

Theses of doctoral dissertation

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**From the Sea of the Steppe to
the Island of the Carpathians
Could the Turkish tribal
associations in the Steppes have
a role in the Hungarian
ethnogenesis?**

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1. Objectives and main theses of the dissertation

The dissertation aims at the modern analysis of the process of Turkish–Hungarian coexistence, the importance of which is shown by the fact that the reconstruction of the Hungarian history in the 5–9th centuries is based on it. Following the concept of Gyula Németh, prehistoric research places Turkish–Hungarian coexistence, which is considered to be a decisive phase of the Hungarian ethnogenesis, in the centuries before the conquest. More and more facts that show Németh’s concept is fundamentally uncertain, the facts of Hungarian language history and our knowledge of the Hungarian ethnogenesis contradict his idea of the constant participation of Turkish steppe tribes and their alliances, which could have led to extensive bilingualism, the melting of the Hungarians in the Turkish sea of the steppe. Multilingualism may have been an everyday phenomenon among the nomads of Eurasia, and the loss of the language of significant communities and peoples also occurred on many occasions. The question may rightly be asked, in what way could the language and ethnicity of our ancestors, which had developed much earlier, have been preserved among the complex prestige relations of the foreign-language nomads of the steppe? The traditional concept of Hungarian people's formation must be reconsidered.

The hypothesis searching the Hungarians under other folk names (Turkish, Hun, Onogur) before the 9th century, is not substantiated by the analysis of the meaning of Hun and Turkish names, which makes their use to identify Hungarians only from the 9th and 10th centuries,

respectively. The transfer of the name Onogur~Ungri to Hungarians from the Turkish-speaking groups found in the Carpathian Basin can be supported by historical, linguistic and archaeological arguments.

A century of archaeological excavations has not been able to locate the traces of the Hungarians in the archaeological heritage of the 6–10th centuries from the Pontus area. In contrast, by the 2010s, their rapid migration through the steppes from the Southern Urals to the Southern Bug and Dnieper rivers during the 9th century became certain. All this confirms the testimony of written sources about the relatively short stay of the Hungarians in the steppes for only a century, and excludes their more centuries-old presence in the Eastern European regions that can be considered from the point of view of linguistic history and cultural geography.

There is no decisive argument in favour of the idea that the stable framework of the Hungarian ethnogenesis would have been provided by the Khazar Empire for 2–300 years. Our only written source (DAI) claims that they have lived together for only three years, and overriding it on the basis of linguistic history and cultural geography brings together gradual, multiple Turkish-Hungarian contacts into a single region and period.

The development of the Turkish-type nomadic tribal organization of the Hungarians does not presuppose their participation century-long in the formation of the steppe tribal associations. In the research, in a less direct way, the one-time Khazar organization has been mentioned several times, which can explain the Turkish name of the vast majority of Hungarian tribes without serious linguistic consequences.

The Kavars may have played a significant role in mediating Khazar institutions to Hungarians. Their subordination cannot be justified; their significant cultural, political and military prestige among the Hungarians is very likely. The three tribes of Kavars, that joined to the Hungarians following the military defeat of the Hungarians by the Pechenegs, were able to offer the princely power over the Hungarian tribes a mobilizable political-military base independent of the social ties of the Hungarians.

We have no reason to reject the concept based on written sources, developed by Gyula Pauler, which makes the appearance of Hungarians in the Eastern European steppe by the years 820–830, making their rapid migration probable. The date of their appearance in Eastern European steppe can be changed to the middle of the 9th century based on newest analyses of written sources.

All the factors (Chuvash Turkish language, the way of life and natural environment reflected in Chuvash loanwords of Hungarian language) that were present in the Don-Caucasus region were also available in the contemporary Carpathian Basin, where both written and archaeological data confirm the presence of the Hungarians.

The Avars and the various Chuvash-speaking Ogur groups of the Carpathian Basin, whose culture were very similar to the Turks in Eastern Europe, may have an important role in the change of life and final formation of the Hungarians. The presence of this Turkish-speaking population at the time of the Hungarian Conquest is confirmed by more and more observations, and their way of life and life-geographical conditions fully match with

the Chuvash-Turkish loanwords of the Hungarian language.

The 3–400 years of Turkish-Hungarian language contact required on the basis of linguistic history can be well explained by a different intensity and nature, but continuous contact with different Turkish groups, which started during the 5–6th century. It has reached its highest degree in the Carpathian Basin, with wider and deeper symbiosis and bilingualism between Hungarians and local Turkish groups.

2. Controversial hypothesises in the research of Hungarian prehistory

In recent decades, two radically different concepts have emerged about the process of Hungarian prehistory. On the basis of linguistic history, the “steppe” version takes into account the 2–300 year-old residence of our ancestors in Eastern Europe, Onogur and then Khazar rule, division into Turkish tribes and tribal associations, with large-scale Turkish–Hungarian bilingualism, and cultural transfer. It explains the lack of mention of Magyar name by their political subordination, although the Iranian and Turkish-speaking tribal associations, which seemed more prestigious on the basis of word borrowings, could not break the political and social unity of our predecessors, otherwise they could not keep their Hungarian language for a long time. It connects the formation of the ethnic unity of the Hungarians to this period in a contradictory way, and it considers the “Csodaszarvas” (Wondrous Hind) myth as the origin myth of the Hungarian people as the historical monument of this process.

The “forest zone” version, on the other hand, estimates that, according to written sources and archaeological data, our ancestors would come out of the Finno-Ugric environment of the Volga-Káma-Ural region around 830. This concept also corresponds to the position of Hungarian linguistics on the development of the Hungarian folk name in the Ugric era, which presupposes ethnic-political independence, and on the continuous integrity of the Hungarian language. In this case, however, the deep, wide-ranging and long-term Turkish linguistic-cultural influence indicated by the linguistic historical data becomes difficult to explain, and the proven short-term Khazar influence can hardly serve as a proper explanation.

Can the “information envelope” created by the specific language of Hungarians, which makes two-way communication difficult and keeps speakers in a closed community, explain the lack of assimilation of our predecessors by the surrounding numerically, culturally and politically dominant Iranian and Turkish tribal associations, as many researchers thought? Since not only the large number of Iranian and Turkish words borrowed by the Hungarian language and covering all areas of life but also grammatical phenomena may reflect the very deep, with Ligeti’s words “irresistible” linguistic and cultural influence of especially Turkish languages! An only a much smaller number of Turkish groups than the Hungarians could explain the lack of assimilation of Hungarians, in the same time the close and continuous Turkish–Hungarian linguistic contact and the presumed partial bilingualism. The gradual integration of subordinate Turkish-speaking groups into the ethnopolitical organization of the Hungarians, in addition

to the ethnopolitical conditions of the Eastern European steppe, seems to be conceivable only if the place of residence of our ancestors is located on the edge of the steppe.

There are also difficulties of the lifestyle changes of the conquering Hungarians. The research explains the rapid disappearance of the phenomena of nomadism after the Conquest, the widespread spread of the semi-nomadic and then settled way of life, and the survival of our Finno-Ugric and Ugric expressions referring to the non-nomadic way of life with the late and restricted formation of nomadism among the Hungarians. According to this explanation, most part of the Hungarians had a complex economy at all times. However, it seems clear that, under the influence of Iranians, their equestrian lifestyle had already developed in the Ugric era, the Iranian word borrowings are also likely to lead to the early development of their nomadic lifestyle, which preceded Turkish contacts. Their Turkish environment in Eastern Europe had almost no demonstrable linguistic influence on them in the field of equestrian nomadic lifestyles.

The Turkish-speaking tribes, whom with the Hungarians could come into contact in Eastern Europe, not only knew the nomadic type of agriculture, but also applied an advanced horticultural and vineyard culture, which presupposed settled way of life. It is also confirmed by written sources about the Khazars and the Volga Bulgarians. However, the conquering Hungarians, especially on the basis of their looter campaigns and fighting style, could still be close enough to nomadism. It is questionable, when the complete change in lifestyle, reflected in the relevant Turkish terminology in the

Hungarian language, as well as the change in the proportion of individual branches of agriculture, may have occurred at our predecessors.

Even today, the research hardly counts with the Turkish-speaking groups that had been present in the new, final homeland of the Hungarians, the Carpathian Basin, since the Avar era. Our written and archaeological sources also point to the migration of Eastern European Oğur-Turkish groups to the Avar Kaganate, and even these Turkish-speaking groups may have been involved in the formation of European Avars. The anthropological research points to the very significant role of the locally found population in the development of the Hungarians of the Arpadian period, even if the demonstration of continuity from an archaeological point of view is not yet successful. Archaeological research has drawn attention to the perfect match of the way of life of the Avar-era population with that of the early Arpadian Hungarians, and at the same time its complete similarity with the way of life reflected in our Chuvash Turkish loanwords. In short, the Carpathian Basin is a realistic alternative both for the change of Hungarian way of life and for the Hungarian assimilation of Turkish-speaking groups, where the prestige conditions were favourable to our predecessors, as opposed to Eastern Europe.

3. Relevant literary background

Due to the nature of the dissertation, it builds on the linguistic, historical and archaeological literature of the examined problem.

The intensive research of the Turkish-Hungarian linguistic-cultural contact started with the activity of József Budenz, who, arguing with Ármin Vámbéry, established the borrowed nature of the Turkish elements of the Hungarian language, at the same time, he marked the Turkish participants of the coexistence in the ancestors of the Chuvash in the Volga region. His conclusions were later clarified by Zoltán Gombocz, who identified the speakers of the language that Budenz called Old Chuvash with the Ogur tribes who moved to the Eastern European steppe in the 5th century. With this step, the research became historical nature, henceforth, the research sought the predecessors of the Hungarians within the framework of the Ogur tribal associations, which were well mentioned by the written sources. Gombocz also tried to establish the geographical framework of coexistence with the help of the phytogeographical terminology recognized by István Zichy (terminology of viticulture, words like wine, grapes, broom, wine-lees, ash tree, cornel). In his first concept, he thought so, the Hungarians made a contact with the Volga Bulgars, which was a Turkish-speaking people, who lived closest to the supposed Hungarian original homeland. Later, based on the phytogeographical considerations and Turkish origin Hungarian plant names referring to the Pontus region, he placed the scene of Turkish–Hungarian contact in the Kuban-Caucasus region. His second concept became the basis of the idea of the so-called Caucasian homeland. An important bypass was the research of Bernát Munkácsi, who, basing on the Chuvash-Mongol phonological analogies he recognized, wrote about the Pontic Ugric-Hun symbiosis, assuming the Mongol language of the Huns, trying to reconcile the

linguistic historical facts with the Hungarian Hun tradition. Munkácsi also writes consistently about Ugric Turks instead of Ogur Turks, which allows them to be mixed with Finno-Ugric peoples. After Munkácsi, Gombocz, then Bálint Hóman and István Zichy tried to derive the Hun tradition of the Hungarian chronicles from the Hun–Bulgarian–Hungarian coexistence in the Pontus region, starting from the Hun-Bulgarian identity, accepted in international research at that time. At the same time, Hóman also referred to the research results of Gyula Németh rejecting the Hun-Bulgarian identity. Hóman’s position, which explains the formation of the Hungarian ethnos with this mixing, was based on the idea, that the current names of the Hungarians must be found by evaluating all ethnographic data of the 5–6th centuries Byzantian and Muslim sources. In the absence of mention of the Hungarian folk name, this procedure became one of the cornerstones of later prehistoric research.

The attitude of the defining historians of the millennium period, the concept of Károly Szabó, Henrik Marczali and Gyula Pauler was determined by the written sources, primarily the picture that can be sketched on the basis of DAI, to which the Muslim sources gradually joined. In addition to the society and way of life of the conquering Hungarians, reflected in contemporary written sources and similar to the Turkish peoples of the same time, the traditional historical conception of the Hungarian chronicles also left a strong imprint on their works. Although the Finno-Ugric kinship of the Hungarian language was treated as a proven fact, the various Turkish-speaking tribes were referred to as “related”, the concept of linguistic and ethnic “kinship” was not clearly

distinguished, although Henrik Marczali emphasized the separation of language and nation history.

A special highlight of Hungarian prehistoric research is the controversial working of István Zichy. Following in the footsteps of Vámbéry, Zichy noticed the often different process of the development of language and ethnicity, also taking into account contemporary foreign research (Antoine Meillet). Based on the lack of takeover of the Turkish political and military organization among Finno-Ugric peoples, he explained the seeming contrast between the “Turkish” culture of the Hungarians and the Finno-Ugric language by exchanging their language. According to him, Turkish terms referring to “higher culture” of Hungarian language would be memories of the replaced Turkish language. His theory has been strongly criticized by contemporary researchers, and although his research on the relationship between language and ethnicity is evaluated by recent research, Klára Sándor argues that its theory, although much more elaborate than Vámbéry’s, it assumes processes that are just opposite to the causes of language exchange based on socio-cultural-political dominance.

A serious turning point in the research was Gyula Németh’s high-impact monograph published in 1930, which attempted to explain the “Turkish” ethnic characteristics of the conquering Hungarians with a wide-ranging and deep Turkish cultural-social, lifestyle and linguistic influence on the originally Finno-Ugric Hungarians. According to Németh, the Hungarians not only came into contact with the Turkish peoples, but also integrated into their organization, adapting to their developmental habits, taking on new Turkish groups, but

losing some of its old components. According to Németh, the former genus organization of the Hungarians was transformed by a Turkish organization into well-united, easily moving political and military units, i. e. tribes. According to Németh, the way of life of the Hungarians underwent a fundamental transformation under the influence of the Bulgar-Turks. The mostly preying, fishing-hunting Hungarians learned farming, animal husbandry, and many other things, which are reflected in the adopted terms. Organically connected to Németh's concept is the hypothesis of Gyula Moravcsik. Moravcsik combined the Ungri name of Magyars, derived from the Onogur, with written sources referring to the presence of the Onogurs in Pontus-Maeotis area in the 8–9th centuries, and the Hungarian tradition referring to the homeland of Pontus-Maeotis and even the Ogur-Bulgarian (Chuvash-Turkish) loanwords of Hungarian. On this basis, he saw so the centuries-old presence of the Hungarians on the Pontus steppe as proven. Referring to this, Moravcsik emended the entry of the DAI's earliest surviving manuscript, which defines Khazar–Hungarian coexistence on three years, for 200 years.

József Deér was the historian, who integrated Gyula Németh's conception, which imagined the Hungarian ethnogenesis in the frame of Turkish tribal associations with the participation of Turkish-speaking and named tribes, in the historical frame of the DAI, which is traditionally considered the main prehistoric source by historiography. Deér believed that the Hungarian language was preserved by the integration of our predecessors into the Turkish tribal associations as a separate tribe. He also retained the culture of his former equestrian nomad, the

Finno-Ugric race type, the ancient Finno-Ugric occupation, the fishing. Deér's views on the relative development of the Ugric-Hungarians clearly show the influence of Gyula Németh's monograph, and by continuously maintaining its independent organization and culture, it also provides a realistic explanation for the later linguistic-ethnic survival of the Hungarians. Deér linked the blood treaty, the Turul myth, with the formation of an independent Hungarian political organization leading to the formation of the people in the 9th century.

Related to the study of György Györffy's in 1948 that concept, which interprets another element of the Chronicle tradition, the "Csodaszarvas" (Wondrous Hind) legend, as a myth of the origin of the Hungarians, in which both the Hungarians, and the ethnogenetically close peoples, are personified. Thus Magor is the *heros eponym* of Hungarians (Magyars), Hunor is of Onogurs, Belar is of Volga or Pontus black Bulgarians, and finally Dula is of the Alans. This concept adopted by later researchers, such as Jenő Szucs and Antal Bartha, who also interpreted the "Csodaszarvas" legend as folk legend of the Hungarian ethnogenesis.

Jenő Szűcs disputed the ideas of Deér, the political process displayed by the DAI 38, in the wake of the concept of Charles Czeglédy, dated for the 6–8th century, defining the events recorded in it as a memory of the "Khazar" era of the Hungarians. According to him, all this reflects the process of the formation of the independent ethnic consciousness of the Hungarians living in the Khazar addiction, the end result of which is the appearance of the Hungarian folk name around 870. He considered so that the integration of the original tradition must be

reckoned with long before the 9th century. Szűcs disputed the opinion of Deér on the chronology of the Hungarian ethnogenesis, although Deér's view on the sovereign political organization, Principality or tribal alliance 9th century emergence, its relationship with the ethnogenesis, is highly likely. The Deér and Szűcs debate highlights well the complexity of the problem of the Hungarian ethnogenesis.

With the work of Nándor Fettich, archeology entered the research of Hungarian prehistory as an equal party to written sources and the history of language. Fettich turned the attention of researchers to the archeological culture of Saltovo-Majackoye, where he tried to show the possible scene of the pre-conquest Turkish–Hungarian contact. After the World War II, Antal Bartha redirected the attention of the research to the Pontus steppe, where he considered the scene of centuries-old Turkish–Hungarian coexistence. Another change of direction began to unfold after 1975, when Csanád Bálint proved in detail the striking differences between the culture of Saltovo-Majackoye and the Hungarian archaeological heritage of the 10th century, but at the same time many parallels with the elements of the Pecheneg legacy. It took two decades for the unsustainability of Fettich's idea, the lack of Hungarian relations in Saltovo, to become completely clear. However, the historical concept of Gyula Németh, which formed the participation of the Hungarians in the Turkish tribal associations for several centuries, was not reviewed.

Prehistoric research based primarily on written sources came to the fore again with Gyula Kristó's 1980 important book. Kristó defined the key issue of the

Hungarian prehistory, the historical period of the Hungarian ethnogenesis, which was a central element of the debate Deér–Szűcs. Kristó showed with a detailed analysis of the DAI that Levedi could have been the older contemporary of Álmos and Árpád (they could have been born around 800, 820, 845), so the centuries-old antedate of the emergence of Levedi's tribal organization cannot be accepted. Kristó, also rightly, linked the name of the Hungarians “Szavartoi” to their coexistence with the Khazars, who were also called Sabirs. According to him, the people of Levedi are only indirectly connected to the Sabirs beyond the Caucasus, their being Hungarians is not justified by the similarity of names. He also emphasized that the name Onogur could be obtained by the Hungarians as a result of their contact with the Volga Bulgarians, not necessarily in the Pontus region. Kristó emphasized that the Hungarian research did not follow the path set by Pauler, who warned that even Theophanes and Nikephoros, who were aware of the Pontus region at the beginning of the 9th century, did not know about the long southern stay of the Hungarians, but the research assumed long southerly residence of the Hungarians on a purely linguistic historical basis. Kristó dated the earliest Hungarian migration south from Bashkiria to the first decades of the 9th century, based on the similarity of the archaeological heritage of the Central Volga region and the Carpathian Basin. To confirm his chronology, in agreement with Ligeti, based on the linguistic proximity of the 13th-century Volga and Pannonian Hungarians, excluded the southern move centuries earlier. Like Kristó, Sándor László Tóth argued that the application of pre-ninth century data that did not mention Hungarians by

name to our predecessors could be questioned. Based on the events of 838–839 on the Danube and the data of *Annales Bertiniani* on the outbursts of barbaric and savage peoples in 839, he assumed the appearance of Hungarians in the Dnieper region around 838. To this, he connected the construction of fortress Sarkel and Ibn Rusta's data on the defense of the Khazars with ditches. Another work by Gyula Kristó warns of many difficult-to-resolve contradictions in Hungarian prehistory. Kristó explained the survival of the Hungarian language from the 5th century BC until the Hungarian Conquest among the Iranian and Turkic peoples, by the practice of the nomadic empires, that they preserved the political organization of the subjugated peoples. According to him, the ancient Hungarians own political organization inhibited the assimilationist influence of the Iranian and Turkish languages. At the same time, he assumes that until the end of the first third of the 9th century there were only the four Finno-Ugric and four Turkish tribes that were united in the Hétmagyar (Seven Hungarians) Tribal Alliance at that time. At that time, according to him, the Hungarians lived scattered in the vast area between the Lower-Danube and the Don, yet during this period they had integrated a significant number of Turkish-speaking and named tribes.

A remarkable step in the research of the period, of similar importance to Gyula Németh's 1930 volume, is Lajos Ligeti's book (1986). By examining the semantics of our Turkish loanwords, Ligeti made some very important conclusions about the nature and chronology of Turkish-Hungarian contact before the conquest and during the Arpadian period. Ligeti writes about the "almost overwhelming Turkish influence" that reached the

conquering Hungarians. Ligeti rejected the etymology of several of our Turkish origin tribal names, given by Gyula Németh, which calls into question the traditionally accepted Bashkir–Hungarian ethnic identity. His view that Turkish tribal names cannot mean the Turkish language of the tribal members is also very important, contrary to Németh’s views. Ligeti warned that, in the language of the Hungarians, traditionally considered a “Turkish-type” nomad, there is hardly a Turkish term for equestrian lifestyle and nomadic armament, although their Turkish terminology is astonishingly rich. Perhaps even more important is Ligeti’s recognition that the language of the Khazars and the Kavars may have been of the Chuvash-Turkish type, leading a new direction in research that had considered the language of Khazars to be common Turkish and thus excluded them from prolonged contact with the Hungarians. Although Németh-Moravcsik’s concept of Eastern European Onogur-Hungarian coexistence was convincingly refuted in Ligeti’s book, his work brought only a partial paradigm shift for several reasons. His work, which is specifically of a linguistic-historical nature, was much less suitable for establishing a new historical concept, in contrast to the highly source-centered HMK, which, published in an updated, revised form in 1991, kept continuously Németh and Moravcsik’s out of date ideas in the public consciousness. In addition, when Ligeti’s work was published, the issue of Avar survival was in the early stages of the scientific debate in several respects, so although Avar-age Turks emerged as potential participants in coexistence at Ligeti’s book, they could not yet be a serious alternative in the opposite Eastern European region. At the same time, Ligeti also raised a new

alternative to Turkish-Hungarian coexistence, assuming the Chuvash-type Turkish language of the Khazars. However, his idea cannot be a real alternative, although many researcher reckon with it, as he does not explain the Onogur~Ungri name of Hungarians in foreign languages, nor the lack of use of the Khazar name for Hungarians neither. He also had to maintain for his hypothesis Moravcsik's explanation of the three-year period of coexistence in DAI, although this possible emendation was based purely on the linguistical fact of more centuries of Turkish-Hungarian coexistence, which identification with the Khazar-Hungarian coexistence cannot be proved with independent sources.

András Róna-Tas's book (1996) also marked a very significant turning point in the research of Hungarian prehistory. The idea of the so-called Caucasian homeland essentially lost its basis when the tomb of Prince of Greater Bulgaria, Kuvrat, was successfully identified with a burial in the early 20th century near Poltava, Ukraine. The residence of the 7th century Bulgarians in the Don region is supported by the identity of the Equestrian Mountain, also called the Bulgarian Mountain, with the Donetsk hills, from which, according to Armenian Geography, Kuvrat's son, Asparuch, fled from the Khazars. The basis of Gombocz's concept, the localization Megale Bulgaria, recorded by Theophanes, on the northern foreground of the Caucasus, can hardly be accepted.

István Zimonyi highlighted that, the DAI's use of words, which characterizes Levedi and Árpád (words of wisdom, courage, merit, and law), can be paralleled with the use of Turkish Orhon inscriptions, which praise the aptitude and actions of the rulers. This means that the

political organization of the Hungarians following the Khazar pattern of Turkish origin was an integral part of the Khazar Empire, and the leaders of the Hungarians thought in the Turkish-Khazar category system even in the middle of the 10th century.

By the 2010s, the research of the archaeological heritage of the 9th century Hungarians had entered a new phase, which fundamentally changed the image of the migration of our ancestors. The archaeological research, essentially moving in the direction designated by linguistic historical research since Antal Bartha's book in 1968, has been able to form an independent picture of our predecessors pre-conquest settlements, which fits well with the known historical process. Attila Türk, re-establishing a close relationship with Russian archaeology, was able to state the fact that the centuries-old presence of the Hungarians in Eastern Europe could not be archeologically justified in the light of the latest Russian and Ukrainian scientific results. The Hungarians left the Southern Urals, moved to the Volga region in the first decades of the 9th century, which they left only around the middle of the 9th century, and their new, permanent settlement was established along the middle reaches of the Dnieper, in the second half of the century. We must definitely review the traditional historical picture, created on Turkish loanwords, on the basis of recent archaeological and historical results. Language borrowings and contact processes that can be linked to space and time in an uncertain way can no longer define the framework of Hungarian prehistory in the same way as during the last century.

4. Methodological, theoretical and conceptual framework of the dissertation

Due to the nature of the dissertation, in addition to the usual critique of sources in history, I also place a strong emphasis on the linguistic approach. This approach is all the more justified because prehistoric concepts have been based primarily on linguistic historical considerations for more than a century. Thus, the history of the Eastern European Ogur-Turkish tribes from written sources could become a source of Hungarian history before the middle of the 9th century and the large-scale Turkish language influence on Hungarian, helps in the recognition the way of life, the society and the military organization of the conquering Hungarians. It is therefore essential to examine, that in what way and within what framework the Turkish-Hungarian linguistic contact, based on linguistic historical conclusions, can become a historical source, and what value and nature toolkit the linguistical method can provide for to know the life of the Hungarians in the 5–10th century.

Linguistic contacts are not only characterized by vocabulary (lexical) borrowings, the study of the scope and meaning of the terms taken over is merely one of the possible approaches to linguistic contacts. It is at least as important to examine the reasons for the transfers, which may be primarily suitable for exploring the nature (depth, extent) of the relationship with the transferring Turkish speakers. It can help to decide to what extent Hungarian society could have integrated into the various Turkish socio-political formations, and what system of relations characterized the Turkish and Hungarian-speaking groups

living together. Vámbéry, Budenz, Gombocz and Németh examined the nature of the Turkish–Hungarian contact essentially only in terms of lexical acquisitions (the loanwords). However, from the point of view of the nature of coexistence, it is precisely the factors behind the transfers, the process of the adaptation that is decisive, which can be examined with the tools of language sociology (substrate, superstrate, bilingualism). Socio-cultural prestige is a key issue for Turkish–Hungarian coexistence, and the problem of cultural and language exchange cannot be examined without it. Although historical, archaeological, and ethnographic research in recent decades has clearly seen the interrelationships between social and linguistic processes, no analysis of complex sociological processes of language has taken place. Recent linguistic works already apply the methodology of the sociology of language; in the field of prehistory, many of Klára Sándor’s works help historians also in this field.

In addition, the extent of the Turkish grammatical influence on the Hungarian language is debatable, which largely preserved its Finno-Ugric foundations and structure, why their centuries-old coexistence did not lead to an exchange of the Hungarian language. Whether we can reckon with on Turkish–Hungarian bilingualism, and when and for how long this situation continued. It seems undoubted that the contact could take place gradually in time and space, the Hungarians could have come into contact with several Turkish groups of less than their own number, for a longer period of time.

The cultural-social aspect of the contact has only recently come to the forefront of Hungarian research.

Hunfalvy did not separate the history of language and people when examining language kinship, only Vámbéry took the first steps. Later, István Zichy followed in this field, however, due to the negative reception of his Turkish-Hungarian language exchange theory, his approach did not spread in Hungarian research. In the last decades of the 20th century, only András Róna-Tas dealt with the problem of the formation of the people, several writings by Csanád Bálint indicate the revival of interest since the 2000s. The Eurasian examples of population formation emphasize the need for a consistent separation of ethnogenetic and linguistic processes.

5. Results

The Turkish lexical borrowings of the Hungarian language reflect a very significant proportion of the takeover of the material and spiritual culture of higher prestigious Turkish people. However, despite the nomadic Turkish culture of the conquering Hungarians (at least the leading and middle classes), based on the written sources and the archaeological research, the terminology of Hungarian language concerning the equestrian lifestyle and nomadism is not Turkish. The Hungarians in Eastern Europe and the Carpathian Basin did not live with nomadic, but with semi-nomadic/settled Turkish peoples, their material culture also appears in our Turkish loanwords. However, there is no clear evidence of a longer stay of the Hungarians in Eastern Europe, to take over the terminology in question; It also contradicts the data suggesting Hungarian nomadism of the 9–10th century.

The geographical location and chronology of our Turkish lexical borrowings is also uncertain.

Today, the research usually connects the adaptation of that terminology, which earlier defined as Bulgarian-Turkish, with the centuries-old coexistence with the Khazars, whose language are already considered to be Chuvash Turkish. However, in the Khazar area, according to the written evidence and the archaeological data, the Hungarians could only appear at the end of the first third of the 9th century, so we cannot assume a longer coexistence. Besides this, the coexistence with the Khazars was by no means as close as might be expected from the data of language history. After their previous loose federal relationship, their political relationship only became close around 850, with the organization of the Hungarian principality by the Khazars. Even then, we cannot talk about real coexistence, we can only count with the significant cultural and political impact of the Kavars that joined the Hungarians, but primarily among the elite. In contrast to the Khazars, a longer coexistence can be expected with the Kavars. The Kavars had a separated political organization from the Hungarians, and their linguistic independence was certainly preserved to the beginning of the 10th century, but perhaps even in the middle of the century. Their wider linguistic impact could hardly have been supposed. The rebellion of the Kavars against the Khazar government suggest that, we can think, this group originated from the Khazar leadership, so that their political and cultural prestige, which was not lower than that of the Hungarians, can rightly be assumed. This is supported by the circumstances of the election of the Hungarian prince by the Khazar custom, and the Khazar

origin of Hungarian dignitaries of Kündü and maybe Gyula, and their place in the Khazar political organization. After the Hungarians moved away from the Khazar power in time and space, in the second half of the 9th century, before the Hungarian Conquest, the learning of the Khazar language could no longer be influenced by the compulsion of communication, it could have only be an individual motivation related to career and social prominence. The direct transmitters, the Kavars, couldn't have low prestige either. Their joining, which can be related to the formation of the Hungarian principality, refers to a group active in the political-military field, so we can mark them as the sources of the Hungarian political-military terminology of Turkish origin.

Since there are also written traces of the Turkish presence in the Middle Volga region at the end of the 6th century, long before the formation of the Volga Bulgaria, and our ancestors may have remained in the region until the early 9th century, an early Turkish–Hungarian contact in this area does not seem to be ruled out. But the area from the Southern Urals to the line of the Middle Volga, where our ancestors could live at the latest from the 6th century, was certainly also the area of the longer or shorter settlement of various Turkish groups migrating from east to west. The gradual assimilation of Turkish-speaking groups from a linguistic-historical point of view is much more conceivable in this region than in the southern regions, where Turkish-speaking groups have been permanently settled in large numbers and the centres of their political formations have been established. Under the Khazar rule, the peoples who retained their political and ethnic independence all lived on the outskirts of the

Kaganate (Volga Bulgarians, Mordvins, Alans, etc.). The concept on the formation of the ethnical consciousness of Hungarians, is placed in the Khazar Kaganate, is difficult to reconcile with the linguistic historical facts, that only afford the gradual, multi-stage assimilation of various Turkish-speaking groups. The latter presuppose the existence of their own, independent Hungarian political organization as a lasting framework for ethnogenetical processes. As a core area of the Khazar Kaganate, the Don-Kuban-Caucasus region could hardly serve as a scene of the political-ethnic detachment of the Hungarians, but in addition to the similar natural and geographical features of the Carpathian Basin, it also offered prestige conditions favourable to the Hungarians.

We can agree with Jenő Szűcs that, the formation of the Hungarian people in the Turkish environment affected at most the upper strata of Hungarian society, the higher organizational levels. In addition to the linguistic historical facts that suggest this, it is the highest level of organization, the Turkish names of the majority of tribes that point to this. Most of them can be related to the naming of Khazars, which have since been defined as Chuvash Turkish, based on the Chuvash Turkish. The hypothesis explaining the Megyer tribal name with the phonological equalization of an original Magyer name on the final-tone Turkish language has a good fit with this reconstruction. This explanation is excellent for solving the contradiction between the concept of the formation of the Magyer, as a name of an independent people, after the end of the Ugric era and the supposed formation of the Hungarian people in the steppe in the Turkish period. When the Turkish-nomadic type tribal system was

artificially formed, the chief tribe gained the already existing, unified folk name. This, the *magyer/magyar* name appears in the last decades of the 9th century. Its formation preceded the formation of the tribal alliance, as opposed to, for example, the name of the Onogurs. The *Hetumoger/Hétmagyar* (Seven Hungarians) name is unknown in this age, it only appears in the work of Anonymous at the second half of the 12th century, as the common name of the seven Hungarian leaders. Thus, it seems unlikely to consider the *Hétmagyar* and not the *magyer/magyar* name as the original self-name of the Hungarian people. The hypothesis assuming the originality of the *Hétmagyar* places the formation of the Hungarian people in the period after the birth of the tribal system formed in the Turkish environment, when the name of the chief tribe would have become a common self-name. The research thus came to a dead end between the linguistic and ethnic independence of the Hungarians and the contradiction between the tribal names called Turkish. *Hétmagyar* can be defined as the name of a formation formed by a Khazar organization, which unites eight tribes actually or nominally in a seven-member tribal association, used in a relatively short period of time.

During the Turkish–Hungarian contact, favourable prestige relations from a Hungarian point of view are probable in the Carpathian Basin, the former residence of the Avars, where lived a significant number of Turks and there was no existing central power since the first third of the 9th century. We also know of two occasions in the Avar Age when a significant number of Turks came to the Carpathian Basin. The Avars themselves may have been Turkish-speaking; their early appearance, together with

the Ogurs, Sabirs, and Khazars, suggests their language belonging to the Western Old Turkish, that Chuvash Turkish dialect. We know some Ogur tribes, that migrated to the Carpathian Basin in Eastern Europe before 568, together with the Avars. Other parts of them that remained in Eastern Europe, following their independence from the Turks, got under the Avar rule in the early 7th century, thus groups from the Onogur tribal association could enter the Carpathian Basin.

Around 630, the Onogurs, also called Bulgarians, already had such a serious significance, that their candidate in the Kagan election could act as a rival of the Avar candidate. Subsequent internal struggles may have led to the (partial) destruction of their leading strata, but their common people have hardly suffered serious losses. Subsequently, sometime around 650-670, other significant Ogur-Turkish groups were allowed to enter the Carpathian Basin, after leaving their homeland in the Don region following the Khazar advance. Perhaps it is due to this migration that by the end of the 8th century, the political organization of the Avar Kaganate already appeared in the sources as a dual kingdom, a fact that may well represent the political importance of the Ogur-Turks. By the middle of the 9th century, due to internal and external tensions, the political organization of the Avar Kaganate had completely disintegrated, and the rule of the Turkish-speaking leaderships had ceased. With the independence of the various Slavic political formations, the slow Turkish-Slavic bilingualism of some of Avar groups began, although, as Svatopluk's example shows, the Slavic princes maintained the Avar cultural-lifestyle

traditions of steppe origin even at the end of the 9th century.

We must definitely connect the indigenous population, which consists of the descendants of the Avar population of the 7–9th centuries, with that Turkish ethnic component, which has left a deep mark on the language and culture of the Hungarians. The takeover of our Chuvash Turkish loanwords in the Carpathian Basin is also supported to a large extent by its natural geographical features, as they correspond to the environmental features reflected in them. The same is true of the way of life of the population of the Carpathian Basin in the 7–9th centuries, which is reflected in the structure, location, constructions and finds of the settlements of the Avar period. It is very similarly to what was experienced in the settlements of Saltovo-Majackoye culture, which was compared with the Hungarian settlements in the Arpad-age. The supposed extermination of the descendants of the Avar population in the 9th century by the Frankish and Bulgarian campaigns, as well as the alleged complete Slavicization, are both unjustifiable assumptions. The settlement area of this population in the Carpathian Basin was not only the same as that of the Hungarians of the Arpadian period, but in the majority of cases their settlements are each other's continuations, structure and constructions almost the same. In a conspicuous way, that source data, which were recently recognized as authentic, they point in the same direction with these recognitions, the appearance of the Ungri (Hungarian) name is confirmed at an early time, in the 7–9th century, before the Hungarian conquest in the Carpathian Basin. These sources used the Ungri name as the collective name of the eastern, semi-nomadic lifestyle

population of the Avar-age Carpathian Basin, as a synonym with Avar and Hun political names.

The extensive Turkish–Hungarian bilingualism before the Hungarian Conquest, is contradicted, both for the Hungarians and the Turks who lived with them, to the gradual assimilation of a much smaller number of Turkish groups than the Hungarians, which alone can explain the preservation of the Hungarian language. In this situation, it seems very probable that our ancestors did not live for a long time within the core areas of the Iranian and Turkish steppe tribal alliances and empires, but in their neighbourhood, on the outskirts of the steppe. In addition to the radically changed prestige conditions in the Carpathian Basin, on the basis of the presence of Turkish and Turkish–Slavic bilingual populations found locally, which is at least equal to that of the number of conquerors, we can reckon with much more bilingualism. However, this may have relevant for only the local population, and only certain groups of the Conquest Hungarians could have been Hungarian–Turkish, Hungarian–Slavic bilingual, or even trilingual. A certain degree of bilingualism in the ranks of the Hungarian common people could also explain the difficult detection of place names of Avar origin. The partial or complete translation of Turkish names may have made them integral elements of the Hungarian toponymical system. The integration of the Avar-age origin Turkish and Slavic monolingual and Turkish–Slavic bilingual populations found in the Carpathian Basin into the Hungarians can also be supported by anthropological data, and the mixed language of the assimilating and marrying Turkish–Slavic groups may have influenced the development of the

Hungarian language. More and more traces of this can be detected from both Turkish and Slavic directions.

This complicated Turkish–Hungarian language contact also corresponds to the results of the Hungarian language history. The large-scale Turkish language influence could not lead to the loss of the Hungarian language, because at different times, Turkish groups speaking different idioms came into contact with the Hungarians and different prestige relations developed between them. All these may have made the manner, extent and extent of language borrowing very different among Hungarian-speakers. Due to the extremely heterogeneous nature of the Turkish linguistic influence, the Turkish linguistic and cultural influence could not have reached the Hungarians as fast and pervasive as it may seem to recent researcher in the light of all the relevant material. It is a very long process of different speeds and depths, which may be due to the changing geographical accommodation of Hungarians, similar changes of accommodation of the Turkish peoples in contact with Hungarians, and constant and dynamic changes in Turkish political organizations. On this bases, it seems very probable, that in the Carpathian Basin, after the Hungarian Conquest, we can count on the very close and long-term coexistence of Hungarians and various Ogur-Turkish groups and bilingualism. The rapid Hungarian assimilation of these Turkish-speaking groups during the 100–150 years after the Hungarian Conquest can be explained in an obvious way by the linguistic and cultural environment foreign to both peoples. The two peoples, both of steppe origin, close to each other in terms of language, culture and way of life, could quickly be

formed into one people in a Slavic and German environment that was alien in all respects.

Although linguistic research thinks on the Slavicization of the Turks of the Avar period, it assumes this on the basis of only a few Turkish terms that were transferred into Hungarian, through Slavic mediation. Because as intermediaries were the southern Slavic languages, we can suppose their source the Avars, who may have lived among the Croats from the 7th to the 10th century. Thus, these terms may not necessarily come from the Turkish population, which came under Hungarian rule. Although the largest proportion of loanwords in Hungarian, around 10%, is represented by Slavic terms, in contrast to Turkish–Hungarian bilingualism, Slavic–Hungarian bilingualism could not affect a significant part of the Hungarian population, as this linguistic contact did not have a similarly profound effect on the Hungarian language. Many of our Slavic origin expressions may have entered the Hungarian language from the contact versions of the assimilating Slavic groups.

The lifestyle of the population of the Late Avar period, which is the same as the way of life reflected in our Chuvash Turkish loanwords, and the continuity of its villages until the Arpadian period are likely to play a significant role in Hungarian ethnogenesis. We can hardly think of its complete linguistic Slavicization, but at the same time there is no doubt about the strong Turkish–Slavic linguistic interference in the Avar age. The linguistic hegemony of the Ogur-Turkish groups, which were perhaps the largest headcount in the Avar period, is much more likely, with more and more signs pointing to the existence of a Turkish linguistic substrate after the

Conquest. Not only the toponyms, but also many elements of the Turkish–Hungarian linguistic contact is connected to the late ancient Hungarian age, as well as fits into the linguistic-historical-geographical environment of the 9–10th century the Carpathian Basin. Hungarian ethnogenesis must be fitted into the process of the Avar popular formation, as is clearly required by the Avar-era origin of a very significant part of the Hungarian population of the Arpadian period. We can count on two or three defining stages of the formation of the medieval Hungarian people. First the Turkish and then Slavic immigration in the Avar-age, which laid the foundations for biological, cultural and lifestyle background. Secondly, the Hungarian conquest at the end of the 9th century, which determined the political and linguistic framework. Finally, 13th century immigration of the Cumans, that changed the ethnic and cultural character of the Great Plain.

6. Previous publications on the theme

1. *Észrevételek Tóth Sándor László: A De Administrando Imperio 38. fejezete időviszonyai és a magyar őstörténet c. tanulmányához.* Study. *Eleink - Magyar Őstörténet* 38 (2015) 2. szám. pp. 48-50. [Remarks to Sándor László Tóth: *The Time Conditions of Chapter 38 of the De Administrando Imperio and Hungarian Prehistory.*]

2. *A honfoglalók létszámának kérdéséhez / To the problem of the number of the conquering Hungarians.* Study. *10 p. Belvedere Meridionale* 27 (2015) 3. szám. pp. 66-76.

3. *Nomád szállásváltások - besenyők és magyarok.* Study 15 p. *Belvedere Meridionale* 28 (2016) 4. sz. pp. 83-93. [*Nomadic migrations – Pechenegs and Hungarians*]

4. *Morávia és a honfoglaló magyarok.* Conference paper. In: II. Fiatalkonferencia Európában Konferencia Pécs, 2015. november 13-14. Conference Book. Edited by: Haffner Tamás, Kis Kelemen Bence, Dr. Kovács Áron. Pécs, 2016. pp. 250-263. [*Moravia and the conquering Hungarians*]

5. *Levedia és Atelkuzu: időrend és földrajzi hely.* Conference paper 12 p. In: Tavaszi Szél 2016 konferencia, Bp. 2016. április 15-17. Conference Book. Edited by: Dr. Keresztes Gábor. Pécs, 2016. pp. 390-400. [*Levedia and Atelkuzu: chronology and geographical location*]

6. *A 9-10. századi magyar fejedelmek.* Conference paper 15 p. In: IDK 2016 konferencia, Pécs, 2016. május 27-29. Conference Book. Pécs, 2016. pp. 186-200. [*Hungarian princes in 9-10th century*]

7. *Kortársak a honfoglalók eredetéről.* Conference paper 16 p. In: III. Fiatalkonferencia Európában Konferencia, Pécs, 2016. november 04-05. Conference Book. Pécs, 2017. pp. 114-131. [*Contemporaries about the origins of the Conquerors*]

8. *A 9-10. századi magyarság életmódjáról.* Conference paper 25 p. In: IX. Szegedi Medievalisztikai Konferencia, Szeged, 2015. június 17-19. Conference Book. Szeged 2017. pp. 237-261. [*On the way of life of Hungarians of the 9-10th century*]

9. *The Hungarian nomadic state and its princes in the 9-10th centuries.* Book. LAP Lambert Academic Publishing, Beau Bassin, 2017. p. 49.

10. *Baskírok és magyarok a muszlim forrásokban.* Study 8 p. *Belvedere Meridionale* 29 (2017) 2. sz. pp. 133–139. [*Bashkirs and Hungarians in Muslim sources*]

11. *Magyar–szláv együttélés a kora Árpád-korban.* *Helynevek, írott források, régészet.* Folyóiratcikk 35 p. 1 táblázat. In: *Helynévtörténeti Tanulmányok* 14. DE Magyar Nyelvtudományi Tanszék. Debrecen, 2019. pp. 7–50. [*Hungarian-Slavic coexistence in the early Árpád era. Place names, written sources, archaeology*]

12. *A 9. századi szláv vándorlás - horvátok, szerbek, morvák.* Book detail 23 p. in: Tóth Sándor László ünnepi kötet. Szerk.: Bagi Zoltán Péter. Szeged 2019, pp. 20–41. [*9th century Slavic migration - Croats, Serbs, Moravians*]

13. *Kavarok és magyarok. Presztízs és kétnyelvűség.* Conference paper (during edition) SzTE BTK XI. Szegedi Medievisztikai Konferencia, Szeged 2017. június 7–9. Conference Book. [*Kavars and Hungarians. Prestige and bilingualism*]