

GENEOLOGY OF BULGARIAN KHANS PRIOR TO

KUBRAT AND KYI

By Valentin Yordanov

I. INTRODUCTON

Mainstream historical science tends to undervalue the importance of the genealogy of royal families. Thus, the matter remains understudied both in terms of depth and detail. Yet, genealogy can unlock an important category of historical facts with significant potential to inform and sometimes even determine how larger sets of facts are internalized, interpreted, analyzed and synthesized into a contemporary picture of events of the ancient past.

The genealogical state-making tradition is traced back to the tribal-communal stage of human civilization. Naturally, we know more about the dynastical marriages from the Late Bronze Age (such as the times of the Trojan War), the Iron Age, Antiquity and the Middle Ages. In these periods of history war and marriage went hand in hand, i.e. most peace treaties were backed up with marriages between the warring parties.

Usually it was the more powerful ruler who forced their will on the weaker through armed conflict, threat of war or request or imposition of a marriage to a daughter, sister or a niece of the weaker ruler. For example, Jordanes writes the following:

„Balamber, the king of the Huns... took his [the Ostrogoth King Vinitharius – note by

V.Y.] niece Valadamerca as his wife and from then on ruled over the entire Gothic [Ostrogoth– note by V.Y.] tribe, but he did so... in such a way that their own king ruled over them [according – note of the translator E. Ch. Skrzhinskaya] to the decisions of the Huns. Soon after the death of Vinitharius, they [Ostrogoths – note by V. Y.] came to be ruled by Hunimund [father of said Valadamerca – note by V.Y.], son of the most powerful late king Ermanaric [in German, Ermanarich – note V.Y.]...”

/Jordanes. Getica, § 247-250./

Likewise, powerful rulers and their offspring were a sought-after match for weaker kings who were interested in using the institution of marriage as a way to protect themselves. Of course, kinship between royalties who had common ancestors, influenced their policies. Vice versa, shared political positions sometimes led to marriages between representatives of ruling dynasties. The same principle was at play in the formation of the tribal unions in South Eastern Europe by Thracians (Odrysian kingdom), Getae/Goths, Macedonians. In Asia Huns, Hephthalites, Avars, Hazars, Turkic Peoples and Mongols also had similar practices. Tribal unions were the forerunners of empires such as Egypt, Rome, the Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantium), Persia and China. Dynastic marriages were useful even for evenly matched tribes provided there was a history peaceful and harmonious cohabitation, creating a sort of regional democracies. Sedentary tribes engaging in agriculture had their own permanent territories from the dawn of time where they built their capital city – polis. Thracians were a good example of this type of life before the emergence in the 6th century BC of the Odrysian kingdom/tribal union. So were the Hellenes before the arrival of the hegemonic military unions of Athens and Sparta in the 5th century BC. Slavic tribes had similar unions grouped geographically as Veneti, Antes and Slavenes. Marriages between members of the families of chieftains of neighboring tribes, given their long established consanguinity, in these cases did not lead to one tribe being dominant and the other being a vassal, but rather ensured the survival of the territorial and political status quo.

At this point I would like to take the opportunity to present to you our **GENEALOGICAL**

TABLE – pp. 205-210). It encompasses three periods:

1. Legendary rulers of the first civilizations on earth between the 11th and the 2th millennium BC.
2. Rulers from the 1st millennium BC.
3. Rulers from the 1st millennium AD.

Легендарни владетели на първите цивилизации XI-II хил. пр.Хр.

~~XI хил. пр.Хр.:~~ **Сварог**/Енлил/Кронос (управлявал света ~ г.) + Лада/Нинхурсаг/Рея

~~X хил. пр.Хр.:~~ Перун/Нинурта/Зевс-Амон/**Имен** (450 г.) Йо/Изида Кашей/Хадес/кай Каус (350 г.) + Мора/Нефтида/Персефона
Дажбог/Хърс/Хурса/кай Хусрау/Хор/Херу/Ахура Мазда/Бакхус/Митрас/ **Авитохол** г.) + Даня/Мемфида/Лизианаса I/Су-Анас I

~~Тотемни на праотеца Хор:~~ „Баръс Мамил Бури“ – „Египетския вълк-барс“; Херу/Герак – сокол; **Хонсу/Конс** – кон/конник/херос

~~IX хил. пр.Хр.:~~ **Боян**/Нанар-Син/Посейдон, на р. Амур и ез. Байгул/Байкал + **Аби Байгул/Су-Анас II** / Лизианаса II

~~VIII хил. пр.Хр.:~~ **Иджик**/Джам, първи кан на именците/хоните и основател на Хонския (Хунския) племенен съюз в Азия
г.) Барънджар/Булгар Сармаг/Чирмиш Алан Бесер

~~5-ма синове:~~ **Бурджан/кай Бурзан**

~~VII хил. пр.Хр.:~~ **Кай Лорасп**, построил град Балкх, управлявал 365 г. държавата Балхара/Бактрия

Тигане/Хин Батир „Победител на китайците“), владеел територия около р. Хуанхъ („Жълтата река“)

Хафар, кан на китайските тюрки **Газан**, кан на хоните + дъщеря на Мар, цар на масагетите

~~VI-II хил. пр.Хр.:~~ **неизвестни владетели**, потомци съответно на Газар и Газан

Дугар, кан на туркмени, хони и угри **Джилки**, кан на масагети и хони

Държавите на тези двама съперничеши си владетели са били в Средна Азия (Седморечието)

Владетели в I хил. пр.Хр.

кан Илирик (986- ? пр.Хр.), владетел на Скития, Дакия и Мизия до р. Сава

кан Владилий (823 - ? пр.Хр.), присъединил областите Сердика, Пеония и Македония
г. пр.Хр.)
кан Колад (763 -

кан Болг (723 - ?), присъединил Тракия и Далмация

кан Брем (723 -?), брат на Болг, присъед. на запад Померания, Брандибурия, Дания; на сев. -изг. – Скития до Кавказ
се откупил с годишен данък
кан Лил/Ладо (588 - ? пр.Хр.), обсадил Рим – цар Луций Тарквиний Стари (616-

.....

кан Перун направил свой васал Филип II Македонски, но бил победен от сина му Александър

/Пояснителна бележка: Може би под името Перун в източна Тракия, в средновековна Сириния (6 век), се крие тракийският цар Ситалк (434-424) а под Филип II – македонският Пердика II (~454- войска, с цел да постави на трона Аминта II, син на Филип I брат на Пердика II. Пердика и съмишлениците му се изпокрили цяла Македония със 150 в крепостите. Тогава Ситалк поставил Аминта II за цар на Източна Македония, с тракийска подкрепа. Едва в 393 г. пр.Хр. Аминта II успял да се възцари над цяла Македония, по време на управлението на тракийския цар Амадок/Медок I (~410-390)

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Вунд/Вананд (втора пол. на II в. пр.Хр.), кан на хоните и българите на Кавказ

Владетели в I хил. сл.Хр.

Неизвестен хуно-български владетел	Ерманарих, крал на остготския племенен съюз между Волга и Дунав до 375 г. (победен от Булномар)
.....	син Хунимунд, крал на остготите (~379~405 г.)
Булномар/Баламбер (~340-378 г.)	– далечен потомък на Вунд; кан на хони, масагети и угри/маджари + Валадамарка , дъщеря на остгота Хунимунд
Балтазар/Алип-бий/Алатей (378-376 г.)	син на Булномар и Валадамарка, вожд на част от хоните, регент на непълн. остготски крал Видирих през I.; неговата тежка конница имала решаващо значение за разгромната победа в битката при Адрианопол на 8 август 378 г. на р азбунтувалите се г.), довела до унищожаването на западни готи на Фритигерн (тогава федерати на Източната империя) срещу император Флавий Юлий Валент (364-превъзхождащата ги римска армия и смъртта на самия император
Улдин (387~ г.)	син на Булномар/Баламбер, кан на черните (западните) хони
Каратон/Шаратон/Урус-Ружа Бургас (~412~ г.)	син на Алип -би/Алатей
синове на Улдин: Мундзук (~422-434 г.), Ругила/Руа , Октар , при които хоните ³⁷⁸ се установяват в Трансилвания	синове на Мундзук: Бледа (434- г.), Атила (434- г.)
синове на Атила: Елак (453- г.), Денгиз (454- г.), Ерпак/Ирпак (463- г.)	Последният наследил източната част на хунската империя със столица на р. Днепър, където през 463 г. I. обявил създаването на държава
Дунав, населена от оногури, кутригури, саклани и др. В 484 г. победил перс. пахиншах Пероз I., под името Балаш. През 486/7 г., в съюз с император Зенон, Ирний прогонил	и станал шахиншах на Персия за
периода 484-Добруджа) и Мизия, където пренесъл своята столица, присъединявайки по този начин западната част от бившата хунска империя на баща си Атила	готите от северния лимес, за което получил Малка Скития

Кингила I (~435~475), основал + 468 дъщеря на

племенния съюз на ефталитите **Пероз I** (457-484)

(„Седемте племена“) шах на Персия

Елак, кан на

Източна Оногурия (453–454 г.)

Ирник/Бел-Кермек + 468 дъщеря на

синът на Кингшла I

Балаш/Валаш

кан на Оногурия (463–489); Кингшла I

Ирник

шах на Персия (484–488) (~475~499 г.)

(484-488)

Боа рикс + **Болах** (489-527) + **Дженбек** **Амбазук** (489-518),

Джураш Масгут (489-505), син

синът на Пероз I

(527-539) син на **Елак**; кан на

на **Ирник**, кан на Оногурия и

+ 484

Кавад I (489-496)

царица на

Източна Барсилия

владетел на племената

Ирник

шах на Персия

Савирското

със столица Варачан

оногури, кутригури

канство

в Северен Кавказ

утигури, саклани и др.

братът на Кавад I

Замасп (496–499)

синове: 1.**Стиракс** (527)

синове: 1.**Зилигби** (518-522)

2.**Глениз** (527), също;

канство **Джураш**, Кавказ; - канство Барсилия, Кавказ,

първородният син на **Джураш**

+ 499

Кавад I (499-531)

3.**Ас-Терек** (530), също

плюс част от Анатолия;

Татра/Банаг/Мундо (505~536),

Ахшунвар II

+ шах-съуправител

4.**Айап** (531 - ?)

кан в гр. Боспор, Крим;

византийски федерат в Илирик

Каос/Сеос/Сиявуш -

и Далмация – кан на кутригури,

първороден син на **Кавад**

3.**Мугел** (528-531) -

гепиди, херули и др.

и внук на **Ирник/Балаш**

канство **Джалада**, Крим;

II син на Джураш - Забер кан , кан на Съюза на кутригурите в Оногурия (531 - аварски каган (559- 562)	правнук на Кингила - Кандик , каган на Аварския каганат в Средна Азия (554- 559)	вторият син на Кавад Хосрой I (531-579) шах на Персия
синът на Тагра/Банат - Сандилх/Боян-Челбир (591 кан на Съюза на утигурите; в Оногурия (~550- заместник-каган на Баян I 568) в Панония (568~580)	синът на Кандик - Баян I Тубджак/Атрак) каган на Аварския каганат в Панония (562-602)	синът на Хосрой - Хормазд IV шах на Персия (579-590)
синът на Сандилх - Атрак - дъщеря + кан на Бурджан (568~ + 570 дъщеря на Тубджак в Джураш (Северен Кавказ)	синът на Сандилх - Тубджак (~580- кан на Бурджан (568~ + 570 дъщеря на Тубджак в Джураш (Северен Кавказ)	синът на Хормазд - Хосрой II Парвиз (602 - 617) (621)

синът на Тубджак	синът на Тубджак	синът на Баян II
Бу-Юрган/Органа	Ал-Бури/Худ-бард	предполагам
(605; 618~622)	(605-618)	Баян III (617- ?)
кан на Оногурия	кан на Оногурия	
предшестваща	предшестваща	
Велика България	Велика България	

внукът на Бу-Юрган	синът на Ал-Бури	синът на Ал-Бури
Хумик (~668~690)	Кур-Бат (~622~668)	Сам-Бат/Само/Кий (~623~658)
кан на канство	Канас Ювиги на	Канас Ювиги на
Бурджан	Стара Велика България	славянската федерация Дулоба
в Северен Кавказ	(от Кавказ до Прибалтика	(от Днепър до Елба и от
	и от Урал до Днестър)	Прибалтика до Дунав)

Синове на Канас Ювиги Кур-бат (Кубрат): **Бат-Баян** – кан на Кара Булгар (Черна или Западна България – между Дон и Днестър), **Котраг** – кан на Ак Булгар (Бяла или Източна, т.е. Волжка България – между Урал и Дон), **Еспор (Аспарух)** – кан на Дунавска България (Мизия и Дакия), **Кубер** – в Македония, **Алцек** – в Италия.

Синове на Канас Ювиги Сам-бат/Само/Кий: във втората половина на VII в. това са **князете (канас = княз) на 12 големи племена в Източна и Централна Европа:** ляхи и мазовшани (дн. в Полша); пруси (дн. в Източна Германия); поморяни; ободрити; рути/руяни; сорби/серби; чехи, словаци и моравци (дн. в Чехия); словенци; хорвати; карантани (дн. в Австрия).

II. FIRST PERIOD OF STUDY – FROM THE XIth TO THE IIth MILLENIUM BC

1. Sources

Let me begin by saying a couple of words about our sources because some of our readers may be surprised by the great distance in time and the length of the periods during which these first legendary kings ruled.

For the period between the XIth and VIIIth millennium, we use five main sources: *The Palermo Stone* from the 25th-24th century BC; *The Turin Papyrus* from the 13th century BC; *Histories by Herodotus* (~485~425 BC), written between 454 and 450 BC; *Aegyptiaca* by *Manetho* (~325~245 BC) High Priest of Egypt and secretary of the Library at Alexandria which was written about 270 BC on the behest of King Ptolemy II Philadelphus (283-246 BC); *Bibliotheca historica* by *Diodorus Siculus* (~90-35 BC) written around 50 BC.

Of course, these sources are reconstructions of older records compromised by the limited durability of the media that was used to record them such as papyrus, parchment paper, wood, ceramics and stone.

For example, Manetho writes that he took the oldest records from the holy hieroglyphic inscriptions of Toth, cut into columns at *Siriat* i.e. *Shiriat*, *Shiri-At* – „World of Shiri/Siri [Dionysus/Horus]“. Here, the record refers to Upper Egypt where the capital at the time was the city of Edfu (Apolinopolis Magna) – the home town of Horus and Toth at the start of their reign. Manetho used, as he insists, „holy scriptures“ – [δελτων] ιερων, i.e. the royal temple annals of Egypt. /V.V. Struve. Манефон и его время. СПб, Изд. „Журнал Нева“, ИТД „Летний Сад“, 2003, p. 130/.

„O Solon, Solon, you Greeks are always children: there is not such a thing as an old Greek... You are young in soul, every one of you... For therein you possess not a single belief that is ancient and derived from old tradition, nor yet one science that is hoary with age... In our state [in Egypt – note by V.Y.] the most ancient legends have been preserved..., everything is recorded in our temples and the memory of him is preserved.“

(**Plato**. *Timaeus*, 22 b, e, 23 a. – In: **Plato**. *Dialogues*. Vol. IV. Translated from Ancient Greek by Georgi Mihaylov, Bogdan Bogdanov, Tsocho Boyadzhiev, Donka Markovska. Sofia, „Science and Art“ Publishing house, 1990, p. 473).

These are the words by the Egyptian priests Psenophis and Sonchis to Solon of Athens (634/559 BC), grandfather of Plato, who spent 10 years (from 570 to 560 BC) in the cities of *Heliopolis* and *Sais* to study the history of the world from the papyrus scrolls and the inscriptions in Egypt. The work of the aforementioned Manetho was destroyed in the 3rd century AD. Prior to that, sections of it were compiled together in the pamphlet *Against Apion* by *Flavius Josephus* (~37/95) and in *Chronographiae* by *Sextus Julius Africanus* (~160~240). However, these works were lost as well. Ultimately, Africanus' works were re-written by *Eusebius of Caesarea* (263-339) in his *Chronicle* (*Chronicon*, preserved as translations into

Armenian from the 6th century), and a fair bit later, by *George Syncellus* (8th-9th century) in his *Ecloga Chronographica*.

It was not only the work of Manetho, but also the collections of ancient knowledge safeguarded at the libraries of Alexandria, Ephesus, Babylon and other cities, together with the ancient inscriptions at the oldest pyramids and tombs of Egypt were irksome for the political and religious status quo during the two millennia following the birth of Christ. Its representatives are guilty of the destruction of hundreds of thousands of manuscripts. As a result of their work, many of the ancient literary works that survived to this day did so only as fragments included in compilations of other authors.

For example, in 391, ten years after the Second Ecumenical council in Constantinople (381), Emperor Theodosius I (379-395), a staunch proponent of the dominance of Orthodox Christianity over Paganism, ordered the closing down of the temples of Jupiter and Vesta in Rome, the Parthenon in Athens, the temple of Apollo at Delphi, the temple of Zeus in Olympus, the Serapeum at Alexandria and so on. In accordance with the new imperial religious doctrine, Theophilus Patriarch of Alexandria sicced a crowd of Christians, followed by looters, on the *Serapeum* and the *Academy* and *Library* that were housed inside. Christians burned a large part of the scrolls and killed the priests and their apprentices that had the nerve to oppose the senseless act of vandalism. Two and a half centuries later, in 642, the Arab Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattāb (579-644), having conquered Egypt, finished the insidious work that was started before him. For six months on end priceless scrolls from the Library of Alexandria, written and illustrated over the course of millennia by tens of thousands of scholars and specially trained calligraphers, were burned in the furnaces of the bath houses.

It is surprising that despite the vandalism and senselessness of emperors, patriarchs and bishops, fate and time left us with a handful of irrefutable facts about the forefathers and builders of the civilization whose fruits we use with great reverence.

2. Legendary Characters from the First Period of Study

The first ruler in our genealogical line is Svarog/Samar/Geb/El/Enlil/Cronus/Saturn (these names are used by Indo-Slavs, Egyptians, Levantines, Sumerians, Thracco-Hellenes and the Latins respectively) to refer to the son of Tan/Aton/Anu/Uranus and the celestial cow (Hathor) Zemun/Nun/Anata/Gaia.

While the first-born twin, Veles/Ra/Winged Serpent/Helios I was a shepherd for about 1,000 years, the second-born twin, Cronus, ruled the world for only 500 years.

The first-born twins of Uranus and Gaia, the two Ashwini/Nestya – Helios I/Ra/Veles and Cronus/Samar – contributed immensely to the creation of the civilization: as temple megaliths, pyramids and cities were built by them; the selection of the first cereal crop and the first domestic animal; the cloning of the human race from divine genetic material; the settling of humans at Eden (the area around the springs of the Tigris and the Euphrates), where they were grouped together by occupation and trained to farm the land and to tend to herds. Sumerian cuneiform records indicate that the most capable of the people were included in the

royal-priest caste and given special tasks such as administering religious rituals and feasts, guarding and passing down ancient knowledge and the arts of architecture, construction, and supporting the socio-political organization of society.

The schooling and civilization-building tasks at Edem took nearly 2,000 years to complete – from the end of the XIth to the end of the IXth millennium BC – during the reign of Cronus/Enlil; his three sons Zeus-Amun/Ninurta, Poseidon/Nannar Sin, Hades/Hadad (Set); and the five sons of Zeus – Dionysus/Bacchus/Horus, Hermes/Mercury/Toth, Iacchos/Anubis, Hephaestus and Apollo.

Initially, the farmer class was trained by Zeus-Amun/Amin/Imen, whereas herders were taught their craft by Nannar Sin (Poseidon). That is how the pupils of these two gods got their first ethnonyms: *Imens* and *Sinds*. They even wore different garments, decorated with particular insignia so as to be easily identified. The first group wore dark clothes while the second, light. Some peoples have preserved this tradition in terms of clothing to this day with, of course, some degree of change that was introduced over time.

After another 1,500 years, the human population at Edem, grew and gained strength thanks to the knowledge and skills imparted on it by its divine shepherds and to the excellent social and natural conditions that were made available to it. At the end of this period, however, there was a sudden disruption triggered by cold and dry spells. The climate deterioration that took place in the ancient region of *Jazeera* (Ja-Sira = „Land of plenty“) also known as Eden/Paradise, sparked an organized exodus at around 7400 BC, which saw the first humans moving north into the more hospitable Thrace. /see **Valentin Yordanov**. The settlement of Thrace in the VIIth millennium BC. – In the „Gorgoni Magazine“, book 2, 2018, pp. 115-168; on the website: [www//gorgoni.info/](http://www.gorgoni.info/). It was in Thrace where people learned the secret of third major manufacturing sector – of mining for minerals and metals and smelting and forging metals.

These skills had just been invented by Hephaestus and his wife, Kabeiro, granddaughter of Poseidon. The two trail blazers of practical metallurgy passed their skills down to their eight sons, the Kabeiroi, and they, in turn, taught the curious proto-Thracians the secrets of their craft. This led to the formation of the first mining guild, which extracted ores from underground and openpit mines in the Thracian mountains Rhodope, Strandzha-Sakar and Sredna Gora. This new industry added to Dionysus' mysteries the new cults to the Kabeiroi and Corybantes, which, according to ancient authors, were celebrated in Thrace, Anatolia and the Aegean islands of Samothrace, Lemnos and Imbros.

In Thrace, one of the Kabeiroi – Mousei – introduced music to the religious rituals dedicated to miners, smelters and smiths. His work was continued by his son, Eumolpus („The good singer“). Apollo and Orpheus made sure the art of music was interwoven into the fabric of Dionysian mysteries and theater. /see **V. Yordanov**. Of Muses, Moesi and Music. – In the „Gorgoni Magazine“, book 2, 2018, pp. 22-32; on the website: [www//gorgoni.info/](http://www.gorgoni.info/).

Other descendants of Zeus/Imen and Poseidon/Nannar Sin took over the teaching duty. For example, Euripides (485-406 BC), Megasthenes (~350~290 BC), Diodorus (~90-35 BC), Lucius Flavius Arrianus (89-175) etc. write that Dionysus/Horus, accompanied by young gods – Satyrs and Bacchae – went on a civilization-building expedition around the world through Ariana, India, China,

Scythia and Europe all the way to its Atlantic coast. During the expedition caravans of grain for seeding were given away and the local tribes were trained in the intricacies of agriculture and grain farming; vine growing and wine making; growing flax and hemp, spinning, weaving and garment making; the use of fire for household purposes; city and temple building; following the rituals of the Solar cult and so on.

Presumably, Dionysus/Horus/Consus crossed the Atlantic to help, as a good teacher, the native tribes, for which he was remembered by the local tradition as Kon-Tiki-Vira-Cocha (i.e. „God Con, [son of] Kocha, [grandson of] Ver“). This name, as read in the holy language, close relative to Old-Bulgarian, includes three divine totems: the horse – a transformation by Dionysus/Horus; 213ulg/ram – of Zeus-Amun, Ver/Dragon – of Cronus. Incidentally, we should note that ceramic and stone horse, ram and, rarely, dragon idols are often found in Thrace placed near the hearth to serve as guardians of fire, the terrestrial counterpart of the Sun-God.

The gratitude of the people to the gods that gave them their knowledge and skills in the field of agriculture was celebrated during two feasts. The first one, which was dedicated to placing seeds in the womb of the earth-mother, came after the winter sowing, which in the Mediterranean and Aegean regions ended around the start of December. *Saturnalia* took place between 17 and 24 December as a happy conclusion of a successful seeding campaign and content of the fact that barns brimming with grain would guarantee sustenance during winter. As it was already mentioned, Saturn (Cronus) – grandfather of Dionysus/Horus/Consus – was the inventor of the plough and cultivated plants and the patron deity of ploughmen, seeders, diggers and harvesters. The second feast – *Consualia* – was celebrated in Thrace and Rome on the days following 21 August in honor of the son of god in his two major functions: the shining horseman warrior Mithras All-Conquering Sun and the horseman farmer, Consus. In conjunction with him, people also celebrated with gratitude the creator of the horse, Neptune (Poseidon), by organizing horse races. Thracians, Slavs and Bulgarians all performed rituals where they prayed for sun and rain to ensure a rich harvest to the same god (Consus), whom they called Dazhbog, Yarilo and German, respectively, (as he was seen as the lord of thunder, scatterer of clouds and bringer of rain). Another son of Zeus-Amun – Hermes/Toth – created a *system of characters (alphabet)* in order to record and compile ancient knowledge imparted since the time of the titans. Egyptian priests believed it was he who gifted humanity with the comprehensive scientific work entitled *The Soul of Ra*. The Christian champion and Neoplatonist Clement of Alexandria (~150~215) wrote that Egyptian priests used 48 books that formed the canon of the Solar cult: 36 of them were on religion and philosophy, 6 on medicine, 2 on music and chemistry, 4 on the stars (likely a synthesis of astronomy and astrology).

Elena Blavatska, the founder of the Theosophical Society in 1875, remarks the following:

„At the time of Iamblichus – 363 AD, Egyptian priests used 42 books, who they credited to Hermes. In 36 of them, according to this author [Iamblichus, a theurg and mystic from the 3rd-4th century – note by V.Y.], the history of all human knowledge is contains; the remaining 6 delved in matters of anatomy,

pathology, eye diseases, surgical instruments and medicines. Ebers Papyrus was undoubtedly one of the books on hermetics.“

/Hellena Blavatskaya. The unraveled Isis. Key to the secrets of ancient and modern science and theology. T. I. Science, B. 1. New translation by L. Cholakov. S., 2005, p. 50./

She refers to the papyrus discovered by the German archaeologist Georg Ebers, who bought it in Egypt from a „wealthy Arab in the city of Luxor“. It is a single sheet of yellowish-brownish color, finished to a high standard of quality, 0.3 meters wide and 20 meters long, featuring masterful calligraphy. On one side, the scroll is divided into 110 numbered pages. It contains a 1552 BC re-write of a medical treatise by Hermes **/same source/**.

With this, our brief overview of the work of Hephaestus and his sons, the Kabeiroi smiths and that of Hermes/Toth and Dionysus/Bacchus/Horus has reached its end. Because the latter inherited the throne of his father Zeus-Amun, having first removed the usurper Hades/Set, we should note that it was the descendants of Dionysus (or Horus) who ruled the local civilizations at the end of the 9th and the start of the 8 millennium BC.

Dionysus/Horus/Avitohol and his wife Lysianassa I/Memphis/Su-Anas begot two royal daughters – Libya and Lysianassa II. Libya and Poseidon, brother of Zeus, begot Belus (Babylonian Marduk) and Agenor. The sons of Belus were: Aegyptus, king of Egypt; Danaus, king of Libya; Cepheus, king of Abyssinia. The children of Agenor were: Thasos, ruler of the island of Thasos; Phoenix – Phoenicia; Cilix, ruler of Cilicia; Europa, ruler of Crete; Cadmus, ruler of Thebes in Boeotia, Hellas.

Lysianassa II/Su-Anas II/Abi-Baigul and Poseidon/Boyan sedentary on the shores of the Amur River and of the Lake Baigul (present-day Baykal) and founded their own kingdom. Long before them, Poseidon had chosen as his home these far-off lands in the East driven by the vicious fight for power between his two brothers Zeus and Hades, which ultimately ended with the brutal fratricide of the former perpetrated by the latter.

Near the head spring of the Amur, Su-Anas II/Abi Baigul gave birth to two sons: Idzhik/Dzham and Laish the Shepherd. Laish did not stay in Asia but returned to Southern Egypt (present-day Sudan) and assumed the name Dumuzid the Shepherd and claimed the throne of Egypt. Unexpectedly and much to the chagrin of the local lord Belus/Marduk, Inanna/Ishtar and several local deities supported the young contender and the powerful Inanna did not hide her intentions to make him her husband. This concerned Belus, who at the time was living in the Great Pyramid and was grooming his sons Aegyptus, Danaus and Cepheus to become kings of the Holy Land – formerly ruled by Zeus-Amun and Hades/Set. Marduk dispatched several envoys to Sudan to scare Dumuzid off. Feeling humiliated by them, the young god ran and threw himself in the rising waters of the swelling Nile hoping to reach the opposite bank but unfortunately drowned.

Enraged and grief-stricken, Inanna/Ishtar called on the Council of the Gods to punish Belus for his deed. The council decided to banish Belus to Mesopotamia where he later founded the city of Babylon and was worshipped by the locals under the name Marduk. However, Egypt, Libya and Abyssinia (present-day Ethiopia) were left to his sons Aegyptus, Danaus and Cepheus. **/according to Zecharia**

Sitchin. The Wars of Gods and Men. Translated by Krum Bachvarov. Sofia, „Бард“ Publishing house, 2003, p. 220/.

The elder brother Idzhik/Dzham stayed in Asia. There he organized his Imenian subjects and trained them to shoot a bow and arrow and in masterful horse riding gifted to him by his father, Poseidon. Idzhik equipped his warriors and their horses with iron armor of the *coltchuga* type, because he knew the secrets of mining and forging iron. It was passed down to him by his grandfather Horus/Hursa. Using his exemplary and invincible Imen Cavalry and his foot detachments of archers with large two-component bows, Idzhik subjugated the wild tribes of Asia forming the *Honnic (Hunnic) Union*. The United People were referred to by a common ethnonym *Hons/Honors* („Sons of the Sun“). At the end of his life, the king divided the tribes among his five sons: Burdjan/Kai-Burzan, Barandzhar/Bulgar, Sarmat/Chirmish, Alan and Beser. /**Bakhshi Iman.** Djagfar Tarikhy (History of Djagfar). A scroll of Bulgar chronicles, 1680. Edited by Professor A. Pantev. Translated from Russian by V. Kolevski. Sofia, 2005, pp. 14, 15, 285-291/. The two first-born sons of Idzhik divided amongst themselves the heavy cavalry (the first knights in history) and the heavy infantry. Their descendants formed the royal, religious and warrior aristocracy – the buils and the urus („bulls“), who wore helmets with bull or elk horns attached to them. The descendants of the remaining three brothers formed the core of the kolabarbagain class.

At the end of the 7th millennium BC the descendant of Burdjan, Tigane/Hin-Batir („vanquisher of the Hintians“) – defended from the Hintians/Chinese a large swath of land around Huang He (Yellow River), and the descendant of Bulgar/Balkhar, Kai-Lorasp, migrated with his share of the Hons west to Central Asia. There, he built his capital city, Balkh, dedicated to his father. With this city at its core, a kingdom grew out called Balkhara, which later became Bactria or Bakh-tera („Land of Bakh“), of the god Bakhus who was the forbearer of the royal and priest class. The ancient epic *Mahabharata* (Maha-Bharata, i.e. „Great Bharata“) often praises the great royal dynasty of Balkhara – Bharata, – to which the rulers of all Central Asian kingdoms trace their lineage:

„Praise the king of Bakhika [Balkh – note by V.Y.] – Darada, – first among all terrestrial kings who received at birth his kingdom on earth! Praise Karna – King of Ang and Vang – who shoots his large bow like a thousand-eyed god!“

„I saw the Great King on his return from the City of the Elephant, Bhisma, Dronga, Vidura, Samdzhia, the King of Bakhlika [Balkh – note by V.Y.], Somadatta and the others, who were revered by the elders, and also the Brahmans and the rest, who exist independently!“

„The kings of the mountain beyond the Himalayas brought sandal tree and aloe and also precious stones, gold and perfume... Daradians, Paradians, the kings of Balkh, the kings of Kashmir... Pahlavians, ...Kukurians, Sakians... all great noblemen sword-wielders brought great treasures!“

„The kings of Aria, true to their purpose, sure of their knowledge, students of „Vedas“, bathed their souls in the light of the stream of the Upanishads! The kings, with all their grace and excellence, walking forward as one, performed all the high sacraments to finalize their union, Bharata! This was the king of Bakhlika [Balkh – note by V.Y.], who arrived on a chariot all

covered in gold and Sudakshina yoked a team of white horses from Afghanistan... The ruler of the Deccan kingdom brought armor. The king of Magadha – garland and turban; the famed marksman Vasudana brought an enormous 60-year-old elephant... The king of the Kashians brought a bow. Shalya, king of Madra, brought a gilded sword and a mandolin with gold strings...”

/according to **Peter Dobrev**. The Saga of the Ancient Bulgarians. Ancestral homeland and wanderings. Sofia, „Kama“ Publishing house, 2005, pp. 68, 69/.

Drawings of Huns („Sons of the Sun“) from the Neolithic Age found in Northern India (**photo 1**).



Photo 1. Drawings of Hunnic riders from the time of the Early Hon (Hunnu) empire on the walls of Rock shelters, Bhimbetka, state of Madhya Pradesh in the northern part of Central India. Early Neolithic (VIIIth-VIth millennium BC).

A Persian legend written down by the Arab geographer Mutahhar ibn al-Maqdisi (10th century) in his voluminous work on creation and history („Le livre de la creation et de l’histoire“, Paris, 1899) claims that:

„After Kai-Kaus, it was Kai-Husrau, son of god Siyâvash, also referred to as Zievus, who ascended to the throne. He ruled for 60 years. Then, it was Kai-Lorasp, who ruled for 120 years and built Balkh, the beautiful city... I have heard highly educated men say that Egyptian pharaohs trace their lineage to Balkh...”

According to another Persian legend, the aforementioned Kai-Lorasp ruled for 365 years. He was the son of Kai-Burzan of the Kayanian Dynasty, who ruled for 300 years. /**Peter Dobrev**. The name Bulgarians: a key to ancient Bulgarian history (Името българи: ключ към древната българска история). Sofia, „ТАНГРА ТанНакРа“ Publishing house, 2002, pp. 76, 77; **Same author**. The Saga of the Ancient Bulgarians. Ancestral homeland and wanderings (Сага за древните българи. Прародина и странствания). Sofia, „Кама“ Publ. House, 2005, pp. 59-78/. Evidently, among everything else, East Persian authors have preserved the names of kings that feature the peculiar royal title – *Kai*, which means „he-goat“ in the holy language – one of the characteristic hypostases of Bacchus, the old Pan. Arranged in chronological order these are *KaiKaus* (Hades); *Kai-Husrav* (Hursa/Ahura-Mazda/Horus), son of Siyâvash (i.e. Zievus or Zeus); *Kai-Burzan* (Burdjan) and the already mentioned *Kai-Lorasp* – the trail blazer of Central Asian civilization.

This curious prefix *Kai* comes most likely from the name *Gaia*, the Great Goddess Mother and is present in words like *gaida* (гайда), *gaitan* (гайтан), *kaimak* (каймак) etc. *Gaidos* (Γαῖδος) means „he-goat“ and *Gaida/Gaia* (гайда/гайя), „she-goat“. *Gaia* and later her daughter Rhea (the Amalthea goat) appeared as sacred goats and breastfeeding mothers. The phoneme *kai* contained in the use a few millennia later of the royal titles of *217ulgar* in Rome, *кайсар* in Byzantium, *caiser* in Germany.

III. SECOND PERIOD OF STUDY

For the rulers from the second period in the Genealogical scheme, which encompassed the first millennium BC, we have used the manuscript by Spyridon, a monk from the Zograph Monastery, who compiled data from old texts whilst serving at Sveta Gora (Agio Oros/Holy Mountain), in Atos Peninsula. /**Spyridon Gabrovski**. История во кратце о болгарском народе славенском 1792. Translated by B. Hristova, B. Raykov. The National Library „St. St. Cyril and Methodius“, Sofia, 1992. – Available online at <http://ziezi.net/spiridon.html/>.

Data from this period is scarce and largely uncorroborated by other sources. Because of this, there is little opportunity to comment. Still, if the first ruler in the list of Father Spyridon, Kan Ilirik, came to the Balkans in 986 BC from the region between Northern Caucasus and Southern Urals, his dynasty could have been a link between the legendary forefathers we mentioned above and the rulers from the better documented the historical time period that the first millennium AD was.

IV. THIRD PERIOD OF STUDY – FIRST MILLENIUM AD

1. Historical Records

The more relevant records that shed light on the genealogy of the Hunnic-Bulgarians in the first millennium AD, who were related by blood to the kans of the Getae/Goths, the Massagetae, the Slavs, the Avars and the Hazars include the following: Flavius Josephus (37- 95); Dio Chrysostom (~40~120); Publius Cornelius Tacitus (~56-117); Ambrose of Milan (~337-397); Jerome of Stridon (347~420); Philostorgius (368-439); Paulus Orosius (~385~418); Moses

Khorenatsi (~410~490) who used as his source the Syrian scholar Mar-Abas Catina (3rd-4th century); Ablabius (5th century); Marcellinus Comes (end of the 5th middle of the 6th century); Flavius Magnus Aurelius Cassiodorus Senator (~487~583); Jordanes (~500~552); John Malalas (~491~578); Procopius of Caesarea (~500~562); John of Ephesus (~507~588); Agathias Scholasticus (536-582) – chronicler and successor of Procopius; Menander Protector (?~582) – successor of Agathias as guardian of the Archives of Constantinople and in particular the foreign treaties between Byzantium and its agents; Theophylact Simocatta (~585~640) – successor of Menander; John of Antioch (end of the 6th start of the 7th century); Emperor Maurice (end of the 6th start of the 7th century); Fredegar (first half of the 7th century), chronicler of the Frankish king Dagobert (623-634); John of Nikiu (7th century); Theophanes the Confessor (~758~818); Nikephoros I of Constantinople (~758~829).

The works of some of the aforementioned authors have been wholly or partially destroyed, sometimes willfully by the ruling political or religious classes, but fortunately fragments of them have come to us in the works of their colleagues.

We have also leaned extensively on a priceless documentary record of the Volga Bulgars which encompasses an immense period of time from Early Antiquity to the Middle Ages, the Bulgarian edition of **Bakhshi Iman**. Djagfar Tarikhy (Историята на Джагфар), a scroll of Bulgar chronicles from 1680. Sofia, „Кама“ Publishing house, 2005, 345 p.

2. The tribal chiefs (kans/kings) in the 1st millennium AD. Goths leave Scandza/ Scandinavia and conquer Dacia and Scythia/Saklan

Now we come to the prominent rulers (in the aspect of their blood kinship) who determined the paths taken by the kingdoms and the fate of their people during the 1st millennium AD. Unfortunately, the end of the second and the beginning of the third period of study, as defined by us earlier, fall in a blind spot of history and therefore we lack records for a period of time that stretched for over four and a half centuries. We know nothing of the Hunnic-Bulgar rulers that came after Vund/Vanand who in the second half of the 2nd century BC ruled over the territories around the Caucasus. This blind spot continues all the way to the second half of the 4th century AD, when the lands between Caucasus and the Danube were ruled by the Bulgarian Kan Bulyumar/Balamber.

Based on ancient epics and older historians of the Getae (later Goths) such as Dio Chrysostom (~40~120), Paulus Orosius (~385~418), Ablabius (5th century) and Cassiodorus (~487~583), Jordanes (~500~552) tells the story of how at the end of the 2nd century Goths left Scandza (the Scandinavian peninsula) and gradually conquered the Baltics and Dacia. They subjugated the indigenous peoples who lived in these lands – the Slavic tribes Obotrites, Pomoryani, Prussians, Veneti, Lutici, Polani, Masoviani, Vidivari, Aesti, Iazyges, Yotvingians, etc. It was here and at this point in time that Goths split into Greutungi (Ostrogoths), led by the Amal Dynasty, and Thervingi (Visigoths), led by the Balt Dynasty and the border between them ran along the Danaster (Dniester) river.

In the first half of the 3rd century, Ostrogoths advanced into Scythia and reached all the way to the northern shores of the Black Sea. Then, after they crossed the Danaper (Dnieper) river they conquered the northern and northwestern shores of the Maeotian (Sea of Azov) to the mouth of the Tanais (Don) river. In their conquest, they subjugated the Akatziri (Acatiri), the Sclaveni and the Antes tribes and farther north, the warlike Golteskyths, Tiuds, Inaunks, Vasinabronks, Merens (Merya), Mordens (Mordva), Imniskaris, Roxolani, Bastarnae, Rogas, Ataul, Tadzans Navego, Bubegens, Colds, Heruli, etc. Thus, the Don river turned into a border between the Goths from the west and Huno-Bulgars from the east, whose lands at this point reached all the way to the Caspian Sea and the Caucasus Mountains. /**Jordanes**. *Getica*, § 25-42; § 116-118. – In **Jordanes**. О происхождении и деяниях гетов. *Getica*. М., 2001. – Available online at: <http://www.krotov.info/acts/06/iordan/iordan01.html/>.

In the Bulgarian record „Djagfar Tarikhy“ (pp. 17-20) Scythia is referred to as Saklan or the Saklan steppe, with the clarification that it stretched between Sula River (Danube) and the Atyl River (Volga). Its inhabitants were referred to as Saklani, also kara-masguti (black or western Massagetae) and the Póntos Áxeinos (Black Sea) was called by them Saklan Sea. Naturally, the ethnonym Saklani is general and applies to many different local tribes – similar to the ethnonyms Scythians and Slavs.

It should be noted that the term Saklani (**Sakla** – name used in the Bulgar record) is evidently the same as Sakā and Saklib (**sakal** – terms used by Persian and Arab authors), just as Sklaboi and Sklabēnoi (**skla** – names used by Greek and Latin authors, such as Jordanes – Sclaveni, to refer in general to wider groups **sc** – Scythians for example, or **cl** – for example Celts).

In this context, post-Christ Saklani/Sclaveni are an ethnic mixture including pre-Christ Scythians, Dacians, Moesians and Getae (Massagetae). Thus, the Scythian/Saklanian black or West Massagetae (kara-masguti) were viewed as Saklani/Slavenes at the time when Central Asia was dominated by East Massagetae (ak-masguti), intermixed with Huns and referred to by chroniclers Xionites and Hephthalites („The Seven [tribes]“).

Hephthalites were well described by Procopius of Caesarea in „The Persian War“: „They are not nomads as the other Hunnic tribes but have been living a settled life in their fertile lands. Among the Huns, they are the only ones that have fair complexions and their faces are not hideous. They do not live as animals. They are ruled by one king and their kingdom has laws. They live amongst themselves and their neighbors based on fair and just rules no worse than the Romans or the Persians.“ /III, (3-5)/.

Indo-Europeans in origin, intermixed with Huns, in the 3rd and the 4th century the Hephthalites lived in Western China on their own land as a western branch (horde) of the ruling Yuezhi or Rourans. At the end of the 4th and the start of the 5th century, they grew stronger and went their separate way, migrating to Central Asia and subjugating the local tribes. The Hephthalites (i.e. the White Massagetae) spoke an East Iranian (Saka, i.e. Scytho-Slavic) dialect while some of the individual tribes that were temporarily made part of their tribal union such as Kidarites, Oghuz/Ugrians and Vars/Avars (Varchonitai), who endured Turk and Mongol influences for a longer period of time, had already adopted the Turkic dialects that were initially forced upon them.

3. The Bulgarian Kan Bulyumar/Balamber (~340-378) and his kingdom. The subjugation of the Scytho-Saklanian and Ostrogoth tribes and the consolidation of the Hunnic Tribal Union

During the third quarter of the 4th century the triumphant march of the Ostrogoths, led by King Ermanaric, was interrupted by a wise, astute and brave leader by the name of Bulyumar/Balamber – Kan of the Honogurs, Utigurs, Kutrigurs, Ugrians/Magyars and other tribes.

A. Names and tribal/royal symbol

The two names of this historical figure, *Bulyumar* /**Bakhshi Iman**. Djagfar Tarikhy..., pp. 1519/ and *Balamber* /**Jordanes**. *Getica*..., § 130, 247-249/, mean more or less the same thing: the first phoneme *Bulyum/Balam* means „sphere“ (or figuratively, the „sun“); the second phoneme, *Mar* is an abbreviation of *Mardukan*, and the second phoneme in the alternative name, *ber/ver*, means „dragon“. Thus, the name *Bulyumar* means the „Sphere [mark of] Mar[dukan]“, whereas *Balamber* has the meaning of the „Sphere [mark of] the dragon“.

In relation to this etymology let's go a bit further here and say that one of Balamber's grandsons, the son of Kan Uldin and father of Kan Mundzuk, picked a name in his honor and called himself *Charaton* – Char-Aton, i.e. „The sphere of Aton“. There is a possibility that Kan Charaton (~412~422) had another name – *Balaton* (Ball-Aton) – which, as its synonym, had the same meaning. The hydronym *Balaton* likely originated after this Kan built and lived in the camp/ongal (fortified camp) near the said lake.

The other name of this body of water – *Mursian Lake* – may have come from the name of one of the grandsons of Charaton/Balaton, who Procopius calls Cinion (former ally of Belisarius in his campaign against the Vandals of Gelimer in 533-534 in Italy) and to whom Justinian gave permission to settle in Pannonia in 551 /**Procopius of Caesarea**. *History of the Wars*. Translated by Ivan Duychev. – In GSBH, item II, pp. 142-146/. The name *Mursian* likely was derived from the mistress of the underground and the underwater world (i.e. of water bodies) Mokosh, Mora/Mura or Morana/Murena worshipped by both Bulgarians and Slavs, and the anthroponym Sinion, or simply Sion, thus Mur-Sinion or Mur-Sion lake.

According to D. I. Dimitrov, the title *tsar*, meaning emperor, came from the title *tsar* (*shar*), which was created during the third or the second millennium BC in Akkad and was later used in Siria (Aram), Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Central Asia (the Hunnic Empire) and Southeastern Europe. The first person to have this title was the founder of Akkad, *Sargon I* (2316-2261 BC), whose royal name was *Šarumken* or *Šarukin*. The name of King *Sargon* is mentioned in cuneiform writings from the old and new Babylonian periods (XX-XVI century BC) displayed at the Louvre in Paris and the British Museum in London. /**D. I. Dimitrov**. The title of „tsar“ – the most ancient imperial title in the world (Титлата цар – най-древната имперска титла в света). – In: AviTohol, *Historical Collection*, New interpretation of Bulgarian Antiquity. Vol. I. Published by Сдружение „Ави-Тохол“. Sofia, „Виделина“ Publishing house, 2005, pp. 25-30/.

The author of this otherwise excellent study has neglected to make the etymological connection between the title *shar/tsar/zar* and *orb/sphere* – regalia used as a symbol of the divine forefather, the Sun. Derivatives and related words include: *tsar/shar* – in Babylon, in addition to „king“, this word meant „year“, i.e. an annual revolution (celestial cycle) around the sun; *Sardika/Serdika* – an ancient city in Thrace; *Sardi* – the capital of ancient Lydia; the island of *Sardinia*; *Sarmizegetusa Regia* – an ancient city in Dacia; *Sarkel* (White House), an early Medieval city on the Tanais River (Don); *Shar Mountain* on the border between North Macedonia and Kosovo; *Sharkolia*, Prince Marco's sleek horse; *Sharo* – a typical Bulgarian name for a short-legged, shortbodied dog; *sharan* – „carp“, a type of fresh-water fish with an oval body; *sharen* – „multicolored“, probably derived from the property of sunlight to be refracted and broken down into a beautiful rainbow; *char*, *ocharovanie*; *charodei* – „sage“, „kolobar“; *chardak* – „balcony“; *charda* – „herd“, „horde“, „people“; *charshia* – „market square“; *chark* – „a component of a larger entity“ among other Old Bulgarian words.

Apart from a „ball“, „orb“ or „sphere“, the phoneme *bal* is laden with an additional meaning – „large“ or „great“, which is related to the construction of holy objects as models of the sun, such as the flag of the Massagetae (see below), as well as *balvans* – large spherical rock totems found in Thrace, Dacia and Scythia. A similar semantic reference is contained in the toponym *Balkan* (Bal-Kan, i.e. the „Great kan“), the aforementioned hydronym *Balaton* (Bal-Aton, i.e. the „Great Aton“) and so on.

It's about the dragon-god or winged serpent is worshipped in Egypt under the name Ra, in Babylon – Marduk, in Asia – Mardukan, in America – Quetzalcohuātl („Feathered serpent“), by Slavs – as Veles, by the Getae/Scythians in Lower Moesia and Dacia – as ΜΕΓΑΣ ΘΕΟΣ ΟΔΙΣΣΙΤΩΝ, „The Great God of the Odessians“ (Helios I), also referred to as ΔΑΡΣΑΛΙΑΣ (Darzalas) /see **Valentin Yordanov**. Hestia and Helios. – In the „Gorgoni Magazine“, book 4, 2020-2021, pp. 7-60; for more details/.

In Antiquity, after the ethnic merging of the Moesians and Getae into the greater Massagetae nation, part of it migrated to Asia and the indigenous people (Chinese, Mongolians and Japanese) took from the newcomers some of their feasts with their typical carnivals of the Winged Serpent or the Celestial Dragon – the zoomorphic incarnation of the Sun God.

The royal *shar/tsar* (orb/ball), which is a model of the Sun God, was a very characteristic symbol of the Massagetae in Central Asia. There is a possibility that their invasion through the Ariana plateau and the Zagros Mountains at the end of the 26th century BC could have triggered the downfall of the kingdom of Sumer and facilitated the establishment of the Akkadian kingdom. Under such a scenario, the founder of the Akkadian state, *Sargon I/Sharrukin* would evidently be a representative of Massagetae dynasty, which used the orb as its symbol. A popular legend written down in Neo-Babylonian and Neo-Assyrian cuneiform texts could back up the claim of the new ruler over the whole of Mesopotamia. According to it, the ruler's mother Enitum was a priestess in the temple of Ishtar in the city of Azupiranu („City of Saffron“); To prevent the murder of her royal child, having given birth in secret, she placed the infant in a reed basket dipped in resin and let it float on the waters of the Euphrates. The child was discovered and raised by the water merchant Akki, who trained the child to become a gardener in the city of

Akkad, where the young *Sharrukin* had just ascended to the throne. Later, after the victories over the rulers of the cities of Kish and Uruk, the Akkadian kingdom took on a path of gradual expansion, rising to dominate the whole of Mesopotamia.

The orb, as a model of the sun, was present in the royal regalia of ancient Massagetae and

Hunnic rulers and can be seen later on coins minted by Roman emperors. There, the patron deity – Mithras, the Invincible sun – gifts the new emperor his symbol along with the authority to rule on his behalf (**photo 2 a/b**). In some cases, the orb of Mithras was adorned by a statuette of Nike/Victoria, goddess of victory, giving the emperor an additional symbol of power, a royal wreath (**photo 3 a/b**). Following the adoption of Christianity, a cross is added to the royal orb (**photo 4, 5**), which changed its meaning. Instead of the sun, the orb came to symbolize Earth.



Photo 2 a/b. Emperor Aurelian Coin (270-275) minted in the city of Serdika. Face: IMP AVRELIANVS AVG. Back: SOL INVICTVS. Photo by the author.



Photo 3 a/b. Emperor Carinus coin (283-385). Face: MARCVS AVRELIVS CARINVS. Back: SOL INVICTUS offering Carinus his orb with the figurine of Nike/Victoria on top, rising a royal wreath. Photo by the author.



Photo 4. Gold seal (bulla aure) of King Ivan-Asen II (1218-1241). The king holds a scepter in his right hand and a gold orb with a cross on top in his left. The inscription reads: IW ACEN ЦР БЛЪГАРѠМЪ И ГРЪКОМЪ.



Photo 5. Gold orb with a cross belonging to Tsar Boris III of Bulgaria (1918-1943). Photo by the author.

* * *

During their stay in Asia, which lasted for millenia, the eastern Massagetae gave their supreme dragon-god two names – Mardukan and Yelbeghen (*God of Beginnings*, i.e. *Forefather*). Huns worshipped this deity under the name Baradj. The Hunnic tribe of Baskort/Ugrians/Magyars knew him as Madjar. /**Bakhshi Iman**. Djagfar Tarikhy..., pp. 15-17/.

In fact, the two names of the Bulgarian Kan Bulyumar/Balamber come from his flag: „...the native ask banner of Baradj featuring a red felt orb with a bundle of colored ribbons“ /**same source**, p. 17/. The red felt orb was a symbol of the sub for the Massagetae and the colored ribbons – the rays of the sun, colored by a rainbow, or *raduga* = „the rainbow of Ra“.

To provide context for what was said above, we should clarify that one of the branches of the Hunno-Bulgarian dynasty abandoned the banner of Idzhik – horse tail (the horse was the totemgod of Hunno-Bulgarians) – and replaced it with the Massagetae banner. This switch was made by Kan Khazan/Ghazan, an ancestor of Bulyumar, who, as an infant, was saved during a Chinese night raid of one of the

royal family's three fortified camps (ongal). This took place on the Ordos Plateau, which at the time was within the territory of the Hunnic Tribal Union. With a total area of 91,000 square kilometres, the plateau is located on one of the larger bends of the Kuban-Su River (Huang He, i.e. Yellow River). The savior of young Khazan – none other than the Massagetae King Mar – raised the young king, gave him one of his daughters in marriage, and let him rule over a significant portion of the Massagetae tribal union /**same source**, p. 15/.

B. Expansion through war and dynastic marriage

The ancient forefather, Khazan, and his father in law, Mar, ruled in Central China and the Valleys of the seven rivers (Central Asia). Later, their distant descendant, Bulyumar also ruled the seven rivers next to his neighboring kings – who were his distant relatives (also descended from Mar) – the chieftains of the Hephthalite tribal union, which was a political formation of the white or Eastern Massagetae and various Hunnic nations.

However, after the death of his father (whose name is lost to history), following one of his campaigns against an alliance of Turkmens, Kirkizians, Sabans and Kipchaks, among others, young Bulyumar was forced to migrate west (341-342) with a core of loyal Huns (Honogurs) along with his Hunno-Massagetae tribes (Utigurs and Kutrigurs) and Magyars who had joined him earlier /**same source**, pp. 15, 16/.

Having negotiated the difficult passes through the Caucasus, Bulyumar settled temporarily (until about 355) in the state of Idel, centered around the delta of the Atil/Ytil River (Volga). At the time, the state was destabilized by dynastic struggles within the Hunnic-Bulgar Bulyar dynasty, triggered by the death of Kan Djoke Utig. The royal pedigree and reputation of Bulyumar led to him being chosen to rule over Idel.

Between 355 and 363 the Hunno-Bulgarians led by Bulyumar/Balamber moved in two directions to bypass the Maeotian (Sea of Azov). The right branch headed west toward the River Tanais (Don). The left branch headed south-east along the eastern shores of the Sea of Azov. Reaching Tanais, most likely on orders by the Ostrogoth King Ermanaric, a strong Goths tribe, referred to as *Alans-Tanaites* by Ammianus Marcellinus, met them. /**Ammianus Marcellinus**.

Res Gestae, Book XXXI, § 3-1. – Available online at **Ammianus Marcellinus**. *Res Gestae*.

Translated by Y. A. Kulakovski and A. I. Soni from the Saint Vladimir Imperial University of Kyiv, 1906-1908/. In the Bulgarian record, these peoples are referred to as the *Alani*, the *Saklani of Boz-Urus* or *Saklani-Urusi* /**Bakhshi Iman**. Djagfar Tarikhy..., pp. 17-19/. In Jordanes' „Getica“, they are referred to as *Rosomons* /**Jordanes**. *Getica*, § 129, 130/. Greek texts refer to the same people as *Roxolani* (which is a transcription of the Bulgarian name *Rus-Alani*). Besides the *Rus-Alans*, Balamer subjugated other warlike tribes, including *Mudrasians*, *Agachars* (descendants of the *Agatrisians*), the *Antes* and the *Sclavens*, the *Goltescythians*, the *Bastarnae* and the *Meryans*.

Bulyumar/Balamer took his time because, on the one hand he did not want to vanquish related peoples, which opposed him on external (Goth) orders, and on the

other, he wished to gather under his banner more tribes before the fateful and imminent collision with the warlike Goths. Besides, he wanted to make the lands stretching between the Don and the Dnieper, the core of his future country. Among other things, they offered the advantage of being naturally fortified and difficult to access by invading forces. However, to achieve this effect, the area had to be cleared of all hostile outsider tribes. To stabilize his position and to gather strength, he remained in the region for 10-15 years. Through a combination of military campaigns and negotiations, he managed to assimilate the Urus/Roxolani along with the rest of the aforementioned tribes.

At the same time, the left branch of the Hunno-Bulgarian group crossed the Tauric Bosphorus (present-day Kerch Strait) and landed on the Crimean Peninsula. In Crimea and later on the Danapre (Dnieper), their path forward was cut off by the Germanic tribes of Farangy (Franks), Galidge (Galicians – from the Gaul people), Alamanni (Alemanni). However, their opposition was gradually broken down by the relentless Hunnic onslaught. /**Bakhshi Iman**. Djagfar Tarikhy..., pp. 16-19/.

In 375, Ermanaric, the mighty king of the thus-far invincible Ostrogoth tribal union, mobilized all of the tribal armies that were under his rule in Dacia and Scythia. However, the decisive battle on the next frontier, the banks of the Danastius (Dniester), ended with the annihilation of the Goths at the hands of the armies of the alliance between the Hunnic-Bulgarians and the local forces of Bulyumar. The defeated Ermanaric died (or took his own life) the same year and the Ostrogoth nation was divided up between his son, Hunimund the Beautiful and his nephew Vithimiris/Vinitharius (grandson of Vutvulf, brother of Ermanaric), who was the supreme commander. /**Ammianus Marcellinus**. Res Gestae, Book XXXI, § 3-1, 3-3; **Jordanes**. Getica..., § 126-130/.

It has to be mentioned here that even before 360, Bulyumar/Balamber had the forethought to engineer a dynastic marriage with Valadamarca, daughter of Hunimund the Beautiful. Later, after the death of Ermanaric in 375, as a result of this marriage Ostrogoth kings came under the military and political influence of Balamber and his heirs from the Goth princess. /**Jordanes**. Getica..., § 249-250/.

Here, we would like to refer to the excellent book „Bulgarian History by **Gavril Krastevich**, member of the Supreme Court“, Vol. 1, published in Constantinople in 1869. * 

G. Krastevich writes that when Kan Bulyumar, whom he calls Belomir, made the Ostrogoth chieftains his vassals, King Athanaric of the Visigoths mobilized his armies to fight but was also defeated by the Hunno-Bulgarians. Gathering his surviving forces, he initially built fortifications on the right bank of the Prut River but feeling insecure here and due to certain religious differences among themselves, the Visigoths broke up into groups. The chieftains Fritigern and Alavivus, who shared a favorable attitude toward Christianity, took a small and partially Christianized group and headed south with the intention to settle in the Eastern Empire with the help of Ulfilas, Bishop of Moesia and Dacia. The bigger group of Visigoths, led by their king, the pagan Athanaric, remained at their fortified camp on the Prut, from where they later moved to the higher and difficult to reach plateaus of the Carpathian mountains, which, at the time, were known as the Caucalands (according to the **same source**, pp. 45-48; 58, 59).

* There is a second edition published by Guta-N in 2016. The author, G. Krastevich, law graduate from the Sorbonne on a scholarship provided by Knyaz Stefan Bogoridi. After that, he worked as a governor on the Island of Samos and later, having drafted the Commerce law of the Ottoman Empire, was appointed to serve on the Higher Council of Justice. An expert in Ancient Greek, Latin and French, with access to the libraries of Turkey, Russia and Western Europe, Krastevich was able to research a multitude of documents from Antiquity and the early Middle Ages for his work.

4. Emperor Valens welcomed to Moesia the Visigoths of Fritigern and employed them as federates. Ostrogoths, Visigoths and the Arian bishop, Ulfilas

When Fritigern and Alavivus reached the northern banks of the Danube, they settled in the area with the people they led. They sent a diplomatic mission led by Bishop Ulfilas to visit Flavius Julius Valens, Emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire (364-378; **photo 6**), who at the time was at the city of Antioch. Worried about the Huns, the Visigoths requested of the Emperor to allow them to settle permanently in Moesia, according to the rules of the Institution of the Federates, introduced in the third decade of the IVth century by Emperor Constantine the Great. They promised to submit to the authority and the laws of Valens, to protect the Danube limes from hostile incursions, to convert to Christianity on en masse basis as opposed to converting individually as they had done thus far, provided the Emperor sent them missionaries to teach them in their own language. /**Ammianus Marcellinus**. *Res Gestae*, Book XXXI, § 3-7; 4-1; 4-5; **Jordanes**. *Getica*..., § 131-137, in conjunction with § 111, 112/.



Photo 6. Aureus of Emperor Valens (364-378) featuring his portrait minted in his home town of Cibalae, Second Pannonia Province (present-day Vinkovci, Croatia). Part of the collection of the museum at the Tsari Mali Grad fortress from Antiquity near present-day village of Belchin, Bulgaria. Photo by the author.

The Christian envy of the Goths, further fueled by their desire to settle in the Eastern Empire, was described by the Orthodox supporter, Jordanes, but in his text he purposefully neglects to mention that they had started to switch to the Arian side

even earlier, spurred on by none other than Bishop Ulfilas, who was now putting in a good word for them with Emperor Valens. For this reason, we feel obliged to mention that some 34 years before the arrival of the Visigoths in Moesia, the provinces of Lower Moesia and Dacia, including the Crimea, which were inhabited by Moesians, Dacians and Getae (which melted together to form the Massagetae ethnos), were in the spiritual jurisdiction of Getae priests based in Nilopolis ad Istrum (Lower Moesia). The aforementioned Ulfilas, who was a Getae from Cappadocia (a province in Anatolia), was appointed Bishop of this bishopric by Emperor Constantius II (337-361; son of Constantine the Great) of the Eastern Empire in 341. Between 341 and 348, Ulfilas translated the Bible and some of the major religious books into the local language of the Moesian Getae (Massagetae). It should be remembered that the religious power of Ulfilas was comprehensive only in Lower Moesia. North of Danube, his influence was limited to the cities along the Black Sea coast. Inside Dacia, Gothic chieftains, who were still pagan, sometimes persecuted Christians. On one occasion, Ulfilas himself and the priests accompanying him barely made it to Moesia, escaping certain death /G. Krastevich, see above, p. 48/.

In 375, during the reign of Emperor Valens (364-378), when Visigoths asked for asylum in Moesia, Ulfilas was still in charge of his bishopric (until his death in 383).

Theophanes writes that Ulfilas vouched for the Visigoths before Valens:

„...The Goths, pressured by the Huns, sent [an envoy – note by V.Y.] to ask Emperor Valens for help, through the interposition of their Bishop, Orphila the Arian [Ulfilas], who, under Constantius [Constantius II] was friends with the Arians Eudoxius [Bishop of Antioch – note by V.Y.] and Akakios [Bishop of Beroe Caesarean in Anatolia – note by V.Y.]. He [Ulfilas – note by V.Y.] learned Arianism from the Goths.“

/Theophanes the Confessor. Chronicle..., § 50. – Available online at: **Летопись византийца Феофана. От Диоклетиана до царей Михаила и сына его**

Феофилакта. Translated from Greek by V. I. Obolenski and F. A. Ternovski. Foreword by O. M. Boidianski. Moscow, 1884, University Printing House, Strastnoy Boulevard. Lectures of the Imperial Society for the History of Russia at Moscow University, 1884, Book 1. – http://krotov.info/acts/08/3/feofan_05.htm/.

Ulfilas adopted as his own son and groomed as his successor the Moesian Auxentius of Durostorum (present-day city of Silistra), who took over his work and moved the bishopric's headquarters to his home town. Thus, the spiritual environment – language, alphabet, literature and religion – was already in place when the Visigoths came. At this point in time, their language was very close (a dialect of) the language of their forerunners the Moeso-Getae, and those of the Sklavi, formerly the Scytho-Getae.

It should be explained that the Emperors of the East – from the aforementioned Constantine the Great (Emperor of the West from 312; Emperor of the West and the East, from 324 to 337) to Valens (Emperor of the East 364-378), and all the bishops in their territory, including Ulfilas and Auxentius, had installed as a state religion the original version of Christianity – Arianism. The edicts of Galerius, adopted in

Serdika (present-day Sofia) in 311, and of Constantine, adopted in Mediolanum (present-day Milan) in 313 promoted freedom and tolerance to all faiths in the empire to prevent the possibility of institutional persecution, torture and killings in the name of religion. Unfortunately, the Second Ecumenical Council at Constantinople in 381, which was organized by Theodosius I (379-395) – the first Eastern emperor with Greek ancestry – established the Symbol of the faith and the canon of the so-called orthodox („correct“ Christianity), which called for intolerance toward pagan beliefs and the Arian heresy. Gradually, over the course of the following decade, persecution of people, looting and destroying magnificent temples (monuments of the culture of Antiquity), the burning of large numbers of books containing the ancient knowledge of mankind was greenlighted, bringing to the fore the barbarian, decadent and degenerative aspects of the orthodox faith!

For this reason, Jordanes, in the middle of the 6th century felt compelled to include in his text the malicious commentary that the Visigoths were brought by Valens into the Arian sect – a failed and poisoned school of Christianity /**Jordanes. Getica...**, § 132, 133/.

Skipping forward in time to 588 in Spain, the Visigoth king Reccared I (587-601) „gathered... in Toledo, all Goths who remained Arian and ordered them to bring him all Arian books in their possession. The books were gathered on his orders and lit on fire. He then forced all Goths to convert to Christianity.“ /**Chronicle of Fredegar** (Paris Codex), § 8. Translated by D. N. Rakov. – Available online at: Восточная литература. Средневековые исторические источники Востока и Запада/.

In this text, the Frankish chronicler Fredegar claims that even two centuries later the Arian priests of the Visigoths used the books of Ulphilas, which they had copied, in their masses. Unfortunately, these priceless epistolary monuments were subjected to vicious auto da fe. Perhaps some of them – the more beautifully and lavishly bound – could have been hidden and protected.

The famous „Codex Argenteuse“ could possibly be one of them.

What is important to know here is the reason for the sudden shift inside the Visigoth royal family from Arian Christianity to orthodox Catholicism. The father of the young king Reccared – Liuvigild (568-586) – was dedicated follower of the Arian faith which was traditional for the Goths. His mother, however, the Greek Theodosia was a passionate proponent of hard orthodoxism. She was the daughter of Severiano elder of Carthage city and the Byzantine enclave in Spain. Her brothers were Leander of Seville, archbishop of Spain (584-601) and his successor to the bishopric, Isidore of Seville (601-636). The two brothers were respected politicians and theologians of the early Catholic Christianity and forerunners of the Holy Inquisition. Thus, the easily influenced young Visigoth king Reccared decided to organize in 588 the outrageous auto da fe of Ulphilas' books at the behest of his mother and uncles.

5. Kan Alyp-bi/Alatheus (378-387). Continuation of the policies of Bulyumar/Balamber to consolidate and reinforce the Hunnic Tribal Union

As we mentioned above, the Ostrogoths chose the grandson and the brother (Vutvulf – Vithimiris = Venetar (375-376) of their late king, Ermanaric, to replace him. Resolved to shed his vassalage to Balamber, the Ostrogoth Venetar raided the

Antes in 376 and treated their chieftains and elders with especial cruelty. He ordered the crucifixion of their chieftain Bozha, his sons and 70 elders. Upset by this madness, Balamber summoned his allied Goth chieftains Sigismund, Hunimund and his son, Gesimund. In the ensuing battle, Venetar was shot with an arrow by Balamber himself and killed. His throne (according to Jordanes) was then taken by Hunimund the Beautiful. /**Jordanes**, *Getica*..., § 126-130; § 245-250/. In fact, the throne was taken by the underaged son of Venetar, Witterich/Vithericus (376-378), and Alatheus and Saphrax served as his regents. /**Ammianus Marcellinus**. *Res Gestae*, XXXI, § 3-3/. Hunimund the Beautiful retrieved the Ostrogoth throne later, circa 379 and ruled until 405. This, we will discuss in more detail a bit later to respect the chronological order of events.

It should be noted that in contrast to Marcellinus, Jordanes does not mention, even briefly, the rule of Witterich after his father, Venetar, died. /**Jordanes**, *Getica*..., § 129-130; § 245-250/. Jordanes does not even include Witterich in his list of Goth rulers. /**same source**, § 79-81/. At this point we will have to digress from the main thread of our research and address the difference in the names used to refer to Ermanaric's heir that different authors from Antiquity used. This is necessary to clarify because it creates ambiguities in the work of many modern historians.

Ammianus Marcellinus, who was closest to the events in question (he wrote between 380 and 390). He uses the name Vithimiris /**Res Gestae**, XXXI, § 3-3/ and Cassiodorus (~487~583; whose account of the „History of the Goths“ was used by Jordanes before it was destroyed) and thereby Jordanes, too (~500~552), who wrote in mid-6th century, use the name Venetar /**Getica**, § 132, 133/.

In fact, all authors write about one and the same person, because after his victory over the

Antes, Vithimiris retrieved the name Venetar – „Vanquisher of the Venetis“. /**Herwig Wolfram**.

ГОТЫ. От истоков до середины VI века. Translated from German by B. Milovidov, M. Shtukin. СПб., Ювента, 2003, с. 317-319/.

* * *

As a result, the new *Hunnic-Ostrogoth federation* of Bulyumar/Balamber and his son Alypbi/Alatheus in the north of Scythia – located among the rivers Dniester, Dnieper, Don and Volga – was populated by the *Eastern branch of the Hunno-Bulgarians*, also known as Ak-Bulgar (i.e. White Bulgarians, which included the Honogurs and the Utigurs), Idel-Bulgar, Agatirses and Magyars plus their allies, the Antes, Merens (Merya), Mordens (Murdases/Mordva), Tiuds, Inaunxis, Vasinabronc, Imniscari, Bastarnae, Rogas, Athaul, Navegos, Bubegens, Coldas, Heruls, etc.

When the Visigoths left Coastal Dacia, their lands were taken immediately by the tribes of the *Western branch of the Hunno-Bulgarians* – Kara-Bulgar (i.e. Kutrigurs), Urus-Alan (i.e. Roxolani), Veneti and Slavini (southern group) in addition to their allies, the Ostrogoths of Sigismund and Hunimund. The latter four Hunnic-Bulgar nations formed the *military core* of the state of Balamber. It was them who cleared the way for its expansion, development and prosperity. At the time, the Gepids (the third Gothic ethnos) lived in Inner Dacia.

We believe that the father of Alatheus/Alyp-bi – Bulyumar/Balamber – set aside for his son part of the allied Hunnic cavalry and placed it under his command probably after his transition into manhood and initiation, as the tradition required. Evidently, this happened on the eve of the decisive battle with the united Ostrogoth forces of Ermanaric in 375, when Bulyumar needed loyal lieutenants to lead the Hunnic cavalry detachments. In the following year, this cavalry unit took part in the aforementioned retaliatory strike of the Hunno-Bulgarians against the Ostrogoth King Venetar. After the death of the latter, the unit was led by Alatheus/Alyp-bi in his capacity as son of the Ostrogoth princess Valadamerka (daughter of Hunimund the Beautiful) who was also the regent of the underaged son of Venetar, king Witterich/Vithericus (376-378). This guaranteed the loyalty of the Ostrogoths to the Hunno-Bulgarians based on their treaty.

We should also clarify that the heavy Hunno-Bulgarian cavalry was recruited mainly from the ranks of the Kutrigurs, Urus-Alani (Roxolani) and Murdasi (part of whom were the Sarmatians). The light cavalry consisted of Onogurs, Utigurs, Magyars and other tribes.

6. Emperor Valens rejected the Ostrogoths as his federates in Moesia. The rebellion of the Visigoth federates led by their chieftain, Frittigern

The successful migration of the Visigoths to Lower Moesia with the permission of Emperor Valens inspired the Ostrogoths to request the same privilege – to move south where the climate and the economic opportunities were better. On the advice of Balamber, the regents of the underaged Ostrogoth king Witterich/Vithericus – Alatheus and Saphrax – moved the main Hunnic-Bulgarian and Ostrogoth forces from the banks of the Dniester toward the northern bank of the Danube. However, their envoys were surprised to hear that Emperor Valens denied their request to settle in Moesia. /**Ammianus Marcellinus**. *Res Gestae*, Book XXXI, § 3-3; § 4-12/. According to Jordanes, the Visigoth federates in Lower Moesia, who were led by Frittigern, Alatheus and Saphrax, endured for two years the whims of the corrupt Roman administration under the military commanders Lupicinus and Maximus. In June 378 Frittigern was invited to a feast at the praetorium in the city of Marcianopolis while his personal guard was led to a separate wing of the building. In the ensuing assassination attempt, the Goths or Frittigern managed to overpower and liquidate their would-be Roman assassins and part of the Roman garrison. Enraged by these events, Frittigern led a federate rebellion against the Romans. /**Jordanes**. *Getica*..., § 134/137/.

The text of Jordanes contains a discrepancy: on the one hand he claims that the Visigoths in Lower Moesia had three military leaders, Frittigern, Alatheus and Saphrax /§ 134/, on the other, he later writes that the Roman general Lupicinus, hatching a treacherous plan, invited only Frittigern to the feast at Marcianopolis /§ 135, 136/.

Alatheus and Saphrax were never in Lower Moesia with Frittigern. As we already pointed out in the preceding paragraph, according to Ammianus Marcellinus, who was a contemporary of the events in question, they served as regents and keepers of the underaged Ostrogoth king Witterich north of the Danube. Furthermore, as we saw, Emperor Valens never allowed the Ostrogoths to settle in Moesia. /**Ammianus Marcellinus**. *Res Gestae*, Book XXXI, § 4-12/. Otherwise,

Alatheus and Saphrax would have definitely been invited to the feast to allow the Romans to deprive the Goths from military leadership in one fell swoop.

7. Kan Aлып-bi/Alatheus passed into Moesia to help Frittigern

Upon learning about the rebellion of Frittigern in Lower Moesia, Valens sent the magister of the cavalry, Saturnin, to block the passes in the Eastern Balkans (most likely the Kotlenski, Varbishki and Rishki passes). The Visigoths, who wanted to reach the rich valleys of Thrace did not manage to break through the Roman lines and could not get food because the locals had stowed away their foodstuffs and livestock in their fortresses (in the second half of July cereals were already harvested). Therefore the Visigoths „asked for help **the Huns and the Alans** [we believe these were Huns-Kutrigurs and their allies, Urus-Alani – note and chattered V. Y.], tempting them with the promise of rich lute“. /**Ammianus Marcellinus**. Res Gestae, Book XXXI, § 8: 3, 4/. Frittigern, blocked by the Roman defensive line, was forced to dispatch couriers to the north of Danube, to the Ostrogoth chieftains Alatheus and Saphrax, asking for their help in this difficult situation. They, most likely left a small security contingent to guard the young Witterich, forced the Danube and successfully crossed into Moesia.

When Saturnin learned of the appearance of the heavy Huno-Kutrigur and Urus-Alan cavalry of Alatheus and Saphrax, he immediately lifted the blockade of the passes and retreated with his forces back to Thrace /**same source**, § 8: 5/. Saturnin likely decided that his forces were no match for the cavalry led by Alatheus and Saphrax. It was those talented commanders in charge of it although Marcellinus does not mention them by name here but does name them a bit later when he describes the battle at Adrianopolis on the 9th of August 378 /**same source**, § 12: 12/.

We believe that in the texts of Ammianus Marcellinus and Jordanes Alatheus is referred to as Aлып-bi in the Bulgar record; he is also called Balthazar /see **Edward Thompson**. The Huns. Oxford, 1999/. According to the Bulgar record, Aлып-bi is listed as son of Bulyumar (Balamber) and his cavalry played a decisive role for the victory over the Romans at Adrianopolis /**Bakhshi**

Iman. Djagfar Tarikhy..., c. 19/ (see below for details of the battle itself).

Jordanes purposefully neglects to mention who the son of Balamber (Bulyumar) and Valadamarca was (does not even mention that the two had a son; **Getica...**, § 249, 250), but mentions Alatheus without providing any personal data about him, in conjunction with Frittigern, there are two references made to him before and after the battle at Adrianopolis /§ **134, 141**/. The battle itself is described in just a few sentences /§ **138**/ which do not mention the role of Alatheus for the crushing defeat of the Romans inflicted on them by the Huno-Goths.

Thus, thanks to Alatheus, at the start of the summer of 378, the hunger-stricken Goths of Frittigern passed through the liberated mountain passes (abandoned by Saturninus), invaded in the Thracian Lowland and the Rhodope Mountains, and plundered their way on. The Visigoth military forces comprised only 10,000 infantrymen whose families accompanied them in large covered quadrigas (wagons), which were something like mobile homes. Emperor Valens learned the bad news in Antioch. He regrouped as quickly as he could his available forces forming a unit of about 30,000 infantry and a small cavalry, which reached

Adrianopolis with a fast march. (**Ammianus Marcellinus**. *Res Gestae*, Book XXXI, § 12: 3-8; **Jordanes**. *Getica*..., § 134-138).

8. Battle at Adrianopolis

On the 9th of August 378 the armies of Valens and Frittigern met north of the city of Adrianopolis. Upon realizing that his foes hold a three-to-one numerical advantage and are much better armed, Frittigern circled the wagons to create a defensive position. The women, children and the elderly were kept inside the position while soldiers guarded the periphery. The chieftain sent a messenger to Valens to ask for truce but, aware of his superiority, Valens declined and ordered his troops to launch an attack. With creative thinking and situational awareness, Frittigern held the defense and tried to buy time by sending another messenger to the Emperor. The Visigoth commander had an arrangement with Alatheus and Saphrax, who at the time were in a different location. Apparently, he knew approximately when they would arrive to save him for the third time in a row (after their decisive interventions at the mountain passes and later in Thrace, at the town of Debelt. /**Ammianus Marcellinus**. *Res Gestae*, Book XXXI, § 8: 9-10; § 12: 10-12;

Jordanes. *Getica*..., § 138/.

Thus, before the cavalry of Alatheus arrived at Adrianopolis, Frittigern was seemingly destined to lose the battle surrounded in his improvised camp defended by no more than 10 000 infantry men.

On Valens' orders, the heavily armed Roman infantry charged the Goths in deep multi-row phalanx using shields to protect itself from the javelins and arrows of their enemy. Soon, it was flanked by cavalry and the Roman forces moved to encircle the Goths.

It was the left wing of the Roman forces that accelerated the course for a clash with the Gothic camp, when with a roar, a metal crash and battle cries, the long-awaited cavalry of Alatheus and Saphrax descended „like lightning“ from a nearby mountain, moving from marching formation to an attacking wedge. Riding at full gallop, from afar, but accurately, the horsemen-archers emptied their quivers: a deadly cloud of arrows swept over the dense Roman ranks, as if death itself had cut them with its sharp hair. In the words of Marcellinus: „*The arrows, carrying the breath of death from everywhere, hit the target, because it was impossible to see them or hide* [them – note by V.Y.]“. The charging Hunno-Alani cavalry crashed on the flanks and rear of the Roman battle formation. Caught between the Hun cavalry from the rear and the Goth infantry guarding the camp, the Roman soldiers were in a desperate situation. Losing their nerve, they broke formation and were slaughtered. /**Res Gestae**, Book XXXI, § 12: 10-12; § 12-17; § 13: 1-7/.

* * *

It is important to clarify the matter of the ethnic composition of the cavalry of Alatheus and Saphrax, which has actually tipped the scales in favor of the Goths in this contested military conflict, which had a great political resonance in its time.

The arrival of the victorious cavalry near Adrianopolis was described by Ammianus Marcellinus as follows:

„**The Goth cavalry** [chattered by V. Y.] came back led by Alatheus and Saphrax, **together with a squad of Alans** [chattered by V. Y.]. Like lightning, it emerged from the steep mountain and rushed into a swift attack, sweeping away everything in its path.“

/Res Gestae, § 12: 17/.

Here, the cavalry of Alatheus is referred to „the Goth cavalry“. Before that, however, explaining how the Visigoths in Moesia could not overcome the Roman defense of the Stara Planina (the Balkan) passes and were forced to call for help „gangs of Huns and Alans“, Marcellinus writes:

„In these days in Scythia and Moesia, where everything edible was exterminated, the barbarians [the Visigoths – note by V.Y.], frenzied with hunger and rage, strained all their forces to break through [the Roman defense of the passes, organized by Magister Saturninus – note by V.Y.]. After repeated attempts, which were reflected by the strong resistance of our [Roman military forces – note by V.Y.], stuck in the high places [the foothills of the Balkans], they found themselves in an extremely difficult situation and called for with them **gangs of Huns and Alans** [chattered by V.Y.], seducing them in the hope of a huge loot.“ /Same source, § 8: 4/.

The expression „gangs of Huns and Alans“ used by Marcellinus, chatterbox by us in the quoted paragraph, it is obvious that the Huno-Alan cavalry of Alatheus and Saphrax is hiding, and it was evident above that in the cavalry Alans are actually just a „squad of Alans“. /same source, § 12: 17/.

Therefore, this cavalry, which presumably numbered from 5 to 8 thousands of fighters, was formed mainly by Huns, plus a „squad of Alans“. In addition, if we take into account the overall context of the events (i.e. to select a more comprehensive sample of historical facts in various sources), then by „Huns“ here we should mean Huns-Kutrigurs, and by „Alans“ – Rus-Alans (Roxolans).

Additional indirect evidence that Alip-bi/Alatheus led Huno-Kutrigur cavalry is Jordan's point out that after the victory at Adrianople the victors separated: „Fritigern set out to plunder Thessaly, Epirus and Achaia, and Alatheus and Saphracus with the rest of the hordes rushed to Pannonia.“

/Getica..., § 141/. From this point in time (378), chroniclers covering Late Antiquity such as Marcellinus Comes, Procopius of Caesarea, Agathias of Myrina and Menander Protector, note the earliest presence of Bulgarians-Kutrigurs in Pannonia.

Additionally, they provide detailed descriptions of the differences in the arms and warfare tactics employed by the Hunno-Kutrigur and Goth cavalries, which were observed in action by Procopius of Caesarea, who saw them personally while employed by General Belisarius during the Roman-Goth war in Italy. Procopius writes the following:

„The difference between them and almost all the Romans and their allies is that **Huns are better marksmen while riding. The Goths do not have**

that skill [chattered by V. Y.], their horsemen are used only to using their swords and javelins whilst mounted; their archers are always on foot...”

/Procopius of Caesarea. The Gothic War, Book V/I, § 27. – Электронная библиотека Royallib.ru. Translated by S. P. Kondratiev/.

It must be pointed out that according to Procopius the Huns were made up of three main tribes: Honogurs, Utigurs and Kutrigurs /**Same source**, Book VIII/IV, § 4, 5, 6 and the following/.

Agathias of Myrina writes that the Huns and the Scythians lived in the lands between the Maeotian and Mount Imayos (Imeon) in Asia since ancient times. He names some of those tribes including Kutrigurs, Utigurs, Uluzurians and Burgundians. When Agathias writes about the Kutrigurs, he refers to them as Kutrigur-Huns. /**Agathias of Myrina**. On the Reign of Justinian. Translated by B. Beshevliev and V. Tapkova. – In Christomathy on the History of Bulgaria (Христоматия по история на България). Sofia, 1978, pp. 66, 67/.

In the battle for Adrianopolis, as we described it based on the superb account provided by the former military commander and contemporary of these events, Ammianus Marcellinus, we can see a true Hunno-Kutrigur cavalry unit in action. During its attack, the mounted unit unleashed a cloud of arrows on the Romans and the text by Procopius indicates that the Goth cavalry did not use bows and arrows but rather javelins and swords.

It should be noted that while in the beginning of *Res Gestae*, Book 31, Ammianus Marcellinus uses the phrase „gangs of Huns and Alans“ /**Res Gestae**, Book XXXI, § 8: 4/, by the end of it he uses much more respectful language: „the Goths were joined by **the warlike and brave Huns and Alans, who were hardened in battle** [emphasized by V. Y.]“ /**Same source**, § 16-3/. Evidently, when he uses the term „Goth cavalry“, Ammianus Marcellinus means the Huns and the Alans who rode into battle to help the Goths. In other words, the Goth cavalry was formed by Huns and Alans /**Same source**, § 12: 10-12; 12-17; § 13: 1, 2; § 16: 3/.

* * *

Witnessing from a distance the unfavorable turn of the battle and stunned by its unexpected outcome, Emperor Valens and his commanders ran for their lives toward Adrianopolis. Alatheus/Alyp-bi left Saphrax to finish off the Roman infantry while he himself took a small unit of his men and tried to chase down the Emperor before the latter could reach the safety of the Adrianopolis fortress. The strong and fast Kutrigur horses soon caught up with the noble fugitives but not before they managed to barricade themselves on the second floor of a villa near the city. The Emperor, who was wounded by an arrow while he was fleeing, did not respond to the calls to surrender, most likely because he hoped that help would arrive. The villa was set on fire and Romans hiding inside it did not manage to get out, possibly because of a collapse of the wooden structure. All died in the blaze with the exception of a young candidate who jumped out a window. When he was captured, he told Alatheus that Emperor Valens died inside the house. He told the same story later when he was released and allowed to come back to Constantinople. /**Ammianus Marcellinus**. *Res Gestae*, § 13-12; 13: 13-16; **Magnus Aurelius Cassiodorus Senator**.

Chronicle, § 1127-1129. – Available online at: Хроника Магна Аврелия Кассиодора Сенатора, светлейшего и сиятельного мужа, бывшего квестора Священного дворца, бывшего ординарного консула, бывшего магистра оффиций, префекта Претория и патриция.

Translated from Latin by V. G. Izosin/.

Alatheus/Alyp-bi climbed on top of the smoldering rubble that used to be the villa where he found his deserved war trophies, the regalia of Valens, Emperor of the East. According to the Bulgar record, he took these items to his father, Bulyumar, back in his camp on the Dnieper. The great victory over the Eastern Empire was celebrated by the leadership of the Hunnic-Bulgarian tribal union. However, Bulyumar died during the feast (September 378). /**Bakhshi Iman**, Djagfar Tarikhy..., p. 19/. The victorious but still politically inexperienced young Kan Alyp-bi had to take over from his father the administration of a vast empire stretching from the Caucasus and Volga to Thrace and Pannonia which included on federative basis about 60 different tribes.

As we already mentioned, according to Jordanes, Fritigern and the Visigoths headed south and then west, „whereas Alatheus [Alyp-bi – note by V.Y.] and Saphrax, with the rest of the horde, headed to Pannonia“ /**Getica...**, § 141/. Based on this information and what is available from the Bulgar record, we could assume that Saphrax left with the Kutrigur and Alani cavalry for Pannonia, while Alyp-bi returned temporarily to his father's home on the Dnieper. Afterwards, in his newly-acquired capacity as supreme Kan, he organized the migration of the families of the Kutrigurs and the Alani to their new lands in Pannonia, where their fathers and husbands waited for them (along with Saphrax).

References to Alatheus/Alyp-bi after 378 are extremely rare. What does exist in the way of available information suggests that in order to control the Ostrogoths he intervened in the struggles for the Ostrogoth throne between the various contenders from the ruling Amal dynasty. For example, Hunimund, a distinguished member of the Amal dynasty, managed to establish himself as the king of the Ostrogoth tribal union by around 379 after the removal of the underaged son of Venetar, Witterich/Vithericus, and with the decisive support of his grandson, Alatheus/Alypbi/Balthazar, son of Vadamerca and Bulyumar/Balamber.

9. Kan Uldin (~387~409), son of Bulyumar/Balamber. Kans Donat (~409~412) and Karaton (~412~422) – sons of Alyp-bi/Alatheus

The rule of Alatheus/Alyp-bi/Balthazar lasted until about 387 when the leadership of the Hunnic Tribal Union was entrusted upon Kan Uldin, brother of Alyp-bi on his brother's side. Gavril Krastevich transcribed the Greek equivalent of Uldin into Slavic as Vladin/Valdin = Vlado as he believed that the Greek chroniclers had written down the name wrong. /История българа. Сочинена от **Гавриила Кръстьовича**, член от Върховното Ц. Судилище. Том първий. Цариград, 1869; Второ издание, С., 2016, с. 71-72/.

In 400, the Goth federate Count Gaina, who had managed to rise to the position of commander in chief of the Eastern Roman Army, led a rebellion against Emperor Arcadius. Because of the intrigues of John Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople,

who pressured the Goths of Constantinople to reject Arianism and convert to the orthodox faith, Gaina, leading a group of Goths, fled to the north of the Danube in the lands of the Huns where he was ambushed, defeated and killed by Kan Uldin who sent the severed Gaina's head to Emperor Arcadius. Because of this, at the initiative of the latter, a treaty of cooperation was signed. /**Same source** – based on the accounts of Zosimus and Philostorgius/. Under this treaty, Uldin was summoned to take part in joint military campaigns (see below) and the western Huns-Kutrigurs moved the capital of their state in Pannonia.

King Hunimund ruled the Ostrogoths until about 405. Since 387, he was supported (and controlled) by the aforementioned son of Balamber, Kan Uldin. Hunimund's throne was inherited by his son Thorismund, who despite his young age defeated and conquered with the help of the Hunno-Kutrigurs the powerful Gepid tribe, which at that time inhabited the region of Pannonia in Interior Dacia. /**Jordanes**, *Getica...*, § 250, 251/. Thus, even the powerful Gepid tribe was placed under the influence of the Hunno-Gothic kans, and King Thorismund enjoyed the support of Kan Uldin over the course of his short-lived rule.

There is information of a joint campaign in 406 between Uldin and Sar, kings of the Huns and

Goths, against the Scythian Radagaisus, who had penetrated deep into Italy with an army of 200 000 /**Marcellinus Comes**. *Chronicle*, § year 406. – On the site: Eastern Literature. Medieval historical sources of East and West (Восточная литература. Средневековые исторические источники Востока и Запада): **Марцеллин Комит**. Хроника. Translated by N. N. Bolgov from the Department of History of the State University of Belgorod, 2010/.

Apparently, this was a case of a Veneti invasion of Italy led by their prince, Kanas Radagaisus

/see **G. Krastevich**, same source, pp. 75, 76; 235 – note 1 to § 5/, which was foiled by the Huns of Uldin and the Goths of Sar at the behest of the Byzantine Emperor, Arcadius (395-408). The individual referred to as Sar was most likely the young Ostrogoth king Thorismund. Alternatively, however, based on the name, it is more likely to be about Sharaton – Shar or Sar, – nephew and co-ruler of Uldin. Sharaton could have led the Gothic contingent in this military operation, since he was the grandson of the Ostrogothic princess Valadamarca and, through her, a member of the Amalie dynasty (see below).

King Thorismund ruled for only 2 years (~405~407), as he killed himself by falling from his horse. The Ostrogoths mourned him bitterly and, as a sign of sadness, decided not to install a king for the next 40 years. /**Jordanes**, *Getica...*, § 251/. This claim by Jordanes seems strange, given the adherence to conservative tribal traditions that the Ostrogoths usually show. We believe that in this case the Gothic historian is trying to conceal the direct assumption of political power over the Ostrogoths at that historical moment by the subsequent Huno-Bulgarian khans Donatus (~409~412) and Sharaton/Karaton (~412~422). These paternal rulers were sons, grandsons and great-grandsons of the Bulgarian khans Alatheï/Alip-bi/Balthazar and his father Balamber, but on their mother's side – through the Ostrogothic princess Valadamarca – of the Ostrogothic kings Hunymund and his father Ermanarich. In other words, in the veins of Donatus and Sharaton flowed the blood of both the Huno-Bulgarian Khan dynasty Dulo and that of the Ostrogothic

Amali. So they ruled completely legally, by virtue of ancient inheritance law, several dozen tribes of different ethnicities.

10. Kan Mundzuk (~422-434), son of Uldin. Kans Attila (434-453) and Bleda (434-444), sons of Mundzuk

After 422, the Ostrogoths and the Gepids, who were still part of the Hunnic Tribal Union located mainly in Transylvania and Pannonia, were subservient to the sons of Kan Uldin, Rugila/Rua, Octar and Mundzuk, father of the famous Attila and Bleda.

We should take the time and discuss the administrative structure employed by Bulgarian rulers. When we use the short title Kan in reference to the supreme chieftain of the Hunnic Tribal Union, we actually mean the full title Kanas Uvigi. It should be clear that Kanas Uvigi was the ruler of a union or federation of nations, a title on the same order of Caesar/Καῖσαρ, Emperor (Rome, Byzantium, China, Japan), Shah (Persia), Hagan/Hakan (Mongolia, Hephthalia, the Avar or the Hazar tribal union).

Kanas Uvigi, apart from holding all of the political and religious power, was also the commander in chief of the united armies, sending his orders from a distance using couriers. In certain instances, he could personally take part in battles heading the main horde (comprising tribal units or the main tribal forces). The main horde would hold the central part of the front and its rear was based at the central ongal.

The right horde, ongal and, respectively, flank of any attack was commanded by the crown prince. The left one, was placed under the command of the elder or the most militarily versed brother of the Kanas Uvigi. Thus, the Kanas Uvigi's second in command were, as it were, the right-hand and the left-hand man of the commander in chief. /**Dimitar Sasalov**. *Bulgaria's Way* (Пътят на България). Sofia, „Кибѐа“ Publishing house, 2004, pp. 46-53/. They held the title of Kanas, which in time transformed into Knyaz (dropping of the first a sound). Of course, the prestigious title of Knyaz later got gradually appropriated by all tribal chieftains.

For example, if we apply this principle scheme to the above-mentioned personalities, we will get the following distribution of military-power functions:

Kanas Uvigi – Mundzuk kanas of
the right flank – Attila, assisted by Bleda;
kanas of the left flank – Rugila/Rua,
assisted by Octar.

Later, when Attila got the title of Kanas Uvigi and the supreme power that came with it, he distributed these roles among his sons and brothers.

We have had the opportunity to look into the etymology of the term Kanas Uvigi /see **V. Yordanov**. *Sacral Insignia and Names of the Bulgarian Kans of the Dulo Dynasty*. – in the „Gorgoni Magazine“, Book 3, 2019, p. 113/, but let us take some time to discuss the issue still. The lexeme *kan*, *234ul*, contains the morphemes *ka* (son) and *an* (sky, i.e. the sky god Tangra/Aton-Ra) and means *Son of the Sky*. In China we have the celestial emperor *Tiān*; in Japan, the emperor *Thenu* is son/descendant of the sky mother Amaterasu, who is the star of Sirius/Sothis (Isis)

and her son Inari (Horus); In Egypt, the Pharaoh is son of the sky-sun god Aton/Amun-PaHorus; in Sumer, the king is son of the celestial deity An/Anu; In Peru, the Great Inca is son of the sun and so on.

The lexeme *Uvigi* is made up of the morphemes *Uvi/Jovi* (the name of Zeus/Jupiter related to his zoomorphic image/totem – the sacred ram) and *Ig/Igi* (shepherd). It therefore means *Uvi/Jovi the Shepherd*.

Thus, the complete meaning of the term *Kanas Uvigi* is *Son of the sky* [Tangra/Aton-Ra], *Uvi the Shepherd* [Zeus/Jupiter]. This title is genealogically consistent because Zeus-Amun was indeed son of Ra and grandson of Aton. Naturally, the Huno-Bulgarian ruler saw himself and was seen by others as the son of the aforementioned deities (see the first rulers of the world according to the Genealogical table).

Wasn't this also true of the rulers of other empires? For example, the Persian Shah Kavad used the following title in his letters to Emperor Justinian: „Kavad, tsar of tsars [king of kings], tsar of the Eastern Sun to Flavius Justinianus, Καίσαρ [Caesar] of the Moon of the West!“ /**John Malalas**.

Chronographia, Book XVIII, § 477. – Available online at Восточная литература. Средневековые исторические источники Востока и Запада: **Йоанн Малала**. Хронография.

Translated by N. N. Bolgov of the Department of History of the Belgorod State University, 2016/. * * *

We hardly need to delve into the events related to the great Kan Attila as they are widely known. We would only like to illustrate his military and political powers with a conversation that took place in a meeting between western Roman and eastern Roman ambassadors, namely Romulus, Promotus, Romanus Rusticius Constantiolus on the one side and Maximin and Priscus. On the other:

„... Attila [Romulus reported – note by V.Y.], should he desire to launch a campaign, will do it with not too much of an effort and will not have to travel a long distance, as he could subjugate the Medes, the Parthians or the Persians and force them to pay tribute to him, given that his armies are no match for any nation.

When we [i.e. eastern Roman ambassadors Maximin and Priscus – note by V.Y.] mentioned that it would benefit us if he were to invade the Persians, Constantiolus admitted he was afraid that if Attila were to deal with the Persians overly easily he could come back not as the proxy for another ruler but as the ruler of all the land. Now, the Romans bring him gold because of the honorary title (which they gave to him), but if he were to conquer the Parthians, the Medes and the Persians, he would not be inclined to put up with the Romans' claim to the title that belongs to him and he would instead proclaim them his slaves, putting forward much more unpalatable demands of them.

The rank of which Constantiolus spoke, was the rank of an eastern Roman general, a title given to Attila by the eastern Roman Emperor Theodosius to mask the reason for the tribute which he was forced to pay to him every year. Thus, his countrymen would believe that what was in fact a tribute was just salary, just as all other eastern Roman generals received... Attila... will reject

the title the eastern Romans want to give him thinking it was a sign of respect, and will force to treat him not as their general but as their ruler ...“

/Priscus the Thracian. Ambassador to the court of Attila. Excerpts. Edited by Ivan Kolev. Sofia, published by ГYTA-H, 2017, § 10.19, 10.20: pp. 31-33/.

The exorbitant annual tribute paid out to Attila since 443, which was mentioned in the conversation between the ambassadors, was 2,100 liters of gold, which is 693 kilograms. This emptied the coffers, forcing the Emperor to levy extra taxes. This impacted adversely the wealthy citizens of the empire, even senators, who were forced to sell valuable objects from their households and even their wives' jewelry. Some of the poorer people resorted to suicide or faced starvation /same source, § 7.1: c. 7, 8/.

Apart from the very indicative conversation above, the qualities and the confidence of Attila are evident in many accounts from his contemporaries. We were tempted into offering here a difficult admission made some 200 years later by the Gothic historian Jordanes, which speaks volumes of the power of the Huns and their leader, whom he did not like very much:

„Attila united under his power the entire tribe [the Huns – note by V.Y.] and, gathering together the many other tribes that he had subjugated, planned to conquer the mightiest peoples of the world – the Romans and the Visigoths.“

/Jordanes, Getica..., § 181, 182/.

According to Jordanes' reluctant admission, only the Visigoths and the Romans had not submitted to the power of the Hun ruler, Attila.

11. Kan Ernak/Irnik/Belus-Kermek/Balash (463-489), son of Attila

In 448, a rebellion by the Agathyrsi, which was stoked by Byzantines, forced Attila to strip their chieftains of their power and appoint his eldest son, Ellac, as their Kan (kanas = knyaz). The remaining tribes inhabiting the Black Sea coast were also placed under his rule. /Priscus the Thracian, excerpts, § 10.8 pp. 20-21/.

Then, after Attila's death, the throne of the Hunnic Empire was inherited subsequently by his sons Ellac (453-454), Dengizich (454-469) and Ernak/Irnik (463-489).

The last one, himself, and his sons and descendants are members of the Hunno-Bulgarian dynasty and as such will be discussed later.

In 463 Ernak/Irnik/Belus-Kermek came of age (probably 18 years old) and was initiated. The second son of Attila – Dengizich – who at the time was the ruler of the Hunnic Empire, gave his younger brother Irnik the eastern half of it to rule. In his capital, which was most likely located on the banks of the Dnieper, Irnik proclaimed in 463 the establishment of a country of his own, Patria Onoguria (Fatherland of the Ten tribes). The kingdom, whose territory stretched between the Caucasus to the northeast and the Danube to the south, was inhabited by Onogurs,

Utigurs, Kutrigurs (eastern branch); Barsils; Agachars (formerly known as Agathyrsi); Saklani (i.e. Sklavini = Slavs); Antes; Urus-Alani (i.e. Roxolani); Murdasi/Mordva (Mordens as referred to by Jordanes), also known as Sarmatians; Merya (Merens by Jordanes).

The term *patria*, i.e. fatherland was no coincidence. It was chosen to underscore the fact that the ten ethnic groups were formed here in the past, although some of them had migrated east and later came back to their homeland to join their related neighboring tribes, who used to be a part of their ethos.

After the death of Dengizich in a battle with the Goths in Interior Pannonia in 469 /**Jordanes**, *Getica*..., § 272, 273/, Irnik took over his, western part, of the Hunnic Empire, but could not preserve its territorial integrity.

In 476 Emperor Zeno (474-491) appointed the Ostrogoth king Theodoric (474-526) military magistrate of the federal army and gave him the area of Sistova (ancient city of Nove, present-day Svishtov) to establish his headquarters. In 478, because of the raids of Thrace, Macedonia and Dalmatia by Theodoric and his ally Theodoric Strabo, Zeno was forced to strike an alliance with Irnik and his Bulgarians (Kutrigurs). The Kutrigur cavalry units dispatched by Irnik were amalgamated with the Bulgaro-Roman infantry of Sabinianus Magnus (the Great), lord of the city of Edessa, commander of the armies in Macedonia and Illyricum and the most capable general of Emperor Zeno. In 479 Sabinianus dealt a crushing defeat to Theodoric striking fear in the hearts of Goths. /**John of Antioch**. *World Chronicle*: fragments: 11:96; 12:97. Translated by G.

Tsankova-Petkova – В: ГИБИ, III, Sofia, 1960, page 32, 33/.

According to Marcellinus Comes, in 482 Theodoric again laid waste to Macedonia and Thessalia. To placate him, Emperor Zeno made him a member of the Imperial Council in 483 and lord of the federates of Coastal Dacia and Lower Moesia. Yet, in 487, the ever-disgruntled Theodoric raided Thrace once again. In 488 he was finally pushed to Italy /**Marcellinus Comes**, *Chronicle*; see the indicated years/.

Circling back to our story, in 486-487, in accordance with their treaty, Irnik and Zeno pushed Theodoric back from the northern shores of the Danube delta and Thrace because of his fickle stance on cooperation with Byzantium. Zeno wanted to push all the way to Italy the Ostrogoths, Gepids, Rogas, Heruli, etc. whose presence was detrimental to the interests of the empire and ultimately his ambition was realized successfully. The grateful Zeno rewarded Irnik by giving him back control of the provinces of Moesia and Scythia Minor, which used to belong to Dengizich. In 487, Irnik moved his capital there, presumably somewhere between the present-day cities of Vidin and Tarnovo.

After the death of the Persian Shah Yazdegerd II (438-457) during the prolonged war with the Kidarites in Khorasan (comprising parts of present-day Iran, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan), his throne was inherited by his younger son, Hormizd III under the regency of his mother, Denag. His elder brother, Peroz sought asylum with the king of the Hephthalites, Khingila I (~435~475). The two agreed that in exchange for his assistance, Khingila would take back Bactria, a part of Khorasan which was taken from the Hephthalites by the Persian Shah Bahram V (421-439), grandfather of Peroz. Khingila placed an army of 30,000 Hephthalites under the command of Peroz, who was also supported by the lords of the eastern provinces of Persia. In the ensuing war, Peroz managed to

gain the upper hand against his brother. /**Abu Ja`far Muhammad ibn Jarir at-Tabari**. The History of the Prophets and Kings, § IX, 858; § X, 863-

865; § XIIIa, 871; § XIV, 872. – Available online at Восточная литература. Средневековые исторические источники Востока и Запада: **Ат-Табари**. История пророков и царей. Translated by A. N. Schmitd based on the text of Материалы по истории Средней Азии и

Ирана. Ученые записки Института востоковедения, volume 16, 1958/.

Only nine years later, the kindness of Khingila was forgotten. Taking advantage of the peace that existed between Persia and Byzantium due to Emperor Leo I Thracian's (457-474) preoccupation with the war against the Vandals, the Persian Shah Peroz I (459-484) wanted to retake Bactria, one of the Hephthalite provinces, which he had to give up to get the throne. The Hephthalite ruler Khingila I was informed of these ambitions and prepared for the attack by attracting on his side Kan Irnik, who arrived in Bactria with his cavalry. The BulgarianHephthalite treaty of alliance was reinforced by the marriage of Khingila's daughter to the Bulgarian Kan /**Procopius of Caesarea**. Persian War, book I, § III, 1, 2. – Available online at Электронная библиотека Royallib.ru: **Прокопий Кесарийский**. Война с персами. Translated by A. A. Chekalovoi/.

In 468 Peroz invaded Bactria with his entire army. In the ensuing battle, part of Irnik's cavalry lured the Persians and their ruler in trap that had been prepared beforehand. Surrounded in a valley stretching between two steep wooded slopes, Peroz was offered to surrender. After a brief talk with his officers and magistrates, he accepted the humiliating terms for surrender: he had to bow in public before Irnik and Khingila and swear in accordance with the old customs (before a lump of salt) that he would never cross the established border; he had to give up as a hostage his young son, Kavad, who would be returned to him upon payment of tribute in the amount of thirty bags of gold. Lastly, as an added guarantee Peroz had to give one of his daughters' hand in marriage to Khingila /**same source**, § III, 8-28/.

In 484, at the request of the Byzantine Emperor Zeno (474-491), who was waging war with Persia along its western border, Irnik attacked the Persians from the east traversing the Caucasus. Of course, Irnik yet again struck an alliance with the closely related Hun-Hephthalite tribes, who were ruled by Akhshunwar II (~475~499) at the time. This time the battleground was a wide field at the entrance of a mountain pass, which Persians would often use for their invasions. The Huns and Hephthalites managed to surprise their enemies. They had dug up a system of deep trenches, which then were covered with reeds and dirt. There was only a narrow path between the trenches, which they had marked in a way that was indiscernible to the enemy /**same source**, Book I, § IV, 1-8/.

When the two armies squared off, a similar tactic was employed. A cavalry unit of Irnik's men conducted a reconnaissance in force operation against the Persians and baited them to attack. The Huns retreated using the narrow path between the trenches. The impatient Peroz launched a wide charge but he himself, most of his sons and brothers and almost the entire army he led tumbled into the ditches and perished /**Procopius**. Persian War, Book I, § IV, 9-14; **Muhammad ibn Jarir at-Tabari**. The History of the Prophets and Kings, § XIV, 872; § XIV, 878, 879/.

Of the surviving sons of Peroz who did not take part in the battle, the eldest, the 35-year-old

Kavad was chosen to inherit his father's throne. However, he was held hostage until 488 by the Hephthalites as a guarantee for the peace between the two kingdoms. The victors appointed Irnik as Shah of Persia. The latter took the name Balash (**photo 7**) and ruled the defeated and pacified empire between 484 and 488. All historians whose accounts describe this moment in history – Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari, Ferdowsi, Yeshu Stilit, Procopius of Caesarea, Nizam al-Mulk – seem to be confused and lacking conviction when they refer to Balash, Valash (according to Procopius – Vlasa) either as brother of Peroz or as his son (brother of Kavad) /**Procopius**. *Persian War*, Book I, § IV, 32-35; V, 1-4; **Muhammad ibn Jarir at-Tabari**, § XVI, 883; § XVII, 883/.



Photo 7. Silver Dirham of Shah Balash (484-488).

This confusion stems from the fact that at that time it was embarrassing and politically incorrect for chroniclers of the Persian Empire (*Book of Kings*), and even for the foreign chroniclers who used their accounts as sources, to put in writing that for no less than four years Persians had to endure in the capital city of Ctesiphon a ruler and a Shah that did not belong to the Mede elite but in fact was a foreigner, namely the Kan of Patria Onoguria, Irnik, even though he was one of the sons of the mighty Attila.

Interestingly, Muhammad ibn Jarir at-Tabari (839-923) in his book *The History of the Prophets and Kings*, which was based on old Persian records, mentions that to ensure the prosperity of the kingdom, Balash took great care for the wellbeing of his subjects, the common Persians. He achieved this by keeping under strict control the central and local administration /**Muhammad ibn Jarir at-Tabari**, *The History of the Prophets and Kings*..., § XVI, 883/.

By the end of 488 or in 489 Kavad was allowed to reclaim the Persian throne. It is not certain (the evidence being contradictory) whether Balash (Irnik) was blinded by Mede noblemen Sohra and Zarmihr and later died in the Persian capital of Ctesiphon, or whether he returned to his new capital in Lower Moesia where he lived out the rest of his days (**photos 8, 9, 10**).

It is certain, however, that Kavad retook his throne and held it until 496, when he suffered another political fiasco. He attempted to implement a religious reform in order to dilute the restrictive influence of the Zoroastrianist caste and part of the

aristocracy. For this purpose, he expanded the role of the Mazdak (one of the sects of Zoroastrianism) in the central administration. They advocated the idea that the rich must share their wealth with the poor to build a fair and egalitarian society. However, the newly empowered mobed (religious leaders) subjected the wealthiest Persians to a campaign of unmitigated despoilment, Shah Kavad was quickly replaced by his younger brother Jamasp (496-498/9). Kavad was exiled to a fortress dubbed the „Palace of oblivion“. /**Procopius**. Persian War, Book I, § V, 1-9; **Muhammad ibn Jarir at-Tabari**, § XVIII, 884; § XIX, 885/.



Photo 8



Photo 9



Photo 10

Photos 8, 9, 10. Part of the hoard of gold vessels of the Bulgarian Kans of the Dulo dynasty, buried in 969 on the western border of then-Bulgaria which was discovered in 1799 in the town of Nagyszentmiklós, Transylvania (which at the time was within the boundaries of Astro-Hungary). Currently, the treasure is kept at the Kunsthistorisches Museum of Vienna, Austria. Photo, courtesy of the author.

We believe one part of the vessels were crafted by Bulgarian master jewelers and the other, by Persians craftsmen. It was because of Kan Irnik/Balash that they were added to the royal treasure of

the Bulgarian dynasty. It can be argued that the victorious horseman, who is depicted on the first pitcher (picture 4), is none other than Kan Irnik, who commissioned the piece.

In 498/9 Kavad's wife was allowed to come and visit him at the fortress. The two made an escape plan which was executed with the help of Siyâvuš or Siyâvash, a young nobleman – probably their own son. During one of the visits of Kavad's loyal wife, they swapped clothes so Kavad could walk out disguised as her and find Siyâvuš who was hiding not far from the castle with several horses. Kavad and Siyâvuš escaped successfully to the Hephthalites and the guards did not find out what had transpired for a few days /**Procopius**. Persian War, Book I, § VI, 1-10/. Naturally, when the fugitive Kavad came to the Hephthalite ruler Akhshunwar II (~475~499), the latter could not forego the chance of getting involved in Persian internal affairs, acquiring an ally instead of an enemy. He married Kavad to one of his daughters and based on that – being the son in law to the Hephthalite royal dynasty – Kavad was given a large army to try and retake the Persian throne. On his way to Ctesiphon, Kavad did not face any meaningful opposition so he quickly and mercilessly dealt with his enemies and appointed Siyâvuš „adrastadaran salana“ – supervisor of all imperial administrative and military personnel. Thus, in 499 Kavad retook the Persian throne, after two interruptions between 484 and 488 and between 496-499, and held it until 531 by being extremely careful and suspicious of even the people from his inner circle. For example, his first-born son Kaos/Kavus supported the dangerous Mazdak but Kavad and his younger son Khosrow I Anurshivan (the subsequent Shah: 531-579) imposed their will on him and in 528 liquidated the sect which they deemed detrimental to the interest of the Persian state /**Procopius**, § VI, 10-19; **Muhammad ibn Jarir at-Tabari**, § XX, 890, 891; XXIII, 896/.

Khosrow I was born in 501 and was Kavad's son from his marriage in 499 to the daughter of Akhshunwar II. Apparently, the heir apparent, Kaos/Kavus, was Kavad's son from his first wife, whom he was forced to marry following the defeat following the death of his father, Peroz, in the war of 484. This first wife was likely the daughter of Kan Irnik who defeated Peroz that year. If she and her son Siyâvuš helped Kavad escape from exile and find asylum with the Hephthalites before retaking his throne in 499, then the names used in the different records – Siyâvuš and Kaos/Kavus – apparently refer to one and the same person, the fifteen-year-old nobleman

Siyâvash, grandson of Irnik and rightful heir to the throne of Persia.

As we already mentioned, in 499 Kavad (**photo 11**) entrusted his son and savior, Siyâvuš (Siyâvash), with the supreme executive power in the empire promoting him to a status of a defacto co-ruler and future heir to the throne. However, by around 528-531 the situation changed. Khosrow, the already grown-up younger son of Kavad had become his favorite not without the help of the Shah's second wife. His first wife, the daughter of Irnik /Balash was apparently either killed or had taken her own life at the Castle of Oblivion where she had taken the place of Kavad (see above). Thus, the son of Kavad's first wife, the heir to the throne, Siyâvuš /Kaos, fell out of favor and in 531 when his father, Kavad, was on his death bed, his brother Khosrow dispatched him mercilessly before doing the same with the rest of his brothers /**Procopius of Caesarea**.

Persian War, Book I, § XI, 20-38; § XXI, 17-23; § XXIII, 1-6; **John Malalas**. Chronographia, Book XVII, 486/.



Photo 11. Fiala with the image of Kavad hunting mouflons.

Ultimately, this is a story of a vicious and unscrupulous fight for power among blood relatives that was destined to ensure unity in the government of the Persian state. The formal reasons or motives that were used by the perpetrators of these crimes to absolve themselves in the eyes of society were written down by the historians. We would like to offer a text by Procopius on the matter mostly because it contains information about the character of Siyâvuš (Siyâvash), grandson of Irnik and lawful heir to the Persian throne:

„Later [after the peace talks between the Eastern Roman Empire and Persia in 531 – note by V.Y.] Mevod slandered Siyâvuš [Magister mevod and Prince Siyâvuš were the envoys representing Persia – note by V.Y.] by telling Kavad that the prince, despite an explicit warning against it, started a vicious argument about Lazica [another name for Colchida, present-day Georgia – note by V.Y.], thereby sabotaging the peace talks... The enemies of Siyâvuš, who also had accused him of great many transgressions, put him on trial. The trial was before the Council of the Persian, which comprised people who were there driven by their own displeasure with the prince rather than by a feeling of duty to uphold the law. They were irked by his power as his position was rather uncommon for them, and they disliked his character. Although Siyâvuš was a principled man and managed the justice system fairly and punctually, he was prone to pride and arrogance much more than the others were... His accusers pointed out... that he was a man who was not interested in living in accordance with the existing customs... According to them, he worshipped some new deities; he had recently buried his late wife although Persian laws forbade consigning the bodies of their dead to the earth [it was customary dead bodies to be left in cages where vultures would feast on their flesh ensuring their reincarnation – note by V.Y.]. Thus, the tribunal sentenced the man to death. Kavad cared about Siyâvuš as one would for a comrade [in fact his firstborn son, something Procopius was apparently oblivious to – note by

V.Y.] but did not wish to save him..., but rather announced that he did not want to break Persian law. Interestingly, he owed his life to Siyâvuš because Siyâvuš was the main reason why he survived and reclaimed his throne [Kavad's first wife and their son, Siyâvuš/Siyâvash, rescued the king when after a coup against him he was exiled to the Castle of Oblivion – note by V.Y.]. This is how Siyâvuš was judged and how his days ended.“

/Procopius of Caesarea. Persian War, Book I, § XI, 31-37/.

* * *

Let us go back in time and shed some light on another string of events. Based on the „Suidae Lexicon“, in about 465, shortly after Irnik/Belus-Kermek proclaimed the creation of Patria Onoguria, his main ongal on the Dnieper was visited by tribes from the Jetisu Region Sabir, namely Saragurs and Magyars, who were persecuted by the Avars (Rourans or Hephthalites). Their elders requested permission from the Hunnic-Bulgarian Kan to settle on his land and to be placed under his protection. He granted their request but this put him on collision course with the Avars, a formidable opponent at the time.

The Bulgar record, where Sabirs are referred to as Sabars, reads the following: „The homeland of the Sabars [i.e. Sabir – note by V.Y.] was the Seven Rivers but they were banished from there by the Avars – the last remaining Hons [Huns] in Chin [China].“ /**Bakhshi Iman**. Djagfar Tarikhy..., p. 20/.

The chronicle, however, offers an interesting account of how the situation developed from there. The Murdas, also known as Sarmatians, who lived on the lands between the Don and the Volga /see **Valentin Yordanov**. Thracians, Kotrags and Bulgarians: § 5. The Murdas (Mordva) tribal group and the peoples that derived from it published. – In **Gorgoni Magazine**, Book 3, 2019, c. 143-151/, which did not readily accept the rule of the Hunnic-Bulgarian dynasty secretly sought alliance with the warlike Sabir, which was aligned against the policies of Belus-Kermek (Irnik). The ruler of Patria Onoguria got out of the bind created by the Avars standing on his eastern border and the conspiracy of the Murdas and Sabir tribes in 468 by marrying one of the daughters of the Khagan of the Masguts in the Jetisu Region, or the aforementioned Khingila. Thus, Irnik avoided a new war and „rescued his people from annihilation“.

It should be underscored that at the start of this text in the Bulgar record the invaders from the East were called Avars whereas by the end of it they were referred to as Masguts: „the Masguts whom the Murdas feared greatly“ /**same source**/.

This means that the Avar and Masgut (Massagetae) tribes were related and partially identical given that, as we explained above, these were the Massagetae who had migrated through the Jetisu Region on their way⁷ to Mongolia and Northern China, where, as neighbors of the Huns, the Mongols and the Uyghurs (Ugrians), their ethnic profile was influenced by the Huns and they adopted the Oghuric language, one of the Turkic dialects. It is possible that the linguistic change observed in some of the Huno-Massagetae tribes, like the Hephthalites, Avars and so on, was brought about by the practice of abducting women en masse during wars or raids against Chinese or Turkic Peoples, as the tradition of war dictated at the time. As a result, the new generations of tall, strongly-built and blue-eyed

Massagetae, raised by their Turkic-speaking mothers, started speaking a Turkic dialect themselves. After enough generations, the old Massagetae language (i.e. Saklan or Sklavenian) was, naturally, forgotten.

The Massagetae who lived in the east were called Ak-Masguts = white Massagetae or white Huns or Hephthalites. The Massagetae who did not partake in the earlier migration and stayed in their homelands in Moesia-Scythia (Saklan) kara-Masguts = black Massagetae, i.e. denizens of the West, were also known as Saklani or Sklavini.

To be entirely certain which people the ethnonym Massagetae refers to, we should skip ahead in time a little. In his book „The Gothic War“, Procopius of Caesarea describes as an eye witness the siege of Rome in 537-538 by the enormous army of the Ostrogoth King Vitiges (536-540). The defense of Rome was entrusted to commander Belisarius (Procopius was his secretary), who was dispatched by Justinian I. He led a smaller fierce, party of which was an allied Hun cavalry. As he describes the feats of heroism by the Huns, Procopius sometimes refers to them as Huns and sometimes as Massagetae, using the two ethnonyms interchangeably. He underscores that their ability to shoot their bows while at full gallop (a characteristic Scythian skill) set them apart from the Goths, whose cavalry did not use bows and arrows (their archers were always on foot), but instead wielded short, metallic spears (javelins) and swords. The author mentions the names of several warriors. Horsamant, who was one of the glorious bodyguards of Belisarius, a native Massagetae born in Bokha, and Kutila, a Thracian warrior. All three were killed in the field of battle /**Procopius of Caesarea**. The Gothic War, Book I, 27; Book II, 1, 2. – Available online at

Электронная библиотека Royallib.ru. Translated by Sergey Petrović Kondratiev/.

Evidently, the author is talking about the black Massagetae (kara-Masguts), also known as Kutrigurs or Bulgarians, which at the time were allies of Byzantium under federative treaty. At the time, Kutrigurs lived in the western parts of Onoguria and were ruled by Zaber Kan (531- 563), son of Dzhurash Masgut (489-505) and grandson of Irnik (463-489). The central camp of Zaber Kan was in present-day Odessa and after 560 was moved to в Pannonia.

The Masgut Khagan in the Seven Rivers Region which was mentioned in the Bulgar record, and whose daughter was married to Belus-Kermek (Irnik) in 468 is none other than Khingila I (~435~475), the creator of the Hephthalite tribal union. This is yet another solid argument in favor of the ethnic closeness between Hephthalites and Avars and, in particular, in favor of the claim that Avars were one of the tribes of the Rouran or Hephthalite tribal union.

In the second half of the 6th century, Avars launched a reconnaissance in force mission to the west in the hope of preparing the ground for the migration of the entire Massagetae i.e. Hephthalite confederation to a better-protected area in the context of the pressure the Turkic Khaganate was exerting on the Avars from the east. In time, the Turkic peoples indeed managed to gradually conquer the powerful Hephthalites in the Jetisu Region, assimilating their kingdom. After the mid 7th century, another Turkic wave – the Khazar Turkic peoples – spilled over Kubrat's Bulgaria, forcing his five sons to separate.

12. Kan Dzhurash Masgut (489-505), son of Belus-Kermek/Irnik

Belus-Kermek/Irnik's son from the daughter of Khingila was given the name Dzhurash Masgut. /**Bakhshi Iman**, Djagfar Tarikhy..., p. 20/. Dzhurash, at the time, was also the name of the strategically important area in the Northeastern Caucasus, from where Irnik and his son used to launch their military campaigns against Persia. The moniker Masgut or Massagetae implies that he was related by blood to the Massagetae (and thus to the Avar) ruling dynast. For his descendants in the 7th, this blood relation played a crucial role for the survival of three of the Bulgarian kingdoms: Ak Bulgar – white of East Bulgaria, i.e. Volga Bulgaria; Kara-Bulgar – Black or West Bulgaria (renamed in the 10th century to Kyivan Rus) and Danubian Bulgaria.

Kan Dzhurash-Masgut, also known as Buzan, ruled his father's Patria Onoguria, which stretched between the Volga and the Danube and included Lower Moesia. Naturally, his political influence spread over the buffer areas to the northeast of Volga all the way to the Caucasus, and to the southwest in Transylvania and Pannonia. The latter was a lost heritage from the Kan's grandfather, Attila. What is more, the center of Attila's empire was located there. The ruins of the capital city and the seven key cities were still visible, reminding the living contemporaries of those days done by. Attila's grandson, Dzhurash, therefore focused his military campaign there. At that time, imperial control over the northwestern periphery of Byzantium, had waned as a result of the wars waged by Anastasius I (491-518; Thracian dynasty), namely the Isaurian War (492-497) and later the Persian War (502-506). Naturally, Kan Dzhurash Masgut took advantage of the favorable geopolitical situation and pursued his plans. In 492-493 he took his Hun-Kutrigurs on demonstrative campaigns in Thrace and Macedonia overcoming easily the weakened Byzantine contingents. He even built a fortress in the present-day Bulgarian city of Vidin.

In 499, Kan Dzhurash unfolded the second stage of his plan for Thrace. Anastasius ordered Evaristus, the then-magistrate of Illyricum, to head southeast and meet the Bulgarian invading force with an army of 15,000 soldiers that were placed in his command. At Tzurta/Tzorlu River not far from the ancient city of Tzouroulum (present-day Çorlu), some 80 kilometers from Constantinople, the East-Roman army were dealt a crushing defeat. Marcellinus Comes writes: „The battle began near the Tzurta River, where more than four thousand of our soldiers died, either in flight or by throwing themselves from the high river bank. Thus the Illyrian military power perished there, and the commanders Nicostratus, Innocentius, Tankus, and Aquilinus were killed.“
/Marcellinus Comes, Chronicle, § year 499/.

In 502, Vidin fortress was used by Kan Dzhurash as a staging ground of his campaign to gradually take control of the strategically important Banat region in Interior Dacia. He gave control of it in 505 to his son from the Gepid princess Kan Tatra/Banat Mundo. Dzhurash Masgut's last military campaign was in Illyricum in 504 when he and his Gepid allies defeated the army of the Ostrogoth king Theodoric – de factor king and formally imperial regent of Italy (493-526). In doing so, Dzhurash did Anastasius a favor because he, like his predecessor, Zeno, wanted to use the help of the Hunno-Bulgarians to push Theodoric and his Goths west.

13. Kan Tatra-Banat/Mundo (505-536), son of Dzhurash Masgut. Cooperation with and opposition to Theodoric, Sabinianus, Vitalian and Justinian

Of Dzhurash's sons, two stood out, Tatra/Mundo and Zaber Kan. The first of them, TatraBanat/Bandzhar/Mundo (505~536), unlike his father was able to settle permanently on the banks of the middle Danube – the former lands of the kans Alatheus/Alyp-bi (378-387), Uldin (387-409), Donat (409-412), Charaton (412-422), Mundzuk (422-434), Attila (434-453) and Dengizich (454-469). Picking up his father's (Dzhurash Masgut) policy of conquest right where he had left off, Kan Mundo managed to create a permanent foothold in the Byzantine provinces of Illyricum whose capital was the city of Sirmium and Interior Dacia, whose center was the strategically important area of Banat, thanks to being related on his mother's side to the Gepid king. In the western half of Onoguria, besides the Hun-Kutrigurs, there were other tribes such as the Gepids, the Veneti, the Slavini, the Antes and the Heruls, among others.

Some ancient authors insist that Mundo descended from the royal dynasty of the Gepids. For example, John Malalas writes: „During the consulate of Decius [Flavius Decius, Consul of the Eastern Roman Empire in 529 – note by V.Y.] the Romans were joined by Mund, a native Gepid, son of Rex [i.e. the king – note by V.Y.], who after the death of his father ended up with his uncle [or grandfather? – note by V.Y.] Thraustila, who lived in Sirmium.“ /**John Malalas**.

Chronographia, Book XVII, § 477/.

Theophanes writes: „... The Roman domains were entered by Mund, of the Gepid tribe, son of Giesmus [Joannes Zonaras uses the name Giesma; both forms are metathesis of Masge/Musgi, i.e. Masget/Musgit/Masgut – note by V.Y.]. The story of Mund is as follows. After the death of his father [Masgut in 505 – note by V.Y.], Mund went to Ric [i.e. the king of the Gepids – note by V.Y.], his maternal grandfather and lord of Sirmium. Upon learning this, the ruler of Rome, Theodoric, sent an invitation to Mund, as a result of which Mund went to Theodoric and lived with him as a military associate. After the death of Theodoric [526 – note by V.Y.], Mund returned to the Danube River and asked Emperor Justinian to let him stay in his country. He arrived in Constantinople, where the emperor welcomed him and his son [Mauricius – note by V.Y.] kindly and with great respect. And he sent them, appointing Mund as commander of Illyricum.“ /**Theophanes the Confessor**. Chronicle..., § 167/.

Jordanes, however, writes that Mundo was descended from the Attila's Clan: „Mundon is a branch [offshoot – note by V.Y.] of the former Attilian genus.“ („... Mundon a Attilanis quondam origin descendens“). /**Jordanes**. Getica, § 301; see also **G. Krastevich**. The Bulgarian History... (Българска история...), Vol. 2, p. 78/.

We believe that Kan Mundo was the son of the Bulgarian Kan Dzhurash Masgut (son of Ernak/Irnik and grandson of Attila) and a Gepid princess, whose father, the king of the Gepids (Thraustila or Thrauseric?) ruled in 505 the province of Illyricum, whose capital was the city of Sirmium. Upon learning that Mundo had arrived at Sirmium, Theodoric the Great (474-526) immediately invited him to Rome. The Gothic king cunningly got Mundo on his side to weaken his adversaries, the Byzantines, who had banished him from Illyricum, by taking away from them

two potential allies, the Kutrigurs and the Gepids, who at the time were ruled by Mundo. Of course, to guarantee his loyalty, we assume that Theodoric, among other things, offered him a dynastic marriage to a noble woman from his inner circle. Mundo's son, Mauricius, who in 526 accompanied his father (i.e. 21 years later) on his visit to Justinian's court in Constantinople, where the two were received kindly and with great reverence /see the quotation above by **Theophanes**/, was a product of this marriage.

Thus, at the very start of his rule, by striking an alliance with Theodoric the Great against the Eastern Roman Empire, Kan Tatra/Banat Mundo changed the political alignment of Onoguria that had been established by his father, Masgut. Also in 505, at Margum (Ćuprija) Mundo's forces, accompanied by Ostrogoths and a unit led by Theodoric's general Pitzia, dealt a crushing defeat to the army of the Eastern Roman Empire led by Flavius Sabinianus, which comprised 10,000 Bulgarian federates from Macedonia.

A short while before that, Pitzia had surprisingly attacked and taken the center of the Province of Illyricum, the city of Sirmium, which was now controlled by the Ostrogoths. The Gepid king Thrauseric left the city in panic along with part of his army and in doing so left behind his own mother. /**Magnus Felix Ennodius**. Panegyric of Theodoric. Translated by M. Voynov. – In: *Christomathy on the History of Bulgaria* (Христоматия по история на България), Vol. I, pp. 5557; **John Malalas**. *Chronographia*, Book XVII, § 477; **Magnus Aurelius Cassiodorus Senator**. *Chronicle*, § 1143-1144; see also **G. Krastevich**. *Българска история...*, Vol. 2, pp. 79, 80; as well as **Gancho Tsenov**. *The Ancestral Fatherland and the Proto-Language of the Bulgarians* (Праотечеството и праезикът на българите). First edition 1907. Second edition, Sofia, „Heliopolis“ Publishing house, 2005, pp. 66-75/.

Flavius Sabinianus was the son of Sabinianus the Great (see above). He had inherited his father's lands in Edessa and the province (Macedonia), and his military title of Magister Militum of Macedonia and Illyricum. In 505 he was appointed consul of the Eastern Roman Empire. The aforementioned Bulgarian federates, citizens of Macedonia, were most likely the descendants of the Hun-Kutrigurs of Ayp-bi/Alatheus, the vanquisher of Emperor Valens in the battle at Adrianopolis in 378. They had headed for Pannonia (see above) right after the battle from where, evidently, they made their way south and settled permanently in Macedonia. It is possible that their princes, naturalized Roman feudals and military leaders from the Sabinianus' clan, could be related to the famous kans Balamir/Balamber and Ayp-bi/Alatheus.

The chain of events that had led to this situation was paradoxical in the sense that the Kutrigur federates (Bulgarians), who had lived in Byzantium for close to 130 years, in 505 squared off against their own kin, the Bulgarians led by Kan Mundo, who had come from the north with a subsequent wave of migrations.

Historians from the Late Antiquity – Early Middle Age period often tend to indulge in politically motivated assessments and to downplay the contributions to European culture of HunKutrigurs, also referred to as Bulgarians. To contextualize this statement, here is an indicative and, frankly, stunning assessment in reference to them by Magnus Felix Ennodius (473-521), Bishop of Pavia and close personal friend of the Ostrogoth king Theodoric the Great:

„I see before my eyes the Chieftain of the Bulgarians [Vulgarum Ductor, which is in reference to Flavius Sabinianus – note by V.Y.] among his invincible tribe... This is the people who before you [before King Theodoric – note by V.Y.] had everything it ever wished for; a people who attained titles, who earned its nobility with the blood of their enemy, for whom the battlefield was a source of glory for the entire family...; they are a people who, before facing you in battle [i.e. Theodoric – note by V.Y.], had never met an opponent that could stand up to them... They were never hampered, as it is reasonable to expect, by mountain ranges, rivers or lack of food, because they believe it is privilege enough to be able to drink mare milk. Who could ever be successful against an enemy who is carried and fed by his swift animal?“

/Magnus Ennodius, source as mentioned above./

In 513-515 Kan Tatra/Banat Mundo led his Kutrigur cavalry to help the pretender to the Byzantine throne, Vitalian, Magister Militum of the Massagetae federates and proxy for Moesia and Scythia, in his civil war against Emperor Anastasius. Constantinople was put under a prolonged siege while talks were held. After he received a large ransom and the authority of Vitalian was extended to Thrace, the Huns and the Massagetae retreated from the capital. In 520, Emperor Justin I appointed Vitalian consul of the East and arranged for him a residence in Constantinople. However, a little later the Emperor had the rebellious federate assassinated there

/John Malalas. Chronographia, Book XVII, § 195/.

In 518 Anastasius died without appointing heir. The commander of the palace guard, the 67year-old Justin I took the vacant imperial throne. In 527 he was succeeded by his young nephew and first assistant Flavius Petrus Sabbatius (Justinian I: 527-565; **photo 12**). Ethnically, Justin (Upravda) and Justinian were Romanized Thracco-Bulgarians from Macedonia, born in a small settlement near the town of Bederiana (present-day Badar) near Skuple (Skopje). They rose to prominence through talent and hard work in their military careers /Procopius of Caesarea. Persian War, Book I, § XI, 1; § XIII, 1; John Malalas. Chronographia, Book XVII, § 194, 201, 202/.



Photo 12. Gold solidus of Justinian on which the Emperor is depicted as Thracian heros, whose analogue with Bulgarians was the Shining horseman (Siyâvash) and Svetovit for Slavs.

Interestingly, the Latin name Justin is a translation of the Old Bulgarian personal name Upravda („supporter of truth, justice and fairness“). It is also worth noting that the surname Sabbatius may be hypothetically related to the military and patrician family Sabinianus, the feudal rulers of Voden.

As it was already mentioned, soon after the death of Theodoric the Great in 526, Kan Mundo parted ways with his Goth allies and realigned with the Eastern Roman Empire. During the consulship of Flavius Decius (529), Mundo sent ambassadors to Justinian I, who had already showed his talent as statesman, with a request „to take him under his rule“ (see the above texts by Malalas and Theophanes). Evidently, this was done through a federative treaty. Being in great need of an ally in the northeastern periphery of the empire, Justinian invited Mundo to Constantinople and „appointed him Stratilatus to the people of Illyricum“. Of course, Mundo justified his trust by repelling the attacks of „a multitude of different barbarians..., thanks to which peace was established in Thrace“. /**John Malalas**. *Chronographia*, Book XVII, § 477/. Another account of heroic deeds by Kan Mundo comes to us from Marcellinus Comes:

„530 year. The commander of the Illyrian infantry and cavalry, Mundo, the first of all Roman commanders, attacked the Getae [Goths – note by V.Y.], who had roamed Illyricum for a long time, and chased them away after dispatching a great many of them.“

/**Marcellinus Comes**. *Chronicle*, § year 530/.

Upon the start of his administration, Justinian appointed Belisarius commander of his Eastern army. He was born in the ancient city of Germanea (present-day town of Sapareva Banya) and had started his military career under the Emperor's uncle, Justin. In the contested war with Persia for Byzantine Mesopotamia – Province of Osrhoene, Belisarius achieved victory in 530 in the battle at Dara, but lost the battles

of 531 near Nicephorium and Osrhoene. Because of these losses, Justinian had temporarily suspended Belisarius and given him the command of Mundo's Eastern army (**photo 13**). /**John Malalas**. *Chronographia*, Book XVII, § 482-484/.

In the war against the Vandals and the prolonged military conflict with the Ostrogoths in Italy, Belisarius gained experience and made a name for himself as a great strategist and military commander.



Photo 13. Emperor Justinian and Belisarius at his right arm depicted in a mosaic in Ravenna commemorating the return of Italy to the Empire. It is beyond doubt that one of the Patricians in Justin's retinue was his ally, Mundo (likely the noble man standing next to Belisarius), who at the time had contributed significantly to the stabilization of the Byzantine state.

In December 531 and January 532, Constantinople was rocked by the *Nika riots*. During the *Idias* – chariot races at the hippodrome, – the blue and the green parties (i.e. „Veneti“ and „Prasini“) rose up against Justinian, nominated as their Emperor the Magistrate Hypatius, nephew of Anastasius, and requested the lowering of taxes and the firing of several corrupt higher magistrates. The rioters resorted to violence and lit fires, which burned down the *St. Sofia Cathedral*, part of the imperial palace and the homes of many senators and noblemen. The riots and the immense devastation of the city required the military to step in. It was led by commanders loyal to Justinian such as Mundo, Belisarius, Constantiolus and Basilides. Ultimately, some 30,000 rioters were killed. /**Procopius of Caesarea**. *The Buildings*, I, 20-26. – Available online at Электронная библиотека Royallib.ru: **Procopius of Caesarea**. О постройках; **Same author**.

Persian War, Book I, § XXIV; **John Malalas**. *Chronographia*, Book XVII, § 486-488/.

In 536, which marked the ninth year since the accession of Justinian, the Emperor launched a military campaign against the Goths in Dalmatia:

„He ordered Mund, the commander in chief for Illyricum, to invade Dalmatia, which was controlled by the Goths, and to attempt to capture Salona. Mund was a native barbarian but extremely loyal to the Emperor and well-versed in the art of war... Mund, with the forces that were with him, arrived in Dalmatia and engaged the Goths that stood in front of him in battle. After defeating them in open battle, he captured Salona.“

/Procopius. The Gothic War, Book I, § 33, 34/.

The ensuing reaction by the Goths has been described as follows:

„The Goths, commanded by Azinanius, Grippa and others, arrived in Dalmatia with a large army. On their approach to Salona they were met by Mundo's son, Mauricius, who had taken a relatively small number of soldiers with him because he was on a reconnaissance mission. Still, a vicious battle broke out in which the Goths lost their foremost and bravest warriors and the Romans lost almost all of their soldiers including their commander, Mauricius. When Mund heard what had transpired, deeply shaken by grief and rage, he descended on the enemy immediately and without any strategy. What ensued was a vicious battle which ended up being a Pyrrhic victory for the Romans. Too many of the enemy were slain and those that turned and fled were chased down and killed by Mund, who was completely unable to control himself in the wake of his son's death. As a result, he, himself was killed by one of the fleeing warriors. When this happened, the chase was called off and the two forces retreated back to their original location.“

/Procopius. The Gothic War, Book I, § 38, 39. – In: Электронная библиотека Royallib.ru. Translated by S. P. Kondratiev/.

This text is evidence that Kan Mundo died in 536. Between 505 and 526, West Onoguria, which was ruled by him, was in a coalition with the Roman-Ostrogoth kingdom of King Theodoric. Between 526 and 536, Mundo was in a coalition with the Eastern Roman Empire and Emperor Justinian. Thus, Kan Tatra/Banat Mundo ruled for a total of 31 years. This period could have been much longer had it not been for the death of his young son, Mauricius.

In 541, the town of Tarbesion, Venetia Province (Northeastern Italy), became a battlefield for the armies of the Gothic King Ildibad and the Roman general Vitalian who led Roman and Herul soldiers. Vitalian suffered defeat: „This battle resulted in the death of the majority of the Eruls and their leader, Visandar. Here, Theodimund, son of Mauricius and grandson of Mundo, still a boy, risked his life but managed to escape with Vitalian.“ /Procopius. Gothic War, Book III, § 215/. The aforementioned Theodimund, grandson of Mundo, is not mentioned anywhere else in the available records.

In 551, when Justinian changed the leadership of the military campaign against the Goths in Italy by substituting Belisarius with the patrician Narses, new allies were sourced to go along the mercenary units of Huns, Eruls, Gepids and Persians. Fighting in Asbadus' unit was a Romanized Erul by the name of Aruf, who was

married to the daughter of Mauricius, the first-born son of Mundo /**Procopius**. Gothic War, Book IV, § 106/. Unfortunately, this granddaughter of Mundo has not been mentioned elsewhere either.

14. Kans Ambazuk (498-518) and Bolakh/Bolkh (503-527), sons of Ellacus

Let us go back in time a little and take a look at the events that took place in East Onoguria, or rather its easternmost periphery. It should be noted that while there is ample historical evidence regarding the descendants of Irnik (whom we discussed so far and will continue to do so further), data on the other sons of Atilla is scant. This is the case of the Hun chieftains Ambazuk and Bolakh/Bolkh (Bolg), whose time came in the sunset years of the son of Irnik, Dzhurash Masgut, who seems to have struggled to maintain control of the entire territory that was left for him to rule. The brothers Ambazuk and Bolakh controlled the historically important region of Barsilia, which bordered on the Volga and the Caspian Sea from the northeast, on the Don and the Sea of Azov from the west and on the Black Sea and the Caucasus from the south. They ruled this land during the first two decades of the 6th century roughly at the same time, which supports the conclusion that they had divided it between themselves. Based on the available data, Ambazuk and his sons ruled over the western half of Barsilia, but the name of their capital has been lost to history. His brother, Bolakh, and his sons ruled the eastern half and their capital was the city of Varachan (which has not yet been localized reliably). It is believed that the city was close to the Caspian Gates and the shores of the Black Sea.

Varachan is what Bulgarians called the Caspian Gates. Varachan = vrachan/vrachani, and Vrach = Vratsa. The Vratsata mountain pass and the city of Vratsa, which are located in the northwest of Bulgaria derive their names from it.

In his book, „Persian War“, Procopius of Caesarea writes the following about Ambazuk:

„X. The Cilician mountain ridge Taurus starts in Cappadocia and passes through Armenia and the so-called Perso-Armenia, then it goes through the lands of the Albanians and Ivirians, and the other local tribes, either independent or subjugated by the Persians. (2) It goes on over vast expanses of land and if one were to go further, one would see the ridge rise up to form a wide and tall massif. (3) Whoever crosses the border of the Ivirians will find himself among canyons on a narrow path going up fifty stadia [9250 m. – note by V.Y.]. (4) The path reaches a steep and inaccessible place. No path is visible beyond, other than a gate as if built by nature. Since times immemorial, this was called the Caspian Gates [Procopius describes the Darial Gorge in the Central Caucasus, presenting it as the Caspian Gates in the Eastern Caucasus (present-day Derbent in Dagestan), repeating a mistake that was all too common among authors from Antiquity – note by the translator, A. C.]. (5) From this point forward, the terrain opens onto flat plains suitable for riding and well irrigated by rivers – a wide country, flat and convenient for horse breeding [the historically important region of Barsilia – note by V.Y.]. (6) Almost all the Hun tribes lived here, calling the lands around lake Maeotiana [Sea of Azov – note by V.Y.] their own. (7) When the Huns invade the lands of Persians or Byzantine Greeks, they ride

on the backs of fresh horses through the gates I mentioned, without having to go around any obstacles or negotiate steep hills, apart from the 50 stadia that, as mentioned, lead to the lands of the Ivirians. (8) If they have to use other mountain passes, their path would be much more difficult and would not be able to do it without changing horses; because they would have to make long detours and negotiate steep terrain. (9) ...With the passage of time, many [kings– note by V.Y.] held these lands, including Amvazuk, a native Hun, friend of the Byzantine Greeks and Basileos Anastasius (10) Having reached a ripe old age, and preparing to die, Amvazuk sent his trusted envoys to the palace of Anastasius to ask for a loan. In exchange, he promised to give to the Byzantine Greeks the fortress at the Caspian Gates [in actuality at Darial Gorge – note by

V.Y.]. (11) because Emperor Anastasius could not and was not typical for him to do anything on a whim, he made the conclusion that he would never be able to support a military contingent in a place so desolate and devoid of any comforts, far removed from any tribes subjugated by the Byzantines. Therefore, he asked them to give Amvazuk his utmost gratitude for the offer but told them it was unacceptable. (12) Before long, Amvazuk succumbed to illness and Kavad [the Shah of Persia – note by V.Y.] took control over the pass, banishing through force the descendants of Amvazuk.“ **/Проконий Кесарийский. Война с персами. Книга первая, X, 1-12. Translated by A. A. Chekalovoy. – In: Электронная библиотека Royallib.ru./**

Obviously, as soon as Ambazuk reached a „ripe old age“ in 518, he did not he could have been the son of Irnicus, the youngest son of Attila, or rather of the first-born Elacus (born around 425/426). If Ambazuk was born in turn around 445/446, then at his death in 518 he was 72/73 years old, which can be taken as a respectable age for that time.

The only information we have for Kan Ambazuk is that he had sons by the names of Ziligbi, Grod, Mugel and Ayar.

Under an alliance treaty with Persia, Kan Ziligbi (516-522) led a successful military campaign against the Eastern Roman Empire where he and his 20,000 men occupied parts of Anatolia

/Bakhshi Iman, Djangfar Tarikhy..., p. 297/. He, however, did not rule for a long time as he fell victim to a cunning assassination plot organized by the Persian Shah Kavad I, which was triggered by the intrigues of Emperor Justin, who evidently was incapable of dealing with the Bulgarians on the field of battle.

This account is based on John Malalas' Chronographia:

„At the time [521 – note by V.Y.] the king of the Persians [Kavad – note by V.Y.] had won over as an ally the Hun king, Tsilvigis [apparently this meant Ziligbi – note by V.Y.]; King Justin [Emperor from 518 to 527 – note by V.Y.], upon hearing the news [in 522 – note by V.Y.], because it was originally his idea to get him to choose the side of the Byzantine Greeks and for this purpose the emperor had sent him many gifts and had struck an agreement with him [sealed, note by the translator A. C.] with an oath; [note by the translator, A. C.] having determined that the king had switched over to the Persians, was extremely disappointed. The Hun, who was persuaded to help the Persians by

Kavad, rose against the Byzantines with a force of twenty thousand [horsemen – note by V.Y.], fully determined to defeat the Byzantines. The god-like Justin sent a message to King Kavad full of kind words of peace. It has been suggested that the letter included an account of the transgression and disloyalty of King Tsilvigis, asserting that he was paid by the Byzantines [to act – note by the translator, A. C.] against the Persians and betray them at a convenient moment of the battle, switching to the side of the Byzantines. The also suggested that the two rulers should act like brothers and not [let – note by the translator, A. C.] themselves become laughing stock for these dogs. Having read the letter, the Persian king summoned Tsilvigis and asked him whether he had received gifts from the Byzantines in exchange [for acting] against the Persians? Tsilvigis told the truth. The king of Persia, Kavad, got angry and killed him, because he believed he had only come to him with the idea of betraying him on the battle field; during the night he destroyed a large part of the army [of the Huns – note by the translator, A. C.] dispatching an overwhelming military force against them...; the Huns who survived ran [from Persia – note by V.Y.]. After these events King Kavad decided to start peace talks [with the Eastern Roman Empire – note by V.Y.] and informed the Byzantine king, Justin [of his intention – note by V.Y.] via the ambassador Lauroi.“ /**John Malalas**. Chronographia, Book XVII, 197./

The text by John Malalas betrays the hypocrisy of Justin and Kavad who *flatter* one another and call each other brothers whilst in the middle of yet another senseless war, a whim that can only be explained by the traditional rivalry between Persia and the Eastern Roman Empire. Because of their own madness, they mobilized their own people turning them into soldiers, turning men into murderers, plunderers and destroyers. What is worse, they seek to embroil rulers of foreign countries, in this case the Bulgarian Kan Ziligbi. First Justin and then Kavad, too, asked Ziligbi to be their ally, competing for his support. Ziligbi was placed in a position to put a thumb on the scales in favor of one or the other adversary. Surprised by their own trap, the cunning Byzantine and the crafty Persian suddenly forgot their mutual hatred and sought to solve the problem between them by killing Ziligbi who brought this fate upon himself by his evident kindheartedness and naïveté.

Theophanes the Confessor offers an account of the same events in a clearer and more understandable way:

„That year [6013, i.e. 521/522], due to yet another war between Byzantium and Persia, Justin sent envoys bearing gifts to Ziligd, king of the Huns, who accepted the offer and swore an oath as the traditions of his forefathers required, to go to war with him against the Persians. [However – note by V.Y.] Kavad, too, sent emissaries to him and the king of the Huns agreed with them. Upon learning about this, Justin was greatly disappointed. [Meanwhile – note by V.Y.] Ziligd dispatched an army of 20,000 to assist the Persians in their war against the Byzantines. Justin, on his part, sent messengers to the Persian King, Kavad, informing him that Ziligd had agreed to help the Byzantine Greeks in exchange for valuable gifts and was ready to betray the Persians. Thus, it was best [for the Byzantines and the Persians – note by V.Y.], to make peace and live in brotherly friendship, preventing the dogs to play them

against one another. Kavad summoned Ziligd and in a one-to-one conversation asked whether he had received gifts from the Byzantines in exchange for helping them against the Persians. The Hun admitted. Enraged, Kavad killed him and that very night sent a large Persian army to decimate his soldiers, acting upon the suspicion that the king had come to visit with hostile intentions. Only those [Huns – note by V.Y.] who managed to escape were able to come back to their homeland.“

/Theophanes the Confessor. Chronicle..., § 129, 130./

After the death of Ziligbi in 522, he was succeeded to the throne by his young brother, Grod, who ruled the Hunno-Bulgaria kingdom of Barsilia until 528 from his capital, Bosporus, which controlled the Scythian Bosporus strait (present-day Kerch strait). The typical Bulgaro-Slavic name that was given to Grod can likely be explained by the fact that he was son of Ambazuk from a Kutrigur princess. Kan Grod and his inner circle tried to convert the locals to the Christian faith, but faced strong opposition from a group led by the next brother in line to the throne, Mugel (528~531). The latter stormed and captured the city of Bosporus and returned the local population to the pagan cult of Tangra. However, soon after he had to retreat from the city in the face of an approaching Byzantine army dispatched by Justinian to assist Grod and protect the local Bulgarian Christians.

Kan Mugel was succeeded by the youngest of his brothers, Ayar, in 531. The deeds of the latter have been lost to history and we do not even know how long his rule lasted.

The other branch of Ellac's dynasty, from the side of his son, Bolakh (503-527/529), also had to develop politically in a challenging environment.

Theophanes writes of a campaign by the Hun-Sabirs against Emperor Anastasius:

„The same year [year 6008, i.e. 516/517 – note by V.Y.] the Huns of the Sabir nation penetrated the Caspian Gates and invaded Armenia, laying waste to Cappadocia, Galatia and the Pontic region as they almost reached Euchaita.“

/Theophanes the Confessor. Chronicle..., § 125./

Although Theophanes does not mention the Hunnic ruler by name, this campaign against the Eastern Roman Empire was led by Kan Bolakh because after his marriage to a Sabirian princess, Hunno-Sabirs became his subjects. After the death of Bolakh in 527/529, his wife, Boarix, was recruited as an ally to the empire by Justinian, and was tasked to operate in Persia.

Kan Bolakh's heirs from his first wife, Dzhenbek, were Stirax, Gleniz and As-Terek. At the time of his sudden and unexpected death, the first two had already reached manhood while the youngest one was still a youth. This was used by the kan's second wife, who we already mentioned, the Suvarian/Sabirian princess Boyar-Kiz/Boarix (527/529-539). As a regent, she managed to take control of her husband's throne possibly with the military assistance of the warlike Suvar/Sabir people. **/Bakhshi Iman.** Djagfar Tarikhy..., p. 297/.

The excellent Renaissance scholar Gavril Krastevich, based on texts by Theophanes, Malalas,

Cedrenus and Anastasius, refers to the Sabirian queen as Voa-ye (Boa-ye) and he calls his husband

– Valach/Vlach (Balach/Blach). He believes that Kan Valach, who commanded an army of 100 000, died during the second year of Justinian's reign, i.e. in 529. At the time Storak (i.e. Stirax) and Glom (i.e. Gleniz) were recruited by the Persians Shah Kavad (i.e. Kavad) to become his allies in the war against the Byzantines. Justinian responded to this by sending the Sabirian queen many gifts, royal garments, silverware and a substantial amount of cash to get her to foil the redeployment of the military across the Caucasus valleys. She did what she was asked of her. She attacked them suddenly, killed Glom and captured Stirax and sent him bound to Justinian, who executed him by hanging at Galata, Constantinople. /**G. Krastevich**. Българска история, Vol. 2 (485-668). Manuscript completed prior to 1865. First edition, Sofia 2019, p. 95/.

Thus, under an alliance treaty and with the financial backing of the Eastern Roman Empire, Boarix reinforced her position and authority in the Kingdom of Sabir and stayed in power until 539. The youngest of Bolakh's sons, As-Terek, who also shared a Pro-Persian stance, survived these events. Later he seceded and established an independent tarkhanate on the tribal lands of his people, the Barsils. However, the long arms of the Sabirian assassins, paid off with Justinian silver coins, got to the young Bulgarian kan in 530. /**Bakhshi Iman**. Djagfar Tarikhy..., p. 297/.

15. Zaber/Zaver Kan (531-562), son of Dzhurash Masgut

After the heroic death in 536 near Salona of a father and son – Kan Mundo and his heir, Mauricius, there was no one to succeed them to the throne of West Onoguria and the country temporarily remained without a ruler. The younger son of Mundo – Boyan-Chelbir, known to the Greeks as Sandilch – was most likely the son of an Utigur princess because later he became chieftain of the Utigurs who lived in the steppes to the east of the Sea of Azov.

Mundo was son of Kan Dzhurash Masgut from a Gepid princess but he did not want to live in Illyricum with his father. He sometimes took on tasks involving trips to Eastern Onoguria, where he evidently had other wives. In 505, when his father Dzhurash Masgut died: „The Roman lands were entered by Mund... After the death of his father, Mund visited Ric [i.e. king of the Gepids – note by V.Y.], his maternal grandfather and ruler of Sirmium.“ /**Theophanes the Confessor**. Chronicle..., § 167/.

Five years before the death of Mundo, namely in 531, the throne of Eastern Onoguria was taken by Zaber Kan (531-563), son of Dzhurash Masgut and brother of Mundo. The Persian Shah Kavad died the same year and was succeeded by his son, Khosrow I (531-579). To materialize his plans of conquest against Byzantium, the young Persian shah employed the services of the young Bulgarian chieftain, Zaber Kan, and his elite cavalry.

The Hunno-Bulgarian aristocracy was famous for its combat skills, which boys acquired through specialized and sustained training since childhood. As youths, they practiced and reinforced what was learned in real battle. Having been trained like this, at their initiation, the young horsemen from the warrior caste were given

the title *varyagi* („warriors of the sun“, i.e. the „Shining horseman“ = „Mithras Sol Invictus“) or *Uruses/Builes* („bulls“). From this point on, they could be hired as mercenaries with the approval of the Bulgarian ruler by foreign statesmen in exchange for a hefty fee. Of course, only Rome, Byzantium and Persia could afford to hire large military contingents as these were empires with virtually limitless financial resource.

Several months before Zaber Kan entered the service of Khosrow, the latter called a trial as a result of which his elder brother Kaos/Siyâvuš (Siyâvash), son of Kavād from Kan Irnik's daughter and rightful heir to the Persian throne was executed. As we mentioned before, center stage in this politically motivated sham trial was given to Khosrow – Mevod, who was the main accuser of Siyâvash and the sole reason for the trial in the first place. /**Procopius of Caesarea**. *Persian Wars*, Book I, § XI, 31-37/.

Thus at the end of 531 and the start of 532, Zaber Kan took revenge for the killing of his cousin, Siyâvash, by discrediting Mevod and ultimately causing his death. From that moment on, Zaber Kan was the favorite to become the new Shah. What played a crucial role for him was not only his demonstrable loyalty but also the fact that he was the commander of the heavy Hunno-Bulgarian cavalry which at the time was the main strike force of the Persian army. Khosrow was very reliant on it and in the end it proved itself worthy of his expectations. /**same source**, Book I, § XXIII, 2529/.

Zaber Kan's army performed brilliantly during Persia's war against Byzantium in 540-545 and in particular in the capture of the pearl of Byzantium, the city of Antioch (541-542) and the siege of the city of Edessa (544). What is more impressive, Khosrow allowed Zaber Kan to negotiate with the delegations from the encircled city. /**same source**, Book II, § VII, 30-34; § XXVI, 1-22/. In 547, the war was renewed in the Caucasus but this time Khosrow targeted Lazica (the ancient city of Colchida in present-day western Georgia). This war proved unsuccessful for Persia although it lasted all the way to 557. The advance force of the Persian army was yet again the Hun cavalry of Zaber Kan, which led ferocious battles with the talented Roman general, Valerian, who at the time was Magister Militum of neighboring Armenia /**Procopius of Caesarea**. *Secret History*, § II, 26-37. – Available at Электронная библиотека Royallib.ru: **Procopius of Caesarea**. Тайная история, translation, notes and commentaries by A. A. Chekalovoy/.

In his description of the events in question, Procopius inserts a message by Theodora, wife of Emperor Justinian, which she wrote to Zaber Kan: „You know, dear Zaverkan, that I am fond of you and believe you are loyal to our interests; After all, you were quite recently an Ambassador with us. You will measure up to my expectation of you if you manage to persuade King Khosrow to maintain peace with our empire. In exchange, I promise to you many gifts from my husband, who does not do anything without asking my advice first.“ /**same source**, § II, 32-35/. Although we have not been able to date this letter by Empress Theodora it is indicative of the influence

Zaber Kan had both on the rulers in Persia and those in the Eastern Roman Empire.

We have no more information on Zaber Kan's participation in this war for the strategically important Caucasus, but apparently since 557 he was no longer a mercenary employed by Khosrow and returned to East Onoguria. This is also a year

that marks the start of a string of invasions in Byzantium over the Danube, which we will discuss in a little bit. To be able to maintain control over his vast territory, Zaber Kan set up his main military camp at Birman, near present-day Odessa, from where he ruled his tribes, Kutrigurs, Utigurs, Onogurs, Sabirs, Saklani, Urus-Alani (Roxolani), Murdas (Mordva), Antes, etc.

Zaber Kan was not satisfied with what he had accomplished thus far and had the strong ambition to expand his state to the west. Agathias of Myrina writes the following of the kan's aforementioned incursion into the Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantium) in January and February of 557:

„Zabergan, chieftain of the Kutrigur-Huns took an exceptionally large number of horsemen and crossed the river [the Danube had frozen over that winter – note by V.Y.] and easily entered the territory of the Byzantines. Because these lands were scarcely populated, he met no obstacles on his way into the interior of the country and quickly entered Thrace from Moesia. Here, he split his army in two. One part marched on Hellas to raid and plunder the local settlements. The second part headed to Hersones or Thrace.“

/Agathias of Myrina. On the Reign of Justinian. Translated by V. Beshevliev and V. Tapkova. – As published in: Christomathy on the History of Bulgaria (Христоматия по история на България), Vol. I, Sofia, 1978, p. 67./

Only two years later, by the end of his reign, Zaber Kan had to make a permanent move west. Here is how this happened.

In 559, a number of tribes from the Avar group appeared on the northeastern border of Onoguria. In a fight for their survival, they were fleeing the merciless Turkic peoples of Istämi Khagan in a curious case of reversal of fates. A century or so earlier, the same Avars were chasing all the way to the Volga the Sabirs and the Magyars, who found refuge in Onoguria with the blessing of Irnik (see above). This time around, it was the Avars who came to Onoguria and were sheltered by Zaber Kan saving them from death at the hands of their cruel Turkic enemies.

To better understand the historical background of the Avars and their related peoples, we will have to take a closer look at the events that had shaped Central Asia in the second half of the 6th century. We will have to go back to the Hephthalites and Khosrow's Persia, whom we discussed a short while ago here.

At the start of his reign, Shah Khosrow I Anurshivan (531-579) managed to retake the eastern Persian territories in Khorasan which were lost by his father, Kavad. This caused the formation of a hostile alliance of several peoples, Abhazians, Bandzhar (in Pehlevi, these are more correctly pronounced as Burzhar and Bugar, apparently part of the Bulgarian nation), Balandzhar (Hazars) and Alani. When these tribes invaded Persia, Khosrow made peace with them by offering them annual tribute. Soon after that, he refocused on the west and started a war with Byzantium. He found success there and, as was mentioned here, captured the famous and wealthy city of Antioch and its surrounding area. /**Muhammad ibn Jarir at-Tabari**, the said work, § XXII, 894/. During his Byzantine campaign in the west, in 554 Khosrow sent envoys east to the Jetisu

Region who carried his letters to the invading Khagan Dizabul also known as Istämi Khagan (552-575) of the house of Ashina, Vice-Khagan and leader of the western

branch of the Turkic Khaganate. A little earlier, in 552, the Turkic tribes had defeated the Rouran Khaganate in Mongolia and Northern China, the old territories of the Huns. On orders by his older brother,

Muqan, Khagan of the Turkic Khaganate and ruler of the Eastern Territories, Dizabu/Istämi invaded the Jetisu Region with the goal of liquidating the western branch of the Rouran Khaganate, also known as the Hephthalite Tribal Union. Thus, compelled by mutual interest, the Turkic tribes and the Persians formed a military alliance against the Hephthalites whom they both hated. It was reinforced by the marriage of Khosrow to the daughter of Istämi, who, interestingly, was the mother of Khosrow's heir and successor, Shah Hormizd IV (579-590). /**same source**, § XXII, 894; XXIII, 896-899/.

Waiting out the conclusion of the war between Byzantium and his allies, the Persians, Dizabu/Istämi focused on subjugating the vassals of the Hephthalites, the tribes who lived on the banks of the rivers Amu Darya and Syr Darya so he could reinforce his position in the upcoming major war. In addition to that, he formed alliances with the Abkhazians, the Bandzhar and the Balandzhar, who informed him that Khosrow had made peace with them in exchange for the payment of annual tribute. /**same source**/.

While, on orders by Istämi, different Turkic hordes raided and subjugated the peoples of Central Asia who were related to or vassals of the Hephthalites, the Turkic tribes unexpectedly ran into a familiar enemy to the west of lake Balkhash. These were a group of tribes including the Abar (Avars), Bar (another group related to the Avars), Ogor (Ugrians?) and Xionites (Kidarites?) who had survived persecution at the hands of the confederacy of the East Rouran Khaganate, which, as we mentioned, was destroyed by the Turkic tribes of Muqan Khagan after a prolonged war. This led to a new local war from 556 to 558. Ultimately, in 559, the entire Avar group moved west to the steppes south of the Urals, between the Aral Sea and the Caspian Sea to seek refuge and shelter in Patria Onoguria. The Turkic tribes gave chase fully intent on intercepting this migration. However, the Avars successfully traversed the Atil (Volga River) and just as the pursuers were about to swoop on them, already tasking victory, a courier sent by their Khagan came and called them back immediately to start preparing for war with the Hephthalites. In 560 the conflict between Persia and Byzantium ended. The military forces of the Persians united with those of the Turkic tribes, as per their pre-existing treaty, and invaded the territory of the Hephthalites. This was a difficult moment for the Hephthalites because at the time, and possibly as no mere accident, they were involved in a war with India. Thus, the otherwise mighty Hephthalites were dealt a major defeat. Their king, Vazrom/Vazra was killed along with his inner circle. Many Hephthalites were sold into slavery and the Turkic tribes and the Persians divided their territories between themselves. Khosrow took the cities of Balkh and Fergana, among others, along with their surrounding land. Thus, in 565 Khosrow reached the peak of his might.

Following the Hephthalite war, which lasted for nearly five years, as the issue of splitting up the lute and the lands in Central Asia came up, the dissatisfied Dizabu/Istämi Khagan threatened war against his former ally, Khosrow, but did not go through with it and retreated from the welldefended borders of Persia /**same source**/.

This is a brief introduction into the history of the Avars before they appeared on the banks of the Volga. The short overview of the major events in Central Asia just after the mid-point of the 6th century, the political landscape and the motivations of the participants in these events create a window for us to see how and why the group of tribes that later Byzantine authors would refer to as Avars migrated from Asia to Europe and became a worrisome factor that early Medieval Europe had to account for. The first khagan of this group of tribes, Kandik/Kindik (554-559) had the unlucky job of ruling in difficult times during a war with the Turkic tribes. In 558-559, he made the decision to move his people and most likely died in the migration as part of the rearguard that stood in the way of the Turkic chasers to allow the rest of his people to traverse the Volga. After the death of Kandik, the Avars that escaped the Turkic tribes stayed for only two years at the banks of the Volga. There was a power vacuum inside the group because Kandik's successor, Bayan, was underaged. This problem was solved successfully when in 559 the already familiar Zaber Kan (531-563) became his regent. The ruler of Onoguria, whose military camp was located near present-day Odessa, had relatives that were close to the royal Avar dynasty. In addition to that, he was a powerful ruler who was in a position to help the Avar people and state to survive until Bayan came of age.

Zaber Kan was son of Dzhurash Masgut and paternal grandson of Irnik. However, the mother of Dzhurash Masgut was daughter of Khingila, the same Khingila who is also great-grandfather of Kandik, Bayan's father. Khingila, was also the founder of the Hephthalite tribal union. Evidently, the royal houses of the Hephthalites, Avars and Hunno-Bulgarians had common heritage, which underpinned their political relations. Historical sources also point out a characteristic feature that was shared by the military aristocracy of all three tribes – the braided (or unbraided) chub.

The migration of the Avars to Transylvania and Pannonia probably took place during the reign of Zaber Kan (in 560) and possibly under his direction. At this moment in time, the interests of the two groups were aligned: the Avars got land and settled in Europe and the struggling western province of Onoguria which had declined after the death of Kan Mundo, could now be restored and reinforced with fresh allied forces.

Zaber Kan ruled the Avars as regent for three years, from 559 to 562, when Bayan came of age and was crowned Khagan. Bayan's reign lasted for 40 years, from 562 to 602. His second in command or Vice Khagans (Yabgu) and advisors were the Hunno-Bulgarian Kans Sandilch/Boyan-Chelbir (568 to 590), son of the brother of Zaber Kan, Tatra-Banat/Mundo, and Tubdjak (590 to 602), son of Zaber Kan (see the genealogical tree).

Ever since the move to Pannonia, the Avar Khaganate showed signs that it would become a local hegemony, subjugating the native tribes from the Veneti, Goth, Gepid and Herul groups, and pushing west the Germanic tribes Lombards and Alemanni. Soon, the Avars made their first political rivals as well, Byzantium and the Frankish Kingdom.

16. Kan Sandilch/Boyan-Chelbir (563~590), son of Tatra/Banat/Mundo

Since around 503 until 531 East Onoguria was ruled by the brothers Bolakh and Ambazuk (sons of Ellac) and their descendants, as we saw above. However, these

two royal blood lines were severed by infighting spurred on by Byzantium and Persia. For this reason, East Onoguria was ruled by Zaber Kan (531-562), the younger son of Dzhurash Masgut, whereas the elder one, Mundo, ruled over West Onoguria, being a federate of the Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantium) until 536.

In the previous paragraph we made it clear that since the start of his reign in 531 until 557 (26 years in total), Zaber Kan and his cavalry were mercenaries for the Persian Shah Khosrow I. During his service for Persia, he most likely authorized his son to rule East Onoguria, although he might have been underage initially. We have no reliable information about this. Perhaps, this role could have been fulfilled by another chieftain of the Kutrigurs by the name of Chinialon/Khinialon who is known to have worked closely with Zaber Kan. Procopius (~500~565) mentions that in 556 the Gepids (one of the three Gothic tribes) in Pannonia were afraid of a hostile alliance between the Byzantines and the Lombards against them:

„And they sent envoys to the leaders of the Kutrigurs, who live on the other side of the Maeotid Lake [Sea of Azov – note V.Y.] and begged them to wage war with them to the end against the Lombards. The Huns immediately sent them 12,000 horsemen, who were led by Chinialon, who was very good in military affairs...”

/**Procopius of Caesarea**. History of the Wars. Translated by Ivan Duychev. – As published in: Christomathy on the History of Bulgaria, Vol. I. Sofia, 1978, p. 62/.

Zaber Kan ruled his country, East Onoguria, truly and in person only from 557 to 559. Above I quoted a paragraph from the „Reign of Justinian“ by Agathias of Myrina (536-582) about how at the beginning of 557 the Kan attacked Byzantium „with an extremely large number of horsemen“, plundering the Thracian Chersonesos without encountering resistance. Then Justinian „sent a letter to Sandilch, the other chieftain, who was his ally and mercenary, while Zaber Kan and his hordes rode rather loosely“. The emperor accused the Kutrigurs of plundering Thrace „until they received all the gold that we usually give you every year as a salary... Right now you are given the opportunity... by defeating them in battle, you will receive your reward as if it had been sent to you through them.“ /**Agathias of Myrina**. The Reign of Justinian. – As published in: Christomathy on the History of Bulgaria, Vol. I. Sofia, 1978, pp. 66-69/.

Here it becomes evident that Kan Sandilch, who ruled the Utigurs and held the lands to the northeast of the Don and the Sea of Azov, and the Emperor had a treaty under which, in exchange for annual tribute the Hun-Utigurs were obliged to protect Byzantium from incursions via Scythia (i.e. East Onoguria). It was for that reason that Justinian asked of Sandilch to fulfil his obligations under the treaty and attack the Hun-Kutrigurs of Zaber Kan upon their return and to collect from them his annual payment. Otherwise he was not going to get it because he had allowed an incursion into Byzantium.

Agathias of Myrina continues:

„When Sandilch had the letter translated, he became angry and, unable to control his temper, he immediately launched a campaign to punish the Kutrigurs for the insult he had to suffer... Thus, when he left with his army,

he struck first the settlements of the enemy [between the Don and Dnieper – note by V.Y.]. His unexpected attack surprised the locals and he slayed great many women and children. Then he ambushed the enemy, who was returning from Thrace and had just forded the Istros [Danube – note by V.Y.]. He killed as many as he could and took from them the money that was given by the Emperor and all of their lute... After this, the two sides were at war with one another for quite a long time..., until their power grew weaker and they fell into disarray... The misery of these Hun tribes was so great...“ /**same source**/.

The following events are described in the „Embassy“ by Menander Protector (?-582):

„And when... the Huns of Zabergan were pushed away from the Byzantine Empire, Justinian (because he thought that the Kotrags would return to raid Thrace) requested of Sandilch, the chieftain of the Utigurs, and incessantly pleaded with him to find a way to start a war against Zabergan. To this end, he often sent messengers and goaded him... The Emperor also promised that if Sandilch defeated the Kotrags, he would transfer to him the money that was set aside for the tribute that was paid annually by Byzantium to Zabergan.“ /**Menander Protector**. Embassy. Translated by V. Besheliev. – As published in:

Christomathy on the History of Bulgaria, Vol. I. Sofia, 1978, p. 71./

Kan Sandilch gave the following level-headed answer to Justinian:

„It would not be fair to completely destroy our fellow tribesmen who not only speak a language that is the same as ours, but also live amongst us and wear the same clothes and live the same as us. They are our kin although they may be ruled by other chieftains. Despite this, I will immediately take the Kotrags' horses from them and will make them mine so they would have nothing to ride and bring harm to the Byzantines with.“ /**same source**/.

Thus, by confiscating the Kutrigurs' horses, Sandilch fulfilled his obligations under the treaty with Justinian without inflicting more damage to the tribe that spoke the same language, wore the same clothes and lived the same life as his. This text indicates that the large Kutrigur and Utigur nations in the not so distant past (from the time of Zaber Kan and Sandilch) were one and the same people.

In fact, the fratricidal war was the reason why Zaber Kan and the Kutrigurs found themselves in a difficult situation, their army defeated, their cavalry deprived of horses, and they themselves deprived of any money. In about a year, they received a rare chance.

As we mentioned in the preceding paragraph, in 559 Zaber Kan gave shelter to the Avars protecting them from the Turkic tribes. Since the Avar Khagan Kandik had died and his son, Bayan, was still a child in early 560, it is possible that none other than Zaber Kan himself organized the migration of the Avars to Pannonia. Thus, the Bulgarian and the Avar forces restored the Bulgarian federative state of Kan Mundo, which had remained without a ruler since his death in 536.

Zaber Kan's leading role lasted only three years, from 559 to 562, while he was the regent for the underaged Avar Khagan Bayan, son of Kandik. In 562 Bayan came of age and Zaber Kan ceded to him the power over the Avar-Bulgarian state due to, as we saw, the temporary political, military and economic weakness of the Kutrigur-Bulgarians, which was caused by the alliance between the Utigurs and the Byzantines. Thus, as things stood, the Bulgarian state (West Onoguria) was transformed into a federative entity inside the borders of the Eastern Roman Empire, a vassal state under the emperor in the independent Avar-Bulgarian Khaganate which, in about a decade, had taken over almost the entire European territory of the Eastern Roman Empire. But it was not only the treaty with Justinian that motivated Sandilchus' reluctant attitude towards his uncle Zaber Kan. The discord inside the Bulgarian royal family, which was masterfully used by Justinian, stemmed from the fact that Zaber Kan had encroached upon the succession rights of Sandilch. The Avars, with the assistance of Zaber Kan, had taken the domains of his father, Mundo – Pannonia of the Kutrigurs and Gepids. This area, which formed the core of West Onoguria, was seen by Sandilch as his ancestral homeland, given that the other tribal branch represented by Zaber Kan had been given East Onoguria to hold as its own in 531 and held it until 559.

Furthermore, the provinces of Illyricum and Dalmatia, former domains of Mundo and the Kutrigurs, were seen by Sandilch as more attractive economically and culturally. Procopius conveys his point of view on this issue: „While we live in a desolate and barren land, the Kutrigurs buy wheat and drink wine and enjoy the most exquisite meals. In fact, in some places they have baths, wear gold jewelry and have finely woven, brightly colored and gold-embroidered garments...“ /**Procopius of Caesarea**. History of the Wars. – In: Christomathy on the History of Bulgaria, Vol. I, p. 65/.

* * *

To secure his back in the context of the upcoming wars with Byzantium and the Frankish Kingdom, Bayan intended to conquer East Onoguria, which at the time encompassed the lands between Danube and the Urals and Caucasus. This plan of the Avars initially did not succeed because Sandilch, the youngest son of Mundo, fairly believed that the Bulgarian royal family should rule its country without taking orders from the Avars. After the death of Zaber Kan in 563, Sandilch managed to maintain the independence of his state and that of East Onoguria until 568. However, in the summer of that year Saklan/Sklavia (to the northwest of the Black Sea) was invaded by the Khazar Turkic tribe (Hazars). This forced the proud Sandilch to ask help from the Avar Khagan, for whom the Hazar-Turkic people were an old enemy. We discussed above how ten years earlier these same Turkic peoples caused the migration of the Avars from Central Asia, when Bayan's father, Kandik died. The common enemy drove the Avars and the Bulgarians to quickly form an alliance and after a series of fierce battles managed to push the Hazars beyond the Buri-Chai (Dnieper) and Dzhurash (Northern Caucasus). The namesake state under Kan Khudbard, the first-born son of Sandilch, was created to serve as a buffer zone or defense formation against the Hazars in Dzhurash /**Bakhshi Iman**, Djagfar Tarikhy..., pp. 20, 21/.

The Bulgar record states that prior to the war with the Hazars, Boyan-Chelbir (Sandilch) and the Avar Khagan Tubdjak swore an oath of brotherhood to one another and according to the custom, the Bulgarian Kan gave his name to the Avar and the Avar came to be known as Khagan Bayan from that point on, and the Avar gave the name of Tubdjak to Boyan-Chelbir's son. /**same source**/.

We believe there is somewhat of a mix-up in the record which came to exist because of the numerous re-writes and translations of it over the years. It is true that the Bulgarian Kan Boyan-Chelbir (Sandilch) took the Avar name Tubdjak but not for his son, rather for his nephew, the son of his uncle, Zaber Kan, who, being underage, was in his care and custody given that Zaber Kan had died in 563. We believe that Sandilch accepted the same oath of brotherhood for his own son, Khudbard, by adopting the secondary name Atrak, which was either a second name or moniker of the Avar Khagan, who came to be known by his Bulgarian name, Bayan.

The mix-up in the Bulgar record „Djagfar Tarikhy“ boils down to the fact that Zaber Kan's son, Tubdjak, is referred to as the son of Boyan-Chelbir instead of his actual son, Khud-bard/Atrak, who is completely omitted in the record. This snowballs into another mistake namely claiming that the next generation of kans, Kubrat and Kyi were presented as sons of Tubdjak's son, Alhuri.

In actuality, they are sons of Khud-bard. The latter, combined with the absence of exhaustive and categorical information in the historical records has prompted some modern scholars to believe Alhuri and Khud-bard were one and the same person.

There is also the question of why the Avar Khagan did not give his name to Boyan-Chelbir, but did so for his son and nephew? This can be explained with the difference in age between the rulers of the Bulgarians and the Avars at the time. Boyan-Chelbir (Sandilch) was already an elderly man while the younger Avar Khagan Bayan I (562-602) was closer to the next generation of Bulgarian rulers – Khud-bard (584-601) and Tubdjak (590-605) who at that time (568) were princes and became kans a little later. The last three would have to often share battlefields over the last two decades of the 6th century in the clashes with the Eastern Roman Empire.

Still, because of the Khazar invasion of 568, Kan Sandilch was forced to yield to Bayan's will and take the position that his uncle, Zaber Kan, vacated 6 years ago and become the Vice Khagan of the Avar state. Unfortunately, this meant that he, his Utigurs and their territory in Saklan (Scythia) were now subjected to the authority of the Avar Khagan Bayan.

* * *

Shortly before the war with the Khazar-Turkic tribes, i.e. at the end of 567 and the beginning of 568, the Avar-Bulgarian Khaganate got the opportunity to rid itself from the foreign peoples that lived within it, such as the German Lombards, which lived in the western part of Upper Pannonia, and the gothic tribe of the Gepids, who called the western part of Lower Pannonia their home.

First and foremost, we should say that Bayan's ambition to reinforce his position in Central Europe did not come to fruition. He waged two wars with the Franks. In 562 the victory was theirs while in 566 the Avars were victorious. Despite the victory, the second war did not bring Bayan significant success. He had to go back

to Pannonia because his armies lacked supplies and because he got news of movements by the Byzantine armies in his rear /**G. Krastevich**. The Bulgarian History (Българска история)..., Vol. 2, pp. 136-138/.

In Pannonia at the end of 567 the old conflict between Lombards and Gepids flared up again. The king of the Gepids, Cunimund, sought to form an alliance with the newly crowned emperor, Justin II while Lombard King Alboin aligned with the Avar Khagan Bayan. Justin promised support but could not provide it in time whereas Bayan assisted the Lombards but not before, through protracted negotiations, he managed to persuade them to surrender to him the land of the Lombards in Pannonia if they won the war.

Pressured from the west by the Lombards and from the east by the Avars, the Gepids were dealt a crushing defeat. Alboin personally killed Cunimund and turned his skull into a mug to perform the ancient ritual of taking the life force (Chi) of the Gepid royal family. Indeed, from that moment on the Gepid kingdom was no more and the surviving remnants of the tribe were subjugated by Alboin.

Interestingly, the name of the last Gepid king, Cunimund, is almost identical to the name of the Ostrogoth king Hunimund the Beautiful (~379-405) who lived almost 200 years earlier. The reoccurrence of the name, given the lack of direct genealogical link between the Gepid and Ostrogoth dynasty could be due to the fact that they both were connected to Hun royal dynasty. In accordance with his treaty with Bayan, on 2 April 568, the Lombard king Alboin headed west with his people toward Northern Italy, followed by the Gepids, Bulgarians, Sarmatians, Suavs, Taurisci and others who had become his subjects. Upon leaving, he surrendered to Bayan the Lombard cities in Pannonia under the condition that if he were not able to settle permanently on his new lands, he could be allowed to come back home. This is how the Avars won the war between the Lombards and the Gepids, allowing Bayan to focus his efforts against the Eastern Roman Empire. /**Paul the Deacon**. History of the Lombards. Translated by M. Voinov and S.

Lichev. – In: Christomathy on the History of Bulgaria, Vol. I, p. 77; **G. Krastevich**. The Bulgarian History (Българска история)..., Vol. 2, pp. 139, 140/.

In the following year (569) Bayan's first diplomatic mission to Constantinople took place, led by the Kutrigurs Targit and Aspih. They demanded from Justin II (565-574) to reinstate the payment of annual tribute which until 565 was paid out by his predecessor, Justinian I, to the Kutrigurs and the Utigurs. The diplomats asked for lump sum tribute payment for the period between 566 and 569 to the Avar Khagan, Bayan, whose subjects they had now become and also demanded that the city of Sirmium be surrendered to the Avar state. The town was initially controlled by the Gepids but had recently been captured by the Byzantines because it inconveniently jutted into their territory.

The demands by Bayan's envoys were denied categorically by Justin II.

In response to this, over the next five years the Avar-Bulgarian Khaganate subjected the European territories of the Eastern Roman Empire to systematic raids. In 574, new peace negotiations followed, in which the victors set the same conditions. Menander Protector writes:

„The leader of the Avars, Bayan, decided to send envoys and make a proposal for peace... That is why he sent Targitius, together with the translator

Vitalian, to tell the Emperor [Justin II – note V.Y.] to give him Sirmium and the usual money that the Kutrigurs and Utigurs received from the Emperor Justinian, since the Khagan had subdued these two tribes, as well as the Gepid Usdibat...”

/Menander Protector. The Embassy. – In: Christomathy on the History of Bulgaria, Vol. I, p. 71/.

This time around Justin II accepted the terms of his opponents as regards the back payment of tribute and gave them 80 000 libras of gold, but refused to surrender Sirmium. The town was captured by the Bulgarian-Kutrigurs four years later, in 578.

17. Kan Khudbard/Atrak (584-601), son of Sandilch. Kan Tubdjak (590-605), son of Zaber Kan

The name Khudbard should be hyphenated (Khud-bard) because it is a collocation of two separate words, *khud* and *bard*. Bards were a Druid sub-caste. The word *bard* meant „singer of holy texts“. Its analogue in Central Asia and in particular among Bulgarians was *bahar*. In Thrace and Hellas, it was *ᾠοιδός/aoidós*. What is the meaning of *khud*?

The meaning of the word **khud** can be captured through words like *hudozhestvo* – „art“, *hudozhnik* – „artist“; *hudoi* – „lean“, „slim“; similar to *gut* in German and *good* in English. Apparently, *khud-bard* does not mean a lean singer, but a sublime, virtuoso singer, whose mastery shines not only through impeccable performance but through a transcendent talent to touch souls, to become one with the divine. Kans were also religious leaders of their people and mediators between their fellow countrymen and the supreme god Tangra. Evidently, this Bulgarian kan was given the name Khud-bard because of his strong devotion to his priestly responsibilities.

In connection to the above, in one of my other articles I have pointed out the identical meaning of the Bulgarian royal title *Kanas* and the moniker *Kanos* that was given to the Thracian king and archemist Orpheus, whom authors from Antiquity describe as being able to entrance not only people but also animals, birds, plants and even rocks with his songs. /see V. Yordanov. Of Muses, Moesi and Music. – in the „Gorgoni Magazine“, Book 2, 2017-2018, p. 30/.

In 584, the Avar Khagan Bayan I need loyal high commanders in light of his increasingly more frequent wars with the Eastern Roman Empire. He appointed Khud-bard/Atrak, the oldest son of Sandilch, to serve as his vice khagan, beside his father, Sandilch, who died later in 590. In 590, Khud-bard's cousin, Tubdjak, son of Zaber Kan, was appointed to a similar position in the administration of the Avar-Bulgarian Khaganate.

We believe that during this period, 584 to 590, the cousins Khud-bard and Tubdjak managed to put behind them the old rivalry between their fathers, Sandilch and Zaber Kan. This possibly happened thanks to the proactive approach of the Avar Khagan because historical records from Antiquity suggest that the subjugated tribes of Kutrigurs and Utigurs joined together their allies, the Avars and Gepids in a coalition against Byzantium.

In 590 the political and military union between Kutrigurs and Utigurs was reinforced through dynastic marriages. Khud-bard married Tubdjak's daughter and Tubdjak took Khud-bard/Atrak's daughter as his wife. If our assumption is correct and Bayan reconciled the Bulgarian chieftains (based on shared political interests), he undoubtedly was the matchmaker (best man) behind the weddings. According to custom, the godfather of a boy became the best man at his wedding. Indeed, as it was mentioned earlier, the Avar Khagan was the godfather of the two Bulgarian princes and gave them his names (or monikers) Atrak and Tubdjak /**Bakhshi Iman**, Djagfar

Tarikhy..., p. 21/.

The Bulgar record states that the mother of Bu-Yurgana/Organa, i.e. the wife of Tubdjak, „was member of the Yurgana family of the Hun tribe of Hot or Hotrag [Kotrag/Kutrigurs – note by

V.Y.]... Of all the Hun tribes, only the Utig or Utyag [Utii/Utigurs – note by V.Y.] could rival the Hotrags in power and headcount“ /**same source**, p. 23/. Therefore, Kan Sandilch, his son Khudbard and the children of Khud-bardo, Kan Kurbat, Kan Sambat and the daughter who got married to Tubdjak, were descendants of the Yurgan family, which ruled the Kutrigurs and the Utigurs. Unfortunately, there are no records of the life and deeds of Khud-bard. He most likely died in one of the great defeats of the Avar-Bulgarian armies at the hands of the army of the Byzantine general Priscus near the Tisa River in 601 /without making any mention of Khud-bard, the five battles of this war were described based on Byzantine records by **G. Krastevich** in „Bulgarian History“ („Българска история“), Vol. 2 (485-668). A manuscript finalized before 1865. First print by „ГУТА-Н“ Publishing house, Sofia, 2019, pp. 190-194/.

Little is known about Kan Tubdjak as well. From 590 until his death in 605 he served as Vice Khagan under Bayan, sharing these duties until 601 with his cousin, Khud-bard.

Tubdjak waged war with Rum (the Eastern Roman Empire) and with „the Ulchians, who were subjugated by the Romans“. Although the Avars had the habit of killing mercilessly these Ulchians, the Bulgarian „baltavar“ (kan) showed them mercy and saved 20,000 of them within his domain. He settled them along the northern border of Onoguria, to the north of Buri-Chai (Dnieper River) and tasked them with its protection. There, they were referred to as Anchians, i.e. „border guards“ (also referred to as Antes in Greek records). The Khagan's negative attitude towards them softened when, on orders by Tubdjak, they made several hundred dugout boats and used them in seaborne attacks on Constantinople. /**Bakhshi Iman**, Djagfar Tarikhy..., p. 21/.

18. Kans Organa/Bu-Yurgan (605; 618~622) and Alhuri (605-618). Kans Kurbat/Qurt (~622~668) and Sambat/Samo (~622~658)

The successor to the Avar throne, Khagan Bayan II (602-617) and his successor, Bayan III (?) gradually forgot the benefits that were brought to them by Bulgarian rulers and adopted a dismissive attitude toward them. They were irked by the

egalitarian structure of the administration of the Avar-Bulgarian Khaganate so they tended toward unilateral rule in favor of the Avar royal family.

In 605 Kan Tubdjak died and was succeeded by his first-born son, Bu-Yurgan/Organa. The same year, after a failed siege attempted by the Avars, Bayan II blamed his failure on the new Bulgarian Kan, Organa, looking for an excuse to demand his replacement with Alhuri, the younger son of Tubdjak. Snubbed, Organa retreated „with part of the Bulgarians to the Roman-held part of Dzhaldia [Crimea – note by V.Y.] where he served [as a mercenary – note by V.Y.] the local Romans [Byzantines – note by V.Y.]. He had such an unusual physical strength that they called him Ar-Buga [buffalo – note by V.Y.]“. /**Bakhshi Iman**. Djagfar Tarikhy..., p. 21/.

The Bulgar record does not offer more detail but we presume that in 605, fearing hostile treatment by Bayan II against the Bulgarian royal family, Organa sent to Constantinople the young princes, the brothers Kubrat/Kurbat (born in 591) and Shambat/Sambat (born in 592/3). The two youths were welcomed to the Palace Hall and the court retinue of Emperor Phocas (602-610) as potential new allies to the Empire against the rising Avar Khaganate. There, they probably entered training at the School of Magnaura.

John of Nikiu writes the following in his Chronicle:

„ ... Qetrades [Kurbat – note by V.Y.], king of the Mutanes [Huns – note by V.Y.], fraternal son [brother's son – note by V.Y.] of Organa... was christened in his childhood and accepted in the bosom of the Christian faith in Constantinople and grew up in the Imperial court... He built an unheard-of friendship with Heraclius [Emperor between 610 and 641], who lavished him with favors... By the power of his holy and life-giving baptism, which he received, he vanquished all barbarians and pagans.“

/John of Nikiu. Chronicle. Translated by V. N. Zlatarski. – In: Christomathy on the History of Bulgaria (Христоматия по история на България). Vol. I, p. 78./

This record suggests, among other things, that Kurbat and Sambat could not have been the sons of Kan Alhuri, who in 605 took the position of Vice-Khagan at the court of Bayan III. The sons of rulers grew up around their fathers so that they could learn in a real-world environment and hone their administrative and military skills. If the sons of Alhuri were to disappear from his inner circle, this would not have gone unnoticed by the Avar Khagan, who would inevitably suspect some form of collusion with the hostile Eastern Empire. The Khagan would never forgive such a transgression on the part of Alhuri, who acted freely in Bayan's capital and took part in battles alongside him until 618, when he was eventually killed by the Khagan but for other reasons, as we will see shortly.

Surely, Organa, who had entered Byzantine service in 605 in Crimea, angered by Bayan II for demoting him unfairly, had the means to ensure that that Kurbat and Sambat, sons of the recently departed Khud-bard, who had lived in the remote eastern fringes of Onoguria (on the Dnieper), would be safe from any future hostile actions at the hands of the Avars. The ever-insightful Organa sensed the change in the attitude of the Avar ruler toward the Bulgarian royal dynasty and in a very clever way ensured the protection of the young Bulgarian princes and found for them in

Constantinople an environment in which they would safely grow and become men and get opportunities to expand their cultural horizons.

As we mentioned, Kan Alburi remained Vice-Khagan until 618 when he was unfairly blamed for an incident in Town of Galich between the Avars and the Anchians (Antes). A unit of Avars stole herds that belonged to the Antes, which caused the latter to kill some of the assailants in selfdefense. In the wake of this, the Avar Khagan Bayan III summoned the Bulgarian Kan Alburi to his camp and killed him in an act of treachery. /**Bakhshi Iman**, Djagfar Tarikhy..., pp. 21, 22/. In response to this outrage on the part of Bayan, Kan Organa made a decisive step in 619. Heading a delegation of Bulgarian noblemen, he visited Emperor Heraclius in Constantinople and announced a political turn in Patria Onoguria's foreign policy toward forming an alliance with the Eastern Roman Empire against the Avar Khaganate. Heraclius, who was pressured from the west by the Avars and from the east by the Persians, was naturally happy that in this difficult situation he would get a powerful ally. The treaty was signed in short order. In exchange for guarantees of joint military actions against the Avars, Heraclius recognized Organa as an independent ruler of Onoguria. /**same source**, p. 22/.

Patriarch Nikephoros writes about these events without mentioning the name of Organa:

„At that time [619] the ruler of the Hun people [Organa – note by V.Y.] came to Byzantium and demanded an audience with the Emperor for himself and his companions so that they could be enlightened through holy baptism. And Theodor, the Emperor's brother, accepted him from the holy font and the Byzantine noblemen [accepted from the holy font – note by the translator] the Hun noblemen and the wives of the former, the wives of the latter. And so the baptized were bestowed with royal gifts and titles: He [the emperor – note by the translator] proclaimed their ruler Patrician and sent him back to his homeland.“ /**Patriarch Nikephoros of Constantinople**. A short history after the reign of Maurice. Translated from Middle Greek by Veselin N. Ivanov. Sofia, „The Zograf“ Publishing House, 1997, p. 30; see also **G. Krastevich**, as above, vol. 2, pp. 197, 198/.

Let us continue⁴ with the story as told in the Bulgar record. It states that „the happy Roman Kan“ struck an agreement with the Bulgarian „baltavar“ and sent him home with great honors:

„When Ar-Buga [Organa – note by V.Y.] came back to his people, the beys [i.e. buili – note by V.Y.] wanted to place him on the Bulgarian throne immediately. But Bu-Yurgan [Organa – note by V.Y.] liked the title boyar [buil – note by V.Y.] more than the title Kan and told them: The people, of course, are free to select their own rulers, but not from amongst the boyars, who are appointed by Tangra. On his advice, the Bulgarians elected as their baltavar [(wielder) of the battle axe – note by V.Y.] the son of Alburi [in actuality the son of Khud-bard – note by V.Y.], Kurbat, who was also known as Bashtu, who immediately started preparing for war with the Avars.“

/**Bakhshi Iman**. Djagfar Tarikhy..., p. 22./

Evidently, this is not an account of Organa's election as Kan, but of the *Buil Council* approving and recognizing the treaty between Bulgaria and Byzantium, and in particular Heraclius' recognition of the independence of the Bulgarian Kan from the Avar Khagan. We believe this is the case because ever since the murder of Kan Alburi the previous year (618), at the request of the Avar Khagan Bayan, Organa, was most likely chosen by the Buil Council to be the Bulgarian ruler but under the authority of the Khagan.

Besides, the transition of power from Organa to Kurbat did not take place in 619 but a little later, in 622.

Nikephoros I of Constantinople describes the first acts of the Bulgarian Kan, Kurbat, as follows:

„At that time, the ruler of the Unogundurs, Kuvrat, nephew of Organ, rose up against the Khagan of the Avars and mocked and humiliated the men that were put in place by him [security garrison – note by V.Y.] and banished them from his land [East Onoguria – note by V.Y.]. He sent envoys to Heraclius and made peace with him, which both rulers respected until their deaths, because he paid him tribute and honored him with the title of Patrician.“
/Nikephoros, Patriarch of Constantinople. A short history after the reign of Maurice..., pp. 40, 41./

Nikephoros dates this event to around 635, but the text refers to the initial treaty between Kurbat and Heraclius, which undoubtedly should have been signed in around 622 when Organa transferred his power over to Kurbat. This is likely to be the case because as with Organa in 619, in 622 Kurbat had to be recognized by a respected foreign power as a ruler independent from the Avars. In 622, the Eastern Roman Empire was in urgent need of an ally against the Avars, whose weakening and decisive defeat were accomplished by 628. In 635 there would have been no need to build alliances against the Avar Khaganate, because it had been rendered to an existence as a small state in Pannonia, abandoned by its tribal allies and left to die off.

Was it only the older brother, Kurbat, who was honored with the title of Patrician in 622? Nestor, the chronicler of the Kyievan Rus, writes:

„If Kyi [Sambat/Samo – note by V.Y.] were a trader [i.e. merchant-trader], he would not visit Constantinople [the Emperor]. This Kyi was the knyaz of his people and when he went to visit with the Caessar [i.e. Καῖσαρ], which one – we know not – but we know that greats reverences and honors was bestowed upon him by the Caesar that he visited.“

/Повесть временных лет (The Tale of Bygone Years). Translated by Dimitriy Likhachëv based on the Laurentian Text. – <http://www.vchi.net/oldrussian/povest.html/>

This Caessar, i.e. Καῖσαρ, was none other than Heraclius. He most likely bestowed „greats honors“ not only upon Kurbat but also upon his younger brother, Kyi (Sambat/Samo), because he had great hope in both of them being able to defeat the Avars and thwart the plans of the PersianAvar alliance against the Eastern

Roman Empire saving its capital, Constantinople, from the largescale siege that the Persians and the Avars planned to lay.

Regarding the variations of the name of the Bulgarian Kan Kurbat used during his rule 622-668.

According to **Theophanes**: Κροβάτου – Krobatu; Κοβράτου – Korbatu. According to **Nikephoros**: Κυβράτος – Kubratos; Κυρτος – Qurtoc (Qurt). See also **G. Krastevich**. Bulgarian History (Българска история), Vol. 2, p. 247.

In the **Bulgar record „Djagfar Tarikhy“** (p. 22) uses the name Kurbat.

According to the initials found on gold rings discovered in the grave of the Bulgarian ruler in the burial mound near Malaya Pershchepina near the city of Poltava: 1. Horbatu with variant Hokratu; 2. Horbatu Patrikiu, with variant Hokratu Patrikiu (**photo 14**). /**Joachim**

Werner. Der Grabfund von Malaja Pereščepina und Kuvrat, Kagan der Bulgaren. Translated from German by M. Matliev. Sofia, published by Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 1988, pp. 44-46/. The reading of the monograms on the rings was performed by Doctor W. Zeibt from the Institute of Byzantine Studies with the University of Vienna.



Photo 14. One of Kan Kubrat/Hokrat/Horbat's personal ring-seals with inscription that reads ΧΟΥΒΡΑΤΟΥ ΠΑΤΡΙΚΟΥ = „ХОУБРАТ ПАТРИКИЙ“ /The State Hermitage Museum, Item № 1930-187/. Photo by the author, taken during a visiting Hermitage exhibition to Sofia in 2019.

The artifacts in the Kan's burial site were described in **Vera N. Zaleskaya, et. Al.** Съкровище на хан Кубрат. Култура на българи, хазари, славяни. Published by the Committee on Culture of the People's Republic of Bulgaria, National Historical Museum, the Ministry of Culture of the USSR, the State Hermitage Museum – Leningrad. Sofia, 1989. 97 p. + artefact catalogue, 59 p.

The energetic 31-year-old Kanas Uvigi Kurbat quickly restored the old borders of his country, East Onoguria, referred to by its own citizens as Ak-Bulgar Yorti (White Bulgaria) and Old Great

Bulgaria by the Greeks. It stretched between Sula (Danube), the Baltic Sea, Idel (Volga) and Dzhurash (Northern Caucasus). The main reinforced camp of the Kana, Batavil, was located on the shores of the Sacred lake, not far from present-day village of Mala Pereshchepyna and the city of Poltava. /**Bakhshi Iman**, Djagfar Tarikhy..., p. 22/.

Soon after his ascent to the throne, the Supreme Kan – Kanas Uvigi Kurbat – ordered his younger brother, Kan Sambat/Shambat, to build a walled in city on the

site of the Askal Aul, which sat on top of strategically important hills on the Dnieper. /same source/.

This text actually reveals how the new Bulgarian ruler set up the administrative and military structure of his state. We already touched upon this in the paragraph on Kan Mundzuk, but we should revisit the topic. Namely, according to ancient traditions /**Dimitër Sasalov**. ПЪТЯТ НА

България. Sofia, „Кибеа“ Publishing House, 2004, pp. 46-53/ the entire territory of the HunnoBulgarian state was controlled via three fortified camps (ongals), where the armies of the three united tribes were stationed: Onogundurs, Utigurs and Kutrigurs. In this case, the central ongal of Kanas Uvigi Kurbat and the middle horde of the Onogundurs (see the quoted text by Patriarch Nikephoros above) was at the camp of Horisdan or Batavil. The second ongal of Kan Sambat (Kyi) and the right horde of the Kutrigurs was in the area of the Askal Aul, where soon rose up the walled city of Kyi. The third ongal of the left horde of the Utigurs has not been identified in the records but could be assumed to have stood in the east, in Dzhurash (Caucasus), under the command of the shining prince, the first-born son of Kurbat, Kan Bat-Bayan. This strategic arrangement facing southwest with its rear toward northeast indicates the political opponents of Bulgaria both at that time and in the foreseeable future, in other words, the Avar Khaganate, the Frankish Kingdom, the Eastern Roman Empire, and Persia.

Incidentally, the word *horde* should not be understood to have barbarian connotations, as one would assume at a first glance. Or-Da or partial metathesis Or-At, means the „Descendants/people of [H]or“. Words that are derived or related to it morphologically or semantically include: *gorod* – Russian, „city“, pronounces *gorad* (Gor-At) = „[Dwelling of] the descendants of Horus“; *266ulga* – Latin, „city“; *opa/ora* – Bulgarian, „people“; *опталък, оптак* – Bulgarian, „partnership“, „partner“; *co-hors/co-hortis* – Latin, „cohort“ (1/10 of a legion or 6 centurias); *орден* – Bulgarian, „medal“; *оренда* – Bulgarian, „tao“; *ореол* – Bulgarian, „halo“; *аура* – Bulgarian, „aura“; *aurora, ae* – Latin, „dawn“; *Aurora* – goddess of the dawn, etc.

Construction of the new city started in 622, but as early as the next year, in 623, Sambat left his builders and supervisors because he had to take on a more urgent task. He led a „large unit of Bulgars and Anchani [Antes – note by V.Y.] and Saklani-Rus [Urus-Alani – note by V.Y.]“, which had been put together in advance, and rode west on the Avars. In Pannonia, his forces were joined by the local Antes, Baskorts and other tribal nations, who, like the Bulgarians, were unhappy with the slave-driver attitude of Bayan toward them.

Sambat defeated the Avars and occupied a part of their country, freeing the local tribes that the Avars had treated like slaves. Here, he proclaimed the creation of his own country of *Duloba*, and his independence from the supreme kan, Kurbat. Sambat likely took the title Kanas Uvigi and the name *Samo*, meaning „independent“, „sovereign“, „autonomous“. On his part, Kurbat dubbed him *Kyi*, i.e. „dissenter“ and his city on the Dnieper got the name *Kyiv/Kiev*. /**Bakhshi Iman**, Djagfar

Tarikhy..., p. 22/.

In Pannonia, the Carantanian and Bohemian tribes sought help from Samo, followed by the Slovaks, Moravians, Slovenians, Croats, Sorbs and other from the group of Western Slavs Veneti. These people endured decades of oppression at the

hands of Avars and Franks. The Bulgarian Kan Sambat/Samo organized them in tribal units and trained them to fight. As a result, after several successful battles the Slavs freed themselves entirely from their oppressors. „Shambat spent thirtythree years in Duloba and earned thunderous glory with his victories over the Franks and the Alemanns.“ /**same source**/.

Some interesting information on the state of Duloba was offered in 1979 by Farchat Nurutdinov of the city of Kazan, based on surviving fragments from the „Hon Qitabi“ manuscript („Book of the Huns“) by Mohammed Gali, writer from Volga Bulgaria:

„At the start of the 7th century, the younger brother of the Bulgarian king Kurbat-Kubrat (descendant of Attila) bek Shambat Kyi (the city of Kyiv was named after him) established on the territory of present-day Czechia, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland, Prussia, Transcarpathian Ukraine and part of the southern Slav and Austrian and German lands the vast state of Duloba – the State of Dulo. In Western Europe Shambat was known as Samo and his country was referred to as Samo or Duleb(i). According to Gali [Mohammed Gali – note by V.Y.] Shambat is ancestor to the rulers of Bailak (Poland) and Maruba (Czechia and Mortavia). Following the breakup of Duloba, some of Shambat’s Bulgarians went to Prussia where they preserved their heritage and came to be known as Sembi (semb – from Shambat, Samo). Between the 7th and the 13th century the Sembs were always serving in the Bulgarian armies. The founders of Lithuania hail from these people.“

/**Bakhshi Iman**. Djagfar Tarikhy..., p. 300./

To put it more succinctly, Kan Samo/Kyi’s state, Duloba, was the second Bulgarian state/tribal union that existed in the 7th century in addition to Old Great Bulgaria of Kurbat. Twelve chieftains of the larger Slavic tribes from the western group, Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Latvians, Belarussians, Poles, Prussians, Serbs, Croats, Slovenians, Moravians, Slovaks, Czechs submitted to Samo, who had saved their people from the savage cruelty of the Avars (**photo 15**). The establishment of the West Slavic Federation of Duloba was reinforced by dynastic marriages by twelve royal princesses (daughters of the tribal chieftains) to the supreme kan (Kanas Uvigi) Samo.



Империи и кралства в Европа през VII в. Империята били три: Западно-славянската федерация Дулоба на кан Само, Източно-славянската федерация Стара Велика България на кан Курбат и Византия. В Западна Европа германските кралства Нейстрия, Австразия, Саксония, Аквитания, Бургундия, Швабия, Алемания, Лангобардия били в процес на обединение под властта на клана Меровинги. На Пиринейския полуостров съществувало Вестготското кралство.
© Съставител Валентин Йорданов, 2020 г.

Photo 15. Map of Europe in the 7th century. Author Valentin Yordanov, 2020.

Another record that describes the brilliant victories of Kan Samo is the Chronicle of Fredegar, who was personal secretary and chronicler to the Frankish king Dagobert. Chronicle of Fredegar is a particularly valuable source because its author was a direct participant in the events related to the Frankish and the Bulgarian rulers.

Before we turn our attention to the text of the Chronicle of Fredegar, let us provide some contextual information that will allow us to understand it better. The Frankish king Chlothar II (597-629) of the Merovingian dynasty, whose court was in Paris (Neustria), proclaimed in 623 his son, Dagobert (623-634), co-ruler and made him king of Austrasia, leaving for himself the administration of Neustria in Burgundy. In turn, at the end of his reign, Dagobert crowned his son Sigebert III (634-656) who, too, had to continue the fight against the inexhaustible Kan Samo until the end of his rule.

Austrasia encompassed the northeastern parts of the kingdom of the Merovingians, namely present-day Eastern France, Belgium, Hollands, Luxembourg and West Germany. At different points in time, the capital of Austrasia was Metz, Reims, Trier and Cologne.

The deeds of Kan Samo in Central Europe between 623-658 deserve special attention, if for no other reason, because two whole centuries after the mighty Attila, the Bulgarian Kan Samo managed to restore the majority of the old Hunno-Bulgarian empire built by his great-grandfather (Attila). What is more, Samo's conquest had a more lasting effect as evidenced by the fact that a century and a half after his (Samo's) reign the ruler of the Frankish Kingdom, Charles the Great (768-814) asked a special favor from the Bulgarian Kan Krum (803-814) – to not allow Moravians to sell to the Franks the salt they mined in Transylvania. This is because

during Krum's reign, western Slavs, as during Samo's reign, were citizens of Bulgaria, which shared a border with Francia.

To illustrate the respect the Franks had for the Bulgarian Kan Samo, we would like to share some larger and particularly interesting quotes from the chronicle written by Samo's contemporary, Fredegar:

„48. In the fortieth year of the rule of Lothar (**623**) a certain Samo of the nation of the Franks from Sens together with a group of merchants went to trade with the Slavs who are called Wends. The Slavs had at that point already risen up against the Avars that were known as Huns and their King, Khagan. Already in the olden days were the Wends used by the Huns [i.e. Avars – note by V.Y.] as the so-called befulci [avanguard – note by V.Y.] so that when the Huns took the field against a nation, they themselves would stand in muster in front of their camp but the Wends would fight. If the Wends won, the Huns would come forth to claim the booty; but if the Wends lost, they would make them regroup and go back in battle...

Every winter the Huns stay with the Slavs, sleep with their wives and children and on top of that the Slavs pay them tribute and suffer a great burden. The sons, who the Slav wives and daughters bore from the Huns found this outrageous humiliation unbearable and refused to obey their masters and, as I said, rebelled. When they advanced on the Huns, Samo, of whom I already spoke, went with them and his courage was met with admiration: a remarkably great number of Huns were slain by Wend swords. Recognizing his contributions, the Wends made Samo their king and he ruled them for 35 years. Under him, they waged war with the Huns several times [i.e. Avars – note by V.Y.]; His prudence and bravery always won them victory. Samo had twelve Wend wives who bore him twenty-two sons and fifteen daughters ...“

/**Chronicle of Fredegar** (Paris Codex), § 48. Translated by D. N. Rakov. – Available online at: Eastern Literature. Medieval historical sources of East and West (Восточная литература. Средневековые исторические источники Востока и Запада)./

Falsely identifying Samo as someone of Frankish origin was an apparent attempt by Fredegar to downplay the victories of the peaceful Slavs against the warlike and arrogant Franks because these victories hurt the pride of the Frankish kings! It puts what transpired into a decidedly different light if it was a Frank who taught the docile Slavs how to fight and led them against his fellow Franks, demolishing their armies in battle after battle for thirty-five years!

Fortunately, there are other sources that disprove Fredegar's erroneous claim. For example, the Bavarian text *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum* i.e. the [religious] conversion of the Bavarians and the Carantanians, the king of the Carantanians, Samo, is introduced as a Slav. /**Conversio**..., MG, SS, vol. XI, page 7/.

The other manipulation committed by Fredegar was introducing Khan Samo as a merchant and not as the aristocrat he was. Our commentary in this case is categorical – in those times it was impossible for a person without noble birth, such

as a merchant for example, to become the king of any nation, even the Slavs?! Let us come back to Fredegar:

...68. In this year, [630 – note by V.Y.] a large number of merchants trading in Samo's kingdom were killed and their property robbed by the Slavs that went by the name Wends. This was the reason behind the falling out between Dagobert and the King of the Slavs Samo. ...The King [Dagobert – note by V.Y.] secretly ordered a great army to be raised out of all Austrasia against Samo and the Wends... Dagobert's Austrasians laid siege to the castle of Wogastisburg, where great many fierce Wendish fighters were stationed [but – note by V.Y.]. After a three-day-long fight they were crushed and, leaving all their tents and all their belongings behind, they fled home. Since that time, the Wends raided Thuringia and other Frankish provinces. In the wake of this, Dervanus, the duke of the Sorbs, a people of the Slavic tribes, who until then to the Frankish Kingdom belonged, went over to Samo with all his people...

...74. In the tenth year of the rule of Dagobert (631) it was reported to him that an army of Wends raided Thuringia. He left, therefore, with his forces from Metz and crossed the Ardennes towards Mainz in order to cross the Rhein there. In addition to dukes and counts he also had the choicest cohort of brave men from Neustrien and Burgundy. There appeared now emissaries of the Saxons in front of Dagobert asked him to exempt them from the taxes that they paid to the state. In exchange for that they promised with great zeal and success to defend [their – note by V.Y.] the border and to protect the Franksih country.

75. In the eleventh year of the reign of Dagobert [632 – note by V.Y.] the Wends, on the orders of Samo, continued their wild raids and would often come raiding out of their own country into the Frankish Kingdom and devastated Thuringia and other provinces, therefore, did Dagobert come to the town Metz and made, after a determination of the clergy and the nobles of his country, his son Sigebert into King of Auster and gave him the town Metz as his seat. And to the Bishop of Koln Chunibert and to Duke Adigisel he left the affairs in Sigebert's Kingdom and palace. He also left a sufficient treasury for his son and granted him all that his high honor required. All these nominations he reaffirmed with specially prepared papers. From that time was the Frankish Kingdom through the zeal of the Austrasier sufficiently protected..."

/Fredegar. Chronicle (Paris Codex), § 68, 74, 75. Translated by D. N. Rakov.

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Published online in: Eastern Literature. Medieval historical sources of East and West

(Восточная литература. Средневековые исторические источники Востока и Запада)./

As they say, no comment needed.

As far as the duration of Khan Samo's reign goes, it is mentioned in the first quoted paragraph by Fredegar (§ 48) that he ruled the Wends for 35 years from 623 on, which puts his death in 658. According to the Bulgar record, after thirty-three

years away (as of 623) Samo returned to Kyiv and died there in 656. /**Bakhshi Iman**. Djagfar Tarikhy..., page 22/. Apparently, the two sources corroborate one another in this respect.

His older brother, Kurbat, outlived Sambat/Samo by ten years and died in 668, at the end of the reign of Emperor Constantine II (661-668). Thus, after the death of the Bulgarian khan, the Empire of *Old Great Bulgaria*, and its population, was split among three of his sons, Bat-Bayan, Kotrag and Asparuh, while his other two sons, Kuber and Altsek, moved their tribes to Macedonia and Italy, respectively. /**Theophanes the Confessor**. Chronicle. Translated by V. Beshevliev. –

In: Christomathy on the History of Bulgaria (Христоматия по история на България). Vol. I. Early Middle Ages. Sofia, 1978, pages 84, 85; **Nikephoros, Patriarch of Constantinople**. A short history after the reign of Maurice..., pages 49, 50/.

Gavril Krastevich, having studied and compared all Greek sources on the matter, also came to the conclusion that Kurbat died in 668. /**Gavril Krastevich**. Bulgarian History (Българска история). Vol. II..., p. 248, 249/.