

Once More About the Origins

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László Götz. *Keleten kél a nap* [The sun rises in the east]. Budapest: Püski Kiadó, 1994. 2 vols. 1107 [8] pp., 8 maps. Indices. ISBN 963 8256 30 3; 963 8256 31 1.

A review of this two-volume work on the ancient history of Asia Minor and its cultural and linguistic influence on later cultures, is long overdue. The two volumes are divided into five books. The first four appeared as separate works between 1981 and 1992, under the following titles: 1. *Az elő-ázsiai ősnyelv felé* [Towards the prehistoric language of Asia Minor]; 2. *Kettős mértékkel (a magyar őstörténetkutatás módszereri és eredményei)* [About the double standard of the methods employed in Hungarian ancient historical research and its results]; 3. *Boncold csak nyelvész! (a finnugor nyelvtudomány módszerei és eredményei)* [Dissect it, linguist! The linguistic methods of Finno-Ugric language research and their results]; 4. *A szumér kérdés (régészeti, etnogenetikai, nyelvfejlődési és kutatástörténeti elemzés)* [The Sumerian Question: an analysis of the history of archeological, ethno-genetic and language development research]. Book 5: *Az uráli finnugor nyelvek genetikai nyelvcsaládi elméletének ellentmondásairól* [On the contradictions of a genetic Uralic Finno-Ugric language family theory], was published in 1994, two years after the author's death, as part of the present two-volume work. Volume two contains two Indices: an Index of Names; and a rather sketchy Subject Index, which can be irritating to use. The Foreword is by the eminent Hungarian archeologist and scholar, the late Gyula László.

Dr. László Götz (1934–1992) left Hungary during the 1956 Revolution, as a 5th-year medical student. Lacking any knowledge of German, he wrote part of his medical school entrance examination at the

University of Vienna, in Latin. He began to take an interest in ancient history in the early 1960s, when he read in the newspaper that a Sumerian ship was excavated in the Southern Ural region in the then Soviet Union. It immediately caught his interest, for he recognized the possibility of an historical connection between the proto-Hungarians and the Sumerians. To broaden his knowledge on the subject, he took a number of courses in ancient history at the University of Vienna. He was also influenced and encouraged by the writings, findings and conclusions of his friend and mentor, Gyula László. Götz's monumental work is a vast storehouse of facts and references. The number of source materials cited in it exceeds 600.

The main thrust of the work is the explanation of the Neolithic and bronze-age cultures; the development of Asia Minor (Syria, Palestine, Anatolia, and Northern Mesopotamia, i. e. the "Fertile Crescent") and of Southern Mesopotamia with its cultural and ethno-genetic influences on Western Eurasia. Götz emphasizes the fact that between 4000 and 2000 B.C., the Sumerian language was the "lingua franca" of the whole Western Eurasian region, playing a determining cultural and linguistic role in the development of South-Eastern, Central and Western Europe, Asia, as well as the Caucasus, Pontus and the Volga-Ural regions, the effects of which Götz summarizes as follows:

...archaeologically demonstrable and proven Sumerian migrations and colonization make the Sumerian language indispensable not only for Sumerian-Hungarian-Finn Ugric, but also for Indo-European language research. In other words — and this should be kept in mind — we are not suggesting here an exclusively Sumerian-Hungarian linguistic or ethnic relationship, but a much more far-reaching linguistic phenomenon. Notably, that to this day, we are able to find striking linguistic similarities with the Sumerian in almost all the languages of Western Eurasia. Given our present archeological and historical knowledge, this phenomenon can be attributed to and explained only by the existence of a regional language koine or "lingua franca" in Asia Minor during the Neolithic and early bronze ages. Massive elements of this common language were carried to the southern regions of Western Eurasia and Europe by agricultural migrants, and later by metal-seeking and -working colonizers. With the passage of time, the indigenous hunter-gatherer populations distorted and "pidginized" the language of the new settlers, adapting it to their own language systems and

phonetic structures. The language got divided first into dialects, and later into separate, individual languages (p. 11; my translation, É.K.).

Götz terms this linguistic development "regional language adjustment."

Based on these findings, in the first book Götz sharply criticizes the outdated "laws of phonetic change" or "development" theory, first espoused by the German linguist, Jakob Grimm, in the 19th century, on which Finno-Ugric linguistics is still based. According to Grimm and his followers, the Indo-European languages originated from a common proto-Indo-European-Arian language about 6000 years ago. Later this language divided into dialects, in which a systematic, chronological "phonetic development" took place. From this developed the theory that, if there was a common proto-Indo-European-Arian language family, then there must have been a common proto-Indo-European-Arian "homeland" as well. This led to all kinds of grandiose cultural and racial deductions and speculations, culminating in Hitler's Arian superiority theory. Götz deals with the matter in length and in depth, and forcefully argues with the help of comparative tables that such changes could have occurred only *concurrently* and have existed *independently* within the individual languages. As they did not, according to Götz the "law of phonetic change" is unsuitable for the establishment of linguistic chronology and development. He also demonstrates that this principle fails at times even within the Indo-European languages, a phenomenon already noted by some German linguists, such as F. Altheim. For instance, phonetic changes do not occur consistently in the *same* words in *all* the languages, but crop up now here, now there. (The same is true of the Finno-Ugric languages.) At other times, there is no phonetic change or "development" at all, the words all start with the same consonant, e. g. in the word "have": HAB-en (German), HAB-en (Old High German), HABB-an (Old English), HAF-a (Old Scandinavian), HAB-an (Gothic), and HAB-ere (Latin).

What follows from all this is that as it is impossible to prove the existence of a proto-Indo-European-Arian language "family" and "homeland" based on linguistic deductions, it is equally impossible to prove that there ever existed a cohesive proto-Uralic Finno-Ugric linguistic family or homeland 6000 years ago(!), as claimed by many Hungarian historians. Not to mention the fact that the oldest extant Finno-Ugric language relic, the Hungarian, is barely a thousand years old. The Indo-Europeans at

least have much older written languages, such as Greek, Latin and Sanskrit, to fall back on.

Götz's second book deals with the methods employed by Hungarian researchers of the Finno-Ugric persuasion. Götz vigorously attacks various leading contemporary Hungarian historians and linguists (for which he is criticized by Gyula László himself) for their one-sided, outdated theories, not taking — or not wanting to take notice of — or simply ignoring the results of linguistic and archeological research of the past 50-60 years. He points out that this is true also of Hungarian universities, and especially of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences that still holds on to the Finno-Ugric theory with grim determination.

The third book is again taken up with the discussion of Finno-Ugric language research methods and results, analyzing and criticizing their hypothetical theories presented as "indisputably proven facts." He is especially irritated by the practice of showing the Hungarians as a primitive, barbaric horde who had almost no language to speak of at the time of their appearance in the Carpathian Basin, but "took over" or "borrowed" most of their words from the Iranians, the Turkic Chuwash and the Slavs, and "learned" culture from the "educated and cultured" West. As Gyula László once remarked: "We must have been the beggars among the nations!"

The fourth book, "The Sumerian Question" is devoted almost entirely to the archeological, linguistic and ethno-genetic analysis of the great Sumerian culture, with special emphasis on its cultural and linguistic impact that reached out for thousands of miles in all directions and had left its demonstrable mark on the Hungarian language as well. Gyula László in his Foreword makes the point that Götz's findings and theories can no longer be ignored by the Hungarian scientific community, but should be considered for serious study and academic discussion.

The exhaustive first chapter of the fifth book discusses the origins of the ancient cultures. Gyula László considered this chapter so important that he suggested that it should be taught in the schools. Part of the chapter deals with the pros and cons of the accuracy of C14 dating, pointing out the many erroneous conclusions reached by misinterpreting the readings.

The third chapter of the fifth book is devoted to the newest findings in the field of Hungarian historical research. Götz sees the beginnings of the proto-Hungarians and their language in the homogenous Andronovo-culture that existed from 1700 BC on, occupying the huge

area stretching from the Altai region to the Urals, and from the Ob-Irtis-Tobol region to Kazakhstan, where its language must have served as the common language between the diverse ethnic groups. After its disintegration around 1000-900 BC, the different tribes and groups parted and became independent, creating their own cultures and dialects. One of these dialects must have played an important role in the development of the proto-Turkic languages, as well in the development of the proto-Hungarian language through "regional language adjustment."

Götz sees the approach of Eurasian cultural and linguistic influence towards the Hungarian in four stages. In the first stage, one can only dimly make out its Mesopotamian origins in the Caucasus region and in Asia. In the second stage, one can definitely detect the influence of the Andronovo-culture. The third stage is the period of the development of the great steppe-cultures at the turn of the 2/1 millennia, which can be identified as Khimer-Scythian and Sarmatian. During this time they come in contact with the proto-Hungarians, influencing their language and culture. This is the time when the Hungarian language must have left its mark on the languages of the Finn tribes, as evidenced by the many lexical similarities between the Hungarian and these languages, especially the Cheremiss. This would reverse the present theory according to which Hungarian "derived" from the Vogul, Ostyak, and other Finno-Ugric languages. The last phase of the above development probably took place in the Middle Volga-Kama region, where Brother Julianus found a Hungarian-speaking group as late as the middle of the 13th century AD.

Götz's work is an all-encompassing study of the ancient southern cultures, which left their indelible mark on all subsequent cultures and languages, including the Hungarian. It is to be hoped that the time is not far off, when the Hungarian scientific community finally takes notice, and recognizes the importance of the findings and theories contained therein.