

THE ANCIENT STEPPE VALUES AND MINDSET

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Abstract: *The Eurasian steppe civilisation left lots of intellectual values and mindset, but internationally they are not enough revealed, yet. Some of them came back to the Iron Age or the Scythian period and they are inherited among horsmen of Eurasia. Unfortunately, the people of the Eurasian steppe left only heroic epic to the future generations, and they began to summarise their own history quiet late. In spite of it, many kinds of folklore texts and old chronicles preserved the essential values of them.*

Key words: *Inner Asia, teaching, Hungary, Turks, nomadic.*

Eski Bozkır Değerleri ve Düşünce Yapısı

Öz: *Avrasya bozkır medeniyeti geride birçok entelektüel değer ve zihniyet bıraktı, ancak bunlar uluslararası alanda henüz yeterince ortaya çıkarılmadı. Bazıları Demir Çağı'na veya İskit dönemine geri döndü ve bunlar Avrasya atlıları arasında miras kaldılar. Ne yazık ki, Avrasya bozkırları halkı gelecek nesillere sadece kahramanca bir destan bıraktı ve kendi tarihlerini oldukça geç toparlamaya başladılar. Buna rağmen, birçok folklor metni türü ve eski kronikler, bunların temel değerlerini muhafaza etti.*

Anahtar Sözcükler: *İç Asya, öğretim, Macaristan, Türkler, göçebe*

The ancient Greeks and Romans made many records of the early Eurasian steppe peoples in which we can often read about the values and mindset of the Scythians, Huns and their descendants, whose way of living was strange to them. In these records we find data that correspond to the folk poetry and the old wise proverbs of the present-day Scythian-Hun descendants from Inner Asia to the Carpathian Basin. Through the following comparative studies, it becomes clear that most of the ancient moral teachings recorded have not disappeared, but most of them still live on amongst the nations such as Turks, Mongols, and Hungarians and so on. Hungarian historical sources must be included in the study, as the basis of the intellectual and material culture of the Hungarians is Eurasian steppe civilization on the steppes. In addition, the peoples of the steppes had a positive effect on their neighbours, such as the peoples in Eastern Europe who formed nations in the Middle Ages, who took over many elements of folk poetry from the Eurasian steppe peoples.

However, while researchers of the Mongolian and the Central Asian Turkic peoples have formed an unified position on the origins of their own national traditions and no one disputes that they are descendants of the ancient Eurasian steppe peoples, many researchers in Hungary do not accept and give credit to Hungarian historical heritage passed down from father to son over centuries that they are descendants of the Scythians and Huns. This may also be since a comprehensive modern analysis of the Hungarian historical chronicles has not been carried out so far. Also, in the works published so far the researchers have not taken into account Eastern sources and have not yet compared the mindset of the Central and Inner Asian peoples with the Hungarians, but they have

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looked at the records exclusively with a Western European eye. For this reason, the sentences of the chronicles are incomprehensible to them. However if one examines the issue from an Eastern and Eurasian steppe nomadic perspective, based on even Mongolian steppe sources as well, then almost every sentence in the Hungarian chronicles will be clear and understandable. In the Middle Ages and in the New Age, not a single Hungarian scholar monk and then a scribe doubted the authenticity of the Hungarian chronicles. At that time, the ancient customs were living reality, which were gradually recorded in the chronicles and documents and the tradition was passed down from father to son. In addition to the fragmented data of the Hungarian documents and chronicles, a comprehensive work on ancient Hungarian customs was written at the beginning of the 16th century. István Werbőczy, known as an advocate of the Royal Court of Hungarian Kingdom, gathered the old Hungarian traditions over many years and compiled them according to various themes in his book titled: *Tripartium* (=Triple book). He adhered to the old traditions that were considered to be Scythian by the commoners and nobles of Hungary at that time. The success and long use of the: *Tripartium* (=Triple book) suggests that the ancient customs were also faithfully practiced by the Hungarian nobility. They adhered to the points of the Triple book, and the private law regulations in it defined Hungarian public thinking for centuries. These old traditions were not only preserved in writing, but – independently from these records – the customs that could be traced back to Scythian times were also preserved by the village communities who have woven them into their own tales.

From the 18th century onwards, high-level scientific dissertations on the origin of our intellectual heritage and moral-ethical system were published. In these, our scientists, who are considered to be highly cultured polyhistorians, carried out a careful analysis of Hungarian customs related to the ancient Eurasian steppe peoples' values in the ancient Greco-Roman sources. They showed a high degree of similarity between the two in terms of culture, art, and customs systems. (Pray 1761, Salamon 1881, Szabó 1881. etc.) An excellent work of the French missionary De Guignes was published in 1765, who collected data on the history and custom of the Eastern Huns from ancient China sources and published it in French. This work enlivened European scientific life as new data emerged about the Hun people who were well-known in Europe as well. This collection of sources was especially useful for us Hungarians, as our greats and scholars were first facing with the fact that the customs and beliefs preserved in our historical tradition are very similar to those of the Eastern Huns. De Guignes himself drew attention to the fact that one of the heirs of the Huns were the Hungarians, Turks and Mongolians.

19th century Hungarian historians, turkologists and ethnographers published important studies on the ancient values of the Hungarians. At the end of the 19th century, one of the most comprehensive analysis of Hungarian folk poetry was carried out by József Thúry, who explored the early Eastern, steppe relations of Hungarian folk poetry in his study entitled "Our Ancient Poetry". (Thury, 1895) As the author was a Turkologist, he lined up mainly Turkic examples to prove his theorems. He drew attention to the fact that from the beginning until the 16th century, the Hungarians have faithfully preserved the intellectual heritage of their predecessors, the Eurasian steppe peoples. Thúry not only spoke in mid-air, but he also confirmed his claim with concrete examples, stating that the first works of Hungarian-related steppe folk poetry predate the time of Árpád's arrival at the end of 9th century. He found some facts in the works of 7th century Byzantine authors. It is his merit that he showed: Anonymus the notary of the

Royal Court of Hungary recorded the history of the arrival of the Hungarians in poetic form, following the lyricism of the old heroic epics! After them, he wrote it down as a prose. Thúry briefly summarized data on Hungarians in Hungarian and foreign chronicles and he also quoted from early Hungarian and Turkic works to present the amazing matches. The Hungarian historian-turkologist summarizes the results of his research as follows: *“But not only that much is certain of our prehistoric poetry that it simply existed, but for several reasons we must also believe that it has absolutely flourished in terms of its abundance and richness. Regarding its volume or quantity, our poetry was much richer, the Hungarian spirit was much more productive than later on and nowadays. As we get closer to our modern times, we have to believe that there has been a gradual decline in quantitas.”* (Thury, 1895)

The old written literature of the early Inner Asian peoples became known in the early 20th century when Aurel Stein excavated the library of the Dunhuang Cave Temple in North-Western China that was walled-in in medieval times. The large number of ancient records, songs, hymns, and prose works from this library provide an insight into the intellectual heritage of the unparalleled Eurasian steppes: some of these are about lifestyle, but we also find charming texts in it, because the Uyghur doctors of that time healed patients with incantation. The texts span nearly a thousand years: among them are Saka, Uyghur, Tibetan, and Tangut wise teachings, parables, moral teachings, proverbs and short stories of wisdom. In Inner and Central Asia, after the incorporation of the great world religions (Islam, Buddhism, Christianity), the previously accumulated knowledge was still not forgotten, but it was incorporated into the literature of the newly acquired religion and into philosophical works. The texts of Dunhuang have been translated into many languages in the world and its study has already become a separate discipline.

Fortunately, in addition to the above cave library, the Turks left a rich memory for their descendants. They were one of the heirs of the Eastern Hun Empire. They erected steles with runic writing in the 8th century. Bilge Kagan, Kül Tigin and Tonyukuk princes carved wise parables into stone for their descendants. They gave advice on how to govern justly, which counselors to listen to, with whom to ally, and how to keep the empire together. For example we can read the followings in the inscription of Tonyukuk: *“The thin is easy to bend, the weak is easy to break. But if the thin becomes thick, bending it is a big task.”* (Györffy 1986) Similar teachings were left behind by the Bulgarian khan Kuvrat, who had separated from the Hungarian (Onogur) alliance, and encouraged his descendants to unite do not separate into small kingdoms. According to this legend King Kuvrat (Kurt) - recorded by two Byzantine authors Theophanes and Nicephorus - had five sons. When his death approached, he enjoined upon them not to separate. But they did not obey his command. The first, Batbaian, remained in his native land, according to his father’s will; the second, Kotrag, crossed the Don and dwelled over against his brother; the third, Ispereich, settled in Bessarabia; the fourth migrated to Pannonia; the fifth to Italy. (Gibbon, 1906. 28.) The Hungarian King St. Stephen, who wrote exhortations to his son Imre, provided not only Christian teachings but also wisdom inherited from his ancestors. In honor of the ancestors and ancient traditions, he encouraged his son as follows: *“For it is hard to keep kingdoms on this land if you do not follow the kings who have reigned in the past... The greatest royal adornment, to my knowledge, is to follow the royal ancestors, to imitate the parents.”* (Szigethy, 2001.)

The intellectual heritage, philosophy and wise teachings of the Eurasian steppe peoples have been preserved not only by folk tradition, but these are also mentioned by Byzantine authors in Eastern Rome. In addition, since the middle of the 7th century, Arabs expanding in the pre-Asian and Caucasus regions have also gathered the philosophical knowledge of the peoples of Central Asia and incorporated much of it into their own philosophical system. When the Muslim storm reached Central Asia in the 8th century and the leaders of the local states that emerged after the acquisition of political supremacy, their goal was to gather the cultural treasures of the region. Not only did they gather the antique, Greco-Latin works forgotten in Europe, but they also paid attention to the customs and traditions of the Turks who carried on the ancient Saka / Scythian culture. All this was recorded, and these ancient wisdoms were passed on to their descendants wrapped up in Islamic robes. One of the exceptional works that gives us an insight into the past of our ancestors is the Persian-language *Sahname*, the *Book of Kings* from which we can learn about the struggle between Iran and Turan. There are many steppe Eurasian steppe customs in the poetic stories, which many researchers date back to the Scythian era. (Hasanov 2006, Uchralt 2008, Potanin 1875, Nagy 1894, etc.) In the 11th century, *Divānu Lugāti't-Türk*, the literary work: *Oguz name* was compiled in the court of the 14th century Persian Mongols, in which very special, ancient customs have been preserved. *Kutadgu Bilig*, or *Wisdom of Royal Glory*, which also serves as a fundamental source for understanding the life conception of the descendants of ancient steppe peoples.

Researchers of the Eastern Steppes peoples have now provided us with a great deal of source data, so there are many works available in which we can read about the wise teachings of the ancient peoples. We can even compare these with historical sources and folklore texts of those nations, who are the descendant of the ancient Eurasian steppe peoples. Through these we can gain insight into how our ancestors were thinking, what values they adhered to, how they believed in truth and morality, how they punished sinners and how they rewarded loyal companions and subjects. We can confidently say that the Huns left us not only unparalleled archaeological finds, but also moral teachings worth considering. Unfortunately, this has not been left to us in one volume, but - through foreign sources - we know only fragments of it, and the collection of folk poetry elements has not been done yet.

Chinese chronicles and Byzantine historical works also report some significant Hunnic customs from which a picture of the steppe state philosophy can emerge. One of the best-known stories has been recorded in the Chinese Sima Qian's work: *The Shi Ji Chronicle*. One of his stories is about how important the land is to the Huns. After the accession of the Hun King Maodun to the throne, he did not want to start a fight with the eastern neighbors, the Donghus, so when they asked him for a horse or a wife through their envoys, he gave these to them. According to Ucsiraltu, the transfer of the horse, wife, and land was a typical nomadic tax in antiquity. The Mongolian heroic epic contains the same elements. (Watson, 1961. *Shi Ji* 110)

We can find an interesting parallel with a part of the *Picture Chronicle* reflecting on King Attila, from which we learn that the great king of the European Huns also gladly gifted his beloved horses, often left with little to himself. This bestowal spirit was characteristic of the steppe peoples, who did not mind giving their valuables to their friends and the rulers who turned to them. It is known from the Crimean Tatar Genghis legend that compassion was an important requirement. (Ivanics, 2001: 164.) However,

with the great rulers too, there was a limit to everything, even to requests. In Chapter 110 of *Shi Ji*, we read of the terrible anger of the King of the Eastern Huns, Maodun, when he was asked for land by his neighbors. The chronicle also tells why this happened: because the Hun ruler was very much attached to the land, according to the Hun interpretation, it was the foundation of the state! This sentence from the Chinese chronicle, already shakes the old erroneous Western theory that Eurasian steppe peoples became wandering peoples and did not know the concept of land ownership, or that land was not considered important. Herodotos's 4th book on the Scythians also drew attention to the custom of honoring the homeland. The book says that the Persians who attacked the land of the Scythians used to converse with the Scythians through envoys. The horsemen evaded the enemy's army and wanted to lure them into the barren prairie so that they could defeat the invaders without human loss and so that they would be destroyed by the harsh natural environment instead of weapons. In the dialogue between the two sides, the Scythians said that the Persians would find out how the Scythians relate to the land when the Persians destroy the tombs and places of worship of their ancestors. (Télfy 1863) From this we can again learn that the Eurasian steppe peoples did indeed cling to their homeland. The Hungarian Picture Chronicle also mentions their attachment to the land, stating why the motherland should not be handed over to strangers. In chapter 28, in connection with the legend of the white horse, when Svatopluk gives the country for the white horse, the following sentence is said: "If the earth, the grass, and the water are theirs, everything is theirs." (*Chronicum Pictum*: 28).

The peoples of the steppes did not care to write pages and pages in chronicles and attribute bright victories to themselves, but, for them, leaving a mark on the earth forever with real, heroic deeds brought glory to a man. It is also stated in the summary of the Turks that dying in battle was a glory. (Télfy 1863.) The characters of the heroic hymns set an example for posterity, but accurate records of the names and deeds of the heroes were made only by late foreign sources, where the perception of steppe horsemen was often incorrectly recorded, so they can only be used in research with a critical eye. The survival of the ancient memories of the steppe peoples was also hindered by the fact that our ancestors became acquainted with the great world religions during the Middle Ages, and when they were declared state religions, foreign priests of the new faith did not bother with including the old, perhaps even a few thousand years old steppe teachings and ethical proverbs in their works. They made only fragmented records of these in their works while most of them continued to live on in folk tradition which is not considered authentic by some philologists. Researchers analyzing the ancient history of the Hungarians often mention that the past of the Eurasian steppe peoples of the steppes is known only from fragmentary source data. However, this is only partially true, as it was the ancient Greek authors who made detailed records of them in between the 6th century BC and the 3rd century AD. In some of these records Scythian and Greek authors were debating about human and universal values. In these sources we can read about what our ancestors considered important: not the glittering gold and wealth which was abundant, but they much more valued friendship, tradition, bravery, and honesty. We get a picture of what outstanding values our ancestors lived by perhaps even three thousand years ago, which did not disappear during thousands of years, but certain elements of them defined the moral system of Hungarian society until recently. Courage, heroism, and respect for friends are still in the first place among steppe peoples who cling to their past and tradition, but the same is still available in value-preserving Hungarian communities

within and beyond the borders. Scythian virtues and their moral teachings can be read, for example, in Tokharis's work: Lucian Hermetim. (Télfy, 1863: 107-118.) In this Tokharis, a Scythian of public order, who was revered by the Greeks as a god, says that the Scythians valued friendship above all else. One young man, who did not win the hand of the chosen lady because he did not have enough wealth, proved that it was not gold but friendship that was most important in a person's life. The Scythian young man who was turned down did not settle for parental decision. He did not hesitate, but asked for the help of his friends to help him obtain the chosen lady. His friends with united forces abducted the girl who were supposed to marry a rich young man. With this, they sent a message to the girl's father that friends were worth more than wealth. This value system is echoed in the Hungarian folk tale, where the poor young man who has gone to wander the world can solve difficult tasks with the help of friends and not money. Other times the hero wins the hand of the princess or fairy girl through hard work and perseverance. We come across a similar element in the Secret History of the Mongols where Genghis Khan, the founder of the Mongolian Empire, was orphaned early and could only regain his legacy through his friends and his father's allies. In this decades-long struggle, the perseverance of loyal companions was far more important than wealth.

Returning to Tokharis's work: Lucian, we read about what the Scythian sage thought of Greek philosophers. He openly criticized Greek philosophy and values. According to him, the Scythians value heroes much more than the Greeks because they respect even the brave alien, fearless soldiers, and even erect monuments for them, where the steppe children regularly make pilgrimages and glorify the merits of the deceased. He says that although the Greeks can give much more beautiful speeches about friendship than the Scythians, they do not practice these lofty principles in deeds and even betray their friends many times. The Scythians, on the other hand, do not prove their friendship by speech but by deed. Tokharis told the truth. Other sources also say that Scythian's words were synonymous with honesty. The basic Scythian virtues presented by Tokharis are not unknown to us. Courage, heroism, bravery and loyalty to friends have been essential elements of Hungarian public mindset for many centuries. These were the virtues that most Hungarian nobles aspired to in the Middle Ages and during modern times. We can read from the work of Thirius Maximus how the Greeks valued the Scythian philosophers: "The wisdom of the Scythians is not chattering wisdom, but it characterized by a free lifestyle, common sense, short and apt speech." (Télfy, 1863: 108)

Lucian recorded the ancient Scythians' education method. Children and young people were taught to honor their ancestors by being regularly taken to stone idols erected in honor of their heroes and told on the spot of the deeds of the great hero who once lived, urging their descendants to do the same. In addition to the written notes, they also explained the glorious deeds of the Scythians and the lives of the great heroes with pictures in forms of frescoes painted on the walls of the buildings also dedicated to the heroes, so that everyone understood why they deserved respect. Similar monuments were erected by the Turks in what is now Mongolia, of which only a few runic stele and a few stone statues have remained.

The spiritual heritage of the steppe peoples did not disappear with the disintegration of the ancient steppe empire, but good teachings were inherited from father to son. For example, after the Scythians of Europe and then the Sarmatians, the Huns of Balambér (Hungarian chronicle mentions as Berend) united the Eurasian steppe peoples living in the Eurasian steppe zone. In this empire many Scythians received high dignity, thereby

not only retaining their political power but also handing over their spiritual treasures to their descendants.

Some of the teachings and deeds of King Attila were recorded by the envoy of the Emperor of Eastern Rome: Rhetor Priscos, who wrote much about the Huns in his eight-volume work. Unfortunately, we know only fragments of this, from which we can learn about the character of the great king and how he related to other countries, such as the Eastern Roman Empire. We can also find out what moral order the Hun ruler demanded of his subjects and allies. Not only did the Byzantine envoy quote the words of the Grand King (some of which are shown below), but he also recorded what the Greek and Roman citizens, living with the Huns, thought of their lords. The dialogue with them reveals that they had a great time among the Huns after learning about the values of this civilization. Priscos described the same thing that Tokharis once referred to, that is, the Scythians and Huns used to judge more fairly than the Greeks. For example, the envoy met a former Roman citizen who was captured by the Huns and was eventually handed over to Onegenius when the spoils were distributed, who treated him well. This former prisoner said he felt better among the Huns than the Romans because the Hun laws are fairer than the Romans, and Eurasian steppe peoples called barbarians have much more respect for human life than the Romans. They treat their prisoners well and reward them for their loyalty and deeds. (Blockley 1983. II. 267-269) The same can be read in the Shi Ji Chronicle, in which the Hunnic envoy tells the Chinese that their laws can be easily applied. The relationship between the ruler and the subjects is loose and confidential, and governing the whole country is no more complicated than controlling a single person. ” (Shi Ji, 110.In: Watson, 1961) Later we find a similar statement in the yearbook of the monastery of Saint Gallen, when a monk called Heribald told his peers about the nature of the Hungarians. He said about the Hungarians carousing in the courtyard of the monastery that they were kind and friendly and that they shared everything with him. (Györffy, 1986: 70-74)

In some late antique sources, the very words of the great King Attila were preserved. These were left behind by authors who were in close contact with the Huns and must have received information from credible informants. The work of Rhetor Priscos included Attila's original speech that he delivered to his soldiers on the battlefield of Catalaunum, with which he wanted to encourage his warriors to fight. The following quotation was preserved in Jordanes' work: *Getica*, who copied the words of the great Hunnic ruler from the work of Priscos:

"Here you stand, after conquering mighty nations and subduing the world. I therefore think it foolish for me to goad you with words, as though you were men who had not been proved in action. Let a new leader or an untried army resort to that. It is not right for me to say anything common, nor ought you to listen. For what is war but your usual custom? Or what is sweeter for a brave man than to seek revenge with his own hand? It is a right of nature to glut the soul with vengeance. Let us then attack the foe eagerly; for they are ever the bolder who make the attack. Despise this union of discordant races! To defend oneself by alliance is proof of cowardice. See, even before our attack they are smitten with terror. They seek the heights, they seize the hills and, repenting too late, clamor for protection against battle in the open fields. You know how slight a matter the Roman attack is. While they are still gathering in order and forming in one line with locked shields, they are checked, I will not say by the first wound, but even by the dust of battle. Then on to the fray with stout hearts, as is your wont. Despise their battle line.

Attack the Alani, smite the Visigoths! Seek swift victory in that spot where the battle rages. For when the sinews are cut the limbs soon relax, nor can a body stand when you have taken away the bones. Let your courage rise and your own fury burst forth! Now show your cunning, Huns, now your deeds of arms! Let the wounded exact in return the death of his foe; let the unwounded revel in slaughter of the enemy. No spear shall harm those who are sure to live; and those who are sure to die Fate overtakes even in peace. And finally, why should Fortune have made the Huns victorious over so many nations, unless it were to prepare them for the joy of this conflict. Who was it revealed to our sires the path through the Maeotian swamp, for so many ages a closed secret? Who, moreover, made armed men yield to you, when you were as yet unarmed? Even a mass of federated nations could not endure the sight of the Huns. I am not deceived in the issue;--here is the field so many victories have promised us. I shall hurl the first spear at the foe. If any can stand at rest while Attila fights, he is a dead man.” (Jordanes 39:202)

In a medieval book titled as life of King Attila, Attila encouraged his soldiers to fight as follows: *“What I see in you, my comrades, to whom, if you win, I promised the city of the Romans. You wanted to fight with me. So, I am here with my generals and soldiers, fight under my leadership, if you do that, there is nothing to frighten you. The gods protect you and me, you will be victorious, you just want to, but even if you don’t want to, you will be victorious. Turn your face toward the enemy, and show me your back. Who cannot show his face to the enemy will be the victor over the enemy!”* (Kulcsár, 2006: 78-79.)

In these few sentences, we get a taste of fragments of Hunnic philosophy. The following series of wise sayings were recorded during the siege of Aquilea, Italy, when storks left the city and moved their chicks to the nearby coast, which Attila considered to be a sign of luck. Supposedly, at that time, the great king said, “Look there, comrades, this stork has already sensed what the future holds. We will destroy the city; he is already fleeing so as not to get lost there with the citizens. So be more valiant in the fight tomorrow and you will see that the city will be lost!” (Chronicum Pictum 16)

Jordanes recorded not only the wise sayings of the great Hun ruler, but also the funeral song that the mourners sang at his funeral, when his subjects glorified Attila in a Hun way. The Latin prose text was made into a poem by Elek Benedek:

*“Attila, Attila, great king of the Huns
Mundzuk's offspring, its famous descendant!
You lord, king of the Scythians and Germans,
Have been conqueror of the Romans:
For westerners, easterners,
You have been dread, you have been horror
to all peoples!
But if they begged, you became reconciled with them,
You were satisfied with them paying taxes,
All these great things you did,
You have conquered the world,
And you remained unscathed!*

*Treachery, treason could not get you,
 Numerous enemies could not catch you,
 Hey! Yet you are dead!
 You were in comfort, lying in your bed,
 In your soft bed, in your towered palace,
 Death surprised you in your deep dream,
 Great king of the Huns,
 Descendant of Mundzuk!
 Hajh! Who calls this death?
 That steals in one's dream!
 Death, death, silent death
 You are not a real death!
 We can't take revenge on you,
 We can't dip a sword in you!
 Death, death, silent death,
 You are not a real death! ” (Lengyel 1983)*

Following Rhetor Priscos, Procopius also reported on the deeds of the Eastern European Huns, who ruled from the eastern half of the Carpathians all the way to the Meotis swamps. None other than Justinianus I, Eastern -Roman emperor (527-565), who wanted to revive the great Roman empire made an alliance with them. The emperor turned to the Huns, asking them for soldiers so that he could defeat the Gothic peoples living in the empire and realize his great dream: the reunification of the Roman Empire. Attila's grandchildren played a major role in the emperor's regaining the former Roman territories, but unfortunately, Hungarian history books keep this fact deeply quiet. Nor is that written in history books what vile trick Emperor Justinian did once to make the two Hun peoples: the Utigurs and the Cutrigurs, turn against each other. He first turned to the Utigur Hun ally to defeat their relatives: the Cutrigurs who attacked Byzantium. Sandil, the Utigur khan complied with the request of his ally in vain, as the emperor betrayed him and began to help the Cutrigurs and settled some of them in Thrace. Following this the betrayed Hun king sent an envoy to Constantinople. Procopius, who reported on the events, mentioned that the king of the Huns living by the Don River did not send a letter, but sent a message to the emperor by an envoy orally, in a "Hun way", through examples of proverbs. In the message, Sandil said that he would never change his given word because "the beast, the wolf, can't change the color of his fur because nature won't let him." (Procopius VII) According to a Hungarian proverb, "a wolf does changes neither his fur nor his will." The Hun envoy also told a story in the court of the emperor about the nature of people and animals. "Shepherds use dogs and they are relieved that there is no fault in the protection of their house. The dog faithfully guards its owners and they feed him. When wolves attack the flock, the dog or dogs protect the house and guard the flock like real bodyguards. I believe this is how it works all over the world. It has never happened anywhere that the dog attacks the flock and the wolf protects it." This message from the mouth of the Hun envoy suggested that Justinian betrayed the covenant and carried out an unworthy act against nature.

Messaging with proverbs and symbols have survived among medieval Turks, Mongols and Hungarians. The secret history of the Mongols has often captured symbolic messages. In Anonymus' *Gesta Hungarorum*, we also find an example of how Hungarian princes and notabilities communicated to each other and to strangers.

Fragments of the old steppe philosophy were also recorded by the Hungarian chronicler Anonymus, the clerk of King Béla, in his work *Gesta Hungarorum*. Anonymus presumably collected and used the old Hungarian heroic songs for his work. József Thúry showed that although he recorded them as prose, it can be deduced from the Latin poetry where the lyrical deposit is in the work.

The Hungarian historian also recorded the speech of chief Álmos, who encouraged his soldiers to fight. Before the Hungarians entered the Carpathian Basin, they clashed with the Varegs (Rus). For our ancestors did not want anyone to attack them in the back during their march. Before the battle, the Hungarian prince addressed the following speech to his people, which may have been left to us from an old heroic epic: "Scythians, my comrades, great, valiant men! Remember the beginning of your journey when you said you were looking for a land with a gun, a war where you could live. So don't be bothered by the multitude of Russians and Cumans who look like our dogs. After all, as soon as they hear the word of their master, do the dogs not immediately fall into fear? Because bravery is not determined by the large number of people, but by the courage of the soul. Or you don't know that a lion will make many deer run, as a sage says. But set aside with these! I'm just telling you: Who could stand up to the soldiers of Scythia? Didn't the Scythians make Darius, the king of Persia run in his horror and in great shame to Persia and lost eighty thousand men? Or wasn't Cyrus, another king of the Persians and his three hundred and thirty thousand men killed by the Scythians? Or Alexander the Great himself, the son of King Philip and Queen Olympus, who subjugated many countries in battle, was he not also made to terribly run by the Scythians? Therefore, let us fight wisely and valiantly against those who are like our dogs, and let us fear their multitude as if it was a cloud of flies." (Anonymous 1) In the above sentences, the Hungarian prince spoke in the same symbol language as the Hun king Sandil and later also as Genghis Khan. It is very likely that the speeches preserved on the pages of the old chronicles may even have been uttered, and their style suggests an unified, steppe mindset. In addition to the above, Anonymus recorded the special customs of Prince Árpád's warriors: "Then Ond, Ketel and Tarcal, after passing through the forest, rode along the Bodrog River; then, as if they were running for a toll, they galloped swiftly to the top of a very high mountain. Leaving the other two behind, Tarcal, the nimble knight reached the mountaintop first. Therefore, the mountain has been called the Tarcal Mountain from that day until now. From the top of the mountain, the three men looked around the land as far as the eye could see. They loved it unspeakably, and immediately in that place, according to pagan custom, killing a fat horse, they made a great sacrifice. They then sent Tarcal, who was a daring man and stood his ground in battle, and his companions to return to chief Árpád to give him news of the suitability of the land." (Anonymus 16)

The above story is valuable to us for two reasons. On the one hand, the tradition of horse racing has not disappeared in the Hungarian tradition. At Pentecost, men competed with their horses for the title of Pentecostal King, which title granted those privileges for a year. Such a game of skill and speed is still present in the tradition of the Hun descendants. One of the main game at the Mongolian Olympic Games is horse racing.

At the time of the great Hun animal census in the autumn, horsemen galloped around the forest (Shi Ji 110, In: Watson, 1961) in the same way as Tarcal the knight.

On the other hand, the text reveals to us that Tarcal, who was the winner of the horse race won land. Under later Hungarian customary law, the ruler granted noble rank for bravery. Werbőczy's Triple Book or Tripartium states that the king had the right to make someone noble if he deserved it by deed. (Tripartium, I. chapter, 10. title) Our ancestors sanctified the purchase of the land with a blessing, and the agreements were made orally. This custom was typical of the Scythian-Hun peoples of Eurasia, so the anonymous author who recorded the story did not even find the Latin word for the custom, instead used the Hungarian word "aldumas". Similar data can be found in Chinese chronicles that write about the blessing of the Huns, but we encounter this custom among the Mongols when decrees passed in parliament were also consecrated with blessing.

Ancient customs, old wisdom and the duties of everyday governance did not change with the adoption of Christianity. Fortunately, many elements of the ancient steppes, of the Scythian-Hun civilization have been preserved in medieval Hungarian documents (Hölbling, 2011. 120-124) and in Hungarian historical chronicles. In addition, there is data that can be traced back to Hun times in the work of master Simon Kezai in the 13th-century, in the Picture Chronicle that was assembled in the 14th century, in the Tarihi Üngürüz from the 16th century and in the work of Antonio Bonfini. One of these is the belief in miraculous omens, which is still dominant among the Eurasian steppe peoples of the steppes and it did not disappear from the Hungarians even after the adoption of Christianity. The Picture Chronicle has a strange story that happened to princes Géza and László. Before the battle of Mogyoród, prince Géza and László had a strange vision. A miracle deer holding candles between its antlers appeared before them, and then disappeared. Prince László, later on he became our King St. László, deciphered the meaning of the phenomenon. According to him, this is how God made it known to them that they would win the battle and Géza would become king. The strong belief in the celestial phenomenon and their interpretation was also present in the taltos-believing (shaman) Huns. We have already mentioned King Attila's intuition about the stork's move, but Genghis Khan also considered it a celestial sign that his saddle belt got undone as he was to escape from his enemies by leaving the security giving forest. He considered the peculiar sign a celestial warning and rather remained in hiding. (Sumiyabaatar 79) Sima Qian, a Chinese chronicler, wrote the following on the Huns' beliefs: "If they get involved in something, they observe the moon and the stars first. They attack during a full moon and command the armies back during a lunar eclipse."

In addition to the above examples, there are countless other data source about the unique customs of the Eurasian steppe peoples of the steppes. We can look at the magical poems of the medieval Uyghur Runic Book, which lists omens that were considered good or bad between the 8th and 10th century. (Kakuk, 1985: 62-68) Sacrificing to a mountain idol instead of honoring God was a bad sign. (Kakuk, 1985: 63) It was also considered ominous if a woman dropped her mirror into a pond or if the oxen caught in the plow did not move. It was lucky to see a hawk, and so did the white horse and camel calving. The greatest happiness, however, was the birth of a child, (Kakuk 1985: 63) and the joy was especially great when the ruler had a son born. When Prince Árpád's son Zolta was born, a multi-day feast was held in the courtyard: "The son of leader Árpád, named Zolta, was born that year. There was great joy among the Hungarians. The leader and his nobles had a great feast for many days, and their young men were playing in front of the leader and

his nobles like the lambs of sheep before the rams.” (Anonymus 56) This celebration has not disappeared over the centuries. These the feast celebrating the birth of a child is known as radina or csök among the Hungarians of the Carpathian Basin. (Mészáros, 1915: 125-129) Similarly to the Hungarians, the birth of the heir to the throne was celebrated by the 13th century Mongols and other Hun descendants living in the Central Asian region. Gyula Mészáros wrote a study about these in 1915, which would be worth recovering again and adding new data.

The intellectual heritage of the ancient Eurasian steppe peoples did not disappear in the Eurasian region but was preserved in the traditions of their descendants. Some of its elements can still be seen in folk poetry, which unfortunately has not been studied thoroughly enough by Hungarian researchers so far as they considered many elements to be foreign. A research topic in the future could be a comprehensive examination of the old steppe value system.

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