proposed by Beller. The goal of this school was to promote the German national consciousness at the expense of that of the neighbouring nations, in this case, the Hungarians. This German school developed German Aryanism later on in the 19th century, searching for the ancestors of the Indo-Europeans everywhere on the Steppes [11. P. 30–35].

The problem with the German sources on the Hun tradition of the Hungarians is that they provide very little information about the equestrian peoples of the Steppes. From this perspective, the Byzantine, Arabic, Armenian, and Chinese sources are much more reliable because they contain eye-witness accounts, as Thúry correctly points out [9. P. 5]. Hunfalvy's attempt was methodologically completely mistaken from the beginning. However, this did not bother him and he started to work on his project with great dynamism. In his study: «The Ethnography of Hungary», published in 1876, he rejected the Hungarian Chronicles, only sticking to a few data that were in support of his Finno-Ugric theory. Hunfalvy considered the Hun mythological tradition of the Hungarians a borrowing from German traditions and chronicles.

Due to the attempt of Hunfalvy, the research into the Hungarian Chronicles was divided into two camps. The Hunfalvy school considered the mythological tradition of the Hungarians, concerning the Huns, to be a fairy-tale and adopted the position that the core elements of this tradition reached Hungary via German mediation. The German-inspired school was followed by Gusztáv Heinrich (1881), Gedeon Petz (1885) and Elemér Moór (1923). The teachings of the German school were rejected by the Turkologist Ármin Vámbéry, the historian Károly Fiók (1895, 1896), the historian Géza Nagy, the Turkologist József Thúry (1897) and the historian Károly Szabó (1824–1874). These Hungarian scholars argued that, if the Hungarians had received their Hun tradition from the Germans, the most specific theses of the Hungarian Chronicles are still not explained, including that of the Hun-Hungarian kinship; that the House of Árpád is genealogically related to Atilla; and that the Székely-Hungarians withdrew to Transylvania after the fall of the Hun Empire. No data on these theses can be found, however, in the German Chronicles. Hence, they could not have been adopted from these sources. The critics of the German school argue that, in these matters, the Hungarian Chronicles are authentic. The specific theses of the Hungarian Chronicles should be checked with other foreign sources, first of all, with the Byzantine, Arabic, Armenian and Syrian sources. In the interbellum, a third line of research was initiated, which agreed with Hunfalvy that the Hungarian Chronicles are compilations but did not exclude the possibility that the mythological Hungarian elements regarding the Huns originate from a Hungarian tradition. This line of research was based on the ponderous study of Bálint Hóman (1925). Sándor Eckhardt (1928) and Sándor Domanovszky (1933) followed this line of research. Research in the 20th century has provided, however, overwhelming counter-evidence, refuting the theory of Hunfalvy and his followers.

These investigations, that should be carried out with much more intensity, to demonstrate that, contrary to the school of Hunfalvy, the first Hungarian history books should be taken seriously and subjected to source critical methods.

The engineer and geographer László Bendefy (1904–1977) has reconstructed «Scythia» as a well-defined geographical entity, on the basis of the geographical data that appear in the Chronicle of Simon Kézai. Bendefy did his research with the help of scientific methods from geography [12]. Relying on the data in Anonymus and Kézai, Bendefy was able to outline a characteristic «Hungarian Scythia». Bendefy concluded from this that the specific features of «Hungarian Scythia» are rooted in the ancient Hungarian traditions. According to Bendefy, three types of traditions can be distinguished. First of all, the most ancient proto-Hungarian traditions that stem from the other side of the Urals. Secondly, the tradition that refer to Bashkir-Hungarian roots. Finally, to the south of these two traditions, a Caucasian heritage clearly can be distinguished. In sum, the essence of Bendefy's research is that there are data to be found in the Hungarian Chronicles that cannot be derived from any other foreign source and, with the help of these data, a specific Hungarian Scythia can be projected.

László Götz (1994) also referred to data that cannot have been borrowed by the Hungarian chroniclers from any other foreign traditions. Götz has argued for the authenticity of these data with the help of data from other independent sources. Hence, the Hungarian Chronicles contain data that are in correspondence with the data of foreign sources, data that could, however, not be borrowed from these sources because the foreign sources were unknown to the Hungarian chroniclers. This convincingly demonstrates that the chroniclers relied on Hungarian autochthonous traditions. Hence, this excludes the theory that the Hungarian Chronicles are nothing more than compilations from German sources.

Firstly, László Götz relying on the research of Frigyes Hirth, notes that Hirth compared the early names of the genealogical tree of the House of Árpád, appearing in the Thuróczy-Chronicle, with the names of the rulers of the Eastern Huns, the Hiung-nu, in the Chinese sources from the third to the first century BC. Götz observed that three names can be found in the Chinese and Hungarian Chronicles, which are almost completely identical phonetically, but also the chronological order of the family trees matches in these cases. The association of a fourth name is very likely. These names are the following [13. P. 306–307]:

Chinese sources	Thuróczy
MAO-TUN or BAKTUR	BETZER or BETZUR
(175 BC.)	(173 BC.)
LAU-SCHANG or MINGI	MIKE
(160 BC.)	(140 BC.)
HU-LU-KU	KULCHE or KULKE
(85 BC.)	(41 BC.)
HŰ-LŰ-KÜAN-KÜ	LEUNTE or ELEUNTE
(60 BC.)	(8 BC.)

Secondly, the results of the research of Omeljan Pritsak support the authenticity of the Atilla traditions of the House of Árpád [14]. The sources unmistakably

inform us about the fact that the son of Atilla, Irnik, withdrew to the surroundings of the Dnieper River after the fall of the Western Hun Empire and that he established the Hun Dulo-dynasty from which the Bulgarian ruling house branched off [10. P. 450]. Kézai and the other Hungarian chroniclers inform us that the name «Dulo» appears in the Hungarian myth of ethnogenesis: «*Hunor and Magor steal the wives of the sons of Belar, the two daughters of the Alan ruler Dula.*» If «Dulo» and «Dula»; and «Belar» and «Bulgarian» are in correspondence, then, according to the Hungarian chroniclers, the Royal House of Árpád is descended from the son of Atilla, Irnik, who is referred to in the Hungarian Chronicles as «Csaba». These correspondences are supported by the findings of Omeljan Pritsak. Pritsak has intensively studied the Hun-Bulgarian Princes' List that surfaced in the 16th century and gives information until the year 769. In the list, the names of thirteen Bulgarian princes appear. There is also information on how long they ruled. The list is authentic and has been confirmed by the Byzantine sources. Pritsak summarizes his research as follows:

1. The names on the Bulgarian Princes' List. Pritsak demonstrates that the Bulgarian-Turkic dynasty of «Duolo (Dulo)» originates from the house of the Hun rulers.

2. The name of the royal tribe of the Asian Huns in the Chinese sources. «T'uko» is represented in ancient Chinese sources as «Dulo». Götz (1994) also refers to the authenticity of the Chinese sources. The striking phonetic correspondence between the name of the ruling Hun tribe, «T'uko», in the Chinese sources and the later name of the Turkic tribes «T'ukin» is strong evidence for the authenticity of the Chinese sources. According to these, the Turks originated from the Hiung-nu, as one of the different branches.

3. The name «Mao-tun» the progenitor of the dynasty displays the ancient Chinese form: «*Bixtun», corresponding to the ancient Bulgarian names, «Vixtun» or «Bixtun». The name, «Mao-tun», reconstructed by Pritsak under (3), clearly corresponds to BEZTUR that appears in the Hungarian Thuróczy-Chronicle. Thuróczy could neither have borrowed these data from the Chinese sources nor from the Bulgarian Princes' List. Hence, we conclude that these data are rooted in the Hungarian traditions.

Thúry (1897) has demonstrated how the Hungarian tradition of the Huns can be successfully matched with the Eastern sources. He observes that the Chinese sources track down the Huns until 375 AD. Around this year, the Western Huns broke away from the Eastern Huns. The Western Huns are recorded, in turn, by the Byzantine sources (Priscos, Agathais, Procopius, Theophanes, Theophylactus and Jordanes), by Armenian, Syrian and finally by Arab sources [9]. According to Thúry, the gap of about five hundred years, between the European appearance of the Huns of Atilla and the Magyar Conquest, is covered «because evidence of world history links the Huns and the Magyars by a common ancestry»; more precisely, «from the first century AD until the 12th century AD, the Magyars and the Huns of Atilla are referred to as one and the same people» [8. P. 290]. It is very likely that the Magyars had already heard in Scythia about the Huns and Atilla, for the Khazars were subjected by Atilla and Atilla made his son, Ellak, ruler of the Khazar tribe. It is a well-established fact that the Magyars lived in close proximity to the Khazars [8. P. 292]. József Thúry was the first to demonstrate that this ap-

proach yields fruitful results. László Götz (1994), Kornél Bakay, Béla Szász (1994) and Marác (to appear) have been doing research along similar lines.

In conclusion, the designation of the Hungarian Chronicles as «useless» served to undermine the theory of Hun-Sabir-Avar-Onogur-Magyar continuity [6. Chapter Eleven]. The analysis of this continuity theory, with scientific means, was already initiated by the Jesuit historian György Pray at the end of the 18th century [8. P. 292]. The rejection of this theory by Hunfalvy and his followers was undertaken with great force, after the loss of the 1848–1849 Hungarian War of Independence against Habsburg rule. These attacks were effective because they marginalized their enemies in the scientific field with bureaucratic power. The humiliated Habsburg power and the German school were interested in this because, in the middle of the 19th century, they had the opportunity to separate the «rebellious» Hungarians from their Hun connection. From a political power perspective, the Hungarians could be controlled more easily, when related to the «tame» Finno-Ugrians.

Eurasian Heartland

In 1904, Mackinder read his influential paper entitled: «The Geographical Pivot of History» [1]. In this study, Mackinder presented his geopolitical theory, which he summarized as follows:

*Whoever rules Eastern Europe commands the Heartland;
Whoever rules the Heartland commands the World-Island;
Whoever rules the World-Island controls the World.*

The central area of this theory is the Heartland that matches Eurasia, stretching from the Volga to the Yangtze rivers and from the Himalayas to the Arctic. The World-Island comprises the interlinked continents of Europe, Asia and Africa. These three continents are the largest, most populous, and possess the most natural resources of all possible land combinations. According to the theory, if a great power can control the majority of these areas, then it can control the whole world. Mackinder's Heartland Theory has been decisive until the present-day in Western political strategic thinking on Eurasia. Mackinder was probably the first to elaborate on this theory with scientific means. In any case, the British were fully aware, during their Asian presence, of the fact that the control of the Eurasian Heartland, i.e. Eastern Europe and Central Asia, is extremely important. If the Western powers cannot control this area, then they have to prevent any other continental power from controlling the Heartland. In the 19th century, the British expressed the ensuing strategic competition with the term: «Great Game» [15, 16]. The Great Game was the 19th century competition between the Russians and the British for power over Central Asia. Several Hungarian scholars, who were studying the ancient roots of the Hungarians and their language in this area, became involved in the Great Game, on the side of the British. Such researchers were Alexander Csoma de Kőrös, Ármin Vámbéry and Aurél Stein [17]. Let us concentrate on the theory of Mackinder, for the Eurasian Heartland is precisely the area, where we must search for the ancestors of the Huns before they wandered westwards. Hence, if we want to know more about the role of the Huns in Western consciousness, we have to deal especially with the theory of Eurasian Heartland.

The starting point of Mackinder's argumentation is that human action is strongly restricted by physical and geographical conditions, although the events of world history are the result of human action. This appears from the analysis of the historical processes. These physical and geographical conditions were also effective in the past, when geography was unknown [1. P. 422]. From this, it follows that the invasion of the Huns into Europe can be, moreover should be, studied within this framework, in order to receive insight into the events of history. Mackinder actually argues against an exclusive Eurocentric historiography, because from this research attitude the processes in European history will not be understood. Mackinder reverses the perspective. The events of European history must be studied in connection with the Eurasian Heartland. The parts of Mackinder's study, relevant for the present exposition, can be summarized in the following three theses:

(1) The most important territories of the Eurasian Heartland, which comprises half of the area of the Earth, consists of Steppe land. In this land, only horse-riding and camel-riding nomads can survive. In the North, extreme, sub-arctic conditions restrict the possibilities of living. Land, suitable for agriculture, is only to be found in the eastern- and westernmost peripheries, because of the lack of water. The Steppes spread continuously for 4000 miles, from the Hungarian *puszta* to the Little Gobi of Manchuria. This expanse of Steppe land occupies a central place in the world-system, i.e. it is the pivot of the world-system. Because of this, expansion is possible in all directions, especially southwards to the territories of the antique world.

(2) European civilization was established as a reaction to foreign pressures from Asia. For the large part, the modern history of Europe is dependent on these nomad pressures.

(3) The Asian «Turanian nomadic equestrian-peoples», like the Huns, Avars, Bulgarians, Magyars, Khazars, Patsinaks, Cumanians and Mongols came from the unknown recesses of Asia, through the gateway between the Ural Mountains and the Caspian Sea, through the South-Russian Steppes, into Europe, between the fifth and the sixteenth centuries, reaching Hungary, the heart of the European peninsula. The Scythians probably preceded these related equestrian peoples on this route to Europe. The conditions of the Steppes restricted the power of these equestrian peoples. In the forest and mountainous areas, they were much less effective in battle.

Mackinder's study postulates the following theses concerning the Huns:

(4) Atilla and his Huns settled down in the Hungarian *puszta*. Hence, from the heart of Europe, they could attack in three directions, i.e. northwards, southwards and westwards.

(5) The idea of France was forced upon the Franks, Goths and Romans who had to fight together against the Huns in the Battle of the Catalaunian Plains [1. P. 423]. On the battlefield, the idea of France was born without the Asians knowing this. Venice was founded when the Huns destroyed Aquileia and Padua. The Papacy obtained decisive prestige for the successful mediation of Pope Leo with Atilla at Milan.

If we put together the five relevant theses from the study of Mackinder, then we will observe that the physical and geographical conditions were favourable to the development of the power of horse-riding and camel-riding peoples in the geographical pivot of history, i.e. in the Eurasian Heartland (compare (1) and (3)). Only equestrian peoples could move back and forth in this Steppe land zone of

4000 miles and expand from this area southwards. According to Mackinder, Genghis Khan (1162–1227) and his Mongols established, from all the equestrian peoples, the greatest empire in the Steppes. The expansion started from the Mongolian Steppes in 1206 under the rule of Genghis Khan. It continued in south-western and south-eastern directions. Mackinder observes that, sooner or later, the settled parts of the antique world, including Russia, Persia, India and China, had to pay tribute to the Mongols, to this dynamic power from the Steppes. If we take Mackinder's theory seriously, then we have to conclude that the Mongols, whose empire reached its maximal expansion in 1259, were on their way to world power, for they controlled the Eurasian Heartland and the largest part of the World-Island. However, we do not agree with Mackinder's opinion – and this shows that even he could not distance himself completely from the Eurocentric historiography – when he states:

«A cloud of ruthless and ideiless horsemen sweeping over the unimpeded plain – a blow, as it were, from the great Asiatic hammer striking freely through the vacant space» [I. P. 427].

Precisely the case of the Mongols shows that the Steppe peoples did not ride helter-skelter in the Steppes but rather they fought and conquered, according to a strategic plan. It is hard to imagine that the equestrian peoples from the Steppes, who were in control of the Eurasian Heartland, were not aware of the geopolitical conditions. It is possible that the equestrians unconsciously contributed to the idea of France and to the birth of Venice (see (5) above) but it is hard to imagine that they were not aware of the fact that, by southwards expansion, they were challenging world power.

It is not by accident that Atilla and his Huns selected Hungary as the centre of their empire. The Hungarian *puszta* is the westernmost periphery of the Steppes. The *puszta* offers to equestrians excellent, familiar terrain. The decision was affected, however, not only by geographical conditions. It must have been a strategic decision, for the Carpathian Basin is the centre of Europe, from where one can attack in any direction. The Western Huns did this between 412 and 454, while ruling over Central- and Eastern Europe. The Magyars of Árpád followed the same strategy after the Conquest of the Carpathian Basin. Szabolcs de Vajay convincingly demonstrated that the northwards, southwards, and westwards Hungarian military operations, after the Conquest, served a preventive policy that neutralised the establishment of a centralized military power in the Holy Roman Empire. These Hungarian military operations served to maintain the balance of power between the different European empires to prevent an attack against Hungary from the territories of the neighbouring countries [18]. Contrary to the Huns and the Mongols, the Magyars did not control background territories in the East.

Atilla's European Empire extended from Hungary to the valley of the Oxus River in Asia. The other side of the Oxus River was controlled by a people related to the Huns, the White Huns. Thierry (1865, 95–96) quotes Priscos, the Byzantine diplomat and historian, who visited the court of Atilla in 448. There he was informed that Atilla was planning an attack on Persia and Media. These countries bordered the territories controlled by related Hun tribes. From this perspective, Atilla's Central European camp looked more like a western base of operations of the Hun Empire. Indeed, from the account of Priscos, his dwelling-place seems to

have been more like a kind of summer residence [10. XX]. The Hungarian popular tradition has recorded that this dwelling-place was somewhere in the neighbourhood of present-day Szeged. Because of the merging of the territories of the Eastern, i.e. Central Asian, Huns and the Western, i.e. European, Huns that took place, when the Western Huns invaded Europe in 375, using the corridor between the Ural Mountains and the Caspian Sea, the Huns were indeed in control of the Mackinder type of Heartland. Strictly arguing from Mackinder's theory, this means that this merger could be used as a stepping-stone for gaining world power, which, as we have discussed above, was referred to in the camp of Atilla.

If we investigate, in this framework, the Battle of the Catalaunian Plains, a battle that many Western historians consider to be the decisive battle against the Huns, then it must be concluded that this battle itself was not that important. Moreover, it is not even essential to know who won the battle. This question has been the focus of research in Western analysis. The attack of Atilla and his Huns, against the western parts of the Roman Empire, was of strategic importance for Atilla's plans to gain world power. Atilla was satisfied with breaking the military power of the Roman Empire, when the Huns and their allies, the German Gepidas and Ostrogoths, crossed the Rhine in order to encounter the military forces of the Roman Empire, allied with the German Franks and Visigoths, in the vicinity of the city of Chalons, on the Catalaunian Plains [19. P. 149–151]. These events are not considered to be important for world history, if we only discuss who won the Battle of the Catalaunian Plains or whether the battle ended in a draw. What is important is that Atilla and the Huns succeeded in neutralizing the military power of the western parts of the Roman Empire, for the troops of the Roman commander, Aetius, did not appear when Atilla and his troops, a half a year after the Battle of the Catalaunian Plains, were campaigning in Northern Italy, in order to conquer Rome. In the Battle of the Catalaunian Plains, Atilla succeeded in weakening the military power of the western parts of the Roman Empire, so much so that they were not able to attack him from the side, nor were they able to stop him, when he was marching with his troops onto Rome. Hence, Atilla could easily take the city of Aquileia, although, because of its fortifications, the Romans thought that this city was impregnable [20. P. 177]. The Hun troops came to a standstill before Rome and Atilla made peace with a delegation led by Pope Leo. However, the fall of Rome was just a matter of time and this decision completely depended on Atilla. A unified campaign of the Western Huns against the Roman Empire and the Eastern Huns against Persia would have meant a southwards expansion of the Huns on two fronts, causing the antique world to fall into a «pair of pincers» in accordance with the first thesis of Mackinder's theory. Hence, the southern parts of the antique world, including the Mediterranean Sea, the Middle East, Persia and India, would have fallen as «dominos» under Hun control. One could argue that the Battle of the Catalaunian Plains was indeed an event shaping world history, for the Huns took the first steps in realizing their plans to conquer the world in the West. The premature death of Atilla prevented the realization of their plans but it is clear that, in the West, the Huns took the relevant steps, from a military-strategic point of view. Seven hundred years later, the Mongols wanted to realize the same Western-Eastern «pair of pincers», although the main pivot of their Empire was in the eastern parts of the Heartland. Contrary to the Huns, the Mongols first expanded

southwards in the East. The military encirclement of Europe in the West could not be carried out because Hungary successfully held off the first attacks of the Mongols. Finally, they withdrew from Europe because their Great Khan died in 1242. From this perspective, it is obvious why Atilla is the eternal enemy of the West, because it was he, who started to realize his plans for world power from the West. The West was saved from Hun domination because of Atilla's sudden death.

Mackinder's theory is important because we are able to put into his framework the equestrian peoples from the Steppes. Mackinder should be given credit for suggesting that the equestrian peoples held a central position in the Eurasian Heartland in the course of world historic events. The birth of Europe is also dependent on this area, and the cultures of the peoples in this area have affected European culture. The famous English geographer is however unable to completely free himself from the Western stereotypes of the Huns and the Steppe peoples, for, when he writes about these peoples, he quite often uses phrases like «“barbarian hordes» that have no military-strategic concepts. The above analyses, however, unambiguously demonstrate that the historical facts and events, related to the equestrian peoples from the Steppes, are in full correspondence with his theory.

Equestrian civilization

The well-known American historian, Carroll Quigley (1910–1977), who was the mentor of the former US President Bill Clinton, during his student years at Georgetown University in Washington, does not classify the so-called equestrian culture as a civilization in his book entitled «The Evolution of Civilizations». According to Quigley, this is due to the fact that the term «civilization» is connected to the knowledge of writing and city life, which he says is lacking from the culture of the equestrian peoples. Just as in the case of Mackinder, Quigley relies on stereotypes for the characterization of the equestrians. Quigley claims about the Roman Empire that «later, barbarian horsemen were raiding into imperial territory». According to Quigley, the Huns who appeared from the Asian Steppes and the Germanic peoples, who were horse-riding near the Danubian border of the Empire, were responsible for the collapse of Rome, although Quigley hastens to add that the Empire was weakened in all respects. According to the American historian, the Roman Empire could have been saved, only if its defence had been shifted from infantry to cavalry. The Romans, however, were unable to bring about this change, primarily from an economic point of view, for horses, as grain-eating animals, compete for food directly with men. The Roman economy was not able to produce such a surplus of grain. Secondly, Quigley argues new techniques were needed to solve this issue of the surplus of grain-production. Thirdly, the cavalry had to be built on heavy cavalry. The establishment of this was, however, costly due to the need for strong horses, equine equipment, stirrups, horseshoes, weapons and grain-production [21. P. 349]. Fourthly, the cavalry required a lot of specialized training. The mounted men fought in loose groups armed with lances or spears. The fighting men had to be prepared for this art of warfare. This implied that the other members of society had to take care of the costly training and upkeep of the soldiers and support them entirely. According to Quigley, the ratio in the society between soil tillers and fighters would have been high, something in the order of a hundred to one [21. P. 349]. The American professor does not, however,

explain how the equestrian societies could solve the problem of an expensive cavalry, accompanied by a large-scale grain-production. Equestrian peoples possessed a large number of horses, for, during combat, soldiers had several horses at their disposal. Quigley does not answer the question of how the equestrian peoples were able to solve these fundamental issues, long before the Roman Empire came into being.

According to Quigley, Western society is actually a hybrid way of life that has been influenced by several cultural spheres. The Steppe peoples from Asia contributed to Western civilization with social organization and technological improvements, including the horseshoe and stirrups. Because of horseshoes, a horse could be used for more than several days. Hence, in a relatively short period of time, they could travel long distances. With the use of stirrups, lances and spears the cavalry could be used effectively against soldiers of the infantry. Quigley dates these technological advancements to the period of the great invasions. These technological improvements probably came into Europe with the Huns or with other Uralic-Altaic groups [22, 23]. The discovery of the composite reflex bow may be added to this that had an average range of 500 metres. The composite reflex bow was able to outshoot the Western European bows by more than two to one, causing Western Europeans to pray: «A sagittis hungarorum libera nos Domine» (Lord, save us from the arrows of the Hungarians). This prayer was recorded in the Northern Italian town of Modena in 924 AD.

Above, I pointed out that Quigley connects the concept of «civilization» to the knowledge of writing and the existence of city life. Interestingly, from this point of view, the Steppe culture satisfies the concept of «civilization». First of all, we can find, in the Mackinder kind of Steppe land of 4000 miles, «settlers», including in places where the nomadic life-style is predominant. There we also find cities, settlements and agriculture, along with drain-pipes and irrigation systems. These have been excavated by Russian archaeologists, like Sergej Pavlovich Tolstov who convincingly demonstrated in his study that the ancient cultures in Central Asian Choresm already knew an urbanized civilization 2000 BC and the Hungarian archaeologist Géza Fehér, while he was researching the ancient Bulgarian culture proved that the ancient Bulgarians had cities [24. P. 18]. Among the equestrian peoples, several systems of writing were developed, and it is certain that they knew the runic writing. Hence, if we adopt Quigley's definition, there is no reason to deny equestrian and Steppe peoples the concept of «civilization». Moreover, I agree with Viktor Padányi, who was the first, to my knowledge, to coin the term «equestrian civilization», when referring to the culture of the people of the Steppes.

Not only was the knowledge of writing part of their culture, and they actively participated in city life, but the horse was the focus of their civilization. The domestication of the horse became an art. Thus, a strong connection developed between man and animal and the horse could be used for transportation. It could be ridden or used to pull a cart or a coach. I have referred to above how the equestrian people gave technological impulses to human civilization in the field of weaponry. In the field of battle techniques, the Steppe peoples elaborated the «Blitzkrieg», the surprise attack. The smiths not only made weapons and swords but, with metallurgic techniques, they created beautiful objects and treasures from iron, silver and gold, often encrusted with precious stones. These «Scythian, Hun, Ancient Bulgarian, Avar and Magyar treasures» have been studied by a number of scholars, like

the Hungarian archeologists Nándor Fettich and Gyula László. In their works and in exhibitions, we can see dazzling ornaments, without precisely knowing where these «barbarian peoples» obtained the knowledge from to make such beautiful treasures. Maybe in the 21st century, the researchers can free themselves from the Western stereotypes dominating the historiography of the previous centuries. Only then can an objective revaluation, understanding and study of the mental and physical culture of the Steppe peoples, including the Huns be successful.

References

1. Mackinder H.J. The Geographical Pivot of History. The Geographical Journal. 1904. Vol. 23, No. 4 (Apr., 1904): 421–437.
2. Howarth Patrick. Atilla, King of the Huns, Man and Myth. London: Constable, 1998.
3. Thierry Amadé. Atilla-mondák. Pest, 1864, Pfeifer Ferdinánd.
4. Beller Manfred and Joep Leerssen, eds. 2007. Imagology. The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters. A Critical Survey. Amsterdam-New York: Rodopi, 2007.
5. Wolff Larry. Inventing Eastern Europe. The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994.
6. Maracz Laszlo. To appear. Towards Eurasian Linguistic Isoglosses: the Case of Turkic and Hungarian. Astana: International Turkic Academy.
7. Gárdonyi Géza. A láthatatlan ember. Budapest: Móra Ferenc Könyvkiadó, 1977.
8. Thury József. Krónikáink és a nemzeti hagyomány. Századok, 1897. P. 275–296.
9. Thury József. A magyarok eredete, őshazája és vándorlása. New York: Turán Printing and Bindery, 1988.
10. Szász Béla. A húnok története, Atilla nagykirály. Budapest: Szabad Tér, 1994.
11. Bryant Edwin. The Quest for the Origins of Vedic Culture. The Indo-Aryan Migration Debate. Oxford : University Press, 2001.
12. Bendefy László. Anonymus és Kézay Simon mester Scythiája. Földrajzi Közlemények LXVI. kötet, 8–10 szám, 1938. P. 201–235.
13. Götz László. Keleten két a nap. I.–II. Budapest: Püski? 1994.
14. Pritsak Omeljan. Die Bulgarische Fürstenliste und die Sprache der Protobulgaren. Wiesbaden: Otto-Harrassowitz, 1995.
15. Hopkirk Peter. The Great Game. The Struggle for Empire in Central Asia. New York: Kodansha International, 1992.
16. Rawlinson Sir Henry. England and Russia in the East. A Series of Papers on the Political and Geographical Condition of Central Asia. London: John Murray, 1875.
17. Blaskovich Lajos. Őshaza és Körösi Csoma Sándor célja. Budapest: Stádium, 1942.
18. Vajay Szabolcs de. 1968. Der Eintritt des Ungarischen Stämmebundes in die Europäische Geschichte (862–933). Mainz: v. Hase & Koehler Verlag.
19. Winkler Gusztáv. 1999. A hadviselés művészete. A kezdektől a magyar államalapításig. Budapest: Tinta Könyvkiadó, 1999.
20. Thierry Amadé. Atilla történelme. Pest: Ráth Mór, 1865.
21. Quigley Carroll. The Evolution of Civilization. An Introduction to Historical Analysis. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1961.
22. Tolstov S.P. Az ősi Chorezm. Budapest, 1950.
23. Fehér Géza. A bolgár-török műveltség emlékei és a magyar őstörténeti vonatkozásaik. Budapest: Archaeologia Hungarica, 1931.
24. Padányi Viktor. Dentu-Magyarica. Veszprém: Turul, 1989.

Dr. László Marác. University of Amsterdam (Amsterdam, the Netherlands). E-mail: L.K.Maracz@una.nl. DOI 10.17223/22220836/17/2

THE HUNS IN WESTERN CONSCIOUSNESS: IMAGES, STEREOTYPES AND CIVILIZATION

Key words: Huns, negative stereotypes, Eurasian horse civilization, Mackinder-style geopolitics.

In this paper, I will study the question of why the Western consciousness attributes only negative images and stereotypes to the Huns. I will argue that the question of why Western stereotypes of the

Huns are so negative is related to Western geopolitical traditions concerning Eurasia. The British geographer Halford John Mackinder was the first to formulate such Western geopolitical theories consciously, in his 1904 study, entitled: "The Geographical Pivot of History". In Mackinder's framework, Eastern Europe and Central Asia play a crucial role. This is precisely the area where, in the course of history, the so-called equestrians appeared. This framework is also very useful in order to understand the drives of the Huns. The military manoeuvres of Atilla, striving for world power, can be analysed insightfully in Mackinder's framework as well. Therefore, it is clear why Atilla, from the time of his appearance on the world stage until today, is represented in Western history books as the world's most notorious barbarian and an enemy of the West. It is even more striking that the first Hungarian history books, the medieval Hungarian chronicles, associate the Hungarians with the Huns, and the Hungarian royal Árpád dynasty with Atilla, although these chronicles were written after the Hungarians had established a strong kingdom in the heart of Europe around 950 AD, which became integrated into the Western political and religious system. Hungarian scholars tried to disconnect the tradition of the Hun ancestry from the Hungarians in the second half of the nineteenth century in order to eliminate a Hun-Hungarian kinship. This had to do with the theory of the ancient Aryans that was developed in Germany. German Aryanism tried to incorporate the traditions of the equestrian culture of the Steppes. Hence, the ancient Hungarians were pushed out of the Steppes. Finally, I will argue that historiography has to free itself from settled Western stereotypes and prejudices concerning the equestrian peoples of the Steppes. From this, it follows, that the features and events of the equestrian civilization have to be studied anew. Only then will it be possible to understand the larger connections of history that have contributed to the political, societal and mental development in the Eurasian space. It is only by ridding ourselves of the stereotypes that we will be able to study insightfully the mental and physical factors of the equestrian civilization.