



# HUNS – MAGYARS

## MILITARY CULTURE OF HORSE ARCHERS

*“It's not a hero's death we must have, rather a heroic life”*



*Foreword by Botos László to the book called "Huns - Magyars. The Military Culture of Magyars and its Related Peoples" by Zalán Kertai (sketch artist) and Gábor Csaba Kárpáti.*

In history books today, Atila is presented as a short, stocky barbarian and Magyars are presented barbarian hordes, who conquered the Carpathian Basin in AD. 895. This helps to dispel this concept. We can see the military strength of the Scythians, Huns and Magyars and the dexterity of the horse-archers. The Scythians were the first to develop the composite bow, which could shoot up to 800 meters and they developed the use of trousers and boots suitable for life on horseback.

Zalán Kertai's illustrations of the weapons, military tactics and costumes of the many peoples related to the Hungarians offer us a glimpse into the ancient coactions between these peoples, a view of history we normally do not find in our history books. His illustrations represent the Sumerians, Scythians, Hittites, Hurrians, Sarmatians, Parthians, Subareans, Bulgars, Petchenegs, Kuns, Vár-Kuns, Turks, Huns, Avars and Magyars. In order for the English-speaking reader to understand the true background of these drawings, we need to explain that the ancient homeland of all these peoples was originally the Carpathian Basin, sometimes referred to as the Danube Valley. The Carpathian Basin is geographically ideal for settlement. It is a large plain surrounded by mountains and well watered by mountain streams and rivers. It is a territory with natural defenses, accessed through only a few mountain-passes, which has been continuously inhabited since ancient times; in fact, in the Bronze Age, there was a flourishing metalworking industry, with trade connections to Sumer and Egypt. (John Dayton: Minerals, Metals, Glazing and Man. London, 1978, p. 72.) Bronze Age objects in Western Europe date to 2000 B.C. but in the Carpathian Basin, the bronze objects made by the Szeklers date back to 4000 B.C. and a bronze adze found in the county of Torontal, which is inscribed with the Szekler Runic Script, dates back to 5000 B.C. According to Grover Krantz, the Hungarian language is the oldest language in Europe. (Geographical Development of European Languages. Peter Lang, 1988.) At the end of the third millennium B.C., overpopulation and climatic change forced some of the people of the Carpathian Basin to migrate to lands farther south and east. They traveled on horseback and with horse drawn carriages. The invention of the wheel can be credited to the ancient people of the Carpathian Basin. "The earliest certain evidence for a wheeled vehicle comes from the pottery model of a wagon found at Budakalász in Hungary, in a Baden Culture burial of about 2900-2400 B.C." (Dayton, 179.) Torma Zsófia tells us that this wagon was a "burial wagon", in which the people of the Carpathian Basin used to send their loved ones to the afterlife, just as the Vikings sent their dead on their journey in ships. (Szumer nyomok Erdélyben. Buenos Aires, 1972. p. 202.) She points out that, according to the research of Fettich Nándor and Stuart Piggott, many wagons have been found in the Carpathian Basin and in Mesopotamia. This would indicate that the people who migrated from the Carpathian Basin not only traveled by wagon but also brought with them their burial customs to Mesopotamia. During this migration, they settled and established lasting states and they took with them their skills in agriculture, their religious beliefs, their military traditions and their runic script which goes back 40,000 years and was the base of all modern writing systems (Varga Csaba: Jel, Jel, Jel. Budapest, 2002. In English: Signs, letters and alphabets). They even reached Egypt by sea. In Egypt the name of the Great Sphinx was hun. (Németi Kálmán: Szfinx-történelmi kutatásom. Budapest, 1912.) Here the runic signs developed into cuneiform and hieroglyphics.



Many historians state that the Sumerians simply "disappeared" after the Akkadians conquered them but in fact they were forced to flee from Mesopotamia and establish new states north of the Caucasus. According to the Hungarian legend of the Enchanted Stag, King Nimrud, the King of the Sumerians was the forefather of the Hungarians. The twin sons of King Nimrud, Hunor and Magor, each with one hundred warriors, followed the White Stag, through the Meotis Marsh, and disappeared from their sight. Hunor and Magor found the two daughters of King Dul of the Alans, together with their handmaidens, whom they kidnapped and their descendants became the Huns and the Magyars. The legend of Hunor and Magor is mentioned in an ancient history of the Magyars, the *Tarihi Üngürüsz*, which only recently came to light in a Turkish translation. In 1543, at the fall of Székesfehérvár, at the time of the burning of the King's castle, The History of the Magyars, written in Latin, fell into the hands of the interpreter of Suleiman I, Mahmud Terjuman, who translated it into Turkish in the *Tarihi Üngürüsz*. According to this history, (translated into Hungarian in 1982 by Blaskovics József), when the sons of Nimrud, Hunor and Magor, arrived in the Carpathian Basin, they found an ancient populace speaking the Magyar language. The *Tarihi Üngürüsz* was written before the discovery of the Sumerian clay tablets. At that time, to be named the descendants of Nimrud was not a claim to distinction. After the discovery of the Sumerian tablets, when the whole world accepted Sumer as the cradle of civilization, it became popular for nations to link their ancestry to the Sumerians. In the legend, the distant past and the actual historical events became intermingled. The important point is that, when they entered the Carpathian Basin, Árpád and the Magyars found, not



foreigners, as is often emphasized but, peoples related to them. Some of the "nations" who came with Árpád, particularly the Megyer "nation" spoke the same language as the people they found in the Carpathian Basin. The Magyar people are definitely more ancient than historians lead us to believe. Hampel József says that the Avars remaining in Pannonia met the Árpád Magyars and lived side by side with them. (Újabb tanulmányok a honfoglaláskor emlékeiről. Budapest, 1907, p. 21.) When the Greek historians recorded the history of the migrating Sumerians, they used many different names for the same people that they had fabricated in the Greek language. Thus the ancient Caspian people were named "Scutas" or "Scyhae" (Scythians). Justinus M. Junius, a Roman historian who lived in the second century A.D., writes that, according to Trogus Pompeius, the world's most-ancient people were the Scytha. Numerous Greek, Latin, Armenian and Chinese records state that the principal tribe of the Scythians were the Kush (Chus). Calmet, the famous biblical commentator, noted that another frequently mentioned Scythian tribe was the Saga tribe. This name, "Saga", was a Greek name for the Kush (Chus) tribe. Both names refer to the same people. Calmet says that the same thing happened to the Massageta tribe. The name "Massageta" is of Armenian origin but was distorted by the Greeks. The Armenian meaning of "Massageta" was "Great Chus". According to Armenian writings, "Massageta" was originally written "Maschus" or "Massachut". They combined two words, "Mas" and "Chus" or "Chut". The Armenians used "Massachut". The Greeks pronounced it "Massageta". From the Chus name came the later name Chazar or Kazar. The Arabs called the Caspian Sea "Chusar", which came from the name "Chus" or "Kush"; "Mare Caspium Arabicus Cusar". The ancient historians most often mention these three tribes: Daha, Saca and Massageta.



The Scythia, Massageta, Saca, Dahae and Chus (Kush) names all refer to the same people. Herodotus, Strabo and Eustinius all describe a bloody war between Cyrus, the King of Persia and Tomyris, Queen of the Scythians. All three mention different people's names. Herodotus mentions Tomyris as Queen of the Massagetae. Strabo calls her the Queen of the Saca and Eustinius calls her the Queen of the Scythia. Among the ancient Scythian peoples, the Parthians have an important historical name. The Parthians were a branch of the ancient Chus/Kush tribe, which departed from the main tribe and thus they received their name. The Armenian historians sometimes called them "Chus" (Kush) and sometimes "Parthus". Finally the name "Parthus" remained. Csobánczi Elemér quotes from Byzantinus Faustus: "The king of the Massagetae, the leader of numerous Hun armies, gathered all his forces..." and from Eliseus: "...destroyed the defences of Tzur and led the Massagetae... opened the gates of Tzur, city of the Alans, and allowed the army of the Huns to enter." Csobánczi suggests that the Huns were relatives of the Massagetae, Sacae, Dahae, Sarmatians, and Scythians, with the same customs and an advanced equestrian culture because they "appeared" on the same territory just as these peoples "disappeared". (Csobánczi Elemér: *Ősturánok*. Garfield, N.J. 1975. p. 62-65.) The Rev. Lukácsi Kristóf worked from Armenian annals and had already come to the same conclusion in 1870. (A magyarok őselei, hajdankori nevei és lakhelyei, Kolozsvár, 1870.) The Chinese called the Western Huns "White Huns" or "A-pa". The Persians called them "Abar". Around A.D. 310, one branch of the Hun tribes conquered Western Turkistan and assimilated the populace they found there, the "Var" and "Abar" peoples. The name of one of the Avar tribes was "Var" and another was "Chuuni" and they were also known as the Var-Kuns. The Onogurs and Sabirs (Subareans) called all these peoples in Asia and in Europe "Avar" or "Apar". The Hun/Avar names were used interchangeably. The names "Abar" and "Apar" were used for the same people that the ancient Greeks called "Aparno" who were actually the Parthians. The history of the Parthians is not yet well-known. Historians represent them as a people of unknown origin, in spite of the fact that there are enough data to identify their origin. Their empire extended from the Euphrates River to India and for five hundred years Rome was unable to defeat them. In 53 B.C. the Parthians defeated the Romans and the Roman General Crassus fell in the battle together with his son. At that time, the territory of Syria (Palestine) came under the rule of the Parthians and in 39 B.C. at Joppa (Jaffa) they repelled another attack by the Romans. Is it possible that the Roman historians knew nothing about the enemy that they continued to attack unsuccessfully during a period of five hundred years? Perhaps it was the religious world-view that intended us to forget this powerful empire, where the people lived with religious tolerance as opposed to the neighboring Semitic people who lived with the laws of their revengeful God. The Parthians worshipped the all-loving God who loves all of Mankind without exception (the Magus religion). Perhaps this religious world-view intends us to forget that the three wise men from the East, who came to visit Jesus, came from the Parthian Empire, and that they had been waiting for Him, the Light of the World, for three thousand years. He was to bring peace to replace the eye-for-eye revenge of the Semites. The Wise Men must have come from Parthia because it was only large territory east of the Roman Empire. Professor Badiny-Jós Ferenc made a study of the Parthians, in which he quotes Professors Basham, Pijoan, Frye and Ghirshman. (Kaldeától Istergamig. Buenos Aires, 1971, pp. 145-146.) Professor Basham writes that the Parthians came from the North in about 250 B.C. and occupied Bactria, but he does not mention that the Parthians were part of a huge ethnic unit. In a very short time, they were able to establish an empire which extended from the River Euphrates, in the west, to the Indus River, in the east. The southern border was the Persian Gulf and the northern border was a line from the Caucasus Mountains, to the Caspian Sea and the Oxus River (the Amu Darya). This empire lasted for five hundred years in spite of constant attacks by the Romans. During that period of time there was no civil war within the Empire. The Parthians were united in their struggle against the Romans.





Jose Pijoan describes the arts of the Parthians. He states that the Parthian art cannot be categorized as Hellenistic as is generally claimed, but was the "forerunner" of the Byzantine style of art. This conclusion was drawn from artifacts found in recent excavations in the Choresm which were created by the Sassanidae, one of the many peoples who lived in the Parthian Empire. In addition to the Parthian art objects, there can be found ornaments of many different styles, which indicates that the Parthians were a people of an advanced and enlightened culture. Moreover, the theater was already a well-developed art form. We can definitely say that these people were not nomads as is generally believed. According to Richard N. Frye, the Parthian custom for the succession of kings was "unusual and obviously Asian". The crown was inherited by the eldest male of the ruling tribe, who also had to be the fittest, physically and mentally, and not necessarily the son of the deceased ruler. If we combine the observations of Basham, Pijoan and Frye, we can conclude that the Parthians came from the North; their art was unique and their custom of royal succession indicates that they were Turanian or Ural-Altaic. Historians say that the term "Turanian" or "Ural-Altaic" is just as comprehensive as the term "Indo-European", so we are actually no closer to identifying the origins of the Parthians. However, one source, Sebeos, tells us that, in 210 B.C., Arsak, the eldest son of the King of the Epthalites (the White Huns) became King of the Parthians. If we examine more closely the three peoples who made up the Parthian ethnic unit, the Sarmatians, the Sacae and the Kush, we will come to a surprising conclusion: all three are of "unknown origins". At least, this is what the Indo-European historians and linguists teach us. How is it possible that a powerful nation that ruled for 500 years and developed such a high level of civilization and culture could be "of unknown origin"? When

the Greeks came to the conclusion that the Scythians were made up of many different peoples, the concept of "Scythian" changed. Procopius wrote of Atilla's "Massageta-Hun" regiment. The Greeks began to use Greek names for the different Scythian peoples: Dahae, Sacae, Thysogetae, Parthi. All these names were incorrect because they were not the names by which these peoples called themselves but were all Greco-Roman historical distortions. Padányi Viktor writes that, in the first century A.D., these names all disappeared just as the name "Scythian" did and, at the same time, new names appeared on the same territory: Huns, Avars, Sabirs (Subareans), Kushites, then Onogors, Saragurs, Kazars, Turks, and Magyars. Present day historians use approximately 300 names for these same peoples who lived in Eurasia. (Padányi Viktor: *Történelmi tanulmányok*. Munich, 1959, p. 131.) Historians generally believe that the ancient Scythian people died out or were absorbed into other nations but, as the findings of archeologists in Mesopotamia became known, historians noticed that these Greco-Roman names were not known in Sumer, Babylon, Assyria, Chaldea, Syria, Elam, Persia and the territory of the Hittites. Instead of the Greek names, such names as Hunut (Karnak inscriptions) Unni (Persepolis inscriptions), Hsiung-Nu (Chinese Annals), Chus (Kassu, Assy, As, Uzi, Kusan, Khazar), Avar (Vár, Obor, Apar, Par, Parni, Parthi), Dah, (Tachi, Taochi, Dak), Shupri, (Sparda, Saspir, Savard, Sabartoi), and other variations in the Caucasian and Caspian territories were found in Egyptian, Babylonian, Assyrian, Chaldean, Hittite, Persian, Armenian, Neo-Persian and Arabic sources from the 17th century B.C. to the 10th Century A.D. (Padányi, 131-132.) Padányi Viktor points out that the word "saca" means "people". The plural "sakit" means "peoples", from which "Skita" or "Scyth" is derived. Csobánczi goes even further and concludes that the Huns and the Scythians were identical peoples. The connections between these peoples can clearly be seen. If we examine the three ethnic components of the Parthian Empire, we can state that all three belonged to the Turanian or Ural-Altaic group. One of them, the Sarmatians, whom Herodotos called "Sauromata" can be easily identified with the Sumerian sa-utu-mada which means "heart-inside-city" or "the heart of a country". This name became the name of a country and when the country no longer existed it became the name of a people. The name "Sauromata" then was derived from the Sumerian language. (Gosztonyi Kálmán: *A kazár aranyemzet, birodalom és nyelve*. Paris, 1962.)



It was reported that no Hun graves were found in the Carpathian Basin but, in that territory, Hun graves were labeled Sarmatian graves. According to the anthropological data, the Sarmatian graves in the Carpathian Basin are totally identical to the Hun graves in Central Asia. Therefore, we can state that the Carpathian Basin "Sarmatians" were actually Huns. Otto Maenchen-Helfen states that the pottery, agriculture, costumes and dwellings of the Huns were similar to those of the Sarmatians. (The World of the Huns. Berkeley, California, 1973, pp. 169-179.) The anthropological material unearthed in Mongolia indicates that Huns lived there before the Mongols. The Huns were city dwellers at that time and they were identical to the Western or Ephthalita Huns who, in A.D. 568, as Avars, entered the Carpathian Basin. The second ethnic unit in the Parthian Empire was the Saca or Saka. We already know that "Saca" means "people". The third was the Kush (Chus) people. Eliseus mentioned that the Huns were called Kush and according to Asolich the Massageta were also Kush. So it is obvious that although the Greeks mentioned many peoples living in the Parthian Empire, these nations all belonged to "one people" speaking the same language. One of the names of these peoples was "Huns", relatives of the Avars and the Magyars. According to Professor Gosztonyi Kálmán, the word: tur-ug in Sumerian means a small nation that has broken away from a larger nation (a fragment of the whole). tur-ug became turk in English and török in Hungarian. Even today the Hungarian word "tör" means "break". This name is very-fitting for the ancient Scythians and the Sarmatians because in this large territory where they lived there was not a large unified nation. In 1000 B.C, they arrived in small groups from the south side of the Caucasus mountains. Colin McEvedy states that the people who were driven across the Caucasus mountains became known as Scythians when they migrated into South Russia and those that remained became known as Sakas. (The Penguin Atlas of Ancient History. Middlesex, 1967, p. 46.) If we compare the surviving Scythian names with the Sumerian words and meanings, we can see an obvious connection. Frank C. Hibbon also states that the Scythians were a mixed people with a Near Eastern culture. (Prehistoric Man in Europe. Constable, 1959, p. 250.) The Scythian and Sarmatian peoples were the major populace of Kazaria. At the beginning of the seventh century, Theophilactus did not call the Kazars by this name. He called them Turks but in A.D. 626, they were called Turks who lived in Kazaria. (Gosztonyi) Tóth József has written a short study of the Huns and Avars ("Atilla népének története". Magyar Múlt, No. 2, 1977), and states that, since the contemporary writers called these people Huns, Avars and Magyars interchangeably, we may conclude that these people all used the same language, dress and customs. Luchinics Imre, in the introduction of his translation of the writings of Menander, quotes the opinions of some historians in connection with the Hun-Avar names. Malalas calls the Avars one of the tribes of the Huns. Theophilactus uses both names interchangeably and calls the Avars "Huns". According to Menander, we know that Hun interpreters were used by the Byzantines to communicate with the Avars. The chronicler of the Lombards, Paulus Diaconus, writes: "The Huns who are also Avars" and "Huns who are also called Avars".

The contemporary historians probably took their information from the fact that the Vár-Huns absorbed many Hun peoples such as the Sabirs (Subareans) and the Huns of Pontus, whose leader was called Mogyer. We can presume that Magyars fought alongside Avars from the writings of Theophilactus: "The Hun-Ugors received the first Avar appearance in Europe around A.D. 460." The Hun-Ugors were also called Magyars and there were Magyars who came with the Avars. The second influx of Avars in A.D. 568 was again welcomed by the Hun-Ugors and at that time again Magyars came with the Avars into the Carpathian Basin. In times of danger these peoples returned to the Carpathian Basin as refugees or to help their related peoples in the territory. The last Homecomings were the Huns, Avars and Magyars. The military customs of the Scythians, Huns, Avars and Magyars were similar, which indicates a common origin. They all used



saddles, stirrups and horseshoes. The Roman army, even in the third century A.D., went to war without those essential pieces of equipment, which were introduced into Europe by the Germanic people, a thousand years after the Huns. The Scythian horseman trained his horse to kneel down. This was very important in battle as kneeling on command could mean the difference between life and death for a fallen and heavily armed warrior, relatively immobile on foot, who could save time getting swiftly back on his kneeling horse. In battle the Huns, Scythians and Magyars used the tactics of repeated attack and retreat. The horsemen must have trained rigorously and diligently to have been able to react obediently and swiftly to the signals to attack and retreat, turning their bodies in the saddle and continuing to fire their arrows as they retreated. At another signal they turned around and again attacked the enemy. This was later named the "Parthian shot" and may well be the origin of our phrase "parting shot". The Greeks called the Scythians "horse archers" because they were so skillful with their small composite bow. These horse-archers were ambidextrous and extremely accurate and their arrows traveled a great distance (over 500 meters). A practiced archer could shoot around twenty arrows a minute. According to Rolf Rolle, "a composite bow of this nature would have taken between five and ten years to produce, as special types of wood and horsehair string were used and long periods of seasoning were necessary." (The World of the Scythians. Berkeley, California, 1989, p. 66.) It required a significant amount of skill to produce such a bow. The arrowheads used by the Scythians were made of bronze. The later Huns introduced arrowheads made of iron that could penetrate metal armor. The Magyars used the same military tactics. They were so feared in Europe that in all the churches people prayed: "Lord, deliver us from the arrows of the Magyars! - De sagittis Hungarorum, libera nos, Domine!" (Padányi Viktor). Bulcsú and Lehel led their alleged "robbing-campaigns" on the West, with the purpose of weakening the Germans so that they might prevent a repetition of the fate that their forefathers, the Huns and the Avars had experienced at the hands of the Germans, the destruction of their empire. These campaigns led by Bulcsú and Lehel were so sensational that they equaled the campaign of Hannibal. They served to ensure the safety of the Magyar Empire, which had been restored several times. We also have to mention that the "final, decisive" victory over the Magyars at Lechfeld took place in the heart of Germany and only two Hungarian "nations" (tribes) took part. After this "decisive" victory, Prince Zolta organized a campaign of revenge against the Germans, which was led by Botond, Szabolcs and Orkony. According to Anonymus and Kézai Simon, they burned and devastated the German territories. This merciless campaign was conducted not because the Magyars lost the Battle of Lechfeld but rather because the Germans had humiliated their leaders Bulcsú and Lehel, by hanging them on the towers of the Augsburg cathedral. By this act, they also desecrated the cathedral itself. (Padányi, 168-169.) A world power such as the Hun Empire must have developed an organized system for keeping order. Their military organization was based on the decimal system. That in itself shows a great level of civilization. The Chinese Annals mention twenty-four high dignitaries. Under each of these were 10,000 men. There was one commander or corporal for every ten men. (This commander in Hungarian is called a "tizedes". "Tíz" means "ten".) For every ten corporals there was one captain. (Captain in Hungarian is "százados". "Száz" means "one hundred".) Over ten captains, was the colonel. (Colonel in Hungarian is "ezredes". "Ezer" means "one thousand".) In charge of ten colonels was a commander called "tízezerredes". "Tízezer" means "ten-thousand". The entire army was divided into four army corps. Each army corps had 100,000 men and a commander who was called a "százezerredes". ("Százezer" means "one hundred thousand".) These four commanders reported directly to the Senyo (emperor). If the Huns were so "boorish" and "barbarian" as they are so often called, they would not have been able to develop such a precise system, and moreover maintain it for a long period of time. In later years, the Magyars also used the decimal system in their military units. (Baráthosi-Balogh Benedek: A hunok három világbirodalma. Buenos

Aires, 1974 )The Huns, Scythians and Magyars all had the custom of swearing an oath with blood (blood brotherhood). By drinking a mixture of wine and their own blood, into which their weapons had been dipped, they swore allegiance for life. Two warriors drank from a single drinking horn. Rolf Rolle says: "This simultaneous drinking was obviously important; it sealed the bond to the death and perhaps even beyond into the next world." (p. 62.)During their migrations, the people of the Carpathian Basin gave their language to the many peoples they came in contact with. Many researchers have established relationships between Hungarian and other languages such as pre-Hellene, and Greek Hellene (Aczél József), the ancient Etruscan language (Mario Alinei), Sumerian (Henry Rawlinson, Anton Deimel, René Labat, Bobula Ida, Badiny-Jós Ferenc, Gosztanyi Kálmán, Padányi Viktor, and others), Sumerian-Finn-Mongol-Turkish (Csőke Sándor), Ural-Altaic languages (Csoke Sándor), and Egyptian (Baráth Tibor) and many more. The research of Marjalaki Kis Lajos, Magyar Adorján, Toronyi Etelka, Torma Zsófia, Nagy Sándor, John Dayton, Grover Krantz and others, proves that civilization began in Central Europe and spread south to Mesopotamia and Egypt, not the reverse. The people who migrated to the south and southeast were later forced to abandon their new territories and return to their homeland in the Carpathian Basin.



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