

zsákmányszerző katonai vállalkozások a X. század közepe után megtörték az erősebb szomszédok ellenállásán. Ez a fejlemény szintén a régi szervezet felbomlását segítette elő. Döntő fontosságú volt, hogy a fejedelem (Géza nagyfejedelem) és környezete felismerte, hogy országa és népe megmaradásának egyetlen esélye, ha alkalmazkodik az európai normákhoz és környezetéhez, hasonló társadalmi berendezkedést alakít ki. Géza fejedelemnek és utódának Istvánnak, az első keresztény uralkodónak ereje is volt e sorsdöntő lépés megtételére. Helyesen ismerték ugyanis fel a magyar gazdaság és társadalom valós helyzetét, ti. azt, hogy e társadalom már jó részt túllépett a nomád életformán, s a keleti típusú politikai és katonai szervezet a társadalom szerves fejlődésének legfőbb akadálya. E változások keresztülvitele (a kereszténység elterjesztése, az európai típusú hűbéri államszervezet kiépítése) a régi berendezkedés híveinek ellenállását váltotta ki, akiknek azonban a magyar társadalomban már nem volt kellő erőtartalékuk ahhoz, hogy a döntő változások irányát megtörjék. Így e belső erőpróba nem forgácsolta szét az ország gazdasági és katonai erejét és nem szolgáltatta ki prédául az országot és népet az erősebb szomszédoknak. Ennek éppen az ellenkezője játszódott le a 800 körüli években az avar birodalomban, ahol a hatalmi arisztokrácia belső küzdelme felemésztette a belső erőtartalékokat, s a külső támadás elsöpörte az avarok országát, s népének sorsát is megpecsételte. Hogy a magyarság történelme nem torkollott hasonlóan zsákutcába a X. század végén, annak oka elsősorban fejlettebb gazdasági és társadalmi szervezete lehetett, s ehhez a hatalom csúcsán szerencsés személyi adottságok is társultak: Géza fejedelem és fia, István király személyében mintegy 70 éven át olyan uralkodók álltak az ország élén, akik páratlan éleslátással ismerték fel a veszélyhelyzetből kivezető egyedüli utat, a környezethez való alkalmazkodás szükségességét.

AN OUTLINE OF HUNGARIAN PREHISTORY

Hungarians settled in the Carpathian Basin in 895 A.D. The available records shed light predominantly on their 8th–9th centuries way of life when the Hungarian tribes inhabited the steppe and parkland area north of the Caucasus Mountains and the Black Sea. Their history prior to this time is documented in very few written sources. Therefore, questions concerning the earliest history, or ethnogenesis of Hungarians can only be studied using evidence from the auxiliary disciplines of historical research. These include linguistics, archaeology, ethnography, physical anthropology, historical botany and zoology. Contemporary studies on the ancient history of Hungarians exploit and utilize results from various fields in a comprehensive way.

Prior to the 895 conquest of the Carpathian Basin, Hungarians lived to the east of the Carpathian Mountains. They covered great distances throughout the two millennia of migration which finally brought them to their permanent homeland. Predecessors of the Hungarians had had, more or less tight links with linguistically related Finno-Ugrian population groups in the Ural region, before the two groups became ethnically independent. At the same time, their connections with other groups of people to whom they were related neither linguistically nor in terms of common origin could be perceived from very early times. Such contacts are mirrored by loanwords in the Hungarian language adopted during various periods.

Conceptually, Hungarian prehistory includes the long process of ethnogenesis of the Hungarian people and the history of migrations by the ancient Hungarians

prior to their conquest of the Carpathian Basin. This long historical interval spanning some six to seven millennia, may be subdivided into a number of periods.

The Uralian Period

The history of people belonging to the Uralic linguistic family (Finno-Ugrian and Samoyed) (Fig. 1.) may be followed as far as the 6th to 4th millennia B.C. by means of historical linguistics and archaeological methodology. At that time, Urali-

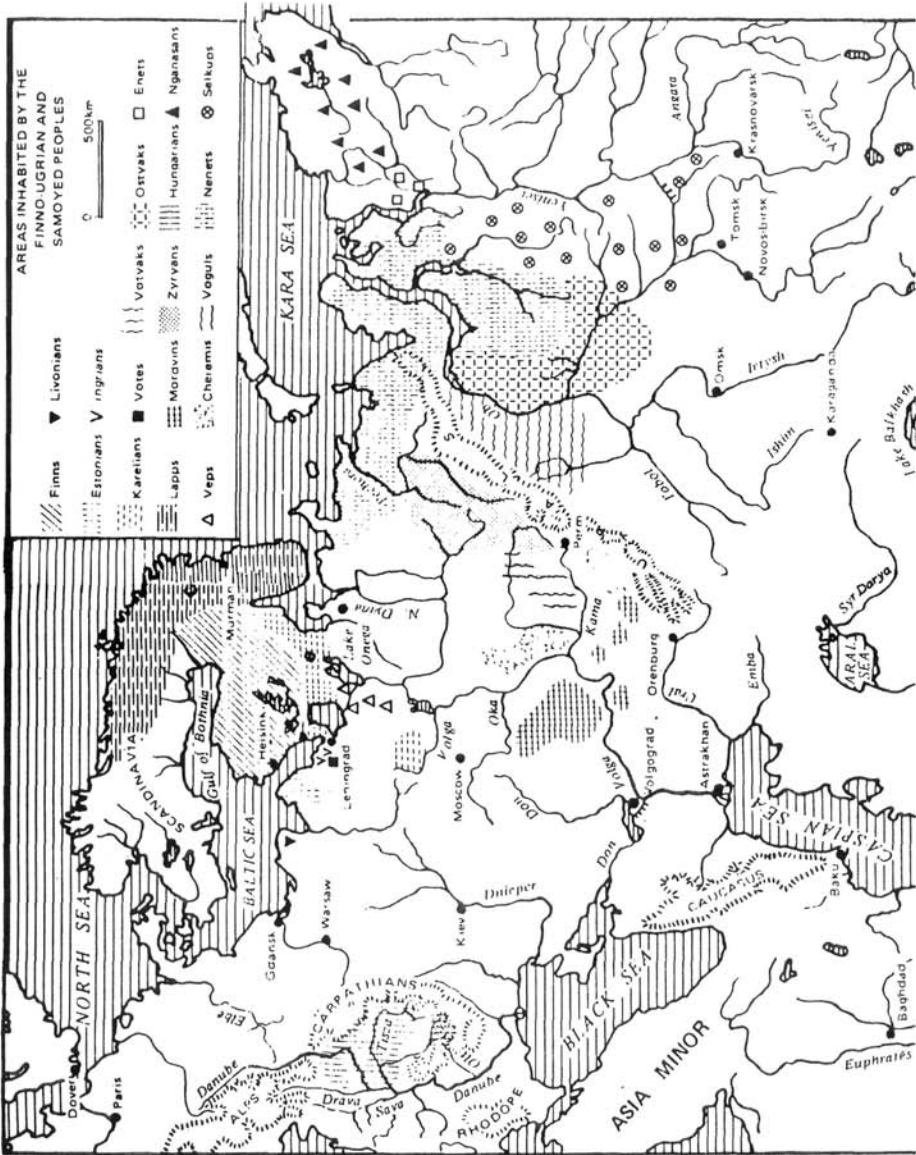


Fig. 1.

The Division of Proto-Uralic

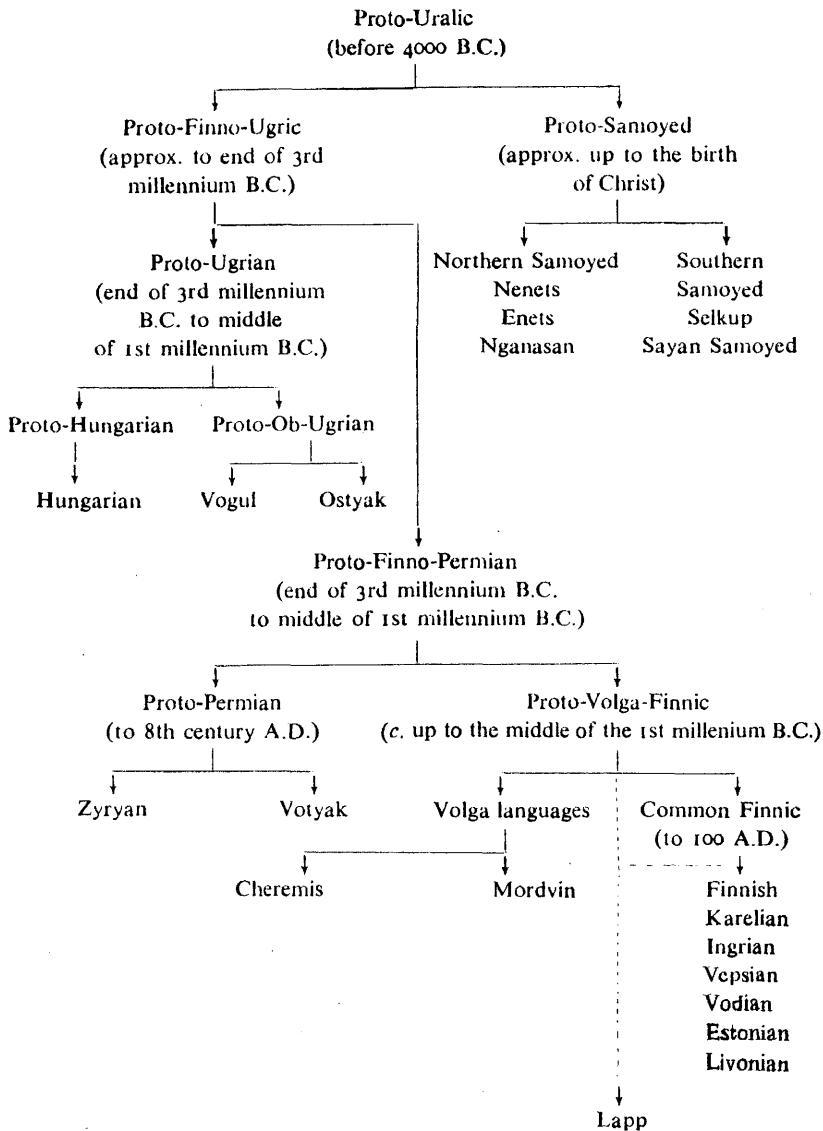


Fig. 2.

an population groups speaking a largely homogeneous language lived predominantly in the area bordered by the central and southern reaches of the Ural Mountains as well as the Ob and Irtysh rivers. Neolithic settlements of these people, dating from the first to the 4th millennia B.C. were discovered by archaeologists mostly on the banks of small lakes and rivers. Their non-productive economy was characterized by the exploitation of natural resources (hunting, fishing and gathering). Unique

monuments of their ancient art are represented by the rock carvings found on the eastern slopes of the Ural Mountains. As much as may be reconstructed from the scanty evidence of anthropological data, their physical constitution displayed transitional characteristics between the European and Oriental racial subdivisions, and these have been designated as the „Uralian type” by researchers. This prehistoric period was not the time, however, when the Uralic linguistic family was formed, but was a time when the more or less uniform (basic) language broke up. It is unclear, what areas had been previously inhabited by population groups from this linguistic family. It is quite likely, however, that they moved to this part of the Ural region from the south sometime during the Mesolithic period. (Fig. 2.)

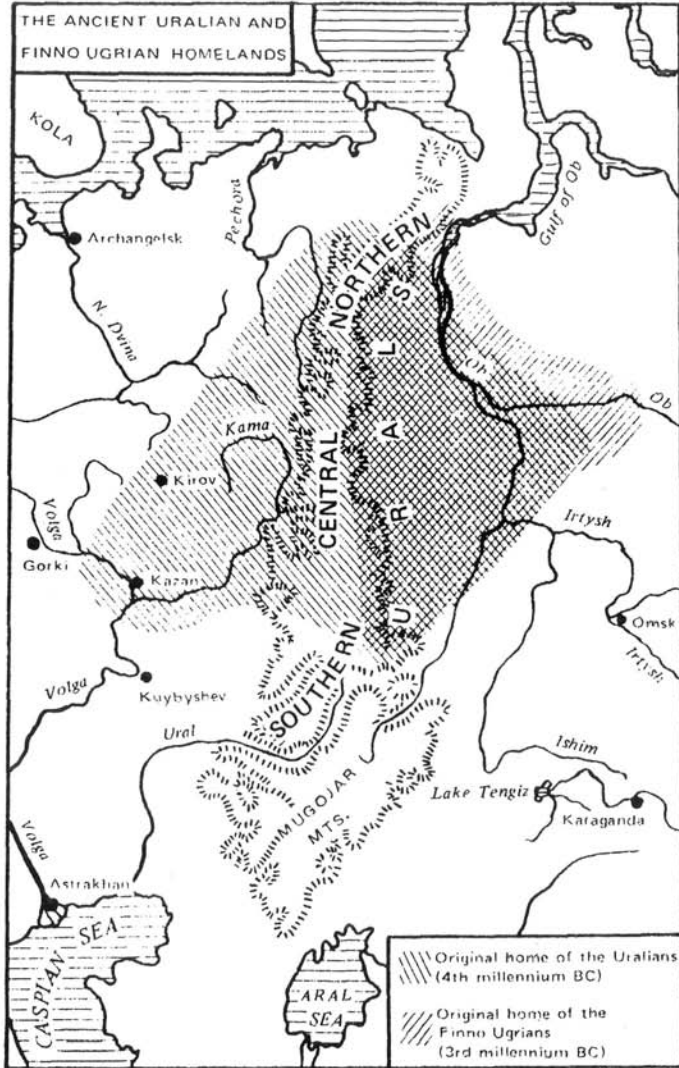


Fig. 3.

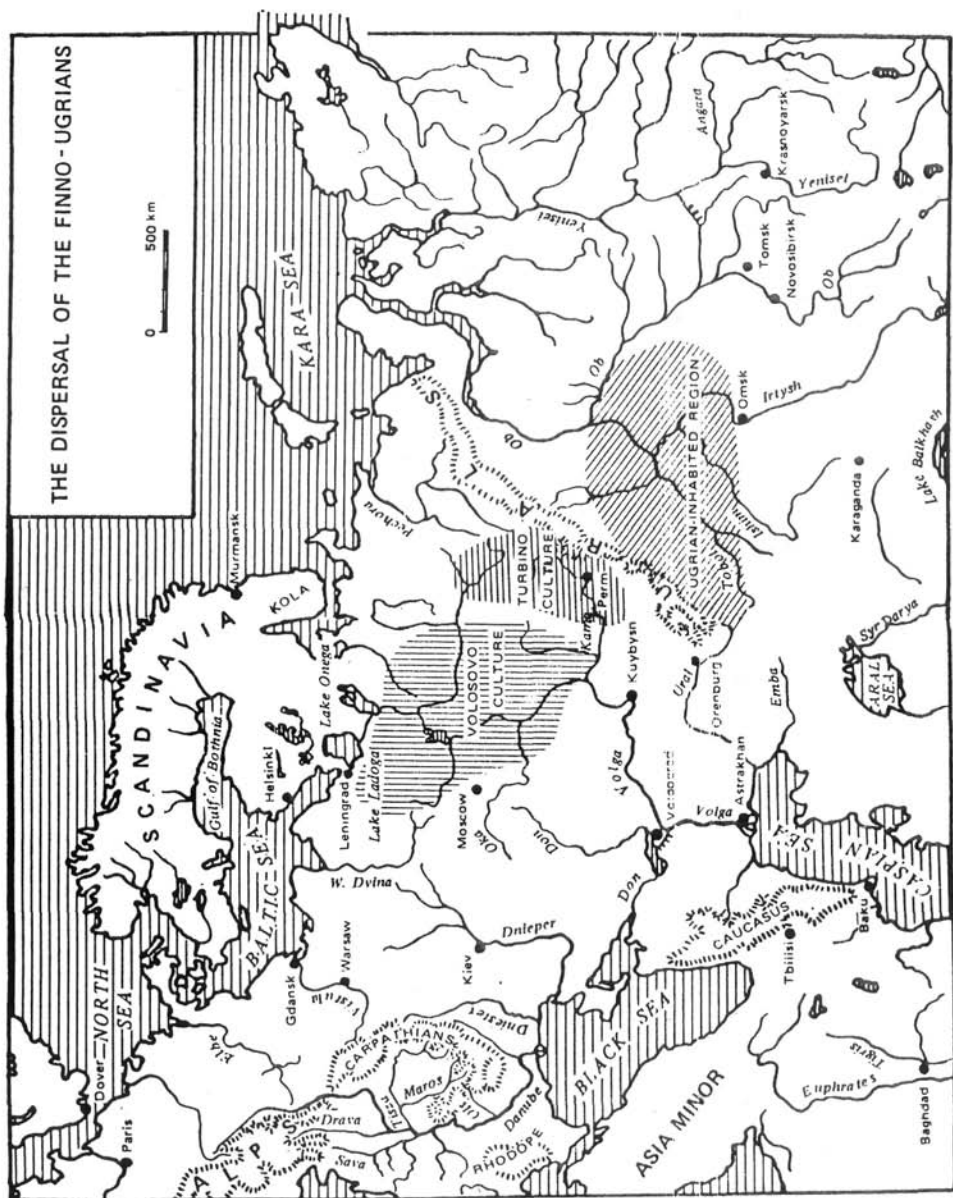


Fig. 4.

The ancient homeland of the Finno-Ugrian peoples

Around the middle of the 4th millennium B.C., one of these population groups moved towards the west-northwest in the ancient Ural homeland and settled in Scandinavia (predominantly in the area of modern Finland). One of the likely hypotheses is that they might have been the ancestors of Lapps who subsequently

changed their language. Another group migrated to the east, all the way to the Yenisei and Angara rivers. This movement most probably represents the separation of ancient Samoyeds from the main body of population.

Finno-Ugrian inhabitants who remained in the Ural region occupied the western slopes of the mountain during the 3rd millennium as well as the valleys of the Kama and Pechora rivers and the area where the Kama flows into the Volga river. Within the framework of their economy using natural resources, a marked development became apparent. More sophisticated artifacts began to occur, traditions of architecture became enriched and pottery remains indicate a southern connection. Among the remains preserved by the peat deposits of lakeshore settlements (such as Sigr and Gorbunovo) a number of artistic wood and bone carvings have also been found. (Fig. 3.)

The period of Ugrian coexistence

The Finno-Ugrian linguistic unit was dissolved by the end of the 3rd millennium B.C. This change is also clearly mirrored in the archaeological material. Western groups of the Finno-Ugrian community moved westward with a great momentum from the region of the Kama and Volga rivers. During the course of a few centuries they had conquered the upper region of the Volga river and reached the Baltic area. These populations became the ancestors of later Volga and Baltic Finnish groups. Ancestors of the Perm Finno-Ugrian population lived in the region of the Pechora, Kama and Viatka rivers. Ugrian populations (ancestors of the later Ob-Ugrians and Hungarians), however, remained in the wooded steppe and parkland areas, east of the Ural Mountains. (Fig. 4.)

The habitation area of the Ugrian group, which populated the Ural Mountains and the regions of the Ob, Irtis, Isim and Tobol rivers must have extended over quite a large area within which small Ugrian communities were only „tied” together through relatively loose contacts. This is suggested by a relatively small number of linguistic phenomena in Ugrian languages which seem to have developed in the Ugrian period.

With the exception of the northern groups, decisive economic changes took place within the Finno-Ugrian community during the years between 2000 to 1500 B.C. Under the influence of their southern neighbours who inhabited the Eurasian steppe region and who primarily spoke ancient Iranian languages, the Finno-Ugrian population was introduced to two important branches of productive economy, animal keeping and land cultivation, in addition to metallurgy. As far as is known today, this process occurred a few centuries earlier in the Ugrian portion of the population than in its Eastern-European component. The Ugrian group most probably inhabited the northwestern territories of the so-called Andronovo Bronze Age archaeological culture. This culture may well have been formed by population groups speaking ancient Iranian, who had previously lived more to the south. The Ugrian agrarian economy was adopted under their influence, while metallurgy developed under stimulation from the south and east. This process is nicely illustrated by the finding that the early vocabularies for both agricultural production and metallurgy in the Finno-Ugrian languages include an overwhelming majority of ancient Iranian loanwords.

The high level of Ugrian animal husbandry is clearly illustrated by the terminology for horse keeping which is common in all Finno-Ugrian languages and had survived to the present („ló” = horse, „nyereg” = saddle, „fék” = cheek bit, „ostor” = whip, „kengyel” = stirrup, „másodfű ló” = „second grass horse”, 2 years old,

„harmadikfű ló” = „third grass horse”, 3 years old). This linguistic evidence is supported by archaeological finds as well. Graves often contain horse bones and carved bone bridle cheek bits. Even a wagon burial was discovered in the surroundings of Cheljabinsk. The Hungarian word „szekér” (cart) is of ancient Iranian origin just like some others such as „tehén” (cow), „tej” (milk) and „nemez” (felt), all of which illustrate the influence of these southern neighbours who had already attained a higher level of economic development. Bones of cattle and sheep as well as whe-

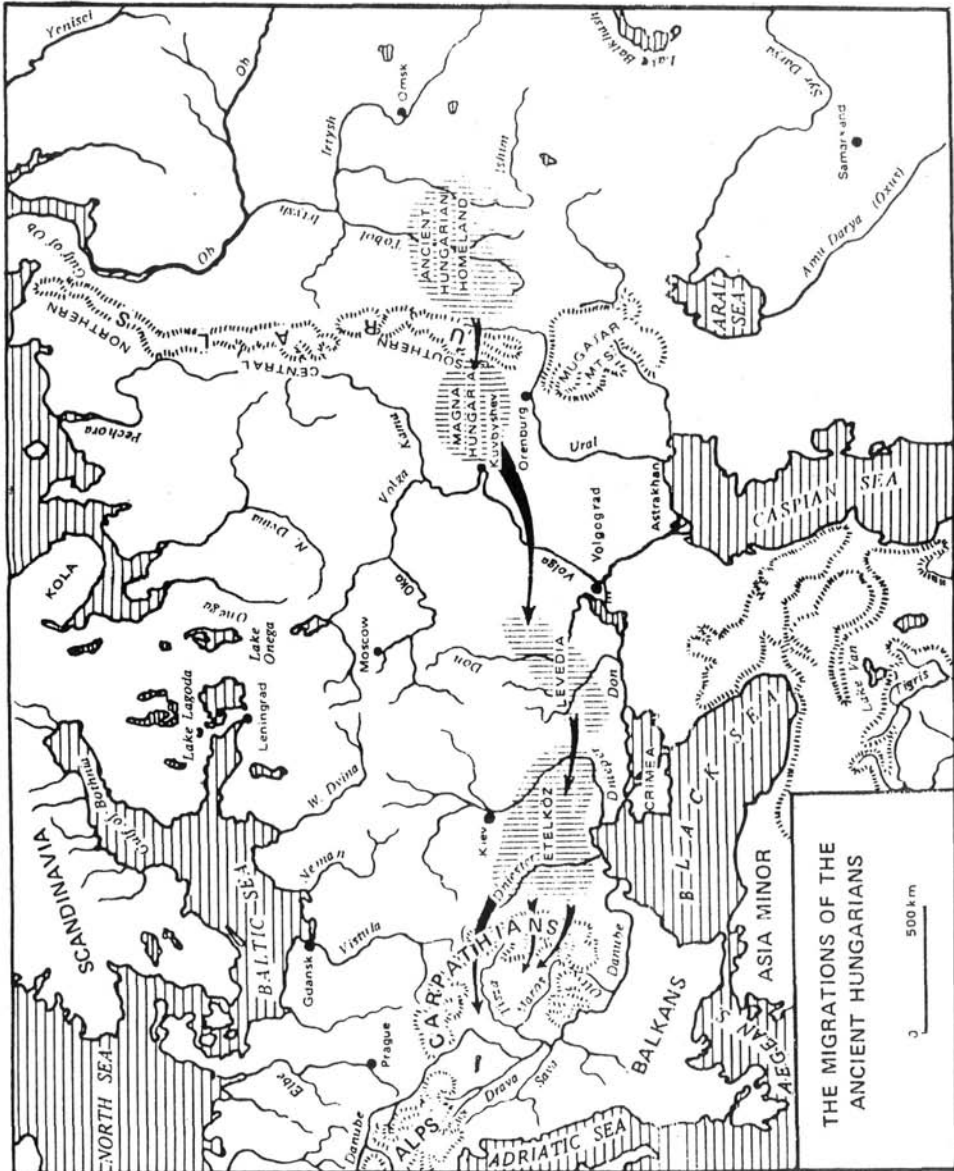


Fig. 5.

at grains, bronze sickles and grinding stones are unquestionable evidence of an economy involved in land cultivation and animal breeding.

The ancient homeland of the Hungarians

Proto-Hungarian population groups probably occupied the southern section of the Ugrian habitation area along the northern edge of the steppe, known to have been a parkland-steppe region. At the end of the Bronze Age (13th to 10th centuries B.C.) a warm and dry climatic period followed in this area. As a result, the borders of geographical zones shifted northwards. Under these new environmental circumstances it became increasingly difficult to pursue the former sedentary mode of animal keeping and cultivation. People of the Eurasian steppe adapted to the new circumstances mostly by changing their way of life. They switched to a mobile, grazing, i.e., nomadic pastoral style of animal husbandry. This had become widespread over the whole of this geographical region by the beginning of the Iron Age (around the 8th century B.C.). By continuously changing pastures these herders could ensure forage supplies for the animal stock and this subsequently contributed to the latter's increase. On the other hand, land cultivation assumed a secondary position and played a complementary role at the winter habitation sites.

A segment of the people who lived in the proximity of the steppe's northern edge, however, reacted to this change of the geographical conditions in a different manner. They drifted in a northerly direction following the new borders of the geographical zones. As far as it is known, the Ugrian community did not react uniformly to this environmental challenge. Northern groups of the loose population complex (predecessors of the Ob-Ugrians) moved northwards towards the lower stretches of the Ob river. Later they merged there with local groups pursuing natural economy, who probably also belonged to the Uralic linguistic division. Proto-Hungarian groups, on the other hand, who lived to the south, converted to pastoralism. Subsequently (at the beginning of the Iron Age) they probably moved even further to the south. It appears that this separation led to the final disintegration of the Ugrian community and resulted in the formation of the Hungarian people as an ethnic group. Between approximately 1000 and 500 B.C. the self-identification of this new ethnic group was "Magyar" as a people. The term means "speaking people". The initial element of this name may be recognized in a latent form in the self-nomination of the Ob-Ugrian Vogul people (Manysi), and in the name of one of the Ob-Ugrian fraternities (Mos). (Fig. 5.)

Hungarians, who pursued a pastoral economy, operated within the environment of the Eurasian nomadic people from the beginning of their independent ethnic existence. Of these, the dominance of Scythians and related people may be considered characteristic. In the southern Ural region, early Sarmatians (Sauromate) were the direct southern neighbours of Hungarians. The similar economic systems of the steppe people resulted in comparable material and intellectual cultures, ways of life, customs and military organization. Thus, the ways of life and culture of the ancient Hungarians eventually displayed these traits while less and less of the ancient Finno-Ugrian tradition was preserved. The ancient language of Finno-Ugrian origin is one of the few characteristics which resisted environmental influences.

Magna Hungaria

Wars between the nomadic pastoralist groups resulted in significant migrations or population movements (Czeglédy 1983). Larger wars in the steppe region caused a chain reaction from the Altai to the Carpathian Mountains and forced many of

the pastoralists to abandon their domains. Such enormous movements were initiated by the Huns during the 3rd to 4th centuries, and the westward migration of the Onogur people during the 5th century. These were followed in the next century by the Avar migration and the expansion of the Inner-Asian Turkic Empire westwards, as far as the Caucasian Mountains. It may have been one of these population movements which forced the Hungarians to leave their Western-Siberian habitation area westbound during the 4th to 5th centuries. At that time they moved to the western slopes of the southern Ural region, largely to the area between the Ural Mountains and the Volga river. (This corresponds approximately to the area later called Bashkiria.)

This was the time of major reorganizations over the steppe. The place of the mostly Iranian-speaking people was taken by population groups from Asia Minor who predominantly spoke Turkic languages and represented the Oriental racial division in terms of their physical anthropology. Thus, the Hungarians found themselves in a new linguistic, racial and, in part, cultural environment.

Hungarians as a whole, inhabited this area until around 700 A.D. as revealed by the archaeological finds. They were organized into tribes as is shown by two Hungarian tribal names (Jenő and Gyarmat) that survived in Bashkiria. Around 700 A.D., the majority of Hungarians migrated towards the southwest to the region of the Volga and Don rivers and settled there. Some of them, however, remained in Bashkiria. Such subdivisions were relatively common among pastoralists as mentioned by Arabian sources and reflected in archaeological finds (for example the cemetery near Bolshie Tigani) and also described in the records of Julianus, a Dominican monk, whose travels from Hungary to the East took place during 1235–1236. In 1236, Julianus met Hungarians whose language he understood, in an area which was twodays walking distance from the capital of the Volga-Burgars, east of the Volga and south of the Kama rivers. He called this habitation area Magna Hungaria which corresponds to „Old Hungary”. The country of the Volga-Bulgars was devastated by the Tartar invasion within the same year and the remaining Eastern-Hungarian community in this area dispersed.

Levedia

After 700 A.D., the majority of Hungarians moved into the region of the lower Volga, Don and Doniec rivers and the Azov Sea. Most of this area fell within the boundaries of the Khazar Empire. A number of Arabian and Byzantine sources carry abundant information on this period. From an ethnic point of view, the Khazar Empire was very colourful. In addition to the Khazar people, neighbours of the Hungarians included Onogur (also known as Onogur-Bulgarian) and Iranian-speaking Alan groups. The Onogur people moved from the east into the steppe area north of the Caucasus Mountains in 463. They created an independent empire under the leadership of the sovereign Kuvrat. This empire, however, was brought down by the Khazar around 650. At that time, one of the Onogur groups migrated northwards to the junction of the Volga and Kama rivers. The other group moved into the lower Danube region under the leadership of Asparuh and created an independent state. A significant part of the population, however, remained in the Don–Kuban area and acknowledged the Kazar rule. Arabian offensives during the 720s and 730s forced the Alan people to move from north of the Caucasus Mountains into the parkland–steppe area of the Don and Doniec rivers' region.

A very important economic process took place in the Khazar Khanate during the 8th to 9th centuries. The khan's military force had stopped the westbound mi-

gration of the eastern nomads, thus creating a relatively peaceful period on the Eastern-European Plain. This protection ensured the external conditions for the settlement process in which all of the area's pastoral communities participated. The economic incentive behind this phenomenon was an impressive development in land cultivation techniques which made the sedentary way of life increasingly attractive. Such improvements resulted in the increasing productivity of this branch of economy in comparison to previous times. The Alan population of the Khanate had, by then, been involved in land cultivation for a long time and increasing masses of Bulgarian-Turkic pastoralists chose this new way of life as well. Hungarians were undoubtedly part of this process with an expanding sedentary population pursuing land cultivation. This phenomenon is shown by the 250 to 300 Bulgarian-Turkic loanwords, the majority of which are associated with land cultivation and intensive animal husbandry. Most of these words were adapted from the Onogur-Bulgarian language. Of these population groups, Hungarians first established links with the Volga-Bulgarian people moving northwards along the Volga river after 700 A.D. Subsequently, they came into contact with the Don-Bulgarians in the area of Levedia. Tight connections between the Hungarian ("Magyar") and Onogur populations who occupied neighbouring domains may explain the names 'vengr', 'Ungarn', 'hongrois', and 'Hungarian' which derive from the name of the Onogur people and were spread over all Europe through Slavic mediation. It is very likely that most of the loan-words adopted at that time originated in the Khazar language itself. The settlement process may also be demonstrated by archaeological data. Settlement patterns, building structures and other parts of the material culture discovered in Hungarian villages built after the conquest of the Carpathian Basin all reveal close relationships with the agricultural settlement of the Don river's region. Significant part of the Hungarian population, however, still followed a predominantly pastoral way of life. Consequently, their culture was characterized by nomadic elements and their organization as well as military system followed nomadic patterns. During the stay within the boundaries of the Khazar Khanate, Hungarian society again underwent significant development as well. A sovereign's status was established above the authority of the seven Hungarian tribes (Nyék, Megyer, Kürtgyarmat, Tarján, Jenő, Kér, Keszi) which may be regarded as the first beginnings of state formation. The first sovereign was Levedi (whose name became associated with the habitation area), who probably was the khan's subordinate. Subsequently, the Hungarian power system included two sovereigns (kende and gyula). This duality of the supreme power followed a Khazar pattern as it was brought into existence under its influence.

Reliable data from this period are available concerning the changes in the ethnic composition of the Hungarian community as well. New population elements joined the Hungarians while others became separated from them. One may assume that members of the Eskil Bulgarian tribe, ancestors of the Seklers ("Székelys") were united with the Hungarian population during the intensive period of Hungarian-Bulgarian contacts. Following a Hungarian-Pecheneg showdown (the Hungarians often joined arms with the Khazars in fighting the Pecheneg who lived in the area of the Volga and Ural rivers), a part of the Hungarian population separated and settled south of the Caucasus Mountains near the Persian frontier. This group has been denoted by the name Savard in a variety of sources. During the first half of the 9th century a civil war broke out in the Khazar Khanate, but the khan's army regained control over the insurgents. The defeated usurpers sought refuge with the Hungarians who accepted them as the eighth tribe. While this population was almost certainly heterogeneous, it spoke the Khazar language. In the written sources

this group is called Kabar (meaning "insurgent"). Assimilation of these insurgents most likely spoiled Hungarian-Khazar relations. This deterioration, together with the Hungarian sovereigns' independence ambitions resulted in the Hungarians' moving to territories located more to the west during the 850s.

Etelköz

This new habitation area located in the lower Danube, Dniester and Dnieper rivers' region was occupied by the Hungarians during the second half of the 9th century. Their contacts significantly improved with Eastern-Slavic tribes and Norman groups who lived north of this area. This pattern is also supported by the archaeological evidence (such as Hungarian artifact types found in Kiev, Chernigov and the environs of Smolensk). Additional proof is provided by Eastern-Slavic loan-words in the Hungarian language. Hungarian equestrian units fighting with nomadic warfare tactics appeared in the eastern provinces of the Frank Empire in 862 as documented in written sources. Subsequently, such raids became increasingly frequent. Hungarians represented a considerable military force. According to an Arabic source, they could manage to mobilize as many as 20,000 horsemen in times of war. Repeated incursions of this kind, often referred to as "adventurous raids" in Hungarian, provided a good opportunity for discovering the geographical and political conditions of the then disunited Carpathian Basin.

In 893, the Uz people won over the Pecheneg who appeared on the Eastern-European steppe after having crossed the Volga river. In 894, the Hungarians, in alliance with the Byzantians achieved victory over the Danube-Bulgarians. In the same year they also devastated what had been the Roman province of Pannonia (western part of the Carpathian Basin). This latter offensive was most probably a preparation for the conquest of the Carpathian Basin. The cause behind this plan was, in all likelihood, the fact that the Etelköz plain was difficult to defend against attacks by the dangerous Pecheneg army. The Carpathian Mountain range, on the other hand, represented a formidable natural defense line along the eastern border of the Carpathian Basin. During 895, the Hungarian army's main body descended onto the Great Hungarian Plain through the Verecke Pass in the northeastern Carpathian Mountain under the command of the sovereign Árpád. Meanwhile, the Bulgarians established an alliance with the Pechenegs and attacked the remaining Hungarian population and rear guard left behind in the Etelköz region. Although Hungarians suffered significant losses, the majority of this population managed to flee behind the mountain range crossing the passes and straits into Transylvania. During this year, which brought military success and loss of people simultaneously, the Hungarians occupied Transylvania and the Great Hungarian Plain. Transdanubia (formerly Pannonia) and the western part of Upper Hungary (in the border region with modern Slovakia) were invaded in 900 without any resistance on the way back from a successful military offensive against Italy. The conquering Hungarians, who may have numbered half a million people, met a variety of groups in their new homeland. These predominantly included Slavic population groups as well as remnants of the former Avar occupants, in addition to Frank and Bavarian settlers. The people thus encountered, however, may have been only half the numbers of the conquering Hungarians.

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The ancient history of the Hungarian people is instructive from a variety of aspects. During the process of its formation, the community of ancient Hungarians

found itself in a completely different ethnic and linguistic environment. As far as one can judge, no other Finno-Ugrian group switched over to an equestrian-pastoral way of life. Hungarians, however, still retained their language and ethnic identity during the 1500 to 2000 years spent in the steppe regions. This population did not disperse and did not merge into the continuously reorganized ethnic formations of the steppe as was the case with many other steppe peoples. One of the reasons behind this phenomenon may be that in spite of the significant changes within this ethnic entity during the long period concerned, newly accepted population elements always remained in the minority and usually played a secondary role in the power structure as well. The peculiarity of the Hungarian language of Finno-Ugrian origin may have significantly contributed to cultural survival in the steppe environment since it hindered interaction with other people and created an impenetrable, closed communication system for the different linguistic environments. Endogamy within the ethnic Hungarian group further contributed to this situation. While the clans were exogamous, marital bonds between them were mostly limited to marriages within the major ethnic group. This, however, does not mean that the community as a whole was completely cut off from external influences. Hungarian culture almost entirely changed in the steppe region and the physical anthropological make-up of this population was significantly modified. The Hungarian language was enriched by a whole stratum of loan-words during this time. The consistently strong military force, which could prevent the dispersal of this group even when it served as a vassal to greater powers, was another important factor in ethnic survival. It is for this reason why the hypothesis of some historians, which assumes that nomadic social organization was introduced to primitive Hungarians by the ruling strata of another ethnic group, does not seem plausible.

The early history of Hungarians has another peculiar feature as well, that is it was the only nomad people of Eastern origin which had succeeded to adapt itself to the family of European nations consequently it did not collapse in the new environment. That is other peoples which had arrived earlier into the Carpathian Basin from the East – like Sarmatians, Huns and Avars – could preserve their political and ethnic independence and identity only for a – historically speaking – short period. For the long run they were marked out by fate for ethnic assimilation.

The settlement of nomad people within the Carpathian Basin can be explained first of all by geographic factors; vast plains, like the Great Hungarian Plain, the last and westernmost relic of the Eurasian steppe with groves offered biogeographic conditions more or less corresponding to those which were characteristic of the Eastern-European regions where these nomad peoples had lived before. However, the conditions of the two regions are not quite identical since in the Carpathian Basin those steppes of vast extension where these peoples used to practice their nomadic way of life in the East, are absent, furthermore large, inundation areas of the rivers Duna and Tisza also impeded considerably the practice of that riverside cyclic pasturage system which was so characteristic of nomad economy in the East. It was due mostly to this geographic feature that among those nomad peoples which had come into the Carpathian Basin the process of settling down accelerated within a relatively short period. A gradually increasing part of the population began to live at permanent settlements and agriculture, together with a stock breeding more intensive than before, was becoming more and more important in the economy. It is conspicuous that while in the eastern archeological record of nomad peoples arrived from the East settlement remains are almost completely missing, dozens of Sarmatian and Avar settlements had been unearthed in Hungary so far.

The above-mentioned biogeographic feature had most probably a great influence on the economy of Hungarians, too, though, no doubt, there was a difference because the ratio of sedentary way of life in the economy of Hungarians was much greater already during the period of Hungarian Conquest than in the economy of the above-mentioned Sarmatians or Avars. Besides, the social structure of Hungarians was also considerably different from that of Sarmatians and Avars. In the neighbourhood of the Khazar kaganate, following the Khazar example and influenced by it a princely power of Eastern half-momadic type (that is the so-called double princely power) had been already developed. Beyond doubt, after the Conquest sedentary agricultural way of life had an ever increasing role while the importance of nomadic economy had decreased within a few decades considerably. Therefore the political and military system of Eastern type and of nomadic character had gradually lost its economic bases. After the middle of the 10th century military campaigns to get spoils of war conducted to the western and southern parts of Europe had already broken under the opposition of stronger neighbours. This also promoted the breaking up of old structures. It was of utmost significance that the reigning prince (Grand Duke Géza) and his entourage had recognized that the only chance for the country and people to survive would be an accommodation to the new environment establishing a social structure meeting European standards. Grand Duke Géza and his successor, King Stephen, the first Christian ruler, had had also the necessary power to take this decisive step. That is they recognized rightly the real position of Hungarian economy and society namely that this society had already exceeded nomadic way of life and that a political and military system of eastern type was already the greatest objection of an organic development of society. The achievement of these alterations (the spread of Christianity, the establishment of a feudal state of European type) produced the resistance of the followers of the old system, yet, they had already no such power reserves within Hungarian society which could have been able to break the process of decisive alterations. Therefore this inner trial of strength did not dissipate the economic and military energies of the country, thus the country and the people did not fall a prey to stronger and more powerful neighbours. Around 800 A.D. a process of just the opposite direction took place in the Avar Empire, when the inner struggles within the aristocracy consumed the inner power resources thus an external assault had overthrown the country of Avars sealing the destiny of the Avar people. That the history of Hungarians had not come to a deadlock at the end of the 10th century was due first of all to their evolved economic and social organization to which some favourable personal endowments were added at the highest level of power. Grand Duke Géza and his son, King Stephen, reigned for more than 70 years and they were rulers who with an extraordinary perspicacity recognized the only way out from the perilous situation – the necessity of accommodating to new standards.

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