HARVARD UKRAINIAN STUDIES

Volume VI Number 4 December 1982

Ukrainian Research Institute
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

A generous subsidy toward the publication of this issue
has been provided by the
Jarema S. Kurdydyk Trust of the Ukrainian Studies Fund, Inc.

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ISSN 0363-5570
Published by the Ukrainian Research Institute of Harvard University,
Cambridge, Massachusetts, U.S.A.

Printed by the Harvard University Printing Office

This issue typeset by Imprimerie Orientaliste, Louvain, Belgium;
Brevis Press, Bethany, Conn.; and the Computer Based Laboratory,
Harvard University.

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Harvard Ukrainian Studies

volume VI, number 4

December 1982

The Hunnic Language of the Attila Clan

OMELJAN PRITSAK

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Introduction

In about A.D. 370, a nomadic people called the Huns invaded Eastern Europe. Coming from the East, and having subjugated the Ostrogothic realm of Hermanarich, they established a nomadic empire which soon stretched to the Roman Danubian *limes*. The Hunnic empire reached its apex under the leadership of Attila (444-453). In 451, however, Attila was defeated in the "Catalaunian fields" in Gaul by the united forces of the Romans and the Visigoths. His sudden death two years later was followed by an internal power struggle among his sons during which the empire's subjugated peoples — mainly the Germanic Gepidae,

Ostrogoths, and Heruli — revolted successfully. A great battle fought in 455 on the still unidentified Pannonian river Nadao put an end to the Hunnic empire's unity and greatness.

But some time later, as we learn from Jordanes, groups of Huns returned to their "inner" territory on the river *Vär* (= Dnieper) in the Ukraine. There they reorganized on a smaller scale, and still held control over the Danubian Scythia Minor (modern Dobrudža). Unfortunately, sources for that period are very taciturn about Hunnic developments, but the Huns continue to be mentioned, if sporadically, until at least the middle of the sixth century.

It was one of the originators of French sinology, Joseph Deguignes (1721-1800), who in 1748 first put the question of the ethnic origin of the Huns on a scholarly level.[a] Since that time, historians, philologists, and, later, also archaeologists and ethnographers have continued the discussion. Nonetheless the question remains unresolved. Since the character of the Hunnic language has consistently held a central place in that debate, reexamination of the language is a requisite for any resolution of it.[b]

The Hunnic problem is of importance in Ukrainian scholarship not just as an interesting academic topic. Not only did the Huns rule over the Ukraine for at least two hundred years (ca. 375-560), but also they apparently merged with successive nomadic waves in that area and had a part in Ukrainian ethnogenesis.

In 1829, a Carpatho-Ukrainian scholar working in Moscow, Jurij Huca-Venelin (1802-1839), developed a theory about the Hunnic origin of the Slavs.[c] His theory found many supporters, including such eminent Russian scholars as the historian Dmitrij Ivanovič Ilovajskij (1832-1920)[d] and the ethnographer Ivan Egorevič Zabelin (1820-1908). According to Zabelin, the Huns were the retinue (*družina*) of the northern Slavs who were invited by the southern Slavs to help fight against the Goths.[e] In 1858, A. F. Vel'tman identified the name Huns (via the form *Kwäne*) with the name Kievans and proposed to call Attila "the autocrat of all Rus'."[f]

[a] *Mémoirs sur l'origine des Huns et des Turcs* (Paris, 1748).

[b] A recent bibliography is given in fn. 1, below.

[c] *Drevnie i nynešnie Bolgare*, vol. 1 (Moscow, 1829).

[d] Ilovajskij began publishing a series of his studies and polemical articles in 1881: "Vopros o narodnosti Russov, Bolgar i Gunnov," *Žurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveščenija*, May 1881. Concerning the discussion, especially between Ilovajskij and the Byzantinist Vasilij Grigor'evič Vasil'evskij (1838-1899), see Konstantin Inostrancev, *Xunnu i Gunny* (Leningrad, 1926), pp. 105-109.

[e] *Istorija russkoj žizni*, vol. 1 (Moscow, 1876), pp. 218-360.

[f] This astounding identification was made in his *Attila i Rus' v IV-V vekax* (Moscow, 1858).

The reader will understand then, why, after having studied the Hunnic problem for over thirty years, I venture to present the results of my investigations in *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*.

* * *

A. *The Sources*

The works of Greek writers (especially Priscus, d. ca. 472) and Latin writers (especially Jordanes, A. D. 551, based on the work of Cassiodorus, *fl.* ca. 530) contain the names of some twenty-five persons among Attila's immediate kin and eight names of their close associates—together thirty-three names over a period of some one hundred and eighty years (ca. 375-555). One can assume that all these persons spoke the same idiom. It is reasonable, then, to use this onomastic material to determine the language of the ruling clan of the so-called European Huns.[1]

Although contemporaneous sources include many more names of "barbarians" than the thirty-three selected here, for the time being one can dismiss these as uncertain, in consideration of the multiethnic character of any steppe empire.[2]

[1] Special literature dealing with the language of the Huns includes: Gerhard Doerfer, "Zur Sprache des Hunnen," *CAJ* (Wiesbaden) 17 (1973): 1-50; Lajos (Louis) Ligeti, "*Dengizikh* és *Bécs* állítólagos kun megfelelői," *Magyar Nyelv* (Budapest), 58 (1962): 142-52 = L. L., *A Magyar nyelv török kapcsolatai és ami körülöttük van*, vol. 2 (Budapest, 1979), pp. 155-61; Otto Maenchen-Helfen, "Zu Moór's Thesen über die Hunnen," *Beiträge zur Namenforschung* (Heidelberg), 14 (1963): 273-78; idem, "Iranian names of the Huns," in *W. B. Henning Memorial Volume* (London, 1970), pp. 272-75; idem, *The World of the Huns* (Berkeley, 1973), especially chap. 9: "Language," pp. 376-443; Elemer Moór, "Zur Herkunft der Hunnen mit besonderer Berücksichtigung ihres Namenmaterials," *Beiträge zur Namenforschung* 14 (1963): 63-104; idem, "Noch einmal zum Hunnenproblem," *Beiträge zur Namenforschung* 16 (1965): 14-22; Gyula (Julius) Németh, "A hunok nyelve," in *Attila és hunjai* (Budapest, 1940), pp. 217-26, 315-16 = [Turkish translation by János Eckmann], "Hunların dili," *Türk Dili Belleten*, ser. 3, nos. 12-13 (Ankara, 1949), pp. 106-114; Pavel Poucha, "Mongolische Miscellen. IV. Zum Hunnenproblem," *CAJ* 1 (1955): 287-71; Omeljan Pritsak, "Kultur und Sprache der Hunnen," in *Festschrift für Dmytro Čyževs'kyj* (Berlin, 1954), pp. 238-49 = O. P., *Studies*, no. VII; idem, "Ein hunnisches Wort," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* (Wiesbaden), 104 (1954): 124-35 = O. P., *Studies*, no. IX; idem, "Der Titel Attila," *Festschrift für Max Vasmer* (Berlin, 1956), pp. 404-419, = O. P., *Studies*, no. VIII; Gottfried Schramm, "Eine hunnisch-germanische Namensbeziehung?," *Jahrbuch für fränkische Landesforschung* 20 (1960): 129-155. (Note the list of abbreviations, pp. 474-76.)

[2] On the ethnic problems of a steppe empire, see Pritsak, *OR*, 1: 10-20; and idem, "The Slavs and the Avars," in *Gli Slavi occidentali e meridionali nell'alto medioevo. Spoleto, 15-21 aprile 1982*, Trentesima Settimana di studio (Spoleto, in press).

The thirty-three names selected here are divided into two groups:

(1) names of actual members of the dynasty (nos. 1-25), which seem to be either personal names or titles;

(2) names of close associates of the dynasty (nos. 26-33), which frequently represent office titles, appellations, epithets, or even nicknames.

The Hunnic material to be analyzed here belongs to four periods: (1) ca. A.D. 375—the time of the first name, that of the epic Hunnic ruler who allegedly entered the East European Ostrogothic realm then, as recorded by Jordanes from the Hunnic epic tradition; (2) ca. 390-420—the time of names 2 to 6, which are historical, although the relationship of their bearers to Attila (and to each other) remains unknown; (3) ca. 420-480—the names in this subdivision, including 7-21 and 26-33, are taken from the surest historical and genealogical information; (4) ca. 536-555—the fully historical names, 22-25, are of actors in the Hunnic epilogue.

The Hunnic names that have come down to us are transmitted mostly in the works of fourteen contemporary (5th-6th century) Greek and Latin writers. Six Greek and two Roman writers lived in the fifth century, whereas three Greek and three Roman writers were from the sixth century. Also, four works (two Greek and two Roman) were written between the seventh and ninth century by authors who had at their disposal rich sources since then lost. We have no serious reason to question the accuracy of their data.

The majority of the Hunnic names (20 of the 33) were recorded by the intelligent politician and historian Priscus of Panium in Thrace (d. after 472), who spent some time at Attila's court (448-449) as the Byzantine ambassador to the Hunnic realm. In fact, thirteen, or more than one-third, of the names are known to us only from Priscus's notations: Ἀδάμει[dat], Ἀτακάμ, Βασίχ, Βέριχος, Ἐδέκων, Ἐσκάμ, Ζέρκων, Ἥσλαν[acc], Κουρσίχ, Κρέκαν, Μάμα[gen], Σκόττας, Ὠηβάρσιον[acc].

An earlier Byzantine ambassador to the Huns, Olympiodorus of Thebae in Egypt, visited the Hunnic rulers in 412. In his historical writings he mentions two names unknown in other sources: Δονάτος and Χαράτων. The history of Justinian I's reign by Agathias (*fl.* 556) mentions two more otherwise unrecorded names: Ἐλμίγγειρος and Ἐλμινζούρ.

A later but nonetheless reliable chronicler, Theophanes Byzantius (752-818), who incorporated materials from many lost sources in his work, also saved one Hunnic name: Γιέσμου[gen].

Three church historians of the first half of the fifth century transmitted several names: Socrates of Constantinople (d. 440), Sozomen of Ghazzah in Palestine (d. ca. 450), and Theodoret of Antioch (d. 451). Of the Greek authors, only Sozomen and the secular historian Zosimus (who wrote after 498) mentioned the name Οὔλδιν ~ Οὔλδης, and Socrates notes the name Οὔπταρος.

The "Chronicon paschale," compiled by an unknown cleric during the reign of Heraclius I (610-641) sometime shortly after 628, contains variants of two names: Βλίδας and Δινζίριχος.[3]

First among the Latin authors is Jordanes, a pro-Roman Ostrogoth who in 551 (probably in Ravenna) wrote his "Getica," or history of the Goths (and Huns). In composing the work he made use of a very important (now lost) Gothic history by the Roman senator Cassiodorus (ca. 490-585), as well as of Gothic and Hunnic popular traditions.

Jordanes includes thirteen Hunnic names in his work. Six of them also appear in the work of Priscus (*Attila* = Ἀττίλας, *Bleda* = Βλήδας, *Dintzic* = Δεγγιζίχ, *Hernac* = Ἠρνάχ, *Mundzuco*^{abl} = Μουνδίουχον^{acc}, *Roas* = Ῥοῦα^{gen}), one in the work of Sozomen and Zosimus (*Huldin* = Οὔλδιν ~ Οὔλδης) and two in the work of Socrates (*Octar* = Οὔπταρος, *Roas* = Ῥούγας). Jordanes himself preserved four Hunnic names for posterity: *Balamur*, *Ellac*, *Emnetzur*, and *Vltzindur*.

Several names already known from the Greek and other Latin sources occur in the historical apology for Christianity by the Spaniard Paulus Orosius (*fl.* 414-417), as well as in the "Gallic Chronicle of 452," the "Gallic Chronicle of 511," and, especially, in the Chronicle by Marcellinus Comes (534). The last work gives five Hunnic names: *Attila*, *Bleda*, *Denzic-* = Δινζίχιρ-, *Huldin*, and *Mundo*.

Two Hunnic names survived in Latin works: *Laudaricus* in the "Gallic Chronicle of 511" (mentioned above), and *Hunigasio*^{abl} in the (older) "Vita Sancti Lupi" (probably compiled in the 5th c.; the saint [ca. 383-479] was bishop of Troyes in France).[4]

[3] Editions of the Byzantine Greek sources are the following: Agathias, *Historiarum libri quinque*, ed. Ludwig Dindorf, *HGM* 2 (Leipzig, 1871), pp. 132-432; *Chronicon paschale*, ed. L. Dindorf (Bonn, 1832); Joannes Malalas, *Chronographia*, ed. L. Dindorf (Bonn, 1831); Olympiodorus, ed. René Henry, "Codices" 1-84, in *Photius*, *Bibliothèque* (Paris, 1959); Priscus, in *EL*, ed. Carolus de Boor, vol. 1 (Berlin, 1903); Procopius, *History of the Wars*, ed. H. B. Dewing, 6 vols. (Cambridge, Mass., 1914-35); Socrates, *Historia ecclesiastica*, ed. J. P. Migne, *PG*, vol. 67 (Paris, 1864), cols. 28-842; Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica*, ed. J. P. Migne, *PG*, vol. 67 (1864), cols. 843-1630; Theodoret, *Historia ecclesiastica*, ed. Felix Scheidweiler (Berlin, 1954); Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. C. de Boor (Leipzig, 1883); Zosimus, *Historia nova*, ed. Ludwig Mendelssohn (Leipzig, 1887).

[4] Editions of the Latin sources are the following: "Anonymus Ravennas," ed. O. Cuntz,

In order to facilitate use and comparison, the source data is presented on p. 434 in parallel Greek and Latin columns, arranged in two parts: (1) names of members of the dynasty, given chronologically (nos. 1-25); and (2) names of the leading Hunnic statesmen and officers from ca. 448-449, arranged alphabetically (nos. 26-33).

B. *Analysis of the Onomastic Material* (nos. 1-33)

I. Names of Members of the Dynasty

1. *Balamur*, *Balamber*. This name occurs three times in the work of Jordanes (551); it has come down to us in five variants, which can be systematized into three categories:[5]

Balaber	*Balamber*	*Balamur*
	Balambyr	*Balamir*.

The form *Balaber* is undoubtedly a corruption of *Balamber*, resulting from the omission of *-m-*. The forms with the second *-b-* (*Balamber*, *Balambyr*) seem to evolve from a dittography (*b-b*); *-mir*, in the variant *Balamir*, is certainly secondary and owes its existence to the Gothic onomastic "suffix"*-mir*/*-mer*.[6] Therefore I regard *Balamur* as the only original Hunnic form of the name. The word recalls the appellative attested in Mongolian (*SH balamut*[7] ~ WMo *balamud* ~ *balamad*),[8] meaning "savage, wild, reckless, venturous, dashing, crazy."

Danube-Bulgarian had the suffix /mA/, with the same meaning as the Middle Turkic suffix /mAt/ 'the greatest among': DBulg *dval*+*ma* 'horse herdsman' (originally, 'the greatest among the horseherd') = MTü *qoy*+*mat* 'shepherd' (originally, 'the greatest among the sheepherd'). This Turkic suffix consists of two elements: /mA/ and the plurative suffix

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Itineraria Romana (Leipzig, 1929), see also the edition of Schnetz (listed on p. 475); "Gallic Chronicle of 452," ed. Theodor Mommsen, "Chronica Gallica a. *CCCCLII*," *Chronica Minora* 1 (= *MGH AA*, 9) (Berlin, 1892); "Gallic Chronicle of 511," ed. T. Mommsen, "Chronica Gallica a. *DXI*," *Chronica Minora* 1 (= *MGH AA*, 9) (Berlin, 1892); Jordanes, *Getica*, ed. Elena C. Skržinskaja, *Jordan o proisxoždenii i dejanijax getov*, *Getica* (Moscow, 1960); Jordanes, *Romana*, ed. Th. Mommsen (= *MGH AA*, *5*, *I*) (Berlin, 1882); Marcellinus Comes, *Chronicon*, ed. Th. Mommsen, *Chronica Minora* 2 (= *MGH AA*, 11) (Berlin, 1894); Orosius, *Historiorum adversum paganos libri VII*, ed. Karl Zangemeister (Vienna, 1882); "Vita Sancti Lupi," *Bollandi*, *Acta Sanctorum*, *Julii*, Tomus VII, ed. Joannes Baptista Sullerius et al. (Venice, 1769); *Surius*, *Historiae seu vitae sanctorum*, ed. Laurentius Gastaldi (Turin, 1877), vol. VII: *Julius*.

[5] *Getica*, ed. Skržinskaja, *Jordan*, p. 152, l. 3 (§130); p. 170, l. 40 (§248); p. 171, l. 2 (§249); and fn. 390 on p. 280.

[6] See Schönfeld, *Wörterbuch*, 43 (s.v. *Ballomarius*) and "Etymologischer Index," p. 304.

[7] *SH*, ed. Haenisch, §§129, 248, 249. See also Haenisch, *Wörterbuch*, p. 12.

[8] Lessing, *Dictionary*, pp. 78-79.

Number	Date in Hunnic History	Greek Source: Author/Title of Work	Greek Source: Provenence	Greek Source: Forms of the Hunnic Name	Latin Source: Author/Title of Work	Latin Source: Provenence	Latin Source: Forms of the Hunnic Name
		a) Names of Members of the Dynasty					
1	375				Jordanes	551	*Balamur*
2	395	Priscus	d. ca. 472	Βασίχ			
3	395	Priscus	d. ca. 472	Κουρσίχ			
4	ca. 395-410	Sozomen	ca. 450	Οὔλδις, Οὔλδιν	Orosius	*fl.* 414-417	*Uldin*
		Zosimus	after 498	Οὔλδης	Marcellinus Comes	534	*Huldin*
					Jordanes, "Romana"	551	*Huldin*
5	ca. 410-412	Olympiodorus	425	Δονάτος			
6	ca. 412-420	Olympiodorus	425	Χαράτων			
7	ca. 420-430	Priscus	d. ca. 472	Μουνδίουχον^{acc}	Jordanes	551	*Mundzuco*^{abl}
		Theophanes	810-814	Μουνδίου^{gen}			
8	d. 430	Socrates	d. 440	Οὔπταρος	Jordanes	551	*Octar*
9	ca. 430-433	Socrates	d. 440	Ῥούγας	"Gallic Chron. 452"	ca. 452	*Rugila*
		Priscus	d. ca. 472	Ῥοῦα^{gen}, Ῥοῦαν^{acc}	"Gallic Chron. 511"	6th century	*Ruga*
		Theodoret	d. ca. 451	Ῥωίλας	Jordanes	551	*Roas*
10	d. 449	Priscus	d. ca. 472	Ὦηβάρσιον^{acc}			
11	448-449	Priscus	d. ca. 472	Ἐσκάμ			
12	433-444	Priscus	d. ca. 472	Βλήδας	"Gallic Chron. 452"	452	*Bleda*
		Marcellinus Comes	534	Βλίδας	Marcellinus Comes	534	*Bleda*
		"Chronicon paschale"	shortly after 628	Βλίδας	Jordanes	551	*Bleda*
13	433-453	Priscus	d. ca. 472	Ἀττίλας	"Gallic Chron. 452"	452	*Attila*
		Procopius	545-551	Ἀττίλας	"Gallic Chron. 511"	6th century	*Attila*
		Malalas	d. 578	Ἀττιλᾶς	Marcellinus Comes	534	*Attila*
					Jordanes	551	*Attila*
					"Anon. Ravennas"	ca. 700	*Attyla*
14	d. 433	Priscus	d. ca. 472	Ἀτακάμ			
15	d. 433	Priscus	d. ca. 472	Μάμα^{gen}			
16	d. 451				"Gallic Chron. 511"	6th century	*Laudaricus*
17	d. 455				Jordanes	551	*Ellac*
18	d. 469	Priscus	d. ca. 472	Δεγγιζίχ	Marcellinus Comes	534	*Denzicis*^{gen}
		Marcellinus Comes	534	Δινζιχίρος			
		"Chronicon paschale"	shortly after 628	Δινζίριχος, Δινζίχ	Jordanes	551	*Dintzic*
19	*fl.* after 469	Priscus	d. ca. 472	Ἤρνάχ	Jordanes	551	*Hernac*
		[cf. "The List of the Bulgar Kings"	ca. 8th century	Ирникъ]			
20	*fl.* after 469				Jordanes	551	*Emnetzur*
21	*fl.* after 469				Jordanes	551	*Vltzindur*
22	5th-6th century	Theophanes	810-814	Γιέσμου^{gen}			
23	d. 536	Procopius	545-551	Μοῦνδος	Marcellinus Comes	534	*Mundo*
		Malalas	d. 578	Μοῦνδος	Jordanes	551	*Mundo*
		Theophanes	810-814	Μοῦνδος			
24	*fl.* 556	Agathias	ca. 536-582	Ἑλμίγγειρος			
25	*fl.* 556	Agathias	ca. 536-582	Ἑλμινζούρ			
		b) Names of Leading Hunnic Statesmen and Officers ca. 448-449					
26	ca. 448-449	Priscus	d. ca. 472	Ἀδάμει^{dat}			
27	ca. 448-449	Priscus	d. ca. 472	Βέριχος			
28	ca. 448-449	Priscus	d. ca. 472	Ἐδέκων			
29	ca. 448-449	Priscus	d. ca. 472	Ζέρκων			
30	ca. 434-449	Priscus	d. ca. 472	Ἥσλαν^{acc}			
31	ca. 448-449	Priscus	d. ca. 472	Κρέκαν			
32	ca. 448-449	Priscus	d. ca. 472	Ὀνηγήσιος	"Vita sancti Lupi" (d. 479)		*Hunigasio*$^{abl.}$
33	ca. 448-449	Priscus	d. ca. 472	Σκόττας			

/t/.[9] In Mongolian the suffix has two variants /mAd/ and /mUd/; cf. WMo *bala+mad* ~ *bala+mud*. As to usage, see WMo *aqa+mad* 'senior, elder' (originally, 'the oldest among the brothers'), from *aqa* 'older brother, senior, older'; *yeke+med* 'the highest (official); the elder men, elders or seniors, important people', from *yeke* 'great, big, large'.[10]

Since in Hunnic the suffix /r/ appears in place of the Mongolian /d/ ~ /t/ (see *Emnetzur*, no. 20), one may assume that Hunnic /mUr/ = /mU/+/r/ corresponds to the Turkic /mA/+/t/ (~/mA/+/č/) and Mongolian /mA/+/d/ ~ /mU/+/d/.

The now obsolete noun *bala* had been preserved in WMo in a perephrastic rendition: *bala bol-* 'to lose one's memory from intoxication, senility, or illness; to become stupid'.[11]

Hence the Hunnic *bala+mur* must have had the meaning "the greatest among the venturous, daring"—surely a reasonable designation for a conquerer and empire builder.

2-3. Βασίχ[12] and Κουρσίχ.[13] Both names have the denominal nominal suffix /siG/ which in Turkic (e.g., OT) has the adjectival meaning "like something."[14]

2. In the Hunno-Bulgarian languages /r/ within a consonantic cluster tends to disappear, e.g.: DBulg σεκτεμ ~ шехтемь 'the eighth' < **sikərtəm*; VBulg اتى *äti* ~ اچى *ači* 'he was' < * *är-di* > **ärti*;[15] Čuv *ïdă* 'added number' < **ärtuq*.[16] On the other hand, there is a tendency in Turkic[17] (and also partly in Hunnic; see no. 26) to avoid geminatae. Therefore, I propose the following etymology: βασιχ = **basíġ* < **bars+siġ*[18] 'feline-like.' The word *bars* 'feline' also occurs in another Hunnic name discussed here: Ὦηβαρς *Ōy bárs* (see no. 10).

3. The root of κουρσιχ is attested in both Hunnic and Turkic: Bulg Hun **kürä* (i.e., *kür+ä*) = Tü *kür*. In Hunnic the word occurs in the Danube-Bulgarian tribe name κυριγηρ *kürə+gir* (<**kürä+gir*). Karl

[9] Pritsak, "Proto-Bulgarian Etymologies IV-V," in *Studies in honor of Horace G. Lunt* (= *Folia Slavica* 3, pt. 2) (Columbus, Ohio, 1979), pp. 203-205.

[10] Ramstedt, *Einführung*, 1: 79. Cf. Lessing, *Dictionary*, pp. 60, 431.

[11] Lessing, *Dictionary*, p. 78.

[12] ed. de Boor, *EL*, p. 141, l. 13.

[13] ed. de Boor, *EL*, p. 141, l. 13 = *Byz Tur*, 2: 169.

[14] See von Gabain, *ATG*, p. 66, §80; Brockelmann, *OTG*, pp. 136-137, §89.

[15] Pritsak, *Fürstenliste*, pp. 58, 74; Farid S. Xakimzjanov, *Jazyk èpitafij volžskix Bulgar* (Moscow, 1978), p. 125, pl. 12, l. 8 (اتى), p. 105, pl. 2, l. 7 (اچى).

[16] Egorov, *ÈSČJ*, p. 344.

[17] Pritsak, "Das Alttürkische," *Handbuch der Orientalistik*, 1. Abt. Bd. 5, 2nd ed. (Leiden, 1982), p. 33.

[18] Cf. the change in New Uighur *rs* > *s*: *bars* > *bās* 'feline,' Sevortjan, *ÈSTJ*, 2: 68.

Menges established for the "Altaic" *kür* ~ *kür*+*ä* the meaning "brave, noble, powerful; universal"; cf. the Pečeneg ruler *s.a.* 972: Кура *Kürä* (*Kür*+*ä*).[19]

Because of Bang's law ("Mittelsilbenschwund")[20] the form **kür*+*ä*+*sig* (> **kurəsig*) became *kürsíg*. The name meant: "brave-like, noble-like, universal-like"; cf. Attila, no. 13. Incidentally, a dangerous expedition (to Iran) was headed by two Dioscuri-like members of the dynasty, Basiġ and *Kürsig*.[21]

4. Οὔλδης,[22] *Uldin*[23] ~ *Huldin*.[24] As the Latin forms (already in Orosius, *fl.* 414-417) show, the name had /n/ and not /s/ in its Auslaut. Also see *Vltzin*+*dur*, no. 21.

The root of the etymons is the verb *öl-*, which survives in Mo (*SH*) *olje* ~ *ol-jei*[25] ~ WMo *öl-jeị*[26] 'auspice, favourable omen, happiness, good luck'.

The suffix /je/ ~ /jei/ < * /jē/ goes back to */di/+/ge/, since every Mongolian *j* is originally **di*.[27]

This concept is supported by the Mongolian (*SH*) form *oljige* = **öl-jige* (< **öl-dige*; > **öljē* > *ölje*) with the meaning "front part."[28] This word also appears in Mongolian (*SH*) as *oljigetai* (= *öl-jige*+*tei*) in the phrase *oljigetai tergen* 'wagon with a front part, i.e., protected wagon'); the Chinese equivalent is 衛 *wei* 'ce qui sert a protéger.'[29]

In Hunno-Bulgarian there was also a tendency toward the development of *di* > *ti* > *či*, as the tribal name Οὐλτινζούρ (*öl-tin*+*čür*) and the personal name *Vltzindur* (*öl-čin*+*dür*; see no. 21) indicate.

[19] Menges, "Altaic Elements in the Proto-Bulgarian Inscriptions," *Byzantion* (Bruxelles), 21 (1951): 105-106. Cf. Doerfer, *TMEN*, 4: 633-37; Pritsak, *Studies*, no. X, p. 26.

[20] See Räsänen, *Lautgeschichte*, p. 45.

[21] On this myth, see Pritsak, *OR*, 1: 141, 154, 163, 165, 169-70.

[22] Sozomen, ed. Migne, *PG*, pp. 1605 (Οὔλδις), 1608 (Οὔλδιν); Zosimus, ed. Mendelssohn, p. 242, l. 27; p. 243, l. 5 (Οὔλδης) = *Byz Tur*, 2: 230. On the priority of the form in *-n*, see Maenchen-Helfen, *Huns*, p. 380.

[23] Orosius, ed. Zangemeister, book V, 37-2.

[24] Marcellinus Comes, *Chronicon*, ed. Mommsen, p. 69 > Jordanes, *Romana*, ed. Mommsen, p. 321. The initial *h-*, which was not present in Orosius's notation (see fn. 23), should be regarded as a sixth-century fashion; see, e.g., Jordanes, *Getica* (ed. Skržinskaja): *Alani* (pp. 156, 162-164, 173, etc.) ~ *Halani* (pp. 144, 151), *Alaricus* (pp. 156, 157) ~ *Halaricus* (pp. 155, 158), etc.

[25] Haenisch, *Wörterbuch*, p. 123. Cf. Marian Lewicki, *La langue mongole des transcriptions chinoises du XIVe siècle: Le Houa-yi yi-yu de 1389*, vol. 2 (Wrocław, 1959), p. 69, s.v. *ölǯäị*.

[26] Lessing, *Dictionary*, 635. Cf. Doerfer, *TMEN*, 1: 173-74.

[27] See Poppe, *MCS*, pp. 265-66.

[28] *SH*, ed. Haenisch, §55.

[29] *SH*, ed. Haenisch, §64. See the comments by Father Antoine Mostaert in his *Sur quelques passages de l'Histoire secrète des Mongols* (Cambridge, Mass., 1953), p. 11.

In place of the Mongolian suffix /ge/ ~ /ge+i/ the Hunnic has the suffix /n/. Hence *οὔλδην is **öl-di+n*. In Mongolian the word *öljē+i* > *ölje+i* with the adjectival suffix /tu/ appears as the name of one Ilkhan, i.e., the Mongolian ruler in Iran (1304-1316): *Öljeitü* (= *öl-je+i+tü*), literally, "auspicious, happy, lucky, fortunate."

The Hunnic **öl-din* (= *öl-di+n*) apparently had a similar meaning.

5. Δονάτ-.[30] The word **donát* corresponds to the Turkic generic word for horse, *yonat* ~ *yont*, *yund*, etc.; see OT Inscr. *yonṭ*, OT Brahmi *yunt* ~ *yund*, MTü Kāšġ. *yond*,[31] Qipčaq/Golden Horde (ca. 1342-1357) *yont* (ёнтя лѣта 'in the horse year').[32] Some Middle Turkic (Abū Ḥaiyān, 1312)[33] and older Ottoman texts spelled the word dissyllabically, the latter with the vowels written plene: يونات *yonat*.[34] The initial consonant, in Greek spelled with δ, was probably *d*. The initial *d*- is attested in Danube-Bulgarian, e.g., δυγε- (*dügä*-) 'to finish.'[35]

Horses played (and still play) a central role in the life and cult of nomads. Horse sacrifice and eating of horsemeat were common expressions of that special role. Each Hunno-Turkic language had at least two terms for "horse," one of which was used as a designation for the "horse year" in the twelve-cycle calendar.[36] Concerning other Hunnic designations for "horse," see Χαράτων (no. 6) and Ἐλμίγγειρ-, etc. (nos. 24-25).

6. Χαράτων.[37] The first component of this name is surely the "Altaic" word *xará* (= *qara*; phonetically with initial spirantization: *q* > [x-]), which had two meanings: (1) 'black' and (2) 'great; northern'.[38] Spirantization in the initial position (*q*- > *x*-)—as well as in the final position (see no. 7)—seems to be a typical Hunnic phonemic feature.

The second element, *tōn* (cf. Turkmen *dōn*), is apparently the Śaka loanword in both Hunnic and Turkic: *thauna* > **taun* > *tōn* 'garment, clothing'.[39] The compound name, *qarátōn*, therefore, had the meaning

[30] Olympiodorus, ed. Dindorf, *HGM*, 1: 457, lines 9, 11, 14 = *Byz Tur*, 2: 119.

[31] See the data in Clauson, *EDT*, p. 846; Räsanen, *EWT*, 211; Doerfer, *TMEN*, 4: 199-200. It was Willy Bang-Kaup who had first established the etymological relation between Δοναατ- and Turkic *yont* (~ **yonat*), "Studien zur vergleichenden Grammatik der Türksprachen," *Sitzungsberichte der...Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Berlin), 37 (1916): 924-25.

[32] Pritsak, *Fürstenliste*, p. 67.

[33] Abu Ḥaiyān, ed. Ahmet Caferoğlu (Istanbul, 1931), p. 97a, l. 10: يُونَدْ

[34] Radloff, *Wb*, vol. 3, col. 545.

[35] Pritsak, *Fürstenliste*, p. 88.

[36] Pritsak, *Fürstenliste*, pp. 65-68.

[37] Olympiodorus, ed. Dindorf, *HGM*, 1: 457, line 15 = *Byz Tur*, 2: 341.

[38] Pritsak, "Orientierung und Farbsymbolik," *Saeculum* (Munich), 5 (1954): 376-83 = Pritsak, *Studies*, no. I.

[39] Clauson, *EDT*, pp. 512-13. Cf. Doerfer, *TMEN*, 2: 645-47.

"black-clad; with black coat." It must have had some significance and currency among the Huns, since the name was popular among their progeny, the Old Chuvashians. Chuvash villages are usually named after their owner, and several villages still bear the name *Xaratum* (< *xaratōn*). Also, the Chuvash cult seems to include ancestral beings (*kiremet*) called *Xoratom kiremet*.[40]

The word *qara-tōn* seems to have been an elliptical designation for "horse."

In Anatolian dialects and in the Ottoman literary language the word *don* (< *tōn*) has still another meaning: "the coat of a horse" ("die Pferdefarbe").[41]

Evliyā Çelebī, the great Ottoman traveler (*fl.* 1640-1684), describes the funeral ceremony of Mürād IV (d. 9 February 1640) in the following way: *Cemī'-i ümmet-i Muḥammad mātene düşüb. At-Meydāninda siyāh dōnli atlarda mātem etdiler*,[42] "All Muslims (lit. 'the community of Muḥammad'), falling into the funeral procession, went into mourning at the At Meydān (Hippodrome) on horses having black coats." The concept of a "horse with a black coat" is expressed here by *siyāh dōnli at*, where *siyāh* 'black' is an Arabic loanword used for "black par excellence" in opposition to *qara* which can mean "dark in general." Like *siyāh dōn*, the compound *qara-tōn* (lit. 'black coat') may be used elliptically for **siyāh dōnli at* = **qara tōnli at* 'black-coated horse'.

In this connection I note that the Hunnic *Xara-Tōn* was the successor of *Donat*[43] ("Horse"). Apparently the elliptical use of the word for "horse" in the title of the successor of a ruler called "Horse" was intentional, especially if we take into account Hunnic totemism.

7. Μουνδίουχ-[44]/ *Mundzuc*-[45] ~ Μουνδίο-[46]. The name of Attila's father has come down to us in two variants, one ending with *-x* and the

[40] Ašmarin, *Thesaurus*, 16:207. On the *kiremet*, see N. V. Nikol'skij, *Xristianstvo sredi čuvaš srednjago Povolžja v XVI-XVIII vekax* (Kazan', 1912), pp. 19-22.

[41] See Radloff, *Wb*, vol. 3, col. 1710 (*don* Osm. Krm. 2. "die Pferdefarbe"); Hamit Zübeyr [Koşay] and İshak Refet, *Anadilden derlemeler* ([Ankara], 1932), p. 107: *don* (G. Antep, Maraş) ... 2. *renk*, *atının donu kırdır* ("coat; the coat of a horse is gray"). My friend Dr. Şinasi Tekin assured me that the word *don* has that particular meaning in different parts of Anatolia, especially the Bursa region. Under the item *don* in his etymological dictionary, È. V. Sevortjan only quotes Radloff, without any further discussion of the meaning "coat of the horse" (*ÈSTJ*, vol. 3 [1980], p. 263).

[42] *Siyāḥet-nāme*, vol. 1 (Istanbul, 1314/1896), p. 266. Cf. *Tarama sözlüğü*, 2nd ed. (Ankara, 1965), p. 1213.

[43] E. A. Thompson, *A History of Attila and the Huns* (Oxford, 1948), pp. 34, 58.

[44] Priscus, ed. de Boor, *EL*, p. 581, l. 84 = *Byz Tur*, 2: 194.

[45] Jordanes, *Getica*, ed. Skržinskaja, p. 159, l. 41; p. 172, l. 26.

[46] Theophanes, ed. de Boor, p. 102, l. 15 = *Byz Tur*, 2: 194.

other lacking it. The majority of scholars connected this word with the Turkic *bunčuq*, *munčuq*, *munǯuq*, *minǯaq*, *bonǯuq*, *mončuq*, etc.,[47] and with either of its two meanings, "jewel, pearl, bead" or "flag."[48]

The Turkic etymon has two variants of the initial affricate of the second syllable: voiced *ǯ* and unvoiced *č*.

But careful study of Greek and Latin usages makes it clear that these two languages distinguished between the two affricates. The voiceless *č* was rendered in Greek by ζ and in Latin by *tz*, e.g., δεγγιζιχ : *dint̲z̲ic*. On the other hand, precisely in our name Greek had *di* and Latin had *dz*: μουνδ̲ίου, μουνδ̲ίουχ; *mund̲z̲uc*; see also μουνδ̲ο = *mund̲o*, when the letter ι was omitted (probably erroneously) in the source in question; significantly enough, the voiced δ: *d* remained.

Based upon these considerations, I propose to read μουνδ̲ίουχ/ *mund̲z̲uc* and μουνδ̲ίου ~ μοῦνδ̲ο/*mund̲o* as *munǯ̲úq* and *munǯ̲ú* ~ *múnǯ̲u*.[49]

Aulis J. Joki suggested that the Turkic word was a borrowing from a Chinese synonym-compositum: *men* (Arch Chin **mwən*, *GSR* 183f) 'red gem' and *chu* (Arch Chin **tiu̯*, *GSR* 128e) 'pearl'. According to him, the second component was later falsely identified with the Turkic diminutive suffix /ČA/, and was then replaced by its Turkic synonym with the final *-K* (=*q*, *k*): /ČUK/ ~ /ČAK/.[50] The existence of two variants of the Hunnic ruler's name, with and without *-K*, corroborates both Joki's etymology and the connection of Hunnic Μουνδιουχ ~ Μουνδιο with *munǯuq* ~ *munǯu*.

The word belongs to the sphere of "Altaic" religious and royal symbolism. The two meanings given above are interconnected. As in China, so also in the Altaic steppe (as confirmed by Kushan, Old Turkic,

[47] See Maenchen-Helfen, *Huns*, pp. 409-411, and G. Schramm in *Jahrbuch für fränkische Landesforschung* 20 (1960): 129-55.

[48] On *munǯuq*, etc., see Clauson, *EDT*, p. 349; Räsänen, *EWT*, p. 340; Doerfer, *TMEN*, 4: 24-27.

[49] L. Ligetis's observation (*apud* Maenchen-Helfen, *Huns*, p. 410) that there is a clearcut distribution in the Turkic languages: Oghuz *b-ǯ* (*bonǯuq*) versus other Turkic languages: *m-č* (e.g., Özb. *munčoq*, Kirg. *mončoq*) has no validity, since Azeri (an Oghuz language) has *munǯuq* and Turkman (also an Oghuz language) has *monǯuq*; in both cases there is an initial *m-*.

In any case, the Turkic situation has no validity for Hunnic, which belonged to a separate Altaic group.

[50] *Die Lehnwörter des Sajansamojedischen* (Helsinki, 1952), pp. 242-43 (s.v. *nunzo'*). That word, with the meaning "flag," penetrated into Ukrainian and from there to Polish and Russian (*bunčuk*); see Max Vasmer, *REW*, 1: 145.

and Old Uighur art forms) a pearl called *munčuq* represented the sun and the moon. In artistic representations it was put in the mouth of a dragon. The *munčuq* gem was usually surrounded by an aureole of flame, and one of its special uses was as a finial on the imperial flagpole.[51] This term, having so much symbolic value, is also often attested as a personal name, e.g.: *Qizil Munčuq*, a Mongolian commander in Afghanistan (ca. 1223);[52] *Munčuk Ilčikeev*, a Bashkir leader (ca. 1761);[53] *Mončak* ~ *Bunčak* ~ *Puncuk*, a Kalmuk (Torgaut) leader (first half of the seventeenth century).[54]

I conclude that the Hunnic name should be reconstructed as *múnʒu* ~ *munʒúq* 'jewel, flagpole' (phonetically having a spirantization of the final stop: *-q* = [x]). Note also the name Moῦνδο- (no. 23).

8. *Octar*. This name of an uncle (d. ca. 430) of Attila has been transmitted in two forms: by Socrates (ca. 380-440) as Οὔπταρος,[55] and by Jordanes (A.D. 551), in the "Getica," as *Octar*.[56] The second form is undoubtedly the correct one. The form with *-pt-* has been rightly recognized by M. Schönfeld as Gothic,[57] and the change from *-ct-* to *-pt-* is one of the characteristic features of Balkan-Latin.[58]

There occurs in Turkic (e.g., *QB*, A.D. 1069)[59] and Mongolian (e.g., Kalmuk)[60] the word *öktem* with two sets of meanings: (1) "strong, brave, imperious, impetuous," and (2) "proud, boastful; pride." The etymon is the verb *ökte-* (*oktä-*), in Turkic known until now only from Chagatai (*Wb*): "to encourage, put heart into (someone)," as was rightly stressed by Sir Gerard Clauson.[61] In Mongolian, *ökte-* occurs in *MA* (fifteenth century): *hanisqayin üsüni ökte-be* = Čag *qašiŋ tüketi boldi*

[51] Details in Emel Esin, "*Tös* and *moncuk*: Notes on Turkish flagpole finials," *ĊAJ* 16 (1972): 14-36, 9 pl.; and M. Fuad Köprülü, "Bayrak," *Islâm Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 2 (Istanbul, 1949), pp. 401-420. Kāšġarī did not know (or ignored) the religious and symbolic meaning of the word, defining it simply as "bead, trinket.... Anything that is hung to a horse's neck, such as gems, lion's paws, or amulets" (Kāšġarī/Dankoff, 1: 354).

[52] See John Andrew Boyle, *Islamic Studies*, 2:2 (Karachi, 1963), p. 241.

[53] *Materialy po istorii Baškirskoj ASSR*, vol. 4, pt. 1, ed. A. N. Usmanov (Moscow, 1956), p. 221.

[54] Gerhard Friedrich Müller (Miller), *Istorija Sibiri*, vol. 2 (Moscow and Leningrad, 1941), pp. 104, 584; *Materialy po istorii Baškirskoj ASSR*, vol. 1 (Moscow and Leningrad, 1936), p. 173; *Kabardino-russkie otnošenija v XVI-XVIII vv.*, vol. 1 (Moscow, 1957), pp. 338, 340.

[55] Socrates, ed. Migne, *PG*, p. 805 (VII, 30) = *Byz Tur*, 2: 237.

[56] Jordanes, *Getica*, ed. Skržinskaja, p. 159, l. 42.

[57] Schönfeld, *Wörterbuch*, p. 173. See also Schramm (fn. 1), p. 148.

[58] Maenchen-Helfen, *Huns*, p. 381.

[59] e.g., *QB F*, p. 59, l. 3; *QB H*, p. 157, l. 8.

[60] Ramstedt, *KWb*, p. 294.

[61] Radloff, *Wb*, vol. 1, col. 1181.

'your eyelashes became compact (solid)'.[62] The deverbal nominal suffix /m/ is known both in Turkic and Mongolian.[63] In the latter language, it alternates with the suffix /ri/,[64] e.g., Kalmuk *bō-* (< *boġu-*) 'zuschnüren' which has two synonyms (deverbal nouns), one with the suffix /m/ and the other with the suffix /ri/: *bō-m* and *bō-ri* 'Engpass.' The Turkic correspondence of Mongolian /ri/ is /z/, e.g., *boġ-əz* 'throat', from *boġ-* (Mongolian *boġu-*) 'to strangle, choke'.[65]

Here we have the following correspondences:

Tü /m/ = Mo /m/;

Tü /z/ = Mo /ri/.

Typical of all Hunnic languages is their rhotacism. Therefore the corresponding Hunnic suffix must have been /r/.[66]

Octar/οὔπταρ- simply transmits the Hunnic appellative *Ökär* (**öktä-r*),[67] most probably with the meaning "strong, brave, imperious" Of special importance to our investigation of the language of Attila's Huns is the very clearly documented rhotacism in this name.

9. Ῥούγα-/*Roa-*. The name of Attila's second paternal uncle and predecessor (d. A. D. 433) is attested in three variants: Socrates (A.D. 439) Ῥούγας[68] ("Gallic Chronicle 511," *Ruga*[69]) = Priscus (A.D. 472) Ῥοῦα-[70] (= Jordanes *Roas*)[71] = Theodoret (ca. 393-451) Ῥώϊλας[72] (Lat. variant in "Gallic Chronicle 452," *Rugila*).[73] The Ῥουα- variant is secondary, reflecting the sound change ουγα- > ουα. The final -ς is a Byzantine masculine suffix; the forms in /ila/ are Gothic—or, better, Gothicized—variants.

I consider this name to be a composite form.

The second element, ούγα(~οῦα), renders the Altaic title *ögä*,[74] well known from Old Turkic. If it is a genuinely "Altaic" word, rather than a

[62] *MA*, ed. Poppe, p. 181.

[63] For Turkic, see Räsänen, *Morphologie*, p. 133; for Mongolian, Szabó, *Szóképzés*, p. 45 (§109).

[64] On /ri/ see Szabó, *Szóképzés*, p. 46 (§113).

[65] See Ramstedt, *Einführung*, 2: 143.

[66] On Hunnic rhotacism, see Pritsak, "Ein hunnisches Wort" (fn. 1), pp. 124-35.

[67] On Hunnic *ä* in the non-first syllable, see below, fn. 198.

[68] Socrates, ed. Migne, *PG*, col. 833 (VII 43) = *Byz Tur*, 2: 260.

[69] "Gallic Chronicle 511," ed. Mommsen, p. 659, l. 587; p. 661, l. 589.

[70] Priscus, ed. Dindorf, *HGM*, 1: 276, ll. 6, 20, 23, 24 = *Byz Tur*, 2: 260.

[71] *Getica*, ed. Skržinskaja, p. 159, l. 42 (§180).

[72] ed. Scheidweiler, p. 340, l. 7.

[73] "Gallic Chronicle 452," ed. Mommsen, p. 658, l. 112; p. 660, l. 116.

[74] The circumflex in Priscus's rendering may reflect Hunnic vocalic length. See also p. 469.