

## ABSTRACTS

Elek Benkő

■ *Medieval and Early Modern Documents of the Székely Runic Script: Archaeological and Historical Considerations*

Keywords: *Székely script, runic script, Khazarian script, Eastern-European runic script*

The question whether, before the spreading of the Latin alphabet, old Hungarians also had their own alphabet, or did only the Székely people have one, in accordance with the general characteristics of their early history, which was somewhat different from that of the rest of Hungarians, continues to be asked not only by scientific researchers, but also preoccupies the public opinion of Hungarians, greatly interested in this subject. The present study argues that Runic script is mainly a legacy of the Székely people, which is why it even uses the term “Székely script” for its designation.

According to the essential part of the study, the Székely runic script belongs to the Turkish (Khazarian) family of writing, similarly to the runic script of the Avarian Empire. Although the relationship between the former Avarian and the later Székely inscriptions has not yet been established, it seems that the connection between these two scripts is not direct and straightforward. From the perspective of the preserved written documents, it seems that the Székely script was a script adapted to the needs of the Hungarian language already in existence in the Árpád period, and it can be surmised that Eastern-European runic scripts and certain Balkanic connections played an equally important role in its formation.

We could not find any reliable evidence for the persecution of the Székely script as pagan legacy by the Christian Church. On the contrary, the written documents have been mostly preserved in churches, and runic script was also used by Christian priests and monastics. Our preserved documents do not attest its widespread “popular” use.

The author of the study is currently working with other specialists on a critical edition of the documents of the Székely script.

Kinga Éry

■ *Anthropological Characteristics of the Conquering Hungarians: An Outline of the Research History*

Keywords: *skeletal research of the Magyars in Hungary, anthropological and demographic characteristics, pathological findings*

The introduction of the study presents the discovery of the first conquering Hungarian grave in 1834, the beginnings of anthropological research and the most important skeletal collections in Hungary. Henceforth, the author surveys the three main questions related to the anthropological characteristics of the conquerors. The first of these pertains to the characteristics of the skulls, including a presentation of the two anthropological groups of them, with their skeletal specifications pertaining to the history of their settlements, as well as the spatial and temporal specifics of their formation. The second question concerns the demographic characteristics of the Conquest Period from the perspective of life expectancy, gender distribution and mortality indicators of the adult population. The third question deals with the most important injuries and pathological changes of the bones, with special attention to the practice of symbolic skull trephination, introduced in the Carpathian Basin by the ancient Hungarians. At the end of the study, the author also alludes to the promising researches related to the skeletal findings, presented by genetics, bone chemistry and physics.

István Fodor

■ *The Enigmatic 10<sup>th</sup> Century*

Keywords: *land-taking, Hungarians, 10<sup>th</sup> century, nomadic lifestyle, settling*

There are only external (foreign) sources of the 10<sup>th</sup> century history of the Hungarian colonizers, and these sources only inform us about the marauding expeditions of the Hungarians, and are silent about their internal life. Consequently, we do not know how this population, which has come from the East, could establish one of the most significant Christian kingdoms of the area.

Arabic and Byzantine sources describe 9<sup>th</sup> century Hungarians as nomads. The essential characteristics of this strategy of

nomadic pastoralism are exemplified by the grazing route, stretching alongside rivers, between the southern winter quarters and the northern summer quarters, of 13<sup>th</sup> century Mongolian aristocrats (Fig. 1). However, such a method of pasturage was inadequate for the Great Hungarian Plain, since rivers had vast floodplains before their regulation (Fig. 2). Therefore, traditional nomadism was not possible here, and the Hungarian nomadic communities settled down (a significant part of them have already opted for a settled lifestyle in the East). The 10<sup>th</sup> century saw the emergence of a network of villages compelled to pay tribute to the prince (Fig. 3-4). The high quantity of noble metals acquired through military campaigns was used by the representatives of the traditional nomadic elite for prestige purposes, and they took these goldsmith objects with them to their graves. Géza, Grand Prince of the Hungarians, limited the power of the elite and began the establishment of a European-type state, relying on the economic power of the rural population.

**István Fodor**

■ ***Sources of the Theory of “Double Land-Taking”***

Keywords: “double land-taking”, *Hungarian history, Nagy Géza, László Gyula*

During the last decades, the theory of the so-called “double land-taking”, according to which Magyars have already arrived in the Carpathian Basin before the group led by Árpád in 895, has elicited much controversy. The first person to come up with such a theory was Nagy Géza in 1895, according to whom the Onogur-Bulgarians who have settled in the Avarian Empire around 670 have mainly been Magyars. In 1969 László Gyula had formulated a similar theory, inspired not by his own historical situation but by Székely folklore, according to which the Székelys have arrived earlier in this region than the Magyars of Árpád.

**Erwin Gáll**

■ ***The Peripheral Transylvania: Thoughts on the Expansion of the “Hungarian Power System” in Transylvania in the 10th Century***

Keywords: *Transylvania, 10<sup>th</sup> century, periphery, Hungarian power system*

At the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, Hungarians and Turks, who conquered

the Carpathian Basin, created a complicated political-military model, in which the so-called “warrior society” communities also took part, but apart from them, there were social classes leading a settled lifestyle, who engaged themselves with agriculture, commerce etc. In the chronological analysis of the 10<sup>th</sup> century finds carried out so far, we have managed to detect the concentration of the items indicating social status (ornamented sabres, studded belts and ornamented mount sabretaches) in a core region, namely the Upper Tisza/Tisa region. However, according to the archaeological finds, there could have been several peripheral centres existing besides this centre, and there could have been areas dependent of these centres, forming a functional unit.

In the case of cemeteries in the Cluj-Napoca/Kolozsvár micro-region, a concentration of burials with horses and weapons can be detected, which, according to our opinion, can be interpreted as the remains of a once-existing military centre. These cemeteries do not excel with the richness of precious metals, but with the amount and association of a variety of different weapon categories.

From these observations concerning the professional warrior class of the 10<sup>th</sup> century power centre, one can infer to the existence a greatly varied population with individuals of different origins.

The possibility of the existence of a cemetery belonging to the military entourage might arise in connection with the two horse burials found on the highest point of Alba Iulia/Gyulafehérvár. With archaeological means (from an archaeological point of view, this being a new representative material), we found out that the Hungarians conquering the Carpathian Basin established military centres in the eastern part of the Basin (Upper Tisza/Tisa region, Cluj-Napoca/Kolozsvár, Biharea/Bihar), which concentrated significant military potential. In contrast with the stereotypes still prevalent, these areas were not destroyed, but integrated, and drew in (also) the Eastern trade, as well as from the whole of Eastern Europe, even up to Scandinavia. Practically, these centres changed the cultural character of the region. At the same time, as a result of previous military events in the Carpathi-

an Basin, these centres also must have increased considerably the number of common people through a slow but sure integration process, by conquering the populations living in the region. The assimilation can be detected archaeologically in the border areas of the Carpathian Basin and in the case of some of the cemeteries in the Transylvanian Basin.

#### László Honti

##### ■ *How Did Our Mother Tongue Sound in the Conquest Period?*

Keywords: *conquest of the homeland, linguistic monuments, vocabulary, Halotti beszéd (Funeral Sermon)*

There is no direct way of knowing how the language of Hungarian colonizers was. Our main sources of information in this matter are historical-comparative linguistics and language typology. Less hypothetical knowledge can be gained from our first linguistic monuments which contain longer, coherent texts (e.g. the Funeral Sermon or the Old Hungarian Lamentations of Mary). All things being considered, we can ascertain that vowel harmony has already been a feature of Hungarian language cca. 1 100 years ago (e.g. *lát-ok* 'I see', *néz-ék* 'I look', *ütök* 'I hit'), that some of our current case-endings have only been postpositional elements (e.g. *-belé* > > *-ba/-be* 'in, into'), and that Hungarian language had verb prefixes, but no (definite and indefinite) article. The duality of objective and subjective conjugation is an ancient linguistic heritage, which could already be found in Old Hungarian, and the verbal moods were also the same as today, but Old Hungarian had more verbal tenses than the current Hungarian literary and spoken language, some of which have been preserved, however, by the Székely dialect. As a matter of course, the Old Hungarian vocabulary lacked the loanwords of Latin, Neo-Latin, Slavic and German origin, borrowed after the settlement of Hungarians (e.g. *templom* 'church', *pálya* 'course, grounds', *asztal* 'table', *bognár* 'cartwright'). A short passage from the Funeral Sermon, presented in the article in phonetic transcript, can serve as a suggestion for the state of Hungarian language from the Conquest Period.

#### László Révész

##### ■ *The Archaeological Legacy of the Hungarian Colonizers*

Keywords: *land-taking, Hungarian, archaeological legacy, burial, burial-ground*

Hungarian colonizers have been extraordinarily diverse in their ethnicity, economic strategies and social stratification – a fact also reflected by their archaeological legacy and the structure of their burial-grounds. The deceased have been buried in formal attire, men lying alongside their weapons, emblems of dignity and fire starting kits, and women alongside even smaller personal articles. The rites performed during the funeral ceremony reflect the variety of their religious beliefs.

No grave of any Hungarian Grand Prince has been found yet. Some members of the tribal aristocracy lie in family burial grounds containing 4-8 graves, richly bejewelled women and small children lying alongside men buried with their emblems of dignity. The archaeological legacy of 10<sup>th</sup> century free people has been preserved in burial-grounds consisting of 15-30-60-100 graves. The economic status of the buried, reflected by their weapons, jewellery and clothing ornaments, also depended on their way of life – graves from agrarian villages contain much less archaeological data than the burial grounds of communities dealing with animal husbandry. The number of graves is also determined by the population of the settlement and by the duration the burial-ground has been used.

#### András Róna-Tas

##### ■ *Some Controversial Questions of Early Hungarian History*

Keywords: *prehistory, early history, original homeland, historical theory and hypothesis*

The author of this study has published several monographs on the early history of the Hungarians. In this paper, he discusses some questions which remained open or were debated during the last decade. *Prehistory* is the period before events were recorded in writing, in the case of the Hungarians roughly until the 7<sup>th</sup> century. The use of the term *nation* has to be specified, and *language* and

*ethnicity*, as well as their respective histories have to be clearly distinguished. The term *original homeland* has to be abandoned. No data endorses that Hungarians would have lived east of the Ural Mountains. *Theory* and *hypothesis* were unduly mixed up. Neither facts nor methodological principles favour the existence of mega-linguistic families, as e.g. the *Nostratic*. On the other hand, we have ample data on early connections between different languages. In the case of some etymologies, it is difficult to separate Turkic, Alanian and Slavic as donor languages. The Hungarian people split before the majority moved into the Carpathian Basin, and a minor group went north to the Middle Volga region. Those who entered their present homeland met there Slavs and the Avars, who spoke a Turkic language. Although the runiform script has traditionally been used only by the Székelys, according to linguistic data, the Hungarians took over from the Turks a carved runiform script before they adopted the Latin alphabet.

**László Veszprémy**

■ ***The Hungarian Raids: Ancient Hungarian Virtue or Just Bloody Plundering?***

Keywords: *Hungarian Conquest, raids, Hungarian virtue, plundering*

The Hungarians entered the European area with raiding troops invited either by the East Frankish court or their Moravian opponents. The classical age of the raids could be set between 899 and 971, when the raiding troops rove over practically the whole continent from the Atlantic Ocean as far as the Iberian Peninsula and South Italy, hired by disputing political parties ready to pay their nomadic auxiliaries. The professional nomadic art of war (the tactical use of quickly moving disciplined mounted archers, shooting backward at the enemy while being pursued by them) remained successful for almost a century against their western or Byzantine opponents, and some battles of the hundreds of smaller clashes belong to the best documented contemporary armed conflicts, like those at the Rivers Brenta (899), Riade (933) and the River Lech (955). The battle of Brenta offers a fine

example of a strategic feigned retreat that ended in an unexpected crossing of the river and the annihilation of the troops of King Berengar. At the battle of Riade, the Germans tried to use the tactical feigned retreat as a stratagem, but the Hungarians recognised it, and fled successfully from the battlefield. The battle of the River Lech testifies the fatal consequences of rain for the nomadic composite bows, which contributed to the disastrous defeat of the Hungarians, and the outcome of this battle testifies for the successful effects of a western modernisation of warfare, stimulated by the Hungarian raids.

The Italian, German and Byzantine courts paid high tribute to them for long decades. In organising the defence against the raiders, the most successful were the Germans, who after minor victories and military and political reforms, finally crushed them in 955.

**Vilmos Voigt**

■ ***On Hungarian Conquest and its Folklore***

Keywords: *Hungarian Conquest, folklore, ancient religion, hierarchy of genres*

Trying to paint a picture of the Conquering Hungarians and their folklore has been an occupation of many generations of scholars. Recent results enable us to return to this topic, stressing some methodological presuppositions. It is important to draw the conclusion from the previous studies, and to establish a logical terminology in describing the phenomena (e.g. “ősvallás” ‘ancient religion’). A very important notion is conveyed by the “hierarchy of genres”, which reflects the systematic interrelation between different genres of the extant folkloric material. Another important topic is the time sequence lived by different generations, before, during and after the land-taking. The period around 896 A.D. was a very dynamic and transitory one. There are many important words (*Isten, ördög, hit, imád, bűn, ünnep, írás, betű, könyv* etc.) which can be dated back before 896 A.D. Also, the first territorial demarcation of Hungarian folklore was finalized only centuries later.

A lapszámot szerkesztette:  
Kovács Kiss Gyöngy

- Benkő Elek** (1954) – régész-történész, az MTA doktora, igazgató, MTA BTK Régészeti Intézet, Budapest
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- Voigt Vilmos** (1940) – folklorista, az MTA doktora, ny. egyetemi tanár, Budapest, a Bukaresti Egyetem tiszteletbeli professzora
- Vorzák Gyula** (1975) – festőművész, Csíkszereda

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„Miert is lenne rejtélyes a mi 10. századi történelmünk, hiszen annyi forrás emlegeti őseink kalandozó hadjáratait s az ezekkel kapcsolatos eseményeket? Ez valóban így van, ám ezeket külföldi – európai, bizánci és arab – szerzők írták őseinkről, de szinte kizárólag hadi tetteikről. E külső források viszont szinte semmit sem szólnak arról, hogyan is élték elődeink mindennapi életüket, mivel foglalatosságok a népesség döntő többsége, amely nem nyeregben ülve száguldozta végig Európát. Ez a külföldi frásstudókat nemigen érdekelte, nem is tudtak erről szinte semmit, hiszen új szomszédaink nemigen turistáskodtak a Duna-Tisza táján, s valószínűleg nem is túlságosan vágytak ide. Belső források pedig – amit a magyarok írtak volna – nem maradtak ránk, s talán nem is keletkeztek ilyenek. A Kalocsa mellett előkerült, csont tegezszájra vésett rovásírás ugyan arról tanúskodik, hogy őseink is ismerték és használták a kelet-európai rovásírást, ez az írás azonban egyelőre még megfejtetlen, ráadásul mindössze egyetlen emléke maradt ránk. Pedig rendkívül érdekes kérdésekre várnánk a választ. Mindenekelőtt arra, hogyan mentek végbe azok a döntő jelentőségű változások, amelyek során a keletről jött magyarság arculatot váltott, s a honserzés után száz esztendővel a Kárpát-medencében kialakult az európai típusú keresztény magyar állam.”

(Fodor István)

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